

## JADE REGENT SESSION SUMMARY 03/03/2013

### CAST OF CHARACTERS

*Bruce* calls in across Skype just in time to hear *Tim* describe a club of dads with adopted Asian daughters. He manages to make the concept of a pack of four white guys and five Asian teenagers slightly less creepy than it otherwise might be.

*Ernest* interrupts by revealing that he has brought a box of Round Rock Donuts. Within moments the entire room is suffering from an amazing sugar rush.

*Paul* describes the incredible joy he encountered at work when the power flickered out, causing an entire cube farm of sararimen to simultaneously gopher up as if they were all concerned about predatory snakes and eagles at the same time.

*Tim* continues his theme of interesting conversational topics by describing a company that had proposed manufacturing small nuclear reactors, about the size (and shape) of a shipping container. Everyone immediately runs with this idea. *Georgina* is very enthusiastic about the neighborhood power-supply potential. *Ernest* suggests creating a housing development called Leukemia Flats.

*Matt* shows up after a bit, noting that he is in agonizing pain as a consequence of trying to build up his arm strength again. The others suggest that perhaps he should examine the difference between “exercise” and “torture”.

<i>Character</i>	<i>Player</i>	<i>Description</i>	<i>Level</i>
Harwynian Falingleaf	Bruce	Elegant Elven Transmuter	12
Yoshihiro Kaijitsu	Ernest	Tien Cavalier/Samurai-In-Training	12
Jacob Frostfang	Matt	Cold-Loving Kellid Party Sorcerer	12
V'lk	Chris	Mute Feral Elf Stabber (and Oracle)	2/10
Gobo Samarillian	Patrick	Blind Gnomish Fortuneteller	12
Bjorn the Unlucky	Tim	Ulfen Woodsman	12

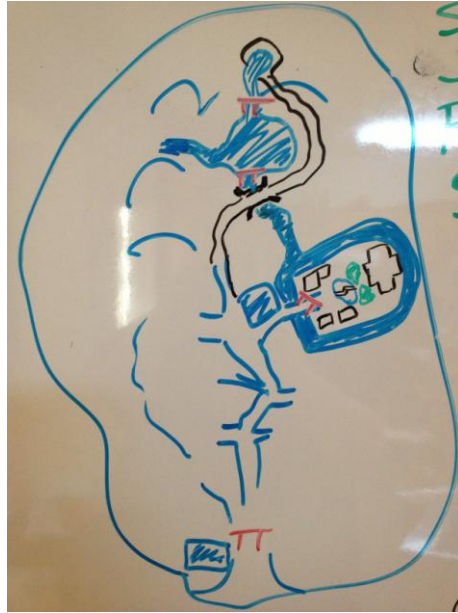
## **AWAY FROM THE FUNERAL PAVILION**

At the end of the last session the characters fled from the funeral pavilion of Emperor Higashiyama Shigure as his ghost started to freak out in traditional camera-trick Japanese ghost style. They now know that they must obtain his blessing, and the blessings from several other former Emperors as well. Dealing with him was a very touchy business – he was on the verge of going all curse-and-avulsion on the characters several times, tamed only by *Ameiko Amatatsu's* Diplomacy skills. The characters suspect that his poor attitude may be because he was executed by beheading and his body was flung into the Well of Demons.

### ***THE WELL OF DEMONS***

To obtain the blessings of Higashiyama Shigure, and beyond that the blessings of the Emperors of the Sugimatu, Shoginawa and Taekuku houses, the characters will need to venture into the Well of Demons. Under normal circumstances, the Well of Demons keeps the evil at bay, preventing it from overrunning the Empire. In the current day, the situation is troubled because the oni defiled the Well of Demons and threw the last (good) Emperor's body into it. The characters may need to obtain the blessings of the three most evil of the fallen Emperors of Minkai.

As a side detail, the Emperor Sugimatu is the source of the *Thundering Blade* that *Hatsue* is armed with.



*The Island of the Imperial Shrine*

## THE TOMB OF AMATATSU ONOKO

The characters are able to learn that the tomb of the Empress *Amatatsu Onoko* is nearby. She was the most recent Amatatsu Empress, though her reign was centuries ago. They decide to visit her to seek helpful tips on how to deal with the cursed ghosts of evil Minkaian Emperors.

The characters return across the pond of dead koi and approach the tomb of Amatatsu Onoko. It is a small stand-alone building. The characters enter. The air is stale and unmoving. From the darkness a marble-skinned Tianmin woman with white feathery wings appears. She wears a beautiful kimono made from cloth of gold and bears a large conch shell.

*Yoshihiro* bows before you, “Greetings honored spirit! The scions of House Amatatsu come to ask your guidance.”

The spirit observes that he bears the honored sword *Suishen* and asks his purpose. Yoshihiro explains that the characters seek her blessing to depose the Jade Regent and place Ameiko Kaijutsu (Amatatsu) on the throne.

The spirit is pleased, noting that it has been a long time since the Amatatsu have held the Jade Throne. However, she cannot offer her blessing until such time as the devil *Amatatsu Maemi* is dispatched. She sat upon the Jade Throne for over 200 years, but remained childless. She petitioned the powers of Hell to extend her life, ruling isolated and alone. After her death the Seal and the Throne passed to another House but the Devils of Hell honored their pact and transformed her into one of them. She is a *gylou* or Handmaiden Devil. They are known by a variety of titles, including “Maidens of Miscarriage.” They perform tasks upon behalf of Hell’s archdevils, but can be driven into rage by the crying of a baby. Their bodies are almost those of human women, but with limbs transformed into awful tangles of spined tentacles. Beyond their physical prowess they also have a wide variety of illusion powers. They are often surrounded by servants, and are often quite fond of erinyes. Empress Maemi lurks in the depths of the Well of Evil, perched upon a replica of the Jade Throne.

The spirit of Amatatsu Onoko frees several characters of the unfortunate spirits that had been possessing them, most notably Jacob’s Swine Shogun spirit that makes him eat foul things when he’s bored. She refrains from freeing *Harwynian* of his possessor – he seems to have developed a comfortable relationship with his inner companion.



*The Gylou Devil, or Handmaiden of Hell*

The characters spend an evening in the tomb, regaining spells and preparing to fight devils. Ameiko uses her Legend Lore to uncover more details about the reigns of the various evil Emperors:

- *Taekuku Sakai* – interested in eugenics and the power of the Minkai. He founded the Five Families.
- *Sugimatu Emperor* – died at 110 and had all of the samurai in his family killed so none could exceed him. He wanted to have his entire family killed, but others stepped in to halt the slaughter.
- *Shoginawa Emperor* – interested in necromancy and illusion, had undead armies disguised as living soldiers. When his samurai objected he had them killed and converted into undead.

The spirits' advice is that the evil Emperors will give their blessings for a bargain, but it will end in horror. The characters conclude that they will need to obtain the blessings of the evil Emperors by beating them. Heavily. With hammers. Apparently if we get the Emperor's body out of the rift the holy cleansing waters will chill them out and we could get the blessings of less psycho members of their Houses at the ancestral shrine on the island.

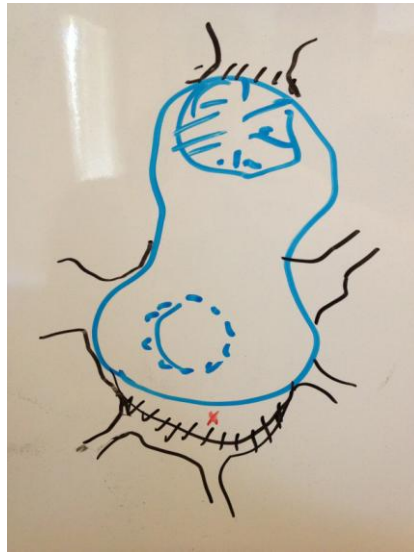
## **INTO THE WELL OF DEMONS**

The characters approach the Well of Demons. It is a gaping wound in the earth, into which a river flows and falls into oblivion. The characters are able to see a narrow muddy path spiraling down into the void. As characters are wont to do, the group proceeds forward carefully. Yoshihiro uses his *Air Walk* trick to keep his boots from getting muddy. Harwynian grumbles because his *Flying Boots* don't last long enough per day for him to just use them all the time. Gobo hovers happily along, knowing that his feet haven't touched the ground for levels – just no one else knows because of his long robe.

The characters start to feel a strange vertigo effect. Harwynian casts *Magic Circle Against Evil* and demonstrates that this is enough to ward away the effect as it

strengthens enough to cause characters to want to dive off the path and into the void. Shalelu Andosana and Sandru Vhiskhi both lean forward and plummet off the side, or try: the others manage to grab hold of them before they fall. Both of them seem to have an overwhelming desire to be at the bottom of the pit.

Jacob flies down to the bottom, finding a large cavern. The falling water empties into another chasm to one side. The characters join him after a few minutes, finding themselves on a sandy beach on one side of the cavern.



*Entering the Well of Demons (Or, the Demonic Uterus)*

## **A FEATURELESS MASK OF PORCELAIN**

The characters make their way through a shallow cave until they come upon a female figure in a featureless porcelain mask. She has twisted horns and a rat's tail creeping from underneath her tattered kimono. She is armed with a naginata. She stands completely immobile.

Yoshihiro and Jacob approach. Yoshihiro demands, "Spirit! We seek the body of Emperor Shigure!" She suddenly launches towards Jacob with her naginata outstretched. Yoshihiro is completely stunned by the speed of her assault and is horribly slashed.

The devil-girl flies into the air, casting *Displacement* and *Dispel Good* as she does. She is surrounded by a coruscating aura of evil energy. Bjorn flings a starknife at

her, but his throw is deflected by her aura. Yoshihiro sends arrows her way, striking only once. Shalelu also fires upon her, missing every time. Harwynian casts *Haste*, helping the others to miss more often. Ameiko starts singing to Inspire Courage, hoping to prevent folks from missing quite so much.



*Shiko Me*

V'lk decides that this is for the birds: he casts *Dispel Magic* on her, eliminating her *Displacement*.

Jacob flies up and breathes a chillingly cold dragon's breath upon her. His attack is completely ineffective.

The masked devil casts two spells. One of them almost blinds Jacob. The second is mildly confusing due to the various perception abilities of the party – it turns her invisible and makes a second copy of her appear nearby. Most people only see the copy; Yoshihiro sees two devils due to Suishen's *see invisible*, and V'lk, thanks to *true seeing*, sees the correct one.

Bjorn clobbers her with his shortbow, though he does a disappointingly small amount of damage. Yoshihiro fires again, hitting four times and inflicting devastating damage. Shalelu manages another strong hit. Harwynian hits her with two *Scorching Rays* to inflict additional damage. The characters note that even though she is losing a lot of blackish blood she doesn't seem to be slowing down too much.

V'lk (with his *True Seeing*) recognizes that everyone is shooting at an illusion of a devil while the real devil hides invisibly nearby. He creates an illusion of an angelic elvish figure pointing at the real devil. Everyone else sees the figure pointing at empty space (except Yoshihiro, who sees it pointing at the devil he was *not* shooting at). They realize that they just poured 180+ points of damage into an illusion.

The characters start attacking the empty space. This is quite a bit harder than attacking something that is actually visible. Gobo prepares by aligning Yoshihiro's bow *Good*. Meanwhile, the devil is busy casting a quickened *Spectral Hand* and *Vampiric Touch*. Yoshihiro fires multiple arrows into her, causing black blood to spray from nothing. "Follow the arrows!" he cries out. Jacob takes him at his word and attacks in dragon form, breaking her slender body and dragging her to the ground.

The characters give her body a thorough looting. They peel off her mask to find a hideous wrinkled rat-face underneath; she is a hag-creature known as a shiko me. She is wearing:

- *Silken Ceremonial Armor* +2
- *Naginata* +1

Harwynian claims the *Silken Ceremonial Armor* in spite of V'lk's concern that he is volunteering to wear women's clothing. Devilish women's clothing, at that! Harwynian is unconcerned: civilized elves do not recognize gender differences in clothing.

## ERINYES JUNCTION

The characters proceed along the corridor. They very quickly find someone: they come around a corner to see six beautiful women with beautiful red hair and beautiful batlike wings and beautiful flaming drawn bows.



Yoshihiro concludes, “These bitches mean us no good! I’m going to light them up!” He does so, as do V’lk and Shalelu. One demonic (devilish?) woman falls.



Three of the erinyes fire upon the characters with arrows while the other two fly down to entangle V’lk and Gobo with long ropes. V’lk is entangled, but manages to use Escape Artist to wriggle free. Gobo casts *Freedom of Movement* to escape the ropes. The archers fire on Yoshihiro, Hatsue and Shalelu. Shalelu howls as her temporary hit points are stripped away. Hatsue gets feathered twice and staggers from the strikes.

Harwynian casts *Mass Bear’s Endurance* on everyone, as he expects everyone to get shot full of arrows soon.

Bjorn fires several arrows up at the erinyes. His arrows are neither cold iron nor Good-aligned, so the erinyes barely even notice them. Yoshihiro fires. His arrows are everything, and he tears another erinyes from the air. Hatsue channels positive energy and heals the characters from the effects of erinyes arrows. In return, the erinyes shoot down her and Shalelu. Both remain standing, but injured.

V’lk summons up an illusionary paladin to fly into the air and charge one of the erinyes. V’lk is quite pleased with himself. The erinyes is substantially less pleased by the apparition. The erinyes is even less pleased when a Good-aspected Jacob tears and rips through another of them. Harwynian flings a *Chain Lightning* at the two archers,

leaving them somewhat scorched. Gobo follows up with a *Holy Smite* that obliterates one of them and leaves the other one horribly wounded and blinded.

Yoshihiro takes careful aim at the erinyes engaged by the illusionary paladin and shoots her down. V'lk makes it look like the paladin did it all, leaving the surviving erinyes deeply concerned. Then he shoots her with a silver arrow. She teleports away, leaving the characters to loot the bodies:

- 5 *Flaming Composite Longbows* +1 (+5 STR)
- 5 *Flaming Greatswords* +1

Bjorn is quite happy to claim one of the bows – he's always wanted an effective ranged weapon.

The characters decide that the large rock formation in the center of the cavern should be called the *Nightingale's Nest*. This is by far the best choice among several offered options.

## **THE TENTACLED QUEEN**

The characters move into another cavern. The walls are concealed by tattered hangings. A delicate balcony 40 feet up looks down upon the floor where the characters stand, and upon that balcony a tentacle female figure sits upon a massive jade throne. Three erinyes attend to the Hellish Empress, who can be no other than Amatsatsu Maemi (one of the erinyes is wounded, the survivor of the last fight).



*Amatatsu Maemi's Throne Room (Or, the Donkey Skull)*

Ameiko and Yoshihiro decide to bluff their way through it. “Greetings, revered ancestor. An Amatatsu seeks your blessing to become Empress!” Gobo creates a moon bridge up to the balcony and the group calmly ascends.

To the characters’ great surprise, Amatatsu Maemi seems pleased by the chance that an Amatatsu might again occupy the Jade Throne. She beckons to Ameiko to receive the kiss of her blessing. Nobody is prepared to allow that to happen, so the characters attack instead. Suddenly, ten tentacles tear out from underneath Maemi’s body and wrap around Ameiko, drawing her towards her undercarriage. V’lk uses a swift *Shadow Jump* to pluck Ameiko away from this fate and place her in the back of the party.

The erinyes open fire on Jacob, burning and piercing him with their arrows. Bjorn storms the bridge and attacks. Gobo follows up with a *Holy Smite* on the three erinyes and Amatatsu Maemi. His attack obliterates the wounded erinyes and blinds one other.

Yoshihiro challenges Amatatsu Maemi and charges her. She claws at him with her tentacles and grapples him, but his strike goes true. It turns out that she is vulnerable to the ancestral weapons of the Amatatsu clan – against her, *Suishen* counts as an *Outsider Bane* weapon. He strikes and inflicts a wound!

Shalelu fires upon one of the flying erinyes with silver arrows. Harwynian roasts two of them with another *Chain Lightning*, though he is quite disappointed to see Maemi completely ignore his spell.

Maemi decides to swallow Yoshihiro whole within her “tentacle cage” in her nether regions. The others are more than a little bit upset by both the tenor of Yoshihiro’s screaming and the process by which she squeezes and bludgeons him. Not to be outdone, she also lashes out at Bjorn and Sandru, inflicting moderate damage – certainly nothing to match what is happening to Yoshihiro.

Jacob decides that things are more than serious enough for desperate measures. He casts a *Hold Monster* on Maemi and is more than a little surprised when the spell actually succeeds. Ameiko draws upon this success to Inspire Courage in the group. Gobo and Bjorn inflict coup-de-grace strikes upon Maemi, ending her in an explosion of blood and flapping skin. Yoshihiro cuts himself free a moment later. The surviving erinyes flee to a convenient parallel dimension as the illusions that covered Amatatsu Maemi’s lair dissipate. The reality that remains is much sadder than what had first appeared. She does, however, have some treasures:

- A magical headdress that looks like Princess Amidala’s headgear on crack, a *Major Crown of Blasting*;
- Gemstones and jewelry worth 5000 gold

Everyone is somewhat conflicted over the *Crown of Blasting*. The ability to inflict 40 points of damage once per day is handy, clearly better than not being able to inflict 40 points of damage, but the cost of sacrificing any semblance of fashion sense is fairly high. Ameiko dons the crown to appear more Empress-like.

### **THREE REPUBLICAN FISH-MEN**

The characters continue into a foggy, misty cavern. They find three large, scaly fish-men sitting around chatting with each other in a cluster of stalagmites. Their hides are scaly, their eyes bulbous, and their mouths lipless and toothy.



### *Cavern of the Three Fish-Men*

The characters use *Tongues* to overhear the conversation. “No, we should just swim upriver and just kill that Commie.” The characters understand that they are Republicans. Jacob attempts to convince them that the characters are *also* here to kill the Commie, even if he doesn’t really understand what that means. He takes the form of a white dragon.

The three fish-men goggle at him with their saucer-like eyes. One fish-man replies, “We have heard of the foreign white dragons, but we had heard that they were none too smart. You must be a genius among white dragons. Only if we redirect the river can we leave the Well of the Demons.”

“What do the Commies have to do with that?”

“The kami controls the river, the kami can redirect the river. If we can kill the kami then we can escape.” The characters get a better understanding of what is going on – these are bad creatures, intent upon plotting evil upon the kami (good nature spirit) guarding the holy river above, though we cannot rule out that they may also be Republicans. One of them appears to have an American Crossroads bumper sticker pasted across his flank.

Jacob approaches them. V'lk does as well, reasoning that he looks like an elf serial killer and should bolster whatever reputation Jacob has been able to build. Jacob tells them, "I could help kill the kami, or I could just roast you." He casts *Dragon Breath* and breathes flame upon all of them. He learns then that far from being vulnerable to fire, the fish-men are actually resistant to it.

The other feature the fish-men bring to the table is an unbelievably horrible stench. Everyone within thirty feet of them must make a Fortitude save or be *sickened*. They are also, as it happens, large – the size of brown bears.

Jacob tries hitting them with cold damage next and discovers that they are also resistant to cold. He grumbles in frustration. Yoshihiro decides to use his oft-neglected *Strategy* ability to give everyone either an immediate move, or a +2 dodge bonus to AC. V'lk moves in, gets *sickened* by the stench, and promptly gets bitten, clawed and grabbed by one of the fish-men. As he is grabbed, he realizes that foul fluids are flowing from the creature's body. He is only barely able to avoid being *nauseated*.

Bjorn moves in to range of the creatures, things that he now realizes are hezrou demons (Type III to you). He reasons that he smells worse things when he gets up in the morning, but that isn't enough to keep him from being *sickened*. A fish-man strikes and grapples him.

Gobo lashes out against the fish-men with a *Chain Lightning*. He is deeply pleased by the fact that his lungful of *Incense of Meditation* lets him cast the spell maximized. He is substantially less pleased by the discovery that the fish-men are completely immune to lightning. One of the fish-men raises his arm to use the electricity to obliterate a couple of annoying parasites under its armpit.

Harwynian, learning from Gobo's example, doesn't use lightning. Instead, he uses a *Persistent Slow* to slow down two of them. Jacob, his draconic shape blessed to be Good, tears into one of the fish-men and tears it into awful-smelling piscine fragments.

Yoshihiro notices that one of the *Slowed* fish-men is standing alone. He takes the opportunity to fire an array of arrows into the creature. It is critically wounded, an arrow piercing almost entirely through its head.

V'lk reaches over to Bjorn and brings both of them to safety with a *Shadow Jump*. The fish-man is upset, but has plenty of targets to take his bad emotions out upon, notably Sandru and Hatsue. The creature manages to claw at Sandru and grapple him. The caravan master is *nauseated* and collapses in wracking heaves. The other fish-man, *Slowed* by magic, lumbers directly at Yoshihiro, closing verrrry sloooooowly.

Ameiko, now wearing the *Crown of Blasting*, opens fire on one fish-man. The blinding light lashes out, but then washes harmlessly off the creature's spell resistance. Harwynian tries some *Scorching Rays* on the *Slowed* fish-man and is likewise disappointed to see his spell evaporate harmlessly.

Jacob moves in and claws one fish-man to death, leaving the last for Hatsue and Yoshihiro to finish off. It dies in a hail of ancestral Amatatsu arrows.

## THE TAEKVU EMPEROR

V'lk becomes *Invisible* and slips into the next chamber. He finds that it is an opulent throne room, but his *True Seeing* shows him that the walls are actually bare stone. Everything is an illusion, except for the giant winged pig-man with giant tusks. Gobo is able to recognize the creature from V'lk's illustration as a malfeshnee demon, or "Type IV" to those in the know. The characters suspect that the creature is the *Emperor Taekuku Sukai*, who set the Five Families to prominence and subjugated all lesser noble families.

The characters prepare to engage the demonic Emperor – *Blessing of Fervor*, *Mass Bear's Endurance*, *Extended Haste*, several folks *Invisible*, *Bull's Strength* for Yoshihiro, *Stoneskin*, *Protection from Energy* (fire) and *Protection from Evil* for Harwynian, *Protection from Evil* for Jacob, and several additional spells.

The characters enter with surprise and charge the demon. To everyone else, it looks like a fancy Tienmin man with samurai hair, but they believe V'lk's intel above their own senses. Gobo strikes Taekuku Sukai with a *Holy Smite*, though the creature manages to evade the worst effects of the spell. Jacob approaches *Invisibly*, allowing everyone to learn that Sukai has continuous *True Seeing* as he takes an attack of opportunity on the dragonkin. Yoshihiro simply charges with *Suishen* and strikes Sukai directly. He issues a challenge against the creature.

Harwynian scorches Sukai with a *Scorching Ray*, managing to get just about enough damage through his damage resistance to make him realize he's under attack.

Shalelu curses Gobo and V'lk for not aligning her weapons to Good, but doesn't let that stop her from striking Sukai with three arrows.

Sukai stands up and focuses upon Yoshihiro. The pig-demon reaches out and claws him half to death. Yoshihiro reflects that it would have been less painful to fling himself into a lawnmower. A moment later, Gobo heals Yoshihiro of all his wounds. Yoshihiro finds himself cast into a state of existential doubt.

V'lk places himself in exactly the perfect spot, flanking Sukai with Jacob. He calls upon the power of his gods, casts it into his blades, and lands a series of strikes on Sukai that would have severed a mortal's spine, cleaved his lungs and pierced his heart. Sukai's own unnatural protections shielded him from the worst effects of his injuries, though demonic ichor still sprays upon the ground, hissing as it lands.

Jacob, still in dragon shape, does likewise. Sukai is torn to pieces, the dragon burrowing through him with tooth and fang.

Sadly, it turns out that dead Emperors do not have much use for money and loot. Sukai had only:

- *A Robe of Blending*
- *A Obsidian Steed Figuring of Wondrous Power*
- A ring worth 100 gold

## **THE END OF THE SESSION**

The characters end the session with one level of the Well of Demons cleared. Huzzah!