

OF FLESH AND SHADOW

In their adventures, the characters will not only face threats from the cold, dehumanised society of Japan under an International Blockade. There are many groups trying to make use of the Kuro Incident and benefit from the chaos, many of whom work in the shadows. If that was not enough, they might also discover that creatures from the beyond exist. Worse, these creatures are determined to settle old scores with the very humanity that is trapped with them by the International Blockade.

created several religious or mystical movements. With already more than 170,000 little sects and 1700 religious movements, Japan has seen new cults, often tiny ones, appear out of the woodwork or change into something different. Each guru or leader insists that they hold the truth about the recent events, and some can be quite persuasive. Many believers, who have been shaken by recent events and do not see any answers coming from the traditional sources, have paid an attentive ear to these rants.

OF FLESH

Cults and Secret Societies in the New Japan

“Nowadays you can’t take a step without meeting some hothead foretelling the end of the world in a few days, or a few hours for the most pessimistic. The worst is that those mystic ravings are mixed up with politics. All kinds of fundamentalists join up with jingoistic thugs and, together, rant about the corruption and the decay of morality, which, according to them is responsible for the current situation in our country.”

-Yamada Naruhiko to a co-worker in the Yamanote Evolve

The Kuro Incident has deeply changed the relationship the Japanese have with politics, with mysticism and with the supernatural. The increase in reports of weird events, and other mysterious oddities has fed a growing number of rumours and urban legends. The Incident also consequently changed or

Kurojiro

The Kurojiro is an alliance between a Shinto priest, defrocked because of many drinking excesses, and a computer technician. Both are convinced that scientific research on networks has led to the opening of a connection with Yomi, the realm of the dead. Upon making contact and after storing enough power, demons can escape and incarnate. Convinced that only computer programmes charged with beneficial energy can counter the creatures connecting through the network, the group went on the warpath against many sites in the NeoWeb. They launched viruses as well as kotodama (power words) to places in the web they believed to be evil. Recruiting among the otaku, gullible computer technicians and impressionable priests, Kurojiro (which can be translated as the Citadel of Darkness) is trying to extend its struggle to other media, convinced that demons are infiltrating everywhere. Recently the movement has opened a cybercafé dedicated to this war, where you can take part in the crusade in your spare time. There you can also purchase kotodama programmes to protect your computer or your Pod from demonic intrusions.

Hanguri Konpaku

Hanguri Konpaku is a cult of some fifty people with headquarters in the Shin-Edo suburbs. Led by the charismatic Lord Konsui, a fifty-year old former talk-show star, the members of the cult have been persuaded that they can talk to the dead since the Kuro Incident. Each has had a near death experience, and since listening to the endless speeches by Lord Konsui, all believe that they have come back with a paranormal power, enabling them to converse with the deceased. In the leader's private demesne each one receives, by appointment, people wanting to contact a specific dead person. Family members, celebrities, the client's choice. Truth be told, Lord Konsui and his mediums have never been able to prove their pretensions. However, they seem to be, disturbingly, quite accurate in revealing the secrets of those they allegedly invoke.

Ge-Mu Movement

The Ge-Mu movement is made up of a whole team of network gamers. These people were, for the most part, geeks and network immersive game aficionados. They were connected during the Kuro Incident, exploring a latest generation virtual world, some using forbidden Squids for the most immersive sensation. Apparently, something happened during the game. Most of them came out... different. Almost dumb, their pupils hugely dilated, all seemed to know each other intimately, their hair prematurely whitened, they all banded together in this group. Their main agenda is to try any method to go back to that "game" universe. But it seems to have fried with the blackout following the Kuro Incident. In fact, electric overloads seem to have burned out many computer servers. Questing for a virtual world that may now have vanished, the Ge-Mu Movement has recently focused its research on the Shinto signs present in the game. Indeed, the game setting, called Matsuri II, included a lot of Shinto symbols. Lately a priest was hired to help them in their quest. They are also looking for the first Matsuri, a completely unknown game whose very existence is questionable.

Shinzenjini

Initially a simple peaceful nature movement, seeking to free man from artificial food and the evils of the modern world, Shinzenjini has become much more radical in less than a year. Essentially based on Shinto beliefs, this religious movement accuses modern technology and society of having expelled

the kami to the beyond. These spirits felt persecuted and forgotten, and decided to leave the material world. They chose not to intervene in the 1945 bombings because they no longer recognised the Japanese people and their expansionist agenda.

Now with several thousand members, recognisable through their old style clothing and their many lucky charms, the Shinzenjini now attack government policies, demanding the end of birth control and assisted procreation. The Genocracy are regularly portrayed as the ultimate taint by the cult's guru, called Dagona, and the authorities have noticed a rise in the many acts of vandalism committed by Shinzenjini members. The change from peaceful demonstrating group to religious fundamentalist community is about to be finalised with the destruction of an android design factory in the Minato Special Ward.

Double Leaf Society

"Bunjiro was right! Everybody thought he was mad, but he was right! They're everywhere! They use the spirits of the dead to control the living! They are back, and after leading us to war one hundred years ago, they now want to annihilate the country! The government has already been deceived. The only way of protecting oneself is to worship the Kami. Only they can save us from this secret society."

-Wakiya Ennosuke, Advisor to Prime Minister Takahashi, 21st January, 2046 (three days before his suicide)

The Double Leaf Society was originally a militaristic secret society from the 1920s. It had the goal of purging the military of its more moderate elements and to acquire a seat on the government. Ultra-nationalistic, its members, convinced of Nipponese superiority, supported the invasion of the Pacific in 1941, as a prelude to the Hakko Ichiu, "in eight directions, only one sky" agenda. The aftermath of the conflict was hard on the group, which became tiny and went to ground, awaiting better days, limited to financing various nationalistic magazines.

When Japan was protected from the Panasiatic Federation bombs by the Kuro Incident, this secret society awoke from its lethargy. Its leaders, senile generals from another age, were approached by a mysterious young man at their biannual meeting. No-one knows what the visitor, a corporal in the Japanese army named Monzaemon Hirobumi, said to the generals, but that very evening the leaders of the Double Leaf Society stepped down in favour of the young man. Hirobumi then endeavoured to renew the movement. A recruitment phase in the military, the police and the law enforcement community in general, was organised. The secret society renewed the activities it once pursued. It soon