

Upon the slopes of Mount Kafuku dwells a village once bedecked in bright colours and cherished masks, dancing in joyous celebration and reverence of the divinity presiding over the slopes that grant them prosperity. But with prosperity comes greed, and inevitably the village exploited the natural resources around them.

As both divine punishment and the inevitable byproduct of the corruption from their excessive greed, a horde of horrors known as the **Seethe** was unleashed. Now the nights are long and filled with unearthly screams. A horrifying corruption resembling gangrenous flesh that erupts into the wailing visages and withered limbs of the damned crawls over the domain mankind once claimed. Horrors caper and stagger through the woods, some utterly inhuman and others hauntingly familiar to mankind in form. The sanctuaries of mankind have been desecrated and ruined, and even when sunlight drives back the Seethe the villagers remain rooted in place. Condemned to unspeakable defilement.

But all is not lost. The villagers' brave priestess Yoshiro has come forth to purify the Seethe, and her mysterious guardian spirit Soh stands ready to strike down even the greatest horrors they can bring to bear.

You start shortly before Soh and Yoshiro arrive at the village outskirts, determined to break what may prove to be an even greater cycle of purity and defilement than they realise.

Take 1000 CP, and make haste. It's always darkest before the dawn.

Age and gender

When one dons a sacred mask, their frailty and weariness seems staunched by the all-consuming necessity of the role they must play. All but the most extreme differences in age, physicality and gender seem to fall away. As such, you can be any human age from 15 to 65 in this world, and whatever gender you please. Certainly, none know the identity of the spirit Soh, though the keen-eyed might see a certain semblance between them and their charge…



Location

The mountain is great and lush with greenery, even after the ravages of man. The greatest forces of the Seethe's corruption are concentrated upon it's summit, and if challenged may take the form of grotesque divinity. You may start anywhere on Mount Kafuku. Below are some notable locations:

Myoko Pass: Once the first village to be touched by morning sunlight, defilement has banished all the rays of the sun. 4 villages remain trapped here, but their bodies remain able if freed.

Enri Village: Even among the covetous, there are those too greedy to coexist easily with others. One such man left his home to found a prosperous village here, raising up many houses to assuages his abandonment. Only to see it all fall to the Seethe. 8 villagers can be found here.

Yuminari Lake: Water, once essential for purification, too has been tainted by the Seethe. Upon these waters, ghostly ships sail and unearthly beasts loom from the depths like twisted lanterns. 10 villagers can be saved upon the shoreline, and traversing the lake could be a vital part of the ceremony to purify the mountain.

Muenzaka Burial Grounds: Those cut off from the world need a place to sleep, and here the living do not walk. There may be no villagers to save in this stately graveyard, but perhaps the spirits of the dead too deserve some respite from the spread of corruption.

Great Cherry Tree of Nakahara: Since the time of the gods, this sacred tree has watched over the people beneath it. Defilement stains it's branches, veiling it's gaze in shadow and twisting it into the image of those that once took comfort in it's blooms. 6 villages are bound here.

Narusawa Wind Caves: This is not the only underground settlement, nor the most insect-infested one. But the beckoning winds and the all-consuming darkness lend this place an ominous air. The Seethe seem more powerful than usual when all light is gone. But 8 villagers here are holding out for salvation.

Great Shrine Passage: The priestess' path of purification will take her all over the mountain, and the doors of the lowermost shrine mark a road leading straight up to its' top should she survive to confront the greatest font of defilment. However, heading up this straightforward road will not be easy even with villagers ready and waiting to resupply her. Knowing it's defeat is imminent, the Seethe will gather up its' forces and manifest its' greatest aberrations and most dire champions to defend itself-many of the greatest foes fought in the night inexplicably revived to bar her way. Without a doubt, this is the final gauntlet for anyone who would hold back the night's monstrosities.

Origins

Villager (Free): It is said that long ago, your ancestors were the gods that laid the foundations for civilisation on the mountain itself. But like the others native to this great land, you are very much mortal in day to day life. You hunger for fine good, adorn yourself in the traditional garb of your culture and support your neighbours so they in turn lend you their aid. Now things may be looking grim and your options are limited, but you're lucky enough to be one of the few that didn't get warped and webbed to the ground by impure forces. Perhaps you'll bring back your old way of life by following in the priestess' footsteps.



Human in form and mind, what remains of your connection to define is passed on in song, dance and the artistry of your traditions. Crafted icons of your gods (typically worn as masks) can bestow a measure of their wisdom, might, and otherworldly mysticism on you. The chanting and dance of your performance may be normally fit only for more subtle blessings like keeping fields fertile and cleansing pestilence, but when large numbers of you perform it in tandem you may empower other spiritually powerful allies such as the priestess to wipe away the corruption before you.

Divine Maiden/Messenger (Free/200 CP): You may be of roughly human form and means, but in truth you descended from the realm of the gods. Whether to offer salvation to humanity or to pass judgement on it remains to be seen, but your closeness to the divine realm offers you a grasp of spiritual forces no mortal can match. It is the sacred duty of beings such as you to preserve both the ancient traditions and those who honour them…though gods have turned their wrath on mortals before.



Two options are available here, each with their own unique traits. The first, which is free, is to be mostly mortal like the priestess. Perhaps because her spiritual power is closer to the living world, it is she who can purify and cleanse the corruption around her through a process that inevitably siphons a measure of it into herself, gradually sickening and enfeebling her until she calcifies as a living statue. Knowledgeable in the same dance and song the villagers utilise, your ceremonial Shinto dancing is efficacious enough to clear away the Seethe's corruption wherever you tread and seal away the otherworldly portals manifesting at the Torii gates through which they arrive in large numbers. Your mere presence can free villagers from the pupa-like state of being trapped in a Cocoon of Defilement that is the typical result of prolonged assault by the Seethe. Though unclear, it seems it is also by her grace that the spiritual crystals and divine masks used to empower villagers are produced. Beware though: For all your power over the spiritual, you are merely human physically-and with this alone have no great gifts of martial prowess.

The second option, which costs 200 CP, is to be like her protector: Soh. As a primarily spiritual being, you cannot be slain by ordinary force in battle or even most of the Seethe's depredations, the death of your physical body merely reducing you to a phantom that can still communicate or otherwise exercise esoteric spiritual influence until after a short while you fully restore your body with all arms and armor upon it-regaining your ability to influence the physical realm. Your spiritual powers are refined for battle instead of purification, so instead of being able to cleanse the Seethe on a wider scale you are instead gifted in a sacred dance-like form of sword combat capable of striking airborne foes, slashing through dozens of foes with a sweep that renders the air like an extension of your blade, and parrying even foes mighty enough to topple houses. You retain a measure of spiritual power like your counterpart: You can telepathically command allies to move in mere instants on the battlefield, change the combat roles of others bestowed with divine gifts such as the masks in the heat of battle and skilfully utilise divine artifacts such as tsuba guards to create spiritual shields that absorb oncoming damage, stun foes with a shockwave, launches waves of fire or summon localised lightning storms. As you slay your foes, you convert their life energy that brings you closer to spiritual deity rather than mortal guardian-becoming immune to all adverse forces in this world, making you move as a blinding blur and striking hard enough to shred armor with the shockwaves from your blade. As a bonus, if you take this option it seems the mysterious cycles of existence have allowed you to manifest *without* a charge as an independent spirit. While certain spiritual powers may still render you incorporeal, weakened or sealed, you are at least not in danger of being banished to the divine realm if a special someone is slain.

As visitors from the divine realm, you are biologically immortal and appear to have a perfect memory. More strangely, you have an…odd relationship with time. While likely irrelevant to your stay here, should you end up in a conflict that outlasts generations it's possible you might find a way to traverse to the divine realm and back with whichever powerset you didn't have to lend yourself aid. *This facet of your existence is poorly understood by mortals, and open to interpretation.*

Either version of this origin may be taken as a Drop-In option.

Seethe (Free/100 CP/200/300 CP): You are the divine punishment of the mountain goddess, arisen from damnation to bring terror and pain upon the folly of man. You are grotesque in form, and unnerving in bearing: A true *youkai* straight out of folklore. Many of your kind are byproducts of hatred, obsession or other spiritual impurities that yearn for little more than to continuously enact the sins you personify-though a select few demonstrate unnerving clarity of purpose, or even divine serenity in dispensing torment. All but the strongest of your kind are banished to a shadowy otherworld by sunlight (though there are rumours some have been encountered in daylight). It's not clear how this works or what is actually happening; lesser Seethe seem to drop dead but at no point is it suggested the attacks will stop from attrition, and corrupted buildings and land remain corrupted even in sunlight. Feel free to fanwank how this works after the jump, if it goes away because of a lack of Shinto divinities enforcing it, or something else reasonable.



As for what you actually *are* well, suffice to say the origins of those making up the Seethe hordes are as numerous as the maladies they inflict. Some are restless spirits killed unjustly, haunting the world in anguish from their miserable ends. Others are residue of regrets that take root in objects, animating them with dread purpose. Some are animals or humans that made contact with the otherworld, and became as one with it until they were more living curse than lifeform. A few are even said to be what's left of wretched deities consumed by anger against mankind. What matters far more than your nature, is the overall strength of your being.

For free you may be equal to one of the diminutive, shambling Gaki or the frail Shibakaki. Or a sedate, eel-like flying wraith of little might. Such creatures may not even be threats to humans were it not for their sharp claws and otherworldly state of being, as well as the corruption they bring.

For 100 CP you may be equal to the towering Sumigaki, similar to it's Gaki kin but easily the size of a bear despite its' spindly limbs. Or the shambling Gotaimen, said to resemble an upturned human face or palm, which can swallow a man with a single bite. You can also be of roughly human bearing but empowered by accused obsession such as the Shiniku Zamurai: A warrior driven to such obsession with the blade he harmlessly impales his face with swords, and withdraws one to fight with inhuman speed and might during the Seethe's onslaught. Or a highly specialised Seethe, such as the immaterial Hidarugami which is capable of possessing humans or incarnated divine beings and interfering with their spiritual powers. More to the point, it can possess Yoshiro to prevent Soh from taking a physical form.

For 200 CP you are among the deadliest Seethe encountered in numbers. You may be like the vile Rosokuro, human occultists fascinated by the power of the otherworld to the point of shedding that humanity who can veil fellow Seethe in a dark flame that makes them far deadlier and destructive. Or the Enenra, which carries the heads of wicked monks and uses them to emit a dark smog capable of suppressing divine powers. Seethe of this level that are primarily physical threats include the Hirafugai, a jellyfish-like horror that can sink ships with its' intestines while transporting other Seethe atop it. The Nurikabe, a mobile Buddha statue that can erect a massive wall of stone which moves with it. And the Noderabo, a giant figure clad in oversized samurai armor that wears a bell upon its' head, mighty enough to shove through walls.

Finally, for 300 CP you can be one of the Festering Seethe: Entities exceptional in both their power and nature. Examples include Yatsurao: A once-sacred tree that absorbed the defilement of its' felled brethren which can launch curses from amongst its' leaves, lash with its branches and stab at foes from afar with a poisonous bloom resembling both a giant serpent's tail and a fell guardian. Raikobo: A giant withered monk who channels lightning to augment his skill with the spear, launches blades crackling with electricity at his foes, and can call down thunderbolts from on high. And Batsu: An envious man morphed into a swift yet bulbous beast that belches burning miasma from one end while spewing cursed strands that pull foes to the ground with ghostly lands.

All Seethe gradually spread the nightmarish, semi-organic corruption that taints and poisons all around it by their own existence to varying degrees. This miasma pollutes the land, poisons the spiritual forces or living things within it, and sometimes corrupts other living things or objects of significance into more Seethe with an instinctive hatred for humanity. The weakest Seethe do little more than poison the air they fly through or the ground they tread on. The strongest may emanate a veil of corruption capable of poisoning an entire mountain. After this jump, when your divine duty is completed you may choose to withhold the spread of the Seethe corruption at will.

Perks



Perks are discounted by 50% under the relevant background header. Discounted 100 CP perks are free.

General

The Song and Dance of Our People (50 CP): The rich heritage of the mountain folk is passed on in performance both kinetic and auditory, a synchronicity of movement and aesthetic that represents the divine's presence amongst the material. And perhaps, beckons it forth. Purchase this, and in future worlds music similar to the soundtrack of this game can be played around you at will, fitting the mood. Moreover, both you and others will be able to improvise dances fitting this mood, even incorporating them into activities like greeting someone or swinging a sword around. This grants no real advantage other than making everything around you more harmonious, choreographed and generally like something out of a kabuki theatre play.

Wheel of Samsara (300 CP): Sometimes the evil may be slain, the wolves cast back from the gate…but lives may be lost. The cycle of purity and impurity may repeat forever if the only answer to impurity is a sacrifice of the divine. But it is not too late. This world is not the eternal world of the divine, and you've come to an accommodation with it. Once every ten years or a jump, should you either die or be subject to a fate comparable or worse than it, your soul will depart your body to the divine realm. Featureless and abstract, you may look upon the most relevant single area to your goals over a vast length of time, gaining insight like that of a god into everything from the threats it has faced to the mistakes you made along

the way; this will not count for the purpose of your chain. After that, you may choose to be resurrected in that area either in the distant future at any point or a short while in the past leading up to your demise-similar to the handful of days or weeks in which it would take Soh and Yoshiro to ascend the mountain in their care. Armed with that knowledge, hopefully you'll do better next time.

Villager

To Move As One (100 CP): Step. Twirl. Sway! Step. Twirl. Sway! There's no village dance without a whole village moving as one. Like the mountain villagers, long practice has given you a near reflexive grasp of harmonious physical coordination with your allies. Even if you're no warrior, your agility and stamina would let you get right to dancing shortly after being rescued from otherworldly horrors, and even in the heat of combat you can maintain rhythm. If you weren't already, this perk obviously makes you very good at dancing, singing and playing musical instruments.

Tradesman's Gift (200 CP): Your trade lets you assist allies on the battlefield even if you yourself are unfit for it. Tried and true as only generations of training in a traditional Japanese village can uphold, like the skilled village carpenter you know your trade well enough to repair broken barriers, restore damage dwellings, repair wrecked cannons and fix wrecked bridges-able to finish multiple tasks before day's end. While you're no more resilient to targeted curses or the fangs of an unearthly horror with this alone, it seems you're also more resilient to passive environmental corruptions. Probably still best to sprint to and from spiritually tainted land when you're done with repairs if you're only human, though.

Grace of the Tormented (400 CP): A most abhorrent fate awaits all who fall at the hands of the Seethe, but at least it's not truly an ending. Whenever you would be magically turned into a frog, sealed behind a spiritual barrier, corrupted by malevolent forces or otherwise altered against your will by mystical forces, there will always be a way to save you from them. For the mundane, this may be a rare herb or ritual taking significant effort to discover. But purifying and restorative mystical forces, especially those from a god or one touched by their power, are far more effective on you-freeing you instantly from a curse that might leave others bedridden for a week and broken in mind.

Favor of the Mountain (600 CP): The mountain and it's goddess may be moved to wrath against the village folk, but in the past there have been those that won the favour of the gods through virtue and diligence. You are lucky enough to be one of them, your lack of involvement in the villagers' greed rewarded. In this world the Seethe will not seek you out to torment (though it would be wise to avoid getting caught in the torment), subtle omens will guide you to safe places during their attacks and you may even find relics bearing divine power more frequently. In the hours of daylight, the animals of the mountain may see to your needs should you be lacking. In the hours of nightfall, you may divine weapons and armor conveniently placed nearby to defend yourself with. Even Soh and Yoshiro may take a liking to you should you introduce yourself. In future worlds, gods that are heavily involved with the mortal world near you will take a similar liking to you, lending you subtle aid while exempting you from their wrath unless directly provoked.

Divine Maiden/Messenger

Queenly Quartermaster (100 CP): A miko's duties are many, and one of the most understated is the management of resources. You do of course know how to soothe and comfort those blighted by spiritual malaise as if trained by divine providence itself. To inspire courage with your resolve, soothe frustrations with your serenity and banish fear with your smile. More importantly though, you're so good at scrounging up and preserving resources, managing money, and other nitty-gritty resource-grubbing things any army would find useful that you can regularly rustle up a little extra to give your champions on the front lines. Never forget that armies walk on their stomachs.

River Flows In You (200 CP): In Shinto tradition, running water is often associated with purity and restoration. You've internalised that divine fluidity, greatly increasing the effectiveness of your physical, spiritual and mystical efforts as long as they incorporate harmony in some sense. A parry could swat aside a blade larger than yourself if performed with grace rather than aggressive force. A ritual could seal or expel forces beyond your normal means if a suitable song and dance number is performed to enhance it-preferably while bedecked in themed garments. And should others perform alongside you, your efforts to purify could be greatly enhanced. After all, it's only with the support of her devoted faithful that Yoshiro can continue to close the Seethe's portals while in the advanced stages of corruption.

Critical Moment (400 CP): To defeat a beast that can bat men around like toys, one must be swift and mighty of course. But it is when the beast limps and reels that the world is truly ready to be rid of it. You have uncanny focus on exploiting the weakness of your foes. When one's guard is down, time seems to slow as you deliver a mighty blow at least ten time greater than your usual level of force with unerring accuracy to where they're weakest. Even your regular attacks seem to hobble, stun, enfeeble and otherwise whittle down your enemies faster than usual. This applies to both spiritual or mystical and physical conflicts, letting you crack open the armor of cursed warriors and banish great swathes of corruption after scouring it with lesser rituals equally well.

A Purified Cycle (600 CP): It can seem hopeless, to endlessly fight back defilement only for purification to be cast aside over and over. But where there's a will, there's a way, and something of the divine within you wills you to never give up. As long as you keep doing everything to your power and pushing to the limits of what's possible, there will always be a way to solve even the most inevitably of calamities. It won't always be easy, or guaranteed. But the fated destruction of the world will always have a moment when it could be averted, and even if humanity is trapped in a vicious cycle of torment there will always be a chance to break it. Should you manage to do so, that particular calamity will never return-cleansed from the world as surely as the Seethe's own taint.

Seethe

Undying Carcass (100 CP): To look upon you is to know the horror of a thing that moves yet does not truly live as mortals understand it, and so cannot die. You have tremendous resilience and no truly vital components in your physiology, such that you could store swords in your skull and fight with no detriment that matters to combat. Any blood loss you sustain is supernatural, mundane disease simply fails to take hold, and concussions are just aesthetically displeasing. You are biologically immortal in every way that matters, the years doing nothing to mar your stamina, might, memory, or skill. This does not of course prevent the sufficiently powerful from beating you to a pulp or dismembering you the long, hard way but disembowelment only matters to the extent of your own intestines getting in your way. Moreover, spiritual and mystical forces (especially those backed by the divine) are not impeded by your undying body, just the woes of the mortal world.

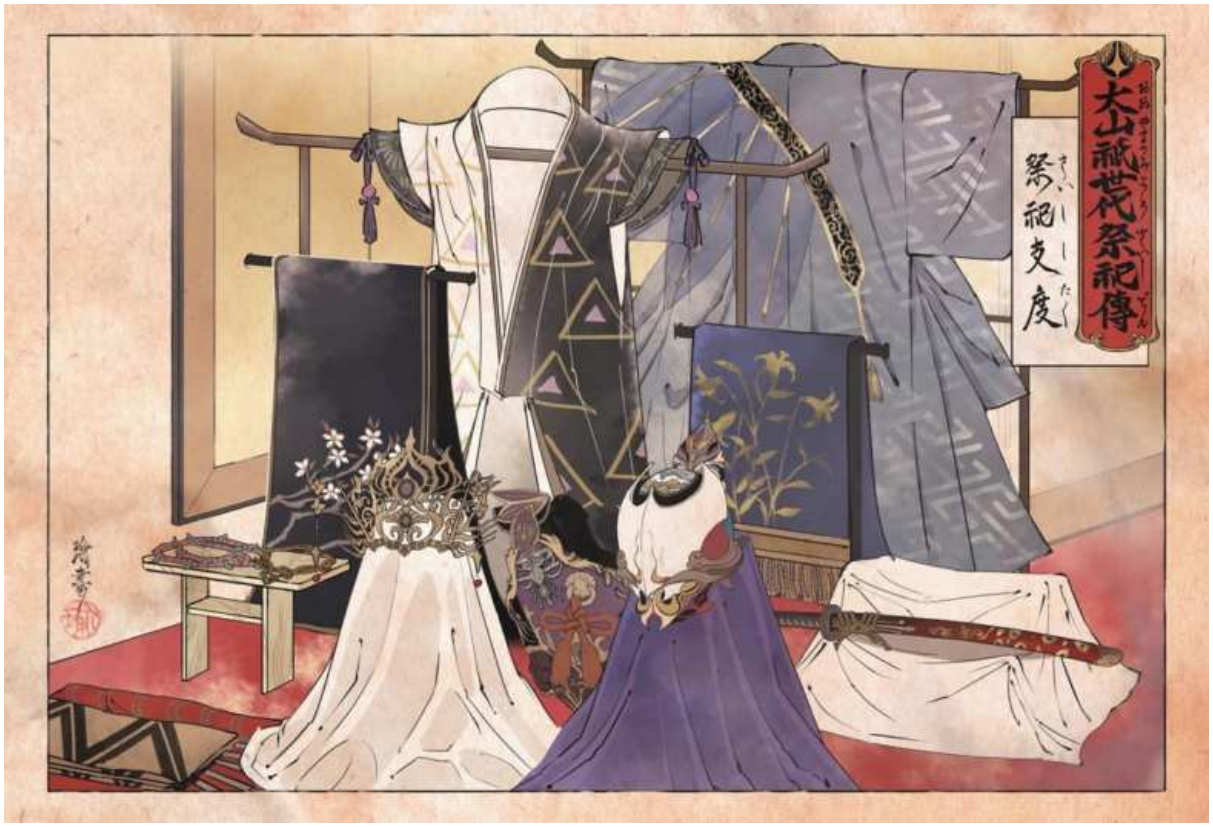
Night Parade of 1000 Demons (200 CP): Powerful Seethe often have the ability to call forth reinforcements, and even should you not be one yourself you too have somehow gained this ability. Exactly how it manifests is open to interpretation. You might open a portal near you from whence shambling horrors leave from their shadowy otherworld. You might have offspring of a more specific kind that you spawn, bud or vomit out onto the battlefield. Whatever the case, your special affinity for summoning lets you increase the numbers and might of Seethe called forth by you as you grow in overall power-even letting you improve one at the expense of the other for any given summon if you want few but powerful minions or plentiful but weak ones. All your summoned Seethe revere you as something akin to a saint or deity-gladly giving their lives for your purpose, or merely a whim.

Dark Sorcery (400 CP): There is power in hatred and impurity that you've studied diligently, to the point some might mistake your dark wisdom for enlightenment. Even if you became Seethe through the relentless pursuit of the occult, this perk greatly improves your refinement and control of the malevolent forces that emanate amongst these entities. Magical powers of this variety are typically localised and malevolent: A damned astrologer might transform the light of the stars into accursed rays smiting the battlefield, and one whose magic is focused on insects might have them devour each other for strength before merging with the strongest into a powerful abomination. You have not only mastered one such discipline but become adept in about half a dozen others, and have developed many terrifying yet innovative ways to combine them-such as igniting your swarm of insects with cursed dark flame that protects them while rotting their enemies.

Overflowing Kegare (600 CP): Impurity accretes within you as inevitably as water pressure accumulates sediment in a deep lake. Within you is a vast reservoir of the Seethe's corrupted energy. It greatly empowers your might and the power of all your mystical or spiritual abilities, such that when you will it, your attacks corrode the mystical and spiritual defences of your foes while corrupting their minds and bodies into submission. At will you can release the energy as a calamitous torrent of curses that blights the land, taints the soul and reshapes the world into an ”arena” with barriers of spiritual energy preventing all you desire to punish from escape. The exact nature of this phenomena is typically inspired by natural disaster,

your identity, and the nightmarish way of being that the Seethe represent. But whether it's a cursed lake of poison, a fog of screaming souls, a blizzard of soul-drinking shadows or a waterfall of flame, it will never harm you or your servants. It's severity and quantity depends on your power; even an ordinary Gaki could scour a village on their own with this, while one of the Festering Seethe would become the equal of mighty Nanamagari-who stands at the peak of the mountain emanating the bulk of the corruption as a whole. Finally, human sin and damage to the natural world both slowly empower your reservoirs, while other corrupt beings such as the Seethe show great deference to your authority-with any weaker than you instinctively submitting to your will.

Items



Items are discounted by 50% under the relevant background header. Discounted 100 CP items are free.

Villager

Traditional Garb (100 CP): Clothing, decorated with golden plants and sacred patterns. Masks, representing flowers or the visages of ancestral deities. Ritual implements, like the paper shide streamers used to ward off the Seethe's taint. You now have an endless supply of such things suitable for all human genders and builds, accessible through an ornately decorated door attached to your Cosmic Warehouse or preferred property. With enough people trained to dance and chant, you have everything you need to recreate the performances of the mountain villages in future worlds. The gods' blessing makes all these things supremely easy to clean and hard to dirty, even several days of sustained battle leaving them nearly immaculate.

Wisdom of the Ancients (200 CP): In this world, much knowledge of history and the occult is recorded on wooden ema plaques and in illustrated emaki scrolls. By purchasing this, you may have all the ones found in the game neatly gathered up for you in a great wooden chest so you can learn and still have time to manage the defence of the village. In future worlds, you'll still have to hunt for a similar quantity of such things but they *will* be found over an area roughly the size of the mountain here, and typically in places suited for habitation or where the wilderness intersects with civilisation.

Wealth of Purity and Defilement (400 CP): Two great resources sustain the divine messengers' campaign against the Seethe: The purified spirit energy from defeating them which forms crystals, and the unrefined power of the Seethe (often poisonous to mortals) collected from where they have gathered in numbers. The former is vital to empowering Yoshiro enough to carve a spirit path through villages in order to fully purify them, empower the divine masks Yoh gives villagers and other more direct uses of spiritual power. The latter is used to increase the inherent power that the divine masks grant, such that a spearman might unleash great sweeps echoing the fighting prowess of ancient gods. You now have two great barrels full of both, each replenishing every week in a paroxysm of ominous wailing and divine music as omens appear and vanish around them. This would surely be of great assistance to the divine messengers…or perhaps, their enemies. In future worlds you can use both to similarly empower other spiritual and mystical practices.

A Sacred Village (600 CP): Oh. It seems that there was *one* village on the mountain which remained so devout that the mountain goddess decided they could remain exempt from the Seethe's attacks. In fact, so great is their devotion that powerful spiritual barriers greatly weaken corrupt entities such as the Seethe trying to encroach on them. How fortunate. You're held in high regard by this village, if not because you're the local leader, viewed as some kind of guardian spirit responsible for it's prosperity then because in some sense they think you're responsible for their safety. Maybe they're even right. The village is prosperous, socially cohesive and regularly produces a number of useful goods ranging from cannons to sweet potatoes. There's even quite a few natural animals ranging from boars to elk to snakes that live in harmony with them. Certainly, you'll have a great many delicious rations available that will keep you nourished on arduous journeys. It's basically the ideal feudal Japanese society. More importantly, anyone sharing the village's bloodline has the same level of spiritual sensitivity as the others on this mountain, allowing them to empower spiritual and mystical practices with song and dance. In future worlds, the blessing of the mountain goddess ensures that they're surrounded by rich natural resources and bountiful forests.

Divine Maiden/Messenger

Sacred Mikoshi (100 CP): Crafted from the roots of the largest tree on the mountain, this ornately decorated palanquin includes a shrine, table, pots and all manner of other things useful to a priestess. Apart from the obvious use case of carting you around, it is a place of spiritual purity that can ward off malevolent influences or empower spiritual practices conducted near it. Comes with two porter followers who, come Hell or high water, seem dedicated to carrying you or your friends wherever you need to go while occupied within it.

Talismans and Guards (200 CP): These great crates hold the power of the gods invested into trinkets. The sacred sword guards typically confer localised miracles suitable for battle: A slash or two of sacred flame, mystical snares that explode when the enemy treads upon them, slowing time in a localised area, a great barrier that deflects incoming attacks while smiting Seethe that dare press up against it, or summoning a spectre impervious to mortal harm that emulates your motion and abilities. Truly great miracles include a divine aura that fortifies, heals, purifies and blesses all your allies. Or splits the sky or earth with thunderous power

that obliterates all but the greatest Seethe. The Mazo talismans' blessings tend to be subtler, but unlike the sword guards do not require recharging between uses. Recovering spiritual power faster, enhancing swiftness or attack power, making one impervious to the first blow struck every battle, obtaining more resources from the local area or siphoning the vitality of foes with every blow is all possible. You now have all the talismans and guards that can be found in this game. Have fun finding your preferred spiritual arsenal!

Masks of the Mountain (400 CP): Within your Cosmic Warehouse or the property of your choice is a door that itself resembles a giant stylised mask depicting your own face, aesthetically suited to your nature and adventures. The drawers within contain endless amounts of the masks found in every game, which confer skills and even supernatural powers emulating the gods they represent to those who don them that can be further improved by spiritual forces such as the crystals refined from slain Seethe. As a bonus for buying what Soh and Yoshiro either already seem to have great quantities of or are able to freely replenish with little trouble, in future worlds this room will also generate masks emulating the greatest achievements of humanity or the roles of the divine. Always a mere fraction of their true power, but able to be bestowed on any who wear them and hold to an oath of loyalty with you in a common goal. Below are a few example masks:

The **Woodcutter** is empowered by an ancestral god, who felled all in the path of his axe so that sunlight would spread. Boasting little more than greater innate strength and durability, those empowered by the Woodcutter mask can nonetheless strike swiftly enough to fell lesser Seethe rapidly and hobble the greater. At the pinnacle of this mask's power, they may unleash a flurry of blows ending in a devastating overhead slash to strike aside lesser enemies before hacking into the mightiest one left.

The **Ascetic** is empowered by the ancestral god that charts the year's calendar, whose ringed staff rationed time proportionately to all living things. Skilled in the art of demon binding, he creates a barrier that slows the movements of corrupt beings such as the Seethe. At the height of this mask's power, the Ascetic's barriers can also damage the Seethe and lower their defences.

A rare role only women can take, the **Shaman** is empowered by the ancestral god who breathed life into humanity, and could even seal the plague of death into the earth's bowels with the elegance of her rituals. The Shaman's healing dance can restore the vitality of allies, with all her mask's upgrades enhancing the range and rate of her healing as well as her own vitality. A selfless mask, at the height of her power the Shaman may purify and revive those trapped by defilement at the moment she falls in battle.

A likewise rare role only men can take, the **Sumo Wrestler** is empowered by the ancestral god who clears paths to uncharted land by flattening it with his mighty stomps. Powerful in close combat due to his blessedly robust physique, the Sumo Wrestler draws in foes before shattering the land beneath them with his blows. At the height of his power, the Sumo Wrestler can perform a charge that can stagger even mighty Seethe.

An elite among warriors, the **Ninja** is empowered by the ancestral god who rules the shadows of the human world while remaining unseen by all. Trained in both weaponry and swift movement, the Ninja strikes down landbound Seethe by blade and aerial Seethe by kunai while moving with practiced ease across all terrain. At the height of this mask's power, the Ninja's teleportation can even cheat certain death.

The truest master of otherworldly forces, the **Sorcerer** is empowered by the ancestral god that uncovered the secrets of the universe, walked freely between this world and the next, and imparted reason to humanity. Practiced in the divine arts of banishing evil, the sorcerer's sole purpose on the battlefield is performing a lengthy incarnation to summon an abstract spirit with a body of paper streamers called a Shikigami to inflict miraculous divine punishment upon all foes on a battlefield. Though empowering this mask does little more than improve the wearer's vitality and the speed of their chant, at the height of this mask's power Shikigami can also be summoned to intercept enemy attacks and lessen their defences.

Blade of the Twelve Divine Generals (600 CP): An ornate weapon perfectly weighted to your grasp, this blade is the equal of Soh's own. Empowered by all twelve of the Divine Generals, it emits varicoloured contrails as it's sacred power smites impure entities like the Seethe. When plunged into a source of great spiritual power-be it corrupt or pure-the sword drinks it in and purifies it into radiant golden light that makes it smite foes with even greater purifying force. Striking with divinely empowered force and accuracy, in time you may discover new powers manifested by the sword adapted to the needs of your battle. The blade might transform into a bow capable of firing arrows powerful enough to topple foes taller than houses or teleport you to where an arrow falls, fire shockwaves when swung, or even with paper catalysts tied to it accelerate and decelerate time itself over the course of a day by being swung at the air so that the work of hours is done in minutes if not seconds-though this requires concentration, and lacks enough refinement to be useful in battle for most purposes. Who knows what else it may be capable of?

If you chose to arrive in this jump as a being similar to Soh, you will of course have your own version of this blade. But hey, it can't hurt to have one more. This is after all a weapon sponsored by the gods themselves.

Seethe

Miserly Miasma (100 CP): An entire field was once tainted by the energy of the Seethe, where it took root and germinated like any other crop. Now that you've come into ownership of it, this great reservoir of corruptive energy is yours to do with as you please. The power of the Seethe can be woven into spells, used to mutate living things into being closer to the Seethe themselves, infused into curses that can animate objects, coalesce into foul poisons or ignite voracious flames. Who knows what else it can do? This particular reservoir of impurity is remarkably stable but replenishing, providing a plentiful supply of the stuff to play with without setting in motion divine punishment you didn't specifically authorise. If unused, in time it may form a deep lake of the stuff.

Scourge of the Gods (200 CP): A nexus of blades that hovers and spins at your back, only to fly faster than a diving hawk at your command to strike down foes and project your magical powers through their formation. A priest's ringed staff, that instead of blessing the land spreads corrosion and flame when slammed into the ground. A blade as long as you are tall, which blends seamlessly into your fighting style while unleashing shockwaves of earth-shattering corrosion. These are merely examples of the once sacred weapon or implement you now wield, that is merely a channel for the Seethe's corruption you can use to sow terror on the battlefield.

Amalgamated Steed (400 CP): Once, there was a monk who infused his dark magic into living creatures then had them fight to the death to concentrate it. Some might call this practice a gu ritual. Over and over again, he repeated this foul act, until he got a bright idea: Why not *then* combine the survivors into one grand abomination? The result is what you see before you: An aberration made of aberrations, boasting overwhelming physical and spiritual power and barely encumbered by its' twisting physiology. It doesn't necessarily have to be a nest of centipedes wrapped around each other, or some kind of giant horror made of giant spiders. *Humans* are living creatures as well, and the monk could well have been stitching together more wraith-like Seethe. Regardless of this entity's components, a part of it has been shaped or carved into a seat for you-potentially to partially merge with it, or else steer it with magical bindings. The entity as a whole is designed to drastically amplify your dark magic, allowing even a frail monk to cast down burning curses that can level buildings and cast curses across an entire village. After all the horror gone into this twisted steed, it is unbreakably loyal to you enough to waddle directly into a divine blade at your command.

Sacramental Profanity (600 CP): It is rare, but sometimes even the divine can be despoiled. What you have here is something like the sacred tree Yatsurao: A once sacred organism or phenomena of great size now so thoroughly tainted by the Seethe it's village-levelling might and divine fertility have been twisted for the purpose of divine punishment. It could be a waterfall that spreads Seethe energy into the local waterways, a small cyclone that rains burning bile and seeds the land with Seethe creatures, or an enormous fungus that expels shambling horrors. Whatever it is, somehow it has become bound to you like a familiar-perhaps you are an extension of it, or vice versa. As the natural forces of the mountain can do, it can still bring both life and death on a great scale-just twisted to the nature of the Seethe and the impurity they represent. And not only does it spread power on par with the greatest of Seethe, but it has the potential to grow the more land it taints and the more lives are sacrificed to empower it.

Companions



Brothers and Sisters In Arms (50/200 CP): Mankind survives only in unity against the Seethe hordes. And even the Seethe themselves show a strange unity when enacting divine punishment, seldom fighting among themselves. You too deserve comrades in arms. For 50 CP apiece you may import or create a companion here with 600 CP to spend on anything except other companions. For 200 CP, you can create or import a full set of 8 at a discount.

A Brush With Destiny (Free/50 CP each): This theatre of war is only a fleeting blink in the eye of eternity, but why should it be any less special? Any who agree with you in this world may leave it with you as a companion. For 50 CP, you may guarantee making a good first impression with someone of your choosing here. Do note that human, Seethe or divine, everyone's going to be very busy soon.

A Reclusive God (50 CP, free/optional Villager): Not all the gods choose to involve themselves in the mortal world, and not always for lack of ability. This deity, more distant from the affairs of those among their kin enshrined in the villagers' masks, has taken a liking to you. Perhaps your interdimensional nature appeals to them? You'll keep coming across shrines to them at which you can receive blessings both subtle as good fortune and protection from the Seethe's impurity, and overt as a shockwave great enough to tear open the Earth. And artifacts, masks, even divine weapons blessed by their touch. Actually finding or beckoning the god seems to be a trickier business; whoever they are, it seems like most of their kin they don't come to the mortal realm very often. But at the very least, written

communication left at their shrines eventually gets replies, and as a sort of sanctified penpal you can learn more about each other there. Perhaps even convince them to lend more direct or specific aid for your endeavours.

Soul Supporter (50 CP, free/optional Divine Messenger): The gods typically do not send their emissaries down to bear the woes of the mortal world alone. This is the Soh to your Yoshiro, or the Yoshiro to your Soh, depending on which version of the Divine Messenger background you chose; if you yourself are not a Divine Messenger they may be similar to either of them in nature. Even departed from the divine realm, there is a gentle strength and ever-present tranquillity among them founded in unbreakable faith in their divinely ordained mission. They will support you like close family, stand with you as bravely as any comrade in arms, and move heaven and earth to save your soul should all the horrors of the Seethe fall upon you both.

The Sutra of the Defiled Maiden (50 CP, free/optional Seethe): This…cannot be. Once before Soh and Yoshiro, a priestess was sent down to repel the Seethe only to end up suffused with so much of their impurity she now rivals the divine arbiter atop the mountain. Unlike the dark fate that awaits Yoshiro should her mission be completed at the cost of her life, she's very much mobile-though her powers now summon, empower and command impurity and those tainted by it. While not only do her sacred dances spread defilement, but she can use them in battle to perform cursed fighting arts with a halved divine blade almost as cursed as she is. Much of her divinely beautiful pale flesh and visage remains immaculately preserved. But her eyes are full of wicked mirth, her words as toxic as her poisons, and her once-pristine shōzoku has been stained by countless curses-bursting at the seams and hanging in rags about her bared chest and barely covered ass, the impurity having grown the maiden from a small waif to a curvaceous temptress with the body and skills of both a harlot and a warrior. Was she betrayed or cast aside? Did she covet power over her charges and use forbidden power to attain it? Or were the legends wrong, and was she tasked to punish humanity all along before joining the otherworld as her post demanded? Whatever happened, she seems to be as devoted to you as Soh and Yoshiro are to each other. Though warped with hedonistic madness, her faith in you is as sincere as any priestess before her god.

Drawbacks



Purity Restored (+0 CP): Partings aren't so different from new beginnings. There is no need to dwell on the past, once impurity is swept aside. If you wish, you can choose to move on to the next jump after the mountain is either fully purified of Seethe or all the humans have farewells to your friends. Although the revels of the Seethe are not for the faint of heart.

New Game Plus = Samsara (+0 CP): On the other hand, if you wish you may prolong your stay for an arbitrary amount of time until the Seethe is purified *and* both Soh and Yoshiro are alive and well. You see, while exactly what's going on is unclear it appears Soh and Yoshiro are bound to resolve the cycle of purity and defilement as the Seethe are defeated, humanity prospers anew, but the mistakes of the old apparently bring forth a new priestess (or perhaps, the same at different points of time and space) that Soh is in turn obliged to defend. Is this the will of the gods or their own determination? Do their battle against the Seethe reset time in some sense, or do they appear to defend a new generation's lives? Whatever is going on, with this drawback you can follow them along their strange journey until their task is either finished or somehow permanently stopped. As with Purity Restored, you can remain for up to a week for a proper farewell.

Progressive Pain (+100-300 CP): It seems Yoshiro isn't the only one bearing the burdens of the villagers' sins. You've already absorbed a measure of the Seethe's corruption, enough to taint your body and soul to varying degrees. For 100 CP apart from some aesthetic blemishes like darkened skin and veins, the impurity disrupts your concentration and fills you with dark impulses but doesn't otherwise impair you physically-apart from alarming others with its' spread. For 200 CP, enough of it has calcified into dark crystals that fighting and performing

incantations or similar actions is significantly harder. You might limp about in battle, or have to make gestures with one arm. Alternatively or in tandem with this, you may experience uncontrollable dark impulses or black out as your soul's vitality is suppressed. Finally, for 300 CP the corruptions renders you immobile. You can gesture, see through one eye and with great will and concentration continue exercising spiritual or mystical techniques akin to those of this world. But you are more crystal husk than living being.

And whatever stage you are in, the more Seethe are slain the more some of the corruption directed Yoshiro's way will land on you instead. While this is technically a boon for them ending the Seethe threat for good (and saving you along with it), no ordinary means can reverse your current corruption. Instead, someone spiritually close to you must enter the landscape of your soul with a touch, where they will battle an avatar of your corruption *at least* as powerful as themselves before drawing on the impurity vested in you. At least they'll be able to bring along any willing allies with you, and slaying this personification will release you from your affliction.

A Malediction Upon Abundance (+100 CP): It seems the goddess of the mountain thinks the challenge of the Seethe is no longer sufficient. Resources of all kinds will be fewer in number and harder to locate, from the Seethe's musubi simply dissolving into unusable puddles to more and more rations found infested with bugs or not found at all. Even some of the damaged village defences will fall apart from a single tap with a hammer. Not only have the gods decided that mankind must confront its own hubris and corruption made manifest, they have demanded that mankind git gud.

Annoying Animals (+100 CP): There's something about you that really gets the natural animals of this world riled up. Maybe they're simply targeting you as one of the Seethe. Maybe they just think you're fun to bully. Regardless, expect a lot of "pranks" directed your way by animals deciding that the Seethe invasion is the perfect opportunity to roughhouse with you. Elk and boars will run you over. Snakes will crawl into your applies and slither away with them. Even the damn BIRDS will make nests in your shrine and disrupt your rituals by flapping around singing at the top of their lungs.

Two Left Feet (+200 CP): Wow. You walk without rhythm, and you definitely won't attract the worm. You're too clumsy to dance properly or keep pace with a tune. Not only does this mean you're useless for performing the sacred dances that the villagers need to purify their homes, but this obstructs you in battle as well. Better get used to fighting like a dumb brawler or staying out of everyone's way while they're clearing up their homes.

Demon of Hatred (+200 CP): There is one among the Seethe who became what they are out of sheer malevolence towards you, specifically. Either because of a great wrong committed against them, or perhaps a great wrong they wished to commit thwarted by you. Though powerful by Seethe standards (less so than one of the Festering Seethe, head and shoulders above the common horde) they begin as a being of roughly human scale and ability-albeit near the peak of it. But such is the intensity of their hatred that not only will they ignore all objectives to kill you, specifically, but keep returning from destruction until the Seethe as a whole are solved permanently. They will learn from their battles and use every possible

means to strike you down-setting up traps in advance, trying to bargain for power among their kind and striving to ruin all you cherish. There will be no reconciliation until one of you is forced into their next life.

Anarcho-Syndaclist Commune (+200 CP): Normally, the suffering heaped upon the villagers would naturally drive them to make amends with their gods, but with this it seems many remain unrepentant and even eager to grab as many resources as they can then escape once liberated from their Cocoons of Defilement. Poor Soh and Yoshiro are at a loss on what to do when many of their charges have no interest in their salvation-or worse, blame them for the current calamities. At least, if you're a Villager or a Divine Messenger. If you are one of the Seethe, it seems your kind's long and complicated lives have resulted in the formation of multiple factions more interested in fighting amongst each other than enacting the gods' will. While deeply confused, the villagers and their saviours are certainly taking full advantage of this disunity. In either case, expect to frequently wind up in circumstances where these events are inconvenient to you.

Kunitsu-Gami Modulo (+300 CP): WOW, what a traditionally Japanese and localised calamity that was! Now that's all over, you can…oh no, what *are* these reports you've been hearing about? Fairies in distant Europe cursing humans with plagues of wraiths and boggarts that curdle milk wherever they go? Mesoamerican deities beckoning interstellar skeleton women with snake penises to hound the living while withering harvests? Plagues of skinwalkers and wendigos taking revenge on America at the behest of the Great Spirit, that rot everything around them as if it was withered by their own hunger? It seems *every nation on Earth* has its' own system of karmic retribution in which angered deities incarnate and deploy spiritual impurity as scary monsters and all-pervading corruption. Expect fate and circumstance to force you to get entangled with all of them. At least traditional Shinto methods of purification (or defilement, if you end up fighting the pious shamans, monks and priests organising resistance against these horrors) still seem to work against these entities-though their fundamentally different natures may lead to quite a few unpleasant surprises.

Interdimensional Impurity (+300 CP): In your travels, you must surely have suffered all manner of lapses in judgement. Moments where you were covetous, fearful, stagnant or indulgent. Moments when you were *impure.* All that impurity has now gathered up into a great Seethe that is a monument to all of your sins, which desires nothing more than to make you suffer unspeakably for each and every one of them. It is *technically* only as powerful as the forces of this world allow it to be, but it is empowered by every selfish and spiteful act you've ever committed. You must destroy or purify this being to progress, for your dharma has been bound to confronting it.

If by some contrivance this is your first jump, you must face some of your future sins instead. On a different, nearby mountain awaits a being equal to Nanamagari spreading its' own corruption. It does not flee or move. It simply awaits your inevitable arrival. You must destroy it and avoid being corrupted by its death rattle unless you want to stay in this world.

Soulbound (+300 CP): Alas. Normally due to special considerations regarding your interdimensional journeying your existence, even as a guardian spirit, would *not* be tethered

to a single life. But if you really want those points, the traditions of the gods can be restored. Now you will fade away and your chain end if a certain living human dies even once. If you are a Divine Messenger with a Soul Supporter that will always be them, but them dying at all will end your chain regardless of respawns (although at least being merely rendered an intangible spirit will not count as death for a guardian spirit. Permanent banishment from the mortal world, complete corruption by the Seethe or another defeat condition that permanently prevents their ability to fulfil their role will). Guard your soulmate well, and persevere.

Endings



Go home: That was enough for you. Were the terrors of purification and decay too great and too grievous, shaking your spirit to its' foundations even as you struggled to make ends meet during the hours of sunlight? Or was it instead the joy of the villagers that moved you to think of what you had left behind? No matter. There's always a way home. A special archway, a divine path back to the world that gave you life. One where the horrors of the human heart are bound tightly away from the world of the living.

Stay: Peace. Community. How rare is such a thing in all the vastness of the multiverses? You find yourself wanting to put down roots here, perhaps welcomed by the grateful villagers after assisting their saviours. Or perhaps it is the darker nature of this world that calls to you. Even when not called to bring torment and terror, the Seethe haunt the folklore of the mortal world as monsters, omens and stranger things. If this is where you belong, you may decide to set down roots here. If you played a key role in either defeating the priestess and her divine guardian or stopping the Seethe, the gods award you 1000 CP worth of additional purposes as your rightful spoils of war.

Move On: This is not the end for you, not at all. There are more mountains to scale, and heavenly realms further than the gods of this world. Your journey continues ever onwards, either bearing the legacy of spirituality that raised up civilisation, or spreading the stains of the Seethe to worlds that might not know how to confront them.

Notes

This is a beautiful goddamn game with a baffling amount of effort put into it, and I heartily recommend everyone try playing it at least once.