

Shukuen

Merchant's Greed

A Ninja Adventure



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Realities

Requires the use of the Action! System(TM)
Core Rules, published by Gold Rush Games(TM)

ACTION!
SYSTEM
READY

MERCHANT'S GREED

A SHUKUEN NINJA ADVENTURE

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Action! System rules created by Mark Arsenault & Patrick Sweeney

Action! System Core Rules written by Mark Arsenault, Patrick Sweeney & Ross Winn

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All maps in this book were created with Profantasy's™ Campaign Cartographer 2. Available at <http://www.profantasy.com>

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INTRODUCTION

When light covers the land I watch the peasants tend their fields. The mighty Samurai lords telling them to remember their place. But as darkness comes the peasants and Samurai return to their safe homes and castles. I know my place as the shadows grow long.

- Matsushita, Chouhouin Ryu



MERCHANT'S GREED

Merchant's Greed is a ninja-centric, Action! Ready adventure. **Action! Ready** means the game is built using the **Action! System Core Rules** to play, but they are not included with the game. They are available as a free download from www.action-system.com. Various extensions to the rules are also available at the same site, and may be needed to play this game to the fullest.

This is the first in a series of adventures tailored for Ninja or Ninja-like characters. As many GMs that have tried to run a Feudal Japanese campaign can attest, it can be difficult to cater to every class, especially the more specialized like the Ninja. One of our goals is to create a series of linked adventures for your ninja characters. Infiltration, Assassination, and Spying will be among the

missions your ninjas will undertake in the name of honor and duty.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Merchant's Greed is designed for 1 - 3 ninja characters with moderate skill levels. Adjustments can be made by the GM by altering NPC skills and traits, or by increasing or decreasing the number of opponent NPCs. The game can be run as a standalone adventure or as part of an existing campaign. The **Campaign Level** for Merchant's Greed is **Cinematic**.

Maps have been provided for all major areas of the adventure, including the Merchant's Compound, each level of the Merchant's Mansion, and a Chase Map. The maps exist in three formats: as images in this book, as Campaign Cartographer 2™ files for use with CC2View, and as hyperlinked HTML files. CC2View can be downloaded free of charge from www.profantasy.com.

Descriptive information that can be read to players will be displayed in a boxed area with a light green background:

You see an army of ninja coming at you, and they don't look the least bit happy.

Encounter information (NPCs, Monsters, Treasure, etc.) will be prefaced with a symbol, followed by descriptive text and/or game attributes:



- a Shuriken symbol denotes a potential encounter. This information will include weapons possessed by the opponent with the name of the weapon and the opponent's skill level (e.g. Yari +3, Katana +4). Any treasure carried will also be noted.



- A Torii indicates non-encounter information, such as a skill roll.



- A Character symbol indicates important GM information, which will generally be unknown to players.

When you have finished running the game, you can go to the **Infinite Realities** web site and provide feedback about the adventure. We may use your ideas to shape future games, so be a part of the action!

A NOTE ON HISTORY

This adventure is designed around a fantasy version of feudal Japan. While it is similar to the Sengoku era in

many ways, it is different from that history in others. The GM may need to make a few changes to make it more compatible with a traditional historic setting. The use of Kami talismans as pseudo magic is one example of non-historical game info that can be left out, if the GM desires.

This adventure is set in the fictitious Itoyanagi (Weeping Willow) province, though it can be placed in any other province deemed appropriate by the GM.

Here are some suggested events for which the GM may wish to award **Action! Points** to players:

- **Gaining entry to the Mansion without having been detected.**
- **Gaining entry to Yoshifumi's Bedchamber without having been detected (does not include detection by the rival ninja already there)**
- **Successfully retrieving the book containing Yoshifumi's illicit activities.**

THINGS NEEDED TO PLAY

As many 6 sided dice as you can get your hands on. Dice are always in demand. A copy of this book and a copy of the **Action! System Core Rules** found at www.action-system.com

You will also do well to have several blank character sheets (also available as a PDF download from the AIS web site). For those who play online or use a computer while gaming, we have provided a simple character sheet in the form of an Excel™ Worksheet. If you downloaded the PDF version of this book you already have it. Otherwise it is available as a free download from the [Infinite Realities](http://InfiniteRealities.com) web site.

As the GM you will also need some of your friends as players. Infinite Realities has a forum for free online gaming if you're unable find any local players. The web address is hdrpg.com. And you can always just stop by and chat with the writers and other game players.

THE STORY

The characters, as part of a Ryu in your campaign (we have provided a fictitious Ryu in this book) are hired to infiltrate the compound of a local merchant named Yoshifumi, whom the authorities suspect of smuggling Sake, and of tax evasion.

Their orders are to obtain as much information as possible about the merchant's trade practices and inventory. Since the guilt of the merchant is in doubt, killing his retainers is unacceptable. A zero body-count is required unless the situation dictates otherwise. The merchant's guards are ordered to kill any intruders on sight, though this will be unknown to players unless they are able to obtain this

information through some means.

If the characters are caught they will not be supported by the authorities, they are on their own. A Ninja would have it no other way.



The merchant is indeed smuggling Sake, but more importantly, he is smuggling in operatives from a neighboring province, who will be used to start an uprising. He is paranoid, thus his compound is well guarded. The merchant has asked for more money and is afraid that his contacts will simply kill him and be done with it. His fears are well founded; his greed has been noted, and a rival ninja team sent to kill him now that he is no longer needed.

The GM is free to alter this scenario to fit his or her campaign.

The characters and the rival ninja team will meet at the Merchants Bedchamber on the Level 3 map.

It is conceivable that a battle will erupt, but the rival Ninja team's main goal is escape. Since this is a combat light adventure try and reward players for being Ninja like in their role-playing. Those seeking large amounts of treasure may be disappointed.

A MERCHANT'S GREED

The characters have been instructed to proceed to a local garden to meet their contact.

The cool night breeze drifts casually through the blooming Cherry blossoms. The tranquil garden is quiet at this time of night and no one can be seen.

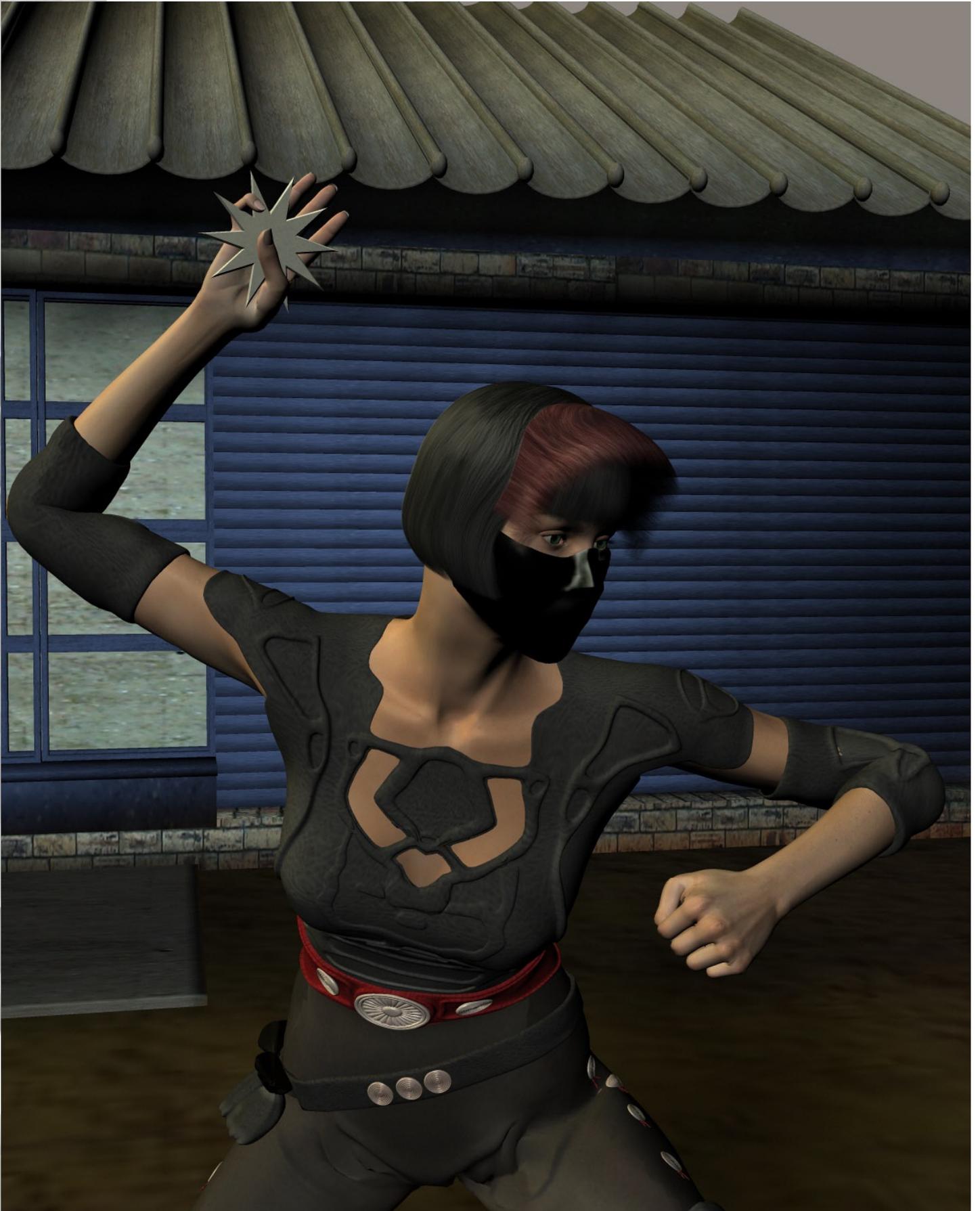
A large Gazebo has been erected in the center of the garden with a large stream that runs behind it.

From your vantage point in the tree line you command a good view of the area.

As you watch, a Geisha enters the garden. She drifts to the Gazebo and sits down. Could this woman be your contact?

This is indeed the player's contact. Her name is Yutsuko and she is 24. She owns and operates a small Geisha house. The four girls under her employ never sleep with their clients. They are Geisha, not prostitutes.

When her house was initially established she was harassed by a local group of thugs. Her girls were terrorized and the bodyguard beaten near to death.



Then one day a small, elderly Samurai found her crying in the garden. He was stern and quiet and wanted to know what hardship could make a woman as beautiful as she filled with sorrow.

He listened patiently to her plight. At the end of it he told her not to worry, that all would be put to right. In return he asked if she would do him a small favor; that if she or any of her girls heard anything interesting she could pass the information on to a messenger, who would drop by once a week. To this she readily agreed.

The following day a strange, well-dressed Samurai came to town. He found the thugs that had terrorized Yukutso, and taunted them into a fight. Fifteen seconds later they were dead and the Samurai took his leave. A week later the messenger arrived at her house for the first time and she told him all that she had heard from her customers; trade deals, military movements, whatever her clients talked about. She felt a little guilty, thinking it unethical to pass along such things, but she stayed true to her word.

Time passed, and one day the elderly Samurai visited her again. He told her that she had an understanding of the nature of intelligence, and asked if she would like more duties.

She accepted, and found that the region's intelligence agents were reporting to her. She was sorting through the reports and piecing together what was important, and then passing that information on to the weekly messenger.

After she took the assignment, several high class and well-paying customers started to frequent her house. Payment for her duties? She often wondered.

When reports started to come through on a regular basis about the Merchant her interest was piqued. She received a message that special agents were being made available to her and that she should do what she felt best. Not sure what that meant exactly she went to the garden to meet the operatives.

YUTSUKO

ATTRIBUTES: STR: 3 (Dmg: 2d6+2, Lift: 150kg), REF: 3, HLT: 3, PRE: 4, INT: 5, WIL: 4

DERIVED ATTRIBUTES: DEF: 13, INI: 4, TGH: 4 (Stunned: 9), LIF: 17 (Superficial: 3 Light: 6 Serious: 9 Critical: 12), MOV: 6 (Run: 12 Sprint: 24)

ADVANTAGES: Attractive (Edge), Wealth (Convenience)

DISADVANTAGES: Secret (Spy) Hardship

SKILLS: Communication +1, Instruction +2, Negotiation +3,

Persuasion +2, Poetry +2, Education +1, Research +2

YUTSUKO'S MISSION

As you approach through the moonlit garden you can see the beauty of the woman.

 **-For Yutsuko to hear the approaching characters:**
Awareness: Tricky - TN 17

She is alert but has no training in the field. She will be startled when the characters finally show their presence.

"Who are you? What do you want?" She seems startled by your sudden appearance.

 At the GM's option, a secret, identifying phrase can be setup prior to the meeting, to insure everyone is who they say they are.

Providing the characters identify themselves as her contacts she will calm visibly.

Once she is sure of the characters' purpose she will discuss the assigned mission.

- The merchant's name is Yoshifumi. He seems to be doing very well for himself yet only shows a modest income on paper, which suggests smuggling.
- Sake is the most probable item that Yoshifumi is bringing in illegally, thus avoiding the high tariffs placed on such items.
- An official investigation is out of the question due to Yoshifumi's standing and contacts.
- The characters are to enter the Merchant's compound and search for anything that might link the merchant to smuggling.
- Zero body count. As the merchant may in fact be innocent the characters must not kill guards to achieve their mission. The guards are not under such restrictions so caution is recommended.
- If the merchant is in fact guilty then the players may defend themselves anyway they see fit.
- She will return when the characters think they have completed the mission. To discuss the outcome and payment. She will give an address where a message can be sent, discreetly, of course.

If the characters have no more questions then she shall leave.

The merchant has informants and spies of his own in some of the seedier parts of town. If the PCs ask around town for information about the merchant there is a chance these spies might hear of it. The general populace knows little.

- Merchant's spies Awareness Roll (+4):

Awareness: Challenging - **TN 19**

What is known is that he has a lot of money and he doesn't share it. He rarely hires from the town preferring to bring in outside labor. He charges a lot for his services but is faster in delivering than his competitors.

The other main course of action is for the characters to go to the merchant compound and check it out. The following descriptions are for the merchant compound, starting with the exterior, and then moving inside.

THE HOME OF YOSHIFUMI

The merchant Yoshifumi lives on a large compound. It includes his home, which is a large three-story mansion, as well as several warehouses and smaller structures.

What looks to be an elaborate garden has been built next to the mansion. Many different plants can be seen growing there. Lanterns have been placed around the garden to light it.

A large, white, stone wall has been erected around the compound. A large gate at the front is the only entrance to the streets. It appears large enough to fit a wagon.

There are guards positioned at the main gate. They are armed with Yari and Katana and have breastplates.

Merchant Guards (2 or 3)

STR 4, REF 4, DEF 14, INI 4, TGH 3, LIF 16, MOV 6; Armor: Bamboo/metal breastplate AV 8 (1/2 dmg from blunt weapons, covers locations 7-8, 10-13, no back protection)

Weapons: Yari +3 (dmg 3d6), Katana +3 (dmg 4d6)

Treasure: 1d6 silver each

If the characters have been asking a lot of questions, and it has been heard by an informant, there will be three guards at the main gate instead of two. As well as thirty guards in the compound instead of twenty. The outer wall is twenty-five feet high and is climbable with some

equipment.

The guards are alert but not alarmed. Nothing has happened for a while and they are not expecting any trouble. Even if extra guards have been put on because of the player's activities, they are not overly concerned.

The guards throughout the compound are of average quality, many having served in a campaign or two, but not distinguishing themselves on the field of battle.

GAINING ENTRY

The characters can try to fight their way in, but this is **NOT** recommended. Once the alarm is raised two guards will arrive every twenty seconds.

They can try to bluff their way in, but since the merchant has no appointments this would be difficult.

 -To bluff their way past the guards: Persuasion: Demanding - **TN 25** (35 if alarm has been raised by spies)

 -Scaling the wall: Climbing: Tricky - **TN 16**

 -Guards awareness if scaling wall with grapple: Awareness: Tricky - **TN 17**

Any section of the outer wall is good for climbing.

Alternately if the players come up with an unusual plan it will be the gm's choice how well it works. An example might be to use a pretty girl to fall in the street so the gate guards run out to help her, while the characters slip in.

Four guards in groups of two patrol the inner perimeter of the wall. They are armed with Yari and Katana. If the alarm had been raised by informants an extra two guards per patrol will be on duty. It takes ten minutes to do one complete circuit of the compound.

 **Guard Patrols (2 groups of 2 or 4)**
STR 4, REF 4, DEF 14, INI 4, TGH 3, LIF 16, MOV 6; Armor: Bamboo/metal breastplate AV 8 (1/2 dmg from blunt weapons, covers locations 7-8, 10-13, no back protection)
Weapons: Yari +3 (dmg 3d6), Katana +3 (dmg 4d6)
Treasure: 1d6 silver each

THE GROUNDS

The grounds are well maintained. The grass is cut low and all trees and shrubs are neatly trimmed. There are several large warehouse buildings about half of which are lit. Many lanterns have been placed to light the grounds. But for the most part they have been placed along side paths and entrances. A large amount of dark shadows exist in which to hide.

Guards are patrolling casually around the grounds. They are armed with Yari and Katana. They move slowly as they check the grounds. Two guards are at the main entrance leading into the merchant's mansion.

1. EMPTY WAREHOUSE

The large wooden warehouse is empty and unguarded. A strong scent of oil hangs in the air. The floors are stained badly from the oil but the walls and building itself are in excellent condition. A set of stairs connects the ground floor to the 2nd story.

The warehouse is unlit and empty. It is constructed from wood and is in very good condition. It has a smell of lamp oil about it and was used to store wooden drums of lantern oil. The warehouse is unguarded.

There is a window on the second story, which can be reached from the outside by climbing. The main door to the warehouse is unlocked.

 **-Skill Roll to reach the second story:**
Climbing: Challenging - TN 20

This building would burn very well.

 **-Skill Roll to set the building on fire:**
INT: Average - TN 10

2. OIL STORAGE

This large warehouse is made of wood and is in good condition. The smell of oil is almost overpowering, and there are fifteen barrels stacked inside.

This warehouse is exactly the same as Number one. With the exception of fifteen barrels of oil. The barrels are unopened. The barrels can be easily broken, no skill roll is required.

3. SILK STORAGE

The wooden warehouse is clean and seems in an almost new condition. There is a guard armed with a Yari at the main entrance. He watches the compound with mild interest. Every now and again he yawns and leans against the building. A metal lock can be seen on the main door. There is a window on the second story.

There are many fine lacquered boxes inside. These hold some of the finest silks and Kimonos in the entire region.

This warehouse is in pristine condition. There is a lock on the door and a guard outside. An entrance through the 2nd story window is possible. There are no guards on the inside. The warehouse is filled with expensive silks and Kimono's. The guard is there due to the disappearance of some of the stock, which has gone missing to impress some guard's lady friends.

 **-Skill Roll to pick the lock:**
Lockpicking: Tricky - TN 15

 **Merchant Guard (1)**
STR 4, REF 4, DEF 14, INI 4, TGH 3, LIF 16, MOV 6; Armor: Bamboo/metal breastplate AV 8 (1/2 dmg from blunt weapons, covers locations 7-8, 10-13, no back protection)
Weapons: Yari +3 (dmg 3d6), Katana +3 (dmg 4d6)
Treasure: 1d6 silver

4. EMPTY WAREHOUSE

The interior of this warehouse is poor and rundown. The walls are in need of repair. There are twenty-four barrels in this location. The lids have been removed and they are stacked neatly against the wall.

 This run down warehouse looks to have been used for whatever odds and ends were needed at the time. There are twenty-four barrels here with the lids removed. These barrels were used to smuggle in the insurgents. It is hard to work out what was inside but smell can detect the hint of sweat, with difficulty.

 **-Skill Roll to detect previous barrel contents:**
Awareness (Smell): Demanding - TN 25

The insurgents have already left the compound. Other than the empty barrels there is little of interest.

5. FOOD STORAGE

The warehouse has a sweet smell to it and is cooler. There appears to be many small crates of food items in storage. There is a small room on the west side of the warehouse.

This warehouse is filled with a mixture of fruits and fine foods, fruits on the second floor and rice and Sushi on the ground floor. It spoils fast so this is the area that has the items shipped out the quickest. **There is one guard hiding in here, eating.** He is located in a small room on the West side of the warehouse. He sneaks in on his watch each time and dines on some of the food before it is shipped out. He is alert as he is afraid of being caught. He has left his Yari outside but he still carries his Katana and a Tanto knife. If he sees the characters he will think Yoshifumi has caught him and will attack.



Merchant Guard (1)

STR 4, REF 4, DEF 14, INI 4, TGH 3, LIF 16, MOV 6; Armor: Bamboo/metal breastplate AV 8 (1/2 dmg from blunt weapons, covers locations 7-8, 10-13, no back protection)

Weapon: Katana +3 (dmg 4d6), Tanto +2 (dmg 1d6)

Treasure: 1d6 silver each, 1 **Talisman of Bishamon** (See **Kami and Their Use** in the back of this adventure)

6. TRANSIT WAREHOUSE

This warehouse is empty. Some scattered paper on the floor is all that remains of whatever contents were here.

This warehouse is empty. It is the sorting house. All deliveries come to this place. From here they are sorted to the other warehouses as needed. The fruit was the last delivery and has already been moved. The next delivery is due in four days and consists of silks. The pieces of paper are blank scraps.

7. GARDEN

The area around the garden smells sweet and cool. Several lanterns swing gently in the breeze, but there is a lot of cover in the trees and shrubs that make up the garden. A mat has been placed on one side. No one is currently in the area.

In the Northwest corner is a garden. There is a large pond with water lilies and fish. Several varieties of trees and plants make up the garden. A small wooden bridge crosses the stream a little to the South and a place has been prepared for meditation. It is well lit, however there is a large amount of cover to hide in.

8. BRIDGE

A wooden bridge crosses the small stream. A path on the other side leads to the garden.

The bridge is a simple but sturdy wood construction. It crosses a small stream.

9. GARDEN SHED

This small wooden shed has seen much use, but is still in good condition. It has a latched wooden door.

This small wooden structure holds items for the gardener to look after the grounds. He is responsible for the garden and general upkeep of the compound. It is possible for a character to disguise himself as the Grounds Keeper in order to move about the compound.



-Successful Grounds Keeper disguise:

Disguise: Tricky - **TN 17**

10. MAIN ENTRANCE

The large wooden doors are closed. Two men armed with Yari stand guard. They chat amongst themselves. A third guard is walking a patrol around the mansion.