

Anime-Punk Cthulhu

A NEW GENRE FOR CALL OF CTHULHU 7TH



ANIME-PUNK CTHULHU

A new genre mash-up for Call of Cthulhu 7th Edition

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INTRODUCTION

“The brightest light casts the darkest shadow.”

Jess C Scott: The Darker Side of Life

Whether you like your anime with demons and supernatural elements or just straight up modern dystopia in your Cyberpunk games, it's likely that Call of Cthulhu can help you hit that sweet spot.

Perhaps the easiest way to answer what is Anime-Punk is to say what it is not. If you envisage your character as a heavily chromed street samurai gunning down all opposition while they carry out their latest heist, this probably isn't for you. If however, you prefer your games with a little more plot than gunplay, a little more Ghost in the Shell than Duke Nuke'em perhaps, then Anime-punk might be to your taste.

Inside here, you will find the bare bones of a world for you to expand on. I try to give you a flavor of the background without tying you into a meta-plot. If you don't like my take on Deep Ones in the 21st century, you can ignore it in favor of inserting your own version and the game will not suffer.

So what is in here? I present a Neo Far East of the near future, ruled by corporations where even career criminals are less ruthless than big business. A world where special police units try to keep a lid on the chaos beneath the surface of society while simmering resentment amongst the populace results in crimes both big and small.

But don't think this world is without its Cthulhu roots. True, my version of the Dreamlands is accessible to anyone with the right software and some of the monsters have discovered that man learns quickly and has the potential to be a far greater monster than they but it is still a world where the King in Yellow

looks down and laughs and where Nyarlathotep still leads people to madness and the expanded vistas that come with such madness.

Perhaps the biggest change is to how Sanity and the loss of the same will affect everyday people. This is a world whose sensibilities are blunted by familiarity. Few people are going to run screaming from the sight of blood; they are more likely to upload the videos to a social network. Similarly, whole research labs are dedicated to seeking out knowledge that previously 'Man was not meant to know'.

Sanity loss in Anime-Punk is measured by the loss of empathy for someone's' fellows. When someone can take out their rubbish, see another person being mugged and assaulted, shrug and return inside their home to continue watching television, playing a game or surfing the net, perhaps relating what they had just witnessed, that is a much more insidious form of insanity.

As a rapidly advancing species, humans might one day even be able to threaten the gods but in the Anime-Punk world, that threat is nullified by the increasing separation between people. It is a paradox that finally, in a world with the technology to potentially save everyone, there are very few people left who care anymore.

The dark gods and the monstrous races, those of which even notice mankind, want to watch the world fall into apathy, to crumble under its own lack of humanity. Perhaps your investigators will be different; perhaps they can *make* the difference.

I have envisioned this game as supporting police investigations and those working with the police but you can incorporate any investigators the same way you would in a normal Call of Cthulhu game.

The world and the tools for fighting the darkness might have changed, but the threats still remain.



H. Haddaway

THE WORLD

Nothing very much has changed between our world and that of the Anime-Punk world. Perhaps the technology is more ubiquitous and commonplace. The lights are a little brighter and glaring but much remains the same and familiar, just seen through a darker mirror.

Big business is truly global now. Politicians expect to sit on the boards of huge conglomerates when they retire from public life and refuse to take any actions which might jeopardize their own futures. Universal health care has gone the way of the dodo, into extinction, as has free access to clean water or clean air. Each citizen is entitled to just as much as he or she can pay for and if they lose their ability to pay, they lose their rights too.

Voting fraud in the past led to corruption in many governments but the cure, as with most things in Anime-Punk, is worse than the disease. Voting is now completely transparent and your vote is a matter of public record. That might sound like a good thing but, while technically illegal, companies will often fire workers whose recorded vote goes against their companies own political direction. Illegal, of course, means that the citizens can challenge the dismissal in court but only if they can afford a lawyer. There are no forms of socially supported legal defense and it is also illegal to defend yourself, as a poor defense is 'against your own best interests'. What this means is that the rich sue the rich but the poor have no recourse in the courts.

All of this means that crime and the black market are rife but the police and laws in general, are draconian, especially where property and privilege are concerned.

Neo-Shihon

Neo-Shihon is the mega-conurbation where most of the stories are likely to be based. You can take your investigators around the world

but there are plots and cults to fight on their very own doorstep.

Investigations might start in the grimmest alleys and reach to the highest glass-walled boardrooms or take the investigators to darker places.

Neo-Shihon is divided into various districts. Consider these thumbnail portraits of those areas and the kind of investigations that might originate there:

Neo-Shihon is divided into various districts and various levels, with the rich essentially living above the poor. Consider these thumbnail portraits of those areas and the kind of investigations that might originate there (NB the Japanese word for district is Chiku).

Suramu is the slum district of Neo-Shihon but rather than be one area, it is the lowest level of the city, hidden in perpetual drizzle and a semi-toxic smog and over-shadowed by the surrounding buildings, the streets overcrowded with pedestrians, the homeless, waste disposal vehicles, litter and cruising police cars.

Kogai district is what might, in another city, be called the suburbs. It is the outskirts of the city when the salarymen live lives of quiet desperation, commuting two hours each way on a subway system now wholly inadequate for the sheer numbers of people using it. The rich don't care how much time their workers spend travelling into work; they don't pay for that time, and this working class have neither the power nor wealth to change anything. The houses are for the most part prefabricated single family homes, closely packed together, but each one has at least a tiny garden and a wall to give some sense of privacy. And at least the air is breathable in the suburbs, unlike that in Suramu.

Tawa is the tower district and covers perhaps the central 25 square miles of Neo-Shihon, rising level upon level above the slums of Suramu. From these huge tower blocks, the

middle class of Neo-Shihon can look down on the poor and look up to the wealthy of Yufukuna. The floor a family live on, in tiny, cramped apartments with every facility built into the walls, including the shower, to save space, denotes their importance. At least the commute is negligible, packed into the enormous but still overcrowded community elevators.

Yufukuna Chiku refers to the higher levels of the tower blocks and is given over to corporations, businesses and the very wealthy, also scrambling over each other to reach the highest floors. Only the largest corporations or the richest billionaires ever make it to the penthouses where at last the air is clear and nothing blocks the view of the sky.

The Kakuo are super-malls, vast shopping complexes, some lying between Tawa and Kogai and others taking up valuable space in the Tawa district. Those outside the Tawa Chiku are the least exclusive while those on the highest floors that push against the edge of Yufukuna are so exclusive as to often have their own security force and to only allow would-be shoppers access who can prove their spending power, often in the form of gold or platinum credit cards.

Corporations

Neo-Shihon doesn't seem to believe in heavy industry and its heartland is the home of voracious companies, always eager to devour each other in bloodless, or sometimes bloody, mergers.

Mumei is the huge corporation built on its creation of the Hoka No Basho ("elsewhere") VROE Virtual Reality Online Environment. VROE is to Neo-Shihon what the Internet is to the real world; it is a portal or front end that allows business to be conducted in completely secure areas, fenced off from intrusion (known as Bijinesu), shopping areas that put the Kakuo to shame (Ichiba) and huge wilderness areas that are home to 'monsters' where role-players

and other games can play to their hearts content (Koya).

What Mumei is telling no one is that Hoka No Basho really is somewhere; it is the Dreamlands, molded and shaped by the waking dreamers that now inhabit it. The various devices, neural implants, headsets and full body rigs that users of the VROE employ really only aid in the translation of their consciousness into the Dreamlands.

And those monsters? Well, not everyone that experiences the vast spaces of Koya returns unchanged; there are some monsters that are real, after all. It is rumored amongst those that have travelled furthest within Koya that Hoka No Basho even has its own Jigoku or "hell".

Mumei have shaped and put boundaries on a realm of wonder, making it into just one more playground for human corruption. It makes one wonder just who the elusive chairperson of Mumei is, or whether they are human at all?

Kabushikigaisha is a corporate entity that specializes in catering to the pleasures of the masses. Alcohol and recreational drugs, unrestricted by ineffectual laws, have drained many of the teeming masses of all their initiative or will to improve their lot, staggering home from then and twelve hour working days only to lose themselves in the stupor of narcotics or the drunken excesses of back street bars and brothels. Of all the dangers to humanity, perhaps human greed and human sloth are the most virulent.

Bengoshi is a litigious corporation that makes its living from suing other corporations and championing the little guy. Their most active area is in defending the oceans around the mega urban complex against environmental pollution and over-fishing. They are generally seen as champions of Gaia. The corporation name even means "lawyer".

Of course, this is Call of Cthulhu and nothing is ever that simple. Bengoshi is backed by the

wealth of the Deep Ones but even their pockets are proving not to be inexhaustible. The Deep Ones perhaps believed that one day they would inherit the whole of the Earth from the upstart humans. They never foresaw that they were facing a creature that could kill an entire world. The seas and oceans are poised with heavy metals and veritable deserts in areas where drag nets have stripped all life from the seas.

The lead and mercury and other heavy metals that built up in the lower invertebrates in the seas made the larger fish that preyed on them weak and vulnerable to disease and, in the bodies of the Deep Ones, often reached lethal levels. Creatures immune to age and warfare fell to the poisoning of their environment and even now it might be too late for them, their numbers reduced to a few handfuls mourning the comatose Father Dagon and those that still try to fight back.

Inaka Corporation (meaning “countryside”) controls the huge automated farms that fill the land beyond even the reach of the Kogai housing estates. The farms are almost entirely maintained by robots and giant scales farm machinery and who knows what happens out there, where no one ever goes. Armed robotic mobile gun platforms patrol the vast farmlands and if the rumors that the bloody worship of ancient nature spirits is still taking place there are true, certainly no one has come back to confirm that uncomfortable truth.



OCCUPATIONS

The occupations listed here are only suggestions that I have chosen from the Investigators Guide to fit with the genre. With cosmetic changes, nearly any of the careers in the Investigators Handbook should be perfectly suitable. A couple of skills, such as Computer Use and Library Use are referenced at the end of this list of suggested careers for their changes.

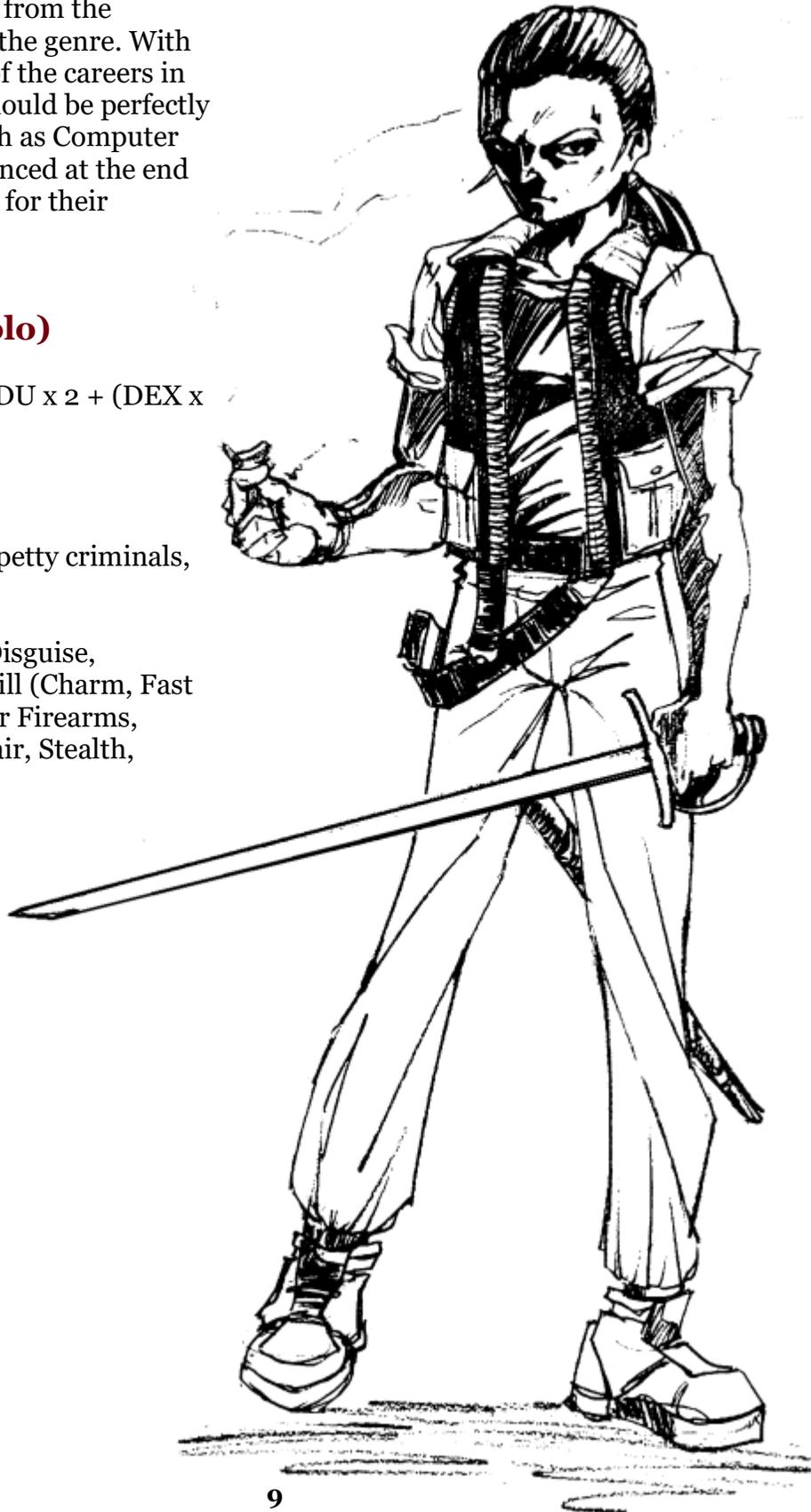
Criminal (freelance/solo)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (DEX x 2 or APP x 2)

Credit Rating: 5–65

Suggested Contacts: Other petty criminals, street-level law enforcement.

Skills: Art/Craft (Acting) or Disguise, Appraise, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk or Intimidate), Fighting or Firearms, Locksmith or Mechanical Repair, Stealth, Psychology, Spot Hidden.



Criminal (Street Punk)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (DEX x 2 or STR x 2)

Credit Rating: 3-10

Suggested Contacts: Petty criminals, other punks, the local fence, maybe the local gangster, certainly the local police.

Skills: Climb, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Fighting, Firearms, Jump, Sleight of Hand, Stealth, Throw.



Gangster Underling

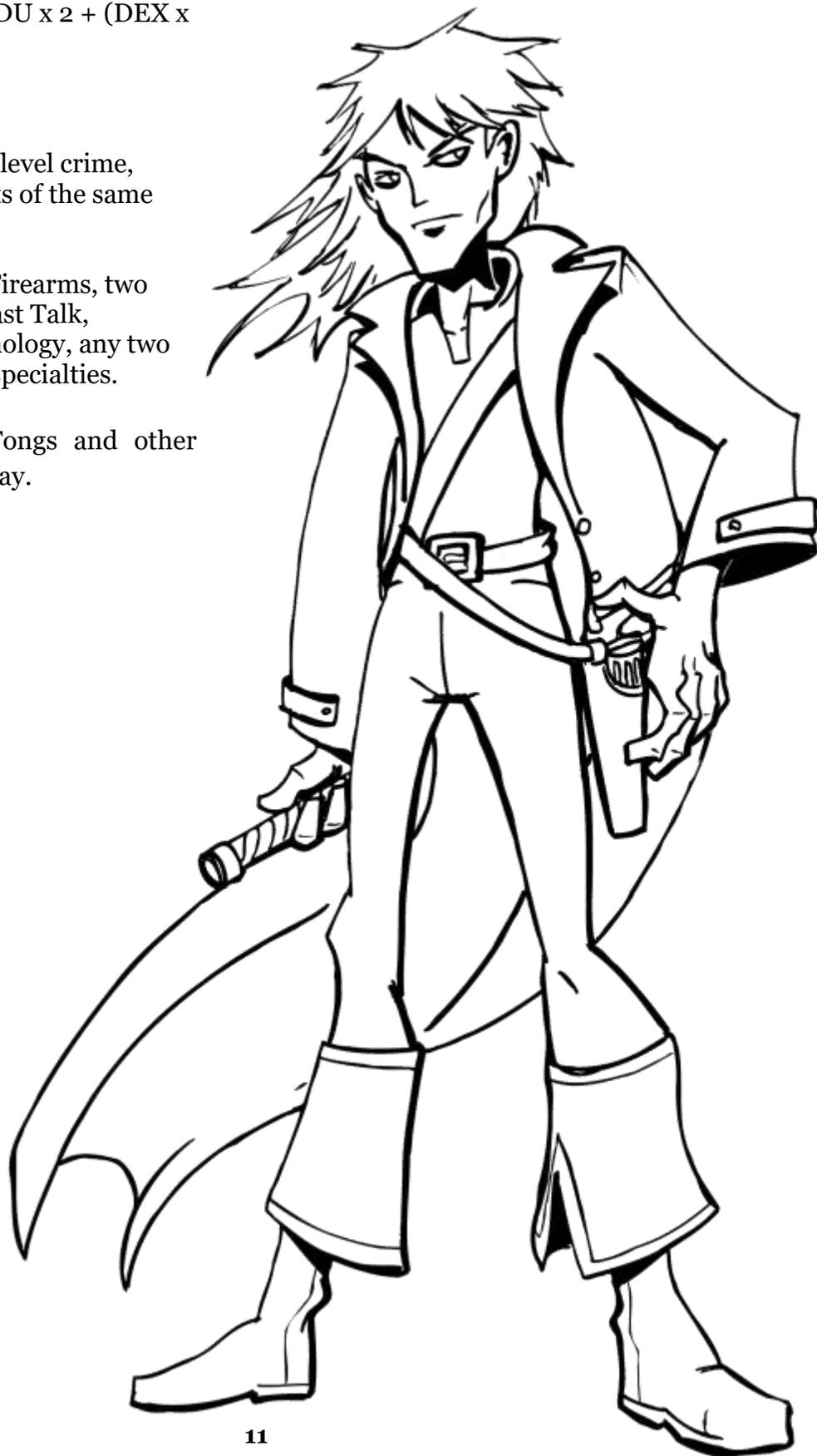
Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (DEX x 2 or STR x 2)

Credit Rating: 9–20

Suggested Contacts: Street-level crime, police, businesses and residents of the same ethnic community.

Skills: Drive Auto, Fighting, Firearms, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Because the Yakuza, the Tongs and other organized crime never goes away.



Hacker

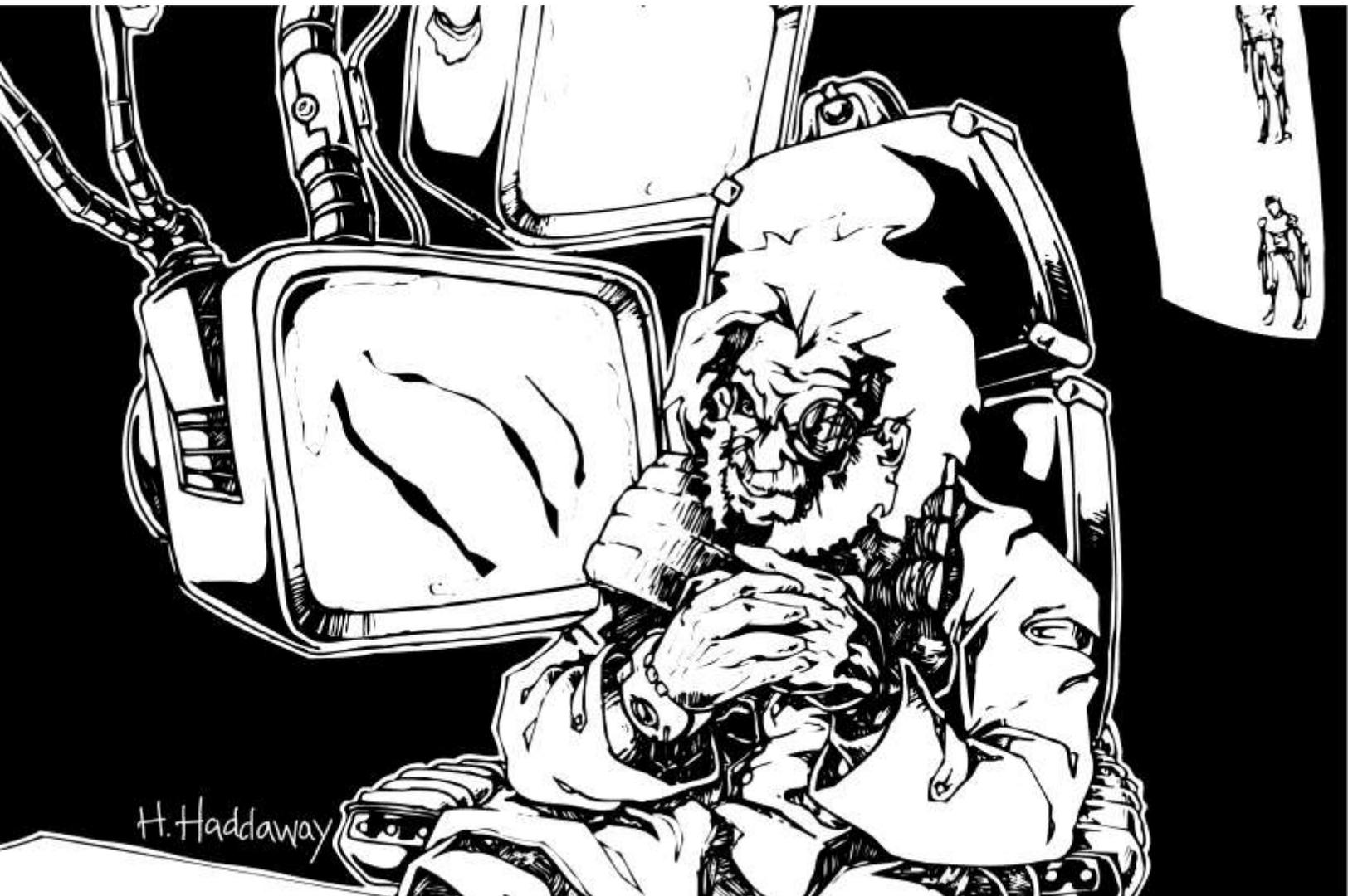
Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 10–70

Suggested Contacts: IT workers, specialized Internet web communities, political groups, criminal enterprises.

Skills: Computer Use, Electrical Repair, Electronics, Library Use, Spot Hidden, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), any two other skills

In Neo-Shihon, a hacker is something special. If the Keeper allows, Dreaming can be taken as one of the elective skills.



Hobo (the homeless of Suramu)

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (APP x 2 or DEX x 2)

Credit Rating: 0–5

Suggested Contacts: Other residents of Suramu.

Skills: Art/Craft (any), Climb, Jump, Listen, Locksmith or Sleight of Hand, Navigate, Stealth, any one other skill as a personal or era specialty.



Investigative Journalist

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 9–30

Suggested Contacts: News industry, politicians, street-level crime or law enforcement.

Skills: Art/Craft (Art or Photography), one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), History, Library Use, Own Language, Psychology, any two other skills as personal or era specialties

Honest news can be hard to get in Neo-Shihon but that doesn't that there are not still people who try.



Laboratory Assistant

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 10-30

Suggested Contacts: Universities, scientists, librarians.

Skills: Computer Use or Library Use, Electrical Repair, Other Language, Science (Chemistry and two others), Spot Hidden, any one other skill as a personal specialty.



Lawyer

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 30–80

Suggested Contacts: Organized crime, financiers, attorneys and judges.

Skills: Accounting, Law, Library use, two interpersonal skills (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Psychology, any two other skills.

Not all lawyers in Neo-Shihon are monsters (though certainly some probably are!)



Nurse

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 9–30

Suggested Contacts: Hospital workers, physicians, community workers.

Skills: First Aid, Listen, Medicine, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Psychology, Science (Biology), (Chemistry), Spot Hidden.



Police Detective

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (DEX x 2 or STR x 2)

Credit Rating: 20–50

Suggested Contacts: Law enforcement, street level crime, coroner’s office, judiciary, organized crime.

Skills: Art/Craft (Acting) or Disguise, Firearms, Law, Listen, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Psychology, Spot Hidden, any one other skill.

Heavy Kevlar Vest 8 points



Uniformed Police Officer

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 2 + (DEX x 2 or STR x 2)

Credit Rating: 9–30

Suggested Contacts: Law enforcement, local businesses and residents, street level crime, organized crime.

Skills: Fighting (Brawl), Firearms, First Aid, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), Law, Psychology, Spot Hidden and Drive Automobile.

Military Body Armor 12 points



Student/Intern

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 5–10

Suggested Contacts: Academics and other students, while interns may also know business people.

Skills: Language (Own or Other), Library Use, Listen, three fields of study and any two other skills as a personal or era specialties.



White-Collar Worker

Occupation Skill Points: EDU x 4

Credit Rating: 9–20

Suggested Contacts: Other office workers.

Skills: Accounting, Language, Law, Library Use or Computer Use, Listen, one interpersonal skill (Charm, Fast Talk, Intimidate or Persuade), any two other skills as personal or era specialties.

Working in the corporations of Yufukuna, you may get to see, or get involved in, things that aren't good for your sanity. It's no wonder that so many white collar workers end up going berserk amongst their colleagues with the Personal Defense Weapon in their briefcase.



ADDITIONAL RULES

Changes to Skills

Computer Use is used for breaking into secure areas and for navigating around inside Hoka No Basho but you can only work with what the VROE provides. Faced with a virtual door, your avatar could summon up a program and hack the door to open it but you still have to deal with that door in some fashion.

Library Use allows a user to retrieve and use data from Hoka No Basho, working within the limits set by the original programmers of the VROE.

Dreaming (1/5 Pow) is a skill which allows you to 'reprogram' the VROE that is Hoka No Basho at, for want of a better word, a quantum level. Faced with the door above, a skilled hacker could just write the door out of existence, for example. Attempting to rewrite the code and failing, especially if you were pushing the attempt, can attract some very unpleasant attention for Mumei ('mummy'), not all of which is even remotely human.

Dream Lore (half Cthulhu Mythos) allows a user to recognize things that are not part of a programmed environment (e.g. monsters) or even start to understand the true nature of Hoka No Basho).

Combat, should it happen in Koya or elsewhere in Hoka No Basho, uses either the Library Use, Computer Use or the Dreaming skill; you either obey the limits laid out (e.g. using Library use to fight a virtual creature within a game environment within the VROE), change the rules (using Computer Use to power up your abilities or to face 'real' creatures that exist outside of the computer generated environment) or just plain break the rules (by using the Dreaming skill to rewrite whatever you like about a scene, such as creating a tank to fight a Dreamlands creature).

Note that the Dreaming skill does not let you, for instance, delete a gug that you are facing in Koya but you are able to remove it or yourself from the current location and drop it elsewhere. You cannot just rewrite the gug because it has its own existence within the Dreamlands; it is 'real' there and not subject *directly* to the Dreaming skill.

There is more about the Dreamlands in Cthulhu Through the Ages from Chaosium.

Online Personas

One thing that makes Anime-punk very different from a standard Call of Cthulhu game is the ready access that characters have to the Dreamlands. For those that work, it may be when much of their networking and meetings takes place, in virtual rooms very much like real world meeting rooms.

For those relaxing, they may create a very different avatar from their work persona but that is still ‘them’. While they might be unlikely to die in Hoka No Basho while working, it is not unknown and deaths due to ‘stress’ are a factor in the Neo-Shihon workplace.

When ‘playing’ in Koya, it may feel very different from Bijinesu but it is only the same as playing an online MMORG at home feels different from sending emails at work but in both cases, if the internet connection is lost, you’ll realize you are ultimately working or playing within one big entity, and Hoka No Basho is no different. Except in Hoka No Basho, if you annoy a gug, it might just track you down in your ‘work’ persona! That tends not to happen in our real world. Yet.

Players can devise as many avatar skins as they wish but ultimately, it does not change their underlying skills, whether that avatar is an online representation of themselves in business clothes or a muscular barbarian wielding a sword twice their own height.

Losing Sanity in Anime Punk

As was mentioned in the Introduction, the effect on a character of losing Sanity in the Anime-punk genre is going to appear very different to the effect in the 1920s. The people are much more jaded and blasé about seeing things that would have caused a Lovecraftian hero or heroine to faint away in a swoon.

By contrast to the 1920’s, Neo-Shihon is more about the dehumanizing effect of the society and events on a person than hysterics or phobias, which are entirely human reactions.

Characters can and will still lose sanity for seeing and experiencing the same things as in a standard game but rather than suffering some of the listed permanent insanities, the characters will lose all empathy for other people, developing psychopathic traits such as Dissocial Personality Disorder or the callous unconcern for the feelings of others. This kind of apathy is often defined as lack of conscience, and comes from the inability to empathize with others. This effectively removes the normal social barriers associated with respect for other people.

Combat in Koya

Combat in Koya should feel very different from physical confrontation in the real world but the feelings of invulnerability that such fights engender can lead a character into trying to resolve inappropriate situations with violence. If that habitual response is carried through into the real world of Neo-Shihon, that can have disastrous social consequences but even in Koya, there are things that a character should run away from and making a mistake in judgment can be just as fatal.

Note that, unlike the standard Dreamlands rules, physical damage (hit points) does carry over from the avatar to the character's physical body but it manifests as shock, physical weakness, aneurisms and heart attacks.

Library Use

If fighting a **virtual** enemy (one created by the VROE environment for the purposes of being fought), a character can use Library Use for the fight.

A successful hit does 1D6 damage to a character's Magic Point total. An impale (1/5) allows the character to roll the damage dice twice and apply the total to the enemy.

Use Intelligence to determine order of combat. If the Magic Points are reduced to zero for a character or an enemy, the avatar lose their resolution ('derez') and a character is kicked out of VROE and must log back in. No damage is permanent and Magic Points are regained as normal, just leaving a character feeling drained and exhausted.

One avatar cannot be damaged by another avatar as the VROE does not allow that except in specific Player versus Player (PVP) areas but attempting to do so will trigger VROE security programs that appear as avatars. They are able to inflict MP damage on a characters avatar but the character cannot inflict damage on them.

Computer Use

When either fighting a virtual enemy or another avatar, if a player has the Computer Use skill, they can inflict damage even on things that the VROE doesn't normally allow an avatar to damage. Again, use INT to determine the order of combat and the effects of losing all Magic Points is the same as for Library Use.

A successful hit does 1D6 MP, a hit under half the skill does 2d6 MP and a hit under one fifth does 3d6 MP.



When faced with a creature native to the Dreamlands, reducing it to zero MP will drive it away. Any damage inflicted by such a creature though reduces the **Hit Points** of a character, not their Magic Points. Combat with such things can easily become lethal.

Dreaming Skill

It is possible to use the Dreaming skill to fight in Hoka No Basho. Use POW to determine a characters order in the combat. All damage inflicted is inflicted as Hit Points rather than Magic points. A successful hit does 1D6 damage to a combatants Hit Point total and an impale (1/5) allows the character to roll the damage dice twice and apply the total to the enemy.

A character can spend Magic Points to add +1d6 damage to an attempted attack using the Dreaming skill but the points must be declared before the attack is rolled and are wasted if the attack is a miss. The bonus damage from spending Magic Points is **not** doubled on an impale result.

Additional Notes on Combat

There are no ranges in Hoka No Basho. You are either close enough to both deliver and receive damage or not close enough to do either.

An attack can look like anything that a player wishes to describe, with Computer Use and Dreaming Skill attacks looking more dramatic that those using library use. A character can wield a huge sword or a mutli-barrel plasma rifle; the look changes nothing about the damage inflicted.



Getting to Hoka No Basho

Hoka No Basho is an environment crafted to allow people that are very distant from each other to meet 'in person', as it were. Not just chat rooms, business meeting and dating sites but whole environments that feel as real as the real world.

A person living in a tiny Tawa apartment can have own and tend a beautiful garden in the VROE with wide, expansive views of snow-capped mountains. Two people can have a physical affair without ever meeting in person. An person who is shy and insecure about their appearance in the waking world can have the face and body they have always dreamed of in this perfect world.

The widow or widower, lost in their grief in their normal life, can continue to live with their loved one in Hoka No Basho. It is no wonder that people have committed suicide when their access to the VROE has been removed. Even prisons use VROE access for their inmates as a form of control.

Accessing the VROE that is Hoka No Basho is simplicity itself. At work, you might have only a lightweight headset that rests across your eyes and a chair, with your desk and office all being in the virtual realm. At home, you might have a couch and full head helmet that allows you to slide into the VROE.

Remember that these various headsets, as technological as they may sound, really only put you into a light sleep or hypnotic state, freeing your mind to enter the Dreamlands but only at certain locations specified by Mumei in their design of their software.

A headset always has a safety cut out to wake a user at a specified time, such as the end of the work day, at break times, or for food but it is not unheard of for both companies and individuals to tamper with their safety features. For businesses, they want to get more work out of their staff between break times. For individuals, if they leave Koya, they can only return to set entry points (or 'spawn points'). That limits how far they can get in their explorations of Hoka No Basho and the reckless will disable the cut outs so that they can reach more distant places. Of course, that has led to a dramatic rise in dehydration and starvation as causes of death.

Schools often use the VROE to deliver lessons to children that never have to leave their homes and never learn to engage with other individuals in person.

Technically, there are no laws about using a portable VROE headset to lighten the long daily commute but that is just asking to get mugged, or worse. Its life, Jim, but not as we know it.



RANGED WEAPONS

Most modern equipment is still available and in use in Neo-Shihon but here are a few specific tools which might find their way into the hands of the investigators, or their enemies. The majority of modern firearms in Neo-Shihon use case-less ammunition for the increased capacity that it brings to a weapon.

Hankyu-bi Auto



A favorite weapon of the professional gangster, the Hankyu-bi is prized as much for its intimidating appearance as it is for its firepower. It is true though that a single burst from a Hankyu should deal with most physical threats that a gangster might face, short of a fully armored police officer.

Skill: Firearms (pistol or submachine gun)

Damage: 1d10+2

Base Range: 15 yards

Uses per Round: 1 or burst 3

Magazine: 15

Malfunction: 98

Choku-nu C37



The C37 is the standard rifle used by both police and private security forces in Neo-Shihon, which is unsurprising really when you consider that the police are just one more customer as far as the corporations are concerned.

Skill: Firearms (rifle or submachine gun)

Damage: 2d6+4

Base Range: 90 yards

Uses per Round: 1 (2) or burst 3

Magazine: 30

Malfunction: 97

Uchi-ne Personal Defense Weapon



The Uchi-ne (or 'PD' in the local slang) is not a particularly effective weapon but is sold to salarymen as a personal defense weapon that can be carried in a briefcase along with the your sandwiches and any work that you had to take home to get finished in your own time.

It is the only common weapon on the streets that doesn't use case-less ammunition, rather using .22 ammo cartridges instead.

Due to its prevalence amongst the stressed masses travelling between Kogai and Yufukuna, it is the most common weapon to be involved in spontaneous shootings and random massacres, being both readily available and legal to carry concealed because of its classification of being for 'defense'.

Skill: Firearms (pistol or submachine gun)

Damage: 1d8

Base Range: 15 yards

Uses per Round: 1 (2) or full auto

Magazine: 20

Malfunction: 96

Serai Laser Mark Two



The Mark Two is not very effective as a weapon as it does very little damage and the battery powering it has a low capacity. A backpack or suitcase sized battery is available, connected to the weapon by a charging cable and raising the shot capacity to nearly unlimited, but that is extremely heavy and unwieldy. Recharging the batteries takes about two hours for the rifle version and about 12 hours for the backpack version.

Only two factors make the Mark Two popular and then only to those with criminal intent. One: if used in a murder, it leaves no forensic

traces behind to connect the weapon to the deceased. Two: it is often employed as a kind of universal lock pick, being used to burn through locks, bars and safes, given sufficient.

Skill: Firearms (rifle)

Damage: 1d6

Base Range: 30 yards

Uses per Round: 1

Charge: 10 shots (1000 shots)

Malfunction: 96

The Mark Two does 1d6 damage but sustained fire against a stationary target will burn through armor at 1d6 points per round.

E.g. the lock in a vault door has 20 armor and 20 hit points. After one round (and 3 points of damage) the lock is reduced to 17 armor and 20 hit points.

The benefit of burning through material cannot be used on anything except a stationary target as the effect is only localized to the tiny spot being heated by the laser beam.

Serai Karūseru



The Karūseru (or "carousel"), also produced by the Serai Corporation, is generally used by the police and military for crowd control and room clearance. It is effectively a laser shotgun. The increased battery size (the whole of the stock is

the battery and is replaced as one unit and its ability to be recharged from any outlet, including a vehicle battery, within 2 hours makes it a viable military weapon.

The weapon is nicknamed 'carousel' due to the appearance when it is fired, with multiple beams projected out of the barrel in an spinning, whirling cone or read light. Due to this scattering effect, the Karūseru doesn't have the same armor defeating effect that the Serai Mark Two has.

The gun tends to be somewhat unreliable but a malfunction is usually a loose internal connection or a faulty battery pack that is not holding its charge properly.

Skill: Firearms (rifle/shotgun)

Damage: 4d6/2d6/1d6

Base Range: 10/20/50 yards

Uses per Round: 1

Magazine: 20

Malfunction: 96

MELEE WEAPONS

Stun Batons

Used by both the police and private security forces, the stun baton isn't used because of its non-lethal nature but because even the lightest contact with a person can render them insensible, twitching in uncontrollable spasms on the floor.

Skill: Fighting (brawl)

Damage: 1d6+stun

Uses per Round: 1

The stunning effect only works on targets up to Build 2, who are incapacitated for 1D6 rounds (or as determined by the Keeper).



ARMOR

Private security, mercenaries and the police generally wear military grade personal body armor and swagger about the streets and corridors on Neo-Shihon with all the confidence that this near-invulnerability provides. It is not available to civilians under any circumstances and the best even the underworld can get away with is heavy Kevlar vests.

Heavy Kevlar Vest 8 points

Military Body Armor 12 points



CREATURES

One of the addictive features of Hoka No Basho is exploring Koya. Characters may believe that it is a procedurally generated environment but that doesn't mean that people do not become obsessed with it. With easily disabled safety cut-out features on the equipment used to connect to the VROE, it is not unheard of for 'players' to starve to death while their avatar is running around in the Dreamlands.

If your characters are going to be exploring the distant reaches of Koya a lot, I'd definitely suggest picking up *Cthulhu Through the Ages* from Chaosium which provides more details on the Dreamlands suitable for your adventures.

There is one facet of Koya that is far from common knowledge in Neo-Shihon. In fact those that have reported encounters have been treated as victims of hallucinations brought on by obsessive playing in Koya.

As the VROE draws the Dreamlands ever closer to the waking world, some creatures are able to 'translate' to the streets of Neo-Shihon. Things like the zoog are interested in being explorers themselves, while the gugs just want fresh meat and the moon-beasts kidnap people from the waking world and drag them back to their own realms in the Dreamlands.

If such invaders are slain or captured in the waking world, they just fade away back to their homes, literally as ethereal and impossible to hold as a dream.



Autonomous Units

The faceless drones that protect the rich from the poor as corporate security are still human. That is not true for AUs. These are robots running set protocols that permit no negotiation and any vocal address they deliver should not be mistaken for conversation. The pre-recorded speech is just another version of a siren or other automated warning.

AUs, by law, should not be deployed where civilians are present, being restricted to places like the automated farms beyond Kogai. Of course, for corporations, the first law is don't get caught breaking any other laws and 'should not be deployed' does not mean the same as 'are not deployed'.

STR 120 CON 120 SIZ 90 DEX 50
INT 30 POW 0
DB: 2d6 Build: 3 Move: 8
MP: 0 HP 20

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 45% (22/9), by weapon type (usually stun baton 1d6 + stun) or Firearms, submachine gun (2d6+4).

Armor: 19 points military armor plating.

Skills: Intimidate 80%, Firearms (submachine gun) 90%, Track 50%, Fighting (brawl) 40%, Dodge 0% (never dodge)

Sanity: 0



Corporate Security

Corporate security might not sit at the top of the totem pole that is society in Neo-Shihon but they know that remaining where there are requires them to keep everyone else in their place. This can make them singularly unsympathetic to the pleas of those that try to get past them without the right authorization. The majority of them literally live by the motto “If you’re name’s not down, you’re not getting in!”

STR 70 CON 50 SIZ 70 DEX 50
INT 50 POW 30
DB: 1d4 Build: 1 Move: 7
MP: 6 HP 12

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 60% (22/9), by weapon type (usually stun baton 1d6 + stun) or Firearms 45%, submachine gun (2d6+4).

Armor: 12 points military grade body armor.

Skills: Intimidate 40%, Firearms (submachine gun) 45%, Stealth 30%, Fighting (brawl) 60%, Dodge 25% (13/5)

Sanity: 0



Gug

Gugs have always been something terrifying to encounter in the Dreamlands but now the hideous giants have slipped through cracks into Kogai, hunting the dark streets and returning to the dreamlands with full bellies. Perhaps they have finally found a way around their ancient banishment to once more celebrate their abhorrent ceremonies in praise of the Great Old Ones.

STR 225 CON 140
 SIZ 285 DEX 50
 INT 65 POW 50
 DB: +5D6 Build: 6
 Move: 10
 MP: 10 HP 42

Attacks per round: 2

Fighting 60% (30/12), damage bite/claw 6d6 or by weapon type (knife, 1d6-2).

Armor: 8 point natural fatty hide.

Spells: A gug has a 10% chance of knowing 1d10 spells.

Skills: Dodge 25% (12/5)

Sanity: 0/1D8 in the Dreamlands, 1d8/1d20 if encountered in the dark streets of Kogai.



Zoog

Despite looking cute, zoogs may be timid when alone but are vicious and nasty in packs, quite happy to eat humans if a victim is encountered alone. Not every corpse that is discovered lying in a dirty alley is Suramu died from being chewed on by rats. Native to the Dreamlands and quite easily as intelligent as many humans, some zoog have found their way to fresh hunting grounds in the slums of Neo-Shihon but that doesn't stop them feeling back into the Dreamlands if they feel in danger of being slain; after all, they can always return later when the investigators have left.

STR 15 CON 35 SIZ 10 DEX 100
 INT 65 POW 50
 DB: -2 Build: -2 Move: 12
 MP: 10 HP 4

Attacks per round: 1

Fighting 40% (20/8), damage bite/claw 1D4+1 or by weapon type (knife, 1d6-2).

Armor: None.

Spells: a zoog will often know 1d4 spells.

Skills: Dodge 50% (25/10)
 Sanity: 0/1D3

