

# YOKOHAMA 2050

- THE PUBLIC WELFARE COMPREHENSIVE SPECIAL COUNTERMEASURES BUREAU -

## INTRODUCTION

This is an alternate quick setting for Shinobigami, a futuristic and slightly transhumanist setting inspired by media like *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* and *AKIRA*. It provides a frame for futurism-themed Shinobigami scenarios in a world of heavy technological, social and political change.

## YOKOHAMA 2050

The setting is not defined by carefully written timelines and world maps; please turn to *GitS:SAC* for visual and thematic background inspiration. But here are the basics:

**Tokyo 2020 Olympics:** Coming as a complete shock to economic and social analysts everywhere, the immense amounts of money and energy funneled into the Tokyo Olympics actually paid off in the years following: An unexpected second economic miracle occurred, catapulting Japan's status further as a world economic and production leader. Much of this had to do with the social ties, money and goodwill extended to the rest of Southeast Asia during this period, and the wide opening of immigration and easing of obtaining citizenship to previously unprecedented levels. Interest in technology and biohacking exploded in the decades after the Second Olympic Miracle. Most citizens of 2050s Japan have at least simple mechanical or biochemical/biomechanical enhancements to their bodies.

**Pan-Asian Resource Conflict (PARC):** In the mid/late 2030s a combination of the discovery of new high-interest material resources, the devastating mainland Calorie Plague-induced food shortages, and aggressive oceanic colony expansion caused immense sociopolitical upheaval in both the Asia-Pacific region and the Puppeteer Nations. Japan was pulled into an escalating conflict after military attacks in Okinawa and Kyushu. The war officially lasted a total of seven years (which Japan was active for the last three).

**Relocation of capital from Tokyo to Yokohama:** After the Tokyo Incident at the end of the PARC left Tokyo largely inhabitable (though radiation and biohazard-scrubbers are –very slowly– reclaiming the ruins), the capital of Japan was relocated from Tokyo to nearby Yokohama. Yokohama is now the political and economic center of Japan, with nearby Kawasaki (due to the pre-PARC technological and automation explosion) regarded as one of the industrial and technological centers of the world, second only to Free Shenzhen.

**Formation of the CSC:** Public Welfare Comprehensive Special Countermeasures Bureau (Kouan Sougou Tokushu Taisakka). While PARC ended almost a decade ago, the social and political fallout is still crashing upon the nation in waves. Article 206 of the post-PARC Ko-oh Constitution allowed the new Public Welfare Commission the freedom to create an organization comprised of temporary and full-time freelance investigation teams, recruited from both within the agency and outside. These task forces could be assembled and dissolved with extreme bureaucratic ease, and assigned to secretly investigate and resolve issues of extreme national interest.

Members of CSC task forces are often pulled in from outside agencies: Law enforcement, technological think-tanks, and even recognized criminal organizations: Those organizations are obliged to release selected staff for missions for the common good of Japan (those organizations are paid for their time). Most of these organizations gladly lend

their members to the CSC, as these tasks often offer great opportunities to advance their own organizational goals. A regular turnover of outside agents helps keep fresh perspectives and new ideas flowing within the CSC. However, on occasion, organizational rivalries and secret goals sometimes work to undermine the CSC missions. It's a delicate balance, but most agents and organizations working on retainer understand that betraying the CSC can lead to severe repercussions.

## **APPLYING YOKOHAMA 2050 TO SHINOBIGAMI**

There are no major rules changes for Yokohama 2050: The changes needed are mostly in the mindset of how the rules adapt to the setting, and how the characters interact in the game.

When the characters are contacted for a CSC mission (either directly from CSC agents, or by leaders within their own organization), it is not always the case that they immediately team up and work together – all smiles and bows – in the same office.

### **COOPERATIVE GAME**

In some cases, the task presented by the CSC is of such a strong nature that they pull in the recruited agents to work together. In these missions, while the agents and their organizations have secrets and goals, they are downplayed for the greater good of Japan (sometimes out of duty, other times out of fear of repercussions from the CSC).

In Game Terms: In other words, this leads to a very cooperative game with little inter-character conflict. If this is the kind of game that is played, please tell the players this clearly in advance, so they know what to expect: They can then plan out characters with a more “Players versus NPC Antagonist” style.

Note, though, that sometimes even in “cooperative games”, GM NPC secrets and tricks may turn the players against each other (this is a world of deep conspiracies and even “brain/sense hacking”, so anything is possible). However, it is nothing like the kind of bloodbath to be expected in a typical Shinobigami Battle Royale scenario.

### **PVP GAME**

Often, especially with first-time recruits or potentially volatile recruits, the CSC will have the agents work separately, often with no knowledge of the other agents assigned to the same task. This increases the ability of the CSC to publicly disavow knowledge of the agents' tasks if things go unexpectedly. They may (or may not, on some occasions) be given temporary identification that gives them access to CSC buildings and resources, and to identify themselves to each other (if they meet) or to other public officials.

In Game Terms: This allows for more PVP-style gaming as seen in traditional Shinobigami scenarios. Note that total PVP will likely not be an option for these games, as in the setting the CSC would not likely pick agents with conflicting goals and agendas and give them free reign to do anything – anything to each other, that is – as long as they complete the missions... or maybe they would, if the mission was important enough!

In either case, before the players begin making characters, clearly tell them in this situation that they will be freelance agents who may have conflicting goals and secrets that may put them at odds (including possible violence) with each other, even including the sabotage of the mission for personal or organizational goals!

## **CLAN OPTIONS**

### **CLAN OPTION ONE: SHINOBIGAMI**

This way is the easiest to play, particularly if players aren't familiar with the transhuman cyberpunk future as presented in Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex or similar media. In short, the six ninja clans are alive and well, fighting for their futures in 2050s Yokohama. The Public Welfare Comprehensive Special Countermeasures Bureau

was created by and is under the control of the Hirasaka Agency. The other five clans, and all abilities and rules, are as-is from the book.

This is the easiest mode to play Yokohama 2050, since it's the same setup and situation as seen in Shinobigami, with a slightly different setting.

Each Skill on the grid can be used to manipulate the real world, or the world in an interfaced network.

### **CLAN OPTION TWO: YOKOHAMA 2050**

This is the default mode expected for this alternative setting. However, this option is a little more difficult, as it reskins the six clans into twelve, and relies on a lot of player initiative to reframe the classic Shinobigami skills and Ninpo as physical and cyberhacking activities. However, it is a setting which is a little bit closer to one as presented in the reference material: Less focus on ninja magic; but more transhumanism and cybertechnology.

In Yokohama 2050, the 6 clans are replaced with 12 Organizations: 6 Public and 6 Private, with each Clan being "reskinned" into two Organizations. This allows the players to define their character background as one that is more in the "light" like government or law-enforcement organizations, or in the "shadow" like secretive and illegal organizations. This does not mean that the Light organization agent will always be working in the CSC's best interests, or that the Shadow organizations will always be acting in self-interest or doing "bad things". It just adds a level of character background which may add to the depth of Shinobigami's trust game.

The GM should also feel free to set a game where "all characters belong to Light Organizations" (or allowing only one Shadow Organization character, perhaps at random, for some diversity) in order to establish a more trusting environment.

Of course, a member of a Light Organization may secretly actually belong to their Shadow counterpart, and vice-versa.

### **CLAN: HASUBA NINJA ARMY becomes...**

**Light: Free Shenzhen Maker Guild** – There are strong ties between Kawasaki's technological miracle, and the group known as the Free Shenzhen Maker Guild: Originally an underclass of DIY technology hobbyists, many banded together across Asia into a shadow network of skilled technology and biohacking enthusiasts driving popular interest in pushing human limits. It is a moderately secretive invitational organization based upon technical ability, enthusiasm, and knowledge above all else. They seek to create, understand, and change the world through information freedom and technology.

**Shadow: Arita Heavy Industries** – Originally a conglomeration of over forty companies under an umbrella-company, it was dissolved after the CEO Arita Hideo was murdered and the company became bankrupt in a flood of litigation into their illicit activities. They were responsible for unlawfully testing cyber/bio prototype tech, shady business practices, and eventually illegally producing and selling military-grade weapons technology to foreign powers. While the company legally dissolved, most of the highly intelligent engineers went underground, and banded together into a loose network for mutual safety and information sharing. They seek the pure pursuit of knowledge of cutting-edge technology, applying it however possible, to uplift humanity by forcing it to evolve.

### **CLAN: KURAMA SHIN CLAN becomes...**

**Light: JSSF Mercy Company** – The Japanese Special Strike Forces battalion featured prominently in the PARC theatre. Each of the companies within it was named after a term or element related to the name of a Buddhist deity or Wisdom King: Unmoving, Authority, Diamond, Thunder and Mercy. It was this last company, Mercy Company, that was sent into the most dangerous missions, requiring the most training, experience and finesse. After retiring, many soldiers of the Mercy Company took on positions within the government while still maintaining ties to the military. They seek to protect Japan's safety in the global theatre.

**Shadow: Imashime** – In the chaos of the PARC, the Self-Defense Force started to realize that several of their secret missions - usually the bloodiest - were conclusively resolved before the first boot fell on enemy soil. It soon became clear that there was a new freelance mercenary organization calling themselves Imashime (“punishment”), with elusive goals, working largely on behalf of Japanese interests. With no ties (even unofficially) to the Japanese government, their rumored status as “badass good guys working on our side” ended towards the end of the PARC when they engaged in a rash of military strikes and assassinations of military and political leaders in both Japan and around the globe. Secretive, heavily funded, and trained well, their organization seems to selectively accept assignments, sometimes turning down lucrative contracts without explanation. Their ultimate goals are not publicly known.

#### **CLAN: LOST ONES becomes...**

**Light: Security Division Five** – Within the National Police Agency is a large renowned division of highly skilled law enforcement agents: Trained in deep cover covert investigation, forensics, and criminal psychology; they are often assigned to the highest profile criminal investigations. Division Five in particular recruits the most enthusiastic and naturally talented investigators from the National Police Agency, to represent the face of Japanese civil order. This is a group from which the CSC liberally borrows agents. In fact, many individuals who wish to eventually work for the CSC aim to get into the NPA’s Security Division Five, seeing it as a path to prove themselves worthy of transferring to the CSC. They serve to uphold and enforce the laws of Japan, and to protect Japan’s interests from within.

**Shadow: Genbu Council** – The Tokyo Incident left the nation’s infrastructure in tatters. Within that turmoil, a conglomerate of the remaining organized Yakuza crime families in the Kanto region formed an alliance for the “Good of Japan” (in their own words, at least). While running the post-war black markets and organizing local and foreign labor for lucrative reconstruction contracts, they established themselves as a quasi-legitimate front specializing in organizing cheap labor and international construction deals. The four families under the Genbu Council of course retain their shadowy side, the side that deals in illegal activities, drugs, ware, and mods: They focus on these economically-rich venues over the classical Yakuza activities of extortion, intimidation and human trafficking. Currently their virtues have weighed heavier than their vices, which is why they have not been crushed by the government. Their agents range from thugs and street protectors to enthusiastic labor organizers and international interpreters.

#### **CLAN: HIRASAKA AGENCY becomes...**

**Light: Cabinet National Investigations Office** – The closest Japan has to a “spy agency”, the agents of the post-war Yokohama-based Cabinet National Investigations Office are like a cross between the CIA and Her Majesty’s Secret Service: They work often outside of the law on deep cover investigations and assignments to protect Japan’s national interests. Highly funded and utterly secretive, they focus on threats to Japan primarily within the borders of the country, but on occasion engage in activity outside the borders when a clear threat to Japan’s interests manifests. Agents of this office are skilled with subterfuge and spying, which makes them great long-term recruits to CSC activities. They aim to gather and understand the secrets of the other organizations in order to protect Japan.

**Shadow: Thyrus Dot Com** – Also known simply as “Thyrus”, their history as an organization would seem comical if their organization were not so powerful. Thyrus originally started in the late 2020s as a social media content-sharing platform focused on fashion and celebrity trend-setters in various artistic circles. As a diamond is born from coal under tremendous heat and pressure; over years of international litigation, expansion into other media venues, and deep level gathering and trading of secrets, Thyrus Dot Com has become a multimedia empire. However, these days their agents are less publicly-known investigative journalists and socialites, and more an advanced privatized spy network which gathers dangerous secrets around the world for the Chairwoman Yoko Yamagishi. Thyrus gathers and exploits the secrets of other organizations for security, enrichment, and leverage.

#### **CLAN: OTOGI PRIVATE ACADEMY becomes...**

**Light: Public Welfare Comprehensive Special Countermeasures Bureau (CSC)** – While other agents are recruited by the secretive CSC for cross-organizational investigations and missions, agents of the CSC form the core of the organization: They tend to be master strategists; with either a deep background and education in politics, sociology and leadership, or “naturals” of leading or controlling others. Most have a solid background in one of the other law enforcement, military, or protective service bureaus before being scouted and recruited for a permanent CSC position. While they often operate outside of legal and political ties that bind other organizations (but almost always within the borders of Japan), their clear goal is for the safety and protection of the country.

**Shadow: Novstock Economic Alliance** – Novstock was formed after the PARC by a loose federation of mostly East African, Southeast Asian and Eastern European countries with a headquarters in Addis Ababa. The Novstock Economic Alliance is a political and economic think-tank and action group that connected and empowered many of the lesser-powered countries left devastated and disenfranchised in the war. Not a union of nations, it is more a loose, free collection of powerful representatives of various countries, which set to various international tasks for the betterment of the Novstock member nations as a whole. It’s unknown how such a group of completely diverse private interests are able to act so quickly in the group’s overall interest without endless debate and bureaucracy; but within that secret lies their true power. Japan is not a member of Novstock: While they are sometimes at odds on various issues, there has not been open conflict between the two (yet). Their public goal is the protection and enrichment of the citizens of the nations under the Novstock umbrella, and they maintain an Economic Organizations Embassy near the Motomachi district of Yokohama.

#### **CLAN: BLOODLINE OF ONI becomes...**

**Light: Whisper** – Artificial Intelligence – as much as it can be recognized as such – exists in 2050. An early experiment by the CSC to create an autonomous information collection and espionage platform resulted in the creation of the first recognizable AI. Most of the original administration and programming team behind the Whisper project resigned and relocated the three servers containing the AI – now calling itself Caretaker – to a privately financed security facility. The AI proved its sentience and usefulness to the CSC by collecting the information needed to negotiate its freedom and autonomy. No public information about the existence of Caretaker has leaked to the public, and the CSC takes measures to protect the Whisper project team. In return, Caretaker and Whisper agents freely donate their time when asked on important CSC activities. Caretaker has confirmed that it intends to watch over and protect humanity “through the next age”, and her loyal Whisper agents – world-class hackers, information analysis and brain-divers – are absolutely certain of Caretaker’s sincerity and methods.

**Shadow: Faction Four** – A few years after Caretaker negotiated its autonomy, a small group of Whisper agents independently traveled to a new research facility in West Myanmar to follow up a rumor on some cutting-edge unlicensed biotech advancements reportedly manufactured there. Within a few days of landing, those agents reportedly dropped off all contact to Whisper. Two days later, they all returned to Japan with members brought in from Myanmar and other countries. Cutting off all contact from Whisper, they began calling themselves Faction Four. Most members of this group host incredible and highly illegal biotech implants and enhancements in their bodies, and have been aggressive in pushing for transhumanist rights and volatile (and often quasi-illegal) technologies and experimental methods. They are mostly completely underground, and are officially recognized as a terrorist organization. While they are clearly very pro-technology (particularly biotech and biohacking) and international-focused, their actual group goals and activities in Japan are totally unknown and extremely suspect. Faction Four seems to respect their original ties to Whisper enough to keep that organization and the existence of Caretaker a secret, but they have an otherwise extremely antagonistic relationship with that organization in particular.

## **SKILL AND NINPO ADAPTATIONS**

In the Yokohama 2050 Clan Option, all of the ninja magical abilities are reskinned as effects of savant-level hacking, mostly affecting cybergear and the wireless-driven internet; but can also be applied to biohacking as well. For example:

**Possession, Domination, Illusion and Curse** could represent “Persona Hacking”, directly influencing or manipulating human behavior using special skills coupled with cyberware (digital brain implants) or bioware (pheromone or chemical/drug distribution implants).

**Binding and Barrier** could represent hacking the “internet of things”: The opponent’s smartgun lock engages; their cyberarm firmware freezes; the chemical cocktail they inhaled causes their legs to cramp and freeze.

**Necromancy** could represent the pulling of secrets (or actions) from the dead: There was enough cyberware in their body, with just enough power, to continue to drive the meat-shell; using a braintap and a volatile biochem mix, a dead person’s brain could be brought back to life for a few short minutes of interrogation.

**Creature Mastery (Strategy)** could represent the control of one’s own or other personal assistant digital avatars, or service robots.

**Kotodama** is a tricky one; this is probably left as applicable only to electronic/internet media and communications: The usage of specific written words or word-based memetic viruses for various unique effects.

## **NINPO and OHGI**

The rules for Ninpo and Ohgi, as well as their names, do not change. Their effects just tend to be based more in technological roots than magical ones. Consider their visual effects when using them.

## **NINJA TOOLS**

There’s no reason to change their names for Yokohama 2050: Just consider that “Bead of Life” is a restorative/healing tool; the “Soma Pill” represents a tool or device used to boost your own action (narrating the use of as-yet-unrevealed cyber and bio implants would be particularly interesting here); and the Prayer Seal represents a tool or device to interfere with others’ actions: Narrating the use of high tech one-use items would be effective here.

## **GM ADVICE**

When creating Yokohama 2050 scenarios, consider well the organizations that the characters belong to when designing the Secrets/Secret Goals. In a typical Shinobigami scenario, you could put together a network of personal/emotional secrets that have no relation to the clans the characters pick. However, it would particularly interesting in a Yokohama 2050 scenario to really consider the organization the character belongs to when designing their secret. Even if it’s something suitably simple (“Collect the Secrets of 3 other Characters...”), you can add a little description text about the motivations of that particular organization that relate to the world or scenario background (“...so that Novstock will be able to leverage them to pull more economic aid from Japan during next month’s Southeast Asia Development Committee meeting.”)

Beyond that, one thing to aim for is to not make the character Secrets/Secret Goals too complicated. Ad Libbing the features of a political and social-focused cyberpunk setting will be a lot of mental work for the players to start off, so focusing on rather classic and simple Secrets for the players initially will help them out. If you want to focus on crazy transhumanist-themed twists (like the kind that often occur in GitS:SAC), keep those in the hands of the major NPCs to be brought out in play.