

About Nantou

Nantou is a group of islands in a vast ocean east of a big continent. It consists of two main islands that poets describe as the moon and its reflection in the water. The bigger one of the two islands is Nan to the southwest, the long, narrow one in the northeast facing the open sea is Tou. Some smaller islands surround the archipel.

In the native language the characters of the name Nantou mean „Islands of humans“. In fact, the inhabitants of the archipel see Nantou as the home of humanity and culture. The nomad tribes of the continent, who also inhabit some of the small northern islands of Tou, have been regarded as barbarians since old times.

Despite this common ground and a long history together there are notable differences between Nanjin and Toujin in terms of language, clothing and culture.

Since Nan is a fertile country full of resources, it has many wealthy cities where arts and science flourish just as the trade. Tou is rather mountainous and harsh, but here as well, people have learnt to create beauty and value out of simplicity.

Nan and Tou are each reigned independently by a spiritual and worldly ruler: the Emperor of Sunrise in Tou and the Emperor of the Sea of Stars in Nan. In the past there hasn't always been peace between the two countries. But recently both have been caught up in internal conflicts. It is not long ago that Nan was unified from several rivaling domains into one realm. And already the harmony is threatened by the early death of one Emperor and the far too young age of his heir.

In Tou war still rages between several warlords and it is far from sure which path the country will take in the future.

On top of that, a few years ago ships from the far west side of the continent have reached Nantou. Their arrival and the strange culture and technologies they brought might change Nantou forever. While Nan has already sold a small island to the sailors, Tou is still cautious and hesitant.

Our story takes place in Arumura, a small city in the northern mountains of Tou. It lies on the border of the domain of clan Kitano, a clan who has fallen from honorable protector of the Emperor to outcast rebels in a war intrigue and has been forced to send away most of its warriors. Arumura has been pulled down in this fall and has become a city of outlaws. Yet, there are rumours that attract attention from people all over the country. Rumours that might mean revival or ruin to Arumura.

The situation in Tou at the beginning of the game

Our story is set in Tou at the border of clan Kitano's domain.

For about ten years now, there has been war and battles in Tou, from which two main factions have emerged: The southern alliance under clan Nobutada and, as a response to its fast increase in power, the northern alliance under clan Saigo. The far northern clan of Kitano remained neutral, as

it has dispatched the guards of the Emperor for a long time, but still the Kitano domain was attacked and partly destroyed several times both by northern and southern forces.

At the end of the past year there was a stalemate between north and south and a unstable truce allowed the country to take a breath of life again. Yet, a new victory of the Nobutada daimyo seemed only a matter of time, because he – other than Saigo – welcomed the sailors from the west and was planning to use their technologies extensively.

But Nobutada was betrayed by his right hand man, a former peasant risen to power, a man called Tosugi. Through a marriage arranged by Nobutada himself, Tosugi had good connections at the imperial court. He convinced the Emperor that Nobutada was planning to oust him from power and introduce the western religion to Tou. As a reward for this revelation, Tosugi was named Regent of the South. Nobutada fled with some loyal retainers and went into hiding, while most of his former followers pledged allegiance to Tosugi.

To have unlimited influence at the imperial court, Tosugi also blamed the neutral Kitano to be a part of Nobutada's conspiracy against the Emperor. Kitano was forced to expel most of its samurai. At last, when the domain of Kitano was to be given to Tosugi as well, Saigo intervened and helped Kitano keep its independence.

Now, it is only a matter of time until either north or south will try to bring Kitano under their control – an act that might spark the flames of war once again.

The factions

When registering, you can choose one of the following factions. Each comes with a more or less secret agenda that you will receive after your registration.

Inhabitants of Arumura: The small town of Arumura is the site of our story. Being a border town of Kitano it has always been a lively market town, especially for silk. In the years of war Arumura has been on a rapid decline. Anyone who lives here either hopes for a chance to get away or to save the city. Most people of Arumura know a thing or two about the rumours that attract strangers to come here lately. But each one of them has their very own plans with them.

Typical characters: Merchants, peasants, craftsmen, day labourers, wood cutters, herb sellers, village idiot or village beauty, priests, monks, fortune tellers, helping hands of the izakaya and the village captain.

Gokudou –the gangs: The weakening power of law and order has turned Arumura into a hive of organized crime. Several gangs are fighting for control over the city, by the very special rules of the gokudou. If Arumura should gain importance again, they will want to have their share in the profits.

Typical characters: thugs, cutthroats, scoundrels, gambling masters, loan sharks and debt collectors, prostitutes, pimps, beggars, shell game players ...

Kitano – a Clan in decline: Arumura lies in the north of Tou on the domain of clan Kitano. By an intrigue the clan has lost its honorable position as guardians of the Emperor. Suspected to be traitors and rebels, the clan had to expel most of its samurai warriors. Now the country is without protection and another twist of fate is already looming.

Typical characters: Ronin and other members of the Samurai class fallen from power, as well as other refugees fleeing to the south.

The rich and powerful of Tou – the Southern and Northern Alliance: For several years now two alliances of clans have struggled for power in Tou. The Northern alliance under the daimyo Saigo, who wants to unite the country and shut it against all foreign barbarians. The Southern alliance under Tosugi, the Regent of the South, is currently in the Emperor's favour. Still, both sides are exhausted from many hard battles. There is a truce in place and the recently hired soldiers roam the lands in search for new work. If it should become known that one of the two sides is grasping for Arumura and Kitano, Tou might fall back into war again.

Typical characters: Spies and messengers in different cover identities, former soldiers and battle field scavengers

Nowhere at home: Of course there are people in Tou who call nothing and noone home. Their life is hard and most people look down on them. Without the protection of a family, a clan or a lord, these people must face all the hardships in life alone – and they should be up to the task. Because there is nothing worse for a Toujin than dying alone and forgotten by the roadside.

Typical characters: Ronin and (martial) artists, who want to make a name for themselves.

Travelers from Nan: Once in a while people from the big neighbour island find their way to the north of Tou as well. They come as travelling or seasonal merchants, wandering scholars and monks or sometimes live here already for several generations, but always keeping the traditional way of life of the golden island of Nan.

Banjin – Barbarians and sailors: the arrival of the sailors from the east under their ex-pirate captain has hit Nantou about 10 years ago like a shock wave. Before, people in Nantou believed to be the only people of culture in the whole world. Faced with the technological achievements of the strange western culture, most were insecure and intrigued at the same time. By now, the banjin sailors have made themselves at home on a small island south of Nan and earn a fortune by managing trade between Nantou and their home countries. But especially in Tou people are starting to doubt the motifs of the foreign sailors. Apart from the sailors there are also people of the nomad tribes of the

eastern continent living in the northern parts of Tou. They are mostly seen as uncivilized barbarians by people of Nantou.

Typical characters: Marine traders and ex-pirates, missionaries, interpreters, cartographers, fur and wood merchants... This faction is limited to 10 % of all characters.