

Kuni Yaruko, Jade Magistrate

Kuni Yaruko was born to stand against the darkness. Her father was a bushi who served atop the Great Carpenter Wall for over a decade, slaying hundreds of the Crab's enemies and never relinquishing so much as an inch of his charged territory to the Shadowlands. Her mother was a tsukai-tsagusau, a Witch Hunter, and one that was hailed by the entire Kuni family as a scourge of evil everywhere. Yaruko was raised by her father, as her mother was of higher rank and was frequently performing investigations for the clan, and he taught their daughter to revere Kuni Yae every bit as much as he did. Yaruko dreamed of joining her mother, but her gift for speaking to the kami exceeded even Yae's, and she was instead sent to study as a shugenja.

Although initially disappointed, Yaruko came to enjoy her training as a shugenja. Although they were not witch hunters in the strictest sense of the word, many Kuni shugenja studied alongside the hunters and aided them in their task, performing the same duties with ultimately the same results. Yaruko worked tirelessly toward her goal, and graduated near the top of her class. Unfortunately, not just anyone could be assigned to work with the great Kuni Yae, not even if that person was her daughter, and Yaruko had many duties to fulfill before she could live her dream. This was understandable, and in truth almost a relief to Yaruko, for in many ways she had always feared she would not be able to live up to her mother's example.

It was while Yaruko was serving as an attendant to a senior Kuni shugenja when the news reached her that her mother had been lost. Accounts were confused at first, and for a short time it seemed that Yae had been defeated by the Shadowlands, presumably killed in the process. Unfortunately, as the lone survivor of the incident was treated for his wounds and recovered, he presented testimony that was far more horrible: Yae had betrayed her family and her oaths, and had fallen to darkness. Yaruko was devastated. She immediately left for her family home only to discover that her father had committed seppuku in order to cleanse their family's honor, freeing Yaruko from dishonor by her mother's actions. Horrified, Yaruko returned to the Kuni elders and requested the right to bring her mother to justice. Though many doubted her ability, none doubted her determination. Yaruko was granted permission.

The Shadowlands were far more horrible than even the most gruesome tales Yaruko had been told, but she did not falter. Several days' travel into that twisted realm, she came upon a vast field of blasted rock and obsidian, a sea of jagged stone, and there she finally faced her mother. Corruption had granted Yae a terrible beauty that she had lacked in life, and Yaruko felt her heart ache with love even as she recoiled in horror. The two fought, and despite Yae's superior skill and experience, her corruption made her weak against her daughter's pure magic. When the final moment came, though,

Yaruko could not kill her mother, and Yae escaped. Distraught, Yaruko returned home and lied, telling her sensei that she could not find Yae.

After her failure, Yaruko went into a self-imposed exile, wandering the Twilight Mountains alone. Ostensibly she was searching for the Shadowlands spirits that infected that area, but truthfully she was seeking atonement. She found it when she encountered a young Dragon magistrate named Mirumoto Narumi, and together the two freed the tortured soul Hitomi Kobai from his imprisonment by the Bloodspeakers. The two were awarded positions as magistrates for this feat, Narumi as an Emerald Magistrate and Yaruko as a Jade Magistrate. Together the two faced the Bloodspeakers yet again, destroying two traitors in the ruins of Shiro Chuda and uncovering clues to the location of some insidious cell at work within the Phoenix lands.

Although their investigation into the Phoenix lands has yet to bear fruit, Yaruko feels some measure of peace for the first time in years. Narumi knows of her secret shame, and has accepted her nonetheless. She is in many ways the sister that Yaruko never had, and her regard is of tremendous importance to Yaruko. The Kuni have long since forgiven the young woman for her failure, but she has yet to forgive herself.

Kuni Yaruko, Jade Magistrate

Air: 2

Reflexes 3

Earth: 3

Fire: 3

Water: 2

Perception 4

Void: 3

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 2

Glory: 3.1

Status: 4.4

Honor: 2.8

Advantages: Blessing of the Elements (Earth), Social Position (Jade Magistrate)

Disadvantages: Antisocial (2 points), Sworn Enemy (Kuni Yae; 3 points)

Spells: Commune, Counterspell, Sense, Summon; Armor of Earth, Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Earth's Stagnation, Fires from the Forge, Fury of Osano-Wo, Heart of Mortality, Hurried Steps, Ignite, Jade Strike, Path to Inner Peace, Slash of the Lion

Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hunting 4, Investigation 3, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Meditation 1, Spellcraft (Maho) 3, Stealth 3, Theology (Fortunes) 1

Note: Yaruko has used the Heart of Mortality spell to forge a close bond with her partner, Emerald Magistrate Mirumoto Narumi.