



Playtest: Ecology of the Hengeyokai

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This month, we're offering a playtest of a new race that ties in with October's Kara-Tur theme. We'll be following feedback on the article, and we will take time to make further revisions if necessary. Once you've had a chance to review and playtest the material, please send your feedback to playtesting@wizards.com with the subject line "Ecology of the Hengeyokai" by October 31.

Hengeyokai are a race of intelligent, shapeshifting animals native to Kara-Tur that can freely assume human form or a bipedal hybrid form; numerous subraces exist, each corresponding to a different species of common animal. They are the descendants of humans and shapeshifting animal spirits, and as such they have a strong connection to both the spirit and mortal worlds. Unlike the savage and bloodthirsty lycanthropes, hengeyokai are usually reclusive and do not become violent except when no other choice remains.

Hengeyokai live throughout Kara-Tur on the fringes of human society. They are secretive creatures that avoid prolonged contact with other races, the one exception being the spirit folk (see the sidebar). Despite their natural reticence, some good-natured hengeyokai become the protectors of human families or small villages. Scholars believe that the

OTHER RACES OF KARA-TUR

In addition to humans and hengeyokai, korobokuru and spirit folk are among the most prevalent races in Kara-Tur.

Korobokuru: These small, dwarflike humanoids usually reside in secluded villages far from human civilization and live simply as hunters, farmers, or artisans. They get along poorly with humans, who consider them backward and primitive. Korobokuru venerate the primal spirits that dwell near their communities.

Spirit Folk: The descendants of humans and various nature spirits, spirit folk are highly attuned to nature but typically live among humans. Three distinct kinds exist (bamboo, river, and sea spirit folk), and all resemble slender, comely humans.

hengeyokai's supernatural heritage explains this seemingly incongruous behavior, since so many spirits are protective by nature. These creatures receive offerings of food, gifts, and services in return for their efforts, even though most beneficiaries never see their guardian or realize its true nature. For instance, the hare hengeyokai Xax Chung is called the hero of Koje, a small city in central Koryo. He perished defending his adopted hometown from a dragon that had smashed Jisziat's Tower, a prominent local landmark; until his death, few suspected that the elderly warrior was anything other than human.

On the other hand, evil hengeyokai often prey upon humans. More mischievous than malevolent, these hengeyokai delight in playing cruel pranks on their victims but will deceive, steal, and even kill to get what they want. Typically they extort offerings from terrorized locals, but few are ever satisfied with their gifts, often leading to unpleasant results.

APPEARANCE AND PHYSICAL QUALITIES

Hengeyokai are agile creatures, but their other physical attributes vary according to their subrace. Twelve subraces are known to exist: badger, carp, cat, crab, crane, dog, fox, hare, monkey, raccoon dog, rat, and sparrow. Legends abound of other subraces, such as frog, lizard, and weasel, in addition to larger beings such as tigers, dolphins, and pandas; however, no human has ever confirmed their existence.

The race is exceptionally long-lived, with an unusual life cycle. Hengeyokai can live for over 200 years, but for the first century they exist only as animals and cannot assume another form. Except for their extended life span and above-average intelligence, immature hengeyokai differ little from mundane animals. Once they reach 100 years of age, they can assume hybrid and human forms. At this point, they are the equivalent of human adolescents,

but any memories of their previous existence are hazy and indistinct.

All hengeyokai can assume three distinct forms.

Animal Form: In animal form, hengeyokai are nearly indistinguishable from normal animals; only careful observation of their behavior can uncover their intelligence. They are exceptionally mobile in this form and often assume it for the purpose of exploration or reconnaissance. Hengeyokai cannot speak in animal form, but they can communicate with beasts similar to themselves.

Hybrid Form: In this form, hengeyokai stand at their human height on their hind legs or similar appendages. They assume an overall humanoid shape, with front paws, wings, or fins changing into hands that are capable of gripping and using weapons and other equipment, but retain their animalistic appearance, including fur, scales, feathers, tails, and other characteristics. They can speak any languages they know and are still able to communicate with animals. Hengeyokai prefer to assume this form among their own kind or trusted companions of other races.

Human Form: Each hengeyokai can assume the form of a unique human. While individuals' appearance varies according to the region in which they were born, on average they are shorter and slighter than their human neighbors. Even in human form, hengeyokai always display some animalistic features. For example, a sparrow hengeyokai might have a sharp, beaklike nose; a crab hengeyokai, larger-than-normal hands; and a rat hengeyokai, beady eyes or a long, thin mustache. Hengeyokai in human form can speak any language they know but can no longer directly communicate with animals, though they can still understand them.

BELIEFS AND CULTURE

Hengeyokai are a reclusive race. They rarely befriend other creatures (except for spirit folk) and are wary of strangers. However, if treated kindly, hengeyokai can become steadfast and lifelong friends.

Attitudes

Hengeyokai are wild and unpredictable, with a strong independent streak. They value their freedom above all else, and many also champion the freedom of others. They abhor slavery and shudder at the thought of chaining or caging an animal; restraining a hengeyokai in this manner is a grave insult. They also display personality traits similar to their animal forms. A badger hengeyokai might be aggressive and dour, a monkey hengeyokai playful and inquisitive, and a hare hengeyokai quiet but always alert for signs of danger.

Like most races, the majority of hengeyokai do not have a strong disposition toward good or evil, though some subraces have an affinity for certain alignments. Carp, crane, dog, hare, and sparrow hengeyokai tend toward good (however, few hengeyokai possess the discipline necessary to be lawful good), while badger, fox, raccoon dog, and rat hengeyokai tend toward evil or chaotic evil. Many humans treat the subraces according to these stereotypes; for example, they might be suspicious of fox hengeyokai and avoid them.

All hengeyokai are mischievous by nature and value playing tricks on others without being caught or noticed, even if doing so doesn't endear them to their neighbors. They do this for a variety of reasons, often for amusement, but mainly to test the reactions of their neighbors and to prepare for dangerous situations. Most pranks are good-natured fun (snatching food, misplacing household objects, and setting animals loose are popular), but those of evil hengeyokai are frequently malicious and destructive—sometimes deadly.

Daily Life

Hengeyokai live as simply as possible and prefer to stay on the edges of human society, often in isolated rural areas close to the safety of the wilderness, moving whenever civilization encroaches further upon their territory. Given their itinerant existence, hengeyokai have little use for material possessions; they usually exchange whatever treasure they accumulate for practical items such as food or weapons. While in human or hybrid form, they typically adopt the dress, language, tools, and customs of their nearest human neighbors. Their diet is also similar to that of their neighbors, though they favor foods associated with their animal forms; for example, sparrow hengeyokai prefer grains while monkey hengeyokai eat fruit, and cat hengeyokai are exclusively carnivores.

Hengeyokai have little interest in land or social status, and they do not strongly value personal honor as their human neighbors do. They enjoy storytelling, horticulture, and all forms of physical recreation, especially swimming, running, and climbing. Few have the patience to learn a craft, but those who do are exceptionally skilled, and collectors eagerly seek out their *nishiki-e* (colored woodcuts) and *kongi rikishi* (carved figures that guard the entrances to temples).

Communities

Hengeyokai do not have lands of their own and rarely form lasting communities. They usually dwell alone or in small nomadic bands, constructing temporary shelters of wood and stone. Different subraces of hengeyokai can live together as long as they share similar habitats and beliefs; homogeneous bands are rarer, but not unheard of. It is proper to refer to homogenous bands by the collective noun associated with their animal form, such as pride, school, or flock; they often become part of local folklore. Some prominent examples include the lake folk of Nam Tso

in Tabot, a school of beneficent carp hengeyokai, and the enigmatic “bird men” of Koryo, believed to be an unusually large flock of crane hengeyokai.

During adolescence, thrill-seeking hengeyokai overcome by wanderlust and curiosity sometimes choose to live among humans temporarily; many of those who do so eventually develop an instinctual urge to remain and protect their new neighbors. They especially favor those who treat animals well, are kind toward strangers, and tolerate their mischief. Such hengeyokai live in human form under an assumed identity (usually one that allows them to disappear for days without raising many questions) or pose as somewhat tame animals living nearby—but never as pets. A content hengeyokai might remain in its adopted home for many years, watching over several generations of humans.

Hengeyokai do not establish clans or have any strong familial bonds, to the point of rarely worshipping ancestor spirits. Adult hengeyokai seldom form lasting romantic relationships and typically mate only once or twice in their lifetimes. Such unions are passionate but fleeting, lasting only until the young can fend for themselves, which is typically a few months after birth; most couples part on good terms and remain friendly for the remainder of their lives. Some parents linger near their young for a few years to offer them protection, especially if hunters pose a threat.

On rare occasions, hengeyokai mate with animals, humans, or spirit folk (the former in animal form, the latter two in human form). The offspring of animals and hengeyokai are hengeyokai, but those born of hengeyokai and humans or spirit folk have the mother's race. Human children of these couplings are notable for their agility, longevity, and beauty; they also have a preternatural connection with animals, often becoming rangers or druids.

Religion

As the descendants of spirits, hengeyokai feel closer to the spirit world than to the world of mortals. They do not venerate spirits as other races do but view them as equals. Even hengeyokai that wield primal magic share this attitude. Their individualism often prompts hengeyokai to become followers of less rigid, more personal religions and philosophical traditions such as the Way (in Shou Lung and T'u Lung), the cult of the Eight Million Gods (in Wa and Kozakura), or shamanism. Hengeyokai rarely follow established doctrine and readily shrug off accusations of heresy; they believe what they believe and worship as they please.

Long ago, many hengeyokai in Wa turned to the worship of the foreign goddess Chauntea despite the shogunate's ban, viewing her as an immensely powerful, yet benevolent and easygoing, nature spirit. Most of these hengeyokai fled Wa after the suppression of the Juzimura Rebellion. Many ultimately migrated to Faerûn where they could worship her as they pleased, much to the annoyance of some orthodox churches there.

HENGEYOKAI POPULATIONS

Hengeyokai live all across Kara-Tur but are especially prevalent in three regions: Sheng Ti province in the heartlands of Shou Lung, the Ama Basin, and the islands of Shinkoku and Tenmei in Kozakura.

Sheng Ti Province

This province of terraced hills and dense forests has always been renowned for its large population of hengeyokai. Its cities are among the few places where hengeyokai openly assume their hybrid forms, even those normally viewed with suspicion by humans, such as the fox and raccoon dog subraces. The

province is also famous for the beauty of its people, and the Sheng are thought to owe much of their diminutive stature and elegance to the influence of hengeyokai, as well as numerous spirit folk.

Following the Spellplague, the connection grew much stronger between Sheng Ti and the portion of the spirit world that Faerûnians would call the Feywild. Though empowered by these events, the hengeyokai and spirit folk inhabitants of the province remained loyal to the Emperor and helped him restore order (the maternal great-grandfather of the ninth Emperor Chin of the ruling Kuo dynasty was a hengeyokai from Sheng Ti). Recognizing their contribution, in 2646 (1396 DR), the grateful Emperor decreed that all hengeyokai and spirit folk subjects residing in the province could legally take the civil service examinations and join the mandarin, which had previously been an option available only to humans. Given their nature, few took the opportunity, but that fact hasn't stopped the formation of racist tongs that wish to restore the former status quo. These tongs plot in the shadows with tacit support from some nobles and bureaucrats, and sometimes act against prominent hengeyokai.

Nowadays, hengeyokai from all over Kara-Tur view Sheng Ti province as a refuge, and many have migrated to it by way of Lo'Shan, its main seaport. Hengeyokai who fled Wa after a wave of gargantuan devastated that country came to Sheng Ti but had trouble assimilating; many left to establish new homes in the Hordelands or even farther west in Faerûn.

Ama Basin

The Shou refer to this immense area of swamps and taiga around the Ama River as the Northern Wastes, a misleading name since it is hardly a wasteland. In fact, it is home to a wide variety of peoples, including several confederations of human barbarians, many korobokuru clans, numerous spirit folk enclaves,

and the largest concentration of hengeyokai in all of Kara-Tur.

Hengeyokai thrive in this remote wilderness, and the barbarians that dominate the region accord them a great deal of respect (and sometimes fear and hatred), believing them to be powerful manifestations of the spiritual forces of nature. Traditionally hengeyokai, even evil ones, become protectors of human tribes, who have always been in desperate need of allies. The situation has only worsened in the decades following the Spellplague, for several powerful oni have enslaved the hobgoblin living in the nearby Land of Snow Demons. The human villages scattered across the region are now under constant threat from their predatory neighbors to the north.

Shamanism is the region's most widespread belief system, and the Ama River basin is home to most hengeyokai practitioners of primal magic, especially barbarians, druids, rangers, and seekers. Spellscars, which are otherwise extremely rare in Kara-Tur, are unusually widespread among the hengeyokai of the Northern Wastes. These strange markings manifest only on hengeyokai in hybrid or human form, engendering great respect (and fear) in their human neighbors. No one has been able to explain this mysterious phenomenon, though it has attracted the attention of sages and wu jen across Kara-Tur.

Kozakura

The mountains and forests of Kozakura have long been home to hengeyokai, who live in isolated enclaves far from the constant strife of the human-dominated coastal regions. Traditionally, monkey hengeyokai are the most numerous in southern Shinkoku, fox hengeyokai in northern Shinkoku, and rat hengeyokai in Tenmei. These demographics have largely remained the same over the centuries, though many rat hengeyokai left Tenmei following a bloody feud with the local korobokuru.

After the Spellplague, Kozakura lapsed into civil war. Much of the hengeyokai population, as well as their spirit folk allies, remained neutral and retreated deeper into the wilderness or fled to Shou Lung. However, several devoted themselves to protecting the populace from the warring factions and rampant banditry. The most famous was a female monkey hengeyokai named Aoi, a student of Onoye, a fellow monkey hengeyokai who had established the Monkey style of martial arts during the previous century. She single-handedly protected seven villages from a force of over 100 marauding ronin, and after the war ebbed, she established several dojos throughout the hinterlands of Shinkoku to teach her master's style to the island's peasantry. Now, many villages in southwestern Shinkoku defiantly display wooden or stone monkey carvings as a warning to bandits, evil spirits, and headstrong samurai.

Beyond Kara-Tur

The upheaval and disruption caused by the Spellplague prompted many to leave Kara-Tur for what they mistakenly believed was the relative peace of Faerûn. Numerous hengeyokai have emigrated westward in recent years. This migration actually began prior to the Spellplague; like their human neighbors, some fled before the Tuigan Horde, while others left following Tan Chin's subsequent invasion of Shou Lung. A few hengeyokai, motivated by curiosity and wanderlust, joined or followed merchant caravans traveling along the Spice Road and the Golden Way.

Some of the hengeyokai who left settled in the Hordelands, particularly in Yaimunnahar, along the Lake of Mists, or in the foothills of the Sunrise Mountains. They became self-appointed guardians of the Golden Way's many oases, much to the chagrin of the bandits and savage humanoids looking to prey on caravan traffic.

In Faerûn, the majority of hengeyokai settled near the Golden Way in Thesk and Rashemen, as

HENGEYOKAI OUTSIDE THE REALMS

The ancestors of the hengeyokai were inhabitants of the Feywild but fled to the world in the aftermath of an extraordinarily destructive war between the eladrin and the fomorians. During that long-ago conflict, evil hengeyokai served the fomorians as spies and assassins. After the eladrin emerged victorious, they took their revenge upon the survivors. This retribution was swift, brutal, and indiscriminate, and many innocents were slaughtered. To this day, hengeyokai fear and distrust eladrin.

The actual origin of the hengeyokai is a matter of dispute. They believe they are fey versions of primal animal spirits; however, most eladrin scholars dismiss them as awakened beasts infused with the magic of their home plane. Some eladrin, perhaps wishing to justify their race's pogrom, believe that the fomorians created the hengeyokai to act as their agents, and they point to the race's chaotic, unpredictable nature as a sign of this influence. The race's innate skill at assassination, infiltration, and espionage is also taken as a sign of fomorian interest.

Today, small bands of hengeyokai live in remote wilderness regions, occasionally interacting with nearby human, halfling, or elven settlements. In the Nentir Vale, they are relatively plentiful—though rarely seen—within the Harkenwold and Winterbole forests, the Witchlight Fens, and even the depths of Lake Nen. In Eberron, the Eldeen Reaches is home to the majority of that world's hengeyokai.

well as in the Great Dale and along the Dragon Coast. Any city with a Shou-town has at least a few hengeyokai inhabitants, who often live disguised as humans (especially in xenophobic Nathlan). They must be cautious to avoid being mistaken for lycanthropes—a particular concern for those with sinister counterparts such as rat hengeyokai. However, the crafty among them can turn such confusion to their advantage.

A few hengeyokai have left behind the familiarity of the Shou-towns and struck out on their own, relocating primarily to the Dalelands, the Western Heartlands, and the North. For example, a pride of cat hengeyokai has settled within the King's Forest in Cormyr. Cleverly taking advantage of their new home's favorable attitude toward cats, these hengeyokai protect the humans living nearby from rampaging beasts and other threats.

EXAMPLE HENGEYOKAI

Hengeyokai are a diverse race that can fulfill a number of different roles in your campaign. This section provides three sample hengeyokai statistics blocks as well as a quick and easy method of creating new hengeyokai characters.

Badger Hengeyokai Chanshi

Badger, crab, and dog hengeyokai in particular embrace the way of the warrior, for they possess the requisite strength, temperament, and stamina. This badger hengeyokai is a fearsome and ornery *chanshi* (warrior); she sweeps the battlefield with her *guan dao*, a crescent-bladed broadsword with a long haft, knocking enemies prone and then hacking them to death.

Badger Hengeyokai Chanshi	Level 4 Brute
Medium fey magical beast (shapechanger)	XP 175
HP 64; Bloodied 32	Initiative +5
AC 16, Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +3
Speed 7, burrow 3 (badger form)	Low-light vision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Guan Dao (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
Requirement: The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 6 damage if the target is prone.	
⚔ Slashing Arc (weapon) ♦ Recharge when first bloodied	
Requirement: The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
Attack: Close burst 1 (creatures in the burst); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d8 + 6 damage, and the hengeyokai pushes the target 1 square.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
⚔ Trip Up (weapon) ♦ At-Will (1/round)	
Requirement: The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The target falls prone.	
🎭 Nature's Mask (polymorph) ♦ At-Will (1/round)	
Effect: The hengeyokai alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny badger or as a Medium unique human or hybrid.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
🔪 Savage Demise ♦ Encounter	
Requirement: The hengeyokai must be in badger or hybrid form.	
Trigger: The hengeyokai drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (Free Action): The hengeyokai takes a standard action.	
Skills Athletics +11, Endurance +9, Intimidate +6	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 9 (+1)
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Shou	
Equipment leather armor, guan dao	

Fox Hengeyokai Wu Jen

As inherently magical creatures, hengeyokai often become wu jen: sorcerers and diviners who strive to master the arcane power of the five elements (air, earth, fire, water, and wood). Cat, fox, monkey, and sparrow hengeyokai have the strongest talent for magic. This fox hengeyokai has mastered the element of fire; in battle, he hurls fiery shuriken, burns opponents alive with his mesmerizing gaze, and augurs the future. He is also a member of the Iridescent Peacock Society, a secretive cabal of mercenary wu jen that fans the flames of conflict in Kozakura. Its members profit in wartime by selling their destructive skills to the highest bidder.

Fox Hengeyokai Wu Jen	
Medium fey magical beast (shapechanger)	Level 7 Artillery XP 300
HP 60; Bloodied 30	Initiative +6
AC 21, Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 20	Perception +5
Speed 7 (9 in fox form)	Low-light vision
Resist 10 fire	
TRAITS	
Elemental Mastery	
When the hengeyokai hits any creature with a fire power, that creature gains vulnerable 5 fire until the end of the hengeyokai's next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Staff (weapon) ♦ At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 5 damage.	
🔥 Fiery Shuriken (fire, implement) ♦ At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one or two creatures); +12 vs. Reflex. If the hengeyokai targets only creature with this power, it can make this attack twice against that creature.	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d4 + 4 fire damage.	

Monkey Hengeyokai Sensei

The monkey hengeyokai of southwestern Shinkoku, Kozakura's largest island, are renowned martial artists. Two of the best known are Onoye, founder of the Monkey style, and Aoi, his contemporary disciple. While in human form, this monkey hengeyokai appears to be an elderly farmer, though closer examination reveals a loping gait and abnormally long arms. He is actually an extremely agile warrior who can effortlessly deliver a staggering blow with a kick or throw.

Monkey Hengeyokai Sensei	
Medium fey magical beast (shapechanger)	Level 12 Skirmisher XP 700
HP 119; Bloodied 59	Initiative +14
AC 26, Fortitude 23, Reflex 25, Will 24	Perception +15
Speed 7, climb 3 (monkey form)	All-around vision, low-light vision
TRAITS	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the hengeyokai.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Flying Kick ♦ At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai jumps up to 2 squares before the attack. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d10 + 9 damage.	
⚔ Throw ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 6 damage, and the hengeyokai pushes the target up to 2 squares.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Light Step ♦ Encounter	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai shifts up to its speed.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Nature's Mask (polymorph) ♦ At-Will (1/round)	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny monkey or as a Medium unique human or hybrid.	
Spring Up ♦ At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai stands up.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Stunning Blow ♦ Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> The hengeyokai hits an enemy with a melee basic attack.	
<i>Effect (Free Action):</i> The enemy is stunned until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Athletics +15, Acrobatics +17, History +12, Insight +15	
Str 19 (+10)	Dex 22 (+12)
Con 15 (+8)	Int 13 (+7)
Cha 16 (+9)	
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Kozakuran	
Equipment staff, bag of chicken bones	

Monkey Hengeyokai Sensei	
Medium fey magical beast (shapechanger)	Level 12 Skirmisher XP 700
HP 119; Bloodied 59	Initiative +14
AC 26, Fortitude 23, Reflex 25, Will 24	Perception +15
Speed 7, climb 3 (monkey form)	All-around vision, low-light vision
TRAITS	
All-Around Vision	
Enemies can't gain combat advantage by flanking the hengeyokai.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
⚔ Flying Kick ♦ At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai jumps up to 2 squares before the attack. This movement does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d10 + 9 damage.	
⚔ Throw ♦ Recharge ☞ ☞	
<i>Requirement:</i> The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d8 + 6 damage, and the hengeyokai pushes the target up to 2 squares.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Light Step ♦ Encounter	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai shifts up to its speed.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Nature's Mask (polymorph) ♦ At-Will (1/round)	
<i>Effect:</i> The hengeyokai alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny monkey or as a Medium unique human or hybrid.	
Spring Up ♦ At-Will	
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Stunning Blow ♦ Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> The hengeyokai hits an enemy with a melee basic attack.	
<i>Effect (Free Action):</i> The enemy is stunned until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Athletics +15, Acrobatics +17, History +12, Insight +15	
Str 19 (+10)	Dex 22 (+12)
Con 15 (+8)	Int 13 (+7)
Cha 16 (+9)	
Alignment unaligned Languages Common, Kozakuran	



Creating New Hengeyokai

DMs can quickly create new hengeyokai by following these steps.

First, select an appropriate human from one of the *Monster Manual* or *Monster Vault* supplements. Then choose an animal form from one of those presented in Table 1-1 below. Badger, carp, crab, crane, and dog hengeyokai make ideal brutes and soldiers, while cat, fox, hare, monkey, raccoon dog, rat, and sparrow hengeyokai are excellent controllers, lurkers, and skirmishers.

Origin: The creature's origin becomes fey.

Type and Subtype: The creature's type becomes magical beast, and it gains the shapeshanger subtype.

Senses: The creature gains low-light vision.

Speed: The creature's speed increases to 7; it also gains a special mode of movement while in animal form (see the table below).

Animal Form	Special Movement	Related Skill
Badger	Burrow 3	Endurance
Carp*	Swim 7	Endurance
Cat	Climb 3	Acrobatics
Crab*	Swim 7	Intimidate
Crane**	Fly 6	Nature
Dog	+2 bonus to speed	Insight
Fox	+2 bonus to speed	Stealth
Hare	+2 bonus to speed	Athletics
Monkey	Climb 3	Athletics
Raccoon Dog	Climb 3	Stealth
Rat	Climb 3	Thievery
Sparrow**	Fly 6	Perception

*Carp and crab hengeyokai in animal form have a land speed of 1 and can breathe underwater.

**Crane and sparrow hengeyokai in animal form have a land speed of 1.

Skill Modifications: The creature gains training in a skill related to the hengeyokai's animal form (see the table).

Special: The creature's attack powers gain the following requirement, unless they are appropriate attacks for an animal.

Requirement: The hengeyokai must be in human or hybrid form.

Finally, hengeyokai gain the following utility power.

MINOR ACTIONS

Nature's Mask (polymorph) ♦ **At-Will**

Effect: The hengeyokai alters its physical form to appear as a Tiny animal or as a Medium unique human or hybrid.

PLAYING HENGEYOKAI

Wily beasts with the ability to assume human form.

Racial Traits

Average Height: 4' 10"-5' 6"

Average Weight: 100-140 lb.

Ability Scores: +2 Dexterity; +2 Wisdom or +2 Charisma

Size: Medium (human or hybrid form)

Speed: 7 squares

Vision: Low-light

Languages: Common, choice of one other

Skill Bonuses: +2 Bluff, +2 to a skill determined by your animal form.

Animal Form: Select your animal form: badger (Endurance), carp (Endurance), cat (Acrobatics), crab (Intimidate), crane (Nature), dog (Insight), fox (Stealth), hare (Athletics), monkey (Athletics), raccoon dog (Stealth), rat (Thievery), or sparrow (Perception).

Elusive: You have a +1 racial bonus to Reflex.

Fey Origin: Your ancestors were animal spirits native to the Feywild. You are considered a fey creature for the purpose of effects that relate to creature origin.

Beast Nature: You are considered both a magical beast and a humanoid for the purpose of effects that relate to creature type.

Shapechanger: You have the shapechanger subtype.

Language of Beasts: While you are in animal or hybrid form, you can communicate with any natural or fey beasts that share your animal form or a form that is closely related (for example, a dog hengeyokai can communicate with a wolf). In human form, you can understand these beasts but cannot directly communicate with them.

You can communicate simple concepts and commands to such creatures, but they are under no compulsion to obey you, and their knowledge is restricted by their experience and mobility. Beasts you talk to are not necessarily friendly; your DM may require skill checks to influence their attitude.

Nature's Mask: You have the *nature's mask* power.

Nature's Mask

Hengeyokai Racial Utility

You swiftly assume the guise of either human or beast.

At-Will (Special) ♦ Polymorph

Minor Action Personal

Effect: You change into your human, Tiny animal, or hybrid form. The new form lasts until you change forms again. While you are in human or animal form, other creatures can attempt to discern your true nature by making an Insight check opposed by your Bluff check; you gain a +5 bonus to your check.

None of your game statistics change in human or hybrid form. While in animal form, you cannot use any attack powers, although you can sustain such powers. Your equipment becomes part of the form, and you continue to gain the benefits of the equipment you wear, except for shields and item powers. While equipment is part of the form, it cannot be removed, and anything in a container that is part of the form is inaccessible. You cannot speak. You otherwise retain your game statistics.

You gain a movement benefit based on your form.
Badger: You gain a burrow speed equal to half your speed.

Carp, Crab: You gain a swim speed equal to your speed, and then your land speed becomes 1. You can breathe underwater.

Cat, Monkey, Raccoon Dog, Rat: You gain a climb speed equal to half your speed.

Crane, Sparrow: Your land speed becomes 1, and you gain a fly speed of 6.

Dog, Fox, Hare: Your speed increases by 2.

Special: You can use this power only once per round.

Hengeyokai Adventurers

As hengeyokai come of age, they are overcome by wanderlust and an instinctual need to seek out new territory (older hengeyokai jokingly refer to this period as “the true Path of Enlightenment”). Most are content to investigate the wilderness near their homes or get into juvenile misadventures in the nearest human settlement, but for some, such high jinks are not enough. These hengeyokai become adventurers.

Greed rarely motivates hengeyokai adventurers. They have little use for treasure, believing that it weighs them down, so they carry only what they need. Instead, curiosity and the thrill of exploration drives them, as does the opportunity to make mischief on a wider scale or to redress social injustices. In their minds, such activities often go hand in hand; hengeyokai in Wa notoriously flout social convention by associating with the downtrodden eta, and those in T'u Lung court official displeasure for freeing slaves. Indeed, many hengeyokai adventurers begin their careers when they are forced to take up arms in defense of an adopted human village or family threatened by monsters, bandits, or evil spirits.

All hengeyokai have a knack for stealth, magic, and subterfuge; they are also incredibly mobile creatures and gravitate toward classes that emphasize these attributes.

Assassin

Despite its sinister reputation, shadow magic holds little stigma for hengeyokai, who treat the gloomy powers of the Shadowfell as any other spirits do. Manipulating the power of shadow appeals to their stealthy, trickster nature, and their ability to get in and out of a target's abode unseen makes them ideal assassins. Many ninja clans, realizing these benefits, have opened their membership to hengeyokai. Cat, fox, and rat hengeyokai are most likely to become assassins.

Monk

Despite a widespread belief that they lack the self-discipline necessary to become monks, hengeyokai are attracted to the solitary pursuit of mental and physical enlightenment. In addition, they have a natural talent for martial arts and love to improvise, preferring to mix and match styles. Hengeyokai do not turn to temples or monasteries for instruction; instead, they seek out hermit-like masters who instruct only a handful of students in the depths of a bamboo forest or atop a snow-covered mountain peak. Carp, crane, dog, hare, and monkey hengeyokai are most likely to train as monks.

Rogue

Thievery, whether for survival, profit, or fun, is second nature to many hengeyokai. In animal form, they can easily slip in and out of the most well-guarded places undetected (even the most suspicious guard pays little attention to a sparrow). Hengeyokai rogues run the gamut from thuggish yakuza to scheming con artists to deadly ninjas, and no subrace monopolizes the class. Even hengeyokai that pursue other paths often dabble, and multiclassed and hybrid rogues are common.

Sorcerer

As the descendants of animal spirits, hengeyokai are inherently magical creatures, and many can effortlessly tap into their innate arcane energy. The raw, chaotic power of the sorcerer best reflects their natural capabilities and disposition; few hengeyokai care to devote the time necessary to become a wizard or make a pact with a “superior” being. They favor the volatile nature of the wild sorcerer above all others. Cat, fox, monkey, and sparrow hengeyokai frequently follow this path, but the potential lies within all the subraces.

Roleplaying a Hengeyokai

When creating a hengeyokai character, here are a few points to consider.

You straddle multiple realms. Hengeyokai embody several, often conflicting worlds. Are you more animal or human? Spirit or mortal? Do you feel more comfortable in the wilderness or amid the trappings of civilization? How you answer these questions largely defines who you are, but these inherent tensions tear you in different directions, causing you to act unpredictably by the standards of other races. Many adventuring hengeyokai do so to get a better sense of themselves. What do you hope to discover about yourself during your journeys?

Guardian, predator, or recluse? Most hengeyokai want to live alone in peace, but others interact with human society more frequently. How do you relate to your neighbors? Those who see themselves as more part of the mortal world will often live among humans and sometimes become the guardians of the families or small villages they encounter; even evil hengeyokai are occasionally forced into this role, though they're more likely to regard their charges as possessions or meal tickets. Hengeyokai who feel superior to their neighbors because of their heritage often become heartless predators, at best using humans for personal gain.

Your freedom is paramount. When you see animals caged in pens or tied to stakes, you shake your head in sadness. You would rather die than suffer such a fate. As a result, you are constantly on the move, even if you remain in the same area, and you strive to limit your attachments, since not all shackles are literal. Something or someone has to be very important to you to make you stay in one place for a lengthy period. What do you value as much as your own freedom?

Your wits are a weapon. You're not as big or as powerful as other races, but you make up for that with your wits. Be smart and fast, and make sure to

take advantage of opportunities as they arise, especially those of your own design. Hone this weapon with mischief; it's better for a merchant to catch you stealing now than for a daimyo's guard to do so later.

Hengeyokai Characteristics: Agile, chaotic, elusive, independent, mischievous, quick, protective, reclusive, secretive, unpredictable, wild

Hengeyokai Names: Hengeyokai adopt the personal names of their local human neighbors. They do not take clan names or surnames.

About the Author

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