

BAKU 貳



What have we do but wait,
dreaming silly dreams
in this endless void?

-Ben John

Quote: *Boogey-Men? Don't mind them little one,
I will eat them up like a piece of peppermint puff
...nom nom nom...*

Of all the families of Fae creatures that could be called Adhene, perhaps the most wondrous and kindest is the Baku of the 3 Go Kingdoms. Protector of children, slayer of demons, and master of spirits; the Baku has had many titles under its prodigious belt. Of course what the Baku truly is, and what it has been purported to do don't always coincide. This is the way of most Fae creatures however, and the Adhene are certainly no exception.

According to mortal folklore, the Baku does have the ability to slay evil dreams. What this means according to the Hsien is something else entirely. The Baku serve as stewards on the cusp of wakefulness. Like Oneiromantic samurai, they protect their sleeping charges from dream-destroying hungry ghosts.

It should be made clear that while the Baku may not be as cold and alien as the other Adhene, they are Adhene. Their ways and methods aren't the same as the Hsien. The Baku are other, and despite their wonderfully colorful exterior, there is nothing tame about them.

Appearance: Classically the Baku is depicted with large head, tusks, trunk and big floppy ears of an elephant. They had an oxen's tail and a tiger's claws: that seems about right.

In *Hotei Mien* they appear as unobtrusive portly men and women of Asian descent: unremarkable and ultimately forgettable.

In *Wani-Mien* as it's known among the Hsien) that Baku description above is exactly how they appear, although there may be other traits evident. Some have a third eye, or a glistening pearl in the middle of their forehead. Some have the sharp fangs like an Oni. Some few sport tiger striped skin. All are different, all are wondrous to behold.

In *Beast Form*, they are elephants with trunks and tusks too long to be normal, and mismatched colored eyes.

Elephant

Attributes: Strength + 9, Dexterity -3, Stamina +5,
Attacks: Tusk Str +1, Trample Str + 12

Also like the Rest of the Hsien, the Baku can manifest the *Mask of the Shintai*. This form appears as a growling and emaciated elephant headed demon with long jade tusks and eight eyes the color of green fire... the colors of Baku in this form are always off, and always virulent... fuchsias and pinks and turquoises that shift and blend into a psychotic miasma of hue that is best left in the dreaming realms of Lisa Frank... Gods keep her.

Lifestyle: The Life of a Baku is a quiet one. Many disdain the autumn world of mortals, content to live out their lives in the

deep Dreaming worlds and spirit-scapes of the Jade Mother. There is enough to do behind the scenes, without having to take on a fleshy body and deal with the forces of banality... Still yet, if duty calls, then the Baku must heed. They serve as night-watch-men and security guards. Some few serve in temples as janitors, the better to discreetly pursue hidden dangers.

Revelry: Baku gain Glamour/Yugen from answering the prayers of sleeping mortals. In dreams, mortals are more honest in their desires. These prayers are rife with symbolism, of course, mysterious pleas manifested in inscrutable allegory. Only the dedicated Baku, can piece out any answers.

Unleashing: Cantrips cast by the Baku are multi-colored, frantic, and full of Jungian symbolism that makes no sense in the Waking world. Smoking monkey-Gods, all bedecked in hot pink leisure suits, drive leopard printed sports-cars up to a Shinto shrine where purple kung-fu tigers hold a tea-ceremony with Abraham Lincoln. *Or something to that effect.*

Aria: The Aria of the Baku range from soft and unassuming, even dull in appearance, to frenzied and helter-skelter inhabitants of a Boschian nightmare. It is hard to ascertain a Baku's mindset.

❖ **Dionae:** These Baku are maddeningly militaristic berserkers and vexingly zealous avengers of evil. More-so than any creature rightly should be. They have three glowing eyes, each a different color, that see nothing but evil. Their tusks are sharp and tipped with brass and copper. The colors of these Baku are usually more vivacious reds and maddening yellow hues.

❖ **Araminae:** The Ariminae Baku are quiet and serious, with calm demeanors but serious eyes that glow quiet but harsh. There is an air of studiousness about them, like someone watching solely to strategize. The colors of these Baku are lush greens or deep violets.

❖ **Apollae:** These Baku are content to aid others in languid dreamy fits of deliriums. They appear as if swimming through molasses, and their limbs and trunks stretch slow and tranquil. There is sense of feverish disorientation to their actions, and the colors are pale bubble-gum pinks, robin-egg blues, and the pale greyish whites of a fish's belly.

Affinity: Scene -or- Kwannon-Jin Fortune: Void
Yin: 2 Yang: 2

Birthrights (or Luck):

Dream-Eating (*Yume no shokuji*): While the terms Eating may be a misnomer, the Baku are powerful in dispensing morphean justice. The Baku choose to reside in the realms of twilight's dreaming. They march and patrol the hidden pathways of sleeping and wakefulness and ensure that mortals are safe from the predation of the many unimaginable horrors that exist in unconsciousness. This mastery is reflected in each Baku possessing the first level of Oneiromancy - *Dream Walk* - for free. In addition, any use of this Art begins at a difficulty of 6. While in the Dreams of others (or themselves) they gain an extra dice to any and all dice-pools.

In addition, if a child wakes up from a nightmare and calls three times for the Baku to eat her bad-dreams, the Baku will become aware and race to the rescue. All Baku hear this call upon the third utterance, regardless of distance. It is up to the Baku whether or not he responds.

Frailties (or Curse):

Bleeding Dreams (*Shukketsu no Yume*): While their accompanying colors and symbolism may be fine and dandy in the realm of dreams, it has an unsightly effect on the waking world. Too much time spent in the realms of the real has an adversely surreal influence on the local gauntlet rating. While some of the Kithain persuasion may find this delightful, it has detrimental effects for other.

This is especially true for mortals. At first, Bright Colors bleed into each other causing eye-aches and migraines. Odd noises come from nowhere akin to the slide-whistles and kerklunks of Saturday Morning hysterics. People obnoxiously slip and fall from spontaneous existence of banana-peels.

Eventually, anomalous motifs bleed over from the realm of the sub-conscious into base reality. Monkeys do steal sports-cars. Multi-hued tigers with top-hats and monocles prowl the street. Abraham Lincoln, sporting full-Samurai-tackle, eats shawarma at the local delicatessen - and they don't usually sell it either.

This tone remains in effects until the Baku retires back to the dream world for a brief respite. In game terms, the Baku's banality (or Yang rating) is roughly equivalent to the amount of days a Baku can spend in the waking world before things get wonky. The longer past his limit, the more and more surreal and more and more dangerous the real world grows.

Mochi-Zo, keeper of the Scarlet-Star Highway, whispers of strange creatures from far-away lands.... And his friends and family too...

Bàofēngyǔ: I do pity them. However, that pity won't prevent me from doing my good works, just as their own feelings don't stop them from doing their evil works. Such is Dharma.

Daitengu: Ninjas? Ninjas don't announce themselves to be Ninjas.

Enenra: Fast, yes. Agile, certainly. But not so fast and agile as to escape my wrath if they should forget their roles.

Gumiho: Clever little liars that break all the rules. They should be sworn enemies, but they do liven things up.

Hanayomeningyo: Poor daughters of a vicious war. Their dreams are the saddest I have seen.

Hsigo: I'm not sure what to make of them. They aren't supposed to be real. I wonder if this is somehow my fault?

Jìng zǐ Shēngwù: Their disguises may be adequate for the real world, but their nightmares of floaty fish lights betray them.

Mahō Shōjo Hō-Ō: This is what the Dreams of the mighty and majestic Feng Huang have become? A Korean High-School Drama production? Wow. How far we've fallen...

Zashiki Warishi: Proud keepers of Tradition, and protectors of the household. I wish we all the Hsien were this dedicated.

