

The Near Now ...

Later today, early tomorrow, sometime next week,
the world began to end.

Japan, Taiwan, and parts of China, South Korea and California have been invaded by raiders from another cosm — another reality. These Possibility Raiders have come to steal Earth's living energy ... to consume its possibilities. They have brought with them their own reality, and now portions of Asia have become someplace else.

3327 and his powerful Kanawa Corporation have used subtle financial maneuvers and the deadly skills of contract ninja and Yakuza assassins to achieve a silent conquest of the Nippon Tech realm. Now mega-corporation executives battle in boardrooms while martial artists duel in mist-shrouded alleyways, technological advances abound, and a desperate war is waged against a High Lord whose very existence is his greatest secret.

Intrigue, deception, and sudden, violent death mark this, the most dangerous site of the battle for Earth's reality.

This is the realm of ...



Roleplaying the Possibility Wars™

Nippon Tech™

The Sourcebook of Mega-Corporate Reality

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Introduction



Ryuchi Kanawa sat motionless at the end of the long mahogany table. Only his eyes moved behind jet-black glasses, studying the faces of each of his department heads in turn. It was a test of endurance — to see how many minutes of unrelenting silence they could stand, before sweat broke out on their brows and they began to fear what he would say.

He saw Ito look down abruptly. He was not surprised. "Report, Ito-san," he said quietly.

The executive nodded and steeled himself. "Kanawa Enterprises profits, up 12.5 percent, first quarter. Investment opportunities, Virginia, Maryland, under investigation. Security restored, optimal levels, at Magnolia Station Research Park following break-in."

Kanawa, secretly the High Lord known as 3327, said nothing, but knew Ito could feel his gaze. "A most regrettable incident. Damage to property and personnel; unwanted attention drawn to our American holdings; and the loss of information that resulted in a certain artifact falling into the hands of our ... competitors, shall we say?"

Ito's colleagues averted their eyes from him, the bond that had joined them to their fellow executive severed, lest they be dragged with him as he fell. In the space of a moment, he was *burakumin*, an untouchable.

"We walk a dangerous path, gentlemen," the High Lord continued. "Where once our presence did not disturb the tiniest blossom on the trees, now those who would oppose us have begun to see our hand in many things. We cannot relax our vigilance, nor commit the slightest error in judgment, or our enemies will be upon us."

Without another word, 3327 dismissed the errant executive. Ito rose, bowed, and hurried from the room. The echo of the door's slam had not yet died when 3327 pressed a button on the console before him. This was the signal to another Kanawa employee, who would be waiting in the parking garage for Ito to arrive. When he was done, the police would dismiss it as a theft gone awry.

3327 allowed himself the smallest of smiles. "I realize tradition demands he be allowed to resign from this existence. But I have not the time for such antiquated notions. There is, after all, business to be done."

He eyed his lieutenants, his servants, his cowering sheep coldly through dark lenses before whispering, "Shall we proceed?"

The Possibility Wars

Earth has been invaded. Powerful beings who call themselves "High Lords" have come from different realities to steal the energy of this cosm. Each High Lord has conquered a section of Earth and reshaped its reality to suit his wishes. That is the situation in the Near Now of *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*.

While the battle for this planet rages across four continents, one High Lord has relied on secrecy and stealth to achieve his ends. 3327, aka "Ryuchi Kanawa," brought no invading army to this cosm — instead he fights his war from within the steel and glass tower of the Kanawa Corporation in Tokyo.

From there, he directs a thousand intrigues, planning to expand his realm

while setting his fellow High Lords against each other. Nippon Tech is a place of high technology, corporate conflict, and espionage, and yet it has taken root in secret. The average Japanese citizen is unaware his land has been invaded.

Important!

This sourcebook is a companion volume to *Torg: Roleplaying the Possibility Wars*. While it is possible to make use of the Nippon setting with other roleplaying games, many of the rules and concepts presented within these pages are explained in greater detail in the boxed *Torg* rules set.

The Sourcebook

This sourcebook provides all the information and advice needed to design exciting campaigns and adventures in the mysterious and deadly realm of Nippon and the *Torg* universe. It describes the realm that currently controls Japan as well as the cosm of Marketplace. It provides new character templates for players to use, new world rules and skills, and a system for martial arts duelling.

Encounter the secretive and sinister High Lord, 3327, and pierce the mysteries that surround his bloodless conquest of a nation. Then meet the residents of the cosm and realm — powerful corporate heads, lethal ninja assassins, and the survivors of a system where one's very life is tied to personal wealth.

Step into the mist that shrouds the midnight streets, and beware the silent shadows that follow you. The adventure has begun ...

Chapter One

The High Lord



The man called 3327 did not start at the soft tone which summoned him to the Ursan Industries boardroom. Indeed, he had been expecting it, and welcomed the message it brought.

The meeting had already begun when he arrived. 2174 was pacing about the room, looking pale and unhealthy. He had failed to recoup the loss — it was all over but the begging, 3327 knew.

The meeting progressed as if he himself had scripted it, as he had, in a way: 2174 sweating and sputtering, trying in vain to explain why he had invested the firm's credits in an enterprise that collapsed; board members angrily pointing to plunging profits this quarter, and looking none too well themselves; and 3327, he who had engineered 2174's fatal error, doing his best not to let a smile disturb his carefully-rehearsed look of concern.

At last, the board had heard enough. Marketplace Security was summoned, and 2174 went with dignity to pay the cosm's penalty for unwise investment. When he was gone, all eyes in the room turned to 3327 — without a word, the young executive walked to the head of the table and assumed the seat of power.

He had achieved his first conquest ...

3327

The man who would one day become the High Lord of Nippon Tech began his march to power in the offices of Ursan Industries in the cosm of Marketplace. His mentor, 2174, predicted a bright future for him, for he exemplified the ideals of the cosm — blind pursuit of profit, unencumbered by emotions such as love or loyalty.

The closest 3327 ever came to an act of self-sacrifice was early in his career, when he intervened to save his employer from food rioters, and in the process was scarred by a knife-wielding burakumin. He would explain his actions later by saying, "I could manipulate 2174, as I might not be able to his successor. It was in my interests at the time to keep him whole." He bears the mark of his wound to this day, refusing to allow plastic surgeons to remove it, for it serves as a reminder that a great profit is worth a bit of pain.

2174 promoted 3327 quickly through the ranks, and the young executive repaid the old man for his guidance by feeding him false figures that led to a disastrous investment, ruin, and board-mandated suicide. 3327 took on the role of chairman and turned Ursan into a power to be reckoned with, along with assuming control of Marketplace's governing body, the Triad.

Eventually, 3327 grew discontented — he owned everything of any great worth in the cosm, and there was no further room for expansion. It was then that he discovered the Darkness Device he has since dubbed "Daikoku," after the Core Earth Japanese god of wealth. 3327 heard the siren call of the alien artifact, which had taken the form of a laptop computer so as not to look conspicuous in Marketplace.

Daikoku promised him new cosms to dominate, in return for the possibility energy contained therein — in essence, this Darkness Device would lease him the use of its powers in return for energy. Should he fail to deliver, Daikoku would simply turn its attention to another Marketplace executive and repeat its offer.

3327 rapidly discovered that he did not need an army to conquer other cosms; the methods which had stood

him in good stead in Marketplace — conquest through financial might — would serve him equally well elsewhere. As his empire grew, 3327 began to find it difficult to run all his operations on his own, yet he could not bring himself to trust anyone enough to allow them more than the smallest measure of power. He thus grew five clones of himself, and using Marketplace technology and the knowledge he had gleaned from Daikoku, implanted a part of his essence into each. He now had six incarnations that were capable of operating independently, yet were linked at all times. Any fact, emotion or experience known to one would be known to all. This procedure had the full support of Daikoku, which could now expect more conquests and greater quantities of possibility energy.

3327 relied on surrogates to mount most of his invasions, low-level executives who were unaware of the existence of possibility energy or the Darkness Device. But when the opportunity arose to join with other High Lords in the invasion of a possibility-rich cosm and a planet called Earth, he chose to take personal control, if only to ensure that none of his rival Possibility Raiders would attain enough power to threaten his domain. In Japan, he assumed the identity of industrialist "Ryuchi Kanawa" and set out to subvert and enslave the nation from within.

Only 3327's lieutenant, 7710, is aware that that there is more than one incarnation of him, and only those who have emigrated from Marketplace to the realm are aware that he is a High Lord. But as time passes, more and more people in Nippon are beginning to suspect that the changes they see around them are unnatural, and wonder if the Possibility Wars have somehow reached their shores.

Personality

Still steadfastly clinging to his Marketplace values, 3327 sees everything in terms of profit and loss. He is completely unaffected by emotions of any sort, save for greed. Although one would think that this might make it



M. Jackson

difficult for 3327 to deal with underlings and lackeys in the organizations he infiltrates, the High Lord has been able to overcome this handicap by mastering the discipline of psychology, allowing him to predict the behavioral patterns of emotional creatures and act accordingly.

3327 has taken notice of the Storm Knights due to their habit of interfering in his enterprises and cutting into his profits. He considers himself above such things as petty revenge, but will strike quickly and without mercy to expunge anyone who stands in the way of profits, and so has mounted an aggressive campaign to exterminate Storm Knights in his realm. For the same reason, he has targeted Japan's Rauru Block, a group of mega-corporations which joined together to combat Kanawa Corp.'s operations.

When he speaks, 3327's dialogue is reasoned, carefully planned in advance, and coldly rational. It is almost impossible to shake his composure or force him into taking a rash action, but he has been known to express impatience with those in his employ who are too slow-witted to comprehend his plans.

To physically slay 3327 would involve killing not only the original High Lord, but all five clones as well. Yet 3327 fears bankruptcy far more than assassination — like any other executive in Marketplace, he could be executed for failing to make a profit. His personal fortune is large enough that he could cover most losses, but his foray into Nippon is the costliest and riskiest venture he has ever attempted. Failure here could result in the loss of his economic power base in Marketplace.

3327, aka "Ryuchi Kanawa"

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Climbing 14

TOUGHNESS 9

PERCEPTION 18

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