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KAPPAS

In the mystical realms of Japanese folklore, the Kappa stands out as one of the most intriguing and complex creatures. These small humanoid figures are distinguished by their amphibious nature and unique physical traits, such as a turtle-like shell on their back, a beak-like mouth, and a water-filled dish atop their heads that is the source of their power. The Kappa's appearance reflects their connection to water, which is central to their existence and abilities.

HABITAT

Kappas are primarily found in and around bodies of fresh water, such as rivers, lakes, and ponds. They prefer these aquatic environments because their abilities are enhanced in water, and they require the moisture for their survival. The water dish on their heads must always be filled; if it spills or dries out, a Kappa can become weakened or even powerless.

SOCIETY AND CULTURE

Despite their notorious reputation for mischief and danger, Kappas are complex beings with a deep connection to the water environments they inhabit. They are known to follow a code of conduct among their kind, which revolves around water-based territories that they fiercely protect. Kappas are often seen as guardians of water resources, and their behavior towards humans can vary significantly. Some stories depict them as malevolent beings who pull unsuspecting victims into the water, while others suggest they can be benevolent, teaching medical and agricultural techniques to humans in exchange for offerings, particularly cucumbers, their favorite food.

SOCIAL INTERACTION

Kappas are usually reclusive but can be highly social among their kind, forming communities underwater. Their interaction with other races, especially humans, is marked by a curious blend of playful mischief and outright hostility, often dependent on the respect shown by others. Kappas respect polite manners and could be bound to help someone if they receive a respectful bow, as spilling the water from their dish forces them to serve in order to refill it.

The complex nature of Kappas allows for varied character development, from trickster to guardian, providing rich opportunities for storytelling and character engagement in mythical settings. Their affinity for water and unique cultural attributes make them fascinating characters for adventures centered around aquatic environments or Japanese folklore themes.



DESIGNER'S NOTE ON KAPPA'S CREATURE TYPE

Races are usually categorized with the Humanoid creature type. This classification ensures that characters are affected by a broad range of spells and game mechanics in a standardized way. Humanoids are susceptible to certain spells and effects that specifically target their creature type, maintaining a balance in gameplay.

However, for the Kappa race, we have chosen to classify them as Fey due to their deep roots in mythology and their unique connection to natural and magical elements. This classification reflects their otherworldly nature and ties to the fey realms, which is integral to their identity in folklore.

The choice to classify Kappas as Fey is influenced by the presence of the **Water Dependency** trait, which is a significant aspect of their lore and in-game mechanics. The dish of water atop their heads, a critical vulnerability, compensates for the immunity to certain spells that the Fey creature type provides. This vulnerability can lead to severe penalties (disadvantage on ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws) if the water is spilled and not replenished, making them balanced in terms of gameplay advantages and disadvantages.

As a Game Master, if you prefer to have Kappas more aligned with standard race mechanics, you may choose to classify them as Humanoid and remove the **Water Dependency** trait. This adjustment could simplify gameplay and integrate Kappas more seamlessly into your campaign without the added complexity of managing their unique Fey attributes and water dependency. This change would align Kappas with other races while still maintaining their unique cultural and mythological characteristics through other racial traits like **Amphibious** and **Slippery**.

KAPPA TRAITS

Kappas as a playable race inherit many unique traits from their folklore origins, reflecting their amphibious nature and connection to water.

Ability Score Increase. Your Dexterity score increases by 2, and your Wisdom score increases by 1. Kappas are agile and cunning, qualities that serve them well both in water and on land.

Age. Kappas mature at the same rate as humans but live longer, typically up to 150 years, thanks to their mystical nature.

Alignment. Kappas tend towards neutral alignments, balancing between their mischievous instincts and the moral codes dictated by their society.

Creature Type. You are a Fey, owing to your mythical and magical nature.

Size. Kappas are small creatures, typically about 3 to 4 feet tall. Your size is Small.

Speed. Your base walking speed is 25 feet, and you have a swimming speed of 30 feet, illustrating your proficiency in aquatic environments.

Amphibious. You can breathe air and water, allowing you to operate seamlessly between land and aquatic settings.

Cucumber Affinity. You gain advantage on all Charisma-based checks when interacting with creatures that have offered you a cucumber, a nod to the folklore that Kappas love cucumbers.

Darkvision. Thanks to your connection with water, you have superior vision in dark and dim conditions. You have darkvision out to a range of 60 feet and can see in dim light within 60 feet of you as if it were bright light, and in darkness as if it were dim light. You can't discern color in darkness, only shades of gray.

Water Dependency. The dish on your head must be filled with water. If the water is spilled or emptied and not refilled within an hour, you suffer disadvantage on all ability checks, attack rolls, and saving throws. You can refill the dish by immersing yourself in water.

Slippery. You have advantage on ability checks and saving throws made to escape a grapple, reflecting your slippery, hard-to-catch nature.

Kappa's Grasp. Due to your unique physiology, you have advantage on grapple checks and you can make a grapple as a bonus action.

Languages. You can speak, read, and write Common and Aquan, reflecting your deep connection with aquatic environments.

KAPPA VARIANT TRAIT: WATER SPRAY ATTACK

To incorporate the kappa's affinity with water and their mythical ability to manipulate it, you can include a unique offensive ability called **Water Spray Attack**. This trait reflects the kappa's connection to their aquatic environment and their reputation for using water as a tool or weapon.

Water Spray Attack

Type. Ranged Spell Attack

Range. 30 feet

Damage. 1d6 + your Dexterity modifier cold damage

Attack Modifier. Your Dexterity + your proficiency bonus

Usage. You can use this attack a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Effect. In addition to dealing damage, the Water Spray Attack can push the target up to 5 feet away from you if the target is Large or smaller. The target must succeed on a Strength saving throw against a DC equal to 8 + your Dexterity modifier + your proficiency bonus or be pushed.