

## The Samurai Genshu

By Dave Crouch

Hundreds of years ago a loan samurai was traveling in a remote part of Japan. The samurai was dressed in a simple warrior's kimono and only carried with him a single weapon, a katana. His hair was white, his face was youthful, and he carried the scars of many battles, as well as the stride of a person who is humble. His appearance also seemed to command the respect of all those around him. He had a kind heart and would help anyone that needed his services. While the samurai was on his way to the great city of Kyuden Bayushi, he decided to stop at a small village to rest and get more supplies before finishing his journey. As he approached the village, he noticed that there were no people in sight. This sight sparked his curiosity to investigate the situation, so he decided to explore the town further.

When he arrived in the town, he approached the closest building and entered it. The building was the town tavern and there was no one inside. As he stepped further in the building, he heard voices coming from the back room. Swiftly, the samurai went to the back to see who was talking and to his surprise it was an old couple. The older woman approached him with relief and told him to go and sit. Not one to insult the elderly, the samurai did what he was told and sat down at a table. Soon after he had sat down, the elderly women returned with food and drink for the samurai and she also told him that the leader of the village would like to see him after dusk.

Shortly after dusk had fallen over the small village, the warrior went to a small house in the back of the village. As he approached, a servant who was posted outside bowed in respect and slid open the door. When the door was fully open, he saw that the house was indeed very small but it was very nice nonetheless. The house itself was only one room and in the middle of it was an older woman kneeled in front of a table. As the samurai approached, he bowed to the village leader and she motioned for him to sit. Soon after he sat down, the servant whom he saw out front came into the room with a tray of hot tea and two cups. The servant set the tray down, poured the steaming tea, and then left the chief and the samurai alone.

Both of them sat for a long time just sitting there and slowly drinking the mint tea. Then the chief looked up and said, "My name is Tetsuko, former battle maiden, and leader of this village. Let me get to the point, Genshu. My village and I need your help." Genshu was shocked to hear the village chief say his name, because there were only a few who knew it. Tetsuko proceeded to tell him that all of the village's samurai were killed by a vicious oni. This demon visits the village once a month and demands food, or he will destroy the village. After Tetsuko finished the story of the demon, Genshu thought about what should be done. The two sat in silence once again until the samurai told her he would set out the next morning and end this poor village's problem. With that he got up, bowed once again to the chief, and left the house.

The servant once again met the warrior outside of the house and instructed him that a room was prepared for him at the inn. After hearing this news, Genshu went to the inn and got his room. The next morning he got up, bathed, and went to prepare for the trek into the mountains where the oni lived. When he left the inn, a group of villagers was there to greet him. They had brought various armor and weapons, some horses, and they also brought food and other supplies that he might need. To the villagers' astonishment, the only thing that he took was a single horse and a one-day ration of food and water. The villagers insisted on him taking at least some armor and a better weapon, but he told him that the kimono that he was wearing was enough and there was no sword in the land better than his. Soon after gathering the equipment, he left the village and headed into the mountains to slay the demon that was tormenting this village.

It did not take Genshu long after getting into the mountains to find the demons lair. Without hesitation, he called for the beast to come out and face him. A roar that could shatter steel erupted from the cave and the creature emerged. The demon was incredibly hideous. Its body was

fiery red and muscular, with sinister looking spikes emerging from various places. His head was an even darker red, with two piercing yellow eyes, and long rows of spikes that curved down the demon's back. Most importantly, the oni carried a spiked club called a tetsubo. The oni roared once again and began to speak to him, "My name is Yakamo no oni and you, samurai, will die for coming here." With that, the creature lunged towards Genshu. The warrior jumped out of the way and pulled his blade. The demon charged with his club raised, but yet again the samurai dodged and left a clean cut on the demon's side. Yakamo no oni howled in pain from the wound and charged Genshu for a third time. This time the demon was ready for the samurai and dealt a viscous blow to his chest. The warrior flew back from the impact of the blow and did not move.

When Genshu opened his eyes, he felt white-hot pain coursing through

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**David Crouch** lived in Scenery Hill for thirteen years. His immediate family includes his father, Todd, his mother, Denise, and his younger brother, Jonathan.

He is currently a student at Bentworth High School where he scheduled as many advanced classes as possible. He is also quite active in after school activities.



Dave has been involved in the martial arts for about four and a half years, and he has recently committed himself to the school musical.

After he completes high school, Dave would like to go on to college. His first two picks for college include Washington and Jefferson and Penn State McKeesport. It is currently undecided what he would like to do, but he is giving considerate thought to engineering and also business.

## The Mother

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"I'll do whatever it is you want, just leave me now I implore!"

Quoth my mother, "Should have done it before."

"Mother," said I, "break is over and school starts tomorrow, and if I don't get this work done by then, I will be full of sorrow.

By that heaven that bends above us—by that God we both adore—

Tell this poor soul why you torment her or I fear she will have a nervous breakdown at the age of eighteen!

Please end this silent war!

You win, I can't take it anymore!"

Quoth my mother, "Should have done it before."

"Do you not see all this work I haven't even started?" I shrieked, "Please go away and let me get it done so as I don't come home tomorrow brokenhearted.

Underclassmen don't have that much homework, go bug my sister—she's a sophomore!

I'm under a lot of pressure and you're not making it any better.

Please stop standing on my floor—

Please stop nagging by my door."

Quoth my mother, "Should have done it before."

"Yes," said my mother; "Should have done that homework before. Don't take it out on me, it's no one's fault but your own, now stop shouting before you I disown!"

Then she quietly walked out the door.

"Despite all her nagging," said I to myself, "I knew she was right. I hate when that happens!

Three A.M.—the clock is ticking, so much work still left to do, oh well, I will just miss half a day of school tomorrow, after all, it's nothing but a bore."

I laid my head down on the floor and began to snore.

Hey at least my mother wasn't talking anymore.