

Notes about the video game Kuon

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created Monday, 2005 May 29
updated Saturday, 2006 March 11

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Contents

1	What is this?	2
2	Other Documents	2
3	Character Summary	2
4	Individual Character Stories	3
4.1	Ayako	3
4.2	Dochin	3
4.3	Dokai	4
4.4	Doman	4
4.5	Doryo	5
4.6	Fujiwara	6
4.7	Kureha	6
4.8	Lady Fujiwara	7
4.9	Miyoshimaru	7
4.10	Sakuya	7
4.11	Seimei	9
5	The Big Story	9
6	In-Game Bibliography	11
7	Questions	11
A	More Japanese Ghost Stories	12
B	Other File Formats	12

1 What is this?

Herein are my notes about the video game, *Kuon*. The game's story was interesting & complex enough that I've made these notes for my own understanding.

This document contains spoilers! If you have not played the game & don't want the secrets revealed before you do, do not read this!

2 Other Documents

The only walkthrough of which I'm aware – but a real good one, is by Danyal Vierheller. It's available at <http://www.gamefaqs.com/console/ps2/game/918963.html>; it's the one authored by "siara79".

3 Character Summary

Here is a table of attributes of player characters & non-player characters. The columns are explained after the table.

name	epithet	player?	seen alive?	seen undead?
?1?	priest in shrine	no	yes	no
?2?	Fujiwara's son	no	no	no
Ayako	Fujiwara's daughter	no	yes	no
Dochin	young exorcist	no	yes	no
Dokai	exorcist	no	yes	yes
Doman	exorcist	no	yes	no
Doryo	exorcist	no	yes	yes
Fujiwara	lord of the manor	no	no	yes
Kureha	Doman's daughter	no	no	oh yes
Lady Fujiwara		no	no	yes
Miyoshimaru	servant boy	no	no	no
Sakuya	exorcist	yes	yes	no
Seimei	exorcist	yes	yes	no
Utsuki	Doman's daughter	yes	yes	yes?
Twins	holograms	no		

Here are explanations of the columns:

name Character's name. If the character has a long, many-word name, I might use just the most common word from it to save space.

epithet Short mnemonic phrase describing the character's job or position.

player? Player characters get a "yes" in this column. Non-player characters get a "no".

seen alive? If you see the character alive, this column says "yes". Otherwise, it says "no".

seen undead? If you see the character in an un-dead form, this column says “yes”. Otherwise it says “no”. For example, you fight the lord of the manor, Fujiwara, to get the bell. According to my table, the monster you fight is Fujiwara in his undead form.

4 Individual Character Stories

Here are brief timelines for many player characters & non-player characters. They were constructed mostly from notes you find in the game.

4.1 Ayako

Ayako is the daughter of Lord & Lady Fujiwara.

1. Ayako reads note from Lady Fujiwara that says Lady is going to the shrine. Lady will ring a bell if it's safe. After ten days with no bell, Ayako should “gather the spikes” & take them to the shrine (presumably in an attempt to stop the Twins on her own.)
2. Ayako follows her mother's advice to the letter, becoming frightened of anyone & hiding in her room.
3. Some days (less than ten) pass. . .
4. Utsuki/Sayuka frightens Ayako into her room.
5. Utsuki/Sayuka peers through hole in the wall to observe Kureha in Ayako's room.
6. Utsuki/Sayuka ring bell, enter Ayako's room, witness Kureha take Ayako.
7. Ayako is never seen again???

4.2 Dochin

The youngest of Doman's student exorcists. No hair.

1. Dochin accompanies Sakuya into the manor through the South (or South-east?) gate.
2. Dochin entices a goki with a corpse in front of the maner so he can leave. (Sakuya reads Dochin's note about this idea. Both Sakuya & Utsuki benefit from the path Dochin opens.)
3. Sakuya encounters Dochin outside the shrine with the disks-&-spikes lock puzzle.
4. Dochin & Sakuya descend the ladder within that shrine.
5. Dochin & Sakuya surface in the shrine.

6. Dochin “guards the rear” while Sakuya explores.
7. Undead Lady Fujiwara hunts Dochin.
8. Dochin runs to a different underground passage, warns Sakuya, & then is killed by Lady Fujiwara who plans to merge with him.

4.3 Dokai

Dokai is a student of Doman. Besides being an exorcist, we might call him a sort of scientist because he likes to do research.

1. Dokai enters the manner with his fellow students but immediately takes his own path.
2. Dokai finds his way to the big shrine outside of the manner.
3. Dokai performs experiments on goki & on undead sleeping in wicker chests.
4. Dokai finds his way into the study behind the big shrine. Utsuki accidentally surprises him here. Dokai runs.
5. Utsuki encounters Dokai again outside of her former rooms. Dokai attacks her, & she is forced to kill him.
6. Someone performs a variation of the wicker chest ritual on Dokai, or maybe something else happens, but Dokai is in the cocoon Sakuya passes on her way to kill the goki at Doryo’s suggestion.
7. Undead Dokai hatches & hides.
8. Dokai locks himself in the shrine with Sakuya & tries to kill her so he can merge with her.
9. Sakuya kills Dokai.

4.4 Doman

Doman is an interesting character. He was a royal exorcist, but he quit to make his own civilian exorcism start-up where he employed four student exorcists: Dochin, Dokai, Doryo, & Sakuya. Doman’s ego may have been rivaled only by that of Dochin.

Doman uses his own daughters as guinea pigs in his magic experiments. Doman is a bastard.

There is one honorable characteristic to Doman: Sakuya likes him as a teacher because he does not treat her differently from the male students. So even though he’s an immoral, murdering(?), mad scientist, Doman is not sexist. (In one note he wrote, he said that if he discovered the secret to immortality, other’s would “whore” themselves to him. So he may have been a leech – but not a sexist leech.)

1. Doman (with his wife, of course) have Kureha.
2. Doman (again with his wife) have Utsuki.
3. Doman becomes royal exorcist.
4. Doman quits his royal exorcism gig to make his own start-up.
5. Doman hires Dochin, Dokai, Doryo, & Sakuya.
6. Doman learns of the (imperfect) silkworm immortality spell, probably from the twins.
7. Doman resurrects Kureha.
8. Doman sends his students to investigate the manor.
9. Doman secretly follows his students to *what?* He notifies Kureha in a note.
10. Doman tells Utsuki to find her sister.
11. Doman tells Utsuki to get back in the wicker chest.
12. Doman tells Utsuki/Kureha(?) that Utsuki did not kill Kureha & that Kureha, for believing Utsuki was a murderer, is worthless.
13. Doman attacks Seimei in the lab & dies.
14. Utsuki merges with Doman.

4.5 Doryo

One of Doman's student exorcists. Brother to Sakuya.

1. Doryo enters the manor at the same time as the other student exorcists, though he immediately sets out on his own path.
2. Doryo encounters Sakuya in the "quarters" (?) section of the manor, gives Sakuya a blood-stained cloth (Venus seal breaker?). He stays in that room when she leaves.
3. Doryo picks up Kureha & Utsuki, takes them just outside the manor's West gate, where they meet Sakuya.
4. With Doryo in the self-appointment lead, the party of four heads through the woods for the big shrine.
5. Doryo (with Kureha?) are separated from Sakuya & Utsuki.
6. Doryo makes it to the shrine's mulberry tree where he is putty in the hands of Kureha until Utsuki & Sakuya show up.
7. Doryo sends Sakuya to kill a goki.

8. Doryo is killed by Kureha.
9. Kureha gets in a wicker chest with Doryo's body, but the process of merging is interrupted by Sakuya, who runs away.
10. Kureha/Doryo finish merging elsewhere? Or maybe the merge never finishes, which is why Kureha looks so bad later?

4.6 Fujiwara

Lord of the manor. Dressed in green. In the game's tempter trailer, you see Kureha kill Fujiwara, stuff him into a wicker chest, & slurp in after him.

1. Fujiwara awakes at night.
2. Fujiwara finds himself dead at the hands of Kureha.
3. Fujiwara stuffed into wicker chest by Kureha.
4. ???
5. Undead Fujiwara guards the bell.

4.7 Kureha

1. Kureha falls off a cliff. From her point of view, it looks like Utsuki could have made her fall.
2. Kureha dies from the fall. Doman (with Utsuki's help?) resurrects Kureha.
3. Kureha awakes with no injuries.
4. Kureha begins to believe Utsuki killed her.
5. Months later, Kureha must sleep in the wicker chest with a larger creature (centipede). This cycle repeats many times.
6. Kureha goes to the manor with Utsuki at the request of Doman in a note.
7. ??? lots of stuff ???
8. Kureha tries to merge with Utsuki. ???
9. Kureha merges with Doryo. (Or tries to???)
10. Kureha threatens to merge with Sakuya (at end of Yang phase), but fails. She's near death for need of merging, & she fails, so it's possible she died soon after.

4.8 Lady Fujiwara

Wife of the lord of the manner.

1. Lady Fujiwara rounds up a bunch of “sick” people & takes them to the shrine in the manner. She locks them in, hoping to care for them & also to isolate the disease.
2. Lady Fujiwara gets sick & dies.
3. Someone resurrects Lady Fujiwara with the immortality ritual. The process must be repeated several times. Lady Fujiwara doesn’t remember any of it at first, but she later remembers that she slept with a centipede in the wicker chest.
4. While in need of the wicker chest treatment, Lady Fujiwara develops an urge to eat human flesh. She eats her son, & Miyoshimaru sees her do it.
5. Lady Fujiwara kills Dochin, begins to sleep with his corpse in the wicker chest, but is killed by Sakuya.

4.9 Miyoshimaru

Miyoshimaru was a the servant boy. Many people in the manor thought he was a simpleton, but at least one person (Lady Fujiwara?) liked “his gentle nature”. Further evidence that the simpleton label was innacurate is that someone (again Lady Fujiwara?) was him break a sealed door. So he knew some magic.

- Miyoshimaru gives special silkworm seeds. To whom?
- Miyoshimaru gets sick. (Undead sick or normal sick?) Breaks the seal on the manor door.
- Miyoshimaru goes to the shrine with Lady Fujiwara to care for the sick.
- Miyoshimaru sees Lady Fujiwara eat her son.

4.10 Sakuya

Female student of Doman.

1. Sakuya talks to her brother, Doryo, in the “chambers” part of the manner. He gives her a cloth to remove some seals (Venus?).
2. Sakuya talks to Dokai in a closet.
3. Sakuya kills Lord Fujiwara & takes bell.
4. Sakuya uses bell to entice Ayako to open door. Kureha takes Ayako.

5. Sakuya leaves the manner proper & heads south to the shrine part of the manner.
6. Sakuya saves Utsuki & gives her a couple of spell cards.
7. Sakuya & Dochin climb down the ladder inside the little shrine with the disks-&-spikes lock.
8. Sakuya & Dochin surface in the manner's shrine.
9. Sakuya talks to the priest.
10. Sakuya enters the underground passage.
11. Sakuya witnesses Dochin's murder by Lady Fujiwara, then kills Lady Fujiwara.
12. Sakuya meets Doryo, Kureha, & Utsuki outside of the manner. They head towards the big shrine.
13. Sakuya defeats the yeti, re-joins Utsuki, & they rejoin Doryo & Kureha at the mullberry tree.
14. Sakuya goes to defeat a goki, sees Kureha push Utsuki off the cliff, sees that Kureha has killed Doryo.
15. Sakuya kills undead Dokai.
16. Sakuya opens chest, runs from Doryo/Kureha monster. Returns to get Uranus seal-breaker.
17. Sakuya closes flood gate, evades Kureha, burns one mullberry tree, enters underground passage.
18. Sakuya confronts Doman, who reveals that he didn't care that his students & daughters were killed. He may even have planned that these things would happen.
19. Sakuya evades Kureha, encounters undead Utsuki, & promises to help Utsuki.
20. Sakuya encounters Seimei at surviving mullberry tree, sees undead Utsuki climb into wicker chest with Doman. Sakuya pleads for Utsuki's life. Seimei agrees.
21. An Utsuki child hatches. Sakuya raises her.

4.11 Seimei

Seimei is a royal exorcist.

1. Seimei arrives at mannor.
2. Seimei partically disables the surviving mullberry tree by driving two spikes into it.
3. Seimei defeats Doman.
4. Seimei starts to kill Utsuki in the wicker chest, but Sakuya talks her out of it.

5 The Big Story

By combining the partial stories, here's my guess at a summary of the entire story.

1. Hundreds of years ago, someone plants the special mullberry trees. They have troubles (not necessarily documented), so they subdue the trees with spikes.
2. Years ago...
 - (a) Doman (& his wife, I presume) have Kureha & Utsuki.
 - (b) Quits his job as a royal exorcist & goes into private practice. Maybe Doman moves his residence to the shrine near the mannor.
3. Last year or before ago...
 - (a) Doman begins researching the mullberry trees. Maybe the trees themselves contacted him subliminally to get him to do it, though they probably could not contact him as the Twins because they were spiked, & we know that the spikes inhibit the Twins.
 - (b) Kureha has her accident, & Doman unspikes the trees & resurrects her.
 - (c) Kureha must undergo the wicker chest ritual periodically. At first, she may not know what's happening to her, but eventually, she is made aware by Doman. Also, she probably has contact with the Twins; they help her collect victims to merge with.
4. Months ago...
 - (a) Miyoshimaru gives silkworm eggs to son of Fujiwara.
 - (b) If those silkworm eggs were supernatural, then they must have caused the recent problems to start. Maybe they cause the "disease".

- (c) The priest told the boy that those silkworm eggs were normal, in which case they had nothing at all to do with the problems.

5. About a fortnight ago...

- (a) People are turning into goki & other baddies.

Who is doing this? Maybe Doman kidnaps people for his experiments. Since he hasn't perfected the spell (if he had, he wouldn't need to experiment any more), he botches it, & the people turn into goki. Or maybe he releases them, & they don't know anything has happened, but when it is time for them to merge, they turn into goki & other monsters.

Maybe the Twins kill people & put them in wicker chests. And as with the Doman explanation above, the people turn into monsters when it becomes their time to merge again.

Here's a wild-assed explanation: Maybe the Twins, seeking to do good, perform the wicker ritual on people who die or are severely injured. But as we know, the resurrection has its draw-backs, the least of which is that the person must merge with another creature periodically, becoming a flesh-eating monster until they do. If the Twins had tried to help just a few injured people, & those people injured other people when they became flesh-eaters, it wouldn't be too long before pretty much everyone in the vicinity was a flesh-eating monster of a resurrected person, a failed resurrection (giving mutilated monsters such as Fujiwara), dead at the hand of such a monster, &/or the ghost of any of the former.

Things the twins say in the game suggest that they are glad people are dead. The pre-game trailer suggests that Kureha is working with them, & at least one note in the game suggests that Kureha is working with her father, Doman. So my best guess is that the Twins, Doman, & Kureha are all actively harming people. Kureha merges with victims to stay alive. Doman performs the ritual on others as part of his experiments with the fringe benefit of keeping his daughter alive. The Twins do it because they just plain want to hurt people.

- (b) Lady Fujiwara takes many sick people, including her son & the servant boy, & heads for the inner-manner shrine, telling Ayako that she will ring a bell within ten days.
- (c) Ayako becomes a paranoid.¹
- (d) Lady Fujiwara locks up the inner-manner shrine in an attempt to confine the "disease".
- (e) Lady Fujiwara undergoes the wicker chest ritual many times, not always with her consent.

¹"Just because you're paranoid doesn't mean they aren't out to get you" – Nirvana, (if I remember correctly)

- (f) Lady Fujiwara eats her son.
- 6. A few days ago, Lord Fujiwara sends for Doman & Seimei.
- 7. Last night, Kureha merges with Lord Fujiwara.
- 8. Yesterday, Doman dispatches his students & his daughters to the manner.
- 9. All hell breaks loose.

6 In-Game Bibliography

This is a bibliography of documents in the game, presented as if they were real. The documents are named here as you find them in the game.

1. Green Bound Book

7 Questions

1. Why did Miyoshimaru give the special seeds to someone?
2. Did the catastrophe begin when Miyoshimaru gave the seeds?
3. What happened to Ayako after we see Kureha take her? Did Kureha merge with her?
4. In the game's trailer, you see Kureha prepare to merge with Fujiwara, but later in the game, undead monster Fujiwara protects the bell. How could it be that Kureha merges with Fujiwara, but there's still a Fujiwara monster to protect the bell?

After you kill Fujiwara, there is a movie scene where you see his corpse convulsing & an eye peeking out from a cut in Fujiwara's skin. Is it possible that Kureha merged with Fujiwara & took his form (or crawled into his skin)? Or maybe the person merging isn't comatose during the process but turns into a monster & wanders around during the process, then crawls back into the wicker chest to finish the process, leaving no memory of what happened? It could explain the Fujiwara monster & the Doryo/Kureha monster.

5. Was there a disease at all? Sure, if there was, it probably wasn't caused by bacteria or virii, so it would not be what we would call a disease, but was it a disease in that people became undead, monsters, goki, or whatever, with no apparent reason, or were they always victims of the Twins, Doman, & Kureha?
6. What is the time period between resurrection rituals for a given person? In Kureha's case, it looks like months, almost a year, but with Dokai, Lady Fujiwara, & others, it was less. How so this?

7. The resurrection ritual was usually performed with a wicker chest, but I'm guessing the person would spin a cocoon if there were no chest. Dokai is an example.
8. In the case of Kureha, Lady Fujiwara, & Utsuki, the resurrected person appeared fine for a while until the ritual was necessary again. Until that time, they didn't even know what had happened. On the other hand, some victims (Lord Fujiwara & Doryo are examples) became monsters. Why?

Maybe the victim of the ritual (the one who is not being resurrected) becomes a monster. *I don't think so.*

Maybe an interrupted ritual creates a monster. Maybe the mid-ritual person is a monster, normally hidden in the wicker chest, but if the monster leaves the chest for some reason, you see the monster. Nothing is out of the ordinary, the non-monster resurrected form will be the end result. Lord Fujiwara's monster corpse is evidence of this.

Maybe the victim becomes a skin around the resurrected, without knowledge of what happened at all. The resurrected can exit the victim (killing it) at any time. Again, Lord Fujiwara's monster corpse is evidence. Also, consider Utsuki & how her father told her that she was stupid because her sister did not kill her (in other words, he was talking to her as if she was Kureha).

A More Japanese Ghost Stories

I enjoyed *Kuon* so much that I was inspired to read more about Japanese ghost stories. Here are some things I found online:

- Tim Screech. "Japanese Ghosts". [5]
Learn the definitions of obake, yokai, yurei, & oni. Improved my understanding of almost all Japanese horror games & movies I've seen. Even improved my understanding of the anime *SORCERER HUNTERS*.
- Kwaidan: Japanese Ghost Stories (web site). [6]

B Other File Formats

- This document is available in multi-file HTML format at <http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/nkuon/>.
- This document is available in Pointless Document Format (PDF) at <http://cybertiggyr.com/gene/nkuon/nkuon.pdf>.

I write almost all of my documents in L^AT_EX ([4], [2]). I compile to PDF with `latex`, `dvips`, & `ps2pdf`. I compile to HTML with `latex2html` ([1], [3]).

References

- [1] Nikos Drakos. latex2html.
- [2] Michel Goossens and Frank Mittelbach. *The L^AT_EX Companion*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1993. ISBN 0201541998.
- [3] Michel Goossens and Sebastian Rahtz. *The L^AT_EX Web Companion: Integrating T_EX, HTML, and XML*. Addison Wesley Longman, Inc., 1999. ISBN 020143317.
- [4] Leslie Lamport. *L^AT_EX: A Document Preparation System*. Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, Inc., 1986. ISBN 0-201-15790-X.
- [5] Tim Screech. Japanese ghosts. *Mangajin*, (40). <http://www.mangajin.com/mangajin/samplemj/ghosts/ghosts.htm>.
- [6] Mire Uno and Chris Garcia, editors. *Kwaidan: Japanese Ghost Stories*. Harapan Media Tech, 1999. <http://www.harapan.co.jp/english/kwaidan/kwaidan%5Findex.htm>.