



The Geisya

An Oriental Adventures class with subtle skills



by Gregg Sharp

The geisya is a profession which finds its roots exclusively in Oriental culture. Though primarily a product of Japanese society, the geisya can be applied to any Oriental campaign setting. The geisya presented here is an NPC class. This means the geisya cannot be used as a PC class unless the DM allows it.

By definition, a geisha is "a Japanese girl who is trained to provide (as by playing on the samisen, dancing, serving food or drinks, or by sympathetic, witty, or amusing talk) entertainment and lighthearted company "as for a man or group of men" (*Webster's Third International Dictionary*, ©1976, p. 943). The geisha, or geisya, as it is denoted herein, should not be confused with the pejorative meaning that has been appended to the profession. (The geisya is

not a prostitute; that is the yujo or korobi geisha, which is not covered in this article.) In Japanese, *gei* means art and *sha* means person; it is this artist/entertainer that is presented herein. Consequently, in the context of *Oriental Adventures*, the geisya is primarily an entertainer in the manner of the Western bard, able to sing, dance, and compose impromptu poetry.

The geisya in this context differs from the more traditional profession in the

skills that are possessed. Some minor (mainly entertainment) spell ability is included, as is the case with the bard of mainstream AD&D® game campaigns. Because many geisya can perform parlor tricks and minor prestidigitation, this talent is also reflected in their abilities.

A geisya has no principle attribute, and thus gains no bonus to experience points. All geisya must have an intelligence and wisdom of 12 or better, a charisma of 11 or better, and a dexterity of 13 or better. Geisya are 99+% female, though there are the rare standup comedian/jester types called otoko geisya (male geisya).

All geisya are lawful in alignment. Humans and spirit folk have unlimited progression in this class; hengeyokai may advance to the 5th level. No other races may become geisya. Initial funds are 1-6 ch'ien. Each geisya starts with four proficiencies; an additional proficiency is gained with each level, and weapons use without proficiency is at -6 "to hit." In combat, Geisya use the magic-user "to hit" tables. Saving throws use the magic-user's table.

Geisya use no armor, shields, oil, or poison (save for dual-classed geisya-ninjas, who use oil, poison, and any weapons they please). The weapons geisya may use are the naginata, dagger, knife, gunsen, kiseru, and shuriken. Geisya-ninjas will frequently use needles.

Geisya gain one art of specialization at the 2nd level. This will be their primary skill — the one they will seek to master. This can never be a weapon-related skill. The specialization requires the use of two proficiency slots and constant study and practice to maintain the ability. The geisya must spend at least six hours per week practicing this specialized art.

Geisya, especially the female geisya, never gain special attack bonuses or abilities. They do possess some defensive abilities, though. Some of these defensive abilities are due to the geisya's peculiar spell abilities. Although most of these spells are entertainment-oriented, some purely defensive spells are utilized by this class.

Geisya have four initial proficiency slots, only one of which can be used for a weapon skill. This is usually the naginata, as a geisya would assist in defending the castle at which she was engaged. Etiquette must be bought at this time as well. The remainder can be used in any category except the barbarian one. The maiko (1st-level and apprentice-level geisya) must decide which skill will become her specialty and plan her training accordingly.

It becomes rapidly obvious that the geisya can never be played as a "hack-and-slash" NPC class. Attack is simply not the way of the geisya. (Still, the geisya Ichiaki

may also be the ninja Takahebi, in which case the demure, young geisya may slip a little something of a nonmedical nature into a sake bowl.)

Most geisya can get out of a tricky situation by means other than combat. Flattery has been known to overcome oni as well as mollify tengu. Great artistic skill is prized by almost all monsters, and a skilled koto or shamisen player may be able to pacify some of the more intelligent creatures. Bakemono, on the other hand, are tone-deaf and just hungry.

Geisya come primarily from other geisya families, and are thus seldom rated on the Family Charts found in *Oriental Adventures*. Geisya are transcendent on the social registers, being treated with respect by both samurai and shukenja, daimyo and peasant.

When a geisya attains 5th level, she must have proficiencies in dance, music, and poetry. The geisya gains the ability to meditate as a shukenja at 4th level.

For every two levels, the geisya can learn one additional language (provided a teacher is available). The number of languages the geisya can learn is equal to one-half the geisya's intelligence score. These languages most often include specialized ancient-court languages and may include the Geisya Cant — a set of gestures with finger and fan designed to silently communicate basic information to another geisya.

Geisya nonweapon proficiencies

Each geisya gains the following abilities through her particular *gei* (specialized art). These extra abilities only apply to the geisya who approaches or has mastery in that particular proficiency.

Brewer. The geisya can make many liquors, especially sake. The geisya is also able to distill pure grain alcohol as a combustible and for use by others as a weapon in repelling siegecraft.

Masseur. This skill allows the geisya to relieve muscle cramps through massage. The skill also gives the geisya specialist the ability to strike pressure points on an opponent. Successful "to hit" and masseuse rolls indicate that the victim suffers a -2 on his "to hit" rolls for 1-4 rounds (due to pain and sudden muscle cramping).

Dance. Through great trial and practice, the geisya specialist in dance develops great endurance and speed. She gains an extra 2" to her base movement rate and does not tire easily.

Juggling. This specialty is rare, but the geisya specialist in juggling can keep a number of daggers in the air equal to 13 minus the die roll needed. Thus, with a success roll of 8, Saiya-san can keep five daggers in the air. In the same example, Saiya-san can then rapidly fire the daggers

at a target all in the same round. It takes one round to get two daggers in the air.

Music. This specialization includes proficiency in the shamisen or koto, or any other single instrument that might be used. Included are several forms of the various musics played on that instrument. As noted under abilities, there is a base chance that geisya music can soothe the semi-savage. Specialists in music can increase this by attempting to *charm person* with a successful proficiency roll. This is only effective against some creatures, though some animals will be calmed by music as well. Saving throws and magic resistance apply in any event. Only a calming, nonthreatening message can be sent; no verbal instruction is possible.

Singing. The geisya with singing ability is a specialist in voice. Because of the ancient heritage of many lays and poems, the geisya who lowers her singing roll to 12 gains the ability to use *legend lore* at 5% per level. This ability applies to relics, artifacts, people, places, and events of a mythic or legendary nature.

Etiquette. The specialist in etiquette knows how to flatter without making such sycophancy obvious. Given a successful roll, the geisya can modify the reaction roll of an individual upwards by 10%. Failure on the roll means that the reaction roll is modified downward by 10% for such an obvious use of flattery.

Flower arranging. The specialist in flower arranging is able to make an artistic statement through the placement of a few shoots and blooms. Specialists in this often leave their art as offerings in shrines. There, priests and spirits turn a critical eye over the offerings. If the offering is of special quality and sublime elegance, there may be good luck and blessings placed upon the geisya. Poor offerings often seem followed by bad luck. The DM should handle this as seen fit, granting a +1 or -1 to saving throws made for one day.

Poetry. The specialist in impromptu poetry is also a riddlemaster. In both Western and Eastern campaigns, the riddle game is an ancient test of wits. Bad luck follows those who break the rules and conditions set. A master of the poetry proficiency may gain an extra clue through her breadth of knowledge in the genre.

Special abilities

All geisya, regardless of specialization, have the following special abilities:

Prestidigitation. The geisya is able to pick pockets as a ninja of two levels below the geisya's level.

Disguise. The geisya is able to disguise her features as a ninja one level below the geisya's level.

Feel spiritual presence. Many geisya retire to temples and are actually sought by the less malicious spirits due to the geisya's artistic skills. As a result, geisya gain a 5% chance for every two levels to detect the presence of unseen or concealed spirits.

Game play. Many geisya spend long hours learning details and strategies of games such as go. In polite company or at work, the geisya will subtly direct a game through this skill, providing a worthy challenge, but still allowing the opponent to barely win. In other related circumstances, the geisya has a 5% chance per level to know the details of a particular game. If the geisya knows how to play the game, there is a 25% chance that she knows enough to play at an expert level. Experts very rarely lose, but for game purposes, a geisya expert has a percentage chance of winning equal to the level of the geisya multiplied by seven.

Geisya spells

The following table and entries list all of the spells available to the geisya. Those spells particular to the geisya class are listed at the end of each level and marked with an asterisk.

Table 1
Geisya Spells by Level

1st level	2nd level
Augury	Detect charm
Divining rod	Speak with animals
Omen	Flashpuff*
Resist	Thump*
Cantrip*	Candletrick*
3rd level	4th level
Divination	Fate
Flame walk	Tongues
Iron kimono*	Great thump*
Scarf*	Jest*
Ventriloquism*	Juggle*

Spell descriptions

Cantrip (Special)

Level: 1 Components: Special
Range: 1" CT: Special
DR: Special ST: Varies
Area of Effect: Special

This spell allows the geisya to use one cantrip, such as those used by magic-users. The cantrip desired must be announced when attempting to gain the spell. All other details can be found under the description of the cantrip the geisya wants. Most geisya, however, will use this spell to gain legerdemain cantrips.

Candletrick (Alteration)

Level: 2 Components: S, M
Range: Special CT: 3 segments
DR: 1 turn/level ST: None

Table 2
Geisya Experience Table

Experience points	Experience level	4-sided dice for accumulated hp	Level title
0-2,100	1	1	Maiko
2,101-4,200	2	2	Student Geisya
4,201-6,300	3	3	Student Geisya
6,301-9,400	4	4	Student Geisya
9,401-13,600	5	5	Student Geisya
13,601-20,101	6	6	Geisya*
20,101-40,100	7	6+1	Geisya
40,101-190,100	8	6+2	Geisya
190,101-440,100	9	6+3	Geisha**

250,000 xp are required for every level beyond the 7th level. Geisya gain 1 hp per level beyond the 6th level.

* At 6th level, the Geisya gains a "younger sister" who is a student geisya of 2nd-5th level. If the student is killed, dishonor falls on the "older sister."

** At 9th level, the Geisha can set up her own tea room and begin training 1-4 maiko.

Area of Effect: One candle, lamp, or torch

The geisya casts this spell on a small fire source of a type typical for lighting purposes. During the duration of the spell, the flame cannot be extinguished by normal means. The candle will immediately relight if snuffed by being placed underwater or in a strong wind, or if the air supply is cut off. This spell will not work on fires larger than a small campfire.

Flashpuff (Alteration)

Level: 2 Components: S, M
Range: 4" CT: 2 segments
DR: 1 round/level ST: None
Area of Effect: 2" cloud

The geisya throws a pinch of white powder into a burning fire (such as a brazier), which causes a brilliant flash and a cloud of smoke. This cloud of smoke can be any color the geisya desires, and lasts for the full duration of the spell. This smoke can be used to form any simple, two-dimensional image the geisya concentrates on. Specialty in the painting proficiency allows the geisya to create instant artwork that dissipates at the end of this spell's duration. The geisya is unaffected by the flash; onlookers are blinded for 2-5 rounds if a save vs. wands is failed.

Thump (Evocation)

Level: 2 Components: V, S, M
Range: Touch CT: 1 segment
DR: Instant ST: Neg.
Area of Effect: Creature touched

Using this spell, the geisya rebukes and thumps the attacking creature with an ornamental fan. If the creature fails its saving throw, its aggression is turned back upon itself. The creature is then stunned for 1-6 rounds. Only attacking, malicious, hungry, or angry creatures are affected by this spell.

Iron kimono (Alteration)

Level: 3 Components: V, S
Range: 0 CT: 1 round
DR: 2 rounds/level ST: None
Area of Effect: Geisya only

This is a protective spell for geisya. By casting this spell, the geisya temporarily enchants her kimono, obi, and tabi to a higher armor class. Though the clothing appears the same, it actually protects the geisya as armor of AC 5. At the end of the spell's duration, the AC returns to its normal level. Dexterity bonuses apply to the geisya; the *iron kimono* does not hamper movement in any way.

Scarf (Evocation)

Level: 3 Components: S, M
Range: 1" CT: 2 rounds
DR: Special ST: None
Area of Effect: Special

The geisya casts the first half of this spell when a number of scarves are at hand. The scarves begin to vanish one by one; the geisya is able to make three scarves per level of experience vanish. The geisya casts the second part of this spell (which takes another two rounds) when the scarves are to reappear. The scarves can be maintained in the spell's "holding area" for up to one day, at which time they automatically reappear around the geisya. The geisya can then pull scarves from sleeves, the robes of her audience, another geisya's ear, etc. The scarves are not detectable when in this magical limbo. The uses of this spell to transmit secret messages are readily apparent.

Ventriloquism (Illusion/Phantasm)

Level: 3 Components: V, M
Range: 6" CT: 1 segment
DR: 1 + 1 rnd./level ST: None
Area of Effect: One object

Table 3
Honor Awards

Geisya	Points awarded
Mastering art	+10
Gaining a court proficiency	+2
Successful skill use	+1
Failed skill use	-2
Unprovoked or unthreatened attack	-3
Pride/boasting	-3
Overindulgence in food or drink	-5
Death of "younger sister"	-5
Accusation (true or not) of being a korobi geisha	-5
Being easily seduced	-10

Excepting level and range, this spell is identical to the first-level wu jen spell, *ventriloquism*.

Great thump (Evocation)

Level: 4 Components: V, S, M
Range: Touch CT: 1 segment
DR: 1 turn/level ST: Neg.
Area of Effect: Creature touched

When a *great thump* is cast, the geisya thumps the attacker with an ornamental fan and berates the offender. Unless a saving throw is successful, the attacker suddenly loses all interest in attacking anything. If the creature is attacked, the spell is broken. This spell affects only those creatures which can be affected by *thump*.

Jest (Enchantment/Evocation)

Level: 4 Components: V
Range: 1" CT: 5 segments
DR: Special ST: Neg.
AE: All creatures in a 1" radius

Jest first acts as the illusionist spell, *fascinate*, upon all hearing it. All creatures within the radius of the spell who fail their saving throw stop their activities and listen for the five segments in which the spell is cast. Upon completion, the victims

are entitled to another saving throw. Failure means that the victims are racked with laughter and are unable to do any thing but laugh for the next 1-10 rounds. Attacking the creatures at any time during the casting enables them to break free of the spell's effects. Success in the latter saving throw means the victims merely walk away confused unless attacked a second time, in which case the creature may also attack. If the victim's saving throw is failed and no attack is made on

the victims during the period of helpless laughter, they view the geisya as having both a charisma and comeliness of 20; this lasts for a full day.

Juggle (Evocation)

Level: 4 Components: V, S
Range: 4" CT: 5 segments
DR: Special ST: None
Area of Effect: Special

This spell requires a proficiency in juggling. Using this spell allows the caster to create harmless balls of fire which can be juggled safely. With further work, spheres of ice or water, colored balls of light, or glowing white daggers can be substituted. One such substitution is gained with every three levels of experience the geisya has attained. The items disappear on contact with something besides the juggler's hands or when the geisya ceases her concentration. Each missile can be thrown (two per round) at a target (requiring both a "to hit" roll missile to strike the target and a single juggling roll to keep the other items juggling). Each missile, regardless of form, does 1-4 damage plus 1 hp per level of the geisya (except the water ball, which does no damage). Ω

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Table 4
Geisya Spells Usable by Level

Level	Spell level			
	1	2	3	4
1	1	-	-	-
2	2	-	-	-
3	2	1	-	-
4	3	2	-	-
5	4	2	1	-
6	4	3	1	-
7	4	4	2	-
8	4	4	3	1
9	4	4	4	2
10*	4	4	4	3

* Maximum spell ability