**The Suijin Gardens**

**Lore:** Suijin is a Japanese god of water, as such he provides the people with clean and fresh water for drinking and irrigation; he is also responsible for the creation and protection of the creatures that reside within his temple’s waters and those that lurk outside as well.

**Inspirations/setting:**

* Water gardens surrounding a shrine with flowing water
* Cool colour palette implementing Blues, whites and pinks
* Walkways and man-made constructs accompanied by plants and decorative water features
* Water dangers, including moving water and man-eating fish

**Unique Obstacles:** The gardens will contain a variety of unique ways to impair or even kill players if they are not careful. The unique dangers in The Suijin Gardens will be based around giant Koi fish that can jump out of the water and devour players in several locations, and also through the use of flowing water which can impair movement and ultimately end up getting the player killed.

The Koi will have a visual tell (water ripples, bubbles, sounds) before they spawn letting the players know to be cautious -or to make use- of them, there will be two main spawn points for the Koi focussing on the areas that give power ups, both players can be devoured at once resulting in a draw. After spawning, Koi are quick to move and attempt to eat the player closest to them; after a brief surface period the Koi will jump towards the nearest player provided there is a body of water on the other side of the player’s current location for it to land within.

The flowing water will be present throughout the level and will have a significant effect on gameplay, if a player were to stand still they would be taken by the water in the direction that it is facing. Players can make use of their stamina bar by either going against the current, across the current or with the current:

* Going against the current drains the stamina bar significantly and slows the player down while they are moving in that direction.
* Going across the current, players only receive half of the stamina drain of going against it and move at a regular speed.
* Going with the current speeds the player up building their momentum and doesn’t drain stamina at all, although difficult to control players can use this to their advantage.

If a player is completely drained of stamina they will be unable to move either against the flow or across it, instead they will be carried along the path until they are able to get out of the water, fall out of the map or be defeated by other means.

**Design impact on gameplay:** with all things considered I expect matches on this level to be a back and forth with lots of battling and attempting to win using either of the unique hazards; these provide some quick reactions and critical thinking to be used to afford satisfying defeats and outplays without a heavy focus on power ups.

**Kagu-tsuchi Dojo**

**Lore:** Kagu-tsuchi is the Japanese blacksmith god of fire, son of both creators of the world; Izanagi his Father and Izanami his Mother. During childbirth his mother Izanami was viciously burned and passed away as a result, his father reacted by furiously cutting Kagu-tsuchi into eight pieces with each piece becoming a volcano; legends say that each volcano produced its own deity to protect the island it spawned, some even believe that the spirit of Kagu-tsuchi himself lives inside of the dojo walls.

**Inspirations/setting:**

* Inside of a training dojo that is burning due to eruption of the nearby volcano
* Hot colour pallete utilising reds and orange tones to create a sense of danger and urgency
* Focus on 8 points on the map as reference to the lore of Kagu-tsuchi
* Fire hazards, including lava flows and ash which spread fire throughout the map

**Unique Obstacles:** The Kagu-tsuchi Dojo is one of the faster paced of the stages and this is due to the use of and spreading of fire. In fact players can’t fall to their deaths as is standard in the other maps; instead players must force each other into the enclosing circle of fire, falling red-hot rocks as well as various other dangers involving volcanoes.

The round will start with various areas of the map rapidly bursting into flames which spread randomly towards the centre of the level. Due to the safeness of the centre of the map there will be power ups located in risky places nearer the edge of the map as well as falling objects more frequently being dropped within the area; this is to dissuade players from only staying within the relative safe zone that the middle provides.

Halfway through the round lava starts pouring in from the sides and confines the players even further as the lava insta-kills anyone that touches it; this continues to streamline one or both players into a rapid death.

**Design impact on gameplay:** From the get go this map promises brute force tactics and manipulation of the other players’ movement in order to win. Rounds will be quick-fire and rarely go the distance here due to the abundance of randomised dangers to the player; the uncertainty doesn’t allow for much in the way of preparation and relies on reaction times and risk taking heavily.

**Sarutahiko Forest**

**Lore:** Sarutahiko Forest is named after a Japanese patron of martial arts, *Sarutahiko Okami.* Okami is known to be a symbol of strength and guidance and used to traverse the Forest himself and so many seek pilgrimage within the expansive forest. Sarutahiko Forest is primarily made up of towering bamboo thickets and giant pandas have been known to clear entire regions through sheer eating power.

**Inspirations/setting:**

* A dense forest made up mainly of bamboo and other fauna
* Lush and verdant greens primarily used in the pallete due to the location being a natural setting
* Segmented areas blocked off by thick bamboo
* Most man-made objects such as bridges are created using natural means.
* Giant panda that roams and alters the map randomly

Giant panda roams randomly around the map eating bamboo to open up new areas or close down old ones and change the map. Giant panda is generally not a threat although can block paths for the players. (Vibrant and verdant green colours used mainly, accompanied by the sounds of nature alongside an upbeat soundscape, a balance of fast and slow pacing targeted focussing on skill and a moderate use of power ups)

**Future themes for levels:**

**Dark/light-** set either outside or within some burial chamber, light sources will come and go and players will need to use their short term memory in order to avoid pitfalls and obstructions whilst attempting to defeat the opposing player.

**Wind-** a level based on the use of and manipulation of wind, traps and activatable mechanisms in order to push your opponent off the edge before they do the same to you.

**Ice-** low-traction floor tiles make this a hard to control level, thin ice will break/melt when walked on for any extended amount of time leaving a deadly space where once you could traverse.

**Additional notes:**

**Shrines-** perhaps add a shrine to some/all levels that is activated in different ways and produces a different effect each level; for example a Suijin shrine could change the flow of water in the gardens, this would be another thing to try and have to balance, and would add to the chaos, but it’s a potential addition that could affect the gameplay in a positive way if executed correctly.

**Nomi-no-Sukune-** legendary sumo wrestler god that is regarded as the human creator of sumo, he defeated a legendary strong man known as “Kuyahaya”.