

The Way of the Clans: Book Five

The Way of the Scorpion

by
John Wick

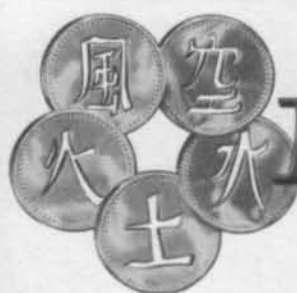
FORBIDDEN PLANET
92 BOLD ST. LIVERPOOL
0151 707 1401

£ 9.99



Legend of the Five Rings





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The Way of the Scorpion



*"How easily men are corrupted,
and how difficult it is to make them just."*

– Bayushi Tengen



Credits

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REPRINT THANKS

For the second printing of *Way of the Scorpion*, we asked to hear about things people really wanted to see changed. Those who answered the call included Chris Bigg, Ray Colina, Corinth, Lucien Cristofaro, David J Dolph, Tim Ellis, Luc Gadioux, David R. "Sanzo" Henry, Thomas Iverson, G Michael Jacobs, Ron James, Shosuro Kanzaki, Kathleen, Rob Kenny, David V Krieger, Otaku KunLiu, David E. Loewen, Stewart MacWilliam, Richard Maddy, Ian McAuliffe, Andrew McGregor, Craig Mercer, Andrew Meyer, Wayne Ogle, James Ojaste, Scott M. Parrish, Chris Payne, Dieter Pearcey, Ramón Peña, Devon E. Sanders, SkidMarxst, John Stepp, Martin Sweeney, Jay Swygert, Tengu, Foxtrot & Vex, Kyle Voltti, and Jay Wrobel. (If we've left your name out, we're very sorry - we tried not to miss anybody from the 2.5 MB of email you sent us!)

Special thanks go to Scott Gearin, who went way above and beyond the call of duty in his contribution.

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D.J. helped out with the Courtier Techniques and Winds and Fortunes.

Patrick wrote the Fortune Tables and the templates in Chapter Five.

Jennifer "Shosuro" Mahr earned her nickname with her advice for *Treachery 101*.

Special Thanks to Jennifer and Ree for the lunch session that inspired at least half this book.

This book could not have been written without the help of one man who continues to question my beliefs in ethics and virtue. It's silly to "dedicate" the book to him, because he wouldn't notice. But I can hope that folks who read this will read him and understand that he wasn't the conniving bastard history has painted him to be. After all he's done for me, it's the least I can do to try and restore his marred reputation.

"I seem to be departing from the usual practice of authors, which has always been to dedicate their works to some prince So, to avoid that mistake, I have chosen to dedicate my discourses not to those who are princes, but those who, on account of their innumerable good qualities, deserve to be ..."

- Niccoló Machiavelli



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The Honest Scorpion

The Lion stood perfectly still as the remnants of his words echoed off the walls of the Emperor's court. The Crane stood quietly, trying to hide the surprise – or perhaps the fear – from escaping to his features. A slight giggle may have been heard from the corner where the Crab and Unicorn sat, sipping the sweet Crane sake. The Phoenix and Dragon were as stoic as ever. But in the corner where robes of crimson and black gathered, there was no laughter, no stoic silence; there was only the rustling quiet of a gathering storm.

"I have said it," the Lion exclaimed, his hand falling to the katana in his obi. "I shall say it again. The Bayushi are nothing but cowards, and if one would dare face me, I would prove it. For this sword – my grandfather's sword – would slice through him and there would be no blood from the Scorpion's wound, only water!"

The rustling of silk was the only sound heard in the court. Eyes flashed over and behind a dozen masks. The Lion stood, his sword and his arm ready.

Finally, a single figure stepped from the crowded corner. He was tall for a Scorpion, and his face was hidden only by a high collar. He walked quietly and without pause. On his scarlet and black robes was the *mon* of the Emerald Champion, and on his sleeve a sash indicating his position as Emerald Magistrate. As he approached, the other Lions whispered his name. He continued to walk across the court, as he heard some Crane whisper, "How lonely; the only honest Scorpion." He stopped before the Lion precisely at the spot where Matsu Ino's sword would strike him. Ino looked straight through him, his eyes burning with fury.

"Ino-san," the Scorpion said, his voice seemingly a whisper, but heard in every corner of the vast room. "Why do you do this?"

"Out of my way, Yojiro. My claim is not against you."

The Scorpion shook his head. "But I am a Bayushi, Ino-san. Your claim is against me. More importantly, it is against my family."

The Lion shook his head. "No. I know. You are Scorpion only by name. Not like the rest."

Yojiro took a deep breath. "I have known you for many years now, Ino-san. You would not do this without reason."

Ino smiled slightly under his thick beard. "I have reasons."

"Tell me," Yojiro said, his voice as soothing as a geisha's caress. "Tell me your reasons."

Silence filled the empty spaces of the room again. Yojiro felt the air around him constrict as the courtiers instinctively took a step forward, anticipating the Lion's answer.

For the first time, Ino's eyes left the other Scorpions and turned toward the lady half-hidden in shadow, standing beside the empty Emerald Throne. "It is her!" he exclaimed, and Yojiro heard a thousand throats gasp. "She is to blame!"

Yojiro side-stepped, putting himself between Ino and the Throne. "Take care, Ino-san," he whispered. "You are lucky the Emperor is not here today. Slandering his most favored counselor..."

"There is no slander if the claim is true!" Ino shouted over Yojiro's shoulder.

Yojiro took a step forward. "My friend," he began, but he stopped when Ino's hand withdrew half his blade from its *saya*. The Scorpion looked at the steel, then looked at the Lion. Beads of sweat dripped from Ino's nose. His eyes were wild.

"She is the one who said I planned to usurp my lord! She is the one who spread the lie! Now, I have fallen from my lord's favor! She is to blame!"

Yojiro whispered softly, "Ino-san, look where you are. Remember your lessons. You are on dangerous ground. There is nothing to be gained here, and much to be lost."

"My love for my lord will not be compromised!"

"Nor will it be won here, Ino-san. It will only be won another day."

Ino looked about him. One by one, he saw the startled faces that surrounded him. He saw their eyes, could almost hear their whispers and knew

their thoughts. Slowly, he began to realize what had happened.

"A little too much *sake*," he whispered.

Yojiro's brow furled. "What did you say, Ino-san?"

The Lion bowed his head in shame. "Too much sake. I knew it was strong. I heard the whispered words, my head was swimming and my temper flew. I have brought shame to my family."

Yojiro saw his opening. He stepped forward again, this time close enough to touch the Lion's sword arm. "Put away your steel. You cannot prove your courage here. That is for another day."

The Lion nodded. Slowly, Ino slipped the katana back into its resting place. "This very night, I will prove my courage."

"Tomorrow. Rest now. Come, I know where you need to go." Yojiro felt the Lion's fury fade and he led him away from the vast chamber.

As they passed the Emerald Throne, Yojiro's gaze fell on the shadows and saw her smile. He nodded.

Yes, my lady. I know what I must do.

"How lonely it must be for you," Ino said, regaining his train of thought.

Yojiro shook his head. "What do you mean?"

"To be the only honest Scorpion."

Yojiro shook his head. "Lonely is not the correct word, my friend."



Ino's dreams kept his eyes heavy. The sweet smell and taste of *sake* kept them warm and wet. His body was floating in a great warm, cleansing bath and he never desired to wake.

But there was the scream.

And then the shouting.

The sounds of pounding feet.

He knew he had to wake, but his hands were so heavy. And his eyes could not focus. His mouth was dry and tasted like rotten eggs. His legs felt as if they were made of seaweed.

He finally opened his eyes and when they found focus, he saw what had caused the scream.

A door opened, flooding light into his field of vision, blinding and burning his eyes.

A voice then, calling his name. Suddenly, his mind snapped awake and he saw...



Yojiro felt his *yoriki* flow past him into the small room. He made certain – as did they – to avoid the pool of blood that had crept out across the floor. Ino's face was flushed with surprise.

Ino looked at his hands, covered in blood.

He looked at his kimono, covered in blood.

He looked at his lord, covered in blood.

And there, sticking from the neck of the dead *daimyo* was Matsu Ino's bloody wakizashi.

"Bring him here," Yojiro said as Ino was lifted to his feet, his eyes filling with tears. The Lion was thrown down at the Scorpion's feet as the magistrate knelt before him.

"Ino, my friend. This does not look good for you. You are sobbing like a little girl."

The Lion could do nothing but look up through his tears at Yojiro. "Whuh-whuh..."

"Now you are stammering like a virgin on her wedding night."

The Lion looked back at the body of his lord and a new wave of despair flooded over him.

Yojiro sighed and spoke again, sounding as if he were scolding his favorite nephew. "Ino-san, do not make this more difficult than it already is for me."

A sudden shift in emotion came across the Lion, but his new-found anger wasn't enough to help him locate his lost speech.

"You know my duty, Ino-san. I am sworn to uphold the Emperor's Law. I am a magistrate of the Emerald Champion, and I have a duty to the office I hold."

The Lion was speechless. All he could do was stare coldly at the Scorpion. He could not even spit for the thick dryness of his mouth.

"Now tell me, Ino-san, do you recall any of your activities last evening?"

The Lion remained silent.

"Ino-san, you are a Lion. I know you understand the law. Silence equals consent in the Emerald Champion's eyes."

Ino maintained his silence, but there was a moment of hesitation in his eyes. He tried to hide it, but Yojiro saw it. He was a Scorpion after all, trained from birth to see the weakness of others.

"Ino-san, this is what I am going to do. I am going to tell you what I know. Then we are going





to talk about what you know. Do you understand?"

The Lion's nod was as solemn as a prayer.

"Very good. Here is what I know. Last evening, your wrathful display in the court forced me to remove you from the Throne room. You and I talked as we walked, and agreed that we should speak of the subject in more comfortable surroundings. We stopped by a tea house – your favorite, if I recall correctly – and we enjoyed the company we found therein. You left with your consort and I left with mine. That was the last I saw of you... until a few moments ago.

"I do know that during the meal, you spoke harshly of your lord. You said that you had been passed up for promotion on more than one occasion, and that your lord was not judging you fairly. I assumed the *sake* was speaking for you, but now..." Yojiro waved a hand at the bloody mess behind them. "If I had known your lord was here, in the same tea house as us, I would have recommended another."

Yojiro leaned in close to the Lion. "Tell me, Ino-san. Tell me why you chose this tea house over any other." The spite in the Lion's eyes bore into Yojiro, but the questions continued. "We walked a long while to get here. We passed perhaps a dozen other tea houses. You chose this one specifically. Why?"

The Lion said nothing. Yojiro resumed his neutral stance.

"Very well. Let us continue. A scream awoke me from my sleep only moments ago. I took up my sword, charged down the hall, told my consort to call for the local magistrate and his yoriki. When we arrived, we found you here in this room."

Yojiro stopped. He let his words fall about the small room. He let the Lion's anticipation build just a little more, then asked the question.

"Ino-san, can you honestly tell me that you remember *not* killing your lord?"

The Lion frowned, his eyes confused. "Whuh..."

"Do you remember not killing your lord?" Yojiro asked, his voice bridging on demanding.

"I do not..."

"Do you know for a fact that you did not kill your lord? It is a simple question. Answer it 'Yes' or 'No.'"

The Lion stuttered. "I – I do not..."

"Yes or no, Ino-san! Yes or no!"

Ino shook his head. "I do not know..."

Yojiro leaned closer. "So you cannot tell me that you did not do it?"

"I did not kill my lord!" the Lion shouted.

"But you do not know that, do you?"

"Yes! Yes I do. I did not kill my lord!"

"You do not know that, do you? You cannot honestly tell me that, can you?"

Ino's head bobbed up and down, his tears starting anew. "YES! Yes I can! I know I did not do it!"

"Do you remember doing it?"

"No," Ino said. "I do not remember doing it."

"Doing what, Ino-san?"

"I do not remember killing my..." Ino stopped. Yojiro smiled.

"I am sorry you do not remember performing such an act, Ino-san. A man should carry the weight of his crime to his ancestors."

"No, wait!"

Yojiro ignored him. He turned to the yoriki. "Take him away. He will await Lord Toturi's permission, granting him the right to *seppuku*."

The yoriki hauled the Lion to his feet and dragged him away. Yojiro sat quietly as he heard the Lion screaming his name. Just as Ino's voice began to fade in the distance, he heard the Lion curse his family.

He had heard worse.



It was as if the shadows were tailored for her. Like a web, they clung to her every curve, hiding what needed to be hidden, intensifying the beauty that was already there. When she moved, they moved with her, clinging with a dark embrace.

When she moved, her kimono revealed a little, but only as much as she wanted. She moved across the room and Yojiro felt his eyes wander from the floor. *She is my lord's wife*, his mind whispered, but even that thought did not help him.

With her back to him she whispered, "Your eyes explore for your hands, Yojiro."

His gaze shot back down to the floor. He heard her turn and walk toward him, her voice on the edge of a soft laugh. "I am not unused to such an occurrence."

Yojiro said nothing, but watched her kneel on the raised dais before him. "My husband is not



here, Yojiro. Had he been, he would have killed the Lion outright."

"I did what I could, Madame," Yojiro said, bowing his forehead to the floor.

"Matsu Ino paid highly for his insolence."

"Not enough, Madame," Yojiro said.

The lady laughed. "Were it any other, Yojiro, I would say he was wearing a mask of false humility." He heard her kimono rustle in the dim light. "But it is you, the only honest Scorpion."

"A title the Lions have bestowed upon me, Madam."

"You have earned it." From the corner of his eye, Yojiro saw a small white box drawn from the sleeve of her kimono.

"Come here and take your reward... my brave champion."

Yojiro bowed low again, rose to his feet and walked forward, keeping his gaze on the floor. In her hands she held a small, white box of folded paper. Yojiro bowed again and opened his hands. She put the box in his palms, her fingertips running along his skin as she withdrew them.

"My gift," she whispered.

Yojiro's lips parted, but she interrupted. "Do not bother with etiquette, Yojiro. You know my heart."

He hesitated, bowed again. "As you wish," he said.

He began to back away, but he heard her say, "Open it."

Yojiro swallowed. "Madame, it is not..."

Her sweet voice suddenly turned as cold as spring water. "I dictate what is and is not proper, samurai." He paused, and her voice was soft again. "Open it."

Yojiro did not disobey twice. He unfolded the paper, still standing before her. The folds fell away revealing rice paper... and a small silver object he did not recognize.

"They are called 'scissors,' Yojiro, a tool the Unicorns use for cutting. They were a gift I received from... an admirer."

He bowed. "Thank you, my lady. This is a fine..."

"That is not the gift, Yojiro." She smiled and rose to her feet. "That is the key to your gift."

Yojiro's mind began to race. He felt his skin grow warm under his kimono and he wondered if she could see.

Of course she can see you sweat, you fool! he cursed himself. He tried to gather his composure and retreated a step. She took a step forward.

"Here is my gift for avenging my stained honor." Yojiro took another step back and she took another step forward. "For doing my husband's duty."

Yojiro watched her hands fall to the obi that was so delicately wrapped about her waist. Her fingers twisted about it, untying the string that kept it in place.

"Madame, I do not think..."

"Keep quiet, samurai. I will tell you when to speak." She took another step forward, and he another step back. "Stand still, Yojiro," she said, her voice as stern as he had ever heard it. "I have something I want you to do."

Yojiro stopped, his heart pounding in his chest.

She is your lord's wife, his mind told him over and over again. *She is your lord's wife.*

She stepped up close and he felt the silk of her kimono rustle against his own. His jaw was trembling, but he could not summon the will to stop it.

He suddenly realized her obi was untied. Her kimono slid slightly off her shoulders. He blinked and she said, "No. Keep your eyes open. It will be dangerous if you close them."

She raised her hands up to his gaze and twisted about her fingers was the beaded string of her obi. "This will make a fine knot," she whispered through her smile.

"Madame, I..."

"Hush, Yojiro. Just do what I tell you to do. You know the price for disobedience." Her fingers pulled the string tight and he swore he felt his heart skip a beat.

"But there is also a price for loyalty, is there not?"

Yojiro nodded.

"Good," she whispered. "Nothing is more valuable to me or our clan than loyalty, Yojiro." She took the string and twisted it into her hair...

"Let the Lions have their honor. It only makes them predictable."

Yojiro watched the string and the hair began to braid under her quick fingers...

"And let the Phoenix have their knowledge. A book cannot teach you pain."

The black and the red folding together...

"The Crane are blinded by their pride."

Making a pattern...

"The Crab think strength is the key, but it takes more than strength to swim."

No, not a pattern, but a web...



AN IMPORTANT DEVELOPER'S NOTE ON ROKUGANI "HISTORY"

When we first started design on this game, one of my primary objectives was to give Rokugan an ambivalent history. It would be confusing at first, but as the reader progressed, he would see hints that things were not exactly as they appeared. After all, in the basic book, we talk about the Unicorn being involved in the "Iuchiban Incident," which is an obvious clerical error. After all, the Unicorn didn't return to Rokugan until three hundred years after Iuchiban was put in his tomb.

I thought little notes like this would create the illusion of "revisionist history" that often occurs in proud, arrogant cultures. (If you don't know what I'm talking about, go take a look at America's "victory" in the War of 1812. You might be surprised at what you find.) Unfortunately, I was too clever for my own good, and the historical errors were seen as just that: errors.

But this book gives me an opportunity to set things right. To explain in clear and simple language a few facts that have slipped through the cracks. In these pages, you'll learn all about the Rokugani attitude toward history and historians. After all, what is the true history of a culture? Ask yourself that question the next time you're told that America has never lost a war.

- /W

"A Dragon's self-contradictory riddles only serve to confuse him."

A delicate web of darkness and blood...

"And the Unicorn..." She laughed. "Who cares what the Unicorn think?" She stepped back to him, the long braid dancing between her fingers. "All they have are wonderful toys."

Yojiro blinked, as if he were suddenly released from a spell. He looked down at the scissors in his hand and back up again.

"Take what you deserve, Yojiro. This is my gift. My gift for my champion."

It took him many moments to do it, but when he finally gathered the courage, he put the scissors to her braid. Then, in a single moment of daring that he would never understand, he looked into her eyes as he depressed the blades.



Welcome to the fifth book in our *Way of the Clans* series. *Way of the Scorpion* is a sourcebook designed to help a Game Master flesh out his own vision of Rokugan's most cunning Clan. The Scorpions could also be called Rokugan's most maligned Clan, for they are the Emperor's "underhand," who perform all the duties the Emperor deems necessary, but shameful. As you read further, you will discover some of the most dangerous and ugly truths about Rokugan, but remember, everything here is told from the Scorpion's point of view, so bring a grain of salt with you.

How To Use This Book

First off, as with all of our sourcebooks, we do not intend this to be the "final word" regarding the Scorpion Clan. As usual, the Game Master always has the final authority over all matters of his game. If his vision of the Scorpion doesn't match with ours, expect some differences between what you find in here and what you find in the shadows.

The first chapter contains anecdotes about the Scorpion, showing you just how they handle themselves around the other Clans. We hope it will give you a better feel for Scorpion philosophy and the dangerous art of Scorpion diplomacy.

The second chapter contains information and history about the different families of the Scorpion Clan, including background on the Bayushi, Soshi and Shosuro families.

The third chapter contains all the rules you will need to create a Scorpion character, including the Shosuro Actors and Bayushi Courtiers.

The fourth chapter details the most important Scorpions (other than Scorpion player characters, of course), including their Traits and Skills.

The fifth chapter lists five ready-to-play characters. All you have to do is photocopy the character sheet out of the book, and you're ready to go.

Lastly, we've included a series of appendices that detail information that is relevant to the Scorpions, including poisons, the Bayushi castle and lands, and Soshi Shadow-magic. One of these appendices deals with the ninja of Rokugan. If you are not a Scorpion or a GM, you may want to leave that section alone.

We have deliberately stayed away from creating any kind of "family tree" for the Scorpion Clan. It's hard to fit characters into a pre-set ancestry, so we've instead given the GM free rein to create his own ancestral trees. We have, however, included some famous Scorpions in the sidebars throughout this book. If one of them strikes your fancy, you can purchase him or her as an ancestor for the listed Character Points.

To peel back the mask of the Scorpion is to look at Rokugan's true face. It is said that the Scorpion only shows his face to those he is about to kill, so they can carry the memory of their killer into the afterlife. It is said (by Scorpion poets, of course) that a Scorpion only shows his face to those whom he truly loves.

You are about to see the true face of the Scorpion.

You'd better know who your friends are.





Chapter One: The Subtle Scorpion





"JUNSHIN"

"Junshin" means "pure of heart," but as far as the Scorpions are concerned, it means "not of the blood." Since the rest of Rokugan would probably consider the term a compliment, Scorpions use it a great deal in public as well. However, no Scorpion would be so vulgar as to use the term as a casual insult; that would ruin the game.

Chapter One: The Subtle Scorpion

FROM THE JOURNAL OF MATSU SANURO

(Sanuro was cousin to Matsu Sinoku, a Lion playwright. Sinoku's mother was a Scorpion, and while she credited her mother for her skill with the pen, she was never a trusted member of her family. Her last play, Mercy, was perhaps her most powerful work. It only played once, and the consequences of that night were recorded in her cousin's journal ...)

Only last evening I was witness to something I shall never forget. I attended the opening night of my cousin's play, *Mercy*. I pray that as I write, I will find the strength to keep tears from falling into the fresh ink so my words can be read and the events of last evening remembered.

I settled down in our lord Akodo's theater and prepared for the evening by reading the argument. I saw that my cousin had chosen the tale that she had longed to write for many, many years. It was the tale of Matsu Uji, a young hero of noteworthy courage, strength and insight; a tale every Lion would know by heart. It would be a tragic play, for the young daimyo was a man of passion who married a beautiful Scorpion out of love, rather than duty. The Scorpion bride plotted with Uji's *karo* Sojuno to murder her husband and take over the Clan. Of course, the whole affair ended with a massacre and the cast lying in pools of blood. It is considered a lesson in humility, honor and loyalty.

As the theater grew dark, I felt the anticipation swell in my belly. I watched for the rising of the curtain, but it remained still. Then, I heard a quiet footfall beside me, and I saw a beautiful woman walk through the audience toward the stage. She

climbed the steps, turned toward us and delivered a soliloquy I will never forget ...

Good evening, dearest brothers and sisters.

This evening, you will be witness to a tragedy. The Tragedy of Matsu Uji, it has been called. But this evening, it has a different name, and with the new name comes a new lesson.

My name is Shosuro Sushanume, and I am the Scorpion bride of your Matsu Uji. I am the villain, the seductress, the traitor. I will seduce Uji's karo, and while he lies in my arms, I will persuade him into betrayal and murder.

And as he will be seduced, my brothers and sisters, so shall you all be seduced.

And just as my husband is murdered, so shall you all be murdered.

For if it is true that death brings new light to our eyes, then so shall your eyes be opened.

Arm yourselves now.

For murder is my motive.

And my words are my poison.

The curtain rose then, and she paced the stage, introducing the cast of the tragedy. She began with her husband, speaking of his nature as we listened and he went on his way, oblivious to our observation and Shosuro's words.

Here is my husband, Matsu Uji. Look at him. Proud. Strong. Courageous. A true Lion. But where is his compassion? Where is his cunning?

His pride and courage have dulled them to a sliver, a smudge, a faint remnant of what they once were. He is a Lion. Loyal to his kinsmen, and faithful to his word.

But as the sun sets and the cold night creeps across the land, where does he go? To the comfort of his bed? To the comfort of his wife?

No.

He finds comfort in the arms of another.

And another. And another.

And I am at home, waiting for his return. Every night he spends away from his wedding bed is a betrayal.

I found solace in the arms of one. That is betrayal, for I am a Scorpion and my heart is black; for I did not seek comfort in the arms of another, but revenge.

He found comfort in the arms of many. But that is not betrayal, for his is a Lion's heart. And I am certain that while his body lay with another, his heart lay with me, and it was because I was

weak that I did not find satisfaction in that sentiment.

The play continued. She introduced each of the characters, and with each one, we saw them as caricatures of the virtues we were taught to revere. A courageous man was blindly irrational. A temperate man was fearful of failure. An idealistic man was foolish and could not see truth if it were sitting on his nose.

As I watched the play unfold, I saw the events I knew by heart as seen through her eyes. I saw Uji's temper and bull-headedness. I saw his stubbornness cloud his judgment and I saw his callousness toward a woman who only sought a hint of compassion.

I saw the *karo* Sanjuno - young, handsome and passionate - fall eagerly into the beautiful Scorpion's arms. Then, as Sushanume stroked his long, beautiful hair, I saw him confess his hatred of his lord, and how it grew from watching Uji strike her day after day, then flee to the willing arms of *geisha*. As Sushanume stoked his fire for vengeance, I saw her cunning scheme begin to

take shape, and for a moment, my heart raced with the anticipation of watching it unfold.

Then, I saw the faithful maid who discovers the Scorpion's treachery, and I saw her look over Sushanume's beauty with jealous eyes. She licked her lips eagerly with the thought of outmaneuvering a Scorpion, especially Sushanume, who so obviously did not deserve the beauty she was born with.

Finally, the duel. I saw Sanjuno draw steel against his lord, Uji's countenance furious over the thought of his wife and *karo* betraying his trust. And in the back of my mind, I heard myself think, "If you were not so cold to her, and if you had shown him the honor he deserved ..."

The duel began, and when Sanjuno's blade struck down his lord, his weeping eyes turned to Sushanume and his steel cut through her skin as well. Then, the young *karo* fell on his own blade, death finding him instantly.

Bleeding on the floor, the husband and wife looked at each other, life fleeing from them with every breath. Quietly, Uji asked, "Why? Why did you betray me?"





Despite the pain, Sushanume smiled. "If you were a better man, you would not need to ask." She choked for a moment, then said, "Then again, if you were a better man ..."

And with those words, Shosuro Sushanume died.

As the lights rose in the stunned and silent theater, I found tears upon my cheeks. But they were *not* tears for Uji.

They were tears for Sushanume.

There was a sudden movement in the rows before me, and my focus followed it. Akodo Kuinjin had leapt to his feet with his katana in hand, standing before my cousin Sinoku. Before anyone could move, the blade cut through Sinoku, killing her instantly. Then, his rage spilled onto the stage as his blade sliced through the terror-struck actors, one by one.

Finally, he turned to the audience, his eyes filled with fury. But when he spoke, his voice was as calm as a warm, sunny summer's day. "This play will never be performed again," he whispered. He sheathed his blade and walked from the theater without looking back.

My cousin's name has been ripped from the history books. All copies of her play have been destroyed.

All of them but the one she sent to me on the morning of her last day.

It arrived this morning.

I read it again just now.

I cannot hold back the tears.

LETTERS FROM DAIDOJI KUKOJIN TO DOJII YABU

Seventh day of the Rooster, Third Year of Hantei XVII

We are successful! Our strategy worked perfectly, and the castle of Bayushi Uduwara belongs to the Crane. Uduwara himself was killed in the battle, but we have captured his wife and two sons.

I plan to move northward toward Shiro no Shosuro in the morning. While I do not expect to receive a ransom (such a thing is for brigands), I do suspect that their diplomats in your court shall be more forthcoming this next week, which shall make our negotiations much simpler.

My lord, I am certain that when snow falls on the walls of your home, I shall send you a letter, confirming our victory over our treacherous cousins, removing their vile fetor from Rokugan forever.

Ninth day of the Rooster, Third Year of Hantei XVII

The last two days have proven highly educational. I have spent them speaking with Lady Shosuro, learning of the Scorpion spirit. She begs me for the lives of her sons, saying that she will trade anything for my assurance of their safety.

"Anything?" I asked, failing to hide my smile.

"Anything," she repeated, her eyes glimmering with desperation.

I can tell you one thing for certain, my lord. The Scorpion certainly know how to educate their women.

Fifteenth day of the Rooster, Third Year of Hantei XVII

On this day, my final day in this world, I hope that this letter will teach others the errors of my weakness and neglect.

Only yesterday we arrived at the foothills of Shiro no Shosuro. Archers stood on the parapets waiting for us to move into range. My lieutenants and I moved forward, three Scorpions leading the way.

As we approached the walls, I saw Scorpion officers rushing to their commander, informing them of our captive guests. And while they sat safe behind their walls, I could see fear fill their eyes as we approached with the wife and children of the great lord of their Clan.

Again she turned to me, begging me for the life of her children.

"Please," she said, her eyes red and her voice trembling. "Allow me to speak to the lord of the castle. He will never listen to you. I have ... some influence with him." Her suggestion made me smile.

"He will not listen to me?"

She shook her head. "No. He will refuse any negotiation. Please. I do not want to see the blood of my children spilled on my homeland."

I thought for a moment, then agreed. Her joy overcame her, and she fell to my feet, kissing my heels. Then she leapt to her feet and ran to the castle, the gates opening wide for her. I was certain our victory was assured.

Then, moments later, she appeared on the walls, calling down to me by name.

"Crane fool!" she called down. "Watch carefully."

Suddenly, a wall of arrows fell down upon us, cutting into my lieutenants and the bodies of her sons. They screamed as they fell, looking up to their mother. I looked up as well, not realizing until later that not a single arrow had targeted me.

"Look here, Crane!" she cried down to me as I gazed up from the riddled and bloody bodies of her children. "Look here!"

"Your children ..." I started, but she halted me with a laugh that was as cold as a blade.

"I can bear others." I saw her smile grow slowly on her lips. "In fact, I already have."

As she continued, I felt my skin crawl.

"And when he is old enough, I shall tell him of his father, his weak-willed and foolish father. He shall grow from boy to man, and I shall nourish his growth with hatred and desire. His hatred will be for you, coupled with his desire to see your blood spill on your native land."

I felt myself nod slowly as the realization fell upon me.

"The last thing you shall ever see will be the eyes of your son as he slices your old, withering body in two and the walls of your native home burn and crumble about you. That is my revenge, Kukojin. A revenge that will haunt you until you and your son embrace ... with blood and steel."

As she retreated behind the safety of the wall, I heard my army screaming for my attention. I turned about, the vision of her laughing at my folly possessing my every thought.

But when I saw my troops, surrounded by two mighty Scorpion armies outnumbering us at least two to one, I knew there was only one recourse.

And so, with this letter, I tell you that I can only find peace at the end of my father's blade. There is no other way to erase my shame. I am uncertain if even that act will be enough.

I shall discover the truth soon. Sooner than I ever suspected.

FROM KAKITA RYOKU'S FAMOUS NOVEL, "WINTER"

It was I who asked the question, and to this day I wish I had not. If I had my wits about me, I would have understood the consequences of my actions, but the *sake* in my belly made my thoughts giddy, and - I must admit - being surrounded by the most powerful men in Rokugan did not help the situation.

"So," I asked. "What is the most important virtue a samurai may possess?"

Of course, everyone turned to pay closer attention when I addressed the room. The first to answer me was Hida Junuro, the daimyo of the Crab. His huge arms always made my head swim.

"Strength!" he cried. "For a weak man is not a man at all."

Many in the room quietly nodded, but Akodo Kyuinjin was next.



"Courage," he said quite calmly. "For even if a man is strong, should he be a coward, his strength will serve nothing but his flight."

Many more nodded at the wisdom of the Akodo, but when the Unicorn spoke up, there was naught but silence.

"Resourcefulness, I think," said the young Shinjo Yuni. "Strength and courage are good and well, but if a man cannot think, he cannot make use of any of his virtues."



And then suddenly, a quiet voice spoke from the crowd. I almost did not hear it as it softly said, "Loyalty." All turned to see Bayushi Ujiro standing in the corner, picking from the fresh *sashimi* on the table. "For if a man is not loyal, all of his virtues serve your enemy."

There was a moment of tension that had filled the room as each of the other daimyos, one by one, nodded in agreement. The last to nod - of course - was the Crab.

"Pah!" he said through his thick beard. "What does a Scorpion know of loyalty?"

The laughter was a bit louder than I was comfortable with, for I remember my nanny teaching me that it was very bad luck to laugh at a Scorpion.

Ujiro smiled under his mask - a beautiful curling mask of smoke and fire that revealed only his eyes and his lips - and walked to face the Crab. "Would you like to put that claim to the test?"

I must say that Hida Junuro made Ujiro look quite small, but the Scorpion did not back down.



The Crab looked down at the Scorpion and said, "A single Crab is worth a thousand Scorpions any day."

Ujiro nodded. "Perhaps in the Shadowlands." He turned and took three steps away, then turned back to the Crab. "But not here. Here in our lovely hostess' winter court." He flashed one of those brilliant smiles at me, and I blushed with the thought of what lay under that mask.

"Very well, let us test our samurai, shall we?" Ujiro strode about the room, his scarlet robes swirling about him like the fiery smoke of his mask. "Who is willing to test their samurai against my own?"

"What will be the test?" asked Shinjo Yuni.

"Loyalty, of course," Ujiro replied. "Is that not the highest of all virtues?" Ujiro directed that question at Akodo Kyuinjin. A wise move, for he knew how the Lion would answer.

"A Lion's loyalty is unconditional."

"So I hear," said Ujiro, his voice spiced with only a hint of sarcasm. "But are you willing to put it to the test?"

"I am," said the Crab.

"As am I," said the Unicorn.

But the Lion eyed Ujiro curiously, suspecting (I suppose) that something was amiss.

"Do not hesitate too much longer, Akodo-san. Lady Ryoko is watching, after all." He turned to me then, his devilish smile flashing in the candlelight. "And you will be writing all of this in your journal, will you not, Madame?"

I smiled. "Of course I will."

He glided past me then, returning to the other daimyo. "You heard it, my friends. We all know that the good Lady will be publishing her journal in the spring. We do not want the rest of Rokugan to view us as foolish ..." he paused before Akodo Kyuinjin "... now do we?"

"My samurai have nothing to prove," Kyuinjin said.

Ujiro bowed to Kyuinjin. "Very well. I had only heard that a Lion lives by his actions ... and not his words."

Kyuinjin nodded. "Hai."

"Very well. Let us see if your *yojimbo's* actions live up to your words."

The Lion hesitated and, for a moment, I thought I saw his hand move toward his wakizashi. Then, he bowed slightly and said curtly, "Very well."

"Excellent!" Ujiro quickly cleared the courtiers to either side of the room and lined the daimyo



up against the wall facing the door. "Then here is our contest. We will each call our yojimbo into the room. Then, we will give him a command."

"What command will that be?" I asked, delighted to see such a game in my court.

Ujiro smiled. "I will demonstrate with my own yojimbo, Shunsen. Then, each of you will follow suit. The yojimbo who hesitates or questions his lord's command will be disqualified. Are we in agreement?"

The other daimyo nodded, but Kyuinjin nodded last.

"Very well. Let the game begin!" He turned to me. "My Lady," he said in a delicate, sweet voice, "would you be so kind as to call Shunsen into the room?"

I nodded and walked to the door of the parlor. Just outside, the yojimbo of each of the daimyo knelt upon a sitting pillow eating warm rice.

"Shunsen," I said, and the Scorpion set down his rice, ran to my feet and bowed low. "Your lord requires your presence."

Shunsen bowed quickly to me and ran into the room kneeling at the feet of his daimyo.

The time between the moment that Shunsen fell to his knees to the moment that Ujiro gave the command was only a breath, but in that single breath, a slow realization came upon me. I looked at the other daimyo and saw the pure contempt in their eyes. I felt my heart racing with the excitement of the game. I felt the cool, winter air in my nose and against my teeth. Then, I looked at Ujiro.

The Scorpion was not looking at his yojimbo. His eyes were fixed on me. I saw those eyes, and suddenly, I could hear his voice as if he were standing next to me.

Remember this, my Lady. Remember this.

I suddenly realized what was about to occur.

It was like a nightmare. My voice caught in my throat, and the world slowed down. I couldn't move. All I could do was watch Ujiro give his command as his eyes remained fixed on my own.

"Shunsen," he said.

"My lord?"

"Kill me."

The Scorpion did not pause. "Yes, my lord."

His katana was out of its *saya* and through Ujiro before anyone could even think of moving. The Scorpion's body fell to the floor, his blood splattered over the other daimyo. Then, again without a pause, Shunsen fell to his knees,

dropped his katana to the floor with a clatter, drew his wakizashi and fell on it.

Moments after the yojimbo had stopped twitching, the screams began.

The other daimyo stood still, their eyes on the still-bleeding corpse of the Scorpion.

And as my wits slowly came back to me, I could think of only two things.

The first was Ujiro's voice, telling me to remember.

And the second was that my question was the cause of his death.

FROM BAYUSHI NAMARU'S BOOK, "BAYUSHI'S PROMISE"

In the shadows, Bayushi sat perfectly still. In his hands was the letter with hastily scrawled handwriting, begging his audience and discretion. His brother sat before him, his eyes filled with the light of anticipation.

Bayushi looked down at the letter again, reading the words there. Then, he looked back up at his brother, his lips parting for only a moment.

"What you ask of me," Bayushi said, his voice a whisper in the darkness, "is to sacrifice my name and the names of all those who follow me."

He stood, strode about the small room, his head hung with the weight of the decision.

"No other can do what I ask of you, my brother."

Bayushi looked up when his brother spoke. He continued.

"I cannot ask Akodo. He has not the courage. I cannot ask Doji. She is too refined. I cannot ask Hida. He is obsessed with his wall. I cannot ask Shiba. His mind is not on the practical. Shinjo is gone over the mountains, but still, her heart is too tender for such work."

"What about Togashi?" Bayushi asked.

The Emperor hesitated. "No. Because... because I do not trust him."

Bayushi nodded. "Nor do I."

Silence fell between the two brothers and Bayushi knelt down in the shadows again.

"You are the only one, Bayushi." The Emperor knelt forward. "The only one I trust to do such work. Such villainous, contemptible work."

Bayushi nodded. "I understand." He stood and walked to his brother.

"I accept." He handed the letter back to his brother, but snatched it back just as he reached for it.



SWIMMING LESSON

The little story of the frog and the scorpion tells much of the philosophy of the Scorpion Clan.

The first lesson involves Shinsei's telling of the story. Bayushi assumes he already knows the outcome, but Shinsei's surprise ending presents the power of misleading an opponent with his own certainty.

The second lesson comes with the strike Bayushi earns. Again, another lesson – albeit a more painful one – about certainty. Shinsei looked into Bayushi's eyes and saw that he had learned one of the secrets of the story, but there was still more to learn. In fact, Shinsei's lesson could be summarized with a single statement which can be found in the Phoenix edition of *The Tao of Shinsei*: "When you are certain you have learned all there is to learn, you have failed."

The third lesson is Shinsei's statement about liars and Bayushi's mask. "Your face told me one thing and your eyes told me another," is one of the most important statements in the story. Bayushi dons the mask to hide his face, so only his eyes are showing. It is often said that "A man's eyes are the mirrors of his soul." This is – undoubtedly – a Scorpion statement. One of the first lessons Scorpion bushi learn is how to lie with their eyes.

"I will be your villain, Hantei." He paused. "But, if you betray me ..." He paused again. "We never faced each other at the contest, brother ..." Bayushi began.

Hantei finished. "And I pray we never will."

The Children of Bayushi

Of all Rokugan's clans, the most maligned is the Scorpion. Nearly every play, song and story features a Scorpion villain. They are portrayed as liars, murderers and cowards. Every samurai in Rokugan knows the truth: a Scorpion can never meet the gaze of an honest man without flinching.

Nothing could be further from the truth.

The tale of the birth of the Scorpion Clan has been told seven times in Rokugan's history, but its most poignant telling is in Bayushi Namaru's book *Bayushi's Promise*. In it, she gives a "non-traditional" perspective on Bayushi's agreement to serve as Hantei's master of espionage.

Scorpion daimyo trace their ancestry to Bayushi, Child of Sun and Moon and brother to Hantei, the first Emperor of Rokugan. Other members of the clan trace their lineage to Shosuro, Soshi and Yogo, the three mortals who chose to follow Bayushi into the hills of central Rokugan.

The Yogo family fulfills the Scorpion's obligation to hide and protect the twelve black scrolls that were the downfall of Fu Leng. The Soshi family are masters of a unique brand of sorcery called "Shinobi," while the Shosuro serve as infiltrators and assassins, quietly removing threats to the clan and its allies. Finally, the Bayushi serve as the Scorpion's "face." They maintain the reputation the Scorpion have fought long and hard to develop, that of scheming, lying, untrustworthy scum. It's very easy to underestimate scum. It's also very dangerous. Especially when there's a samurai hiding under that villainous veneer.

And, collectively, they continue to help perpetuate the greatest falsehood in the history of Rokugan.



THE NINJA

For a thousand years, stories of ninja have been woven into the tapestry of Rokugan's folk lore. Disregarded as peasant superstition by most samurai, others suspect there may be some truth to the wild tales of shadow-weaving spies who can disappear from view, climb sheer walls and kill without a sound. Everyone knows the ninja began with the Scorpion, and while the shadow warriors may have begun as Scorpions, many speculate that the ninja have grown beyond the Scorpion's ability to control them.

Not all the stories of the ninja are true, but then again, not all of them are false. The truth is deeper and more lucid than any suspect.

THE FROG AND THE SCORPION - A STORY TOLD BY BAYUSHI GUWAHIME

This is an old story; one of the oldest, in fact. It is the first story I ever learned, and I will tell it to you now.

It is said that when the Children of Sun and Moon held their great contest to see who would rule, Bayushi stood by and watched his brothers and sisters fight, saw Shinsei and approached him.

Bayushi said, "Little master, I have a question for you."

Shinsei said nothing, only focused on the contest.

Bayushi continued. "I hope to win the contest, but I do not know if my strategy will carry me through."

"There is more than one way to win the contest," Shinsei said.

Bayushi sat down next to Shinsei and said, "Tell me."

Shinsei nodded and began.

"There was once a little frog who lived by the river side. One day, a scorpion wandered by and asked the little frog if he would carry him across the river."

Bayushi smiled. "I know this story, little master."

Shinsei frowned. "Are you sure?" He waited for a moment, still watching the contest. Bayushi fell silent and waited for him to continue.

"The scorpion said to the frog, 'Carry me across the river.' The frog said, 'I will not. For if I do, you will sting me.' The scorpion said, 'I will not. For if I do, we will both drown.'"

Bayushi nodded impatiently. "Yes, yes. I have heard this story."

Shinsei frowned again. "Are you sure?" He waited for a moment, still watching the contest. Bayushi fell silent again and waited for him to continue.

"The frog saw wisdom in the scorpion's words, so he let her climb on his back and began swimming across the river. About halfway across, he felt a painful sting in his back ..."

"Yes, yes! I know this story!" Bayushi exclaimed.

Finally, Shinsei turned from the contest and looked into Bayushi's eyes.

Bayushi fell silent. "I am sorry, little master. Please continue."

Shinsei turned his eyes back to the contest. "The frog felt the scorpion's poison flow into his heart, and as death closed in on him, they both began to sink into the cold water." Shinsei paused a moment, but Bayushi remained silent. "Just before his nose slipped under the waves, the frog said, 'Scorpion, now we will both drown!' But the scorpion smiled ..." Shinsei paused again and turned to look at Bayushi "... and she said, 'But little frog, I can swim.'"

Bayushi sat next to Shinsei, his face showing his stunned surprise. Then, slowly, he began to smile. "I understand, little master."

Shinsei suddenly delivered a swift strike from his walking stick against Bayushi's mouth. His lips broke and blood sprayed. Bayushi leapt to his feet and put his hands to his face.

"Why did you do that?" he said through his smashed lips.

"Pain is the liar's only reward. Your face told me one thing and your eyes told me another. I had to reward one of the two, so I chose to reward your lying face."

Bayushi stood in silence as his blood trickled onto the earth.

And slowly - painfully - he smiled. He ripped a piece of cloth from his robe, wrapped it about his face, walked into the contest ... and lost on purpose.

Then, he returned to Shinsei and bowed low to the little master.

Shinsei nodded. "Now you know how to swim."



SWIMMING LESSON (CONTINUED)

The final lesson is Bayushi's intentional failure in the contest. By failing to defeat his brother Shiba, he has established expectations from his brother, and perhaps, his other brothers and sisters as well. He has established an expectation of weakness. Bayushi's clever tricks were enough to defeat Shinjo, but not Shiba.



Chapter Two



The History of the Scorpion



BAYUSHI'S DAUGHTER

The name "Shosuro" is obviously a pseudonym. It is a slight bastardization of the word "shosuru" which means "name." In Scorpion histories, Bayushi often calls the Scorpion Thunder "Shosuko," a nickname fathers give to their first-born daughters, and "Soshisa," which means "founder."

Almost nothing is known of "Bayushi's Daughter," including Shosuro's gender. It's assumed that Shosuro is female, but Scorpion portrayals on stage and in art often paint the enigmatic Thunder with no telling signs of gender. For clarity's sake, this book will refer to Shosuro as feminine, but there is no evidence to prove the nickname "Bayushi's Daughter" is correct.

Chapter Two: History of the Scorpion

While the history of the Scorpion Clan starts with the fall of Bayushi, it is not until after his (in)famous meeting with Hantei that the story begins. When Bayushi agreed to be the Emperor's master of espionage, he undertook a role that would stigmatize him and his family for all time. Nonetheless, he saw his brother's point: none of his other siblings were capable of the role, and it was a necessary duty.

And so, Bayushi became the most hated name in Rokugan. But other names would gain similar infamy. One by one, Shosuro, Soshi and Yogo became forever associated with Bayushi, thus winning them eternal defamation. The stories of Bayushi's meeting with each truly quantifies their characters, setting the stage for both their origin and evolution through a thousand years of peace.

Studying Scorpion history is no easy matter. It can be said that the known history of the Scorpion Clan is considered the Rokugani equivalent of "urban myth." The only history the fabled Lion Clan historians accept is history that has occurred in public. Wild tales of ninja, poisons, shadow magic and conspiracies are at the heart of Scorpion history, and generally regarded as peasant superstition.

That's just how the Scorpion want it.

Unlike the Dragon, the Scorpion have made every effort to define themselves, and they make every effort to reinforce their carefully crafted image. That image, however, has little to do with the truth.

To find the true nature of the Scorpion, we have to first take a journey into the past and follow the events that shaped them.

SHOSURO

Riding out into Rokugan with his armor and sword, Bayushi went looking for allies in his appointed task. He passed through the countryside, stopping at towns and villages, looking for those worthy to join his quest.

In one town, he was spotted by a bright-eyed boy standing on the side of the road. In his hands and pockets were trinkets and magic tricks. He ran up to the mounted samurai, calling out to him as he passed. "Samurai!" he cried. "Samurai, take me with you!"

The boy's enthusiasm made him smile. "But you do not even know where I am going," Bayushi replied.

"It does not matter! Take me with you! I want to be a samurai!"

Bayushi smiled, but shook his head. "I am not looking for men of honor, little one. I am looking for men of cunning."

The youth suddenly stood proud. "I am a man of cunning."

Bayushi's temper began to grow. "I do not have time for nonsense, little boy. Why don't you tell me where I can find a place to rest tonight?"

The boy's eyes dimmed. "Yes," he said, his voice betraying his disappointment. "There is a tea house in the town. You can stay there."

Bayushi threw the boy some coins and rode toward the town. The boy looked down at the





coins, then ran after the samurai, leaving the gold in the dust on the side of the road.

When Bayushi reached the tea house, he bathed, ate and prepared for a comfortable evening. The *okasan* arranged for him to spend the night with a beautiful geisha "talented in all respects." When she slid the panel of the door aside, Bayushi saw that her beauty could inspire poetry. She bowed and sat herself across from him. They spent the evening in conversation and song, and for the first time in years Bayushi allowed himself to feel at ease.

When the hour grew late and the geisha turned down the lights, Bayushi put aside his *tanto* and prepared for a long night of entertainment. But before he could move, a sudden and painful weight fell on his head. Someone pulled back his head by his hair and there was a knee in the small of his back. The cold steel of his own *tanto* was put at his throat and he heard a soft familiar voice in his ear: "You were looking for men of cunning?"

Bayushi felt his lips curl into a smile. "You are the boy on the side of the road, eh? This is a brilliant disguise."

The geisha chortled. "Who says I'm wearing a disguise?"

The next morning, Bayushi walked out of the village with "Shosuro" at his side.

THE BETRAYER

The shadows of the room were thick and long from the setting sun. The Phoenix shugenja knelt down before his wakizashi and sighed. His head was hung low and his breath was deep. His eyes were red from the day's tears, but his sorrow did not dampen his resolve.

Quietly, the Phoenix placed a sheet of paper in his hands, the last words he would ever write. Then, he took up the wakizashi, freed it from its saya and placed the tip against his ...

"Wait," said a voice behind him.

The shugenja turned, fire brewing in his soul. "Who dares ...?"

A figure stepped forward from the shadows, a figure the shugenja knew well. "It is I," it said. "He who dares anything."

"Bayushi." He spoke the name through spite-clenched teeth.

The Scorpion nodded. "Aye. I heard of your ... dilemma. I have a far less painful solution."

Suddenly, the shugenja's hate was cast away, and hope was put in its place. "You know how to remove the curse?"

Bayushi shook his head. "No. That knowledge is not within my grasp."

The shugenja suddenly realized he was standing. His chin fell to his chest again, and the strength in his legs failed him. He fell to the floor weeping.

"Cursed!" he shouted, as if the moon could hear him. "Cursed forever!"

"To betray the one you love the most," Bayushi finished.

The shugenja nodded. He sobbed for a while, then his fist clenched about the blade before him.

"If only ..."

"If only?"

"If only I could make them ..."

"Make them pay?"

The shugenja looked up. Bayushi could see the hate in the man's eyes, even through the darkness.

"Yes. Make them pay. All of them."

The Scorpion stepped forward. "We can. Together, we can make them pay."

The shugenja shook his head. "No. There is no way. Even with all my knowledge, the curse cannot be broken. I am condemned to betray those I love."

Bayushi knelt next to him and put his hand on his shoulder. There was a smile on his face and glee in his eyes.

"But Yogo, you do not love me."

- from Yogo Anaido's "The Traitor"

During the great war with their dark brother, the Children of Sun and Moon gained many mortal followers. One of those to join with Bayushi was the man called Yogo. However, Bayushi was not the first *kami* that Yogo followed.

At the beginning of the war, Yogo was a follower of Shiba, and wore the *mon* of the Phoenix on his shoulder. He was a crafty shugenja, and of great use to the Phoenix. However, after one particularly brilliant victory, Yogo was cursed by a *maho-tsukai*. The Phoenix recognized the black magics fouling Yogo's chi, but despite their best efforts, their limited knowledge of *maho* was not enough to remove the curse. However, they were able to identify it. Yogo was destined - at the most crucial moment of his life - to betray the one he loved most. The Phoenix shugenja also determined that the curse would pass on through his blood to his children,

BAYUSHI GUWAHIME

The youngest daughter of Shosuro Ideme, Guwahime was a very plain girl. Her father lamented that he would never be able to marry his daughter, that she was doomed to spend her life as a nun. He tried to marry her to each of the Clans, but time and time again, she returned home with no promise.

Finally, she went without her father's permission to the eldest son of the Bayushi daimyo. The next morning, Ideme received word that the heir to the Scorpion throne had married her that night. Her father learned from Guwahime's maid that the heir asked her what use she could possibly be. She spent the night, telling him what she had learned from each of the Clans and how to trick them all.

She had a fondness for educating children, and spent many hours in the court, telling them stories. Her most famous tales are commonly known as Guwahime's Fables, and were published by her son after her death.

You'll find her most famous stories scattered throughout this book's sidebars.



THE BAYUSHI MON

The *mon* of the Bayushi family is a Scorpion surrounded by water. It is often accompanied with the *kanji* "I can swim."



his children's children and all others who bore his name.

Where the Phoenix saw tragedy, Bayushi saw opportunity.

He approached the cursed shugenja with the hope that he could stay Yogo's hand. It took many hours of convincing, but finally, the shugenja agreed. He would join with Bayushi if it meant he could gain revenge on the dark god in the wilderness. Bayushi promised he would honor the shugenja's request.

Little did Bayushi know how prophetic his pretty lies would be.

BAYUSHI'S THUNDER

The Children stood in absolute silence, dumfounded by Shinsei's announcement. One by one, they nodded to the little master. Finally, their eyes fell to Bayushi, and the Scorpion shook his head.

"No," he said.

Shinsei stepped closer. "There is no other way," he said.

Bayushi's hands clenched, his eyes burning with an inner rage. A step away from the two, Akodo's fingers curled about his katana. Hida's did the same.

Bayushi looked at Hantei, his eyes pleading. "I have lost enough of my children."

Doji stepped forward. "We have all lost children, my brother. You are not alone in your pain."

Bayushi turned to face her and the man beside her let his own hand fall to his katana. Bayushi nodded toward him. "Will you send your husband then, sister Doji?" He spun about, turning to Akodo. "And who will you send? Perhaps the beautiful Matsu should be sent to meet our brother, eh?"

Akodo's eyes never faltered. "If it will save the Empire ... she will go without question."

Bayushi turned again back to Shinsei, his body trembling with anger. "No. There must be another way!"

The little master shook his head. "No. There is no other way."

Bayushi stood silent in the midst of his brothers and sisters. Their eyes fixed on him. Some were amazed. Some were confused. Two were filled with hatred.

- from Kakita Uniko's "Day of Thunder"

It has been said the Day of Thunder was Shinsei's last lesson to the Children of Sun and Moon, a lesson of humility and loss. Perhaps no one was more aware of this than Bayushi.

Bayushi's refusal to send one of his own is one of the greatest stories of Rokugan legend. Countless plays and books have been written about the incident. It could be said that this one act of "treachery" was the beginning of the villainization of the Scorpion Clan.

Speculation surrounding Bayushi's refusal has had one thousand years to develop. Many scholars believe it had to do with numbers. While Bayushi's brothers and sisters gathered hundreds of followers, the followers of the Scorpion were few and far between. During the war, the Scorpion were responsible for scouting and spying on the enemy, and while they were clever and cunning, many fell to the armies of Fu Leng. Bayushi's objection was not that he had already lost so many of his followers, but that he had no more to lose.

There is even speculation that the kami did not trust Shinsei, a sentiment that exists in many Scorpions even to this day. The most venomous attacks on the Tao of Shinsei come from Scorpion scholars who doubt its authenticity. As the Scorpion scholar Soshi Muyoko wrote, "If Shinsei actually said everything that is in the Tao, he would still be saying it."

But even more significant than Bayushi's refusal is what occurred when Shinsei left with his Thunders. The next morning, despite his objections, Shosuro rode out with Shinsei to meet Fu Leng. She was the only Thunder to ride out without the approval of her Clan's progenitor.

Shosuro was also the only one to return.

THE HIDDEN SHADOW

The doors flew open as dozens of guards stood ready to protect the Emperor. Standing in the doorway, a gray smoke oozing from her skin, Shosuro stood shaking, a black bag thrown over her shoulder.

Her mask was torn, but still, little of her face was visible. Her weary eyes scanned the court, and her lips whispered a single name: "Bayushi."

He stepped forward, his gait hesitant. His lips trembled. When he saw her standing there, surrounded by terrified guards, he ran to her, throwing off hands that would keep him back.

She fell to her knees when she saw him, an exhausted smile finding her lips.

"Don't touch her!" Shiba called out. "The taint!"

Bayushi did not hesitate. He took the dying Thunder in his arms and pulled her close. They whispered together for a moment, the drama of the moment drowning their words. Then, as the court came closer, their conversation could be heard.

"It doesn't matter, little one," Bayushi told her. "It does not matter any more."

The Thunder shook her head. "I came back ... I came back because I needed to tell you ..."

He shushed her, but she continued. "I need to tell you ..." she whispered again, her words so soft, they were lost to all but the man who held her.

Bayushi nodded. "I understand. And I forgive you."

Shosuro smiled one last time. Then the light left her eyes and her body fell deep into his arms, still and motionless.

Silence filled the hall. The only sound that reached us was the soft, rhythmic sound of Bayushi's breathing. No one moved.

Then, finally, Bayushi stood, his eyes remaining on the broken body on the floor. He spoke, his eyes never shifting.

"The body must be blessed. Then burned."

Bayushi paused, catching his breath. Then, he continued. "The bag," he said. "The bag contains the method they used to bind our brother. She promised Shinsei she would bring it back to us."

Hantei nodded. "Then she was successful."

"They must be guarded," Bayushi said. "The duty belongs to me."

Hantei nodded again. "I have no argument with that."

Bayushi turned back to the bag. He lifted it into his hands and turned to his followers. "Come my children," he said. "We have much to do."

— from Kakita Uniko's "Day of Thunder"

The mask and clothes of Shosuro were cremated, and a young shugenja stood beside Bayushi and lit the pyre. Then, Bayushi and the shugenja walked together to the tallest mountains in Rokugan to gain a high vantage point to watch the rest of the country. Together, they built a secret fortress guarded by sorcery and shadow. The shugenja took Shosuro's place at Bayushi's side. He was Bayushi's advisor and closest confidant.

He said his name was Soshi.

Everyone in the Emperor's court had witnessed the death of Bayushi's daughter. Shosuro, the greatest actress who had ever lived, was gone forever.

Or so they believed.

Bayushi carried off Shosuro to be burned and buried, but that ceremony never occurred. For Shosuro had played her greatest trick on all of Rokugan; she had convinced the entire Empire that she was dead. She had played an even greater trick than her lord Bayushi, for now, she was nothing more than a memory, a whisper, a hidden shadow.

With Shosuro dead and gone, Soshi and Bayushi began creating a network of spies and informants that would become the safeguard of Rokugan's secrets.

Together with one of his more admirable students, Soshi developed a new style of magic. He called it "Shinobi," and it involved sensing, summoning and communing with shadow. After further experiments, Soshi was able to imprint Bayushi's spies with shadow-brands, literally making them one with the shadows. The art of Shinobi has remained a secret of the Scorpion Clan for a thousand years; if the Crab or Phoenix were to discover it, they would certainly brand it as *maho*.



SHOSURO'S LEGACY

Before Shosuro left with Shinsei and the other Thunders, she left behind three students who had learned the secrets of her techniques. These three took on their sensei's name and continued to serve Bayushi in her memory.

Since then, the Shosuro "family" has served the Bayushi family. Of course, it is rumored that the eldest Shosuro — Kinjiko — was actually Shosuro and Bayushi's child. Such rumors never reach more than a whisper ... and probably originate within the Scorpion Clan itself.



THE KI-RIN AND THE SCORPION

One day, the Ki-Rin was frolicking in a field. Her sister the Phoenix had told her to look out for the Scorpion, but the Ki-Rin was so busy playing and looking at all the new things that she only half-listened to her sister's warning.

While she was playing, a creature climbed upon a rock to watch. The Ki-Rin saw the creature and said, "I have seen Flower, and I have seen Tree, and I have seen Horse, but I have not seen you. Who are you?"

The creature said, "I am Truth."

The Ki-Rin smiled. "I am very pleased to meet you, friend Truth. Have you seen the Scorpion? My sister told me to watch for him, but I do not know what he looks like."

"Yes, I know Scorpion," said Truth.

"Can you tell me what he looks like?"

"Yes. In fact, let us go look for him now. If you put me on your back, we will go much faster than if we both walk."

"Good idea!" said the Ki-Rin. "Climb on my back, friend, and we will be off."

Truth climbed on the Ki-Rin's back and together, they went looking for Scorpion.

THE TWELVE SCROLLS

As construction on the castle began, Bayushi gave Yogo a large box. "Within it," he said, "you will find your revenge."

Yogo opened the box and found the twelve black scrolls Shosuro had brought back from the Shadowlands.

"That is correct," Bayushi said. "I have given you the doom of Fu Leng."

Yogo accepted the scrolls with trembling hands. He realized that he held the most potent magic the world had ever seen. "But, why me?"

"Because you are destined to betray Shiba, not me. That is why I trust you."

— from Yogo Anaido's "The Traitor"

Since that day, it has been the duty of the Yogo family to guard the black scrolls. For nearly a thousand years, many *tsukai* have tried to gain access to the knowledge they contain, but none have ever located them.

Only one man knows the location of all twelve scrolls: the daimyo of the Scorpion Clan. They remain hidden in separate locations, and each of the guardians knows only the location of their own respective scroll.

THE SHOSURO ACTING TROUPE

While Soshi developed shadow-magic, the students of Shosuro improved and developed the skills their sensei had left them. The Shosuro taught its students the fundamentals of acting: make-up (disguise), voice (mimicry), costume (camouflage), movement (stealth), character (impersonation) and stage crew (ropes, climbing and tools).

While they studied the arts of deception, one instructor, Shosuro Furuyari, felt the need to test his own theories and techniques. He took his students out on the Emperor's roads as a traveling acting troupe and performed for village headmen and low-ranking magistrates.

As his reputation grew, the stature of his audience grew with him. After a few years, he was performing for the heads of Rokugan's most prestigious families, entertaining them with tales of highest comedy and darkest tragedy. During his visits, he was afforded every hospitality... an opportunity that Furuyari did not overlook.

While his troupe was inside the walls of the Hiruma, Daidoji and Shiba castles, they gathered information on the families and their defenses. They bribed servants, memorized escape routes

and engaged retainers who seemed eager to break faith with the master of the house.

For thirty-seven years, Furuyari was the Scorpion's most valuable tool. However, his health caught up with him, and his strength failed. His final performance was before the Emperor himself. He died only hours later.

But despite his death, Furuyari's troupe continued in his memory. They formed a school, named after his traveling actors. The School of the Ivory Fan still exists and travels across Rokugan, entertaining its most prestigious nobility.

Events

There are many significant events in the history of Rokugan that have had a profound impact on the structure and duties of the Scorpion Clan. Of course, some of these events have no record of Scorpion intervention or interference, which is a tribute to their ability to perform their designated duty.

TOGASHI

The samurai had fallen asleep exactly on cue. She kissed his forehead softly, saying nothing. Then, she slipped her kimono over her shoulders and moved silently across the floor to the thin wall that separated her room from the room Yokuni had agreed to meet her husband. The thin paper would not mute the sound of their words, only obscure them. It was no matter. She was adept at hearing obscured words.

She knelt close to the wall, as silent as she had ever been.

"I know the truth," she heard Shoju say.

"But not all of it," Yokuni replied.

"I want it."

"What do you want?"

"All of it."

She heard Yokuni sigh. "Very well. It is as I have seen it take place. You wish to know the tale..."

"I know the story, Dragon." She heard her husband's kimono shuffle with his movement. He was leaning forward. "I want to know what will come of it."

Just then, she could have sworn she heard the Dragon smile. "I know what you want, Scorpion. I have always known. Always."



She heard Togashi laugh then, and it sent a river of ice down her spine. She had never heard such a laugh before. She would hear it only one more time, and she would hear it only moments before she watched him die ...

The story is a secret one, known to a total of five living souls. The first is the father. The second is the son. The third is the ghost of the mother who wanders the mountainsides. The fourth is the Scorpion daimyo, and the fifth is his wife.

It begins two hundred years after the end of the war with the Dark One, when the Scorpion daimyo of that age sent his daughter to the halls of the Togashi to learn their secrets. She performed her job well; she learned their greatest secret. But the price...

Bayushi Oshiso's daughter, Kuninoko, was one of the most skilled and talented students of the Shosuro school. It was her duty to penetrate the walls of Togashi castle and bring back all she saw and learned. Unfortunately, she succeeded, and her efforts brought her to the attention of the Dragon daimyo, Togashi Kuzejiro. She gained Kuzejiro's trust and love, and - incredibly - he gained hers. The result of their love brought a child into the world ... and a dangerous truth to the Scorpion storehouse of secrets.

Kuninoko came back to her father, telling him only that she was pregnant, and that she had to return to the lands of the Dragon. Oshiso demanded to know the name of the father, and she agreed, claiming that it was Togashi himself, disguised for two hundred years under various names. Then, she left her father's lands, never to appear again.

Oshiso sent many spies to the Dragon lands to find and bring back his daughter. None of them returned.

Since that time, the Scorpion Clan has made it their duty to discover the fate of the child Kuninoko bore. Only recently, a Scorpion magistrate finally confirmed what they had suspected for hundreds of years. While posing as a Shintao monk, he managed to lay eyes on a creature that was half-man and half-dragon. The creature, he learned, often came to the monastery to meditate and enjoy the company of the monks. When he inquired further, he learned that the creature was often seen leaving the monastery in the direction of the Dragon lands.

Soon thereafter, Bayushi Shoji left for the Dragon lands himself to confront the entity that is

Togashi. They spent many days in long, whispered conversation, and Bayushi Shoji learned much. He learned that every Scorpion daimyo before him had come to Togashi to learn what secrets he had known.

"I will tell you secrets," Togashi said, "just as I have told all Scorpions before you. Remember this, Scorpion. The only secrets you know are the secrets I allow you to know."

THE NINJA

The death of Bayushi Aramoro (*L5R RPG*, pp. 185-186) is one of the most recreated events on both the stage and the page. It is the subject of much debate among historians and scholars, especially those interested in discovering the "truth" behind the ninja myth.

The truth behind the ninja myth is much more elaborate than anyone can suppose. Aramoro's death convinced the Scorpion that an intricate lie was necessary to keep the efficacy of the network at an optimum level. After all, if all of Rokugan knew of the network, then what could it really accomplish?

Bayushi Hajioki, the Clan daimyo, pondered the problem and came up with a solution. After consulting with the daimyos of the Shosuro, Soshi and Yogo families, a new conspiracy was formulated: an illusionary conspiracy, separate from the Scorpion, that would divert attention away from the masters of secrets.

Hajioki placed Shosuro Nodage in charge of the project. Nodage was one of the most accomplished Shosuro in recent memory, and eager for the challenge. Under his orders, the network spread rumors of a radical splinter group calling themselves "the ninja." Scorpions began whispering in not-so-hushed tones of the shadowy assassins, and the word spread quickly.

According to the mythology, the ghost of Aramoro came to a select group of Scorpion spies, urging them to gain revenge for his death. The spies followed their deceased master's orders and faked their own deaths (out of respect for their fallen master). Then, they used forbidden magic to transform their bodies and souls into the stuff of shadow.

These "shadow warriors" went forth to gain revenge on all those allied to the Emerald Champion and the downfall of their lord. One by one, the samurai responsible for the death of Bayushi Aramoro were killed by unsavory and grisly means. What's more, no evidence of any

THE KI-RIN AND THE SCORPION (CONTINUED)

"So," asked Ki-Rin. "What does Scorpion look like?"

"He has two sharp pincers," said Truth.

Ki-Rin looked at Truth's two sharp pincers and said, "Ah, I see."

"And he has many legs."

Ki-Rin looked at Truth's many legs and said, "Ah, I see."

"And he has a tail that drips deadly poison."

Ki-Rin looked at Truth's tail and said, "Why Truth, he looks just like you!"

Truth smiled and said, "Yes. Yes he does."

Ki-Rin laughed. "Isn't it fortunate I met you before I met him!"

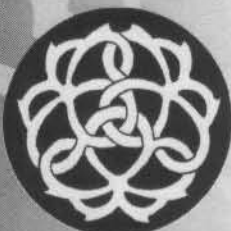
The Scorpion nodded. "Yes, it is."

And Ki-Rin had nothing more to say.



THE SHOSURO MON

The mon of the Shosuro family is an endless loop of intertwining ivy. It is the eternal maze, the puzzle that may never be solved.



assassin was left behind. Such evidence only furthered the claims of the Scorpion Clan, that there was indeed an independent conspiracy of shadow warriors seeking revenge for their departed lord.

As soon as the myth was firmly in place, low-ranking Shosuro spies began dressing in black gowns and hoods, inciting "ninja sightings" all across Rokugan. Ninja became more than a myth; they became a convenient distraction for the superstitious. For while black-garbed "ninja" leapt about through hallways desperately trying to be conspicuous, a more discreet Shosuro could creep silently through the shadows completing missions.

The myth gained momentum. Sightings of ninja occurred everywhere - and they were not always planted by the Scorpion. After all, the stories of ninja fueled many jealous and ambitious samurai to villainous deeds, easily blamed on dangerous shadows. Ninja were said to be nothing more than shadows, able to disappear in plain sight, climb sheer walls and employ *maho* never before seen. And all the while, the Shosuro spies continued their missions as the rest of Rokugan concerned itself with the ninja threat.

THE DEEPEST SHADOWS

For eight hundred years, the Scorpion have maintained the ninja myth. Only a few have come close to the truth, and as soon as they begin to realize the implications of what they've learned, they are silenced by the ninja cult.

Very recently, however, the findings of a certain magistrate, Kitsuki Kaagi, have drawn much attention from the Scorpion Clan. Kaagi was dedicated to uncovering the truth about the ninja cult, and his obsession brought him closer than any other. However, he mysteriously disappeared before the Scorpion could learn what he knew.

Kaagi's journal is now safe in the hands of the daimyo of Kitsuki castle and Yasu refuses to allow any to look upon the pages. A rumor has spread that the book itself is cursed, and only those of the Kitsuki blood can read it. Others say that Kaagi found secrets that even the Scorpion do not know.

There are others who whisper that the ninja myth is not myth at all, but fact. Many tales - from reliable sources - tell of ninja performing magics that not even the Dark One can provide.

There have been sightings of ninja taking on the substance of shadow, disappearing into darkness and even changing shape at will. Of course, these



tales are met with a sardonic chuckle by many Shosuro... but then there is Kaagi's journal.

One Bayushi managed to gain access to the book and read its "cursed" pages. He returned one month later and attacked the Shosuro daimyo. "He isn't human! He isn't human!" he screamed as he plunged a dagger into the man's chest. Somehow, the Shosuro survived the attack, and the mad Bayushi was immediately put to death.

IUCHIBAN

For more information on the Tomb of Iuchiban, see The Way of the Crab.

No other event in Rokugani history has had such an impact on its politics and culture than the rise of the sorcerer called Iuchiban. The name is enough to make even the sturdiest Crab shudder. It shares nearly the same infamy as the Fallen Brother. The tale of Iuchiban is actually the tale of three men. It is important to say that the story reported here is only known to a very few, and while it contains many of the actual historical facts, it also contains many half-truths, and some dearly-held falsehoods. It begins nearly 900 years ago with a shugenja in the lands of the Crab and ends with the most subtle and dangerous alliance in Rokugan.

The shugenja's name was Kuni Nakanu, although you won't find his name in any of the Crab history books. He was one of the first Crabs to notice that the Shadowlands Taint had a strange effect on corpses: it re-animated them. He spent the better part of two years researching the phenomenon, then spent two more learning to focus the energy of the dark land into a spell. His justification was simple: he wanted to find a way to raise the dead before the Shadowlands could, and turn them against the armies of the Dark One. His story ended in tragedy. After five years of research, a miscalculation in casting accidentally rose seventeen corpses at once, and Nakanu could not control them all. He was eaten alive by his own foul creations.

Nakanu's research journal was thought lost for hundreds of years, but it turned up again in the hands of the man who would come to be called "Iuchiban" (which means "blood speaker"). Exactly who Iuchiban was is a closely guarded secret and three different Scorpion scrolls tell three different stories. The first tells that he was a gardener in Otosan Uchi. The second lists him as a fallen Master of Void. The third says that he was a member of the lost Unicorn tribe who wandered over the mountains, carrying secret and alien magic. Any of them could be the truth.

In any case, after he gained his knowledge, Iuchiban solicited the aid of a Crane shugenja, Asahina Yajinden. Yajinden was a gifted artimancer who created the infamous enchanted porcelain masks. These masks, when placed on the faces of the dead, created an army of willful dead. The two were also responsible for the

creation of the four "Iuchiban blades": cursed swords forged from the souls of four honorable samurai, each the mockery of a virtue revered by the samurai caste. With them, Iuchiban secretly caused the downfall of three Clan daimyos before his plot was uncovered.

The discovery of Iuchiban's treachery is a tale of coincidence and chance. Had it not been for a squabble between a Lion and Scorpion magistrate, his plot may have proven successful. But, as the Fortunes would have it, the two magistrates happened across his secret stronghold, right in the heart of Otosan Uchi.

As soon as it was discovered, Iuchiban's plot was put to rest. The combined might of all seven clans was too much for even a sorcerer to face. But, when the clans captured him, they discovered the sorcerer had thwarted them. Using magic that even the Phoenix did not fully understand, Iuchiban had somehow removed his heart from his chest, hiding it in a secret location, which made him effectively immortal.

Iuchiban was placed in jade chains and manacles while the shugenja of the Great Clans discussed what to do with the sorcerer. Finally, after three nights of heated argument, it was decided an elaborate crypt would be erected. Because many of Iuchiban's followers had escaped the battle, the structure would require devices to keep Iuchiban in and keep his followers out.

More importantly, the builder of the tomb was not allowed to know the true location of his invention. A total of three tombs were built, two of which were false. The Scorpion daimyo allowed the locations of the two false structures to be "leaked" into Blood Speaker hands, thus leading many of Iuchiban's followers to grisly ends.

When the creator of the true tomb finished his work, Lion and Crab history records that he walked into the tomb, setting the traps behind him as he went; a noble end for Kaiu Gineza. The truth of the matter is a bit bleaker. When Gineza's work was done, he was abducted by Scorpion spies and murdered, to make certain the secrets of the tomb would never be known.

When the Crab daimyo asked the Scorpion daimyo of the fate of his engineer, the Scorpion replied, "He has walked into the tomb to set the traps. He will never return."

The Crab knew full well that the engineer would have made a better design, that he would not have planned so poorly to create such a

THE SOSHI MON

The mon of the Soshi family is a Scorpion with claws outstretched, a net between them.





THE LION AND THE SCORPION

Once there was a Lion, sleeping in a sunny field. A Scorpion came to him, and said, "Lion, you are so large. I suppose you are the largest creature in all the lands."

The Lion replied, "Yes, I believe that I am."

"And," said the Scorpion, "You must be the bravest and strongest creature as well."

"That is what they say," said the Lion.

"My only advantage is my poison tail," the Scorpion said. "And I suppose you could smash me underfoot before I could sting you even once."

"I could, quite easily," the Lion said, rising and stretching.

"In fact, if I stung you, I doubt you would even notice."

The Lion looked down at the little Scorpion curiously. "Perhaps. But I believe that I will step upon you now, tiny one, and you will never have a chance."

"Oh, but great Lion," the Scorpion said, smiling. "I stung you five minutes ago."

And the Lion had nothing further to say.

backward tomb. He looked at the Scorpion and said, "His sacrifice will be remembered."

The Scorpion nodded and nothing more was ever said of the matter.

THE RETURN OF THE BLOOD SPEAKER

One hundred and fifty years later, when Iuchiban escaped his imprisonment, the Clans joined together once again to put the sorcerer down. This time, however, even their combined might would not be enough.

Because Iuchiban's severed heart had never been found, he was able to separate his soul from his body and possess the bodies of others. For the one hundred and fifty years while the Clans assumed he was trapped in his tomb, the sorcerer traveled Rokugan, collecting the materials and means to gain revenge on them. All this time, he moved undetected among the peasantry and nobility of Rokugan ... until he made one error of vanity.

While in the Dragon lands, Iuchiban attempted to possess the body of an *ise zumi* and failed. But the attempt alerted the tattooed man who was now able to sense Iuchiban's presence. Dragon and Scorpion magistrates joined together to track down Iuchiban, hoping to keep the escape of the disembodied sorcerer a secret. Failure after failure required the assistance of the Phoenix and eventually the Crab, and soon, the other Clans were mustered as well.

Finally, the sorcerer was captured by forcing him to possess the body of the *ise zumi*. His tomb was reconstructed - this time by Phoenix, Crab and Scorpion shugenja - and he was imprisoned once again ... along with the three shugenja, to make certain he would never escape.

AFTERMATH

After Iuchiban's second imprisonment, the Crab Clan witch-hunters were established, but the Scorpion took their own precautions against black magic. A special order of Yogo shugenja was instituted to keep an eye out for Blood Speakers and other practitioners of maho. The *kuroiban* ("black watch") were trained to recognize maho, and in the methods of protection against its power.

The first *kuroiban* was Yogo Itoju, a young apprentice of the Soshi shugenja bound in Iuchiban's tomb. Working from his master's notes, he developed a sophisticated system of warding

spells to protect against maho. Itoju shared his knowledge with the Crab, and the Kuni shared their knowledge of bindings. So began a long relationship between the Kuni and the Yogo families.

"TO PROTECT THE EMPEROR ..."

Not only did the Iuchiban incident bring together the Kuni and Yogo families, it also created one of the strangest - and most subdued - relationships in Rokugan history. In fact, the event changed Rokugan history itself ... in more ways than are generally known.

When Iuchiban was captured and his identity revealed, an immediate conference was held between the Emperor and the daimyos of the Bayushi and Ikoma families. For reasons no longer recorded, the Emperor demanded that the identity of Iuchiban be hidden forever, and the details of the event changed. Not just obscured, but directly altered so that future generations would never know the true identity of the sorcerer.

The Bayushi daimyo immediately called the daimyo of the Shosuro and related the Emperor's orders. He also explained why. The Shosuro daimyo nodded and joined with the Ikoma to make certain the Emperor's orders were carried out.

Since that day, the Ikoma and the Shosuro have worked together for one reason: to protect the Emperor. Together, they have made certain that official Rokugani history has protected the Emperor from dangers both visible and invisible. The records make no mention of Iuchiban's true heritage (whatever that may be), nor do they make any other mention of Imperial indiscretion.

The Lion histories make no mention of a foreign navy being invited into the docks of Otosan Uchi for trade and commerce. However, a foreign navy did attack Otosan Uchi, and was driven off successfully. Of course, no record of Mantis Clan involvement is mentioned.

There is no mention of Hantei XVII's insatiable appetite for young samurai-ko. Nor is there discussion of the Crab maiden who raised her hand in the Imperial presence, thus sparking a Lion crusade against the Crab which only Crane and Scorpion diplomacy averted.

Nor is there record of the nineteenth Hantei's peculiar nocturnal habits.

Or of the twenty-third Hantei's refusal ever to bathe.

Or of the Lion-Phoenix war nearly brought about by the malicious political meddling of Hantei XXV.

In fact, the Shosuro and Ikoma have made certain that any event that could compromise the honor or integrity of the Hantei line is erased from the Empire's memory, for everyone knows if the Ikoma do not record it, it never happened.

SHADOW BRANDS

For many centuries, the Scorpion have experimented with a peculiar magic first introduced by Soshi. His initial experiments with "shadow branding" proved unsuccessful, but one hundred years of apprentices followed up on his work, resulting in a unique magic type the Soshi call "Shadow-magic."

Shadow-magic provides many advantages for the Scorpions. As other shugenja study the Five Elements, Soshi have tapped into raw shadow, discovering that it, like the other elements, has its own *kami*.

Using unique powers, the Soshi "imprint" a samurai with the raw element of shadow, branding a *kami* directly onto his skin and making him one with the element. The process is long and painful, but also highly useful for Shosuro spies. More information on shadow-brands can be found in Appendix 3.

Battles

THE BATTLE OF THE BLOODY RETREAT (750)

There have been countless battles at Rokugan's crossroads, but in Scorpion history, the most important occurred around the year 750 against the undead army of Iuchiban.

When the sorcerer rose from his tomb, his undead army joined him at the northern tip of the Twilight Mountains. They marched through the Shinomen Forest (and lost nearly a third of their force), across the Plain of Thunder (#27), and were first sighted by the gamblers in Ryoko Owari. The citizens abandoned the City of Lies and fled to Yogo Shiro. The undead ravaged the city and marched south to Beiden Pass.

The Scorpion sent runners to the Lion telling of Iuchiban's return, but the Lion could not make it to the other end of the Pass until after the undead would be easily on the Osari plains. In

order to give the Lion time, the Scorpion sent their armies to defend the southern mouth of Beiden Pass. They fought backward for nearly five days, losing ground at the end of each day, waiting for the Lion to send reinforcements.

When the last broken legions of the Scorpion came through the northern end of the Pass, they were met by the cheers of thousands of Lions who rushed in to battle the undead and pushed them northward along the Way of Righteous Vengeance Road (#2) where Iuchiban's hordes were defeated in a final battle at the Sleeping River.

THE BATTLE AT FORTUNE'S PLAIN (554)

The two armies – one Crab and one Scorpion – had been fighting for hours near the shrine of Osano-Wo. They fought for control of the rich farmlands near the shrine, but the battle ceased when they saw a massive Lion army approaching the plain. Either the Scorpion or the Crab could combat the army and win, but if they continued to fight each other, the Lion would certainly defeat the victor.

The Scorpion general proposed an alliance, but the Crab general did not trust him. Instead, the Scorpion suggested a less bloody method of determining who won the day.

"We will roll dice," the general suggested. "Whoever rolls highest will take the plain, and the other will remove himself from the field." The Crab agreed but demanded they use his dice. The Scorpion nodded and the dice game began.

The Crab rolled first. "A twelve!" he shouted and his men shouted with him. "You cannot beat a twelve, Scorpion."

"No," said the Scorpion, "but I can tie." He rolled the dice and they came up six and six. The Scorpions cheered at the Crab armies as their general smiled. "I guess we have to roll again."

The Crab snatched up the dice – inspected them to make certain they were still his dice – and rolled again. "Twelve again!" he shouted as the dice landed. "Certainly the Fortunes favor me to win this day!"

"Perhaps," said the Scorpion. "But I have not yet had my second turn." He picked up the dice, and he prayed to Bayushi and he spun them across the ground. When they landed, one came up six, but the other one broke in half.

"Hah!" shouted the Crab. "You have lost!"

"No," said the Scorpion, pointing at the dice. "For the halves have come up six and one. Six and

THE CRANE AND THE SCORPION

Once there was a Crane and a Scorpion, sitting by the edge of a river. The Crane said, "Isn't it funny how the Fortunes distributed their blessings among the creatures?"

The Scorpion eyed the Crane suspiciously, "What do you mean?"

The Crane smiled and said, "Look at me. Look at my beautiful wings and feathers. I can fly and I can swim. Look at my perfect neck and my shining eyes. I am the envy of all of the creatures in the world."

Then the Crane looked down at the Scorpion and said, "Look at you. All you have is your tail."

"Ah," said the Scorpion, "but all that means is that you have nothing to gain, and I have nothing to lose. And when you are old and have lost your feathers, you will no longer be able to fly. And when you are fat and half-blind, you will no longer be able to swim. Then, when you are counting everything that you have lost, I will be counting everything I have gained."

And the Crane had nothing more to say.





six and one makes thirteen. The plain is mine." The Crab cursed and took his men from the field. The Scorpion defeated the Lion, and took the shrine of Osano-Wo.

THE BATTLE AT WHITE SHORE PLAIN (815)

The Scorpion are second only to the Kolat in long-term planning. This made them the second-unhappiest group in Rokugan when the Ki-Rin Clan, now calling themselves the Unicorn, came riding back through the Shadowlands.

What's more, 800 years of culture shock meant that the standard Scorpion tactics were impotent. (There's no meaningful way to embarrass a barbarian in front of the court.) The Scorpion daimyo at the time, Bayushi Ogoe, correctly deduced that more drastic measures were necessary, and he called on his general, Bayushi Tozasu. "Tozasu-san," he said, "I need you to

muster your army. We're going to war with these Unicorns. And I need you to lose."

"Hai, Ogoe-sama," Tozasu agreed. "I will begin assembling my inferior troops."

Over the next few weeks, the Scorpion propaganda machine went into high gear, accusing the impostor Unicorns of usurping the true Ki-Rin Clan's place in Rokugan. These barbarians couldn't stand against a properly-trained Rokugani army; the only reason they'd broken through the Crab lines was the element of surprise. Clearly these outlanders didn't have true Rokugani blood in their veins.

A month later, Bayushi Tozasu was roundly trounced by the Unicorn cavalry and a small contingent of Lions. Observers castigated Tozasu, who seemed completely unprepared; even though he knew of the Unicorn's amazing new cavalry, he had neglected to accumulate pikes to slow down the charges, and he joined battle on a vast plain, where he was outmaneuvered and flanked

twice. None could question Tozasu on his lapse in tactical prowess, for he had committed *seppuku* on the field after his army's defeat was certain.

As soon as news of the defeat reached Ogoe, he dispatched the messenger he'd had standing by for a week. The messenger traveled, under flag of truce, to the tent in which the headman of the Unicorns was staying. There, he groveled the Scorpion Clan's apologies and their formal welcome of the Ki-Rin Clan back to Rokugan.

What had the Scorpion accomplished? They'd thrown away thousands of men, expended political capital to no effect, lost a potent general and were forced to deliver an apology to the people they'd been slandering for weeks.

On the other hand, the Unicorn now thought they had the measure of the Scorpion. After their



ineffective words failed in the courts, their ineffective troops failed on the battlefield. Clearly the Scorpion Clan was no threat, as their capitulation after the battle proved.

The other Clans got to see the Scorpions lose and lose poorly. Lots of people hold a grudge against the Scorpion, but resentment is increased against a superior, and diminished against an inferior. The Lions and Cranes could feel a bit more smug now that the Scorpions had been taught a lesson, even if it took new tactics to do so.

So at the cost of an army and three weeks of ineffectual braggadocio in the courts, the Scorpion went from being a major threat to being all talk. The Lions and Cranes could safely ignore them after this debacle, and concentrate on cutting each other up. And the Scorpion could fade into the shadows, beneath everybody's notice, and... do whatever it is Scorpions do when they know they aren't being observed.

The Other Clans

We are no different than any other, save for our masks. All in Rokugan wear a mask; we just make ours plain. The others all hide behind less visible and more debilitating masks.

CRAB

Our relationship with the Crab is a complicated one. A Crab is easy to fool, but if he ever discovers what you've done, he will kill you without shame or mercy. That is why if you must play our game with the Crab, it must be played most delicately. He can never know the source of his pain and misery.

However, we must be careful what games we play with them, for their wall stands between us and the lands of the Dark Lord. Use their weakness, but respect their duty.

In the end, Crabs hide their hatred of us behind a mask of duty. We do what is required, as do they. In fact, our duty is nearly identical to their own. But they know where their enemy lies. We are required to be crafty, for we must seek out our enemies. The Crab resent us because they know the truth: strength is no match for cunning.

CRANE

The Crane hide behind a mask of refinement to cover their motley collection of vices. All of

those poets and singers praise the high virtue of love, but where is love in a geisha house? I have never found it there. Yet, more than any other Clan, the samurai of the Crane can be found trying to woo the affections of geisha ... and in disguise! If love is such a noble virtue, then why do they hide while pursuing it?

The Crane resent us because we are what they wish to be. They sing songs of noble virtue only because they need to remind themselves that virtue is noble. Or is it to convince themselves of it?

I can never remember.

DRAGON

The Dragon sit in their high mountain keeps. Do you know what they are doing up there?

They are hiding.

Isolation is their mask, and it hides a dark secret. It hides their fear.

Fear of the world. Fear of life. Fear of living. Better to spend a life thinking than living.

They wait and watch because they are afraid to take a chance. Afraid to commit to the world. Afraid they may have to make a choice.

They are afraid to fail.

LION

The Lion are nothing. They cannot threaten me with shame. They cannot threaten me with dishonor. The only threat they offer is death, and death only returns me to my ancestors. The Lion's mask is the flimsiest, for it is made of courage, and thus of wet paper. Behind that mask he hides two things: doubt and fear.

The doubt he hides is doubt in his lord, his family and even his Emperor.

The fear he hides is the darkest of all. For every Lion is afraid of me. He is afraid that all the things I whisper in his ear about honor and glory and courage are true.

PHOENIX

In their schools and libraries, the Phoenix are as dangerous as the Lion. They read and learn, but they never know.

The mask the Phoenix wear is enlightenment. It hides the face of ignorance.

A Phoenix spends his lifetime studying Shinsei and the elements, but put him in a battle, and where is he? Frightened like a child, hoping to go home. Put him in a court and where is he? Stammering and pouting, hoping the party will end soon.

THE YOGO MON

The *mon* of the Yogo family is a mask made of flaming feathers, representing their lost heritage to the Phoenix Clan.





SHINRIKO: LITTLE TRUTHS

While Tange intended "Lies" to be public knowledge, there is another book of Scorpion wisdom that was never meant to be read by the Emperor; you will find excerpts of it here, in the sidebars of this Chapter.

When Tange died, his journal was discovered by his wife and passed on to their son. At the front of the journal, Tange wrote the words, "Little Truths." Obviously a counterpiece to "Lies," this collection of truisms has passed on through dozens of Scorpion daimyo, each one adding their own wisdom to the collection.

The Phoenix have no heart, they have no spine, they have no blood. There is no life in them. If a Phoenix gives you trouble, put a pretty girl in his way and watch him run out of words to say.

UNICORN

Many years have I watched the newcomers, and still I do not fully understand them. They do not hide their faces, but wear them proudly.

But there is something ... something they are hiding. Something they brought back with them from over the mountains.

In any case, the Children of Shinjo are cousins of the Crab. They do not play our game, nor do we ask them to. They are less than pawns; they are the pieces that did not have the muster to make it to the board.

MINOR CLANS

They are of no matter to us. They are even less than the Unicorn. If they have something we want, we convince the Lion to crush them.

"Lies"

AN ESSAY BY BAYUSHI TANGEN

The following excerpts are from Bayushi Tange's famous treatise, Lies, written shortly after the publication of Akodo Horu's famous book Leadership. Not only does Tange's introduction openly attack Horu's book, but it also provides an example of Scorpion "sincerity."

To my lord and master, the honorable Hantei Goshino,

One year ago, your eminence commanded me write a treatise on treachery, duplicity and espionage. The day the command was given, my pen was put to paper, and my thoughts flowed freely into the ink. However, as I spent the year preparing my work, I saw another treatise published that gave me concern, for this work contained more treachery, duplicity and simple lies than I could ever compile.

As the most humble servant of my lord, it is my duty to warn him against those who would mislead him with pretty lies and treachery. I tell you now that there are many, including those who would give you counsel.

Only recently have I seen a document that claims to give the reader a sense of what it means

to be a leader. I tell you now that this document is filled with nothing but falsehoods, fabrications, half-truths and lies. It is the intent of this document to root out those prevaricators and shove them into the light, where they can be seen as they truly are.

If some find offense with my words, let me say that the intent of this document is to bring wisdom to the Emperor, to show him the errors of others' "wisdom," in addition to educating him on the nature of treacherous men, so he may root out duplicity and kill it before this bitter fruit has a chance to spread its seeds.

Find fault with me then, and not my words.

LIES AND TRUTH

Akodo speaks eloquently of the virtue of honesty. "No harm can come of the truth," he says, "and a lie kills someone in the world."

If a lie were to save the Emperor, and the truth doom him, I would ask the Lion what he might choose.

A lie does indeed kill someone in the world, but what if it saved the Emperor? Who would not give his life for the Son of Heaven?

If Lord Akodo is unwilling to do so, I certainly shall take his place.

ON THE NATURE OF LEADERSHIP

There are some who would have my lord believe that a leader must be virtuous. Generosity breeds contempt. If a man has everything but the throne, what does he desire? He desires what all men desire: to obtain what he does not have.

GIVE FOOLS WHAT THEY WANT

Let an ambitious man dig his own grave.

Let the general appeal to the people, then watch his own foolishness doom him. You appear to be a beneficent ruler, and he becomes a martyr whose memory you can call upon for sympathy.

CRUEL BUT JUST

Fear is more powerful than love, and the more desired emotion.

Lords who are loved can fail, and like a lover, a lord who disappoints his people will earn nothing but hatred.

A lord who is feared for his abject cruelty, however, is never spoken against. What's more, a lord who is cruel but just is always admired.

THE PEASANTRY

You may always trust a peasant over a nobleman.

The nobleman is ambitious.

The peasant only wants to eat.

In other words, the nobleman has betrayed in his blood while the peasant only wishes not to be betrayed.

WHAT YOU DO AND DO NOT GIVE

A man will feel obliged for everything you give him.

He will also feel obliged for all that you have not taken.

This is human nature.

If a man feels obliged to you for something you have not given him, is that not still a gift?

And if it is a gift, does he not owe you something in return?

FORCE AND FRAUD

Akodo tells you: "Pure force cannot succeed alone. One needs strategy as well."

I tell you: If you are wise, fraud alone is necessary.

As noble Akodo has said, "It is right and proper to use fraud on the battlefield, for it saves the lives of those who follow us."

I say this: if a man has used fraud against me, I consider him a wretch and a scoundrel, and I will not adhere to rules that he ignores. I will not put myself at the disadvantage of clinging to "morals" while he takes the advantage of free action.

The world is filled with evil men, my lord.

To refuse an advantage because it is "underhanded" is not only disrespectful to those whom you protect and lead, it is also the most selfish act I can think of.

PROMISES

It is never shameful to break a promise made under duress of force. If the source of duress is killed, the promise never need be kept. If the promise is broken publicly and you reveal the source of the duress, you are made a hero for your display of honesty and courage, and he a villain for his cowardice.

MY ENEMY'S ENEMY

You do not need to be stronger than your enemy; you need to be stronger than his enemy.

If my enemy is the Lion and his enemy is the Crane, I should crush the Crane. Thereby, my enemy owes me a favor.

THREATS

A weak man uses threats. A powerful man has no need for threats. If you confront a man with the threat of force and he concedes, it is because he fears you. The threat was unnecessary.

Never threaten an enemy. It will anger him. A man who has been threatened feels the need to do something to erase the stain on his honor.

If you have the force to destroy an enemy, destroy him.

A living enemy is dangerous.

A dead enemy is dead.

Better to have a graveyard of dead enemies than a single angry one.

PITY

Pity is not a virtue.

To pause when causing my enemy pain is weakness.

He would not do so for me, and if he did, I would smite him for his stupidity.

GREED

The generous lord bestows gifts - and must raise taxes so that he can afford them.

The greedy lord, however, grabs land and treasure when he can - thus removing the need to over-tax his people.

THE HATRED OF MY ENEMY

I do not fear a man who hates me openly, for that is all he is capable of doing. If he were capable of causing me harm in any other way, he would do it. No, a man who is hostile to me in the court is of no concern to me. He is weak and his words are easily ignored.

NEVER PAUSE FOR EXPLANATION

It is always better to focus on what is to be done than what is to be said. Make your actions swift and certain. Explanation can always follow, and may even take days. If your mind is uncertain about what is to be done, you will falter. But once it has been done, you will find the Fortunes always provide for explanation.

KILL A MAN'S WIFE

Kill an ambitious man's wife, and his life will turn to revenge... and away from ambition. All

SHINRIKO: LITTLE TRUTHS

Enemies you make are enemies you keep.

Enemies you threaten make armies. Enemies you destroy make graves.

How easily men are corrupted, and how difficult it is to make them just.

Be more afraid of an army of sheep led by a wolf than an army of wolves led by a sheep.

Everyone lies. Even me.

A commander must be two men: To those he commands, he must be a saint. To his enemies, he must be a devil. The reverse is also true.

Men hold on to nothing like that they do not know.

Life is not fair. That doesn't mean you can't win.

Know where your sword is. Always.

The only box that can hold a secret is a coffin.

He who speaks with anger makes his anger heard, but his words forgotten.





THE CRAB AND THE SCORPION

Once, long ago, Scorpion was walking on a sandy beach with his brother, Crab.

"Ah, Scorpion," said Crab, "you have tricked Lion, and you have tricked Crane, but you shall not best me. For I am safe within my armored house, and not even your poison sting can reach me here."

Scorpion eyed Crab's metal plating, and nodded wisely. "That is true, my friend. But how sad for you that you are trapped in such an unwieldy prison."

"What?" said Crab. "This is not a prison, it is my home."

"Of course," smiled Scorpion. "And that is what everyone tells you. But, if it were not a prison, you would be able to take it off. I have heard that you were cursed, condemned to spend the rest of your life, carrying your own prison on your back."

Crab said, "I can take it off whenever I want to!"

Scorpion nodded sadly and said, "I'll be sure to tell everyone that."

Crab stomped in the sand, "I can take off my shell whenever I want!"

Scorpion said, "Have you ever tried?"

Crab stopped and took his house off his back and threw it to the ground.

Scorpion smiled as they looked at each other.

And Crab had nothing else to say.

his focus will be on you... and not on those around him.

This is how you kill an ambitious man.

This is also how you kill any man.

IMPETUOUSNESS ALWAYS TRIUMPHS

When you must ask a favor from another, do not allow him time to consider, especially if you make certain he understands that refusal shall draw disfavor from you.

Mother Sun is a woman, after all, and what impresses a woman more than a bold, impetuous man?

TWO MEN AT THE RIVER

Two men, in the heart of winter, on either side of a river.

One has flint, the other steel. And neither of them are willing to cross the cold water.

So are we all.

TRUE TREACHERY

Never presume a man is incapable of treachery. If one man is capable of it, all men are capable of it. But you do not need to fear all men. You only need concern yourself with men of cunning, strong heart, will and determination. These men are capable of *true treachery*. Other men are only capable of *low treachery*.

Weak men are not capable of true treachery; neither are men of low means. Only those who are brave are capable of it. The cowardly do not have the stomach for it. Men of weakness will always wait for another to take risks. This is the way of the world.

Great men may employ weak men to spill blood for them, however. Even still, do not confuse the hand for the blade; it still belongs to a man of means and will. It takes power to convince another man to take risks.

More than anything, you must fear those upon whom you have bestowed great favor, those you hold close and capable men of courage and will. Do not fear men who are distant, or who bear you ill will. The desire to rule has always been greater than the desire for revenge.

ONE CALAMITY IS INVITATION FOR ANOTHER

If – upon observing your enemy – he makes a blatantly catastrophic error, assume that he is drawing you in. No man makes public his errors.

Never take opportunity upon the misfortune of another. Do not advance upon what cannot be hidden; it is of no value to you. Only advance upon mistakes that could have been hidden.

ROOTING OUT TREACHERY

If you fear a man is guilty of treachery, place him with your lieutenants and treat him like a dog. Soon, he will begin to seek others to conspire against you.

That is how you root out a rat.

CONTINGENCIES

Many generals and daimyos spend days figuring their plans, calculating every chance, preparing for the course of events. But how little time they spend preparing contingent plans.

Contingencies are part of the plan.

One fly spoils the ointment.

Spend little time on the plan, for the only thing that is certain is that something will go wrong.

Spend all your time on contingencies.

MEN ACT SLOWLY WHEN THEY THINK THEY HAVE TIME

There are two ways to allow a man to make a decision. The first is to let him brood over it. The second is to not even give him a breath.

Our way is the second way.

When men are forced to make decisions at a moment's notice, they make mistakes. When they have time to think, they have time to sort out the details and calm any foul temper they may be carrying.

Therefore, I say force a man to make a decision without a moment of thought.

And force him to do it in public.

PEASANTS AND SOLDIERS

Peasants do not understand what it means to be a soldier. They do not understand bushido. To them, our ways are foreign ways. They are a simple people and will never understand us.

Alienation causes fear.

Men strike at what they fear.

This is how revolts are formed. Not among lieutenants, but among farmers. For every twenty samurai there are two hundred farmers.

Two hundred angry men – be they farmers or samurai – are an army.





Chapter Three



Character



Chapter Three: Character

New Skills

Some of these Skills were presented in the basic rulebook. We present them here again, further defined and explained.

EXPLOSIVES (INTELLIGENCE)

This skill represents the actor's experience with the small explosives used in stink bombs, smoke bombs, flash paper, etc. More information on bombs can be found in the Appendices at the end of this book. This is a Bugei Skill.

MIMIC (AWARENESS)

You have learned to mimic the voices of others. When this Skill is used against someone who is unfamiliar with the person you are attempting to mimic, you must make an Awareness + Mimic Simple Roll against their Perception x5. If they are familiar with the person you are attempting to mimic, expect the GM to increase the TN, depending on the degree of familiarity. For instance, someone with a casual acquaintance would increase the TN by 5 or maybe 10, but if you are attempting to fool someone's wife or husband, expect the TN to go up by as much as 20. This is a Low Skill.

NINJUTSU

"Ninjutsu" is a broad Skill that represents the training required to use the tools of the ninja's trade. Each tool is both a weapon and a tool. With each Rank, the assassin learns how to use a new tool. These tools can be found in the Appendices at the end of this book. This is a Low Skill.

POISON (INTELLIGENCE)

The Poison Skill gives a character the ability and knowledge to brew and use poisons. The revised poison rules (initially presented in *Honor's Veil*) are presented in Appendix III at the end of this book. This is a Low Skill.

SLEIGHT OF HAND (AGILITY)

This Skill allows the character to use sleight of hand tricks such as palming items, picking pockets, and other acts of prestidigitation. This is a Low Skill.

New Advantages

CRAFTY (3 POINTS)

Quite simply, you are very good at being bad. You are considered to have at least one Rank in all Low Skills, even Skills for which you have not yet purchased a Rank. If, however, you wish to buy a Low Skill you do not have, you must purchase Rank 1 with Experience Points as normal.

DANGEROUS BEAUTY (2 POINTS, 1 POINT FOR SCORPION CHARACTERS)

This is a very different Advantage from Bente's Blessing. A woman (or man) with Dangerous Beauty rolls three additional dice for the purposes of seduction and other less-than-honorable temptations.

A character who wishes to purchase both Bente's Blessing and Dangerous Beauty must pay an additional 3 Character Points on top of the total Advantage price (a total of 8 Points, or 7 Points for Scorpion and Crane characters).

EAR OF THE EMPEROR (5 POINTS)

The PC has a (semi-)direct line to the Imperial Court, whether through familial connections, favors, social or political influence or simple respect. The terms of the connection must be clearly defined before a PC with this Advantage can be brought into play, but once it is, the PC may invoke it at any time, gaining a bonus of their dice (rolled, but not kept) in Awareness when "suggesting" things to those in the Imperial Court. And the best part of this Advantage is that, depending on its circumstances, the PC might not even need to be present in the courts when it is proposed, relying instead on easily-manipulated third parties to insinuate the desired information.

HEARTLESS (2 POINTS)

All attempts to woo or sway your heart to pleas of compassion, love or courtesy fall on deaf ears. Any appeal to your heart shall find it made of stone. Any Skills used with Awareness in such an attempt (such as Seduction, Poetry, Acting or Sincerity) need to Raise twice in order to be successful.

A HEART OF VENGEANCE (3 POINTS)

Pick a clan, any clan (should be a Great Clan). For some reason or another, members of that clan will always draw your wrath. Whenever you are using any Skill against a member of that clan, you always keep (not roll) an additional die. Gain a minor enemy from that clan.

New Disadvantages

NEMESIS (5 POINTS)

The dark counterpart to the Kharmic Tie Advantage, *Nemesis* attaches you to an enemy from a past life rather than an ally. Whenever you face your *Nemesis*, you cannot use Void Points.

JUNSHIN (3 POINTS; SCORPION ONLY)

This Disadvantage is a kind of specialized **Black Sheep**. You are legitimately honorable. You try your best to adhere to bushido, but your Scorpion blood keeps disagreeing with your "pure heart." Not only do your fellow Scorpions not completely trust you, but the rest of the Empire thinks you're just putting on another mask. Or, at the very least, that you're some kind of freak. (See the *Junshin* sidebar, Chapter One.)

THE YOGO CURSE (0 POINTS)

All characters from the Yogo family automatically have this *Disadvantage*. At the beginning of character creation, all Scorpion characters roll one die, and re-roll any 10 as usual. If the roll is at least 15 (one ten and at least a five), they have inherited the Yogo curse. Once in your life, you will betray the person you love the most. Some action, either intentional or unintentional, will cause that person pain. The more you try to avoid it, the more painful the betrayal will be.

Because of the curse, the Yogo family has been forbidden to marry within the Scorpion Clan. However, true love rarely listens to rules, and taboo often breeds tragedy.





THE KUNI AND YOGO

While the Scorpion hold the Crab in quiet contempt and the Crab hold the Scorpion in open contempt, there is a kind of working relationship between the Kuni and the Yogo. The witch-hunters and nomadic shugenja exchange knowledge with the kuroiban on a regular basis.

The Scorpion's knowledge of wards (magic symbols that keep out humans and creatures with the Shadowlands Taint) is of great value to the Kuni.

Likewise, the Kuni's knowledge of binding (spells that hold a human or creature with the Taint in one specific area; see Way of the Crab) is of equal value to the Yogo. Yogo wards can be found in Appendix III (page 99).

The Yogo Family

For a thousand years, the Yogo family has guarded the Twelve Black Scrolls that defeated Fu Leng. Despite their family curse, no Yogo has ever betrayed that duty.

Benefit: +1 Willpower

THE YOGO SHUGENJA SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Perception

Yogo shugenja gain a Free Raise when using any Warding Spells (see Appendix III).

Skills: Calligraphy, History, Lore: Shadowlands, Lore: Maho, Meditation, Theology and 1 High Skill

Beginning Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, plus 3 Air, 2 Water and 1 Fire

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

The Shosuro Butai (Acting) School

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Skills: Acting, Etiquette, Forgery, Locksmith, Poison, Seduction, Stealth or Sleight of Hand

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: A Scorpion Has A Thousand Hearts

Drawing upon their rigorous acting training, the actor adds his School Rank to his Awareness whenever he is attempting to influence or persuade. His Rank is also added to his Awareness when others are attempting to test his candor and sincerity.

Rank 2: The Scorpion's Sting

The Actor has been taught how to strike an unaware opponent with such skill that only a single strike is necessary. When an opponent is unaware or unable to defend himself - making his TN to be hit 5 - the actor's Raises are not limited by his Void.

Rank 3 - 5: The Thousand Masks

From this point on, the Actor learns the deepest secrets of Shosuro's technique. While other bushi spend months learning new fighting techniques, the Shosuro Actor spends that time learning a new identity. At each new School Rank, the Actor gains a new "Persona," an identity that is etched into his own personality. Therefore, at Rank 3, the Actor gains one Persona, at Rank 4 he gains a second, and at Rank 5, he gains a third.

When he assumes his Persona, he has the Skills of that Persona. If he takes the role of a Lion bushi, he has the Skills of a Lion bushi. If she takes the Persona of a geisha, she has the Skills of a trained geisha.

Many of the Personae that are taught by the Shosuro School are listed below. Game Masters are free to create new Personae, as long as they follow the guidelines listed below. An Actor gains these Skills at their listed Ranks and may use them while in the mindset of that Persona. Immersing oneself in a completely different identity is not a simple thing; it is a meditation that requires complete concentration. Therefore, while in the mindset of one Persona, it is very difficult to use the Skills and abilities of another.

While in the mindset of one Persona - including his own "native" Persona - he cannot use Skills from another without great difficulty. It requires a Void + Meditation roll at a TN of 5 x the Rank of the Skill. This represents the fact that greater Skills are more deeply etched into the core of that other Persona, therefore more difficult to summon. To switch between Personae, the Actor must spend 5 minutes of complete

concentration as he sheds one set of trappings and dons another.

Shosuro Personae

The following Personae are those that are taught by the Shosuro School. As an Actor learns each new Persona, he gains these Skills at Rank 1. The Actor cannot gain Ranks in these Skills regularly. It requires double the regular Experience Points in order to increase them.

CLAN BUSHI AND SHUGENJA

A Shosuro Actor who takes on the role of a clan bushi gains all the Skills of that School, but not the Techniques. Particularly confident or foolhardy Actors may also attempt to impersonate the shugenja of respective clans, but they may not use spells.



Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Skills: Courtier, Etiquette, Investigation, Law, Sincerity, Seduction, and either Forgery or Poison

GEISHA

Conversation
Dance
Etiquette
Music
Seduction
Tea Ceremony

MONK

Shintao
Tea Ceremony
Theology
Hand-to-Hand
Bo-stick
any 2 Craft

FARMER

Hunting
Lore (Farming)
Herbalism
Lore (Peasant Superstition)
Knife
any 2 Craft

MERCHANT

Commerce
Gambling
Law
Sincerity
Lore (Streetwise)
any 2 Craft





USING THE COURTIER TECHNIQUES

It's all too easy to just allow mechanics to take the place of good role-playing. ("I roll my Awareness. Do I seduce him?") On the other hand, if a character is role-playing a Scorpion to the hilt, you should reward him by skipping the die roll, a factor that could cause him to fail despite his good role-playing.

The Courtier Techniques were designed to reward characters who role-play well with mechanical advantages. You'll notice that nearly all of them require a certain amount of conversation (role-playing) to be effective. Then, once the talking is over, the player gets to choose from a wide array of effects to invoke.

Rank 1: Weakness Is My Strength

The Courtier School teaches its students to turn the weaknesses of others to their advantage. Whenever he makes a Contested Roll against another character in a social situation, he gains a Free Raise for every 2 points of Disadvantages the character has (round up).

Rank 2: Shallow Waters

The name of this Technique comes from the proverb: "Every man is an ocean, and no matter how deep, every ocean has shallow waters." After ten minutes of conversation with another character, the Courtier may make a Contested Awareness roll to determine any character's lowest Trait. If the roll is successful, the Courtier may expend a Void Point to discover the character's next lowest Trait. A Scorpion may only perform this Technique against a single character a number of times equal to the Scorpion's Awareness.

For example, a Scorpion with a 4 Awareness and 3 Void makes a successful Contested Awareness roll against a Crane and discovers his lowest Trait is his Willpower. Then, over the course of the evening (through continued conversation), the Scorpion spends all three of her Void points, discovering the Crane's next three lowest Traits. Because she has a 4 Awareness, she can only discover the Crane's 4 lowest Traits. Once she increases her Awareness to 5, she can go back, chat with the Crane for a while, and discover her next lowest Trait.

Rank 3: Secrets Are Birthmarks

The name of this technique comes from the Scorpion adage "Secrets are like birthmarks; the more you try to hide them, the easier they are to see." The Courtier has gained an acute sense that allows him to sniff out the weaknesses of his opponent. By making a successful Contested Awareness roll during conversation, he may know one Disadvantage of any character he speaks with. This Technique can only be used to gain the general nature of a Disadvantage. For instance, a Scorpion could use this Technique to determine a character has a Dark Secret, but does not necessarily know the details of the secret.

Rank 4: Scrutiny's Sweet Sting

At this Rank, the Scorpion can not only learn other's weaknesses, but knows how to exploit them. For every one hour of game time spent interacting with a character, the Scorpion gains 1



point of the Blackmail Advantage on that character (maximum 5). He must make a successful Contested Awareness + School Rank roll versus the character's Awareness each hour in order to use this Technique - 5 points of Blackmail takes five rolls over five hours. If successful, the Scorpion has learned some bit of information the character doesn't want anyone to know. If the character doesn't have any secrets to hide (they'd better be a saint to pull that off), the Scorpion learns something about some close family member. Alternately, the Scorpion is just good enough to twist mundane information into something scandalous.

Rank 5: No More Masks

Finally, the Scorpion has become the master of manipulation. Through conversation, she is able to show the weaknesses she sees, gaining herself benefit and inflicting difficulties on others. Through slanderous public communication (and the expenditure of Void Points), the Scorpion is able to give target characters the Disadvantages Bad Reputation (2 Void Points), Obligation (4 Void Points), or Sworn Enemy (4 Void Points). A character gains no Character Points for these Disadvantages, nor can he get rid of them with Experience Points. They are stuck with the Disadvantages until the Game Master is satisfied the player has "role-played" his way out of them. A Courtier may only bestow a number of Disadvantages on one character equal to his School Rank.



THE IUCHIBAN BLADES

The four swords created by Iuchiban and Yajinden were given to four Clan daimyos; or, at least, the daimyos ended up with them.

The Scorpion Clan knows of the location of only two of the Iuchiban blades. One is in the hands of a ronin who seeks the assassin of his daimyo. This ronin, who calls himself "Ginawa," is beginning to discover truths the Scorpion would rather leave in the shadows. The sword Ginawa holds is called "Revenge"; the dark half of loyalty.

The second Iuchiban blade is held within the walls of Bayushi castle itself. It somehow found its way into the hands of the Scorpion daimyo five hundred years ago, and has not left Scorpion possession since. It is called "Ambition," and for five hundred years, every Scorpion daimyo has heard its siren song.

Heritage Tables

After the choice of family is made, a player has the option to roll on the Heritage Tables to see what kind of family line his character was born into. A player may make up to three rolls upon these tables as desired, but each roll costs him 1 Character Point.

Begin with Table 1 and follow instructions. Beware. The only thing about the Scorpion more venomous than their hollow promise is their bitter-sweet sting...

HERITAGE TABLE 1

Roll	Result
1-2	Dishonorable Past. Roll on Heritage Table 2.
3-5	Undistinguished Past. No benefits or penalties.
6-7	Distinguished Past. Roll on Heritage Table 3.
8-10	Mixed Blessing. Roll on Heritage Table 4.

HERITAGE TABLE 2 - DISHONORABLE PAST

Roll	Result
1-2	Villainous Blood. The blood of an ancestor courses through your veins. Gain any one Advantage up to 4 Points for free and you may purchase an Ancestor for half the required Character Points. This result may only be acquired once. Treat subsequent rolls as no effect.
3-4	Romantic Entanglement. One of your ancestors attempted to use a romantic affair to his, her or the clan's benefit. Roll on Heritage Table 2A.
5-6	Heinous Deed. One of your ancestors performed a grievous act of depravity for the clan. Roll on Heritage Table 2B.
7-9	Obscure Death. An ancestor managed to remain (largely) invisible into death while in the service of the clan. Roll on Heritage Table 2C.
10	Deep Secret. One of your ancestors was able to discover some deep, dark secret and make good on its owner. Roll on Heritage Table 2D.

HERITAGE TABLE 3 - DISTINGUISHED PAST

Scorpions generally prefer to remain hidden behind masks. Your ancestor either did not or was bested by another. Now, his legacy remains...

Roll	Result
1-2	Junshin! One of your ancestors fancied himself honorable, and bragged about it! Now, you must live with his legacy. Begin with 0 Honor and the Junshin Disadvantage (but no CP for it).
3-4	Fool! One of your ancestors was played! Lose 5 Honor Points, 4 Glory Points and 5 initial koku or 2 items from your outfit.
5-6	Cursed! One of your ancestors secretly married into the Yogo family. Gain the Yogo Curse Disadvantage. Of course, your family has kept this secret from the clan... so far.
7-8	Nemesis! An ancient slight has cost your family the lives of many of their children since before many can remember what it was. Gain the Nemesis Disadvantage (but no CP for it). Watch your back.
9-10	Betrayer! Your parents or their parents chose to testify against the clan in court, creating a schism between your line and the clan. You are clan ronin.

HERITAGE TABLE 4 - MIXED BLESSING

Roll	Result
1-2	Your family line has a persistent charismatic strain. Gain the Dangerous Beauty Advantage. Of course, this is not always desirable, as many scorn the attractive. Keep 1 less die when using Etiquette with those whose Honor exceeds yours.
3-4	Your family has always been involved with the underworld. Gain a Minor Ally in the clan of your choosing, but they are of a criminal disposition.
5-6	A close relative of yours has periodically disappeared without warning all your life. You are unsure what he or she does for a living. But when they are around, they teach you strange skills. Gain 2 Ranks in Ninjutsu.
7-8	You were kidnapped and branded as a child. Since then, your family has mysteriously urged you to become a shugenja. Regardless of your choice, you still gain the benefit of a <i>kage yakiin</i> , as well as the drawbacks. Gain the Dark Secret Disadvantage (but no CP for it).
9-0	You have inherited a magical item (perhaps a mask or piece of equipment), but are unsure of its history or nature. You were warned by your relative to keep it safe, hidden and to never <i>ever</i> use it.

HERITAGE TABLE 2A - ROMANTIC ENTANGLEMENT

Step One: Roll two dice for the clan affiliation of your ancestor's romantic interest.

01-25	Crane
26-35	Phoenix
36-50	Dragon
51-65	Crab
66-70	Unicorn
71-90	Lion
91-00	Minor Clan or GM/Player choice.

Step Two: Now roll a single die for the outcome.

1-3 Advantageous

- 1 Alliance struck! Gain a Major Ally from appropriate clan. Keep in mind that this alliance may not be based on trust or favor - it might be coerced.
- 2 Sensitive information gained! Gain the Blackmail Advantage on one of appropriate clan.
- 3 Favor owed! A member of the appropriate clan owes you or your family for a perceived "kindness" during the social conflict. Someone owes you a 4 Point Obligation.

4-7 Noteworthy

- 4 Scandal! A complicated familial slight resulted in near-conflict, but your ancestor was in his element and twisted events in his favor. Gain 1 Glory Rank when in presence of appropriate clan.
- 5 Summer Affair. Marginal success. Gain a Minor Ally from appropriate clan.
- 6 Marriage! Loving relationship. No effect.
- 7 Winter Affair. Ancestor's intent toppled by prying gossip-mongers. Lose 3 Honor.

8-10 Adverse

- 8 Failure! Your ancestor only managed to trap himself in an uncaring relationship until death. The bitter regret remains to this day. Gain the Insensitive Disadvantage, but no Character Points for it.
- 9 Discovery! Gain the Bad Reputation Disadvantage (but no CP) and lose 5 Honor.
- 10 The Tables are Turned! The target of the amorous assault was a close friend to the Emperor, and less naive than your ancestor thought. Now, your family owes his or hers a lasting debt by Imperial decree. Gain the Obligation Disadvantage (but no CP) and lose 1 Honor Rank.

HERITAGE TABLE 2B - HEINOUS DEED

Your ancestor performed a valuable service to the clan, and you reap the reward for his cunning.

Roll Result

- 1-2 Ancestor assassinated a daimyo, and was never discovered. Gain Stealth or Poison 1 (or Stealth/Poison +1) and 5 Honor Points.
- 3-4 Ancestor ransomed someone's relative, and was never discovered. Gain 11-20 koku and 5 Honor. If the victim's clan ever finds out who did this, though...
- 5-6 Ancestor impersonated an Imperial magistrate, rooting out several "traitors," then arranged for other Scorpion to replace them. Gain 1 Glory Rank or Ear of the Emperor Advantage (PC's choice) and 3 Honor.
- 7-8 Ancestor performed special (undisclosed) mission for the Shosuro School. Gifted with a gilded mask worth 15 koku, which has been passed on to you. You have a standing offer to attend the school if you so choose.
- 9-10 Ancestor wrote an influential book of Scorpion philosophy. Gain Rhetoric 1 or Rhetoric +1 (see *Way of the Crane*), or Bard; a copy of their book, and 3 Honor.



HERITAGE TABLE 2C - OBSCURE DEATH

Your ancestor died in a manner befitting his role as a Scorpion. Commonly, this means he died away from public view, the details of his passing obscured...

Roll	Result
1-2	Killed in a duel - either to cover up an undesirable truth, further an aim or prove a point.
3-5	Killed in Battle... (roll one die) 1-2 ...after having "detaining" the opposing general the night before. Gain 4 points of Honor and a Minor Enemy in the appropriate clan. 3-4 ...having secreted away the object of everyone's contention. It has yet to be found. But your mother has told you for years that she has a "special gift" for you at your completion of your Rank 1 Technique. 5-6 ...after poisoning the opposition's flag-bearer. Gain 3 points of Honor and Poison 1 (or Poison +1). 7-8 ...in guise of Scorpion general, who was sequestered in safety elsewhere. Gain 5 points of Glory, 4 points of Honor and Mimic 1 (or Mimic +1). 9-0 ...among the ranks of the enemy, "evidence" of their guilt upon his person. Gain 2 points of Glory, 4 points of Honor and Blackmail Advantage for appropriate clan.
6-9	Died to conceal a larger truth or further a larger plot. Gain the Crafty Advantage and 5 points of Honor.
0	<i>Seppuku</i> - either to save face for the clan, lay the foundation for future deception or simply to make a point. You have inherited his blood-stained wakizashi, originally of fine quality. Gain 3 points of Honor.

HERITAGE TABLE 2D - DEEP SECRETS

Your ancestor discovered something he wasn't meant to, then turned it to your family's advantage. Now you've inherited the secret.

Step One: Roll two dice for the clan affiliation of your ancestor's discovery.

01-25	Crane
26-35	Phoenix
36-50	Dragon
51-65	Crab
66-70	Unicorn
71-90	Lion
91-00	Minor Clan or GM/Player choice.

Step Two: Roll on the table below.

Roll	Result
1-3	Murder Your ancestor stumbled on an ambitious murder plot to depose a daimyo and replace him. You know who did it, you know why they did it and you have the evidence. Roll one die, then subtract 2; the result is the Glory Rank of the murderer.
4-5	Lies Someone isn't telling the truth. A family secret lies buried in a chest in Shinomen forest. You know where the chest is and you wear the key around your neck. You're not exactly sure what the secret might be, but your father assured you that when you opened the box, you'd understand.
6-7	Dangerous Liaison Secret affairs are one thing, but secret marriages are another. You've got the names, dates and places and the shugenja who performed the ceremony has a habit that you maintain... just in case you ever need him to testify in the Emperor's court.
8-9	Magic <i>Maho</i> is a capital offense... if it's ever reported. Of course, you'll never report it as long as the <i>maho-tsukai</i> keeps up his end of the bargain.
0	One of the Twelve You are a keeper of one of the Twelve Black Scrolls. You know where it's hidden, although you've never seen it. And it's your responsibility to guard the scroll with your life ... and anyone else's.

Scorpion Fortune Tables

Every Scorpion character has the option of rolling once on these tables, at a cost of 3 CP, to discover what hand fate has dealt them. Roll one die. If even, roll on the Good Fortune Table. If odd, roll on the Bad Fortune Table.

GOOD FORTUNE TABLE

Roll Result

- 1 Shugenja: Gain an extra spell. Others: Gain a 4k2 katana.
- 2 You are a natural liar. Gain 2 Ranks in Sincerity (or Sincerity 2).
- 3 You have an heirloom item, several hundred years old (mask, tanto, fan).
- 4 You have a potion with five doses. Each renders you invisible for 2 turns.
- 5 You have a *nemuranai* to be determined by the GM.
- 6 Respected blood. Gain 4 Glory Points.
- 7 Favored Student: Add 3 Points to your Skills. One Skill may begin higher than 4.
- 8 Swindling: Roll 2 dice and keep the higher in koku.
- 9 You have a piece of nice, but stolen, jewelry. Roll 2 dice to determine its value in koku.
- 0 You have many contacts (1 Minor Ally yet to be determined).

BAD FORTUNE TABLE

Roll Result

- 1 You have two fewer items from your starting Outfit (GM's choice).
- 2 Lying is difficult for you. Gain the Can't Lie Disadvantage (but no CP), which can be "bought off" with XPs.
- 3 You are a twin! No one knows who was born first, and there is a sizable inheritance.
- 4 You have part of a stolen heirloom (a shogi set minus one of the pieces, a katana without its saya); your enemies have the rest.
- 5 You lost your family mask. Lose 1 Rank in Honor and suffer at the hands of your relatives until you find it!
- 6 Overconfident: Lose 1 Rank in highest skill (choose randomly if more than one).
- 7 You lack direction and purpose, or perhaps you're just confused about loyalty and *bushido*. You must gain 5 extra Insight for every School Rank.
- 8 Gambling Losses: Lose 1-10 koku or gain a Minor Enemy (Loanshark).
- 9 You were recently told that you were found in a coffer your father pilfered. You are really the son of a *daimyo* from another clan.
- 0 No Bad Fortune – yet. Your crafty GM owns your soul now, ninja-boy!





Chapter Four



***Who's Who in the
Scorpion Clan***



INSIGHT

Perceptive readers will note that the statistics given for the characters described in this Who's Who do not necessarily add up to the insight total given for that character's School Rank.

This is deliberate. For some games, it may be necessary for Hida Kisada, the Crab Clan Champion, to have a Horsemanship skill of 4. For others, such a skill would not only be highly inappropriate, but may ruin a well-thought out campaign or adventure.

Therefore, we have only mentioned the most prominent skills for each character, leaving gaps in their insight totals where other skills and abilities can be determined by your GM as he feels is appropriate.

GMs should feel free to fill in whatever skills and abilities are needed for any Who's Who character (up to their insight maximum for their given School Rank), or simply allow them to develop in time, as the PCs interact with the character.

Chapter Four: Who's Who in the Scorpion Clan

The Bayushi

BAYUSHI ARAMORO

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Perception 4

Fire: 4

Air: 5

Void: 4

School/Rank: Shosuro Assassin 5 (See Appendix II)

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 5, Explosives 4, Kenjutsu 5, Locksmith 4, Ninjutsu 4, Poison 4, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 5

Honor: 1.8

Glory: 7.8

Advantages: Kharmic Tie (Bayushi Kachiko), Greater Destiny, 1 Shadowbrand

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (In love with brother's wife), Yogo Curse

Aramoro is the younger brother of Bayushi Shoji, the daimyo of the Scorpion Clan. However, Shoji is actually his *half* brother. Shoji's mother died during childbirth, and his grief-stricken father spent many years in quiet solitude, far from his deformed son. Finally, he found comfort in

the arms of a Yogo shugenja, and soon afterward, his second son was born.

Aramoro grew up strong and handsome, quite unlike his older brother. His mask was slight and suggestive, allowing the ladies of the court to look upon his flashing eyes and dashing smile while Shoji hid his ugliness behind a shroud. Still, he was the younger son. Shoji was born to sit on the throne and Aramoro was born to serve. But where physicality came easily to Aramoro, the crippled Shoji stumbled. Aramoro's masks were silken to hint at his handsome features while Shoji's were obscure to hide his loathsomeness. Every one of Aramoro's advantages were hurdles for Shoji. But their rivalry was a quiet one; Aramoro knew his place. That is, until the brothers met Shosuro Kachiko.

All that winter, Aramoro set his mind to winning the woman's affections. He wrote her poems, sent her gifts and took long walks with her through the snow-covered gardens of Shosuro palace. And just when he thought his exploits had succeeded, his brother approached him with a small box. When Aramoro opened it, he found all



the gifts and poems he had sent the Shosuro beauty. Shoji smiled under his mask and turned on his heel. That night, Aramoro saw his brother escorting Kachiko to dinner.

For the first time in his life, Aramoro had been beaten. Beaten by a man he assumed was incapable of such a feat. He resolved to never let it happen again. Aramoro abruptly left the Bayushi courtier school and sought out the shadows.

At first, the Shosuro sensei refused to admit him, but when he saw the fire in Aramoro's eyes, he accepted the man's petition. Aramoro began his lessons in earnest, quickly becoming the school's most promising pupil. Within three years, his skills surpassed those of the sensei's most talented students.

One day, Aramoro was told he had a visitor. He walked out into the courtyard and found the young beauty he had courted four years earlier waiting for him. She told him she was to be married... and that there was a complication.

Kachiko was pregnant – and not with Shoji's child, but with the child of Doji Hoturi. "Help me, Aramoro," she begged him. "Only you can protect him."

Aramoro could not refuse her. He could never refuse her. He had willingly fallen under the spell of her beauty years before and was hers to command. He accepted the responsibility of quietly watching over the boy, to ensure his safety.

Since then, Aramoro has lived up to his namesake. He has proven one of the best of his kind, a silent watcher who kills and escapes without a trace. Even he cannot count the number of men whom he can call victims. He fulfills his position without fault, without error. But always in the corner of his eye and in the back of his mind is the beautiful image of his sister-in-law, a living testament to his one failure. His one continuing failure.

BAYUSHI KACHIKO

Earth: 2

Willpower: 4

Water: 2

Perception: 4

Fire: 3

Intelligence: 4

Air: 4

Awareness: 7

Void: 3

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 5

Skills: Acting 5, Courtier 5, Etiquette 5, Knife 3, Poison 4, Seduction 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 4, Tea Ceremony 4

Honor: 1.2

Glory: 8.7

Advantages: Blackmail, Benten's Blessing, Clear Thinker, Dangerous Beauty, Great Destiny (Seven Thunders), Kharmic Tie (Doji Hoturi), Luck (6 pts.)

Disadvantages: Dark Secret, True Love (Doji Hoturi), Vanity

Bayushi Kachiko was born Shosuro Kachiko, the daughter of the daimyo of her family. She is his first-born, but not his first-born son, and therefore, not the inheritor of the Shosuro throne. That title fell to her younger brother, Hametsu.

Kachiko never liked her brother, and spent most of her childhood teasing and taunting him. She learned quickly that she could get older boys to pummel him with a slight hint of recompense, a lesson she would keep for the rest of her life. She also learned another lesson: that men would do nearly anything if a reward was involved. Especially a reward of physical gratification.

These lessons led her to one conclusion: that men were stupid and weak. Social position meant nothing, because her brother held position, even though he was weak. Physical strength meant nothing, because she could manipulate that to her own designs. Everywhere she looked, she saw men who could be manipulated with promises that she need never deliver on. She also discovered that men would continue to serve, even if she broke her promises, for the mere *chance* of winning her favor.

All her life, Kachiko had been told that her womanhood made her less than a man, a second-rate human being at best. No matter how hard she tried, she would eventually be relegated to the role of a wife, a man's possession and nothing more. But Kachiko had learned a deeper truth: that men were slaves of their own desires, and the woman who held the leash of their desires was truly their master.

When she reached the age of education, she asked to be sent to the Shosuro school, but her father insisted that she be sent to the Bayushi school instead to learn etiquette and the ways of the Emperor's Court. Her brother, on the other hand, went to the Shosuro school, which gave Kachiko yet another reason to resent him. Through various connections, she made certain

BLACKMAIL

Kachiko and Shoji both have the Blackmail Advantage. We didn't bother putting points next to them. We shouldn't have to. Both Kachiko and Shoji have access to the most sophisticated spy network Rokugan has ever seen. If they want to know something, they'll find out about it. It's just a matter of time.



ANCESTOR: BAYUSHI

DIED 76?

5 POINTS

"You cannot talk about Bayushi without also talking about Shosuro."

— Bayushi Ubane

It is said the progenitor of the Scorpion Clan wept only once in his life: on the day he watched his daughter march into the Shadowlands. His new companions served him faithfully and without question, but as his son Bayushi Ubane once wrote, "Soshi was not Shosuro." Thirty years after Shosuro walked into the Shadowlands, Bayushi disappeared. All he left behind was his mask and a single strip of paper, both found by his son. The paper read, "I have lost her forever."

Scorpions who take Bayushi as an ancestor have both a blessing and a curse.

They gain a kind of Kharmic Tie with one other character (NPC or otherwise) that allows the two to use each other's Void Points at will. If one of characters dies, however, the other character may never use Void Points again.



her brother's fellow students were anything but affable.

When she began her instruction with the Bayushi, the first lesson she learned was "Abolish all sympathy for your enemy, for he certainly holds none for you." For Kachiko, it was easy. All she needed to do was find the same weakness in her enemy that she knew rested in her brother's heart, and all of her sympathy would be drowned. She had already taught herself how to capture and control the desires of men, and use those desires against them. She used her time in school to refine the craft into an art.

She gathered books to teach her the art of warcraft and used those principles in court. She learned to dodge questions she did not want to

answer and manipulate others into saying what

they did not want to say. She learned to avoid controversial subjects by neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and discovered that proximity (both physical and political) was a powerful weapon.

She learned to use Rokugani politeness to her advantage.

After all, what samurai is going to speak out against a beautiful, educated woman who has promised a late night walk in the garden later that evening? Kachiko learned she could ignore the "polite distance" barrier, which gave her a double advantage. First, it allowed her to make the subject uncomfortable, and thus easily manipulated. Second, it created an illusion

of temporary intimacy, which added to her skills at charm and seduction. The old adage "Keep your allies close and your enemies closer" took on an entirely new meaning for the Lady Scorpion.

When she reached the age of seventeen, her father realized that he had a problem. His lord Shoji had shown interest in marrying Kachiko, but he had already promised her to a Crab samurai while she was still a baby. Denying the Crab would mean a loss of face – something the old Shosuro did not want – so he came up with a way to call off the engagement.

He officially introduced his daughter to the court and announced that she would marry Bayushi Shoji, and not the Crab samurai. The



Hiruma was incensed and challenged the old man to a duel to restore his honor. Kachiko, on cue, turned her gaze to the young and handsome son of the Emerald Champion, Doji Hoturi. She even managed a tear. The Crane could not help himself. He stood and offered his sword to Shosuro to defend the honor of his daughter.

The Hiruma never stood a chance. Kachiko rewarded the handsome Crane with her fan, but then went a bit beyond her father's instructions.

For a year she had heard of the exploits of the young Crane, and the more she heard of Hoturi, the more she knew she hated him. He represented everything she despised most about men. He was beautiful, and used that beauty and lies of love for the purposes of conquest. He held prestigious rank – because he was born into it. And, he presumed that Kachiko now owed him ... a favor.

So when Hoturi accepted her fan, and his eyes gazed at her as if she were a meal, she suggested that he meet her in the garden later that evening for a game of Go. She left him then, quietly pleased at the look on his face.

Hoturi arrived later that evening. Kachiko and the Go board were waiting for him. He suggested they play a game of riddles to determine who would go first. Kachiko agreed. The game continued well onto morning, and they never found the chance to play Go.

As the months passed, another kind of game developed between the two. It had rules that only Kachiko and Hoturi understood, and each had their own path to victory. Hoturi had seduced the most beautiful women in Rokugan, but Kachiko was the real challenge. If he could win her heart, if he could make her whisper "I love you" with those delicate lips, he would have won a battle even the greatest Akodo could not match.

Kachiko, on the other hand, had set her sights on seducing the great romancer of the Emperor's court, a feat that many felt was impossible. After all, the man had proven time and time again that one woman's affections could not keep his heart. But unlike her predecessors, Kachiko knew that victory depended on how long she could say "No" rather than how quickly she could say "Yes."

In its inception, it was a dangerous game, for they were not Kachiko and Hoturi, but Scorpion and Crane. As the game progressed, the stakes grew higher as whispers of their flirtations began in Rokugan's winter courts. Kachiko and Hoturi smiled quietly to themselves as their little game acquired an audience, an audience that could

guess – but never know – the circumstances of their competition.

Their game continued even after Kachiko was married to Shoji, but so subtle were their maneuvers that her husband could only suspect her infidelity. If he did suspect, Shoji didn't seem to care. As long as she continued to serve the clan, all was well within the Bayushi household. Two years after she married, she ended the game abruptly, refusing to even answer his correspondence. Hoturi arrived at the Bayushi house on a stormy winter night, but Aramoro refused to admit him. Far above the entryway, Kachiko watched as Hoturi was turned away. She would not see him again for another year.

The next day, she left the Bayushi house for the home of her ancestors. Three months into her stay, she invited Shoji to visit her. Nine months later, she returned with a baby. She calls the child "Dairu," which means "My first duty." The boy is now eight years old, and has not inherited any of Shoji's deformities. On the contrary, he is as handsome as a Crane. Dairu is her only child. She has been pregnant twice since, but was not able to carry either to term.

When Hoturi married Kitsune Ameiko, Kachiko found herself too ill to attend. Since then, they have only spoken on formal occasions and have been nothing but courteous, respectful, and very cold.

Three years ago, Kachiko was appointed the personal aide to the Emperor, a position with little "official" political power. She was only to assist the aging Emperor with reading documents, recognizing seals and *mons* to compensate for his failing eyesight and hearing. However, because of her position, she has had a great impact on Rokugani fashion and political etiquette. The Emperor chose her for this position due to her continuing loyalty and service in the Imperial Court as a courtier for the Scorpion Clan. The Emperor has also noticed that the Lady Scorpion proved valuable during negotiations, as opposing daimyos found it difficult to concentrate with such a lovely distraction sitting before them.

Kachiko has made many allies in the court, but her most valuable by far are those from the Dragon and Crane Clans. The Asahina and Agasha shugenja have provided her with many elixirs and ointments to help her retain her beauty and keep her youthful appearance. They have also managed to keep their services discreet,

**ANCESTOR: BAYUSHI
TESAGURI
415-545
2 POINTS**

Bayushi Junzen, daimyo of the Scorpion Clan, did *not* trust the Yogo family. He took the third, fourth and fifth Black Scrolls from their possession and entrusted them to his son, Tesaguri. The boy had proven himself time after time in battle. He was an accomplished shugenja and a brilliant strategist.

Unfortunately, Junzen trusted his son a little too much. Within days of receiving the scrolls, Tesaguri took advantage of his father's trust, sold them to the Phoenix Clan, and replaced them with forgeries, thinking no one would ever notice.

Ichinore, the *daimyo* of the Yogo family, noticed. He informed Junzen and the boy was called in to validate the Yogo's story. Once Tesaguri learned his trick had been discovered, he ran. But he didn't get far.

He was caught in the place that is now known as Traitor's Grove. There, the Yogo family tied him to a tree and trapped his soul within it forever.

Samurai who take Tesaguri as an Ancestor are always paid 50% more gold for any service they perform. They also receive finer gifts than they deserve. On the other hand, they can't keep a secret. If they ever learn a secret, they will spill it the first chance they get.



THE PHOENIX AND THE SCORPION

One day, Scorpion came to Phoenix in his high mountains and said, "I have a gift for you."

Phoenix backed away. "Oh, no. I know of you, brother Scorpion. I know all about you. I don't want your gift."

"Oh really," said Scorpion. "I will leave it here," he said as he put it on the ground. "And if you don't want it, someone else certainly will." Then, Scorpion walked away.

Phoenix looked at the gift and thought, "If I take the gift, and it is a trap, then I have been tricked. But if I leave it and it is not a trap, then I have been tricked. What shall I do?"

All day long, Phoenix sat and looked at the gift, pondering it. "What does he have in mind? He tricked the Crab with anger and the Lion with pride. He tricked the Ki-Rin with her ignorance and the Crane with flattery. How does he mean to trick me?"

Soon, Mother Sun had crossed the sky and Father Moon had made his nightly progress, but Phoenix had not moved a single footstep. He was rooted to the spot, pondering Scorpion's gift. When he looked up the next morning, he saw Scorpion watching him and laughing.

And Phoenix had nothing more to say.

as they have with many other powerful noble women.

Other than Hoturi, Kachiko has never been unfaithful to Shoji. She has implied, tempted, teased, hinted and insinuated, but never delivered. Love is the only thing that would make her break her vow to Shoji, and Hoturi is the only man she has ever loved.

BAYUSHI SHOJU

Earth: 3

Willpower: 5

Water: 2

Perception: 5

Fire: 3

Intelligence: 5

Air: 5

Awareness: 6

Void: 6

School/Rank:

Bayushi Bushi 5

Skills: Acting 4, Archery 3, Battle 2, Courtier 3, Defense 5, History 4, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 5, Law 5, Poison 5, Sincerity 5, Shintao 4, Stealth 5

Honor: 2.5

Glory: 9.5

Advantages:

Blackmail, Clear Thinker, Great Destiny

Disadvantages:

Benten's Curse, Nemesis (Doji Hoturi), Lane (Left arm), Soft-Hearted, True Love (Kachiko), Unluck (3 Points), Weakness (Strength)

It is said that no man or woman has looked upon Bayushi Shoji's naked face and lived. Of course, these words are never heard when he, his wife or their agents are within earshot. But it is true that he has never

been seen publicly without a mask that completely covers his face, and rarely have his eyes been seen. His masks are either magnificently elaborate or very simple, but always conceal his features from view. While many speculate that this fashion is symbolic, it also serves a very practical purpose.

If the curious women of the court were to peel away the veneer, they would find a truth that no-one must ever discover: Bayushi Shoji is not a handsome man. In fact, to call him "plain" would be kind. His cursed countenance could be the stuff of legend ... if he were a Lion or a Crane. But he is a Scorpion, and so he has used the traditional garb of his clan to hide his face. He is fully aware of the importance of beauty in the Emperor's court, which is why he and Kachiko make such a marvelous match.



What's more, Shoji's right arm is twisted with palsy, and while magical and mundane remedies have alleviated many of its symptoms, he still suffers pain and deformity. Only three people know of Shoji's affliction: his wife Kachiko, his brother Aramoro and his old maid Kiko. None have ever whispered a word of it out of loyalty to the "Lord of Secrets."

Despite his infirmity, Shoji may be one of the greatest daimyos in history. His quiet cunning has left its mark on nearly every family of Rokugan. He has no enemies. None dare cross him in court. He has never lost a duel or battle ... but he has yet to face Akodo Toturi on the field, a moment that he faces with dread and anticipation. And while he is regarded with both fame and infamy for his successes, his greatest achievement— and failure — sits beside him in his throne room.

There is no doubt in anyone's mind that Shoji loves his wife, and there is no doubt that Kachiko loves her husband. Since her *gempukku*, Shoji had been intrigued by the tales of her cunning in the Emperor's court. When he met finally met her, he was doubly enthralled with her beauty. When they spent an evening together, he was fascinated by her keen insight. She saw straight through his "mask," and he found himself unable to beguile her with words of fancy. For the first time in his life, the Great Deceiver was forced to be himself. He bid her good evening, and as he watched her leave, he knew that she would be his bride.

Very shortly after they were married, Kachiko gave birth to a son. The exact date was altered to disguise the fact that the child was conceived before the marriage. Shoji knows the boy is not his. When he demanded the truth from Kachiko, she knew he would see through any lie she could devise, so she told him the truth: the child belonged to Doji Hoturi. Shoji was incensed. The "pretty boy" of the Crane Clan represented everything Shoji hated about the samurai of Rokugan. He was beautiful ... and irresponsible. Everything was given to him; he had to earn nothing for himself. He survived only due to his reputation, not to any kind of accomplishment.

Shoji swore at that moment that Doji Hoturi would forever be his enemy. He also swore to hide the fact that the Crane's only child bore a Scorpion name. Not even the child would know his own heritage. And so, Bayushi Daiyu has gone his entire life without suspecting that the man his "father" has taught him to hate is his own flesh and blood.

BAYUSHI TANGEN

Earth: 2

Water: 3

Fire: 2

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 2

Skills: Archery 2, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Poison 2, Sincerity 1, Stealth 1

Honor: 2.1

Glory: 2.2

Advantages: Luck (9 Points)

Disadvantages: Brash, Gullible

Bayushi Tange was named after his great-grandfather, the daimyo who wrote *Lies*. More than anything else in this world, he wants to live up to his name. He is impulsive, rash and eager to prove his worth. He genuinely believes everything that his superiors tell him. After all, why would his clan deceive him? He's a Scorpion, he's loyal and he's a great warrior. He's got the blood of the first Tange in his veins.

All of this makes him the ideal pawn.

Tange loves combat. He jumps at the chance to duel anyone. He wants to found a Bayushi Dueling Academy to rival the Kakita's. He'll teach his techniques to anyone who listens to him. Unfortunately, most of his students haven't been as lucky as he — or perhaps they had not fully mastered the Tange Method. Their deaths have been a stumbling block to Tange's glorious dream.

Tange wants, more than anything, to serve as the right hand of the Scorpion daimyo, and prove that his ideas and techniques are worthy of the Scorpion Clan, but Shoji has not given the young man a chance to prove his worth. Every task Tange has been assigned has been fulfilled — not through skill or ability, but out of pure luck. He always seems to escape certain doom and returns asking for another duty to further prove his worth.

One of the more annoying aspects of Tange's behavior is his constant quoting of his great, great grandfather's famous treatise. He'll quote it to the daimyo, he'll quote it to the Unicorn, he'll quote it to the Crane, he'll even quote it out loud just to hear himself say it.

There have been three attempts on Tange's life, two of which came from the Shosuro family, although Tange doesn't know it. Somehow, he managed to survive each of the attempts by the skin of his teeth. Lately, there's been talk of

ANCESTOR: BAYUSHI TANGEN

147-170

2 POINTS

The author of *Lies* and *Little Truths*, Tange was one of the most successful and popular daimyos in Scorpion history. His death caused as much controversy as his life. At the age of thirty-three, Tange suddenly dropped dead in the middle of Akodo Hiyorimi's court. It occurred during an argument over his work, shortly after he had presented it to the Emperor. The Lions called the whole work treasonous, but Tange supported it, saying "there is not a single lie on those pages." In the middle of all the excitement, Tange suddenly stopped, grasped his left arm and fell to the floor, dead.

Chaos erupted. His supporters claimed he had been poisoned. Hiyorimi claimed assassins caused the death to put the blame on the Lion house. Cranes whispered tales of ninja within the Scorpion Clan who did not trust their own master, or were angry at him for giving away their secrets, while the Phoenix proclaimed it was the will of the Fortunes. The cause of Tange's mysterious death is disputed to this day.

Scorpions who take Tange as an Ancestor automatically have the Disadvantage Can't Lie. However, this character always needs 10 less Insight to gain his next School Rank.



THE DRAGON AND THE SCORPION

One day, Dragon came to Scorpion and said, "I saw how you tricked Ki-Rin."

And Scorpion nodded.

Dragon continued, "I saw how you tricked Lion."

And Scorpion nodded.

Dragon continued, "I watched you trick Crane."

And Scorpion nodded.

Dragon continued, "I was there when you tricked Crab."

And Scorpion nodded.

Dragon continued, "And I knew what you would do to Phoenix."

And Scorpion said, "And you stood by and did nothing."

And Dragon had nothing more to say.

sending him as a political envoy to the Phoenix Clan, but the Bayushi aren't sure that's far enough away.

Tangen has developed his own School Technique: "The Dark Sword of Bitter Lies." He's very proud of that name. He shouts "Prepare to face the Dark Sword of Bitter Lies!" whenever he enters combat or a duel.

Tangen's Technique allows him to keep an extra die for every 3 points of the Luck Advantage he has. Unfortunately, Tangen isn't a very good teacher, and no-one else can quite figure out his Technique. Game Masters are welcome to allow Tangen to teach it to other players, but it doesn't always work as well as it does for him.

BAYUSHI YOJIRO

Earth: 2

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Agility 4

Air: 4

Awareness 5

Void: 4

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 4

Skills: Courtier 4, Etiquette 3, Investigation 3, Law 2, Sincerity 4, Seduction 3, Poison 2

Honor: 3.7

Glory: 4.9

Advantages: Allies (Lion Clan), Benten's Blessing, Read Lips, Voice



Disadvantages: *Junshin*, Reputation (Honest), Soft-Hearted, Unluck (3 Points)

Unfortunately for Yojiro, he is a Scorpion with a Lion's heart. He read books when he was young, that talked about honor and duty, and when his father took them away from him, he arranged for the books to be sent to him by the Lions and Cranes he met in court. His closest friend, Matsu Agetoki, was more than willing to assist his friend in his search for bushido. The young Yojiro's favorite story was the tale of the Thunder Shosuro. He wept when he read the words describing her sacrifice and her loyalty ... not just for the Scorpion, but for the whole Empire.

Yojiro's father - Bayushi Noburu - was an advisor to the Scorpion daimyo. When a Crane duelist was about to trap the daimyo in a duel he couldn't refuse, Noburu saw a way out of the situation, therefore saving the life of the Scorpion daimyo. In return for his quick thinking, the daimyo offered him a boon. Noburu responded, "Let my son serve you as I have." The daimyo agreed, and the young Yojiro was admitted to the Bayushi Courtier school.

Yojiro had mixed success in the Courtier school. He found he had a natural talent for understanding what the other courtiers were doing, but did not have the drive to duplicate it. He was a quick study of political games and could easily construct scenarios to trap the unwary, but could not bring himself to deceive someone who placed their trust in him. He was more than willing to trick those who were a danger to the clan, but he could not learn to hate his enemy.

Bayushi Kyoto, the head of the school, knew that something had to be done. Yojiro had a promising mind, yet he had no desire to use the techniques he mastered. Kyoto meditated on the dilemma, then set a plan in motion that would either break Yojiro's honor or send him out of the school entirely.

He called upon his finest student, Shosuro Toge, to carry out his plan. She informed Yojiro of a Crane samurai who had been visiting a Scorpion geisha house. Afraid that the Scorpion would use his nights of indulgence as a political lever, the Crane killed everyone in the geisha house, burned the building to the ground and went back to his homeland without a sign of regret. She ordered Yojiro to destroy the man's honor and kill his family in revenge for the innocent Scorpion lives.

Yojiro was incensed. Such a man deserved every horrible thing he could do to him. Using the skills he learned at the courtier school, he began spinning a web of intrigue which would culminate in the death of the Crane's family, apparently at the bushi's own hands. Such an event would surely destroy the man's life, his honor, his history and his future. On the eve of the event, Toge stopped Yojiro as he was about to issue the final order. She told him that the Crane was innocent of everything that she and Kyoto had said. She told him the geisha house had been burned down by Scorpion agents and the geisha inside had been killed in order to test Yojiro's loyalty.

Yojiro was to continue with his plan against the Crane. "If you could have done it out of hate," she said, "you can do it out of loyalty. Hatred is selfish. If you do this because you hate him, you





do it because you want it done. If you do it out of loyalty, you do it because we want it done. Whom do you serve, Yojiro? Do you serve the Scorpion, or do you serve your own selfish sense of honor?"

Yojiro had no choice but to destroy the man. He knew that if he refused, his kinsmen would kill him. He hesitated for only a moment, then issued the order.

Nine years have passed since that night, and Yojiro has continued to serve the clan. However, word of his "initiation" has been passed on throughout the courtier school, and he has been called "the honest Scorpion" behind his back, mocking his moment of hesitation. Courtiers from other clans have learned the nickname and, ironically, use it as a compliment.

He still can't bring himself to arbitrarily hurt innocents; his conscience and his sense of honor still get in the way. He tries to serve the Scorpion as any other member of the clan would, but all too often, assignments are taken out of his hands and given to other less "emotional" agents.

His devotion to the clan, however, remains unquestioned and has been noticed at the highest level. Bayushi Shoji himself has secretly ordered Yojiro to keep a subtle watch on Kachiko, to make certain "her indiscretions do not endanger the Clan." Yojiro has followed his daimyo's orders to the letter, staying close to the Lady Scorpion as often as he can. And while he is not immune to her allure, his loyalty has proven to be a suitable shield to her more dangerous charms – a virtue she has found frustrating on more than one occasion.

The Shosuro

SHOSURO HAMETSU

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception 4

Fire: 2

Intelligence 4

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Shosuro Assassin 5

Skills: Explosives 4, Leadership 5, Locksmith 4, Ninjutsu 4, Poison 5, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 5

Honor: 0.6

Glory: 8.4

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Small

Being the younger brother of a bitter Shosuro Kachiko is no easy task. Hametsu survived the experience only to become the Shosuro's most inconsequential daimyo in recent history.

Completely overshadowed by his famous sister and Bayushi Aramoro, Hametsu is daimyo in name only. So many samurai remember Hametsu when he was younger and the target of his older sister's venomous manipulations. He was a weakling and a target of bullies as a boy, and now, he is his sister's pawn and puppet.

Hametsu has done nothing to repair that perception. He prefers that



others consider him impotent and incompetent. It makes his duties that much easier.

Because of his blackened image, Hametsu rarely attends any court functions, but prefers the solitude of Shosuro castle. He surrounds himself with his spies, making them his eyes, ears, legs and hands. He is the placid spider, waiting for the slight vibrations of his strands to inform him someone has become trapped in his web.

When Hametsu's father died, he left behind a single scrap of paper for his son. Written on it were words from a book the Lions had forbidden long ago. It said,

"A general does not need knowledge of tactics, strategy, movement or any other military matter. He only needs the perception to recognize men who do have such knowledge, the intelligence to put them in positions of authority and the willpower to let them do what they do best and not hinder their efforts with his own desire for glory."

That day, Hametsu decided that he would surround himself with proficiency. He put those his most competent followers in their areas of expertise, then let them do their jobs. So far, he's met with unqualified success. The Shosuro spy network operates at a level few daimyos have ever achieved, only because Hametsu has forced himself to step back and listen to those who know his job better than he does.

SHOSURO TABERU

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception 4
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Awareness 5
Void: 3

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 3

Skills: Courtier 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 4, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Law 3, Sincerity 4, Seduction 3, Forgery 4

Honor: 0.9

Glory: 5.8

Advantages: Ally (Ide Tadaji), Read Lips, Voice

Disadvantages: Meddler

Taberu is a middle child, neither the youngest or the oldest, neither outspoken or shy. He is not an exemplary swordsman, although he does have some skill with the katana. All in all, he seems distinctly mundane.

And that's exactly what he wants you to think.

Taberu has made a study of being insignificant. Everything that has ever been given to him has appeared as good fortune, from his father's untimely death to the inheritance of certain lands that once belonged to the Boar Clan. His position at the Imperial Court seems to have



ANCESTOR:

SHOSURO FURUYARI

774-856

2 POINTS

Furuyari wrote three of the most important plays in Rokugani history: *The Death of Hantei*, the tale of the death of the first Emperor; *The Mask*, a history of the only Scorpion daimyo who never wore a mask; and *Father and Daughter*, a three-part epic about Bayushi and Shosuro.

Furuyari is said to have died three days after the death of his only son. However, some Lion historians claim Furuyari never existed. They say his plays were written by three minor Scorpion playwrights who felt their work might be considered too controversial; so they all wrote under the same pseudonym in order to hide their true identities. The controversy persisted for several years until finally, one of Furuyari's descendants proved the Lions' claims false – a hoax meant to discredit a Scorpion playwright that rivaled their own.

Scorpions who take Furuyari as an Ancestor gain a Free Raise whenever using the Skills: Acting, Oratory/Rhetoric, and Disguise. The Advantage Voice costs 1 Point rather than 2 Points if you have Furuyari as an Ancestor.



ANCESTOR: SOSHI SAIBANKAN

130-175

5 POINTS

4 POINTS FOR SCORPION MAGISTRATES

Before the convention of sending Emerald Magistrates to enforce the Emperor's Law, the various cities of the Empire often had their own system of judges who would arbitrarily interpret the law for each city. Soshi

Saibankan was one such judge, and among the most famous. He ruled over *Taiyo One Toshi* (Sun's Ridge City) as its judge for ten years.

Afterwards, the Emperor called him to serve his court, and he defined the system and function of the Emerald Magistrates in roughly the same way we know them today.

Soshi Saibankan was famous his stories about his "wise old Uncle Sochoku," parables of wisdom which he used to explain his rather unorthodox judgements.

Saibankan unified the interpretations of the Emperor's Law into a single code, and used stories of his wise old uncle to justify his decisions.

been given to him for no reason other than the fact that Taberu was in the right place at the right time. His father was Bayushi Shoji's uncle, but he bears the Shosuro name because his mother left his father when he was still a youth. He has always felt cheated, because he was the rightful heir of the Ancestral Sword. Until recently, the Scorpion daimyo has never carried the Sword, so the clans are unaware of its location. Taberu was chosen to bear the sword by Shoji's father because he was so adept at being unremarkable. However, on the day Shoji inherited the throne, he demanded the sword and Taberu could do nothing but surrender it. He has always considered it his duty to protect the sword, no matter who held it.

Taberu's position in the Emperor's court is one of intrigue and subterfuge. He has been responsible for numerous political maneuverings and when Bayushi Kachiko became the Emperor's aid, Taberu was placed as her highest retainer. She immediately recognized his skills and his loyalty. She saw Taberu surrender the sword to her husband and knew his duty would always

overcome his pride. This man was worthy of her trust.

He is a slender man, somewhat effeminate. His movements are graceful, which has caused some to refer to him as "The Poison Crane." Taberu doesn't mind the nickname, nor does he consider it an insult. In fact, it has gained him the confidences of many Doji courtiers. His closest friend - if you could call him that - is Ide Tadaji, the envoy of the Unicorn. The two often spend time playing Go, and while Taberu has had many opportunities to abuse the Unicorn's trust, he has chosen not to do so. He finds the Unicorn's unorthodox mind fascinating, and has managed to incorporate their methods into his own techniques.

The Soshi

SOSHI BANTARO

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception 4

Fire: 1

Air: 5

Void: 3

School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 3

Skills: Calligraphy 5, Courtier 3, Maho Lore 2, Sincerity 3, Meditation 4, Theology 5, Shintao 4, Herbalism 4, Law 3

Honor: 0.5

Glory: 7.4

Advantages: Higher Purpose (Ambition), 1 Shadow-brand

Disadvantages: Brash, Dark Secret (Father's Death), Reputation (Overconfident), Weakness (Fire)

Soshi Bantaro is a spiteful, hateful little man. He is prideful, confident in his abilities and eager to prove his name. Above all else, he wants recognition.

He is his father's first-born son, but not the first-born. He has eight sisters ahead of him, five from his father's first wife, and three from his second wife, Bantaro's mother. After Soshi Wachigai's first wife gave him five daughters, she was put to





death. His second wife also bore three daughters, and many whispers circulated through the court regarding her similar lack of future. Then, she gave birth to Bantaro.

He was the apple of his father's eye, the only child he publically recognized beyond mere courtesy. Bantaro has been given everything he ever wanted, and told numerous times that he had a great future. He would follow in his father's footsteps.

Bantaro did more than that. He rose quickly through the ranks of the Soshi shugenja school, becoming one of its most prized students. The Soshi daimyo was so impressed with his skills, he took Bantaro into his court as a high advisor. Bantaro served the daimyo for ten years, earning the old man's respect and admiration. During his fifth year, the daimyo arranged for Bantaro to marry his daughter, thus making him the heir apparent to the Soshi throne. Five years later, the Soshi daimyo was killed in battle and Bantaro claimed the throne. That day, Wachigai shaved his head and became a monk. He married off all of his beautiful daughters and sold the ugly ones to tea houses. Then, he moved in with his son, to provide the new Soshi daimyo with a permanent advisor.

Bantaro tried working with his father. He tried ignoring his father. He tried arranging for other things to take up his father's time. Nothing worked.

So, in the end, he killed his father.

Bantaro has proven to be quite an imperious daimyo. He's prideful and arrogant, confident his skills are enough to best any opponent. Whenever Bayushi Shoji calls on him, he is eager to prove his worth. He volunteers information to the daimyo as often as he thinks it will be received with open ears. He stands by the side of his daimyo, certain that as long as he is there to defend him, the fate of their clan will be a glorious one.

The Yogo

YOGO JUNZO

Earth: 4

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Air: 6

Awareness 7

Void: 2

School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 5

Skills: Calligraphy 5, History 4, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Lore: Maho 4, Meditation 3, Shintao 5, Theology 5

Honor: 1.1

Glory: 8.8

Advantages: Crafty, Great Destiny, Strength of the Earth (4 Points)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Temperamental), Insensitive, Phobia (Women), Yogo Curse

Yogo Junzo is the oldest son of the Yogo daimyo, and the inheritor of a great legacy. Currently, Junzo is one of three men – including Shoji and his father – who know the location of the first Black Scroll that was carried out of the Shadowlands by the Scorpion Thunder a thousand years ago.

When his father retires in six months, Junzo will take his place. He will become the daimyo of the Yogo family and the guardian of their darkest secret. Junzo is very aware of the responsibility facing him. In fact, he considers himself the finest shugenja since Shiba, and easily the superior of the Isawa Elemental Masters. It is only his name that has kept him from vying for the position of Elemental Master of Void. He has traveled to the Isawa shugenja schools on numerous occasions, proving his skill and flaunting it before their students. He often places himself in positions to challenge an Elemental Master. He enjoys testing their preconceptions, their theories and their spellcraft.

Junzo is not a tall man, but he is physically impressive for a shugenja. His wide shoulders and large hands give the impression of strength, while his quick wit can make even the most stalwart Crab blush. He does not waste time with romance because women are simply not worth his time. Junzo views them as inferior creatures, best suited – like dogs – to remain in the home. He has often been chastised for expressing his views in public; Shoji once physically struck him for saying to Kachiko, "Fools are not born, pretty girls make them in their spare time." The blow left a scar across his forehead just above his right eye. Junzo makes no effort to hide it and calls it "obedience to the daimyo's woman."

Junzo had a great deal of respect for Shoji before Kachiko came along. Now, he sees Shoji using the woman as a crutch. Instead of dealing with matters himself, Shoji simply sends Kachiko to set things straight. After his first chastisement,

ANCESTOR: SOSHI SAIBANKAN

(CONTINUED)

Because of his wisdom and the great work he performed for the Emperor, all judges in Rokugan are called "saibankans;" he is considered the "patron Fortune" of magistrates and judges.

Any magistrate character may choose him as an Ancestor, but Scorpions may take him for 1 point less. Characters who take him as an Ancestor gain a number of Free Raises per day equal to their School Rank, which may only be used for the following Skills: Investigation, Law, Heraldry, and History.



ANCESTOR: YOGO

BIRTH & DEATH UNKNOWN

2 POINTS

First guardian of the Black Scrolls, Asako Yogo was cursed to betray the one he loved the most, but to never know when or how he would do it. Yogo left behind his Clan and his wife and son, changing his name from Asako Yogo to Yogo Kocho.

Kocho took a new Scorpion wife – a very plain, simple woman named Shujunoko – and over the course of attempting to give him a son, she bore him three daughters. Yogo cared nothing for the children, and saw them rarely.

When Yogo was seventy, he passed on his duty to his eldest daughter. She took on the responsibility reluctantly while his youngest daughter swallowed her protest. She knew her sister was not strong enough for the position and she was right.

Within one year, the locations of the Black Scrolls had to be resecured.

he has never voiced his opinion again. But he has said to his cousin, Bantaro, "It is obvious the daimyo prefers the counsel of a whore to my own, so I will keep my opinions to myself."

Like most other Yogos, Junzo sees his upcoming duty as a responsibility to Rokugan rather than to the Scorpion Clan. He has often considered what he would do if he was forced to compromise his duty, and has come to the conclusion that if the Scorpion must fall to preserve the Empire, then he will let the Scorpion fall.

YOGO ASAMI

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception 4

Fire: 2

Air: 3

Void: 2

School/Rank: Shosuro
Assassin 2

Skills: Disguise 4,
Explosives 1, Locksmith 2,
Mimic 5, Ninjutsu 3, Poison
3, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth
4

Honor: 1.2

Glory: 1.2

Advantages: Bente's
Blessing

Disadvantages: Small,
True Love (Aramoro)

Asami began her association with the Scorpion Clan when she was twelve. She was the daughter of a farmer whose crops had been destroyed by an ogre bandit; he was forced to sell her to a geisha house. Bayushi Kachiko saw the girl and immediately purchased her contract. Kachiko was only fourteen at the time, and hid the purchase from her father. The resemblance between the girls was remarkable, and Kachiko trained Asami in the skills

of mimicry and disguise in order for her to serve as a double.

When Kachiko began her long and secret relationship with Hoturi, Asami would often take her place, sometimes even for days. It wasn't uncommon in the Bayushi stronghold for Kachiko to go unseen for a day or two, as long as Asami took a short walk through the garden for appearances. Asami was a quick learner, and quickly began to mimic Kachiko's voice and mannerisms to such a degree that even Kachiko's maids could not tell them apart.

The deception worked flawlessly for two years... until Aramoro came back to the Shosuro provinces and asked to see Kachiko. When Asami came into the room, dressed as Kachiko, it took Aramoro only a short while to figure out that this woman was not who she claimed to be.





Aramoro demanded to know where Kachiko was, but Asami would not talk. Aramoro threatened to kill the girl if she did not reveal Kachiko's location, but Asami refused, telling the ninja that she would rather die than betray her mistress. Aramoro said, "Then I will wait here until your mistress can tell me herself."

Later that night, Kachiko returned and found Aramoro and Asami still locked in stalemate. Kachiko explained Asami's role to Aramoro, and the ninja acquiesced. However, the ninja was so impressed by the peasant girl's faithfulness and willpower that he offered to train her when her duties with Kachiko were over.

As time went on, Asami's ruse became more difficult to maintain. As they aged, their features became less identical and their bodies matured differently. At last, Kachiko sold Asami her contract, and told her she was free to do as she pleased. She immediately went to Aramoro, and begged him for instruction. However, the secrets of the Shosuro school are forbidden to all but Scorpion Clan members. It was an easy matter for Asami to use the skills she had learned under Kachiko's tutelage to catch an aging Yogo husband. She then used the skills Aramoro taught her to free herself from him, and was recognized as a Scorpion in her own right.

Another ally she gained during her service to Kachiko was Shosuro Hametsu. Because of her resemblance to his sister, Hametsu found her both alluring and repellent. Asami

noticed this, and used it as far as she dared. She has been studying in the Shosuro school for over a year now, and has picked up the skills to create many of Hametsu's simpler poisons.

She has proven to be an apt pupil for both Hametsu and Aramoro. She is certain that Aramoro is biding his time for her first mission. She's also certain that Hametsu isn't the only teacher who appreciates her resemblance to Kachiko.



ANCESTOR: YOGO

(CONTINUED)

Historians are often asked the question, "Whom did Yogo betray?" The answer is not a simple one. Some count the eldest daughter, others count the youngest. Some Phoenix say that Yogo betrayed his first wife and son. Perhaps he betrayed them all.

Those who take Yogo as an Ancestor have an innate skill at *maho*. They gain a number of Free Raises equal to their School Rank when using Lore: *Maho*. On the other hand, they also gain an additional number of Shadowlands Points equal to their School Rank when they use *maho*.



Chapter Five



Sample Scorpion Characters

Shosuro Actor

As an actor, you have many masks. Among them are the warrior's face your father always wished you would adopt and the sensitive, endearing one your mother wears. Both come quite naturally to you now, as do several others. Which is fortunate, because the path of blinding darkness you travel requires that you recreate yourself before your work is done.

You were closer to your mother as a child, and matured into a sympathetic adult with her ability in voices, emulation and production technique. Thanks to her contacts in the Shosuro Butei School, you were accepted early and began your training as a Kabuki stage actor. Your tutors all claimed you had a gift for "blending into" your surroundings, but this was only half a compliment, as it relegated you to minor roles.

This was uncomfortable, and you yearned for the spotlight. Your fondest desire was to play the lead, in a role full of passion, loss and betrayal. Who could have guessed that you would fulfill your desire so completely?

Being accepted into an acting troupe upon completion of your first-year studies was no small accomplishment. This was to be your great inception into the true world of dramatization. It would also be your grand finale.

During the troupe's very first stop, the lead fell ill and you, as his "invisible" understudy, were asked to fill in. You know that you were powerful upon the stage; you saw the fire of your performance in the audience's awed faces. The elation of realizing your dream, coupled with the fury of the dialogue you uttered, were nearly enough to usher tears; but those would come scant days later. A local magistrate arrived, claiming that his daughter had been defiled on the night of your great performance. The young girl is certain that it was your voice that taunted her, your proud words of spite uttered about your triumphs that day – both on and off the stage. And she remembers your face...

...a face that has changed every few days since, as you flee. You are a wanted man, improperly blamed for the vilest crime imaginable. Will you continue running?

Or will you turn to see whose sting has poisoned you?





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Shosuro Actor

Clan:
Scorpion

Profession:
Actor

Primary Weapon
Aiguchi 1k2

Primary Armor
None

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

Fire
Agility: 2
Intelligence: 3

Air
Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 4

Earth
Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water
Strength: 2
Perception: 2

Void
Void Points Spent:

Insight: 120

Techniques

Scorpion Has A Thousand Hearts

Acting	3
Etiquette	2
Forgery	2
Hand-to-hand	1
Knife	1
Locksmith	1
Music	1
Poetry	1
Poison	1
Seduction	1
Sincerity	2
Sleight-of-Hand	2
Stealth	2

Skills

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Shosuro Butei

Rank: 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Benten's Blessing	+3
Voice	+2
Bad Rep. (Wanted)	-2
Sworn Enemy	-4

Glory: 1

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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Honor: 0

☒	☒	☒	☒	☒	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
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Experience Points:

Bayushi Honorable Bushu

You have a very serious problem. You are honorable.

As a Scorpion, it was unlikely that you would find ultimate truth in the Code of Bushido. It was even more unlikely that you would discover your heart's true path in the words of the great Shinsei and adhere to the Shintao. But you did.

You would like to "fit in" with the rest of your family and clan. You would like to have the knack for deception that other Scorpions do, but the Fortunes have chosen instead to grant you a strong moral streak. You cannot look on the cruel acts of your brethren with anything but contempt, and would scorn their vile plots if you weren't afraid that doing so would ostracize you.

Things have not improved much with the prospect of leaving your beloved homeland. Rokugani are notoriously prejudiced against your Clan, so it is improbable that you will be happier elsewhere. And there is your family to consider.

You cannot hide behind the false mask of your acceptance forever, and you cannot run away. But you can do something beneficial while remaining true to your faith. You can make a difference. You can fight the image that the world has of the Scorpion. You can prove that your clan is more misunderstood than mistrusted. You can change the world.

Your family, however, is not supportive. Your father, who vanished for two years – and who embodies everything about the Scorpion that you hate – claims that your "foolish errand" will cost the family dearly, and has forbidden you to continue.

Will you once again bow before the authority of someone who desires your corruption? You had always believed that he had unsavory ideals, but recently your mother has revealed a dark secret to you – something that has rocked the very foundations of your beliefs about the possibility of Scorpion redemption.

You cried silently when you left home thereafter. Tucked carefully within your *furoshiki* sack were the sash from a black kimono and a bloodied copper bracelet, one of your father's "trophies." You know that you can never return, but perhaps someday you can bring things with your shadowy father to a close – even if you have to kill him to do so.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Bayushi Bushi

Clan:
Scorpion

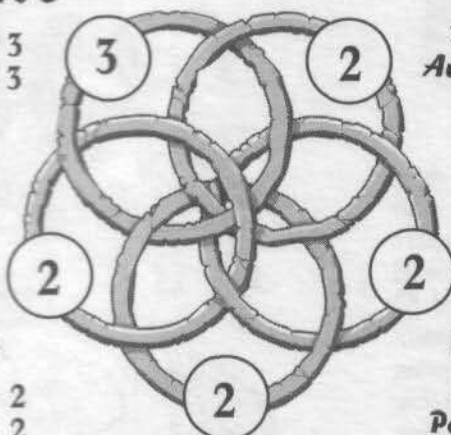
Profession:
Bushi

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 2



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 130

Techniques

The Way of the Scorpion

Primary Weapon

Katana 3k2

Primary Armor

Light Armor

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

15

(20 with armor)

Skills

Archery	1
Athletics	2
Defense	2
Etiquette	2
Horsemanship	1
Iaijutsu	2
Kenjutsu	3
Poison	1
Shintao	2
Sincerity	3
Stealth	1

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Bayushi Bushi

Rank: 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Higher Purpose	+2
Perfect Balance	+2
Dark Secret	-5
Junshin	-3

Glory: 1



Honor: 1



Experience Points:

Shosuro Courtier

The Imperial court system always fascinated you. As a child, you followed magistrates about, asking endless questions until you had to be restrained by your apologetic parents. Your tutors said that although you displayed ability with interpersonal communication, you lacked the mental discipline required. So you dedicated your adolescence to studying the civic system and clan histories, observing hundreds of court disputes, critiquing the participants and second-guessing the judgments.

Your obsession with the legal system of Rokugan is far from benign. The exhilaration of public victory, the tantalizing smell of shame; these appeal to you. When you were six, the family daimyo ordered your father to commit *seppuku*, an act that shattered your mother. You found that display of power intoxicating, and began an odyssey that you believed would grant you immense authority and wisdom.

Along the way, you have become a beautiful young maiden. More than once, you have had to shun amorous samurai. You are called "cold," but you do not care, so long as you can someday practice law in the Imperial Courts.

That day may have finally come. One of your tutors has taken an interest in you, and has agreed to take you on as his protégé, a position that will expose you to the best civic minds of your region. You will also travel outside your lands to observe the magistrates of other areas, represent the Scorpion Clan in the most brutal forum known, and receive the wisdom of the masters of the field. You will wear the mask of civic duty to your clan, the coy guise of timidity concealing your venomous instruments – a clear mind and a sharp tongue. "Words cut like a sword," your new master has told you.

You owe him a favor, of course, and some day he will collect.

But you are not one to simply accept your fate. You have not been idle during your studies. You have collected evidence of his illegal purchases from the Unicorn. You keep them safe at hand, for you never know when something incriminating will come in handy...





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Shosuro Courtier

Clan:
Scorpion

Profession:
Courtier

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 3

Primary Weapon
Tanto 1k2

Primary Armor
None

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
10

Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Skills

Courtier	2
Etiquette	2
Heraldry	1
Investigation	2
Knife	1
Law	3
Lore: Imperial Court	1
Forgery	1
Poison	1
Seduction	2
Sincerity	3
Stealth	2

Techniques

Weakness Is My Strength

Insight: 121

Wounds

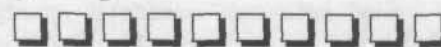
4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Bayushi Courtier **Rank:** 1

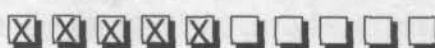
Advantages/ Disadvantages

Dangerous Beauty	+1
Clear Thinker	+2
Read Lips	+2
Blackmail (Sensei)	+4
Insensitive	-2
Obligation (Sensei)	-4

Glory: 1



Honor: 1



Experience Points:

Bayushi Ninja Infiltrator

You are very lucky. You have survived the Gauntlet, and graduated... to Hell.

Granted, your weapons have improved, you have a fair amount of experience to fall back on and you have begun your *true* training. But, by and large, your lot is still unfortunate. The stress of the Gauntlet has drawn a taste for something dark and dangerous from you. You have hidden it well – from your compatriots, from your family, even, you hope, from your sensei. Do you have the strength to continue?

"You have a great deal of talent. It will blossom with proper training," they have told you. You are fast and dextrous, but lack the skills to take full advantage of your gifts. You are "Everyman" – a ninja in his second year of training. This is the most critical time of your career as a master of the shadows. You will be asked not only to risk your life at every moment, but to do so while acquiring the skills you were denied during the Gauntlet.

As for your objective this year... it isn't exactly a promotion.

"You will go out into the world and learn the ways of the Enemy," they told you. "You will infiltrate a group whose training differs sharply from yours. You will act in accordance with their needs, in every way serving them as a friend and ally. Never reveal your true identity. Periodically, you will be asked to perform certain 'services' for us. These will be completed without flaw and, most importantly, without the knowledge of your hosts. Go forth. Develop the mask of deception that all ninja have worn since Aramoro first accepted his task. And do so with pride – your mission is noble, if not honorable..."

Every Scorpion wears a mask. Yours is very thin indeed. You hide behind last-minute training in swordplay and speak through a veil of false truths and compounded lies. But it is your lot, and you must accept it, or die.

Your sensei spoke to you on the night you burned your black kimono, offering the only bit of advice he could on the most dangerous year of your life. "Remember the tale of the Little Scorpion," he said. "Remember to learn to swim before you poison the Frog."





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Bayushi Ninja

Clan:
Scorpion

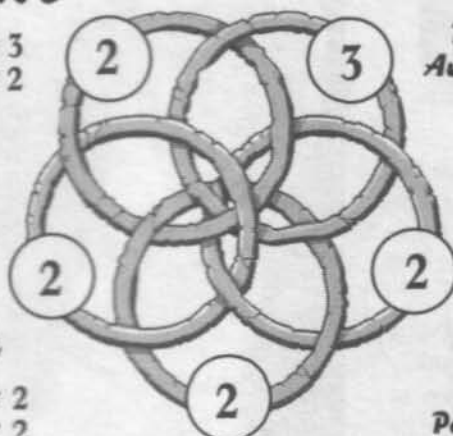
Profession:
Ninja

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 3



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 126

Techniques

The Shadow Has No Mask

Primary Weapon

Katana 3k2

Primary Armor

Light Armor

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

15

(20 with armor)

Skills

Acrobatics	2
Acting	2
Athletics	1
Kenjutsu	1
Locksmith	1
Poison	1
Seduction	1
Stealth	2
Sleight of Hand	2
Ninja-to	1
Shuriken	1
Nageteppo	1

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Shosuro Shinobi **Rank:** 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Luck	+6
Quick	+3
Dark Secret	-5
Compulsion	-4

Glory: 1

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 1

☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒

Experience Points:

Soshi Shugenja Interrogator

The last year of your life has been most illuminating. It has taught you much about loss and regret, anger and longing, and the fine arts of suspicion and self-doubt. Most of all, it has implanted two very important emotions in your soul that will prove invaluable in the coming months – rage and fear.

During your training at the Soshi Shugenja School, you became quite close to your sensei, a man of much worldly knowledge and talent with the Elements. He trained you in *shinobi*. He also presided over your branding, and on that day he revealed to you that his years of experimentation with the darker aspects of Tejina magic were killing him. He gave you a gift he called “The Truth of Lies” and left, never to return.

Upon awakening after your *kage-yakiin* ceremony, you were informed that it had drawn from your own constitution, and that you would never fully recover. You also found that the brand was somehow alive – or nearly so. It took some time and effort, but you finally discovered “The Truth of Lies.” Your *kage-yakiin* helped you “feel” when those around you were lying.

This was useful in your profession as an interrogator. You are called upon to question enemies of your organization. You are good at what you do, and everything would have been fine if it had not been for one of your “assignments.”

He was a shugenja of a rival organization with a strange scar across his torso. You were to question him about their interests in your syndicate’s territory and then hand him over to your “associates.” But when he saw your brand, he erupted in anger, shouting the name of your sensei and calling you a thief. You had to stain your own hands putting him down.

Now, a year later, you find yourself wishing that you had never entered the dangerous arena of organized crime. The shugenja has returned (or so the man who killed your mate, Tobuki, claims) and has begun a war against you and yours. He has made a living hell of everything you hold dear. How much farther will you allow this to go? Are you going to give up and run away?

And if you did, would he not follow?





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Soshi Interrogator

Clan:
Scorpion

Profession:
Shugenja

Primary Weapon

Wakizashi 2k2

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

Skills

Calligraphy	2
Etiquette	1
Investigation	3
Kenjutsu	1
Law	1
Meditation	2
Seduction	1
Shintao	1
Sincerity	3
Stealth	1
Torture	2

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 3

Earth

Stamina: 1
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 108

Spells

Sense, Commune, Summon,
Bad Karma, Forget, Whispering
Wind (Innate), Know the Mind,
The Ties That Bind, The Fire From
Within

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Soshi Shugenja **Rank:** 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Allies (Criminals)	+4
Inheritance	+3
(Shadowbrand)	
Innate Ability	+3
Nemesis	-3
Lost Love	-2
Weakness	-5

Glory: 1

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 1

☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒☒

Experience Points:



Appendices





Appendix I: Treachery 101

OR, "HOW TO BE A SNEAKY GIT AND NOT GET KILLED BY THE OTHER CHARACTERS"

So, you've decided to be a Scorpion, eh? Well, good luck to you. You've got everything going against you. You are held among the most reviled and hated people in Rokugan. No one will ever trust you, no one will ever believe a word you say, and they'll probably betray you when they get the chance.

There's only one way to get around all of this, of course, and that is to make them look like the villain, and make you look like the saint. How do you do that? It's easy. Just read through the following tips, and you're well on your way to being a sneaky bastard who always comes out smelling like a rose.

Part One: Some Basics

Here are some fundamentals to remember when thinking about your Scorpion character's Honor and attitude toward the other Clans. Consider these carefully before you go on to the more devious entries.

A LITTLE BIT ABOUT ETHICS

There's a very old philosophical question about ethics that even Socrates couldn't answer. The question is: "Does the good of a man's actions lie in his intent or the outcome?"

Socrates said (and I'm paraphrasing), "If a man's intent is ethical, the outcome of his actions

cannot be otherwise." In other words, if somebody intends to do good, and his actions fail, we must judge him by what he intended to do rather than what he actually accomplished.

On the other hand, many others (most notably Machiavelli) argued that it was the outcome that determines the worth of a man's actions. After all, the road to Hell is paved with good intentions, right?

For example, let's say that a Lion daimyo has a beautiful daughter who is supposed to marry a Crane, but she's fallen in love with a Phoenix. She tells her mother that there's no way she's going to marry the pretty boy Crane, and she's going to run away with the Phoenix.

The daimyo says a little curse, but there's little she can do. She knows her daughter is strong-willed (she's a Matsu after all), and she's supposed to obey her mother's commands, but she remembers when she was young and hot-headed and she just can't force her daughter to marry a man she doesn't love. Quite a predicament.

Enter the Scorpion. He suggests to the mother the following plan. All she has to do is convince her daughter that she can carry on an affair with the Phoenix as long as she marries the Crane. The Lioness condemns the Scorpion, saying that she will not compromise her honor with such dishonesty.

Then, the Scorpion smiles and says, "But what if the Crane doesn't mind?"

Here's how it all works out.

The Scorpion arranges for the Crane pretty-boy to fall madly in love with a Scorpion-trained geisha. Then, when his heart belongs to the geisha, he tells the Crane that his fiancée is in love with another man. Is he going to complain? Of course not.

Now, the marriage can take place. The bride is happy, the groom is happy, the mother is happy and everyone owes the Scorpion a discreet favor.

Was anybody hurt?

Was anybody's honor compromised?

Of course not. Everyone is happy; as long as the married couple keep their affairs discreet, everything will work out fine.

One last question for the skeptical: Has the Scorpion done wrong or has he averted a great romantic tragedy involving blood feuds and suicides? You decide.

THE LAWS OF WARFARE

"On the battlefield, all actions are honorable."

– From Akodo's *Leadership*

If everything is truly fair in war (we'll talk about love later), then everything in life is fair. A samurai is taught at a very young age that the martial mind must be maintained at all times. At any moment, he must be ready to die.

If this is so, asks the Scorpion, then why are any actions dishonorable? All of life is open warfare; therefore, all actions are honorable and nothing is forbidden.

Scorpions don't wear this philosophy on their sleeve, however. Let the Lions and Cranes believe that civilization and the battlefield are different places. It only makes the Scorpion's job easier.

LOYALTY

"I don't care what colors he wears. He has Scorpion blood in his heart, and that's all that matters."

– Shosuro Naginame, speaking of his childhood friend, Akodo Hachi

Remember that Scorpions value loyalty above all else, even when the sentiment comes from non-Scorpions. This includes your fellow players. Many times, you'll find that a loyal Lion is more useful than a disloyal Scorpion.

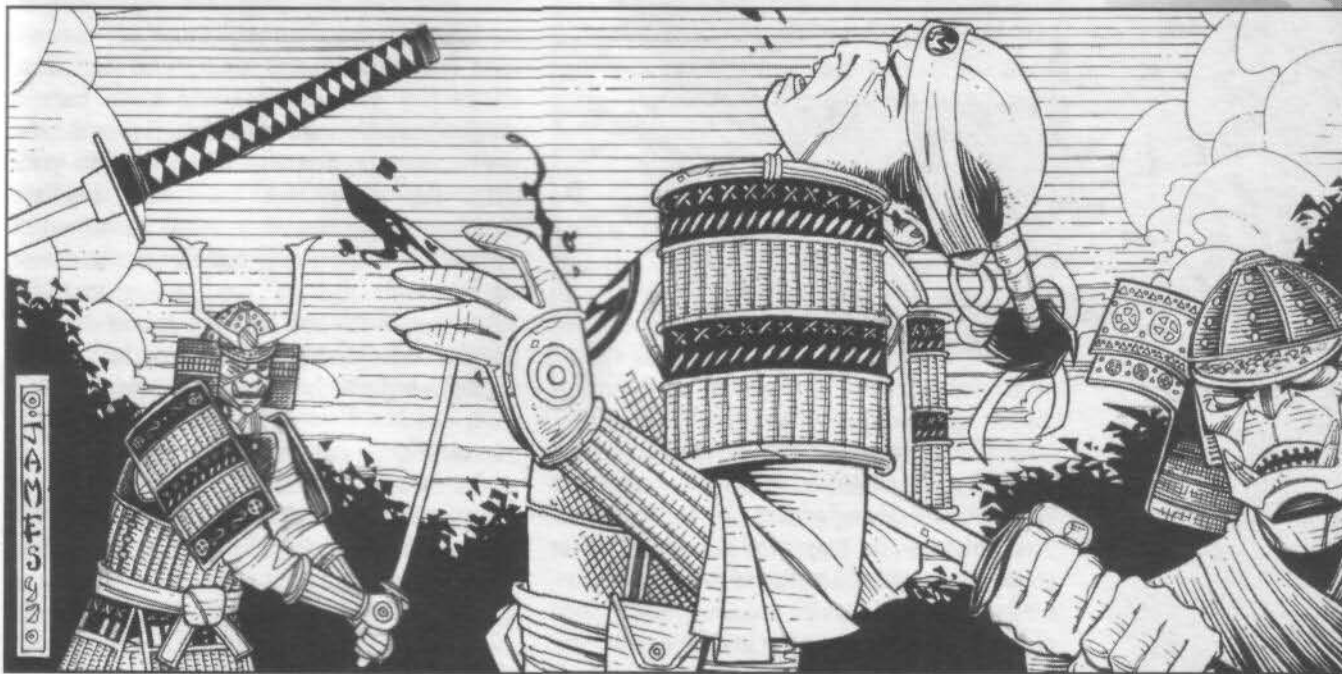
If anyone – Scorpion, Lion, Crab, Dragon – shows you that their heart is loyal, then you have found a resource more precious than gold. Cherish it, protect it, and above all, don't exploit it. Loyalty is hard enough to find in Rokugan, especially for Scorpions. Do not fool around with those who are loyal to you. Remember, if someone is not your friend, he is your enemy.

The hardest part about this is that you can't just tell people to trust you, you have to earn their trust. You wear the *mon* of the most treacherous Clan in Rokugan, after all. You can't just expect people to trust you. However, once you've proved your loyalty to them a couple of times, they'll begin to trust you, and then they'll believe they have a very rare commodity: a trustworthy Scorpion.

SCORPION HONOR

As we've said a thousand times, Scorpions don't put a lot of faith in *bushido*, but they do put a lot of faith in loyalty. A Scorpion starts with such a low Honor at the beginning of the game because he's surrounded by Rokugan propaganda about the virtues of *bushido*. Certainly, he spends most of his life being indoctrinated into Scorpion philosophy, but it's still a hard pill to swallow.

Imagine yourself raised in America by Communist parents. All your life you're told that everything that surrounds you is wrong. Sure, you





want to believe your parents, but just imagine the philosophical polarity shifts going on in your little teenage head.

Yojiro is a good example of Scorpion honor. He's developed a high sense of morality, but justifies all of his immoral actions with loyalty. He doesn't lose any Honor points when he lies, plants evidence or bribes dishonest guards as long as he believes that he's serving his Clan.



But the moment he puts those skills toward something that doesn't serve his Clan, then he's in hot water. In fact, Scorpion loyalty is such a powerful force, he may even lose more Honor points than suggested in the rulebook. As always, it all depends on the GM and the player's vision of his character, but in the end, it should also depend on loyalty.

Part Two: Advanced Treachery

Now that you've got the preliminaries down, let's look at some real deviancy.

WIN OR DIE

A Scorpion must be willing to do anything to destroy an enemy. You must be willing to go to any extreme. You must be willing to do such horrible, unthinkable acts that your enemies are boggled by your deprivations.

When they hesitate, you strike.

The best way to do this is to present the mask of weakness, while razors hide behind your sheepish eyes.

CHOOSING TWO EVILS

Make certain that your enemy must choose between two evils. Put him in the position that requires that he choose between his family's honor and self-sacrifice (exile, *seppuku*, etc.). If he's honorable, he'll choose sacrifice. If he's selfish, he'll choose honor, in which case, he's gone and done something just as useful as suicide: he's cut himself off from his family forever.

LYING

"Everyone lies. Even me."
— From "Little Truths"

Here's a little truth about lies. If people must choose between a pretty lie and an ugly truth, they will generally choose the lie. Or, if they have to choose between a painful truth and a pleasurable lie, they will again generally choose the lie.

Now samurai tend to be a bit on the self-sacrifice side of the fence, so you have to be careful when you force folks to choose between truth and lies. However, there are a few things you can always count on.

For instance, if a Lion is faced with the choice of accepting a lie that will sacrifice his family's honor or killing himself, he'll kill himself. Either way, you win.

PATIENCE IS ITS OWN REWARD

"Fools forget. Make certain you do not."
— From Bayushi Tange's "Lies"



Let us take a Matsu who has just conquered a Scorpion castle. The dying words of the lord of the castle are a curse so loud that all in attendance can hear it (including the Scorpions hiding in the shadows). He screams that if she does not kill her firstborn child, the child will kill her.

Those words are heard by Scorpions in the shadows, and the plot has begun.

Years later, when she's forgotten those words, the Lady Matsu awakens outside the castle on the exact spot where she beheaded the Scorpion daimyo; his sword is cradled in her arms. She has not been harmed in any way, but there she is, alone in the wilderness. Somehow, she finds her way back home, and soon thereafter, she discovers that she's pregnant.

AID A DOOMED CONSPIRACY

This technique is rather complicated and requires illustration. Let us set the stage with a Unicorn bushi who has recently married into a wealthy Crane family. He has inherited Crane land and brought many Unicorn steeds with him to his new castle. The Crane wish to take advantage of the Unicorn's *naïveté*, using him to set his steeds out to stud with the smaller Crane horses.

At his winter court, he meets with a Scorpion who sees the situation and expresses his concern to the Unicorn. "They are using you, my friend," he says. "They don't want you, they want your horses." The Scorpion plays upon the Unicorn's pride, but the Unicorn ignores him. He's been warned about Scorpion treachery, and knows what the Scorpion is up to. He sends the Scorpion away and disregards the warnings.

Then, without any other parties discovering his activities, the Scorpion goes about making sure that the Crane's plan works. He bribes reluctant stable boys through third parties (disguised as Cranes, of course), arranges for Cranes to go on unscheduled rides on the Unicorn's battle steeds and generally makes the Crane look very, very guilty.

Sure enough, the Unicorn's suspicions are confirmed. He starts watching his Crane cousins more closely, and just as he does, the Scorpion pulls back, removing himself from the scene. He is no longer needed in that aspect of his plan. Now, he returns to the Unicorn's court, apologizes for speaking against his Crane cousins without confirming his suspicions first, then asks if there is any way he can repair his reputation.

The Unicorn, now armed with evidence, tells the Scorpion that there is indeed something he can do to help. He asks the Scorpion to help him catch the Crane at their dirty little game. After all, how clever can a Crane be compared to a Scorpion?

The Scorpion agrees. He already knows all the conspirators by name, because (under disguise), he was helping them only a few months ago. He catches the Cranes, brings them before the Unicorn for judgment, gains the favor of the daimyo ... and a few Otaku steeds for a reward.

Part Three: "I'd Have More Fun..."

During playtesting, one of our players created a Scorpion character. After a few sessions of play, one of her comments on the response sheet was, "I'd have more fun if I weren't playing a Scorpion." I asked her about it privately, and she explained it to me this way. "The Crane doesn't like the Lion and the Lion doesn't like the Crab and the Crab doesn't like the Phoenix ... but everybody hates me. And I haven't even done anything to them."

It can be tough playing the Scorpion. Nobody trusts you. What's worse, they're expecting you to betray them at the first opportunity. Worse than that, many of them pretend you already have. It's fun to have someone to hate, and because they can't pick on the Crane, they take all that anger out on you. After all, who is going to stand up for the Scorpion?

There's a problem with this. A very big problem. While players find it easy to pick on the Scorpion, their *characters* know better. In Rokugan, the very last thing you want to do is get on a Scorpion's bad side, because if you mess with one, you mess with the whole treacherous lot.

The Scorpion have the distinction of being the equivalent of Rokugani Mafia. Everyone knows who they are and what they're doing, but nobody wants to cross them. And with good reason. Everyone has a secret to hide, and if you mess with the Scorpion, it's as good as putting that secret right out in the open for everyone to see.

If your character gets caught up in the whole "take it out on the Scorpion" dilemma, here's a few ways to solve it.



OPTIONAL RULE:

SCORPION LOYALTY

In order to represent the concept of Scorpion loyalty with hard numbers, consider this. When questions of loyalty come up, a Scorpion's Honor is *always* considered to be 2 Ranks higher (maximum 5).

These are considered a Scorpion's "Loyalty Ranks." However, if he loses Honor because of disloyalty, he loses *double* the Honor points suggested.

Game Masters may also require Scorpion characters to make out a Loyalty List.

For each point of Honor (including the Loyalty bonus) the Scorpion lists one person, place or thing he is loyal to. The list is in order of importance, so hopefully the Clan is at the top.

A Scorpion can only have as many loyalties as he has Honor. For instance, if a Scorpion has a 2 Honor, plus the 2 "Ranks" of Scorpion Loyalty, he has a total of 4 people, places or things he can have on his loyalty list. The Scorpion picks his Clan to be at the top of the list (good boy), his sensei second, his Crane lover third and his parents last.

While the list can have "mechanical" side-effects, we suggest it here as more of a roleplaying aid. But if a GM sees fit to hit you with Honor losses for choosing your parents over your Crane lover, we can't see any reason at all to chastise him. It was your list, after all!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE FOR ME LATELY?

The best and most direct way to handle an uppity samurai who thinks it's cool to call the Scorpion names is to remind him that you are all in this ride together. Everyone has a duty to the Emperor, and if that samurai thinks he can do your job better than you can, he's welcome to try. Remember, you're the samurai who does what no one else wants to do. You're not inhibited by silly things like bushido. Somebody has to do the dirty work, and it may as well be a professional.

Make certain that everybody knows this. All of Rokugan is about appearance, and you're the one who's making them look good. When they can't get by a bodyguard without bloodshed, you're the one who pulls out the bribe. When they need to speak to the *okasan* who runs the geisha house, you're the one who knows her name. When the villain of the story gets away scot free, you're the one who's poisoning his tea later that night.

You're also the one who can warn the party when they're about to put their collective feet in their mouths. You know, for instance, that the brash young samurai who's insulting people at random happens to be the Emperor's secret love-child, and to take him out for a spanking will earn you all Kaiu Wall duty for five months. Worse, you could wind up guarding the Emperor's favorite peacock for a season or two.

There are other ways your skills can be handy to the party. Just before the Kakita is about to enter a duel to save his daughter's honor, you tell him, "The Dragon is favoring his left," or perhaps you're in the Dragon's ear, telling him all about the non-existent bad left wrist of his Crane opponent. And when they're questioning the Unicorn about the murder of his mistress, you're the one who sees his left eye twitch whenever he tries to tell a lie.

Having a Scorpion in the party is not necessarily a nuisance. You can provide essential assistance to a party – magistrates or otherwise. The only obstacle you have to overcome is your reputation. And that's easily done, as soon as they understand the concept of Scorpion loyalty.

SCORPION LOYALTY

"The more you question my loyalty, the less you deserve it."

– Bayushi Yojiro

Hopefully by now you're familiar with this concept. Here's how to roleplay it.

Scorpions don't make a habit of telling people how loyal they are, they show it. After all, nobody in Rokugan knows better how worthless a promise is than a Scorpion. But once a Scorpion puts someone on his "loyalty list," that person's earned something very potent.

For some reason or another, at least a few of the folks you're traveling with have earned your loyalty. Show them that. Show them how valuable a Scorpion's loyalty is. Once the sympathetic members of your party start reaping the benefits of your skills, the others will be eager to gain that trust.

Show them you're willing to lie, cheat and steal. Show them that you'll be willing to take the heat for them when things go bad. After all, what does *bushido* mean to you? What does Honor mean to you? You'll be willing to take the rap to protect their reputations. Give little favors, especially if no-one asks for them. If you're a shugenja, make the Crab more difficult to hit in battle by making him appear exactly two feet away from where he's actually standing. Remember that herbalism can heal as well as harm.

Scorpions can go where other samurai can't... and so can their friends. You know all the best geisha houses. You know where to get the best *sake*. You know all the best merchants. You know everybody's price, and if you don't, you can find out quick. You know everyone's secrets, dirty or otherwise. In a nutshell, you can get things done without getting tied up in the fear of compromising your Honor. Let's see the Lion and Crane do that. They can question your methods, but they can never question your effectiveness.

PUTTING ON THE PAIN

Messing with the Scorpion is like asking the IRS to give you an audit. No, that's not right. It's like paying them to do it. It's like kicking a mob boss's dog. Nobody is going to help you out, because they know better than to get involved. You should have your friends trained enough so that when somebody messes with them, they turn immediately to you for help. Nobody does revenge like the Scorpion.

When it comes time to do somebody harm, remember that you've got the whole Clan behind you. The Scorpions know that if one of them looks weak, they all look weak. Scorpions look



after their own; it's the only way they stay alive. Here's a few ways to put the pain on the unbelievers.

You really should deliver an equal amount of pain for what got dealt out. However, don't forget that an angry enemy makes armies and a dead one seeds a grave. Don't hesitate to destroy someone if they present a real threat. You'll never forget killing an enemy, but he'll always make you regret letting him live. If you do choose to kill him, make sure that nobody will be around for vindication.

But killing isn't always the best way to remove an enemy. It certainly isn't the most poetic. While poetry should only be reserved for wooing pretty Cranes, a flair for the dramatic can earn you quite a reputation both inside and outside the Clan. Poetry is fine, as long as it doesn't get in the way of your goal.

When you've decided to put on the pain, start small. Begin with little scars to their honor. Put small metal needles in the pommel of their sword so it's just a bit off-balance. Put the needles in one at a time, so he'll think he's losing his touch, adding to his general loss of confidence. Once he's gotten used to the extra weight, take out the needles.

Brew up poisons that induce flatulence or turn certain portions of his anatomy a sick shade of green.

Drug his *sake* so even a single sip will make him appear the fool. No one has to know you helped him out.

Finally, wound his pride by arranging it so the *okasan* at his favorite tea house no longer appreciates his business.

If little scars don't work, it's time to get into the real pain.

Treat his sword with a rusting compound. No matter how much he oils and cares for the blade, it just gets worse. Eventually, he'll have to explain to his lord exactly why his family sword is in such poor shape.

When he's asleep, cut off his pinkies. No more *kenjutsu* for him.

Arrange for his sister to consummate her secret love a month before her marriage to the man her family negotiated long and hard to win.

While he's asleep, forge his traveling papers ... poorly. When magistrates examine the papers, they'll notice the forgery and demand to know who he really is. Make sure the magistrates know how stupid he thinks they are. Otherwise, he would have done a better job of forging his papers.

When he and his friends go to their favorite tea house, the *okasan* arranges for him to spend the night with the ugliest girl in the house. "I think she usually does the dishes," you comment quietly. The *okasan* makes a comment (a bit





louder than she should, perhaps) that she won't give him a "real woman" until he learns how to please a "real woman."

SECRETS AND PORCELAIN

Secrets and porcelain have one thing in common. Drop either of them, and all the world hears it.

— from *Little Truths*

The biggest mistake a samurai can make is to betray a Scorpion's trust. Such men are the stuff of Rokugani legend. The most famous is the story of Shiba Tatsune. The son of the Phoenix daimyo, Tatsune was young, proud and a little arrogant. He had won the heart of a Scorpion samurai-ko, Bayushi Naname, and agreed to run away with her. Everyone knew they would, everyone expected they would ... everyone but Tatsune's father. Tatsune put off telling his father as long as he could, but the old man discovered the plan before he had a chance to tell him. His father confronted him and told him there was no chance of him ever marrying a Scorpion. He ordered his son to call off the affair and drop the girl mercilessly. "Break her heart," he told him.

Tatsune followed his father's orders to the letter. Naname was crushed. Unable to overcome her emotions, she shaved her head and joined a nunnery. However, Naname's two sisters had a little more to say on the subject. Disguised as geisha, one sister seduced the father and the other seduced the father's *karo*. Then, in turn, each of them convinced their lover that the other was listening too closely to the advice of a woman. Before

anyone could say anything to either of them, the entire province was in disorder as the two most important men in the area were quarreling with each other.

Finally, a Lion army showed up on the doorstep of Shiba castle. The two men began to quarrel over who should lead the army against them. The two sisters then revealed their identity to the daimyo. They told him the Lion army knew all the castle's secrets and all the weaknesses of the Shiba army. They also told him the general of the army knew every secret the daimyo and his *karo* had whispered to them. "Even killing us now will not preserve your secrets."

But they assured the daimyo there was a way out. If Tatsune went to the nunnery where Naname still wept for him and begged for her forgiveness, the Lion army would retreat and his secrets would remain safe.





The daimyo had no choice. He sent his son to the nunnery where Naname was waiting for him. "The only way to gain my forgiveness," she told him, "is to marry me. Here and now." Tatsune agreed and the two were married. The next morning, they left for his father's castle, and when they arrived, they found that his father had committed *seppuku* and Tatsune was the new daimyo. More importantly, a Scorpion would be the mother of the next daimyo of the Shiba family.

Part Four: Tragic Misconceptions

The most frequently asked question about the Scorpion Clan goes something like this:

"If they are the most reviled, villainized Clan, known for their evil, despicable ways, why are they still around? Why haven't the other Clans just whacked 'em and be done with it already?"

The Scorpions are not the only source of evil in Rokugan. Everything depends on your point of view. Let's take a good look at each of the Clans, and when we're done, you tell me which one is the source of evil in Rokugan.

(By the way, these next sections are intended to teach you how to speak about the Clans in the voice of your character, so be sure to take all of these with a grain of salt.)

THE CRAB

Okay, okay, so the Crab guard Rokugan's borders.

So what?

Doing your duty isn't enough. You've got to do your duty well, and exactly how well do the Crab guard Rokugan's borders? The Shadowlands creep by them every week, it seems. There are reports of *maho-tsukai* all over the Empire, not to mention bog hags, goblins, ogres and trolls. Oni summonings are certainly not a rare occasion, or they wouldn't have those Kuni Witch-Hunters out scouring the countryside for them, would they?

Yes, the Crab are doing a fine job guarding the borders. As fine as ... well, let's say ... the Lion would do. I'm sure if we sent a brigade or two of Matsus down to the Kaiu wall, they would shriek in terror from all those hordes of little screaming goblins throwing themselves at that one hundred foot high wall. I'm sure they'd do just as well as

the Hida do, dropping boiling tar and pitch down on those terrible, terrible goblins.

What are they, now ... three feet high?

To be honest, it's easy to pick on the Crab and their duty to the Empire, but it's even easier to point out how little they regard the other Clans' duties to the Emperor. How many Crabs do you know that have shown up to the Emperor's birthday covered in muck and gore? They certainly hold the Lion in high regard, picking their noses and scratching themselves while the Akodo and Matsu revere their ancestors.

Half the Hida are corrupted by the Shadowlands Taint, and the other half are mindless berserkers who don't have any more manners or common decency than your typical ogre. They bring the Taint back with them into our courts and don't even have the common courtesy to take a bath. Their shugenja would rather entreat with goblins and their bushi prefer the company of "ratlings" over any of us. They mock us, call us weak, say that we don't know "what real fear is" then return to their little wall and watch and wait for something to endanger the Emperor.

They complain about their duty, but if you offer assistance, they mock you and laugh in your face. "You're not ready for what's out there!" they say.

Perhaps they don't want us down at the wall because they don't want us to see what they are really guarding us against.

THE CRANE

And then there are our cousins the Crane. There is a reason they choose a bird with such an enormous snout: it's to hide the fact that they have two mouths. One they use when talking to the Lion and the other they use when talking about the Lion.

Did I say two mouths? Perhaps I meant two faces.

We have been slandered by the Crane as being devious, and yet, we have never been anything but honest about our nature. We wear it on our face, after all. The Crane, on the other hand, embrace the same philosophies we do, but hide it under fine silks and pretty smiles.

How many times have they hid behind the Emperor's kimono while chastising you on your lack of honor?

SHINRIKO: LITTLE TRUTHS

Procrastination is the pastime of fools.

Injury is more quickly forgotten than insult.

Let fools read what fools write.

Only a learned woman can please a learned man.

How dearly we cling to pretty deceit.

No enemy is beneath notice.

What lies behind the throne is always greater than what sits in it.

A man in love, a man in hate: both are willing to believe anything to accomplish their cause.

Always be ready to wait.

Shinsei says, "Forgive and forget." Why? So you can fool me again?

Learn the lessons of the past, for what has happened, *is* happening. What has happened, *will* happen. By understanding the past, you learn how to act now and how to prepare for the future.



How many times have they fled the battlefield, sending in the Emperor's personal guards to protect them as they ran away?

Kakita himself said it best: "I only need one strike."

And he only strikes when he's made sure that you have no chance of even drawing your blade. Not because he's a better swordsman, but because he talks better than you do.

The Crane are snotty, limp-wristed, inbred whelps who need... no, not need... who *want* a spanking.



The funniest thing about the Crane is how they think they serve the Emperor. After all, how does art serve the Emperor? Does it serve him... oh, say, greater than the way the Crab serve the Emperor? Which duty is more important to Rokugan's survival - guarding the wall or growing flowers? Hunting down witches, ogres and hags or making paper birds? A samurai's duty is to make his soul ready and willing to die at any moment to serve his lord. Just how does

paper folding and flower arranging ready your soul for death? I'm certain some Crane has a very eloquent answer for us. He can tell his eloquent answer to the troll who just ate his family. I'm certain the troll wants to hear all about it.

Oh yes, the Crane certainly make Rokugan look very pretty, but a pretty coffin is still a coffin, no matter how many flowers and paper birds you put on it.

THE DRAGON

Everyone always says, "What can anyone say about the Dragon with any certainty?"

Well, I have something very certain to say about them.

I have never been there, but I hear there are a lot of fences up in Dragon lands, and there's a lot of Dragons sitting on them.

They're all afraid to come down, because they'll find out they have to do something.

THE LIONS

Here's a truth for you. No Lion will ever see you as his equal. As far as he's concerned, there's no difference between you and a dung heap. That's a truth. You know it and I know it. They know it, too. They're just too afraid to say it out loud, because vanity is a character flaw. Akodo himself said so.

And the Lion know this better than anyone else. I mean, look at those armies marching down that field with their hair and their banners and their bright yellow - I mean *gold* - armor. Don't they look just handsome! It's a good thing they're not vain, because that's a character flaw, you know. Akodo said so.

He also said that a samurai had no room in his heart for pride. After all, a Lion only has room in his heart for his lord. Just ask him. Any Lion would do anything for his lord.

Except lie.

And cheat.

Maybe steal.

Certainly not murder, oh no.

Those things would compromise his honor, and he can't do that.

He'd kill himself before he compromised his honor. Just ask him.



NIWATORI

The first documented evidence of ninja comes from the testimony of Kitsuki Ikawa, one of Agasha Kitsuki's youngest students. During an attack of black-garbed assassins, he heard the words "Ninja, tori!" ("Ninja, do what I say!") Thus, he assumed the assassins were called "ninja," a word he had never heard before.

However, the words that were actually spoken were, "Niwatori," or "Chicken."

The nickname Shosuro use for first year apprentices is "chicken," for the little egg bombs they are forced to carry. Ikawa misheard the phrase and the "ninja" were born.

That's what Akodo told him to do.

So, a Lion will do anything for his lord, except... well, you know - in which case, he'd kill himself.

That's why those Lions have to be very careful about what they ask their samurai to do. I mean, the last thing in the world I want to see is a bunch of Lions falling on their own swords rather than do what their lord tells them to do.

But that's a Lion for you: obedient to the very end.

THE PHOENIX

There's not a whole lot bad to say about the Phoenix. I mean, I rarely see them. They stay up in their mountains, studying away, looking for the truth in Shinsei's words. All day long, that's what they do: study, study, study.

I wish I had the time to read all day long.

Trouble is, I'm too busy serving the Emperor.

THE UNICORN

I have just one question about the Unicorn. It'll take me a bit to get to it, so I'll beg your indulgence for just a moment.

We Scorpions have never been anything but honest. We are the Emperor's underhand, doing what he cannot so he does not dirty his hands with our work. We protect him from things the Lion and Crane cannot see, because they will not dirty their eyes with the knowledge required to see them. We study the Shadowlands as well as the Crab. We study the secrets of the Elements as well as the Phoenix.

We have never been anything but the Scorpion, and yet, still you shun us.

The Ki-Rin were gone for eight hundred years.

Some barbarians show up, call themselves "the Unicorn" and you take them in with open arms.

You shun us, but embrace them.

Well, my question to you is simple.

They say they are the Unicorn.

Why do you believe them?

Conclusion

The tricks presented here are only the beginning. Exploiting the weaknesses of others is your best strength. Use it, but use it wisely. Everything that goes around comes around. Rokugani believe that with all their hearts and,

for that matter, so do Game Masters. In the end, the best advice a Scorpion can get boils down to: "Remember your friends and never forget your enemies."



By now you've learned the truth about Rokugan's ninja.

They don't exist.

At least, not exactly.

Low-ranking Shosuro assassins trying to gain favor from their *sensei*, dressing up in black and jumping around so people "can't see them" while the real assassin sneaks in the back and does all the fun stuff is what it means to be a ninja.

Congratulations, you're a distraction.

But a distraction is very important for the work Scorpions often find necessary to protect the Emperor ... and the interests of the Scorpion Clan. This appendix is dedicated to showing you how to use ninja in Scorpion campaigns, and how their discreet skills can be useful to just about anyone willing to use them.

Part One: All About Ninja

THE GAUNTLET

The Kitsuki magistrates have accumulated quite a collection of ninja equipment. Unfortunately, their collection is rather puzzling. You see, nearly all of it is low-grade, useless trash. The Kitsuki cannot understand how the most competent and accomplished assassins in all of Rokugan can be equipped with such nonsense.

The "egg-grenades" are unpredictable and unreliable. Shuriken are difficult to throw, easy to



POCKETS

Many readers may be asking, "Why do ninja hide caltrops, climbing tools and shuriken in the most awkward places (sword pommels and blades, for instance)?" The answer of course, is that it's another part of the gauntlet. Ninja are not allowed to sew pockets into their kimonos, but must find other means of carrying their equipment and weapons.

Cruel, isn't it?

dodge and cause no real damage to a samurai in armor. Ninja-to are forged of cheap, non-folded metal and are have straight blades (rather than the curved blade of a katana, which is a superior design). Finally, ninja are expected to remain hidden while dressed up in the most conspicuous costumes ever designed. The Kitsuki's conclusion is that the captured equipment is simply a red herring. After all, how could any organization prosper if they kept their agents so poorly equipped?

The truth is a little more cruel than the Kitsuki could ever imagine. The first year of a Shosuro's active training is often referred to as "the gauntlet." Many Shosuro do not survive the first year of active duty, nor are they expected to. They are given the equipment and sent on missions to test their cunning and resourcefulness. Any ninja who spends one year of active duty while using such poor equipment graduates to the second tier of training. They are also allowed the privilege of never having to wear the gear again. In fact, many burn their ninja garb after their first year as a kind of farewell ritual. Others pass it on to the next first-year cadet with a half-hearted blessing and a sadistic grin.

THE ART OF NOT BEING SEEN

Ninja are trained to hide... but they are also trained to be conspicuous. To be a proper distraction, ninja move quietly through shadow into a position that will move the most amount of people out of position so the real assassin can move freely. Then, once they've gained the attention of their target, they use acrobatics and tools to escape capture. They must keep their targets busy to buy time for the assassin to get to his target and make the kill. This requires that the ninja gain the attention of his target without looking like he's a distraction.

For example, if the target of the mission is a daimyo with three *yojimbo*, the duty of the ninja is to get close enough to the *yojimbo* to seem to be a threat. Let's say that the team in charge of distracting the *yojimbo* consists of six ninja. The first three appear out of nowhere, attacking the guards with smoke bombs and *shuriken*. The samurai retaliate by attacking the ninja and calling out the castle guard.

The ninja continue the distraction. Two more appear, backing up the first three. More smoke bombs and shuriken are thrown, creating more confusion. Then, the last ninja appears in front of the lord's room, creating further disunity as the



guards chase after the black-garbed assassin. By then, the guard decide to move the lord to a "safer location." Unfortunately for the lord, moving him during such a ruckus allows a Scorpion assassin (disguised as a geisha, guard, servant, whatever) scratches him with a hidden poison ring. Surrounded by guards and yojimbo, the lord dies and the ninja disappear without ever getting close to him.

Ninja Tools

Ninja have many tools, and nearly all of them are designed to befuddle and confuse rather than kill. Unfortunately, most of them are also of low quality and/or near useless. Here's the low-down on ninja tools, for better or worse.

KIMONO (NINJA-STYLE)

The ninja kimono often has metal sewn into its seams. This helps turn aside blows. Unfortunately, most katana of any worth will cut right through the metal if the strike is good enough. The ninja gown counts as Light Armor, adding 5 to the ninja's TN to be hit. The armor also rattles if the ninja isn't very careful. This adds 5 to any Stealth rolls the ninja undertakes, or gives any active listeners a Free Raise if attempting to find the location of a moving ninja.

NINJA-TO (NINJA SWORD) (1k2)

The ninja's sword, a *ninja-to* is forged of cheap metal. The metal is not folded and often double-edged, making it more useful as a spear or a thrown weapon than a sword. A solid hit from any katana worth its weight will shatter a *ninja-to*. The blade is often hollow anyway, providing the ninja a place to hide climbing equipment, caltrops, etc.

SHURIKEN (THROWING STARS) (1k1)

Shuriken are little pieces of shaved and sharpened metal that ninja throw through the air at encroaching opponents. No ninja in his right mind expects these little things to hit, but it does make your opponent duck, which gives you another moment or two to fade into the background.

However, many ninja have taken it upon themselves to turn these little toys into real weapons. They practice for hours on end, throwing and throwing until their arms and

fingers cramp to get the technique right, just to spite their Shosuro superiors who watch them and quietly giggle behind their masks.

LOCK PICKS

The lockpicks ninja use are crude and break very easily, but are still fine training tools for the real lockpicks they'll get after graduation.

BLOWGUN (FUKIYA) (1k1)

Nothing is more conspicuous than a blowgun, except perhaps a grown man jumping around in black clothes and a mask.

While blowguns are easy to conceal, they are very difficult to use discreetly. You can't hide the fact that you are putting a long, thin tube up to your lips. Blowguns are not very accurate weapons to begin with, and are useless in windy weather - which is typical in Rokugan. If the dart does hit, it will usually bounce off most surfaces - even silk (+5 to TN to be hit for non-armored, +10 for armored). The ninja has to hit flesh - most of which is covered up by conservative Rokugani fashion.

CLIMBING TOOLS (4k1)

Ninja climbing tools require a great deal of strength and stamina. They are "climbing claws" attached to the hands and feet that make a terrible racket if not used properly.

Those who subscribe to the myth that they make good hand-to-hand weapons must also realize that they add about 3 pounds to each hand, are impossible to walk in and provide no protection from a four-foot razor blade.

Climbing tools add 3 dice to any climbing actions (rolled, not kept).

NAGETEPPU (EGG GRENADES)

Egg grenades are perhaps the cruelest joke ever played on Shosuro apprentices. They are awkward to carry, difficult to throw, break easily, and work 50% of the time. If a ninja carrying *nageteppo* falls, there's a good chance his little grenades will explode, even if they are being carried in cotton - they're eggs, after all.

Nageteppo force ninja to be quick on their feet. They don't dare fall down. When used as grenades, roll a die for each egg thrown. An even number indicates the egg has exploded successfully. An odd number indicates a bad egg with no effect.

"AT LEAST I GET TO USE POISONS, RIGHT?"

Wrong.

Shosuro apprentices are not allowed to use poisons. That's a privilege they have to earn. A clumsy apprentice who gets himself captured while carrying poisons is literally handing over the most closely guarded secret to Kitsuki magistrates and Agasha shugenja, who will be more than happy to learn their properties, and develop an antidote, making the poison useless.

"Yeah, but if I get caught, I'll just swallow the poison!"

Wrong again.

Those pesky Dragons will be certain to cut you apart piece by piece, do a few magical and mundane tests and figure out the poison anyway, despite your little "sacrifice."





There are two kinds of nageteppo: smoke and fire.

Smoke nageteppo explode into choking clouds of noxious fumes. Anyone within the cloud must make a Simple Stamina roll to beat a TN 30. If they succeed, they keep one fewer die for all actions as long as they remain in the area effect of the cloud. If they fail the roll, they fall to the ground helpless for 1 die of rounds.

Fire nageteppo are almost exclusively used at night. They provide a brilliant flash that blinds any unwary viewer. If successfully deployed, any viewer must make a Simple Reflexes roll at TN 30 or be blinded for 1 die of rounds. If the viewer

damage. The target must make a Simple Stamina roll against a TN 20 in order to continue pursuit. Also, he keeps one fewer die from each roll until the barbed tetsubishi is removed (which causes another damage roll).

Tetsubishi are difficult to use because... well, because they're sharp little pieces of barbed metal that you're supposed to throw. Special gloves are usually employed when throwing them, but ninja don't always have the time to put them on while a dozen samurai are chasing them. In order to use tetsubishi without gloves, the ninja must make a Simple Agility roll against a TN 15. If he fails, he takes damage from the tetsubishi: one die per 5 points (or fraction thereof) by which he missed the roll.

HAN-KYU (HALF-BOW) (IKI)

Han-kyu are small, concealable bows that fit up the ninja's sleeve. Unfortunately, they have poor range (50 yards) and little stopping power. Arrows fired from *han-kyu* are the size of crossbow bolts without the velocity, and usually bounce off any real armor. Thus, when fired against a samurai in Heavy Armor, a *han-kyu* does no damage. When fired against a samurai in Light Armor, it does not re-roll 10s.

Part Two: The Ninja Campaign

THE PROBLEMS

Ninja do not make good player characters. After all, would you trust someone who dresses up in black pajamas?

Seriously, playing a ninja is problematic at best. If you want to play a ninja, you're going to have to find a way to overcome some major problems. For instance, as a low-grade assassin, you're going to be expected to go on missions. If you're with a group of magistrates, you're going to have to find a way to deal with that without letting them in on the secret. Unless you're with other Scorpions, you have to hide what you are. As soon as anybody else finds out that you're a ninja, you have to kill them or they have to kill you. As far as the other Clans are concerned, you are the lowest form of life on the planet, a traitor to the Emperor (you were supposed to kill yourself with Bayushi Aramoro, remember?), and a danger to their clan.



succeeds in this roll, they keep one fewer die for all actions taken in their next round.

TETSUBISHI (CALTROPS) (IKI)

Tetsubishi are small, sharp metal spikes thrown on the floor to delay pursuers. Razor sharp, they can usually cut through most leather shoe soles. Roll a die for each caltrop stepped on. If the result is an even number, the caltrop causes

Nobody has a ninja for a friend. Not if they know they're ninja. It's like hanging out with a convicted serial killer. It's commonly known (not believed, but known) that ninja use *maho*. They drink the blood of babies, worship Fu Leng and sleep with Bog Hags. They are the vilest creatures known to man.

What Lion is going to accept a ninja as his buddy? "Don't worry, old pal. Just because I've known you for fifteen years, and you've kept this secret from me all that time while you conspired against my Clan and my family, I won't kill you.



I'll accept you for what you are, despite everything you've kept from me all this time."

Yeah, right. More likely you'll get your head cut off.

THE SOLUTIONS

Most player character Shosuro have already proved themselves and have cast away their black pajamas. They know about the ninja myth and whenever they see the black-clad fellows dancing in the moonlight, they can't help but smile a little, remembering their own year of training.

However, if you want to play that Shosuro-in-training, you've got a long road ahead of you. Ninja training is supposed to be hard, unforgiving and relentless. But it can also make for one helluva campaign.

If you and your GM are up to it, running an all-Scorpion ninja campaign can be the ultimate game of cat and mouse. Use the following character generation rules for ninja.

Ninja-In-Training

TRAITS

All of your Traits and your Void Ring start at Rank 1. You have four extra Ranks that you must allocate to your traits. If you want to raise your Void Ring, you must spend two of these Ranks.

SKILLS

You have two of the following seven Skills, both at Rank 1.

- Athletics
- Lockpick
- Stealth
- Any 4 Ninja Tools Weapons

CHARACTER POINTS

You have no Character Points to spend.

HONOR AND GLORY

Your Glory begins at Rank 0. Honor begins at 1.5.

It costs 1 Experience Point to buy a Skill at Rank 1. As soon as you have raised all seven Skills to at least Rank 1, and all five Rings to at least Rank 2, you are promoted to Rank 1 in the Shosuro School and are no longer required to wear the black kimono.

OPTIONAL RULE: NINJA TOOLS

Some GMs may prefer to use a little more detailed system for ninja tools. For each Rank gained, the assassin learns to use a new tool, but that Skill is at Rank 1. All subsequent tools learned gain one Rank of experience.

For example, Hojatsu has gained Rank 1 in ninjutsu. He chooses the *kaginawa*, or grappling hook. He can use that tool at Rank 1. When he gains Rank 2, he gains a new tool, the *ninja-to*, the ninja sword. He also gains an additional Rank in the *kaginawa*. When he reaches Rank 3, he chooses *nageteppo* at Rank 1, while the *kaginawa* gains Rank 3 and the *ninja-to* moves up to Rank 2.



The Shosuro Shimobi (Assassin) School

This School is the counterpart of the Shosuro Acting School. Those who pass the Gauntlet initiation are allowed to cast away the ninja garb and learn the true secrets of Scorpion espionage.

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Explosives, Poison, Stealth plus 2 Ninjutsu

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Shadow Has No Mask

Assassins are given rudimentary acting training during their first year, mainly to teach them how to master the art of appearing nondescript. Keep a number of additional dice equal to your School Rank when rolling Stealth.

Rank 2: The Shadow Has No Mercy

The Assassin has been taught how to strike an unaware opponent with such skill that only a single strike is necessary. When an opponent is unaware or unable to defend himself – making his TN to be hit 5 – the Assassin's Raises are not limited by his Void.

Rank 3: The Shadow Has No Form

Using unique movement techniques, the assassin is a very difficult target to hit. The assassin may, during the declaration phase, decide to use this Technique instead of one of the three maneuvers. By using his distraction technique, the assassin raises the TN to hit him by either 10 or 20 (Reflexes x 5 +10 or +20). However, any actions he chooses to take also have their TNs raised by 10 or 20, respectively.

Rank 4: The Shadow Has No Substance

At this Rank, the Assassin has learned the true art of invisibility. The Assassin may move through a room without anyone noticing he was ever there. In order to do this, the Assassin must spend a Void point. The invisibility lasts for as long as the Assassin can hold his breath (a number of minutes equal to his Stamina), and there must be activity in the area he is passing through.

Rank 5: The Shadow Has No Soul

Finally, the Assassin has learned the mythical power of "walking through walls." By spending a

Void point, the Assassin can move through 1 inch of solid material. This requires at least one minute of meditation before the act.

Appendix III: Magic and Poison

Part One: Magic and Nemuranai of the Scorpion Clan

ITSUWARI: THE ANCESTRAL SWORD OF THE SCORPION CLAN

Bayushi's sword is the oldest and holiest of Scorpion artifacts. No one is entirely certain how it came to be made, but popular lore tells that it was a gift from Shosuro to her *daimyo*. There is no accompanying wakizashi.

Itsuwari is rarely held in the daimyo's hands. It has been a tradition for the daimyo to entrust the blade to another, so the location of the sword remains a mystery. Shoji has chosen to break with tradition and carries the sword with him at all times. Many speculate, but few know the reason why.

More than any other daimyo, Shoji has heard the siren song of the other sword locked in the bowels of Bayushi castle. It is one of the four Iuchiban blades, and it calls to him. Shoji keeps the sword of his ancestors close to him to keep away Ambition's invitation.

The wielder of the Scorpion sword gains a significant advantage. The sword makes its wielder appear as if he were standing directly beside where he is actually standing. Needless to say, this makes him very difficult to hit. In fact,

the wielder's TN to Be Hit is figured differently; it's his Reflexes times 10 rather than times 5.

This bonus is only totally effective for the first round of combat. At the beginning of the second round of combat (and each round thereafter), the opponent is allowed an Awareness + Kenjutsu roll at a TN of 30. If he makes that roll, the sword's power is negated and the wielder's TN returns to normal. Once the power of the sword has been overcome, it can never be used on that opponent again.

BAYUSHI'S MASK

Second to the sword, Bayushi's mask is the most holy artifact of the Scorpion Clan. He left it behind on the day he disappeared. It was found by his son along with the cryptic words, "*I have lost her.*"

The mask has been passed down from daimyo to daimyo; the power of the man who first wore it has preserved the silken mask all those years. It is currently in the possession of Bayushi Shoji and while he wears it, he is immune to any "lie detector" effects, magical or mundane. Anything he says has at least a slight ring of truth and listeners *want* to believe him.

Obviously, he cannot tell someone "The sky is orange," and be believed, but he could get away with saying, "The sky only appears to be blue, it is actually orange."

Once again, Rank 5 Kitsuki magistrates will *want* to believe him. Anyone holding a Yasuki coin will *want* to believe him. Everything he says sounds very plausible and pleasantly agreeable.

SHOSURO'S CLOAK

It appears to be a slice of darkest, starless moonlight. When worn, it feels the same.

Shosuro's cloak grants the wearer an ability to appear as any onlookers *expect* you to appear. For instance, if the wearer of Shosuro's cloak stepped into a room where a Lion was waiting for his wife, the wearer would look exactly like the Lion's wife.

If a Shosuro wearing the cloak were to walk through a crowded room, kill someone in

that room and jump out the window, everyone in that room just might tell a magistrate a different story. ("I saw Isawa Ujina!" "But I saw Shinjo Yasamura!" "No! I tell you it was Togashi Rinjin!") The cloak can cause quite a clamor if anyone actually addresses the wearer. ("Why are you calling him Hida Tampako? Can't you see that's Ginawa?") The cloak does not mimic voices, only appearances.

YASHIN (AMBITION) - THE THIRD IUCHIBAN BLADE

For nearly five hundred years, every Scorpion daimyo has heard the whispers of the bloodsword locked away in the bowels of Scorpion castle. It is "Ambition," the third Iuchiban blade, and as far as the Scorpion know, it is the only one of the four blades to never see the light of day.





On two occasions, Scorpion daimyos have succumbed to its call, and on both occasions, the daimyos were put to quick deaths. The first involved Bayushi Gonasu. He took up the sword and decided to invade the Lion provinces to the north. Shosuro Nobane was forced to put him down before his army could move through Beiden Pass. The second tale is a bit more tragic. Bayushi Hajeko, the first and only samurai-ko to gain the title of Scorpion daimyo, killed her father with the sword and claimed right to his title. She was daimyo for nearly seventeen hours.

Ambition has all the powers of a bloodsword listed in the main rule book (pg. 181), but it also gives the wielder an additional bonus. For example, let us say the wielder of Ambition (a Glory Rank 3 samurai) were to attack a daimyo (a Glory Rank 7 samurai, for example), he would be able to keep an additional number of dice equal to the difference in Glory totals (7-3=4). This bonus only applies when the wielder is in Full Attack. On the other hand, samurai who attack the wielder of Ambition gain an identical bonus if their Glory Rank is lower than the wielder's Glory.

As listed in the main book (page 181), the call of a bloodsword is difficult to resist. Ambition calls upon specific desires in a samurai's heart: aspiration and avarice. Shoji has the thing locked away deep in the bowels of the castle, yet every night, he can hear it calling to him. Ambition has eaten so many souls, if a samurai even comes close to the thing, he must begin making Willpower rolls to resist its allure.

MEIWAKU FANS

One hundred and fifty years ago, Asahina Meiwaku, a Crane shugenja, married Soshi Toraburu, a prominent shugenja in the Soshi family. Her marriage was nothing more than a political arrangement. She spent many years alone in her husband's home, ostracized by her new family, until she finally decided to show Scorpions what true loyalty was.

When her husband returned from a particularly long business trip, she presented him with a gift: a fan. "Take this fan with you the next time you visit my cousins on the coast, my husband," she said. "If you would, give it to my father as a gift." Toraburu promised to honor his wife's request and when he next visited her father, he kept his promise.

During dinner, as Toraburu ate with Meiwaku's father, a strange thing occurred. Toraburu could hear the old man's thoughts as he spoke to him. He noticed the old man was wearing his daughter's fan and a small smile grew on his face.

Upon his return, Toraburu begged his wife to create more fans. She smiled, "If you want more fans, my husband, then you must show me that you see me as a Scorpion, and not a useless Crane." She demanded that her husband perform a second *gempukku* ceremony and that she be officially accepted into the family and the Clan.

Toraburu himself performed the ritual a few months later. The Soshi daimyo was also there, as well as ninety other members of the family. And on every anniversary of that ceremony, she gave her husband a new fan.

There are currently seventeen Meiwaku fans, many of which are in the possession of rival Clans rather than Scorpions. Try as they might, Soshi shugenja tried to copy Meiwaku's formula, but never perfected it.

Meiwaku fans only operate properly when given as gifts. The giver of the fan can spend a Void Point and hear the thoughts of the recipient of the gift for a number of rounds equal to their Void Rank. This may only be performed a number of times per day equal to the Void Rank of the Scorpion.

SHOSURO'S HAND AND MIRROR

Shosuro returned from the Shadowlands with the Twelve Black Scrolls, but the hand she carried them in was not her own. It was made from a strange black glass that shimmered as if a rainbow had been trapped within. Every man and woman in the Emperor's court saw the hand, but assumed it was the samurai's own flesh corrupted by the magic of the scrolls.

The hand was not Shosuro's own, nor was it the only obsidian artifact that returned with her. She also brought back a thin slab made from the same material. She called this her mirror.

The hand and mirror have remained within the possession of the Scorpion Clan for generations, and while few *daimyo* have found the courage to touch the hand, many have employed the abilities of the mirror.

Neither items have any trace of the Shadowlands Taint, nor do they pass the Taint on to those who use them.

The hand must be attached using a painful ritual kept in the secret libraries of the Soshi family (the hand is kept with the Shosuro). In order to use the hand, a samurai must first cut off his own right hand; when the ritual is over, the obsidian hand takes the place of the original. Those who have worn the obsidian hand have heard voices and suffered from terrible nightmares, and are often driven to desperate acts. Three of the four daimyo who have attempted to wear the hand have killed themselves. The fourth sliced the hand from his arm with Itsuwari, the Ancestral Sword.

While wearing the hand and facing an opponent in a fight or duel, the samurai keeps an additional number of dice equal to his opponent's Honor (round down).

The mirror has been employed by nearly every Shosuro daimyo in the history of Rokugan. Used as a scrying device, it is able to show the viewer scenes miles or years away.

The mirror makes two demands upon its viewer. One is blood and the second is Void Points. For every drop of blood (Wound) dropped onto the mirror, the viewer can see one specific

scene for one minute. Each additional drop of blood will gain another scene or another minute.

One Void Point is also required to activate the mirror. If the viewer wishes to look into the past, he must surrender an additional Void Point. The mirror cannot look into the future.

Tejina: The Magic of the Soshi Family

The Soshi family specializes in one craft: deception. Their magic is dedicated to misleading enemy perceptions and protecting the agents of the Scorpion Clan. To this end, they have developed many unique spells and an entirely new type of magic: *tejina*.

While the Elemental Masters research the more primal elements in the Tao of Shinsei, the Soshi have tapped into a lesser known element: the element of shadow. Tejina is sometimes also called *shinobi*, *kage-do*, or "the way of shadow." It is the art of summoning and binding shadow. The most common application of the art is through





kage yakiin, or "shadow-brands." The recipient of a *kage yakiin* is placed in a dark chamber with a *Soshi shugenja*. There is always a single candle lit during the ceremony. The recipient seldom remembers the event; excruciating pain is often the sole memory.

When the ritual is over, the Scorpion has gained a black pattern across his skin, much like a tattoo. However, the brand fades to near invisibility when in direct sunlight, resurfacing only in near-darkness. Also, those who possess *kage yakiin* report the brand burns when directly exposed to light.

Shadow Brands

Kage yakiin (shadow brands) are only available to Scorpion characters, and are usually only administered to those of the *Shosuro* and *Soshi* families. A character may have more than one *kage yakiin*, but there are side-effects.

For some reason, shadow-brands limit a character's attunement to the more primal elements. After a character receives his first *kage yakiin*, his Void can no longer be above 5. When he receives his second, his Void can be no higher than 4. A third brand will reduce his maximum Void to 3. *Soshi shugenja* have never administered more than three *kage yakiin* to a single individual... at least, they haven't reported it to the *Bayushi*.

For every shadow-brand a character has, he keeps an additional die to every action when he is in dim light. A large room lit only by candles could be constituted an area of dim light. Any sunlight will cancel out the benefits gained by *kage yakiin*, even if it is a single beam. In fact, any shadow-brands exposed to direct sunlight will visibly blister and burn, causing 1 die of Wounds per round exposed per shadow-brand.

Shadow-brands cost 5 Character points at the beginning of character creation. A character may only begin with a single *kage yakiin*. Further imprinting of shadow requires more than simple experience points. *Soshi shugenja* will only reward Scorpions who have proven themselves worthy of such a distinction. One brand per School Rank is a good rule of thumb for GMs who allow shadow-brands in their campaigns. See *The Way of Shadow* for more information on this sinister form of magic.

New Spells

The *Soshi* and *Yogo* have developed magics other than *kage yakiin* to aid their Scorpion brethren. Listed below are a few of the more common *Soshi* spells.

BAD KHARMA

Element: Air

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: See below

Concentration: Full

Mastery: 4

Raises: Casting Time, Number of die rolls (see below)

Effect: *Soshi shugenja* have become quite adept at contacting angry, vengeful or otherwise disgruntled *kami*, and drawing that *kami*'s attention to another. This causes a number of problems, depending on the strength and/or vindictiveness of the *kami*. The result is usually a streak of "bad luck" for the target.

Bad Karma requires a little bit of preparation time, but if successfully cast, this spell allows the caster to contact a *kami* who holds a grudge against the family of the spell's target. With a little coercion (GMs should award Free Raises for good role-playing and likewise penalize those who take the *kami*'s favors for granted), the *shugenja* can convince the *kami* to make the target's life a living hell.

The target of this spell has the equivalent of the Unluck Disadvantage. The spell only lasts until the next time the target tries to make a roll. The *kami* automatically botches the roll, effectively giving them a roll of 1. For one Raise, the *shugenja* can decrease the Casting Time as normal, and for 2 Raises, the *shugenja* can cause a second (or third, or fourth) roll to botch as well.

FALSE TONGUE

Element: Air

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: Caster's Air

Concentration: Full

Mastery: 4

Raises: Duration

Effect: By use of this spell, the caster can speak while appearing to say something completely different. For example, the caster is a



shugenja standing in court, surrounded by Lions and a fellow Scorpion. He casts this spell, allowing him to continue to speak to the Lions about trade policy while the target of the spell (the other Scorpion) hears something completely different.

This spell is extremely difficult to use and requires complete concentration. The Scorpion can only target one individual to send messages to and no other. The spell lasts a number of turns equal to the caster's Air, but each Raise increases the duration of the spell as normal.

FORGET

Element: Water

Base TN: Target's Intelligence x 5 (Contested)

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: See below

Concentration: Full

Mastery: 4

Raises: Casting Time

Effect: This spell requires a Contested Intelligence roll to be successful. Also, the caster must make eye contact with the target. If the spell is successful, the caster can remove ten minutes of memory from the target. The caster must have intimate knowledge of the information he is removing; he gets a Free Raise to use this spell if he experienced the ten minutes he is attempting to remove.

Removing the information takes approximately five seconds and when finished, the target is incapacitated for about thirty seconds to a minute as his brain tries to re-organize the distorted information.

If the caster fails his casting roll, the target is aware of what has occurred. He is still slightly disoriented, however. The target rolls one fewer die (dropped before the roll is made) for a number of rounds equal to the caster's Water.

Kumasu: Ward Magic

As guardians of the Black Scrolls, the Yogo family has done a great deal of research creating magic that would keep out those who wished to break the Scrolls' bloody seals. "Warding magic" or "kuwasu" (created in conjunction with the Kuni shugenja of the Crab Clan) is designed for just that purpose.

There are two kinds of wards: elemental wards and Shadowlands wards. If the shugenja knows

the calligraphic character for what he wishes the ward to guard against, he can create that ward.

A shugenja must spend at least one hour to summon the energy required to create the ward; he cannot use the energy of *kami* or other elemental spirits. First, he draws the symbol of what he wishes the ward to guard against. For instance, if he wishes the ward to guard against anyone with the Shadowlands Taint, he draws the calligraphic character for the Shadowlands. As he draws the symbol, he chants and passes a bit of his own energy into the symbol.

Wards are usually drawn with ink onto pieces of paper. They are nailed on doorways - one side on the door and the other on the wall - to keep the door sealed shut. They may also be attached to boxes, a katana's saya, or any other object that can be opened.

Casting a ward is identical to casting a spell. The element used in the creation of a ward depends on the nature of the ward. Elemental wards (Earth, Air, Fire, Water and Void) are cast using the appropriate Element. For instance, an Earth ward would call for an Earth + Shugenja School Rank roll. Shadowlands wards require an Earth + Shadowlands Lore roll. The TN to create a ward is 20. The shugenja may use Raises when creating the ward. By Raising the TN by 10, the shugenja adds 1 die to the ward's effectiveness (see below).

Anyone who attempts to touch the ward will be forced to make a Contested Roll against the ward. The ward rolls 4 dice (keeping 4) and the creature rolls the appropriate Element. For instance, if a character touches an Earth ward, he rolls his Earth. If the ward wins the roll, the ward rolls 4 dice and keeps the highest die. This is the number of Wounds the creature takes. If the creature wins the roll, the effectiveness of the ward is reduced by 1 die. The creature may continue to try to reduce the effectiveness of the ward until it has run out of dice, thus "disenchanted" the ward.

Part Two: Poison

The Scorpion have been practicing poisoning for generations and have refined the science to an art. At first, the Scorpion used bizarre chemical compounds that produced amazing and dramatic effects (such as those listed in *Honor's Veil*), but after many generations of testing, the Shosuro



DOES "PATH TO INNER PEACE" WORK ON POISON?

Yes.
No.

Well, kind of.

Answering this question opens a can of big, fat worms, so let's take it one step at a time.

Path to Inner Peace heals Wounds, but it does not heal wounds. Wounds represent more than just physical injury; they also represent the shock a body goes through when a four-foot razor blade cuts through it. When a character heals back his Wounds, it represents his body overcoming the effects of shock.

Phoenix shugenja have speculated (and their guess is as good as mine) that when a body becomes injured, the spirit in that body loses some of its grip, and feels a need to leave.

Perhaps it's a man's willpower that keeps his soul attached, perhaps not. In either case, when a body gets injured, Path to Inner Peace keeps the soul in the body long enough for the body to overcome the shock. The problem with poisons is that they cause continual shock, which convinces the soul to take a hike.

applied Shinsei's age-old adage, "Simplify, simplify, simplify."

The poisons described in *Honor's Veil* use exotic herbs and chemicals, difficult to manufacture and use. They smell awful, taste worse and make strange bubbly sounds. The Scorpion have all but forgotten how to manufacture these poisons, preferring the simpler toxins listed below.

How Much Does It Cost?

This is one of the most frequent questions we get regarding poison. Poison has two costs.

- 1) If you don't have the Poison Skill, it costs exactly how much the poisoner you have to buy it from wants it to cost.
- 2) It costs you your life if you get caught using it.

All of the poisons listed below can be plucked from any field or forest ... if you know what to look for. It's as easy as plucking a bitter smelling orange from a tree and taking out the seeds. It gets a little more difficult if you want to milk a spider or a scorpion. It can be quite painful if you want to steal honey from a bee hive.

But if you're looking for the costs for poisons from *Honor's Veil*, you can divide the TN of the poison by 5 and assume the sum is the price in koku.

Administering Poison

Most of the poisons listed below must be either injected or ingested. Smearing poison on a weapon is very impractical. Many poisons begin to immediately lose potency when exposed to air (see *Snake venom* for an example).

Shosuro often use a poison ring to administer the toxin. It's a small thimble with a needle on the end. The assassin keeps a tiny jar of the poison with him, covered with a calf-skin seal. The needle is pushed through the calf-skin, the bottle is turned upside down (so the poison inside can wash over the needle), then the needle is removed. The calf-skin is so tender it will seal up the hole. A calf-skin seal usually needs to be replaced after five uses.

Poison should be injected as close to the heart as possible, or in a major artery or vein. While going for the neck may seem to be the obvious choice, don't forget those big fat veins on the top of the hands.

Poison and Herbalism

Characters with the Poison Skill are trained in the use and manufacture of poisons. They use the Skill to identify poisonous plants and when they use their poison ring (to see how close to the vein they got).

Characters with Herbalism know what to eat and what not to eat, but they do not know how to manufacture poisons or how to use them most effectively.

Poison Types

Listed below are the most common poison types employed by the Shosuro assassins. They are simple to acquire and easy to apply. Most cause the equivalent of an allergic reaction, which appears as normal flu symptoms. It usually takes a few hours (anywhere from 4 to 24) for the poison to take effect, which gives a whole day of activity to hide the cause of the poison - if anyone even figures out the victim was poisoned.

Remember, Rokugani do not perform autopsies (other than the Kitsuki and the Kuni, of course). If a victim looks like he died from the flu (a common occurrence in Rokugan), then he died from the flu.

BEE AND WASP VENOM

Bee venom is not very lethal unless the victim is allergic to it. Wasp venom is a little more potent. Bee and wasp poisons will cause skin irritation, and under extreme circumstances will also cause respiration problems, nausea and vomiting. Death can occur within one hour if enough venom is injected.

KIREI-KO

Kirei-ko was originally used as a cosmetic. The women of the Scorpion and Crane Clans used it to shade their eyes. One Shosuro wife remarked to her husband that it caused her eyes to tingle, and since that day, it has become one of the most popular Shosuro poisons.

Kirei-ko affects the nervous system, causing dilated pupils, blurred vision, dry skin and mouth and hallucinations. The most dramatic side-effect is how it affects the pulse. The victim's heart rate and blood pressure becomes so high that his pulse is audible from several feet away. Industrious Scorpions can find a way to exploit this to their own ends. Death from kirei-ko poisoning can last several hours or even several days. Currently, there is no Rokugani antidote.

Administering kirei-ko is easy. It can be made into a powder or liquid, but it must be ingested. Kirei-ko can also be fed to animals (mostly fish) and served to guests. The poison will remain in the animal for hours after preparation.

KETSU

"Ketsu" (its proper name is *ketsuiki-ringo*) is found in nearly 50 different fruits in Rokugan. It can be made from peaches, apples, apricots, cherries, plums or any other related fruit. After processing, ketsu appears as a grey or brown powder that smells of bitter almonds. It can be absorbed through the skin, inhaled, ingested or injected. Generally, it becomes toxic when it comes in contact with gastric acids.

Ketsu prevents white blood cells from absorbing oxygen, so the victim "suffocates to death." Obvious symptoms of ketsu poisoning are lack of breath, wheezing, headache, rapid pulse, dizziness and fainting. Kitsuki magistrates have learned to identify ketsu poisoning from the bitter almond smell, but a more tell-tale sign has also been recently discovered - the blood takes on a bright cherry red color. The skin may also develop a slight pink hue after poisoning. There is no current Rokugani antidote for ketsu.

WARUI PASERI

Different parts of the *paseri* plant are poisonous at different times of the year. The roots are poisonous during winter and fall, but nearly harmless during springtime. The leaves are almost always poisonous, but deadly during spring.

It takes almost a half an hour for *paseri* to take effect. Once it does, it causes gradual degeneration of muscle control. The pulse slows. As muscles slowly degenerate, a dull pain sets in. Blindness often occurs in the final hours before death. But the most terrible thing about *paseri* is that the mind stays awake and aware through the whole process. Death finally occurs after several

hours of suffering, usually from paralysis of the lungs. There is only one cure for *paseri* poisoning, and that is immediate regurgitation.

Quail eat *paseri* regularly (they're immune to it), but the poison remains in their flesh for several hours. Cooking the quail flesh does not affect the poison, and the above symptoms usually show up about four hours after consumption.

JELLYFISH

Jellyfish poison can be quite dangerous, mainly because small doses can cause dramatic effects. It is a contact poison that causes severe chest pains, skin necrosis (death of the tissue), swelling in the throat and larynx, breathing difficulties and cardiac depression (slowing of the heart). Contact on the skin causes immediate irritation to such a degree that permanent scars are left behind. Death can occur within minutes.

JERUKU ROPU

In Rokugan, *jeruku ropu* is an evergreen. Nearly all parts of the plant are poisonous if ingested or inhaled as a gas (smoke), but the most potent collection of poison is in its flowers. Exposure to *jeruku ropu* causes quickening of the heartbeat. Common symptoms are sweating, irregular pulse, respiratory problems leading to paralysis and death. Many species of bees use *jeruku ropu* pollen to make honey, which can be made into a very tasty poison indeed. (Just as a sidenote, any kind of honey is dangerous to infants and can be fatal at any dose.) Death is rapid after exposure.

PUFFERFISH (FUGU)

The poison of the famous "pufferfish" is contained in the fish's ovaries. The poison survives through the cooking process and causes slow, painful death if ingested. If poisoned, there is an approximately 50% chance of death. Eating *fugu* causes the ingestor to feel a slight numbness or tingling in the stomach, lips and tongue. It also causes slight euphoria and has been known to cause dizziness.

If poisoned, the victim loses all control of speech. Complete paralysis quickly takes hold and death follows anywhere from ten minutes to four hours. Small doses of the poison cause a kind of paralyzation of the brain, making the victim little more than a semi-conscious zombie, capable only of involuntary actions (breathing, pulse,



DOES "PATH TO INNER PEACE" WORK ON POISON? (CONTINUED)

Path to Inner Peace can be used to keep the soul around in the body until the effects of the poison run its course. This can be anywhere from ten minutes to four days, which would require a lot of shugenja casting the spell over and over again while the victim suffers the symptoms of the poison for a few hours, a few days, or even a week or two.



swallowing, etc.). Scorpions have learned to use small doses of fugu poison to capture and control victims until they can be removed to safe houses for safe keeping.

SCORPION VENOM

While scorpion poison is more lethal than snake poison, it is also generally administered in lesser doses (the size of the little beast's stinger), and is therefore less dangerous. Scorpion assassins have rectified that problem. Scorpion poison is a neurotoxin that destroys nerve tissues and causes cardiac problems. It must be injected. Symptoms include swelling of the tongue and throat, spasms and convulsions, irregular pulse, water on the lungs and respiratory failure. Symptoms usually occur within two to four hours of exposure, and death can occur anywhere from four to twenty-four hours. Some samurai have been known to survive up to four days after exposure.

Kitsuki magistrates have discovered an antitoxin to scorpion venom and many Shosuro assassins have switched to other, more reliable poisons. The antitoxin must be used immediately after exposure to the poison, however, or it will do no good.

SNAKE VENOM

While there are many species of snakes in Rokugan, there are only three kinds of snake toxin. The first is a neurotoxin, attacking the nerves and muscles of the victim. The second is nearly acidic, causing the tissues to "melt" on contact. The third is thrown into the eyes to cause blindness (the snake spits the venom). The first two kinds of venom must be injected. They may also be ingested, but only cause minimum discomfort when introduced into the digestive system.

It should also be noted that snake venom loses its potency in a matter of minutes after it's been exposed to open air. This makes it one of the least useful poisons listed here.

SPIDER VENOM

There are over one hundred different species of spider in Rokugan, but the most favored is by far the Black Piper. Black Piper spiders are jet black with a long white line down their body (the "pipe"). Poison from a black piper begins to take effect approximately eight hours after injection. Symptoms highly resemble the flu. The victim's

nasal passages become clogged as the sinuses release inordinate amounts of fluid. Excessive coughing occurs as the lungs begin to fill. Chills and fever soon follow. Headaches, pallid skin, nausea and diarrhea are also common symptoms. Finally, the victim passes away from cardiac failure.

The Kitsuki do possess an antitoxin for black piper poison, but it must be administered within hours, and the antitoxin itself is very poisonous. If administered, there is an equal chance of dying from the antitoxin as there is from the spider poison.

FUANTEI SHI

Fuantei shi is one of the most dramatic and frightening poisons known to the Rokugani. Once it takes effect, the victim loses complete control of bodily functions as he throws himself into violent convulsions, literally shaking himself to death.

It is a colorless, crystalline powder with a tell-tale bitter taste. It is usually used in liquids, but it can be concealed in solid food as well, and can even be applied to the eyes. It can be extracted easily from certain bitter-tasting orange plants or a root called *inu botan*, or "dog button."

Fuantei shi attacks the central nervous system. Once ingested, the poison goes to work in approximately ten to fifteen minutes. As soon as it takes effect, the victim begins reacting violently as every muscle in the body begins to constrict and contract all at once. This causes what the Kitsuki have called "the folding knife effect," named after the folding knives used by the Mantis Clan sailors. The body flexes, the back arches, arms snap in to the sides of the body and the face contorts into a hideous grimace. Contractions can be as quick as one per two seconds.

The spasms become quicker, until finally the body is trapped in an arched position. Any sound or movement around the victim will cause the spasms to become even more violent. Death occurs in minutes.

The Kitsuki have found an antidote for *fuantei shi*. It is called "Rukun's Juice" named after the Kitsuki who discovered it. Small doses of Rukun's Juice must be given to the victim immediately after ingestion of the poison. Once symptoms appear, the antitoxin is less effective, but has still been known to save lives. Kitsuki have also learned to keep the victim alone and to extinguish all but necessary light, to prevent aggravating the spasms.

Conclusion

None of the poisons listed above have target numbers. The plain fact of the matter is, most of them will kill you if they get into your bloodstream. It's kind of like asking, "I have the black plague? What do I roll?" Poison is just as lethal as a sword and, unfortunately, there are more precautions than remedies.

For the player and GM who cannot see The Great Bear getting knocked on his backside by a spider bite, we suggest that any character with an Earth greater than 5 is immune to mundane poisons. Alternately, you may want to permit a poisoned character to roll his Earth against a TN of 25: a successful roll means he survives.

Finally, for the curious completist, I should note that none of the poisons listed above (or their symptoms and effects) are fictional. "Kirei-ko" is arsenic, "ketsu" is cyanide, "wari paseri" is hemlock, "jeruko ropu" is oleander, and "fuantei shi" is strychnine.



Bayushi Castle

CASTLE OF THE TWO FACES

When visitors approach Bayushi castle, they can see its tall, majestic walls and towers all the way at the bottom of the steep mountain pass they must climb to get there. After many hours of tight twists and turns, the traveler finally reaches the castle.

Everything the *junshin* see of Bayushi castle is precisely what the Scorpion want them to see. Other than the walls, there are no obvious defensive mechanisms or preparations. There is a

distinct lack of military presence. Rooms are wide, spacious and full of sunlight.

But the front of the castle is only a mask. Secret passages separate the two, so only those who know the intricate maze of passageways can see the castle's true face.

A Scorpion educated in the navigation in those passages can gain access to any room in the castle without taking a single step in the main hallways.

Shiryo Bayushi may hold more secrets than any other castle in Rokugan, including the story of their lost progenitor.

TRAITOR'S GROVE

Just south of Bayushi castle is a small grove of trees called *Hayashi no Uragirimono*, or "Traitor's Grove." Scorpions who betray the Clan are brought here for punishment. The betrayer is bound to a tree as shugenja prepare his body and soul for the painful ritual he is about to experience. After hours of preparation, a long straight knife is set against his chest while his crimes against the Clan are read out loud. Then, as the crimes are read, the knife is slowly thrust through his chest. The magic invoked by the shugenja keep the traitor alive during this ritual. Finally, the knife is plunged deep, piercing both the traitor and the tree, transferring the traitor's soul into the tree for all eternity. The body is buried at the foot of the tree and personal effects are hung from the branches.

On the third day of the Monkey – the birthday of Bayushi Tesaguri (see *Ancestors* in Chapter 4) – all Scorpions go to the grove to throw rocks and curse at the trees.

The Scorpion do not hide Traitor's Grove. In fact, it is quite accessible by many of the Emperor's roads. They do not encourage visitors, but the curious who do wander into the haunted wood get to see the price of betraying the Scorpion first hand.

THE SLEEPING LAKE

Far below the surface of Bayushi castle is a tremendous cavern. It may only be reached through the private chambers of the *daimyo*, and along the way, seven different locks must be opened, not all of them mechanical.

The cavern overlooks a vast underground lake of crystal blue water. A small pathway winds down from the precipice to the edge of the water.

No one is certain how it happened, but somehow, the first Bayushi took his last breath in





this cave. Many have speculated that he took his life here, and his ghost now haunts the waters. Others say the primal Scorpion walked into the water, returning his mind and body to the elements.

None can say for certain, but a spirit does haunt the cavern, a spirit that may very well be Bayushi. Those of his blood who drink the water have been known to fall into catatonic trances for hours on end. When they awaken, they report of strange visions of the past and the future; many – but not all – have come true.

A bushi, more of a caretaker than a guardian, is always assigned to the lake. It is a hereditary position that began nine hundred years ago. The current guardian is Bayushi Shindei, an old woman with gray hair that stretches far out behind her. Her grand-daughter, also Shindei, is waiting for the day when she will take her grandmother's place with a bit of hope and trepidation.

Once, when she was a little girl, she thought she saw a beautiful man, surrounded by blue fire, walking on the waters. He whispered, "Where are you? I can feel you. Where are you?" Young Shindei isn't sure if she was dreaming while

attending to her old grandmother, or if she actually saw the vision, but for fifteen years, she has been unable to clear the vision of the man from her head. For those same fifteen years, she has wondered what she will do if she sees him again.

Shosuro Castle

HERB GARDENS

The Crane have their magnificent and stately gardens, and the Dragon have their very clever story gardens, but the garden in Shosuro castle is a little different. It's an "herb garden," and it is definitely *not* on display.

The Shosuro herb garden is the largest collection of poisonous plants in Rokugan. It is not as large as the garden in Shiryo Kakita, but it's close. What's more, there is no need to guard it.

The garden is spotted with the *nusumu iki*, a plant that expels a poisonous vapor whenever anyone walks close to it. The *nusumu iki* looks identical to another plant, the *shinsei iki*, which is also a predominant member of the garden.





It is here that the Shosuro further their herbalistic researches. They have managed to breed over fifty new types of poison plant over the last three decades, thus keeping ahead of those dirty antitoxin-breeding Kitsuki. Every student in the Shosuro school spends a great deal of time in the garden, learning every represented species.

Shosuro Hametsu spends most of his time here. In fact, one story that has circulated around the school for many years concerns his daily studies in the garden. Two students – one samurai and one samurai-ko – snuck into the garden on a dare. In the middle of their nocturnal activities, they witnessed the poison master walking through the garden, touching each of the plants, calling them by name with the same familiarity one calls a family pet. When he reached the *musumu iki*, he reached forward and caressed its leaves. The plant spit its spores directly into his face.

The poison master only giggled and continued his walk.

ITARU, TEMARE AND THE KEMPI FLOWER

Travelers passing through the northernmost part of Shosuro Province may notice a singular scent, light like rain but with a lingering sweetness. The fragrance is that of the *kempi* flower, a plant prevalent in this area, but found nowhere else in Rokugan. Aside from its pleasant scent and its four brilliant red petals, the *kempi* gained a degree of notoriety from an incident about fifty years past.

Two Scorpion families, one Shosuro and the other Bayushi, possessed land adjacent to each other. The two families had over the years developed a mutually beneficial relationship, guarding each other's borders, trading at favorable rates and exchanging young people to learn each other's arts and skills.

Two such young people met in the Bayushi court one spring: a valiant but untried samurai, Bayushi Itaru, and a young samurai-ko only recently finished with her schooling, Shosuro Temare. Temare had been sent by her family to observe the ways of the Bayushi court and to look for an opportunity to make a name for herself. Itaru had only recently returned from visiting in Shosuro lands where he had been learning their ways of government.

It was only natural that they should speak often to each other since he had been among her

kin more recently than she. And in fact he had messages for her from several members of her family. Polite talk in court turned into longer conversations and walks through the gardens. The two became friends and, perhaps foolishly, lovers. Anyone who was paying more than casual attention could have noted the hours they spent out in the fields beyond the castle's walls, and in a Scorpion castle, secrets kept loosely are not really secrets at all.

It didn't take long for the two lovers to come to the attention of their respective families. Still, there was no harm in the matter, so it was allowed to continue for a time. As the months passed, an advantageous match was found for Temare. A Shinjo family in need of military support on their southern border would trade a dozen of their steeds for a guarantee of armed Shosuro to help patrol their territory. The marriage was a proper way to seal the bargain and an excellent opportunity to put a spy in the midst of Unicorn country: a spy they would be bound to protect.

When Temare's father called her home for a time, she had high hopes that he would inform her of her impending marriage to her lover. Such a thing was not unheard of. Her younger cousin had only recently been given in marriage to the Bayushi as a show of good faith. When her father told her his real news, Temare behaved as a loyal daughter. Her only complaint was to quietly say, "You knew whom it was I loved." Her father nodded a little sadly, but knowing she understood the advantages of the match, he dismissed her.

Temare returned to the Bayushi court to finish out the season. It was spring, and when the summer came, she would leave to meet her husband. As was expected, she ended her relationship with Itaru, at least publicly.

For the next two months, to even the careful observer, the two behaved impeccably. They still spent time together, but in the boisterous manner of two samurai, training together, gaming, and drinking in the company of fellow bushi. It appeared as if the two had ended their affair, but had continued a good friendship. Itaru was heard saying that he would be honored to come to Temare's wedding, to which she jokingly replied that perhaps her soon-to-be husband would reward him for his escorting her with a fine horse.

When spring came to a close and the time for Temare to depart was at hand, the two announced that they would fight one last duel. The match



was applauded and friends and fellows at court lay bets to either side. It was plain that Itaru had the advantage of size and strength, but Temare was well known for a keen patience and her ability to wait opponents out until they grew foolish.

On the day of the duel, each samurai appeared, dressed in their best. They took their time encouraging the enthusiasm of the crowd, taunting each others ability. When they took their stances, each was smiling broadly. The "duel" was over in seconds. Both samurai stepped forward and each executed a perfect strike to the heart, neither attempting to parry.

As they fell to the ground a stunned silence fell over the crowd. The two young samurai had remained loyal to themselves, each other and their families the only way that they could.

When *eta* came to take the bodies away and prepare them they found two identical kempfi flowers, one worn over the heart of each samurai. Since that time, it has been the height of fashion to give, as a gift of honorable love, a jeweled brooch in the shape of the blood-red flower.

City of the Open Hand

Just southeast of Bayushi castle (about two days' ride), was a small city on the border of the Three Man Alliance and Scorpion territory. The city was called *Sekkai Yurri* ("The City of Limes and Lilies"). It was a pit of corruption and filth, a blemish on the face of the Scorpion Clan. The small town was populated by miners and gamblers, neither with any degree of conscience. There were constant squabbles between the two groups, aggravated by a corrupt headman and magistrate. The peasants feared the retribution of the gamblers and miners, and never complained to outside officials.

The main source of revenue was a silver mine located on the outskirts of the town limits. *Sekkai Yurri* was built on an incline and the mine was built on the lower end of that incline. The circumstance was merciful. About five years ago, miners hit an underground river and ten thousand tons of water rushed out, burying half the town. A local shugenja tried to appeal to the spirits, but his pleas were in vain. Over half the city's population was killed in the accident, and

within five hours, the west end of the town was nearly covered by a newborn lake.

Shoju was content to let the town die, but one of his lieutenants suggested a better idea. The man's name was Bayushi Zenasaru, and he changed the face of the city forever.

First, he mobilized a small army of bushi and *eta*. The bushi cleared out the riff-raff and the *eta* cleaned up the mess. Zenasaru tore down the old street signs and put up new ones. He killed the previous magistrate and headman and put his own *yoriki* in their places.

When his work was done, Zenasaru announced the city would no longer be called *Sekkai Yurri*, but *Toshi Aitate*, "City of the Open Hand." He re-opened the city's gambling and tea houses and put his own men in charge. For the first time in Rokugan's history, legitimate gambling was available to the public.

The houses were run by Scorpion Clan magistrates, each approved by the Emerald Champion. One-tenth of all the profits of the town went directly into the Emerald Champion's personal fund (in other words, Doji Satsume's pocket).

The city is closed during the day, but as soon as the moon creeps up into the sky, its doors open and all are welcomed inside. Visitors are also offered masks to wear, to keep their identities hidden if they so wish.

Every vice is available to the masked visitors: gambling and geisha and drinking and every other debauchery Rokugani can imagine, all under the close attention of the Emerald Magistrates. Complete safety is assured, as well as anonymity; the punishment for removing another's mask is unsavory, if not fatal.

Aitate has proven to be a highly profitable venture for the Scorpion Clan, and Zenasaru has received many promotions since lifting it's face. He is the man behind the scenes in the City of the Open Hand and its true master, despite what the Emerald Champion's magistrates may think.

Geisha

(For more information on geisha, see the L5R RPG, page 26.)

While every Clan has been known to contribute to the geisha trade, none contributes as much as the Scorpion. In fact, the Scorpion have nearly turned the profession into an industry.

Most geisha have been sold off by their family (or even gambled away by desperate husbands), but Scorpion geisha are different. Almost all of them are geisha by choice.

The Shosuro have many geisha schools, the most famous being *Uchi no Chiisaite*, or "The House of Little Hands." The founder of the house, Shosuro Kenjo ("Modesty", an obvious pseudonym) reportedly was a samurai-ko before becoming a geisha. She sold herself into service at a very young age, learned the trade, then bought her own contract back. Soon thereafter, she opened her own house and school.

Kenjo's school rarely purchases girls. Most of her geisha come from low-ranking women facing a life in a nunnery rather than marriage. Kenjo's training schedule is merciless, and many of the girls end up as serving wenches rather than geisha. But those who learn their lessons well and deliver on their promise have become some of the most famous women in Rokugan.

The process of entering a geisha house is strict. Samurai must be introduced to the house madam, or *okasan*, by current clientele. Samurai sponsors put their own status on the line when they introduce comrades to Kenjo. If Kenjo doesn't like the samurai being sponsored, the sponsor's reputation could be damaged, so samurai are very careful who they recommend. Once a samurai has become an official client, Kenjo chooses which geisha will be his companion.

A samurai who retires to the geisha house for the evening leaves behind his sword for two reasons. The first is symbolic. Tonight, he is leaving behind his station, for the geisha house is the only place he can put aside the mask of samurai and be "only a man." The second is practical. After all, you can't have a dozen or so half-drunk samurai running around with weapons.

The samurai receives a full course meal, music and, most importantly, conversation. A samurai never opens his heart to his wife. That would show weakness, and put her in the dreadful position of having to deal with a blubbing man. The role of husband is the strong pillar that holds up the household. But a samurai can open his heart to a geisha, who is trained to listen to his woes and console him.

Geisha are not obligated to spend the night with a customer, nor does her pay increase if she does. It usually takes several months of courtship

(and very expensive gifts) for a customer to earn that favor.

Geisha are highly paid for their services. An average geisha can earn anywhere from one koku to three koku per customer per visit. Few Scorpion geisha are considered "average," however, and can demand as much as 5 to 10 koku a visit. These prices do not include the many gifts samurai are expected to bring with them, many of which are at least twice as expensive.

Many times, long-standing clients request permission to purchase the geisha's contract to bring them into their household as private courtesans, concubines or even wives. Okasan are very reluctant to part with a geisha, especially if she has a regular clientele, but often times, social status can pressure her into it.

Purchasing a geisha's contract is a costly endeavor. The price can run anywhere from five hundred koku for an average geisha to five thousand koku for one of quality and fame.

On other occasions, certain samurai are introduced to particularly skilled girls whose intent is to gain access to their client's home. A Shosuro-trained geisha learns more than just conversation; she also learns to watch and remember.

Fortunes and Winds: Dice in Rokugan

THE DICE

The primary dice game in Rokugan is known as "Fortunes and Winds" (after its highest-paying combination). It is played with a set of five six-sided dice. One die is a different color than the other four. They are shown on page 109.

RULES

The player throwing the dice must lay down a bet, and also an equal amount "for Lord Moon." Winning bets are paid out by (and losing bets collected by) the Banker: this duty is performed by the host if the game is being played in a gambling house, or by the richest player if it's being played more informally. Other players may also bet as if they were throwing the dice, or make side bets (described below). The player throwing the dice may not make side bets.





GAMBLERS AND DAIKOKU

Daikoku is the Fortune of Wealth. Like all Fortunes, he has a "blissful" and "wrathful" aspect. His blissful aspect shows him as a fat, happy man surrounded by riches. His wrathful aspect shows him with a sword in each hand, his face twisted into an angry grimace, his mouth very wide and full of fire.

Statues of the blissful Daikoku appear in nearly every gambling hall, and many gamblers feel it is lucky to rub his belly for good luck.

The object is to assemble the following combinations of dice:

"Fortunes and Winds" (Pays 4 to 1)

North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, South Wind, Seven Fortunes

"The Lady's Breath" (Pays 4 to 1)

North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, South Wind, Lady Sun

"Empty Winds" (Pays 2 to 1)

North Wind, East Wind, West Wind, South Wind, Void

"Shinsei's Blessing" (Pays 2 to 1)

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Void

"The Lady's Tears" (Pays 2 to 1)

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Lady Sun

"Seven Thunders" (Pays 1 to 1)

Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Seven Fortunes

After all bets have been laid down and covered, the shooter takes a turn at the dice. Every turn consists of up to three rolls of the dice. On the first roll, if a combination appears, the shooter wins double the listed amount from the Banker.

If the shooter gets neither Lord Moon nor a scoring combination on his first roll, he may set aside up to three of the white dice and roll the remaining dice again. Once a player has set aside a die, he may not roll it again that turn. The shooter *must* roll the black die on every roll.

The shooter has three rolls to assemble a scoring combination (above). As soon as one of these combinations appears, the player collects his winnings from the Banker and begins a new turn. If after the third roll he has not built one of the scoring combinations on the table above, he loses his bet to the Banker (but not his money for Lord Moon) and the dice pass to his left.

On any roll, if Lord Moon turns up on the black die, the shooter loses his bet to the Banker. He also loses his amount set aside "for Lord Moon". The dice then pass to the left.

If the player wins, he may continue shooting with a new turn. Any time after the shooter has won, he may pass the dice.

There are two popular side bets, which may be made before the shooter starts his turn. Neither side bet requires a bet for Lord Moon.

"Daikoku's Belly" is a bet that the current shooter will win. The odds on this bet are 3 to 2 against. Betting that the current shooter will lose has odds of 2 to 3. However, many gamblers view this as summoning Daikoku's wrathful aspect

(see sidebar), and it is considered very unlucky. Some houses have a space set aside for betting against the shooter, but many do not.

"Lady Sun's Tea" is a bet that the player will make all three rolls in the turn. This is an even-odds bet. Its opposite is "Hungry Moon", which is a bet for the shooter to make one or two rolls during the turn. It is also an even-odds bet, but if the shooter rolls "Winds and Fortunes" on the first or second roll, this bet neither wins nor loses.

The only required equipment is a set of dice, appropriately marked. Most gambling houses provide a table, marked as indicated in the illustration; but gamblers playing outside a house can sketch the curve and two lines, or just envision it and arrange their bets in the appropriate places.

Example: Ginawa, Sanzo, and Ujikeme are gambling at the House Where Fortune Smiles; the house has provided a Banker at the table.

Ginawa starts with the dice, and bets one koku, also placing a koku behind the line for Lord Moon. Sanzo feels that Ginawa's luck is running, and he also makes the standard bet: one koku, plus one for Lord Moon. Ujikeme is less optimistic, and puts down a side bet: three koku for Ginawa to lose.

Ginawa rolls the dice: North, East, Fire, Bird, and Void. He must reroll the Void die, and he decides to keep the North and East dice.

Make Your Own "Fortunes and Winds" Dice!

On the facing page, you'll find a bunch of squares with kanji and English words written in them. Photocopy those squares (preferably onto a sheet of label paper), cut them out and attach them to any six-sided dice (blank ones are available at most finer game stores). Bingo! You've got a set of Fortunes and Winds dice!

Note: Actually gambling for actual money is likely to be illegal in your state; it is in ours. These dice should be used for roleplaying purposes only, not to figure out who buys the pizza.

Fortunes And Winds

Dice and Table Layout

EARTH DIE:

土 EARTH	土 EARTH	土 EARTH	北 NORTH	北 NORTH	米 RICE
------------	------------	------------	------------	------------	-----------

WATER DIE:

水 WATER	水 WATER	水 WATER	東 EAST	東 EAST	魚 FISH
------------	------------	------------	-----------	-----------	-----------

FIRE DIE:

火 FIRE	火 FIRE	火 FIRE	西 WEST	西 WEST	木 TREE
-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

AIR DIE:

風 AIR	風 AIR	風 AIR	南 SOUTH	南 SOUTH	鳥 BIRD
----------	----------	----------	------------	------------	-----------

MOON DIE:

空 VOID	空 VOID	運 FORTUNES	運 FORTUNES	陽 SUN	月 MOON
-----------	-----------	---------------	---------------	----------	-----------

BANKER SITS HERE





Ginawa's second roll: [North], [East], West, Air, Sun. Ginawa keeps the West die and rolls the other two.

Ginawa's third roll: [North], [East], [West], Air, Fortunes. So close, but no luck. Ginawa and Sanzo lose their one koku bets to the Banker, but keep their money for Lord Moon. Ujikeme's bet (that Ginawa would lose) pays off, and he is paid two koku by the Banker.

Since Ginawa has lost, he must pass the dice. Sanzo is next to roll, and bets are deployed. Sanzo bets two koku, and must put down two for Lord Moon as well. Ginawa bets one koku that Sanzo will make all three rolls, but Ujikeme bets one koku that he won't.

Sanzo's first roll: Earth, Water, Fire, Air, Sun. Since Sanzo has rolled The Lady's Tears on his first roll, he wins double the usual amount: the Banker pays him eight koku. Since Sanzo made only one roll, Ginawa loses again, and Ujikeme wins again. Sanzo may pass the dice, or start a new turn; he elects to pass the dice to Ujikeme.

Ujikeme lays down one koku, plus one for Lord Moon. Both Ginawa and Sanzo bet that he'll make fewer than three rolls: Ginawa bets two koku, and Sanzo only one. Ujikeme's first roll comes up Earth, Water, Fire, South, and Moon.

Too bad: he loses his bet, plus his bet for Lord Moon. Since the shooter didn't make all three rolls, Ginawa is paid two koku by the Banker, and Sanzo is paid one. Since Ujikeme lost, he passes the dice back to Ginawa.

SAMURAI AND GAMBLING

Gambling isn't exactly the most honorable vice for a samurai to indulge in, but it is the most popular. Ronin are typically the ones found rolling dice in gambling dens, but occasionally, you'll find some Clan samurai (in disguise, of course) throwing away their money as well.

Gambling is much more dangerous to a samurai's Honor than his Glory. Samurai are expected to throw away their money, but associating with such low-lives (gamblers) is beneath their dignity. Samurai of low Honor (0 or 1) couldn't care less, but more honorable fellows (3, 4 or 5) should lose 1 Honor (at most) when they enter a house of ill repute with the intention of gambling.



Appendix V: L5R CCG Scorpion Decks

"Bowed, Controlled, Dead or Discarded"

By: Frank L. Chafe

STRONGHOLD

The Shadow Stronghold of the Bayushi

DYNASTY DECK: 31 CARDS

Bayushi Aramoro x3	SL	U
Bayushi Tangen x2	AoD	C
Bayushi Kachiko	OE	R
Yogo Asami x3	FK	C
Ninja Shapeshifter x3	OE	U
Bayushi Goshiu (Exp.)	TotV	R
Jade Works x3	OE	C
Geisha House x3	SL	C
Corrupted Geisha House x3	TotV	C
Ninja Stronghold x2	OE	R
Merchant Caravan x2	FK	C
As the Shadow Falls	AoD	U
Emperor's Peace	OE	U
Inheritance	OE	R
In Time of War	TotV	U
Return of Fu Leng	AoD	R

FATE DECK: 30 CARDS

Fires of Retribution x3	SCC	C
Egg of Pan Ku	OE	R
Refugees x3	AoD	C
Entrapping Terrain x3	OE	C
Kolat Master x3	OE	R
Block Supply Lines x3	OE	C
Bad Karma x3	C&J	R
Feign Death x3	OE	R

Call to Arms x3	SL	U
Kolat Assassin x3	OE	U
Scorpion's Sting x2	TotV	R

This deck will bow opposing personalities from the the get-go so that they never have enough force to take a province. Aramoro's sole job in life is to remove personalities before they can enter play. The Shapeshifters allow you to copy either Asami's ability or Aramoro's. You use the Call to Arms when they do announce an attack, to use your Yogo Asamis to bow the guys you couldn't bow in their action phase. Goshiu and Kachiko are there to control your honor loss, and your opponent's, and kill off opposing personalities. Once your opponent's dynasty deck has been depleted, have your shapeshifters assume the largest force and start taking provinces.

The fate deck does its share of controlling as well. With some help from your friendly neighborhood Kolat, you will have even the toughest personalities begging for mercy. The Fires of Retribution are there to stop those pesky Phoenix Wasting Disease decks. The Scorpion's Stings have been added to get you past those Crane honor decks or dueling decks. The rest of the deck will allow you and your personalities to stay alive long enough to control the game.

"The Dark Sword of Bitter Lies!"

By Dion Rigdon

STRONGHOLD

The Ruined Fortress of the Scorpion

DYNASTY DECK: 41 CARDS

Merchant Caravan x3	FK	C
Small Farm x3	OE	C
Storehouses x3	SCC	C
Geisha House x3	SL	C
Black Market x3	FK	C
Ninja Stronghold x2	OE	R
The Farther You Fall	Promo	*
In Time of War	TotV	U
Time of the Void	Promo	*
Inheritance	OE	R
Chrysanthemum Festival	OE	R
Doom of the Dark Lord	Promo	*



SHINRIKO: LITTLE TRUTHS

Need to defeat a Crane?
Convince him a battle will
ruffle his feathers.

Need to defeat a Lion?
Study what his grandfather
did.

Need to defeat a Phoenix?
Make him fight.

Need to defeat a Crab? Trip
him when he charges.

Patience and persistence can
bring down the tallest tree.

A man divided by duty has
not a single leg to stand on.

Never judge a man by
instinct, only by his past.

Every man is equal in the
privy.

Women learn to weep
because husbands always
assume it was their actions
that caused the tears.

Appendix Two was a lie.

If you cannot kill a man,
make him impotent.

Need to defeat a Dragon?
Make him rely on another's
trust.

Men are like trees - they
die from the top.



Bayushi Aramoro x3	SL	U
Ninja Shapeshifter x3	OE	U
Yogo Asami x3	FK	C
Bayushi Goshiu	SL	U
Bayushi Goshiu (exp.)	TotV	R
Bayushi Kachiko (inexp.)	SCC	R
Bayushi Kachiko	OE	R
Yogo Shidachi x3	SCC	C
Soshi Taoshi x2	SCC	R

Refugees x3	FK	C
Touch of Death x3	OE	R
Secrets on the Wind x3	OE	U
Walking the Way x3	OE	U
Force of Will x3	SL	C
Sailors x3	TotV	C
Spirit Guide x3	OE	R

FATE DECK: 51 CARDS

Ancestral Sword of the Scorpion	SCC	R
Broken Sword of the Scorpion	SL	R
The 12th Black Scroll	TotV	R
I Believed in You x3	TotV	C
Bad Karma x3	C&J	R
Feign Death x3	OE	R
Kolat Assassin x3	OE	R
Kolat Master x3	OE	R
Test of Honor x3	OE	R
Remorseful Seppuku x3	OE	C
Geisha Assassin x2	OE	R
Egg of Pan Ku	OE	R
Block Supply Lines x3	OE	C

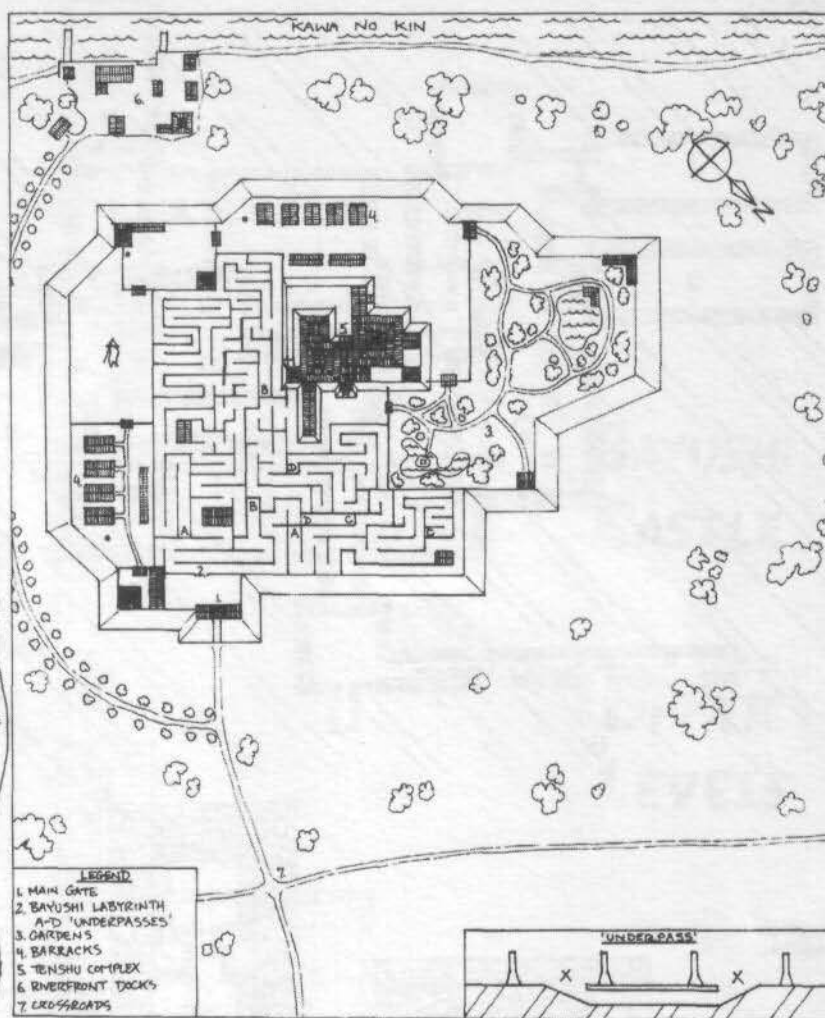
This Scorpion Deck is designed to kill off your opponent's personalities while setting up the dishonor aspect of the traditional Scorpion decks. The Fate deck has a distinctive kill aspect. It uses all of the well-known personality-killer cards such as Test of Honor and Touch of Death. On the other hand, the Dynasty Deck contains many cards that can dishonor your opponent such as Bayushi Goshiu and the inexperienced Bayushi Kachiko. One major thing that should be noted here is the fact that the gold holding in the dynasty deck all come out with the stronghold or for free. This allows the deck to start killing off your opponents' personalities fairly quickly and give you time to bring out your personalities.



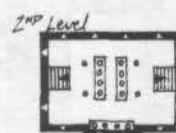
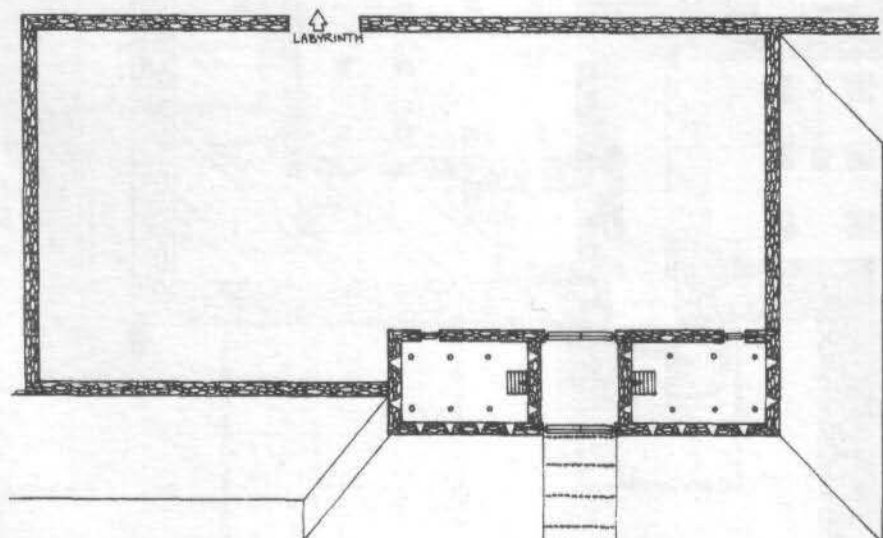
KYUDEN



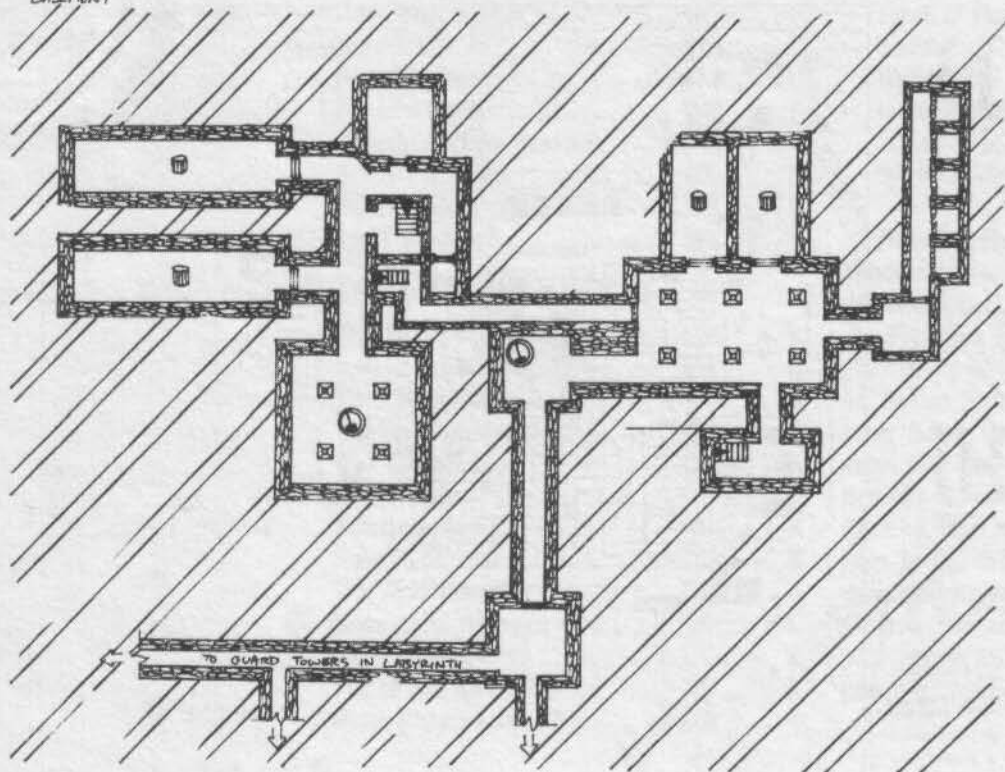
BAYUSHI



MAIN GATE (& COURTYARD)



BASEMENT

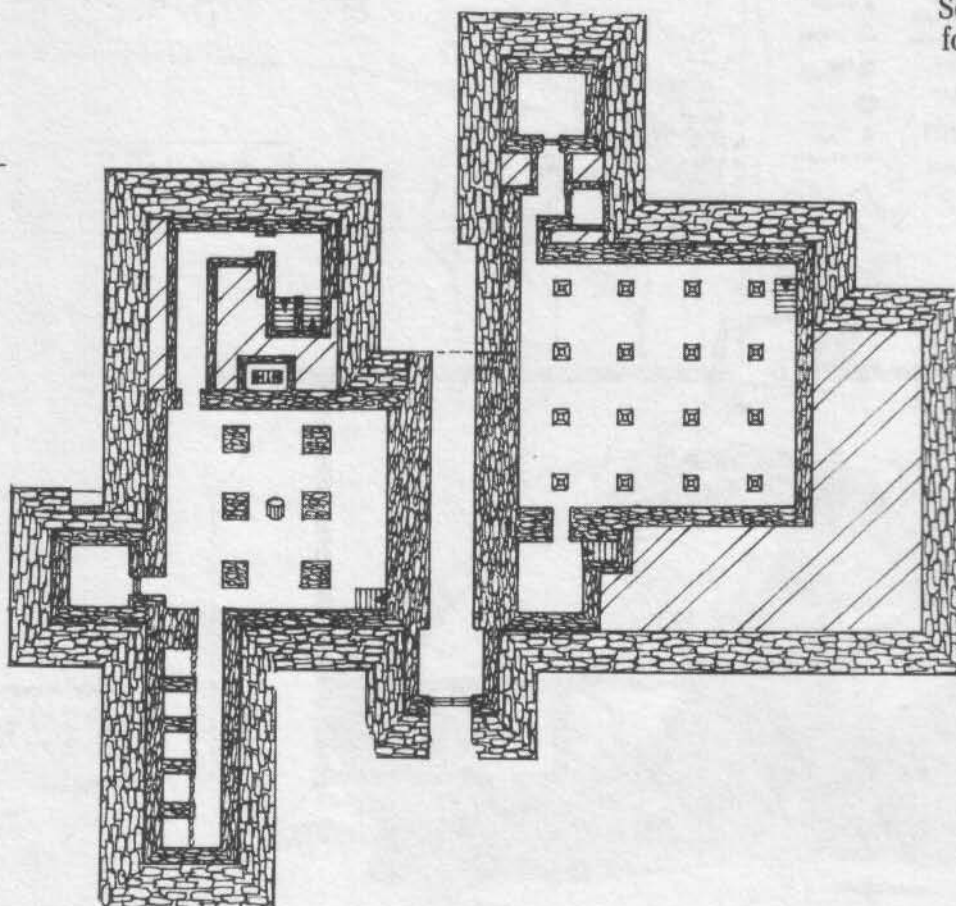


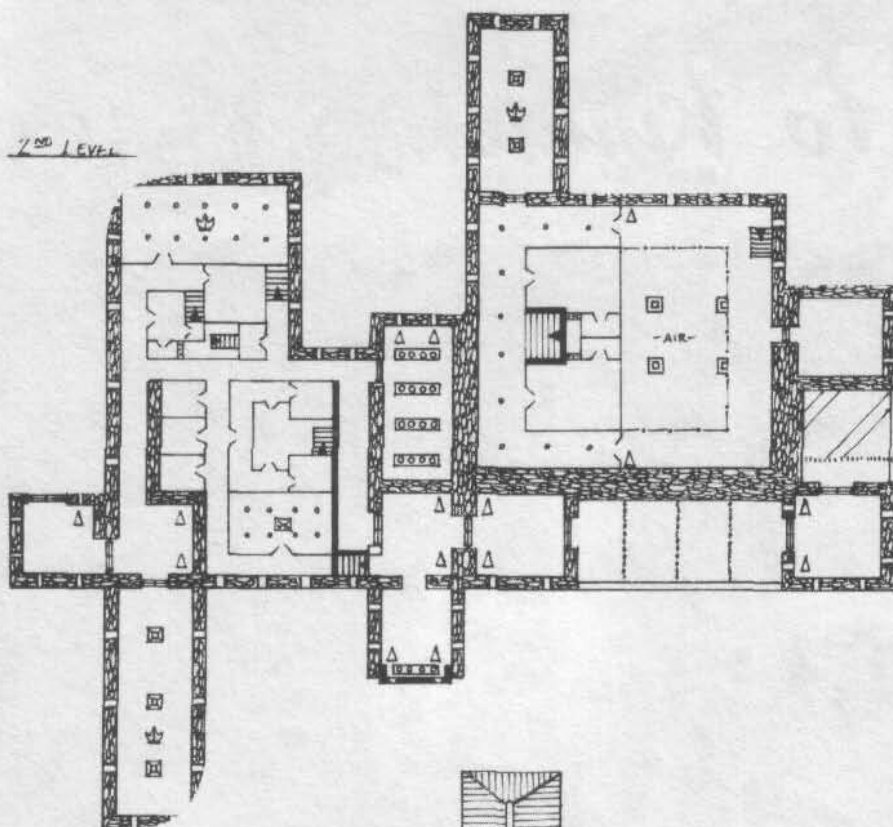
BAYUSHI CASTLE

TENSHIN COMPLEX

See Item #5 on page 113
for overview of this area.

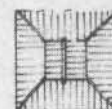
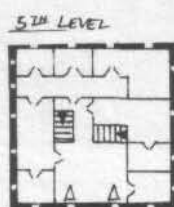
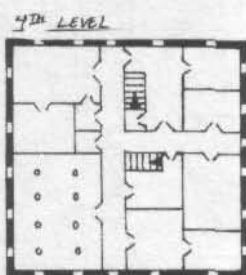
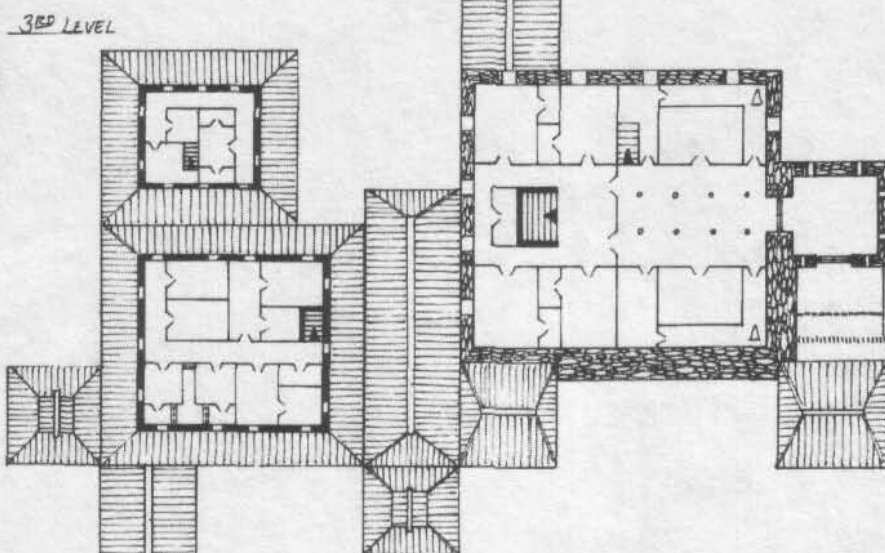
1ST LEVEL





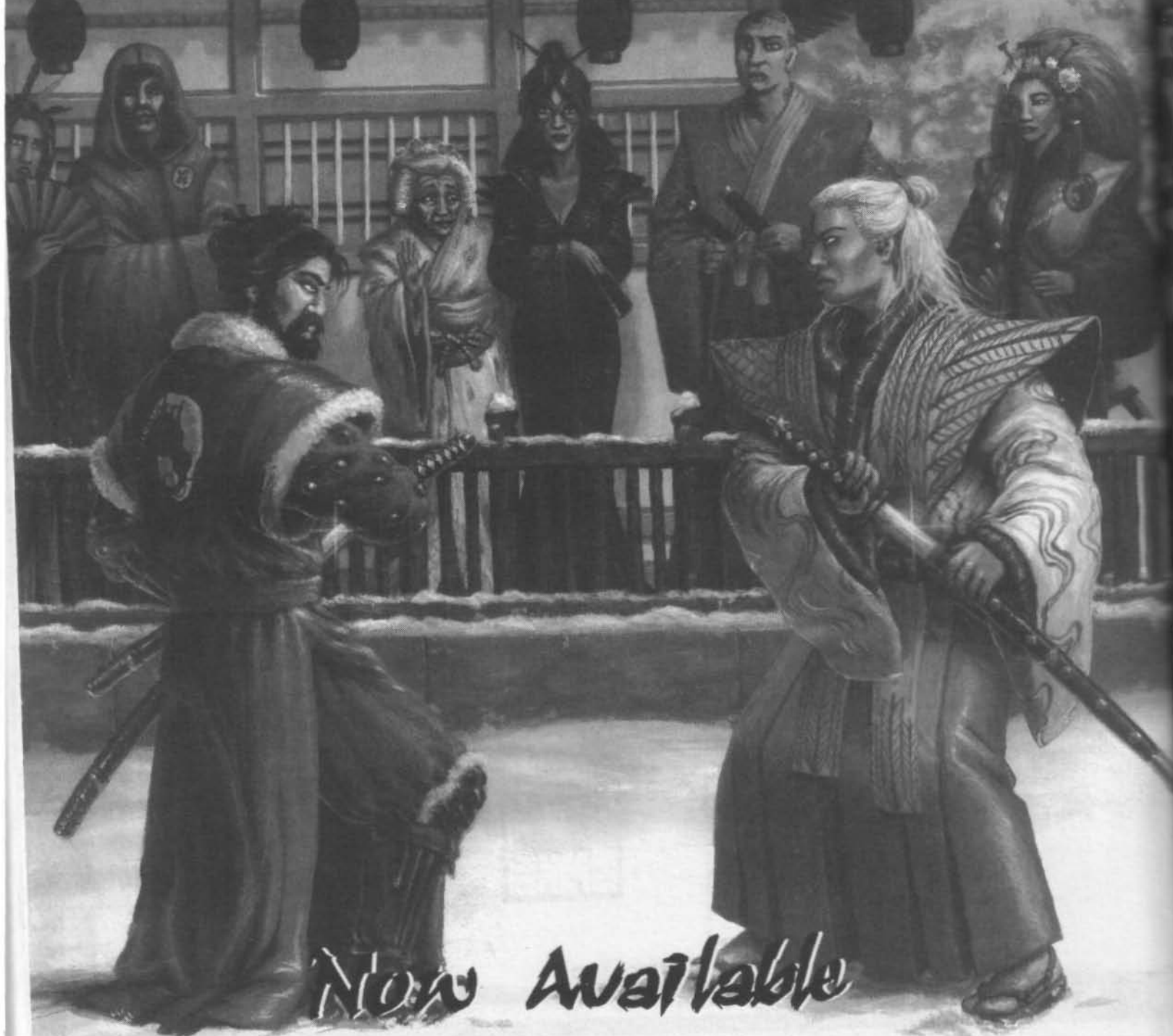
BAYUSHI CASTLE

UPPER LEVELS



The Winter Court

Welcome to Kyuden Seppun.



Now Available



Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Profession:

Fire

Agility:
Intelligence:

Air

Reflexes:
Awareness:

Primary Weapon

Primary Armor

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes $\times$ 5 + Armor)

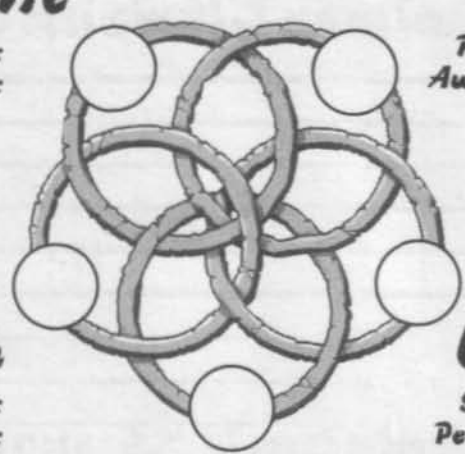
Earth

Stamina:
Willpower:

Water

Strength:
Perception:

Skills



Void

Void Points Spent:

Spells

Insight:

Wounds

☐	-0
☐	-1
☐	-2
☐	-3
☐	-4
☐	Down
☐	Out
☐	Dead

School:

Rank:

Glory:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Honor:

☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------	--------------------------

Experience Points:



Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Home Province:

Allies and Enemies

History and Glorious Deeds

Weapons & Equipment

Gifts, Bestowments and Recognitions

Surrounded by shadows, the Scorpion weave a tapestry of lies and deceit, betrayal and treachery, all in the name of the Emperor. To lift the mask of the Scorpion is to look upon the face of truth. If you are ready to learn the darkest secrets of Rokugan, then you are ready to learn the secrets of the Scorpion Clan.

The Way of the Scorpion™

- The "history" of the Scorpion Clan, including stories the other Clans don't want you to know
- New Character Rules for Bayushi Courtiers, Soshi Shadow Magic and Shosuro "Actors"
- Excerpts from *Lies*, Bayushi Tengen's ancient treatise on treachery, deceit and loyalty
- New Skills, Techniques, Advantages and Disadvantages, and Scorpion Ancestors
- Information on Traitor's Grove, Bayushi's Mask, Shosuro's Cloak and *Ambition*, the third Iuchiban Blade
- New poison rules, Treachery 101, a complete Fortunes and Winds set, and the secrets of the *niwatori*, the ninja of the Scorpion Clan
- And more!



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