Legend of the Five Rings™

The Four Winds



The Toturi Dynasty from Gold to Lotus

Lotus Edition™



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Welcome to the Four Winds Sourcebook

The book you hold in your hands is one of the most ambitious undertakings in the history of the Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game. The *Four Winds* sourcebook is a comprehensive volume covering roughly nine years of Rokugan's history and continuity.

Fans of the Legend of the Five Rings Collectible Card Game (CCG) will find these contents familiar. This book presents an overview of the popular Gold and Diamond Edition story arcs and sets the stage for campaigns in the brand new Lotus Edition. This book is divided into chapters by these story arcs. The Gold Edition story arc covers the tragic death of Emperor Toturi I, the ensuing struggle for succession among his children, and the rise of a new Dark Lord, Daigotsu. The Diamond Edition story arc encompasses the escape of the infamous Bloodspeaker, Iuchiban, and the rise of the Elemental Keepers.

Lotus Edition, the third part of this sourcebook, is an entirely new beast. Legend of the Five Rings has always prided itself on its player-driven storyline, and the fate of Lotus Edition is perhaps the most dynamic example. At the World Championships at GenCon 2005, the faction played by the winner will determine which clan plumbs the secrets of enlightenment and becomes the Keeper of the Five Rings. If a player supporting the Shadowlands should win, the secrets of enlightenment will be lost, heralding a dark age for the Empire.

At the time this book is being written, the ultimate fate of Lotus Edition is unknown, which poses an interesting problem. The Empire stands at a crossroads. How can we write of what is to come when we do not know which path the players will take? This is, of course, a problem familiar to GMs. A Game Master must plan out his campaign and adventures in advance, never knowing how the players will embrace the challenges he offers, or if they will even encounter them at all. So it is with Lotus Edition. Thus the third section of this book is a suggestion of things to come, and a description of those elements of the storyline that will remain constant whether or not enlightenment is forgotten. Possibilities are offered for both the Age of the Lotus and the Age of the Dark Lotus. The final section of the book is therefore a glimpse of things to come, offering possibilities for two different possibilities in the Empire's future.

Retelling an Old Story

This book follows the pattern of previous books such as *Time of the Void* and *The Hidden Emperor*, which also described major story arcs in the CCG and translated them into statistics and adventure hooks for the RPG. While the idea of playing through such canon events as the Fall of Otosan Uchi or the Rain of Blood may seem exciting for some, others might question why they would wish to participate in a story when the ending is pre-ordained.

This is a problem only if the GM allows it to be. The players should never feel as if they are simply bit parts in someone else's story, or that their actions will have no effect on the outcome of the story. The events and information here are guidelines, but they are by no means the final word. The GM is encouraged to take what is presented here and manipulate it as much as he desires. Perhaps in your version of the Gold Edition story, the players discover the truth about the Shadowed Tower and expose its secrets to the Scorpion Clan. In your Diamond Edition campaign perhaps it was a player, not Iuchi Katamari, who took up the mantle of the Doomseeker and discovered the means by which Iuchiban would be defeated.



If there is ever a dispute between the canon chain of events and a more interesting and engrossing path, never hesitate to diverge from canon. Your game is, and always should be, ultimately your own. The player characters are the true heroes, and while they should certainly have a sense that they are a part of a larger Empire, they should never feel as if their actions have no significance.

What You'll Find In This Book

This book is divided into four main chapters. This introductory chapter presents a wealth of new mechanical options for character customization. These include rules for highly advanced characters (beyond Insight Rank 5), Advanced Schools that grant unique Techniques and abilities to these characters, and New Paths which offer divergent paths of advancement for young and old characters alike. Many of these rules were options in previous editions of the game, but they have been polished and updated for Third Edition. You might recognize a few Techniques from Second Edition, but many others are entirely new.

The following three chapters each cover a different period in history, divided by the CCG story arc titles. These chapters are further divided into sections by the names of the original CCG expansions. Each of these sections contains a detailed timeline, fiction, adventure hooks, and statistics for important NPCs active during that period. Each of these chapters also concludes with a section that introduces new mechanical options such as schools, items, NPC enemies, and other elements that are significant during this time period.

What Do I Need to Use This Book?

In the past, large campaign sourcebooks such as this could be daunting due to the sheer number of previous sourcebooks they drew upon. Special care has been taken to make this book as self-contained as possible. All NPCs and other mechanics rely solely upon information in this book and in the *Third Edition* rulebook. In cases where schools and other options from previous sourcebooks were particularly appropriate, such options are presented in a sidebar. In this way, players who have access to all of these older sourcebooks can take advantage of them, but new players are not left feeling that their experience is somehow incomplete.

Role-Playing During the Lotus Era

Many inter-clan conflicts continue into the Lotus era. Relations between the Lion and Crane simmer with the tensions of a millennium of conflict, and the war between Phoenix and Mantis continues. The struggle between the Shogun and Emperor is also very important during this period, though at the beginning this conflict is mainly political. Is the party unified in its support of one the Shogun or the Emperor, or is it divided? Just as in the Four Winds Era, party loyalties can present interesting dynamics and role-playing opportunities.

The question of enlightenment is also important during this period, and can very greatly depending on whether or not enlightenment is lost. In a Dark Lotus campaign, finding the reclusive Keepers and returning Shinsei's lost wisdom to the Empire can be the focus of a campaign. In a Lotus campaign, perhaps one or more of the player characters have received the new enlightenment, and see it as their duty to spread their wisdom to the Empire.

The threat of Uikku's impending Dooms and their prophet, Kokujin, offer a more traditional villain. Seeking to prevent the Dooms (or simply deal with their repercussions) and battle Kokujin's followers can become a major campaign focus.

A note on Non-Player Characters (NPCs)

A number of important NPCs in this book develop throughout the course of the story, gaining skills and abilities just as a player characters do. This is represented in their statistics, with the character's level of skill at the beginning of the Lotus story arc given in brackets. For example, a character that begins Gold as a Rank 2 Akodo Bushi but begins Lotus as a Rank 4 Akodo Bushi would have his School Rank described as follows:

Akodo Bushi 2 [4]

Characters Beyond Rank 5

Third Edition established rules for playing characters of up to Insight Rank 8, but most of the schools described offer only five Rank Techniques. For most campaigns, this level of advancement is more than sufficient; however, there are always exceptions.

The RPG is in its ninth year, and many campaigns have been around since the beginning. Five ranks of Insight are not sufficient to describe the abilities of such venerable characters. Some GMs prefer a swifter rate of advancement, in which five ranks aren't enough for even a short campaign. Meanwhile, other players and GMs may wish to begin a game with senior characters, creating starting characters above the normal maximum Insight Rank. Finally, the possibility of creating extremely high-powered campaign can be useful even in a standard campaign, when the GM needs NPCs of truly impressive power and ability.

Multiple Schools

With the exception of shugenja, any characters who proceed beyond Rank 5 and do not have the Multiple Schools Advantage must face the fact that their original school no longer has anything to teach them. This places non-shugenja at a disadvantage.

Any non-shugenja character who reaches Insight Rank 6 and has a total of five Rank Techniques from a single school may therefore gain the Multiple Schools Advantage free of charge. This Advantage may only be applied to another of his clan's schools (or a ronin school, if the character is a ronin). If the character wishes to advance in a school not offered by his clan, he must purchase Multiple Schools normally. Alternately, a character who meets the requirements may instead choose to enter an Advanced School, a character option described in this chapter.

Beginning At Higher Ranks

Beginning at Ranks above 5 is not recommended for a number of reasons, not the least of which is that it undercuts the feeling of accomplishment a player enjoys when legitimately progressing to that level. Nevertheless, some GMs and players enjoy starting with high-level characters, so a few guidelines follow. Third Edition gives options for creating characters above Insight Rank 1, but a character intentionally crafted to have the most Insight possible will easily outstrip a balanced character or a character that purchases many Advantages, given equal amounts of experience. This is intentional, as Insight is not the final arbitrator of character worth in L5R. However, it can be less fun to play a character with drastically lower Insight than one's comrades. At higher Ranks, it becomes even more difficult to assign a set amount of Experience Points that would produce identical Insight Ranks across the board.

If the GM does intend for characters to start at very high Ranks, a general rule of thumb is to start from the minimum Insight required for a particular Rank and work backward. Rings should account for roughly two-thirds of a character's Insight, with the remaining third coming from Skills. This estimate does not take into account Insight bonuses gained from Mastery Levels, which vary wildly from one character to another. Beyond Rings and Skills, a character being constructed in this manner should receive approximately 10 experience points per Insight Rank to be spent on Advantages or other miscellaneous benefits (such as Kata or Kiho). For example, if you wanted characters to begin at Rank 6, you might begin with 255 Insight (250 being the minimum for Rank 6). Such characters would have roughly 160 Insight from the sum of their Rings and 85 Insight from ranks in Skills. Such characters would also receive 60 Experience Points to be spent on purchasing Advantages and other benefits. These Experience Points should not be used to improve any other statistics, and would be lost if not used during character creation.

This system is open to abuse, as characters can obtain high Rings and Skills more easily than they could through normal development. The GM must approve all characters and make certain there is nothing particularly unbalanced.

Advanced Schools

Advanced Schools allow a character to progress past the normal five-rank schools, and add depth, power, and variety to experienced characters. Each Advanced School features a certain method of training practiced by a Great Clan that goes beyond the normal training of a bushi or shugenja school. Advanced Schools feature powerful Techniques, and attendance is by invitation only.

If a character meets the requirements of an Advanced School, and is invited to attend that school, he can immediately begin training as soon as he gains enough Insight to learn a new technique or, in the case of a shugenja, increase in Rank. Instead of gaining a new Technique or spells from his original school, the character instead gains the first Rank Technique from his new school. All previous Rank Techniques are permanently frozen at their previous levels. As with ordinary Schools, when an Advanced School Technique refers to a student's "School Rank," only the School Ranks in the Advanced School count.

Example: Hida Tsubaru attended the Hida Bushi School through Rank 4 and performed admirably. The senseis of the Hida Avenger School invite him to study at their school, and Hida Tsubaru accepts. When he reaches 225 Insight, he may learn the Hida Avenger Rank 1 Technique after months of practice. His Hida Bushi School Rank is permanently 4, and can never be raised again, though his Insight Rank is now 5.

The GM should keep in mind that Advanced Schools are very selective about those with whom they share their secrets. A character who meets the steep requirements of an Advanced School may not be considered for training unless he has a sufficiently impressive reputation. The GM always has the final word regarding whether a character will be allowed Advanced Training, but it is recommended that no character with an Insight Rank of 2 or less enter any Advanced Schools.

It is possible for a character to be invited to a school of another clan. These schools showcase talent and ability more than political leverage, though most of the alumni tend to be from the appropriate clan. Simply put, a student of an Advanced School is expected to be loyal to his school and sensei just as he is loyal to his clan. This can produce a conflict of interests that a samurai would rather avoid. For this reason, some samurai deny invitations to Advanced Schools outside of their own clan to avoid potentially sticky questions of duty.

Shugenja and Advanced Schools

Entering an Advanced School that is geared for shugenja does not impede a shugenja's understanding of the kami. A shugenja's effective School Rank continues to increase in regards to casting spells as his rank in the Advanced School grows, if the Advanced School is a shugenja school. Unless specifically stated by the Advanced School, you gain no Affinity or Deficiency for entering an Advanced School, but retain any Affinity or Deficiency formerly acquired.

Crab: Hida Avenger (Bushi)

The Avengers are the Crab's elite heavy infantry, warriors skilled in combating the beasts of the Shadowlands. The Avengers embody the character traits most appreciated by the Crab samurai. These legendary warriors are as tough and indefatigable as the Carpenter Wall itself. The Avengers continue fighting against impossible odds, taking blow upon blow without faltering.

The Avenger has an intimate knowledge of the Shadowlands and knows the quickest way to defeat many Shadowlands creatures. Though he is primarily skilled in fending off the Shadowlands, in times of war the Hida Avengers are among the first Crab forces to smash into the opposing army.

The Avenger School shares the mindset of the Hida Bushi School, and a great majority of the Avengers are Hida. The vast majority of the Crab Clan Champions have been graduates of the Hida Avenger School. However, the Hida Avenger sensei accept those who meet its standards, even if they are out of clan. The few Kuni Witch Hunters that have joined the Avenger School have had their exploits marked down in history. Even a few ronin who proved their valor on the Wall have been deemed worthy to join their ranks, though they are always first offered fealty to the Crab.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Earth 4, Water 4

Skills: Defense 5, Lore: Shadowlands 5, any two Weapon Skills at 5

Advantages: Strength of the Earth, Crab Hands

Other: You must enter the Shadowlands alone and return with the head of an ogre, oni, or other Shadowlands beast no smaller than a man.

You may waive the requirement of the Strength of the Earth Advantage by increasing all Skill requirements by one.

Techniques

Rank 1: Wrath of the Crab

The Avenger can slip the blows of Shadowlands creatures and administer terrible strikes in return. Any creature with a Shadowlands Taint Rank of at least 1 may not reroll 10's on damage rolls against you. You roll and keep an extra die of damage against all such opponents. You may add your Earth to the total of all your damage rolls. You gain a number of Free Raises every day equal to your School Rank that may only be used to increase damage.

Rank 2: Be the Wall

The Avenger carries the spirit of the Carpenter Wall within him. You may add three times your Earth Ring to your TN to Be Hit, except during an Iaijutsu duel or when immobilized. When you attack an enemy, his Carapace Rating is considered to be reduced by half your Earth Ring (rounded up).

Rank 3: Hida's Technique

The Avenger reaches a nearly supernatural level of toughness, allowing him to withstand tremendous amounts of damage. You gain a Carapace Rating equal to half your Earth (rounded up). Your number of Wounds per Wound Rank is now 3 x Earth instead of 2 x Earth. Apply this Technique before The Mountain Does Not Fall when reckoning Wounds per Wound Rank.

Crane: The Kenshinzen (Bushi)

The Crane value perfection in all things, from their clothes, to their art, to every detail of their lives. The Crane's Kenshinzen have devoted their lives to perfecting the skill of the quick draw. The Kenshinzen are the best of the best, skilled duelists who epitomize the dominance of Kakita's Technique. To be a Kenshinzen is to be one of the fastest blades of the Empire. The Kenshinzen's speed, skill, and dedication to the tenets of bushido are known through the Empire, and even those who detest the Crane Clan grudgingly acknowledge the strength of the Kenshinzen.

The sensei of the Kakita Dueling Academy and the Kakita family daimyo are generally Kenshinzen. The Kenshinzen do not require prospective students to be Crane. Any who prove themselves honorable, dedicated to the Kakita style of Iaijutsu, and otherwise meet the requirements of the Kenshinzen may join the illustrious school.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Fire 4, Void 4

Skills: Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu 5, Lore: Bushido 4, Meditation 5

Advantages: Quick

Other: You must defeat a member of the Kenshinzen in a legal duel. The duel need not necessarily be to the death (and most often are not), but the candidate must win fairly.

You may waive the requirement of the Quick Advantage by increasing all Ring and Skill requirements by 1.

Techniques

Rank 1: Drawing the Void

In an Iaijutsu duel, you may focus an additional number of times equal to your School Rank. Your first focus does not increase your opponent's TN to Be Hit (but increases yours as normal). You always have the first option to choose "Focus" or "Strike." Additionally, you may add your Honor Rank to the total of your Initiative roll.

Rank 2: A Single Moment

The Kenshinzen has mastered the speed of the strike so that he may strike between the spaces of a heartbeat. You may make an additional attack per round. You always choose which Trait you wish to use in an Iaijutsu duel (Agility, Void, or Reflexes) instead of allowing your opponent to choose.

Rank 3: Kakita's Technique

The Kenshinzen is so unimaginably fast that he can strike all of his opponents at once. You may forego all of your normal attacks in a combat round to instead deliver a single attack to every enemy within 5' of you in that round. You make a single attack roll for this special maneuver, and compare it to each opponent's TN to Be Hit. Thus, it is possible to strike some opponents while missing others. You may make Raises on this attack. Additionally, you may add twice your Honor Rank to the total of your Initiative roll, replacing the benefit from Rank 1.

Dragon: Students of the Tao (Bushi)

The Student of the Tao is a samurai who is intent on unlocking the inherent spiritual powers that lie within every person. He researches the Tao, he meditates, and he attempts tasks that challenge his perceptions of the world. A Student of the Tao has taken his first steps on the road to enlightenment, and with this new awareness of the world, he is able to perform kiho. This school is not restricted solely to the Dragon Clan; any spiritual samurai who meet the sensei's approval may join the school.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: 4 in appropriate Ring (see below), Void 5
Skills: Kenjutsu 4, Meditation 5, Theology (Shintao) 6
Advantages: Sage
Other: You must choose one Element when you join this School. You must have at least a 4 in that Ring. The Techniques refer to this as your "chosen element."

Techniques

Rank 1: Path of Wisdom

The Student of the Tao is focused on unlocking the power of his soul. You learn three Kiho from your chosen element as if you were a monk. You may activate a second Internal Kiho by spending a Void Point. You may have both Kihos active for a number of rounds equal to twice your School Rank, at the end of which one of the Kiho's benefits immediately end (your choice). You may add your Insight Rank to the result of all your Contested Rolls involving Kihos.

Rank 2: Seek the Path

The Student of the Tao harnesses the spiritual power available to him, and can unleash the awesome force in the space of a heartbeat. You learn an additional Kiho from your chosen element, and another Kiho from any element, as if you were a monk. A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may activate an Internal or Kharmic Kiho without spending a Void Point. You may choose to either double a bonus received from the Kiho or double the duration.

Rank 3: Defining the Essence

As a true samurai, the Student of the Tao has learned to extend his spiritual power to his weapons. You learn a Martial Kiho from any element as if you were a monk. You may perform non-Atemi Martial Kihos while holding a katana and or a wakizashi. You may make an additional attack per round.

Dragon: Student of the Tao (Shugenja)

Requirements

Rings/Traits: 4 in appropriate Ring (see below), Void 5
Skills: Kenjutsu 4, Meditation 5, Theology (Shintao) 6
Advantages: Sage
Other: You must choose one Element for which you have an Affinity when you join this School. You must have at least a 4 in that Ring. The Techniques refer to this as your "chosen element."

Technique: Defining the Essence

The Student of the Tao harnesses the spiritual power available in his own body and soul. You learn three Kiho from your chosen element as if you were a monk. At every level, you learn another Kiho as if you were a monk. A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may activate an Internal or Kharmic Kiho without spending a Void Point. You may choose to either double a bonus received from the kiho or double the duration.

Lion: The Kensai, or "Sword-Saint" (Bushi)

The Lion Clan prides itself on its adherence to tradition and its reverence of the brave warriors that served the clan before them. The Lion pass down its warriors' methods and kata, ensuring that the next generation of bushi perform them exactly as their ancestors did years before. Among the Lion warriors are Kensai, or Sword-Saints, who have mastered the kata and made the movements a part of their very souls.

The Kensai are known throughout the Empire for having an almost supernatural connection with their katana. Just as the Kenshinzen are known for their mastery of iaijutsu, the Kensai are known for their mastery of kenjutsu, earned with hours and hours of practice.

Only Lion bushi may join this school. If a bushi of another clan were accepted to the school and learned the Kensai's secrets, it would dishonor the memory of the bushi who toiled to create the Lion's secret kata.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Agility 5, Void 4
Skills: Battle 5, Kenjutsu 6, Defense 4, Lore (Bushido) 4
Other: You must have learned at least one kata.

Techniques

Rank 1: The Power of Discipline

The Kensai's incredible skills come from countless hours of practice. You gain a free kata, for which you must meet all requirements. All your experience costs for kata are halved. A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may activate a kata while waiving its preparation time; the duration of kata activated this way is halved. You may add your Kenjutsu Skill to the total of all your Initiative rolls.

Rank 2: Ritual of Steel

The Kensai moves with blinding speed. You may make an additional attack per round. A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may gain the benefits of having spent a Void Point on a kata without spending Void. You may not then spend more Void to gain the benefits again.

Rank 3: Invincible Blades

The Kensai has mastered the kata available to him, and their movements and actions come to him as naturally as his next breath. At the beginning of each day, choose one kata you know; that kata is active as long as you are conscious. You may choose to deactivate this kata as a free action at any time. You may spend 3 Void Points as an action at any time to switch to a different kata or to reactivate the same kata. This kata does not count as an active kata for the purposes of having another kata active. You may add twice your Kenjutsu Skill to the total of all your Initiative rolls, replacing the Rank 1 Technique benefit.

Mantis: The Orochi Riders (Bushi or Shugenja)

It was purely circumstance that led the Mantis to find the Orochi.

Tsuruchi Ki and Moshi Minami wandered across the Twilight Mountains in search of a criminal who had eluded them for many months. Finally the pair cornered their quarry in a small cave, and followed him inside.

They found themselves in a world without rules, where the cave rocks flowed away like water, where the sky was nauseatingly green and the ground bright pink. They would have perished in the strange place had they not met the Orochi called Tsurayuki. They were surprised to discover that they could talk to the sea-monster.

The Orochi were originally from Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief, the Realm that they had somehow entered. The Orochi that existed in Ningen-do had fled from Sakkaku with the help of the Ningyo — water sprites native to Rokugan — but many of the younger Orochi were unable to do the same. Tsurayuki led the Orochi that remained trapped in the realm of tricksters; it had located the two Mantis because they had brought the feel of Ningen-do with them.

Ki and Minami would have perished there had Minami not been a daring shugenja. She knew a little about Realm magic, and persuaded Tsurayuki to help them, promising in return to try bringing the Orochi out of Sakkaku. Though Tsurayuki was wary of enslavement, it agreed; Minami used complex magic to form a pact between Tsurayuki and Tsuruchi Ki, binding their souls together.

Minami's magic worked, and the trio found themselves in the Twilight Mountains. Tsurayuki only partially materialized in Ningen-do, and could stay for only a short time before it was called back to Sakkaku. Ki found that he could concentrate on a part of his mind where he could sense the Orochi, summoning it to Ningen-do. It promised Minami that the Orochi under his command would form such pacts with other worthy warriors.

Tsuruchi Ki and Moshi Minami returned to the Mantis Clan as heroes. The Orochi Riders have an intimate connection with their Orochi, and the Orochi Riders have sworn to protect the Orochi until they are fully connected to Ningen-do and old enough to fend for themselves.

Only Mantis samurai may join this Advanced School.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Water 6, Void 5

Skills: Horsemanship 5, Lore: Orochi 3, Meditation 5, any Weapon Skill at 5

Other: Honor Rank 2

Techniques

Rank 1: The Orochi's Pact

You are attuned to an Orochi. The Orochi remains trapped in Sakkaku until you focus your energies to bring it into Ningen-do. A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may summon your Orochi by spending a Void Point and concentrating for six rounds. The Orochi stays in the mortal realm for thirty minutes before disappearing. Though you are able to touch and ride your Orochi (thanks to your spiritual connection), it is not fully materialized in Ningen-do. Others see only a hazy outline of the Orochi. You may unsummon your Orochi at will. Your Orochi swims as if its Water Ring were 7. It may shapeshift to a form with six legs (if you are on land when you summon the Orochi, it appears in this form). Shapeshifting requires you to spend a full round in Full Concentration. Your Orochi moves on foot as if its Water Ring were 5, and it may not perform its Constrict ability on land. You gain a TN bonus equal to your School Rank plus Horsemanship while riding your Orochi.

If you are a shugenja, your spell slots are permanently halved, rounded up. You may have Innate Abilities only of spells of your Affinity (you lose all other Innate Abilities). You have an unrivaled spiritual connection with your Orochi, and you may share thoughts with it at all times (even while the Orochi is in Sakkaku). You may expend a spell slot of any element to double your Orochi's speed and TN bonus for five minutes.

Rank 2: The Orochi's Loyalty

Your connection with the Orochi has strengthened, and now it fully materializes in Ningen-do when you summon it. It now takes five rounds of concentration to summon your Orochi. The Orochi stays by your side for sixty minutes before disappearing. Others may now see your Orochi.

Your Orochi swims as if its Water Ring were 8 and moves on foot as if its Water Ring were 6. A number of times during each manifestation equal to your School Rank, the Orochi can take the brunt of an attack meant for you. If you succeed at an Agility/Horsemanship roll with a TN of 20, the Orochi takes all of the damage instead of you. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your School Rank on all attacks while riding the Orochi.

If you are a shugenja, the Orochi will always move to protect you unless you specifically tell it to stop. You may expend a spell slot as a full-round action to double its Carapace Rating for one minute.

Rank 3: The Orochi Unleashed

The Orochi has escaped from Sakkaku, but its powers are so weak that it remains in an intangible form near you until summoned. It takes four rounds of concentration to summon your Orochi, and you no longer need to spend a Void Point. The Orochi stays by your side for ninety minutes before disappearing.

Your Orochi swims as if its Water Ring were 10 and moves on foot as if its Water Ring were 7. You may order the Orochi to attack someone instead of making an attack yourself. You may Raise five times on your attack to attack on the same round as your Orochi.

If you are a shugenja, you may expend a spell slot as a full-round action to heal the Orochi of a number of Wounds equal to 4 x your Water Ring.

The Bushi's Orochi

Earth: 8 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 5 **Air:** 3
Strength: 7

Rolls when Attacking: 8k5 **Rolls for Damage:** 8k6
TN to Be Hit: 25 **Fear:** 4
Carapace: 4 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 12

Skills: Stealth 5

The Orochi has the following ability:

Constriction: Any creature caught in the coils of an orochi takes 10k4 Wounds per round as the orochi constricts with its massive strength.

The Shugenja's Orochi

Earth: 8 **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 4 **Air:** 3
Strength: 6

Rolls when Attacking: 6k4 **Rolls for Damage:** 6k5
TN to Be Hit: 20 **Fear:** 4
Carapace: 4 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 12

Skills: Stealth 5

The Orochi has the following ability:

Constriction: Any creature caught in the coils of an orochi takes 10k4 Wounds per round as the orochi constricts with its massive strength.

Phoenix: Dragon Channeler (Shugenja)

The Phoenix Dragon Channelers are shugenja who receive the power and blessings of the Elemental Dragons. The first Dragon Channeler was Agasha Miyoshi, a young shugenja who prayed at the Temple of the Seven Dragons in the City of Remembrance during a time of desperate need. She could not explain how she received the power of the Elemental Dragons, but through hours of prayer and meticulous research she discovered spells that would help to call upon a slight portion of the Elemental Dragons' power.

To direct the powers of the Dragons, the Dragon Channeler must devote time, effort, and sacrifice a lot of elemental power. The Dragons do not bother with the affairs of mortals, and it takes a large sacrifice to gain the Dragons' respect. A Dragon Channeler is forever distinguished as a Dragon Channeler; many of his spells take on a distinctly different look. For example, the spell Fires from Within ordinarily launches a ball of fire against the target. A Dragon Channeler's Fires from Within calls a small dragon of fire to smite his target.

Only Phoenix shugenja may join the school, and few of them study with the Dragon Channelers. The Agasha are not yet on an equal footing with the other Phoenix schools, though no one can predict how the existence of this school will affect their political power within the clan.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Three Rings at 5

Skills: Lore: Elemental Dragons 5, Meditation 4, Spellcraft 5, Theology 4

Advantages: Blessing of the Elements (any Element)

Other: You may waive the requirement of the Blessing of the Elements Advantage by raising all the Skill requirements by one.

Techniques

Rank 1: Awaken the Power

You lose any Affinities and Deficiencies you had prior to entering the school. Your spell slots are permanently halved, rounded up. You learn two spells that call the power of the Dragons as Innate Abilities. You have a number of Dragon spell slots equal to your School Rank.

Rank 2: Harness the Power

You learn two more spells that call the power of the Dragons as Innate Abilities. You may spend one Void Point to reduce the casting time of a Dragon spell to three rounds. You may spend three Void Points to cast a Dragon spell without using a Dragon spell slot.

Rank 3: Beseech the Dragons

You learn three more spells that call the power of the Dragons as Innate Abilities. You may spend one Void Point to reduce the casting time of a Dragon spell to three Rounds. You may spend two Void Points to cast a Dragon spell without using a Dragon spell slot.

Multi-Element Spells

A multi-element spell is considered to be a spell of all of its elements. If a character has Affinity or Deficiency for any of the elements involved, these apply. If a character has an Affinity for one of the spell's elements and a Deficiency for another of its elements, they cancel each other out. When a multi-element spell is cast, the caster adds all his applicable Rings, divides by the number of elements in the spell, and rounds down. Any Free Raises or other effects that apply to any elements involved in the spell may be applied to the spell normally.



Dragon Spells

These spells are Mastery Level 7. When you cast one of them, you must spend a Dragon spell slot. Once a Dragon Spell slot is expended, it is gone. To regain Dragon spell slots, you must pray to the elemental dragons for one hour per slot. This requires a Void/Meditation roll with a TN of 25. Dragon spell slots cannot be regained more than once per day.

Courage of the Thunder Dragon

ELEMENT: Air, Fire
DURATION: 1 hour
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: 15′ radius

Those favored by the Thunder Dragon are said to be unstoppable. Your allies within range increase all their Rings by 1, and you increase all your Rings by 2.

Ferocity of the Fire Dragon

ELEMENT: Fire
DURATION: 1 minute
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: Self

The Fire Dragon fills your body with its destructive power. Anyone who hits you in melee must make a Raw Fire Roll at a TN of your Fire Ring x 5 or take Wounds equal to your Fire Ring x 3. Your Weapon Skills are increased by 3 (even if that would increase the Skill past 10). You deal an extra XkX Wounds in Hand-to-Hand combat, where X is your Fire Ring.

Mystery of the Void Dragon

ELEMENT: Void
DURATION: 10 minutes
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: 15′ radius

The Void Dragon is the embodiment of everything and nothing simultaneously. You gain Fear 10. You gain a number of extra Void Points equal to your Void Ring. You add triple your Void Ring to the result of all rolls.

Perfection of the Celestial Dragon

ELEMENT: Air, Earth, Fire, Water, Void
DURATION: 1 Rokugani hour
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: 15′ radius

You call upon the blessing of the Celestial Dragon, the embodiment of Tengoku. All allies within range may re-roll any roll once, keeping the second roll. A number of times equal to your lowest Ring + School Rank, you automatically succeed on any roll that is not a damage roll. You may not gain the bonuses of Raises on automatically-successful rolls, even if you would have gained Free Raises on the roll.

Power of the Shadow Dragon

ELEMENT: Air
DURATION: 1 Rokugani hour
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: Self

This spell has yet to be discovered by the masters of the Dragon Channeler School. The Shadow Dragon's realm is misdirection and corruption. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Air Ring on all rolls to persuade someone or lie to someone. A number of times equal to your School Rank, you may increase the TN of any spell cast nearby by 15. If the spell fails, the caster immediately gains one die of Shadowlands Taint.

Protection of the Earth Dragon

ELEMENT: Earth
DURATION: 1 minute
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: 15′ radius

The Earth Dragon is indestructible, unyielding, and unstoppable. Your allies within range gain a Carapace Rating equal to your Earth Ring, and you are Invulnerable.

Purity of the Jade Dragon

ELEMENT: Earth
DURATION: 1 Rokugani hour
AREA OF EFFECT: 25′ radius
RANGE: Self

The Jade Dragon's power protects you from corruptive influences. For the duration of the spell, any effect that would poison you or give you the Shadowlands Taint automatically fails. Any creature with the Shadowlands Taint within a 25′ radius suffers XkX Wounds every round, where X is your Earth Ring.

Tranquility of the Water Dragon

ELEMENT: Water
DURATION: Instantaneous
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: 15' radius

The Water Dragon's power lies in peace and healing. Your allies within range heal a number of Wound Ranks equal to your Water Ring. Additionally, everyone within the spell's range must immediately make a Raw Water Check, with a TN equal to 10 plus your Water Ring x 5. Those who fail must immediately stop fighting, and they cannot fight for another Rokugani hour unless someone directly threatens their life or honor (and they pass a Willpower check with a TN of 25).

Whim of the Air Dragon

ELEMENT: Air
DURATION: Casual Concentration
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
RANGE: Self

The Air Dragon is the embodiment of speed, grace, and liberty from the confines of the earth. The Air Dragon surrounds you and carries you in his grasp. You gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to your (Air Ring + School Rank) x 5. You may fly at a speed that is twice your normal movement speed.

Scorpion Shadow-Hunter (Ninja)

When the Shadow-Hunter school was created, the Scorpion Clan was in great need of a defense against the insidious Lying Darkness. The Shadow-Hunters was created in response to that need.

After the Lying Darkness was defeated, the Shadow-Hunter sensei discussed the school's future. Could they survive without an enemy to fight? Eventually they realized that while the Lying Darkness had been defeated, enemies of the Scorpion Clan still lurked in the shadows. The Shadowlands still threatened, in the form of monstrous beasts and maho-tsukai.

The sensei of the Shadow-Hunter school have added skills to their repertoire to update the school for its current challenges. The new Shadow-Hunter is truly a master of the darkness, a warrior who can destroy the monsters that threaten the clan. The Shadow-Hunters are not averse to targeting other samurai who threaten the Scorpion Clan.

Only a Scorpion samurai may join the Shadow-Hunter school. Few outside of the Clan know of the school. The Scorpion would like to keep it that way.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Awareness 4, Perception 4, Void 4
Skills: Hunting 4, Investigation 5, Lore: Lying Darkness 3, Stealth 5
Advantage: Heart of Vengeance (Goju and Ninube)
Other: You may waive the Heart of Vengeance Advantage requirement by raising all Skill Requirements by one.

Techniques

Rank 1: Strike of the Righteous

The Shadow-Hunter travels in the darkness to hunt his clan's enemies. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Insight Rank on all attack rolls against manifestations of the Lying Darkness, against anyone who possesses Shadow Points, or against anyone who possesses the Shadowlands Taint. These Raises may only be used to increase damage. Additionally, you gain a number of Free Raises to all Stealth rolls equal to your School Rank plus one.

Rank 2: Scent of the Prey

By spending a Void Point, you immediately become aware of any Living Darkness spawn or any individual with Shadow Points within 100'. Additionally, you may add double your Stealth Skill to your TN to Be Hit.

Rank 3: Strike from the Darkness

A number of times per day equal to your School Rank, you may choose to double the result of a damage roll against any enemy who was not aware of your presence before your attack. Once per day, you may spend two Void Points to instead triple the damage. The doubling or tripling must be declared before the attack roll.

Unicorn White Guard (Bushi)

The White Guard are the most fearsome unit in all the Unicorn armies, rivaled only by the Utaku shiotome, or "Battle Maidens." The White Guard was almost destroyed centuries ago when the Moto daimyo led his forces into the Shadowlands, planning to destroy Fu Leng's minions. The White Guard fell to the Taint and rose again as the Black Guard, among the deadliest of the Shadowlands' forces. The few White Guard who survived bore the shame of their brothers' defeat, and became sullen warriors obsessed with their own deaths. It was only after the Moto tribe emerged from the Burning Sands, and Moto Gaheris led them to destroy the Black Guard, that the White Guard returned to its former glory.

The White Guard are unparalleled horsemen and warriors, and study the teachings of both the Tao and the Fortunes in their pursuit of purity. Each samurai who joins swears an eternal oath to serve the Khan and the Guard above all others, and takes up the study of religion with incredible zeal to forestall any possible corruption.

Only Moto samurai are accepted into the White Guard.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Earth 5, Agility 5, Strength 4
Skills: Horsemanship 5, Theology 5, any one Weapon Skill at 5

Techniques

Rank 1: Shield of the Righteous

So pious are the White Guard that even the kami respect their devotion. If you are targeted by a spell, you may spend a Void Point to add three times your ranks in Theology to the TN of that spell. If you are targeted by more than one spell in a round, you may affect more than one by spending one Void Point per spell.

RANK 2: IN MY ANCESTORS' NAME

The merciless White Guard display incredible speed and devastating power. You may make an additional attack per round.

RANK 3: FURY OF HEAVEN

The certainty of the White Guard's religious devotion transforms them from simple samurai to unrelenting forces of nature. You receive a number of Free Raises on all Weapon Skill rolls equal to half your ranks in Theology (rounding down).

Imperial Master of the Courts (Courtier)

Although the Great Clans, particularly the Crane and Scorpion, pride themselves on their accomplishments in court, the Imperial families influence the Imperial Court far more than the clan courtiers. The Otomo excel in the court setting, and indeed consider politics their sacred duty. These self-styled masters make it their business to know everything about everyone, from the most powerful and influential Crane courtiers to the lowliest Tortoise ambassador. Nothing escapes their notice. These courtiers have absorbed history's lessons, and know that even the most loyal or unimportant subject can become a threat, as witness the Scorpion Clan Coup and Mantis Champion Gusai's treachery. Only those of Imperial lineage may learn these Techniques.

REQUIREMENTS

Rings/Traits: Awareness 6
Skills: Courtier 6, Deceit 3, Etiquette 4

TECHNIQUES

RANK 1: THE EMPEROR'S GRACE

A true Master of the Courts understands that there is no difference between attack and defense, and that words are far more deadly than steel. You may spend a Void Point to use your Courtier Skill in place of your Etiquette Skill or vice versa. This effect lasts for a number of Rokugani hours equal to your Insight Rank, although you may choose to end it before that time expires.

RANK 2: FAVORED AMONG THE HEAVENS

The honeyed words of a politician can sway even the most aggressive mind, and the proper suggestion in the heat of battle can transform an enemy to an ally. You may use your Deceit Skill in place of your Defense Skill, gaining all Defense Skill Mastery Abilities as if you possessed Defense at a rank equal to your Deceit.

RANK 3: VOICE OF THE SUN AND MOON

An edict from a master can shape lives as surely as if Lady Moon or Lord Sun had descended from the Heavens to take a role in the mortal realm. After spending ten minutes in conversation with someone, you may spend a Void Point to grant him any one of the following Advantages or Disadvantages: Allies (4 points or less), Bad Reputation, Social Position, or Sworn Enemy (4 points or less). An unwilling target may make a Contested Awareness Roll against you to avoid this. No target may be affected by this Technique more than once per season.

Minor Clan Defender (Bushi or Shugenja)

The history of Rokugan's Minor Clans has been checkered at best. The Snake were destroyed for practicing maho. The Boar were corrupted by a powerful artifact. The Badger were virtually destroyed when one of them summoned an oni. The Hare were disbanded because of their Kolat affiliation, although that charge was later proven false and the clan was restored to honor. Throughout it all, the Great Clans have ultimately taken little notice. The Minor Clans are little more than a footnote in the Empire's history.

There are those among the Minor Clans who struggle against this mediocrity. Some are men and women of such skill that the Empire must acknowledge their prowess. Such individuals are defenders of their families and clans, struggling to gain recognition for the Minor Clans despite the prejudice they face. Only Minor Clans produce Defenders, because Great Clans have nothing to prove in this arena.

REQUIREMENTS

Rings/Traits: Agility 5, Strength 4 (bushi); one Ring at 5 (shugenja)
Skills: One Weapon Skill at 5 (bushi); Spellcraft 5 (shugenja)

TECHNIQUES

RANK 1: HERO'S QUEST

A defender's determination fuels his reputation, and his reputation in turn makes him further determined to gain glory for his clan. Select one of your School Skills. Whenever you make a roll using that Skill, roll additional dice equal to your Glory Rank. Shugenja defenders may also add their Glory Rank to the total of all spell-casting rolls made for one chosen element.

RANK 2: STRENGTH OF HUMILITY

A true defender never ceases in his quest to better himself and his clan. If you are a bushi, you gain an additional attack per round. If you are a shugenja, choose any one spell of Mastery Level 3 or lower. You may cast this spell once per day with three Free Raises, and this casting does not expend a spell slot. This spell may also be cast normally, using a spell slot, but does not receive the Free Raises.

RANK 3: KNOW NO BOUNDARIES

Conviction and determination can elevate even the lowest samurai to greatness if he but follows his own sense of honor in moments of crisis. You may spend a Void Point to temporarily gain two additional Status Ranks, forcing others to recognize your talents and abilities. This Technique lasts for one Rokugani hour, during which time you may also add your Glory Rank to the total of all School Skill rolls, attack rolls (if a bushi) or spell-casting rolls (if a shugenja), and damage rolls.

Master of the Elements (Shugenja)

There are a handful of individuals born in each generation who command such incredible power that they surpass other shugenja to the extent that shugenja surpass peasants. They are the stuff of legends and nightmares, and their actions write history. Some have been great boons to the Empire, but others have threatened to destroy it. Many Phoenix who become particularly powerful Elemental Masters have been Masters of the Elements, as have those who bear the Naka name. Current Grand Master of the Elements Naka Tokei and Voice of the Emperor Isawa Sezaru are two recent examples. These Techniques become self-evident to anyone who can meet the daunting requirements.

Requirements

Rings/Traits: Any one Ring at 6, all others at 4
Skills: Theology 5, Spellcraft 7
Other: You must possess at least 5 spells as Innate Abilities.

Techniques

Rank 1: Stone Among the Flames

The strength of the elements purges weakness. You lose all Deficiencies, retaining any Affinities. This rank counts as an additional rank in your original School.

Rank 2: Wind Among the Waves

The fickle kami both command and obey, both whisper and shout, but a master can always find the path to reach harmony with the spirits. You may spend a Void Point when casting any spell to have the spell succeed automatically without requiring a roll. A spell cast in this way may benefit from Free Raises, but no other Raises may be made on it. Spells cast in this way do not expend a spell slot. This rank counts as an additional rank in your original School.

Rank 3: The Secrets Between all Things

The true secret is that all kami share the same spirit, regardless of their elemental affinities. You may cast any spell you know as a spell of a different element by increasing the spell's Mastery Level by 1. A Fire spell of Mastery Level 4, for example, could be cast as an Earth spell of Mastery Level 5. This rank counts as two additional ranks in your original School.



New Paths

While the vast majority of schools in Rokugan follow a linear path of study, there are some who believe that true mastery of oneself comes from mastering a wide variety of abilities. Only by varying one's martial training can one be prepared.

New Paths are individual dojo founded and maintained by influential sects or even powerful individuals within a clan. They typically teach a single specialized style of fighting or philosophy of combat. Many of these dojo only accept applicants from certain schools, and masters of the New Paths require their students to study at specific schools once their training in the New Path is complete. In this way they guarantee a course of study that will build upon and refine the training of the Path.

How Do They Work?

New Paths are just what their name implies: new ways of combining training styles to achieve a character whose talents are somewhat more diverse than a student of a single school. New Paths have a Path of Entry requirement, which states the exact school and School Rank (not Insight Rank) a character must be in order to be accepted in the Path's dojo. For example, the Defenders of Uikku accept only students who have achieved the second rank of the Shiba Yojimbo School, but are not yet third Rank in that School.

Similarly, New Paths have a Path of Egress. This specifies what schools the student may attend after his training in the New Path has been completed and he is ready to advance once more. Usually, this means that the founder of the New Path was originally a student of the mentioned school and arranged for his students to study there upon their graduation. As long as the character follows both the Path of Entry and the Path of Egress, the Multiple Schools Advantage is not required and no cost is incurred.

Example: Mirumoto Sumisu is a Rank 2 Mirumoto Bushi. He applies for permission to study at the dojo of the Nightingale Samurai, and is granted leave by his sensei. Upon completion of his studies with the Nightingale Samurai, Sumisu returns to the Mirumoto Bushi school, the path suggested by his instructors. Upon achieving Insight 200, Sumisu's School Rank will be Mirumoto Bushi 3/Nightgale Samurai 1. This is an acceptable course of study among the Dragon, and Sumisu does not pay for the Multiple Schools Advantage at any point.

Shugenja and New Paths

Entering a New Shugenja Path does not impede a shugenja's understanding of the kami. A shugenja may add his Rank in the New Path to any of his former shugenja School Ranks. Unless specifically stated by the New Path, you gain no Affinity or Deficiency for entering an Advanced School, but retain any Affinity or Deficiency formerly acquired.

Crab

Hiruma Stalkers (Ninja)

Because the Hiruma lands are so close to the heart of the Shadowlands, the Hiruma scouts are constantly in the crucible. Threats were identified and eliminated when possible, defenses prepared against inevitable assaults. Over time, a new sect of scouts developed: veterans skilled at infiltrating the Shadowlands forces and assassinating particularly crafty or powerful creatures before they threatened Shiro Hiruma. These scouts, the Hiruma Stalkers, have even been deployed against occasional human targets.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Hiruma Scout 2
Path of Egress: Hida Berserker 1 or Hiruma Scout 3

Technique: Piercing Strike

The Hiruma Stalkers are proficient hunters who can find the weakness of any target. If you strike a foe that is unaware of your presence (and thus has a TN of 5 + armor), you ignore all armor (including Carapace) for your first strike. When you make a melee attack, your target's Carapace Rating is reduced by your Insight Rank. You may add twice your Earth Ring to the result of all Contested Stealth Rolls.

Tsuru's Legion (Bushi)

The brother of the Great Bear, Hida Tsuru, created this heavily armored cavalry unit. Tsuru's Legion chases down Shadowlands beasts that bypass the Carpenter's Wall and is a great help to the Crab in Clan warfare. Hida Yasamura and Hida Kuroda have in turn led the Legion after Tsuru's death.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Hida Bushi 1
Path of Egress: Hida Bushi 2

Technique: Overrun

You receive a war steed, if you do not have one already. You gain a Free Raise when using a yari. If you are in the Full Attack posture, you may declare a charge as a full-round action. You must charge in a straight line and make an Agility/Horsemanship check with a TN of 20. If it is successful, you gain three Free Raises on the attack, and your opponent becomes dazed and cannot perform any actions the next round if he was not in Full Defense.

Yasuki Peacekeeper (Bushi)

The Yasuki Peacekeepers are Crab magistrates appalled by the banditry, looting, and destruction that overcame the Yasuki lands during the recent war against the Crane Clan. The Peacekeepers swore to protect the villages from the ravages of war. Hida Shara, the most famous Peacekeeper and the creator of this Technique, used her considerable skills to successfully guard the profitable Friendly Traveler Village.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Hida Bushi 1, Hiruma Scout 1
Benefit: +1 Agility
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Athletics, Defense, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Law, Polearms (Sodegarami), any one High or Bugei Skill
Outfit: As Hida Bushi or Hiruma Scout (your choice).

Technique: Uphold Order

The Yasuki Peacekeepers are defenders of the peace, charged with stopping drunk and disorderly samurai, fighting off bandits and the occasional Shadowlands force that slip past the Carpenter Wall. You gain a Free Raise to all attempts to Disarm any opponent. You may add your Fire Ring to the result of all Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, or Polearms rolls.

Crane

Asahina Sohei (Shugenja)

The Asahina is a peaceful family. However, many recent Asahina have not been able to tolerate the depravity rampant in the Empire, and have taken up arms. Asahina Sekawa, the current Jade Champion and Asahina Daimyo, is the leader of the Asahina Sohei.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Asahina Shugenja 2
Path of Egress: Asahina Shugenja 3

Technique: Vengeful Wind

During Mass Battle you roll Air/Battle (Mass Combat) for the Tides of Battle and Determination steps, and you may add your Air Ring to the result of the roll. In hand-to-hand combat you roll Air/Jiujutsu instead of Agility/Jiujutsu, and you add your Air Ring to the result of all unarmed damage rolls.

Daidoji Iron Warriors (Bushi)

Although the Daidoji are renowned for their unconventional battle tactics, it is still the duty of the Daidoji to make up the bulk of the Crane armed forces. When the time comes for direct confrontation, the Daidoji Iron Warriors are always in the front lines. These heavily armed spearmen face down their foes without flinching.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Daidoji Harrier 2, Kakita Bushi 3
Path of Egress: Daidoji Harrier 3, Hida Bushi 1

Technique: Strength of the Reed

The Iron Warriors exploit the reach of their weapons. When using a polearm or spear against an enemy who does not, you roll two extra dice on your attack rolls. In addition, you may ignore TN penalties for wearing armor on all skills except Stealth, and you roll two extra dice on Initiative rolls.

YASUKI COURTIER (COURTIER)

The Yasuki who returned to the Crane Clan were mostly courtiers. Though they were eager to join the famous Doji Courtier School, the "returned" Yasuki also wished to pass on the uniquely mercantile skills they had already learned to other Crane Yasuki. The Crane liked the idea, and allowed the creation of the Yasuki Courtier school.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Doji Courtier 1

Benefit: +1 Awareness
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Commerce, Courtier (Manipulation), Etiquette (Bureaucracy), Stealth (Sneaking), Tea Ceremony, any one Bugei skill, any one High or Merchant Skill
Outfit: As Doji Courtier.

TECHNIQUE: THE CARP AND THE CRANE

Those who returned to the Crane Clan brought their unique commercial skills. You lose no Honor for conducting trade in public. You add your Air Ring to the total of any School Skill Rolls. You may spend a Void Point to receive a number of Free Raises to any Contested Social Skill roll equal to your rank in the Doji Courtier School plus one.

Dragon

KITSUKI JUSTICAR (BUSHI)

The Justicars are magistrates trained in the Kitsuki method of investigation that relies upon physical evidence to draw conclusions. The Justicar is trained to hunt down criminals and bring them to justice. Their intensive Iaijutsu training helps them to ensure that the Rokugani Justice system sees their works as valid. When the Justicar finds his target, nothing will stop his relentless strike.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Kitsuki Courtier 3, Kitsuki Magistrate 2
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same school at Courtier 4 or Magistrate 3

TECHNIQUE: STRENGTH OF EVIDENCE

The Justicar believes in the righteousness of his duty, and his desire to bring criminals to justice knows no bounds. While you are facing, in a skirmish or duel, a criminal for whom you have proof of guilt, your Reflexes, Agility, and Void are all considered to be one higher, and your Iaijutsu Skill and Kenjutsu Skill are both considered to be two higher.

NIGHTINGALE SAMURAI (BUSHI)

The Nightingale style of fighting was developed by an ingenious young woman named Mirumoto Narumi during the early days of Toturi III's reign. She used her startling speed to move in and out of attack range while making an overwhelming number of seemingly uncontrolled strikes. An observer of her style gave her the "nightingale" nickname, comparing her movements to those of a bird in flight. Rosanjin approved of her style and gave her leave to teach her Technique to the Mirumoto students.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Mirumoto Bushi 2
Path of Egress: Mirumoto Bushi 3

TECHNIQUE: FLIGHT OF THE NIGHTINGALE

The Nightingale samurai use unorthodox tactics and incredible speed, attacking quickly while feigning a defense vulnerable to attack. For the purposes of this Technique, your Mirumoto Bushi School Rank is considered to be one higher. By spending a Void Point, you gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to five times your Mirumoto Bushi School Rank, for a number of rounds equal to your Mirumoto Bushi School Rank. You must move each Round this Technique is active. You may not use this Technique in an Iaijutsu duel. You may have this bonus active only once at any time.

TAMORI YAMABUSHI (SHUGENJA)

The Tamori have always been a martial shugenja family, as willing to throw themselves into combat as any bushi. The spells held in secret by the Yamabushi are powerfully destructive, but wondrous to see.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Tamori Shugenja 2
Path of Egress: Tamori Shugenja 3

TECHNIQUE: SOUL OF THE DEEPEST EARTH

The Yamabushi are attuned to the heart of the mountain. You add twice your Earth Ring to the result of your attack rolls. You may spend a Void Point to grant this identical bonus to another character, or to double your own bonus for a number of rounds equal to your Insight Rank + 1. Additionally, you gain a Free Raise on all spells you have learned as Innate Abilities.

Lion

LION DEATHSEEKER (BUSHI)

Honor is the most important thing in a Lion bushi's life. Should a Lion bushi loses his honor, he must cleanse it through blood. Many dishonored Lion choose to commit seppuku, but others choose to serve the clan as Deathseekers, those who attempt to fall in combat against the clan's enemies. Though the Deathseekers have no time to create a school, a similar madness overtakes each Deathseeker as they fight to die for the clan.

Technique Rank: Any
Path of Entry: Any Lion or Ronin bushi
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same school at the next-highest Rank
Requirements: Honor 2.5 or higher, Deathseeker Disadvantage

If this path is used as a Rank 1 Technique, use the following information:
Benefit: +1 Strength
Honor: 3.5
Skills: Battle, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu (Katana), Kyujutsu, Lore: Bushido, any two Bugei Skills
Outfit: As Matsu Berserker.

Special: When a dishonored PC wishes to join the Lion Deathseekers, he may immediately renounce his highest School Rank to enter this Path. The loss of Rank is permanent. This reflects the fact that most Deathseekers will not live to see their next Insight Rank.

Technique: Deathseeker's Oath

Deathseekers wish to redeem their dishonored names by falling in battle against the Lion's enemies, and throw themselves into the thick of battle regardless of danger. While in the Full Attack posture, you may reduce your TN to Be Hit by increments of 5 to gain one Free Raise per reduction on all attacks that round. These Raises may only be used to deal increased damage. You may not reduce your TN below 5. Additionally, lower all TN penalties you receive from Wounds by twice your Honor Rank.

Lion Warden (Bushi)

Lion Wardens guard the borders of the Lion Clan against bandits and other troublemakers. Wardens are trained to maximize the advantage mounted troops receive against infantry, but also learn how to counteract the benefits of cavalry should they face mounted opponents while afoot.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Akodo Bushi 1, Matsu Berserker 1

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 3.5
Skills: Athletics, Defense, Horsemanship, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Law, Spears (Yari)
Outfit: As Akodo Bushi, with steed.

Technique: Rolling Thunder

You gain a Free Raise on attack rolls against opponents who are mounted while you are on foot, or who are on foot while you are mounted. While using a yari, you gain a Free Raise on attack rolls. Additionally, you roll one extra die on Initiative rolls while mounted.

Tsuko's Heart (Bushi)

Tsuko's Heart is an elite unit created by Matsu Turi during the War of Spirits to hunt spirits who betrayed their oaths to Kitsu Motso, the Lion Champion at the time. These bushi trained extensively in exploiting the enemies' weaknesses. Tsuko's Heart continues to learn the weaknesses of the Lion Clan's greatest enemies to best serve the clan.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Akodo Bushi 2
Path of Egress: Akodo Bushi 3

Technique: Tsuko's Justice

Double the bonuses you receive from your Know the School Skills. You gain a Free Raise to all Disarm or Knockdown checks against members of those schools. Additionally, you gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to twice your Honor Rank.

Mantis

Moshi Guardian of the Sun (Bushi)

The male Moshi are eternally devoted to the female Moshi shugenja and have sworn to defend them from all threats. The guardians develop their skills with the yari and how to exploit their extra reach with an intensity that borders on obsession. Those who have seen the Guardians in action rarely attempt aggressions against the Moshi again, as the Guardians hold nothing back in combat with their enemies.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter 1 or Yoritomo Bushi 1

Benefit: +1 Agility
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Athletics, Defense, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Meditation, Spears (Yari), any one High or Bugei Skill
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, tanto, yari, light armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 2 koku.

Technique: The Vigilant Sentinel

The Moshi Guardian hones his skills until he can wield his spear as an extension of his body. You may spend a Void Point to gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Fire Ring to any Defense or Spears roll while wielding a spear. For every Raise you make while Guarding, your ward receives an extra +3 to his TN to Be Hit.

Tsuruchi Swordsman (Bushi)

Not all Tsuruchi become archers. Those who follow the way of the sword use a style that emphasizes speed and athleticism. With their agility, they are able to perform feats that seem almost supernaturally powerful. Their keen eyes allow them to cut arrows in midair.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter 1
Path of Egress: Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter 2 or Yoritomo Bushi 1

Technique: Darting Wings

Choose one Kenjutsu Emphasis that you possess; you add your rank in Athletics to the result of all your melee attacks that use that weapon. While in the Full Attack stance, you may roll Agility/Kenjutsu to cut an in-flight arrow aimed at another individual within 10'. The TN for this roll is the archer's attack roll. If successful, you slice the arrow in two and it inflicts no damage. While in the Full Defense stance, your TN to Be Hit versus ranged attacks is increased by twice your Kenjutsu Skill.

Yoritomo Emissary (Courtier)

The Yoritomo Courtier school emphasizes the use of intimidation as an effective tool to obtain goals. The Emissaries were those courtiers who became skilled in dangerous negotiations from the courts of mainland Rokugan to courts in gaijin nations. The Emissaries are skilled at keeping up discussions with hostile forces even when at the brink of war.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Yoritomo Courtier 2
Path of Egress: Yoritomo Courtier 3

Technique: Intrepid Negotiator

The Emissary finds a way to negotiate profitably even while dealing with hostile factions. For the purposes of this Technique, your Mantis Courtier School Rank is considered to be one higher. You may spend a Void Point whenever you make an Etiquette roll to add five times your Rank in the Yoritomo Courtier School to the result of the roll. You may make a Courtier (Manipulation) or Etiquette (Conversation) roll against an enemy's Intelligence x 5 to convince him that it would be unwise to harm you (he must succeed at a Willpower check against a TN of 30 to do so).

Phoenix

The Chosen Phoenix (Shugenja)

One of the greatest cells of the Bloodspeaker cult lurks within the Phoenix lands. Through the revival of Iuchiban and the great trials that followed, Bloodspeaker shugenja Agasha Kinuye has led her Chosen Phoenix with wisdom and an iron fist. Kinuye affectionately refers to her followers as Kinuye's Blood, and it is a tribute to her skill and ruthlessness that her cell has survived for so long. Many of the Chosen Phoenix remain fiercely loyal to the Phoenix Clan.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Any Phoenix Shugenja 1, any ronin Shugenja 1
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same school at Rank 2.

Technique: The Hidden Predator

You may cast maho spells using your Path of Entry School Rank instead of the Maho-Tsukai School Rank. You do not gain the other benefits of the Maho-Tsukai School. You gain an Affinity for maho spells. You gain two Free Raises on all Deceit rolls.

The Defenders of Uikku (Bushi)

The Defenders of Uikku are a secret brotherhood of samurai based in Kyuden Isawa devoted to guarding the scrolls of the prophet Uikku. Near the end of his life, Uikku predicted the destruction of the Great Clans, and the prophecies' very existence is a carefully maintained secret. The Defenders will defend to their deaths the scrolls that describe the Dooms of the Clans.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Rank 2 Shiba Yojimbo
Path of Egress: Rank 1 Shiba Bushi

Technique: Sever Tomorrow

The Defender of Uikku is attuned to the ebb and flow of the kharmic wheel. While on Full Defense, if an opponent successfully hits you (but before he rolls damage), you may spend a Void Point. Make a Raw Void Roll with a TN equal to your attacker's melee attack roll. If you are successful, the opponent's attack automatically misses, and you immediately hit him. Additionally, you add your Void Ring plus your Honor Rank to all your attack and damage rolls.

Asako Inquisitor (Shugenja)

While the Kuni Witch Hunters specifically seek out beasts and individuals with the Taint, and the Jade Magistrates hunt the Empire's criminals, the Inquisitors traffic in unexplained magical phenomena. They specialize in the location and elimination of maho-tsukai.

Technique Rank: 4
Path of Entry: Any Phoenix Shugenja School 3
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same school at Rank 4.

Technique: Stealing the Elements

Shugenja may command the kami, but the Inquisitors can influence them in subtle ways that most shugenja are woefully unprepared to face. By spending a round during the casting time concentrating, you may cancel one casting action by a shugenja. Make a Void/Meditation roll at a TN of 15 + five times the Mastery Level of the spell. This cannot cancel a spell with a Mastery Level of 5 or higher. Additionally, you roll one extra die on all attack rolls against shugenja.

Scorpion

Bayushi Violator (Bushi)

When the Scorpion were exiled to the Burning Sands, a young samurai named Bayushi Elyo was consumed with hatred for the Crane who had orchestrated the exile. His hatred made him careless, and he almost died in those foreign lands. Luckily, a group of immortal Ashalan took pity on him and saved his life. They gave him a crystal mask and taught him a Technique designed to disrupt the fighting style of his opponents. It is a vicious style of fighting, one that serves the Scorpion well.

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Bayushi Bushi 2
Path of Egress: Shosuro Shinobi 1

Technique: Concentrated Strike

You may spend a Void Point to force all opponents within 15' to spend an additional Void Point to use any of their Techniques, spells, kiho, or kata for the next five Rounds. If an ability did not require a Void expenditure before, it now costs one Void Point. Additionally, you gain an extra Free Raise for every round you Focus.

Bitter Lies Swordsman (Bushi)

The school of Bitter Lies was founded shortly before the Clan War began by the infamous Scorpion Clan Martyr, Bayushi Tangen. Students of this style are capable of extraordinary feats that seem to owe more to dumb luck and stubborn stupidity than to skill. Still, the school draws many students, and the Bitter Lies school grows every day.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Bayushi Bushi 1
Path of Egress: Bayushi Bushi 2

Technique: The Dark Sword of Bitter Lies

The Bitter Lies Swordsman succeeds where any normal samurai would fail. You immediately gain one rank of the Luck Advantage, even if you already have three ranks of Luck. Whenever facing an opponent of greater Insight Rank, you roll and keep additional dice on all attack rolls equal to the difference, but never more dice than your ranks in the Luck Advantage. Additionally, you roll and keep dice equal to your ranks in the Luck Advantage in all life-or-death situations outside of combat (such as attempting to climb over a vat of boiling pitch).

Should you ever retreat in the face of superior numbers or skill, you cannot use this Technique for one full day.

Shosuro Yojimbo (Ninja)

One of the primary roles a shinobi plays is a yojimbo. Whether hidden in disguise as a harmless servant or lurking in the shadows, the Shosuro Yojimbo destroys anything that seeks to harm his ward.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Shosuro Shinobi 1, Shosuro Actor 2
Path of Egress: Shosuro Shinobi 2

Technique: Protector From the Shadows

The Shosuro Yojimbo's greatest advantage over a bushi yojimbo is his great understanding of the shadows and the enemies that lurk in them. For the purposes of this Technique, your Shosuro Shinobi School Rank is considered to be one higher. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Shosuro Shinobi School Rank on Investigation or Battle rolls to notice hidden threats or traps that might threaten your charge. At the beginning of a skirmish, you may make a Contested Awareness/Stealth Roll against each opponent. If they are not aware of your presence, you may add twice your Stealth to the results of these rolls. If you win all of these Contested Rolls, you gain one full round to act before anyone else does.

Unicorn

Master of the Winds (Bushi)

Before the Shinjo family's fall, the Unicorn Champion was known as the Master of the Four Winds. With the Moto's ascension, and with the identification of Toturi's children as the Four Winds, the Unicorn now reserve the title Master of the Winds for those exceptional horsemen who continue to embody Shinjo's passion for exploration. Among the Unicorn, these individuals are still known as the Masters of the Four Winds, but the term is not used among outsiders to avoid insult to the Imperial line.

Masters of the Winds are rare and often solitary. They are invariably among the finest scouts and cavalrymen among the Unicorn, but are given to wanderlust, and roam the Empire's most distant reaches. Many have frequent contact with the lands beyond Rokugan, and are occasionally called upon by the Khan to make important trips across the Burning Sands.

Technique Rank: 6
Path of Entry: Shinjo Bushi 5 or Shinjo Scout 5
Path of Egress: Enter another Unicorn School at Rank 1

Technique: Spirit of the Wind

A Master of the Winds has a wild and unfettered spirit that expresses the wanderlust of all great Unicorn heroes. You add twice your Insight Rank to the result of all Hunting and Horsemanship rolls. You add 50% to both your movement rate and the movement rate of any steed you ride. Additionally, you may spend a Void Point to automatically re-roll any attack or damage roll made while mounted. You may reroll as many times as you wish so long as you continue to spend Void Points, and may keep whichever roll you choose.

Moto Priest of Death (Shugenja)

The Moto family hails from the plains far north of Rokugan, where the nomadic tribesmen called the Ujik-hai pursue a constant struggle for survival and domination. Before joining Shinjo and the wandering Ki-Rin Clan, the Moto revered dark, sinister gods called the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang, the Lords of Death. These dark entities were greatly angered when the Moto abandoned them, and pursued their former worshippers across the world. When they reached Rokugan, they cursed the Moto and destined them for darkness. It was not until Moto Chagatai, grandson of the Khan Moto Gaheris, battled the Lords of Death in the Spirit Realms that a compromise was reached. Chagatai pledged that the Moto would forever remember the Lords so long as they lifted their dark curse upon the family.

The Priests of Death are shugenja who revere the Lords in addition to their normal reverence for the Tao and Fortunes. Despite their best efforts, the Priests have been unable to gain recognition for the Lords among other clans, or even other families. Most traditional shugenja in the Empire regard the Priests of Death as sinister, blasphemous priests who flirt with powers they cannot comprehend, and await the day when the entire order is plunged into corruption and madness.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Iuchi Shugenja 1

Benefit: +1 Willpower
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Calligraphy, Horsemanship, Deceit (Intimidation), Meditation, Theology, any two High or Bugei Skills
Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto; kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, steed, traveling pack; 10 koku
Affinity/Deficiency: The shugenja who revere the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang split their focus between the kami and the Lords of Death, diminishing their elemental capacity somewhat. You do not gain an Elemental Affinity and Deficiency until you join the Iuchi Shugenja School, at which time you receive that School's Affinity (Water) and Deficiency (Fire).

Technique: Death's Sight

A Moto shugenja can peer into another's soul and perceive the proximity of that soul to Meido, the Realm of the Dead. By rolling Perception/School Rank (TN 5), you can instantly determine if any one of the following are present in another individual: poison, disease, the Shadowlands Taint, or any permanent magical effects (such as a blessing or a curse). You may search for one additional piece of information per Raise. The piercing, unworldly glare of this Technique makes it immediately obvious to the target.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, plus 3 Water, 2 Earth, and 1 Air. When a Priest of Death reaches Rank 2 and begins studying with the Iuchi, he gains 3 new spells just as if he had advanced in Rank in a normal Shugenja School.

Shinomen Guard (Bushi)

The Unicorn Clan sealed a pact with the Naga race during the serpent race's final days in the waking world. As part of that pact, the few Naga who remain awake are staunch allies of the Unicorn, and the children of Shinjo defend the sleeping Naga cities from intruders. Those Unicorn who follow the general Moto Chen, together with the ronin who serve the half-Naga woman Akasha, comprise the Shinomen Guard.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Any Ronin Bushi School, Naga, Nezumi or Unicorn Bushi School at Rank 1
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same School at Rank 2.

Technique: The Hunter's Spirit

The samurai who patrol the vast Shinomen Mori have mastered the art of hunting and wilderness survival, particularly the quick, lethal strike of a hunter. You may re-roll all damage dice with a result of 1, keeping the second roll. You gain a Free Raise on all Hunting rolls and on all Stealth rolls made in a non-urban setting.

Imperial

Emperor's Blessing (Courtier)

The Emperor's Blessing is the name of a group of Miya Heralds who travel the Empire, repairing damage from battles, natural disasters, or even just the ravages of time. Their reconstruction efforts make them much beloved by the people. The Blessing has been more active since the Clan War than in any time in history, constantly seeking to repair the tremendous damage from that war, the War against the Darkness, the War of Spirits, and the subsequent conflicts between the Four Winds and the Empire's struggle against the Bloodspeakers. Although the Miya are a small family with limited resources, the other Imperial families have never wavered in supporting the Emperor's Blessing.

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Miya Herald 1
Path of Egress: Miya Herald 2

Technique: The People's Gift

Those Miya who ride with the Emperor's Blessing are beloved like no other. Whenever you use a Craft Skill to repair an object or building belonging to another, you roll additional dice equal to your Honor Rank. Every successful Raise made on such a Craft roll confers a Free Raise that you may use on any Social Skill roll involving the owner. If a building is repaired in this way, the Free Raises may be used on anyone who lives within the village or city.

Path of Toturi (Bushi)

The fighting tradition of Akodo Toturi and his dynasty began with the ronin army he led during the Clan War. Those who studied alongside him — a handful of great heroes such as Toku, Ginawa, and the like — mastered a new Technique that Toturi developed. This new fighting style was taught to warriors throughout Toturi's Army, saw extensive use during the Clan War, and was adopted into widespread use by the Imperial Guard after Toturi took the throne. This Technique is still taught to promising students of Imperial Schools, predominantly the Seppun Guardsmen and the Toku Bushi School.

Technique Rank: 3
Requirements: Water 3, Battle 3, 3 Ranks in any Weapon Skill
Path of Entry: Toku Bushi 2, any Imperial School 2
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same School at Rank 3

Technique: A Samurai's Fury

The Path of Toturi is one of tranquility, where a bushi's anger is held in reserve to be channeled as a weapon for the calm mind. Whenever you spend a Void Point to gain 1k1 on a roll, you may also add twice your Water Ring to the total of that roll.

Seppun Magistrate (Bushi)

[Formerly the Seppun Investigator]
The Seppun Guardsman defend the Emperor and his holdings. When a crime is committed, they can call upon the resources of the Imperial Magistrates and many other magistrate groups throughout the Empire, but the family also maintains a small dojo for their own magistrates.

Seppun magistrates are consulted when crimes of a particularly sensitive nature have been committed and the family is unwilling to seek outside intervention, preferring to keep the matter quiet. This frequently involves issues with the Imperial families, although not the Emperor directly; any crime against the Emperor requires the full measure of his servants, and the Seppun are not so proud that they will risk the Emperor's safety because of their own arrogance.

Technique Rank: 2
Requirements: Investigation 3
Path of Entry: Seppun Bushi 1
Path of Egress: Seppun Bushi 2

Technique: Tengoku's Huntsman

The blessings of heaven aid the Seppun in their sacred duty to protect the Emperor, and none can escape their righteous scrutiny. You may roll additional dice equal to your Honor Rank on all Hunting and Investigation rolls. You may add your Perception Rank to the total of all your attack rolls.

Minor Clans

Minor Clan Diplomat (Courtier)

Although they have traditionally been excluded from high-ranking courts, a recent alliance between the Minor Clans has resulted in their inclusion in even the Imperial Court. As a result, many promising young diplomats from different Minor Clans have begun working together, both in public and in private. While they lack the resources and political clout of representatives from the Great Clans, these individuals are both enthusiastic and extremely cunning.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Any Courtier School of your Minor Clan at Rank 1

Benefit: +1 Awareness
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Calligraphy, Courtier (Political Maneuvering), Defense, Etiquette, any one Lore: Skill, any two High or Bugei Skills
Outfit: Kimono, courtly clothing, wakizashi, calligraphy set, traveling pack, 2 koku

Technique: Fox Among Wolves

The Minor Clans understand that they may never be accepted as equals, but their lesser status can serve as protection against more highly regarded courtiers. When interacting with an individual of higher Status, you roll extra dice equal to the difference in your Status Ranks on all Etiquette rolls for the duration of the discussion.

Suzume Storyteller (Bushi)

The tiny Sparrow Clan is often overlooked, with little to distinguish them. Their stark, almost ascetic lifestyle leaves little time to pursue activities most samurai enjoy. The one exception is the unique emphasis that the Suzume family, lords of the Sparrow, places upon oral history. The atmospheric conditions prevailing in Sparrow lands causes paper to decay rapidly. As a result, the Suzume have a rich tradition of storytelling that has made them popular in certain courts around Rokugan. In a strange twist, younger storytellers tend to be more popular than their older kinsmen, as the older generation of Suzume storytellers has an undeserved reputation for engaging in lengthy, dull stories from which listeners cannot escape.

Technique Rank: 2
Requirements: Performance: Storytelling 3
Path of Entry: Suzume Bushi 1
Path of Egress: Suzume Bushi 2

Technique: Ten Thousand Tales

A true storyteller can find the perfect story to fit any occasion, and can use parables to deflect any debate or accusation. You may spend a Void Point to use your Performance: Storytelling Skill in place of either the Courtier or Etiquette for a period of one Rokugani hour. All Techniques or Advantages that would normally affect one of these Skills affect Performance: Storytelling in the same manner. You may choose to end this effect before the hour is up. You may spend an additional Void Point to change the Skill being replaced from Courtier to Etiquette, or vice versa.

Woodland Tracker (Bushi)

Most Minor Clans' holdings are not the Empire's most desirable land. The samurai of the Minor Clans accept this, both as their sacred duty to the Emperor, in whose name they defend the lands he has granted them, and in the interests of their own survival. If their lands were rich in resources, after all, the Great Clans might covet them, and not all have faith that the Imperial decree preventing open warfare on the Minor Clans would be enough to stop the force of greed.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Any Bushi School of your Minor Clan at Rank 1

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Athletics, Hunting (Trailblazing) 2, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Stealth, any one Skill
Outfit: Wakizashi, any 1 weapon; kimono and sandals, traveling clothes, traveling pack; 1 koku

Technique: The Hidden Path

Woodland Trackers are intimately familiar with the wilderness throughout the Empire. You roll additional dice equal to your Insight Rank on all Hunting and Stealth rolls.

Ronin

The Tessen (Bushi)

The Tessen are an order of ronin who have dwelled within Toshi Ranbo since long before that city became Rokugan's capital. The Tessen regard it as their sacred duty to protect the people of the city, and have spent decades protecting them from the constant war between Lion and Crane. Currently, the Tessen continue their duties very discreetly to avoid drawing the ire of the city's Lion, Crane, and Imperial guardians.

Technique Rank: 2
Requirements: War Fan 3
Path of Entry: Any Ronin Bushi School 1
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same School at Rank 2, or a new Ronin Bushi at 1

Technique: The Iron Fan

The Tessen have perfected both offense and defense with the war fan, so much so that even innocuous versions can be dangerous. You may use your War Fan Skill in place of Defense when using the Full Defense maneuver. You gain the Defense Mastery Abilities when you reach the appropriate ranks in the War Fan Skill (Ranks 3, 5, 7, and 10). Additionally, you may use any wooden or metal fan, even a decorative one, as a war fan with the normal DR for that weapon (0k1).

Tsi Smith (Bushi)

The Tsi are unique even among Rokugan's handful of ronin families. Their progenitor was an assistant to a legendary Crane weaponsmith, one of such reputation that he was called upon to make a blade for the Emperor. The first Tsi was permitted the honor of crafting the blade's tsuba, and the Emperor was so taken with it that he awarded the ronin his own family name. Since that time, the Tsi have pursued many endeavors, but none so fiercely as their rich smithing tradition. Only one Master Smith exists at any time, although all of his apprentices learn the Tsi's unique Technique.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level path.
Path of Egress: Any ronin bushi School at Rank 1

Benefit: +1 Intelligence
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Craft: Armorsmithing, Craft: Weaponsmithing, Hunting, Kenjutsu (Katana), Lore: Weapons, any two Skills
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, any 1 weapon; kimono and sandals, smithing tools, traveling pack; 1 koku

Technique: Tsi Xing Guo's Blessing

The Tsi Smiths continue the secret techniques created by their sacred patron, the Fortune of Steel. Select one Craft Skill. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Insight Rank on all rolls with that Skill.

Wolf Legion (Bushi)

The Wolf Legion are the last true remnant of Toturi's ronin forces from the Clan War. These ronin embrace their status rather than begrudging it, believing that it offers them a unique impartiality. The Legion relies upon this impartiality to find the truth path of service to their Emperor, the only authority that the Legion recognizes.

The few remaining Wolf Legion members have settled into a comfortable agreement with the Dragon Clan after a period of uncertainty during the Four Winds Era.

Technique Rank: 2
Requirements: Honor Rank 2
Path of Entry: Any Ronin Bushi School 1
Path of Egress: Re-enter the same School at Rank 2, or enter a new Ronin Bushi at 1

Technique: Black Lion Talon

No strike is as deadly as that of a virtuous warrior. Whenever you spend a Void Point on an attack or damage roll, add twice your Honor Rank to the total of the roll.

THE FOUR WINDS SAGA

GOLD EDITION



The southern Scorpion lands, near the Shinomen Forest Dark clouds gathered on the distant horizon. A powerful storm would be here within the hour — but there were other concerns at the moment. Dark shapes moved in the Shinomen Forest, just out of sight. Something was there, waiting. But it would not wait for long.

"My lord." Toturi turned to see one of his Scorpion scouts bowing low. "Two outriders have not returned."

The Emperor nodded. "An ambush."

"We must get you to safety, my lord," a Scorpion officer said. "We will turn south, toward Crab lands. We can outrun them."

Toturi considered the matter for a moment. "No," he finally answered.

"My lord?" the officer asked. Every eye was upon them now.

"I will not run," Toturi answered. "Old I may be, but I am far from infirm. I will not flee from an enemy in my own lands."

The Scorpion officers glanced at one another, somehow exchanging information in a long look. It was amazing how all Scorpion seemed able to do that. "Please reconsider, my lord. We have no inkling of who they are, or what they want."

"Who they are does not matter," Toturi answered. "And what they want is obvious. They want the blood of an Emperor."

"They will not have it!" one Scorpion hissed, drawing irritable glances from his senior officers.

Toturi smiled at the young man's words. "Then draw your blade, my friend. We will teach them that 'Toturi' is still a name to be feared."

Toturi and the Scorpion rode forward toward the forest. As they grew closer, the shapes inside the forest grew more distinct. The oni and goblins rushed forward to meet the Emperor and his men.

Ryoko Owari Toshi, the City of Lies

Akodo Kaneka launched into a complex series of kata he had learned during his recent tutelage at Shiro sano Ken Hayai, alongside the legendary Akodo Ginawa. The taxing movements helped him clear his mind and deal with his unaccustomed anxiety. According to the reports he had heard, the Emperor was on his way to Ryoko Owari to speak with him.

His father was coming to speak with him.

Kaneka knew so little about himself. He and his mother had been facing certain death when he was an infant, and for reasons he would likely never understand, he had been drawn into the Water Dragon's domain and held there, safe and timeless, for years. When he emerged, he grew to adulthood in seclusion. What would his life have been like? Would he have had more than dreams and ambition? He might never know.

Kaneka stopped and rested his boken against his shoulder. The Emperor should arrive within hours. It was time to put aside his fears, his anxiety, his uncertainty. He must show his father that he was a man worthy of respect, of recognition. He must show his strength, not his weaknesses.

There was a sound at the dojo doorway. Kaneka turned to see a young Ikoma messenger. "Forgive me, sama," the young man said. He hesitated for a moment. "There... there are reports from the south. A force of Shadowlands creatures has attacked the Emperor's party." He paused again and rubbed his mouth nervously. "The reports say there were no survivors, Kaneka-sama. I am sorry."

Kaneka said nothing as the man left, closing the door behind him. He was numb, everything drained from him in a handful of seconds. Everything he had hoped for, a family, his birthright, a sense of belonging... gone.

"No," Kaneka whispered. He hefted the boken and swung it at the practice dummy, shattering both. "No!"

The Imperial City, Otosan Uchi

Hantei Naseru sipped at his tea with a wearied expression. "I assume you mean other than the obvious, dear sister?"

Toturi Tsudao's expression was one of mild irritation, which meant that she was close to fury. It was the only time that she permitted any expression to mar her emotionless façade. "If you have an obvious reason to circumvent my authority and appoint officers under my command, brother, then I would very much enjoy hearing your reasons. The only reason that readily comes to mind is an attempt for you to undermine my command, and I would prefer to continue believing you would not do such a thing."

Naseru offered a wry smile. "I did indeed appoint a small number of officers to positions within your Legion. It was a necessary arrangement that came about as part of a larger treaty I recently negotiated between the Lion and Phoenix. You do wish for the Lion and Phoenix to be allies, do you not?"

"You know that I do," Tsudao said patiently, "but I hardly think it would have delayed your plans to consult me first. Or does your vaunted talent for social interaction only extend to those who have something you want?"

Naseru opened his mouth to reply, but was brought short by a startled gasp from across the room. Their mother sat upon the throne, and for the first time he could remember, Naseru saw surprise in her face. "Toturi," she whispered.

"Father?" Tsudao asked, her voice alarmed.

Naseru already knew. There was but one thing that could surprise an Oracle.

The Celestial Order had been disturbed.

The hills above Kyuden Isawa

On the day of his gempukku, Toturi Sezaru had slain a massive oni that had inexplicably appeared near the Phoenix lands. No one knew where the beast had come from, nor how it had arrived so far from the Shadowlands. The Asako inquisitors and the Imperial Legions, including his older sister, had scoured the land for any sign of a maho-tsukai or more such creatures, but to no avail. On that day, Sezaru had taken the name Wolf for himself. The moment he had come face to face with the oni, he had understood his purpose in the world. There had been no fear in his heart. No, the fear had come only from the demon, once it had seen the power Sezaru commanded.

His destiny was that of a hunter. A predator. A Wolf. He had no prey, not yet. But he would find his path. Soon.

Something shattered inside the Void.

Sezaru rose from his meditative position in one smooth movement, unaware that he had done so. Something had happened, something terrible. Sezaru reached through the Void, searching for whatever it had been that had awakened him from his meditation.

Far to the south, near the Shinomen, he saw the huge, hulking form of an oni cut his father down. He saw the Emperor fall dead on the ground, his life's blood staining the grass.

Grief welled up inside Sezaru, but only for a moment. He felt something break inside him, and the grief was at once replaced by a cold fury such as he had never known. His father had been murdered. He would have vengeance.

Sezaru summoned the kami to take him into their embrace. It would take him hours to reach the fields where his father lay dead, even with his magic. By that time, the demon would be gone.

But the Wolf would find it.

Somewhere deep inside the Shadowlands

The man called Daigotsu came to his senses with a start. He rose quickly from the plinth where his body rested while his spirit wandered the Empire. A sinister smile split his features beneath the porcelain mask he preferred to wear. He stretched for a moment, regaining the sense of his body. It was so different from controlling the huge, powerful forms of the Onisu. In some ways, his body was weaker. But in all the ways that mattered, it was so much more powerful.

Daigotsu looked to the vast temple that was still being constructed. It would soon be finished, and when it was it would be far grander than any temple that mortal hands had ever constructed. His smile widened at the thought. This one was hardly constructed by mortal hands, was it?

"I have avenged you, my lord," Daigotsu offered a prayer to Jigoku. "I have avenged you, brother."

A sense of satisfaction overwhelmed the Dark Lord of the Shadowlands, filling his being with the familiar feelings of success and accomplishment. All was proceeding just as he had planned.

It had begun.

The Four Winds Saga (1158–1160)

The events of the Four Winds Saga begin in the year 1158, but as with most important events in Rokugan, much of what is to come is tied to the past. The following events play a significant part in what is to come. Many of these events are also described in the history section of *L5R RPG Third Edition*.

Daigotsu

In the year 1111, an Imperial caravan escorting Empress Hochiahime through the mountains of the Dragon provinces is attacked by Bloodspeakers. All members of the caravan are killed except for the Empress and the Imperial heir, young Hantei Sotorii. The Bloodspeakers follow an ancient prophecy that suggests the last surviving Hantei will become a vessel of unimaginable dark power. They prepare to ritually sacrifice Hochiahime and Sotorii so that the Emperor will be consumed by the prophecy. While they make their preparations, a daring ronin by the name of Yotsu steals into the Bloodspeaker camp, exchanges Sotorii with his own son, and escapes before the Bloodspeakers realize what has happened. It is only when Yotsu's son, Kyoden, is about to die and he defiantly denounces the Bloodspeakers that they realize their mistake.

Instead of killing Hochiahime and Kyoden, the Bloodspeakers realize that their goal of killing all but the last surviving Hantei has eluded them. They keep their hostages alive as potential bargaining chips as they flee toward Unicorn lands. When they learn that Hochiahime is with child, the Bloodspeakers plan to raise the child as one of their own. Infused with dark magic all his life, the Bloodspeakers banish the young Hantei to Jigoku so that he might achieve unprecedented power.

After a decade spent in the Realm of Evil, the lost Hantei returns to the mortal realm. He takes the name Daigotsu and proves to be unparalleled in his mastery of the dark arts. He is clever and charismatic, and the Bloodspeakers hope that he might one day lead them as Iuchiban once did, but Daigotsu has even greater plans.

The Oracle of the Void

Since the Clan War ended in 1128, Isawa Kaede has served as the Void Dragon's Oracle in the mortal realm. The Oracles normally remain aloof from human affairs, and for good reason. The mortal realm must remain in balance, unduly influenced by neither the Celestial Heavens of Tengoku nor the infernal pits of Jigoku. If the Oracles were to act too openly to sway the destiny of mortals, it would cause an imbalance that could only be corrected by the forces of darkness gaining greater power. To prevent such a tragedy, the Oracles interfere only when asked.

During the War Against the Darkness, these circumstances changed. The power of Nothing threatened both Tengoku and Jigoku. Many noble souls became subverted by the Lying Darkness, including Emperor Toturi himself. The purity of Void was a powerful weapon against the Goju, and only Kaede — betrothed to the Emperor — could help Toturi fight the madness that burned within him.

When the Lying Darkness was named and the war won, Kaede realized that her part in the Empire's future had been played, and that she must withdraw. Yet she found that she could not forsake Toturi: her love for him was too great. The Void Dragon pitied Kaede, for she had been its favorite Oracle, and thus the dragon did not strip her of her powers for her defiance. To her credit, Kaede was always careful never to interfere too greatly in matters of her husband's rule, always remaining distant so that her impartiality as an Oracle could be preserved.

The War of Spirits

At the end of the Battle of Oblivion's Gate (in 1133), many deceased heroes of Rokugan returned to the mortal realm to fight the Lying Darkness. Passing through the gate, they were granted mortal flesh once more. These souls hailed mostly from Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors, and Toshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter. At the climax of the battle, Oblivion's Gate was destroyed, thus stranding many of these ancient souls in the mortal realm. Though many of these returned spirits were content to coexist with their descendants, some had greater ambition. Many, particularly those who had come from the Realm of Slaughter, sought to usurp power: among them Hantei XVI, known as the Steel Chrysanthemum. One of the most hated Emperors who had ever lived, he was a cunning but utterly ruthless individual who gathered allies to destroy the Toturi Dynasty. He fanned the flames of hatred between the spirits and their descendants, polarizing the Empire and igniting a massive civil war.

In the end, the Steel Chrysanthemum failed to conquer the Toturi Dynasty. The returned spirits were offered a choice: they could seppuku honorably, or swear fealty to the Toturi Dynasty and undergo a Phoenix ritual that would render them truly mortal, silencing the influence of Toshigoku that had driven so many spirits to madness. The Steel Chrysanthemum offered his surrender, knowing full well that he had sufficient support among the populace that the Emperor would not dare kill him outright. He began to plan his revenge, demanding among the conditions of his surrender that he be allowed to tutor Toturi's youngest child, Naseru.

The Steel Chrysanthemum died several years later under mysterious circumstances. Though Naseru was said to have been present at the Hantei's death, the Toturi Dynasty rigorously denied any allegations of his involvement.

The Imperial Heirs

As of the year 1158, Toturi I had three acknowledged adult children — Tsudao, Naseru, and Sezaru. Though each was worthy and respected, Toturi refused to name any one of them as his heir; his wife, Kaede, was nominated as his official successor. Many whispered that this was due to the existence of an illegitimate older child, Akodo Kaneka, a former ronin serving with the Lion Clan. Toturi never officially recognized Kaneka as his son. When Toturi announced an unexpected trip to Ryoko Owari, where Kaneka had been dwelling for several months, many theorized that the Emperor planned to recognize his bastard son — but Toturi was attacked on the journey by a force of oni and goblins, and slain.

Role-Playing In The Four Winds Era

Political infighting was prevalent during this period. Relations between the Phoenix, Lion, and Dragon Clans were particularly strained. Characters who hail from these clans and do not have a higher purpose for working together (such as Emerald Magistrate status or mutual posting in an Imperial Legion) will have great difficulty working together while their clans are at war. While it is of course not impossible that an individual Dragon and Phoenix could find common ground, it is not something that should be assumed and certainly not a matter to be ignored. The Dragon are in particularly dire straits during this period, caught between war with the Phoenix Clan and the threat of famine due to the Dark Oracle of Fire's machinations. Dragon player characters will likely see gathering allies or relief for their clan as their primary concern even if they are far from home.

The Four Winds themselves are another important consideration. With four heirs in a contest for the throne, it is inevitable that the player characters will seek to support one of them. Will the player characters be unified in their support of a single Wind? Will their loyalties to Toturi's heirs cause conflict and division within the party? Remember that in your campaign, Naseru's coronation not need be inevitable. The actions of the player characters may very well affect the succession. If the player characters support Toturi Tsudao, for example, their actions may prevent her death and lead to her becoming the Empress.

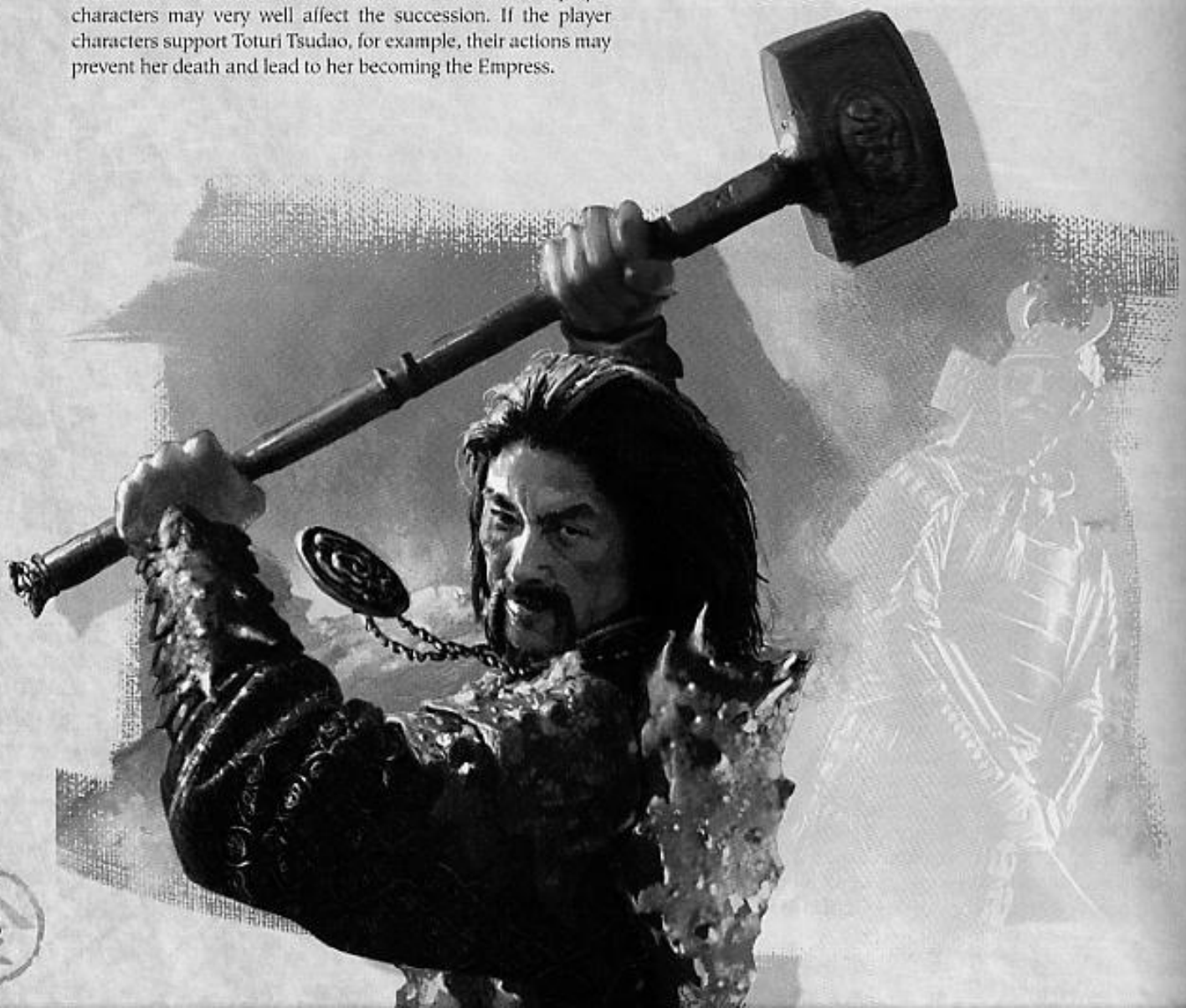
The Great Clans during the Four Winds Saga

The Crab Clan

Current Champion: Hida O-Ushi

Though she is still active, the years are beginning to weigh upon O-Ushi. She fears one day soon she will be unable to rule her clan with the strength it needs, and hopes that she might meet her end in battle so as to serve as an example to her clan. Her two sons, Kuroda and Kuon, appear to be worthy heirs and will no doubt serve the clan well.

Alliances: The Crab share a strong friendship with the Unicorn. Though they have traditionally been on friendly terms with the Mantis, the Mantis Champion's recent distance from the rest of the Empire has weakened these ties.



The Phoenix have attempted to gain the Crab's support in their war against the Dragon, advances the Crab have politely rebuffed. The Phoenix argue that if the Dragon were dealt with, the Lion and Phoenix could pursue the original purpose of their alliance — to help the Crab destroy the Shadowlands. The Crab retort that, given their historically low jade supplies, such an invasion would be doomed from the outset and thus is not a dream worth pursuing.

Enemies: The Yasuki daimyo and his son have both died recently, and the rightful Yasuki heir has been revealed to be the Crane Daidoji Hachi. The Crane Clan's attempts to claim the Yasuki lands have been met with stiff Crab resistance. Relations between these clans are worse than they have been in centuries, and only Toturi's arbitration has prevented open war. Relations between the Crab and their northern neighbors, the Scorpion, are poor, but no more so than they have always been.

Objectives: The most pressing objective of the Crab is to prove the clan's claim on the Yasuki lands and family. Without the Yasuki traders, the Crab fear they will become reliant on other clans' generosity to pursue their war against the Shadowlands.

The only barrier to the clan committing itself strongly to the defense of the Yasuki territories is the eternal enemy, the Shadowlands. Every soldier that guards the Yasuki territories is one fewer standing on the Kaiu Wall. Hida O-Ushi personally leads the defense of the Yasuki territories while leaving her sons, Kuon and Kuroda, to manage the defense of the Wall. The Shadowlands have been silent for nearly eight years, but the Crab have not become lax in their duties — only more suspicious.

The Crab and the Four Winds

As the conflict of succession begins, the Crab are truly indifferent to which of the heirs takes the throne. As Hantei Naseru was instrumental in revealing the Crane Yasuki heir, few Crab relish the prospect of his accession, but otherwise the Crab are equally divided in their support of Toturi's children. As usual, Imperial matters are far too removed from the Kaiu Wall for the Crab to care.

The Crane Clan

Current Champion: Doji Kurohito

Ambitious and brave, Doji Kurohito wishes to return his clan to its former glory, unrivaled in the courts and feared on the battlefield. What he does not realize is that his actions are being influenced by Chukandomo, the ancient blade he carries. The sword carries a powerful curse — it makes its wielder capable of great things, but should he ever fail to meet the sword's exacting standards, it will summon the tormented spirits of its past wielders to destroy him. Though Kurohito suspects that his sword is more than it appears, he is unaware of the full truth.

Alliances: The Crane have spent years cultivating allies in every house, in service of their goal to reassert mastery over the courts. Even their hated enemies, the Lion, are not quite as hostile toward the Crane as they have been in generations past.

Enemies: Since the end of the War of Spirits, when the Scorpion were instrumental in Toturi's salvaging his dynasty, the Scorpion have dominated the Imperial Courts. The Crane are eager to see their bitter rival's star fall. Though the Crane bear the Crab no ill will, the opportunities offered in Yasuki lands are too good to pass up. The Crane realize the importance of the Crab's war against the Shadowlands, but argue that the Shadowlands have not been a threat for nearly a decade; surely the Crab can afford to spare the Yasuki lands and supplement their supplies through trade. Kurohito and the other Crane involved in the clan's expansion into Yasuki territories hope to claim the lands quickly and uneventfully, making it clear that to oppose them would ultimately require a greater sacrifice than the Crab can afford to make.

Objectives: The Crane's current objectives are simple: build power and influence, returning to their former glory. During the Hantei Dynasty the Crane always had the Emperor's ear, as every Emperor had a Doji bride. Now, not only is this no longer the case, but the current dynasty is descended from the Lion Clan — the Crane's traditional enemies. The Crane recognize that if they wish to regain their previous economic and political dominance they must make sacrifices and adopt new strategies. Though they have despised the Yasuki ever since that family left the Crane for the Crab nearly eight centuries ago, the Crane will eagerly reclaim their lands if it will help the clan restore its strength. Offering the hand of friendship to the Lion also comes hard, but it is a necessary sacrifice, at least for now.

The Crane and the Four Winds

While there are Crane supporters of every Wind, far more support Toturi Tsudao than any of her brothers. Tsudao is honorable, courageous, beautiful, and pure: everything the Crane respect in a samurai. While she has demonstrated considerable naiveté when off the battlefield, the Crane do not view this as a weakness. If anything, it is an advantage, for it means that she will require politically capable allies — such as the Crane — when she takes her father's throne.

The Dragon Clan

Current Champion: Hoshi

The man-beast Hoshi is the son of Togashi, the Dragon Clan's founder and child of the Sun and Moon. Hoshi assumed his father's role as Champion years ago, but has continued Togashi's tradition of remaining removed from worldly events. He relies on his son Togashi Satsu to administrate the needs of the clan's tattooed orders, and on the Mirumoto family daimyo, Mirumoto Uso, to deal with matters that affect the clan as a whole. Hoshi often offers advise to his subjects, but frequently in the form of riddles that only perplex his adherents. Of late, Hoshi has been increasingly distant, and among the Hoshi order believe that he is preparing to depart the mortal realm altogether.

Alliances: The Dragon maintain their friendship with the Scorpion. The Dragon have neither demanded nor expected any aid from the Scorpion against the Phoenix, though the Scorpion have dispatched small units of samurai to help defend outlying Dragon villages. The Scorpion have offered the starving Dragon what food they can spare, but harvests have never been bountiful in the Scorpion's rocky territories. Other clans remain neutral toward or wary of the mysterious Dragon.

Enemies: The Dragon are embroiled in a bitter war with the Phoenix. When volcanic explosions rendered much of the Dragon Clan's farmlands a useless wasteland, the Dragon began settling the previously uninhabited lands between their eastern-most settlements and the Phoenix's western villages. The Phoenix reacted violently, defending the border that had been laid out by the Imperial Cartographers. The Lion have opposed the Dragon on the field of battle, though it is clear that their samurai fight in the name of their alliance with the Phoenix and not out of hatred for the Dragon. Of course, the Lion are grateful for an excuse to take up arms against the Dragonfly, whom the Lion have hated since that Minor Clan's inception.

Objectives: Currently the Dragon Clan's most pressing objective is survival. With so much of their fertile lands destroyed, the Dragon cannot possibly survive the coming winter unless they either find new farmland or an alternate food source. Cooler heads have noted that the war between their clan and the Phoenix seems abrupt for two clans that traditionally value peace, but plumbing the true reasons for the war is a mystery that must wait until the clan's future is secure.

The Dragon and the Four Winds

While the Dragon respect all of Toturi's children, none have earned their admiration more than Toturi Sezaru. He is wise, thoughtful, and pious, all qualities that the Dragon value.

The Lion Clan

Current Champion: Matsu Nimuro

The Golden Lion of Toshi Ranbo may be the most renowned and feared samurai in the Empire. Though most regard him as a violent and wrathful man, he is surprisingly reserved and thoughtful. Nimuro recognizes the value of reputation, and knows that by encouraging others to fear him he might defeat an enemy before swords are drawn. In this, he is perhaps more like an Akodo than a Matsu, but Nimuro cares little for stereotypes — only success.

Alliances: The Lion share an alliance with the Phoenix Clan brokered by the Emperor's son, Naseru. The original intent was to forge a powerful army of the Empire's greatest shugenja and samurai to march upon the Shadowlands and help the Crab defeat their eternal enemies once and for all. When the Dragon invaded their territory and the Phoenix asked for aid, many Lion eagerly complied, glad of a chance to confront the Dragon's allies in the Dragonfly Clan — a thorn in the Lion's side for over 400 years. The Lion also have a quiet alliance with the Scorpion. While the two clans are unlikely to leap to one another's aid, Bayushi Yojiro and Matsu Nimuro have a great deal of respect for one another; they often share information, particularly regarding their mutual enemy, the Crane.

Enemies: Though the Lion are technically at war with the Dragon, they bear the Dragon no grudge. Only their obligation to the Phoenix and their hatred for the Dragonfly drive them to war. Though they have not been aggressive toward the Crane Clan for years, few Lion would ever consider the Crane anything but enemies.

Objectives: The Lion are currently very strong in their position as the Emperor's Right Hand. Their armies are fit and strong, their lands are unchallenged, and they have a strong ally in the Phoenix. They want for nothing, and to many veteran Lion soldiers this is the only true concern. A satisfied soldier becomes complacent, and the experienced officers worry that soft times will weaken them against unseen enemies.

The Lion and the Four Winds

The clan is divided. The Ikoma respect Hantei Naseru's traditional values and political clout. The Matsu respect Toturi Tsudao's honor and battlefield experience. The Kitsu revere Toturi Sezaru, one of the few outsiders to train in their sacred temples. The Akodo support Akodo Kaneka as one of their own. Matsu Nimuro worries that these loyalties may cause division within his clan should the conflict over the throne escalate, but so far the families seem content to endure these differences of opinion.

The Mantis Clan

Current Champion: Yoritomo Aramasu

Though outsiders consider him a recluse, the Mantis revere Aramasu. Most of Rokugan is unaware of the war that the Mantis Clan fought during the War of Spirits. In the distant Ivory Kingdoms, Aramasu battled the Cult of the Destroyer, returned to power the rightful ruling house of the gaijin kingdom, and forestalled the cult's invasion of Rokugan. Though the Emperor never publicly recognized Aramasu for his accomplishments, the Mantis, especially those who fought beside Aramasu in the Ivory Kingdoms, hold him in the same esteem as Osano-Wo, Kaimetsu-Uo, and Yoritomo.

Alliances: Due to pressing concerns in foreign lands, the Mantis have been unable to focus on Rokugani politics in recent years. They are still on good terms with the Crab and Crane, but otherwise have no strong allies. This is a problem Aramasu is looking to rectify.

Enemies: Just as they have few alliances, the Mantis have few true enemies. Though the Scorpion hold a deep grudge against Aramasu, the hatred is not presently mutual.

Objectives: Having succeeded in saving the Empire from gaijin invasion, the Mantis are now concerned about their homeland. Their highest priority is to renew the friendships and alliances that they have neglected for so long.

The Mantis and the Four Winds

Of all of Toturi's children, the Mantis feel the greatest amount of empathy for Kaneka. Like Yoritomo, he has forged his own destiny despite all attempts to bar his path. He is a warrior who knows how to balance ambition with honor — a quality the Mantis understand and respect.

The Phoenix Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Shiba Tsukune

A veteran leader of advancing years, Tsukune wishes that her reign over her clan could have ended on a more peaceful note. Unlike all previous Phoenix Champions, Tsukune no longer bears Ofushikai, the Ancestral Sword of the Phoenix that served as an anchor for the immortal Soul of Shiba. Tsukune fears that without the sword, the Soul will pass on with her death and the Kami's eternal wisdom will be lost to reincarnation.

Alliances: The Phoenix are allied with the Lion Clan, an alliance brokered by the Emperor's son, Naseru. Though many Phoenix objected at first to allying with such a warlike clan, opposition quickly faded when the Phoenix realized the Lion could help them defend against the Dragon's invasion of their lands. The Phoenix are on friendly terms with the Crane, a fact their courtiers avoid emphasizing when their Lion allies are present.

Enemies: While the Phoenix usually avoid confrontation, they are currently embroiled in a fierce border dispute with the Dragon Clan. Although unpopulated, the land that the Dragon refugees have claimed is on the Phoenix side of the border, and the clan rallied in defense of its land. Emperor Toturi did what he could to prevent the war, but as the Dragon poured over the Phoenix border, the conflict became inevitable.

Objectives: The Phoenix want the Dragon to leave their lands so that they might return to their solitude. A handful of Phoenix wonder at the timing of this invasion: why would the Dragon turn against them on the eve of a great assault against the Shadowlands? Some go so far as to accuse Togashi Satsu of a secret alliance with dark forces, while others theorize that both sides have been somehow manipulated.

The Phoenix and the Four Winds

The Phoenix Clan consider Toturi Sezaru a Phoenix in all but name, but that is not to say that they feel he would be the best Emperor. The Elemental Council know how erratic and unpredictable Ishiken can be, and fear that Sezaru would be lost to madness if the responsibility of rule were placed upon his head. Instead, they support Tsudao, the eldest of Toturi's legitimate children.

The Scorpion Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Bayushi Yojiro

The Master of Secrets has ruled his clan for a long time. He is greatly respected even outside his clan due to his heroism during the War of Spirits, perhaps more respected than any Scorpion Champion in memory. Yojiro has not allowed success to dull his vigilance, and he remains quite active despite his advancing age.

Alliances: The Scorpion are closely allied with the Dragon Clan, though they regret being unable to offer their friends more than token aid and spare supplies during their trying times. Yojiro has a secret alliance with Matsu Nimuro, mostly involving mutual exchanges of information.

Enemies: The Scorpion hate Yoritomo Aramasu personally, for the Mantis Champion is a former Scorpion. That being said, the Scorpion bear no particular ill will toward the Mantis in general. Once Aramasu has been dealt with, the rest of the Mantis will be of no concern. A more pertinent threat is the growing power of the Crane Clan. While the Scorpion maintain their power through coercion and intimidation, the Crane gather friendships and alliances. The Scorpion retain their mastery of the courts for now, but the Crane gather strength with each passing day.

Objectives: Currently the Scorpion seek only to maintain their power. Unknown to Bayushi Yojiro, some among the Scorpion have become dissatisfied with their Champion's rule and have sought solace in a secret organization known as the Shadowed Tower.

The Scorpion and the Four Winds

The conflict between Toturi's children, while unfortunate, presents opportunities. While the Scorpion have sought to ingratiate themselves to each of the heirs in the event of their succession, most support Hantei Naseru for his pragmatism, intellect, and ruthlessness.



The Unicorn Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Moto Gaheris

Once a legendary warlord of the Burning Sands, Gaheris followed Lady Shinjo to Rokugan and became the Champion of the Unicorn Clan. He has lived to see his son die a hero in the War of Spirits and his grandson become a proud, strong warrior. Weakened by age and illness, Gaheris is largely confined to Shiro Moto, escaping periodically to hunt despite the wishes of his attendant healers. To his clan, Gaheris' grandson, Chagatai, is already Khan in all but name.

Alliances: The Unicorn are strongly allied with the Crab. They have dispatched several units of Baraunghar cavalry to aid the Crab's defense of the Wall while their allies attend to the Crane invasion of the Yasuki lands.

Enemies: Tensions between the Unicorn and Scorpion are high in the city of Ryoko Owari. The city is currently under Unicorn guardianship, but the Scorpion are eager to reassert their rule. Outside of this minor conflict, the Unicorn currently have no true enemies.

Objectives: The Unicorn seem almost to be on the sidelines of all major conflicts in the Empire, left at peace and largely ignored. To the young Moto Chagatai, who will soon inherit rulership of his clan, this is unacceptable. The Unicorn are warriors. On the Burning Sands, the name Moto was breathed with fear and trepidation; here, in their true homeland, they are beneath concern. One thing is certain — on the day he becomes Khan, the Empire will learn to respect the Unicorn.

The Unicorn and the Four Winds

Though many of the Unicorn respect and support Toturi Tsudao, Moto Chagatai has made no secret of his admiration for Akodo Kaneka, treating the Lion as an honored guest in the city of Ryoko Owari.

Part I
A Perfect Cut

The Crab army looked out over the plains at the Crane forces on the horizon. There was little talk among the ranks, only the restless clattering of armor as the multitude of Hida and Hiruma bushi prepared for battle. The bickering in court over the fate of the Yasuki family had gone on for months. The proclamation by Hantei Naseru that the rightful heir to the position of family daimyo belonged to a Crane had been the last straw. The children of Hida would never accept such an insult, nor allow the Crane to annex their holdings. What did the Crane know of duty and suffering? Theirs was a life of pampered excess, but rather than support those who made their luxury possible, they sought to take more. The Crane had become greedy and bloated, like scavengers on a battlefield. And now it was time to end their indulgence.

Kaiu Umasu stood impassively, though thoughts of his Crane enemies stirred his Crab blood. He was honored to stand at the head of such a glorious Crab army, even more so than usual because he was among the command staff of the Crab Champion, the legendary Hida O-Ushi.

O-Ushi stood at the army's fore, overlooking the slope down onto the battlefield. Her die-tsuchi, a weapon that had destroyed tens of thousands of enemies, was slung casually over her shoulder. Her expression, so often twisted in distaste or irritation, was strangely serene. Umasu found it odd that it was only here, in the presence of violence, that she ever found peace. "What are your orders, O-Ushi-sama?" he asked, pride evident in his voice.

The Champion did not answer for a moment. "Standard attack formation," she finally said. "Hida heavy infantry units in the front, polearms first. Heavy weapons following, with Hiruma light infantry flanking on the north and southwest."

"Hai!" Umasu turned and nodded to his signalmen, who immediately rode north and south to flag the appropriate units. He turned back. "Our forces are prepared, my lady. Victory will belong to the Crab today."

"They say that Kurohito leads the Crane himself," O-Ushi said casually. "He is among the most feared men in Rokugan. Few award me such a title any more."

"They are fools if they do not fear you, O-Ushi-sama."

"Perhaps they are." The Lady of the Crab shrugged, obviously unconcerned. "Or perhaps I am simply too old to be of concern. Who can say? It matters little. For all his strengths, for all his alleged brilliance, there is one weakness that Kurohito cannot overcome."

"What is that, my lady?" Umasu asked.

O-Ushi turned back to the engineer with a wide grin. "He is not a Crab."

Year 1158, Month of the Boar (Late Fall/Early Winter)

Death of Toturi I

While traveling to Ryoko Owari to meet with his illegitimate son Kaneka, Emperor Toturi is attacked by a large Shadowlands force. His Seppun and Scorpion defenders cannot protect him. Toturi falls dueling a large red oni with four huge arms, an oni of a breed never seen before. He leaves no clear successor, and his instructions state that his wife Toturi Kaede is to take the throne.

Disappearance of Toturi Kaede

After ascending to the throne, Toturi Kaede realizes that she has overstepped her bounds as the Oracle of the Void. The Void has always been the impartial element, both dark and light at the same time. By becoming the Empress of Rokugan, she has tipped the balance of the elements. Kaede tells the four children of Toturi to leave the throne empty until they have saved Rokugan from fire, thunder, and itself. She disappears, leaving the Empire without a leader.

Death of Utagu

Jade Champion Kuni Utagu is found murdered only days after the Emperor's death. His death signals a great increase in Bloodspeaker activity, as if the blood-magicians are rejoicing at the death of the one nicknamed "The Wall."

Second Yasuki War Begins

Five days after the funeral of Toturi the First, the Crab and the Crane begin hostilities. Crane forces take over Yasuki Hanko, a village that was once Crane territory before the Yasuki's defection. The Crab retaliate, and the Second Yasuki War is underway.

Dragon-Phoenix War Begins

When Dragon soldiers and peasants occupy Phoenix farmlands, having been driven from the Dragon's mountains by volcanic eruptions, the Phoenix declare war on the Dragon Clan. As allies of the Phoenix, the Lion are honor-bound to attack the Dragon. The Battle of Honored Treaty Plains is the first battle of the war, and the Lion and Phoenix gain the first victory.

Return of the Grand Master

After travel through the realms beyond Ningen-do, Naka Tokei is compelled to return to the mortal realm. He appears in the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey and meets Toturi Miyako, the daughter of his old friend Toku. Though she is not a shugenja, he decides to take her as his apprentice.

A New Emerald Champion

Though there is no Emperor, Hantei Naseru presides over the Test of the Emerald Champion at Kyuden Seppun, for it is necessary to replace the ailing Kakita Toshiken. At his behest, the Scorpion oversee the Test. Scorpion entrant Bayushi Kwanchai deliberately injures Shiba Aikune. Phoenix shugenja immediately cast healing spells on their entrant, and the outside interference disqualifies Aikune. The Crane contestant Yasuki Hachi wins the Test through default. It is widely believed that the new Emerald Champion is simply a pawn of the Scorpion Clan and Hantei Naseru.

Year 1158, Month of the Rat (Early Winter)

Death of the Dark Daughter (Shadowlands)

The Bloodspeaker Shahai reaches the depths of the Shadowlands in her search for a missing Bloodspeaker named Daigotsu. She is greeted by the Dark Daughter of Fu Leng, who tells her that Daigotsu has been waiting for her. The Dark Daughter leads her into a great city in the middle of the Shadowlands, one that is populated by Lost samurai and Lost peasants. It seems a perfect mirror of civilization above the Wall, unlike the rest of the chaotic Shadowlands.

When Shahai meets Daigotsu, she realizes that he has gathered the Lost to this city and is the leader of the Shadowlands Horde. When Daigotsu offers her power at his side, Shahai kills the Dark Daughter of Fu Leng and becomes the new Dark Daughter.

Friendly Traveler Village

A small force led by Doji Kazo takes over Friendly Traveler Village, a small village renowned for its profitable sake works. The village is quickly surrounded by the army of Hida Shara, whose army greatly outnumbers the Crane's. Instead of fighting and possibly destroying the village, the Crab and Crane forces decide to share the city's wealth.

Yasuki Hachi arrives too late to resolve the situation; this event reinforces the perception of the Emerald Champion as a powerless pawn.

Oracle at Sunset Tower

Toturi Sezaru and his attendants Toturi Koshei and Asako Ryoma seek the Oracle of Air in the destroyed Sunset Tower. Sezaru finds out that his father's killer was Fushin, the Onisu of Betrayal, also called the Nightmare of the Scorpion. He also learns that Daigotsu summoned Fushin. Upon learning where to find the Oracle of Earth, Sezaru leaves.

Battle of Ki-Rin's Shrine

Dragon troops led by general Mirumoto Junnosuke take shelter in Reihaido sano Ki-Rin, a shrine to the Ki-Rin in the Phoenix lands. The Phoenix surround the shrine and besiege the Dragon army. The Dragon lift the siege due largely to a hidden band of Scorpion warriors who assault the Phoenix at a crucial moment, then withdraw immediately after the battle. The Scorpion warriors arrived in time due to the machinations of Hantei Naseru, who congratulates Junnosuke for his victory only a few hours after the fact.

Destruction of the Tonbo Family

Lion armies move toward the Dragon lands to support their Phoenix allies. An army led by young general Akodo Ijiasu attacks Kyuden Tonbo, the castle of the Dragonfly Clan, using the war as a pretext. Within weeks, the Minor Clan is all but eradicated, and the Dragonfly's ancient insult to the Akodo is avenged.

Year 1158, Month of the Ox (Mid-Winter)

Dark Oracle of Earth Awakens

After twenty years of torture, Yasuki Nokatsu agrees to become the Dark Oracle of Earth. Daigotsu, the new leader of the Shadowlands, cuts off Nokatsu's hand and attaches the Claw of Yakamo no Oni, greatly increasing his power.

Armor of the Shadow Warrior Found

Yogo Itoju is given orders to investigate a jade mine that is said to contain the Armor of the Shadow Warrior, the armor that Hida Kisada wore as Crab Clan Champion. When he arrives, he and his forces are killed by a Tsuburu no Oni spawn, who dresses his corpse with the Armor of the Shadow Warrior and places him in a boat drifting towards the Mantis lands. When Yoritomo Aramasu finds the boat, he is disturbed by the implications of the corpse. Aramasu goes to Otosan Uchi to investigate.

Kyoso no Oni Banished

Daigotsu is tired of the erratic oni lord Kyoso no Oni's constant maneuvering for power. He summons the oni lord to him, and in a fearsome display of power, banishes her back to Jigoku.

Unbeknownst to Daigotsu, Kyoso no Oni's unique mixture of human and oni allows her to summon herself back to Ningen-do. She keeps a low profile and stays out of Daigotsu's reach.

Togashi Mitsu Returns

Togashi Mitsu, great hero of the Dragon Clan, decides to end his voluntary withdrawal from the empire. He appears in time to save Mirumoto Rosanjin and his patrol from destruction by a larger, better-trained Lion force. He will not say why he has returned, and many wonder what his unfinished business might be.

Shiba Tsukune's Ascension

The Fortune of Fire and Thunder appears before the Phoenix Clan Champion to offer her a choice. She can stay in Ningen-do to protect the Phoenix clan and her son; if she were to die in the mortal world, the Soul of Shiba would die with her. Instead, she can ascend to Tengoku and return the Soul of Shiba to the heavens, but the Phoenix Clan would go through harsh times.

Shiba Tsukune ascends to Tengoku as the Fortune of Rebirth and leaves the Phoenix without a Champion.

Islands in the Mist

Led by Ikoma Otemi and Matsu Kenji, a Lion ship stumbles upon the mythical Island in the Mist, the lost stronghold of the pirate Yasuki Fumoki. Through the heroic efforts of the Lion and the aid of Nezumi living on the island, Otemi and Kenji slay a fearsome undead Orochi guardian and claim the pirate's impressive wealth for the Lion Clan.

Year 1158, Month of the Tiger (Late Winter)

Winter Court: Kyuden Miya

As a show of good faith and their desire for peace, the Four Winds meet at the Winter Court in Kyuden Miya. All the Clans attend, hoping to win the favor of one of Toturi's heirs. This event is marred by tragedy when Miya Gensaiken reveals Usagi Fuyuko, a Hare courtier and a popular newcomer to the court, to be an Pekkle no Oni in disguise. The fight is short and brutal; in its death the Pekkle infuses the Steel Throne with the Shadowlands Taint. Unhappy with the lax security and their constant infighting, the Four Winds leave. The chance for peace is shattered.

Toturi Sezaru takes Miya Gensaiken as one of his followers as a reward for his service. Nobody knows that Gensaiken is a second Pekkle no Oni who has orchestrated the entire affair.

The Steel Throne disappears shortly after Winter Court ends.

Shadowlands Assault the Lion

Mysterious horned beasts called Tsuno appear from nowhere to attack the Lion lands. They are of some breed never seen before, though a few Lion samurai seem to see something familiar within their eyes. The beasts fight as a unified force, rare for Shadowlands creatures. The Lion fight off the incursion, although they take heavy casualties. The beasts take the bodies of their fallen with them.

Creation of the Celestial Jitte

The apprentice of the Fortune of Steel Tsi Xing Guo, Shiba Tsubeko, works under his direction to create a brilliant pair of ebony jitte in the Celestial Forge in Tengoku. She returns to Kyuden Nio, a Crane palace on the outskirts of Otosan Uchi, intending to give the weapons to a hero worthy of wielding them.

Test of the Jade Champion

After the death of Kuni Utagu, the Four Winds decide to hold the Test of the Jade Champion at Kyuden Nio. The two finalists of the Test are the siblings Asahina Sekawa and Asahina Kimita. Asahina Sekawa defeats his sister and becomes the new Jade Champion.

An Onisu, a powerful oni created by the new Dark Lord Daigotsu, is drawn to Kyuden Nio by the power of the Celestial Jitte. Daigotsu's comrade Omoni — the Sculptor of Flesh —and his goblins murder Shiba Tsubeko and steal the Celestial Jitte while the Onisu, Hakai, holds the gathered samurai at bay. The Onisu kills Asahina Kimita and her uncle Asahina Tamako before leaving. The death of his sister and uncle hardens Sekawa, and he swears to show the Shadowlands no mercy.

Tsudao Marches to the Lion Lands

When Toturi Tsudao receives word of the Shadowlands attacks, she gathers the Imperial Legion and marches towards the Lion Lands to help them repel the attacks.

Year 1159, Month of the Hare (Early Spring)

Restoration of Sunset Tower

Katsu, the son of two Tainted samurai, has resisted the call of the Shadowlands his whole life. Upon his father's death, Katsu travels to the destroyed Sunset Tower, one of his father's favorite places in the Empire. Using the Dark Covenant of Earth, a dangerous artifact that allows the wielder one wish from the Dark Oracle of Earth, he orders Yasuki Nokatsu to rebuild the Sunset Tower as it was before, with no Taint to mar it. Nokatsu promises to do so if Katsu will serve Daigotsu. Katsu agrees, and joins Daigotsu in the City of the Lost.

Death of Hida O-Ushi

Hida O-Ushi decides to lead a counterattack herself, and she assaults the Crane forces with overwhelming fury. Just as the Crane seem doomed, Doji Kurohito, the Crane Clan Champion, arrives with an army that greatly outnumbers the Crab's. O-Ushi knows the situation is hopeless. To give her troops time to retreat, O-Ushi challenges Kurohito to a duel. The master of iaijutsu kills O-Ushi in one perfect stroke. The Crane army allows the Crab army to retreat, in honor of O-Ushi's sacrifice. O-Ushi's son Kuroda becomes Crab Champion.

Death of Yoritomo Aramasu

The Scorpion approach Akodo Kaneka at Otosan Uchi, asking for the Wind's aid in the Scorpion's quest to kill the traitor Yoritomo Aramasu. In return, the Scorpion would fully support Kaneka's quest for the throne. Aramasu himself arrives a few moments later, offering Mantis support if Kaneka will ally himself with them. Kaneka refuses to favor either the Scorpion or the Mantis.

The Scorpion seize the opportunity to ambush Aramasu, and Bayushi Kamnan kills Aramasu as Kaneka watches. Yoritomo Kitao arrives moments later with a detachment of Mantis troops and destroys the Scorpion forces. Kitao, the heroic avenger, easily ascends to the Mantis Clan Championship.

The Scorpion know the truth: their troops were able to ambush Aramasu only with the help of Yoritomo Kitao. They do nothing, content to conceal this knowledge until they need leverage.

Snow and Fire

The Elemental Masters join the Phoenix armies against the Dragon. Tamori Shaitung emerges to face the Council, and manages to hold off a few of the Masters alone. When all five Masters turn their attention to the Tamori daimyo, it becomes clear that not even her surprising power can defeat them all. Instead of victory, Shaitung surprises the Council again by opening up the earth beneath them. All six shugenja vanish into the earth, and both sides assume Shaitung sacrificed herself to bring down the Elemental Masters.

In the crevice below the earth, the six find themselves in the presence of Agasha Tamori, the Dark Oracle of Fire, who reveals that he started the volcanic eruptions that set the Dragon and the Phoenix against each other. The furious Master of Fire Isawa Hochiu assaults the Dark Oracle. Isawa Nakamuro, Master of Air, and Tamori Shaitung escape down a side corridor. Master of Water Isawa Riake dies while protecting the others from Tamori's attacks.

Imprisoned inside a stone dome, the surviving elemental masters enter a state of deep slumber to wait for someone who can help them.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

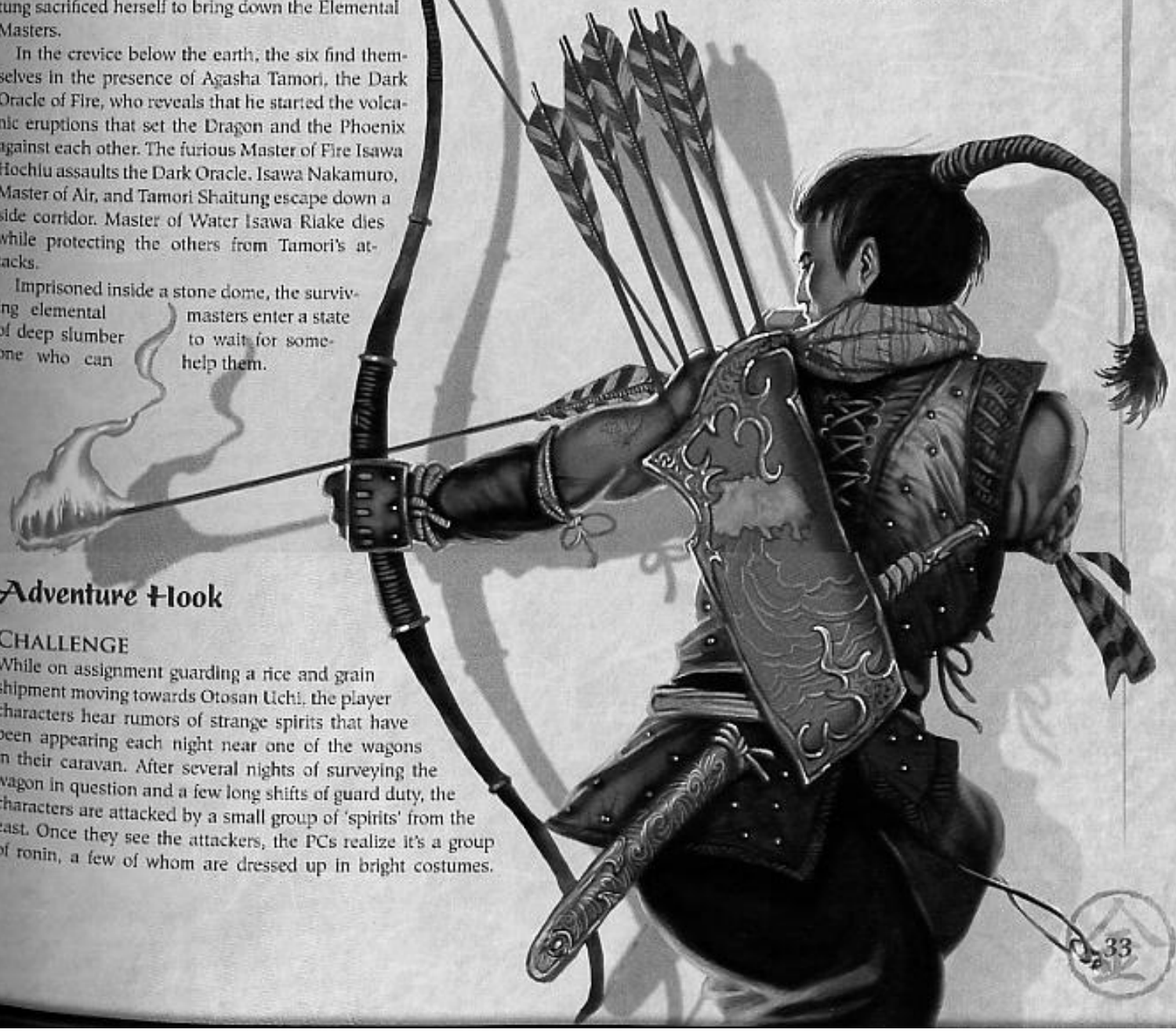
While on assignment guarding a rice and grain shipment moving towards Otosan Uchi, the player characters hear rumors of strange spirits that have been appearing each night near one of the wagons in their caravan. After several nights of surveying the wagon in question and a few long shifts of guard duty, the characters are attacked by a small group of 'spirits' from the east. Once they see the attackers, the PCs realize it's a group of ronin, a few of whom are dressed up in bright costumes.

If the fight goes badly for the ronin, they retreat. The following night, other possible attackers are sighted in the forest — this time to the south — but retreat immediately if confronted. Assuming the party drives away both groups, they have another couple of nights rest before being attacked again. In the meantime, they can try to find out what's really going on.

Focus

What the player characters do not know (and only the most strenuous torture will elicit from any captured 'ronin') is that the two groups of ronin are actually Mantis and Scorpion samurai, respectively. The Mantis wish to seize or, failing that, destroy the caravan, while the Scorpion seek to test the defenses and keep the sentries alarmed. The Scorpion's presence is also intended to make the Mantis impatient and reckless. A search of the wagon the 'spirits' are interested in reveals a short flat blade, several star-shaped items, and several small locked boxes in one of the barrels of rice. Any character who is even slightly familiar with ninja recognizes the blade and stars as a ninja-to and shuriken.

The boxes are another mystery, however...



STRIKE

An inexperienced Scorpion messenger, Shosuro Miyeko, is being tested by her betters. She has been entrusted with sensitive documents and ordered to take them to Otosan Uchi. The documents are actually forgeries, carefully doctored to supply false information. The Scorpion leaked word of the caravan to the Mantis, and have deployed agents to ensure that the situation comes to a head (the agents in the woods). Miyeko's superiors wish to learn how she reacts to something so unexpected.

If the characters locate and take the boxes, Shosuro Miyeko may attack the party during the night if the player characters don't appear to be particularly combat-oriented. Otherwise, she does her best to simply steal the boxes back from the party or burn down their wagon if it doesn't seem likely she'll be able to get them back.

Each box contains a scroll, which appears to be a letter from one Mantis lord to another discussing sensitive financial transactions. Closer examination reveals that these scrolls are actually coded messages involving secret trade routes. Only minute scrutiny by someone skilled in both Forgery and Commerce can reveal that the scrolls are not what they seem.

Important NPCs During A Perfect Cut

YASUKI HACHI, EMERALD CHAMPION

SCHOOL/RANK: Kakita Bushi 3 [Doji Magistrate 2]
HONOR: 3.3 [4.1] STATUS: 9.0 GLORY: 8.0 (9.3)

Air: 3 [4] **Earth:** 2 [3] **Fire:** 3 [4] **Water:** 2 [3] **Void:** 4
Perception 3

ADVANTAGES: Ally: Doji Nagori (2/4), Benten's Blessing, [Leadership, Multiple Schools]
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation (usurper), Lechery (1), Nemesis (Tsukuro)
KATA: Kakita's First Stance, Striking As Fire, Watchful Falcon
SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 3 [5], Diplomacy 4, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Sincerity) 4 [6], Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 4 [7], Intimidation 4, [Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 3,] Kenjutsu (Katana) 5 [6], Kyujutsu 3, [Lore: Law 3], Meditation 3, Stealth 3, [Underworld 3]

Hachi could never rely on anyone but himself. His line of the Daidoji family was of low rank. His parents died seeking glory in the War of Spirits and his younger sister was fostered to the Scorpion before he truly knew her, leaving him essentially alone.

Always an optimistic sort, Hachi reasoned he had nowhere to go but up. Offered an invitation to the prestigious Test of the Topaz Champion by his father's comrades, Hachi not only performed admirably but won the contest. He earned enrollment at the Kakita Academy, where he met Doji Yasuyo and Doji Nagori, cousins of the Crane Champion. Hachi's charming good nature and dry, self-deprecating humor quickly earned their trust and friendship. Impressed by Hachi's ability, his superiors promoted him to gunso.

Hachi's tendency to embroil himself in romantic misadventures kept him from further promotions. The occasional duels that resulted from these incidents also earned him quite a reputation as a swordsman. Doji Nagori took a secret delight in embellishing upon and spreading tales of Hachi's exploits, much to his friend's chagrin.

When the daimyo of the Yasuki family and his son died under mysterious circumstances, no one was more surprised to learn that the rightful heir was young Daidoji Hachi than Hachi himself. Hachi willingly accepted the Yasuki name and agreed to serve as lord of the family. However, when he expressed concern that Lord Kurohito's intent to conquer the Yasuki lands might sap the strength of the Crab Clan and weaken their defenses against the Shadowlands, Kurohito ordered Hachi away from Yasuki lands. He granted Hachi the honor of attending the Test of the Emerald Champion, far from the Yasuki territories.

Hachi won his matches honorably, but Hantei Naseru's manipulations cast a shadow of doubt over the results, making it appear as if Hachi had not truly earned his place. It was in the Anvil's best interests for the new Emerald Champion to appear weak so that the courts would continue to look to him for leadership, but he underestimated Hachi's stubborn determination. Hachi refuses to let dishonor stain the Emerald Championship, and has done everything in his power to restore honor and respect to his post.

From the Shadowlands, the dark general Tsukuro watches the new Emerald Champion with interest. Once a Daidoji, it was Hachi's ancestor Tsukuro who originally shamed his branch of the family by fleeing into the Shadowlands rather than face spurious accusations of corruption. Now Tsukuro watches his descendant follow the same path, struggling against the manipulations of others to claim what is rightfully his. The fact that Hachi seems to be succeeding despite all odds fills the undead madman with growing rage.

NAKA TOKEI, GRAND MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

SCHOOL/RANK: Tuchi Shugenja 5 / Master of the Elements 3
HONOR: 2.6 STATUS: N/A(Ronin) GLORY: 9.5

Air: 5 **Earth:** 5 **Fire:** 5 **Water:** 5 **Void:** 5

ADVANTAGES: Clear Thinker, Friendly Kami, Friend of the Elements (Air, Earth, Fire, Water), Great Destiny, Inner Gift (Lesser Prophecy), Kharmic Tie: Asahina Nizomi (5)
DISADVANTAGES: Overconfident, Sworn Enemy (the Maw)
SPELLS: Naka Tokei has access to all spells in the Third Edition Player's Guide as Innate Abilities, including maho, though he chooses not to use such magic.
SKILLS: Calligraphy 5, Defense 3, Divination (Omens) 5, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 2, Investigation (Notice) 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: History 3, Lore: Spirit Realms 9, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 3, Meditation (Void Recovery, Zanji) 6, Spellcraft (Elemental Knowledge) 10, Theology (Fortunes) 6

Naka Tokei has lived many lives, with many names. Once he was Otaku Tokei, a minor shugenja in service to the Unicorn family. When his brother Morito was exiled from the family, Tokei followed him out of loyalty. He took his brother's name as a jest, naming himself Morito Tokei. The two men traveled the Empire as ronin, offering their services to any who would meet their price.

When Tokei met Naka Kuro, Grand Master of the Elements, he realized that there was a great deal more to existence than the dreary life of a mercenary. He became Kuro's apprentice, learning the hidden secrets of the universe. When the ronin Toturi called ronin to his side to battle Yogo Junzo's army, Kuro and Tokei were among the first to answer. Tokei was greatly saddened when Morito chose not to follow Toturi. He had hoped that his brother might share in the glorious destiny Kuro had seen for Toturi, but such was not to be.

Near the end of the Clan War, Tokei was placed in command of Toturi's reserves in Nanashi Mura. The village was attacked by a powerful force of oni led by the Maw, an Oni Lord not seen in Rokugan in centuries. Tokei launched a desperate spell to protect his troops, tearing the Maw from the mortal realm. When the spell was complete, Tokei was gone, and most assumed he was dead.

In truth, the Maw had dragged Tokei from the mortal realm and into the heart of Jigoku. For years the oni tortured Tokei, never allowing him to become truly corrupted by the Taint. The spirit of Tokei's friend, the ninja Hiroru, helped Tokei escape the Maw's prison. Tokei began a long, perilous journey to return to the mortal realm, during which he visited each of the known Spirit Realms. When he returned to Rokugan he had become Naka Tokei, the new Grand Master of the Elements.

Tokei's experiences changed him, and though he gained great wisdom, he suffered just as greatly. Somehow his magic preserved his sanity, splitting his soul in twain so that the madness he had seen could be distributed equally between two beings. The process created a strange young boy named Nizomi.

Tokei fears that it is inevitable that either he or Nizomi will one day fall prey to the madness that lies within them both, so he has fostered Nizomi to the Asahina. Tokei hopes that the peaceful Crane will temper the boy's soul... and that they will teach Nizomi the skills he will need if he must ever destroy a mad Grand Master.

Part II
An Oni's Fury

The Lion Hall of Ancestors was among the most sacred sites in all of Rokugan, and not just to the Lion. Reverence for one's ancestors was not a quality restricted to one clan. Any true samurai prayed to his ancestors every day; the Lion were simply more reverent than most. It was rare for a week to pass without the arrival of a pilgrim from another clan. Such visitors were restricted to the temple's outermost chambers, of course, but they never failed to be taken aback by the Hall's beauty.

Matsu Domotai supposed that some might consider his opinion biased. As the second son of the Matsu daimyo, it was his sacred duty to defend the Hall, with his life if necessary. His devotion was to be expected. Still, he was well traveled, and had visited Oto-san Uchi more than once. The temples there were beautiful, but they lacked something, something that he could only find within the Hall of Ancestors. Perhaps it was because he was a Lion. Or perhaps it was because he understood the true nature of faith. Domotai believed it was the latter.

Domotai knelt before a particular shrine that was his favorite, the one devoted to his family branch's ancestors. He came here every day after his shift and meditated for an hour, praying for strength and guidance. He closed his eyes and exhaled slowly, allowing worldly concerns to fall away and leaving him with the pure emptiness necessary for true piety.

His eyes opened suddenly. There was another presence here, something that left a foul, uneasy feeling in Domotai's mind. He rose, gripping the hilt of his blade tightly. "Who dares violate this place?" he snarled.

There was a pause, then a sensation totally new to Domotai: a sudden feeling of expectancy, a certainty that something was about to arrive. The veil between two worlds shimmered, allowing the Lion a clouded glimpse into a world beyond his own.

And then the beast stepped through.

Domotai recognized it at once. From the descriptions he had heard, it could only be one of the Tsuno. The hideous, misshapen, armored hide, the horns, and the elongated snout marked it as one of the mysterious demons that had plagued the Lion in recent months. The beasts were supposedly deadly and extremely difficult to kill. The beast hefted its weapon and snarled, preparing to offer some grave insult.

Domotai did not allow it the chance. He stepped forward and plunged his katana into the creature's open mouth, impaling its head. The Lion warrior gave the blade a savage twist, tearing tissue and breaking bone. The Tsuno fell dead on the cold stone floor.

Matsu Domotai retrieved his blade and shouted for his kinsmen. There would be more of these demons, and he would see them all dead.

Year 1159, Month of the Dragon (Mid-Spring)

Escape from the Dark Oracle of Fire

Tamori Shaitung and Isawa Nakamuro, fleeing from the Dark Oracle of Fire, find themselves in a cavern in the earth that was created by a Zokujin tribe called the Zesh. The Zesh are suspicious of Shaitung, as Dark Oracle of Fire Agasha Tamori still wears the Dragon mon, but the two are able to convince the Zokujin that they mean no harm. Nakamuro and Shaitung swear to aid the Zesh in their quest to destroy the Dark Oracle. Aided by the Zesh, the two shugenja escape from the mountain into Dragon lands, where Isawa Nakamuro stays as a hostage.

Junnosuke's Dishonor

Mirumoto Junnosuke leads his Dragon army towards the Lion lands in response to the Lion attacks upon the Dragon Clan, but Toturi Tsudao and her Imperial Legions intercept him. Tsudao demands that Junnosuke stop his advance, as the Lion have suffered too much because of the Shadowlands attacks. Junnosuke refuses.

The Wind and the Dragon enter a kenjutsu duel. Though Tsudao easily disarms Junnosuke, he refuses to submit, and she cannot stop him without insulting his men and starting a battle. Luckily, Bayushi Paneki, a shireikan of the Imperial Legions, arrives with an order from the Mirumoto daimyo. Documents had recently been uncovered that revealed Junnosuke's dishonorable actions during his stint in the Imperial Legions. The Mirumoto daimyo has ordered Junnosuke exiled from his clan.

Junnosuke, now a ronin, departs, and many of his officers follow their leader into exile. Bayushi Paneki takes control of the Dragon army.

The City of Night

When the Unicorn peasants cleared the forest near the Great Crater, they found traces of an ancient nonhuman city. When the Khan's heir Moto Chagatai hears of the ruins, he secures the area and orders Moto Vordu to investigate. The city seems to have been created by five ancient races, and it holds crystal weapons and strange markings from a time before man.



Kaneka's Lineage Uncovered

Hantei Naseru asks renowned researcher Kitsuki Remata to discover whether or not Akodo Kaneka is truly who he says he is. Remata discovers a shocking fact: Kaneka is the rightful lord of the Yasuki family. The Dragon scholar sends this knowledge to the Bastard, unsure of what should be done.

A Hero's Death

Hantei Naseru gathers a group of heroes to combat a mysterious assassin who is murdering returned samurai, former spirits such as Mirumoto Tokeru and Isawa Ujime. Miya Shoin, Utaku Yu-Pan, Agasha Chieh, Kijuro, Toritaka Akemi, and Moshi Kakau begin their journey across Rokugan. After many adventures and meetings with some of the greatest heroes of Rokugan, including Rezan, the group finds out that former Mantis Champion Gusai and minion of the Lying Darkness Goju Yume are behind the killings.

Death of Moto Gaheris

Moto Gaheris, Khan of the Unicorn Clan, dies in his sleep. To battle an ancient curse placed upon the Moto family, his grandson Moto Chagatai and Chagatai's loyal friend Moto Chen travel to Toshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter, upon Gaheris' death. There they meet the Shi-Tien Yen Wang, forgotten gods called the Lords of Death. Moto Chagatai promises the Lords of Death that the Unicorn Clan will once more worship them as gods, and in return the Shi-Tien Yen Wang promise to lift the curse.

Moto Chagatai becomes the new Khan of the Unicorn Clan.

Selecting the Chancellor

The Otomo decide to name an Imperial Chancellor to lead the Imperial Court, even in the absence of an emperor. Bayushi Kaukatsu is chosen.

Otemi's Engagement

To cement a new alliance forged by the Scorpion Clan and Lion Clan courtiers, Ikoma family daimyo Ikoma Sume proposes an engagement between the hero Ikoma Otemi and Shosuro Yasuko.

The Lion Withdraw

The Shadowlands continue to assault the Lion lands, so most of the Lion forces stationed with the Phoenix Clan begin to return to defend their home. A few Lion samurai, led by Matsu Shinya, remain to advise the Phoenix.

The Baraunghar Arrive

Iuchi Lixue uses her travel magic to bring her army, the Baraunghar, to the Kaiu Wall. She believes that since the Crab are forced to fight on two fronts because of the war against the Crane Clan, she must aid the Crab in fighting the true enemy, the Shadowlands. Crab Champion Hida Kuroda gladly welcomes the Unicorn to the Wall.

Year 1159, Month of the Serpent (Late Spring)

Kaneka's Advance

Kaneka is puzzled by Kitsuki Remata's findings. After deliberation, Akodo Kaneka decides to move his armies to Yasuki Yashiki and take it as his own. Though he would take the land for himself, he decides to donate crops from the Yasuki lands to the Crab Clan to support their efforts against the Shadowlands. When Kaneka claims the castle personally, the fighting between the Crab and Crane must stop, for neither clan can stand against the Wind. However, Kaneka suspects Remata's research may be faulty, and refuses to take the Yasuki name.

An Oni's Fury

Sezaru and his attendants go to the Twilight Mountains to find the Oracle of Earth, called Hiruma Osuno when he was still a man. Sezaru and his bodyguard Koshei enter the Oracle's home by themselves while Asako Ryoma and Miya Gensaiken wait outside. Gensaiken, the disguised Pekkle no Oni, reveals himself to Ryoma moments before he murders him, with the help of an Onisu named Yokubo who had been lurking near the Oracle's home.

Sezaru learns where to find the Oracle of Water; when he asks where Daigotsu is, the Oracle says that the Dark Lord waits for him outside, in Yokubo's body.Yokubo and Sezaru fight, and it quickly becomes apparent that Yokubo is too strong for the Wind. Sezaru would perish were it not for his bodyguard. The Onisu of Desire can draw no power from Koshei, who truly desires nothing. Sezaru and Koshei flee, though Yokubo takes Sezaru's mask as his prize.

Aikune's Quest

After both his mother, Clan Champion Shiba Tsukune, and the Elemental Council disappear, Shiba Aikune wanders the Phoenix lands searching for something that can turn the tides of the war back in favor of the Phoenix Clan. In an abandoned temple he finds a nemuranai he recognizes as Isawa's Last Wish, an artifact with limitless power. Isawa's Last Wish is a sentient nemuranai created by Isawa himself, though it lay unfinished at his death.

Isawa's Last Wish recognizes in Aikune a kindred desire for recognition and a feeling of neglect. Isawa's Last Wish decides to help Aikune in his quest, and the Phoenix bushi returns to the battlefield.

Burning of the Kitstu Tombs

The Tsuno appear from nowhere to attack the Hall of Ancestors. Matsu Domotai, the brother of the Lion Clan Champion, successfully defends the Hall. He realizes that the assault is only a feint, and he leads his men to defend the Kitsu Tombs. There, the Tsuno — led by an Onisu named Nikushimi — overwhelm his men and sack the Tombs. The Tsuno disappear, taking with them the sacred scrolls of the Kitsu and the unconscious Domotai.

Son of Naka Tokei

Asahina Sekawa, the Jade Champion, ventures into the wild at the behest of the Asahina seers who have seen a temple that would "plant the seeds of war and set the Empire ablaze." When he finds the temple, he finds Naka Tokei awaiting his arrival with a small child. This child, called Nizomi, was the result of Naka Tokei's travels in the other Realms; either Nizomi or Tokei held all the pain, agony, and darkness Tokei experienced through his journey. Sekawa offers to protect Nizomi and raise him among the Asahina.

Pearls of Wisdom

Akasha, the half-Naga who emerged from the pearl known as the Legacy of the Naga, continues to take lessons from Ghedai, a Naga who remains awake to guard the sleeping race. She is visited through her dreams by Shasyahkar, a Naga shugenja who warns her that Ghedai would prove to be the doom of the Naga. Though Akasha does not fully trust Shasyahkar, she decides to learn the powers of pearl magic from him.

Year 1159, Month of the Horse (Early Summer)

Bayushi Yojiro Meets With Matsu Nimuro

While Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro meditates in the Hall of the Ancestors, site of the recent Tsuno attack, his secret ally Bayushi Yojiro approaches him. If Nimuro will use his powers to arrange a meeting between Toturi Sezaru and a Scorpion representative, the Scorpion Champion will use his powers to promote Kaneka's hold on the Yasuki provinces. Nimuro agrees to be the go-between.

Duel Over the Yasuki

When Akodo Kaneka approaches Friendly Traveler Village, the Emerald Champion and current Yasuki daimyo Yasuki Hachi awaits him. Hachi orders Kaneka to leave the Yasuki lands, saying that the Wind — never officially acknowledged by the Emperor as his son — has no claim on the area. Kaneka insults Hachi, attempting to draw the weaker duelist into an armed confrontation. When the insults do not work, Kaneka refuses Hachi's order and challenges him to a duel.

To leave in one piece, Hachi takes the right as the challenged to declare the duel to see whose stance is better. Kaneka takes his familiar stance; Hachi clumsily takes the stance of an Akodo Bushi, and loses the duel. Hachi retreats.

Toshiken's Order

Former Emerald Champion Toshiken summons Yasuki Hachi to Kyuden Kakita, where he tells him that Hachi has the power to stop the Yasuki War in one stroke. Though he does not specify how he could do this, he directs Hachi towards a man who will, he says, help him towards his goal: Hare Clan Champion Usagi Ozaki.

Kitsune Ryosei Meets Kokujin

In her quest to find her father, who has become the Monstrous Horror of Fu Leng, Fox daimyo Kitsune Ryosei travels into the Shadowlands. There she meets Kokujin, a twisted ise zumi who tells her he can show her where her father is. She follows him to the City of the Lost.

Aikune's Return

Shiba Aikune returns to the Phoenix Clan with Isawa's Last Wish, which has taken the shape of a fiery katana. Its power burns dozens of Dragon samurai with each stroke. Many Phoenix submit to Isawa's Last Wish and receive a part of its power. The Dragon forces must retreat.

Carpenter Wall Falls

The Shadowlands Horde uses unknown magic to transport a portion of their forces beyond the Carpenter Wall. The Horde then attacks the Wall from both sides. The Crab lose six of seven watchtowers before they can put up a defense.

Hida Kuroda, Champion of the Crab, faces Kyofu, the Onisu of Fear below the Kaiu Wall. Hida Reiha is ordered to run with the Celestial Sword of the Crab in her possession. Though he makes a valiant effort in the fight against the Onisu, Kuroda dies.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

Great turmoil disturbs the Dragon and Phoenix lands. Only a few years ago, these samurai would have greeted each other in friendship, but all that has changed since the War of the Spirits. Mirumoto Junnosuke's dishonor and the conflict between Tamori Shaitung and the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix have left several posts within the Dragon Clan open. The player characters have been asked by their lord (or a high-ranking Dragon officer) to help the Dragon look after several smaller villages between Toi Koku and Nanashi Mura during the administrative shuffle as the Dragon Clan finds new magistrates to man them.

Focus

After several nights on patrol, moving from village to village, the PCs run into a group of samurai wearing Dragon colors, camped on a small hill. The camp immediately becomes active if the party approaches and a rider comes out to meet them before they get close enough to spot details. While they still wear the armor of the Dragon, these men are actually Bloodspeakers who once served Mirumoto Junnosuke. After Junnosuke's dishonor, they turned their backs on the clan, following their lord into shame. Unable to handle life as ronin, they fell in with some of the maho-tsukai that find refuge in the Dragon's lands. The Bloodspeakers provided the men with food and shelter after initiating them. The rider makes every attempt to brush off the player characters, becoming threatening if they persist in moving towards the camp. If the party gets close enough to see the dilapidated state of the false Dragon samurai's armor and horses, the rider signals the attack.

Strike

Whether the party decides to move on or is attacked by the ronin, one member of the camp approaches the player characters, attempting to parley. If they allow him to approach, the samurai gives his name as Kitsuki Yamagi; if they speak to him in private, he presents a scroll with symbols of both the Dragon Clan and the Jade Magistrates on the outside. Yamagi has joined the new ronin in an attempt to find their Bloodspeaker connections, and perhaps root out the maho-tsukai who turned them to darkness. He asks for the party's aid. It's up to the player characters, but any help they give Yamagi will be greatly appreciated by the Dragon Clan. If Yamagi fails, or is discovered and killed, the PCs may be held responsible for his death and the escape of the Bloodspeakers.

Important NPCs in An Oni's Fury

Shiba Aikune, Master of the Last Wish

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 3 [5]
Honor: 3.3 Status: 3.0 [7.4] Glory: 3.0 [8.5]

Air: 2 **Earth:** 2 [4] **Fire:** 3 [4] **Water:** 3 **Void** 4 [5]
Reflexes 4 Willpower 3 [4] Strength 4

Advantages: Great Destiny, Magic Resistance (6)
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (destructive), Brash, Dark Fate, Forsaken, Sworn Enemy (Isawa Taeruko)
Kata: Striking as Fire, Touching the Infinite, [The World is Empty]
Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3 [5], Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 4 [6], Kenjutsu (Katana) 4 [7], Kyujutsu 5, Meditation (Void Recovery) 5, Naginata 3, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology (Shintao) 3

Shiba Aikune's life has been a tale of destiny denied.

He barely knew his father Kanjiro, who was often away performing secret duties for the clan. His mother Tsukune was one of the greatest Champions the Phoenix had ever known, but he watched her be ignored and belittled by the Elemental Council. Unlike many Shiba, Aikune never heard the voices of the ancestors in his prayers. Though these things saddened Aikune, he did not allow himself to become angry — this was the way things were.

During the War of Spirits, things changed. A messenger brought news: Kanjiro had died in battle. Aikune's betrothed, Isawa Yaruko, was slain by the Steel Chrysanthemum's troops despite Aikune's efforts to defend her. Her death drove a wedge between Aikune and his best friend Isawa Nakamuro. Yaruko's mother Isawa Taeruko, the Master of Earth, blamed Aikune for her death, and did her best to stymie the young Shiba's rise through the ranks. Aikune began to quietly hate the Council, though he would not speak of his feelings.

At the Test of the Emerald Champion, Aikune thought he finally had a chance to earn greatness despite the Council's interference. As the son of the Phoenix Champion, he demanded the right to compete. He was injured during the late rounds, and an Isawa shugenja healed him, violating the traditions of the test and disqualifying him from competing in the final round.

Convinced that he was cursed, Aikune began to research the history of his family. He soon discovered his father's secret duties — Kanjiro was a protector of Isawa's Last Wish, an dangerous artifact of unlimited power. Intent on using the Wish to defeat the Dragon armies and teach the Council a lesson in humility even if it meant his own destruction, Aikune sought out the Wish and seized its power.

To his surprise, he found that the Wish was a living thing, a spirit just as confused, hopeless, and abandoned as himself. Aikune reached out to the Wish not as a tool, but as an equal, and has mastered its power in an unprecedented way. He has conquered his desire for vengeance, instead seeking to help the Wish fulfill its destiny.

In his search for power, Shiba Aikune has found wisdom.

MIYA GENSAIKEN, SERVANT OF THE WOLF

SCHOOL/RANK: Miya Herald 3
HONOR: 0 (1.3) STATUS: 4.7 GLORY: 2.0

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 4	Void —

Shadowlands Taint: 6 (None)

ADVANTAGES: Clear Thinker, Crafty, Heartless, Perceived Honor (6)

DISADVANTAGES: Dark Secret (Pekkle no Oni)

SHADOWLANDS POWERS: Blackened Claws, Blood Domination

SKILLS: Acting (Disguise) 6, Athletics (Running) 3, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette (Conversation, Sincerity) 5, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Shadowlands 5

SPECIAL: As a Pekkle no Oni, Miya Gensaiken possesses the following abilities.

HIDDEN DARKNESS: Gensaiken's Taint cannot be detected by any means, nor is he harmed by continuous effects such as Evil Ward. Instantaneous spells that harm Tainted targets, such as Jade Strike, affect him normally. The only other way to detect Gensaiken's taint is by inspecting his blood, which is very thin and pitch black.

CONTROLLED APPEARANCE: A Pekkle no Oni can change its age or gender at will.

RETRIBUTION: When a Pekkle no Oni dies, it releases a cloud of intense corruption. All creatures within a 30' radius must make an Earth roll vs. TN 25 or immediately gain 1–10 points of Shadowlands Taint.

The creatures known as Pekkle no Oni are rare and terrifying creatures. Though they are not as strong or deadly as other oni, they are cunning tricksters, adept at concealing themselves among humanity and sowing pain, misery, and destruction among honorable samurai.

When the Four Winds met at Winter Court at Kyuden Miya, a Pekkle in the guise of Usagi Fuyuko did her best to fan the flames of jealousy and distrust among Toturi's heirs. Miya Gensaiken exposed her as an impostor, and the Winds quickly destroyed the creature. Impressed by Gensaiken's cleverness and courage, Toturi Sezaru offered Gensaiken a place as his advisor.

Unbeknownst to the Wolf, Gensaiken was also a trickster oni. After making his own plans to enter the good graces of the Winds, Gensaiken was irritated by Fuyuko's clumsy attempts to turn them against one another. He gladly exposed and sacrificed her to promote his own agenda. He could not be more pleased with the results. The Wolf trusts him implicitly and seems to suspect nothing. Gensaiken sees the madness that boils behind Sezaru's eyes. If he is cautious and patient, he knows that he can help the Wolf to become an even greater evil than the Dark Lord himself.

Gensaiken's Fate

Ages ago, Pekkle no Oni were trickster spirits from the Realm of Mischief, Sakkaku. Though certainly not honorable creatures, they were not evil. Sadly, they succumbed to Fu Leng's power and were forced to join his ranks. Creatures of Sakkaku are not easy to corrupt, so the connection between a Pekkle and the Taint is tenuous. If Fu Leng senses that a Pekkle is in danger of slipping from his control, he violently destroys the creature first (thus the rather dramatic effects of a Pekkle's death).

Sezaru realizes that Gensaiken is a Pekkle no Oni, but does not immediately act on the information. When the Wolf finally turns on his traitorous advisor, he swiftly severs the Pekkle from Jigoku's influence. Gensaiken realizes he is now free of Fu Leng's control, but now there is only one place where he is assured continued safety — as close to Sezaru as possible.

After his purification, Gensaiken's statistics change as follows: He loses all Shadowlands Taint and all Shadowlands Powers. He loses all of his Special Abilities except Controlled Appearance. His Void remains "—".

Part III
Dark Allies

Toshi Ranbo had been the site of dozens of major conflicts and literally hundreds of minor skirmishes in the millennium since borders were drawn between the Lion and the Crane. It was the city's unfortunate distinction to sit squarely on the border between two clans that hated one another more vehemently than perhaps any others in the Empire. The blood of tens of thousands had washed the streets, and the peasants who lived there had long since quit caring what masters they served. Their only concern was survival, and how long the reprieve would be before the next battle came to their doorstep.

All things considered, then, the only ones surprised when the Crane attacked with the first rays of morning sunlight were the Lion. It was a sound tactical decision. The Lion were consumed with avenging the insult they had suffered when the Tsuno had attacked their home and disappeared into nothingness. Perhaps even more infuriating, the Phoenix officer Shiba Aikune had violently dissolved the Lion-Phoenix alliance by using a powerful nemuranai to incinerate the majority of the Lion delegation. Never in history had the Lion been so beset by their enemies.

The thought made Kakita Nakazo smile. The courtiers might say otherwise, but to a warrior the Lion were nothing more than enemies. Their reputation as the greatest army in Rokugan infuriated him, for he knew he and his men were superior. The Lion army was a blunt instrument, smashing away at foes. The Crane forces under Nakazo's command were precise like a Kakita blade, devastating with a single strike.

Nakazo and his men shouted a brutal cry of victory as they descended upon the sleeping city. The Lion were unprepared and unaware. They would not brag about their great army today, and not for many days to follow.

The Ikoma's expression did not change. "I would ask that you reconsider, Naseru-sama. This attack was completely unprovoked, taking advantage of the Lion while they were occupied by a threat to the entire Empire. The Crane's unwarranted hostility weakens all of Rokugan."

Hantei Naseru raised an eyebrow curiously. "A specious argument, Goro-san. How many times have the Lion attacked Toshi Ranbo while it was under the control of Crane forces?"

Goro struggled not to frown. "Never while the Crane were concerned with matters of importance to the entire Empire, Naseru-sama."

"You speak of the Tsuno," the Anvil answered. "The beasts are, if I am not mistaken, currently the subject of an exhaustive hunt by my sister and the First Legion. If I am not also mistaken, I believe these creatures have not attacked any clan but the Lion."

This time, Goro could not suppress a scowl. "Not yet, my lord."

"So at present, it is the Empire who works to protect the Lion, and not the other way around." Naseru sipped his tea. "It seems to me that, given your clan's hardships, the Lion were unable to adequately protect the citizens of Toshi Ranbo." He took another sip. "And thus I recognize the Crane's claim to the city."

Kakita Nakazo smiled fiercely. Toshi Ranbo would only be the beginning.

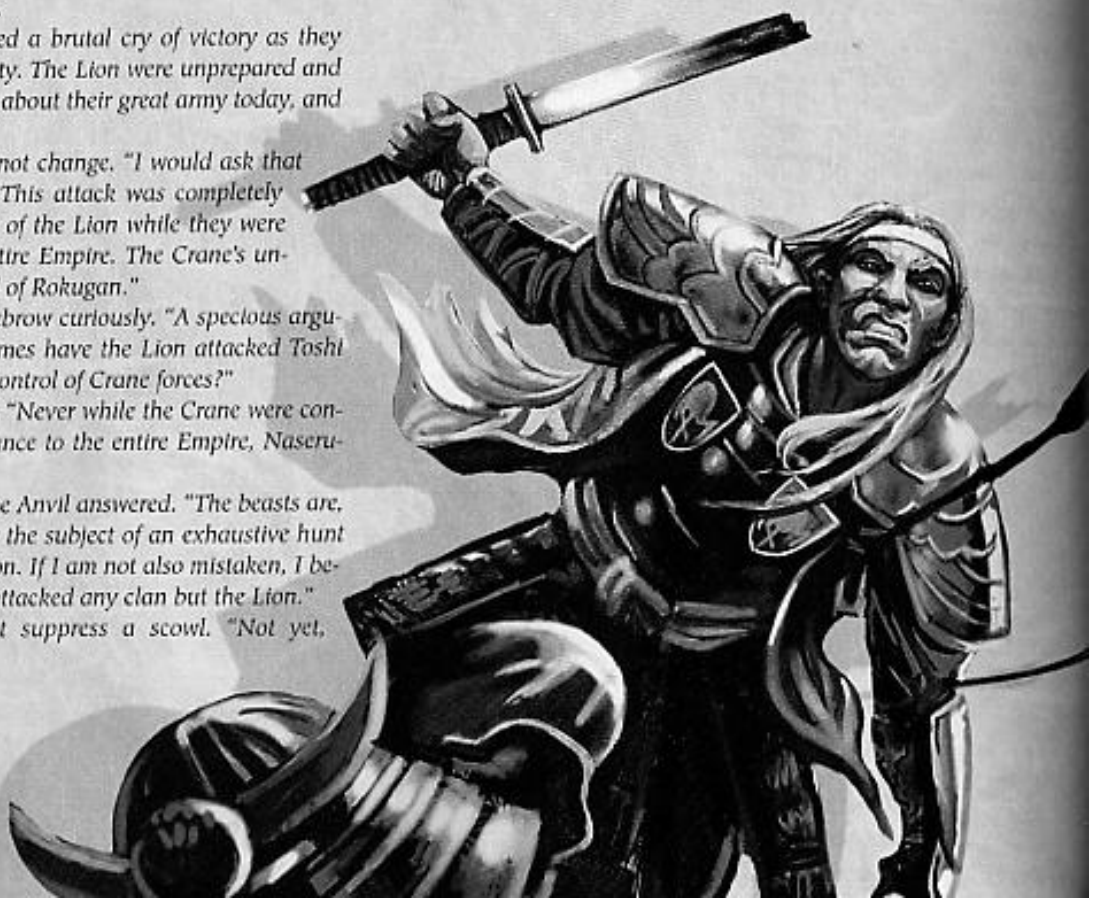
Year 1159, Month of the Goat (Mid-Summer)

Lion-Phoenix Alliance is Broken

Shiba Aikune confronts the remaining Lion troops in Phoenix lands, accusing them of cowardice for withdrawing from the war with the Dragon Clan. Lion leader Matsu Shinya challenges Aikune to a duel. Still wielding the powerful nemuranai Isawa's Last Wish as a fiery katana, Aikune slays Shinya. Outraged, more Lion troops attack Aikune, and they too are destroyed. Aikune commands his Shiba samurai to kill the remaining Lion and declares their alliance at an end. The few Lion samurai who survive the slaughter hide in the Phoenix forests.

Return of the Elemental Masters

Isawa Hochiu, Isawa Taeruko and Shiba Ningen dig themselves out of their underground prison. The Elemental Masters vow to bring the full might of the Phoenix Clan to bear to destroy the Dark Oracle of Fire. They are displeased by the power Shiba Aikune has accrued in their absence, and by the way Aikune has shattered the Phoenix alliance with the Lion. They do nothing for now, seeing Aikune's popularity among the Phoenix.



Death of Kakita Kaiten

The Crane begin to leave the Yasuki lands, and intend to take with them all of the crops they have borne, leaving only barren fields and empty storehouses. But Akodo Kaneka's army blocks the Crane from exploiting the lands. The leader of the Crane, Kakita Kaiten, is incensed by Kaneka's arrogance, and challenges him to a duel. Kaneka accepts, and defeats the iaijutsu master.

The Shadowed Tower

Bayushi Yojiro, the Master of Secrets, learns of the existence of the Shadowed Tower, a secret organization that intends to usurp his power and perhaps the power of the next Emperor, whoever that will be. The Shadowed Tower is believed to use maho and other sinister techniques. Their activities are not limited to the Scorpion Clan, and it is believed there are Shadowed Tower operatives in the Crane Clan. Yojiro orders the talented young Bayushi Tai to infiltrate the Shadowed Tower and discover their secrets. Shosuro family daimyo Shosuro Yudoka is commanded to watch Tai, to make sure he is not converted to the Shadowed Tower's cause.

Hida Kuon's Meeting with Daigotsu

Hida Kuon, new Crab Clan Champion, immediately begins to plan to take back the Carpenter Wall. During his first attack, Daigotsu appears before him with an offer: he will return the body of Kuon's brother Kuroda if Kuon will surrender the Wall. In response, Hida Kuon swings his dai tsuchi as hard as he can at the Dark Lord's head. Daigotsu easily blocks the attack and shatters his weapon. Realizing he is overmatched, Kuon sounds the retreat.

Ryosei Sees the City of the Lost

Fox daimyo Kitsune Ryosei follows Kokujin to the City of the Lost, a city built by the samurai who fell to the Taint at the battle of Volturnum. She meets her father, who attempts to entice her into joining his side. In his grasp is the Tenth Black Scroll, which the Scorpion have sworn they destroyed years ago.

With the help of Omen, a Tainted shugenja living in the City of the Lost, Ryosei escapes the City of the Lost.

True Heir of Yoritomo

Though Yoritomo Kitao is unquestionably the Mantis Clan Champion, rumors about an heir of Yoritomo begin to circulate in the Islands of Spice and Silk. Kitao immediately devotes her intelligence network into finding whether the rumor is true. Kitao will stand for no challenge to her position, and plans to kill the heir if one exists.

Toshi Ranbo Falls

Distracted by their conflict with the Tsuno and troubled by Al-kune's assault, the Lion are unprepared when Daidoji Nakazo leads an army of Crane to besiege Toshi Ranbo. Both sides are surprised when Hantei Naseru intervenes, offering to arbitrate a diplomatic solution. They accept his mediation, and Naseru decides in favor of the Crane. Some wonder whether Naseru truly favors the Crane, or if he seeks to punish the Lion for their support of Kaneka and Tsudao. In either case, the Lion abide by Naseru's decision.

Year 1159, Month of the Monkey (Late Summer)

The King of Trolls

Returned Dragon hero Togashi Mitsu and his apprentice Togashi Matsuo accidentally awaken the King of Trolls, a troll as big as a mountain that has slumbered for centuries. Bayushi Ogura (the son of the Imperial Chancellor), witch-hunter Kuni Junji, and a Zokujin named Zgkol help them to lay the troll to rest once more. Ogura, a member of the Shadowed Tower conspiracy, murders Junji, who has begun to correctly suspect him of researching maho.

Protector of the Imperial City

Ikoma Otemi, the Lion samurai who defeated an Orochi, is given the title of Protector of the Imperial City. He guards Oto-san Uchi at the helm of *The Deathless*, the boat he acquired during his adventures in the Island of the Mist.

The Bastard's Followers

In a surprising move, Moto Chagatai and his Unicorn armies arrive at Yasuki Yashiki and declare their allegiance to Akodo Kaneka. The Unicorn is the first Great Clan to publicly stand next to one of the Four Winds. Yoritomo Kitao quickly aligns the Mantis with Akodo Kaneka as well, though she continues to court the other Winds.

The Grandmaster's Wisdom

Naka Tokei, the Grand Master, appears in front of Toturi Tsudao to aid her in her quest to destroy the Tsuno. The shugenja and the Wind have a long conversation about the nature of the Tsuno, and how they are able to travel long distances without detection. Naka Tokei reveals that the Tsuno travel through the Realm of Dreams. They have the power to open a connection to Ningen-do wherever they wish with their powerful magic.

Togashi Hoshi Disappears

Togashi Hoshi tells his clan that he and his wife Hoshi Eisai are needed elsewhere, and they leave Ningen-do for the Spirit Realms. The Dragon Clan Championship is left vacant. Most Dragon samurai expect Mirumoto family daimyo Mirumoto Uso or Togashi Satsu, son of Hoshi, to become champion, but neither moves to claim the mantle.

The Lion Counterattack

Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro cannot afford to send many troops to punish the Phoenix for their attack on Lion troops in the Phoenix lands. However, veteran warrior Ikoma Fujimaro volunteers to lead a small unit of men to look for Lion survivors and strike at the Phoenix. They leave immediately.

Forgeries Discovered

Historian Ikoma Fudai reports to Hantei Naseru that the papers that declared Akodo Kaneka the rightful heir of the Yasuki are forgeries. The evidence seems to suggest that Shosuro Higatsuku, one of Akodo Kaneka's advisers, forced archivist Miya Ippei to enter these papers into the Miya Archives for his master's benefit. Ikoma Fudai, convinced by the evidence he has uncovered, goes to the Emerald Champion to seek justice. The truth is more complicated: Hantei Naseru orchestrated the evidence to make Kaneka seem culpable, yet he is the one responsible for the entire affair.

Year 1159, Month of the Rooster (Early Fall)

Domotai's Torture

In the depths of the Shadowlands, the Tsuno take the kidnapped Matsu Domotai to their sacred temple, Nikushimi Shinden. The Tsuno torturers begin their work in figuring out exactly what will cause him the most pain.

The Mantis Divided

Yoritomo Komori, Yoritomo Kamoto, and other older members of the Mantis move to protect the true heir of Yoritomo from Kitao's machinations. They begin to secretly lobby the other clans for aid and prepare for the return of Yoritomo's heir.

The Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng

Garen, the Tainted gaijin captain of the ghostly ship the *Revenant*, recovers the Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng at Daigotsu's request, destroying the village where it had been hidden.

Sezaru's Blessing

Following the advice of his attendant Miya Gensaiken (who is not yet revealed as a Pekkle no Oni), Sezaru travels to the Dragon lands. He magically fertilizes the crops, and the harvest is plentiful. The starving Dragon peasants are grateful for his aid.

The Dark Lord Prepares

Daigotsu marshals his forces in the City of the Lost for a great offensive. His men do not know the Dark Lord's target, though they are eager to fight. The Lost samurai are ready to show the samurai of Rokugan how much more fearsome the Shadowlands have become since the Dark Lord came to power.

Omen, the Tainted shugenja who helped Kitsune Ryosei to escape the City of the Lost, is a spy that has infiltrated the Tainted City. As the son of Kuni Utagu, his disguise had to be strong: to make sure no one could recognize him, Ratling shaman Te'tik'kir stole his Name using powerful magic, so Omen could safely adopt a new identity. Omen cannot discover the Dark Lord's target, so he cannot warn Rokugan of the army that would soon march upon it.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

A superior sends the party to the small Crane village of Musume Mura (Daughter Village) to find his son a wife. The PCs have a chance to relax while the town celebrates the anniversary of the time the first Hantei met his bride, a girl from the village. Shortly after they arrive, the player characters receive a messenger from Otosan Uchi; they have been summoned to the Imperial city to be commended for their recent work by a high-ranking Emerald Magistrate. The message instructs them to come to Otosan Uchi with all haste, but it is impossible to leave: the festival requires all those who enter the village by day to stay the night to foster "amorous intentions" and increase the likelihood of finding a bride. Anyone who leaves risks insulting the memory of the first Hantei and the present-day Crane, an impediment to their mission to find a wife for their superior's first-born.

Focus

For such a small village, the local inns and geisha houses are surprisingly large. At one of the better inns in the city, observant party members notice several important people. Shinjo Shono, the Shinjo family daimyo, and Asahina Sekawa, the newly-minted Asahina daimyo, are both in the village, though incognito, and appear to be working on potential alliances through marriages to some of their subordinates. If there are Unicorn or Crane members of the party, the family daimyos may even make a show at finding them a bride or husband. If not, they will find another way to surreptitiously contact the party to discuss the real reason they are in Musume Mura.

Strike

While Shono and Sekawa are making it look as if they are in the village to work on alliances with each other's clan, their true mission is a much more serious one: there have been multiple Tsuno sightings near Musume Mura. While neither the Crane nor the Unicorn are friends of the Lion, they realize that the Tsuno pose a threat to the entire Empire. Both daimyo meet with the party in secret to discuss the recent sightings and outline a plan for the player characters to patrol the streets of Daughter Village. While the PCs may leave the village after sunrise without insulting the Crane, Shono and Sekawa would appreciate it if the party were to stay another few days.

If the party cooperates or performs well against any incursions, they make some powerful allies.

Important NPCs in Dark Allies

Omen, Oracle of Jade

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 3 [Kuni Shugenja 4]
Honor: 2.2 [3.4] Status: 5.5 [9.0] Glory: 4.5[0.0: has no past or history]

Air: 2 [5] **Earth:** 5 [6] **Fire:** 3 [3] **Water:** 3 [3] **Void:** 4 [6]

Carapace: 3 (4 against Shadowlands creatures).

KATA: None
ADVANTAGES: None [Oracle]
DISADVANTAGES: Driven (prove existence of City of the Lost; loses this disadvantage after he becomes Omen), Languages: Nezumi
SPELLS: (Spells marked with * are innate abilities) Commune*, Counterspell, Earthquake, Evil Ward*, Fires From the Forge, Hands of Clay, [Hand of Jurojin,] Heart of the Inferno, Jade Strike*, Path to Inner Peace*, Preservation, Sense*, Strength of the Crow, Summon*, The Ties That Bind*, Tomb of Jade, Walk Without Passing, [Wings of Fire]
SKILLS: Calligraphy 1 [2], Defense 2 [4], [Jitte 2], Kenjutsu 1, Lore: Maho 4 [6], Lore: Shadowlands 4 [6], Medicine 3 [4], Meditation 2 [4], Shintao 3, Spellcraft (Maho) 2 [4], Yari 3 [4]

OMEN'S ABILITIES AS ORACLE OF JADE

AURA SIGHT: Omen can automatically determine the true Honor rank of a person with a glance, and whether a creature has the Shadowlands Taint.

FLIGHT: Omen can fly at will, at four times his normal walking speed.

JADE DRAGON: Omen can take the form of a small jade dragon at will. While in this form, roughly the size of a horse, he can breathe green fire in a thirty-foot cone. All Shadowlands creatures within this cone take 7k7 damage. Non-Tainted creatures are not affected.

MAGIC RESISTANCE: Omen has Magic Resistance (TN +15), as per the Advantage, save that it applies only against magic cast by Tainted creatures.

ORACLE ABILITIES/RESTRICTIONS: Like all Oracles, Omen has the inherent ability to divine the future; this ability is not magical, but part of his very nature. Any mortal being may ask Omen one question. If Omen chooses to answer, he immediately knows the answer to this question (the knowledge appears in his mind), and he must tell the questioner the answer. The answer may be cryptic, but it is always truthful. Omen cannot use this ability more than once for any given mortal, even if he wishes to do so. Omen has some control over when this power is used, and need not use it on the first question posed to him ("Are you really the Oracle?"), though he may do so if he wishes.

The Oracles of Light are creatures of incredible power, but they must obey certain rules. They may not use their enormous magical powers to interfere in the affairs of the mortal world, except as advisors or to preserve their own lives. They may not seek out others to give their advice, but must wait until they are asked. If they violate these rules, the dragons can retract their blessing at any time, destroying the Oracle.

TELEPORTATION: Once per day, Omen can teleport to any place in Rokugan that he has visited before and bring up to three other human-sized creatures with him.

Few in Rokugan have led such a strange and tortured life as the man known as Omen. And no one knows the full truth of it except for him and the Nezumi shaman Te'tik'kir.

He began life as Kuni Kiyoshi, the only son of the leader of the Kuni Witch-Hunters, Kuni Utagu. He was a prodigy in the halls of the tsukai-sagasu, but he never felt that he could gain his infamous father's respect, always overshadowed by his more proficient rival, Kuni Shigeaki. This drove him to ever more daring and prideful deeds, and finally drove him alone into the heart of the Shadowlands. All alone, he saw something the rest of the Empire had never before believed possible: an entire city of Tainted humans and other creatures, the City of the Lost. He returned home, but no one believed his tale, not even his father. Vowing to return with evidence, he sought the city again, but he was surprised by a patrol of Lost samurai and wounded by a Tainted arrow.

The Nezumi rescued him and nursed him back to health, but they could not save him from the Taint. The mere existence of the City of the Lost was of gravest consequence. His brethren Witch-Hunters would need as much information as possible about this new threat, but the Lost would be able to sense a spy, just as the Crab clan had conceived such defenses against Fu Leng's minions. So with the help of the Name magic of the Ratling Nameseeker Te'tik'kir, he relinquished his name and everything that comprised his identity as Kuni Kiyoshi, and became Omen. His old name settled upon his rival Shigeaki, and the history and memories of the Empire realigned themselves as if he had never existed. He was truly alone, struggling daily with the inexorable advance of the Taint. Protected only by a mystical spear given to him by Te'tik'kir, Omen returned — for the first time — to the City of the Lost. His only contact with the Empire was through Te'tik'kir, who relayed his messages to the Kuni Witch-Hunters. It was only a matter of time before Omen would succumb to the Taint and become a true minion of the Dark Lord.



But he was redeemed by either fate or fortune, when he was chosen by the newborn Dragon of Jade to be its Oracle. The inevitable doom of Omen's corruption was erased in an instant as their spirits merged, and he became the first Oracle of Jade.

The first set of stats represents Kuni Kiyoshi as he was before he became Tainted and relinquished his name. The set in brackets is to be used after he becomes the Oracle of Jade.

Omen's Weapons

Omen's Crimson Spear

Forged by the legendary Nezumi shaman Te'tik'kir, this spear has the potent ability to help its wielder resist the insidious Shadowlands Taint.

In combat, Omen's Crimson Spear counts as a yari and inflicts 3k4 damage. The wielder rolls four extra dice to resist accumulating Shadowlands Taint. In the Shadowlands, the bearer only needs to roll to resist accumulating Taint every third day rather than every day.

After he becomes the Oracle of Jade, Omen is able to confer the spear's blessings on others by touching them with the blade. The spear loses all of its powers for one week when he does so, but the person touched is protected during this time as if he were carrying the spear.

The Celestial Jitte

The Celestial Jitte were crafted on the Celestial Forge by the Fortune of Steel and Shiba Tsubeko, working in collaboration. The jitte were stolen shortly after their creation by the Onisu called Hakai. Until Omen recovered them from the City of the Lost, their powers were unknown.

In combat, the Celestial Jitte are treated as normal jitte, except they inflict 3k3 damage, 4k4 against Shadowlands creatures. If the wielder uses both of them together, he gains an extra attack per round. If the jitte are separated by more than ten feet, they automatically teleport to each other's side or to their last wielder's hands.

If wielded by a Tainted individual or a person with less than 2 Honor, the jitte exhibit no magical powers whatsoever.

Asahina Nizomi, Son of the Grand Master

School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 1 [5]
Honor: 3.3 Status: 0.0 [6.0] Glory: 0.0 [4.0]

Air: 3 [4] **Earth:** 1 [3] **Fire:** 3 [5] **Water:** 1 [3] **Void** 4 [6]
Willpower 3 Intelligence 4 (6) Perception 2 [3]

Kata: None

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Friend of the Elements (Fire), Great Destiny, Great Potential (Divination, Spellcraft), Inner Gift (Foresight, Lesser Prophecy), Kharmic Tie: Naka Tokei (5), Precise Memory

Disadvantages: Dark Secret

Spells: Benten's Touch, Biting Steel, Commune*, Counterspell*, Fires of Purity, The Fires from Within*, Force of Will, Heart of the Inferno, Nature's Touch, Path to Inner Peace*, Reflections of Pan Ku, Reflective Pool, Sense*, Slash of the Lion, Summon*, Tail of the Fire Dragon*, Wind-Borne Slumbers.

Skills: Calligraphy 0 [3], Divination 3 [5], Etiquette 0 [3], Investigation (Notice) 2 [4], Lore: History 0 [4], Lore: Spirit Realms 5, Meditation 4 [5], Spellcraft 0 [5], Theology (Fortunes) 3 [5]

For many years, Grand Master of the Elements Naka Tokei wandered the Spirit Realms. When he returned to the Realm of Mortals, he brought with him a strange child whom he presented to Asahina Sekawa for safekeeping. Naka Tokei claimed that during his travels his soul had been cloven in two, separating the good and bad portions of his nature. The new soul shorn away from Tokei's created a new being, a being blessed with all the latent potential of the Grand Master's tremendous powers. This new being had taken the shape of a young human boy, with all the frailties and limitations of that form. Naka Tokei named the boy Nizomi. When Nizomi was presented to Asahina Sekawa to be raised in the Asahina temples, he appeared to be about three years old, normal in all respects except for his unearthly eyes: golden, piercing with strange intelligence, and vertically slitted like a cat's. The boy's tremendous potential could be best cultivated in the peaceful hands of the Asahina, because there was one thing of which Naka Tokei was still unsure. He did not know which half of his soul was the good half and which was the bad half. Nizomi could be one of the greatest heroes of a new age, or one of its greatest villains.

With Naka Tokei's dire warning in mind, Asahina Sekawa took Nizomi with him to be raised as an Asahina shugenja. In the halls of the Asahina temples, Nizomi's latent abilities and otherworldly intelligence blossomed and flourished. Throughout all the years of Nizomi's training, Asahina Sekawa kept a careful eye upon him, looking for signs of what role Nizomi's true nature had chosen for him. Even as a boy, he showed disturbing flashes of insight. He exhibited a breathtaking intellect, until he so far outstripped the knowledge and abilities of his teachers that he learned more by studying outside of his daily lessons, immersing himself in the ancient lore of the Asahina libraries. But he was ever a respectful student, in spite of the shortcomings of his teachers.

He is highly unusual among the Asahina in that his aptitude is with the element of Fire, not Air. The pacifistic Asahina find the destructive nature of Fire to be uncomfortable; Nizomi's talent for it particularly disturbs Sekawa, but he knows that forbidding Nizomi to study Fire, stifling his potential, would be unfortunate at best, disastrous at worst.

Nizomi is fully aware of his past and nature. He has forgotten nothing since the moment he came into being, and he often wonders what destiny has in store for him. If he knows the truth about his good or bad nature, he has told no one, and the truth remains a mystery for now.

Part IV
Broken Blades

As forges went, this one was inadequate. The heat source was insufficient for the task, and the tools provided were of considerably lower quality than he was accustomed to using. Given what he had to work with, the task set before him could not be done. Which only meant that it would take him slightly longer than usual.

Kaiu Mizumi turned and took up the hammer and tongs. He examined the dozens of shards of metal he was to work with. They were many different types of steel, forged with different techniques. It would prove difficult, as he already knew; more importantly, it would make the final product of questionable quality, and that was unacceptable. A Kaiu did not forge a blade that was unworthy. If he failed in his task, none of his fellows would ever mention it, but he would know. And in knowing his failure, he would be useless to his family and clan.

"Will there be a problem?" a deep voice asked. Mizumi turned to regard Akodo Kaneka curiously. The Bastard — no, he had a new title now — wore armor crafted in the Lion style, but had replaced the mon with one recently adapted from the symbols found in the Book of Sun Tao. It was Kaneka's personal symbol now. The symbol of the Shogun.

"No, Shogun," Mizumi responded. "It will be difficult, but it can be done."

"Excellent," Kaneka responded, obviously pleased at the smith's determination. "How long will the process take?"

Mizumi looked again at the shattered steel pieces he had been given to work with. Each was a shard of a wakizashi that had been broken to signify its owner's oath of fealty to the Shogun. Just as the Kami had broken their blades to serve the first Hantei, so too had these men and women given their wakizashi, their honor, to demonstrate their loyalty to a man they believed could bring order to an Empire in chaos. "The steel was purged of impurities when it was first forged. It will take time to render and shape, but not nearly so long as a new sword would normally take." He considered it for a moment. "A week, perhaps two. The folding process will be difficult."

"Two weeks," grunted a surly, squat man clad in purple. "That does not seem very long. Will the blade be of any real quality in such a short time?"

Mizumi met the man's eyes without fear or hesitation. "I will not forge a substandard blade, Khan. If the blade I create is not equal to the Shogun's needs, then he can replace it with mine after I have coated it with my life's blood."

The Unicorn Khan smiled wryly at the smith's words and rubbed his chin, nodding appreciatively. He gave Kaneka a knowing look of approval.

"Begin," the Shogun ordered.

Year 1159, Month of the Dog (Mid-Fall)

Return of Kuroda

Daigotsu raises Hida Kuroda from the dead. The former Crab Champion is now fiercely loyal to Daigotsu, but retains his military prowess and his might. Daigotsu appoints him the general of the Shadowlands forces that occupy the Carpenter Wall, knowing that his presence will disturb the Crab forces.

The Shogun

Kitsuki Remata discovers that the earlier documents were a forgery, and believes that Hantei Naseru was behind the plot to discredit his half-brother. Calling upon an obscure reference in the book of Sun Tao, Kaneka declares himself *shogun*, military leader of the Empire. All those who will serve him are to break their wakizashi as a show of fealty. Kaneka has a new sword, a shogun's sword, forged from the steel. Kaneka's ambassador Shosuro Higatsuku, his liaison to the Lion Akodo Ijiasu, and Khan Moto Chagatai are the first to break their swords to the new Shogun. When Yoritomo Kitao, the Mantis Champion, refuses to commit to one of the Winds in such a blatant way, a young woman named Yoritomo Kumiko pledges her sword to the shogun for the Mantis.

Yoritomo Kumiko

A young samurai-ko named Yoritomo Kumiko reveals herself at Yasuki Yashiki, bearing in her hands the twin kama that Yoritomo used to wield. She claims to be the daughter of Yoritomo and the rightful heir of the Mantis Clan. Many samurai, disillusioned by Kitao or enamored by the Daughter of Storms, flock to her banner. Though no one realizes it, Kumiko has been Tainted since her birth, and she has been in a temple all of her life to keep the Taint from spreading.

The Crane-Phoenix Alliance

Facing conflicts with the Lion and the Crab, the Crane Clan seeks an alliance with the Phoenix. The wife of the Crane Clan Champion, Doji Akiko — once known as Isawa Akiko, the daughter of Isawa who returned through Oblivion's Gate — lobbies the Elemental Council for a treaty. To prove the worth of the Crane, Isawa Hochiu challenges Doji Kurohito to a duel of first blood. Kurohito wins, and the Phoenix accepts the alliance.

To further solidify the ties between the two Clans, the Elemental Council accepts Doji Akiko as the Master of Water to replace the fallen Isawa Riake.

Wedding of Ikoma Otemi and Shosuro Yasuko

The Protector of the Imperial City, Ikoma Otemi, weds Shosuro Yasuko in an elaborate ceremony in Otosan Uchi. Many daimyo and high-ranking samurai attend. After the wedding, Ikoma Otemi returns to his boat and to the sea; it is clear to everyone that he does not love his new bride.

Kaeru Join the Lion

Ikoma family daimyo Ikoma Sume visits Kaeru Tomaru, the ronin leader of the City of the Rich Frog. Sume convinces Tomaru that Ikoma patronage will serve his interests and help the city grow. The Kaeru family of ronin joins the Ikoma family, and the Lion Clan annexes the City of the Rich Frog. This move angers the Unicorn; the City of the Rich Frog, though not garrisoned by Unicorn soldiers, is a part of traditional Unicorn lands.

Tsudao's Challenge

Toturi Tsudao and her Imperial Legions follow the Tsuno as they retreat from the Lion lands to the Shinomen Forest. Tsudao fights the Tsuno, who have destroyed an ancient Naga city. After the battle, Tsudao and her retainers meet Shahai, the Dark Daughter of Fu Leng. With her is the ronin Junnosuke, who has been magically bound to Shahai's will. The fight is long and grueling, but Tsudao is victorious; Shahai must flee, and Junnosuke dies.

After the fight, Tsudao is surprised to find an unconscious Matsu Domotai in Shahai's lair. He bears the marks of long torture, and Tsudao is unsure if he will live. She sends Domotai to the Matsu lands with an escort.

Year 1159, Month of the Boar (Late Fall)

The Anvil and the Emerald Champion

Yasuki Hachi publicly outwits Hantei Naseru in the Imperial Court. For the first time, the new Emerald Champion is viewed by the Empire as a capable Champion, and not simply a pawn. Naseru congratulates Hachi upon his victory, and tells him that he has expected Hachi to develop into the best Emerald Champion out of those who were at the Test of the Emerald Champion. It seems the two men will finally be able to come to an understanding, and erase the enmity between them.

The Dark Lord Assaults the Imperial City

The Dark Lord Daigotsu masterminds a daring attack on the Imperial City taking a cue from the Crab's assault on Otosan Uchi years ago: Tainted gaijin admiral Garen's fleet of ghostly ships attack from the sea, while powerful Tsuno magic transports Daigotsu's army to Otosan Uchi's doorstep. Though Shahai voices some concerns about the futility of the attack, Daigotsu is firm in his desire to attack Otosan Uchi.

The gathered samurai put up their best defense, but the Horde quickly pushes into the city. When the Shadowlands forces are inside the city, they destroy the gates to slow down the Rokugani samurai coming to relieve the besieged capital. Hantei Naseru leads the Imperial Court out of the city through escape tunnels as the battle rages. Many brave samurai die in the battle, though the day is not without victories: Lion Clan Champion Matsu Nimuro defeats Goju Kyoden, Daigotsu's personal bodyguard, in single combat. Yasuki Hachi and Phoenix hero Shiba Aikune rally and organize the troops near the Imperial City.

Daigotsu and his cultists enter the Imperial Palace, which activates ancient wards that keep out all those who did not have the blood of Emperors. Untotuched by the wards, Daigotsu and several cultists walk to the throne room.

Passage into Meido

Otosan Uchi is the location where the Kami fell from the Celestial Heavens to the mortal realm, and the barriers between all the Spirit Realms beyond Ningen-do are weak there. Once he reaches the throne room, Daigotsu performs a ritual that the Tsuno taught him. It takes him to Meido, the Realm of Waiting, where the souls of the dead go to be judged.

Emma-O, the Fortune of Death, guards and weighs the mortal souls that wait in Meido. The Fortune confronts Daigotsu, curious about the living soul that has entered where no living souls go. Daigotsu orders Emma-O to bring the soul of Fu Leng to him, from the place it is imprisoned deep within the Realm. When Emma-O refuses, incredulous, Daigotsu impales himself on the Fortune's spear. He pulls himself closer to Emma-O and places the Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng onto the Fortune's face. It begins to kill the Fortune of Death.

Emma-O releases Fu Leng, who reclaims his Porcelain Mask. Emma-O flees, swearing vengeance upon Daigotsu once the Dark Lord dies. Fu Leng rewards his faithful servant by curing his wounds.



Ascension of Fu Leng

Using Sezaru's Mask, a powerful nemuranai created by the Oracle of Void herself, Daigotsu opens a portal to Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens. Fu Leng and his greatest minions — Akuma no Oni, the Maw, and Yakamo no Oni — ascend to fight the Fortunes, the Gods, and the Dragons. Daigotsu promises Fu Leng that he will protect the Temple of the Ninth Kami in the City of the Lost; as long as the Tainted worship the dark god there, he says, Fu Leng will have enough power to wage war against the heavens. Fu Leng promises Daigotsu his eternal blessing for all he has done to restore him to his proper place.

Fu Leng and his oni commence their assault on the Celestial Heavens, and Daigotsu returns to the mortal realm.

Legendary Confrontation

With the help of the Naga shugenja Ghedai, Toturi Tsudao and her closest retainers are transported to the Imperial City in the middle of the chaotic battle. Grand Master Naka Tokei informs Tsudao that she is the only one able to enter the palace. Toturi Sezaru transports himself to Otosan Uchi magically, though he is too late to help his sister face the Dark Lord.

When she enters, she meets Bayushi Tai, a young Scorpion samurai who was trapped inside the palace when the wards became active. Though Tsudao orders him to go, Tai refuses to leave Tsudao's side. Together they enter the throne room, where Daigotsu and his cultists are in the middle of a complex ritual. Though Tai and Tsudao kill the cultists, it is too late; the spell has been completed, and Daigotsu may return to the Shadowlands at will.

Daigotsu tells her that he is the forgotten son of Hantei XXXVIII, who was still unborn when the Empress Hochiahime was captured by a Bloodspeaker cell. Raised by the Bloodspeakers, he has known from infancy that he was destined to be the Dark Lord of the Shadowlands. He informs the daughter of Toturi that Fu Leng has returned to the heavens, where another war rages. He makes a tempting offer: if Rokugan will not attack Daigotsu's empire, Daigotsu's men will no longer invade Rokugan. Tsudao refuses to compromise with the Shadowlands, and the two fight.

The fight is quick and brutal; Tsudao severs Daigotsu's right arm at the shoulder, and he retreats to the Shadowlands. He leaves behind the Steel Throne, which he stole when it was Tainted at the previous year's Winter Court. Tai offers to clean the Throne of Taint and return it to Tsudao as a symbol of her right to rule, and she accepts.

Unbeknownst to Tsudao, Tai takes the Steel Throne to the Shadowed Tower. The secret organization plans to place powerful enchantments on the Throne that will allow them to spy on the future Emperor.

Empress Toturi II

Toturi Tsudao sees that none of her brothers are able to protect the Empire. Sezaru could not defeat Daigotsu when they clashed outside the Oracle's home, Kaneka could not protect the Carpenter Wall, and Naseru could not protect Otosan Uchi. As she is the only one able to save the Empire, she proclaims herself Empress Toturi the Second. Since Daigotsu's assault has corrupted Otosan Uchi beyond repair, she will move her capital to Kyuden Seppun.

One of the first to acknowledge her as Empress is Shiba Aikune, who gives her a part of Isawa's Last Wish. The gift assumes the form of a fiery wakizashi. As a reward, Tsudao swears to Aikune that she will appoint him Clan Champion once her reign is recognized by all of Rokugan.

Enlightened Madness

The insane ise zumi Kokujin has become one of the greatest adversaries of the Dragon Clan. He sends the Dragon Clan a challenge: he will face the Dragon in combat if they send seven of their strongest to the Twilight Mountains. General Mirumoto Rosanjin, shugenja Tamori Chieko, son of the previous Clan Champion Togashi Satsu, Dragon hero Togashi Mitsu, his student Togashi Matsuo, tattooed monk Hitomi Hogai, and head of the Hoshi order Hoshi Wayan travel to the Twilight Mountains to face him. His offer is a trap: Kokujin ambushes them with a huge number of goblins and twisted ise zumi and takes them prisoner. He uses the Anvil of Despair to create Shameswords with the souls of some of the trapped Dragon, including Chieko.

Kokujin then summons a spawn of the First Oni to learn the true name of Fu Leng. Togashi Satsu saves the surviving Dragon when he taps into the power of Togashi inside him, turns into a dragon, and fights the Oni until it crashes below the earth once more. Kokujin, Togashi Mitsu, and the Anvil of Despair are lost in the chaos.

Togashi Satsu accepts the power and wisdom of his grandfather Togashi that his soul carries. He takes the post of the Dragon Clan Champion.

Adventure Hook

Challenge: In the days after Daigotsu's assault on Otosan Uchi, the roads along the coastline are clogged with peasants fleeing the capital, as well as the Shogun's forces moving north to attempt to restore order within the city. It is rumored that a favored friend of the Shogun, Doji Tanitsu, has come to meet with Kaneka. However the player characters have found their way to South Hub Village, they will find it difficult to not join the troops marching against the Horde; many daimyo have made it clear that honor and glory will be heaped upon those who fight with the Shogun and that those who shirk their duty are less than honorable.

Focus

Tanitsu's meeting with the Shogun is dual-purposed. He wants to see his friend one more time before Kaneka enters the fray against the Horde, where he may die. Tanitsu also wants to find out Kaneka's true plans for the Empire as Shogun. The player characters come into the picture as bodyguards and sentries to supplement the two Kenshinzen that currently defend Tanitsu. The party's service is a favor to Tanitsu from the players' lord (or superior officer) and is greatly appreciated; not everyone in the Empire is happy that the Shogun is leading the march on Otosan Uchi. Those that support Toturi's other children might find one last chance to strike at Kaneka; and the Crane, while being no friend to the Shogun, know that he is the best hope of ridding the Imperial city of the Shadowlands Horde and regaining some security in their lands surrounding the capital.

Strike

During the meeting between Kaneka and Tanitsu, the party must stay on their toes. Assassins have been looking for a chance to take the head of Toturi's bastard son. Depending on how perceptive the party is and how tough they appear, the meeting may go off without any incident, or the killers may believe the player characters' presence is the moment of weakness they've been waiting for. Regardless of the results, the PCs' service should earn them favor in the Imperial courts and — if they decide to join the Shogun's army — may bring them the glory they need to impress the Empire.

Important NPCs in Broken Blades

Kaelung, Jade Sect Enforcer

SCHOOL/RANK: Three Orders Monk (Hoshi) 4 [5]
HONOR: 2.5 STATUS: 2.0 GLORY: 1.0 (monk)

Air: 2 [3]	Earth: 4	Fire: 3 [4]	Void 3	Water: 3
Reflexes 4				Strength 5

ADVANTAGES: Heartless, Quick, Wary
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation, Brash
SKILLS: Artisan (Bonsai) 2, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 5, Heavy Weapons [6], Hunting 4 [6], Investigation 4 [5], Jiujutsu 6 [7], Lore: Shadowlands 4 [5], Meditation (Void Recovery) 4, Peasant Weapons 5, Stealth 4, Theology 3 [4]

Kaelung began his service to the Dragon years ago as a young monk studying with the Order of Hoshi. He was a difficult student, always seeking a more direct path, with little use for enigmas. When the tattooed madman Kokujin slew several of Kaelung's brother monks, the young man left the order to hunt Kokujin.

During his quest, Kaelung was approached by men who assured him that they had the means to locate threats like Kokujin — entities that threatened the entire Empire — and that they needed the aid of warriors like Kaelung to destroy such threats. They offered Kokujin's whereabouts as proof of their sincerity. Kaelung investigated, and though his prey had escaped while Kaelung was traveling, the information had been valid. Kaelung joined his informants, discovering only later that he had thrown in his lot with the Kolat's Jade Sect.

For years, Kaelung scoured the Empire for the madman he had sworn to kill. Along the way, he ended the threat posed by dozens of Shadowlands beasts, maho-tsukai, and enigmatic spirits that the Jade Sect directed him to destroy. During the recent Dragon-Phoenix war, he was nearly arrested by Mirumoto magistrates who claimed that he had murdered men in the ronin village of Nanashi Mura. Kaelung knew nothing of this crime, and defended himself appropriately. Unfortunately, not all the magistrates survived, and Kaelung found that the Dragon now regarded him as a murderer. It was a crime he could not dismiss as easily as he pretended.

Recently, Kaelung came face to face with his nemesis when Togashi Satsu gathered a handful of Dragon to face Kokujin in the Twilight Mountains. The venerated ise zumi Togashi Mitsu recruited an unwilling Kaelung for the encounter, and Kaelung was enraged when Kokujin escaped his wrath once again. The madman's apparent death brought Kaelung little comfort, and now he wonders what his purpose in life will be.

Asahina Sekawa, Jade Champion

SCHOOL/RANK: Asahina Shugenja 4 [5]
HONOR: 2.5 STATUS: 9.2 GLORY: 8.5

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3 [4]	Void 4
	Willpower 6		Perception 5	

ADVANTAGES: Friend of the Elements (Air), Heart of Vengeance (Shadowlands), Higher Purpose (Fight Taint), [Leadership]
DISADVANTAGES: Driven, Sworn Enemy (Hakai)
SPELLS: As Jade Champion, Sekawa has access to a staggering number of spell scrolls and libraries. He has a wide variety of Air spells, many as Innate Abilities. He also possesses all spells with Jade in the title as Innate Abilities, assuming he meets the prerequisites to possess them.
SKILLS: Artisan (Origami) 2, Calligraphy 4, Courtier 4, Divination 2, Etiquette 5, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 4 [6], Kenjutsu 3, Knives 2, Lore: Law 5 [6], Lore: Shadowlands 4 [7], Lore: Shugenja 3 [5], Meditation 4, Spears 3 [5], Spellcraft 5 [7], Theology (Fortunes, Shintao) 4

For most of his life, Asahina Sekawa subscribed to the pacifism embraced by most Asahina shugenja, even though he and his sister Kimita had been orphaned when their father died at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Their uncle Tamako, although Tainted at that battle, returned and embraced a life of seclusion and rigorous self-control; his example was a powerful influence. Sekawa's one departure from other Asahina youth, perhaps, was his martial training, although he learned to wield an array of weapons purely as a means of maintaining his physical condition.

Sekawa and Kimita entered the contest for the Jade Championship almost as an afterthought, intending only to demonstrate their power and finesse, and learn from the competition. Perhaps it was this indifference to the outcome that allowed the youths to do so well. Each had a different style, and each was fortunate in the opponents they faced. In the final round, Sekawa and Kimita faced each other in a duel that was more about form than power. Kimita was victorious, and Sekawa gladly bowed before his sister, the new Jade Champion.

The siblings' elation was short-lived. Hakai, the Onisu of Death, appeared in Otosan Uchi with a sizeable contingent of Omoni's new breed of destructive bakemono. The demon's attack was swift and brutal, and Kimita was killed in moments. A rage such as Sekawa had never known blossomed in his heart, and he threw himself at the Onisu. Only the appearance of his uncle, Asahina Tamako, prevented Sekawa from joining his sister. Tamako's corrupted power allowed him to stand against the Onisu, but only for a moment, and then Hakai destroyed him as well. Bleakly, Sekawa stood shoulder to shoulder with the Emerald Champion, Yasuki Hachi, prepared to die like a samurai. At that moment, the Grand Master of the Elements, Naka Tokei, appeared. Hakai instinctively knew that it could not defeat the Master, and fled rather than face him. Sekawa's vengeance was denied.

Sekawa assumed the title of Jade Champion. He has marshaled the meager resources of that position, which had fallen into disuse for years, and expanded those resources substantially when he became Asahina daimyo. Many among his family pity or despise Sekawa for his newfound passion for destruction, but Sekawa does not care. He will not rest until the Shadowlands have been driven from Rokugan and he has faced Hakai once more.

On that day, he will prove that even death can die.

Part V
Fall of Otosan Uchi

Mirumoto Hikari came awake with a start. He despised the disorientation he often felt upon awakening almost as much as he despised the naps he now sometimes needed. Once, he had been a powerful warrior, the finest student in his dojo, the greatest combatant in his Legion. His name had been known and feared. Even as recently as the War of Spirits, the Steel Chrysanthemum's officers had withdrawn from duels just as often as they had chosen to face him.

What a terrible toll the years took on a man. What no enemy could do, the years had done for them. Now Hikari was old and infirm, constantly tired. He would have retired to a monastery years ago were it not that his clan depended on him. He was a minor functionary in the grand scheme of things, but the one skill he had possessed as a young man that had not atrophied was his ability to read people. He always knew when someone was lying to him. Perhaps it was a gift from his Kitsuki mother.

There was a sound from outside. Hikari frowned; he thought he had awakened at the whim of his unpredictable body. He shook his head slightly, scratching at one ear to test his hearing. He could swear that he heard the sounds of battle from beyond the embassy quarters that had been his home for a decade. But that was ridiculous. No one would be brazen enough to bring conflict to Otosan Uchi.

A shout of alarm rose from the street outside, and then a screeching sound that Hikari had never heard. No human throat would make that noise, not even in the last excruciating moments of a painful death. His frown deepened, and instincts he had not used in years told him to cross the room and place his daisho securely in his obi. It was a ludicrous gesture, of course, but—

Something struck the embassy wall with a sound like thunder. Hikari wondered what could have caused such a calamity. The blow came again, and this time the floor lurched. The old Dragon knew at once that somewhere, a wall had collapsed. Whatever had been in the street was now in the building. When the sounds of splintering wood and crumbled masonry finally faded, a scuttling sound replaced them.

Creatures entered Hikari's chamber. They were small, muscular, and bristling with fangs and talons. They might have been bakemono, save that they were larger than any depiction of such creatures Hikari had ever seen. They sniffed the air and snarled at him, ropes of saliva dripping from their ominous maws.

"Come, then," Hikari said, dropping into a fighting stance. His bones no longer ached. The position felt natural, as if he were young again. He would not be able to kill them all, but they would know that they had faced a Dragon samurai this day.

Year 1159, Month of the Rat (Early Winter)

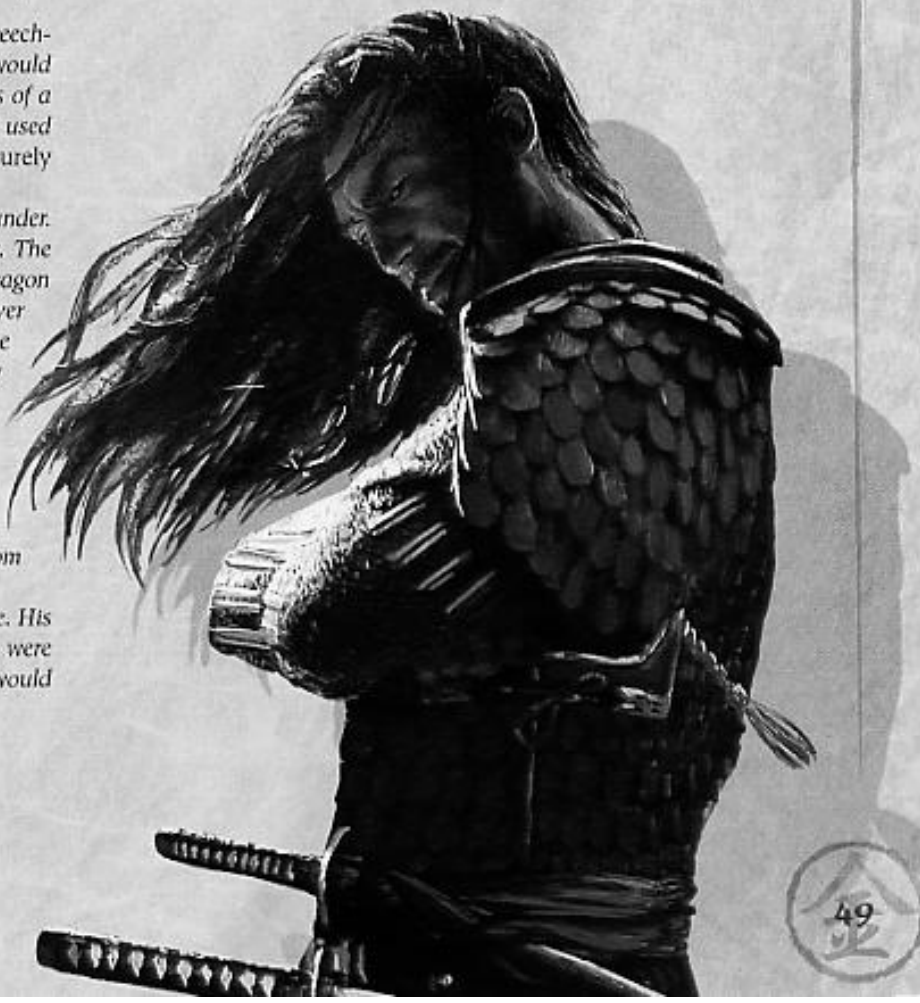
Destruction of Otosan Uchi

The city lies in ruins, without any hope of repair. The spell Daigotsu used to move through the spiritual realms thinned the barrier between the realms, and Shadowlands creatures spawn inside the great city. Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro orders his men to set the city on fire and to bar its walls. The former capital city is no longer the jewel of the empire.

The ruins are inhabited by members of the Sword of Yotsu who remain to destroy the Shadowlands creatures, and several Ratling tribes who do not mind the Taint.

The Shadowlands Regroup

Daigotsu and his minions settle in the City of the Lost to regroup after the losses they took in the attack on Otosan Uchi. Omoni, the Sculptor of Flesh, creates a new arm for the Dark Lord. In vengeance for the death of his bodyguard Goju Kyoden, Daigotsu releases his Onisu through the Empire. The Onisu, fearsome creatures created by Daigotsu, travel through Rokugan in search of chaos and destruction. Though they are eventually destroyed by brave samurai, the Onisu kill many samurai and spread fear across the Empire. Daigotsu gives a part of his soul to the Shadow Dragon to revive his friend and bodyguard Kyoden.



Kyofu, Onisu of Fear

Always thinking of ways to improve on his creations, Daigotsu hits upon the idea of merging the body of an Onisu with the soul of a Lost samurai. With the Onisu dead from their recent assault, now is the perfect time to experiment. Omoni builds the carapace of Kyofu onto the body of resurrected Crab Champion and current Shadowlands general Hida Kuroda. The experiment is a success; Kyofu is stronger, more brutal, and more cunning than ever.

Dissatisfaction With the Dark Lord

The night before the Crab counterattack the Wall, Crab Champion Hida Kuon is visited by the Ogre Overlord Kayobun. The ogres are unhappy with Daigotsu, for he has reinstated Fu Leng to the heavens. After all, Fu Leng was the one who enslaved the ogres. Kayobun suggests an alliance between the ogres and the Crab. Kuon refuses, for he will not ally with Shadowlands beasts, and kills Kayobun.

The Crab Counterattack

Hida Kuon frames an extensive plan to retake the fallen towers. The Crab warriors work together fervently to recover their beloved Kaiu Wall. Elder Crab shugenja Hida Rohiteki, witch hunter Kuni Kiyoshi, and the best of the Kuni work together to cast a complex ritual that causes a rain of jade to fall upon the corrupted beasts that occupy the Wall. The Crab take back five of the six fallen watchtowers, assisted by a contingent of Crane led by Daidoji Rekai, and by Iuchi Lixue's Baraunghar army.

Kyofu must flee from Kuon's mighty charge.

Kyuden Sezaru

In appreciation of Toturi Sezaru's blessings, which rejuvenated the failed crops and staved off starvation, the Dragon Clan offers Sezaru a home in any of their castles. The Wolf chooses Kyuden Tonbo, the small Dragonfly castle ruined by the Akodo's attack. Using his magic, he restores the castle to its previous glory. The peasants in the area christen the castle Kyuden Sezaru.

Naseru's Refuge

After the destruction of the Imperial City, and with the recent proclamation by his sister that she would be reigning as Toturi II from Kyuden Seppun, Hantei Naseru realizes he must find a base of operations. He settles in Ryoko Owari. The City of Lies is not only the biggest city in Rokugan, but also famous for its constant power struggles — perfect for a political mastermind such as the Anvil.

Naseru convinces Bayushi Kaukatsu, the Imperial Chancellor, that his reign would be best for the Scorpion Clan. Kaukatsu publicly declares his support of Naseru — at least, for now.

Dark Oracle of the Void

The elements have been unbalanced since the Oracle of the Void, Toturi Kaede, took the throne in the year 1158. Oracles are forbidden to interfere with the affairs of mortals, and yet the impartial Oracle of the Void did so. To balance the elements, Tonbo Toryu voluntarily relinquishes his status as the Oracle of Thunder to become the Dark Oracle of the Void. The position of the Oracle of Thunder remains vacant.

The Chuda Reborn

Agasha Mishime is the last surviving member the Chuda family, rulers of the Snake Clan that was destroyed in the year 402 for dabbling in maho. Mishime, a quiet, unassuming Phoenix Clan Inquisitor, steals the sword that was used to end the mortal life of Hantei XVI, the Steel Chrysanthemum. He flees to the Shadowlands with the sword and presents it to Daigotsu. Daigotsu, pleased, gives Mishime leave to recreate the Chuda family in service of the Dark Lord.

Yasuyo Returns

Fourteen months ago, Lady Doji visited the Crane Champion's cousin Doji Yasuyo in a dream. The Kami told her to seek out a kenku named Kozue, a legendary kenjutsu teacher who instructed the greatest heroes of the Crane Clan. Now, Doji Yasuyo returns from her training with Kozue in the Realm of Animals. Seven years passed for her in the Realm of Animals, and she is surprised by all the changes that have occurred in her absence.

Yasuyo meets with Doji Kurohito, the Crane Clan Champion, and passes along a warning from her master. Kurohito's blade, Chukandome, bears a powerful curse; if he is not careful, the curse will consume not only Kurohito but the entire Crane Clan. After some thought, Kurohito refuses to put aside the blade. He intends to face the curse and defeat it.

The City of Night

Driven by strange dreams, Hantei Naseru is compelled to visit the City of Night, a pre-human city recently uncovered in Seikitsu Pass by the Unicorn Clan. Naseru and his companions — his spy Bayushi Sunetra, his yojimbo Seppun Isei, and the Shinjo family daimyo Shinjo Shono — are hounded by the sinister Tsuno throughout their journey. When they reach the City of Night, they meet Moto Vordu, the city's appointed guardian. Vordu, driven mad by what he has uncovered, attempts to use Naseru to unlock a powerful nemuranai: a crystal sphere with the power to change the entire world. The sphere, Vordu believes, can only be opened by the descendents of Soli Izumo, one of the first Kitsu. The mad shugenja hopes that Naseru's Akodo veins may carry Kitsu blood capable of unlocking the sphere.

Naseru is forced to unlock the nemuranai by Kishenku, an ancient Tsuno brought to life by Moto Vordu. Naseru learns that the Tsuno were once Kitsu before their fall. Through strength of will, Naseru uses the nemuranai to destroy Kishenku and the Tsuno that threaten the city. He realizes that the absolute power the artifact grants would let him destroy the world, and he destroys it rather than succumb to temptation.

Yotsu Irie, a former Dragonfly who followed Naseru to the city, blames the Anvil for the Lion-Phoenix alliance that destroyed her former family. Initially she hopes to kill Naseru, but after she watches the Anvil in action, she realizes that she has been acting irrationally. When Seppun Isei falls in battle, Irie becomes the Anvil's new yojimbo, and one of his most trusted companions.

Year 1159, Month of the Ox (Mid-Winter)

Dark Knowledge

Daigotsu knows that the Shadowlands forces are united now as they never have been before. However, he is afraid that the united army will shatter if the Dark Lord were to fall in battle. He travels to Volturnum to ask the Dark Oracle of the Void about the exact time and manner in which he will die. With this knowledge in hand, Daigotsu begins his preparations.

Tamori Takes the Field

Dark Oracles cannot directly interfere with the Empire unless someone gives them explicit permission. Before the Phoenix-Dragon war had started, a Phoenix individual had given the Dark Oracle of Fire permission to attack the Dragon Clan. With the help of his servant Tamori Hitaka, Tamori coerces Dragon officer Mirumoto Tsuge into granting him permission to attack the Phoenix. Tamori takes the field and begins to incinerate both Dragon and Phoenix troops. Though tensions between the two Clans rise, both Clans begin to realize the truth.

The Shadowed Tower Revealed

Scorpion Clan Champion Bayushi Yojiro takes his first steps to defeat the Shadowed Tower. He confronts the man "Shosuro Furuyari," a respected poet who returned from Oblivion's Gate, and whom he believes to be a member. Furuyari admits that such a man never existed. In his past life, he was in fact Bayushi Atsuki, one of the heads of the Gozoku: a secret organization dedicated to ruling through a puppet emperor.

Yojiro realizes that Atsuki has studied his tactics and can outthink him at every moment. Yojiro secretly retires as Scorpion Clan Champion, appointing Bayushi Sunetra in his place. She dons Yojiro's armor and does not let anyone know her true identity. This way, she hopes, she will be able to outwit Bayushi Atsuki.

Moto Chen Dishonored

Moto Chen's older brother Moto Chaozhu has never forgiven him for becoming the general of the Unicorn's Junghar army over him. To gain revenge, Chaozhu contacts the Kolat, who dishonor Chen publicly and force him out of his generalship. Shinjo Shono becomes the new general of the Junghar. Chaozhu is appointed to a lieutenant's position under Shono.

The Oracle of Jade

The Jade Dragon is not an Elemental Dragon and does not have the powers of one. During Fu Leng's assault on the heavens, the Dragon enters Ningen-do to see if it can find a hero with sufficient power to help Tengoku. It arrives in the mortal world in the City of the Lost, where it finds the Tainted shugenja Omen. The Jade Dragon looks inside Omen's heart and sees an honorable soul. When the Jade Dragon lends Omen its powers, Omen becomes the first Oracle of Jade, his Taint disappearing. Omen steals the Celestial Jitte that Hakai took from the Shiba at the Test of the Jade Champion, and uses his magic to leave the Shadowlands.

A Dark Bargain

Daigotsu sends an emissary to Hantei Naseru in Ryoko Owari. He believes that the Anvil is the most reasonable of the Four Winds, and the most amenable to an alliance between Daigotsu and Rokugan. Naseru rejects the offer and kills the emissary, but not before extracting from him the location of the City of the Lost. He sends a skilled scout to the Shadowlands to verify the information.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

In several villages in the northeastern Unicorn provinces, magistrates have gone missing. A Unicorn shugenja named Moto Tsusung, who calls himself a "priest of death," may have had something to do with their disappearance. The player characters have been retained by the Jade Magistrates; the PCs are to investigate the situation and report back to their lord or to a Jade Magistrate.

When the party arrives at Dark Edge Village, Unicorn sentries inquire as to their business and remind them of a shugenja tournament to be held the next day on the northernmost tournament field. Mention of Moto Tsusung clearly makes the guards uncomfortable, but they inform the characters that the Moto is an honored guest of Shinjo Guan, the local magistrate.

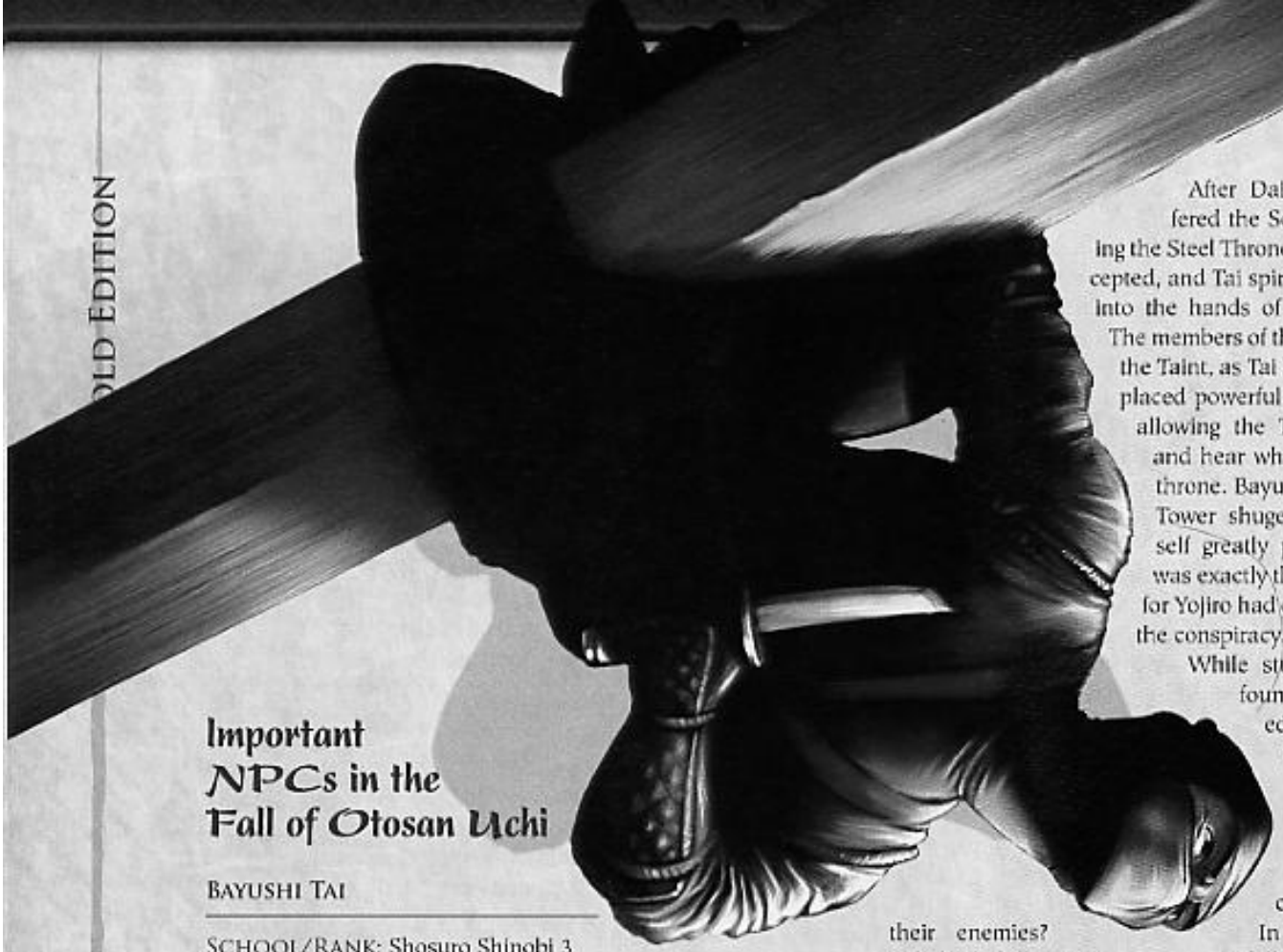
Shinjo Guan welcomes the party and speaks to them candidly regarding Tsusung. After two different magistrates disappeared shortly after meeting with Tsusung, Guan decided to follow him in secret for a few days. On the third day, the Moto visited a hidden shrine in the hills to the northeast. After meditating for an hour or two, Tsusung departed, and Guan had a chance to inspect the shrine. There, he found two magistrates' seals, possibly belonging to the missing men.

Focus

Guan has no testimony to identify Tsusung as the murderer, and what meager evidence he has is not sufficient to accuse a man of Tsusung's standing. Rather than abandon the investigation, Guan has invited Tsusung to stay in his home during his time within the village. Tsusung will depart once the tournament ends, and Guan is desperate to find out what happened before Tsusung leaves. Thus far, the shugenja has said nothing to lead Guan to either evidence or testimony. He asks the characters to attempt to provoke Tsusung, perhaps angering him enough to boast of his prowess or even become enraged. The shugenja tournament, in which shugenja of varying Schools and temples display their craft, is a good place for such a spectacle.

Strike

Although his surly demeanor and strange ritual practices mark Tsusung as a suspicious sort, he has committed no crime. The missing magistrates were killed by bandits, whom Tsusung stalked and killed. He placed the magistrates' seals on a shrine he built for the Lords of Death, and intends to report the entire incident to the Khan, who favors Tsusung. The shugenja has not reported the incident to Guan because he does not consider Guan a capable magistrate, and does not consider the younger man to hold any authority over him. Whether or not Tsusung responds to baiting is left up to the GM.



Important NPCs in the Fall of Otosan Uchi

Bayushi Tai

SCHOOL/RANK: Shosuro Shinobi 3
HONOR: 1.0 STATUS: 3.4 GLORY: –6.0

Air: 2 **Earth: 3** **Fire: 5** **Water: 3** **Void 3**
Reflexes 3

KATA: Cut Under the Mountain, The Tail's Reach
ADVANTAGES: Allies (Bayushi Paneki, Influence 4/Devotion 1, Shosuro Yudoka, Influence 3/Devotion 1), Combat Reflexes, Quick
DISADVANTAGES: None
SKILLS: Acting (Disguise) 3, Athletics 4, Deceit 2, Defense 4, Engineering (Construction) 2, Explosives 2, Kenjutsu 2, Ninja Ranged Weapons 4, Poison 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 4, Underworld 3

Bayushi Tai was the son of two Scorpions who survived their clan's exile to the Burning Sands. He was raised on tales of how the Scorpion could overcome any obstacle so long as they clung to their sacred loyalty to the Clan Champion and the Empire. He also heard of the Empire's hatred, and how the Scorpion's enemies stood ever poised to destroy them if they made even a single mistake. From these tales, Tai learned to be competent and unseen, gaining the attention of his sensei Shosuro Yudoka.

As one of Yudoka's prize students, Tai aided his master in hunting the Lying Darkness-infested Goju ninja for many years. He also served as a messenger and spy for Yudoka and even Clan Champion Bayushi Yojiro himself, overseeing such important operatives as Akodo Kaneka's advisor Shosuro Higatsuku. While on one such mission, Tai found himself trapped in the Imperial Palace when Daigotsu and his forces attacked Otosan Uchi. Tai survived the slaughter and discovered Toturi Tsudao during the fighting. Together, the two faced Daigotsu in the Imperial throne room.

After Daigotsu's defeat, Tai offered the Scorpion's aid in cleansing the Steel Throne. Tsudao graciously accepted, and Tai spirited the artifact directly into the hands of the Shadowed Tower. The members of that conspiracy cleansed the Taint, as Tai had promised, and also placed powerful scrying spells upon it, allowing the Tower's leaders to see and hear what went on around the throne. Bayushi Ogura, a prominent Tower shugenja, pronounced himself greatly pleased with Tai. This was exactly the outcome Tai desired, for Yojiro had ordered him to infiltrate the conspiracy.

While studying the Tower, Tai found himself sorely tempted by their philosophies. He supported the notion that the Scorpion belonged in the shadows, just as the Tower claimed. How else could they hide from their enemies? In the end his loyalty prevailed, and he gave a full report to Yudoka. The Scorpion Clan leadership crushed the Shadowed Tower, due in no small part to Tai's assistance.

Since the Tower's destruction, Tai has returned to his previous duties for the Scorpion. There are precious few Goju left for him to hunt, but the need for skilled spies has never been greater, and there are few the clan's leaders trust as well as Bayushi Tai.

Moto Chen, Kolat Hunter

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 3, Shinomen Guard 1
HONOR: 2.9 STATUS: 4.0 GLORY: 4.2

Air: 3 **Earth: 3** **Fire: 4** **Water: 4** **Void: 4**
Awareness 5

KATA: Howl of the Moto, Moto's Burning Strike
ADVANTAGES: Allies (Moto Chagatai, Naga), Heart of Vengeance (Kolat), Way of the Land (Shinomen, Unicorn)
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation, Driven (Destroy the Kolat), Sworn Enemy (Moto Chaozhu), True Love (Akasha)
SKILLS: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Defense 5, Horsemanship 5, Hunting (Survival) 4, Investigation (Notice) 2, Deceit (Intimidation) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore: Naga 3, Lore: Shinomen 3, Stealth (Sneaking) 3, Kyujutsu (Yomanri) 4

Moto Chen was the younger of two brothers. His elder brother Chaozhu excelled in all the martial pursuits so important to the Moto family, while Chen grew up trying to emulate his brother's prowess. The fact he never received the praise or rewards that Chaozhu received did not bother him. His brother was a god in his eyes.

While Chaozhu was away from home, an earthquake struck their province and killed their parents. The loss devastated Chen, but seemed to enrage Chaozhu, who rode away swearing to defend their borders from some unspecified enemy. Chen had to rebuild their home and put their family affairs in order. Overcoming his grief, Chen rebuilt and reorganized the province over the next several months. He hoped that Chaozhu would find his efforts adequate when he returned from his "patrol," but instead his brother spent all his energy and the last of the family's resources ingratiating himself to the Khan.

The Khan saw through Chaozhu's glory-hungry ambition. He appointed the omnicompetent Chen as general of the Junghar, Army of the Left. Chen knew that Chaozhu was furious, but he did not know how deeply his brother's hatred now ran. That was his downfall. As general of the Army of the Left, Chen found happiness in the honorable execution of his duty to the Khan and in the company of a strange woman called Akasha, who had a bizarre connection to the soul of the Naga race. Chaozhu conspired with a Kolat agent to ruin that happiness, and Chen was humiliated and disgraced in court beyond any hope of redemption.

Only too late did Chen figure out what had happened. The Khan realized it as well, but he could not ignore Chen's public disgrace. He relieved Chen of his duties, and then secretly charged him with the duty and responsibility to purge the Kolat from the ranks of the Unicorn Clan. With the assistance of Akasha and the Mantis Daughter of Storms, Yoritomo Kumiko, Chen discovered a link between the Kolat and the Naga known as the Ghedai. Chen helped Akasha and her teacher the Shasyahkar destroy the Ghedai. The battle between the two Naga awakened a small army of Asp warriors. Chen and Akasha assumed command of these Asps to safeguard the Shinomen Mori.

Moto Chen still hunts Kolat agents. He still shows them no mercy.

Part VI
Heaven and Earth

Nagumo knelt in the shrine, his head pressed firmly against the cold stone floor before the altar that was devoted to Kaze-no-kami. He had served at this shrine since his retirement. In those years, he had come to find that religion had answered many questions that had nagged at him for his entire life. Questions, perhaps, that he had not recognized existed deep within his soul. He had wanted something more than the meager existence of duty and violence that encapsulated his life before entering the service of the Fortunes.

But today Nagumo lifted his head from the floor, his eyes wet with tears. The lord he now served was gone. He could not claim to have understood the Fortune of Wind, for the power of Kaze-no-kami was not something that the mortal mind could comprehend. But he had respected and revered it, and he had been blessed as a result. Now that was over. The constant, gentle breeze that had stirred through the shrine even on the calmest of days was gone.

Fu Leng had been unleashed on the Celestial Heavens, and the gods were dying.

•••

The heavens were thick with the essence of death. The foul stench hung in the air, clouding the vast plains that lay before Tengoku's gate. Thus far, the corruption had not spread past the gates into the idyllic realm beyond. Fu Leng's power was not such that he could befoul the Celestial Heavens themselves. Not unless he could cross the gateway.

A swarm of ryu tore apart a pack of Sanru no Oni and descended toward Fu Leng, their fiery breath swirling about them in a brilliant corona of purity. The pitiful spirits spewed flame as they reached him, hoping perhaps to incinerate him on the spot. He laughed as the flames licked at his robes, scorching them only slightly. He waved his hand and a cascade of noxious green gas billowed forth, enveloping the swarm. Their brilliant flames died instantly, swallowed by the cloud. Their forms went limp and dark as it suffused their flesh.

A long ryu twirled in midair. The light in its eyes flashed with the sun's fury, perhaps signifying its allegiance to the forces of Heaven. Fu Leng reached out with divine speed and grabbed the creature where it hung in the sky, shaking it violently and snapping everything within it in one swift movement. The light in its eyes died and it went as limp as a broken toy.

The dark god laughed with the power of it all.

Year 1159, Month of the Tiger (Late Winter)

Death of Shinjo

Fu Leng's armies overwhelm the guardian of the gates to Tengoku, Okura no Oni. As she did once, a millennium ago, the Kami Shinjo rides forth before the Shadowlands army and talks to her brother, Fu Leng. She believes that a spark of righteousness remains in her wayward brother. Fu Leng uses the spear he stole from the Fortune of Death to kill Shinjo.

Shinjo's Journey

Dead, Shinjo finds herself in Meido, Realm of Waiting. There she finds that the Shi-Tien Yen Wang, the Moto Lords of Death, are on a campaign to take control of Meido from Emma-O. They claim that Emma-O has failed to carry out the duties incumbent upon the Fortune of Death, and the Shi-Tien Yen Wang are needed to keep Meido in order. Emma-O agrees to share control of the Realm of Waiting with the Shi-Tien Yen Wang.

After a short discussion, Shinjo is sent to Ningen-do, where she will be reincarnated back into the world when the time is right.

Mantis Civil War Begins

The followers of Yoritomo Kumiko, daughter of the Clan founder Yoritomo, and those who follow Clan Champion Yoritomo Kitao have eyed each other warily for months. Matters come to a head when one of Kitao's men, Tsuruchi Yutaka, threatens the life of Kumiko's follower Tsuruchi Fusako. Tsuruchi Nobumoto, Commander of the Guard at Gateway Village, kills Yutaka with a single precise arrow. The Mantis Civil War begins in earnest.

Formation of the Tower of Fear

Crab Champion Hida Kuon retakes six of the seven watchtowers, but try as he will he cannot keep the seventh. Finally, the Crab decide to destroy the seventh watchtower and rebuild the Wall around its remains. The next morning, the Crab are appalled to discover that the destroyed tower has rebuilt itself overnight. The Tower of Fear is the closest outbreak of corruption to the Crab lands; filled with Shadowlands beasts and Lost samurai, it rests only a few feet away from the Kaiu Wall.

Akodo's Grave

Matsu Turi, the Dark Oracle of Water, searches the Lion lands until he finds a location of great power: the grave of the Kami Akodo. Turi steals the bones of Akodo with the intent of blackmailing the Lion Clan. A Tsuno warrior traveling with him, Shingai, takes Akodo's blade, still sharp after centuries.

Tamori Defeated

Master of Air Isawa Nakamuro discovers that a Dark Oracle must follow a single order from one who wields the appropriate Dark Covenant, a powerful Tainted artifact. After great trials, Nakamuro and Tamori Shaitung, the Tamori family daimyo, confront Shaitung's father Agasha Tamori in his lair once again, this time armed with the Dark Covenant of Fire. It is revealed that the one to ask Tamori to attack the Dragon Clan was Master of Fire Isawa Hochiu. Hochiu wanted a war between the Phoenix and the Dragon to bring out the heroes within the Phoenix.

Hochiu dies dueling the Dark Oracle of Fire, and disgraced Dragon officer Mirumoto Tsuge ends Agasha Tamori's mad reign with a blade through the Oracle's heart. However, when Tamori dies, his brother Tamori Chosai, who also accompanied Nakamurao and Shaitung, becomes the new Dark Oracle of Fire. Nakamuro thinks quickly; grabbing the Dark Covenant of Fire, he banishes Chosai from Rokugan. As long as he lives, Chosai may never return to Rokugan.

The Dragon-Phoenix War ends.

Ambassador from Afar

Rama Singh, an ambassador from the Ivory Kingdoms, arrives in Rokugan to renew an alliance between the Ivory Kingdoms and the Mantis Clan. The Maharaja who rules the Ivory Kingdoms needs ginseng to survive, and it is only found in Rokugan. Rama Singh arrives in Yasuki Yashiki, the biggest port in Rokugan. Infamous Crane courtier Kakita Munemori and the monk advisor (and former courtier) Konetsu arrive in Kaneka's castle and slickly take the foreign ambassador into the Crane's care.

Year 1160, Month of the Hare (Early Spring)

A Vision of Thunder

A vision of Doji Hoturi, the fallen Crane Thunder, appears at the gates of Kyuden Kakita. The vision claims that Hoturi himself will return in a week to bless the Crane Clan in these times of trouble. Grand Master of the Elements Naka Tokei and his student Toturi Miyako are present to see the blessing. However, events go awry when it is not Doji Hoturi who returns, but the False Hoturi, a creation of the Egg of P'an Ku. The Tainted False Hoturi has sworn allegiance to the Dark Lord Daigotsu.

While the False Hoturi distracts those gathered, Crane duelist Daidoji Megumi sneaks into the chambers of Kakita Toshiken, the former Emerald Champion. She has been corrupted by the Onisu of Death, Hakai, rendering her vulnerable. She is possessed by the vengeful spirit of the ronin Dairya, who loathed Toshiken. She easily defeats Toshiken's yojimbo Doji Reju and cuts off his sword arm, then kills Toshiken and escapes.

Kumiko and the Unbroken

Yoritomo's daughter Kumiko realizes that she will never have the full support of the Mantis Clan, nor the approval of the Empire, if the Shadowlands Taint continues to infect her. She leaves her supporters to be led by her trusted advisors, and with the help of the Naga-connected Akasha and the disgraced Junghar general Moto Chen, she finds the village of the Unbroken. This band of ronin has developed a technique to destroy their Taint by destroying Shadowlands creatures. She joins them for a time, learning their ways.

The Curse of Chukandomo

Crane Champion Doji Kurohito and his cousin Doji Yasuyo are determined to break the curse on his katana Chukandomo. Kurohito orders Crane forces to withdraw from Toshi Ranbo, a site of much death, suffering, and failure for Crane ancestors. The Crane will return the city to the Lion, Kurohito claims, once the curse on the sword is broken. The deal seems too good to be true, and Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro sends sodan-senzo Kitsu Hisashi, an ancestor-shugenja, to investigate.

When Kurohito gives the city back to the Lion, the damned souls trapped in Chukandomo arrive to destroy Kurohito for his failure. To counter them, Yasuyo releases the souls of the great Crane heroes that reside within her blade, Naishi. With the help of the Kitsu sodan-senzo that are present, Kurohito breaks the curse and puts the damned souls to rest.

Kurohito cedes Toshi Ranbo to Nimuro, and promises no Crane will lift a sword to take it back for at least one year. Finally, he hands Chukandomo to Nimuro. The sword was originally created to be given to the Matsu family, to repair the relationship between the Kakita and the Matsu. Nimuro accepts in gratitude, and decides to hold it to give to another Matsu hero.

Shamate Pass

Matsu Hataki follows his wife's murderer Bayushi Kuemon to a small pass that connects the Lion lands to the Scorpion lands. Though Kuemon and his allies outnumber Hataki nine to one, Hataki attacks Kuemon. Hataki gains vengeance for his wife's death, though he dies shortly afterwards. Bayushi Eitarou and a Lion representative make sure that the true history of Matsu Hataki is known. In his honor, and the honor of his quest, the pass is renamed after his dead wife.

Year 1160, Month of the Dragon (Mid-Spring)

The Lost Black Scroll

The Twelve Black Scrolls are potent magical artifacts from the First War Against the Shadowlands, corrupted by centuries of keeping Fu Leng's soul bound. Iuchi Yue, the Iuchi Family Daimyo, received the black scroll called the Wasting Disease on the day of her gempukku. On the Day of Thunder, her father Iuchi Karasu found the Black Scroll on Yogo Junzo's corpse and kept it for safekeeping. Yue accepted the duty of safeguarding the dangerous artifact.

One night, the Black Scroll disappears. Yue questions the kami, but they have been silenced. The only thing she learns is that the thief was a Phoenix. When Clan Champion Moto Chagatai learns what happened, he is incensed. Not only was he unaware that the Unicorn held the artifact, he does not want such a dangerous item loose in the empire. Chagatai orders Yue to personally bring the Black Scroll back to Unicorn hands or face his wrath.

Lions in Phoenix Lands

Ikoma Fujimaro and his small band of Lion samurai make their way through the Phoenix lands. When they can, they attack caravans and harass the Phoenix army. Through persistence and luck, Fujimaro finds a small band of surviving Lions led by Ikoma Korin. All vow to leave the Phoenix lands alive.

City of Gold

Under orders from his superiors to find a weapon to counter Isawa's Last Wish, Mirumoto Temoru finds the City of Gold to the north of Rokugan's lands. It is a huge Yobanjin city — with the seal of Isawa marking its gates. Temoru enters the city, hopeful that he will find an answer to the problem.

Kaneka's Vengeance

Convinced that his brother Naseru will never stop attacking him, Shogun Akodo Kaneka musters his forces and marches toward the City of Lies. The Bastard's Unicorn allies make sure that the strike is unexpected, and the Shogun's troops march to the walls of the City of Lies before the Scorpion realize what is going on. Naseru is satisfied; his attacks on Kaneka were meant to force his half-brother to kill him, thereby showing the rest of Rokugan that Kaneka is unfit to lead. Naseru is ready to die for the good of the Empire.

Aikune's Retreat

Shiba Aikune decides to use the power of Isawa's Last Wish against Fu Leng, but is surprised to find he can no longer control it. The sentient nemuranai is afraid of the Kami who killed his father Isawa. The Last Wish causes an enormous explosion, devastating everything within miles. Aikune realizes that he has been treating the nemuranai as simply a tool, when it was an entity to be respected. Shamed by his conduct during the war, Shiba Aikune disappears with Isawa's Last Wish into exile.

Return of Kaede

Oracle of the Void Toturi Kaede has a conversation with her master, the Void Dragon. She realizes that although her interference caused havoc among the elements in Rokugan, it was preferable to standing by and watching the Empire be destroyed. She decides to go back to the mortal world to end the chaos, and to appoint an Emperor to succeed her and her husband Toturi.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

While traveling through the southern Lion provinces, the player characters stop one afternoon near a small roadside shrine. After they begin to unload their equipment, perceptive members of the party notice the ashes of a small fire, still faintly warm, and a small furoshiki sack beside them. Inside the sack are some scrolls and a few writing implements, as well as a chop with a Lion mon on it.

The scrolls contain notes regarding an investigation into the death of a woman named Bayushi Shamate. The notes seem to have been made by her husband, a Lion duelist of some renown. The notes indicate that he, Matsu Hataki, was very close to finding Shamate's murderer, but provide little proof other than that Hataki "feels certain" that Shamate's former lover is responsible. The notes indicate that Hataki was leaving to search for the culprit in a small, unnamed pass to the south.

Focus

If the party searches further, they find several discarded pieces of armor to the east, all lacquered in dark red. The armor is cracked and has been hacked with sword blades. On the ground nearby is the jade badge of office of an Imperial magistrate, split in two. Hoof prints lead away to the south, toward the Spine of the World Mountains. One can surmise that a fight took place here recently and the men involved are probably not more than a day's ride south at this point.



Shortly after the party arrives at the shrine, two Scorpion samurai ride up. One dismounts and introduces himself as Bayushi Seiryo, a Scorpion magistrate. He explains that he and his partner, Soshi Natsuo, had recently found this site and wanted to know why the player characters were there. After some discussion, Seiryo asks if they found any other evidence, and seems shocked if the party divulges the contents of the other scrolls. He asks the PCs to continue to investigate and contact him if they find out anything else.

Strike

The pass to the south is now known as Shamate Pass, in recognition of Hataki's defeat of Bayushi Kuemon, Shamate's murderer. Kuemon's death, and the subsequent death of Hataki from the wounds he received in the battle, is a matter of honor for the Lion and Scorpion, both of whom consider Hataki a hero for his devotion. Seiryo and Natsuo are distant cousins of Kuemon, and have found themselves tainted by their link to him. They planted the scrolls that the characters discovered, hoping to call into question Kuemon's guilt and paint Hataki as a raving lunatic obsessed with vengeance.

Arriving at Shamate Pass, the player characters are directed to speak to Bayushi Eitarou, captain of the honor guard and Shamate's brother. Eitarou talks to the party and gladly answers any questions they have about what happened here. When confronted with doubts as to the truth of Matsu Hataki's investigation, Eitarou fiercely denies that Hataki would ever write such things, and then calm himself, asking the party if they have any other questions. If actually shown the scrolls as evidence, the Bayushi captain reads them and smiles, putting the second scroll in a pouch. Eitarou then explains how he helped Hataki find the man who killed his sister, and how the scrolls they produced were obviously faked. The Scorpion then tells them that while he appreciates the party's inquiries, the matter was a point of honor, now considered closed. Any further questions about Hataki's or Shamate's honor will be met with steel. Regardless of how they interact with him, before they leave, Eitarou asks the party to tell those they meet of Hataki's bravery and his sister's love.

Should the characters press the investigation into Hataki's quest, they earn Eitarou's wrath, and possibly the ire of others within the Lion and Scorpion clans. If they pursue discussion with Seiryo and Natsuo, they find the two evasive, and the false magistrates quickly disappear. Hunting them down could earn the characters allies within both clans, although there may be other members of Kuemon's extended family who would not look kindly upon further dishonor.

Important NPCs in Heaven and Earth

Bayushi Kwanchai, Bitter Lies Swordsman

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 2 (3) / Bitter Lies Swordsman 1
Honor: 2.3 Status: 1.9 Glory: 3.1

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 2 [3] Agility 4	Water: 3	Void: 2 [3]

Advantages: Ally (Bayushi Kaukatsu, 4/1), Daredevil, Great Destiny, Luck (3)
Disadvantages: Antisocial, Bad Reputation, Brash
Kata: Striking as Earth, Sundering Grace, The Tail's Reach
Skills: Athletics 5, Courtier 2, Deceit (Intimidation) 4 [6], Defense 4, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 4 [6], Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4, Poison 2, Stealth 1

The name Bayushi Kwanchai typically inspires one of two reactions: bemused laughter from those who have seen his outlandish behavior, or irrational fear from the few who have faced him and lived.

Bayushi Kwanchai is the student and heir of Bayushi Tangen, a gifted but eccentric swordsman of the Clan War era. Kwanchai was the only student to master the technique Tangen created, called the Dark Sword of Bitter Lies, and has become something of a sensei among the Scorpion, attracting only the young, the idealistic, and the insane. None have mastered the technique, but he is not discouraged.

Kwanchai came to prominence during the contest the Emerald Championship. His clan required him to disqualify himself by deliberately injuring another contestant, Shiba Aikune, so that Aikune would be disqualified as well. Kwanchai was angry, believing that he could have won the tournament, but obeyed his lord as always. When the tournament was over, Kwanchai returned to his studies in Scorpion lands.

Nearly a year later, Kwanchai was in Ryoko Owari when the Onisu Fushin and Muchitsujo were attacking the city. Kwanchai hurled himself into combat with Fushin, the Nightmare of the Scorpion, which had murdered the Emperor; he wounded it, but was himself gravely injured. Fushin had become covered in pitch during the attack, and as it held Kwanchai, preparing for the death strike, the samurai grabbed a flaming arrow and plunged it into the demon's eye. Both were enveloped in flame, and fell into the river. The Onisu fell howling with rage. Kwanchai fell laughing.

Kwanchai, burned and wounded, was recovered from the river by servants of Imperial Chancellor Bayushi Kaukatsu. The Chancellor saw to it that Kwanchai was treated by the finest herbalists and shugenja, who healed his wounds and even repaired the terrible damage to his face. In return, Kwanchai became Kaukatsu's loyal yojimbo, protecting him from all who would do him harm. This would eventually come to include the Chancellor's son Ogura, a member of the Shadowed Tower sect.

Now Kwanchai stands among those assembled in the Imperial Court, an ever-present reminder of the Chancellor's unassailability. Hitomi Vedau, a Dragon ise zumi appointed to the court, insists that Kwanchai cannot die until the world has finished with him. No one knows exactly what that means, but few are willing to challenge Kwanchai's insanely good fortune.

New Path: Bitter Lies Swordsman

Technique Rank: 2
Path of Entry: Bayushi Bushi 1
Path of Egress: Bayushi Bushi 3

TECHNIQUE: THE DARK SWORD OF BITTER LIES
When facing an opponent of greater Insight Rank, the bushi rolls and keeps a number of additional dice equal to the difference, but never more dice than his rank in the Luck Advantage. Additionally, the bushi rolls and keeps additional dice equal to his rank in the Luck Advantage whenever faced with a life or death situation outside of combat.

Part VII Winds of Change

The Imperial Court had reconvened only recently, and only after a great deal of work by the Miya family. Their heralds had scoured the Empire, bringing invitations to the Clan Champions and those samurai who were willing to participate. After two years of chaos, with no Emperor upon the throne and no clear leader, the court had tenuously assembled once more.

For the first time in Rokugan's history, there was an Emperor who could not fully lay claim to the title. Toturi Tsudao, the daughter of the late Emperor, had declared herself the Empress months ago, after her victory over the dark lord Daigotsu in the ruins of Otosan Uchi. But her claim was tenuous. Certainly her three brothers did not recognize her as Empress, and many of their supporters politely refused to discuss the matter. When the proclamation came that all four Winds attend Imperial Court, many suspected that this Court would end as badly as the last, two years previous.

And then the Empress Kaede, the Oracle of the Void, returned to the Empire.

Asahina Sekawa remained awestruck, weeks later. As Jade Champion, he had witnessed such power that most could not dream of, both pure and corrupt in nature. But nothing had prepared him for the aura of otherworldly power that surrounded Kaede. She was like a denizen of heaven, descended to the mortal world to demonstrate the perfection that mortal things lacked. *Actually,* Sekawa thought after a moment's consideration, that is exactly what she is.

But now Sekawa had business to conduct. The seemingly endless rows of clay men stood before him, motionless. They would remain so until he spoke the word of command; a word that he had divined in the weeks since a startled peasant had found the clay warriors and led him to them. He drew a deep breath, and uttered the word.

"Tsukune."

There was the slightest grinding of stone against stone as the magical constructs came to life, though they did not move. One in the front rank turned its head ever so slightly to regard Sekawa with its inscrutable expression. "What is our duty?" it asked. The sound was like stones falling down a cliff.

"The Four Winds... the children of our Emperor... are preparing to march on the Shadowlands. There will be vast legions of evil seeking to destroy them, and we have not the jade to equip an army to protect them."

The warrior did not hesitate. "We do not require jade."

"I know," Sekawa answered. "You will march with them. You will protect them from the Shadowlands."

"We were made to stand against the darkness. We will fulfill our purpose."

Sekawa nodded. "You will likely all be destroyed. There is little hope of survival."

"We are not alive. We cannot die. We can only return from whence we came."

Sekawa drew a deep breath. "In that, my friend, we are the same."

Year 1160, Month of the Serpent (Late Spring)

THE IMPERIAL COURT ASSEMBLES

Imperial Chancellor Bayushi Kaukatsu, Crane courtier Doji Tanitsu, Imperial Advisor Ide Tadaji, and Imperial Herald Miya Shoin combine their political might to gather the remnants of the Imperial Court. To demonstrate impartiality toward the Four Winds, the court gathers at Kyuden Miya, a neutral site.

THE NEW CAPITAL

The Miya Heralds persuade the clans to attend Imperial Court for the first time in two years. With no universally-acknowledged Emperor to keep the Court in line, the Imperial Court bickers pointlessly. However, Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro and Crane Champion Doji Kurohito present themselves to the court and offer Toshi Ranbo, Violence Behind Courtliness City, as the new capital of Rokugan, to replace the ruined Otosan Uchi. The combined might of the Lion Clan and the Crane Clan will guard the city.

The Imperial Court, impressed by this example of cooperation between traditional enemies, begins its work.

ASSAULT ON SHINSEI'S LAST HOPE

Built upon land blessed by Shinsei a thousand years ago, Shinsei's Last Hope is a village that cannot be corrupted, despite its location inside the Shadowlands. Daigotsu orders Tsukuro, one of his undead generals, to assault Shinsei's Last Hope. Its destruction would be a great blow to the Empire. The Crab are beset at the Wall, and cannot send enough troops to save the village.

Luckily, Yasuki Hachi arrives in the Crab lands seeking to end the Second Yasuki War. When he hears that the village is in trouble, he leads his Emerald Legions to defend the city. Hachi defeats Tsukuro himself single-handedly, saving the village.

Hachi's Oath

Hachi enters the Shadowlands and comes back to Kyuden Hida with twenty goblin heads — a traditional custom by which any samurai may join the Crab Clan. Though he will not give up his Crane allegiance, he swears fealty to the Crab. The Yasuki family daimyo is both Crab and Crane at the same time, as is the Yasuki family. The Second Yasuki War ends with Hachi's oath.

Domotai's Sacrifice

Matsu Turi, Dark Oracle of Water, has recovered the bones of the first Lion, the Kami Akodo. He makes an offer to his former clan to exchange the remains in return for a willing Lion student. Matsu Domotai, mentally scarred from his kidnap and torture by the Tsuno, offers to accept the deal. Matsu Domotai goes to meet Turi at Black Tear Mountain at the northern parts of the Twilight Mountains. Domotai meets Turi and pledges to become his vassal; however, to fulfill his duty as a Lion, Domotai commits seppuku. Turi is powerless to stop him. Turi keeps his end of the bargain, and returns Akodo's bones to the Lion Clan.

The Summons

Toturi Tsudao returns to her home in Kyuden Seppun to find that her mother the Empress Kaede has returned to Rokugan. The Oracle of the Void has come back and resumed the throne to choose her successor. However, the greater threat of the Shadowlands must first be vanquished before an Emperor can be chosen. Tsudao submits to her mother's decision, relinquishing the title of Toturi the Second.

Toturi Sezaru is the second Wind to come to his mother's side at Kyuden Seppun.

The Confrontation

Shogun Akodo Kaneka and his forces break into the City of Lies and approach the house of his half-brother the Anvil. Hantei Naseru awaits his arrival. Both of them know that were Kaneka to kill Naseru, Kaneka would prove himself the violent usurper many perceive him to be, and lose any chance of the throne. Naseru has accepted this, and has made arrangements for his resources to pass to his sister Tsudao. Unbeknownst to the Anvil, Kaneka approaches the confrontation with the intent of letting Naseru live, but stripped of power, thus scoring points for mercy while shaming his rival. Naseru quickly formulates a counterstrategy: if Kaneka will not negotiate, Naseru threatens to have himself put to death by Scorpion samurai, casting the blame on Kaneka.

At an impasse, Kaneka and Naseru agree to work together.

Year 1160, Month of the Horse (Early Summer)

The Four Winds Gather

Empress Kaede tells the Four Winds that they must all work together to defeat the Dark Lord Daigotsu. When the Winds return from their journey into the Shadowlands, the Empress will choose one of the four to become the new emperor. Each of the Four Winds offers something unique to the cause.

Toturi Sezaru offers nemuranai called Lady Doji's Tears: pieces of jade that do not tarnish even in the heart of the Shadowlands. The Four Winds' souls will be safe through their journey in the Shadowlands.

Toturi Tsudao offers Tadaka's Children, clay soldiers that fight as well as mortal men. Though they cannot destroy Daigotsu's army, they can distract it while the Four Winds infiltrate the City of the Lost.

Akodo Kaneka offers a map of the Shadowlands. Though the land is treacherous and mutable, the map was created recently enough to be accurate.

Hantei Naseru offers the location of the City of the Lost, where the Winds can find the Dark Lord.

For the first time in two years, the Four Winds join together for a single cause.

The Dark Lord Prepares

Daigotsu is not unaware of the intent of the Four Winds, having foreseen the event. Because he knows exactly when and how he will die, Daigotsu can ready his troops and his soul for the upcoming battle. With his unyielding belief in Fu Leng, Daigotsu is sure to win even if he falls in battle.

The Four Winds March

The Winds' journey goes as planned, and they make their way through the Shadowlands without incident. The Crab send their Ratling allies to guide the Four Winds to the City of the Lost. Legions of Lost samurai await their arrival, and the fighting begins. The Four Winds fight valiantly, and as Kaneka fights alongside his half-brothers and half-sister, Toturi Sezaru finally acknowledges him as brother.

Using Tadaka's Children as a decoy, the Four Winds slip into the city and make their way to the Temple of the Lost.

The Final Battle

Daigotsu and his strongest Onisu await the Winds' arrival at the Temple of the Lost. Daigotsu is a match for Toturi Sezaru's magic, and his Onisu fight the Winds to a standstill. The Temple is wracked with chaos; Kaneka shatters his sword and the Onisu and Sezaru cast spells at each other. Daigotsu retreats to one side of the Temple to conserve his energy for when the Winds will face him once more.

There, he finds Hantei Naseru also waiting out the combat. Naseru freely admits that he is no warrior, and begins to insidiously foster doubt in his enemy. Daigotsu is fanatically devoted to his master, but Fu Leng has been trapped for two centuries; trust would not come to him easily. Here, in his Temple, Fu Leng watches and listens. And Fu Leng doubts his chosen champion.

Daigotsu realizes that Fu Leng doubts him, and this doubt is strong enough to shake the foundation of power the Lost supply to their Dark God — for they believe in Fu Leng's power less fervently than they believe in Daigotsu's. Daigotsu can feel that Fu Leng will soon be ejected from Tengoku. The Onisu fade into nothing as Daigotsu's power is weakened. Infuriated, Daigotsu attacks Naseru, only to be intercepted by Tsudao.

Daigotsu, knowing that he will die that day in that place, begins a powerful spell that will level the Temple and slay all within it. While Kaneka, Naseru, and Sezaru are too stunned to act, there is no hesitation within Tsudao. She leaps forward through the beginnings of the spell and cleaves Daigotsu in two. Although she kills him before he can complete the spell, she is not fast enough to keep from being destroyed herself. Her brothers are shocked and awed by her sacrifice.

Sezaru quickly casts a spell of teleportation to send the Winds back to Kyuden Seppun.

The Seven Thunders

Fu Leng's power is shaken when he loses faith in Daigotsu, even though this loss of faith lasted for only a moment. He turns to continue his assault on the heavens when he sees the greatest of warriors assembled before him. Toturi stands before him, and beside him stand the six other Thunders. They have defeated him twice before, and Fu Leng does not believe that, in his weakened state, he can prevail this time either. Toturi offers Fu Leng a chance to leave without bloodshed.

Fu Leng leaves Tengoku and returns to his home in Jigoku, swearing vengeance upon the heavens.

A New Emperor

The Winds return to the Imperial Court at Kyuden Seppun. Toturi Kaede is surprised to find that Tsudao has died; her powers as an oracle have failed her. When the Winds ask her who the new Emperor should be, she seems unable to answer.

Before she responds, Toturi Sezaru steps forward and relinquishes his claim to the throne. His concerns do not leave him the time to rule an empire. Kaneka also relinquishes his claim to the throne, provided that Naseru will uphold his part of the bargain and leave him as Shogun. Naseru agrees. Kaede proclaims Naseru the Righteous Emperor, and disappears from Ningen-do once more.

Naseru's first action as Emperor is to change his name. He will no longer bear the name Hantei, after the Steel Chrysanthemum who raised him, but will instead rule as Toturi Naseru, Toturi III. With this proclamation he also validates Toturi Tsudao's rule as Empress Toturi II.

He appoints Toturi Sezaru to be the Voice of the Emperor, whose duty will be to bring peace between the clans. Kaneka is confirmed in his title of Shogun, but to insure that he will not usurp the throne, Naseru orders him to give up the Akodo name and sever all connections with his former followers. Kaneka is incensed, but obeys.

Doji Akiko, Master of Water, invites Kaneka to join the Phoenix Clan. There, she says, he will be able to learn the ways of peace. Kaneka accepts her offer. Sezaru also asks to join the Phoenix Clan, and Master of Air Isawa Nakamuro accepts on behalf of his clan.

Year 1160, Month of the Goat (Mid-Summer)

Kaneka and Sezaru Join the Phoenix

At Shiro Shiba, Kaneka moves into a small room near the barracks. He does not take the Shiba name, deciding to be known only as Kaneka. He settles into the castle and begins to rebuild his army... and his life.

Toturi Sezaru moves into Kyuden Isawa. When he meets with the Elemental Council, he asks to join the Isawa family, and they grant permission. He will not join the Elemental Council, but will seek his own goals within the clan. When an assassin comes later that night, his goals become more apparent; a darkness grows within the Phoenix Clan, and Isawa Sezaru plans to destroy it before it can claim all of Rokugan.

The End of the Shadowed Tower

Acting Scorpion Champion Bayushi Sunetra orchestrates hundreds of simultaneous raids across the Scorpion lands against cells of the Shadowed Tower, guided by the information her spy Bayushi Tai ferreted out. She personally assaults the hideout of Shadowed Tower leader Bayushi Atsuki, and before he can leave, orders Kamnan's minion Bayushi Kamnan to kill him. Kamnan obeys his Champion, cutting Atsuki in half. The Shadowed Tower is no more. Sunetra finally takes off Bayushi Yojiro's armor and becomes the Scorpion Clan Champion in her own right.

Miles away, near the Burning Sands, the real Bayushi Atsuki and Bayushi Kamnan rest. The magic that tricked Sunetra was of gaijin origin, so her shugenja would not spot the deception, and it took a huge toll on its casters. With the maho-tsukai in the Shadowed Tower dead, and his enemies certain that he is slain, Bayushi Atsuki is now free to act once more.

Year 1160, Month of the Monkey (Late Summer)

The End of the Mantis Civil War

Yoritomo's daughter Kumiko and the titular Mantis Champion Yoritomo Kitao finally face off in personal combat to see who will be the Mantis Clan Champion. Kumiko defeats Kitao, then spares her life so that she may serve Kumiko. At that moment Settozai, Onisu of Larceny, appears on the scene to destroy Kumiko. Kumiko uses the techniques of the Unbroken as she defeats the monster with Yoritomo's kama. As she kills Settozai, she feels the last of her Shadowlands Taint leaving her body. For the first time in her life, she is pure.

The Betrothal of Shono and Genki

On the advice of his Khan, Shinjo Shono decides to marry Moto Genki. The Junghar general has remained unmarried since his wife and children were killed in an unfortunate accident years ago. The union of the Shinjo family daimyo and a Moto samurai-ko catches the attention of many, including the Kolat, who vow to destroy Shono in retaliation for his many attacks on the Kolat.

But for now, Shono and Genki are happy in their engagement. The two will marry in the spring.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

The smiths of the Crab have been forging new steel day and night, working to arm the samurai of the Crab against the oni, trolls and bakemono that can be expected to assault the Four Winds' march. Having heard of the PCs' previous exploits, a Crab courtier named Yasuki Namika has requested a meeting with the party.

Namika has been given a huge responsibility by Crab Champion Hida Kuon: she must find able and brave samurai to fight alongside the Crab forces that will give the Four Winds their chance to reach and defeat Daigotsu. The young Crab courtier owes a favor to Kuon's wife Reiha, and has decided to repay it by personally interviewing those she sends to him.

Focus

The party is to meet Namika in a sake house called "The Drunken Carp," near Kyuden Hida's docks. Though Yasuki Yashiki has a larger port, the fleet that feeds the thousands within Kyuden Hida is second in size only to Kyuden Gotei's Mantis kobune fleet. As a result, the sake houses that cater to the sailors of Kyuden Hida are both some of the most profitable in the Empire and some of the rowdiest.

When the player characters arrive at the establishment, Namika is nowhere to be found, but the young women serving drinks in the sake house assures the party that the Crab courtier will be along soon. The many drunken sailors and bushi grumble at the party's invasion of their pub. Every few minutes, one sailor interrupts whatever the party is doing, belching loudly and leering at any female player characters. Another bumps into the PCs while they're attempting to take a drink or a bite to eat. A third attempts to get in a fistfight with different members of the group, picking on the weakest first. This continues for more than an hour before Namika graces the sake house with her presence.

Strike

The party doesn't know that the conflict at the Drunken Carp has been staged to thest the party's resourcefulness and toughness. As soon as the Crab courtier arrives, any conflicts with the patrons immediately cease, and most of the men in the establishment turn and bow deeply to Namika. She explains that the Drunken Carp has been owned by members of her family for generations, tells the party about her test, and orders a round of drinks on the house. Most of the regulars are almost as loyal to Namika as to their Clan Champion, so they're happy to help her out when she asks.

If the party managed to stay in one piece and performed well enough, Yasuki Namika offers them command of one of the mixed legions that will be following Kuon into the Shadowlands. If the party accepts, they each receive a Kaiu blade. If they don't wish to dishonor their ancestral daisho by wearing another sword, Namika gladly gives them a singular honor: a scroll that allows any of the players' descendants to request a Kaiu Blade to be made for them. The party is invited to celebrate by the patrons of the bar, but before she leaves Namika reminds the PCs that Kuon's forces will be assembling in two days, and that their fight is for the future of the Empire...

Togashi Mitsu, Dragon Clan Legend

SCHOOL/RANK: Three Orders Tattooed Man 5, Temple of the Seven Thunders 3

HONOR: 2.5 STATUS: 5.0 GLORY: 1.0 (were he not a monk, Mitsu's Glory would be 9.3)

Air: 4 **Earth:** 5 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 4 **Void** 5
Agility 5

ADVANTAGES: Ambidextrous, Clear Thinker, Great Destiny, Magic Resistance (4), Quick, Tamashii

DISADVANTAGES: Brash

TATTOOS: Arrowroot, Centipede, Crow, Dragon, Eagle, Ocean

KIHO: Breaking Blow, Dance of the Flames, Fire Fist, Fire's Fleeting Speed, Kharmic Strike, Purity of Shinsei, Self No Self

KATA: Breaking Waves, Striking as Water

SKILLS: Artisan: Tattooing 6, Athletics 5, Deceit 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 2, Hunting 3, Instruction (Jiujutsu, Meditation) 5, Investigation 4, Jiujutsu 8, Lore: Lying Darkness 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 4, Meditation (Void Recovery) 8, Staves 5, Stealth 4, Theology 5

Togashi Mitsu is a living legend. One of the greatest heroes of the Clan War, he fought by Toturi's side in many battles. Curiously, Mitsu never held any official rank in Toturi's Army, nor did he serve in any single unit. He came and went as he pleased, offering his help wherever it was needed. Though Toturi never asked for Mitsu's aid, it was never unappreciated. His powerful tattoo magic, devastating martial arts abilities, and general courage and good humor served Toturi well.

During the War Against the Darkness, sadly, even Mitsu's eternal optimism began to wane. When the Dragon Clan became split by civil war, Mitsu was one of many Togashi who refused to take the Hitomi name. He retreated from the public eye, and most assumed that he was disgusted by the civil war that had consumed his brethren.

The truth is more complicated. Though Mitsu was saddened by the violence that erupted among the Dragon after Togashi's death, his true concern was his own destiny. Mitsu is a tamashii, one of the rare ise zumi capable of serving as a host to the immortal Togashi's soul. He had always known that one day his lord would call upon him to become the new Dragon Champion, and that his life would be forfeit. He had always been prepared for his destiny. But then Togashi was slain by Fu Leng, and Mitsu was overwhelmed by doubt. If Togashi was dead, then what was his true purpose?

It was only when Lord Hoshi introduced him to Togashi Matsuo that Mitsu was convinced to return from his solitude. Matsuo, like Mitsu, bore the enhanced abilities of a tamashii. But if Togashi was dead, why were tamashii still being born? Did they perhaps serve an even greater purpose? As Mitsu continues to teach Matsuo, these questions concern him less and less. For now, it simply feels good to be back among the people of Rokugan again, fighting against evil.

It feels good to be a hero.

New Advantage: Tamashii [Inherent] (10 points)

Any Trait-, Ring-, or Rank-based effect of your tattoos takes effect as if your Trait, Ring, or Rank were one higher. Whenever you spend Void Points to increase a roll, you gain a +2 bonus to the roll.

You are a satisfactory host for the soul of the Kami Togashi, and possibly other powerful spirits.

SHOSURO FURUYARI (BAYUSHI ATSUKI), MASTER OF THE SHADOWED TOWER

SCHOOL/RANK: Bayushi Bushi 4/Bayushi Courtier 4
HONOR: 0.1 (Perceived Honor 3.1) STATUS: 4.7 GLORY: –9.9 (Infamous)

Air: 5	Earth: 3	Fire: 5	Water: 3	Void: 4
Awareness 7	Willpower 5	Intelligence 6	Perception 5	

ADVANTAGES: Perceived Honor (6), Precise Memory, Benten's Blessing
DISADVANTAGES: Overconfident, Forsaken
KATA: The Tail's Reach
SKILLS: Acting (Disguise, Kabuki, Mimicry, Noh) 7, Artisan: Poetry 5, Courtier (Manipulation, Political Maneuvering) 7, Deceit (Intimidation, Lying, Seduction) 7, Defense 5, Etiquette (Sincerity) 9, History: Scorpion Clan 8, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 6, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Maho 4, Poison 7, Sleight of Hand 6, Stealth 6, Theology (Shintao) 4, Underworld 7

Shosuro Furuyari is a complete fiction.



The man claiming the name Furuyari first lived over seven hundred years ago. Bayushi Atsuki was a passionate man who valued the quality of life in the Empire and constantly meditated upon ways to improve it. Several years after his appointment as Scorpion Clan Champion, Atsuki became friends with two other like-minded samurai — Doji Raigu, heir to the Crane Champion, and Shiba Gaijushiko, the Imperial Scribe and the most influential Phoenix in Otosan Uchi. It was not long before the three men realized that not only did they share a common goal, but that between them they held the power and influence to make their hopes a reality. They became the leaders of the Gozoku, a conspiracy that controlled the Hantei Dynasty for two generations until his fellows betrayed him and he was executed for treason.

Some thought that perhaps Atsuki's spirit was damned to Gaki-do, the Realm of Hungry Ghosts, while many among the Scorpion claimed that he had reached the Realm of Blessed Ancestors — he was a true Scorpion to the end, after all. None knew that Bayushi Atsuki's final thoughts of vengeance had doomed his spirit to Toshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter. For centuries, he waited and he planned.

When Oblivion's Gate was torn open, Atsuki saw his opportunity and strode back into Rokugan under the alias of "Shosuro Furuyari." The ruse was perfect, as there had never truly been a Shosuro Furuyari; it was a pen name Scorpion playwrights hid behind when they were unsure how their work would be received. He easily slid into the role of the fictitious author and was quickly accepted by the Scorpion and in turn, the Empire.

When the War of Spirits ended, Furuyari set upon a new objective of reconstructing the Gozoku. He constructed the Shadowed Tower to supply the resources he needed to fund a new network of spies, informants, and assassins. Though he truly does despise Bayushi Yojiro, the Tower's rebellion against the Scorpion Champion was only a means to an end. Once Atsuki had the funds and information he needed, he could discard the Tower and fake his death.

Atsuki does not care which of Toturi's children claim the Steel Throne. Whoever sits on the throne will serve the Gozoku.

Miscellaneous NPCs During the Four Winds Saga

Akodo Ijiasu, Servant of the Shogun

SCHOOL/RANK: Akodo Bushi 4
HONOR: 3.4 STATUS: 4.4 GLORY: 6.1

Air: 3 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 3 **Void:** 3
Reflexes 4 Strength 5

ADVANTAGES: Death Trance, Kharmic Tie (Kaneka), Tactician
DISADVANTAGES: Forsaken, Sworn Enemies (Various Dragonfly)
KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Tsuko's Storm
SKILLS: Athletics 4, Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 3, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: History 3, Storytelling 1

Great things have always been expected of Akodo Ijiasu. His parents were of high rank in the Akodo family, and he was a favored student of Akodo Ginawa, the first Akodo daimyo after the family's reformation. Ever since childhood, Ijiasu has been told that his ancestors look upon him with great favor. Ijiasu always accepted the praise graciously, but he always felt inadequate. In truth, he never heard his ancestors' voices.

Ijiasu spent every day of his life struggling to prove his worth, not to others but to himself. When the Dragon and Phoenix went to war shortly after Toturi's death, Ijiasu led his men through the Dragonfly lands to attack the Dragon. The Dragonfly were all but destroyed, and an ancient blood feud was resolved. Ijiasu had unimpressive results against the Dragon, but his razing of Dragonfly lands secured his status as a Lion hero.

When Akodo Kaneka took the title of Shogun, Ijiasu was among the first to swear fealty to him. The Lion had long supported Kaneka, perhaps because of Ginawa's tutelage of the young man. Ijiasu viewed Kaneka as an elder brother, and was eager to stand by him. When Kaneka led his forces into the Yasuki lands, Ijiasu rode by his side. When the Shogun assaulted his treacherous half-brother Hantei Naseru in Ryoko Owari, Ijiasu led the attack. He never wavered in his duties, certain that in helping Kaneka gain the throne he would at last gain his ancestors' favor.

But Kaneka did not reach the throne. Worse, he was forced by the Emperor to swear fealty to the Phoenix, the Lion's failed allies. Ijiasu's ties to the Shogun were severed, and he was forbidden to ride alongside him. The turn of events devastated Ijiasu, and he foundered for some time, seeking a purpose. It was not until the cooling relations between the Lion and the Unicorn caused an increase of Lion forces in Kaeru Toshi that Ijiasu found a new purpose. He would stand guard against the Khan's men, protecting his brothers from any who would threaten them.

Akodo Kaneka, the Bastard

TECHNIQUES: Akodo Bushi 5 [/ Child of Water 1]
HONOR: 2.9 STATUS: 6.5 GLORY: 7.9

Air: 3 **Earth:** 3 [4] **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 4
Reflexes 4

KATA: Striking as Fire
ADVANTAGES: Allies (many), Blood of Toturi, True Friend (Akodo Ginawa), Way of the Land (Lion, Unicorn, Imperial lands)
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation (illegitimate), Brash, Overconfident, Sworn Enemy (Hantei Naseru), Unluck (3)
SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle (Battle Lore, Mass Combat) 5 [6], [Courtier 4], Defense 4 [5], Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 4, Hunting (Tracking) 3, Iaijutsu 7 [8], Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6 [8], Kyujutsu (Daikyu) 5, Law 3, Lore: History 4, Spears (Yari) 3, Storytelling (Bragging) 2, Theology (Shintao) 3

Akodo Kaneka is the son of Emperor Toturi and the geisha Hatsuko, and the oldest of the Four Winds. Born before Toturi ascended to the throne, Kaneka and his mother were spirited away from certain death during the Clan War by the enigmatic Water Dragon, who kept them safe and ageless until depositing him back in Rokugan shortly before the Battle at Oblivion's Gate. His parentage was completely unknown to the Empire. Kaneka spent the first half of his life as a ronin.

Akodo Kaneka is a stubborn but honorable man. Many see him as the very image of his father, and expect him to fulfill a similar destiny. Kaneka respected Toturi, but refuses to disappear into his shadow. He often acts wildly and unpredictably, usually when others assume he will follow his father's example. Kaneka is a deadly duelist who made his living as a mercenary long before he took the Akodo name.

Shortly after his mother's death, Kaneka announced his heritage in Ryoko Owari Toshi, causing an uproar throughout the Empire. While Toturi never officially recognized Kaneka, Akodo Ginawa, daimyo of the Akodo family, granted the ronin a place within his family. Lion Clan Champion Matsu Nimuro offered Kaneka his place as Lion Champion, but Kaneka refused, stating that he had not earned the position. The fact that Toturi took offense at neither Ginawa's nor Nimuro's actions is proof enough to many in Rokugan that Kaneka was indeed his son.

Emperor Toturi's death at Daigotsu's hands occurred en route to a meeting with Kaneka, a meeting during which many believe the Emperor would have officially declared Kaneka his heir. After Toturi's death, Empress Kaede chose to recognize Kaneka as a son of her late husband. She did *not* declare Kaneka the heir, and vanished before a successor could be chosen. Kaneka found himself embroiled in a conflict with his half-siblings to determine who will become the next Emperor of Rokugan.

Though Kaneka is certainly arrogant, it is not arrogance that drives him to compete for the throne. If he does not make his move, he knows that Hantei Naseru will easily outmaneuver his naive sister and mad brother. Naseru is the exact sort of man whom Kaneka would hate to see on the throne — devious, manipulative, and heartless. The Bastard will do all that he can to see that the Steel Chrysanthemum's student does not take his father's throne.

New Ronin Technique: Child of Waters

Technique Rank
Path of Entry: Akodo Bushi 5
Path of Egress: None

TECHNIQUE
The fluid, graceful essence of the Water Dragon permeates your actions. You may add double your Water Ring to your initiative. Additionally, you may add double your Water Ring to the first attack roll you make each round.

This technique is currently known only to Kaneka himself. He could teach it to others, but Kaneka does not lightly share his secrets.

Bayushi Kaukatsu, Imperial Chancellor

SCHOOL/RANK: Bayushi Bushi 5 [/ Master of the Courts 1]
HONOR: 1.9 STATUS: 9.1 GLORY: 6.6

Air: 3 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 2 [3] **Void:** 5
Awareness 6 Intelligence 6 Perception 5

ADVANTAGES: Heartless, Social Position (Imperial Chancellor)
DISADVANTAGES: Cruel, Sworn Enemies (many)
SKILLS: Acting 4, Battle 2, Calligraphy 4, Courtier 6 [7], Courtier (Political Maneuvering) 8, Deceit 4 [6], Deceit (Intimidation) 5 [7], Deceit (Seduction) 5, Etiquette (Sincerity) 6 [8], Forgery 4, Horsemanship 2, Instruction 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Kenjutsu 2, Knives 3, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 2, Underworld 4

Note: Although he is not of Imperial blood, Kaukatsu's status as Imperial Chancellor and his sheer ability at manipulation afford him access to the Master of the Court Advanced School, normally reserved for those of Imperial descent.

Bayushi Kaukatsu is living proof that true power lies neither in steel nor command over the kami, but in influence and cunning. Kaukatsu has overcome all manner of adversity in his life, and his tenacity and sheer gift for manipulation has elevated him to the position of Imperial Chancellor, one of the most powerful posts in the Empire. The Emerald and Jade Champions, even the Imperial Advisor, are not above his authority. Only the Emperor and Empress can truly claim a superior station, as can, perhaps, the Scorpion Champion whom Kaukatsu nominally serves. All others must bow before him, or be ruined by a casual word or gesture.

Kaukatsu was the son and favored student of Bayushi Goshiu, the legendary master of the courts whose intrigues could only be ruined by the Scorpion Clan's dissolution after Bayushi Shoju's failed coup in 1123. The young Kaukatsu learned even from his father's defeat. He watched as those who hated Goshiu struggled to bury him, watched his father destroy others by sending letters containing a fraction of the secrets he knew. When the Scorpion were reinstated after the Clan War, a young Kaukatsu entered the courts on his clan's behalf, his plans already extending decades into the future.

After a few years, Kaukatsu found himself ranked with the great minds of the court, spinning his webs alongside such notable figures as Ide Tadaji and Ikoma Sume. Both men appreciated Kaukatsu's keen mind, and the three enjoyed many entertaining games pitting various pawns and resources against one another. Many other players came and went, but none had the ability to compete with them.

After the Emperor's death, the Otomo struggled to maintain control over an Imperial Court that was rapidly disintegrating. Among the steps they took to attempt to bring order was to appoint an Imperial Chancellor, a single figure to oversee and coordinate the activities of the Imperial Court when in session. Given that Tadaji already held the position of Imperial Advisor, and Sume seemed uninterested in the position, Kaukatsu was the unquestioned choice. His only real competition was Doji Tanitsu, a young courtier Kaukatsu had already marked as a potential rival.

As Chancellor, Kaukatsu's activities were limited until the new Emperor was selected. With the court back in session, Kaukatsu's influence has grown rapidly. He took the time to reaffirm his loyalty to the Scorpion Champion by contributing his entire estate to the effort of expunging the Shadowed Tower. The only request he made of his lord was that he be permitted to deal with Bayushi Ogura, one of the Tower's leaders, himself. After all, Kaukatsu felt, he should be able to punish his wayward son in person.

BAYUSHI SUNETRA, THE UNDERHAND

SCHOOL/RANK: Bayushi Bushi 3 / Bayushi Courtier 1 [2]
HONOR: 2.8 STATUS: 8.7 GLORY: 8.3 [–9.5, Infamy]

Air: 4 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 3 [2] **Water:** 2 [4] **Void:** 3
Perception 4

ADVANTAGES: Dangerous Beauty, Heartless, Kharmic Tie (Yasuki Ichibei), Multiple Schools
DISADVANTAGES: Dark Secret (Crane blood), Fascination (Hantei Naseru)
KATA: Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind, The Tail's Reach
SKILLS: Acting 4 [6], Defense 3, Courtier 4, Courtier (Sincerity) 6, Deceit (Intimidation) 5 [6], Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 3 [5], Knives 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 3, Ninja Ranged Weapons 3 [4], Poison 3, Stealth 6

Bayushi Sunetra does not remember her life before the Scorpion Clan. She was raised among the Bayushi from the time she could walk, and has adopted their ways as her own without question or reservation. But she is a Scorpion by choice, not by birth. At the beginning of the War against the Darkness, long before any among the Great Clans understood the insidious subterfuge their enemy employed, the Emperor disappeared and the Scorpion were blamed. The clan was shown mercy and exiled from Rokugan rather than destroyed, but that was not the end of their punishment. To prevent the clan from returning to seek vengeance, Scorpion children were fostered to the Crane Clan. After the Scorpion came back from exile, several Crane children were fostered to the Scorpion in return. When the time came for the children to return to the Crane, one among them chose to stay. The Daidoji girl became Bayushi Sunetra on the day of her gempukku.

Sunetra's first years of service were exemplary, and even Clan Champion Bayushi Yojiro had a hand in her teaching. Her intelligence and level of skill soon won her an appointment to Otosan Uchi. Only a short time after arriving, Hantei Naseru noticed Sunetra and her impressive abilities. He offered her a position in his service, acting as a messenger, an enforcer, and a spy. Yojiro was delighted by the opportunity, and gave Sunetra free rein to serve Naseru.

After the Shadowed Tower conspiracy came to light, Bayushi Yojiro summoned Sunetra to Kyuden Bayushi. He was retiring, he said, and she would take his place as Scorpion Champion — but she would masquerade as Yojiro, letting no one save her immediate personal advisors know that he had retired. In this way, her unique perspective could aid in destroying the Tower without its leaders realizing that a new threat had presented



itself. The ruse continued for months before Sunetra was prepared to make her move. In the span of a single night, Sunetra and her loyal forces moved throughout Scorpion lands, attacking and razing every Tower stronghold. Those who were not executed immediately were placed in Traitor's Grove.

Now that the Tower has been defeated, Sunetra wonders what new challenge will present itself. Is her time as Champion complete, or does the clan require her attention for some new threat? She is an assassin, after all, not a leader, and she wonders if she will be the equal of the next challenge she must face.

DAIGOTSU, THE DARK LORD

SCHOOL/RANK: Maho Tsukai 6 [8]
HONOR: 1.0 STATUS: 0.0 GLORY: –10.0 (Infamy)

Air: 4 **Earth:** 4 [5] **Fire:** 3 [4] **Water:** 3 [4] **Void:** 4 [5]
Awareness: 6 Willpower: 6 Intelligence: 5

Shadowlands Taint: 9.0

ADVANTAGES: Ally: Fu Leng (4/4), Benten's Blessing, Clear Thinker, Hantei Blood, Great Destiny, Leadership, Magic Resistance (6), Strength of the Earth (8)
DISADVANTAGES: Sworn Enemies (Iuchiban, Sezaru, Emma-O)
SPELLS: Daigotsu has extensive knowledge of magic, and cancast any spell available to a shugenja of his rank, including maho.
SKILLS: Battle 6, Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Deceit (Seduction) 3 [6], Defense 5, Etiquette (Sincerity) 4, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 4 [6], Kenjutsu (Katana) 6 [8], Knives 4, Lore: Spirit Realms 8, Lore: Shadowlands 8, Meditation 7, Spellcraft (Maho) 6, Stealth (Spellcasting) 4, Theology: Shintao 5

DAIGOTSU'S SPECIAL ABILITIES

The Dark Lord possesses a number of unique abilities:

ONI POSSESSION — Daigotsu may possess any oni he can see, at will. The oni has no chance to resist; its soul is automatically suppressed and Daigotsu's original body becomes inanimate while he controls the oni. Daigotsu may return to his own body at will, regardless of range, or may shift his soul to another oni within sight at will. Daigotsu is aware of all abilities of his host and may use them, but Daigotsu may not cast his own spells or use his own natural abilities (with the exception of this one) while within a host. If Daigotsu's host is killed, Daigotsu's soul returns to his body regardless of range.

ONI VISION — Daigotsu may view the location of any oni he has seen before, at will. Outside the Shadowlands, Daigotsu must make a Perception roll vs. TN 40 or be unable to view that oni again for one day.

ONI HERITAGE — Spells and effects that affect oni also affect Daigotsu.

The newest leader of the Shadowlands is notable for his curious sense of honor. Though undeniably evil, he is a man of his word and readily grants mercy to any who sincerely surrender to the corruptive power of the Shadowlands. He leads the Lost with magnetic charisma, demonstrates great loyalty to his comrades, and shows piety to match the most earnest shugenja. His faith, however, is reserved for one deity alone — the Ninth Kami, Fu Leng. Unlike past masters of the Shadowlands, it is not Daigotsu's intent to usurp or destroy the Empire. In his mind, the Empire of the Lost is already superior to that of Rokugan. Rokugan must be preserved, though kept in check, so that the Lost may feed upon it as a predator feeds upon its prey.

Daigotsu's story is a long and strange one. He is the son of Hantei XXXVIII, kidnapped and raised by Bloodspeakers, banished to Jigoku for over two decades to elude the eyes of Rokugan. Though Daigotsu's stay in the Realm of Evil passed in little more than the blink of an eye, Fu Leng sensed the boy's presence and his growing power. The Dark Kami reached out from his prison in Meido, planting dreams within the child's head, granting him the knowledge he would need to unite the Lost and rescue Fu Leng from the Fortune of Death.

Daigotsu remained with the Bloodspeakers for a time, learning what he could. As soon as he was able, Daigotsu escaped the Bloodspeaker cell along with his comrades Kyoden and Omoni. They wandered the Empire, avoiding the Bloodspeakers as well as the Jade Magistrates and Witch Hunters who would have destroyed them. Along the way, they met the tattooed madman Kokujin, who helped Daigotsu complete his plans for building a City of the Lost.

Forming an alliance with the mysterious Tsuno race, Daigotsu created the nightmarish Onisu. With their aid, he ruled the Lost for many years. The eight years of quiet from the Shadowlands was, as the Crab suspected, merely the calm before the storm. Possessing the Onisu Fushin, Daigotsu slew Emperor Toturi I and threw Rokugan into chaos.

It is Daigotsu's ultimate goal to rescue the imprisoned soul of his master, Fu Leng. The Lost must see their god returned to his proper place before they can claim true superiority over the decadent Empire of Rokugan. Daigotsu knows that this cannot be accomplished without sacrifice, and that he will perish in pursuit of his goal. It is no matter; the Dark Lord has already made plans...

DOJI JOTARO, SERVANT OF THE SWORD

SCHOOL/RANK: Doji Magistrate 3 [4]
HONOR: 3.6 STATUS: 4.8 GLORY: 4.4

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3 [4]	Water: 3	Void: 3
			Perception 5	

ADVANTAGES: Benten's Blessing, Social Position
DISADVANTAGES: Driven
KATA: Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind, Watchful Falcon
SKILLS: Animal Handling (Falcons) 3, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 4, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 4 [5], Investigation 4 [6], Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Law 5

A true child of Doji excels in all things, and Doji Jotaro is from one of the oldest and noblest branches of the Doji family. Jotaro was the son of a prominent Emerald Magistrate, and was appointed to a position as a family magistrate upon his gempukku. Within a matter of months, he had been promoted in recognition of exceptional service, and commanded other young Crane he had stood alongside during their gempukku. It was his service to the Doji that resulted in his appointment as an Emerald Magistrate by the Emerald Champion, Kakita Toshiken.

Jotaro was still a young man when several Yobanjin tribes set aside their traditional rivalries to jointly invade Phoenix lands. He was attached to one of many battalions under the command of Toturi Tsudao, the Emperor's daughter and commander of the First Legion. Jotaro's tireless efforts to locate the barbarian's leaders impressed Tsudao greatly, and only a year or so later, she invited him to join her personal command staff as an officer of the First Legion.

Service in the First Legion was not without its problems. Another of Tsudao's officers, a decorated Scorpion warrior named Bayushi Paneki, constantly conflicted with Jotaro over even the most trivial decisions. The two had far too many differences in their command style to ever work together effectively, or so it appeared. In time, however, Jotaro and Paneki at least came to respect one another enough that they could serve Tsudao to the best of their ability. The one thing they held in common, it seemed, was their tremendous admiration for the woman the Empire knew as the Sword.

Jotaro and his fellow officers struggled to maintain control when Tsudao declared herself Empress. He and Paneki fought back to back when she drove Daigotsu from the Imperial Palace in Otosan Uchi, and took command of her varied resources when she established her headquarters at the nearby Kyuden Seppun. It was an impossible task, but Jotaro never wavered in his devotion. It was not until Tsudao died during the Four Winds' assault on Daigotsu's City of the Lost that his resolve finally broke. Tsudao had been Jotaro's lord for years, and his every waking moment had been in service to her for nearly as long as he could remember.

In the wake of Tsudao's death, Iotaro has struggled to find his purpose again. He continues to serve the Imperial Legions as an officer and a chief magistrate, and is currently second-in-command to Toturi Miyako, commander of the First Legion. The two worked together under Tsudao, and have a healthy respect for one another that is reflected in their working relationship.

Doji Tanitsu, Imperial Advisor

SCHOOL/RANK: Doji Courtier 3 [5]
HONOR: 3.7 STATUS: 9.1 GLORY: 4.7

Air: 4 [5]	Earth: 3	Fire: 2 [3]	Water: 2	Void: 3 [4]
Awareness 5 [7]	Willpower 4		Perception 4	

ADVANTAGES: Allies (The Four Winds, 4/2), Benten's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty
DISADVANTAGES: True Love (Toturi Tsudao)
SKILLS: Athletics 4, Courtier 4 [7], Etiquette 4 [6], Games: Kemari 3, Games: Sadane 4, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 1, Knives 2, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Law 5 [7], Storytelling 4, Theology (Shintao) 2

Perhaps no samurai in all of Rokugan has watched the Four Winds with greater interest and anxiety than Doji Tanitsu. As a young man growing up in Otosan Uchi, born to high-ranking courtiers amid the Crane delegation, Tanitsu was in a position to befriend the Winds when they were all children. He played in the gardens with Tsudao and her younger brothers, Sezaru and Naseru. As they grew older, they studied in the libraries together, read the great works of history, and discussed philosophy. Although the Emperor's children had other friends, there were none that they each called friend in turn save for Tanitsu.

Only months after his gempukku, Tanitsu found himself embroiled in a brief but passionate love affair with Toturi Tsudao. It ended quickly and amicably, and the two remained friends afterwards, but for Tanitsu it never truly ended. Though he had not realized it beforehand, he had loved Tsudao for years, and their breakup made him miserable. For a short time, he undertook other business in the Crane's name, and saw many different cities and courts throughout the Empire. Among them was Ryoko Owari, where he met Akodo Kaneka.

At the time, Kaneka had not yet publicly claimed to be the illegitimate son of Toturi, but there were those who were aware of his lineage. Fascinated, Tanitsu took time to befriend Kaneka, listening to his tales and asking many questions. When Tanitsu left Ryoko Owari, he had produced a series of scrolls about Kaneka entitled *The Forgotten Son*. Tanitsu's work was many readers' first introduction to Kaneka, and the Lion was grateful to Tanitsu for his assistance.

After Toturi's death, Tanitsu's unique experiences brought him a prestigious position within the Crane. Despite most Crane's support for Toturi Tsudao as Emperor, Doji Kurohito was unwilling to alienate the clan from any who might claim the throne. Tanitsu was called upon to advise the Crane Champion and the Crane's chosen ambassadors to each Wind. Often, Tanitsu took on the role of intermediary between the Crane and the Winds, although in the case of Kaneka he left that role to the enigmatic warrior Doji Midoru, whom he had trained. It was a stressful time, during which Tanitsu was called upon to consider possible arranged marriages for each Wind, including Tsudao. The dutiful young courtier advised the Champion as best he could, and did not speak of his feelings.

Almost two years after the Four Winds conflict began, the former Imperial Advisor, the brilliant but ailing Ide Tadaji, selected Tadaji to succeed him once a new Emperor was selected. Tanitsu trained diligently at Tadaji's side, learning from the old man's decades of accumulated wisdom. Tanitsu was prepared for Tsudao to return victorious from the Shadowlands, and to stand at her side in court as her advisor. He was not prepared for her death.

In the wake of Tsudao's death, Tanitsu has remained Imperial Advisor to her brother Naseru. He has little need of advice, so Tanitsu enjoys the power of his position with little responsibility. He helped arrange the marriage between Kaneka and his distant cousin Doji Yasuyo, and has undertaken countless other efforts on the Crane's behalf. He hopes that one day, his duty will help him forget Tsudao.

Goju Kyoden, the Obsidian Champion

SCHOOL/RANK: Daigotsu's Legion 5
HONOR: 1.0 STATUS: 0.0 GLORY: –4.0 (Infamous)

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3

Shadowlands Taint: 6.0

ADVANTAGES: Ally: Daigotsu (4/4), Large, Strength of the Earth (6), Tactician
DISADVANTAGES: Obligation (Shadow Dragon)
SHADOWLANDS POWERS: Blessing of the Dark One, Master of Shadows, Terrible Armor, Protection of the Dark
SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 6, Defense 5, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 7, Investigation (Notice) 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Lore: Shadowlands 8, Meditation 5, Stealth (Sneaking) 4

Kyoden is the Dark Lord's enforcer. He rarely speaks — a silent, menacing figure in obsidian armor. To Kyoden, words do not matter, only loyalty.

He remembers how defiant he was when he was a child, sneering at the Bloodspeakers because he knew his father, Yotsu, had escaped with the true Imperial heir. The tortures Kyoden endured were indescribable. The Bloodspeakers worked foul magic upon him, seeking to suffuse him with Taint against his will. The younger boy, Daigotsu, never gave up hope. He encouraged Kyoden to remain strong, to persevere until the day they could escape and have their revenge.

After they made their escape, Kyoden swore himself to Daigotsu's service. He believes fervently in his friend's vision of a City of the Lost, an Empire in which those who honor the true glory of Fu Leng might stand strong, without fear.

The power that drives Kyoden, however, does not stem entirely from Fu Leng. In his case, the Bloodspeaker rituals summoned power of a different sort. Kyoden is infused with a shred of Nothing, the power that was the Lying Darkness. This connection allows him to hear the voice of the Shadow Dragon, and to see occasional glimpses of the future that the dragon has seen. Kyoden has seen his own ultimate fate, and has accepted it. He does not speak of what he has seen, not even to the Dark Lord.

The future, after all, does not matter. Loyalty is all that matters.

HANTEI NASERU, THE ANVIL

SCHOOL/RANK: Bayushi Courtier 4 / Naseru 1 [/Otomo Courtier 1]
HONOR: 3.2 (2.2) STATUS: 9.4 GLORY: 7.0

Air: 3 [5]	Earth: 2	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 3
	Willpower 4 [6]	Intelligence 5	Perception 6	

ADVANTAGES: Allies (various), Perceived Honor (2), Benten's Blessing, Blackmail (various) Blood of Toturi, Heartless
DISADVANTAGES: Missing Eye, Contrary, Meddler, Sworn Enemy (Akodo Kaneka)
SKILLS: Battle 2 [4], Calligraphy 5, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation, Political Maneuvering) 5 [7], Deceit (Intimidation) 5 [7], Defense 4, Diplomacy 5 [8], Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Conversation, Sincerity) 4 [8], Forgery (Calligraphy) 4, Games: Go 6 [7], Iaijutsu 4, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 5 [7], Kenjutsu 5, Lore: History 5, Lore: Law 4, Shintao 4 [6], Stealth 2, War Fan 4, Underworld 2

The treaty that peacefully ended the War of Spirits bound one of Toturi's children to be apprenticed to the Hantei XVI, the wicked Steel Chrysanthemum, and take the Hantei name. That child was Hantei Naseru, son of Toturi and Kaede, youngest of the Four Winds. Though Naseru spent a great deal of time training with Hantei XVI, his loyalties were never bent to the Hantei's will.

Instead, the cruelties Naseru suffered during his lessons from the old spirit molded Naseru into a cold, cunning, and patient man. Naseru recognized that his education was a necessary evil, done for the peace of the Empire. Rather than simply bemoan his lot, Naseru learned everything he could from the manipulative old Hantei. When Hantei XVI later died under mysterious circumstances, it was no surprise that Naseru was able to conceal the truth behind the incident — his girlfriend, Otomo Hoketuhime, had stabbed the Hantei from behind.

Hantei Naseru has come to be regarded as one of the most cunning and capable politicians in Rokugan. Before his father died, Naseru had become indispensable to Toturi. The young courtier often caught nuances of politics that even his perceptive father missed.

Naseru considers it his responsibility to take the throne. He loves his siblings, but in his opinion neither Sezaru nor Tsudao is qualified to rule the Empire. He does not see Kaneka as a brother, just an upstart ronin whose existence sullies Toturi's name. While Naseru would not willingly allow harm to befall his siblings (with the exception of Kaneka), he is ruthlessly efficient, and has made plans to remove each of them from his path to succession.

While he is a capable statesman with a keen mind and quick eye for detail, Naseru's weakness is his lack of compassion. He is quick to judge, quick to generalize, and quick to rationalize sacrifices for the greater good. Upon reflection he often regrets the things he has done, but he will not allow sentimentality to divert his quest for the throne.

Sentiment is not befitting of an Emperor.

New Path: Naseru's Technique

Technique Rank: 5
Path of Entry: Bayushi Courtier 4
Path of Egress: Otomo Courtier 1

TECHNIQUE: NASERU'S TECHNIQUE

You are adept at reading the most closely guarded secrets of others. When making any opposed Social Skill roll involving Perception or Awareness, your 8's and 9's explode as well as 10's. This effect may be used only once per die per roll. Thus, if you roll an 8 then reroll a 9 on the same die, it explodes only once. If you roll an 8 then reroll a 10, the 10 explodes normally.

Naseru has thus far taught no one this Technique, preferring to keep such a substantial advantage to himself. If someone were to gain his unequivocal trust, he might share this secret.

KITSU DEJIKO, IMPERIAL LEGIONNAIRE

SCHOOL/RANK: Matsu Berserker 4
HONOR: 3.3 STATUS: 5.9 GLORY: 6.1

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 3	Water: 4	Void: 3
Reflexes 4		Agility 5		

ADVANTAGES: Death Trance, Kharmic Tie (Toturi Tsudao)
DISADVANTAGES: Brash
KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, The Soul's Roar, Tsuko's Storm
SKILLS: Athletics 4, Battle 4, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Tsuno 2, Meditation 3, Theology (Shintao) 2

The Kitsu are strictly regimented even for a shugenja family. The highest among them are the sodan-senzo, who can speak to the ancestors. Below them are more conventional shugenja, and at the bottom are those Kitsu born without an affinity for the kami. For such individuals there is rarely a chance for advancement within the family. Most accept this fate. Kitsu Dejiko refused. Even as a child, Dejiko swore that she would not be marginalized, neither by her family nor anyone else. When it was established that she could not speak to the kami, she immediately began studying the blade. She was among the finest students at her school, and was quickly recruited into the Matsu legions despite the scoffing of many Kitsu. When she went on to join the Lion's Pride and then the Imperial Legions, even her most vocal detractors fell silent.

Dejiko's early career in the Legions was difficult. She came into conflict with another officer, Mirumoto Junnosuke. Their mutual hatred sabotaged both their careers for some time before Junnosuke was finally cast out in disgrace. Years later, they met on the battlefield during the Lion incursions into Dragon lands, and their renewed conflict was interrupted by the intervention of Toturi Tsudao and the First Legion.

In Tsudao, Dejiko found a kindred spirit. Tsudao was everything Dejiko aspired to be, and the Wind appreciated the younger woman's skill and dedication. Dejiko became an officer in the First Legion, serving directly under Tsudao alongside such other officers as Bayushi Paneki, Doji Jotaro, and Toturi Miyako. Fighting alongside them, Dejiko finally began setting aside her anger and tempering her skill with a cool, rational outlook that mirrors her commander's.

After Tsudao's death, Dejiko found herself commanding the Seventh Legion. She no longer works alongside those she has come to call friends, but the lessons she learned while serving with them have transformed her into one of the finest tactical minds in the Imperial Legions. While she misses her friend Tsudao, Dejiko at last knows peace.

OMONI, SCULPTOR OF FLESH

SCHOOL/RANK: Daigotsu's Legion 4
HONOR: 0 STATUS: 0.0 GLORY: –3.8 (Infamous)

Air: 4 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 1

Shadowlands Taint: 4.0

ADVANTAGES: True Friend (Daigotsu), Quick
DISADVANTAGES: Benten's Curse, Momoku,
SHADOWLANDS POWERS: Blackened Claws, Blood Domination, Child of Darkness, Uncanny Speed
SKILLS: Anatomy (Goblin Anatomy, Torture) 8, Athletics 4, Battle 3, Craft: Flesh Sculpting 8, Deceit (Intimidation) 5, Defense 3, Hunting 5, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Stealth 3



The past is an undecipherable haze to Omoni. He was a Bloodspeaker experiment, a failed test in their attempts to make Daigotsu what he is. Where Daigotsu's connection to Jigoku and the demonic power of that realm is unrivaled, Omoni is greatly flawed. He is more beast than man, consumed with constant pain and rage. When Daigotsu escaped from the Bloodspeakers, he took pity on Omoni, and used his magic to erase the more painful memories of what the cultists did to him. Omoni does not know if he was goblin or human before the Bloodspeakers began to work on him. He thinks he is human; he looks human, and he feels human most of the time. Sometimes, though, an unstoppable anger rises in him and animal impulses urge him to kill. If he is truly human, why can't he control those urges? If he is a goblin, why does he feel so much *like* a human?

Omoni began to experiment with captured bakemono to vent his frustration. *If I find out what makes a goblin a goblin,* he reasoned, *I will find out what I truly am.* To his disappointment, he found there was nothing unique about a goblin. If he manipulated the goblin's body a little, he could make it as strong as a human, if not stronger. On a whim, he forced those changes in the goblin with his hands; to his surprise, the goblin did not die. It grew even more vicious, and when Omoni let it loose, it killed nearly ten normal goblins before it was overwhelmed. Omoni smiled; finally, he could help Daigotsu in his quest to rule the Shadowlands.

The Lost avoid Omoni's presence, disgusted by his bestial nature and obsession with flesh. Omoni ignores them, throwing himself into his duty. Daigotsu has never judged him, and when Omoni did good work Daigotsu was pleased. Daigotsu has asked him to make the goblins stronger, to make them obey his bidding. He will not fail.

Sculptor of Flesh

Flesh sculpting is an ability that is unique to Omoni. Omoni may alter living, Tainted beings to be stronger, faster, and more powerful. Omoni may bring to life dead flesh or modify beasts to create new species. This always requires a great deal of time, but there are virtually no limits to what Omoni can create, given time and resources.

SEPPUN ISEI, SERVANT OF THE ANVIL

SCHOOL/RANK: Seppun Guardsman 5
HONOR: 4.3 STATUS: 5.1 GLORY: 5.0

Air: 3 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 5 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 4
Reflexes 4 Agility 6

ADVANTAGES: Higher Purpose (Defend the Toturi Dynasty), Magic Resistance (2)
DISADVANTAGES: Obligation
KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind
SKILLS: Battle 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 4, Games: Kemari 3, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 5, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 4

Centuries ago, Seppun Isei was a valiant soldier in the Imperial Legions. He served for years without incident, pleasing his lord and his Emperor, an inspiration to all those who served alongside him. When a blasphemous maho-tsukai and his blood-bound ronin servitors staged a feeble attack on the Imperial Palace, Isei dealt with them in the way that they deserved: quickly and brutally. Unfortunately, the ronin serving the maho-tsukai carried poisoned blades, and Isei died shortly after they did. His death was mourned throughout Otosan Uchi.

Isei returned to Rokugan through Oblivion's Gate centuries later. He served loyally in the Emperor's army and after the War of Spirits was prepared to relinquish his life once again, but the Emperor had a change of heart and permitted spirits loyal to him to remain in the Empire so long as they embraced mortality through a Phoenix ritual. Isei was delighted to resume his duties protecting the Emperor, albeit guarding the Toturi dynasty rather than the Hantei. In time, he was honored to be chosen as the personal yojimbo of Toturi I's youngest child, Hantei Naseru.

Despite the faith that others placed in him, Isei often doubted his own resolve. He had seen the afterlife. He had walked in Yomi. He knew what awaited him after death. Was it that, then, which made him so fearless? Was his devotion to duty truly as complete as it seemed? Was he in fact afraid to die again?

The answer came to Isei in the final moments of his second life. He accompanied Naseru to the ancient City of Night deep within the cavernous recesses of Seikitsu Pass. The ancient city's origins, together with the threat posed by the Tsuno and the madness of Moto Vordu, nearly claimed the life of Naseru and many others, including Shinjo daimyo Shinjo Shono. Isei gave his life to protect his charge, just as he had in his first lifetime, just as he had been trained from childhood. In his last moments, Isei knew the truth: there was no doubt, only duty. Today, a private shrine to Isei's memory stands within the Imperial Palace, and the Emperor visits it frequently.

Shosuro Higatsuku, Voice of the Shogun

SCHOOL/RANK: Bayushi Courtier 3 [4]
HONOR: 1.3 STATUS: 5.3 GLORY: 2.7

Air: 4	Earth: 2 [3]	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 3
	Willpower 4		Perception 4	

ADVANTAGES: Crafty, Read Lips, Social Position (Shogun's Herald)
DISADVANTAGES: Unluck
SKILLS: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 5 [6], Deceit (Seduction) 3 [5], Etiquette (Sincerity) 4 (6), Forgery 4, Games: Sadane 5 [7], Investigation (Interrogation) 4 [5], Kenjutsu 2, Knives 3, Lore: Law 2

Shosuro Higatsuku is a young man who discovered his talent early in life. Unfortunately, that talent has jeopardized his life more than once. Higatsuku's talent is inciting anger, and he is perhaps the finest practitioner of his craft in the Empire.

Once his superiors discovered Higatsuku's unique knack, they put him to work. He would be sent into a particular court setting and given a target. Soon, Higatsuku would discover exactly what combination of words and actions would outrage his prey, and the enemy would challenge the Scorpion courtier to a duel. Invariably, an exceptional Scorpion duelist would be on hand to champion Higatsuku, and the Scorpion would have one fewer enemy to deal with.

The greatest assignment of Higatsuku's career came when his Champion, Bayushi Yojiro, deployed him to deal with the threat of Akodo Kaneka, a competitor of the Scorpion's ally Hantei Naseru in his race for the throne. Higatsuku operated without a champion, hoping only to provoke Kaneka into killing him; the disgrace of slaying an unarmed courtier would eliminate Kaneka as an Imperial heir. Unfortunately, Higatsuku dangerously underestimated Kaneka, who spared his life and in return demanded his loyalty.

Higatsuku served Kaneka throughout the Four Winds' conflict, even after Kaneka declared himself the Shogun and all his other allies encouraged him to discard Higatsuku as a liability. In time, the young courtier even came to understand and agree with the Shogun's philosophies. When the Shogun's power base was dissolved by the new Emperor, Higatsuku found himself back in the Scorpion's service once again. His previous duties were no longer appropriate, given his high profile. Life is now boring, and Higatsuku craves the excitement, even the danger, that he once tasted while serving the Shogun.

Soshi Angai, Kuroiban

SCHOOL/RANK: Soshi Shugenja 2 [3]
HONOR: 2.6 STATUS: 3.3 GLORY: 2.9

Air: 3 [4]	Earth: 2	Fire: 2 [3]	Water: 3	Void 3
	Willpower 4	Intelligence 4		

ADVANTAGES: Dangerous Beauty, Friend of the Elements (Air), Jurojin's Blessing
DISADVANTAGES: Obligation (Kuroiban)
SKILLS: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3 [4], Etiquette 3 [4], Investigation 3 [5], Meditation 4, Spellcraft 4, Stealth (Spellcasting) 4, Theology 3
SPELLS: Armor of Earth, Cloak of Night, Echoes of a Breeze, (The Eye Shall Not See), Forgotten Murmurs, (Immortal Steel), Jade Strike, (Know the Mind), Mists of Illusion, Reversal of Fortunes, Secrets on the Wind, (Silent Waters), Sympathetic Energies, Way of Deception

Soshi Angai came under observation just a few years after her gempukku. There had been allegations of maho use by someone in her lord's courts, and as one of the court's more promising young shugenja, Angai was a chief suspect. The Kuroiban, a secretive Scorpion group devoted to destroying maho both within the clan and without, were seeking only the final proof they required before moving to arrest and interrogate Angai, a process she would likely not have survived.

Angai was innocent, however, and totally ignorant of the dark magic being performed. By happenstance, she discovered the true culprit, a Shosuro diplomat, while he was conducting his dark arts late one night in a guest's chambers. Angai reacted instinctively and killed the man with a powerful spell. The Kuroiban, aghast at their mistake and greatly impressed by Angai's abilities, began watching her as a potential recruit rather than a suspect. Angai was inducted into the Kuroiban less than a year later.

After several successful assignments on the Kuroiban's behalf, Angai received a truly bizarre appointment. The Kuni family daimyo, Kuni Utagu, had made several comments denigrating the purity of Toturi Sezaru's magic, and had shortly thereafter been murdered. Angai was therefore assigned to monitor the Emperor's eldest son. It took her some time, but she secured a position in Sezaru's retinue through sheer tenacity and her ability to manipulate social situations to Sezaru's benefit, a talent that Sezaru himself notoriously lacked. Ironically, by the time Angai was offered the position, it was quite obvious to her that Sezaru was not responsible for any murder, nor was he capable of practicing blood sorcery.

As one of Sezaru's chief advisors, Angai found the Four Winds' conflict to be a unique experience. She believed that Sezaru was the most capable Wind, and encouraged him to seek the throne despite her clan's almost universal support for his brother Naseru. She helped the Wolf to rebuild the Dragonfly lands, and soothed those Tonbo who were offended at his presumption in doing so. When Naseru took the throne and Sezaru swore fealty to the Phoenix, Angai reaffirmed her loyalty to him. Sezaru counseled her to return to the Scorpion lands and aid in the purging of the Shadowed Tower, a group of which he had recently become aware. Angai did so, and will remain in Scorpion lands until Sezaru calls her to re-enter his service.

Tonbo Toryu, Dark Oracle of the Void

SCHOOL/RANK: Tonbo Shugenja 5 / Master of the Elements 3
HONOR: 3.6 STATUS: N/A GLORY: -5.0 (Infamy)

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void 9
	Willpower 6			

ADVANTAGES: Dark Oracle (Void)
DISADVANTAGES: Obligation (Jigoku)
SKILLS: Calligraphy 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Prophecy 6, Lore: Shadowlands 5, Lore: Void 8, Meditation 6, Spellcraft 8, Theology (Shintao) 7
SPELLS: As a Dark Oracle, Toryu possesses all spells of his element and all maho spells as Innate Abilities. He may cast any other elemental spell known to mortal men as well, and many that are unknown.

If the Celestial Heavens can have tragedy, then surely Tonbo Toryu is the most tragic among their number. Once, he served as the Oracle of Thunder, the most valorous and honorable of all Oracles of Light, a patron of heroes and saviors. To save the Celestial Order from an unbearable imbalance, however, he accepted a terrible burden that inexorably eats away at everything that remains of his mortal soul.

Toryu was once a prominent member of the ruling family of the Dragonfly Clan. He served as an emissary for both the Dragon and the Phoenix, the generous patrons of his clan. Although he did not possess an affinity for the kami like so many of his comrades, Toryu found his calling while studying with the Shiba in Phoenix lands. There he developed a passion for the Tao of Shinsei that rivaled even the most devout monks. Soon he became known for his encyclopedic knowledge of the Tao as well as his insightful philosophical discussions regarding its contents. Although a bushi, Toryu was known as a sage.

When the Great Clans united to march upon Oblivion's Gate, Toryu was there. He fought all day beside the others, and at night he would offer them wisdom from the Tao to ease their troubled minds. He was an anchor for many bushi during that terrible time, and through his stability many retained their sanity. The battle at the Gate was a nightmare, and before it was over Toryu had sacrificed himself to save many of his fellow soldiers, embracing his fate for the greater good just as Shinsei had taught.

Tonbo Toryu did not, however, remain dead. His valor, wisdom and courage had captured the attention of Tengoku, and the mercurial, enigmatic Thunder Dragon accepted Toryu into his presence and made him the Oracle of Thunder, guardian of heroes. Toryu rejoined the battle at Oblivion's Gate, aiding the heroes there in their stand against the Darkness. When the battle was concluded, Toryu chose to remain to oversee the Gate, certain that it would one day prove vital once more.

Toryu's tenure as Oracle of Thunder was short-lived, as the Dragons measure such things. When Toturi Kaede, Oracle of the Void, assumed the mantle of Empress, she created an imbalance. The Void had shown partiality for the first time in history, and a Dark Oracle must be created to balance the scales. Fearing that the powers of Jigoku would select someone far more dangerous, Toryu accepted the burden with the hope that he could mitigate the corrupting influence the power would have upon him.

A decade later, Toryu fears that his will is not strong enough. The power he commands is beyond measure, but it slowly devours what little remains of his mortal soul. All too soon, he fears, he will become a monster just like the other Dark Oracles.

Toturi Kaede, Empress and Oracle of the Void

SCHOOL/RANK: Isawa Shugenja (Void) 5 / Master of the Elements 3
HONOR: 4.2 STATUS: 9.2 GLORY: 4.4

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 8
	Willpower 6		Perception 6	

ADVANTAGES: Oracle of Light (Void)
DISADVANTAGES: Lost Love (Toturi), Obligation (Tengoku)
SKILLS: Calligraphy 5, Courtier 6, Etiquette 7, Horsemanship 3, Investigation 5, Knives 4, Lore: Void 10, Meditation 8, Spellcraft (Void Knowledge) 9, Tea Ceremony 7, Theology 7, Theology (Fortunes) 8
Spells: As an Oracle, Kaede possesses all elemental spells as Innate Abilities. She receives three Free Raises on all Void Spells. Kaede possesses many spells that mortal shugenja have yet to discover.

If there is a family line that has possessed more affinity for the kami than that of Toturi Kaede, history has failed to record it. Kaede was the youngest child of Isawa Ujina, the Master of the Void; her two older brothers, Tadaka and Tomo, also inherited their father's incredible magical affinity. Her brothers, however, were the children of Ujina's first wife. Kaede's mother, Doji Ninube, was kidnapped by unknown parties shortly before she and Ujina were to wed. It was only after a perilous quest that Ujina and a Dragon magistrate named Kitsuki Kaagi rescued Ninube. Ujina was forced to kill Ninube shortly after Kaede's birth, upon realizing that his bride was not Ninube, but a manifestation of the Lying Darkness. Through his powerful Void magic, Ujina imposed a name on Kaede, severing her from the Darkness and rendering her a normal, if powerful, mortal child.

Kaede served the Phoenix well for years, eventually assuming the position of Master of the Void when her father fell ill. She desperately sought a means to cure him, but his exposure to the Lying Darkness had corrupted him, transforming him into a Nameless One. Kaede found solace in duty and in the company of her betrothed, the Lion Champion's younger son Akodo Toturi. The quiet, reverent young man was overlooked by many, but Kaede could see the hand of destiny upon him.

The Clan War was even more devastating for Kaede than for the rest of the Phoenix. She felt the losses that afflicted her clan as keenly as any other, but Toturi's disgrace, together with the deaths of her father and both brothers at the war's conclusion, left with a terrible feeling of emptiness. It was during these feelings of emptiness that she first heard the call of the Void Dragon. The balance had been upset. A new Oracle of the Void was needed, and Kaede gladly accepted the burden.

Unlike every other Oracle documented in history, Kaede did not withdraw from the Empire's affairs upon her ascension. She fulfilled the arranged marriage and became Empress to Toturi I, bearing him a daughter and two sons. Her soul may no longer have been truly human, but Kaede was happy.

After Toturi I died, Empress Kaede chose to rule in her husband's stead until one of his children was chosen as heir. In her grief, Kaede took too active a role, and created an imbalance that the Celestial Order could not abide. Because of her blatant favoritism toward the Empire, a Dark Oracle of the Void was created to restore the balance. Kaede had no choice but to withdraw to the Heavens to forestall a worse imbalance, returning only once to offer her children counsel before their expedition into the Shadowlands.

Now Kaede has withdrawn from the Empire altogether. She would remain with her children if she could, but that decision is no longer hers to make. She can only watch from afar and hope that they are strong enough to endure that which must follow.

Toturi Koshei, Servant of the Wolf

SCHOOL/RANK: Akodo Bushi 3 [/ Seppun Guardsman 2]
HONOR: 3.3 STATUS: 3.8 GLORY: 4.4

Air: 2 [3]	Earth: 3	Fire: 3 [4]	Water: 4 [5]	Void 2 [3]
Reflexes 3				

ADVANTAGES: Bishamon's Blessing
DISADVANTAGES: Doubt (Battle)
KATA: Fury Without End, Striking as Earth
SKILLS: Battle 4 [5], Courtier 2 [4], Defense 3 [4], Etiquette 2 [4], Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2 [5], Kenjutsu 5 [6], Kyujutsu 2 [4], Lore: History 3, Spears 2 [3], Storytelling 1, War Fan 1 [3]

Like so many other prominent samurai attached to the Four Winds, Toturi Koshei has accrued admirers throughout the Empire, young men and women who respect his abilities and wish to be like him. Unlike most admired individuals, Koshei actively discourages this fascination. He is wracked with guilt, shame, and self-loathing. He genuinely believes that serving the Toturi Sezaru is the only means through which he can atone for his heinous sins.

Koshei was once Akodo Koshei, a zealous officer in the Lion armies. He served under Akodo Ijiasu, and took part in the devastating siege on the Dragonfly lands that his lord commanded. While Ijiasu marched on toward Dragon lands, he ordered Koshei and his men to deal with the meager resistance the Dragonfly offered. Koshei did so, putting entire villages to the torch in the name of defeating his clan's enemies.

The aftermath filled Koshei with horror. Women and children had been killed or rendered homeless by his actions. Doubt overwhelmed him, and Koshei requested reassignment. A hero to the Lion, he received an appointment to the Legions stationed in Otosan Uchi. While serving there, Koshei encountered Toturi Sezaru and offered his loyalty as an act of atonement for his perceived crimes. Sezaru was curious, and could see the merit in Koshei's character, so he offered him fealty. Koshei accepted, took the Toturi name, and became the Wolf's yojimbo.

As the bodyguard of perhaps the most powerful man in Rokugan, Koshei's duties were odd. He accompanied his master in his visits to the Oracles, and faced an Onisu when Yokubo attacked his master. It was only through Koshei's complete selflessness that the demon was defeated, confirming Koshei's value in Sezaru's eyes. Throughout the Wolf's quest to attain the throne, Koshei remained at his side, and it was because of Koshei's presence that Sezaru selected the Dragonfly lands to create his power base.

In those early days, and again now that Sezaru has joined the Phoenix, Koshei has spent countless hours among the Dragonfly, representing Sezaru's interests and assisting in the ongoing rebuilding of their lands. The Dragonfly have long since forgiven him for his past crimes, but Koshei will never forgive himself.

Toturi Sezaru, the Wolf

SCHOOL/RANK: Isawa Shugenja (Void) 3 / Tamori Shugenja 2 [/ Master of the Elements 1]
HONOR: 3.3 STATUS: 9.1 GLORY: 7.4

Air: 4	Earth: 3 [4]	Fire: 4	Water: 3 [4]	Void: 5
	Willpower 6		Perception 5	

ADVANTAGES: Blood of Toturi, Friend of the Elements (Fire, Void), Great Destiny, Ishiken-do, Kharmic Tie (Daigotsu, Iuchiban), Multiple Schools
DISADVANTAGES: Driven (Defend the Empire), Haunted (Inner Voice), Nemesis (Daigotsu), Obligation (The Emperor)

SKILLS: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 2, Defense 2 [5], Divination 3 [4], Etiquette 2, Investigation 3 [5], Knives 3, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 2, Meditation 4, Spellcraft (Fire Knowledge) 5 [6], Spellcraft (Void Knowledge) 7, Theology 6

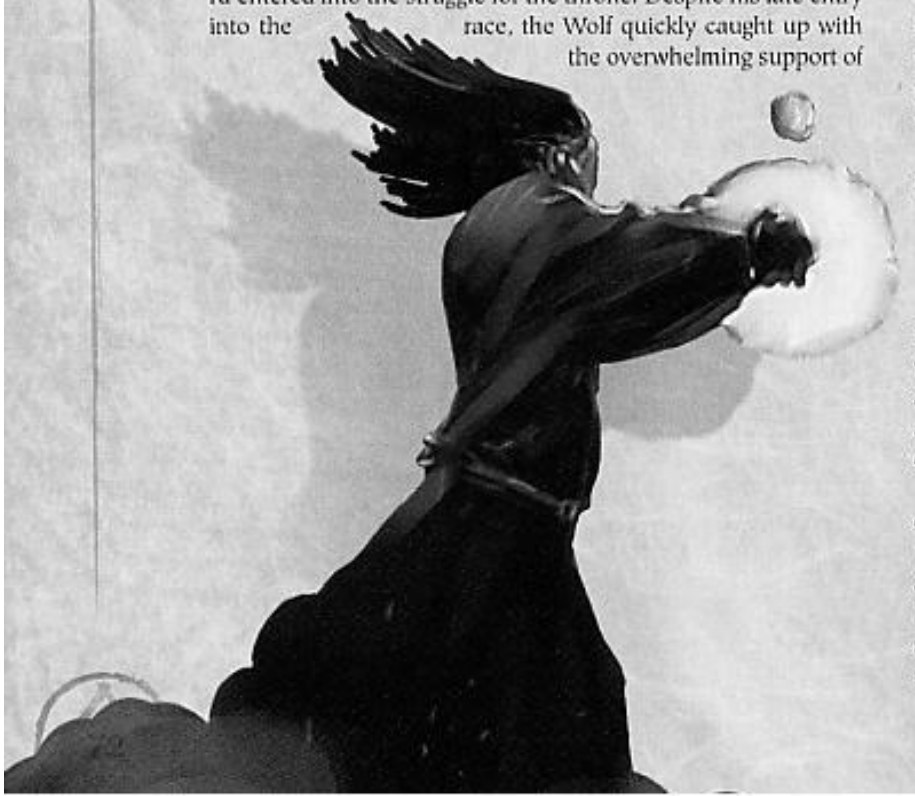
SPELLS: Sezaru possesses all Fire and Void spells as Innate Abilities. He has numerous Innate Abilities from other elements as well, any that the GM deems appropriate for the occasion.

There has been some debate as to whether Toturi Sezaru is, as some claim, the most powerful shugenja in the Empire's history. As time goes on and Sezaru's power grows, fewer and fewer voices oppose the idea.

Sezaru is the eldest legitimate son of the Emperor Toturi I, the Splendid Emperor. He was born with white hair and a caul, signs of great magical power. With an Oracle as a mother, no one was particularly surprised. As the Emperor's son, there was no limit to the resources available to young Sezaru, and his magical talent developed at a startlingly young age. On the day of his gempukku, Sezaru was attacked by a huge oni, which he destroyed utterly with a combination of Fire and Void magic. He took the name of the Wolf, to signify his hunt for all that would threaten his father's Empire.

When Toturi died, Sezaru did not experience the grief his siblings felt. Instead, he was filled with rage. While the other Winds began competing for prestige and position in hopes of taking the throne, Sezaru began a tireless quest to find the demon that murdered his father. His travels took him to visit many Oracles, and eventually to face the Onisu Yokubo. The demon was possessed by Daigotsu at the time, and Sezaru learned the first inklings of his foe's power. Sezaru narrowly defeated the beast, and gained new motivation.

In time, Sezaru came to understand that the struggle for the throne was of interest to him, even if he did not desire power. The foe facing Rokugan was of a nature that his siblings could not hope to defend against it. For the good of the Empire, Sezaru entered into the struggle for the throne. Despite his late entry into the race, the Wolf quickly caught up with the overwhelming support of the Dragon and many among the Phoenix. He rebuilt the Dragonfly lands after the Lion had decimated them, magically building a new castle in a single day, and took up residence there with his supporters.



When the Empress Kaede returned, Sezaru and the other Winds united in their opposition to Daigotsu. Sezaru's magic devastated the Shadowlands when the Winds marched on the City of the Lost, but he could not save his sister Tsudao. When the Winds returned, Sezaru renounced his claim to the throne, allowing his brother Naseru to take it. Sezaru became the Voice of the Emperor, representing his brother's interests to the Empire. He was content at last, his demons at peace.

TOTURI TSUDAO, THE SWORD

SCHOOL/RANK: Akodo Bushi 4 / Seppun Guardsman 1 [2]
HONOR: 4.6 STATUS: 9.2 GLORY: 8.3

Air: 3 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 3 [4] **Void:** 3
Reflexes 5

ADVANTAGES: Blood of Toturi, Leadership, Multiple Schools, Social Position (First Legion Commander)

DISADVANTAGES: Idealistic

KATA: Fury without End, Gentle Blade of Winter, Hand of Akodo, Striking as Fire

SKILLS: Artisan (Painting) 2, Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 6 [7], Courtier 4 [5], Defense 5, Etiquette 5, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 7 [8], Knives 5, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 4, Meditation 3, Storytelling 3, Theology (Shintao) 3, War Fan 2

The Four Winds' conflict was a difficult and unpleasant time in Rokugan's history. Uncertainty is a foe that can lay low even the greatest samurai, and when samurai cannot be certain which lord to serve, the inner conflict can destroy their sense of self. While each Wind marshaled his or her share of backers, it could be argued that none matched the support given to Toturi Tsudao, and while each of Tsudao's brothers had enemies, there was no one who could rightfully be said not to admire and respect Tsudao.

Tsudao was the eldest child of Emperor Toturi I and Empress Kaede. As such, she was seen by the Empire as the continuation of a new, stable dynasty that had emerged from the Clan War and endured both the War against the Darkness and the War of Spirits. Tsudao was lavished with praise and attention as a child, but amazingly she did not become arrogant or self-important, remaining instead a quiet, demure, modest young woman with a tremendous sense of self. Even in her youth, she allowed herself few indulgences, although they included a brief affair with her lifelong friend and advisor, Doji Tanitsu. Tsudao's one true passion was bushido.

Shortly after her gempukku, Tsudao was appointed to an officer's position in the First Legion. Many believed it to be a political appointment, but they were quickly proven wrong when a unified force of Yobanjin attacked the Phoenix lands. Tsudao led the First Legion into battle, masterfully cutting off every possible path the barbarians could take to press further into Phoenix lands, then severing their escape routes.

Tsudao was devastated when her father was killed, but struggled not to show it. She immediately recognized the power struggle that blossomed between her brothers Naseru and Kaneka, but preferred to lead by example, taking the First Legion into battle with the mysterious Tsuno that were attacking Lion holdings and the surrounding lands. With a varied command staff comprised of high-ranking samurai from the Lion, Crane, Scorpion, and Monkey clans, Tsudao gained support from virtually every family and clan in the Empire. When Daigotsu's forces attacked Otosan Uchi, she and her command staff used a Naga ritual to travel across the empire in a heartbeat in order to help defend the city. It was Tsudao, together with Bayushi Tai, who faced Daigotsu in the Imperial Throne room, where she severed his arm but was unable to prevent his escape. In the aftermath of Daigotsu's defeat, Tsudao declared herself Empress.

Claiming the throne was not as simple as Tsudao had believed. She was inundated with requests for aid by those who required the Emperor's intervention, but at the same time ignored by those who supported her brothers. Fortunately, the Imperial families recognized her claim. As Empress, Tsudao attempted to maintain law and order until, to her surprise, the Empress Kaede returned at Winter Court and helped unite the Winds against Daigotsu.

The battle in the Shadowlands was fierce, and in the end it was Tsudao who made the final sacrifice. Daigotsu was enraged by the Winds' interference, and gathered all his power to destroy them. Tsudao realized he had held nothing in reserve to defend himself, and hurled herself through his fire to cut him down. Both perished.

After her death, Tsudao's memory was celebrated throughout Rokugan. When her brother Naseru took the throne as Emperor, he retroactively declared her rule to be legitimate, taking the name Toturi III in recognition of it.

New Mechanics

Blood of Toturi (6 points, GM's permission only)

This special Advantage is allowed only to members of Emperor Toturi I's bloodline (i.e. the Four Winds). A player character should not have this Advantage unless the GM wishes to allow players to create characters descended from Toturi I.

You gain a Free Raise on any interactions with the Imperial Court, and can gain Advantages, Disadvantages, kata, School Techniques or other character options as if you were a member of every clan, so long as members of that clan acknowledge your Imperial descent. Your Toturi blood also allows you to pass through certain specially warded areas of the Imperial Palace without detection or harm.

This Advantage counts as either Great Destiny or Dark Fate. Only the GM knows which of these two ultimately applies. In addition, as a member of the Imperial bloodline you can expect to be manipulated and monitored by both allies and enemies seeking to gain an upper hand, so this is as much a Disadvantage as an Advantage.

Isawa's Last Wish

At the dawn of the Empire, the shugenja known as Isawa undertook a monumental task. He believed that the difference between humans and kami was merely one of perception, and that with effort humans — even those without the gifts of shugenja — could communicate with the kami. Along with the greatest shugenja of the young Phoenix Clan, Isawa set out to create a magical construct that would allow humans and kami to understand one another. He intended to give the construct to his daughter Akiko and her betrothed, Asako Sagoten, as a wedding gift. Sagoten and Akiko helped Isawa in his research, joined by Sagoten's father, Asako Yogo, and many other talented Phoenix shugenja.

The first time Isawa attempted to use the construct, he found it curious and eager to please. Using only a fraction of its power, it transformed a wall of Isawa's temple into butterflies, and then set the butterflies on fire. The second time Isawa used it, the construct caused a mountain to erupt in the heart of Lion territory, hundreds of miles away (and now known as Lookout Mountain). Simultaneously, an island off the coast near Kyuden Isawa sank beneath the waves, along with the Coral Palace (then a minor fortress of the Phoenix).

When Asako Yogo was cursed by the Shadowlands and left the Phoenix to join the Scorpion Clan, work on the Last Wish slowed dramatically. Yogo had been the most talented shugenja working on the construct other than Isawa himself, and his loss was demoralizing. When the Day of Thunder came and Isawa did not return, work on the Last Wish halted altogether. The Asako and Isawa families fought among themselves to determine who had the right to complete Isawa's masterpiece. Akiko called off her wedding to Sagoten after one of his cousins killed an Isawa in an argument about the Wish. Hantei Genji himself intervened. Both Sagoten and Akiko cautioned Genji against destroying the Last Wish, as neither knew a way to do so safely. Genji commanded that the Wish never be completed, and that Isawa's notes be destroyed. As only shugenja could use the incomplete Last Wish, it would be given into the care of the Shiba family of bushi.

Decades later, Asako Sagoten proved Genji's fears to be well founded when he attempted to use the incomplete Last Wish to make Akiko love him once more. The resulting catastrophe killed Sagoten, Akiko, and many others and destroyed Isawa's original castle. The Shiba recovered the Last Wish and hid it more carefully.

For centuries the Last Wish lay unused. Without human contact, the intelligent construct slowly began to go insane. It clung desperately to the lessons of its creator Isawa, who had always impressed upon it the importance of mercy and selflessness. Occasionally ambitious shugenja would learn of the Wish and attempt to use its power. These attempts ended badly; the user always died, and sometimes he managed to cause massive destruction as well. Always the Shiba came to pick up the pieces and hide the Wish again.

During the War of Spirits, Hantei XVI's forces attempted to coerce the returned spirit of Asako Sagoten to find and complete Isawa's Last Wish. Sagoten refused, escaped the Steel Chrysanthemum's custody, and sought out the Wish to warn its guardians. The Hantei, who had allowed Sagoten to escape to lead him to the Wish, dispatched his own shugenja to follow.

Sagoten used the Wish one final time, but this time he did so without selfish intent. He used the Wish to create Void spirits called the Children of the Last Wish that would protect the artifact from improper use. Having done so, he committed seppuku to prevent his knowledge from being exploited. When the Hantei's shugenja arrived, the Children destroyed them.

With the Children as its eyes and ears, the Last Wish slowly began to emerge from the depths of loneliness and insanity. It also developed to the point that non-shugenja could draw upon its power. When the Wish heard of the terrible war that had erupted between Phoenix and Dragon, it was consumed with an overwhelming need to help the clan of its creator. It dispatched the Children to find someone worthy to wield it, but they could find no one.

As fate would have it, Shiba Aikune found the Last Wish instead. Though Aikune is a brash, proud man, his desire to use the Last Wish was pure and selfless. He safely used the construct to drive the Dragon back from Phoenix lands and fortify their position through the winter. The Last Wish feels that it has much in common with Aikune. Both were beings of limitless potential that were cast aside and forgotten. Both have a strong desire to aid their "families," but often end up responsible for the deaths of those they love. Both are viewed as dangerous despite their desire to serve the Empire. For the moment, Shiba Aikune and Isawa's Last Wish are the perfect match, though it remains to be seen whether or not that match will ultimately help or harm the Phoenix Clan.

MECHANICS

In its dormant form, Isawa's Last Wish resembles a spinning globe of light. Close inspection reveals the sphere's interior to be a complex latticework of magical energy. The sphere is weightless, and tends to hover in midair wherever it was last released. When touched by a mortal, it takes a shape appropriate to that person's personality and an appearance appropriate to how that individual intends to use the Wish. (In Isawa's hands, it remained a perfect sphere of energy.) Many different results are possible, but a few of the different possibilities are listed here.

FORM	MEANING
Chrysanthemum	Person of Imperial blood
Gem	Merchant, seeker of wealth
Hammer and chisel	Creator or artist
Katana	Warrior
Knife	Criminal, murderer
Quill	Scholar, historian
Tessen	General, leader
Torch	Teacher

APPEARANCE	MEANING
Bloody	Intends to use the Wish for vengeance
Flaming	Intends to use the Wish against an enemy
Clay, glass, or fragile material	Weak-willed or uncertain about what to do
Golden	Intends to use the Wish as a tool of creation
Jade	Intends to use the Wish against the Shadowlands
Obsidian	Intends to use the Wish as a tool of corruption

The Last Wish seems to be entirely indestructible. Sagoten and Akiko once suggested that there might be a way to destroy it, but both feared that to do so would be more dangerous than any destruction the Wish could unleash. Some members of the Dragon Clan believe that the Yobanjin, whose primitive magic is very similar to Isawa's early magic, may hold the secrets of destroying the Last Wish.

The Last Wish has three major abilities.

First, upon taking a form, the Last Wish becomes a powerful magical item. This item can permanently emulate any shugenja spell of Mastery Level 3 or less with a duration other than Instantaneous. For example, it could become a katana that is permanently affected by a Katana of Fire spell (as it is for Aikune), or an amulet that radiates a continuous Evil Ward. This spell takes effect as if its wielder had made three Raises when casting. If the Last Wish loses contact with the individual holding it, it immediately reverts to its dormant form and hovers in midair.

Second, a person wielding the Last Wish gains the spellcasting abilities of a shugenja of School Rank equal to his Insight Rank, and immediately gains five spells of each Rank that he can cast as Innate Abilities. All of these spells are cast as if the character had a 5 in the appropriate Ring and a School Rank equal to his Insight Rank. If the character was already a shugenja, this pool of magical ability is entirely separate from his original abilities. Spells are chosen by the Last Wish, not the user, and never change for that user. The wielder also gains the ability to cast Commune at will.

The third and most potent ability allows the wielder to reshape reality itself. The effects of this ability are unlimited, but not without cost. Any time the user wishes to do this, he should tell the GM *exactly* what he intends to do with the Wish. The Wish always interprets any and all requests extremely literally (even if it does not wish to harm the wielder). The most direct route will be taken, heedless of any damage the Wish causes along the way. Extremely complex wishes confuse the childlike mind of the Wish, so for the purposes of a role-playing game these commands must be ten words or less.

For example, if the wielder says, "I wish for a mountain of gold," then the Last Wish might create a bonsai mountain out of gold, three inches high. Alternately, the Last Wish may create an enormous mountain of gold, more wealth that the character could ever hope to spend, but drop it in the middle of the Burning Sands where the character could never find it. Using the Wish in this manner is always risky and unpredictable. If the user's intent is entirely selfish, the Wish always causes havoc and destruction, even if the user phrased his intent very carefully. For instance, in the above example, the Last Wish might well create a mountain of gold directly on top of its user, crushing him and everyone around him. Alternately, wishes that are selfless or noble are often fulfilled with a minimum of chaos even if worded poorly.

If the user's intent is selfish *and* his wish involves harming innocents, there is a fifty percent chance that the Wish simply flares up with magical energy, destroying everyone and everything (except the Wish) within a 200' radius. There is no protection from this effect, especially for the wielder. Each time the wielder uses the Wish in such a way and survives, the percentage chance of such a destructive event increases by ten percent for that user.

The Last Wish is an intelligent magical construct with the following pertinent statistics: Awareness 1, Intelligence 4, Perception 2, Willpower 2, Void 8. It has 2 Honor. It possesses the following skills: Investigation 5, Lore: History 8, Lore: Phoenix Clan 8, and Spellcraft 8. The Last Wish can communicate telepathically with any intelligent creature within 5'.

The Tsuno

Tsuno Honor

Tsuno have their own code of honor that is alien to the tenets of bushido, and incomprehensible to anyone who is not a Tsuno. Tsuno do not gain and lose Honor like normal characters. Only acts of kindness, disobedience, or cowardice in the face of the enemy would cause them to lose Honor. Nevertheless, any magical or special effects that target Honor affect Tsuno as if they have the Honor listed in their statistics.

Average Tsuno

Honor: 2.0

Air: 2	**Earth:** 4	**Fire:** 2	**Water:** 3
Reflexes 3		Agility 3	

Rolls When Attacking: 7k3 (Tsuno blade); 6k3 (unarmed)
Rolls For Damage: 6k3 (Tsuno blade); 3k2 (unarmed)
TN to Be Hit: 20 (Light Armor)
Wounds Per Wound Level: 10
Shadowlands Taint: 4 (Considered Lost)

Special: Carapace 3. Tsuno can move Water x 20' in a round, or twice that distance if they take no other action that round.

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 3, Heavy Weapons (Tsuno blade) 4, Iaijutsu 1, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Lore: Spirit Realms 4, Stealth 3

These statistics represent young or average Tsuno, but even an average Tsuno is more than a match for most samurai. The Tsuno's superior size, strength, and toughness, formidable natural weapons, devilish cunning, and disciplined organization make them some of the most fearsome creatures the Empire has ever faced. Tsuno reside in a corner of the Shadowlands they have claimed for themselves. They are unique among non-human Tainted creatures in their skill at creating their own weapons and armor, which makes them even more formidable.

They are organized and usually encountered in packs, inside and outside of the Shadowlands. They are not solitary creatures and rarely travel alone. Tsuno packs generally include 5–20 Tsuno led by at least one ravager and sometimes a Soultwister, leaders whose knowledge of tactics can direct the brutal power of the pack. Lesser Tsuno are fiercely loyal to their leaders, and never defy orders or seek to usurp a superior's position. Rank is earned only through trials and battle, never through treachery.

It is a point of honor for Tsuno never to leave their wounded or dying comrades, nor their equipment, on the battlefield.

Tsuno Ravager

School/Technique: Tsuno Bushi School 3
Honor: 2.0

Air: 3	**Earth:** 6	**Fire:** 4	**Water:** 4
Reflexes 4			

Rolls When Attacking: 9k5 (Tsuno blade); 8k4 (unarmed)
Rolls For Damage: 7k3 (Tsuno blade); 4k2 (unarmed)
TN to Be Hit: 25 (Light Armor)
Wounds Per Wound Level: 15
Shadowlands Taint: 6 (Considered Lost)

Special: Carapace 4. Tsuno can move Water x 20' in a round, or twice that distance if they take no other action that round.

Skills: Anatomy (Torture) 4, Athletics 4, Battle 5, Defense 4, Heavy Weapons (Tsuno blade) 5, Iaijutsu 3, Jiujutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 5, Lore: Spirit Realms 6, Stealth 4

Tsuno ravagers form the upper echelons of the Tsuno race's disciplined military hierarchy. As fearsome as the normal Tsuno is, ravagers inspire terror in the most battle-hardened samurai. They achieve their positions after dangerous quests across the Shadowlands and through the Spirit Realms. The creatures who survive these trials return stronger, faster, tougher, more brutal, and more cunning, earning them the leadership of packs or even entire armies.

Ravagers lead their units from the front, roaring their orders and inspiring their subordinates to frenzied bloodlust. The Tsuno code of honor demands discipline in all things, and they tolerate no disobedience or weakness in their troops.



Tsuno Soultwister

Honor: 2.0

Air: 5	Earth: 3	Fire: 5	Water: 3
	Willpower 5		Strength 5

Rolls When Attacking: 10k5 (Tsuno blade); 9k4 (unarmed)
Rolls For Damage: 8k3 (Tsuno blade); 4k2 (unarmed)
TN to Be Hit: 30 (Light Armor)
Wounds Per Wound Level: 8
Shadowlands Taint: 8.0 (Considered Lost)

Special: Fear 3, Carapace 3. Tsuno can move Water x 20' in a round, or twice that distance if they take no other action that round.

Skills: Anatomy (Torture) 6, Athletics 5, Heavy Weapons (Tsuno blade) 5, History 6, Jiujutsu 4, Lore: Herbalism 4, Lore: Kami 6, Lore: Shadowlands 6, Lore: Spirit Realms 8, Stealth 4, Theology 5

At the pinnacle of the Tsuno hierarchy are the strange and powerful Soultwisters, the shugenja with the knowledge and power to take the Tsuno on journeys across the Spirit Realms. The statistics above portray a typical Soultwister.

Becoming a Soultwister is an ordeal more torturous and deadly than most mortals can conceive. It requires candidates to travel the Spirit Realms and do solitary battle with the creatures they find. The few who survive are scarred in body and mind, and they often perform ritual scarification to enhance the scars they received during their trials.

Surviving candidates return from their trials with the insights necessary to use the Soultwisters' unique form of magic. They are tremendously powerful beings both physically and magically, superior even to veteran Tsuno ravagers.

Tsuno Bushi School

Note: This school is available to Tsuno only.
Benefit: None
Honor: 2.5 (see sidebar note on Tsuno Honor)
Skills: Battle, Defense, Iaijutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Heavy Weapons (Tsuno Blade), any two Bugei Skills
Outfit: Tsuno Blade, chitin armor (treat as light armor)

Techniques

Rank 1: Kill Your Weakness

Tsuno seek to conquer all weaknesses, especially in themselves. When they are wounded, they draw upon the deep reserves granted them by centuries of warfare across the Spirit Realms. The Tsuno's TN to Be Hit is increased by any Wound penalties he currently suffers, to a maximum bonus of his Insight Rank x 5.

Rank 2: Tsuno Technique

At this level, the Tsuno's combat efficiency is as finely honed as his blade. He can make two attacks per round.

Rank 3: Howl from the Depths

The Tsuno learns how to unleash a tremendous roar of battle, striking fear into his enemies and driving his comrades to greater feats of martial prowess. All enemies within 50' who can hear the Tsuno roar are affected by Fear 5. All allied Tsuno within range gain a bonus of +1k0 to all attack and damage rolls. These effects last for a number of rounds equal to the Tsuno's Insight Rank. This Technique can be used once per day, and its effects do not stack with the howls of other Tsuno. Using this ability requires one action.

Rank 4: Slaughter is in the Blood

A Tsuno's bloodlust fuels the power of his blows. If the Tsuno bushi kills an opponent, on the next round of combat he gains a number of Free Raises on his attack roll equal to his Insight Rank.

Rank 5: Undying Vengeance

Centuries in the Spirit Realm of Toshigoku have infused Tsuno bushi with the ability to track enemies wherever they might hide. If the Tsuno bushi is wounded by an opponent in melee combat, or wounds an opponent, he may to choose to hunt that opponent. Once per day, the Tsuno can make an Awareness roll (TN 15) to know the direction and distance to the hunted opponent. A magical barrier (such as Evil Ward) that protects against magical detection is the only way to foil this Technique. If the Tsuno's quarry moves to a different Spirit Realm, the difficulty of the Awareness roll becomes TN 25. If the Tsuno makes the roll, he identifies the Spirit Realm and may continue the hunt; if not, the hunt ends. The Tsuno can use this ability until either he or his quarry is dead, but may hunt only one quarry at a time.

Soultwister Magic

Soultwisters do not channel the power of the elements or blood, like other races. Their travels in the Spirit Realms have given them other channels of power, allowing them to draw on the Spirit Realms. As a result, their Rings have no bearing on their abilities to choose spells. Instead, their physical and mental abilities allow them to tune more closely into certain Realms.

To cast a spell, a Soultwister must roll a number of dice equal to his Trait that corresponds to the Realm of the spell, plus his School Rank, and keep a number of dice equal to his Trait. The casting TN is 10 plus the spell's Mastery Level x 5. All other rules for casting spells apply.

Trait	Linked Spirit Realm
Agility	Sakkaku, the Realm of Mischief
Intelligence	Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens
Awareness	Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors
Reflexes	Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals
Stamina	Gaki-do, the Realm of the Hungry Dead
Willpower	Meido, the Realm of the Dead
Perception	Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams
Strength	Toshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter
Taint	Jigoku, the Realm of Evil

Ningen-do, the Realm of Mortals, is not accessible to Soultwisters, as the native spirits of that Realm are the kami themselves.

None of the spells listed below are associated with the realm of Jigoku. Those spells are maho; Soultwisters may attempt to learn maho spells if they are aligned with Jigoku. Soultwisters do not need to use the blood of living creatures to cast maho spells.

Tsuno Soultwister School

Note: This school is available to Tsuno only.

Benefit: None

Honor: 2.5 (see sidebar note on Tsuno Honor)

Skills: Anatomy (Torture), Athletics, Heavy Weapons (Tsuno blade), Jiujutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Lore: Spirit Realms, Stealth.

Outfit: Tsuno Blade, chitin armor (treat as light armor); satchel with ritual materials.

Affinity/Deficiency: Tsuno Soultwisters have no Affinity nor Deficiency.

Technique: None.

Spells: A Soultwister may choose spells from any three Spirit Realms of his choosing. A Soultwister may cast a number of spells per day equal to twice his Shadowlands Taint rank. A Soultwister may learn two new spells with each advance in School Rank.

Soultwister Spells

Mastery Level 1

Bloodlust

DURATION: School Rank x 2 roundsArea of
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Toshigoku [Trait: Strength]
RANGE: 50'

The bloodlust that infuses the Realm of Slaughter overwhelms the target's mind. The target of this spell must choose the Full Attack Posture during combat and he must immediately attack the nearest creature. Each round of the spell's duration, the target can make a Willpower roll (TN Soultwister's School Rank x 5; TN is reduced by 10 if the nearest creature is a friend). If he succeeds, he can choose to do nothing, but it requires all of his concentration for that round.

Heaven's Blessing

DURATION: School Rank x 5 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Tengoku [Trait: Intelligence]
RANGE: 50'

The Soultwister channels the benevolence of the heavenly spirits into the spell's target. For the duration of the spell, the target rolls +1k0 for all actions.

Hungry Steel

DURATION: School Rank x 5 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One weapon
REALM: Gaki-do [Trait: Stamina]
RANGE: Touch

The Soultwister summons the hungry dead into a weapon. A weapon empowered by these spirits inflicts an additional 5 Wounds per successful melee strike.

Special Raises: The Soultwister may Raise once to increase the damage by an additional 5 Wounds.

Primal Nature

DURATION: School Rank x 5 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
REALM: Chikushudo [Trait: Reflexes]
RANGE: Self

The Soultwister can succumb to the primal urges of the animal realm, granting him greater physical ability at the expense of his mental acuity. For the duration of the spell, the Soultwister adds his School Rank to one physical Trait (Agility, Reflexes, Strength, or Stamina), but subtracts the same amount from the mental Trait associated with the same Ring, to a minimum of 1. The Soultwister always gains the full benefit to his physical Trait even if he cannot subtract the full amount from his mental Trait.

Separate the Soul

DURATION: School Rank x 2 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Yomi [Trait: Awareness]
RANGE: 30'

The Soultwister dispels the spirits of Yomi around the target for a short time. The target of the spell feels the influence of his ancestors fading. A human character with any Ancestor benefits loses those benefits for the duration of the spell. Furthermore, the target also has a penalty of +5 TN to all attack, damage, and Skill rolls for the duration of the spell.

The Smith's Lament

DURATION: Permanent
AREA OF EFFECT: One object
REALM: Sakkaku [Trait: Agility]
RANGE: 60'

Mischievous spirits love to break things, so the Soultwister directs them toward a suitable target. The spell affects any one non-magical object of Average quality or less, including weapons and armor. The object will break next time it is used. Objects of Fine quality or higher are immune to this spell.

The Veil of Death

DURATION: School Rank x 2 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Meido [Trait: Willpower]
RANGE: 20'

The Soultwister draws the spirits of the peaceful dead to afflict his enemies with indolence, cloud their minds, and dull their senses. The target's Initiative score is reduced by XkX, where X is the Soultwister's School Rank, for the duration of the spell.

Whispered Secrets

DURATION: School Rank x 5 minutes
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Yume-do [Trait: Perception]
RANGE: 500 miles

The dream spirits of Yume-do carry messages or images from the Soultwister to his intended recipient. The Soultwister can appear in the target's dreams and communicate with the target's sleeping mind. This communication is one-way only, and the target cannot reply.

Mastery Level 2

Agony's Embrace

DURATION: School Rank x 2 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Toshigoku [Trait: Strength]
RANGE: 30'

The Soultwister summons the agony of Toshigoku to wrack the victim with pain. The target cannot take any actions for the duration of the spell, and must succeed on a Willpower roll (TN Soultwister's School Rank x 5) or take 2k2 Wounds each round.

Tainted creatures ignore the effects of this spell.

Death's Dark Embrace

REALM: Meido [Trait: Willpower]
DURATION: 15 minutes
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
RANGE: 25'

The spirits of Meido can sense when someone is about to join them. For the duration of the spell, the target suffers the effects of the Wound penalty one level greater than his actual Wound Level. If the target is already Out or is reduced to that level during this spell's duration, the target dies.

Delicious Pain

DURATION: Instantaneous
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Sakkaku [Trait: Agility]
RANGE: 50'

The Soultwister summons mischievous spirits to twist the victim's body. The target must succeed on a Stamina roll (TN 10 x Soultwister's School Rank) or fall to the ground and suffer 3k3 Wounds as his body is wracked by painful spasms.

Fury of the Wild

DURATION: School Rank x 5 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
REALM: Chikushudo [Trait: Reflexes]
RANGE: Self

The Soultwister channels the primal essence of the animal realm into the power of his natural attacks. The Soultwister gains a +3k0 bonus to all unarmed damage rolls.

Interrogate the Weak

DURATION: Concentration
AREA OF EFFECT: Self
REALM: Yomi [Trait: Awareness]
RANGE: Self

The Soultwister summons the ancestor spirit of a human subject and demands information. Successful casting allows the Tsuno to ask two questions, and the ancestor spirit must answer truthfully. Ancestor spirits have full knowledge of a character's statistics, including all Traits, Skills, Advantages, Disadvantages, Honor, Glory, etc.

The Soultwister may Raise once to ask an additional question.

Night of Screams

DURATION: School Rank + 1 days
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Yume-do [Trait: Perception]
RANGE: 1 mile

The Soultwister whips the dream spirits into a frenzy and sends them to plague his target. The target suffers disturbing nightmares, and cannot rest peacefully. For the duration of the spell, the target cannot regenerate Void Points by sleeping.

The Shield of Heaven

DURATION: School Rank x 5 rounds
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Tengoku [Trait: Intelligence]
RANGE: 100'

The target is blessed by the spirits of the Celestial Heavens, which protect him from harm. For the duration of the spell, any Wounds the target will suffer are reduced by XkX, where X is the Soultwister's School Rank.

Mastery Level 3

Drink the Soul

DURATION: 1 round
AREA OF EFFECT: One target
REALM: Gaki-do [Trait: Stamina]
RANGE: 30'

The hungry dead from Gaki-do drink from the target's essence, sapping his energy. For every School Rank the Soultwister has, the target suffers a +5 TN penalty to all attack and magic rolls for the duration of the spell. Furthermore, the target must make an Earth roll (TN 20) or lose one action from the following round.



The Onisu

One of Daigotsu's first actions after taking power in the Shadowlands was to forge an alliance with the enigmatic Tsuno. Before Daigotsu's arrival, the Tsuno were virtually unknown to the Shadowlands' denizens, much less the citizens of Rokugan. Daigotsu understood both their origin and their powers, although how he came by the knowledge remains unknown. Drawing upon the Tsuno's aid, Daigotsu crafted a new species of oni from the raw stuff of Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams.

The Onisu are crafted from the dreams of samurai, embodying both their greatest fears and their most hated stereotypes. The Scorpion Clan's anger at being under constant suspicion, for instance, fueled the creation of Fushin, Onisu of Betrayal. Daigotsu crafted the perfect servants to wage a psychological war against the Great Clans. Not only would the Onisu strike fear into the heart of any warrior who faced them in battle, but their images and actions would prey on the basest impulses that hid within the samurai's hearts. The more Rokugan's samurai failed, the greater their Nightmares would become.

The Onisu are among the most powerful oni ever created. While they lack the pure physical power of the mindless demons that have crawled from the Festering Pit, their unique power to feed on the sins of mortals and their keen intelligence makes them far deadlier foes. Of the lot, Hakai and Kyofu are by far the most powerful, as all things experience death and fear, even if only fear of failure. Comparatively speaking, Settozai and Muchitsujo are weaker, preying upon weaknesses that samurai are taught to discard during childhood. Daigotsu's spirit can inhabit an Onisu's body, increasing its size and power while reducing its weaknesses, and making it an even greater threat. Daigotsu was inhabiting Fushin, for instance, when it attacked and killed the Emperor Toturi I.

The Onisu are effectively immortal. If slain, they return to Yume-do, where they remain in stasis. While in Yume-do, the Onisu have no sense of passage of time, but merely wait until they are retrieved from the Realm of Dreams by Daigotsu or the Tsuno Soultwisters. Once returned to the mortal realm the Onisu quickly regain their power, becoming fully restored within a matter of days.

Common Onisu Qualities

The Onisu are crafted from the same dreams, and share certain abilities.

Carapace: All Onisu have a Carapace rating. Weapons dipped in the waters of Yume-do ignore this Carapace rating.

Feed on Sin: The Onisu feed on weakness. Whenever a person within 100 feet commits an action that corresponds with a specific Onisu's vice (murder for Hakai, betrayal for Fushin, etc.), one of the Onisu's Traits (GM's choice) increases by 1. This bonus lasts for 1 week, after which time it instantly dissipates. The Onisu grow slightly larger when gaining such a bonus, signaling what is taking place.

Honorable Vulnerability: The Onisu feed on sin, but they are weakened by virtue. Whenever a person within 100 feet commits an act in opposition to an Onisu's vice (a courageous act near Kyofu, a generous act near Settozai, etc.), one of the demon's Traits decreases by 1. This penalty lasts for 1 week, after which time it instantly dissipates.

Passages: Onisu can instinctively sense any passage into a Spirit Realm, and may move from the mortal world to Jigoku or Yume-do and back again as a standard action.

Resurrection: An Onisu that is slain can be recovered from the Realm of Dreams through an elaborate ritual known only to Daigotsu and the Tsuno.

Fushin, the Onisu of Betrayal, Nightmare of the Scorpion

Air: 8	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 5

Rolls When Attacking: 10k7 **Rolls For Damage:** 7k4
TN to Be Hit: 45 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25

Special: Carapace 8. Fear 6 (This fear originates from the Onisu's gaze; any opponent may make a Raise on all attacks made against the Onisu that round to avert his gaze from Fushin's). Fushin possesses four arms and may make up to four attacks per round. If separated from its katana, Fushin may summon them to its hands as a free action.

Of all the Onisu, none is more reviled than the wretched Fushin. The samurai of Rokugan loathe it for its murder of Toturi I, the Splendid Emperor, while denizens of the Shadowlands, even the other Onisu, expect it to betray them at any moment. Ironically, Fushin is the most widely recognized Onisu despite its stealthy demeanor, due to its role in Toturi's death.

Kanashimi, the Onisu of Regret, Nightmare of the Dragon

Air: 4	Earth: 6	Fire: 6	Water: 8

Rolls When Attacking: 8k4 **Rolls For Damage:** 6k3
TN to Be Hit: 40 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25

Special: Carapace 5. Kanashimi can attack three times per round using its daisho, in a style eerily similar to that of the Mirumoto bushi.

Kanashimi can make an opposed Willpower roll with any individual within 100 feet. The target of this ability subtracts twice the number of points he possesses in Disadvantages from the total of his Willpower roll. If Kanashimi is successful, the target is overcome with remorse for his perceived failures and the wrongs he has committed throughout his life. The target may not make Raises or spend Void Points while suffering from this malaise, and victims often withdraw from the outside world to contemplate their failures. This effect lasts for a number of Rokugani hours equal to the amount by which Kanashimi's Willpower roll exceeded the target.

A subtle and insidious foe, Kanashimi embodies one of the first Three Sins that gave rise to the universe. Kanashimi is not well known to the Empire or the Shadowlands, keeping to the shadows and hunting solitary prey. It follows the commands of Daigotsu and Hakai out of convenience more so than anything else, and its motivations are inscrutable.

Kyofu, the Onisu of Fear, Nightmare of the Crab

Air: 4	Earth: 6	Fire: 4	Water: 5 Strength 7

Rolls When Attacking: 7k4 **Rolls For Damage:** 8k2
TN to Be Hit: 35 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25

Special: Carapace 6. Kyofu wields the blade once carried by Hida Kuroda, now corrupted by the Shadowlands. Any opponent damaged by the katana continues to lose a single Wound per round until he spends one full combat round tending to his injuries. Any opponent struck by this blade must make an immediate roll to resist Fear 5. Opponents normally immune to fear are still affected by Fear 3.

Fear 9. Opponents who are normally immune to Fear effects are still affected as if Kyofu had Fear 6. If Kyofu does not move or take any action during a combat round, it may force all opponents within range to make three rolls to resist Fear per round. Any opponent who fails three rolls to resist Fear in a single round must make an immediate Earth roll (TN 20) or die of fright.

Kyofu can summon an onikage, the undead demon steeds of the Shadowlands. These creatures are loyal to Kyofu and will fight if it commands them to, but normally only fight to defend themselves. Kyofu may have only one such steed at a time.

Kyofu is among the more powerful Onisu, second perhaps only to Hakai. It slew Hida Kuroda, the Crab Clan Champion, in the battle where Daigotsu's forces claimed a portion of the Kaiu Wall for a short time. Kyofu is eternally furious that it was bested by a Nezumi warrior in the aftermath of the Battle of Otosan Uchi, when the Onisu were hunted across Rokugan.

Kyofu is unique among the Onisu due to the nature of its resurrection. Rather that grant the oni a new physical form, when Daigotsu summoned Kyofu back from Yume-do, he placed the demon's spirit within a physical host: the undead form of Hida Kuroda. The two now co-exist within the same body, ostensibly with Kyofu in control. Unknown to anyone, however, the Fortune Emma-O aided Kuroda in dominating their shared form, and Kyofu has been imprisoned within their body for years.

Hakai, the Onisu of Death, Nightmare of the Phoenix

Air: 5	Earth: 5	Fire: 5	Water: 5

Rolls When Attacking: 5k5 **Rolls For Damage:** 4k3
TN to Be Hit: 30 **Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25

Special: Carapace 5. By looking into a person's eyes, Hakai can see the possible ways in which that person will die. Telling a person this information has a tendency to cause them to act irrationally, and can often bring about the exact circumstances seen in the vision.

Creatures or persons of Insight Rank 1 or lower are instantly killed by Hakai's touch. Other targets must make an opposed Earth roll against Hakai or immediately suffer 4k4 damage. Hakai can suppress this ability if it chooses to do so.

Hakai can fly at twice its normal movement speed.

Hakai can attack twice per round.

Hakai can project its spirit into the body of any goblin, ogre, or Tainted human, taking complete control of the host's actions. While possessing a host, Hakai's mental Traits remain the same, but it adopts the physical Traits of the host. Hakai's body becomes inert during possession. If the host is killed, Hakai's spirit instantly returns to its body.

Hakai can cast elemental spells as a Rank 5 Isawa shugenja with no Affinity or Deficiency. It may also cast maho spells as a Rank 5 maho-tsukai, and knows all maho spells as Innate Abilities. Hakai does not require scrolls to cast elemental spells, but does not gain the benefits of having them as Innate Abilities.

Leader of the Onisu and Daigotsu's trusted assassin, Hakai is feared even by its comrades, for even demons can die. Daigotsu gives Hakai far more leeway than the other Onisu, rarely interfering with its pursuits. Hakai is the second most recognizable Onisu after Fushin, a result of the destruction it unleashed at the last Test of the Jade Champion a decade ago.

Muchitsujo, the Onisu of Chaos, Nightmare of the Unicorn

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 8
Rolls When Attacking: 6k6		**Rolls For Damage:** 7k5	
TN to Be Hit: 35		**Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25	

Special: Carapace 5. Muchitsujo's Water Ring is doubled for the purposes of determining its movement (160' per round). It can adopt the Full Attack posture after running full speed with no penalty. Muchitsujo can attack twice per round.

Muchitsujo's bony plates click together, creating a terrible sound. All those within 60' must make an opposed Willpower roll against Muchitsujo. If a target fails, he behaves completely at random for that round. There is a fifty percent chance that the target does nothing at all; otherwise the GM decides what action he takes. Targets must make a Willpower roll against this effect every round they remain in range. Muchitsujo can suppress this ability at will.

Much like the Unicorn, Muchitsujo is a creature of contradictions. It is more violent and destructive than any other Onisu save Nikushimi, yet can be as eloquent and clever as Hakai or Yokubo when the occasion demands.

Nikushimi, the Onisu of Hatred, Nightmare of the Lion

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 8
Rolls When Attacking: 8k8		**Rolls For Damage:** 6k5	
TN to Be Hit: 35		**Wounds Per Wound Level:** 30	

Special Abilities: Carapace 7. Creatures bitten by Nikushimi must make an Earth roll vs. TN 20 or be afflicted with a mystical disease that instills irrational fear. Anything that even remotely threatens the subject gains Fear 5. This effect may be cured with appropriate spells or one week of bed rest.

Nikushimi can attack three times per round. Creatures struck by Nikushimi's claws must make an Earth roll vs. TN 25 or temporarily lose any immunity to fear they may have for a number of days equal to 7 minus their Earth Ring (minimum 1).

Nikushimi bears a strong resemblance to the Tsuno, a result of the Soultwisters' involvement with its creation. Nikushimi was the first Onisu, and the interaction between the Tsuno and the essence of Lion hatred that they were creating resulted in a unique creature that combined the power of an Onisu with the seething rage of a Tsuno. Nikushimi is considerably more bestial than the other Onisu, and is reserved by Daigotsu for the most violent and explosive situations.

Settozai, the Onisu of Larceny, Nightmare of the Mantis

Air: 4	Earth: 5	Fire: 8	Water: 5
Rolls When Attacking: 7k5		**Rolls For Damage:** 6k5	
TN to Be Hit: 25		**Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25	

Special Abilities: Carapace 5. Settozai can attack twice per round.

Settozai may make an opposed Willpower roll with any individual within 100'. If successful, Settozai can make the target succumb to intense feelings of greed, avarice, and curiosity. The target must pursue anything he perceives as desirable, including material goods, information, or even the company of another. The target becomes violent if deflected from his objective, attacking even superiors or lifelong friends. The target may make an additional opposed Willpower roll once per Rokugani hour to try and break free, with Settozai gaining a cumulative +5 to its Willpower roll on the second and all subsequent Willpower rolls.

The Mantis Onisu is a conniving, wretched creature filled with avarice and envy. It is noticeably smaller than the other Onisu, a hideous, insect-like vision that resembles a misshapen mantis. The creature avoids the other Onisu, bitter that their embodied sins are so much more prevalent than that which it represents.

Yokubo, the Onisu of Desire, Nightmare of the Crane

Air: 5	Earth: 4	Fire: 6 Agility 8	Water: 4
Rolls When Attacking: 8k4		**Rolls For Damage:** 6k3	
TN to Be Hit: 40		**Wounds Per Wound Level:** 25	

Special Abilities: Carapace 5. Yokubo may fly at three times its normal movement speed. Yokubo can attack twice per round.

Yokubo may make an opposed Willpower roll against any individual within 100'. If Yokubo is successful, that individual is overcome with desire for something they covet. This can be an object or an idea, such as a prestigious appointment, but is most often another individual. The target will do anything to obtain the item of his desire, including violence. This effect lasts for a number of Rokugani hours equal to the amount by which Yokubo's Willpower roll exceeded the target's.

Yokubo is perhaps the single most disturbing Onisu for a samurai to face, because desire is far more difficult to control than most sins. The creature is devious and manipulative in a way that its brethren are not. It mocks its opponents before destroying them, delighting in their suffering.

The Shadowed Tower

The conspiracy known as the Shadowed Tower at once encapsulated all that was perfect and all that was flawed within the Scorpion Clan. It was the carefully kept secret, hidden from almost all Scorpion, managed by a handful of samurai who believed they were serving the greater good. On the other hand, its members employed means that even the basest samurai would decry, and they sacrificed pawns without hesitation, weakening their clan in the pursuit of their personal goals.

The Shadowed Tower was created by Bayushi Atsuki, a brilliant manipulator who returned to the mortal realm through Oblivion's Gate. Atsuki had once been a mastermind behind the Gozoku, a political body that usurped the Emperor's power and ruled Rokugan from behind the throne. Upon his return to the mortal world Atsuki adopted an alias, living among the Scorpion as Shosuro Furuyari while plotting his return to power. Recognizing that he would require substantial resources to rebuild the Gozoku, he settled for a stopgap measure and built a subversive movement within the Scorpion Clan.

Atsuki began by carefully locating a small number of Scorpion who had reservations about their Champion, Bayushi Yojiro. Yojiro's reputation as an honest man was anathema to some Scorpion, despite the obvious differences between Yojiro's reputation and the execution of his duties. Atsuki brought these individuals together and formed a group that was willing to do whatever was necessary to return the Scorpion to their rightful duties: manipulating the Empire from the shadows.

It is a testament to Atsuki's incredible powers of manipulation that he convinced several comrades that maho was an acceptable tool. One of his principal agents, the talented shugenja Bayushi Ogura, discovered and eradicated a Bloodspeaker cell and confiscated their materials. Among them, Ogura found a new ritual methodology that would permit shugenja to use maho without obtaining the Taint in any real quantity. This information was exactly what Atsuki required to further his personal objectives, and he implemented the practice immediately. Through careful and limited use of blood magic, the Shadowed Tower dramatically increased its power, influence, and resources in a short time.

Eventually, the Shadowed Tower's activities came to the attention of the Scorpion leadership. Yojiro and his lieutenants quietly began to investigate every lead, ferreting out agents and foiling operations. Yojiro regarded the matter as such a grave threat to the Scorpion that he secretly stepped down as Champion and had his replacement, Bayushi Sunetra, masquerade as him for months. This duplicity made it impossible for Atsuki to accurately predict the Champion's actions. Loyalist moles within the Tower's ranks fed Sunetra information, and the Shadowed Tower was crushed a short time after Toturi III took the throne.

Unfortunately for the Scorpion, Atsuki predicted Sunetra's strike, having been warned by his yojimbo Bayushi Kamnan, a triple agent. Atsuki permitted the Tower to fall, and the Scorpion to believe him dead, so that he might move on to rebuilding the Gozoku, using the Tower's hidden resources.

The Shadowed Tower's very existence is a closely guarded secret. Many know that the Scorpion experienced some sort of internal conflict, but only a handful of non-Scorpion know the full truth. The Scorpion are unwilling to admit to outsiders that such a schism existed, as loyalty is their greatest virtue. That the Tower was able to operate in secret for so long, and that they so significantly dominated the clan's interest for over a year, is a blemish on the Scorpion's honor that they will feel for generations to come.

The Four Winds Era

As the conflict of Toturi's heirs comes to a close, the Shadowed Tower is at the peak of its power. The conspiracy has grown until it poses a genuine threat to the Scorpion Clan's leadership, but its goals remain a closely guarded secret. Atsuki's assertion to his followers that they seek to restore the clan's former glory resonates with the Tower's members. They believe that the Scorpion leaders are weak, and depend too heavily upon the Emperor's authority for direction. They advocate a return to the more sinister Scorpion Clan that predated the Clan War, a clan unafraid to take risks and to seize any advantage.

Bayushi Atsuki surmounts the Shadowed Tower's hierarchy like a mountaintop shrouded in fog. He genuinely believes in the doctrine he teaches to his subordinates, but believes that it is an unreasonable goal. He believes that Yojiro will expose the Tower to the Empire rather than allow it to overcome the clan as a whole and become a threat to Rokugan. Atsuki regards this as unfortunate, but in the grand scheme of things it is unimportant. The resources being generated by the Tower and his operatives — smugglers, blackmailers, information merchants, assassins, and opium dealers — have already been funneled to other locations. From these riches, Atsuki plans to rebuild the Gozoku to its former glory, and eclipse the Emperor forever.

Organization

The Shadowed Tower conspiracy places the greatest possible emphasis on secrecy, as all conspiracies must. Atsuki and his handpicked lieutenants control all operations through an ever-expanding web of subordinates, the vast majority of whom can identify only two or three other members. Only a few of Atsuki's lieutenants are aware of their master's true plans, among them Bayushi Kamnan and Kakita Munemori, one of Atsuki's allies outside the clan.

Ironically, no Shadowed Tower leaders practice maho, even though they condone it among their subordinates. The leaders remain pure, and are constantly on the watch for any operatives who may have become too embroiled in their rituals to maintain their purity. Any shugenja showing signs of Taint is immediately killed by his yojimbo, a Tower-appointed guardian known among Tower operatives as a Witness.

Centers of Power

The name Shadowed Tower implies the existence of a single hidden location from which the organization's leadership rules with an iron fist. Like so much else with the Tower, the name is a deliberate deception, intended to confuse those who might seek them out. Operatives are instructed to speak of the Tower as a physical location, when in fact the Tower actually has many strongholds secreted throughout the Scorpion lands.

The Shadowed Tower's largest stronghold is located within Ryoko Owari Toshi, largest city in the Empire. This den of vice is perfect for concealing the Tower, and the tremendous amount of money and illicit materials moving through the city made it an obvious choice for a power base. Beyond Ryoko Owari, operatives tend to use small, forgotten locations hidden away from the public. Forgotten way stations, abandoned ruins from previous wars, outdated military outposts and the like are common refuges for Shadowed Tower agents.

New Advantage

Hand of the Shadowed Tower (6 points)

Your knowledge of certain rare arcane practices allows you to cast maho spells as complex, time-consuming rituals that confer no Shadowlands Taint. Casting a maho spell in this manner increases the time required by a factor of ten (i.e. a spell normally cast in one round requires ten, a spell normally requiring two hours requires twenty, etc.). Each time you cast a spell in this manner, you must make an immediate Willpower roll against TN 25. If you fail, your Void Ring is permanently reduced by 1. If your Void Ring reaches 0 this way, you immediately gain a Shadowlands Taint Rank equal to your highest Ring and become Lost, your character becoming an NPC under the GM's control. This Advantage is only available to Shadowed Tower agents.

Equipment

SHADOWED POWDER: Despite the order's use of maho, the foul creation known as Shadowed Powder is their most insidious tool. The secret of Shadowed Powder's creation was discovered through research into the ritual maho techniques the Tower employs, but it is not intrinsically linked to blood magic, and can be manufactured without it (although maho does expedite the process).

Shadowed Powder is a fine powder that is odorless, tasteless, and dissolves completely in liquid. It can be mixed with sake, sochu, Liquid Void, or any number of illicit compounds. Anyone who ingests a dose (about a pinch) of powder suffers a –5 penalty to all Willpower Raw Trait Rolls and Earth Ring Rolls for a period of one day, or until the poison is removed by other means. Multiple doses of Shadowed Powder have cumulative penalties. The penalty is doubled if the subject is attempting to resist someone convincing them to use more Shadowed Powder.

Shadowed Powder is very difficult to create, requiring an elaborate, six-hour process and several rare herbs that can only be found in certain Scorpion provinces. The ritual that creates this powder is only taught to those who possess the Hand of the Shadowed Tower Advantage.

New Earth Spell

Shadowed Caress

MASTERY LEVEL: 3
DURATION: Permanent
AREA OF EFFECT: 2 targets (see description)
RANGE: 25'

Developed from secrets stolen from the Bloodspeakers, this spell allows the Shadowed Tower to maintain control over the level of Taint their operatives develop. By tapping into the essence of two objects and individuals and mingling them, the shugenja casting this spell can cause the Taint to flow from one into the other.

If this spell targets a Tainted person, then another person must be targeted as the recipient of the Taint. This spell transfers one Shadowlands Taint Rank from the Tainted target into the pure target. Tainted objects may be purified by transferring their Taint into another object, a creature, or a person. Tainted individuals may only be purified by transferring the Taint into another individual. The individual being Tainted by this spell need not be a willing participant.

For every full Rank of Taint a participant receives from this spell, he gains an additional Taint point as well. For example, if a target with a Taint Rank of 3.0 were being completely purified by this spell, the recipient of the Taint would gain a Taint Rank of 3.3 rather than 3.0.

Special Raises: The caster may Raise once to transfer one additional Taint Rank.

The Steel Throne

Previously known as the Emerald Throne and the Jade Throne, the Steel Throne served as the formal seat for the Emperor Toturi I during the entirety of his reign. It was a testament to the Splendid Emperor's wisdom and generosity that he had the jade removed from the ancient throne and presented it as a gift to the Crab Clan, proclaiming that all in the Empire were expected to give of their jade to the sons of Hida as he had. The portions removed were replaced with the finest Kaiu steel, giving the throne its current name.

Shortly after Toturi's death, a disastrous attempt by the Miya to unite the Four Winds at Winter Court ended with the destruction of a Pekkle no Oni within the confines of Kyuden Miya. The cloud of Taint that always accompanies a Pekkle's demise settled on the Steel Throne, corrupting it. The court attendants were horrified, and the Winds went their separate ways. A short time later, the throne disappeared; the court correctly surmised that it had been summoned to the Shadowlands by some sinister power, perhaps even one awakened within it.



The throne remained in the Shadowlands until the time of Daigotsu's siege on Otosan Uchi, when it was returned to the Imperial throne room as part of the Dark Lord's plan to resurrect Fu Leng. After Daigotsu was driven away, the throne was reclaimed and given to the Scorpion, who claimed to have a means of purifying it. The radical separatist movement within the Scorpion, the Shadowed Tower, purified the throne by draining its Taint into unwilling peasants, then placed powerful but subtle enchantments on the throne that permitted them to see and hear it from afar, giving them the perfect means to spy on any new Emperor. These wards remained until the Rain of Blood (see Chapter Two), when the Emperor's brother Sezaru placed powerful new wards on the Imperial Palace and the throne, destroying all previous enchantments.

The Steel Throne is currently in the Imperial Palace in Toshi Ranbo. Emperor Toturi III, the Righteous Emperor, uses it as the centerpiece of his Imperial Court, just as his father and dozens of other Emperors did before him. The malevolence that the throne once possessed has been purged, and it shows no signs of the strange and sinister intelligence that it demonstrated during its brief time in the Shadowlands.

The Purified Steel Throne

The Emperor's throne has existed in one form or another for over a thousand years, since the rule of the first Hantei. It has had many names, but the sheer reverence it has evoked for so long has led to an awakening of its spirit; the throne already possessed a rudimentary awareness before it was corrupted. The throne automatically attunes itself to the current Emperor after a short period so long as the new Emperor sits upon the throne for at least four hours a day for one month after his coronation. The throne confers +2 Intelligence, Awareness, Perception and Willpower on the current Emperor so long as he remains within close proximity, typically within the confines of the Imperial City.

The Corrupted Steel Throne

During its period of corruption, the Steel Throne retained its innate abilities, but with a sinister twist. In addition to its normal bonuses, the Throne conferred upon any attuned to it the ability to cast maho as if they were maho-tsukai of School Rank equal to their Insight Rank. The throne would attune itself to any who spent at least one hour near it, and could be attuned to multiple individuals at once.

Read-Aloud Text

Throughout this book, you will find text to be read aloud formatted as follows:

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This is sample read-aloud text. Were this actual read-aloud text, you would be reading it aloud. If you are reading this text aloud, congratulations. This has been read-aloud text.

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The King of Trolls

"Sometimes endings aren't simple. Sometimes you're left wondering what could have gone better..."

— Togashi Mitsu

"The King of Trolls" is an adventure in six parts that takes place largely in Ryoko Owari and the Great Crater, in Unicorn territory. Events begin in the year 1159, just as the conflict between the Four Winds is beginning in earnest, and are divided into three major parts. These installments are designed so that the adventure can be the major focus of a campaign or run concurrently with other major plots as the characters keep returning to the mystery of the King of Trolls and the City of Night. The adventure initially involves the party with the Unicorn Clan, but as they uncover secrets left buried for centuries, the players' investigation will draw the attention of many powerful men and women.

Act 1: The Troll's Grave

Synopsis

The characters are brought before the Unicorn leaders of Ryoko Owari and asked to discreetly inspect a mountain-sized sleeping troll near the Seikitsu Pass. After waking from its slumber near Dragon lands, the King of Trolls was only returned to rest after it had destroyed several villages and smaller cities. Though unified in the face of the enormous threat, the Unicorn, Dragon, and Scorpion Clans now find themselves in conflict over who should study the remains.

With tensions in Rokugan high and the possibility of open warfare everywhere, the characters find themselves in the middle of three clans that each hold a piece of the larger puzzle but do not trust one another. The Unicorn wish to minimize any incursion near the Great Crater by outsiders, the Scorpion believe the King of Trolls is the key to some ancient and powerful secret, and the Dragon are wary of waking the gargantuan beast once again. The characters will find themselves traveling between the agents (and possibly the strongholds) of these three Clans, and in doing so they will eventually attract the attention of other parties — notably spies from the Shadowed Tower. Additionally, the players might find themselves contacting other Clans for their advice, such as the Crab Clan (regarding the nature of trolls in general) or the Phoenix Clan (when they realize the manner in which the beast is awakened and put down).

The History of the King of Trolls

GMs may not be familiar with the stories of the Troll King's first and second awakenings, so the details are summed up here for use in this adventure. In the year 958, a Phoenix cartographer (Asako Gohiro) studying the Spine of the World Moutains disturbed an unusual marker near what is now the Great Crater, which in turn awoke the King of Trolls. After chasing the beast, a Scorpion magistrate (Bayushi Seiko) revealed her hidden alliance with a Zokujin shaman (Zgkol) that knew the way to return the massive beast to its slumber, which it taught to Gohiro. The sheer power of the spell was too much for Gohiro, however, and with his dying breath he asked Seiko to raise his child as her own so that the child might grow to be as honorable and brave as she.

In the year 1159, the King of Trolls (which had been put to rest at the edge of Dragon territory) awoke once more in response to the Unicorn's excavation of the City of Night (though this connection remained undiscovered). The beast rampaged its way towards the Great Crater, attracting the attention of the Dragon and Unicorn Clans. Gohiro's descendent, Bayushi Ogura, faced the beast alongside a Kuni witch hunter who had been investigating him but agreed to assist him for the good of Rokugan. The witch hunter discovered that the beast was not Tainted, and Ogura used his ancestor's spell to return the King Troll to sleep. He then magically diverted the spell's backlash so it destroyed the Kuni instead of himself. The Unicorn quickly ordered all others off their land. The King of Trolls has been dormant only a month when this adventure starts.

Scene One: Audience With the Governor

The adventure begins with the PCs in Ryoko Owari. If the group is already in the City of Stories and has an honorable reputation, they are contacted by the agents of Shinjo Osema, governor of the city. It is possible a PC (or one character's daimyo) has an existing relationship with the Unicorn nobles, or the group may include Unicorn characters. In these situations, the PCs are asked to perform a favor for their allies. Alternately, the PCs may be hand-picked by Yaushi Hachi, the fledgling Emerald Champion, to deal with the matter that has arisen between the three Great Clans. Since Hachi is seen largely as the puppet of Hantei Naseru, the players may be chosen because of their relatively low status or an existing relationship with the Yasuki daimyo (making them unable to refuse the command), their high regard for the Anvil (making them more likely to cooperate), or merely because they have already made an enemy of Naseru and Hachi is trying to step out of the Anvil's shadow.

In any case, the group has been ordered to report to Shinjo Osema to perform a duty for the Emerald Magistrates. The Governor is curt, as Osema is an efficient and obviously paranoid man. He addresses the characters as follows:

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"I am not fond of needless pleasantries, and I expect you will follow my example. There is precious little time to waste on formal greetings and ostentatious dinners. You must listen carefully to what I am going to tell you. There is a large Tainted beast called the King of Trolls that was awakened near the Dragon mountains and made its way to the Great Crater in our lands. It was put down in a matter of days, but it reached the Seikitsu Pass by crushing every outpost of civilization in its path. I trust I do not have to impress upon you the spectacular speed and destructive capability of this… thing… to have achieved all of this in less than a week. The King of Trolls was beaten, but not slain, by the combined efforts of the Dragon, Scorpion, and Unicorn Clans.

It is important that you understand: the combined efforts of three Clans could only return this beast to its slumber. Though this troll is now dormant, there is no telling what awoke it, or if it will awaken again. This is where your efforts are needed, samurai. There was a Scorpion shugenja who seemed to know the secret of returning the King of Trolls to its sleep, but prying such information from the Clan of Secrets requires more time than we may have at present. Among the Dragon, there were two tattooed men who were present when it awoke. They have since vanished, likely returning to their mountain monastery. Finally, since it now rests in Unicorn territory, it falls upon our Clan to investigate the matter, but we have only parts of the puzzle to work with.

The other clans hold the missing pieces. It is now your task to pry those secrets from their clenched fists."

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Besides the information he relates, Osema knows little about the incident or the creature. He can provide a few helpful names of those who were present at the battle against the King of Trolls. Osema recalls the Scorpion shungeja as Bayushi Ogura ("I believe he has a residence here or at least stays here frequently with a member of his family…"), the commander of the Unicorn forces as Moto Chen ("Lord Chen is one of the Khan's own generals and is likely still seeing to the security of the pass, unless he has been called to some other duty."), and that he was told one of the Dragon monks was none other than Togashi Mitsu ("Which is likely a rumor and nothing more. I find it doubtful that anyone who took to openly wandering the countryside during the Clan War would be alive today.") Anyone even mildly interested in court politics knows Bayushi Ogura to be the son of the Imperial Chancellor.

Osema urges the characters to investigate the Dragon or Scorpion Clans. He mentions that a dispute has arisen in the matter, because Togashi Mitsu still carries a crystal sword that belongs to Bayushi Ogura. It seems the sword is an heirloom passed down from Ogura's ancestor, and it was not returned after it was lent to the Dragon to combat the King of Trolls.

Osema is well aware of how jealously Moto Chagatai guards the secrets of the Great Crater and the City of Night that was found beneath it — making it unlikely that even a group of Unicorn characters venturing into the area will be looked upon favorably by the Khan. Osema will not compromise his honor or duty as a magistrate by lying to the characters or denying them the ability to travel to the Great Crater. He suggests that other lines of inquiry would prove far more fruitful.

Characters can expect the full cooperation of the Governor (and, in turn, the city's magistrates) so long as they do not bring shame to their role as his agents. After there is time for the characters to ask questions (though probing too deeply about the Great Crater or other sensitive matters stirs up Osema's paranoia), he dismisses them to perform their duty.

Scene Two: The Crab and the Scorpion

Almost immediately after leaving the governor's estate, the party is approached by a boy wearing the colors and mask of a Scorpion samurai. The boy, no more than eleven years old, bows deeply before the group and offers a sealed parchment to whichever character looks most important. It is an invitation to the house of Soshi Natsuo, a minor representative of the Scorpion Clan in Ryoko Owari.

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Esteemed agents of the Governor —
News of the Unicorn's investigation into the matter of the King of Trolls has reached me only this morning, and I wish to offer you my full cooperation. I believe you will wish to speak to my distant cousin, Bayushi Ogura, regarding his role in the matter. I can arrange such a meeting, and anything else within my power, if you so wish. Please honor my home with your presence if you require anything.

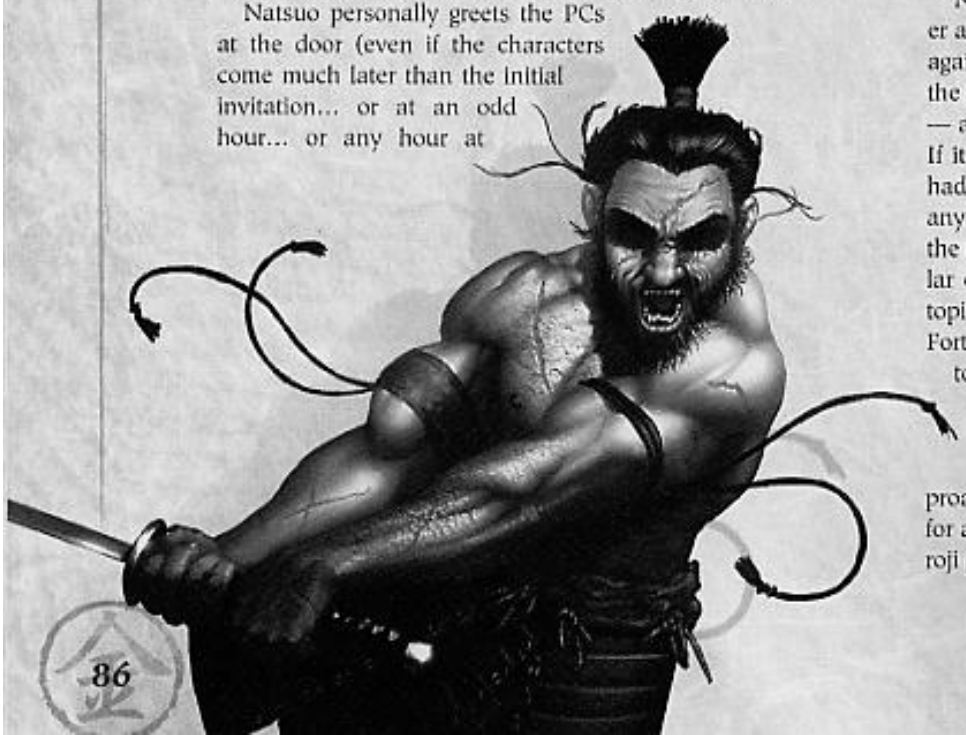
— Soshi Natsuo

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The young messenger awaits the character's response, delivering it to his master or escorting the PCs to Natsuo's small estate if they so request.

If the characters wish to speak with Natsuo directly, an arrangement the messenger whole-heartedly encourages, they are led to a modest but tasteful home in the Scorpion section of the City of Stories. Characters familiar with Ryoko Owari know Natsuo's reputation as a recluse who makes only occasional appearances at the city's social functions. Like many Scorpion shugenja, he keeps his home dark, but lights additional lamps at the first sign of discomfort from one of the characters.

Natsuo personally greets the PCs at the door (even if the characters come much later than the initial invitation... or at an odd hour... or any hour at all). He invites them in and ensures their comfort, asking if they need more or fewer pillows to sit upon, warmer or cooler tea, and so on. The first time one of the characters makes an unusual request as a joke, such as an exceptionally exotic tea or burning a rare incense the character likes, Natsuo will produce the item in question immediately.



Once the formalities and social niceties are out of the way — sooner than that if the characters insist at all on skipping them — Natsuo thanks them for answering his message so promptly (even if it's days later). He offers to answer any questions the characters may have regarding the Scorpion's role in the defeat of the King of Trolls, though he admits that his accounts are secondhand from his cousin Ogura. He knows that Ogura is the descendent of Asako Gohiro, the Phoenix scholar who gave his life in battle two hundred years ago when the King of Trolls awoke the first time. Gohiro's heir was fostered to his comrade in the fight, a magistrate named Bayushi Seiko (the popular rumor that Gohiro was in love with Seiko is false, but one Natsuo shares anyway), and thus the secret of the Troll King's defeat was guarded by the Scorpion.

Natsuo confirms that Togashi Mitsu was indeed at the more recent battle against the beast, as was Mitsu's student Matsuo. He also insists that Ogura has nothing but praise for the Unicorn and Dragon that rallied behind him in the conflict. When matters turn to setting up a meeting with Ogura, the scene is interrupted by the announcement of a visitor from the Crab Clan. The announcement is in turn interrupted by the Crab in question, pushing past the servant and starting to accuse Natsuo of several things, not the least of which is the theft of another Crab's property.

Things happen so quickly that the Crab's actual words cannot be heard as armed guards rush into the room to stand between their master and the intruder, who is a Kuni witch hunter from his appearance. The confrontation does not become violent, but the Kuni continues to hurl accusations of thievery, covering up a murder, and other unsavory traits usually attributed to Scorpions. Natsuo endures the tirade with a forced smile until the Kuni is finally removed.

Natsuo says only that the Crab was Kuni Hiroji, a witch hunter and the student of another Crab that was killed in the battle against the King of Trolls. Canny players will notice that this is the first time anyone had mentioned the death of a witch hunter — and it's certainly a detail that would be foolish to overlook. If it's mentioned to Natsuo, he points out that the characters had not asked him about it, and says that he isn't trying to hide anything. Unfortunately, the gregarious Soshi knows little about the matter firsthand and has nothing to add about that particular detail. After the interruption, Natsuo quickly changes the topic back to arranging a meeting with his illustrious cousin. Fortunately, says Natsuo, his cousin is to arrive in Ryoko Owari tomorrow, and Natsuo will make sure they meet him as soon as possible.

When the characters leave Natsuo's home, they find Kuni Hiroji waiting patiently for them outside. He approaches them, much calmer than he was previously, and asks for a moment of their time. If the characters agree to listen, Hiroji gives the following explanation:

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Rumors of your investigation circulated through this city far quicker than any other scraps of gossip, but I had not believed that snake would try to wrap himself around your hearts so quickly. I know there is no excuse for my behavior earlier, but believe me when I say that Natsuo deserves no better. He is his cousin's lapdog, the lackey of a man who has been under investigation for some time. Oh yes, the revered 'hero' of the battle against the King of Trolls was being investigated by my master on suspicion of maho. Kuni Junji was my teacher and a man of flawless perception. If he chose to investigate someone, it was only a matter of time before his suspicions were proven right. The only thing that could stop Junji-sama was death... a fate that came all too swiftly after he began his scrutiny of Bayushi Ogura. I was called to Ryoko Owari to attend to my master's meager home and possessions, only to find his home ransacked by thieves and all of his journals stolen. I may not be as wise as my former master, but it is quite clear that Natsuo's agents are responsible. Though I cannot yet prove it to my lords in the Crab, for now it is enough that I warn you.

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If asked about the King of Trolls, Hiroji admits he knows nothing about the matter. His teacher was investigating Ogura, not the beast. Hiroji adds that the Crab's knowledge of the trolls does not, as far as he knows, refer to a beast such as the King of Trolls. In short, Hiroji's only connection to the matter is in continuing his master's investigation into Bayushi Ogura, and proving Kuni Junji's death to have been murder. He promises to aid the party in any way he can, but he also warns them not to interfere with his own duties.

Scene Three: The First Step

The characters have three choices of where to go to start looking for answers: the Scorpion, the Dragon, or the Unicorn. All three Clans maintain representatives in Ryoko Owari, which would be the first logical step in getting the information they want. If the characters have allies in any of the clans, it may speed their efforts.

The Scorpion

The first step in speaking with the Scorpion is clearly to question Bayushi Ogura. If the characters have already spoken to Natsuo, from here it is simply a matter of waiting for Ogura to arrive in the city. If the characters do not speak with the Soshi, they may find the Chancellor's son constantly occupied with business that the characters do not have the clout to interrupt. Characters might be directed to speak with Ogura's bodyguard and karo, Bayushi Katai, who was nowhere near the incident. Characters may hit upon how odd it was that Ogura was traveling in such dangerous company without his yojimbo, a fact that Katai tries her best to pass off without explanation. In truth, at the time Katai was helping Soshi Natsuo turn Kuni Junji's home inside out while the witch hunter was away. Characters with the skills to do so might be able to piece together hints, but without more of the story the best conclusion they can reach is that Katai was left behind for a specific purpose.

When the characters do meet Ogura, he is polite but terse. He recounts everything that has already been said — the King Troll was awakened in Dragon lands, he rode with the Dragon and Kuni Junji and used his ancestor's magic to put the beast down. He naturally does not mention murdering Junji or the fact that the spell he used is Zokujin magic, nor does he contradict the group if they mention the beast being Tainted. The one thing Ogura does mention without prompting is the crystal blade passed down to him from his ancestor. He asks the characters that, if they find Mitsu, they see about getting it back from him.

The Dragon

Tracking down the ise zumi may seem a daunting task for those unfamiliar with the Dragon. Representatives of the Dragon Clan do not know the exact location of Togashi Mitsu, remarking that the man is a wanderer by nature. If the party is determined enough to try and travel to Dragon lands in search of him, they are unlikely to get further than the outer castles. Outsiders are hardly ever admitted to the High House of Light, where the tattooed monks study their arts, and the Dragon insist they do not know Mitsu's location. If asked about the King of Trolls, those in the know mention that Mitsu's student Matsuo also saw the King's awakening, but he is at his teacher's side (and thus unaccounted for). As is frequently the case with the Dragon, the characters will find themselves stymied until they ask the right question: why does Mitsu still carry Ogura's crystal sword? The answer, of course, is that Mitsu would only keep it if he intended to use it.

Given enough time, it's possible that word of the group's investigation can cause Togashi Matsuo to come to Ryoko Owari. If so, Matsuo seeks out the characters to explain that he and his master, Mitsu, are also seeking answers to the questions left by the Troll King's sudden awakening and defeat. He informs them that Mitsu is near the scene of the battle and would be glad to assist the PCs.

The Unicorn

The obvious place to get first-hand Unicorn testimony is the military encampment at the Seikitsu Pass. As the characters are under the command of a Unicorn and the incursion threatened the Unicorn's borders, the Unicorn Clan is much more cooperative than the Dragon or Scorpion. None of the witnesses of the conflict are in Ryoko Owari, but Unicorn NPCs will likely recognize the characters by sight or name once they are commissioned by Shinjo Osema. Though the party must leave the city to get information abut the King of Trolls from the Unicorn, they should feel free to make use of the Clan's cooperation. A research effort using the Unicorn's libraries might bear fruit. Though no known histories record the facts that the King of Trolls is untainted or that Bayushi Seiko had a Zokujin ally, characters attempting Lore: History or Lore: Shadowlands rolls to discern more about Asako Gohiro's encounter are likely to gather several missing pieces of the puzzle. A roll of 30 or better reveals that there is no recorded source for the spell used to return the King of Trolls to its slumber. Characters combing the histories for clues on how to deal with the King of Trolls may roll Intelligence/Investigation: a roll of 20 reveals that the King of Trolls did not come from the Shadowlands, and a roll of 30 or better reveals that the King of Trolls now rests in almost the exact spot where it awoke two hundred years ago.

When the characters decided to leave Ryoko Owari to investigate the Unicorn soldiers and the body of the King of Trolls in person, they can be given a small honor guard if they request it. Such an escort dissuades lone or opportunistic bandits, but may well create a target for ambitious and organized criminals.

Act 2: The Nature of the Beast

Synopsis

Once the characters reach the site of the fallen King of Trolls, it becomes clear that the investigation is not as simple as trying to get the Dragon, Scorpion, and Unicorn to communicate. In addition to the generally mysterious nature of the Troll King, the party is stymied by the Khan, who initially refuses to let the characters get near the Troll King. While the characters attempt to piece together the sparse information they have already received and devise a way to circumvent the Unicorn Champion, matters become complicated when two outside forces are revealed to have taken an interest in the matter — the ancient race of the Zokujin, and the agents of the Shadowed Tower of the Scorpion.

Scene One: The Body of the Troll King

Once the characters make the journey to the Seikitsu Pass, they are greeted with open arms by the Unicorn guards. The commander of the forces, Moto Chen, is brave and intelligent, but he is not fond of the idea that a beast the size of a mountain is sleeping in territory he must defend. The characters can speak with Chen at their earliest convenience, though they may wish to take a moment to clean up or rest after the long journey. After staying at the Unicorn outpost (which is on the southwestern edge of the Pass), any character with the Way of the Land Advantage relevant to the area spots that the King of Trolls must be the gigantic formation near the northern end of the pass.

Moto Chen does not carry himself with the severe attitude normally attributed to his family, but neither is he particularly jovial. He is dedicated to his duty, and right now that duty is literally overshadowed by a threat that, for all he knows, could arise at any moment. Chen's account of the battle is from the ground when the King of Trolls made its way toward the Seikitsu Pass and started slaughtering any soliders that got in its way. Traditional weaponry seemed able to pierce the thing's skin, but had no effect. The few shugenja that occupy the area found their abilities likewise useless against the giant, though Chen theorizes that there may not have been enough of them. Characters may make an Intelligence/Investigation roll (TN 30) or raw Intelligence roll (TN 35) to realize that the Seikitsu Pass did not exist the first time the Troll King rampaged through the Empire, making it unlikely it knew the pass was there.

If asked about it (or on an Investigation/Intelligence roll at a TN of 25) Chen mentions that the monster's advance stopped once it got close to the Crater. The Unicorn general originally reasoned the combined efforts of the Unicorn and Scorpion armies had checked its advance. However, after reexamining the scene in his mind, he recalls that the intervention of the Unicorn forces and the arrival of the Scorpion came after the Troll King had already slowed.

Chen can also fill the characters in on what happened after the Troll King was put down: nothing. The Scorpion returned to their lands, the two Dragon monks vanished, and the beast turned into stone in mere hours. Unicorn sentries patrol the body regularly, albeit at a distance. Since that time, some sentries have reported ghosts and spirits haunting the area, but none of these reports can be verified. (These figures are actually the Zokujin shaman, Zgkol, and Togashi Mitsu, who is attempting to corner Zgkol and speak with him.)

If the PCs ask to see the body of the Troll King, Chen suggests that they wait until morning, at which time the characters are escorted under heavy guard to the gigantic beast. At this point, several facts can be determined:

- An Intelligence/Investigation roll at TN 25 reveals that the Troll King's body has turned into a rock of a different structure and color than anything else in the area.
- A shugenja attempting to Sense or Commune with the spirits in the area finds the Earth kami greatly weakened and terrified. In areas where the Troll King's body comes in contact with the ground, there are no Earth kami at all.
- The beast fell while facing, and likely heading toward, the center of the Great Crater.
- The Troll King is not Tainted.

Characters attempting to leave the immediate area to investigate are stopped by the Unicorn guards. Chen has ordered the soldiers to make sure the characters don't wander; for their own safety, but also to keep them out of the City of Night. The guards might be persuaded (by the characters attempting to assert their authority or merely apply some charm) to allow them to leave the area, but all attempts to approach the Great Crater are forbidden.

Scene Two: Visitors

Once the characters return to the Unicorn outpost, they find it difficult to speak with Moto Chen again. Chen knows the characters will likely want to get into the Crater after coming to the same conclusion he has — the Troll King was looking for something or someone in there. He knows Moto Chagatai would not want anyone near the excavations there. Finally, he doesn't want the characters outsmarting him or otherwise trapping him into letting them go to the Crater. So long as the characters are focused on trying to meet with him once again, they aren't going anywhere, which is just fine.

While the characters are attempting to deal with Chen, they are approached by either Zgkol or Togashi Mitsu (or both, separately, given enough time). Zgkol turns up if they have spent more time poking around the body of the Troll King than on anything else. If the characters have been inquiring to the whereabouts of Mitsu since their arrival at the Pass (or if they arrived with Matsuo), he comes to them first.

Mitsu is probably the most forthright person the characters have encountered since the beginning of their journey. The monk makes sure he is not seen by the Unicorn guards, though he makes no overt attempts to sneak around. He fills in any details about the conflict they have not learned yet, and adds a few that they probably have not been able to learn from any other source. Mitsu reveals that the spell that was used to return the Troll King to its slumber was given to Asako Gohiro by a Zokujin named Zgkol, the same Zokujin who reemerged when the beast did. The spell does more than just put the creature into a deep sleep; it separates the Troll King's spirit from its body, though it is unclear where the spirit is held prisoner. Mitsu has remained in the area in order to find Zgkol and get more information from him, but the Zokujin has eluded the monk. Characters might ask why the Zokujin has not just left the area if Mitsu keeps harassing him; Mitsu believes the Troll King may be somehow connected to Zgkol or the whole Zokujin race. Mitsu is determined to stay nearby until he discovers the connection.

Zgkol only approaches the characters if they are alone, and he tries to approach the smallest group of characters possible. He speaks to a character who seems most likely to greet him without revulsion or hostility (a shugenja is the ideal candidate). Like Mitsu, he has remained in the area since the Troll King's defeat, but his natural affinity to the earth has made him effectively invisible. What Zgkol reveals to the characters might be difficult for them to believe at first, but Zokujin have enormous patience and he explains it as many times as necessary. With little preamble, Zgkol tells the characters the following:



It is not like my people to meddle in the affairs of other races, but it seems the King of Trolls has defied our wish to remain apart. Human, the beast that your Mitsu and Ogura put down is no mindless creature enslaved by the will of a dark god. When races more welcoming to us ruled these lands, we remained apart, but we were still considered their equals. During this time, many races joined to build a city in these very mountains, a city your horse riders have found. The Zokujin race lent their strength to this city, as did the Troll race, as did the Kitsu race — though not all of these Kitsu were to be trusted. The Kitsu purged their ranks of those who sought to pervert the city, and these beasts, called the Tsuno, were banished from the realm we dwell in. The exiles pleaded with the other races to intervene on their behalf, but the Trolls were the first to denounce them, and the other races followed suit. Though the Tsuno were banished, eventually they found a way to influence this world again, and sent their most powerful sorcerers to return and reclaim what they sought in the beginning — the power within the city. They found, to their anger, that the Kitsu had built wards against such a day. They could not gain entry to the ancient place. What they could claim, however, was their vengeance. I do not know what pain they brought to others, but they never forgot what they perceived as the treachery of the Trolls. They hunted the Trolls and cursed them with their newfound magic.

Twisted in body, spirit, and mind, these Trolls were lesser beasts now — they are what you see today, and many of them have since been touched by the corrupted child of Sun and Moon. When the Tsuno found the Troll leader, Sichi, they cursed him with enormous strength and size, warping his connection to the spirits of stone so that he drew endless strength from the earth by destroying its energy. The Tsuno used him as a guardian; if they could not reclaim their city, they would have this Troll King guard it until they could. The Tsuno sent Sichi's spirit to a place of torture and madness, so that when he is awakened, he desires only destruction.

I say this to you now because the time to free Sichi's spirit has come. His body is once again close to where the Tsuno have bound his spirit, and his spirit has been forced back into that place of torment. I... found that I could not work the magic to imprison the great hero's spirit in such a place, but I could not stand by idly as he ravaged your people. Now, though... now, we can see a great wrong righted. Deep within the city of green crystal below this ground lies the Troll King's prison — a prison the humans have found but do not comprehend. A man named Shem-Zhe has been studying it for months, and it is he who awoke the Troll King a second time. To disturb the prison again would cause the same result, but it is hardly the only thing the Tsuno placed to awaken Sichi from his torment. There are stones, scattered throughout these mountains. They are wards that, once disturbed, will cause the guardian to rise again.



Zgkol reiterates his points if the PCs ask questions, but has no more information he is willing to give them. Once the characters are done asking questions, he cocks his head to the side as if he has heard a far-off noise, bids them farewell, and melts into the ground.

Naturally, some characters will react to this quite differently from others. The most obvious stumbling block is whether or not to trust Zgkol. The characters have just been told the trolls aren't creatures of Fu Leng, and that the Troll King is actually a cursed hero of an ancient race, by a green goblin-looking creature that just disappeared into the ground. Those unfamiliar with pre-Rokugani history or the nature of the Spirit Realms may find the situation almost impossible to grasp. Even those who understand the nature of the Kitsu, the Zokujin, and other races might balk at the idea that Fu Leng didn't create the trolls. If the characters speak with Togashi Mitsu at any point after meeting Zgkol, the tattooed man vouches for the Zokujin's reliability and cautions the party not to dismiss its wisdom.

Characters may also entertain the option of reporting what they heard and saw to Chen or anyone else. The reaction to such a story is somewhat predictable, though Chen merely ignores the tale (after he hears about it through intermediaries — he continues to avoid the characters) and leaves the characters to their business.

Scene Three: Friends in the Shadows

Zgkol's story suggests that the party should find a way into the City of Night. Fortunately for them, once they return to the Unicorn outpost where they are staying, they are approached by a messenger from the Scorpion Clan carrying word from Ryoko Owari. Bayushi Sanji introduces himself as a representative of Bayushi Ogura, who has come to inspect the King of Trolls now that he has had a chance to research his family's archives on the matter.

Of course, the Unicorn forces are none too happy about Ogura's presence, but they can hardly refuse the son of the Imperial Chancellor who heroically brought down the Troll King. Moto Chen stops trying to distract the characters so he can keep Ogura from snooping around. Guards are reassigned to cover the southern part of the pass and take up positions all around the King of Trolls. The only place the Unicorn forget to cover is the Crater, a fact that Ogura and Sanji are counting on. The Chancellor's son arrives with little fanfare at the head of a small escort, and the party becomes all but invisible to Moto Chen's soldiers as they focus on the Scorpion.

Sanji turns up just a few hours after he and Ogura arrive. He has a document from Moto Chen giving the Scorpion permission to investigate the area of the Great Crater, and permission to take the PCs with them as guards. Sanji made Chen agree to allow the party to escort him, as Ogura would be well served by their assistance. Since the party was already trying to get in, he considers it a beneficial situation for all. Asked how the Scorpion would know the party would be barred from the Crater, or how they managed to get such clearance in short order, Sanji breezily assures them that the Unicorn's paranoia about the Crater is well known, and reminds them of Ogura's powerful political connections.

If the characters refuse to assist Sanji, he denigrates their sense of duty and leaves them to their own devices. If they agree, then naturally Sanji insists they leave as soon as possible.

Scene Four: Infiltrators

The party approaches the Great Crater and is met by an outrider emerging from the excavation site. What few know, and this reveals, is that there has to be a large encampment *within* the crater, presumably occupied by the Unicorn. When the outrider meets the group, he demands to know what business they have and on whose authority they think they can approach the site. The PCs have a chance to introduce themselves before a bored and superior Sanji says, "Tell your master Moto Vordu that I am here on Bayushi Ogura's business, and my lord sends his regards."

The outrider flinches at both Vordu and Ogura's names, and warns the group to stay in place until he returns. Less than twenty minutes later, a small army of Unicorns emerges from the dig site, at its head the shugenja Horiuchi Shem-Zhe, Moto Vordu's assistant. Shem-Zhe is a quiet, introspective little man, not used to strangers. He parleys with Shinji and the party for quite some time, attempting to find out what they know about the Crater, the Troll King, and possibly anything else connected to the City of Night. Shem-Zhe is not a deceptive man, but he is trying to figure out just how much of the area he can show the group before they will be satisfied with their inspection.

While this conversation is going on, hidden agents of Bayushi Ogura move unseen into the tunnels that have been dug below the Great Crater. With almost the entire unicorn force now focused on Ogura and the players, the infiltrators meet with no resistance.

If the PCs ask about the Troll King's untainted nature (or the origin of the Troll race as told to them by Zgkol), the Horiuchi shugenja conditionally confirms their information. But while Shem-Zhe is talking to the group, there is a momentary noise from the Crater like a fire burning out of control, then a whoosh of air. Shem-Zhe immediately rushes to the Crater with half of the guards, while the other half encircles the group.

Act 3: The City of Night

Synopsis

With the City of Night so close, the characters now find their investigation thwarted because the Unicorn believe they were trying to sneak into their guarded excavation site. Just as the party believes having the Scorpion Clan pin the blame for the situation on them is the worst of their troubles, the Seikitsu Pass is approached from the north by a small Lion army. As the situation around the Great Crater escalates, the Troll King begins to stir from its slumber, either awakened by the movement of the Lion or the events that took place in the City of Night.

Scene One: Caught in the Middle

Under guard, the PCs and the Scorpion are brought back to the southern outpost and hauled in front of Moto Chen. As might be expected, this meeting is far less civil than the last. The guards accuse the party of trying to sneak into the City of Night. Bayushi Sanji insists that the characters assured him they had Chen's approval to enter the City of Night, and he merely followed them. The characters were awfully quick to run to the area as soon as the Unicorn had their hands full with other matters, and Chen grudgingly agrees that the characters have been doing nothing but trying to reach the Crater since their arrival.

If the characters put up a decent defense of their honor and actions, they find themselves at odds with the son of the Imperial Chancellor and his servant. If the characters cannot get themselves out of the hole Ogura has dug for them, so much the better. Ogura has a contingency plan if they can smooth-talk their way out: Unicorn guards will find a dazed Crab witch hunter just inside the Crater. The tsukai-sagasu insists he has no idea how he came to awaken there. The PCs remember Kuni Hiroji, who looks as if he was close to an explosion or fire — his robes are tattered and he is covered in soot. Ogura immediately "recognizes" Hiroji as the man whom he had overhead in Ryoko Owari saying he would go to any end to prove his master's death in the Seikitsu Pass was the Unicorn's fault.

Though the Unicorn and Crab are allies, Chen is eager to for any solution to this situation that doesn't involve arresting the son of the Chancellor or a party of magistrates endorsed by the Emerald Champion and the governor of Ryoko Owari. The PCs may argue with Ogura, Chen, and Sanji on Hiroji's behalf. As it stands, he's going to face charges of trespassing and theft (why else would he have been in the City of Night?), and will likely be executed. Though Chen will not be dissuaded from using Hiroji as the scapegoat in this case, he accepts any reasonable excuse to lessen the man's punishment.

Scene Two: Arrival of the Lion

Just as the situation is being worked out, a scout from the northern end of the Pass rushes towards Chen and delivers a quick whispered report without even taking the time to bow or kneel. Chen's eyes widen at the scout's words, and he commands everyone to stay where they are while he leaves. Chen takes a few guards with him but leaves the majority to make sure no one goes anywhere.

An hour later another Unicorn messenger is dispatched to the outpost and demands the characters follow him. Shem-Zhe is with the messenger to vouch that Moto Chen has commanded their presence. However, he also has his own message for the characters:

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The advance of the Lion soldiers has done something to disturb the Troll King's slumber, samurai. We still know too little of the beast's nature to know what has happened, but you have my word that nothing has been disturbed in the City of Night since the Troll King awoke a month ago. Even the incursion earlier today did not actually transpire within the city, so only the Lion could have caused this. They have come saying they are fulfilling their duty to the Empire by destroying its foes — claiming that the armies of the Scorpion and Unicorn have failed to destroy the Troll King and thus it falls to them to do so. That may be their reason, but if they can wrench the Seikitsu Pass from the Unicorn's grasp, they will.

So long as the Lion are contained, the Troll King's awakening may yet be slowed, but we must find the source of the beast's rampage... what could it possibly be looking for in the City of Night?

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The PCs may remember what Zgkol told them; if not, allow them a raw Intelligence roll at TN 20 to recall that the Zokujin stated Shem-Zhe had found the Troll King's prison in the City of Night. Once that has been determined, the Unicorn shugenja requests that the party split into two groups: one to assist the Unicorn in keeping the Lion at bay, and one to follow him into the City of Night.



Scene Three: Into the City of Night

Characters who follow the Unicorn messenger back to Moto Chen should be the ones who have been itching this whole time to assert their authority as magistrates. The Lion have taken a war party into Unicorn lands, in direct violation of the Emperor's edicts. The Lion argue that the Emperor forbade the Clans to make war upon one another; only the Troll King is their enemy, but if the Unicorn use force to stop them they must respond in kind. The leader of the Lion forces is the brash but intelligent Matsu Atahiko. With no Emperor on the throne and with an Emerald Champion who does not command respect, characters who appeal to Atahiko's sense of honor fare better than those who threaten her with the wrath of a vacant Steel Throne. Should the situation escalate into violence, the Lion army charges unhesitatingly straight into the heart of the Seikitsu Pass. The party does not necessarily need to turn the Lion away, but must delay them as long as possible so the second group can continue their trek through the City of Night.

Characters who follow Shem-Zhe into the City of Night are attacked by warriors from the shadows. These are typical ninja, sent by Bayushi Ogura to search the area for anything that seems connected to the Troll King. Ogura seeks to enslave the Troll King. The assassins have instructions to kill anyone else who enters the area around Shem-Zhe's most recent find, and then damage their bodies so that it appears they were mauled by some unknown beast. The group is ambushed two or three times before reaching the Troll King's prison.

Scene Four: The Spirit of the King of Trolls

Sichi's prison is no elaborate jail of crystal, but merely a room roughly cut into the stone with a darkened orb resting upon a pedestal in the room's center. From the orb, a glowing chain of energy tethers a whimpering, sobbing creature that is curled up in the corner of the room. Shem-Zhe whispers that he found this room just over a month ago, but he could not determine what manner of spirit had been chained here. The one time he attempted to communicate with it, it vanished and the Troll King awoke.

Zgkol appears from the ground behind the characters, saying that the time to free Sichi has come. Zgkol could never find the prison on his own, and thanks Shem-Zhe for doing so. The Zokujin begins to cast a spell that he says will destroy the link between Sichi's spirit and his twisted body, destroying the orb in the center of the room. Shugenja characters who ask to assist can do so, casting the spell as a ritual with the shaman and reducing its casting time. The spell takes a full 10 rounds to complete, lowered by one for each additional shugenja participating.

As Zgkol begins the spell, the group is once again attacked by agents of the Shadowed Tower — the dark splinter faction within the Scorpion Clan to which Ogura owes his true allegiance. Zgkol warns that the conflict may awaken Sichi's spirit yet again, and continues his spell while the party fends off the attackers. Each round that Zgkol is wounded causes the spell to take an additional round to cast — if the combat lasts for more than 15 rounds, the Troll King awakens once more. Success results in the orb exploding in a flash of brilliant light, dazing everyone for a round, and causing the Scorpion agents to flee.

In the aftermath, Zgkol and the spirit of the Troll King are nowhere to be found.

Epilogue

If the characters successfully free Sichi, his spirit is free to wander the Spirit Realms as he chooses. The Troll King may seek out the characters to thank them for their part in his release. He finds the ultimate fate of his race — corruption and barbarism — too much to bear, and he leaves the Realm of Mortals forever. If the Troll King is once again awakened, it falls to Bayushi Ogura to use his magic to once again seal the spirit of Sichi in its tortured slumber. He attempts to trap one of the characters in the spell's fatal effects as he did with Kuni Junji.

The Lion army fails to capture the pass, presumably thanks to the party. If the characters turn back Matsu Atahiko's force, they are praised by Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi for their great deeds and offered positions as true Emerald Magistrates (current Magistrates receive promotions). If the Lion press into the Pass, they are killed to a man, and tensions between the Lion and Unicorn escalate. This failure does not tarnish the characters' reputations, but Moto Chen and the Unicorn do not forget it.

In any event, the party will have earned an enemy in the Shadowed Tower — Bayushi Ogura — for their interference in his plot to enslave the Troll King. Agents of the Tower will not go out of their way to harass the characters, but any of the characters (including Scorpions) will find their dealings with Ogura, his allies, and many Scorpion difficult for no apparent reason. Kuni Hiroji is banished from Crab lands for his crimes, which he insists were fabricated by the Scorpion Clan. Though the majority of the Crab believe him, they cannot leave him unpunished in the face of condemnation from the Unicorn and Scorpion. Ironically, Hiroji is eventually approached by the Kuroiban — a sect of Yogo shugenja dedicated to hunting maho-tsukai. The Yogo realize Hiroji's fall from grace was due to the Shadowed Tower's manipulation, and thus the Scorpion feel somewhat responsible... and the Yogo are eager to gain the expertise of a Kuni-trained shugenja for their efforts. Hiroji readily agrees to share his secrets with the Yogo when they agree to aid him in his quest for vengeance against Bayushi Ogura and Soshi Natsuo.

NPCs

Bayushi Ogura — Rank 3 Soshi Shugenja

Ogura is an agent of the Shadowed Tower, a sect of Scorpion that employ maho and secret magic in an attempt to overthrow Scorpion Champion Bayushi Yojiro. The son of the Imperial Chancellor, Ogura is obsessed with power and has thrown in his lot with the Tower in a bid to gain even more.

Horiuchi Shem-Zhe — Rank 4 Iuchi Shugenja

The daimyo of the Horiuchi family is a small man most comfortable when he is in his library. He at once fears and is awed by what the Unicorn are uncovering in the City of Night.

Kuni Hiroji — Rank 2 Kuni Shugenja

Like many Witch Hunters, Hiroji is single-minded in his purpose and lets few things get in the way. He is known throughout the Crab because of his master's reflected glory.

Moto Chen (see page 52 for Chen's statistics)

Chen is a talented commander but not skilled in the arts of diplomacy. A hunter and warrior by nature, he is glad to have a position far from court. He sees the party's intrusion as a reminder of everything he's avoiding.

Shinjo Osema — Rank 4 Moto Bushi

As the governor of the most corrupt city in Rokugan, Osema's inborn distrust of others has become full-blown paranoia since his term began. However, he is a man of honor and integrity, and does not let anything get in the way of his duty.

Soshi Natsuo — Rank 2 Soshi Shugenja

Ogura's cousin is a charming and slightly eccentric shugenja known throughout Ryoko Owari as the subject of countless odd tales. He joined the Shadowed Tower with his cousin, but unlike Ogura he is starting to truly adopt the organization's philosophies.

Togashi Mitsu (see page 60 for Mitsu's statistics)

A hero of the Clan War, Mitsu has fought beside legends and witnessed epic events that the Empire will never see again. He is nevertheless still a vigorous, pleasant man who prefers the simple to the complicated, the mundane to the glamorous.

Togashi Matsuo — Rank 3 Tattooed Monk

Mitsu's student is much like his master, and several veterans of the Clan War have remarked that he is *exactly* like a young Mitsu. Matsuo is an eager learner, and gives his full attention to any new experience.

Zgkol — Effectively Rank 5 Tamori Shugenja

An ancient shaman of the Zokujin race, Zgkol has spent more time with humans than is normal for his race. He feels personally responsible for not being able to free the spirit of Sichi the first time the Troll King awoke, and has hunted for the spirit's prison since.

THE FOUR WINDS SAGA

DIAMOND EDITION

Diamond Edition — Blood and Enlightenment

Living in Toshi Ranbo had come to mean growing accustomed to the sounds of construction. The sound of hammering was a constant companion during the daylight hours. It had gotten so that Kubei, who normally retired with the sun, had started staying up an extra hour or two, sitting by the light of a lantern, enjoying the silence. It was a bit harder to rise in the morning, but his service to his lords among the Kitsuki had not suffered. If the samurai had noticed — and they almost certainly had, given who they were — they said nothing of his change in behavior.

Kubei enjoyed serving the Kitsuki. He had been raised in a small village near their southern borders, and they had been kind and fair lords for as long as he could remember. When his village was destroyed following the Lion Clan's decimation of Dragonfly lands, the Kitsuki had found homes for him and the other survivors. Kubei had been among the lucky few chosen to serve in Toshi Ranbo. He had never presumed to question, but one of his lords confessed that it was because he was among the most intelligent and observant heimin the Kitsuki had ever seen. Kubei had basked in the glow of such praise for weeks.

Truthfully, Kubei's innermost thoughts would be considered blasphemous by most. What he wished more than anything was not to ascend to a higher station, for that would truly be the mark of greed and ambition beyond his station. No, his secret wish was to serve as an assistant to a Kitsuki investigator. The Kitsuki understood that peasants often moved unseen and saw things samurai missed, and they valued their heimin servants. Such a duty would be like a dream. But this was not his lot. He cooked. It was not a glorious duty, but such was life.



An odd sensation interrupted Kubei's reverie. He frowned and drew a deep breath. This house had been his home for several years, and there was nothing within it that was unknown to him. Yet today, there was an odd scent, something strange and acrid. And there was something else — a burning scent that he could not place. It was no lantern, candle, or incense; of that he was certain.

Kubei prowled the hallways, restlessly sniffing in search of the source of the odor. It grew stronger as he approached the storage room. A dark realization overtook him. He had occasionally smelled the burning scent of Liquid Void, a powerful drug enjoyed in the city's seedier neighborhoods. That was what he smelled now — that, and something else. If one of his fellow servants was indulging while on Kitsuki grounds, he would punish them severely.

Kubei opened the door and walked down the steps into the storage room. The scent was definitely stronger, accompanied now by a low hissing sound. Kubei's frown deepened. He walked among the crates and barrels, seeking the source. When it seemed he would find nothing, he rounded a stack of crates and froze.

There, amid the familiar materials, was a barrel with unfamiliar markings. The scent from it was strong, and a strange dark powder had spilled around its base. A length of string or rope of some kind was burning along the ground. The trail it left indicated that quite some length had already burned.

"By the Fortunes—" he whispered.

The explosion devastated the lower floors and set fire to the building. More thunderous detonations echoed the blast throughout the city. Kubei did not survive to hear them.

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With a muttered curse, Akodo Setai tucked his daisho into his obi and charged out into the street. The explosions had finally stopped, but pillars of smoke billowed upward from at least a dozen major fires throughout the city. "Guardsman!" he commanded, pointing to a shocked soldier wearing the Imperial mon. "What is happening?"

"I do not know, sama!" the man answered, barely. "The Imperial Guards are mobilizing at the palace! I must go!"

Setai nodded and gazed at the smoke. Most issued from the most recently constructed city section, the one that had not yet been named or granted a governor. There were few important holdings there, and only a single Great Clan embassy, a Dragon holding. Perhaps, Fortunes willing, the loss of life could yet be minimized. In the meantime, there were other matters to consider. Matters of Lion honor.

"Akodo!" he shouted. "Akodo!"

"Akodo!" came the answer. The Lion estate's guards came running at the sound, shouting their ancestor's name as they ran. They gathered and knelt before Setai, their blades held before them in the manner of a soldier awaiting orders from his commander.

"The city has been attacked," he said briefly, stating what they all knew in their hearts. "The guardsmen, the Legions, the Crane… they will all be working to control the situation. In the meantime, it will fall to us to find the party responsible for this blasphemy. The Lion are the guardians of Toshi Ranbo. We will not endure this dishonor."

The assembled Lion nodded in agreement, their eyes displaying a strange mixture of anger, shame, and eagerness. "You will deploy to the city's edge," Setai continued. "Secure every main road. Send patrols along the edges with no road exits. Commandeer any Lion you pass on the way. Unless they have orders from the Emperor, the Emerald Champion, or Nimuro-sama, then they are ordered to join you in securing the city's perimeter." He paused, his eyes blazing. "The Lion will punish whoever is responsible for this. Bring the culprits to me alive, and we shall take them before the Emperor."

The men bowed quickly and dispersed, scattering in all directions in small groups of threes and fours. Even before they left his hearing, he could hear them shouting for more Lion samurai to join them. Later, he would feel proud that his men remained so calm in the midst of chaos. Now there was only rage. He had not felt such fury since he had left behind the path of the Deathseeker. His blood cried out for vengeance.

Setai took hold of his katana's hilt and ran toward the city's center. His men would find the culprits, but in the meantime, he must do something. There would be those who would seek to take advantage of such chaos. Dishonorable men always seemed to thrive in such situations.

They would find Setai waiting.

A Time of Blood and Enlightenment

Five years of relative peace and security have elapsed since the coronation of Toturi III. Of course, even peaceful times in Rokugan are rarely without conflict.

A New Emperor

Toturi's heirs have been at peace since Naseru discarded the Hantei name and took the throne as Emperor Toturi III. Sezaru, having taken the Isawa name, has gladly retreated from politics and mostly withdrawn from public scrutiny. Kaneka, though bitter about the loss of his armies, has fulfilled his promise in building a new body of troops personally loyal to him. Most of the Shogun's soldiers are Phoenix, though a healthy number come from the Imperial Legions. In the new capital of Toshi Ranbo, Naseru has begun expanding and glorifying the city to make it grander than Otosan Uchi ever was. With the Lion and Crane unified in their support of the new Emperor, few question the Emperor's wishes. His reign appears unchallenged.

One evening, explosions erupt throughout Toshi Ranbo, decimating a quarter of the capital city. Gaijin pepper, the explosive powder that devastated Otosan Uchi during the Battle of White Stag, seems to blame for much of the damage. The Lion and Crane act immediately to save as many citizens as possible and the fire is doused before it can spread further, but great damage has been inflicted upon both the city and the Emperor's reputation.

Investigating Daidoji troops discover a gaijin named Esteban Cornejo fleeing a burning warehouse. Though Cornejo appears to be responsible for the explosions, the Crane also note that his warehouse contains nothing of value. Bewildered by the circumstances, the Daidoji daimyo, Daidoji Kikaze, spares Cornejo's life and conceals his arrest until he can be thoroughly interrogated.

Kikaze discovers that Esteban hails from the ruined kingdom of Merenae, the land from which the White Stag invaders came in the fifth century. Esteban came to Rokugan seeking his cousin Alhundro Cornejo, whom he believed to be part of a plot to kill the Emperor. Fearing that Alhundro's actions would bring ruin but knowing that the Rokugani would not heed the warnings of a gaijin, he has been forced to act covertly. When Esteban arrived, he found that Alhundro had already laid an elaborate network of explosives throughout the Imperial City.

Esteban did the only thing he could, setting off part of the explosive network in the new quarter of the city, hoping to expose his cousin's plan without harming innocents. Unfortunately, even Esteban underestimated the extent of Alhundro's plot, and the fires spread quickly through the new quarter.

While Kikaze does not believe Cornejo's tale at first, his subsequent investigations reveals intact barrels of gaijin pepper stockpiled in many of the newly constructed houses surrounding the Imperial Palace. Had the fire touched them off, the resulting explosions might have destroyed the entire palace.

Rise of the Gozoku

Though disappointed that the fires in Toshi Ranbo were not sufficient to kill Naseru and leave a political vacuum to exploit, the outcast Scorpion mastermind Bayushi Atsuki continues to plot. For five years he has quietly cultivated allies, waiting for bitter memories of the Shadowed Tower conspiracy to fade so that he might use his resources more openly. Now he merely waits for the opportunity to turn public opinion against the Emperor, to prove Toturi III to be weak so that his allies can gather true power.

The Return of the Dark Lord

Rokugan does not suspect that the dark lord Daigotsu has returned from death to reign over the City of the Lost. Having learned in advance of his own demise from the Dark Oracle of the Void, Daigotsu made plans for his own resurrection. Before the Winds ever invaded his city, he left a portion of his soul under the protection of the Shadow Dragon. After Daigotsu died, his yojimbo Goju Kyoden offered his own life to the dragon in exchange for Daigotsu's return. The Shadow Dragon gladly complied.

However, upon his return, Daigotsu realized he was not as he once was. The part of his soul that had perished now languished in Meido, imprisoned by Emma-O. The Fortune of Death wreaked a terrible vengeance upon the Dark Lord in return for the insult Daigotsu had given him by releasing Fu Leng — he had rendered Daigotsu's soul immune to the Shadowlands Taint.

Unable to call upon the maho that once granted him such power, Daigotsu is forced to remain hidden in the City of the Lost and hope that no enemies learn of his weakness. Only those closest to him — his consort Shahai and the flesh sculptor Omoni — know the truth. In the meantime, he has temporarily abandoned his plans to strike the Empire. A Wall of Bones has been constructed on the border of Hiruma lands to keep curious Crab at bay while Daigotsu seeks to recover his power. Desperate to help her Dark Lord regain his lost capabilities, Shahai seeks out the one being in Rokugan who knows more about manipulating the Taint than any other.

Iuchiban, the immortal master of the Bloodspeakers.

Role-Playing During the Rise of Iuchiban

During this period, relations between the Lion and Unicorn Clans are particularly poor while they war over the City of the Rich Frog. Mantis and Phoenix relations degrade later, when the Bloodspeakers reignite old feuds between the clans. Tensions are high in general due to general suspicion of Bloodspeaker infiltration within every clan.



On a more positive note, adventure hooks are numerous as the Bloodspeakers present a powerful and omnipresent foe for honorable samurai.

The Gozoku conspiracy is also an important consideration, being more morally ambiguous than most enemies of the throne. The player characters may even find themselves sympathizing with the Gozoku's motivations and ambitions. A party split between those who support the Gozoku and those who support the Emperor's undisputed rule could present some interesting role-playing opportunities.

A more pressing concern for this era is in regards to campaigns that continue directly from the Gold Edition Era. The five-year span between these time periods is something the GM should consider carefully. Will this period simply be considered "downtime" and be skipped entirely? Will the characters advance and gain experience during these lost years? What events transpire in the characters' lives during these lost years? All of this should be considered very carefully if the GM intends to make the half-decade jump.

Status of the Great Clans

The Crab Clan

Current Champion: Hida Kuon

Life has changed a great deal for Kuon in the last five years. Though the beginning of his reign over the Crab was marked by sorrow and loss, the following time has been filled with promise. He has become a symbol of hope and strength for his clan. His wife, Reiha, is seen by many as the spiritual heir to O-Ushi, the passionate heart of the Crab. Their sons, Ichiro and Ren, symbolize the Crab's reborn hope for the future. Though heroes may die and the clan may never know true victory, they will never truly be defeated.

Alliances: In the last five years the Crab have built upon their alliance with the Unicorn. In cooperation with them, the Kaiu have embarked upon the first stage of an endeavor to extend the Kaiu Wall around all of Rokugan. The first part of this project, the Khol Wall, is already well underway in Unicorn lands. Bolstered by the security of the Kaiu defenses, the Khan has begun to withdraw many patrols from the outer borders of his lands.



A more curious alliance is the one between the Crab and Crane. With Yasuki Hachi's bold resolution of the Yasuki War, the two clans find themselves cooperating on both military and economic matters. As the only family in Rokugan to simultaneously serve two clans, the Yasuki serve as the bridge between the two. While the Crane still disdain the Crab's brutishness and the Crab frown upon the Crane's political manipulations, neither can deny the benefit they have gained from this new alliance. While theirs is not a particularly warm friendship, neither seems willing to be the first to break the truce.

Enemies: The last five years have been kind to the Crab Clan. With the political support of the Crane, they have had the rare luxury of focusing on the defense of the Wall rather than worrying about Imperial politics. The other clans have been content to leave the Crab to their own devices. The Crab have therefore distanced themselves from the courts and have no true enemies. While they still bitterly loathe the Scorpion, no one on either side has recently done anything to worsen the relationship.

Objectives: As ever, the defense against the Shadowlands is the Crab's primary concern. Hida Kuon finds the Empire-wide shortage of jade extremely frustrating. In the wake of Daigotsu's defeat in the City of the Lost, Kuon has no doubt that his Crab could crush the Wall of Bones and destroy Daigotsu's followers if only he had enough jade to protect them from the Taint during the attack. With the aid of the Crane, Kuon has begun secretly dispatching Yasuki emissaries to foreign lands, seeking jade beyond the Empire's borders.

The Crane Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Doji Kurohito

Having broken Chukandomo's curse, brought the Yasuki War to an amicable end, forged an alliance with the Lion, and helped to found the new Imperial City, Kurohito's confidence is at an all-time high. He is beloved by his clan and respected even by the few who dare call themselves his enemies. Unknown to Kurohito, this new security has created a new threat. Kurohito's wife, Akiko, a returned spirit who has long been secretly dissatisfied with the Toturi Dynasty, has become a member of Bayushi Atsuki's fledgling Gozoku alliance. Though Akiko knows the true origins of the new Gozoku, she is confident that she can eventually wrest power from Atsuki and purge all those who once belonged to the Shadowed Tower.

Alliances: The Crane currently enjoy several strong alliances. Through the Yasuki family, they are now closely tied to the Crab Clan, though bitter memories of the war prevent the relationship from being anything more than business and politics. They have also built an alliance with the Lion Clan, founded upon mutual desire to build the new Imperial capital of Toshi Ranbo into a worthy successor of the late Otosan Uchi. Though there are many brash and bitter samurai on both sides who would prefer to see a return to the blood feuds of old, cooler heads (primarily Doji Kurohito and Matsu Nimuro) have thus far prevailed. The Crane's friendship with the Phoenix is particularly strong, reflected in a great deal of trade and travel. The Crane have also forged notable alliances with gaijin, particularly the Ivory Kingdoms and the Mountain Wind Yobanjin tribe. With the Crane's support, an Ivory Kingdoms ambassador, Rama Singh, was invited to the Imperial City, though he was placed under house arrest for his own protection shortly after the fires in Toshi Ranbo.

Enemies: The Crane would boast that they no longer have any enemies, but this is not entirely true. The Scorpion remain their most bitter rivals. By securing the positions of Emerald Champion, Jade Champion, and Imperial Advisor, the Crane undermined the Scorpion's dominance of the courts. Only Imperial Chancellor Bayushi Kaukatsu remains a significant Scorpion player in the upper levels of the Emperor's retinue, but his influence is not to be underestimated.

Objectives: The Crane wish only to maintain the status quo. Chaotic events such as the fires in Toshi Ranbo threaten the peace that has brought their clan such prosperity, and are not to be tolerated. As the Gozoku begins to gather power, many Crane become seduced by its philosophies. The idea that an Emperor must be honored but not obeyed is extremely appealing to some powerful Crane samurai, allowing them to mask their selfish ambitions in the guise of honor.

The Dragon Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Togashi Satsu

In the last few years, Satsu has come to a deeper understanding of the power that he possesses. He hears the voice of his grandfather more and more, guiding him to greatness. While Satsu is grateful, he fears that these gifts would not be granted if there were not dire need for them, and he wonders what darkness the future will bring. As his perception of the future becomes clearer with each passing day, Satsu grows more troubled. He does what he can to conceal his worries from those around him until he can determine what the approaching threat might be.

Alliances: The Dragon have a strained friendship with the Phoenix, stemming from their mutually wounded pride after being manipulated into war. They also continue to be closely allied to the Scorpion Clan, an alliance cemented by Togashi Satsu's marriage to Bayushi Yojiro's distant cousin Misuko.

Enemies: Oddly the Dragon's most prominent enemy is also their closest ally — the Phoenix. While it is now public knowledge that the war between Dragon and Phoenix was the result of Agasha Tamori's manipulations, many Dragon and Phoenix have not forgiven one another for the violence that ensued. Though neither seems to wish to strike the first blow, bitter samurai on both sides closely watch one another for any sign of aggression or insult. Both Satsu and the Elemental Council have recognized the fragility of their new alliance, and have limited interactions with one another except with carefully chosen ambassadors such as Tamori Shaitung and Isawa Nakamuro.

Objectives: In recent years the Mirumoto family has become consumed with a curious new goal — to collect and study potentially dangerous nemuranai. After witnessing the dangers such magical items as the Last Wish and the Dark Covenant can bring, the Mirumoto have determined to destroy all dangerous nemuranai. To this end, Mirumoto relic hunters have been dispatched to the furthest ends of the Empire, seeking artifacts. These are returned to Dragon lands, where they are studied by the Tamori family. All those artifacts that can be safely destroyed are cast into the volcanic heart of Tamori's furnace, where their magic is safely redistributed and used in the defense of the Dragon provinces. Those that cannot be safely destroyed are locked away in the Tamori vaults where they can be studied and prevented from bringing harm.

The Lion Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Matsu Nimuro

In the last few years, Nimuro has become a brooding and solitary man. After the seppuku of his brother Domotai and the corruption of his sister Satomi, he has begun to doubt his purpose. What sort of samurai cannot defend his own family? How can the Lion call themselves the mightiest warriors in the Empire if they cannot protect their lands from the Tsuno? To his credit, Nimuro keeps his doubts to himself and continues to stand as an example of courage and honor. Yet as the Unicorn gather to threaten his clan's borders, he wonders how long he can fight.

Alliances: The Lion are allied with the Crane Clan. Some courtiers find it deeply ironic that the Lion's strongest ally in the courts is the clan with whom they share a thousand-year blood feud. Akodo Setai, a redeemed Deathseeker turned Imperial diplomat, has become a powerful figure in the courts. His forceful personality and patient wisdom have won a great deal of respect for the Lion Clan in recent months, and done a great deal to restore the Empire's faith in the Right Hand of the Emperor. Since Bayushi Yojiro's retirement the Lion's relationship with the Scorpion has all but dissolved, though friendship remains between the Bayushi and Ikoma families. While there is no particular enmity between the clans, Matsu Nimuro simply does not respect Bayushi Sunetra as he did her predecessor. Their relationship with the Phoenix has similarly been terminated due to Shiba Aikune's attacks on Lion troops several years before. Some Lion still scream for reprisal against the Phoenix for the insult, but Nimuro does not intend to entertain any such notions until both the Lion and Phoenix are strong enough to make such a war worth fighting.

Enemies: Unicorn patrols have been testing the Lion's borders for months, and it is clear to veteran warriors that it is only a matter of time before the Khan strikes. When the Unicorn will attack, where they will attack, and how they will justify their actions remain a mystery. Given the flexibility and mobility of the Unicorn armies, the Lion can do little except wait for the advance and meet it without mercy.

Objectives: Still weak after their disastrous alliance with the Phoenix and the Tsuno attacks of several years before, the Lion are desperate to prove their worth once more. Too many doubt the strength of the Right Hand, and when doubts arise battle is sure to follow. Voices among the Lion demand a war, a chance to prove that the Lion are not weak. Though Nimuro agrees with the logic, his clan lacks an enemy. A war against the Crane would only weaken the Emperor, who needs the support of both clans so early in his rule. A war against the wounded Phoenix or Dragon Clans would be cowardly. The Scorpion are too unpredictable an enemy to take lightly, the Mantis and Crab too distant.

Perhaps the fact that the Lion have done little to dissuade the probing Unicorn patrols is no coincidence.

The Mantis Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Yoritomo Kumiko

A curious change has overcome the Daughter of Storms since she purged herself of the Taint. During the years while she endured the touch of the Shadowlands, she was pure, noble, and honorable to a fault. Now that she has cleansed herself of corruption she has become more unpredictable, ambitious, and tempestuous. While some worry about this change, concerned that Kumiko used honor only to shield herself from damnation and then discarded it at her earliest convenience, other Mantis seem relieved that Kumiko's behavior has come to more closely resemble her father's — never forsaking honor, but using it to her advantage when required.

Alliances: The Mantis have no strong alliances, nor do they seem motivated to seek any. The clan is determined to stand or fall on its own merits without becoming embroiled in the political entanglements that have hobbled other clans, such as the Lion, against those who have traditionally been their greatest enemies.

Enemies: Though the Mantis had a brief skirmish with the Crab over a trade route in the Sea of Shadow, no enduring enmity resulted. Beyond this, the Mantis' alleged piracy has irritated those clans that rely upon ocean trade, such as the Crane and Phoenix. Neither clan has mounted a significant offensive against the Mantis (as neither is truly prepared to face the Mantis fleets) but both have strongly denounced Kumiko's activities in the court.

Objectives: Due to a unique interpretation of the Mantis Clan's charter, written by Toturi I, the clan has declared all open seas to be territory of their clan. Kumiko has ordered these territories to be vigorously defended. All ships upon the sea are subject to Mantis search and seizure, particularly those with profitable cargoes. Though the Mantis never harm those that surrender peacefully, those who resist are quickly dispatched to the bottom of the sea by the superior Mantis navy. The Emerald Champion has denounced Kumiko's actions as piracy, though at this time he can do little to stop her.

The Phoenix Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Shiba Mirabu

Though a brave and honorable samurai who has proven himself in countless battles, Mirabu has yet to gain the respect of his clan. Many Shiba wish that Shiba Aikune had become Champion. Others whisper that Mirabu is a mere pawn of the Elemental Masters, the first Champion in history to be nominated by the Council rather than the Soul of Shiba. No matter what Mirabu accomplishes, it seems to matter little. He shares authority with the Elemental Council, Isawa Sezaru, and the Shogun. Mirabu's only consolation is that all those with whom he shares power are worthy and honorable souls. That they do their duties with honor, as he does, is all that he can ask. If he is not remembered for his leadership, so be it. He serves for the good of his clan, not himself.

Alliances: The Phoenix endure a shaky alliance with the Dragon Clan. The lands they once defended so viciously from Dragon intruders, they now share peacefully with their neighbors. They have a friendlier alliance with the Crane, a remnant of Shiba Aikune's great respect for that clan.

Enemies: The Phoenix seek no conflict, content to remain in the solitude of their forests. The frequent Mantis attacks on their trade vessels are an annoyance, one that the Phoenix plan to deal with personally if the Emerald Champion does not take action. The Phoenix have also noted a sharp rise in Bloodspeaker activity, and have begun preparing their mystical defenses against whatever threat the hidden cultists may have planned.

Objectives: With no wars or crises at hand, the Phoenix have returned to their most sacred duty — the accumulation of knowledge and reformation of the Council. A new Master of Fire, Isawa Ochiai, has risen to replace the fallen Hochiu. Doji Akiko, daughter of the original Isawa, now serves not only as Master of Water but as a bridge between the Phoenix and their Crane allies. The Council is stronger than it has been for many years, and Isawa Taeruko is confident that the Phoenix can withstand whatever trials may come.

The Scorpion Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Bayushi Sunetra

Though she reigned for several months in the guise of Bayushi Yojiro, Sunetra has now ruled the clan for several years in her own identity. Though she has done an admirable job of maintaining the strength of her clan, she cannot help but feel that her position as a daimyo somewhat exceeds her talents. Fighting against the Shadowed Tower, maintaining the illusion that she was something she was not, Sunetra was in her element. Now, as the public face of an entire clan, she feels out of her depth. Though her clan has no complaints about her rule and the Scorpion are loyal to her, Sunetra misses the freedom to personally hunt the clan's enemies as she once did.

Alliances: The Scorpion have been secretly building an alliance with the Unicorn Clan. The Scorpion have long sought to regain control of Ryoko Owari, and noted the Khan's growing ambition. They have agreed to supply information and supplies to aid the Unicorn's campaign against the City of the Rich Frog in return for having the City of Lies restored to their rule.

The Scorpion's alliance with the Dragon Clan is as strong as ever. Togashi Satsu's recent marriage to a Scorpion has only fortified this alliance.

Enemies: As usual, the Scorpion have many enemies but few who would dare to move against them. The Crane are their foremost political rivals. Though they have usurped the Scorpion's former dominance of the court, the Scorpion consider this a temporary setback. The Crane have spread themselves too thin, attempted to broker friendships with too many former enemies. It is only a matter of time before one of their porcelain alliances falters, and when the Crane show weakness the Scorpion will be prepared to strike.

Objectives: Like many other clans, in this time of peace the Scorpion are most interested in maintaining the status quo. Though they intend to aid the Unicorn in their attack on the Lion, they also hope to make the conflict as brutal, short, and one-sided as possible so that no lingering harm is done to the Empire. Some Scorpion, particularly Shosuro Yudoka and his followers, remain unconvinced that the remnants of the Shadowed Tower have been entirely purged. They hunt tirelessly for any sign that the cult has survived, prepared to deliver any of its supporters to damnation in Traitor's Grove.

The Unicorn Clan

CURRENT CHAMPION: Moto Chagatai

To the Khan, the Unicorn Clan stands poised at the brink of a brilliant future. For too long, his clansmen have been regarded as ignorant barbarians. For too long, their courage, honor, and prowess have been ignored. For five years he has made his plans. Soon all of Rokugan will fear the power of the Unicorn and the fury of the Khan.





Alliances: The Unicorn have been quite attentive in maintaining their alliance with the Crab. Chagatai has enormous respect for Hida Kuon, and is intrigued by the Crab's plans to extend the Kaiu Wall around the entire Empire. What little supplies of jade the Unicorn still possess have been surrendered to the Crab, and the Unicorn have traded a large amount of food and luxuries for Crab steel. Arrangements have even been made for Kuon's eldest son to be trained by the Utaku family as soon as he is old enough to do so.

The Unicorn also maintain a more subtle alliance with the Scorpion. Chagatai has no problem with surrendering the City of Lies to the Scorpion in return for their aid in his coming war against the Lion. In truth, the Scorpion already controlled much of the city, despite its Unicorn governor. In Chagatai's eyes, he is giving up very little in return for a great deal, and gaining a deadly ally in the process. He is not foolish enough to trust the Scorpion too far, but neither can he deny the value of what they offer.

Enemies: Unicorn patrols on the Lion borders have drawn a great deal of suspicion. Chagatai doesn't care. He knows his enemy cannot possibly imagine the magnitude of the attack he has planned; he expects the Lion to prepare an insufficient, overconfident defense. The only true concern the Khan has is that he knows how unforgiving the Lion can be. Win or lose, the war to come will make the Right Hand of the Emperor enemies of the Unicorn for generations to come.

Objectives: The Unicorn have prepared a massive invasion of the City of the Rich Frog. The city was once Unicorn territory, though the nomadic clan allowed the ronin Kaeru family to oversee its rule. When the Kaeru swore fealty to the Ikoma family, the Lion claimed the city as well. The Unicorn allowed the insult to go unpunished, but only because Chagatai knew he could not challenge the Lion lightly. For years he has been preparing his retribution, withdrawing troops from the new Khol Wall and even allowing large numbers of desert raiders to swear fealty to the Unicorn Clan. The army he has constructed is larger than any the Unicorn have ever fielded. Chagatai has analyzed the tactics and lessons he learned from Akodo Kaneka, and feels prepared for any defense that the Lion will muster.

The time has come for the Emperor's Right Hand to respect the power of the Unicorn Clan.

Part I
Reign of Blood

The vast Unicorn plains extended as far as the eye could see, bounded by the mountains that loomed to the distant north and west. The Utaku had settled in this region hundreds of years ago because of the land's rich beauty and endless potential. The plains allowed them to ride wild and free.

Utaku Moriken was a simple man. He preferred life's simple pleasures to the adventure that so many others in his family craved. He had trained with the Utaku infantry, as was his duty, but his true passion was for the majestic horses for which his family was famed. He was a skilled horseman, and raised excellent Shinjo riding horses at his private estate some miles away. As was tradition, however, he was forbidden to ride the famed Utaku steeds. The animals were his one passion. They were so beautiful and powerful that it was easy to believe the legends that they were of divine blood.

of divine blood.

Moriken smiled as he finished brushing down a golden mare. She was expecting a foal any time now. He was as excited as if it were his own child. It was an odd time of year, but it was not unheard of for the mares to foal so late in the fall. There was a risk of complication, but he would be on hand to ensure that did not happen.

The horses grazing outside the stable nickered anxiously, drawing a frown from Moriken. Horses were sensitive animals, and it sounded as if something had frightened them. He stopped brushing the mare and, with an affectionate pat, stepped out of the stall and walked to the door to see what was bothering the horses.

Moriken froze in the doorway. The sky was full of clouds, though there had been none only a short time ago. They billowed and rolled, moving with a speed he had never seen. There was a crimson tint to them, one that filled him with horror just to look on it. It was an ominous color, one of death and suffering, and his soul was chilled by it.

There was a flash of distant lightning, followed by a crack of thunder so loud that Moriken took an involuntary step backward. The clouds swelled and surged, then belched a savage storm upon the plains. Moriken stared in horror as he watched the rains paint the grass red. The coppery smell of fresh blood filled his nostrils.

Moriken shied away, drawing back into the stable's security. The horses outside bucked and screamed, terrified and confused by what was happening. Moriken felt fear, terror, but when he heard the cries of the horses, confused and terrified, he sprang into action. He threw the stable doors open and charged into the storm, shouting for the animals, leading them to safety. The rain burned as it touched his skin, but Moriken ignored it, blind to all but his duty.

The Rain of Blood had begun.

Year 1165, Month of the Dragon (Mid Spring)

Hamanari's Fever

Agasha Hamanari, the Agasha family daimyo, is no stranger to prophetic visions. The gift has always been his blessing, but now his glimpses of the future have become a curse. Hamanari sees a dark time approaching, when blood rains from the sky and the souls of the innocent suffer. So bleak are his predictions that he becomes consumed with fever. With each passing day his condition grows worse.

Deeply concerned, prominent Imperial magistrate Agasha Chieh places Hamanari under the care of her family's finest physicians and assumes temporary leadership of their family. Hamanari's ravings are carefully monitored and transcribed, as Chieh has little doubt that the daimyo's visions will shortly come to pass. She begins summoning trustworthy heroes to hunt out the clues embedded in Hamanari's prophecy. Notable among them is Moto Najmudin, another Imperial magistrate and a former Topaz Champion.

The New Gozoku

For years, exiled criminal mastermind Bayushi Atsuki has slowly been coordinating resources and allies. With memories of the Shadowed Tower finally beginning to fade, Atsuki begins to make progress toward his goal of restoring the Gozoku. Using Ashalan magic he somehow acquired, he maintains contact with his agents in the Empire. Foremost among these is Bayushi Kamnan, the assassin who once killed Yoritomo Aramasu. Feeling used and discarded by the Scorpion Clan, Kamnan is extremely loyal to Atsuki.

To those whom he approaches to join the new Gozoku, Atsuki preaches a powerfully seductive philosophy. His goal is not to remove the Emperor from power, but merely to distribute his power among those who truly have the capability to rule. By removing such responsibilities from a single individual, the Gozoku actually intend to save the Son of Heaven from inevitably becoming corrupted and broken by power. To many idealistic samurai, this allows them to aid the Gozoku with the belief they are actually aiding the Emperor. To the more cynical, Atsuki's philosophy allows them to pursue naked ambition under the guise of a purer goal.

Kakita Munemori, a senior member of the Imperial Court, is one of the first allies recruited to the Gozoku alliance. Munemori is no fool. While he sincerely believes that a single man should not rule the Empire, he does not trust Atsuki and is deeply disturbed to learn of the Gozoku's connection to the Shadowed Tower. He deplores the path the Scorpion traveled to gain his power and prestige. Recognizing the danger he would face were he to turn openly against Atsuki, Munemori conceives another plan entirely. He intends to seek out new recruits who weigh ambition and honor in equal measure, as he does. In time, he hopes to reveal the Gozoku's origins to them and help them to deal with Atsuki accordingly. In this way, perhaps the Gozoku's perverse origins might be expunged while the purity of its philosophy will remain.

Year 1165, Month of the Serpent (Late Spring)

Iuchiban Escapes

Desperate to find some way to restore Daigotsu to his full power, his consort Shahai, a powerful Bloodspeaker, seeks out the one soul in Rokugan who knows more about manipulating the power of corruption than any other: Iuchiban. Shahai's plan is bold but simple. She plans to enter Iuchiban's tomb and use the Ruby of Iuchiban — an artifact created by his lieutenant, Yajinden — to contain Iuchiban's soul and carry it free from the Tomb. In exchange for his release from the Tomb and the Ruby, she will grant Iuchiban his freedom.

The many traps and wards within the Tomb remain a barrier. Shahai disguises herself as Asako Genjiko, claiming to be an Inquisitor in pursuit of a band of Bloodspeakers intent on releasing Iuchiban. She seeks out Kaiu Kuma, a descendant of the engineer who originally built Iuchiban's tomb. Kuma's wife Sui is a former student of the Kitsu school, and with her magic Kuma is able to pass through the many traps that lay inside.

Realizing the deception too late, Kuma is unable to stop Shahai from piercing the heart of Iuchiban's tomb. However, another betrayal awaits them all. The soul that Shahai draws into Iuchiban's ruby is not Iuchiban's at all but that of his lieutenant, Yajinden, who unknown to Shahai had been trapped there as well. Possessing Shahai's lieutenant Mohai, Iuchiban frees Yajinden and himself from imprisonment. Kuma and Sui die in the confrontation. Kuma's half-brother, Iuchi Katamari, escapes with the aid of Adisabah the Cruel, a rakshasa spirit that had been a prisoner of Iuchiban for ages.

Iuchiban's tomb is entirely destroyed, but Iuchiban and Yajinden survive. The immortal Bloodspeaker begins to demonstrate the control he wields over his cult by immediately enslaving the once-defiant Shahai.

The Fires of Toshi Ranbo

Without warning, explosions and fire consume one quarter of the new Imperial City. Fortunately the catastrophe is contained in the new quarter of the rapidly expanding city, so there are few casualties. Nonetheless, the Lion and Crane defenders of Toshi Ranbo are outraged. They begin conducting independent investigations into the source of the fire, but none make much progress.

The Topaz Championship

Few are truly surprised when the winner of the annual Topaz Championship proves to be Sakura, the talented daughter of Crane Clan Champion Doji Kurohito and Elemental Master Doji Akiko. What is surprising is when Sakura completes her gempukku and selects "Domotai" as her adult name, naming herself after the brother of the Lion Champion who heroically sacrificed himself rather than succumb to the Dark Oracle of Water years before.

Year 1165, Month of the Horse (Early Summer)

Iuchiban Conquers the City of the Lost

Guided by Shahai, Iuchiban comes to the City of the Lost. Over many centuries Iuchiban has mastered the art of moving his soul from one body to the next, snuffing out the life that previously existed there and taking the vessel as his own. He intends to do this to the Dark Lord and take command of his armies, but finds that even a weakened Daigotsu is not so easy to defeat. Rather than simply perishing during his possession, Daigotsu possesses Iuchiban's former body. A titanic duel follows, with the two dark masters switching bodies repeatedly as they tear at one another with steel and magic. Ultimately the weakened Daigotsu cannot compete with Iuchiban at full strength. Gravely wounded, Daigotsu falls from the tallest spire of the Temple of the Ninth Kami. Before Iuchiban can finish the wounded Dark Lord, Daigotsu is spirited away from the city by Kyofu, the Onisu of Fear.

All too few of the Lost follow Daigotsu into exile. Many of Daigotsu's former followers swear fealty to Iuchiban out of fear. Those who were once Bloodspeakers have no choice, as Iuchiban now controls each of them. The Ninube family, former servants of the Lying Darkness that had remained hidden, emerge to offer their fealty, but Iuchiban demands that they prove their worth. They comply by using their command of the power of Nothing to kill the twisted mockery known as Daigotsu Hoturi — the "False Hoturi" — and restore the infamous Egg of Pan Ku.

War of the Rich Frog Begins

After months of feints and probing attacks against the Lion borders, the Unicorn Clan unleashes a full-scale assault upon the City of the Rich Frog. Even Akodo Ijiasu, the confident young Lion officer in command of the city's defenders, is unprepared for the Khan's unorthodox tactics. The Lion are crushed in the initial stages of the war and Ijiasu is among the first casualties. Seasoned senior officer Akodo Tadenori quickly takes command and prevents the City of the Rich Frog from being taken completely, and the Lion struggle to move reinforcements to halt the Unicorn advance.

Many decry the Khan's brazen warmongering in the court, but a clever courtier by the name of Ide Tang defends the Unicorn actions. While Imperial Law clearly states that one clan cannot make war upon another without provocation, said law dates to a time before the Unicorn's return to the Empire, and thus does not apply to the Unicorn. Some rebut that if the Khan intends to defy the law, he will not be protected by it. With the Crab as their allies and an army large enough to challenge the Lion, the Khan does not seem concerned.

Shamed that a member of his peaceful family could use his political expertise to legitimize war, former Imperial Advisor Ide Tadaji labors tirelessly to update Imperial Law to both prevent such an abuse in the future and to protect his clan from reprisals.

Year 1165, Month of the Goat (Mid Summer)

Iuchiban Attacks Shiro Hiruma

An army of Bloodspeakers assaults Shiro Hiruma, intent on wiping out the enemy closest to Iuchiban's stronghold. Hiruma Masagaro, lord of the family, dies during the initial defense leaving veteran scout Hiruma Todori to command the desperate survivors. To Todori's surprise reinforcements arrive not from the wall, but from the Shadowlands, when the tattooed madman Kokujin, a former Dragon monk, appears with a legion of Lost samurai to attack the Bloodspeakers from behind. The Bloodspeakers hurriedly withdraw, preserving their strength for another day. When the battle is complete, Kokujin offers a promise from the Dark Lord: Daigotsu will offer the Crab no violence for a year and a day while both gather their strength to oppose Iuchiban. Kyofu, an Onisu sharing the body of the fallen Crab lord Hida Kuroda, even offers his former brethren a map specifying the location of one of Iuchiban's most powerful allies — the Oni Lord, Tsuburu.

Death of Ide Tadaji

Perhaps the oldest and most respected member of the Imperial Court, former Imperial Advisor Ide Tadaji peacefully passes away during a gathering of the Emperor's closest advisors. Though his loss is shocking, none can deny that he died as he would have wished, doing what was most important to him and surrounded by his closest friends.

It comes as little surprise that, with Tadaji possessing no heir of appropriate age and training, the Khan names his ally Ide Tang as the new Ide daimyo.

Guided by the delirious visions of Agasha daimyo Agasha Hamanari, Imperial magistrate Moto Najmudin and his fellow magistrates see this horrible event coming, but they are too late to protect the Empire. The Elemental Masters enact a ritual to protect the Phoenix lands and similar protection is offered to the Imperial Palace, but much of the Empire becomes chaotic and hellish for days to follow.

Death of Tsuburu

Hida Isamu, illegitimate son of the Steel Chrysanthemum's general Hida Tsuneo, seeks out and defeats the Oni Lord Tsuburu shortly before the Rain of Blood begins. Isamu's arrogance nearly leads him to be corrupted by the rain but the elder shugenja Hida Rohiteki shields his soul with her own and is drawn into the darkness. Overcome with remorse, the once-ambitious young samurai swears loyalty to Hida Kuon without reservation.

Emperor and Dragon

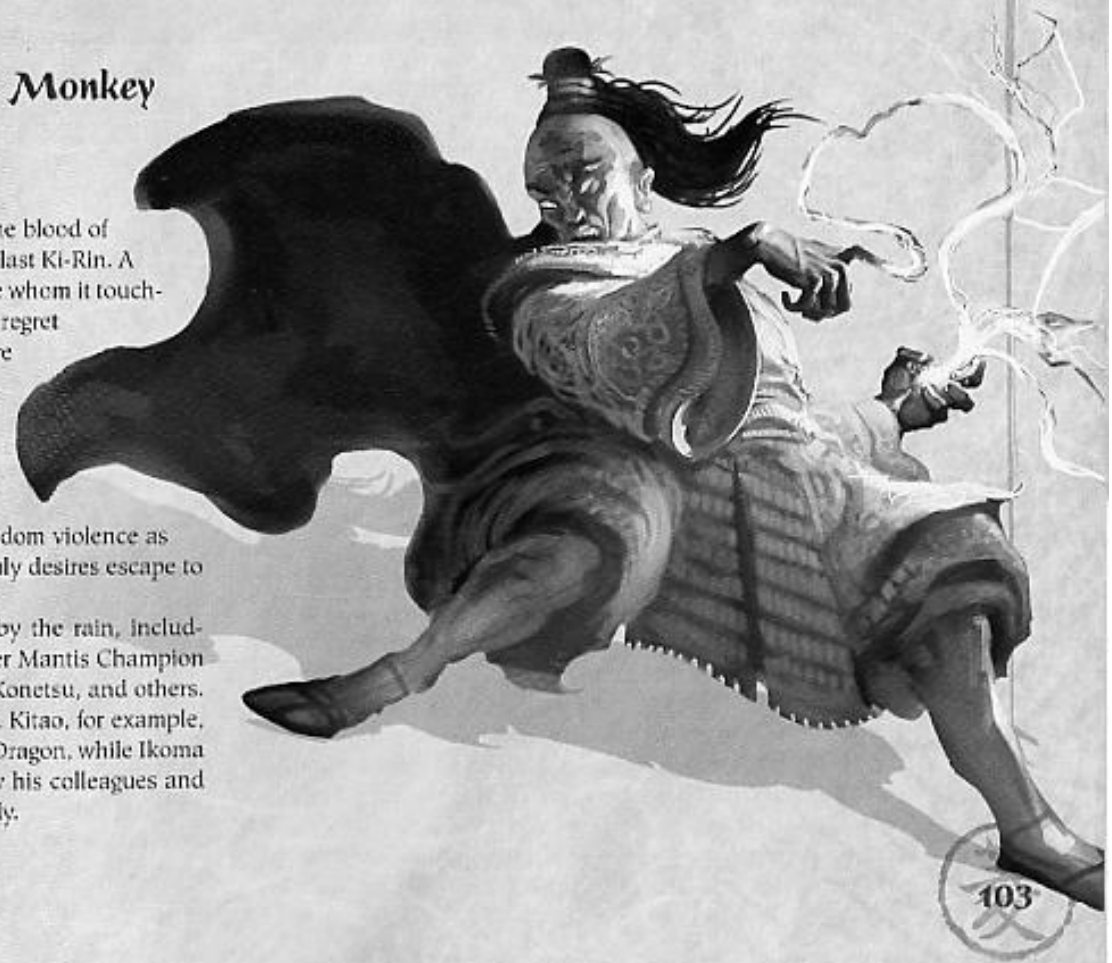
Though the Dragon are not untouched by the Rain of Blood, their strength is least diminished. The techniques of balance and meditation popular among their clan allow most to resist Iuchiban's call, and those who fall are swiftly struck down by their Mirumoto brethren. As a result, the Emperor commands the Dragon armies to restore order to the Empire in the rain's wake, granting them permission to move throughout the Empire in any way they deem fit in the pursuit of peace.

Year 1165, Month of the Monkey (Late Summer)

The Rain of Blood

Iuchiban conducts a horrible ritual using the blood of the Seven Thunders and the sacrifice of the last Ki-Rin. A rain of hot blood falls upon Rokugan. Those whom it touches are forced to face the fear, desire, and regret within themselves. If these weaknesses are not conquered, then the soul in question becomes Tainted and under Iuchiban's control. Chaos and riots consume the Empire in the rain's wake. Iuchiban exacerbates matters by commanding any soul for whom he has no use to cause as much random violence as possible to provide cover while those he truly desires escape to the Shadowlands.

Many prominent figures are corrupted by the rain, including the Lion general Akodo Tadenori, former Mantis Champion Yoritomo Kitao, prominent Crane courtier Konetsu, and others. Some manage to escape Iuchiban's control. Kitao, for example, is shielded from Iuchiban's by the Shadow Dragon, while Ikoma Tsai, a Kolat Master, is quickly subdued by his colleagues and taken to the Kolat's Hidden Temple for study.



The Birth of Tamago

Iuchiban's Ninube servants leave the cursed artifact, the Egg of Pan Ku, in a place where it is discovered by Kitsu family daimyo Kitsu Juri, who immediately reports its discovery to the Lion Champion. Concerned that if left unused it might do great damage, Matsu Nimuro determines that the only way to make sure it is used responsibly is to use it himself. Thus the Egg is used to produce an exact copy of Nimuro. The "twin" is named Tamago, and is left in the care of the Kitsu family while Nimuro leaves to see to his own affairs.

Unknown to Kitsu Juri, the "twin" is, in fact, the original Nimuro, disoriented and confused by the Egg's magic. The duplicate, born with all the memories of Nimuro, is aware of his counterpart's plans. Worried that if it is imprisoned in the Kitsu Tombs it might never have a chance to prove its own honor and courage, the Egg pretends to be the true Nimuro, leaving the true Nimuro in what Tamago hopes will be a temporary arrangement until the duplicate can prove itself.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

The characters are invited to a quiet night in a local tea house by an influential local samurai. The samurai's family and clan are left to the GM's discretion. If the characters are new to the area, the meeting's purpose is for the samurai to introduce himself to the characters, perhaps to thank them for their performance on a previous adventure or merely in an attempt to forge a new political contact. The chosen establishment is a favorite of their host because he enjoys flirting with a particular serving girl. The samurai is accompanied by two of his loyal, high-ranking retainers and two yojimbo, all of whom often accompany him on such social forays.

Focus

The characters meet the samurai at the appointed time, the Hour of the Dog. Night has fallen, and the air is strangely still, but the air is warm and pleasant. Guests often dine in the impressive, well-manicured garden, with paper lanterns carefully placed to provide pools of light that highlight the garden's beauty.

Conversation between the characters and their host proceeds pleasantly. The characters notice that their host is smitten with the girl who serves them their meal and tea. She brings one course after another. She is quite beautiful, graceful and well-mannered. While the samurai is polite enough, he is clearly smitten with her, a woman beneath his station. Perceptive characters notice that she is aware of this, and feels some discomfort, not wishing to insult or offend such an influential patron.

Strike

Black clouds laced with scarlet roil across the starry sky, accompanied by the distant rumble of thunder. Warm raindrops begin to fall, staining the gardens red. The Rain of Blood has begun. The formerly pleasant gathering erupts into horror. Unless the characters intervene, one of the samurai's bodyguards is consumed with shame and attempts to cut down his master for flirting with a peasant. Their host is wounded in the attack, but the other bodyguard strikes at his comrade. Their host is heedless of his wound, fawning over the peasant girl and offering her anything — his lands, his titles, his fortunes — for her love. The host's loyal retainers lunge at each other in fury. The PCs may wish to attempt to bring this situation to a peaceful end, but they may be too occupied trying to save their own souls from the Rain (see details on the effects of the Rain of Blood, later in this chapter).

Important NPCs During the Reign of Blood

Iuchi Katamari, the Doomseeker

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 4
Honor: 2.2 Status: 4.0 Glory: 4.3

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 4	Void: 4
			Agility: 4	

Advantages: Absolute Direction, Ally: Isawa Sezaru (4/2 points), Death Trance, Forbidden Knowledge (Khadi Lore), Great Destiny (Doomseeker), Luck (3 points)

Disadvantages: Driven (to avenge his family), Obligation (Adisabah the Cruel, 4 points)

Spells: (*denotes Innate Ability) By the Light of Lord Moon, Commune*, Counterspell*, Fires From the Forge, Importune*, Jade Strike*, Near to Ice, Path to Inner Peace*, Power of the Ocean, Sense*, Summon*, Symbol of Water, The Ties That Bind, Wave-Borne Speed, Yari of Air*

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Horsemanship 5, Hunting (Survival) 5, Investigation 3, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Lore: Khadi 6, Meditation 4, Spellcraft (Maho) 4, Spears (Nage-Yari) 4, Theology (Fortunes) 3

Katamari came from lowly beginnings. He was born out of wedlock, his father's identity unknown, a situation that shamed and disgraced his mother and himself. It was only on his mother's deathbed that she revealed the truth to Katamari: his father was Kaiu Kenru, the renowned armorsmith. Though Kenru knew of Katamari's birth, he never acknowledged his son, nor did his mother expose the truth and force Kenru to share in their shame. She had borne the dishonor with serenity until her death.

Furious, intending to avenge his mother's shame, Katamari set out for Kaiu lands. He discovered that Kenru was already dead. Kenru had been married during his affair with Katamari's mother, and had a son who now served as an Emerald Magistrate in Kakita Bogu. Katamari sought out Kaiu Kuma, seeking to punish him for his father's misdeeds. To Katamari's shock, Kuma was neither surprised nor willing to defend his father's dishonorable actions.

The young shugenja felt his rage bleed away. Realizing if he blamed Kuma for his father's actions he would be no better than those who spat upon his mother, he found himself adrift. Without his vengeance, he had nothing. Kuma impulsively offered Katamari a position as his yoriki. At Kuma's side, Katamari found respect and friendship. He was accepted as family. Though he quickly lost his heart to Kuma's wife, Sui, he kept his relationship pure and honorable and remained a steadfast defender of them both.

Then came Shahai.

Deluding and betraying them all, Shahai led Kuma into the Tomb of Iuchiban. She used Kuma's ancestral connection to the tomb's builder and Sui's Kitsu magic to pierce the Hidden Heart. Because Kuma had trusted too much, one of the greatest threats the Empire had ever known was released once more. Many nights Katamari wishes that it was he, not his brother and Sui, who perished in the Tomb that day. He does not fully trust the strange rakshasa who spared his life, but without the creature's aid he knows he stands no chance against the Bloodspeaker.

But is he falling for the same trap that destroyed Kuma by placing his trust in Adisabah? Katamari is uncertain. For now, the man known as the Doomseeker can only fight on and hope that one day he will find his vengeance.

ADISABAH THE CRUEL, RAKSHASA MASTERMIND

Air: 6	Earth: 5	Fire: 7	Water: 5
	Perception 8	Awareness 8	

Rolls When Attacking: 10k9 (with claws)
Rolls for Damage: 5k4 (with claws)
TN to be Hit: 30
Carapace: 6

SKILLS: Acting (Disguise) 6, Anatomy (Torture) 5, Athletics 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 6, Divination (Omens) 5, Deceit (Lying, Intimidation, Seduction) 8, Defense 4, Etiquette (Sincerity) 6, Iiujutsu 5, Hunting 4, Lore: History 6, Stealth 6

SPELLS: Adisabah does not cast spells as the shugenja of Rokugan understand them, but his strange magic allows him to invoke effects identical to those of the following spells as if they were cast by a Rank 5 shugenja: Dominate the Mind, Echoes of a Breeze, Essence of Air, Mists of Illusion, Reflections of Pan Ku, Secrets on the Wind, Teleport, Whispering Wind. Adisabah may also cast the following spells once per day, which do not count as maho: Bleeding, Choking Death, Curse, Stealing Breath.

RAKSHASA ABILITIES

Immunity: Adisabah is immortal, immune to aging, poison, and disease. It possesses an innate resistance to the magic of the kami and cannot be affected by elemental spells unless it chooses to be. Maho affects it normally.

Ivory Weakness: Weapons crafted from ivory ignore Adisabah's Carapace rating.

Shapeshifting: Adisabah may take the form of any humanoid creature it has encountered. This effect takes one round, and grants it an additional 2 rolled dice on all Acting, Disguise, and Sincerity rolls to impersonate the individual in question.

Devour Spirit: The round after killing an opponent, Adisabah may spend an entire round standing over the body and inhaling deeply. Adisabah may make a contested Willpower roll against the dead individual. If successful, it gains all the victim's memories and abilities and can change its form to that of the individual at will.

While in this altered form, Adisabah loses all its abilities (except for shapeshifting) and adopts the Skills, Advantages, Disadvantages, and Techniques of the victim. This form may be maintained indefinitely, but to do so risks being influenced by the spirit it has consumed. Every day, Adisabah must make a Willpower roll (TN equal to the individual's Insight Rank x 5 + 1 for every day in which the Rakshasa has spent at least half the day in the target's form). If Adisabah fails this roll, it gains the Honor Rank and some character traits of the dead target (GM's discretion) for one day. If Adisabah fails three of these rolls while possessing the same spirit, it permanently becomes the target, losing all Rakshasa abilities.

Adisabah can possess only one devoured spirit at a time. If it wishes to possess another spirit, it must first release any it possesses. To do so, it must spend a full round coughing violently. If Adisabah has failed any Willpower rolls to prevent being influenced by the spirit, it must make a Stamina roll (TN equal to 20 for one failed roll, 30 for two failed rolls) or it cannot release the spirit for another week. If the Stamina roll is successful or unnecessary, the lost spirit is vomited forth in a cloud of white mist and passes on to the afterlife.

Among rakshasa, Adisabah was always known as "the Cruel" for its ferocity in battle, but also for its curiosity regarding mortals — a curiosity that inevitably led it to torment and destroy them.

Its curiosity led Adisabah to travel from its home in the Ivory Kingdoms to the Burning Sands. There, it encountered Otomo Jama (younger brother to the Imperial Heir) and his three companions, Jama Suru, Asahina Yajinden, and Doji Tsugiko. The Rokugani had become lost in the desert. Intrigued by the web of ambition, hated, and devotion between them, it gave them sanctuary but crafted a special prison. So long as the four survived, all would remain healthy and strong. If Otomo Jama attempted to escape in any way, the spell would take his life but the others would be free. If any of the others escaped, they would be free, but the other three would die. If any one of them attacked one of the others, all four would perish.

They remained imprisoned for a time, while Otomo Jama learned as much as he could from Adisabah about gaijin magic. When he felt he was ready to venture out once more, he commanded Doji Tsugiko to kill herself. She willingly did so, freeing her beloved and his henchmen. Adisabah was intrigued, and continued to follow Otomo Jama for a time, aiding him in his quest to become a khadi. The outcast Hantei spurned his given name and took on a new one: Iuchiban. Too late did Adisabah realize the monster he had helped create, a menace that might one day even destroy the rakshasa themselves.

With Yajinden's aid, Adisabah began to form plans to one day destroy Iuchiban. From Yajinden, Adisabah learned the weaknesses of Rokugani magic. Adisabah combined this knowledge with its own, but was unwilling to oppose Iuchiban personally. Instead it passed the knowledge on to a band of wandering travelers within whom it sensed a curiously overdeveloped sense of honor. These travelers called themselves the Unicorn Clan.

When Adisabah learned that Iuchiban had been defeated and contained by mortals, it set aside its plans for the Doomseekers and came to Rokugan seeking to find the Bloodspeaker's heart. To Adisabah's chagrin, Iuchiban had already escaped his prison. The Bloodspeaker captured the rakshasa and, unable to find a way to kill the spirit, bound it in his own former tomb. Iuchiban was imprisoned there again not long thereafter, binding the two enemies together in mutual misery until both escaped in recent months.

Unwilling to fight Iuchiban itself, Adisabah has informed its mortal ally Iuchi Katamari of the Doomseeker tradition, as exemplified by the Clan War-era hero Iuchi Karasu. The sect, it tells Katamari, wages an endless battle against the heartless khadi sorcerers, such as Iuchiban has become. The Doomseekers were, in fact, created by Adisabah and Yajinden, an irony that amuses the rakshasa. To the mortal's credit, Katamari seems a bit more intelligent than its previous pawns, and Adisabah suspects Katamari has some inkling of the truth.

In the end, it does not matter, so long as Iuchiban is destroyed.

Part II
The Hidden City

The sun had not yet risen when Shiba Ameiko awoke. She was immediately alert, as she had trained herself to be. Innumerable things that dwelled in the Isawa Forest could threaten even a trained bushi, so it was best to be ready at all times when traveling the wilderness.

This was not her first extended patrol through this region. The Isawa enjoyed their reputation as the Empire's preeminent shugenja, and presented themselves as fearless, all-knowing pacifists. The truth was, however, that Mori Isawa was vast and mysterious, the home of spirits that even the Isawa did not fully understand. There were things that moved and dwelt within the woods that no man ever laid eyes upon, at least none who lived to speak of what they saw. The Isawa called upon their Shiba defenders to patrol the wilderness regularly. Their job was to defend, not hunt, but that did not mean that they were not on occasion hunted. So when Ameiko came awake an hour before sunrise, she quickly reached for her blade.

The weapon was gone. Ameiko gasped and cast about, trying to find it, but saw it nowhere. Instead, she saw a strange little lump of a man sitting on a log across from the campfire's embers, looking at her impatiently. "Good," he grumbled in an odd, scratchy voice. "You're awake."

Ameiko drew the knife that she kept tucked in her robe. "Where are my swords?" she demanded, her voice threatening.

"I put them out of reach, over there," the old man said, nodding to one side. "I feared you might react with violence. Fear not, I have not dishonored your swords. I, like you, am samurai. You will find my magistrate's papers with your weapons."

Ameiko frowned and carefully moved to take her swords. They were unharmed, as he had said, and there was a scroll accompanying them. She quickly glanced over them, her eyes narrowing. "These are the papers of an Agasha warden," she said.

"You actually read them?" The man sounded genuinely surprised. "No one ever does that."

"Who are you?" she demanded.

"Very well then," he grumbled, withdrawing a small jade seal from his robes and dusting it off. "Here." He tossed it to her.

She inspected it. "This is an Asako Inquisitor's seal. How do I know you did not steal this, and your papers?"

"If I took an Inquisitor's seal," he said irritably, "that would mean I had killed an Inquisitor, or at least robbed one and escaped undetected. Such a master criminal would hardly need one such as you, would he?" He rose and brushed crumbs from his robes. "I am Isawa Fosuta. Now that we have been introduced and we're both well rested, we should go. We have work to do."

"I am not going with you!" Ameiko hissed. "This is outrageous! What are you doing here?"

"There are men moving north through the forest. Their clothing and speech marks them as from all different regions of Phoenix lands. I thought perhaps they were simply ronin or criminals, but I followed them to make certain. Six hours ago, they attacked and killed a trio of ronin in the forest. After a brief ritual, the ronin rose and joined them on their journey."

"Undead," Ameiko said. She turned and spat. "Maho-tsukai."

"Bloodspeakers," Fosuta corrected. "They move north. They speak of others. I believe they are gathering, and I require aid to stop them."

Ameiko frowned. "There is nothing north of here. Where are they going?"

Fosuta shrugged. "Does it matter? They are Bloodspeakers. They have to die."

Ameiko considered it for a moment, then agreed. It did not matter. She quickly gathered her things and followed the little man into the forest.

Year 1165, Month of the Rooster (Early Fall)

The Doomseeker

For several months, the Unicorn shugenja Iuchi Katamari has been a guest of Adisabah the Cruel, a twisted rakshasa, in a cavern deep in the Burning Sands. Unable to leave, Katamari is forced to listen to the rakshasa's strange tales of the past. Adisabah reveals the truth of Iuchiban's origins — that Iuchiban was once the younger brother of the Emperor and, for a time, believed he would inherit the throne. The Bloodspeaker was driven mad when power was denied him. Adisabah also reveals how Iuchiban has become so uniquely powerful, via a mixture of Rokugani maho and gaijin khadi magic. While Adisabah is by no means a good or noble spirit, it thirsts for vengeance upon Iuchiban and is willing to help Katamari find a way to kill the Bloodspeaker. The rakshasa reveals to Katamari the ancient traditions of the Doomseekers, an order of holy men sworn to kill evils that cannot be killed.

Yajinden's Discovery

Iuchiban's chief lieutenant, the artisan Yajinden, discovers the existence of a previously unknown Spirit Realm, a realm of infinite power and potential, the Realm of Thwarted Destiny. This Realm has become a repository for lost souls, forever denied their destiny when the Lying Darkness caused Oblivion's Gate to open. While greatly intrigued by this discovery, Yajinden knows that he cannot safely enter the Realm himself, nor can he investigate too deeply without Iuchiban learning of and taking credit for his discovery. He will need an ally.

Emperor and Shogun

With the Rain of Blood throwing the Empire into chaos, the Unicorn Clan's plan to swiftly overwhelm the Lion in Kaeru Toshi is derailed. Both clans settle in for a grueling war. The Shogun mobilizes his forces to march on Kaeru Toshi and bring peace, but the Emperor hurriedly summons Kaneka to his presence.

Naseru suspects that Kaneka's intentions in Kaeru Toshi are less than honorable. As the Akodo and the Khan are both his former allies, he suspects that at best the Shogun plans to aid one side and claim the city's resources for himself, or at worst plans to unite both armies and march upon the capital. He thus commands Kaneka to not interfere, and instead dispatches him and his army to help the Crab defend the Kaiu Wall.

Insulted and embittered by the Emperor's distrust, Kaneka grudgingly agrees. In truth, he cannot deny Naseru's logic but it galls him just the same. As he prepares to march at the Emperor's command, he is approached by the Gozoku courtier Kakita Munemori, who sees a kindred spirit in the bitter and ambitious but honorable Shogun.

Year 1165, Month of the Rooster (Mid Fall)

Strange Allies

While the Onisu Kyofu and the tattooed madman Kokujin continue to gather those still loyal to the Dark Lord, Daigotsu seeks knowledge in the lands beyond Rokugan. Seeking knowledge of the khadi sorcerers, he meets with Ruqayah, a Kolat Master. As her sect is not loyal to Rokugan, Daigotsu believes she will be less prejudiced against him for his past actions. They strike an alliance between the Kolat and the Lost. In return for information about hidden Bloodspeaker sects, the Lost will act to destroy such sects in ways that the secretive Kolat cannot. Ikoma Tsai, the corrupted Kolat Master, is chosen as the liaison for this fragile new alliance.

Closer to home, the Unicorn Clan also make a fragile peace with Daigotsu's followers. When vengeful soldier Moto Latomu discovers the ancient writings of the maho-tsukai Kuni Nakanu, he immediately recognizes their value in the war against the Bloodspeakers. Sadly, he understands very little of them. Approaching a relatively honorable Lost samurai named Daigotsu Meguro, Latomu offers a copy of the book in return for whatever knowledge Meguro's allies can offer. While both sides are initially suspicious, both adhere to their side of the bargain honorably.

Year 1165, Month of the Dog (Late Fall)

Fires of the Hidden City

In an attempt to track his lost Bloodswords to their current locations, Iuchiban accidentally discovers the location of Gisei Toshi, the Hidden City of the Phoenix where that clan caches dangerous magical artifacts. Iuchiban dispatches his lieutenant Yajinden to begin an assault upon the Hidden City. In the meantime, he summons forth the monstrous Kusatte Iru, an oni prophesied to one day bring about the end of the mortal realm, and unleashes it upon Kyuden Isawa as a distraction for the Elemental Council.

Toku, daimyo of the Monkey Clan, is among the first to rush to the Phoenix Clan's aid, bringing with him a legion of Dragon Clan soldiers. Desperate to keep the Black Scrolls out of Iuchiban's hands, Toku, Crane warrior Doji Midoru, and Toku's son Kyoji flee the city with the ancient relics. Yajinden pursues them, forcing Toku to sacrifice his life to bring down an avalanche upon the immortal Bloodspeaker.

At Kyuden Isawa, the Phoenix are hard pressed by the Kusatte Iru. The Elemental Masters complete the spell that will return the beast to its sleep, but not before Isawa Taeruko, Master of Earth and senior member of the Council, is slain.

Iuchiban returns to take command of the assault just as the wayward general Shiba Aikune, bonded with the infinitely powerful artifact called Isawa's Last Wish, returns from self-imposed exile to defend his clan. Iuchiban boasts that all of this was according to his plan, that not only had he hoped for a chance to dominate the Last Wish, but that he manipulated events from his prison so that Aikune would find the Wish to begin with. Aikune does not believe Iuchiban, but nearly loses control of the Wish to Iuchiban, escaping only with the aid of his old friend, Master of Air Isawa Nakamuro. As the battle turns against the defenders, the Dragon soldier Mirumoto Kenzo takes up the Bloodsword, Ambition, from a ruined temple and wields it against the Bloodspeakers.



Aikune returns just as the Phoenix and Dragon troops are beginning a withdrawal from the city. He apparently loses control of the Last Wish and destroys the city. In reality, he has used the Wish to move Gisei Toshi from its current location, placing it deeper in the mountains beyond Iuchiban's grasp.

Year 1165, Month of the Boar (Late Fall)

Dawn of Enlightenment

In a hidden monastery deep in Rokugan's wilderness, the man known as the Hooded Ronin has lived in seclusion for decades. The descendant of Shinsei, he was the hero who gathered the Seven Thunders against Fu Leng at the end of the Clan War. On his deathbed he begs his son, Rosoku, not to abandon Rokugan during its time of need as all previous heirs to Shinsei have done.

Rosoku is torn between his father's final wish and Rokugan's need for Shinsei's descendants to survive until the next Day of Thunder. He decides to compromise. He crafts a number of challenges and presents them to the Emperor. Whoever can meet these challenges will have proven themselves enlightened, worthy of the secret volumes of Shinsei's wisdom known as the Books of the Five Rings. Having found such enlightened souls, Rosoku can confidently return to obscurity knowing that the Empire is in good hands.

Shinsei's descendant knows that he risks much by surfacing even for so brief a time, but he fears greater harm will come to Rokugan if he does nothing.

Rosoku's Challenges

The six challenges created by Rosoku and passed on by the Emperor are as follows:

The smith who can craft a helmet strong enough to shatter one thousand blades shall keep the Book of Earth.

The scholar who can contain one thousand years of learning on a single parchment shall keep the Book of Air.

The warrior who can defeat a thousand enemies in a single stroke shall keep the Book of Fire.

The general who can lead his armies from one end of the Empire to the other in a single night shall keep the Book of Water.

The sage who can perform a task greater than these four things combined shall keep the Book of the Void.

And to the soul who can master all five of these, an even greater gift — a collection of these five scrolls supplemented by ancient scrolls penned by the original Shinsei. Rosoku calls this volume the Book of Five Rings.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

The characters are traveling in the Empire's northern lands, near Phoenix territory, and encounter a wounded Phoenix shugenja. He hurriedly explains that he is being pursued by a cadre of Bloodspeakers, who want to steal an item in his possession. His wounds are hastily bound and he is exhausted from his flight. He is extremely suspicious of the player characters at first, wary that they might be Bloodspeaker spies.

Focus

The shugenja is a refugee from Gisei Toshi, who fled the city dodging Bloodspeaker legions. He has no nemuranai, as he claims, but were he to be captured his knowledge of the city's layout would be invaluable to the Bloodspeakers. He is deeply ashamed that he fled the battle, and does not readily admit his cowardice. If the player characters learn of the situation at Gisei Toshi and wish to offer aid, they need the fleeing shugenja's help to find the city.

Strike

Of course the Bloodspeakers remain to be dealt with. Consumed by his shame, the Phoenix may throw himself into desperate combat, hoping to die in battle with his enemies. Of course, if this happens the player characters will never learn the location of Gisei Toshi.



Important NPCs During the Hidden City

ISAWA NAKAMURO, MASTER OF AIR

SCHOOL/RANK: Isawa Tensai (Air) 5 [6]
HONOR: 3.3 STATUS: 8.0 GLORY: 5.1

Air: 6	Earth: 3 [4]	Fire: 4	Water: 3 [4]	Void: 3
	Willpower 5		Strength 5	

ADVANTAGES: Ally (Tamori Shaitung), Benten's Blessing, Friend of the Elements (Air), Higher Purpose (Peace for the Phoenix)

DISADVANTAGES: Idealistic, Sworn Enemy (Tamori Chosai), True Love (Tamori Shaitung), Unlucky (3 points)

SKILLS: Artisan (Bonsai) 2, Calligraphy 4, Courtier 5, Etiquette 4, Investigation 6, Lore: the Elements 5, Lore: the Oracles of Light 6, Medicine 4, Meditation 6, Spears 3 [5], Spellcraft (Air Knowledge) 7, Theology (Shintao) 4

SPELLS: As the Elemental Master of Air, Nakamuro has all known Air spells, many as Innate Abilities. His selection of other elemental spells is extensive, but not to the same extent as Air. Nakamuro may be assumed to have all non-Void elemental spells listed in Third Edition so long as he meets their requirements.



In his youth, Isawa Nakamuro was happy. He studied under the great sensei Isawa Sachi alongside Isawa Yaruko, the young woman he loved, and had drawn the attention of Agasha Gennai, the Master of Air. When his studies permitted, he loved spending time wandering the hills alongside Yaruko and his friend Shiba Aikune, the Phoenix Champion's son. Although he was not born to a prominent branch of the Isawa, Nakamuro had a strong affinity for air and enjoyed a carefree lifestyle.

The first blow to Nakamuro's world was when a marriage was arranged between Aikune and Yaruko. Although he had never confessed his feelings to Yaruko, Nakamuro was devastated. When Yaruko's father was killed by Yobanjin, it drove her and Aikune closer together, which pained Nakamuro greatly. Only a few years later, after the three of them passed their gempukku, Yaruko was among the Phoenix children kidnapped by the Steel Chrysanthemum's forces with the assistance of Dark Oracle of Fire Agasha Tamori. Nakamuro and Aikune accompanied Isawa Sachi in an attempt to rescue her, but the vengeful spirits murdered her to punish the Phoenix. Sachi took a terrible vengeance upon the spirits, but Aikune turned his wrath on Nakamuro. The pair's friendship was finished. To make matters worse, Yaruko's mother Taeruko, the Master of Earth, blamed both young men. In a single instant, Nakamuro lost everyone he had called a friend.

With little left in his life, Nakamuro threw himself into his studies, becoming Agasha Gennai's favored student. When the divisions among the Elemental Masters grew too great for his sensei to bear, Nakamuro found himself promoted to the position of Master of Air after Gennai retired in disgust. Isawa Taeruko's wrath had not diminished over time, and Nakamuro did not find his early years on the Council pleasant.

When the Dragon-Phoenix war was at its peak, Nakamuro and the other Masters were defeated in combat by the sheer audacity and selflessness of Tamori Shaitung. Shaitung and the Masters were cast deep into tunnels below the Dragon mountains, where they encountered and were defeated by the Dark Oracle of Fire. Nakamuro and Shaitung escaped, and Nakamuro attempted to ease tensions between the two clans by remaining in Dragon lands as a hostage. The two eventually returned and defeated the Dark Oracle, ending the war and discovering that they loved one another, even though they could not be together.

Recently, Nakamuro was among the foremost defenders of Gisei Toshi, the legendary Hidden City of the Phoenix. Nakamuro stood against the attacking Bloodspeaker army, accepting aid from outsiders for the first time in the city's history. Nakamuro was blessed by Bishamon during the battle, and his magic was essential in the city's defense. Many Phoenix learned to respect Nakamuro that day.

The current Council make-up is frustrating for Nakamuro. He and the Master of the Void Shiba Ningen are often allies, finding themselves in opposition to the traditionalist Doji Akiko and Isawa Sachi. Nakamuro's sister, Isawa Ochiai, is often the deciding vote, but to his consternation she sides with Akiko as often as Nakamuro.

TOKU, THE GENERAL

SCHOOL/RANK: Toku Bushi 5
HONOR: 3.8 STATUS: 7.7 GLORY: 5.4

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 3	Water: 4	Void: 4
Reflexes 4		Agility 5		

ADVANTAGES: Great Destiny, Luck (6 points)
DISADVANTAGES: Can't Lie, Idealistic
KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Water
SKILLS: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Courtier 3, Craft: Farming 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Hunting 6, Instruction 4, Investigation (Search) 6, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 6, Knives 4, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 4, Theology (Shintao) 4, War Fan 2

It is among the greatest ironies of Rokugan that one of the greatest heroes in the Empire's history began with such humble origins. His valor and honor elevated him above the circumstances of his birth and into history.

Toku's original name remains unknown. He was a peasant whose village was beset by bandits. Toku took up the blade of a dead samurai and defended his people. When the attack was at an end, the samurai who defended the village were dead. Toku claimed the blade and a Unicorn steed, and set out into the Empire to find his fortune as a ronin. He attracted little attention at first, and might well have come to nothing had it not been for the Clan War's onset. When the outcast Lion Champion Toturi began gathering his ronin army, Toku was among the first to join him.

Toku had no training whatsoever, and came close to death many times during the Clan War's early days. He was a bright lad with a quick mind, however, and soon became an adept warrior, developing his own style and techniques. In less than a year, he became one of Toturi's personal guard, the fabled Twelve Ronin. When Fu Leng was defeated on the second Day of Thunder, Toturi took the throne and offered Toku a position as captain of his Imperial Guard. Toku declined and confessed his origin as a peasant, asking only to be allowed one final act as a samurai: seppuku. Toturi refused and insisted not only on Toku's appointment as captain, but also as Champion of a new Minor Clan, the Monkey Clan.

The Monkey Clan became magistrates and soldiers for the Emperor. Under Toku's leadership, they gained more prestige than any other Minor Clan in history, save the Mantis. Toku forged an alliance with the Scorpion, marrying the Shosuro daimyo's sister Inao and having four children. His eldest, Miyako, became an officer under Toturi Tsudao in the First Legion. Though he and his wife had not married for love, Toku and Inao came to love one another dearly.

Toku was one of those who rode to defend Gisei Toshi when Iuchiban attacked the Phoenix city. When it was discovered that two Black Scrolls were among Gisei Toshi's treasures, Toku, Doji Midoru, and Toku's son rode south in an attempt to bear the dangerous artifacts out of the Bloodspeaker's grasp. Iuchiban's lieutenant Yajinden was too determined to be shaken. Toku took the only route he could, and bought his son time to escape with the scrolls by sacrificing himself. In his final act, Toku brought a landslide down upon the immortal sorcerer, giving Midoru and his son more than enough time to escape.

Part III
Wrath of the Emperor

Doji Kintaro tried his best not to fidget. He was waiting in a small and opulent chamber in the Imperial Palace. Three days ago, he had never seen the palace. He was a high-ranking magistrate of the Doji family, but his authority did not extend beyond Crane borders. He was content to serve his family, clan, and Empire by protecting his clan's interests at home. He had no ambition to serve among the Emerald Magistrates as so did so many of his fellow magistrates. Kintaro was a simple man. He desired only law and order, and believed such desires were worthy no matter the scale.

Doji Noriko smiled at the younger man. "Be at ease, Kintaro. Your presence here is an honor, not a punishment."

Kintaro smiled nervously. "Forgive my anxiety, Noriko-sama," he said. "The notion of a private audience with the Emperor... it is difficult for me to comprehend."

Noriko nodded. She was the senior magistrate for all Doji provinces. She reported directly to Doji Kurohito concerning the affairs of the dozens of magistrates under her command.

"You are a gifted magistrate," she offered. "Perhaps the Emperor has taken an interest in some matter you have investigated?"

Kintaro opened his mouth to explain that nothing he could have done would possibly be worthy of the Emperor's attention, but the sliding of a shoji screen interrupted him. He straightened his obi one final time and prepared himself.

A young woman entered the chamber. The breastplate of her golden armor was emblazoned with the Imperial chrysanthemum. She examined them both carefully, eyes drinking in every detail, and then glanced at the stand in the room's corner to ensure their swords were out of reach.

"Your Majesty," she said, bowing low, "we are ready."

Kintaro felt his heart skip a beat as Emperor Toturi III entered the chamber. He moved briskly, nodding to his bodyguard and scanning the chamber with an impatient eye. Kintaro knelt and placed his head against the floor, and saw Noriko do the same next to him.

"My Emperor," he whispered.

"Rise." The Emperor's voice was casual, unconcerned. "I have brought you here to recognize your valorous service. I apologize if I must be brief."

"A moment of your time is worth our lifetimes," Noriko said politely.

The Emperor favored her with a smile. "Doji Kintaro, my personal attendants have reviewed the records of your duty. One year ago, you exposed and executed a number of Bloodspeakers in your province, did you not?"

"I did, my lord." Kintaro's heart fell. "If I had been more vigilant, perhaps the Rain could have been avoided and more lives saved. I have dwelt on that failure. I do not know what I did wrong..."

"You did nothing wrong," the Emperor countered. "The Bloodspeakers know our tradition, our laws. They are adept at taking advantage of our adherence to protocol. For example — you turned everything over to your superior, Noriko-san, did you not?"

"Hai," Kintaro agreed.

The Emperor turned toward Noriko. "Curious, then, that the matter was not pursued, and that the documents were destroyed before they were ever entered into the Imperial records."

"A mistake on the part of my subordinates," Noriko said, sneering at Kintaro. "A regrettable mistake, but one that should not be held against Kintaro-san. I am sure he can explain…"

"No," the Emperor said. "You explain, Noriko. To my brother."

Noriko attempted to rise, reaching for something within her robes, but a pulse of heat erupted from the rear of the chamber. Kintaro looked up in shock as Noriko's charred body fell to the floor. Behind her stood a man in long red robes, his face covered with a white mask emblazoned with the rising sun.

This was Sezaru, the Emperor's brother, also known as the merciless Wolf.

Kintaro stood aghast. "What… what…"

"A Bloodspeaker, as I said." The Emperor looked at the twitching corpse with disgust. "Irie, summon the eta." He turned back to the Crane. "Your superior betrayed me, and she paid the price that all traitors will pay." There was a quiet, smoldering anger in his voice and eye. "You have been promoted. Remember what you have seen here."

Kintaro glanced over his shoulder. Sezaru's baleful gaze bore down on him coldly.

"Yes, my Emperor."

Year 1165, Month of the Rat (Early Winter)

Gozoku Slander

Supporters of the Gozoku begin to subtly denigrate the Emperor in court. They point to tragedies such as the Rain of Blood and the attack on Gisei Toshi, blaming the Emperor for his ineffectiveness in dealing with the Empire's enemies. Though Toturi III still commands a great deal of respect, even those who once revered him begin to wonder if his leadership can truly keep the Empire secure.

The Emperor's Challenge

Reacting violently to the attack on Gisei Toshi, Toturi III grants his brother, Isawa Sezaru, total authority in rooting out and destroying the Bloodspeaker menace. Even the Emerald and Jade Magistrates are subordinated to Sezaru and his hunters, and not even the Elemental Masters are immune to his authority. Though Jade Champion Asahina Sekawa is at first upset by this challenge to authority, he swallows his pride and allies himself with Sezaru so that together they might hunt out Iuchiban's hidden followers as efficiently as possible.

Further, the Emperor issues a formal challenge, carried throughout the Empire by his heralds. He commands the Bloodspeaker to gather his armies and meet him on the fields beyond Toshi Ranbo, to face those whom he has insulted with his very existence. The Emperor does not honestly expect Iuchiban to reply to the challenge so quickly after withdrawing from Gisei Toshi. The challenge is essentially an attempt to remind the people of Rokugan that the Emperor's strength is still greater than Iuchiban's. Though the result is not as universal a renewal of hope as the Emperor had hoped it would be, many commend him for his bravery and stand ready to defend the Imperial City in his name.

Rezan's Madness

Since the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, the poet Rezan has wandered the Empire seeking his lost love, his bride in life, a woman he never truly realized he loved until she was reincarnated in the mortal realm. From the lands of the Dragon Clan, he receives bitter news. A letter addressed to Rezan was discovered in the belongings of a young Mirumoto girl, a letter that revealed her as his reincarnated love. Sadly, the letter was neither completed nor delivered, as she was among those few Dragon souls corrupted during the Rain of Blood.

Crushed by grief, Rezan finds grim purpose — revenge upon Iuchiban. He sets out to ally himself with the man he feels can deliver this revenge to him with more certainty than any other — the Dark Lord, Daigotsu.

Bidding farewell to his closest friend, Imperial Herald Miya Shoin, Rezan takes up his sword and walks into the Shadowlands alone.



Year 1165, Month of the Ox (Mid Winter)

Aramasu's Pride

On the remote island of Aramasu's Pride, Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi uncovers a conspiracy between a Mantis captain and a disgraced Dragon samurai. The Dragon, Mirumoto Gengyo, had once served the renowned general Mirumoto Junnosuke but had retreated into the mountains following his master's disgrace, and had since come to command a large Yobanjin tribe. The Mantis captain, Yoritomo Chimori, had been supplying Gengyo with food and weapons skimmed from his recent piratical activities in return for rare Yobanjin treasures. Gengyo had intended to use these supplies to mount a vengeful strike against the weakened Phoenix Clan. Gengyo recognizes Hachi in his guise as a lowly magistrate and attacks him, only to be slain by the Emerald Champion.

In return for rooting out Chimori's criminal activities, Mantis Champion Yoritomo Kumiko promises to halt all unprovoked naval attacks for two years. Chimori, guilty of no official crime, is reassigned as a diplomat in Sparrow lands. As Chimori was personally responsible for sinking a Sparrow vessel, he is slain in a duel by the Kakita-trained son of the Sparrow Clan daimyo two weeks later.

Keeper of Air

When a shrine containing the Dark Covenant of Fire is attacked by unknown assailants, forces in the Dragon and Phoenix Clan are quick to blame one another. The confrontation seems poised to explode into violence when Mirumoto Masae, sister of Mirumoto daimyo Mirumoto Rosanjin, intervenes. She scolds the leaders of both sides for their arrogance, brandishing the treaty that promised peace between the two clans, reminding them that their mutual duty to stand against the Shadowlands surpasses the petty need to cast blame. Shamed by their actions, both sides bow to her wisdom. Shortly thereafter, Masae discovers the Book of Air.

Year 1165, Month of the Tiger (Late Winter)

Yajinden's Return

Iuchiban's lieutenant, Yajinden, finally frees himself from the rubble where he has lain imprisoned since the battle of Gisei Toshi. From the vaults of the Hidden City he has recovered a prize — a pearl containing the soul of the villainous Kuni Yori, a villain of the Clan War era. He strikes a bargain with Yori, offering freedom in return for Yori's investigation of the Realm of Thwarted Destiny. Yori begins gathering damned spirits to aid him in the conquest of this new Spirit Realm.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

In spite of its prominent role in restoring order after the Rain of Blood, the Dragon Clan has received little gratitude from the rest of the Empire. In fact, many Clans expressed indignation at the Dragon's role, interpreting it as implying that they could not protect their own holdings. During their travels, the player characters encounter a group of Dragon soldiers surrounded by a patrol of local magistrates who are unaware of the Dragon's newly granted powers. The magistrates have questioned the authenticity of the Dragon's Imperial charter. The Dragon have endured the suspicion patiently, but tempers are clearly beginning to fray.



Focus

The PCs have stumbled onto a difficult situation. If the magistrates kill or arrest the Dragon squad, the Emperor's other servants (and the Dragon Champion) will be enraged and seek justice. If the Dragon are forced to kill or flee the magistrates, they will lose a great deal of respect from the very citizens whom they are endeavoring to protect.

Strike

If the player characters are noticed, astute players may realize there is no true way to withdraw gracefully. Either side could rightly blame them for not aiding a peaceful solution when they had the opportunity — they might be branded as cowards or worse. The player characters must find a way to broker peace between the Dragon troops and the locals or, failing that, withdraw honorably before the fighting begins.

NPCs During Wrath of the Emperor

Kakita Munemori, Simple Courtier

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 4 [5]
Honor: 2.1 (3.1) Status: 2.8 Glory: 2.7

Air: 5	Earth: 2 [3]	Fire: 4	Water: 2 [3]	Void: 3
	Willpower 4	Intelligence 6	Perception 5	

Advantages: Crafty, Perceived Honor (1)
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Hedonist), Small, Lechery (2 points)
Skills: Courtier 6 [7], Etiquette 6, Etiquette (Seduction) 7, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: History 4, Lore: Imperial Courts 6, Tea Ceremony 4, Theology 3, Underworld 2 [4]

Although there are those who fear his influence, and others who consider him a worthy rival in the courts, very few who have ever met Kakita Munemori truly respect him. This is exactly as Munemori wishes it. He has spent his entire life crafting an image as a hedonist, a lecher, a drunkard; a man of no honor. Those who believe his image disregard him utterly, making them easier to deal with. Those who see past his façade are threats, and can be treated with more attention and resources than the mindless masses who are incapable of seeing the truth.

In his youth, Munemori was a promising student of Kakita Yoshi. His favored status earned him the enmity of his fellow students, but Munemori did not care. He did not seek to build alliances, but rather worked to make an impression only on the truly powerful among the courts, impressing them with his skill and discretion. Those who were unimportant, he impressed as little more than a foolish youth.

Munemori was among the first contacts made by Bayushi Atsuki when the Scorpion mastermind began marshalling allies outside his clan. Atsuki believed that Munemori was a like-minded spirit, and in some respects he was correct. The courtier did agree with the Gozoku philosophy of a sole Emperor being unable to rule, but he did not believe Atsuki's claims that he did not desire power for himself. Munemori was far cannier than the Scorpion believed, and he recognized lust for power when he saw it. Nevertheless, Munemori accepted his offer to join the Gozoku, and began carefully planning a means of removing the mastermind's malevolent influence from it.

For the past few years, Munemori has worked tirelessly in expanding the Gozoku, but only with individuals who he believes will join him in opposing Atsuki. Even the Shogun found Munemori's offer too tempting to pass up, and now that the Crane has allowed certain evidence of Atsuki's history with the Shadowed Tower to fall into Kaneka's hands, he hopes that the Gozoku can become what it was always meant to be.

Utagawa, Ronin Duelist

School/Rank: Ronin Duelist 3
Honor: 3.6 Status: N/A (Ronin) Glory: 1.1

Air: 3	Earth: 2	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Reflexes 4	Stamina 4			

Advantages: Ebisu's Blessing, Inheritance (Wakizashi), Quick
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Small, Social Disadvantage (3 points)
Kata: Striking as Fire, Striking as Void, The World is Empty
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle (Skirmish) 2, Craft: Weaponsmithing 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Hunting (Survival) 3, Iaijutsu 5, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Stealth 2, Theology 3, Underworld 2

Ronin are generally overlooked by most samurai. When they are noticed, they tend to be treated with disdain, hostility, or at best forced politeness. Those who travel as wave men learn to overcome this hardship, though for many it remains a source of anger and simmering resentment that haunts them until their dying day.

Utagawa prefers it.

The ronin called Utagawa was once a samurai in a minor vassal family that served the Isawa. Even among vassals, she was of low standing, and was content to pursue a life of obscurity. The talent that changed her life was her skill with crafting steel. Her craftsmanship was such that she was given the privilege of forging katana for her tiny family. A representative from the Isawa even came to inspect her work, and though the shugenja was sparse with his praise, he seemed pleased with her skill. It was the man's yojimbo, however, that changed Utagawa's destiny.

The yojimbo's name was Reikado, and he had once been ronin. He visited Utagawa frequently, and the two became friends. He taught her to use the blade as well as create it, and many other things besides. In time, he confided in her regarding his ancestry: he was the scion of a long, doomed line that traced its roots back to the Snake Clan, destroyed centuries ago. More to the point, he told her of Asako Mishime, the Phoenix who had betrayed his clan so that the Chuda family could be born again in the Shadowlands. So long as the Chuda existed, Reikado's honor could never be cleansed.

In time, the elderly Reikado died. He left his wakizashi, an ancient relic of the Snake Clan, to Utagawa, and begged her to cleanse his honor. She swore that she would. She crafted a katana to match the exquisite wakizashi and, knowing that her vows to the Phoenix would never allow her to pursue justice for Reikado, she abandoned her lords and became ronin.

For now, Utagawa roams the Empire honing her skills. One day she will fulfill her vow and kill Chuda Mishime, but she is not yet ready. Until that day comes, she spends each day perfecting her art.

Part IV
Web of Lies

The Lion troops drilled for countless hours. If this was their daily routine, it was a marvel that they had enough energy to engage in battle. Then again, if they endured such rigors without complaint, perhaps that was how they had endured the long and grueling conflict against the Unicorn.

Toru sat unmoving amid the rocks, watching the troops with a bored expression. He had been studying their movement for nearly four days, and the regimented routines of the Lion armies had long since become tedious. He took a bite of a rice ball, chewing absently, eating more out of ennui than hunger. This was by far among the least pleasant duties he had performed.

"Do not move!"

Toru was almost relieved. He stopped chewing and raised his hands carefully. "May I turn around?"

"Slowly," was the answer. Toru rose and turned slowly, as instructed. Three Lion bushi faced him, blades drawn. Two bore the Matsu mon. One bore the Akodo mon and the markings of a gunso, a sergeant in the Lion army. He was the one who had spoken. "What is your purpose here? Whom do you serve?"

"I serve no one," Toru answered. "I am ronin."

"A likely story," one of the Matsu sneered. "The Khan is not above disguising his scouts. Let me deal with him!"

"Wait," the Akodo answered. "What is your name, ronin?"

"Toru," the ronin answered. "I once served the Scorpion, long ago. Now, I serve whomever the Fortunes command." He licked his lips. "I had hoped perhaps to find service with the Lion. Will your commander see me?"

The second Matsu scowled. "The Lion have no need of filthy wave men!"

"Toru," the gunso said. "I have heard that name. A Scorpion, you say?"

"Wait," the first Matsu said. "The one cast out for cowardice? Or was it honesty?" He laughed. "What a poor Scorpion you were!"

Toru looked down. "I am a loyal servant. Does the division assembled below require scouts?"

"Bah," the second Matsu scoffed. "There are two divisions with full scout support. We have no need of you!"

"Of course," Toru said. "I am sorry. I will leave immediately."

"Do so quickly," the Akodo said. "We will not be merciful if we see you again."

Toru nodded, grabbed his pack and left. As he walked away he smiled. Two divisions with full scout support. His masters in the Scorpion Clan would be pleased by such information.

Year 1166, Month of the Hare (Early Spring)

Glory of the Shogun

The Shogun's armies arrive in Toshi Ranbo in force. The Emperor is initially outraged at Kaneka's defiance of his edict to guard the wall, but Kaneka replies that the Emperor's command was to defend the Empire against the Bloodspeakers. With the Emperor's recent challenge to the Bloodspeakers, it would be foolish for the Shogun to leave his Emperor undefended. The Emperor mistrusts the Shogun's true motives, but finds he cannot argue further without appearing to have similarly selfish motives.

Hour of the Wolf

In the northern regions of the Empire, Isawa Sezaru faces two of Iuchiban's most powerful lieutenants, Jama Suru and Mohai. He narrowly defeats them both, surviving only due to the timely arrival of Iuchi Katamari. From the Doomseeker, Sezaru learns of Iuchiban's origins and realizes that to defeat the Bloodspeakers he must learn more. The two of them venture beyond Rokugan's borders into the Burning Sands.

Year 1166, Month of the Dragon (Mid Spring)

Death of Agasha Hamanari

The seer Agasha Hamanari begins to rouse from his fit of prophecy, but one of Sezaru's hunters provides proof that Hamanari is allied with the Bloodspeakers. The hunter puts Hamanari to death, only to have his evidence and testimony demonstrated to be spurious shortly thereafter. The Elemental Council arrests and executes the rogue shugenja.

Though the matter is swiftly exposed, the fact remains that one of Sezaru's chosen hunters has unjustly put to death one of the few men in Rokugan who demonstrated an ability to predict and defend against Iuchiban's actions.

Most are so intent on demonizing the absent Sezaru and his "renegade" hunters that few stop to question where the false evidence came from. Those few who do seek the truth are quietly silenced by the Gozoku lord Bayushi Atsuki's agents as he continues to fan the flames of suspicion against the Emperor.

The Iron Citadel

Iuchiban long ago removed his own heart in a khadi magic ritual. He gave his heart to his loyal vassal, Jama Suru, so that it could be hidden where Iuchiban's enemies would not locate it or guess at its significance. With Suru's death, Iuchiban must now seek out his own heart and reclaim it so that it can again be safely hidden. Sensing that the heart is somewhere within Oto-san Uchi, he moves his forces there, claiming that he wishes to retake the former Imperial Capital as his new base of operations. Using a Black Scroll recovered by his minions, he constructs an Iron Citadel on the ruins of the former Imperial Palace.

Rise of the Gozoku

Seppun Toshiaki, leader of the Emperor's Hidden Guard, reveals his Gozoku affiliations to the Emperor. Those who would seek to usurp the Emperor's power now stand even among his most trusted protectors. The Emperor realizes how deeply Gozoku influence has spread, and can trust only a select few. Toshiaki is permitted to retain his position, as the Emperor keeps his enemy under his watchful eye.

Year 1166, Month of the Serpent (Late Spring)

The Legion of the Dead

In reaction to the corrupted spirit Kuni Yori's invasion of the new Spirit Realm, the Realm of Thwarted Destiny begins seizing souls of dead heroes from other Realms for defense. Iuchiban senses this spiritual activity but, ironically, fails to detect that Yori and his own lieutenant Yajinden are responsible. The paranoid Bloodspeaker believes that the Realm of Thwarted Destiny is gathering heroes to destroy him, and he commands Yajinden to mount a defense. Yajinden gladly complies, adding the damned spirits Iuchiban offers him to the army that Kuni Yori already leads, creating a Legion of Blood.

As the Legion of Blood and Legion of the Dead gather to do battle on the gray, formless plains of the Realm of Thwarted Destiny, many of the heroes begin to fear for the mortal realm. Naka Kuro reveals that Toku, who now stands with the Legion of the Dead, unknowingly has the secret of locating Iuchiban's heart. If the battle in the Realm of Thwarted Destiny should ultimately consume the souls who fight there, that secret will be forever lost. The Legion of the Dead embark on a desperate gambit to send one soul back through that realm's analogue of Oblivion's Gate, so that their descendants will have a chance to fight. In the meantime, Kuni Yori has also discovered that this Realm's Gate still has enough power to send one soul back to the mortal realm, and plans to use it to restore his own life.

Neither side realizes that this very battle will determine the balance of this Realm. Should the Legion of the Dead triumph, the Realm of Thwarted Destiny will become a place of boundless hope. If the Legion of Blood triumphs, it will become a foul and hellish place.

Ultimately it is a hero, former Crab Champion Hida Kisada, who fights his way through the Gate first. Kuni Yori flees to unknown reaches of the Spirit Realms. The soul of Sanzo, a troubled ronin hero, becomes the guardian spirit of this new Realm, which he names Maigo no Musha.

Daigotsu's Soul Recovered

Behind the battle in the Realm of Thwarted Destiny, Yajinden has even greater plans. Having encouraged Kuni Yori to escalate the conflict, his secret ally the Shadow Dragon reveals the existence of the new Spirit Realm to the gods of Meido. The Lords of Death turn away from their duties, seeking to interfere in the battle. The Fortune of Death Emma-O is similarly distracted when the soul of former Crane Champion Doji Satsume escapes the new Realm with the Shadow Dragon's aid and intrudes into Meido, seeking his dead wife's soul. While the protectors of Meido are not paying attention, Daigotsu Hoturi steals into Emma-O's fortress and rescues the imprisoned half of Daigotsu's soul. The Shadow Dragon returns the lost half of Daigotsu's soul to the Dark Lord on Yajinden's behalf, fully restoring the Dark Lord's former power.



Year 1166, Month of the Horse (Early Summer)

War of the Rich Frog

Veteran officer Ikoma Otemi steps into a position of command in the City of the Rich Frog shortly after Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro — actually, the duplicate of him created by the Egg of Pan Ku — orders the previous commanding officer to commit seppuku for his failure. Otemi coordinates the defense as best he can, but "Nimuro's" commands become increasingly random and erratic. Finally, "Nimuro" returns to take a personal hand.

The War of the Rich Frog comes to a bloody end on the fields of Sukoshi Zutsu, an insignificant village near the larger city. It is here that the Unicorn Khan Moto Chagatai slays the duplicate Nimuro in personal combat. Chagatai comes away with an empty feeling, sensing that the foe he has defeated was not truly the Lion hero he expected to face. The Lion seem similarly unwilling to fight after it is revealed that forces within their own Kaeru vassal family were secretly aiding the Unicorn. The Unicorn surrender their claim on Kaeru Toshi, though they keep Sukoshi Zutsu. The village quickly becomes a formidable Unicorn military outpost.

Ikoma Otemi is named Lion Clan Champion until such a time as Nimuro's heir is of age.



Adventure Hook

Challenge

The party has been dispatched to Toshi Ranbo to offer their services in securing the Imperial City. The Shogun has offered his troops to guard the Emperor from the Bloodspeakers, and many other lords have also sent honor guards to show their dedication to the Emperor.

Focus

Not long after their arrival, the player characters note the tensions between the Shogun's forces and the local Emerald Magistrates. Though matters are not yet violent, observant characters can see a growing schism between the Shogun's followers and the Emperor's.

Strike

The player characters' arrival has not gone without notice. The Emperor has been busily gathering whatever allies he can trust; if the party has served his interests in the past, he may contact them again in his efforts to root out the Gozoku. The Shogun may also take an interest in the player characters, seeking kindred spirits to help him restore ultimate order to the Empire.

NPCs During Web of Lies

Moshi Mogai, Master of Pain

School/Rank: Moshi Shugenja 2 / Maho-Tsukai 1 [2]
Honor: 1.1 Status: N/A Glory: –2.3 (Infamous)

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 2 [3]	Void: 2
		Intelligence 4	Perception 4	

Shadowlands Taint: 3.8

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Luck (6 points), Voice
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse
Skills: Anatomy (Torture) 6 [7], Calligraphy 3, Craft: Sailing 3 [5], Divination 4 [6], Games: Go 3, Knives 3 [5], Lore: Shadowlands 2 [4], Medicine 5, Meditation 2, Spellcraft 4 [5], Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 1, Theology (Fortunes) 3
Spells: Bleeding, [Choking Death], Drain Soul, Fires from Within, Fist of Osano-Wo, Fury of Osano-Wo, Ignite, Path to Inner Peace, Purify Water, Tempest of Air, Wave-Borne Speed

For most of his life, Moshi Mogai was content to serve his family and clan without complaint or ambition. None could accuse him of being a poor vassal, but by the same token none would have referred to him as particularly skilled. Mogai simply existed, fulfilling his duties in a desultory way and pursuing whatever mundane pastimes captured his attention. Mogai found himself serving as a minor functionary at the Moshi estate in the Mantis Islands when he first saw Yoritomo Yoyonagi.

Yoyonagi was a brilliant, gifted young courtier serving the Mantis as a representative to the Imperial Court. It was rare for her to make the journey back to the islands, as her duties mostly kept her on the mainland. During her visit, however, she passed Mogai in the corridor, never noticing the older man's dumbstruck expression or pale countenance. She had far more important things on her mind, after all.

Mogai was spellbound. Yoyonagi was the most beautiful creature he had ever seen, more captivating than even the exquisite paintings and depictions of Amaterasu in his homeland. He was smitten, and asked everyone he knew about the young courtier. He never gathered the courage to speak to her directly, of course, but even after she left the island, she was never far from his thoughts.

Other Mantis found the notion of Mogai's interest in Yoyonagi wildly amusing. How could so shabby a man have any hope of winning a beauty's heart? Yoyonagi was his superior in every possible way. Their laughter pained him, but Mogai ignored it. He would not surrender his dreams, not after a lifetime of having none.

In time, Mogai's inquiries became so tiresome that he was assigned to duty aboard a kobune. As fate would have it, he served the former Champion Yoritomo Kitao, a woman with no patience and little mercy. Serving under her was miserable, and Mogai's only relief was the thought of his beloved. He endured further ridicule, but paid it no attention. It was under these circumstances that Kitao's vessel was caught in the storm known as the Rain of Blood.

The Rain transformed Mogai. The bitter resentment and hostility that had brewed in his heart for years exploded forth, overwhelming him. Mogai accepted the Rain's siren call and embraced the power of corruption, vowing to take Yoyonagi for himself and to punish all those who had mocked him. His newfound certainty and confidence transformed him from a shabby, disrespected shugenja into a wrathful, wicked man capable of terrible deeds. Kitao approved, and made him her new first mate once Mogai had killed his predecessor.

Mogai now sails with the Dark Wave, a fleet of vessels manned by those corrupted in the Rain. He is Kitao's second-in-command, and her enforcer. Those whom the Dark Wave captures are brought before him for interrogation. None can endure his attention, and all eventually die. He is the Master of Pain, and he will taste the blood of all who have mocked him. Once he has had his vengeance, Yoyonagi will be his.

Kakita Korihime, Champion of Duty

SCHOOL/RANK: Kakita Bushi 3
HONOR: 2.9 STATUS: 2.2 GLORY: 3.1

Air: 4	Earth: 2	Fire: 3	Water: 2	Void: 3
	Willpower 5	Agility 5		

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Kakita Noritoshi, 4/1 points), Benten's Blessing, Great Destiny, Great Potential (Iaijutsu)
DISADVANTAGES: Sworn Enemies (many duelists)
KATA: Kakita's First Stance, One Leg Stance, Striking as Fire
SKILLS: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 7, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 4, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology (Shintao) 3

Kakita Korihime is still a young woman, but already her life has proven to be an exceptional one. While still a child, before training for her gempukku ceremony, she displayed an incredible talent for Iaijutsu. By the time she reached her gempukku, she had caught the eye of every sensei at the Kakita Dueling Academy, including Grand Master Kakita Noritoshi. Five years after her gempukku, every duelist in the Crane lands knows her name, and Noritoshi has taken her on as his personal student. On more than one occasion, he has publicly said that she will soon surpass him.

The talented Korihime has received many prestigious appointments from her lord, and has been called upon to demonstrate her skill for daimyo throughout the Empire. In the process, she has been forced to accept challenges from headstrong duelists who wish to best the greatest student of Iaijutsu the Crane have seen in centuries. Korihime has never been defeated, but more than once has been forced to kill an opponent. The deaths weigh upon her.

During an appointment to Toshi Ranbo, Korihime was overwhelmed with the demands placed on her in court. She took a brief leave from the city, traveling at random, and stumbled upon a small village. She stopped to pray at a temple there, hoping for guidance. Instead, she found a mysterious monk named Koan and a number of other samurai, some there by chance and others brought by the monk. The seven engaged in a spirited debate, spurred on by the monk asking what the true meaning of bushido was. The seven never came to an agreement, but through the debate Korihime came to understand that, to her, the principle of duty was the overriding motivation of her life. Even as this understanding came to her, a large force of bandits attacked the village. Korihime and the others defended the village and the temple, preventing great loss of life and utterly defeating the bandits. In the aftermath, there were many questions about both Koan and the bandits, but the monk had disappeared and the bandits fought to the death.

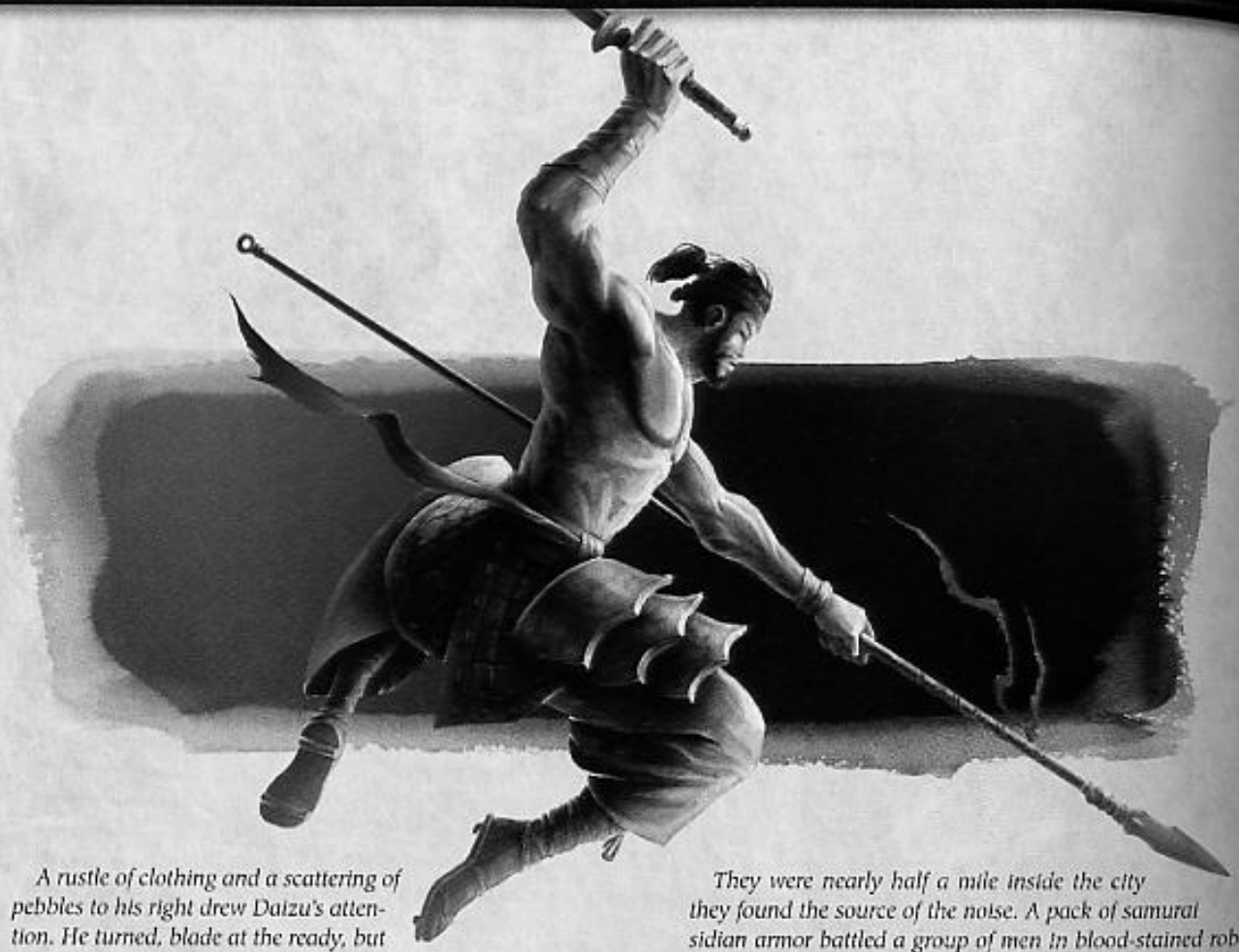
Korihime has returned to her duties with a zeal befitting a true champion of bushido. For a time, she put the mysteries of the village behind her, but recently she received a message from Koan, asking only if she was prepared to learn the true meaning of bushido after all. She has not yet decided what the note means.

Part V
Enemy of My Enemy

If the sun ever shone over the ruins of Otosan Uchi, then Hida Daizu could not imagine what it must look like. Today the sky was thick with clouds, swollen and angry with the promise of storms. Even as the thought occurred to him, there was a rumbling on the horizon, a distant thunder that promised nature's fury would be unleashed. Perhaps even the elements despised the Heartless, Daizu thought, and the storm has come to wash away the stain of his presence from the Empire.

Daizu returned his attention to the task at hand. He was crouched just inside the shattered remains of the exterior city wall. The peasant huts and ramshackle buildings outside the wall lay in ruins. There was little to mark the former splendor of the city except scattered handfuls of crushed stone and rotten wood.

The Crab warrior squatted unmoving in a pile of stone and debris, his specially crafted armor helping him to blend in with the rocks. Unless someone looked closely, they would never notice him. He looked about, searching for his comrade, for any glimpse of Crab colors amid the stark gray surroundings.



A rustle of clothing and a scattering of pebbles to his right drew Daizu's attention. He turned, blade at the ready, but quickly lowered his weapon with a curse.

"Why frighten me, Shara? I might have ruined something beautiful."

The lithe Hida warrior smiled wryly. "Flattery, Daizu?" she asked.

"I was talking about my sword," he said, turning back to watch the ruins. "I'm sure your armor would dent it."

Shara chuckled. "Daizu-san," she cooed. "Just because you lumber through life with the grace of a drunken ogre does not mean I have to."

"Wit and beauty," Daizu said dryly. "What a husband you will make!" He grinned at her. "What have you found?"

"Very little," she said, frowning. "A wounded Nezumi that ran from me before I could speak to it. A handful of bakemono feasting on a dead ronin. And something else... something watching me. I caught only a glimpse of it. I think it might have been a Tortoise scout."

"Alive?" Daizu asked.

"Frightened," Shara said, "but alive. Maybe if he stays frightened he'll stay alive."

"Shh!" Daizu waved for silence. "I hear something."

Shara said nothing, listening intently. After a moment, she nodded and pointed to the northeast, toward the city's center. Daizu crept forward slowly, but with surprising stealth. Shara followed, moving much more easily.

They were nearly half a mile inside the city when they found the source of the noise. A pack of samurai in obsidian armor battled a group of men in blood-stained robes. The samurai were obviously Lost, the corrupted samurai who served Daigotsu. The robed men were Bloodspeaker cultists. Shara gestured toward her blade, but Daizu shook his head and gestured back the way they had come. He withdrew silently, careful not to alert the others to their presence.

"What are you doing?" she demanded. "Those were Iuchiban's servants!"

"Those Bloodspeakers are no match for the Dark Lord's magistrates," Daizu said. "Our enemy is already dead."

"The Dark Lord's soldiers are our enemies too, Daizu," she hissed.

"Not today," he said uneasily.

Shara stared at Daizu for a long time. Her hard gaze softened, and she let the matter drop. The two Crab slipped back into the shadows, moving back through the ruins toward the Great Bear's army.

Year 1166, Month of the Goat (Mid Summer)

The Underhand

Growing bolder by the day, Gozoku conspirator Bayushi Atsuki dispatches several assassins to eliminate Scorpion Champion Bayushi Sunetra, who he suspects is close to learning of his existence. The assassins fail, and Sunetra disappears, hurrying to the Imperial City to warn the Emperor of what has happened. The Emperor realizes that if he is to fight the Gozoku, he cannot do so publicly. He can only trust a select few — Sunetra among them. He commands Sunetra to step down as Scorpion Champion and become his personal spy and assassin, as she was before his coronation. Sunetra agrees, passing her title to the worthy Legionnaire Bayushi Paneki.

The Emperor's Wedding

A temple to Toku, newly named Fortune of Virtue, is dedicated in Ryoko Owari. Emperor Toturi III is secretly married to his betrothed, Akodo Kurako, in the temple the night before it is opened to the public. The bold move surprises even Hidden Guard commander Seppun Toshiaki, who believed the Emperor could not act without the Gozoku being aware of it.

Shortly after the revelation, Bayushi Sunetra leads Bayushi Atsuki's henchman, Bayushi Kamnan, into an ambush of vengeful Mantis samurai led by the brutal Yoritomo Naizen. Bayushi Baku, the vengeful Scorpion ghost, is among her allies. Once Kamnan is slain, Baku seizes the traitor's soul and devours it, allowing him to appear as Kamnan once did and act as Sunetra's spy within the true Gozoku.

Year 1166, Month of the Monkey (Late Summer)

Keeper of Earth

When a jade vein in the lands of the Badger Clan collapses, the Badger are quick to blame their Yobanjin neighbors, the Mountain Wind Tribe. Kaiu Tasuku, an arrogant samurai seeking to win Rosoku's Challenge of Earth, plans to help the Badger conquer their enemies in return for a rare iron ore found in their lands, which he believes he can use to craft the helmet in question.

Tasuku's advisor Sugimoto, an elderly Kaiu gravely wounded in the Dark Lord's invasion of Otosan Uchi years before, intervenes. He feels the Yobanjin are innocent of the Badger's accusations. When his courage is called into question, Sugimoto slams his helmet upon the map table where the officers plan their strategy, insulting them for having forgotten their true duty. The assembled officers realize the wisdom of Sugimoto's words, and agree to find a better way.

Shortly thereafter, Sugimoto discovers the Book of Earth. The Crane Clan, who were secretly fostering diplomatic relations with the Mountain Wind, are so impressed by Sugimoto's actions that they arrange a marriage between the new Keeper of Earth and Kasuga Mino, the clever young daughter of the Tortoise Clan daimyo who aided Sugimoto in restoring peace to Badger lands.

Year 1166, Month of the Rooster (Early Fall)

The Mantis-Phoenix War

The Mantis continue to hunt the corrupted Yoritomo Kitao throughout the waters of Phoenix lands, leading them to repeated confrontations with Phoenix trade vessels who mistake the Mantis for pirates. Though no attacks are mounted by either party, relations between them slowly deteriorate.

Meanwhile Asako Kinuye, a Bloodspeaker monk who nonetheless considers herself a loyal Phoenix, has begun to notice the Gozoku influence within her clan. Seeing such influence within the Mantis as well, she sees it as her duty to her clan to drive a wedge between Phoenix and Mantis. Using a Black Scroll she acquired years before, she summons the Wasting Disease and wipes out a Phoenix village, then has one of her agents plant the Black Scroll on a captured Mantis vessel.

Though some are surprised by the suddenness of such an event, relations between the two clans have become so strained that neither is truly surprised when the Elemental Masters declare war on the Mantis.

Year 1166, Month of the Dog (Mid-Fall)

The Fall of Iuchiban

The armies of Crab hero Hida Kisada and his new ally, the Lion samurai-ko Matsu Aoiko, seek Iuchiban's heart in the city of Otosan Uchi so they can destroy the Bloodspeaker. Isawa Sezaru and his ally Iuchi Katamari return from the Burning Sands at this time, and the Dark Lord Daigotsu's forces move upon the former Imperial capital by sea.

Iuchiban senses his many enemies moving against him, and he reaches out to his followers — only to find that many of them, including his lieutenant Yajinden, have been severed from his control. The Shadow Dragon appears before the Bloodspeaker to gloat. Iuchiban's belief that he had manipulated the Last Wish was a mere hallucination imposed by the dragon. The dragon also initially concealed the Legion of Blood from Iuchiban's sight as well. Many of Iuchiban's recent deeds had been manipulated by this enigmatic creature, and now that he had become more dangerous than useful, the dragon had launched his enemies to destroy him.

Enraged at having been outwitted, Iuchiban turns his anger on his followers, blaming them for his failure. Alone, he reasons, he has always been strong; but each time he has faith in others, he is defeated. Seizing control of his remaining followers, he commands them to perform acts of suicidal violence against anyone they encounter. The Shadow Dragon vanishes amid mocking laughter, leaving Iuchiban to wonder if this, too, was a manipulation.

Hida Kisada goads Iuchiban into personal combat with a frontal assault while Matsu Aoiko and Sezaru infiltrate the Iron Citadel, defeat Iuchiban's Oracle of Blood, and win back Iuchiban's hidden heart.

The corrupted poet Rezan appears before Sezaru, informing him that Daigotsu has agreed to withdraw and allow Sezaru to defeat Iuchiban alone. Rezan expects, and perhaps hopes, that Sezaru will kill him, but the Wolf orders Rezan out of his sight.

Sezaru triumphs in a final battle with the Bloodspeaker even as the Iron Citadel collapses around them. Iuchiban remains defiant to the end.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

While traveling near Otosan Uchi, the characters encounter a wandering Shadowlands beast (oni, undead, or other creature of dark magic). While it is not entirely unheard of for such beasts to escape the forgotten ruins of the capital, one of such size and power is unprecedented. The player characters' first objective is to keep the beast from menacing locals and restore order.

Focus

After defeating the creature, the players may well wish to know where it came from. A brief investigation reveals that the ruined capital has been unusually active lately, and that an army led by Hida Kisada himself recently marched upon the city.

Strike

Obviously the battle between the Great Bear and the Bloodspeakers is having unexpected side effects. Many powerful creatures once dormant beneath the city have been driven from the ruins by the conflict. Will the players search for more such wandering threats? Will they make for the city to aid Kisada in battle? Will they merely attempt to escape before matters become even more dangerous?

Important NPCs During Enemy of My Enemy

Ide Tang, Ide Family Daimyo

School/Rank: Ide Emissary 5
Honor: 1.1 Status: 7.0 Glory: 6.7

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 4

Advantages: Ally: Moto Chagatai (4/2 points), Crafty, Ebisu's Blessing, Perceived Honor (4 points), Read Lips, Voice
Disadvantages: Contrary, Dark Secret (Scorpion spy), Rumormonger
Skills: Acting (Disguise) 7, Commerce 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 6, Deceit (Intimidation, Lying) 5, Etiquette (Conversation, Sincerity) 5, Horsemanship 3, Investigation (Notice) 4, Lore: Law 7, Stealth 5, Storytelling 2

Ide Tang is the political mastermind who helped Moto Chagatai design and execute the most brutal invasion in recent history. Many despise him for his callous manipulations, claiming that he has cast aside the Ide family's tradition of peace. Others commend him for his ability, applauding his willingness to set his own ethics aside to assist the Shogun. None were truly surprised when he was named as the new ruler of his family.

To Ide Tang, the opinions of others matter little so long as they do not interfere with his duties. All that matters is his service to the Khan and his loyalty to his true masters: the Scorpion Clan.

Ide Buodin was a loyal servant of his clan with a penchant for gambling. Nearly bankrupted by his visits to Ryoko Owari, he retreated from the public eye to attend to his holdings in the remotest provinces of the Ide. But then his teenage son, Tang, caught a rare fever and was on the brink of death. He sent pleading messages to his friends in Ryoko Owari, seeking healers or other aid that they could offer.

A representative of the Shosuro family appeared to Buodin soon thereafter. The Scorpion Clan had come to collect its gambling debt. Their price was simple enough: that their healers would be allowed to tend Tang exclusively. Although they could not promise to heal him, they had drugs that could ensure that he would not die in agony. Once the fever inevitably killed him, his body would be quietly cremated. A young Shosuro would then step into the boy's place and immediately be sent away to study at the Ide family school, where none who knew him would notice the sudden change in his appearance. Buodin reluctantly agreed to the arrangements — the best he could arrange for his son — and promised to keep the matter secret. He was true to his word, for he died in a hunting accident only three weeks later.

Though the man who now calls himself Ide Tang is a Scorpion to the core, he has come to greatly respect the Unicorn Clan and their strange gaijin ways. He particularly admires the political acumen of the Ide family, and the strength of character that drives them to pursue peace even when the other families of their clan clamor for war. He is meticulous about keeping his secret, for he fears if he were exposed it would not only threaten the Scorpion's plans, but do irrevocable damage to the family he has come to think of as his own.

Hida Kisada, the Great Bear, Fortune of Persistence

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 5 / Hida Avenger 3
Honor: 2.9 Status: 7.9 Glory: 9.9

Air 3	Earth 9	Fire 5	Water 4 Strength 6	Void 4

Advantages: Bishamon's Blessing, Crab Hands, Clear Thinker, Large, Leadership, Magic Resistance (6 points), Sage, Strength of the Earth (8 points), Tactician
Disadvantages: Brash, Dark Fate
Kata: Hida's Avalanche, Shell of Stone, Stance of the Wall, Striking as Earth, Unyielding Fury
Skills: Battle (Mass Combat, Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 5, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 5, Heavy Weapons (Ono, Tetsubo) 7, Hunting 3, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Shadowlands 9, Theology (Shintao) 5

What can be said about Hida Kisada? In the eyes of the people of Rokugan, he is all things. He is a hero. He is a villain. He is a legendary figure, a man on the fulcrum of whose life history has turned. He is a god.

And now he has returned.

On the plains of Thwarted Destiny, Kisada made his decision. He would fight his way through Kuni Yori's legions and pass through Oblivion's Gate. He would be reincarnated as a mortal, setting aside the divine power of the Fortune of Persistence. He would seek out Iuchiban's hidden heart and aid the heroes of the Empire in ending a threat that had plagued them for centuries.



Kisada has no doubt that he will triumph. He has determination. He has soldiers loyal to his cause and his name. He has a plan. Though his march on Otosan Uchi is eerily reminiscent of his fateful march on the Palace years before, Kisada knows that he cannot fail. This time, his course is clear and his honor is pure. Any similarity to the day when Fu Leng plunged the Hantei's sword into his stomach is, in Kisada's estimation, only a sign that his path is one of redemption.

It is what will occur once the Bloodspeaker has been defeated that truly worries the Great Bear. From the realms of the dead he has watched the mortal realm for decades, and he saw the atrocities that occurred during the War of Spirits. Once-noble heroes became consumed by arrogance and sought to supplant the rightful place of their descendants. Though the villainous Steel Chrysanthemum led the spirit armies, not all of his followers were dishonorable men. Kisada had known many of them. They were honorable men, but their return had changed them.

Kisada knows that his fears could easily be put to rest. He could perform the three cuts and return to his rightful place in the Celestial Heavens. Such an act would be easy — too easy, the coward's way out.

Hida Kisada has never been a coward. He will accept the new life he has been given, whatever its end may be.

Part VI
Code of Bushido

Tsuruchi Shinmiko stood on the deck of the Wicked Breeze. The kobune was larger than most, built to transport soldiers and weapons. Shinmiko was not entirely certain what cargo the ship currently carried, and she preferred it that way. There was no point in tempting fate by confusing her loyalties. For the moment her duty was clear, albeit distasteful. Shortly, her skills would be put to the test.

"Dark thoughts, Shinmiko?"

The archer glanced idly at the young shugenja leaning against the railing. "Of course not," she said flatly. "That would be pointless."

"True enough," he agreed, "but we often indulge in pointless endeavors, don't we? At least in our own minds. It is the curse of mortality: uncertainty."

"Your riddles were vaguely interesting when we first began serving together," Shinmiko said. "That was several weeks ago. They've become quite tiresome."

"Tiresome, but no less true." The shugenja stepped closer. "You cannot hide your reservations. The Tsuruchi have no ill will toward the Phoenix. Nor do the Moshi." He shrugged. "They are my cousins, for Amaterasu's sake, but all of that is irrelevant. The Yoritomo began this war — but we are all Mantis. Where they go, we follow."

"That was our oath," Shinmiko replied.

"Duty is everything," Moshi Hiramono agreed. "I am of course comfortable accepting the consequences of my actions, and prepared to face my ancestors with a full accounting when my death comes." He smiled. "Are you?"

Shinmiko glanced sidelong at the man irritably. "What purpose do your questions serve? Doubt is a sin, shugenja."

"All the more reason to root it out."

She sneered. "I would think you would prefer comrades to value your presence. I might find it hard to bring myself to save your life, if we were in battle together."

"By the Fortunes, how dark-spirited you can be." The shugenja's smile broadened. "In truth, the true purpose of our discussions is to entertain me. I must confess that I find sea travel terribly dull. I'm sorry if your resolve is so weak that I threatened it with my ramblings."

"Silence!" Shinmiko hissed. "It is time. Enough games."

For once, Hiramono only nodded. He chanted under his breath. Within seconds, his prayer summoned a thick fog that billowed up from the planks and concealed their vessel. Archers poured forth from the hold, joining Shinmiko in a practiced formation, an arrow nocked in each bow. As they watched, a small group of Yoritomo appeared on the coastline, sprinting toward a small boat they had left on the beach. Even as they shoved off into the water, a division of Shiba warriors appeared in their wake, determined to stop the Yoritomo saboteurs before they could escape.

"Fire at will," Shinmiko commanded.



Year 1166, Month of the Boar (Late Fall)

Keeper of Fire and Water

Kakita Tsuken, a brash young Crane warrior, is perhaps the last soul anyone would expect to be blessed with enlightenment. Yojimbo to a diplomat in a strategically located Phoenix village, he is left with an uncertain future when his charge and the commanding Phoenix officer are killed in a Mantis ambush.

He returns to give his report at Shiro Henka. Doji Jun'ai, the ranking Crane officer, regrets that she is unable to offer any aid. The Crane are forbidden to offer any military support to the Phoenix against the Mantis, by Master of Water Doji Akiko's own command. She orders him to return to his post at the village, and await his new charge.

On his way, he finds a legion of Yoritomo soldiers marching on the defenseless village. He races before them and reaches the pass first, blocking their advance. With no regard for his own life, he demands that any who would threaten the Phoenix face him first. The Mantis officer agrees to his duel, and though he wounds Tsuken gravely he dies under a single stroke from the Crane's blade. The other Mantis withdraw honorably, seeking another route through the mountains, though they leave Tsuken to die.

Crawling off to a nearby cavern, weak from loss of blood, the Crane is surprised when he finds renewed strength — and the Book of Fire.

Meanwhile in the village beyond, Jun'ai arrives with a large force of Crane determined not to abandon their oaths to the Phoenix. Shortly after her forces arrive to fortify the village, she discovers the Book of Water.

Khan and Shogun

In the wake of Iuchiban's defeat, his suicidal cultists continue to lash out throughout Rokugan. Though some shake off Iuchiban's control with aid from Daigotsu, the Shadow Dragon, or the Bloodspeaker monk Asako Kinuye, most cultists perish. The Unicorn are particularly active during this time, striking down the Bloodspeakers and proclaiming their victories in the name of the Khan and, surprisingly, the Shogun.

The Unicorn have not only truly become a force to be feared in recent years, but now have publicly thrown their support behind the Shogun. The Emperor is left to wonder what this may betoken.

One Thousand Years of Darkness

When two Crane warriors venture through a newly formed passage to the Spirit Realm Maigo no Musha, their invasion brings about an unexpected side effect. A shadow of Daidoji Uji is torn out of the Realm of Dreams, from a nightmare world where the Seven Thunders were defeated and Fu Leng reigns over Rokugan. When one of these two Crane proves to be a Bloodspeaker spy, Uji acts as his counterpart in Rokugan would, striking him down without mercy. Incapable of returning to his own Realm or staying in Maigo no Musha, this strange reflection of the famous Crane lord is forced to go back to the mortal realm and find his future there.

The Death of Rosoku

Iuchiban's final vengeance is the most nefarious of all. A Bloodspeaker assassin known as Shukumei infiltrates the Imperial Palace, passing through all but the most powerful wards of protection. Just outside the Emperor's throne room, he ambushes and mortally wounds Shinsei's last known descendant, Rosoku. Though Shukumei is killed before he can escape, the damage has been done. The descendant of Shinsei has been killed with no heir.

The Soul's Return

Using the power of Isawa's Last Wish, Phoenix warrior Shiba Aikune reaches into the Celestial Heavens and attempts to retrieve Ofushikai, the Celestial Sword of the Phoenix which now contains the Soul of Shiba. When he finds that he cannot return the blade to the mortal realm, he instead uses the Last Wish to sever Shiba's connection to the blade itself, anchoring it in the bloodline of his own family. Unable to bear the Soul of Shiba himself due to his strange disconnection from his ancestors, Aikune instead guides Shiba to a new host — his old friend and current Phoenix Champion, Shiba Mirabu.

Gozoku Overthrown?

In a bold move, the Shogun's forces root out the Gozoku mastermind Bayushi Atsuki in his stronghold. Though he puts up a valiant defense, Atsuki is, in the end, defeated by Kaneka. The Shogun promises that in the months to come, all those who once stood with Atsuki against the Emperor will be punished. In truth, only those who allied with Atsuki out of their own selfish interest or who truly desire to overthrow the Emperor meet such a fate. Reasonable individuals are overlooked, and become the Shogun's closest allies as he continues to quietly promote the Gozoku's philosophy that the Emperor must be protected from the burdens of rule.

Adventure Hook

Challenge

When traveling through unaligned lands, the player characters notice a column of smoke in the distance. They hurry to investigate, and find a small village. The village shrine is in flames, and the villagers stand around watching in horror.

Focus

The village headman approaches the party with respectful desperation, pleading with the brave samurai to help. Apparently there is a person trapped in the burning temple — the monk assigned to the village.

Strike

Not only is the monk unwilling to leave the shrine, but he set the fire himself. Upon hearing the news of Rosoku's death, the monk has lost all hope for the future. He believes that the Empire is on a path of false enlightenment, leading inevitably to destruction. Though he is a good and wise man, the idea of an Empire without Shinsei's wisdom is too much for him to bear. He hopes to sacrifice himself as a symbol to the villagers. The situation must be handled delicately. If the party allows the monk to die, the people of the village will be shattered. With the fire spreading quickly, there isn't much time to decide what to do.

Important NPCs During Code of Bushido

Rama Singh, Ivory Kingdoms Diplomat

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3 (Ivory Kingdoms equivalent)
Honor: 1.9 Status: 0.0 (gaijin) Glory: 5.6

Air: 2 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 3 **Void:** 2
Awareness 3

Advantages: Ally: Doji Kurohito (4/2 points), Clear Thinker, Irreproachable (2 points), Language (Ruumal), Strength of the Earth (2 points)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Gaijin), Obligation: Maharaja (4 points)

Skills: Courtier (Political Maneuvering) 4, Craft: Sailing 4, Defense 3, Engineering 3, Etiquette (Sincerity) 4, Investigation (Notice) 4, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 5, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 6, Meditation 3, Theology 3

Rama Singh is a member of the Kshatriya, the caste of warriors and scholars who rule the Ivory Kingdoms. He is a soft-spoken and introspective man, though when roused his skill with the twin scimitars is deadly to behold.

Rama's family guards House Suresh, the rulers of the Ivory Kingdoms. For many years the Maharaja, the ruler of the Ivory Kingdoms, suffered from a slowly progressing illness. The use of a Rokugani ginseng remedy kept this condition in check, but this medicine was available only through their Mantis allies, for the rare plant from which it was derived could not grow outside of Rokugan's climate.

When Yoritomo Kitao came to rule the Mantis Clan, Rama Singh pleaded caution. Kitao was not as honorable or trustworthy as her predecessor Aramasu, and she had not stood beside Aramasu during the war that freed their lands. Predictably, a war of succession broke out, and Kitao lost all interest in maintaining contact with the Ivory Kingdoms.

The Maharaja's stockpiles of medicine would dwindle, Singh knew, so he pleaded with House Suresh to allow him to journey to Rokugan. Aramasu was an honorable man, so others of his kind must surely exist in that land. Singh would seek out new allies and obtain the Maharaja's medicine.

His journey has ultimately been a success. He has faced many trials in Rokugan, from the brutal, calculating politics of the Shogun to the refined prejudices of the Imperial Court. He is saddened by Rokugan's hatred of outsiders, but having learned of the events of White Stag he cannot truly blame them. Instead, the noble ambassador has done what he can to show the people of Rokugan that not all gaijin are savages.

When fires erupted throughout Toshi Ranbo and gaijin were suspected of being responsible, many demanded Rama's immediate execution. The Emperor placed the diplomat under house arrest. Oddly, Rama commends the Emperor for his wisdom. He knows Toturi III is a man of peace, but one who knows better than to openly defy his people. Rama's arrest allows the Emperor to make a public action to contain the gaijin menace, while providing guards and a safe refuge to protect the diplomat from harm. Though Rama Singh holds no ill will toward the Emperor, the time is swiftly approaching when he must return to the Ivory Kingdoms with another shipment of medicine. He only hopes that this matter will be resolved, and he will be freed, before then, or his loyalty to the Maharaja will necessitate desperate action.

Daidoji Uji, the Jade Crane

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 5 / Daidoji Iron Warrior 1 / Yoritomo Bushi 1

Honor: 2.5 Status: 0.0 (technically does not exist) Glory: 7.9

Air: 5 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 3 **Void:** 3

Strength 5

Advantages: Bishamon's Blessing, Combat Reflexes, Crafty, Fleet (4 points), Heart of Vengeance (Shadowlands), Kharmic Tie: Kaneka (5 points), Quick Healer, Way of the Land (Crane)

Disadvantages: Driven (destroy Fu Leng)

Kata: Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Commerce (Appraisal) 4, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 7, Engineering 4, Etiquette 2, Explosives 7, Hunting (Survival, Tracking) 6, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Gaijin Culture 2, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 4, Sleight of Hand (Escape) 3, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 8, Traps 4, Underworld 4

Rokugan remembers Daidoji Uji as the heroic leader of the Daidoji family. During the Clan War, his resourcefulness saved the life of Doji Kuwanan and prevented the False Hoturi from completely destroying the lands of the Crane. In the War Against the Darkness, he was one of the first to realize that the civil war that consumed his clan was the work of outside forces. And though he was nearly crippled at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, Daidoji Uji continued to serve as the scheming mastermind of the Crane throughout the War of Spirits. When the Steel Chrysanthemum's assassins came for Uji, he fought to the last, slaying them to a man before succumbing to his wounds.

The man who now walks the Empire and calls himself Daidoji Uji is not that man. His memories tell a different tale. In the Rokugan he remembers, the Seven Thunders failed to defeat Fu Leng. The Dark Kami's shadow fell across all of Rokugan, and the honorable servants of the Emperor either perished under the blades of his servants or were hunted ceaselessly across the land. Uji watched as his clan was exterminated. He watched as even Toturi met defeat after defeat at Fu Leng's hand.

In the world Daidoji Uji knows, Rokugan will know one thousand years of darkness, and he is the last Crane samurai alive.

But that world is no longer his own. During a brutal suicide attack against Fu Leng's erstwhile ally, the Caliph, Uji was torn from his place in his own world. He awakened to find himself on a gray plain, a place called Maigo no Musha. Somehow, the intrusion of mortals through a newly formed passage to that realm had drawn Uji there. According to Sanzo, the guardian of that place, the world Uji remembers is not real. For all intents and purposes, he is a nightmare given mortal form. Having no place in Maigo no Musha, he must now return to the true Rokugan and find his place there.

Even given the atrocities Iuchiban has committed here, this vision of Rokugan is a paradise compared to the one Uji knows. To Uji, this is the greatest imaginable punishment. Even if his own Rokugan is a mere shadow of a dream, to him it was real, and he knows that while he lingers here his allies must fight on without him.

Part VII
A New Path

The winds blew swiftly over the cliff, constantly scouring the bare rock. One day, perhaps, the wind would even wear away the stone, leaving only an empty valley where a mountain once stood.

Kaiu Sugimoto stood there, feeling the wind at his back and the cold, unrelenting stone beneath his feet. There were secrets in the wind and the stone, if one knew how to listen. Not so long ago, he was deaf to their wisdom. Now he was the Keeper of Earth. He had fulfilled the terms of a quest he didn't even understand at the time, succeeding through accident more than design. Fate was incomprehensible at times, but he had come to realize that even chaos could serve a greater order.

Silent footsteps approached, one in the lead and three more far behind. There was no sound, only the continued whistling of the wind, but he could feel them through the stone on which he stood.

"Masae," he said simply.

"Sugimoto," the Dragon woman answered. "Have you been waiting long?"

"Only a moment, as the stones count time," he replied. "The others are coming?"

"They follow," she confirmed. "They will be here shortly, except for the final Keeper, but surely he will appear soon."

"They are cautious," he said with a shake of his head. "Uncertain."

"As we were, not so long ago," the Keeper of Air replied. "The burden will teach them, as it taught us."

"Will it matter? Will anything we do make a difference?"

Masae did not hesitate. "It will. It must."

Sugimoto shook his head. "Rosoku thought that as well. Now he is dead. How can we proceed without the heir of Shinsei? Mankind is lost."

"No," Masae insisted. "Shinsei's wisdom will always return when it is needed. That is the way."

"It was also 'the way' that Shinsei remain apart from the Empire. Rosoku did not. He changed the way, and now the way is lost. I think we are on a false path, Masae."

"Then we must find a new path," Masae said. Her voice was hopeful, expectant.

Sugimoto turned and regarded her curiously. "Rokugan has failed Shinsei once," he said. "Perhaps we do not deserve a second chance."

Masae looked downcast for a moment. "You should not speak so, Sugimoto," she said. "If even the enlightened lose hope, then what future can there be for anyone else?"

"What future indeed?" the Keeper of Earth replied grimly.

WHAT LIES AHEAD?

What seems to be a time of victory, with the defeat of Iuchiban and death of Bayushi Atsuki, only leaves more questions. Rosoku is dead. Is the Empire doomed without Shinsei? Will the Keepers step forward in his place or abandon Rokugan for its failure? Who will be named as the final two Keepers?

The answers lie in the age of the Lotus.

Important NPC During A New Path

REZAN, LOST POET

SCHOOL/RANK: Ronin Bushi 2 / Ronin Duelist 2 / Daigotsu Elite Guard 1
HONOR: 1.7 STATUS: N/A GLORY: –8.3 (Infamy) (4.7 in the Shadowlands)

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 4
Reflexes: 6		Agility: 6		

ADVANTAGES: Heart of Vengeance (Bloodspeakers)
DISADVANTAGES: Lechery, Lost Love (Wife)
KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Wind
SKILLS: Courtier 3, Defense 4, Deceit (Intimidation, Seduction) 4, Etiquette (Sincerity) 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: History 4, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Storytelling (Poetry) 4

The poet Rezan has lived a strange life, one full of unexpected twists and regrets. In life, he was a wandering ronin who dabbled in poetry. Through sheer happenstance, he became embroiled in a poetry contest with a skilled Crane poet. The Crane was horrified to discover that the woman being praised by Rezan's poem was the Emperor's daughter, traveling in disguise. The only way he could avoid the dishonor of insulting her was to acknowledge Rezan as the better poet. The story of Rezan's victory quickly spread across Rokugan, and he found himself in great demand at different courts. In time, he even married the Emperor's daughter and became a member of the Imperial family.

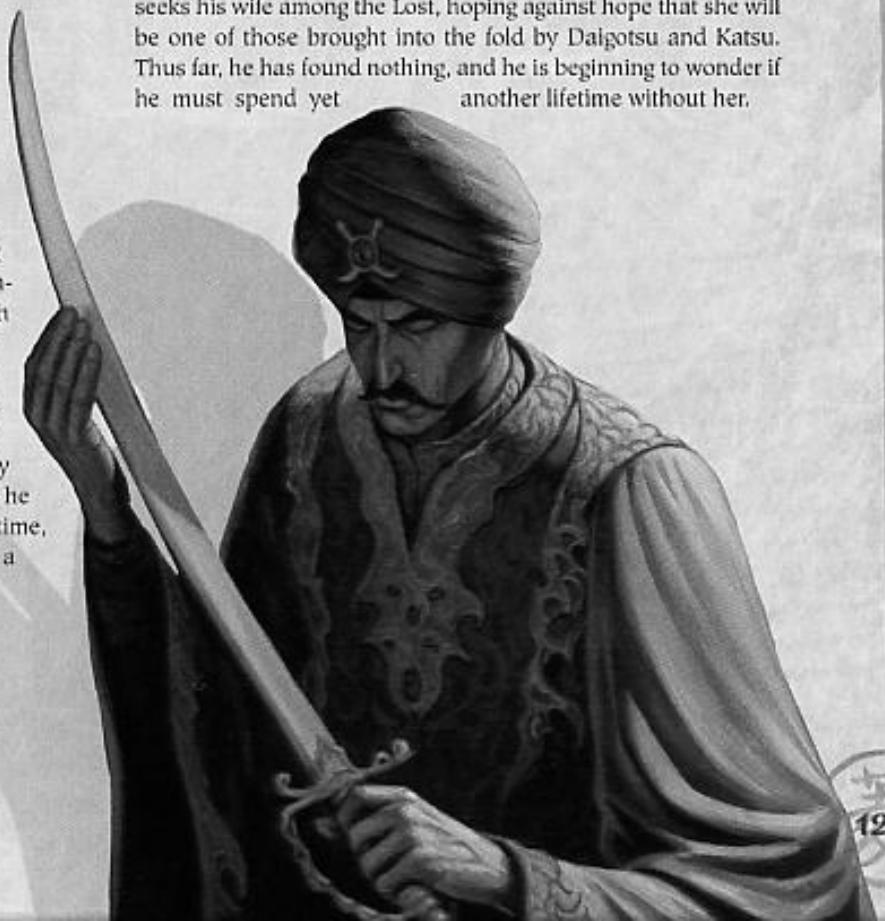
After their deaths, Rezan and his bride entered Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. There, Rezan found any number of pursuits to occupy his time, including fighting alongside the realm's defenders, the Blessed Guard. In time, Rezan's wife determined that the poet did not love her, and departed for the mortal realm to be reincarnated. Only after her departure did Rezan realize he did indeed love her, and when the opportunity came to return to Rokugan through Oblivion's Gate to find her, he did so.

Rezan spent decades searching the Empire for his lost bride. He discovered to his surprise that he was a legendary poet, as many talented writers had used his name over the years to gain recognition for their works. He loved many women, seeing a little of his wife in each of them, but never finding her. It was not until the Rain of Blood that any hint of her location came to him.

After Iuchiban's ritual wreaked havoc across the Empire, Rezan discovered that his wife had been among the victims. The Dragon found evidence of her identity among the belongings of a woman who had gone mad in the Rain, and delivered them to Rezan. Stricken with grief and remorse, Rezan left Rokugan and joined the only man he believed could punish Iuchiban for his crimes, the only man who understood the Bloodspeaker: Daigotsu, the Dark Lord of the Shadowlands.

In the Shadowlands, Rezan discovered that his normally flippant behavior was gone, and that he was the calm, ordered center in a hurricane of madness. Daigotsu accepted his fealty, and the poet led the Crab to Oblivion's Gate to herald the return of Hida Kisada. A short time later, he was Daigotsu's lieutenant when the Dark Lord attacked Iuchiban's stronghold in Otosan Uchi. Rezan even carried Daigotsu's good wishes to Isawa Sezaru, although the Wolf had little appreciation for the gesture.

Now that Iuchiban is dead, Rezan has nothing to live for. He seeks his wife among the Lost, hoping against hope that she will be one of those brought into the fold by Daigotsu and Katsu. Thus far, he has found nothing, and he is beginning to wonder if he must spend yet another lifetime without her.



Rezan's School/Rank

If you own Fortunes & Winds, Rezan's training with the Blessed Guard allows him to use their Techniques from the time he returns through Oblivion's Gate until he joins Daigotsu. At that point, his embrace of the Taint severs Yomi's hold on his spirit, and he loses those Techniques.

Miscellaneous NPCs

The Bloodspeakers

Iuchiban, the Bloodspeaker

SCHOOL/RANK: Seppun Shugenja 8
HONOR: 0.6 STATUS: N/A GLORY: –10.0

Air: 6	Earth: 6	Fire: 4	Water: 5	Void: 4
	Willpower 8	Intelligence 6		

ADVANTAGES: Heart of Vengeance (Dragon Clan, Imperial Families, Scorpion Clan), Heartless, Leadership
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation, Benten's Curse, Cruel, Dark Fate, Jealousy, Overconfident, Spoiled
SPELLS: Iuchiban can cast any spell, including Maho spells, as an Innate Ability.
SKILLS: Anatomy (Torture) 7, Courtier 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 2, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: Gaijin Sorcery 8, Lore: Heraldry 5, Lore: Maho 4, Meditation 7, Spellcraft 9

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Advanced Taint Suppression: Iuchiban automatically suppresses any effect that detects or specifically targets Taint within 100' of himself. He may suppress this ability at will or alter it so that it only applies to himself.

Possession: Iuchiban may attempt to possess any living humanoid creature within 30 feet by locking gazes with them. The target must make an opposed Willpower roll or become possessed by Iuchiban. Iuchiban's former host body immediately dies. The target's body becomes Iuchiban's new host body and the former occupant's spirit immediately dies. Iuchiban's physical Traits temporarily become those of the host body if they are greater than his own. The host body retains any natural abilities and ongoing magical effects, but otherwise all its previous abilities, including Wounds, are lost and replaced with Iuchiban's. There is no limit to the amount of time that Iuchiban may remain in a host body. If the target's initial Willpower roll is successful, Iuchiban remains in his previous body and the target is immune to this effect for ten minutes. Once Iuchiban possesses a body, the body is considered his own and he cannot be removed by exorcism or similar methods.

Blood Mastery: When casting maho using his own blood, Iuchiban takes no Wounds unless he makes Raises (not including Free Raises). Iuchiban gains two Free Raises when casting maho.

Improved Magic Resistance: The TN of all maho spells targeting Iuchiban are increased by 10 unless he is a willing target.

Immortality: Iuchiban cannot be killed by any means unless the Hidden Heart of Iuchiban is destroyed. Should his body be destroyed, he regenerates in an invisible, incorporeal state



one to four months later. In this form, he can neither attack nor use magic. The only ability he may use while in this state is his Possession ability.

Manifestation: If not possessing a host body, Iuchiban can force his spirit to take tangible form for one hour per day. In this form, he has the listed stats.

Regeneration: Iuchiban heals one die of Wounds every round, even if he is injured beyond the Dead level.

The sorcerer called Iuchiban is perhaps the greatest villain Rokugan has ever known. He was born Hantei Jama, the second son of an Emperor, and bitter because his elder brother was favored. When his brother contracted a fever, Jama rejoiced, for he would become Emperor — but his brother survived, and his fair-weather new friends abandoned him.

With the aid of a shugenja named Asahina Yajinden, the insane Jama plumbed the secrets of blood magic, using the journals of the mad shugenja Kuni Nakanu to chart his path. Fearing that the Taint that would result of such magic would dominate his soul, Jama searched for a way to avoid his own damnation. Finding no such answer in Rokugan, he drew upon his resources as an Imperial prince to journey to the forbidden lands beyond its borders.

In strange foreign lands, Jama encountered many strange things, including demons and a cabal of heartless sorcerers called the Khadi. Jama underwent their rituals along with his vassal Yajinden, and returned to the Empire as the powerful sorcerer Iuchiban. By combining gaijin sorcery with his knowledge of maho, Iuchiban became perhaps the most powerful being in the Empire, and attempted to overthrow his brother the Emperor. His attempt was discovered and foiled, and he was imprisoned within a specially created tomb.

Iuchiban eventually escaped as a spirit and discreetly wandered the Empire, preparing his cult for another attempt at overthrowing the Emperor. Again he was discovered, this time by an ise zumi, and his hand was forced. His followers massed a huge army of undead and faced the combined Great Clans at the Battle of Sleeping River. This time, Iuchiban had planned for every possible obstacle, save one: the immortal blood of the Kami Togashi had created a special tattoo on one of his ise zumi. The tattooed monk drew in Iuchiban's spirit and caged it within himself. Once again, Iuchiban was locked within his personal tomb, this time in such a way that his spirit could not escape.

Much later, the Bloodspeaker Shahai manipulated a group of magistrates into breaking the seals on the Tomb of Iuchiban. She attempted to strike a bargain with the sorcerer, hoping to enlist his aid in restoring the Dark Lord Daigotsu to full power. Iuchiban deceived Shahai, and made his escape. He quickly subjugated his cult once more and drove Daigotsu from the Shadowlands. With his power secure, Iuchiban launched a two-year reign of terror the likes of which the Empire had never seen, culminating in the terrible Rain of Blood. It was only through the machinations of the enigmatic Shadow Dragon and his own treacherous lieutenant Yajinden that Iuchiban was finally defeated. With his heart destroyed, the Bloodspeaker fell in battle with Isawa Sezaru, the Wolf. Iuchiban died victorious, boasting that the Empire would never forget him, nor cease to fear his name.

Shahai, the Lady of Blood

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 6
Honor: 0.3 Status: N/A Glory: –6.0

Air: 5	Earth: 4	Fire: 5	Water: 5	Void: 2
	Willpower: 7		Perception: 8	

Shadowlands Taint: 5.8

Advantages: Dark Daughter (see below), Innate Abilities (numerous)

Disadvantages: Obligation, Sworn Enemy (Kuni Kiyoshi), True Love (Daigotsu)

Spells: Shahai possesses all known maho spells, many as Innate Abilities. She also possesses a wide variety of elemental spells, determined as the GM sees appropriate.

Shadowlands Powers: Child of Darkness, Master of Blood, Unholy Beauty, Beside the Darkness, Unearthly Regeneration, Drawing Out the Darkness, Protection of the Dark.

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Defense 5, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 3, Intimidation 6, Lore: Maho 8, Lore: Shadowlands 7, Meditation 4, Poison 3, Spellcraft 7, Theology (Shintao) 3

Born into wealth and status, Iuchi Shahai was neglected by her father, the Iuchi family daimyo. As a young girl, Shahai often acted out in an attempt to gain her father's attention. By the time of her gempukku, she had long since stopped caring about her distant father and had grown bored with life in the Unicorn lands. While exploring a forest near her family's holdings, Shahai stumbled across a human skull. A mysterious voice whispered in her mind as she examined the skull, promising to teach her great power if only she would open her mind. Shahai quickly agreed, excited for the first time in years, and began studying under the spirit that she called "grandfather."

Shahai spiraled downward into a realm of blood magic and blasphemy, but found that she did not care. She fell in with the Bloodspeakers — the cult of Iuchiban — and learned even more dark secrets. During her tenure with the Bloodspeakers she met Daigotsu, a young man with an incredible gift for blood magic. The attraction and affection she felt for him was her first genuine emotion in years. When he disappeared, she could not help but venture into the Shadowlands to search for him.

In the Shadowlands, Shahai found Daigotsu constructing a vast City of the Lost, where the samurai who had fallen in the Battle at Oblivion's Gate were attempting to rebuild a semblance of their previous lives. Daigotsu was also constructing a temple to Fu Leng, a blatant departure from Bloodspeaker dogma. Intrigued by Daigotsu's offer to accept her not as a subject, but an equal, she slaughtered the entity called the Dark Daughter of Fu Leng, absorbed her power, and took her place at Daigotsu's side.

When Daigotsu was slain by Toturi Tsudao, Shahai mourned. His return to life briefly brought her exultation, but when she discovered that he had lost his ability to use maho, she was horrified for him. Back within Rokugan's borders, she manipulated a group of magistrates into entering Iuchiban's Tomb and breaking the seals that barred her from entering. She attempted to bargain with the Bloodspeaker in hopes that he could restore Daigotsu's power. Instead, she was betrayed, enslaved, and forced to watch the sorcerer drive Daigotsu from the City of the Lost and seize it for himself.

Iuchiban's rule over the Shadowlands was torturous for Shahai. She could not betray him, but neither could she could forget Daigotsu. Indecision and anguish paralyzed her until Daigotsu's return, when he liberated her from Iuchiban's control and she aided him in driving the Bloodspeaker from the Shadowlands. Though much of their city was devastated, Shahai and Daigotsu are together once more.

Daigotsu Yajinden, the Swordsmith

School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 6
Honor: 0.8 Status: N/A Glory: –8.0 (Infamous)

Air: 6 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 5 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 1
Willpower: 7

Shadowlands Taint: 9.4 (Held in check because of the Khadi ritual)

Advantages: Allies (Bloodspeakers), Great Potential (Artisan), Way of the Land (Crane, Imperial)
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Dark Fate, Driven (to create), Jealousy
Skills: Courtier 2, Craft: Armorsmithing 6, Craft: Weaponsmithing 8, Deceit 7, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Kenjutsu 5, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Maho 8, Lore: Nemuranai 8, Lore: Shadowlands 8, Meditation 6, Spellcraft 7
Kata: Striking as Fire, Striking as Water

Special Abilities

Advanced Taint Suppression: Yajinden automatically suppresses any effect that detects or specifically targets Taint within 100' of himself. He may suppress this ability at will or alter it so that it only applies to himself.

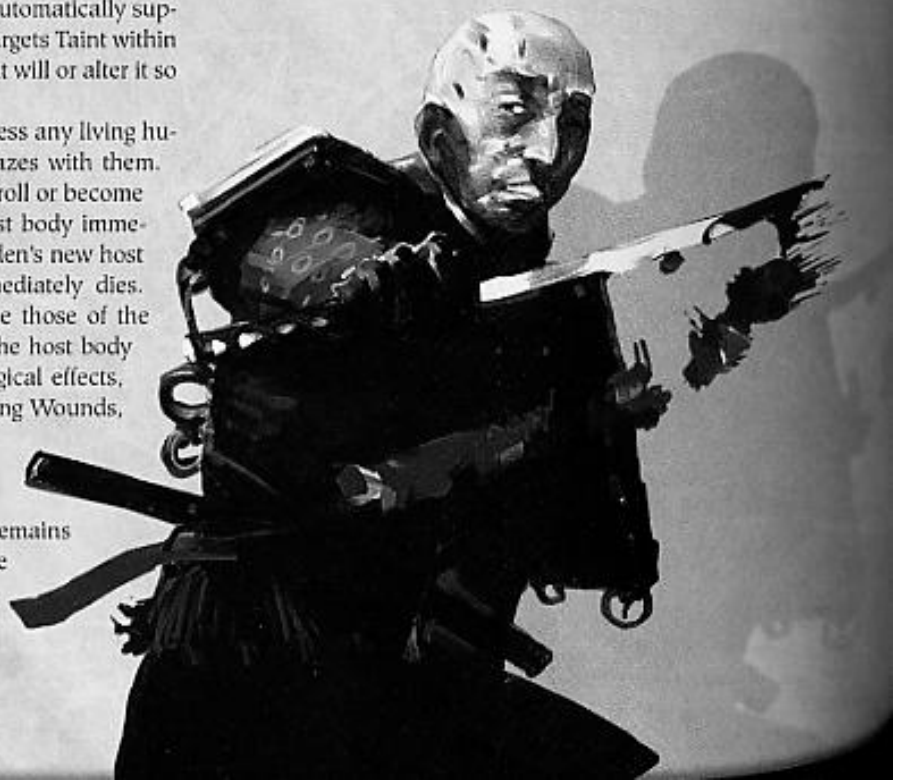
Possession: Yajinden may attempt to possess any living humanoid creature within 30 feet by locking gazes with them. The target must make an opposed Willpower roll or become possessed by Yajinden. Yajinden's former host body immediately dies. The target's body becomes Yajinden's new host body and the former occupant's spirit immediately dies. Yajinden's physical Traits temporarily become those of the host body if they are greater than his own. The host body retains any natural abilities and ongoing magical effects, but otherwise all its previous abilities, including Wounds, are lost and replaced with Yajinden's. There is no limit to the amount of time that Yajinden may remain in a host body. If the target's initial Willpower roll is successful, Yajinden remains in his previous body and the target is immune to this effect for ten minutes. Once Yajinden possesses a body, the body is considered his own and he cannot be removed by exorcism or similar methods.

Art is all that drives the man once called Asahina Yajinden. It is all that has ever interested him, the one thing that inflamed his passions. Battle, philosophy, love, power... none of these things have ever mattered. It is only the sacred act of creating an item of terrible beauty that brings him alive. The rest of life is merely the price he must pay for those moments of rapture.

Yajinden became friendly with Otomo Jama when the two were still young. Jama was the Emperor's second son, and out of favor with the courts. He understood Yajinden's passion even if he did not share it. Yajinden considered Iuchiban something of a fool, but he was a wealthy and influential fool. It was Yajinden who suggested that they seek their fortune in the Burning Sands. There, Yajinden and Jama underwent the bizarre Khadi rituals that rendered them immortal sorcerers.

To Yajinden's dismay, Jama — now calling himself Iuchiban — was far more talented at wielding their unique combination of maho and gaijin magic, and enslaved Yajinden. He forced his former friend to craft the Bloodswords in order to punish his enemies. A vengeful Yajinden did as he was told, but left one of the blades flawed. Yashin, the final Bloodsword, possessed a sense of honor that the others did not. Of all the blades, only Yashin sought to redeem itself. And so it was that Yashin was the only blade whose true nature was discovered, eventually bringing about Iuchiban's defeat.

Though Yajinden was captured alongside his master, he had prepared for the eventuality. Using a technique he had concealed from Iuchiban, he projected his mind into a new body and escaped before his body could be punished. Yajinden spent decades wandering the Empire, creating objects of terrible magical power. In time, Iuchiban also learned to set his soul wandering and, by watching Yajinden, learned to possess new bodies as well. Yajinden was disturbed when his master returned, for once again he was forced to serve Iuchiban's arrogance instead of pursuing his art. When Iuchiban was defeated a second time, Yajinden escaped capture entirely, and was content.



Eventually, ambition became too great for Yajinden to bear. He infiltrated his master's tomb and attempted to absorb his power. Iuchiban was far too powerful, however, and Yajinden was entrapped in his prison, tormented for years before the Bloodspeaker Shahai inadvertently freed them both.

Iuchiban's third reign was one of madness and chaos, with no artistry to speak of. Yajinden sought to undermine his lord when he could, though he could take no direct action against him. His alliance with the Shadow Dragon eventually resulted in Iuchiban's death and his own freedom. Shortly thereafter, Yajinden swore his allegiance to Daigotsu. He now spends his days in the City of the Lost, deep within the Shadowlands, pursuing his fiendish art.

THE GOZOKU

SEPPUN TOSHIAKI, MASTER OF THE HIDDEN GUARD

SCHOOL/RANK: Seppun Shugenja 5
HONOR: 1.5 STATUS: 6.5 GLORY: 5.0

Air: 4 **Earth:** 2 **Fire:** 2 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 3
Willpower 5 Intelligence 4

ADVANTAGES: Blessing of the Elements (Air, Water), Perceived Honor (4 points)

DISADVANTAGES: Contrary, Lechery (4 points), Meddler, Obligation: Gozoku (4 points)

SPELLS: (*denotes Innate Ability) Banish*, Benten's Touch, Commune*, Counterspell*, Hand of Jurojin, Heart of Morality, Importune*, Jade Strike*, Mists of Illusion, Path to Inner Peace*, Peace of the Kami, Reflective Pool, Rise, Air, Secrets on the Wind, Sense*, Silent Waters, Summon*, Symbol of Air, Symbol of Water, The Eye Shall Not See*, The Ties That Bind*

SKILLS: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 6, Defense 4, Divination (Astrology) 5, Etiquette (Bureaucracy) 7, Investigation (Notice) 8, Lore: Law 5, Medicine 7, Meditation 6, Stealth (Spellcasting) 3, Theology 7

Born to the Seppun family and demonstrating an early gift for water and air magic, Toshiaki was a natural choice for the Hidden Guard, the order of shugenja that personally protects the Emperor from magical threats. Seppun Toshiaki has been a servant of the Toturi Dynasty all his life, and familiarity has bred contempt. While others stand in awe of the glorious Son of Heaven, he has seen the Toturi as they truly are — no better than anyone else.

He watched Toturi himself wracked by indecision, unable to recognize the son he knew was his. He watched the Oracle Kaede assume the throne though she knew it would bring disaster. He watched the Four Winds squabbling with one another over their father's legacy, giving the Dark Lord the chance he needed to restore his sinister god to glory. Now he watches Toturi III and the Shogun play petty games of power, allowing the Empire to suffer.

Truth be told, while Toshiaki believes in the Gozoku philosophy, that is not why he aids them. He is a man who places his duty first, and would have served the Toturi willingly despite his feelings for them. His motivation is far simpler: blackmail.

Toshiaki has long used his position as a high-ranking member of the court to facilitate his romantic indiscretions, and as fate would have it one of those indiscretions occurred with an agent of Bayushi Atsuki. Bayushi Kamnan visited Toshiaki shortly thereafter, threatening to reveal the existence of the Seppun's new illegitimate daughter to his wife unless his demands were met. Toshiaki agreed, so long as he was not commanded to bring any harm to the Toturi family.

Ironically, Toshiaki's new duties suit him just fine. His role is simple — protect and monitor Toturi III so that the Emperor can continue to exist as a powerless figurehead. Toshiaki relishes his position in the Gozoku, and even allows them to think that his affiliation with them is his own decision. If that relationship were to change, and the Gozoku were to decide Toturi's usefulness was at an end, he does not know what he would do. Would he abandon his oaths to his family and allow the Emperor to die? Would he protect the Emperor only to face the shame that would follow when his indiscretions were exposed?

Only time will tell.

DOJI AKIKO

SCHOOL/RANK: Isawa Shugenja (Water) 8
HONOR: 4.3 STATUS: 8.5 GLORY: 8.8

Air: 4 **Fire:** 3 **Earth:** 4 **Water:** 8 **Void:** 5
Awareness: 5 Intelligence: 6

ADVANTAGES: Benten's Blessing, Blessing of the Elements (Water), Voice

DISADVANTAGES: Ally: Bayushi Atsuki (4/1 points), Dark Secret (Gozoku conspirator), Driven (Ambitious), True Love (Doji Kurohito)

SPELLS: Doji Akiko can cast any elemental spell and possesses all Water spells as Innate Abilities.

SKILLS: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation, Political Maneuvering) 4, Divination (Omens) 5, Etiquette (Sincerity) 5, Instruction (Isawa Shugenja School, Spellcraft) 5, Lore: History 5, Lore: Shugenja 5, Medicine 4, Meditation 6, Spellcraft (Maho) 8, Theology (Shintao) 7

Doji Akiko is the daughter of Isawa, the original Phoenix Clan Thunder. She remembers the earliest days of the Empire, the fall of the Kami, the rise of Fu Leng, Shiba bending his knee before her father, the creation of the Last Wish, and the first Day of Thunder. It was a time of heroism, honor, and sacrifice.

Akiko met her end when Asako Sagoten attempted to use Isawa's Last Wish to regain her love, and the magical construct exploded with energy. For a thousand years she watched Rokugan from the Realm of Blessed Ancestors and grew ever more dissatisfied. In her eyes, the heroes of today cannot compare to such legends as Shiba, Kakita, Otaku, and her father.

During the Battle of Oblivion's Gate she returned to the mortal realm because she felt that the lesser heroes of the modern age were unprepared for the threat they faced. She was disgusted to find herself trapped in Rokugan, but determined to make the best of it. She kept her identity a secret, hoping to explore this new Empire before determining if she should reveal herself to her descendants. The Steel Chrysanthemum's soldiers recognized her and, seeking the secrets of Isawa's Last Wish,

hunted her tirelessly. Even her considerable magical power was no defense, and she was forced to throw herself on the mercy of mortals. At Kyuden Doji she pleaded for the aid of the Crane Clan, and had her first fateful meeting with Doji Kurohito.

Kurohito proved himself every bit as worthy as the heroes of old. He was cunning, brave, honorable, and had the light of ambition in his eye. Akiko was smitten, and determined to help this worthy lord to fulfill his destiny. With Akiko as his bride, Kurohito has become one of the most respected Champions of the Crane in recent history. Returning to her own clan and rejoining the Elemental Council as Master of Water, she has forged a powerful bond between the Phoenix and Crane. Akiko is without a doubt among the most powerful individuals in the Empire, both magically and politically.

Of course, not even her husband knows the entire truth about her. He does not know how, in her wanderings, she encountered Bayushi Atsuki and found that he shared her disdain for the modern world. While she did not agree with the coarser details of his scheme, his overall plan had merit, and she was proud to become one of the founders of the new Gozoku.

Akiko is, however, disturbed by how violent Atsuki has proven to be. She suspects that his ambitions extend beyond merely turning the Toturi Dynasty into pawns. If he proves to be a liability, he will have to be removed. She knows that the Scorpion will be a difficult opponent, but the daughter of Isawa is not truly concerned.

Bayushi Kamnan, Gozoku Agent

SCHOOL/RANK: Shosuro Shinobi 4
HONOR: 1.0 STATUS: N/A (Exile) GLORY: –5.6 (Infamous)

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 2
		Agility 5	Strength 4	

ADVANTAGES: Combat Reflexes, Crafty, Daredevil, Quick
DISADVANTAGES: Cruel, Dark Fate, Unlucky (3 ranks)
KATA: Blackened Sight, Striking as Wind, The Tail's Reach
SKILLS: Athletics (Climbing) 5, Deceit 3, Defense 4, Hunting (Tracking) 3, Investigation (Notice, Search) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 3, Ninja Ranged Weapons 5, Spears (Nagamaki) 7, Stealth (Sneaking) 6, Underworld 5

To Bayushi Kamnan, murder has always been a way of life. The only thing that has ever changed is the face on the other end of his spear.

Trained as an assassin, Kamnan was conditioned to kill without hesitation, mercy, or honor. He was conditioned never to question the commands of his lord, because the greater glory of the Scorpion Clan would wash away his sins. The day he was given the command to slay Yoritomo Aramasu was the proudest in his life. When the Mantis Champion met his death on Kamnan's nagamaki, the assassin knew only joy and triumph.

After that... nothing.

He fled the city of Otosan Uchi like a common criminal. He scuttled through shadowed safehouses and garbage-strewn alleys for weeks, avoiding the Mantis warriors that sought his blood. He found even his own kinsmen strangely unwilling to aid him. In their eyes, he was a pawn whose purpose had been fulfilled. Now he served no purpose, the ugly reminder of an ugly deed that needed to be done.

Kamnan was disheartened by how his clan had betrayed him, but Ogura offered him hope in the form of a new master — Bayushi Atsuki of the Shadowed Tower. He preached the rhetoric of the new Gozoku, the promise of glorious days to come.

In truth, Kamnan heard none of it. He no longer cared. Ogura had already offered him what he truly desired, and that was all he now cared about — a chance to ruin the Scorpion Clan that had ruined him.

The Imperial Family

Toturi III, The Righteous Emperor

(See statistics on page 67, "Hantei Naseru")

Though the first years of his reign were peaceful and prosperous, Toturi Naseru now finds himself a prisoner in his own palace. With each day that passes, more former allies prove to be conspiring against him. While tragedy continues to consume Rokugan, fools seize upon excuses to turn against the throne instead of banding together against threats to the Empire itself.

Naseru finds the Gozoku particularly reprehensible. They claim that the Empire cannot be ruled by a single man, that the responsibility of leadership cannot be properly executed by a flawed mortal soul. Their idealistic philosophy only shrouds their arrogance and ignorance. Rokugan has never been ruled by a single man; the Emperor has always relied upon his champions and advisors. However, in the end, final authority must devolve upon a single person whose decisions are final. Otherwise, all would fall to chaos — and that is the true duty of an Emperor, to take responsibility when all else fails.

That the Gozoku do not see this brands them as fools or, worse, powermongers. Naseru suspects that the true leader of the Gozoku knows the truth — that one man must ultimately decide the fate of Rokugan — but this mysterious leader merely covets that power for himself.

What saddens Naseru most of all is that he cannot help but sympathize. He remembers his hunger for his father's throne, a thirst for power that would not suffer even family to stand in the way. Had his life taken a different route, and one of his siblings gained the throne instead, he may well have allied himself with these Gozoku. He sees his own ambition, his own flaws, reflected in their eyes. Yet there is one important difference.

He is Emperor, and they are not.

Kaneka, the Shogun

(See statistics on page 62, "Akodo Kaneka")

What is honor? What is ambition? Can they coexist in a single soul? If a man's ends are honorable, does it matter that they also fulfill his personal ambitions? If one pursues power, is honor an impossible goal?

Such questions consume the Shogun's sleepless nights.

The years since his brother's coronation have made the Shogun even more bitter and cynical, if that is possible. He now recognizes that each time he seeks to defy his father's example he is only doomed to repeat the past. The sons of Toturi are reflections of their legendary father, each in their own way, and even the Bastard must play his part.

Kaneka now recognizes what his part must be. During the Clan War, when the Imperialv Court was consumed by corruption, it was Toturi who united those few heroes who still embraced duty and honor. It was Toturi who stood as a beacon of hope against darkness and brought the Dark Kami to his knees. And so it shall be for Kaneka.



Of course Kaneka realizes that Naseru is no Fu Leng, but the Gozoku are no less a threat. When the Gozoku initially approached Kaneka, he was suspicious. Though their philosophies seemed noble enough, he suspected they harbored darker ambitions. He remained as close to them as he could, and kept his eyes open.

It came as no surprise when a terrified Gozoku agent came to him seeking sanctuary. The Crane possessed evidence that the Gozoku masters were affiliated with the Shadowed Tower, the abominable cult that had once nearly destroyed the Scorpion Clan. With this revelation, Kaneka's course was set — the leaders of the Gozoku must be destroyed.

But what of the rest of the Gozoku? Most knew nothing of the organization's sinister origins. Many were men and women who loved the Empire. Who could truly blame them for not believing that Naseru had Rokugan's best interests at heart? Kaneka could certainly sympathize.

When the original Toturi cut out the heart of the corrupt Hantei Dynasty, he made the Palace his own. The Hantei's noble servants became his own advisors. Perhaps, as he prepares to hunt the Gozoku masters, Kaneka will follow his father's example one more time.

Isawa Sezaru

(See statistics on page 71, "Toturi Sezaru")

Throughout his youth, Sezaru was plagued by a voice that encouraged him to wreak violence on those who defied him. It hovered always at the edge of perception, threatening to push him into madness. He realized years ago that this voice was a part of him, a fractured part of his own soul that personified what he might become if he indulged the raw power that coursed through his being. When his brother assumed the throne and his sister was buried, the voice fell silent.

When Naseru commanded Sezaru to destroy the Bloodspeakers in the name of the Empire, the voice returned.

Now, strangely, it doesn't bother Sezaru quite so much. Its advice has even been useful on occasion, for its violent nature readily adapts to the dangerous situations he frequently faces in the name of the Emperor's justice. Sezaru feels his sanity beginning to wear thin, but he can also feel his power growing. If surrendering to the voice within himself offers power, is his sanity truly so great a sacrifice? So long as he remembers what is important — his loyalty to his brother — then nothing else matters. Naseru will guide him, no matter what else happens.

Sezaru's only fear is that if he should lose this final anchor, his love for his brother, that all will be lost. Then he will truly become that which he fears.

Another Iuchiban.

Another Daigotsu.

Until that evil day comes, Sezaru will cling to his loyalty and his love, and they will keep him sane. With each day more of his soul slips out of his control, but with each day another enemy of the Emperor falls before his magic.

In the end, is one soul such a large price to pay?

Doji Yasuyo, Crane Clan Hero

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 2/Doji Magistrate 2/ Crane Kenshinzen 3

Honor: 3.8 Status: 5.6 Glory: 6.0

Air: 5 **Earth:** 5 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 6
Agility: 5

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Bishamon's Blessing, Great Potential (Iaijutsu), Multiple Schools

Disadvantages: Idealistic, Soft Hearted

Kata: Kakita's First Stance, One Leg Stance, Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire

Skills: Athletics 4, Courtier 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 4, Falconry 2, Heraldry 3, Hunting (Survival) 5, Iaijutsu 7, Investigation 4, Lore: Bushido 5, Lore: Myth and Legend 4, Katana 6, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4, Law 4, Meditation 5, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 3

Doji Yasuyo's Schools

If the *Fortunes and Winds* sourcebook is available, Yasuyo's School/Rank should instead be Kakita Bushi 2 / Doji Magistrate 2 / Kenku Kenjutsu 3.

Yasuyo rose to prominence during the time of the Four Winds. Through her heroism, Doji Kurohito broke Chukandomo's curse and ended his clan's long feud with the Lion Clan. A new generation of Crane heroes endeavors to live by her example. Her brother, Nagori, has often commented that Lady Doji will never truly be far from Rokugan's shores so long as Yasuyo walks among her children. Though Yasuyo would never compare herself to her clan's founder, she is deeply flattered by Nagori's comparison. She was even more surprised to hear the words repeated in the court by her cousin Kurohito.

Thus it came as a shock to hear of her betrothal to Kaneka. During the Four Winds conflict, Kaneka had never been anything but an enemy of the Crane. He had even played upon the Empire's general resentment of the clan to garner power and support for himself, interfering in the Yasuki war in the name of "justice" while using Yasuki resources to outfit his own soldiers. To Yasuyo, being married to the Shogun seemed an unwarranted punishment, yet she did not argue with her cousin's request. If Kurohito wished to make peace with the Shogun, then she would do her part.

She has been quite surprised to find herself developing enormous respect for Kaneka. Though he is brash, coarse, and rude, he has an undeniable sense of honor and a bold pragmatism she finds extremely refreshing. Through a strange course of events she uncovered Kaneka's secret war against the Gozoku leaders, and has allied herself to his cause.



Toturi Kurako, Empress of Rokugan

SCHOOL/RANK: Ikoma Omoidasu 4 / Naseru 1
HONOR: 4.1 STATUS: 9.9 GLORY: 5.1

Air: 5	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Awareness: 6	Willpower: 5	Intelligence: 5	Perception: 5	

ADVANTAGES: Ally: Emperor Toturi III (4/4 points), Benten's Blessing, Bishamon's Blessing, Clear Thinker, Imperial Spouse, Irreproachable (5 points), Precise Memory, Voice
DISADVANTAGES: Epilepsy, Idealistic, Small
SKILLS: Battle (Battle Lore) 5, Courtier (Gossip, Political Maneuvering) 4, Defense 4, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Sincerity) 6, Games: Go 6, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation (Notice) 6, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: History (Lion Clan) 5, Meditation 3, Storytelling (Bragging, Oratory, Poetry, Rhetoric) 7

A daughter of the noble Akodo house, Kurako inherited a medical condition that causes occasional painful and uncontrollable seizures. Fearful that her condition might cause her death on the battlefield (as it had for her father), Kurako's mother arranged for her to be trained as an omoidasu.

Kurako was saddened that she would never have her chance to stand among the Lion Clan's mightiest heroes, but accepted that telling the stories of such heroes was an honorable fate. She threw herself into her studies with zeal. Her sensei were quite impressed, and she soon became one of the most respected students of the Ikoma dojo. Her rendition of the epic Night of Falling Stars was so profoundly touching that she was summoned to Toturi I's Winter Court to recite it, and was rewarded with a standing invitation to all future Winter Courts from the Emperor himself.

When the time came for Toturi III to choose an Empress, he turned to his father's clan — the Lion. He asked each of the Lion families to name the candidate they felt would make the finest bride, and each family presented its candidate. The wily Ikoma Sume raised a few eyebrows when he did not name an Ikoma at all, instead offering Kurako's hand. Sume claimed that Kurako's wisdom and eloquence proved her to be a true daughter of Ikoma more surely than any bonds of blood. Though it was a bold move, the Akodo did not deny Kurako the honor. Impressed by both Kurako's reputation and by Sume's eloquence, Toturi III selected Kurako as his bride.

Upon entering the Imperial household, Kurako's keen eye quickly measured the balance of power. She was shocked by the way that the Emperor's authority had been undermined by ambitious men. She took swift action, denouncing several Gozoku sympathizers for their past dishonorable actions and ruining their reputations. Naseru was greatly impressed, and embraced Kurako as an ally. Kurako was pleased to gain some measure of Toturi's trust, if not his love. Perhaps by helping the Anvil regain the power that is rightfully his, she might yet become the hero she had always hoped to be.

Seekers of Enlightenment

Rosoku, Descendant of Shinsei

SCHOOL/RANK: Shrine of Seven Thunders Monk 4
HONOR: 4.2 STATUS: 2.0 GLORY: 1.0 (monk)

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 5
	Willpower 5		Perception 4	

ADVANTAGES: Balance
DISADVANTAGES: Driven (fulfill father's dying wish)
KIHO: Ancestral Guidance, Breaking Blow, Chi Protection, Cleansing Spirit, Ebb and Flow, Eight Directions Awareness, Falling Star Strike, Fortune's Breath, Harmony of the Four Winds, Harmony of the Mountain, Heart of Stone, Kharmic Strike, One with All, Purity of Shinsei, Speak to the Spirit, Touch the Void Dragon, Wind's Truth
SKILLS: Athletics 4, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Instruction 6, Jiujutsu 4, Lore: The Elements 6, Meditation 6, Theology (Shintao) 9

History has never recorded the origin or fate of the little man known only as Shinsei. Where Shinsei accumulated his incredible wealth of wisdom, how he achieved enlightenment, what secrets he passed to those he taught, what fate befell him after the Thunders defeated Fu Leng... these mysteries have never been answered. What is known is that his line continued after Fu Leng fell, for his descendant emerged in Rokugan to gather the reincarnated Thunders when the second Day of Thunder took place in Otosan Uchi. After Fu Leng had been defeated for the second time, Shinsei's descendant, the Hooded Ronin, once again disappeared into mystery.

Shinsei's descendants long ago embraced their destiny to guide mankind during the Days of Thunder that pit them against forces of divine evil every thousand years. The only way to ensure that mankind has the guidance they require is for Shinsei's line to remain safe and removed from the events in the Empire. Toward that end, Shinsei's son built a home in a secluded mountain range far from Rokugan's borders. There he studied his father's wisdom, seeking enlightenment and venturing out only when it was time to pass on his wisdom. On occasion, wayward nomads would find their way into his temple. When that happened, he would either send them on their way, or offer them a home and a chance to unlock the universe's secrets.

Rosoku is the most recent of Shinsei's descendants. His father's dying wish drove him to break his sacred solitude, venturing into Rokugan to establish the contests that would create the Keepers of the Elements. Once the Keepers are chosen, Rosoku intends to leave Rokugan to its fate, but with each day that passes he finds it more difficult to separate himself. He only hopes he can select the Keepers and step away before it is too late.

Kaiu Sugimoto, Keeper of Earth

School/Rank: Kaiu Engineer 3
Honor: 3.2 Status: 5.4 Glory: 4.1

Air: 2	Earth: 4	Fire: 2	Water: 3	Void: 3
		Intelligence 3		

Advantages: Keeper of Earth (see "The Path of Enlightenment," page 137)
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Missing Limb (useless right arm)
Kata: Striking as Earth
Skills: Battle 4, Craft: Armorsmithing 5, Defense 3, Engineering 3, Engineering (Siege) 6, Heavy Weapons 4, Horsemanship 1, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Theology (Shintao) 4

Among any clan other than the Crab, Kaiu Sugimoto's life would be a tragedy worthy of the greatest playwright. His wife died while defending the Kaiu Towers, shortly after their only son's gempukku. Her glorious death brought her family much honor, but broke Sugimoto's heart. It was obvious that his life was in ruins, so a compassionate Hida Kuon reassigned Sugimoto and his son to Otosan Uchi in hopes of lifting his spirits. He had been there only a short time when Daigotsu's forces attacked, destroying the city. Sugimoto's son died in front of his eyes.

Sugimoto survived, although he was horribly maimed. He took up the path of an armorsmith so that he might still serve the Crab, but it was difficult for him to forget his wife and son. It was not until he traveled to the distant Badger lands that his life truly began again. While struggling to reconcile the selfish agenda of his cousin with the needs of the Crab's Ichiro cousins, Sugimoto averted a potential disaster and brought all parties to an accord. In doing so, he unknowingly fulfilled the terms of Rosoku's quest and became the Keeper of Earth. Sugimoto attempted to pass the honor to his lord, but Kuon refused. It was Sugimoto who must serve with Rosoku and help in the Empire's struggle for enlightenment.

The irony of his situation is not lost on Sugimoto. Despite the many physical and emotional trials he has endured, the spiritual difficulty of his new duties alongside the Keepers has proven to exceed anything he has ever experienced. He understands now that his wife and son have met their destinies, and that he must meet his before he can hope to see them again. Though he does not yet understand why, the Empire still needs the crippled old man who once wanted nothing more than to die and find peace at last.

The nascent struggle between the Emperor and the Shogun greatly alarms Sugimoto. Nothing divides the Empire's spirit more so than politics and conflict, and this has the potential to divide the Empire in a way that nothing in history has managed to do. The Keepers have been gathered at last, but is it already too late?

Mirumoto Masae, Keeper of Air

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3
Honor: 3.8 Status: 4.0 Glory: 6.3

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 2	Void: 4
	Willpower 4		Perception 4	

Advantages: Keeper of Air (see "The Path of Enlightenment," page 137)
Disadvantages: Ascetic, Can't Lie
Kata: Spirit and Steel, Striking as Fire
Skills: Athletics 2, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Shugenja 3, Meditation 4, Theology (Shintao) 4

Since childhood, Masae has always been a peacekeeper. Her impetuous older brother Rosanjin often found unnecessary trouble, and Masae frequently had to moderate his exuberance. It was in large part due to her that a young Mirumoto Rosanjin avoided feuds that could have sent his life down a radically different path.

When age and wisdom tempered Rosanjin's behavior, Masae was relieved to pursue her own interests. Their mother had often spun tales of the Dragon Clan's greatest heroes. While her brother was fascinated with history's greatest warriors, Masae preferred tales of Shinsei and his teachings. The concept of enlightenment fascinated her, and as she grew older she followed a more ascetic path than many of her fellow Mirumoto. Even the pious considered her odd, a warrior with the spirit of a monk. Still, the Dragon recognized her needs, and honored her with a position guarding the most illustrious shrines and temples in their lands. Masae was content to fulfill her duties and study the Tao in quiet contemplation.

When Rosoku returned to the Empire and presented the Emperor with his quests, Togashi Satsu summoned Masae and instructed her to join her brother in Imperial Court. Masae was confused, for the quests had not yet been announced, but Satsu only replied that her true quest for enlightenment would soon begin. Masae was thrilled at the notion, and rushed to join her brother in court.

Her disappointment was overwhelming. Enlightenment was not a contest, nor could it be found at the end of a sword. Of this she was certain. She returned to Dragon lands to inform Satsu that she could not possibly compete, and ask permission for seppuku. On her journey, she encountered a wrathful Phoenix and a smug Tamori on the brink of a duel. The two were squabbling over a matter that could easily have been solved peacefully, and in her frustration Masae berated them. The two capitulated, and hostilities were averted. As they departed, Masae was staggered by a strong wind and stumbled. When she regained her footing, she found herself face to face with Rosoku's Book of Air concealed within the stones.

The position of Keeper of Air is yet new to Masae. She once again finds herself a diplomat, keeping the cynical Kaiu Sugimoto and the brash Crane Keeper of Fire from fighting. With Rosoku's death, Masae feels a sense of urgency that she cannot explain. The Empire stands on a precipice, and she feels that the Keepers are the only ones who can save it.

If only she knew how.

Advanced Maho

Blood magic has existed since before the Kami fell from the heavens. In ancient times, it was practiced by the Tribe of Isawa as a pure form of magic not yet corrupted by the touch of Jigoku. Even under the best of circumstances, original blood magic would have been considered dangerous, drawing as it did on the power of one's soul to assert one's will on the mortal world, but it was not inherently corrupt. That did not come until Fu Leng's fall into the depths of Jigoku.

In the centuries since the Kami's fall, blood magic has become the last refuge of the desperate and mad, seeking power they could not acquire through any other means. The basic tenets of maho have remained virtually unchanged for nearly a thousand years, as there have been precious few mortal souls able to wield it for long enough to innovate. Only those who succumbed to the Shadowlands experienced the true power they craved, and even then they harnessed power that would never have been available to mortals.



The only group to have significantly changed maho has been the Bloodspeaker cult. The practices handed down for centuries among their number were adopted from Iuchiban's personal style, a hybrid of maho and gaijin rituals from the Burning Sands. These rituals have served the cult for centuries, allowing the Bloodspeakers to avoid accruing physical signs of corruption while granting them subtle, potent powers to use on enemies. Unfortunately for the cultists, the only true way to avoid the Taint when using maho is to undergo the gaijin ritual that makes one a Khadi, a heartless sorcerer, and none save Asahina Yajinden and Iuchiban himself have ever done so. The Taint, then, is unavoidable for Bloodspeakers who embrace maho, even though it takes longer for the symptoms to manifest. The magistrates who hunt the Bloodspeakers have never understood how the cult's members can practice blood magic but avoid the Taint for so long. The answer lies with the cult's founder.

Calling on Iuchiban's Power

In his centuries of existence, Iuchiban has become dangerously deluded about his place in the Celestial Order. He genuinely believes that he is entitled to the power he craves, and that his acquisition of the power he already commands proves his worthiness. He continually, perhaps unconsciously, revises his vision of history, choosing to interpret events in a light that paints him as an architect of destiny, shaping events that he did not truly affect. Iuchiban has begun to believe he is in fact divine, a being that has transcended his place in the world and taken the power that always should have been his. In truth, while he is still mortal (albeit ageless), he has in many ways duplicated the powers of a lesser Fortune.

Upon his imprisonment in the tomb constructed for him by the Great Clans, Iuchiban used his gaijin sorcery to split off a small part of his soul. The wards that imprisoned Iuchiban blocked his ability to communicate with Yajinden and his followers, but they could not break the bond between two parts of a single soul. With the Empire ignorant of his machinations, Iuchiban continued to speak to his followers through the fragment of his soul that he left behind, an entity that the Bloodspeakers came to know as the Oracle of Blood.

The Oracle of Blood is a manifestation of Iuchiban's will, a tool through which he commanded his cult during his long, troubled slumber. The Bloodspeakers are not aware that the entity is an extension of their master's subconscious, as Iuchiban speaks through the Oracle as if it were a unique creature. It is merely another deception by which he controls his followers.

Bloodspeakers corrupted by the Taint are of no use to Iuchiban. He has little regard for his followers, but is unwilling to lose them when they might yet prove useful. To this end, he has established a means of mitigating the amount of Taint imposed by maho use. By invoking the Oracle of Blood, Bloodspeakers can draw upon Iuchiban's incredible command of blood magic, using him almost as an intermediary between the power of Jigoku and their personal command of maho.

Calling upon Iuchiban's power is a frighteningly simple process. Before casting any maho spell, the cultist must recite a ritual prayer that entreats the Oracle of Blood's blessing. This prayer is widely known among more experienced Bloodspeakers, but rarely shared with new adherents until they have accumulated sufficient personal power to prove their devotion to the cult. The recitation of this prayer requires one full round, and always requires the expenditure of a Void Point. The next maho spell the cultist casts is blessed by the Oracle of Blood, and receives a number of Free Raises equal to the cultist's Insight Rank.

Iuchiban's Control

There is a cost for calling upon the First Bloodspeaker's power. Invoking Iuchiban's name in the name of greater potency is a common practice among the Bloodspeakers, but what is less well known is that doing so dramatically increases the hold Iuchiban has over his vassals. It is believed that the strange interaction of gaijin magic and maho results in a permanent bond being forged between any two souls that interact in this manner, namely Iuchiban's and those of his supplicants.

The first time a Bloodspeaker calls upon Iuchiban's power with the Blessing of Blood (see below), he must make a Raw Willpower roll (TN 15). If successful, then there is no immediate side effect to the cultist's request for power. Each subsequent time the cultists calls on Iuchiban's power, the TN for this Willpower roll increases by 5. Any time this roll is failed, the cultist immediately loses all Void Points. If the cultist has no remaining Void Points, his Void Ring is permanently reduced by 1. These Void Points are restored normally through rest or meditation. As a result of this failed roll, Iuchiban gains a number of Free Raises equal to the cultist's Void Ring. These Free Raises may only be applied during the casting of the maho spell Grip of Iuchiban (see below). Due to his lengthy period of imprisonment, during which time his cultists were free to call upon his power at will, Iuchiban has thousands of Free Raises stored to use on castings of this spell whenever he desires.

New Advantage: Blessing of Blood [Granted] (4 points)

You have learned the prayers necessary to entreat the Oracle of Blood. You can call upon its blessings whenever you have need, although there is always a price for such power. You may spend the full round before casting any maho spell praying to the Oracle. In return, you receive a number of Free Raises equal to your Insight Rank on the maho spell. This requires the expenditure of a Void Point. After using this ability, you must make a Willpower roll as described in the paragraph above.

New Spell: The Grip of Iuchiban

MASTERY LEVEL: 7
ELEMENT: Maho
DURATION: 1 hour
AREA OF EFFECT: 1 target Bloodspeaker
RANGE: Unlimited

This is perhaps the most potent maho spell in existence, and can only be cast by a maho-tsukai who has undergone the gaijin ritual that transforms an individual into one of the heartless sorcerers known as the Khadi. Iuchiban is known to use this spell; Yajinden has never used it and the khadi Katsu is likely too inexperienced. Successfully casting this spell allows Iuchiban to issue direct mental commands to his followers. These commands must be followed, and cannot be resisted. Only Bloodspeakers who have called upon Iuchiban's power through the Oracle of Blood may be targeted with this spell (see above).

Special Raises: The Grip of Iuchiban may only benefit from Free Raises, not regular Raises. Iuchiban may apply one Free Raise to increase the duration by 1 hour, or to increase the number of targets by 10 per Raise.

The Khadi

Iuchiban gained the power he commands not merely through the use of maho, but by combining the power of the Taint with gaijin sorcery. In the lands beyond Rokugan, there exists an order of sorcerers known as the Khadi. These fiendish wizards use sinister magic to grant themselves immortality. Through use of a secret ritual, a khadi cuts out his own heart and magically preserves it between two heartbeats. So long as the heart remains preserved and intact, the khadi gains extraordinary abilities.

Immortality and Rejuvenation

A khadi ceases to age so long as his heart is preserved (generally within a locked iron box). A khadi also becomes extremely difficult to permanently injure, healing one die of Wounds each round, even when reduced below the Dead level. Poison and disease affect a khadi's body normally, but he recovers from them at ten times the normal rate. Lost limbs regenerate overnight. A poison or disease that would normally be fatal instead induces a deep sleep in a khadi. Even a khadi who is burned to ashes or otherwise completely dismembered will eventually regenerate, so long as his heart remains intact.

Magical Power

A khadi gains enhanced magical skills, no matter whether he knows gaijin sorcery, maho, or elemental magic. This amounts to two Free Raises when using any form of magic. A khadi does not suddenly learn new forms of magic after his transformation, but simply gains greater mastery over any magical arts he previously knew.



The Hidden Heart

Half a khadi's soul is locked safely within his heart. This has a number of effects. First, the khadi becomes increasingly amoral the longer he is separated from his heart, gaining the effects of the Heartless Advantage as well as the Cruel and Insensitive Disadvantages. Additionally, the khadi becomes immune to any form of control. Any magical attempts to control his actions automatically fail. Even mundane attempts to manipulate or influence the khadi require three additional Raises. This immunity to control extends even to powerful influences such as the Shadowlands Taint. Though a khadi may accumulate large amounts of Taint, he is immune to Jigoku's control so long as his heart remains untainted. If a khadi holds his own heart for more than a few minutes he loses this immunity until he distances himself again.

Anyone who gains possession of the khadi's heart gains absolute and total control of the khadi. The possessor is immediately aware of the khadi's location and can command the khadi with a thought. He is not aware of the khadi's thoughts, nor can he prevent the khadi from misinterpreting commands in an attempt to avoid them or harm the heart's possessor. The leaders of khadi sects in the Burning Sands typically keep the hearts of their initiates in return for the power they offered, thus insuring the loyalty of their followers. Iuchiban entrusted his heart to Jama Suru, a minion whom he had completely dominated through a combination of magic and powerful charisma, and therefore he had no fear of Suru using the heart against him.

A khadi can always follow his heart to its general location, and sense it within 300'. Beyond this, he must search to find its specific location. If someone has picked up the khadi's heart, the khadi immediately becomes aware of its exact location and the identity of the person attempting to command him.

If the khadi's heart is destroyed, the khadi immediately dies, though some khadi possess magic powerful enough to sustain their own lives for a few minutes — usually long enough to wreak vengeance upon their killer. An extremely Tainted khadi instead becomes Lost (and undead) if his heart is destroyed.

Soul Transfer

Upon reaching Insight Rank 5, a khadi is no longer bound to a single body. A khadi may attempt to possess any living humanoid creature within 30' by locking gazes with them. The target must make an opposed Willpower roll or become possessed. The khadi's former body immediately dies. The target's body becomes the khadi's new host body and the former occupant's spirit immediately dies. The khadi's physical Traits temporarily become those of the host body if they are greater than his own. The host body retains any natural abilities and ongoing magical effects, but otherwise all its previous abilities, including Wounds, are lost and replaced with the khadi's. There is no limit to the amount of time that a khadi may remain in a host body. If the target's initial Willpower roll is successful, the khadi remains in his previous body and the target is immune to this effect for ten minutes. Once a khadi possesses a body, the body is considered the khadi's own and he cannot be removed by exorcism or similar methods. A khadi may choose to slowly alter a new body over time, making it gradually come to resemble his original body.

If a khadi's body is damaged beyond repair, he can voluntarily choose to abandon the corpse and become a free-roaming spirit. The khadi becomes invisible, intangible, and unable to use any magic other than his Soul Transfer ability. There is no limit to the amount of time that a khadi may remain a roaming spirit.

Khadi in Rokugan

In Rokugan, the ritual used to create khadi is known only to three men — Daigotsu, Yajinden, and Sezaru. Of these three, Yajinden is known to be a khadi himself, though the location of his heart is unknown since Iuchiban's death. Daigotsu had the chance to become a khadi but refused, mistrusting the effect the ritual would have upon his soul. Daigotsu instead performed the ritual on his traitorous servant Katsu, and now keeps Katsu's heart close at hand at all times.

The Path of Enlightenment

The smith who can craft a helmet strong enough to shatter one thousand blades shall keep the Book of Earth.

The scholar who can contain one thousand years of learning on a single parchment shall keep the Book of Air.

The warrior who can defeat a thousand enemies in a single stroke shall keep the Book of Fire.

The general who can lead his armies from one end of the Empire to the other in a single night shall keep the Book of Water.

And the sage who can perform a task greater than these four things combined shall keep the Book of the Void.

And to the soul who can master all five of these, an even greater gift — a collection of these five scrolls supplemented by ancient scrolls penned by the original Shinsei: the Book of Five Rings.

When Rosoku issued these challenges to the Emperor, seekers of enlightenment from across the Empire immediately struck out to find the Elemental Books. Some were driven by arrogance, seeking to be the first to claim one of these sacred volumes. Others exhibited scholarly curiosity, hoping to glean Shinsei's hidden secrets. Still others did not embark upon the quests of their own accord, but were commanded to do so by their lords. In the end, those who found the books were often not seeking them at all.

As Rosoku apparently possesses no magic, none know precisely how his challenges function. How he knew precisely when and where the Keepers would meet these challenges, and how he placed the books where they would then be discovered, are mysteries even the Keepers cannot unravel. Most simply attribute it to the riddle that is Shinsei.

You may wish to have the Elemental Keepers appear in your own campaign, or perhaps have different heroes assume their roles (maybe even player characters). The secret of Rosoku's challenges, the power of the Elemental Books, and the abilities of the Keepers are described below.

Completing the Challenges

Obviously none of the challenges are meant to be taken at literal face value. For example, in brandishing the Phoenix-Dragon treaty before two warmongering samurai who had forgotten their true common enemy, the Shadowlands, Mirumoto Masae contained one thousand years of learning on a piece of parchment. It was Rosoku's intent that none of the Keepers would realize they had fulfilled the challenges until the deed was done. A challenge is only considered fulfilled if the individual performs the deed in a courageous or selfless manner. Those who seek to fulfill the challenges intentionally for their own glory automatically fail.

The Power of the Books

Many samurai pursued the Elemental Books, hungry for the power they contained. In truth they contained no power, only simple wisdom. The Books of Five Rings are not magical, although the elemental spirits seem fond of the volumes and refuse to harm them. An Elemental Book placed in fire will not burn. A Book placed in water will not warp, nor will its ink bleed. The Books are extremely well-made and durable.

As for the promise of wisdom contained within the Books, they do contain a complete recounting of Shinsei's wisdom as well as the teachings of his descendants. An individual consulting one of the Elemental Books receives two Free Raises on an ensuing Lore: Shintao or Meditation roll.

The Power of the Keepers

In reality, Rosoku's challenges were a mere test. The prize was not the Elemental Books but the Keepers themselves, in whom the potential for enlightenment always existed. Rosoku knew that by making public challenges, those who could truly reach enlightenment but would otherwise be too humble to step forward might be commanded to compete by their ambitious lords.

Once the Keepers are named as such, they begin to gain supernatural powers undreamed of even by Rosoku. It is not known whence these abilities originate — not even by the Keepers themselves — but they did not begin to surface until after Rosoku's death. Some have postulated that they are the result of Rosoku's spirit, guarding his selected keepers. Others have theorized that the kami, outraged that they failed to protect Rosoku, have decided to be more adamant in guarding his successors. Others merely believe that the Keepers have developed their power as the next step on the path to enlightenment.

Abilities of All Keepers

- Keepers gain two additional Void Points per day.
- Keepers gain a Free Raise on any Lore Skill Rolls.
- Keepers may, at will, cast the Commune spell to speak to kami of their element as if they were Rank 5 shugenja.
- Keepers roll three additional dice on all Skill and Raw Trait Rolls pertaining to their Ring or the Traits of their Ring.

Specific Keeper Abilities

Keeper of Air: +25 TN to Be Hit.
Keeper of Earth: Carapace equal to Earth Ring.
Keeper of Fire: Gains an additional attack per round.
Keeper of Water: Doubled movement rate, even when mounted.
Keeper of Void: Any Raises the Keeper declares count as two Raises.
Keeper of the Five Rings: Can emulate the abilities of any other Keeper, but only one at a time. He may switch between these abilities each round.

The Shadow Dragon

At the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, the entity known as the Air Dragon risked its own existence for the future of the Empire. The dragon entered the mortal realm and soared into the battle, bearing the Master of Fire, Isawa Hochiu, on its back. Though the dragon protected Hochiu from the corrupting influence of the Shadowlands, it was unable to protect itself. The power of the Taint suffused its essence, and what was once the Air Dragon became dark and twisted.

As the immortal dragon began to lose itself to the Taint, it realized that arrogance had been its true undoing. Why had it risked so much to deliver Hochiu to the battle? Many great heroes had already gathered to fight Goju Adorai, many of which knew how to fight the Lying Darkness far better than Hochiu did. In the end, though Hochiu did strike the final blow against Adorai, it was a Scorpion actor who truly opened the door for Adorai's defeat. Hochiu's heroic act could have been performed by anyone in that place, at that time.

In the end, the Air Dragon had sacrificed itself for pride.

The Air Dragon knew that it would soon cease to be, that the corruption that suffused its essence would soon unbalance the elemental harmony that defined its being. Not willing to die for nothing, the previously immortal creature sought out any means to prolong its existence, any way that it might continue to serve the Celestial Order as a defining elemental force and atone for the arrogance that had destroyed it.

And so the dragon discovered Nothing, the power that predated existence, the absence of all elements, the same power that had defined the Lying Darkness. With the Lying Darkness having been given a name, the power of Nothing was now uncontrolled. In time, the Lying Darkness might sufficiently recover to command Nothing again. The dying Air Dragon launched itself into the heart of Nothing and devoured its essence, seeking to command this power so that the Lying Darkness would not return.

On that day, the old Air Dragon truly died. The Shadow Dragon was born, a powerful creature born of corruption, elemental magic, and the ineffable power of Nothing. Where the former Air Dragon was curious, playful, and mischievous, the Shadow Dragon is calculating, manipulative, and patient. Yet despite all of the changes it had endured, it is still a dragon, so the Shadow Dragon set out to do what all dragons do... monitor and influence the future of the Empire.

MOTIVES

The Shadow Dragon is unpredictable, extremely subtle and manipulative. It moves cautiously, never revealing itself except to further its goals. The Shadow Dragon possesses a curious need to take credit for its actions, though, and occasionally appears and gloats once its plans have progressed too far to be undone. This is likely an attempt to maintain a sense of identity, to remain unique and memorable so that it does not become the ambiguous force of cosmic destruction that the Lying Darkness was.

The best example of the Shadow Dragon's modus operandi is the rise and fall of Iuchiban. Though the dragon did not plan Iuchiban's escape, it quickly adapted to the development and sought to take advantage. It insinuated itself into Iuchiban's dreams, convincing the Bloodspeaker that he was responsible for Shiba Aikune seeking out the Last Wish, confusing Iuchiban's greater schemes with petty grabs for power.

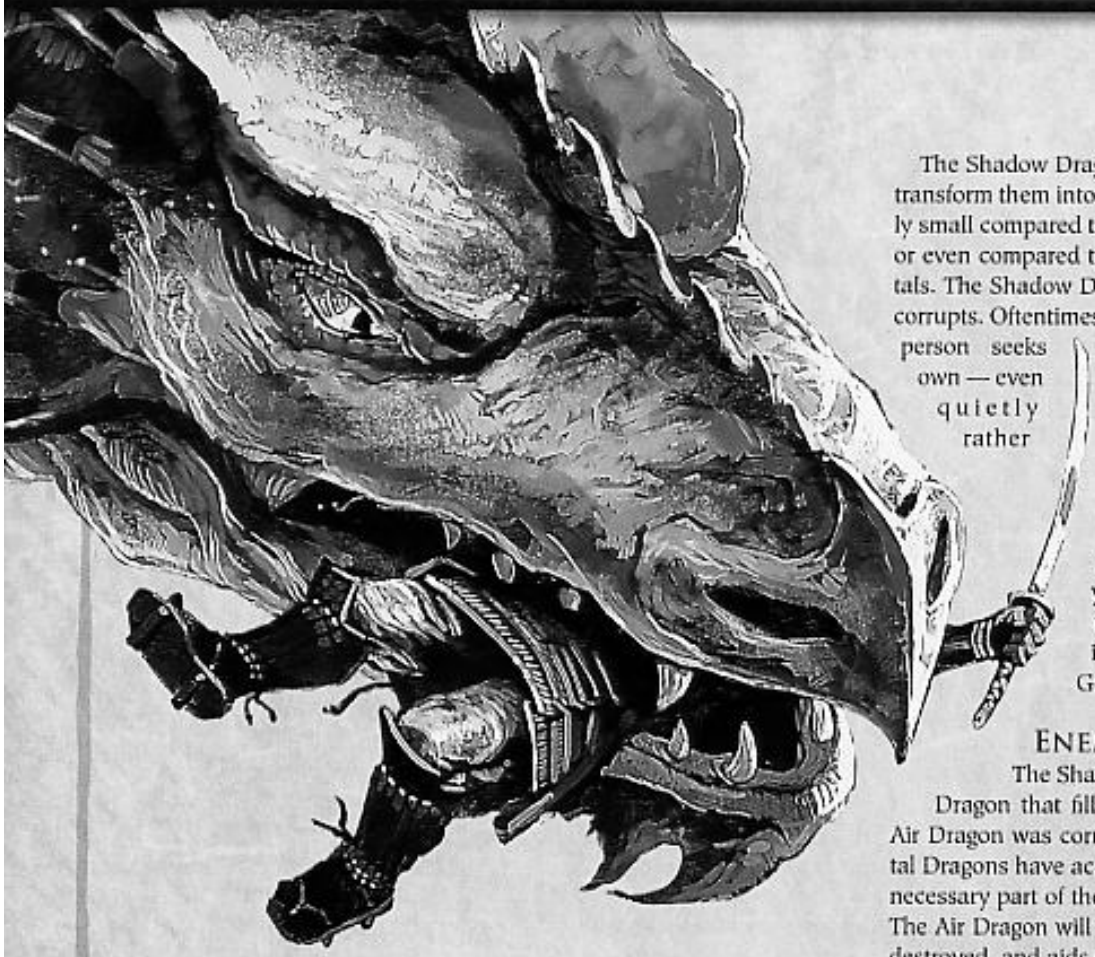
When the Realm of Thwarted Destiny began to form, the Shadow Dragon was the first to detect its existence and true purpose. If the Realm continued to become a place of destiny denied and potential thwarted, then it would come to embody the very denial of all existence — and the true Lying Darkness would be reborn. If it came to embody a realm of hope and potential for redemption, then the Darkness would remain a powerless, forgotten shred of its former self. The dragon went about fighting the darkness in a unique manner — by subtly revealing the Realm of Thwarted Destiny to Yajinden. As the Bloodspeaker sought to corrupt the new Realm, heroes inevitably moved to defeat him. The dragon presented itself to the heroes repeatedly, assuring them their cause was hopeless, mocking their courage. Its actions inspired them to valor and, in the end, the Realm of Thwarted Destiny became Maigo no Musha — the Realm of Lost Heroes.

All was according to the Shadow Dragon's plan.

At the same time that it coordinated a secret war against the Lying Darkness' reincarnation, the Shadow Dragon also used the war between the Legion of the Dead and the Legion of Blood to mask other activities. It used the conflict to draw the Lords of Death from their place in Meido, and dispatched the soul of Doji Satsume to distract the mighty Emma-O. Sending the soul of Daigotsu Hoturi into the heart of the gray realm, it reclaimed the lost half of Daigotsu's soul. On behalf of its ally Yajinden, the Shadow Dragon both restored the Dark Lord to power and assured that the Swordsmith would survive Iuchiban's defeat.

The dragon's ultimate goals are impossible to guess, but a few things seem to remain constant. It is driven to accumulate minions, corrupting mortals and infusing them with the power of Nothing as the Lying Darkness once did. These minions refer to themselves as the Goju. Until recently it was believed that the Ninube, another family which once served the Lying Darkness, remained free of the Shadow Dragon's influence and were independently seeking out their own objectives. This proved to be another ruse when the Ninube revealed that their alliance with Iuchiban was solely for the purpose of allowing the Dragon to manipulate the Bloodspeaker. The fact that the Ninube murdered Daigotsu Hoturi, a man who even in death was duped into serving as the dragon's ally, only demonstrates the true depth of the dragon's manipulation. It will use anyone or anything for as long as its purposes require, then discard them without hesitation.





Plans

The Shadow Dragon's future plans are unknown. The creature seems quite interested in the continued survival of several prominent Shadowlands figures, including Daigotsu, Yajinden, and Kokujin. Though it does not openly aid any of them, it frequently provides advice or offers minions. While each of these powerful villains has accepted the Shadow Dragon's help, none of them trust the strange entity, and all suspect it of having some ulterior motive. Their clarity of vision and unwillingness to accept the Dragon's gifts blindly only gives the Shadow Dragon greater respect for each of them. These men are not pawns in the game — they, like the dragon, are its players.

Allies

The Dragon's closest allies are the Goju and Ninube families. Though the Ninube believe that they have rebelled against its control, the Dragon continues to monitor them and can subtly guide their actions. Many of these individuals were once servants of the Lying Darkness, men and women that the Darkness allowed to retain a name and some sense of identity so that they could operate in Rokugan unnoticed. When Hitomi named the Darkness, this sense of identity allowed the Goju and Ninube to escape being transformed into mere mortals again (as most of the nameless minions of the Darkness became the new Akodo family).

When the Shadow Dragon came into existence, it sought out these men and women and offered them an alliance. They would continue to serve as they had served the Lying Darkness, but they would be given greater freedom and sense of identity than before. Most of the Goju and Ninube willingly agreed. Those that did not quickly realized their error when the dragon used its mastery of Nothing to tear them apart from the inside.

The Shadow Dragon occasionally seeks to corrupt souls and transform them into new Goju or Ninube. Its efforts are relatively small compared to Jigoku's continual thirst for mortal pawns, or even compared to the Lying Darkness' need to subject mortals. The Shadow Dragon is extremely selective about whom it corrupts. Oftentimes it will not corrupt an individual unless that person seeks to command the power of Nothing on his own — even then, it is just as likely that the dragon will quietly destroy the mortal to stifle his curiosity rather than invite him into the Goju.

The City of the Lost is a constant source of new recruits. Through some arrangement with the Dark Lord, the Shadow Dragon is granted a number of new Lost samurai each year. These men and women are always volunteers, eager to learn the secrets of Nothing at the foot of the dragon's master sensei, Goju Shingo.

Enemies

The Shadow Dragon's greatest enemy is the new Air Dragon that filled the void left behind when the original Air Dragon was corrupted. Though some of the other Elemental Dragons have accepted the Shadow Dragon's existence as a necessary part of the cosmic balance, the Air Dragon does not. The Air Dragon will stop at nothing to see the Shadow Dragon destroyed, and aids those who oppose the Goju and Ninube.

Sadly, the Air Dragon's unfocused rage has served the Shadow Dragon's own purposes more often than not. The Air Dragon is so predictably violent that all the Shadow Dragon need do is occasionally act openly, sending the Goju to aid its own enemies. Inevitably the servants of the Air Dragon appear, assaulting those the Shadow Dragon wished to destroy in the first place and weakening themselves in the process. The Shadow Dragon might find the entire arrangement a bit pathetic if the Air Dragon were not so frequently useful.

Using the Shadow Dragon in Your Campaign

The Shadow Dragon is an extremely powerful enemy, but can nonetheless be introduced into any campaign. The Shadow Dragon is cunning and patient. When it operates in the mortal realm, it invariably does so through pawns — by commanding its Goju and Ninube minions or by influencing unsuspecting samurai like the player characters. The Shadow Dragon should rarely make a personal appearance. If it does so, it is either to goad an enemy into action, to gloat before a helpless foe, or both (as in the case of Iuchiban).

If the Shadow Dragon's plans begin to crumble, it will not appear to rectify the matter. Not only are the Shadow Dragon's powers in the mortal realm somewhat limited, but it is a patient creature with many simultaneous plans. If a plan fails, the Dragon simply cuts its losses. That being said, if a group of heroes repeatedly proves to be a problem, the Shadow Dragon will certainly turn its attention to them, usually in the form of Goju assassins.

Abilities

The Shadow Dragon's influence in the mortal realm is limited. Its power is strongest in the House of Goju within the City of the Lost. There, the Dragon can manifest physically and its power is as limitless as any elemental dragon's (it would therefore be unwise to face the Dragon there). The Shadow Dragon can appear in dreams, manifest visibly for brief periods, or move swiftly across the land. It cannot enter sacred temples or other places warded against the Shadowlands Taint, including the Imperial Palace and most shugenja family homes. To monitor such places and to affect the mortal realm in a more direct manner, it must rely on human servants: the Goju and Ninube.

These "families" consist of those who have willingly pledged their souls to the Shadow Dragon. The Goju are bushi and ninja, while the Ninube are almost exclusively shugenja. The Shadow Dragon does not draw its servants exclusively from the samurai caste, but corrupts useful peasants, eta, and samurai alike.

Though the Lying Darkness once insinuated the power of Nothing into unwilling servants in much the same manner as the Shadowlands Taint, the Shadow Dragon desires only willing pawns. That being said, it can go to great lengths to seduce intriguing mortals, even driving them to madness. Once a Goju or Ninube has surrendered himself to Nothing, he belongs to the Shadow Dragon forevermore.

Goju and Ninube agents are immune to the Shadowlands Taint, protected by the Shadow Dragon's power. Though the dragon itself is Tainted, it knows that Jigoku's influence makes its followers much easier to detect. All Goju and Ninube gain two Free Raises on all Stealth, Deceit, and Acting Skill Rolls. They can weave a shadowy disguise at will, masking their voice and appearance to resemble any human whom they have previously met. Goju and Ninube are extraordinarily swift — their movement is increased as if their Water Ring were 3 Ranks higher, and they can leap half the distance they can run in one round. Any Goju or Ninube who comes into contact with crystal loses all of these abilities until contact is broken. The touch of crystal is mildly painful to them, and a wound from a crystal weapon invariably causes them to cry out in pain, even at a minor injury.

Goju Ninja School

The techniques of the Goju school were created many centuries ago, and have been passed down by the minions of the Lying Darkness. In modern times, these techniques have been adapted and improved. Though some of these techniques are quite extraordinary, none of them rely upon the Goju's supernatural powers.

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 0.0

Skills: Athletics, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Ninja Ranged Weapons, Poison, Stealth (Sneaking) 2.

Outfit: Ninja-to, tanto, 6 shuriken or tsubute, 3 ninja tools or weapons of choice; black gi, 50' rope and grapple, traveling pack; 1 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: The Art of Distraction

A Goju ninja can summon a barely visible web of shadows around his body, making himself extremely difficult to hit. At the beginning of your action, you may use this Technique. Choose a bonus to your TN to Be Hit; all of your TNs also increase by the same amount. The TN increase can be any amount up to your School Rank x 5. The TN increase lasts until the beginning of your action on the next turn.

Rank 2: Merciless Blade

A Goju knows how to take advantage of a weaker opponent. Once per round, you may make an extra attack against a blind or unaware enemy if you declare the Full Attack action.

Rank 3: Shadows Melt

At this level of skill, a Goju can quickly vanish from sight even when observed. If your Initiative is at least 5 higher than your opponent's, you may make a Raw Agility Roll vs. a TN of his Perception x 5. If this roll is successful, you move up to your Water x 5' away, and seem to have disappeared. Enemies with higher Perception than the deceived opponent do not lose sight of you when you use this Technique unless you make enough Raises on the Agility roll to also exceed their Perception x 5. If you are in a darkened area, or have a nageteppo (smoke bomb) in hand and drop it to cover your escape, you gain a +10 to your Agility roll when using this Technique. Use of this Technique counts as your action for the round.

Rank 4: Sword of the Moon

A Goju incorporates cruel subtlety into every action. You may add your Stealth Skill to all attack and damage roll totals. You may add twice your Stealth Skill to your damage roll totals against blind or unaware opponents.

Rank 5: Final Darkness

Through rapid movement, a Goju master becomes a blur of motion, taking advantage of any failure by an opponent. Any time an enemy attacks you and misses, you gain an immediate melee attack against him. You may not use this Technique more times each round than your Agility Trait. If you use this Technique while on Full Defense, your TNs are increased by 15. You may not move nor hide while using this Technique, but must stand in one place, spinning like a whirlwind.

The Shameswords

Perhaps the most terrible artifacts in Rokugan's history are the Bloodswords, a quartet of insidious blades that afflict those who wear them with the worst sins a samurai can commit: Ambition, Judgment, Passion, and Revenge. Ruin came to all who wielded the blades, bringing death, destruction, and shame in their wake. Many aspiring maho-tsukai have struggled to recreate the horror of these blades over the centuries, but none have succeeded. None have had Yajinden's terrible combination of brilliance, madness, and evil that the artisan evoked for his master, Iuchiban.

Sadly, that is no longer true.

In the past decade, a new set of cursed blades have come to haunt Rokugan, appearing in the hands of heroes at the strangest times, always wreaking havoc. These blades, the Shameswords, are not as powerful as the Bloodswords, but neither are they as subtle. Yajinden is alleged to consider the Shameswords crude, but even the great artisan himself cannot deny their effectiveness. To those who know of the Shameswords, however, the notion that they are vulgar but effective comes as no surprise. They were, after all, created by the tattooed madman Kokujin.

The Shameswords were created near the end of the Four Winds' conflict, when the exiled madman Kokujin sent a challenge to his former clan, baiting the Dragon to send seven warriors to stand against him and recover Togashi's daisho. The Dragon Champion Togashi Satsu and his chosen companions answered Kokujin's challenge, and in the process they witnessed the final stages of the Shameswords' creation.

Kokujin's plan is still poorly understood, even by those Dragon who were there when the events unfolded. Somehow Kokujin used the legendary Anvil of Despair to forge ten new blades, each one crafted from the soul of a disgraced Dragon hero. Each blade contained a curse distilled from the sins of the doomed soul contained within it. Somehow, this act of creation allowed Kokujin to make contact with the First Oni, the nightmarish beast of legend that is alleged to bear Fu Leng's true name. A fraction of the beast's power was awakened in the Twilight Mountains that day, and Kokujin was somehow deluded into believing that this would grant him apotheosis. Instead, the oni was defeated and Kokujin fell into darkness, although the madman would eventually return as he always did.

Regardless of Kokujin's fate or plans, his Shameswords were a gruesome success. As with many such cursed artifacts, the Shameswords bear a malevolent will of their own. They appear to be able to move about under their own power, appearing in the possession of those they have chosen to bear them (or perhaps those that Kokujin has chosen; the truth is unclear).

Shamesword Qualities

All identified Shameswords have common qualities. Among those that the Dragon Clan have positively identified are the following:

Damage: Shameswords are 4k3 katana. Any wielder with at least 1 rank in Kenjutsu rolls two additional dice for attack rolls.

Lingering: A Shamesword remains in the possession of its wielder until it chooses to move on. Even if left behind or deliberately discarded, the sword returns to its wielder's possession in a short period of time.

Unbreakable: The Dragon have not yet figured out how to destroy a Shamesword. The blades do not appear to suffer wear and tear. Even great pressure, heat, and magical energies do not appear capable of destroying them.

The Blade of Fury

Forged with an unknown soul, the Blade of Fury is at once the most straightforward and dangerous Shamesword yet encountered. Shortly after the Dragon-Phoenix War ended, the blade appeared in the possession of a Phoenix scholar named Asako Tsuruko. Tsuruko came to live among the Dragon as part of the newfound peace between the two, although her motives were darker than any recognized. Tsuruko was a Bloodspeaker spy. The blade fascinated her, and she found herself under its influence almost immediately. With its power and her magic, she infiltrated Shiro Mirumoto and murdered Mirumoto Uso, the family's daimyo. Immediately afterward, Tsuruko broke free from the blade's influence and remained free for several years as she struggled to understand its power. In time it overcame her, and she claimed more innocent lives. Her yojimbo, a skilled Dragon duelist, discovered her crimes and confronted her. The blade recognized a better host and seized the warrior, who was unable to resist it. He killed Tsuruko and fled into the wilderness. Shortly thereafter he was hunted and slain by Mirumoto Kenzo and the monk Kaelung, who were seeking the secret behind the murders. The blade came into Mirumoto Kenzo's possession, and he retains it to this day. Kenzo believes that the blade contains the soul of his father, the disgraced general Mirumoto Junnosuke. He seeks to free his father's soul.

The Blade of Fury allows its wielder to access the Mirumoto Bushi School Techniques as if he possessed Rank 5 in that School. The wielder can also use any Skill associated with that School at +3 Ranks. Each week the sword remains in a character's possession, he must make a Raw Trait Willpower roll at TN 25. If he fails, the wielder lapses into a murderous frenzy, stalking and killing anyone who has slighted him. Each time this roll is failed, the TN permanently increases by +5. If the blade senses a superior host, it immediately withdraws all benefits from its current wielder and attempts to drive its new target (who must be within line of sight) into a frenzy. If frenzied, the new target immediately attempts to kill the current wielder and take the sword.

The Blade of Hubris

Hubris is a heinous sin for a samurai, placing his own interests above those of his lord. This blade is the least understood of all identified Shameswords, and the Dragon are aware of its existence only because Hitomi Kobai vaguely recalls the swords' creation. The Blade of Hubris has not appeared since Kokujin's apotheosis attempt failed, so gathering more information has been impossible. Some fear that this blade may imprison the soul of Agasha Tamori; others insist that not even Kokujin could have shackled so powerful a spirit.

The Blade of Hubris grossly inflates the ego of any samurai who carries it. Like other Shameswords, it mirrors in some ways the power of a Bloodsword, specifically that of Ambition. Each week that the blade is carried, the wielder must make a successful Raw Trait Awareness roll at TN 20. The TN of this roll increases by +5 each week the blade is carried. Each time he fails a roll, the wielder rolls one fewer die on all Social Skill Rolls, as others are increasingly put off by the wielder's demeanor. When the number of dice lost equals the wielder's Awareness, his hubris becomes so obnoxious that he regularly insults others without noticing, provoking duels, blood feuds, or even wars.

The Blade of the Meek

Perhaps the most insidious of Kokujin's cursed blades, the Blade of the Meek was crafted with the soul of Tamori Chieko, one of the gentlest souls the Dragon have ever seen. Chieko accompanied Togashi Satsu on his quest to end Kokujin's threat, only to perish on the Anvil of Despair as the madman tore her soul from her living body. In this instance, however, Kokujin made a mistake. The enormity of Chieko's sins was far less than he imagined, and her soul's purity could not be contained within the sinister artifact. A shade of her soul remained, trapped in the mortal realm by her link to the blade. While Chieko's spirit cannot fully interact with mortals, she appears to the Dragon on occasion with advice and insights.

The Blade of the Meek is subtler than its companion blades. Rather than taunting its victims with visions of their failures, it instead curses them with dark thoughts of how they will fail in the future. Whenever the wielder is faced with a decision, the blade evokes visions of the most spectacular disaster possible for each choice. Given a choice between attending a Crane court or visiting the Imperial City, for example, the wielder might receive images of a Lion attack on the Crane and another series of fires gutting Toshi Ranbo. Each time the wielder is faced with a significant decision, he must succeed at an Intelligence roll at TN 15 to make the decision. If he fails the roll, the wielder is paralyzed with indecision, incapable of making the choice at all. The TN of this roll increases by +5 each week the blade is carried.

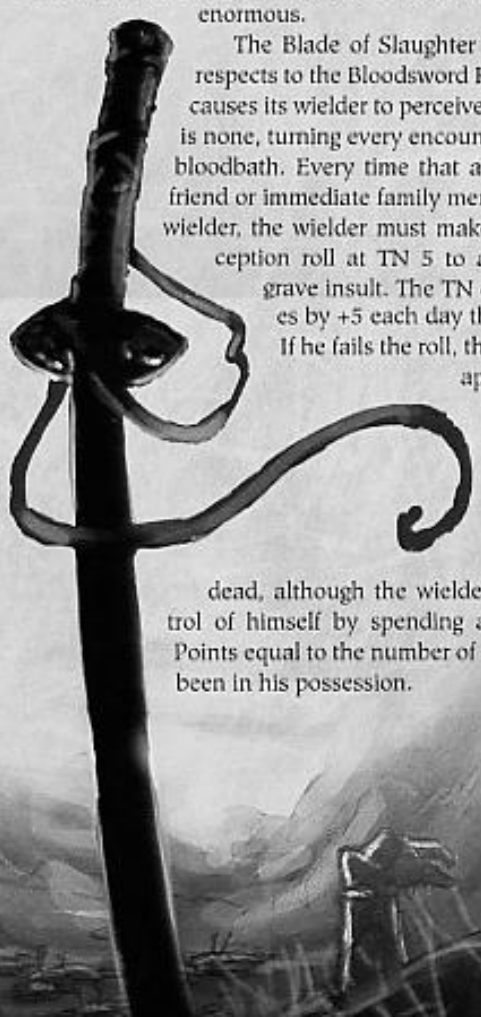
The Blade of Penance

The Blade of Penance was among the first Shameswords to come to the Dragon Clan's attention. It was given to Hiruma Todori, the Hiruma family daimyo, by Kokujin, who told him to either use the blade or leave it for the Bloodspeakers. Unwilling to risk such a weapon in the cult's hands, Todori took the blade. He later attempted to discard and destroy the blade, but continually found it in his possession despite his best efforts. In desperation, Todori petitioned Hida Kuon for aid, and Kuon sent his troubled vassal to speak with Togashi Satsu, Dragon Clan Champion. Satsu explained the blade's secrets, allowing Todori to put aside his reservations and leave the blade once and for all, securely in the Dragon's hands. Dragon Clan scholars have studied this blade extensively, greatly contributing to their understanding of Shameswords, but have yet to find a means to destroy it without also destroying the soul within it. The Dragon believe that the Blade of Penance contains the soul of Hitomi Akuai.

The Blade of Penance haunts those who wield it with nightmarish memories of their past failures. These visions come while the wielder sleeps, making it difficult to rest. Each week that the sword is in the wielder's possession, he must make a Raw Trait Stamina roll at TN 25. Each time he fails a roll, the wielder rolls one fewer die on all mental tasks. After the third failed roll, these penalties begin applying to physical actions as well.

The Blade of Slaughter

If the Blade of Fury is the instrument of a murderer, then the Blade of Slaughter is surely that of a madman. The Dragon believe that this blade was created when Kokujin sacrificed his vassal, Hitomi Kobai, on the Anvil of Despair. Kobai lived a violent life, one of a bully and a butcher, and his tendencies became even more primal when he was Tainted at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate and began following Kokujin. Through the intervention of Lady Moon, however, Kobai's soul was not sealed within the Blade of Slaughter entirely; only the part that had become Tainted and corrupt. Kobai lives still, seeking redemption among the Dragon and struggling with the bouts of rage that overcome him when the Blade of Slaughter is used. None among the Dragon know the blade's location, but Kobai gains a sense of its location each time it is used. Eventually, he will track it down, but the cost in lives before that happens will be enormous.



The Blade of Slaughter is similar in some respects to the Bloodsword Revenge. The blade causes its wielder to perceive insult where there is none, turning every encounter into a potential bloodbath. Every time that anyone but a close friend or immediate family member speaks to the wielder, the wielder must make a Raw Trait Perception roll at TN 5 to avoid perceiving a grave insult. The TN of this roll increases by +5 each day the blade is carried. If he fails the roll, the wielder becomes apoplectic and attacks the person he believes has insulted him. This rage does not end until the insulting party is dead, although the wielder may regain control of himself by spending a number of Void Points equal to the number of days the blade has been in his possession.

The Rain of Blood

The Rain of Blood, evoked by Iuchiban's sacrifice of the Ki-Rin, was perhaps the single most powerful magical event ever to take place in Rokugan. Its breadth, scope, and effects will be felt for years. More disastrous than the horrible plague that ravaged the Empire during the Clan War, the Rain of Blood turned a large portion of the population into Tainted madmen. Some of these madmen were slain; others fled into the wilderness or journeyed to the Shadowlands to answer the call of the Bloodspeakers; and some remain in their communities, hiding their affliction and fighting a never-ending battle against the inevitable advance of the Taint. It was a tremendous blow to Rokugani society and the economy, leaving fewer farmers to tend the harvest, fewer laborers, and fewer samurai, not to mention the widespread damage to property and holdings caused by those who succumbed. Because of their generally lower Honor, heimin and hinin were harder hit.

The Rain affects anyone who is exposed to the rainfall itself. Once the Rain touches the earth, its power is diffused by the element of Earth and becomes ineffective. The Rain affects only humans. Animals, Ratlings, Naga, and Shadowlands creatures are unaffected. The power of the Rain is to cause the victim's existing weaknesses to drive him into madness, providing an opportunity for the Taint to take root.

A human exposed to the Rain must endure several effects. Keep in mind that Honor Rolls and Tests of Honor can be used as normal with respect to these effects, and the benefits of any Ancestors, Techniques, Advantages, etc., that apply can be used as normal.

- For every round he is exposed to the Rain, he must make a Raw Earth roll at TN 15 or gain one die of Shadowlands Points. If he has any open, unbound wounds, the TN for this roll is 30. Once a character fails this roll, he does not roll again; a character can only gain one die of Shadowlands Points in this manner. If he has jade or nemuranai that help resist Taint, he can use those benefits as normal.
- He must make an Honor roll at TN 10 or fall into temporary madness. Humans who are already Tainted automatically fail this roll. An Honor roll must be made for every round spent exposed to the falling Rain. The madness lasts for a number of hours equal to the amount by which the victim failed the Honor roll. The form of this madness is determined by the weaknesses in the victim's character, inner demons, ghosts of past failures, and the like. The GM is encouraged to be as inventive as possible, as the Rain attacks characters at their weakest points. If the character has any Disadvantages, the GM is encouraged to use them against the character. If the GM chooses to have the Rain attack one or more suitable Disadvantages, the TN for the Honor rolls is increased by 5 for each Disadvantage. Characters who fail the Honor roll may become violent, even attacking life-long friends or helpless innocents. If the character has no suitable Disadvantages, devious GMs can choose a more subtle form of madness, or force characters to take one or more Disadvantages from the table below. The GM can choose from the table below or roll 2k2. The character gains no character points if this effect becomes permanent.
- A victim who falls to the madness must make a Willpower roll at TN 15 (using any TN modifiers that also applied to the Honor roll above) to recover at the end of his temporary madness. If he fails, the madness becomes permanent. He cannot use Void Points for this roll. If a character gains a permanent Disadvantage from the effects of the madness that conflicts with an existing Advantage, like an Irreproachable character being afflicted with Greed, the Advantage and Disadvantage cancel each other and the character loses both.

Table: Rain of Blood Temporary Disadvantages

2	Weakness (5 points)
3	Low Pain Threshold (5 points)
4	Antisocial (4 points)
5	Compulsion (4 points)
6	Doubt (4 points)
7	Lechery (4 points)
8	Elemental Imbalance (shugenja only, 3 points; non-shugenja characters roll again)
9	Bad Health (2 points)
10	Benten's Curse (2 points)
11	Brash (2 points)
12	Contrary (2 points)
13	Insensitive (2 points)
14	Jealousy (2 points)
15	Cruel (3 points)
16	Phobia (3 points)
17	Greedy (4 points)
18	Phobia (5 points)
19	Coward (6 points)
20 or higher	Roll twice on this table and take both

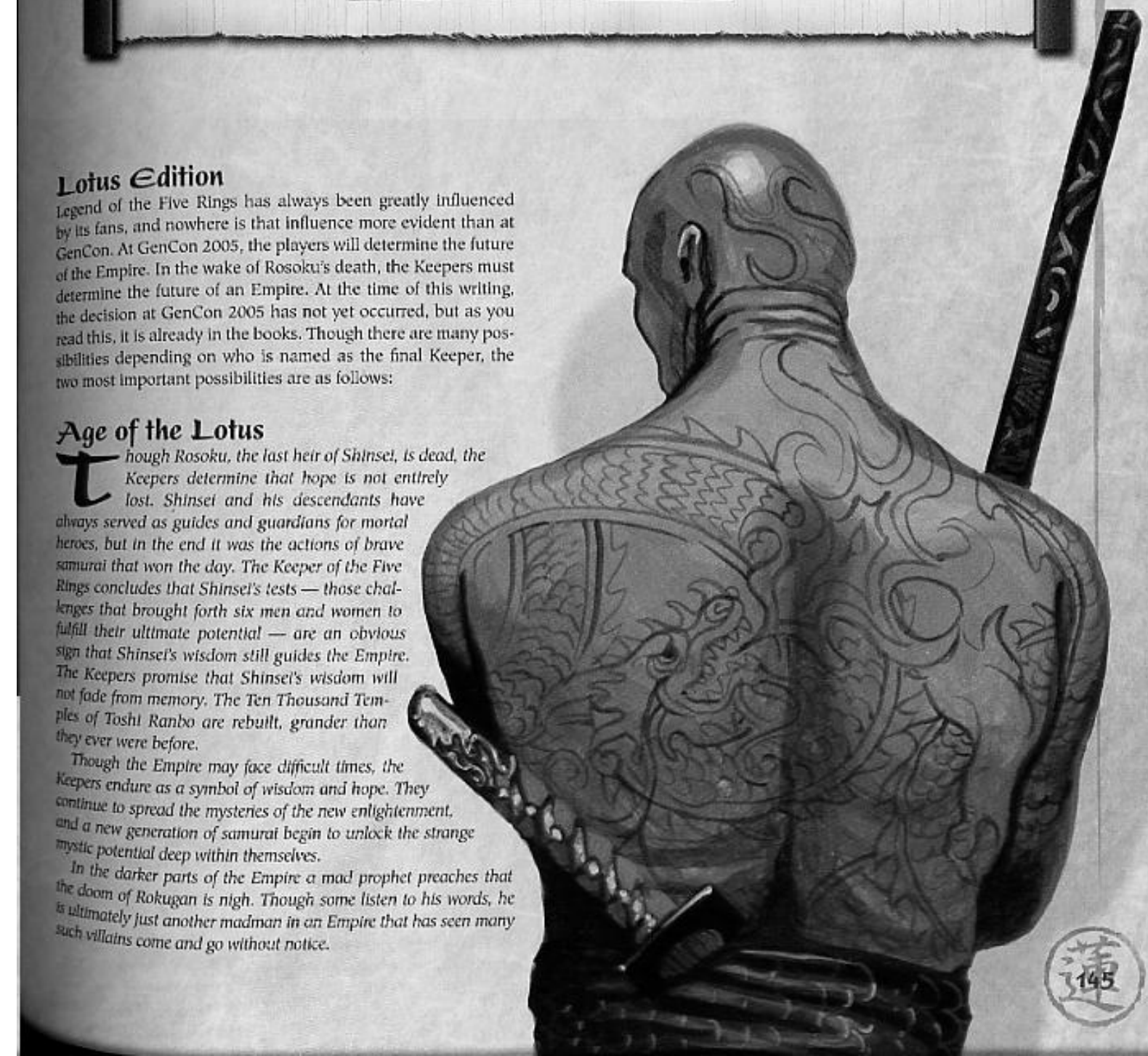
Disadvantages

The Rain of Blood as an event lasted for several hours across the Empire, with different localities suffering varying durations of Rainfall. The duration of the Rain is left up to the GM's discretion, but should be at least 10 minutes, up to several hours. The time of day also varies as the phenomenon spreads across the expanse of the Empire. The only real defense is shelter.

This is a magical effect, so Advantages like Clear Thinker have no effect on resisting the madness, but characters can make Tests of Honor and Honor Rolls as normal.

The Four Winds Saga

Lotus Edition



Lotus Edition

Legend of the Five Rings has always been greatly influenced by its fans, and nowhere is that influence more evident than at GenCon. At GenCon 2005, the players will determine the future of the Empire. In the wake of Rosoku's death, the Keepers must determine the future of an Empire. At the time of this writing, the decision at GenCon 2005 has not yet occurred, but as you read this, it is already in the books. Though there are many possibilities depending on who is named as the final Keeper, the two most important possibilities are as follows:

Age of the Lotus

Though Rosoku, the last heir of Shinsei, is dead, the Keepers determine that hope is not entirely lost. Shinsei and his descendants have always served as guides and guardians for mortal heroes, but in the end it was the actions of brave samurai that won the day. The Keeper of the Five Rings concludes that Shinsei's tests — those challenges that brought forth six men and women to fulfill their ultimate potential — are an obvious sign that Shinsei's wisdom still guides the Empire. The Keepers promise that Shinsei's wisdom will not fade from memory. The Ten Thousand Temples of Toshi Ranbo are rebuilt, grander than they ever were before.

Though the Empire may face difficult times, the Keepers endure as a symbol of wisdom and hope. They continue to spread the mysteries of the new enlightenment, and a new generation of samurai begin to unlock the strange mystic potential deep within themselves.

In the darker parts of the Empire a mad prophet preaches that the doom of Rokugan is nigh. Though some listen to his words, he is ultimately just another madman in an Empire that has seen many such villains come and go without notice.



Age of the Dark Lotus

Rosoku is dead. The rift between Emperor and Shogun deepens as their supporters blame one another for failing to protect him. The Keepers withdraw from the Empire to ponder what this might mean for the future while they wait for the final Keeper, the Keeper of the Five Rings, to reveal himself.

The newly named Keeper never arrives in Toshi Ranbo. On the road to the Imperial Capital, he meets a strange monk and his followers. This monk tells the Keeper of Rosoku's death, and paints a bleak image of Rokugan's future without the descendants of Shinsei to guide the next Day of Thunder. The Keeper is saddened by these words, but then the monk offers a new hope.

It is said that Rokugan cannot survive without Shinsei's guidance. Logically, it then follows that Rokugan must not survive. For the good of the mortal realm, the Empire must be purged. The Dooms that Uikku once foresaw — prophecies that hover eternally at the edge of awareness, entities that have taken on their own sinister intellect as they seek to impose themselves upon reality — stand ready to bring about this glorious new age. With the help of the Keeper of the Five Rings, these Dooms can become a reality, and none will stand against them.

The Keeper agrees to the mad prophet's plan, and even accepts his mystic tattoos.

Together, Kokujin and the Keeper plan the doom of an Empire.

•••

Of course, while each of these paths offers a variety of possibilities, some constants remain. The following section details the alliances and events that will define the Great Clans at the beginning of the Lotus arc regardless of whether enlightenment is renewed or ceases to exist.

The Way of the Crab

Current Status

The Crab Clan's future is uncertain. More than ever they question their purpose. For the first time in history the inhabitants of the Shadowlands have proven that they are not without honor; for without their aid Iuchiban would never have fallen, and Hiruma Castle would lay in ruins. Many Crab have begun to question whether the Lost are an exception to their crusade against the Shadowlands and should receive leniency, or whether this is merely some nefarious plan by which Daigotsu can weaken the Crab's resolve.

The Hiruma family secretly works with the Lost on occasion, helping one another destroy dangerous oni and other uncontrolled beasts. The Hiruma find such alliances convenient. If the City of the Lost is immune to a Crab assault, then why not aid its samurai in destroying mutual threats? If the result is fewer Crab lives lost, then the Crab will be that much stronger when Daigotsu inevitably betrays them. For the Hiruma, who face the horrors of battle every day without the protection of the Kaiu Wall, any ally is welcome — even a temporary one. For the other Crab families the matter is more complicated. Those who remember the era of the Four Winds recall vividly how Daigotsu and his armies nearly conquered the Kaiu Wall. They remember Hida Kuroda's defeat and corruption, and cannot forgive.

The return of the Fortune of Persistence and former Clan Champion, Hida Kisada, has polarized the Crab. Kisada turned down Kuon's offer to resign as Champion in favor of the returned Fortune, but many Crab samurai can conceive of no greater honor than to follow the orders of the Fortune of Persistence. To the sons and daughters of Hida, Kisada remains the Great Bear, and thus his word outweighs that of his grandson even if Kuon is still Champion. The fact that Kisada appears more willing to negotiate with the Lost than his grandson only deepens the growing division in the Crab Clan.

But the Crab are not defined solely by their war with the Shadowlands. They look with growing concern upon the worsening relations between the Lion and Crane. If the Lion should reignite the ancient blood feud, the Crab would be honor bound to defend their Crane allies. The Unicorn would, in turn, seize upon their own alliance with the Crab as an excuse to attack the Lion once more. The Crab harbor a great deal of respect for the Lion Clan, but know that even their formidable military might could not stand against the Crane, Crab, and Unicorn combined.

The Crab are preparing to offer aid to the Mantis, who have promised increased supplies of jade from the Ivory Kingdoms in return. If the Mantis are true to their word, then what they offer might give the Crab the strength they need to crush the Wall of Bones and destroy the City of the Lost once and for all.

Hida Kuon, Crab Clan Champion

SCHOOL/RANK: Hida Bushi 5 / Hida Avenger 3
HONOR: 2.3 STATUS: 8.1 GLORY: 8.1

Air: 4	Earth: 6	Fire: 4	Water: 5	Void: 4
			Strength: 7	

ADVANTAGES: Bishamon's Blessing, Kharmic Tie: Kyofu (3 points), Language: Nezumi, Large, Leadership, Strength of the Earth (8 points), Way of the Land (Crab Lands)
DISADVANTAGES: Driven (to punish the Shadowlands), Nemesis (Hida Kuroda)
KATA: Hida's Avalanche, Shards of Earth, Striking as Earth, Unyielding Fury
SKILLS: Athletics 6, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 6, Courtier 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 3, Heavy Weapons (Dai Tsuchi, Tetsubo) 7, Hunting (Tracking, Wilderness Lore) 5, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Nezumi 5, Lore: Shadowlands 5

Hida Kuon is one of the most respected warriors in Rokugan. Under his leadership, the Crab reclaimed six fallen towers of the Kaiu Wall. Under his command, the armies of the Crab Clan have never known defeat by the Shadowlands. Kuon has sworn that the Crab Clan will never compromise with darkness again, that they will never surrender or bow before the servants of Jigoku. Few can compare to his prowess on the battlefield; it is said that he is the very reflection of his legendary grandfather.

But now that the legend has returned, what will become of Kuon?

When Hida Kisada returned, Kuon offered to yield leadership of the clan. Kisada refused, not seeking to usurp his grandson's rule. Kuon was grateful at first, but wonders if the decision truly made any difference. Many of his soldiers revere Kisada — rightfully so, for he is a god — and look to obey his commands before Kuon's own.

And there is an even greater menace. Though Kuon confidently faces Daigotsu's forces on the battlefield, the Dark Lord has proven an insidious enemy. Many Crab remember how Daigotsu's troops aided them at the Hiruma castle or distracted Iuchiban's forces while Matsu Aoiko and Sezaru entered the Iron Citadel. With each day, Kuon hears more rumors about Crab samurai consorting with citizens of the Dark Lord's city, even allying with them to fight the more monstrous denizens of the Shadowlands. Many of those who have shown sympathies for the Lost are the same who revere Kisada.

What will happen if Kisada decides to condone an alliance with the Lost?

To Kuon, the answer is clear, but not easy. There can be no compromise with the Shadowlands. There can be no peace with the servants of Fu Leng, the ones who stole his brother's soul. They will know no other fate than absolute destruction beneath the steel of Crab warriors. No man or beast in all the realms will stand between Hida Kuon and the Crab Clan's duty.

Not even the Great Bear himself.

The Kaiu Engineer School (Bushi)

Though many families are renowned for their fine crafts, none are quite so admired as the Kaiu family of the Crab. Masters of armorsmithing, weaponsmithing, engineering, and siegecraft, their talents are unparalleled in Rokugan. Their craftsmanship can be seen in the solidity of the Kaiu Wall, the beauty of the Imperial Palace, and the gleaming edge of a Kaiu Blade.

Benefit: +1 Intelligence
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Battle, Craft: Armorsmithing, Craft: Weaponsmithing, Engineering (Siege), Kenjutsu, Lore: History, Traps
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, heavy armor; drawing paper and pens, kimono and sandals, scroll case, surveying tools, traveling pack; 3 koku

Techniques

The Kaiu Engineering School does not teach a set progression of Techniques like most Rokugani schools. Instead, the Kaiu offer a number of areas of study, each vital to the Crab's ongoing struggle against the Shadowlands. Each time a Kaiu Engineer gains a new Insight Rank, he may choose one of the abilities listed below. These abilities are sequential: a Kaiu Engineer with the first level of the Path of the Anvil may choose to learn the second level of that path or the first level of another path, but he may not select the third level of the Path of the Anvil until he learns the second. Each of the following paths is based on one skill that the Engineer gains as part of his school training.

The Path of the Anvil (Armorsmith)

Rank 1

You can modify armor to suit the needs of its wearer. This requires one hour of work for light armor, two hours for heavy armor. With a successful Craft: Armorsmithing roll (TN 15 for light armor, 25 for heavy armor), you may increase the armor's TN to Be Hit bonus by 5. These adjustments are temporary. The armor must be adjusted again after one week to retain the bonus. A given suit of armor may bear only one adjustment from

a Kaiu armorer at a time. When making any Craft: Armorsmithing check, you gain a Free Raise for every rank you possess on the Path of the Anvil. These Raises must be dedicated toward improving the item's quality.

RANK 2

You can now adjust armor (in the same manner as the Rank 1 Technique: TN 25 for light armor, 35 for heavy armor) so that it confers one of the following benefits: +1k0 to Initiative; the armor's bonus to TN to Be Hit bonus increases by 10; one Free Raise on Intimidation or Courtier rolls when wearing the armor; or the TN penalty imposed by heavy armor is reduced by 2.

RANK 3

You can now adjust armor (in the same manner as the Rank 1 Technique) to confer a Carapace Rating of 2. Additionally, you can work on a single suit of armor for one week and make any of the benefits offered by the Rank 1 or 2 Techniques a permanent feature of the armor (the armor may bear only one such feature at a time).

The Path of War (Battle)

RANK 1

When coordinating men in battle, you know how best to distribute troops for maximum efficiency. Troops taking direction from you in combat gain a bonus to their Initiative and Battle rolls equal to triple your Rank in this Path. You may confer this bonus on a maximum number of troops equal to your Insight Rank x 5. Additionally, you gain a free Emphasis for the Battle Skill for each Rank you possess in this Path.

RANK 2

Tactics come easily to the trained mind. You gain a +5 bonus on all Tides of Battle rolls in mass combat.

RANK 3

A true leader's skill shows not in his own accomplishments, but through the accomplishments of those who follow him. During any combat, you gain a number of additional dice equal to your Insight Rank. These dice may be granted to any person under your command, and may be used to roll an extra die on any Skill roll. No individual may receive more than one such die per round.

The Path of Steel (Weaponsmith)

RANK 1

You can temporarily enhance a weapon, honing its edge to a fine point or adjusting its balance for maximum impact. This confers a number of Free Raises equal to triple your Rank in this path. These Raises may be used at any time when someone attacks with this weapon, one per attack roll, but once a given Raise is used its benefits are gone. It requires twenty minutes of work and a Craft: Weaponsmith roll vs. TN 15 to grant this bonus. A weapon may have no more than one bonus conferred by this school at a time. When making any Craft: Weaponsmithing check, you gain a Free Raise for every Rank you possess on the Path of Steel. These Raises must be dedicated toward improving the item's quality.

RANK 2

You may instill additional rolled or kept dice into a weapon's Damage Rating. It requires twenty minutes of work and a Craft: Weaponsmith roll vs. TN 25 to grant this bonus. The maximum number of additional rolled dice equals your Rank on this Path. Two rolled dice can instead offer the benefit of one kept die. You choose which enhancement you instill when you make the roll. The effects of this enhancement fade after one day.

RANK 3

You may now enhance a weapon (as in the Rank 1 technique) to reduce any creature's Carapace rating by 2 for one day. A weapon so enhanced will ignore Carapace 4 for a single strike if its wielder expends a Void Point, or will cut through up to three inches of stone or steel if its wielder expends a Void Point. Additionally, you can work on a single weapon for one week and make the benefit offered by the Rank 2 Technique permanent (the weapon may have only one such benefit).

The Path of Stone (Engineering)

RANK 1

You are skilled at planning construction projects. Fortifications, buildings, or other constructions you plan or oversee have their building time reduced by 10%. This is cumulative if multiple engineers are coordinating on a project, with a maximum of a 30% reduction. You gain a Free Raise on attack rolls when operating any siege weapon. When making any Engineering check, you gain a Free Raise for every rank you possess on the Path of Stone. These Raises must be dedicated toward improving the final construction's quality. Additionally, you gain a free Emphasis for the Engineering Skill for each Rank you possess in this Path.

RANK 2

Fortifications you construct confer great protection on their defenders. Characters defending a fortification built by a Kaiu Engineer of Rank 2 or greater in the Path of Stone roll an additional die on Defense Skill rolls. Any siege weapon you operate has its range increased by 25%.

RANK 3

Engineers who devote their training to architecture are capable of truly amazing accomplishments. You gain five Free Raises on all Engineering rolls. Any siege engine you operate rolls two additional dice for damage.

New Crab Kata

Hida's Jade Fist

PREPARATION TIME: 20 minutes
DURATION: 180 minutes

The Crab know how to fight the creatures of the Shadowlands better than anyone else, and nowhere is it more evident than in this deadly technique. Against a prepared Crab bushi, even the deadliest oni cannot stand for long.

RANK: Hida Bushi 4 or Hiruma Scout 4
COST: 6
SPECIAL: Must be used with a magical, crystal, or jade weapon.
EFFECT: If fighting a Shadowlands creature with Invulnerability while wielding a magical, crystal, or jade weapon that can pierce its Invulnerability, you gain a bonus to each attack and damage roll equal to the target's Shadowlands Taint Rank.

Nothing Can Save You

PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes
DURATION: 120 minutes

The Crab often find themselves opposing enemies who call upon supernatural powers. By focusing on the innate purity of the elements, a Crab warrior can resist hostile magic for a brief time.

RANK: Any Crab School 3
COST: 6
SPECIAL: None.
EFFECT: Any time you are targeted by a hostile spell, the TN of that spell is increased by 10. If this penalty would cause the spell to fail, you are unaffected by it, though the spell otherwise takes effect normally. (For example, if the area where you are standing were engulfed in magical flame, you would stand among the flames unharmed.) Additionally, all magical effects roll and keep one fewer die on damage rolls against you. This bonus is cumulative with the Magic Resistance Advantage, but has no harmful effect on friendly magic.
VOID: You may spend a Void Point while preparing this kata to cause the first spell that fails to affect you to be canceled entirely, even if it affects a larger area.

The Way of the Crane

The Crane begin the Lotus Era in a position of strength. Their alliance with the Lion Clan has served them well, allowing them to focus their energies on matters other than border skirmishes and petty bickering over small parcels of land. The Crane have reclaimed their rightful place as masters of the court, serving as the Emperor's Left Hand, just as destiny intended.

The Crane embrace their allies and have little use for enemies. An enemy, in the mind of a Crane, inefficiently consumes resources and time that could be better spent pursuing the clan's more pressing business. The Crane have therefore improved relations with as many clans as possible.

The Crane's strongest allies at present are the Crab. The two clans have overcome centuries of distrust and hostility to better the position of both. The two clans share resources, so the Crane benefit economically while the Crab's defense against the Shadowlands has been tremendously bolstered. The Crane have a similar arrangement with their longtime allies the Phoenix, represented by Doji Akiko's leadership of the Elemental Council. The Crane's alliance with the Lion is nowhere near as strong as the ones with the Crab and Phoenix, but it has held



despite differences that might once have led to open war. The Crane's alliances with the Unicorn and Mantis are purely economic, but have further strengthened the Crane's dominance of many seashore markets.

The Scorpion remain the Crane Clan's one true enemy. The two clans have little common ground and it seems that there will be no peace between them. Fortunately, their conflict has not erupted into battle for decades, and it is likely to remain that way. The Scorpion's alliance with the Dragon keeps relations between Crane and Dragon quite cool.

Although the Crane have divisions among their ranks just as do the other Great Clans, the majority of Crane leaders overwhelmingly support the Emperor over the Shogun. Kurohito is known to be a vehement detractor of Kaneka, possibly stemming back to the Shogun's defeat of Kakita Kaiten in a duel years ago. Kurohito's primary objectives as the Lotus Era opens are to maintain the Crane's dominance over the court and the Empire's economy, and to support the Emperor in his conflict with the Shogun.

An unspoken objective being avidly pursed by the Doji family is to find a solution to the hostilities between the Phoenix and Mantis, both Crane allies. Should the conflict continue, the Crane could very well find themselves in a position where they must choose sides. Regardless of their choice, the Crane would lose. Given the presence of Doji Akiko on the Elemental Council, it is likely that the Crane would support the Phoenix, putting them at odds with the Mantis-Unicorn economic alliance.

The shaky alliance with the Lion is like a delicate origami crane: ever in danger of coming apart. The Crane consider the alliance important to their continued prosperity, and wish to maintain it so long as it does not result in their appearing weak before the Lion. Not even diplomacy is important enough to cause the Crane to lose face or to seem subordinate to their neighbors to the west.

As might be expected of a clan with political clout, a great number of Crane hold considerable power both within the clan and throughout the Empire. In such troubled times, this diversification of power could prove a strength or a weakness. Will Kurohito find his lieutenants rallying to his banner to present a unified Crane front, or will the intoxicating lure of power create a rift among the clan's various power brokers? Only time will tell.

In the Imperial Court, few wield more influence than Doji Tanitsu, the Imperial Advisor, and Kakita Munemori, a wizened old courtier who has risen from relative obscurity to serve as one of the Shogun's principal advocates. Once sensei and student, Munemori and Tanitsu are now bitter opponents. The two are often brought into conflict by the machinations of their common enemy, Bayushi Kaukatsu. Elsewhere in the Imperial City, other significant Crane personalities include Doji Seishiro, a prominent diplomat for the Crane and the chief liaison to the Lion Clan, and Doji Domotai, the Lion-trained daughter of Doji Kurohito, currently serving as an officer in the Imperial Guard.

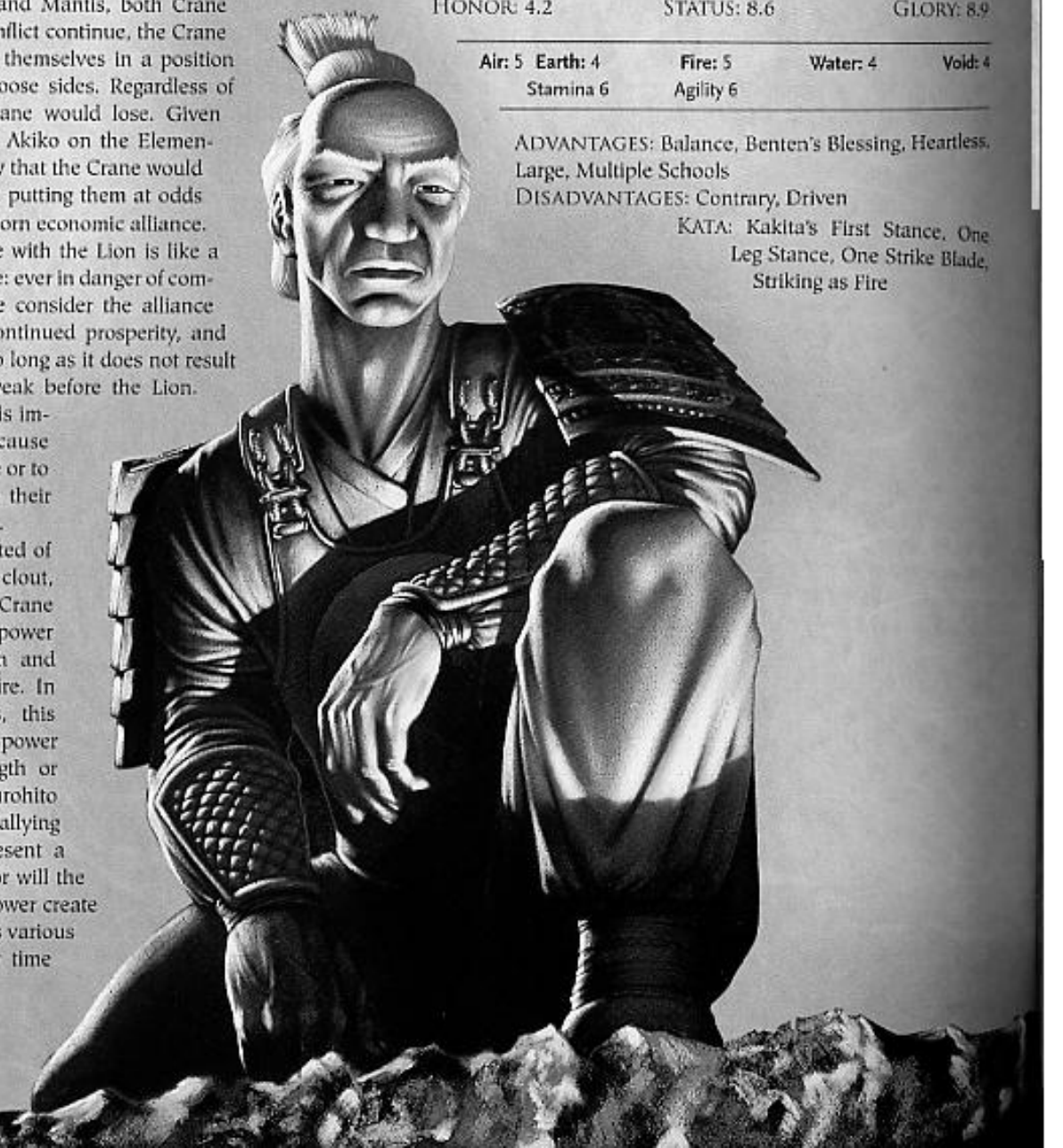
Yasuki Hachi and Asahina Sekawa remain prominent. The Emerald Champion and the Jade Champion have not been particularly outspoken regarding the conflict between the Emperor and Shogun, consumed as they are with the execution of their duties, but neither has done anything to suggest that their well-known devotion to Toturi III has changed in any way.

Doji Kurohito, Crane Clan Champion

SCHOOL/RANK: Kakita Bushi 5 / Doji Courtier 3
HONOR: 4.2 STATUS: 8.6 GLORY: 8.9

Air: 5 **Earth:** 4 **Fire:** 5 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 4
Stamina 6 Agility 6

ADVANTAGES: Balance, Benten's Blessing, Heartless, Large, Multiple Schools
DISADVANTAGES: Contrary, Driven
KATA: Kakita's First Stance, One Leg Stance, One Strike Blade, Striking as Fire



SKILLS: Athletics 4, Artisan: Origami 3, Battle 5, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 6, Defense 4, Etiquette 6, Games: Go 4, Heavy Weapons 3, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 7, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu (Yumi) 5, Performance: Music 3, Spears (Yari) 4, Storytelling: Poetry 2, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology (Shintao) 4

The samurai who serve the Crane Clan, particularly their Champions, have always been respected, admired, and envied. In truth, though, only a few have been feared. Like his grandfather, the terrible Doji Satsume, and to a lesser extent his father Doji Kuwanan, Doji Kurohito has become one of the few. In addition to being a brilliant tactical mind and adept diplomat, Kurohito is a magnificent duelist and is considered one of the most dangerous personal combatants in the Empire.

Kurohito's birth was marked with a pair of omens, one fortunate and one ominous. Only moments after his birth, word reached his mother and her attendants that Kurohito's father, Doji Kuwanan, had fallen in battle at Oblivion's Gate. Kurohito's mother was devastated, and her health immediately suffered. The Asahina were quick to note, however, that on that same day a great wave washed ashore in the Doji provinces, engulfing a shrine to Lady Doji. When the sea receded, a brilliant sword, emblazoned with a Crane and of exquisite craftsmanship, was found within the shrine. To the Asahina, the sign was obvious: this blade was meant for their Champion.

It was only a short time after becoming Champion that Kurohito met Isawa Akiko. Akiko had returned through Oblivion's Gate and was a fugitive from the Steel Chrysanthemum. Kurohito granted her asylum and petitioned the Emperor for mercy on those returned spirits who had remained loyal to the Empire, going so far as to marry Akiko and pledge to join her in death if necessary. The Emperor was impressed, and Kurohito's intercession spared many returned spirits.

The first true challenge to Kurohito's leadership came in the Yasuki War, when the Crab and Crane struggled over control of the Yasuki family and the fertile lands they controlled. Kurohito led his troops on the battlefield and brutally cut down Hida O-Ushi, the beloved Crab Champion and hero of the Clan Wars. Even as the Crane fought along their southern border, Kurohito took advantage of the Lion Clan's distraction and ordered the northern Crane armies to seize Toshi Ranbo. It was at this crucial juncture in the Crane's military deployment that Kurohito was approached by his cousin, Doji Yasuyo, with dire news regarding the sword he carried, the blade that had washed up on the day of his birth.

The sword was Chukandomo, a legendary lost blade forged to heal the rift between Lion and Crane. The blade had been lost to the ocean before it could be used, and had become cursed. Kurohito and Yasuyo hatched a daring plan wherein Kurohito surrendered Toshi Ranbo to the Lion in order to draw out the vengeful spirits within Chukandomo. The spirits came to claim Kurohito's spirit, but Yasuyo's blade Naishi allowed her to summon the spirits of many great Crane heroes to battle them. A great battle was fought, and when it was done, Chukandomo had been cleansed of its curse. As a sign of respect and gratitude for the Lion's assistance during the battle, Kurohito relinquished his claim to the city for one year and offered the blade to Matsu Nimuro, just as it had been intended. Nimuro accepted, forging mutual respect between them.

A short time later, following the destruction of Otosan Uchi, Kurohito and Nimuro came together again and secured Toshi Ranbo as the new Imperial City, protected by both Lion and Crane in an unprecedented truce. With his clan prospering as never before and with no enemies to speak of, Kurohito has withdrawn to a quieter life with his family, remaining largely apart from the Empire. During the Bloodspeaker conflict, he was content to purge his own house rather than overextend his resources.

Daidoji Yojimbo School (Bushi)

The first Daidoji, the former Doji Hayaku, was honored by his mother with the duty of protecting the body and spirit of his brothers, the Doji. Hayaku first earned this duty when he saved the spirit of the Doji family by returning the blade of Doji Konishiko, the Crane Thunder, to their mother. Lady Doji's grieving was ended at last, and the Daidoji family was born.

The Daidoji hold many sacred duties, but defending the Doji is first among them. While a handful protect their cousins' honor through performing unsavory tasks as Harriers, the majority are soldiers and yojimbo (bodyguards). While the Kakita and Doji families follow many different paths, including warriors, artisans, and courtiers, the Daidoji are almost exclusively warriors. The bulk of all Crane armies are Daidoji, as are the yojimbo who protect the vast majority of important Crane personages.

Daidoji yojimbo are trained to serve equally well in large groups as heavy infantry or individually as bodyguards. The two duties are not mutually exclusive, and a skilled soldier may be called upon to leave his military post and serve as a yojimbo for an important courtier, just as a skilled yojimbo may be moved to a military post in order to take command of a unit without a leader.

The Daidoji have wavered in their loyalty to the Doji only once in Rokugan's history, during the tumultuous period known as the War against the Darkness. The manipulations of the primordial entity called the Lying Darkness resulted in gross miscommunications between the Crane general Daidoji Uji and Crane Champion Doji Kuwanan. Civil war erupted, a result of Uji's misunderstanding of Kuwanan's actions and intentions and vice versa. It was not until the Darkness' threat was understood that the conflict was defused. Uji offered his seppuku to Kuwanan, but the Champion declined.

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Battle (Skirmish), Defense 2, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, any one Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, yari, any two weapons, light or heavy armor, helm; kimono and sandals, steed, traveling pack; 10 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: The Force of Honor

The honor of the Crane is a yojimbo's only concern, and the strength of his honor keeps him fighting when others would have fallen. You may add your Honor Rank to the maximum number of Wounds you may sustain at each Wound Level. Additionally, you may add your Air Ring to the total of all attack rolls.

Rank 2: Wielding the Inner Fire

A yojimbo is trained to assess a situation and act without hesitation. If you choose Full Defense as a combat maneuver, you add your Insight Rank x 5 to your Initiative score the following round. Additionally, you may add your Fire Ring to your TN to Be Hit at all times.

Rank 3: Shadowed Guardian

The protection of others is a yojimbo's sacred duty. At the beginning of a combat round, you may select one ally who is within your normal movement range. That ally's TN to Be Hit is increased to match yours for the remainder of the round so long as you remain within your movement range. You must be an active participant in the combat in order for this benefit to take effect. Additionally, you may add twice your Air Ring to the total of all attack rolls, replacing the benefit from Rank 1.

Rank 4: Strike Beneath the Veil

A Daidoji strikes without question or doubt. You may make an additional attack per round. Additionally, you may add twice your Fire Ring to your TN to Be Hit at all times, replacing the benefit from Rank 2.

Rank 5: To Tread on the Sword

A Daidoji dies before allowing his charge to come to harm. If an opponent declares an attack on any of your allies (other player characters, Crane samurai, or other such individuals) within your normal movement range, you may spend a Void Point to immediately attack that opponent. This is considered your action for the round. You roll a number of additional dice on this attack equal to your Honor Rank. Additionally, you may add three times your Air Ring to the total of all attack rolls, replacing the benefit from Rank 3.

Doji Magistrate School (Bushi)

Much of Rokugan's society can be traced back to the teachings of Lady Doji, Mother of Cranes. Doji was the most sophisticated and social of the Kami, and the customs she created for her family's court were quickly adopted in her brother Hantei's court and the courts of other Kami. Just as the Emperor learned from Doji, so too did the Crane learn from their Emperor, adopting his laws and enforcing them with great zeal and vigor.

The Doji family's magistrates are known throughout the Empire for their skill at extracting information from even the most reticent. Although they are not as skilled at discourse as their family's courtiers, they do train alongside the Doji courtiers for at least a year during their education, ensuring that the magistrates represent their family's interests with honor and poise even as they are enforcing the Emperor's laws. They train alongside students of the Kakita Dueling Academy as well, ensuring that they are equipped to deal with whatever foes they must face.

The Doji Magistrate School and its network of dojo are closely linked with the Emerald Champion and his magistrates. The Crane have traditionally held the position of Emerald Champion for centuries, and the clan's dojo and those of the Imperial magistrates share students freely. The Doji magistrates are more frequently recruited to serve as Imperial magistrates than any other group.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Etiquette, Iaijutsu, Investigation (Interrogation), Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: Heraldry, Lore: Law
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, jitte, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any one weapon, light armor; badge of office, kimono and sandals, steed, traveling pack; 10 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Eternal Vigilance

The magistrate's first lesson is that one's eyes must always be open, ever prepared for an ambush. Your TN to Be Hit is always increased by an amount equal to twice your Perception.

Rank 2: The Eyes of Doji

A magistrate is trained to devote every aspect of his being to his art. Spending a Void Point or making a Raise when making a roll using any of your non-Bugei School Skills confers double the normal benefit for you (Void Points confer 2k2 instead of 1k1, one successful Raise counts as two, etc.).

Rank 3: Strike of the Just

A magistrate's keen eye can defeat any foe. Once per round, you may make a Perception/Investigation roll against one opponent's normal TN to Be Hit. For every five points by which your roll exceeds the opponent's TN, you gain one Free Raise on any one attack made against that opponent later in the round. Free Raises gained from this Technique are lost at the end of the round if not used.

Rank 4: Judgment's Swift Blade

The Emperor's justice is dispensed swiftly by his loyal magistrates. You may make an additional attack per round.

Rank 5: Eternal Justice

The magistrate is an instrument of the Emperor's justice, and cannot be deterred from his duty. You may roll an additional number of dice equal to your Honor Rank when using any of your non-Bugei School Skills. If you have testimony or evidence that confirms an opponent is guilty of breaking one of the Emperor's laws, then you may roll the additional dice on your Bugei School Skills as well.

New Crane Kata

The Crane emphasize perfection in art, and they consider martial pursuits among the highest arts a samurai can choose. Their kata are elaborate, graceful movements that catch the eye purely due to their exceptional beauty. Even the most jaded Daidoji warrior becomes an artist when preparing his kata.



Spirit of Iron

PREPARATION TIME: 60 minutes
DURATION: 30 minutes

The majority of Crane kata emphasize precise attacks, graceful movement, and the speed of a samurai's strike. The Daidoji have a variant that instead teaches a bushi to steel himself against an enemy's strikes in order to get close enough to finish his grisly work. This particular kata teaches the samurai to turn his body slightly, allowing an enemy's strike to glance away and leaving him wide open for the Iron Crane's counterattack.

RANK: Daidoji Yojimbo 4
COST: 5
SPECIAL: Must be used with light or heavy armor.
EFFECT: You must use the Standard Attack posture to employ this kata. You decrease your Initiative by 10 during any round this kata is active. You gain a Carapace rating equal to your School Rank for the remainder of the round.
VOID: None

Wind in Darkened Skies

PREPARATION TIME: 30 minutes
DURATION: 10 minutes

Wind in Darkened Skies is based on an older Daidoji fighting style that is no longer practiced. The remnants of this esoteric style are known only to a handful of warriors who practice it to increase their speed and potency with the blade. It teaches the samurai to move with incredible speed, launching himself into the air and striking down his foes as he passes above them, circumventing both their attack and their defense.

RANK: Daidoji Harrier 3 or Kakita Bushi 2
COST: 3
SPECIAL: Must have an Athletics Skill of 3 or higher. This kata may not be prepared or used while wearing armor.
EFFECT: You must take the Full Attack posture to use this kata. When using the kata, you leap over your enemies and strike at them from above. You ignore your opponents' armor when determining their TN to Be Hit. Because of your position, your opponent gains only two Free Raises to hit you rather than the usual three.
VOID: You may spend a Void Point when preparing this kata to reduce your opponent's TN to Be Hit by an additional 5.

The Fortress of Thunder

When Fu Leng assaulted the Celestial Heavens, it became obvious to the divine powers that oversee Rokugan's cosmology that the delicate balance that maintained the Celestial Order was in serious jeopardy. To maintain the balance, the Heavens withdrew their influence from Ningen-do, bringing their mortal servants, the Oracles of Light, with them. Before the Oracles departed, however, they attempted to undo the damage wrought by the forces of Jigoku and their allies. For the second time in history the Oracles came together to craft nemuranai of pure elemental power, items of such potency that a single mortal soul bearing one could turn the tide against the darkness. In a move that surprised even the Heavens, the Dark Oracle of the Void appeared among the Oracles and demanded the right to contribute his blessing. As the former Oracle of Thunder, one who had accepted the burden of darkness to spare further imbalance, Tonbo Toryu was granted this right. Thus was the Fortress of Thunder created.

The Fortress of Thunder is an intricate model of a large fortress. It is small enough to be carried by a lone samurai, but is so heavy that the samurai would be unable to carry anything else. The model fortress is perfect in every regard and appears to be made of porcelain, but cannot be harmed by any means.

When placed within an existing palace, castle, fortress, or other large building, the Fortress can be activated with a short prayer to Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder. Once active, the Fortress cannot be moved until the prayer is repeated and Osano-Wo withdraws his blessing. So long as the Fortress's blessing remains active, the building in which it is place will never fall. No siege can overcome it, no army can storm its walls. The Crane have not yet had to test the Fortress's power, and are hopeful that it will not be necessary any time in the near future.

The Fortress of Thunder has a second ability, one that as yet remains unknown to any mortal. If placed in an open field during a thunderstorm, the Fortress can be activated by the same prayer. Once activated, the Fortress will be struck by lightning and transform into a full-sized fortress identical to its smaller version. This Fortress bears the same blessing normally conferred on other strongholds by the smaller model.

Spirit Portals

Portals to the Spirit Realms beyond the mortal realm of Ningen-do are rare. Only a handful exist in the mortal realm at any one time, and most are in places of such seclusion and natural beauty that no samurai ever lays eyes upon them. For most of Rokugan's history, spirit portals have been poorly understood. Scholars did not properly comprehend their nature until the enormity of Oblivion's Gate brought it home. Now, the discovery of a new portal would strike fear in the hearts of those who remember the War of Spirits. Such portals could herald the return of another horror like the Steel Chrysanthemum, or even (theoretically) the Chrysanthemum himself. A second war against the ancestors could mortally wound Rokugan.

Portals to the Spirit Realms are, by their very nature, extremely chaotic. Only some Realms can even be accessed through the mortal realm, and fortunately most are relatively benign. Jigoku and Tengoku are far too distant to connect directly to Ningen-do without the intervention of a divine entity. Likewise, portals to Yomi and Toshigoku, the realms of Blessed Ancestors and Slaughter respectively, are exceptionally rare.

Spirit portals are typically temporary, the result of a bizarre conflux of energies that briefly mingles the Realms' spiritual essences. Most rarely last more than a few hours, or at longest a matter of days. Permanent portals are possible, like the one at Oblivion's Gate prior to that artifact's destruction, but are rare beyond imagining, with only one other such portal having been discovered in history. Portals to the various Spirit Realms work as follows.

Chikushudo

Portals to the Realm of Animals are not unknown, although they exist in such areas of deep wilderness that they are usually only discovered after they have already closed. Animal spirits wander between the Realm of Animals and the mortal world at will when such portals open.

Gaki-do

The jealous, greedy spirits in the Realm of the Hungry Dead long to enter Ningen-do and feast on the spirits of the living. Although individual spirits can cross with relative ease, direct portals between the two Realms are not common.

Jigoku

The only known portal to the Realm of Evil lies at the heart of the Festering Pit of Fu Leng, deep in the Shadowlands.

Meido

The Realm of Waiting is near to Ningen-do, but the Fortune of Death and his cohorts, the Lords of Death (Shi-Tien Yen-Wang), jealously guard its borders. Passages between the two are rare, but not unheard of. Many restless spirits are those bound for or returned from Meido.

Sakkaku

Portals to Sakkaku are relatively common, and usually called into existence by the cooperative efforts of the trickster spirits who call the Realm of Mischief their home. These portals typically remain open just long enough to permit their creators to cross.

Tengoku

Portals to the Celestial Heavens do not exist. The only known exception to this is a thinning of the spirit barriers that was created in the Imperial Throne Room of Otosan Uchi, where Fu Leng died. Even this weak spot requires so much power to open and traverse that mortal men cannot make the journey.

Toshigoku

The only known portals to the Realm of Slaughter, other than Oblivion's Gate, were those created within the Lion lands during the years prior to the Clan War. In theory, the site of any large, bloody battle could become a portal to Toshigoku, but fortunately that happens only rarely.

Yomi

Oblivion's Gate is the only known portal to ever connect the Realm of Blessed Ancestors to the mortal world. The spirits of Yomi have completed their destiny in the mortal world.

Yume-do

The Realm of Dreams is distant from Ningen-do, and passages between the two typically exist only in the mind of intelligent beings as they sleep.

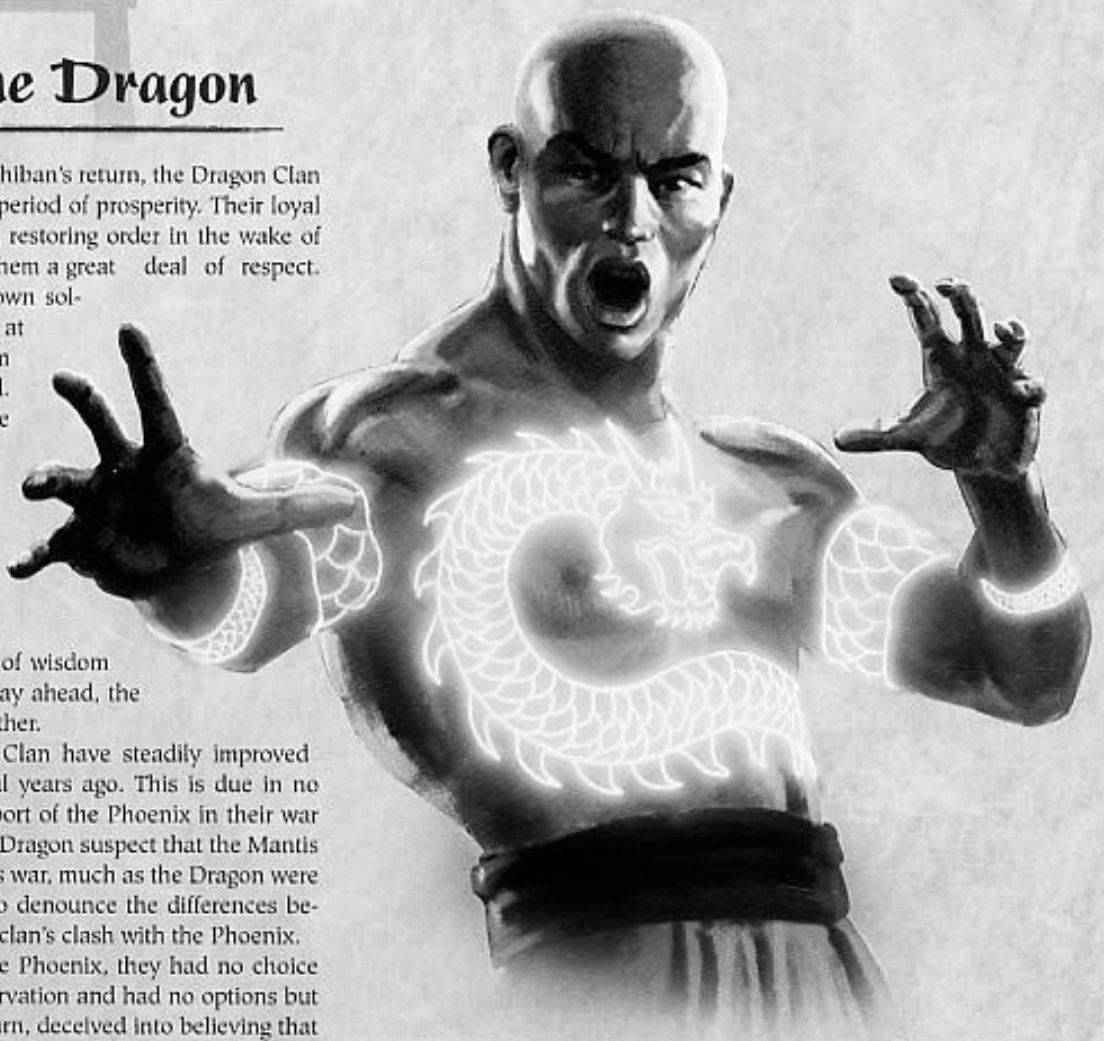
The Needle's Eye

The Needle's Eye is a stable, persistent spirit portal in the forest a short distance from Kyuden Doji. Only a handful of Crane are aware of the portal's existence, and it is guarded very carefully to ensure that no one who might abuse the portal's power ever learns of its existence. Even more unusual than the Eye's stability is that it does not lead to any one fixed Realm, but instead seems to be connect to different Realms at different times. It was through this portal that Daidoji Uji emerged from deep within the Realm of Dream, returned to Rokugan from an Empire of nightmares unlike any Ningen-do has ever experienced.

The Needle's Eye is dormant much of the time, and only awakens when the chaotic energies of Lady Moon are at their strongest. On the night of a full moon, the portal opens and connects to a randomly selected Spirit Realm. Any Realm may be reached save for Tengoku and Jigoku, which are barred. During the few hours the portal is open on each such night, it is possible for mortals to pass through to other Realms, or for spirits from those Realms to reach the mortal world.

Way of the Dragon

Following the harsh trials of Iuchiban's return, the Dragon Clan is experiencing an unexpected period of prosperity. Their loyal service in the Emperor's name, restoring order in the wake of the Rain of Blood, has earned them a great deal of respect. Their willingness to risk their own soldiers for the sake of peace at Kaeru Toshi did not earn them the enemies that they expected. The Lion seem to approve of the Dragon's selfless actions and the Unicorn, at least, remain neutral. The return of heroes thought dead or lost forever, such as Hitomi Kobai and Hoshi Kaelung, has galvanized the Dragon and united them in their common pursuit of wisdom and honor. Whatever dangers lay ahead, the Dragon will face the future together.



Relations with the Phoenix Clan have steadily improved since the bloody war of several years ago. This is due in no small part to the Dragon's support of the Phoenix in their war against the Mantis. Though the Dragon suspect that the Mantis have been manipulated into this war, much as the Dragon were before, Satsu has been quick to denounce the differences between this conflict and his own clan's clash with the Phoenix.

When the Dragon battled the Phoenix, they had no choice — their clan was faced with starvation and had no options but to fight. The Phoenix were, in turn, deceived into believing that the Dragon's invasion stemmed from dreams of conquest. In contrast, the Mantis seem to be attacking over nothing more than foolish pride and ancient feuds. If Phoenix accusations that the Mantis used a Black Scroll to destroy one of those villages are, as the Mantis claim, untrue, then would it not be logical for them to withdraw from the conflict? By seeking a violent resolution the Mantis Clan has, in the Dragon's estimation, only validated the Phoenix's distrust.

Togashi Satsu, Dragon Clan Champion

School/Rank: Three Orders Tattooed Man 5 / Student of the Tao 3
Honor: 4.1 Status: 8.0 Glory: 6.9

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 5	Water: 3	Void: 5
Awareness 5		Perception 6		

Advantages: Ally: Togashi Mitsu (4/4 points), Ambidextrous, Balance, Fukurokujin's Blessing, Great Destiny, Hands of Stone, Inner Gift (Lesser Prophecy), Jurojin's Blessing, Leadership, Sage, Way of the Land (Dragon).

Disadvantages: Ascetic, Dark Fate, Haunted — Togashi (3 points), Nemesis (Kokujin), Soft-Hearted

Tattoos: Arrowroot, Centipede, Cloud, Crow, Dragon, Ocean

Kiho: Ancestral Guidance, Channel the Fire Dragon, Cleansing Spirit, Death Touch, Falling Star Strike, Fire's Fleeting Speed, Grasp the Earth Dragon, Kharmic Strike, Rest, My Brother, Self, No Self, Unbalance the Mind

Skills: Artisan: Tattooing 4, Athletics (Climbing) 4, Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Political Maneuvering) 4, Divination (Kawaru, Omens) 6, Etiquette (Sincerity) 4, Hand-to-Hand 6, Hunting 4, Instruction (Three Orders Tattooed Man, Meditation, Theology) 6, Investigation (Notice) 5, Jiujutsu 6, Kenjutsu (Katana, Wakizashi) 5, Lore: Myth and Legend 4, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Medicine 4, Meditation (Fasting, Void Recovery, Zanji) 6, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 3, Theology (Shintao) 7

Satsu's Dragon Form

Just like his father and grandfather, Satsu is able to assume the form of a true dragon. At the moment, Satsu's transformation abilities are limited. He can only assume dragon form whenever the Dragon Clan is directly threatened. As soon as the threat has been dealt with, he immediately returns to human form.

In dragon form, he retains his Skills, Tattoos, Techniques, Kiho, and Advantages, but his Rings change as follows and he gains the following abilities:

TOGASHI SATSU, DRAGON FORM

Air: 3	Earth: 5	Fire: 5	Water: 6	Void: 7

Special Abilities

Claws: In dragon form, Satsu's claws inflict 8k3 Wounds (this already includes his Strength).

Fire Breath: Three times per day Satsu can breathe fire, inflicting 6k6 Wounds in a cone 100 ft. long and wide. Those within the blast area can make a Reflexes roll vs. TN 20 to reduce the damage by half.

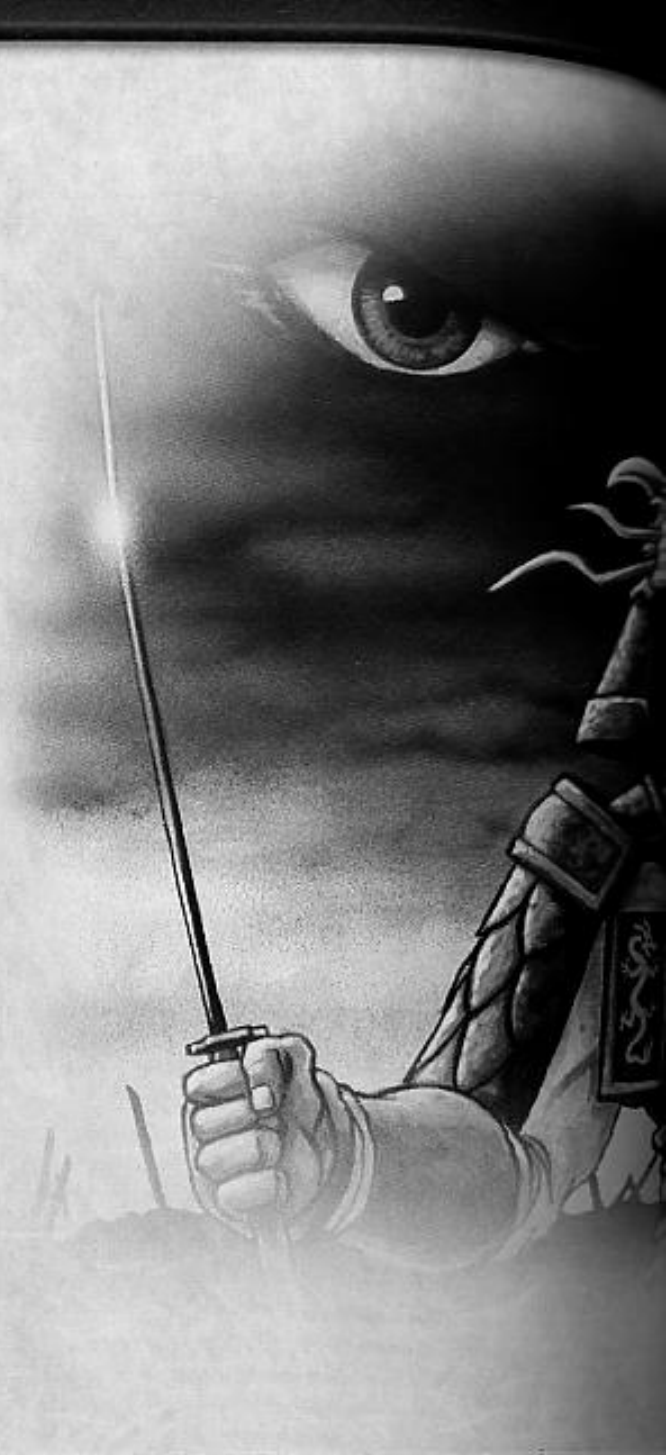
Flight: In dragon form, Satsu can fly at double his normal running speed.

Scales: Satsu's dragon scales grant him a Carapace of 7.

Togashi Satsu's time as Champion has been a strange journey. His life today is completely different from his life ten years ago. All that seems to have remained the same is his name. His mother and father are gone, departed on a mysterious celestial journey. The Dragon have survived a war with the Phoenix and helped end another between the Unicorn and Lion. His grandfather's swords have been recovered from the madman Kokujin. His childhood hero, Togashi Mitsu, is now his subject. He is a husband, and as of recently, a father. His grandfather's voice whispers in his mind and with each day that goes by he gains a clearer vision of the future.

Satsu realizes that he is becoming something more than mortal, though something less than a god. He has adapted to the changes with his typical serenity and quiet humor. At times, the predictions his grandfather offers him are worrisome. As his view of the future becomes clearer, it begins to resemble a forest path. Some parts are brightly lit, while others are wreathed in darkness. At a fork in the path ahead, Satsu sees a figure he recognizes, a man who will determine the course of the days ahead. The man's face is one Satsu instantly recognizes — the madman, Kokujin. Though the vision is bleak, Satsu does not allow himself to become despondent. He knows that the finest heroes in all of Rokugan stand ready to help him weather whatever comes.

The death of Rosoku troubles Satsu greatly, but even this does not dim Satsu's eternal hope. Shinsei's bloodline must endure somewhere, somehow. The Dragon Champion will accept no other possibility, for in the end there is no purpose in losing hope. After all, if there truly will be no Shinsei at the next Day of Thunder, then Rokugan will need all the hope it can muster.



Mirumoto Swordmaster School (Bushi)

Though the Mirumoto style seems simple enough on the surface, a great deal of variety in style and technique exists among those who wield the two swords. While some embrace the more versatile, sweeping styles of the Mirumoto Bushi School, others pursue a more personal path. These warriors call themselves the Swordmasters, focusing purely on the defeat of a single, powerful opponent where their brethren engage multiple foes at once.

Benefit: +1 Agility

Honor: 3.0

Skills: Craft: Weaponsmith, Defense, Iaijutsu, Kenjutsu (Katana), Kyujutsu, Meditation, any High or Bugei Skill

Starting Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any 1 weapon, light armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 2 koku



Techniques

Rank 1: Two Heavens

"All paths are one." — Mirumoto's *Niten*
You may use your Kenjutsu Skill for all Iaijutsu rolls (this does not grant you additional Iaijutsu Mastery Level abilities). You may add your Fire Ring to your TN to Be Hit. When an opponent chooses which statistic from among your Agility, Void, and Reflexes you will use in an Iaijutsu duel, he must instead choose two Traits, and you may use whichever you prefer.

Rank 2: Let Him Go By

"When the enemy charges with strength and urgency, let him go by." — Mirumoto's *Niten*
Once per opponent per round, you may spend a Void Point to gain an extra attack against an opponent who attacks you and misses. This action may be performed on Full Defense. If you win the initial Awareness/Iaijutsu Roll at the beginning of a duel, you may choose not to learn any information about your opponent and instead gain the ability to focus two additional times in the duel.

Rank 3: Half Beat Strike

"Victory passes between the space of a heartbeat." — Mirumoto's *Niten*
When in a duel, you may spend a Void Point each time you Focus to reduce the maximum number of times your opponent may Focus by 1. Any time an opponent strikes at you and misses, you may add your Fire Ring to all attack rolls against that opponent for the rest of the round.

Rank 4: The River Sword

"Strike like the flowing river, without beginning or end." — Mirumoto's *Niten*
You may make an extra attack each round. You may now add twice your Fire Ring to your TN to Be Hit, replacing the benefit from Rank 1.

Rank 5: Truth is in the Killing

"The greatest example of a Swordmaster's skill is the final one." — Mirumoto's *Niten*
You may spend a Void Point at the beginning of a combat round or duel to force all enemies within 20' to also spend a Void Point. Enemies may choose not to spend this Void Point, but those who do not cannot spend Void Points or make Raises for any reason until their next action. Enemies without a Void Ring are unaffected. Additionally, you roll and keep an extra die on damage rolls against all targets with a lower total amount of Void Points than you (including those with no Void Ring).

New Dragon Kata

Borrow the Next Breath

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Duration: 60 minutes

A simple but powerful technique, this kata allows a Dragon to perform an incredibly swift series of strikes, though its use leaves him momentarily open to attack.

Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 2 or Mirumoto Swordmaster 3
Cost: 3
Special: Must be used with a katana or daisho.
Effect: You may spend a Void Point to gain an additional attack against an opponent you have already attacked this round. In the round after you use this effect, you cannot attack at all and you are forced into the Full Attack Posture.

Tapping the Void

Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Duration: 180 minutes

This kata allows a Dragon to enter a deep meditation in which all manner of incredible feats become possible.

Rank: Any Dragon School 5
Cost: 10
Effect: You gain an additional three Void Points, even if this would give you more Void Points than your normal maximum. You may spend these Void Points in the normal manner. Until these Void Points are spent, you may not declare Raises.

Way of the Lion



The Emperor's Right Hand faces an uncertain future. The Lion Clan's new Champion, Ikoma Otemi, is uncertain and untested. Rumors circulate that the Clan leaders have concealed the truth about the War of the Rich Frog and Matsu Nimuro's death. Some whisper that the Kaeru family attempted to betray the Lion. Others say that the treachery extends even further, to Otemi's Scorpion wife. Some even say that Otemi seized the rulership of his clan unjustly, and that Matsu Nimuro is not truly dead but now lives the life of a ronin. Otemi does what he can to stifle these foolish rumors, but he is only one man. The Lion are a clan of warriors, and he cannot change the fact that he rose to power during a war that the Lion Clan ultimately lost. Though the War of the Rich Frog would have had a much bleaker end without his leadership, he knows that the ultimate responsibility for an army's victory or failure lies upon the general.

So now Otemi faces a difficult decision. His clan has suffered and needs time to rebuild its strength, but its spirit has been wounded. While peace would bolster his clan's physical might, morale will continue to suffer. The Lion need a victory. Yet where will Otemi find one? The Unicorn stand ready for battle, but he is unsure that his clan is ready to face them again. His advisors encourage him to renew the ancient feud with the Crane, but where will such a division leave the Imperial City, jointly guarded by both clans? Perhaps the answer lies to the north, in the Phoenix-Mantis war. To attack the Phoenix would incite the wrath of the Crane, but to aid the Mantis in the wake of accusations that they have used a Black Scroll would weaken the Lion's position in the court.

After such a short time in command of his clan, Otemi finds that only one thing is certain — he is swiftly coming to hate politics.

Ikoma Otemi, Lion Clan Champion

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5 / Ikoma Tactician 3
Honor: 3.6 Status: 8.3 Glory: 5.5

Air: 4	Earth: 5	Fire: 4	Water: 5	Void: 5
Reflexes 5			Perception 6	

Advantages: Death Trance, Great Destiny, Idealistic, Language: Nezumi, Leadership, Multiple Schools, Tactician

Disadvantages: Small, True Love (Matsu Kenji)

Kata: Fury without End, Gentle Blade of Winter, Striking as Fire, Striking as Water

Skills: Animal Handling (Horses) 4, Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Courtier 4, Craft: Sailing 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Horsemanship 6, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Heraldry 5, Lore: History (Lion Clan) 6, Storytelling (Bragging) 2, War Fan 5

Less than a decade ago, Ikoma Otemi was a simple warden patrolling the edges of the Ikoma provinces. His family was of reasonable status, due mostly to his uncle's position as the Ikoma family daimyo, but Otemi had no expectations of greatness. His one true wish was to serve his uncle to the best of his ability. That was the duty of any samurai, after all. Fortunately for Otemi, Ikoma Sume had much more grandiose plans. When he reached an officer's position through his own merits, his uncle stepped in and began to direct his career, beginning with a failed attempt to secure Otemi a position as the Protector of Otosan Uchi, an ancient and nearly forgotten position similar in many respects to that of Emerald Champion or Jade Champion. The attempt failed, due to the Winds' ongoing conflict and the intervention of a Pekkle no Oni, but the stage was set for Otemi's later advancement.

During the execution of his duties, Otemi and a fellow soldier, a Lion's Pride member named Matsu Kenji, discovered an ancient map in the possession of a bandit group. The map seemed to indicate the location of a legendary hoard of stolen goods of an infamous Yasuki pirate. Otemi led an attempt to recover it, facing an undead orochi in the process. Once the smoke cleared, Otemi found himself the captain of an "iron turtle" warship, staffed by a Nezumi crew and attended by his first mate Kenji. For months, Otemi patrolled the seas around Otosan Uchi, the city's protector in duty if not in name.

Otemi's newfound fame resulted in an arranged marriage with Shosuro Yasuko. His Scorpion bride was the favored student of Bayushi Kaukatsu, one of Sume's contemporaries and among the most powerful courtiers in Rokugan. Otemi was determined to marry for the good of his clan, although his heart belonged to Kenji. He continued to serve aboard his warship the *Deathless* until Otosan Uchi was destroyed, when even his mighty vessel could not stop the entire Shadowlands fleet.

When the Imperial City relocated to Toshi Ranbo, Otemi's ship became largely obsolete, and he was moved to the city as the chief Ikoma representative. His marriage to Yasuko was completed, and though he did not love her, Otemi treated her with respect and devotion, eventually winning her heart despite her ulterior motives on behalf of Kaukatsu. After hostilities with the Unicorn broke out at Kaeru Toshi, Otemi became the tactical advisor to the Lion representatives in Toshi Ranbo, interpreting the battle reports so that they could debate the Unicorn in court effectively.

In time, Otemi was recalled to Kyuden Ikoma, near the front lines. After repeated losses to the Unicorn, Otemi was ordered to oversee the Lion armies around the city and coordinate its defense. It was at the head of these armies that Otemi saw Matsu Nimuro, Lion Champion, fall in battle to the Khan, Moto Chagatai. Rallying his demoralized troops, Otemi ordered a fighting withdrawal. His cool head and tactical prowess prevented the loss of Lion territory despite Nimuro's death. Imperial authority intervened shortly thereafter, ending the war with Kaeru Toshi still in Lion hands, although a small village near the border was lost to the Unicorn.

Nimuro's death posed a difficulty to the Lion. His sons were not yet of age, he had no surviving siblings, and his mother Matsu Ketsui refused to assume the Championship. The various Lion daimyo considered the matter, and Otemi was unanimously selected to serve as Lion Champion until such time as Nimuro's eldest son was of age to assume his birthright. The announcement was a shock to Otemi, who had not even considered the possibility. He has accepted his duties as regent, however, and his well-known tactical abilities have only reinforced the Lion Clan's military might in the eyes of most clans.

Akodo War College (Bushi)

The Akodo War College developed as a branch of the Akodo Bushi School only a few generations after Akodo One-Eye fell in battle with the Shadowlands. Up until that time, the Kami had led the Lion armies into every major engagement. The few that he had not attended for one reason or another had been the responsibility of his hand-picked officers, men and women who had learned tactics standing at Akodo's side in battle. With the great general gone at last, the Lion needed to develop his teachings more fully in order to cope with the loss.

The War College began as a single dojo in Akodo family lands, where the teachings of Akodo were interpreted as a map for large-scale conflict rather than teachings for the individual warrior. The vassals of Ikoma were integral to the dojo's development, as they were keen students of both history and tactics. The Ikoma were more academic in their approach, while the Akodo preferred a more direct, practical approach. As a result, the endeavor eventually gave rise to not one, but two unique Schools: the Akodo War College and the Ikoma Tacticians, although the latter school was not formally organized until the Akodo were disbanded centuries later.

Students of the Akodo War College excel at leadership. They inspire those under their command through both action and example. These students often become officers even early in their careers, and work well with Akodo Bushi School students. They do not place the same emphasis on academic endeavors as their colleagues among the Ikoma Tacticians, but they possess a tremendous synergy with that School as well. In many ways, the Akodo War College is a bridge between the Ikoma Tacticians and the Akodo Bushi School, applying the tacticians' lessons to the Akodo's personal combat style and creating a superior small-unit combat style that lends itself particularly well to the Lion military structure.

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Honor: 3.5

Skills: Battle (Mass Combat) 2, Defense, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: History

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any two weapons, light armor, helm; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 5 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Strength of My Brothers

A War College student knows that his brothers among the Lion are his strength and courage. Depending upon them frees a samurai's energy to strike at his enemies. You gain a bonus to your attack and damage rolls equal to the number of bushi fighting in your unit or group, up to a maximum bonus of twice your School Rank.

Rank 2: The Tide Ebbs and Flows

A battle moves like water, flowing and drifting seemingly at random. The War College teaches that there are patterns, and a wise student can move among them. When rolling for the Tides of Battle, you may add twice your Water Ring to the amount you are adding or subtracting from Initiative scores. When skirmishing, you may always use the Tides of Battle, even if you suffered Wounds during the previous round. You may spend a Void Point to allow a skirmishing ally to roll for the Tides of Battle, even if he suffered Wounds in the previous round.

Rank 3: A Lion's Claws

A true servant of Akodo hones his speed and precision to such a degree that no enemy can stand against him. You may make an additional attack per round.

Rank 4: Clear Mind, Focused Will

The War College's true strength is in the direction of skilled Lion warriors. Each combat round, you gain a number of Free Raises equal to your School Rank. These Raises may be used by you or by any members of your unit or group within 10′ per School Rank. These Raises may only be used to execute combat maneuvers, including Disarm, Feint, Guard, Knockdown, etc. Raises not used by the end of the combat round are lost.

Rank 5: In Akodo's Name

Akodo's Leadership teaches that all Akodo warriors are brothers. By forsaking personal glory and guiding his brothers in combat, a student of the War College can direct them toward the perfect execution of their combat style. By sacrificing all your actions for the round, you may confer a number of additional attacks per round equal to your School Rank on other bushi in your unit or group. Each soldier benefiting from this Technique must be within 50′, and each may receive only one additional attack per round.

Ikoma Tactician School (Bushi)

The Ikoma family has always served as the Lion Clan's bards and historians, keepers of the clan's memory. They have therefore accumulated an exhaustive library of information on virtually every major battle ever fought in Rokugan, and even a handful beyond her borders. The family's encyclopedic knowledge has made an Ikoma advisor an invaluable asset to a great many Akodo generals.

About fifty years ago, the Scorpion Clan attempted to overthrow the Emperor and seize control of Otosan Uchi. The plan ultimately failed, due in part to the Scorpion Champion's failure to eliminate the threat posed by the Lion Champion, Akodo Toturi, before the coup. The new Emperor was angry with what he perceived as Toturi's failure to protect the capital and his impertinence in requesting an honorable burial for Bayushi Shoju. As a result, the Akodo were disbanded, and Toturi was cast out as a ronin. The Matsu rejoiced at this opportunity, frustrated as they were by decades of rivalry with the Akodo. The loss was keenly felt, however, as the Akodo had always served as the clan's generals. Many Ikoma, together with surviving Akodo who took the Ikoma name, combined their teachings and studies to fill the void. They formally inaugurated the Ikoma Tactician School under the command of Ikoma Ujiaki.

The Ikoma Tacticians encountered many problems almost from the moment of their inception. The Matsu forces were headstrong with their sudden acquisition of power, not inclined to heed the Ikoma's sensible tactical advice. The introduction of renamed Akodo samurai into the family caused further strife with differing philosophies among the tactician dojo sensei. The further division within the Lion that arose during the Clan War, over the issue of whether the Lion served the Emperor or the Empire, exacerbated the problem.

In the Clan War's aftermath the situation stabilized, and the Ikoma served adequately as the clan's tactical branch for years until the Akodo were reinstated. Even after Akodo Ginawa reformed the Akodo War College, the Ikoma Tacticians remained important to all Lion military matters. It is rare for any Akodo or Matsu general not to have a command staff with many Ikoma-trained tacticians.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 3.5
Skills: Battle (Battle Lore) 2, Defense, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Lore: History, War Fan
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), war fan, light armor, helm; small back banner, kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 5 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Knowledge Lies in the Past

The Ikoma study the secrets of their clan's greatest generals, as well as history's other great generals such as the famous ronin commander Sun Tao, to gain insights into the ebb and flow of battle. You may add twice your Honor Rank to your Initiative rolls and all Battle rolls.

Rank 2: Triumph Before the Battle

Learning from one's foes even during the midst of a chaotic battle is the hallmark of a true tactician. Once per attack roll or Battle roll, you may spend a Void Point to immediately re-roll all dice that roll less than your Battle Skill Rank. This re-roll happens before the bonus from your Rank 1 Technique.

Rank 3: To Prepare for Death

A true tactician knows not to let thought interfere with the flow of action. You may make an additional attack per round.

Rank 4: On Deadly Ground

A tactician learns to goad his opponents into making costly mistakes. When making an opposed Battle roll during Mass Combat, you may add your Water Ring to the result of each die. Additionally, you add twice your Water Ring to your TN to Be Hit in any skirmish.

Rank 5: The Master's Tactics

When a tactician can go no further, he must change to suit his challenges. You may spend a Void Point before an opponent makes an attack roll in order to make a Perception/Battle roll against any attack, including spells. The result of this roll is compared to the opponent's roll. If your roll is higher, you successfully anticipate the attack and avoid it entirely. If you are commanding troops in a battle, or a member of the commander's senior command staff, you may spend a Void Point to



increase or decrease the total of your general's Perception/Battle (Mass Combat) roll by any amount, in increments of 5, up to a maximum of your Insight Rank x 5.

New Lion Kata

With the potential exception of their traditional opponents in the Crane, the Lion are perhaps the most rigidly traditional — some would say inflexible — swordsmen in the Empire. Their kata have been honed to perfection by centuries of practice, and are among the most precise of any bushi dojo. They lack the graceful execution that typifies Crane styles, but instead are very direct and efficient, with no wasted movements.

Hand of Akodo

PREPARATION TIME: 30 minutes
DURATION: 120 minutes

Like the mighty Akodo, the Lion Clan's warriors are trained to use all weapons to their fullest extent. A true servant of Akodo is never without a weapon, even if his steel is lost.

RANK: Any Lion Bushi School 2
COST: 3
SPECIAL: Must be used with unarmed strikes.
EFFECT: You roll one additional die on damage rolls using unarmed strikes. Your Initiative is increased by 5 during any combat round when you are unarmed, and your Wound penalties are reduced by your Insight Rank. Your TN to Be Hit is reduced by 5.
VOID: None.

Motso's Method

PREPARATION TIME: 60 minutes
DURATION: 180 minutes

Kitsu Motso was the greatest tactician and warrior ever born to the Kitsu family, and numbers among the greatest generals ever to serve as Lion Champion. His ability to assess his foes was such that he could instantly modify his stance to defeat their styles. Those who study his method gain a measure of his abilities, vastly improving their defenses in battle.

RANK: Akodo War College 3 or Ikoma Tactician 3
COST: 4
SPECIAL: None.
EFFECT: You roll one fewer die on all attack and damage rolls. Your Initiative and TN to Be Hit are increased by 5.

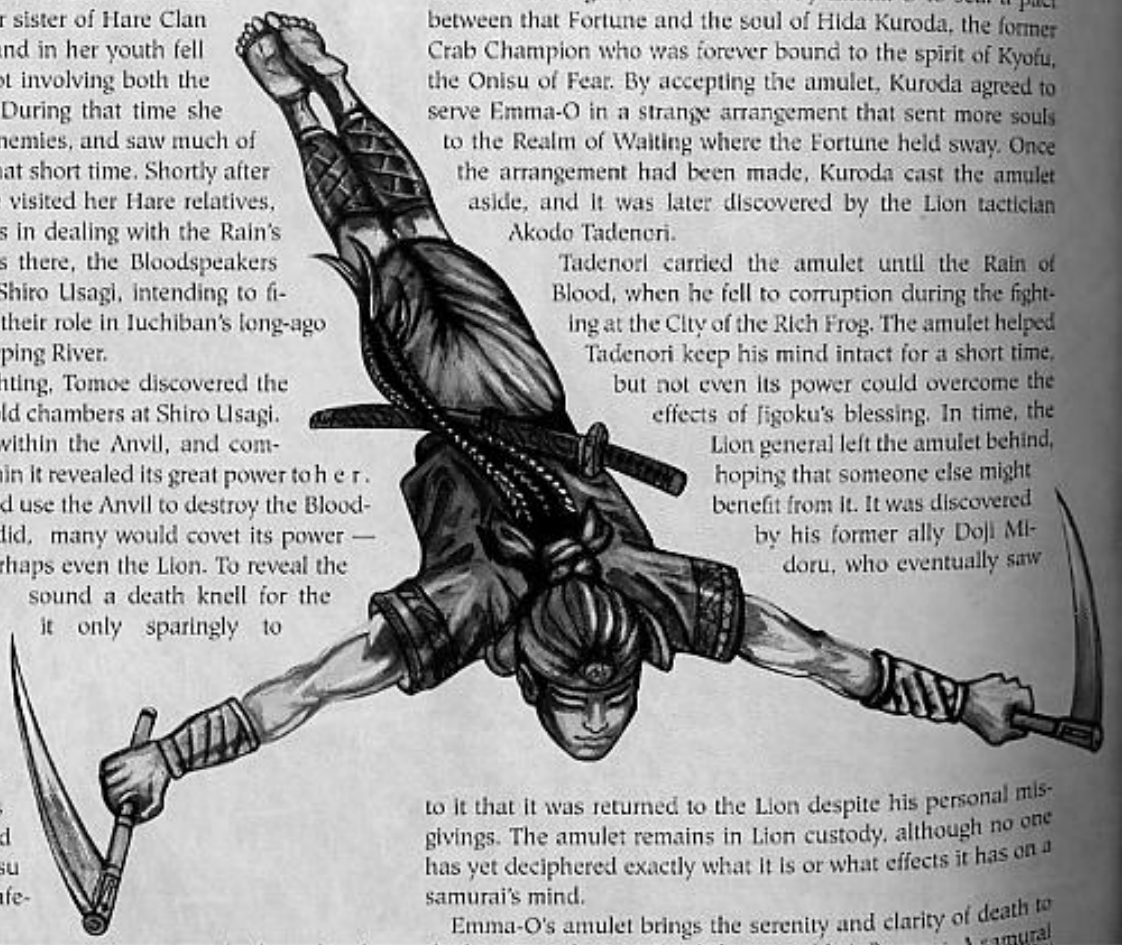
VOID: You may spend a Void Point and sacrifice another rolled die from your attack and damage rolls to increase your Initiative and TN to Be Hit by an additional +5.

The Anvil of Earth

The parting gift to mortal men from the Oracle of Earth is very likely the most powerful of the new Elemental Nemuranai, but also takes the heaviest toll upon those who use it. That such an item passed to the Lion Clan, some believe, was a last message from the Oracles as they exited the mortal realm: temper your might with wisdom, lest it consume you.

The Anvil of Earth was found by a Lion shugenja named Kitsu Tomoe. Tomoe was once Usagi Tomoe, the younger sister of Hare Clan Champion Usagi Ozaki, and in her youth fell victim to an elaborate plot involving both the Scorpion and the Kolat. During that time she was held captive by her enemies, and saw much of power and its abuses in that short time. Shortly after the Rain of Blood, Tomoe visited her Hare relatives, wishing to aid her cousins in dealing with the Rain's aftermath. While she was there, the Bloodspeakers sent an army to destroy Shiro Usagi, intending to finally punish the Hare for their role in Iuchiban's long-ago defeat at the Battle of Sleeping River.

During the heaviest fighting, Tomoe discovered the Anvil of Earth within her old chambers at Shiro Usagi. She sensed great power within the Anvil, and communing with the kami within it revealed its great power to her. Tomoe knew that she could use the Anvil to destroy the Bloodspeaker army, but if she did, many would covet its power — certainly the Scorpion, perhaps even the Lion. To reveal the Anvil's power would sound a death knell for the Hare. Instead, she used it only sparingly to ensure that the Hare would not be overrun, resulting in a surprising victory over the vastly superior Bloodspeaker force. When the battle was concluded, Tomoe returned with the Anvil to the Kitsu lands, where it could be safely studied.



The Anvil of Earth is a massive anvil adorned with elaborate kanji. The Anvil can be transported by cart to any location and set up as if it were a normal anvil. When sprinkled with earth, it becomes active. When the Anvil is active, anyone may use it by focusing on any natural landmark within line of sight — a plain, a mountain, a hill — and striking it. The Anvil shapes the land according to the user's will. Plains can be devastated by earthquakes, hills can be flattened, mountains can be crushed, etc. Major changes, such as flattening a mountain, may require lengthy use to accomplish. Any land shaped by the Anvil of Earth becomes more fertile than it was before, although the Anvil cannot change barrens to farmlands. If the Anvil is used on land currently occupied by individuals or structures, treat that area as if it had been the target of the Earthquake spell as cast by a Rank 8 shugenja with three Free Raises.

The Anvil extracts a price. The first time it is used after being activated, the user must succeed at a Raw Earth Roll (TN 15). Each successive blow requires an additional Earth roll, with the TN increasing by 5 each time. Every failed roll temporarily reduces the user's Earth by 1. If the user's Earth reaches 0, he falls unconscious and will not awaken until his Earth is fully restored. Earth ranks lost in this manner return at the rate of one per week.

Emma-O's Amulet

This mysterious amulet, created by the Fortune of Death, has a checkered and disastrous past. Although the Lion are unaware of its origins, it was created by Emma-O to seal a pact between that Fortune and the soul of Hida Kuroda, the former Crab Champion who was forever bound to the spirit of Kyofu, the Onisu of Fear. By accepting the amulet, Kuroda agreed to serve Emma-O in a strange arrangement that sent more souls to the Realm of Waiting where the Fortune held sway. Once the arrangement had been made, Kuroda cast the amulet aside, and it was later discovered by the Lion tactician Akodo Tadenori.

Tadenori carried the amulet until the Rain of Blood, when he fell to corruption during the fighting at the City of the Rich Frog. The amulet helped Tadenori keep his mind intact for a short time, but not even its power could overcome the effects of Jigoku's blessing. In time, the Lion general left the amulet behind, hoping that someone else might benefit from it. It was discovered by his former ally Doji Midoru, who eventually saw to it that it was returned to the Lion despite his personal misgivings. The amulet remains in Lion custody, although no one has yet deciphered exactly what it is or what effects it has on a samurai's mind.

Emma-O's amulet brings the serenity and clarity of death to the living mind, protecting it from outside influences. A samurai who carries the amulet gains +10 to any roll made to resist any mind-altering effects. This includes illicit substances, supernatural abilities, the manipulative effects of courtier Techniques, spells, and any other similar ability. If the effect in question is not one that would normally allow the wearer to roll to resist it (such as many spells), then the TN for that effect is increased by +10 instead.

The Shakuhachi of Air

The Shakuhachi of Air is a tranquil, serene nemuranai that might seem ill placed in the hands of a Lion. It was discovered by an omoidasu named Ikoma Masote, a historian and bard sent to chronicle the War of the Rich Frog. Masote was diligent in his writings of battle after battle, but secretly became

disillusioned with the horrors of war. Masote sought some means of easing the suffering he saw all around him, and while meditating at a shrine, he discovered a flute, lying as if discarded near the entrance. Thinking to perhaps find some measure of peace, Masote took up the instrument and carried it with him, practicing when he had the opportunity. The next time Masote found himself in a Lion encampment, he played the flute for the battle-weary troops.

The flute's effect was remarkable, easing the troubled minds of many Lion soldiers. The next day found the troops rested, calm, and prepared to face battle with a steady soul. Masote found himself in demand in Lion camps all across the battlefront, and he spent the war's remainder traveling from place to place, playing the simple but powerful instrument. It was not until he played for a group immediately before they entered battle that Masote realized the flute's drawback.

The Shakuhachi of Air increases the Performance: Flute Skill of anyone who plays it by 3 ranks. The would-be performer must have at least 1 rank of Performance: Flute in order to benefit from its effects. Those who hear the Shakuhachi's music have all negative mental effects immediately removed. This includes the effects of spells, poisons, diseases, and even Disadvantages, although the effects of Disadvantages return within a day. The calming effect of this music is so complete that those affected find it difficult to rouse themselves for combat. Anyone affected by the music has all attack rolls reduced by 3 dice for one full day after hearing the music.

Way of the Mantis

The Mantis seem doomed to flourish only in times of conflict. During the periods of peace since Yoritomo boldly elevated his people to Great Clan status, the Mantis have struggled to maintain their identity and prosperity. The rule of Toturi I after the War of Spirits was such that many believed the Mantis would lose their status as a Great Clan. The civil war between Yoritomo Kitao and Yoritomo Kumiko brought vitality to the clan once again, even though it pitted brother against brother. Kumiko's victory coincided with the ascension of a new Emperor, and the Daughter of Storms anticipated the same troubles for her people. To prevent their loss of identity, she returned the Mantis to their origins, patrolling the seas and preying on those who failed to pay their price.

The Mantis are not popular as allies, as few find them trustworthy even under the best of circumstances. Those who ally with the Mantis do so with caution and no small amount of preparation in the event that the Yoritomo betray them at an opportune moment. The Mantis are, above all else, opportunists.

The Mantis are currently allied with the Crane and Unicorn in a loose association that extends only to economic matters. As the three wealthiest clans, it benefits the trio to cooperate in matters of trade and commerce to ensure that they retain their stranglehold on mercantile interests all along the seacoast and through the largest mountain passes. This alliance has been strained somewhat by the Mantis-Phoenix war, due largely to the close alliance between Crane and Phoenix. Thus far, the conflict has not affected their commercial alliance.

The relationship between Mantis and Scorpion is ill-defined at the dawn of Lotus. The two have been the bitterest of enemies since the Mantis ascended, due largely to the actions of Yoritomo Aramasu, Yoritomo's heir and the former Bayushi Aramasu, widely regarded by the Scorpion as their clan's greatest traitor. When the Scorpion assassinated Aramasu shortly before the death of Toturi I, the two clans' mutual hatred was assured. It was not until recently, when the Scorpion voluntarily delivered Aramasu's assassin into the hands of Mantis general Yoritomo Naizen, that the ill feelings finally began to ease. There is still much bad blood between the two, but the first overtures toward reconciliation have been made.

The most implacable foes the Mantis currently have are the Phoenix. The Rain of Blood is responsible for this conflict, as corrupted Mantis laid waste to the City of Remembrance in Phoenix lands. Subsequent misunderstandings and personality conflicts led to increasingly hostile relations, and ultimately to war.

Beyond the Great Clans, the Mantis's greatest enemy is the Dark Wave, a corrupted fleet of former Mantis vessels led by Yoritomo Kitao, who was corrupted during the Rain of Blood. Kitao and her followers played a significant role in fostering the Mantis-Phoenix war, and they continue to plague Mantis waters.

The primary Mantis objective during the early Lotus Era is to teach the Phoenix a lesson in humility. The Phoenix have accused the Mantis of trafficking in dark artifacts, namely a Black Scroll, a claim that infuriates the Mantis. They may ferry illicit goods across the seas, but Black Scrolls have never been among them. Even though the Phoenix have presented the Scroll to the Emperor's brother Isawa Sezaru as proof of Mantis treachery, the Emperor has not spoken out against the Yoritomo, but neither has he censured the Phoenix hostilities against them. Yoritomo Kumiko believes that Naseru's silence is a sign that he does not believe the Mantis responsible for this heinous act, but neither will he condemn the Phoenix for their actions. If the Mantis wish to support the Shogun, even in part, then they must deal with their conflicts without Imperial intervention.

Beyond the Phoenix war, the Mantis are largely concerned with their expansive trade interests, both legitimate and otherwise. Their alliance with the Crane and Unicorn has proved profitable despite difficulties, and the Mantis wish to continue it as long as possible. The one true obstacle to increasing their dominance over the seas, ironically, lies with the Dark Wave. Kumiko now believes that sparing Kitao was a mistake, and seeks to rectify her error as quickly as possible. Her general Naizen hunts the Dark Wave without rest all across the seas, although thus far the Tainted ships have escaped his attempts to destroy them.

Yoritomo Kumiko is unquestionably the most important Mantis in Rokugan, and is regarded by the other clans with a mixture of disdain, amusement, and fear. Kumiko is as charismatic as her father was, nearly as skilled in combat, but far more unpredictable and prone to seemingly random decisions. If Yoritomo was identified with the storm because of his ferocity, his daughter is identified with the storm because of her mercurial nature.

Within the Yoritomo, the sensei Kaigen holds considerable clout. He is the master of Tempest Island, home of the Mantis's most powerful shugenja, the men and women called the Storm

Riders. Kaigen's power is feared and respected universally among the Mantis, and even the Moshi recognize his power. Yoritomo Naizen is respected only by the Yoritomo, as his reputation as a ruthless pirate ensures he is despised by other clans. None can doubt his brilliance with naval tactics, however, and even those who call for his death fear to face him on the open seas.

The Tsuruchi and Moshi have a much lower profile than their Yoritomo lords. Tsuruchi Nobumoto is well regarded in the courts he frequents, as he maintains what the other clans consider an appropriately respectful attitude. Nobumoto is a vocal supporter of both the Emerald Champion and the Emperor despite widespread Yoritomo support for the Shogun. The Tsuruchi may anticipate trying times.

The Moshi are perhaps less involved with the Empire's affairs than any other Great Clan family in Rokugan. Moshi Amika is known to be a devout priestess with outstanding command over the elements, but she has done very little to make her thoughts known with regard to the conflict between Emperor and Shogun.

Yoritomo Kumiko, Daughter of Storms

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 5 / Temple of Kaimetsu-uo 3
Honor: 2.1 Status: 8.2 Glory: 7.7

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 5	Water: 5	Void: 4
	Willpower 7	Agility 6		

Advantages: Allies (Bat Clan, 2/4 points), Ebisu's Blessing, Kharmic Tie (Yoritomo Kitao)

Disadvantages: Brash, Meddler, Sworn Enemy (Yoritomo Kitao)

Kata: Boundless Fury, Howl of the Son of Storms, Strike of the Cliff's Edge, Striking as Fire, Striking as Water

Skills: Athletics 6, Battle 4, Courtier 2, Commerce 3, Craft: Sailing 6, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Knives 4, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Meditation 5, Peasant Weapons (Kama, Sai, Tonfa) 6, Performance: Dance 3, Stealth 5, Theology (Fortunes) 4, Underworld 6

Historians, storytellers, and playwrights alike have a great affinity for Yoritomo, the Mantis Clan Champion who led his people to greatness during the Clan War. He is widely regarded as among the most ambitious men ever to walk the Empire, and is remembered as a hero rather than a villain only because his plans succeeded. Many believe he was among history's greatest warriors, citing his devastating effectiveness on the battlefield. Only a generation after his death, Yoritomo has become far more than a memory. He is a legend, and one that will be remembered for all time.

It is to Yoritomo Kumiko's great regret that she has no memory of her father. This man, this legend, that she longed to have known, died at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate only a few months before she was born. Her mother, the former Moshi Wakiza, was wounded at the same battle, and left her only daughter a unique and enduring legacy: the Shadowlands Taint. Wakiza died in childbirth, leaving young Kumiko with no family, no legacy, and a curse that would almost certainly kill her. Under any other circumstances, she might well have been killed as an infant. Her life was spared only because Yoritomo Aramasu, her father's adopted son and heir, could not bear to see their father's bloodline ended.

Kumiko was raised in a monastery, hidden from the Mantis, her birth unknown to all save a small handful of trusted vassals. Her guardian was Yoritomo Komori, her father's shugenja advisor. Komori allowed the Empire to believe he had retired and took up residence within the monastery, teaching Kumiko to resist the Taint even before she could even speak or walk. It was his constant supervision and tutelage that allowed her to remain in control of herself over the years. With Yoritomo dead and Aramasu unable to visit without risking her exposure, Komori became like a father to young Kumiko.

Kumiko's exile ended only a few years after her gempukku, when her brother Aramasu was assassinated at his estate in Otosan Uchi. Kumiko was outraged, and thirsted for vengeance. Against Komori's advice, she rallied the Yoritomo Elite Guard, the faction loyal to her, and moved against Aramasu's betrayer and successor, the pirate Yoritomo Kitao. The struggle between Kitao and Kumiko polarized the Mantis. The Yoritomo Elite Guard remained loyal to Kumiko, while the vaunted Storm Legion pledged their loyalty to Kitao. The two engaged in a shadow war, even as the clan's other families struggled with their own internal conflicts: the Tsuruchi over philosophy and the Moshi over gender.

Kumiko understood that so long as she bore the Taint, there was a part of her clan that would never accept her. To overcome this, she formed an alliance with the outcast Unicorn general Moto Chen and his half-Naga consort, Akasha. They led her to the Unbroken, a group of ronin who used an ancient Naga ritual to combat the Taint. After being inducted into their ranks and taught their ways, Kumiko returned to the Mantis.

The final battle with Kitao saw Kumiko victorious. More than that, she found herself fighting Settozai, the Mantis Nightmare, and slew the beast to expunge her Taint. Victorious, she claimed her birthright as Mantis Champion and led the clan back to its roots as the unquestioned masters of the sea.

Recently, the Mantis were accused of trafficking in maho by the Phoenix. Already on poor terms because of Kitao's actions after the Rain of Blood, the two clans have gone to war. Kumiko will not tolerate accusations of blood magic, and intends to teach the Phoenix a dire lesson in what happens when the Mantis are crossed. No clan has ever truly defeated the Phoenix in battle due to their powerful magic, but the Mantis have power that the Phoenix have not yet seen. Kumiko expects they will not find it to their liking.

The Yoritomo Shugenja School

Although the Yoritomo are not renowned for their affinity with the kami, there have been a handful of powerful Yoritomo shugenja throughout history who have had unparalleled command over the seas. Among the most powerful was the first. Fumiko, the daughter of Mantis Clan founder Kaimetsu-uo, was given every opportunity to study the kami. Kaimetsu-uo considered her abilities the mark of her grandfather, the great Hida Osano-Wo. Fumiko had incredible command over the seas, and is said to have created and dissipated hurricanes on a whim. She had many children, and a few Mantis bloodlines carry a strong magical affinity to this day.

The Yoritomo shugenja did not maintain an official School until after the Battle at Oblivion's Gate, when the Centipede Minor Clan was absorbed into the Mantis Clan as the Moshi family. With the Moshi's expertise and resources suddenly

available, the Mantis Champion Yoritomo Aramasu ordered his family's shugenja to formalize their training. The simultaneous absorption of the Wasp Minor Clan as the Tsuruchi family also increased the manpower available to the Yoritomo, affording the shugenja school an expanded pool of potential students.

The Yoritomo Shugenja School does not yet command respect, being regarded as relative newcomers with crude power and no finesse. None can deny their power over the waves, however, and their abilities amplify other clans' fear of the Mantis on the open ocean. Fortunately for the other clans, Yoritomo shugenja are relatively rare, and the truly powerful among them, the Storm Riders, are rarer still.

Benefit: +1 Perception

Honor: 1.5

Skills: Athletics (Swimming), Calligraphy, Lore: Sailing, Spellcraft, Theology, any two Skills

Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto, any 1 weapon; sturdy traveling clothes and sandals, traveling pack; 3 koku

Affinity/Deficiency: Yoritomo shugenja revere Suitengu and other Fortunes of the sea. They have an Affinity for Water spells and a Deficiency for Fire spells.

Technique: *Chosen of Suitengu* – The unbridled ocean's fury can unleash devastation, and the Yoritomo shugenja can access that sleeping fury. Yoritomo shugenja are considered to be one Insight Rank higher when casting Water spells while on the open sea, an island, or the coastline. Even on the mainland the Yoritomo retain something of this affinity, and gain a Free Raise on all Water spells.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, plus 3 Water, 3 Air.

The Tsuruchi Magistrates (Bushi)

The Tsuruchi family was created less than a century ago. Before they joined the Mantis, they were the Minor Clan known as the Wasp, skilled archers and vassals of the ronin Tsuruchi. They gained their Minor Clan status through a unique arrangement with the Emerald Champion. The Champion, a Crane with decidedly anti-Scorpion leanings, happily advocated Tsuruchi's case against the Scorpion army that was threatening to destroy his home of Kyuden Ashinagabachi. He persuaded the Emperor to recognize their status as a Minor Clan on the condition that they would serve the Emerald Champion.

The Wasp earned a reputation as peerless archers and ruthless bounty hunters, chasing criminals and fugitives across the Empire. For the most part, these bounty hunters relied on their reputation, archery skills, and experience with tracking. As time progressed, the Wasp began to develop more specific means of tracking their prey, often working alongside the Doji and Kitsuki magistrates. Some went so far as to eschew studying the bow to instead focus on developing reliable, consistent techniques of detection that could better match those of their colleagues in other clans.



Since the Wasp were absorbed by the Mantis, the Tsuruchi family has devoted more resources to developing these abilities into a formal School, complete with a new dojo constructed alongside Kyuden Ashinagabachi. The Tsuruchi are now the principal magistrates for the clan, and still maintain their decades-old arrangement with the Emerald Champion even though the present Champion, Yasuki Hachi, has made no requests of the family to date.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Athletics, Defense, Hunting, Investigation (Search), Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, any one Skill
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any 1 weapon; sturdy traveling clothes and sandals, traveling pack; 3 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Eyes of the Wasp

A magistrate's keen eye never fails to seek out his foe's weaknesses, and the Tsuruchi are taught to use their keen senses to combat their foes wherever they appear. You may add your Perception to the total of all your attack and damage rolls.



Rank 2: A Hunter's Senses

When the Tsuruchi are on the trail of their prey, nothing can shatter their focus. You may spend a Void Point to gain a number of additional rolled dice equal to your School Rank on any Hunting or Investigation roll. The Void Point confers no other benefits.

Rank 3: No Prey Escapes

Although they share the Yoritomo's reputation for brusqueness, the Tsuruchi can be cunning, and find polite discussion an excellent means of flushing out their prey. You may add your Investigation Skill to the total of all your Courtier and Etiquette rolls.

Rank 4: Twin Sting Strike

The Wasp's sting is swift and merciless. You may make an additional attack per round.

Rank 5: The Justice of the Wasp

A Tsuruchi magistrate does not accept failure, for it flies in the face of all values held dear by both Wasp and Mantis. When making a Hunting or Investigation roll, you may sacrifice rolled dice to gain one Free Raise per sacrificed die. You may use this benefit on other School Skills as well, but doing so requires the expenditure of a Void Point.

Mantis Kata

The Cresting Wave

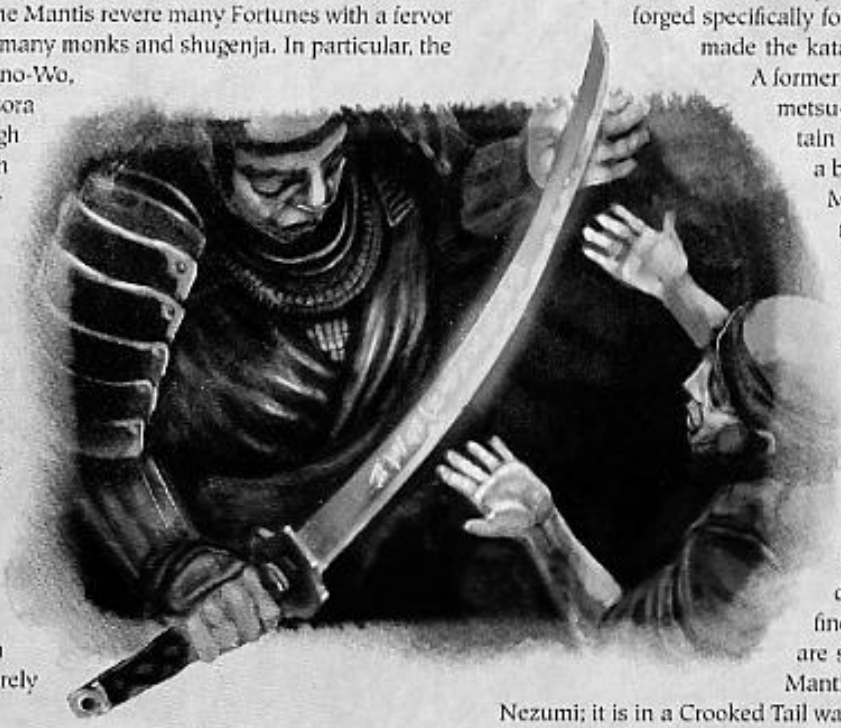
Preparation Time: 60 minutes
Duration: 120 minutes
Not only the Hida and the Matsu are feared for their merciless attacks. The Yoritomo are taught to exploit every advantage, and in many cases their only advantage is their chaotic fighting style. The Cresting Wave focuses a bushi's energy into an all-or-nothing assault, wherein he attacks and follows through with his body, crashing into his opponent and driving him to the ground.
Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3 or Tsuruchi Archer 3
Cost: 4
Special: None.
Effect: Your Initiative is increased by +5 when this kata is active. If you make a Full Attack against an opponent within your normal movement range that is successful and inflicts damage, your opponent is immediately knocked prone as if you had successfully executed the Knockdown combat maneuver. You roll 2 fewer damage dice for this attack, and your TN to Be Hit is reduced by 5 (this is cumulative with the normal Full Attack consequences).
Void: None.

Twin Mantis Strike

Preparation Time: 60 minutes
Duration: 60 minutes
The Mantis learn to use whatever weapons are available to defeat their enemies. On a ship, these are often small, simple weapons such as the kama or tonfa that are not hindered by the sail or rails. To compensate for weapons so obviously inadequate when compared to the katana, Mantis bushi strike with incredible speed, blurring into an opponent before he can attack.
Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 2
Cost: 3
Special: Must be used with knives or peasant weapons.
Effect: You gain two Free Raises per round that may only be used to attempt the Extra Attack maneuver. Your Initiative is increased by 5, and your damage is decreased by 10.
Void: You may spend a Void Point to gain an additional Free Raise to be used toward the Extra Attack maneuver.

New Kiho

The Mantis have never been regarded as a particularly religious clan. Their history of obsession with material wealth leaves most outsiders with the impression that they care little for religion save perhaps a healthy reverence for Daikoku, the Fortune of Wealth. In truth, the Mantis revere many Fortunes with a fervor that would shame many monks and shugenja. In particular, the Mantis hold Osano-Wo, Suitengu, and Isora in extremely high regard, although shrines and temples to many other Fortunes are scattered across the clan's islands.



Outside of the monastic order that serves the Temple of Kaimetsu-uo, the orders that live and serve in the Mantis islands tend to be militant. Some have even called them hostile, though rarely to their faces.

Across the Orochi's Back

ELEMENT: Water
TYPE: Internal
MASTERY: 4

A monk can channel his chi to buoy his weight above the waves, allowing him to run across bodies of water with incredible speed. By spending a Void Point and concentrating for one minute, you may run across the surface of any body of water at double your normal maximum movement rate. You must spend an additional Void Point every second round in order to maintain this effect. Once you reach land the effect ends, your movement rate returns to normal, and you become sluggish, subtracting 5 from your Initiative for as many rounds as the effect lasted.

Seven Storms' Fist

ELEMENT: Air
TYPE: Martial
MASTERY: 5

The spirits of air exist surround everyone, unnoticed by most, but possessed of incredible strength that a chosen few can draw upon. A monk who draws this hidden strength into his chi can discharge the energy through his hands in a devastating unarmed attack. By spending a Void Point and focusing for one round, you may charge your hands with the elemental lightning present in the air around you. Your next unarmed attack deals an additional 3k3 electrical damage above your normal unarmed damage.

New Magic Items

Kaimetsu-uo's Blade

The blade carried by the Mantis Clan's founder was forged specifically for him by Lion craftsmen, who made the katana as a favor to his mother. A former Lion's Pride commander, Kaimetsu-uo's mother would not entertain the notion of her son bearing a blade that was not meant for a Matsu's hand. After the Mantis founder died, none of his children felt worthy to take up the blade. They enshrined it in the first Temple of Kaimetsu-uo, and it became the clan's first true ancestral item. During the tumultuous Mantis civil war, someone stole Kaimetsu-uo's Blade. Yoritomo Kumiko has assigned an entire battalion of Yoritomo and a dozen Tsuruchi magistrates to find the blade, but thus far they are stymied. Unbeknownst to the Mantis, the blade was taken by a Nezumi; it is in a Crooked Tail warren.

Kaimetsu-uo's Blade is a 5k4 katana with a weighted chain at the end of its saya, so it can can be used in the same manner as a manrikikusari with DR 3k2. Three times per day, the wielder of Kaimetsu-uo's Blade may call upon the favor of Osano-Wo and unleash a blast of lightning from the blade, targeting anything within line of sight. The wielder makes a Raw Fire Roll to hit the target against a TN of the target's Insight Rank x 5, inflicting 5k5 Wounds of electrical damage. Anyone who is not a blood descendant of Kaimetsu-uo must first succeed at a Raw Earth Roll (TN 25) or be unable to draw the blade from its saya. The Nezumi who have the blade have not attempted to draw it.

Kaimetsu-uo's Ono

Like his father Hida Osano-Wo, Kaimetsu-uo carried and used many weapons during his lifetime, but none eclipsed the blade that his mother had given him. His only other favorite weapon was the ax his father gave him on the day of his gempukku. When Hida Osano-Wo died at the hands of an assassin, Kaimetsu-uo pursued his murderer all the way to the Phoenix lands. The Isawa refused to surrender the man, and Kaimetsu-uo struck the gates of their palace, calling out to his father for aid. The gate was struck by lightning even as the axe struck it, and the Phoenix defenses were cast down. The Phoenix, cowed by the obvious favor in which the Fortunes held the Mantis, surrendered the suspect.

Kaimetsu-uo's Ono is a 6k5 weapon that cannot be wielded by any character with fewer than 3 ranks in Heavy Weapons. Any strike that has more than 1 die explode also produces a clap of thunder that forces everyone within 25' to make a Raw

Earth roll (TN 15) or be incapable of any actions for one full round. When used against trolls of any sort, damage dice on the Ono explode on a 9 or 10. Anyone who is not a blood descendant of Kaimetsu-uo must first succeed at a Raw Earth roll (TN 20) or be unable to pick up the Ono.

The Black Lion's Banner

The Mantis came to prominence during the Clan War, the same war that established the Toturi Dynasty. While Yoritomo and his forces did not fight alongside Toturi prior to the Day of Thunder, the Son of Storms held the Black Lion in extremely high regard, even more so after Toturi elevated the Mantis to Great Clan status. During the War against the Darkness, Yoritomo's military campaign across the mainland included many magistrates and bounty hunters who scoured the countryside for any sign of the missing Emperor. Most returned with no news. Some did not return at all. They were assumed lost to enemies or, as information came to light, to the Darkness and its minions.

Recently, a Tsuruchi hunter attached to the Ninth Imperial Legion discovered a cave while pursuing bandits through the ruins of Belden Pass. The hunter, Tsuruchi Masanori, found in that cave an ancient skeleton clutching a tattered scrap of cloth. He realized at once what he had discovered: the war banner carried by Toturi when he was a ronin, painted for him by the hero Otomo Yayu. He immediately took the cloth to his commander Yoritomo Egumi, who in turn sent word to Yoritomo Kumiko. Kumiko sent her ally Komori, Bat Clan Champion, to present the banner to the Shogun as a sign of her continued support. Kaneka accepted the banner and made Masanori his personal standard bearer.

Although carefully cleaned and preserved, the Black Lion's Banner bears the tatters and stains of age. The Banner still radiates a palpable aura of resolve. Anyone within a number of feet equal to 100 x the banner bearer's Insight Rank rolls additional dice equal to twice their Honor when resisting a Fear effect. The commander of an army bearing the Black Lion Banner adds his Insight Rank to his mass combat Tides of Battle roll.

Storm Bottles

The origin of these strange creations is unknown, but it is believed the Yoritomo shugenja developed them some centuries ago as a means of clearing the decks of enemy ships. These small glass bottles appear to be full of a slightly murky liquid that might be sake or any number of other common beverages. The bottles actually contain tempestuous kami of air and fire that are captured during heavy storms. The latent power of these kami is unleashed when the bottle breaks.

A storm bottle may be thrown using Agility/Athletics, with a TN to hit the target of 5 + 1 per foot of distance thrown. (A missed throw falls short by an appropriate amount, and may deviate at the GM's discretion. A *badly* missed throw — again, GM's discretion — means the thrower has dropped the bottle where he's standing.) When the bottle breaks, it inflicts 3k3 Wounds on everything within 10'. If the bottle's contents are drunk for any reason, for example if put up to it by mischievous Mantis sailors, the bottle inflicts 30 damage to the imbiber.

Way of the Phoenix

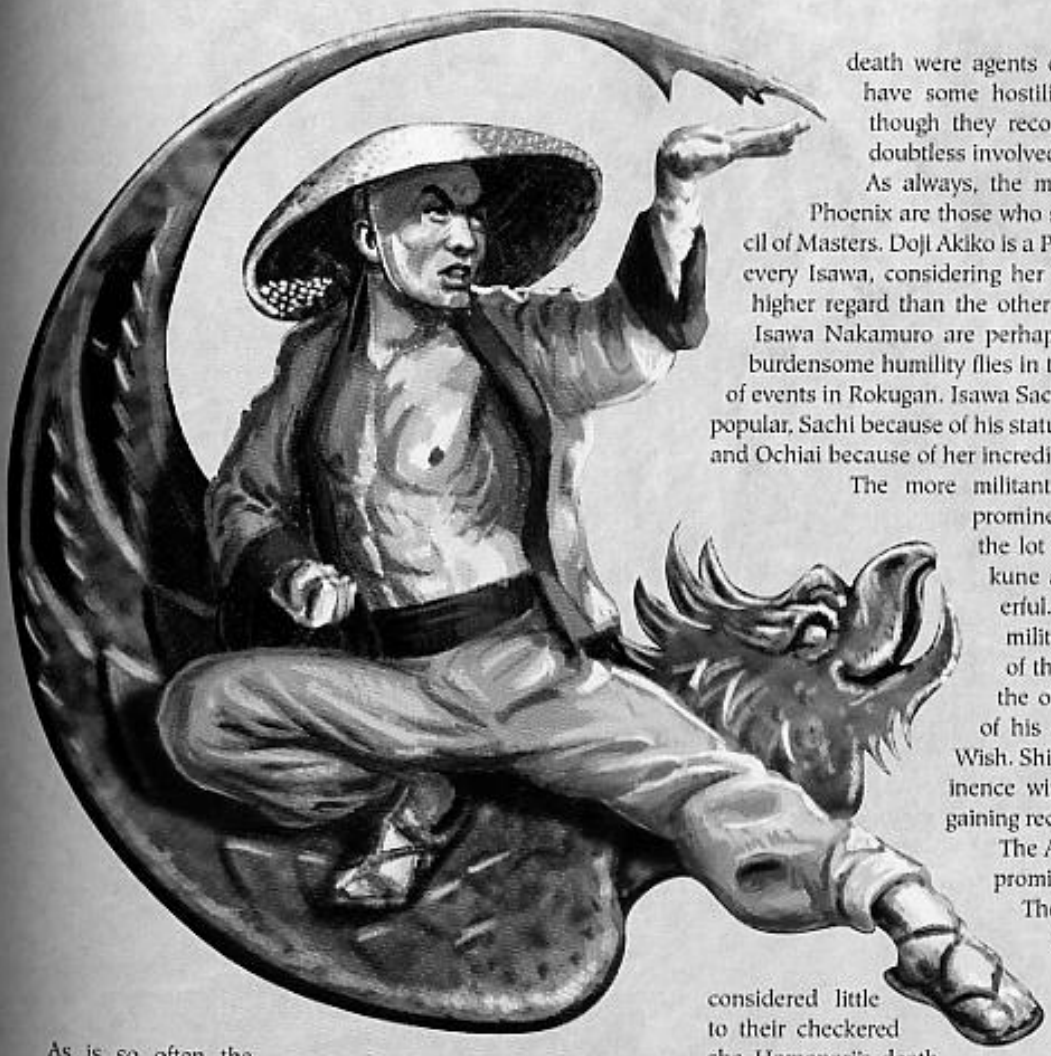
The traditionally pacifistic Phoenix find themselves embroiled in a bitter conflict for the second time in a decade, marking the Lotus Era as the most hostile the Phoenix have experienced in centuries. The Phoenix is a fractured clan, one that has had a taste of power and now finds itself lacking. The Elemental Masters are sharply divided, with Doji Akiko's leadership often chafing the widely respected Isawa Nakamuro, a strong proponent of closer ties with the Dragon. The family's bushi are likewise divided. Most follow Clan Champion Shiba Mirabu without question, but a vocal minority awaits the return of Shiba Aikune and the Last Wish, believing that Aikune represents the true leadership tradition. The Asako continue as they ever have, but the Agasha are bitter over the wrongful execution of their previous daimyo, Agasha Hamanari, at the hands of Isawa Sezaru's inquisitors.

First among the Phoenix's enemies is the Mantis Clan. The conflict between the two clans incorporates many factors, the most pressing of which are bad blood and the machinations of a prominent Phoenix cell of Bloodspeakers. The Gozoku benefit from the war as well, for it is far easier to foment insurrection during times of chaos than during times of peace. Regardless of the conflict's origins, the war between the Mantis and Phoenix has the potential to be even bloodier than the one the Phoenix fought against the Dragon almost ten years ago. The Last Wish may not prove a factor, and the Mantis may not possess the ground forces of the Dragon, but the sheer tenacity and seething hatred of the Yoritomo family may well spawn violence unseen by the Phoenix since the Clan War.

Relations between the Dragon and Phoenix remain cool despite the years that have passed since the conclusion of hostilities between them. The revelation that they were manipulated into war has done little to ease the hard feelings. The Master of Air, Isawa Nakamuro, is a strong proponent of re-forging the alliance between the Empire's two oldest allies. His detractors claim that this is a shallow attempt to strengthen his personal relationship with Tamori Shaitung.

The Phoenix's strongest allies are the Crane. This centuries-old alliance has never been stronger, thanks in part to the presence of Isawa's daughter, Doji Akiko, on the Elemental Council of Masters. The Crane lent considerable aid to the Phoenix during the difficult years following their war with the Dragon, and the Phoenix returned the favor following the Rain of Blood, which took a far greater toll on the Crane than the Phoenix.

The Phoenix are largely ambivalent in their dealings with the other Great Clans. There are some hard feelings as a result of the failed alliance between the Lion and Phoenix, which fell apart after a wrathful Shiba Aikune incinerated a contingent of Lion soldiers in Phoenix lands. Many Isawa feel they should not be held accountable for the actions of a lone madman. The Lion see things in a considerably different light.



As is so often the case with the Phoenix, their objectives during the early Lotus Era divide along family lines. To the Isawa, the war with the Mantis is a mere distraction. The revelations of Rosoku and his Keepers fascinate the Isawa, and they seek to learn all they can about his teachings and their implications. Indeed, many consider it deeply ironic that the Isawa are pursing the secrets of enlightenment with what can only be described as naked avarice.

The Shiba and Asako are far more concerned with the Mantis war than their aloof Isawa cousins. The Shiba consider it their sacred duty to maintain the sanctity of Phoenix lands, and the Mantis incursions along the coastline are an intolerable affront. Unfortunately, the typical Mantis tactic is a lightning strike against a coastal holding, followed by retreat to await the Phoenix with superior naval forces. Until the Isawa fully commit to the conflict, the Shiba will prove unable to defeat the Mantis on the sea, as their Storm Rider shugenja are far more powerful than any save the greatest Isawa. The normally retiring Asako have committed significant resources to the conflict. The Asako see the suffering that the Phoenix peasants must endure as a result of this conflict, and wish to end it as soon as possible.

The conflict also plagues the Agasha, as their lands are predominantly coastal and therefore at risk from Mantis attack. Perhaps more importantly, however, the family's leaders are obsessed with finding the parties responsible for their previous daimyo's death. Because those responsible for Hamanari's death were agents of Isawa Sezaru, the Agasha have some hostility toward their patrons, although they recognize some other party was doubtless involved.

As always, the most prominent and powerful Phoenix are those who sit upon the Elemental Council of Masters. Doji Akiko is a Phoenix in the minds of almost every Isawa, considering her lineage, and is held in even higher regard than the other Masters. Isawa Ningen and Isawa Nakamuro are perhaps the least popular, as their burdensome humility flies in the face of many Isawa's view of events in Rokugan. Isawa Sachi and Isawa Ochiai are more popular, Sachi because of his status as the clan's greatest sensei and Ochiai because of her incredible beauty.

The more militant Shiba have a much less prominent role in the Empire, and of the lot Shiba Mirabu and Shiba Aikune are obviously the most powerful. Mirabu is well regarded as a military leader and a loyal servant of the Phoenix ideals. Aikune, on the other hand, is feared because of his command over Isawa's Last Wish. Shiba Tsukimi has risen to prominence within the clan and is rapidly gaining recognition among other clans.

The Asako and Agasha are far less prominent than even the Shiba. The Asako are virtually unknown beyond Phoenix borders, and the Agasha are considered little better than traitors due to their checkered past. In the wake of Agasha Hamanari's death, the family's new daimyo, Agasha Chieh, has earned respect for her tactful handling of a delicate situation. Her previous status as chief yojimbo to one of Toturi III's favored magistrates, Moto Najmudin, has likely helped her in this regard.

Shiba Mirabu, Phoenix Clan Champion

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 5 / Shiba Yojimbo 3
Honor: 4.3 Status: 8.5 Glory: 7.7

Air: 5	Earth: 4	Fire: 5	Water: 4	Void: 4
	Willpower: 5	Intelligence: 6		

Advantages: Balance, Bland, Clear Thinker, Combat Reflexes, Fukurokujin's Blessing, Inner Gift (Soul of Shiba), Multiple Schools

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Pawn of the Elemental Council)

Kata: Deeper Reflection, Eyes of the Phoenix, Striking as Wind

Skills: Artisan: Painting 3, Athletics 4, Battle 5, Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 3, Courtier 4, Defense 6, Etiquette (Phoenix Clan) 5, Games: Go 3, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 5, Instruction (Shiba Bushi) 4, Investigation 4, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu (Daikyu) 4, Lore: History 4, Meditation (Void Recovery) 3, Spears (Naginata) 5, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology (Shintao) 4



All Mirabu ever desired in life was to serve his Clan. Raised on tales of Shiba, Isawa Tadaka, and other self-effacing, self-sacrificing members of the Phoenix, Mirabu never sought advancement, never sought glory, merely seeking to protect the clan. Although his career was never marked with brilliant successes, it was notable for a complete lack of failures. His willingness to do what needed to be done, without ego and without hesitation, made him a dependable bushi, trusted by his commanders.

It was this quality that led Shiba Tsukune, then Champion of the Phoenix, to personally select Mirabu to be the second and advisor to her son, Aikune. Shiba Aikune, caught up in the events of the Phoenix-Dragon war during the struggle between the Four Winds, was grappling with the need to prove his value to the Phoenix and his ancestors. Tsukune matched her son with Mirabu, hoping the latter's stoicism and calm acceptance of life would rub off on Aikune. Events would ultimately vindicate her opinion.

Tsukune's abrupt ascension to Fortune status, along with Aikune's unearthing and use of Isawa's Last Wish, proved to be a trial for the Phoenix Clan. Throughout, Mirabu stood beside Aikune, helping Tsukune's heir to understand that being worthy of the Clan and its duties did not require the recognition of others. Although Aikune is credited with building a rapport with the Wish, it is Mirabu's often-overlooked contribution that ensured Aikune was stable enough to form a meaningful bond with the Wish.

Aikune's self-exile at the conclusion of the Phoenix-Dragon war, combined with his mother's ascension, left the position of Phoenix Champion vacant. Traditionally, the Soul of Shiba selected successors to the role, but with the Soul no longer accessible, there was no established method for choosing a new Champion. The Elemental Council, the most powerful body within the Phoenix, took it upon themselves to select Mirabu as the next Champion of the Phoenix.

In the eyes of the Council, Mirabu was ideal for the position: he was skilled, loyal, reliable, and largely without personal faults or habits that would render him vulnerable to outside manipulation. Equally important to them was Mirabu's traditionalism, in that he saw the role of the Shiba as guardians and supporters of the Isawa and Elemental Council. Mirabu was thrust into a position that he never truly desired, yet was ideally equipped to fill.

His performance since his promotion has been admirable, if not particularly noteworthy. For the most part, he has overseen the rebuilding and renewal of the Phoenix armies after the Phoenix-Dragon war, and ensured the day-to-day functioning of the Phoenix lands. Recent developments have thrust him into greater prominence, as the Rain of Blood and declaration of hostilities between the Mantis and Phoenix have forced him to take a personal hand in matters. Much as before, Mirabu has discharged his duties smoothly and efficiently, with little fanfare. He has a reputation for cleanly ending problems, which makes him valuable but not particularly renowned. The return of the Soul of Shiba, hosted by Mirabu, is known only to Mirabu

himself and Aikune. The immortal guardian of his clan seems content to remain unseen and let Mirabu earn his own destiny.

The strife between the Shogun and Emperor has given Mirabu pause. Although overall Clan policy is usually dictated by the Elemental Council, the fact that many Shiba have served within Kaneka's army has caused Mirabu to keep a close watch on the situation. Mirabu has met Kaneka, and spoken with him on several occasions. To a considerable extent, Kaneka reminds Mirabu of Aikune — a great man grappling with heavy responsibilities. Likewise, Mirabu has some reservations about Naseru; the Emperor appears far too involved in hoarding personal power for Mirabu's tastes. However, Mirabu has held back from making any public displays of allegiance thus far, as he feels that the will of the Council should guide the Phoenix.

Isawa Tensai School (Shugenja)

In the forests near Kyuden Isawa stand four temples, each dedicated to a single element. These four temples are not large, but they are among the most treasured and prestigious of the Phoenix's holdings. The Isawa Tensai, the most powerful elemental shugenja in the Empire, train in these temples, and their prowess is known across Rokugan.

Most shugenja specialize in an element, but the Tensai have a deeper understanding of their chosen element than any other group. The gap between a Fire Tensai and a Fire shugenja of another clan is comparable to that between a Fire shugenja and a shugenja of another element.

Students do not choose to be Tensai; the capacity to become a Tensai, much like the capacity to become an Ishiken (Void shugenja), is inborn. The masters of each elemental temple choose who will attend their schools, and being selected as a pupil brings great prestige to the student's family.

The Elemental Masters of the Phoenix are almost exclusively chosen from the ranks of the Tensai, save for the Master of the Void, who is traditionally an Ishiken (a particularly skilled Void shugenja). Although it is conceptually possible for an Ishiken to possess a comparable mastery of the Void as a Tensai, the nature of the Void — encompassing both all and nothing simultaneously — does not lend itself to the focused specialization that the Tensai school demands.

Benefit: +1 to one Trait in the Ring of the Tensai's chosen element

Honor: 3.5

Skills: Calligraphy, Lore: History, Meditation, Shintao (Theology), Tea Ceremony, any two High Skills

Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto; kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, traveling pack; 4 koku

Affinity/Deficiency: Isawa Tensai devote themselves to the study of a particular element, mastering it in all its forms, but this comes at the expense of the general expertise common to most Phoenix shugenja. Choose an Affinity of Air, Earth, Fire, or Water. You are automatically Deficient in the opposing element.

There are no Tensai of Void; although the Isawa Ishiken specialize in Void magic, their training and outlook is different enough to be distinct from the Tensai.

Technique: Elemental Attunement

Isawa Tensai are peerless in their mastery of their chosen elements. You count as having the Innate Ability Advantage for all spells in your chosen element. For any spell in your chosen element for which you have purchased the Innate Ability Advantage, you receive an additional Free Raise.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, plus 4 spells of your chosen element and 1 each from the two elements from which you have no Affinity or Deficiency.

Shiba Yojimbo School (Bushi)

More than any other family in the Empire, the Shiba feel personally responsible for the safety of individual members of their Clan. Ever since Lord Shiba founded the family, it has been devoted to the protection of Isawa and his descendants. The Shiba consider their founder's oath to Isawa to be one of the most noble sacrifices in the history of the Empire, and each one is determined to uphold his own end of this legacy.

The Shiba yojimbo school teaches its students the skills to protect individual people. Whereas other yojimbo schools concentrate on general defense and protection, the Shiba school focuses heavily on equipping a single guard to protect a single person (usually a shugenja) against heavy opposition. This reflects the Shiba family's philosophy in filling Lord Shiba's oath — each Shiba yojimbo is typically charged with the protection of a single person, and is expected to die before allowing harm to come to his charge.

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Defense, Kenjutsu, Meditation, Kyujutsu, Theology (Shintao), Iaijutsu, any one Bugei Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), light or heavy armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 2 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: A Single Life

The Yojimbo is prepared at any time to sacrifice himself for others. You may make an opposed Agility/Defense roll against any attack roll targeted within 10' in order to redirect that attack to yourself. You may do this to a number of attacks per round equal to your Void Ring. Additionally, you may add your Honor Rank to your TN to Be Hit.

Rank 2: Shield of Honor

The Yojimbo is as one with the sacred duty of the Shiba family. You need not declare the initial raise to Guard an ally during combat. If you successfully Guard an ally, both you and he share your TN to Be Hit. Once per round, if someone attempts to attack your Guarded ally and fails, either by missing or having the attack redirected to you via your Rank 1 Technique, you gain a free attack against the assailant. You may also add your Fire Ring to the total of all attack and damage rolls.

Rank 3: No Illusions

The Yojimbo reacts instinctively to the needs of those under his care. By spending a Void Point and meditating for one Rokugani hour with an individual, you place that person under your

charge. Afterward, you always know the direction to that person. This does not indicate distance, location, or even whether the charge still lives. You may have only one "charge" at a time. Additionally, you may add twice your Honor Rank to your TN to Be Hit, replacing the Rank 1 bonus.

Rank 4: Sword of the Phoenix

The Yojimbo understands the interplay between offense and defense. You gain an extra attack each round. You may now add double your Fire Ring to the total of your attack and damage rolls, replacing the bonus gained at Rank 2.

Rank 5: Purity of Fire

The Yojimbo's spirit is like that of the Phoenix — rising to face even hopeless odds to protect his charge. Opponents may not make Raises for extra damage against you or your charge (see Rank 3) if your charge is within 10' of you. Additionally, as well as being able to retaliate against attacks on a Guarded ally (see Rank 2), you may also retaliate against attacks aimed at you. You may make only one counterattack per failed attack, but you may make two counterattacks per round instead of one.

The Order of Chikai (New Path)

When the Empire was young, Shiba swore that he would protect Isawa's followers and descendants for all time, in exchange for Isawa's assistance on the Day of Thunder. Since that day, generations of Shiba samurai have been raised to honor that oath. The Order of Chikai represents the pinnacle of hundreds of years of dedication to a single cause: to protect those who followed Isawa.

The Order of Chikai is best known for a singular duty within the Phoenix: the protection of the Council of Five. Although the Order is tiny — there are rarely more than three dozen members — this sacred duty is not their only function. In addition to forming the yojimbo for the Elemental Council, the Order of Chikai also protects the daimyo of each of the Phoenix families, as well as any visiting dignitaries whom the Phoenix wish to honor.

Membership in the Order is tightly controlled. In addition to their skills with the blade, prospective Chikai yojimbo must be known for their reliability; so far as the Shiba are concerned, there is no higher responsibility than the one the Order bears. Students are individually paired with masters for instruction, and the Order is actively involved in selection and training of both students and sensei.

Competition among the Shiba for admission into the Order is every bit as fierce as it is among the Isawa to become Elemental Masters. Even more so than other Shiba yojimbo, members of the Order of Chikai are fiercely determined to protect their charges, and this extends to their selection processes. The Order considers the deaths of four of the five Elemental Masters during the Clan War a terrible failure, and they are determined to prevent their charges from ever being harmed again.

Technique Rank: 6
Path of Entry: Shiba Bushi 5 or Shiba Yojimbo 5
Path of Egress: Enter the other school at Rank 1

Technique: None Shall Pass

Generations of Shiba have refined techniques to protect their charges from harm. At the beginning of every round, before initiative is determined, you may designate one person within 10' as your ward. So long as you are able to maneuver, you may choose to redirect any and all attacks aimed at your ward (including hostile spells) to yourself instead.

The Order of the Bent Knee (Advanced School)

For a Shiba yojimbo, few things are as tragic as outliving their charges. Being entrusted with the care of an Isawa shugenja is a great honor, and those yojimbo who fail to protect their wards often seppuku. However, some yojimbo choose not to, or are denied the opportunity to atone. Life is difficult for them, as they are often bereft of purpose — few shugenja desire a yojimbo who is known to have failed.

One such yojimbo was Shiba Raigen. He finished his gempukku shortly after the Clan War, and great things were expected of him. In recognition of his great potential, he was assigned a shugenja of similar ability, one that the Phoenix hoped would someday take the mantle of Elemental Master: Isawa Osugi.

The Imperial Court had requested Osugi's presence at the then-capital Otosan Uchi, ostensibly to assist them in understanding the New Tao. Raigen accompanied her to the libraries, and vigilantly stood guard while she spent long nights reading and scribing various interpretations of its contents. Throughout, he saw to it that nothing threatened her, nor interfered with her work.

When Emperor Toturi, under control of the Lying Darkness, executed Osugi as a Kolat, Raigen was shocked. Although he had not been actively involved in her work, Raigen was certain she had done nothing dishonorable; although he had noticed that she was making multiple copies, he had assumed that, since she had left the original intact, this was merely part of her work. Toturi's refusal to elaborate was also unsettling; even though the majority of the Court shunned him as being associated with an executed woman, it was plainly obvious that nobody knew what Toturi meant by the term.

Raigen became determined to discover the full story behind Osugi's murder (as he saw it); even though he failed to save her life, he was sure he could clear her name. Over time, he compiled testimony, and even some evidence, proving that Osugi was not engaged in any traitorous activity. When it was revealed that the Lying Darkness had tried to control the Empire through the Emperor, Raigen was sure that he would be vindicated and resume his duty.

Raigen was devastated to discover that his efforts had been in vain. Although everyone agreed that the Emperor had been under the influence of the Darkness, and was not to blame for the atrocities it forced him to commit, the Kolat were real, and Lady Shinjo had decried the group as treasonous. Even those who were sympathetic to Raigen's cause balked at the idea of contradicting both the Emperor and a Kami. The full story came out, but Raigen was still unable to persuade the Court or the historians to reexamine the plight of a lone Phoenix shugenja.

Despondent, Raigen returned to his duties among the Phoenix, volunteering to accompany shugenja on the most dangerous missions under the most extreme conditions. He indeed became acclaimed within the Shiba family for great successes, throwing himself in front of arrows and spells, and fighting duels on behalf of the shugenja he guarded. However, in spite of his many victories, he felt the need to atone for his failure.

Eventually, he was granted leave by Shiba Tsukune, Champion of the Phoenix, to found a new school, dedicated not to protecting the Isawa from personal harm, but from the social consequences of their actions. There, he and a few disciples worked on methods to protect the reputations of the Isawa, to find ways to protect them from accusations of treason or maho use leveled by their political rivals. Throughout, he and his students kept one theme in mind: that, like Shiba when he swore fealty to Isawa, yojimbo of the Phoenix must be prepared to sacrifice their own pride and humble themselves in order to protect their charges.



Today, the Order of the Bent Knee is not particularly prestigious, but is greatly respected within the Shiba family. Students are selected on their willingness to sacrifice their own pride to honor the oath of the family's founder. They are trained in stealth, in disguise, and in the nuances of politics, so that they can actively work to protect both the bodies and the social images of their wards. Graduates of the Bent Knee dojo are not spies; they think of themselves as defensive courtiers, ferreting out scandals, slanders, and rumors before they can affect their wards.

The work of the Order is generally distasteful; its graduates are the ones who guard the socially inept or controversially engaged members of the Clan. Sometimes, the Order finds that one of its charges truly is involved in some distasteful or dishonorable act. The Order takes a dim view of this, as it interprets the oath of Shiba to be to the lineage of Isawa rather than any one individual. More than a few Isawa who would otherwise have caused disgrace to the family have found themselves reported to their superiors by yojimbo of the Order protecting the Clan.

Members of the Order are rarely thanked; their need to guard shugenja from both the rest of the world and the shugenja's own activities, combined with the tendency for members to be reassigned between shugenja on a regular basis, makes friendships difficult to form. Members have to find meaning within their work itself, preventing problems from ever forming rather than protecting their wards from the consequences. For the Order of the Bent Knee, a good day is one where nothing significant happened.

Required Rings/Traits: Air 4; Earth 4; Reflexes 4, Awareness 5

Required Skills: Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Investigation 5, Deceit 4, Stealth 4, Defense 6, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu 4, any one weapon skill 5

Other: Only Shiba samurai from the Shiba Yojimbo or Bushi Schools are allowed entry into the Order of the Bent Knee.

Techniques

Rank 1: Anticipate the Strike

Bent Knee yojimbo are attuned to the ebb and flow of political discourse, and are skilled at protecting the reputations of themselves and their charges. Any time you are in a social situation, and are trying to persuade someone to believe a fact or point to protect the reputation of yourself or your charge, you may roll a number of extra dice equal to your Rank in this School. This would include Courtier Skill checks to protect your charge's Glory or Status, Etiquette rolls to give a good impression, or even Deceit rolls to cover up evidence of wrongdoing.

Rank 2: Intercept the Strike

Sometimes a yojimbo needs to take an active role in the protection of his wards, to prevent a critical moment from ever occurring. When you are persuading someone to refrain from doing something, such as declaring war, issuing a challenge, or even creating a scene in public, you may keep an extra die. This is cumulative with the Rank 1 Technique if you are trying to persuade people of facts that will prompt them not to act — such as convincing an Imperial Magistrate that the yojimbo is innocent of a crime, and therefore does not need to be taken into custody.

Rank 3: Prevent the Strike

As a Bent Knee yojimbo approaches mastery of the school's teachings, he learns how to pressure opponents in a way that hinders their ability to strike back at the yojimbo or his charge.

While in combat and within melee range of one or more opponents, you have access to a "pool" of TN penalties that you can assign at will. This pool is equal to 3 x your Intelligence, and is assigned just before Initiative is rolled for each round. The TN penalty affects all rolls the opponent makes until the end of the round, and remains even if the opponent moves out of melee range during the round.

For example, a Rank 3 Bent Knee yojimbo with an Intelligence of 5 is engaged in combat with three assassins. The yojimbo has a total of +15 TN that he can assign to any combination of the three. Knowing that one of them is likely to strike at the shugenja he has been assigned to protect, the yojimbo assigns +9 TN from his pool to that assassin, and assigns +3 each to the other two.

Way of the Scorpion

With Bayushi Atsuki finally slain and a new Champion in control, the Scorpion are entering a new age. Whether this change is ultimately positive or negative remains to be seen. Some Scorpion samurai still wonder whatever happened to Bayushi Sunetra, and how precisely Paneki came to assume her role.

Paneki's path is not much clearer. Though he is loyal to the Emperor, he is uncertain what form that loyalty should take. It is clear that the ambitious Shogun seeks to usurp his brother's authority, yet Naseru has made no obvious move against him. Were Paneki in the Emperor's place, he would kill the Shogun without hesitation. The Master of Secrets is tempted to do so even though he has received no such command, but his memories of Toturi Tsudao stay his hand. It was Tsudao's death that brought peace between Emperor and Shogun and allowed the Empire to move past the troubled time of the Four Winds. If he were to kill the Shogun, would that not invalidate her sacrifice? Until he is called upon to resolve the matter, Paneki can do nothing but watch the Emperor carefully and trust in his judgment.

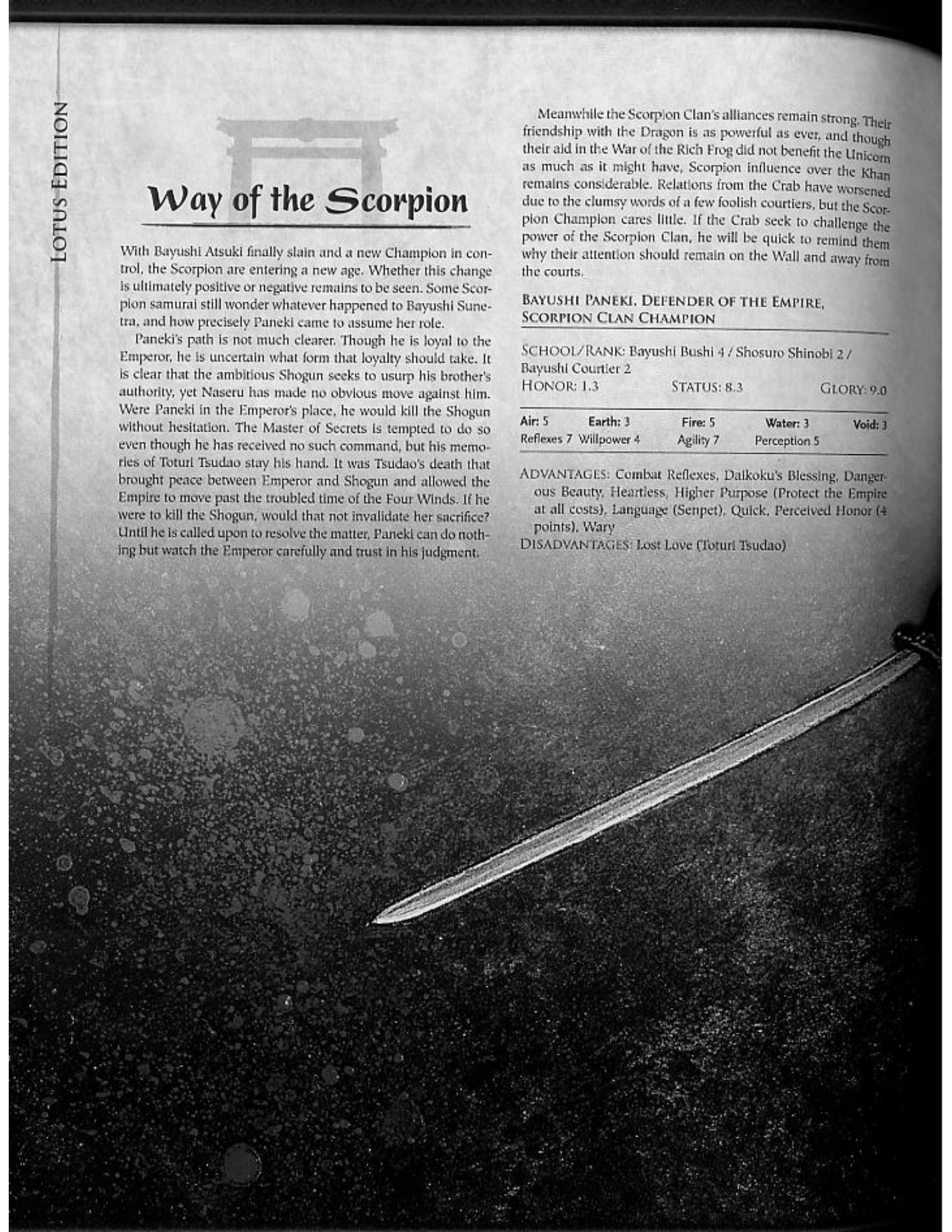
Meanwhile the Scorpion Clan's alliances remain strong. Their friendship with the Dragon is as powerful as ever, and though their aid in the War of the Rich Frog did not benefit the Unicorn as much as it might have, Scorpion influence over the Khan remains considerable. Relations from the Crab have worsened due to the clumsy words of a few foolish courtiers, but the Scorpion Champion cares little. If the Crab seek to challenge the power of the Scorpion Clan, he will be quick to remind them why their attention should remain on the Wall and away from the courts.

Bayushi Paneki, Defender of the Empire, Scorpion Clan Champion

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 4 / Shosuro Shinobi 2 / Bayushi Courtier 2
Honor: 1.3 Status: 8.3 Glory: 9.0

Air: 5	Earth: 3	Fire: 5	Water: 3	Void: 3
Reflexes 7	Willpower 4	Agility 7	Perception 5	

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Daikoku's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty, Heartless, Higher Purpose (Protect the Empire at all costs), Language (Senpet), Quick, Perceived Honor (4 points), Wary
Disadvantages: Lost Love (Toturi Tsudao)



SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 4, Calligraphy 2, Commerce: Appraisal 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation, Political Maneuvering) 6, Deceit (Intimidation, Seduction) 6, Defense 4, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Conversation, Sincerity) 6, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation (Interrogation, Search, Notice) 4, Know the School: Akodo Bushi 3, Know the School: Bayushi Bushi 4, Know the School: Kakita Bushi 3, Know the School: Moto Bushi 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Law 3, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 3, Meditation 3, Ninja Ranged Weapons 4, Poison 5, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 6, Storytelling (Oratory, Poetry) 3, Underworld 5

Bayushi Paneki is one of the most amoral killers in the history of the Empire, but his bloodlust has always been tempered by his unwavering dedication to the throne. Since he was named Scorpion Champion, many of his clan's rivals in the court have become remarkably less aggressive. The Defender of the Empire's reputation speaks for itself, and few willingly cross his path.

Paneki earned a name for himself during the War of Spirits. When Shiro Iuchi was captured by the Hantei's spirit armies, Paneki defeated the invaders with a small scouting party. Accusations followed that Paneki had infiltrated the camp and poisoned the spirit army's food the evening before the attack, but the Iuchi defended Paneki's heroism staunchly. Toturi I ended the dispute personally by awarding the young Scorpion the rank of shireikan in the Imperial Legions and the title "Defender of the Empire." It is a title that Paneki wears proudly to this day, one that renewed his loyalty to the Toturi Dynasty.

During the time of the Four Winds, Bayushi Paneki entered the service of Toturi Tsudao. As commander of the Legions and Toturi's eldest legitimate child, Paneki's loyalty naturally settled on her. He proved himself by preventing a bloody confrontation between Tsudao's legions and a force of Dragon troops led by the rogue general, Junnosuke.

Tsudao was a brilliant and charismatic leader, and Paneki often dreamed of the glorious future that lay in store for Rokugan when she inevitably inherited the throne. In her presence, Paneki felt emotions that he thought he had buried long ago. Though he gladly took lives in the name of Toturi, for his daughter he would have given his soul.

When Paneki learned of Toturi Tsudao's death in the City of the Lost, he was crushed. Paneki might have followed her into death, but when he heard that Naseru had retroactively recognized his sister's rule as Empress, he stayed his hand. His loyalty transferred to Toturi III in that instant, immediately and without reservation.

Perhaps even in death, Tsudao continued to lead and inspire.

For her sake, he will live on, and help create an Empire she would have wished to rule.



Yogo Shugenja School

Few families in Rokugan are as misunderstood and despised as the Yogo. Cursed since the day of their foundation, they have always followed a lonely and tormented path. The specter of Yogo Junzo bitterly reminds the Yogo of past failures, yet they struggle on despite the shame heaped upon their name. They are the undisputed masters of warding magic. Their spells guard the hidden sanctuaries of Bayushi's Labyrinth and the paths of Traitor's Grove. Those who would pry into the secrets of the Scorpion Clan risk disturbing the ancient protections placed by the Yogo family.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 1.5
Skills: Calligraphy, Lore: History, Lore: Shadowlands, Meditation, Spellcraft (Maho), Theology, any one High Skill
Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto; kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, traveling pack; 5 koku
Affinity/Deficiency: The Yogo focus upon their wards rather than any particular element. As a result, they possess no Affinity or Deficiency.

Technique: Yogo's Love

Yogo was doomed to destroy that which he loved, so he focused his love on his enemies. The darkest secret of the Yogo is that their wards draw upon the power of the curse that burns within their bloodline, focusing the rage of one thousand years of accursed spirits against those who intrude upon the protected area. The resulting effect is quite potent. Symbol of Air, Symbol of Earth, Symbol of Fire, and Symbol of Water all count as Mastery Level 1 spells to a Yogo shugenja. A Yogo begins with any one of these spells (in addition to his starting spells), and may only learn an additional one each time he increases in Rank.

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, Counterspell, Banish, plus 1 spell of each element

New Scorpion Kata

Eyes of the Trickster

Preparation Time: 10 minutes
Duration: 180 minutes

It is said that the Scorpion learned this kata from a mischievous kenku who was so impressed by a Bayushi bushi's poetry that he gave him this artful stance. A Bayushi holding this mindset is difficult to deceive, placing enemies who would seek to use the Scorpion's tricks against them at an extreme disadvantage.

Rank: Bayushi Bushi 2
Cost: 2
Special: Must be used with a katana or naginata.
Effect: While this kata is active, so long as you hold your weapon, enemies must make an additional Raise on any attempts to use a Disarm, Feint, or Knockdown attack against you.

Kachiko's Kiss

Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Duration: 120 minutes

Named for the famed Lady of Scorpions, this is among the most feared of all Scorpion kata. A patient Scorpion who falls into this stance inevitably explodes with a frenzy of powerful blows, destroying an overconfident enemy.

Rank: Bayushi Bushi 4
Cost: 7
Effect: When in the Full Defense Posture, you may spend a Void Point to "cap" one die that explodes on an attack roll directed against you, whether or not the strike is successful: the die's result is reduced to 10. If multiple dice explode on a single attack roll, you may use this kata multiple times on that roll so long as you have sufficient Void. If you cap an opponent's exploding die, you may direct a savage attack against that opponent in the following round: for every die you capped the round before, you may choose a rolled die on your own attack or damage roll to immediately be considered a 10. The chosen die explodes normally. You choose the die after you make your roll.

While this kata is active, you must Raise once to attack any enemy who did not attack you within the last round.



Way of the Unicorn

Never before in history have the Unicorn been as feared as they are at the moment, and the Khan would have it no other way. The War of the Rich Frog ended less than a year ago, and despite the Unicorn's failure to recapture Kaeru Toshi, they are content with having seized a Lion village and transformed it into a major Unicorn military outpost. No one fully comprehends the depth and breadth of the Khan's ambition, however, and his recent alliance with the Shogun, renewed after nearly two years, has alarmed many who might be considered targets by the Unicorn armies.

Allies traditionally serve one of two purposes: to increase a clan's military stability by adding the threat of another clan's armies, or to improve a clan's economic stability by creating lucrative commercial bonds that ensure prosperous trading. As one of Rokugan's wealthiest clans, the Unicorn have little need for the latter, and no need whatsoever for the former.

The Unicorn's principal allies are the Crab. Moto Chagatai has tremendous respect for the Hida and their thousand years of diligent service. Of all Rokugan's families, only the Hida can truly be considered the Moto's equal. The Hida, for their part, have not forgotten the aid Chagatai sent them during Daigotsu's attack on the Wall, and the Baraunghar army that was so instrumental in maintaining order during that period. The Crab have returned the favor, lending the Unicorn siege engineers during the War of the Rich Frog, and assisting with the construction of Chagatai's Khol Wall. The Unicorn have no stronger allies than the Crab.

The Crane and Mantis are also Unicorn allies, but only insofar as their cooperation ensures that Unicorn tariffs on traffic through Seikitsu Pass match those the Crane and Mantis charge along the coast and in their ports. With the three cooperating, trade on both land and sea is assured, and profits remain high.

Although the conflict at Kaeru Toshi has been over for nearly a year, the Unicorn have not forgotten, and their enmity for the Lion and Dragon is nearly beyond measure. The Lion, at least, are respected foes, and the only force in Rokugan that the Khan truly considers a worthy opponent. The Dragon, on the other hand, are meddling interlopers, and it is not unthinkable that the Unicorn will soon move on their borders to avenge the insult.

The alliance between the Khan and the Shogun disturbs many. The Emperor has said nothing regarding their rekindled relationship, but many note that Toturi III has been quietly mustering his own allies ever since the Khan came out in support of Kaneka. He may well preparing for a conflict that many believe would be more damaging to Rokugani society than any in history.

Leading the Khan's agenda: gaining more power and respect for the Unicorn Clan. Moto Chagatai genuinely believes that no clan in Rokugan can stand against his military might, and he will not rest until the entire Empire recognizes his power. The disdain that that Great Clans displayed toward the returned Moto nomads after Lady Shinjo came back to Rokugan was considerable, and Chagatai does not suffer insult lightly.

Beyond military concerns, the Moto family's goals include the continued expansion of trade and influence beyond Rokugan's borders into the Burning Sands, and in expanding worship of the Shi-Tien Yen-Wang beyond Unicorn shrines. The Iuchi, Ide, Utaku, and Horiuchi families are content to pursue their own private matters, which have little bearing on outside matter. The Shinjo, of course, continue their quest for redemption. Many Shinjo have placed their faith and hope in their daimyo Shono, believing that he alone can lead them back into the light.

There is no daimyo or general who does not fear the name of Moto Chagatai. Even the Khan's allies are careful in their interactions — who knows what strange gaijin customs might cause the Khan to take offense? His reputation has caused all Moto to be looked upon with trepidation. Some, like the rogue general Moto Chen, have overcome the prejudice surrounding them. Others, like the White Guard commander Moto Hideyoshi, do nothing to alleviate such perceptions, and are shunned by civilized folk.

Shinjo Shono is known to most courts in Rokugan, but as a disgrace rather than an honored daimyo. The sins of his father linger despite Shono's decades of work to expunge the dishonor. His contemporary Ide Tang has done what he can to restore the Shinjo's reputation, but to no avail.



Utaku Xieng Chi and Horiuchi Shem-Zhe are well known and respected as family daimyo, but take little part in the affairs of clans beyond their borders. Iuchi Lixue is among the most prominent samurai-ko in the Empire due to her position as the Baraunghar general. Many mistakenly believe her to be the Iuchi family daimyo, but that position remains the province of Iuchi Yue, who has all but disappeared from view in recent years.

MOTO CHAGATAI, UNICORN CLAN KHAN

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 5 / White Guard 3
HONOR: 2.2 STATUS: 8.9 GLORY: 8.8

Air: 4	Earth: 5	Fire: 4	Water: 6	Void: 4
Reflexes 6		Agility 5		

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Hida Kuon, 4/1 points; Shogun, 4/2 points), Jurojin's Blessing, Way of the Land (Unicorn provinces)
DISADVANTAGES: Bad Reputation (Barbarian)
KATA: Howl of the Moto, Moto's Burning Strike, Striking as Earth, Striking as Water, Thundering the Sky
SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 6, Athletics 4, Battle 6, Commerce 5, Courtier 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 7, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Horse Archery, Yomanri), Lore: Burning Sands 5, Lore: Shi-Tien Yen Wang 5, Polearms (Lance) 4, Stealth 3, Theology (Fortunes) 5, Underworld 4

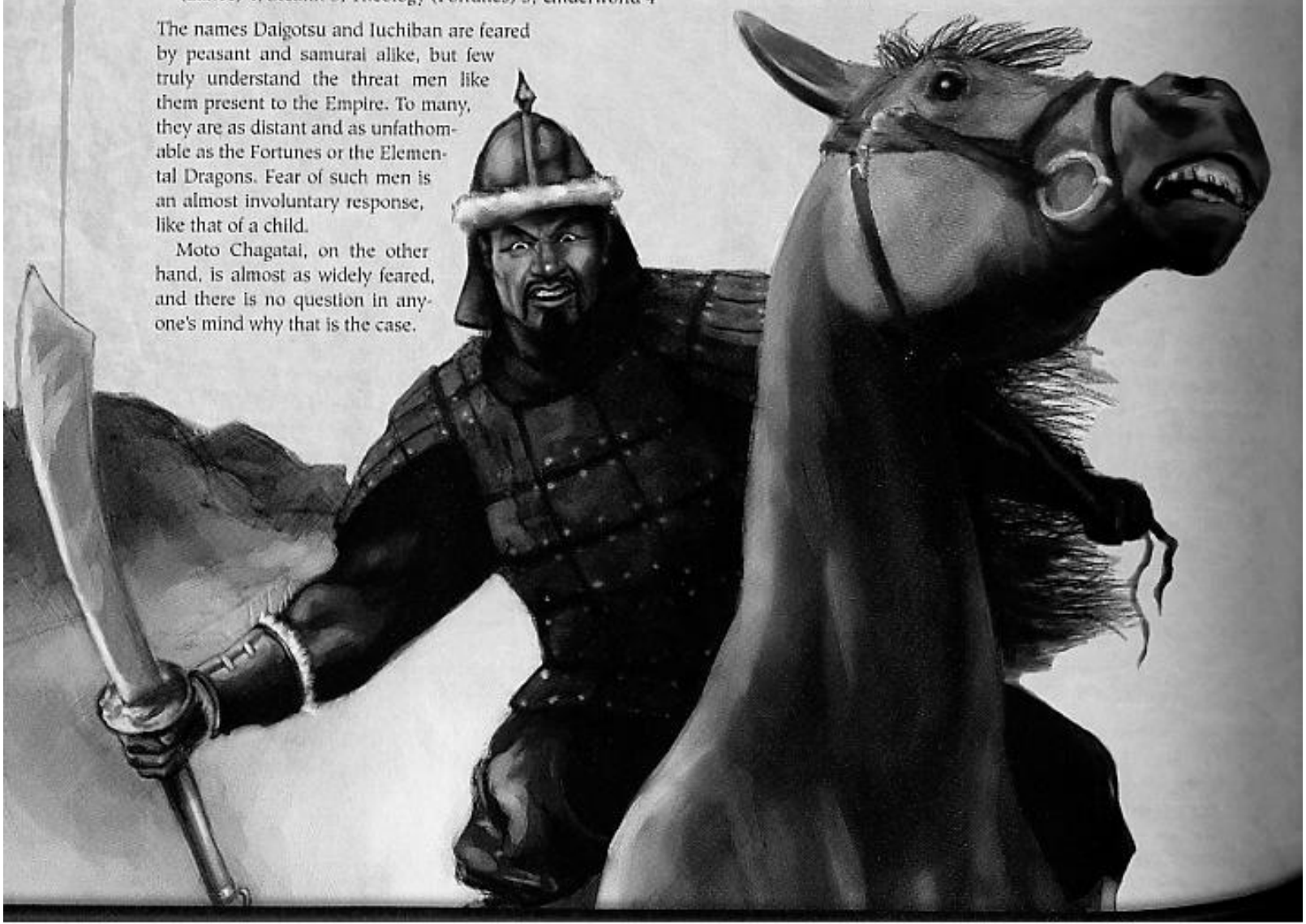
The Unicorn Khan is a dangerous, ambitious, cunning man. His rise to power and early rule were largely overlooked because of the widespread but inaccurate belief that he was a simple-minded barbarian. Chagatai actively encouraged this misperception, believing that those who were deceived by it were fools, and those who saw past it would prove either potential allies or worthy foes. Few penetrated Chagatai's deception until he formed an alliance with the Shogun, Akodo Kaneka. The sudden appearance of the Khan's armies alongside those loyal to the Shogun was an alarming revelation to those who knew the Unicorn's true military power.

After the Emperor Toturi III dissolved the Shogun's power base, Chagatai returned to the Moto provinces to contemplate his next move. He was disappointed and angry, and felt he had been denied the opportunity to prove the Unicorn's might to the Empire. He began searching for a means to prove his power and strength, and found opportunity very close by: the city of Kaeru Toshi on the Lion-Unicorn border.

For years, Chagatai planned his maneuvers. Five years after the Emperor's ascension, he moved against Kaeru Toshi with the Khol, the strongest of his three armies. The conflict was explosive, but quickly ground to a halt due to winter conditions after only a short period of brutal skirmishing. This was according to Chagatai's plans, as he hoped to enrage the Lion, forcing them to make a mistake that would allow him to defeat them more soundly and, if circumstances permitted, push deeper into

The names Daigotsu and Iuchiban are feared by peasant and samurai alike, but few truly understand the threat men like them present to the Empire. To many, they are as distant and as unfathomable as the Fortunes or the Elemental Dragons. Fear of such men is an almost involuntary response, like that of a child.

Moto Chagatai, on the other hand, is almost as widely feared, and there is no question in anyone's mind why that is the case.



Lion territory. The delay led to unforeseen complications as the Dragon joined the conflict, presenting both Lion and Unicorn with a divided front. Realizing that an Imperial intervention was unavoidable, Chagatai changed the focus of his struggle, feinting toward Kaeru Toshi and instead establishing a military stronghold in the former Lion village of Sukoshi Zutsu. The final battle in the War of the Rich Frog took place outside the village, and Chagatai faced the Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro in personal combat. Chagatai was victorious, and the Golden Lion of Toshi Ranbo met his end at the Khan's hands.

After the war's end, the Khan maintained a low profile for some time before suddenly rekindling his alliance with the Shogun. The Unicorn armies and the Imperial Legions united to scour the Empire in search of Iuchiban's remaining Bloodspeakers. For the moment, the Empire views the Khan as an enforcer of law and order, and the Shogun's foremost supporter. At the moment it is enough, even for Moto Chagatai.

Shinjo Bushi School

The students of Shinjo's fighting style are known for their strange, flamboyant maneuvers that seem at odds with the other Unicorn families' straightforward styles. Historians are quick to point out, however, that Lady Shinjo was known to be more open than her brothers and sisters, and that her personal combat techniques drew from many sources even before she and her followers left the Empire. Adding in centuries of experience with new and unknown styles that the Unicorn discovered all throughout the gaijin lands, and it is no small wonder that the Shinjo style is unlike any other.

The Shinjo continued in the manner of their founder even centuries after her imprisonment in the Burning Sands. They modified their techniques throughout their travel outside the Empire. Even after they returned to Rokugan, they continued to revise their style to incorporate certain elements of other clans' fighting styles that impressed them. It was not until several years after their return that they ceased changing their style and it began to resemble the static techniques that the Shinjo are now known for.

Shinjo bushi provided the bulk of the Unicorn armies for most of their time in Rokugan. It was not until Lady Shinjo's return and her subsequent purge of Kolat influences from her descendants that the Shinjo family's fortunes were shattered. After executions, desertions, and seppuku, the family's strength was shattered, and they were removed from power by Shinjo herself. Over the course of a few weeks and months, the Shinjo were virtually destroyed.

Those who had remained loyal to Shinjo and the Unicorn were appalled at what happened; not only that their family had been so corrupted, but at the casual ease with which the loyal among them were discarded. As a family, the Shinjo dedicated themselves to cleansing their family's name and honor, and have never wavered in their loyalty to Lady Shinjo and their new Moto lords.

Benefit: +1 Strength

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Defense, Horsemanship 2, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu (Yomanri), any one High or Bugei Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow (yumi or daikyu) with 20 arrows (any type), light or heavy armor, helm, any 2 weapons; kimono and sandals, Unicorn steed, traveling pack; 8 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: The Way of the Unicorn

Unicorn samurai learn to ride a horse almost before they learn to walk, and the natural agility they learn as a result of this extensive riding aids them in all that they do. While on foot, you add half your Horsemanship rank (rounded up) to the total of all Initiative and Bugei Skill Rolls. While mounted, you add your Horsemanship rank to the total of all Weapon Skill Rolls. Additionally, you add your Water Ring to the total of all your Initiative rolls.

Rank 2: Dance of the Blade

In most fighting styles, parrying is instinctive. The Unicorn, however, have mastered the art of parrying and counterattacking without hesitation. When you are in the Full Defense posture, any opponent who attacks you and misses may be attacked the following round with a number of Free Raises equal to your School Rank.

Rank 3: The Four Winds Strike

The sweeping Unicorn combat style allows a Unicorn warrior to move with incredible speed. You may make an additional attack per round. Additionally, you add twice your Water Ring to the total of all your Initiative rolls, replacing the benefit from Rank 1.

Rank 4: Spirit of Our Lady

The union between Unicorn and steed is forged early in their training, and cannot be broken short of death. If you make Raises on an attack roll while on horseback and fail to meet the increased TN, but meet the original TN, the roll is considered a success. This Technique may also be used when on foot, but it requires the expenditure of a Void Point.

Rank 5: Dancing with the Fortunes

Although the Shinjo family lost the favor of their Lady, they have not lost the near-mystical ability to overcome hardship that she taught her followers a thousand years ago. After any failed roll, you may spend a Void Point to instantly change the failure to a success. You may not use this Technique more than five times per day. You must roll at least half the TN (including any Raises) for this Technique to take effect. Additionally, you add three times your Water Ring to the total of all your Initiative rolls, replacing the benefit from Rank 3.

Shinjo Scout School (Bushi)

Not all of Shinjo's followers were warriors. In fact, some among the Shinjo Scout School believe that they are the true heirs of her legacy, given that they are explorers, riders, and wanderers, just as she was. The techniques they teach to their students have their origin in the Ki-Rin Clan's earliest days, when Shinjo and her followers wandered the deserts and plains north of Rokugan, and scouts and outriders kept the clan safe from attacks and predators. Many scouts died in those days, particularly in the first months, but experience was an exceptional teacher. Out of that experience the Shinjo Scouts were born.

The Shinjo family branches that scout for the clan have had a difficult history. They have served for centuries without question or hesitation, doing whatever tasks were required of them. They

were never interested in serving as warriors, however, and it was only through necessity that they became such. The harsh environment and hostile encounters that typified the clan's travels through gaijin lands caused the scouts to develop more martial methods and techniques. Still, the scouts remained content so long as there was exploring to be done, as that was their order's one true passion. It was not until after the Unicorn returned to Rokugan that the scouts' true difficulty began.

Rokugan had precious few frontiers for the scouts to push forward. The Empire was new to them, but it had already been mapped by generations of Imperial cartographers. With the Unicorn having a permanent home for the first time in history, there was suddenly no need for scouts. With no sense of purpose or duty, the scouts became easy prey for the Kolat agents within the Shinjo family.

The Shinjo branches that oversaw the family's scouting were heavily infiltrated by the Kolat. Over the course of two centuries, the scouts were transformed from explorers and warriors into spies and assassins. The Unicorn's scouts had never played a prominent role in the affairs of Rokugan, and with the Kolat's need for secrecy they disappeared entirely. It was not until Lady Shinjo returned and purged the family of its Kolat affiliation that the Empire noticed the scouts; nearly one in five were eliminated by Shinjo and her agents as being affiliated with the Kolat.

Members of a disgraced family, the Shinjo scouts are widely reviled. Those who escaped Shinjo's purge have struggled to rebuild their dojo and holdings, helped only by other Shinjo families who understood their disgrace. The Khan has used the scouts in his efforts to rebuild relations with nations beyond Rokugan. Ironically, despite their disgrace, the scouts once again enjoy their true purpose.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Defense, Horsemanship, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu (Yomanri), Stealth, any one Skill
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow (yumi or daikyu) with 20 arrows (any type), any 1 weapon, light armor; kimono and sandals, Unicorn steed, traveling pack; 6 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: The Ki-Rin's Grace

A Shinjo scout knows the importance of moving unseen, and of surviving random encounters to bring information back to one's lords. You may use Stealth while on horseback. While in the Full Defense posture, you may add your Stealth rank to your TN to Be Hit.

Rank 2: The Viper's Speed

A scout is patient, waiting for the perfect moment, then strikes with the speed of a predator. During the round immediately after a round when you used the Full Defense posture, you may add your Stealth rank to the total of your Initiative and your attack rolls. Your Initiative score returns to its previous value the following round.

Rank 3: The Stars Are My Guide

Though many of her descendants shamed her, Lady Shinjo did not abandon all her faithful followers, leaving signs for them to follow among the stars in the Celestial Heavens. You are always considered to have the Way of the Land Advantage, no matter where you are. Additionally, you gain a number of Free Raises per day equal to twice your Insight Rank. These Free Raises can be used only on Hunting or Stealth rolls.

Rank 4: A Soul as Swift

Fleet of foot and ever mindful of his surroundings, the scout's speed infuses all that he does. You may make an additional attack per round.

Rank 5: Purity of the First Strike

The Unicorn teach their scouts to strike first, and to leave no need for a second strike. When attacking an opponent unaware of your presence, you may add your Stealth rank to the result on each die. You may also add your Stealth rank to the total of any damage roll following such an attack.

New Unicorn Kata

Unicorn kata are often performed on horseback, a feat unheard of in all but the most advanced cavalry units of other Great Clans. Unicorn steeds are, of course, trained to work side-by-side with their Unicorn brothers as soon as they can trot.

East Wind Kata

Preparation Time: 20 minutes
Duration: 120 minutes

The samurai of the Army of the East, the Junghar, are trained to fight to the death to protect their brothers and their homes. By focusing their energy inward, they become like iron that no enemy can break.

Rank: Moto Bushi 3 or Shinjo Bushi 3
Cost: 5
Special: None.
Effect: Your TN to Be Hit increases by twice your Insight Rank. Your Initiative and movement per round are decreased by an amount equal to your Insight Rank.
Void: None.

Wind Borne Strike

Preparation Time: 45 minutes
Duration: 120 minutes

Unicorn cavalry has been legendary for over two centuries, and for good reason. A trained horseman can ride into a battle at incredible speed, striking down his foes before they even realize their enemy is among them, and disappear with the next breath.

Rank: Shinjo Bushi 3 or Utaku Battle Maiden 3
Cost: 5
Special: Must be used on horseback.
Effect: When mounted, you calculate your horse's movement as if its Water Ring were 2 ranks higher. Your Initiative and attack rolls are increased by 5. Your TN to Be Hit is decreased by 10.
Void: You may spend one or more Void Points to increase the bonus to your attack and Initiative by 5 per Void Point spent. Each point spent in this manner decreases your TN to Be Hit by an additional 5.



The Daisho of Water

The Daisho of Water is an exquisite set of paired swords crafted by the Oracle of Water shortly before she departed from Rokugan. The blades are perfect in every possible way, twins in all save their proportions, one a katana and the other a wakizashi. Some believe that the blades were intended to represent the eternal bond between the Oracle and her still-living twin, Isawa Sayuri. It may even be that that Oracle thought to give these blades to her sister, but divine power comes with restrictions, and the bladés had to be set free for mortals to find.

The power of an Oracle is almost beyond comprehension, and it seems possible that when the Daisho was cast adrift in the mysterious energies of Water, it was somehow discovered before it was even created. The Daisho is carried by the warrior Horiuchi Nobane, commander of the Ninth Imperial Legion. Nobane is said to have discovered the Daisho early in his career and kept the swords as trophies, not realizing the power they contained. It was not until he rose among the ranks, proving himself an honorable and righteous man, that the Daisho's power revealed itself to him. Nobane offered the blade both to his commanding officers in the Imperial Legions and to his Khan, but both declined. Moto Chagatai claimed that the blades were clearly meant for Nobane, and so long as he carried them he could continue to bring honor and glory to the Unicorn.

The Daisho of Water is a matched pair of swords, each with DR 5k5. If both are carried, the Daisho adds 2 ranks to the wielder's Kenjutsu and Iaijutsu. Anyone carrying the Daisho of Water may adopt a fighting stance using the blades and spend a Void Point to project such an aura of absolute invincibility that no one of lower Insight Rank is capable of attacking them for any reason for a full day.

Shuriken of Serpents

Repulsive by any standard, these rare items are remnants of the Unicorn Clan's travels through the most bizarre regions beyond Rokugan's borders. The exact origins of these weapons have been lost to history, but they are alleged to have been taken from the bodies of assassins sent to kill Unicorn leaders during the clan's travels. The Mantis appear to be familiar with these items, indicating a possible origin in the Ivory Kingdoms. Whatever the secret of their creation, they are excellent assassination tools, which may be a reason for their continued existence beyond mere academic curiosity.

A Shuriken of Serpents is a small metal throwing star crafted in the image of a twined wheel of serpents. When the Shuriken is ready to be thrown, it must be activated by speaking a command word in an ancient language of unknown origins, known only to those Iuchi scholars who study them. Once active, the shuriken transforms from metal into a living mass of serpents when thrown. The Shuriken inflicts normal damage when it strikes, and an additional 3k3 Wounds as a result of multiple snake bites. The virulent venom the snakes exactly duplicates the effects of the poison Fauntei Shi (see page 161 of the *Legend of the Five Rings Role-playing Game, Third Edition*). After striking and poisoning the original target, the Shuriken can fly and strike other targets, up to a maximum equal to the user's Insight Rank. Once used, the Shuriken reverts to its metal form and shatters.

The Yumi of Fire

The Yumi of Fire is one of the Elemental Nemuranai created by the Oracles of Light as they departed the mortal realm for the Celestial Heavens. Ever more brash and impulsive than the other Oracles, the Oracle of Fire chose to craft a weapon of exquisite power and precision, the sort of item that makes one man the equal of an army. In his mind, the rising darkness that threatened mankind would require heroes of great power to combat it. And if mankind proved unworthy, and men of evil means acquired the Yumi to dominate their fellow man, then humankind did not deserve to stand against evil.

The Yumi of Fire went undiscovered for quite some time. It was found only recently, when a Shinjo scout discovered it in a small village in the western Unicorn mountains. This was roughly at the same time that Iuchiban fell in Otosan Uchi, and his Bloodspeakers were rampaging across the Empire. The young scout was present when a Bloodspeaker cell attacked the village, and he alone stood against them. He suffered terrible wounds from their blood magic, but slew many. It was not until the last few had cornered him and several peasants he was protecting that he discovered the Yumi and killed the remaining Bloodspeakers. He returned to Shiro Shinjo and was given a hero's welcome when the tale of his valor came to light.

The Yumi of Fire appears identical to a typical yumi crafted from ash wood. It feels warm to the touch, as if it had been left in the sun. The Yumi transforms standard arrows fired from it into bolts of pure elemental fire that inflict 6k6 Wounds on anything they strike. Anyone holding the yumi may make up to three ranged attacks per round regardless of how many attacks they might otherwise be able to make. The Yumi of Fire adds +10 to the Initiative score of anyone holding it, even if they are not using it at the time.

Way of the Imperials

In the wake of Rosoku's death, the Imperial families are more divided than ever. The Shogun's followers blame Naseru's shugenja for being unable to ward the outer halls of the palace from Bloodspeakers. The Emperor's supporters blame the Shogun's soldiers for failing to protect Rosoku quickly enough. Naseru and Kaneka are both above casting petty blame, but both sense the deepening division between them. Naseru knows that not all of the Gozoku conspiracy has been exposed, and he suspects that many of its supporters now add their strength to Kaneka's growing power.

Both brothers fear that the time may soon come when the political divisions between them will explode into violence. For the time being, neither wants that to occur. Both brothers remember Toturi Tsudao's sacrifice, and the promises they made to one another. Kaneka does not truly want the responsibilities of the throne, and Naseru does not truly want to abandon hope that Kaneka will one day prove to become a loyal subject.

Sezaru, as always, remains the outsider. Though he serves Naseru dutifully, the Wolf disapproves of the feud between his brothers. As their dispute deepens, Sezaru begins to ponder if his magic is strong enough to force peace between the Emperor and Shogun, or if he should retreat from the public eye altogether and abandon his brothers to their squabbles.



YOTSU IRIE, CAPTAIN OF THE IMPERIAL GUARD

SCHOOL/RANK: Ronin Yojimbo 5
HONOR: 3.3 STATUS: 7.0 GLORY: 5.0

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 4	Void: 4
	Willpower: 4	Agility: 5	Strength: 5	

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Toturi III, 4/2 points), Clear Thinker, Combat Reflexes, Higher Purpose (protect Toturi III), Irreproachable (4 points), Inner Gift (Foresight, Lesser Prophecy), Precise Memory
DISADVANTAGES: None
KATA: Standing on the Heavens, Striking as Wind, The Empire Rests on its Edge
SKILLS: Calligraphy 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: History 2, Meditation 4, Spears 4

Yotsu Irie is one of a handful of people who have the Emperor's complete trust. She gained it through devoted service, unflinching loyalty, a keen mind, and formidable martial skills. She is his personal yojimbo, and Captain of the Imperial Guard. But she began her career quite differently, as a person whose single wish was to slay Hantei Naseru, the man who became Emperor Toturi III.

Irie was born into the Tonbo family of the Dragonfly clan. She was destined for a life as a shugenja or courtier until her ancestral home, Kyuden Tonbo, was destroyed by the Lion Clan. She was away from the castle at the time and thus escaped the slaughter. When her grief subsided, she was left with a burning hatred of both the Lion Clan and the man who orchestrated the alliance that destroyed her home, Hantei Naseru. She dedicated her life to one goal: seeing the man known as the Anvil dead at her feet. But she was not motivated solely by revenge. She could not allow a man like Hantei Naseru to take the throne. She believed he would become the most heartless, cruelest tyrant the Empire had ever seen.

She was taken in by the Yotsu, a family of ronin who kept order in the Yatoshin district of Otosan Uchi. They taught her as best they could, and she applied herself to the goal of destroying Hantei Naseru before he had a chance to become Emperor. She studied hard and practiced relentlessly. When she was ready, she set out to kill the Anvil. She followed him for a long time, waiting for her chance. But as she watched him, she was plagued by doubts. Killing a man in cold blood was a dishonorable deed, even a man as deserving as Naseru. Then as she watched Naseru gathering power, using it for the good of the Empire to defeat the horrible Tsuno, she saw flashes of something better than the tyrant she dreaded. During the fighting with the Tsuno, Naseru's yojimbo was killed. Naseru had known of Irie's existence for a while, and he confronted her. When she told him her history and why she wanted to kill him, much to her surprise, he made her his new personal bodyguard. He wanted, he said, to keep her at his side so she could prevent him from becoming the tyrant she feared.

The Emperor values her opinion, and she gives it freely and honestly, even when it contradicts him — although never in public. She would never do anything to bring him dishonor.

Toturi Bushi School

When Toturi I took the throne, one of his first endeavors was to create a school of martial arts and generalship loyal to him. He was one of the greatest warriors and tacticians the Empire has ever known, with the rare ability to intuit the rhythms of battle. After he became Emperor, one of his goals was to create an Imperial Army schooled in the ways of battle and the insights he discovered during his tempestuous years as a ronin general.

But his reign was turbulent and filled with strife. When he was taken by the Lying Darkness and eventually died, his bushi school faltered, because the Emperor himself was the sensei. The school remained open, but its prestige flagged; its students could not learn the deep secrets known only to Toturi himself. Some thought that it would eventually fade away, but when Toturi returned during the War of Spirits and reassumed the throne, his bushi school was revitalized. The school now flourishes, with teachers and students who are almost a match for the legendary general.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.5
Skills: Battle (Battle Lore), Defense, Iaijutsu, Katana, Spears, War Fans, any one Skill
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, yari, any 2 weapons, light or heavy armor, helm; kimono and sandals, steed, traveling pack; 10 koku

TECHNIQUES

RANK 1: MOON ON THE WATER

Before any conflict, the Toturi bushi sizes up his opponent, looking for weaknesses in his technique, his character, his armor —as if studying the reflection of the moon on the water. In the first round of any skirmish, after Initiative is rolled but before any actions are resolved, you may make a Contested Perception/(Weapon Skill) Roll against one target's Awareness/(Weapon Skill), where Weapon Skill refers to the weapon the opponent is using. If you are successful, you gain +5 to your TN to Be Hit, and a Free Raise on all attack rolls you make against that opponent.

RANK 2: THE FAN OF COMMAND

A successful general possesses secret weapons that no one expects, and one of the Toturi bushi's overlooked weapons is his war fan. You may roll and keep an extra die when attacking with a war fan in a skirmish, making an average war fan a 1k2 DR weapon. In Mass Combat, when you roll for the Tides of Battle, you may add half your War Fan rank (rounding up) to the total of your die roll.

RANK 3: SWORD OF WATER

A Toturi bushi attacks with power and precision by thoroughly sizing up the opponent. You gain an additional attack each round. Additionally, you may add your Water Ring plus your Honor Rank as a bonus to all damage rolls.

Rank 4: The Fan of Command

Useful for signaling subordinates, rallying troops, and fending off attacks in close quarters, the war fan is an indispensable weapon in the general's armory. You may keep an extra die when attacking with a war fan in a skirmish. This is cumulative with the Rank 2 Technique, making an average war fan a 1k3 DR weapon. In Mass Combat, when you roll for the Tides of Battle, you may add your War Fan rank to the total of your die roll. This bonus replaces the bonus from Rank 2.

Rank 5: The Supreme Warrior

Toturi was one of the greatest warriors and leaders of all time, and his imparts his wisdom down through the generations. You gain an additional attack each round. Additionally, you add your Water Ring plus your Honor Rank plus your Battle Skill as a bonus to all damage roll totals. This bonus replaces the Water Ring bonus from Rank 3.

Eye of the Emperor

The Eye of the Emperor looks like a multifaceted sky-blue gem about the size of a child's fist. More than one such gem is known to exist, and it is rumored that they are created by Seppun shugenja, but the Seppun say nothing. The few that have been spotted have been seen only in the possession of Imperial Magistrates. The Eye allows the user to view someone not only in the present, but in the future.

When the gem is used, it glows with a soft blue light. To use the Eye, its holder must concentrate for one minute on the person he intends to spy upon and decide if he wants the present or the future. After the minute, he can make an Awareness/Divination roll (TN 15 for the present, TN 25 for the future). If he is successful, he can look into the Eye and see the target as if he were an invisible disembodied eye nearby. He can change his position as he chooses. He can make any sight-based Perception rolls as if he were present with the target, but he cannot hear anything at the target's location. This ability lasts for a number of minutes equal to the amount by which the user exceeded the die roll, with a minimum of one minute.

When seeing the future, the user must realize that the future can be changed by the actions of the present. The events he sees will come to pass if he does nothing to interrupt them.

The user must know the face of his target to concentrate well enough for this item to work. He cannot use it on someone he has never seen before. The Eye can be used once per day.

Gong of the Righteous Emperor

The precise origins of this item are unknown, but it first appeared in Hida Kisada's Crab army during the battle to kill Iuchiban in the ruins of Otosan Uchi. Some speculate that the Great Bear brought it with him from the Realm of the Dead, or that he created it with his own power as Fortune of Persistence, but only Kisada knows for certain. After that battle, the Gong was presented as a gift to Toturi III. It is now in Toshi Ranbo.

It appears to be a beautifully made golden gong, about three feet in height. A wooden striker is chained to the frame. The Imperial mon is emblazoned on the surface of the gong with a strangely durable green lacquer. The gong is surprisingly heavy, as if its substance goes beyond the mere physical manifestation of its presence. It requires four strong men to lift, and must be moved in a cart.

The Gong harnesses the bloodlust of the army that carries it. It is used to keep the cadence of a marching army, crashing with metallic thunder in time with the army's footsteps.

In mass combat, the general of an army carrying the Gong of the Righteous Emperor gains a +5 bonus to his Tides of Battle roll. Characters in the Gong's army gain a +5 bonus to their Determination rolls.

The enemy army suffers from uncertainty due to the Gong's relentless thunder. At the skirmish level of a battle, characters in the army opposing the Gong roll two fewer dice on all rolls.

If the army carrying the Gong ever loses three straight Battle Turns, the power of the Gong is dissipated. It cannot be used again this battle.

The Imperial Standard

Any army that carries the Imperial Standard walks with the full sanction of the Emperor himself. It is a broad golden banner emblazoned with the Imperial Chrysanthemum, and the warriors who march under the banner of the Son of Heaven know that the Fortunes themselves favor their cause. The Imperial Standard has a long history, but somehow it remains impervious to the effects of age and battle. It still looks as new as the first day it was unfurled. It is not known exactly when this standard was first used, and in some historical accounts, there seems to have to been more than one. There is currently only one Imperial Standard, kept near the Emperor in Toshi Ranbo.

In mass combat, the general of an army carrying the Imperial Standard gains a +5 bonus to his Tides of Battle roll. Characters in the Standard's army gain a +5 bonus to their Determination rolls.

At the skirmish level of a battle, characters in the army carrying the Imperial Standard may keep one extra die on all rolls and are immune to Fear.

Way of the Minor Clans

The Lotus era has the potential to usher in a new age of prosperity for the Minor Clans. The ravages of Iuchiban and his Bloodspeakers largely passed over the Minor Clans, as they were essentially beneath the Heartless' notice. The Hare Clan, traditional enemies of the Bloodspeakers, suffered an attack shortly after Iuchiban escaped his tomb, but beyond that the Minor Clans emerged from the Bloodspeaker Saga largely unscathed.

The most important Minor Clan alliance right now is that between the Tortoise and the Dragon. The Dragon's sponsorship permits the Minor Clans to have an unprecedented voice in the Imperial Court. The Tortoise are permitted to attend all major court functions, where they serve as the representatives for all Minor Clans, all of whom send advisors to the Tortoise. Needless to say, the Minor Clans appreciate the Dragon's willingness to share clout.

Other alliances stem from the links between individual Minor Clans and their parent Great Clans. The tiny Badger Clan has rekindled its links to the distant Crab, the fledgling Bat Clan retains extremely close ties to the Mantis, the Sparrow continue to have a close and cordial relation with the Crane, and so on. The notable exception is the ever-contrary Ox Clan. While the Ox are not exactly hostile to the Unicorn, Morito and the Khan do not respect each other. Fortunately, there are enough miles between their lands that the Khan does not consider it necessary to wipe out the Ox.

The Minor Clans' enmities are largely unchanged. The Fox and Sparrow, together with their Tsuruchi neighbors, are frequently at odds with the Scorpion. The rift between the Fox and Crane has never truly closed, which occasionally puts the Fox in a difficult position with their Sparrow allies. The Hare passionately despise the Scorpion for that clan's role in the Hare's dissolution some decades back, and the Dragonfly still loathe the Lion for their near-destruction at the onset of the Dragon-Phoenix War shortly after Toturi I's death.

The Monkey Clan has virtually no enemies, favored as they are by the Imperial line. Their long-standing alliance with the Scorpion, as well as their proximity to Scorpion lands, also contributes to this protection.

The wants and needs of Minor Clans are rarely as complex as those of their Great Clan counterparts. Their greatest desire is to expand their support in the Imperial Court. If the Great Clans come to view them at least as worthy allies, then their individual needs will be far easier to meet. None champion this cause more so than the Tortoise, who consider it their sacred duty to better the lot of all Minor Clans. That their clan will likely gain considerable prestige and wealth in the process is a secondary benefit.

The Badger and Dragonfly continue to rebuild, the latter far more successfully than the former. This is in large part due to the Dragon Clan's direct patronage of the Dragonfly, and the distance between the Badger and their Crab allies.

The Bat Clan's primary objective is to build a power base. Bat champion Komori has but a handful of followers and adherents, and is reluctant to draw too heavily upon his Mantis allies' goodwill. The Ox similarly pursue more power and prestige, but for entirely different reasons. Conversely, the Hare are almost entirely unconcerned with the acquisition of power, preferring instead to hunt the remnants of Iuchiban's Bloodspeakers across Rokugan.

The Fox, Sparrow, and Monkey Clans have no specific agenda, instead continuing their service and activities as they have for centuries (or decades, in the case of the Monkey).

There are few truly powerful individuals from the Minor Clans. The Champions of each clan command a certain amount of respect, but on average there simply is nothing about a Minor Clan samurai that compels their more powerful counterparts to pay them any mind. Among the most powerful are Kasuga Taigen, the Minor Clan representative to the Imperial Court, and Ox Clan Champion Morito, who commands a large (for a Minor Clan) military force. The resources from his Kolat allies are even more considerable, although he cannot draw on them without arousing suspicion.





Few men have ridden such capricious waves of fortune as Kasuga Taigen. In his younger days, he was a sailor of the Tortoise clan. He and his brother Eizan made many voyages between the mainland and the Islands of Silk and Spice. Some characterized their activities back then as "piracy," and Taigen neither confirms nor denies those stories.

He has learned how to bathe regularly, shave, and see that his clothes are clean. He has even largely conquered his nervous stutter. Years and experience have smoothed his rough edges, leaving him a ruggedly charismatic man with a roguish, gap-toothed smile and a strength born of hauling on ropes and scrubbing decks. He has an unmistakable way with people, a legacy of his days as a con artist. Taigen's loyalties shift with the wind, but there has always been one constant in his life: he has always been loyal to the Tortoise clan, and his fate has been tied to the clan's own vicissitudes.

His charisma has earned the loyalty of the Tortoise bushi. They would follow Taigen into a fire. For this reason, he is reasonably certain this those beneath him remain free of Kolat infiltrators. He uses this loyalty to weed out the Kolat wherever he finds them.

He was quite pleased that, since he chose to throw in his lot with Hantei Naseru, Naseru's bid to become Emperor succeeded. His loyalty to the Emperor is strong, which may be why he was hand-picked to become the official Imperial Court representative of all the Minor Clans. He has tried hard to gain the trust of all the minor clans so that he can present a united front in the face of the Great Clans' overwhelming power. His means of gaining that trust are sometimes unconventional for a courtier, but he is a courtier by circumstance, not by choice or training. Inwardly, he likens his position as consensus builder to that of cat herder. He often wishes he was sailing the seas once again, but he does his duty and he does it well. In spite of his roguish nature he takes his position very seriously, and he wants nothing more than to help the Tortoise and all the Minor Clans not just survive but flourish.

Although he was once captain of his own ship, he is still unaccustomed to the deference he receives from all the Minor Clan daimyo. It sits uncomfortably upon his rugged spirit, but he is trying to adjust to his change in circumstances. Sometimes he fears his checkered past will come back to haunt him. Even the fabulous wealth which drips from every facet of life in the Imperial court, something which he often dreamed of when he was a sailor, seems too much for him now. He is afraid that if he ever becomes accustomed to it, his fortunes will shift again and he will be cast alone out into the world, weakened by a sedentary courtier's life.

Beyond the obvious respect he is due as Bat Clan Champion, Komori is respected in shugenja circles for his powerful and innovative magic style. The research he and his followers have conducted into their prospective School has intrigued the Empire's older shugenja temples. If not for the burgeoning Mantis-Phoenix conflict, Komori may well have been invited to study alongside the Isawa, so the Phoenix could gain further insight into their unique practices.

Usagi Ozaki, the Hare Champion, is one of Rokugan's leading experts on the Kolat. Shortly before the Clan War, the Hare were dissolved by Imperial decree due to accusations of maho use. Ozaki went ronin and hunted the people who had destroyed his clan, eventually proving that it had been an elaborate Kolat plot. In the decades since, he has worked tirelessly to expose and destroy the plots of Kolat and Bloodspeakers. While Ozaki is too old to continue the hunt himself, his children and followers continue in his name.

Kasuga Taigen, Imperial Diplomat

School/Rank: Kasuga Bushi 3/Tortoise Courtier 2
Honor: 1.0 Status: 8.0 Glory: 5.0

Air: 4 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 4 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 3
Reflexes: 5 Intelligence: 5

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Bland, Crafty, Allies (Toturi III, 4/2 points), Multiple Schools
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Tortoise Daimyo), Greedy, Small
Kata: Striking as Fire
Skills: Acting 3, Athletics 2, Commerce (Appraisal) 5, Courtier 4, Craft: Sailing 3, Deceit (Lying) 4, Defense 3, Etiquette (Sincerity) 3, Investigation 2, Navigation 4, Peasant Weapons (Kama) 5, Stealth (Shadowing) 4, Underworld 5

New Skill

Navigation (Perception)

LORE SKILL

EMPHASES: Land, Sea, Specific Clan Holdings

You have spent years learning the ways of the land and the sea, as well as studying the geography of the Empire and its shipping lanes. This Skill is used to find your way in the wilderness or on the open sea. You may spend five minutes studying the position of the sun, the moon, and the stars, feeling the direction of the wind, and studying visible landmarks to know your location anywhere within the Empire or on the open seas. You know the distance and direction to any destination.

EMPHASIS ABILITIES

Land: You may use this Skill as a Lore Skill as it applies to Rokugan's geography, as well as historical geography.

Sea: You may use this Skill as a Lore Skill as it applies to the sea, locations of historical sea battles and shipwrecks, and fast-moving currents, rocky shallows, or other hazards.

Specific Clan Holdings: You may use this Skill as a Lore Skill as it applies the holdings of a specific clan, including the Shadowlands.

MASTERY ABILITIES

Rank 5: You gain +2 Insight.

Rank 10: You gain +2 Insight.

Ichiro Bushi School (Badger Clan)

Though the Badger clan was all but destroyed decades ago by the rampaging Hideo no Oni, a few surviving Badger rebuilt their bushi school in Kaeru Toshi, assembling scattered bits of lore about their school's techniques. While their ancestral lands remain in ruins, they maintain that home is where their brethren are. Badger samurai tend to form tight-knit groups, because it is the only way they can feel at home since the Fortunes cast them to the four winds.

Benefit: +1 Strength

Honor: 1.5

Skills: Athletics, Defense, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu (Katana), Spears, any two High or Bugei skills

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, nage-yari, either no-dachi or ono; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 2 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Return the Strike

The Badger clan dojo cultivate the philosophy of waiting for the proper opening before the strike. At the beginning of a combat round, you may reduce your Initiative by any amount you choose, and then add half that amount (rounded up) to either your attack rolls or your damage rolls for the remainder of the round.

Rank 2: Refuse to Fail

The Badger's tenacity and toughness were born deep in the inhospitable mountains, and their bushi use those qualities to their advantage. You may add twice your Insight Rank to the result of all Strength rolls. Additionally, you may choose to re-roll any Strength roll in an attempt to get a better result, keeping the higher of the two rolls. For damage rolls, only unarmed damage may be re-rolled in this manner.

Rank 3: Crushing Blow

The force of the Badger's blows are barely blunted by armor. You ignore light and heavy armor when striking in melee combat. Additionally, you receive a number of Free Raises per day equal to half your Strength (rounded down) that may be used on any damage roll.

Rank 4: Crashing Stones

The Badger strikes with the force of an avalanche. You may now make an additional attack per round.

Rank 5: Transcend the Mountain

The Badger's claws can burrow even through stony mountains. You add your School Rank to each die for all Strength rolls. For damage rolls, only unarmed damage rolls may gain this bonus.

Komori Shugenja School (Bat Clan)

Less than two years has passed since Yoritomo Komori was granted the right to found his own Minor Clan. Since then, he has been gathering the necessary materials, wealth, and students to start the new clan's own shugenja school. Since he was formerly a Mantis, and trained in the Moshi shugenja school, his teaching style closely parallels the Moshi school, but Komori's proficiency with summoning gives his school a different focus. Komori's curriculum spends a lot of time on history and ancestors, so that students can better commune with them.

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Honor: 2.5

Skills: Calligraphy, Lore: Ancestors, Meditation, Spellcraft, Tea Ceremony, Theology (Fortunes), any one High Skill

Outfit: Wakizashi, tanto; kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, traveling pack; 3 koku

Affinity/Deficiency: The Bat Clan shugenja school's emphasis on communication means that students spend a lot of time with the kami of Air. Komori shugenja have an Affinity for Air and a Deficiency for Earth.

Technique: Summon the Strength of Ancestors

You may cast Sense and Commune with regards to Ancestors to detect and communicate with ancestors, and you gain two Free Raises when doing so. When casting a spell that results in the summoning of some physical element, illusion, or creature (not just the kami), you gain two Free Raises. Any spells that allow you to travel by supernaturvtal means gain one Free Raise.

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

Tonbo Shugenja School (Dragonfly Clan)

Of all the Minor Clans, only the Dragonfly has been so habitually bullied by a Great Clan. The Lion clan threatened them for decades and finally succeeded in destroying their home. The Dragonfly understand the importance of cultivating powerful allies, like the Phoenix and the Dragon clan, because only then can they hope to survive the Lion's perpetual hatred. Their experience with politics and the winds of fortune have made them very adaptable.

The Dragonfly clan has traditionally focused on magic, and the Tonbo shugenja school is the only notable Dragonfly school.

Benefit: +1 Perception
Honor: 2.0
Skills: Calligraphy, Courtier, Etiquette, Meditation (Zanji), Spears, Spellcraft, any one High Skill
Outfit: Wakizashi, yari; kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, traveling pack; 3 koku
Affinity/Deficiency: The Dragonfly shugenja school has traditionally focused on Water, since its ever-changing nature gives them the insight to swim the dangerous waters between the Lion, Dragon, and Phoenix clans. Tonbo shugenja are calm and level-headed, important traits for an often-embattled clan. They have an Affinity for Water, and a Deficiency for Fire.

TECHNIQUE: CRYSTAL WINGS AND SILVERED TONGUE

The Dragonfly's constant state of threat from the Lion clan, having to walk the tightrope of survival among the powerful Great Clans, has given them the ability to survive in dangerous circumstances. You gain one Free Raise for all social rolls. You gain the Balance Advantage at no cost.

The recent reconstruction of the school has given new life to its research library, and all new students are taught a secret, recently developed Technique. By spending a Void Point, you can summon the spirits of air and water to grant you wings like those of a dragonfly. The wings are clear and nearly invisible when they are moving, as they flap faster than the eye can see. You can fly for a number of minutes equal to your School Rank. You can fly up to 30' per round in any direction. Winds of more than 10 miles per hour cut this movement in half, and winds above 20 miles per hour make flying impossible. When this ability's duration ends, the wings disappear, and if you have not landed, you fall and take damage as normal. You can carry any weight you could normally carry while walking. The GM may require Strength rolls in some circumstances. This ability can be used once per day.

Morito Bushi School (Ox Clan)

Only recently has the Ox clan, founded by Shinjo Morito, been given its own family name by the Emperor Toturi III. In previous years, its school for warriors was merely called the Ox Clan Bushi School.

Like their Unicorn ancestors, Ox clan bushi are adept horsemen, but their unique location and history have made them much more than simple horse warriors. They are also trackers, mountaineers, couriers, and spies. They are generally squat and solidly built, like their clan's namesake. They are also the only bushi school from which almost every graduate is a Kolat (see "The Ox Clan" on page 69 of the ***L5R Third Edition Rulebook***). Some graduates are not. Only those candidates that prove their unswerving loyalty are shown the deeper secrets of this quiet, unassuming minor clan.

Ostensibly, their purpose is to protect the Empire from raids by the Yobanjin tribesmen, gaijin savages who prowl the trackless wilderness north of the Empire. But their true purpose is quite different. They are the sole protectors of the Hidden Temple of the Kolat, although practically no one outside the clan knows that such a place even exists, and even many within the clan do not know of its existence.

Benefit: +1 Agility
Honor: 1.5
Skills: Horsemanship, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu (Yomanri), Lore: Kolat, Underworld, any one Skill
Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, daikyu and 20 arrows (any type), light armor; kimono and sandals, steed, traveling pack; 4 koku

TECHNIQUES

RANK 1: LEGACY OF THE FOUR WINDS

Ox Clan cavalry is true to its Unicorn roots, and is capable of lightning raids, but the Ox also specialize in surprise dismounts that bring them face to face with their enemies quickly. For the first round of any skirmish, you gain an Initiative bonus equal to twice your Horsemanship. If you are on horseback, you receive an additional +3 to your Initiative and the bonus lasts for the first two rounds of the skirmish.

RANK 2: THE WIND BLOWS MANY WAYS

Morito bushi adapt with the speed of the wind to whatever combat situation presents itself. You receive a number of Free Raises per day equal to your School Rank that must be used on Bugei Skill Rolls. You also receive an additional Free Raise that may only be used while on horseback.

RANK 3: THUNDER AND FURY

Trained to fight fiercely from horseback, Morito samurai are formidable opponents. You may make an additional attack each round. If on horseback, you may add your Agility +1 to the result of all your attack rolls.

RANK 4: THE BLADE UPON THE WIND

Morito samurai are adept at the art of the lightning strike, hitting fast and moving out of range before any counterstrike. Against any opponent with a lower Initiative, you gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit. While on foot, the bonus is +5; if you are mounted, this bonus is increased to +10.

RANK 5: FAST AND FURIOUS

The Morito family creed of hitting hard and fast reaches the pinnacle of its power. You must spend a Void Point to activate this Technique. Make a Raw Water Roll and add the result to your Initiative score for a number of rounds equal to half your Water Ring (rounded up). For the same duration, you may add three times your Water Ring to the result of all your damage rolls.

Suzume Bushi School (Sparrow Clan)

The Sparrow Clan's unique location and history have given rise to a unique course of martial training. Since the inhospitable domains of their upbringing offer little in the way of diversions or beauty, they turn their attention inward, to the study of the Tao of Shinsei and the cultivating their own purity of spirit. They have found that this knowledge grants them an almost supernatural insight into their own inner selves, and into their adversaries. A life of quiet study and contemplation gives them the ability to focus their minds and their spirits like few others.

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Honor: 3.5

Skills: Calligraphy, Kenjutsu, Lore: History, Performance: Storytelling, Theology (Shintao), any one Lore Skill, any one High Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi; well-worn kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 1 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: All Things in Time

The patience of the Suzume is legendary. At the beginning of a combat round, you may voluntarily lower your Initiative by any amount to raise your TN to Be Hit by half that amount (round up). Your TN may not be raised by an amount greater than twice your Reflexes. You may not use this Technique while making a Full Attack. Additionally, choose one Lore Skill: you receive a Free Raise when using this Lore Skill.

Rank 2: Purity of Chi

As he trains, the Sparrow becomes suffused with the aura of righteous honor. Against any human opponent with a lower Honor, your TN to Be Hit is increased by +5, and you may add your Honor Rank to the total of all your attack and damage rolls against him. Additionally, choose one Lore Skill (you may choose one that has already received this benefit): you receive a Free Raise when using this Lore Skill.

Rank 3: Wisdom is the Greatest Weapon

Suzume bushi carefully study the ways of their adversaries, seeking to use their knowledge to best advantage in battle. If you possess a Lore Skill that pertains to your opponent, you may make an additional attack per round when facing that opponent.

This Technique requires specific knowledge. If facing a Lion samurai, Lore: Lion would suffice, but not Lore: Samurai. Against Shadowlands creatures, specific Skills are necessary, such as Lore: Oni or Lore: Ogres. Lore: Shadowlands is too broad.

Additionally, choose one Lore Skill (you may choose one that has already received this benefit): you receive a Free Raise when using this Lore Skill.

Rank 4: Quiet Spirit, Steady Blade

Through careful meditation, the Sparrow frees his body and mind from distraction and focuses on the task at hand. If you spend 30 minutes in meditation, you may make a Meditation roll versus a TN of 10. For every 3 points by which you surpass the TN, you gain a Free Raise to use on attack rolls or damage rolls that day. You may gain only as many Free Raises as you have ranks in Theology. Additionally, choose one Lore Skill (you may choose one that has already received this benefit): you receive a Free Raise when using this Lore Skill.

Rank 5: Purity of Purpose

The Sparrow's strength of spirit guides him toward his destiny and protects him on the path. You must spend a Void Point to activate this Technique. You may ignore wound penalties for a number of rounds equal to your Theology Skill.

Additionally, choose one Lore Skill (you may choose one that has already received this benefit): you receive a Free Raise when using this Lore Skill.

Kasuga Bushi School (Tortoise Clan)

Perhaps no clan in the Empire is held in such contempt as the lowly Tortoise. Only their unique position under the eye of the Emperor grants them the slightest tolerance from polite society. They go about their business out of sight of those who would cast aspersions. After all, who else would be willing to do the things necessary to make the Empire run smoothly? The Tortoise bushi see that the will of their courtier brethren is carried out quickly and quietly. Only the Scorpion Clan is more secretive about its techniques.

The Tortoise Clan bushi school teaches its students the ways of combat on both land and sea, and how to handle themselves in either environment. While their clan is small, their vulnerability has required them to refine their techniques so that they are extremely effective.

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Honor: 1.0

Skills: Commerce, Craft: Sailing, Deceit, Navigation (Sea), Peasant Weapons, Underworld, any one Weapon Skill

Outfit: Tanto, any 3 weapons, light armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 5 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Ride the Pitching Deck

A life of riding the waves gives the Tortoise an extraordinary sense of balance and body control. You may add your Reflexes and your School Rank to the result of all your Agility rolls. Additionally, you gain Free Raises equal to your Insight Rank on all Commerce and Underworld rolls.

Rank 2: Stars Lead the Way

Reading the signs of the heavens, the wind, and the currents is a science and an art. You can find your way nearly anywhere. You may add twice your Awareness to the result of all your Navigation rolls.

Rank 3: Shadowed Presence

While the Tortoise are skilled warriors and sailors, they are at their best when using guile. You may roll (but not keep) additional dice equal to your Stealth Skill on any attack roll against an opponent who is unaware of your presence or who cannot see you.

Rank 4: Strike of the Snapping Turtle

The Tortoise hones his attacks until they are almost too fast to follow, denying the enemy a chance to strike back. You may now make an additional attack per round. Additionally, you may add twice your Stealth Skill to your TN to Be Hit.

Rank 5: Crash of the Ocean's Waves

A Tortoise sailor knows the pitch and roll of the sea. By synchronizing his own rhythm with the rhythm of Water, he can upend an opponent. On your next successful attack, if your attack roll exceeds your opponent's (Earth + Insight Rank) x 5, he is knocked prone.

Way of the Shadowlands

Daigotsu has issued a command to his followers: the Lost are now at peace with Rokugan. Those who owe fealty to the Dark Lord acknowledge the necessity. The Lost suffered greatly under Iuchiban's rule. Many Bloodspeakers and Daigotsu samurai died fighting one another, and the City of the Lost itself was severely damaged. Outside the city, the monstrous denizens of the Shadowlands have become more active, and these creatures care little for the lives of mortals even if they honor Fu Leng. Thus the Dark Lord's followers have turned their attention toward recovery.

The Dark Lord finds it somewhat disturbing that so many of his followers have willingly allied themselves with Crab samurai. Though he has not forbidden his samurai to take such action in defense of their city, he believes that the Crab cannot be trusted. His personal experiences with Kuon have led him to conclude that the Crab Champion cannot be brought to compromise.

Fortunately, there exists a hero who has been known to deal with the Shadowlands on occasion: Hida Kisada.

Yajinden has already noticed the divisions between Kuon and his grandfather. The Crab Clan stands divided between the two leaders. It is only a matter of time before one questions the authority of the other, and the Crab's unity begins to crumble. If rumors that the Mantis have promised the Crab fresh supplies of gaijin jade are true, then the Lost must do all they can to subtly play upon the divisions between these two leaders before a significant assault can be mounted against their city.

Togashi Kokujin, Prophet of the Dark Lotus

SCHOOL/RANK: Three Orders Tattooed Man 5 / Student of the Tao 3
GLORY: –8.0 (Infamous) STATUS: N/A HONOR: 0.0

Air: 3	Earth: 5	Fire: 4	Water: 4	Void: 6
Reflexes 5		Agility 6	Strength 5	

Shadowlands Taint: 2.2

ADVANTAGES: Combat Reflexes, Daredevil, Death Trance, Great Destiny, Hands of Stone, Heartless, Inner Gift (Lesser Prophecy), Large, Tamashii
DISADVANTAGES: Ascetic, Bad Reputation (Murderer), Dark Fate, Fascination (Fu Leng's Name), Insensitive, Nemesis (Togashi Mitsu)
TATTOOS: Bat, Cloud, Blaze, Crab, Full Moon, Ocean
KIHO: Breaking Blow, Cleansing Spirit, Earth Fist, Grasp the Earth Dragon, Heart of Stone, Kharmic Strike, Self / No Self
SHADOWLANDS POWERS: Child of Darkness, Blood Domination, Protection of the Dark
SKILLS: Anatomy (Torture) 5, Artisan: Tattooing 6, Athletics (Climbing) 5, Divination (Astrology, Omens) 6, Hunting (Survival, Tracking) 4, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jiujutsu 7, Kenjutsu (Katana, Wakizashi) 5, Lore: Shadowlands 6, Medicine (Herbalism, Wound Treatment) 5, Meditation (Void Recovery, Zanji) 7, Spellcraft (Maho) 4, Stealth 5, Theology (Shintao) 4

Kokujin and other sources

If the *Way of the Dragon* sourcebook is available, Kokujin should certainly have as many points of the Enlightened Madness Disadvantage as possible.

In the lands of the Dragon Clan, there is one name that inspires greater fear and contempt than even Fu Leng's. That name is "Kokujin."

Kokujin was born a tamashii, one of the few worthy to serve as a vessel for Togashi's immortal spirit. He denied his destiny, unwilling to give up his own life for a god too pathetic to accept his own end. Realizing that the tattoo magic and kiho that Togashi had taught him granted him the ability to purify his own body and soul, Kokujin embarked upon a daring plan — to master the power of two gods. Journeying into the Shadowlands, he invited Fu Leng's Taint into himself. Using Dragon purification techniques, he prevented the Taint from ever seizing command of his soul, turning Togashi and Fu Leng's influence against one another.

Yet to say that Kokujin has resisted Fu Leng's influence is not to say that he is not evil. Kokujin is personally responsible for a trail of murder, pain, and misery that spans decades, stretching from the High House of Light to the City of the Lost. He claims a curious friendship with the Dark Lord, Daigotsu, and commands his own cult of manic doomsayers. To the Dragon Clan, there is no criminal more deserving of death. He even personally battled Togashi Satsu once, and lived to tell the tale.

To Kokujin, the Dragon's dreams of vengeance matter little. Satsu is not the only soul in Rokugan who can glimpse the future. Kokujin has also seen what lies ahead for Rokugan, and the visions have brought a smile to his painted face.

Daigotsu's Legion (Bushi)

Though many of those who stand among the Lost employ techniques carried with them from the Great and Minor Clans, a few bold samurai have begun to practice new techniques in the name of their dark master. To many, a true servant of the Dark Lord has not proven himself until he has adopted the style of the family that bears his name, and most of Daigotsu's Obsidian Legions practice the techniques taught at this dojo. Members of this school embrace the Dark Lord's unique vision of bushido. While undeniably evil, Daigotsu's Legionnaires possess some shred of honor, and treat their enemies with respect if it is shown in turn.

Benefit: +1 Stamina

Honor: 1.0

Skills: Deceit, Hunting, Jiujutsu, Kenjutsu (Katana), Kyujutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, any Bugei Skill

Outfit: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any 1 weapon, light or heavy armor; kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 2 koku

Techniques

Rank 1: Fury of the Forsaken

When on the offensive, the Legionnaire's strike is powerful and overwhelming. If the Legionnaire successfully strikes an enemy while in the Full Attack Posture, that enemy does not gain any Free Raises on attacks against him due to his combat Posture until the Legionnaire's next action.

Rank 2: Jigoku's Talons

The Legionnaire begins to draw upon the power of darkness buried deep within all human souls. The Legionnaire's maximum number of Raises is no longer restricted by his Void, but rather his Void plus his Taint Rank. The Legionnaire gains a Shadowlands Power of his choice.

Rank 3: Ashura's Wing

The Legionnaire moves and strikes as swiftly as ash borne away by the wind. The Legionnaire may make an additional attack per round. The Legionnaire adds his Shadowlands Taint Rank to all his attack and damage totals in melee combat.

Rank 4: Devouring Wrath

By the power of Fu Leng, the Legionnaire feeds on the souls of the fallen. Any time the Legionnaire kills an opponent in melee, he immediately regains 2k1 Wounds. This can potentially grant additional Wounds beyond his normal maximum; any excess Wounds last for only three rounds. The Legionnaire gains another Shadowlands Power of his choice.



RANK 5: GLORY OF THE NINTH KAMI

The essence of corruption surrounds the Legionnaire, permeating all he touches. The Legionnaire's Wounds on each level are increased by his Shadowlands Taint Rank. By touching any body killed within the last minute and channeling 10 of his own Wounds into the corpse, he may reanimate the body as a mindless Undead under his control (see page 283 of the ***L5R Third Edition Rulebook***). The Legionnaire may not command more than five such Undead at a time, and they return to death after twenty-four hours.

New Shadowlands Kata

Blood of Innocents

PREPARATION TIME: 25 minutes
DURATION: 180 minutes

Just as the Crab are skilled at battling the creatures of the Shadowlands, so have the Lost become adept at destroying any life untouched by their dark master.

RANK: Daigotsu's Legion 2
COST: 2
SPECIAL: The bushi must have at least one Rank of Shadowlands Taint to use this Technique.
EFFECT: The bushi may add his Shadowlands Taint Rank to all his attack and damage totals against enemies with no Shadowlands Taint.

Fu Leng's Fury

PREPARATION TIME: 10 minutes
DURATION: 120 minutes

This is the most powerful kata yet devised by the Lost. A swordsman using this stance is patient, waiting for the proper time when his strength waxes and his enemy's defense wanes. At that time, he explodes with dark energies, annihilating all defense.

RANK: Daigotsu's Legion 4
COST: 6
SPECIAL: The bushi must have at least one Rank of Shadowlands Taint to use this Technique. Must be used with a katana.
EFFECT: The first time any of the bushi's damage dice explodes against an opponent while this kata is active, all of his damage dice are increased by his Shadowlands Taint Rank. If multiple dice explode on a single roll, the effects are cumulative. After this kata takes effect, none of the bushi's dice can explode for a number of rounds afterward equal to his Shadowlands Taint Rank; rolled 10's remain 10's.

Way of the Emperor

After the death of Shinsei's heir Rosoku, the Imperial families are more divided than ever. The Shogun's followers blame Naseru's shugenja for being unable to ward the outer halls of the palace from Bloodspeakers. The Emperor's supporters blame the Shogun's soldiers for failing to protect Rosoku quickly enough. Naseru and Kaneka are both above petty finger-pointing, but both have sensed that the division between them has deepened. Naseru knows that the Gozoku conspiracy has not been completely exposed, and he suspects that many of its members now add their voices to Kaneka's growing chorus of supporters.

Both brothers fear that the political divisions between them will explode into violence. For the time being, neither wants that to occur. They remember their sister Toturi Tsudao's sacrifice, and the promises they made to one another. Kaneka does not truly want the responsibilities of the throne, and Naseru does not truly want to abandon hope that Kaneka will one day prove to become a loyal subject.

Sezaru, as always, remains the outsider. Though he serves Naseru dutifully, the Wolf disapproves of the feud between the two brothers. As their dispute deepens, Sezaru begins to ponder if his magic is strong enough to force peace between the Emperor and Shogun, or if he should retreat from the public eye altogether and abandon his brothers to their arrogant squabbles.

The Path of the Lotus Player Vote

Since the inception of Legend of the Five Rings, players have always had a profound effect upon the course of the game's story. Generally, this was seen in the collectible card game, and the role-playing game has had only limited influence.

In an effort to change this, this is the first in a series of polls to our RPG players. Just answer the following question and mail your results to *lotuspoll@alderac.com*. Votes that do not have a Subject line of "Path of the Lotus Poll" will not be counted. If you do not have email access, then simply mail your answer to:

Path of the Lotus Poll
c/o AEG
4045 Guasti Road, Suite #212
Ontario, California 91761

The poll is as follows:

Which of the following villains from L5R history would you want as the subject of a major online adventure?

A) Tsukuro
B) The Maw
C) Hantei XVI, the Steel Chrysanthemum
D) Yogo Junzo
E) Moto Tsume
F) Muhomono, the Ogre Outlaw

Votes must be received by December 15, 2005.

"To remember history is a fine thing. To create tomorrow's history is something much greater."
– Toturi Tsudao

The Splendid Emperor, Toturi I, is dead. Though his reign was not always peaceful, he is remembered as one of the Empire's most courageous rulers. He was a man of honor and principles, willing and able to hold together the divisive Great Clans of Rokugan, sometimes through sheer force of will.

With Toturi's death, his reign passes to the Empress, the Oracle of the Void. But she vanishes without naming a successor, and Toturi's four children begin to vie with one another over their father's Empire. The conflict of the Four Winds will shape the future of the Empire.

And when one of Toturi's heirs takes the throne, he will find his trials are only beginning.

The Four Winds: The Toturi Dynasty from Gold to Lotus Edition contains:

- Complete timelines and histories for over nine years of continuity, describing the Gold and Diamond story arcs of the L5R Collectible Card Game.
- NPCs, adventure hooks, and full adventures that will allow you to use this period of Rokugan's history in your own campaign — either as the focus of your ongoing adventures or as background flavor in your own plots.
- The setup for the upcoming Lotus — or Dark Lotus — Edition story arc of the CCG and RPG.
- Advanced Schools and New Paths, allowing divergent methods of advancement for existing characters or epic Rank Techniques for extremely powerful characters.

This is a sourcebook for the Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game, Third Edition. Players of the L5R CCG may also find it useful as a reference guide for the story arcs presented within. You only need Legend of the Five Rings, Third Edition to use this book in your campaign.

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