

Legend of the Five Rings™

Otosan Uchi

Book 3



The Scorpion's Sting:
A Game Master's Guide
to the Scorpion Clan Coup

A cluster of five circular coins, each embossed with a different Japanese character representing an element: Wind (風), Void (空), Fire (火), Water (水), and Earth (土).

Legend of the Five Rings

The Scorpion's Sting

A Gamemaster's Guide to the Scorpion Clan Coup



*They say that the outcome of any war is
written by the victor, but always remember this:
History can be changed.*

– Bayushi Kachiko



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All those who love the Scorpion, and have waited patiently for the true story of their fall.

- RS

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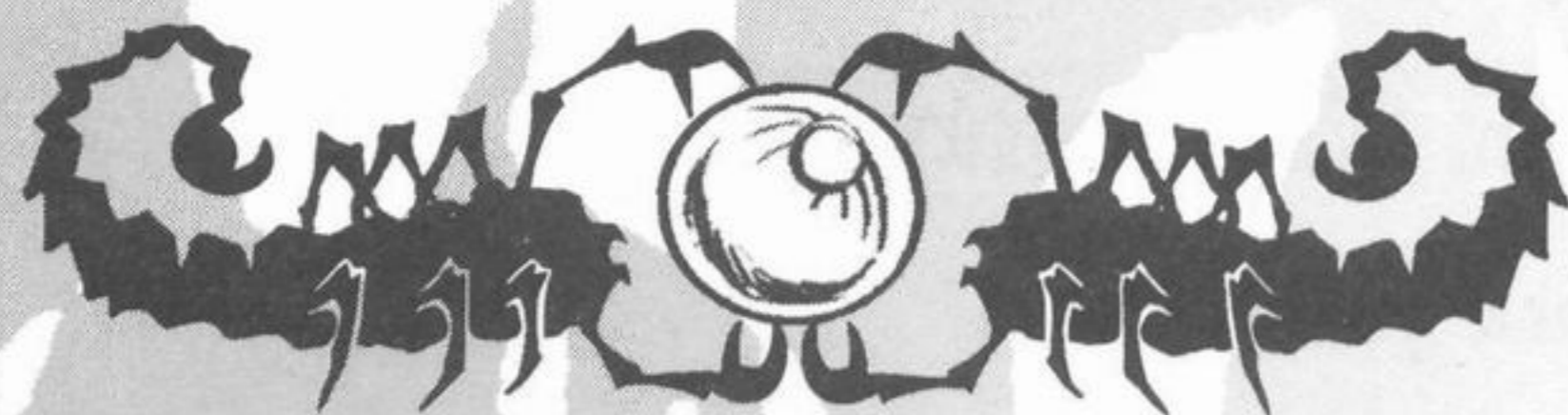
Ambition's Price

The darkness whispered across the evening, and a storm thundered over the mountains to the north, threatening to roll across the plains and cover them all.

In the Bayushi Palace, the hallways were silent and still; a cool breeze moved down empty passages and behind open shoji screens, unheeded by the night. Hardly a movement stirred the corridors of the mighty palace; no courtiers plotted behind closed doors. The guards who stood watch over their rooms were gone, preparing for the future their daimyo commanded.

The darkness in the throne room was almost palpable, dissecting sound from movement and covering all with a thick layer of anticipation. One man rested on an obsidian throne at the top of the dais, his pale mask catching the threads of light that fought their way through the clouds. His hands were empty now, the clenched scroll fallen to the floor. Its crumpled edges told a tale of great age and wear.

The Scorpion Champion no longer saw it.



Shoju no longer remembered the scroll's words, hinting of darkness and death, or its bitter prophecies of things to come. They were no longer important. The black stone was already placed upon the great board of the Empire, and the world waited for Shoju to make his first move.

Silk slid across the wooden floor as footsteps approached. Soft and careful, her dark eyes lowered, Kachiko bowed before her husband. "My lord..."

He said nothing, his eyes consumed by the darkness that surrounded them.

"I have brought Yojiro-san," she continued, undisturbed. The young samurai behind her fell to his knees, his head bowed in reverence to his master.

"Shoju-sama," the Scorpion Magistrate humbly whispered, afraid to shatter the silence even with his vows, "I am your servant in this, as always. Tell me how I may die, and I will gladly give my life to better the clan."

"No." Shoju spoke, though his words echoed too loudly. "It is not your death I desire." After a long pause, Shoju turned his face away from the gathering storm to look down at the kneeling Scorpion. "I seek to claim your life."

The odd request had barely passed the daimyo's lips before Yojiro complied. "You have it."

Shoju stood and slowly drew the Clan Sword from his obi. "This sword has been sheltered for generations, hidden from those who would do us harm." Shoju's right hand grasped the hilt with reverence, his left hand fighting not to shake beneath the weight of the saya. "I have kept it close, that its strength might aid me. I will do so no more."

Yojiro raised his head to see the daimyo offering the proud sword to him, as carefully as if cradling a child. "Take this, Yojiro. It is your duty, now."

Honored yet concerned, Yojiro's hands lifted the blade. "My lord, I..."

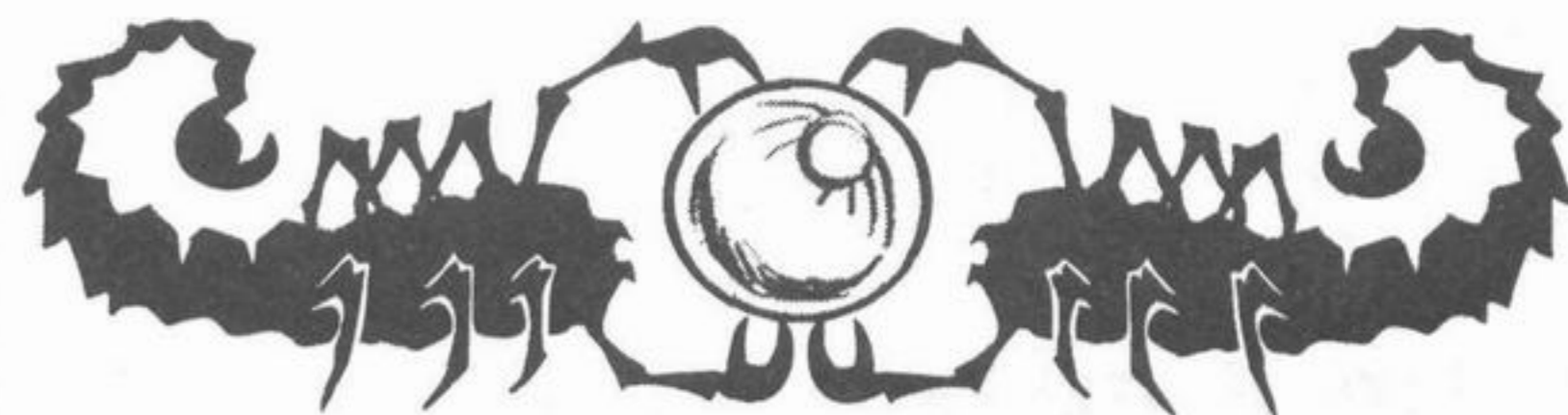
"Do not refuse this, for it is not a gift, Yojiro. It is a duty. And do not speak of honor, for such things do not become you." The daimyo turned away, stepping toward the window. His footsteps faded into the clash of thunder above the palace. "Tell me only that it will never be found by our enemies, and that I have chosen well."

"Hai, my *sensei*," Yojiro stammered, holding the ancient blade close. "It will be done. I swear it."

"Go, then. And do not let me see your face again in this world."

Rising, the Scorpion Magistrate bowed once more, his eyes flickering with concern and confusion. Yojiro glanced aside only once, toward the Mistress of the House. Kachiko gazed silently at her husband, offering no advice or consolation.

"Hai, Shoju-sama," the Magistrate said again, and he was gone.



The shadows clustered at Kachiko's feet as she moved toward Shoju, her lace mask clinging to her face with courtier's magic. She stood by the daimyo's side as he lowered his head, watching the play of the lightning upon his dark eyes. No word stood between them, only an ancient hurt. She had given her life to him, but she had never been able to give him her heart.

Shoju stood, his body flexing like a great hunting cat's as he stepped down from the dais. His strides took him past Kachiko, toward the small table at the far end of the room. A single sword rested on the wooden stand there, a sword that had called to every Scorpion lord since the time of ancient Iuchiban, the Blood Sorcerer. The sword's name was *Iyoku*.

Ambition.

Shoju's hand paused above the stained blade as he stared down at the tightly wrapped laces. A soft motion behind him betrayed his wife's movements. "You cannot do this," she murmured. "The sword is forbidden."

"Forbidden..." Shoju looked down at the saya with contempt, seeing Kachiko's shadow reflected in a bright flash of lightning. "Nothing is forbidden to me. I am the daimyo of the Scorpion Clan, and the Empire's last hope." With that, his hand closed around the hilt of the sword, and the reflection faded.

Shoju lifted *Iyoku* from its stand, sensing a tremor rippling through the steel.

"This course of action is too rash, my Lord. There are other ways. Our spies unlock the secrets of Otosan Uchi even now, breaking down its hidden walls and entering its passageways. Leave them to their duty, my Lord Shoju." Kachiko's voice was

calm, but her eyes were lowered to shield her emotions. "Turn back. This is a fool's journey."

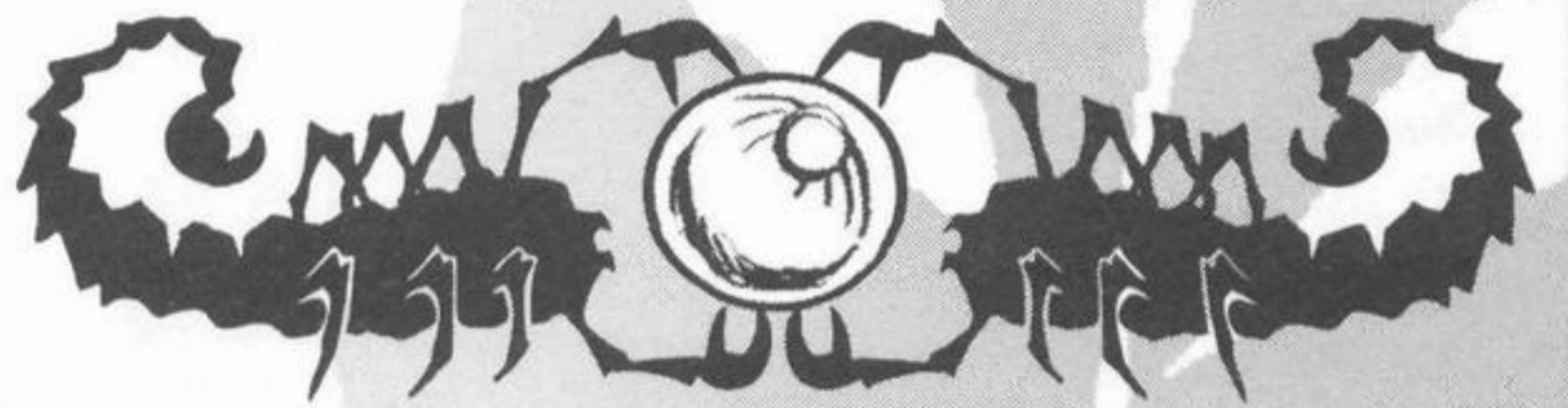
"Shall we not make haste, as the Empire's doom approaches?" Though whispered, Shoju's voice held the lash of a whip.

A pause, and Shoju could feel the blade reaching into his mind, reading his thoughts. He could feel something else, as well, a sense of emotion, of long-forgotten hunger.

"My Lord, I do not approve..."

"I do not need your *approval*," Shoju replied harshly. "Merely your obedience."

In the silence that followed, Kachiko lowered her head. Only the rain could see the anger in her eyes.



The Kharmaic Wheel Spins

The first two books of this boxed set present the glittering city of Otsan Uchi, capital of the Emerald Empire, and offer you a wealth of opportunities for honorable adventure. This, the third book, shows you how to change that Empire forever.

Welcome to the Scorpion Clan Coup.

Not all Gamemasters, nor all players, will use this book. The information it contains affects the entire Empire, creating divisions and alliances between the Seven Clans - and in the end destroying one forever. Consider this material a major campaign supplement, detailing the events and situations leading up to, and taking place during, the Scorpion Clan Coup.

The Coup? That story has already been told in the CCG!

Scorpions hide their secrets well. The information here uncovers some of their darkest secrets, from the death of the Emperor by Shoju's hand, to the Phoenix's betrayal of their allies, to the true reasons for the dishonor of Akodo Toturi and the fall of the Akodo.

Here, you'll find ways to work the Scorpion Clan Coup into your current campaign, and how to integrate it with the links from other adventure modules (such as *Code of Bushido* and *Legacy of the Forge*). Also included are four Clan War scenarios, so that you may recreate the Coup from the soldier's perspective, using our official miniatures gaming rules. Finally, the appendices provide information about the various districts of the Imperial City and how the city changes during the events of the Coup.

The majority of this book details a ten-day RPG adventure, beginning just before Shoju's capture of the Throne and ending after Toturi's banishment and Hantei Sotorii's marriage to Bayushi Kachiko. It is important to note that - unlike most adventure modules - *The Scorpion's Sting* is significantly less detailed, containing a series of Challenge-Focus-Strike events rather than complex descriptions. This is deliberate, intended to give you an *idea* of how the Coup occurred.

Some of these events may be superfluous to your campaign - throw them out. Add your own CFS scenarios if you wish, integrating your own campaign with these events. *The Scorpion's*

Sting is not a blow-by-blow description of the Coup; it simply gives you the tools to connect what is happening in your own story with the 'canon' events surrounding your characters' actions.

It's up to you, the Gamemaster, to decide which of the events described here actually involve your PCs; if something is wrong for your story, replace it. If the PCs want to change history, you must decide how far they can stretch your chosen timeline. You are limited only by your imagination.

ADVENTURE FORMAT

The Scorpion's Sting is broken down in three interwoven timelines, so that any character may join from his own angle. The first timeline is the *Courtier's Tale* (Chapter One), written for characters who will begin and end the story within the Imperial Palace. This tale conveys a great deal of information from the 'inside' of the Scorpion Coup. It also details how to run the adventure with a Scorpion Clan character who is sympathetic to the Coup, and who is 'on the inside' from the beginning. Captured (or hiding) courtiers can affect the workings of Shoju's generals and leadership, make a desperate attempt to escape (thus joining the *Skirmisher's Tale*, or possibly fleeing the city entirely and joining the *Soldier's Tale*), or bravely suffer through ten days of captivity, all while gaining a great deal of information about the Coup, and possibly helping to place Sotorii into power.

The second timeline follows the *Skirmisher's Tale* (Chapter Two), and may be used for characters who begin anywhere in the city. This timeline will be most useful for characters inside Otsan Uchi's gates who are not visitors to the Imperial Courts themselves. PCs in this adventure may potentially be captured, and taken to join the courtiers in the Imperial Palace (becoming part of the *Courtier's Tale*), or escape the city to join the armies outside the gates (joining the *Soldier's Tale*). They may instead remain in the city, hiding from the ever-present threat of Scorpion guards. Those who choose to fight the Scorpion inside the city have many chances to defeat and undermine the Scorpion grip upon the city, ruin Scorpion traps set for the invading armies of the Six Clans, or even join the arriving defenders of Otsan Uchi in their last desperate battles against the threat of the betrayers.

The third tale of the Scorpion Clan Coup is the *Soldier's Tale* (Chapter Three), presented for characters outside the city's walls. Armies gather and argue for position, small battles break out between clans and inside each of the two fronts. The *Soldier's Tale* defines the armies outside the city, and presents player characters with an opportunity to interact with some of the most powerful personalities in the Empire. The PCs might be given troops to command or a precarious flank to defend, or be charged with sneaking into the city and gathering refugees (joining the *Skirmisher's Tale*), or rescuing hostages in the Forbidden City (as part of the *Courtier's Tale*).

Chapter Four, the *Journal of Bayushi Togai*, describes how to turn the battles, skirmishes and warfare of the Scorpion Clan Coup into four linked Clan Wars scenarios. The *Journal* works in conjunction with the roleplaying adventure, outlining the troops

in play around the city and how they acted in the 'historical' timeline. You can combine this material with the first three chapters to run an RPG/miniatures metagame, with RPG characters in the *Soldier's* and *Skirmisher's Tales* affecting the course of the Clan War scenarios and vice versa. Dramatic supply runs, courier missions into enemy-occupied districts of the city, and a host of other RPG adventures can change the starting conditions (or even add new challenges or victory conditions during play) in the Clan War Coup campaign. Conversely, you may use completed Clan War scenarios as the backdrop for RPG adventures, describing the military movements in the miniatures game to the players from their individual perspectives throughout their adventure. The *Journal* may also be used separately, as a non-integrated Clan Wars scenario.

The Appendix of this book updates the material presented in Books One and Two of this boxed set, setting the Imperial stage for upcoming releases in the official *Legend of the Five Rings* RPG timeline. Important changes to each of the major districts in the city are described here, including the final fate of their governors and many of their primary (outlined) locations. Using this Appendix, you can "re-forged" the Imperial City in whatever image you desire following the Scorpion Clan Coup. Entire quarters may be destroyed, NPCs moved or drastically changed, and storylines altered in whatever way suits you. Or everything may remain as presented; with minimal effort, you can run their

characters through the *Scorpion's Sting* adventure, ending with a complete revision of the upper tiers of the Empire's leadership, but retaining the locations and NPCs presented in the rest of this supplement for use in later games. Just because the throne swaps hands and the Great Clans are in turmoil doesn't mean that you have to sacrifice what you've already played through; all the friends and enemies your characters have made in Otosan Uchi and all the history they have accumulated here can remain.

The story of the Scorpion Clan Coup is well-known to players of the *Legend of the Five Rings* CCG, but not to many of those only familiar with the RPG. To uncover the face of destiny takes a strong hand, and to realize the deceptions behind historical 'records' can be difficult. Thus, as you read through this book, be aware that what is told is not always what has happened, and that your characters can certainly change the outcome of the events we portray here. The Coup is an event destined by fate and the Celestial Heavens. Its outcome, for your campaign, may not be so rigidly pre-ordained.

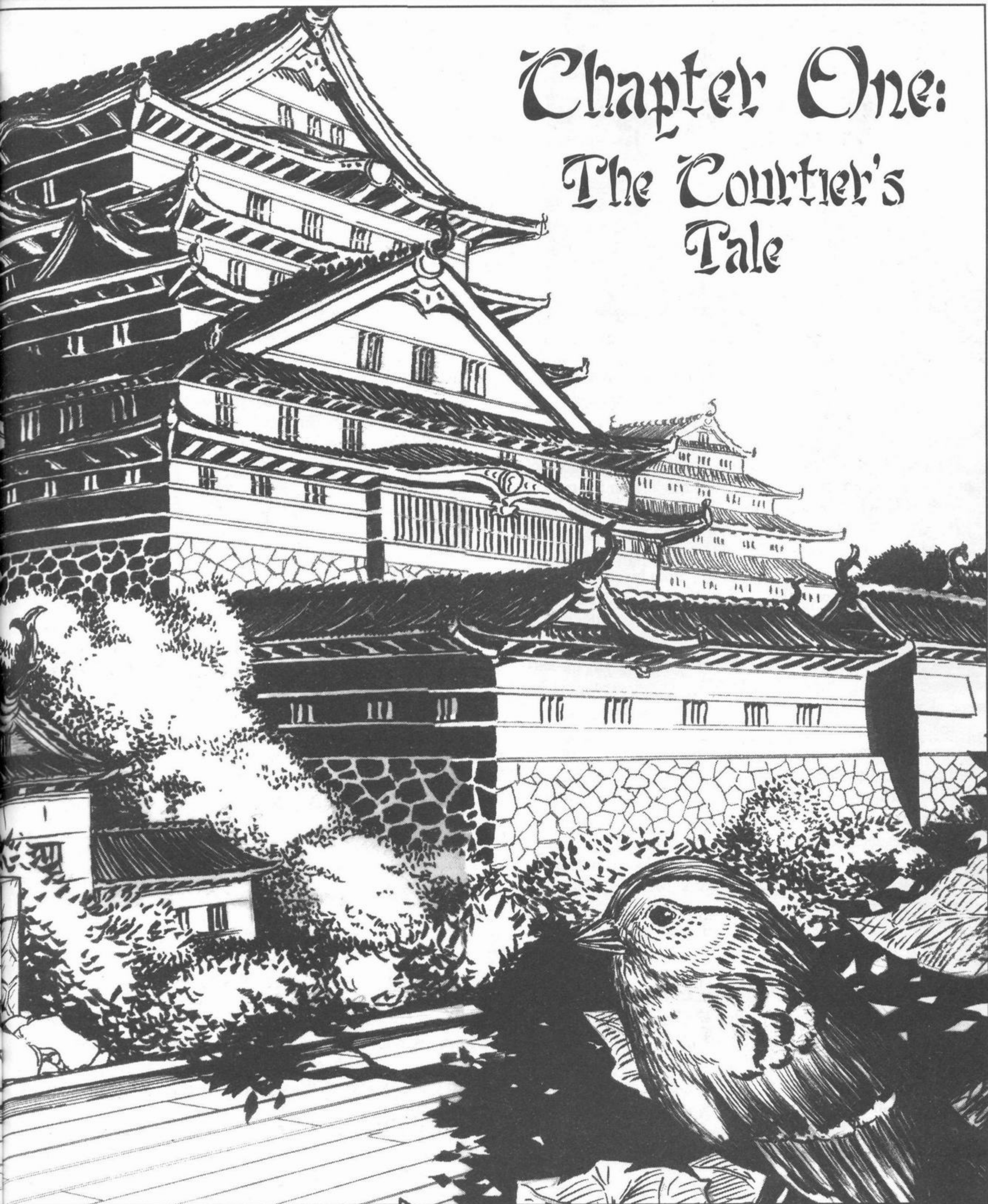
Are your players strong enough to experience the full force of destiny, and to begin the greatest *Legend of the Five Rings* tale ever told?

Are they prepared to walk the path that Shoju chose?
Are you?





Chapter One: The Courtier's Tale



A Vision of Truth

*"Following a false light only leads you deeper into darkness."
– The Tao of Shinsei*

Welcome to the Imperial Court of Hantei the 38th!

The current Emperor is an aging man with the wisdom of many years upon the throne. His court is bright with the mon of every clan in the Empire, glittering with famous names and faces.

The young Prince Sotorii – now a youth and nearing his *gempukku* – studies swordplay with his sensei, Toshimoko. Sotorii is ostensibly here for a brief respite from his studies in the Kakita lands, but whispers abound that the elder Hantei hopes to complete the youth's *gempukku* soon, and encourage the boy to take a Doji bride, so that his bloodline may continue.

Courtiers wheel in intricate dances, a flock of pigeons surrounding a magnificent fountain. They do not see the falcon stoop above them. They are not aware of their destiny...

There are many ways to begin this adventure, but the Courtier's Tale originates within the Emperor's Palace, in the heart of Otosan Uchi itself. This chapter deals with those who are already 'connected' in the Forbidden City before the Scorpion Clan Coup begins. Most characters involved here will be courtiers themselves, but other options include *yojimbo* or influential samurai hoping to speak to their clan's courtiers. The only restriction for characters beginning here is that they are within the Forbidden City – dealing with or in the Imperial Court – when the action begins.

LINKS WITH OTHER PUBLISHED MATERIAL

The *Courtier's Tale* may be easily integrated into an existing campaign, using plotlines from *Winter Court* or story threads from *Code of Bushido*, *Legacy of the Forge*, or other modules. These adventures are intended to establish a reason for the players to be inside the Forbidden City at this time. They also provide impetus for the central plotline of *The Scorpion's Sting*.

Several of these connections (and page references in the original texts) include:

Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun:

- (Page 85): The characters have been sent to discuss past (failed) negotiations with the Phoenix Clan during last year's Winter Court (the *mujina* who plagued the Isawa prevented their clan from completing the negotiations, and the Phoenix have extended an invitation for reconciliation at this time, in the Imperial Court).

- (Page 83): One of the player characters (or a *heimin* NPC) who assisted during the Falcon Clan debacle actually saw a Naga! The Emperor has asked that the tale be told to him directly, and the PCs (or the *heimin*, under their supervision) must be brought before him to speak of the omen.

Night of a Thousand Screams

- (Page 41, 46, and throughout): Whispers are heard of an apprentice to Isawa Orimono (or worse, the undead form of *O-sama* himself), who has begun a new Moon cult in the Imperial City. Such a threat could be brought to the attention of the Imperial Court if the information (which you might allow to fall into the PCs' hands) were delivered in time.

Code of Bushido:

- (Page 43): The characters have arrived at the Imperial Court to explain the meaning of the duel between their companion and Otaku Iruko, and to face any allegations of crimes committed by Shinjo Gidayu.

Midnight's Blood:

- (No Page Reference): The Phoenix plague took the life of a Seppun – a distant, though favored, nephew of the Emperor. The characters are here to defend the actions of the Phoenix, and explain how this tragedy occurred.

- (Page 26 and throughout the Second Adventure): The Emperor wants to know the location of the lost sword of Doji Yasurugi (*Chukandomo*), and plans to send a group of samurai to find it. The characters have been asked to come and provide information about its last known location, or to join the mission themselves.

Legacy of the Forge:

- (No Page Reference): The Crane and the Lion are embroiled in a bitter war, and all the clans have entreated the Emperor to put an end to the fighting. The characters are asked to serve as *yojimbo* to the diplomats (or as liaisons, if courtiers).

- (Pages 10 and 58–59): The characters are hot on the trail of the Scorpion instigator, Bayushi Sozui, who has infiltrated several key positions in the Ekohikei in preparation for the Scorpion Clan Coup (see page 71 of Book Two). They may be arriving at the Imperial Court to warn of the spy, or to try to ferret her out.

IMPORTANT NPCs

Within the Imperial Court, there are many NPCs – dignitaries from the various clans (detailed in the appropriate *Way of...*

sourcebooks), ambassadors, and district governors (detailed in the Books One and Two of this boxed set). Some well-known faces the player characters may see are included here:

- *Way of the Crane*: Doji Hoturi and retinue (including Kakita Yoshi and Doji Shizue).
- *Way of the Phoenix*: Isawa Ujina and Isawa Kaede.
- *Way of the Unicorn*: Ide Tadaji and retinue.
- *Way of the Crab*: Yasuki Taka, and Kuni Fujiko (detailed later; known to be Kuni Yori's unacknowledged daughter to those who succeed in a Courtier roll with a TN of 25).
- *Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun*: Seppun Daiori, Seppun Ishikawa, Miya Satoshi, Hantei 38th, and Hantei Sotorii.
- Hasagawa, an emissary from the Mantis (detailed later).
- Kitsuki Yaruma, the only Dragon emissary (detailed later).



RUMORS AND GOSSIP

The following rumors and information should be accessible to player characters up to (and during) the *Courtier's Tale*. Although some of these rumors should be retained for use during play, or to increase player speculation, the PCs may benefit from knowing certain facts beforehand. These rumors are presented by the clans that might know them:

- **Crab**: Any Crab characters who have frequent contact with their homeland have heard dark rumors surrounding Kisada's dealings with the Kuni. It is whispered that the Kuni daimyo, Yori, is making solitary journeys into the deepest parts of the Shadowlands, risking the Taint in order to bring back knowledge for his lord. Some of the Kuni in the palace believe Yori is trafficking with dark powers, while others (Kuni Fujiko, in particular) argue that he is merely following the footsteps of Kuni Mokuna, the legendary researcher of the Crab.

Further, many Crab believe that the clan is gaining enemies in two directions. To the south of their homelands, the Shadowlands loom, and the Hiruma warn that a quiet threat is not an idle one. To the north, the Phoenix have grown angry that several mujina are making trouble in their lands, and are blaming the Crab for their misfortune. Many think that Kisada expects war soon, and has massed an army which is ready to march within a few days. Yet the questions remains: will Kisada march south, or north?

- **Crane**: The noble emissaries of the Crane are the life-blood of the Imperial Court, but they are currently preoccupied with Shiro no Yojin (see *Legacy of the Forge*). Now that they hold Yojin and its northern neighbor, Toshi Ranbo, they have put considerable pressure on the one Lion Castle which stands between their holdings: Shiro Akodo.

Crane courtiers are busy keeping the war manageable, and making certain that their gains are safe from Lion retaliation. Their politicians and diplomats work feverishly to suppress unfavorable responses to their war with the Lion, and put out small political fires as the other clans choose sides in the struggle.

- **Dragon**: Only one official Emissary of the Dragon lives within Otosan Uchi – an old Kitsuki, well known among the Imperial Court. His name is Yaruma, descendant of Agasha Kitsuki, founder of his house.

Although other Dragon live in the city, and a few visit the Imperial Court on occasion, Yaruma is the single link between the reclusive Dragon daimyo and the Hantei. Without him, the Dragon hierarchy would be completely cut off from the rest of the Empire. Many take his solitary presence as a sign that the most recent Champion of the Dragon – Togashi Yokuni – wishes to be left completely out of Imperial affairs.

Beyond that, the Dragon know very little. Their Champion has given hidden orders that the Togashi are not to interfere with Imperial politics in any way, and that they are not to actively engage in any politics or disputes that arise. The world must unfold as the Celestial Heavens have decreed; it is not the place of the Dragon to determine the future. (Note that these orders are *hidden*, and limited to the Togashi; the Mirumoto, Agasha and Kitsuki will not know of them, and may do as they wish).

- **Lion**: Similar to the Crane, the Lion are preoccupied with the battles erupting across their homelands. The Lion Champion, Akodo Toturi, is currently suing for peace with the Crane in the Imperial Court, distracting him from other matters, and causing many to doubt his loyalty.

None of the Akodo doubt Toturi, however; they follow him with fierce loyalty, nearly breaking the code of brotherhood with Matsu or Ikoma who dare suggest disloyalty.

Both Toturi and Doji Hoturi are currently within the Emperor's Court, and that they have arranged a private meeting with the Hantei to discuss a resolution of the current war. The Matsu murmur darkly that any peace would be a compromise (as they have already lost the castle of Shiro no Yojin), and that Toturi is throwing away Lion lives in order to gain Crane gold.

Anger wells in the Lion heartlands, and rumors contend that Matsu Tsuko is ready to declare Matsu sovereignty over the 'weak' Akodo lord, Toturi, and claim the seat of Clan Champion for her own family.

Some of the more politically-inclined Lion (Ikoma and Kitsu, primarily) may also know that Toturi favors a young geisha



woman named Hatsuko, who resides within the Imperial City of Otosan Uchi.

- **Phoenix:** The shugenja of the Phoenix have recently seen visions of a dark time in the Empire's future - of death, plague, and war. They believe that the feud between the Lion and the Crane will trigger this disaster, and they have sent one of their most powerful Elemental Masters, Isawa Ujina, to ask the Hantei for permission to enter the war. The Phoenix hope to use their tremendous magical power to sue for peace - or force it upon the Lion and the Crane.

Dark magics have also surfaced recently in the Phoenix lands. The outbreak of mujina during last Winter Court seems to have a source deep beneath the mountains of Shiro sano Chujitsu na Shinpu, their northernmost palace. Though the Isawa have said nothing, they know the labyrinth below this palace houses one of their stolen Black Scrolls, and that the scroll's bonds may be weakening. If those bonds break, then the scroll will be opened, and the Empire may soon fall...

- **Unicorn:** The Unicorn armies were called to meet at Toshi Sani Kanemochi Kaeru about two weeks ago, to begin a series of 'intense drills'. These drills are exceedingly realistic, including food supplies and siege materials which could support an army for weeks.

The Unicorn trust their leaders, and aren't at war with anyone, so they assume that these drills (while unusual) are not warranted by any threat. The general consensus is that the Unicorn are preparing for an alliance with the Lion or the Crane.

But unofficial rumors suggest that the Unicorn have already decided their allegiance, and that the 'combat drills' are preparing their bushi for a sudden strike against the Lion (or the Crane, depending on which Unicorn you speak with).

- **Minor Clans and Ronin:** The Lesser Houses are in a unique position: too weak or small to make a difference in the wars surrounding them, yet concerned that either side might take advantage of the hostilities to invade. Three of the strongest Minor Clans - the Fox, the Wasp and the Sparrow - have joined together in a pact they call the 'Three-Man Alliance'. An ambassador from each of these clans has recently arrived at the Imperial Court to receive Hantei's blessing upon the treaty.

- **Scorpion:** The most difficult characters to engage in these scenarios are the Scorpion, whose decision during play is pivotal: join with their brothers inside the walls, or desert them and stand with the armies who will destroy Shoju.

Any Scorpion who does not join Shoju (at least publicly) will be cast out of their clan and considered ronin, forever to bear the stigma of their desertion. On the other hand, Scorpion who side with the rest of their clan may be called upon to kill the rest of the party, or battle with the Six Major Clans and their servants. Scorpion players should make this decision on their own, but the GM should ensure that the group does not dissolve into two feuding sides as a result.

Take time to prepare for the reactions of any Scorpion player characters. Have them describe their character's loyalties to you before play (if they are not already enumerated on a Loyalty List), and think about how those loyalties will affect their choice for or

against the Coup. Anticipate what their part in the Coup will be, and how far they are willing to participate. And if you want them to ally with Shojū and live through the adventure, be sure to plan a few ways out, as well.

WHAT YOUR PCs KNOW ABOUT THE COUP

Scorpion characters fall into one of three categories during this adventure: those who know everything about the Coup; those who know little about the Coup, but have received orders which will allow them to anticipate trouble; and those who know nothing of the Coup, and have not been alerted to upcoming trouble in any form.

The first type of player is the easiest to Gamemaster. They have stood beside Shojū from the beginning, and are here to serve him. They might be part of an infiltration party, or 'servants' of a Scorpion district governor. In other cases, Scorpion characters may be here to keep the Emperor's Advisors from interfering with Shojū's plans. Alternately, they may be part of Shojū's official entourage, or charged with sneaking into the city through the waterways during the evening of the assault. Such characters will find their initial scenes to be quite uneventful, their approach disguised by the *Mists of Illusion* spell.

Scorpions who do not know about the Coup may be summoned to the city under other pretenses, then exposed to the master plan once it moves into its final stages. Guests of a Scorpion District Governor are an option, as are those who have been remanded to a Clan Ambassador's home in the Forbidden City. One potential reason that the characters do not know about the Coup is to ensure that their companions (the other PCs) are not aware of the planned treachery. In addition, the PC may not be trusted, but instead considered dangerous if not observed closely when the truth comes to light.

Scorpion PCs who have not been alerted to upcoming trouble are most likely not trusted by the clan, or have companions who might potentially jeopardize Shojū's plan. If a Scorpion is watched closely by a Kitsuki in his party, for example, it might be dangerous to allow him to know what is about to happen: if the Kitsuki were to discover it, all the Scorpion objectives could be endangered. Such characters must make the biggest decision of their lives once the adventure is under way; during the heat of battle, while the city explodes into flames and treason, they have only moments to decide if blind faith in their clan condones joining the Coup, or forces them to betray the daimyo out of duty to the Emerald Throne.

Note that your PCs need not be high-powered, daimyo-level Glory characters to influence the elements in the Coup. Unlike most situations in Rokugan, here chaos reigns. A Lion PC may be called on to submit his opinion on an assault plan because he is the *only surviving Lion* outside the city. Courtiers from possibly-neutral clans may be pressed into service to deliver messages from the Imperial home to the besieging forces. And any small group of PCs can make a contribution in the broken streets of *The Skirmisher's Tale*.

The Fair Voices of Lies

The *Courtier's Tale* is set within the Forbidden City of Otosan Uchi, filled with glorious opulence and the pride of a thousand years of Imperial rule. The first few events occur the day before the Scorpion Coup, about a day and a half before Shojū kills Hantei the 38th.

All the characters who begin with the *Courtier's Tale* enter the scenario within the city of Otosan Uchi - preferably within the Forbidden City - with access to the Imperial Court itself. The *Skirmisher's Tale* and the *Soldier's Tale* (featured later in this book) happen concurrently with the events of this scenario, so that all characters - regardless of their profession - have a chance to notice trouble brewing.

During the first day of Court, players interact with established courtiers and emissaries of the various clans, and learn the rumors and whispers circulating throughout Otosan Uchi. If characters have the Courtier Skill, they might learn one or more of their clan rumors (see the previous two pages); those with a Skill Rank of 3 or more may discover rumors from outside their clan as well.

The most obvious topics in the court include the Lion-Crane war, the troubles in the Phoenix lands, and the recent Unicorn mobilization. Although no one is personally concerned about the Unicorn, the situation has become as a red herring during other negotiations. (The Unicorn are content to be used in this fashion; it suits their purposes to be all but ignored.)

Beneath the surface, however, tensions are rising. The Phoenix fear the Shadowlands infiltration, and argue loudly with the Crab. The Crab ignore the peaceful northern clan, concerning themselves with ways to counteract Imperial demands, and whisper that the Emperor is too weak to rule. Rumors that Kisada is readying an army circulate among the Unicorn and Crane, while others (primarily in the Phoenix) claim that Kisada is making deals with the Shadowlands. Many of the courtiers not directly involved in the Lion-Crane war are embroiled with Crab concerns, trying to determine if Kisada - who despises Hantei the 38th - is planning a coup.

It is possible to use many of these concerns and scenarios as adventure hooks leading into the coup, and others as ready motivations to involve the players in the *Courtier's Tale*. Be inventive, and use existing storylines in your own campaign to draw the characters into the heart of the Imperial Court.

THE DEATH OF KITSUKI YARUMA

A disturbance threatens the court in the early morning, hours before Shoju's arrival. The elderly Dragon Magistrate, Kitsuki Yaruma, is found dead by *seppuku*, his katana missing and his wakizashi plunged deep within his chest. Yaruma's few attendants are puzzled by their master's death, and concerned that he did not mention his shame before taking his life. The only message he left behind is a single death-poem, written on a sheaf of rice-paper wrapped around the blade of his wakizashi:

*On a withered branch
A crow has settled
Autumn Nightfall*

The *seppuku* stuns and concerns the entire court, and allegations fly among the clans. Some say that Yaruma took his life to protest the Lion-Crane war, while others claim that he took his life to avoid being sent to a monastery. Still others, mainly Crab, argue that the Emperor commanded the Dragon's death, and that Hantei is deliberately causing trouble to divert the courtiers from Rokugan's true problems. Scorpion instigators chide them all, further confusing the issue with rumors of a family secret that Yaruma died to protect.

Three Kitsu shugenja are summoned (a PC Kitsu could easily assume this role) to investigate Yaruma's death and ease his spirit's journey into the afterworld. A message has been sent to the Dragon Mountains to ask Togashi Yokuni, Champion of the Dragon, for an emissary to replace Yaruma, but such a replacement will take weeks to arrive. In their desperation, the Imperial Court is willing to accept the next-best-thing: a PC, if one is available. If not, a young shugenja named Agasha Mukai will step forward.

A brief investigation reveals that the Ambassador hosted a visitor last night: Bayushi Togai, a powerful general who has been named as the Emperor's taster for the evening. Togai claims to know nothing of Yaruma's *seppuku*, and blames age and weakness for the man's death. If strongly questioned, however (a Willpower + Intimidation roll of 20 or higher), Togai reveals that he visited Yaruma to discuss the sudden disappearance of three Scorpion bushi who were chasing bandits into the southern Dragon lands. Togai suspects that the bandits were sent by Yokuni to infiltrate Scorpion holdings at Beiden Pass. Perhaps Yaruma committed *seppuku* because he was ashamed of his lord's actions...

Of course, the whole story is a lie, fabricated to keep the players busy until Shoju arrives, and to keep them away from the

truth: that Togai is Yaruma's son, stolen from the Kitsuki when he was a babe, and that - being a son of Kitsuki Ancestors - he has the ability to ignore all effects from poison.

Togai has agreed to taste the Emperor's food this evening, knowing that the food will contain a sleep potion which will slow the Emperor's reflexes, making him equitable to Shoju's suggestions. Shoju intends to murder all the Ambassadors in the Imperial Court; Togai met with Yaruma in order to offer him the chance to die with honor.

POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

Word arrives in the early afternoon that Bayushi Shoju is coming to see the Emperor. Shoju plans to attend the Imperial Court tonight, bringing a message of great importance. Many people believe that his wife Kachiko is pregnant with another Scorpion heir, which would jeopardize her son Dairu's title and inheritance.

In celebration of his trusted friend's arrival, the Emperor declares a feast this evening, highlighted by his Imperial acting troupe, the Jade Tear. All the major Ambassadors of the court are invited, save the Crab (at the Scorpion daimyo's request).

When the Scorpion arrive in the Forbidden City, the entire court turns out to see them; the courtiers greet the Scorpion daimyo one by one, bringing sincere words of flattery and appreciation to the Bayushi. Characters with perceptive eyes (TN 30) notice that Kachiko, Shoju's wife, greets Doji Hoturi as his Ambassador speak to the Scorpion Champion. She murmurs something soft, a polite smile on her face, then leaves the Crane to withdraw to speak with his men.

Later in the day, Hoturi declares that he has been called out of the city in order to deal with business affairs in Mura Minamo Cushin (the southernmost of the four Holy Home Villages). A large body of Crane are to be left behind to handle Kakita affairs in the Imperial Court, and Crane PCs are assumed to be part of this entourage. The Crane exodus from the city will be kept as quiet as possible; only those with Courtier Skill of 3 or greater will realize that they are leaving at all. Those who inquire after Hoturi's are simply told that he is attending a 'disturbance to the south'.

IMPORTANT CONCERNS

The Crab are in an uproar over not being invited to the feast, and the Kuni hiss that this is simply another means for the Imperial Families to slight their clan. The Lion demand to know Shoju's stand on their war, and whom the Scorpion plan to support at Beiden Pass. Important Crane are conspicuously quiet about Hoturi's departure, and deftly avoid questions concerning the 'disturbances' he is attending to.

Meanwhile, the Scorpion remain aloof about Shoju's visit, refusing all questions 'until tomorrow'.

The 38th Hantei Falls

It is a cold night, fittingly so for the events about to transpire. In the woods surrounding the Imperial capital, black-clad samurai stalk silently toward the palace and prepare their weapons, while ninja begin to climb the ancient walls. The hour approaches, and treachery is on the wind.

Not so very far away, Akodo Toturi – the leader of the Lion armies and sworn defender of the Emerald Throne – kicks off his sandals and enters a small house in a nondescript alley. It is not a wealthy dwelling nor reputable, but it houses the geisha he loves. The Lion Champion comes here to escape the weight of Imperial matters. He shivers. Toturi seats himself and asks for some tea. The rain drips from his hair, so he does not notice the drip of a single tear landing in the cup she offers him. Her masters have ordered her to poison Toturi, and she has no choice but to obey.

Meanwhile, in the Throne Room itself, Bayushi Shoji speaks with Emperor Hantei. “I have found an ancient prophecy,” he says gravely. “It says the greatest among us will cause the Empire to fall, and release an ancient evil into the world. I need your blessing to take every action necessary to avoid this fate.”

“You have it,” the Emperor says. “But who, my trusted friend, is more powerful than you?”

Shoji bows, a final reverence heralding the darkness to come. “Only you, my Lord Emperor,” he says as he draws his katana.

“Only you.”

EVENING

The Emperor's feast is lavish, with music and performances by the most legendary acting troupe in the land. They perform a tale of honor and duty, ending in the death of a great Matsu Lord in order to save his Champion. Afterward, there is brief applause, and muffled whispers of appreciation. The Emperor eats his food with delicate chopsticks while the Lady Kachiko and Togai kneel on the dais beside him. The young Prince, Sotorii, retires to his chambers in order to prepare for his journey to the Phoenix lands in the morning. Some retainers, and Isawa Kaede, walk with him.

The following scene takes place in the main court room (Location 66 on the map of the Imperial Palaces), but later scenes may range through the rooms of the palace according to the players' actions and your own.

GAMEMASTERING THE SCENE

The Emperor's celebration should allow the PCs to relax and enjoy their surroundings. Strive to immerse them in the grandeur and beauty of the Imperial Court, and allow them to feel at home in the splendor of the moment. This is the Empire at its grandest; the PCs should enjoy it.

At last, Shoji and his retinue arrive. The Scorpion daimyo wears the rich robes of his station, and his soldiers are arrayed in their finest armor. They hold no weapons, for only the greatest and most trusted samurai may wear a daisho in the Emperor's presence. Only Shoji, whom the Emperor trusts utterly, carries twin saya in his obi. In one sheath a Scorpion wakizashi shines, but its mate is missing, replaced with an ancient and ornate blade of surpassing beauty and quality.

The Scorpion daimyo steps forward to kneel before Hantei the 38th, speaking briefly with the Emperor. His words are firm and prepared; as the court listens, Shoji relates a tale of prophecy and dark futures (as depicted in the opening fiction of this section). The Emperor, concerned and completely trusting, gives Shoji permission to do ‘anything within his power to stop this great catastrophe’. Shoji bows once more, stands proudly, and draws a strange reddish blade from its saya, removing the Emperor's head before Hantei has a chance to speak again.

There is a brilliant flash of lightning, and with a tremendous clap of thunder (the work of well-prepared Soshi) the Scorpion attack begins. Soshi shugenja in the city begin to seal the gates with spellcraft; the Bayushi and Yogo use deadly force to shut down huge districts of Otsan Uchi; and Shoji's bushi immediately draw hidden weapons from beneath their hakama pants. The Scorpion are willing to offer one chance for surrender to any member of the samurai caste, within or outside the gates of the Forbidden City. If anyone resists, they are killed. There is no other alternative.

SEIZING THE IMPERIAL CITY

The Scorpion attack is swift, deadly, and efficient. Their men gain a foothold in every district of the city; even as Shoji's sword cuts through the Emperor's body, they are climbing from subterranean waterways and hidden places, commanding the gates and blocking city roads. The river and bay ports of the Higshikawa and Meiyoko Districts, where many Scorpion are already in place, are taken almost immediately. Toyotomi, another Scorpion-controlled district, moves to secure the northwestern inland road that leads to the heart of the Empire, cutting Otsan Uchi off from the outside world. And with so many other Outer City districts caught unawares by the attack, Otsan Uchi's best hope rests within the Miwaku Kabe, with the social elite.

The World Stood Still

Once Shoju has assassinated Hantei the 38th, the court explodes into chaos. Courtiers scream and panic as the Scorpion guards attempt to seal the chamber. The Emperor's bodyguards fight to the death, as do the Seppun in the palace, but both are overwhelmed. The enemy is simply too numerous and too well-prepared for the Imperial defenders to defeat.

In the initial confusion, PCs in the feast hall may attempt three things: they can surrender to the Scorpion guardsmen and hope to be spared; they can fight against the guardsmen, possibly escaping into the rest of the palace (most likely a temporary solution); or they can attempt to flee, leaving the palace entirely to join the fighting in the streets, and possibly escape the city.

If the characters attempt to escape, they will be hounded by Scorpion guards at every turn, and attacked in the passages and streets of the Forbidden City. One potential escape route is the underground waterways beneath the Imperial Mound (Locations 781-783, and 788), though these chambers and crevices are difficult to navigate, and the PCs may fall prey to Kolat operatives or opium smugglers before finding a way out.

If the courtiers allow themselves to be captured (either immediately or after combat in the palace halls), the Scorpion will be courteous, though harsh. Their commands are simple: anyone with a weapon must remove it, or be killed. Those who attempt to escape will also be put to death.

Many of the NPCs, particularly Lion samurai, commit *seppuku* for their failure to save the Emperor's life. Some PCs may be ready to fall on their own swords as well. To prevent this situation from preempting the rest of the adventure, another (higher-ranking) member of the PC's clan should command them to hold their blade. Explanations follow. The Six Clans haven't give up hope yet, and there is more honor to be had; why die in *seppuku* when you can bide your time and possibly give your life to destroy the usurping Shoju?

THE CRAB

After all the characters have established their places within the palace, describe the scene before them. Those watching the central corridors and halls of the palace see the Crab Ambassadors marched from one end to the other, still bearing their weapons. They are escorted by an 'honor guard' of Scorpion bushi, enough to overpower the Crab if they decide to revolt. Unlike other clan representatives present in the scene, however, the Crab are being treated with care and respect rather than rough commands.

The Crab are taken into the Imperial Throne Room (Location 87), where the other ambassadors and retainers are held. With all six clans assembled in the room, Shoju stands before the Emerald Throne, the body of the Emperor at his feet. Read the following to those who witness this event.

"The Imperial Throne has been defended," Shoju murmurs, as much to himself as to the watching throng. "With the death of the line of Hantei, the prophecy has been fulfilled.

"The Dark One will not destroy our Empire."

The Scorpion daimyo turns slowly, his full face-mask gleaming in the firelight outside the window. "One man's twilight is the Empire's dawn." With that, Shoju sits upon the Emerald Throne, daring anyone to oppose him.

The Ambassador of the Crab - Kuni Fujiko - steps forward. Behind her, Yasuki Taka listens with placid ease, seemingly unconcerned with the current difficulties. "And what of our family?" Fujiko asks.

THE CRAB CONNECTION

The Crab are being kept alive and well to influence Kisada's actions when he hears about the Coup. One of the Crabs - a PC or a simple yojimbo - is released soon after the city is secured, in order to lead a Scorpion messenger to Kisada. The Scorpion hope that Kisada will choose to support the Coup, but they aren't taking any risks.

A Scorpion courtier arrives and briefly outlines the situation for the Crab - they may keep their weapons and chambers within the Imperial Palace, as guests of Emperor Shoju. Crab PCs may see through the ruse at once (Perception + Sincerity; TN 15) but if they wish to live, they will not mention it.

PC Crabs may remain in the Crab chambers with Fujiko, Taka and their yojimbo. Although they are still guarded, the Scorpion remain in the hallway outside the wing rather than within the room (as is the case with the rest of the nobility). Courtiers of the other clans are taken to the Third Floor (Locations 67-70 on the Imperial Palace map), and kept under careful watch. For each group of 10-15 hostages, there are seven well-armed and armored Scorpion guards.

MISSING DIGNITARIES

Any Crane character who makes a Perception check (TN 15) notices that Doji Shizue and her master, an elderly courtier, are not among the group being held in the Imperial Palace. Nor are Isawa Kaede or her father Ujina. There is no indication of where they might be, or of any 'escape route' they may have taken. Characters with the Imperial Lore Skill who succeed with Intelligence + Imperial Lore (TN 30) know that there are many secret passages within the Imperial Palace. (Note that the Hantei Blood Advantage - see Book One, page 96 - grants a +10 bonus to this roll.) Such a roll should only reveal a direct way out of the palace or into the Imperial Labyrinth if it suits your intentions with this scene.

EVENING EVENTS

During the first evening of the Scorpion Clan Coup, several independent scenes may occur to or near the player characters. Choose those which best suit your characters, and run them in the order that best suits your vision. These events may occur at any time in the evening.

Hidden Corridors

Many rooms in the palace contain hidden alcoves, secret chambers and corridors, and recessed areas. These halls and rooms serve various functions, from hidden escape and travel routes through the palace to secret armories, siege storage, and war offices. Characters with the Imperial Lore Skill or Hantei Blood Advantage may be aware of one or more of these, as described above. Unfortunately, Shoji's men already know of more than half of these passages, many of them having arrived through the Imperial Labyrinth beneath the Palace.

If a character knows of or manages to find one of these hidden areas, you should make a secret roll using their Agility + Stealth. Then, for every hour he and his companions remain hidden in the same spot, a roll should be made against this total using a generic Scorpion guards' Perception Trait. (For Scorpion guard statistics, please see page 19 of this book.) Failure indicates that the characters have eluded capture for another hour.

Success means that the PCs have been found. In this case, the Scorpion guards offer them one chance to surrender. Those who

refuse are attacked (resulting in standard L5R combat). Others are returned to the 'holding rooms' (Locations 67-70 on the Imperial Palace map), where they rejoin the captured diplomats of the Imperial Court.

Those who elude capture will spend the next several days playing a delicate game of cat-and-mouse with the Scorpion troops. They are on their own to find food, water, and other necessities (mostly available in the palace kitchens and servant quarters - Locations 52-54 on the Imperial Palace map), as well as avoid discovery. Be sure to keep them on their toes with several close calls, and describe one or two other scenes from *The Courtier's Tale*, which occur outside their hiding places, or beyond thin walls. Entice successfully hidden PCs out into the open by playing upon their honor and morality in such instances - upstanding PCs will find it difficult to resist heroic opportunities right under their noses.

THREE TALES — ONE STORY

As the Scorpion begin to solidify their command of Otosan Uchi, the PCs may split up, encountering adventures within the captive court, through the city, or outside the Enchanted Walls with the massive armies of the clans (as they arrive). The three Tales featured in this book allow characters to shift from one to another through cleverness or luck. Be sure to keep careful track of time, running the three Tales concurrently if possible. When characters from one Tale overlap with those of another, you should be prepared to describe what the setting of each looks like at that particular point. For instance, if a member of the *Courtier's Tale* sees a guard fleeing the palace, those in the *Skirmisher's Tale* might encounter him elsewhere in the city.

As the adventures unfold, players will encounter opportunities that allow them to jump from one timeline to another (for example, they might escape from the courtier hostages to join the hidden forces within the city, moving from the *Courtier's Tale* to the *Skirmisher's Tale*). Also note that each plotline is designed to allow the actions of characters in the first third of one Tale to directly affect what those in later sections of other Tales see or hear.

Shoju and Kachiko

At some point, the PCs hear Shoju addressing the 'hostages' and Crab emissaries. The attitude of the Scorpions is uncompromising, unwilling to submit to explanations or offer justifications.

Lion Seppuku

In one of the hallways, seven Scorpion guardsmen pitch a furious battle with a Lion bodyguard - one of Toturi's men. If the characters assist him, the Scorpions turn on them. If the battle does not go well, the Lion commits *seppuku* to avoid capture.

Battle with the Seppun Miharu

The Seppun Miharu defenders sequester themselves in the Shadow Maze (Level 4 of the Imperial Palace) shortly after the Scorpion attack. They wage a desperate battle against the Scorpion bushi throughout the maze, protecting a small group of Otomo and Seppun courtiers (the last free remnants of the Imperial line). These Seppun will fight to the last man; none will themselves to become hostages. Characters may join this struggle or use it as a distraction for their own escape.

Statistics for the Seppun Miharu can be found on page 20.

Behind Night's Shadow

Day 1 (14th day of the month of the Rooster)

Courtier characters trapped within the Imperial Palace can see battles erupting outside the palace, and flames linger everywhere as dawn approaches. Scorpion troops quickly seize control of the Ekohikei and Miwaku Kabe, moving toward the Outer City walls in short order. No force in the city is strong enough to stop them; no single clan has the resources inside the city walls. The River of the Sun runs with blood, the bodies of Emerald Guardsmen floating slowly toward the Bay of the Golden Sun.

The city has been partially destroyed and buildings have been deliberately collapsed into the city streets to block the passage of enemy troops. Soshi shugenja stand on the Enchanted Walls around the Forbidden City, ferreting out pockets of Emerald Guardsmen still fighting pitched battles against the invaders.

Characters should hold out little hope for a happy ending at this point. There are no banners outside the city gates, no signs of help approaching on any horizon. The Scorpions have sealed the gates of the city with fire and stone torn from the foundations of nearby buildings, leaving the Imperial Capital firmly in the hands of the Scorpion. Ricocheting sounds of explosives (forbidden for centuries, since the gaijin invasion of White Stag) can be heard in the distance, along with the booming collapse of buildings as the Bayushi manufacture blockades and other Scorpion death-traps.

THE BLACKENED CITY

It is important that the characters receive some freedom of movement during this time, by masquerading as Scorpions, finding means of escaping their captors, or hiding in the secret corridors of the palace. Challenge their attempts to escape, but allow them to win free eventually, so that they might participate in the various events occurring in the Forbidden City at this time.

The courtiers held in the Imperial Court will not be killed unless they resist the Scorpion. Shoju understands that living hostages are more valuable than dead ones; so long as he retains them, the Six Great Clans have a reason to negotiate. Further, they cannot lay siege to the Imperial Palace without risking the lives of their loved ones. The hostages buy Shoju time to

consolidate his control over the city – and (hopefully) for his Crab allies to arrive and reinforce his troops.

The danger courtier characters face during the Coup is very different from that presented later. Courtiers are threatened not with flying arrows or the blades of armies, but with the sharpest poison of a Scorpion-controlled court. PCs are unlikely to be accustomed to this kind of danger, and care should be taken in presenting the challenges of this scene.

Some characters may choose to remain in the Imperial Palace, rallying resistance against the Scorpion menace or gathering information for their allies on the outside. Others might only be interested in escaping the madness plaguing the city. You should ask the players what their ultimate intentions are, and gear your descriptions and challenges in that direction.

Scorpions Working With Shoju

Any Scorpion who serves the Bayushi during the Coup could be sent to deal with the ambassadors under guard in the palace. They are told to impress upon the survivors that Shoju is the new Emperor, and they'd better get used to it.

There is no other choice; Sotorii is dead.

This will, of course, bring loyal Scorpion directly into conflict with characters of other clans. Though it offers a few moments of unlimited roleplaying potential, it could also result in a permanent schism within the party, and jeopardize the possibility of the characters ever adventuring together again. Be aware of this before bringing a mixed party into this adventure. Also be aware that running such a game is a tremendous challenge, and is therefore only recommended for confident and experienced GMs, or teams.

WITHIN THE PALACE

The player characters may not stay together during the first day. The holding rooms Shoju has chosen are spread across most of the Imperial Palace's third floor, and hostages are separated into small, manageable groups. Characters will never be alone, surrounded by the guards as well as other Hantei prisoners, whose reactions will range from fanatic to hopeless, frightened to stoic.

At some point, courtier PCs should hear of, or witness, the deaths of several Phoenix who refuse to accept Shoju as their Emperor. These men die by hanging; they are not allowed honorable deaths.

The palace is not completely captured until the end of the day, as small battles erupt between Scorpion bushi and limited resistance cells. And as the Scorpion spread out to claim more and more of the Forbidden City, the courtiers feel the Bayushi stranglehold on their movements lift slightly.

THE DEATH OF THE HEIR

Before the end of the day, news of the heir Sotorii's death spreads throughout the palace. The Scorpion outwardly cheer this news, but characters succeeding with a Perception + Sincerity roll

(TN 25) notice a certain hesitancy, as if many of them hoped the news would never come. Many Scorpion publicly pray to their ancestors, begging forgiveness for their transgressions against the Sons of Heaven.

All Scorpion - Shoju included - feel the burden of this act.

Finally, near twilight, select representatives of each clan (including Crab) are brought before Shoju. Strive to include as many PCs in this group as possible, but do not disregard important captive NPCs in favor of less glorious characters.

In full view of the representatives, Sotorii's body is brought before Shoju and laid to rest upon a silk palanquin-base. Shoju begins by asking whether any wish to examine the body to assure themselves that the Hantei line is destroyed.

Any who accept find the body to be that of the young prince. It has all the identifying marks the young boy was known to have; Kitsu characters may also note that the young man's spirit is clouded, troubled by an inky darkness. They cannot confirm nor deny the spirit's identity.

Players who are already familiar with the story of the Coup may take extra convincing that Sotorii has truly died. It may help convince your skeptics if you imply that you're willing to play somewhat fast and loose with story canon. If it happens to be true, so much the better.

Once the courtiers are convinced that the Hantei heir is dead, Shoju speaks once more. He decrees that they will act as his temporary 'court', speaking for their clans during the siege of the palace. Then he gives all the assembled courtiers one last chance to refuse. Those who do are returned to the holding rooms.

Shoju somberly reminds the assemblage that they have no choice but to accept him as Emperor. Hantei is dead, as is his son. No army in the Empire can defeat him without destroying the Imperial Capital. Shoju assures them all that their Champions will bow before him, soon enough; if the courtiers cooperate, their clan will be treated with favor in his new court. If they disobey...

Once the prince's body has been identified, the courtiers will be moved once more, into more relaxed areas of the palace. The Imperial Line defeated, Shoju shows his benevolence by granting the hostages private rooms along the third floor, where they are fed and allowed to sleep. Guards remain outside the rooms at all times, within view of one another, but the hostages are finally treated with some respect - so long as they remain cooperative.

Approaching the Crab

Crab characters, or those who speak with them for a few unguarded moments, will find that the Crab are being treated well. They remain in their chambers under minimal guard. Food is brought to them, and they have received ink and paper for composing messages. Of course, the Scorpion read all such missives, and make no attempt to hide the fact.

If a character attempts to hide a message in one of these letters - either by code or pre-arranged signal - there is a high likelihood that the Scorpion will discover it. (Any character attempting a hidden message must roll Intelligence + Forgery, Courtier, or Cadence with a TN of 35 to avoid Scorpion detection; those who discovered concealing information in these missives are taken out of sight and killed.)

SCORPION GUARDSMEN

Earth: 2 (Willpower 3) Water: 3

Fire: 3 (Agility 4) Air: 3

Void: 3

Rank Bayushi Bushi 2

Honor 1.0-1.9 Glory 2.0-2.9

Notable Skills: Archery 2, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Ninjutsu 2, Poison 3, Sincerity 3, Tantojutsu 2, Yarijutsu 2

Squads: During the Coup, Scorpion guards travel in squads of 2-5, each with a School Rank of 1-2.

Die roll	Weapon carried
1-2	Tanto
3	Wakizashi
4	Aiguchi
5	Ninja-to
6	Shuriken (3)
7	Caltrops (5)
8	Sai
9	Jitte
10	Katana

MIHARU RESISTANCE

As the hostages are being transferred to better quarters, their Scorpion guards are attacked by four fugitive Seppun Miharu. The Imperial bushi attempt to slaughter the Bayushi and free as many of the prisoners as possible.

The battle should be fast and furious. Depending on the number of hostages being transferred (GM's call), there are from three to five Scorpion guards. PCs and NPC courtiers should periodically be allowed to affect the combat as the flow of action allows.

Assuming the Seppun are successful, the PCs are left to their own devices within the palace walls. Once again, they must decide on a new course of action: flee the palace? Join the Seppun resistance inside? Attempt to free the other hostages being held by the Scorpion?

The Miharu do not know that Sotorii is dead, and if told rapidly lose all hope. Only a Willpower + Leadership roll of 20 or higher renews their will to fight; otherwise, they commit seppuku, recommending that the PCs do the same.

If the Seppun believe that the boy has escaped, however, they will continue 'freeing' hostages, taking them to the secret armory of the Honor Guard (Location 62 on the Imperial Palace map). PC bushi are invited to join them in their attempt to retake the palace, but it should be obvious that their plan is dangerous, and most likely futile.

THE MIHARU PLAN

The Miharu have a risky plan to free all those they have contained in the armory, involving a midnight flight through the *Shi-kojin* Garden (Location 63), down the side of the Imperial Mound and into the Forbidden City. From there, they intend to lead the refugees through the Imperial Water Gardens (Location 746) and past the Scorpion guards at the Miwaku Kabe.

The plan sounds desperate, and it is – but that shouldn't stop PCs from offering their assistance. Player characters who choose this option receive the chance to lead the operation, as the Miharu remain behind to secure as many more hostages as they can. The Seppun promise to follow in a few days, once they have done all they can at the palace.

Player characters who accept this dangerous challenge should be offered a sketch map of the Imperial Palace (including any secret passages they are aware of), and allowed to plan their escape. Once they are satisfied, you should place a few suitable Scorpion guard-posts and pitfalls in their way. Inventive ideas and unexpected plans from the players should be rewarded with less resistance (though not too little to be an effective challenge), while frontal assaults against a heavily-guarded Scorpion outpost (such as Location 742, the Southern Gate) should meet heavy opposition.

Scorpion Retaliation

In two days, the Bayushi will stage a major attack on the hidden armory, having followed the Miharu back to their haven after one of their guerrilla attacks. The assault kills all the remaining Miharu guardsmen, and threatens anyone aiding them. Courtiers found hiding within the room will be executed unless they succeed with an Awareness + Sincerity roll of 20. Those spared through discourse will be taken to a private room, which remains locked from the outside.

SERVANTS OF THE SCORPION

The only individuals who may travel through the palace's corridors (relatively) unmolested are the servant-*heimin*. The few scattered *heimin* who remain now serve Shoju, fearing for their lives. They obey Scorpion commands unquestioningly, but are not loyal to the invaders. They may be convinced to carry food, water, messages, or information to others in the palace (with a successful Awareness + Oratory or Willpower + Intimidation roll of 10 or more). A servant named Ozuki knows of the hidden armory, and the Seppun. He will risk his life for the Miharu, but only if the PCs vow to take his wife and daughter (among those in the armory) to safety.

CAPTIVES IN THE PALACE

The two most important discoveries the players can achieve during the first day of *The Courtier's Tale* are:

- Understanding their delicate position, and ways to resist the Scorpion as captives, and
- Communicating with other PCs and important NPCs despite physical separation.

Make sure that your players understand that their characters can still become involved, even if their case seems 'hopeless'. It is easy to give up when faced with such oppression, which makes it important to point out the advantages of their position. What information can they discover as captives, and how can they get it back to their lords? What Scorpion weaknesses can they report? How can they aide the other hostages?

Little victories should be celebrated more in this situation; NPCs can remind the characters of that if necessary.

Treatment of Prisoners in Rokugan

There is an important difference between samurai hostages and peasant captives. In Rokugan, honor is everything; once samurai have been captured, they are expected to behave with honor, and receive freedoms and benefits worthy of their station unless they prove that they cannot be trusted with them. After the first evening – once over the initial fear that Sotorii has escaped or some errant force will rise up against them – the Scorpion are polite to their hostages. None are abused – other than being restrained – unless they struggle or pose a threat.

SEPPUN MIHARU

Water: 3 (Perception 4) Earth: 3

Fire: 2 (Agility 2) Air: 3

Void: 3

Rank: Seppun Miharu 2

Honor 2.0–2.9 Glory 2.0–2.9

Notable Skills: Archery 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Obiesaseru 2, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 2

Die Roll	Weapon carried
1–2	Tanto
3	Nagiyari or Bow
4	Aiguchi
5–6	Naginata
7–10	Katana

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

Characters who escape the palace to join the *Skirmisher's Tale* during the first day of the adventure find the city still under assault by the Scorpions. Bayushi and Shosuro troops have not yet captured all the major districts of the city, and open fighting can still be found throughout the Hinjaku, Hojize, Kosuga, Hidari, Juramashi, and Hayasu Districts.

One of the most promising methods of moving through the outer city involves crawling through the sewers. This is the way many of the Scorpion came in, after all; why not use it to escape? Unfortunately, the Scorpion are currently trying to block the sewers with collapsed tunnels, re-routed water from the river, and stationed guards. If the courtiers have been lucky (or ingenious) enough to make it this far, they will need to stretch their luck even further in order to get past these Scorpion blockades.

The Crab Beachhead

Several Crab guardsmen have set up a defensive base in an abandoned smuggling den (Locations 784–786), and are waging a private war against the Scorpion in the undercity. Though these valiant bushi represent the characters' best hope for allies or escape beneath the city, getting to them may prove difficult. Throughout the first two days of the Coup, large numbers of Scorpion soldiers throw themselves at the Crab, hoping to overwhelm them. By the third day, the Scorpion – seeing no other way to eliminate the Crab threat – burn them out of the den.

At the start of the Coup, there are 32 Crab defenders. By the time they are burned out, only a dozen remain.

Navigating the Streets During the Coup

The roads, alleys, and avenues of the city are nearly impossible to traverse. Scorpion troops march from quarter to quarter, securing hostages and setting up blockades to defend against the inevitable besieging armies. Characters making their way through the city should regularly encounter Scorpion bushi, other refugees, fleeing heimin, and Tortoise emergency teams.

From nearly anywhere in the city, it is obvious that the worst fighting is in the Hojize and Hinjaku Districts, which have not yet fallen to the Scorpion. Using the smaller river that cuts through Hojize, the Miwaku Kabe, and the graveyards to the north, Dragon guardsmen stand defiantly beside merchants in an unbroken line against the Scorpion. The PCs may decide to use this chaos as a distraction – or lend their aid to the noble samurai defending the area.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

As the various clans outside the city receive word of the Coup, armies will be assembled. The most prepared troops of the Six Great Clans arrive first, sacrificing strength for swiftness. Unfortunately, even the closest of these forces are still several days' march from the Imperial Capital, leaving the city on its own during the first desperate hours. (More on the armies that arrive to support Otsan Uchi may be found on page 58.)

At the outset of the Coup, the only clan with combat-ready troops near the city is the Phoenix. By evening of the Coup's first day, a few ragged units of the clan's famed Tsunami Legion stand ready to take the battle back to the Scorpion. Characters who make it outside the city receive only a lackluster reception from these broken troops, however; with only 25 soldiers and two shugenja, they are precious little opposition for the enormous forces of the enemy.

The leader of this rag-tag band, Shiba Tsukune, mentions that Unicorn troops are on their way, but there is no proof that this hopeful rumor is true. Few banners still fly within the city save the black and scarlet of the Scorpion Clan, amplifying the suspicion that most of the city has already fallen. With so little of Otsan Uchi still resisting, what are the chances that messengers have been sent out to warn the rest of the Empire?

The characters have only to wait and see...



Streets of Otsan Uchi

Day 2 (15th day of the month of the Rooster)

At the beginning of the day, word travels through the castle that the Unicorn are arriving outside the walls. The Scorpion are obviously nervous; they aren't prepared to mount a defense against an attack so soon. If the Unicorn come in force, can the Coup survive its first assault?

Meanwhile, heimin servants mention a group of courtiers who have been slaughtered. They say that a group of Seppun Miharū attacked the Bayushi guards, cutting through the courtiers in order to reach their Scorpion quarry. The courtiers pleaded for their lives, but the Miharū refused, killing every man, woman, and child as "traitors to the Empire."

SPY VERSUS SPY

Inside the palace, more dangerous intrigues begin. One group of courtiers (with a high concentration of NPCs) deduces the presence of a Scorpion spy among them. None of the courtiers know the others very well (all are Imperial guests, from various parts of the city), so the spy would have found it easy to insinuate himself among them. Having been among the courtiers since the beginning (and perhaps with one or more of the PCs during sensitive conversations), it is likely that the Scorpion know about any escape plans the hostages have made.

In reality, there is no spy. The room in which the hostages are being held is monitored from Location 60, the secret tunnel network that runs through its walls. The Scorpion have had a man positioned there, listening to everything the group says and does, since shortly after the Emperor's death. He can only observe half of the room, however, so the Scorpion receive only an incomplete picture of the hostages' plans.

INTERNAL ASSAULT

Sometime today, the Scorpions lose control of one small section of the palace to a hidden group of Emerald Guards, who are determined to overthrow Shoju from the inside – or die avenging their Emperor. The guards are desperate, as willing to die as to cause any real harm to the encamped Scorpion. But they

are doomed to fail without effective leadership (they are all rank 1 gunso). The PCs may help them if one or more escape or are somehow rescued by the soldiers. If the PCs already know of the Seppun in the hidden armory, these men can be brought to them so that both have a better chance against the Scorpion.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

The Unicorn begin to arrive outside the walls of the Imperial Capital at dawn, in groups of 10 and 20. The Scorpion take note of their movements, snarling at the Shinjo camp beside the undermanned Tsunami Legion, but all know that the genuine battles will not begin until tomorrow. During the day, however, there are tests of the Scorpion defenses; a single massive attack toward the front gate which drains away as water through a sieve. Though some men are lost on both sides, the attackers find several weak spots along the Outer Wall. Many smaller, guerrilla-style attacks, using Phoenix magic and Unicorn speed, locate additional holes in the new Scorpion line.

The Lost Unit

Over the remaining hours of the day, Scorpion commanders strive to plug the leaks in their defenses as the Unicorn and Phoenix lash out at seemingly random locations. Eventually, one of these sprinkled attacks punches a hole in the Bayushi forces, though the 'victory' is a minor one. Within an hour, the Bayushi

reclaim the gate and trap the Shinjo in the twisting and blocked streets of Otosan Uchi.

Courtier characters who 'escape' into *The Skirmisher's Tale* might meet with these fleet Shinjo troops (only seven men and three horses), and aid them in retrieving the last Unicorn ambassador held hostage within the Imperial Palace.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

Within hours of the Unicorn arrival, the Scorpion send a Shosuro ambassador into their midst under a flag of peace. He asks to speak with the Phoenix and Unicorn generals, in order to explain the situation and the consequences of standing against Shoju's army. The Phoenix wish to open negotiations, but the Unicorn want only to cut the Scorpion agent down.

Despite the best efforts of the Phoenix, the Shosuro and his entourage are captured. The Unicorn offer to exchange him for several of the hostages held in the Imperial Palace. Perhaps PCs in *The Soldier's Tale* can seize this opportunity to rescue the hostages within the city walls?

One or more of the Shosuro's group might be 'persuaded' to ferry a message out to the assembled armies. Such a message need not contain any treachery; it might simply be a last goodbye to family, or the PC's lord. Then again, as Cranes with the Cadence Advantage are well aware, some 'simple messages' are not as innocent as they appear...





The Fog of War

Day 3 (16th Day of the month of the Rooster)

If the characters in the palace are able to look outside the palace, they note that much of Otosan Uchi has changed. Districts are aflame, buildings are torn down to form barricades, and bodies of fallen Unicorn and Phoenix are displayed on pikes at each major crossroad – a chilling testament to the Scorpion betrayal.

Sometime last night, Lion and Crane troops arrived, and still more troops funnel in as their campgrounds swell outside the city. One large golden tent stands to the north of the Unicorn and Phoenix soldiers, while another, this one silver, stands to the south.

Battles during the day are fierce, as Matsu troops storm the city from unexpected angles, seeking to create weakness where there is none. A legion of Scorpion guards leaves the palace to join the defense of the Outer Walls, but Shoju does not appear concerned. He strides the halls of 'his' stronghold, further adding to everyone's discomfort.

A CAPTIVE COURT

The courtiers and ambassadors who viewed the heir's body yesterday are summoned again. They arrive at the Throne Room (Location 87), only to find its enormous dimensions vacant now except for Shoju, his Scorpion guard, and the rest of the 'hostage court'. (Remember, if any of the courtiers refused Shoju's offer, they will not be present at this time, and their clan will be given no information on the events which have transpired.)

Shortly after their arrival, a Scorpion shugenja appears. Soshi Bantaro stands within eyeshot of the assemblage, looking distant, uncomfortable, and wary of the assembled courtiers (as if they are about to leap at his lord Shoju at any moment). During this scene, his half-hearted silence is broken by muttered sentiments designed to impugn the collected diplomats. (It should be obvious to all present that Bantaro disapproves of his lord's decision to bring the 'court' together again.)

A table stands to one side to the Throne room, with a large map unrolled upon it. If the characters are cautious (a contested

Reflexes + Stealth roll against the Scorpion guards: TN 15, and the guards roll 3k3), they may see what is drawn upon that map. With a successful Perception + Battle roll (TN 20), those looking at the map recognize it as a modified sketch of Otosan Uchi, detailing the location of each of the Scorpion blockades and traps.

This information can be of much use to characters in *The Skirmisher's Tale* and *The Soldier's Tale*; courtiers can greatly affect those adventures by sneaking out of the palace with it. Bushi who are aware of the map's information, and fighting in either Tale, gain 2 unkept dice to their Battle, Lore (Otosan Uchi), Defense, Engineering, Siege, or Stealth rolls while moving about or planning attacks or defenses against the Scorpion in the city. Though the specifics of the map are not included here, you are encouraged to sketch them for the players so that they can more easily immerse themselves into the rapidly changing Coup setting.

THE SABOTEUR

The map is not the reason that Shoju has summoned the characters, however. He is more interested in the Lion and Crane representatives, and what they might know about insurrectionist movements within the Forbidden City. It seems that a saboteur has caused the Scorpion much grief as they prepare their defenses. The sabotage is mainly targeted at Shoju's tactical and magical defenses, so he assumes that the Lion or Phoenix are responsible.

The 'new Emperor' has brought his court together to determine what they might know of such saboteurs, or the possibility of the other captives working with them. He never separates the diplomats, asking pointed questions at each, and seeking to play their answers off one another. He consults Lion and Phoenix first, then moves on to those of other clans.

Lion NPCs respond to Shoju's queries with stony silence, or brave quotes from Akodo's *Leadership*. The Phoenix are elusive, using circular logic and deceptive turns of phrase to avoid the question. No courtiers of either clan claim to know of the saboteurs, their locations, or their intentions. NPCs of the other clans concur, though the PCs should be left feeling that one or more of the diplomats is lying (perhaps determined with a Perception + Sincerity roll).

The player characters are also questioned about the sabotage. If they, too, claim ignorance, all of the courtiers will be dispatched back to their quarters. Otherwise, they will be retained after the others are gone, and briskly interrogated about what they know. Regardless of what they say or whether they convince the Yogo interrogators of their sincerity, they will not be returned to the third floor. Instead, the Scorpion lock them within one of the chambers on the fifth floor (inside Kakita Ryoku's former rooms – Location 85). From this point on, two Scorpion guards stand watch over them constantly; their tale will remain solitary unless they somehow escape.

Shoju will focus much of his future ire upon them.

THE GEISHA

Large sections of the Tsai District burn today, as the Scorpion attempt to flush Akodo Toturi out of hiding (the Lion daimyo vanished into the Outer City sometime late on Day One, and has been plaguing the Scorpion defenders with a small band of skilled bushi ever since). Player characters in the palace should overhear the guards or other courtiers speaking about the dilemma, leading them to believe that the invaders are concerned about the renegade Lion, but not – yet – fearful.

At some point during Day Three, a young geisha named Hatsuko is dragged through the palace, en route to Kachiko's chambers. Characters with the Lore (Lion) Skill at at least Rank 4 recognize the girl as a frequent liaison of Akodo Toturi, and those who succeed with an Intelligence + Lore (Lion) roll, TN 25, also know that the daimyo cherished her greatly.

If possible, Kachiko should encounter the guards who are forcing Hatsuko through the palace in front of one or more of the PCs (perhaps as part of the Empress' morning walk through the stronghold). Kachiko immediately demands to know Hatsuko's part in Toturi's escape. The geisha defends her love for Toturi, and throws herself on Kachiko's mercy, 'woman to woman'. Offended, Kachiko orders the guards to 'dispose' of her.

Unless the PCs somehow intervene, Hatsuko will be dragged away, kicking and screaming. The guards haul her through the pacified Kanjo district of the Ekohikei and hurl her over the cataracts of Sorrow's Falls (Location 764). If the PCs somehow manage to distract the guards or otherwise free her, however, Hatsuko leaps through the nearest window, falling to her apparent death. In either case, her body is never found.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

Characters who have witnessed the event described under *The Geisha* (above) know that Toturi is alive and free somewhere in the Outer City. If they can get information out of the palace (or, even better, have determined a way to escape), they might make contact with him. A famed tactician and well-respected leader of the Lion armies, Toturi is a valuable resource for the PCs to draw upon – if they can find him.

Another situation that can link the *Skirmisher's Tale* to the *Courtier's Tale* is the command of Matsu trapped inside the Outer City. By now, their location is clear – they are pinned down in the Toyotomi District, and suffering heavy casualties at the hands of the Scorpion. Many of the Lion have been captured, and are now tied to poles in the center of the district, to be burned alive at dawn tomorrow. The pyres are visible from any northern window of the palace, and the hostages know that Shosuro Taberu will give the order for the fires to begin (see *Way of the Scorpion*, page 61). If the courtiers inside the palace could somehow convince him to order honorable deaths for the Matsu instead – or simply provide the armies outside the city enough time to rescue them – the tide of this particular tale could be turned.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

During the course of the day's attacks, the Crane Champion and Emerald Champion, Doji Satsume, is struck by a Scorpion sword – a blow from which he will not recover. He dies shortly thereafter from a terrible belly wound, not even granted the honor of a quick and clean death.

The Scorpion discover this during the day, and proudly pass the information onto any Crane courtiers among the hostages. The announcement is delivered by a Scorpion general, though it will be given to the Crane with the highest Glory to read:

"My Master,

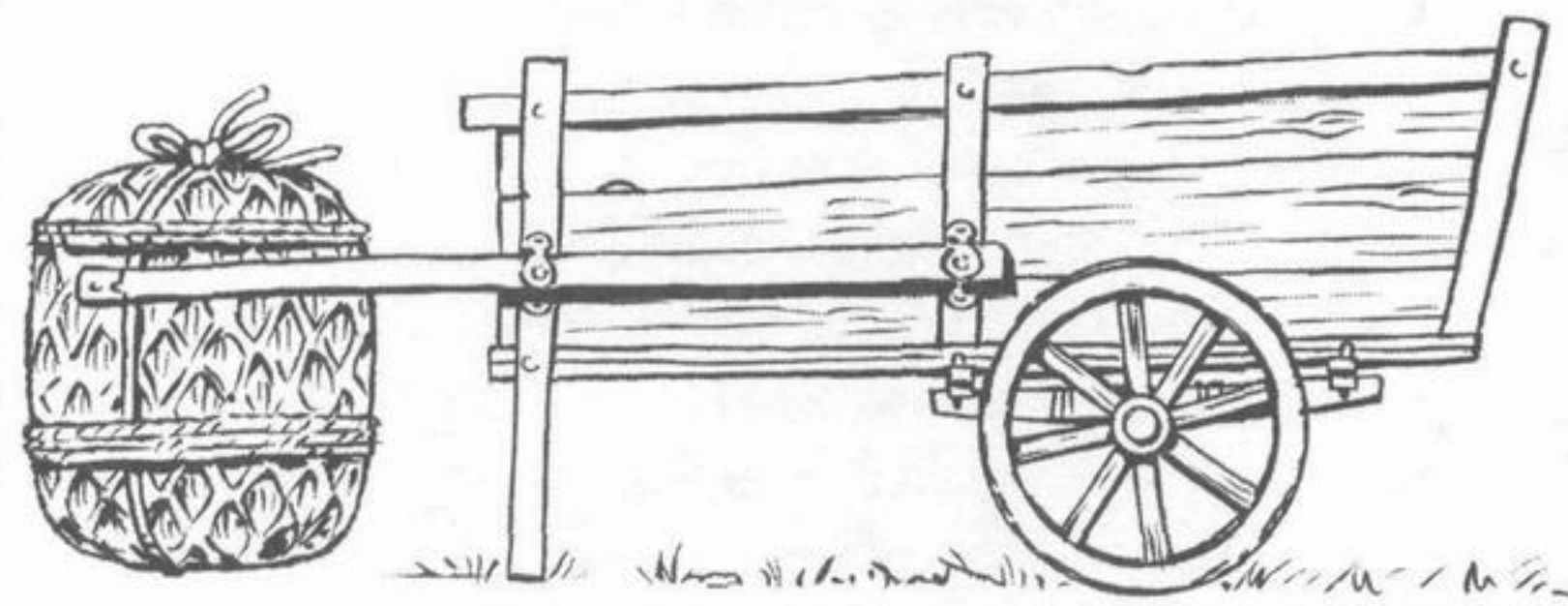
The Crane Champion, Satsume, has been destroyed. His body bleeds on the ground outside our city, wounded from within as he dared strike at our heels. Your throne is secure from the Crane. His son, Hoturi, takes command at dawn."

The message is signed only with a Scorpion mon.

Doji Hoturi, a known playboy and gallant, is now in command of the Crane forces outside the wall. This causes a great imbalance of political power within the palace; Hoturi is not known as a forceful commander, nor as a capable tactician. The tales of his exploits with women are legendary, but he has no known ability to lead men. The Crab curse his name, and the Lion laugh at him, calling him the 'shining Crane'. The other clans within the palace assume that – with his rise to command – Crane resistance against the Scorpion is effectively crushed.

The Scorpion use this as another tool to convince the courtiers to side with them. Without the Crane the Six Clans cannot help but fail. Can the PCs maintain the Crane presence in the 'new court', or will their strength and determination be lost with their Champion?

Some Crane courtiers actively begin discussing alliances with the Scorpion at this time. "Without strength on the field," they argue, "we will be little help. If we ally with Shoju now, perhaps he will be merciful to our new 'Lord'".



The Crab Arrive

Day 4 (17th Day of the month of the Rooster)

Although the fourth day dawns to the sound of constant battle, a nearly palpable tension permeates the palace. Crab courtiers, in particular, are silent and somber this morning, and their food returns to the servants untouched.

Other courtiers, arrayed throughout the palace, hear whispers that Shojū has procured the Imperial Pyres (Location 46 on the map of the Imperial Palace). He intends to ask for their oaths of fealty, or their lives in *seppuku*. Some say that the Crab are already dead, their bodies lain upon the pyre to be lit in full view of all the ambassadors. There is no validity to this rumor, though, as any Crab PCs already know.

Early in the morning, all the Crab hostages within the Imperial Palace are brought before Shojū and his finest general, Bayushi Togai. There is no pomp and circumstance this time; everyone knows why they have been gathered. The Scorpion wait for the Crab oaths of fealty...

...which never come. Instead, Kuni Fujiko – the Crab Ambassador to the Hantei Court – stands proudly before the pyre, refusing the enemy demands. “The only Emperor I will have,” she says staunchly, “is Kisada himself.” With that, she spits at the Scorpion captors and leaps from the second-story platform onto the spires of the wall surrounding the palace grounds. Her defiance is a message to all other Crabs – submit to death or conform to the dishonor of the Scorpion regime.

Every Crab NPC gathered at the pyre follows Fujiko. Player characters gathered at the pyre face the same choice (unless some form of escape is presented by their particular abilities – magical flight, for instance). They may choose to side with the Scorpion (either truthfully – in which case they lose all their current Void Points and likely become an NPC for the remainder of the adventure; or deceptively – in which case they have to walk the very fine line of secretly aiding the resistance while outwardly supporting their new Scorpion allies).

Characters who side with the Scorpion should be taken aside and asked their motivation. If they are working for the Scorpion, the player should be provided another character elsewhere in the

adventure. If they are working against the Scorpion threat – and fulfill this promise by the end of the adventure – they should be awarded three or more bonus Experience Points as a result.

Crab characters who sacrifice themselves for the honor of their clan are perhaps the most noble of all. They should be allowed to create another character (of their choice) for the rest of the adventure – with an additional ten CP due to the player’s heroic act. Also, every non-Scorpion character and NPC that witnesses the act receives 1 free Void Point to spend on any Action taken against the Scorpion.

FIRE IN THE PALACE

Late this day, skirmishers inside the Forbidden City set fire to the Imperial Palace with several amazingly lucky indirect shots. At least, that’s what the Scorpion claim. In truth, a lantern in the Shadow Maze (Level 4 of the Imperial Palace) has been disrupted by the earlier saboteur (see page 23). A section of the maze burns out of control, and hot ashes ignites parts of the lower floors by dusk. Though the palace’s superstructure is largely undamaged, there is a great deal of concern for the first several hours. Shojū, Kachiko, and any prisoners on the fifth floor of the palace are moved up to the roof, where the smoke is less thick. The hostages are subsequently shifted into the abandoned Otomo palace (Locations 20–33 on the map of the Imperial Mound).

If any characters are interested in escaping the Scorpion, this is perhaps the best opportunity. With an Agility + Stealth roll of 20 or higher, one or more PCs can slip into the darkness and off the mound, where they can make their way beyond the inner wall and out of the Forbidden City.

RESCUE?

Even if the PCs do not attempt to escape on their own, help arrives in the form of a heimin servant (actually a Crane samurai in disguise). He is one of the group assigned to lead the hostages from the Imperial Palace to the Otomo stronghold, and approaches one or more PCs (along with the most influential NPCs among the courtiers) en route. He takes them to the Emperor’s Shintao Garden (Location 36), which holds a cache of tanto, dai-kyū, and peasant weapons.

From there, the Crane spy leads the hostages off the Imperial Mound and into the training grounds (Location 750), intending to flee the Forbidden City through the northern gate (Location 753). Unfortunately, the gate is guarded by a small cadre of Scorpion guards (roughly half as many as there are courtiers). Shojū does not consider this location critical to the defense of the city, and has redistributed many of the bushi that were stationed here to reinforce weakened locations.

The player characters are likely the most martial samurai present, as most of the other hostages are courtiers, diplomats, and emissaries. It is up to them (in conjunction with the Crane spy) to coordinate the attack and pierce the northern gate.

THE GREAT BEAR

Kisada arrives at Otosan Uchi a few hours before dark, joining the Lion, Phoenix, and others on the fields north of the city. Refusing to hesitate another night while the capital languishes in the hands of the enemy, he orders an immediate attack – to be coordinated before nightfall.

The combined forces of the clans march into the Hojize District through the inland road and occupy both it and the Hinjaku Districts with ease (they had been two of the disputed districts in the city since the Coup's beginning). From there, Kisada orders troops into the Toyotomi District and across the river into Hayasu and Juramashi, commandeering as many inland fishing and transport junks as he can. First advances are wildly successful, with most of the Outer City recaptured by dawn of Day Five. At first light, only the Tsai, Higshikawa, and Meiyoko Districts remain under Scorpion control.

The Great Bear's advance is stymied, however, by the Miwaku Kabe. Now firmly under Scorpion control, even the combined force of four clans cannot breach the Enchanted Walls.

Meanwhile, inside the Imperial Palace, the surviving Crab courtiers bargain with Shoju, using Kisada's advance as fuel for their release. "Do you really want this to continue, lord?" they ask. "Surely you understand that this devastation can be stalled or even stopped if you allow us to take word to our lords." Eventually, Shoju agrees, freeing the Crab diplomats to return to Kisada and their troops, and call for a halt to the fighting. Any PCs who have already endeared themselves with one or more of the Crab, or successfully convince them to recommend their release (requiring an Intelligence + Courtier roll of 20 or more) are allowed to leave with them, entering the *Skirmisher's Tale*.

A LOSS OF HOPE

When Kisada joins the siege, many Scorpion lose hope for their lord's struggle, and commit seppuku. Others visit the hostages, butchering them in anger over the poor outcome of their coup. The hostages may choose to fight back, flee, or use the distraction to complete other goals they have accumulated in the palace.

DEATH OF A HEIMIN

If the Seppun Miharu holding out in the hidden armory of the Imperial Palace have not been introduced by now (or have remained in the same hiding place), they are found and slaughtered this day. The wife and child of the heimin Ozuki (see page 20) will suffer a similar fate today, discovered in the confusion of the fire and Kisada's advance.

This unreasoning murder causes poor Ozuki to slip into irreparable madness, convincing him that striking a blow of vengeance at the Scorpion is worth any price. The heimin owns only one object of any value: a bloodied knife which he found in the palace gardens years ago. Without knowing the true nature of his find, Ozuki hid the weapon beside the reservoir behind the Imperial Palace, where it has rested ever since. Even near so much water, it has remained unblemished all these years (save for a thin trickle of blood which perpetually drips down its blue-white blade).

The knife is named *Kiken* ("Famine"), and is a maho-blade, created hundreds of years ago by the famous sorcerer, Iuchiban, during his time at the palace. It contains some faint intelligence, although it is far from a true blood-sword. *Kiken* is a tanto, with a 1k2 Damage Value, and contains 2 Void Points that you may



spend any time it is used (this Void is replenished each night at midnight). The knife is semi-sentient, and typically uses its Void to become 'lost' or overlooked by those it does not 'like'. Wielders of the blade who have fewer Void Points than it does at any given time are 'possessed' by Kiken's will; they become its servant until their Void is once again greater (note that control may swap several times each day as the Void Point totals for the character and the blade are spent and regained).

Ozuki plans to use the knife to assassinate Bayushi Kachiko – the wife of the Usurper – to avenge his own wife's death. He tests it on his own finger first, however, to check for dullness. From this, Kiken re-acquires a taste for blood and awakens, overpowering Ozuki instantly (poor Ozuki only has a Void of 1).

Once Kiken has taken possession of Ozuki, it begins to assassinate anyone who is 'pure' (any untarnished soul; i.e. anyone with an Honor of 4 or greater). This draws Ozuki into the courtier's room, where the most honorable people in the palace are located. Lying in wait, Kiken chooses the proper moment for Ozuki to strike, driving the knife into the back of the most honorable person in the room.

The courtiers should easily overpower Ozuki, leaving them with a strange weapon... one that they may not wish to keep once they realize its true power. Those who retain it anyway gain a point of Shadowlands Taint (cumulative) each week.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

With Kisada's success in the Outer City, Shoju and Togai order the Scorpion units in the Ekohikei to set up booby-traps, pitfalls, and other obstacles in preparation for an assault on the Enchanted Walls. These preparations are obvious from within the Imperial Palace (to anyone who succeeds with an Awareness + Battle roll; TN 15). It is also obvious to such characters that Kisada's next move could result in many, many deaths for the besieging armies if word of the defenses is not sent to him.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

In addition to the death-traps throughout the Ekohikei and Forbidden City, the Scorpion have concocted another desperate plan to thwart the onslaught. They send an assassin out of the city and into the Unicorn encampment with orders to kill Shinjo Yokatsu. He is also to leave evidence that a Crab (perhaps even a high-ranking military official) is responsible. The Scorpion hope this will shatter the fragile alliance Kisada has formed among the clans occupying the Outer City.

There are two ways to use this plot hook. One or more of the courtiers could become aware of the plot, forcing them to get the information out to Kisada and the other clans. Or – once the murder has occurred – one or more of the generals outside the Miwaku Kabe might suspect the Scorpion, and try to ferret out the culprits from the inside. This second option works best if the courtiers have forewarned the generals.

When Men Stand Divided

Day 5 (18th Day of the month of the Rooster)

During the fifth day of the Scorpion Clan Coup, the Scorpion suffer the greatest blow yet: with Kisada's help, the Six Clans take the rest of the Outer City. This is the day in which the *Skirmisher's Tale* (inside the Ekohikei) unites with the *Soldier's Tale*, and when the members of the *Courtier's Tale* first see a light at the end of the tunnel. Unfortunately, time is running out quickly for the courtiers, as their usefulness as hostages wears thin...

A HOSTAGE TRADE

Shortly after hearing that the Outer City has fallen, Shoju offers to exchange the hostages for concessions, meeting with a *chui* (lieutenant) from each of the clans arrayed outside the palace. If the negotiations succeed, as many as twelve of the courtiers (two from each clan) will be released to rejoin their clans later this day.

Shoju's demand is simple: the clans outside cease their attacks and negotiate in good faith for the Emerald Throne. Although Shoju has no intention of releasing the throne, he has commanded his Scorpion negotiators to appear compliant. He has also instructed the negotiators to incite tension between the clans outside during the talks.

His plan is simple. If the clans argue over a throne they have not yet won, then their attention will focus on the throne and not the man who is occupying it. Perhaps the negotiators can interject enough doubt to prevent any one clan from claiming the throne, leaving Shoju's rule unchallenged. Otherwise, the ruse keeps them all busy long enough for the Scorpion to consolidate their control over the city.

It is a desperate gamble, and the Scorpion courtiers sent into the clan camps already know this. They have been instructed to create as much dissension between the clans as possible, and only promise the hostages of the clans who were 'most helpful'.

Note that a Scorpion PC may step in as negotiator, or a bushi as a yojimbo or guard during the summit.

A SCORPION WANTS OUT

A traitorous Scorpion named Shosuro Gisako offers to help a group of courtiers escape if they are willing to disguise her and pass her off as one of their own. (Of course those who take her up on her offer will also be betraying their clan, by lying about the Scorpion's true nature – but this *is* a method of escape, and their conditions are getting worse by the hour.)

If the courtiers accept the Scorpion courtier's proposal, she leads them out through the *Shikojin* garden (Location 63 of the Imperial Palace map), dressed as Scorpions. She tells the guards that she and the PCs are carrying messages to the southern gate out of the Forbidden City, and instructs the PCs to let her do all of the talking. Though the PCs should be asked to make several Sincerity, Courtier, Oratory, and other Skill rolls, they are ultimately safe from suspicion in this scene – but it is your job to make sure they don't believe that.

Once outside, Gisako returns the courtiers' original clothing, and uses her Actor abilities to appear as a meek courtier of another clan (preferably the clan whose members she helped escape).

Shosuro Gisako fades into the background and vanishes shortly after being accepted into the clan encampments of the Outer City. True to her nature, however, she continues to follow the careers of those who helped her to escape, planning to kill them before they can expose her treachery.

THE MINOR CLANS NEGOTIATE

A missive arrives in the Scorpion city via a pearl diver who swims through the underwater passages and into the labyrinth under the Imperial Mound. The diver is a Mantis samurai, loyal to the brash daimyo, Yoritomo, and offers to sneak a number of the Scorpions out by sea, helping them to escape.

Shoju takes the offer very seriously, risking treachery for the safety of his most loyal retainers. (While he cannot afford to lose any troops at this juncture, courtiers are another matter altogether.)

Scorpion PCs are encouraged (or even ordered) to take this option. Brutally loyal Scorpions who refuse should understand that they will die in the next day's fighting. Those who accept may follow the diver through the subterranean river system, swimming to safety. Thereafter, they must live with their cowardice, and with the knowledge that they owe the Mantis Clan their life. A heavy burden for the clan who once stood faithfully by the Emperor's side.

BAYUSHI DAIRU

Dairu, Shoju's son, is ordered back from the worst of the fighting. (He was helping to defend the southern wall from Crane attackers.) Dairu has been seriously injured, and is carried into the palace on his own cloak, the blood-red cloth stained from a spear-wound in his side. Scarcely past his gempukku, Dairu fought valiantly, but was caught unawares when the Crane descended on his unit.

The last two Shosuro to survive the assault gained permission to bring his body back from the Wall, so that his final moments might be spent in the presence of his family. Servants throughout the palace whisper of the 'death' of Shoju's son. If the courtiers visit the halls that Dairu's body passed through (including the 'Way', Location 51), they find a lone eta woman, kneeling with a rag and a bucket to mop up the boy's blood. Her dark eyes are empty; she has seen far too much blood to be moved by death any longer.

At dawn, a wail rises through the chambers of the Scorpion. Dairu has died. With his death, his clan gains new ferocity; anger rages through the palace, and even the most somber Scorpions lift their swords once more, determined to make the Crane pay for their bloody deed. Even if the Scorpion lose the war, the Six Clans will know whom they have been fighting – and the price for their 'victory'.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

The fighting across Otosan Uchi's streets continues to go well for the Six Clans. The Crab armies make a tremendous difference, defeating the Scorpion in one location after another, pushing them back behind the massive walls of the Forbidden City. As the Scorpion retreat, members of the *Skirmisher's Tale* join the *Soldier's Tale* for the final day's combat. Among them stands the Akodo Champion, who has escaped the Kosuga District and rallied the forces of the Six Clans to victory.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

On the battlefield outside the capital, a brash young Dragon samurai-ko named Mirumoto Hitomi charges through the ranks, disobeying orders to challenge the son of a Crab general. She does not defeat him, but removes his hand 'in penance for taking her brother's life'. Rumors circulate about the source of this conflict, but the Scorpion see it as a path to survival – the clans are sure to fight amongst themselves now.

Even though the Mirumoto represent the least powerful of the armies present, their antagonism toward the Crab threatens the tenuous balance of Kisada's alliance (and the Six Clans' attempt to recapture the capital). Already, Scorpion spies report that Kisada is furious, demanding Sodanko's life. The Mirumoto refuse to relinquish her, even though many of their bushi agree with the Great Bear's demand. This strife in the ranks of the Six Clans can only benefit the Scorpion, and the Shosuro among the Six Clans eagerly use this opportunity to drive a wedge within the alliance.

In the Imperial Palace, rumors of the incident fly from mouth to mouth, alternately claiming that the Sodanko is dead, and that Kisada's son (or even Kisada himself) has fallen in the dispute. One of the older courtiers, Otomo Teken, has many contacts among the soldiers fighting at the wall and knows the truth of the story, relating it to those who will listen. He is the one element in the palace that balances the hysteria of the Coup's final hours.

The Face of My Enemy

Day 6 (19th Day of the month of the Rooster)

Near dawn on the sixth day, the Phoenix begin lashing out at the Enchanted Walls with tremendous spell-barrages, woven by dozens of shugenja working in unison. The forces they channel are earth-shattering; huge gouts of flame, torrents of wind, and pillars of earth assault the Four Walls of Otosan Uchi. But it readily becomes apparent that no spell can cut through the ancient magics protecting the Ekohikei.

The attack is an amazing display of raw power for any hostages left in the Imperial Palace. Nearby Scorpion guards shudder and quake as one wall of elemental force after another collapses upon the Miwaku Kabe.

The elemental siege continues well into the day, as the Six Clans hurl their armies against the weakest points of the wall. Phoenix hostages recognize each of the Five Isawa Masters

lending their strength to the concussions, driving through the ancient enchantments and finally piercing the southern gate through the Wall.

Together, the Six Clans funnel through the shattered gate, meeting the bulk of the Scorpion army in an epic skirmish bards will remember for years to come. Even with the bottleneck and preparation on their side, the Scorpion eventually fall to the siege, losing the Ekohikei as Toturi's armies settle around the Forbidden City.

The options for courtier characters explode now. The hostages are released shortly after the Imperial Palace is recaptured (as the duel between Shoju and Toturi reaches a fever pitch in the throne room), and those already escaped need no longer have to hide from Scorpion patrols.

Here, the *Courtier's Tale*, *Skirmisher's Tale*, and *Soldier's Tale* all unite in a final, sweeping victory sequence. As Gamemaster, you should grant the players as much freedom of movement and action as possible, and encourage them to both relish and enact the glory of the Six Clans' triumph.

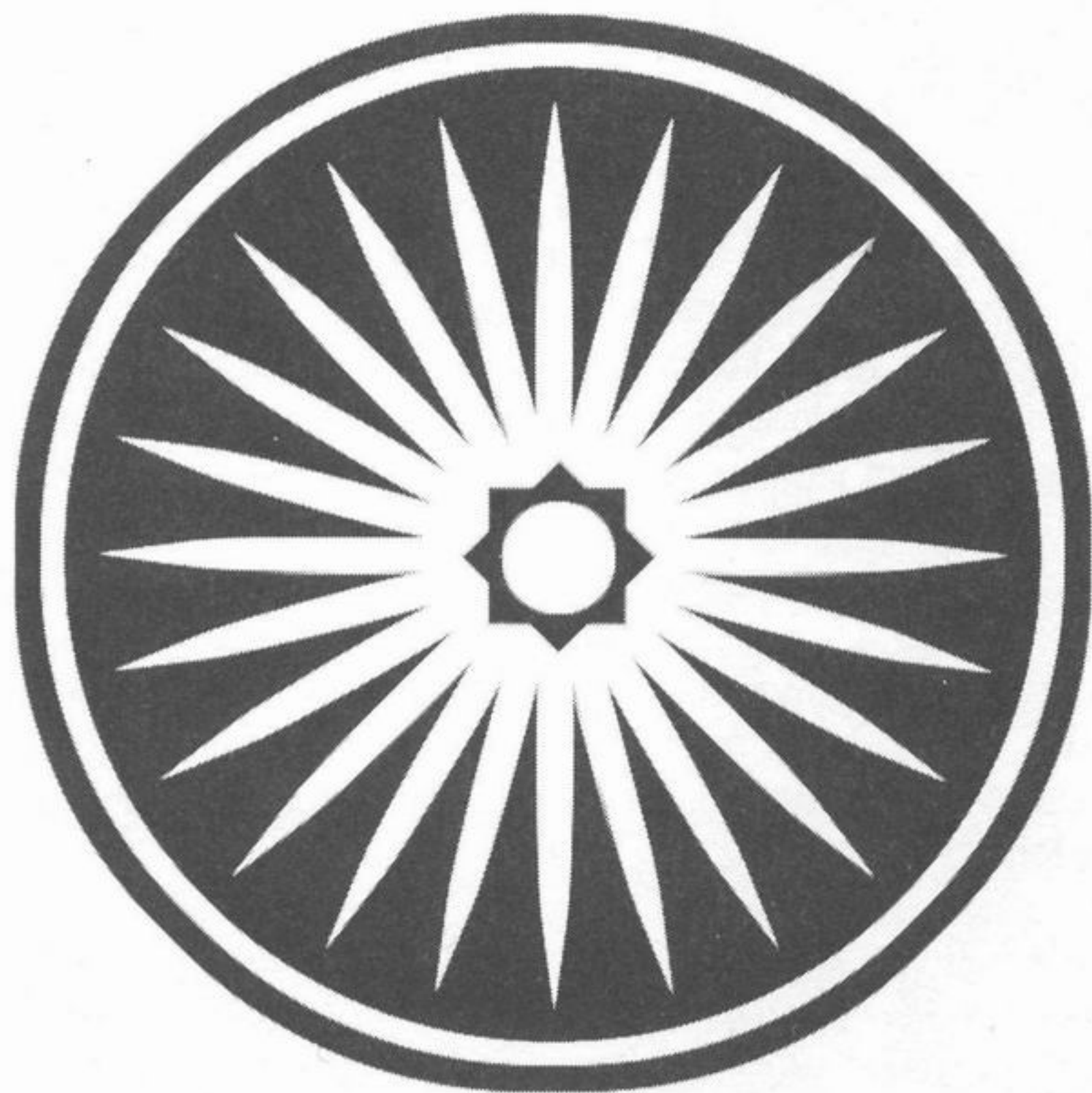
Pages 78-80 describe the events that transpire after the Coup is officially broken. In summary: The Phoenix spirited away Hantei Sotorii in the early moments of the Coup. Their magic changed Sotorii's childhood playmate to resemble him, and he sacrificed himself to draw attention away from the escaping heir.

Sotorii arrives in the throne room to find Toturi claiming the throne over the body of Bayushi Shoju. Incensed, Sotorii assumes the throne as the last Hantei, and declares the Akodo line to be ended, revoking the family's right to a name. The Scorpion Clan is to be destroyed utterly, except for Bayushi Kachiko, whom Sotorii marries.





Chapter Two:



The Skirmisher's Tale

Through Fire and Fury

Murder stalks the streets of the Golden Capital – murder and treachery. Shiba Tsukune looks back over one ash-covered shoulder at the eyes of seven men who follow her. Anger burns there, and anticipation, despite the thick coating of blood that smears their *hakima*. Around them, the magnificent gardens of Otosan Uchi resound with screams and *kiai* shrieks. Nearby, courtiers and Imperial Guards die one by one under Scorpion swords.

“Our orders are to find the swiftest passage to the plains northwest of the city. Do you understand?” Her voice is harsh from more than smoke, but holds the unmistakable ring of authority. The Phoenix guardsmen nod, bowing slightly.

“We will serve, Tsukune-sama.” Another scream through the clash of katana, and the ringing of a temple bell.

Isawa Sze, Tsukune’s companion, smiles grimly. Though he carries no sword in his obi and walks without a warrior’s grace, Tsukune knows he is prepared. Calmly, he holds a single rice-paper scroll to his chest as if it is a courtier’s fan.

Only one spell. It is enough.

It must be.

With a deft movement, Shiba Tsukune wraps a wetted cloth about her face to shield her from the smoke. It is all the protection she will have. She lifts her arm silently, and her men brace.

A leap, and they are gone. The palace walls fade into the smoke behind them, screams echoing as they cross the once-lovely garden. Thick fumes wash over them and hot ash burns their skin, blackening their once-golden *haori* vests. The Phoenix bushi move through the garden’s green paths with silent feet, their hands tightly gripped around the hilts of their katana. Any sound they might make is hidden by the loud crackling of fire through the trees, and the shouts of combat in the streets outside the Forbidden City.

Tsukune’s brow furrows as she approaches the delicately arched garden gate. The stonework is chipped and bloodied, and the ruined bodies of three men dressed in Imperial green lie in the roadway. The Scorpion have been here. Figures race down the

path, away from her and toward the city streets. More of Shoji’s men, certainly. Tsukune nods to her soldiers; they will have to fight their way out.

“May Shiba walk beside us,” she whispers, invoking the spirit of her ancient ancestor. Then, as swiftly as they had arrived, the Phoenix race out into the open streets. Through the bright fire and darkened smoke, figures loom and swords flash. The clouds of billowing ash part as the Scorpion turn toward them. “Phoenix,” yells one man, pointing. “Kill them all!”

His comrades turn, swords already in hand. Brilliant flames gleam from their shining black armor. The lead bushi are past the arch of the gate, close enough for Tsukune to see the hatred in their eyes. Around her, shouts tear from her men as they lift their swords from their *saya*. The Scorpion charge.

The first bushi steps close to Tsukune, his sword high above his head. She spins and draws her sword from its sheath with a snap. An *iaijutsu* strike – the quick-blow of a trained duelist – and the first Scorpion falls.

The Phoenix Clan bushi clash with the Scorpion guards, their swords parrying and whistling in the air, flashing bright like starlight in the darkness of the evening. One leaps past his Scorpion opponent and twists his grandfather’s blade in an arc, nearly cutting the man’s feet from beneath him. The Scorpion hops back and snarls, but a rivulet of blood trickles down his shin.

Tsukune feels a sudden burning pain in her shoulder, and reaches to pull a small dagger free. One of the Bayushi reaches into his obi for another shuriken, smiling beneath his mask. Throwing stars, probably poisoned. All Tsukune can do is pray that the drug merely sickens her, rather than killing her with its lethal touch. On both sides of the narrow street, flames spread dangerously and rooftops crumble. She lifts her sword once more as the black-masked assailant throws his second blade, gauging the distance and timing.

A solid clink, and the knife falls to her feet, deflected by an impossibly deft sword-blow.

Tsukune doesn’t have time to thank the Seven Fortunes, only to lower her katana and step towards her attacker. His swing is wild, frightened, and her parry thrusts the tip of her sword against his enameled black *do*. The cut is short, but the blade scrapes dangerously against his breastplate. Her wound is on fire, and the muscles in her shoulder start to throb in warning. In anger, Tsukune screams a *kiai* cry, hearing it echoed by her Phoenix brothers.

Again their swords blur, meet, and fall. The Scorpion staggers back, blood trickling from a gash between his ribs. Now the fight becomes a race between the Scorpion’s remaining strength and the poison trickling through Tsukune’s veins. She feels her breathing grow labored, her chest tighten...

Around her, Scorpion fall to Phoenix blades, their heads rolling in the gutters. The palatial estate of a Crane nobleman sways in the breeze as its interior paper walls erupt into flames. The structure twists and blackens with heat, then weaves back and forth as the wind spreads the fire through its wooden bones.

As the Bayushi strike again, the dwelling collapses in flames.

Tsukune spins and weaves, her sword dancing in the blast of heat that sweeps across the road. Sparks sting her eyes, but she cannot afford to look away. One wrong step, and the Scorpion's attack will finish her.

When their swords touch again, she feels him weaken. Sliding her blade along the length of his, she steps into the Scorpion's thrust, guiding the hilt of his katana past her hip. Then, standing with her own katana poised against his rib cage, she twists her body to the side, stepping away from the Bayushi's startled form. Drawing her sword back down the blade of his own, Tsukune neatly tears him in two.

Behind her, only four of her original seven guards remain standing. Their robes bloodied and stained, they cut down the remaining Scorpion with swift strokes. Tsukune turns toward the fallen building. A tremendous pile of burning wreckage now fills the small street completely. The hope in Tsukune's heart dies; the ruin now blocks the shortest passage to the Northern Gate - their only hope of escape. Now, the Phoenix have to retrace their route back through the Forbidden City, down to the Southern Gate. It is an exit that stands miles away, through a burning city filled with traitors.

Tsukune raises her head, black eyes resolute. If the Phoenix are to die, then they will die fighting for the Emperor. "We cannot pass this way," she says shortly.

"We can." Sze's voice is soothing, like a clear stream of water.

Tsukune wheels, sheathing her katana with a deft motion. "How? The road is blocked. We cannot fight those flames."

"We are Phoenix." Sze lifts his chin proudly. "No way is barred to us." The shugenja raises his hand, and a thin paper scroll trails in the wind. "The kami will clear our path." His voice echoes as he chants, raising his other hand into the air to call upon the wind-spirits that rest on the breeze. Softly, he draws upon the essence of the element, feeling each brush of wind upon his face, his fingers. Sze moves his open palm through the air in intricate prayer, his voice growing louder with each passage.

The wind grows, and Tsukune's hair whips into her eyes. Dust and ash lift into a great tornado, churning with the force of the storm, but Sze never falters in his rhythmic chant. Instead, his voice grows louder once more, beseeching the kami of air to heed his words.

At last, standing in the center of a towering cloud of wind, Isawa Sze points. One moment, the rubble of a burning house stretches from street to street - and the next, a massive gust of wind tears through the wreckage. The flames devouring the building explode into short-lived fireballs, then hurl away from the Phoenix bushi. The house itself, struck by the force of a hundred mighty breaths, scatters into shreds of paper and huge blazing splinters.

The road is clear.



Silent and grim, the Phoenix bushi charge through the opening toward the northern gate. Air presses tightly against Tsukune's lungs, but she refuses to pause. The wound from the poison blade aches, but there is no time to rest or heal. Within minutes, the Scorpion will secure the city, barricading the main gates and partitioning the roads so that none can pass.

The road twists through the city, over an arched bridge sheltering terrified peasants. The river that flows past is filled with flaming debris and thin streaks of blood. A child whimpers loudly as Tsukune leads her men over the stone span.

There is no time to pause.

At last, the great spires of the Northern Gate rise through the fire and chaos. Gold trellises shine in the firelight, and Tsukune steps past three more dead Imperial guardsmen. As the city roars in flames behind them, the Phoenix hear a challenging voice call out, "Halt or be destroyed!"

Twenty men stand guard over the Northern Gate, their faces bloodied with fighting. Some clutch iron-studded tetsubo, while others raise katana in warning. All bear Scorpion mon. Tsukune and her men pause, some gasping for breath. One of the yojimbo coughs, and from his mouth trickles a thin line of blood. Tsukune's heart falls; though the Scorpion seem unprepared and injured, this is a battle that the Phoenix cannot win.

A tall, thin warrior in blood-hued armor steps forward from the Bayushi at the gate. His voice is rich and his movements careful, exacting; the steps of a trained duelist. "You will lower your weapons," he calls, "and surrender yourselves to Shoju."

"Never," Tsukune hears Sze whisper, and the other Phoenix nod softly.

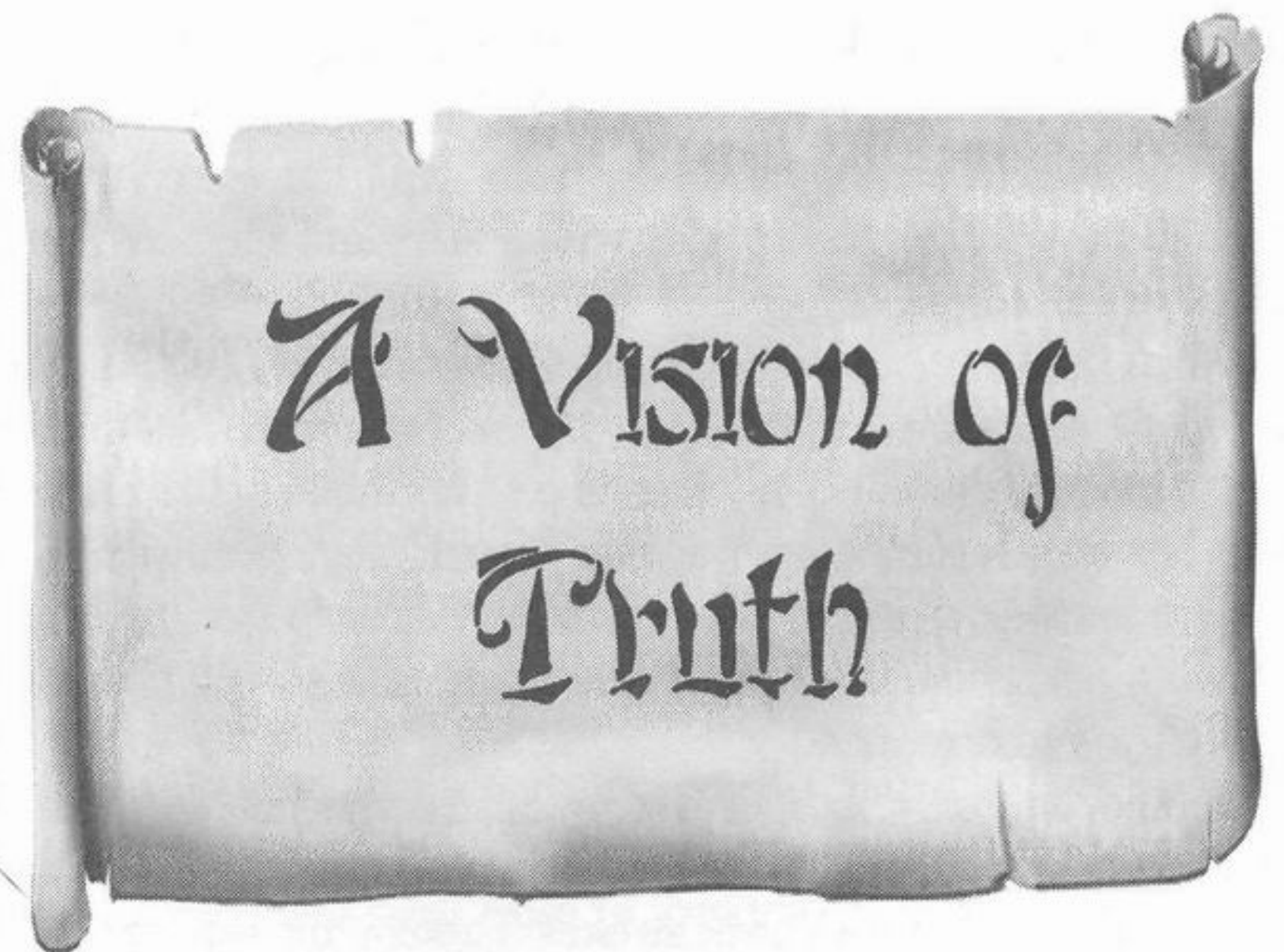
Beyond the Scorpion, the fields outside the capital gleam whitely in the pale moonlight, the fires of the city casting a pallid shadow on the hills. "I am Shiba Tsukune, daughter of the Phoenix daimyo Shiba Jimen, and yojimbo to the Elemental Masters themselves." She forces bravery into her weary voice. "And you will let us pass."

The Scorpion pauses, unprepared for such a challenge. "I am Bayushi Tsumori, son of Bayushi Baku and defender of the Yogo lands." His title and station are impressive, but Tsukune cares little for status. "I hold this gate under the command of Bayushi Shoju, Scorpion Clan Champion. Do you dare challenge me?"

It is their only hope. In a moment, the Scorpion will attack, and the Shiba will die. Tsukune lowers her head, feeling the poison in her veins. If she is successful, the Scorpion will be bound by honor to allow the Phoenix to pass. If she fails, they will all be put to death for her rashness.

Shiba Tsukune raises her father's katana high above her head. Her black hair waves like a banner, flowing in the wind of the ravaged city. "By my ancestors, I do challenge you, Scorpion. And with their blessing, I will defeat you." Her eyes shine with dedication and confidence, and her katana spins with captured firelight.

The Bayushi smiles acidly behind his metal mempo and lifts his own sword in salute...



Otosan Uchi lies cold and whispering in the dusky twilight. Above the Imperial Palace, banners fly in the faint wind, lazily unfurling their mon for all to see.

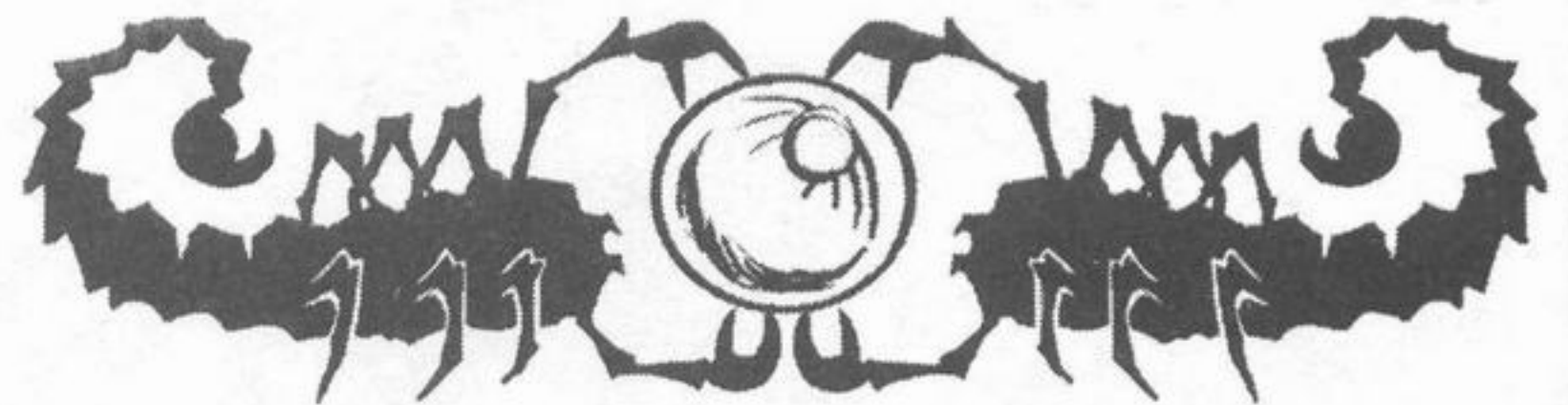
The Hantei lives here.

USES FOR THIS CHAPTER

There are many ways to begin the Scorpion Clan Coup adventure; *The Skirmisher's Tale* is designed to be played by characters who are within the city, but not in the Emperor's Court. The PCs may be the yojimbo to a diplomat, courtiers who have come home for the evening, or simple travelers passing through the city. In order to begin *The Skirmisher's Tale*, the characters must be inside the gates of the Imperial City and have some reason to be outside the Forbidden City in the brief moments before the Coup begins.

The other chapters of this book detail alternate openings to the story of the Scorpion Clan Coup, for those characters in the Emperor's Palace during the Scorpion's arrival (*The Courtier's Tale*), or those outside Otosan Uchi just before the Coup begins (*The Soldier's Tale*).

The Skirmisher's Tale is perhaps the most easily adaptable of any scenario in this book, for it requires little to no lead-in, and there are few things more motivating to a player character than the possible loss of their own life.



PREPARING TO RUN THIS SCENARIO

Within the Imperial City, there are many NPCs – members of the various clans who have traveled to the capital or are serving as yojimbo or messengers for the governors of the city districts. In order to run *The Skirmisher's Tale*, you will need to brush up on the other books in this boxed set; notably Book One, which details Otsan Uchi's streets and provinces. Ambassadors and district Governors (detailed in Books One and Two) walk through the city streets, completely unaware that the bustling city is about to turn into a war zone. You should become comfortably familiar with them in advance, compiling a list of probable encounters that suit the story you wish to tell.

In order to properly begin *The Skirmisher's Tale*, the following rumors and information should be disseminated to PCs within the Imperial City. Whether or not the characters hear them should be based upon their clan, actions, and the likelihood that these whispers could reach their ears. Remember, however, that the PCs will be greatly aided by knowing at least some of them, and that you should endeavor to include those that will directly affect their decisions during the course of play.

Note that the rumors presented in *The Courtier's Tale* (see page 11) may also be introduced to Skirmisher PCs during or before play commences.

- **Crab:** Last week, a fight broke out between Hida Benkei and a monk called Izusi, who was caught spying upon the Crab war offices. As it turns out, Izusi was a disguised Scorpion, and news of the deception now spreads throughout the city.

Though many accept such dishonorable spying from the Scorpion, the Crab have decreed that their 'monks' should remain in their own districts – or next time, they will return home in head-bags.

- **Crane:** Crane bodyguards and yojimbo remain close to home these days, filling their city districts with bristling marches and parade practice. Pride about their victory at Shiro no Yojin (see *Legacy of the Forge*) swells every day, as more and more troops arrive to reinforce the Imperial Guard. But some say that the Crane are still wary that their ancient enemies, the Scorpion, will move against them. Any Crane seeking refuge in his family's provinces is questioned carefully before the hand of friendship is extended.

- **Dragon:** Rumors claim that Togashi Yokuni has withdrawn all of his ambassadors as a rebuke against the Lion-Crane war, but if this is the case, the Dragon aren't verbally supporting his actions. The other families of the Dragon know nothing of

Yokuni's actions, and have no restrictions on their actions – but hardly any *ise zumi* or Kitsuki are in the city.

Recently, a tattooed monk named Togashi Gemasa has planted himself at the center of the Garden of Juramashi's Honor (Location 627), refusing to move and eating only a bowl of rice a day, as if in protest.

Yet, when asked, he says he is only 'watching.'
Watching for what?

- **Lion:** In response to internal strife within the Lion Clan, street fights have broken out between the Clan House Guard and traveling Lion samurai. Matsu openly argue with the Akodo, challenging their honor and the honor of their Champion. Any Lion PC in the city finds himself subjected to rude treatment from the 'other side', and even from unaligned samurai, who are expecting trouble at the first sight of any Lion mon.

- **Phoenix:** Rumors of dark magics in the Phoenix lands travel like wildfire across the city, and Phoenix are given a wide berth. You never know who has the Taint these days.

Also, a Crab named Hida Yusoki is seeking Phoenix all across Otsan Uchi, looking for the Taint among them. He boasts loudly of what he will do when he finds it. "The outbreak of mujina in this past year's Winter Court is only one example of Phoenix corruption," he states flatly. "I will find the rest, and purge them before they can contaminate the Imperial Capital."

- **Minor Clan or Ronin:** Whispers abound that the Minor Clans are quietly opening their doors to traveling ronin, hoping to strengthen their armies in case the Crane or Lion attack (or in case Shoji's mighty army begins to march, though that seems far less likely). Any ronin in the Imperial City can easily find hospitality from the Three-Man Alliance in exchange for their skill with a sword.

- **Scorpion:** Scorpion in Otsan Uchi fall into one of three categories: those who know everything about the Coup; those who know little about the Coup, but have received orders indicating trouble in the city; and those who know nothing of the Coup, and have not been alerted to upcoming trouble. More information about how to deal with each of these character types is available in *The Courtier's Tale* (see page 13).

RIOTS IN THE STREETS

As the Scorpion bushi advance through the city, the citizens of the Otsan Uchi are in panic. Looting is on the rise and many unsavory citizens turn to thieving. Throughout some of the poorer districts, many peasants break into stores and houses, removing food and other items of worth.

Samurai of merit – especially magistrates – may desire to put an end to the looting. Fighting off thieving peasants should be simple, but if a rabble-rouser successfully raises the ire of the crowd, the samurai may find themselves facing down a mob.

The Moment Before the Strike

The *Skirmisher's Tale* takes place across the whole of Ootosan Uchi's Outer City, from its twisting streets to its glorious manor houses; from the deepest squalor of the northern eta villages to the merchant rows beside the Miwaku Kabe. It weaves through all levels of the Empire, and in it, the PCs wage war against an obviously superior enemy, aiding the massive troops that thunder just outside the city walls. If they are successful, the Scorpion will be unable to resist the final attack of the Six Clans. If not, the Scorpion may hold the city despite all outside efforts.

As with the *Courtier's Tale*, the first few events of this scenario occur the day before the Scorpion Coup, about a day and a half before Shoju kills Hantei the 38th.

All characters who begin with *The Skirmisher's Tale* are inside the great walls of Ootosan Uchi, but outside the Imperial Court and denied access to its political power. For some, this may be a matter of course (ronin are not often invited to splendid celebrations), while for others, it may indicate disfavor (the Crab, after all, were not invited to the celebration, as described during *The Courtier's Tale*; see page 14).

In order to maintain playable continuity with the other *Tales*, events inside the city are listed along with their parallels in the court and outside the city walls so that all characters within a PC group may become involved.

During the day before the arrival of the Scorpion, the players should be allowed to interact with the common folk of the city, from samurai to peasant. Perhaps they choose to reside with one of their dignitaries, within one of the districts controlled by their clansmen. Or perhaps they choose to rest in a pleasant tea house by the river's edge, relaxing while awaiting orders. Regardless of their location, PCs should have the chance to overhear a few rumors. Those with the Investigation Skill may also learn rumors from clans other than their own (this may be handled during roleplay, or with an Awareness + Investigation total vs. a TN of 10, with each Raise indicating another rumor: GM discretion applies).

THE DEATH OF KITSUKI YARUMA

The seppuku of the Dragon Ambassador (see *The Courtier's Tale*, page 14) stuns the court, sending allegations throughout all of the clans. The ramifications of this event trickle out into the city with astonishing speed, as the Seven Clans speculate who will take the old man's place. Did the Scorpion have anything to do with the Dragon Ambassador's seppuku? Was the event engineered by the Crab in order to bolster Kisada's argument against the Hantei Emperor?

In the streets, the Dragon are furious. Traveling Kitsuki declare that they will solve the mystery – some even claim insult from the Crab and Scorpion, and challenge them to duels in fits of drunken rage.

One group of Magistrates in particular, led by a Dragon samurai named Kitsuki Emishi, promises to solve the mystery before they leave the capital. It seems that Emishi had intended to meet with Yaruma in the morning to discuss orders from Yokuni himself. His orders commanded the old man to leave the city immediately. Now, the magistrate is left to wonder if the man's death had anything to do with him, or the Dragon Clan as a whole.

Some Mirumoto samurai say that Yaruma took his life to protest the Lion-Crane war, while others mention the aged Kitsuki's weary demeanor and determine that he took his own life rather than be sent to a monastery. Still others – mainly Crabs – argue that the Dragon's death was at the Emperor's command, and that Hantei is deliberately causing trouble so that he will not be called to interfere in the problems of the Empire.

AFTERNOON

Whispers say that Shoju is coming to see the Emperor tonight, bringing a message of great importance. Many believe that his wife, Kachiko, is pregnant with another Scorpion heir, thus placing the title and inheritance of her first son, Dairu, in jeopardy.

THE SCORPION GATHER

In celebration of Shoju's arrival, the Emperor declares that a feast shall be held later this evening. All the major Ambassadors of the court are invited – but more importantly, certain people (the Kuni diplomats and Crab emissaries) are not, by request of the Scorpion daimyo. This disgrace fosters even more resentment within the Crab Clan, and many claim that the Emperor is deliberately abusing them, sending them away from the festivities, and not allowing them their proper place in court.

THE CRANE

Later in the day, the Doji daimyo, Hoturi, leaves the city unexpectedly in order to deal with business affairs in *Mura Minamo Cushin* (the southernmost of the four Holy Home Villages). Crane in the city are told that the daimyo's honorable father, Doji Satsume, has called his son away on a matter of pressing business.

Perhaps the war for Shiro Akodo is beginning in earnest...?

TOTURI LEAVES THE COURT

During the afternoon, characters may see the Lion Champion, Akodo Toturi, heading for the geisha district. Though the Akodo claim it is not unusual for a Champion to seek relaxation and rest from the annoyances of the court, rumors spread – why is he relaxing while the Crane prepare to invade his homeland?

This spurs another argument between the Matsu and Akodo troops within the city, and an entire Matsu *guntai* (ten men) openly challenge a similar unit of Crane samurai. Their screams are heard all about the Hidari District: “You may have purchased Akodo honor, but you will not have ours!”

Magistrates in the city have their hands full. Kitsu ambassadors are asked to step in and calm the raging tempers, but little can be done. Lion PCs wishing to search for Toturi among the geisha houses of the district may hear rumors of his location, but will not find their Champion before the Scorpions attack the city.

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

This encounter works best if introduced on a crowded street, where the PCs may be easily distracted by their surroundings.

Running and careening around a corner, a peasant stumbles, trips, and skids across the rocky ground of the city street, falling right before the PCs. He looks up to see the samurai and immediately falls prone, seeking forgiveness for his mis-step.

He apologizes over and over... perhaps too much.

The samurai have intercepted a Scorpion spy. Whether they know it or not, he has a vital message that he must carry from one wall of the city to another. Disguised as a peasant messenger, he is moving through the city, undetected until now.

The PCs' response to this encounter determines how the scenario proceeds. The messenger must transfer information about the progress of Scorpion troops beneath and within the city from one group to another. Should the PCs ignore him (ending this encounter), the Scorpion will be smoothly coordinated when they take the Outer City. If they instead detain the peasant for interrogation or magical intervention, several of the Scorpion cells may be cut off, and forced to act independently when Shojū's signal comes.

Although the peasant is dedicated to the Scorpion, a shugenja may be able to extract a few important bits of data. In every case, however, the Scorpion tries to deflect questions, making it appear that only a few Scorpions are operating here, and that they are working alone.

GMs interested in expanding this encounter could have the spy tip the PCs off about one or more pivotal military moves planned for later in the day – maneuvers which the PCs might be able to intercept if they are swift and cunning. You should take care in this case, however, not to leak too much to the PCs too soon, lest the Coup be averted altogether.



The 38th Hantei Falls

The night is cold, with the bitter taste of sea-winds rifling the pale flags above the gates. Samurai walk the city streets, their heimin lantern-bearers eager to show them to their destination, so that they can be out of the autumn chill. In the palace, high above the casual merchant-districts and soft lights of geisha houses, torches flare and glow, heralding the sumptuous party within. Shoju, Champion of the Scorpion, has come home to his brother.

Who knows what secrets they shall share?

In a dark alcove deep within a small tea-house, a maiden offers her lord a glass of tea. "You are crying," he says wonderingly, lifting a finger to steal her tear.

"Drink, my master," she whispers, "and I will cry no more."

A thunderclap bursts above the city, and heavy rain falls from the heavens, drowning sorrow in an angry flood. Bells ring, fire flashes from estate and temple, and samurai scream through the streets in armor as black as night.

One samurai, a Crane, falls to his knees. "You have killed the Emperor," he says in a voice shocked by the blasphemy he utters. "You have killed the Hantei..." The Scorpion takes his head in a single blow, then races on to seal the gates. The streets burst with fire and screams, and blood.

"Long live Shoju, the First of his name."

EVENING

There is a brilliant flash of lightning and a tremendous clap of thunder (the work of well-prepared Soshi, which signals all of Shoju's loyal Scorpion in the city of the Emperor's death). On the Enchanted Walls, twin Soshi brothers have unleashed a terrible storm.

In an instant, the Scorpion hidden in the streets throw off their disguises, draw their blades, and attack. Soshi shugenja, sequestered throughout the city, seal the gates with spellcraft. Bayushi and Yogo use deadly force to shut down entire districts of Otosan Uchi. The Scorpions offer only one chance for surrender to any member of the samurai caste. If anyone resists, they die.

SEIZING THE IMPERIAL CITY

All of these events here take place during the evening of the 13th day of the Rooster, when Hantei the 38th is killed. The Scorpion attack is swift, deadly, and efficient. Their men gain a foothold in every district of the city; even as Shoju's sword cuts through the Emperor's body, they climb from the waterways and hidden places, commanding the city gates and blocking thoroughfares.

The river and bay ports of the Higshikawa and Meiyoko Districts, where many Scorpion are already in place, are taken almost immediately. Toyotomi, another Scorpion-controlled district, moves to secure the northwestern inland road that leads to the heart of the Empire, cutting Otosan Uchi off from the outside world. In the opening days of the Coup, the most successful defensive positions against the Scorpion are the Kosuga, Juramashi, Hinjaku, and Hojize Districts, where confusing street plans and previously fortified magistrate stations conspire against them.

RUNNING THE SCENE

The following are two simple adventure hooks to help bring the Coup to characters in the city. If your PCs are in Otosan Uchi when the strike begins, they must defend themselves against the Scorpion. They have three choices: surrender, fight and hide, or make for the city gates and attempt to flee the city.

Seizing the Gambling House

As the PCs enjoy a pleasant evening of gambling or other diversions, thunder rumbles above the city, and rain begins to pelt the building. Many patrons look up, cursing in annoyance at the unexpected rain, and continue their games...

...until a bleeding magistrate steps inside the door, dripping blood and rain across the floor. He croaks a bitter warning, "The Emperor... is dead..." and then falls to the ground. Outside, in the streets, fires light the sky, and Scorpion bushi flood the streets, cutting down anyone who stands in their way.

Fighting in the Streets

Ten Scorpion bushi gather at every street-corner, headed for the gates and important estates of the city. They force open the doors of Kyuden Kokai (the prison of the Toyotomi District, Location 375), ushering the prisoners into the streets as a distraction.

Character opting to flee the Scorpion must generate Agility + Athletics totals (TN of the chasing bushi's Agility x5). Characters wearing armor add 5 to their TN (10 if heavy).

In the confusion, the Scorpion begin to solidify their command of Otosan Uchi. Within an hour, even the river will not be a viable escape route; Scorpion archers stationed at both the mouth and the entrance of the river shoot anyone who attempts to swim out.

Behind Night's Shadow

Day 1 (14th day of the month of the Rooster)

The streets of the Emperor's city are filled with ash and blood; the heavy heel of the Scorpion Clan has crushed the life from the Imperial Guard. The Emerald Champion's empty residence (Locations 49-50) burns brightest among the carnage, and the screams of magistrates can be heard, as they clutch their wounds in gutters and forgotten roads.

Characters trapped within the burning rubble of the Outer City are surrounded by small battles and burning buildings. Although open warfare dies down slowly as dawn approaches, there are still pockets of resistance in tea and geisha houses, beneath the city streets, and amid the wreckage of the city itself. Through the long and harrowing night, the Scorpion seize control of the Inner and Outer Walls.

The Outer City is currently controlled by two men: Bayushi Togai, general of the Scorpion armies, and Bayushi Sundokai, charged with crushing all resistance in the city. No force in the city is strong enough to stop them; no single clan has the resources. The river flows through the city, now filled with the blood of their enemies. Those who choose to hide near the water's edge see the bodies of Emerald Guardsmen and other samurai floating slowly toward the ocean. They may even note faces of family, friends, trusted men and women...

The city has been partially destroyed; fires still rage throughout, and buildings have been deliberately collapsed into the streets. From thin avenues to rooftops, characters see Soshi shugenja standing on the Enchanted Walls of the Forbidden City. The banners of the Scorpion rise above the palace, defying all opposition.

Pockets of Emerald Guardsmen fight pitched battles to survive, and characters find other samurai hiding in the wreckage searching for a way out of the city. Once outside, they say, they plan to alert their daimyo to the treachery of the Bayushi. Their clans will avenge Hantei, they are sure.

The city is in chaos: few leaders are left, and bodies line the streets. The Scorpion arrive in tremendous numbers, and their shugenja have prepared spells of incredible magnitude.

Through descriptions of the Scorpion troops and blockades, the players should see that hope is faltering. Emerald Magistrates are hunted down like rats, and all those who surrender are taken to Kyuden Kokai (Location 375), to be locked away with the *heimin* rabble of the city. Though hundreds of peasants still huddle in their charred houses, and some districts have been spared, the city has little resistance left. There are no banners outside the city gates, no signs of help approaching. The Scorpion have sealed the gates with fire and stone torn from the foundations of nearby buildings. The population is trapped under Scorpion control, their lives threatened and their peaceful commerce destroyed.

Ricocheting sounds of explosives (forbidden for centuries, since the *gaijin* invasion of White Stag) rock through the city as ancient buildings fall to block wide thoroughfares. Echoing strains of wood and horrific detonations precede the collapsing of gutted buildings as the Bayushi manufacture blockades and other death-traps. Anyone within the city can see the Bayushi are preparing for a prolonged siege.

THE BLACKENED CITY

Scorpion-governed districts of the city (Toyotomi, Meiyoko, Tsai, and Higshikawa) are the starting point for Scorpion troops in Ootosan Uchi. From there, they extend outward in a wheel-formation to contain surrounding districts. Kosuga falls early (or appears to; in reality, the greatest resistance cell in the city - led by Akodo Toturi - is hidden there). The worst fighting spreads through the Hidari, Hojize, and Hinjaku Districts, where well-prepared governors vie against the Scorpion threat. At first, Hayasu, Juramashi and the pacifistic Ochiyo Districts remain largely self-contained, regardless of Scorpion saboteurs and small strike teams.

But that will change soon enough...

RUNNING THIS SCENE

Through this section of the adventure, the characters are hunted by Scorpion guards, narrowly escaping capture as the Soshi track their every move. They may meet pockets of resistance throughout the city, also struggling to escape - or to find ways into the palace, where they can free the hostages who have been taken by Shoju (see the *Courtier's Tale*).

The players should have every reason to believe that the Scorpion are right on their tail at every turn. Sundokai's troops should eventually ferret out their hiding places and discover their routes as they move from district to district. Their characters *certainly* shouldn't feel that this is easy, though you should make sure they have a chance to see and understand (and most importantly, interact with) all of the important events presented during the *Skirmisher's Tale*. Read this chapter carefully, noting which events you would like to use and adapting each to the players' style - and your own.

BENEATH THE STREETS

As noted in the map of Otosan Uchi's cavernous sewers (and Chapter 14 of Book One), there are many hidden ways beneath the city - man-made passages and natural tunnels caused by tremendous fissures deep beneath the ground. While dangerous, these fissures can provide a means of moving about the city - or even outside the walls themselves.

While the Scorpion have blockaded any entrances they know of (the ones they used to get into the city in the first place), there is much to the labyrinth that has never been explored. If the PCs have seen the sewer map of the city, you are advised to expand upon it, introducing new and more complex cavern-systems filled with Scorpion guards, booby-traps, natural pitfalls, and other dangers.

ONE BUSHI'S WAR

During the day, characters may interact with one of the minor heroes of the Clan Wars: Shiba Tsukune. She escaped from the palace last evening (see *The Courtier's Tale* for more), and is leading a small group of Phoenix warriors (and one shugenja, Isawa Sze) to the outer gates of the city. These Phoenix are dedicated, honorable, and determined to escape the walls at any cost. Speed is their shield; they avoid conflict, if possible. If Tsukune encounters the PCs, she may urge them to join her flight, possibly escaping to join *The Soldier's Tale*.

STAND AND FIGHT?

Honorable samurai will be against the idea of hiding from the cowardly Scorpion, but an entire squad of Bayushi bushi can make short work of a brash samurai PC. However, PCs should understand that you can still fight a war from within. Furtive attacks and guerrilla action during the siege can win the war while the soldiers fight from outside the walls.

If the PCs are interested in living to fight another day, then hiding and scurrying through the city streets may be a smart way to avoid the Scorpion army. Is skulking dishonorable? Ask a Daidoji or Hida bushi, and he'll tell you 'no'. PCs free to move about the city can cause significant damage to the Scorpion forces. *The Skirmisher's Tale* is the most dangerous of the three adventures of the Scorpion Coup - and the most profitable.

PCs should be under constant fear that they've been spotted, or being chased. Increase the tension with a lot of die rolls, fugitive glances, and the occasional, "What are you doing?"

The Battle skill is important in fighting off the Scorpion, while Stealth and Agility are used to hide from the enemy. Feel free to improvise and keep the PCs guessing as to what is really happening in the city. Otosan Uchi is a large city, and your samurai can't see the whole thing at once.

Early in the morning, the Phoenix arrive at the Northern Gate into Otosan Uchi, where a number of Scorpion guards stand firm against their charge. Shiba Tsukune challenges their general (a man twice her age) to a lethal iaijutsu duel, to save her men from the fight.

Just before the duel, however, PCs with Tsukune note one of the Soshi, at the rear of the Scorpions, who raises his hands and whispers a few words into the air. A scroll, held tightly in his hand, glows for but a second, and then dims again.

There is no way Tsukune may witness the treachery herself, nor does the general she faces. But a PC's successful Intelligence + Lore (Shugenja) or Spellcraft (TN 20) reveals that the spell is *Biting Steel*. Tsukune's opponent now has the advantage...

Can the players afford to interrupt the duel in order to prevent Tsukune's dishonorable death? If they do not, can they afford the consequences?

THE DEATH OF THE HEIR

Before the end of the Coup's first day, news of Sotorii's death spreads through the city. The Scorpion seem both relieved and worried by this, as if many had hoped that it would not happen. Many publicly pray to their ancestors, begging forgiveness for their transgressions against the 'Sons of Heaven'.

In the streets, a group of ten monks climb to the highest peak of the Temple to the Sun Goddess (Location 709). Their leader kneels before a Scorpion, asking permission to toll the huge bell and mark the passing of the boy-prince.

Any PCs in *The Skirmisher's Tale* may witness this scene, or hear the bell as it tolls only a few moments later. While the courtiers in the palace ready the Imperial Pyre, the city mourns the loss of the Last Hantei, and many noble guardsmen commit seppuku.

One possible way to impart this news to the PCs is through a Seppun Miharu, who meets with them during their flight through the city, and stands beside them during the first day's battles. As the bell tolls, he turns to the character with the highest Glory, and says, "It is my place to be with Sotorii. Be my second, honorable samurai-san." The PCs witness his seppuku, and bear testimony of his honor to all who will listen after the Coup has passed.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY ONE

Two conflicts within the Outer City are presented here. Either may be expounded upon for use in this scenario, as a single encounter or as an entire evening's play.

Death of a Samurai-ko

During the siege of the city, the Scorpion release the 'prisoners' of Kyuden Kokai ('The Palace of Remorse', Location 375). Among them are a group of rebels determined to exact revenge upon the Scorpion for their attack on the Emperor and the city (for more on their motives, see the location's entry in Book One). The

Scorpion do not expect the prisoners to resent their freedom, and are taken unawares – at first.

The rebels are led by a Shiba samurai-ko named Akutiso. During the escape, Akutiso is killed with a vicious blow from a Bayushi guard, struck down from behind with no honor. Though the guard also dies in the fight, the implications of this assault will present themselves later in this *Tale* (see page 42).

Two other samurai were present when Shiba Akutiso died, and both were courting her. One is Daidoji Rubaiten, and the other – Ikoma Nejire – is a Lion shugenja trained at the Isawa school. Either or both should be introduced here to help build continuity with later sequences of the adventure. See their character descriptions on page 42.



The Burning Dojo

One of the most prominent estates in the Outer City, the dojo of local legend Shinjo Torasu (Location 724) is on fire. Torasu's students try to fend off Scorpion legions while fighting the flames. Inside the house hides a Unicorn noblewoman (Shinjo Musiko). She has only recently given birth to Torasu's child, and cannot be moved. Ten students are with her, unwilling to leave, but also unable to risk her life by moving her. Fourteen Scorpion (including one Soshi shugenja) wage a private war to take the icon. The Soshi casts *Inflame* on the dojo, while Torasu duels the rest. The players must draw off the Scorpion attack, allowing the students to put out the flames. If possible, the PCs may attempt to save Shinjo Musiko, but she must be carried, and will take a Wound level if moved.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

The smell of funeral pyres within the Imperial Palace sparks rumors throughout the city. The few who escape the Forbidden City early this day attest to the Scorpion cruelty – and the bitter fate of those who resisted.

Escapes from *The Courtier's Tale* carry news of Prince Sotorii's death. One representative of each clan (including Crab) is brought before Shoju, near twilight. In full view of them, a youth's body is carried on a cloak and laid before Shoju. It is Sotorii, son of the Hantei Emperor and the final heir to the throne. The body has all identifying marks, possessions, and obvious traits of the young prince.

Other messages arrive from the palace servants – brothers and sisters of *heimin* in the city. The messages arrive with those who carry food for the troops, or messages for the Scorpion in the Outer City. On their return trips, these *heimin* may be able to smuggle messages into the Imperial Palace, and with some luck, verify the condition of any PCs trapped in the palace. They mention that Shoju is treating Crab courtiers well. All others are hostages, kept alive to force their clans to do as Shoju demands.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

As the various clans outside the city receive word of the Coup, they send their most prepared troops to Otosan Uchi, sacrificing strength for swiftness. Unfortunately, the nearest troops several days' march from the Bay of the Golden Sun. Even the Lion and the Crane, waging a full-scale war on the Plains of Battle, are unable to rally their units against Shoju and his minions within the first two or three days of this adventure.

The only clan with troops outside the city at the end of Day One are the Phoenix. A small legion survived and escaped the burning city last night, and is now posted at the Outer Wall.

Characters from *The Skirmisher's Tale* who make it outside the city receive a lackluster reception. There are only a handful of Phoenix – 25 in all – with only two shugenja. Their leader, Shiba Tsukune, may mention that the Unicorn are on their way, but no one knows when they may arrive, or even whether they will at all.

From within the city, PCs can see no banners outside the walls. Only the Scorpion armies seem in place; there is no obvious resistance. It appears that the other clans are not even aware of the Coup – yet.

Streets of Otosan Uchi

Day 2 (15th day of the month of the Rooster)

The Unicorn arrive outside the walls early today. But within their ranks lurks a Scorpion spy, prepared to assassinate Yokatsu should the Great Bear side with the Six Clans and attempt to retake the Imperial Capital. The Scorpion hope to cause division among the clans as they arrive to fight against Shoju.

Meanwhile, the Scorpion lose control of one small section of the palace to a hidden band of Seppun Miharu, who are determined to overthrow Shoju from the inside – or die avenging their Emperor.

MADNESS IN THE STREETS

As the PCs move through the city streets, dodging Scorpion troops, they find themselves in a narrow alley between two fragile buildings, both half-gutted by yesterday's flames. Inside, three young samurai, no older than twelve, rest behind a tattered shoji screen. One wears an enameled *do* which is much too large for him, bearing the soot-stained mon of the Crab. When the PCs find the children, two are sleeping, clutching their *tetsubo* close to their chests. They are not all Crab – the youngest child is a Lion named Akodo Osuzo (his pre-*gempukku* name). The other two, Hida Yetsigi and Hiruma Kadu (who is standing watch), staunchly defend their young companion.

The three boys were formerly foster children at the house of a Scorpion named Shosuro Jitaka. When the Coup began, the house was spared because the Shosuro had been working secretly with Shoju. The boys discovered their foster parents' deception when Bayushi troops arrived to congratulate the local Governor (choose one from Book One), and seize control of the district. Horrified at the terrible actions of their 'father', the boys immediately fled from his care. Now, they need a way out of the city – with little or no training, and nothing but the equipment they were someday to inherit.

Ultimately, these NPCs are more of a hindrance than a help. They have no training, little skill, and no Traits above Rank 1. They have no School Rank, and no Techniques, though they do

have some knowledge of the Imperial City (they have lived here for the past three years).

All three are children of minor daimyo in the lands of their respective clans. If they are returned to their parents, their rescuers will no doubt reap great rewards – in addition to 5 Points of both Honor and Glory (each).

A SABOTEUR

Rumors abound that a saboteur is plaguing the Scorpion. Servants in the palace (and the occasional loud-mouthed Scorpion bushi) relate that the saboteur is presumed to be an escaped courtier, or a spy within the Scorpion army, though little evidence supports either claim.

At noon on the second day, a Scorpion outpost just inside the Forbidden City collapses, the walls undermined. Confused Bayushi in the area believe that a Daidoji spy has entered the city. More patrols scour the city to bring the saboteur back in chains. Three of the patrols are destroyed to the last man, which further stymies the Scorpion and infuriates their leaders.

This scenario is designed to give the players some hope: though trapped in the city, another samurai, somewhere, is causing the Scorpions great trouble. If the PCs could only find the saboteur and combine their efforts...

But the spy is too difficult to locate. He's wily, and leaves no trace of his intrusions or escapes. A perceptive character (those who succeed with a Lore (Shugenja) roll vs. a TN of 20) note that the intrusions all required magical assistance.

The saboteurs are Daidoji Rubaiten and his assistant Ikoma Nejire, a shugenja trained at the Isawa school. Their unprecedented alliance – a Lion and a Crane – comes from the death of Shiba Akutiso, a woman they both loved (see page 41). Though they were once rivals, Akutiso's death rallied both men to cooperate in inflicting as much damage on the Scorpion as possible. Although dedicated, and willing to give their lives for this cause, they are also canny. They will not be caught simply to die gloriously.

TROOPS IN THE CITY

Shortly after the Unicorn forces join the Phoenix outside the city gates (during the hour of the Goat), they launch an immediate surprise attack against the Scorpion. While this move may not appear tactically sound at first, the Unicorn mean to announce their intention, and – if possible – test the strength and resolve of the Bayushi troops.

But they are too lucky. An entire Unicorn squad makes it past the Scorpion guards at the Outer Northern Wall – nine mounted bushi scrambling through the streets with Scorpion hot on their heels. Try as they might, they can find no way back. Their test attack has turned into a trap as they are hunted and killed, one by one.

Over the next hour, they use every twist and turn of the Outer City to their advantage, but the close confines of Otosan Uchi's narrow avenues limits the speed of their mounts. They are boxed

in, their horses a liability. They must make the ultimate choice for a Unicorn: abandon their steeds or die.

This is an exceptional chance to integrate Unicorn characters into the city. If the Unicorn do not abandon their horses, or find a place to hide, they will all be slaughtered. Characters of *The Skirmisher's Tale* may use their resources to aid the Unicorn, but they do so at risk of being found and killed themselves.

If the characters choose to aid the Unicorn, the mounted bushi reveal their true plan – to find their Ambassador (and the few hostages from *The Courtier's Tale* who escape on the first day) and bring them back out of the city.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY TWO

The Scorpion Messenger

A Scorpion Ambassador named Yogo Ahaira travels through the city under a flag of truce during the hour of the Monkey, just after the failed Unicorn assault. He wishes to speak with the Unicorn and test their resolve – once they learn that both the Emperor and his heir are dead. Ahaira's trip through the city can occasion ambushes or other resistance, as your PCs dictate.

Internal Resistance

Within the Ekohikei, a group of Imperial Guardsmen attack the Northern Gate (Location 765), attempting to hold off the Scorpion long enough for the Phoenix to pierce their defenses. They are unsuccessful, mostly due to overwhelming odds – and the presence of the powerful Soshi shugenja named Bantaro.

Afterward, rumors claim that the Scorpion are using blood-magic (*maho*) to guard the gate, and few in the city dare go near it. The bodies of the fallen Phoenix troops are arranged on spikes, up and down the river banks near the gate, as a threat to those who would follow their example.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

Inside the palace, the Scorpion continue the dangerous game of cat-and-mouse with the hidden Seppun Miharu, who strive to free the hostages and return control of the capital to the Empire.

Meanwhile, Bayushi Hasuken – a Scorpion commander – places a spy among the newly-arrived Unicorn troops. He steals battle plans while preparing to assassinate Shinjo Yokatsu, the Unicorn Champion. Posing as Ide Shiguji, the spy may encounter the 'lost' Unicorn legion (see *The Skirmisher's Tale* above), providing a delightful irony if the PCs help them reach the Unicorn

encampment – and then discover they have delivered an assassin to his quarry.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

Outside the city, an entire army of Unicorn set up camp on the Plain of Fast Troubles, near the Holy Home villages. The Scorpion send an ambassador to them, under a flag of peace. Participants in *The Skirmisher's Tale* may have the chance to follow the ambassador as he marches through the gates of Otosan Uchi, and escape the city, hidden within his honor guard.

The Phoenix listen to the ambassador and open negotiations, but the Unicorn want to cut the Scorpion down. PCs present in this dispute may have an opportunity to affect the ultimate outcome of the conversation – bringing the Unicorn and Phoenix under one banner or lodging a near-permanent wedge between them.



The Fog of War

Day 3 (16th Day of the month of the Rooster)

Early in the morning, before the hour of the Hare, a group of Lion guardsmen who have escaped the palace launched a strike against the Scorpion. They had withdrawn from hiding to avenge the death of Matsu Okimoto, the wife of their aging general. Sworn to protect her, they have failed in their duties to their commander, and now seek Scorpion blood to avenge their dishonor.

Their unexpected attack overwhelmed nearly an entire squad of Bayushi bushi. But the Lion were eventually captured, and the Scorpion commander, Bayushi Sundokai, decided to make an example of them. They are tied to wooden stakes in the center of the Toyotomi District, which is being set aflame.

The Scorpion engulf Toyotomi (their own district) in flames to 'flush the remaining Lion out'. Unknown to them, they aren't simply flushing out the Lion, but also Toturi, the Akodo Champion himself. Hatsuko has hidden the Lion daimyo in the Kosuga District, and as the fires spread, he is faced with an impossible choice - confronting the Scorpion in their own territory or letting the Matsu die.

The fire begins during the hour of the Hare, and continues through the hour of the Dragon. Over the hour of the Serpent and the Horse, it grows, engulfing many innocent heimin homes across the Toyotomi, Meiyoko, and Hojize Districts - unless it is hindered by the PCs.

The Scorpions are not concerned - a city in shambles is more difficult for the armies outside the gates to traverse. The Bayushi keep the flames from consuming their own noble homes and locations of merit in these districts, but otherwise let the fires burn themselves into the ground.

By the end of the hour of the Dragon (midday), the Lion will be lost to the flames. Until then, they are loosely guarded by the seven Scorpion bushi who started the fires. These bushi open fire with a storm of arrows at anyone who attempts to rescue the Lion or the burning buildings.

FALL OF THE CRANE

During the hour of the Goat (approximately 2 PM), a mighty *kiai* shout assaults the Outer Southern Wall, at the Emperor's Gate. The Lion army has assembled to the southwest of the city, away from the combined Unicorn-Phoenix forces. Shortly after the Lion flood the Emperor's gate and engage Scorpion forces to the south, another Crane army assaults the city from the west.

Arrows rain down on anything that moves, Soshi shugenja twist their magic to defend their city, and although the Lion break through for a brief period of time, they are eventually forced to retreat, outmaneuvered by the Scorpion troops and their deadly crossfire.

The Scorpion turn the full might of their strength against the Crane retreat, severely wounding Doji Satsume, Champion of the Crane and Empire. His body falls, but is quickly retrieved by his clansmen, who lift it onto a horse and carry it off the battlefield. His son, Doji Hoturi, personally ferries him from the city. The young man's face is pale, white as death.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY THREE

The Saboteurs Strike Again

During the hour of the Rooster, the saboteur team (see page 42) strikes again. This time their target is a Scorpion encampment near the river, to the south of the city. They spread barrels of fish oil across the water, then light the river on fire, destroying several Scorpion junks set up as a blockade against attacks launched from the sea.

This tactic isn't incredibly successful; General Bayushi Sundokai has boats covered in mud and barrels of sand and silt sent down-river to collide with the burning boats, dousing the flames. But the event causes a great deal of distraction, which can enhance the drama in the backdrop of pivotal PC actions.

If the PCs are already working with the saboteurs, they know that the fire is intended to divert attention from a riverside house where two Dragon nobles are being held by the Scorpion. Unless the PCs add another dimension to this plan, however, the ruse is quickly discovered and a pitched battle erupts outside the Dragon home.

Toturi's Escape

Shortly after the flames erupt in the Toyotomi District, the Akodo Champion, Toturi, escapes from the Kosuga District, and moves through the besieged city. Although the PCs probably shouldn't be directly involved in his exploits, they might find him in the backdrop of several of their encounters during the rest of the Coup (stepping into a battle, then vanishing once it is done). They may also find traces of his movement through the city - witnesses who claim to have seen him streaking through enemy territory, quietly eliminating a Scorpion before slipping back into the shadows of the Outer City.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

Inside the palace, the geisha Hatsuko is dragged before Kachiko (see the *Courtier's Tale*, page 24), and forced to reveal her part in the attempted murder of Toturi. Any characters of the *Skirmisher's Tale* who follow the geisha's guard into the palace might overhear this scene, and be in a position to carry news of her execution or suicide to others.

The saboteur team (and any PC acts of violence) now receives Scorpion attention. Shosuro actors and Yogo shugenja are dispatched through the city to hunt down the pockets of resistance and destroy them. A member of *The Courtier's Tale* could convey this information to the skirmishers, or a member of *The Skirmisher's Tale* might use one of their identities to gain access to the palace.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

During the day's attacks, Doji Satsume is struck by a Scorpion death-blow. He wastes away from the unclean cut, never to recover.

Characters in *The Skirmisher's Tale* most likely witness the battle, and may even catch sight of the Crane Champion's valiant struggle against the Scorpion guards. After the battle, a message is dispatched from the Bayushi and Yogo guards, to the Imperial Palace. The messenger can be attacked, and his message taken, though he is only one of three; the message will reach Shoju regardless of PC actions.

The missive is terse, and reads as follows:

"My Master,

The Crane Champion, Satsume, has been destroyed. His body bleeds on the ground outside our city, wounded from within as he dared strike at our heels. Your throne is secure from the Crane. His son, Hoturi, takes command at dawn."

The message is signed only with a Scorpion mon.

Doji Hoturi now commands the Crane forces outside the wall. This causes a great imbalance of political power within the palace, as Hoturi is not seen as a forceful commander, nor a capable tactician. The other clans within the palace assumes that - with his rise to command - all Crane resistance against the Scorpion is effectively crushed.

The Scorpion use this as another tool to convince the skirmishers to surrender, or side with them. Without the Crane, the Six Clans cannot help but fail. Can the PCs maintain the Crane presence so desperately needed in the streets of Otosan Uchi, or will everything fall apart?

More than one Crane noble hiding in the city now actively discusses alliances with the Scorpion. "Without strength on the field," they ask, "how can we survive? Perhaps we should surrender now, and offer fealty to our new 'lord'."



The Crab Arrive

Day 4 (17th Day of the month of the Rooster)

Outside the city, Kisada and the Crab arrive, allying with the Five Clans already assembled on the Plains of Battle. With the Great Bear's arrival, trouble in the city increases throughout this day, as the Scorpions start to believe that they may lose. There are desertions and death-squad attacks (suicide missions), and traps are laid in preparation for a full-scale siege.

RESCUE?

Early in this day, a bushi named Doji Hatsue sneaks into the city through the Outer Wall, disguised as a heimin servant. He meets with characters of *The Skirmisher's Tale* briefly, stumbling into them while avoiding Scorpion patrols.

Hatsue claims that he is under orders from the Doji daimyo, Hoturi, but he is actually here without the Crane's knowledge. He hopes to rescue his beloved - Kuni Fujiko - who is held with the hostages in the palace. He has brought a map of the sewers beneath the palace (which - unknown to him - are guarded closely by the Scorpion). He plans to enter the palace as a messenger bearing a missive from the outer gates, then help the courtiers escape through the sewers.

Those who enter the palace with Hatsue find the chambers of the Crab tightly guarded - though they may be able to reach other courtiers held on the third floor of the palace. Should the PCs accompany Hatsue and the hostages through the sewers, they will find themselves lured into a Scorpion trap (see page 25).

THE GREAT BEAR

Kisada arrives a few hours before dark, and loud horns blow over the Scorpion-held walls. There is a long pause, as Kisada's messenger approaches the city, bearing a large red flag, the symbol of Kisada's alliance. With slow, deliberate motion, the Hiruma messenger stands before the palatial gate to the Emperor's Road, raises the flag, and then points toward the encampments to the west of the city. The Crab turn, and join forces with the Six Clans, launching a final strike upon the Imperial city before it is too dark to fight.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY FOUR

During the greater part of Day Four, the armies outside the city (Lion, Crane, Unicorn, Phoenix, and a single elite force bearing the Mirumoto mon) launch repeated attacks against the city, resulting in chaos and a tremendous death toll on all sides. However, the combined might of the clans cannot punch through the outer gates again. Anyone who observes the battles and succeeds with a Perception + Battle roll (TN 20) notes that the armies are crumbling from conflict and hatred within their own ranks. The armies are strong, but they have no leadership.

Lion's Rage

During the Hour of the Horse, a great and sudden battle erupts across the Toyotomi District. PCs may join if they wish, fighting against 17 Bayushi bushi and two Soshi shugenja who are trying to flush their quarry from a small sake house (the *Lion's Rage*, Location 369). Characters who engage the Scorpion soon discover the targets of their wrath to be the two saboteurs who have been plaguing them (see page 42).

If the PCs do not intervene, Isawa Nejire is killed in the battle. His body is stripped of all possessions, and left before the Temple to Lord Moon (Location 374), where the crows may feed upon it. Scorpion patrols speak loudly and joyfully about the battle as they search for Daidoji Rubaiten. Anyone listening will know that Rubaiten has been badly injured, and may be inclined to locate him before he dies - or the Scorpion find him.

The Shrine to Lord Moon

As his final act, Daidoji Rubaiten crawls into a narrow passageway behind the Moon-shrine, then collapses it behind him, leaving no trace of his passage behind. Although bleeding badly, he holds a single wrapped bundle of 'black pepper', intending to light it beneath the altar within the shrine. This act will almost certainly draw down the wrath of *Onnotengu* (Lord Moon). If he succeeds, a loud explosion echoes throughout the city during the hour of the Dog. Fire rages through the shrine, and - if legends are correct - there is little time before Lord Moon's wrath will be felt by all.

Unless the PCs and the Scorpion can put the fire out in time.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE


Inside the Imperial Palace, many Crab courtiers forge alliances with the Six Clans, or take their own lives; among them is Kuni Fujiko, unacknowledged daughter of Kuni Yori. Characters of *The Skirmisher's Tale* may use this confusion to strike a blow against the Scorpion; with help, they could rescue a number of the hostages. The Bayushi are too concerned with the Crab courtiers to pay much attention to the rest.

Hostility rises within the palace; with each passing day, the hostages (and members of *The Courtier's Tale*) are less likely to survive the Coup. If the members of *The Skirmisher's Tale* do not act soon, Kisada's alliance may spell a death sentence for the courtiers in the palace.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

As described in the *Courtier's Tale* (see page 26), Kisada's alliance captures the Outer Walls, but cannot penetrate the Miwaku Kabe. The Scorpion spy among the Unicorn troops also acts today, making an attempt on the life of Shinjo Yokatsu – and planting the blame firmly on the shoulders of the Crab Clan.

The resulting division could cause the Crab to rethink their alliance, or strike out on their own against the Scorpion – a death-knell for Otosan Uchi. Can the soldiers outside the walls unravel what has happened, and save the toppling alliance? Members of the *Skirmisher's Tale* might be in a position to provide proof of the spy's mission, convey messages from the courtiers to the members of the *Soldier's Tale*, or even capture the spy once he has re-entered the city with the Unicorn maps.



When Men Stand Divided

Day 5 (18th Day of the month of the Rooster)

During the fifth day of the Scorpion Clan Coup, the Six Clans at last take the Outer City. Here, *The Skirmisher's Tale* unites with *The Soldier's Tale*, and the members of *The Courtier's Tale* first see the light at the end of the tunnel.

THE LAST DAY

Battles throughout the city go well for the Six Clans. The Crab armies make a tremendous difference, defeating the Scorpion again and again, until they retreat behind the Enchanted Walls of the Forbidden City. By dusk, the entire outer ring of Otosan Uchi is free of Scorpion control, and the samurai hidden in the city rejoin their comrades in the armies of the Six Clans. The Scorpion retreat, and members of *The Skirmisher's* and *Soldier's Tales* reunite for the next day's fighting.

Outside, the Akodo Champion has taken command of the armies of the Six Clans. Unknown to the Scorpion within the palace, Toturi has escaped Otosan Uchi, and under his guidance the allied forces fully took the Outer City. The Clans are united at last, and may now turn their strength against the Scorpion – with the force of Akodo Toturi at their head.

SEVEN SCORPION

A group of seven Scorpion approach the skirmishers, led by Bayushi Taeru. Their weapons are sheathed, and their hands are at their sides as if they are unafraid of repercussions. Beneath a flag of truce, they claim to be deserters from the Scorpion army, willing to betray the plans of their commander, Bayushi Sundokai. They have served under him throughout the Coup, and will testify to his numerous crimes and cruelties – if the Six Clans will take mercy on them, and their families.

If the PCs agree to the exchange, the Scorpions surrender their weapons, and are taken into custody. All of them are sincere, save one – Yogo Boku, who was placed among this unit in case Taeru betrayed the clan (something Sundokai suspected from the beginning). Now, Boku sees Taeru's betrayal as an advantage – if he can approach the leaders of the besieging armies, he might be able to use his abilities (he is a Rank 3 Shosuro Assassin) to kill a major general.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY FIVE

As Kisada takes the city, the most ferocious fighting occurs in the Hidari District, where the Scorpion have lined the area with pitfalls. (More information on this battle can be found in *The Soldier's Tale*; see page 65.)

Other major battles take place in the Hinjaku and Hojize Districts, where resistance cells have proliferated since the beginning of the Coup, and at the river ports of the Higshikawa District, where Bayushi Sundokai is finally captured. (If the skirmisher PCs take Bayushi Taeru and his men into custody, they – and the forces of the Six Clans they contact – have the upper hand during this stage of the fighting.)

After the battle, Kisada offers the Scorpion general the chance to *seppuku* and assuage his guilt over the betrayal of the Emperor. Sundokai accepts, calling for his father's wakizashi and ritual robes. Many who have fought against Sundokai and his troops during *The Skirmisher's Tale* may find this punishment too light for the butcher who slaughtered so many innocent Imperials and citizens of the city, but unless the PCs intercede (or arrange for Sundokai to die in another fashion), he commits *seppuku* at the hour of the Ox, during the 18th day of the Rooster.

Although the Six Clans do not completely control the Outer City by the end of this day, positions have suddenly reversed. The Scorpion now become the skirmishers here, harrying the forces of the Six Clans, who patrol the territory around the clock.

It should be noted that with the capture of the outer city, participants in *The Skirmisher's Tale* will become part of *The Soldier's Tale*. Unless they escape into the Forbidden City through some clever plan, they join *The Soldier's Tale* at the end of this day, once the Crab have stormed the city gates and recaptured most of Otosan Uchi. Still, the inner walls have yet to be breached, and it is unlikely that they will be easily overcome.

Bayushi Dairu

A contingent of Scorpion battle throughout the day to keep the Crane out of the Forbidden City, losing ground and samurai as they retreat toward the Enchanted Walls. Among them is a young Bayushi samurai named Dairu – son of the Scorpion daimyo, Bayushi Shoju.

Dairu is mortally injured by the new Crane Champion, Doji Hoturi. The Scorpion who fight beside him ask permission to return his body to the Imperial Palace, to deliver it to Shoju with honor. In penance, or – some whisper – out of a need to make Kachiko and Shoju suffer, Hoturi demands the request be honored.

Most see Hoturi's bold actions as the first sign that the new Crane Champion will follow in his father's footsteps. The Crab honor him for destroying a powerful Scorpion legion, and for dealing such a clear and precise blow to the Bayushi nobility. Hoturi does not address any of their words, however, but retires to his tent to pray to his ancestors about tomorrow's battle.

The Shosuro carry Dairu's body into the palace on his scarlet cloak, the cloth slowly pooling with blood from the spear-wound in his side. Sorrow is palpable throughout the Forbidden City – both among the Scorpion invaders and those who honor them. Regardless of his actions, Dairu's intent is unquestioned.

The boy was barely 14 and just past his *gempukku*.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

In the palace, a pearl diver arrives from beneath the waves of the swift-flowing river, bearing a missive for the Scorpion. The diver is a Mantis, loyal to the brash daimyo, Yoritomo, who offers to sneak a portion of the Scorpion out by sea. Several junks are stationed beyond the breakers of the Bay of the Golden Sun, where escaping Scorpion can be picked up to be taken to the Mantis Isles.

At dawn, a wail rises through the chambers of the Scorpion: Shoju's son has died. With Dairu's death, the Scorpion gain new ferocity. Anger rages through the palace; even the most sober Scorpions lift their swords once more, determined to make the Crane pay for their vicious deed.

PARALLEL: THE SOLDIER'S TALE

Outside the Imperial City, a brash young Dragon samurai-ko challenges the son of the Crab general. The results of this attack are described in *The Courtier's Tale* (see page 65), and work to divide the Six Clans. The Scorpion work to drive this wedge further between the feuding factions, an effort PCs may find themselves counteracting at every turn. As the final battle for Otosan Uchi draws ever closer, the characters will be faced with maintaining the fragile peace between the Six Clans, keeping their focus on the true enemy.



The Face of My Enemy

Day 6 (19th Day of the month of the Rooster)

The final day of the Coup dawns clear and cold, the first hints of autumn drifting through the morning. Toturi and the Six Clans gather to attack the Four Walls and capture the Forbidden City. The Crane and the Dragon strike the southern Miwaku Kabe, while the Crab and Lion move in from the north, as the second wave of an immense pincer maneuver. The Unicorn charge against the oni-infested Western Wall around the Ekohikei, trapping the Scorpion between five clans and the unforgiving sea.

Meanwhile, the Phoenix lend their awesome magical might to all sides, supporting entire flanks of troops with small pockets of shugenja. Enormous waves of crushing force streak across the battlefield, wiping Scorpions away like a hand from the Celestial Heavens. Searing goutts of flame hundreds of feet high arc through the sky before plummeting into Scorpion-held garrisons and guard towers.



By the close of the Hour of the Serpent, Ootosan Uchi's outer ring lies in ruins, a victim of the Great Clans' charge toward the Miwaku Kabe. They direct the worst devastation against the Enchanted Walls, where the Scorpion retain their doomed position until well into the afternoon. As the Crab and Lion meet outside the Wall known as 'Glory' (to the east, facing the Bay of the Golden Sun), hundreds of homes, small temples, and shanty towns are crushed. The Six Clans cannot afford subtlety in their demand to return the Empire's favored jewel.

Throughout all, the Enchanted Walls never falter. Eventually, the Phoenix pierce the southern gate, offering half the clans a direct line to the Imperial Palace. The rest - led by the Great Bear - smash the northern gate to pieces.

GAMEMASTERING THE FINAL BATTLE

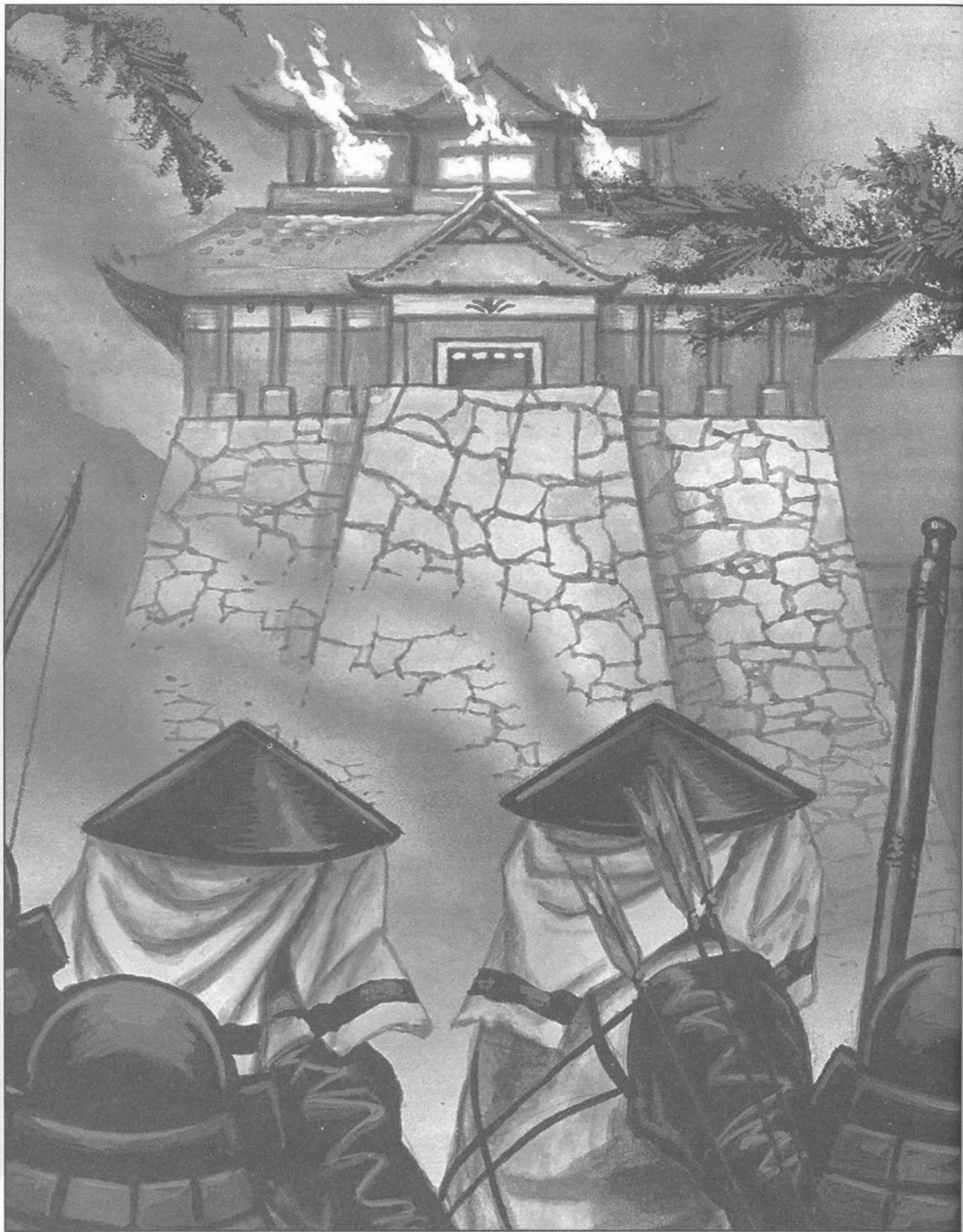
There are two ways for you to orchestrate the final siege against Scorpion-occupied Ootosan Uchi. The first - described in Chapter Three (*The Soldier's Tale*, see page 66) - is to continue depicting it through the personal perspective, focusing on the player characters' actions, and using everything else as a backdrop. This style of play requires several key challenges the players can become directly involved with, and follows the standard "head-on" adventure format favored by most traditionalist players.

The second option - though labor-intensive - offers you the chance to immerse the players directly into the action around them, while maintaining the feeling that they are directly involved. Using the Battle Table (see page 115 of the *L5R RPG*), you can create a personalized version of this epic struggle.

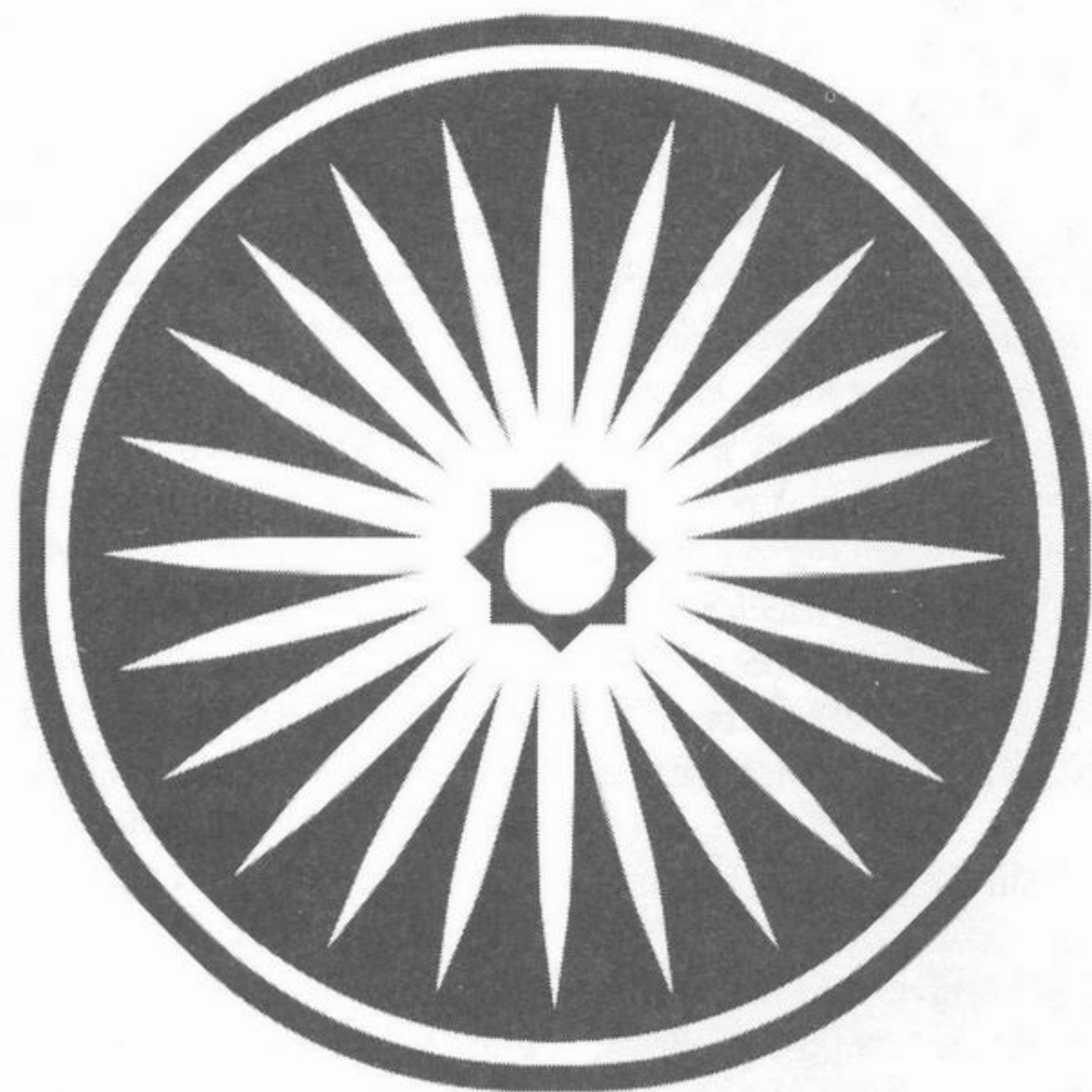
Again, there are two ways of approaching this technique. First, you may use the table as it is presented. If this is the case, we recommend that PCs not be allowed to choose "Disengaged" or "Reserves" during the siege; with the fighting as concentrated as it is, there is little chance the PCs will become detached from it. We also recommend that Duel and Heroic Opportunity results be linked directly with the battle as you define it. (We have purposefully left much of this open and interpretive, so that you can incorporate your own themes and plotlines as you play; hopefully, by this point new ideas will have risen both from you and your players which may be converted into challenges on the field of battle.)

CLAN WAR AND THE SCORPION CLAN COUP

A third option exists for running the final battle for Ootosan Uchi - our tabletop miniatures wargame, *Clan War*. Four scenarios, the troops involved, and their timing are included in Chapter Four of this book. You are encouraged to consider this as an alternative to the standard roleplaying experience; you might run the Clan War scenarios first, keeping track of the results which can then form the backdrop to the roleplaying adventures. The choice is yours. We have left room to tailor the material presented here to your own style and taste.



Chapter Three:



The Soldier's Tale

A Friend to the Darkness

The darkness shifts around him, but he pays it no notice. What does darkness matter, when shadows are your only friends? The Great Lord sits alone in the Emperor's throne room, his eyes beneath the mask fixed upon the sliding door at its far end. Around him, the guards sit motionless, waiting for his voice, the raise of his hand, any motion that might command them. The waiting is unbearable, and a single bead of sweat trickles down one man's cheek. Soon, Toturi will come, and the darkness, thick and cloying, will settle around them like a traveler's cloak.

Yet their Lord does not move, does not blink, does not breathe.

Twenty years ago, the man sitting upon the gleaming Emerald throne was a child. He watched Scorpion samurai train on the fields, far below the high palace, his face covered in a silken mask that barely hid his deformities. He moved closer to the precipice, and could feel the smooth stone of the castle's wall under his bare feet. A fierce wind blew through his tousled hair, sending thick strands into his eyes.

Beneath his foot, Shoju felt a stone give way under his weight, shifting his balance dangerously. He cried out, grasping at any foundation - any outcropping that might save him from the fall. But there was none. With a gasp, he started to plunge toward his death, but at the last moment caught the edge of the wooden rafter that protruded from the wall. The world spun crazily around him and he clutched at the frail support with all his strength, his thin arms shaking from the effort.

An eternity passed as the boy slowly pulled himself up the wall, fingers bleeding as they scraped against the stone of the castle. When he heaved himself over the top of the precipice, he saw his father, the Scorpion Champion, standing above him, watching with an impassive face.

"Father...?" the boy whispered, staring up at the cold face before him. Shoju's legs still dangled out over the edge of the castle, his torn pants waving like banners in the wind. He struggled for words, "I was watching the parade... and I slipped..."

The cold man turned his back to the child, and walked away. His words brought a chill to Shoju's spirit. "If you had not been strong enough to help yourself, you would not be worth saving."

...The darkness does not move, does not speak, does not falter. The man on the gleaming throne sits with equal impassivity, his chiseled features framed by black hair that falls down his chest like twin rivers of obsidian. The doors remain closed, the shadowy forms on the other side rising and falling as they walk past, like tides. Like the flickering flames of war on the battlefield. The daimyo on his throne stares past the figures, into another time. Another flame. The flame of hatred...

Fires scattered before his steed as they leaped over the burning grasses of the field. His sword bright in his hand, he cut down the Lion army. Their bodies parted before the keen steel of his family's Ancestral Sword as if they were no more than rice paper. Ahead of him, he saw the enemy commander, wielding a tetsubo and screaming in rage and fury. Through the smoke and flame, Shoju pointed his gleaming blade at the man and shouted a challenge. The Lion nodded, and readied his weapon. The Scorpion dismounted, his horse fleeing into the carnage around them, and stepped through the black flames.

With the barest flicker of movement, the Lion was disarmed, his tetsubo flying through the air. A kick to the leg, and he was kneeling before the young Scorpion with the iron mask. Gripping the samurai's hair in one hand, Shoju pulled the Lion's head back and stared down into his eyes as the screams of war echoed about them. Through the darkness of night, the eerie leaping of fires on the plain silhouetted the pair. "Your men betrayed you," he hissed into the paralyzed Lion's ear as he raised his family's sword. "They came to us in the night with your battle plans, and they cursed your name."

"Why..." the man cried out. "Why are you telling me this?"

"When you dueled my father at the Emperor's Palace, you said that you sought only truth. Take a close look at your 'truth' now."

The sword fell like a scythe, and Shoju held the man's head high above the racing flames, taking in his last vision of the Lion army's decimation, and the slaughter of its loyal men. Above Shoju, the crows wheeled in the sky with ravenous, sickening cries, preparing for the morning's feast.

...One of the samurai flinches, the patient hours shattering his nerves and breaking his control, but the man in scarlet does not notice. Around him, like the wing of a crow, the blackness shivers and breathes. The flowers in a nearby alcove wilt, and a single white petal falls to the floor. Still the guards sit in icy silence, the lord and his men, waiting for the news to be brought to them.

The darkness too, it seems, waits for the rest of the story.

It is, after all, only a legend. When the First Hantei returned from the battles against Fu Leng's Horde, it is said that the blood ran from his side in a river that would not be quenched. The battle lines were broken, retreating to the distant south, and the cheers of armies could be heard even on the far plains of the Imperial Palace.

Today, actors wheel in graceful steps toward the figure who lies in the center of the stage – the dying Hantei. The play has been enacted many times, and the actors know their parts. Even Shoji, who as a youth once played the role of the unreadable Bayushi, could close his eyes and recite the lines from memory. The legend was still strong.

A tall man paces to the deathbed, a sword in his hand. A maiden in blue kneels by the Emperor, trying vainly to stanch his wounds. Doji and Akodo. In the corner, Bayushi waits...

"Will I die?" The Emperor gasps, his voice rattling, the actor's care and precision perfectly miming the failing voice of the dying.

"No," says the maiden. "Your wounds have been cared for – the bleeding is stopped. Oh, my brother, you will not die." Doji's voice, in contrast to the Emperor's, is strong through tears, and her hands flutter over the bandages as if she could contain his spirit inside with the strong silk wrappings.

The actor on the couch turns to the tall golden man. "Will I die?" he whispers, his voice growing faint.

"You will never die, my Lord," the Lion replies, clutching his sword and kneeling before the Emperor's cushions. "Your deeds, and your strength, are the heart of legend – those things will never fade. Your life will never end."

A faint rattle from the man, a cry from the maiden, and the Emperor raises his hand weakly. "Bayushi – tell me..." the actor punctuates his movements with pain, his mask shining with the painted features of agony. "Will I die?"

A moment, a pause, a tableau. Shoji – Bayushi – Shoji again, behind painted shadows. "Yes, my brother. You will die, and you will be alone." Stunned silence, the whispers of the audience, the cheers of the men on the plain far away. "But we will follow one day, and we will be with you again."

"Thank you... brother." The Emperor's last words fade. For an instant all is silent – and then the temple bells begin to toll.

"Why did you say that?" Akodo's grieving roar shatters the silence, as Doji weeps beside Hantei's corpse.

"She cared for his body," the Scorpion whispers, each word a drop of blood upon the floor between them. "And you cared for his honor. But I, my brother... only I cared for his soul."

So it has always been, and yet the single strike of a bloody sword has changed the world.

...darkness again, moving and thick. It caresses the hilt of Shoji's sword, the curve of an Emerald chair. Outside, Lady Sun approaches her first horizon. The sounds of armor and steel are close, and the soft murmur of night will soon be replaced by the screams of dawn.

Still, Emperor Shoji waits...

In another palace, another time, Shoji stepped into the paper corridors, hiding his deformities behind masks and silk. Despite his curse – or perhaps because of it – he was the greatest swordsman in the Empire. To the side, a curtain fell and the rice paper doors opened. A maid stepped into the chamber, kneeling before the Bayushi daimyo. Silence. Then her trembling voice. "A... a son, my Lord." Shoji was impassive, his body forged with an iron will. Waiting. Staring at the paper panel behind which his wife rested.

"He died immediately after the birth, my Lord. There were... complications..." The midwife's voice grew ever fainter, and she crumpled to the floor, trembling in fear.

Shoji turned, his tall form slowly unfolding. As he passed the maid, she raised her head again and whispered, "Your wife lives, Shoji-sama... and there is still your firstborn son."

Before the words had left her throat, however, her head left her body. Shoji stood over her impassively, his katana dripping blood onto the stainless wooden floor.

...Around him, the darkness presses in like a kimono, like a lover, like the curtain after the final act of the Noh drama in which Shoji has been an unwilling part. Beside him, his guard stands wearily, their knees shaking from the effort and their hands ever-ready on the pommels of their katana. The darkness around them listens, not only to the past and present, but to the faint voices of the future which only it can hear...

"My Lord," the soldier bows from the doorway, a gleaming black mempo held under his arm. The commander waits until Shoji's gaze lifts from the gleaming sword before him. "Dawn is here, my Lord. The armies of the Six Clans rise against us, and I fear Toturi's men have breached the walls."

His voice shakes with fear, Shoji notes calmly. He is hardly more than a boy, but this day will forever change that.

"Go." Shoji tells his guard. "Fight with your brothers, and at the gate of the palace."

"But, my Lord..." the Bayushi whispers.

"Go."

Their presence will change nothing. Long moments pass, and sounds of battle drift into the Emperor's Throne room, dispelling the darkness with rays of morning sun.

"Have you left me, at last?" Shoji whispers to the shadow, but no voice answers; only the chorus of battle-cries and ringing clap of steel thunder echoes through the palace halls.

A long silence, and the blade before him glitters.

Soon, the door to his chambers opens, and a man steps into the room. Bleeding, his golden armor torn, he stands at the far end of the chamber, holding his father's sword. "Yes." Shoji says, reaching for Iyoku and hearing it whine for blood. One last time.

"I knew that you would come.

"Now, let us end this."

...Toturi...

A Vision of Truth

The Empire of Rokugan is a verdant place, broken by mountains and plains as wide as the eye can see. Its histories hold 'a thousand years of glory', an age of peace, broken by small, infrequent battles. Seven Clans, born of seven great Kami, have reigned over the Empire since the dawn of time, and their Master descends from the most heroic myth of all – the youngest Child of the Sun and Moon, the Hantei Emperor, born of the line of a hundred Imperial Princes.

USES FOR THE SOLDIER'S TALE

Wherever your PCs are, no matter what distant corner of the Empire they adventure in, *The Soldier's Tale* can bring them to Rokugan's heart – the shining city of Otsan Uchi.

The throne of the Hantei.

It is best if this adventure begins with the PCs no more than a day's travel from the city, so that they can quickly join the armies gathering outside. Of course, the PCs may arrive at the same time as their Clan's forces, camping with their brothers on the tremendous fields outside the Imperial City, and partaking only in the glory of the spectacular final battles against the Scorpion.

There are many ways to begin the Scorpion Clan Coup. *The Soldier's Tale* is designed for characters who begin outside the city. They might be here to serve the interests of their clan, or the Emerald Champion, or to avenge the Emperor's line after the Scorpion Coup. They only need to be outside the Imperial City, or to be en route to Otsan Uchi, in the brief moments before the Scorpion Coup begins.

The Soldier's Tale can be integrated into any campaign, for it requires little to no lead-in. The Six Clans summon all samurai of their Clans in the area when Shoju's actions become apparent.

IMPORTANT NPCs IN THE SOLDIER'S TALE

Many familiar NPCs become embroiled in the events outside the walls of the capital during this adventure. You should spend a few minutes before the game familiarizing yourself with the prominent NPCs in each army and their statistics. We recommend

using the following, in order of their arrival outside the city walls (all are presented in the appropriate *Way of...* books):

- **Phoenix:** Isawa Tadaka, Isawa Tsuke, Isawa Sze (not in *Way of the Phoenix*), Shiba Tsukune
- **Unicorn:** Shinjo Yokatsu, Shinjo Hanari, Ide Tadaji, Otaku Morito (as a ronin)
- **Dragon:** Mirumoto Daini, Mirumoto Hitomi, Mirumoto Sukune, Togashi Mitsu
- **Crane:** Doji Satsume, Doji Hoturi, Kakita Toshimoko, Daidoji Uji
- **Lion:** Matsu Tsuko, Ikoma Tsanuri, Matsu Hokitare
- **Crab:** Hida Kisada, Hida Yakamo, Kuni Yori, Kaiu Suman

Late in *The Soldier's Tale*, Akodo Toturi's arrival sounds the death-knell for the Bayushi inside the city. You may wish to read his description in the *Way of the Lion*, even if he is only present in a portion of your own story.

Personalities from *Way of the Scorpion* can be found throughout this chapter. Their abilities can also be derived from that sourcebook.

GAMEMASTERING THE SOLDIER'S TALE

In order to properly begin *The Soldier's Tale*, the following information should be provided for player characters who pay attention or make the appropriate Skill checks. Determining factors may include the PCs' clans, their status, and their actions prior to the start of the adventure. What the characters know of their own clan's activities before the Coup is of secondary importance, and can be determined using the rumors available in the pages of the *Skirmisher's* and *Courtier's Tales*.

• **Crab:** Kisada has sent a message to all his clansmen in the Imperial Capital's vicinity: Shoju has breached the city's walls, killed the Emperor, and taken the city of Otsan Uchi. All Crab samurai are to gather in the hills to the south, near the gates of Mura Minami Chushin. The instructions override all other commitments; obey the Crab summons, or be crushed as Kisada's armies march to the city.

Nowhere in his missive does Kisada mention which side he intends to join, and if the PCs ask, they get the feeling that the message leans toward neither side (this can be further complicated if the PCs receive word from their own daimyo and not directly from Kisada).

The Great Bear's army marches in full force on the fourth day of the attack, arriving in the late afternoon of Day 4 (the 17th day of the month of the Rooster). Until the moment Kisada arrives, the gathering Crab forces wait impatiently, eager to know how their Champion will decide: for the Scorpion, or against them?

On the second day, rumors reach the Crab that Hantei Sotorii has followed his father's path: he is dead. If true, the Empire is without a Hantei, and the Emerald Throne stands empty. Kisada could fill that throne and at last rule the Empire as his strength

dictates – if the Crab secure the city. From this moment, many Crab fanatically anticipate doing whatever is necessary to make this event come to pass.

- **Crane:** On the day that Hantei the 38th is killed, messenger doves are released by Crane courtiers in the palace, and many of them make it through the Scorpion arrows, informing the Crane Clan of Shoji's deed. Though the courtiers may die from the Scorpion invasion, their message could save the Empire. All Crane are commanded to meet with the armies at Shiro sano Kakita, or at the Mura Nishi Chushin, where Doji Hoturi has assembled a small force in preparation.

A Crane PC could find one of the missive birds, wounded or tangled in the brush, bearing a message from the courtiers in the palace. The message is hastily written, and contains only the barest facts about the slaughter of the Emperor.

Otherwise, a Crane PC may learn of the coup when a rider comes through their area, bearing messages from Satsume and Hoturi. The Crane Clan is currently at war with the Lion, and are already gathering at Shiro sano Kakita, but their march to the north is delayed as they wait for their general, the Emerald Champion Doji Satsume. He comes from the war-front on the Osari plains, to lead the Crane to Ootosan Uchi by the morning of the third day of the Coup.

- **Dragon:** By the third day of the Coup (the 16th day of the month of the Rooster), a legion of Dragon arrives at the capital, quietly camping beside the Phoenix and Unicorn forces. They are

led by Mirumoto Sukune, although Mirumoto Hitomi – the daimyo of the family – is also on hand. Although the Dragon do not mention why the Togashi chose to send such a relatively small force, they insist that they are here to support the efforts against the Scorpion 'Emperor'. Amazingly enough, these Dragon are specifically trained in city siege tactics, and prove one of the greatest assets to the besiegers.

In order to involve Dragon PCs in this adventure, they should receive a missive the day before the Coup begins, telling them to journey to the capital city. It is unsigned, marked only with the Togashi mon, and written with an imperative hand.

- **Lion:** The Lion have perhaps the longest journey of all the armies in the Coup resistance. The Matsu come from the war front on the Osari plains, but the Akodo and Ikoma legions arrive throughout the Coup, having traveled from as far away as Shiro sano Ken Hayai and Toshi Ranbo. By the morning of Day Three (the 16th day of the month of the Rooster), the Lion armies arrive *en masse* to camp on the south-west plains, far from the Crane army in the northern fields.

Any Lion may discover the Coup by hearing of the Lion forces marching from the west, toward the Imperial City. The army has runners and scouts covering miles of territory before the massive legion, gathering any Lion samurai they can find to fill their ranks along the way.

- **Phoenix:** The Phoenix are the first clan to become aware of the Scorpion deed, though the bulk of their armies do not arrive



until shortly after the Unicorn, on the Day Two. As early as Day One, however, a Phoenix legion lies outside the Northern Gate of the city, escaped through Scorpion lines behind the brave Shiba Tsukune.

Phoenix all across the land quickly hear the whispered voice of Isawa Eju, Master of Air. He briefly describes the troubles at the capital, and commands all loyal Phoenix to join Tsukune's legion there. Until Ujimitsu, or another of the Masters can arrive, the Phoenix armies are under her command.

• **Unicorn:** For weeks, the Unicorn have molded and trained an army on the edge of Ikoma land, as near to the capital as they could. How the Unicorn daimyo knew that there would be an attack is anyone's guess - most likely, it was luck, coupled with Unicorn fear of Lion invasion, which prepared them to race to Ootosan Uchi on a moment's notice.

Any Unicorn characters who join *The Soldier's Tale* are most likely part of this well-prepared force, arriving in the early afternoon of Day Two. You should arrange your own back-story for this, gathering Unicorns across the Empire slowly, over a few weeks, to 'train' at Toshi sano Kanemochi.

When the call comes, they are ready.



The 38th Hantei Falls

Shadow races beside roaring flames as the city on the horizon erupts into chaos. The samurai on Togashi's hill lower their arms in shock, watching as the Imperial Palace shudders, flooded with blood.

"By the Fortunes," the Otaku whispers, hand to her mouth.

"This is what we were sent to watch," Shinjo Yasamura's voice, pale from lack of sleep and fearful awe. "Father knew..."

"To the horses!" The battle maiden leaps for her steed, grasping the reins with a gentle hand. "Quickly! We must light the signal fires so the army can march!"

Her mount is gone, as swiftly as the wind takes her words. Reaching to comfort his own frantic steed, Yasamura only stares at the glow of fires on the horizon. Below him, an army of ants in a beehive, the Scorpions drown the residents of Ootosan Uchi in black corpses.

"Time to go, Yasamura-san." The voice is unexpected, and Yasamura spins to look into the metal mempo of the Dragon Champion.

He had not been there, only a moment before.

"Go, son of Shinjo. There will be much to do. Now, at last, the story unfolds."

It isn't until long after, as his steed races toward the Unicorn signal fires, that Yasamura realizes that he had not truly heard the words at all...

EVENING

A brilliant flash of lightning, and a tremendous clap of thunder. There is no other warning before the Scorpion descend on the city. The city burns, a low light in the dark, night sky. Inside the palace, Shoju removes Hantei's head, and in an instant, the Scorpions in the street throw off their disguises, draw their blades, and begin the attack. Soshi shugenja seal the city gates with spellcraft. Bayushi and Yogo shut down entire districts.

The armies of *The Soldier's Tale* do not arrive this evening, although the Phoenix legion soon stands on the plains to the North, survivors of the city's destruction.

Behind Night's Shadow

Day 1 (14th day of the month of the Rooster)

The city is partially destroyed: fires rage, and the Scorpion collapse buildings into the city streets to block passage. From the hillocks to the south and north of Otosan Uchi, characters can see Soshi shugenja standing on the Enchanted Walls of the Forbidden City. Scorpion banners rise above the palace, waving defiantly in the breeze.

Much of Otosan Uchi still burns. The Scorpion march through the streets in tremendous numbers, and shugenja prepare spells of incredible magnitude. But though the city is injured, it is not yet dead; most of its buildings still stand, and the Imperial Palace is largely untouched. A testament to the nature of this battle: it is a fight for control, not destruction.

THE BLACKENED CITY

The Scorpion gain tenuous control of the Imperial City and work to consolidate it by manning its defensive posts with their own soldiers, closing all gates and preparing for battle.

During the first day, there is little combat of note. The Phoenix gather all local samurai in the nearby Holy Home Villages, and the Scorpion desperately try to solidify their control over the city by constructing barricades and pitfalls.

Each major battle in *The Soldier's Tale* may be run as an RPG adventure scene (as described in this chapter), as a *Clan War* scenario (as described in Chapter Four), or both.

THE DEATH OF THE HEIR?

Before the end of Day One, news of Sotorii's death whispers through the city. Those watching from rooftops or nearby hills see a group of monks climb to the highest part of the Temple of the Sun Goddess (Location 709), and toll the huge bell to mark the passing of the boy-prince.

In the Phoenix encampment, Shiba Tsukune seems unconcerned, preparing battle-plans for the Phoenix troops and sending small groups of shugenja to harass the Scorpion at the Outer City gates.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY ONE

Major fighting in the city seems to be centralized in the Hidari, Hojize, and Hinjaku Districts, where open fighting is visible even from outside the city. Any character watching Otosan Uchi from a high vantage point (such as the Tortoise shanty town, Location 463) sees great damage and death spreading across these districts as the fighting moves from quarter to quarter.

The Phoenix Outside the City

The only clan with troops immediately available outside the city are the Phoenix, a small legion of whom escape the burning city during the first evening of the Coup. Twenty-five in all, the Phoenix have only two shugenja (other than any PCs who might be here). Their leader, Shiba Tsukune, mentions that the Unicorn are on their way, but there is no proof supporting her assertion. Any help the PCs offer is more than welcome. Although more Phoenix legions are rallying to the north, the resistance needs any assistance it can muster.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

Rumors of the slaughter within the Palace are fueled by the smell of funeral pyres. A few escapees whisper of courtiers who refused to accept Shoju as their Emperor – and who were denied honorable deaths for their effort.

Escapees from *The Courtier's Tale*, or *Skirmishers* who discover information inside the city, might bring news of Prince Sotorii's death. By all accounts, the body found is that of Sotorii, with all the appropriate identifying marks of the young prince.

Those outside the city automatically assume courtiers inside the Imperial Palace are either hostages, or deceased. As hostages, their only value lies in manipulating Shoju's enemies, once they arrive. Tsukune and other leaders know that any mistakes could cost the hostages their lives. You may wish to make use of this threat as dramatic tension increases; those who speak with the Scorpion on behalf of their clan should keep a civil tongue.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

Characters who join *The Skirmisher's Tale* at this point note that the city is still under assault by the Scorpion. Bayushi and Shosuro troops still work to capture the major districts of the Outer City, and fighting spreads everywhere. Because of the debris the Scorpion have spread, interior roads are nearly impossible to navigate; the battle rages fiercely across the entire city.

A few unoccupied (though small) sections of the Outer City are still accessible. By the next day, these access-ways will be sealed by the Scorpion, cutting off ready means of exchange between the samurai inside and those outside the city. PCs outside may choose to take advantage of the distraction, but should take heed: the taste for blood is still fresh along the streets of Otosan Uchi.

Streets of Otosan Uchi

Day 2 (15th day of the month of the Rooster)

The Unicorns arrive today, and the Scorpion send an ambassador out of the city under a flag of peace. The Phoenix desire to listen, but the Unicorn want to cut him down as soon as he arrives. The Scorpions' commands are ludicrous: the Six Clans are to accept Shoju as their Emperor, or all hostages within the city will receive dishonorable deaths, to protest the shameful actions of their daimyo. The Unicorn reject the demands unequivocally, but the Phoenix prevent them from slaughtering the ambassador out of hand.

A SABOTEUR

Rumors abound that a saboteur is plaguing the Scorpion within the Forbidden City. At noon on Day Two, a Scorpion outpost just inside the Forbidden City collapses. The Bayushi in the area are apparently confused; reports from brief battles at the gates indicate that the Scorpion believe a Daidoji spy has entered the city and is using his training to sabotage the Bayushi.

TROOPS IN THE CITY

Shortly after the Unicorn arrive (during the hour of the Goat), they join with the Phoenix. Yokatsu enters hurriedly, eager to begin without observing the pleasantries saved for more peaceful times. One or more PCs from *The Soldier's Tale* may be with Shiba Tsukune when the Shinjo daimyo enters her command tent.

Yokatsu is adamant that the Unicorn and Phoenix ally to launch an immediate surprise attack against the Scorpion. While this may not appear tactically sound at first, the Unicorn only mean to announce their intention to stand against the Scorpion – and if possible, test the resolve of the Bayushi troops at the gate.

Should the PCs agree with Yokatsu, Tsukune assigns them to lead a small Phoenix squad to accompany the Unicorn. Tsukune can spare only ten men and Shiba Shingo, their commander, who will coordinate with the player characters in their mission.

JOURNAL ENTRY: BACK TO THE WALL

Because the Unicorn and Phoenix forces are already here, the Scorpion have posted defensive forces outside the city gates as well, working to prevent them from entering before the Bayushi can lock its districts firmly in their grip. These units, arranged at or near the main gates, launch a counter-strike at the first sign of Unicorn-Phoenix aggression.

The first scenario described in Chapter Four is a small representation of Yokatsu's hastily arranged Unicorn and Phoenix assault against these units. It takes place in the twilight hours, shortly before dark. A damp, ocean fog lingers about the Imperial City, limiting visibility and making archers less effective.

If you wish to run this battle as a Clan War scenario, use *Back to the Wall* (see page 70) as your guide. Or you may play the scenario as an RPG scene, using the Battle Table from the *L5R RPG* (page 115) to describe important occurrences and Heroic Events. Remember that these scenarios represent only small, manageable portions of the larger battles: the Scorpion are not, of course, defending the Imperial City with only sixty men.

Troops Involved in the Battle: the Scorpion

- Bayushi Togai, leading 24 bushi, all members of the Scorpion's Strike unit
- Bayushi Hida, leading 20 Elite Black Cabal
- Bayushi Tangen, leading 20 Bayushi Ambushers

Troops Involved in the Battle: the Unicorn

- Shinjo Tashima, leading 9 Shinjo's Thunder, a mounted assault unit which will shortly become 'lost' in the city (see the *Skirmisher's Tale*, page 42, and below)
- Shinjo Mokatsu, leading 20 Striders
- Shiba Shingo, leading 15 Water Elementals (the squad containing all non-Unicorn PCs; simply decrease the number of units in this squad by the number of PC figures)
- Isawa Suma and one yojimbo

As always, feel free to replace the leaders of each unit with more 'generic' NPCs or more appropriate individuals, depending on your campaign and the needs of your particular storyline.

The Lost Unicorn

An entire Unicorn squad makes it past the Scorpion guards at the outer northern wall. Nine men and their horses are lost, scrambling through the streets with Scorpion hot on their heels. Try as they might, they can find no way back out. Their test attack has turned into a trap, as they are slowly hunted down, one by one, by Scorpion traps, arrows, and spells.

This is an exceptional way to move characters from *The Soldier's Tale* into the city, where they join *The Skirmisher's Tale*. (For more on this unit and their potential, read through the rest of Chapters Two and Three).

BATTLES

Yogo Ahaira, a Scorpion ambassador, travels through the city under a flag of truce during the hour of the Monkey, just after the failed Unicorn assault. He wishes to speak with the Unicorn and test their resolve to combat the Scorpions, once they discover both the Emperor and his heir are dead. His trip through the city could prompt ambushes or other PC actions.

Maho

Rumors fly that the Scorpion are using blood-magic (*maho*) to guard the Northern Gate, and few of the hidden samurai in the city dare go near it. The bodies of fallen Phoenix troops are arranged on spikes along the river banks near the gate, as a threat to those who would follow. The Phoenix, of course, are furious – if there had been any reason for them to discuss peace with the Scorpion before, that resolve is gone.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

The Scorpion, in a plan concocted by a commander named Bayushi Hasuken, have placed a spy within the Unicorn troops. The spy's duty is to steal maps and assassinate Shinjo Yokatsu, the Unicorn Champion. Hasuken has purportedly already killed one of the Unicorn ambassadors, whose body currently hangs in the trees of the Palace gardens.

Shosuro Meido, an actor and a member of the Jade Tear (the former Hantei's personal troupe) slips through the city on his way

out into the Unicorn legions. He may even join with the 'lost' Unicorn legion (see above and throughout the *Skirmisher's Tale*), providing a delightful irony when skirmisher PCs realize *they* have helped the spy reach the Unicorn encampment – and his target.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

Every Scorpion on the outer city wall knows that the genuine battles will begin tomorrow. The Unicorn and Phoenix attacks merely test their response time and strength. Though some samurai fall on both sides, the strikes are not designed to bring down the gates, only to uncover their weaknesses.

Inside the city, however, many smaller, guerrilla-style attacks take place between the Scorpion and the city's initial defenders. Among them are the Shinjo troops lost within the Toyotomi District. *Soldier's Tale* characters who 'escape' into *The Skirmisher's Tale* may meet with these fleet troops (numbering only seven men and three horses after several brief conflicts with the enemy). They might even be part of that lost troop themselves (entering the city among them if your story requires). Such characters might aid the skirmishers in retrieving the Unicorn ambassador held hostage within the Imperial Palace (see page 25) of *The Courtier's Tale*. Other hostages from *The Courtier's Tale* who escape on Day One may also ally with these Unicorn, or even escape the city entirely.



The Fog of War

Day 3 (16th Day of the month of the Rooster)

During this day's attacks, Doji Satsume falls under a Scorpion sword (see pages 24 and 44 for more). He wastes away from a belly wound, never to recover. His son, Doji Hoturi, is now in command of the Crane forces outside the wall. Matsu Tsuko hates him, and many other commanders think him unworthy of the command, which – coupled with his father's death – destroys his confidence. Can the PCs help Doji Hoturi maintain the Crane presence outside the city?

THE LION AND THE CRANE

Matsu Tsuko, general of the Lion in the absence of Akodo Toturi (who is lost within the Kosuga District – see pages 24 and 44 for more), arrives with her armies mid-afternoon on Day Two. Shortly after her arrival, scouts to the south report the banners of the Crane approaching.

The commanders of both armies meet with Yokatsu in the afternoon. In attendance are Shiba Tsukune (and her PC advisors, if they have not yet joined with their own clans), Shinjo Yokatsu of the Unicorn, Matsu Tsuko and Matsu Gohei, and Doji Satsume and his son, Doji Hoturi. The meetings go poorly, and after a scarcely-concealed insult to the honor of the Lion, Matsu Tsuko rallies her troops and attacks the city – alone.

There are only a few hours of light left when the Lion storm Otosan Uchi, a fact which you may wish to stress. If the Lion continue their press into the city after nightfall, they will all be slaughtered. Even the hot-headed Tsuko must realize that fact.

JOURNAL ENTRY: GO MASTERS

During the hour of the Goat, at approximately 2 PM, a mighty kiai shout assaults the the Emperor's Gate. The Lion army has assembled all day, camping to the northwest of the city away from the combined Unicorn-Phoenix forces. Now, they have gathered enough strength to attack. In the south, shortly after the Lion flood the Emperor's Gate and engage the Scorpion forces there, another Crane army assaults the city.

The second scenario described in Chapter Four (see page 72) represents the Lion Clan's initial charge and the Scorpion response. Shortly after the Scorpion have shut down all access to Otosan Uchi, Lion Clan forces arrive on the scene. Many Lion troops have already been lost in the Scorpion conquest of the Imperial City, and the Lion army's rage calls for immediate, decisive action: battle.

During an assault along the outer southern wall, the Lion manage to create a small breach in the Scorpion line, and slip a few units into the city. The Scorpion must quickly contain the threat and destroy the Lion troops before this small incursion becomes a torrential rush of enemy troops. Worse still, the Crane attack at the Northern Gate occurs *during* the Lion battle, so the Scorpion need to quickly end their battle with the Lion, and turn their attention to that breach as well.

Again, we have provided the tools to run this battle using the *Clan War* scenario rules (see page 72) or the L5R Battle Table (page 115 of the *L5R RPG*).

Troops Involved in the Battle: the Scorpion

- Bayushi Aramoro, leading 27 Bayushi Elite Spearmen
- Yogo Asami, leading 20 Bayushi Ambushers
- Bayushi Tangen, leading 10 Bayushi Ambushers
- Bayushi Kuritsu (similar statistics to Tangen), leading 8 Ninja Bowmen

Troops Involved in the Battle: the Lion

- Matsu Gohei, leading 16 Akodo Deathseekers
- Matsu Chokoku, leading 20 Lion Medium Elite
- Matsu Yojo, leading 15 regular line troops

As always, feel free to replace the leaders of each unit with other NPCs or appropriate individuals, depending on your campaign.

There may also be Unicorn or Phoenix forces involved in this battle, if they survived the night's attack. Feel free to scatter the PCs wherever is most appropriate. Although the Crane side of the battle is not represented in Chapter Four, it should be of major importance to those who are running the RPG campaign, as its outcome greatly changes the status quo outside the walls for the rest of the *Soldier's Tale*.

Burn it Down

As mentioned in earlier chapters, General Bayushi Sundokai commands that the Toyotomi District be set aflame today. The Scorpion begin setting fires (both magical and mundane) during the hour of the Hare, to 'flush the Lions out'. The fire grows through the morning, spreading across Meiyoko and Hojize Districts as well. By the end of the hour of the Dragon (midday), the Toyotomi is completely engulfed.

The Scorpion do not seem concerned; those with knowledge of strategy understand why; with the city in shambles, enemy troops will have a much more difficult time penetrating it.

Toturi's Escape

Shortly after the flames erupt in Toyotomi, Akodo Toturi moves through the besieged city. During his flight, the characters might encounter him for a moment of interaction (he steps in during a battle, then vanishes once it is done). Or they could find traces of him without knowing whose trail they have found.

The Emerald Champion

Throughout the city, arrows and spells fly between attacker and defender, eventually forcing the Lion out of the city. As they retreat, the Scorpion wheel their full might against the Crane, mortally wounding Doji Satsume as his clan retreats. His fallen body is carried back to the Crane encampment by his son, Doji Hoturi.

PCs in the armies outside the city soon discover that Satsume has received a death-blow. After the battle, the Scorpion guards on the Outer City wall send a message to the Imperial Palace (detailed in the first two chapters of this book), which soldier PCs may intercept if offered the opportunity.

Doji Hoturi now commands the Crane forces outside the wall. This causes a great imbalance of political power, as Hoturi is regarded as neither forceful nor capable. The Scorpion use this as another piece of political leverage. More than one of the Crane nobles hiding in the city actively discusses a potential alliance with the Scorpion at this time. "Without strength on the field," they argue, "we will be destroyed. If we ally with Shoju now, perhaps he will be merciful."

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

Inside the palace, the geisha Hatsuko is dragged before Kachiko, and forced to reveal her part in the Toturi's attempted murder. Any characters of the *Soldier's Tale* who followed the geisha's guard into the palace may overhear her admission, and carry news of her apparent execution or suicide to others outside.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

As mentioned, Toturi begins moving through the besieged city during this time. The players may find him, or traces of his flight. If they are courtiers escaping from the palace, they may have knowledge of his location (through Hatsuko – see page 44).

Other parts of *The Skirmisher's Tale* which may affect *The Soldier's Tale* include a unit of Matsu who are trapped and dying in the Toyotomi District (see page 44). The Scorpion have tied them to poles in the center of the district with the intention of burning them alive. The pyres are easily visible from the highest hillocks outside the city, and one or more of the characters may be offered a command of Lion to save them. A prominent Scorpion courtier named Shosuro Taberu (see *Way of the Scorpion*) commands Toyotomi, and any troops the PCs would encounter in their rescue mission (20 Bayushi bushi and two Soshi shugenja).



Day 4 (17th Day of the month of the Rooster)

The last three days of the Coup are filled with desperate battles, aggressive assaults on the Scorpion fortifications of the city, and other acts of war. Player characters in the *Soldier's Tale* should be prepared for a good deal of fighting – most of it quite lethal. During the fourth day, Hida Kisada arrives with a Crab army. The united clans capture the Outer Walls but cannot penetrate the enchantments on the Miwaku Kabe.

Also, the Scorpion spy among the Unicorn troops makes his move to assassinate Yokatsu, pinning the blame on the Crab. Success in his mission results in much division among Kisada's alliance – unless the soldiers outside the walls can unravel what has happened, and locate the assassin before he slips back into Otosan Uchi.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY FOUR

During Day Four, the clans outside the city launch repeated attacks against the Scorpion, resulting in chaos and tremendous death on all sides. Still, however, the combined might of the clans cannot punch through the Enchanted Walls. Although the armies are strong, they are powerless against the already-entrenched Scorpion.

It is important to balance the high combat aspects of *The Soldier's Tale* with roleplay and intrigue. Although players who opt to remain with the troops outside the walls know that they should be involved in the fighting, some attention should be paid to the structure and outcome of their battles, to prevent them from devolving into hours of hack-and-slashing behind an NPC.

Placing characters in positions where they can reach some pivotal objective is an excellent way to involve them in the pressing conflict. A few brief examples follow.

- **The Healer:** A squad of Lion have entrenched between Scorpion encampments. They are in desperate need of a healer, and though one has been found, he needs an entourage of guards to protect him on the way to his patients. The PCs are assigned to escort him through the fighting.

• **A Quick Rescue:** The PCs' daimyo has fallen on the battlefield, and must be carried to safety. This scenario also works if the PCs wish to remain behind, guarding the path while their daimyo is carried to safety.

• **Capture the Flag:** An item, hostage, or enemy general has been captured (possibly by the PCs), and must be defended until other troops can enter the city to assist. Conversely, a Scorpion battalion has left the city and captured a significant item from the encamped troops left behind by the Six Clans. Can the PCs defeat the Scorpion and recover the item before the Bayushi escape back into Otosan Uchi?

Many other scenarios are possible on the battlefield, including rivals viewing the melee as an opportunity to revive old disputes, avenge insults, etc. Not all enemies in this adventure must be within the Scorpion walls, and "division" should be one of the largest recurring themes throughout the Scorpion Clan Coup. The Six Clans are not in any way unified. Only their goal is united, and that keeps them from tearing each others' throats out for only so long.

Make that clear. Very clear.

It becomes crucial at the end of the adventure.

THE GREAT BEAR

Kisada arrives a few hours before dark, and loud horns sound over Otosan Uchi. There is a long pause, as Kisada's messenger approaches the city. He bears a large red flag, symbol of Kisada's alliance. With a slow, deliberate motion, the Hiruma messenger stands before the palatial gate to the Emperor's Road, and raises the flag. Then, just as slowly, he lowers it, pointing toward the encampments to the west of the city. The Crab turn, and join forces with the Six Clans. The combined might of all Six Clans stand ready to face Shoju's minions, and a final strike falls upon the Imperial City before it is too dark to fight.

JOURNAL ENTRY: CRASHING WAVE

During this last battle, the Six Clans capture the Outer Walls of Otosan Uchi, but cannot penetrate the immense structures surrounding the Forbidden City. The fighting is fierce, and many Scorpion troops die to the last man. The Crab produce siege engines which they have brought from the Kaiu Wall - engines that have previously only been used for defense. This is a radical innovation on Kisada's part, something of which the Crab are very proud, even though initial reactions among the other clans is mixed. (Some even murmur about his sanity in these dark times; if Kisada hears them, he remains impassive.)

The third scenario described in Chapter Four represents the Crab assault on Otosan Uchi, with the reinforcements of the other clans hard at their heels. Although the clans are not united at this point, the crushing blow dealt by the Crab has given them the advantage they needed to dislodge the Scorpion from Otosan Uchi's Outer Walls.

We have provided the tools to run this battle using the Clan War scenario rules (see page 74) or the L5R Battle Table (page 115 of the *L5R RPG*). Remember, however, that this battle is only a sample of the overall fighting during Day Four of the Scorpion Clan Coup. Should the players fail in one (or perhaps even two) such scenarios, remind them that such battles are occurring all around the city, and that the Six Clans may still find victory before the day is done.

Troops Involved in this Battle

• Bayushi Togai with Fan of Command, leading 24 Black Cabal with Poisoned Weapons

• Bayushi Dozan (who has the same statistics as Bayushi Togai), leading 24 Black Cabal

• Bayushi Tomaru leading 20 Scorpion Claws with Poisoned Weapons

• Bayushi Tasu leading 20 Scorpion's Strike

For the Crab

• Hida O-Ushi leading 20 of the Damned

• Hida Tampako leading 20 Crab Heavy Infantry

• 16 Hiruma Archers and 8 Hiruma Scouts, led by Hiruma gunso

• Hida Amoro leading 20 Crab Berserkers

• Kaiu Kenru leading 20 Hiruma Medium Elite, and overseeing any assault with the siege engines (for the RPG battle)

• Yasuki Nokatsu leading 19 Heavy Infantry

Although this battle takes place on the outer southern wall of the Imperial Capital, troops of all the clans may easily be involved. Although they fight as individual units, most will support their allies in time of need. Again, feel free to scatter the PCs wherever is most appropriate. As always, feel free to replace the leaders of each unit with more 'generic' NPCs, depending on your campaign.

A Spy in the Midst of Revel

The Scorpion have planted a spy among the Unicorn troops, ready to assassinate Yokatsu (as described in both the *Courtier's* and *Skirmisher's Tales*). His mission is to eliminate the Unicorn general, and divert the blame onto the Crab. The Scorpion hope the resulting division might even cause the Crab to change their alliance, shattering the offensive power of the Six Clans once and for all. Of course, the discovery of a few well-placed clues by soldier PCs may offer a chance to save the fledgling alliance - if they can only reveal the conspiracy in time.

One possible sub-plot involves the hostages of *The Courtier's Tale*. The generals of the forces outside the city may determine that one or more of the hostages have information about the Scorpion - their battle-plans, defenses, or even the location of the spy sent to kill Yokatsu (if his intentions have been revealed).

PCs embroiled in *The Soldier's Tale* might journey into the city disguised as Scorpion guards, and thus link the two adventures.

Any characters assigned to such a mission would have to sneak into the palace with the help of the skirmishers, meet with the hostages in the palace, and make it out again with their information – and possibly some of the captives as well.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

Within the Imperial Palace, many Crab courtiers and samurai under Shoju's control decide to follow their masters' cue. They forge alliances with the other five clans to get out of the city. Many choose to take their own lives, however; among them is Kuni Fujiko, the unacknowledged daughter of Kuni Yori.

Characters of *The Soldier's Tale* may hear of this atrocity and strike a blow against the Scorpion in the palace under the veil of Kisada's attack. If they are skilled or lucky enough, they might even rescue a number of courtiers and be back in time for the fighting on Day Five.

The Bayushi are too concerned with the Crab threat within the palace to pay as much attention to the other courtiers as they should. Hostility increases within the halls of the shining spire, and with each passing day, the hostages (and characters of *The Courtier's Tale*) are less likely to survive the Coup. If someone

outside the city does not act soon, Kisada's alliance may spell death for the courtiers inside the palace.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

When Kisada arrives and the Six Clans capture the Outer Walls, the Scorpion begin to lose hope. There is talk for the first time among the soldiers camped throughout the Emerald Capital that Shoju may lose, and that all of them will die dishonorably in the vengeful counterstrike. There are desertions and death-squad attacks (suicide missions), and traps are laid as a last line of defense against the Six Clans.

By evening of Day Four, there are only a few ways in or out of the city (and only one obvious path – along the Road of the Most High, Location 563). Observant soldier characters (those who succeed with an Awareness + Battle roll of 20 or more) know that the Six Clans may be marching into a death-trap in the morning, when their push into the city continues. Of course, knowing this and doing something about it are two different things. With the clans bickering amongst themselves, how can they convince them of the threat?



When Men Stand Divided

Day 5 (18th Day of the month of the Rooster)

CHAMPION OF THE EMPIRE

Early in the morning of Day Five, just before dawn, Scorpion raiders assault the sleeping encampments of the Six Clans. Their attack focuses on the Phoenix and their shugenja, of whom they slaughter as many as they can locate. After their sneak attack, a single bushi in Scorpion armor is discovered approaching the Crane camp. Although not part of the assault squad, he claims to have escaped the city walls under cover of their attack. The bushi is Akodo Toturi, Champion of the Lion.

Reactions to Toturi's return vary among the Six Clans:

- **Crab:** Kisada's forces are pleased to see Toturi. They respect his battle-prowess and daring escape from Otsan Uchi. The information he brings about the Scorpion defenses only further elevates him in their eyes. Honor is not a stumbling block; the Crab understand that Toturi has performed his duty to the Empire, even if he has tarnished his honor in the escape. The Crab support Toturi's return, and are willing to listen to his advice and support his command.

- **Crane:** For many years, Doji Hoturi and Akodo Toturi have been allies and friends. Matsu Tsuko's unreasoning hatred for the Crane has caused the two clans to refuse to work as allies, and Toturi might heal that rift between their troops – at least long enough for the Six Clans to capture Otsan Uchi. Privately, Hoturi welcomes his old friend; outwardly, he agrees that Toturi has acted dishonorably, and suggests some methods of meditation and retreat to once more purify Toturi's soul.

- **Dragon:** Of all the clans, the Dragon are the least surprised to see Toturi. In fact, they seem prepared for Toturi's return, and bring him a special suit of armor created by Togashi Yokuni. The Dragon shrug off questions about this gift, and immediately ask for Toturi's command. Privately, the Dragon wonder at their own

Champion's foreknowledge of Toturi's return, and his command for them to follow him unquestioningly.

- **Lion:** The Lion troops, led by their commander, Matsu Tsuko, feel betrayed and disillusioned. Toturi has stained his honor – not once, but twice – in ignoring his clan's call to arms, and in his method of escaping the city. Only with Tsuko's support can Toturi guide and command the rebellious Lion troops, but Tsuko is ultimately unwilling to give it. Toturi and his allies have to politically or physically force Tsuko to accept his command. If they cannot, all hope is lost.

- **Phoenix:** The Phoenix are unsure about this returned Lion Commander. Shiba Tsukune distrusts a man who arrives in Scorpion armor. What if he is no more than another Shosuro assassin? Or, if the real Toturi, who is to say he is not brainwashed or ensorcelled to lead the Six Clans into the Scorpion's trap? Tsukune (and the two Elemental Masters – Isawa Tsuke and Isawa Tomo – who arrive on the fifth day with Phoenix reinforcements) will need to be convinced.

- **Unicorn:** Toturi or no Toturi, the Unicorn want only one thing: victory against the Scorpion. If the dishonored Lion Champion can provide the information they need and the tactical skill to lead the Six Clans as a united force, then Shinjo Yokatsu stands behind him. If Toturi cannot, then the clans had best find someone else who can – and quickly, for the Scorpions have nearly secured their hold on the Ekohikei and soon, all may be lost.



Ultimately, the Akodo Champion takes command of the armies of the Six Clans. If all goes well, the Six Clans are truly united, and at last can turn their full strength against the Scorpion. Only with Toturi's battle prowess and tactical skill can they crush the Bayushi enemy, and many believe that only Toturi can discover a way to break down the Miwaku Kabe.

BATTLES OF THE COUP — DAY FIVE

The many battles to retake the Outer City districts of Otsan Uchi occur throughout Day Five (and are described in detail on pages 27 and 47 of the *Courtier's* and *Skirmisher's Tales*). The following events occur this day in addition to the seppuku of Bayushi Sundokai and the forced retreat of the Scorpion behind the Enchanted Walls surrounding the Ekohikei. You are encouraged to incorporate them into the battle sequences of the day if you wish.

NEMESIS

One other important event occurs during the battles of the fifth day which reverberates through the united armies — and which one day, will be felt throughout the Emerald Empire. On the battlefield outside the Imperial City, a brash young Dragon samurai-ko, Mirumoto Hitomi, charges through the ranks, disobeying orders in order to challenge the son of the Crab general, Hida Yakamo. She does not defeat him, but removes his hand in partial payment for taking her brother's life.

Rumors run rampant, and the Scorpion see this as a victory — the clans are now arguing, and possibly fighting, amongst themselves. Kisada is furious, demanding the samurai-ko's life, but the small Mirumoto legion refuses, standing firm against the Great Bear. Such strife can only benefit the Scorpion, and the Shusuro use this opportunity to drive a wedge between the alliance and the Crab.

How can both sides be pacified without bloodshed and the loss of Otsan Uchi? Can the alliances forged between characters in *The Soldier's Tale* help to heal the wounds between the Dragon and the Crab? Can the Crab fight without their general's son by their side? How many Hida will use the chaos of tomorrow's attack to take revenge upon the Dragon legion?

Rumors about this incident spread through the campsites of the Six Clans. The Dragon and Crab exchange wild stories and accusations, and even with Toturi in command, the PCs will have their hands full keeping the fragile peace together.

THE LAST DAY

Throughout Day Five, numerous battles take place in the city streets as the Scorpion fall back behind the Enchanted Walls surrounding the Ekohikei. The fighting goes well for the Six Clans, and Toturi is heralded as a hero. By sunset, the Six Clans fully occupy the Outer City, and Crab siege engines move through the streets in anticipation of the next day's assault on the Miwaku Kabe.

Toturi, with the might of the Crab armies at his side, makes a tremendous difference in this struggle. The Scorpion are defeated again and again, retreating behind the massive walls of the Forbidden City. By the end of this day, samurai hidden in the city during the *Skirmisher's Tale* may join their comrades in the armies of the Six Clans (joining *The Soldier's Tale* for the last day of combat).

A HOSTAGE TRADE

At sunset, a messenger from the Scorpion approaches the commanders of the Six Clans. The message is this: Shoju will exchange hostages for an immediate halt to the fighting and the promise of open negotiations for the Emerald Throne. A meeting is planned with a *chui* (lieutenant) from each of the clans arrayed outside the Forbidden City. Success in these negotiations results in the release of a courtier-hostage from each clan.

Although Shoju is unwilling to release the throne, he wishes to appear willing to step down to the rank of a Champion if the Six Clans determine a preferable candidate for Emperor. In truth, this is a ruse intended to incite argument and civil war between the allied clans outside Otsan Uchi. As they bicker over a throne they have not yet won, their attentions will be diverted from the Scorpion.

This is a desperate gamble, and the Scorpion courtiers sent into negotiations with the Six Clans already know this. If they fail, they have been instructed to create as much dissension as possible, and return hostages to the clans who were 'most helpful'.

PARALLEL: THE COURTIER'S TALE

A pearl diver arrives in the palace bearing a message he has carried up the swift-flowing river. The man is a Mantis samurai, loyal to the brash daimyo, Yoritomo, and offers to sneak out some of the Scorpions by sea. Those who accept must pass through the armies of the Six Clans during the night. The Mantis have three junks waiting past the breakers of the Bay of the Golden Sun, prepared to take the Scorpion refugees to safety.

At dawn, the Scorpion handmaidens wail; Shoju's son has died of his wounds. With Dairu's death, the Scorpions gain new ferocity. Anger rages through the palace, and even the most sober Scorpion lift their swords, determined to make the Crane pay a heavy price.

PARALLEL: THE SKIRMISHER'S TALE

Characters among the skirmishers of the Outer City may join *The Soldier's Tale* for the final day's combat during this day. They are incorporated into the forces of their clans as possible, unless they choose to work as a unit of only one clan (which may be helpful for RPG play). Such an option should be offered to the PCs if they do not propose it themselves, to ease your job during the final act of the Scorpion Clan Coup.

The Face of My Enemy

Day 6 (19th Day of the month of the Rooster)

The final day of the Coup dawns clear and cold. Toturi and the Six Clans gather to attack the Four Walls and capture the Forbidden City. One inviolate karmic balance must come to pass before the Empire can again be at peace.

Toturi must duel Shoju.

The battle in the Forbidden City brings all the timelines together once more, as the Six Clans free the city, storm the enchanted walls, and destroy the Scorpion Clan. Characters of *The Skirmisher's Tale* are now incorporated into *The Soldier's Tale*, and those of *The Courtier's Tale* observe the battles raging for the first time at the gates of the palace itself.

Near dawn on the sixth day, the spell-barrages begin. Huge gouts of flame, thunder, torrents of wind, and pillars of earth assault the Four Enchanted Walls of Otsan Uchi, but no spell brings them down. The assault continues well through the day, as the Six Clans continue to hurl their armies against the weakest points of the wall, hoping to find a breach. Eventually, the Phoenix Elemental Masters pierce the gates between the walls, allowing the armies of the Six Clans to flood into the Ekohikei and engage the Scorpion in their defensive trenches.

BREACHING THE SOUTH WALL

The primary assault within the Ekohikei takes place at the Southern Miwaku Kabe, the enigmatic wall of mirrors and mystery (for more on this structure, please see Book Two, page 8). "Take the South Wall, and trust in the Fortunes that the enchantments there will know the hearts of those who are loyal to Hantei..." Toturi says before the armies leave for battle. Now those words ring in every samurai's mind as the great wall of Otsan Uchi looms before them, rising in the dawn like a towering monolith.

With the morning's dew, a strange fog escapes the mirrors that surmount the wall, covering the ground in a rapidly thickening well of cold dampness. Even the Scorpion atop the wall shout in surprise and fear as the Wall itself begins to shift and move – and

then, as all things are covered by the ethereal fog, the battle is joined...

THE FINAL BATTLE AT THE SOUTHERN WALL

There are three challenges facing the troops assaulting the Southern Miwaku Kabe, all of them deadly. The first is navigating the maze of fog and blindness, surrounded both by allies and by enemies – not only the Scorpion, but also the Oni captured in the Western Wall during the Battle of Four Winds a thousand years ago. Those creatures are released by the activation of the walls, and loom in the fog, half-real and half-imagined. These threats are real, their swords and claws sharp, and the possibility of death – even from a terrified ally – is very real.

Second, the characters enter a vision, created by the fog, of their most dishonorable or disgraceful moment. Here, without words, the wall forces them to justify what they have done, and why. If their answer is not acceptable (*i.e.* there is no true remorse for their actions), their heart bursts, and they die. (After the battle, many Lion and Unicorn samurai are found dead in this manner, some of whom managed to commit *seppuku* before they were overwhelmed by the Wall.)

Finally, and potentially the most fatal, attackers must navigate a portion of Jigoku. The Wall fades to nothingness, and a gateway to the Land of the Dead appears within its shadowy coil, where ancestral spirits await the honored dead. Those with the courage and conviction to stand fast in their duty may cross this strip of Jigoku, but all others fall to the side, unable to find their way out. Although the capstone of a samurai's life is to reach Jigoku and join their ancestors, to a true samurai duty is more important than reward. The proper choice is to return to the real world, despite its dangers and troubles, and fulfill one's obligation to the Empire.

TOTURI

Akodo Toturi and the Six Clans successfully attack the Four Walls, capturing the Forbidden City by the end of the day. Shortly after the assault, however, perceptive PCs note that Toturi is gone. (He has entered the palace through a secret aperture, and now, as the battle rages outside, he meets Shoju, alone, in the throne room.)

No one is present to witness the duel, and when the Crane storm through the jade doors, they discover a wounded Toturi standing over the body of Bayushi Shoju. The Iuchiban blade, *Ambition*, is driven within a crack of the Imperial Throne, broken. Before this point, the Emerald Throne has been unblemished, but now a great rift carved into the circle of the throne's back divides the picture of the First Emperor from the Sun Goddess. This is a great blow to the Hantei line, as the defacement of one of its greatest treasures will be a shock to the Empire.

Wedged within the crack in the throne is the broken blade of Shoju's bloodsword, *Ambition*. Pouring from its twisted blade, a stream of blood cascades across the dais. The throne is covered in crimson, the ground, tapestries and delicately painted screens are

covered in blood, and the floor is sticky with residue from the sword's death. Blood surrounds the dais, and only Akodo Toturi survives to tell the tale. PCs who arrive late find several wounded and weary courtiers being led out of the palace by Crane guards, among them the pale and shaken Doji Shizue, surrounded by her brother Kuwanan and his personal retinue. Strangely, no one is allowed to speak to her. There are no exceptions; she is taken immediately from the palace, and escorted to Kyuden Doji.

This detail becomes the focus of many questions across the Empire, but there are no answers at this time. What really happened to Doji Shizue during the final battle for Otosan Uchi will be revealed in time.

Toturi claims to have defeated Shoju in honorable combat, and that Shoju should be mourned as a man who died in the name of duty, no matter how misdirected. Although Toturi may be questioned for his words, he stands by them: Shoju believed that his actions would save the Empire from a darker fate. Though he was a madman, he acted according to what he saw to be his duty. Madness is the sign of a mind touched by the blazing light of the Sun and Moon – it should be pitied, not reviled.

The Champions gather after the battle to face an empty throne while eta labor to cleanse the gore-spattered throne room. Knowing that there is no heir, the daimyo argue: "There must be an Emperor, or there will be war." But before their swords are drawn, Toturi steps before the Emerald Throne. "I have defeated the Usurper," he cries. "I will stand as your Emperor. No other can

claim the right." The others fall silent, and Toturi stands for a moment, awaiting any challenge. None comes.

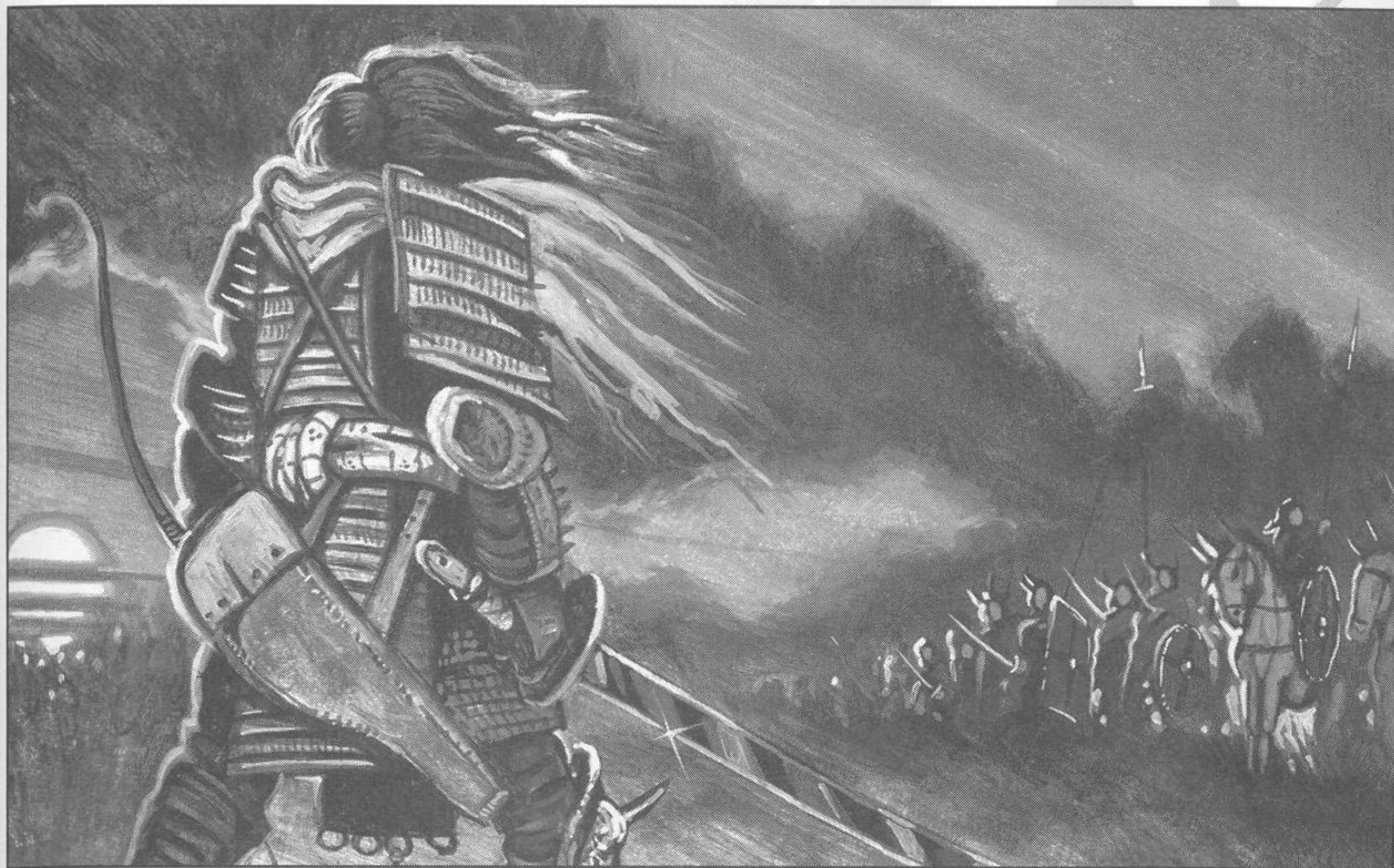
Then, in utter silence, Toturi withdraws the Bloodsword's hilt, throwing the broken blade to the floor. With a solemn face, he seats himself upon the broken throne.

HANTEI XXXIX

Within seconds of Toturi's claim, the jade doors of the throne room open again, and the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix enter. Between them, escorted by young Isawa Kaede, is Hantei Sotorii, the young son of the fallen Emperor. For a moment, the court is thrown into chaos, and Champions of the clans fall to their knees in shock and amazement. Toturi rises from the Emerald Throne, his face ashen.

The secret of the young Emperor's return is this: the Phoenix Master of Void Isawa Ujina and his daughter, Kaede, used their magic to reform one of the young Prince's playmates with a semblance of the Hantei's features. They left that boy behind to die with honor protecting both his friend and his Empire, and spirited the true Prince away from the palace with another great spell.

The Phoenix spell took the boy to their lands, safe from Shoju's grasp. Knowing that a boy Prince could never hope to defeat Shoju, the Phoenix offered the Hantei his *gempukku*, thus crowning the thirty-ninth Emperor of Rokugan. Gathering their troops to protect him and using their magic to keep the Hantei



informed of the battle at the palace, the Phoenix served the Empire's needs. The young Hantei chose to keep his survival a secret to prevent Shoju's assassins from discovering him and completing their task to end the Hantei line. The Emperor also claimed that he wished to test the loyalty of the Crab, though the Phoenix suspect he did not have faith in the victory of the Great Clans against Shoju's mighty army.

To speak such words about an Emperor's courage would be treason. Whatever their reasons, the Elemental Masters quietly obeyed the commands of the new Hantei. When the victory of the Great Clans seemed assured, Phoenix magics once more brought Hantei the Thirty-Ninth back to his palace, with Kaede and the Elemental Masters at his side, to return the Empire to order and restore the line of Hantei Emperors.

DENOUEMENT

These are the historic commands given by the newly crowned Emperor. Feel free to elaborate, alter, or modify them as suits your campaign, knowing that these declarations change the Empire dramatically through the course of the Clan Wars.

The Scorpion Clan is pronounced anathema, their descendants and liegemen to be hunted across the land, their lineage destroyed. The Crane - inheritors of Satsume's responsibility as Emerald Champion - are commanded to see that the Scorpion lands and titles are returned to the Emperor. Although the place of the Emerald Champion is empty due to Doji Satsume's death

during the Coup, the Crane Clan inherit the responsibility of the responsibility of maintaining Satsume's duties until such time as a new Emerald Champion can be chosen.

In order to completely erase the line of the Bayushi, the young Hantei marries Bayushi Kachiko, stripping her of her heritage. Still, she keeps her family name as a badge of dishonor and a constant reminder of her clan's failure - she is not deemed worthy to bear the name 'Hantei'. Her life as his concubine and the mother of his heirs is one of slavery to the Hantei line, returning lives to pay for those taken by her husband's treachery and greed.

This decision is an extremely controversial one, and the Empire is divided by the Emperor's choice of 'punishment' toward the wife of his greatest enemy. Some said that the Bayushi woman had used *maho* to enchant the Emperor's mind, while others claimed that she gave the Emperor some vital piece of information that allowed the Imperial troops to defeat Shoju. Perhaps the Emperor let her live as a reward for aiding in the defeat of her husband - or as a constant shame, forbidding her *seppuku*. After all, if the rumor was true, then she had both betrayed the Empire and the man to whom she had been married. *Once a traitor, the whispers say, always a traitor.*

The Emperor's choice of a Bayushi wife is a great scandal through the Empire - but it is eclipsed by his second royal decree. Where those who once supported the young Hantei are at first willing to accept his unusual actions, taken out of rage and a need to punish those who betrayed his father and the Empire, Hantei



XXXIX had not yet finished placing his foot onto the throats of those he felt were disloyal during the coup.

THE AKODO

It is widely believed that the new Hantei destroyed the Akodo because he believed Akodo Toturi to be a traitor to the Imperial Line. It is further said that the general of the Lion armies had been told the Hantei line was still alive, that he had claimed the throne in pretended ignorance while planning to destroy Sotorii when the boy returned to the city.

Some among the Phoenix claim that they got word through to Toturi of the boy's escape, but not of the Prince's *gempukku*. Perhaps Toturi claimed the throne as a precaution, as regent for the young prince while he completed his training and was formally crowned as the 39th Hantei Emperor.

Whatever the cause, when the new Hantei entered his throne room, he found another samurai resting upon his father's throne and claiming the right to rule the Emerald Empire.

The Emperor's announcement was brief, and cold, and not a word arose from the watching samurai nobles. As Toturi rose from his throne, the Hantei began to speak, stepping up to the dais as the Akodo general fell to his knees on the floor of the bloodstained throne room, beside the other Champions of the Six Great Clans.

"Akodo Toturi, I know of your dishonor and your treachery. Now I will speak of your crimes against the Empire, so that all will understand when I show you no mercy. Do not think that a boy Emperor is blind to the truth, or that I have not been watching as my city was destroyed and my throne was claimed – first by Shoju, and now, of all my servants, by the one who claimed most to serve my honor." The words were bitter and filled with hatred.

"Hear the deeds of 'glorious' Akodo Toturi," the Hantei spoke, settling into his Emerald Throne. "The man who abandoned the Lion Clan in their time of greatest need, allowing himself to be trapped and influenced by a geisha. He chose the embrace of a heimin woman over duty to his Lord and to his Empire.

"He spoke in Shoju's favor after the usurper was killed, and proclaimed that Shoju deserved an honorable burial despite his slaughter of the Hantei family.

"And last, he is to be reviled for his treachery – daring to speak a false claim to the Hantei throne. For resting where none but the Hantei have been allowed to remain – upon this, the Emerald Throne.

"For these, the actions of a traitorous man, the samurai known as Akodo Toturi is dishonored. He is to be denied a true samurai's right to an honorable *seppuku*, and must live on in shame.

"Your shame shall destroy not only your own honor, Toturi," the Emperor snarled, "but your entire traitorous line. It is said that the Akodo live as brothers, and so let them die as brothers. We shall see how the Akodo stand by their oaths to you when they learn of your black and corrupted heart."

The Emperor's command was carried through the Imperial City of Otsan Uchi with the speed of a hundred winds. All those who bore the Akodo name had until sunrise to determine if their honor lay with Toturi, with the Akodo, or with the Lion. Some chose to remain loyal to Toturi, allowing their names to be stripped in order to join him as ronin. Others felt their honor lay with the Akodo, and joined the Deathseekers of the Lion or committed *seppuku* before the morning dawned. A third group, the largest number of Akodo samurai, set aside their personal honor and their family name and were adopted into the other Great Houses of the Lion – the Matsu, the Ikoma and the Kitsu. By sunrise on the day after Shoju's death, the Akodo line was no more.

Tsuko, Champion of the Lion

Matsu Tsuko's first command as the new Lion Champion was to see that no Akodo lived within the Empire before the sun rises the following morning. To achieve this, the Akodo were to give up their name to become ronin, or take the name of Ikoma, Matsu or Kitsu, remaining with their former clan in shame. The only Akodo not affected by this command was Akodo Kage, who received specific dispensation as one of the Emperor's own sensei and most trusted advisors. Yet even he was not allowed to pass his name on to others, nor to bear children, nor to allow the Akodo name to be spoken in his presence with either pride or honor.

THE EMPEROR

Hantei Sotorii, the young Prince, was a peaceful child, sheltered from the ravages of war and the politics of court; he was by no means prepared to accept the throne. When his court was butchered around him, and his father's life was taken by his most trusted friend, something in the young man seemed to break. The Phoenix, with their great magic, were unable to bring him peace or understanding, and when he took the throne of Rokugan his edicts were as cruel as the atrocities he had been forced to witness. Some historians say that Sotorii, if he had been able to mature into his role as the Thirty-Ninth Hantei, would have been a kind and generous Emperor.

But that was not to be his fate.

Perhaps the war that claimed his father's life and destroyed his family drove the Thirty-Ninth into madness, or perhaps the betrayal and bloodshed scarred a soul too young to bear the burden of the Emerald Throne. No matter what the true cause, the Hantei Emperor that claimed Rokugan's throne that day would never be the same bright young boy who had been prince. Nor was there any choice: the line of the Hantei had been destroyed... all save one.

Scorpion Deployment Zone

Paved Road

Unicorn/Phoenix Deployment Zone

SCORPION CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Bayushi Togai (General)	200
24	Scorpion's Strike w/Poisoned Weapons	312
1	Bayushi Hisa (w/Fan of Command)	135
20	Black Cabal	300
1	Bayushi Tange	95
10	Bayushi Ambushers w/extra Damage using Trap! card	130 20
1	Bayushi Tange	95
10	Bayushi Ambushers w/extra Damage using Trap! card	130 20
Total Cost		1437

SCORPION TACTICAL DECK


3 x A Master of Tactics	3 x Beyond Your Mastery
2 x Burst of Speed	3 x Charge
3 x Countercharge	2 x Defensive Position
3 x Grim Determination	3 x Parade Ground Practice
3 x Retreat	2 x Trap! (+2 Damage dice each)
3 x Wall of Spears	

UNICORN/PHOENIX CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Shinjo Tashima (General)	162
9	Shinjo's Thunder	234
1	Shinjo Mosaku	156
20	Striders	220
1	Isawa Suma w/Fury of Osano Wo w/Wind Borne Speed w/Steady the Spirit	135 10 15 15
1	Yojimbo	24
1	Shiba Shingo	110
15	Water Elementals	180
Total Cost		1261

UNICORN/PHOENIX TACTICAL DECK

3 x An Unguarded Moment	3 x Banzai Charge
3 x Burst of Speed	3 x Charge
3 x Countercharge	3 x Frenzy
3 x Grim Determination	3 x Iaijutsu Duel
3 x Parade Ground Practice	3 x Ride Until Dawn



Scenario One: Back to the Wall

Shock... disbelief... outrage...

Word races through Ootosan Uchi, first through the Inner City, then the Outer, and finally into the areas outside the city walls. The unthinkable has happened. A great clan has turned on the Hantei. Rumor even holds that the Hantei has been murdered by Bayushi Shoji.

Within hours, the forces around the city are mobilized to recapture the heart and soul of Rokugan. The Unicorn and Phoenix, with but meager forces available at the city, are first to launch an assault.

In an attempt to prevent the city from being sealed by the Scorpion forces, the Unicorn and Phoenix try to capture some of the city and hold until reinforcements arrive.

Their armies march in a gloomy silence. A quiet rage burns within the soldiery of Rokugan – a blasphemy unlike any known before has brought them out of their beds midway through this moonless night.

As the Coup begins, the first concern of the Scorpion forces is to establish control. They swiftly slaughter obvious opposition, such as Imperial troops, then seek out those capable of organizing any remaining troops.

Meanwhile, Scorpion troops race to capture the Outer Walls of Ootosan Uchi, to forestall reinforcements and to establish control of the city's perimeter.

For the Coup to succeed, at least in the early hours, the Scorpion must meet two goals: speed and control. If their enemies can delay the Scorpion efforts for even a day, the Coup may fail and the Scorpion Clan would be destroyed.

In this Scenario

The Scorpion have gained tenuous control of the Imperial City and work to stabilize it by concentrating their forces at easily defensible posts. They close all gates and prepare for battle with the other clans who are certain to come to the city's rescue. At this time, the Scorpion's domination of Ootosan Uchi is very delicate.

Because the Unicorn and Phoenix already have some small forces near the city, the Scorpion have positioned defensive forces outside the walls. If Unicorn and Phoenix forces penetrate into the city, the Scorpion plans may begin to unravel. If the Scorpion can deny their enemies access to the city, their forces might have the time they need to lock Ootosan Uchi firmly in their grip.

This scenario is a small representation of the Unicorn-Phoenix counterstrike following the Scorpion's initial assault of Ootosan Uchi. It takes place in the early morning hours, when a light fog still lingers about the Imperial City, limiting visibility.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The play area is 4 feet by 6 feet and armies are deployed according to the map provided to the left.

All ranges for Ranged Attacks and Spells are reduced by 6" due to the fog, and there are no movement modifiers for the paved road. In addition, Shinjo's Thunder is not allowed to use the Overrun Attack rules in this scenario.

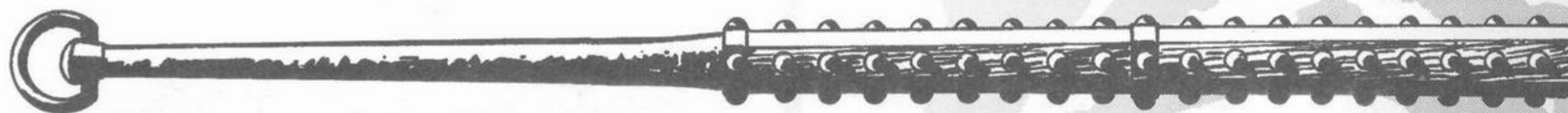
Objectives

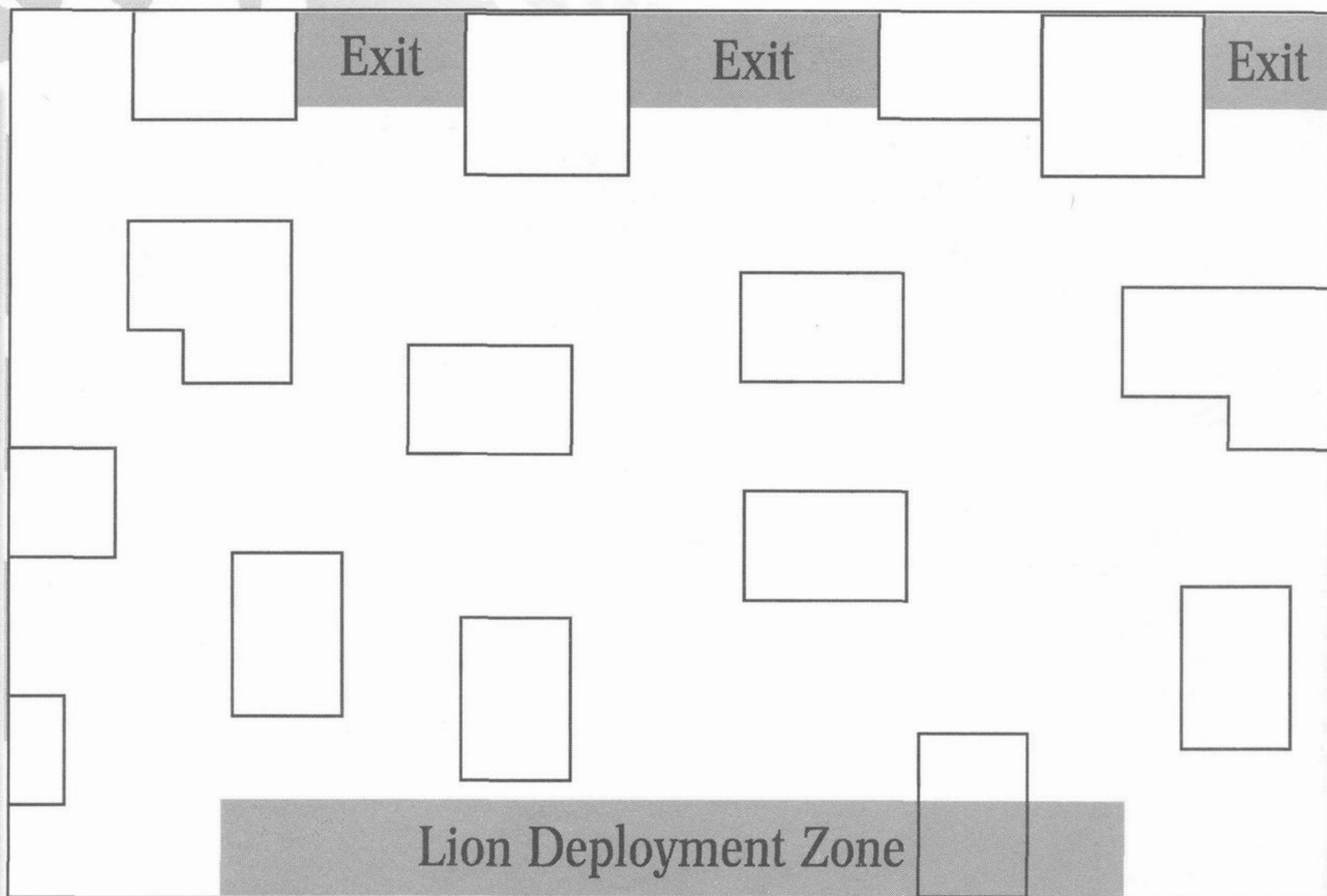
Unicorn/Phoenix: Exit 400 koku of their forces past the Scorpion and into the city by the end of turn 7. Broken or routing units do not count toward the 400 koku objective. If the Unicorn-Phoenix force succeeds, the Lion forces gain use of one reinforcement unit during the next scenario (see *Go Masters* on page 73).

Scorpion: Prevent the Unicorn-Phoenix objective from being completed.

Custom Forces

If you choose to play this scenario with forces other than those provided, the Scorpion should have about 120% of the Unicorn-Phoenix forces' koku value in troops. There is no increased expense for Phoenix troops allying with the Unicorn army in this scenario.





SCORPION CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Bayushi Aramoro (General)	218
27	Bayushi Elite Spearmen	405
1	Yogo Asami w/Fan of Command	107
10	Bayushi Ambushers	130
	w/extra Damage using Trap! card	20
1	Yogo Asami	82
10	Bayushi Ambushers	130
	w/extra Damage using Trap! card	20
1	Bayushi Tangen	95
10	Bayushi Ambushers	130
1	Bayushi Tangen	95
8	Ninja Bowmen	120
	Total Cost	1552

SCORPION TACTICAL DECK

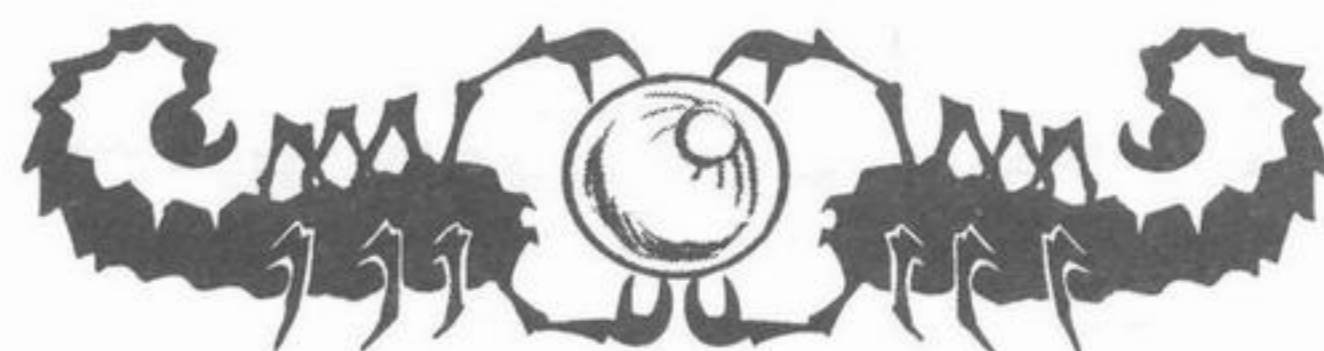
9 x Blackmail	2 x Burst of Speed
3 x Charge	3 x Countercharge
2 x Defensive Position	3 x Grim Determination
3 x Wall of Spears	3 x Parade Ground Practice
3 x Trap! (+2 Damage dice each)	

LION CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Matsu Gohei (General)	230
16	Akodo Death Seekers	480
1	Matsu Chokoku	125
20	Lion Medium Elite	340
1	Matsu Yojo	75
15	Lion Medium Regulars	150
	Total Cost	1400

LION TACTICAL DECK

3 x Banzai Charge	3 x Burst of Speed
3 x Charge	3 x Countercharge
2 x Iaijutsu Duel	3 x Grim Determination
3 x Know the Terrain	3 x Parade Ground Practice
2 x Strength of Purity	2 x Test of Might
3 x Turtle Shell	



Scenario Two: Go Masters

The Outer Walls of Otosan Uchi suffer from many crumbling gaps, the lasting memories of countless minor earthquakes. The Scorpion army must prevent a breach of their outer defenses, regardless of the walls' condition.

Scrambling over the ruins of one such gap, a Scorpion commander quietly laments his seemingly impossible task. Suddenly, he is struck with an idea. If it seems impossible to hold the enemy outside of such a gap, why not coax an enemy into an ambush? Certainly such news will spread through the attacking forces and inspire reluctance to push further into the city...

Within moments, forces are placed around a rather large gap. But only a token force is visible to the armies outside the walls, who march unknowing toward it.

Shortly after the Scorpion troops close off all access to Otosan Uchi, the Lion Clan forces arrive outside the Imperial City. Many Lion leaders and troops posted within the city were lost in the Scorpion's unexpected attack. The Lion's rage is beyond control. Despite the disappearance of their Clan Daimyo, Akodo Toturi, they organize a quick attack against the Scorpion forces - aimed at a particular gap in the city's Outer Wall.

Unfortunately, Scorpion forces await the hastily mounted offensive, and the Lion are about to learn a lesson in tactical use of city terrain.

In this Scenario

During a strike at the city's walls - specifically against one of the larger breaches - the Lion Clan create what appears to be a small opening in the Scorpion defenses. Or *is* it a failure in the Scorpion defense? Could this be a calculated effort to trap and crush the penetrating force in the hopes of demoralizing outside forces?

The Scorpion must quickly contain the threat and destroy the Lion troops before this small incursion becomes a torrential rush of enemy troops. This scenario exemplifies the 'smoke and mirror' tactic of the Scorpion in defending Otosan Uchi.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The play area is 4 feet by 6 feet. The Lion force must deploy all of its units first, and only in the designated placement area. The Scorpion forces deploy after the Lion force has been placed and may deploy anywhere on the map except the Lion's placement area or the designated exit areas.

Objectives

Lion: Exit 400 koku worth of troops off of the table via designated exit zone by the end of turn 5. Broken and routing units are not considered part of the 400 koku.

Scorpion: Prevent the Lion forces from accomplishing their goal.

Custom Forces

If you choose to play this scenario with forces other than those provided, the Scorpion should have about 120% of the Lion forces' koku value in troops, before adding in reinforcements based on the previous scenario.

LION REINFORCEMENTS

If the Unicorn/Phoenix forces were successful in the previous scenario (Back to the Wall), the Lion may also include one of the following units, as reinforcements:

Qty	Models	Cost	Qty	Models	Cost
1	Shiba Family Chui	25	1	Moto Family Gunso	20
8	Tsunami Legion	128	12	Striders	132
	Total	153		Total	152

Scorpion Deployment Zone

Crab Deployment Zone

SCORPION CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Bayushi Togai (General)	200
24	Black Cabal w/Poisoned Weapons	360
1	Bayushi Togai w/Fan of Command	225
24	Black Cabal	360
1	Bayushi Tomaru	151
20	Scorpion Claws w/ Poisoned Weapons	300
1	Bayushi Tasu	75
20	Scorpion's Strike	260
	Total Cost	1931

SCORPION TACTICAL DECK

3 x A Master of Tactics	3 x Burst of Speed
3 x Charge	3 x Countercharge
2 x Defensive Position	3 x Grim Determination
3 x Iaijutsu Duel	3 x Parade Ground Practice
3 x Retreat	3 x Wall of Spears



CRAB CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Hida O-Ushi (General) w/Fan of Command	180
20	The Damned	380
1	Hida Tampako	124
20	Crab Heavy Infantry	300
1	Hida Amoro	173
20	Crab Berserkers	280
1	Kaiu Kenru	92
20	Hiruma Medium Elite	340
1	Yasuki Nokatsu	84
19	Heavy Infantry	209
1	Hiruma Family Gunso	20
12	Hiruma Archers	180
	Total Cost	2362

CRAB TACTICAL DECK

3 x Another Time	3 x Charge
3 x Countercharge	3 x Frenzy
3 x Grim Determination	3 x Parade Ground Practice
3 x Retreat	3 x Superior Tactics
3 x The Waves Break	

Scenario Three: Crashing Wave

Following a few aborted attempts to gain access to the city, the Great Clans (Crane, Dragon, Lion, Phoenix, and Unicorn) choose to await the arrival of the Crab Clan.

Finally, the Crab forces arrive, but set up their camps a short distance away from the others, not offering to aid in the capture of the city. Following a few anxious moments, the Crab take action to aid in the recapture of Otosan Uchi.

The damaged walls of the city shake as tremendous Crab siege engines roll across the wide plains toward the Scorpion's hostage. Kaiu engineers educate their allies in the art of laying siege. Kisada's sharp eyes review the fractured walls of the Imperial City and assemble his plans.

Within hours, the Crab armies (and the appearance of Toturi following his drugged sleep) marshal the Great Clans and position them to conquer the traitorous forces of Bayushi Shoju.

Though the attacking forces are ostensibly working together, each clan is wary of their rivals, and even more wary of relinquishing command to other forces. The forces mix like oil and water, creating currents and eddies of clan-specific units all about the city's Outer Walls.

The vanguard of the attacking army - a heavy force of Crab troops backed by the constant lashings of their siege equipment - breaks through the city walls, establishing strongholds through which other forces can enter the city without fear of ambush.

During these advances, however, many Crab forces face determined, even desperate resistance from the wide-spread and overcommitted Scorpion.



In this Scenario

Rather than working side by side with the other clans, Kisada's troops widen a collapsed section of the Southern Wall and advance upon the Scorpion forces alone.

With the might of the Crab joining the other Clans, the Scorpion come to the realization that it's just a matter of time before their mission fails. Nonetheless, they fight for their lives and the very existence of their clan.

In this scenario, the Scorpion draw upon their heaviest units to combat the Crab incursion, and show their military confidence, standing toe-to-toe with the Crab forces.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The play area is 4 feet by 6 feet. Placement areas are marked on the map to the left, and placement takes place normally. Blackmail Tactical cards may not be used during this battle.

Objectives

Crab: The goal of the Crab force is simple: crush the Scorpion forces and do it quickly.

Scorpion: The Scorpion are fighting a delaying action to give Shoju time to devise a plan to save the clan. If, at the end of turn 8, the Scorpion still have 800 koku worth of force on the table, they have achieved a victory. Broken and routing units are not considered in the 800 points.

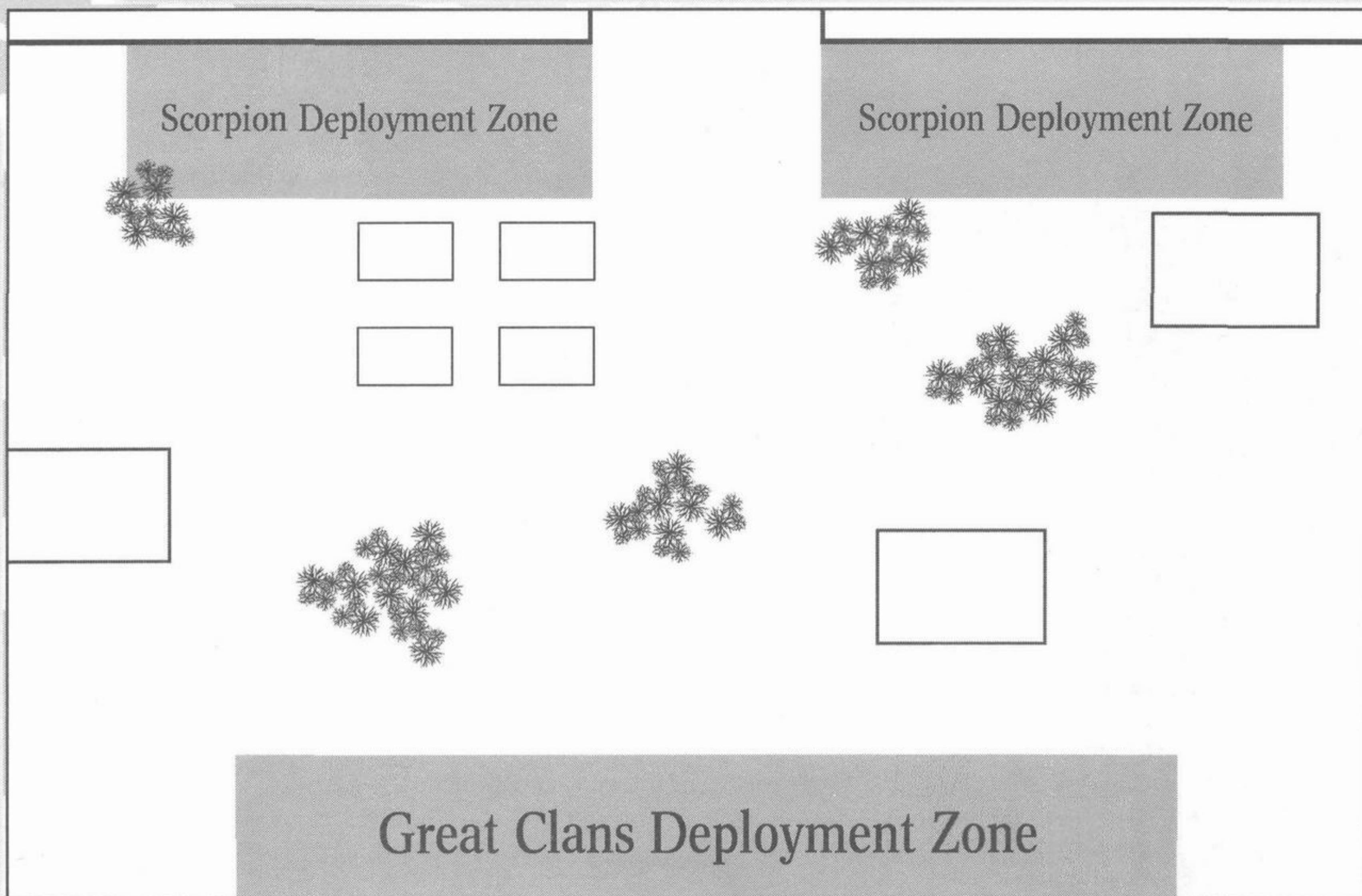
Custom Forces

If you choose to play this scenario with forces other than those provided, the Crab forces should have 110-120% of the koku value of the Scorpion forces. Bayushi Shoju and Hida Kisada may not appear in this battle.

SCORPION REINFORCEMENTS

If the Scorpion forces were successful in preventing a Lion victory in the previous scenario, the Scorpion forces may also use the following unit:

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Bayushi Gunso	20
8	Ninja Bowmen	120
	Total	140



SCORPION CLAN FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Bayushi Togai (General) w/Fan of Command	200 25
20	Black Cabal	300
1	Bayushi Tomaru	151
20	Scorpion's Strike	260
1	Bayushi Tasu	75
19	Scorpion's Strike	247
1	Bayushi Hisa	110
20	Crimson Legion	180
1	Bayushi Tangen	95
20	Scorpion's Strike	260
1	Bayushi Hisa	110
16	Medium Infantry w/yumi	192
	Total Cost	2205

SCORPION TACTICAL DECK


3 x A Master of Tactics	3 x Beyond Your Mastery
2 x Burst of Speed	3 x Charge
3 x Countercharge	2 x Defensive Position
3 x Grim Determination	3 x Parade Ground Practice
2 x Resist Magic	3 x Retreat
3 x Wall of Spears	

GREAT CLANS FORCES

Qty	Models	Cost
1	Toturi (General)	398
16	Lion Heavy Elite	432
1	Hida Tampako	124
15	The Damned	285
1	Daidoji Sonoko	81
15	Daidoji Harriers	225
1	Mirumoto Kiza	86
15	Mirumoto Medium Infantry	210
1	Isawa Uona	235
	w/Wind Borne Speed	5
	w/Steady the Spirit	5
12	Firestorm	216
1	Shinjo Sanetama	92
11	Ide Lancers	198
	Total Cost	2592

GREAT CLANS TACTICAL DECK

2 x All or Nothing	3 x An Unguarded Moment
2 x Another Time	2 x Burst of Speed
3 x Charge	3 x Frenzy
3 x Grim Determination	2 x Iaijutsu Duel
3 x Parade Ground Practice	2 x Test of Might



Scenario Four: End Game

Bayushi Togai stands atop the tallest tower of the Imperial Palace and looks out over the city. Black smoke rises from the dwindling fires of yesterday's battles. Enemy troops can be seen taking positions as their comrades approach the palace itself.

Less than a week ago, the determined Scorpion Clan seized Otosan Uchi with the expert execution of a highly skilled military. Everything had gone according to plan. The Scorpion Clan were elated. With the help of but a single ally, the Scorpion would have succeeded in their plans, placing a new Emperor on the throne and returning to their ancestral home in triumph.

In the last week, however, all of that had been washed away. Bayushi Shoji had proposed an alliance to Hida Kisada, Daimyo of the Crab Clan. When the Crab army arrives, however, it scarcely pauses before siding with the avenging clans outside the city walls.

Shoji's instructions to his samurai are brief and direct. If the other clans intend to shed Scorpion blood, they will do so at their own peril! Each Scorpion bushi will sell his life at the highest cost.

Togai turns away from the scene below and strides toward the stairs. There is no longer any hope for his clan, but they could still go to their death with honor.

The final days of the Coup see the avenging clan forces reclaim every portion of the city, drawing the noose tighter and tighter around the Scorpion-controlled Imperial Palace. Akodo Toturi has arrived and organized an assault of the city under a single banner – that of the Hantei. Every Scorpion clan samurai hiding in the city is found and killed.

The final struggle takes place at the gates of the Imperial Palace as the Great Clans' liberating forces wrestle control of the Palace from the Scorpion and strike into the inner sanctum.



In this Scenario

The Great Clans have regained control of Otosan Uchi and have only the Imperial Palace left to liberate. Rumors still abound that the Hantei and his family is dead, but leaders of the clans cling to the hope that their fate is not that dark.

In the final assault, all of the clans insist on participating – each demands the right to strike against the traitors who have driven a blade into the heart of Rokugan. For the first time in centuries, most of the Clans are united in purpose... to destroy the Scorpion.

This scenario includes elements from each clan. The focus of the attack is to get Toturi into the gates of the Palace, where – shortly thereafter – he and Shoji duel one another.

SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

The play area is 4 feet by 6 feet and armies are deployed according to the map provided to the left.

Note that the Scorpion army has more Scorpion's Strike units than allowed by their restriction. Since nearly all the Scorpion Clan's elite units are present during the Scorpion Clan Coup, we've ignored the unit/quantity restrictions for these Scorpion units during this scenario.

Objectives

Great Clans: The clan forces achieve a decisive victory if they exit Toturi off the battlefield through the gate by the end of turn 6. They achieve a marginal victory if they have destroyed, routed, or broken 1800 koku worth of Scorpion forces by the end of turn 8. Broken units that have rallied before the start of turn 8 do not count toward the 1800 koku objective.

Scorpion: The Scorpion achieve a marginal victory by having at least 600 koku worth of unrouted and unbroken forces on the battlefield at the end of turn 8. They achieve a decisive victory by having a least 500 koku worth of unrouted and unbroken forces on the battlefield at the end of turn 10.

Custom Forces

If you choose to play this scenario with forces other than those provided, the Scorpion should have about 80% of the Great Clan forces' koku value in troops. The Scorpion may ignore restrictions on the number of units and models/unit. The Scorpion are limited to 20 troop models per unit. Also, there is no increased recruitment expense for allying troops used in the Great Clan forces.

Otosan Uchi After the Coup

The Scorpion Clan Coup is the most influential event in Otosan Uchi's history since the *gaijin* were thrown back at the Battle of White Stag. Whole quarters are leveled or burned to the ground during the fighting, and heroes are made and broken throughout. The following entries relate a few of the more pivotal scenes that occurred in each district during the Coup, how the districts were affected, and what they look like now.

HAYASU DISTRICT

Virtually ignored by the Scorpion (who assumed that it contained nothing but the homes of feeble, retired samurai), the Hayasu is by far the least affected District in the city. It is also perhaps the most heralded in the wake of the Coup, due to the heroic efforts of its citizenry while the city was occupied.

With no warning, the retired samurai of Hayasu coordinated a civilian militia, which they led into battle on Day Three (against the Scorpion defensive lines in the Hidari and Toyotomi Districts). Consisting mainly of Rank 4 and 5 bushi commanding untrained ashigaru, this force greatly surprised the Scorpion; it easily swept several quarters of Toyotomi, reclaiming them after that district's militia had failed.

Unfortunately, many ancient heroes died at the Hidari line when Soshi shugenja trapped them in a crossfire of elemental fury and archer fire. These brave men and women have not been forgotten, however; among the first decrees of Emperor Sotorii was an order to construct monuments to their valiant efforts along the Road of the Most High.

HIDARI DISTRICT

Little physical damage was inflicted upon the Hidari District or its businesses, as it was the Scorpions' second target in Otosan Uchi (after the Imperial Palace itself). Securing the Road of the Most High was an imperative part of Shoji's plan, and throughout his occupation of the city, Scorpion troops were stationed here in force. Only during the final sweep of the Outer City during Day Five were these invaders ousted from their positions.

HIGSHIKAWA DISTRICT

As the most direct route to the single bridge leading into Kosuga from the north, the Higshikawa District suffered enormous damage during the Coup. Mantis, Tortoise, and Crane fleets cordoned off the Bay of the Golden Sun early into Day Two of the occupation, ensuring that the Scorpion could not sail in reinforcements or supplies, so Higshikawa's port was all but untouched during most of the fighting.

Peddler's Row (Locations 424-426) became a center of much fighting toward the end of Day Four, when several well-trained heimin were found stockpiling food which they refused to relinquish to the Scorpion hordes. Were it not for the arrival of the Six Clans in the Outer City on Day Five, the peasants would surely have been crushed. As it is, all that is needed is to rebuild much of the bazaar, where the Scorpion burned or ransacked whatever they could before the clans retook the city.

HINJAKU DISTRICT

Together with his cousin, Mirumoto Hinjaku proved one of the most determined forces against the Scorpion through the first four days of the Coup. With legions of eta and heimin at his disposal, Hinjaku mounted one campaign after another against the Scorpion aggressors, eventually convincing even Hojize to enter the fray. By the end of the fighting, they were jointly responsible for hundreds of Scorpion deaths, and the salvation of a great deal property and goods.

HOJIZE DISTRICT

Early in the Coup, Mirumoto Hojize decided that the only way to survive the madness around him was to shut down his borders and sit. Against the pleas of his cousin to the northwest, he set up lines of militiamen all around his irregularly-shaped district, informing the Scorpion that his territory was 'uninvolved in their war'.

Yet the Scorpion never asked Hojize's opinion, quickly moving in to capture his valuable stores of rice, grain, and weapons. By dawn of Day Two, fully half of Hojize's 'troops' lay dead along the small rivers running through his district. Quickly capitulating, he offered the Scorpion whatever they wanted and began secretly meeting with his cousin to the northwest.

Being a naturally distrustful man, Mirumoto Hojize had hidden much of his weapons and armor within the undercity, and offered them to Hinjaku and his eta masses. (Regardless of his personal views about peasants, Hojize was a pragmatic man, and understood the value of a well-armed resistance.)

Hojize also worked closely with the military minds of the Toyotomi District, ferreting messages out to the Great Clans as they arrived on the Plains of Battle, and coordinating attacks against the Scorpion. Unfortunately, none of these sudden honorable deeds would save him. In the end, during the final hours of the Coup, he suffered a massive heart attack, leaving his lands to his cousin in a ragged testimonial.

JURAMASHI DISTRICT

Even spread across the southern half of Ootosan Uchi, this buffer between the Road of the Most High (Location 763), the Ochiyo Temple District, and the richest private homes in the city remains largely untouched. Visitors to North Juramashi, the rich and fertile half of this district along the banks of the river, can scarcely tell that the Coup even occurred. The worst damage committed here were among the residents themselves, out of fear when a small guntai of Scorpion broke through their defenses on Day Three. Over a dozen were murdered, taken prisoner, or beaten in the streets before the Scorpion were wrestled to the ground.

South Juramashi, however, was not spared by the invaders. Most of its warehouses were pillaged to supply the Scorpion army, and many businesses near the temples (centers of hope during the Coup) were burned to the ground. The Garden of Juramashi's Honor was used as a staging ground by the Bayushi troops, and many of its statues and shrines were damaged beyond repair.

KOSUGA DISTRICT

The district where the famed Champion, Akodo Toturi, hid after his escape from poisoning, Kosuga was on the front line throughout the Coup. Fortunately for its high-profile business quarters, however, it was a negotiable front line. While terrible fighting and huge fires swept many other districts, Kosuga remained largely out of the spotlight. Its position at the mouth of the river was overshadowed by Glory, the Eastern (and perhaps

most famous, if not feared) Miwaku Kabe, and Shoju was content to leave it be in favor of retaining his more important defensive lines. As a result, nearly all of Kosuga's lucrative holdings remained intact, to become the cornerstone of Ootosan Uchi's reconstruction in the months following the Coup.

MEIYOKO DISTRICT

Meiyoko was one of the few districts to support Shoju's plot - though not by the hand of its governor. Bayushi Yashino, Meiyoko's military advisor and a true Scorpion, handled Shoju's demands for assistance. Working in tandem with Bayushi Komei of the Tsai District, loyal Scorpions manipulated Governor Meiyoko into participating in the Coup.

Facing threats of political shame and recrimination, Meiyoko agreed, never suspecting the Coup would result in so much death and destruction. During the madness of the first Four Days, she remained hidden within her palatial estate, her political advisor, Mamoru, always at her side. As Yashino's troops stymied the efforts of the Unicorn, Lion, and Phoenix, she watched. As her precious district burned, she watched. But when it appeared that the Scorpion would lose, that she would be overrun for supporting beliefs she did not share, she ran.

Meiyoko and her political advisor headed into the Maze of Wisdom (Location 439), hoping to use its entrance into the undercity to escape. There she encountered Bayushi Yashino, whose thoughts mirrored her own. She would have met her fate there, in the cold morning of Day Five, were it not for Doji Isamu,



who arrived just in time to dispatch Yashino and ensure Meiyoko's escape.

What Meiyoko found during the following minutes as she raced through the Maze of Wisdom, none can say. What is known is that she fled Ootosan Uchi, never to return, and has only been seen once since... near the Dragon Mountains.

The streets of her district were among the hardest hit in all of Ootosan Uchi. Haven (Location 428) was utterly destroyed, along with most of its neighbors. The Ivy Palace (Location 429) stands, but its occupants are all dead, having committed *jigai*. The Mariko Theatre (Location 431) smolders still, the center of some of the worst fires in the city. And Toshiyori's smithy was destroyed after many of his finest weapons fell into Scorpion hands.

Two happy scenes were left behind in Meiyoko, however. The Maze of Wisdom - which the Scorpion attempted to burn down on Day Six - remains untouched, its shrubs and trees protected by some unseen force. And the ruins of Yogo Tenari's Estate (Location 423) were filled in as part of the reconstruction.

OCHIYO DISTRICT

One of the greatest atrocities committed by the Scorpion during their occupation of the Imperial Capitol concerns this district. When Shoju's men arrived at the Temple of the Sun Goddess (Location 709) to herald Dairu's death, a group of resolute monks refused to allow them entry into its sacred halls. The monks claimed that Shoju's acts were dishonorable, and not worthy of Lady Sun's consideration. The Scorpion - without thinking - cut them down where they stood. This act of bloodshed brought the otherwise impassive temple district directly into the fighting against the Scorpion, and resulted in many of its beautiful relics being forever destroyed.

TOYOTOMI DISTRICT

As a former general of the Phoenix legions well-versed in Scorpion tactics, Governor Toyotomi was a significant threat to the Scorpion throughout their occupation of Ootosan Uchi. Further, the size and strategic placement of his district within the city offered it a place in history as the beachhead for most of the early resistance against the Scorpion.

Unfortunately, this recognition did not come without a cost. Between the tremendous fire set in Toyotomi during Day Three and near-constant fighting throughout the district until the armies of the Six Clans retook the Outer City on Day Six, Toyotomi was leveled. The Outer Wall must still be reconstructed from scratch, having been one of two principal entry points for the armies of the Six Clans. The Palace of Remorse (Location 375) - where the Scorpion confined their enemies during the Coup - must be purified before the prisoners can return to their meditations. And much of the heimin quarter outside the wall collapsed from the weight of an enormous army encampment that rested upon it throughout the siege.

Governor Toyotomi went missing early in Day Two (actually falling to a Scorpion assassin), but not before admonishing his

men to resist the Scorpion at any cost. (Early in the first day of the Coup, Toyotomi offered them all the advice he could muster, and drew up several battle-plans which became pivotal during the guerrilla attacks after his death.)

Isawa Zenshin, Toyotomi's trusted servant, perished in a ball of fire that consumed a large portion of the business quarter near the Temple to Lord Moon (Location 374). Those few who witnessed the awesome explosion contend that he died casting a spell which eliminated an entire kaisha of enemy troops.

TSAI DISTRICT

This district was among the most supportive of Shoju's claim, and worked with the usurper for months prior to the Coup. Its militia supported the Scorpion armies, and its food stores fed them. But on Day Five, when the the Six Clans swept through the Outer City, Governor Tsai was among the first to realize that there was little hope for any of the invaders to survive. He ordered his subordinates to hold their ground as he fled.

He was never seen alive again, and his remains were never found.

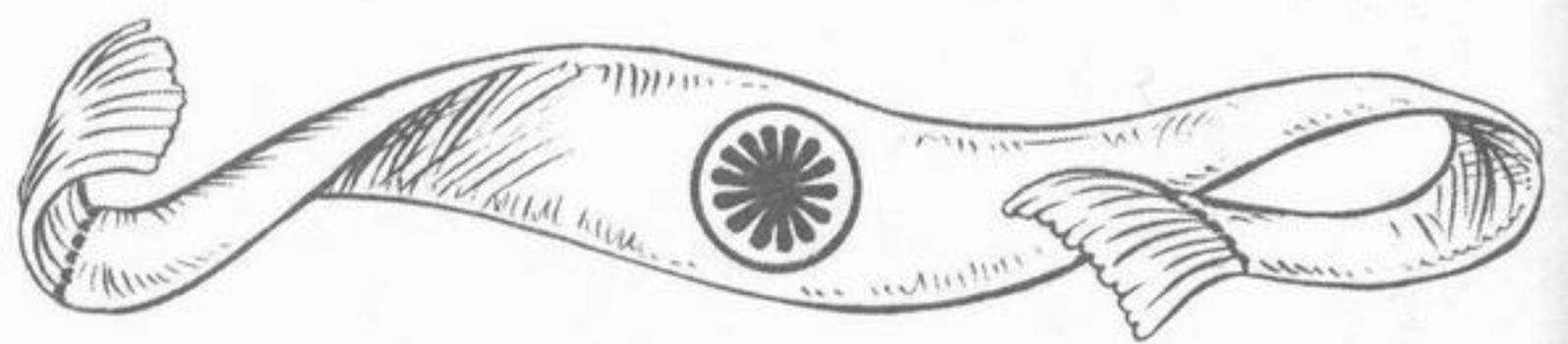
For many weeks following the Coup, the Tsai District was unoccupied, abandoned, and without leadership. Ultimately, the Kosuga Districts consumed it to become one of the strongest parts of Ootosan Uchi's new defense (see the *Kosuga District*, above). Tsai was rebuilt, and a new advisor placed in charge of its day-to-day operation. The shame of its former master was quickly buried by political redirection, never to be spoken of again.

THE EKOHIKEI DISTRICTS

By the time that these four districts became involved in the fighting between the Six Clans and the Scorpion (Day Six), the war had already been won. Consequently, most of them remained untouched by Shoju's betrayal. Many philosophers point to this, jesting that "the jewel of the Hantei' has returned to its roots."

THE FORBIDDEN CITY

The worst fighting of Days One and Six occurred here, surrounding the Imperial Palace. Many of the guest homes and yoriki stations inside the Inner Walls of the city were demolished in the epic struggle, but its northern half - including the Imperial Palace itself - lay stable and unharmed (save for the fire which broke out during Day Four). Much of the walls surrounding the city must be rebuilt, however - a task which the Kaiu are more than happy to undertake.



Scorpion's Sting Adventure Timeline

Courtier's Tale Courtier's and Skirmisher's Tales All Tales Skirmisher's Tale Skirmisher's and Soldier's Tales Soldier's

Time	(Reference Page Numbers in Parentheses)
Rooster 14, Morning	Death of Kitsuki Yaruma (14) Preparations for Shoju's arrival throughout city (36)
Rooster 14, Afternoon	Bayushi Shoju arrives at the Imperial Palace (36) Akodo Toturi vanishes into the city, later to plague Scorpion defenders (37) Doji daimyo leaves Otsan Uchi for Crane lands (36) Akodo and Matsu bushi spar in the city streets (37) Skirmishers encounter an advance Scorpion spy (37)
Rooster 14, Evening	Death of Emperor Hantei XXXVIII at the hands of Bayushi Shoju (38) Scorpion troops seize the Imperial City (38) Open fighting remains in Hinjaku, Hojize, Kosuga, Hidari, Juramashi, and Hayasu (39) Shiba Tsukune leads Phoenix unit out of city (40) Battle: Back to the Wall (58) Seppun Miharū wage guerrilla war against Scorpion (19) Heimin Ozuki learns the location of the Seppun (20) Imperial Court is taken hostage (20) Crab hostages are favored (16) Isawa Kaede and Ujina go missing (17) Lone Lion guard fights Scorpion (17)
Rooster 14, Night	Shiba Tsukune's force arrives outside the city gates (57) Scorpion release prisoners from Kyuden Kokai (40) Shinjo Torasu's dojo catches fire (41)
Rooster 15, Morning	Unicorn forces arrive outside the city walls (58) Shinjo Yokatsu demands the Unicorn and Phoenix ally and begin attacking the city (58)
Rooster 15, Afternoon	Scorpion spy discovered among the hostages (21) Emerald guardsmen reclaim part of the Imperial Palace (21) Three children trapped within burning building (42) Unit of Shinjo trapped inside the city by Scorpion defenders (42) Yogo messenger sent into Unicorn camp (58)
Rooster 15, Night	Lion and Crane armies arrive outside city (60) Battle: Go Masters (60) Saboteurs begin plaguing the Scorpion within the Palace (23)
Rooster 16, Morning	Shoju summons the hostages to interrogate them about the saboteur (23) Scorpion set Toyotomi on fire to flush out Akodo Toturi (44)
Rooster 16, Afternoon	Hatsuko the geisha is dragged through the Palace, then escapes (24) Saboteurs strike along the river (42) Akodo Toturi escapes the Kosuga District (44) Trapped Shinjo unit is pinned down in Toyotomi District (42) Lion soldiers are captured in Toyotomi, to be burned to death (44) Crane attack the city's western edge (44) Doji Satsume is mortally wounded by the Scorpion; Scorpion deliver "word" of Satsume's death to enemy troops (61) Doji Hoturi placed in command of Great Clan armies (61)
Rooster 16, Evening	Yokatsu meets with Great Clan leaders (60) Lion attacks pierce the Outer Southern Wall (60)
Rooster 17, Morning	Shoju demands fealty from Crab hostages; all commit seppuku (25)
Rooster 17, Afternoon	Hida Kisada and the Crab armies arrive (62) Many Scorpion troops commit seppuku (46) Saboteurs are pinned down in Toyotomi sake house (46) Daidoji Raiboten attempts to destroy the Shrine to Lord Moon (46)
Rooster 17, Evening	Fires erupt in the Imperial Palace (25) Crane spy offers the hostages a route to freedom (25) Battle: Crushing Wave (62) Great Clan armies occupy much of Outer City (65) Remaining Crab courtiers bargain with Shoju (26) Hidden Seppun Miharū are found and killed (26) Heimin Ozuki's wife and child murdered; he goes on rampage (26)
Rooster 17, Night	Scorpion troops set up traps and pitfalls within Ekohikei (46) Scorpion assassin enters Unicorn camp (47)
Rooster 18, Morning	Bayushi Dairu is killed while defending the city (48)
Rooster 18, Afternoon	The Great Clan armies retake the Outer City (49) Shoju offers to trade the remaining hostages for concessions (65) Seven Scorpion bushi surrender to the skirmishers (47) Mirumoto Hitomi cuts off Hida Yakamo's hand (65) Shosuro Gisako offers to help the hostages escape the palace (28) Yoritomo offers to help many Scorpion escape the city (28)
Rooster 18, Evening	Bayushi Sundokai is captured in the Higshikawa District (47)
Rooster 18, Night	Bayushi Sundokai commits seppuku (47)
Rooster 19, Morning	Great Clans/Phoenix Masters attack the Enchanted Walls (66)
Rooster 19, Afternoon	Phoenix Masters pierce the Forbidden City's Southern Gate (66)
Rooster 19, Evening	Akodo Toturi duels Shoju in the Throne Room (66) Imperial Palace is recaptured, and the hostages are released (29)



Scorpion's Sting Adventure Timeline

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