

# **Of Family and Honor**

**A Two-round Adventure for Legend of the Five Rings**

**Round One**

**By Robert Hobart**

Violence and anger plague the border between the great clans of the Crane and Crab. Your group of Emerald Magistrates has been dispatched to solve the problem before it boils over into war. Characters provided.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS, L5R, ROKUGAN, RPGA are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Tournament detail copyright 2000 by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. Begin by passing out the player characters; pass them out based on class only, not revealing gender or race. Instruct the players to leave the character sheets face down until you have read the introduction. Then, tell them to study their character sheets, select spells, and notify you when they are ready to begin the adventure.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Make sure you have finished voting before you collect the players' voting sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their votes and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

This is a two-round tournament for the Legend of the Five Rings RPG. The goal of this scenario is to force the players to confront two divided loyalties – their loyalty to the Empire and their loyalty to their family. In round one, the PCs are a group of Emerald Magistrates sent to the Crab-Crane frontier to investigate a series of incidents that threaten to bring open war between those clans. With care and a little luck, the PCs can learn the true cause of the trouble – a powerful minion of the Shadowlands named Doji Nashiko, one of the legendary Akutenshi (Evil Angels). She offers them a stark choice: fight and ensure the deaths of their own children, or join her in the service of Fu Leng and thereby spare their offspring. Round Two takes up the story of the PCs' children ten years later, forcing them to face the consequences of their parents' choice.

Round One takes place seven years before the beginning of the “standard” L5R campaign. As a result, the major NPCs that the PCs encounter (Daidoji Uji, Asahina Tamako, Hida Yakamo) are somewhat younger and less experienced than their versions in the standard Clan books. Their personalities, however,

should basically be the same as described, perhaps with more energy and a little less wisdom.

This scenario makes extensive use of materials from *Bearers of Jade: the Second Book of the Shadowlands*. For the assistance of GMs who may not own that dreadful tome, the relevant rules have been repeated in the NPCs section at the end of each round.

## Running the Scenario

Round One presents the PCs with a mysterious crisis, which they must resolve through investigation and role-playing. It should not be immediately apparent that the Shadowlands are behind what is happening. The longer the GM can keep this discovery from the PCs, the better – that makes the final discovery that much more shocking.

The player-characters for Round One are six Emerald Magistrates, sent by the Emperor to investigate what is happening and try to prevent a war. Most NPCs will cooperate willingly with these representatives of the Emperor, although a few Clan animosities will still get in the way (notably with Daidoji Uji and the various Crabs). Regardless, everyone will show them proper respect, even the often-rude Hida Yakamo. The real challenge will not be getting answers, but asking the right questions of the right people.

The GM should be careful to familiarize himself with the six PCs before starting play. Several of them have Schools or Advantages/Disadvantages drawn from the Clan books, so the GM should be familiar with those as well as with the main rulebook. Reading the *Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun* book can also be helpful in supplying much important cultural detail about Rokugan.

*Hiruma Tadoshi*: A former Hiruma Scout who became an Emerald Magistrate after uncovering the mahotsukai who murdered his wife. His son is all he has left of her. He has been chosen for this mission because of his steadfast loyalty to the Emperor, even when his Clan's own affairs were at stake.

*Matsu Ayame*: A widowed Matsu samurai-ko approaching the age of retirement, Ayame is blessed (or perhaps cursed) with a karmic tie to her son. Unlike most Matsu, her ferocity has been tempered with the wisdom of age (which is a good thing, since the PCs will be spending so much time with Cranes).

*Otaku (Ide) Hiroji*: A former member of the diplomatic Ide family, Hiroji married an Otaku battle maiden and took their name. Rather than stay in Unicorn lands and care for the horses, Hiroji has arranged through political favors to attend the Doji Courtier school, which gives

him a great deal of knowledge about the Crane. It also allows him to call upon favors from the Crane political network; although this has only limited value within the context of the scenario, any physical item or minor service Hiroji needs can be secured with this ability, and NPCs will always find time to talk with him.

*Asako Igemi:* A member of the famous Phoenix Inquisitors, who hunt the influences of Maho all across the Empire, Igemi is also secretly one of the Henshins, the Asako masters of the Elements who seek to achieve human divinity. Although she has not yet learned the true nature of the Asako family school, she already knows it must be kept secret from others. She, like Tadoshi, has a Kharmic Tie to her child.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* A Yogo-trained shugenja and a member of the Black Watch, Gamaro is the only one who suspects that the influence of the Shadowlands may be at work; he has been told this secretly by his superiors in the Black Watch, who pulled strings to get him assigned to this mission. His daughter is a student at the infamous Shosuro Butei (actor) school.

*Otomo Kaigen:* A scion of one of the three Imperial families, Kaigen has been trained in the unorthodox Kitsuki school, which gives him an unusual (for a Rokugani) perspective on matters of evidence and truth. His daughter is a student at the famed Kakita dueling school, a fact of which he is inordinately proud.

## **Nashiko's Plot (What is Happening)**

Doji Nashiko has hatched an elaborate plan to drive the Crab and Crane Clans into war with each other. For the past few months she has been shuttling back and forth across the border, taking the form of a beautiful Doji courtier (Doji Miyako) when among the Crane, and the form of an equally beautiful Kuni shugenja (Kuni Miyubi) when among the Crab. By seducing and manipulating the local generals on both sides, she has been able to foment more and more violent border incidents, gradually escalating the situation. A few weeks ago, she convinced the Crab general, Hida Chuto, that an estate of the Crane's Asahina family was housing users of Maho (black magic). Chuto launched a vicious cross-border raid which destroyed the entire estate. This, of course, enraged the Crane, and in her guise as "Doji Miyako" Nashiko then convinced one of the Crane generals to launch a retaliatory raid against Clear Water Village, the commercial headquarters of the Crab's Yasuki family. Since Nashiko's cat's-paws are not informing their superiors of their actions, both sides are now officially denying any actions while

blaming the other for committing atrocities. The stage is set for war. This is the situation when the PCs arrive.

In the course of the scenario, the PCs should be able to convince the leaders on both sides (Hida Yakamo and Daidoji Uji) to meet on "neutral ground" (the border between the Clans) to try to defuse the crisis. Nashiko will be furious at this, but also sees it as an opportunity: if she can provoke an armed clash at this conference, war will be assured, and she might even be able to get Yakamo and Uji killed in the confusion. Switching rapidly between her two guises, the Akutenshi manipulates her victims into preparing for battle...unless the PCs can stop her.

## **Player's Introduction**

*It is the fourth day of the month of the Dog, known in the high usage as the month of Hida, as you ride south on Yoiun Doro sano Bura no Ayame (the Lucky Road of the Blue Iris) toward Niwa Shita no Kage Toshi (Garden under Shadow City), the home of the Daidoji family and the principle Crane stronghold in their southern territories. Tensions along the Crab-Crane border have risen suddenly and violently in the last few weeks, despite the long-standing respect between the Crab and the Daidoji family, and the Emperor has dispatched you six Emerald Magistrates to learn why and, if possible, to bring a halt to a problem that now threatens to break into war.*

*Your trip from the capitol, Otosan Uchi, has lasted better than two weeks, two weeks of hoping you do not arrive too late. Now, as the afternoon sun bursts from the clouds, you spy the walls of the Crane city and, rising within them, the local castle; your first destination. After investigating here, you plan to cross the border and speak with the Crab, and perhaps find some way to a peaceful solution to this conflict.*

## **The Home of the Daidoji**

Located just across the tidal landbridge from Crab lands, Garden Under Shadow City is one of many Crane Clan ports along the coast of Rokugan. A prosperous place, home to many of the Daidoji family's merchants, it is the heart of that family's power (although the official family castle is located in northern Crane lands) and is home to a large portion of that family's military strength. Much of that strength is on display as the PCs arrive in the city, marching and drilling on the fields around the city; the Daidoji are visibly preparing for war. The guards at the city gates examine the PCs' travelling papers carefully before allowing them into the city and directing them toward the small castle which merges with the walls in the

southwestern corner of the city. The streets of the city are crowded, and with a Perception+Investigation roll (TN 20) the PCs note an unusually high number of peasants among the crowds – common folk are evidently fleeing the countryside for the city, a sure sign of impending war.

The southern castle of the Daidoji is not especially large (especially compared to their main castle north of the Spine of the World Mountains), but like all Crane structures it is both functional and beautiful. Guards in perfectly polished armor stand at the gates and review the PCs papers once again before bowing and leading them inside. After only a short wait (less than half an hour), the PCs are brought into the presence of the family daimyo, Daidoji Uji.

The young, swarthy daimyo of the Daidoji family sits stiffly, his sky-blue kimono flawless, and reads carefully through the PCs' letter from the Emperor. He passes the letter to an older man seated nearby, then bows to the PCs. "We welcome the Emperor's servants. Be assured that the Daidoji family is always ready to seek peace over war." His words are sincere, but an Awareness (+Ichi Miru) roll (TN 25) detects fierce tension in the set of his shoulders and the icy blankness of his face. The older man, Asahina Tamako (the Asahina family daimyo) also bows, then introduces himself. "I, too, stand ready in the service of the Emperor. I have come here to advise my Daidoji cousin, in hopes that peace may avert the dark clouds of war which now fog our lands." Uji asks the PCs their names and stations, thanks them again for coming, and informs them that a formal dinner will be held tonight at which the PCs may meet his retainers, discuss the causes of the recent troubles, and perhaps offer solutions. However, his tone implies that this may be a fruitless enterprise.

After this conversation, the PCs are shown to their rooms, which are located on the second floor of the castle. Other visitors, courtiers, and diplomats assigned to the castle are housed on this floor as well, and as the PCs descend to the dinner they meet representatives from three other clans: Ikoma Tadaka of the Lion, Bayushi Oro of the Scorpion, and Ide Kagetora of the Unicorn. The three courtiers speak briefly with the PCs, expressing their loyalty to the Emperor and their wishes (sincere or otherwise) for peace.

## Dining With Cranes

Dinner is a formal affair, held in a large room with the walls covered in delicate silk screens and paintings. The guests sit on tatami mats around a long low wooden table. There are more than a dozen courses, with sake in plenty, and while individual portions are modest by the end of the meal everyone is quite full. The Crane cooks

are excellent and Daidoji Uji is obviously proud of the excellent hospitality his family presents. The PCs will be seated at the head of the table, next to Uji and Tamako, in a show of deference to their station as Emerald Magistrates.

During the dinner, the PCs will have few opportunities for conversation with the other guests; they are seated flanking Uji and Tamako, who are far too polite to talk about such matters over food. On the opposite side are Ide Kagetora (who has been seated next to his clan kinsman Otaku Hiroji) and the local daimyo of the Daidoji city, Daidoji Shinro. The PCs will not be able to speak with the other guests (at least, not without rudely raising their voices), but they can observe the dynamics at the table. Much attention seems to focus on one of the courtiers, the lovely Doji Miyako, whose every word and gesture is a masterpiece of etiquette and subtle flirtation. The two Crane generals, Daidoji Akahito and Daidoji Murakawa, seem to pay particular attention to her. Of the other two out-of-Clan guests, Ikoma Tadaka holds aloof from the dinner conversation and observes the scene with thinly-veiled disapproval, while Bayushi Oro converses pleasantly with all and watches the scene with eyes that sparkle at some inner joke.

Have all the PCs make Intelligence+Etiquette rolls to avoid any social gaffes during dinner. PCs who fail to make a TN of at least 15 have insulted their hosts with their poor manners; although the Crane are too polite to mention such offenses, the unfortunate PCs will have to drop one die from any rolls involving subsequent social interactions. PCs who make a TN of 30 or better have impressed the Crane with their social skills and superior manners, and gain a free raise for any social interaction die rolls during the remainder of the evening.

After the dinner, everyone retires to the gardens outside the castle, where the PCs and NPCs converse by the light of colored lanterns. Servants circulate quietly through the place, offering fresh sake to any who might need it. Voices are kept politely low, and privacy can be found simply by moving aside a few paces. In this civilized atmosphere, the PCs are free to move about, alone or together, and speak to all the major NPCs at the castle. See "The Crane Point of View" and the Guest List for more details on what the PCs can learn here.

## The Crane Point of View

As the PCs question the various guests and courtiers, they can quickly learn much about the recent troubles. There have been numerous border skirmishes in recent weeks, and several samurai have died on both sides. The Crane claim the troubles were started by the Crab,

although they will also admit that, once problems began, their own samurai contributed to the continuing high tensions.

But the most shocking incident, and the one which has pushed the border to the brink of war, is said to be entirely the Crab's doing: a violent raid several weeks ago on one of the estates near Kyuden Asahina, which left most of the residents dead and the estate wrecked. A detailed account of this incident is available from Asahina Tenka, who witnessed it personally and is the only known survivor; Asahina Miki and the general Daidoji Murakawa both visited the site afterwards, and can testify to the destruction they saw and the evidence they found. All of this information is found in the appropriate sections of the Guest List. What makes the offense even worse is that the Crabs deny it, claiming none of their troops have crossed the border. All the Cranes are outraged by this obvious lie, which only "dishonorable Crabs" could attempt.

If the PCs actually wish to visit the site of the massacre, it is two days' travel away. There is nothing to be learned there that the PCs cannot gain from their interviews here.

Doji Miyako is one of the loudest in condemning the Crabs' viciousness and dishonesty, and flirtatiously encourages the Crane generals as they make aggressive remarks, suggesting the Crabs should be punished with "good Daidoji steel." She claims to be the kinswoman of one of the Cranes who died in border skirmishes, and says that her cousin "Doji Moteuchi" was struck down by a tetsubo-wielding Crab (as the PCs will know, by normal Rokugani standards it is dishonorable to use the tetsubo against human enemies). PCs making Awareness+Courtier rolls (TN 20) can see that Doji Miyako always seems to hold the attention of the two Crane generals (Akahito and Murakawa). If they make TN 30 they may also notice Kakita Yumi watching Miyako with thinly-disguised jealousy. Finally, a Perception+Investigation/Nazado roll (TN 25) will notice that Ikoma Tadaka perks up at the mention of "Doji Moteuchi."

The Cranes all deny that they have undertaken any provocation themselves. This is intriguing to Ikoma Tadaka, who has heard rumors of a Crane attack on the fishing fleet at Clear Water Village, the main Yasuki city. All the Cranes vehemently deny this, claiming any such story to "Crab lies," but a Perception+Investigation/Nazado roll (TN 25) notices Daidoji Akahito seems to be rather too anxious with his denials. Any PC succeeding in a contested Perception vs Awareness roll against Akahito suspects he knows more about this than he is letting on (remember that Clear Thinker PCs get to add 10 to their die rolls). Ide Kagetora has also heard these rumors, and comments worriedly on possible damage to Unicorn commercial

interests in the region (the Cranes ignore this bad-mannered talk of money).

### **The Guest List (Crane NPCs)**

There are over thirty people present at the dinner and reception (not counting the PCs themselves) but the majority of these are relatively unimportant Crane courtiers, minor officials, and local minor daimyos. Only twelve people here are of sufficient rank, influence, or significance for the PCs to register them as individuals; they are described in detail below. The GM should feel free to improvise whatever other "typical Cranes" are needed to round out this encounter.

*Daidoji Uji:* the daimyo of the Daidoji family is a young man in his mid twenties, swarthy of skin and piercing of eye, who is fiercely devoted to the defense of his clan.

He is very angry over the Crab attacks. Although he normally gets along well with the Crab Clan, recent events have outraged him, and while he is not exactly eager for war, he will not run away from it either.

The PCs will have to be convincing to persuade him to seek a non-violent solution.

Uji has been here only a short time, and does not have personal experience of any of the recent incidents. He has visited the site of the Asahina massacre, however.

Uji is completely unaware of the raid on Clear Water Village.

Uji's manners are always impeccable, but the PCs can sense the coiled violence beneath his smooth surface. He is hostile to Lions (such as Matsu Ayame), and currently to Crabs as well, but will listen to any other Clan representative and will be very deferential to Otomo Kaigen.

*Asahina Tamako:* the daimyo of the Asahina family is a frail older man of weak constitution, who often coughs softly into a blue silk cloth. Like most Asahina he is an enlightened and peaceful man, and despite the outrages committed against his family he is anxious to find a peaceful solution to the current crisis.

Tamako will be the PCs' best ally on the Crane side of this scenario, and he will quickly move to suggest a conference of the leaders from both sides, perhaps meeting at neutral ground on the Clan border, to try and resolve differences.

He is also free of any reflexive prejudices against other Clans, and will listen to all the PCs with equal care and attention.

Tamako has no personal knowledge of any of the recent incidents, although he (like Uji) has visited the site of the Asahina massacre.

*Daidoji Shinro*: a tall, dignified man with his hair in the classic samurai topknot. Shinro is the local daimyo of the city, as well as overall general of its forces.

This man is quite honorable (Honor Rank 3.4); his ethics reinforced by his honorable wife Eriko; who is usually found at his side.

Shinro has been targeted by Doji Miyako's seductive attentions, but so far he has resisted (thanks in large part to the presence of his wife). When he leaves her to visit the border later in the scenario, he will become much more vulnerable.

Shinro is unaware of the recent Crane raids across the border, and believes the Crab are entirely to blame for the recent trouble.

He is aware that the two other Crane generals (Daidoji Akahito and Daidoji Murakawa) have been engaged in an extended competition of flirtation/seduction with Doji Miyako, and disapproves of their behavior. Of course, he will not speak of any of this to the PCs, since this might bring dishonor on his Clan.

PCs can notice (with Awareness rolls, TN 20) the disapproving looks he bestows on the two lower-ranking generals whenever they are in Miyako's presence.

*Daidoji Eriko*: Shinro's wife is an elegant Crane woman in early middle age. An extremely honorable and traditional woman, who always speaks with her eyes properly averted, she flares up whenever the topic of Doji Miyako arises. "That...woman behaves as shamelessly as a courtesan," she murmurs, her eyes flashing beneath the curtain of her hair. "And the way those two generals follow her around, like tongue-lolling dogs...they behave like Crabs, not honorable Daidoji."

She knows little directly of Miyako, beyond that she is a courtier who came to the city three months ago.

*Daidoji Akahito*: one of two other Crane generals in this region, Akahito is rather short and tree-trunk-like in build, a fact which makes him more talkative and aggressive to compensate. His hair is worn undyed and in a traditional topknot.

Akahito has been seduced by Doji Miyako (Nashiko). He is completely under Miyako's thumb, and follows her around trying to curry her favor, agreeing wholeheartedly with her remarks about Crabs, and so forth.

Miyako convinced him to launch the retaliatory raid on Clear Water Village. He has told no one else about this, and will keep it secret until the end of the scenario.

Akahito visibly bristles whenever Daidoji Murakawa approaches Miyako.

Needless to say, he will not be terribly cooperative with the PCs, and certainly will not tell them about his attack on Clear Water village.

*Daidoji Murakawa*: the third general in the region, Murakawa is taller and more handsome than Akahito, and dyes his hair white in the classic Crane style. He is also calmer and more self-controlled in his public demeanor, although he too blames the Crab for the current troubles.

Murakawa has not yet been seduced by Miyako, but he is strongly attracted to her, and feels jealous of Akahito. Murakawa was in command of the troops which visited the site of the Crab raid on Asahina lands, and is consumed with anger at the brutal slaughter he witnessed there. He can describe bodies (men, women, and children) strewn about like straw, and beheaded as though they were Tainted monsters. Tetsubos, scraps of cloth in Crab gray, and other evidence of Crab guilt was found on the site. His voice stays flat and even as he speaks, but his hands tighten visibly with the effort of maintaining decorum.

He will be coldly hostile to Hiruma Tadoshi, and reacts poorly to any suggestion that the attack might not have been committed by the Crab. Otherwise, he will be polite and respectful to all the PCs.

Murakawa knows nothing of the raid on Clear Water Village, and dismisses such stories as "Crab lies."

*Kakita Yumi*: this lovely woman in her mid-twenties is a skilled Kakita artisan (a painter, to be specific) and one of the brightest stars at this court. Her manners are impeccable and her every motion a study in etiquette and style. Nevertheless, she seems pallid and bland compared to Doji Miyako.

Yumi is intensely resentful of Miyako, whose arrival three months ago cast her into the shade. The PCs will often notice her trying to maneuver herself into the center of a conversation, only to be upstaged by Miyako.

She knows nothing of the troubles with the Crab beyond what is generally accepted, and is much more interested in her rivalry with Miyako.

Any PC making an Awareness+Courtier roll (TN 15) will be able to interpret and understand her behavior as an attempt to regain the "limelight" she lost when Miyako arrived.

*Doji Miyako (Doji Nashiko)*: A stunningly beautiful courtier, her long white-dyed hair braided down her back and her blue kimono a masterpiece of subtle suggestion. This is actually the illusion-shrouded Doji Nashiko, the most accomplished seductress in Rokugani history, here to provoke a destructive war between the Crane and Crab Clans. She plays her role to the hilt and never slips out of her persona as a gentle courtier, pretending ignorance of all matters military while using every opportunity to stoke the fires of the Cranes' anger.

She claims to be the kinswoman of one of the Cranes who died in border skirmishes, and says that her cousin “Doji Moteuchi” was struck down by a tetsubo-wielding Crab (as the PCs will know, by normal Rokugani standards it is dishonorable to use the tetsubo against human enemies).

She constantly flirts with the Crane generals Akahito and Murakawa, egging them on to more and more aggressive denunciations of the Crab.

She will smile and politely deflect any questions directed against her, perhaps by turning the tables and asking the PCs some difficult or perplexing question. For example, she might ask Matsu Ayame how her Clan reconciles its claim to be the most honorable with its heavy-handed treatment of its peasants.

Miyako will certainly never do anything to openly betray her true nature, and her illusions and taint are not detectable to any magic the PCs possess.

*Asahina Tenka:* this Crane shugenja is a soft-spoken, civilized man in his mid-thirties, the epitome of the gentle, delicate courtier. His pale eyes are haunted and hung with dark rings, for he is the sole survivor of the Crab raid on the Asahina estates.

He will be more than willing to describe the incident to non-Crab PCs, speaking in a soft voice that belies the horrors he recounts: “The Crab appeared suddenly in mid-day, and without a single word or warning attacked us. We cried out to them to tell us why they did this, why they assaulted men and women who sought only knowledge and wisdom, but they answered only with savage war cries. There were two Kuni shugenja among them, a man and woman, who seemed to urge them on to their slaughter. They killed everyone they could reach outside, then barricaded the house and burned it to the ground. I escaped because I happened to be out visiting the village nearby, speaking with the headman about the rice crop. I saw everything from the village, and then fled before the Crab might hunt me down.”

He knows nothing about the Crane raid on Clear Water Village, and is angered at the suggestion that the Crane might do anything so crude and violent.

He will not cooperate with Hiruma Tadoshi beyond the basic rules of polite etiquette. All other PCs will be treated with polite deference.

*Asahina Miki:* this gentle but strong-willed young woman is Daidoji Shinro’s court shugenja. She visited the site of the Crab raid a couple of days after the incident, and can describe it to the PCs if they ask. “The whole place was burned to the ground, and every man and woman there killed. Their bodies had all been beheaded, as though the Crab feared them to be Tainted. What nonsense!”

Miki interrogated the spirits at the massacre site and, from them, confirmed Asahina Tenka’s account of the attack.

She knows nothing of the Crane attack on Clear Water Village, and is unwilling to believe that such rumors could be true.

Miki is less blatantly anti-Crab than Tenka, but nevertheless will be more cooperative to an elegant courtier PC than to Hiruma Tadoshi. In fact, if Tadoshi speaks to her, she will demand to know what his kinsmen could have been thinking to launch such a vicious attack.

*Ikoma Tadaka:* an earnest, noble-looking man in his thirties, Tadaka is the epitome of the honorable Lion, here to represent and support his Clan with the Daidoji. He is puzzled and concerned about the recent incidents, not out of any sympathy with the Crane (like all Lions he despises them, although he keeps his feelings cloaked beneath a layer of excellent courtesy) but because the behavior of the Crab, the defenders of Rokugan, seems so unusual.

Tadaka has begun to suspect that some outside force is manipulating the two clans into conflict.

At present, his suspect for such a manipulating force is (no surprise) the Scorpion Clan, and he has no idea that there is Shadowlands involvement.

He has heard unconfirmed rumors of the Crane raid on the Yasuki territories, and will mention them aloud once the Crane begin discussing the Asahina massacre.

Tadaka may confide his suspicions about an outside manipulator to a PC he finds trustworthy – most likely Hiruma Tadoshi or Matsu Ayame, but certainly not Shosuro Gamaro.

Tadaka will not survive the evening (see “A Shocking Incident,” below).

*Bayushi Oro:* the Scorpion representative at the Daidoji palace is a clever, handsome man with a pleasant voice (he has the classic Bente’s Blessing/Voice combination of Advantages) who cloaks his activities under a facade of affable charm. He wears a minimal mask (mempo) which lets his good looks work for him, and the PCs may notice him flirting with some of the female courtiers after dinner.

Oro has realized that something is pushing the Crab and Crane toward war, but he has no intention of stopping it, since such a war will weaken two threats to the Scorpion Clan.

He knows the Scorpion is not involved in this matter in any way.

He does not know whether the Crab is really responsible for the raid on the Asahina, and does not particularly care.

He is well aware (from Scorpion spies) that one of the Crane generals (Akahito) recently staged a retaliatory

raid against Sunda Mizu Mura (Clear Water Village) and burned some Yasuki fishing vessels. However, he will only share this information with Shosuro Gamaro or (possibly) Otaku Hiroji.

If the PCs role-play well and are badly in need of a clue, Oro may draw their attention to Doji Miyako's manipulations of the Crane generals, which he finds quite fascinating. Otherwise he will hold himself aloof, offering ironic commentary on the scene.

*Ide Kagetora:* the Unicorn ambassador is a short, slightly plump man with a trimmed goatee beard and a ready smile. He knows little about what is happening, but is deeply concerned that a war between the Clans could disrupt the trade networks which the Unicorn are developing in this region.

Kagetora will repeatedly urge the PCs to find a way to avoid a war.

He is aware that the tenor of the court here has changed in recent months, but will not connect this with the arrival of Doji Miyako unless the PCs suggest it to him; then his face clears as he suddenly understands. "She must hate the Crab very much," he murmurs, stroking his goatee thoughtfully.

Kagetora has heard rumors about the Crane raid on Clear Water Village, and comments worriedly on possible damage to Unicorn commercial interests in the region (the Cranes ignore this bad-mannered talk of money).

## Negotiating with Uji

Asahina Tamako will speak with the PCs both during dinner and afterward, offering his suggestion for a meeting on neutral ground. There, on the border, representatives of each Clan could meet directly and, perhaps, find an honorable solution short of war. He explains that Uji-sama is reluctant to take such a step after the outrage against the Asahina estates, but perhaps the PCs (as representatives of the Emperor) will be able to convince him to at least try the idea. Tamako himself is shaken and saddened by the raid on the Asahina estates, but is willing to set aside the call for vengeance in order to preserve the Imperial peace.

To convince Uji to agree to such a meeting, the PCs will need to make Awareness+Courtier rolls at a TN of 20 (remember the penalty for any PC who failed their Etiquette roll earlier in the evening). More importantly, they will have to role-play well – no matter how well they roll the dice, without good role-playing Uji will not agree to such a questionable notion. Other Cranes will argue against such a meeting (especially Akahito and Murakawa, as well as Miyako if she gets the chance to insinuate herself into the conversation); but the PCs' clout as Emerald Magistrates should allow

them to carry the day if they role-play well and don't fumble their Courtier rolls.

If Uji agrees, he will allow the PCs five days in which to visit the Crab, convince them to attend the meeting, and return. "After that time I can offer no guarantees of peace," he warns.

## A Shocking Incident

At some point during the after-dinner discussions (preferably after the PCs have picked up some of the clues and convinced Daidoji Uji to a meeting on the border), have all the PCs make Simple Perception rolls at TN 20. Those who succeed notice Ikoma Tadaka speaking in a low voice to Doji Miyako. She gestures him toward a private corner of the garden, away from the lamps.

PCs who wish to eavesdrop on this conversation will have to make either an Agility+Steath roll (TN 20) or a Simple Perception roll (TN 25). Shosuro Gamaro could also use his spell Secrets on the Wind to listen to the conversation. It is dishonorable to listen to a private conversation, of course, but perhaps the PC merely "accidentally overhears" what is happening behind those carefully trimmed bushes... Note that Stealth is a dishonorable skill, and being discovered listening in on someone else's private conversation entails losses of both Honor and Glory (not to mention a public scandal which will endanger the PCs' mission).

They can hear Tadaka speaking in a low voice. "...saw Doji Moteuchi die on the northern border nine months ago, near Shiro no Yugin. Why did you lie, my lady?" Miyako answers in a low voice, her tone pleading. There is a moments' silence, then a scream rings out. Doji Miyako stumbles back into the light, her kimono torn half-open, and points a shaking finger at a dazed Ikoma Tadaka as he follows her.

Daidoji Murakawa steps forward, shouting in fury for Tadaka to draw his sword and die. (A Perception+Investigation/Nazado roll, TN 20, notes that Daidoji Akahito was also stepping forward, but did not speak as quickly as Murakawa.) Tadaka, stunned by the sudden crisis, cries out that the lady is lying, but this only infuriates the Cranes more. A duel is quickly arranged, the normal procedures abandoned in the face of such a shocking offense. Murakawa cuts down Tadaka with a single precise blow.

Bayushi Oro watches all this with a faint smile; if the PCs ask his opinion, he remarks that, "Miyako-san could give lessons to the Shosuro school." He denies, of course, any doubt of her claim – it has been proven true by the duel.

With a Simple Perception or Perception+Ichi Miru roll (TN 35), the PCs glimpse a brief expression of gloating delight on Miyako's face as Tadaka is slain. It



is there and gone in an instant, and the PCs are not sure if they saw it or not.

## Journey to Yasuki Yashiki

Daidoji Uji has granted the PCs five days to convince the Crab to agree to the meeting on the border. Since it takes close to two days to ride from here to Yasuki Yashiki, the palace of the Yasuki family and the principle seat of Crab government in this region, the PCs will have only a single day to negotiate with the Crab. They should leave immediately the next morning. The following text describes their journey:

*From the Daidoji city you ride northeast along the coast of Earthquake Bay, toward the Crab border and the Yasuki palace beyond, the seat of Crab government in their southern provinces. The journey lasts two days, and early on the second day you reach the border. It is easy to spot – the Crab patrols are numerous and suspicious. Burly, unshaven Hida bushi squint suspiciously at your travel papers while keeping a wary eye on the Crane patrols across the border. Only after consulting their commanding officer, a scarred man with one eye, do they reluctantly lower their yari and allow you passage through to the Yasuki territories.*

The Yasuki Palace is larger than the Daidoji one, but less pleasant and ostentatious. Those of you who have visited other Crab castles know that this place is a wonder of civilized comfort compared to those cold fortresses, but it still seems plain and drab after the splendor of the Crane dwellings. Large numbers of Crab troops are drilling on the fields outside the palace, busy with kenjutsu practice, archery, and wrestling. You can see banners with the mons of both the Yasuki and the Hida flying above the palace walls, suggesting that someone of import is already here. The guards escort you directly to a large meeting room within the palace, where a dozen or so Crabs are speaking together heatedly. Silence falls as you are announced, and the largest of the Crabs steps forward. He regards you with a dark and suspicious gaze; then his eyes light upon Hiruma Tadoshi. “Finally, someone who will listen!” he grunts, and gestures you all forward.

The man who has just spoken is Hida Yakamo, the eldest son of the Crab Clan Champion, Hida Kisada. Hiruma Tadoshi knows him by sight. He brusquely introduces the PCs to the other NPCs in the room, and invites his underlings to explain the situation. “Here you will hear the truth, not pretty Crane lies,” he says. The words are answered with growls and mutters of agreement from the collected Crabs. Only one person reacts differently; a slight man dressed in dun brown

and black colors, who winces almost visibly at Yakamo’s indelicate words; he looks distinctly harried and unhappy. With an Intelligence+Heraldry roll (TN 20) the PCs can identify him as belonging to the Sparrow Clan, a minor clan whose lands are located northeast of here.

The Occupants of Yasuki Yashiki

*Hida Yakamo:* the son of the Crab Clan Champion, young Yakamo is already a hugely strong and formidable man, a walking tower of muscle and armor. He is here to “settle things” on the border, and will do whatever it takes to accomplish that – negotiate or war, either one is acceptable.

Yakamo is experienced enough with the ways of Rokugan to be open to the suggestion that the conflict is being engineered from outside, and will be willing to meet with Daidoji Uji if the PCs are persuasive.

He knows nothing about the Crab raid on the Asahina, and dismisses such reports as “pretty Crane lies.” He will not think otherwise until and unless the PCs can force Masakazu and Akuja to tell the truth about the raid.

He is furious about the Crane raid on Clear Water Village, and believes it was launched in support of some Crane mercantilist maneuver.

Yakamo should be played as the “classic Crab”: blunt, harsh-voiced, and pragmatic, with no time for the indirect talk and diplomatic niceties favored by the other clans.

*Hida Chuto:* An ox-strong man in his early forties, of average height, his face disfigured by a nasty vertical scar, Hida Chuto is the local shogun (general) and commands most of the local troops (as opposed to the large number of reinforcements which have recently arrived).

Chuto has fallen under the spell of Doji Nashiko’s form on this side of the border – the lovely Kuni Miyubi – and at the urging of her and her sensei, Kuni Akuja, he launched the raid on the Asahina estates, believing he was crushing a pocket of Maho-tsukai. He will not admit this publicly, of course, since Miyubi has convinced him that the Crane have the rest of the Empire in their pocket.

Anyone who speaks with Chuto can make a Simple Awareness roll (+Ichi Miru, if available) at TN 20 to realize that this man is well past his prime, as a warrior and, more importantly, as a general, and was probably assigned to this region to spare him the humiliation of a forced retirement.

Chuto will compete with Masakazu as to which of them can denounce the Crane with greater fervor. He is sure the Crane are completely in the wrong.

If the topic of the Asahina raid is discussed with him, he will become nervous, and attempt to cover himself

with loud bluster about “pretty Crane lies.” A Contested roll of Perception (+Ichi Miru) vs Awareness can deduce that Chuto knows a great deal more about the raid than he is letting on.

Chuto will be hostile to any courtier or Scorpion PCs, especially Otomo Kaigen.

*Hida Masakazu:* Taller and somewhat younger than the grizzled Chuto, this stern man with flinty dark eyes accompanied Hida Yakamo to the border, and commands most of the reinforcements. However, he too has been smitten by the stunning Kuni Miyubi, and is competing with Chuto for her attentions.

Masakazu is convinced that the Crane are completely in the wrong, and will compete with Chuto in calling for action against them.

Masakazu is aware that Chuto launched a raid across the border (at the suggestion of Kuni Akuja and Kuni Miyubi) to destroy a pocket of Maho. He does not agree with Chuto’s precipitate action, but acknowledges that it was necessary.

Due to Miyubi’s corrupting influence, he has not yet informed Yakamo of the raid, a serious failure of duty and loyalty. After the confrontation with Chuto (see “A Confrontation, and Perhaps Some Truth,” below) he will be willing to admit the truth to the PCs.

He will be marginally politer to the PCs than Chuto, but still sneers at any non-bushi among them.

*Yasuki Yoshinori:* The local Yasuki daimyo is a thin, perpetually smiling man with a long nose and small, narrow eyes. He is always rubbing his hands together, as though to warm them, and seems distinctly ill at ease with so many large, armed Hida bushi in his castle.

He knows almost nothing about the recent troubles and clashes – “That’s bushi business” – and his sole concern is the recent Crane raid on Sweet Water Village, which burned several dozen trade and fishing vessels and cost him many precious koku. He will expostulate on this at length, demanding that the Magistrates secure him compensation from the rich, careless, destructive Cranes across the border. “Those Cranes, they don’t understand the value of a koku,” he moans, his long face twisted in almost physical pain, “Money has no value, they say. How can that be? Without money the Empire would grind to a halt.” How the PCs respond to this dishonorable, peasant-like talk is up to them.

*Kuni Akuja:* This middle-aged Kuni shugenja is missing his left hand, and wears a silken glove to cover the burn scars on his right one. One eye is closed by additional burn scars that snake across the left side of his face. He speaks in a hoarse, ominous whisper. If asked about his injuries, he says merely, “Oni.”

Akuja’s new apprentice, Kuni Miyubi (Doji Nashiko), has seduced him and has him wrapped around her little finger. He is blind to her true nature and gets intensely jealous whenever others pay too much attention to her.

Akuja believes himself to be responsible for the raid across the Crane border, since he was the one who urged it on Hida Chuto; he does not realize that Kuni Miyubi manipulated and deceived him into launching the raid.

He will deny the raid ever happened, until and unless Masakazu confesses or Yakamo orders him to explain his actions. He will then explain that his apprentice Miyubi brought back evidence of Maho use, and more evidence was found when they attacked. He is convinced the raid was the correct action.

Regardless, he will always insist that the Crane cannot be trusted, that they are corrupt and foolish and do not realize the dangers of the Shadowlands, and that the recent troubles are entirely their fault.

*Kuni Miyubi (Doji Nashiko):* Kuni Akuja’s new apprentice is an astonishingly pretty young woman, her black hair worn in a short ponytail, her beauty only accentuated by the simple gray Kuni robes she wears. This is the form which Doji Nashiko takes on this side of the border, covering her frequent departures as “investigation” or “research.”

She has seduced Akuja and is leading him around by the nose. She is also manipulating both Hida Chuto and Hida Masakazu with promises of her future favors.

If the PCs learn the truth about the raid on the Asahina, Miyubi claims to have uncovered evidence of Maho use there, evidence which she then brought back to her master Akuja.

Miyubi’s face and figure are completely different from “Doji Miyako,” of course, and her speech here is that of a determined Kuni shugenja, but the PCs may still notice the similarities between the situation here and that on the Crane side of the border. If nothing else, Miyubi’s startling beauty (easily equal to Miyako’s) may serve as a clue.

*Suzume Akemiro:* The sole non-Crab here is a courtier from the peaceable and enlightened Sparrow Clan, trying to find a way of averting a war that he fears will spill over into the near-defenseless lands of his own minor Clan. Akemiro is a slight, pleasant-looking man who dresses simply and speaks without ostentation.

He knows the Crab believes itself to be in the right, and knows their confidence has something to do with the Kuni, but cannot understand how the conflict began. Surely the honorable Crane would not have started it.

He can confirm the Crane raid on Sweet Water Village, which he witnessed personally. In fact, he is the only one here to have been present at the city when the Daidoji troops struck.

He knows nothing about the Crab raid on the Asahina.

## Dining With Crabs

The Crabs will regard all the PCs except Hiruma Tadoshi with great suspicion, although they will offer grudging respect to these representatives of the Emperor. Yakamo calls for food and drink, and Yasuki household servants bring in a low table laden with simple fare: rice, fish, pickled vegetables, and sake. The Crabs discuss everything while eating, sometimes punctuating their points with sharp gestures with their chopsticks. Only Yasuki Yoshinori, Suzume Akemiro, and Kuni Miyubi maintain more proper decorum, although Miyubi does not hesitate to put down her chopsticks and join in the conversation.

The sake served at dinner is unusually hot, almost scalding – the Yasuki servants are frightened and out-of-sorts with all the rumors of war, and heated it too long before serving. The PCs must make Stamina+Etiquette rolls at TN 15 to avoid uttering a startled squawk, spitting, or otherwise insulting their hosts. The Hida growl and grimace (except for Yakamo, who merely takes a brief sip and then sets his cup down to cool), while Yasuki Yoshinori looks quietly embarrassed and, after a moment, murmurs an apology. Suzume Akemiro skillfully suppresses his momentary twitch of pain with hardly a flutter. But the reaction of the Kuni draws the attention of any PC making a Simple Perception roll at TN 20 or better (TN 15 if the PC specifically asks if anyone at the table reacts oddly): while Kuni Akuja grimaces and sets his cup down quickly, Kuni Miyubi drinks normally for a moment, then blinks and makes a small face before putting down her cup. Nashiko’s persona has slipped for a moment – she felt no pain from the hot sake – and a PC rolling Intelligence+Acting at TN 25 can surmise that her slightly-delayed wince was faked.

## The Crab Point of View

As dinner proceeds the Crab explain, quite heatedly, that they are not responsible for the current troubles. They claim the whole thing is a Crane attempt to use force in support of their mercantile dealings, and point to the raid on Sweet Water Village as proof positive of this supposition. Any PCs who suggest that the Crane are above such shallow commercial interests are greeted with incredulous looks and (from the Hida) bellows of laughter. The PCs can notice (with a Perception+Courtier roll, TN 20) that the two Hida generals seem to compete with each other for which of them can offer more violent declarations of “teaching those weak-kneed Crane a lesson!” If the roll is made at TN 30 or better, the PC can also notice that Kuni

Miyubi seems to subtly egg the generals on with an occasional sidelong glance or slight smile. A PC who notices this can make another roll, Simple Awareness (+Ichi Miru) at TN 25, to notice that Kuni Akuja seems to get sour and unhappy at Miyubi’s attentions to the other Crabs, only to relax when she touches him, feather-light and almost unnoticeably, on one arm. Since touching in public is a major violation of Rokugani etiquette, the PCs can draw their own conclusions about the relationship between Akuja and Miyubi.

The Crabs will all deny the raid on the Asahina estates. However, any PC making a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 25 will notice that the two Hida generals (Chuto and Masakazu) and Kuni Akuja all become slightly uneasy when this topic is broached. Any PC who discusses the topic with any of these three persons and succeeds on a Contested roll of Perception vs Awareness can tell that these individuals know more about the raid than they are letting on. (Remember that Clear Thinkers can add 10 to that roll.) Oddly, it is impossible to pick up any such indications from Kuni Miyubi.

Of all those present at this meeting, only Yasuki Yoshinori and Suzume Akemiro seem to actively be interested in a peaceful solution to the crisis. The Hida and Kuni all advocate war, with increasing vehemence as the evening goes on. Hida Yakamo himself stays aloof from most of the conversation, listening to all arguments and reserving judgement until the evening has passed. It is up to the PCs to convince him to accept the proposal for a meeting on neutral ground.

## A Challenge, and Perhaps Some Truth

The PCs should know that, historically, the Crab Clan has had good relations with the Daidoji family, who they refer to as the “Iron Cranes.” If the players don’t know this, their PCs can recall it with an Intelligence+History roll at TN 15. If none of the PCs think of mentioning this, Suzume Akemiro will bring it up in conversation at some point, hoping thereby to suggest an argument as to why the Crab should avoid escalating to war. Regardless of who brings it up, Hida Yakamo nods gravely, and Hida Masakazu reluctantly concedes that the Daidoji have been useful allies “in the past, at least.”

As soon as the topic of the Daidoji is raised, however, Hida Chuto jumps up, shouting that Masakazu must be “soft in the head” to suggest that any Cranes are true friends to the Crab Clan. Any PC making a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 30 notices that Chuto shot a glance at Kuni Miyubi just before his outburst. Masakazu rises to his feet as well,

shouting that he understands all threats to the Crab perfectly well and demanding that Chuto withdraw his insult. Before this can go any further, though, Yakamo lifts his hand. “Settle this like Crabs, not like foolish courtiers,” he growls.

The two generals nod, set their daishos aside, and walk to the center of the chamber, where they engage in a violent wrestling match. The other Crabs watch with interest, while Suzume Akemiro turns his eyes aside in exquisite embarrassment.

Although Masakazu is several years younger, the grizzled Chuto is a true master of hand-to-hand combat, and after several grunting, joint-popping tussles he throws Masakazu and pins him to the floor. The younger general acknowledges defeat with bowed head and flushed face, and returns silently to his seat. Any PC who makes a Perception+Investigation/Nazado roll at TN 30 (TN 20 if they specified they were watching Kuni Miyubi) spots Miyubi shooting a lovely smile at Chuto; she skillfully does this behind Kuni Akuja’s shoulder, so that he does not notice. Chuto visibly preens as he returns to his chair, and booms out, “As I was saying: whatever help the Daidoji may have been to us in the past, a Crane is still a Crane.”

Although this incident has brought Chuto farther under Miyubi’s spell, it has also (temporarily, at least) humiliated and disgraced Hida Masakazu. He spends the rest of the dinner, and any subsequent conversation, brooding and darting angry looks at Miyubi. Any PC who approaches Masakazu after this may be able to get more information out of him, assuming decent role-playing and an Awareness+Courtier roll at TN 20.

Masakazu will confess (in a low voice, out of others’ hearing) that Hida Chuto did indeed lead a raid across the border into Asahina lands; Masakazu learned of it shortly after his arrival, but has not yet informed Yakamo-sama. If asked for specifics, Masakazu says the raid was launched at the suggestion of Kuni Akuja, who believed the Cranes there were practicing Maho (black magic). This was later confirmed by the discovery of Maho scrolls and death-masks which were found at the site (and are now, supposedly, under Akuja’s care).

If the PCs confront Akuja about this, he confirms the story and credits his excellent student Miyubi, who brought back a Maho mask and a damning personal report after spending some time investigating (read: spying) on the far side of the border. After the raid, more masks and scrolls were recovered from within the Asahina buildings (if asked, Akuja will confess that Miyubi found all of them). Akuja does in fact have a stash of authentic Maho scrolls and items which Miyubi delivered to him during the raid; he will not show it to the PCs, however, unless Yakamo orders it.

## Negotiating With Yakamo

Hida Yakamo is, as stated, willing to consider a peace conference on the border if the PCs push the idea with vigor and genuine eloquence. Sincerity rolls will not help here; as a Crab, Yakamo values honesty and clear speech, something the PCs can deduce with an Awareness+Courtier roll at TN 15. The GM should judge whether the PCs make convincing arguments for the conference: their best gambit is probably to point out that Yakamo’s troops would be serving the Clan (and the Empire) far better on the Kaiu wall than they are here. Since Yakamo is himself concerned about that very fact, this point will score highly with him.

Yakamo regards the story of the raid on the Asahina estates as a patent Crane fabrication until and unless the PCs manage to squeeze some of the information out of Hida Masakazu or Kuni Akuja. Once it becomes clear that the raid was, in fact, carried out by Crab troops, he demands explanations from his subordinates. Akuja and Chuto admit to launching the raid without authority, but claim it was needed to prevent the taint of Maho from spreading. Masakazu is more guarded in his words, admitting that he did not know of the raid until after the fact; however, all the evidence clearly shows the raid to have been justified.

Akuja will show everyone the Maho masks and scrolls he claims (apparently honestly, if the PCs want to make Contested rolls to plumb his sincerity) were discovered at the scene. An Intelligence+Maho-Tsukai Lore (or Shadowlands Lore) roll at TN 20 (25 for Shadowlands Lore) will determine that the items are authentic Maho relics. Yakamo nods thoughtfully and agrees the raid was probably justified, but points out sternly that he should have been informed at once. He then turns to the PCs and agrees to meet with the Crane. “They need to be made aware of this,” he growls, pointing to the crate full of Maho trappings, “so they will realize our actions were not directed against them, but against our mutual enemy.”

Regardless of how or why Yakamo agrees to the meeting, he is urged by both Hida Chuto and Kuni Akuja to bring along a sizable escort of troops as a show of might, to “discourage any Bloodspeaker madness.” Yakamo nods and gestures sharply at the PCs. “Go and tell the Daidoji. Four days. I can restrain my men that long. On the border...if they dare show their pretty Crane faces.”

## Return to the Daidoji

Two days’ ride brings the PCs back to the Daidoji city to explain the results of their trip. If the PCs repeat the Crab reports of Maho, the Crane are outraged. Their honor is above question, they say, and it is far more likely that the Crab are using the accusation to cover up

their own ill-deeds. Doji Miyako and her two pet Crane generals will be especially vociferous, demanding to see the Crab commit seppuku for spreading such vile lies. The PCs will need to do some diplomatic role-playing (and perhaps make some Awareness+Sincerity rolls) to smooth things over enough for the conference to proceed.

Regardless of whether the PCs repeat the Crab accusations or not, Daidoji Uji will insist on bringing a sizable armed escort of his own to discourage any “Crab thuggery.” Besides Uji himself, the Crane negotiating team will include Asahina Tamako, Daidoji Shinro, the other two Daidoji generals (Akahito and Murakawa), and Asahina Miki. Uji forbids any other members of the court, especially wives, from accompanying him; the risk of an armed clash is too great.

Doji Miyako frowns prettily at this, but agrees that the Crab cannot be trusted to honor a truce. “Please, explain the truth to those Crab boors,” she urges Akahito and Murakawa, “Make them give us apology and restitution, until they crawl on their bellies and beg us for seppuku.” The two generals agree with enthusiasm. Any PC making a Perception+Investigation/Nazado roll at TN 35 or better notices a brief flash of burning, savage malice in Miyako’s eyes as she speaks these words.

By now, unless your players are complete dullards, the PCs should be noticing similar patterns in the courts of the Crab and Crane. Doji Nashiko’s weakness, her vanity, has caused her to use overly similar methods on the opposing sides. Since the PCs are expected to accompany the border conference, they will not be able to investigate “Doji Miyako” further at this time, but they should be starting to realize what is happening and, therefore, know something of what to watch for at the conference.

## **The Border Conference: A Last Chance for Peace**

*The return journey to the Crab border seems to pass more slowly than before, or perhaps you are merely more anxious to reach your destination. The Daidoji troops who accompany you are nervous and ill at ease, their eyes darting this way and that as they approach the border. The Crab are waiting for you, drawn up in ranks with war-banners fluttering overhead. The Daidoji troops grow even more tense, gripping their yari tightly, as they take up formation opposite the Crab. Daidoji Uji and the other Crane leaders step forward, and from the opposite side you see Hida Yakamo, general Chuto, Yasuki Yoshinori and the two Kuni shugenja approach. There is an exchange of bows and formal greetings, and some of*

*the tension seems to ebb from the air. Servants begin setting up tents and pavilions to house the troops and shelter the conference.*

After an hour or so, the shelters are in place and several folding tables have been set up for the conferees to use. The PCs, as representatives of the Emperor seeking peace, are expected to participate in the meeting.

Initially, the position of each side will be that the other is to blame for the problem, and should make restitution. Those who have been seduced by Nashiko (Daidoji Akahito, Daidoji Murakawa, Hida Chuto, and Kuni Akuja) will be especially loud in blaming the other side, and will tend to interrupt, make insults, and generally disrupt any progress at the table. Nashiko herself is present, of course, in her guise as Kuni Miyubi; she will encourage both Chuto and Akuja in their behavior. Any PC making a Perception+Courtier roll at TN 20 will be able to pick up on the subtle gestures and glances she uses to egg them on.

Perhaps more interestingly, any PC who watches Miyubi during the conference can make a Simple Awareness roll at TN 25 to notice that she is shooting an occasional smoky glance at Daidoji Shinro across the table. The daimyo seems to be catching the looks, although his etiquette is good enough that the PCs cannot guess how he is reacting. Without his wife to strengthen his honor, Shinro is now vulnerable, and Nashiko intends to use him as the final piece of her plan.

The PCs will have their hands full trying to guide this meeting to a successful conclusion. If they can propose a good face-saving compromise (perhaps apologies and symbolic restitution on both sides, while blaming the whole incident on unspecified enemies or provocateurs), and make Awareness+Courtier rolls at TN 30, they can convince the two sides to accept an end to the problems. Otaku Hiroji’s courtier abilities could also come in very handy here. Asahina Tamako will, of course, support any solution that will bring peace. Yasuki Yoshinori will also support a peaceful solution, provided he can get some compensation for his financial losses.

The PCs can make their task much easier by convincing Yakamo and Uji to meet alone, without the noise and distraction of their underlings. The PCs will have to come up with this idea themselves – no-one else will suggest it – and support it with an Awareness+Etiquette roll at TN 20. Any PC watching Kuni Miyubi at this time can make a Simple Perception roll (TN 30) to notice a brief flash of petulant anger on her face. If the PCs are successful at arranging a more private meeting, they can negotiate a peaceful resolution much more easily – the Awareness+Courtier roll now has a TN of only 20.

Regardless of whether the PCs are able to forge a peace or not, the meeting finally breaks up in late evening, and servants bring trays of food and bottles of sake for the exhausted participants.

## Dinner and Danger

The Crab and Crane nobles sit on opposite sides of the tables, mostly glaring at each other suspiciously, while they eat and drink. There are exceptions to this general trend, however: Asahina Tamako speaks amiably with everyone around him, and Hida Yakamo has a quiet, apparently cordial discussion with Daidoji Uji – the two young men have much in common, despite the troubles which have brought them here, and the friendship between the Crab and the Daidoji is old and deep.

Kuni Miyubi continues to dart subtle signals at Daidoji Shinro throughout dinner, although she does not speak to him directly. If any PC asks her about this, she feigns ignorance. (“Looking at him? I certainly don’t know what you mean, honorable samurai.”) Shinro, who is much less strong-willed without his wife to support him, is too unsettled by Miyubi’s subtle attentions to admit to noticing them.

Kuni Akuja hasn’t caught on to what is happening yet, but if a PC points it out, he becomes agitated and hurries over to Miyubi, speaking to her in a low urgent manner. He seems dissatisfied by her replies, and glowers at her for the rest of the evening. Any PC making a Simple Awareness roll at TN 15 can tell he is jealous.

The general attitude of the NPCs will depend on how successful the negotiations were, but regardless of whether the PCs managed to broker an agreement or not, the overall level of tension will remain high. The PCs will notice several instances of the opposing generals engaging in staredowns, making overly loud remarks about the vices of the opposing Clan, and so forth. It should be obvious that the potential for conflict remains very high.

As the evening deepens, servants bring torches and paper lanterns to light the encampment. The PCs can hear conversation, the jingle of armor and weapons, and the occasional sentry’s challenge from the troops surrounding the small group of nobles. As the different leaders depart for their tents and sleep, any PC who makes a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 25 catches a glimpse of a figure in a blue kimono moving in the shadows near the tents of the two Daidoji generals (Akahito and Murakawa). The PC thinks the form was female, but cannot be sure unless they make a TN of 35 or better; if they make 40 or better, they think the form looked familiar. If any PC thinks to ask, Kuni Miyubi is nowhere to be seen – she seems to have slipped away

just before this, and they can see Kuni Akuja looking around with a slightly lost expression.

If any PC is rude enough to actually approach the two Daidoji generals’ tents and ask about female visitors, both the generals and their guards will firmly deny that any female visitors are present (they are lying, which can be determined with a Contested roll, but knowing that is not sufficient justification for questioning their word – they out-rank the PCs, after all). A PC who insists on barging into the tents will find nothing (Nashiko slips out before they can spot her) and earns a challenge for their appalling lack of respect.

Not everyone is so eager for sleep. Yakamo and Uji continue talking for some little while, and Asahina Tamako will want to speak with the PCs – to praise their performance if they brokered a deal, or to encourage them for tomorrow if they failed thus far. Hida Chuto tromps around the Crab encampment, checking on his troops and urging them to be alert for “Crane treachery.” And Kuni Akuja continues to wander about, searching for his missing student Miyubi. He becomes more agitated by the minute, and any PC making a Perception+Investigation roll can overhear him muttering, “Some fancy Crane better not have his hand up her kimono. She was always too pretty for her own good.”

Akuja finally vanishes into the dark, sniffing around the different Crane tents. If a PC follows him, they will have to make Agility+Stealth rolls (TN 20) to stay close enough to see him stop at Daidoji Shinro’s tent, lean close to the fluttering silk, then suddenly rise and storm away into the Crab encampment. A PC making a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 30 can make out Shinro’s and Miyubi’s low voices inside the tent, although they cannot distinguish the words. A Secrets on the Wind spell, oddly, fails here no matter what the roll (Doji Nashiko will not allow such a feeble magic to trouble her).

If the PCs follow Akuja, or listen in on him with magic, he goes to Hida Chuto and proclaims urgently that the Cranes have seduced his apprentice and are probably preparing a night attack. Chuto immediately begins issuing combat orders to his men. If the PCs stay and observe Daidoji Shinro, he soon emerges from his tent (Kuni Miyubi at his side) and summons the two Daidoji generals, ordering them to prepare their troops for action. “This Crab maiden has warned me that her people cannot be trusted,” he declares heatedly. We will forestall the Crab treachery. Prepare to attack.”

Nashiko is now about to make the war between Crane and Crab unavoidable. Having visited both Daidoji Akahito and Daidoji Murakawa in the guise of Doji Miyako (they are now so thoroughly besotted that they do not even question her presence here) she has used her Kuni Miyubi form to seduce Daidoji Shinro, convincing him that the cross-border raid was actually

Akuja's idea and warning him (falsely) that the Crab are preparing to attack tonight. Primed by her urgings, the three Daidoji now prepare their own troops for a pre-emptive strike. Meanwhile, the madly jealous Akuja and the compromised Hida Chuto are readying their own troops for action. The stage is set for a violent, chaotic clash of arms which will tip the Clans over the edge into open war – preferably killing Hida Yakamo and Daidoji Uji in the process.

## Sequence of Events

For the assistance of GMs who must coordinate the evening's events at the encampment, here is a brief timeline of NPC behavior:

Dinner: Miyubi subtly flirts with Daidoji Shinro. Kuni Akuja notices.

Uji and Yakamo stay at the table after dinner to talk.

Asahina Tamako speaks with the PCs.

Hida Chuto walks around the Crab encampment.

Kuni Miyubi (Nashiko) disappears. Akuja begins looking for her.

Nashiko, in the guise of Doji Miyako, visits both Daidoji Akahito and Daidoji Murakawa, urging them to prepare for battle.

Nashiko switches back to her "Kuni Miyubi" form and visits Daidoji Shinro in his tent, seducing him. She tells him the Crab are planning a night attack.

Kuni Akuja searches through the Crane tents for Miyubi, and overhears her with Shinro.

Akuja goes to Chuto, telling him that Miyubi has been seduced by the Crane and an attack is sure to follow. Chuto marshalls his troops.

Shinro and Miyubi summon the other Crane generals and prepare for battle as well.

## A Mad Moment

The PCs face an immediate crisis. There are a number of ways they can defuse it.

The most obvious is to confront one or both groups of NPC leaders, demanding an explanation for their actions. This will require some good role-playing, as well as some skill rolls and perhaps contested Willpower rolls. Otomo Kaigen's Obeiesaseru skill (the ability to freeze someone in their tracks for a round by invoking the name of the Emperor) can come in especially handy here. Other skills which could be useful here are Intimidation (to cow the unruly generals), Etiquette (to avoid provoking them into duels), Oratory (to sway the opinions of their troops), or Law (to point out how wrong these actions are), or Hiroji's Rank Two Doji Courtier technique (if he can get them to listen long enough for it to work). It will

require both good play and good rolls to succeed, and if the PCs approach only one side of the conflict, they will have to deal with the sudden attack from the other side just as they seem to have solved the problem.

A more drastic approach to forestalling the fight might be to challenge one or more of the leaders to duels, proclaiming that their actions are unlawful and against the will of the Emperor, and demanding that they defend them with steel. This will work especially well against the Daidoji, who are sensitive of their own compromised honor and will leap to defend it in combat.

Another option – perhaps the best one – is for the PCs to go directly to Hida Yakamo and Daidoji Uji, reporting the trouble before it gets underway. They will need to role-play well and then roll Awareness+Sincerity (TN 25) to convince these two daimyos that their generals are about to run rampage without proper orders. If they succeed, the two order their generals brought before them, effectively short-circuiting the crisis.

Once a fight begins, stopping it will be extremely difficult. The PCs' best option is to find the leaders of each side (Uji and Yakamo) and help keep them alive long enough for them to issue orders and sort out the confusion. This would probably require use of the Obeiesaseru and Intimidation skills again, to face down any squads of panicked, attacking samurai who blunder into the area. If the PCs fail to protect these two leaders once the fighting begins, they will be killed in the confusion (perhaps by Nashiko herself, if she gets the opportunity) and the fight (and war) will be unstoppable. If they do keep the leaders alive, the fight is brought under control after a few minutes, with minimal casualties.

Regardless, once things get exciting, "Kuni Miyubi" slips away in the confusion, switching back to her Doji Miyako form and heading back for Daidoji lands.

## Aftermath

Once the violence is aborted or brought under control, the PCs can question the participants on both sides and piece together what has happened. The three compromised Daidoji, heartbroken by their loss of honor, freely confess everything that has happened. Akahito and Murakawa both confess to being seduced by Doji Miyako, and to launching the raid on Clear Water Village; Shinro confesses to being seduced by Kuni Miyubi and explains how she deceived him into mobilizing the troops tonight.

Kuni Akuja and Hida Chuto will confess less readily, but if the PCs press them (and especially if they enlist Yakamo to help them), they will eventually each

admit taking Kuni Miyubi as a lover (Akuja is furious and heartbroken to learn that Miyubi seduced Chuto), and that she was the sole source of the evidence which led them to launch the raid on the Asahina. Both Kuni Miyubi and Doji Miyako are nowhere to be found in the camp, but if a search is launched, a Crane sentry soon comes forward who remembers seeing a lovely woman in Crane colors riding back toward Garden Under Shadow City. Of Miyubi there is no sign.

The three fallen Daidoji all ask permission to commit seppuku, and Uji grants them leave to save their family honor in this fashion. Akuja also takes this route, but Hida Chuto asks (and is granted) permission to go into the Shadowlands “looking for Hida,” a traditional Crab alternative to seppuku. Before dawn he is already on his way back to the Kaiu wall to fulfill his destiny.

As for the two missing women...Hida Yakamo promises to scour the Crab lands for Kuni Miyubi. Daidoji Uji turns to the PCs and says, “Doji Miyako has betrayed her honor and committed crimes against the Empire. She is your responsibility now.” He signs an Order of Appearance for Miyako’s arrest.

## What Women?

It is possible, though not likely, that the PCs will forestall the war without ever realizing that Miyubi/Miyako was behind it. In this case, the confessions of the dishonored NPCs should be enough to show them what was really going on. Daidoji Uji will certainly realize at least some of what has happened and will insist that Doji Miyako be arrested for helping to provoke the conflict.

## The Final Confrontation

The PCs will return to Garden Under Shadow City well ahead of Daidoji Uji’s troops, and find everything seemingly normal, the troops remaining in the city quietly waiting for their lord’s orders. If they ask after Doji Miyako, they learn she is in her quarters. The Daidoji guards who stand watch outside the residential quarters will, reluctantly, admit that she has been away recently, and only returned one day ago. Servants will report the same, if questioned. The Daidoji troops are shocked by the Order of Appearance, but then nod gravely and stand aside.

You walk down the corridor to Miyako’s quarters, noticing how quiet the palace has become. Even your soft footsteps seem to echo in the empty hallway. You slide open the door to Miyako’s chamber, and two terrified servants bow themselves out of your way as you stride through to the inner chambers.

*Doji Miyako sits in regal seiza, clothed only in a translucent blue kimono. A sheathed wakizashi lies at her side. Floating in the air around her are six glowing portals, each about the size of a peasant’s straw hat. Within these portals you can see six children of various ages, each going about their normal business, oblivious. “Ah, noble samurai, welcome.” Miyako smiles and bows deeply, but her eyes glint with mockery. “I have prepared a suitable greeting for you. Lovely children, are they not?” She gestures at the six portals, and with a shock of horror each of you recognizes one of the children as your own. “It would be so unfortunate if something were to...happen to them. Don’t you agree?”*

If the PCs mention her name, or demand to know who she really is, she is delighted. “Miyako.? Ah ha ha ha!” Her laugh tinkles like a perfect wind-chime. At the same time, her face changes, becoming both different and (impossibly) even more beautiful than that of Doji Miyako. Nashiko is showing her true self. An open, black-edged wound is visible in her throat, and within it pulses the glowing blood of Fu Leng. “That was merely the name I used among these poor foolish Cranes. My name, my real name, is Doji Nashiko. Perhaps you’ve heard of me?” PCs may roll Intelligence plus Crane Lore, Lion Lore, or Maho-Tsukai Lore (TN 25) to recognize her name, in which case they will have reason to tremble. She is the Bride of Fu Leng, the most accomplished seductress in the history of Rokugan, a woman who nearly destroyed the Crane court of Doji Komatsu hundreds of years ago.

*“You have foiled my plans for this place, my mission for the Dread Lord. But I have decided not to leave here empty-handed. Such noble Magistrates, such strong souls... you would make worthy additions to Fu Leng’s army. You would not even mind...in fact, I am sure you would thank me, once it was all over.” Her smile is inhumanly lovely, made all the more exotic by the blue light that shines from her eyes. “It is a simple choice. Come with me to serve Fu Leng, and I will allow your children to live. Resist, and they will perish. The decision is yours.”*

The PCs now face a terrible choice. They have no way of knowing whether the visions in these six portals are real, or merely illusions meant to thwart them. Nor do they have any way of knowing whether Nashiko is telling the truth about sparing their children. Mere human insight cannot possibly divine the motivations of such a being. The PCs must make their choices in ignorance. Nor will Nashiko allow some to make one choice, and some another – they must all surrender to Fu Leng, or their children will all die.



In point of fact, Nashiko is bargaining more-or-less honestly. She will spare the children if the PCs surrender, because this will allow her to continue to use them as a threat hanging over the PCs' heads, and because the children will then have the potential of being turned later by their fallen parents, thereby winning two generations of servants for Fu Leng. If the PCs agree to her terms, she laughs, closes the six portals, and leads them out of the city (shrouding their existence with a Mists of Illusion spell) to the Shadowlands. To the rest of Rokugan, their fate is unknown – they have simply vanished. This is the ending assumed by Round Two.

If the PCs refuse, an expression of petulant fury crosses Nashiko's flawless features. She makes a sharp gesture with one hand, and in each portal the PCs see a bony-limbed bipedal monster (recognizable as Akutsukai, fallen humans imbued with the power of Fu Leng, with an Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore roll at TN 20) materialize and stab each child through the heart. Those PCs with Kharmic Ties to their children feel a dreadful wrench in their hearts as the Tie is broken. Nashiko leaps to her feet, scooping up the wakizashi from the floor, her face twisted in rage, the blue light pulsing from her eyes. "Your children have paid the price for your foolishness," she hisses, "and now you will pay the same price." All PCs must make Fear Tests against Nashiko's Fear Rank of 4. She attacks immediately, alternating physical strikes with spells and magical abilities in whatever way seems most effective (see her stats in the NPC section).

The PCs are basically certain to die here – they simply do not have the strength or skill (not to mention the jade weapons) to overcome such a fearsome opponent. Fleeing is dishonorable, and in any case Nashiko's magical abilities make it easy for her to chase the PCs down. Still, at least they perish with their souls free – and against Fu Leng, sometimes that is the only victory possible.

### **End of Round One**

## Non-Player Characters (those not found in Clan Books)

Skills listed are those at Rank 2 or better; all NPCs will have a variety of skills (basically, whatever is needed) at Rank 1.

### **Daidoji Shinro, Daimyo of Garden Under Shadow City, Crane Shogun (general)**

FIRE 3  
AIR 4  
EARTH 2 Willpower 3  
WATER 2 Strength 3  
VOID 4  
TN to be Hit: 20  
Weapons: Daisho set  
Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 3.4/5.8  
School/Rank: Kakita Duellist, rank 3  
Skills: Courtier 3, Dance 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Manipulation 2, Oratory 2, Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (daimyo), Gentry/Frail Mind

### **Daidoji Akahito, Crane Shogun (general)**

FIRE 3 Agility 4  
AIR 2 Reflexes 4  
EARTH 2  
WATER 3  
VOID 4  
TN to be Hit: 25  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 1.7/4.2  
School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard, Rank Two  
Skills: Battle 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Sincerity 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank one)/Small, Weakness (Awareness), Dark Secret (seduced by Doji Miyako)

### **Daidoji Murakawa, Crane Shogun (general)**

FIRE 3  
AIR 4  
EARTH 2  
WATER 3  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 25  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 2.2/4.4  
School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard, Rank 3  
Skills: Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance (can focus two extra times in Iaijutsu duel)/Dark Secret (seduced by Doji Miyako)

### **Kakita Yumi, Crane Artisan and Courtier**

FIRE 2 Agility 3  
AIR 3  
EARTH 2  
WATER 2  
VOID 2  
TN to be Hit: 15  
Primary Weapon: None  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 2.6/2.4  
School/Rank: Kakita Artisan (Painter) Rank One  
Skills: Artisan (Painting) 3, Etiquette 2, Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Jealousy (looks), Bad Reputation (jealous of Doji Miyako)

### **Asahina Tenka, Visiting Crane Shugenja**

FIRE 2  
AIR 4  
EARTH 2  
WATER 3  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 20  
Primary Weapon: Wakizashi (2k2)  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 3.8/2.6  
School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja, Rank Two  
Skills: Calligraphy 2, Etiquette 3, Lore (Shugenja) 3, Meditation 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Abilities (Tempest of Air, Mists of Illusion, Path to Inner Peace)

### **Asahina Miki, Court Shugenja of Garden Under Shadow City**

FIRE 2  
AIR 3 Awareness 4  
EARTH 2  
WATER 3  
VOID 2  
TN to be Hit: 15  
Primary Weapon: None  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 3.6/3.2  
School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja, Rank One  
Skills: Courtier 2, Etiquette 2, Lore (shugenja) 2, Meditation 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Ability (Wind's Distractions), Social Position (Court Shugenja)/Soft Hearted

**Ikoma Tadaka, Lion Emissary to Garden  
Under Shadow City**

FIRE 3  
AIR 3  
EARTH 3  
WATER 2 Strength 3  
VOID 2  
TN to be Hit:  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 3.8/2.7  
School/Rank: Akodo Bushi, Rank Two  
Skills: Bard 2, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 3, Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable, Precise Memory/Can't Lie

**Bayushi Oro, Scorpion Emissary to Garden  
Under Shadow City**

FIRE 3  
AIR 4  
EARTH 2 Willpower 3  
WATER 2 Perception 4  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 25  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 1.2/3.4  
School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi, Rank Two  
Skills: Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Sincerity 4, Sleight-of-Hand 2, Stealth 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Read Lips, Voice

**Ide Kagetora, Unicorn Emissary to Garden  
Under Shadow City**

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3  
AIR 3  
EARTH 2 Willpower 3  
WATER 2 Perception 3  
VOID 2  
TN to be Hit: 15  
Primary Weapon: Wakizashi (2k2)  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 2.8/2.4  
School/Rank: Ide Emissary, Rank One  
Skills: Etiquette 3, Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing

**Hida Chuto, Crab Shogun (general) for the  
southern border**

FIRE 3 Agility 4  
AIR 2  
EARTH 4  
WATER 3 Strength 4

VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 20  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2) or Tetsubo (2k2)  
Primary Armor: Heavy  
Honor/Glory: 1.3/4.7  
School/Rank: Hida Bushi, Rank Two  
Skills: Battle 2, Hand-to-Hand 4, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 2, Tetsubo 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank one), Hands of Stone/Gullible, Dark Secret (seduced by Kuni Miyubi)

**Hida Masakazu, Visiting Crab Shogun  
(general)**

FIRE 3  
AIR 2 Reflexes 3  
EARTH 4  
WATER 3  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit:  
Primary Weapon:  
Primary Armor:  
Honor/Glory:  
School/Rank: Hida Bushi, Rank Three  
Skills: Battle 4, Hand-to-Hand 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Tetsubo 4  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Crab Hands, Large/Contrary

**Yasuki Yoshinori, Daimyo of Yasuki Yashiki**

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3  
AIR 3  
EARTH 3 Willpower 4  
WATER 2 Perception 4  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 15  
Primary Weapon: None  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 1.8/5.4  
School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant, Rank Three  
Skills: Appraisal 4, Commerce 5, Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, Heraldry 3, Manipulation 2, Sincerity 5, Sleight of Hand 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Hida Family), Crafty, Gentry, Social Position (daimyo)/Bad Reputation (merchant), Coward

**Kuni Akuja, Care-worn Kuni Shugenja**

FIRE 4  
AIR 3  
EARTH 4  
WATER 3  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 20  
Primary Weapon: Wakizashi (2k2)

Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 1.4/3.7  
School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja, Rank Three  
Skills: Defense 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 3,  
Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Spellcraft 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Ability (Tomb of  
Jade)/Permanent Wound, Lechery, Missing Limb  
(hand), Dark Secret (seduced by Kuni Miyubi)

**Suzume Akemiro, Sparrow Clan ambassador**

FIRE 3  
AIR 3  
EARTH 2  
WATER 2  
VOID 3  
TN to be Hit: 15  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: None  
Honor/Glory: 2.8/3.1  
School/Rank: None  
Skills: Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 2,  
Sincerity 3  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Voice/Ascetic

# Doji Nashiko, a.k.a. Doji Miyako, a.k.a. Kuni Miyubi

## Akutenshi (Evil Angel), Bride of Fu Leng

FIRE 4 Intelligence 6

AIR 8

EARTH 6

WATER 4

VOID 0

**School/Rank:** Doji Courtier 4, Maho-Bujin 3

**Shadowlands Taint:** 9

**Wounds:** 96 :Dead

**TN to be Hit:** 40

**Advantages:** Benten's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty, Voice, Most Others!!

**Disadvantages:** Vanity, Phobia (Disfigurement).

**Skills:** Acting 5, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Maho-tsukai 5, Lore: Shadowlands 5, Manipulation 5, Mimic 3, Political Maneuvering 5, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Torture 4, All High Skills 3.

### Maho-Bujin Techniques:

- *Rank One: Carve the Crimson Road.* Gains an additional number of attacks equal to the highest Honor Rank among her opponents.
- *Rank Two: Corruption Rewards.* May use the wounds inflicted in her previous strike as her initiative score for the following round.
- *Rank Three: Devourer of Purity.* May recover a number of Wound Ranks equal to the Honor Rank of anyone she brings to Down, Out, or Dead. This takes effect immediately. Any ranks beyond her injuries are lost.

### Spells:

Nashiko knows all Air spells and most Maho spells, plus any others the GM deems appropriate, and casts them all as though she is Rank Five. Touch of Death, Summon Oni, Dancing With Demons, Sinful Dreams, and Truth is a Scourge are all innate. In combat she will cast Touch of Death (DR 7) by preference.

### Akutenshi Powers:

*Armor of Death:* Nashiko has an Armor rating equal to the number of wounds she inflicted on the previous round. This is like oni armor, subtracting from the Wound total rather than adding to her TN.

*Blood Shouting.* Nashiko can form links to other people or creatures which taste her saliva. When struck, she screams, and if the target can hear it, he/she takes the wounds in her place. NPCs in this event which she can transfer wounds to in this fashion include Daidoji Shinro, Daidoji Akahito, Daidoji Murakawa, Hida Chuto, Hida Masakazu, and Kuni Akuja. Note that many of these NPCs have probably committed seppuku by the time the PCs confront her.

*Body of Damned Time:* For the cost of six Wounds, Nashiko can turn her shape to an inky void filled with stars. All who look upon it see their own death, turning their hair white.

Nashiko makes a contested Shadowlands Taint vs. Void roll. For every point by which she exceeds each victim's total, they age one year.

*Command the Taint:* Nashiko can command lesser Shadowlands creatures and tainted humans by succeeding in a contested Willpower roll. Note that there are no other Shadowlands creatures immediately available, and the only PC with taint is Hiruma Tadashi.

*Calligraphy of Thought:* Nashiko can read her victim's surface thoughts by making a contested Awareness roll vs. the victim's Awareness + Defense. It takes two raises for her to read something the victim is deliberately trying to hide. This is how Nashiko knows about the PCs' children.

*Disrupt Chi:* By making a contested Awareness roll against an opponent's Awareness + School Rank, Nashiko can force that opponent to add his or her lowest Trait to all skill rolls. This lasts for one round, plus one round per raise.

*Eyes of Hell:* In her true form Nashiko has no eyes, but instead empty sockets that glow blue. This allows her to see in the dark; also, she cannot be blinded. Note that this is normally masked by her shapechanging abilities and Mists of Illusion spell.

*Fear:* Nashiko has Fear Rank 4.

*Flight:* Nashiko can fly through the air at will. She suffers no ill effect from this and can spin in circles around her opponents. This adds +10 to her TN to be hit.

*Invisibility:* Nashiko can take a single action to become invisible, adding +20 to her TN to be hit. She can still be seen through crystal or thin sheets of jade.

*Invulnerability:* Nashiko can only be wounded by weapons of Crystal, Jade, or Obsidian, or by magic.

*Sense Purity:* Nashiko may roll Perception + Investigation, TN 15, to detect unTainted humans within a mile radius (plus a half-mile per raise).

*Shapechanging:* Probably her favorite power, Nashiko has complete control over her shape. It takes a complete round to change to something similar, two rounds for something slightly different, three for something of significantly different size and shape, four rounds for extremely different size and shape, and five rounds for something of impossibly different size and shape. Her preferred form is always that of a staggeringly beautiful woman.

*Soul Drinking:* Nashiko may suck out a dying person's final breath to consume their soul, preventing the person from reincarnating for as long as she lives. The victim's face appears on the lining of her small intestine, and she is not above drinking boiling tea to torment these faces.

*Undead Strength:* Nashiko ignores Wound penalties. She has no "Down" or "Out" ranks, and can fight until dead.

## GM's Aid: Condensed NPC List for Round One

Since there are so many NPCs in Round One, GMs may find this “short list” useful for keeping track of who’s who.

### Crane NPCs:

**Daidoji Uji:** The daimyo of the Daidoji family, and senior Crane NPC in the scenario. A young man in his mid twenties, swarthy of skin and piercing of eye, fiercely devoted to the defense of his clan.

**Asahina Tamako:** Daimyo of the Asahina family. A frail older man of weak constitution, who often coughs softly into a blue silk cloth. Enlightened and peaceful, and wants a diplomatic solution to the current crisis.

**Daidoji Shinro:** Daimyo and general of Garden Under Shadow City. Third-highest ranking Crane, after Uji and Tamako. A tall, dignified man with his hair in the classic samurai topknot. Resists being seduced so long as his wife is around, but succumbs to Kuni Miyubi during the border conference.

**Daidoji Eriko:** Shinro’s wife. An elegant Crane woman in early middle age. Extremely honorable and traditional woman, always speaks with her eyes properly averted. Disgusted by Doji Miyako.

**Daidoji Akahito:** Crane general. Short and tree-trunk-like in build, which makes him talkative and aggressive to compensate. His hair is worn undyed in a traditional topknot. Seduced by Doji Miyako. Launched the raid on Clear Water Village.

**Daidoji Murakawa:** Crane general. Taller and more handsome than Akahito, dyes his hair white in classic Crane style. Usually calm and self-controlled, at least outwardly. Not yet seduced by Miyako at the start of the scenario, but succumbs by the end.

**Kakita Yumi:** Crane artisan (painter) and courtier. A lovely woman in her mid-twenties. Impeccable manners and perfect etiquette and style. Jealous of Doji Miyako, who has eclipsed her as the center of attention at court.

**Doji Miyako (Doji Nashiko):** Crane courtier, actually Doji Nashiko cloaked in illusion and shape-changing. A stunningly beautiful courtier, long white-dyed hair braided down her back, her blue kimono a masterpiece of subtle suggestion. Constantly urges Akahito and Murakawa to “punish” the Crab.

**Asahina Tenka:** Crane shugenja. A soft-spoken, civilized man in his mid-thirties, the epitome of the gentle, delicate courtier. Sole survivor of the Crab raid on the Asahina estates. His pale eyes are haunted and hung with dark rings.

**Asahina Miki:** Crane shugenja, assigned to the court of Garden Under Shadow City. A gentle but strong-willed young woman. Visited the site of the Crab raid.

### Crab NPCs:

**Hida Yakamo:** Son of the Crab Clan Champion. Highest ranking Crab NPC. A hugely strong and formidable young man. Angry at the Crane, but willing to accept a peaceful solution if it seems fair. The “classic Crab”: blunt, harsh-voiced, and pragmatic.

**Hida Chuto:** Crab general, commanding the local border forces. An ox-strong man in his early forties, average height, face disfigured by a nasty vertical scar. Seduced and manipulated by Kuni Miyubi. Led the raid on the Asahina.

**Hida Masakazu:** Crab general, accompanied Yakamo to the border. A stern man with dark eyes, taller and younger than Chuto. Is smitten with Miyubi and competing with Chuto for her affections. Knows about the raid on the Asahina.

**Yasuki Yoshinori:** Local Yasuki daimyo. A thin, perpetually smiling man with a long nose and small, narrow eyes. Anxious and cowardly, concerned only about making back the money he lost in the Crane raid on Clear Water Village.

**Kuni Akuja:** Middle-aged Kuni shugenja, missing his left hand and left eye. Wears a silken glove to cover the burn scars on his right hand. Has been seduced by his “student” Miyubi, and is intensely jealous of anyone approaching her. Her evidence caused him to urge Chuto into launching the raid on the Asahina.

**Kuni Miyubi (Doji Nashiko):** Nashiko’s guise on the Crab side of the border. An astonishingly pretty young woman, her black hair worn in a short ponytail. Apprenticed to Kuni Akuja.

### Other NPCs:

**Ikoma Tadaka:** Lion emissary to the Crane. An earnest, noble-looking man in his thirties. He has heard about the Crane raid on Clear Water Village. Thinks the problems are being arranged by the Scorpion Clan. Miyako arranges his death after he catches on to one of her lies.

**Bayushi Oro:** Scorpion emissary to the Crane. A clever, handsome man with a pleasant voice, wearing a minimal mask. Knows about the Crane raid on Clear Water Village, and recognizes many of Miyako’s manipulations.

**Ide Kagetora:** Unicorn ambassador to the Crane. A short, slightly plump man with a trimmed goatee beard and a ready smile. Knows little about what is happening, but has heard rumors of the Crane raid on Clear Water Village. Deeply concerned that a war could disrupt Unicorn trade networks in the region.

**Suzume Akemiro:** Sparrow Clan ambassador to the Crab. Slight, pleasant-looking man who seeks peace. Witnessed the Crane attack on Clear Water Village.

**Hiruma Tadoshi**  
**Crab Clan Samurai**  
**Rank Two Hiruma Scout**

FIRE 3	EARTH 3
Agility 3	Stamina 3
Intelligence 3	Willpower 4
AIR 2	WATER 2
Reflexes 3	Strength 2
Awareness 2	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 20 (15 without armor)

**Primary Weapon:** Katana (3k2)

**Primary Armor:** Light

**SKILLS**

Archery 1	Etiquette 2	Investigation 2	Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 2
Athletics 2	Hand-to-Hand 2	Kenjutsu 3	Medicine 1
Battle 1	History 1	Law 3	Meditation 1
Calligraphy 2	Horsemanship 1	Lore	Origami 2
Courtier 1	Hunting 3	(Shadowlands) 1	Sincerity 1
Defense 3	Iaijutsu 2		Stealth 2

**Honor:** 3.1

**Glory:** 3.6

<b>Advantages:</b>	Death Trance Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Driven (to destroy Maho) Lost Love (dead wife)

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate
	Katana (3k2)	Umbrella
	Wakizashi (2k2)	Purse (4 koku)
	Kimono	Traveling pack
	Sandals	Rations and a bottle of sake
	Rokugani pony w/ saddle	Inkstone and Brush
	Personal Chop	4 sheets of parchment
	Hilt Guard from sword of dead wife	tinderbox and three candles

---

**Wounds**

6	- 0
6	- 1
6	- 2
6	- 3
6	- 4
6	<b>Down</b>
6	<b>Out</b>
6	<b>Dead</b>

**School/Rank:** Hiruma Scout, Rank 2

<i>Dance the Razor's Edge.</i>	Tadoshi may add 5 to his TN to be hit by Shadowlands creatures for each School Rank.
<i>Run Like the Wind</i>	Tadoshi can maintain a running pace (10 mph) for a number of hours equal to his Stamina times 2, after which he must rest for the same time.

*Personality/Appearance:* Hiruma Tadoshi is a serious, sad-looking man in early middle age. His hair is streaked with gray and worn in a long ponytail, and he often leaves a thin grizzle of stubble on his cheeks. He is intensely devoted to his mission as an Emerald Magistrate, regarding his duties to the Emperor as more important than anything else, even his loyalty to his own Clan. He hates maho (black magic) and the Shadowlands, and becomes agitated when either subject is mentioned. He loves his son Shinji deeply, seeing in him all that remains of his lost wife.

You spent your youth with the Moto family, learning the new scouting school which they have taught your family since the original Hiruma school was lost. Unexpectedly, you fell in love with one of your fellow students, Moto Aoi. Most such relationships between samurai end in tragedy, but you were able to arrange a marriage with Aoi's family, and she returned to Crab lands with you. For two years you were happy together, and she bore you a son, Shinji.

Then disaster struck. A Scorpion courtier was posted to your daimyo's castle, and shortly after his arrival strange incidents began to plague the region. Your wife realized the man was a maho-tsukai, a practitioner of black magic, but before she could warn you he killed her and fled the castle. Heartbroken and choked with the need for vengeance, you spent almost a year hunting the Scorpion across the Empire, and finally tracked him to the capital itself, the Imperial city of Ootosan Uchi. There, the Scorpion (now in the guise of a Phoenix holy man) was infiltrating the Imperial court, threatening the very heart of Rokugan. You succeeded in exposing and killing him before he could wreck any further damage. The Emperor was deeply impressed by this accomplishment, and appointed you one of his Emerald Magistrates. You were not really happy with this honor, for it took you away from the Wall and your duties to the Crab clan. But your first duty – the first duty of any Rokugani – was to the Emperor, so you accepted the appointment and did your best to carry out your duties. This has had the virtue of keeping you alive to help raise your son, so in some ways the duty has been a blessing.

Recently you have married again, to a plain but devoted Hida woman, but as yet no children have been born; you cannot bring yourself to touch your new wife, since you feel as though doing so is betraying Aoi's memory. You still remember her as vividly as the day she died, and you are often tormented by guilt that you failed to save her, or to detect the maho-tsukai before it was too late. Your son Shinji is all you have left of her, and he is far more valuable to you than your own simple life. You would do anything to spare him from harm.

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Matsu Ayame:* An older woman who has served the Emperor for many years. You have met Ayame-san only a few times, but you have always been impressed by her combination of an honorable heart and a forthright attitude. Like you, she lost her spouse many years ago, and you respect her old grief.

*Otaku Hiroji:* you have worked several times with Hiroji-san, an intelligent Unicorn diplomat with a knack for finding peaceful solutions to the worst crises. You get along well with Unicorns and consider Hiroji-san a friend as well as a fellow Magistrate. No doubt his skills will be very useful in your new assignment.

*Asako Igemi:* Normally you have little respect for the pacifistic Phoenix clan, which shelters on the far side of the Empire from the Shadowlands; but this man is one of the Inquisitors, who hunt the users of Maho (black magic) across the Empire. You worked with him once on an investigation of maho, and quickly learned to respect his abilities and judgment. Although no maho involvement is suspected on your current assignment, you nevertheless are happy to have Igemi-san in your company.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* You have never met this particular Scorpion before, but you know from harsh experience that Scorpions are honorless, treacherous villains. You're sure Gamaro cannot be trusted. Everything he says has an ulterior motive. You'll be careful not to let him trick you into any mistakes.

*Otomo Kaigen:* The highest-ranking member of your group of Magistrates is this Imperial diplomat. Given your past experiences with those of the Otomo family, you don't expect him to do more than stand around looking important.



**Matsu Ayame**  
**Lion Clan Samurai-ko**  
**Rank Three Matsu Bushi**

FIRE 3	EARTH 3
Agility 4	Stamina 3
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 3	WATER 3
Reflexes 3	Strength 3
Awareness 3	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 25 (15 without armor)  
**Primary Weapon:** Fine Katana (4k2)  
**Primary Armor:** Heavy (-5 to all physical actions)

**Skills**

Athletics 3	Hand-to-Hand 2	Intimidation 2	Lore (Lion) 2
Bard 1	Heraldry 2	Investigation 1	Medicine 1
Battle 2	History 3	Kenjutsu 4	Meditation 2
Calligraphy 2	Horsemanship 1	Knife 1	Sincerity 2
Etiquette 2	Hunting 1	Law 3	Tea Ceremony 1
Falconry 1	Iaijutsu 3	Lore (Ancestors) 1	War Fan 2

**Honor:** 3.9

**Glory:** 4.3

<b>Advantages:</b>	Clear Thinker Kharmic Tie (rank 3, her son Hiro) Strength of the Earth (rank 1) Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Brash Bad Reputation (killing duelist)

<b>Outfit:</b>	Heavy Armor	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate
	Fine Katana (4k2)	Bow (strength 2)
	Wakizashi (2k2)	Quiver with 20 arrows (all standard, 2k2)
	Tessen (Iron Fan, 0k2)	Traveling pack
	Kimono	Rations
	Sandals	Inkstone and Brush
	Rokugani pony w/ saddle	2 sheets of parchment
	Personal Chop	tinderbox and candle

**Wounds**

6	- 0
6	- 0
6	- 1
6	- 2
6	- 3
6	Down
6	Out
6	Dead

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi, Rank 3

<i>The Lion's Roar</i>	When making a Full Attack, Ayame generates a Fear effect in her foes equal to her School Rank +1.
<i>Matsu's Fury</i>	When making a Full Attack, Ayame may make one additional attack per turn.
<i>With My Ancestors Beside Me</i>	When making a Full Attack, Ayame rolls a number of initiative dice equal to her Honor Rank.

*Personality/Appearance:* Ayame is a fierce, passionate woman who has learned, after many years, to curb her anger with the wisdom of age. She is thin and hawk-like in body and face, with sharp cheekbones and intense black eyes. Her hair is usually worn loose over her shoulders, giving her a wild look. Ayame has no time for talking around an issue – she always prefers the direct word and the straightforward approach. If she is challenged she does not hesitate to accept a duel, and given the chance she always fights to the death. She feels an intense emotional bond to her son, even when they are separated by great distances as they are now, and would do almost anything to protect him from harm.

You are a classical Matsu, fierce and independent, a true heir to the founder of your family. Since the day of your gempukku you have had no thought save to serve the Lion Clan and the Empire with courage and honor. You fought in many skirmishes and battles in your youth, serving against the Crane, Dragon, and Phoenix; in a battle on the northern frontier, you saw the young Matsu Tsuko and her mother stand and rally the army after the treacherous Phoenix sneak attack of the night before. You felt then the song of your ancestors in your veins, and knew that no other samurai could ever feel what Lions felt. You fought not alone, but with all of your ancestors beside you.

After ten years of service as a bushi, your family determined that the time had come for you to marry and carry on your line. You were betrothed to a fellow Matsu, a skilled and honorable man named Matsu Hoitsu, and married him that winter at the New Years' Festival. Hoitsu treated you with the respect and dignity which a Matsu bride deserved, your relationship was as harmonious as it could be, and soon you were with child. Some months later, you and your husband had the honor to accompany the Emperor on a trip back from Winter Court in Lion lands, when the caravan was attacked by a pack of honorless ronin. Hoitsu fell, along with many other Lions and Imperial Guards, protecting the Son of Heaven. Although you were nearly to term, you also fought to protect the Emperor, and took a serious wound to the leg. The Ikoma wept for your husband at the funeral, while you watched with dry eyes as his body was consumed by the pyre. A Matsu, man or woman, does not weep or cry out in pain, and you knew Hoitsu's spirit watched you and was pleased with you. Your son was born three weeks later, on the day you were appointed an Emerald Magistrate. Looking into his eyes, you saw the soul of your husband and yourself in equal measure, and felt an emotional bond such as you have never known before.

In the years since, you have devoted yourself to your new duties as an Emerald Magistrate, enforcing the Imperial law in Lion lands. You have also devoted yourself to the upbringing of your son, Hiro, guiding him along the path of the Matsu, teaching him the code of honor and the glorious past of his family and Clan. Although he cannot always accompany you on your journeys through the Empire, you always feel a connection to his spirit, even when you are separated by hundreds of miles. You are sure he will be one of the greatest Matsu to ever wear that name.

Your methods as an Emerald Magistrate have sometimes drawn controversy, especially in the early years of your duties, for you usually approach problems with a direct pragmatism that unsettles the more intellectual clans, such as the Crane, Scorpion, and Phoenix. However, over the years you have learned to temper your brash impulses with wisdom, and know to avoid insulting without need or provoking those who might help you. In particular, you have learned (reluctantly) to ignore your Clan's enmity with the Crane clan, however much you might like to break all their skinny, lying necks. When the time does come to set manners aside, however, you do not hesitate to draw steel, and your duels have always been to the death. A Matsu would never expect less.

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Hiruma Tadoshi:* A member of the Crab clan; unlikely to understand the importance of Bushido. Still, unlike most Crabs, he seems to have some sense of honor and to care about more than the mindless battle on the Kaiu wall; he has served as an Emerald Magistrate for many years, and you respect him for that. You have heard that he, like you, lost his spouse years ago, so perhaps you have more in common than might first appear.

*Otaku Hiroji:* The Otaku family are like the Matsu in that they force men who marry into their line to take their name; but in the case of this man they seem to have taken his soul as well. A more mouse-like, weak-limbed excuse

for a man you have never seen – except, perhaps, for those Crane courtiers who infest Otosan Uchi like rats. His sole talent seems to be talking. Let him talk, then; you will expect no more.

*Asako Igemi:* like most Lion, you have little respect for the Phoenix clan's strange blend of pacifism and ruthlessness. This particular Phoenix is apparently a historian, a task more properly belonging to your own clan's Ikoma family, so you like him even less. You expect him to keep out of your way.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* no Scorpion can be trusted. They are creatures of treachery and malice; of this every Lion is rightly sure. You have had to work with this Scorpion worm once before, and he did nothing to betray you or your duties then, but that no doubt was because you made it perfectly clear that any betrayal would be met with a lethal duel. You will make the same thing clear to him this time.

*Otomo Kaigen:* A member of the Otomo, the highest of the Imperial families below the Emperor himself; having him along on this mission is a sign both of the Emperor's favor and of how important the Son of Heaven considers this mission. You will not hesitate to obey this man implicitly.

# Otaku Hiroji

Unicorn Clan Diplomat

Rank One Ide Emissary/Rank Two Doji Courtier

FIRE 2	EARTH 2
Agility 2	Stamina 2
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 3	WATER 2
Reflexes 3	Strength 2
Awareness 4	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Primary Weapon:** Wakizashi (2k2)

**Primary Armor:** None

## SKILLS

Acting 1	Etiquette 4	Knife 2	Political Maneuvering 2
Athletics 1	Heraldry 2	Law 2	Poetry 1
Bard 2	History 2	Lore (Crane) 1	Rhetoric 1
Calligraphy 3	Horsemanship 3	Lore (Unicorn) 2	Shintao 1
Courtier 3	Iaijutsu 1	Manipulation 2	Sincerity 3
Dance 2	Investigation 1	Meditation 1	Tea Ceremony 2
Defense 2	Kenjutsu 1	Oratory 1	

**Honor:** 2.7

**Glory:** 3.3

<b>Advantages:</b>	Multiple Schools Ide Emissary Doji Courtier Social Position (Emerald Magistrate) Voice
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Small

<b>Outfit:</b>	Wakizashi (2k2)	Purse containing 8 koku
	Tanto (1k2)	Traveling pack
	Fine Kimono	Assortment of fine quality fans with Otaku mon
	Fine Sandals	Inkstone and Brush
	Fine Gaijin Riding Horse	8 sheets of parchment
	With Leather Saddle	gaijin lamp with three flasks of oil
	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate	tinderbox
	Personal Chop	small mirror

## Wounds

4	- 0
4	- 1
4	- 2
4	- 3
4	- 4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

**School/Rank:** Ide Emissary Rank One/Doji Courtier Rank Two

<i>The Heart Speaks</i>	Hiroji may add his Honor to the total of any social interaction roll. He may roll Awareness+Etiquette at TN 20 to avoid making a social error even if he is not aware of the custom in question.
<i>The Perfect Gift</i>	Hiroji may call upon political favors to provide himself with useful gifts (items, training, etc.) up to five times per adventure. In scenario terms, this ability is somewhat limited by the circumstances, but any physical item you need will be readily available.
<i>A Whisper From the Soul</i>	By talking at least five minutes with a target person, and making a Contested Awareness roll, Hiroji can bring them to an emotional state favorable to his goals (whatever that state might be).

*Personality/Appearance:* Hiroji is a soft-spoken, unprepossessing man; short of stature, exuding a palpable aura of friendship and an earnest desire to help. His features are not especially distinctive (especially his overly large nose), and his hair is thinning on the top; however, his charming personality and deep, pleasant voice easily make up for these minor shortfalls; few can resist his carefully reasoned proposals at the negotiating table. He is still allied with Miya Yoto and is dedicated to the cause of peace in Rokugan. Unfortunately, Hiroji seldom has time to return to Unicorn lands, and his children have grown up strangers to him. He secretly regrets this, and sometimes wishes his marriage could have been happy rather than cold and loveless.

You were born Ide Hiroji, of the Unicorn Clan. Like all those of the Ide family, you were trained as a diplomat and negotiator, learning to navigate the treacherous waters of Rokugani diplomacy. Your clan is still regarded with suspicion by much of the rest of the Empire, and the skills the Ide family learned dealing with suspicious gaijin in the Burning Sands have applied themselves equally well at dealing with the complex currents of the Emerald Empire.

While you were still a young man, helping with border disputes along the Crab frontier, you found that you had been engaged to an Otaku Battle Maiden through a complex political negotiation between your families. The Otaku are a matriarchal family, where the men remain home to tend the war-horses while the women fight in the field; this troubled you less than it might have bothered a fierce Shinjo or Moto samurai, since your family's methods were less than violent, but it still rankled you to remain at home while your skills went unused. Your wife, Otaku Niki, seemed to regard you as little more than a means of having children. You were still able to use your skills as an Ide, however, during negotiations between the Otaku and their rivals and enemies, both within and without the Clan. Several years after your marriage, you were instrumental in averting a possible war between the Otaku and the Lion Clan. Miya Yoto, the daimyo of the Imperial Miya family and a staunch advocate of peace, was present at those negotiations and was deeply impressed by your diplomatic skills; through his influence, you were soon appointed as an Emerald Magistrate. You have spent many of the years since then carrying out delicate negotiations between different families and Clans, helping to prevent wars and resolve territorial disputes. You are proud of this role, which allows you to serve the entire Empire and to prove the worth of your Clan. Your wife is somewhat disgruntled at your position, since it means you are often absent from home and cannot carry out the traditional duties of an Otaku husband, but even she grudgingly acknowledges that you have brought much Glory to the Unicorn Clan.

In order to further your performance as a negotiator, you called on some political favors (especially the sponsorship of Miya Yoto) and arranged to attend the famed Doji Courtier school. Their methods are very different from those of your own family school, but you have found that by combining their techniques with your own you can accomplish even more than in the past. You spend much of your time now in Crane lands, learning their methods, or in the Imperial capital Otosan Uchi, mediating between different Clan factions. But this prestige comes with a price: only seldom do you find time to return to your home in the Otaku lands, and your children (two sons and three daughters) are growing up strangers to you. On your last trip you barely recognized your eldest daughter, Otaku Ameiko, now a lanky girl of thirteen. That is the price of your position, you remind yourself; one of the samurai caste should never allow sentimentality to interfere with duty. Still, you love your children, and you can't help but sometimes wish you could have been closer to them.

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Hiruma Tadoshi:* a friend as well as a fellow Magistrate, this middle-aged Crab warrior is well able to appreciate your diplomatic skills, unlike many of his often-crude Clan. His wife, who died many years ago, was a Unicorn, and he thinks well of your Clan. You are glad to have him in your company once more. If you should need a champion in a duel, you hope you can count on Tadoshi for that favor.

*Matsu Ayame:* a Lion warrior of the most classic and hot-tempered sort, though fortunately her attitudes seem to have mellowed with her advancing age. She looks down on you as only a Lion bushi can. Still, that is of no importance so long as it does not impede your mission.

*Asako Igemi:* a historian and Inquisitor (maho-hunter) of the Phoenix clan, this gentle man is one with whom you feel a true kinship. Like you, he is often sneered at by more militant samurai, but he is enlightened enough to shrug off such trivial insults; you try to emulate his calm approach to life, but do not always succeed. You have visited his home and seen the close relationship he has with his daughter, and wish you could have forged such a strong link with your own children. You know you can rely on Igemi to be a valuable member of this team.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* You have met this Scorpion before and find him to be an intelligent man and a charming conversationalist. Although it is a truism that Scorpions are completely honorless, your own Unicorn custom is to judge individuals on their own merits, and you have found nothing to distrust in Gamaro-san. Indeed, from hints he has dropped in conversation, you suspect he may be uncomfortable with his Clan's traditions of treachery and deceit. Perhaps you can learn more about this now that you are together again in the Emperor's service.

*Otomo Kaigen:* the highest-ranking member of your team is a member of the Imperial family, a rich and powerful man, perhaps even kin to the Emperor himself. Most of the Otomo family are diplomats, working on behalf of the Emperor, but Kaigen-san wears the mon of the Kitsuki, a Dragon clan school of skilled magistrates and investigators. You are intrigued; this will be your first chance to see the Kitsuki method in action.

**Asako Igemi**  
**Phoenix Clan Historian and Inquisitor**  
**Rank Two *Henshin***

FIRE 2	EARTH 2
Agility 2	Stamina 2
Intelligence 4	Willpower 3
AIR 3	WATER 2
Reflexes 3	Strength 2
Awareness 3	Perception 2
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 20 (15 without Armor)

**Primary Weapon:** Katana (3k2)

**Primary Armor:** Light

**SKILLS**

Acting 2	Heraldry 1	Lore (Asako family) 3	Meditation 3
Astrology 1	History 4	Lore (Crane) 2	Shintao 3
Athletics 1	Horsemanship 1	Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 2	Sincerity 2
Calligraphy 3	Iaijutsu 3	Lore (Shadowlands) 1	Stealth 1
Cipher 1	Investigation 3	Medicine 2	Tea Ceremony 2
Courtier 1	Kenjutsu 2		Theology 2
Defense 2	Knife 1		
Etiquette 2	Law 2		

Honor: 3.4

Glory: 4.1

<b>Advantages:</b>	Kharmic Tie (rank 5, daughter) Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Dark Secret (Asako Family School)

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate
	Katana (3k2)	Purse (1 koku, 2 bu)
	Wakizashi (2k2)	Traveling pack
	Kimono	Letter from daughter
	Sandals	Inkstone and Brush
	Rokugani pony w/ saddle	11 sheets of rice paper
	Necklace w/ polished wooden symbol of Hotei	Personal Chop
		Fortune of Contentment

**Wounds**

4	- 0
4	- 1
4	- 2
4	- 3
4	- 4
4	<b>Down</b>
4	<b>Out</b>
4	<b>Dead</b>

**School/Rank:** Asako Henshin, Rank Two

<i>Mystery of Earth</i>	1/ day, add 1 to his Earth ring or subtract 1 from an opponent's Earth ring for two turns
<i>Riddle of Earth</i>	1/day, may ignore Earth+1 wounds, or heal the same amount of wounds taken by another
<i>Mystery of Air</i>	2/day, may add 2 to his Air ring or subtract 1 from an opponent's Air ring for two turns
<i>Riddle of Air</i>	2/day, may roll Air+2 extra dice for social interaction checks

*Personality/Appearance:* Igemi is a tall, thin man, his face long and aquiline. Normally a serious man who pursue his duty (whatever it might be) with efficiency and determination, he turns light-hearted and smiling whenever the topic of home and family arises. He dotes on his daughter and likes to talk about her when duty is not interfering (at social gatherings, for example). He never becomes angry or loses his center. Igemi is a skilled Inquisitor but does not obsess on maho or the Shadowlands – he thinks it is dangerous to think about such things when there isn't an immediate need. He will never reveal the secret of the Asako school, no matter what.

You are a member of the Inquisitors, the Phoenix brotherhood which hunts the influences of maho and the Shadowlands across the Emerald Empire. You are also, officially, an Imperial historian, and you have traveled across the Empire for many years fulfilling both duties. But all of that is merely a cover for your real purpose. You are one of the Henshins, the secret school of the Asako family, who seek out the deepest mysteries of the elements. This school is kept secret from the rest of the Empire, since most people are not ready for it, and your public persona is that of a scholar and courtier, a man of learning and manners who frequents the courts of the Empire. You must be careful never to reveal your powers and abilities publicly, lest others learn the sacred secrets of the Asako.

Your wife is also an Asako, a Henshin of power equal or greater than yours; your marriage was arranged by your families in the hopes that your children would share your gifts, or perhaps hold them at an even higher level. So far you have had only one child, a lovely daughter named Kimi. She has shown no particular aptitude for the Henshin school as of yet, but to you this hardly matters; Kimi is a joy to you, the pulsing heartbeat at the center of your life. Since the moment you held her tiny hand in your own, you have known that nothing and no one would ever be as important to you as her. Although your duties as an Inquisitor and, more recently, as an Emerald Magistrate have carried you all across the Empire, you always find time to return home and be with her. You often bring her gifts from the different parts of the Empire you have visited, letting her catch a glimpse of life outside the sheltered enclave of the Asako lands.

Compared to the joy of raising your daughter, the duties of an Inquisitor seem grim indeed, but they are important nonetheless. Maho cannot be allowed to stain the Empire where Kimi lives. Several times you have rooted out maho-tsukai or pockets of Bloodspeaker cultists, putting them to the bitter deaths they so richly deserve. As an Imperial Historian, you have chronicled several notable events in the recent history of Rokugan, most notably the wedding of Doji Hoturi, the heir to the Doji family daimyo. The Emperor himself was impressed with the depth and artistry of your work, and appointed you as an Emerald Magistrate in reward for the enjoyment your work gave him. This honor has proven to be a mixed blessing, however, for while you now dispose of more power than you ever had as a mere Phoenix Inquisitor, you seldom have the time or opportunity to follow your old path of investigating maho; an Emerald Magistrate must go where the Emerald Champion requires, however drab the duties he might assign. Last autumn you actually had to help with tax collections in your home provinces.

Your current assignment is a similar duty. You have been sent to the border of Crab and Crane lands to resolve some sort of border dispute that threatens to bring war between them. You will perform your duty without fail, of course, but you would much rather be out stalking the cursed practitioners of maho through their sordid paths. Or better still, home with your daughter, listening to her pure, birdlike voice.

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Hiruma Tadoshi:* You have worked once before with this Crab warrior, a man with many years of experience in both the Imperial service and the battle against the Shadowlands. His wife was murdered by a maho-tsukai, and you can still see the rage that burns within him at that long-ago loss. Aside from that, however, he is a wise and reliable man, and you are glad to have him along on this mission for the Emperor.

*Matsu Ayame:* A Lion bushi of advancing age but undiminished ferocity, this woman seems to regard you as nothing more than an insult to her own Clan's Ikoma family, the official historians of the Empire. She is unaware even of your role as an Inquisitor, let alone your true nature as a henshin, and seems to think you a completely useless



appendage to this mission. Perhaps, by proving her wrong, you can open her eyes to a more enlightened vision of the world.

*Otaku Hiroji:* A Unicorn diplomat with whom you have been acquainted for several years, Hiroji seems to be unhappy with his strange, warlike clan, and longs for a more enlightened existence. You have become friends, and he has even visited you a few times at your home in Phoenix lands, an honor you have accorded to few. He has a poor relationship with his wife and especially his children, and you have sometimes tried to help him find a better path with them. You are sure that with him accompanying you, you will be able to find a peaceful solution to any problem.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* You have never met this Scorpion magistrate before, and your first instinct is to distrust him. After all, the Scorpions are known throughout the Empire as masters of manipulation, blackmail, and treachery. Still, you can't help noticing that this particular Scorpion seems to lack their general air of mocking superiority. Hiroji-san is acquainted with him; you will have to learn more from him about this man.

*Otomo Kaigen:* you are deeply honored to have one of the Imperial family leading your mission. Kaigen-sama is himself a magistrate of no small skill, trained in the Kitsuki school, who has solved many crimes and problems for the Empire. You have no doubt he will be the most important part of your team.

**Shosuro Gamaro**  
**Scorpion Clan Shugenja**  
**Rank Two Yogo**

FIRE 3	EARTH 2
Agility 3	Stamina 2
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 3	WATER 3
Reflexes 3	Strength 3
Awareness 4	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 20 (15 without Armor)

**Primary Weapon:** Wakizashi (2k2)

**Primary Armor:** Light

**SKILLS**

Acting 1	Etiquette 2	Kenjutsu 2	Sincerity 2
Athletics 1	Forgery 1	Law 2	Sleight-of-Hand 1
Bard 1	Heraldry 1	Lore (Maho-	Spellcraft 2
Calligraphy 2	History 1	Tsukai) 2	Stealth 2
Courtier 2	Horsemanship 1	Medicine 1	Tea Ceremony 1
Dance 1	Iaijutsu 1	Meditation 2	Theology 1
Defense 1	Investigation 2	Shintao 2	Yarijutsu 2

Honor: 2.2

Glory: 4.1

<b>Advantages:</b>	Innate ability (Yari of Air) Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	True Love (his wife, unrealized) Junshin

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate
	Wakizashi (2k2)	Purse (3 koku)
	Kimono	Traveling pack
	Sandals	Rice balls
	Rokugani pony w/ saddle	Inkstone and Brush
	Scroll satchel (with scrolls for known spells)	8 blank scrolls
		Rokugani lamp w/ 1 flask of oil
		TN25 puzzle box w/ Black Watch reports

---

**Wounds**

4	- 0
4	- 1
4	- 2
4	- 3
4	- 4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

**School/Rank:** Yogo shugenja, Rank Two Free raise with Warding Spells

**SPELLS**

Sense	<b>(Air)</b>	<b>(Water)</b>	<b>(Fire)</b>
Commune	Call Upon the Wind	Reversal	of Fury of Osano-Wo
Summon	Know the Shadows	Fortunes	<b>(Earth)</b>
	Secrets on the Wind	Sympathetic	Jade Strike.
	Wind's Distractions	Energies	
	Yari of Air (innate)	Calm Mind	

**Ward Magic:** by spending one hour, Gamaro may create an Elemental Ward by rolling (Element)+(School Rank) at TN 20. A 10-point Raise adds 1 die to the ward's effectiveness. See *Way of the Scorpion* for details on how Wards function.

*Personality/Appearance:* Shosuro Gamaro is a smooth-featured, well-spoken man who wears a simple mask of thin red silk over the lower half of his face. He believes in bushido (or at least the ideal of bushido) but is forced to violate that belief on a regular basis, which leaves him feeling conflicted and uncertain of himself. He is loyal to both the Scorpion Clan and the Emperor, and sees no real conflict between those loyalties. He is also in love with his wife Makoto, although he does not realize it, and may never realize it unless circumstances forced him; he cares about his children (especially Miaka) as extensions of Makoto herself. In social situations he is polite and friendly in the classic Scorpion manner, but sometimes puts out subtle conversational feelers to others, hoping to find someone who can understand and appreciate his feelings about bushido, loyalty, and duty.

You were born to the Shosuro, the family of spies, actors, and assassins who do all the subtlest and most dangerous duties of the Scorpion Clan. Early on, however, you showed an aptitude for magic and an instinctive understanding of the elemental spirits; at the age of ten you were apprenticed to the Yogo Shugenja school. There you proved yourself a worthy student, and completed your gempukku at the age of thirteen. Subsequently, you were inducted into the Black Watch, the branch of the Yogo school which hunts for the forces of maho (black magic) across the Empire. You have co-ordinated with Kuni shugenja, Phoenix Inquisitors, and even the occasional Kuni Witch Hunter to root out the treacherous practitioners of black magic. One of your successes drew the attention of an Emerald Magistrate, Hiruma Usigo, and his recommendation eventually led to your being appointed an Emerald Magistrate as well.

Your appointment delighted your Clan, since every Scorpion Emerald Magistrate was another chance to bend the laws of Rokugan in the favor of the Scorpion Clan. You, however, felt more conflicted over this honor. Unlike most Scorpions, you actually feel some sense that the code of bushido, even if it isn't real, SHOULD be real – the world would be a better place if everyone followed bushido. You try to do so yourself, but it is difficult because everyone (your own Clan included) expects you to be the treacherous Scorpion. Often these very expectations force you to behave in ways that you would prefer to avoid.

You are married, to a plain but intelligent Bayushi woman, Makoto. The marriage was arranged, of course, but you have found Makoto to be a pleasant and useful addition to your life, a skilled courtier and a careful manager of your household. You have spent many long evenings in conversation, discussing everything from the latest political maneuvers in court to the deepest mysteries of the Tao. Unlike other Scorpions, she seems to understand your feelings about honor, and has never questioned your devotion to the Scorpion Clan. Although you have never told her to her face, you have realized that your life would be dreary and hollow without her. She has given you three children, two sons and a daughter, Miaka. Miaka, at eleven the oldest of the children, seems to have inherited much from her mother, but is prettier than Makoto ever was; she has recently been accepted to the Shosuro Actors' School, a great honor. She will serve the Scorpion Clan well. Unfortunately, she seems to have fully absorbed the conventional Scorpion attitudes about honor, which has somewhat alienated her from you. Perhaps, in the end, that will be for the best, since your reputation has not always helped your position within your clan.

Your current assignment as an Emerald Magistrate is to travel to the border of Crane and Crab lands, where an unexpected series of border skirmishes are threatening to break into open war. However, you have been secretly appraised by your superiors in the Black Watch that they suspect the hand of the Shadowlands in this matter. What better way for Fu Leng to weaken the defense of the Empire than to force its defenders into another war? You are expected to investigate this possibility in addition to your publicly assigned role as an Imperial peacemaker. Your companions, of course, are unaware of your second mission, which is a pity; you would like to be honest and tell them of what may lie ahead, but duty and loyalty forbid you.

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Hiruma Tadoshi:* an aging Crab magistrate who regards you with the instant and total distrust which his Clan bestows on all Scorpions. You will simply have to avoid antagonizing him, since Crabs are notoriously violent.

*Matsu Ayame:* you have been forced once before to work in concert with this fierce, stiff-necked Lion bushi. She distrusts you so obviously and completely that you have long since given up trying to convince her that you share, in a small way, her belief in bushido. Well, perhaps that's for the best; if she trusted you, your superiors might order you to exploit or betray that trust.

*Otaku Hiroji:* a Unicorn diplomat of formidable skill, known for using his silver-tongued negotiations to solve almost any problem. He seems less prone to conventional attitudes about Scorpions than others you have met, so perhaps you will be able to work together effectively. You have heard that he, like you, is estranged from his children.

*Asako Igemi:* A Phoenix historian, this man is also one of the Inquisitors, the Phoenix Clan hunters of maho. That is good, since it gives you an ally in case there really is Shadowlands involvement here. He seems to be a very spiritual man, and speaks frequently of his daughter, on whom he dotes excessively. Were you a more conventional Scorpion, you might use that against him, but as it is you find yourself envying his more pleasant and enlightened life.

*Otomo Kaigen:* A member of the Imperial family; you've met him before, since he is also an Emerald Magistrate trained in the unusual Kitsuki school. Most Scorpions fear and hate the Kitsuki, whose unconventional methods allow them to ferret out many plots which would otherwise go undetected. Although your loyalty to your clan requires you to keep Kaigen-san at arm's length, you find him a stimulating conversationalist, and his tender-hearted attitudes toward peasants are an interesting change from the callous arrogance of most samurai.

**Otomo Kaigen**  
**Imperial Family Samurai**  
**Rank Two Kitsuki Magistrate**

FIRE 3	EARTH 2
Agility 3	Stamina 2
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 2	WATER 3
Reflexes 2	Strength 3
Awareness 3	Perception 4
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 10

**Primary Weapon:** Fine Katana (4k2)

**Primary Armor:** None

**SKILLS**

Athletics 1	Etiquette 4	Investigation 3	Obeiesaseru 2
Bard 1	Heraldry 3	Kenjutsu 2	Shintao 3
Calligraphy 3	History 2	Law 3	Sincerity 3
Courtier 3	Horsemanship 1	Medicine 1	Tea Ceremony 2
Dance 1	Iaijutsu 3	Meditation 2	
Defense 2	Ichi-Miru 2	Nazodo 3	

Honor: 3.4

Glory: 4.6

<b>Advantages:</b>	Ear of the Emperor Different School (Kitsuki) Gentry Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Soft-Hearted Vanity (family, son's accomplishments)

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Fine Katana (4k2)	Sash of the Emerald Magistrate
	Fine Wakizashi (3k2)	Purse (11 koku in asstrd coinage)
	Exquisite Kimono	Traveling pack
	Sandals	Inkstone and Brush
	Gaijin Riding horse w/ saddle	Lots of blank parchment
	Scroll satchel (with scrolls for known spells)	Fan
		Journal of his investigations
		Personal chop

---

**Wounds**

4	- 0
4	- 1
4	- 2
4	- 3
4	- 4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

**School/Rank:** Kitsuki Magistrate, Rank 2

<i>Kitsuki's Method</i>	Kaigen may spend any available Void Points on any Awareness or Perception roll.
<i>Wisdom the Wind Brings</i>	For a Awareness/Perception roll, Kaigen gains a number of Free Raises equal to his School Rank.

*Personality/Appearance:* Kaigen is a gentle, soft-hearted man who feels the suffering of Rokugan's peasantry every time he rides through a village. He always seeks ways to help those less fortunate than himself, and has been known to hire ronin he does not need after their tales of woe moved his heart. Physically, his looks are only average, but he compensates for this by making sure he always dresses, moves, and talks with immaculate perfection. Anything less would be an unbearable embarrassment. He is prickly about his school (the controversial Kitsuki path) and defends it to anyone who will listen. He is very proud of his family and status, and sometimes cannot help but quietly brag about his son's success in the Kakita school.

You are a scion of the Otomo family, one of the three Imperial families who serve the Son of Heaven directly and share his bloodline. Your family has always accepted its wealth and social status as its due, for it is only proper that the Imperial families should benefit most from the Empire they protect. That was the attitude of your parents, your siblings, and your wife, a splendid Crane woman. It is the attitude of your children as well. Only you yourself have deviated, if only in a small way, from this accepted view.

Even as a child, you always felt sorry for the hard-working peasants who slaved in their fields while you enjoyed luxury and leisure. Your childhood sensei explained that this was the working of the Celestial Order, which decreed that some should rule, some should fight, and some should labor. Although you accepted this argument, you always felt that the harsh rules of the Celestial Order should be tempered whenever possible by mercy and kindness. You were especially concerned that all in the Empire should receive justice and fairness from the law, and you were disturbed that legally, rank and position seemed to count for more than truth and fact.

Your father, although bewildered by your attitudes, saw that it would be useless to argue you out of them, for you had inherited your strength of conviction from him. Rather than push you into your family's traditional courtier school (for which you would have been completely unsuitable), he arranged for you to attend the Dragon Clan's controversial Kitsuki school. Their notions of evidence and truth were strikingly different from the rest of the Empire, and for you, they came as water to a man in the Burning Sands. You embraced the Kitsuki method wholeheartedly, and your teachers there were pleased by your enthusiasm and dedication. After your gempukku, you were appointed an Emerald Magistrate, and went forth to administer the law of the Empire. You have followed that duty ever since, earning honor and glory for your family and striving, in the small ways your position allows, to bring mercy and kindness to Rokugan's faceless masses.

Your wife does not agree with your views, finding them silly and perhaps even childish, but as a well-trained Crane she never brings dishonor to you in public. Your private lives have been less harmonious, but she has proven a capable manager of your estates, and you have been blessed with four children. The oldest, Hametsu, is now a student at the prestigious Kakita dueling school, and honor reserved for only the finest of prodigies, and you take deep pride in every report of his steady progress through the school's regimen. It is a pity he does not share your views on the need for mercy and kindness in the Empire, but perhaps he will grow more generous with age. In the meantime, you will continue to serve as an example to him and to all the Empire.

**Special Skills (from *Way of the Dragon* and *Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun*):**

**Ichi-Miru:** From observing another person, Kaigen can glean information on their nature, disposition, temperament, habits, and mannerisms.

**Nazodo:** This is similar to Investigation, but can also be used to solve puzzles, riddles, and logic games, as well as to interpret omens and portents.

**Obeiesaseru:** This is a special form of the Intimidation skill, usable only by members of the Imperial family, which overawes opponents by invoking the Imperial name and power. Kaigen must make a Contested Roll of Willpower+Obeiesaseru vs the opponent's Willpower; if successful, the opponent is frozen in place for a round (can defend, but not move or attack). Naturally, this does not work very well against foes who do not respect the Emperor (e.g. gaijin and non-humans).

**How you feel about the other PCs:**

*Hiruma Tadoshi:* An aging Crab warrior who seems to share his Clan daimyo's contempt for anyone not fighting on the Kaiu Wall – especially the Imperial family. This is a shame, since you personally admire the Crab for their courage and for the good relationship between samurai and peasant in their lands. Perhaps you can bring this man to realize that not all courtiers are cowardly or useless.

*Matsu Ayame:* An honorable woman of the Lion clan, an example of the best the Lion have to offer. You have no doubt she would lay down her life for you, should duty demand it. It is samurai like her who ensure that the Emerald Empire will stand forever. If only the Lion were not so thoughtlessly cruel to the poor peasants who toil for them...

*Otaku Hiroji:* A charming man from the Unicorn clan, known for resolving many disputes through peaceful negotiation. You are pleased to have him on this mission, for you are sure that words will be more important than swords here. He seems sympathetic to your attitudes about the Celestial Order, which is a pleasant change from the polite skepticism you often encounter.

*Asako Igemi:* You have heard good things about this man, an enlightened historian from the Phoenix Clan. Of all the Clans the Phoenix seem most to share your ideas about the Celestial Order, so perhaps you can have some fruitful conversation with Igemi-san.

*Shosuro Gamaro:* You have worked before with this Scorpion shugenja, a member of the mysterious Black Watch (hunters of maho). Although you have had bad experiences with Scorpions in the past, and have thwarted their plots several times, this man has never shown anything but loyalty to the Empire. He is also an interesting conversationalist who listens to you without judging your ideas. Odd as it may seem, you would rather rely on him than on Hiruma Tadoshi, despite their Clans' respective reputations.

# **Of Family and Honor**

**A Two-round Adventure for Legend of the Five Rings**

**Round One**

**By Robert Hobart**

Violence and anger plague the border between the great clans of the Crane and Crab. Your group of Emerald Magistrates has been dispatched to solve the problem before it boils over into war. Characters provided.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS, L5R, ROKUGAN, RPGA are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Tournament detail copyright 2000 by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.



This is a standard RPGA Network tournament. A four-hour time block has been set aside for this event. Begin by passing out the player characters; pass them out based on class only, not revealing gender or race. Instruct the players to leave the character sheets face down until you have read the introduction. Then, tell them to study their character sheets, select spells, and notify you when they are ready to begin the adventure.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The actual playing time will be about three hours. Make sure you use the last 20 to 30 minutes of the event time block to have the players capsule their characters for each other and vote. The standard RPGA Network voting procedures will be used. Make sure you have finished voting before you collect the players' voting sheets. This way you will not be influenced by their votes and comments.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

A note about the text: Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

This is a two-round tournament for the Legend of the Five Rings RPG. The goal of this scenario is to force the players to confront two divided loyalties – their loyalty to the Empire and its codes, and their loyalty to their family. In round one, the PCs were a group of Emerald Magistrates sent to the Crab-Crane frontier to forestall a possible war. They discovered that the real cause of the trouble was a Shadowlands Akutenshi (Evil Angel) named Doji Nashiko. She offered them a stark choice: fight and ensure the deaths of their own children, or join her in the service of Fu Leng and thereby spare their offspring. For the purposes of the story in Round Two, it is assumed the players chose to save their children (regardless of the actual outcome of Round One in play). Round Two begins ten years later, and takes up the story of the PCs' children, who are now mighty samurai in their own right. They must face the consequences of their parents' choice.

Round Two takes place three years after the start-date of the "standard" L5R campaign. The principle effect of this, in game terms, is that the

Lion-Crane war is now in full swing, and threatening to spill over into the rest of the Empire. Tensions and suspicions are high, and fear stalks the land.

This scenario makes extensive use of materials from *Bearers of Jade: the Second Book of the Shadowlands*. For the assistance of GMs who may not own that dreadful tome, the relevant rules have been repeated in the NPCs section at the end of each round.

## Running the Scenario

The PCs have traveled (each for their own reasons) to Scorpion lands to investigate a series of deadly raids on the Shrine of Osano-Wo. As they learn more it becomes increasingly clear that they are facing their own fallen parents, a dreadful stain on their family honor. Only through the destruction of these deadly creatures – the slaughter of those who gave them life – will they be able to cleanse their line. But Doji Nashiko will not allow them to make such decisions easily.

The second round is deliberately constructed to present a sharp contrast with Round One. In the first round, the PCs were a group of comparatively weak Emerald Magistrates, and the challenge presented to them was primarily one of mystery and role-playing. Ultimately, they were unable to escape the dark fate that awaited them: slavery to Fu Leng, or the death of themselves and their children. In the second round, by contrast, the PCs (the children of the PCs in Round One) are an extremely powerful (but internally divided) group facing a more-or-less straightforward quest, concluding with a spectacular battle. Their fates are their own, and victory or defeat depends on their skills, determination, and luck. GMs who ran the first round should be prepared to adjust their style accordingly.

The player characters of Round Two do not begin the scenario as a formed party; only two pairs of them know each other from events prior to the scenario. The introduction is designed to give the PCs a chance to become acquainted, and should be played accordingly. There is no outside force that will keep the PCs together; rather, their individual motivations and the logic of the scenario should combine to keep them together, at least until the final encounter.

***Hiruma Shinji***: Hiruma Tadoshi's son is a Kuni-trained shugenja whose magical powers awoke when his true love, Hiruma Eiko, was slaughtered by an Oni before his eyes. Her ghost haunts him, reminding him once a day about his failure to protect her. He knows Otaku Ameiko and is traveling with her when they arrive at Ryoko Owari, but he is unable (so far) to return her feelings for him.

**Matsu Hiro:** The son of Matsu Ayame is a ferocious Lion samurai who has won much honor and glory on the fields of battle. Unfortunately, he has also earned the enmity of the Scorpion clan, which has dispatched Shosuro Miaka (in the guise of an Ikoma historian) to ruin him. He has come here in response to an insult from a Crab samurai, who implied that the Lion did not know true courage because they have never faced the forces of the Shadowlands.

**Otaku Ameiko:** the daughter of Otaku Hiroji is a fierce Battle Maiden sent to investigate the possible threat to Unicorn Lands from the Shadowlands forces in this region. She is secretly in love with Hiruma Shinji, who she met while patrolling the Crab border a few years ago. Remember that she has an Otaku war-horse, a formidable creature that is fiercely loyal to her.

**Asako Kimi:** the daughter of Asako Igemi has a Kharmic Tie to her father, and consequently has never accepted that her father is dead. Like her father she is an Inquisitor, and her hunt for Shadowlands Taint, combined with the inner pull of her Kharmic Tie, has drawn her to the Scorpion border.

**Ikoma Asuka/Shosuro Miaka:** Miaka, the daughter of Shosuro Gamaro, is a Shosuro Actor assigned to seduce and ruin Matsu Hiro, disguising herself for this purpose as an Ikoma bard assigned to recount his personal history. She is a conventional Scorpion and tries to forget her father's foolish and embarrassing ideas.

**Togashi Hametsu:** Hametsu, an Ise Zumi, has a Great Destiny (Togashi told him so himself), but he does not know what it is. His destiny is, in fact, to grant his father peace. Thanks to his destiny, the first time in the scenario when he is killed, he will instead remain alive at one wound.

## **An End and A Beginning: the Inn of the Golden Swallow**

(Read this before the PCs begin playing their characters.)

***The woman smiles, her eyes glowing with blue light. "It is a simple choice. Come with me to serve Fu Leng, and I will allow your children to live. Resist, and they will perish. The decision is yours."***

***One by one, the six figures in the room bow their heads. Her smile broadens and she sweeps to her feet, her blue kimono swirling around her. "Let us go, then," she laughs. "Your new master awaits."***

***There is a shudder of dark energies, and the room is empty.***

***Ten years pass.***

***It is the 11<sup>th</sup> day of the Month of Doji (April), the Month of the Serpent in common usage, in the twenty-fourth year of the reign of Hantai the 38<sup>th</sup>.***

The sun is setting over Ryoko Owari Toshi, Journey's End City, as you approach the Inn of the Golden Swallow. The city is noisy and crowded, for the Scorpion Clan's nearby borders have been struck repeatedly by bandits and Shadowlands creatures, while the bulk of their army is committed to guarding their other frontiers. The Lion-Crane war is threatening to spread to other Clans, and the Scorpion are alert and alarmed. The common folk, meanwhile, are simply frightened; the streets of this great city are packed with fearful peasants who have fled their farms, more fearful of staying than of the wrath of their lords. All the Inns you have visited so far have been packed to bursting, and as you pass the threshold of the Golden Swallow it seems at first to be no exception: the common room is hot and noisy, people crowded around the tables. The Innkeeper, wringing his hands apologetically, humbly explains that only the private meeting rooms remain. Tired from your journeys, you agree, and he quickly leads you back to one of these chambers. Servants bring rice and sake, and you finally have a chance to catch your breath and look around you. Some of you have met before, but for the most part, you are strangers to each other.

This is a chance for the PCs to role-play, get into character, and learn about each other. Have each player describe his or her PC. Once they've had the chance to role-play and get acquainted, move on to the next scene.

The door to the room slides open and two more guests enter, accompanied by a bowing and apologizing innkeeper. The new arrivals – two monks, dressed in simple robes of brown cloth – take the two remaining seats at the table. One of them is a young man, obviously one who took up his vows early in life, while the other has the age, scars, and hulking muscles of a recently retired samurai. Both of them are obviously tired and stained by recent travel. The younger monk speaks, introducing himself and his comrade. "Greetings, noble samurai. I am called Tateru, and my companion is Yusaku. I hope our presence will not offend you. We could find no other place to rest ourselves."

A Perception+Heraldry roll (TN 20) will identify the monks as following the order of Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder. Further, an Intelligence+History or Theology roll (TN 20) will remind the PCs that the Shrine of Osano-Wo, the main temple of that deity, lies on the Plains of Thunder two days' travel west of Ryoko Owari. The monks are obviously damp, dirty, and exhausted from travel, and careful examination (and a Perception roll, TN

25) will notice that Tateru's left arm has been injured; he moves it with care.

Tateru is polite, pious, and soft-spoken, although he is also in excellent physical condition (as a monk of Osano-Wo should be). He will willingly answer any questions from the PCs, but does not readily volunteer conversation with them – they are samurai, after all, and have their own concerns. Yusaku is another story – a former Hida warrior who finally felt the call of a more contemplative life. He still thinks of himself as a Crab, and the recent troubles at the Shrine have re-awakened his aggressive side; he is gruff and blunt-spoken, gestures freely with his hands, and tries to strike up conversation with Hiruma Shinji, an obvious fellow Crab.

Once the subject of Shadowlands, border raids, or similar concerns enters the conversation, Yusaku begins to grumble about the repeated attacks on the Shrine of Osano-Wo. Tateru will try to discourage him (“Our concern is with the Scorpion Clan, my friend, not with these noble travelers”) but Yusaku rumbles on, contemptuous: “Scorpions! Hah! Those sneaky mice won't stir themselves past their borders! Now, a good troop of Hida infantry, that's what we need.”

Presumably, since most of the PCs are here seeking information on the Shadowlands forces raiding the border, this conversation should be enough to get them asking questions. It seems that the Shrine of Osano-Wo has been the favorite target of the Shadowlands force, which has struck at it repeatedly over the past few weeks. The monks are growing hard-pressed to hold their own, and Tateru and Yusaku have been dispatched to request help from the Scorpion Clan. On the way here they were ambushed by a pack of zombies, and Tateru was injured before they could strike the vile creatures down and continue to Ryoko Owari, their first destination. The local governor of Ryoko Owari claims to have no troops to spare for them, however, so from here they plan to travel on to Kyuden Bayushi, where they will seek an audience with Scorpion Clan Champion Bayushi Shoji. Perhaps he will be more generous (Yusaku snorts indelicately at this point – with no visible Scorpions present, he doesn't hesitate to express his opinion).

The monks can describe the Shadowlands army as composed of a mixture of goblins, ogres, and zombies – the classic Shadowlands mix. Tateru uses dramatic terms to describe the horror of this army, while Yusaku seems unfazed – he has fought such things all his life. The real problem, he explains, is the commanders – a pack of humans, probably Maho-Tsukai, of formidable skill and power. “One of them got over the compound wall and killed a dozen of our fellows in as many seconds before we drove him

out,” he growls, his sword-hand flexing slightly. “If that happens again the Shrine will be finished.” Tateru quietly admonishes him not to lose faith – surely the Fortune will not allow his shrine to fall so easily to the forces of Fu Leng.

Once dinner is finished, the monks rise, bowing to the PCs (and Tateru perhaps offering a prayer to the Fortunes for their health), and retire to their rooms for the night. The PCs are free to decide on their future actions.

## Journey Across the Plains of Thunder

Since most of the PCs are here to learn about the Shadowlands threat on the Scorpion border, an investigation of events at the Shrine of Osano-Wo seems an obvious next step. Also, both Asako Kimi and Matsu Hiro feel (on an Awareness roll, TN 15) a strange quickening of their hearts when the subject of the Shrine and its danger arises in conversation. This should be sufficient to get the PCs heading across the Plains of Thunder the next morning, although sluggish players may need a few whacks with the invisible rubber GM hammer. The Plains of Thunder are largely unpopulated, and storms arise frequently on their open, gently rolling landscape. It will take a little less than two days of travel for the PCs to reach the Shrine from Ryoko Owari.

Early on the first day, the PCs encounter a Scorpion patrol: a dozen bushi, trained in the Bayushi school and riding ponies. Their leader, a man named Bayushi Rigori, brings his troops over and demands to see the PCs' travel papers. Although all of the PCs have papers authorizing their travel through Scorpion lands, Rigori is suspicious of such a diverse collection of strangers and questions them intently about their purpose and destination. He pays especial attention to Matsu Hiro and “Ikoma Asuka” since they are Lions, the constant enemies of the Scorpion. (“Asuka” has no way of signaling her true nature to the Scorpions without breaking her cover.) Togashi Hametsu, on the other hand, makes him uneasy and nervous, and he will be more polite to him. If any of the PCs (especially the Lion or Crab) are belligerent or insulting, Rigori will pretend to find problems with their travel papers and demand that they accompany him back to Ryoko Owari for questioning. The PCs can smooth this problem over with good role-play (e.g. a humble apology) and Awareness+Sincerity rolls (TN 20); they could also fight the Scorpion, although this thuggish response will cost them all 3 points of Honor.

If the PCs question Rigori (politely) about conditions on the Plain, or at the Shrine of Osano-Wo, he will only say that there has been much danger here in recent weeks. He will neither confirm nor deny that the trouble is from Shadowlands creatures; if pressed on this issue, he looks at Hiruma Shinji and remarks, “All those monsters are

kept safely behind the Kaiu Wall, aren't they, Hiruma-san? So how could they be here?" He will strongly suggest the PCs should be elsewhere, preferably well away from Scorpion lands, rather than here giving him trouble.

### **Eleven Scorpion Bushi**

FIRE 3  
AIR 2 Reflexes 3  
EARTH 2  
WATER 2 Strength 3  
VOID 2  
TN to be Hit: 20  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0  
School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi, Rank One  
Skills: Archery 1, Defense 1, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2

### **Bayushi Rigori**

FIRE 4  
AIR 4 Reflexes 5  
EARTH 3  
WATER 3  
VOID 4  
TN to be Hit: 30  
Primary Weapon: Katana (3k2)  
Primary Armor: Light  
Honor/Glory: 1.2/3.2  
School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi, Rank Four  
Skills: Archery 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2  
Advantages/Disadvantages: Luck (rank one), Quick/Insensitive

After the meeting with Rigori's troops, the PCs travel the rest of the first day without incident, their journey broken only by the occasional sudden thunderstorm. The night is likewise free from danger, although the PCs probably set watches and make other precautions. During the night, however, two of the PCs (Matsu Hiro and Asako Kimi) experience strange dreams. These are repeated as handouts at the end of the tournament.

*Hiro's Dream: You see your mother seated on a rocky promontory, surrounded by dark clouds. She is dressed in the white robes of the seppuku ceremony, and holds her wakizashi, about to begin the ritual. Suddenly the dark, swirling vapors seem to condense around her, gripping her arms with shadowy fingers and preventing her from completing the cut. She looks up and her eyes meet yours, pleading with you to help her complete the ritual with honor, but you cannot seem to reach her; your feet are rooted to the*

*earth, and your limbs feel as heavy as lead. The shadowy hands wrench the wakizashi out of her grasp and snatch her away into the darkness, and the last thing you hear before you awake is her piercing scream.*

*Kimi's Dream: You are standing before the court at Kyuden Isawa, receiving a great honor from the Elemental Masters; you have been accepted as an Adept of Fire, and the planned successor to the current Master of Fire, Isawa Tsuke. As the gathered shugenja applaud your accomplishment, you suddenly blink and realize your father is among them. He is applauding more fervently than any of them, but there is something wrong; he seems to be aging, his hair turning thin and white, his limbs shriveling and his back slumping with each handclap. Then his flesh begins to shrivel and fall from his bones, his skeleton crumbling away even as the applause continues. You scream and beg for the crowd to stop clapping, but they do not seem to hear you. When silence finally returns, all that is left of your father is a cloud of dust that drifts away in the breeze.*

The next day, the PCs encounter a family of peasant refugees, travelling across the Plains toward Scorpion lands. The peasants total eleven (a shriveled grandmother, the married adults, and eight children of varying ages) and are carrying their pathetic personal belongings (mostly ragged clothes and farming tools) on their straining backs. All of them immediately fall to their knees and bow low in the presence of these great samurai. If questioned, they willingly admit to hailing from the village attached to the Shrine of Osano-Wo. "The monsters have attacked every day this week, and the monks have only barely held them off. We feared for our miserable lives, mighty lords. We are hoping to find shelter with the Scorpion, even if it means we must forsake our lands and become mere day-laborers or worse." If asked to describe the forces attacking the Shrine, the peasants become almost incoherent with terror, speaking of "dreadful inhuman things, and dead men that walk like the living, and green-skinned midgets that leap and chatter and caper." Any PC making a Lore (Shadowlands) roll at TN 15 can recognize these descriptions as authentic Shadowlands creatures – probably Oni, zombies, and goblins.

A few hours after meeting the peasants, as the sun sinks into the west and the weather grows steadily worse, the PCs reach the Shrine.

## **Battle at the Shrine of Osano-Wo**

*All this afternoon, the weather has worsened, the sky filling with dark and tumultuous clouds and the occasional rumbles of thunder swelling into a steady drumroll. The lands here are hilly, covered in thick grass and brush, and the dark green slopes seem to*

*ripple like water under the gusts of wind. Ahead, you can see thin columns of smoke rising from beyond the hills, and the distant noises of battle reach your ears beneath the smothering thunder.*

*You crest a rise and see below you the Shrine of Osano-Wo. The Temple and its attendant compound have been surrounded by a low stockade wall, and you can see the distant forms of monks and peasants atop that wall, brandishing staves and clubs and yari as they struggle to hold back the attackers. The enemy force is clearly, even from this distance, of inhuman nature: you can make out the capering forms of goblins, hulking ogres, and the slow, grinding advance of zombies. Your hearts pound in your chests as you recognize the tattered banners which wave above the Shadowlands army, displaying the symbol of Fu Leng. Even as you watch, a dark explosion blasts part of the stockade to smithereens, and the Shadowlands troops rush toward the breach. Unless something is done, the Shrine is doomed.*

Surely no self-respecting samurai will allow the Shadowlands troops to advance unmolested. If the PCs ride forward to join the action, they will be facing the Battle Table on the “Even” column; all PCs who join the fight must be at least Unengaged (there are no Reserves). Since this is a one-shot scenario, Glory awards for the Battle Table may be ignored (they would be halved in any case, since this is a battle with honorless Shadowlands forces). Any PC who rides a mount into the battle will lose that mount (they are not trained for battle) except for Otaku Ameiko’s war-horse, Chisa; Chisa will take one less die of wounds each round than her rider takes. Note that, since Chisa has no Defense skill, she can only subtract her Reflexes from the wounds she takes on the Battle Table.

Any roll on the Battle Table which generates a Duel or Heroic Opportunity will instead select from the following list of Battle Events, taking them in sequence; the battle ends once the PCs have accomplished all the Battle Events.

**1: Into the Fray!** As you charge into the thick of the battle, a mass of chattering goblins swarms onto you, trying to crush you under sheer weight. Their grinning, jabbering faces are everywhere, their rubbery little hands clutching rusty knives and sharpened sticks. As the PC hacks through the mass of goblins, s/he must roll Stamina+Athletics at TN 25 to avoid being overwhelmed by the sheer weight of goblin numbers, in which case the PC takes an additional two dice of wounds over and above whatever the Battle Table applied.

**2: Into the Breach.** You rush forward through the chaos of battle and stand in the freshly-opened gap in the Shrine’s stockade. For a few minutes it is you, and you alone, who stands between the Shrine and the raging army outside. The PC must make a Simple Willpower roll at TN 15 to find the courage to stand alone in the breach. If successful, the PC takes 1 additional die of wounds. If failed, all subsequent rolls on the Battle Table are on the “Losing” column until Event 8, “Close the Breach.”

**3. Block the Reinforcements.** Although your intervention has momentarily stymied the Shadowlands assault, you can see reinforcements moving up: a huge mass of zombies, their weapons clutched in rotting fingers, are approaching an undefended section of the wall. The only one available to stop them is you. A bushi PC must make an Agility+Weapon roll (whichever melee weapon the PC favors) at TN 25, while a shugenja PC must roll Intelligence+Spellcraft at TN 25. The PC loses 1 additional die of wounds if the roll is successful, 2 dice of wounds if it is failed. Also, if the roll is failed, the PC must roll Simple Earth at TN 20 or get 1-5 points of Shadowlands Taint from the flying zombie ichor.

**4. Goblin Madmen.** You have reached the stockade, and as you stand atop the wall hacking down your attackers, you see something bizarre and startling. A dozen goblins have coated themselves with a black, tarry substance; now they set the liquid alight, turning themselves into shrieking, bipedal torches, and rush toward the wall, their limbs spinning frantically. The other goblins cheer raucously, and even the ogres and worse creatures pause to hoot and bellow as the goblin madmen charge. The PC must roll Reflexes+Athletics at TN 25 to dodge the goblin fanatics. Failure means 2k2 damage as the PC is hugged by a flaming goblin.

**5. A Glimpse of the Enemy.** Momentarily the enemy has been thrown back, and as you pause to catch your breath and wipe the worst of the filth of battle from your weapon and body, you catch a glimpse of what must be one of the enemy commanders: a tall, human-like form striding among them, black hair whipping wildly about her (for you realize it is a woman) head, her eyes shining with a fierce red light. She waves a huge serrated-edge katana, casually slaughtering a pack of fleeing goblins, and at her bellowed commands the other creatures fall back into line and return once more to the attack. The PC may make a Perception+Heraldry roll to spot the Matsu mon on the woman’s armor. If the PC who gets this event is Matsu Hiro, he will recognize his mother if he makes a Simple Intelligence roll at TN 25; in that case, he must make an immediate Honor test at TN 30 or lose one rank of Honor at the horror of his realization.

**6. The Battering Ram.** As the Shadowlands army storms forward once more, they bring with them a huge tree-trunk slung on heavy iron chains. A dozen ogres hold the chains and lug the battering ram forward, slamming it against the wooden stockade wall. Zombies and goblins crowd close behind, ready to storm through the new breach. A few peasants cower behind the wall, flinching with each blow from the ram, clutching their spears in terror-clenched hands. To rally the monks and destroy the battering ram, the PC must roll Awareness+Battle at TN 25. If the roll is failed, all PCs take an additional die of wounds as the enemy troops briefly flood through the new breach.

**7. Save the Abbot.** A huge ogre has gotten across the wall, and lunges toward a wounded man who you recognize as the Abbott of the Shrine. Leaping forward, you shove the older man aside and take the blow yourself. A moment later the ogre falls under a hail of blows from other monks, rushing to save their leader. The PC takes 4k2 damage from the ogre's glancing blow.

**8. Close the Breach.** Several of the monks and peasants have patched together new barricades from logs and timbers, and are struggling to bring them forward into the gaps in the stockade. Joining them, you strain to push the makeshift patches into place, and lash them to the rest of the stockade with stout timbers. The PC must roll Strength+Athletics at TN 20 to accomplish this without being hurt; otherwise he takes 2k1 damage as a hand or foot is mashed by a heavy log.

**9. Final Struggle.** The fight seems to have finally guttered out, but one foe still remains inside the walls, a grotesque monstrosity with dozens of spidery limbs and slobbering, toothy mouths. The heaviest blows seem to bounce off it with barely a scratch, and it tosses and shreds men like rag dolls. Finally your combined efforts bring the creature down, and it melts into a puddle of disgusting sludge. The PC takes one additional die of wounds, and must roll Simple Earth at TN 30 or get 1-5 points of Shadowlands Taint.

## The Face of the Enemy

As the battle stumbles to a halt and the Shadowlands forces withdraw, the PCs can see (with Perception+Battle rolls, TN 20) several obvious leaders, apparently human (or at least human-shaped) moving about to rally the inhuman troops. The PC who glimpsed Matsu Ayame earlier can recognize

her as one of these leaders. Another man, shriveled and hunchbacked, supervises the loading of corpses onto wagons, presumably to be re-animated later. Any PC making a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 30 or better notices something disturbingly familiar about these leaders, although it is difficult to define exactly what.

A few prisoners are visible, mostly peasants but also including a few monks, struggling with the zombies and goblins who hold them. A long line of wooden stakes are placed in the ground, and the prisoners are impaled one after the other, shrieking in agony and despair. The peasants watching from the stockade shout and weep with horror at the fate of their brethren, while the monks make warding gestures and speak soft prayers to the fortunes.

Finally, as the sun dips below the clouds and splashes red-gold light across the horrible field, one of the figures rides forward on a vile parody of a horse, with clawed feet and ropy tentacles in place of a mane (Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore at TN 20 to recognize Onikage). A ratling, squeaking with pain and fear, is dragged along behind the Onikage by a thin length of black chain. The man dismounts and strides forward several paces, dragging the ratling behind him. The man's long black hair hangs unbound past his shoulders, and his eyes glitter with a vicious blue light. His garments are tattered and dirt-stained, but with a Perception+Heraldry roll at TN 25 the PCs can see they still show the colors and mon of the Otomo family. At this point, have Togashi Hametsu make a Simple Perception roll at TN 20; if successful, he recognizes his father, Otomo Kaigen.

*“Doji Nashiko-sama congratulates you on your skills!” the man shouts, his voice echoing like a trumpet. “You are truly your parents’ children, of that there is no doubt!” He bows deeply and mockingly, brushing the ground with his long wild hair. “Perhaps we can continue this discussion in a better setting? Nashiko-sama would dearly love to meet with you, to discuss the nature of life and death, and reveal the truth about this bushido you claim to serve! And we would like to discuss such matters with you as well, in peace and privacy!” His cold blue eyes seem to bore directly into Hametsu. “We shall withdraw now, to Shinomen, and await your reply.” He gestures broadly to the west, where the thin dark shadow of Shinomen Forest crouches on the horizon. Then he kicks forward the sniveling ratling at his feet. “A guide for you, to find your way to Her presence. We will wait four days! If you have not presented yourselves to Her in that time, we will return, and wipe this place from the face of the earth! Not one stone shall lie on another, not one stick will go unburned, not one life will be spared, no matter how old or how young!” He waves behind him at the impaled victims, still moaning and twitching as their lives fade. “So consider wisely what your course will be!” He leaps back into the saddle of the Onikage and rides back to the*

*army, which is already withdrawing westward. The huddled, miserable Ratling stays where he was tossed, furry arms wrapped around himself pitifully.*

## Stich’Kik the Slave

This poor Nezumi was captured in the Shadowlands some time ago, and has been tortured and tormented without mercy. One of his hands is missing, leaving a festering stump, and white scars writhe through the fur of his body and face. He crouches trembling before the PCs, wiping his face with his truncated forearm, and whimpering, “Don’t hurt Stich’Kik, he good-good, yes, not hurt, please, not hurt...”

Stich’Kik knows where the Shadowlands army bases itself (within the Shinomen forest); more importantly, he also knows the location of the forest glade where Doji Nashiko and her six converted samurai are waiting to meet with the PCs. He is pathetically eager to guide the PCs there, and becomes very anxious and agitated if they do not promptly journey there. “We must go, yes-yes, she will hurt me if we don’t. Stich’Kik not want to be hurt-hurt, no, not want it.” The PCs can question him as they wish, and he will try his best to answer, but his mind is half-gone from months of torture and he is terrified of Nashiko and her minions. He will calm somewhat if Hiruma Shinji speaks to him in his own tongue. He has the following information:

- Nashiko: “Pretty-pretty wo-man, dress in blue, like sky. She’s the one in charge, yes-yes, hurts us all lots. Always smiling, pretty-pretty, but not pretty inside, no-no, all rotten inside. She always talk-talk with the others, the bad-bad ones, ones who hurt Stich’Kik.” He regards the PCs with a nervous, sidelong glance. “Talk-talk about you. About when you get here, when you join them. You meet her before?”
- The PCs’ parents: “They bad-bad, six of them. Big tough-mens,” jabs a claw at Hiruma Shinji, “gots name for them, calls them Evil-Servers, yes?” The PCs may roll Shadowlands Lore at TN 20 to recognize a garbled version of Akutsukai (Servants of Evil), humans who have taken the blood of Fu Leng into their veins. “Five mens, one wo-man. Long-haired big-sword wo-man one of the worstest, yes-yes, kill lots. But they all bad. Bad-bad, much worse than you, Stich’Kik thinks.”
- The Shadowlands Army: “They comes up from bad-bad lands, go north of tough-mens’ big walls, through big-big forest. Kill lots of humans, kill-kill, make dead into soldiers to fight for them. Pretty-pretty wo-man say they march

all through hu-man lands, kill everyone, especially once you come here. Yes-yes.”

- Himself: “Poor Stich’Kik. They kill his tribe, take him prisoner, hurt him. Make Stich’Kik do everything, haul dead bodies, make food, fix clothes. No rest for Stich’Kik, no food, take his hand when he misbehave. Stich’Kik just want to die. He show you where pretty-pretty woman is, you kill him? Not give him back to them? Please? Stich’Kik is asking you nicely.”

## In the Shrine of Osano-Wo

The monks have built a wooden stockade which surrounds the shrine and most of the peasant village which supported it. Unfortunately, the rice fields lie outside the wall, and have been trampled and churned into undifferentiated mud by the recent battles. Consequently, the surviving peasants (about three hundred of all ages) are terrified not only of the immediate threat from the Shadowlands army but the longer-term threat of starvation.

The monks are of more even temper – they know they can eventually get food from elsewhere in the Empire if they can survive the enemy assaults. There are about a hundred monks left alive, ranging from novices in their teens to age-worn men in their sixties and seventies. About a third of the monks are retired samurai, and it is this hard core of experienced former warriors which has enabled the monks to hold off the assault. It has also helped that eight of the monks are shugenja, and that the Shrine kept stores of powdered jade.

The abbot, Jubei, is a stern, powerfully-built man in his fifties. He thanks the PCs profusely for their assistance, without which the Shrine would surely have fallen to the forces of the Dark One. He asks how they came to arrive at the Shrine at just this moment, and what could have brought such a group together from across the Empire at just this time and place. It is up to the PCs how they answer, but the Abbot is likely to see the hands of the Fortunes in this event. If any PCs confess to the Abbott regarding their suspicions about the leaders of the Shadowlands army (that they may be their parents), Jubei listens gravely. “If this is true, your family has suffered a terrible blow. Such creatures are a blight upon the world – staining the honor of their family so long as they continue to walk. You have my sympathies.” If the PCs ask his advice, he speaks bluntly. “Kill them. Their souls have been utterly corrupted. Only by returning them to the Celestial Wheel can they be cleansed and reborn.”

## Journey Into Shinomen

The PCs can leave for the forest tonight, right on the heels of the Shadowlands army, or they can wait until the morning. Either way, they will not be able to keep pace with the army – its inhuman troops move far more swiftly than a human army could ever manage. It takes about half a day for the PCs to reach the edge of Shinomen forest, which means if they leave immediately it will be well after dark before they make it that far. They will also be exhausted and suffer a –1 die penalty until they rest. Wise PCs wait until morning before setting out – they have four days, after all. If they do rest the night, all PCs heal their Stamina in Wounds and recover one Void Point; shugenja PCs recover one spell ring in all Elements.

It will take the PCs a day and a half to reach the meeting place which Doji Nashiko has chosen, assuming they let poor Stich’Kik guide them. Shinomen is a strange and magical place, a deep and untamed forest very different from the more modest woods which can be found within the Empire. The huge, thickly-clustered trees press in on all sides, and strands of moss brush the PCs’ faces. If they bring their horses (or ponies, as the case may be), the poor beasts are very uneasy, their eyes staring wildly as they shy at every noise; the PCs must make Awareness+Horsemanship rolls at TN 20 every time they attempt any action other than slowly riding ahead. If the roll is failed, the animal throws its rider (incidental 1k1 damage) and bolts, requiring a Perception+Hunting roll at TN 30 to track down. Chisa, Otaku Ameiko’s war-horse, is immune to these effects, although it too is uneasy in the forest.

At various times throughout the day, the PCs may notice (with Perception+Hunting rolls, TN 25) odd drag-marks on the ground, resembling the trails of enormous serpents. The Naga are awakening, preparing the retake their ancient home. In a few months, they will be numerous enough to easily crush Nashiko’s small Shadowlands army...but for now, they remain a sparse and hidden presence.

Late on the first day, as the shadows are thickening and the PCs are starting to look for a place to camp, they come upon a grisly sight: eight dead peasants, dressed in filthy robes which once were white, arranged in seated positions and clutching wakizashi thrust into their bellies. The scene is a deliberate mockery of the ceremony of seppuku, one of the more important elements of the code of bushido. Any PC with an Honor Rank of 2 or higher (everyone but Shosuro Miaka, that is) must make a Simple Willpower roll at TN 20 or be overcome with rage and “lose their face,” giving in to the fury and disgust which rush through them. Any PC who succumbs to this momentary loss of control suffers a

penalty of three points of Honor (note that this will drop Hiruma Shinji to Honor Rank 2.5, if he fails).

If the PCs examine the bodies closely (without touching them, of course – only eta touch a dead body) they can make Perception+Calligraphy rolls at TN 25 to pick out the kanji which have been carved into the poor peasants’ bellies as part of the false seppuku. In order, the Kanji read, “Such is the true nature of your precious bushido. Or can you prove me wrong?”

## An Evening Visitor

*As you make camp, the darkness of the forest seems to press in upon you from all sides. You feel very small and unimportant compared to this great force of nature, and your campfire seems but a tiny spark struggling weakly against the surrounding night. As you eat your rations and prepare to catch what sleep you can, something moves in the twilight beyond your fire’s circle. You reach for your weapons, but then the figure steps forward and is revealed as nothing more than an old man, wizened and browned with age and sun, dressed in a shapeless garment of dark brown and leaning on a gnarled stick. He peers at you from under wispy eyebrows and rasps, “Eh, some warmth and conversation for an old man? So lonely here in these woods.”*

The old man is, in point of fact, a Kumo (shape-changing spider), a race of sometimes-malevolent beings who dwell far from civilized lands. A PC who specifically asks about any stories of Shadowlands creatures who shape-change can roll Shadowlands Lore (TN 20) to recall that Oni, Kitsune, and Kumo are all known to take human form. In point of fact, this particular Kumo (who calls himself “Mamoru”), an old and very powerful specimen, is in a friendly and rather playful mood, and plays to the hilt its role as a forest-dwelling hermit lonely for conversation, food, and a warming fire. He claims to have lived in the forest “all my life” and says he doesn’t remember who his family was, where they came from, or how old he is. If the PCs ask where he lives, he gestures vaguely with his free hand and says, “Oh, hereabouts. Wherever it suits me.” If they ask about the Shadowlands Army, a scowl crosses the old man’s shriveled features. “New, they are. Rude. Trampling through here without so much as a by-your-leave.” He lowers his eyebrows and glares suspiciously at the PCs. “Won’t be like them, now, will you?”

The Kumo asks the PCs’ names, invites them to talk about themselves, and asks to share their dinner. “Get so tired of eating the same things, here,” he murmurs. If the PCs are polite, hospitable, and provide some interesting conversation, the Kumo never breaks out of his character, and eventually rises and shuffles off into the woods,



muttering, “Nice ones, you are. Ought to be more like you.”

If, on the other hand, the PCs are rude or directly violent, the Kumo reacts poorly. He leaps suddenly into a tree, clinging to the trunk with hands and feet, and glares at the PCs with eyes which seem to have suddenly swollen and multiplied. “My forest, this is!” he snarls. “Tired of intruders! Tired of strangers! Now you die!” One hand reaches out and yanks a strand of creeper, and suddenly a thick web drops out of the trees – all PCs must roll Reflexes+Athletics at TN 25 or be caught in the net of sticky gray strands. The Kumo then attacks, first with a poison spit and then with his bite. PCs who are trapped in the webs are helpless, and must make a Contested Strength roll against the webbing’s Strength of 5 to free themselves.

Stich’Kik, of course, will not fight – he scuttles into the shadows to hide, emerging only after the Kumo is safely dead.

### **Mamoru, Old and Powerful Kumo**

EARTH 3

FIRE 6

WATER 3

AIR 3

Attack: 5k4

Damage: 4k2

TN to be Hit: 25

Armor: 4

Wounds: 16: -1, 32: -2, 48: Dead

Special Abilities: Mamoru can spit poison at a target up to 10 feet away in place of a normal bite attack. The target must make a contested roll of Stamina vs the poison’s strength of 5, or become paralyzed for ten rounds.

## **A Journey Ended**

After the encounter with Mamoru the Kumo, the rest of the night passes uneventfully. The PCs awaken to a cool, damp morning, their muscles aching painfully – except for Hiruma Shinji, who seems well-rested and fresh. Their rest has brought some benefit, however; all PCs heal their Stamina in Wounds and recover one Void Point, and shugenja PCs recover one spell ring in all Elements.

Stich’Kik is even more craven and fearful today, for they have almost reached Doji Nashiko. He keeps stopping and curling himself into a ball, whimpering, “No, no, no hurt-hurt, no hurt anymore,” and must be prodded and threatened into continuing the journey. Finally, after many hours of slow and difficult travel, Stich’Kik stops and points a trembling paw at a forest clearing, just visible between the trees a few score yards ahead. “There, she is there,” he whimpers.

“Pretty-pretty wo-man and the others. All there. Good Stich’Kik bring you, now she not hurt-hurt. You go talk-talk now, tell them Stich’Kik good?” If the PCs offer to end Stich’Kik’s life, as he asked earlier, he cowers down and whispers, “Oh, she angry if Stich’Kik die-die. So angry.” It is up to the PCs whether to honor his earlier request or let him live.

There is no one else in the forest; to all appearances, the only place to investigate is the clearing. Since it is dishonorable to approach with stealth, the PCs (most of them anyway) have little choice but to advance directly to meet their fate.

## **A Conversation With Doji Nashiko**

*The forest glade was once a place of beauty, filled with long grass and wild-flowers, the trees arching in a protective canopy overhead. Now its beauty has been corrupted: the grass lies rank and brown on the muddy earth, and the flowers have shriveled as though burnt. The trees have lost their leaves, and now their limbs reach upward like desperate claws. The sounds of animal life you caught elsewhere in the forest are silent here.*

In the center of the glade, resting on a tatami mat woven of some leathery substance, sits a shockingly beautiful woman, the loveliest creature you have ever seen, her every feature perfect, her blue Crane kimono a study in understated suggestion. On either side of her stand three creatures which once were human. Creatures who are dreadfully, impossibly familiar.

Just to her left stands the tall, wild-haired woman some of you glimpsed in the battle. Her armor is clearly that of the Matsu, but the saw-edged sword which she balances lightly on her shoulder is like nothing any Matsu ever carried. Her eyes glow red, and fanged teeth glisten from her ruby lips as she smiles at you – especially at Hiro-san. (If Hiro did not recognize her at the battle, he automatically does so now, and must make an Honor Test at TN 30 or lose one rank of Honor at the horror of what has happened to his mother.)

Next to her, huddled in her shadow, is a hunch-backed travesty of a human form, his head bulbous and misshapen, his eyes swollen out like those of a frog. His shriveled, twisted hands are drawn up against his body like some insect’s limbs. You can see the mon of the Scorpion Clan on the tattered silk of the mangled kimono which still clings, just barely, to his distorted frame. He fixes his staring gaze on Ikoma Asuka and cackles wildly. “At last, my dear little Miaka-chan, at last.” (Shosuro Miaka must roll Willpower+Acting at TN 30 or find herself unable to maintain her “Ikoma Asuka” persona, her face relaxing and her very manner of speech changing as she reverts to her true identity.)

Beyond the misshapen thing, leaning casually against the trunk of a tree, is the wild-haired man with the glowing blue eyes who spoke to you after the battle. You can clearly see the Otomo mon on his dirty kimono. He smiles broadly and gives you a mocking salute. (If Togashi Hametsu did not recognize his father at the battle, he does so now. He feels a sudden lurch in his chest, the call of destiny.)

To the right of the beautiful Crane woman stands a thin, viciously-smiling creature, its flesh shrunken down on its bones so that it seems to be no more than a skeleton with skin. Faint blue sparks glow within the sunken sockets of its eyes, and thin, brittle hair hangs in tangled strands from its scalp. It is clothed in a ragged, fluttering garment of muddied orange, and you can just make out the faded mon of the Phoenix Clan upon it. Foul, black ichor drips from its elongated fingernails, and the very air seems to ripple slightly around it. (Asako Kimi feels a dreadful tug in her heart as she recognizes her father. Like Hiro, she must make an immediate Honor Test – this one at TN 25 – or lose a rank of Honor.)

Next to the skeletal monster stands a short, bloated thing dressed in a fine kimono of purple silk. His swollen, pinkish face seems to be set in a permanent, gloating smile, and his plump hands are linked in front of his belly. After a moment a long pink tongue, its tip forked like a lizard, slithers out of his mouth and licks a speck of dirt of his forehead. The mon of the Ide family is prominent on his chest. He looks at Otaku Ameiko and speaks, still smiling, revealing rows of sharklike teeth within his broad mouth. His voice is beautiful, like a finely-tuned musical instrument. “Ah, daughter, we have traveled so very far to be re-united again, ne? And how is your mother? Does she miss my pretty voice?” (Otaku Ameiko must roll Perception+Investigation at TN 25 to recognize her father in this bloated thing; if she does, she is –1 die to any future attacks against him, due to the sheer disgust which the realization arouses in her.)

On the far right, wrapped in a heavy cloak, is a thin man with a seamed, gray-skinned face. His eyes gleam with blue light from beneath lowered brows. As your gaze falls upon him he shrugs the cloak off his shoulders and unfurls a pair of huge, membranous wings, dripping with black slime. The mon of the Hiruma family still gleams from the battered, rusted armor which hangs on his lank frame. He smiles at Hiruma Shinji, showing strong yellow teeth. “It’s no use, son,” he says softly. “The Dark One always wins. You, of all people, should know that.” (Hiruma Shinji recognizes his father, and the fallen samurai’s words recall to him the fate of his lost love Hiruma Eiko; he falls under the effects of the Lost Love

disadvantage until he spends a Void Point to snap out of it.)

After the GM has finished describing this dreadful scene, and assessed any individual effects for it, all the PCs (except those with Death Trance) must make a Fear test at Difficulty Rank 4.

The beautiful akutenshi smiles at the PCs, bowing as elegantly as a courtier before the Emperor. “So good to meet these precious children, for whom their parents gave so much,” she murmurs. The six fallen samurai gather around her in a semicircle, facing the PCs, smiling to match her smile. She gestures to them with her ivory skinned hands, each motion a study in perfect, mocking etiquette. “See, your parents have learned the fruits to be gained from obeying the Eighth Kami. Shall you not join them, and be re-united in His service? Or will you die at their hands, alone and unremembered, in the name of your childish myth of bushido?” She laughs delightedly at the PCs. “Ah yes, bushido. Such a lovely little dream, isn’t it? But now it is time to wake and face the cold reality of the world.”

Nashiko will try not to initiate combat immediately; she wants to toy with the PCs, to break their spirits and crush their belief in bushido. She will hold a dialogue with the PCs until they either attack her or acknowledge defeat. Her goal is to puncture their belief in bushido and their faith in themselves. Her powers give her access to all the PCs’ deepest secrets, of course, and she will use all their inner flaws, dreams, and hopes against them. She will also deliberately attack the principles of bushido, seeking to show that they are hollow and meaningless. Nashiko does not fight fair, of course; she will think nothing of changing her arguments, shifting targets, ignoring or twisting the PCs’ words, and generally using every rhetorical dirty trick imaginable. Guides to her different arguments follow.

Ideally, the PCs should find this conversational struggle just as taxing – and victory just as hard to earn – as the physical battle which will follow. At the end of the discussion, when Nashiko has used all her main arguments (or the PCs have lost patience and attacked), all the PCs must make an Honor Test. If they have role-played well, and offered strong counter-arguments, the TN for this test is only 20; a PC who argues poorly or incoherently, or those who falls back on physical attack because they can’t think of a rebuttal, face a TN of 25; those who fail to role-play convincingly face a TN of 30. Failing the Honor Test means the PC loses a rank of Honor and a Void Point, as Nashiko’s sinister arguments worm their way into their heart. If all six PCs fail the Honor Test, their resistance to Nashiko collapses and they join their parents in the service of Fu Leng; but as long as at least one PC passes the test, Nashiko is thwarted. Proceed to “Final Battle,” below.

## Nashiko's Attacks on the PCs

**Hiruma Shinji:** “Ah, Shinji-kun... bushido didn't protect your dear Eiko-chan, did it? Has it offered you any recompense since? Any hope that your pain might diminish, that your love might return? None, of course not, how could it? Bushido demands only sacrifice, and offers no rewards. My lord, on the other hand, can give you anything you want. Anything at all.”

**Matsu Hiro:** “Ah, Hiro, I see you have recognized your mother. Isn't she lovely? The picture of obedience, here at my side. Oh, but how can that be? Her honor should have protected her, shouldn't it? She could never have willingly chosen to follow me, not an honorable follower of bushido, could she?” She smiles at the hollow-eyed Ayame. “Well, my dear? Did you choose the Eighth Kami willingly?” “Hai, mistress,” the fallen Matsu replies.

**Otaku Ameiko:** “Ah, my dear, your heart is so transparent. How can you believe in bushido when your heart is urging you to forsake your duty for dear Shinji-kun? A fine practitioner of bushido you are! Why, anyone would think you were some foolish courtier, with those lovely little dreams of secret meetings and romantic confessions... Your mother will be so disappointed when she learns. And then your precious code of bushido will send you to a geisha house, won't it? That's the fate of a samurai who betrays her oath of chastity, after all.”

**Asako Kimi:** “My child, you believed so strongly in your father, didn't you? You were sure he was waiting for you somewhere, if only you could find him. Well, here he is.” She gestures at the deformed, hunchbacked creature that is Asako Igemi. “Aren't you glad? Such a lovely reunion. He's been waiting all these years for you to find him. Come, come, greet your father. He has so much to tell you.” She looks mock-saddened. “Oh, but this wasn't the reunion you envisioned at all, is it? You were going to bring him back and show all those people in Phoenix lands, especially your mother. Show them they were wrong, and you were right. Such a shallow, selfish goal, really... but you couldn't possibly be so shallow, an enlightened young woman like you, could you?”

**Ikoma Asuka (Shosuro Miaka):** This is in many ways Nashiko's favorite target, since she knows of Miaka's true identity and mission and will take great delight in revealing them to the rest of the party. “Ah, yes, my dear, you have already realized the pointlessness of bushido, haven't you? And you've used it against poor Hiro-kun very well indeed. A worthy follower of my own methods, ne?” She looks mock-saddened again, resting a hand on her throat. “Oh, didn't you know? Dear Miaka-san – that is your real name, isn't it, child? – was sent here by the

Scorpion, to entrap poor Hiro-kun. And you really believed she was someone who might marry you...” She smiles sweetly at Miaka. “Come now, you should be on my side here. You already know the pointlessness of serving these ridiculous codes, these child's made-up myths.”

**Togashi Hametsu:** Hametsu is the one PC who Nashiko does not know how to approach. She instead hopes to attack him indirectly through her more general assault on Bushido. Whenever he confronts her with an argument, she quickly changes focus and subject. If he points out she is ignoring him, she replies that she need not worry herself with those beneath her notice. If he actually accuses her of fearing him, she flares with anger: “You should be the one to fear me, little man. Your precious Dragon's blood will not protect your soul from my Lord.”

## Nashiko's Attacks on Bushido

**Honesty:** “Oh, please! Every one of your clans, no matter how 'honorable' they claim to be, expect their samurai to lie on behalf of their lords. Why, it's practically considered a *duty* to lie. No room for honesty there!”

**Courage:** “Courage? What courage is it to follow the path everyone else follows? That is not courage, it is cowardice. You are afraid to stand alone, to be noticed as different, so you submit to your lords' orders like so many sheep.”

**Compassion:** “Oh, that's a fine one! Tell me, how much compassion does a lord show to his peasants when they have a bad harvest, when their rice cannot match the Imperial levy? Or perhaps, a samurai whose daughter has given in to the call of love? Why, he sells her to a geisha house at once! Where is your vaunted compassion then?”

**Courtesy:** “Ah, yes, the famous Rokugani etiquette. A game, a mask. Speaking pleasant words while sinking knives into each others' backs. Are not the Scorpion the most courteous of all the Clans? And what do they use their courtesy for but to cloak all their disreputable actions?”

**Honor:** “Honor? What is honor? A word, bandied about by your lords to keep you in line. Air, is all that honor is. Where is the honor in lying to protect a guilty superior? Where is the honor in fighting a duel to protect your lord's infidelities?”

**Sincerity:** “Now there's a fine virtue indeed. All it means is the ability to lie well. To pretend to believe something you know is false, because your lord demands it. Why, how can you do that when the rest of your precious code demands that you be honest and forthright?”

**Duty:** “Duty. Ah yes. Your lords always expect you to do your duty. But what about their duty? What happens when they fail, or betray you? They are not held

accountable. They do not slit their bellies, as they expect you to do.”

**The End**

## **The Final Battle**

So long as at least one PC makes the Honor Test to resist Nashiko’s attack on bushido, the party as a whole does not fall into her seductive clutches. She hisses with thwarted fury, her lovely face suddenly twisted and inhuman, and rises in a flutter of blue silk. *“So be it,” her voice grates like rusted metal, “You have rejected my offer, and now you will pay the price. Your own parents will end your foolish existence!”* With a sharp whump of displaced air she flies straight up, vanishing into the thick tree branches. The six fallen samurai advance on the PCs, their baleful eyes glaring sickly light in the forest gloom.

The final combat ensues. The fallen parents – five Akutsukai and an Akutenshi – will pull no punches, and use all their powers to the fullest. They will attack their own children by preference, but do not play favorites and strike where and how seems most effective in defeating the totality of their foes. The GM should pull no punches in running this combat, fudge no die rolls, and allow no hesitations on the part of the PCs. If the heroes all die, so be it; many Rokugani stories end that way. But if they triumph, they should feel they have beaten near-unbeatable foes.

*As you stand, shaking with pain and exhaustion, over the bodies of the things which were once your parents, you see the form of Nashiko shimmer in the air before you. Her lovely features are twisted in hatred and thwarted fury, fangs sprout from her ruby-red lips, and taint-dripping claws extend from her delicate fingers. “You think you have won? What use a victory that destroys that which you sought to save? So it shall be for all your feeble Empire. Your Clans will betray and war on one another, your Emperor will die, and the Dark One shall march in triumph over your rotting corpses!” She vanishes in a twining cloud of smoke.*

*As you stumble free of the smoke and prepare for the long trek back to the Empire and your distant homes, you realize something: for all Nashiko’s vicious words, she was unwilling to risk her life against those who destroyed her greatest minions. You have defeated her, if only partially, and cleansed your family lines of the taint of the Shadowlands. Your hearts warm within you as you reach the edge of the forest and watch mother Sun rise in the east, shining over the Plains of Thunder, once again free of the servants of Fu Leng.*

## NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS, ROUND TWO

### Stich’Kik, Ratling Slave Guide

FIRE 3	EARTH 2
AIR 1	WATER 2

**Attacking:** If given a weapon, 4k3, but won’t fight against the Shadowlands forces  
**Damage:** As weapon+Strength  
**TN to be Hit:** 15  
**Armor:** 3  
**Wounds:** 9: -1, 18: Dead

### Hiruma Tadoshi, Akutsukai, Fallen Crab Scout

FIRE 4	EARTH 4
AIR 4	WATER 3
Shadowlands Taint Rank: 6	

**Attacking:** 7k4 (tetsubo, ignores armor) or 3k3 (wings)  
**Damage:** 5k2 (tetsubo), 2k2+Taint (wings)  
**TN to be Hit:** 25 (20 without armor, +10 when flying)  
**Armor Rating:** 7  
**Wounds:** 64: Dead

**Schools/Rank:** Hiruma Scout Rank Two

<i>Dance the Razor’s Edge</i>	Tadoshi may add 5 to his TN to be hit by Shadowlands creatures for each School Rank. Naturally, he seldom finds use for this skill any longer.
<i>Run Like the Wind</i>	Tadoshi can maintain a running pace (10 mph) for a number of hours equal to his Stamina times 2, after which he must rest for the same time.

### SPECIAL ABILITIES

<i>Eyes of Hell</i>	Tadoshi’s glowing eyes see in the dark, and cannot be blinded.
<i>Undead Strength</i>	Tadoshi suffers no wound penalties, ignores the “Down” and “Out” ranks, and fights at full capabilities until Dead.
<i>Wings</i>	Tadoshi may fly at four times his waling pace. He suffers a +5 TN penalty while on the ground, but while flying his TN to be Hit is at +10.1
<i>Invulnerability</i>	As per the oni ability, only jade, crystal, and magic can affect him.

Note that, like all Akutsukai, Tadoshi has the ability to spend Wounds in place of his now non-existent Void. He may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

*Appearance:* Tadoshi is thin and gray-skinned, and sports a pair of membranous wings which drip with Tainted slime. His eyes glow blue. He still wears his decaying old armor with the Hiruma mon, and wields a rotting tetsubo.

---

1 *Wings of Taint (Unique):* if Tadoshi is not flying, he may use his wings to fling Tainted ichor at his foes in addition to his normal melee attack. Any opponent struck by the ichor is burned for 2k2 damage and must make a Simple Earth roll at TN 20 or suffer 1-10 points of Taint as well

## Matsu Ayame, Akutenshi, fallen Lion Samurai

FIRE 4	EARTH 6
AIR 4	WATER 4
Reflexes 5	
Shadowlands Taint Rank 7	

**Attacking:** 8k4

**Damage:** 7k2+3 (saw-edged katana)

**TN to be Hit:** 30 (25 without armor)

**Armor Rating:** 9

**Wounds:** 96: Dead.

**Schools/Rank:** Matsu Bushi Rank Three/Maho-Bujin Rank 3

<i>The Lion's Roar</i>	During a Full Attack, Ayame generates a Fear effect in her foes equal to her School Rank +1.
<i>Matsu's Fury</i>	During a Full Attack, Ayame may make one additional attack per turn.
<i>With My Ancestors Beside Me</i>	When making a Full Attack, Ayame rolls a number of initiative dice equal to her Honor Rank.
<i>Carve the Crimson Road</i>	Gains an additional amount of attacks equal to the highest Honor Rank among her opponents.
<i>Corruption Rewards</i>	Use the wounds inflicted in the previous strike as her initiative score for the following round.
<i>Devourer of Purity</i>	She may recover a number of wound ranks equal to the Honor of anyone she brings to Down, Out, or Dead. This takes effect immediately. Any ranks beyond her injuries are lost.

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

<i>Command the Taint</i>	Ayame can make a contested Willpower roll to control lesser Shadowlands creatures.
<i>Disrupt Chi</i>	By making a contested Awareness roll against an opponent's Awareness+School Rank, Ayame can force him to use his lowest Trait for all die rolls. This lasts one round, plus one round per raise.
<i>Fear: Rank 4</i>	This also adds +1 to the power of the "Matsu's Roar" fear effect when she uses that technique.
<i>Invulnerability</i>	As per the oni ability, only jade, crystal, and magic can affect her.
<i>Magic Resistance</i>	Any spell cast at Ayame must add +10 to its TN to succeed.
<i>Undead Strength</i>	Ayame ignores all wound penalties, including the "Down" and "Out" effects, and keeps fighting until reduced to Dead.

Note that Ayame has the ability to spend Wounds in place of her now non-existent Void. She may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

**Appearance:** Ayame appears superficially human, indeed beautiful, but taller and more muscular than she was in life. Her eyes glow red and fangs glint behind her lips. She always carries her strange saw-edged blade unsheathed, usually balanced on her shoulder. She still wears the armor of the Matsu.

## Ide Hiroji, Akutsukai, Fallen Unicorn Diplomat

FIRE 3	EARTH 4
AIR 3	WATER 3
Shadowlands Taint Rank 5	

**Attacking:** 6k3 (tail)

**Damage:** 4k2 (tail)

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Armor:** 4

**Wounds:** 16: -1; 24: -2; 32: -3; 40: -4; 48: Down; 56: Out; 64: Dead

School/Rank: Hiroji has forgotten all his courtier techniques; they are useless games to him. He is a Maho-Tsukai.

Spells: Hiroji can cast the following maho spells:

Corruption of the Earth (Base TN 15, 3 actions, costs 8 wounds, duration 4 actions, creates a 3-foot pool of mud which swallows all within its area at 2 feet per turn, they must roll Earth at TN 15 to move three feet)

No Pure Breaths (Base TN is target's Earth x 5, 2 actions, costs 5 wounds, forces the air violently out of the target inflicting DR 5 wounds, target is at +10 on all TN until magically healed)

Stealing the Soul (Base TN 15, 2 actions, costs 8 wounds, lasts 8 actions, target loses one from each Ring and Trait – to a minimum of one – for each shugenja participating).

He also knows the following “normal” spells in their Elemental Maho versions (cast using Ring+Taint Rank, and costing Wounds equal to their Mastery Level):

Earth's Stagnation

Fury of Osano-Wo

Wind's Distractions.

Special Abilities:

<i>Blend with Darkness</i>	Hiroji can turn his skin black and mottled, allowing him to blend into darkness or deep shadow. Those trying to detect him under such conditions (such as the dense shadows of Shinomen Forest) must roll Perception+Investigation at TN 25.
<i>Command the Taint</i>	Hiroji can make a contested Willpower roll to control lesser Shadowlands creatures.
<i>Regeneration</i>	<i>(unique):</i> Hiroji's slimy, bloated flesh heals itself of 2k2 wounds every round until he is reduced to the “Dead” level. He will actually exploit this ability to trick opponents into thinking him dead, then slip away into the shadows and resume casting spells.
<i>Tail</i>	Hiroji has a club-like lizard tail, with which he may fight.

Note that Hiroji has the ability to spend Wounds in place of his now non-existent Void. He may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

Appearance: Hiroji resembles nothing so much as a bloated human toad, dressed in the fine garments of the Unicorn. His wide mouth is filled with small shark-like teeth, and he sports a long forked tongue with which he cleans his smooth, pudgy face. His tail is normally kept concealed beneath his robes, whence he can whip it forth with maximum surprise and shock.

## Asako Igemi, Akutsukai, Fallen Henshin

FIRE 3	EARTH 4
Intelligence 5	
AIR 4	WATER 3
	Strength 4
Shadowlands Taint Rank 5	

**Attacking:** 6k3 (two claw attacks per round)

**Damage:** 4k2+possible Taint (claws)

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Armor:** 10 (chitinous hide)

**Wounds:** 64: Dead.

Schools/Rank: Asako Henshin Rank Two

Mystery of Earth	once a day, add 1 to his Earth ring or subtract 1 from an opponent's Earth ring for two turns
Riddle of Earth	once per day, may ignore Earth+1 wounds, or heal the same amount of wounds taken by another
Mystery of Air	twice a day, may add 2 to his Air ring or subtract 1 from an opponent's Air ring for two turns
Riddle of Air	twice per day, may roll Air+2 extra dice for social interaction checks

## SPECIAL ABILITIES

<i>Chitinous Hide</i>	Igemi's thick, hardened skin resists damage, giving him an armor rating (as oni armor) of 10.
<i>Undead Strength</i>	Igemi ignores all Wound penalties, including the "Down" and "Out" ranks, and continues to fight at full power until reduced to Dead.
<i>Invulnerability</i>	As per the oni ability, only jade, crystal, and magic can affect him.
<i>Claws</i>	In addition to inflicting damage, Igemi's Taint-dripping claws force the target to make an Earth roll at a TN of 20 or suffer 1-5 points of Taint.
<i>Air Warp</i>	<i>(Unique):</i> Any missile weapon, or missile-like spell which targets Igemi has its TN increased by +20 due to the constant rippling flux of the air around him; this is caused by a cloud of Kansen (evil air spirits) which constantly circle his body.

Note that Igemi has the ability to spend Wounds in place of his now non-existent Void. He may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

Appearance: Igemi is grotesquely thin, his flesh shrunken down against the bones and encrusted with thick chitin. His eyes glow dimly from deep within their sunken sockets, and his fingers are tipped with dripping claws.



**Shosuro Gamaro, Akutsukai, Fallen Scorpion Shugenja**

FIRE 2	EARTH 4
Intelligence 5	
AIR 4	WATER 3
Shadowlands Taint Rank 5	

**Attacking:** 4k2  
**Damage:** 4k1 (small knife)  
**TN to be Hit:** 20  
**Armor:** 6  
**Wounds:** 64: Dead.

**Schools/Rank:** Yogo Shugenja Rank Two/Maho-Tsukai

**SPELLS**

Animate the Dead (Base TN 20, 10 actions, costs 5 wounds, animates a dead sentient being as a zombie)  
 Touch of Death (Base TN 20, 2 actions, costs 5 wounds, target must be within 10 feet plus 2 feet per raise, inflicts damage of DR 7 on target as their flesh flakes away)  
 Tomb of Earth (Base TN is target’s Air x 5, 3 actions, costs 6 wounds, target is slowly turned to stone from the outside in, requiring a contested roll of target’s Air against caster’s Earth each round – if target wins, the spell ends, if caster wins, target takes DR 2 wounds and spell continues to the next round for another roll).

He also retains knowledge (and scrolls) for the following normal spells:

Call Upon the Wind	Secrets on the Wind	Sympathetic Energies
Know the Shadows	Reversal of Fortunes	Calm Mind.

**SPECIAL ABILITIES:**

<i>Undead Strength</i>	Gamaro ignores all wound penalties, including the “Down” and “Out” ranks, and fights at full capability until reduced to Dead.
<i>Invulnerability</i>	As per the oni ability, only jade, crystal, and magic can affect him.

Note that Gamaro, like all Akutsukai, has the ability to spend Wounds in place of his now non-existent Void. He may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

Appearance: Gamaro appears as a grotesque, hunch-backed travesty with a bulbous, misshapen head. His arms are atrophied and clutched up against his belly, and his only weapon is a small knife he uses to let the blood needed for his spells; he is a physical coward and will attempt to avoid any melee situation.

## Otomo Kaigen, Akutsukai, Fallen Magistrate

FIRE 4	EARTH 4
AIR 4	WATER 3
	Perception 4
Shadowlands Taint Rank 5	

**Attacking:** 8k4 (twice per round)

**Damage:** 6k2 (katana)

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Armor:** 4

**Wounds:** 64: Dead

Schools/Rank: **Kitsuki Magistrate rank Two/Maho-Tsukai**

<i>Kitsuki's Method</i>	Kaigen may spend as many Void Points as he has on any Awareness or Perception roll.
<i>Wisdom the Wind Brings</i>	For an Awareness or Perception roll, Kaigen gains a number of Free Raises equal to his School Rank.

## SPELLS

Stealing the Soul (Base TN 15, 2 actions, costs 8 wounds, lasts 8 actions, target loses one from each Ring and Trait – to a minimum of one – for each shugenja participating).

## **SPECIAL ABILITIES:**

<i>Command the Taint</i>	Kaigen can make a contested Willpower roll to control lesser Shadowlands creatures.
<i>Eyes of Hell</i>	Kaigen's glowing eyes can see in the dark, and cannot be blinded.
<i>Inhuman Speed</i>	(unique) Kaigen can attack twice per round.
<i>Undead Strength</i>	Kaigen ignores all wound penalties and functions at full power until reduced to Dead.

Note that Kaigen has the ability to spend Wounds in place of his now non-existent Void. He may gain an extra die to roll and keep (just like spending a Void Point) by spending four Wounds.

Appearance: The most human-like of the six fallen samurai, Kaigen appears as a grinning wild-haired man with glittering, blue-glowing eyes. He still wears the tattered, filthy robes of an Otomo.

### **Player Handout: Hiro's Dream.**

You see your mother seated on a rocky promontory, surrounded by dark clouds. She is dressed in the white robes of the seppuku ceremony, and holds her wakizashi, about to begin the ritual. Suddenly the dark, swirling vapors seem to condense around her, gripping her arms with shadowy fingers and preventing her from completing the cut. She looks up and her eyes meet yours, pleading with you to help her complete the ritual with honor, but you cannot seem to reach her; your feet are rooted to the earth, and your limbs feel as heavy as lead. The shadowy hands wrench the wakizashi out of her grasp and snatch her away into the darkness, and the last thing you hear before you awake is her piercing scream.

### **Player Handout: Kimi's Dream.**

You are standing before the court at Kyuden Isawa, receiving a great honor from the Elemental Masters; you have been accepted as an Adept of Fire, and the planned successor to the current Master of Fire, Isawa Tsuke. As the gathered shugenja applaud your accomplishment, you suddenly blink and realize your father is among them. He is applauding more fervently than any of them, but there is something wrong; he seems to be aging, his hair turning thin and white, his limbs shriveling and his back slumping with each handclap. Then his flesh begins to shrivel and fall from his bones, his skeleton crumbling away even as the applause continues. You scream and beg for the crowd to stop clapping, but they do not seem to hear you. When silence finally returns, all that is left of your father is a cloud of dust that drifts away in the breeze.

**Hiruma Shinji**  
**Crab Clan Shugenja**  
**Rank Four Kuni Shugenja (former Hiruma Scout)**

FIRE 4	EARTH 5
Agility 4	Stamina 5
Intelligence 4	Willpower 5
AIR 3	WATER 2
Reflexes 3	Strength 3
Awareness 3	Perception 2
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Primary Weapon:** Katana (3k2) or Tetsubo of Earth

**Primary Armor:** Light

**SKILLS**

Athletics 3	History 1	Law 1	Origami 1
Battle 3	Horsemanship 1	Lore	Ratling Speech 2
Calligraphy 2	Hunting 2	(Shadowlands) 4	Shintao 1
Defense 2	Iaijutsu 1	Lore (Shugenja) 3	Spellcraft 1
Etiquette 1	Intimidation 2	Lore Ratling 2	Tsubojutsu 4
Hand-to-Hand 2	Investigation 1	Medicine 3	Wrestling 1
Heraldry 1	Kenjutsu 2	Meditation 2	

**Honor:** 3.3

**Glory:** 4.0

<b>Advantages:</b>	Blood of Osano-Wo Innate Abilities Jade Strike Tetsubo of Earth Multiple Schools (Hiruma/Kuni) Strength of the Earth (Rank 1)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Driven <sup>2</sup> Lost Love (Hiruma Eiko) Haunted (Hiruma Eiko)

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor Katana (3k2) Wakizashi (2k2) Tetsubo (2k2) Rokugani pony with saddle Scroll satchel with scrolls for all known spells Purse (2 koku) Kimono	Sandals Traveling Pack containing: rations inkstone and brush 6 blank scrolls 4 pouches of jade powder personal chop old obi bead (belonged to Hiruma Eiko)
----------------	--	--

<sup>2</sup> Must destroy enough Shadowlands evil to placate Eiko's spirit

**Wounds**

	<b>10</b>	- 0
	<b>10</b>	- 0
	<b>10</b>	- 1
	<b>10</b>	- 2
	<b>10</b>	- 3
	<b>10</b>	<b>Down</b>
	<b>10</b>	<b>Out</b>
	<b>10</b>	<b>Dead</b>

**School/Rank:** Hiruma Scout rank 1/Kuni Shugenja rank 4

<i>Dance the Razor's Edge</i>	Shinji may add 5 to his TN to be hit by Shadowlands creatures for each School Rank.
<i>Kuni Shugenja</i>	Shinji gets a Free Raise with all Earth Spells.

**SPELLS**

Sense	<b>Earth</b>	<b>Fire</b>	<b>Water</b>	<b>Air</b>
Commune	Courage of the	Biting Steel	Calm Mind	Tempest of Air.
Summon	Seven Thunders	Fury of Osano-Wo	Path to Inner Peace	
Counterspell	Earth's Stagnation	Fire From Within	Reversal of	
	Fires From the		Fortunes	
	Forge		Sympathetic	
	Force of Will		Energies	
	Jade Strike			
	Tetsubo of Earth			
	Tomb of Jade			

*Personality/Appearance:* Hiruma Shinji is a deceptively ordinary looking man, plain of feature and calm of speech. Unlike most Crabs, he is usually restrained and polite, but when the subject of the Shadowlands comes up, he becomes much louder and more aggressive, gestures broadly, and a bitter light flashes in his eyes. A secret sorrow burdens him, and he often seems gloomy and depressed. He feels himself attracted to Otaku Ameiko, but the memory of Eiko (not to mention the periodic visits from her angry spirit) makes it almost impossible for him to acknowledge those feelings.

*Otaku Ameiko:* You met this spirited Unicorn samurai-ko while patrolling your clan's northern borders, and recently ran into her again while travelling to investigate the troubles in Scorpion lands. The two of you have agreed to travel together, since she is also looking into the problems there. You cannot deny that you feel an attraction for her, for her fierce spirit and strange, direct personality. But such a thing will never be, not so long as you can remember Eiko's face.

You are the only son of Hiruma Tadoshi, a famed Emerald Magistrate, and Moto Aoi, a maiden of the cursed Moto family of the Unicorn. You have only a few soft memories of your mother, for she was killed by a maho-tsukai (black sorcerer) when you were very young. Your father avenged her, and did his best to raise you himself; he loved you dearly, but he had been appointed as an Emerald Magistrate and spent much time away from your home, travelling the Empire to do the Emperor's duty. You missed him deeply, and felt little affection for his second wife, a prim and proper Hida woman.

When you were fifteen years old, and just finishing your gempukku (coming-of-age), your father disappeared during a mission for the Emperor. The samurai who brought you the news told you he had prevented a war between your clan and the Crane, and suggested he had been assassinated for his troubles. Such was the fate of a Crab who let the Emperor decide his path. You swore to yourself that you would serve only the Crab Clan, and no others. Shortly after you took up your duties as a scout along the Kaiu Wall. You were a skilled and effective scout, for weather and wind did not trouble you and you could walk through the worst of storms with only a kimono. While there you met a young Hiruma maiden named Eiko, and became instantly infatuated. The two of you went on many patrols together, and from the hints she dropped you realized she felt the same for you as you did for her. But these feelings would only bring you pain.

During a patrol into the Shadowlands, your scout team was ambushed by a dreadful oni. A pestilent mass of writhing tentacles and bulbous eyes, the thing darted out of a cave and tore apart every samurai in its path. Only two of you had jade powder, and both of them perished in the first seconds; while your weapon bounced futilely off the oni's slimy hide, it lifted Eiko shrieking into the air and tossed her like a rag doll. She screamed for you to help her, and tears of helplessness blinded you as the thing slowly ripped her apart. Your own screams seemed to merge with hers, and suddenly a gateway seemed to open deep in your soul; an instant later you were bludgeoning the thing with a tetsubo that seemed to have grown in your hand. You struck over and over, in a mad frenzy, long after the stinking carcass had ceased to move.

The next day another patrol found you, still clutching the tetsubo, cradling Eiko's remains in your arms. You stood to meet them, and the magical tetsubo crumbled to dust in your hand. The Kuni shugenja who accompanied the patrol stepped up and laid his hand on your shoulder. "You are no longer Hiruma," he said, "but Kuni."

You have spent the years since then studying your new path as one of the Kuni shugenja. You have proven to have quite an aptitude for magical studies, and an even greater aptitude for hunting down the servants of Fu Leng. You are obsessed with destroying the creatures of the Shadowlands, and have often accompanied the Kuni Witch Hunters on their journeys across the Empire. At other times you have served your Clan in more conventional ways, fighting on the Wall or accompanying patrols along your borders with other Clans. But no matter how far you travel, no matter how many monstrosities you kill, you cannot escape the memory of Eiko. Her screams still haunt your dreams, and sometimes you hear her voice in your mind, asking why you could not have summoned that tetsubo sooner, why you could not save her life. You fear she will remain with you until you die. Or perhaps, just perhaps, you can slay enough of those things to satisfy her unquiet spirit.

Your latest attempt to do just that has brought you to Scorpion lands. The Scorpion have recently been plagued by many border raids from the Shinomen Forest, and rumor has it that the raiding forces are Shadowlands creatures. You have come to learn the truth of the matter and, if possible, to destroy the creatures.

**Matsu Hiro**  
**Lion Clan Samurai**  
**Rank Five Matsu Bushi**

FIRE 4	EARTH 4
Agility 4	Stamina 4
Intelligence 4	Willpower 5
AIR 3	WATER 3
Reflexes 4	Strength 4
Awareness 3	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 30 (20 without armor)  
**Primary Weapon:** Fine Katana (4k2)  
**Primary Armor:** Heavy (-5 to all physical rolls)

**SKILLS**

Archery 3	Falconry 1	Kenjutsu 5	Tea Ceremony 1
Armorer 1	Hand-to-hand 3	Law 1	Theology 1
Athletics 3	Heraldry 2	Lore (Lion) 3	Yarijutsu 2
Battle 4	History 3	Lore (Ancestors) 3	War Fan (Tessen) 1
Calligraphy 1	Horsemanship 1	Medicine 1	Wrestling 2
Dance 1	Hunting 2	Meditation 1	
Defense 1	Iaijutsu 3	Poetry 1	
Etiquette 2	Intimidation 1	Sincerity 3	

**Honor:** 4.6

**Glory:** 4.3

<b>Advantages:</b>	Death Trance Kharmic Tie (mother, Matsu Ayame) Strength of the Earth (Rank 1)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Brash

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Heavy Armor	Purse (1 koku, 2 bu)
	Fine Katana (4k2)	Kimono
	Wakizashi (2k2)	Sandals
	Bow (STR 2)	Traveling Pack containing:
	Quiver w/ 20 arrows	rations
	10 Ya (2k2)	blanket
	5 flesh cutters (3k3)	whetstone
	5 armor piercing (1k2)	personal chop
	Rokugani pony with saddle	

---

**Wounds**

	8	- 0
	8	- 0
	8	- 1
	8	- 2
	8	- 3
	8	Down
	8	Out
	8	Dead

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi Rank 5

<i>The Lion's Roar</i>	When in a Full Attack, Hiro generates a Fear effect in his foes equal to his School Rank +1.
<i>Matsu's Fury</i>	When making a Full Attack, Hiro may make one additional attack per turn.
<i>With My Ancestors Beside Me</i>	When making a Full Attack, Hiro rolls a number of initiative dice equal to his Honor Rank.
<i>The Lion's Claws</i>	Hiro may make two attacks per turn. He gains a third attack when making a Full Attack.
<i>Matsu's Courage</i>	When making a Full Attack, Hiro ignores Wound Rank penalties up to his Honor Rank; thus, at his current Honor Rank of 4, he ignores all Wound Rank penalties above "Down."

**Ancestor:** Ikoma (may ask one Yes-or-No question of the GM during the game; the GM must answer truthfully).

**Personality/Appearance:** Matsu Hiro is a formidable man, strong, handsome, and graceful. His expression alternates between a placid gaze (in battle) and a fierce, angry scowl (the rest of the time). He hates Scorpions and Cranes, and finds travel in the Scorpion lands acutely uncomfortable – not because he fears assassination (death has no power over him) but out of the fear that the crafty Scorpions might somehow dishonor him. He is anxiously seeking a wife and will assess any non-Scorpion females from this perspective.

**Ikoma Asuka:** This lovely Ikoma Bard was recently assigned to you as your personal historian. She is both honorable and attractive, a fitting prospect for a bride, but it would be improper to let such feelings interfere in your respective duties. Still, if you saw some sign that she returned your feelings, you might be moved to find a way around such impediments.

You are the epitome of the brave and honorable Matsu, a powerful warrior and hero of the Lion clan, a man who fears not death, but only dishonor. Your father died before you were born, saving the Emperor from a band of vicious ronin, and you were raised by your mother Ayame, herself a ferocious Matsu samurai. She taught you everything you needed to know about being a Lion and a Matsu, the most honorable family in the most honorable clan in the Empire. She was not always able to be there to instruct you, of course, for her duties as an Emerald Magistrate took her all across the Empire. But even when she was far away, you always felt the closeness of her spirit, as though the two of you shared parts of the same soul.

When you were fourteen, almost ready to begin the demanding and dangerous gempukku (coming-of-age) ceremony of your family, you received word that your mother had vanished while mediating a dispute between the Crab and Crane clans. You were told she was believed dead, but you could not bring yourself to accept that. Surely if she had died, you would have felt it, wherever she was. You completed your gempukku convinced that her eyes were upon you, and you have lived your life with the conviction that she might, at any time, reappear and demand an accounting for your actions. You have served the Matsu family with pride, courage, and unbreachable honor, particularly since the beginning of the long-awaited war with the Crane two years ago. You have slain many Crane samurai on the field of battle, and even your mighty daimyo, Matsu Tsuko herself, has taken note of your courage and accomplishments. Greater honor no samurai could desire.

Fourteen months ago you were assigned to a castle on the frontier with the Scorpion. The war with the Crane was threatening to spill over into the other clans, and it was felt that the other borders should be reinforced. While there, you were approached by a mysterious agent (undoubtedly a Scorpion) who offered to give you information on your long-lost mother. Strengthened by your honor, you rejected his questionable offer, which would surely have



compromised your loyalty to the Lion Clan. You would learn of your mother's fate when destiny decreed, and not before.

At Winter Court last year, your honesty again served you well, when you discovered and exposed a Scorpion plot to draw the Unicorn into the war on the side of the Crane. This has certainly earned you the wrath of the Scorpion Clan, but what care you for the squabbling of such treacherous dogs? More importantly, it has also earned you more attention and praise from your superiors in the Lion Clan; you have now been assigned a personal historian, Ikoma Asuka, who will record your glorious deeds for posterity. Surely your mother is pleased, wherever she watches over you. You have yet to marry, and the need for companionship weighs heavily on you – unlike most samurai, you do not care for the attentions of geisha, who cannot really understand the trials and rewards of a samurai's life. Someday soon, you will have to seek a wife.

A few weeks ago, while at your lord's court, you heard that the Scorpion Clan's western borders were being raided by a strange force that appeared to hail from the Shadowlands. You laughed at the Scorpions' inability to deal with this minor threat, but at your words a Crab visitor at the court spoke up, making many disparaging remarks about the Lion Clan's unfamiliarity with the dangers of the Shadowlands. "You handsome Lions think you know about courage, but you have never faced the forces of Fu Leng," he sneered. You shouted that he was a liar and a braggart, and that you would personally prove the Shadowlands forces were nothing for even a Scorpion to fear. With the permission of your lord, you have traveled to Scorpion lands to learn about this strange army and prove the rude Crab the liar that he was. Even as you have drawn closer to the scene, a strange urgency has seized you, as though something desperately important waits at the end of this journey. You will find it, whatever it is, and return home with honor.

## Otaku Ameiko

Unicorn Clan Samurai-ko  
Rank Four Otaku Battle Maiden

FIRE 3	EARTH 3
Agility 4	Stamina 3
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 4	WATER 3
Reflexes 4	Strength 3
Awareness 4	Perception 3
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 25 (20 without armor, +5 when wielding the Family Yari)

**Primary Weapon:** on foot, Katana (3k2) or Family Yari (4k3); mounted, Umayari (3k4)

**Primary Armor:** Light

### SKILLS

Animal Husbandry 1	Hand-to-hand 1	Intimidation 1	Lore (Crab Clan) 1
Archery 2	Heraldry 1	Kenjutsu 4	Medicine 1
Athletics 3	History 1	Lance (Umayari) 2	Poetry 3
Battle 3	Horse Archery 3	Lore (Unicorn Clan) 1	Shintao 1
Calligraphy 1	Horsemanship 4	Lore (Otaku Family) 3	Sincerity 2
Defense 3	Hunting 3		Yarijutsu 3
Etiquette 1	Iaijutsu 3		Wrestling 1

**Honor:** 3.4

**Glory:** 2.8

<b>Advantages:</b>	Perfect Balance Quick Strength of the Earth (Rank 1)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Small True Love (Hiruma Shinji)

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor Katana (3k2) Wakizashi (2k2) Family Yari (4k3) Dai-Kyu Bow (STR 3) Quiver w/ 20 arrows (2k2) Otaku warhorse with saddle and Umayari (3k4) Purse (3 koku) Straw rainhat	Kimono sandals Traveling Pack containing: Inkstone and brush rations blanket small silver statue of Shinjo tinder box personal chop
----------------	--	---

<sup>3</sup> This weapon has been handed down within your family, mother to daughter, for many generations. It is a magnificent spear, useful both for the attack and the defense, and while wielding it you may add +5 to your TN to be Hit. Also, it is considered a magical weapon should you find yourself in combat with Invulnerable enemies.

**Wounds**

6	- 0
6	- 1
6	- 2
6	- 3
6	- 4
6	<b>Down</b>
6	<b>Out</b>
6	<b>Dead</b>

**School/Rank:** Otaku Battle Maiden Rank Four

<i>Riding in Harmony</i>	Anytime Ameiko makes a skill roll while riding her horse, she may keep an extra die.
<i>The Void of War</i>	After everyone rolls for initiative in a combat round, Ameiko can choose to switch her initiative roll with her TN to be Hit for that round.
<i>Sensing the Breeze:</i>	Ameiko may subtract her School Rank (4) from the damage of any physical blow which strikes her successfully.
<i>The Wind Never Stops:</i>	When attacking with her Yari or Umayari from horseback), Ameiko may make two attacks per round. Also, if Ameiko should happen to kill an opponent with any attack (mounted or on foot), she may make a free extra attack on another opponent at the end of the round.

*Personality/Appearance:* Ameiko is short and deceptively slight, her small frame belying the muscles which cord beneath her skin. She is pretty but not beautiful, and makes no effort to look ladylike. Proud and touchy, she is quick to take offense and challenge for her honor – except where Hiruma Shinji is concerned. However, she also has a gentler and more empathic side, which she tries to express through poetry (either haiku or Unicorn travel poetry, as the mood strikes her).

*Hiruma Shinji:* You feel a deep, inescapable passion for this man, and find yourself more and more hoping to find some way of arranging a marriage with him. You do not know how he feels about you – he has always been very polite and proper toward you – and this lack of certainty fills you with nervous dread. Perhaps, on this journey together, you can find some way of learning his true feelings. What if he does care for you? You don't know what foolishness you might succumb to if you learned that...but you want to find out.

**Ameiko's War-horse: Chisa.** Chisa is trained to fight at Ameiko's side and will continue to fight to protect her if she is knocked down or killed. Ameiko adds +1 to her Horsemanship skill when riding Chisa.

FIRE 2	EARTH 3
Agility 4	Stamina 7
AIR 1	WATER 3
Reflexes 2	Strength 7
VOID 2	

**TN to be Hit:** 10

**Armor:** 2

<b>Attacks</b> (1/round)	<i>Club</i>	5k3	DR 5k3
	<i>Kick (Rear only)</i>	5k2	DR 7k3
	<i>Plunge (rider cannot act)</i>	6k3	DR 8k4

<b>Wounds</b>	15	-1
	25	-2
	30	-3
	40	<b>Down</b>
	50	<b>Dead</b>

Your mother is a recently-retired officer of the Battle Maidens, a mighty samurai-ko whose skills and battlefield accomplishments have brought great glory to your family and Clan. Your father was an Ide diplomat, and was said to be a skilled negotiator who prevented many wars; you remember little of him, for he spent much of his time elsewhere in the Empire, and disappeared a decade ago when you were thirteen years old. Your mother remembers him with little affection, and claims he was too proud of his manliness to be a proper Otaku husband. You do not know what happened to him, other than that he vanished just after preventing a war between the Crane and Crab Clans. Sometimes you wish you could have known him better, but more often you accept your mother's judgement that his departure was a good riddance. His only legacy for you was your small stature, so embarrassingly different from your statuesque mother.

In the years just after your gempukku (coming-of-age) you spent much of your time patrolling to the south, in the disputed territories between your clan and the Crab. While there, you had several unpleasant encounters with crude, ill-mannered Crab warriors, who seemed to you the very worst Rokugan had to offer. But on one patrol you met a young shugenja named Hiruma Shinji. Where the other Crabs were all bluster and noise, he seemed sad and thoughtful, and spoke to you politely. You met him several times when his patrols encountered yours, and you often tried to learn what dark secrets had left him so shaken and unhappy. He never told you, although you gathered it had something to do with the Shadowlands. One thing you did learn, to your surprise, was that his mother had been a Unicorn, of the past-haunted Moto family.

Eventually your duties took you elsewhere, and you did not meet him again. But try as you might, you could not shake the memory of his face from your mind. You are frightened by your feelings, for they are improper for a samurai and especially for an Otaku, who should not go mooning after some mere man. But try as you might, you cannot deny them. You often find yourself imagining long conversations with him, secret romantic assignations amid whirling cherry blossoms, and similar nonsense. Despite the passage of several years, your feelings remain as strong as ever. What would your mother think, so stern and proud, studying the tao in her monastery? Recently, your daimyo has given you an unusual assignment. There are reports of a dangerous army, possibly of Shadowlands origin, raiding the borders of Scorpion lands near the Shinomen forest. If this is true, such an army might also turn north and threaten Unicorn lands; you are to investigate the region, learn the nature of this army, and assess its threat. While on your way through Scorpion lands to the border, who should you meet but Hiruma Shinji. It seems he has also come to investigate the same threat, and he suggested (with all apparent innocence) that you travel together. "Two sets of eyes may see that which one would miss," he remarked. Stammering and blushing like some foolish courtier maiden, you agreed.

**Asako Kimi**  
**Phoenix Clan Shugenja-ko and Inquisitor**  
**Rank Four Isawa Shugenja**

FIRE 4	EARTH 3
Agility 4	Stamina 3
Intelligence 5	Willpower 4
AIR 3	WATER 3
Reflexes 3	Strength 3
Awareness 3	Perception 3
VOID 4	

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Primary Weapon:** Bo Staff (2k2) or Bo of Water

**Primary Armor:** None

**SKILLS**

Advanced Medicine 2	Etiquette 2	Lore (maho-tsukai) 2	Shintao 4
Bard 1	History 1	Lore (Shadowlands) 1	Sincerity 2
Battle 1	Horsemanship 1	Medicine 3	Spellcraft 3
Bojutsu 3	Investigation 2	Meditation 3	Tea Ceremony 2
Calligraphy 3	Kenjutsu 2	Poetry 1	Theology 2
Courtier 1	Knife 2	Research 2	War Fan (Tessen) 1
Dance 1	Law 2		
Defense 1			

**Honor:** 3.6

**Glory:** 3.8

<b>Advantages:</b>	Death Trance Innate Abilities Fire from Within Fury of Osano-Wo Jade Strike Bo of Water Kharmic Tie (her father)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Driven (to find her father)

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Knife (1k2) Bo Staff (2k2) Kimono sandals Rokugani pony with saddle Purse (3 koku) personal chop Scroll Satchel (contains scrolls for all spells known) Umbrella	Traveling Pack containing: Inkstone and brush 15 blank scrolls bedroll journal of investigations for the Inquisitors small Jade statue of Shinsei scroll of the Tao 1 pouch of Jade powder tinder box small mirror
----------------	---	---

---

**Wounds**

6	- 0
6	- 1
6	- 2
6	- 3
6	- 4
6	Down
6	Out
6	Dead

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja, Rank Four

Kimi gets a Free Raise when casting any Ritual spell, and may spend multiple Void points when casting any spell.

**SPELLS**

Sense	Fire	Earth	Water	Air
Commune	Amaterasu's Anger	Courage of the	Bo of Water	Call Upon the Wind
Summon	Amaterasu's	Seven Thunders	(innate)	Tempest of Air
Counterspell	Blessing	Jade Strike	Path to Inner	Wind's Distractions.
	Biting Steel	(innate)	Peace	
	Fires of Purity	Strike at the Roots	Reversal of	
	Fire From Within		Fortunes	
	(innate)			
	Fury of Osano-Wo			
	(innate)			
	Katana of Fire			

Ancestor: Naka Kaeteru (Kimi is considered to have a Void score two higher than her actual one, and may always add two additional dice to her Meditation score when meditating or helping others to meditate. However, if her Honor Rank is ever reduced to 1 or less, Kaeteru abandons her forever).

*Personality/Appearance:* Asako Kimi is a beatific, almost divinely calm woman, utterly sure of her place in the world. Of medium height, with a slim but athletic build and delicate features, she seems ethereal, almost elfin (to use a non-Rokugani comparison), an impression enhanced by the slight, gentle smile she usually wears. She is completely in control of herself and never succumbs to fear, impatience, anger, or desire. Even the darkest horrors of the Shadowlands cause her no more reaction than an expression of mild disgust and a soft prayer to the Fortunes. The only thing which could break her enlightened calm is the discovery that her father is dead – or perhaps, worse than dead. If she learned that, it could well shatter her.

You are a young woman at odds with her past. You were born to the Asako family, the most mysterious family of the magical Phoenix Clan, and grew up in sheltered isolation. Your mother, who did most of your rearing, was a strange, aloof woman, who treated you more like a student than a daughter. Your father, by contrast, seemed always to know what you were thinking, sensing your worries and fears as quickly as you did, and always knowing how to sooth them. You loved him unreservedly, and swore many times that you would grow up to be just like him. He would always laugh and remark, "Learn more before you make such bold promises." You knew he was one of the Inquisitors, the brave Phoenix investigators who seek the influences of maho (dark magic) across the Empire, and later he became an Emerald Magistrate, a special servant of the Emperor himself. But when you were ten years old, he disappeared. Your mother came to you and told you he had died, killed in some investigation in Crane lands, but you did not believe her. You would have known, would have felt the tearing in your heart and soul, if your father had perished. So you simply decided that he had gone away for a while, and you must wait for his return.

The elders of your family told you your belief was foolish, that it was disrupting your chi, that your elements had gone out of alignment. You were not fit for the Asako school. They seemed very disappointed by this, although they never said why. Neither did your mother, although her eyes were clouded with regret when she looked at you. You endured it all without complaint, and in time you were apprenticed to the Isawa school instead. There, your "unbalanced elements" proved a virtue rather than a hindrance, and by the time you were sixteen you had completed your gempukku. Your family said they were proud of you, and hid their old regret in public. And you accepted their

false praise with your own false smile, and knew that somewhere, somehow, your father knew of your skills and rejoiced with you.

When you were eighteen, you announced your intention of following your father's path and joining the Inquisitors. Your mother acquiesced with only a token argument, and you felt your father's approval in the depths of your soul. If he could not return to you, you would seek him out, and find him wherever he had been hidden away. You have spent the two years since then travelling across the Empire, following your father's old paths, seeking word of him anywhere you can. You have also fulfilled his old mission of hunting the forces of darkness and Maho, and sent more than a few of the enemies of the Kami into eternal darkness.

Now, for some reason, you have found yourself drawn to Scorpion lands. There are reports of Shadowlands raiders on the border, and even rumors that the Shrine of Osano-Wo – one of the greatest temples in the Empire – is in danger. But more than that, you have felt a tugging in your soul, an urgent need to go here and learn what is happening. Surely your father's spirit is guiding you; surely now, at last, you will find him.

**Ikoma Asuka**  
**Lion Clan Historian**  
**Rank One Ikoma Bard**  
**(Shosuro Miaka, Rank Four Shosuro Actor)**

FIRE 3	EARTH 3
Agility 3	Stamina 3
Intelligence 3	Willpower 3
AIR 4	WATER 2
Reflexes 4	Strength 3
Awareness 4	Perception 2
VOID 3	

**TN to be Hit:** 25 (20 without armor)

**Primary Weapon:** Katana (3k2)

**Primary Armor:** Light

**SKILLS**

Acting 5	Defense 2	Investigation 2	Poison 1
Archery 1	Etiquette 3	Kenjutsu 3	Seduction 3
Athletics 3	Forgery 3	Knife 2	Sincerity 4
Calligraphy 2	Hand-to-Hand 3	Law 2	Sleight of Hand 3
Cipher 1	Heraldry 2	Manipulation 2	Stealth 4
Courtier 2	Horsemanship 1	Meditation 3	War Fan (Tessen) 3
Dance 3	Iaijutsu 1	Mimic 3	Wrestling 2

**Honor:** 0.8 (apparent Honor: 3)

**Glory:** 2.6

<b>Advantages:</b>	Ambidextrous Apparent Honor Dangerous Beauty Heartless
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Dark Secret (Shosuro Actor)

<b>Outfit:</b>	Light Armor Katana (3k2) Wakizashi (2k2) Tessen (0k2)4 Kimono (Lion colors) sandals Rokugani pony with saddle5 Purse (5 koku) personal chop	Traveling Pack6 containing: Spare kimono Bedroll Inkstone and brush 11 blank parchments (rolled) first 2 pages of Noble History of Matsu Hiro forged letter (TN 35) from Ikoma daimyo assigning her as Hiro's personal historian,
----------------	---	---

4 The edge of the fan is coated with poison causing an additional 2k2 wounds per rounds for ten rounds or until cured.

5 Miaka's saddle and travelling pack both have concealed compartments which can only be detected by others with a careful examination and a Perception+Investigation (or Nazodo) roll at TN 30. The concealed saddle pouch contains spare kimonos in Crane blue (Kakita family mon, Doji Courtier school mon) and Scorpion red-and-black (Shosuro family and school mons)

6 The concealed travel pack compartment contains a bottle with four more doses of the poison on her tessen, two other personal chops (one her own, one for "Kakita Kasumi"), and a Fine Tanto (2k2).



**Wounds**

	6	- 0
	6	- 1
	6	- 2
	6	- 3
	6	- 4
	6	<b>Down</b>
	6	<b>Out</b>
	6	<b>Dead</b>

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Actor, rank 4

<i>A Scorpion Has a Thousand Hearts:</i>	Miaka may add her School Rank to her Awareness Rank when attempting to influence or persuade another, or when someone else is attempting to test her candor and sincerity.
<i>The Scorpion's Sting:</i>	When attacking opponents who are unaware or unable to defend themselves (TN to hit = 5), Miaka's Raises are not limited by her Void Rank
<i>Variant Personas</i>	While in these other personas, Miaka may only use their listed skills; if she wants to use skills from another persona (including her "real" persona), Miaka must make a Void+Meditation roll at a TN of 5 x the Rank of the Skill in question. Switching between her personas requires 5 minutes of complete and uninterrupted concentration.
<b>"Kakita Kasumi" Persona:</b>	This persona is a humble, delicate Crane courtier. Skills: Courtier 1, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 1, Manipulation 1, Oratory 1, Poetry 1, and Sincerity 2.
<b>"Ikoma Asuka" Persona:</b>	As described below, this persona is an honorable Ikoma Bard who is assigned to record the history of Matsu Hiro. Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 1, Heraldry 1, History 2, Law 1, Lore (Lion Clan) 1, and Lore (Lion Ancestors) 1. While in this persona, she does not lose Honor or Glory for expressing emotion in public – this is the role of the Ikoma, who are the "heart of the Lion."

*Personality/Appearance (Ikoma Asuka):* You are a petite, lovely woman who wears her hair trimmed short and dresses in the practical kimono of a samurai. As Ikoma Asuka, you are an honorable and dedicated Lion historian and storyteller. Your mission in life is to record the Glorious deeds of Matsu Hiro and to serve as "the heart of the Lion," expressing the joy, sorrow, and anger which other Lions must hide beneath the iron mask of duty. You are attracted to Hiro-san, but will not allow your feelings to get in the way of your duty – at least, not easily.

*Real Personality:* You are a cold, ruthless woman who is completely dedicated to her Clan and its needs. You will do whatever it takes to fulfill your duties, and feel neither pity nor remorse for your victims. You have done your very best to forget your father and his peculiar ideas, and it embarrasses you to even admit that he once existed. Feelings are for the weak; you would never let them overtake you.

You are actually Shosuro Miaka, a spy from the legendary Shosuro Butei (actor) school. Your father was a shugenja in the Black Watch, the segment of the Yogo family which hunts the influence of the Shadowlands across the Empire. He was an unusual man for a Scorpion, for he sometimes seemed to believe in these quaint myths of bushido and honor which control the lives of samurai from other clans. Your mother was more practical, and under her guidance you trained in the Shosuro family school, learning the arts of acting, mimicry, and deception which have served your clan so well. You have caught rumors of another, darker Shosuro school – one whose graduates are not actors, but assassins – but you have not learned for sure whether it exists or not.

Your father vanished when you were still training with the Shosuro school, and was eventually assumed dead. You felt little loss at this, for you had never been able to understand him or his peculiar attitudes. Your mother, for her part, seemed almost relieved that he was gone. Both of you did your best to forget about him and carry on with your lives and duties. Two years later, you completed your gempukku (coming-of-age) and took up your duties with the Shosuro school. Initially, you were assigned to one of the touring Shosuro acting troupes while you honed your skills; later, you got more important assignments, ones involving spying, theft, and espionage.

The first persona you learned was that of a humble, delicate Crane courtier maiden, "Kakita Kasumi." In this guise you were able to infiltrate Kyuden Doji and sabotage a trade agreement between the Crane and the Phoenix.

Your sensei and daimyo were pleased with your performance, especially the ruthless way in which you manipulated the emotions of the Cranes around you. A few tears, or a sidelong glance, were all that was needed to make them putty in your hands. Behind the mask of your beautiful face, you laughed at these *junshin* fools, so weak and changeable for all their talk of honor and bushido. Eventually, your assignment complete, you faked your own suicide and returned to Scorpion lands for further training.

After you learned a new persona, that of an Ikoma Bard, your clan gave you another task – subtler, but for that very reason perhaps more useful in the long run. A Lion samurai named Matsu Hiro, who has earned much glory in the Lion-Crane wars, recently thwarted an important Scorpion plot. In the guise of “Ikoma Asuka,” you have been assigned as his personal historian, supposedly to preserve his deeds for posterity. Your real goal is to seduce him, thereby compromising his honor and leaving him vulnerable to future blackmail by your Clan. In this way, a man who has damaged the Scorpion will come in future to serve them – a far more fitting punishment than mere assassination.

*Matsu Hiro:* This simpleton of a Lion is so rigidly honorable that it is child’s play to manipulate him. All you have to do is to drop a few subtle questions about his honor, or the code of bushido, and you can lead him by the nose. He is looking rather anxiously for a bride, and you are setting up your “Ikoma Asuka” persona as the perfect prospect for him. With a little careful guidance, he’ll soon be head-over-heels for you, and then you can lower the jaws of the trap. In the meantime, of course, you have to play the admiring bard and sing his praises to all comers.

# Togashi Hametsu

Dragon Clan Monk

Rank Five Ise Zumi

FIRE 3	EARTH 4
Agility 4	Stamina 4
Intelligence 3	Willpower 4
AIR 3	WATER 3
Reflexes 5	Strength 4
Awareness 3	Perception 3
VOID 6	

**TN to be Hit:** 25

**Primary Weapon:** Bo staff (2k2) or bare hands (base damage 0k1)

**Primary Armor:** None

## SKILLS

Archery 1	Hand-to-Hand 4	Lore (Dragon Clan)	Sincerity 2
Athletics 3	Heraldry 1	2	Stealth 1
Battle 2	History 1	Medicine 2	Tea Ceremony 1
Bojutsu 4	Hunting 2	Mountaineer 1	Theology 2
Calligraphy 1	Iaijutsu 1	Nazodo 2	Wrestling 3
Defense 3	Investigation 1	Poetry 1	
Etiquette 1	Kenjutsu 1	Shintao 4	

**Honor:** 3.4

**Glory:**

1.2

<b>Advantages:</b>	Dangerous Beauty, Higher Purpose (to find his destiny), Great Destiny (unknown)
<b>Disadvantages:</b>	Dark Secret (knows that Togashi Yokuni is the original Togashi)

---

<b>Outfit:</b>	Bo Staff (2k2)	four Mizugusuri (potions)
	hakema	one Bayushi's Bane
	travelling pack (rice balls)	one Brother of Fire
	blanket	one Health
	tinderbox	one Lion's Heart).
		See the end of the character sheet for details

---

## Wounds

8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	-0
8	Dead

**School/Rank:** Ise Zumi, Rank Five (six tattoos)

<i>Arrowroot Tattoo:</i>	Hametsu may heal himself or another character by five Wound Ranks up to five times per day. However when Hametsu uses this power to heal another he suffers half that number of Wounds himself and those wounds cannot be healed with any kind of magic – only by time and rest. His tattoo bleeds when he takes wounds upon himself in this way.
<i>Crab Tattoo:</i>	Hametsu may absorb (ignore) 10 Wounds per hit from enemy attacks. While he is using this power his Reflexes are reduced by one. This does <i>not</i> affect his TN to be hit.
<i>Dragon Tattoo:</i>	Hametsu may breathe out the “Heart’s Fire” at an enemy rolling 8k3 to Hit and 8k5 Damage. He may hit up to five targets with a single blast and Armor does not affect the TN to hit with the Fire (monstrous Armor still subtracts from Wounds delivered). He may do this up to five times per day. After breathing the Heart’s Fire Hametsu must rest and is considered “Down” (for purposes of what actions he can take) for five rounds.
<i>Sun Tattoo:</i>	During the day Hametsu may draw on this tattoo for a Free Raise up to five times per day. This only works during daylight.
<i>Wasp Tattoo:</i>	Hametsu may gain an additional action for this round up to five times per day. However this tattoo is invoked he may not spend Void Points.
<i>Pine Tattoo:</i>	Hametsu may ignore the effects of Wound Ranks until Dead.

**Hametsu’s Mitsurusugi (from *Way of the Dragon*)**

*Bayushi’s Bane:* This potion instantly extinguishes any poison in his body.

*Brother of Fire:* This potion makes the imbiber immune to Fire spells for five rounds.

*Health:* This potion instantly heals the imbiber one full Wound Rank.

*Lion’s Heart:* The imbiber may add his Honor Rank to all To Hit and Damage rolls in combat for five rounds.

*Personality/Appearance:* Togashi Hametsu is still strikingly handsome, even as a shaven-headed monk covered in tattoos. He dresses in a simple hakema (pants) of Dragon green, and carries only a staff and a small travelling pack. He belongs to the school of “worldly monks” who believe the temptations of the world are best resisted by meeting them headlong, rather than cowering in a monastery. He is always cheerful and friendly, ready to speak with samurai and peasants alike, and with a mischievous sense of humor. Unlike many ise zume he is capable of speaking simply and directly, although he does like to pepper his conversation with quotations from the tao.

You were born Otomo Hametsu; eldest son of Otomo Kaigen - a skilled courtier and Emerald Magistrate who served the Hantai with ability and devotion. You grew up in the capitol, Otosan Uchi; surrounded by luxury, taught by the finest sensei and offered every opportunity. Though handsome and skilled, you were also arrogant and self-centered, often abusing your position to get what you wanted. Nevertheless, your skills in swordsmanship and the courtly arts were very real, and with your father’s sponsorship you were enrolled in the prestigious Kakita school. You were not especially grateful; looking down on your father’s soft heart and unconventional attitudes. When but a year away from completing your schooling, word came that your father had inexplicably vanished while mediating a dispute between the Crab and the Crane. He was believed dead, and with the passage of weeks that belief became certainty. Friends and family members offered condolences, but you could see their words were not heartfelt; many of them were secretly delighted at the departure of such a powerful and unpredictable political rival. Your comfortable life was shattered by these events. If an Otomo, a man of rank and respect, of the Imperial family, could vanish so easily, and be forgotten so quickly... what value lay in the life of the court, its manners and stylings? The world around you was suddenly hollow and sour. Frightened and disgusted, you left the Kakita school; wandering across the Empire, living for several months as a ronin, a wave man, without master or home.

One day you found yourself drinking from a spring at the foot of a high mountain range. An armored samurai in the colors of the Dragon approached you and asked your name. Normally you did not answer such questions, but something about this man seemed different, and so you told him: “Otomo Hametsu.”

“What does an Otomo do in the ragged garments of a wave man?” The stranger’s voice was deep and powerful, and seemed to reverberate through you.

“Seek a meaning for my existence.”

The stranger drew closer. “And have you found any?”

“No,” you admitted, weary and sad. “I have walked across this great Empire, and found nothing, no reason to show me why I should live or die.”

“Then come with me,” the stranger said, “and we will seek one together.” At that moment you realized whom you spoke with: Togashi Yokuni, the champion of the Dragon Clan; the same Togashi who founded the clan a thousand years ago. You bowed to him, and he led you up the secret paths to Shiro Togashi, the secret citadel of the Dragon; there you learned much that terrified you, much that set your soul at ease, and much that amazed you.

Today you are Togashi Hametsu, one of the Ise Zume – the tattooed men – an order of monks who serve Togashi’s will and carry his blood in their veins. In the enlightenment of Shintao you have found the peace and purpose you could not discover in the world. You look back on your previous life as a bad dream, a false vision that held you trapped (like a fly in amber) until Togashi freed you.

A few weeks ago, Togashi came to you and told you that a great destiny lay before you. He could not tell you what it is, but he did know that you would find a clue to it in Ryoko Owari Toshii – the City of Stories, sometimes called the City of Lies, located on the western border of Scorpion Lands. Without a second thought, you gathered your meager belongings and set out at once for the city. You do not know what destiny you will find there, but you know Togashi is never wrong about such things.