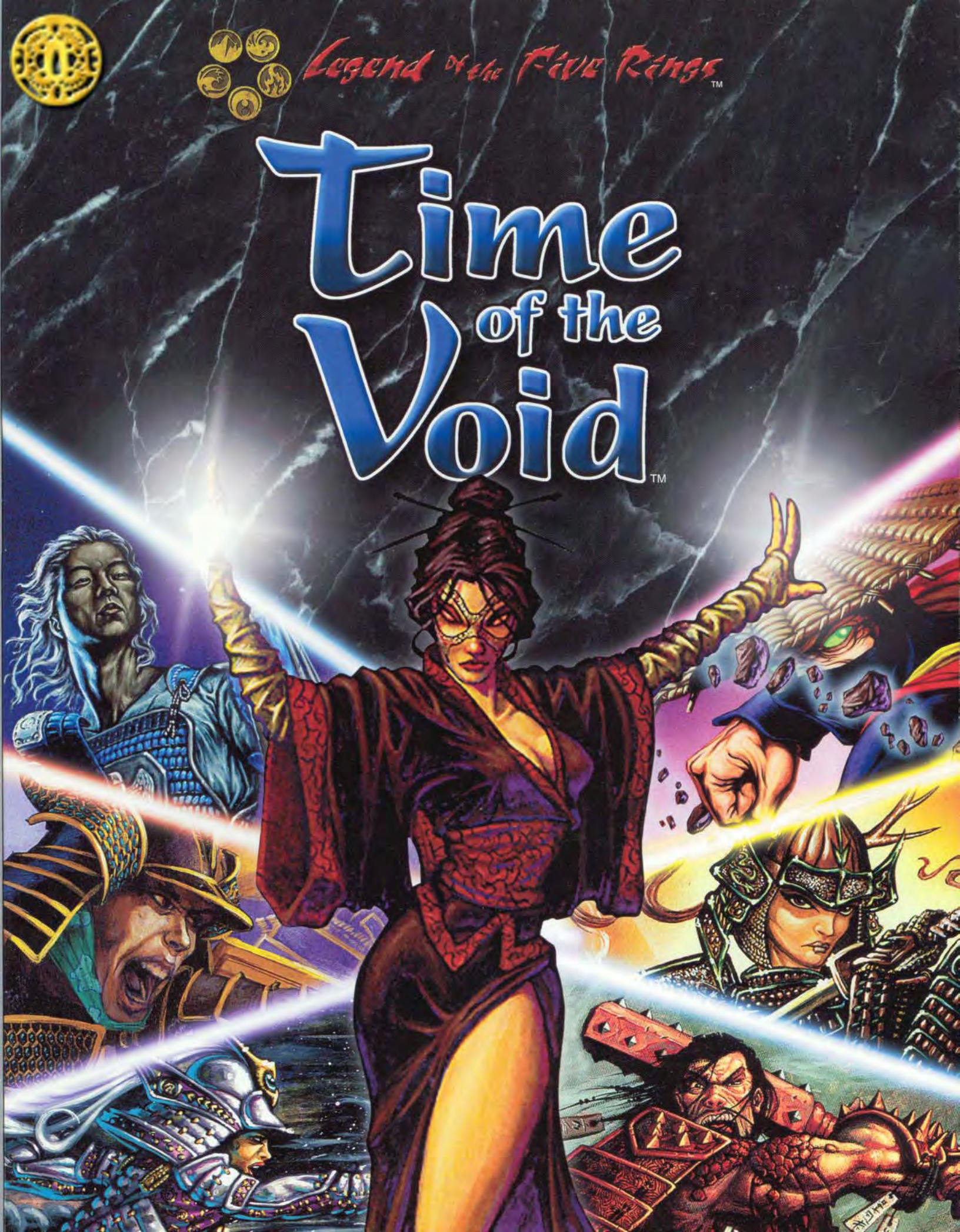
Legend of the Five Rings™

Time of the Void™



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Sorry, Ree!

We inadvertently left Ree Soesbee's name off of the writing credits for Way of the Ratling. We'd like to take a moment here to rectify the oversight: she contributed not only most of the Squeaky Eyeball Tribe's information, but also other valuable chunks of information about Nezumi society and a wide variety of interesting Ratling noises. Thanks, Ree, and sorry about that.

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Introduction

Welcome to the Clan War

"May you live in interesting times." – old Akodo curse

The book that you are holding takes a major step in the storyline of *Legend of the Five Rings*. Though some techniques, skills, and advantages in this book are intended for player use, it is intended that only the GM read any further.

The material presented here is designed to take a campaign through the opening phases of the Clan War to the Day of Thunder: the tale originally presented in the first story arc of the Legend of the Five Rings collectible card game.

Hasn't this story been told already?

Though this tale has indeed been previously told in various forms, the version here reveals a great deal of information heretofore untold. New secrets are revealed and a new perspective is given to the events surrounding the end of the Hantei Dynasty. Though it may be a familiar story, it isn't told in the same manner. This tale will be told by the player characters themselves.

But this isn't my story.

True, the Seven Thunders are the most prominent heroes of the Clan War, and unless the GM wishes to alter the canon storyline, the story of the player characters will not be the story of the Seven Thunders. This does not mean that the accomplishments of the player characters are unimportant, or that the only role they can serve is as cheerleaders for the "real" heroes. Not only would a campaign where players sit by and watch powerful NPCs do all the work be uninteresting, it would be unrealistic. Player characters are supposed to be heroes, not watch them. The Clan War is a tumultuous time, and it will certainly take more than seven heroes to deal with everything that happens.

The appendix of this book presents a few options for adventurous GMs who aren't afraid to alter the canon events as presented. Though this book will strive to present canon events as they "truly" happened, don't hesitate to break from the storyline if the game demands it.

What's in this book?

This book is divided into five chapters, each detailing an important part of the Clan War. These chapters are named after the original five expansions of the CCG, and each covers five months of time. Each chapter begins with introductory fiction that touches upon the flavor of that period.

Next, each chapter features a Current Events timeline. Events are listed for every clan, so that no matter where in Rokugan your campaign takes place you will find some important event that could affect the lives of the player characters in a dramatic fashion.

Following this timeline is a series of adventure hooks. A number of these events could be separated from the events of the Clan War and used in nearly any campaign with little adjustment.

Each chapter then features a section with new game mechanics that either are developed or become prominent during the Clan War.

All of these could be easily removed from the context of the Clan War without difficulty.

A brief Who's Who follows, introducing new characters that have not appeared in any previously published supplements.

Finally, each chapter ends with a chapter of "Kenshin's Helm," an adventure that occurs before the backdrop of the Clan War.

The appendix of this book features suggestions for introducing your party to the Clan War itself, and for altering the story for your own purposes. It also features a comprehensive list of all the Black Scrolls and their powers. The appendix also contains a compilation of many NPCs who have previously appeared.

What do I need to use this adventure?

Technically, all that you need is a copy of the Second Edition *Player's Guide* and *Game Master's Guide*. With some minor adjustments, you could get by with a copy of the First Edition rule book. The *Winter Court* series is helpful for background information, but not entirely necessary. The Way of the Clans books may come in handy, though most of the major characters mentioned for this book are reprinted in the appendix. *Way of the Naga, Way of the Dragon, Way of Shinsei,* and *Way of the Shadowlands* are helpful for the strange abilities of Naga, *ise zumi*, monks, and powerful Shadowlands creatures.

Can my characters even survive the Clan War?

True, the Clan War period is a difficult time. If you present the adventures and hooks within this book as a single campaign, the party will face a number of extremely dangerous challenges. It is recommended that only mid-to high-level characters embark upon such a quest, as lower-ranking characters are unlikely to survive.

However, if you truly wish to know if your character can survive the Clan War, there's only one way to find out…

Role-playing During the Clan War

The Clan War is a particularly divisive period in Rokugan's history, with virtually every clan set against the others. This type of environment can prove difficult for a party with characters from multiple clans. How could Lion and Crane characters keep from killing one another? Would a Crab bushi be forced to join the Shadowlands? Must a Phoenix shugenja begin researching *maho*? Does the party immediately execute any Scorpions in their midst? These questions can stifle any campaign.

To begin, magistrate-style campaigns are fairly common. In such games, the characters have been sworn to a duty by their individual daimyo or by a single lord whom they jointly serve. Having sworn such an oath, the characters are bound by it. To turn their backs upon their duty disgraces not only themselves, but their clans as well.

A similar option for forming a multiclan group is the Imperial Legion. All clans have representatives among the Legion, and squads are frequently grouped by ability rather than clan affiliation. Even for those who aren't interested in a military campaign, reconnaissance and courier missions can provide a Legion squad with a large variety of adventure potential. Duty in the Legion is an honor for a samurai and his clan, and his vows to the Emperor take precedence over the petty squabbling of the clans.

A more extreme approach might be for the characters to join Toturi's army. Most clans, however, will immediately cast out any samurai that chooses to side with the Black Lion (at least initially). Dragon, Unicorn or ronin characters can join Toturi's army without penalty, but members of other clans will be making a choice that perhaps cannot be reversed. Nevertheless, a party of characters with a strong commitment to the good of the Empire can utilize this option as a means of exploring the Clan War era with a great deal of freedom.

The greatest challenge of the Clan War era is incorporating Scorpion characters. There are ways this can be done, but most require planning and a subtle touch. One method is to have the Scorpion cast out of his clan prior to the coup. This can either be done legitimately (if the clan thinks the character will oppose them) or it could be a ruse perpetuated by the clan in the event of failure. A select few of their most loyal samurai are ordered to live the life of a ronin, allowing them to continue operating publicly after the coup while secretly continuing the work of the clan. Some players will enjoy this opportunity immensely, while others might prefer a different approach. There is always the opportunity for post-coup Scorpions to become ronin, or even masquerade as members of other clans. Remotely located Minor Clans or vassal families are particularly suitable choices, as few Rokugani interact with them on a regular basis.

Chapter One
Shadowlands

Shadowlands

"War among grasshoppers delights the jay." – Shinsei

In the lands of the fallen Scorpion, a single merchant's pass connects the Empire. Roka Beiden is no stranger to battle; its sparse scrub has been well fertilized by the blood of the samurai who would control it. As Lord Moon rose on the eighth day of the Month of the Serpent – The Month of Hantei by formal estimation – two armies gathered here once again.

"Is this what you expected?"

Toturi turned, peering over the soot-darkened sode shoulder-plate of his heavy armor. His black eyes were sharp, glinting in the reflection of the ronin campfires. Here in the night shadows of Beiden Pass, Toturi looked every bit the wolf. His eyes softened when he recognized the tall tattooed Dragon, though his frown remained firmly in place. Toturi returned his attention to the countless tiny motes of red flame dotting the horizon – Crab troops spread thick across the mouth of Beiden.

"Surprises have become commonplace, Togashi-san," Toturi whispered. "I have learned to cast aside expectations."

Togashi Mitsu chuckled quietly as he moved to stand beside the ronin, arms folded across his painted chest. "Why so formal, Rikugunshokan? Are we not allies?"

"Are we?" Toturi asked quietly, still studying the distant enemy.

Mitsu shifted slightly, a puzzled expression crossing his blunt face. "Is there doubt? My master has placed his trust in you."

"I know, Togashi-san," Toturi replied. "I understand that you Dragon are wiser then most. You see the danger to the Empire and wish to stop it. I also realize that the greater part of your army remains at Shiro Mirumoto."

Mitsu's eyes narrowed momentarily. "What are you impl–?"

"I am implying that your champion is wise," Toturi interrupted, focusing his flint eyes on the ise zumi. "He recognizes the value of expendable troops. I have been a ronin for only a short time, but I recognize certain realities of my existence. I will do my duty. I will lead these troops into battle. If the Fortunes are with me I will win, but I have no illusions about why I was chosen."

"You believe Yokuni-sama considers you expendable?" Mitsu asked, a strange hint of amusement in his voice.

"I believe the Empire considers me a reminder of a time better forgotten," Toturi replied. "I believe Yokuni-sama has done me a favor giving me this opportunity, but yes, I believe that he considers us expendable." Toturi looked away again, his eyes still searching the darkness, probing the Crab's strengths.

"Hm." Mitsu nodded, considering for a moment. "If it makes you feel better, Toturi-sama, I do not consider myself expendable."

Toturi looked at the ise zumi, one eyebrow arched in surprise. The corner of Mitsu's mouth turned in a grin. Toturi laughed out loud, surprising them both.

Mitsu laughed as well.

"This is not what I expected," Sukune whispered as he surveyed his encampment.

His father's armies filled Roka Beiden, fortified against Toturi's pitiful rabble. The soldiers were in high spirits. Even Yori's grim apprentices were joking among themselves. Their victory was assured.

Sukune was not so certain.

A half-dozen samurai stood nearby, watching the young general silently. They were yojimbo, hand-picked by Sukune's father to guard him from assassins. The mad cackles drifting from the southern edge of the camp reminded Sukune that assassins were not the only danger. The idea of the Shadowlands beasts that served them slipping Kuni Yori's leash disturbed the young general greatly.

The slow plod of a tired horse's hooves sounded from the road. A mounted samurai in black insectoid armor appeared, the mon of Hida flapping proudly on his sashimono. The figure was unmistakable – Hida Tsuru, master of the Crab cavalry and Sukune's uncle. The young general bowed as a pair of ashigaru helped Tsuru from his horse. Tsuru returned the gesture and removed his massive helmet. Tsuru brushed his sweaty topknot from his eyes and inspected the camp with a sour expression.

"Have the scouts returned yet, Tsuru-sam– Tsuru-san?" Sukune asked, stumbling a bit over the formality of his new rank.

Tsuru nodded sharply, ignoring his nephew's error. "Hai, Rikugunshokan-sama," he replied. "Their surveys indicate that we outnumber the forces of the Wolf three to one, including the Mirumoto who march by his side. We noted a few Unicorn scouting parties, but they avoided us."

"What of the others?" Sukune asked.

"The Crane and Phoenix have withdrawn their forces to Kyuden Doji, and the Lion, too, have withdrawn," Tsuru answered. "I believe they only interfered because they felt we were treading on their blood feud with the Crane. I do not think the Lion wish to begin war with us. At least not yet."

"Will they aid Toturi?" Sukune asked.

"Difficult to say," Tsuru replied. "The Lion have no love for Toturi, but perhaps they will once again feel honor-bound to protect their enemy until they can dispose of him personally. Perhaps the Lion will realize the practicality of allowing one's adversaries to destroy one other, and remain neutral. Who can say? Lions. Bushido makes them into madmen quicker than the Taint."

Sukune sighed, twisting his folded tessen in one hand as he reflected upon his options. Tsuru stood patiently, watching his nephew with an expectant frown.

Sukune took the hint. "You have the greatest experience, Uncle. Your recommendation?"

Tsuru smiled in acknowledgment. "Toturi is an unpredictable foe," he replied. "Though he is a worthless ronin, he is a worthy general. If we allow him to determine the pace of the battle, we will be defeated despite our advantage."

Sukune nodded.

"I recommend a defensive position," Tsuru continued. "Your brother's forces are three days from here. If we can hold this position until their arrival our victory will be assured even if the Lion, Crane, Phoenix, and Unicorn were to ally with him. Although… I hear there is a pack of Sparrow bushi nearby. If they throw their weight behind the Wolf we should be cautious."

Sukune blinked. He was not used to his uncle's sense of humor.

Tsuru chortled and clapped Sukune's shoulder with a meaty hand. "Do not fret, nephew," he said, his tone suddenly warm. "Do you believe Kisada-sama would have given you this promotion if you were unworthy? Do you believe he wishes you to fail?"

"Of course not," Sukune said weakly. Inside, he was uncertain. "It is just that perhaps Yakamo would be better suited…"

"I am not worried," Tsuru returned with confidence. "My brother's approval speaks volumes in my mind. You have already learned the value of delegating authority. Cast aside your doubts, lad. I am with you, and the Fortunes are with us both. We cannot lose! Now if you'll excuse me, I smell like a Shinjo who swam through the Black Finger. I need to find a bath, lest Kuni Yori put my stench to use as a weapon against our foes." The big Crab laughed out loud as he strode through the camp, proud and strong.

Sukune could not help but smile. He had always favored his Uncle Tsuru, with whom he had much in common. Both had grown up in the shadow of a more successful brother. Both had struggled for acceptance from the Great Bear. The only difference was that Tsuru had succeeded. Sukune was uncertain whether he could ever please his father.

"The Fortunes are with us…" Sukune repeated, trying to draw confidence from his uncle's words. As the unsettling laughter of the oni drifted across the camp, Sukune wondered if that could possibly be true.

In a dark clutch of trees above Roka Beiden, the sound of a *shakuhachi* monk's flute accentuated the silence of the night. A small man in a dark green cloak crouched in the shadows of the pines, holding the instrument lightly to his lips as music flowed from his soul. The song was mournful, a tribute to the lost souls who haunted Roka Beiden.

A sharp cry echoed from the trees above. Pausing in his song, the hooded ronin glanced upward. A black crow perched on a branch, cocking its head to regard him inquisitively.

"That time again?" the man asked, a note of regret in his voice.

The crow simply cawed once, kicking an itch from its cheek.

"I see," the hooded ronin answered. "Well, I suppose we should begin." The man rose, put his flute aside and held one gloved arm to the sky. The crow flapped down to perch upon his arm. Making not a sound as he trod across the dry scrub, the hooded ronin began his journey.

Significant Events

Event Location

Each significant event in the Empire is listed with a location code. This code can be used to find the site of the event using the expanded map in the *Game Master's Guide* for the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG, Second Edition.*

Year 1126, Month of the Ox (Mid-Winter)

Isawa Tadaka Returns (P9)

His mission into the Shadowlands finally complete after many months, the Elemental Master Isawa Tadaka returns to the lands of the Phoenix Clan. He brings with him one Black Scroll taken from the Shadowlands as well as a tale of an insane Yogo Junzo marshaling the power of the Dark Lord for an inevitable invasion of the Empire. Tadaka brings one final thing with him to the Phoenix Clan: corruption. His wanderings in the Shadowlands have intensified the mark of the Dark Lord upon his soul.

Convening the council of the Elemental Masters, Tadaka and the others withdraw from Rokugan to study the Black Scrolls in their possession. Despite the objections of Isawa Kaede, the Masters are convinced that Tadaka's find, together with the three purchased from treacherous Scorpion long ago, will provide the Phoenix with the knowledge they require to destroy the forces of the Shadowlands once and for all.

The Crab March (CB17)

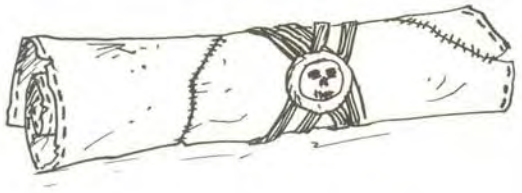
Their dark alliance with the Shadowlands sealed by the sinister Kuni Yori, the clan of Hida at last sets its sights upon the forging of a new dynasty. Hida Kisada's ambition is fueled by a simple truth: the Hantei is too weak to rule the Empire. Only the strongest should rule. And there is no one stronger than Kisada.

Kisada has entrusted his sons Sukune and Yakamo with one of the largest armies ever mobilized by the Crab. Bolstered by goblins, oni, and the undead, this massive force sets out across the winter lands of Rokugan, bound north toward the so-called "crossroads of the empire," Beiden Pass. If the Crab can seize the pass, they can cripple trade throughout the Empire and bring the Great Clans to their knees.

The Kolat Uncovered (P17)

The underground network of the Scorpion Clan discovers the existence of the Kolat during an operation near Morikage Toshi when Bayushi Tomaru investigates the disappearance of his beloved Usagi Tomoe. Kachiko is fascinated by the mysterious organization and devotes her considerable resources to learning all about them. When she has learned enough, she has her agents deliver word to the Kolat that she wishes to meet with one of the Masters, implying that the Scorpion have known of them all along and wish to forge an alliance to serve the needs of both groups.

The Kolat are skeptical, unsure of how much Kachiko truly knows. The Ten Masters begin deliberation in an attempt to decide upon a course of action. Success in this venture could achieve the extermination of the Hantei line, one more step in the Kolat's master plan. Failure, however, could undo centuries of clandestine operations.



Year 1126, Month of the Tiger (Late Winter)

The Dragon and the Black Lion (D10)

During the last days of the Winter Courts across Rokugan, a new rumor spreads through the court. Reports from the Dragon lands say that the enigmatic Togashi Yokuni has disappeared from the mountains, but only after conferring command of a large Dragon army on the Black Lion, Toturi. With such a formidable force at his command, many wonder if the ronin general will seek revenge upon those who cast him out.

With an army at his command once again, Toturi establishes a camp south of the Dragon Mountains in an uninhabited section of the Dragon Heart Plain near Nanashi Mura. Word of his camp spreads and wave men from all across the Empire begin to arrive, few at first, but more and more as time progresses. With his ranks swelling, Toturi takes a small force south to the Crane lands to discuss passage through their lands toward Beiden Pass.

The Fallen Crab and the Immortal Shiba (P14)

The Emperor's Winter Court at Kyuden Asako is the site of a cunning ploy by Kuni Yori, the architect of the Crab's alliance with the Shadowlands. Using the immortal madman Asako Oyo as a tool in his games, Yori drives a wedge between the families of the Phoenix Clan. The Asako and Isawa turn upon each other, leaving the Shiba to attempt to restore order to their clan.

Yori himself is confronted by Shiba Ujimitsu, the Champion of the Phoenix Clan. Sharp words are exchanged, and Yori departs the Phoenix court shortly thereafter, leaving his apprentice Kuni Nakiro to report on Phoenix activities. On his way back to the Crab lands, Yori's entourage is attacked by the undead Shadowlands general Tsukuro. Offered great power in exchange for his cooperation, Yori chooses to side with the Shadowlands.

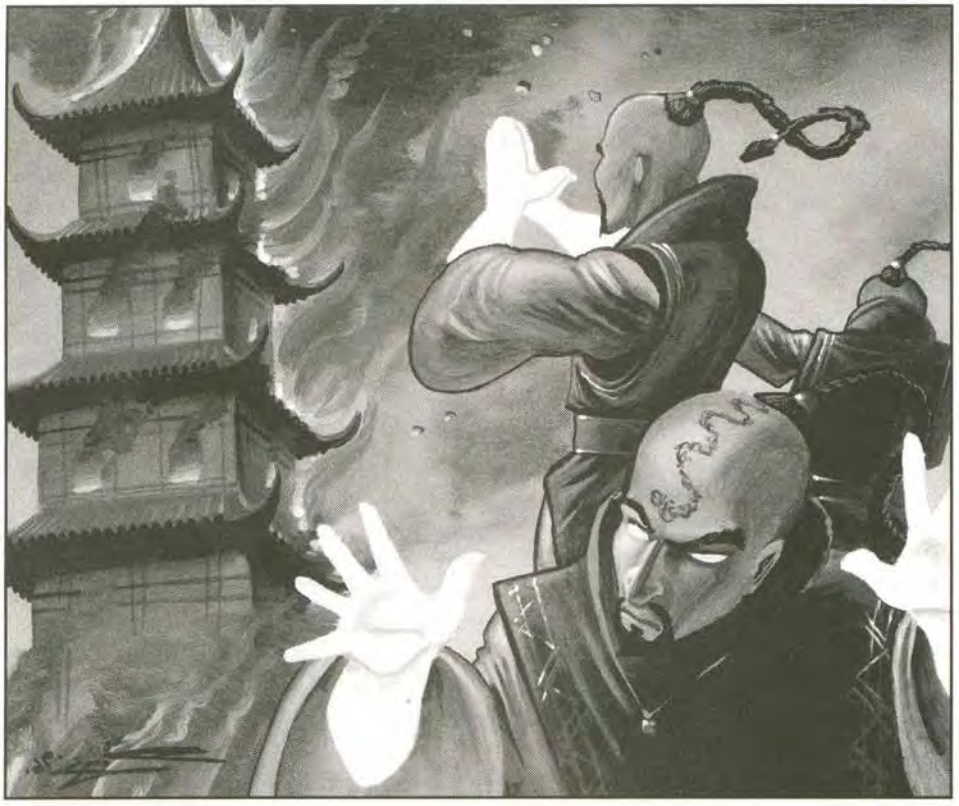
Engulfed by the Flames of the Phoenix (near P16)

A chance encounter near the northern border of the Crane lands explodes into violence, threatening to engulf the normally pacifistic Phoenix Clan in the Lion-Crane war. A Phoenix patrol led by Shiba Tsukune comes across a Lion scouting party led by an arrogant Kitsu shugenja. The Lion are aggressive and accusatory, quickly arousing Tsukune's wrath. Sharp words are exchanged and violence ensues. Despite their smaller numbers, the Phoenix decimate the Lion after Tsukune kills their leader in personal combat. Following the battle, Tsukune and her men encounter Toturi on his southern journey and join him in heading for the Crane lands.

The Lion Champion Matsu Tsuko is enraged by the incident and swears vengeance on Tsukune. Tsukune is indifferent to the Lion's rage, and the incident moves the Phoenix and Crane closer to a formal alliance.

The Butcher Unleashed (CN1)

In her fury over the Phoenix Clan's intervention in the Lion-Crane war, Tsuko gives leave to Matsu Gohei, her reckless and bloodthirsty cousin, to attack Violence Behind Courtliness City. Despite the courageous defense offered by the Tsume vassal family of the Crane, the city falls to the Lion. Gohei's ruthless assault claims the lives of innumerable Cranes, causing his enemies to label him "the Butcher."



Year 1127, Month of the Hare (Early Spring)

Kyuden Kakita Falls to the Crab (CN3)

A splinter group of the massive Crab forces is sent ahead of the main army. Cloaked by dark magic and keeping to the countryside, this sizable force arrives at Kyuden Kakita in the southern Crane lands undetected. The Crane are taken by surprise and are dangerously outnumbered. The cunning sabotage led by Daidoji Uji delays the inevitable, but in the end the palace is overrun and the Crane are crushed by the might of the Crab. A great number of supplies are taken to the main Crab army south of Beiden Pass.

Sukune's orders were to press as far into Crane territory as possible, but the Crab are stopped when the surviving Crane are bolstered by assistance from Toturi's ronin forces. The Crab, unprepared to deal with a combined offensive, retreat to the main army camp. Toturi leaves the Phoenix with the Crane and reunites with the bulk of his forces to meet the Crab at the pass.

The Brotherhood Prepares (throughout Rokugan)

Sensing the conflict that looms on the horizon, Tetsuya and the leaders of the Brotherhood of Shinsei make plans to preserve as much as possible. Sohei training begins in earnest, as does martial training of the peasants in the hopes that they will be able to defend their lives and homes against the reckless battles of the samurai. The Brotherhood likewise prepares to defend the monasteries and libraries that are their homes, as war has historically been a costly affair for the monks. In their search for allies, the leaders of the Brotherhood turn to the one Great Clan that has yet to enter the war: the Unicorn Clan.

Elsewhere in the Empire, a lone hooded ronin, a scholar of the Tao, begins to make his preparations as well.

The Unicorn's Decision (U7)

Emissaries from the Brotherhood arrive in the court of Shinjo Yokatsu, the daimyo of the Unicorn Clan. Appealing to the Unicorn's long-standing devotion to law and justice, the Brotherhood entreats Yokatsu to aid them in protecting the Emperor's land and people from the ravages of the impending war.

Yokatsu deliberates for a time, then agrees to aid the Brotherhood. The innocent victims of war are his concern, and ashigaru training begins in the Unicorn lands immediately. Hoping for a quick end to the battle, Yokatsu sends aid to the one force he believes will act in the Empire's best interest: the army of Toturi. (In truth, Yokatsu also believes that aiding Toturi in the coming conflict will best serve the wishes of the Kolat as well.)

The Eyes of Nanashi Mura (D12)

With the army of Toturi growing ever larger to the north, the leaders of the infamous ronin village Nanashi Mura send agents of their own fighting order to infiltrate the army and determine the Black Lion's true intentions. They fear that Toturi will, if motivated by vengeance or greed, further damage the reputation of ronin in the Empire, possibly leading to the destruction of Nanashi Mura itself. This cannot be allowed. The Eyes are sent to join Toturi's army. If the Black Lion is found to be a threat to the village, he will be assassinated.

Year 1127, Month of the Dragon (Mid-Spring)

The Pillaging of Ryoko Owari Toshi (S3)

As the Crab army approaches Beiden Pass, a splinter group is sent from the main force to raze Ryoko Owari, the City of Lies. The Crab's failure to hold the city centuries ago is an unpleasant memory, so taking it would serve the twin purposes of resupply and vengeance. Between the main army and the city, the Crab task force encounters and destroys the Eighteenth Imperial Legion.

Upon arriving at Ryoko Owari, the Crab find another legion occupying it. Although the second Legion is also destroyed, the battle delays the Crab's conquest of the city and allows Imperial functionaries to flee north, to warn the Great Clans of the Crab's impending arrival. With the losses sustained by the twin battles, the task force commander chooses not to waste valuable time and energy with the literal destruction of the city, choosing instead to pillage as many supplies as possible in a short time and return to the main Crab army.

The Quest of Miya Yumi (near A1)

The youthful Miya Yumi, distraught over her cousin Satoshi's usurping of the position of family daimyo from the revered Miya Yoto, sets upon a course of action to restore her uncle to power. After consulting with her uncle in his virtual imprisonment at a monastery loyal to Satoshi, she sets off for Kyuden Ashinagabachi with the ronin shugenja Koan and the Dragon outcast Sanzo at her side. Once there, she undertakes a dangerous mission to the former Scorpion lands in an effort to discover a way to thwart Satoshi's quest for power.

Yoritomo's Alliance Begins (A9, A15, A26, A27, A29, Y)

Ambassadors of the Mantis Clan begin arriving in the courts of minor clans all across the Empire. Yoritomo, lord of the Mantis, believes that the Great Clans are too engrossed in their own centuries-old grudges to see the true danger to Rokugan: the deadly threat of the Shadowlands. If they will not do what must be done, he proposes, then the minor houses of the Empire must unite and show them the true meaning of strength. The Wasp, Fox, Sparrow, Tortoise, Centipede, Falcon, and Dragonfly Clans all host a Mantis emissary.

The Dragonfly decline immediately, choosing instead to side with their patrons in the Dragon Clan. The Falcon Clan likewise refuses before even hearing the offer, lacking as they do the resources for a serious military engagement, though some individuals choose to join Yoritomo's cause. Conversely, the tiny Tortoise Clan immediately joins Yoritomo, eager to demonstrate its worth to an Empire that loathes and reviles it. Among the clans of the Three Man Alliance, there is much debate. Tsuruchi of the Wasp seems interested, but the daimyo of the Fox is hesitant to commit, while the Sparrow Clan is insistent that such an arrangement will result in disaster. The Moshi family of the Centipede Clan do not answer immediately, instead retiring for a lengthy period of discussion and meditation before committing themselves to an act of war.

In the luxurious chambers of Kyuden Gotei, Yoritomo can only wait.

Year 1127, Month of the Serpent (Late Spring)

The Battle at Beiden Pass (PP)

After months of maneuvering and skirmishes, open warfare breaks out in Beiden Pass. From the south, the massive force of the Crab army pushes forward, bolstered by legions upon legions of goblins, oni, undead, and various other Shadowlands monstrosities. Led by Hida Sukune and Hida Yakamo, the Crab are intent on pushing through the Pass and ravaging a path toward the capital of Otosan Uchi, where they will seize it in the name of their father, Hida Kisada.

Unfortunately for the Crab, an army almost as massive as theirs blocks the path. Led by Toturi and composed of Dragon soldiers, ronin troops, and Unicorn cavalry, the opposing force is considerable. Weeks of bloody, uninhibited fighting ensues while the Lion Clan looks on, prepared to move in and wipe out the victor if necessary.

Daini Returns with the Naga (near PP)

Emerging from the Shinomen Forest, Mirumoto Daini returns to the camp of Toturi with unexpected allies: warriors of the Naga race. The serpentine beings keep well to themselves, away from the rank and file of Toturi's forces. Toturi himself is surprised but pleased to have the creatures by his side. They are thought to be immune to the Taint and corrupting influence of the Shadowlands, and thus make the perfect allies against the corrupted Crab forces.

Daini himself is changed by his time with the Naga. He is more certain and more insightful. He has gained the trust of the Naga, and it is through him alone that Toturi can communicate with the strange beings.

The Black Scrolls Are Opened (location unknown, near P9)

Concluding months of research, the Elemental Masters finally choose to complete their study of the Black Scrolls in their possession by opening them. Only Isawa Kaede, Master of Void, refuses to participate, believing that the cost of the knowledge gained is far too high. The remaining Masters, however, are committed to the course of action and open all four Black Scrolls, bringing the current total of opened scrolls to six (Junzo has already opened two). The knowledge they gain is great indeed, but at an even greater cost: they are each corrupted by the Dark Lord's touch. The Taint permeates their souls.

Sabotage in Earthquake Fish Bay (UUU)

Greatly concerned that the corrupted forces of the Crab Clan might utilize their growing navy to harvest resources from the Silk and Spice Islands, the Mantis Clan sends infiltrators to sabotage the shipyards of the Kaiu. Slipping unnoticed into Earthquake Fish Bay in the dark of night, the Mantis set fire to a large number of kobune while others use explosives to damage the great "iron turtles" that the Kaiu are constructing in preparation for a planned attack on Otosan Uchi. The damage caused is extensive, thanks in no small part to the aid of a gaijin castaway from the Mantis court, and sets the Crab's plans back by nearly a full year. Although there is a brief combat exchange, the Crab never discover the identity of the saboteurs.

The Prophecies of Uikku

The brief career of the prophet known as Uikku had a remarkable impact on Rokugani thought and philosophy. His insights on the Tao astounded the Phoenix and helped shape the role of shugenja.

In Uikku's final days, the young prophet was wracked with fever and suffered dark visions of the future. He foresaw the destruction of the Great Clans, and babbled endlessly about the bleak times to come. Though much of what Uikku said was unintelligible gibberish, all of it was dutifully recorded by Phoenix scribes. By far the most lucid segment of the prophet's ramblings is a set of scrolls known as the Dooms. These scrolls have never been copied, and are guarded by a secret brotherhood of bushi based in Kyuden Isawa.

The Phoenix believe that these scrolls contain warnings that could prevent the destruction of the Clans. It is said that although the events predicted in these prophecies are unrelated, they must occur in the following order, as Uikku uttered them, or the doom of the Empire will not come to pass. If any of them can be prevented, the rest of the predictions may yet occur but the Empire will be saved.

The First Doom

"Of the Crane, a fallen foe will prove to be their undoing. They will be led astray by a deceiver, and the true hero will arise too late to save them."

The Second Doom

"The Lion Clan shall find that blind faith in the Throne leaves you blind to the need of the Empire."

The Third Doom

"The Tao of Shinsei is no guard against darkness. It is their pride that will blind the Phoenix to their downfall."

The Fourth Doom

"At the moment of their victory, that is when the Scorpion Clan shall learn the cost of dark alliances."

The Fifth Doom

"The Unicorn may be the masters of the Four Winds, but when the great wind comes, it shall be the saplings that fall before the great trees with deep roots."

The Sixth Doom

(The contents of this scroll are unknown. The Dragon Champion of Uikku's era somehow obtained it from the scribes and never revealed its contents. Presumably, the descendant of that Dragon Champion – Togashi Yokuni – possesses it still.)

The Seventh Doom

"They believe they have come to the Empire to assist against the Shadowlands, but it shall be this very action that will be their doom."

(Unfortunately, this is the height of clarity for this particular Doom. The identity of the group it describes was never given by Uikku. The Brotherhood of Uikku theorize that it could be the Mantis Clan, Toturi's Army, northern barbarians, or any number of other groups.)

The Eighth Doom

"Of the Crab, it will be the return of an ancient hero that marks their doom. He will destroy the Crab Clan and everything for which they have fought."

What's New

New Disadvantage

Cursed (–2 to –4)

The character is the victim of a curse of some sort. It might be a result of a *maho* spell (such as the Yogo Curse) or it may simply be a result of kharma (like the Moto Curse). Whatever the reason, it has a profound effect on the character's life. The point cost can vary depending upon the potency of the curse, ranging from mild inconvenience (2 points) to life-altering conditions (4 points). Players and GMs are encouraged to create their own curses, although examples have been included to give a sense of the point range.

Points	Curse
–2	May never eat rice
–3	Always keeps one fewer die in a certain situation
–4	Will be killed on the day rain touches their bare skin

New Paths

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

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

How Do They Work?

New Paths are just what their name implies: new ways of combining training styles to achieve a character whose talents are somewhat more diverse than a student of a single school. New Paths have a Path of Entry requirement, which states what school and rank a character must be in order to be accepted in the Path's dojo. For example, the Defenders of Uikku accept only students who have achieved the second rank of the Shiba Yojimbo School.

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

Example: Shiba Tsuru is a Rank 2 Shiba Yojimbo. He applies for permission to study at the dojo of the Defenders of Uikku and is granted leave by his sensei. Upon completion of his studies with the Defenders, Tsuru requests permission to study with the Shiba Bushi, the path suggested by his instructors among the Defenders. Upon achieving Insight 225, Tsuru's School Rank will be as follows: Shiba Yojimbo 2, Defenders of Uikku 1, Shiba Bushi 2. This is an acceptable course of study among the Phoenix, and Tsuru does not pay for Multiple Schools at any point.

The Defenders of Uikku (New Path)

Technique Rank: 3
Path of Entry: Rank 2 Shiba Yojimbo
Path of Egress: Shiba Bushi
Technique: Sever Tomorrow. The Defender of Uikku is comfortable with the ebb and flow of the kharmic wheel and can turn opponents' victories into his own personal doom. When on Full Defense, the Defender may spend a Void Point to make an opposed Void roll vs. the melee attack roll of his attacker before damage is rolled. If the Defender is successful, the attack automatically misses and the Defender may immediately attack his opponent with any weapon he has ready. He must apply the total of his opponent's failed attack roll total in place of his own.

Tsume Pikeman (New Path)

Doji Retsu was a ruthless duelist and general who seized Violence Behind Courtliness City from the Lion Clan in a daring and violent incursion that destroyed the Lion vassal family of the Goseki. While extremely aggressive, Retsu was canny enough to develop fighting methods that would allow the Lion's reckless style to be turned against them. With his gambit successful, after the Crane awarded him the vassal family name of Tsume, Retsu formalized his fighting style into a single dojo operated by his family.

Although Retsu has been dead for many years, his son Takashi and the samurai who serve him have made excellent use of Retsu's style in recent years. The Lion Clan's constant hostilities against the Crane have paid special attention to the Tsume family's holdings. Although the physical dojo has been destroyed, Takashi and his men are keeping the fighting style alive in the front lines of battle.

The Tsume Pikeman dojo places great emphasis on analyzing the enemy's style and then responding with lightning speed to holes in the defense, in essence allowing their foes' own momentum to impale them. This gambit has been very successful against the waves of Matsu who hurl themselves at Crane positions with little thought for their own safety.

Technique Rank: 1
Path of Entry: None. This is a beginning-level Path.
Benefit: +1 Reflexes
Skills: Battle, Defense, Hand-to-Hand, Kenjutsu, Yarijutsu 2, any one High or Bugei skill

Beginning Honor: 2.5

Path of Egress: Daidoji Bodyguard or Doji Magistrate

Technique: None Shall Pass. If the pikeman is struck by an opponent while on Full Defense and wielding a yari, he may immediately roll Yarijutsu /Reflexes versus a TN of 10. If successful, he has maneuvered the weapon so that his opponent has impaled himself upon it. The opponent suffers Wounds as indicated below. The pikeman may increase the dice rolled for damage by one for every successful Raise on the Yarijutsu /Reflexes roll.

Opponent is wearing	Wounds
No armor	3k3
Light armor	2k2
Heavy armor	1k1

Outfit: (all of average quality, one fine item) Katana, wakizashi, light armor, yari, any one weapon, travel pack, 8 koku.

Masters of the Akasha (Advanced School)

All Naga share a link with the group mind of their race, the living memory known as the Akasha. Some Naga, many of them Vedic, spend their lives exploring the mysteries of this spiritual realm of knowledge. On occasion, a Naga becomes so deeply entrenched within the Akasha that he ceases to be a true individual and is transformed into a living extension of the entirety of the Naga race.

The Masters of the Akasha are regarded with a combination of reverence and pity by other Naga. On the one hand, they have achieved a unity of spirit with their race that few will ever experience. Unfortunately, this unity robs them of those qualities that make them individuals. The Masters are essentially the mouthpieces of the Akasha, and often adopt the personality quirks and mannerisms of the other Naga around them. The Masters are powerful, but are very easily influenced by powerful minds within the Akasha. For that reason, they rarely remain in one place, moving throughout Naga society like nomads.

Requirements:

Rings/Traits: Akasha 5

Skills: Moksha 4, Theology (Naga) 5

Advantages: Immune to Fear (the Akasha has little to fear from the minions of the Foul)

Techniques

Rank 1: Summon the Past

All Masters of the Akasha are able to plumb the depths of their race's memories to gain the expertise of any Naga who has ever lived. By expending a single point of Akasha, the Master may manifest the benefit of any Naga Duty for a period of one hour. (See *Way of the Naga*, page 76, for Naga Duties.)

Rank 2: Alter the Future

The Master may use the insight of the Akasha to glimpse what lies ahead for the future of his race. By gently influencing the Akasha, the Master may slightly alter events that have yet to occur. By meditating for a full hour and spending an Akasha point, the Master gains the ability to reverse the outcome of any one skill roll that takes place in his vicinity, be it his own, an ally's, or an enemy's. A successful roll may be changed to a failure or vice versa. This must be done within two days of the meditation or the effect is lost until another meditation is conducted.

Rank 3: Command the Present

The entire Naga race is intimately connected to the Akasha group mind, and the Masters may call upon the skills of any of their people at will. By expending an Akasha point, the Master may gain any Naga skill (i.e. any skill excluding those that deal exclusively with Rokugani culture) at rank 4 for roughly five minutes.

Adventure Hooks

Enlightenment Interrupted

Location: Any

Challenge

The lord whom the characters serve summons them. This lord can be of virtually any clan or family within the Empire, or even a non-clan-specific individual such as a high-ranking member of the Imperial Legion or Emerald Magistrates. For whatever reason, the characters' superior has summoned them for a delicate undertaking.

Shortly after the failed Scorpion Clan Coup a few years past, a prominent Akodo general retired to a monastery rather than join another family or become a Deathseeker. Little has been heard of him since, but now the war blossoming near Beiden Pass threatens to engulf the entire Empire and the characters' lord desires the counsel of this wise general. The PCs are to journey to the monastery and bring the former soldier back with them.

The daimyo equips the characters as necessary, although outlandish requests will result in a stern reprimand. Traveling papers are supplied, as is a sealed message for the former general. If asked about its contents, the daimyo replies that the message is simply insurance that the monk will comply with the characters' request.

Focus

The actual location of the monastery is up to the GM, but it should be near the fighting around Beiden Pass or the Lion/Crane border. The trip there should prove difficult, with the party dodging battles and border patrols that might attack first and check travel papers later.

When they arrive at Tea Petal Village, the characters have little trouble finding the unnamed monastery, which is prominently positioned on a hilltop overlooking the village and the surrounding area. The village itself appears to have seen some battle recently, as numerous buildings have crumbled or burned to the ground. Indeed, the monks themselves are out among the villagers helping them repair their homes. Should the party inquire among the monks or villagers about Akodo Ikato, they receive the reply, "There is no one by that name in this village."

Ikato, of course, changed his name when he entered the monastery and is now known simply as Teju. The other monks know his old name, but will not reveal him to the characters; the villagers have no idea who Ikato is. Before Teju will reveal himself to the party members, they must demonstrate their honorable nature. Offering assistance of some sort to the villagers will definitely work, as would investigating the damage to the village.

Once Teju meets the characters, either through their investigations or by revealing himself, he gently refuses their request. A bloodthirsty band of samurai has been periodically raiding the village, and his expertise is essential to the village's defense. If he is presented with their lord's message, he becomes morose. Their lord once rescued Ikato's son in battle, and even though he has left that life behind, his honor demands that he accede to their lord's request. He pleads with the characters to help secure the village before his departure.

Strike

The samurai attacking the village are actually disguised Scorpion. They wish to prevent the general's return, which would conflict with their Lady's plans. They have stolen armor of various clans from battlefields and camouflage themselves in it.

If the characters aid Teju in defending the village, more drastic measures are taken. Shosuro assassins use explosives in covert night raids to keep the village in chaos, and if this fails they attempt to assassinate Teju himself. This will be done onlyas a last resort, however, as it could prompt an investigation by magistrates that will reveal the Scorpion plot.

The Goseki Blades

Location: Lion or Crane lands

Challenge

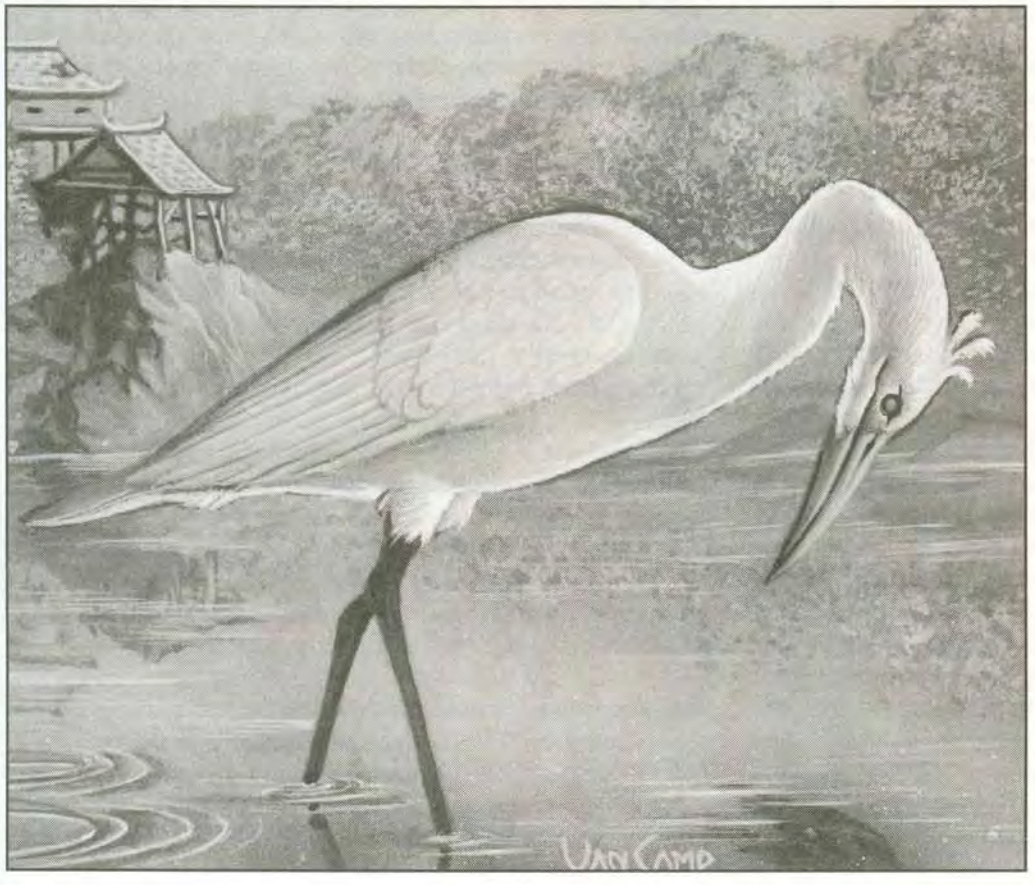
A minor functionary of the Imperial Court, Otomo Banu *(see Appendix)*, has become desperate to cement his power in light of the Hantei's failing health. Toward that end, he has decided on a means to end the Lion/Crane conflict that is even now exploding into total

war. Since the primary source of conflict seems to be Violence Behind Courtliness City, he has struck upon an idea that will both end the conflict and gain him a reputation in court for cleverness.

In truth, neither is possible. The Lion and Crane are beyond pacification, and the other members of the Imperial Court have no regard for Banu whatsoever. Nevertheless, he is convinced that his plan will work.

When the Crane general Tsume Retsu first seized the city years ago, his aggressive tactics completely wiped out a minor vassal family of the Matsu, the Goseki. Banu has decreed that whichever clan can return to him the long-missing Goseki daisho, the swords which were presented to Matsu Goseki upon the founding of his family, will be declared the rightful owner of the city for a period of at least five years. This is well outside Banu's authority to grant, but he is a presumptuous and arrogant man.

The characters are contacted by either Tsume Takashi, head of the Tsume family, or a minor Lion functionary. Neither party truly believes that this competition will have any effect upon the conflict, but neither is willing to allow the possibility that the other might win.



Focus

Whomever the party is working for, the task at hand is exceptionally difficult. Violence Behind Courtliness City is one of the most contested tracts of land in all of Rokugan, near the heaviest fighting of the Lion-Crane war. Chances are slim that the party will be able to get into the city, as it is almost always prepared for siege. However, a number of heimin refugees have scattered to the surrounding villages.

Investigating the outlying villages will prove difficult, as the peasants there are extremely skittish around samurai. The reason soon becomes clear as a samurai quartermaster and a squad of bushi enter the village to commandeer resources. They curtly order the peasants to surrender whatever is needed to keep the army provisioned, sparing no regard for the heimin. Characters who confront the samurai will be forced to produce travel papers or risk arrest. There is little they can do to stop the quartermaster from taking what he needs, but any character who intercedes on behalf of the village gains many allies among the peasants.

Characters who inquire about survivors of the Crane attack decades earlier learn of an old woman named Mochiko, a personal servant of the Goseki. She survived the attack but left the Lion lands almost immediately afterward with a young orphan she took in the battle's aftermath. She is believed to have relocated to Nanashi Mura, a village on the edge of the Dragon lands a day or two to the north.

Further investigation determines that Mochiko's son still lives in Nanashi Mura, and that his family had several relics of the Goseki including the daisho. He claims that many were "returned" to some visiting Unicorn samurai who pledged to take the blades to their rightful owners, the Matsu. Naturally, the Matsu do not currently possess the blades. What could have happened to them?

Strike

Mochiko escaped the battle with her own young son and a young girl as well, the sole surviving member of the Goseki family. They sold the blades to a corrupt Shinjo caravan master many years back for enough koku to live

comfortably for the rest of their lives. The blades never made it to the Unicorn lands, however, as the caravan was attacked and the blades were taken by bandits operating from the Spine of the World Mountains. The bandits remain active to this day, and the new leader of the bandits, Gamaro, has taken the blades as his personal weapons. Gamaro is a former Akodo who is disgusted with samurai. He will never surrender the blades while living.

Of course, if the characters manage to find the blades, defeat their current owner, and return them to their employer, it amounts to very little. Banu declares their patron the rightful holder of Violence Behind Courtliness City and his pronouncement is utterly ignored. But the characters will have made an ally, and perhaps gotten the attention of the Imperial Court with their bravery and industriousness.

Big Trouble in Little Ryoko Owari

Location: Ryoko Owari (S3)

Challenge

As the armies of Hida Yakamo continue their march north, the City of Lies, Ryoko Owari Toshi, looms closer upon the horizon. Already the Crab armies have laid siege to several Crane cities to replenish supplies. Now the men grow hungry once more, and the target before them is the site of the Crab's famous failure: the city the Hida could not hold. After centuries bearing the shame of failure, the Crab at last have their revenge.

This adventure calls for the characters to be within Ryoko Owari Toshi when the Crab attack begins. This can be achieved in any number of ways: the characters may be the magistrates there. They could be emissaries of a clan interested in claiming the city's resources. They could be members of the Imperial Legion who currently hold the city (although a different faction may be in charge in your campaign). They may simply be passing through the city when the Crab attack. It is even possible that the characters do not know one another at the beginning of the adventure.

The opening battle is quick and decisive. Despite their valor, the Imperial Legion defending the city have no chance against the huge Crab army. The battle to the south of the city delays the Crab only two or three hours. During that time, large numbers of goblins pour past the legion into the city, wreaking havoc in the streets. Likewise, several packs of winged Oni no Sanru descend into the city and begin killing armed resisters.

The characters witness a single samurai, a member of the legion, defending the people of the city. The Shadowlands beasts prove too much for him, and he is cut down by an Oni no Sanru before the characters can aid him (assuming that they would do so). With his dying breath, the Legionnaire informs the characters that a member of the Imperial Court is within the city and must be rescued before the Crab complete their attack. In the event of attack, the Otomo would seek refuge in a hidden chamber within the former governor's estate, and the legionnaire gives the characters instructions on how to find the Otomo and identify themselves. With that, he dies.

Of course, the characters have no reason to fulfill this man's dying request. But truly honorable samurai would consider themselves duty bound to honor such a brave soul, not to mention preserve the integrity of the Imperial Court.

Focus

The characters are pressed for time. While there are various Shadowlands creatures and a few bushi patrols in the city, the vast majority of the Crab forces are occupied with the legion outside the city. Once that minor obstacle is removed, the army will descend upon Ryoko Owari, filling every street and alley with soldiers.

Moving through a massive city filled with panicking heimin and ravenous Shadowlands creatures is a daunting task. Chaos dominates most regions of the city as the raiding goblins and oni cause several fires and other urban disasters.

Strike

When the characters arrive at their destination – a secret chamber within the governor's residence – they find that the Otomo courtier has committed honorable seppuku. Faced with impossible odds, surrounded by oni and about to be overrun by the Crab, he took his own life rather than allow himself to be used as a pawn against the Emperor and his court.

Having failed to preserve the Otomo's life, it is now incumbent upon the PCs to return his daisho to his family and tell them of his honorable death. As the Crab army smashes through the southern city gates, the characters must somehow escape the city with the daisho of the Otomo.

The Legend of Mura no Kin

Location: Lion or Crane lands

Challenge

Magistrates in service to the characters' daimyo have discovered a map which appears to reveal a second entrance to the legendary

gold mine of Mura no Kin, the Village of Gold. The village was constructed around one of the richest gold mines ever discovered in the history of the Empire. Unfortunately, the mountains in which the mine was located are extremely unstable, and the frequent earthquakes cost hundreds of lives in the mines during the few years the mine was active. The decision was ultimately made to close the mine. The village still exists, but it is a mere shadow of its former self.

With war breaking out across Rokugan, the wealth of this mine would be too great to overlook. The characters are ordered to discreetly investigate the accuracy of this map and report their findings to the daimyo as soon as possible. Mura no Kin is located in unaligned lands in the Twilight Mountains, north of the Crab holdings and south of the Sparrow Clan.

Focus

Depending upon which clan the characters serve, chances are that the party will have to travel through the Spine of the World Mountains to reach Mura no Kin. Given the conflict raging there, this will prove extremely difficult without becoming involved in several large-scale battles. An alternative might be the Iuchi Pass, a small and infrequently-traveled pass in the Unicorn lands. Characters moving through this region might come across Mirumoto Daini, either on his way to the Shinomen Mori or, more interestingly, returning with his Naga allies to aid Toturi's forces.

When the PCs arrive in Mura no Kin, they find it surprisingly active for a supposed ghost village. The villagers there bear a variety of strange injuries, all of which they desperately claim to have obtained while foraging in the mountains. The heimin of the village are clearly terrified of the characters, but are even more afraid of a small group of surly ronin who occupy what passes for the local inn.

Strike

The second entrance to the mine does exist, but it is secretly being exploited by an unscrupulous Lion diplomat who is using enslaved zokujin to keep the mine secret. A minor courtier at best, Kitsu Yunaki was assigned the virtually worthless post of ambassador to the Sparrow Clan. During his travels, he discovered the second entrance and secretly arranged to have the materials for exploiting it transported south. He also has acquired a small group of extremely brutal, extremely well paid ronin who keep both the enslaved zokujin and the conscripted peasant workers in line. Yunaki is utterly unconcerned with the Lion's current state of war, preferring instead to increase his own wealth. Yunaki's superiors in the Lion Clan have long ago forgotten him, so he can line his own pockets without interference from them.

Who's Who

Akodo Godaigo

Lion Clan Wandering Spirit

Earth: 4
Stamina: 6
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Void: 2
Shadowlands Taint: 4.6
School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 4
Honor: 4.1
Glory: 2.2
Advantages: Way of the Land (all of northern Rokugan)
Disadvantages: Cursed
Skills: Bard 2, Battle 4, Defense 4, Heraldry 3, History 5, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Bushido) 7, Shintao 4, Stealth 2
Shadowlands Powers: Speak With the Voices of the Dead, Taint Sense, Thy Master's Will

Once, long ago, Akodo Godaigo was known as a man of honor. A valiant and noble samurai, he served his lord without question or remorse. There was room in his heart only for bushido – and for his betrothed, Matsu Hitomi. Hitomi was everything that Godaigo was not: passion and emotion to his quiet intensity. It was as if a great playwright had written each for the other. Their story, however, was destined for tragedy.

Godaigo and Hitomi both served Akodo Hatsu, a provincial daimyo of the Lion Clan. Hatsu was in the debt of Mirumoto Turan, an unscrupulous daimyo within the Dragon Clan. During a period of conflict with the Crab and Scorpion, Turan contacted Hatsu and requested assistance. Hatsu in turn assigned a detachment of Lion samurai to assist Turan, including Hitomi and her brother, the unit's

commander. In her passion, Hitomi swore upon the honor of the Lion Clan to follow Turan's every command.

Godaigo felt his heart grow cold at her words and at Turan's wry, answering smile.

The battle with the Dragon's enemies went well, but Hitomi's brother was slain early in the fighting. Smoldering with anger, Hitomi took up her brother's armor and led the troops to victory. Once that duty was completed, the treacherous Turan ordered Hitomi and her troops to seize a fortress in the northern reaches of the Lion lands, one commanded by Akodo Godaigo himself. Despite her vow to follow Turan's commands, Hitomi refused this order and led her troops in a series of attacks against his holdings.

Hitomi's actions had disgraced the Lion by the words of her own vow. Urged on by his lieutenant, Kitsu Uragiri, Godaigo hunted Hitomi and her men down at a small peasant village. In agony over fighting his lover, Godaigo failed to notice Uragiri's use of black magic to raze the village while he pursued Hitomi. When the two finally confronted each other, the dying samurai-ko spat a foul curse at him.

"You will find no honorable death, betrayer!" she shrieked. "You will be cursed to walk the earth forever, without death as you are without honor!" With those words still on her lips, Matsu Hitomi died of the wounds inflicted by her own lover.

Recovering from his anguish, Godaigo suddenly realized that the village was little more than a blackened husk, the corpses of his men strewn about in varying stages of corruption. Uragiri's maddened laughter rang out through the darkness, his foul magic having spread the Taint to everything it touched.

Even Godaigo.

Godaigo, overcome by grief, knew that he had only a short time before his Taint became obvious. He converted his holdings and engaged a family of builders to erect the Castle of the Faithful Bride as a monument to his dead love. The foundation was laid on the first anniversary of Hitomi's death. Godaigo oversaw the construction only long enough to be assured that it was proceeding properly. Once satisfied that Hitomi would be properly memorialized, he "vanished" one night to concentrate on his final task.

For centuries, Godaigo and Uragiri have pursued one another across Rokugan and the Shadowlands, each seeking the other's demise. Godaigo longs for the peace of true death, but his corruption keeps him in a state beyond death. He watches Toturi from afar and wonders: if death is beyond his reach, what of redemption?

Matsu Gohei

Lion Clan Butcher

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Strength: 6
Fire: 3
Agility: 5
Air: 3
Reflexes: 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 4
Honor: 4.3
Glory: 6.4
Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Student of Water
Disadvantages: Brash, Overconfident, Proud
Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 6, History 2, Intimidation 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 3

For years, Matsu Gohei has been known throughout the Empire as a fierce and brutal warrior. He is feared by his enemies and respected on the field of battle. That respect, however, does not extend to his own house. Since he was young, Gohei has constantly been ridiculed and belittled by his elder cousin Matsu Tsuko. Even before she was the daimyo, she knew she was born into privilege and responsibility, and she made sure that the other children knew that as well. Gohei was a proud and talented student who excelled at his studies, easily surpassing all of the other students save Tsuko. He passed his gempukku at the age of 11, earlier than every other student save Tsuko. His entire life he has lived in her shadow, and they both know it.

Even though he knew that he would never lead his family, it was his hope that he could lead their armies on the field of battle as gunso. When Tsuko took over as daimyo, he assumed that his appointment was assured. Instead of Gohei, however, Tsuko chose a young Matsu who had attended the Akodo War College. Gohei was enraged. He demanded to know why he had been overlooked. She scoffed at him, and then struck him with her saya so hard that the crack of bone rang loud and clear. She left him there, walking away without a word. He has never forgotten that incident, and although he fights under her command to this day, he knows that one day his daimyo will fall – he only hopes that he is there when she does.

For now, he fights alongside Matsu Agetoki, throwing his fury into battle. He has single-handedly destroyed two Doji units, and killed one of the three Isawa shugenja whom the Phoenix have allied with the Crane. His hunger for battle cannot be sated, and he will kill the Crane to a man if he is given the chance.

Alhundro Cornejo

Gaijin Explosives Master

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Perception: 4
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 5
Air: 3
Void: 2
School/Rank: None
Honor: 1.3
Glory: 0.0 (Gaijin)
Advantages: Great Potential (Gaijin Explosives), Large
Disadvantages: Dark Fate, Gaijin Name, Nightmares, Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)
Skills: Chemistry 4, Engineering 3, Forgery 2, Horsemanship 2, Knife 2, Polvora 7, Sleight of Hand 3, Stealth 3, Swordsmanship 3

Thirty years ago, a hurricane wracked the islands of the Mantis. In the midst of the storm, a *gaijin* ship crashed upon the reefs. The sailors who came to the rescue discovered barrels of gaijin pepper spilling from the broken hull, ruined by the salt water. Only two survivors escaped their watery grave – ship's chemist Ésteban Cornejo and his six-year-old son Alhundro. The two gaijin were taken into custody until Yoshitsune, lord of the Mantis, could decide their fate.

Ésteban proved his worth by offering to share his knowledge of chemistry with Lord Yoshitsune. Cornejo produced medicines, adhesives for use in shipbuilding, and even the occasional barrel of illegal polvora (gaijin explosives). In return, the Mantis gave the gaijin a home and kept his presence in their islands a closely guarded secret. When Alhundro came of age, his father passed on the secrets of his craft.

Unfortunately, before Alhundro could complete his training, Ésteban Cornejo took his own life. The local magistrate deemed that Ésteban must have been mad from grief, stranded too long in a land where he did not belong. Yoshitsune's successor, Yoritomo, offered the younger Cornejo sanctuary if he would continue to serve in the same capacity as his father. Left with no other options, Alhundro accepted.

Alhundro is a quiet man prone to periods of brooding and introspection. He has only dim memories of his homeland; Rokugan is the only true home he has ever known. Yet he is an outsider. Even those who value his skills do not respect him; he can see the hatred and derision in their eyes. He senses their spite at every turn. He is a useful outsider, but he is still an outsider. The only joys he takes in life are his craft – the sciences taught him by his father – and Mieko, a young eta girl with whom he has recently fallen in love.

When Yoritomo's Alliance entered the Clan War, Yoritomo demanded that Alhundro accompany his armies to the mainland. The young chemist fears the idea of war and hates to leave Mieko behind, but he knows that he cannot refuse the Mantis Champion's command.

Since leaving the islands Alhundro has begun having strange dreams, dreams of faceless spirits beckoning in the night. They offer a chance to be something greater, a chance to belong, a chance to finally find a home and an identity. The dreams frighten Alhundro, and he speaks of them to no one.

Who would listen to the fears of a gaijin?

Heichi Chokei

Boar Clan Scholar

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 4
Air: 2
Reflexes: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Ronin Shugenja 3
Honor: 2.3
Glory: 4.7
Advantages: Inner Gift (Guiding Visions), Great Destiny
Disadvantages: Driven, Small
Skills: Astrology 3, Bard 2, Defense 2, History (Boar Clan) 4, Medicine 2, Meditation 3, Shintao 2, Tanto 3, Theology 3, Weaponsmith 2
Spells (Italics denotes Innate Ability): Sense,* Commune*, Summon*, Tempest of Air, Call Upon the Wind*, Echoes of a Breeze, Elemental Ward*, Fires From the Forge, Jade Strike*, Armor of Earth*, Hands of Jurojin, Immortal Steel, Fury of Osano-Wo

Some wonder if this small man is truly the last son of the Clan of the Boar. He has been mocked, publicly insulted, and even attacked for claiming such a thing. Chokei doesn't care. He carries the broken sword of his lost Clan wherever he goes, and waits. When he was still too small to lift a sword, his father spoke to him of duty, responsibility, and power. Even at such a young age, the Boar was a serious child, and knew he would eventually be called upon to perform a great task for his Clan.

He has spent years wandering the countryside, tracing bloodlines. Where a Heichi married into the Shinjo, Chokei tracked down the man's great-grandson and spoke to him about the Boar Clan. If Chokei finds those he deems as worthy ronin who ask him about his quest, he will tell them about the Boar, and he will return for them some day. His visions have slowly driven him across the Empire, hunting down any vestige of hope for his Clan.

One day, the shugenja's travels brought him to the palace of Hida Kisada. Chokei had known the Crab Champion previously, serving as an advisor and aide to the giant of a man. He announced himself at the gate, and the next day Chokei found himself taking sake with Kisada and his children. The Crab lord's laughter rang out as Chokei recounted his journeys across the Empire, fancifully adding farce to a Crane's manner or humorous ignorance to a Unicorn merchant. After perhaps a little too much sake, a deal was struck between the Boar and the Crab. Kisada knew he would need capable, wise, and calm men such as Chokei soon, and offered the shugenja whatever aid the Crab could offer to rebuild the Boar. Anything at all. All Chokei had to do was follow Kisada's every command, no matter what it was, until the war was over. Chokei wasn't sure what war Kisada referred to, but the offer was too great to turn down. The next day, Chokei walked at Kisada's side, temporarily clad in the dark blue of the Crab.

That blue has almost turned black now from dirt, blood, and decay. Chokei has spent months marching in the company of dead men and oni, staring each night into a lonely campfire and wondering if the price of the bargain is too high. The quiet shugenja can only grip the broken sword at his side and pray it is not.

Kenshin's Helm, Act One: Legacy of Corruption

"Once worn by a legendary samurai, the helm was said to bring even the boldest samurai to his knees with tears in his eyes and blood in his ears." – Unknown

Kenshin's Helm is a five-part adventure that takes place throughout Rokugan during the saga of the Clan War. In each chapter, you will find an installment of this story that ties into the events of the period covered in that chapter. These adventures are designed to be played as a campaign, but they can also be used individually with little modification if that suits your group's needs.

Synopsis

A member of the Miya family contacts the characters. Unknown to most outsiders, there is currently a power struggle raging within this small Imperial family, and the prize is the ultimate loyalty of all Miya. Satoshi, the treacherous son of the family daimyo Miya Yoto, has forced his father into retirement, all but imprisoning him within a monastery somewhere outside Otosan Uchi. Many Miya are unhappy with Satoshi's aggressive philosophy, and as a result he has had great difficulty consolidating his power.

Recently, however, Satoshi has been diverting many loyal Miya from their normal duties to remote locations all across Rokugan. It seems that Satoshi is searching for something, but just what is

anyone's guess. On behalf of the Miya loyal to Yoto, the characters are asked to seek out Miya Yumi, Yoto's niece and the only one who may know what sinister plan Satoshi has in mind.

The characters' task is not an easy one. Yumi's trail takes them to Kyuden Ashinagabachi, the home of the Wasp Clan. To get there, they must travel through Beiden Pass, which is currently hosting one of the largest battles in Rokugan's history. If they survive the trip through the pass, they will find that a battle between two ancient enemies awaits them. A battle that has raged unchecked across the.centuries.

Scene One: Encounter with the Miya

The beginning of the adventure can occur anywhere in Rokugan, as the Miya are the heralds of the Emperor and can be found throughout the Empire. GMs are encouraged to use an existing Miya character from their own campaigns to meet with the party if possible. Otherwise, they meet with Miya Katsu (see Winter Court: Kyuden Kakita).

The meeting place is extremely discreet. As an envoy of the Hantei, Katsu has little difficulty finding an appropriate location, and most likely commandeers the use of the local magistrate's office as a secure location to meet with the characters. Once you have set the scene for the party, read the following:

The office of the local magistrate is small, but orderly and functional. A few simple calligraphies adorn the bare walls, and sheets of rice paper lie neatly stacked upon the magistrate's desk. Behind the desk sits a stern man with his hands tucked deep inside the sleeves of his finely detailed kimono. Once you have all entered, he acknowledges you with an extremely rigid bow and gestures toward the cushions across the table from him.

"Konichi-wa, noble samurai. You honor me by accepting my invitation. I regret the secrecy with which you were contacted, but this is a matter of great sensitivity. I am told that you are capable individuals who can be depended upon to handle matters such as these with honor and discretion." He regards each of you in turn, as if evaluating your responses. Finally, he nods and continues.

"A member of my family has gone missing. She has undertaken a… private endeavor that has kept her away for quite some time. Unfortunately, a matter has arisen that requires information only she possesses. We do not wish to intrude upon her undertaking, but it is imperative that we contact her immediately."

Katsu pauses for a moment, as if pained by some unpleasant thought. "With the number of armed conflicts currently raging throughout the Empire, it is impossible to divert any of our family to search for Miya Yumi. We few Heralds are already over-committed. We require the assistance of outside agents to accomplish our task, one that is vital to the survival of the Imperial families' current existence."

Once again, Katsu gazes from one face to another. "I ask you, in the name of the Miya family and the Emperor of Rokugan, will you grant us your aid in this sensitive matter?"

He looks at you expectantly.

The characters should easily recognize that, if an individual of such rank and importance (he is both a prominent member of the Miya and an Emerald Magistrate) blatantly asks for help in this way, circumstances are dire indeed. Katsu absolutely refuses to elaborate on the dilemma facing the Miya, although characters with a high Courtier or Gossip may have heard something of Satoshi's treachery. If the characters ask for time to consider his offer, he concedes, but emphasizes the urgency of his request. The characters must answer no later than the following morning.

Should the characters decline, Katsu will be obviously disappointed and somewhat surprised. He honestly does believe the characters to be an honorable and competent band. He asks them not to discuss the matter with anyone, then leaves to find other candidates. If the characters choose to aid him, his rigid exterior cracks for a moment, just long enough for the PCs to see how relieved he is. Then he regains his composure. Read the following:

"My family's last contact with Miya Yumi came through a letter sent to me. She and her companions left the Imperial lands to travel to Kyuden Ashinagabachi, the home of the Wasp Clan south of the Spine of the World Mountains. You must journey there immediately. If you can find her, you must convince her to contact us as soon as possible. Tell her…" Katsu winces again. "Tell her that it concerns her uncle, Miya Yoto."

Katsu hands one of you a bundle of papers. "These will grant you safe passage through all of the Emperor's lands. There is a sealed letter there for Yumi. You must allow no one to read it but Yumi. Should there be a risk of another seizing the letter, you must destroy it."

He glances around one final time as he rises to leave. "Thank you. Your service will be remembered by the Miya always. I must take my leave now, as I am due in the lands of the Unicorn soon. Please, you must start your journey as soon as possible."

Unless the party has specific questions for Katsu, he bows very deeply in respect and goes immediately to an awaiting horse. If this encounter was set in the northern portions of Rokugan, proceed to Scene Two. If you set this adventure in the southern regions, you may proceed directly to Scene Three.

Scene Two: The Battle at Beiden Pass

One fact that Katsu failed to mention, but of which the characters are likely all too aware, is that to get to Kyuden Ashinagabachi requires travel through Beiden Pass. Unfortunately, Beiden Pass is currently the site of an enormous military campaign between a force of corrupted Crab and the forces united under the command of Toturi, the Black Lion. As the characters get within a day's travel of the Pass, they will pass increasing numbers of heimin refugees traveling away from the Pass, carrying as many of their belongings as they can. Read the following:

Although Beiden Pass is many miles distant, already you can make out the haze that fills the air around it. The dust of battle and the smoke from thousands upon thousands of campfires has thickened the air until it resembles the fog of an autumn morning. Already you have passed many burned-out farmhouses, heimin refugees, and fallen bodies of samurai.

Luckily for the characters, the heaviest parts of the fighting have ceased as both armies pull back and prepare to engage each other once more. Unfortunately, there are constant skirmishes within the pass between patrols and scouting parties, some of which have combatants numbering into the thousands. Read the following:

As you make your way through the pass, the sounds of battle are evident. The noises ricochet off of the stone walls and bounce all around the valley, making it impossible to tell if the fighting is behind you or in front of you, much less how large the battle is.

Moving forward through the winding pass, the din grows ever louder. Finally, you come to the top of a crest within the pass. The path before you leads down into a large basin where a massive battle is taking place. You can see the swirling green and gold of the Dragon Clan, the blue and gray of the Crab, the shabby brown of ronin soldiers, and a few hulking monstrosities that can only be creatures of the Shadowlands. The beasts seem to be fighting alongside the Crab forces. Although the battle seems evenly matched, the sinister power of the Shadowlands could well lead to a victory for this Crab patrol, crushing the Dragon and ronin beneath them.

Some characters will wish to join the battle immediately, probably on the side of the Dragon. Extremely honorable characters may feel that their mission for the Emperor must take precedence, while still others may feel an obligation to fight on behalf of the Crab. Whatever their tendencies, Dragon reservists will attempt to conscript them on behalf of their forces. Those who adamantly refuse may be taken into "protective custody" or "detained until their loyalties are made known."

The battle lasts for at least four rounds. The Dragon commander rolls 5k4 on his Battle roll, while the Crab rolls 6k3. Some Heroic Opportunities in this battle include:

Hidden Threat: A pack of lesser oni break through the earth and threaten to overrun the Dragon commander and his retinue. A character is close by when this happens and has the chance to save the commander's life.

Siege Engine: The lone Crab siege engine present at this battle is left vulnerable by a flanking movement. Only the character is close enough to capitalize upon this opportunity.

Flying Enemies: An Oni no Sanru has seized the Dragon standard and is flying with it high above the battle. A single shot, if skilled enough, could slay the beast and bolster Dragon morale.

Scene Three: Kyuden Ashinagabachi

Once the characters successfully make it through Beiden Pass, the next leg of their journey is comparatively uneventful. The former lands of the Scorpion Clan are desolate and largely empty. The villages through which the characters travel seem deserted, as few heimin welcome the sight of samurai. The persecution of the Crane Clan and the pillaging of the Crab Clan have left them paranoid. Any samurai they see will be shunned or dealt with as obediently as possible. As the party nears the castle, read the following:

Kyuden Ashinagabachi nestles in a valley against the southern edge of the Spine of the World Mountains. The sheer edges of the valley walls prevent any approach from the side, and the castle's rear wall faces a secure and empty valley. The only means of entry is to descend into the mouth of the valley itself, an approach far too narrow to accommodate a military force of any significant size. As you descend toward the castle, you can feel the eyes of many hidden archers upon you. You have no doubt that, were you openly hostile, you would be dead long before reaching the front gates of Kyuden Ashinagabachi.

This is the home of the Wasp, and of the Scorpion before that. It has been designed to be all but impregnable, and the eerie silence of the valley should disconcert first-time visitors. Knowing that the Empire's finest archers are watching carefully with arrows notched should be an uncomfortable sensation for visitors. Which is, of course, exactly as the Wasp Clan wishes it. Read the following when the characters arrive at the front gate.

The front gate of Kyuden Ashinagabachi is formidable indeed, set as it is into a wall that spans the entire valley and reaches nearly one-third of the distance to the top of the valley walls. It is stark in appearance, lacking the decorative appearance that the gate of a Great Clan's castle might, but you have no doubt that it serves its purpose well: preventing access by the unwanted.

As you stand regarding the wall, movement catches your eye. Far to the left of the gate itself, a smaller door set into the wall opens and three men exit. One is dressed in simple garb adorned with the mon of the Wasp Clan, while the two men flanking him are dressed in the style of ronin. The Wasp, clearly the youngest of the three, regards the characters briefly. In an even, unconcerned tone he demands, "What is your business at Kyuden Ashinagabachi, samurai?"

The young man is Ashinagabachi Ichiro, the sworn defender of the castle who often serves as the majordomo while Tsuruchi is away. He will identify himself if asked, but if the characters request to speak to the daimyo of the castle he responds simply, "Tsuruchi-sama is not here. It is my honor to speak for him when he is away."

If the characters speak frankly of their search for Miya Yumi, their honesty and straightforward nature will earn Ichiro's respect. He will nod and respond:

"We were honored to host Yumi-san and her companions during their travels, but they are no longer here. Come and partake of the Wasp's hospitality. We will discuss your request once the dust of your travel has been washed away and a warm meal is finished." They young Wasp shouts a command and the gates of Kyuden Ashinagabachi swing open for you. Ichiro smiles slightly and bows from the waist, an uncommon practice among the usually brusque Wasps. "You will be my guests this evening. Allow one of my men to show you to your quarters."

Although the characters may be in a hurry to complete their mission, Ichiro will not discuss Yumi until he has had an opportunity to observe them more closely, and that means staying the evening. The party may refuse, of course, in which case Ichiro simply shrugs and allows them to go on their way with no information. If for some reason the characters were to become hostile, it would be a deadly mistake. Dozens of Wasp archers are watching their every move and would shoot them down with little hesitation should they turn to violence.

If the characters comply with Ichiro's request, they are shown to quarters and given the chance to refresh themselves, something they have likely not been able to do properly for several weeks. Once that is done, they are invited to dine with Ichiro and some of his men in the main chamber of the castle.

Despite the stark and functional appearance of Kyuden Ashinagabachi, the quarters are spacious and well-furnished, and the food is fresh and excellent. The Wasp bounty hunters are amply paid for their services, and the clan apparently treats its members very well indeed.

Ichiro's conversation through the evening is light, discussing the current events of the Empire with a sort of detached curiosity. The fighting near the pass, while interesting, does not seem to concern him, although he is eager to hear of your experiences there.

Once the meal is finished, the other Wasps leave the chamber. Only you and Ichiro remain. Retiring from the table, Ichiro sits comfortably upon a cushion that rests on the dais near the front of the room. He gestures for you to seat yourselves in front of the dais, just as you might in court.

Ichiro looks at you expectantly. "What do you wish to know of Miya Yumi?"

Ichiro knows much of Yumi and her mission. The young woman and her companions came to the castle to request the aid of the Wasp in the name of her uncle, Miya Yoto. Yoto was a great ally of the minor clans, and Tsuruchi gladly offered his aid to Yumi. Yumi first asked that Tsuruchi have his Wasps look into the possibility that her cousin, Miya Satoshi, was forming an alliance with the Emperor's wife Kachiko that could result in the reorganization of the Scorpion military forces. Ever eager to ruin the plans of the Scorpion, Tsuruchi agreed.

Secondly, Yumi requested that the Wasp lord provide a guide to the Scorpion lands, so that she and her friends might investigate an enigma there. Ichiro knows her destination well, as he was the guide assigned to Yumi by Tsuruchi. He took the party to Traitor's Grove, a deadly place near the ruins of Kyuden Bayushi. Ichiro did not accompany them into the Grove, but he knows that they succeeded in their quest and parted ways with him there. Ichiro's knowledge of Yumi's mission is summarized as follows.

Ichiro knows but will not reveal, the following information:

- Tsuruchi's arrangement with Yumi regarding the Scorpion.
- Yumi is searching for Kenshin's Helm to thwart Satoshi's plans.
- After completing their business in Traitor's Grove, Yumi left for the Phoenix lands.

Ichiro will reveal the following information if dealt with appropriately:

- Yumi is traveling with two ronin.
- She was seeking information from a spirit trapped in the Grove, a spirit named Bayushi Tesaguri.
- She left north toward Beiden Pass after finishing at Traitor's Grove.
- Yumi is attempting to travel undetected, as she believes there are enemies looking for her.

Assuming that the party deals with Ichiro honestly, he concludes their meeting as follows:

Ichiro rises from his seat upon the dais, an indication that your discussion is at an end. "In the morning, I will dispatch a guide to take you to Traitor's Grove. While I am certain that you could locate it without help, the Scorpion lands are very dangerous and we Wasp know the fastest way there. I wish you success in your mission, samurai. You must leave at first light if you hope to arrive by nightfall."

Unknown to the characters, Ichiro himself leaves the castle in the dead of night, traveling north to meet with Yumi and her companions. His part in this saga is not yet complete.

Ashinagabachi Ichiro

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Reflexes 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Wasp Bounty Hunter 2
Honor: 2.8
Glory: 1.9
Advantages: Clear Thinker, Social Position
Disadvantages: Meddler

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 4, Fletchery 4, Hunting 3, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 4, Lore (Criminals) 2, Stealth 2

Scene Four: The Uragirimono

The return to the Scorpion lands is just as uninviting as the trip through, perhaps more so. This time the characters are moving through the central provinces, which suffered the most damage following the coup. Read the following:

The light grows dimmer as you get closer and closer to your goal. The villages that are closest to the Grove itself seem deserted, like many you have seen during your travels. These, however, are different. Bodies of the recently dead litter the streets, with no sign of recent troop movement or the plague. Your Wasp escort is uneasy, but does not hesitate in his movement.

Allow the characters to divert themselves as they like in these villages. There is no obvious sign of death (the Uragirimono are subtle), and the Wasp is insistent that they reach the Grove as soon as possible.

At last you arrive at your destination. The sun's last rays are slowly fading, painting everything a subtle shade of amber. Even as you approach the infamous Traitor's Grove, you can tell something is wrong. A low moaning fills the air, something that barely sounds human. Finally, you pierce the veil of mist that surrounds the Grove.

What you see before you can only be called a nightmare.

The Grove itself is disturbing. There are ancient blades and bits of armor thrust into the hearts of the trees throughout the Grove. Somehow, none of it has been looted. The trees themselves are dark and foreboding, and they seem to be staring at you.

Perhaps a dozen men, women and children are within the Grove. Dead bodies are strewn about in varying stages of decay. Some appear to have been brought here recently. The men and women in the Grove surround a single individual in tattered bushi armor. The bushi grips his sword and assumes an advanced fighting stance. He turns toward you.

And you see his withered face.

In a cracked and ancient voice that nonetheless commands attention, the bushi croaks, "Leave this place now! Or you too will be consumed by his ancient evil!" His words cause the others to turn toward you. Their eyes are dead, glazed over and vaguely luminescent. From each of their mouths sprouts a single fleshy tendril that whips back and forth like the tail of a hungry lion. Though their mouths do not move, a whisper emanates from each one, creating an unholy chorus that speaks in unison.

"They will join us, Godaigo-sama. More innocents that you will have failed to protect. Even without the helm, the deaths on your name will hasten your fall." A terrible laughter ricochets through the Grove, and the undead bushi's visage is pained by it, even as the creatures advance toward you.

The Helm of Kenshin is currently in the possession of one of Uragirimono's greater spawn, hidden within the Phoenix lands. The Uragirimono does not yet realize that Miya Yumi and her allies are hunting the Helm. It has dispatched its spawn to the lands around Beiden Pass, seeking its ancient foe Akodo Godaigo in the hopes of bringing the old spirit to it and using the Helm to complete Godaigo's corruption.

The Outcome

Ideally, the characters and Godaigo will be able to defeat the Uragirimono. As these are merely the spawn of the true Uragirimono, the defeat costs the Shadowlands little. However, it is also possible that the characters will turn on Godaigo as well. If so, allow them to discover how potent a fighter he truly is. He will not kill them, however, not even if it means his own death. His honor will not allow it.

If the characters do attack Godaigo, he will simply disappear into the mists once the Uragirimono are destroyed. This eliminates one possible means for the characters to discover what is truly going on. If, however, the characters realize that Godaigo is an honorable being, he thanks them when the battle is over. Read the following:

The ancient bushi draws his tattered body to a rigid posture and bows deeply to you, a sign of his respect and gratitude. "You have saved me from a fate far worse than death, samurai, an eternity of suffering that outstrips even this existence." Godaigo looks upon you curiously. "What brought you to this place?"

Listening to your story attentively, the undead samurai nods knowingly. "Yes," he rasps, "the Miya and their quest." With a sad shake of his head, he continues. "They seek the Helm of Kenshin, a cursed thing in the possession of the Uragirimono. He will consume any who attempt to take it from him.

"If the one you seek is as honorable as you, she does not deserve such a fate. The Uragirimono holds it now, farther north, toward the lands of the Phoenix. Even now, after all these years, I can hear it calling to me." Godaigo seems to drift for a moment, lost in a song that only he can hear. He shakes himself. "The Empire would be best served if that damnable thing were found, yes. Found and destroyed. I cannot undertake the task myself, for in doing so the Helm would surely become my master."

He looks at you. "Only the strength and honor of mortal men can resist its power."

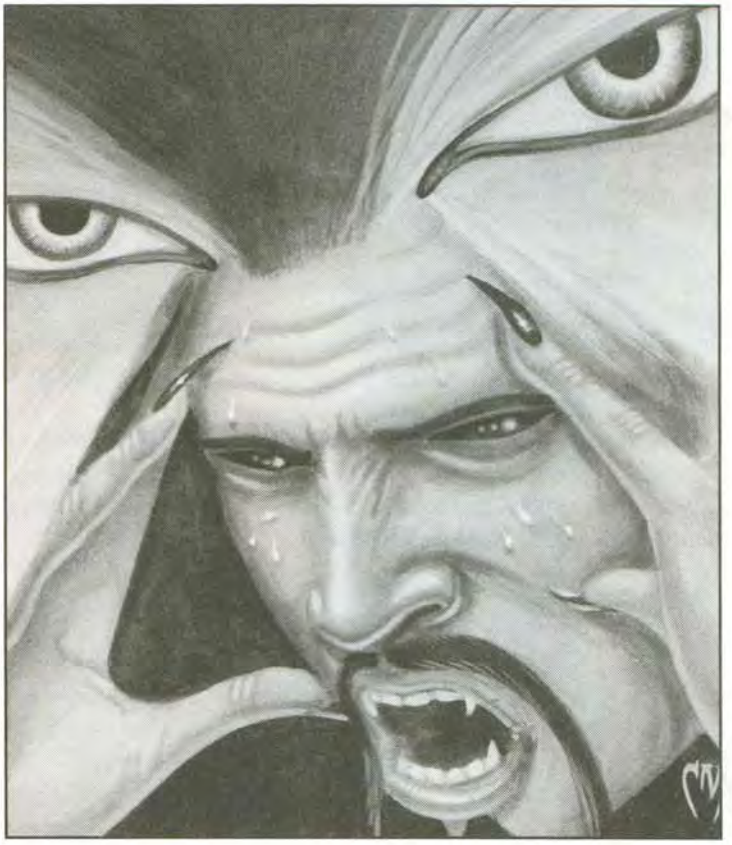
With that, the ancient bushi simply disappears, fading away into nothingness. If the characters choose to continue their mission to find Miya Yumi, they will find themselves on the trail of the Helm itself, and they could be the only hope to save a family or even an Empire.

The Uragirimono

(The numbers before the slash are for the spawn when they have taken over a host body. The second numbers are for the spawn in their natural form.)

Earth: 4/1
Water: 4/1
Fire: 3/2
Air: 3/5
Shadowlands Taint: 7.3
Shadowlands Powers: Hands of Stone, Uncanny Speed
Advantages: Quick (natural form only)
Disadvantages: Small (natural form only)
Skills: Defense 4, Jiujutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Stealth 4, Wrestling 4
TN to be Hit: 15/25
Attack Roll: 3k3 (host only)
Damage Roll: 4k2 (host only)

The Uragirimono are the detached tentacles of their dark master. They can instantly assume control of a dead body simply by crawling into it. If a host is killed, the tentacles dart from the body to seek a new host.



Chapter Two
Forbidden Knowledge

Forbidden Knowledge

"Knowledge of the Tao does not free one's soul from sin."
–Tetsuya

The mountains of the northern Phoenix lands loomed on the horizon. The trip had taken weeks. Weeks of avoiding battlefields littered with corpses, weeks of dodging patrols of clan magistrates, weeks of hunger, thirst, and exhaustion. Yogosha did not truly even know where he was going or why, only that the beautiful woman in his dreams commanded it.

He could not refuse.

By late afternoon, Yogosha had reached the base of the mountains. As he gathered his things for the climb into the mountains, he regarded his mount with sadness. The beast had served him well for years, yet he would be unable to take it with him. And he was not sure that he would return. He stroked the horse's mane while feeding it a treat from his satchel. He removed the saddle and bridle, dropping them to the ground. "You're free to find whatever fate the Fortunes have in store for you, old friend." Yogosha peered up at the mountains before him. "As am I."

Three days later, Iuchi Yogosha pulled himself onto a great ledge overlooking the fertile Phoenix lands far below him. His fingers were torn and bleeding, his robes tattered from a dozen falls. He had not anticipated the strength of the mountain winds, and his very bones felt as though they were weighed down with ice. His teeth chattering and his eyes blurred with fatigue, Yogosha looked up from his toil, certain that he would face yet another cliff that stretched seemingly into the clouds themselves.

Instead, he saw before him a level plateau, one whose distant edges were obscured by a thick mist. Near the center of the plateau, sitting atop a fallen boulder, a man sat deep in meditation. His serene features and simple garb hinted that he might be of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, a notion dispelled by the presence of a wakizashi at his side. As Yogosha stared, the man opened his eyes and regarded the Unicorn shugenja with a warm smile.

"You must be the other this mistress spoke of." The man hopped gracefully down from his perch and bowed low. "Konichi-wa, Iuchi-sama. I am Asako Shingon. It is my great privilege to meet you."

"Mistress?" Yogosha rasped. Did the Phoenix know of the woman who appeared in his dreams? The one who invaded his every meditation, urging him wordlessly to trek halfway across the Empire for some unknown purpose, to face some unknown fate? The battered Unicorn tried to voice his questions, but his aching body would not obey.

As if sensing Yogosha's unrest, the Asako smiled and opened his mouth to speak. But Yogosha never heard his words, as he had collapsed into an unconscious heap atop the mountain.

When Yogosha awoke, he found himself resting comfortably next to a small fire protected by the lee of the boulder where Shingon had been sitting. He sat up suddenly, surprised to find his various

injuries healed. He also felt as refreshed as if he'd slept for a great while, although he sensed that little time had actually passed. He peered curiously at the blaze that warmed him, which burned with no wood or obvious fuel. Yogosha had seen no scroll satchel upon the Phoenix. "You can summon the kami, then?" he asked the ascetic Shingon.

Shingon looked up from his meditation some distance across the plateau. "Summon them? No. I merely tell them clever riddles." Another easy grin spread across the henshin's face. "If they cannot guess the answer, then they do as I wish." Before Yogosha could question him further, Shingon stood up suddenly and crossed the plateau to sit across the fire from the Unicorn. "Meditate with me, friend. That we may understand our destiny."

Wordlessly, Yogosha assumed a serene position and closed his eyes. He allowed himself to drift into the realm of the mind, where the physical world seemed a distant memory. It was a familiar, comfortable process, one he practiced daily at his family's shrine in the Unicorn lands. This time, however, it was much different.

The shugenja felt a breeze whistle around the boulder, seeming to come through him rather than around him. When it passed by his ear, he could hear a whispering voice that resonated within his soul. "Welcome, my chosen servants. Your presence pleases me greatly, for you have been selected for a work fit for the Celestial Heavens themselves."

After so long hearing the voice in his dreams, at last the truth was revealed to Yogosha. "The Oracle of Light," he breathed. "The sacred lady of Air, mistress of the kami." It seemed so simple now. Who else could he have believed so beautiful a being to be?

"Yes," the voice whispered simply. "Time is now short. The Great Elemental Dragons have returned to the Heavens, for the celestial balance has been disturbed. Darkness spreads across the land as man unleashed things forbidden to mortals. The Black Scrolls are being opened, and the Dark Ones have crafted abominations, Elemental Terrors that should not exist within this realm."

Dark Ones. The Dark Oracles. Yogosha shivered uncontrollably. The myths were true. They did exist.

"They do. And my brothers and I have chosen to undo their evil. We will restore the balance. You will be our instruments, our implements of balance. You will create that which we require."

An image formed within Yogosha's mind. A weapon, crafted from the stuff of the elements themselves, blazing with power. "But Oracle," he protested weakly, "I know nothing of weapons, nor their construction. Surely I am not the one you seek."

"Your worldly knowledge matters little. You have been chosen."

Shingon stirred. "Why us, enlightened one? Surely your enormous power could craft such an object without the help of mortal men such as us."

"Indeed. But crafted by the Oracles, these objects would be things of the Heavens as well as of the world. And for the balance to be restored, they must be of the world only. Fortune favors the mortal man."

Iuchi Yogosha felt a sense of pride and honor that the Oracles had chosen him for such a task. He knew not why, but he would fulfill his destiny performing an honored task for the servants of the Heavens themselves. He could sense the Oracle's satisfaction.

"You honor your family and clan, men of Rokugan. We shall begin." More pictures sprang unbidden into Yogosha's mind. Their beauty was overwhelming.

Yogosha struggled with the powerful magic, as did Shingon beside him. For months they had toiled within the wilderness, seeking out the perfect location for each Elemental Weapon to be crafted. As always, the Oracles had provided the sign they needed. When the proper location was discovered, the materials would appear before them. A katana, a set of armor, a gunsen, a yari, and now a mempo.

As they had before, the two worked in tandem to craft the item. For days, Shingon coaxed the kami to occupy the item, slowly infusing it with the essence of an element. Then Yogosha would use his knowledge of Meishodo to erode the object's true name while Shingon contained the kami. Finally, the two would complete the sacred magic placed in their minds by the Oracles, destroying the physical object and leaving behind one composed only of the power of the elements themselves.

On this, the last of the Elemental items, something was different. Yogosha could not identify the strange sensation he felt, but as he gazed at the smooth, flawless surface of the mempo he and Shingon had discovered, he knew that somehow this was the moment of his true destiny.

"I sense it as well." As always, Shingon mirrored Yogosha's unspoken thoughts. "The magic we work here I do not fully understand. The way of the Void is unknown to me. I am no Ishiken." The henshin's brow ran with rivers of sweat from his arduous labors.

"It matters little, my friend. Our work here will soon be done, and we will have performed the task for which we were born. What comes after matters little." Shingon nodded in mute agreement.

As the final hours passed, Yogosha joined Shingon in his efforts. The mempo neared completion with each passing moment. As the last moments approached, the two felt a great calm come upon them, as well as a great weariness. At last Yogosha understood.

We give our lives that this final task might be completed. Our spirits join with the Void contained within it, giving it form. It is a good death.

The Oracle looked down upon the completed Mempo of Void. Lovingly, she returned the two bodies near it to the elements. With a thought, the Mempo disappeared only to reappear somewhere within the Empire, waiting to be found by mortal hands.

"The balance is restored," she whispered from her seat between the Heavens and Rokugan. "I only hope that man is strong enough to understand what must be done."

Significant Events

Year 1127, Month of the Horse (Early Summer)

Forbidden Knowledge (P9)

On the eve of the great Chrysanthemum Festival, as the other members of his clan join the rest of the Empire in a much-needed celebration, Isawa Tadaka makes a deadly decision. The Master of Earth has felt the power of the Black Scrolls, the knowledge that they contain. He has read four of the twelve now, and still his hunger for knowledge cannot be sated. In the dead of night, he wanders through the catacombs of Isawa Palace, seeking the scrolls that the other Masters have opened. One by one, he takes their knowledge for his own, each time giving a piece of his soul in return. Tadaka is soon reported missing.

A Hand for a Hand (PP)

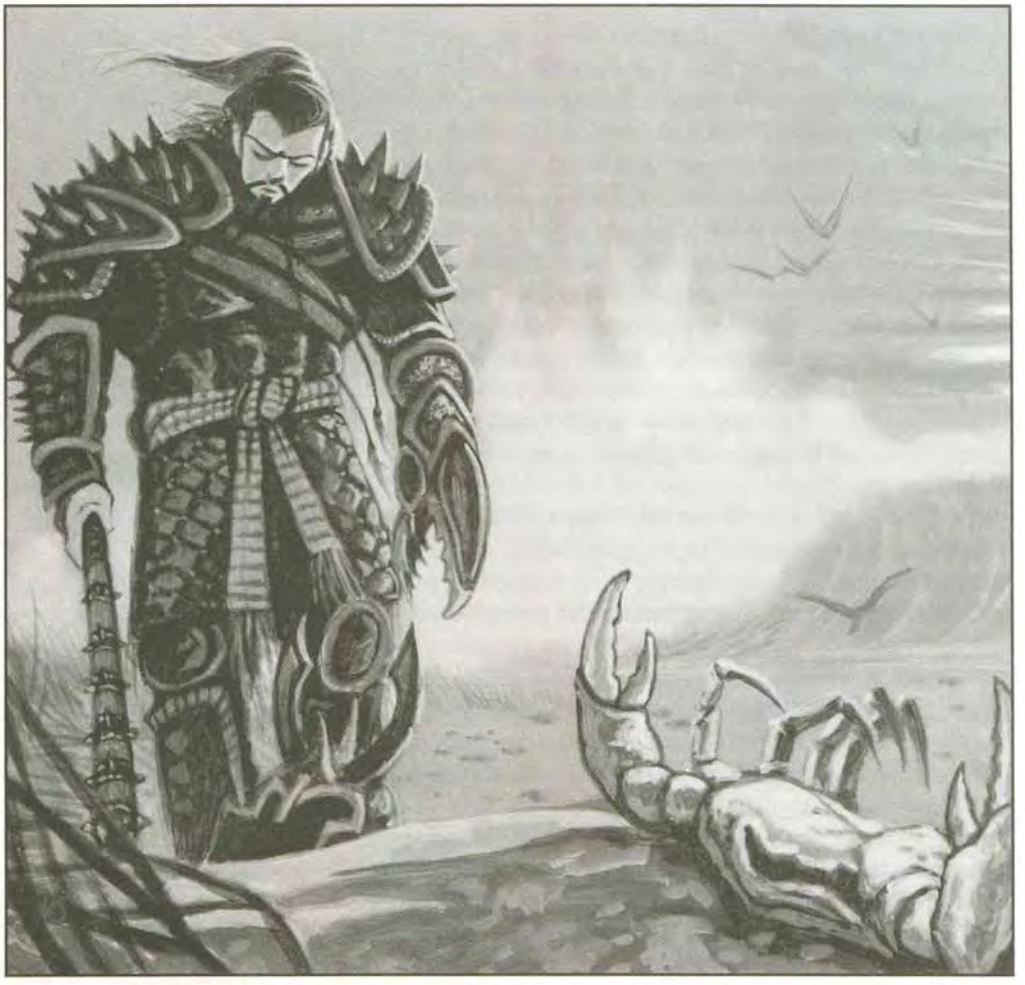
Twice before Mirumoto Hitomi and Hida Yakamo had met in combat. The first duel left Hitomi in shame, the second left Yakamo without a hand. On the field of battle during the struggle for Beiden Pass, the two warriors meet yet again. Around them, the forces of Hida Sukune and the ronin general Toturi clash, and the duel begins for the third time. Though Hitomi has grown in strength and cunning, Yakamo's prowess has been bolstered by darker means. Rain and wind tears at their armor, Hitomi raises her family's sword to strike. In a furious rage, Yakamo seizes the ancestral sword of the Dragon and snaps it in two, taking Hitomi's hand with it. Delivering a tremendous blow to her skull, Yakamo leaves the daimyo of the Mirumoto to die of her wounds. Hitomi's body is found and carried off the field by minions of Bayushi Kachiko; only the broken

Ancestral Sword of the Mirumoto is found. Erroneously believing Hitomi to be dead, Mirumoto Yukihira takes leadership of the Mirumoto family.

The Battle at Beiden Pass Ends (PP)

The two generals, Hida Sukune and Toturi, had circled each other, feinting and striking with their armies, for a month now. On the morning that the clouds bring down water and wind on the Pass, both know the battle will be finished before sundown. Sukune's strategy forces Toturi to rally his troops again and again as the Crab pushes the army of Dragon and ronin farther into Lion lands. Overzealous in his early advantage, Sukune pushes into Toturi's trap as a legion of Shinjo horsearchers fire from the Crab's right flank and a horde of screaming Battle Maidens crash into the left.

Within hours, the battle is decided, and Toturi's forces hold Beiden Pass. The Crab retreat south, and a defeated Hida Sukune prepares to face his father with news of the failure. The Crab general is never heard from again.



My Enemy's Weakness (CN6 and CN5)

With the Crane weakened by both the rampant plague and the Crab's assaults on their lands, the Lion decide to renew their attacks on the Crane with full force. At least two different armies are seen on the move, one led by Matsu Tsuko, the other by her hatamoto, Matsu Agetoki. Both invade the Crane lands, and although their final destination is not quite certain, it is clear that they are out for blood. Shiba Tsukune agrees to stay with her small force of Phoenix and defend their Crane allies. This declaration only encourages Tsuko further, as she still burns for the head of the Phoenix samurai-ko to be brought to her. Even with some of the most talented shugenja at her side, Tsukune and her Crane allies are hard pressed to keep Tsuko from burning Doji Palace to the ground.

Year 1127, Month of the Goat (Mid-Summer)

Darkness Feeds (CB17)

Following Sukune's report, the Great Bear looks for any alternative. As their target was clear to all the Empire, he knows it is only a matter of time before the Lion and perhaps others band together to finish off the wounded Crab as they did the Scorpion only years ago. In desperation, Kisada turns to his advisor, Kuni Yori, and commands him to bring more allies from the Shadowlands under his command. The Crab Champion states that he is willing to pay any price and offers himself as a sacrifice to the Shadowlands after their war is complete.

However, the forces of Fu Leng demand a different tribute. Reluctantly, Kisada agrees to the Kuni's wishes, and his two sons pay the price for new Crab strength. Hida Sukune is sacrificed and placed upon the Terrible Standard of Fu Leng, now carried by the Crab. Already bound to Jigoku by his new hand, Hida Yakamo is forced to lend his name to an oni. The Oni no Yakamo enters the world as an immense beast, already drawing great strength from the Crab's powerful name.

With the aid of further dark magic, the Crab fleet will be underway soon. As Kisada stares across a sea filled by both Crab ships and a foul ghost fleet, he begins to wonder who is serving whom.

Flight of the Dragons (D7)

Though the opening of each Black Scroll is felt by shugenja across the Empire, the Dragon have felt another change in the Celestial Pattern that disturbs them greatly. It is not long before the wise Agasha Tamori reveals to his family that the Elemental Dragons have turned a blind eye to the affairs of Rokugan. The Oracles have gone into hiding, and all attempts to contact the Heavenly Dragons have met with failure. With the absence of their daimyo and Kami, Tamori chooses to keep this information within the Dragon Clan.

Kachiko's Gift (A9)

After her duel with Hida Yakamo, Hitomi lay alone and unseen on the rocky lands of Beiden Pass. The Mother of Scorpions had kept the Dragon samurai under surveillance, and Scorpion agents bring Hitomi to the palace. After spending days in sickness and fevered speech, Hitomi awakens to find a gift from the Empress – a hand of black glass replacing the one Hida Yakamo took. In exchange for her help, Kachiko asks only that the Mirumoto daimyo enter the Test of the Emerald Champion and remember who has shown her such favor.

In Hitomi, Kachiko acquires a pawn with a dual purpose. She might be able to defeat Toshimoko and become the Emerald Champion, providing the lady of the Scorpions with a powerful and easily manipulated pawn. If, however, Hitomi is unable to defeat Toshimoko, then she can separate the Grey Crane from his clan and weaken her former paramour Hoturi's clan even further. As in all things, there is always a victory for the former wife of Bayushi Shoju.

The Darkness Released (various)

From the depths of the Shadowlands, the Dark Oracles release five of the most powerful oni the Empire has ever known. Each one twists the power of a different element, corrupting the very Harmonies themselves. Their power is unbelievable and their spawn quickly appear in all parts of the Empire. The oni seem most interested in the Unicorn and Phoenix provinces, although many come to stand beside the growing Crab army.

Sounds of the Dead (L13 and A9)

From within the Halls of the Ancestors, the Kitsu scream in pain as their ancestors cry out in unison. Somewhere, a Lion has performed an act that could topple the Empire. The voices are so numerous that none can figure out exactly what has occurred, but each sodan-senzo knows that something unspeakable has occurred.

In the palace of Otosan Uchi, a young Lion shugenja bows deeply to his Empress, holding out a simple wooden box, its surface covered in strange markings. "The Emperor will be most pleased," she declares, relieving the young Kitsu of his burden. After he leaves, Kachiko turns to Soshi Bantaro. Both Scorpion know what is contained in the box, and the Empress leaves it in Bantaro's care. Kachiko gives the Soshi leave to do with it whatever is in the interest of her designs, but forbids him to defile the corpse of her beloved husband with the Black Scroll.

Mirumoto Daini's Quest (departs from D12, passes through U20)

Preparing to move into Beiden Pass, Toturi and Mirumoto Yukihira send Mirumoto Daini, younger brother of the missing Mirumoto daimyo Hitomi, south toward the Shinomen Mori. Reports of ronin bushi – possibly Akodo or Scorpion – attacking passersby pique Toturi's interest. In hopes of gaining allies against the Crab, he sends Daini to make contact.

Traveling with a borrowed Kitsuki steed, Daini crosses the Lion lands to those of the Unicorn and proceeds south through the Iuchi Pass, a minor and rarely used pass through the Spine of the World Mountains. The great forest is only a short distance beyond. Within days of entering the forest, Daini discovers that the inhabitants of the Shinomen are not ronin at all – but warriors of the legendary Naga race.

Daini encounters the Mara and is taken before the Shahadet to present his request for an alliance.

Year 1127, Month of the Monkey (Late Summer)

The Test of the Emerald Champion (A9)

Drawn by the promise of glory and Imperial alliances, samurai from around the Empire arrive at Otosan Uchi to compete in the Test of the Emerald Champion. In the face of growing bandit attacks and

lawlessness in the Empire, many look to this day as a new hope for Rokugan.

Though all Clans make a showing for the Championship, one of the more notable samurai in attendance is Mirumoto Hitomi, thought to have been killed at Beiden Pass. On her arm rests a hand of pure black glass, unsettling to those who view it. Moments before the opening ceremonies commence, the aged Kakita sensei, Toshimoko, makes an appearance. Though wounded, he enters the contest.

Competition is fierce as the samurai test their skill for the honor of the Emerald Honor. It quickly becomes apparent that Kakita Toshimoko and Mirumoto Hitomi are the most skilled duelists in attendance. By sunset, the wounded Crane raises his sword in salute to the Dragon, who only sneers in return. Moments later, Toshimoko flicks a few drops of Hitomi's blood off his blade, and the Mirumoto daimyo is forced to concede. During Toshimoko's appointment as Emerald Champion, Hitomi is nowhere to be found.

Dark Mastery (P9)

Isawa Uona is terribly deformed during an accident while casting Dark Divination, the Black Scroll under her protection. While at home, she remains secluded, lest anyone see her porcelain face or the tears of blood that she now cries. Despite her corruption she remains in control of her soul and gains priceless insight to the movements of Tainted creatures all over the land.

Kharmic Balance (various Unicorn and Phoenix)

In an effort to counteract the efforts of their corrupted counterparts, the Oracles bring together an Asako and Iuchi shugenja to create a set of nemuranai. High within the mountains of the Phoenix, the two heroes work without pause to fulfill their destiny as the Oracles have commanded. Asako Shingon's connection to the kami and Yogosha's use of Meishodo allow them to create the powerful artifacts. In the end, they forfeit their lives in the creation of the items, and the Oracles rest knowing that these mortals have balanced what the Dark Oracles had upset.

Hoturi Returns (various Crane lands)

In small villages throughout the Crane provinces, a rumor is spreading like wildfire. The Champion of the Crane has returned to his people, but he is a changed man. Those who see him say that a dark fire seems to burn in his eyes, and a furious temper has possessed Doji Hoturi. Even more troubling then his change are the "allies" he has brought to the aid of the once-peaceful clan. Hordes of the plague-ridden bodies in the Crane provinces have risen from their eternal slumber to fight under the banner of their lord, and every passing day his army grows greater.

Year 1127, Month of the Rooster (Early Fall)

Yoritomo's Command (A29)

As Yoritomo begins to array his forces, he turns his sights to the growing army of the Black Ronin, Toturi. The Mantis Champion sees in Toturi what he wishes others to see in him, and dispatches his

most trusted lieutenant, Kamoto, to join with the Black Ronin and learn what he can.

Secrets Revealed (P9)

Having spent several months in the lands of the Phoenix, the Dragon shugenja Togashi Yama has been honored several times with the chance to speak with the Elemental Masters. He has spoken the most frequently with Isawa Tsuke. During one of their talks, the Master of Fire became annoyed at the Togashi's seemingly useless questions and answers. In an angry outburst, he growled that such meaningless nonsense was why the Dragon have yet to do anything to save the Empire from the growing power of the Shadowlands. Tsuke denounced the Dragon Clan while claiming he and his cousins have already "made sacrifices to bring the power of the Scrolls under control."

Yama leaves that same night, as Tsuke's temper and declarations have confirmed what he was sent to learn – the Council of Masters is slowly being overtaken by the Taint, and has opened at least one of the legendary Black Scrolls.

The Price of Victory (A9)

Kakita Toshimoko, the newly named Emerald Champion, dons the Emerald Armor and begins to investigate the Empress Kachiko. Before long, the Emperor gives his champion his first command: restore the Emerald Magistrates to their former glory, and investigate the rumors of Doji Hoturi practicing dark magic and leading an army of undead.

Return of the True Champion (PP)

In the dead of night, a small masked ronin delivers the barely-living body of Doji Hoturi to Toturi's camp. With the aid of the mysterious magic of the Dragon tattooed men, Hoturi recovers enough to relate the tale of Bayushi Kachiko's dark use of the Egg of P'an Ku. Toturi agrees to keep his friend safe until he is well enough to fight. The Black Ronin then takes a large portion of his army and sets out for the lands of the Crane at Hoturi's request, leaving an army of Unicorns led by Shinjo Yasamura in control of Beiden Pass.

Year 1127, Month of the Dog (Mid-Fall)

The Shadows Prepare (A9)

As the falling of the leaves signifies the coming of winter, the shadows are making arrangements.

Bayushi Goshiu works from within the capital city of Otosan Uchi, drawing his web taut in anticipation of the coming Winter Court. His manipulations have kept the Crane and Lion at war, with naught but a few Phoenix to aid the weakened Crane. Before long, the Lion will overrun Doji's clan and move toward the cowardly Phoenix. Goshiu's duty is to make sure that there are no more alliances made this winter and that the coming spring is truly one of war.

Kachiko, meanwhile, reads her latest letter from the Unicorn general, Shinjo Yasamura. He truly thinks that he has won her support as well as the Lion's. Of course she will not disabuse him of the notion, which has turned the Unicorn against Toturi. The letters she has sent to the Lion will surely seal his fate. She holds the rice paper over the small candle on her table and smiles, watching it burn.

Trapping Tactics (various Lion and Crane)

As Toturi leads his army to the Crane lands, the forces of the Lion, led by Matsu Gohei, intercept him. The Lion do not parley, and launch an immediate charge into the ranks of ronin and Dragon samurai. Toturi manages to break his much smaller force away from Gohei and retreats to Beiden Pass, only to find that the poison words of a Scorpion have led the Unicorn to betray him. The ronin general will spend the next months feinting, dodging, and skirmishing, but ultimately fleeing the Lion.

A Turn for the Worse (N3)

The Dashmar, the political voice of the Naga, has returned from the Imperial Court after urging the clans to end the wars. To his disappointment, he has met violent opposition from the Empress Kachiko, and his words were barely heard. The Shahadet is not pleased with what he hears. The Balash speaks with open contempt of the humans, insisting that they brought the evil upon themselves and that they must be destroyed. For now, the Qamar is keeping the two in check, but many within the Akasha feel that they should rule the world once again, and that the humans are only standing in their way.

Return of the Fallen Lord (A9)

Unknown to Lady Kachiko, Soshi Bantaro has used the Black Scroll to bring the soul of Bayushi Shoju back to the Emerald Empire. Twisted by dark magics, the undead Shoju prepares an army of Shadowlands creatures and undead to do the bidding of his new master, Fu Leng. Though he has changed, Shoju is still a general, and has enacted several orders that will prepare a fearsome army for him. Before he departs the Emperor's City, however, there is someone he will wish to see – his lovely bride.

What's New

New Maho Kiho

The power of the darkness spreads as the Great Clans begin accessing forbidden magic, each instance giving power to the Dark Lord. Because of this, many powers once thought lost are surfacing again, including Dark Kiho. (Rules for Dark Kiho can be found in *Way of the Shadowlands*.)

Blessings of Jigoku

Type: Dark
Element: Taint
Mastery: 5

By summoning forth the power of a lost soul, this kiho grants the wisdom of the dead to an ally of the *maho-tsukai*. When cast, the shugenja or monk must target a dead creature it is touching. The maho-tsukai may then use any skill known to the dead person in life, at a rank equal to the tsukai's Shadowlands Taint rank (but not surpassing the dead person's original skill). This kiho may remain in effect for up to 10 rounds, or one round after physical contact is lost, whichever is first.

Bloodstrike

Type: Dark
Element: Taint
Mastery: 3

This terrifying kiho is thankfully known to only a few *maho-tsukai* in the Empire. Thought to have been created by Iuchiban, it has been passed down to Fu Leng's most devout followers. By summoning the darkness of the air around them and powering it with his own corrupted blood, users are able to strike his opponents' very souls with corrupted lightning. Those who are struck with this lightning instantly lose one point of Void. If he has no Void to spend, he instead takes 3k1 Wounds from the black lightning and gains 1 point of Taint. This kiho can only be cast by spilling tainted blood, and has a range of thirty feet.

New Spell

Courage of the Seven Thunders

Element: Earth
Mastery Level: 2
Duration: 1 hour
Area of Effect: 5′ radius
Range: 10′

By calling forth the spirit of those who have fought the darkness before, the caster(s) can create a powerful barrier of magic. Any number of casters can participate in the spell's casting; for each shugenja involved the area of effect increases by a five-foot radius and the range increases by five feet. Those who attempt to pass through the barrier will feel as though they are walking through mud. Although breathing is unaffected, movement is halved. Anyone possessing any amount of Taint will feel physical pain while passing through the barrier, as each round the spell causes 1k1 Wounds for every rank of Taint (rounded up) the character or creature has.

New Items

Elemental Items

All Elemental Items are crafted of powerful magic. All are considered to be magic items and can hurt creatures normally hurt only by crystal or jade. In addition, all do damage as a magic attack of their appropriate element. For example, a creature vulnerable to water would be affected appropriately by the Gunsen of Water.

Gunsen of Water

While not a seemingly powerful weapon in its own right, the Gunsen provides the protection and power of the Water Dragon. When used as a fan, the Gunsen takes on the shape of a fan appropriate to its environment, from an intricate fan for a Scorpion's court to a tessen fit for the Akodo of legend.

Beyond its shapeshifting abilities, the Gunsen transmits its strength to its user. While in possession of the Gunsen, a person need not fear the power of water. The user becomes instantly aware when a Water spell targets him, and may choose to raise the TN of the spell by 30. Even if the bearer of the Gunsen is successfully

targeted by a Water spell, he may choose to halve all the effects. If used as a weapon, the Gunsen grants the wielder greater power, allowing him to defend himself while following through with an attack. As a tessen, the Gunsen does 1k3 Wounds and raises the user's TN to be hit by twice his Water Ring. All Battle and Tessen rolls using the Gunsen of Water roll and keep one extra die.

Armor of Earth

Arguably the most powerful of all the elemental artifacts, the Armor of Earth grants unparalleled Strength and Stamina to the wearer. While wearing the Armor, this character's Strength and Stamina are raised by one each and the character's TN to be hit is increased by 20. The Armor of Earth is considered heavy armor, but does not inflict the usual penalties heavy armor does.

Katana of Fire

This powerful katana has a 4k3 damage rating, and inflicts an additional 1k1 Wounds of fire damage. Once per day, the wielder may cast Fires From Within as though he were a School Rank 4 shugenja (the Katana imparts no Affinity or Deficiency for Fire). Add one to his Fire Ring for casting this spell.

Yari of Air

One of the greatest attributes of this weapon is the fact that it is completely invisible to all but the person holding it. Those who have a strong connection to the elements may sense the item's power, but they still cannot see it. The Yari has a 3k4 damage rating and grants the wielder an additional attack each round. As the air kami surround the bearer, they offer great protection as well. Ranged attacks and spells targeting this character have their TN raised by 10.

Mempo of the Void

This helmet contains the life force of the two shugenja who created the Elemental Artifacts. Their deaths finalized their creation, connecting the Mempo to the Void and the mortal world. The wearer or the helmet is immune to all mind control spells and abilities and cannot lose Void for any reason other than spending it of his own free will. Seeing through the eyes of the Mempo of the Void allows him to see into the elemental patterns of the universe. Natural or magically invisibility items or beings are revealed, and those who are affected by spells or favored by the kami in some way (monks or shugenja) are readily apparent. In addition, he is considered to have a +1 Void while wearing the Mempo.

The Terrible Standard of Fu Leng

This twisted and foul war banner has rested in the Shadowlands for generations. Among the denizens of Fu Leng's realm it is a legend that one day the Standard shall be borne by mortal hands to crush the Empire. By itself, the standard is a fearsome item, striking terror into all who look upon it. When fed with the power of blood, it can become a deadly source of power for those with a connection to the Dark Lord. Each time a human sacrifice is made to the standard, all within 500′ of the banner may roll and keep an extra die when attacking and when rolling for damage as long as their Shadowlands Rank is above 2. In addition, maho spells receive a free raise when cast within the standard's 500′ radius. Fu Leng's favor lasts longer with a greater sacrifice, and the power of the Standard lasts for one full month per School Rank of the sacrificed person.

Adventure Hooks

A shadow is spreading across the Empire. As the great houses of the Empire are inexorably drawn into the struggle, the powers of the Shadowlands have struck out fiercely. The Dark Oracles have even seen fit to employ their might, setting loose the Elemental Terrors and their spawn upon the Emerald Empire.

The following are adventures that will help your heroes fight the darkness in unique ways. There are no restrictions on these scenarios, and they can easily fit into any campaign during the Clan War. They follow closely the story of Iuchi Yogosha and

Asako Shingon, and the Elemental Terrors, allowing the characters to have a brush with the corruption of the Elements or become fully drawn into the plan of the Dark Oracles. GMs are encouraged to have the Oracles, both Light and Dark, make several appearances if more than one of these adventures are used.

Oracles as NPCs

As extensions of the Immortal Dragons into the realm of man, the Oracles do not often interfere in the affairs of Rokugan. Usually they await those who seek them in their fantastic and remote lairs, answering worthy questioners with the wisdom of the Heavens. They are not allowed to take a hand in the affairs of a mortal's life unless they are invited or threatened in some manner. The threat doesn't even need to be truly frightening – a man simply speaking ill of the Dragons or their Oracles is reason enough for the wrath of an Oracle. In addition, the Dark Oracles are quite adept at getting around the laws that govern them by indirectly meddling in the affairs of mortals. Though the Oracles of Light do so on occasion, it is usually to undo the influence of their corrupted counterparts.

Using these guidelines, it is easiest to keep the Oracles in the roles they should occupy – sideline dramatic forces, as either a resource for determined characters or a catalyst for a great journey or quest. Oracles are as unlikely to "join a party" as their Celestial masters, and rarely do they perform any task other than simply answering a question or working the will of the Dragons.

Fire

Location: Crane or Phoenix lands

Challenge

Your party has been asked to deliver a package to Shiba Tsukune, gunso of the Phoenix armies aiding the Crane in their war. This can be given to the characters anywhere in or between Phoenix and Crane lands by a messenger; if the characters are in Shiro Shiba, they will be contacted by an envoy of Shiba Ujimitsu himself. The package itself is sealed with the chop of the Champion of the Phoenix Clan and is clearly a katana.

Focus

The trip from the Phoenix provinces to Kyuden Doji is far from easy. Along the way are both Lion and Shadowlands armies that should be rather difficult to avoid. Although the party may not meet up with the whole of either army, it could easily run into a small unit or scouting party. There have also been rumors of a strange beast roaming the fields of the Crane, a beast made of foul waters and swallowing brave samurai whole.

Strike

The reports of the water oni are true, and a foul Oni no Mizu spawn has decided to wreak havoc across the fields of the Doji while the defenders are elsewhere. When the characters enter the lands with Tsukune's package, the Oni no Mizu seeks the package like a bloodhound and ruthlessly attacks the characters. Whoever is actually carrying the package receives the brunt of Mizu's fury. On the second or third hit from the oni, the character is sent sprawling, and the package hits the ground and splits open.

The Katana of Fire lies on the ground unsheathed, and the Oni immediately becomes wary. A raw Perception check at TN 10 allows a character to recognize that the oni is less afraid of the party than it is of the flaming weapon. Anyone who simply decides that swinging a flaming katana at the oni is the best thing to do also notices Mizu's fear. With the Katana in hand, the Mizu spawn should be no match for the party.

Of course, now the party must explain how the katana's packaging came open to a skeptical Shiba Tsukune.

Oni no Mizu

Elemental Terror of Water

Earth: 3
Fire: 2
Water: 7
Air: 4
Rolls When Attacking: 5k4
Rolls For Damage: 6k3
TN to be Hit: 20
Armor: 5
Wounds: 25: +5; 50: +10; 100: Dead

Special Abilities:

Teleportation

Mizu can collapse in upon itself and reform anywhere else within 500'. It may also act during a round in which it performs this action.

Invulnerability

Mizu is vulnerable to fire and takes double damage from all fire-based attacks.

Engulf

Mizu automatically engulfs and digests any creature that it kills with an attack. It may then shape-shift into the form of that creature at will, perfectly mimicking form, appearance, speech, and non-magical equipment. (Magical items and scrolls are not engulfed.) Mizu also absorbs the memories of those it engulfs, though this knowledge is not specific enough to allow it to call upon skills, Rank Techniques, and spells. Mizu can only replicate the last creature it engulfs; if it engulfs someone else, all previous memories and ability to replicate other creatures are lost. Mizu cannot teleport when replicating another creature's form.

Air

Location: Crane lands

Challenge

While in the lands of the Crane, the party meets a young man by the name of Daidoji Tsumerai. He is tired, and he needs help. It is obvious that he has not slept in many days and has been through a terrible ordeal. Before he can even ask the party for help, he collapses before them.

When the young Crane becomes coherent once again, he tells his story. His small unit of Daidoji Saboteurs had been ordered to slow down Doji Hoturi's army. They walked into an ambush and were nearly killed to a man. Tsumerai, having lost his weapon within the first few minutes of combat, picked up a strange-looking yari. With it, he somehow fought his way free from the ambush. He then hid the yari, and has been on the run ever since.

Focus

The young Daidoji asks for the party's assistance in slowing the Dark Army's approach. He is desperate and promises everything from glory to the powerful artifact that he discovered in return for their aid. Although he is now only one where once there were twenty, he is determined not to fail in his duty. If the PCs accept they will gain favor with the Crane, a clan that possesses both influence and wealth, but it will also mean facing an army of Shadowlands madmen.

Strike

What the Crane neglects to tell the party is that, while on the run, he was attacked by the ground itself. It didn't hurt him directly, but it flung stones and trees at him indiscriminately, and he believes that only his ancestors' guidance kept him alive. Although he was able to make it this far, both the small unit and the creature that attacked him are still following him. He also never hid the yari. He still carries it with him, and although it is invisible to the naked eye, a shugenja with a connection to the Air kami may be able to detect a powerful force nearby.

While following Tsumerai's lead back to the ambush he was preparing, the corrupt Oni of Earth will attack the party, again focusing on the bearer of the Elemental artifact. The young Daidoji

bequeaths the Yari of Air to anyone who claims or shows any prowess with such a weapon. Oni no Jimen will then turn upon this new target, shaking the very ground the party walks upon.

Shortly after the encounter with Oni no Jimen, the army Tsumerai was sent to delay appears. Unable to prepare a proper trap, the Daidoji urges the characters to follow him back to his army, where he will introduce them as heroes to his daimyo, Daidoji Uji.

Oni no Jimen

Elemental Terror of Earth

Earth: 7
Fire: 3
Water: 4
Air: 2
Rolls When Attacking: 5k4
Rolls For Damage: 7k4
TN to be Hit: 10
Armor: 10
Wounds: 35: +5; 70: +10; 140 : Dead

Special Abilities:

Stone Passage

Oni no Jimen can pass through barriers made of earth, metal, or stone at its normal movement.

Invulnerability

Is also vulnerable to steel of Fine Quality; it is said that the purity of the metal rebels at the corruption that is Jimen.

Quake

The earth shakes in Jimen's wake. All skill rolls within 100′ of the oni receive a +5 to their TN. All skill rolls within 10′ receive a +10 to their TN. This shaking causes fragile structures to crumble and fall apart.

Water

Location: Otosan Uchi

Challenge

At the Imperial Court, the diplomats of the Clans are vying for control. With the Emperor dying on his bed, he who commands the court can command the Empire. Amid all of the political maneuvering, strange rumors are beginning to surface. Whispers of ancient evil, gaijin attacks, and even ninja are becoming commonplace. No one can be trusted.

Late one evening, a diplomat from a clan associated with the party approaches the characters. She tells them that a caravan carrying an important family heirloom has been robbed just days outside Otosan Uchi. She does not know exactly who the thieves are, but she is sure that the PCs are capable of finding them.

If the characters take the offer, they are forced to obtain information from the Imperial Court as to the whereabouts of this caravan. While they may have many allies within the court, remember: with the darkness that has fallen over the Empire, nothing is for certain.

Focus

The party's investigations lead them to a small set of caves where the thieves are likely hiding. Unknown to the party the cave is not a lair for thieves, but rather the nesting ground for an Oni no Taki-bi spawn. Should the oni becomes aware of their presence, it sends a group of Uragirimono to deal with the party. If the characters survive the attack, they can attempt to track the creatures whence they came with a Hunting roll vs. TN 15.

Strike

The truth of the matter is that the "heirloom" that they are tracking is a powerful item known as the Gunsen of Water, currently in the hands of Bayushi Goshiu. In addition to this, the diplomat who approached the characters was actually the Oracle of Water in disguise. Wresting the Gunsen out of Scorpion hands will be a relatively easy task, as far as dealing with Scorpions goes. Goshiu is aware of the artifact's nature and will agree to relinquish it to characters sent by the Oracle, for a favor later on. After that, they still have the oni to deal with.

Oni no Taki-bi

Elemental Terror of Fire

Earth: 4
Fire: 7
Water: 2
Air: 3
Rolls When Attacking: 7k7
Rolls For Damage: 4k1
TN to be Hit: 15
Armor: 4
Wounds: 30: +5; 60: +10; 120: Dead

Special Abilities:

Flight

Taki-bi can hover up to thirty feet above the ground at its normal movement rate.

Flaming Aura

Anyone who touches Oni no Taki-bi takes 1k1 Wounds from fire. Any wood or partially wood weapons (including arrows, bo, and tetsubo) incinerate upon contact with Taki-bi and are rendered useless.

Invulnerability

Is vulnerable to water; takes 1k1 Wounds per gallon of water hurled at it, and takes double damage from all ice-based attacks. The Gunsen of Water also inflicts double damage on Taki-bi.

Hurl Flame

Taki-bi may scoop balls of flaming energy from itself and hurl them at opponents. It may hurl these projectiles up to 1,000′. They inflict 5k4 Wounds in a ten-foot radius.

Void

Location: Unicorn Lands

Challenge

If the characters have completed the first three of these adventure hooks, they may well be wondering about the items and their connection to the Elemental Terrors. Characters seeking answers may wish naturally look to the Phoenix. Others may suggest questioning the Agasha, as they are experts regarding nemuranai. Some players may just be stumped and ask any monk or shugenja who seems fairly knowledgeable. Even if they aren't exactly concerned about the items or their origins, they will eventually be met by a hooded man who broaches the subject unexpectedly.

Characters who start probing for the history of the artifacts will eventually be directed to the same place the nameless samurai suggests. Daikoku Seido (U16) rests on the very edge of the Unicorn lands and the very end of Rokugan. The weapons fit Unicorn make, and monks and shugenja from all over the Empire frequent the opulent shrine. If any can answer the mystery, they will be found there.

Even if the party is not involved in the previous adventures, this hook can be fitted to characters who are in Unicorn lands when the action occurs.

Focus

Fortunately, the characters will be able to learn anything they wish from the monks at Daikoku Seido. They are familiar with the shugenja Iuchi Yogosha, his Phoenix collaborator Asako Shingon, and the items they created. When the two passed their souls into the Mempo of the Void, the great helm, the Armor of Earth, and Yogosha's scrolls detailing the artifacts came to rest at the Unicorn shrine. If the characters ask to see the Mempo of the Void, the monks gladly display it for them.

Strike

Unfortunately, the Dark Oracles have become aware of the shrine's importance as well, and have sent their terrors to destroy Daikoku Seido and the artifacts. The finale of these adventures can be low-key or dramatic, depending on how the characters have handled the first of these hooks. If this is the party's first encounter with the Elemental Terrors, this could be a simple matter of defending the temples.

Otherwise, the characters should have a relatively good idea of something larger going on. The Terrors they have already faced are the original spawn of the Terror Overlords, and Akeru and Kaze spawn have come to take revenge personally for their lost "brothers."

If the characters fail, the Elemental Items will be corrupted and taken by the Dark Oracles to further strengthen the Terrors.

When combat begins the Oni no Akeru hides, and ambushes PCs and monks from the shadows mercilessly. If a character thinks to don the Mempo of the Void, most of Akeru's surprise advantage will be neutralized.

Oni no Akeru

Elemental Terror of the Void

Earth: 3
Fire: 3
Water: 3
Air: 3
Void: 7 (special, see below)
Rolls When Attacking: 3k3
Rolls For Damage: 3k3
TN to be Hit: 15
Armor: 7
Wounds: 20: +5; 45: +10; 90: Dead
Special Abilities:

Invulnerability

Standard.

Walk Through Nothing

Akeru can meld with shadows at will, vanishing into nothing. Anyone attempting to find Akeru must make an opposed Perception roll against the oni's Void. The oni must reveal itself before it can attack.

Void

Akeru is the only known Shadowlands creature that can use Void. This Void is not its own – it most be stolen from another source (see Void Sap). The oni begins with 7 Void and can spend Void Points normally. Akeru's Void Ring increases and decreases equal to the Void Points it has remaining. Akeru recovers its Void at the rate of one per hour (by stealing Void from the elements around it) until it has seven again. If Akeru ever has a Void Ring of zero, it is destroyed.

Void Sap

Any Void Points spent within 100′ of Akeru are canceled and added to Akeru's own Void. Akeru may make an opposed Void roll against any opponent it strikes in combat. If this attack is successful, Akeru steals one point of Void from its target as well as inflicting normal damage. For every two Raises Akeru makes on its attack roll, it steals an additional Void Point. It may steal Akasha points as if they were Void.

Void Strike:

By spending 10 Void Points, Akeru can release a focused beam of stolen Void. Akeru must roll to attack normally. If successful, this beam inflicts 10k10 Wounds on a single target. Targets killed by this attack are utterly and completely consumed. Their bodies and souls are lost. At the GM's discretion, such a consumed character cannot take advantage of the Kharma rule.

Telepathy

Akeru communicates without sound. It may mentally broadcast and receive messages with other thinking creatures within 1000′. It cannot read thoughts other than those specifically directed toward it.

Oni no Kaze

Elemental Terror of Air

Earth: 2
Fire: 4
Water: 3
Air: 7
Rolls When Attacking: 6k4
Rolls For Damage: 5k2
TN to be Hit: 35
Armor: None
Wounds: 20: +5; 40: +10, 80: Dead
Special Abilities:

Flight

Kaze can move up to Air x 5 feet each round and still act, double that distance if it does nothing but move.

Invulnerability

Takes double damage from all magic.

Twisted Elements

All spells cast within 100′ by enemies of Kaze have their TN raised by 25. Any spell that fails due to this increase in TN is immediately added to Kaze's spell list, and the scroll is destroyed.

Spells: Knows up to 10 randomly chosen spells of any Mastery Level. Oni no Kaze has unlimited spell slots in each element. However, when Kaze casts a spell, it is permanently removed from its spell list. Kaze is considered to be a Rank 5 shugenja with affinity for all elements.

Who's Who

The False Hoturi

Doom of the Crane

Earth: 4
Water: 6
Fire: 4
Agility 6
Air: 5
Reflexes 6
Void: 0
Shadowlands Taint: 4.8

Shadowlands Symptoms: No physical symptoms. The False Hoturi radiates an aura of unease that unsettles all who are around him.

Shadowlands Powers: Demonic Charisma, Uncanny Speed, Unholy Stamina

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 5
Honor: 0.3
Glory: 7.6
Advantages: Cadence
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Lecherous, Sworn Enemy (Doji Hoturi)

Skills: Battle 5, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, History (Rokugan) 3, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 6, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Lion Clan) 2, Meditation 2, Poetry 5, Political Maneuvering 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 4

The False Hoturi has lived only a few short weeks, but it has the memories of a full life. A life of honor and precision, of beauty and devotion. A life wasted on meaningless drivel. The memories and actions of the man it has replaced – the man he has become – fill him with loathing and disgust. Power is to be used, strength to be demonstrated, and weakness to be crushed without hesitation.

In the weeks since the true Doji Hoturi disappeared, the False Hoturi has alienated all who were close to the Crane Champion. His brash and dishonorable actions have confused them, and his brazen lewdness has shocked and horrified all who witness it. Yet the Crane are sworn to serve him, and so they endured it for far longer than might be expected. It was so easy to lead them to their own damnation.

The False Hoturi now marches at the head of an army of corrupted warriors and shambling undead. Villages, cities, fortresses and palaces lay shattered in his wake. The Empire looks on in horror as the Champion of the Crane lays waste to his own lands, driven mad by some unknown force. The insolent Doji Kuwanan and Daidoji Uji oppose his advance, betraying their own oaths of fealty to save the clan. Perhaps these mewling pups will prove a challenge to the False Hoturi, called the Black Crane, the Doom of the Crane, by the peasants he butchers in the fields.

At the back of his mind, the False Hoturi feels something. A strange, tingling sensation. Is it possible that the true Hoturi is free, drawing nearer to the impostor and his army of Shadowlands madmen? Does the fool really think to halt the inevitable? Does he believe that the Crane will ever trust him again after the devastation his likeness has visited upon them?

The foul creature that wears Hoturi's face hopes beyond hope that he will meet the true Crane Champion upon the field of battle. Only then will the fool's defeat be complete. Only then will there be one, true Hoturi.

Only then will the Crane Clan die.

Akiyoshi

Ronin Hero

Earth: 2
Willpower: 4
Water: 2
Perception: 3
Fire: 2
Intelligence: 3
Air: 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Sword of Yotsu 1, Gaze of Sun Tao 1
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 0.0 (True Ronin)
Advantages: Bland, Higher Purpose (help others)
Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Ronin), Dark Secret

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 3, Conversation 4, Dance 4, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 4, Katana 3, Kyujutsu 3, Law 3, Meditation 2, Seduction 5

The masked ronin Akiyoshi first appeared recently, but has already accrued quite a reputation. The heimin regard him as a hero, a force for justice and mercy. He has risked his life helping farmers to escape the Shadowlands Horde or using his talents to punish murderous bandits. Akiyoshi's true identity has become a subject of legend.

Those who know Akiyoshi know a sliver of the truth. Akiyoshi is not a man, but a young woman posing as a male samurai.

What is the truth?

Once, there was a young girl of the Akodo house, betrothed to a powerful Matsu noble. During the coup, her three brothers died battling the Scorpion. Her father committed seppuku to protest the Emperor's banishment of the Akodo. She was left alone, her future now uncertain. Taking up her brother's armor and father's sword, she sought out the banner of the Wolf.

Is this the truth?

Once there was a maidservant of Bayushi Kachiko who watched her mistress with growing concern. On a dark night, she noticed the limp form of Doji Hoturi being carted to the dungeons, and made a difficult choice. Covering her face so that the Scorpion would not find her, she has embarked upon a path of honor.

Is this the truth?

It is said that when Bayushi Shoju's soldiers cleansed the Hantei line, there was one who escaped. A young cousin of Hantei, so beautiful that she melted the heart of the Scorpion assassin come to take her life. Instead, he gave her his mask and helped her escape. She does not know what became of her would-be killer, but she intends to pass on the mercy he granted her.

Is this the truth?

Once, a geisha named Hatsuko loved a man so much that she was willing to risk everything. Despite her sacrifice, her decision destroyed exactly what she held dear. In the end, it is said she paid the price for her weakness with her death. Her body was never found, and some wonder whether Hatsuko now lives under another name.

What is the truth?

If asked, Akiyoshi would reply that the truth does not matter. The past cannot be changed. What matters is the time that we have left, and what we do with it.

Akiyoshi has been given a second chance, and she intends to make the best of it.

Bayushi Goshiu

Scorpion Master of Lies

Earth: 3
Willpower 4
Water: 3
Perception 5
Fire: 3
Intelligence 5
Air: 5
Awareness 6
Void: 4
School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 5
Honor: 1.5
Glory: 4.7

Advantages: Blackmail (many), Clear Thinker, Heartless, Precise Memory, Read Lips

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Social Disadvantage

Skills: Acting 2, Bard 3, Courtier 6, Etiquette 4, Forgery 2, Heraldry 3, Intimidation 3, Investigation 4, Law 4, Manipulation 6, Oratory 5, Poison 4, Sincerity 4, Seduction 3, Shintao 3, Stealth 3, Tantojutsu 3

Goshiu was once one of the most feared opponents in all of the Rokugani courts, second only to the likes of Kakita Yoshi and his own mistress Bayushi Kachiko. His ruthless manipulation of gossip and public perception was legendary. It was said that after a moment's observation he could destroy the reputation of a complete stranger with a single sentence. This surely would be considered hyperbole had he not so aptly demonstrated this facility on numerous occasions. His network of conspirators extended into virtually every court in the nation, and many found themselves ensnared in the Scorpion's web with little or no idea how they came to such dire straits.

With the fall of his clan, Goshiu's personal power has waned considerably. He still holds secrets over the heads of many, but he is unable to move among the courts himself, a considerable disadvantage for one so skilled in manipulation. His information network has been weakened as well, as many have taken advantage of his temporary displacement to extricate themselves from his sinister machinations.

He remembers each and every one of those who have abandoned him. They believe that they are beyond his grasp. The realization that they are not will come in time, and is an experience that few will survive unscathed.

Despite his outcast status, Goshiu is hardly powerless. There is not a court in the land without at least one major player in thrall to him. Although the tapestry of lies he has spent his life weaving was not created with the intent to outlast the clan that spawned it, it has done so miraculously well. For the most part, Goshiu follows the lead of his lady Kachiko, using his power to pit the enemies of the Scorpion against one another, furthering the chaos that plagues the land. Centuries-old alliances wither at his touch, and long-forgotten offenses explode into new life with staggering vehemence. The murderers of his lord Bayushi Shoju now find themselves tearing one another apart at the slightest provocation.

Hidden in the shadows of the Emerald Empire, Bayushi Goshiu smiles. He waits only for the day when his lady will put into motion the means to return the Scorpion to their proper place. On that day, he will return openly to the courts, and all of Rokugan will know that they are but puppets in his hands, mere pawns in service to the true master of the court.

Mirumoto Taki

Dragon Clan Bushi

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Strength: 4
Fire: 5
Air: 4
Reflexes: 6
Void: 4
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 4
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 5.5

Advantages: Absolute Direction, Way of the Land – Dragon, True Friend (Takuan), Social Position (Magistrate)

Disadvantages: Dark Fate

Skills: Battle 4, Defense 4, Go 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 2, Law 4, Lore (Shugenja) 3, Meditation 4, Mountaineer 2, Sensei 4, Shintao 4

More than most samurai, Taki's life has been surrounded by duty and battle; now that he rides with the ronin general Toturi, it is no different. The son of a great Mirumoto sensei, Taki spent his childhood living up to his father, ensuring he would never bring shame to the man who raised him. Taki not only succeeded in gaining his father's approval, but the Dragon prodigy was named a senior student shortly after his gempukku.

Three years ago, Taki accepted the position of magistrate of Nanashi Mura, keeping an eye on the ronin that wander close to the village. Thanks both to his understanding nature and the location of his post, Taki has become very fond of the ronin in Nanashi. In particular, the ronin "governor" of the village has become a close friend of Taki's – he and Takuan often split responsibility for the ronin outpost equally.

When Yokuni's call for the Black Lion Toturi went out, Taki knew what was to happen, as did Takuan. Now Taki stands at the right hand of a dishonored ronin, and his friend Takuan stands to the left. The Dragon samurai feels no shame in his new assignment; he knows Toturi is a good man and an extraordinary leader. As the Clan War escalates, Toturi is thankful for Taki's keen mind and fearsome skill time and again.

For now, Mirumoto Taki is content with aiding the Empire in this way. However, as he looks among the great plains where Toturi's Army grows with each passing day, he realizes that soon the day will come when he can return to the Dragon lands where he is needed. The ronin army will be able to go on without Dragon aid, though Taki will be truly sad to say good-bye to his friend and the new look on life that the ronin have given him.

Kenshin's Helm Act Two: A Little Knowledge

Scene One: Tesaguri the Traitor

Following the advice of Godaigo takes the characters to the other end of the Empire. Despite the fact that the tainted Akodo is sincerely trying to help the characters, it is likely that they might be suspicious of his words. If this seems to be so, Godaigo is hardly surprised. He leaves them with one last piece of advice.

If you will not believe a Lion, perhaps you will believe a Scorpion," he says, pointing at a large tree at the heart of the forest, the largest by far in Traitor's Grove. "That is the resting place of the greatest traitor the Scorpion Clan has ever known. It was his shade who directed the Miya and her companions. Go, and see for yourself." The ancient samurai then fades from view, his form becoming as insubstantial as a spider's web, then dispersing to nothing.

If the characters approach the tree, they discover that it is indeed the oldest and largest in the grove. The bark is deep blood red. An ancient katana, pitted with rust and decay, is driven into the roots of the tree. The bark around the blade seems rough, as if it has been disturbed recently. The area doesn't look as if it is visited often, but a Hunting or Investigation/Perception roll vs. TN 15 reveals that four people on horseback were here a few days ago.

PCs can commune with the spirit in the tree in a variety of ways. The Ancestral Guidance kiho, Cloud tattoo, Sense Void, sodan-senzo abilities, or a simple Commune (Earth) spell with two Raises can all gain the attention of the spirit within the tree. Unfortunately, this only determines that the spirit is in intense pain from a deep wound in what seems to be his legs.

A Lore (Ghosts)/Intelligence roll vs. TN 20 suggests that easing the spirit's suffering may allow it to manifest and communicate. Any Scorpion character knows enough about the Traitor's Grove to tell the same thing with a raw Intelligence roll vs. the same TN.

If the blade lodged in the roots is removed, the surface of the tree boils and twists. Soon, a man's face wearing a twisted kenku mask forms from the bark of the tree. This is the spirit of Bayushi Tesaguri, the Scorpion who sold three Black Scrolls to the Phoenix centuries ago. When he sees the characters, he smirks.

"More of you," he chuckles in a macabre voice, like dried leaves crackling in a fire. "Come to see the deposed master of traitors? Indeed, for I am master no more! Another has taken my position, and upended my domain over this forest of the damned. His name is Junzo, and he is now king of betrayers! He shall be planted in this grove soon enough. Even now I sense him…" The tree's eyes grow distant as they stare off to the north. "Marching closer to the place where the helm lies. The helm… and that which I once guarded." Tesaguri's wooden gaze flicks back to the characters, eyes narrowing in sudden anger.

"You, like the Miya and her friends, seek Doro Owari Mura. That is where the broken helm lies, where the doom of the Empire lies. If you are fortunate, you will find them both before Yogo Junzo."

The tree suddenly smiles, showing bloody white teeth sharpened to fangs. "And if you are truly fortunate, Junzo will find it first, and end the festival of pain we call life. I wish you the greatest of fortune, little ones. Now leave me to my pain!"

With that, the face vanishes, and the tree is silent again.

Scene Two – Across the Empire

The voyage to Doro Owari Mura is long, and requires several weeks of travel. In their travels, the characters may catch rumors regarding the Current Events in this chapter, and perhaps even witness a few of them. The countryside has been devastated. Entire cities lie in ruin, ravaged by famine, plague, and war. If the characters have not thought to bring sufficient food, they may begin to starve, as food is scarce. Refugees and beggars with haunted eyes wander the roads, many of them sickened by plague.

The GM is encouraged to mix as many of the adventure hooks from this chapter as he feels appropriate during the long journey north. With a number of possible routes available, listing all the encounters possible during this journey is impossible. Instead, additional encounters could be created using the Random Encounter Tables in the *Game Master's Guide*. Modify these encounters as

fitting for the Clan War. For instance, a result of "Heimin travelers" could become heimin refugees fleeing a siege, heimin plague victims begging at the roadside, or heimin travelers lying dead in the road, abandoned by some unknown attacker. The Clan War is a grim time, and this journey should illustrate that fact.

Scene Three – Road's End Village

When the characters near Road's End Village, they see smoke rising from the valley. This is not the smoke of a campfire, but of a large inferno. Road's End Village is burning. Tracks on the road indicate that a large army appeared, seemingly from nowhere, and marched on the village. Some tracks are human, but most are clearly not. Any character with the ability to sense Shadowlands Taint will be distinctly uneasy as they near the village. The village is not tainted, but some powerful tainted force moved through here recently.

The village is littered with corpses. Some seem to be heimin villagers. Others are rotted skeletons, goblins, and the occasional ogre. There are a large number of Scorpion samurai, and a quartet of Imperial Heralds wearing the traditional straw *horo* cloaks of the Miya *shisha*. It appears as if the Scorpions were battling the Shadowlands invaders, but were overwhelmed. Now only corpses remain in Road's End Village.

Some are still alive, after a fashion.

Seven Uragirimono wander the village. They pretend to be mere corpses until they can move into a position to ambush the party. The fight against the Uragirimono is especially deadly, for there is no shortage of corpses for the creatures to possess. If they cannot be dispatched quickly, the beasts will leap from body to body until the player characters are overwhelmed.

If the characters kill more than half of the Uragirimono, read the following:

As another creature dies, you hear a blood-curdling scream rise from the earth itself. An enormous mass of pale white tentacles erupts from the ground near the center of the village, each screaming in the same voice. The worm-like things immediately burrow their way into the corpse of an ogre, causing the thing's body to rise clumsily, like a puppet on its strings. Even the huge form of the ogre cannot contain this new threat; great white tentacles covered with spiky bristles protrude from the creature's eyes, nose, shoulders, mouth, and the great wound in its stomach.

"For the death of my brothers, you too shall die!" it hisses in the voice of the other beasts, the voice of the things you faced at Akodo Godaigo's side.

The monstrosity charges toward you.

Greater Uragirimono

Earth: 5
Stamina: 6
Water: 5
Strength: 6
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Shadowlands Taint: 7.3
Shadowlands Powers: Hands of Stone, Uncanny Speed
Advantages: Quick (natural form only)
Skills: Defense 5, Hand to Hand (tentacle) 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Stealth 5, Wrestling 5
TN to be Hit: 15
Carapace: 7
Attack Roll: 5k3+5
Damage Roll: 6k2
Abilities:
Possession

Like its lesser kin, the Greater Uragirimono can possess and animate corpses, although it requires a much larger body to animate. Even the body of the ogre is not large enough to house its form. While in the ogre's body, the greater Uragirimono gains the ogre's enhanced physical traits and Carapace (these are already factored into its statistics) but is not otherwise protected. If the ogre's body is destroyed, so is the Uragirimono.

Special Attacks

The Uragirimono's extended tentacles allow it to reach targets up to twenty feet away. It can attack up to three separate characters per round with its tentacles. It cannot direct all of these attacks against the same target. The Uragirimono may use its tentacles with a grapple attack, as per the rules for Kaze-do on page 181 of the Player's Guide. While fighting, the greater Uragirimono exclusively uses its tentacles, not the ogre's arms. The ogre's body hangs limp in the midst of the roiling mass, like the stolen shell of some unholy hermit crab.

When the Greater Uragirimono is defeated, read the following:

With the final blow, the creature suddenly splits into a thousand wriggling fibers. Each moves like a thing alive, snaking quickly toward another of the many corpses lying about the village. You realize to your horror that it has multiplied into dozens of the lesser creatures you have been fighting. As the bodies begin to rise, you prepare for what may be the end…

A sudden breeze wafts across the village. Tiny motes of sparkling white smoke carry on the breeze. They have a strange, somewhat sweet smell, like baking bread. For a moment, the

stench of rot and decay vanishes. The shambling corpses do not seem to enjoy the smell. The moment the smoke touches them, they scream and writhe in pain. Within moments, their bodies explode from within and crumble.

Light laughter echoes from upwind. A tall man in a wide-brimmed hat, steel mask, and bright red kimono emerges from the scrub of the hills. He carries a small incense burner on a chain in one hand, the source of the strange smoke. He is surrounded by a quartet of fierce looking bushi in blood-red armor and fierce mempo.

"My apologies, friends, for taking so long to lend a hand," he says with a chuckle. "I was waiting for the wind to change. My name is Hametsu, former lord of the Shosuro and now magistrate of this village. I am pleased to make your acquaintance."

(Note: Any Tainted characters in the incense cloud take damage as normal – see "Sweet Incense," below. Fleeing the cloud requires two rounds.)

Sweet Incense

Sweet Incense is a special poison invented by Hametsu. When burned, the incense inflicts XkX Wounds per round to those within the cloud, where X is equal to their Taint rank. Tainted characters with less than one rank of Taint feel distinctly uncomfortable and itchy. The incense comes in large sticks which burn for one hour. It is an extremely rare item and difficult to create, but Hametsu may offer a stick or two to protect the party in their journey, especially if there are any Scorpion among them.

While Hametsu and his men are obviously Scorpion, perceptive characters will notice that none of them wear any mon of family or clan. Hametsu and his retinue are in no violation of the Empire's edict dissolving the Scorpion houses, and Hametsu truly is the magistrate of the village. Any belligerent samurai will be reminded by Hametsu that they now owe him a debt of honor for saving their lives.

Hametsu has been living in Road's End Village since the Coup, when he forsook his family name as per the Emperor's decree. He and a number of his retainers made their homes here. He admits that the village has long been owned by the Scorpion, though they made no effort to advertise the fact. If asked why the Scorpion bothered to maintain lands so far from their own, Hametsu replies "We use it for storage, mostly."

If asked what is in the censer, Hametsu merely chuckles and replies, "Sweet incense, a concoction of mine. Herbalism is a hobby of mine. Not all poisons affect the living, you know. If only I'd had a dose prepared earlier, perhaps I could have saved the village."

If asked about the dead Miya, Hametsu looks disturbed. "Victims of bad timing. They were here to purchase an ancient artifact for their daimyo. Three days ago, the apprentice to the traitor Junzo came and destroyed everything. I consider myself brave, but I know when I have been beaten. My yojimbo and I retreated so that someone might tell the tale of what happened here."

Hametsu knows nothing about Miya Yumi or her companions. He has not seen them enter or leave the village. If asked about Kenshin's helm, Hametsu becomes irate.

"A helmet? Who cares about a Fortunes-forsaken helmet? I suppose Junzo's horde must have taken it; the caves were empty after he left. I should think that you'd be a good deal less worried about the helmet, though, and more concerned by the Black Scroll they stole!"

When the party prepares to leave, Hametsu asks them to honor a request for him. He produces a sealed scroll – a report of what transpired here. He asks the characters to transport it with all possible haste to his sister.

Bayushi Kachiko.

Hametsu asks that the characters personally make certain the letter arrives in her hands. If asked why Hametsu does not deliver the letter, he chuckles. "Me? I'm not going within a mile of Otosan Uchi. The Legionnaires have a taste for Scorpion blood, and I really don't think my dear sister would lift a finger to protect me. No, this is the only way. I know I can trust you. Were you servants of Fu Leng, you'd have never survived the sweet incense."

Chapter Three
Anvil of Despair

Anvil of Despair

"He who wishes for a prosperous alliance must be careful not to ask for too little."

- Otomo Reju, Gozoku master

Hogosha maintained a veneer of calm as he was shown into the audience chamber of Shiro Shinjo. He had waited several days to be allowed to address the Unicorn daimyo despite his requests for an immediate meeting, a tactic clearly intended to show him that even the "barbarians" of the Shinjo would not be rushed by an emissary of the Mantis Clan.

Yokatsu's chamber was domed, a feature Hogosha had found in many Unicorn buildings. The room was a careful blend of traditional Rokugani elements with various gaijin tapestries and other oddities. While it might seem laughable to some in the Imperial Court, it had a decidedly intimidating effect on those who found themselves surrounded by it. It was a subtle tactic to give the Unicorn yet another edge in their own home, and another indication that the Unicorn had a much firmer grasp of the workings of the court than many would suspect.

Just the type of hidden strength that the Mantis need on their side, Hogosha silently affirmed. *Just the sort of gift I can bring Lord Yoritomo.* Bowing low, he addressed the silent Unicorn. "Most noble and honorable Shinjo Yokatsu-sama, Master of the Four Winds, I bring you greetings from the Islands of Silk and Spice. My lord Yoritomo has graciously permitted me to travel to your magnificent lands and speak with you."

Yokatsu waved a hand in dismissal of the ambassador's flowery words. "Now is not the time for the word games of court, Mantis. The incessant battles of the other clans threaten to destroy the works of a thousand years of peace. Should anything survive, the tainted beasts from the south will overrun what is left. State your purpose, else I might consider that my time is better spent preparing the ashigaru for the battles to come." For the first time, Hogosha noticed how weary the cavalry master looked. His eyes had the look of a man who had not slept for days, and his clothes were covered in dust, as if he had come directly from the field of battle.

"As you wish, Yokatsu-sama." Hogosha straightened and looked directly into the champion's eyes. "Lord Yoritomo has amassed a great army, an alliance of the smaller clans in the Empire. He has seen how the Great Clans deal with the rampages of the Shadowlands: by warring with one another. If the Great Clans," Hogosha spat the words as if they were a curse, "are unwilling to do what is needed, then we will show the Empire what it means to be strong."

Yokatsu stared at Hogosha, his features betraying no hint of emotion. A Unicorn bushi standing near the daimyo bristled at the Mantis' words and placed his hand upon his sword, clearly taking the words as an insult. Yokatsu made a subtle gesture with his hand, keeping the bushi in his place. His stare fixed Hogosha, penetrated deep into his soul. "Then why have you come here?"

Hogosha bowed his head in supplication. "Of all the clans, only the Unicorn have taken up arms against the Shadowlands rather than turn their might upon their political enemies. Only the Unicorn have had the strength to return law to the land, to bring order where the other clans have left only chaos."

The Shinjo lord leaned forward. "Why have you come here?" he repeated forcefully.

"Lord Yoritomo has taken up arms with a force that rivals that of the Great Clans. When this war is finished, there will be those in the court who will feel threatened by his actions. All we desire is an ally who will remind them that only the Unicorn and Mantis were strong enough to protect the Empire from the darkness."

Yokatsu leaned back into a sitting position, regarding Hogosha frankly from his dais. Slowly, he nodded. "You may tell your lord that the Unicorn Clan values those with the courage to do what must be done. If he has the strength to forge his own destiny, then we will support him."

"My lord," Hogosha replied, "the Son of Storms is strong enough for the destiny of an entire Empire."

The scouts had sighted the Shadowlands horde preparing to enter a narrow valley several miles away, near the southern reaches of the Crane lands. Yoritomo had sent a small force to the mouth of the valley to delay the beasts until the Alliance's army could reach them.

Tsuruchi watched the entrance to the valley for any hint of movement. The window of opportunity for a strike would be short and must not be missed. Finally, a rippling of shadow near the mouth told him that the enemy approached. He snapped his hand forward, signaling one of his hunters. Shimbei loosed an arrow from the wooded area in which the Wasp were concealed toward the rocky outcropping near the hills. There was no response, but Tsuruchi knew the message had been received.

Dozens of goblins and lesser oni began spilling forth from the valley, driven by the larger beasts of the horde. There was no semblance of order to the formation; rather, a herd mentality ushered the sinister group in a single direction in search of prey. Likely this band had split off from some larger force in the aftermath of a battle elsewhere in the Empire.

"Now," the Wasp lord hissed.

Arrows filled the sky, arching toward the creatures that crawled from the valley. An answering volley from the opposite side of the pass struck the mob almost at the same instant, felling hundreds of the wretched beasts. The smaller creatures panicked, but the larger

oni and ogres caught the scent of blood and lunged forward toward the opening, eager for blood and battle.

As the monstrosities lunged forward from the valley, the earth around their feet began to surge upward, engulfing their lower bodies and holding them fast. Shugenja of the Kitsune family emerged from their hiding places, focusing their Earth magic against the corrupted oni. Immobilized, the demons made perfect targets for Tsuruchi's men.

"Tsuruchi-sama, their armor is too thick for our arrows!"

"Their eyes, boy! Take their eyes! Even oni cannot fight blind!" Tsuruchi snarled at his subordinate. Already he could see Mukami's handiwork as a gigantic ogre sprouted arrows from each eye and slumped forward in its earthen prison. Several others were already dead, but the beasts behind them were beginning to claw over their dead pack-mates to reach their attackers.

Again Tsuruchi gestured toward the rock outcropping where the Fox shugenja stood. They fell back as a trio of young women clad all in red stepped forward. Summoning their powerful magic, the Centipede shugenja hurled huge gouts of flame that washed over the wall of oni like the tide upon breakers. Although some of the beasts possessed a natural immunity to fire, many of the smaller ones did not. The valley rang with hideous, inhuman shrieks and the rancid stench of burning corrupted flesh hung over the battlefield.

The valley's entrance was now completely blocked by the burning forms of Shadowlands creatures. The remaining oni, ogres, and goblins could be heard raging behind them, clamoring for an exit. Tsuruchi's ambush, however, had sealed it with their dead.

On the horizon, Tsuruchi could make out the massive forces of the Alliance army moving into the other end of the valley. With this end blocked, the Shadowlands beasts had no escape. They would be pinned between the blazing wreckage of their comrades and the deadly Mantis warriors eager for their blood. Despite their armor and sinister abilities, the creatures stood no chance. Tenacity and sheer numbers would drive Yoritomo to a crushing victory over the wretched beasts.

Mukami appeared at Tsuruchi's side, having effortlessly crossed the battlefield to speak to his lord. "We are victorious, Tsuruchi-sama. Your strategy will no doubt please Yoritomo greatly."

Tsuruchi grunted. "One arrow would have likely finished the ogre, you know."

A ready grin appeared on Mukami's face. "Ahh, but where would the challenge be? You taught me too well to take only the easy shots, old friend." Another noncommittal grunt caused the grin to fade a bit. "What troubles you? Are you concerned about Kyuden Ashinagabachi?"

The older man shook his head. "No. We left enough men to turn away any force that could make its way through the mountains. Truthfully, I wonder about the Miya girl who visited us some time ago. I think of her quest often."

Mukami nodded thoughtfully. "You sent Ichiro with her, along with your support in her endeavors. Are you concerned that she will fail?"

"No, not that one. She will die sooner than fail, I think. No, I merely worry that if she is successful in discovering a plot by the Scorpions," Tsuruchi's face contorted with rage as the word slipped past his lips, "that we will not have enough resources to support her."

"I would not trouble yourself over such things. If Yumi can find the Scorpions, we will find a way to aid her."

Tsuruchi only nodded, a merciless gleam in his eye.

Significant Events

Year 1127, Month of the Boar (Late Fall)

Summoning of Oni no Tadaka (Mountains near P11)

In an attempt to understand the power of the Shadowlands, Isawa Tadaka gives an oni his name. Interrogation of the newly consecrated Oni no Tadaka begins in earnest.

The Naga Return to Otosan Uchi (A9)

With all but a few Naga now awakened, the Qamar again dispatches the Dashmar to the capital city of the humans, Otosan Uchi. The Dashmar is accompanied by an honor guard of Naga, as well as several of Toturi's finest samurai. With the aid of Dragon magistrate Kitsuki Yasu, a small group of Naga arrange a meeting with the Imperial Court.

Death Stalks the Unicorn (U22)

The Unicorn prepare a large expeditionary force to aid their Lion allies, but matters closer to home interrupt their plans. Armies of undead appear throughout Unicorn lands, greatly damaging many of their cities. One large force appears near Shiro Iuchi, tearing down the walls in a single night. Daimyo Iuchi Daiyu is not present, but Iuchi Karasu's powerful magic seals the breach and drives the creatures back. With the coming of the dawn, Karasu begins to falter, but the timely arrival of Otaku Kamoko's Battle Maidens saves the castle.

In the ensuing battle, Iuchi shugenja report a wave of corruptive energies spilling from what they can describe only as an "elemental vortex." This vortex is observed disgorging undead troops at an alarming rate. A daring scout reports of an individual in "tattered robes of the Yogo" commanding the vortex.

Kamoko and her Maidens charge the heart of the vortex, accompanied by Karasu. The Maidens take heavy casualties and Kamoko is wounded badly before Karasu leaps into the vortex itself in a mad, all-or-nothing assault. The vortex is destroyed and the Yogo maho-tsukai vanishes, his army of corpses dropping lifeless at the moment of his departure. The Iuchi note many of the corpses seem to be Phoenix ashigaru, suggesting that the army originated in Phoenix lands.

The Eyes of Nanashi Join Toturi (D13)

Satisfied that Toturi has the best interests of the Empire in mind, the defenders of Nanashi (the Anonymous Village) publicly throw their support behind the Black Lion. Toturi accepts the alliance and grants their leader, Takuan, the rank of chui (lieutenant) in his army.

Shortly thereafter, 70 former Akodo ronin led by the ronin Utsuei leave Nanashi in disgust. Blaming Toturi for their disgrace, they refuse to follow him again.

Year 1127, Month of the Rat (Early Winter)

Winter Court Canceled (U21)

The Emperor's plans to spend the winter with the Ide family are canceled due to his failing health. After expending a great deal of wealth and favors preparing for the Emperor's arrival, the Ide are incensed.

In a possibly unrelated incident, the Unicorn recall all of their ambassadors from Otosan Uchi shortly thereafter.

Death of Akodo Kage (L13)

Akodo Kage is discovered dead in once-proud Shiro Akodo. Details of the sensei's death are sketchy, but foul play is rumored. Dark rumors suggest Kage was being blackmailed to influence the Lion armies against his former student, Toturi, and committed seppuku rather than carry through with the act.

Shiro Akodo is burned shortly thereafter as part of the gentle sensei's last wishes. With no heirs to speak of, Kage's daisho is shipped to a distant cousin in the Shinjo.

The Kitsu claim that they cannot reach Kage's soul in Yomi. Pointing to the ancient prophecies of Togashi – "When the last Akodo falls, so falls the last Hantei" – they wonder what this means and fear for the future.

(GM's Note: To tell the truth, Akodo Kage is not dead. Rather, he has tired of being blackmailed by Kachiko – who knows of his high position within the Kolat – and has decided to dispose of his public identity rather than compromise the Kolat further. He has retreated to the Hidden Temple, and plans to arrange for his daisho to be stolen from his nonexistent Unicorn cousin and returned to him as soon as possible.)

March of the Battle Maidens (U22)

Unicorn daimyo Shinjo Yokatsu arrives at Shiro Iuchi to assess the damage wrought by the undead army. Now that winter has set in, the Unicorn cavalry will be largely immobilized. Yokatsu is enraged that his forces cannot strike back.

Otaku Kamoko demands permission to take a small group of Battle Maidens and hunt Junzo down. Though still weak from his experiences in the vortex, Iuchi Karasu volunteers to accompany her.

The mission seems suicidal, but Yokatsu agrees. Meanwhile, he will organize the bulk of their armies and follow as soon as the snows melt. Kamoko and Karasu's tiny band leaves immediately, mercilessly cutting down any Tainted creatures they encounter during their mad race. Karasu's reckless tactics in the face of Shadowlands creatures earns him the nickname "Doomseeker" from Kamoko.

Secrets of the Anvil Revealed (Mountains near P11)

The Elemental Masters' research bears fruit when Oni no Tadaka reveals the location of the Anvil of Despair, a powerful relic sought by the Shadowlands Horde. A band of Inquisitors is immediately dispatched to take custody of the anvil.

Plans Within Plans (various)

Bayushi Kachiko is stymied when her contact with the Kolat – Akodo Kage – slips beyond her grasp. Suspecting that reports of his death are a sham, she dispatches her best spies to find any trace of his passing. In the meantime, she enacts contingencies so that she will no longer need to rely upon Kolat aid.

The Naga Flee Otosan Uchi (A9)

The Dashmar's mission ends with disaster. Crane, Phoenix, and Fox representatives respond favorably to the Naga's offers of peace, but many courtiers are unimpressed by the blunt (some would say tactless) words of the Naga. Tempers flare between Empress Kachiko and the Dashmar when he openly accuses her of using her power to deceive. The Empress' guards demand that the Dashmar pay for his disrespect in blood. Rather than create a diplomatic incident, Kachiko banishes the Naga representatives from the capital. Dashmar and his retinue vanish into the forests before Kachiko's spies can follow.

Year 1127, Month of the Ox (Mid-Winter)

Kyuden Doji Falls (CN6)

After a difficult and protracted siege, Lion troops assaulting Kyuden Doji cease their assault. By Imperial decree, the Lion are ordered to stand down. The exhausted (and nearly victorious) Lion are angered. Several Lion commanders express their discontent via *seppuku*. Disgusted Lion general Matsu Agetoki obediently leads his troops off the field.

Shortly thereafter, the armies of Doji Hoturi arrive. The relieved Cranes open their gates to their long-lost champion. Too late the Crane realize that Hoturi leads an army of Shadowlands Madmen. The armies of Hoturi sack Kyuden Doji in scant hours. All those within are either slain or join the ranks of the Lost. A handful of Crane escape, including Daidoji Uji and Hoturi's brother, Kuwanan.

Battle at Prosperous Plains City (CN5)

Returning from the failed siege of Doji Palace, fierce young Taisa (Captain) Matsu Gohei marches north, leading the Lion rear guard. While passing the remains of Prosperous Plains City, Gohei's scouts report an undead mob attacking local heimin. While Gohei cannot attack a Crane city without permission from his daimyo, he is unwilling to allow Shadowlands abominations to prowl the Empire. He orders his troops into the city to "commission supplies," reasoning that after polishing off their foes they can rightly claim they fought only in defense.

Though Gohei's tactics are sound, the number of undead is 20 times greater than the scouts reported. What's more, the Lion find themselves confronting a squad of ogres and a pair of greater oni. Gohei is unwilling to retreat even in the face of such odds. As the sun sets over Prosperous Plains and the Lion casualties mount, Gohei and his troops prepare to meet as honorable a death as they can.

To the Lion's surprise, help arrives from an unlikely source. The Broken Shinbone Nezumi emerge from earthen tunnels to attack the Tainted army from behind. Gohei is surprised but quickly takes advantage of their arrival. Lion and Nezumi forces dispatch the Shadowlands creatures with a precise pincer movement, leaving no survivors.

Gohei is impressed by the tenacity of the Nezumi warriors. As he is badly in need of reinforcements, the young captain offers the Broken Shinbone Ratlings food and weapons in return for joining his forces as conscripts. The Ratlings, nearly debilitated from famine, happily agree.

A Desperate Journey Begins (location unknown)

Phoenix Inquisitor Asako Yurito locates the Anvil of Despair and embarks on a desperate mission to destroy it. Believing that the Elemental Masters cannot be trusted with the relic, he and his stalwart band begin a journey to the heart of the Shadowlands. There, they hope to locate Amaterasu's Furnace, a mythical pit of holy fire that burns in the midst of Fu Leng's corruption. Yurito believes that the Furnace will cleanse the Anvil of the First Oni's blood. Some believe Yurito has been driven insane by the dark anvil, but Yurito presses on with the journey nonetheless.

The Eleventh Scroll is Opened (location unknown)

Shugenja across Rokugan experience terrible nightmares: visions of torment, destruction, and the implacable darkness of Jigoku. The Elemental Masters weep tears of blood and bile. The kami seem confused and frightened. The Eleventh Black Scroll has been opened.

Kisada's Blockade (LL)

Finally acting upon plans long ago put into motion, the Crab invade Otosan Uchi. While Lion forces are prepared to defend the Plain of Fast Troubles, most of the Crab troops arrive by *koutetsukan* ("iron turtle" warships) in Golden Sun Bay. The Crab navy blockades the bay, their koutetsukan forming an impassable barrier against anyone attempting to enter or leave by sea.

The Lion rally, but at a critical moment Matsu Tsuko is approached by a Miya herald. By Imperial edict, she is forbidden to lead the Lion forces into battle. Knowing that her subcommanders cannot hope to defeat an army led by the legendary Hida Kisada, she can do no more than watch as the Imperial City is overrun.

This event, combined with the Emperor's edict at Kyuden Doji, leads many Lion to question their loyalty to the Emperor. Just as many Lion seize upon this time of trouble to prove their undying obedience to the Son of Heaven. True to Kachiko's plans, a rift slowly but surely opens between the two schools of thought, dividing the clan.

Year 1127, Month of the Tiger (Late Winter)

The Centipede Join Yoritomo (AAA)

Ambassadors from the Valley of the Centipede reply at last to Yoritomo's offers of alliance. The answer is "yes," but conditionally. The Moshi wish a marriage with the ruling family of the Mantis, the terms of which are to be determined later. Eager for the battlefield advantage that Centipede fire-magic will provide, Yoritomo quickly accepts.

Kachiko's Discovery (A9)

Using the Obsidian Mirror to spy upon the sickly Hantei, Bayushi Kachiko makes a startling discovery. She notes the young Emperor looking surprisingly well, moving about his chambers with health and vitality unusual for one whose body has been ravaged by poison. She is even more disturbed when she watches the Emperor callously murder one of his own Seppun shugenja, savagely beating the young woman to death with his bare fists.

Year 1128, Month of the Hare (Early Spring)

The New Year Festival (various)

Following the Festival of the New Year, many strange omens are reported. It is said that an army of undead assaulting Tani Hitokage

(MM) was reduced to ashes by a single word from an unidentified gaijin. It is said that the Oracle of Water appeared above the ruins of Shiro Usagi (A2) and announced the return of the Hare Clan was nigh. It is said that the Ki-Rin was sighted above Kyuden Isawa (P9), but that when the Elemental Masters came forth to greet her, she turned her face away. It is said that a plume of green flame a thousand feet high erupted from the ruins of Kyuden Bayushi (S10) for a full hour, but the Imperial Legions who investigated found no signs of fire.

The Unicorn Abandon Beiden Pass (PP)

Acting on Shinjo Yokatsu's orders, Shinjo Yasamura and his troops abandon Beiden Pass. Yokatsu also feels that they can no longer rely on their Lion allies after their behavior at Otosan Uchi and Kyuden Doji. Free from the Unicorn's interference, Toturi's ronin army is able to move south and escape the Lion's ire.

Attack on Otosan Uchi (A9)

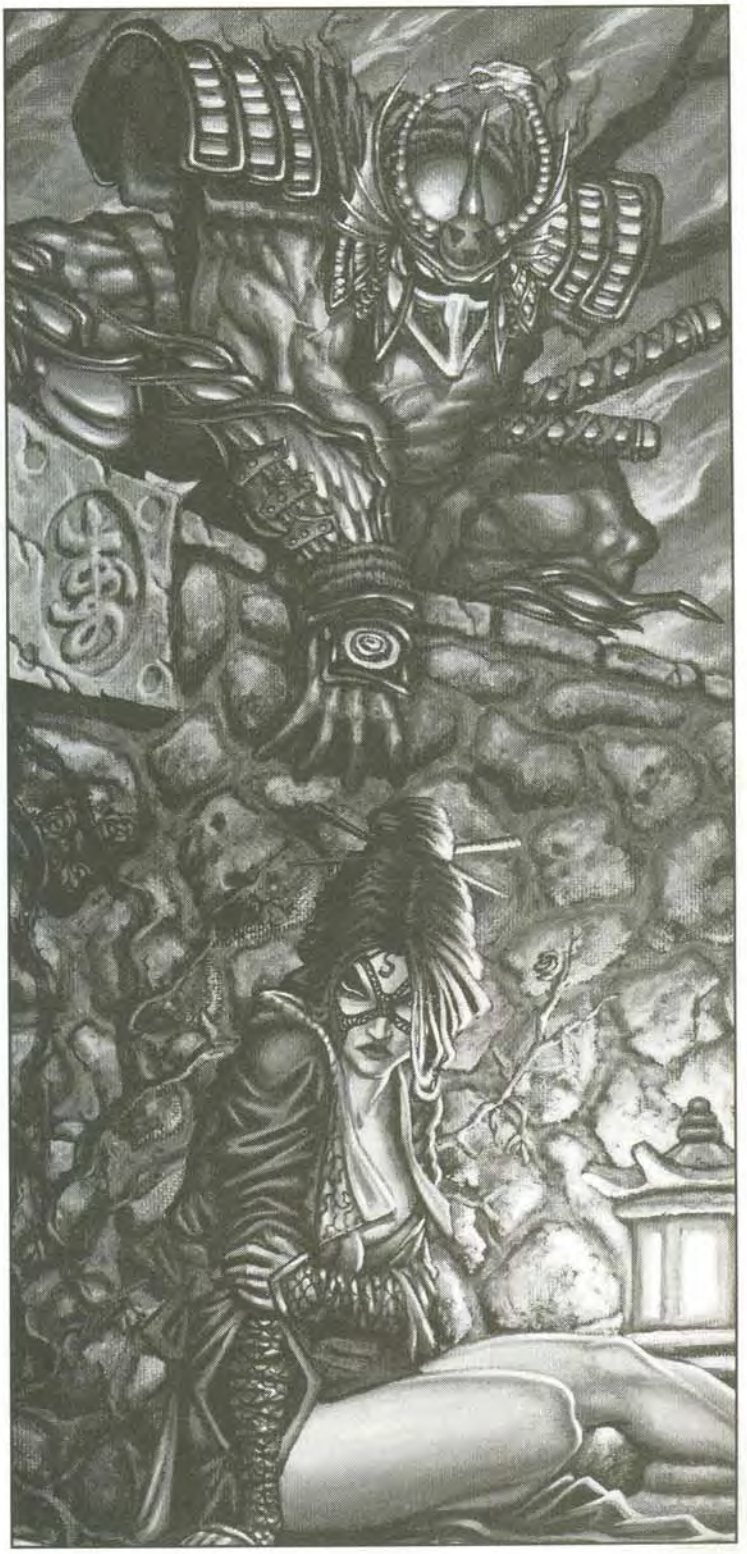
In a daring midnight assault, the Crab and their Shadowlands allies breach the walls of Otosan Uchi. Daimyo Hida Kisada and his son, Hida Yakamo, enter the palace to confront the Hantei. What follows within the throne room is unknown, but Yakamo and Kisada vanish.

Meanwhile, realizing that the Emperor has been possessed by some powerful evil, the Empress decides to cut her losses, flee the Palace, and allow Hida Kisada to deal with the last Hantei. To her surprise, her flight is interrupted by Togashi Yokuni, who reveals that the Emperor has been possessed by the spirit of Fu Leng himself. The Dragon Champion advises the Lady of Scorpions to return to the Palace, to continue weakening the body of the Emperor. He then vanishes, leaving the decision in Kachiko's hands.

Kachiko knows that if she flees, she will survive. With her extensive contacts she could vanish easily. If she remains in the castle, the mad Emperor may well destroy her. Though she is filled with fear, an emotion unfamiliar to her, the Poison Empress returns to the Palace.

Immediately after the Crab daimyo and his son confront the Hantei, the Shadowlands Horde turns on its Crab allies. The Crab navy breaks its blockade and turns south, but many koutetsukan are destroyed by skull tides and ghost-ships. Crab and Lion troops are cut down mercilessly as they flee the city. Many samurai disappear within the city itself.

Yogo Junzo is seen arriving at midnight the following day. The Emperor allows the mad shugenja entrance to the castle, and all is quiet for a time.



What's New

New Skills

Beastmaster (Awareness)

This is a specialized form of Animal Husbandry, similar in many respects to Falconry, that deals in particular with large, predatory animals. The Matsu family utilizes this skill almost exclusively to train and lead lions and lionesses into battle as the dreaded Lion Warcats, although it can be used with other fighting animals as well (such as the Unicorn's gaijin attack dogs). Beastmaster governs the care and training of large animals, as well as leading them in combat situations. A practitioner of this skill may handle a number of animals equal to his Beastmaster skill rank without fearing loss of control. Any more in number, and even a skilled trainer risks being attacked.

Whip (Agility)

Occasionally found in the hands of peasants, the whip sees use most often to encourage beasts of burden in labors around the village or in the pulling of carts in a merchant's caravan. Whip is considered a specialized weapon skill of the Nofujutsu skill, although at least two samurai schools (the Yasuki Taskmaster and the Matsu Beastmaster) teach the whip exclusively on its own and consider it a Bugei skill rather than a Low skill. With at least 3 ranks in the Whip skill, a character may forfeit an attack, instead rolling to hit versus the target's Agility x 5. Success means that the target has been ensnared, and a successful contested Strength roll drops the target to the ground.

The Matsu Beastmasters Advanced School

An elite and selective school of the Lion Clan, the Matsu Beastmasters are few in number. Perhaps no more than a few hundred exist at any time. This would not seem so small but for the legions of Matsu bushi students alongside whom the Beastmasters train. Despite their numbers, the Beastmasters are revered, for it is believed that the beasts they command embody the fighting spirit of the Matsu family and the Lion clan.

The role of the Beastmasters in battle is a gruesome one. They accompany the front ranks of the Matsu soldiers, often scattering the enemy before them and opening a hole in their defenses for the Lion army to exploit. A far more unsavory task is that of following the front lines, ensuring that those enemies overrun by the Matsu soldiers cannot rise to strike their attackers in the back.

Although the Beastmasters train with dozens of lions, every student has a single lion which he has raises from a cub and trains every day; no other human ever works with this animal. This warcat becomes the leader of the Beastmaster's pride in battle, and is considered his "second" *(see Techniques below)*.

Beastmasters often carry a whip into battle. This is an intimidation tactic, used primarily against enemies and to direct difficult warcats in battle. The whip rarely touches the skin of these majestic beasts.

Requirements:

Rings/Traits: Agility 5, Awareness 4, Willpower 4

Skills: Athletics 5, Beastmaster 4, Hand-to-Hand 3, Whip 2 (this is considered a Bugei skill for those training for entry into the Beastmasters)

Advantages: Death Trance

Other: Training with lions from cubs, the Beastmaster gains insight into their dangerous ways. As long as he maintains eye contact, no lion or warcat, no matter how feral, will attack him.

Techniques

Rank 1: One with the Pride

Fighting fluidly alongside the pride, the Beastmaster knows how to position himself for maximum effectiveness. He receives one Free Raise on attack rolls per warcat within twenty feet. The number of Free Raises may not exceed the samurai's rank in the Beastmaster skill.

Rank 2: The Lion's Strike

Fighting alongside the mighty warcats, the Beastmaster has learned the secret of the lion's deadly strike. When fighting unarmed, the Beastmaster may ignore enemy armor bonuses. The Damage Rating for the Beastmaster's unarmed attacks increases to 0k2.

Rank 3: With the Soul of a Lion

The Beastmaster has formed a bond with the leader of his pride that cannot be broken. When fighting with his second (see above), the Beastmaster directs the creature's actions through a subtle form of body language invisible to outsiders. The Beastmaster may choose what action the lion will take each round (regular or full attack) and rolls for the lion as if he were taking the action himself. The lion gains a number of experience points each session equal to the Beastmaster's School Rank, which may be spent in any way the player chooses. If the Beastmaster's familiar lion is ever killed, this Technique becomes unusable until a new lion can be trained (not until the Beastmaster acquires 25 further points of Insight).

Matsu Warcats

Earth: 5
Water: 4
Fire: 2
Agility 4
Air: 3
Rolls When Attacking: Bite 5k3, Claw 6k4
Rolls For Damage: Bite 5k4, Claw 4k3
TN to be Hit: 20
Wounds Per Level: 30, +5; 60, Dead
Notes: Beastmasters spending experience points for their chosen warcat (as per Rank 3 above) pay the standard cost to raise Traits. Increasing an attack or damage roll costs new level x 3 for rolled dice and new level x 4 for kept dice. The lion's TN to be hit can be increased by an increment of 5 for an amount of experience equal to half of the new TN (rounded down).

Toturi's Army (Ronin Brotherhood)

The once-motley band of ronin who follow Toturi have been forged by circumstance into an elite fighting force. Though much of Rokugan despises them, the followers of the Black Wolf take great pride in who they are. Recently, these ronin have developed an otokodate technique of their own. It is uncertain exactly who devised this technique, but it has caught on quickly among the ronin band.

Type: Otokodate

Required Traits: Water 3
Required Skills: Battle 3, one weapon skill at 3
Other Requirements: Must have Honor of at least 2.0
Location: Mobile

Technique
A Samurai's Fury (5 points)

Toturi's Army teaches its members to be calm and prepared at all times, keeping one's anger in check as a weapon to be used at the proper moment. Whenever the bushi spends Void Points on an action, he may add his Water x 2 to the total roll.

New Skills

Polvora (Low Skill)

The Cornejo family are masters of demolition, focusing on the use of chemicals to produce explosive effects. Primary among their tools is polvora (called "gaijin pepper" in Rokugan), a mixture of charcoal, sulfur, and saltpeter.

At the current time, Alhundro is the only surviving member of the Cornejo family in Rokugan, and thus the only person who knows how to make true polvora. With proper materials, an hour of work, and an Explosives roll vs. TN of 15, a character trained in Polvora can make a bomb that inflicts 3k3 Wounds in a 10′ radius. This bomb can either be set with a delayed fuse (1–10 rounds) or can be designed to detonate on impact. For each Raise made on the Explosives roll, the bomb can roll or keep an extra die on damage, or the blast radius increases by 2′. Each Raise (not including Free Raises) increases the time needed to create the bomb by twenty minutes.

A character with the Explosives skill can upgrade to Gaijin Explosives (replacing the former skill at the same rank) by spending two Experience Points and training with Alhundro Cornejo. Of course, Cornejo is highly unlikely to share his secrets. GMs are completely within their rights to forbid their PCs to learn this skill.

New Tattoo

Hawk Tattoo

Effect: The eyes of the hawk are unparalleled. By accessing this tattoo, the *ise zumi* is able to see great distances without effort. Also, when using his archery skill, he can reduce the TN to hit his target by 5 and gain one Free Raise for a called shot.

Cost: "The greater your vision, the less you see." Togashi's words are illustrated by this tattoo, for while the *ise zumi* using this tattoo can see things far away, he often cannot see what is right next to him. Any perception checks this character makes concerning the surrounding areas have their TN raised by 10 while the character is using the tattoo.

Engines of War

The Kaiu family are the undisputed masters of siegecraft, although the Lion also have a number of siege masters, particularly among the Ikoma family. The Lion avoid siege whenever possible, as both the Book of Sun Tao and Akodo's Leadership refer to siege as a situation to be avoided at all costs. Sometimes, however, there is no alternative.

The Agasha have dabbled in siege warfare from time to time, usually at the invitation of a Hida or Ikoma. The Agasha's mastery of hanabi (fireworks) mixes with Crab and Lion siege engines for deadly effects.

Some of the more common siege engines and their effects follow.

Kikkôsha ("turtle-shell wagon")

A wooden wagon with a thick roof to protect the occupants from arrow fire. The soldiers wheel the wagon to a castle wall and then dig under or through the fortifications. The TN to hit anyone within the wagon with a ranged attack is raised by 40, but the wagon requires at least 20 Strength (total) to move. It can accommodate 20 soldiers. The wagon is treated to be resistant to flame, but continued exposure (such as with flaming oil or magic) will cause it to burn. Treat the wagon as having a Carapace rating of 8 against all fire damage. A smaller version of the turtle shell is commonly referred to as a "wooden donkey." It can protect up to seven soldiers and requires 12 Strength to move. A character protected by either wagon takes one fewer die of Wounds on the Battle Table, but receives two fewer Glory points per Battle Turn.

Kuruma seirô (siege towers)

These are 30′ high towers mounted on large wheels. They often have two or three levels, each of which can accommodate up to a dozen soldiers. Soldiers stationed on these platforms can fire arrows or simply spy over the enemy walls. A scout in a siege tower rolls an extra die on all Perception rolls to study the enemy's defenses and on all ranged attack rolls. If a character in a siege tower is Engaged or Heavily Engaged, he takes an extra die of Wounds from the archery fire these towers inevitably draw.

Kuruma date

These are large wooden shields on wheels, used as mobile cover. The shields provide a +20 TN vs. missile fire to anyone hiding behind them. An archer who peeks out from behind the shield to fire has only a +10 to his TN to be hit. A bushi behind one of these shields takes one fewer die of Wounds on the Battle Table while he is Disengaged or in the Reserves.

Tosekiki ("stone-firing catapults")

The earliest Kaiu catapults had a complex system of ropes and required crews of up to 40 men. After the Unicorn returned from the Burning Sands, the Kaiu adapted and applied the gaijin technology of counterweights they reported. Such modern catapults require only a dozen crewmen. They can fire as frequently as once a minute and can be aimed at a stationary location by an engineer with the Siege skill (TN determined by the GM, base TN of 15). The most common catapult ammunition is a stone which inflicts 5k3 Wounds. (Raises may be made by the engineer to inflict more Wounds as normal.) Crab on the Kaiu Wall often load their catapults with corrupted jade, as this inflicts damage on Invulnerable Shadowlands creatures and disposes of the dangerous material.

Dishonorable generals have been known to fire dead carcasses over the wall of the enemy in order to inflict disease upon the besieged. The False Hoturi was particularly fond of using corpses of victims of the Wasting Disease for this purpose.

Hekireki kakyu ("thunderclap fireballs")

These weapons consist of a large, egg-shaped paper casing covered with lacquer and filled with flammable pitch. A fuse is fitted in one end through a bamboo tube. The fuse is lit, and the fireball is either launched from a catapult or dropped off the wall on an attacking army.

These weapons are built with a large wheel on one end and a handle on the other to allow them to be loaded into a catapult more easily. On impact, the hekireki kakyu breaks open, spreading the flaming pitch in a 10′ radius around the point of impact and inflicting 3k3 Wounds. All targets continue to take 1k1 Wounds per round until they can douse the flames.

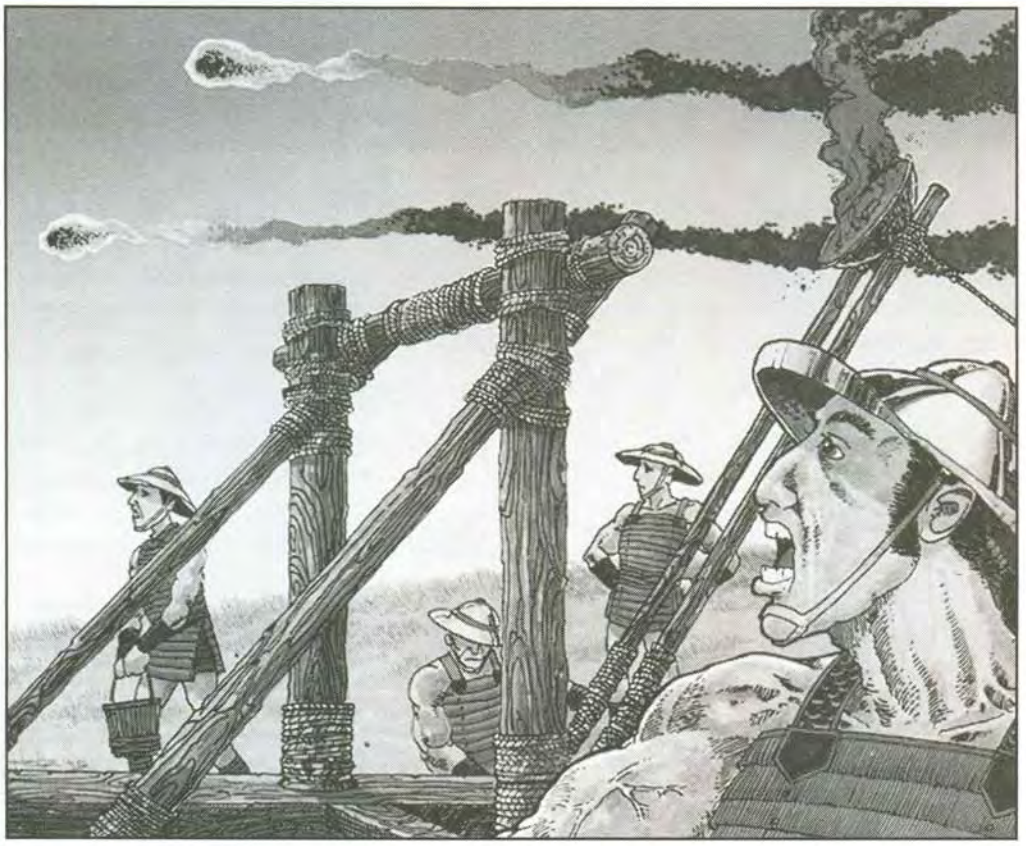
A more deadly version of the *hekireki kakyu* incorporates Dragon *hanabi* and broken crockery instead of pitch. This causes the missile to explode, scattering flame and shrapnel over a 20′ radius and inflicting 5k5 Wounds (if the missiles are loaded with jade rather than crockery, they inflict this damage on Invulnerable creatures). These missiles are very unstable, and blow up in the air or in the catapult 10% of the time.

An even more deadly version of the *hekireki kakyu* would be possible were the Kaiu to learn the gaijin secrets of true polvora. A missile loaded with true polvora would explode in a 30′ radius, inflicting 7k7 Wounds.

Fire bombs

The Crab occasionally use a much smaller version of the *hekireki kakyu* in a manner similar to a grenade. Small ceramic spheres are filled with pitch, topped with a fuse, and either thrown or launched using flexible bamboo poles. Hitting a target in either fashion requires a specialized weapon skill in Fire Bombs, using Agility. The bamboo launchers have an effective range of 100′.

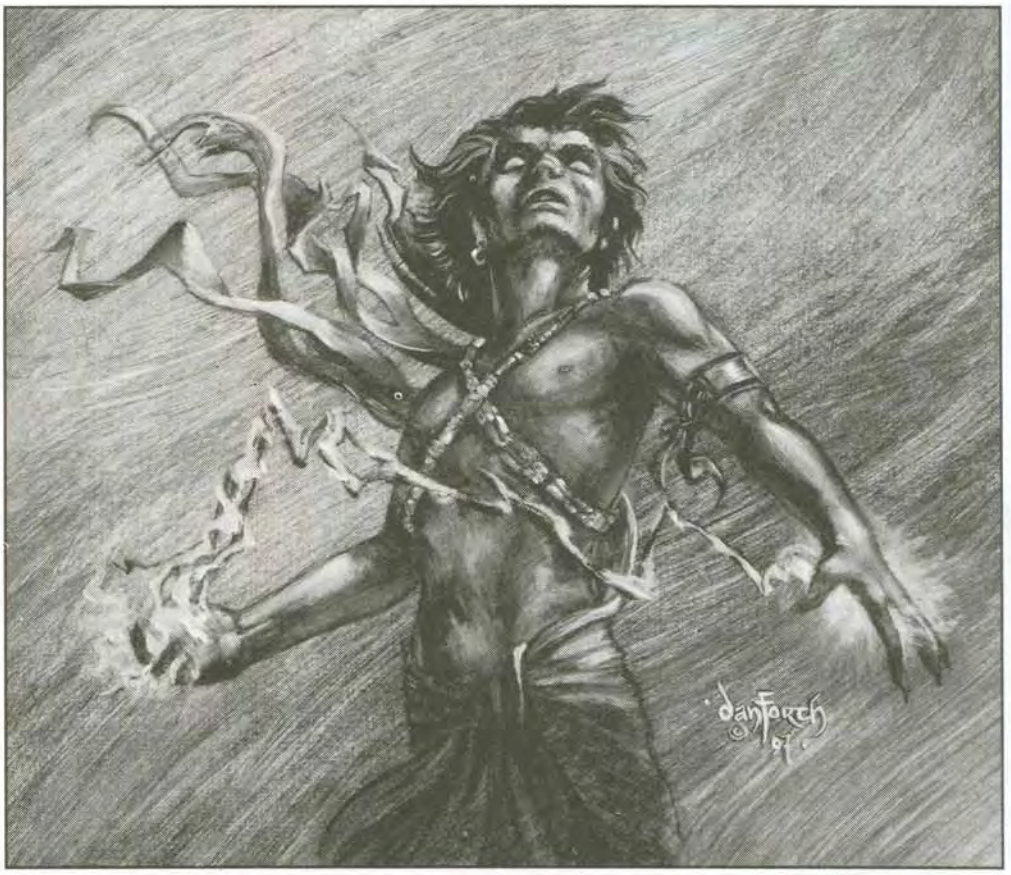
These small fire bombs have only one-third the radius of their larger counterparts, and roll and keep two fewer dice for damage. They are very unstable, and are apt to detonate when their wielder is struck in combat (3 in 10 chance per blow). If a fire bomb is ever exposed to open flame, it explodes immediately.



Warabushi (straw targets)

One common tactic used in siege defense is the creation of straw, wicker, or clay soldiers dressed in wooden armor painted to resemble samurai armor. These warabushi are placed at attention on high walls or in other areas where enemy scouts will see them, but will be unable to examine them closely enough to determine that they aren't real soldiers. A defensive force can thus create the illusion that it has a larger garrison. The Hiruma frequently stock the Carpenter Wall with wicker troops to deter Shadowlands forces. The Scorpion occasionally carry straw targets into battle, using them both as a means of padding their numbers and an improvised shield against archer fire. A straw target used in this fashion provides a +10 TN vs. ranged attacks, but also imposes a +10 TN penalty on any actions performed by the person carrying it.

Elemental Vortices



Another twisted creation of the Dark Oracles, the Elemental Vortices are corrupted eddies in the dance of the Elements. They are undetectable by most, though the effects they create are easy to see. An Elemental Vortex is a portal to Jigoku, spanning 100 feet in every direction. Through these hellish rifts, all manner of creatures are able to escape the Shadowlands into the heart of Rokugan.

Typical Elemental Vortex

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 2
Air: 2
Rolls When Attacking: Special
Rolls For Damage: Special
TN to be Hit: Special
Wounds: 100: Dead
Special Abilities:

Simultaneous Existence

Each Vortex exists in two places at once: in the Shadowlands and somewhere else. By passing through one mouth of a Vortex, a willing traveler is immediately dispatched to the other location. An Elemental Vortex can change the location of one of its openings once per hour, but otherwise cannot move. It can only open a portal within 100′ of its previous location, or within 100′ of another Elemental Vortex.

Invisibility

An Elemental Vortex is invisible to those whose eyes are closed to the dance of the Elements. Any shugenja, or any character with kiho, Inner Gift, or Elemental Attunement, can clearly see a Vortex.

Twisted Elements

Any non-maho spells cast within an Elemental Vortex have their casting TN increased by 10. A shugenja who fails to cast a spell due to this increase in TN becomes nauseated, and can neither move nor act for 1–10 rounds.

Invulnerability

Elemental Vortices cannot be harmed by any means but magic, and any pure magic disrupts the corruption a Vortex represents. Any spell which causes Wounds can harm a Vortex, but only does one-eighth the normal number of Wounds unless cast within the Vortex itself. Any spell cast by a shugenja within the Vortex does Wounds as normal. In addition, any non-maho spell successfully cast inside an Elemental Vortex inflicts XkX damage on the Vortex, where X is the Mastery level of the Spell.

Limited Lifespan

Elemental Vortices are unstable and usually disperse after about a week. They can only be brought into existence via the Create Elemental Vortex spell, devised by the Dark Oracles.

New Maho Spell

Create Elemental Vortex

Mastery Level: 5
Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: One Elemental Vortex
Range: 100′

This spell summons into being an Elemental Vortex. One manifestation of the Vortex appears within 100'. The other takes shape any place in the Shadowlands that the caster has personally visited and knows well. The Elemental Vortex need not obey the caster's wishes. However, most Elemental Vortices will gladly work with their summoners if pain, chaos, and death will follow.

Adventure Hooks

Elemental Vortex

Location: Any

Challenge

The characters are traveling through rough territory when a sudden storm begins. The characters are forced to take shelter under the trees.

Focus

The storm grows steadily worse. Eventually, rain gives way to hail. Any character stuck in the open during the hail takes one die of Wounds per round (subtract any TN bonus provided by armor, and do not reroll 10s). Amid the hail, the characters can make out larger shapes plummeting to the earth – human-sized shapes. As unlikely as it sounds, undead are falling from the sky. Most are damaged from the fall, but they attack relentlessly.

Strike

An Elemental Vortex has broken free of its master and is spreading pain and mischief randomly. It is currently hovering roughly 60 feet in the air, within the storm itself. The characters have a choice – either flee the Vortex through the hail or find a way to destroy the abominable thing.

Despair

Location: Phoenix, Unicorn, Crab, or Shadowlands

Challenge

While traveling through the wilderness, the party stumbles upon a battlefield. The corpses of oni, zombies, and bakemono lie everywhere, mixed with those of Phoenix Inquisitors, Otaku Battle Maidens, and Hiruma Scouts. There aren't any important resources or trade routes nearby worth fighting for, nor any reason for such a large, mixed group to be passing through the area.

Focus

A feeble cry for help arises from a wounded Inquisitor. He begs the characters either to treat his wounds or give him a quick death. Close inspection shows that the Inquisitor is mildly Tainted (he has 0.6 boxes of Taint) but not yet Lost.

Strike

If asked, the Inquisitor reveals that he was part of a group of Phoenix, Crab, and Unicorn escorting the Anvil of Despair to Amaterasu's Furnace. The group was attacked by a band of Junzo's minions seeking the Anvil for themselves. After the battle, he suggested that perhaps they had erred in deciding to cart the Anvil into the heart of the Shadowlands. The Inquisitor was then stabbed *by one of his fellow Inquisitors.*

The Inquisitor fears that his brothers have fallen under the spell of the Anvil. They do not have much time, if they have not been Lost or killed already. He pleads for the party to either help him find the caravan or escort him back to Kyuden Asako. What the characters decides to do, and the consequences, are ultimately their choice.

Broken Crane

Location: Crane territory

Challenge

The village, town, or city in which the characters are staying is frequently attacked by small, disorganized mobs of Shadowlands madmen consisting of Crane eta, heimin, and a small number of samurai. Nobody knows exactly how or why these individuals are becoming Lost.

Focus

A traveling monk passes through the town during one of the attacks. While the characters watch, he halts a group of madmen with a single gesture and a flash of green light. The madmen fall to the ground unconscious. Upon examination, they are found to be completely cured of the Taint and the accompanying madness.

Strike

If asked how he accomplished this miracle, the monk produces a handful of jade tears. He claims that he was visited in a dream by the Lady Doji, who told him that each jade tear had the power to steal a soul from Fu Leng – once. The monk thinks that the Lady may have more of the tears, but to get them he'll have to return whence he found the first batch – the Lady's Rest, at the foot of the cliffs beneath Kyuden Doji.

Unfortunately, this means passing through the lines of the besieging Lion armies, or possibly the False Hoturi's hordes. The Lion are likely to attempt to conscript the characters (or attack them outright, if they're Crane). The False Hoturi's hordes attack anything that moves. Either group is unlikely to listen to reason, especially where saving Crane peasants is concerned.

Down in Flames

Location: Dragon or Phoenix lands

Challenge

A small temple to Fukurokujin, Fortune of Wisdom, stands in a village near the border between Dragon and Phoenix lands. The temple is tended by Agasha monks, dedicated to the search for wisdom and the study of nature.

Focus

The normally serene temple is in flames. A scouting party of 20 goblins has been ordered to burn every temple it encounters. The monks put up a good fight, but there are only a few remaining, trapped on the second floor while the cackling goblins put the building to the torch. The local magistrate is away, conscripted into the army of the Emerald Champion. The villagers have been left to fend for themselves.

Strike

One of the many paths of scholarly pursuit studied by the monks is *kagaku*. Unbeknownst to the arson-minded goblins, a storage room on the bottom floor contains several urns filled with unstable gaijin pepper. The player characters have three minutes, at most, to rescue the monks before the temple explodes. Dragon gaijin pepper is not as potent as true polvora, but the resulting fire will quickly spread to the other homes. Anyone trapped in the temple when the gaijin pepper ignites suffers 3k3 Wounds per round. A nearby river provides an opportunity to douse the flame via bucket brigade, but the villagers won't go near the temple until the savage goblins have been eliminated.

Heroic Opportunities

If the party is in or near Otosan Uchi when the Crab invade, it is likely that the characters will become involved in the ensuing battle. There is no need to roll opposed Battle Rolls for the generals; the Lion army is doomed to failure without Matsu Tsuko. The Lion are Even for the first several rounds and then Losing thereafter. The Crab are Even, and then Winning until they finally break through the walls. Shortly after Kisada enters the Palace, the Crab begin Losing, and the enemy army becomes their erstwhile Shadowlands allies.

Lion Heroic Opportunities

Imperial Refugee

In the midst of the battle, you encounter a noble of the Otomo house, fleeing for his life before the Crab onslaught. His yojimbo have been cut down by Crab berserkers. It is obvious that the Crab wish to capture this powerful courtier. If you wish to aid him, you will have to defeat the two remaining berserkers. The berserkers are of a Rank equal to the player characters. If you successfully rescue the courtier, you may choose to escort him safely out of the city. This takes two turns, during which time you are Heavily Engaged. If you survive the battle, gain the Allies advantage (the Otomo), and a gift of the GM's choosing.

The Tunnels

While fighting near the gates of Otosan Uchi, you notice a group of courtiers hurriedly emerge from a small building far down the road, away from the fighting. You recognize them as minor palace functionaries, but what are they doing in a grain warehouse? If the character chooses to investigate, he discovers a tunnel leading from the warehouse to the palace itself. While this isn't helpful at the moment, it may come in handy to characters looking for a way into the palace later.

Crab Heroic Opportunities

Imperial Hostage!

In the midst of the battle, you encounter a noble of the Otomo house, fleeing for his life before your superior forces. He is protected by a pair of stubborn miharu, guiding him toward the city gates. The Otomo would make an excellent hostage, perhaps easing Lord Kisada's transition to the throne. The courtier's yojimbo are of equal rank to the player characters. If they are defeated, the courtier – far out of his element on a battlefield – meekly surrenders. However, he must now be escorted back to the bay. This takes two turns, during which time you are considered Heavily Engaged. If you and the Otomo survive intact, the noble will be indebted to you as a hostage.

Take the Wall

A hail of arrows erupts from the walls. Though you duck behind cover and escape without injury, not everyone is so lucky. The crew of a nearby siege engine has been slaughtered. Your commanding officer howls in fury as he tries to find a new engineer to man the engine. The siege engine is one of those described in this chapter, most likely a *kikkôsha* or *tosekiki*. Any member of the party with the Engineering skill is qualified to lead the new siege crew. Anyone manning a siege engine is considered to be in the Reserves. Any Heroic Opportunity amounts to either a chance to destroy an important target, or a chance to defend the siege engine from attacking bushi. Any "Duel" result indicates that the siege engine has been struck by a catapult stone or flaming arrow from the defenders.

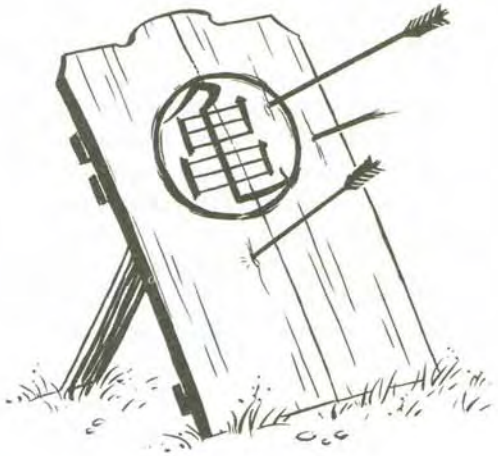
Heroic Opportunities Against the Horde

Come to the Darkness

You notice one of your kinsmen standing nearby. When he turns to face you, you are startled to see a sickly yellow glow in his eyes and a pallid cast to his features. A pair of tiny creatures scamper out of the alley to either side of him. They look like heaps of rotten meat with eyes and fangs, each the size of a large dog. Oni. "Come to me," your kinsman says, holding out one hand. "The Hantei has called, and we must obey…" The seal of the Emperor gleams in his hand. Ideally, this character should be someone the PC actually knows and cares about, now Lost to the power of Fu Leng. The seal marks an authentic Imperial Edict ordering the Lion and Crab in the city to obey Yogo Junzo's will. If the character resists, the two creatures attack (both are Lesser Oni; see page 232 of the *Game Master's Guide*). If the character surrenders, assign him whatever fate you deem appropriate. Such a character should not become immediately Lost (that's a terrible reward for such dramatic role-playing) but should definitely be put through the wringer.

Fallen Darkness

A shriveled man in the tattered robes of a necromancer steps out of a nearby building, cackling as he draws a wicked blade across his bare arm. To your surprise, a bolt of white lightning streaks down from the sky before you can react, reducing the maho-tsukai to ash. It is as if the heavens themselves have struck down the blasphemous tsukai. Where the lightning came from is immaterial, but nosy characters will discover that the tsukai's pouch of scrolls is still intact. He is carrying 3–5 *maho* scrolls of varying Mastery Levels.



Who's Who

Oni no Yakamo

Crab Clan Oni

Earth: 7
Water: 3
Strength: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 2
Reflexes: 4
Void: N/A
Shadowlands Taint: Innate
School/Rank: Shadowlands 4
Honor: 0.0
Glory: 0.0

Advantages: Large, Crab Hands, Strength of the Earth (4 points), Luck (3 points)

Disadvantages: Brash, Dark Fate

Shadowlands Powers: Blackened Claws, Blessing of the Dark One, Child of Darkness, Fu Leng's Venom, Terrible Armor, Unholy Strength, Feeding On Flesh, Protection of the Dark

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Blackened Claws 6, Defense 5, Hunting 4, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Subojutsu 5, Wrestling 5

Note: Oni no Yakamo carries a spiked obsidian club, a weapon with a 0k4 DR that ignores armor as a tetsubo and gains the standard polearm bonus on initiative.

(See *Way of the Shadowlands* for more rules regarding Name-Bound Oni and Shadowlands Powers. Using the rules presented in that book, Oni no Yakamo has succeeded at 24 Willpower tests with Hida Yakamo. The true Yakamo's temporary Shadowlands Taint is currently 4.9.)

At first, the concept of existence was little more than a red blur to the creature known as Oni no Yakamo. With each day that passes, its purpose becomes more clear. Its intellect becomes sharper, its

power greater. It now realizes that it is more than merely another minion in the Horde.

It is much, much more.

Oni no Yakamo was summoned during the Battle of Beiden Pass, to seal the Crab's alliance with the Shadowlands. Only Kuni Yori and Hida Kisada knew the true details of the bargain: one with the blood of the first Hida must give his soul to Jigoku. Kisada had always assumed that he would be the one to pay the price, and that his sons would rule the Empire after his sacrifice. Unfortunately, the Shadowlands had no need for the Great Bear.

Fu Leng saw more potential in Kisada's sons.

Yori had preferred Kisada's younger, more intelligent son, Sukune. In the end, to Yori's surprise, Hida Sukune was too strong-willed. He would not submit to the power of the Shadowlands, and died rather than give Jigoku his name. Yori was disappointed, but not deterred. He had already put contingencies into motion when Hida Yakamo lost his hand in a duel with Mirumoto Hitomi. Yori had offered an oni's claw to Yakamo as a replacement, and the young Hida had agreed. Thus, when Yori needed to seal the deal with the Shadowlands, he drew upon Yakamo's acceptance of the claw and Oni no Yakamo was born.

Oni no Yakamo revels in its power. It wanders the battlefields as it wills, laying waste to entire armies. Despite its bestial appearance, it is surprisingly cunning, patient, and ruthless. The creature's only weakness seems to be its utter hatred of Hida Yakamo, whose enduring nobility and strength infuriate the oni.

Soon, the Oni's growth will be complete. At the rate that the creature's development is progressing, it will become a True Oni Lord within weeks. If Hida Yakamo cannot destroy his twin before then, there may be no force that can match the oni's power other than Fu Leng. The creature longs for the day that it no longer needs the weak human that shares its name. It dreams of the day that it will finally slay the true Yakamo and take its place among Fu Leng's chosen as Champion of the Crab.

Takuan

Ronin Lieutenant

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Perception: 3
Fire: 2
Agility: 3
Air: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 1, Eyes of Nanashi 1, Toturi 1
Honor: 2.6
Glory: 0.0 (Ronin)
Advantages: Allies (Nanashi Mura), Inheritance (Armor of Sun Tao), True Friend (Mirumoto Taki)
Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Ronin), Obligation (Nanashi Mura), Idealistic, Brash
Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 6, Commerce 4, Defense 3, Diplomacy 5, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kuenai 4, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 2, Jiujutsu 4, Law 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3

Takuan is a samurai used to life's twists and turns. He was born to a vassal family of the Daidoji. As a child, he eagerly drank in tales of bushido and heroism, longing for the day that he would be worthy to wield the daisho. After his gempukku, Takuan was assigned to guard a Daidoji caravan. When Takuan later discovered the caravan was merely a cover for an opium smuggling cartel, he immediately reported the news to his lord, Daidoji Kichibei. The powerful Crane laughed it off and offered Takuan a share of the profits to keep quiet.

The idealistic young bushi's image of the world was shattered. In a fit of rage, Takuan struck Kichibei across the face and departed, seeking a more honorable lord to whom to report his findings. Kichibei manufactured false evidence and testimony suggesting that Takuan had embezzled from the caravan, ruining the young bushi's

reputation. Officially, Takuan was expelled from the Daidoji for his dishonorable behavior.

Takuan knows the truth – he left of his own choice.

The life of a ronin has been difficult, but Takuan enjoys the freedom. He has found a certain sort of honor on the hills and back roads of Rokugan. There is a certain purity to the life he has chosen, a wholeness of focus that was impossible to achieve while serving the needs of dishonorable men of greater rank. Takuan wandered the Empire for some time, learning his life's lessons in the most unlikely of places. He defended the Kaiu Wall for two years, and learned courage. He wandered the deserts north of Rokugan with the Ide, and learned resourcefulness. He served as a diplomat for the Suzume, and learned humility. For four years, he was the headman of Nanashi Mura, and learned leadership.

Today, Takuan serves in Toturi's Army. Already, he has been appointed the rank of chui (lieutenant) and leadership of the Twelve Ronin. He is uncertain of the future, but he has come to admire Toturi. Serving among Toturi's ronin, Takuan has been able to make a difference. He would give his life for Toturi's cause without hesitation, and will use every bit of his skill and experience to bring victory to the banner of the Wolf.

Shinjo Goshi

Unicorn Archer

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Strength: 4
Fire: 4
Agility: 6
Air: 4
Reflexes: 6
Void: 3
School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 3
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 4.2
Advantages: Quick, Leadership
Disadvantages: Naive
Skills: Defense 2, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 3, Nage-yari 2, Naginata 1, Yomanri 4

Growing up in the woodlands near Shiro Shinjo was never boring. A prodigy with the bow since he could draw it, Goshi has spent almost all of his life among the trees and animals in the forest. For his *gempukku,* the young Shinjo spent thirty nights in the Shinomen Forest and returned with the largest set of wild boar teeth the Unicorn have ever seen. Within a year, Goshi was leading most of the hunting parties that left Shinjo Castle, and the young man's jovial attitude made him a natural leader.

When Bayushi Shoju staged the Coup, Goshi and a rather large party were in the forest outside Violence Behind Courtliness City. The Unicorn had been invited to hunt in the Crane's forest as a sign of friendship between the two clans, and Goshi agreed eagerly. The Crane's only condition was that the hunter bring a large contingent of samurai with him to the former Lion territory, just in case. Goshi's unit was the first to answer the Unicorn's call to the lands of Otosan Uchi, and devastated every force that stood in their way. Using attack formations patterned after a hunt chase, Goshi and his men decimated small armies with their bows, frequently taking no losses.

When the fight was over, Shinjo Goshi and his men were recognized for their worth on the battlefield, and ordered to train several other groups in the tactics they employed. As the Clan War escalates, it is those men under Goshi's tutelage that are called across the lands of the Unicorn to defend against the walking darkness. Though the Shinjo misses the forests of his home, he cannot deny that hunting the shambling dead has become a worthy sport.

Togashi Miyoki

Earth: 3
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Reflexes: 5
Void: 5
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 2, Ise Zumi 2
Honor: 2.1
Glory: 2
Advantages: Multiple Schools, Inheritance (Courage), Sensei (Togashi Jodome), Heart of Vengeance (Scorpion)
Disadvantages: Black Sheep
Kiho: Heart of Stone, Self, No Self, Soul of the Four Winds
Tattoos: Arrowroot, Wasp, Hawk
Skills: Archery 2, Battle 2, Defense 4, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Shugenja) 3, Meditation 3, Nazodo 3, Shintao 4

For the young girl known as Mirumoto Miyoki, life had been easy. As the only daughter of Mirumoto Sukune and cousin to the Mirumoto daimyo, she lived a somewhat spoiled life. She trained under the very best masters, read freely from the Clan's great libraries, and traveled as often as she liked. It was not impossible that Miyoki would take over her father's position of Rikugunshokan, leading the Dragon's armies on the field, as she had shown both his talent for tactics and for archery.

That all changed on a snowy night during the Winter Court held at Kyuden Mirumoto. The court should not have even been held there that year, but Scorpion intrigue led the 38th Hantei Emperor to visit the far-off castle. It was during that Winter Court that a Bayushi courtier stumbled upon Togashi Hoshi in his true form. Rather than allow the Scorpion to cause a scene, Mirumoto Hitomi slew the man before he could utter a word. To protect the leadership of the Clan, Hitomi placed blame for the crime upon Miyoki. Sukune's daughter was cast out of her clan into the unforgiving winter of the Dragon mountains.

That was when the *ise zumi* came and bore her away to Togashi's secret palace. There, she was honored for the sacrifices that she made for the Clan, and put into training with the tattooed monks.

During the Battle at Shinden Osano-wo, Miyoki was instrumental in guarding the temple's sacred scrolls from Junzo's army. It was also there that she retrieved Courage, one of the Dragon's five Legendary Swords, from the hands of an undead monster. With the sword in hand, she has gone with Doji Hoturi, her cousin Mirumoto Daini, and his Naga allies to the Asahina Temples, where the Crane will make their final stand.

Kenshin's Helm, Act Three: Forbidden City

Scene One: Poison Empress

With Shosuro Hametsu's message in hand, the characters are off for Otosan Uchi. The journey takes several days at the least. The party may need to take detours to circle the battles raging between Lion and Crane, Lion and Phoenix, or the Shadowlands Horde and anyone.

If the characters open Hametsu's letter, they find nothing but code. A Cipher/Intelligence roll vs. TN 45 can decode it. It reads simply, "Junzo has taken the eleventh scroll – Hametsu." Unless the characters can replace the Scorpion's seal, they are in for a lot of trouble if they deliver the Empress' message opened.

If the party wishes to participate in battles along the way, or the GM wishes to add encounters involving the adventure hooks and current events in this chapter, by all means do so. Keep in mind that the party is delivering a message to the Empress. Serious-minded characters will probably want to make its delivery their top priority, causing an interesting conflict of interest. (If the characters encounter the Broken Cranes hook, for example, they will be forced to choose between duty to the Empress and a chance to cure the Taint. The outcome of such a decision will reveal much about what a character truly values.)

Arriving in Otosan Uchi, the party receives a cold reception. The Legionnaires at the gates refuse to allow admission. (If the characters live in the city, have contacts here, or flash the Empress' letter, they enter without problem.) The guards at the Palace are even more brusque. After making the party wait for an hour, they return to announce that the Empress is too busy to attend them. They may either make an appointment or try again tomorrow. (Astute courtiers recognize "try again tomorrow" as a polite dismissal.) Alternately, they could leave the letter with the guards, who promise to deliver it to the Empress. If the characters decide to wait, they may, and are provided with quarters within the outer city. The earliest

appointment available is in the month of the Ox (possibly weeks or months away).

Impatient characters should be firmly reminded that an appointment with the Imperial presence usually requires weeks, if not months, of negotiations. The fact that Kachiko has agreed to meet with them at all is a positive development. The best thing to do is simply wait.

Note: If the party has not played previous chapters of "Kenshin's Helm," simply skip this Act. Giving the party any reason to visit the city should be sufficient hook to rouse Satoshi's paranoia, even if they have nothing to do with Miya Katsu and Miya Yumi.

Scene Two – Satoshi

When the time nears for the party's appointment and the party is spending its time together as a group, read the following.

The door slides open quickly and a dozen bushi enter as a group. All wear the starburst mon of the Miya and the wicker *horo* cloaks of the shisha. Otherwise they bear little resemblance to the peaceful diplomats of their family, as all are dressed in brightly lacquered armor and are armed with daisho, yumi, and naginata. They fan out quickly and take up positions around the room as the leader of the group enters. He is a handsome man with long black hair and elaborately ornamented armor. The Miya mon is emblazoned on his obi, but he wears the mon of the Matsu on his left sode (shoulder plate), closer to his heart.

The man gives a tight, mirthless smile as he approaches your group and bows as shallowly as decorum will allow. "Greetings, samurai," he says in a honeyed voice. "I am Satoshi, daimyo of the Miya. How fortuitous that I found you."

If asked why their meeting is fortuitous, Satoshi replies, "You were approached by my family, were you not? To find my prodigal cousin? To be sure, I am searching for her as well. Perhaps we can combine our efforts."

If the characters deny working for the Miya (or have not played Act One and truly have nothing to do with this) Satoshi nods and smiles, but does not believe them. Extremely honorable characters may see no reason to lie. Miya Katsu foresaw this when he gave them their mission. Keep in mind that the magistrate made no mention of Satoshi whatsoever, and never gave any direct implications that the Miya daimyo was their enemy.

If they claim that they know nothing about the matter, read the following.

"Fine, then," Satoshi says, brushing nonexistent dust from the back of his gauntlet. "If you are not yet involved in this matter, perhaps it is time for you to become involved. I recently made arrangements to purchase an item of great historical and sentimental value to my family. Unfortunately, it was stolen by my errant cousin, Yumi, before the deal could be sealed. I am not certain where she could be, but I expect her arrival in the city eventually. Rumor has it that she is traveling with three men: a ronin shugenja, a tall man with a dragon tattooed across his face, and the bounty hunter Ashinagabachi Ichiro. If you see any of them, report to me at once. As lord of the Miya and servant of the Son of Heaven I can assure I would be most grateful." Satoshi gives another tight smile.

If they threaten or defy Satoshi, the characters learn nothing and the Miya daimyo's demeanor becomes grim. In this case, read the following.

"Fine, then," he says in a curt tone, rising to his feet, one hand steadying the katana in his obi. "If you have no manners, then perhaps I should teach you some." He quickly gestures at his troops, who level their naginata and circle you. "If you wish to visit the Palace, I can oblige you. Take these fools to their new quarters, in the dungeons."

If combat ensues, Satoshi throws himself into battle. (If he should fall, his Dark Fate will save him; he's not meant to die just yet.) In any case, before too much more can happen the adventure shifts to Scene Three.

Scene Three: Kisada's Blockade

Read the following:

A tremendous explosion erupts outside, and the glare of fire can be seen through the paper walls. Screams of pain and confusion follow, to be punctuated by another explosion, this one more distant. The front doors slide open and two of Satoshi's heavily armed Miya rush in, their faces painted in shock.

"My lord!" one shouts.

"What in Jigoku is going on out there?" Satoshi asks, his eyes narrowing.

"The Crab invade!" replies the bushi.

"What?" Satoshi snapped. "They couldn't possibly have broken Lady Tsuko's lines!"

"Koutetsukan are entering the bay, my lord!" the bushi replies.

Satoshi curses loudly, then turns to you with a sneer. "Don't go far," he orders, pointing at each of you with a sweep of his hand. "The Emperor's city is under attack and it falls to her true son to defend it. I'll return for you after I've dealt with this." With that, Satoshi charges into the street. His loyal bushi are only a step behind.

If the characters decide to go find out what's going on, they discover the following…

The tea house across the street is consumed in flames. Heimin with buckets run about frantically, trying to douse the fire before it spreads. To the east, in Golden Sun Bay, the black shapes of the Crab koutetsukan form a solid line across the horizon. Streaks of red flame periodically erupt from the iron ships, arcing high into the sky to explode in the city. Smaller landing ships swarm the docks, disgorging platoons of Crab samurai or strange, twisted creatures. Bushi in armor of emerald and brown – Emerald Legionnaires and Lion troops – charge the docks in an attempt to hold off the invaders. Already you can see that they are too few, too late. The greater part of the Lion army remains waiting for a land attack at the Plain of Fast Troubles, and will not arrive for some time.

The characters have a number of options. The five most obvious are as follows.

1) **Charge the docks and help fight the Crab.**
For Lion, Imperial, and characters eager to give their lives for the Emperor, this seems the most obvious choice. The Emerald Legions welcome the help, and conscript the characters into the nearest unit. Use the Battle Rules in the Game Master's Guide along with the Heroic Opportunities presented earlier in this chapter. As this is merely the beginning of the long siege, the Crab are considered to be winning until early the next morning, when the greater portion of the Lion forces arrive and the Crab retreat to the lines of their blockade. The characters should have plenty of chances to turn the tide of the battle before Scene Four begins.

2) **Help douse fires and escort the injured to safety.**
Shugenja, monks, and less combat-intensive characters may wish to turn their attention toward helping the helpless. Already, there are a number of burning buildings and injured persons in the city, providing a great deal of work to do. The Forest Fire Rules on page 85 of the *Game Master's Guide* can be readily adapted to a house fire for any character who charges into an inferno to save those within.

3) **Try to deliver Hametsu's letter in the confusion.**
The Palace gates are sealed, and have been since the moment the Crab forces rolled into the bay. The characters could attempt to sneak inside, but risk a quick death should the dozens of archers lining the walls catch sight of them. If the characters are Magistrates, Legionnaires, possess the Ear of the Emperor advantage, or have Glory in excess of 4.0, they can use their credentials to order the guards to admit them, but only if they're persistent. Crab characters will only be admitted if they are Magistrates or Legionnaires (such characters are expected to obey their duty to the Hantei foremost) and even then only if the other characters vouch for their honor.
Once inside the Palace, it has become remarkably easy to gain an audience with the Empress. With the political games of the court on hold, Kachiko is interested in what her brother has to say. The party is escorted to Kachiko's presence. Bayushi Aramoro watches them carefully while they make their report. Kachiko hardly takes notice of the characters as she reads the encoded letter, then quickly thanks them for their trouble. The Poison Empress is poised, cultured, and polite, showing none of her discomfort at the news of Junzo's madness. She asks to hear more of their adventures, as she is curious how the party happened to find Hametsu. Whatever they tell her, she secretly dispatches couriers to Road's End Village to confirm the tale.
With that, she orders Aramoro to escort them out of the Palace. Though it may seem as if delivering Hametsu's letter accomplished nothing, Kachiko is more interested than she seems. Already, she has begun to rethink her alliance with Miya Satoshi. With Kisada's forces invading the city as she planned, the shisha's usefulness is nearly at an end.
When the characters leave, Kachiko dispatches Bayushi Nanako, a Scorpion spy disguised as a nun of Shinsei. The spy's orders are to follow the characters and watch. If she is discovered, she will attempt to flee. Nanako is no assassin (though she could fulfill that role if needed); she is merely another pair of Kachiko's eyes and ears. If Nanako discovers the danger inherent in Kenshin's Helm, she will openly approach the party and offer to help prevent Satoshi from acquiring it.

Bayushi Nanako

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception: 3
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Bayushi Saboteur 2
Honor: 2.6
Glory: 0.0 (Ronin)
Advantages: Bland, Meek
Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Scorpion Ronin), Meddler, Unluck (1 Rank)
Skills: Acting 3, Bo 2, Engineering 1, Explosives 2, Kuenai 3, Locksmith 3, Poison 2, Shintao 3, Stealth 4

4) Join the Crab forces.
This option is quite likely if there are any Crab in the party. If the party makes this decision, it is highly recommended that you head them off with the events in Scene Four before they reach Golden Sun Bay. Otherwise, the logical outcome would lead the party to retreat to Kisada's Blockade, where they would remain for several months and end up far separated from next later chapter of this adventure.

5) Get out of the city while it's still possible.
A reasonable, if cowardly, thing to do. Characters with a strong sense of self-preservation may simply head for the west wall and keep moving. In this case, Scene Four opens before they exit the city.

6) All of the above.
The party may wish to split and do several different things. In this case, allow the characters to do what they like, but try to find a way to bring them together again before Scene Four begins.

Scene Four – Brother of the Four Temples

Wherever the characters happen to be, read the following boxed text.

As you round the corner, another firebomb screams out of the sky, exploding violently into a temple to the Seven Fortunes. The fire quickly spreads over the dried wood, and you watch in horror as the simple monks run burning into the streets. You see one leap from a roof with a cloth bundle under his arm. He lands awkwardly and crumples to the ground, though he rolls to avoid damaging his burden. He turns to you with a desperate look in his eyes

"Noble samurai!" he calls out, holding his bundle aloft in both hands. "Quickly! Take this child of Otomo from the city!"

You see that the bundle is a baby, wrapped in blankets of fine silk.

The monk's name is Kôrogi (a pseudonym meaning "cricket") of the Four Temples. The child he carries is Otomo Ariwara, a niece of Imperial cousin Otomo Banu. She was born with a strange birthmark, indicating that one day she would gain perception of the future. Her family sent her to the temple to be raised among the monks. Unfortunately, only Kôrogi remains now. Even if the characters can heal Kôrogi's leg, he asks them to escort him and the child to the Four Temples of Kyuden Seppun, where she will be safe. He begs, he pleads, he implores upon their honor. The monk is deathly afraid of battle, and believes he will never make it out of the city alone.

Kôrogi

Earth: 2
Stamina: 3
Water: 2
Fire: 2
Intelligence: 3
Air: 4
Void: 4
School/Rank: Four Temples Monk 2
Honor: 2.5
Glory: 2.0 (Monk)
Advantages: Brink of Enlightenment, Benten's' Blessing
Disadvantages: Ascetic, Cowardice (Moderate), Soft Hearted
Kiho: Soul of the Four Winds, The Wind's Truth, Self No Self, Ryoku, Way of the Willow
Skills: Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Hand to Hand 2, Meditation 4, Shintao 4, Zanji 3, Athletics 3, History 2, Defense 3

The flight from Otosan Uchi is rather uneventful. The Lion have their hands full keeping the Crab out, and aren't concerned about people leaving. The GM may throw in a few encounters to make the trip more interesting, but if the party has been having a hard time you may wish to go easy on them. Once the party arrives at Kyuden Seppun, Act Four begins.

Chapter Four
Crimson and Jade

Crimson and Jade

"If one could say where death resided, none would ever go there."
– Miya Mai, The Tools of War

Smoke hung heavily in the sky over the Imperial Palace. The lush gardens were littered with the dead, the walls were crowded with battling samurai. The screams of the dying echoed faintly in the distance; the screeching cackle of the horde echoed in reply. Nearby, the skeleton of a burnt torii arch shivered in the wind, ready to collapse at any moment. As the Great Bear watched, an arrow lodged itself heavily in the thick wood. What once had been a symbol of peace and tranquility was now a ruin.

"So many sacrifices," Kisada whispered, his voice thick. "It is too late to turn back. The price has been paid." The Champion of the Crab charged up the steps of the Imperial Palace. He could hear the heavy footfalls of his son Yakamo behind him. A squad of Hiruma archers flanked the stairs, watching expertly for any sign of an attack and covering the Lord of the Crab as he entered the palace. Both men drew their weapons as they entered, preparing themselves.

Whatever they had been prepared to see, this was not it.

Corpses lay everywhere. Kisada's own men, whom he had sent ahead to secure the entrance, lay dead beside the corpses of Lions, Seppun, and courtiers. Expressions of terror painted their faces. Some of them looked as if they had been torn limb from limb. Some were so mutilated as to be unrecognizable as men. An eerie wind howled through the halls, causing the few remaining lanterns illuminating the chamber to flicker.

"Father," Yakamo said quietly. "What could have done this?"

Kisada said nothing. Behind the black armored mempo of Ketsuen, the Armor of the Shadow Warrior, his face was unreadable. He bowed his head a moment in tribute to those who had fallen here and charged on. Yakamo followed without hesitation.

A woman's body lay on the floor before the doors of the throne room. Like the others, it was badly mutilated. Hida Kisada paused to consider it nonetheless, kneeling to study her tattered robes.

"Father?" Yakamo asked in his gruff voice. "It is only another Seppun. We must move on and find the heart of this."

"This is no mere Seppun, son," Kisada replied, a wary tone in his voice. "This is a member of the Hidden Guard, the shugenja who protect the Emperor's soul."

"So she was killed by a Crab," Yakamo replied. "Let us move on and win the day."

Kisada looked at his son, gray eyes intense behind his mempo. "Her wounds are Tainted, Yakamo," he said. "From within."

Yakamo looked puzzled. "What does that mean?"

"It means that you are both traitors," called a rich, sonorous voice from the throne room. "Just as Shoju and Toturi betrayed us. Just as my brothers and sisters betrayed us. Come, traitors, and face the glory of the Son of Heaven." A thin young man stepped out from behind the Emerald Throne. He was dressed in a rich kimono of dark black velvet, dark hair braided into a thick topknot. His cheeks were sunken, and dark rings circled his eyes. He shifted awkwardly

as he walked, his bony, emaciated physique clearly visible even through his thick clothing.

"The Hantei," Yakamo whispered. "Where are his guards?"

Kisada said nothing, but only stepped forward to face the Emperor. Chikara, the Ancestral Sword of the Crab, gleamed in the Crab Lord's hand like a shard of molten iron, its light illuminating the chamber. The Emperor's eyes narrowed for a moment when he noticed the glow, but he continued to advance on the Great Bear. The Emperor's velvet robes brushed the floor as he walked, painting a trail of bright blood in his wake. Disdaining the use of a weapon, the Emperor charged with a speed uncanny for one in such poor health.

Yakamo felt a strange twitch in his arm. He glanced down at the metal claw, the bestial thing that Yori had given him to replace his missing hand. The thing was moving of its own accord, chewing the air slowly as if in anticipation of what would come next. Yakamo felt his stomach turn.

"Yakamo!" Kisada shouted as he leveled his shoulders to meet the Emperor's charge. "run!"

The son of the Great Bear charged through the tunnels beneath the Forbidden City as quickly as the terrain and his burden would allow. The dim light of the Empress's servant bounced in the distance like a ghost, leading them, he hoped, to safety. Could he truly trust her? Even now? There seemed to be little choice.

The Great Bear made no sound; Yakamo scowled. Even now his father refused to show weakness. Even though his ruined form twisted horribly – his spine snapped over the Emperor's knee – the Great Bear would not cry out. Pain was for lesser men. The only sign that his father yet lived was his tight grip upon Yakamo's right hand – the hand that was still human.

"Hold on, father," Yakamo whispered as he followed the heimin. "Strength. I will not fail." He recited the Hida motto, drawing from it what strength he could.

Yakamo suddenly emerged into daylight and peered around to get his bearings. They were somewhere outside the Forbidden City. Kachiko's servant was already gone – no surprise. In the distance, he could see the Crab's monstrous former allies tearing into the *koutetsukan*. Yakamo quickly kicked down the door of an abandoned house and laid his father on the floor while he considered what to do next.

Ketsuen's helm had been lost in the battle with the Hantei, and now the Great Bear's long gray hair spilled over one side of his face. His eyes were cloudy and unfocused as he peered up at Yakamo's face. A trickle of blood streamed from the corner of the old man's mouth. Strange. Yakamo had never thought of his father as old before this moment.

"My son," Kisada whispered, his deep voice now weak and strained. He took a deep breath before he continued. "Is it over?"

"No, father," Yakamo said without hesitation. "For what they have done to you, for what they have done to Sukune and the rest of us, we will have–"

"Vengeance?" Kisada asked, his eyes suddenly intense as they focused on his son.

"Vengeance is for lesser men," Yakamo replied. "We will have justice."

Around them, the Imperial City continued to burn.

Significant Events

Year 1128, Month of the Dragon (Mid-spring)

Aftermath of Otosan Uchi (A9)

As the Clan of the Crab learns the price of its bargain, the Empire slowly awakens to a threat it has long ignored. Many report from Otosan Uchi to their lords that Kisada was slain in his attack by the honorable legions of the Lion, while other letters describe a sickness that has taken hold of the capital. In both accounts, however, the Hantei Emperor is said to be gaining strength.

Many of the Lion samurai who survived the attack have seen what has befallen the city and vowed revenge on the Crab for their treason. Others, however, see nothing but a dying city ruled by a corrupted Hantei and his undead legions. The number of Lion samurai who have fled Otosan Uchi cannot be ignored, and Ikoma Ujiaki has stepped forward to reassure the samurai that all is well. As the rift in the Lion Clan grows wider, many Matsu and Ikoma delegates are dispatched to scour the Empire for Matsu Tsuko, who has been missing since the Crab attack.

Kuni Yori, acting under the orders of the Emperor, gathers many Lions still loyal to Hantei and the Crab samurai who survived the attack but did not escape Otosan Uchi. In one of the great courtyards of the Imperial City, Yori unfolds one of the ancient Black Scrolls and invokes its power, sacrificing those Crab who do not choose to follow the Emperor. As the blood spills all about, the Terrible Oath is completed, granting all present the foul power of Fu Leng.

Death of the Lion Champion (PP)

Shortly after the Crab are defeated, Matsu Tsuko leaves the city of Otosan Uchi without preamble, and alone. The ride she takes is short, bringing her to the camp of Toturi the Black in the dead of the night.

Tsuko cannot bring herself to serve the thing that sits on the Emerald Throne, although a thousand years of oaths bind her to the Emperor. Cognizant of her failure, she prepares for seppuku – the only recourse left her. Toturi seconds her. As she makes the first cut, she reminds Toturi: where she had failed to unite the Lion against the possessed Emperor, he would be the only one who could succeed.

The next morning, Toturi reads Tsuko's final haiku to those who wish to hear.

Arrival of the Unicorn at Shiro Shiba (P15)

Slowed by both the winter season and endless skirmishes with the roving undead, Otaku Kamoko's small Unicorn force arrives at Shiba Castle. They find nothing of what they expect, as the Phoenix lands have yet to see the true ravages of war. The Champion of the Phoenix, Ujimitsu, arrives to speak with the Unicorn and is greatly troubled by their reports of undead Phoenix samurai. Despite what appears to be an error on the Unicorn's part, Iuchi Karasu insists they stay a little longer to protect the Phoenix.

Ride of the Lost Moto (Various Unicorn Lands)

Following the initial attacks by undead in Unicorn lands, another army has begun to terrorize the provinces of the Unicorn Clan. Led by the immortal Moto Tsume, the undead Moto ravage anything flying the banner of the Unicorn, leaving nothing alive in their wake. Family daimyo Moto Terumori immediately orders a counterattack on his family's undead counterparts and is killed in the ensuing battle. Though the fighting is bitter, the undead give no chase when the Unicorn are forced to retreat. Riding to the east, Tsume seeks other prey.

Kachiko's Commands (A9)

From the Palace of Otosan Uchi, the Lady of the Scorpion writes letters with trembling hands. Kachiko can no longer laugh off Yokuni's warnings, nor can she flee the terror that has engulfed Otosan Uchi. The missives she sends to her hidden Clan members directs them to either flee the Empire for good or stand beside her against the very thing that Lord Bayushi Shoju attempted to prevent. Fu Leng has returned in the body of the last Hantei, and all blame rests on the shoulders of the broken Scorpion Clan. Kachiko entreats those who still remember what a Scorpion's duty is to hunt down the roving Shadowlands where they can, and be ready for her call.

Year 1128, Month of the Serpent (Late spring)

Hoturi's Charge (PP)

Finally free of the Lion's trap, Toturi has turned his sights to the lands of the Crane. The true Doji Hoturi pleads for Toturi's aid in destroying the False Hoturi and his Shadowlands army. Toturi agrees to his friend's request and leads part of the ronin army to the Crane lands. Under the banner of the Wolf, Mirumoto Daini commands a troop of Naga, and the Emerald Champion himself, Kakita Toshimoko, has come to Hoturi's side. Leaving Takuan in charge of Beiden Pass for now, Toturi races to Asahina Temple, hoping his small force will be able to arrive before the impostor.

Burning of the Temples (Various Locations)

Yogo Junzo has split his force of Shadowlands beasts into several smaller armies. It is now clear that Junzo's forces are targeting the holy sites of the Brotherhood of Shinsei. The *sohei* across the Empire prove they are not easy prey, and every fallen temple is a costly victory for the armies of Fu Leng. The temples are nonetheless falling, and each time Junzo's armies appear, the Brotherhood loses another sacred place.

Among the most notable losses is the holy Four Temples, as the sickened and dying Seppun are no match for the forces of Yogo Junzo.

Kitsu Motso Rallies the Lion (L13)

Before the ruins of Akodo Castle, Kitsu Motso raises the standard of his family. Unable to find open support from either the Matsu or Ikoma, Motso has chosen the burnt husk of Shiro Akodo as a rallying point for the Lion. Those who understand the wisdom in the Kitsu general's words slowly come to join other Lions desperately seeking a leader.

After the seppuku of Matsu Tsuko, the clan is without a clear leader, and Motso hopes to heal the breach in his clan. His hopes are in vain, however, when it becomes clear that Ikoma Tsanuri and Ikoma Ujiaki have chosen to stand by the Hantei Emperor even now. Many of the Matsu and nearly all of the Ikoma await Tsanuri's command as Ujiaki declares any Lion following the war standard of Kitsu Motso to be a traitor to the Empire.

Asako Yurito's Death (Unknown)

With no word from the Inquisitor since the start of his quest, the Phoenix record Yurito's death on the 15th day of the Serpent.

Battle of Phoenix's Flight (P15)

After waiting nearly a month, the Unicorn forces under Otaku Kamoko leave the ancestral home of the Shiba family to return to Shiro Iuchi. No more than one li outside the castle gates a young road warden meets up with them, warning of the advancing army of Shadowlands beasts. Hungry for battle, Kamoko turns her army northward with Iuchi Karasu laying holy wards along the road.

The fight is quick, as the Phoenix are unprepared to fight such a massive enemy force. Shiba Ujimitsu notices a flaw in the tactics of the undead general – the Shadowlands forces do not bother to inflict any real damage on the structures of Shiro Shiba. The Immortal Phoenix reasons that Junzo is after a prize to the north – Kyuden Isawa.

Ujimitsu dispatches messengers to Kyuden Isawa, warning them of what is to come. Kamoko volunteers her army to hold off the horde as long as it can, to allow the Phoenix to regroup. Ujimitsu sees the fire in the Battle Maiden's eyes and vows to meet her forces at Kyuden Isawa – he orders her not to throw her life away recklessly. Kamoko agrees, realizing the wisdom in the Shiba Champion's words. Iuchi Karasu smugly refuses to make any such agreement.

Shiro Shiba is sacked, but not destroyed, and Phoenix losses are light. Just as Ujimitsu expects, Junzo pays little mind to Shiro Shiba and continues his march north. At the urging of Iuchi Karasu, Kamoko leads the charge straight into the heart of Junzo's forces instead of simply harrying them. Karasu unleashes the wrath of powerful kami into the ranks of undead, and Kamoko's attack shatters their front ranks. However, the Unicorn force is too small and takes heavy losses before retreating.

Year 1128, Month of the Horse (Early summer)

Battle of Bloodied Honor (CN18)

Though spared by the Crab, the forces under the False Hoturi's command do not hesitate to strike at Shinden Asahina. The Fields of the Morning Sun have never seen battle, but even the firmly pacifistic Asahina Tamako is forced to accede to Hoturi's wishes when Asahina Tomo returns with news of the Shadowlands' imminent attack. The fresh ronin samurai and fearsome Naga bushi bring new hope to the battle-weary Crane, and Hoturi gathers the last remains of his once proud clan.

The battle itself is as long as the day, as foul Oni darken the sky and shambling undead assail the Crane forces relentlessly. Black necromancers enact foul magic that raises every fallen Crane to fight for the False Hoturi, and even the powerful Asahina Tomo's spells are tested by *maho-tsukai* at every turn. In the middle of the field, the False

Hoturi calls out to the one he calls "Father," raising a sword bathed in Crane blood, clad in armor that Doji Satsume once wore.

The sky darkens from the maho-tsukai's foul magic as the true Crane Champion draws closer to the False. One pure strike flies, and the darkened sky breaks into sunlight.

Standing over the body of his doppelgänger, Hoturi raises a great cry and leads his forces to victory.

The Jade Hand (CB17)

In the aftermath of their disastrous encounter with Fu Leng, both Hida Yakamo and Hida Kisada are widely rumored to be dead. Hida O-Ushi takes temporary command of the loyal Crab forces, but a contingent led by Hida Amoro and Kuni Yori goes over to the Shadowlands Emperor.

Yakamo and Kisada are not, however, dead. Led out of the palace by one of the Empress' servitors, they take cover in a cave near the Imperial City, where Yakamo is visited by Togashi Yokuni. The Dragon Champion delivers the Jade Hand to Yakamo and vanishes as mysteriously as he appeared. Yakamo forces his father to confirm his suspicions: the claw that he wears came from the oni that bears his name. In an access of fury, Yakamo wrenches the claw from his wrist and flings it to the floor. He then holds the Jade Hand to his stump, and it fuses to his arm.

Convinced that his son will now atone for the sins the Hida family has committed at his orders, Hida Kisada prepares himself for *seppuku*. Yakamo rails at his father, calling his planned suicide cowardly; the Crab have delivered the Empire's capital city into the hands of their ancient Shadowlands enemies, and to commit seppuku before retaking it is a capitulation of the most craven sort. Furthermore, Hida Kisada developed a comprehensive knowledge of Otosan Uchi's terrain while planning his coup; suicide would deprive the clan of his invaluable intelligence. Faced with his son's passion and cold logic, Kisada consents to live with his shame.

Return of Togashi Yokuni (D4)

As a powerful figure rests once again on his ancient throne, word spreads from Dragon to Dragon across the Empire like wildfire. Their Champion has returned. Bringing with him words of prophecy and duty, Yokuni's word defines a single purpose for the scattered Dragon forces. Almost as one, Dragons emerge from seemingly everywhere in the Empire. Kitsuki diplomats appear at courts across Rokugan, promising the aid of unused Dragon grain houses and coffers. The shugenja of the Agasha roam the lands, bringing healing and the wisdom of Shinsei to burned villages and wounded samurai.

The Mirumoto samurai and Togashi monks face a less peaceful task as they conceal the Brotherhood from Junzo's hunters. As temple after temple burns to the ground, the Dragon give their lives to preserve as many of their brothers as they can. Each moment a Brotherhood shrine stands, each monk saved from the wrath of the Shadowlands, is bought in Dragon blood.

Battle of Blackened Ground (P9)

The Phoenix regroup at Kyuden Isawa, quickly joined by Otaku Kamoko and her small army. The Elemental Masters are nowhere to be found. The corrupted army marches on the blackened wastes that surround the once-beautiful Isawa home. Junzo's forces seem to draw strength from the perverted land around them, and the Phoenix's own spells are twisted by its foul presence.

Finding their own land and magic turned against them, not even the powerful Isawa shugenja and brave Unicorn samurai prove a match for Yogo Junzo's army. Unable to do anything else, Ujimitsu sounds the retreat and watches with trembling fists as Kyuden Isawa is pillaged for the Black Scrolls, then set ablaze.

Shortly after the battle, a Unicorn messenger brings word to Kamoko of the Lost Moto's attacks on Unicorn lands, and she swiftly departs with Iuchi Karasu and her samurai.

Year 1128, Month of the Goat (Mid-summer)

Opening of the Crane Coffers

Shortly after the defeat of the False Hoturi, the true Doji Hoturi begins to organize what remains of the Crane. His letters to the lords of the Crane command them to open their strongboxes and hire any who would fight under the banner of the Crane. The koku sent to Yoritomo's Alliance is doubled, and within weeks ronin and Minor Clan samurai flock to the lands of Asahina Temples.

Many Scorpion ronin take this opportunity to act openly against the Shadowlands as Kachiko has commanded. Though they do not realize it, the Crane hire a large number of former Scorpion, allowing their hated enemies to rally under their own banner.

Battle at Benten Seido (CN8)

The first major victory for the Yoritomo Alliance, a large force of Shadowlands creatures is prevented from destroying the temple of Benten Seido. Wasp arrows, Centipede magic, and Mantis blades make short work of the attackers, and those who witness the battle begin to realize the power the combined Minor Clans can wield.

The Madness of Isawa Tsuke (Various Phoenix and Imperial Lands)

Rumors of a Lost madman hurling black fire from the heavens can no longer be quelled by the Phoenix. Isawa Tsuke has been

consumed by Fu Leng's influence, his robes tattered and his lips dripping dark blood as he wanders the countryside. The corrupted Master destroys anything in his path – oni and samurai alike falling before Tsuke's rage as he slowly and relentlessly makes his way south from Kyuden Isawa.

Year 1128, Month of the Monkey (Late summer)

Toturi's Army rallies (PP)

Leaving the Crane to organize themselves, Toturi leads his army back toward Beiden Pass and the rest of his ronin. Many of the Dragon samurai who stood with Toturi have returned to their homelands at the command of their Champion. What is left, however, is a fearsome army of battle-hardened ronin and loyal Clan samurai. After a visit from the mysterious Hooded Ronin, Toturi's commands become ever more sharp and sure. He sends messengers to Takuan, instructing him to bring his troops to meet the main ronin army in Lion lands near the strategically significant Beiden Pass. At Beiden Pass, the Wolf will await an army of Crab once more – this time as an ally.

Defeat of Moto Tsume and Moto Sada (D11)

Returning to the lands of the Unicorn, Otaku Kamoko and Iuchi Karasu are surprised to encounter the roving Lost Moto. South of Kyuden Tonbo the two forces clash, with the insane laughter of Moto Sada ringing across the land as he and his undead brother Tsume charge their Unicorn cousins.

The Tainted bushi underestimate the fire in Kamoko's soul and the fury of Karasu's power. Having fought the undead beside the Phoenix for two months, the Battle Maidens make short work of Tsume's forces, and Iuchi Karasu's spells blast Moto Soro into oblivion. Tsume retreats, but he and his forces are ridden down to dust by Unicorn hooves.

The Hooded Ronin captured by Shadowlands

The descendant of Shinsei's return proves short. Near the end of the summer, he is captured by oni outside Phoenix lands, betrayed by a temple that had fallen to darkness months ago. Few are aware that he is in any danger, for hardly anyone knew where he was in the first place. The heimin who report this event quickly catch the attention of the Dragon and Unicorn, who race to intercept the Shadowlands force before they lead him to Otosan Uchi and the ancient god that now rests on the Emerald Throne.

What's New

New Item

The Jade Hand

This artifact is considered mythical, and the legends surrounding it are too numerous to detail. None of the stories quite touch upon the truth of this sacred object; only the Clan of the Crab knows its full history and powers.

When the army of the Maw attacked the Crab and seized Hiruma Castle, a young Crab bushi from the Kuni family went to a small shrine of Osano-Wo and prayed to the Fortune for guidance. The great Fortune of Fire and Thunder looked down upon the boy with little pity and did nothing. While the Crab retreated farther and farther, the young Kuni poured sake at the shrine and begged further. Still, Osano-Wo watched the boy from the Heavens with disinterest. When Kuni Osaku raised the wall of water to hold back the horde, the little Crab laid out fish and sake for his ancestor, still begging. Finally, when news reached the Kuni boy that his sister had died holding up the water, his eyes grew dark. The boy flung the sake and rice from its place and roared at the statue of Osano-wo, "If you will not aid me, then I will suffer alone to avenge her!"

It was then that the Fortune appeared in a dance of thunder and fire. Osano-Wo led Kuni Hohiro to a secret place where he forged a beautiful hand from a scale of his Celestial brother, the Jade Dragon. Some say that Osano-Wo took pity on the young Kuni, as he had once lost his sibling to the Shadowlands; others in the Clan say the Fortune was uncaring until he was impressed with the youth's fury at the temple. The Jade Hand passed down from Hohiro through his honored line until ten years ago. Kuni Hitu, the Hand's owner at the time, awoke in the middle of the night and disappeared. The only

one to see him leave was a Hida guard, who claims Hitu simply said, "I hear his call," before departing to the north.

The Jade Hand's Powers

By itself, the Hand is a powerful tool against the forces of the Shadowlands. Any Tainted creature struck by the Hand immediately takes 5k5 Wounds and is affected by Fear 3. Carrying the Hand protects the wearer from gaining the Taint in the same way as holding a piece of normal jade, but the Hand's protection lasts indefinitely and its jade does not become corrupted.

If held to a person's left arm (missing the forearm and hand), the Jade Hand may – if it deems the bearer worthy – attach itself to the stump, replacing the lost limb. The bearer of the Hand becomes completely immune to the Taint: there is absolutely no way that the character can gain the Shadowlands Taint. If the character has any Ranks of Taint when the Hand is attached, they are burned away painfully. This also means the wearer cannot practice *maho*, and any maho that targets the character has its TN raised by 30. The character's left hand inflicts 1k3 Wounds when used to punch, in addition to extra damage inflicted upon Shadowlands creatures. In addition, the bearer may spend a Void Point to cast Jade Strike as a shugenja of equivalent Rank, with a number of Free Raises equal to the bearer's Earth.

Naturally, such an object is impossible to conceal from Tainted creatures and people. Those with any amount of Taint feel uncomfortable whenever they are within 300′ of the relic, and can easily spot the source of their discomfort.

New Spells

The following are but a few of the new spells devised by the Isawa and Asahina during this time as weapons against the advancing Shadowlands Horde.

Visage of the Void

Element: Void
Mastery Level: 3
Duration: 1 Hour
Area of Effect: One target
Range: Touch

By altering the very pattern of the Void, this spell allows a single target to become invisible to any supernatural sense. The target is still visible to the eye, but any sort of magical detection automatically fails to register the target. The target will not trigger wards, will not be seen by those relying on any form of magical sight, and so on. The target is even invisible to enhanced awareness techniques such as the Rank Three Bayushi Saboteur technique and the Zanji skill from The Way of Shinsei.

In addition, the character also gains a strong protection from magic, as the kami find it difficult to see the target. Any spell targeting the recipient of a Visage of the Void spell has its TN raised by 15.

Light of the Morning Sun

Element: Fire
Mastery Level: 4
Duration: Instant
Area of Effect: One target per School Rank
Range: 20′

Calling upon the revered Sun Goddess, this spell is the bane of those who cannot withstand the glare of Amaterasu's gaze. Any creature with one full rank of Taint or more suffers the full effects of this spell – 2k2 Wounds and Fear 1 as the fury of the Sun's anger shines down on them. Naturally occurring clouds break open to allow the Sun Goddess' rays to fall on targets, but this spell will not summon sunlight where none can reach (like the inside of a cave, or a room with no windows), nor at night. Any place indirect sunlight can reach is sufficient to cast this spell.

Other shugenja capable of casting this spell may share their strength and create a larger effect, as the combined prayers can bring the Light of the Morning Sun down upon an entire field. For each shugenja casting in conjunction with the first, the range of the spell is increased by 20′ and two additional targets may be affected.

Kata

Kamoko completed the final steps taught to her years ago and sheathed her katana with a calm grace. The Battle Maiden's eyes flickered open, and the depth and power of the endless seas could be seen there. "I am ready," she said finally to the Phoenix general, mounting her steed and turning toward the advancing army of dead men.

Anyone can learn how to grip a sword, how to thrust with a naginata, or how to swing a heavy tetsubo, but truly great students of the martial arts are taught kata. The kata is a ritual movement that incorporates many different movements with either a weapon or empty hands. Kata generally have a focal point, training the student in, for instance, defensive movements with a wakizashi, or a purely evasive unarmed kata, or a deadly kenjutsu kata dedicated to lightning-fast strokes.

The movements of a kata are usually timed against invisible opponents, and the battle is exactly the same every time. For example, a simple Shinjo bushi kata may have the student draw his

katana, turn to the left, avoid a clumsy strike, then swing to cut off his opponent's head. The student then turns to face the opposite direction and takes three steps forward, making a simple overhead slash with each step. To end the kata, the student takes one step back to examine the imaginary fight, flicks the imaginary blood off of his katana, and sheathes it.

While it would be foolish to try to enact a kata in the middle of a battle, there is no denying that preparing for a fight with the proper kata helps the bushi focus on certain techniques. In preparation for a Lion attack, Daidoji Uji would perhaps drill his students in a yari kata that focused on defense and outmaneuvering a larger army. These kata become more than simple movements, but instead a ritual in which each bushi focuses his chi to a pronounced effect. As the Clan War reaches a point that could forge an new Empire or turn it to dust, many bushi across Rokugan look to their ancient forms of preparation as they ready themselves for each battle.

"When Can I Use My Kata?"

Though kata can give your character impressive abilities, there are a couple things to take into consideration. The bonuses a kata grants are the result of an intense focus achieved by enacting the kata several times. For example, the Shinjo bushi using a Thundering the Sky kata isn't just jumping a little – he's leaping several feet off the ground during the movements. Because of the preparation involved, you're not going to walk into an ambush and have your kata ready in most cases.

For the most part, kata are performed when a character has the time to prepare for a fight that will occur soon, like in a tournament or when an enemy has been sighted marching to your lord's castle.

Like Techniques, each bushi school claims its own unique creations in addition to several basic foundation kata. Many contests of a samurai's skill involve performing one or more kata for show, where one competes only with himself to show either the grace and beauty of his school (such as the Shiba school's "Heaven's Wing" kata) or the flashy and awesome might of the technique (like the Hida's "Shards of Earth" kata). Unlike normal displays with two or more combatants, only the participant is involved, so the expectation for perfection is higher.

Attributes of Kata

School: The school that primarily teaches the kata. It is possible to learn the kata outside of its school, but very rare. If the school is "Any," then this kata is common to all bushi schools.

Time: The amount of time (in minutes) it will take to repeat the kata before a correct focus is reached. Subtract twice the character's School Rank from this number, as more advanced bushi achieve the desired focus more efficiently.

Rank: The difficulty rating of the kata, and also the Rank a character must be in the appropriate school to learn the kata. When performing a kata for show, the TN to perform the kata well becomes 10 plus the kata's Rank x 5. The character rolls using the appropriate weapon Skill /Agility if a weapon is used to perform, or Jiujutsu/Agility if it is an empty-hand kata.

Cost: The amount of experience points needed to learn the kata.

Other: If there are additional modifiers or situations to take into account for this kata, they will be listed here.

Effect: After the kata has been practiced long enough to give the samurai focus, these are the benefits and penalties for the samurai. The sharp focus a kata induces does not last long – all kata's effects last at least one hour, or until the end of the first battle the samurai engages in after completing the kata (whichever is longer).

Striking as Fire

"Knowing your fate means nothing if you can do nothing about it." – Ginawa

School: Any
Time: 10
Rank: 1
Cost: 2
Other: None

Effect: One of the first kata any bushi learns, this is simple, short, and adaptable to any weapon or empty hands. Schools that prize speed over power teach this right away as an exercise, improving the accuracy and repetition of a student's strike. While focusing on Striking as Fire, the bushi may raise his initiative roll by 2, rolls one extra die when rolling to hit, and rolls one fewer die when determining damage.

Striking as Water

"Parry this, Unicorn." – Yoritomo

School: Any
Time: 10
Rank: 1
Cost: 2
Other: This kata can be used with a blunt weapon or bare hands.

Effect: Focusing on pure strength over more subtle moves in combat, the Striking as Water kata brings to bear the power of Water in the bushi's chi, sacrificing all else for the pure ability to inflict damage. Given the nature of this kata, however, bladed weapons (such as katana) do not benefit from as effectively, thus negating the kata's benefits. When under the effects of a Striking as Water kata, the bushi gains two additional dice to roll for damage, but his initiative rolls are reduced by 2 and he rolls one fewer die when attempting to hit a target.

Shards of Earth

"You cannot hide from my fury, samurai." – Hida Amoro

School: Hida Bushi
Time: 20
Rank: 3
Cost: 3
Other: When learning this kata, the bushi chooses to practice either with a tetsubo or barehanded. Shards of Earth may be learned in both forms separately.

Effect: The Hida teach their samurai to focus their chi like the earth, to become impenetrable and strong like the mountains. They show their students how to draw out the Earth in themselves to augment their own strength, but this kata takes a different approach to the Hida's affinity for Earth. To see this kata performed can either be somewhat dull or completely fascinating as the Hida bushi goes through many slow, wide movements with his hands or tetsubo. The bushi focuses his chi as he moves quietly around a large stone. When the bushi reaches the end of the ritual, he raises either his weapon or an empty hand high above his head and strikes down quickly, stopping only fractions of an inch above the stone. The power of the bushi's chi alone causes the stone to crumble into pebbles.

While focusing on the Shards of Earth kata, the Hida bushi may completely ignore armor when striking an opponent, directly attacking the target's Earth. Unprepared or surprised targets struck by a Shards of Earth attack must make a opposed Earth check vs. the Earth of the bushi or be thrown off his feet and dazed for one round.

One Leg Stance

"Let the world move, as long as you stand at its center."
– Kakita's "The Sword"

School: Kakita Bushi
Time: 25
Rank: 3
Cost: 4
Other: When learning this kata, the bushi chooses to practice either with a yari or a katana. The One Leg Stance kata may be learned for both weapons separately.

Effect: This kata is unusual in the fact that there are almost no movements below the waist while this is performed. Like the stance of the clan's totem, the samurai raises one leg and folds it beneath him. From this position, the Kakita bushi then strikes at furious angles all around him, moving only slightly to change the direction he is facing. When the kata is completed, and the bushi is ready to fight, he stands normally, but is focused on making controlled, furious strikes with as little movement as possible.

The blinding speed and focus of this kata grants the bushi one additional attack per round. While focused on the One Leg Stance, the bushi's TN to be hit is reduced to his Reflexes x 2 (plus armor) for close combat, or simply his armor bonus when being targeted with a ranged attack. The relative immobility of the One Leg Stance also means the Crane suffers a +5 penalty to the TN to hit anyone attacking the samurai with a polearm (unless the Crane is using a yari).

Falling Stars

"All the Heavens will stand still for the focused mind."
– Mirumoto's "Niten"

School: Mirumoto Bushi
Time: 15
Rank: 2
Cost: 2
Other: This kata may be used with the daisho.

Effect: In order to learn the coordination of the two-sword technique, a student's patience and focus must be absolute. The kata of Falling Stars is an important one for a would-be Niten legend to master – although it is a simple pattern, the intricate steps and strikes take months to learn precisely. The kata begins with both swords at rest, and the student draws the wakizashi, stepping back and away in defensive moves and postures until the katana is drawn. It is then that the truly amazing part of the kata begins. The Dragon samurai becomes surrounded by an endless whirl of blades as he strikes down three opponents for every step. The movements showcased by the Falling Stars kata are so intricate that samurai have been known to slash themselves – in two cases fatally – attempting it.

This kata brings the student's focus to an absolute point, making it nearly impossible to distract the bushi's attention from the battle, by magical means. Any technique or action that relies on some sort of feint or distraction automatically fails. This also means that the Dragon samurai will be oblivious to things farther away than about 20′. While focused on the Falling Stars, the bushi gains a +5 TN to be hit in close combat, and suffers a -10 TN to be hit penalty for ranged attacks.

Fury Without End

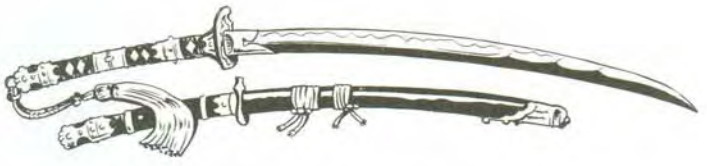
"A Lion's sword does not rest until every enemy of the Empire lies dead." – Matsu Gohei

School: Lion (Akodo) Bushi
Time: 30
Rank: 3
Cost: 3
Other: None

Effect: Rarely shown at competition, the Fury Without End kata is sometimes used when training Lion armies. The kata itself has no ending, just as the name implies. Its final move glides smoothly into its first, repeating until the samurai chooses to end it (usually from fatigue). Units of samurai have practiced this kata for days on end, not wavering until their general gives the command to cease. The movements of the kata itself are simple enough to adapt to any close-range weapon, or even empty hands.

The strength of this kata, however, lies not in intricate patterns and sweeping motions. Fury Without End allows the Lion samurai to ignore fatigue, pain, and other distractions while fighting for a number of hours equal to his School Rank. Penalties incurred due to wounds are ignored, and the need for rest is similarly forgotten as the bushi fights on and on. This is not a berserker rage of any sort, but a focused mindset that sweeps away all else but the fight.

When the Lion comes out of the battle, he will require rest for at least half a day, and is considered to be at the +20 wound level until he rests.



Heaven's Wing

"Let the flow of the world rush through you, and nothing can oppose your course." – Shiba Ujimitsu

School: Shiba Bushi

Time: 25

Rank: 4

Cost: 4

Other: This kata must be used with a naginata.

Effect: Many Shiba bushi are never taught the Heaven's Wing kata, as it requires a focus and deep strength that are beyond the capabilities of most. The way this kata is performed is unusual, as it does not teach technique by its movements. Heaven's Wing instead teaches a focus that builds up over the simple, wide movements of the naginata. Although almost never used for competitions, the steps are beautiful and sure as the bushi guides his weapon in long flowing arcs all around him.

The effect of this kata is both devastating and simple. After the bushi gains enough focus from the movements, he can maintain that mindset for no more than half an hour as the power of his chi and the Void burns within his soul more brightly than ever. When the time is right, the Shiba bushi unleashes a furious and sudden assault. The bushi spends all of his remaining Void Points, and gains a number of extra attacks equal to the number of Void Points spent. After the round is over, the bushi must remain on Full Defense for a number of rounds equal to the number of attacks he gained.

Rising Claws

"Even the strongest castle must stand on something." – Bayushi Kyono

School: Bayushi Bushi

Time: None

Rank: 3

Cost: 4

Other: This kata may be used with bladed weapons.

Effect: When some view this kata performed by a Scorpion samurai, they are amazed by how openly it makes underhanded and obviously deceitful moves. The bushi moves in a circle around the invisible foe, feinting in and out quickly, but never actually striking the "opponent." The fact that a blow is never landed is obvious only

to the person performing the ritual steps and to others who know this technique. What the bushi is actually attempting to do is find a rhythm in the opponent's defense to take advantage of.

Unlike many kata, this may be performed in a combat situation, but it is almost worthless unless the samurai is engaging a single foe. While using the kata of Rising Claws, the bushi gains +10 to his TN to be hit, as he is not really attempting anything but drawing attacks from the foe. The kata is completed when the samurai makes a sudden, single attack at the opponent's inner thigh, striking at the tendons. The strike gains a +5 bonus for each round spent dancing around the foe, to a maximum of +20. If the roll beats the opponent's TN to be hit by 5, the attack has successfully "hamstrung" the Scorpion's target, who can no longer stand correctly until the wound is tended.

The samurai performing the kata has a -20 penalty to his TN to be hit against all opponents except the target of the kata. This kata is useless if the Scorpion samurai is somehow unable to move fully around the opponent, as the sudden strike requires a deft spinning lunge. The kata is equally useless against those who know it. Of course, the name "Rising Claws" has nothing to do with what the kata actually does, but is simply another piece of Scorpion deception.

Thundering the Sky

"Come to me, Crab, if you think you can fight the very wind." – Shinjo Yasamura

School: Shinjo Bushi

Time: 20

Rank: 3

Cost: 5

Other: This kata must be used with a katana and no armor.

Effect: Many believe the Unicorn can fight on a horse. Many will tell you if you cut the horse from beneath a charging Shinjo, you have already defeated him. Many are wrong, and dead. Developed shortly after the return of the Unicorn to the Empire, Thundering the Sky is an awesome kata to behold. The Shinjo samurai leaps and spins, never stopping until every sweeping and dizzying movement of the kata is completed. The strikes of this kata defy the tradition of kenjutsu in the Empire, a fact that the Unicorn relies on once he has set his mind on the Thundering the Sky kata.

The katana's strikes seem to come from all angles as the Shinjo bushi dances all around his opponent, no matter how hard the foe attempts to catch him. The TN to hit the samurai is raised by 15, and the Unicorn gains one extra attack each round. However, due to the shallow and quick strikes focused on by this kata, each hit made by the Unicorn rolls and keeps one fewer die for damage.

Adventure Hooks

Divided Honor

Location: Lion lands

"Now comes the time for our most painful choice." – Kitsu Motso

Challenge

As Lions gather slowly on both sides of the walls of Otosan Uchi, Kitsu Motso takes what he believes is the last chance to avoid conflict between the clan's two factions. If any of the characters are Lion, this will be the ultimate test of their honor, as Motso brings them into his command tent and tells them of his plan. Even if there are no Lion in the party, characters may have mixed feelings about Motso's idea of fighting against the Emperor. Kitsu Motso may trust the characters because they have served him loyally in the past, or because they are known to be honorable and trustworthy, or for some other reason.

The characters are given a message for Ikoma Ujiaki, sealed and to be opened only by the Ikoma elder. Motso informs the characters of the letter's contents – that the Lion's oath to protect the Emperor died with the Hantei's corruption, and there is no path left but that of protecting the Empire. If any of the characters attempt to argue with him, Motso begins by trying to sway their opinion. If the characters persist, they are led away from the camp by armed guard.

Characters who agree to Motso's wishes are given fresh mounts, provisions, and the prayers of the Kitsu sodan-senzo as they prepare for a journey to Otosan Uchi.

Focus

It's likely that none of the characters has ever visited Otosan Uchi. Even if they have, odds are that the characters did not have to

contend with wandering trolls, oni, and undead the last time they visited. GMs are encouraged to unleash any sort of Shadowlands abomination they wish to hurl at the characters. Rokugan has been torn by war for nearly two years now, and even the Imperial City is not immune to the ravages of the Clan War. Shattered villages, burning shrines, and places where the dead simply lie in fields unattended by eta are just some of the sights the PCs must face.

Make sure at least one of the characters understands that as they grow nearer to Otosan Uchi, the blight seems to get steadily worse.

Strike

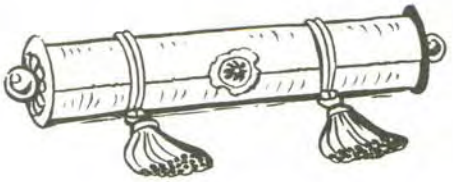
When (and if) the PCs arrive at Otosan Uchi, they should be fully aware that Motso did not lie when he said darkness had engulfed the city. They are greeted by guards that are either sick or Tainted. Kitsu Motso's seal should get them into the inner city, as Ikoma Ujiaki has been scouring Rokugan for signs of Matsu Tsuko and the missing general Kitsu Motso.

Make it very clear what has happened to Otosan Uchi. Guards in the colors of the Hantei shamble through the streets, and they can be easily identified as the walking dead. The Taint clings to sections of the inner city, and the whole of Otosan Uchi is broken and charred from either the recent Crab attack or simple decay, as few of Taint-free citizens dare to walk the streets anymore.

Ujiaki greets the party the day they arrive, before the sun has begun to set. The Ikoma daimyo is hospitable and cordial, although obviously distracted by fatigue and duty. He asks the characters to remain while he reads the letter, thinking to give them a response. The message is brief and pointed enough that Ujiaki cannot mask the surprise and anger that overtake him.

In a rage, the Ikoma destroys the letter and demands to know if they will stand beside their Emperor or the "lying, cowardly man who speaks with less honor than a Scorpion." Though this is not an easy choice, it is likely one that each PC has made by now. Those who agree with Ujiaki are allowed to leave. Those who do not could very well end up the next group of walking dead in the Pearl of Rokugan.

Characters who lie to Ujiaki could escape the city and return to Motso, or they could be hunted by the armies of a corrupt Emperor to be murdered as traitors; the outcome is left in the hands of the GM.



The Master of Fire

Location: Phoenix lands

Challenge

The characters are approached by a dirty and exhausted ashigaru spearman, who nearly collapses as he slams his head into the ground before the samurai. Between ragged breaths and fearful hesitations, the peasant begs the party to follow him back to his village. An oni has attacked, and is slaughtering the small ashigaru garrison and burning the village to the ground. The man has the smell of soot and looks as if he has been running for hours.

By the time the PCs reach the village (which can be anywhere the GM deems fit for the campaign, but is most likely to lie in Phoenix or Imperial lands), it is nothing but a withered husk, and the dead lie everywhere. The only damage caused to the villagers and buildings was done by fire.

Focus

Hitaka, the ashigaru, quickly realizes he is the last survivor of his village. He asks the samurai to help him find whatever caused all of this and avenge his family. Though the characters may not have been the keepers of this village in particular, they are looking at at least five boxes of Honor loss if they have an Honor Rank of 2 or higher and refuse to help without an extremely good reason.

Characters who attempt to find some sign of the beast that destroyed the town will sooner or later note a path of burned bushes and grass heading away from the town. Anyone who makes a Perception check at TN 15 will note that the most likely cause was am immolated humanoid walking off that way. Hitaka points out that another village that traded with his lies not far in that direction.

Continued searching will yield little else, as every person in the village was killed in the attack. The only thing left to do is to travel to the next village, which will take a few hours on foot, or less than one on horseback.

Strike

Some time before reaching the second village, the PCs can see smoke on the horizon. Hitaka's eyes become both fearful and angry as he beholds the burning village. Screams rise to the heavens as one lone figure floats throughout the small dirt roads, raining fire and destruction everywhere. As the characters gets closer, they can make out that the monster is a bald human in the robes of a Phoenix.

Depending on their skills and/or experiences, characters may or may not recognize the man as Isawa Tsuke, the Phoenix Clan Master of Fire, screaming in madness and clearly consumed by the Taint.

Foolish characters (or players) will not last long here. It becomes quickly apparent that even an army would be hard-pressed to withstand Tsuke's fury, as he tears the village and villagers to pieces. Attacking Tsuke with a katana or polearm is suicide, and attempting to shoot him down is equally futile as he is surrounded by unnatural flame (Tsuke's Call to Heaven).

The party is not however, helpless. Those who pay close attention notice that the twisted Master is wreaking havoc on buildings, killing those that stand in his way. As long as the PCs make an effort to escape Tsuke's way (not difficult at all), they are free to rush to the aid of villagers and the wounded. Isawa Tsuke's attack ends when most of the village has been destroyed, and he simply leaves, surrounded by fire.

Escape from Otosan Uchi

Location: Otosan Uchi (A9)

Challenge

As the remaining Crab forces attempt to flee the Imperial City after Kisada's encounter with Fu Leng, they are devoured by their Shadowlands allies. Destruction runs rampant through the streets as the oni, goblins, and trolls run free, cutting down any human who stands in their way. If the characters are at Otosan Uchi at this time, they may also find fleeing the city to be the most prudent course.

Focus

While the characters are pushing past running citizens, fleeing samurai, and rampaging beasts, a voice calls out to them (most likely identifying them by the mon they are wearing, if any). A stern Lion samurai wearing the badge of an Imperial Magistrate orders them to her side as she cuts down a goblin with a solid blow.

When the characters reach her, Matsu Shiko demands that they stand at her side and help her to bring order back to the streets of Otosan Uchi. She points her sword at a squad of fleeing Hiruma scouts and barks, "Start with those traitors!"

If the party has any Crab characters, she commands them to make the first kill, or she will consider them traitors to the Throne as well.

Strike

Depending on how the characters reached Otosan Uchi, or if there is a Crab in their ranks, they could respond in a number of ways. An attack by a Crab character on the inflexible Lion is acceptable in terms of honor, but other characters should be honor bound merely subdue her for the sake of their companion. Should a PC slay Matsu Shiko, her yoriki report his action and the entire party gains the Hunted disadvantage. If the party decides to side with the Lion, they gain the favor of the Emerald Throne and Matsu Shiko, one of the Emperor's most loyal samurai, but must deal with the dangers of remaining in the doomed city with the stubborn Magistrate.

Heroic Opportunities

The following are customized Heroic Opportunities for the two key battles in the months covered by this chapter. Keep in mind that no rolling is needed for the generals, as these two battles have outcomes that have been determined. If the GM has decided to diverge from canon, however, he can feel free to determine the outcome in the matter that pleases him, or indeed whether these battles occur at all.

Battle of Blackened Ground

Location: Isawa Palace; Phoenix vs. Shadowlands

For the first four rounds, the Phoenix and Shadowlands forces should be considered Even, with two rounds of the Shadowlands Winning and the Phoenix Losing before the palace is overrun and the Phoenix forces retreat. For the purpose of casting and failing spells, the lands around Isawa Palace are considered to have the same effect as the Shadowlands.

Claimed by Fu Leng

After hurling several spells into the charging ranks of Shadowlands monsters, a nearby shugenja suddenly stops his chanting and doubles over in pain. As you look to see what the problem is, the Phoenix begins spitting black ichor out of his mouth. A moment passes and the man stands up tall again, his face a twisted visage set in an insane grin. His eyes flash a dark yellow as he raises his hands to turn his spells into the ranks of his former clan. Depending on the level of the character, the shugenja could just be turned against his allies, deeply Tainted, or suddenly touched with several Shadowlands powers. If the PC does not reach the shugenja in time to stop him, the Tainted shugenja will most likely decimate his former companions.

Oni Summoning

As you fight against the endless waves of Tainted foes, a breach appears in their ranks, and there you see several foul necromancers concluding a maho ritual. As they slash their arms to seek the favor of Fu Leng, you see the air shimmer between them and the ground begins to crack. You have only moments before they summon another unspeakable oni from Jigoku. Stopping the summoning ritual is not difficult, but the character will probably find himself the focus of the enraged maho-tsukai's powers.

Battle of Bloodied Honor

Location: Asahina Temple; Crane vs. Shadowlands

For the first four rounds, the Crane forces are Losing badly to the Shadowlands. The third round suddenly becomes Even as the true Hoturi faces the False, and the following round the Crane should begin Winning and continue to do so until the Shadowlands army breaks.

Oni no Sanru Swarm

The screams from both sides of the fight surround you; the Crane cry out to their ancestors, and the Tainted simply bellow in rage. As the battle flows around you, you suddenly hear another battle shout – one from above. A group of winged oni flies over the fight, heading straight for the unprotected archers who hurry their preparations to fire another volley. This opportunity is best suited if the party is still together, as it results in a skirmish with one or more Oni no Sanru. Characters armed with bow weapons will probably have been given two or more crystal or jade arrows before the battle. The party can either try to shoot the oni down (a successful hit causes the Sanru to attack the party instead), or run to defend the archers.

Beside My Ancestors

Among the walking dead under the False Hoturi's command are some wearing tattered and ancient Crane kimono. Next to you, a bushi freezes in horror as something that is apparently his ancestor engages him and cuts him down mercilessly. The samurai hits the ground quickly, overcome with fear and confusion. The fallen Crane samurai has been badly injured by his great-great-grandfather's corpse. The undead should prove only a slight problem for the character; the PC is then considered to be a part of the "wounded comrade" opportunity.

Who's Who

Bayushi Tasu

Scorpion Clan Killer

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Perception: 4
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Reflexes: 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 2, Shosuro Assasin 2
Honor: 1.5
Glory: 0.0 (technically ronin)
Advantages: Silent, Balance, Shadow Brand (one), Multiple Schools
Disadvantages: Sworn Enemy (Soshi Bantaro), Driven (to prove his loyalty)
Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 3, Climbing 4, Defense 4, Explosives 3, Hunting 5, Kusari-gama 6, Locksmith 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Ninjutsu 6, Poison 4, Stealth 6, Tanto 4

Bayushi Tasu is remembered by most as merely an effete noble of the Bayushi house. Though he was a powerful landholder, second in wealth only to Bayushi Shoju, most outside the clan considered him a vain, impractical man, prone to long periods of secluded reflection. As far as Scorpion go, he was relatively harmless.

Such are the shadows woven by a Scorpion assassin.

Before the Coup, he served as Soshi Bantaro's personal enforcer. His long periods of "seclusion" were a cover for his missions. It was Tasu's blade that slew Bantaro's predecessor, Tasu's poison that killed Bantaro's meddlesome father. Tasu has become something of a legend among Scorpions, dubbed "The Killer" by Aramoro himself. Only a handful realize that Tasu and the Killer are the same man. Even this is a testament to his talents.

Privately, Tasu considered Bantaro a short-sighted, temperamental, and often foolish master. Regardless, the Killer kept his feelings private and obeyed dutifully for many years. During the Coup, when things looked bleakest, Tasu slew a dozen miharu while Bantaro escaped the Forbidden City. When Bantaro determined to steal Bayushi Shoju's corpse from the pyres of Otosan Uchi, it was Tasu who slipped past the guards and executed his will.

After the Coup, Tasu watched Bantaro's descent into madness with concern. He realized that no good would come of his master's quest to resurrect Shoju. He knew the mad shugenja would not listen to reason. When Tasu realized he could obey Bantaro no more, he was shattered. No matter what crimes he had committed, no matter what evil he had perpetrated, Tasu's loyalty had always been the one virtue to which he could cling. Now even that was gone.

What profit was there in swearing loyalty to a man disloyal to the ideals upon which the clan was founded? Had his entire life been a waste? Tasu was torn with doubt. He knew only one thing for certain – he must stop Soshi Bantaro. With a heavy heart, Tasu gathered what like-minded Scorpions he could find and fled Kyuden Bayushi.

With the help of Suisei, a retired Scorpion bushi who recently joined his band, he has learned the skills he will require to defeat the maho-tsukai. The Scorpions who follow Tasu have learned from Suisei as well. The Killer has forged his band of exiles into an elite band of assassins specialized in destroying the creatures of darkness.

Tasu secretly hopes to die fighting Bantaro. Surely that will spare him the pain of existence now that he has abandoned his only virtue. The Scorpion ronin who follow Tasu would be shocked to hear this. To them, it is clear that Tasu has found a virtue as great as his loyalty.

Courage.

Doji Chomei

Earth: 3
Water: 4
Fire: 3
Air: 2
Reflexes 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 2, Mantis Bushi 1
Honor: 2.6
Glory: 3.3
Advantages: Allies (the Minor Clans), Multiple Schools, Social Position (Ambassador)
Disadvantages: Brash
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 4, Commerce 3, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 4,

Kyujutsu 3, Law 2, Lore (Bushido) 3, Nofujutsu 2, Sailing 2, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 4

The son of a Doji courtier and a Daidoji bushi, Chomei's upbringing varied between two extremes: the diplomacy of court and the brazen haggling of merchants in the ports where his father was stationed. While he could never truly master the subtleties of court as his mother had, the lessons he learned there garnered great success for him in dealing with the merchants and traders of his father's world. He was known among their kind as a shrewd and discriminating opponent.

Several years ago, the Crane began experiencing significant difficulties with their emissaries to the Islands of Silk and Spice. The courtiers stationed there – not a prestigious post by any stretch of the imagination – complained that the court of the Mantis Lord Yoritomo was a brusque and hostile environment in which few gains could be made. Concerned about maintaining as dominant a role in the courts of Rokugan as possible, even in the courts of the Minor Clans, the Doji family searched for a suitable candidate to represent them to the Mantis. While no courtiers with the necessary experience could be found, they discovered Doji Chomei serving as a magistrate in a minor port in the Daidoji lands.

Chomei quickly found himself serving as the yojimbo of the Doji ambassador to the Mantis Clan. While Yoritomo's court was still difficult for the Crane emissaries to endure, they were able to manage with Chomei's assistance. For his part, Chomei enjoyed the boisterous nature of the Mantis and trained often in their dojo. His defensive training availed him well against the Mantis fighting style, and Chomei's boasting led him to be soundly defeated in the dojo by Yoritomo himself. Rather than generating animosity between the them, this encounter fostered a deep respect between the two men that lasts to this day.

Although his assignment to the Islands of Silk and Spice ended some time ago, the Crane have recently called upon Chomei to renew his contacts there. The Crane have suffered numerous defeats early in the Clan War, and the Mantis are among the few allies whose loyalty can be purchased with the near-limitless wealth the Crane have at their disposal. Chomei finds himself standing at the front of a legion of Mantis, Tortoise, Fox, Wasp, and Centipede troops. Among the Crane he has always been little more than a convenient curiosity; utilized when convenient and overlooked the rest of the time.

In the Alliance, however, he is a leader.

Isawa Norikazu

Earth: 4
Willpower 6
Water: 3
Fire: 5
Air: 4
Awareness: 5
Void: 6
School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 4 (Fire Affinity)
Honor: 2.4
Glory: 4.9

Advantages: Chosen by the Oracles, Forbidden Knowledge Great Destiny, Inner Gift (prescience)

Disadvantages: Enlightened Madness, Haunted (visions), Small

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Investigation 2, Lore (Prophecies of Uikku) 3, Meditation 6, Shintao 3, Spellcraft 6, Theology 3

Spells: (Italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon, Hurried Steps, Summon Fire Spirit, Wings of Fire, By the Light of Lord Moon,* Tempest of Air, Speed Growth, Heart of the Inferno, Secrets on the Wind, *Reflections of Pan Ku,* Symbol of Fire, *Wisdom of the Kami,* Following Osano-Wo

Kiho: Channel the Fire Dragon, Touch the Void Dragon

As a young child, Norikazu trudged through the Isawa Shugenja School unnoticed by his peers and his instructors. He had always been small and showed none of the potential that many of his fellow students had.

When the time came for his gempukku, Norikazu had accepted his unimportant station in life. However, that is where his destiny took a turn. It was at that time that he first saw the strange old man. The elder brushed by the young Isawa, saying, "I am watching you, Norikazu." When the shugenja turned, the stranger was gone. However, Isawa Ujina, his father's closest friend, was standing in front of him.

Ujina looked down and said, "It will be best if you avoid that man." Before Norikazu could reply, the Master of the Void walked off.

In the months to come, Norikazu found an untapped potential within him. He began to train with Ujina's children and the kami all about seemed to wait upon his smallest wish. However, the brief reprieve in the Isawa's life ended when his father died of a sudden illness. As his mother had died in childbirth, his father's ceremonial duties fell to him. On the night of his father's funeral, Norikazu saw the old man again. Though Ujina had warned young Norikazu, something in the man's eyes set the Phoenix at ease. "It is time for you to leave," he said. Somehow Norikazu knew that he was right,

and so he left with only a brief good-bye to his childhood friend, Kaede, Ujina's daughter.

Norikazu was not seen for years. When he returned to the Isawa lands, he rushed to see what had become of the friends he had left behind. Norikazu first looked for Kaede, but only found a twisted and foul man in tattered robes. Something in the broken Isawa remembered him, and Norikazu finally recognized Isawa Ujina.

Before he could speak, Ujina's low and rasping voice silenced him, "You were warned! Warned, warned, warned! But it is too late now! Too late. Too."

"Ujina-sama," Norikazu whispered. "What has happened? What did you want to keep me from seeing?"

The Nameless One's eye blazed at Norikazu. "See?" he bellowed, pointing a deformed finger at Norikazu. "I will show you what you will see!" and with a twist of his body, the former Master's hand came to rest on the younger Phoenix's forehead. In that moment everything changed.

He saw everything: Ujina's hatred for the Oracles, Shiba kneeling before Isawa, Shoju cutting down the 38th Hantei Emperor, a great army of Naga marching on the lands of the Dragon. He saw the Sun and Moon turn to ash and fall from the sky. The images were too much, too quick, and Norikazu screamed as the Void enclosed him, falling to the floor.

Since that day, he has had brief moments of lucidity, though his connection to the kami has grown stronger. They obey commands that seem like gibberish to mortal minds, surrounding him and protecting him as if he were one of their own. Isawa Kaede, feeling responsible for the curse her father placed upon the young man, has taken a personal interest in keeping Norikazu well. His ravings occasionally lead to true prophecy. It is not the babblings that unsettle Kaede, but the fact that Norikazu's eyes become clearer with each passing day…

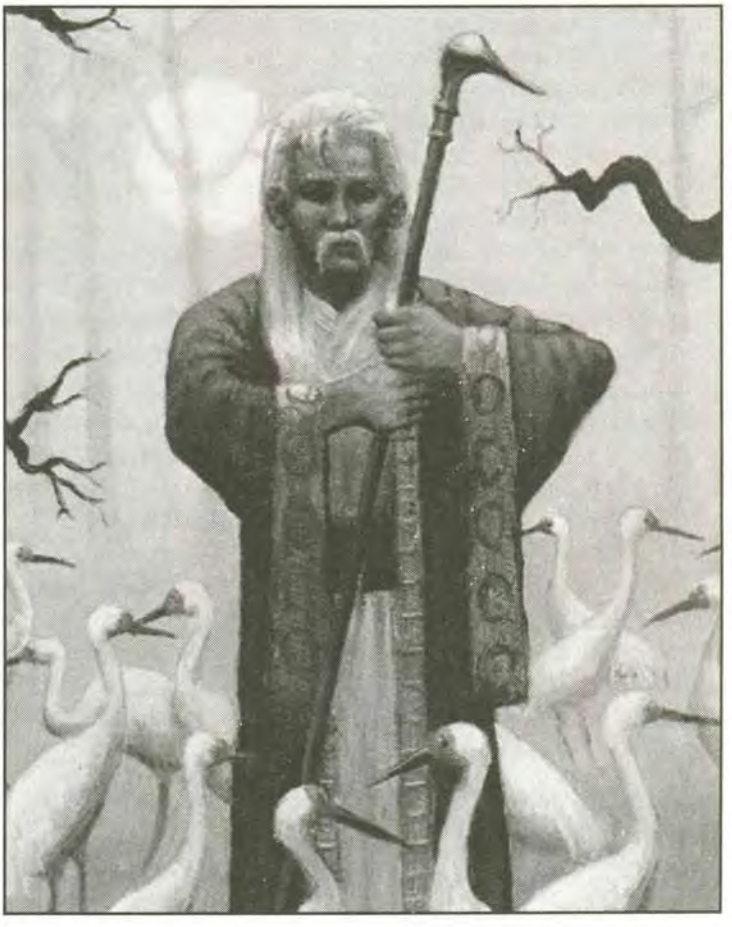
Asahina Tomo

Crane Clan Healer

Earth: 3
Willpower: 6
Water: 3
Perception: 4
Fire: 4
Intelligence: 5
Air: 6
Awareness: 7
Void: 4
School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 5
Honor: 4.8
Glory: 6.4

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Sage
Disadvantages: Soft-Hearted
Spells: (italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon, Mists of Illusion,* Echoes of a Breeze, Summon Fog, *Call Upon the Wind,* Wall of Air, *Jade Strike,* Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Tomb of Jade, Fires of Purity, Evil Ward, Rays of Amaterasu, Castle of Water, *Path to Inner Peace,* Hands of Jurojin, Reversal of Fortunes, Purify Water, Reflective Pool, *Regrow the Wound, Light of the Morning Sun*
Skills: Advanced Medicine 5, Astrology 4, Bard 4, Calligraphy 4, Defense 2, Divination 3, Etiquette 4, Go 2, History (Asahina) 3, History (Crane Clan) 5, History (Hantei Line) 4, Lore (Crane Clan) 4, Lore (Otosan Uchi) 3, Lore (Phoenix Clan) 2, Medicine 3, Meditation 5, Origami 3, Research 3, Shintao 4, Theology 4

Asahina Tomo never thought he would see war. When he was young– long ago – he wanted only to study what had come before, vicariously living the lives brave samurai and wise shugenja did by studying them. As he grew in the comfort of the ancestral home and



temple of his family, Tomo did what he could to further the research of his brothers. As he grew, others in the temple noticed how easily the healing and meditative arts came to him, and as his power grew with the kami, Tomo became more able to pass his calmness and wholeness to others.

As his brother Tamako became the leader the Asahina family would need, the bond between the two created a new era of learning in the Asahina Temples that had been seen only twice before. Together Tamako and Tomo learned from the heavens things that a single mind could never see, and they shared information with their family that sparked further discoveries.

However, one night, something between the stars looked back at the brothers.

War.

Rokugan would be torn apart, and the Clan of the Crane would suffer the first blow in the horrible war that would last for two years. Tomo and his brother talked into the night about the omens, omens both knew were true, but Tamako refused to believe. By the end of the night, the Asahina daimyo had forbidden his brother to speak on any of the night's events to anyone. Heartbroken, Tomo quietly returned to his studies, but not those that had engrossed him before. When the first Crab attack broke the Crane's borders, Tomo readied the scrolls he had spent the year gathering and set out with a unit of Daidoji spearmen into the thick of the fighting. The seasoned warriors scoffed at the old man's intentions, but when Tomo shook the ground and sky, calling the fury of the kami down upon the Crab, the Daidoji laughter stopped.

However, not even the old man's mighty magic has repulsed attackers from all sides, and Tomo knows that one day soon he will have to return to his family home and make his brother see the truth he embraced years ago.

Kenshin's Helm, Act Four: Doom of Fu Leng

The opening of this adventure presumes that the characters have played Act III of the Kenshin's Helm, found in the Anvil of Despair chapter. If this is not the case, omit mention of the infant and use this adventure with any group of characters heading for Kyuden Seppun.

Scene One: Arrival at Kyuden Seppun

Kyuden Seppun lies to the south of Otosan Uchi, a mere day's travel by the Emperor's Road. Unfortunately, the journey may take the characters somewhat longer, as they may have to dodge roving Crab patrols looking for Imperial escapees. (These patrols are as yet blissfully unaware of the defeat Kisada suffered at Otosan Uchi, much less that the Crab navy has withdrawn and stranded them here.) The GM is encouraged to make the journey as easy or as difficult as he likes.

Unless the characters experience an extremely high level of combat on the road, however, they will arrive at the gates of Kyuden Seppun less than two days after leaving Otosan Uchi. Read the following as the characters approach the gates.

Kyuden Seppun is possibly the grandest temple in all of Rokugan. Its resplendent shrines and gardens calm the soul just by looking at them. Even with the horror of Otosan Uchi fresh in your mind, you cannot help but feel serene gazing upon such splendor.

Even as the grand temple stills your soul, the gates open and a dozen Seppun Miharu ride forth to greet you in full armor, weapons drawn. Their commander rides at the front, his family's mon emblazoned upon his sashimono (back banner) along with his rank of chui (lieutenant) in the Imperial Legions. For just a moment his eyes flicker to the smoke upon the horizon, where

portions of Otosan Uchi burn. He tenses visibly, obviously restraining his impulse to order his men forward. Instead, he turns to you.

"State your name and purpose at Kyuden Seppun, and quickly. I have little patience for foolishness on this day." The katana in his hand indicates just how impatient the guardsman is.

This commander is Seppun Ogami, chief defender of Kyuden Seppun. Allow the characters to explain themselves as best they can. Any obvious duplicity or flowery language will only deepen the frown on Ogami's face: a very foolish thing to do. If the characters have legitimate business in the temple, he will grudgingly admit them. If they mention the name of the monk Kôrogi, if Kôrogi is with the party, or if they reveal the infant they carry, read the following.

Upon hearing of your mission, the guardsman immediately leaps down from his mount and takes the infant from your arms, nestling it close to his armored chest. "Ariwara-chan," he mutters, stroking the infant's face.

The guardsman stiffens suddenly, as if remembering where he is. Bowing deeply, more deeply than is necessary for your station, he says "Forgive me, honored visitors. You have returned a great treasure to us, and I repay your kindness with hostility. We at Kyuden Seppun are forever in your debt. I am Seppun Ogami of the Miharu, and it would honor me greatly for you to stay as my guests at Kyuden Seppun."

Characters with the Courtier or Etiquette skill should quickly realize that Ogami's treatment shows them great honor, one far out of proportion to his hostile treatment of them before seeing the infant. Apparently the monk Kôrogi was telling the truth: Otomo Ariwara is a very important child.

Crab Patrols

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 2
Void: 2
School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2
Skills: Battle 2, Defense 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Tetsubo 4
Attack Roll: 4k3
Damage Roll: 5k2 (katana), 4k3 (tetsubo)
TN to be Hit: 20

Seppun Ogami

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Perception 6
Fire: 5
Air: 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Seppun Miharu 4
Honor: 4.1
Glory: 5.5
Advantages: Social Position, Way of the Land (Imperial Provinces)
Disadvantages: Obligation (Defend Kyuden Seppun)
Skills: Bard 2, Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, History 2, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4, Obeiesaseru 4, Shintao 3
Attack Roll: 5k5
Damage Roll: 6k2 (fine katana)
TN to be Hit: 25 (light armor)

Seppun Guards

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Agility 4
Air: 3
Void: 2
School/Rank: Seppun Miharu 2
Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Obeiesaseru 1
Attack Roll: 3k3 (katana)
Damage Roll: 5k2 (katana)
TN to be Hit: 20 (light armor)

Scene Two: A Moment's Peace

Once inside Kyuden Seppun, the characters may relax a bit. Despite its primary functions as a temple and a library, it is remarkably well defended against almost any conceivable assault. (Not every type of assault, however, as the characters will soon learn.) Read the following.

A tranquil atmosphere pervades the interior of Kyuden Seppun. Gardens, ponds, temples, and shrines surround the palace itself.

Four large shrines stand at each corner of the wall surrounding the palace. At the top of each shrine is a large ceramic bell that glints in the sunlight as if adorned with glass or mirrors.

Ogami, noticing your stares, smiles. "They are the greatest treasure of Kyuden Seppun, greater even than our precious library. They are called the Chimes of Purity. Each one was crafted by monks during the formation of the Brotherhood of Shinsei. So great is their purity that their tone is said to bring pain to the creatures of the Dark Lord. Fortunately, we have never had to verify such accounts." His features harden as he glances to the north, toward the smoke of Otosan Uchi. "That may soon change," he mutters.

Ogami will take the characters to the finest guest quarters in the palace, another honor out of proportion to the characters' rank. They will be given the finest treatment possible, with servants attending them to bring them anything they wish. Once they have had time to relax, a servant will inform them that Ogami wishes the honor of their company for tea in the main audience chamber. Should they choose to attend (and not doing so would be a great insult to such a generous host), read the following.

The main audience chamber is as breathtaking as the palace itself, lovingly crafted from the finest wood and marble. With Kyuden Seppun's reputation as the second home of the Emperor, you would have expected no less.

Ogami, now dressed in an exquisite yet subdued kimono, smiles warmly as you enter. Bowing low, he gestures toward a simple wood table set in the middle of the room. Hot tea and rice cakes await.

During the light meal, Ogami inquires as to the status of affairs in Otosan Uchi. He is greatly troubled by the character description of the Crab invasion, although he tries to conceal his concern. A small, sad smile spreads across his face.

"It is my great honor that Seppun Baka appointed me to care for the temple during his long stay in Otosan Uchi. Indeed, I am instructed to defend Kyuden Seppun no matter the cost. No matter what else may occur. Even an invasion of the capital city." Ogami gazes wistfully at the northern wall, in the direction of the city. He visibly shakes himself from his trance and returns his attention to his guests with a smile.

"But enough of that! Let us speak of more pleasant things. Tell me of your homelands, for it has been many years since I had the opportunity to travel the Empire."

The rest of the day passes without incident. After tea, Ogami shows the characters around Kyuden Seppun personally, including a tour of the library and the four sacred shrines that surround the palace itself. The characters have an opportunity to move about the grounds alone, if they wish, but are expected to take dinner with Ogami and his gunso in the evening.

Shortly before they retire for the evening, Ogami asks the characters to accompany him to check on the infant they brought with them. Read the following.

The tiny form of Otomo Ariwara lies sleeping on a tatami mat, watched closely by a heimin nursemaid and a Miharu who guards the door. Ogami looks upon the infant girl and smiles. He turns to you with a thoughtful look. "There are those who believe that the war encompassing the Empire is a sign that we have lost our way. I am a soldier and know little of such things. But I do know that girl could one day be the leader who brings peace to us all. She is destined to have the gift of prophecy."

Looking at all of you, Ogami chuckles. "Forgive me, my friends. I have burdened you with enough of my philosophy today. Perhaps tomorrow I will be more pleasant company. Good night to you, honored guests." With that, he takes leave of you and heads for his quarters. A servant awaits to lead you to your own.

Scene Three: Wazinu Attacks

While the characters sleep (although it's not uncommon for character parties to post sentries, even in safe environments), a deadly threat is invading Kyuden Seppun. Kuni Yori, one of Fu Leng's chief servants, has dispatched one of his apprentices to destroy the Chimes of Purity in anticipation of a full-scale attack on Kyuden Seppun. Kuni Wazinu has at his disposal a small number of uncorrupted, unsuspecting Hida warriors as well as a significant arsenal of *maho*. To ensure his success, Yori has bestowed upon his apprentice one final advantage.

Kuni Wazinu holds one of the Black Scrolls.

Cloaked by magic, it is relatively easy for the Crabs to infiltrate the temple, as the Miharu guardsmen are distracted by the glow of burning buildings from Otosan Uchi to the north. Unfortunately for the saboteurs, the enchantments upon the Chimes of Purity ensure that a significant display of magical power is required for their destruction. Wazinu is certainly powerful enough to destroy the

Chimes, but not enough so to mask his actions. When he destroys the first bell, the palace is alerted to his presence. Read the following.

You are roughly awakened from your hard-earned rest by the sound of shouting and muffled explosions in the courtyard beyond your room. From the window, it is impossible to see anything except the glow of a fire from the front of the palace. Shouts and the pounding of armored feet echo in from the corridor outside your door. The only words you can make out is the frantic cry of a young guardsman: "The Crab are attacking!"

Having witnessed the massive invasion of Otosan Uchi, the characters are likely to overreact to such news, thinking perhaps that the massive horde of the Crab that descended upon that city has marched to the south to sack Kyuden Seppun. Allow them to react as they will.

Assuming that the PCs head for the front exit of the temple to investigate, read the following.

As you burst into the main audience chamber on your way to the exit into the front courtyard, you come across Ogami. He stands in the center of the audience chamber, surrounded by a half-dozen heavily armed and armored Miharu. He issues commands as he fastens the clasp of his helm.

"Squadron one, you will exit from the rear of the temple with Otomo Ariwara. Take her directly to Kyuden Miya. Stop for nothing. She must not be captured and enslaved by these corrupted traitors. Squadron two, you will accompany me to face the enemy. We will show them what it means to have honor."

Ogami turns to face you, as if noticing you for the first time. "You are my guests. I cannot ask you to take up arms against the enemies of the Seppun. Go with my men to Kyuden Miya. You will be welcome there. You have my word."

The characters now face a choice: they can attack the Crab alongside Ogami, or they can travel and escape with the guards protecting Ariwara. Either is an honorable choice. If the characters choose to accompany the infant, this adventure is essentially over and Act Five begins. They will doubtless encounter many adventures on the long journey *(see the Adventure Hooks throughout this book for ideas)*.

If the characters choose to aid Ogami, read the following.

Ogami nods solemnly. "You are true samurai, my friends. It will be my great honor to fight alongside you." He bows deeply then quickly straightens, his features hardened into a mask of concentration. "Let us see who dares defile the second home of the Emperor."

The front doors of the palace burst open as you charge into the courtyard beside Ogami and his precious few guardsmen. Your charge is short-lived, however, as you rush headlong toward the open front gates to discover… nothing. There is no army attacking. There are no siege engines. Only the bodies of a few young Seppun guards scattered throughout the courtyard and burning shrines at the southwestern and southeastern corners of the temple indicate anything at all is unusual.

"What is this madness?" Ogami demands, looking about for an enemy. Even as he finishes the words, another explosion rocks the courtyard, and the shrine at the northwestern corner of the temple detonates in a fiery explosion. The light of the fire illuminates several burly figures upon the wall, all clad in the colors of the Crab. Ogami quakes with rage. "Saboteurs. Our home, besmirched by the foul touch of Crab saboteurs. No! I will not allow it!"

Fairly snarling with anger, Ogami darts for the nearest ladder to take him atop the wall.

Presumably, the characters will follow Ogami. His guardsmen certainly do, scattering to take advantage of the multiple ladders and climb to the top of the wall, pinning the Crabs between them. Unfortunately, while Ogami is a seasoned veteran, many of his men have never seen real battle. The hardened Hida warriors will make quick work of them while desperately trying to finish sabotaging the final Chime. With the characters on the wall (or at least on the ground near the conflict), read the following.

Although you rush into the combat with the speed of true warriors, you are too late to stop the destruction of the Chimes. Ogami quickly cuts down two Crab warriors before meeting an opponent of equal skill who delays him. In the meantime, his men are badly outmatched by the seasoned Hida warriors. You watch helplessly while a young shugenja blasts the final Chime into oblivion with a powerful fire spell.

With the majority of the guardsmen dealt with, the young shugenja turns his attention to Ogami and his Hida opponents. A sick, sinister laugh crawls from his throat as he pulls a blackened parchment from his robes and chants in a thick, oily voice.

A blast of foul, black energy leaps from the shugenja's hands to envelop both Ogami and the Hida. Both men scream in agony and crumple to the ground, smoldering from the spell's effect.

A moment of silence settles upon the courtyard, and you can hear the words of one of the Crab bushi. "Wazinu-sama! What... what have you done?"

The shugenja whirls upon the bushi. "I have completed my mission using the tools the master has given me! Now I return to him! Delay these fools and cover my escape, or you too shall feel my wrath!" The shugenja chants again, and hideous leathery wings erupt from his back. He leaps from the wall, and disappears.

The remaining Crab bushi turn to face you, doubt and disgust warring on their faces.

Any character with Lore (Maho) or Spellcraft may roll Skill/Intelligence vs. TN 15 to realize that the power Wazinu wields could only come from one of the legendary Black Scrolls. The Crab bushi are horrified to have seen so blatant a use of maho by their companion. Nonetheless, they are honor bound to follow his commands. The bushi use the same profile as the Crab patrols in Scene One.

Kuni Wazinu

Earth: 5
Water: 4
Strength 5
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Void: 2
School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 2/Shadowlands 1
Shadowlands Taint: 3.8 (and rising)
Shadowlands Powers: Blood Domination, Unearthly Regeneration
Honor: 0.0
Glory: 2.0
Advantages: Chosen by the Oracles (Dark Oracle of Earth)
Disadvantages: None
Skills: Calligraphy 3, Defense 3, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Meditation 1, Spell Research 4, Tetsubo 3, Torture 2
Spells: (italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon, The Fury of Osano-Wo,* Pain, Curse, *Stealing Breath,* Corruption of the Elements, *Summon Greater Kansen,* Wall of Earth, Dark Wings, Doom of Fu Leng
Kiho: Bloodstrike, Speaking with the Voice of the Dead, Child of the Corrupted Dragon

Wazinu has been an apprentice to Kuni Yori for many years. He believes that any sacrifice that furthers the cause of the Crab is well worth it, including his own soul. His loyalty and service to the clan has been twisted by Yori until the young man feels nothing but devotion to his sensei. He will follow any command by Kuni Yori, no matter the cost. He believes that Yori's gift to him of the Black Scroll Doom of Fu Leng is a sign of his master's approval.

Scene Four: Pursuit and Confrontation

Read the following after the characters dispatch the Hida bushi (assuming they don't charge directly after Wazinu; if they do, skip ahead a bit).

As you approach Ogami's frail form, you can sense something is horribly wrong. His body is shriveled and weak, and the strength that you sensed in him before is gone. The spell cast upon him has destroyed his strength of spirit and left him little more than a rasping shell of a man.

"You... must...," he coughs, "stop him... He must not be...allowed to escape...after what he has done." Another coughing spasm wracks his body. "Leave me...to do what I must." His shaking hands reach out and grasp his wakizashi with surprising firmness. His eyes fix on yours and you sense a glimmer of the strength he had only earlier today.

"Go...now."

Ogami will find the strength to complete the seppuku ceremony, but insists that the characters pursue the maho-tsukai. The shugenja has a sizable lead, and with the spell Dark Wings he travels very quickly. However, the Seppun stables hold several Unicorn steeds, and successful Horsemanship rolls let the PCs overtake the dark sorcerer. If the characters have magic of their own to call upon, that could allow them to catch up more quickly as well.

The final confrontation is left to your discretion. If the characters defeat Wazinu, they will possess one of the most dangerous and coveted spells in the Empire: one of the Black Scrolls. Though it has already been opened, they can count on being endlessly hounded as Kuni Yori, Yogo Junzo, and others seek to steal the scroll back.

Where do heroes turn when they are hunted on all sides?

Only you can answer that question.

Chapter Five
Time of the Void

Time of the Void

"To win the battle is simple; to finish the battle is a challenge." – Akodo

The skies were dark above Otosan Uchi. The tall grasses of the Plain of Fast Troubles were dead and blackened. The ocean itself roiled with filth and contamination. The air hung thick with the smoke of burning buildings and burning flesh. As Hida Yakamo led the armies of the True Crab forth, he found it difficult to separate earth from sea from sky. All melded into one corrupt whole. Only the spires of Otosan Uchi still shone dimly among the contamination. Only the spires and the bright steel of countless samurai, standing ready to defend the Imperial City.

The Jade Hand gave an angry pulse at the sight of them. Most were corrupt already, taken by the power of Fu Leng. The rest were misguided, believing that their true loyalty lay with the Emperor, despite the fact that the thing within the Palace was no longer the Hantei, but a puppet of evil. There were many Lion, Phoenix, and Crab among them. There were a few scattered members of the fallen Scorpion.

Most were Crab.

Yakamo recognized a number of them. Many had once been friends.

"Your command, my lord?" asked Hida Tampako, standing at the new Crab Champion's side.

Yakamo leveled the Jade Hand at the armies of the Hantei, pointing at their ranks with two fingers. "Attack," he said in a gruff voice. "Show no mercy to any Crab who stands against you. Our clan shall wipe its sins clean with blood or die in the effort."

"Hai," Tampako acknowledged, drawing his large tessen and flashing orders to the ranks of the Crab.

Yakamo's eyes narrowed. He thought he noticed the face of Kuni Yori amid Hantei's ranks. Now it was gone, replaced with another familiar face. The face of Oni no Yakamo, now transformed into a perfect replica of himself. Yakamo scowled.

Today there would be a reckoning.

Doji Hoturi tucked the lock of dark hair beneath his obi, stroking its silken length one last time, drawing strength from its presence.

"Ameiko," he whispered, turning his eyes to the battle.

Already Yakamo's forces had engaged with Junzo's horde. The True Crab had spirit, but they were outnumbered.

"Prepare to march," Hoturi said, pointing a folded fan toward the Shadowlands army. "We must relieve Yakamo's forces before they are overwhelmed. We shall take the right flank, which Yori's fallen Crab have yet to fortify. If we are lucky, and the Unicorn arrive in time, we shall take the East Wall by nightfall.

"Brother, we have been marching for three days," Kuwanan said, doubt mirrored in his tired eyes. "We need rest. Surely the Crab can hold their position. Their fallen brethren are their own concern."

"And what will you do when Yakamo and his soldiers rise to join Junzo?" Hoturi asked, his blue eyes sharp as he turned to face his brother. "Who will be left to blame then?"

"If we attack in our current state, we throw our lives away to no purpose," Kuwanan sneered. "For the sake of our enemies, no less."

"The Crab are no longer enemies, brother," Hoturi replied. "Rokugan has but one enemy today."

"My lord," Daidoji Uji whispered, his low voice barely audible above the sounds of battle. "With all respect, your brother has a point. The troops are tired, true, but there are a small number of us ready to fight. We can send half our number forward, while the rest relieve the Crab and allow their shugenja to retreat. Give me thirty minutes and I shall find seven hundred men fit enough to fight – more than enough to support the Crab until the Unicorn and Toturi arrive."

"You have ten minutes," Hoturi said sharply. "Are you certain seven hundred will be enough?"

"They are Daidoji, my lord," Uji said, an eager glint in his eye. "Say the word, and we shall march into Jigoku."

"Fortunate," Hoturi answered grimly. "For that is indeed what we prepare to do."

Otaku Kamoko wheeled her horse at the top of the ridge. Her breath caught in her throat when she saw what had become of the city. Otosan Uchi lay in ruins. The home of the Son of Heaven had become a bastion of evil, worse than anything she and her Maidens had seen in their race across Rokugan.

"It seems that the Crab and Crane have arrived before us," Iuchi Karasu said wryly, his rough voice echoing within his iron mask. He reined his blood-red steed to a halt beside the Battle Maiden. "If word of this gets out, your reputation will suffer, my lady."

"This is no time for humor, Doomseeker," Kamoko replied shortly. Her eyes scanned the armies that lay before her, searching for the face of Junzo, the damnable maho-tsukai that had eluded her for so many months. Beneath her, Hachiman's shoulders were tense. The animal was fearful, but prepared to charge at its mistress' command.

"You might be surprised what I find humorous," Karasu answered cryptically. "For instance, it occurs to me that all those assembled here have a personal stake in this battle, with the exception of ourselves. Yakamo fights for the redemption of his clan. Hoturi seeks to expunge the dishonor heaped upon him by the Shadowlands monstrosity that took his form. What stake do we have, Kamoko? What fire burns in our belly, I wonder?"

In the distance, Kamoko caught sight of the face of Yogo Junzo at the rear of the Horde. Her Maidens were swift; with Karasu's magic they could skirt the Horde's flank and take him unaware. Kamoko's Maidens had been riding together for some time now; even without her command they knew her mind and were instantly prepared. Karasu sensed their tension and quickly followed her gaze.

"You haven't answered my question yet, Kamoko-sama," he said idly as he rifled through his pouches for the proper scroll.

"We are Unicorn, Karasu," she replied. "I need no reason to fight evil."

Kamoko gave a loud cry, and the Unicorn charged.

Mirumoto Hitomi leaned heavily against an overturned wagon. The battle had been raging for some time; all of the clans were assembled. Even a band of Scorpion bushi had appeared from nowhere just in time to save the Phoenix, of all people, from a savage pincer maneuver by a pack of Byoki oni.

The young bushi clutched her side tenderly, cupping the rough bandage with her obsidian hand. The wound had not been deep, but the arrowhead had been obsidian, a tainted weapon of a fallen Crab. If not for the Naga healer, she might have found herself fighting on the other side by now. The experience had altered her perceptions of the battle. She suddenly felt invigorated, lucky to be alive. Despite the pain and exhaustion she felt, she was ready to take on the world. She had even dispatched the dark mockery of her enemy, Yakamo, and allowed her nemesis to live. For the moment, it had been enough to see the look of shame on his face when she succeeded where he failed.

All around her, she could see the green armor and bright tattoos of her fellow Dragon. Brothers and sisters had descended from the mountains at last. The time for seclusion was over. The time for riddles was over.

Now it was time for Fu Leng to witness the fury of the Dragon.

Mistaking her moment of rest for weakness, an oni leapt from the shadows to attack her. It was an indescribable thing, like a great ape with sharp iron fur, seven arms, and a face made of teeth. A moment later it was dead, fallen in two pieces as Hitomi wiped ichor from her blade. The laughter of the dark lady of the Dragon rang across the battlefield.

Yes, today was a good day to be alive.

A bright green flame burned in Isawa Tadaka's hand, casting the ruins of North Hub Village in an eerie light.

The sun had set on Otosan Uchi, but hope burned brightly as the battle continued. The East Wall had fallen. With the arrival of Yoritomo's fleet, the flagging forces of the Crab and unified Lion found new strength. Samurai clad in colors of the Mantis, Wasp, Fox, and a half-dozen others Tadaka did not recognize covered the field. Minor Clans. Minor people, of minor importance, and yet they laid down their lives like any other. Tadaka's heart would be moved by the sight if anything could still move him. The Master of Earth found that only strict control of his own emotions could control the Taint raging inside of him. There were no extremes. No happiness. No sadness. Only the hard, cold, brutal necessity of Earth.

A flash of light from the spires of the Forbidden City drew his attention. Tadaka recognized the flames of Tsuke, the master who had fallen the farthest. He stood with Junzo, Yori, and Fu Leng now, as did many other Phoenix who had fallen to the lure of the Scrolls' power. Though the fallen Hantei still lurked within the Palace, Tsuke was the more immediate threat. Once the armies of the clans reached his position, Tsuke's superior magic would reduce them to ashes.

Shiba Ujimitsu was suddenly beside him. "Tadaka," he said quietly, also watching the spires. "Tsuke–"

"I know," Tadaka said, his deep voice echoing with a metallic timbre. "He must be stopped. And we must stop him."

"What have we to lose?" Ujimitsu asked wryly.

"Nothing," Tadaka said softly. "Everything."

"Then everything is as it should be," Ujimitsu replied, drawing the ancestral sword. "I am ready."

Toturi's armor was darkened by blood and ichor. His sashimono were tattered wisps of silk, the Wolf mon painted by a young Otomo two years ago hardly recognizable. The shugenja had claimed he was a gatherer of stories, a collector of legends. Toturi understood distantly, through the haze of battle, that he was living one of those legends right now. The body of a pair of Shadowlands madmen fell before the Black Lion's sword. Toturi realized that he recognized the men. Once they had been Akodo. Once, but no longer.

He added their deaths to the list of sins he had yet to atone for and moved on. There was no time for guilt while there was a battle to be won.

"To me!" Toturi cried, rallying his troops with a wave of his bloody sword. "Twelve Ronin, to me!"

The men charged forward, crashing heavily into the ranks of the Shadowlands. The Black Lion strode into combat by their sides. He knew each man, each woman, by face and by name. He wondered how many of them would die. He wondered if any of them would live on in the Otomo's legends.

Toturi pushed the thought aside. He shouted another fierce battle cry, and was surprised to hear the cry echoed in return – not just in his ears, but in his soul. As the spirits of his Lion ancestors guided him once, he know felt the strength of all those who had died in this war guiding his hand, of all those who had struggled for redemption.

Hatsuko.

Tsuko.

Shoju.

A thousand ronin who had gathered under the banner of the wolf.

He recognized each man, each woman, by face and by name.

"For Rokugan!" Toturi cried, and the Twelve Ronin answered.

Bolstered by their strength, Toturi fought on.

"But yours has been the most difficult battle, has it not?" the Hooded Ronin asked, a mild expression on his simple face. "Toturi merely had to mend a clan. Yakamo? Hoturi? Their demons were the physical sorts, easily dealt with. You, on the other hand, were your own enemy." A paper lantern dangled from the end of the ronin's shakuhachi flute, casting a pale light across the rough stone.

She said nothing in reply, but remained standing in the shadows of the tunnel.

"Do you disagree?" he asked. The crow on his shoulder cocked its head, viewing her carefully. It fluffed its feathers and paced one step to the left.

Again she said nothing.

"A soul can be weighted down by the past," the ronin said. "The wise learn to cast the past aside, and realize that there is only the present. Your husband recognized this. For all his faults, he was not a vengeful man."

"I am not my husband," Bayushi Kachiko sneered, stepping forward into the ronin's light. "I am not even sure why I do this. If I were wise, as you say, I would be miles from here."

"I think the answer is simple," the ronin replied. "You may fancy yourself a Poison Empress, Lady Kachiko, but at heart your honor is as strong as your husband's. You are a samurai."

"My husband's bushi used these tunnels to infiltrate the Palace and kill an Emperor," she said softly. "I wonder. Will we fail, as he did?"

"Look at it this way, my lady," the ronin replied with a grin. "Your husband had the armies of Rokugan allied against him. You merely have to defeat a legion of undead, the demons of Jigoku, and a fallen god with the power and wisdom of eleven centuries."

"You're saying our battle is hopeless?" Kachiko asked severely, a frown wrinkling her perfect face. "Then why try?"

"In the end, what else is there to do," the descendant of Shinsei replied, "but to try?"

Significant Events

Year 1128, Month of the Rooster (Early Fall)

Theft in Shiro Shinjo (U7)

Akodo Kage's daisho vanishes from Shiro Shinjo. Shinjo Yasamura, master of the castle in his father's absence, determines to solve the theft with the help of expert Unicorn magistrates. Despite their best efforts, no clues are found. Yasamura is left with an uneasy feeling that someone within the castle itself is responsible, but keeps his suspicions private until he can meet with his father.

The Ichiro Join Toturi (U19)

A group of Badger samurai arrive in the City of the Rich Frog seeking representatives of Toturi's army. Though they are not technically ronin, the nigh-defunct Ichiro family feels they would be best suited throwing their Fortunes in with the Wolf. Perhaps together they can win back some shred of honor. Perhaps together, the Badger can prevent another tragedy like the one that befell their home province.

Peasant Vengeance (near U17)

Their training complete, the legions of Shinjo-trained ashigaru mobilize throughout the Unicorn lands, turning their anger and frustration on the Shadowlands forces that plague their homes and provinces. Led by the Battle Maidens, the Unicorn forces successfully push the Dark Moto south past the mountains and send them fleeing toward their home far to the south. Otaku Kamoko is wounded by a Tainted blade in the battle.

Year 1128, Month of the Dog (Mid Fall)

Student No More (D13)

Naka Kuro releases Morito Tokei from his apprenticeship, claiming that he can teach him no more. Morito Tokei is surprised and somewhat disappointed, believing he has failed the Grand Master in some way. Toturi orders the young shugenja to assist in the defense of Nanashi Mura to occupy his troubled mind.

Kolat infiltrate Ryoko Owari (S3)

With Kachiko's hidden Scorpion now fighting against Junzo's machinations, the Scorpion have turned their attentions away from criminal interests in Ryoko Owari. Soon, new interests begin to take hold in the city. Independent entrepreneur Chinoko donates generously to rebuild Teardrop Island following the Crab attack, restoring the geisha quarter to new grandeur – under her control. Soon her spies and informants are established throughout the city.

Disappearing Gaijin (unknown)

While on a mission for his patrons in the Mantis Clan, gaijin explosives expert Alhundro Cornejo disappears, failing to return upon the completion of the mission. Although a brief investigation turns up no evidence, it is assumed that Cornejo has attempted to sail east, toward the lands of his father.

The Prophecies of Yurito (D8)

As the Phoenix attempt to organize the Izaku libraries, a simple scribe stumbles across an incredible treasure: the prophecies of Asako Yurito. No one is quite certain how the lost Inquisitor's prophecies made their way to the library. Yurito's prophecies foretell of a time of great suffering, when an Age of Man would bring a time of "shadows without names" and "forms without faces, who shake the very sun, stars, and moon."

Izaku Libraries Founded (D8)

Refugees from the Agasha and Isawa libraries meet in the city of Heibeisu. They gather in a minor library under construction by the Izaku family, a vassal family of the Phoenix. Originally, the library had been intended to house texts on crop production and grain distribution, but in these times of trouble it is used to store the surviving knowledge of the lost libraries of the Phoenix, Dragon, and Brotherhood. The humble library is now the greatest repository of magical knowledge in all of Rokugan.

Year 1128, Month of the Boar (Late Fall)

Flight From Otosan Uchi (A9)

In a rare moment of selflessness, courtier Bayushi Goshiu picks the locks on his cell, overwhelms the goblin warden, and helps the other prisoners to escape Otosan Uchi's dungeons. The path out of the Palace and through the Tainted city is dangerous, but Goshiu leads most of the prisoners out alive, earning the respect of many who once considered him an enemy.

Goshiu and his retinue are soon discovered by Yakamo's scouts and escorted to the Crab camps near Kyuden Doji. The Crab give sanctuary to the courtiers, and the wounded Hida Kisada listens to Goshiu's analysis of Junzo's defenses with keen interest.

Death of Suzume Kashira (A27)

Daimyo of the Sparrow, Suzume Kashira, dies from a lingering illness (believed to be a strain of plague). His son Suzume Yugoki reluctantly assumes leadership of the Sparrow. When visited by Mantis diplomats shortly after the funeral, Yugoki again politely declines offers to join Yoritomo's Alliance.

Vanishing (P17)

Utsuei and his band of Akodo ronin settle in Phoenix lands. The bold ronin ignore the local warnings of angry spirits haunting the ruined castle of Mori Kage. One week later, Utsuei and his followers vanish. The locals are uninterested in pursuing the matter, considering themselves better off without a band of unpredictable ronin nearby.

Year 1128, Month of the Rat (Early Winter)

Winter Court Canceled (A9)

Once again, plans for the Emperor's Winter Court are canceled. With the strange happenings in the capital, no one is truly surprised. As if in jest, Hida Tsuru's scouts dispatch invitations to the Crab's "Winter Court" in their camp near the ruins of Kyuden Doji. Doji Hoturi, Toturi, Togashi Yokuni, Yoritomo, Shiba Ujimitsu, Tetsuya, Bayushi Yojiro, and Shinjo Yokatsu appear soon after with their military advisors in tow. With that, the clans begin organizing their forces for an assault.

Tadaka's Name Redeemed (near P9)

Distraught over the continuing corruption of her beloved Isawa Tadaka, Shiba Tsukune succumbs to anger and frustration. She barges through the guards posted by the Elemental Masters into the chamber where the Oni no Tadaka is bound for study. With a single deft strike she slays the beast, freeing the tiny fraction of Tadaka's soul that was trapped within it. Confronted by Isawa Uona, Tsukune condemns the Elemental Masters for their folly. The honor of the Phoenix, she claims, is far more valuable than knowledge gained through the creation of such abominations.

Kaiu Wall Overrun (CB3)

Razor of the Dawn Castle is attacked by an enormous horde of Shadowlands creatures. Traditionally one of the least important bases along the Kaiu wall, the sparse defenders are wiped out and the Horde breaks through into Rokugan. Hida O-Ushi and the Hiruma defending the Wall quickly organize and pursue the beasts, but even the swift Hiruma are soon outdistanced. The pack of tainted monsters does not stop to rest, but heads directly for Otosan Uchi at a breakneck pace.

Year 1128, Month of the Ox (Mid-Winter)

The Battle of Sokustel Forest (near CN6)

With the armies of the clans massing near Otosan Uchi, the necromancer Yogo Junzo has ceased his attack, instead beginning to lead his horde toward the massed armies of Rokugan. In his arrogance, Junzo forgets the forces of the Alliance.

As Junzo leads his force through the Sokustel woods, they are ambushed by the Wasp archers of Tsuruchi. When the horde rushes forward to engage the Wasp, the archers retreat into the woods as Genzo of the Falcon Clan leads a flanking attack. As the horde responds to this fresh assault, Genzo retreats and the Mantis warrior Kamoto leads an attack on the opposite flank. Fox and Centipede shugenja riddle the tainted army with Earth and Fire magic throughout.

Trapped by an enemy they cannot engage, the forces of the Shadowlands suffer heavy losses until Yoritomo withdraws his forces and quickly moves north to join the others.

Return of Hida Sukune (Near CN6)

Hida Sukune returns from Jigoku as a Shadow Samurai to offer guidance and strength to his war-weary clan. Hida Yakamo's heart is lifted by his brother's return, and Kisada is calmed by his son's

forgiveness. Though Sukune vanishes shortly thereafter, the Crab know that his strength remains by their side.

Nanashi Mura Attacked (D13)

In the dead of night, Nanashi Mura is besieged by an army of oni. With no proper defenses to speak of, the ronin village seems doomed. It is Morito Tokei, Naka Kuro's former apprentice, who turns the tide of the battle. Alone, he steps forward into the ranks of the enemy and weaves a great spell, vaporizing dozens of creatures in a tremendous blast of white energy. The Eyes of Nanashi rally and defeat the rest of the attackers.

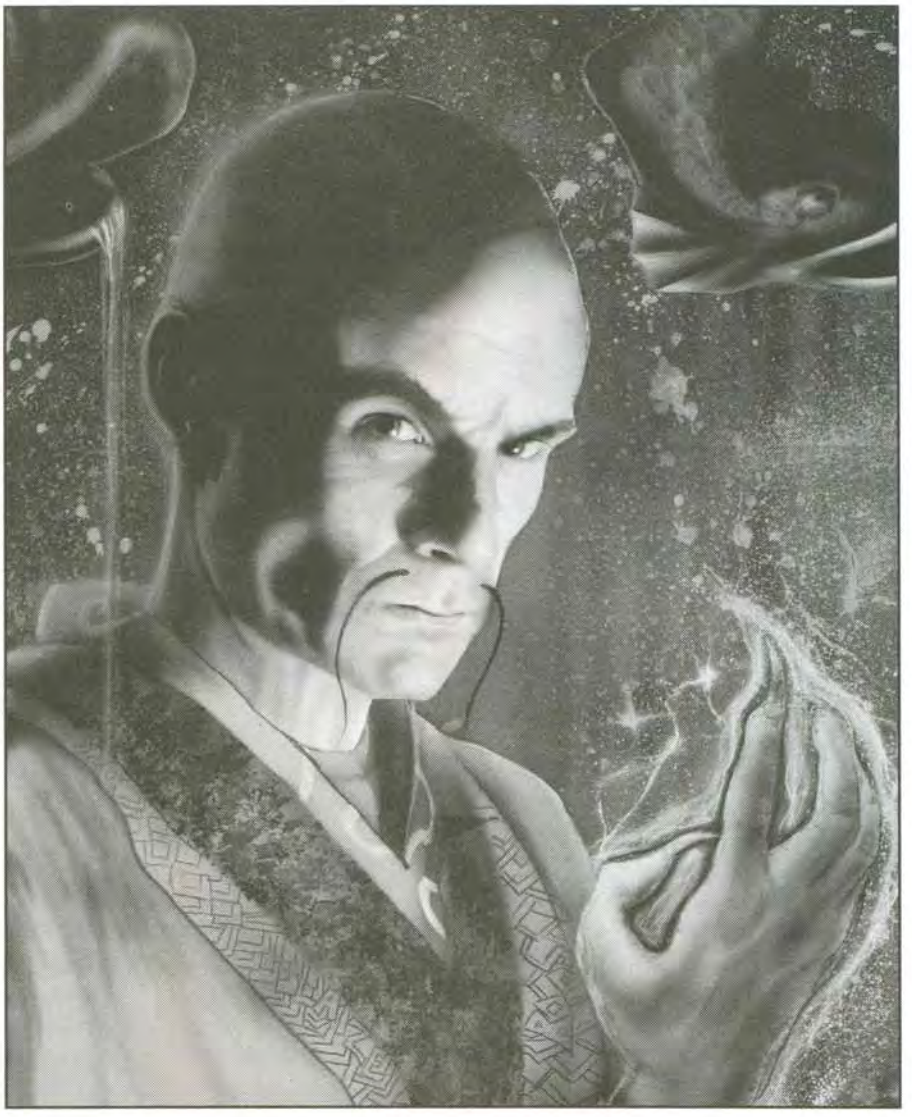
Morito Tokei later cannot be found, and is presumed to have given his life to the power of his magic. A marker honoring Tokei's memory is placed in the village next to that of Nanashi Mura's founder, Shinjo Fuyari.

The Day of Thunder (A9)

On the ninth day of the Month of the Ox (known formally as the Month of Fu Leng) the armies of Rokugan and their allies, the Naga, gather against Fu Leng and his allies in Otosan Uchi. The following events all occur within or near the Otosan Uchi area as the armies clash in a final battle.

The Mantis' Demand

Yoritomo stuns the allied commanders when he informs them that his forces will attack the armies of the Great Clans if they are not recognized as equals. He bows and offers his head to the Champions for his temerity, but instructs his subordinates to order the attack if his wishes are not met. Impressed by the Mantis's valor and deeds, the combined leaders of the Great Clans acknowledge the Mantis as a Great Clan. With that, the clans begin organizing their forces for an assault.



Brother against Brother

Without Matsu Tsuko, the samurai of the Lion Clan complete their descent into civil war with two distinct factions emerging. Many Lion believe that the ancient vows of their clan to obey the Emperor remain valid no matter the circumstances, no matter the situation. Honor knows no conditions, and these Lion will abide by their word unto death. Led by Ikoma Tsanuri, the student of both Tsuko and Toturi, these samurai take the field at Otosan Uchi, prepared to defend the possessed Emperor from all who would attack him, no matter the cost.

However, there are those among the Lion who believe that the Emperor has betrayed Rokugan and, as such, is no longer worthy of the Lion's fealty. Rallying beneath the banner of the tactician Kitsu Motso, this second faction of the Lion moves toward Otosan Uchi to assault the legions of Shadowlands creatures surrounding that most holy of cities.

Meeting upon the field of battle, these two armies prepare to engage as the Shadowlands horde looks on. As clansman prepares to kill clansman, as brother prepares to kill brother, an army of ronin appear on the horizon. Toturi stands on a crest before the combined Lion forces. Lifting his katana to point at the beasts of the Shadowlands, he screams "For Matsu Tsuko and Rokugan!" With relish, the Lion unite under the command of their former Champion and fall upon the Shadowlands horde with a vengeance.

The East Wall Falls

Charging forward through Otosan Uchi, it is the armies of the Crane that are the first to breach the Forbidden City itself. While Daidoji archers pin down the tainted defenders of Homare, the east wall of the Palace, Asahina shugenja begin a complex spell designed to commune with the spirits dwelling within the wall. Homare is said to be possessed by the spirits of those who have died in the Emperor's defense, and never has a stronger argument been seen for this legend than today's events. After the Asahina make contact with the spirits and inform them of the situation in the city, the wall buckles and opens to allow the Crane access. The Tainted defenders of the wall are crushed and mutilated to the last man as the stone peels away. The Daidoji quickly take the wall and hold it until the other armies arrive.

Matsu Gohei and the Broken Shinbone

Conspicuously absent during the opening of the battle, the so-called Butcher, Matsu Gohei, arrives with a sizable force of bushi under his command. Bolstering his forces are a large number of Nezumi from the Broken Shinbone tribe. The curious creatures saved his life during a skirmish months earlier, and he rewarded them with a place among his forces. With food supplied and the chance to kill the creatures of the Shadowlands, the Nezumi have found Gohei's reward to be extremely fulfilling. Even more disturbing than seeing Gohei fight alongside the Ratlings are the mujina that follow in their wake, inflicting cruel, lethal "pranks" upon the Shadowlands Horde.

The Two Yakamos

Charging through the ranks of the Horde, Hida Yakamo stands face to face with Oni no Yakamo, now a perfect duplicate of himself. Though the Jade Hand has severed the tie between Yakamo and the beast, the creature has grown powerful from the Crab Lord's name. After fighting his way through the ranks of goblins and undead, the true Yakamo finds his strength failing before the inexhaustible oni. As the oni prepares to deal the finishing blow, Mirumoto Hitomi kills the creature with a savage blow from the Obsidian Hand.

The true Yakamo staggers to his feet. Angry and bitter that his nemesis was defeated by another, he faces Hitomi. She merely taunts the wounded Crab, disarms him easily, and, for reasons of her own, allows him to live. His loyal troops rush to his side, showering him with congratulations for destroying the beast that tainted the Hida name.

All the while, Hitomi's laughter rings in his ears.

The Isha Ascendant

As the battle rages, the valiant Qamar of the Naga moves through the horde like an unstoppable storm. Countless corrupted beasts fall beneath his blade. His fury is halted by an oni of gigantic proportions. Although the monstrosity is no match for the Qamar's fury, it delays him while a corrupted Phoenix strikes him down with a powerful spell. Even as the Qamar's spirit rejoins the Akasha, the human Shiba Tsukune slays the foul sorcerer. The Isha steps forward to take up the Qamar's blade. Rallying the Naga, the new Qamar charges into the battle with an intensity fueled by vengeance.

Junzo's Final Stand

His forces battered following the Battle of Sokustel, the necromancer Yogo Junzo and his Shadowlands minions suffer tremendous losses at the hands of the vast Unicorn ashigaru legions. Once the peasant warriors have weakened the horde's lines, the Battle Maidens appear and smash through the remaining resistance. Otaku Kamoko crushes Junzo beneath the hooves of her mighty warhorse, ending his undead existence once and for all. Iuchi Karasu pauses long enough to cast a simple spell over the maho-tsukai's remains, assuring that the fallen Scorpion's Tainted soul will never rejoin his body.

Death of Tetsuya

At the north wall of Otosan Uchi, the creature known only as Kyojin – Yogo Junzo's yojimbo – holds the gates alone. With the death of his master, he cuts through the attackers with a savage fury until one steps forward to face him. Tetsuya, the gentle master of the Four Temples, sacrifices his existence to unravel the corruption that fills Kyojin's soul. The two fall simultaneously, and the armies of the clans take the North Wall.

The Death of the Masters

As he stands upon the South Wall overlooking the battle, the mind of Isawa Tsuke fully succumbs to the corrupting influence of the Taint. His insane rampage claims the life of Isawa Uona, the Master of Air, and Isawa Tomo, Master of Water. Only Isawa Tadaka, Tainted but not corrupted, has the strength to oppose the mindless Master of Fire. The magical battle between the two is visible across the battlefield, and it seems as though the two are too evenly matched for one to defeat the other.

From nowhere, Shiba Ujimitsu appears upon the wall. The Phoenix Champion strikes down the insane Tsuke, but unleashes a magical backlash that washes over the Immortal Phoenix, engulfing him in flame and hurling him from the wall. Ujimitsu's sacrifice is sufficient, however, as Tadaka unleashes a furious onslaught that overwhelms and defeats the mortally wounded Tsuke.

Ujimitsu's dying form is discovered by Shiba Tsukune. Ujimitsu whispers his final words to her – words she is never to repeat. He dies, and Tsukune feels the Soul of Shiba meld with her own.

Just as Tsukune recovers Ujimitsu's body, Tadaka and Acolyte of Water Suana find Tsuke yet alive despite his injuries and fall from the walls. The monk purifies Tsuke with powerful kiho, and Isawa Tadaka forgives his fallen comrade for his madness. As Tsuke passes to meet his ancestors, Tadaka offers a ceremonial prayer for fallen Phoenix heroes, and those who have yet to give their lives in this battle.

Duel With Fu Leng

Passing into the heart of the Imperial Palace through secret passageways once used by Bayushi Shoju's soldiers during the coup, the Seven Thunders gain access to the lair of the possessed Emperor. Togashi Yokuni and the Hooded Ronin, now revealed to all as the descendant of Shinsei, gather Hida Yakamo, Doji Hoturi, Mirumoto Hitomi, Toturi, Isawa Tadaka, Bayushi Kachiko, and Otaku Kamoko for what will be the final, decisive battle of the Clan War.

Togashi Yokuni enters the fray first, casting aside his mortal guise and revealing his identity as the kami Togashi for the first time in eleven centuries. He takes the form of a true dragon and rises to attack his evil brother. Fu Leng accepts Togashi's challenge and takes the shape of a great shadow dragon. Togashi wounds Fu Leng, but to no avail. Fu Leng shatters the great Dragon Champion's spine and casts his body to the stone floor.

As Fu Leng revels in his brother's destruction, Hitomi moves with deadly purpose. Plunging her hand into the body of her dying Champion, she draws out his heart. Inside Yokuni's heart, hidden since the last Day of Thunder, she finds the twelfth Black Scroll. Basking in the sudden surge of power as Shosuro's Hand drinks Yokuni's power, she opens the seal on the Black Scroll.

The other Thunders stand by in shock as the last piece of Fu Leng's soul is released. The Fallen Kami cackles in triumph, but his laughter is interrupted by the sound of the descendant of Shinsei, clapping. Though Fu Leng's power is now complete, the spell Isawa began so long ago was now complete as well. Fu Leng is now fully bonded to a mortal body, and can die.

The ensuing combat is terrible. Otaku Kamoko is knocked aside with ease. Doji Hoturi and Hida Yakamo attack, but are quickly knocked aside. Isawa Tadaka summons the power of his magic to hurl the Emerald Throne at the Emperor, allowing Toturi an opportunity, but to no avail. The Fallen Emperor is too strong. Seizing Bayushi Kachiko by the throat, he prepares to end her life.

Before Fu Leng can deal the killing blow, Kachiko gouges his eyes. Fu Leng screams in pain, flinging her across the room. Hoturi attacks, only to find the dark Emperor's fist piercing his chest. As Hoturi falls, Fu Leng twists Tadaka's jade magic to mortally wound the corrupt Master of Earth, hurls Toturi across the chamber, and binds Yakamo in chains of darkness. Mirumoto Hitomi kneels over Togashi Yokuni's body throughout the battle; Fu Leng ignores her.

Urged on by what could be none other than the voice of Matsu Tsuko's spirit, Toturi rises to his feet once more. Hoturi struggles to rise as well, casting aside the pain of his wound. Kachiko presents the opportunity they need, drawing the broken shards of Ambition from her hair and ravaging the dark Emperor's face. In that moment, Toturi strikes the Emperor's head from his shoulders just as Hoturi pierces his heart.

A moment later, the Dark Lord is truly dead.

The Seven Thunders

The seven destined to battle Fu Leng in Otosan Uchi are the spiritual descendants of the original Seven Thunders. Each is a reincarnation of the original seven, though their personalities and capabilities are quite different.

Statistics for each of these characters can be found in the Appendix. For detailed histories of each of these characters, see the Way of the Clans series.

Hida Yakamo, Crab Clan Champion, wielder of the Jade Hand
Doji Hoturi, Crane Clan Champion
Mirumoto Hitomi, Mirumoto family daimyo, wielder of the Obsidian Hand
Toturi, former Champion of the Lion, leader of Toturi's Army
Isawa Tadaka, Elemental Master of Earth
Bayushi Kachiko, Empress of Rokugan
Otaku Kamoko, daimyo of the Otaku family, leader of the Otaku Battle Maidens

What's New

Shadow Samurai

Occasionally, when a samurai dies in the Shadowlands his soul does not pass peacefully to Meido. Some spirits become trapped in Jigoku and are forced to fight their way out of the hellish darkness. Unfortunately, this leads many of these lost souls through Gakido, the Realm of Hungry Ghosts. The journey transforms these poor spirits into a unique kind of creature with many powers common to shiryo, gaki, and oni. Most are driven mad and return to Ningen-do seeking vengeance against the living. These creatures are called kagemusha, or Shadow Samurai.

Shadow Samurai tend to be solitary, though Yogo Junzo has devised methods of enslaving entire armies of kagemusha. These unfortunate spirits are among the most dangerous of Jigoku's minions, for they retain the skills and knowledge that they acquired in life. They also retain a certain sense of honor, but even this has been twisted by the corruption of Jigoku and the hunger of Gakido.

For instance, a Shadow Samurai typically will not slay an unarmed foe, but will frequently toss an opponent a stick, spear, or other mediocre weapon (that cannot harm the invulnerable samurai) before attacking. A Shadow Samurai cannot speak a word that is untrue, and must answer any questions posed by someone who knows its true name. (It is, however, free to kill the questioner.) Shadow Samurai traveling through Rokugan tend to stop and pay their respects at shrines and temples, and become enraged when the spells used to protect such places (such as Evil Ward) forbid them entrance.

Typical Shadow Samurai

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Strength: 4
Fire: 3
Agility: 4
Air: 3
Void: N/A
Shadowlands Taint: 4.0 (Can use Taint in place of Void, as per Corruption Point rules in Way of Shadowlands)
School/Rank: Any, usually Rank 2+
Honor: often 3.0+
Glory: 0.0 (dead)
Shadowlands Powers: 1 Minor, usually Darkness Unseen, Blessing of the Dark One, or Master of Shadows; 1 Major, usually Billowing Darkness or Unholy Strength
Notable Skills: Defense 3, Katana 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Bushido) 3, Two other Weapon skills at 2, plus other skills the GM deems appropriate.
Abilities
Ethereal Weapons
The Shadow Samurai always appears fully armed, with whatever weapons and armor he used in life. This equipment is actually an extension of his spirit, and if any of it is destroyed or separated from him, it can be summoned back with a thought.

Intangibility
Like many denizens of Gakido, Shadow Samurai are immaterial, as if continuously affected by The Eye Shall Not See (pg. 210, *Player's Guide*).

Invulnerability
Shadow Samurai can be harmed only by crystal, jade, or magic.

Stealth
Shadow Samurai tend to be semi-invisible in darkness. Though they usually make no effort to conceal themselves, they automatically move through shadows as if they had a Stealth skill of 6.

Fear
Equal to the Shadow Samurai's School Rank plus three.

Immortality
Shadow Samurai who die simply return to Jigoku, and must make their way to Ningen-do once more. The process usually takes

several years, but this means that no Shadow Samurai ever truly dies, and a vengeful Shadow Samurai could plague a family for generations. Each Shadow Samurai must be put to rest in a unique manner, such as beheading him with the sword he wielded in life, retrieving his corpse from the Shadowlands, destroying the oni who stole his name, avenging his master's death, etc.

Limitations

A Shadow Samurai cannot lie, and must answer truthfully any question posed by someone who knows the kagemusha's true name. Shadow Samurai have a twisted sense of honor, and always attempt to rationalize a dishonorable act. If a kagemusha can be convinced that his actions are without honor, he may become distracted, or even vanish until the next night, when he can rationalize his actions anew.

Pure Shadow Samurai

In rare cases, a Shadow Samurai escapes Jigoku and Gakido with none of the Taint or madness that usually results from such a journey. Most of these individuals continue on their journey, enter Yomi, and become powerful shiryo. A handful remain on Ningen-do for some purpose, to protect their family or right a wrong they allowed in life. These Shadow Samurai have all of the above abilities, but have no Shadowlands Taint. Instead, they retain their Void Ring and ability to spend Void Points.

Hida Sukune is one such pure Shadow Samurai.

Mantis Bushi School (New Technique)

The rise of Yoritomo's Alliance has already turned the tide of the Clan War. The Minor Clans have begun to receive a bit of the respect always denied them by their Great Clan cousins. The Mantis in particular have been a force to be reckoned with, often inflicting greater casualties on the Horde than the Great Clan armies. The Crab and Crane hold Yoritomo's bushi in particularly high esteem, and even the proud Lion have begun to recognize their talents. After the heavy casualties inflicted during the Clan War, Yoritomo's bushi outnumber those of the Phoenix and Crane, and Yoritomo's petition for Great Clan status is granted.

During the latter part of the Clan War, the members of the famous Storm Legion have been seen practicing a new technique, bringing their bushi school on par with those of the Great Clans. It is unknown exactly who devised this technique. Though Yoritomo himself has been seen practicing it, he denies having created it. If asked, he claims that the technique was a gift from Osano-Wo, a symbol of favor toward his sons in the Mantis.

The following Technique is not a New Path. It is simply a Rank 5 Technique to be added to the Mantis Bushi school presented in Way of the Minor Clans.

Rank 5: Hand of Osano-Wo

Masters of the Mantis Bushi school are capable of a savage double overhand strike. While using two weapons of medium size or smaller, the Mantis may make a single attack with both against an opponent. The attacker chooses which weapon he wishes to lead the strike with; the Damage Rating of the attack is that weapon's DR + 1k1. In addition, the attacker gains a number of free Raises on this attack equal to his Water. Multiple attacks cannot be performed while using this technique.

Adventure Hooks

Bakemono Monk

Location: Any

Challenge

The characters are suddenly approached by a frenzied goblin, unarmed and unarmored. "Help! Help!" it cries, "They're going to kill him! They're going to kill Shinsei!" The characters are likely to ignore the goblin's ravings and simply try to kill it; it makes no move to defend itself, but simply flees, running in circles as it begs for mercy. The first character who successfully strikes the goblin has his attack ruined as he is suddenly swooped upon by a crow. The crow cuts the attacker's face just below the eye, then flaps onto the goblin's shoulder.

Focus

If the characters try to kill the goblin, he begins quoting passages from the Tao as he begs for mercy: "He who flies has done no better than a common bird; he who conquers his heart is a hero." "Worry not for the hereafter – one world at a time!" "If you cannot work with joy, it is better that you do not work!" and other such aphorisms instantly recognizable by any monk, shugenja, or character with the Shintao skill. At the very least, a goblin who quotes Shinsei should stick out as something unusual, and a mystery to be explored rather than destroyed. If the characters do not slay the goblin, he surrenders peacefully and tells them his purpose. He introduces himself as Gazuk, "bakemono monk and traveler on the path of enlightenment."

Strike

A group of oni and goblins recently kidnapped the Hooded Ronin, the descendant of Shinsei. They are currently awaiting the arrival of Junzo, who will decide his fate. Shinsei's descendant is unable to escape, but managed to speak with Gazuk, one of his captors. He was easily able to bewilder the weak-willed goblin with his wisdom, and turn him toward the path of enlightenment. The born-again goblin was unable to rescue the Hooded Ronin alone, but agreed to find others to help.

The Hooded Ronin is currently being held in a camp in a forest miles away from the characters' current position. He is guarded by a pair of Ugulu oni and thirty goblins (see the Game Master's Guide for statistics). Gazuk gladly tells the characters this, and will lead them to the site. He will not, however, help them attack (he considers himself a pacifist). It is possible the characters could seek reinforcements before attacking, but Gazuk isn't certain how long it will be before Junzo arrives…

If the Hooded Ronin is successfully rescued, he thanks the characters sincerely and continues on his way with Gazuk in tow. He will under no circumstances stand by and allow Gazuk to be harmed, and will be profoundly angry at any character who kills the reformed goblin.

Alone

Location: Any

Challenge

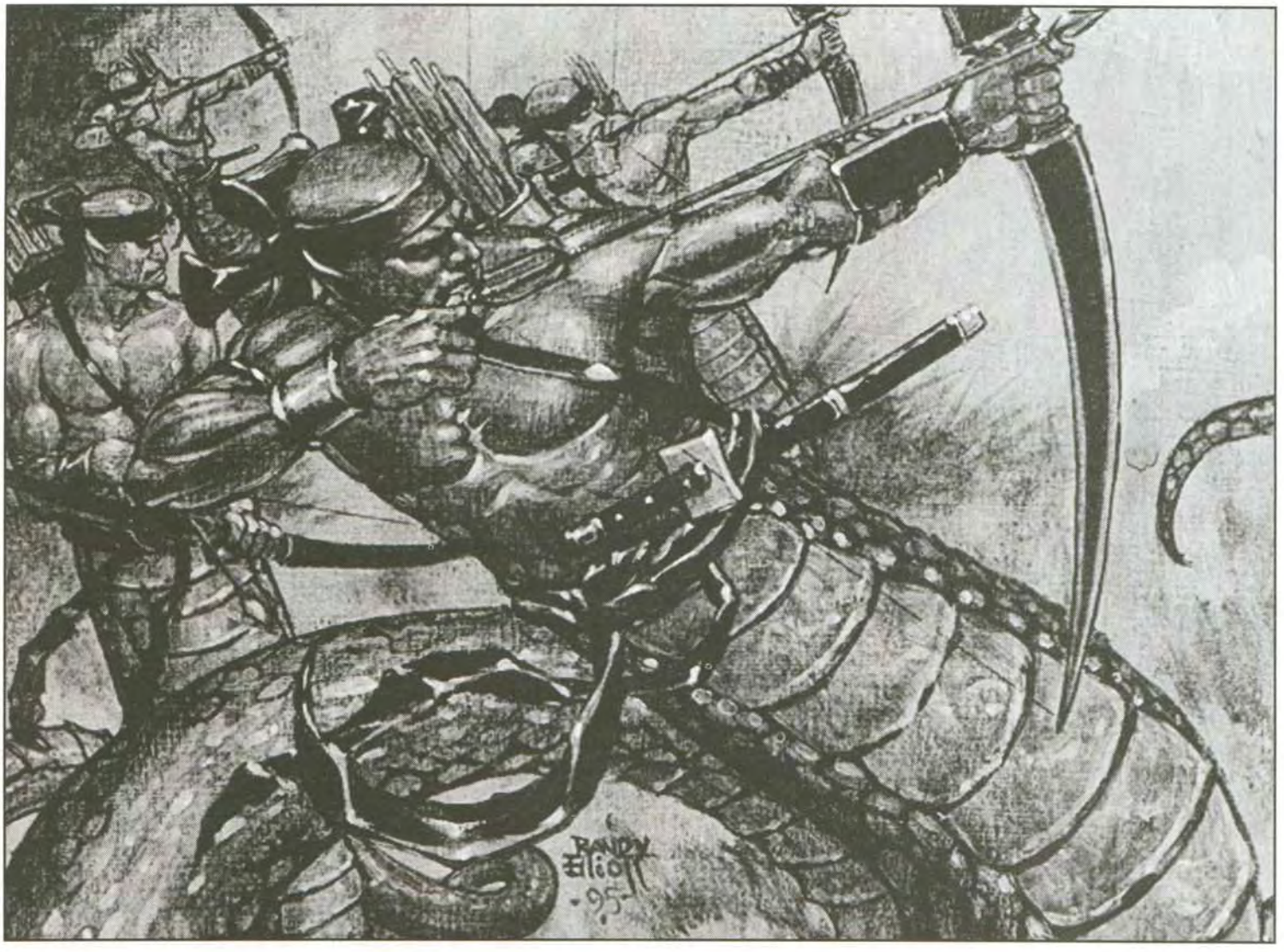
While traveling through a dangerous area of the war-torn Empire, the party finds a group of minor Shadowlands creatures (goblins, zombies, perhaps a lesser oni) destroying a farmer's house.

Focus

For once, the threat is exactly what it appears to be. The threat is dealt with in short order, but by the time the characters arrive the creatures have already slaughtered the man and woman who live in the house. Before they can be on their way, a cry echoes from behind the farmer's shabby futon.

Strike

There is one survivor – a heimin boy, no more than four years old. The nearest safe town or village is days away, through dangerous lands where Shadowlands creatures or enemy samurai could attack at any moment. Does the party accept this burden, or do they leave the poor child to his fate?



The Crystal Gate

Location: Naga, Phoenix, Crane lands

Challenge

This adventure works best in an area frequently attacked by the Horde, such as Isawa Castle, the Asahina Plains, or a Naga city. The local shugenja (or jakla) have hit upon a new defense against the horde, a crystal torii arch that reflects the sun's light with such radiance that no Shadowlands creature can bear to look upon it.

Focus

The gate works in theory, but it must be assembled and tested. Its magic will only function in an area of strong positive chi. Unfortunately, the only such location nearby is currently inhabited by Shadowlands monsters.

Strike

To assemble the gate and dispel the threat, the stones of the arch must be brought to the proper location and assembled. There are nine of the stones, and each weighs eighty pounds. Assembling and aligning properly requires five minutes per piece, and an Engineering or Lore (Nemuranai)/Intelligence roll vs. TN 25. (If the

characters think to obtain written instructions from the creators, they gain two free Raises on this roll.)

Fortunately, until the entire gate is assembled the pieces appear to be nothing more than drab black stone. It is possible the party could attempt guerrilla tactics, distracting the beasts, sneaking in quickly to assemble one or two pieces, then drawing back and waiting until another opportunity presents itself.

When the gate is fully assembled, it radiates a permanent Evil Ward effect in a one mile radius so long as the sun shines upon it.

Daughter of Seppun

Location: Otosan Uchi area

Challenge

The party is approached by Seppun Aya, the daughter of a prominent Otosan Uchi noble. She was away from the city during the Horde invasion, and is distraught at the idea of her father still trapped inside. She is used to getting her way, but as the political system of the Empire crumbles she is having a great deal of trouble adjusting. She begs the characters to help her, out of desperation more than anything else.

Focus

She tells the characters that her father, moneylender Seppun Dozan, is still trapped within the city. She wishes the characters to attempt to sneak into Otosan Uchi and rescue him. She is absolutely certain that he is alive, as his home has several secret chambers which she believes the invaders could never find. However, there is a catch: she insists on accompanying the party.

Strike

Aya is actually less burdensome than one might think, and obeys the characters dutifully, heeding their wisdom and experience. However, once the characters arrive at her father's home, they find Dozan's corpse rotting on the front steps.

Aya does not seem to care, and heads directly for the basement. Within minutes, she lugs several heavy chests filled with koku from a secret chamber behind her father's offices. She begins filling her pockets and demands that the characters help her make off with as much of the money as possible. If pressed, she offers them all a fair share.

Her open greed and desire for wealth are quite dishonorable, of course, and sneaking the heavy chests past the hordes of Tainted creatures will be quite difficult.

Then again, these are desperate times. And it is a lot of money...

Heroic Opportunities

The Day of Thunder: Heroic Opportunities

While not every samurai in Rokugan is present at the Battle for Otosan Uchi, a significant percentage is there, battling for their clans, families, and lives. Any characters who are active in the activities of their clan can be expected to be summoned here for the climactic final battle, except for those occupied elsewhere in the Empire with affairs of a very serious nature.

Although the battle raging in and around Otosan Uchi is a pivotal moment in the Clan War, it is not the deciding element. The true victory of the Clan War only occurs when the Seven Thunders defeat the dark god Fu Leng, ending his threat to Rokugan once and for all. The battle rages for eight rounds before the Thunders finally enter the Palace, and for another round until they enter the throne room itself. The armies of the Thunders are Losing during this entire time. When the Thunders begin their battle with Fu Leng, the battle becomes Even for one round as the dark lord's attention is elsewhere. When Fu Leng is slain (if you follow the canon storyline), then the Shadowlands will essentially be routed, and are treated as Losing for the three rounds it takes to clean out the last of the Horde.

Characters participating in this battle may encounter the following situations when a Heroic Opportunity is obtained from a roll on the Battle Table. Although they have been grouped by faction, the GM may mix and match them in any way he feels appropriate.

Brotherhood of Shinsei Heroic Opportunities

Famous Duel

Through the haze of war and death, you see the kharmic strike that claims the lives of both Kyojin, the Shadowlands monstrosity, and Tetsuya, venerated elder of the Brotherhood. You must reclaim his body so that his remains might be spared desecration at the

hands of the corrupted ones. Remain Heavily Engaged for two rounds, adding one additional die of Wounds. You gain six points of Honor.

Panicked Ashigaru

Their leader dead, a squadron of peasant warriors has lost their resolve. You have the chance to take command of their unit and return them to battle. Monks gain no Glory, but they do receive the respect and admiration of the peasants with whom they fight.

Crab Heroic Opportunities

Corrupted Brothers

You find yourself facing one of your own, a warrior of the Crab. The traitor has sided with the infernal Kuni Yori and the Shadowlands rather than your true lord Hida Yakamo. His betrayal must be punished with death. This is treated as a duel, with 2 additional Glory points if the character is victorious.

The Terrible Standard of Fu Leng

Adrift in the battle, you find yourself near the battle standard of the enemy. Its loss would be a devastating blow to the horde, one that might even be worth the sacrifice of the courageous samurai who could destroy it. Remain Heavily Engaged for six rounds. If successful, gain triple the Glory points for the round in which the standard is destroyed.

Crane Heroic Opportunities

Tsume Pikemen

A unit of pikemen have placed themselves behind you. If you can goad the enemy into rushing you, they will impale themselves upon the Tsume's yari. The character remains Heavily Engaged for 2 rounds, then may change ranks as normal.

Kakita Blade

Your commander falls dead to the ground before you, his ancient Kakita blade dropping limply from his grasp. Without thinking, you seize it and hold it aloft, screaming your family's name at the top of your lungs and rousing a mighty war cry from your fellow warriors. Gain 2 additional points of Glory.

Dragon Heroic Opportunities

Mizugusuri

A dying Agasha hands you a satchel full of vials. You recognize the contents as a dangerously explosive mizugusuri. Hurling them upon your enemies, you avoid being attacked. You may choose to use the vials up to three times, eliminating one die of Wounds per use.

Daisho of Fire

As you fight, your daisho erupts into flame. Glancing about, you see an allied shugenja saluting your valor. Add one to your Fire Ring for the next two rounds of the battle.

Imperial Families Heroic Opportunities

The Emerald Champion

Kakita Toshimoko and his magistrates appear in this part of the battlefield, shattering the enemy's ranks. You and your squadron have an opportunity to follow them through into the ranks of the horde. If you can remain Heavily Engaged for the next 4 turns, you gain double Glory for the remainder of the battle and may receive a promotion to the Imperial Legions after the battle (GM's discretion).

Ishikawa's Charge

The former head of the Imperial Guard drives forward with a contingent of samurai from all clans. They continue pushing, clearing a path toward the Imperial Palace. Follow them if you dare. Remain Heavily Engaged for 5 rounds, and receive 8 additional Glory points and the Advantage Ally (Imperial Guard).

Lion Heroic Opportunities

A Brother in Need

One of your fellow Lions, against whom you would have fought a short time ago, is cut off by the enemy. He will be overrun in mere moments without aid. By remaining Heavily Engaged for 3 rounds, you gain 3 additional Glory and gain a Major Ally.

Ancestral Intervention

You feel the strength of your ancestors course through you as the Kitsu call upon their aid in this dark hour. Choose one Trait or Skill to be increased by 2 ranks for the rest of the battle.

Minor Clans Heroic Opportunities

Fallen Yojimbo

One of the guardians of Yoritomo has fallen to the claws of a gigantic oni. Without him, the defense of your lord is weakened. Remain Heavily Engaged or Engaged for the remainder of the battle, gaining 2 additional Glory per round and the Social Position Advantage.

Lone Shugenja

A member of the Moshi family has been left alone after the death of her yojimbo. Her spells cannot repel all of the beasts attacking her, and she seems doomed. Become Heavily Engaged next round, then one battle rank less per round until you reach Reserves. Gain 3 Glory and the Ally Advantage.

Naga Heroic Opportunities

Return to the Void

A human samurai is paralyzed by indecision as the reanimated corpse of his ancestor shambles toward him. The humans must be shown that the dark ones deserve no mercy, no matter the shell they wear. Enter a Duel. If victorious, gain the True Friend Advantage.

The Qamar Falls

The Qamar, greatest among the Naga warriors, falls to the dark ones. The Isha takes up his weapon and rallies the Naga. Follow him to victory! Remain Heavily Engaged for the next 4 rounds, and gain 5 additional Caste points. (In a campaign diverging from canon, perhaps you are the one to take up the spear…)

Phoenix Heroic Opportunities

Elemental Fury

The magic of the Phoenix is used with devastating effect. The rolling earth forces many of the horde to the ground. Take advantage of their weakness. Double any Glory received in this and the next round of battle.

Fallen Kinsman

You are confronted with the unthinkable: a Phoenix who serves the Shadowlands. Destroy the abomination and redeem your clan's honor. Enter a Duel automatically next round. If victorious, gain 3 additional Glory and 4 points of Honor.

Ronin Heroic Opportunities

The Twelve Ronin

Toturi's vanguard the Twelve Ronin fight near you. One falls in battle. Another sees you and beckons you forth to fill in the missing rank. Remain Heavily Engaged or Engaged for the remainder of the battle. Gain 2 additional Glory points per round and the Social Position Advantage.

Moment of Glory

A commander from a Great Clan is clutched by the claws of a great oni. Save him, and your life as a clanless samurai may be at an end. Gain 4 additional Glory points and the True Friend Advantage.

Scorpion Heroic Opportunities

Defend the Phoenix

The goblin hordes threaten to overrun the Phoenix shugenja, an unacceptable loss. Only by hurling yourself into their ranks can you buy enough time for the shugenja to defend themselves. If you remain successfully Heavily Engaged for 3 rounds, automatically gain the Shugenja's Gift Heroic Opportunity afterwards.

The Poisoned Blade

A corrupted tactician harasses your position. A brother-in-arms places a blade glistening with poison in your hand and gestures toward the enemy strategist. His meaning is clear. Remain Heavily Engaged for 3 rounds, then face the enemy in a Duel. Success results in 3 additional Glory points.

Unicorn Heroic Opportunities

Ashigaru Command

Your commander shouts at you to take a unit of ashigaru and flank the enemy forces attacking your clan's army. Gain 3 additional Glory points this round.

Harried Maiden

A Battle Maiden is assaulted on all sides. Occupied as she is, she cannot slay the beast crawling onto the rear of her war-horse. Automatically enter a Duel next round. If successful, gain 3 Glory points and the Ally (Otaku) Advantage.

Who's Who

Al-Rashid

Gaijin Warrior

Earth: 3
Willpower 5
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Agility 5
Air: 3
Reflexes 5
Void: 3

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 2, Shinjo Bushi 2 (these are not actual school ranks, but an approximation of the training and abilities that al-Rashid has gained studying gaijin fighting styles)

Honor: N/A (al-Rashid is an honorable warrior, and he would have an equivalent of 3.0 in his own society)

Glory: 0.0

Advantages: Ambidextrous, Heartless, Precise Memory, Quick Healer

Disadvantages: Black Sheep (gaijin), Dark Secret, Obligation (al-Hazaad, Kolat)

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 4, Commerce 3, Defense 4, History (Burning Sands) 3, Horsemanship 3, Longsword 3, Lore (Burning Sands) 5, Rokugani Language 3, Scimitar 5, Sincerity 2, Stealth 4

During the early days of the Clan War, the Ten Masters of the Kolat realized that this was the opportunity for which they had been preparing for centuries. At last, the means by which to depose the line of the Hantei from the throne of Rokugan was in their grasp. The Masters immediately mobilized all of their resources to capitalize upon this opportunity. One of the first things done by the master al-Hazaad was to dispatch his sworn defender al-Rashid to Rokugan.

An honorable man, al-Rashid finds his servitude to the deceitful al-Hazaad a brutal punishment, but one that he endures without complaint. Long ago, a desperate young warrior pledged to serve the Qolat Master forever in exchange for the Master's intervention on behalf of his family, who were facing execution for crimes they did not commit. The gambit was successful: the family was spared. However, their fate was little different, as they were wiped out by unknown enemies a short time later. Al-Rashid found himself bound in eternal servitude to a honorless master for nothing.

A student of gaijin warfare, al-Rashid quickly found himself introduced to Rokugan as a guest of the Unicorn Clan, a visitor from the Burning Sands. His purpose was very clear: introduce unknown gaijin strategies to allow those favored by the Kolat an advantage over their foes. Even among the Unicorn, al-Rashid's tactics were an unknown element, one that gave them a distinct edge in combat. Eventually al-Rashid found himself advising the likes of Toturi and Hida Yakamo shortly before the epic battle on the Day of Thunder, although only one of the two champions truly exploited the gaijin's strange ways.

Al-Rashid feels strangely at home in Rokugan. The samurai of this strange land are men of honor and courage, and remind him of his own long-dead family in many ways. Unfortunately, he is bound by his word of honor to work against them in the name of al-Hazaad and his duplicitous cohorts. The irony of the situation is not lost upon al-Rashid: to truly join the samurai, he would have to expose his master to them. But in betraying his lord, he would forever lose the respect of those warriors whom he admires.

Al-Rashid is lithe and athletic, his body typically swathed in desert robes. In battle he rides into the fray upon a mighty Unicorn war-horse, his enemies falling before his twin scimitars as wheat before the harvest.

Isawa Osugi

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception 3
Fire: 2
Air: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Isawa Ishiken 1
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 2.3
Advantages: Great Potential (Void), Magic Resistance (6 points), Ishiken-do
Disadvantages: Soft Hearted, Dark Secret (Kolat)
Spells: (Italics denote innate ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon, Sense Void, Drawing the Void, Path to Inner Peace, Wind-Borne Slumbers, By the Light of Lord Moon*
Skills: Calligraphy 2, Investigation 1, Lore (Void Magic) 2, Meditation 4, Shintao 2, Spellcraft 3, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology 2

Being born to a clan that houses the most powerful shugenja in the Empire can make it difficult for someone who is merely ordinary. Unfortunately, Isawa Osugi's family was quite mundane. Her ancestors were unskilled at wielding the elements, so the family had been appointed keepers of a village shrine and small library far from Kyuden Isawa. As the second child of a small family, Osugi could hope for little better than to be married off for extra income. At the age of eight she was sent to the library to tend the books there until she was old enough to marry.

What she discovered at the library was hardly the dull and dusty scrolls she expected. In the dark of the night, her mother spirited her away to a strange building located far from home. It was there that she was tested. Osugi cannot remember much about that night, but she knows that whatever the test was, the instructors were pleased with the results. Since then, her mother has gradually revealed information about a secret organization that helps their family from time to time. Her mother promised to teach her wonderful things, as long as she didn't reveal the secret.

Osugi would wait months between each session with her new teachers, and it was during this time that the canny youth realized the price she was paying for her instruction. The library that her family tended housed a great deal of magical knowledge. Any time something new was discovered or researched, Osugi's mother would quietly copy it down an extra copy and set it aside. When the Phoenix girl went to her sensei, she would take the scrolls with her, and her lessons would continue.

The Kolat have gained more than they could have hoped for in Osugi, however. Where they wanted just another shugenja loyal to their cause, they have found Osugi's connection to the kami far beyond what they had hoped. As the months pass, Osugi's power grows faster than the Kolat have ever seen. Now even the Masters have taken notice of the simple young shugenja. She has become the personal attendant of Shiba Tsukune, wandering far and wide across the war-torn Empire.

Where Osugi's path will take her next, it is difficult to say. But her life is far from ordinary.

The Hooded Ronin

Descendant of Shinsei
Earth: 5
Willpower: 6
Water: 5
Perception: 6
Fire: 5

Intelligence: 7
Air: 5
Awareness: 6
Void: 6
School/Rank: Monk (Four Temples) 5
Honor: 2.7
Glory: 1.3 (9.9 to those who recognize him as what he truly is)
Advantages: Great Destiny, Luck (9 points)
Disadvantages: Sworn Enemy (all the powers of Jigoku), Heimin
Kiho: Heart of Stone, Rest My Brother, Cleansing Spirit, Grasp the Earth Dragon, Musubi, Slap the Wave, Chi Projection, Purity of Shinsei, Way of the Willow, The Wind's Truth, The Great Silence, Flee the Darkness, Self no Self, Unattunement, Happo Zanshin
Skills: Atemi 3, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Fasting 4, Hand-to-Hand 4, History (Shintao) 5, Kenjutsu 4, Kokyu 5, Lore (Brotherhood) 5, Lore (Seven Thunders) 5, Lore (Shinsei) 5, Meditation 6, Music 3, Shintao 9, Zanji 6

Duty is never an easy burden to bear, and the man known to Rokugan as the Hooded Ronin knows that better than most. Until three years ago, he was a farmer's grandson. The boy had lived his entire life on the rice paddy near Imperial lands, spending the summer bending and picking under the hot sun. He lost his father earlier than he could remember, a fact that his grandfather never seemed sad about. Actually, nothing ever seemed to get Ojo-sama too sad; he always had a ready smile or a funny quote from Shinsei if the young boy ever got too down.

Each fall since he was two years old, monks would visit the boy's village from the City of the Emperor itself, and when they had blessed the people, they would leave with him in tow. The cold months would pass as the boy was taught many things under the tutelage of the peaceful monks. He was forbidden, however, to ever speak of what happened inside the walls of the Four Temples, and each spring he would return to the rice paddies, completely unaware of why he was being taught such things if he could never use them.

A quote from Shinsei says, "Those who beg for answers often beg for ignorance soon after," and his questions were answered in such a fashion. The year Bayushi Shoju planned his coup of Otosan Uchi, Lion bushi came to his village. The great warrior Matsu Agetoki demanded that every able-bodied villager prepare to march on the Emperor's City at once. His grandfather threw himself at the feet of the Lion, begging Agetoki not to take his grandson. The samurai refused curtly, kicking Ojo-sama in the chest. The old man let out a low grunt as he was flung on his back with a sickening snap, and the boy knew something was wrong. No smile or quip came from Ojo-sama's form, and all around knew what had happened. Not

wanting to draw attention to his overzealous behavior, Agetoki moved on with a few of the villagers.

That fall, the monks returned, led by a man the boy had never met. The man was the great Tetsuya, master of the Four Temples, and he took the boy to speak alone in one of the abandoned huts. The truth was given to him then, wrapped in the death of his grandfather and the duty his blood carried. All night the two spoke together, until the young man could take no more and fled into the dawning day, never to be seen again by the Brotherhood that raised him.

He ran to the only place that he could – the Clan his grandfather said he could trust above all else. By the time he reached the lands of the Dragon, samurai, *ise zumi,* and shugenja alike bowed before him as he approached the waiting Togashi Yokuni. As his grandfather had planned, the trip to the mountains had let Tetsuya's words sink into his soul.

The young man opened his mouth to speak, looking for some way to express the shame he felt in running, but something within him stirred.

Yokuni needed him, he knew suddenly, just as Rokugan needed him… and seven others. "Let us walk together awhile," he spoke finally, turning to leave. Wordlessly, the Dragon daimyo followed him.

Though Yokuni returned to his mountain fortress months later, the young man has not been seen since.

Kenshin's Helm, Act Five: The Dark Lord's Vengeance

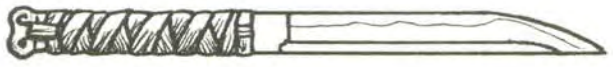
"The Day of Thunder is here, and the armies of those that call themselves pure array against us. Yet even should we fall in battle, we will triumph. Even should I succumb to their power, fear not. Even death is not eternal, and I have planned against this battle since the ancestors of our enemies were naught but mewling babes."
– Fu Leng, in a speech to his lieutenants.

Scene One – Aftermath

After the characters escape Kyuden Seppun they are free to continue their mission. If the characters did not play Act Four, or played Act Four but did not recover the Eleventh Black Scroll, the final chapter will be more difficult but not impossible.

If the characters have the Eleventh Black Scroll, they may wonder exactly what to do with it. Scorpion characters will almost certainly see it as their responsibility (even though it has already been opened) whereas any Phoenix may see the knowledge it contains as rightly belonging to his clan. The power of the scroll is a constant temptation to any shugenja. Some may feel they are better off simply destroying the scroll, or handing it off to their superiors. If this is the decision they feel is best, by all means allow them to make it. It will make the final battle more dangerous, but keeping the scroll creates entirely different problems.

No more developments in the saga of Kenshin's Helm occur until near the end of the Month of the Rat. At this time, the party encounters a Miya shisha galloping on a fast horse. When he sees the party, he looks up in bewilderment and comes to a halt. He calls one of the characters by name, hands him a roll of parchment, and gallops back the way he came.



The message reads as follows:

> My friends –
> Please attend me at Kyuden Miya as soon as possible.
> Miya Yoto
> Daimyo of the Miya

Once again, the journey is difficult, and additional encounters from elsewhere in this chapter can be added to taste as the party treks across the war-torn Empire. The threat of becoming embroiled in wars between the clans is less pervasive during this time, but the armies of Fu Leng march openly in every province.

Upon their arrival at Kyuden Miya, a servant admits them, glancing quickly about to see if they have been followed. The servant escorts them into the presence of Miya Yoto, who sits attended by Katsu and a handful of elderly Miya. The only exception is a young, pretty girl with a bruise on her cheek seated to Yoto's right. She is recognizable from Katsu's descriptions as Miya Yumi. Yoto sits hunched by age and sorrow, his already ancient face lined in thought as he studies the party. He pays the proper respects and invites each of the characters to sit.

"To begin, allow me to apologize," he says frankly, his dark eyes focusing upon a distant corner of the room. "The quest my cousin Katsu has given you has consumed much of your time, time when the Empire could have used such fine samurai to greater purpose. It seems that my niece has been hiding for months in the libraries of Kyuden Ikoma, among her former teachers. Would that she had remained there, safe." Yumi casts her eyes on the floor, shamed by her uncle's words.

"Instead, she returned. She thought to warn us of Satoshi's madness, and of what would come if we continued to obey his will. As fate would have it, he happened to be here at the time. When she denounced him before the elders of our family, he became enraged, and struck her savagely. 'The problem with the Miya,' he said to us, 'is that we have ever been afraid that blood may stain our hands. I will show you blood, Miya Yumi. You and all those who would follow you.'"

"Ironically, it was that speech that proved to many how far my son had fallen. I joined Yumi, denouncing him and stating my wish to resume leadership of the family. Satoshi only sneered, claiming that he didn't need a band of worthless old men to rule the Empire. He promised he would return to show us the true strength of the Miya."

"No doubt Satoshi refers to the Scorpion he has armed with funds embezzled from the Emperor's Blessing," Yumi adds in a low voice. "I fear that he spoke truly. A new day for the Miya will dawn, and it is a day I do not wish to see." The young shisha's shoulders have gone rigid and her eyes are intense, full of anger long held in check.

"Allow me to apologize as well, my friends," intones Miya Katsu, his deep voice filling the chamber as he draws attention away from his impulsive colleague. "I apologize for not recognizing what a threat Satoshi was. I apologize for not helping you more than I have. If Satoshi and his Scorpion rise to slay us all, there shall be only one thing I can do to cleanse the shame I have brought."

"And with that, I can only ask you to leave," Yoto finishes, his voice sad and distant. "You owe us nothing further, and we have nothing more to give. Tell others of what has happened here, and how we failed, so that this cannot happen again."

Yoto is vaguely hoping that the characters will offer to aid him, but does not force the issue. The truth is obvious. Most of those within Kyuden Miya are like Yoto – elderly pacifists, not young bushi. The only combat-ready warriors are a handful of ronin loyal to Yoto, and Katsu's deputies. The castle's defenses are weak; the Miya have depended upon their reputation to defend them from attack for centuries. Should Satoshi return, the castle and the precious knowledge it contains would be lost. If the characters do not realize that the Miya need help, Yumi follows them when they leave and begs them to help her stop Satoshi.

If asked about Kenshin's Helm, Yumi becomes grave. She replies that she did indeed find it in Road's End Village, and stole it from the Uragirimono shortly after Junzo attacked. Her efforts to destroy the helm only proved that it is indestructible. She returned to Kyuden Ikoma hoping to search their libraries to find some way to destroy the accursed thing; the best she could find was a vague reference to a similar artifact during the rise of Iuchiban. Yumi still carries a copy of the scroll, and points out the relevant section.

"'How does one kill a shadow?' asked Lady Sun. 'Snuff out the light,' laughed Lord Moon. By a greater darkness can darkness be consumed. And so it is with the tools of Jigoku."

After striking Yumi, Satoshi recognized the helmet and took it for his own. It was after donning the kabuto that he made his startling speech. Either he is truly mad or the power of Kenshin's curse has consumed him.

The idea that a cursed helm has driven Satoshi to madness disturbs Miya Yoto greatly. He begs the characters to save him if possible, to separate him from this thing of darkness. "However," he adds with deep trepidation, "if there is no way to save him, you must destroy Satoshi, and quickly. Let my son know the peace in Meido that he never accepted here."

Yumi humbly asks the characters if she can accompany them (her statistics are in the appendix). If they deny her request, she will be disappointed, but will remain at Kyuden Miya.

The only clue to Satoshi's destination is a servant who claims that he overheard Satoshi mumbling that he would go "where the Lion slipped through our fingers," in a strange detached voice, shortly after taking the helmet. When Satoshi left, he and his group rode directly east.

Scene Two – Pawn of Darkness

The clue overheard by the servant refers to the City of Remembrance, where Akodo Godaigo was exposed to the Helm's influence but overcame his corruption to turn his back on Jigoku. If the clue is not obvious enough, the characters can slowly make their way east, questioning refugees (Satoshi is a striking individual, and easy to recognize in his blood-red helm). A Hunting/Perception roll vs. a TN of 25 each day will also keep the PCs on the trail of Satoshi and his followers.

It is in the City of Remembrance (P19 in the Game Master's Guide) that Satoshi has been arming and outfitting Scorpion ronin. With the recent attacks on the Phoenix, most of those who lived in the city have fled to Shiro Shiba. This has left the city largely in the hands of Satoshi and his ronin, who have begun to fortify their positions. Satoshi's Scorpion are young and inexperienced, donated to his cause by Kachiko because she had no other use for them. Unfortunately, this also means that many of them are not as strongly tied to their clan as most Scorpion. A good number were not even samurai when their clan was destroyed. The only life they have known is as ronin. Many prefer the life in Satoshi's army, and are loyal to the Miya. Perhaps not even Kachiko could pry them away.

Especially not now. The helm's power has taken root in the city, as it once did long ago. Its curse has spread over Satoshi's followers, transforming them into Shadowlands Madmen loyal to his cause. If either the helm or Satoshi can be destroyed, the curse would be broken, and these poor men and women would return to their true selves, realizing what has happened.

Unfortunately, that isn't as easy as it sounds. Kenshin's Helm has bestowed a number of powers upon Satoshi, including supernatural speed and endurance. If Satoshi should die while wearing the helm, matters grow even more complicated.

Miya Satoshi

Earth: 3
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Void: 3
Shadowlands Taint: 2.5 (Temporary)
School/Rank: Miya Shisha 1, Matsu Bushi 3, Shadowlands 1 (bestowed by Kenshin's Helm)
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 9.2
Advantages: Multiple Schools, Combat Reflexes, Ear of the Emperor
Disadvantages: Brash, Overconfident, Insensitive, Dark Fate (fulfilled when he donned Kenshin's Helm)
Shadowlands Powers: Blessing of the Dark One, Uncanny Speed, Greater Blessing of the Dark One, Greater Blessing of the Dark One, Terrible Armor, Final Blessing of the Dark One, Outside the Elements
Rolls When Attacking: 6k4+5 (Fine Katana, +1 Skill)
Rolls For Damage: 5k2
TN to be Hit: 30 (Light Armor, Terrible Armor)
Skills: Archery 4, Battle 4, Calligraphy 1, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Diplomacy 2, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 6, History 2, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 4, Katana 5, Kenjutsu 5

(For those without *Way of the Shadowlands*, Satoshi's powers provide him with seven extra Wounds on each level, +10 to his TN to be Hit, +20 TN to all non-maho spells targeting him, and he may double his initiative dice for a round by gaining a point of Taint.)

Satoshi's Ronin

Earth: 2
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 2
Void: 2
Shadowlands Taint: 1.0 (Temporary)
School/Rank: Miya Shisha 1 or Bayushi Bushi 1
Honor: 2.0 (average)
Glory: 0.0 (Scorpions) or 1.0 (Miya)
Rolls When Attacking: 6k4+5 (Fine Katana, +1 Skill)
Rolls For Damage: 5k2
TN to be Hit: 30 (Light Armor, Terrible Armor)
Skills of Note: Defense 2, Katana 3, Kyujutsu 3; Horsemanship (Miya only) 3, Stealth (Scorpion only) 3

This final battle with Satoshi should be tailored to the party's strengths. If the PCs prefer head-to-head conflict, then allow them to confront Satoshi directly and include a fair number of tainted bushi as backup. If they prefer stealth or subterfuge, have Satoshi's soldiers outnumber the party so greatly that only a shadow mission would lead to a clear victory. If they enjoy large battles, provide an opportunity for the characters to gather a few of the allies they have made along the way (perhaps including Yumi's friends Koan, Ashinagabachi Ichiro, and Sanzo). Satoshi considers himself a skilled general and will gladly face the player character general. Perhaps the final duel could be the result of a Heroic Opportunity.

Dealing with Kenshin's Helm

The two best ways of dealing with Kenshin's Helm are as follows.

1) Casting Doom of Fu Leng directly at the helm. Not only will this destroy the helm's power, but the explosive backlash of maho will permanently remove the Taint upon the Black Scroll as well. Whoever casts the spell will become Tainted normally. In this case, Satoshi lives and the Taint granted by the Helm is cleansed both from him and from his followers. Satoshi remains somewhat dazed and horrified by his experience. If he is allowed to live, he either joins the Brotherhood of Shinsei to hide his shame or throws himself into furious battle on the Day of Thunder hoping to die fighting the hordes of Fu Leng.
2) Killing Satoshi. This tactic cures the madness of the Scorpions and Miya, but leaves them all Tainted. There is the additional problem of what to do with Kenshin's Helm, as it still contains Fu Leng's power.

Resolution

Once Satoshi has been dealt with, the danger Kenshin's Helm poses is at an end (at least temporarily). The Dark Lord's vengeance has been overcome. However, the Day of Thunder has yet to be won. If the characters still have time, they may wish to rush to Otosan Uchi and contribute to the battle.

Appendix

The Tale of Kenshin's Helm

Miya Satoshi is a man with a vision. Raised by the Lion, he despises the diplomatic methods of his family. He believes that they should take a stronger role in politics, surpassing the Otomo and Seppun to stand unequaled at the Emperor's side. Despite Satoshi's support among the younger Miya, his goal seemed unattainable.

Then came the offer of alliance from the Scorpion. In return for Satoshi's support, the Scorpion would prevent his rivals within the family from challenging his power. The Poison Empress, Bayushi Kachiko, even revealed the location of a long-lost artifact of the Miya – a kabuto once worn by Miya himself. If Satoshi could recover this heirloom, it would prove to many of the older generation that perhaps he is a daimyo who can get things done.

In return for Kachiko's assistance, Satoshi embezzled funds from the Emperor's Blessing to outfit and armor the fallen bushi of the Scorpion. He knows that his actions are dishonorable, but believes that his ultimate ends will benefit the Empire. As soon as he has Kenshin's Helm and the support of his family, he will have no further need for his Scorpion allies.

Unfortunately, there are a few facts about Kenshin's Helm of which not even Kachiko and Satoshi are aware.

Kenshin's Helm is an ancient item created by a craftsman who served Miya during the first Emperor's Blessing, in the wake of the War Against Fu Leng. The helm was treasured by Miya, and came to be recognized as a symbol of the legendary shisha.

What history has overlooked is the fact that Miya Kenshin was a priest of one of the many religions that dominated Rokugan before the arrival of the Kami. Kenshin secretly despised the interference of Kami in the lives of mortals; the War of Fu Leng only proved that meddling gods bring nothing but trouble. While he openly pretended to support Miya's works, Kenshin despised his lord as a lap-dog of the Kami. Kenshin's Helm was intended it as an experiment, a template for a more powerful version to be given to Hantei Genji. Unfortunately, Kenshin died before he could create this second artifact. His plot was never discovered.

Upon the death of Miya Kenshin, Miya set the helm in a place of honor in Kyuden Miya. Ironically, it was his love for his false friend that saved Miya from the helm's curse.

Kenshin's Helm surfaced again during the Crab-Crane War in the year 387. Miya Kazu, daimyo of the Miya, was dispatched to investigate the growing dispute between Crab and Crane. He wore Kenshin's Helm on his mission, hoping that the kabuto of his ancestor would bring him luck. Instead, the helm's curse took root and caused Kazu to fail miserably. The Yasuki broke from the Crane, war began in earnest, and many Miya died before all was said and done.

The helm was returned to Kyuden Miya, and none suspected its involvement in the tragedy that occurred. It remained untouched for nearly four decades.

In the early fifth century, the helm was given to the Kitsu family as a gift from the Miya, in thanks for their assistance in defusing a volatile situation brewing between the Akodo and Matsu. It was passed into the hands of the succeeding daimyo of the Kitsu, a young shugenja named Uragiri. Uragiri treasured the helm and wore it often, never realizing the subtle effect it had upon his sanity.

Over a time, Uragiri turned his studies to the power of *maho.* He became a deadly *maho-tsukai,* his Taint carefully hidden by subtle magic. In time, he became advisor to the great general, Akodo Godaigo. Advised by the kansen stealing his sanity, Uragiri gave Godaigo the helm and used its curse to hasten his downfall. The famous tale of Akodo Godaigo's failure and his betrayal of Matsu Hitomi is told in both *Way of the Lion* and *Way of the Shadowlands.*

After Matsu Hitomi's defeat in the year 441, Godaigo was disgraced. Before he vanished from the public eye, he returned Kenshin's Helm to the Miya, for he no longer felt worthy to carry it. Still unaware of the helm's curse, the Miya accepted it.

This time, the helm remained untouched for only one year.

In the year 442, a gaijin fleet arrived in Otosan Uchi. The Miya shisha dispatched to meet the gaijin wore Kenshin's helm.

Later, that Miya was washed up on the shores of Golden Sun Bay. A massive battle had erupted between the gaijin and the Rokugani. Many Miya were taken hostage and never seen again.

The helm and its wearer were discovered by a young Scorpion named Bayushi Tesaguri, son of the Scorpion daimyo. On impulse, Tesaguri took the helm with him.

Bayushi Tesaguri wore Kenshin's Helm for three years, though he lacquered it dark red so that it would not be recognized. In the year 445, he was entrusted with three of the Black Scrolls, and quickly sold them to the Phoenix clan. When Yogo Ichinore discovered the truth, Tesaguri's spirit became the first resident of Traitor's Grove.

Ichinore and the others who came for Tesaguri were the first to recognize the subtle touch of maho upon the helm. The kabuto was deemed too dangerous to be left in Traitor's Grove, so Ichinore assumed the responsibility of protecting the helm from being used again. He hid the cursed thing in the same location as the Eleventh Black Scroll, the Doom of Fu Leng. As a testament to Ichinore's sense of irony, both the scroll and the helm were hidden where the Phoenix would be least likely to look for it: in a deep cave in Road's End Village.

Over time, proximity to the Eleventh Black Scroll has stirred something within Kenshin's Helm. Fu Leng has transformed the helm into a potent weapon to be activated in the eventuality that he falls against the Thunders. Should Fu Leng be slain, the Helm will become a repository for much of his power. Any mortal foolish enough to wear it will be instantly maddened by corruption, effectively becoming the new Dark Lord.

No one currently knows that the helm will do this, not even Fu Leng's servant, Yogo Junzo. Fu Leng has kept his plan quiet, so that this time no mortals will interfere. When Junzo discovers the Eleventh Black Scroll, Kenshin's helm is simply cast aside. It is, however, recognized by one of the Uragirimono, tainted spawn of the

Lost soul who was once Kitsu Uragiri. The Uragirimono, in turn, lost the helm to Miya Yumi.

If not found and destroyed before the Day of Thunder, all that the Great Clans fought for may be for naught. Though Fu Leng may fall, his power will live on in the cursed helm of the first Miya…

The irony of corrupting the daimyo of Rokugan's most treasured family of peacekeepers has not escaped Fu Leng. In fact, when the Dark Lord's soul first returned to Rokugan and he began his search for a mortal vessel, Miya Satoshi was among the first to be considered. Satoshi has the right mix of anger, arrogance, and loneliness for Fu Leng's needs, but ultimately the Hantei was a far better choice. Instead, Satoshi has become the focus of the Dark Lord's vengeance should Fu Leng fall to the Thunders. Kenshin's Helm is a means to this end.

If a soul filled with anger (like Satoshi) wears the helm, he is merely granted as many Shadowlands Powers as he could have for his rank, plus a Rank in the Shadowlands School. In a place where the power of *maho* is strong (such as the City of Remembrance) the helm can slowly extend its influence to others, as well.

Once Fu Leng has been defeated, however, the helm grants its wearer twice the normal number of Shadowlands Powers and causes him to immediately become Lost.

If the helm is destroyed by Doom of Fu Leng, all Taint it generates is permanently negated.

Resolution

In the wake of Fu Leng's destruction, much has changed in Rokugan. Life in the wake of the Clan War will be detailed further in future supplements, but this section describes a few of the more important events following the death of Fu Leng.

Toturi's Army

Toturi the Black assumes the throne in the interest of restoring stability to Rokugan. The leaders of the Great Clans support Toturi's claim, and the reign of Toturi I begins. What was once Toturi's Army becomes the new Imperial Guard. In the interest of making the transition to the new dynasty as smooth as possible, Toturi promises that the Imperial Families of the Seppun, Otomo, and Miya will retain their duties and status.

The Mantis and Scorpion

As a reward for their services during the Clan War, the Mantis and Scorpion are officially awarded Great Clan status by Toturi I. The Yoritomo family name is inscribed in the Ikoma Records. These announcements shock the court, but the intimidating presence of Yoritomo's bushi in Otosan Uchi stifles argument.

The Miya

Using what funds remain of the Emperor's Blessing, the Miya begins a journey across Rokugan reminiscent of the one embarked upon by their founder. Toturi I supplements their resources with the surplus supplies from his ronin army. As they travel, the shisha rebuild what they can and deliver food, medicine, and hope to the people. Restoring the burnt temples of the Brotherhood is one of their primary goals.

The Crab

With a redeemed sense of purpose, the Crab Clan returns to its duty upon the Carpenter Wall. Hida Yakamo promises that the Hida name shall never again succumb to the Taint. The Naga form an alliance with the Crab, promising to help them cleanse the Empire of the Foul in all its forms. Plans are made to retake Haikyo no Hiruma, the lost homeland of the Hiruma family.

The Crane

Doji Kuwanan becomes daimyo of the Crane Clan. The Crane set about the task of rebuilding their exhausted resources.

The Dragon

Mirumoto Hitomi assumes leadership of the Dragon Clan and orders her clan to return to their mountain retreats. Hitomi discards the Mirumoto name, and requests permission from the Emperor to found a Hitomi family. Permission is granted. No more is heard from the Dragon.

The Lion

Ikoma Tsanuri becomes daimyo of the Lion Clan. This comes as a surprise to some, and Tsanuri's detractors point to the fact that the man who was once her teacher is now Emperor.

The Phoenix

Shiba Tsukune becomes the new champion of the Phoenix. Considering the heavy losses the Phoenix have endured, including the loss of the entire Council of Masters, some wonder whether they still deserve Great Clan status. In an effort to replenish their numbers, the Isawa open the doors of their shugenja school to any who possess the slightest talent for magic. Naka Kuro adds his support to the Phoenix, promising that he will remain with them until a new Council can be formed.

The Unicorn

Of all the clans, the Unicorn have suffered least during the Clan War. Taking advantage of their numbers and mobility, the Emperor gives Emerald Magistrate status to a large number of Unicorn, and dispatches them to carry justice to the land. Among their many goals, the Unicorn swear to return order to the city of Ryoko Owari, a place steeped in decadence and corruption.

The Shadowlands

The armies of the Shadowlands are routed. Many zombie and oni legions dissolve into dust with the deaths of Fu Leng and Yogo Junzo. Kuni Yori survives, however, and escapes into the Shadowlands with

what minions he can gather. Yori carries a grim burden – the severed head of the last Hantei, stolen from the Palace before the Thunders could secure their victory.

New families after Time of the Void

The following are mechanical benefits for members of new families created after the Day of Thunder. Previously existing characters do not gain these benefits.

Yoritomo (Mantis)

Only the Storm Legion and other loyal followers of Yoritomo are granted this name.

Benefit: +1 Strength

Hitomi (Dragon)

Few Dragon carry this name, though their number seems to be slowly growing.

Benefit: +1 Void (Special: Members of the Hitomi family may only be *ise zumi*.)

The Black Scrolls

Let the courage of the Seven Thunders remedy this corruption.
Let the truth of our purpose stand as a citadel against the night.
Let our soul's wind rise and snuff the flames of Jigoku.
Let our minds be unclouded; may Tengoku be our light.
As the oceans shift, we shall adapt to cage our foe,
And we harden our hearts against the touch of despair.
As the touch of the Dark One reaches for our souls,
And let Ninth Son, the Fallen One, be taken unaware.
A terrible oath I now make to bind the darkness.
A soul's sacrifice to purge the horrors from our land.
The doom of Fu Leng is upon us,
Let the time of redemption be now at hand.

– Isawa's final spell, roughly translated from the language of those who came before the Kami.

The infamous Black Scrolls did not always contain terrible spells of dark *maho*. Originally they were no more than simple spell scrolls, carried by Isawa when the Seven Thunders faced Fu Leng. During the final battle, Isawa's cunning mind devised a way to lace the twelve spells together into a single incantation. As the other Thunders destroyed Fu Leng's body, Isawa banished Fu Leng's immortal soul to Jigoku. The Phoenix Thunder realized that his spell was unstable, and depended entirely upon the safety of the scrolls themselves. As his life ebbed away from the exhausting magic, Isawa passed the scrolls on to Shosuro and begged her to protect them. Heeding the Phoenix's words, the Scorpion took Isawa's scrolls and fled, leaving the remaining Thunders to deal with Fu Leng's minions.

The Scrolls themselves do not contain Fu Leng's power, but they represent the seal on his prison. As the scrolls are opened, the seal is weakened. When all twelve scrolls are opened, Fu Leng's spirit will be released from Jigoku.

Fu Leng is aware of the nature of his prison. Though he has been unable to open the scrolls from Jigoku, or even communicate their locations to his minions, he has used his corruptive power to twist their pure magics. The Black Scrolls have been transformed into weapons of evil to tempt mortals into opening them.

Powers of the Black Scrolls

All Black Scrolls are effectively Rank 5 maho spells, though shugenja of any Rank may cast them. Casting a Black Scroll causes its user to gain twice the normal Taint accumulated when casting maho. Besides the spells they contain, an opened Black Scroll gives its holder a Free Raise when casting any maho spell or when making any Lore (Maho) check. This bonus is cumulative for each opened Black Scroll carried. Black Scrolls that have not yet been opened do not provide this bonus.

Black Scrolls radiate a quiet aura of menace. Any shugenja who can see a Black Scroll may make a Perception roll vs. TN 5 to sense the power contained therein. A shugenja who touches a Black Scroll (opened or unopened) immediately becomes aware of the powers the scroll can grant. Such a shugenja must make a Willpower roll vs. TN 15 or immediately try to open the scroll.

Fu Leng's corruption follows the Black Scrolls everywhere. Anyone who carries a Black Scroll or keeps one in his or her immediate presence for more than a day accumulates one point of

Shadowlands Taint. This Taint continues to accumulate so long as the scroll is carried. Amulets of jade carried by the holder are no protection, though encasing the scroll itself in jade or crystal will prevent the effect. The Black Scrolls stolen by the Phoenix were encased in such crystal. Those guarded by the Scorpion were not; the Scorpion protectors were merely wise enough not to remain in the presence of the Scrolls unless absolutely necessary.

Opening a Black Scroll

Isawa foresaw the possibility of Fu Leng's corruption twisting the Scrolls and sealed each with a potent yet subtle ward. A shugenja who attempts to open a Black Scroll must make a Lore (Maho)/Intelligence roll vs. TN 35 to successfully unravel the ward. (If the roll is successful on the first attempt, the shugenja may not even realize that the ward was in place.) Should the roll fail, the shugenja is unable to defeat the ward and open the scroll.

Each time a Black Scroll is opened for the first time, it breaks away a bit of Fu Leng's prison. Closing the scroll again does not restore this seal. Opening a Black Scroll sends a ripple of dark magic across the elements. This ripple can be detected anywhere in Rokugan by shugenja or any character with kiho, Elemental Attunement, or Inner Gift. Such characters must make a raw Void roll vs. a TN of 25 - (number of Black Scrolls opened so far x 2).

The opening of Fu Leng's prison also creates terrible disruptions in the harmony of the universe. Each time a Black Scroll is opened, all shugenja in Rokugan who cast a non-maho spell will find the TN of their spells raised by the number of Black Scrolls opened thus far, for a number of days equal to the number of scrolls opened so far. Any spell that fails due to this increase in TN causes the casting shugenja to become nauseated and helpless, unable to move or act for 1-10 rounds (roll one die).

The First Black Scroll: The Wasting Disease

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 Creature
Range: Touch

This Black Scroll was the first to be opened, beginning Yogo Junzo's descent into madness.

This spell afflicts the targeted creature with the Wasting Disease. (See page 88 of the *Game Master's Guide*.) If the target is immune to the Wasting Disease, he becomes a carrier for 1-10 days. The disease spreads normally. The targeted victim has a 90% chance of returning from the dead as a zombie (see page 142, Game Master's Guide) if he dies while infected. Those infected by the primary target have a 80% chance to return as a zombie. Those infected by these individuals have a 70% chance to return as undead, and so on, with the chances decreasing by 10% with each succeeding generation. Once the chances reach 0%, the disease is no longer contagious.

Note that the process of returning as undead is unpredictable. Early victims of the Wasting Disease did not animate for many months. As more and more Black Scrolls are opened, however, the process quickens. During the Time of the Void chapter, a victim of the Wasting Disease might animate in a matter of seconds.

The Second Black Scroll: The Iron Citadel

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 Citadel
Range: 1 Mile

This spell was originally used by Isawa to build and repair the walls of Gisei Toshi. Now it is something else entirely.

This spell may only be cast in an area with strong natural Taint. Over the course of several hours, it summons into being a castle crafted of black iron, the size of a large shiro or kyuden. The citadel is up to ten stories in height, and is always crafted to the caster's specifications. The interior of the castle is lined with devious traps, twisting passageways, and doors that open only at the command of the caster. So long as the scroll remains within the citadel, the castle stands eternal. If the scroll is taken more than a mile from the citadel, it collapses in a matter of minutes (very likely killing anyone inside). No more than one Iron Citadel may exist at a time. Shortly before the first events described by this book, Yogo Junzo uses this spell to create a stronghold deep in the Shadowlands, near the legendary Black Finger River.

The Third Black Scroll: Black Wind From The Soul

Duration: Instantaneous
Area of Effect: 1000′ radius
Range: Self

This spell may be cast ritually, with multiple shugenja participating. Only the highest Rank shugenja actually rolls to cast the spell; the additional shugenja merely add to its effect. When completed, the spell releases a wave of black fire that inflicts XkX Wounds in the area of effect, where X is equal to the sum of all the School Ranks of all shugenja participating. If more than ten dice are rolled for damage, extra dice are instead rolled in subsequent rounds as the black energy continues to rage through the area. The flames continue to burn until all damage dice are exhausted. Roll ten of the extra damage dice in each round until the extra dice are used up. These flames only harm living beings, and pass through other barriers without a trace. Any living creature killed by the Black Wind is reduced to ashes.

The shugenja casting the spell are not immune to this effect, and must be within the radius of the Black Wind for the spell to function.

All shugenja participating this ritual are Tainted as if they had cast the spell.

The Fourth Black Scroll: The Walking Horror of Fu Leng

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: One target
Range: Touch

One of the most terrifying Black Scrolls, this spell completely subverts the will of the target, twisting him into a tool of the Dark Kami. The ritual requires the corpses of twelve humans laid out before the target of this spell. As the spell is cast, the corruption of Fu Leng reaches into the realm of the dead and draws off the spirits that once inhabited those bodies. When the spell is complete, the victimized spirits are chained to Fu Leng for eternity, and the target draws from their strength. The person targeted by this spell gains a Taint Rank equal to his highest Trait, and gains as many Shadowlands Powers as he can possibly have, free of cost. In addition, any Skills that the sacrificed spirits possessed in life are now the target's to use, as well as any Skills or powers the target knew before the ritual.

The Fifth Black Scroll: Dark Divination

Duration: 5 minutes
Area of Effect: Personal
Range: None

It is unknown what form of spell this Black Scroll originally contained, but some theorize that it may have been a very rudimentary Void spell created by Isawa to glimpse the future. Whether or not these theories are correct is largely irrelevant, because Dark Divination is far from the mundane magic it once might have been. The spell now has two different effects depending upon the nature of the caster. A servant of Fu Leng who casts the spell will see the future actions of his enemies, those who threaten his plans and the plans of his Dark Lord. Non-servants who open this scroll see horrifying visions of the future in which their families, friends, and superiors betray and kill them in the course of turning to the service of Fu Leng.

When cast, Dark Divination allows the caster to ask the GM questions regarding the events of the campaign. These must be questions that can be answered with one word. Three such questions may be asked per casting.

The Sixth Black Scroll: Shapeshifting

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 1 Target
Range: Line of Sight

Believed to have originally been a forerunner of the Dragon Clan's Transform, this spell has become a vile implement of corruption. What once transformed one inorganic substance to another has become a means of twisting and corrupting the flesh, transforming living beings into the evil creatures of the Shadowlands. The caster merely needs to select an element when casting this spell upon a target and the target will be painfully transformed into a corrupted entity that roughly corresponds with that element. The newly created beast is under the complete control of the caster for an indefinite period of time (determined by the GM, although a minimum of a year is appropriate). These creatures have no advanced Shadowlands powers beyond those common to the races.

Element	Resulting Transformation
Earth	Ogre
Water	Bog Hag
Fire	Dark Moto
Air	Oni no Sanru

The Seventh Black Scroll: Touch of Despair

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: 250′ radius from caster
Range: Line of Sight

Once a simple and powerful spell, Touch of Purity was created by Isawa to combat the corrupting influence of the Taint in others. In fact, it is believed that Touch of Purity may have been the only true cure for the Taint that Rokugan has ever known. Sadly, like all the scrolls sacrificed by Isawa to seal the soul of Fu Leng in its tomb, Touch of Purity became perverted by the raw power of Jigoku. Where it once cured the Taint, it now bestows it on a large area.

When cast, Touch of Despair immediately bestows a number of Taint ranks to everyone within its area of effect equal to 10 – (the individual's Honor Rank). Only the most honorable samurai caught within its blast have a chance of retaining their sense of self. The dishonorable are instantly transformed into raving Shadowlands Madmen. (See *Way of the Shadowlands* for information on the Lost.)

The Eighth Black Scroll: Touch of Fu Leng

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: One Target
Range: Touch

This scroll was originally a spell Isawa developed to heal great wounds, including lost limbs. The corruption of Fu Leng's influence has twisted its power to grant Shadowlands Powers that replace the natural body parts. This Black Scroll confers a Power that warps or mimics any part of the body (such as Claws of the Kumo), but never grants Powers that do not (such as Child of Darkness). The actual Power gained is random, left up to the discretion of the GM, and usually reflects a darker side of the character's soul. For example, someone who is constantly eating may gain Fu Leng's Hunger.

In addition to the Power, the target gains two full ranks of Taint if he receives a Minor Power, four ranks for a Major, and six ranks for a Greater Power. This maho may be cast on an unwilling target, but such victims will usually have to be restrained as the scroll takes a full hour to read and cast properly. Anyone who becomes Lost through the agency of this spell comes under the complete control of the caster.

The Ninth Black Scroll: Return of the Fallen Lord

Mastery Level: 5
Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: One Target
Range: Touch

A testament to the corruption that Fu Leng can cause, this Black Scroll's effect violates the Celestial Order and subverts it to the

caster's will. Where Isawa's original spell allowed a summoned ancestor to take physical form and fight for his bloodline, the Eighth Scroll rips a soul from its place in the afterlife and forces it back into its mortal shell. All that is required for this spell to function is the whole remains of the dead, and a full ten hours for the ritual. The thing that is brought back, however, is not the same person who passed into the next life. The foul magic that returns the soul to the world of man bends it fully to the Dark Kami's whim. The target's Honor is reduced to zero, it gains Taint equal to its highest Trait, and it immediately becomes Lost. Otherwise, the skills and memories of the target are almost the same, though twisted to reflect the unholy thing it has become.

The Tenth Black Scroll: A Terrible Oath

Duration: 1 Year
Area of Effect: 100 Creatures
Range: 10´

This powerful spell requires the sacrifice of a living, thinking being and the willing participation of up to one hundred individuals, all of whom must mark the Black Scroll with their blood. When the spell is cast, it immediately increases the Traits (and therefore the Rings) of all of the participants by one, with the exception of Void, which decreases by two. All targets also gain a full Rank of Shadowlands Taint. Insight remains unchanged by this spell's effects. The caster may choose whether or not he wishes to be one of the targets.

When the spell's duration ends, all the targets' Traits (and therefore Rings) are reduced by one, returning to their normal levels. The target's lost Void remains lost. Insight is adjusted accordingly, possibly causing a loss of Rank Techniques.

The Eleventh Black Scroll: Doom of Fu Leng

Duration: Permanent
Area of Effect: One target
Range: 50 feet

The name of this scroll only serves as another trap for the unwary; another plot the Dark Kami has enacted to bring about his resurrection. The power of this scroll is as frightening as it is bizarre – it is the bane of both the living and those who serve Fu Leng. Isawa's original intent for this scroll was a simple binding spell, and Fu Leng's corruption has twisted it more completely than the other Black Scrolls.

When cast upon a living being, this spell almost completely severs the target's connection to the elements. The target's Void is immediately decreased by two permanently. A Naga's Akasha Ring is instead affected if one is targeted by this spell. If a target's Void is reduced to zero, he becomes a shambling invalid, barely able to speak coherently.

If the target of this spell is either Tainted or possesses Shadow Points, the Black Scroll instead drops the target's Shadowlands Taint Rank to zero, or replaces his Shadow Points with an equal number of points of Shadowlands Taint. Natural Shadowlands creatures will be rendered weak and useless (considered to be at the +20 wound level) until they can find some way to regain their Taint.

The Twelfth Black Scroll: The Spell Which Has No Name

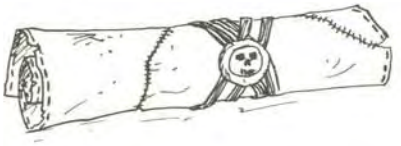
Duration: Special
Area of Effect: Special
Range: Special

Eight hundred years ago, Togashi fell in love with the daughter of the Scorpion daimyo. She returned his love, and he shared with her his deepest secrets. The weight of these secrets cost her dearly, but she knew her destiny. When she left the land of her father, she took one thing away – the Twelfth Black Scroll. Even to this day, no one save Togashi knows what happened to the scroll, and very few know it was ever in the Dragon Kami's possession. The Yogo guardians were startled to suddenly realize it was missing until centuries later, and none could fathom its whereabouts. Even magical means proved ineffective in finding the lost scroll, rendering even the powers of Fu Leng useless in his efforts to locate the final seal on his power.

This, the most legendary of all the scrolls, is said to hold the power of life and death. No one has ever used this spell, though many have theorized as to what powers it may hold. The truth of the matter is very simple.

The Twelfth Black Scroll does nothing. It still possesses the same traits of all other Black Scrolls, tempting shugenja to explore its mysteries, but the scroll is entirely blank. The spell that Isawa scribed upon it was long since expended in binding Fu Leng's spirit. Fu Leng has made no effort to fill this scroll with the same temptations with which he has laced the other eleven scrolls. He has no reason to do so, for once it is opened he will truly be free and human pawns will no longer be needed.

If anything, the power of the Twelfth Black Scroll is a terrible divine joke, and proof that when the Day of Thunder comes, it shall truly be Fu Leng who laughs last.



Stepping Away From Canon

The timeline and fiction in this book present the "official" story of the Second Day of Thunder, but you are by no means limited to this version of the tale. Diverging from the canon storyline can throw an interesting twist into a campaign, especially for players who are familiar with the story. A GM may wish to take the spotlight off of the Thunders and give the player characters a more active role. Here are some suggested variants that might spark ideas.

Fall of the Great Bear

During the Crab invasion of Otosan Uchi, Hida Kisada is not defeated by the Last Hantei. Instead, Fu Leng looks upon the Great Bear and sees the opportunity to seize a stronger vessel. Fu Leng casts aside Hantei XXXIX's weak body and possesses Kisada. To the Crab Clan, it appears merely as if their daimyo has defeated the Emperor. Now, with a powerful body and the support of his greatest enemies, Emperor Kisada I has plans to take a more active role in the destruction of Rokugan…

New Thunder

The campaign suddenly diverges from canon in a radical manner. Perhaps Doji Hoturi is slain by his evil duplicate. Perhaps Isawa Tadaka is consumed by his corruption and joins Tsuke in destroying the Phoenix. Perhaps Hida Yakamo never escapes Otosan Uchi. With the Thunders dead, new Thunders must step into their places. Perhaps Yoritomo is the Crab Thunder? Or the Lion Thunder? Or both? Perhaps a few of the player characters have the proper lineage, and can become Thunders themselves!

1000 Years of Darkness

The Thunders are defeated, and Jigoku stands victorious.

The sun rises no more and a wave of darkness spreads across Rokugan.

The armies of the Great Clans are broken by Fu Leng's unrivaled might.

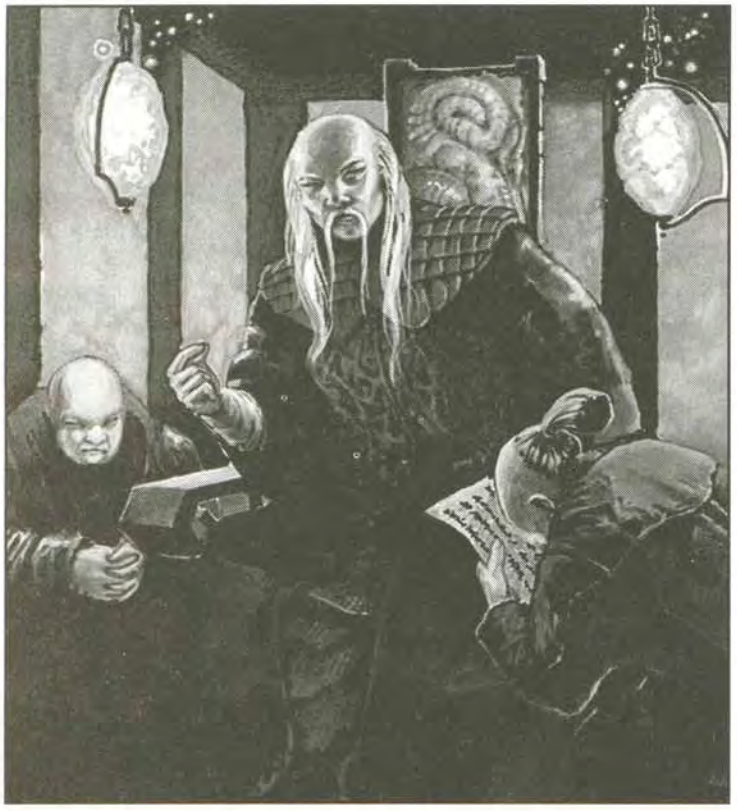
Only a few strongholds remain – the Naga cities, lost Gisei Toshi, the Mantis Isles, and a handful of others. The characters are among the survivors of the dark Day of Thunder, hiding from the awesome might of Fu Leng and planning for the day that he can be defeated.

Character Summaries

The following characters have appeared in previous products, but are presented here for your convenience. These characters have been adapted for 2nd Edition rules, as well as for the current timeline. Many of these characters have been given character options that they did not possess in previous printings merely because these were not available at the time. Feel free to adjust these statistics for your campaign.

Akodo Kage

Earth: 6
Water: 5
Perception: 7
Fire: 5
Intelligence: 6
Air: 5
Awareness: 7
Void: 4
School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5
Honor: 4.2 perceived (0.5 actual)
Glory: 6.2
Advantages: Leadership, Major Allies (unknown), Blackmail (many), Crafty



Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Kolat Master), Proud, Sworn Enemies (Unknown

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 3, Battle 6, Commerce 4, Courtier 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Hand-to-Hand 5, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 5, Law 2, Lore (Burning Sands) 1, Lore (Bushido) 6, Manipulation 6, Oratory 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5

Asako Oyo

Earth: 3
Willpower: 4
Water: 4
Perception: 7
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 5
Air: 4
Awareness: 6
Void: 5
School/Rank: Asako Henshin 5; Water/Fire/Earth/Air/Void
Honor: 2.8
Glory: 1.0
Advantages: Higher Purpose

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Missing Eye, Enlightened Madness, Forbidden Knowledge

Skills: Bard 2, Bo 3, Calligraphy 6, Defense 4, Hand-to-Hand 3, Herbalism 4, History 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (The Gift) 5, Medicine 3, Meditation 8, Shintao 6, Theology 3

Kiho: Musubi, Channel the Fire Dragon, Self No Self.

Bayushi Aramoro

Earth: 4
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Air: 6
Void: 4
School/Rank: Shosuro Assassin 5
Honor: 1.8
Glory: 7.9
Advantages: Kharmic Tie (Kachiko), Great Destiny, Shadowbrand (1), Silent

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (in love with Kachiko), Yogo Curse

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 5, Explosives 4, Hisomu 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kuenai 5, Locksmith 4, Ninjutsu 6, Poison 5, Sleight of Hand 4, Stealth 7

Bayushi Kachiko

Earth: 3,
Willpower: 5
Water: 2
Perception: 4
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 4
Air: 4
Awareness: 7
Void: 4
School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 5
Honor: 1.2
Glory: 9.9 (Empress)
Advantages: Blackmail, Benten's Blessing, Clear Thinker, Dangerous Beauty, Great Destiny, Kharmic Tie (Doji Hoturi – 2), Luck (6)

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

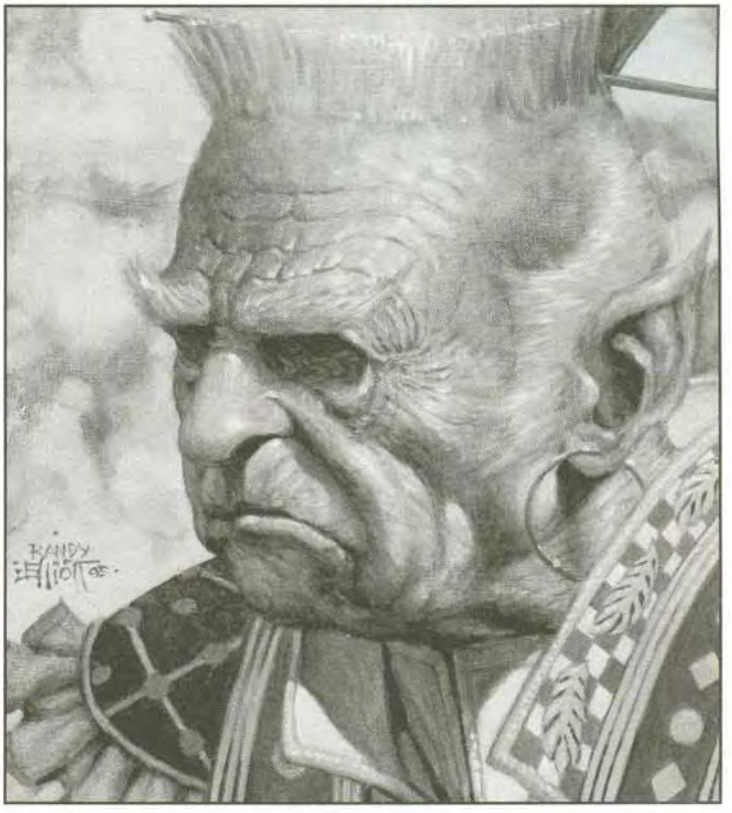
Skills: Acting 7, Courtier 7, Etiquette 7, Investigation 3, Law 4, Knife 3, Poison 6, Shintao 3, Sincerity 7, Sleight of Hand 5, Stealth 6, Tea Ceremony 4, Dance 5, Manipulation 8, Conversation 6, Seduction 9, Go 4

Bayushi Shoju (Undead)

Earth: 3
Willpower 5
Water: 2
Perception 5
Fire: 3,
Intelligence 5
Air: 5
Awareness 6
Void: 6
School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 5
Shadowlands Taint: 6
Honor: 0.0
Glory: 0.0 (dead)
Advantages: Clear Thinker
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Lame (left arm), True Love (Bayushi Kachiko), Unluck (3), Undead
Skills: Acting 4, Kyujutsu 3, Battle 4, Courtier 6, Defense 5, History 4, Iaijutsu 5, Katana 8, Kenjutsu 5, Law 5, Poison 5, Sincerity 6, Shintao 4, Stealth 5
Shadowlands Powers: Master of Shadows, Uncanny Speed, Billowing Darkness, Unearthly Regeneration, Book of Souls

Bayushi Yojiro

Earth: 2
Water: 3
Fire: 4
Air: 4
Awareness: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 4
Honor: 3.7
Glory: 4.9
Advantages: Allies (Lion Clan), Benten's Blessing, Read Lips, Voice
Disadvantages: Junshin, Bad Reputation (Honest), Soft-Hearted, Unluck (3)
Skills: Courtier 7, Etiquette 6, Investigation 8, Law 6, Sincerity 6, Seduction 5, Poison 4



Dashmar

Earth: 4
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Intelligence: 5
Air: 5
Akasha: 5
School/Great Lesson: Greensnake Vedic 5
Caste Rank: 8.9
Advantages: Higher Purpose (prevent war), Voice
Disadvantages: None
Skills: Advanced Medicine 3, Astronomy 4, Calligraphy (Naga) 2, Etiquette 5, Law (Naga) 4, Lore (Naga Ruins) 6, Lore (Rokugani Culture) 3, Meditation 2, Moksha 5, Oratory 4, Rokugani Language 4, Swordsmanship 3, Theology (Naga) 5

Doji Hoturi

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 5
Air: 5
Reflexes: 6
Void: 5
School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 5
Honor: 4.1
Glory: 7.6
Advantages: Great Destiny, Benten's Blessing, Luck, Kharmic Tie (Kachiko), Cadence, True Friend (Toshimoko), Ally (Toturi)
Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Bayushi Dairyu's death), Compulsion (women)
Skills: Battle 2, Courtier 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 4, History 3, Iaijutsu 6, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Lion Clan) 4, Meditation 2, Poetry 5, Political Maneuvering 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 4

Doji Kuwanan

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Reflexes: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 3, Hida Bushi 1, Lion Bushi 1
Honor: 3.8
Glory: 7.6
Advantages: Clear Thinker, Different School: Lion Bushi, Multiple Schools: Crane & Crab, Kakita Blade (Omeka)
Disadvantages: Driven, Sworn Enemy (Matsu Hiroru), Lost Love (Isawa Nosuriko)
Skills: Armorer 3, Athletics 4, Battle 5, Courtier 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 4, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Crab Clan) 3, Lore (Lion Clan) 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 2, Oratory 2, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3, Subojutsu 4, Weaponsmith 2, Yarijutsu 3

Doji Shizue

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception: 4
Fire: 4
Intelligence 6
Air: 3
Void: 4
School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 3, Storyteller 2, Poet 1
Honor: 2.5
Glory: 3.8
Advantages: Precise Memory, Voice, Benten's Blessing, Kharmic Tie (Matsu Hiroru – 4), Luck (6)
Disadvantages: True Love (Matsu Hiroru), Lame (left leg), Soft-hearted, Small
Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Investigation 5, Knife 2, Lore (Myth and Legend) 4, Manipulation 4, Meditation 3, Oratory 3, Poetry 3, Political Maneuvering 2, Shintao 3, Storytelling 6

Hantei Sotorii

Earth: 1
Willpower: 2
Water: 2
Fire: 2
Air: 2
Void: 2
School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 1
Honor: 3.0
Glory: 10
Advantages: Sensei (Kakita Toshimoko)
Disadvantages: Gullible, Dark Fate, Bad Health, Weakness (Stamina)
Skills: Etiquette 3, Falconry 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 1, Kyujutsu 1, Sincerity 2, Kemari 3, Bard 2, History 1, Law 1, Lore (Shadowlands) 1, Lore (Shugenja) 1, Meditation 1, Shintao 2, Tea Ceremony 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 1
Adjustments: After Anvil of Despair, all of Sotorii's Traits increase to eight (except Void, which is unchanged). He gains ten Ranks of Taint, four Ranks in the Shadowlands School, and seven ranks in Hand-to-Hand. Select any five Minor Shadowlands Powers, five Major Shadowlands Powers, and five Greater Shadowlands Powers for the vessel of Fu Leng.

Hida Kisada

Earth: 9
Water: 3
Strength 6,
Fire: 5
Air: 4
Void: 4
School/Rank: Hida Bushi 5, Hida Avenger 3
Honor: 2.0
Glory: 8.3 (Crab daimyo)
Advantages: Crab Hands, Clear Thinker, Large, Magic Resistance (6), Strength of the Earth (8)
Disadvantages: Brash, Dark Fate
Skills: Heraldry 2, History 2, Hunting 3, Law 3, Shintao 3, Athletics 4, Battle 7, Defense 5, Kobo Ichi-Kai (or Hand-to-Hand) 5, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 7, Ono 5, Tetsubo 6, Wrestling 5
Kata: Shards of Earth, Striking as Water
Adjustments: After Anvil of Despair, add Lame, Bad Health, and Permanent Wound to Kisada's Disadvantages.

Hida Sukune

Earth: 3,
Water: 3
Perception 4
Fire: 3
Air: 2
Void: 2
School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2
Honor: 2.0
Glory: 6.0
Advantages: Great Destiny
Disadvantages: Low Pain Threshold, Weakness (Stamina)
Skills: Jiujutsu 2, Kyujutsu 4, Etiquette 1, Heraldry 2, Battle 4, Defense 3, Kobo Ichi-Kai (or Hand-to-Hand) 3, Kenjutsu 3, Katana 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Tanto 3, Tessen 2, Tetsubo 3
Kata: Striking as Fire
Adjustments: After Shadowlands, Hida Sukune becomes a "pure" Shadow Samurai. By Time of the Void he is a Rank 3 Hida Bushi.

Hida Yakamo

Earth: 7
Water: 3
Strength: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 2,
Reflexes: 4
Void: 4
School/Rank: Hida Bushi 4
Honor: 2.0
Glory: 7.5
Advantages: Ancestor: Hida, Crab Hands, Great Destiny, Large, Strength of the Earth (4)
Disadvantages: Brash, Nemesis (Mirumoto Hitomi), Unluck (3)
Skills: Hunting 3, Athletics 4, Battle 3, Kyujutsu 2, Defense 5, Hand-to-Hand 4, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Tetsubo 5, Wrestling 5
Kata: Shards of Earth, Striking as Water
Adjustments: During Shadowlands, Yakamo gains Missing Limb (left hand) and is bound to Oni no Yakamo. He slowly gains temporary Shadowlands Taint and wields an Oni Claw on his left hand; this weapon uses the Jiujutsu skill, has a 3k3 Damage Rating, and gains a free Raise to seize or crush a weapon. In Crimson & Jade, he gains the Jade Hand, cleanses his Taint, and gains 0.5 Glory.

Hoshi

Earth: 7,
Water: 8,
Fire: 7
Air: 8,
Void: 7
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 5
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 0.0
Advantages: Great Destiny, Immune to Fear, Large, Leadership
Skills: Battle 3, Defense 6, History 8, Kenjutsu 7, Kyujutsu 3, Jiujutsu 8, Lore (Scorpion Clan) 7, Lore (Shugenja) 6, Meditation 4, Shintao 6
Adjustments: In the guise of a retired Scorpion named Suisei, Hoshi increases his Shintao to 7 during Crimson and Jade.

Ide Tadaji

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Fire: 4,
Air: 4
Void: 4
School/Rank: Ide Emissary 4
Honor: 2.4
Glory: 5.2
Advantages: Clear Thinker, Social Position (Ambassador to the Imperial Court), Voice
Disadvantages: Bad Fortune, Lame
Skills: Commerce 4, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, History 3, Law 4, Lore (Political) 4, Oratory 3, Shintao 3, Theology 2, Tantojutsu 4

Ikoma Ujiaki

Earth: 4
Willpower 5
Water: 4,
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 6
Air: 4
Awareness: 6,
Void: 3
School/Rank: Ikoma Bard 5
Honor: 3.0
Glory: 6.4

Advantages: Allies, Ancestor (Ikoma), Ear of the Emperor, Heart of Vengeance (Crane), Read Lips

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Temper), Brash, Nemesis (Kakita Yoshi), Overconfident, Permanent Wound, Vanity

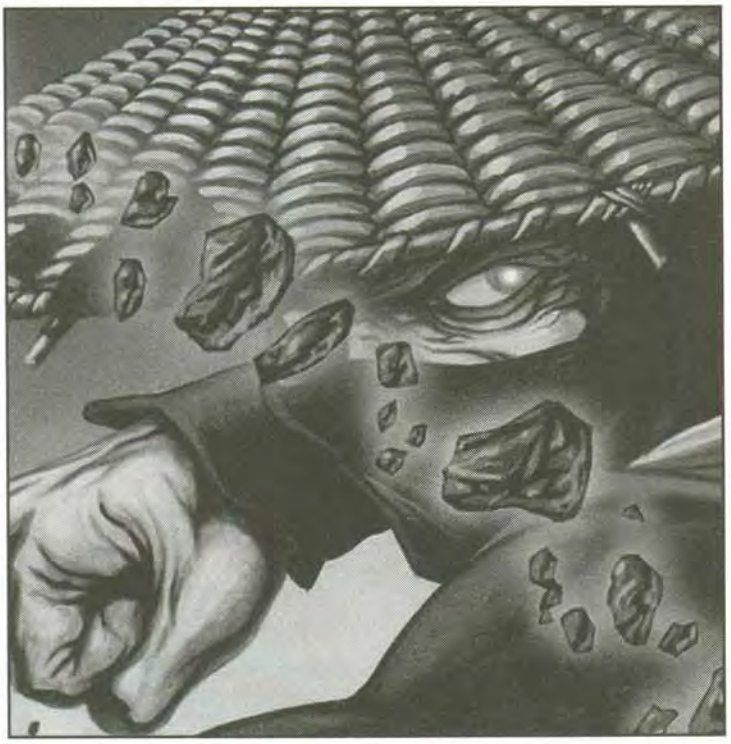
Kata: Fury Without End, Strike as Water

Skills: Bard 6, Calligraphy 2, History 3, Bo 3, Courtier 4, Defense 4, Gambling 2, Heraldry 4, Intimidation 7, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 4, Law 4, Lore (Bushido) 4, Lore (Underworld) 4, Manipulation 5, Oratory 4, Sincerity 4

Isawa Tadaka

Earth: 7
Water: 5
Fire: 5
Intelligence 6
Air: 5
Reflexes 6
Void: 5
School/Rank: Isawa Tensai (Earth) 5
Taint: 2.8
Honor: 4.2
Glory: 7.7

Advantages: Ancestor (Isawa Akuma), Social Position (Master of Earth)



Disadvantages: Fascination (Oni no Akuma), Driven

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, History 5, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (maho-tsukai) 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Meditation 3, Shintao 4, Spell Research 5, Theology 4

Spells: All Earth spells, others as GM sees fit.

Isawa Tsuke

Earth: 6
Willpower: 8
Water: 4
Fire: 8
Air: 4
Void: 4
School/Rank: Isawa Tensai (Fire) 5
Taint: 2.1
Honor: 4.1
Glory: 5.3

Advantages: Higher Purpose, Social Position (Master of Fire), Strength of the Earth (4), Tactician

Disadvantages: Brash, Blackmail (Akodo Kage), Jealousy

Skills: Battle 4, Calligraphy 3, Cipher 4, Courtier 4, Defense 4, History 3, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 4, Law 2, Manipulation 5, Meditation 3, Shintao 5, Spell Research 7, Theology 5

Spells: All Fire spells, others as GM sees fit.

Isha

Earth: 4
Willpower: 5
Water: 4
Perception: 5
Fire: 4
Agility: 6
Air: 3
Reflexes: 5
Akasha: 3
School/Great Lesson: Greensnake Scout 4
Caste: 6.

Advantages: Acute Smell, Combat Reflexes, Fertile, Great Destiny, Large, Quick, Way of the Land (Naga, Shinomen, Unicorn)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Fascination (Rokugani), Soft-Hearted

Skills: Yomanri 8, Athletics 3, Battle 3, Conceal 6, Defense 3, Jiujutsu 3, Hunting 6, Investigation 4, Meditation 2, Moksha 3, Stealth 6, Swordsmanship 4, Yarijutsu 3

Adjustments: On the Day of Thunder, Isha becomes the Qamar. His Caste increases to 8.0.

Iuchi Karasu

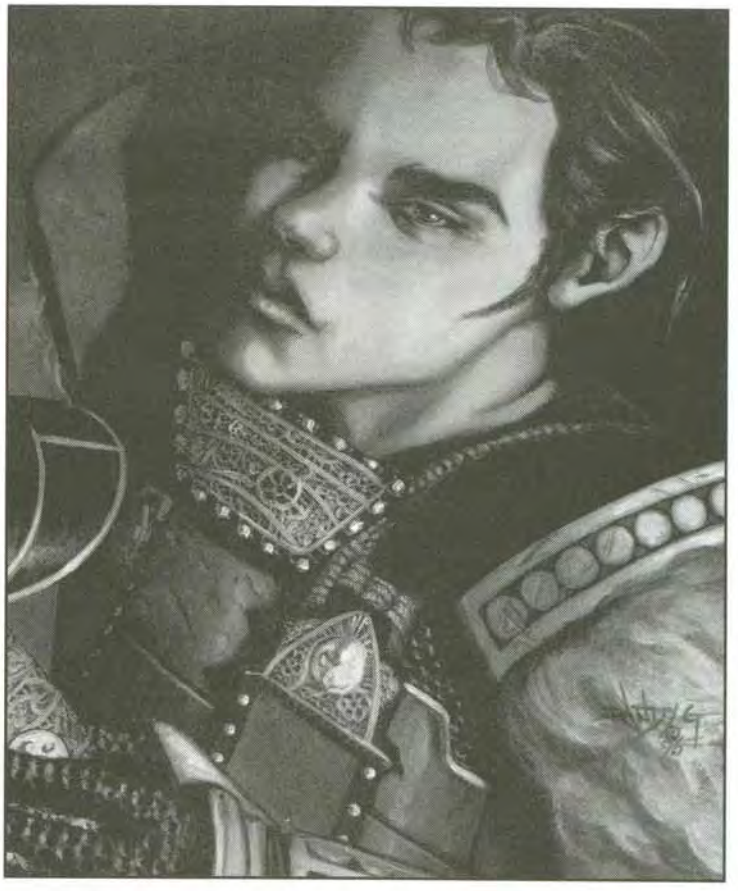
Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 3,
Void: 4
School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 4
Honor: 2.2
Glory: 6.8
Advantages: None;
Disadvantages: Dark Secret, Permanent Wound
Skills: Calligraphy 4, Defense 3, Herbalism 5, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Medicine 5, Meditation 3, Sai 4
Spells: Avoidance, Not This Day, Dance of the Unicorn, Ride Through the Night, Tomb of Jade, Fires from Within, The Burning Sands, The Four Winds Favor, Gate to Nowhere, Heart of the Inferno, The Ties That Bind, Wall of Water, Sacred Wind.

Kakita Toshimoko

Earth: 4
Water: 4
Fire: 7
Air: 4
Reflexes: 6
Void: 8
School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 5, Kenshinzen 3
Honor: 3.6
Glory: 7.0
Advantages: True Friend (Doji Hoturi), Ancestor – Kakita, Strength of the Earth (2), Quick, Balance, Kakita Blade
Disadvantages: Heart of Vengeance (Fox), Bad Reputation, Sworn Enemy (Dairya)
Skills: Acrobatics 3, Archery 2, Athletics 4, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, Iaijutsu 9, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Bushido) 5, Meditation 5, Naginata 4, Oratory 1, Shintao 5, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 2
Kata: One Leg Stance, Strike as Fire.

Kitsu Motso

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Matsu: Bushi 5
Honor: 2.8
Glory: 6.7



Advantages: Balance, Heart of Vengeance (Kitsu), Kaiu Sword, Tactician
Disadvantages: Forsaken, Vanity
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 7, Defense 4, Hand-to-Hand 4, History 3, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 4, Yarijutsu 4

Koan

Earth: 3,
Willpower: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 2
Intelligence: 4
Air: 3
Void: 4
School/Rank: Ronin Shugenja 3
Honor: 2.4
Glory: 0.0 (ronin)
Advantages: Higher Purpose, Great Destiny

Disadvantages: Overconfident, Social Disadvantage (ronin), Phobia (cats)

Skills: Astrology 2, Bard 2, Bo 3, Defense 3, Calligraphy 4, History 2, Intimidation 3, Lore (Shugenja) 4, Lore (Elements) 4, Meditation 5, Shintao 3, Theology 3, Spellcraft 5, Spell Research 5

Spells: (italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon, By the Light of Lord Moon,* Cloak of Night, Quiescence of Air, *Path to Inner Peace,* Bo of Water, Jade Strike, Evil Ward, *Mists of Illusion, Fires From Within, Call Upon the Wind, Essence of Air, Facing Your Devils,* Silent Waters, Strength of the Crow

Kiho: Soul of the Four Winds.

Kuni Yori

Earth: 5
Water: 3
Fire: 4
Air: 3
Void: 4
School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 5
Honor: 2
Glory: 7.1 (Kuni daimyo)

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Great Destiny

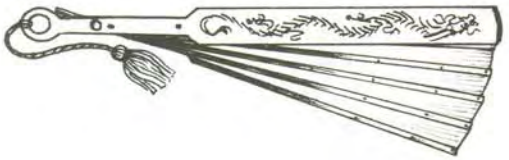
Disadvantages: Benten's Curse

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Medicine 3, Sincerity 4, Defense 3, Intimidation 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 8, Meditation 5, Stealth 3, Theology 4, Tanto 5, Torture 6, Lore (Maho) 6

Spells: (italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon,* Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Earth's Stagnation, Biting Steel, Jade Strike, Path to Inner Peace, Amaterasu's Blessing, Tomb of Jade, Fist of Osano Wo, By the Light of Lord Moon, Cloak of Night, Mists of Illusion, Fear, Minor Binding, Major Binding, Strength of the Crow, Earth's Protection, Preservation

Kiho: Rest, My Brother

Adjustments: Yori slowly gains the Shadowlands Taint and a number of maho spells throughout the Clan War. By Crimson and Jade, he is Lost with 5.0 Shadowlands Taint, zero Honor and Glory, and the following Shadowlands Powers: Child of Darkness, Unholy Vision, Beside the Darkness, Corrupted Blood, Outside the Elements.



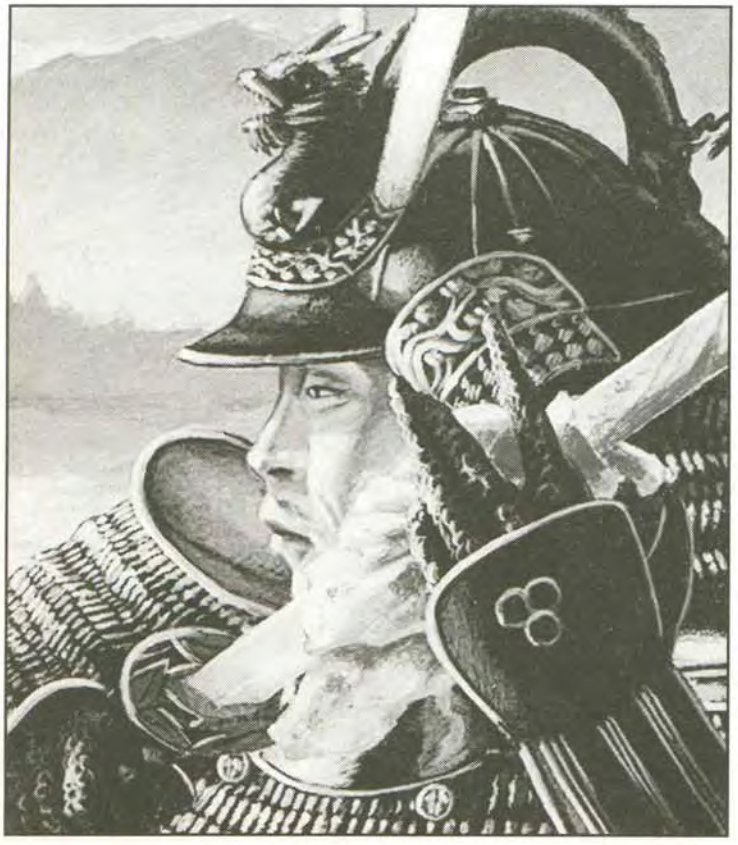
Matsu Tsuko

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Fire: 5
Agility 6
Air: 4
Reflexes: 6
Void: 3
School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 5
Honor: 4.3
Glory: 8.5

Advantages: Death Trance, Strength of the Earth (4), Great Destiny, Leadership

Disadvantages: Brash, Driven (destroy Crane), Lost Love (Akodo Arasou)

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 6, Hand-to-Hand 5, Heraldry 4, History 4, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation 5, Kenjutsu 7, Knife 5, Kyujutsu 2, Lore (Bushido) 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 2, Wrestling 3



Mirumoto Daini

Earth: 3
Water: 3
Fire: 5
Agility: 6
Air: 4
Reflexes: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 4
Honor: 3.4
Glory: 7.1
Advantages: Allies, Ambidextrous, Benten's Blessing, Great Destiny, Kharmic Tie (Toturi), Luck, Quick, Way of the Land
Disadvantages: Brash, Vain
Skills: Battle 3, Courtier 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 4, Etiquette (Naga) 3, Heraldry 4, History 2, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Meditation 3, Lore (Naga) 5, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Naga Language 3, Yarijutsu 3

Mirumoto Hitomi

Earth: 4
Water: 4
Fire: 5
Agility: 6
Air: 4
Reflexes: 5
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 5
Void: 4
Honor: 2.2
Glory: 8.0
Advantages: Ambidextrous, Benten's Blessing, Death Trance, Great Destiny, Perfect Balance, Quick
Disadvantages: Brash, Driven, Sworn Enemy (Hida Yakamo), Unluck
Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 4, Defense 5, Heraldry 3, History 4, Horsemanship 3, Jiujutsu 5, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Law 3, Lore (Crab Clan) 3, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Meditation 1, Shintao 3, Wrestling 4, Yarijutsu 3

Miya Yoto

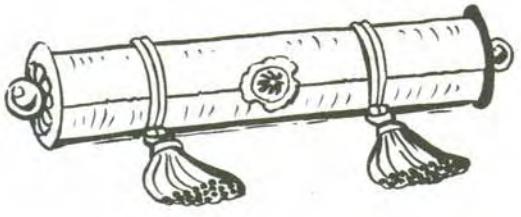
Earth: 2,
Willpower: 3
Water: 2,
Perception: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Miya Shisha 5
Honor: 4.3
Glory: 2.0 (retired)
Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Meek, Voice, Ancestor (Miya)
Disadvantages: Gullible
Skills: Bard 3, Defense 3, Diplomacy 9, Heraldry 7, Horsemanship 2, Calligraphy 2, Commerce 4, Kuenai 4, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, Sincerity: 5, Law 6, Lore (Hantei) 2, Lore (Otosan Uchi) 3, Lore (Ronin) 5, Mediation 1, Painting 5, Poetry 2, Sincerity 5, Shintao 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 2
Adjustments: When Yoto becomes Miya daimyo again, his Glory becomes 9.2.

Miya Yumi

Earth: 2
Willpower: 3
Water: 2
Fire: 3
Air: 4
Void: 3
School/Rank: Miya Shisha 2
Honor: 3.8
Glory: 1.6
Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Quick, Voice, Way of the Land – Lion
Disadvantages: Unluck (3), Brash, Soft-hearted
Skills: Heraldry 5, Horsemanship 2, Etiquette 2, Defense 2, Courtier 3, Obeiesaseru 3, Bard 4, Dance 2, Oratory 2, Yarijutsu 2, Law 3, History 4, Diplomacy 4

Morito Tokei

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Perception: 4
Fire: 3
Air: 3,
Void: 4
School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 2, Insight Rank 4
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 2.2
Advantages: Sensei (Naka Kuro)
Disadvantages: Black Sheep, Idealistic, Proud, Social Disadvantage (ronin)
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Calligraphy 3, Commerce 2, Defense 4, Falconry 1, Herbalism 4, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 5, Kenjutsu 3, Meditation 5, Oratory 2, Painting 2, Spell Research 5, Yomanri 2
Spells: Biting Steel, Bo of Water, Earth's Stagnation, The Fires That Cleanse, The Fist of Osano-Wo, The Path to Inner Peace, Sympathetic Energies.



Moto Tsume

Earth: 8
Water: 6,
Fire: 5
Air: 6
School/Rank: Maho-Bujin 5
Taint: 8.3
Advantages: Absolute Direction, Great Destiny, Higher Purpose, Kharmic Tie (Iuchi Karasu), Way of the Land (Shadowlands)
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Onikage Stink
Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Defense 5, Hand-to-Hand 5, Heraldry 3, Horsemanship 6, Hunting 5, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 6, Lore (maho-tsukai) 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 9, Shintao 3, Sincerity 2, Subojutsu 4, Stealth 4, Torture 7, Yarijutsu 4
Akutenshi/Akutsukai Powers: Armor of Death, Blood Shouting, Breath of Taint, Calligraphy of Thought, Command the Taint, Consume Chi, Death Never Stops, Disrupt Chi, Eyes of Hell, Fear, Flight, Invisibility, Sense Purity.

Naka Kuro

Earth: 5
Water: 5
Fire: 5
Air: 5
Void: 6
School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 5 Dragon Spirit-Binder 3
Honor: 3.9
Glory: 0.0 (ronin)

Advantages: Ancestor (Naka Kaeteru) Chosen By the Oracles, Forbidden Knowledge, Great Destiny, Higher Purpose, Magic Resistance (6), Precise Memory

Disadvantages: Ascetic, Can't Lie

Skills: Advanced Medicine 4, Astrology 4, Calligraphy 5, Cipher 4, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 4, History 5, Lore (Elements) 10, Lore (Meishodo) 5, Lore (Nemuranai) 5, Lore (Shugenja) 6, Meditation 5, Mizugusuri 4, Omens 4, Oratory 3, Origami 4, Painting 4, Poetry 3, Research 4, Shintao 9, Spellcraft 8, Spell Research 7, Theology 8, Tsangusuri 4

Spells: All spells, including Void Magic, all as Innate Abilities

Kiho: All kiho for which he meets Mastery requirements

Adjustments: When Kuro joins the Phoenix after Time of the Void, he gains 7.0 Glory.

Otaku Kamoko

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 4
Agility: 5
Air: 4,
Void: 4
School/Rank: Otaku Battle Maiden 5
Honor: 3.8
Glory: 8.5

Advantages: Great Destiny, Ancestor (Otaku), Quick, Social Position (Family Daimyo)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Reckless), Brash, Lost Love (Mother)

Skills: Animal Husbandry 3, Battle 3, Chisaijutsu 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 1, History 4, Horsemanship 7, Horse Archery 5, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (Horse Family) 4, Poetry 3, Singing 5, Umayarijutsu 3, Yomanri 3

Otomo Banu

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception: 5
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Void: 3
School/Rank: Otomo Seiyaku 2
Honor: 1.8
Glory: 3.2

Advantages: Blackmail (many), Clear Thinker, Social Position

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Dishonest), Cruel, Haunted, Insensitive, Small

Skills: Bard 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 4, Etiquette 3, Kenjutsu 1, Lore (Bushido) 1, Lore (Otosan Uchi) 3, Obeiesaseru 5, Manipulation 5, Law 4, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 1, Theology 2

Qamar

Earth: 5
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Agility: 5
Air: 4
Reflexes 6
Akasha: 5
School/Great Lesson: Asp Warrior 5
Caste Rank: 8.3

Advantages: Great Destiny, Higher Purpose, Immune to Fear, Large, Leadership, Strength of the Earth (1), Venom (Acid) 3

Disadvantages: Proud, Spoiled, Vanity

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 5, Conceal 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Hand-to-Hand 4, Hunting 1, Intimidation 2, Kyujutsu (Naga) 5, Lore (Naga Civilization) 6, Lore (Naga Myth) 2, Lore (Naga Religion) 2, Lore (Rokugani Culture) 3, Meditation 3, Moksha 4, Rokugani Language 3, Single Strike 4, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2, Swordsmanship 5, Wrestling 1, Yarijutsu (Naga) 4

Ryosei

Earth: 4
Water: 3
Fire: 4
Agility: 5
Air: 2
Void: 3
School/Rank: Kitsune Shugenja 3
Honor: 3.2
Glory: 4.2

Advantages: Ally (Tsuruchi), Ancestor (Osusuki & Akomachi), Crafty, Quick, True Friend (Yoshun), Way of the Land (all of southern Rokugan

Disadvantages: Heart of Vengeance (Hare), Kitsune Taboo (must follow word of honor)

Skills: Battle 2, Calligraphy 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Herbalism 4, History 4, Hunting 5, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Black Scrolls) 3, Lore (Scorpion Clan) 1, Meditation 1, Seduction 2, Shintao 3, Yarijutsu 4

Sanzo

Earth: 2
Water: 3
Fire: 3
Air: 3
Void: 2
School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1
Honor: 2.0
Glory: 0.0 (ronin)

Disadvantages: Coward (6), Dishonored, Driven, Haunted (4), Social Disadvantage (Ronin)

Skills: Defense 1, Hand-to-Hand 1, History 1, Iaijutsu 1, Intimidation 1, Investigation 1, Kenjutsu 3, Meditation 2, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 1, Wrestling 2, Kuenai 2, Hisomu 3

Seppun Ishikawa

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Agility: 6
Air: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Seppun Miharu 5
Honor: 4.0
Glory: 5.5

Advantages: Allies, Balance, Combat Reflexes, Great Destiny, Leadership, Sensei, Strength of the Earth (1), Social Position

Disadvantages: Soft-hearted

Skills: Armorer 2, Battle 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Intimidation 3, Jiujutsu 4, Kenjutsu 6, Obeiesaseru 3, Subojutsu 4, Weaponsmith 3, Wrestling 3

Shashakar

Earth: 5
Water: 4
Fire: 4
Intelligence: 5
Air: 5,
School/Great Lesson: Cobra Jakla 5 Cobra Jakla 8
Akasha: 9
Caste: 7.6
Advantages: Abomination

Disadvantages: Dark Secrets

Skills: Calligraphy (Naga) 3, Lore (Pearl Magic) 9, Conceal 5, History (Naga) 4, Lore (Naga Myth) 4, Meditation 7, Moksha 7, Pearl Carving 5, Traps 4

Pearls: All.

Shiba Ujimitsu

Earth: 5,
Water: 3
Perception: 5
Fire: 4
Air: 6
Void: 5
School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 3, Shiba Yojimbo 2
Honor: 4.3
Glory: 8.3 (Phoenix daimyo)

Advantages: True Friend (Agasha Hisojo), Ancestors (Shiba), Irreproachable (5), Soul of Shiba

Disadvantages: Dark Secret, Small

Skills: Defense 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 5, Meditation 5, Naginata 4, Shintao 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Calligraphy 3, Etiquette 5, Horse Archery 3, Manipulation 2

Kata: Heaven's Wing, Strike of Fire

Shinjo Yokatsu

Earth: 4
Stamina: 5
Water: 4
Strength: 5
Fire: 3
Agility: 5
Air: 3
Reflexes: 5
Void: 4
School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 5
Honor: 4.5
Glory: 8.6 (Unicorn daimyo)

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Higher Purpose, Quick Healer, Way of the Land (Unicorn), Major Allies, Perceived Honor (6)

Disadvantages: Dark Secret

Skills: Etiquette 4, Singing 2, History (Burning Sands) 4, History (Rokugan) 2, Lore (Kolat) 4, Horsemanship 9, Lore (Horses) 4, Shintao 3, Battle 4, Kenjutsu 5, Animal Husbandry 4, Horse Archery 7, Sincerity 5, Kuenai 6, Stealth 3

Kata: Strike of Fire, Thundering the Sky

Soshi Bantaro

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Perception: 4,
Fire: 2
Air: 5,
Void: 4
School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 3
Shadowlands Taint: 2.1
Honor: 4.5
Glory: 0.0 (technically ronin)

Advantages: Higher Purpose, Shadow-Brand

Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Scorpion), Brash, Dark Secret, Bad Reputation

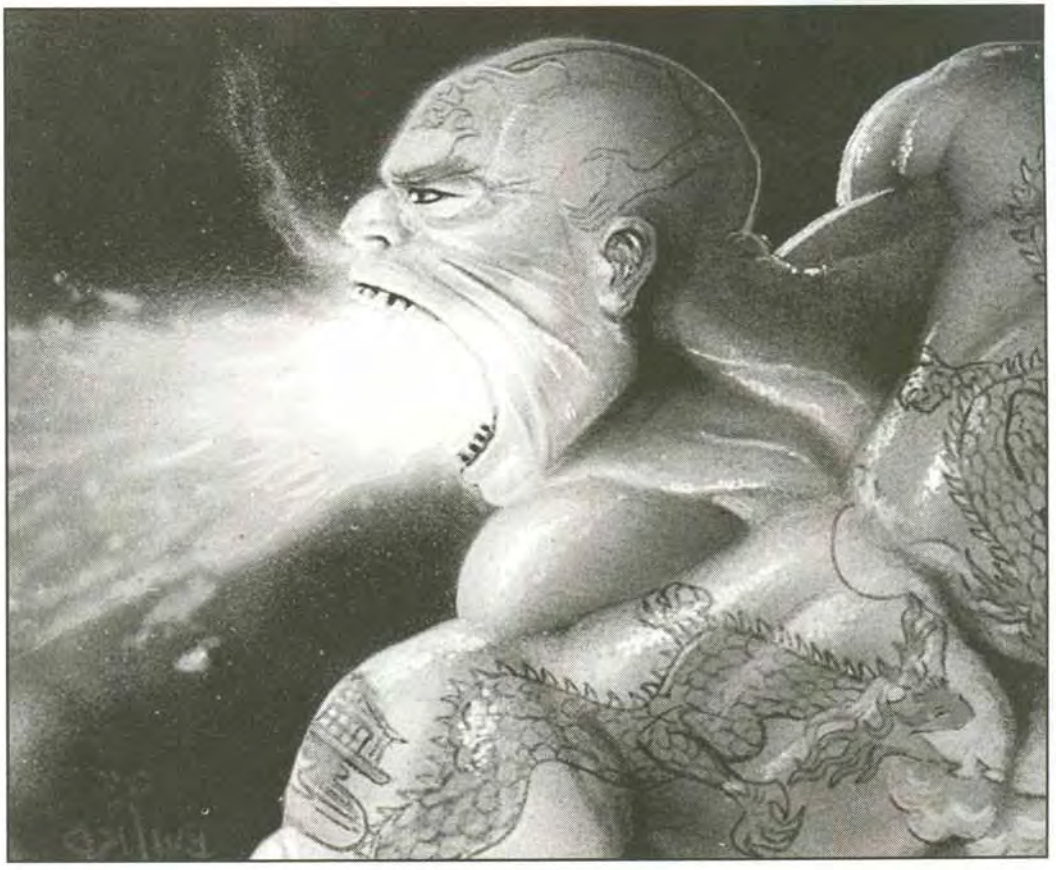
Skills: Calligraphy 5, Courtier 3, Lore (maho) 5, Sincerity 3, Meditation 4, Theology 5, Shintao 4, Herbalism 4, Law 3

Spells: (italics denote Innate Ability) *Sense, Commune, Summon,* Secrets on the Wind, False Tongue, Howl of Isora, Path to Inner Peace, Cross the Veil of Sleep, The Fires that Cleanse, Essence of Air, The Eye Shall Not See, Dominate the Mind, Kharmic Vengeance, Summon Undead Champion, Stealing Breath, Summon Greater Kansen

Shadowlands Powers: Master of Blood, Speak With the Voices of the Dead

Kiho: Steal the Air Dragon

Adjustments: Bantaro accumulates Taint throughout the course of the Clan War.



Tetsuya

Earth: 6
Water: 5
Perception 6
Fire: 5
Air: 5
Void: 6
School/Rank: N/A
Honor: 3.8
Glory: 2.0

Advantages: Allies, Clear Thinker, Hands of Stone, Noble Birth, Perfect Balance, Social Position, Way of the Land (Imperial holdings)

Disadvantages: Ascetic, Soft-Hearted

Skills: Advanced Medicine 3, Athletics 4, Calligraphy 5, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Jiujutsu 5, Lore (various) 3-5, Meditation 6, Shintao 6, Tea Ceremony 5, Theology 5, Zanji 3

Kiho: Slap the Wave, The Boundless Depths of Water, Root the Mountain, Soul of the Four Winds, the Purity of Shinsei, Rest, My Brother

Togashi Mitsu

Earth: 4
Stamina 5
Water: 2,
Strength: 3
Fire: 3
Agility: 5
Air: 2,
Awareness: 3
Void: 5
School/Rank: Ise Zumi 3
Honor: 2.3
Glory: 2.0 (monk)

Advantages: Ambidextrous, Clear Thinker, Great Destiny, Magic Resistance (4), Quick, Daredevil

Disadvantages: Brash

Skills: Athletics 4, Medicine 3, Shintao 5, Defense 5, Kaze-do 6, Wrestling 4, Nazodo 4, Tattooing 2, Meditation 3

Kiho: Cleansing Spirit, Ai Uchi, Touch the Void Dragon

Toku

Earth: 2
Water: 2
Fire: 2
Agility: 3
Air: 2
Reflexes: 3
Water: 2
Void: 3
School/Rank: True Ronin
Honor: 2.6
Glory: 0.0 (ronin)

Advantages: Great Destiny, Kharmic Tie (Toturi – 5), Luck (9)

Disadvantages: Driven, Heimin, Idealistic

Skills: Archery 1, Battle 1, Defense 2, Horsemanship 1, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Law 1, Lore (Bushido) 3, Poetry 1, Shintao 2

Kata: Strike of Fire

Adjustments: Toku is Insight Rank 2 by Anvil of Despair and Insight Rank 3 by Time of the Void. He will learn the Samurai's Fury technique as soon as it becomes available.

Toturi

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Perception: 7
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 7
Air: 4
Awareness: 5
Void: 5
Honor: 3.1
Glory: 0.0 (ronin)

Advantages: Allies (Toturi's Army), Great Destiny, Sensei (Suana, Kage), Tactician, Natural Leader

Disadvantages: Obligation (Kage), True Love, Bad Reputation, Lost Love

Kata: Strike of Fire, Fury Without End

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 9, Courtier 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Hand-to-Hand 4, Heraldry 3, History 6, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Katana 5, Law 3, Meditation 4, Oratory 4, Shintao 5, Theology 3

Adjustments: Toturi learns the Samurai's Fury technique in Anvil of Despair.

Tsuruchi

Earth: 3
Water: 4
Fire: 4,
Air: 4
Reflexes: 6
Void: 4
School/Rank: Wasp Bounty Hunter 3
Honor: 1.7
Glory: 6.4

Advantages: Allies (Crane, Dragon, Fox, Sparrow, Unicorn), Clear Thinker, Quick, Way of the Land (Crane, Dragon, Lion, Scorpion, Unicorn, Wasp)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Driven, Unluck

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Courtier 2, Defense 5, Fletchery 5, Heraldry 5, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 5, Intimidation 2, Investigation 5, Jiujutsu 5, Kyujutsu 8, Lore (Lion Clan) 5, Lore (Scorpion Clan) 5, Lore (Crane Clan) 3, Lore (Unicorn Clan) 3, Lore (Dragon Clan) 1, Medicine 3, Poison 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 1, Stealth 5, Theology 1

Yogo Junzo

Earth: 5
Water: 4
Fire: 3
Intelligence: 5
Air: 7
School/Rank: Yogo Shugenja 2/Shadowlands 3
Taint: 6.8

Advantages: Crafty, Forbidden Knowledge, Great Destiny, Strength of the Earth

Disadvantages: Benten's Curse, Driven (open the Black Scrolls), Overpowering Darkness, Yogo Curse

Skills: Calligraphy 5, History 4, Hunting 5, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Maho) 8, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Meditation 3, Shintao 5, Stealth 5, Theology 5

Spells: All known maho spells plus many others; elemental spells as the GM sees fit.

Yoritomo

Earth: 6
Water: 5
Fire: 4
Agility 6
Air: 4,
Void: 5
School/Rank: Mantis Bushi 5
Honor: 2.8
Glory: 8.3

Advantages: Ancestor (Gusai), Combat Reflexes, Great Destiny, Inheritance (Mantis Kama), Natural Leader, Quick, Strength of the Earth (4)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Brash, Insensitive

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 5, Commerce 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Hand-to-Hand 5, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 5, Investigation 2, Kama 7, Kenjutsu 4, Nofujutsu 6, Sailing 4, Shintao 4

Scrolls of the Dead

A great number of important individuals perish during the Clan War. The following is a comprehensive list of the characters presented in earlier supplements (or in this book) that are now dead in the canon storyline. As always, your own campaign may vary, leaving any or all of these characters whole and intact in your game. This list is presented merely for the purposes of information and discussion, and is not meant to be the last word for anyone's game.

Akodo Kage: Presumed dead by general public.
Alhundro Cornejo: Missing; presumed dead.
Asako Masanao: Missing; presumed dead.
Asako Oyo: Missing; presumed dead.
Asako Togama: Killed by Isawa Tsuke.
Aseth: Killed by Hida Kisada.
Bayushi Shoju: Died in the Scorpion Coup, reanimates as undead, slain by Bayushi Tasu.
Doji Ameiko: Commits jigai after Hoturi's disappearance.
Doji Hoturi: Killed by Fu Leng.
Doji Satsume: Dies shortly after the Scorpion Coup.
The False Hoturi: Slain in a duel with Doji Hoturi.
Hantei 38th: Killed in the Scorpion Coup.
Hantei Sotorii: Becomes Hantei 39th. Becomes Fu Leng. Slain by the Seven Thunders.
Hida Amoro: Killed by his own zombie troops, reanimates as undead.
Hida Kisada: Dies of wounds inflicted by Fu Leng.
Hida Sukune: Sacrificed by Kuni Yori.
Hiruma Kage: Fell in battle on the Day of Thunder.
Ichiro Chuga: Killed by Oni no Hideo.
Isawa Tadaka: Killed by Fu Leng.
Isawa Tomo: Killed by Isawa Tsuke.
Isawa Tsuke: Killed by Isawa Tadaka and Shiba Ujimitsu.
Isawa Ujina: Killed by Isawa Tsuke.
Isawa Uona: Killed by Isawa Tsuke.
Kado: Missing; presumed dead.
Kuni Yori: Kills himself in a maho ritual, becomes undead.
Kyojin: Dies facing Tetsuya on the Day of Thunder.
Matsu Hokitare: Dies during the Scorpion Coup.
Matsu Tsuko: Commits seppuku shortly before the Day of Thunder.
Mikaru: Slain by the Balash.
Morito Tokei: Presumed dead.
Moto Tsume: Killed by Otaku Kamoko.
Moto Sada: Slain by Iuchi Karasu.
Oni no Yakamo: Killed by Mirumoto Hitomi.
Otomo Kisagarasu: Dies during Crab invasion, reanimates as undead.
Qamar: Killed by a maho-tsukai on the Day of Thunder.
Seppun Daiori: Slain by Bayushi Shoju during the Scorpion Coup.
Seppun Ishikawa: Dies under mysterious circumstances on the Day of Thunder.
Shiba Ujimitsu: Killed by Isawa Tsuke.
Soshi Bantaro: Slain by Bayushi Tasu
Tetsuya: Died facing Kyojin on the Day of Thunder.
Togashi Yokuni: Slain by Fu Leng.
Yogo Junzo: Slain by the Wasting Disease. Reanimates as undead. Killed by Otaku Kamoko. Soul severed from his corpse by Iuchi Karasu.

Legend of the Five Rings™

Time of the Void™

For over a thousand years, Rokugan has known this day would come.

This is a day when clan turns against clan, when brother turns against brother and the Clan War consumes the Empire.

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This is the day when Fu Leng shall escape from his eternal prison and wreak his terrible vengeance against everything that lives.

This is the Day of Thunder.

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