

Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei

Part One: Rising Storm

**A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido**

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Winter comes to the Empire and in the Court of the Mantis the season of political maneuvering begins in a uniquely Mantis way.

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This module is written for the Legend of the Five Rings: Fourth Edition, published by Alderac Entertainment.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

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

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters. All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate, as sometimes reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

Players will have Module Tracking Sheets that need to be filled out at the end of the game, which is to keep track of certain circumstances and events for future GM's to create a better roleplaying experience for the player. Important information to be included in the game will be listed at the beginning of the module, and information that needs to be recorded will be listed at the end of the module. Please fill out the GM tracking sheet attached to the end of this module and return it to the Campaign Coordinator. If you need an electronic version of the form, please contact the Campaign Administrator or Campaign Coordinator (e-mail addresses are available on the website).

Rokugan has a complex and rich culture that is different in many ways from modern Western civilization. The Legend of the Five Rings book details these numerous differences, but it is suggested that GMs keep a few specifics in mind.

- Family name precedes personal name for all characters; Akodo Toturi was a member of the Akodo family with the personal name of Toturi.

- Samurai do not commonly concern themselves with money or commerce; exchanges between samurai are treated as gifts, and payments are made to peasants as though humoring the lower orders petty ways.
- An event is not truly considered to have happened without samurai witness; even criminal investigations rely entirely upon eyewitness testimony.

Some events that occur within this module affect the storyline and may need to be reported by the Campaign Administrators. This module has an effective 'active' period which is 3 months after its release, and these events (listed at the end of the module) **MUST** be reported by the GM to the campaign administration before the end of the active period for them to take effect.

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward or punishment. **Please consult the Honor table on page 91 and the Glory table on page 93** of the Legend of the Five Rings Fourth Edition core sourcebook for more specific guidelines for Honor and Glory gains and losses. Specifically, be mindful of the performing PC's current Honor, Glory, and Infamy when meting out rewards and punishments.

Reminder

This module is intended for entertainment purposes; this means that the goal is to provide an enjoyable playing experience for the players. The events of the module should be challenging, so as to ensure the players have a sense of accomplishment, but the mechanics presented here are, ultimately, guidelines. If adjustments are necessary to adapt to the specific group of players, it is suggested that care should be taken to ensure the player characters do have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals (or at least of achieving an entertaining failure). Remember that the GM has the final word at the table, and use that power with both discretion and consideration.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low/Mid rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters

have been optimized for a party of average Rank 2, but should serve all ranks with little change.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank 1): The GM can lower the TNs of any rolls by 5 should they feel the need to do so.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3): The GM can raise the TNs of any rolls by 5 should they feel the need to proffer more of a challenge to the PCs.

Adventure Summary and Background

Another winter has come to the Empire, and with the unfortunate demise of the Emperor, the political wheels are turning. Within every major court in the Empire, power plays are being made to improve the position and influence of the various Clans in the future. Unfortunately for the PCs, they are assigned to the Winter Court at Kyuden Gotei.

Yoritomo Aramasu is in seclusion for a second year, and Yoritomo Hogosha reins over the court with the assistance of Tsuruchi. Hogosha expects another quiet winter in the warm and sunny climate that the Isles of Silk and Spice provides, something that cannot be experienced in any other land.

Over the course of the Winter Court, Hogosha will be appointing a new ambassador to the Imperial Court for the Mantis Clan. He fully expects his protégé to win, but rather than simply handing the position to her as a prize, has instead chosen to require her to earn it in healthy competition with another suitable candidate. The former Mantis Clan Champion, Gusai, has other plans. Gusai is coming to this court with the intention of placing men of a more militaristic mindset into positions places of power in the Empire. Men like him, who will owe him and remember their rise.

Throughout the Court, the PCs will have the opportunity to aid the various contestants in playing the courtly game and help to ensure that a candidate that matches their personal or Clan goals into the position.

Relations with other Clans

The Mantis have recently secured an alliance with Crab Clan, strengthening the familial bond that remains from their founding as an offshoot of the Hida line. They also get along with the Unicorn as both Clans have an interest in the world outside Rokugan's borders. The Mantis and Dragon are neither enemies nor allies, as the two Clans have almost nothing in common but have no cause for conflict either. A bitter rivalry exists between the Scorpion and the Mantis; the Mantis attribute this to several attempts to assassinate their Clan Champion, a former Scorpion himself as well as the recent military actions undertaken by the Scorpion against several Tsuruchi family holdings. Relations with the Phoenix remain strained from the War Against the Shadow, when the Mantis laid claim to the Phoenix territories. Ties with the Crane have also been strained due to their recent alliance with the Crab although, traditionally, the Mantis have gotten along quite well with them. The Lion and the Mantis have traditionally been neutral with each other due to their lack of any real interaction, though the honor-bound Lion tend to see them more as upstarts than as equals. The Mantis have also been a traditional ally of the Minor Clans and the employer of many a ronin.

Favor Trading

Throughout the first half of the Mantis Winter Court, the PCs will have many opportunities to collect the favors of several samurai. These Favors will potentially be of use during Part Two of Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei. This represents the important element of favor trading within the courts, where one samurai will gain influence and benefits from calling upon favors that they have done. These Favors may also be kept for future use; having many favors with the Mantis Clan is potentially valuable for any character who intends to further their career politically.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Characters with the Advantage "Oath of Fealty: Yoritomo Tadanobu" (Gisei Province) are local samurai, and receive one Free Raise to use over the course of the module for any one Social Roll. Once this Free Raise is used, it is gone.

Additionally, characters with the one of the following "Oath of Fealty" Advantages have been sent to Kyuden Gotei with a gift from their lord. They may keep this gift for themselves, or give them publicly to one of the candidates in order to gain one Favor from that candidate. These gifts were originally provided to their

Province by another Clan, and some thought should be given toward their appropriate use.

- Agasha Hibiki: A go or shogi set, in highly traditional design. (Lion)
- Daidoji Nyoko: Any single musical instrument. (Unicorn)
- Doji Hyobe: A bottle of potent sake. (Crab)
- Doji Kei: Three scrolls of finely-crafted paper. (Phoenix)
- Ikoma Yachi: Exotic travel rations – dried fish from Earthquake Fish Bay. (Crab)
- Kasuga Shunji: A small, ornate mirror, suitable for carrying in an obi or sleeve. (Mantis)
- Kitsu Kyuwa: A copy of a text on any subject. (Dragon)
- Mirumoto Kabe: A travel kit with the tools to use any one Artisan Skill. (Crane)
- Mirumoto Nobu: A hearty blend of “Butterflies Dancing”, a surprisingly robust tea. (Scorpion)
- Shiba Akihito: Any article of clothing made from fine silk. (Scorpion)
- Soshi Ayane: A rare set of five incense sticks, one for each Element. (Dragon)
- Tsuruchi Shoin: A personal back-banner. (Unicorn)

Introduction

The month of Hida has come to southern Rokugan and the PCs find themselves travelling to the Isles of Silk and Spice to attend the Mantis Clan’s Winter Court at Kyuden Gotei. Clan and Imperial PCs have received invitations to be guests of the Mantis Clan for the winter. As the PCs are rising stars in their Clans, they have once again been allowed to join a Winter Court at a major Clan holding. As their star has not risen all that high, however, they have been sent to the Mantis court in Kyuden Gotei. Ronin are traditionally welcome among the Mantis as they have historically been one of the major employers of wave-men.

Scorpion PCs were chosen for this mission specifically for their low rank in the Clan, They have been given strict orders to observe everything that they can and report on it afterwards. The PCs have specifically been warned that the Mantis will be looking for excuses to embarrass them during this court and that this should not be allowed. If they come upon information that may be of use while in court, they are only to use it if they can do so in a way that will bring absolutely no eyes upon the Clan.

Mantis PCs are to serve as guides for the other PCs and to keep an eye on any Scorpion PCs that may be in their group.

The deck of the Bitter Flower rises and falls with the swell of the waves. The Mantis kobune has provided a safe and pleasant journey since you boarded in the Imperial Capitol. The journey has been surprisingly pleasant for the time of year, with warm trade winds providing comfort from the south. While the ship was built more as a military vessel than for carrying passengers, there has been enough room for its guests, as most of the crew sleeps on the deck.

The journey to Mantis lands will take four days, giving the PCs enough time to get to know each other. On the evening of the first night, Yoritomo Kitao will invite the PCs to dinner in her small Captain’s Quarters.

Kitao is a pretty samurai-ko that has obviously seen much time on the deck of a ship as the sun and weather have aged her slightly beyond her years as they do with many of the Mantis kobune captains. She wears her hair loose so that it blows in the breeze on the ship.

PCs can make a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** or **Lore: Mantis / Intelligence** roll against a TN of 20 to learn that Kitao is a member of the Storm Legion despite her youth. She is the most recent addition to the Legion’s ranks, for “services to the Clan” – a deliberately vague description the Mantis use when they wish to reward their samurai for doing things that the rest of the Empire would disapprove of. Mantis PCs who make the roll (or other PCs with 3 Ranks in the Lore: Underworld Skill) know that, while Kitao is a skilled warrior, her contributions to the Clan tend more to her vast knowledge of Rokugan’s coastlines and the defenses that the other Clans use to regulate smuggling along those coastlines.

The first mate of the ship is a young samurai-ko by the name of Yoritomo Ayano who the PCs may have met in *New Beginnings*. Ayano has moved up in the world since her experience at the Test of the Topaz Champion. She is probably the mellowest of all the Mantis on the ship, and tends to play peacemaker when the sailors have issues. Whenever Kitao is forced to ‘lay down the law’ it is Ayano who smoothes things over.

Kitao will spend most of the dinner making enthusiastic claims about the new prominence of the Mantis Clan within the Empire. She will express that her hope is for the PCs to bring word of Mantis power back to their daimyo. She is also “concerned” that the lack of real

leadership may hold her Clan back. She will express this regardless of what Clans the PCs represent, believing that by saying this openly they may take it more seriously.

If the PCs ask about Yoritomo Aramasu, Kitao will respond: *“Aramasu-sama has been in seclusion for over a year. Repeated assassination attempts by what are believed to be Scorpion agents were given as the cause of his seclusion. However, I am afraid that what started as proper concern for security might now be taken by some as cowardice, and that our Clan will suffer for it in the courts of the Empire. You are here to make sure that doesn’t happen. We will show you our strength, and you will know that the Mantis fear nothing. Each of us is a mighty storm, whether Aramasu shows his face or not.”*

This is likely the first opportunity that many PCs will have had with Mantis ‘diplomacy’. Kitao shows no shame for speaking her mind aloud and bluntly as many Mantis do and does not pause for a moment should another PC try to call her on it. *“Am I to remain silent when there is need for words? I tell you this now, samurai-sans. A quiet Mantis is one to be careful of. The calm before the storm as they say.”*

Arrival

The PCs will arrive at Kyuden Gotei late in the afternoon of their fourth day at sea. The castle and the surrounding village make one of the largest cities in the Empire, third in size only to Ryoko Owari and Ootosan Uchi – though the Mantis are the smallest of the Great Clans, their population is more densely concentrated than that of the other Clans. The ornately decorated castle stands the traditional six stories tall.

Yoritomo Kitao leads the PCs through the cities by and straight for the castle. They have the opportunity to see a thriving marketplace, and a large religious district.

In short order, the PCs receive rooms within the castle. These rooms are elaborately decorated in rich silks and precious metals. They appear to be far beyond their station but after seeing much of the castle, they should realize that the rooms are actually quite plain in comparison. It quickly becomes apparent that even the least opulent of the rooms is far more posh than what many local daimyo would have back at the mainland. Much of the artwork in the castle is of gaijin make, and several of the servants appear to be of gaijin stock.

The PCs will have some opportunity to mingle with the other guests that are here at this point (see Appendix #2; all are present save for Gusai’s Contingent).

Introductory Dinner

That evening, Yoritomo Hogosha hosts a welcoming dinner for the visiting samurai. The meal is held in the beautiful gardens of Kyuden Gotei. This setting reinforces the tropical comfort of the Mantis Isles: the night’s weather is cool but comfortable, and it is clear that winter will be mild here as compared to the rest of the Empire.

Yoritomo Hogosha stands and addresses the gathered samurai with a full cup of sake in hand. “I am pleased to welcome you to Kyuden Gotei for what passes as winter in the Isles of Silk and Spice.” Hogosha smiles at the gathering, “I hope you will enjoy the pleasant weather and what meager comforts we can provide for you, and I pray that you forgive us our lack of snow and wind.” He pauses to allow a quiet chuckle to pass around the assembly. “I must unfortunately start by offering my lord Yoritomo Aramasu-dono’s regrets that he will be unable to attend court here again this winter, but he has left the handling of its affairs to me, and I will perform this duty once more with pride.”

If the PCs are paying attention to the reactions of the crowd, they will notice that several samurai, including Yoritomo Kitao, look dismayed by the announcement but not surprised.

Hogosha smiles at the crowd. “I know that my lord would wish his guests to see the best of his Clan. Therefore, we will have the traditional events and competitions where you, our guests, may experience the entertainments of the Mantis Clan. Over the course of the winter, the schools of the Clan will host four events. The first, sponsored by the Yoritomo Bushi School, will be a competition of sailing. Many disagreements among ourselves are settled in just this fashion. The next event will be a duel of words, judged by myself and sponsored by the Yoritomo courtiers: a Sadane competition. On the solstice, the Moshi shugenja will lead a great ritual to ‘help’ the rebirth of the Sun as the New Year begins. Finally, at the beginning of spring, the Tsuruchi Archers will present an archery demonstration, on the direction of Tsuruchi himself. And, of course, there will be games and gatherings throughout the season, that our hospitality will be remembered by all our guests.”

He pauses to take a sip from his cup and gestures with the drink to various courtiers around the garden. “I would be remiss if I did not introduce some of the luminaries that have graced us with their presence. Yasuki Nobuhide leads a contingent of the mighty Crab, our allies. We are also honored to once more have Doji Chomei here, the Crane’s ambassador to our humble Clan for many years before he was

recalled. I would also like to welcome Shosuro Ochiba, the ambassador of the Scorpion. May you all find the welcome here that we would expect in your own lands.” Hogosha’s polite smile takes on a meaningful edge as he nods toward the Scorpion.

“One of the other matters that my duties require me to attend to is the selection of a worthy samurai to take my place as the Mantis Ambassador to the Imperial Court. There are two such samurai that are under consideration, and it is my hope that you will have the opportunity to meet with them, that you can return to your daimyo with a better understanding of our voice in Otosan Uchi.”

He raises his cup in a toast to the assembled guests. “Once again, welcome and enjoy your stay on the Isles of Silk and Spice!”

Part One: Kyuden Gotei

There are many places in the castle and surrounding city that the PCs may wish to visit over the course of the winter.

The Gardens

The Mantis gardens, while not the most extravagant in the Empire, surely hold one of the strangest assortments of flora and fauna in the Empire. Trees bearing soft yellow fruit are clustered with birds and flowers in brilliant colors. Near the standard koi pond is a group of birds that can best be described as pink cranes. Munching on sweet bamboo grasses is a black and white bear. There is so much here that is unusual that the regular peace and quiet of a palace garden is almost nonexistent as there is always be something to see.

Temple District

The Mantis may not revere the Kami and Fortunes as much as some of the other Clans, but there is still a variety of shrines in the city. The largest temple in the city is dedicated to Osano-Wo, Fortune of Fire and Thunder and patron Fortune of the Mantis Clan. Following this is a Temple to the Thunder Dragon, one of the few such in the Empire. Of the major Fortunes, there are sizable Temples to both Bishamon and Daikoku. There are also many several smaller shrines, with the most popular being those dedicated to the lesser Fortunes Haruhiko, Fortune of Fisherman; Isora, Fortune of the Seashore Kaze-no-Kami, Fortune of Wind; and Suitengo, Fortune of the Sea.

Marketplace

A vast array of goods from all over the Empire and without fill the marketplace of Kyuden Gotei. PCs can find next to anything they want from throughout the Empire. If they are looking for it, they can also find examples of rare gaijin gems, ivory, exotic feathers, and timber. They can even find an example of a gaijin lance for the small price of 25 koku.

Rumors for Winter Court

Winter Court is always a hotbed of gossip and rumors. Information on any of the NPCs present can be learned by making rolls as described in Appendix #2. PCs who wish to learn about events in the Empire may roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, TN 10; a successful roll learns one rumor at random, plus one extra rumor for every 5 points by which the roll beats the TN. The rumors include:

- The Crab Clan has had a great deal of success with their military campaign in the Hiruma provinces. Supplemented with at least minor assistance from nearly every Clan in the Empire, Hida Tsuneo has led the Crab forces to victory after victory, forcing the foul beasts that have claimed those lands to retreat. It is believed that the provinces will be completely clear (or, at least as clear as the Crab lands ever get) within the next year.
- The Crane have experienced a great deal of disarray in the last year. While their military offensive against the Crab was ultimately stymied, they were successful enough that many wonder if they will continue to press their fortune. At the same time, disagreements in their leadership have caused whispers that the Clan will have a great deal of difficulty in maintaining their political supremacy: unless the Clan can unite, the other Clans will show no hesitation in supplanting their influence in the courts.
- The mysterious Togashi Hoshi, Champion of the Dragon Clan, has recently been sighted at shrines and monasteries across the Empire. While the extent of his abilities is unknown, it is hard to credit even the son of a Kami with being able to travel across the breadth of Rokugan with the speed that is being claimed. What may have prompted him to end his seclusion is also a matter of intense speculation, though the Dragon’s enemies are quick to point out that he has chosen to seek the company of monks rather than samurai.
- Imperial Regent Miya Mashigai is expected to formally acknowledge Kitsu Motso’s choice as

the new daimyo of the Ikoma family at Winter Court in Otosan Uchi this year. Ikoma Gohesu, the returned spirit that sparked controversy as the instigator of his predecessor's retirement, was chosen after long deliberations from the Imperial Adjudicator. There are rumors of a marriage being brokered between him and one of the other contenders in an attempt to solidify support for the new daimyo's rule.

- New Mantis vessels have been arriving in ports across Rokugan, seeking new markets for their goods. While the Mantis have always had the premiere navy in the Empire, there are more new ships being commissioned than ever before. The alliance with the Crab Clan has obviously granted them access to more goods to trade, and both Clans are prospering from the association.
- The Phoenix Clan have made more claims of piracy along their coast, and are using their concerns to justify even greater embargoes of trade in the northern waters of the Empire. How much attention they will have to spare for their eastern lands while being pressured along the west by the Dragon remains to be seen.
- Yogo Masuhiro, the daimyo of the Yogo family, has been spending a great deal of time in the Phoenix lands since the autumn court that announced the alliance between the Clans. There are rumors that he has been smitten by one of the high-ranking Phoenix ladies, but whether it is Shiba Tsukune, the Phoenix Clan Champion, or Isawa Taeruko, the Master of Earth, that has caught his eye is hotly debated.
- The daimyo of the Unicorn Clan's Shinten province, Iuchi Barashi, has been very vocal of late over the conflict between the Lion and the Unicorn. The daimyo's son, Aseo, was taken hostage by the Lion during the fighting over the summer, and his concerns are understandable, but the Khan has demonstrated no hesitation about punishing those who publicly disagree with his policies, so it remains to be seen what the consequences of this will be.

Part Two: Oncoming Storm

The first few weeks will go by pleasantly with plenty of opportunity for the PCs to mingle with the various NPCs at the court. The weather remains quite mild though in most courts the earliest snows would be

arriving. The PCs have plenty of opportunity to experience some of the foods that are very rare outside of the Isles of Silk and Spice.

One morning at breakfast, a servant presents the PC who appears to be the most uncomfortable at Court with a wide cylindrical fruit with a scaly brown skin and a regal crown of spiny, blue-green leaves. The Mantis of the castle will watch closely to the PC tries to tackle this strange fruit, suppressing laughs at the poor samurai's discomfort. Eventually one of them will cut the fruit for the samurai.

Court Events

This is a good opportunity for the PCs to sponsor events of their own; this is intended as a way to let the players be creative and involved in the court. The winner of a contest earns a generic Mantis Favor that does not count towards the Favor-count for the representative unless the PC creates an event in such a way to enhance or compliment one of the candidates. The PC that sponsors the event will gain a point of Glory as will the winner of the event. No PC can gain more than one point of Glory for sponsoring events or for winning them. It is highly suggested that these events be very simple mechanically, so as to avoid taking too much time – a single roll is recommended, with the victor being the character that rolled the highest.

Gusai Arrives

A few days after the welcoming dinner, a breathless herald enters court and reports on the arrival of a large number of Mantis samurai led by the returned spirit Gusai. Gusai himself follows closely on the heels of this announcement with a substantial honor guard. He is a blocky, muscular samurai with a topknot and fairly loose-fitting clothing (sadly out of fashion). Though he is quite homely, his force of personality overshadows such minor concerns as physical appearance. He does not hesitate to address the gathering:

“I am pleased to see so many distinguished guests at the highest court offered by my kin! I am disappointed that my own invitation to this august gathering was misdirected, but knowing that it was a simple accident, I have of course chosen to attend nonetheless.” A slight smirk touches his lips, then fades immediately.

“Sadly, my attendance was compulsory; while I wish it were simple pleasure that brings me to Kyuden Gotei's lush gardens, I am here because my Clan needs my voice. For too long, my fellow Mantis, we have wandered, leaderless and without a Champion to stand at our head. Too many in the Empire would set

aside or forget what the great Yoritomo accomplished – too many would cast us aside as little better than ronin, forgetting that we carry the blood of a Kami and a Celestial Dragon both in our veins. We need a Champion to remind them of who we are, to force them to recognize our power. The Mantis had such a man in Yoritomo. However, the Son of Storms is dead, and his chosen successor is... where?” Gusai makes a show of looking around the court room, then his gaze locks with the courtier on the dais.

“Yoritomo Hogosha! On behalf of the samurai of the Mantis Clan, I demand that Yoritomo Aramasu presents himself before this court! If he is the heir of Yoritomo, he should be in his rightful place! I demand that he cease his cowardice and stand before his Clan as a Champion should!”

Hogosha’s face is calm, though next to him Tsuruchi looks ready to draw and loose at a moment’s notice. The courtier replies calmly, “I am afraid that Aramasu-dono cannot meet with you today, Gusai-san.” He pauses for a brief moment, and continues politely. “Perhaps if you return tomorrow?”

Some of the courtiers in the room laugh, but Gusai’s expression only darkens. “If he cannot face me,” Gusai answers flatly, “then he is no Clan Champion. By right as the first Champion to have earned the Mantis a family name, I claim my place once more. Let all true Mantis kneel before me and swear their oaths again.”

The room breaks out into shouting and shocked cries, and many bushi reach for weapons. Gusai’s honor guards were clearly expecting this reaction and they close protectively around him.

Yoritomo Hogosha raises a hand to the crowd and all eyes focus on him. “Lord Gusai-sama, I regret to inform you that Lord Aramasu-dono is not in the castle. He should be given the chance to answer your ‘challenge’ himself. Perhaps you could give him until the end of the winter to answer you in a proper fashion.”

Gusai sneers at Hogosha, light shining in his eyes. “He has until the New Year’s Festival to make his appearance. After that, the Mantis must do what is in their best interests.”

Tsuruchi and Yoritomo Hogosha will immediately leave the court chambers and head for a private room to discuss matters. Gusai will also leave for rapidly prepared personal rooms, leaving some of his retinue behind.

The room is awash in courtier gossip as those from other Clans discuss what these events could mean for the Mantis Clan while Mantis Clan samurai erupt into debates about which side they fall upon. The PCs will have an opportunity to speak with anyone present about their thoughts on the matter

Gusai’s Side

Yoritomo Kitao – Yoritomo Kitao is one of the first samurai to take Gusai’s side, and will be quite passionate about it. *“If Aramasu-sama cannot even make an appearance in front of his own Clan, how can we trust him to lead us?”* She will reiterate to the PCs everything she said on their trip to court aboard the *Bitter Flower*. *“The Mantis need clear leadership to show the Empire how strong we truly are. Gusai can offer what Aramasu-sama has not.”*

Yoritomo Sensin – Sensin is a loud and boisterous Yoritomo Bushi who entered the court with Gusai. It should be unsurprising that he has placed his full support behind Gusai. He will go almost as far as calling Aramasu a coward to anyone who asks without crossing that final line.

Aramasu’s Side

Yoritomo Atsumori – Yoritomo Atsumori will remain calm and collected. *“Aramasu-dono is worthy of the utmost respect. Gusai oversteps his bounds. Time will show Gusai to have been a fool in this matter.”*

Yoritomo Taihime – Taihime is a protégé of Hogosha and supports him fervently. She is not afraid to intimidate any samurai who shows strong support for Gusai. *“Yoritomo himself chose Aramasu-dono to lead us after he was gone. He claimed him as a son. Who are we to doubt that now?”*

Other Delegates

Doji Chomei – Doji Chomei will tell any PC who asks him that the Crane will not meddle in the affairs of the Mantis and stay strictly neutral on this affair. In private, he will tell Crane PCs that while the Crane are officially neutral, he knew Yoritomo and Aramasu well. Aramasu is an honorable man and would not do things without a reason. However, an unstable Mantis Clan could be of use should hostilities with the Crab recommence.

Yasuki Nobuhide – Nobuhide will remain neutral publicly. He will remind his Clan mates that the Mantis must be stable to be strong allies, but acknowledge that Gusai was a far more militant man than Aramasu, and that many Crab are more likely to respect Gusai as a

result. Should he take control of the Mantis, the Crab can expect more military support than they are currently getting.

Shosuro Ochiba – Ochiba will tell anyone that asks that the Scorpion will not take any stance on this issue. It is not their place to interfere. To Scorpion PCs, Ochiba will be extremely nervous as to what this might represent. With Aramasu gone from the Mantis leadership, the Scorpion may be able to settle their vendetta against Aramasu. However, they cannot afford to show any sign of supporting one side or the other or the Mantis will blame them for the entire thing. If Scorpion PCs are to do anything, they must be extremely circumspect in their actions

Other Viewpoints

Moshi Uidori – Moshi Uidori counsels peace. *“Let us not rush to conclusions. Hogosha-sama and Gusai-sama will come to a peace. It is how proper samurai do these things. Simply let time prove whose beliefs are in the right.”*

Yoritomo Ayano – Ayano is nearly overwhelmed by this unexpected conflict in the leadership of her Clan. She sees both sides of the argument – that, while the Mantis owe Aramasu their loyalty as he is the Champion of the Clan, Aramasu has a duty to the Clan as well. Should any of the PCs have been friendly with her, she will make a point of seeking them out for their council. *“I don’t want to make a choice like this, but I know that I can’t ignore the situation either.”*

For the rest of Winter Court, samurai will be aligning themselves with either Gusai or Hogosha. By doing so, they will be declaring their allegiance to the man they think best represents the Mantis. This will cause many disruptions throughout the winter. Samurai will get into brawls over their preferred candidate and duels will occur to try to prove whose opinion is right on the matter. The GM should feel free to play up this aspect of the court any time it would be dramatic (as time allows, of course).

Part Three: The Game Begins

A few days after Gusai’s arrival, Hogosha calls the guests into court to announce the prospects to become the Imperial Ambassador from the Mantis.

“As I mentioned at the start of court, there are two candidates to be named Mantis ambassador to the

Imperial Court.” Hogosha motions to a tall, attractive samurai-ko with her hair in a maiden’s foxtail. “This is Yoritomo Taihime. She has trained within my own School of the Yoritomo Courtiers. She is quite skilled in the ways of the courts, as I am sure you will find.” Taihime bows deeply to Hogosha.

“From our cousins in the Moshi, we have Moshi Uidori.” Hogosha indicate a small, petite shugenja who appears quite embarrassed at the attention that she is receiving. “Uidori-san was trained in the ways of the Moshi shugenja and could bring a more religious outlook to our dealing with the Imperial court.” Uidori bows as well, one hand moving in an unconscious gesture of blessing.

“These two samurai represent some of the best that the Mantis have to offer the Empire and will do more than excellent jobs should either become our official ambassador. Now, please, take your time to get to know them, as both have-”

Gusai strides forward to Hogosha’s side. “Your pardon, Hogosha-san, but I wish to present the Clan with another option.”

Hogosha keeps a neutral face and blinks at Gusai. “Of course, Gusai-san, your opinions on the matter will carry great weight among the Clan.”

Gusai smiles broadly at Yoritomo Hogosha. “Samurai from the Mantis, and noble guests from all over the Empire. I have no doubt that either of these two samurai would bring honor upon our Clan. However, I ask you, do they truly represent who the Mantis are? I brought a candidate who I believe to be the very essence of a true Mantis samurai.” A weatherworn, scarred samurai steps forward from the crowd. “This is Yoritomo Sensin. He was trained among the Yoritomo Bushi to be everything that a Mantis is supposed to be. He is a member of the Storm Legion and proved himself against the Scorpion in last summer’s skirmishes. I would ask that you show your support of what a Mantis is,” Gusai stares hard at Hogosha, “rather than what we may wish others to believe we are.”

Hogosha nods at Gusai’s words, his face revealing nothing. “Thank you Gusai-san.” He turns towards the gathered samurai, “My friends, we have three samurai for you to meet. Please take your time over the next several months to get to know these samurai as one of them will be serving our interests in the Imperial Courts.”

The PCs will have their first chance to get to know these three samurai and how they stand on issues that they believe to be. They may ask any questions of them over the course of the winter that they may wish, though they may want to be careful about how they ask them, as there will be hot-button issues for each candidate. The PCs may also change the minds of the candidate on any issue if they wish to attempt it. TNs for these issues are shown next to each question.

Yoritomo Taihime

Taihime is a woman who is not afraid to speak her mind about how she feels. She will give her opinion on each issue in a straightforward and truthful manner that will allow for little argument. Should the PCs wish to change her mind on any issue, it will be extremely difficult as she is rather stubborn about how she sees the world and will be unwelcoming to any idea that is hostile to her pre-made decision. PCs may have more luck trying to change Hogosha's mind on an issue, in which case Taihime will automatically agree to the change in policy.

- On the skirmishes of last summer, Taihime believes that the Scorpion should be made to pay for their unwarranted attacks upon the Mantis. The Mantis have done nothing to earn their derision save for supporting a man who was born into the Scorpion to become their Clan Champion. For this 'betrayal', they have become the targets of a Scorpion campaign. The Mantis will show the Scorpion what it means to attack the Clan of Yoritomo.
- Taihime is fond of the Crab Clan (and may even take a romantic interest in a Crab Clan samurai with the Large Advantage). She views them as their cousins as most Mantis do. She fully supports the alliance between the two Clans.
- She does not really care one way or the other as to the fighting between the Phoenix and Dragon Clans. Taihime sees this as a completely internal matter between the two Clans and would prefer to leave both be in their war against each other.
- Taihime has a fondness for sadane and any PC that shows even the smallest amount of gift in the game will win her approval.

Moshi Uidori

Moshi Uidori is a shy woman who chooses her words very carefully. She is afraid of saying the wrong thing and giving the wrong impression. However, she is more than capable of staying strong on an issue when she feels strongly about that it. She is a pacifist that

would prefer that the Mantis follow the path of peace in the future and attempt to mend the fences built up since the Clan Wars. Convincing her to take a more militant standing on any issue will be extremely difficult.

- In regards to the Scorpion conflict, Uidori would prefer that the two sides sue for peace. She believes that all either side is accomplishing is hurt feelings and dead samurai. By choosing to find a way to make peace with the Scorpion, they can prove to the Empire that the Mantis are more than the thugs and bullies that many Clans see them to be.
- Uidori is very glad to have the Crab Clan on the side of the Mantis, but not for military support. The Crab give validation to the Mantis being a Major Clan every day that they remain friends. With greater validation from the Greater Clan comes a greater presence among the higher courts of the Empire.
- The conflict between the Dragon and Phoenix saddens her. Uidori believes that for the two most enlightened clans in the Empire to fight is a loss to all. However, the Phoenix are merely defending themselves from the slights that the Dragon seem to want blood for. The Agasha chose to leave the Dragon for a reason, and the Dragon seem to be proving that reason. If the two must fight, she believes that the Mantis should support the Phoenix, despite their past differences.
- Uidori appreciates paintings of all kinds. Should any PCs show any ability in the art she will wish to hold long discussions with them on the various art styles of the Empire.

Yoritomo Sensin

Yoritomo Sensin is a brash and arrogant young man, the kind of man that many Mantis can see themselves in. He feels no loyalty to anyone save for the might of the Mantis. He believes that destiny will show that his Clan is the greatest of all the Clans. Sensin is probably the easiest candidate to sway to one opinion or another as he is quite prone to drink and willing to agree to almost anything under its influence. Whether or not he remembers the promises made is another question.

- The Scorpion must and will pay for their attacks upon the Mantis. They are playing with a fire that they do not seem to understand. The Mantis will not sit idly by and allow the Scorpion to play their usual game. When the Scorpion disappear from the Empire again, it will be at the hands of the Mantis.

- While Sensin appreciates the shared history of the Crab Clan, he does not support a continued alliance with them. If the Crab wish for the Mantis to be on their side, they can pay for it just like all the other Clans. Sensin has no qualms about placing Mantis troops on the mainland in support of the highest bidder. The more koku that flow into Mantis coffers, the better for the Clan, and the worse for the enemies of their employers.
- The Phoenix are weak and foolish dreamers of a peace that will never and has never truly existed. The Empire is one of war and the Phoenix cannot seem to understand this. The Mantis have tried to teach them this lesson before and they cannot seem to understand it. Maybe the Dragon destroying them once and for all will prove the point. Of course, then they would all be dead.
- Sensin will spend more time in court with a cup of sake than without one. He is more than willing to share and any PCs who spend time drinking with him will earn his friendship.
- The PCs may publicly detract from one of the rival candidates and earn a favor from the other two candidates at once. This will require a roll of **Courtier** or **Intimidation / Awareness** at a TN of 30. Again, a well role-played appeal will earn the PC up to two free raises at the GMs discretion.
- By participating in many of the events, the PCs can influence the different samurai as to which NPC to support by their actions. These are covered in the individual sections.
- The PCs can also attempt to convince an NPC to support one of the candidates directly. They can only attempt to sway the heads of each Clan's contingent. The TN for doing so is in that NPC's information in Appendix Two.
- If there are Mantis PCs at the table, they will be harassed until they choose a side, and then they will be harassed more by the side they choose not to support, but at least they will have many samurai as allies. If there is time in the mod, have a Mantis NPC challenge one of the PCs to a duel over the matter. This duel can take the form of any of the standard Mantis dueling methods (Sailing or Kama bouts) or through Iaijutsu. By winning this duel, they can win a Favor from the side that their choice supports (Sensin for Gusai and Taihime for Hogosha). The PC could also attempt to make peace between two battling Mantis samurai so that blood is not shed. Doing so will earn a favor with Uidori.
- Scorpion PCs may feel like hamstrung here as they have been told not to do anything publicly. While this is the case in some ways, it is a perfect opportunity for a Scorpion PC to manipulate the NPCs or PCs into supporting their preferred candidate. Should a Scorpion PC successfully do so, they will also earn a favor from their preferred candidate.

Part Four: Ships and Swords

The PCs will need to help the candidate that they most approve of to gain favor in the eyes of the court in order for them to earn the coveted position of Ambassador to the Imperial Court. Their actions throughout Winter Court will earn the PCs Mantis Favors from the candidates as they help to push their agenda (whether the PCs mean to or not).

The PCs can earn these favors in several ways.

- The PCs can publically announce their support of any of the candidates. This will require a roll of **Courtier / Awareness** at a TN of 25 in order to gain their favor. A well role-played appeal may gain the PC up to two free raises on this roll.
- The PC may perform or create an inspiring piece of art in support of the beliefs of one of the candidates. The piece will need to represent how the candidates feel about a particular subject. This will require a **Perform** or **Artisan / Awareness** roll against a TN of 25. The PC may get a free raise on the roll if they do so in one of the candidate's preferred methods.

Sailing Competition

The weather continues to be quite pleasant, and soon the Yoritomo Bushi School announces that the sailing competition will take place presently.

Any PC who wishes to may participate in this competition of sailing skill among the Mantis; however, they will have to borrow a boat to do so if they do not have one of their own. The boats are small craft capable of being piloted by a single sailor and are in excellent shape. Yoritomo Sensin allows the PC that has earned the most favors with him to use his personal boat; this give them a Free Raise to each roll as a result.

If the PCs are paying attention to the other contestants, they will notice that all of the Mantis contestants are drinking heavily. If the PCs confront a Mantis about this they will smile and tell the PC that there is a bet among the Yoritomo bushi as to which drunken samurai will win the competition. If the PCs wish to participate in the drinking portion of this competition, they will have to roll a TN 20 **Stamina** roll or all their rolls are reduced by 10. If the PC participates in the drinking portion of the race, they will gain a favor with Yoritomo Sensin who respects them for joining in the Mantis tradition.

The first part of the contest places the PCs in a race of speed, holding the wind and responding to it as they race towards a reef. This will require a **Sailing / Air** roll.

The second section of the race involves tricky navigation through the reef. The will be represented by a **Sailing / Water** roll. Rolling less than 10 on this check will actually sink the PCs boat. They will have to be rescued by a boat full of laughing Mantis samurai who will spend most of the rest of winter laughing at those samurai who needed to be rescued and causing them a loss of face (two pips of Glory).

The final part of the contest will be the same as the first as the participants race their boats back to shore. Again the PCs will need to make a **Sailing / Air** roll.

Once the contest is complete, add the totals of the rolls together for all PCs who did not sink their boats. The highest total will win the competition if they can also beat an 80, which represents Yoritomo Kitao's roll. If they do, the PC wins, if they do not, the honor belongs to Yoritomo Kitao. Should a PC win the competition, Kitao will come in a close second, doing with skill what the PC has done with luck. The PC who wins gains a favor from the NPC of their choice (two if they are supporting Sensin).

Fight or Flight

About two weeks after the sailing competition, two Mantis samurai get into a public altercation in the gardens. The PCs will hear the shouting and see people scurrying about –either avoiding the shameful display or hurrying so they won't miss the inevitable violence.

Two Mantis samurai face off against each other. One wears the mon of the Storm Legion while another is a member of the Yoritomo Elite Guard.

“Gusai is right!” yells the samurai wearing the mon of the Storm Legion. “Aramasu has failed us! He

hides himself in fear of Scorpion assassins and proves himself a coward!”

The other samurai sneers at him, “Yoritomo himself chose Aramasu as his heir. To deny Aramasu is to spit in the face of Yoritomo himself! To call him a coward is to call Yoritomo a coward!” The Mantis draws his katana. “You will pay for your words, samurai, with your blood, or YOU are the coward!”

The Storm Legionnaire is a young bushi named Yoritomo Bugati and he has decided to pick a fight with Yoritomo Kuroda. Strangely enough, before Gusai arrived and made his proclamation, these two samurai were best friends. The issues within the Mantis have truly split the Mantis in unexpected ways.

This is effectively a duel to the death. There are many ways a PC could get involved here. They could attempt to talk the samurai out of the duel or at least delay it until they get the proper permission from their daimyo. This will take enough time that it will delay the duel until after part one of this mod. Doing this will require a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll at a TN of 25. If the PCs talk the samurai into waiting until they have the proper permission, they will earn a favor from Uidori. Should they talk the samurai out of fighting completely they will earn two favors from Uidori.

The PCs can also support one side or the other. Supporting the Storm Legion samurai will earn the PC a favor from Sensin. Supporting the Yoritomo Elite Guard will earn a favor from Taihime. The PCs only need to show their support for either samurai.

It is also possible for the PCs to take the place of either samurai in the duel should they choose to do so. This will require a roll of **Sincerity / Awareness** at a TN of 15 to convince either samurai to allow him to take their place. The PC should know that with this being a duel to the death, there is the possibility that their character may die. They should be willing to accept the consequences. Should the PC win the duel they will earn three Favors from either Sensin or Taihime depending on which samurai they chose to take the place of. They will also get a **Sworn Enemy** of the other samurai (Sensin or Taihime) and lose all Favors that PC has earned towards that candidate. They will also be unable to earn any more Favors from that particular samurai.

Part Five: A Dinner with Hogosha

At the end of the Month of the Rat, Hogosha will invite the PCs to join him for a private dinner. The purpose of the dinner is an attempt to sway the PCs towards supporting Aramasu and Taihime.

The dinner is held in a private room in the castle that is even more ostentatious than most of the other rooms the PCs have seen. Also at the dinner will be Tsuruchi, Tsuruchi Ichiro, Yoritomo Atsumori, Yoritomo Taihime, Doji Chomei, and Yasuki Nobuhide.

The meal will be the most extravagant that the PCs have had all winter including delicacies from all over the Empire. The PCs may be surprised to find their favorite dishes from their homes. After the dinner, Hogosha will turn to the PCs.

Hogosha smiles at you as the servants begin to clear the dishes. "I hope you are enjoying your stay in Kyuden Gotei. We have tried to make things as comfortable as possible for you. I wish to apologize for the behavior of some of the other samurai. The Mantis Clan is known for its... boisterousness for good reason."

Hogosha will ask the PCs what they thought of Gusai's pronouncement upon their arrival. Should any PC be hesitant to answer the question he will respond by saying, *"Come now samurai-sans, while it may not fall on you to make a decision in this matter, you still have an opinion on it. The Mantis would value your opinion, regardless of which side you fall upon. We respect forthrightness very much."* Should a PC still refuse to give his opinion, Hogosha will shrug and move on to those PCs that did. He will offer up any answers should the PCs have questions on the situation as best he can.

- How do you feel about Gusai? *Lord Gusai was an honorable samurai in his time. He did more for the Mantis than almost any samurai save for Kaimetsu-Uo or Yoritomo. We were pleased to have such a man return through Oblivion's Gate. I respect Lord Gusai, but he has the issues that many returned spirits have had in acclimating to the modern Empire. Times have changed, and it seems Gusai has decided that they should go back to the way they were.*
- Where is Aramasu? *Indisposed.* (Hogosha will flatly refuse to answer this further; he is simply not interested in giving up his lord's secrets.)
- Will Aramasu return to meet Gusai's challenge? *I do not know. We sent word to him, but it will take some time for a response.*

- What will happen if Gusai insists on taking leadership of the Clan? *I do not know, but it could mean civil war within the Clan. Gusai has a point in that Aramasu-dono has been absent for a long time. It has been for good reason but it has caused some strife in the Clan. I hope that Aramasu finishes what he is doing and returns as soon as possible.*
- Whom do you support to become the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Courts? *Yoritomo Taihime, of course. She has been a protégé of mine for years and is quite capable. She will do honor to the Mantis in the position.*
- Why should we support Taihime? *She is a highly competent samurai, trained in the ways of the court by myself and quite conversant with the intricacies of the Imperial Court as a result. By now, you know what to expect from the Mantis; Taihime will not change that or bring shame upon us.*
- How do you feel about Moshi Uidori? *Moshi-san is an honorable samurai, but her pacifist leanings are not representative of the Mantis. She can do the job but I worry about her ability to negotiate against what she may personally believe for the betterment of the Clan.*
- How do you feel about Yoritomo Sensin? *Sensin-san is a brash and rambunctious samurai. He is a warrior, not a man for court. I feel he will be a poor choice for such a prestigious position. I am not sure what Lord Gusai-sama sees in him unless it is a reflection of himself. I do not believe the courts would treat us as kindly if a Mantis blade again found its way into the Imperial Court.*

Tsuruchi will pledge his support to Hogosha and Aramasu without any hesitation as will Tsuruchi Ichiro. As long as the PCs have not convinced Doji Chomei and Yasuki Nobuhide differently, they will do the same.

At the end of dinner, Hogosha will thank the PCs for their time. *"I hope you will consider our words over the course of the winter."*

Part Six: Words and Deeds

The Sadane Match

The month of the Ox has come and the Yoritomo Courtiers inform the court that they will hold their sadane competition after dinner.

After dinner, the guests are marched into a side room where three objects await. To the left is a stone sculpture of a Mantis kobune in high seas. The stone is a dark marble, which seems to move when the light plays along it.

In the middle is a painting of a shugenja-ko speaking with a fire kami, paying it due respect and honor. Mother Sun looks down upon her, smiling at the proper reverence portrayed.

To the right is a sea-green kimono of extremely fine silk embroidered with multi-colored butterflies swirling from the lowest hem up towards the shoulders.

Making a roll of **Artisan: Stonework, Artisan: Painting, or Craft: Tailoring (or an equivalent skill) / Perception** against a TN of 20 shows that each of these items is of the highest quality. They are the masterpieces that the PCs should come to expect considering the ostentatious surroundings around them.

“Please samurai-sans,” says a smiling Yoritomo Hogosha, “Choose one of these items and show us your Clan’s ability at the courtly game of sadane.”

Sadane is a game of impromptu criticism, using previously agreed-upon subjects. Determining the winner of the game requires a roll of **Games: Sadane / Awareness** against the other contestants. The judge can allow Free Raises depending upon the role-played efforts of the PCs, but probably no more than two. The highest roll wins the match.

Depending on the object of the player’s scorn, they will lose or gain a Favor with a particular candidate. If they choose the sculpture, they will lose a Favor with Sensin. If they choose the painting then they will lose a Favor with Uidori.

Taihime will give a Favor to the victor of the competition regardless of what they have chosen as their object as she appreciates the skill they have displayed. However, if the losing player rolls below a 25 on the Sadane roll, she will show scorn as obviously, the PC was not even trying and that PC will lose a Favor with her. *“Surely, a true samurai cannot be that bad at the game.”*

A Trip to Kaimetsu-Uo Seido

Towards the middle of the Month of the Tiger, the court invites those who wish to go on a trip with several Mantis samurai to Kaimetsu-Uo Seido, the shrine dedicated to the founder of the Mantis Clan located on an island to the east. The trip to Kaimetsu-Uo Seido is a short one. The seas are calm and the breeze is cool, but not too cold. The island the shrine sits on is a small one; very little of the island is dedicated to anything but the shrine save for a few small vegetable gardens to serve the monks needs. The group will depart their small kobune and Moshi Uidori will lead the PCs up the stairs toward the shrine.

Moshi Uidori addresses the group at the shrine, “When Kaimetsu-Uo finally retired after being the Clan Champion of the Mantis, he and his son sailed toward the rising sun. The next time the Mantis saw him was when they found his ship tied to a pirate vessel. He was dead on the deck of the enemy ship, surrounded by his fallen enemies. The Mantis who found him set the pirate ship ablaze and sent him to Yomi with his fallen foes.”

Uidori turns to face the group, “The Mantis built this temple on the island closest to where they found his body. They dedicated this shrine to the memory of the first Mantis samurai, the grandson of Hida. It is here that we bring honor to the man who created something from nothing.” She takes a stick of incense, and it blazes to life at a whisper from her.

“Many call the Mantis brash, impulsive, or uncouth, and it is true that they can be. It is the blood of Kaimetsu-Uo that runs in the veins of the Yoritomo, the blood of Matsu and Hida, the blood of Osano-Wo and the Thunder Dragon. They have a history of seizing their destiny from the clutches of the heaven and the sea. From Kaimetsu-Uo to Yoritomo, this is what it has meant to be Mantis.”

Uidori turns to place the incense on the altar, and smoke wafts around her robes as she turns back. “While I am Moshi, and new to the Clan of Kaimetsu-Uo, we hold great respect for him. When the Moshi were created from a small branch of the Phoenix Clan, our founder, Isawa Azami, also had to find her own destiny. Lady Amaterasu showed her that destiny, but I have always felt that, like Kaimetsu-Uo, it was for her to seize it.”

“Please, explore the shrine and pay your respects should you wish. I ask only that while you are here you meditate upon what it means to be a Mantis and needing to forge your own destiny outside of the traditions of the Empire.” Moshi Uidori bows low to you and kneels before the altar in supplication.

Kaimetsu-Uo Seido consists of seven building that serve all of the monk's needs. The monks themselves consist of members of both the Order of Kaimetsu-Uo and the Order of Osano-Wo.

As the PCs explore, they will find several Mantis samurai wrestling with various monks. Should they ask about this, the monks tell them that it is considered a matter of great pride among the Mantis to challenge the Monks of Kaimetsu-Uo Seido to non-lethal unarmed combat.

Should any of the PCs wish to attempt this, a monk will be more than happy to oblige. This will be a skirmish using only Jiujutsu. Should the PCs lose the match, Mantis samurai show them a new level of respect. Have they done anything to earn their derision the Mantis will stop giving the samurai grief over whatever started them mocking the PC.

If a PC should happen to win, they will have prevailed at Kaimetsu-Uo Seido. Shouting or declaring this to a Mantis will garner them a new level of respect in any situation. (Any PC who does so gains the "I Prevailed At Kaimetsu-Uo Seido" Cert.)

Any PC that joins Moshi Uidori in meditating as she has asked will earn her approval and a Favor from her. She approaches them to discover what they have meditated upon and discuss with them the merits of Kaimetsu-Uo. (There is no roll associated with this; all it requires is a simple act of effort and some minor role-playing on the PC's part.)

Part Seven: A Dinner with Gusai

A few days after the PCs return from Kaimetsu-Uo Seido, Gusai invites them to attend a meal with him. Gusai holds the dinner in a private hall in Kyuden Gotei, but in a room that seems far less ostentatious than the room they met with Hogosha in. This could be the room with the least amount of audacious decoration in the castle. At this dinner Yoritomo Sensin, Yoritomo Kitao, Matsu Koiso, Utaku Dongmei, and Kasuga Senriko join the PCs. The meal this time will consist of standard Mantis delicacies, from fresh sashimi to exotic fruits.

During the meal, Gusai will speak with the PCs:

"Let me be blunt. The Mantis Clan cannot continue on the path that Aramasu has set. Without true leadership, the Clan will become the laughingstock of the Empire. If the Mantis are to remain a Great Clan, we need leadership; leadership that Aramasu has proved he cannot give."

"While Aramasu hides from his enemies, the other Clans laugh at us. Do not try to deny it; we know it to be true. 'Where is Aramasu?' you ask and only the crickets chirp in response. It is an insult to the Clan and the Empire. Since Aramasu has been 'in seclusion' we have lost an Emperor, and the Clans have begun to fight among themselves." He drains his cup quickly, covering a grimace with alcohol.

"I don't believe that any of the Clans can afford to be leaderless in these uncertain times. We cannot trust Aramasu to do the right thing on his own, so I have forced the issue. It is not something that I wanted to do; it is something that I MUST do. I cannot let my Clan lose what prestige Yoritomo earned for it."

Again, Gusai will ask for the PCs opinion on the matter. If the PCs refuse to answer he will respond with, ***"We aren't asking you to choose for us, samurai-san, we are asking for an opinion. We all have opinions and to keep your mouth closed when it is truth that is of value is to spit in the face of honesty."*** He too, will ignore any PC who does still refuses to speak up.

After the PCs have given their opinion, he will open the floor for their question for him.

- What do you think of Hogosha? ***Hogosha has done the best job he can do with an absent leader, but he is failing to keep the Clan together; I am proof enough of that. I would not have allowed for such vocal dissent within my own Clan if I were still in charge.***
- Where is Aramasu? ***I can only come to the conclusion that Aramasu is hiding from his enemies. The Mantis do not need a coward as Clan Champion.***
- Will Aramasu return to meet your challenge? ***I doubt it. It will be to Hogosha-san's credit if he can salvage what he can for his Lord. I fully intend to be leading the Clan by the spring.***
- What will happen if Hogosha resists your rule? ***Then there will be war within the Clan. Those that support the coward will lose. Mantis will kill Mantis. I do not wish for this to happen, but I do not see a way around it. Hogosha is a clever man, though, and may find a way to salvage his Lord's rule.***

- Whom do you support to be the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court? *Yoritomo Sensin. I would not have proposed him to the position had I thought he was not capable.*
- Why should we support Yoritomo Sensin? *He is the only one of the candidates that truly represents what it is to be Mantis. Too many of those at court play the game of words when the Mantis are men of action. If you want the Mantis to send someone who IS Mantis, the Sensin is your only choice.*
- How do you feel about Moshi Uidori? *The Moshi is a priest. She does not understand the soul of the Mantis. She is at least not Hogosha's puppet.*
- How do you feel about Yoritomo Taihime? *She is Hogosha's puppet. With her in the position, we will get more of the same incapable leadership that the Mantis have had for more than a year.*

Yoritomo Kitao will pledge her support to Gusai as will Utaku Dongmei and Matsu Koiso assuming the PCs have not already convinced them differently.

At the end of the meal, Gusai will thank the PCs for their time and ask them to "Make the right choice."

Part Eight: Prayers and Arrows

Prayers to the Kami

As the end of winter draws near in the Month of the Tiger, the Moshi will perform a set of prayers in preparation for Oshogatsu, the New Year festival. The Mantis Clan invites everyone to attend the religious event should they wish to watch as the Moshi perform a ritual to assist the Sun in its rebirth.

While the shugenja prepare their spells, several less than religious samurai grumble about being forced to get up early for this event, regardless of the fact that this was an optional event. They will make rude comments about the Moshi and their need to praise the Sun at every moment and even make a few crude jokes about how they praise the Sun should they stub their

toe. Should the PCs do anything to quiet them they will earn a Favor with Moshi Uidori and she will smile kindly upon them when she has a moment.

The Moshi shugenja gather in a circle in the garden to perform the ritual early in the morning before the sun has risen. They quietly chant to the kami for their assistance in preparing the way for the sun to enter the New Year. Air kami swirl about the shugenja and a wind picks up pushing loose objects into the air. As the sun crests the horizon, the Moshi shugenja suddenly burst into flames as fire kami join those of the air, creating a blending of air and fire unlike any you have seen.

Broken Bow

Before the festivities for Oshogatsu begin, the Tsuruchi announce that they will put on a demonstration of Kyujutsu. This will take place just outside of the castle's dojo where they have set up a series of dummies. Tsuruchi will address the surrounding samurai.

"When I was a young child, my father taught me the way of the bow, and I discovered that I had a natural affinity for Kyujutsu. After his death, though I was little more than a boy, it became the only weapon I could trust. I gathered men to my banner and we trained in archery, perfecting the art far beyond that of other samurai. This is not a boast, just simple truth. Many samurai within the Empire are quite capable of using the bow and arrow, but we have made it into a way of life."

Tsuruchi takes aim at the closest target and casually fires an arrow directly into its center. "A simple shot. Ichiro-san, if you would." Tsuruchi Ichiro steps up and fires three more arrows in a row, each splitting the previous arrow precisely down the center.

Tsuruchi draws his bow again and faces the furthest target on the line. He draws back slowly, turning his head to look at the crowd, and releases. The arrow flies straight and true, hitting the dummy directly where the target's eye would have been.

"It is a matter of knowing just how the arrow will fall. This takes experience. Most samurai focus on the sword, and even those that do not usually spread their weapons training across several weapons. The Tsuruchi family has made its sole study that of the bow. If you would like to learn more, Ichiro-san and I will be happy to show you where you could improve."

At this point, should the PCs wish to learn more about Kyujutsu they have a once in a lifetime opportunity to

train under the eye of Tsuruchi. Bows are provided, and Tsuruchi and Ichiro will provide simple, straightforward, and useful insights on the basics of archery. Anybody wishing to learn may make three rolls of **Kyujutsu / Reflexes** at progressive TNs of 15, 20, and 25. Should a PC make all of these rolls, their training with Tsuruchi has given them two free experience points to spend on the Skill (this raise must be done immediately or at the end of this module, or this bonus is lost). Once everyone has had a chance to go, read the following:

Tsuruchi takes his yumi from the servant that was holding it, "I wish to show you what is possible when you have mastered the skill. There is another target atop that rise over there." Tsuruchi gestures over the wall, at a barely visible figure some two hundred yards away. He pulls the string back and just as he is prepared to release, the string snaps and the bow warps from the force. Tsuruchi looks confused, then angry as he looks at the servant that handed him the bow with a deep frown. "My apologies, samurai-sans, but it appears I will not be able to perform this feat for you today. Perhaps I will be able to tomorrow." With that, Tsuruchi storms out of the gardens and into the castle, clenching his left hand in carefully-controlled pain.

If the PCs ask who the servant was, they can discover that it is a young woman by the name of Iseki. She will be available for the PCs to speak with in the second part of *Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei*. She will follow Tsuruchi back to his rooms immediately, and will be unavailable for the PCs to speak with at this time.

Conclusion

After the incident at the Archery demonstration, tally up how many Favors each candidate has given out. This will tell you how well the PCs did in supporting their candidate. The candidate with the most Favors given will become the new Ambassador to the Imperial Courts for the Mantis. PCs who supported the winner will then gain that NPC as an Ally of their candidate (1 Devotion /3 Influence). The PCs gain a number of Mantis Clan Favors equal to the Favors they were given by the candidate that they choose to support (any others are lost).

Hogosha will announce which of the candidates is taking his old position; though he will be less enthusiastic should Sensin win. He will be more subdued than usual as he has sincere concerns over the state of Tsuruchi. As he is finishing his speech:

A castle servant comes rushing into Court with tears in her eyes. "Yoritomo Hogosha-sama! Yoritomo Hogosha-sama! It is Tsuruchi-sama! He's dying!"

The court falls into a strained quiet as all eyes turn to Hogosha. For the first time during the court, you see Hogosha break face, for only an instant, as he pales in fear. He rushes out of the room as the samurai at court look at each other in stunned silence.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Raw Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll fails, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

If a PC has a Crafting cert, they may make a Crafting roll at this time.

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Earning at least one Favor:	+1XP
Participating in at least one event:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Glory

Any PC who won one of the competitions gains a single point of Glory (no matter how many they won).

Any PC who sponsors a competition gains a single point of Glory (no matter how many they sponsor).

If a PC does not participate in any event during the court, they lose four points of Glory for inactivity.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who supported the winning candidate will then gain that NPC as an Ally of their candidate (1 Devotion / 3 Influence).

Module Tracking Sheets

If a PC is successful at the non-lethal Jiu-jitsu match with a monk at Kaimetsu-Uo Seido, they gain the “*I Prevailed at Kaimetsu-Uo Seido*” Cert

GM Reporting

Which candidate became the Mantis Ambassador to the Imperial Court?

Meta-Question for Year Two of the Campaign:

Do you want your PC's daimyo to support the Toturi Dynasty or the Hantei Dynasty?

This is not entirely an in-character question; the players are being given a chance to determine which daimyo support which side of the coming conflict. List the name of the daimyo and the side that each individual player chose for their answer in the reporting sheet. (More than one PC at a table sharing a daimyo each get their own, independent, vote.)

GM must report this information BEFORE (4/21/12) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPC Stats

Temple of Kaimetsu-Uo Monk

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 4
Reflexes 3 Strength 3
Honor 4.5 Status 0.0 Glory 1.0
Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 8k3
Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 3k1
Reduction: 0
School/Rank: **Temple of Kaimetsu-Uo Monk 2**
Skills: Defense 3, Jiujutsu 5, Lore: Theology (Fortunes) 5, Meditation 4

Typical Storm Legionnaire

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 3 Void 3
Reflexes 3
Honor 3.5 Status 2.5 Glory 4.0
Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 10k3+2
(Simple)
Armor TN: 20 (25 with **Damage:** 3k2
light armor)
Reduction: 3
School/Rank: **Yoritomo Bushi 4**
Skills: Commerce 4, Defense 4, Jiujutsu (Improvised
Weapons) 5, Kenjutsu 4, Knives 7, Sailing 7, Iaijutsu 5,
Lore: Mantis 5

Typical Yoritomo Elite Guard

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 2 Water 3 Void 3
Reflexes 3
Honor 3.5 Status 2.0 Glory 3.0
Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 9k3
Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 3k2
Reduction: 0
School/Rank: **Yoritomo Bushi 3**
Skills: Commerce 4, Defense 4, Jiujutsu (Improvised
Weapons) 5, Kenjutsu 4, Knives 5, Sailing 5, Iaijutsu 4,
Lore: Mantis 4

Appendix #2: NPCs

This section is intended to facilitate using the host of NPCs present at a major court function. Full stats are unnecessary for most of the characters; the GM is encouraged to use their Insight Rank and School to extrapolate if needed (those rolls required by events in the mod are already provided). Each NPC has a few pieces of gossip that a PC can uncover if they start looking into them, but this does require specific investigation (as well as a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll; the information given will be based on the result of the roll). These NPCs are here to help flesh out the court, not to provide for major plot points; however, they are also available targets for pursuing romantic relationships should PCs wish.

Mantis

Yoritomo Hogosha: Acting daimyo of the Mantis. Hogosha is an average looking samurai nearing the age of retirement with a large sense of presence. With a proper look from his eyes, Hogosha can put the fear of his life into many samurai. He is always seen in impeccable robes and usually with a small entourage that includes Yoritomo Taihime. With Aramasu absent, Hogosha has had to take on far more duties than he has in the past. As the de facto leader of the Mantis, he tries to rule in the fashion that Yoritomo and Aramasu would expect but he worries that he has not been as successful as he should be with the growing unease in the Clan for their missing Champion.

Honor: 3.5 Status: 6.0 Glory: 6.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Courtier 5

Goals: Maintain the image of Mantis strength while Aramasu is away and place the proper person (Yoritomo Taihime) into his former position as ambassador to the Imperial Courts. Manipulate those you can into solving those issues.

Gossip: TN 10 – Hogosha is the former Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Courts and made enemies of several of the Clans during the War Against the Shadow.

TN 20 – Hogosha has served for a year as the acting Clan Champion while Aramasu is in seclusion. He is rumored to be only one of two men who knows where Aramasu currently is

TN 35 – There are rumors that Aramasu has actually died and that Hogosha is only acting as he is until he can convince the other samurai of the Mantis to recognize him as the new Clan Champion

Tsuruchi: Daimyo of the Tsuruchi family and acting head of the Mantis armies. Tsuruchi is a well-built samurai with a constant air of confidence around him. He is usually found with the traditional Wasp clan Yumi near at hand, and a loose hand itching for an arrow. Tsuruchi had a great respect for Yoritomo though he was often asked to do things that may not have been in the best interests of the Tsuruchi family as part of the new Clan's politics. He has come to respect Aramasu much in the same way.

Honor: 3.5 Status: 7.0 Glory: 7.0 School/Rank: Tsuruchi Archer 5

Goals: Maintain order during the court and keep a hold of Aramasu's interests. Protect Hogosha and other members of the court from danger. Keep an eye on the Scorpion members of the court.

Gossip: TN 15 – Tsuruchi has been on edge since Aramasu went into seclusion. As acting commander of the Mantis armies, he has been stressed by the losses over the summer.

TN 25 – Many Mantis blame Tsuruchi's lack of real battlefield experience that led to the losses of last summer.

Tsuruchi Ichiro: Tsuruchi's designated heir. Ichiro always wears a yellow and black scarf around his left arm. He always has a stern watchful look in his eye. He was not a supporter of the Wasp Clan joining the Mantis Clan, but has come to respect Aramasu for how he has handled the Clan.

Honor: 3.5 Status: 4.5 Glory: 4.0 School/Rank: Tsuruchi Archer 4

Goals: Learn what he can from Tsuruchi in a court situation. Assist him in his duties.

Gossip: TN 10 – Ichiro is said to be the chosen successor for Tsuruchi when he finally steps down as Tsuruchi family daimyo.

TN 40 – Ichiro did not support the Tsuruchi's inclusion into the Mantis. Some say that he may pull the Tsuruchi family from the Clan.

Moshi Uidori: She is a Moshi Shugenja and one of the candidates to be the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court. Moshi Uidori is a small young samurai-ko whose features, while not unattractive, are sterner than the classical Rokugani view of beauty. She is a severely religious young woman with an attitude more Phoenix than

Mantis in many ways. She sees the skirmishes of the last summer as needless wastes of life and hopes to use whatever influence she may gain to support a campaign for peace throughout the Empire.

Honor: 5.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.0 School/Rank: Moshi Shugenja 3

Goals: Become the Mantis Ambassador to the Imperial Courts. Spread a message of peaceful coexistence.

Gossip: TN 10 – Uidori is an accomplished priest of the Air kami in the Moshi family. She is said to be better at speaking to the fire kami than most of her peers

TN 20 – Uidori is quite shy, but apt to get into long discussions about religion or famous painting and artists throughout the Empire.

TN 35 – No one is quite certain why the Moshi family have sponsored her to become the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court. Perhaps they have done so to soften the image that many have about the Mantis.

Yoritomo Kitao: Captain of the *Bitter Flower*, and high-ranking member of the Storm Legion. Kitao is a pretty samurai-ko that has obviously seen much time on the deck of a ship as the sun and weather have aged her slightly beyond her years as they do with many of the Mantis kobune captains. Kitao holds a harsher view of the Empire in total. She believes that the Mantis leadership is failing the Clan in a horrible way and that the other Clans will never take the Mantis seriously if their Clan Champion is constantly in hiding.

Honor: 3.0 Status: 2.5 Glory: 5.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 4

Goals: Show the strength of the Mantis. Underplay support for Aramasu.

Gossip: TN 10 – Kitao is on the fast track to becoming a prominent member of the Storm Legion. She is one of the Mantis Clan's most capable sailors.

TN 20 – Kitao is one of the more vocal members of the Mantic Clan that is unhappy with Aramasu's lack of presence.

Yoritomo Atsumori: Atsumori is a well-dressed Mantis samurai that has a grizzled sea-veteran look. He has come to the court looking for a bride, as he is quite lonely. He is more than willing to accept any offers from pretty PCs that may come his way.

Honor: 2.5 Status: 1.5 Glory: 4.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 1

Goals: Keep an eye on troublemakers in the court. Promote Aramasu as the man of honor he is.

Gossip: TN 10 -- Atsumori has a long history as a ship's captain. Some of his tales have been the basis for several popular pillow books in the Empire.

TN 15 – Atsumori has been looking for a wife that will meet his standards of the archetypical warrior maiden for years.

TN 40 – Atsumori's stories are completely false. He is just a pillow book writer that uses his stories in order to feed his lechery

Yoritomo Taihime: She is a Yoritomo Courtier and one of the candidates to be the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court. Taihime is a fierce and strict no-nonsense samurai-ko who idolizes Hogosha. She tends to follow him around when he is in public. She firmly believes that Aramasu is the only future of the Mantis Clan and that nothing can stop the Clan from becoming the powerhouse of the Empire. Under the leadership of Hogosha and Aramasu, they cannot fail.

Honor: 2.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Courtier 3

Goals: Become the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court by whatever means necessary. Make Hogosha look good to those who would injure his reputation.

Gossip: TN 10 – Taihime is a proud follower of how Hogosha has been leading the Clan.

TN 15 – Taihime has a love of Sadane that rivals the Crane's own love of the game.

TN 25 – Taihime has been known to have been escorted by several male samurai in the past. She is rarely seen with the same one twice.

Gusai's Contingent

Gusai: Former Mantis Champion. Gusai was famously killed after having pulled a knife on the Emperor in order to prove a point. In return the Mantis received their first family name, that of Gusai. Since his return, Gusai has held no ill will for the Clan that Yoritomo led to greatness. When Aramasu went into seclusion, Gusai still held no ill will; it was not what he would have done but few samurai would meet the demand Gusai put on himself. A year has gone by without any sign of Aramasu returning to lead his Clan. Gusai became more and more frustrated with

Aramasu's lack of leadership and seeming cowardice. He has come to the conclusion that action must be taken to put the Mantis back on the correct path.

Honor: 4.0 Status: 5.0 Glory: 4.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi

Goals: Remove the Scorpion usurper from the Clan Leadership. Place his own puppet into the position of Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court.

Gossip: TN 10 – Since Gusai's return he has been quiet about the status of the Mantis Clan, though much has changed since he was Clan Champion.

TN 20 – As a returned spirit, Gusai has had as much trouble reintegrating into the Empire that many have wondered what he plans to do with his future.

Yoritomo Sensin: He is a Yoritomo Bushi and one of the candidates to be the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court. Sensin is a dashing young samurai with an easy smile and a lust for life. He is your typical Mantis Bushi, loud in voice and as uncouth as a Hida. Sensin fell under the sway of Gusai over a year ago when he sought out the former Clan Champion to start a friendship. That friendship quickly turned into hero worship. Sensin does not really care who becomes the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court, he only knows that his idol, Gusai, wishes it to be him. He would prefer not to disappoint him.

Honor: 3.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.0 School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3

Goals: Have fun. Get into fights. In addition, if you can do it, become the Mantis ambassador to the Imperial Court.

Gossip: TN 10 – Mantis samurai of the Mantis wonder at Sensin's involvement with Gusai. He was not known as a samurai of influence until after Gusai became his patron.

TN 20 – Sensin tends towards drink and has been known to have a bit of a loose tongue when under the influence of sake.

Others

Yasuki Nobuhide: Representative of the Crab. Nobuhide wears the kimono of a Crab samurai on his slender frame. He is a cautious man when it comes to making deals, but willing, when necessary, to take that long-shot risk. He is known among the Yasuki and the Mantis as a shrewd dealer when it comes to merchant pursuits.

Honor: 2.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 4.5 School/Rank: Yasuki Courtier 3

Goals: Continue to tighten the alliance with the Mantis.

Gossip: TN 10 – Nobuhide is a rising star among the Yasuki family. His presence at this Winter Court is surely a sign of his favor within the family.

TN 20 – Nobuhide is a very successful merchant patron with ties to merchants throughout the Empire.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Taihime.

TN 20 – Moshi Uidori

TN 25 – Yoritomo Sensin

Doji Chomei: Representative of the Crane. Chomei is an older samurai who has long weathered the friendship of the Mantis. He trained among them for a time before rejoining the Crane and eventually becoming a Rikuganshokan of the Crane armies during the War Against the Shadow. He has gained the respect of the Mantis through his friendship with Yoritomo and he has remained friendly since Aramasu took Yoritomo's place.

Honor: 7.0 Status: 7.0 Glory: 6.0 School/Rank: Daidoji Iron Warrior 2 / Yoritomo Bushi 2

Goals: Maintain the good relationship the Crane have with the Mantis despite their recent alliance with the Crab.

Gossip: TN 10 – Chomei trained among the Mantis and has been a friend to the Clan for most of his life. He was a good friend of Yoritomo,

TN 20 – Chomei was disappointed when the Mantis decided to ally with the Crab but apparently agreed that the Mantis had to do what they felt was right in their interests. He holds the Clan no ill will for this decision.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Taihime.

TN 20 – Moshi Uidori

TN 25 – Yoritomo Sensin

Doji Juichi: Assistant to Doji Chomei. Juichi is everything anyone would expect from a Doji Courtier: handsome, smooth talking, and honorable. His unmarried status is a mystery to most, as someone of his position should have wed many years ago. Unfortunately, Juichi lost face last year with the death of his yojimbo at the winter court at Kyuden Hida. He seems far less confident this year, as he is merely an assistant at the court instead of a major

player. Juichi will be looking for someone with which to share his loneliness with if there are any male PCs who show a willingness to accept his non-standard tastes.

Honor: 5.5 **Status:** 2.8 **Glory:** 2.0 **School/Rank:** Doji Courtier 3

Goals: Make it through this Winter Court without embarrassing himself. Find someone to confide in.

Gossip: TN 10 – Juichi’s journey to Kyuden Hida last year was a spectacular failure for him. He lost much face due to the death of his yojimbo. As a result, his star has fallen a bit in the Crane courts.

TN 15 – Juichi is known to be an expert on Rokugani Theater; he has some training as an actor, though his career as a diplomat usually keeps him from being more than a member of the audience.

TN 25 – Though it does not carry the same stigma in Rokugan, Juichi makes some effort to keep his homosexuality hidden from the public view. It is known, though it is not the first thing people think of when they speak of him.

Mirumoto Kaukatsu: Representative of the Dragon. Kaukatsu is a friendly samurai with an eye to attractive samurai-ko. He has served as a diplomat in his clan for a short time and this is the first major Winter Court in which the Dragon are allowing him to serve such a prominent position.

Honor: 5.5 **Status:** 3.0 **Glory:** 3.0 **School/Rank:** Kitsuki Investigator 3

Goals: Promote the burgeoning friendship between the Dragon and the Mantis. Oh, and flirt with the pretty girls.

Gossip: TN 15 – Kaukatsu is friendly with several Mantis samurai who are appearing at the Court and wishes to seek a closer friendship with the Clan in general.

TN 20 – Kaukatsu trained with the Kitsuki Investigators, and though he’s predominantly a diplomat, has some experience with criminal investigations. He is credited with finding a would-be Scorpion assassin during the War Against the Shadow and saving the life of a Dragon daimyo, which secured his current, cushy assignment.

TN 30 – Kaukatsu is a bit of a ladies’ man. There are rumors that he has lovers in several courts.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Sensin.

TN 20 – Yoritomo Taihime

TN 30 – Moshi Uidori

Matsu Koiso: Representative of the Lion. Koiso is not even sure why she is here. The Lion hold no interest in the Mantis that she is aware of and she sees this whole business as a waste of her time when she could be training among the other Bushi. She has no time for the nonsense of Court and attempts to stay completely out of the way at all times.

Honor: 6.5 **Status:** 3.0 **Glory:** 3.0 **School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 3

Goals: Let the others make fools of themselves.

Gossip: TN 10 – Koiso has no love for the ways of the court. She spends most of her time training in the dojo.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Sensin.

TN 20 – Yoritomo Taihime

TN 30 – Moshi Uidori

Asako Misashi: Representative of the Phoenix. The Phoenix gave Misashi the task that he is not very excited to perform, becoming friendly with the Mantis. He had family who died when the Mantis invaded Phoenix lands during the War Against the Shadow and has no love for the Clan. However, Misashi is anything if not a dutiful samurai. He will do what his superiors ordered him to do, though he may find it distasteful.

Honor: 6.5 **Status:** 3.0 **Glory:** 3.0 **School/Rank:** Asako Loremaster 3

Goals: Push the Mantis to distance themselves from the Dragon. Attempt to find a peaceful solution to Mantis-Phoenix issues.

Gossip: TN 15 – Misashi has no love of the Mantis and some say it was a minor insult to the Mantis that the Phoenix sent him.

TN 25 – Misashi had family die in a Mantis attack on Shiro Shiba

Support: Default support is with Moshi Uidori.

TN 25 – Yoritomo Taihime

TN 30 – Yoritomo Sensin

Shosuro Ochiba: Representative of the Scorpion. Ochiba is a fish out of water. She is a pretty samurai-ko who seems to have upset someone very badly to have this duty of leading the Scorpion contingent. She has not chosen sides in the disputes within her Clan and yet she has found her way to a Court filled with samurai who would love to see her harmed politically and physically. She is a bit desperate to get the Scorpion at the Court to be on their best behavior and will do her best to make sure that nothing is blamed on her Clan.

Honor: 3.0 Status: 3.5 Glory: 3.0 School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 3

Goals: For the love of the Kami, do not let any Scorpion do something that would place blame on them.

Gossip: TN 15 – Ochiba has served her Clan as a diplomat for the last decade. She has done so without accumulating the normal list of enemies for a Scorpion.

TN 25 – Apparently Ochiba has upset someone in the Scorpion lands as she usually attends courts of much higher prestige

Support: Ochiba will refuse to place public support behind anyone

Utaku Dongmei: Representative of the Unicorn. Dongmei is an unhappy samurai-ko. She does not wish to be at this court, though it is one she can respect due to their ties to the world outside of the Empire. She will do the best by her clan regardless, and she will keep an eye on the Lion Clan to make sure that they are not up to anything after the Skirmishes of last summer.

Honor: 6.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.0 School/Rank: Utaku Battle Maiden 3

Goals: Keep an eye on the Lion contingent.

Gossip: TN 10 – Dongmei has no respect for the Lion from the results of last year's skirmishes.

TN 20 – Dongmei is not a popular samurai in the courts of the Empire. She tends to look down upon those samurai not trained in horsemanship.

TN 25 – Dongmei had a marriage contract nullified due to a disrespect shown by said samurai for horses.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Sensin.

TN 20 – Yoritomo Taihime

TN 30 – Moshi Uidori

Kasuga Senriko: Representative of the Tortoise. Senriko is an attractive woman with unusually dark skin, the result of many days spent under the sun on the open sea. She wears the finest quality kimono available, but wears her hair in a peculiar style, a tight bun surrounded by short curls that frame her face. She is very direct in her speech and spends more time looking people in the eye than most Rokugani feel comfortable with.

Honor: 0.9 Status: 3.7 Glory: 2.7 School/Rank: Kasuga Smuggler 2

Goals: Find ways to economically benefit the Tortoise.

Gossip: TN 15: Senriko is a skilled courtier, but is not as well known in the courts as she might be, as she spends nearly half a year outside Rokugan, trading with gaijin.

TN 20: Senriko is an extremely wealthy merchant patron, with interests in several Rokugani cities as well as her trading in foreign ports.

TN 25: She collects gaijin books in particular, though she reportedly does not read several of the languages that she has collected books in

TN 30: She has been whispered to have picked up some unusual gaijin beliefs, including the idea that there are no fundamental differences between peasants and samurai, and that people would be better off if they were allowed to choose their own leaders rather than following the Celestial Order. She generally does not discuss these beliefs in public, of course.

Support: Default support is with Yoritomo Sensin.

TN 20 – Yoritomo Taihime

TN 25 – Moshi Uidori

GM Aid #1: Favor Tracking

	Yoritomo Taihime	Moshi Uidori	Yoritomo Sensin
Player 1			
Player 2			
Player 3			
Player 4			
Player 5			
Player 6			
Player 7			