

Fan and Sword

**A One-Round Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of Rokugan:
Spirit of Bushido
Month of Shinjo, 1139 (Late Fall)**

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Module Number SoB31

Release Date: 11/15/2012

The Emerald Champion is marrying the mother of the Crane's next daimyo. The political stakes are high, and even the smallest things could tip the balance of power within the Clan of Doji...

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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 Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 3.

Since the combat in this module is not a significant part of the challenge in this module (as most of it is in the investigative elements and the political results of the decisions the PCs make), a Rank One PC does not necessarily represent a problem for a table, but some care should be taken that there is no more than one Rank One PC per table.

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 2): The GM may decrease most TNs by 5 at their discretion (the TN for finding the letter in the scabbard should NOT be reduced in this fashion).

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 4): The Toshigoku spirits have been blessed by the shugenja that summoned them, granting them the benefits of Reversal of Fortunes and increasing their Reduction to 8.

Adventure Summary and Background

It is common for many of the returned spirits who have come back to Rokugan through Oblivion's Gate to feel as though they have another chance to deal with unfinished business from their previous lifetimes. Often, these are fairly minor matters – an unfulfilled desire to become a published poet, perhaps, or to see the great Carpenter Wall with one's own eyes. Other times, though, they are things that can shake the Empire and touch the lives of thousands or tens of thousands of samurai – and it is business of that nature that has obsessed Doji Meihu since he first returned to Rokugan.

Meihu was a Crane general whose first lifetime was spent mastering the ways of inter-Clan warfare against the Crab, for Meihu was head of the Crane armies during the Yasuki War in the third century. This was the first (and last, before the Clan War) large-scale conflict between the Clans in the Empire's history, and it was so devastating to both sides that it provoked the

Emperor to issue a decree against any such conflicts in the future. Unfortunately for Meihu, the decree came too late to save his life, as he fell to the Crab in battle a few months before the Emperor's decree ended the war. Having died honorably in battle, Meihu spent the next centuries in Yomi, content with his fate, but when the call came to stand against the Shadow with Toturi he did not hesitate to return to the mortal Realm once more. Once the battle ended, though, Meihu learned that the old insult of the Yasuki betrayal had not, in almost 800 years, been addressed, and he found he could not return to Yomi without making another attempt to finish what he had begun so many years before.

Unfortunately for Meihu, the Crane are not a warlike Clan as a rule, and the Clan's political leadership, dominated by the courtier Kakita Yoshi, did not want to initiate the war Meihu craved. Meihu was able to get his war, but the Crane never fully committed to it, and Yoshi and his allies have constantly sought to weaken Meihu's position and force an end to the conflict.

Now, though, outside forces are planning to intervene in the dispute between Kakita Yoshi and Doji Meihu; by exposing Yoshi's protégé, Kakita Munemori, to public shame and disgrace, these forces plot to strengthen Meihu and see the Crane/Crab war intensify. The PCs are caught in the middle of this plot, in a position to either aid it or turn it on its head, profoundly affecting the course of the Crab/Crane war and the Empire overall.

List of advantages, disadvantages, and other information that will be specifically important in this module goes here.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Mod certs from "Emperor's Favor" or "Claiming the Throne".
- Any Social Position relating to either the Crane Clan or the Emerald Magistrates.
- Membership in Kakita Yoshi's "Nightingales."

Introduction

When the adventure begins, the PCs have all arrived at Kyuden Doji, the capital of the Crane provinces and one of the most beautiful and elegant buildings in the entire Empire. Only the Imperial Palace itself exceeds Kyuden Doji's grandeur, and even the Crane's harshest critics are forced to admit to the majesty and grace of the architecture. The palace sits atop a bluff

overlooking the Umi Amaterasu, and each morning the sparkling blue waters of the ocean turn a magnificent gold as Lord Sun spreads his light over the ancestral seat of Doji.

The PCs, like the many hundreds of other samurai who have also gathered at Kyuden Doji, have come because Kakita Toshiken, Emerald Champion, is marrying Doji Narumi, the widowed mother of the Crane's Champion, seven-year-old Doji Kurohito. Narumi currently holds the Doji family regency on her son's behalf, and the match represents the potential debut of a new political powerhouse team within the Empire's courts. Any ronin characters who are present are here at the request of Emerald Magistrate Yotsu Seou, who has hired them to provide her with an entourage better suited to her position. (What she thinks of having to hire an entourage rather than simply being assigned one is not something she shares.)

Although the bustle of dozens upon dozens of arriving samurai surrounds you, the Crane seem to have outdone even their own reputation for hospitality in readying for this affair. Each guest is greeted swiftly and personally by a courteous Crane official, made welcome and shown smoothly to prepared rooms within the palace or at one of the many nearby, well-appointed inns. Smiles and deep bows greet you all, no matter your Clan affiliation – the Crane are as gracious and generous to their Crab and Scorpion guests as they are to their Imperial and Unicorn ones. In short order, each of you finds yourself surrounded by the sybaritic splendors of the Crane's finest inns, yours to savor if you wish.

Among other experiences to savor, including fine sake and sweet cakes in every room, a note has been placed on each room's futon with the name of a local tailor who will supply a fine obi for the wedding guests, at the expense of Doji Hiyobe, the governor of the local province. PCs who need suitable wedding garb for an event as prestigious as this can make arrangements for such an outfit at the tailor's as well – the appropriate kimono cost 2 koku. (Note that wearing the obi without a fine kimono to go with it will make the PC look like a tasteless boor, costing 3 points of Glory and raising the TN of all Social rolls by 10. Any samurai sworn to Hiyobe who makes this error also loses 2 points of Status, as they have embarrassed their lord.) Ronin characters are actually staying in the palace itself, because they are housed with Yotsu Seou; otherwise, though, their experience is largely similar to that of the other PCs elsewhere, including the gift of the obi.

Once the PCs have settled into their rooms and washed away the dust of travel, they have the afternoon to

explore the city and the public areas of the Palace. By far the most popular site for visiting guests is the Doji Gardens, a phenomenally beautiful array of plants from across the Empire, all carefully maintained by a cadre of Asahina priests who not only see to the care of the plants but also sculpt the very weather itself within the gardens so that the flowers within it are always in bloom. At the garden's center, a broad rock sits in the warm sunlight; this is the Stone of the Sun, where legend tells the Kami first set foot in Ningen-do after their fall from Tengoku. All around, small shrines and private nooks allow pilgrims to meditate on the holy site, and further off tea houses and small shops offer the garden's visitors the chance to relieve themselves of their koku in exchange for memories they hope to carry with them to their homes.

Below the palace itself, the city of Kyuden Doji Toshi spills down the slope from the bluffs where the palace sits; the city contains some of the finest and most expensive marketplaces in the Empire, as well as many dozens of temples and shrines supported by wealthy and pious Doji merchant patrons. Nearly anything for sale in the Empire can be found here, but even the usually-high prices have been elevated because of the wedding about to take place (prices roughly 150% of what is listed in the L5R 4E core book, although the quality is uniformly excellent).

Part One: Riddles of Steel

Toshiken and Narumi are not scheduled to marry for another six days, but the festivities have already begun. The court being held on the first night is intended to welcome the many hundreds of guests to the palace and set the tone for the celebration, and as such is not as formal an affair as some of the courts scheduled for later in the week. As such, the PCs are not obligated to wear their court finery in order to attend without insult; even so, most of the courtiers who arrive do so in the first of what is likely to be a parade of high fashion spread across the next several days.

The central court of Kyuden Doji is as breathtakingly beautiful as the rest of the building, steeped in both rich artworks and subtle perfumes, blending together into a mélange of heady sensations unlike anything else in the Empire. Servants move smoothly through the crowd, offering drinks, small foods and many folded notes and letters to the dignitaries that mingle beneath the polished cherry wood beams. Seated on a dais at the room's far end, Kakita Toshiken and Doji Narumi watch over the event with satisfied expressions, occasionally motioning one favored courtier or another up to speak with them quietly for a

moment. Between them, a somber and sharp-eyed child of perhaps seven years shifts restlessly, obviously trying to contain an active spirit within proper decorum. He seems to be managing the feat fairly well, and his mother – for the boy can be none other than Doji Kurohito, the titular Champion of the Crane Clan – gives him an approving glance every now and again, making him smile each time.

Across the dais from the couple, a large privacy screen has been erected, decorated lavishly with images of cranes, chrysanthemums and sunbursts. A full dozen Seppun miharu stand watchful guard around the screen, and though they are calm and polite, they allow no one to step too close. They also refuse to say who might be behind the screen, but throughout the court, the whispering diplomats speak of Toshiken's insistence on seeing to Toturi Tsudao's safety personally, and the old tradition of very high-Status samurai attending courts behind such screens to avoid distracting from the intended focus of the event.

In addition to the couple on the dais, several other samurai of importance are in attendance at this event. While a political alliance of this intensity could not help but attract courtiers from every Clan in the Empire, some of the highest-ranking attendees include Kakita Yoshi, the daimyo of the Kakita family, and his protégé, Kakita Munemori; Daidoji Uji, daimyo of the Daidoji family; Asahina Koji, daimyo of the Asahina family; Doji Meihu, shreikan of the Crane forces skirmishing against the Crab to the south; Kakita Masahiro, rikugunshokan of the Third Imperial Legion; Bayushi Yojiro, Scorpion Clan Champion; Shosuro Taberu, master sensei of the Dojo of Lies; Ide Tadaji, Imperial Advisor; Shinjo Shono, daimyo of the Shinjo family; Asako Toshi, daimyo of the Asako family; and Yoritomo Hogosha, master sensei of the Yoritomo Courtier School and the Mantis Clan's senior politician. Moreover, as this is the wedding of the Emerald Champion, a number of Emerald Magistrates are in attendance, including Doji Oharu, Shinjo Shirasu and Yotsu Seou; Isawa Zeppeki, the Jade Magistrate, is also present, although his master, the Jade Champion Kuni Utagu, is not. (See Appendix #1 for descriptions, roleplaying notes and some rumors a courtier might pick up about each of these NPCs.) Note that Tsudao is not actually behind the screen on the dais – she is actually far away, surrounded by far more than a dozen Seppun guards, but Toshiken hopes to confuse any potential assassins by making her seem to be with him here instead.

As the PCs move through the crowd, they may each make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 20, to spot a small folded note, marked with the

personal mon of Doji Narumi, being handed to Yoritomo Hogosha by a servant. For every 5 points beyond the TN the PC achieves, the PC spots a similar note being handed to another one of the following samurai: Doji Meihu (TN 25), Kakita Munemori (TN 30), Kakita Yoshi (TN 35), Bayushi Yojiro (TN 40). Each man reads the note and glances toward Narumi, exchanging a nod with her before going about his business.

If anyone speaks with Yotsu Seou during the court, she seems distracted and concerned by something, but refuses to discuss it at the moment. If pressed, she simply says it is not a matter for a court setting, and becomes insulted if pushed further.

Once the crowd has reached what seems like about as large as the room can comfortably hold, a signal gong booms out, damping the conversation as all eyes turn toward the dais. Doji Narumi stands up, smiling, and bows deeply to her assembled guests. She is an extremely beautiful woman, although motherhood and age have softened the lines that were once praised by some of the finest poets of the Crane at her first wedding day some twelve years before; still, more than a few men stand rapturous as she begins to speak.

“My honored friends,” she says, in a soft voice that those near the back must strain to hear, “I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate this event with me, my son, and my future husband, the honorable Kakita Toshiken. We hope that our union will mark the beginning of a new chapter for the Crane Clan, one in which we bring new prosperity to our people and build new friendships among the honorable samurai of every Clan. We know each of you will stand with us as we start down that path, for it has always been the way of the Crane to find allies wherever there were samurai of honor to be found, no matter what our small differences of opinion might be.” There is a smattering of polite applause at this, and Narumi lets it die down before she continues.

“For tonight, we wish to begin with a game, one that we hope will bring us all together, much as one very like it brought my betrothed and I together. Five of you have been given clues to a puzzle, a puzzle I challenge each of you to solve tonight. These clues have been handed out this evening, but it is up to you to determine who holds these clues, as well as to solve the riddle they pose once you have assembled the entire set. If you think you know the answer, please come see me, and I shall see that you are suitably rewarded for your cleverness and insight. In the meantime, please, enjoy our hospitality, and have a wonderful night!” As another wave of applause

sweeps across the room, Narumi returns to her seat and the court begins anew.

Rumors

With such a large grouping of courtiers, it is almost impossible to avoid overhearing gossip of almost every stripe imaginable in the court. Any PC who wishes to listen to the wagging of tongues may make a **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. (PCs with “Oath of Fealty: Doji Hiyobe” gain a Free Raise on this roll.) The rumors include:

- Kakita Munemori is said to be extremely frustrated with his current position as Doji Meihu’s chief diplomat. Munemori is well-known to be tied to Meihu’s rival Kakita Yoshi, and thus everyone believes Munemori to be Yoshi’s spy in Meihu’s camp – this has kept Meihu from actually giving Munemori any authority or assignments, while Yoshi refuses to take him back into direct service.
- As the conflict between the Emerald Champion and the self-proclaimed Imperial Regent, Hantei Okucheo, escalates, no one is sure what to make of Kakita Masahiro’s presence at Toshiken’s wedding. As the head of the Third Imperial Legion, Masahiro might be an envoy from the Imperial General, Seppun Murayasu, to Toshiken; on the other hand, since Murayasu has recently transferred direct command of the Third Legion back to Toshiken, the fact that no other major representative of the Legions is here might be seen as a rebuke. The significance seems to be ambivalent at best.
- Support for Doji Meihu’s war against the Crab seems to be weakening the Crane – while the Doji and Daidoji daimyo all continue to offer vocal support, several units have been “reassigned” from the front lines, which has forced Meihu to stop his advances. No major territory has changed hands since late spring.
- Though there are few Crab guests, and none of significant political distinction, word is spreading through the Empire of the Kaiu’s new technological development – siege engines with a great deal more flexibility in their deployment and power in their payload than previously in use. The stated intent for the weapons is against the enemy to the south, but there is no doubt that the Crab are entirely

willing to use their existence as an intimidation tactic with the other Clans.

- Every Clan has some representation, however, the Unicorn and Phoenix Clans are being made particularly welcome. Some tensions have strained the Crane’s relationships with their allies, but the Crane are making significant overtures to their allies in the Unicorn and the Phoenix have gone out of their way to mend their fences with the Crane of late.
- There are no Lion guests of distinction present, possibly due to the political support the Crane have lent to their allies in the Unicorn Clan following the Lion’s retaking of Toshi no Meiyo Gisei.

In addition, anyone hunting gossip who gets a TN 10 learns that Yoritomo Hogosha was given one of Narumi’s clues, and PCs who want to play the puzzle game can hunt rumors for that specific purpose if they wish. For every 5 points by which their roll exceeds 10, they learn the identity of an additional clue holder, in the same order as with the Perception roll above: Doji Meihu (TN 15), Kakita Munemori (TN 20), Kakita Yoshi (TN 25), and Bayushi Yojiro (TN 30); this information is in addition to the rumors they learn.

Solving the Puzzle

Each of the five clues is held by one of the above samurai. The clues and their holders are these:

- Yoritomo Hogosha: “The graceful fury of Heaven’s grandson”
- Doji Meihu: “The song of the true heir”
- Kakita Yoshi: “The lost gift of peace”
- Bayushi Yojiro: “The steel raven’s feather”
- Kakita Munemori: “The untested and unrealized”

Taken together, these five phrases describe one of five swords forged at the dawn of the Empire by the eldest son of Doji-kami and Kakita, Doji Yasurugi. Yasurugi was a brilliant swordsmith as well as a talented bushi, and forged five legendary blades over his lifetime. The first was Kunshu, given to Hantei Genji during the first War against Fu Leng and wielded by him in battle; the second was Shukujo, which became the Ancestral Sword of the Crane and sounded a pure musical tone when touched by the rightful Champion of the Crane; the third was Chukandomo, intended as a gift to the Matsu to heal the rift between that family and the Kakita, but lost at sea before the gift could be made; the fourth was Naishi, the “Raven Sword,” gifted at times throughout history by the mysterious kenku to various heroes during dark periods in Rokugan’s past; and the

last was Kanpeki, never carried or drawn, which still rests untouched after a millennium in the vaults of Kyuden Doji. A **Lore: History** or **Lore: Crane / Intelligence** roll, TN 25, or a **Kenjutsu / Intelligence** roll, TN 40, is enough to make the connection between the clues if the players cannot do so themselves – the TN is increased by 5 for every clue the PC does not have.

If one or more PCs determines the correct answer to the puzzle (“the blades of Doji Yasurugi” or words to a similar effect), they may approach Doji Narumi and tell her so. She smiles, visibly pleased, and awards them a beautifully-sculpted netsuke depicting the sun rising over Golden Sun Bay. Any PC who receives the netsuke gains 1 point of Glory; if they are Crane, they also get 1 point of Status.

Each holder of a clue is somewhat more approachable than they might otherwise be tonight, in recognition of their role in the courtly game. As such, all five of the men can be spoken with fairly easily; in some cases (particularly Doji Meihu and Yoritomo Hogosha), they might also have met the PCs before, in which case they greet them appropriately. Each has also correctly determined the answer to the puzzle, and while they will not give the answer away outright, it definitely colors their conversation and impacts their trains of thought.

The Five Swords

The holder of the first clue is **Yoritomo Hogosha**. Hogosha is an intense, angry-looking man with sharp eyes and a tight topknot. He is not unhandsome, but it is difficult to notice that through the haze of menace that seems to surround him, even more palpable than the glow of a returned spirit he bears. The PCs might have met him and even joined him for dinner in the module “Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei.” If the PCs ask him about his clue, he smiles – something rather more like a grimace – and produces a small blue note, handing it over for their perusal before taking it back and slipping it into his sleeve once more.

As he hides the clue away, Hogosha muses, “I believe ‘Heaven’s grandson’ must be Hantei Genji, son of Hantei-kami and thus the grandson of Amaterasu and Onnatangu, don’t you think? Such fury he would have had! To think, the power and strength of the bloodline of the Sun and Moon themselves... Sadly, ours is a fallen era, with so much of the pure vitality of Heaven’s lineage lost. I wonder how much stronger the Empire would be if we were to find that potency once more.” He smiles, but it is all teeth.

“When the Regent marries the Empress, perhaps we will have a chance to find out, eh?” Several other courtiers nearby either glare at Hogosha or look uncomfortably toward Toshiken, seated on the dais, but Hogosha is entirely unfazed.

If the PCs wish to continue the discussion with him, Hogosha is clear that he respects the strength and ambition demonstrated by Hantei Okucheo and believes it makes him worthy of marrying the Empress and reigning alongside her. In his eyes, the forceful and somewhat bloody means by which Okucheo claimed the Regency are what make him deserving of the title. While Toshiken’s need to appoint an Imperial General has weakened Hogosha’s general respect for the Emerald Champion, the Mantis diplomat does not hold any particular onus against him, and is content to see which of the two men who claim to speak for the Empress proves the stronger in the long run.

The second clue is held by **Doji Meihu**, a tall, battle-hardened warrior who looks to be in his early forties, his head shaved except for his snow-white topknot and a narrow beard. He, like Hogosha, is a returned spirit, but he is much friendlier, smiling broadly and bowing to the PCs when they approach him. If he met any of them during the Topaz Championship (in the module “New Beginnings”), he remembers them and offers congratulations on their heroism in the wake of Kaede’s death. The only exceptions to this are Crab characters, with whom he is courteous but terse and distant. If the PCs ask about his clue, he produces it with a flourish and hands it over, accepting it back graciously when they have finished reading it. As he does so, he offers this comment:

“Truth is a strange thing sometimes, I think. For some people, truth is only a word used to dress up a lie of convenience, a set of gaudy clothes and ridiculous makeup designed to make us forget what truth really is and accept their lie instead. But we are samurai, yes? We understand that truth does not change because someone has twisted their words; our duties and our honors are not things of the moment, but unshakable pillars that stand as eternally as the Celestial Order itself. An oath given to one’s lord is not set aside because it is inconvenient; a bird’s feathers do not change colors simply because it tries to tell you black is instead white. Truth runs deeper than that. There were once samurai who understood that, who did their duty without hesitation, whether it was ‘inconvenient’ or not. I have not given up hope that there are still samurai who understand it still – and should they stand forth and re-swear the oaths their ancestors set aside, they will prove themselves honorable samurai once more.” His eyes harden, and

seem to drill into you. “And those who have forgotten what truth means... will be reminded. Because that is what bushido demands of traitors.”

If the PCs engage him further, Meihu is very explicit in his desire to see the Yasuki family returned to the Crane, no matter the cost in lives or koku; he believes honor demands nothing less. If any Dragon are present and no Phoenix are, he specifically compares the Yasuki defection to that of the Agasha, and speaks quite approvingly of Mirumoto Uso’s campaign against the Phoenix over the last year and a half. He is also clear, however, that the war could be over tomorrow if the Yasuki simply agreed to return to the Crane; he is not interested in punishing either the family or the Crab for the defection, because “that is a matter best left to each samurai’s own honor.”

The third clue is held by **Kakita Yoshi**, an exceptionally handsome and graceful man whose aristocratic countenance is enhanced by the soft glow of a returned spirit. His white hair cascades loosely down his shoulders in stylish waves, and his kimono is the absolute epitome of fashion. He waves his fan with the casual and yet purposeful movements of a master swordsman practicing a long-memorized kata as he greets the PCs. If they ask for his clue, he smiles beneficently and produces it with a smooth motion. As they read it, he comments,

“It is quite breathtaking, really, how much tragedy is packed into those few simple words, is it not? As a Crane, there are few things I am more devoted to than peace, and few things I am more familiar with than gifts – and so the loss of them touches my soul in a way few other things can. Peace is the ultimate goal of the Empire, in a very real sense; we look to the Empress to protect us from that which threatens us so that we can have the peace to lead our lives within the light of her divinity, and we train our bushi to fight for the peace we hold as a sacred trust for them to return to when the fighting is done. Peace is what Shinsei’s wisdom promises us, and peace is what Yomi’s blessed realm will give us when we at last reach our pinnacle on the Wheel of Reincarnation. And so, any loss of peace must be seen as a tragedy, especially when it is a senseless war without value equal to what it costs us. We are samurai, not butchers. We cannot allow old grudges to poison our sense of what makes us something more than killers in the streets.”

If the PCs pursue the topic with him, Yoshi presses his point, arguing that the war with the Crab over the Yasuki is rooted in Meihu’s Desire and Regret, and thus both impious and unnecessary. He listens quite

intently, seeming to give serious consideration to every speaker, but is unwavering in his desire to see the war ended and some kind of accord reached with the Crab as quickly and painlessly as possible. If any PC who speaks with him has the “Nightingales” cert, he will suggest that they use the opportunity provided by the court to display their art (see below).

The fourth clue is held by **Bayushi Yojiro**, who is, as is his custom, wearing a full-face mempo that depicts a snarling oni-like expression. He wears a somber kimono in the rich, dark reds and blacks of his Clan, but he has also chosen to wear a brilliant emerald sash as well, a reminder that he still technically holds a position within the Emerald Magistrates along with his duties as Scorpion Clan Champion. His dark eyes seem to weigh and measure the PCs as they approach, and his voice is carefully controlled when he offers his greetings. When the PCs ask for his clue, he hands it over with a slight nod. As they read it, he murmurs quietly, *“Ravens hunt the fields of the dead, but they also place their mark upon certain heroes who step forward to aid Rokugan in its time of need. Your names have reached my ears, samurai-sans, but as yet I do not know: will you be heroes we need, or just more carrion to feast the ravens?”* He does not speak further, merely nodding again in dismissal when the PCs return the clue.

The fifth and final clue is in the hands of Kakita Munemori. Slightly taller than his mentor and sensei Kakita Yoshi, Munemori is only slightly less handsome, but his attractiveness is definitely of an earthier, more sensuous sort. He smiles most broadly at any samurai-ko who approach him, particularly attractive ones who are noticeably younger than his own 28 or so years. His face twists just slightly when the PCs ask for his clue, and he looks almost sulky when they read it. When they return it to him, he looks it over himself and grunts,

“You get the sense that it’s talking about something meant for great things, don’t you? And instead, it’s locked away somewhere, out of sight and out of mind, languishing. Perhaps if it were tested, it would be found wanting – it’s always a possibility, of course. I know that better than most. But to be set aside without even getting the chance? There is little more painful to a true samurai’s soul than knowing that greatness isn’t just escaping you, but is actively being denied you by forces beyond your control.” He shakes his head, reading the clue through one last time before replacing it within his sleeve. He doesn’t really have anything else to say, although if an attractive woman wishes to flirt with him he will be more than willing to go along with it.

The Nightingales Sing

Kakita family daimyo Kakita Yoshi has, over the last year, been building an organization of artisans and performers from almost every Clan. If any PC members of the Nightingales are present, he will arrange for them to put on a performance or present a display of one of their own creations. (In the case of non-performance arts which require a certain amount of time to prepare, it can be assumed that the PCs have an example of their craft ready to hand.) An exhibition worthy of the company requires a roll of **(Chosen Art) / Awareness** at a TN of 30; success earns them two points of Glory plus an additional point per Raise called toward that end. Additionally, if the Nightingale wishes to impress a specific member of the crowd, they may tailor their performance or display by making an additional roll of either **Courtier (Gossip) / Intelligence** (to know what themes will be most appealing to the target) or **Investigation (Notice) / Awareness** (to play to the target's reactions) at a TN equal to the NPC's Status x5. Only one NPC may be targeted during the performance, but success should be noted on the PC's module reporting sheet as "Patron" with the name of the NPC.

Once the PCs have spoken with any other characters that are present that they wish to talk to, the court winds its way down, and they can return to the rich comforts of their temporary rooms for the night.

Part Two: When Darkness Falls

The following morning, the PCs are awakened shortly before dawn by servants who have come down from Kyuden Doji to deliver an urgent summons from Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate. (Obviously, ronin characters are merely awakened by Seou herself.) They are asked to meet with her at once, and to come prepared to travel. The message is signed by Seou and marked with her magistrate's seal, indicating that it comes in an official capacity.

Yotsu Seou looks like she had little or no sleep last night, as deep shadows darken her eyes and her hair looks to have been put up into its foxtail rather hastily. The slight ronin sounds tired too as she invites you all to sit around a low table in the middle of her chambers, but her weariness does not seem to have affected her manners – she is courteous and gracious as she asks you all to join her for tea and an early breakfast. Soon, though, she turns to the business for which she called you.

"About a week ago," she begins, "I received a letter from an informant of mine named Kakita Chuusuu. Chuusuu is a courtier of fairly small renown, as such things go, but has ambitions of joining the Doji Magistrates some day; as a result, he has frequently given me information that has aided me in my investigations over the last few years. The letter indicated that he had uncovered some important, even Empire-shaking, information – information he wasn't willing to entrust to a simple letter. He asked that we instead meet in person to discuss what he found, and we arranged to meet here, yesterday, before the court began. Yesterday morning, he sent a note via carrier pigeon that he had reached Mizen Mura, just half a day's travel from here, and would arrive as scheduled." She pauses, and if possible, seems even more tired. "As you might have already guessed, he didn't make it."

After taking a sip of her tea, Seou continues, "I wouldn't normally worry over a few hours' delay, but the scope of what Chuusuu implied has made me wary. I've known him for several years, and he is not one to exaggerate. What he learned is important, and I want to make sure I find out what it is. Which brings me to you.

"One of the annoying parts of being an Emerald Magistrate is that it places unavoidable demands on your time. In my case, I have an appointment with Toshiken-sama to make my annual report to him this afternoon. I can't skip out on it just to track down a missing friend, especially not on just a hunch of something important going on. At the same time, though, that hunch means I don't want to wait until tomorrow to start looking for him. So instead, I'd like you to act as my yoriki in this. Find out what happened to Chuusuu, and bring him or his information back to me if possible. If he's just run into a bad stretch of road, fine. If not..." She trails off. "Just... find out what's happened."

The PCs are free to ask any questions they like, but Seou has little more information to offer beyond what she's said. She can offer a description of Chuusuu, should the PCs ask for one: he is a fairly large man, especially for a Crane, built more like a bushi than a typical courtier, who does not dye his hair the traditional Crane white. He is a returned spirit, and he does not actually ever have his wakizashi with him, instead carrying an empty saya with a tsuba (hand guard) and tsuka (handle) welded to it – she does not know why, only that it was a personal quirk. Other than that, she has little to offer, and suggests the PCs make haste to ride for Mizen Mura at once. (If the PCs

do not all have steeds already, she has already made arrangements for them to borrow some horses from the Doji stables for the journey.)

The Unquiet Village

Assuming the PCs leave as quickly as Seou as requested, they are well down the road before the sun has even gotten halfway up the sky. The road north follows the Doji cliffs, providing a spectacular view over the ocean, while a thick forest with red, yellow and brown leaves woven together in brilliant fall patterns spills away on the other side. The air is crisp, but the early morning chill is already burning away ahead of what looks like a beautiful autumn day.

About two hours after the PCs leave Kyuden Doji, they spot a village ahead through the trees. It appears to be large and prosperous, but as the PCs approach, a man bursts from out of the trees at the road's edge and runs toward them, throwing himself down in prostration in front of their horses' hooves. "Thank you, honored samurai-samas!" he cries. "Thank you for coming so swiftly!"

If the PCs react with confusion, the man looks up, startled. "Are you... not the magistrates we sent for from the palace? We need samurai to deal with this murder!" Otherwise, the man leaps up once more, bowing again and saying, "Quickly, please, samurai-samas – this way! To my father's inn!"

The peasant man is solidly-built and weatherbeaten, apparently in his late 20s. He introduces himself as Anjo, son of the village headman and the town's "egg hunter." (If asked to explain, he does so: he holds the town's only license for hunting tsu fish eggs, which he is allowed to do just one day a week. The rest of his time is usually spent guiding hunting samurai through the nearby forest when they come to the village for visits.) The village is Izumi no Tenrai Mura, and Anjo proudly explains that it has a great reputation as a vacation spot for well-to-do samurai, as the climate is almost always pleasant, the hunting plentiful, the views gorgeous and the nearby sacred spring believed to have healing properties. Characters with at least 1 Rank in Lore: Crane or 3 Ranks in Courtier are familiar with this reputation (this requires actual Ranks in the skills, not "virtual" Ranks as from the Sage Advantage or the like). The village is one of the healthiest in the Empire, as the locals frequently visit the springs themselves to partake of its waters when illness or injury strike. Most of the village's prosperity comes from seeing to the many needs and comforts of these important and

wealthy samurai, but that has left them woefully unprepared to deal with the current crisis.

If asked for more details on that crisis, Anjo demurs, adding, "I wasn't really here, but my father can explain everything – it is his inn, after all. We can only pray to the Fortunes that he isn't going to lose his livelihood for a simple act of charity..." If the PCs ask specifically about Kakita Chuusuu, Anjo nods, replying, "Yes, that was his name, I believe, samurai-samas."

After a short walk, Anjo leads the PCs to a large, well-appointed inn, three stories high – the tallest in the village, though several other inns in adjacent streets have two floors – called the House of Blessed Restoration. A small crowd of worried-looking peasants press around the outside doors, kept clear by four men, ranging in age from perhaps 18 to 35, all of whom show a clear family resemblance to Anjo. He joins the others as the PCs step inside the inn.

Within, there are a woman, a man and two girls; the man is elderly, with deep laugh lines and finely-made clothes (at least for a peasant), while the woman is of a similar age, with hands that are used to manual work and a firmly matron-like air. The other two are young, no more than 16, and self-evidently the daughters of the other two. When the PCs enter, all four rise and kneel down into bows; the women stay on their knees while the man stands up rather unsteadily. "Honorable samurai-samas," he says in a resonant voice, "I am Gozen, headman of Izumi no Tenrai Mura and owner of this inn. Fortunes bless you for coming so quickly." He introduces the women as Katsumi, his wife, and the two girls as Fumiko and Reiko, his remaining unmarried daughters. Gozen is a normally cheerful, garrulous man who enjoys his work as an innkeeper and "entertainment director" of sorts for the samurai who visit his village. Unfortunately, dealing with a murder is outside his purview in his usually peaceful, almost idyllic town, leaving him a bit shellshocked and desperate for samurai to take over and make the matter go away.

Once they get him to explain what is happening, Gozen tells the following story:

"A lone Crane samurai rode into town yesterday, stopping at the House of Blessed Restoration around midmorning. He seemed confused, asking where all the time had gone, and demanding to know why it was already night – despite the clear evidence of daylight all around. We... assumed he was sick with a fever and offered him a room to rest, although my wife, who has seen our village through numerous plagues and other maladies, could see no signs of illness beyond

his ravings. He slept – or at least we thought he slept – most of the day, but just before sunset last night, my Fumiko went to offer him supper and... and... and found him dead in the room, with blood everywhere. We sent word to Kyuden Doji at once, but with the wedding preparations... Forgive us, samurai-samas, that we did not know any sooner!”

Some of the questions the PCs might ask, and the answers Gozen gives:

- “Did anyone hear or see anything unusual?” *No, sama – we are basically empty, with all those who might normally be our guests attending Doji-dono’s wedding, so there was no one on the second floor for most of the day.*
- “Did the man identify himself?” *He said his name was Kakita Chuusuu, sama.*
- “Did he mention his purpose in coming here?” *No, sama. He acted as though he were in a great hurry, though, and he seemed very upset that he had somehow fallen so far behind in his travels.*

If they attempt to interrogate Fumiko directly, they find that the girl is practically catatonic, and cannot share any useful information. In truth, she doesn’t know anything more than what Gozen has already said anyway.

If the PCs wish to investigate themselves, they are free to do so. The room where Chuusuu was staying and in which he was murdered is on the second floor of the inn, largely untouched from the way Fumiko found it when she walked in. The only disturbance was when the eta came to take Chuusuu’s body away – but other than moving it to the local crematorium on the edge of the village (out of sight of the rest of the town, as is the custom), they have done nothing with it, because they aren’t sure how to handle a samurai’s death. As a result, Chuusuu’s body is also available for examination, if desired.

The Scene of the Crime

The House of Blessed Restoration is a very high-quality inn, and the room where Chuusuu died was once as beautiful as the rest of the building. Now, though, it is an abattoir, with blood spattered across the floor, the futon, the low table and cushions that surround it, and more. The thickest pool is near the door, and smears of blood where the body was moved and Gozen’s words both confirm that that is the spot where Chuusuu himself fell. It is clear even at a casual glance that there was a struggle in the room – the futon mattress

has been slashed several times by a blade, the table has been knocked aside, and the washstand has fallen over, the fine pitcher and washing bowls shattered and water spilled across the finely sanded floor. There is a large bamboo chest at the foot of the bed, which has also been knocked askew – the lid stands open, and a set of clothes and a furoshiki bag are visible inside.

Closer examination, along with **Investigation (Search) / Perception** rolls, can allow the PCs to gain additional information. The base TN is 20, which allows the PC to find one of the following pieces of information – up to three rolls are possible, one for each piece of evidence, but at the GM’s discretion (to help speed things up) beating the TN by 5 or more might allow the PC to spot an additional piece of information for every increment of 5 instead. If the PC specifically indicates that they are examining a particular spot for clues, use the information that is most relevant to their search spot – otherwise, determine the information gained randomly.

- The weapon used to make the cuts was a katana.
- The killer left – and probably entered as well – through the window. The paper screen has been cut, and traces of blood in the shape of partial handprints are visible on the sill.
- The outside of the bamboo chest has blood on it, but the inside and the contents do not. This suggests that the chest was opened after Chuusuu died and the fight ended.

If the PCs look for it, Chuusuu’s wakizashi is not present, but Gozen insists that, other than Chuusuu himself, nothing was taken from the room before the PCs arrived.

It might seem unlikely that a battle such as this could take place without alerting the inn, and indeed, it probably would have, except that the killer used Quiescence of Air to silence the room before striking. Determining that will be almost impossible, however, as the last thing she did before leaving was to Banish the kami in the room – none of the kami that are here not know anything about the attack or what came before it. Use of By the Light of the Moon reveals nothing – there are no hidden items within the room to find.

The clothes in the chest are a set of court-suitable kimono and the necessary accessories, properly bundled for travel. The furoshiki bundle is small and, when handled, obviously contains a set of scrolls. The scrolls are lengthy and not sealed. They are addressed to Yotsu Seou, and contain a number of sworn testimonies

from samurai in several cities across Crane, Crab, Mantis and Phoenix lands detailing smuggling operations in support of the Crane war against the Crab. The smuggling is being used to keep Doji Meihu's coffers full and his armories well-stocked in order to continue prosecuting the war without needing the financial backing of Kakita Yoshi. Although the smuggling appears to be helping sustain Meihu's war, the smuggling itself is described in the testimony as organized by Kakita Munemori, Yoshi's protégé. The testimony seems to say that Munemori plans to frame Meihu for the smuggling and thus disgrace him, forcing his seppuku. A simple **Lore: Law / Intelligence** roll, TN 10, suggests that this evidence would be more than enough to convict Munemori of smuggling and conspiring to mislead a magistrate.

Note: at this point, the PCs have accomplished what Seou asked them to do – find out what happened to Chuusuu and return with the information he had. They may, if they wish, return to Kyuden Doji and report in with no shame or loss of honor; see Part Four for the results of this decision. Most groups, however, will likely want to continue the investigation.

Chuusuu's Body

Chuusuu's corpse has been taken to the village's crematorium, a fifteen-minute walk away from the town proper, carefully screened from the sensitivities of the samurai by a small ridge and some thick trees. The town eta, a half-dozen families all told, live around it, in ramshackle huts that completely contrast with the clean, upscale town itself. Within the crematorium, an old stone-brick building with low ceilings and the thick smell of death, Chuusuu's body has been laid out on a stone table, the clothes he was wearing (still his traveling outfit, apparently) set on a smaller worktable across the room. Two eta workers stand awkwardly off to the side when the PCs enter, and their eyes widen before they drop into full face-down bows at the sight of actual samurai standing in their crematorium.

The man on the stone table matches the description Seou gave the PCs for Kakita Chuusuu: a large man, well-muscled and fit, much more like a bushi than a typical courtier, with traditionally fine Crane features below untraditionally black hair. The returned spirit glow has faded away after death, but there is nothing to suggest this is not the man the PCs were sent to find. It is clear that he died from a sword cut to the throat, and he bears other wounds as well, bruises as well as cuts. A closer look, combined with either an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll or a **Medicine / Perception** roll, TN 20, reveals that Chuusuu fought back against

his attacker, probably with some success – there are small cuts and bruises on the knuckles and palms of both his hands, the kinds of wounds associated with unarmed martial arts strikes. The roll also confirms that Chuusuu was likely struck down by a katana.

If the PC makes a TN 30 and asked for the help of the eta in performing the examination of the body, they find an additional clue: a small wound, like that of a dart or needle, on the back of Chuusuu's neck, underneath his hair. The wound is surrounded by a strangely-colored bruise, mottled in wavy lines that radiate out from the injury. The entire affected area is only about two inches across, and wound likely have been invisible when he stood with his hair in the usual topknot. A **Craft: Poison or Medicine (Antidotes) / Intelligence** roll, TN 25, identifies the effect as characteristic of a hallucinogenic poison called "morning's sorrow." (A PC must have the Emphasis to use Medicine for this roll.) Morning's sorrow causes partial blindness and hallucinations involving twinkling lights that together tend to make the victim believe night has fallen, no matter the actual time of day.

There is nothing else to find here; if questioned, the eta confirm that only Chuusuu and his clothes were brought from the inn, and his wakizashi is still nowhere to be found.

Part Three: Spring Into Ambush

If the PCs did not find the evidence suggesting the killer entered and left Chuusuu's room through the window, they may well have no choice but to return to Kyuden Doji with the information they have already gathered. If they did find the clue at the window, though, they can search the ground below the window with a **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** roll, TN 20. Success reveals not only a set of fresh tracks, less than a day old, but also a blood trail. The tracks and blood trail lead through the village and into the forest to the west. If the PCs cannot find the tracks themselves, Anjo notices their search and helps them look – he makes all Hunting / Perception rolls at 8k3, and he has both the Tracking and Survival Emphases. If asked, he will immediately agree to help the samurai follow the tracks into the forest, and will track to the best of his ability.

The trail heads west-northwest, over some reasonably rough terrain; the PCs must make another **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** roll, TN 20, along the way to keep on the trail. They can only fail this once, in which

case they spend about fifteen minutes casting about for the tracks before getting to roll again – failing a second time means they’ve lost the trail for good. Once the group has made the second roll, Anjo notes (if he is present) that the trail seems to be taking a direct, if difficult, route toward the sacred healing spring located in the forest. If Anjo is not present, a PC with at least 1 Rank in Lore: Crane or at least 1 Rank in both Lore: Theology and Hunting can make the same assessment (this requires an actual Rank in the skills, not “virtual” Ranks as from the Sage Advantage or the like). The tracker, whether it is Anjo or one of the PCs, can also tell at this point that the group is catching up to the killer quickly – they have covered in about an hour what the murderer only managed in most of the night’s travel. Although night-time travel through the woods would be difficult, that kind of delay probably indicates that the killer’s wounds were fairly serious.

After another half-hour’s clamber over the rolling ridges and narrow valleys that make up this part of the Crane forest, you suddenly step out of the trees onto a broad outcropping of dark grey and red stone, as though the top of this ridge had burst up through the undergrowth to expose the base rock beneath. In the middle of the stone plateau is a broad pool, filled almost to the brim with clear water. Steam dances over the water like tiny dragons swirling through the autumn air. Across the rocks you see an ornate temple to Jurojin, the Fortune of Longevity; the golden statue of the Fortune is attended by a trio of elderly monks, while a fourth guides a pair of kneeling pilgrims through a prayer of blessing before leading them toward the pool. Offering bowls surround the statue, and it is not difficult to spot the glint of coin within them.

The abbot of this small shrine is named Karada, and he is the one who was praying with the pilgrims. As soon as he sees the peasants safely into the pool, he approaches the group and politely asks them how he can help. Karada is fairly new to his responsibilities here, as the previous abbot left to take a position helping to restore a recently rediscovered shrine to Jurojin in the mountains near Dragon Heart Plain, far to the north; as such, he has some differing opinions on the role of kindness and the role of alms-giving than did the last abbot. As is often the case among the Crane, the local monks had tied spirituality to profit, seeing no reason not to make sure the visiting samurai gave generously to the shrine in order to make use of its facilities, but Karada has a slightly more ascetic view.

As such, he freely admits that when a ronin arrived at the spring this morning from the woods, bleeding and with a broken arm from what she claimed was a fall off

of one of the ridges in the forest, Karada had seen her straight into the pool for healing, setting aside the usual donations the monks would ask of someone wanting to use the pool. “She spent much of the time in prayer,” Karada adds approvingly, “and her wounds were healed in a short while. She left perhaps an hour ago, south, along the stream path.” He points, and indeed there is a path through the woods, clinging to the bank of the small creek that carries the spring’s waters out toward the sea. If asked, he describes her: a medium-height woman, hair cut short in a maiden foxtail, with a daisho and some basic armor (he is no bushi, and doesn’t know how to differentiate between ashigaru and light armor in his description). She had a small, sharp nose and high cheekbones, and was (he admits with a cough and a slight coloring of his cheeks) quite pretty.

The PCs can, if they wish, follow the trail after the killer – alternatively, they can simply head back to town via the more direct path leading northeast. If they do follow the stream path, the blood trail is gone, making following any tracks harder to do – the TN is 30 if the PCs are looking for signs that the killer passed this way, but if successful, they do find traces. The shrine and springs quickly disappear behind a screen of yellow-gold trees as the group heads back into the forest.

The Sleep of Death

About twenty minutes after leaving the shrine, the PCs approach a pair of trees that form a natural archway over the stream and path. On the base of the trunk of the tree on the stream’s far side is a sigil carved into the bark: a Symbol of Air. Noticing the sigil requires an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 35, and recognizing it for what it is requires a **Spellcraft / Intelligence** roll, TN 25. If the PCs walk under the arch, they suffer the effects of the ward – assume Yoinokuchi rolls a 20 on her Air roll, contested by the PCs’ Earth, and a 35 on her Spell Casting roll, resisted by the PCs’ Willpower. (Anjo, if present, succumbs to the Symbol and is subsequently ignored by Yoinokuchi and the spirit both.) Regardless, as soon as the PCs either suffer the effects of the Symbol or stop short of the archway, Chuusuu’s killer, a shugenja-assassin named Soshi Yoinokuchi, attacks.

Yoinokuchi was instructed to murder Kakita Chuusuu, but although the first part of her plan – poisoning him with a thrown dart so he would stop in Izumi no Tenrai Mura rather than reaching Kyuden Doji – worked perfectly, things went off the rails when she used magic to become invisible and climbed into his room in the inn. Chuusuu awoke as she cut through the paper screen, the poison apparently already out of his system,

and he had a good enough idea where she was to attack her as she climbed into the room. He could not call for help, thanks to her magic, but he was surprisingly dangerous, despite being unarmed – to her (almost lethal) astonishment, Chuusuu turned out to be a skilled martial artist, and he badly wounded her before she managed to finally kill him. With a broken arm and several internal injuries, it was all she could do to complete her assignment, Banish the kami from the room and leave. Knowing she was almost dead herself, she spent the night making her dogged way through the forest to the healing spring, reaching it shortly after dawn and lying her way into being allowed to use it. Now she has fully healed, but although the spring also cleansed her fatigue from her sleepless night, it did not refresh her spirit enough to recover the spells she spent the day before. While at the spring, she used its waters to cast Visions of the Future, and so learned of her pursuers – the vision pointed her toward the tree-archway over the stream and the ambush. As a result, she has used much of her remaining spell capacity to prepare this ambush; she has several effects in place, but only her Void and Fire spell slots remain for new castings. Her stat block, below, lists her active effects. She begins about 30 yards past the tree-arch, firing her han-kyu to poison as many people as possible so that her spirit ally can use his Techniques to full effect.

The biggest advantage Yoinokuchi has is that she has used Call the Spirit to summon a spirit from Toshigoku, a bushi ancestor who fell in battle several centuries ago. (For tables of 6 or more, the “spirit” is actually a pair of twins who shared one soul and died at the same time, and thus can be summoned with a single casting of the spell – both men use the same stat block, given below.) He waits in the trees near the arch to join the ambush, attacking when Yoinokuchi does. Roll **Stealth (Ambush) / Agility** for him, resisted by the PCs’ **Investigation (Notice) / Perception**, before initiative begins to see whether he is spotted or can strike from surprise on the first round. The spirit appears as a man in his early 30s, very slightly translucent, surrounded by a soft yellow glow.

Soshi Yoinokuchi

Air 4	Earth 4	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 4
		Agility 4	Perception 5	
Honor 0.6	Status 1.5		Infamy 4.5	
Armor TN: 35	Reduction: 1			
(ashigaru armor plus Cloak of the Miya)				
Attack: 8k4 (katana) or 8k4 (han-kyu)	Damage: 7k2 (katana) or 3k2 plus poison (han-kyu)			
Initiative: 8k4				

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Dead)

School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 4

The Kami’s Whisper: can spend second spell slot of same element when casting non-damaging spell to negate all visual effects of the spell.

Spells: *Air* (9k4 plus a Free Raise): Blessed Wind (ML 1), Call the Spirit (ML 4), Cloak of Night (ML 1), Essence of Air (ML 3), Gift of Wind (ML 4), Hidden Visage (ML 2), Mists of Illusion (ML 2), Quiescence of Air (ML 2), Symbol of Air (ML 4), Token of Memory (ML 1); *Fire* (8k3 plus a Free Raise): Envious Flames (ML 1), Fury of Osano-Wo (ML 1); *Water* (8k3 plus a Free Raise): Cloak of the Miya (ML 2), Path to Inner Peace (ML 1), Silent Waters (ML 3), Visions of the Future (ML 3). All her spells are Innate.

Special Effects and Abilities: *Cloak of the Miya:* adds +8 to her Armor TN.

Silent Waters: holds a casting of Envious Flames, activated when she says “Witch!” in Senpet. She will use this ability the first time a shugenja casts a spell within 30 feet of her.

Poison: Yoinokuchi has used morning’s sorrow on her arrows. During the Reactions Stage of the Round the target was struck, they must roll Earth, TN 20, or become partially blind, suffering a -1k1 penalty to Perception checks and ranged attack rolls (this is cumulative with Bad Sight, but not actual blindness). Whether or not the roll succeeds, the hallucinogenic effects of the poison render the target Fatigued. Each hour, the target may roll Earth, TN 20, to overcome the poison’s effects.

Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Craft: Poison 4, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Investigation (Notice) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Theology 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 4, Spellcraft 5, Stealth (Spellcasting, Sneaking) 3

Mastery Abilities: several

Advantages/Disadvantages: Stealthy / Failure of Honor

Toshigoku Spirit

Air 4	Earth 3	Fire 4	Water 3
		Agility 5	
Honor 0.0	Status N/A		Infamy 5.0
Armor TN: 30 (light armor)	Reduction: 3		
Attack: 9k5 (ninja-to) or 9k4 (shuriken)	Damage: 6k2 (ninja-to) or 1k1 (shuriken)		
Initiative: 7k4			
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)			

School/Rank: Shosuro Infiltrator 3

The Path of Shadows: lose no Honor for using Stealth in service to the Scorpion; add +2k0 to all Stealth rolls.

Strike From Darkness: add +3k0 to attack rolls against unaware targets and Raises not limited by Void; adds +1k0 to attack rolls against targets suffering from conditions (not cumulative with unaware bonus).

Steel Within Silk: attack as Simple Action with Ninja weapons or against unaware targets.

Special Effects and Abilities: *Spirit* (half damage from all sources except jade, crystal, obsidian, or spells with the Jade or Crystal keyword)

Skills: Acting 3, Athletics 3, Craft: Poison 2, Defense 3, Kenjutsu 4, Knives 4, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Spirit Realms 3, Ninjutsu 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 3, Stealth (Ambush, Sneaking) 5

Mastery Abilities: several

Advantages/Disadvantages: Cursed by Toshigoku

Yoinokuchi has a poison pill, and will take it, even in the instant before she falls unconscious from wounds, rather than submit to capture or interrogation. However, she was still carrying several vital pieces of evidence that do much to explain the events of the last day. Although she does not carry a shugenja's scroll satchel (which allows her to "pass" as a ronin bushi most of the time), she does have a small traveling pack that contains several scrolls. These scrolls are very similar to the ones the PCs found in Chuusuu's room, and are also addressed to Seou – these, however, detail testimony collected by Chuusuu that outlines a smuggling operation, organized by Doji Meihu himself, that is completely separate from the one Munemori assembled and that was detailed in the other set of papers. (The testimony suggests that Meihu might have picked up on part of what Munemori was doing, although not his purpose in framing Meihu for it, and adopted the idea as his own.) Again, a simple **Lore: Law / Intelligence** roll, TN 10, suggests that this testimony is enough to convict Meihu of smuggling and disgrace him quite thoroughly. (If the PCs somehow manage to keep Yoinokuchi from killing herself, interrogations prove fruitless – she freely lies about who sent her, claiming to have been ordered by Kakita Munemori to assassinate Chuusuu, and to have been unable to replace the documents in Chuusuu's room with the ones she is carrying due to her wounds.)

Keen eyes (and an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 25) can also spot something else: the wakizashi thrust through the shugenja's obi has an extremely ornate tsuba, one decorated with a Kakita mon. A closer look reveals that the tsuba has been welded to the saya. This is Kakita Chuusuu's wakizashi. Anyone holding it may make another **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 40, to realize that the end of the

saya comes off – removing it reveals a small space where the wakizashi's blade should be. Instead, there is a folded piece of paper. The contents of the paper are in Appendix #2.

At this point, with the assassin dead and all of Chuusuu's testimony recovered, the PCs can at last head back to Kyuden Doji, their work fully complete.

Using the Spring

Badly injured (and potentially hallucinating) PCs might wish to stop by the healing spring to take advantage of its waters. Now that Yoinokuchi is dead, there's no particular reason not to do so. Karada, for his part, offers the same free bath that he gave Yoinokuchi earlier, particularly if the PCs explain that she ambushed and tried to kill them after healing in the spring. All the PCs are free to make use of the spring once before leaving if they desire.

Actually gaining any benefit from the spring involves sitting in the water for an hour. Once that hour is passed, characters regain 1 Wound for every minute they sit in the water, up to their full health, and also removes any Fatigue Condition they might be facing. (It also cures morning's sorrow outright.) Once they reach full health, the spring has the chance to remove one more permanent ailment from the character. If a PC has the Bad Eyesight, Blind, Epilepsy, Lameness, Missing Limb or Permanent Wound Disadvantage, the PC may roll their Water Ring, TN 30, to have the ailment be removed. (This still requires the Disadvantage be bought off with Experience Points, but the player need only pay the original cost of the Disadvantage, and does not have to provide a justification to the Campaign Administration.) A PC with Jurojin's Blessing adds +1k1 to this roll, but a PC with Cursed by Jurojin cannot use this ability at all. Once the roll has been attempted, one way or the other, the PC can never again gain this benefit from the spring.

Part Four: Injustice is Served

Once the PCs return to Kyuden Doji, the servants inform them that Yotsu Seou is waiting to speak with them as soon as they have properly changed and settled from travel. Seou meets them back in her rooms, and listens intently to their report when they make it.

If the PCs did not locate and deal with Chuusuu's killer, Seou is disappointed, but acknowledges at once that she

sent them to find out Chuusuu's fate and locate his information, not to solve a murder. She notes with sadness that there is little way to know who did it anyway, at this point; it will likely rot forever in her "unsolved cases" file.

What else happens depends on what information the PCs turn over to Seou. If they only give her the information on Munemori, either because they don't have anything else to offer or because they choose to withhold the testimony on Meihu, Seou accepts it gravely, shaking her head as she reads the contents. "Munemori'll be a dead man in a week," she comments, "and Yoshi's going to suffer a world of hurt in the courts as well. Uji and Meihu will love this, though."

Likewise, if the PCs turn over the documents that implicate Meihu without also handing over the Munemori documents, Seou shakes her head and comments, "Looks like the end of Meihu's second time through the wheel, and the Crab/Crane War with it. Yoshi will probably be giggling for weeks behind that pretty fan of his."

Note: if the PCs choose to turn over only one set of documents when they have both, they will suffer an Honor loss of 1 point per Rank of Honor they currently possess. This is the price of being able to significantly impact the course of a Great Clan's destiny.

On the other hand, if the PCs show both sets of documents to Seou, she reads them with an ever-deepening frown before finally turning back to the group. "Clearly, the circumstances in which you found this testimony is suspicious to say the least," she tells them. "As my investigators, I must trust your assessment on this: which on these papers do you think are legitimate? Either? Both?" She listens to whatever the PCs have to say, and accepts their recommendation on which set of documents to pursue. If they either support both sets or neither, she sighs and says she will look into it further herself.

Regardless, once the PCs have presented their testimonies, Seou offers her thanks for their efforts. "I am grieved for the death of my friend, but I appreciate your efforts in completing his final task. I won't be pursuing any formal investigations until after the wedding, to avoid disrupting Toshiken-sama's celebration. As a result, I would ask for your discretion until my investigation is announced. Thank you again for your time and hard work." Unless the PCs have anything else to add, she dismisses them to enjoy the rest of the week.

Going Around Seou

Although the servants command the PCs to return to Seou as soon as they reach Kyuden Doji, some PCs might wish to speak with some of the other principals in the case before they turn over the evidence to Seou. Ignoring the command of an Emerald Magistrate the PC has agreed to serve is somewhat dishonorable – PCs who do so lose 1 point of Honor for every four full Ranks of Honor they possess – but otherwise nothing prevents them from doing so. Both Meihu and Munemori can be reached for an audience with relative ease (an **Etiquette (Bureaucracy)** / **Awareness** roll, TN 15, for each one); Yoshi and Toshiken, however, are not accessible in a time period shorter than a few days.

If the PCs speak with Meihu, he meets with them in his office in Kyuden Doji, a large space equally filled with military trophies and shelves filled with scrolls. Meihu is polite but terse, as he is a busy man; if the PCs bring up the idea that he might be involved in smuggling in any way, however, his attitude changes completely. "Let me make something very clear," he says flatly, and he reaches out a hand to place it on the hilt of his katana, resting on a stand near his desk. "What you are suggesting is an insult to me and to every soldier under my command. I take such things extremely seriously. If you so much as whisper of this again, I will prove my worth with steel, and you will go to your ancestors wishing you'd held your tongue in better check. Now get out of my office." An **Investigation (Interrogation)** / **Awareness** roll, TN 30, notes that Meihu is indeed angry at the accusation, but not actually shocked by the idea of it. On the other hand, if the PCs show him testimony accusing Munemori, he shrugs and says, "I wish I could say that the man I know would never do such a thing, but I cannot in honesty do so. You have your testimony, samurai-sans; you know what you must do with it." He does not quite manage to hide a smile in the process.

If the PCs choose to speak to Munemori, he greets them in his office, which is lavishly but somewhat inelegantly decorated, as though by a man with more money to spend than interest in what he is spending it on. He offers the PCs some sake when they enter, and listens politely and without expression to what they have to say. If they ask about the smuggling in connection with him, he sighs and shakes his head. "I am a man with many enemies," he says at last, "and my patron – both of my patrons, in fact – have even more. I wish I knew who was behind this, but I can assure you, this is some plot to discredit me and those for whom I work. Possibly even an attack against the

Crane as a whole.” Meeting a TN 45 on **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** determines that Munemori is being sincere but not completely honest – his words are true, but misleading. At this point, Munemori will roll his **Lore: Bushido / Awareness** of 8k5 against a TN 30 to determine the PCs’ Honor. If everyone to whom he is speaking appears to have an Honor Rank of 3 or less, he continues, “The Crane look out for those who help them, and we would be generous indeed to anyone who act to protect us from this vile assault. Both wealth and position could easily come to one with friends as generous as we can be.” If the PCs agree to bury the testimony against him, Munemori can and will bribe them with either 5 Ranks of the Wealth Advantage or a Social Position worth Status 2.0. They will also gain a Crane Favor, a Major Obligation to the Crane, and the Dark Secret (Bribed by Munemori) Disadvantage. If the PCs instead ask him about the Meihu testimony, Munemori looks surprised, then saddened. “Meihu-sama has been... frustrated... by the lack of cooperation he has faced from others in our Clan. His drive to see the Yasuki returned to the Crane is greater than even I imagined, though. I do not look forward to what this means for the Crane, but the demands of justice are clear. You know your duty, samurai-sans, and I commend you to it.” An **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, TN 35, notes that the surprise is genuine – the sadness is not.

If the PCs hint at an accusation to Munemori and either refuse his bribe or are unsuited to being offered it, as soon as they leave Munemori goes to speak with Yoshi. The results of that conversation are detailed in the Conclusion, below.

Conclusion

At the end of the week, Kakita Toshiken and Doji Narumi are married in a ceremony as extravagant as the rest of the week has been combined. Narumi takes the Kakita name, although her son – as Clan Champion – does not. The event is celebrated as having set a high bar for the Winter Courts soon to come, and the dignitaries scatter back to their homes across the Empire for one last rest before the winter’s politicking begins.

If the PCs supported either or both of the sets of testimony, Yotsu Seou announces the results of their investigation a few days after the wedding. She highlights the role the PCs played in the investigation, earning them 2 points of Glory each.

If the PCs supported the evidence against Meihu (whether or not they also supported it against

Munemori), Meihu denounces Seou as a puppet of Toshiken and refuses to commit seppuku, instead taking a number of Doji bushi and going ronin. These samurai are last seen heading north, toward the Imperial Capital.

If the PCs supported the evidence against Munemori (whether or not they also supported it against Meihu), the result depends on whether they also spoke to Munemori before turning the testimony over to Seou. If Munemori was warned about the possible investigation, he admits to his crimes, and goes further – supported by testimony from two of his aides, he confesses to having begun a frame job against Yoshi as well, with the aim of eventually gaining control of the family. Yoshi is apparently shocked, but the betrayal casts Yoshi in a sympathetic light, and Munemori’s subsequent seppuku takes all the shame and disgrace on Munemori, leaving Yoshi politically unscathed. On the other hand, if Munemori was not warned, Munemori confesses and commits seppuku, but did not have a chance to fabricate the additional evidence to spare his mentor; Yoshi is tainted by the scandal, and his position in the courts is weakened considerably going into the winter season.

If the PCs did not support either of the sets of testimony, Seou is forced to confirm them herself. She is able to do so, verifying that all the accusations are true, but her report only mentions the PCs as a side note, and they gain no Glory. The other consequences are as above, for both of the suspects.

In the coming months, if Meihu escaped conviction but Munemori and Yoshi did not, the trend against the war within the Crane reverses itself, as the pacifist faction is weakened by the scandal – the war looks likely to escalate substantially next summer. If Meihu was caught but Yoshi (and possibly Munemori) were untouched, the Crane begin preparations to sue for peace, with an eye toward ending the war during the coming Winter Court. If all three suffered, then the Crane are hugely weakened, and Crab negotiators across the Empire begin rubbing their hands together in glee...

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
Returning at least one piece of evidence to Seou:	+1XP
Defeating Yoinokuchi:	+1XP
Total Possible Experience:	4XP

Honor

PCs who aided in Seou's investigation gain 1 point of Honor if they have 4-6 Ranks of Honor, and 2 points of Honor if they have 3 Ranks of Honor or less.

Deliberately withholding information from Seou costs the PCs 1 point of Honor per Rank they currently possess.

Ignoring Seou's command to return to her immediately costs the PCs 1 point of Honor if they have Honor 4-7, or 2 points of Honor if they have Honor 8 or higher.

Glory

If the PCs correctly solved the puzzle and gained the netsuke from Narumi, they gain 1 point of Glory.

If the PCs supported at least one set of testimony, they gain 2 points of Glory.

If they did not otherwise earn Glory in the adventure, they lose 1 point of Glory due to inactivity.

Other Awards/Penalties

Crane characters who were given the netsuke by Narumi gain 1 point of Status.

Characters who did not already have Yotsu Seou as an Ally gain her as an Ally (Influence 2, Devotion 1). Other characters increase her Devotion by +1, and her Influence is a minimum of 2.

Module Tracking Sheets

PCs who received a netsuke from Doji Narumi should note it on their mod tracking sheet.

Any Nightingale that impressed an NPC should note which one on their mod sheet.

GM Reporting

Did Meihu go ronin?
Did Munemori commit seppuku?
Was Yoshi affected by the scandal?
Did the PCs give Seou Chuusuu's letter?
What was Yoinokuchi's fate?

GM must report this information BEFORE (02/23/2013) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

This is a list of the NPCs of note present at Toshiken and Narumi's wedding. There are, of course, numerous other samurai attending, but the following information is intended to help the GM portray the most important characters and provide some of the things that are being said about them in the court.

Kakita Toshiken, Emerald Champion (Status 9.5, Glory 8.0, Honor 6.3): The groom is too busy to speak with the PCs. While most of the court are inclined to support him, and those who are not so inclined are being quite circumspect, there are still a number of rumors circulating about his somewhat checkered career. Toshiken was appointed as Emerald Champion by Toturi I while the Emperor was under the influence of the Lying Darkness, but was confirmed after the Battle of Oblivion's Gate and the Emperor's return. The events surrounding the death of the Empress, and later the Emperor, have also cast a pall over Toshiken's service, but he is known to have dedicated everything to the protection of Tsudao (perhaps in an attempt to reclaim his honor). Toshiken remains one of the finest duelists in the Empire, however, and it is highly unlikely any challenger could wrest his title away from him in a traditional duel.

Doji Narumi, Doji Regent (Status 7.0, Glory 3.5, Honor 7.2): The bride is also too busy to be able to talk to the PCs. Narumi is somewhat unknown in the courts of Rokugan; while a beautiful and skilled courtier, her previous distinction had been her marriage to Doji Kuwanan. She has only recently begun to publicly exert influence over the direction of the Crane Clan's future. Her courtship of Toshiken, undertaken in a subtle game of poetry during the conference that determined the Imperial General, indicates that she is likely to take a more overt role in the Clan's politics. Narumi is dedicated to her son's future, having spent a great deal of effort already securing a private sensei for Kurohito (a prominent member of the Kakita Academy) and declaring that the sword found on the beach on the day of his birth would be his when he comes of age.

Daidoji Uji, daimyo of the Daidoji (Status 7.5, Glory 8.9, Honor 5.9): The overall commander of the Crane's military forces, Uji is far more comfortable on the battlefield than in court, but his dark features remain calm throughout the event. While he has allowed the Crane military efforts to the south and gave Doji Meihu to his command, he has made no secret of the fact that he retains a great deal of respect for (most of) the Crab. Uji is a consummate warrior, and has few compunctions when it comes to defending the Crane, but some view his lack of participation on the southern front as tacit disapproval.

Asahina Koji, daimyo of the Asahina (Status 7.0, Glory 3.0, Honor 7.7): Koji never expected to lead his the Asahina, having taken over duties as daimyo after his brother Tamako was Tainted during the March to Volturnum. He is a gentle, quiet shugenja with a deep love for the arts and little care for the high politics required by his position, but he does his duty to the best of his ability. It is widely rumored that Koji has established a private retreat for his brother, so that he may seek the benefit of Tamako's experience despite his affliction.

Kakita Yoshi, daimyo of the Kakita (Status 7.5, Glory 6.7, Honor 8.1): Undoubtedly one of the most influential courtiers in the Empire, Yoshi stepped down from his position as Imperial Advisor in order to lead the Crane's political dealings after his son Kaiten committed seppuku. Despite the tragedies he has suffered, or perhaps because of them, he has focused all of his efforts on strengthening the Crane's position in the courts. Yoshi is fairly vocal about the Crane's strength being in the political arena, and his disapproval of using military might to enforce their political will as "certain other Clans" are known to do. He is thought to be attempting to create consensus among the Clans, with some pointing to the organization of artisans he calls the "Nightingales" as an example of his community building.

Kakita Munemori, protégé of Yoshi (Status 4.8, Glory 4.1, Honor 4.4): As noted elsewhere, Munemori has been assigned to serve as Meihu's court liaison, but his current position offers him little opportunity. He is a skilled politician with a disarming, affable manner that encourages somewhat closer and more familiar relationships than is normal in Rokugan's courts. He is fond of the company of young women, and has something of a reputation as a womanizer, but given the combination of his charm with his influence and wealth, he has little difficulty finding willing partners.

Doji Meihu, shireikan of the Crane Armies (Status 7.0, Glory 7.2, Honor 5.3): Meihu is a returned spirit who has had a moderate amount of difficulty in adapting to the changes time has wrought in Rokugan, and in fact has never accepted the current status of the Crane and Crab. As a result, he has spent a great deal of influence in seeking support for a war against the Crab (to continue the conflict that resulted in his original death). Meihu is actually a skilled warrior and able commander, and has led the Crane to greater military success than anticipated; however, the armies of the Crane have not proven able to consistently defeat the Crab in the field, and there are rumors that he has begun seeking assistance from other Clans in order to support his efforts.

Kakita Masahiro, rikugunshokan of the Third Imperial Legion (Status 7.2, Glory 6.3, Honor 7.6): Masahiro is the highest ranking Crane in the Imperial Legions, having been assigned to the Third by order of the Emperor when Toturi I was restructuring the Legions. He is a highly skilled duelist and a formidable battlefield commander, having served directly under Daidoji Uji during the Clan War and as the second-in-command of the Crane forces during the Battle of Oblivion's Gate under Doji Kuwanan. Masahiro believes that a samurai should be more than just a warrior, and it is a requirement for officers in his command to present themselves with proper decorum. As a result, the Third is generally assigned to more urban areas, where their ability to deal with the nobility without resorting to force is a significant benefit to their operations.

Bayushi Yojiro, Scorpion Clan Champion (Status 8.0, Glory 8.2, Honor 3.7): The Master of Secrets is somewhat of an enigma; though once called "the Honest Scorpion", Yojiro has unquestionably proven himself to be a strong leader for the Scorpion both in the courts and on the field of battle. Though reputed to have little patience with fools and none with traitors, Yojiro has worked ceaselessly to restore the Clan to their place following the Clan's exiles during the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow. There are indications of a minor dispute between Yojiro and Shosuro Yudoka, the Shosuro family daimyo, though in fact Yojiro has more problems with Yudoka's advisor, a returned spirit of the Shosuro family going by the name of "Tsuyoshi."

Shosuro Taberu, Master Sensei of the Dojo of Lies (Status 4.5, Glory 5.7, Honor 2.3): Taberu is one of the most experienced courtiers in the Empire, having served in the Imperial Court before the Scorpion Clan Coup. He survived the intervening years with difficulty, and it has had a profound effect on him. Taberu remains on good terms with Ide Tadaji, but many members of the court have observed that he has no other close friends, and that even those few allies he has are more motivated by fear than anything else. Taberu is a noted poet in addition to his formidable personality, however, and his vast political experience does make him a force to be wary of in court.

Ide Tadaji, Imperial Advisor (Status 9.0, Glory 6.6, Honor 6.2): In theory, Tadaji is one of the most powerful men in the Empire, as the office of Imperial Advisor is intended to serve the Emperor as a personal advisor and confidant, but the death of Toturi has left him with few duties. While the new Regent has not seen fit to appoint a new Advisor, neither has Okucheo made much use of Tadaji's political experience. The Unicorn has a fair amount of time on his hands as a result, though before Tsudao left the capital, rumor has it that he had begun to establish a relationship with the young Empress as one of her closest teachers.

Shinjo Shono, daimyo of the Shinjo (Status 7.0, Glory 3.3, Honor 5.4): Shono was just past his gempukku, little more than a child, when his father fled and Shinjo decimated the family that bore her name. He rose to leadership of the family by default, and has seen little in the way of friendship or understanding from the Empire due to his family's disgrace. The invitation from the Crane to this marriage is the first overture the young man has received in quite some time, and he has every intention of making the most of it. (Those players who know the eventual canon should be aware that he still has both eyes at this point.)

Asako Toshi, daimyo of the Asako (Status 7.0, Glory 2.1, Honor 7.2): Toshi is, like most of his family, more of a scholar than a courtier. He is inclined to approach the court as a giant puzzle, one that he perceives through the lens of history and precedence. Toshi is genuinely friendly and naturally polite, however, which does gain him allies if sometimes leads him to lose the political gains he might see if he were more willing to be as ruthless as his colleagues. Toshi is concerned about the Regent's policies and the actions he has taken in pursuit of his ambitions, but the missing chronicles of Okucheo's reign likely trouble him more than any other fact about the situation.

Yoritomo Hogosha, Mantis political leader (Status 7.5, Glory 4.4, Honor 2.7): The senior political mind of his Clan, Hogosha is the founder of a School based on serving the Clan's interests through intimidation. He's strong-willed and stubborn, but the Mantis owe a great deal of their current status as a Great Clan to his force of personality.

While Yoritomo may have led the way, Hogosha has been instrumental in securing the Clan's position in the Imperial Court; both because he is well-connected, and because he fully understands when to apply pressure and when to hold back. With Yoritomo Aramasu, the Mantis Champion, away, Hogosha has been making most of the policy decisions for the Clan, but recently he seems to have been focusing on developing the Clan's trade fleet as opposed to political gains; the Mantis have begun construction on a new fleet of ships on his orders.

Doji Oharu, Emerald Magistrate (Status 4.5, Glory 6.8, Honor 3.2 [6.2 Perceived]): One of the more experienced Emerald Magistrates working under Kakita Toshiken, Oharu has a reputation both for making friends and for getting them to accomplish his tasks. While a keen observer of people and a charming courtier, he has been known to enjoy himself somewhat more than is entirely proper. For years, his early bugei training had been forgotten by the courts, ignored in light of his infirmity and his developing reputation as a courtier and magistrate. Early this summer, however, he displayed his prowess as a duelist before leading the samurai who warned the capital of the peasant army to raise the Imperial forces in its defense. Oharu is inclined to pass off the matter as an isolated incident, and has made no secret of the fact that he is contemplating retirement.

Yotsu Seou, Emerald Magistrate (Status 4.5, Glory 5.2, Honor 3.8): A ronin Emerald Magistrate is seen by many as a contradiction in terms, though Seou's service has never been anything less than exemplary. Her connection to the deceased Emperor, having served in his army during the Clan War, even prompted some to consider her for a position on the Regency Council that serves to advise the Imperial Regent. She was passed over in favor of the Jade Champion, but there are still some who feel that she is deserving of a greater status than she currently possesses.

Shinjo Shirasu, Emerald Magistrate (Status 4.5, Glory 7.1, Honor 6.6): When the Emerald Champion was thought to be dead during the early days of the conflict that came to be known as the War Against the Shadow, Shirasu was a senior Emerald Magistrate who stood up to provide leadership and guidance to his colleagues. He organized the scattered law enforcement through the Empire and coordinated their efforts to fight against the bandits and criminals who sought to take advantage of the chaos. More recently, Shirasu was stationed at Toshi no Meiyo Gisei, but given the reclaiming of the city by the Lion, has chosen to return to assist Kakita Toshiken in organizing the Emerald Magistrates. Shirasu is reputed to be saddened by the state his family has fallen to, but his dedication to his career and his service to the Empire takes up the entirety of his focus.

Isawa Zeppeki, Jade Magistrate (Status 4.5, Glory 4.9, Honor 6.8): Zeppeki is an earnest man, somewhat young for his position, but his power as a shugenja is undeniable and he is rapidly acquiring a reputation as an effective enemy of the Shadowlands. He has relatively little field experience, compared to many other magistrates, however, his cases have all been brought to satisfactory conclusions to date. There are rumors that Zeppeki was a compromise between the Jade Champion and the Elemental Council – that the Council would not interfere with Utagu's mission so long as he was willing to accept Phoenix shugenja into the ranks of Jade Magistrates and heed their advice.

Appendix #2: A Folded Letter

Seou,

If you're reading this, then I'm dead. And if I'm dead, then the stakes are even higher than I thought.

You see, the part that I couldn't tell you, the part that I needed to share face-to-face if possible? It's this: I didn't find this on my own. I woke up one morning two weeks ago with a list of names on my table and directions to "ask about Munemori." Then, last week, I stepped into a tea house from a crowded street and found another note with different names and instructions to investigate Meihu in my pouch. Two different hands, pointing in two different directions.

I am being used as a weapon. Against Meihu, against Munemori, maybe even against Yoshi – I don't know. But they're the target, and I'm just the knife.

I am, and now you are. Be careful, Seou. Someone – maybe multiple someones – has an agenda, and they're apparently willing to kill me to accomplish it.

See you in Meido.
Chuusuu