

Winter Court: Shiro Chuda

**A One-Round Mid-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Hida through Ryoshun, 1141 (Winter)**

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Winter's white shrouds the Dragon Heart Plain. The Dragon Clan have promised a season of revelations and entertainment. It will no doubt prove to be a memorable winter.

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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 can involve parties of widely varying capabilities.

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-Rank Table (most of the PCs are Rank 3): TNs for Social Skill rolls may be reduced by 5 at the GM's discretion.

High-Rank Table (most of the PCs are Rank 5): TNs for Social Skill rolls may be increased by 5 at the GM's discretion; Kokujin is much more likely to stay and fight, and is more willing to maim or kill the PCs, at the GM's discretion.

Adventure Summary and Background

Seven hundred and thirty-nine years ago, the Phoenix Clan descended upon the lands of the Snake Clan and exterminated every last man, woman, and child to be found. Though they had good reasons, these were never shared with the Empire and the tacit permission of the Emperor (Hantei Kusada, influenced by the Gozoku) meant that they faced no serious repercussions for this act. A truth difficult to uncover, but known to a very few scattered through Rokugan's history, is that the Snake Clan had fallen to maho and been possessed by a malevolent entity of Jigoku known as the Shuten Doji. The Phoenix, granted forewarning by what can only be described as divine intervention, prevented the monster from spreading its influence at the cost of its first victims.

Whether due to the overt influence of the Shuten Doji or the corruption and death of so many innocent souls, the Snake Clan's lands in the northern Dragon Heart Plain have been haunted for centuries since. Recently, the Dragon Clan came into possession of the Plain, and with the aid of a blessed Shrine to the Sun, have cleansed the region of the negative influences of the other Realms. The reclusive Dragon Champion, Togashi Hoshi, has decided to showcase the changes that have been made in the area by hosting a Winter Court. Though most of Rokugan regards Hoshi as a complete mystery, he has chosen to end his seclusion and involve himself in the affairs of the Empire in order to help his Clan through the difficult times coming.

Unfortunately, Hoshi is not the only one with an agenda. One of the Dragon Clan's nemeses, the fallen ise zumi Kokujin, has himself had a vision of the coming war in the Empire. While his own power is his foremost motivation, Kokujin does wish for major difficulties to befall the Clan he once helped lead; if nothing else, he believes that causing hardships to the Dragon will help him recruit followers to his philosophy of defiance against the Heavens. (Kokujin's reasons are fairly complex, and described in more detail in the appropriate section.) To that end, he will cause the Dragon to lose a significant amount of face by killing guests from other Clans, attempt to use their blood to desecrate the Shrine to the Sun in order to reopen the Dragon Heart Plain to malign spiritual influences, and cause what chaos he can to satisfy his malicious nature.

Of course, politics at a Winter Court will continue no matter the other events. As the official Winter Court of a Great Clan, there is a certain amount of importance to this gathering (though the Dragon are far from the most influential Clan, they are still a Great Clan). Some of the Clans (Crab and Phoenix) will be attempting to build alliances, some will be attempting to cause problems for their enemies (Scorpion and Mantis), and some will simply be working for the general betterment of the Clan though whatever method they can.

Additionally, as the Dragon Clan has been the most staunch in their support of the Emerald Champion, this Winter Court (the first in many years with the Dragon Clan Champion in attendance) will be a focal point of conflict between those samurai who have lent their support to Toshiken and those who act on behalf of the Imperial Regent, Hantei Okucheo.

Ultimately, as the winter progresses, the number of deaths will mount and tensions will become very high. Though the Dragon will be investigating very carefully, unless the PCs follow through on the matter, they will prove unable to stop the murders (Kokujin's abilities are outside of their experience, while he is intimately familiar with the way that Kitsuki investigators operate). The season's end will depend on the PCs and their actions.

Character Notes

This module is somewhat more specific to the PCs than most; it is up to the GM to tailor some of the situations to the PCs present. Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Support for the Emerald Champion, such as Positions in the Empress' Court, or in the Emerald Magistrate organization.
- Support for the Imperial Regent, such as a Position as an Owl.
- The Doubt Disadvantage.
- Status Ranks of 3.0 or higher.

How to Run this Module

As with other Winter Court modules, this mod covers four months of in-character time. There are only a few detailed scenes, for the most part, with several depending on what positions the PCs have or Imperial faction they support. There are sixteen weeks in the winter, so it will be important to move through them fairly quickly, in order to give the players a chance to focus on those events that are most important to them. (Confronting Kokujiin, for example.) There are more events scheduled for the earlier weeks for this reason. In a typical four-hour slot, sixteen weeks does average to fifteen minutes per week, but as the more involved weeks will involve more time to play through, it is suggested that the less intense weeks be moved through as quickly as possible.

The bulk of the module is broken down into a week-by-week overview of the various happenings – a list of any events and gossip, notes for when partisan events begin to occur, and the murder that takes place. The order of some of these events (the murders and the gossips) is important, though whether or not they happen is variable – when the PCs find and confront Kokujiin, the killings will stop, and any references to further deaths will not happen as a result. Details of investigating and confronting Kokujiin are found in Part Three.

Introduction

Cold winter winds blow across the Dragon Heart Plain, broken by the Great Wall of the North but still presaging the bitter chill that is soon to come to these northern lands. Shiro Chuda sits atop a hill overlooking the plain, a small castle obviously still expanding, but impressive considering that a year ago there was nothing here but ruins. A half-dozen buildings cluster at the base of the hill, a recently-constructed village that houses the laborers and peasants that support the growing castle.

Polite servants greet you at the castle gate. The courtyard is dominated by the main keep, an elegant five-story building with two wings spreading as if in

welcome. A small temple and a stable take up the rest of the courtyard. You are shown to austere rooms in the guest wing, furnished with simple decorations but appropriate to your station. Some other guests have already arrived, and anticipation hangs heavy in the air as the courtiers and envoys ready themselves for the coming winter months.

The PCs have been personally invited by the Dragon Clan Champion Togashi Hoshi to attend the official Dragon Clan Winter Court. This is a significant honor, and due to the increased responsibilities and fame that they have earned. The PCs are, obviously, not the only characters from their Clans present; the Clan handouts have a sample of the sort of letter Hoshi would have extended his invitation in and a list of the other samurai present from their Clan. It can be assumed that the PCs are familiar with the other members of their Clan present, based on traveling with them if nothing else.

It is important to remember that the PCs are not (in most cases) directly under the authority of the NPCs; they are present at the court in their own right as guests of the Dragon Champion, and any service they wish to extend to their Clan is entirely at their discretion. (In some ways, the Winter Court is sort of a vacation for the PCs.)

Guests will be arriving for several days in the week leading up to the start of winter. These first few days will give the PCs a chance to familiarize themselves with the area, determine who the most important NPCs present from the other Clans are, and look for news from around the Empire. The castle and village are detailed below. Players interested in the other prominent samurai should be given Player Handout #1. Gossip in this module is handled somewhat different than in most other mods: there is a collection of rumors in Player Handout #2 that represents the things that are being talked about through the Empire before the winter begins, and there are rumors that will be available through the course of the season (based primarily off of events that will occur through the module).

Locations in Shiro Chuda

The PCs have access to most of the castle's grounds, though the rooms and offices of the high-ranking Dragon samurai are off-limits.

Main Hall

The castle proper is sparsely decorated; the Dragon are not known for ostentatious display to begin with, and the majority of their budget for construction went to completing the castle as swiftly as possible, not for aesthetics. Even at that, the building is not entirely

complete. The two guest wings are comfortable enough, but a third wing is little more than framework still; without a roof, it is exposed to the elements, and materials for continuing the construction have been stored here where it should be out of the way.

A serene, if slumbering, garden can be found behind the main hall. The plants are mostly wrapped for the winter, though there are paths leading around several decorative fountains. Footbridges cross over a small stream that winds its way through the garden, and several shrines stand along the path. Though it will be cold enough to be uncomfortable in the later months, the garden will be a center of activity for the first few weeks.

Guest Wing

The PCs' rooms are on the upper floors of the guest wings, due to their status as personal guests of the Dragon Champion. In general, the rooms only have a single piece of decoration (a wall-hanging or vase, for example), but are comfortable enough and well-heated against the winter winds.

The higher-ranked NPCs are given rooms on the top floors of the guest wings, and their Clans are arranged in blocks under them. There are Dragon guards supplementing the Clan guards on every floor, though they make themselves as unobtrusive as possible. In addition to the expected Mirumoto bushi, there is also always at least one Agasha shugenja on duty in each of the guest wings.

Dojo

Though the province is being administrated by the Togashi, there is still a small dojo off the garden. The castle's guards practice here, but it is also available for the use of the guests. It is built in the typical Mirumoto style, with the words "*Neither Will I*" blazoned across the wall the only decoration. A variety of practice weapons are available, though kenjutsu is obviously the emphasis of the school.

Kitsuki Mizuochi will be spending a great deal of time in the dojo in the weeks leading up to his duel. He is, understandably, nervous about his chances against a professional duelist and more than eager to heed any instruction offered him. If a PC wishes to help him, they may roll **Iaijutsu / Intelligence** at a TN of 30 or **Kenjutsu / Intelligence** at a TN of 40 to give him some pointers that will help him in his duel; this may be done once per week. (See Week Nine for the effects of this assistance.)

Temple

Though the Mirumoto family has been given the administration of the southern Dragon Heart Plain, Togashi Hoshi requested that the Togashi family be responsible for the area surrounding Shiro Chuda. A temple for the Three Orders has been built on the grounds, along with quarters to house the monks assigned to it. The temple area is dedicated to the reverence of Shinsei and the first Togashi, though small altars for the Fortunes and ancestors can be found as well.

Stables

While the Dragon Clan is by no means known for its cavalry, the castle does have a decent facility to house the steeds of its guests. The acquisition of the Dragon Heart Plain may result in the Clan being able to develop a mounted force, however, and they have begun to gather vassals who are familiar with the care of horses. Shiro Chuda has a stable master who was trained by the Unicorn, having come to the Dragon lands with a string of animals given to the Clan as part of a marriage treaty. Even the strictest Utaku should be pleased with the care their steeds will receive through the winter.

Village

The village below the castle is still small, with only a few buildings other than residences for the peasants: a meeting-hall, a small shrine, and an inn that also serves as a sake house and a general store. The residents are generally happy and polite to any samurai who decide to pass through, though there is little to attract a samurai's attention to the village. The overall feel of the village is comfortably rural, without any of the danger that might attract a samurai who wants to "go slumming", or anything of high enough quality to interest more refined sensibilities. There is, naturally, a small eta village with all the appropriate facilities necessary for a community – the PCs may wind up visiting the crematorium later if they investigate the deaths.

The Shrine of the Sun

The PCs (particularly those who remember "Blessing of the Dragon" or "The Killing Grounds") may ask after the blessed Shrine of the Sun that was used to cleanse the Dragon Heart Plain. The Shrine is not located at Shiro Chuda or in the village around it; instead, it is located at a cave roughly ten miles away from the castle. It will take somewhat more than two hours to get there, with even greater time required in the later months. More information on the Shrine itself can be found in Part Three. For now, the PCs are welcome to visit it, and "Saïdo" will be a welcoming host.

Part One: Making an Entrance

The guests and members of the local court gather on the first day of winter for the official opening of the event. After a brief, quiet ceremony celebrating the start of the season, servants begin to circulate bearing refreshments while musicians in the alcoves play soft music. The castle's lord, Togashi Ryoko, takes a place on the dais with his highest-ranking vassals, but the Dragon Champion is nowhere to be seen.

Several minutes pass, and whispers pass through the assembled samurai at the absence of the court's official host. After perhaps fifteen minutes, Ryoko moves to the center of the dais to address the court. "I bid you all welcome to Shiro Chuda in the name of my lord Togashi Hoshi. We are honored to serve as hosts for so many honorable samurai." He scans the crowd, eyes flickering to the doors to the hall anxiously. "We have many entertainments prepared for the season, and we hope that our efforts to honor you, our guests, will be appreciated in the spirit that they are..." He breaks off as the doors to the hall slide open wide; a huge samurai in full armor stands in the entrance. The man is easily seven feet tall to the Dragons cresting his kabuto, and the shoulders of the green and golden plate make his already-wide shoulders truly impressive.

Togashi Ryoko is interrupted in his attempt to stall for his lord's arrival by, in fact, his lord's arrival. The PCs may roll **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** (TN 35) to recognize the Dragon Clan Champion; Dragon PCs receive two Free Raises for this roll, but even they have very little experience with their Champion. PCs may also roll **Lore: History / Intelligence** (TN 30) to recognize the armor itself as that worn by Togashi Yokuni, the Dragon Clan Champion before Hitomi who died on the Day of Thunder performing an unspecified service to the Thunders (virtually no one in the Empire is aware of Yokuni's true nature). Other applicable Skills can be used at the GM's discretion; Lore: Dragon Clan, Lore: Nemuranai, etc.

Most of the assembled samurai are unsettled by the presence of an armored samurai in court, whether they recognize the Champion for who he is or not. Hands drift to the hilts of wakizashi, courtiers spread fans before their faces, and Phoenix PCs (or those near them, at the GM's discretion) may roll **Perception** (TN 10) to notice the floor under the tatami mats trembling as Taeruko prepares herself for a possible confrontation.

The crowd shifts back slightly from the aisle as the armored bushi strides toward the dais. Whispers rustle through the crowd again, following the warrior in his wake as he steps easily up to stand next to Ryoko. Rather than ordering his guards forward, the daimyo bows deeply and greets the man with respect. "My lord Hoshi-sama." A few gasps indicate those who had not already concluded the identity of Togashi Hoshi, Champion of the Dragon.

Hoshi nods briefly to Ryoko before turning to the court. He pauses, then lifts a hand to his helmet and removes it to reveal a dark-skinned, somewhat homely face. He addresses the gathering in a calm, deep voice. "Greetings, samurai of the Empire. I thank you for attending this court, the first I have hosted since taking up my duties as Champion. I do ask forgiveness for my appearance, but this armor was worn by the Dragon Champions before Hitomi in all of their public appearances, and I wished to honor that tradition." He tucks the helmet under his arm casually, his explanation mollifying the crowd only slightly.

PCs may roll **Courtier / Intelligence** (TN 20) to realize that, no matter the traditions, Hoshi's appearance is a tacit declaration that he is prepared for violence. He is acknowledging the tensions arrayed against his Clan and is making a gesture to indicate his readiness to defend his Clan. Those who roll a 30 or higher will realize that this is more subtle than it appears; by using an explanation of tradition, he avoids direct insult while capitalizing on the fact that the Dragon Champion's history is one of isolation from the Empire.

Hoshi continues without raising his voice, and the murmurs die down as the crowd listens. "We have many events planned for the season, that we may share our hospitality with you. First, the Festival of Hida is in two days' time; while I understand that most of the Crab Clan who must spend their winter away from their own lands do not have an opportunity to celebrate their founder's day as they are accustomed to, we will do our best to provide them that chance." He nods in the direction of the Crab delegation. "We will celebrate the other winter festivals as well, of course – the Festival of the River of Stars, the Festival of the Moon's Wrath, and of course the Festival of Akodo, to honor our Lion allies in turn. Other entertainments and contests of skill will take place through the entire season, and I encourage each of you to take part. I will also be meeting with all of my guests of standing."

Hoshi pauses for a moment, drawing a breath, and his tone becomes stern. “We will also bear witness to the resolution of a challenge made this past year between the honorable Yasuki family daimyo, Yasuki Oguri, and my dedicated vassal Kitsuki Mizuochi. While I understand Oguri-san’s desire to seek redress for the insult he feels was done to him, I have recently spoken with the Crab Champion, and she and I agree that a duel to the death is not appropriate. In recognition of the depth of the Crab’s offense, however, we have decided to allow it to be to submission instead of first blood.”

This is another surprise; while iaijutsu duels to something other than death or first blood do happen from time to time, it is very uncommon for samurai of such standing to be involved in them. Regardless, Oguri shows a great deal of confidence in his champion, while Mizuochi’s stern countenance is somewhat less assured. Interested PCs may roll **Courtier / Awareness** (TN 25) to realize that Mizuochi, as a magistrate who bears a katana, must stand for himself, and is therefore concerned about facing an actual duelist.

Hoshi shakes his head and moves on. “But such matters will come in due course. For now, we have a feast to celebrate the start of the season. Be welcome in Shiro Chuda, and may the winter months bring you understanding.”

There is, as promised, a great feast; the food is perhaps more heavily spiced than many of the guests are used to, though it does not detract from its quality, and a particularly fine sake is served. Afterwards, the samurai guests will mingle for quiet conversation, congenial drinks, and to begin plotting; this pattern will continue through the next four months, even as tensions rise.

Part Two: Week by Week

Through this section of the module, each week of the winter months will be detailed with the key events that take place. The name of Kokujin’s victim, as well as the method of their death, is described – obviously, when Kokujin is confronted, these murders will cease. Also listed is who Hoshi meets with in that week, and their overall reaction – Hoshi is going in strict order of Status, so if a PC has higher Status than a listed NPC, they get their turn first. Finally, the gossip that can be heard in that week is roughly mentioned, usually with two TNs; earlier gossips may also become available at lower TNs in later weeks. Gossip that is likely to change based on PC actions is listed in *italics* – the GM

is encouraged to put effects of the PCs’ deeds in through the season.

Once Kokujin is confronted, it may be difficult to maintain tension in the module; however, that is appropriate since the major conflict of the winter will have been resolved. The GM should at least touch on the remainder of the events of the winter, and the PCs’ meetings with Hoshi are also very important.

Week One, Month of Hida

Events: Festival of Hida: bragging contest, sumai tournament

Murder Victim: Hida Kiyomasu (“fell down some stairs” while drunk)

Meetings: Isawa Taeruko emerges from her meeting with Hoshi very thoughtful; she will tell the other Phoenix that Hoshi has claimed to be the son of Togashi, and that the spirits seem to corroborate his story – she is uncertain as to what precisely this means. Yasuki Oguri, on the other hand, leaves his meeting with Hoshi extremely pale-faced in what might be both anger and fear; he refuses to speak of the matter at all.

Gossip: (20) The monk that tends the Shrine of the Sun monk was recently replaced when the first one died of old age. His replacement is spending the winter at the shrine itself, but is by all accounts a pious and distinguished man.

(30) There are a fairly large number of samurai present who have declared their support for either the Imperial Regent or the Emerald Champion; there are, for an event of this nature, relatively few people present who represent the undecided majority.

The first real event of the winter will be the Festival of Hida on the 3rd day of the Month of Hida. The Dragon will confer with their Crab guests to ensure that the preparations are well-received. The festival is not particularly spiritual, being a celebration of the valor of those who defend the Empire, and sake and stronger drinks flow freely. Both a (bragging) storytelling contest and a small sumai tournament are planned, and open for any PC who wishes to participate.

Participating in the storytelling contest requires selecting something the character done to tell a story about. (This is a chance for the PCs to discuss things that they have done and gain some recognition for those deeds.) This is numerically resolved with a **Perform: Storytelling** or **Perform: Oratory / Awareness** roll; PCs receive a bonus to the total of this roll equal to their Glory Ranks. Particularly valiant tales should grant between one and three Free Raises at the GM’s discretion. There are several NPCs participating, of course; if no PC rolls more than 40, then Shiba Nadare will be proclaimed the victor with his tale of the

defense of the Isawa Mori during the Clan War. The PC with the highest roll over 40 is the victor. Rolling a 25 gains a PC a point of Glory; victory gains them 3 points of Glory and a prize of a finely-crafted sashimono marked with their personal mon “that your enemies will likewise know your valor when next you take the field.”

The sumai tournament is resolved with three rolls; each of them use **Jiu-jutsu (Sumai)** as the Skill, though the first uses **Agility**, the second **Strength**, and the final **Stamina**. The Large Advantage gives a bonus of +1k1 to all of these rolls; the Small Disadvantage imposes a penalty of -1k1. The total of these rolls will be used to determine victory; a PC who rolls more than 120 will prove the eventual victor (with the victory going to the one with the highest roll if more than one qualify). If no PC totals that high, the victor will be Matsu Tora. Scoring a total of 75 gains the PC one point of Glory; victory gains 4 points and the prize, a beautifully-crafted yumi. The victor is also expected to perform a victory dance – this requires a **Perform: Dance / Agility** roll; failing a TN of 15 means that the character loses a point of Glory.

Additionally, any PC who participates in the tournament gains the title of “komosubi”; the victor earns the title of “sekiwake”, and if they manage to roll a total of 150, they are granted the title of “ozeki” to represent a tournament victory without losses.

The celebration and drinking will continue well into the night; it is appropriate to ask PCs who are indulging to roll **Earth** at a TN of 20 to avoid penalties for inebriation (generally a +5 to TNs, though GMs can rule that those who roll less than a 10 should suffer more, as well as potential Glory or Honor losses).

In the late hours of the night, Hida Kiyomasu will be found at the base of the stairs leading up to his rooms; by all appearances, he has fallen down the stairs in his drunken state and broken his neck. The Dragon will be apologetic, summon eta to tend to the body, and promise that all appropriate rites will be performed for the funeral. (The Kitsuki will discretely investigate, for the sake of completeness; they will find nothing more than some blood at the top of the stairs where the unfortunate Crab apparently struck his head on the stone wall while falling. Curious PCs will find this as well with a successful **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll at a TN of 40, but there are no other clues at this point. It should be pointed out that magical investigations will require casting spells, and should only be done with the permission of the Dragon – this will not be forthcoming this early in the season, when it only appears to have been an unfortunate accident.)

Week Two, Month of Hida

Events: Festival of the River of Stars

Murder Victim: Ide Shiniki (trampled by horses)

Meetings: Otomo Saruko leaves her meeting with Hoshi entirely unruffled; while this may simply be due to her extensive experience as a courtier, she will tell any other Imperials that she is reserving her judgment on what the Dragon Champion shared with her.

Gossip: (20) Tensions are rising between the Imperial Factions – those supporting the Regent and those supporting the Emerald Champion. At this point, it is simply a question of occasionally harsh words, but it is becoming obvious that there are relatively few undecided samurai present.

(30) Kitsuki Mizuochi is spending a great deal of time in the dojo, in preparation for his pending duel. While it is thought by many to be past time for him to step into his father’s place as the daimyo of the Kitsuki family, it appears as though Hoshi is waiting the resolution of the duel before naming him to the position he has effectively served for years.

Though there is something of a pall cast on the court with the death of a samurai so soon, the festive air does pick back up within a few days. The Festival of the River of Stars takes place on the ninth day of the Month of Hida; it is a celebration of romantic love with an ancient tradition behind it. The tale goes that the Fortunes placed two lovers in the Heavens as stars, and they are allowed to meet one night a year. All of Rokugan celebrates their union; star-gazing parties are arranged to “chaperone” the two lovers, and romantic poems and wishes written on long silk streamers are hung from bamboo branches. (Though it is early in the season, this may represent an opportunity for a PC to begin a relationship with an NPC.) The garden of Shiro Chuda will be the scene of a large party, though the worsening weather will curtail outdoor activities soon.

PCs involved in the festival may roll **Investigation / Awareness** (TN 20) to note that Kakita Kyruko, Moshi Shogo, and Ide Shiniki hang the most messages, with the latter two seeming more melancholy than eager. (Speaking with them will reveal that they miss their significant others, though they will speak of it discreetly; Shogo is married and his wife is back home, while Shiniki’s betrothed died recently in the fighting along the Lion border.)

Two days after the event, Ide Shiniki will be trampled to death while visiting her steed in the stables; several of the horses will spook suddenly, doing some damage to themselves and their stalls, as well as killing the Unicorn. Curious PCs will notice Ide Yaichiro berating one of the stablemen immediately thereafter, while a small group of Dragon courtiers attempt damage

control by offering apologies. Somewhat more discreetly, another Kitsuki is searching the stables on hands and knees in the muck. Again, however, little is apparent to the eye; the horses were not spooked by anything physical, but there is no spiritual activity that can be found by the Agasha either (neither Kokujin's tattoos or kiho leave such traces). An **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll (TN 25) will positively determine that there are no wounds on the horses save self-inflicted damage done by throwing themselves at their stalls, or anything untoward in their stalls.

Week Three, Month of Hida

Events: Puzzle Game

Murder Victim: Bayushi Itsuwari (drowned in a fountain)

Meetings: Kuni Tansho is somewhat amused by her meeting with Hoshi, and has no problem with sharing the Dragon Champion's claim of being a son of a kami with the other Crab; ultimately, she feels it has little to do with the pressing matter of possibly malign spiritual influences in the region. Moshi Amika, on the other hand, is mostly confused – she will relate the same news to the other Mantis, but does not understand how such a thing could be possible to have been secret for so many centuries.

Gossip: (20) *Kitsuki Mizuochi has been training in the castle's dojo, worried about the duel he is facing, but his practice is not going well; few doubt that he will lose to the Crab duelist.*

(30) The Crab and Phoenix have begun to open negotiations, though they are moving very slowly and carefully.

In the third week, the Dragon Clan put on a “puzzle game” designed after certain training methods espoused by the Kitsuki. Each guest is given a piece of paper with a clue on it, in the form of a poem, quote from a play, or snippet of a prayer mudra. They will be informed that the clue will lead them to another such message hidden somewhere in the garden, which will in turn lead to another. There are dozens of clues scattered through the shrines, foot-bridges, and topiary in the garden. PCs who wish to participate may roll **Investigation / Intelligence** to follow their clues to the end of the puzzle. Rolling a 25 allows a character to find at least three clues, gaining them a single point of Glory. Those who roll a 40 find the final clues first (again, with the highest roll over 40 being the victor), gaining two points of Glory and winning the prize of a Kitsuki Journal – a blank notebook for recording one's thoughts for the day, as well as memory training to best use it (an additional point of experience at the end of the module for the purpose of buying the Precise Memory Advantage). If a PC rolls more than 60, they will receive an invitation to the Kitsuki Investigator

School (PCs interested in exploring this option will need to contact the Campaign Admin for details of requirements for Multiple School). If no PC rolls a 40 or higher, then the winner is Isawa Taroemon.

The Puzzle Game is the last time the garden will be used for official purposes for the season due to the worsening weather, though it will not be closed off. Three days after the contest, however, Bayushi Itsuwari will be found drowned in one of the fountains. To all appearances, he sat on the edge to read, slipped into the fountain, broke through the ice, and could not find his way back to the point he fell in at. His scroll satchel and the scroll he was reading readily be found where he fell in; the scroll is obviously not an ofuda, but is written in a Scorpion cipher (it is, in fact, a spell scroll, just one designed not to look like it). The snow in the area where he fell in is stirred up, but there are no other tracks besides his.

Once again, the Dragon are apologetic, arrange for the funeral, and begin a quiet investigation. And, once again, there is no physical evidence that the Kitsuki can use to build a case. The Scorpion are very displeased, though they are fairly quiet about it; the third death in as many weeks has begun to be thought of as suspicious by most of the guests.

Week Four, Month of Hida

Events: Factional confrontation (Doubt)

Murder Victim: Shiba Nadare (bad fugu)

Meetings: Akodo Hayato and Ikoma Sho both meet with the Dragon Champion this week, and their reaction is mostly positive; while Sho is somewhat less enthusiastic, the message that the Empire will be tested once more is promising to the daimyo, and they are confident that the Lion will prove equal to the task. (Hoshi's parentage is seen as secondary at best.)

Gossip: (20) Negotiations between the Clans are proceeding, albeit with some difficulty due to the tensions caused by the deaths as well as the factionalism. The Crab and Phoenix are meeting, as are the Scorpion and Mantis, and the Crane with just about everyone.

(30) Word is beginning to spread that Hoshi is claiming to be the son of the kami Togashi in his private meetings; this is seen by most of the court as patently ridiculous, though those who have actually met with him are less certain about that interpretation.

There are no major court events scheduled for this week. There is an optional scene, however: if any PC has the Doubt Disadvantage, they will be pressured into a display of their weakness by an NPC from the opposing political faction – PCs who are perceived to support the Emerald Champion (including those with a

Position in the Empress' Court or in the Emerald Magistrates organization) will be called upon by Kakita Kyruko to provide an example of their Schools' teachings, while PCs who support the Imperial Regent will be pressured into it by Toku Choroihime.

Refusing this request without giving offense requires a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 40. Failure means that the PC loses Honor for their breach of etiquette (1 point for every Rank of Honor they have), as well as the loss of two Ranks of Glory if they refuse. Even if they succeed at this roll, refusing still causes them to lose the Glory.

Going through with the demonstration requires a typical courtly use of the Skill in question (target shooting for Kyujutsu, kata for most weapon Skills, word-games for Social Skills, etc), using an appropriate Trait and at a fixed TN of 40 (including the required Raises for the Disad). Failure causes the loss of two Ranks of Glory; success means that they still lose one full Rank for their obvious ineptitude. However, taking part does earn the PC an extra point of experience that can only go toward buying off the Doubt Disadvantage; succeeding at this roll increases this reward to two extra experience.

Obviously, some GM discretion should be used here: Skills that are inappropriate for a court function (such as Low Skills) should not be used. If a PC's Doubt is not a core part of the School, then the PC's own reputation for their inability should be sufficient to make them a target. If there are two PCs with Doubt, the character with the higher Glory should be the target. The intent is to make this Disadvantage impact on the character, with their political enemies doing their utmost to cause them loss of face.

It is also possible for the PC to take offense at the situation and issue a challenge; doing so requires the same roll as refusing, with the same penalties for failure, but grants the PC two Free Raises on the roll and they will not lose Glory for succeeding unless they lose the duel (in which case they are subject to the full Glory loss). Dueling Traits for Kyruko and Choroihime's yojimbo can be found in Appendix #2.

Also during this week, Shiba Nadare will collapse during a feast. This causes a great deal of stir, moreso when he dies within a few minutes despite the best efforts of the castle shugenja and the Master of Earth. Examination of his plate reveals that he was eating fugu, despite the dish not being on the menu for the meal. Speaking with Heijiro, the cook responsible, is impossible, since as soon as the Phoenix fell, he found a knife in the kitchen and killed himself. A search of the cook's rooms (**Investigation (Search) / Perception** TN

25) later uncovers a string of Mantis koku, but the Kitsuki will keep that fact quiet if they are the only ones to discover it. (As this is a false trail planted by the Scorpion to implicate the Mantis, this is ultimately for the good, but intervention of the PCs may cause other issues.) Additional inquiries will reveal that Heijiro was brought to the castle at the command of Togashi Ryoko, who was familiar with his work from Toi Koku; Heijiro was an experienced chef, trained in several different styles, and was in fact taught how to prepare fugu in the Mantis isles. (He acquired some of the rare fish in hopes of serving them at a special occasion in the winter.)

Needless to say, every further death causes more and more tension in the court and the continuing apologies from the Dragon are proving less effective.

Week Five, Month of Togashi

Events: Festival of the Moon's Wrath

Murder Victim: Daidoji Natsuo (left out in snow)

Meetings: Bayushi Kanchou leaves his meeting with Hoshi thoughtful and pensive, but keeps his own counsel about what was discussed. Shosuro Tsuyoshi by all reports refused to meet with the Dragon Champion, a significant insult to the court's hosts.

Gossip: (20) The unfortunate deaths are being blamed on restless spirits; everyone knows the history of the Dragon Heart Plain, and the accidents have many thinking that the castle remains cursed, no matter what the Dragon claim.

(30) Several of the guests are investigating the deaths without permission from the Dragon. They are being discrete, for the most part, but everyone is concerned.

The Festival of the Moon's Wrath is meant to divert the anger of the Moon from Rokugan by spending the time of the festival in silence; this has its origins when Onnotangu was the Moon, but has not appreciably changed since Hitomi's ascension. Though courts frequently make games of the silence, using slate boards to communicate or hosting art-viewing events, the Dragon tend toward a more staid, spiritual celebration of the event with prayer-scrolls burnt in an outdoor brazier to carry messages of gratitude and honor to the Lady Hitomi.

Unfortunately, with the court shrouded in silence, there is no one who notices Daidoji Natsuo getting drunk and wandering outside in the dead of night. That is, at least, the assumption when his frozen body is found outside the next day with several empty sake bottles. Natsuo was not known as a particularly heavy drinker, but once again there is no evidence of foul play and his death casts a pall over the proceedings.

Week Six, Month of Togashi

Events: No Major Events Scheduled

Murder Victim: Akodo Shotan (wall collapse)

Meetings: Ide Yaichiro emerges from his meeting unsure what to think. Miya Shozaru is somewhat dismissive, though not to the point of disrespect.

Gossip: (20) *Some of the guests have begun to investigate the deaths, doing so quietly as they do not have the Dragon's permission for their inquiries. Several of the shugenja in particular are interested in whether the spirits are involved.*

(30) There are whispers that Yasuki Oguri wants Kitsuki Mizuochi dead, though most do not know why; the insult given at the Miya's Blessing announcement was not that grave, and some wonder if there is some hidden personal antagonism between the two men.

There is no major court event scheduled for this week, though if time allows, the PCs are certainly welcome to sponsor or provide some form of entertainment themselves.

However, the mystery of the deaths has caused a great deal of curiosity among the guests. Two of the Lion, Akodo Shotan and Ikoma Takeshi, will go looking for clues in the unfinished section of the castle, where one of the walls will collapse on them. Takeshi's leg is broken, and Shotan is killed outright. Again, investigation reveals few clues: **Investigation (Search) / Perception** (TN 40) at the scene will allow them to catch a faint scent of incense on the fallen materials. A **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** (TN 30) roll (for those who make the Investigation roll) will identify it as kyara, a very rare and expensive kind of incense used in the most revered shrines; PCs who have been to the Shrine of the Sun will recognize it from there with this roll. It is not used in the temple on the castle grounds, nor in the shrine in town; inquiries at the temple will yield this information with little difficulty.

Week Seven, Month of Togashi

Events: Yasotaro and Mai disappear

Murder Victim: Seppun Nobuatsu (dead in sleep)

Meetings: Asahina Maemi's meeting with the Dragon Champion is quiet and the Emerald Magistrate leaves it with concern, but she will be silent about particulars. Kakita Kyruko, on the other hand, is affronted by the claims made by Hoshi and arrogantly refuses to give them any credence at all.

Gossip: (20) Hiruma Kaoru, Oguri's aide, has been seen in several different places in the castle at odd times; she may be nothing more than curious about the building, but some find her behavior suspicious.

(30) *Rumors are beginning that a Mantis is behind the murders; none of them have died, and the cook had*

Mantis coin. There is no proof, and no one is speaking loudly enough to insult the Mantis... yet.

During this week, Asako Yasotaro and Shiba Mai will leave the castle; they do not have permission from Taeruko, and once it becomes clear that they have left, not been killed, she will be furious. Simply asking at the stables, or inquiries among the servants, will reveal that Yasotaro received a message from a carrier pigeon the previous day and chose to ride out with his yojimbo.

If the PCs wish to follow, they may do so; riding out in the winter weather requires a **Stamina** roll (TN 20; a Free Raise may be granted with sufficient preparation, at the GM's discretion) to avoid Fatigue penalties. Frostbite is also a distinct possibility; if a PC fails to roll at least a 5 on this roll, they will suffer the effects of the Permanent Wound Disadvantage until it is treated (**Medicine / Intelligence**, TN 20) and may wind up losing a body part if it is not treated. Tracking the Phoenix requires a **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** roll (TN 25); the snow takes tracks well even if it is somewhat shifting, but the pair are making no effort to hide their trail.

Once found, the Phoenix pair will react with slight irritation at being interrupted, but not guilt or shame. Yasotaro will prefer to speak with other Owls, but if pressed, he will admit to having received a request to take care of a "small errand." He will refuse to discuss the matter, regardless of any pressures brought to bear, though sufficient interaction will eventually reveal that he is doing whatever he is doing on behalf of the Imperial Regent. (He is heading north to open talks with a tribe of Yobanjin at the Regent's request, but has no intention of sharing that fact.) Convincing him to return to the castle is possible, though difficult – he acknowledges his duty to his Clan, but is even more worried about what he sees as his duty to the Empire as a whole. A **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll (TN 50) will suffice; Owls gain two Free Raises on this roll.

Also during this week, Seppun Nobuatsu will be found dead in his bed, apparently having simply died in his sleep. As Nobuatsu is barely twenty years old, this is more than somewhat suspicious. Again, the Kitsuki investigate with little success; while it is obvious to a cursory investigation that the Seppun was smothered (a Search roll at TN 25), there is little to connect it to a suspect. The PCs may roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception** (TN 30) to notice the faint odor of incense – the same kyara as at the scene of the Lion's death, and the same Theology roll will determine its nature. The Kitsuki, unfortunately, do not know its origin

though it does convince them that they are dealing with the same killer.

Kokujin will attempt to desecrate the Shrine of the Sun this week once he has blood of all seven kami; it will not work, however, leading to some frustration on his part and rather more obvious murders.

Week Eight, Month of Togashi

Events: No Major Events Scheduled

Murder Victim: Toku Uzuki (hanged)

Meetings: Kitsu Shishou is left cautiously optimistic by is meeting with Hoshi, believing that the Empire may be in danger but that the samurai of the Clans will meet the challenge. Toku Choroihime is perplexed by Hoshi's claims, and will be quite vocal about being certain that the Empire will be fine if everyone can just get along.

Gossip: (20) The disappearance of two of the Phoenix contingent has been noticed, and the fact that Yasotaro is the main political advisor to Taeruko has been remarked upon at length. The Dragon cannot help but be a bit smug about the situation, while the Crab are actually somewhat happier to be dealing directly with Taeruko without a courtier.

(30) *Though there is nothing the victims of the accidents have in common, it has been noticed that they are from different Clans and suggested that something about their heritage may be involved in their deaths.*

There are no court events scheduled for this week.

Toku Uzuki will be found in his rooms one morning swaying gently from a rope looped over the rafters; a short suicide note in his coarse handwriting is left on his futon, claiming to be unable to stand "the voices", that the castle is cursed, and that there is only one way to end the screaming but he is unworthy of a proper samurai seppuku. Investigation yields the same scent of incense; studying the note requires a **Calligraphy / Perception** roll (TN 20) to determine that, while it is in his hand, he was under a great deal of strain while he was writing it.

Week Nine, Month of Fu Leng

Events: Duel Between Kitsuki Mizuochi and Yasuki Oguri's Champion

Murder Victim: Moshi Shogo (fallen icicle)

Meetings: any PC with Status higher than 3.4; Yoritomo Takafumi is dismissive of Hoshi's claims, welcoming a war for a chance to demonstrate the strength of the Mantis and bluntly calling the Champion crazy for claiming to be the son of a kami.

Gossip: (20) Moto Kage and Matsu Naga, two honorable bushi from their respective Clans who fought side-by-side in the Imperial Legions before the strife

between their Clans began, have been giving lessons in the dojo for any samurai that wishes to participate. Their styles are very different, but both are skilled instructors, and their mutual respect has made the dojo a veritable oasis of peace in the conflict of the court.

(30) *The monk that tends the Shrine of the Sun has been seen in the castle a few times since winter began. This is not entirely unusual, as the shrine is one of the best-known features of the province, but his travel during the winter weather is somewhat remarkable.*

The duel between Kitsuki Mizuochi and Yasuki Oguri will happen this week. Unless he received assistance from a PC, Mizuochi will not only lose the duel, he will be slain by Oguri's champion Hyouchou. Oguri will, of course, apologize profusely, but his satisfaction will still be evident. If Mizuochi had at least one successful lesson from a PC, the duel will be a karmic strike – both men will be incapacitated by the first blow, but survive. If Mizuochi received more than one successful lesson, he will win the duel; Oguri will offer an appropriate apology, and the matter will be over.

While heading to the bath-house and accompanied by two other samurai (Yoritomo Takafumi and Hida Ryochi), Moshi Shogo will be struck in the head by a falling icicle, killing him instantly. As this took place outside, finding the scent of incense is difficult but not impossible (TN 40); the ice was also broken off rather than melting – this does require examining the body immediately as well as an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll (TN 30) to determine. At this point, less and less effort will be made to make the deaths appear accidental.

Week Ten, Month of Fu Leng

Events: No Major Events Scheduled

Murder Victim: Hiruma Kaoru (crushed skull)

Meetings: any other PCs with Status 3; If the PCs convinced Asako Yasotaro to return to the castle, he will meet with Hoshi and emerge very concerned – both with the thought of more war in the Empire's future and for the implication of the Dragon's leadership.

Gossip: (20) Toku Choroihime has been making friends, as those familiar with her expect; she has developed a working relationship with both Yasuki Oguri and Kakita Kyruko, proving that she can find common ground even with two such different samurai.

(30) *If Mizuochi died: Though Oguri promised to punish Hyouchou for his lack of control in the duel, the champion is seen in court this week with a new kimono of the finest silk; interpreting this as anything but a reward from his charge is difficult even for Oguri's supporters.*

There are no court events scheduled for this week.

Hiruma Kaoru will be found in the lower levels of the castle with a crushed skull. She was seen by a Mirumoto guard only a few moments before she was killed, but she turned a corner and was out of sight for less than a minute. She was carrying a jade finger, clutched in her hand as though for protection, and a small silk bag containing a mass of black sludge wrapped in waxed paper. **Lore: Shadowlands / Perception** (TN 20) will identify the sludge as the remains of a jade finger that has been exposed to the Taint; Kaoru's hand is unburnt, however, so she was not the source of the Taint. (In truth, she was hoping to plant it somewhere on Oguri's orders to make the castle seem Tainted, but has been unable to be unobserved long enough to do so.)

Week Eleven, Month of Fu Leng

Events: No Major Events Scheduled; possible Faction Confrontation (Duel)

Murder Victim: Horiuchi Bouyou (broken neck)

Meetings: the other PCs

Gossip: (20) *Saido, the monk at the Shrine to the Sun, was in the castle to bless the Mizuochi and Hyouchou before their duel. This is but one of the little things the pious little monk has braved the bitter winter chill to help with.*

(30) Kuni Tansho has been seen walking the halls with a jade carving of some sort, though she refuses to allow anyone to examine it.

There are no major court events scheduled for this week; however, if time allows, this is a good opportunity for a confrontation between the Imperial Factions. Yoritomo Takafumi and Asahina Maemi will begin a debate on the nature of duty, specifically to the Empire. Each obviously will be speaking to further their political agenda, attempting to make the other side look bad; PCs who have chosen a side are likely to be drawn in for support, or to use as negative examples.

This is primarily a role-playing event, though the Crane and Mantis will be very forceful in their arguments and insult is quite possible even without PC intervention. Attempting to calm the situation to avoid it requires **Courtier / Awareness** (TN 40); otherwise, the discussion will spark enough controversy that a personal insult will eventually cause a challenge to be issued by one side or the other. It is best to pull PCs into this where possible; the NPCs will seek champions from their own Imperial Faction even over those from their own Clan (a breach of etiquette for them, but part of the point of the display as far as they are concerned). Ultimately, if this option is pursued, it will be at the GM's discretion as to the nature of the insult – such

things should be tailored to the PCs at the table. Stats for the most likely NPC champions are in Appendix #2.

Horiuchi Bouyou is found in the temple with a broken neck. None of the monks remember seeing him come in, let alone seeing anyone assault him; he was meditating alone when attacked. The Kitsuki determine that his attacker was skilled in Kaze-do; a PC may come to the same conclusion by examining the body with a **Jiu-jutsu (Kaze-do) / Intelligence** roll (TN 30). Additionally, the smell of incense is somewhat more difficult to detect – it does not stand out as well in the temple with the other blends (TN 35).

Week Twelve, Month of Fu Leng

Events: Kitsuki Mizuochi promoted to Family Daimyo

Murder Victim: Soshi Itsuwari (strangled with mask)

Gossip: (20) Isawa Taeruko has offered to provide blessings to help the structural integrity of the newly-constructed castle; some think this a generous gesture on the part of the Master of Earth, while others whisper that she would be able to use the spirits as she saw fit if granted such permission.

(30) Mirumoto Kyuujo, a young gunso in the Dragon Army and the son of Mirumoto Takejiro, leapt to the defense of his uncle Agasha Takenao when the sensei of the Agasha Shugenja School was insulted by Isawa Taroemon.

During this week, if he survived the duel, Kitsuki Mizuochi will be formally elevated to the rank of Kitsuki Family Daimyo. His father Yasu's retirement will be formally announced, and he takes his oaths to Togashi Hoshi with dignity. A Dragon PC who helped him win the duel (even by arranging instruction rather than providing it) may swear fealty directly to him instead of a provincial daimyo; while this does not carry any immediate Status change, it is an elevation of their place in the Clan. (The player should contact the Campaign Admin for details.)

Additionally, Soshi Itsuwari's body is found in the dojo, strangled with her own mask. She did fight back against her attacker, and it is apparent from her wounds that she was battered by an unarmed assailant, as with the Horiuchi. Detecting the incense is possible here as well (TN 30).

Week Thirteen, Month of Ryoshun

Events: Shouting Day

Murder Victim: Isawa Taroemon (scroll shoved down throat)

Gossip: (20) Doji Fujiko is found in a compromising position with Fuzake Toyoharu; mortified, the Minor Clan shugenja has not been seen in the main court room since.

(30) Ikoma Takeshi and Shiba Anizu were heard arguing with Yoritomo Takashi and Kakita Kyruko about the best way to demonstrate their loyalty to the Regent. The Lion and Phoenix do not seem to feel that their position as Owls grants the right to abuse their fellow samurai, while the others apparently have the opinion that samurai who support Toshiken are fair game for ridicule and mockery.

The peasant festival known as “Shouting Day” takes place this week; though samurai do not observe it, it is often difficult to ignore as the men of the village gather below to raise their voices to the Heavens. This year, the peasant screaming is accompanied by the heavy beat of taiko drums. The noise adds a level of tension to the samurai’s court, but it is of course most appropriate to ignore the spectacle.

Isawa Taroemon will be found in the bath-house, a scroll shoved into his throat. PCs willing to oversee the eta in their preparation of the body can recover the scroll at a cost of 2 points of Honor; though in the Isawa spell cipher, it is a copy of Jade Strike. Again, there is no attempt to make this look like anything but a murder. Detecting the incense is at a slight penalty due to the steam and water (+5 to the TN).

Week Fourteen, Month of Ryoshun

Events: No Major Events Scheduled

Murder Victim: Kakita Sanetomo (sword)

Gossip: (20) *Several of the Clans are preparing to make their displeasure with the Dragon’s inability to keep their guests safe known to the hosts in no uncertain terms. Which Clans are involved in this vary from story to story, however.*

(30) Mirumoto Ukira, the gunso of the First Imperial squad assigned to the defense of Miya Shozaru, fought a duel against Seppun Enuco regarding certain things said about the Dragon Clan in the Imperial Court. As this duel was not officially authorized, it is not something most are speaking of – openly.

There are no events scheduled for this week.

Kakita Sanetomo is found in his rooms, walls spattered with blood from where he was slain by his own sword. The weapon itself is broken, with most of the blade left in his torso and the rest buried in his skull. There is a large bruise on his throat, indicating he was struck there to prevent his crying out. Physical evidence is scanty, due to the carnage – there was a fight, and the blood makes the scent of incense somewhat more difficult to identify (+5 to both TNs).

Week Fifteen, Month of Ryoshun

Events: Festival of Akodo, go tournament

Murder Victim: Matsu Tomi (beaten with helmet)

Gossip: (20) The Crane and Unicorn have settled a trade agreement with the new Dragon provinces, avoiding the difficulties of the central Dragon mountains.

(30) Shosuro Tsuyoshi’s refusal to meet with the Dragon Champion has caused him no small amount of difficulty; the local Dragon are often disrespectful in turn, and many of his messages have “been lost.”

The Festival of Akodo is celebrated on the fifteenth day of the Month of Ryoshun; tales of honor and glory from all the Clans will be shared. Additionally, there will be tournaments for both go and shogi, the two most strategic of the board games. Participation is open to all, though as the tournaments are simultaneous, only one may be played by any given PC; in both cases, the PC makes three **Games: Go** or **Games: Shogi / Intelligence** rolls and adds them together. (Battle may be used to substitute for the Games Skill if a character does not have it, but is still treated as unskilled, meaning that 10s will not explode; spending Void to gain a Rank in the correct Skill will not allow Battle dice to explode.) PCs who score a 75 gain a point of Glory; the PC who rolls a total the highest over 120 is the victor of their tournament, winning 3 points of Glory and a set for their game made of gold and silver (easily worth 20 koku). If no PC proves victorious, Otomo Saruko will win the go tournament handily, while Ikoma Takeshi wins the shogi prize.

Three days later, Matsu Tomi’s body is found in her rooms, beaten to death with her own helmet. The bloody kabuto has been returned to her armor-stand and set at a jaunty angle. There are the same problems with investigation as at the scene of Sanetomo’s death.

Week Sixteen, Month of Ryoshun

Events: New Year’s (See the Conclusion)

Murder Victim: Otomo Saruko (beheaded and body displayed in main hall)

Gossip: (20) The Crab and Phoenix have formalized a minor alliance with the intent of pursuing “malign spiritual influence wherever they may be”, pending the approval of their respective Clan Champions.

(30) The Scorpion Champion’s agreement to not attack Yoritomo Aramasu while the threat of the gaijin invasion loomed over the Empire remains in force, but has not prevented the Scorpion from acting against the Mantis in other ways.

If Kokujin is still acting at this point, he has grown entirely weary of subtlety or stealth, and simply seizes Otomo Saruko from her rooms as she readies herself for sleep. Dragging her screaming through the halls, he will gleefully behead her in the main hall, and flee the

scene with her head. Interrupting him is essentially impossible due to his Invulnerability, though powerful enough magic could cause him to retreat with nothing more than a bit of her blood.

Tracking him to the Shrine of the Sun is possible, though difficult (**Hunting (Tracking) / Perception**, TN 30) as his shadow-form leaves few tracks. Once the PCs enter, they will discover that the blessing of the shrine has been shattered – Kokujin remains only long enough to taunt them for their failure before fleeing again, this time leaving the Dragon lands entirely.

Part Three: Dance with the Devil

Investigating the Murders

The Dragon Clan have a reputation for both being mysterious and, particularly in the case of the Kitsuki Investigators, solving mysteries. Unfortunately, when they are working against someone who knows their methods and the way they approach problems, it puts them at as much of a disadvantage as anyone. Kokujin will use his various abilities to full extent in order to sow chaos, make the Dragon look bad, and gain what he needs for a maho ritual to desecrate the Shrine of the Sun. He will make full use of his tattoos to move quickly and silently, as well as to hide in relatively plain sight at the Shrine, his kiho to help swiftly kill his targets and avoid retribution, and Blood Domination to tip some of his victims just that little bit closer to death.

Investigating his crimes, therefore, will be extremely difficult. There are few clues left behind, and virtually no testimony to be found. Even the spirits are difficult to use in the task; Kokujin is difficult for them to sense or describe due to his tattoos and Taint. The biggest clue that he is not capable of preventing (due to not realizing it is an issue) is the scent of incense unique to the Shrine of the Sun that has begun to cling to his clothes. The first few murders will not have this clue, as it will take time for the smell to permeate his clothing enough to remain at the crime scenes. Eventually, however, it will become noticeable; the Kitsuki will focus on the guests as the most probable suspects, and will be carefully and quietly searching the castle for evidence until it is too late.

Another difficulty the PCs will face is that the Dragon Clan has every intention of handling the matter themselves; it is their castle, and they are responsible for what happens there. They will not initially ask for help, though if any PC offers after the third week (when it is thought to no longer be coincidence), the Dragon

magistrates in charge of the case – Kitsuki Otojiro and Agasha Kakuzen – will accept assistance. They don't know why Hoshi invited the PCs, after all; it seems reasonable to them to assume that the murders are part of it.

Shrine of the Sun

The PCs should, hopefully, make their way to the Shrine to the Sun. It is entirely possible that their first visit will be under friendly circumstances; Kokujin is more than willing to remain in his guise of “Saïdo” as long as possible.

Bear in mind that winter travel is dangerous and difficult: a **Stamina** roll (TN 20; a Free Raise may be granted with sufficient preparation, at the GM's discretion) is necessary to avoid becoming Fatigued. Frostbite is also a distinct possibility; if a PC fails to roll at least a 5 on this roll, they will suffer the effects of the Permanent Wound Disadvantage until it is treated (**Medicine / Intelligence**, TN 20) and may wind up losing a body part if it is not treated for more than a day.

The Shrine is a small building built into the side of a hill in the same range as the hill that Shiro Chuda sits upon. The doors are shut tight against the winter winds, but not barred; warm golden light shines through the shuttered windows to welcome the PCs. Inside, the shrine is warm and cozy; a large altar dedicated equally to both Amaterasu (as the Sun That Was) and Yakamo (as the Sun That Is) occupies the main floor, but nine more altars are built along the walls – one for each of the Kami (save for Fu Leng). Offerings may be left for Hida, Shinjo, Bayushi, Shiba, Doji, Akodo, Hantei, Togashi, or Ryoshun there. The main room of the shrine is only about forty feet wide and twenty feet deep (with fairly high vaulted ceilings at twelve feet, carved and painted with depictions of the Celestial Heavens). There are two doors on the far wall, opposite the entrance: one is a simple curtained doorway leading to the monk's living quarters, the other is a massive iron-bound door with warding symbols and seals holding it shut. (The second door leads into the cave that Chuda Tamihei summoned the Shuten Doji in 402; it is a potential portal to Jigoku and is sealed to prevent access in either direction.)

The blessing of the Shrine of the Sun is powerful and pervasive, though somewhat subtle: it prevents any Spirit Realm other than Tengoku from having an influence on Ningen-do in its area. Inside the shrine, this prevents the use of any mechanic that involves other Spirit Realms, including (but not limited to) Touch of the Spirit Realm, Curse of the Spirit Realm, Haunted, the Kitsu Shugenja Technique, and the

Shadowlands Taint. This is apparent by a feeling of peace and contentment that washes over the characters as they enter, which even those without a Realm-related Disadvantage feel. A PC who succeeds at a **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** roll of a TN of 20 realizes that the effect comes from the proximity of the Celestial Heavens; success at a 30 brings home precisely how unique this place is – there are perhaps three sites in the Empire as holy as this otherwise unremarkable shrine. (PCs with three or more Ranks in Lore: Theology need not roll for this information.) The Shrine of the Sun is not simply blessed; it is a blessing in and of itself.

The monk that tends the shrine appears to be a wiry man in his early fifties; he moves with a light step, and has a friendly smile, introducing himself as Saido. He is happy to provide blessings, to accept assistance offered by pious samurai, and is eager to offer something warm to help the samurai recover from the chill of the road (simple rice and tea; another Stamina roll at 10 will end the Fatigued penalty, but a 15 is required to avoid the Taint – note that the blessing of the Shrine will prevent it from coming into play immediately, but will take root as soon as they leave).

While entirely friendly, Saido is of course Kokujin in disguise; suspicious PCs may make Contested **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** rolls against his Deceit roll of 8k3+5 (though he may roll twice and keep the better roll due to his Ki-Rin tattoo) to catch him in his misdirections. Without some other reason to suspect him, however, it is unlikely the PCs will catch him in a lie. He is, to all appearances, a friendly, helpful monk – why should they doubt what he has to say?

On the other hand, if the PCs do suspect him of something, they can search the shrine – there is nothing in the main room, but an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll (TN 40) will locate a hidden compartment under the floor in his sleeping chamber that contains a tarnished bronze brazier, a bloodstained aiguchi, and several small glass vials containing blood from each of his victims to date (plus however many empty vials he has yet to fill).

When confronted, Kokujin will initially attempt to lie his way out of it, but will not allow himself to be taken prisoner. Once it becomes obvious that he cannot direct the PCs elsewhere, he will shift back into his own form.

The little monk shimmers, ripples of light washing over his form as it expands. When it settles, the man is almost a foot taller, well over six feet, and massively muscled. His skin is covered in swirling black tattoos,

and a sharp, white smile glitters under golden eyes. “Ah, that’s better...” He bows, mockingly, adjusting the daisho that has appeared at his waist.

Recognizing Kokujin based off his Infamy requires a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll (TN 20); **Lore: Shadowlands** may be used instead. Dragon PCs receive a Free Raise on this roll. **Lore: Nemuranai / Intelligence** (TN 25) will recognize the weapons as Togashi’s Daisho, lost since Hitomi ascended to the Heavens.

Even if recognized, Kokujin’s preference is to retreat rather than fight it out; his advantage of surprise is gone, but he has goals he would like to accomplish. Unless the PCs simply attack, he will engage them in conversation, being completely frank with the PCs about his plans, and what he intends to do now. *“Ah, you caught me, samurai. Well done. I suppose there is little for me to do but make my escape. The Dragon will be expecting me now, and while I know all their little tricks, they can anticipate... oh, at least half of mine. No fun in that, now is there?”* He will share what he knows about the Shrine’s ability to prevent other Realms from having an effect on the mortal Realm, his plans for desecrating it by using blood from all of the Kami, and the true story of the destruction of the Snake Clan. He will also taunt the PCs with the visions he has seen of the Empire’s future. *“Why? Why not? I have seen it, the Empire in flames once more... And this time, it won’t be the forces of Jigoku, it won’t be the Lying Darkness... it will be you. Your fault. The honorable samurai of Rokugan, throwing the mortal Realm into chaos and blood.” His smile widens. “Oh, how I’m looking forward to it...”*

If the PCs seem divided on what to do with him, he will offer to duel one of them. *“Perhaps a challenge, then. What could be more in keeping with how a samurai should act? Win, and I will go along with you quietly to face Lord Hoshi. But if I win, then I go free.”*

It is ultimately up to the PCs to decide how to handle the situation; Kokujin will leave the Dragon lands for the foreseeable future if given the chance. If the PCs accept his challenge, he will fight the duel with his utmost ability – taking care to point out, if he wins, that he bears Togashi’s Daisho and informing them that they should tell Hoshi where his father’s weapons are.

It is highly possible for a high-ranking party to kill Kokujin before he can leave, but that is a path fraught with complications. PCs who succeeded at the Lore: Theology roll to recognize the significance of the shrine will realize the potential danger of Tainted blood being shed in it, and if there is any hesitation on the players’

part about their course of action, they should be allowed another roll.

If the PCs attack, Kokujin's first priority will be to get outside the Shrine – while inside, he cannot access any of his Shadowlands Powers, and lacking *Protection of the Dark* makes him vulnerable. Additionally, the Shrine of the Sun is too brightly-lit to allow him to use his Crescent Moon tattoo. Once outside, he will activate it, turning into a shadow and escaping into the wild – unless there are multiple shugenja prepared and ready, it is unlikely that the party will be able to do anything to stop him at this point.

The GM's motivation should be to get Kokujin out of the shrine before his death in order to avoid afflicting the PCs with the consequences of killing him in the shrine; if the players choose the path of aggression, they will get the opportunity to throw dice against him, but the GM should use the rules to his advantage in the best interests of the characters. Fighting monsters in Rokugan often carries the risk of becoming a monster, and causing the opening of a portal to Jigoku in a shrine dedicated to the Celestial Heavens is something that should be avoided.

During the fight, Kokujin's primary targets will be anyone capable of actually injuring him seriously: shugenja and anyone with a nemuranai. Kokujin is one of the most dangerous unarmed combatants in the Empire. Favored tactics include Grappling, then using the target of that as a shield – he may make a Contested **Jiu-jutsu / Reflexes** Roll (10k7) to intercept an attack with the body of his Grapple target, and his Armor TN is not reduced by being in a Grapple if he is in control of the Grapple. As a master of Kaze-do, he is also capable of taking control of a Grapple as soon as one is initiated against him.

If the PCs kill him inside the Shrine, Kokujin will stagger to lean over the altar with a manic grin. *“Not... the first... choice. But... acceptable.” Black blood pouring out of his body, he slumps down onto the altar, staining the depictions of the sun with his foul ichor. A shudder passes through the Shrine, the lights dim, and the sealed door on the back wall shatters open, scattering chunks of iron and wood through the room. A dark, whirling wind sweeps through the shrine, tearing Kokujin's corpse away and sucking it down a tunnel leading further into the hill. The feeling of warmth and peace in the shrine is gone, replaced by dread.*

Kokujin has both Great Destiny and Dark Fate; it is absolutely impossible for the PCs to kill him permanently, and highly recommended against. If they

do kill him in the shrine, they receive the “Curse of Tengoku” cert.

Part Four: The Limits of Power

Over the course of the winter, Togashi Hoshi will meet with all of the guests that he invited; this is all of the PCs, and any of the NPCs with a Status of 3 or higher. His purpose is to share some of what he knows is coming; he will reveal his nature more as a means of supporting his argument, not as part of a plot in its own right. This can be run individually for each PC if there is sufficient time, but it may just be simpler to present the scene for the table all at once.

The Dragon Champion meets you in his rooms on the top floor of Shiro Chuda. Though the winter winds blow outside, their chill does not penetrate too far into the chamber. Even out of armor, Hoshi is impressive: taller than most Crab samurai, with a wide, ruddy face and penetrating eyes. A bald female monk, a tattoo of a crow spread across her scalp, pours tea for you and Hoshi while he watches with a quiet smile. His movements are smooth, and he gestures his guards and the monk away once you are settled, leaving you alone.

Taking up his tea cup, Hoshi inhales the vapors rising from it before speaking. “I do thank you for attending this court, despite what I am certain are misgivings on your part. Let me assure you, whatever problems the Dragon Heart Plain suffers now are due to man bringing them here, not to the spirits. But that is not why I asked you to come, nor why I wished to speak with you.”

He takes a sip of his tea, watching you carefully. “I am aware of the forces arraying themselves in the Empire. Another war is coming, something that may be worse than the Clan War. I know that you will do your duty as a samurai, but I ask you to also remember that the Empire exists for a reason, and to recall your duty to it. Whatever choices you make in the days to come, whatever counsel you give to your own lords, I hope that you act in service to Rokugan as well as your lord. For that is what being a samurai means: we are those who serve.”

If possible, Hoshi should mention specific things about the PCs at this point; they are not just random samurai, they have involved themselves in the affairs of the Empire through their actions in various modules, and Hoshi is one of several people who has noticed this.

Togashi Hoshi is, as he will readily admit, nowhere near as powerful as his father was. He is intelligent and has the benefit of more than eight hundred years of life experience, but he is not clairvoyant or precognitive. He knows what he has figured out, based on what he has heard; and though he will not discuss the details of his shapeshifting abilities, they do allow him to go many places and learn many things. His concern is for his Clan, and he truly believes that the Imperial Regent will make an example of the Dragon for their opposition to his rule.

PCs who wish to engage Hoshi on specific subjects may do so; he will not commit to any answers, and will not reveal if he has a bias in the Imperial Factions (though the fact that every Dragon provincial daimyo has spoken in support of Toshiken does stand out). Eventually, he will turn to the more controversial revelation:

“I have been asked of my origins, and I have chosen to be entirely open, even though it might have served my purposes to be less than completely honest. I recognize the signs of the coming war, for I have seen them many times before. I was born in the third century after the fall of the Kami; my father was Togashi, the eldest son of Amaterasu and Onnotangu. I do not share his visions – all I know of the future is the things I have seen in the past. I do not have his magic – apart from my age, the only power I have besides the Clan entrusted to me is a minor thing. But I have eight centuries of experience, watching the lives of both samurai and peasants; I have seen what happens when there is doubt in the one that sits the throne.” Hoshi shakes his head sadly, looking off into the distance. “I have seen many things, and I think that the war that is coming will be nothing like anything seen in the Empire before.”

Hoshi is sincerely concerned about the future of the Empire, and hopes to convince the PCs of the danger. He is not going to try to pressure them into one side or the other, but wants to stress the importance of their choices. They have, after all, been present for several crucial points in the Empire’s history already.

Finally, as you are readying to go, Hoshi produces a small golden netsuke in the shape of a dragon with crystal eyes. “Please allow me to present you with this gift as a token of my regard. It is a small thing, but know that by bearing it you mark yourself as one who understands the importance of the choices that you make.”

The full gift-giving ceremony is appropriate, though not necessary, in this instance. It can be assumed that the PCs do not wish to directly offend the Champion of a Great Clan. The netsuke is well-crafted, heavy for its size (being made out of gold), and easily worth two or three koku. PCs who keep theirs should mark it on their sheet.

Conclusion

The Winter Court at Shiro Chuda will eventually come to an end. The New Year’s Festival will be at least somewhat subdued; the deaths that Kokujin managed to accomplish will cast a pall on the celebration as the court remembers the winter, even if he is stopped fairly early. If he is uncaught and kills Otomo Saruko, however, there will be little more than a simple, quiet ceremony as the utterly cowed samurai of the court eagerly await the chance to leave this court far behind them.

If Kokujin is caught and driven away, the Festival will still be somewhat somber but there will also be an air of triumph in recognition of the PCs having faced one of the greatest threats to the Dragon Clan.

Togashi Hoshi will address his guests as they depart: *“Though this season was not the time of peace we may have wished, we must prepare ourselves for the coming year and the trials the Empire will face. May the Fortunes guide you in your path.”*

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
Taking part in at least one court event:	+1XP
Confront Kokujin:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

PCs who fight Kokujin gain 2 points of Honor, no matter the outcome.

A PC who duels Kokujin gains 3 points of Honor, win or lose.

Glory

PCs who participate in or win the various contests gain the amount indicated in the description of those contests.

Discovering Kokujin's responsibility for the murders and driving him away gains the PCs a full Rank of Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who drove Kokujin away gain a Dragon Clan Favor.

PCs who kill Kokujin in the shrine gain the "Curse of Tengoku" cert; this gives a full Rank of the Shadowlands Taint, plus two dice (unexploding) in points, the "Curse of the Realm: Tengoku" Disadvantage, a Rank of Unluck, and permanently removes one Void Point that will not refresh (this does not reduce their Void Ring).

PCs who return Togashi's Daisho to Hoshi, whether by killing Kokujin or capturing him by winning the duel, gain Togashi Hoshi as an Ally (1 Devotion/4 Influence).

A PC who receives the Kitsuki Journal for the Puzzle Game gains an additional point of experience that can only be used to purchase the Precise Memory Advantage.

A PC with Doubt who was maneuvered into a display of their weakness gains an additional point of experience that may only be used to buy off the Disadvantage; success on the display roll grants a total of two extra experience for this purpose.

A PC who helped Kitsuki Mizuochi before his duel gains him as an Ally with Devotion 1 and Influence 3; if he wins the duel, increase the Devotion to 2.

Module Tracking Sheets

Any prizes won from the various contests should be marked on the mod sheet.

PCs who meet with Hoshi receive "Hoshi's Netsuke", which should be marked on the mod sheet.

GM Reporting

How many guests did Kokujin kill before he was confronted?

Was Yasotaro convinced to return to the castle?

Did Mizuochi survive the duel?

Did Mizuochi win the duel?

Did the PCs kill Kokujin in the shrine?

Did Kokujin escape?

Was Kokujin beaten in a duel?

Did Togashi Hoshi recover his father's daisho?

GM must report this information BEFORE (2/28/2014) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: Kokujin

Kokujin's plans are complex and difficult to understand for those who do not share his insanity. However, his ultimate drive is to increase his own power.

- Plan A is to desecrate the Shrine of the Sun. He will be frustrated when the ritual does not work the first time, leading to more flamboyant murders, but will retreat rather than dying.
- Plan B is to simply cause the Dragon a major loss of face; this is accomplished no matter how many samurai he kills, though the more, the better from his point of view. Still, once confronted, he will retreat – his advantage of surprise is gone and he knows the Dragon can prepare for him given enough time.
- Plan C is to corrupt Togashi Hoshi in a confrontation; this will likely result in Kokujin's death, but passing his Taint along to the son of Togashi would be worth it.
- Plan D is to open the portal to Jigoku at the Shrine; this will require his own death, but both accomplish Plan A while allowing him to cause even more chaos on the Dragon Heart Plain.

Kokujin

Kokujin's muscular form is wrapped in swirling black tattoos. His eyes are golden and his smile is bright and friendly, but dangerous and insane.

Air 3	Earth 5	Fire 4	Water 4	Void 6
Reflexes 5		Agility 6	Strength 5	
Honor 0.3		Status 0	Infamy 6.0	

Initiative: 10k8

Attack: 10k10+2

(unarmed, Simple) or
10k6 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 30 (45, **Damage:** 7k4 (unarmed)
Bamboo Tattoo) or 9k3 (katana)

Shadowlands Taint: 2.2

Reduction: 10 (Embrace the Stone)

Wounds: 25 (+0), 35 (+3), 45 (+5), 55 (+10), 65 (+15),
75 (+20), 85 (Down, +40), 95 (Dead)

School/Rank: Togashi Tattooed Order 5

Techniques: *Blood of the Kami:* Gain two Tattoos.

Body of Stone: Gain a bonus of +1k1 to the total of all unarmed attack and damage rolls.

Blessing of the Kami: Gain two additional Tattoos.

Will of Stone: May make unarmed attacks as a Simple Action rather than a Complex Action.

Touch of the Kami: Gain two additional Tattoos.

Tattoos: Bamboo, Chameleon, Cloud, Crescent Moon, Ki-Rin, Ocean

Bamboo: increases Armor TN by 15 while active;

Chameleon: make a Willpower / School Rank roll to disguise self as another person, TN dependent on

familiarity with the subject (5-20); *Cloud:* any successful melee attack against self must re-roll in order to hit or is treated as a miss; *Crescent Moon:* May spend a Void and take six Wounds to take on a shadow form; *Ki-Rin:* may re-roll one roll per round; *Ocean:* does not need to eat or drink, may refresh Void Points once every three days

Kiho: Breaking Blow, Cleansing Spirit, Embrace the Stone, Grasp the Earth Dragon, Riding the Clouds, Self/No Self, Stain Upon the Soul

Shadowlands Powers: Child of Darkness, Blood Domination, Protection of the Dark

Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 5, Craft: Tattooing 6, Defense 4, Divination (Astrology, Omens) 6, Hunting (Survival, Tracking) 4, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jiu-jutsu (Kaze-do) 10, Kenjutsu (Katana, Wakizashi) 5, Lore: Shadowlands 6, Lore: Theology (Shintao) 4, Medicine (Herbalism, Wound Treatment) 5, Meditation (Void Recovery) 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Spellcraft (Maho) 4, Stealth 5

Mastery Abilities: ignore Terrain Penalties for movement; may keep a Full Defense Roll in successive Rounds; +1k1 unarmed damage, Free Raise to Grapple; +1k0 sword damage, may ready a sword as a Free Action; +1k0 Wounds treated with Medicine; +5 to the total of any Contested Sincerity Roll; Simple Move Actions as normal while using Stealth

Advantages/Disadvantages: Daredevil, Great Destiny, Hands of Stone, Heartless, Inner Gift (Lesser Prophecy), Large, Paragon of Courage / Ascetic, Bad Reputation, Dark Fate, Enlightened Madness, Fascination (Fu Leng's Name), Insensitive, Nemesis (Togashi Mitsu)

Special: Whether it be because of his position as a fulcrum of destiny, his enlightened madness, his defiance of the gods, or something else, Kokujin may have two of his Tattoos active at a time. While disguised, he usually has both the Chameleon and Ki-Rin activated. In combat, he makes more use of Bamboo and Cloud.

Togashi's Daisho: Kokujin bears the blades of the kami Togashi, having stolen them from Hitomi when she ascended to the Heavens. They are an exceptional pair of weapons, keeping an extra die of damage, that grant the bearer several abilities: while worn, they receive +2k2 to Initiative rolls, and any Skill or Trait rolls involving Perception or Void. The blades also grant the ability to speak with spirits as a shugenja of equal School Rank casting Commune, a number of times per day equal to the wielder's Void Ring.

Duel Stats: Assessment 8k4 (w/Void); Focus 10k10+16 (w/Void); Strike 10k7+6 (w/Void)

Appendix #2: NPCs Stats and Secrets

With only a few exceptions, most of these NPCs do not have significant secrets or notes that should apply beyond what is listed in the Clan handouts. They should not need full statblocks, either, but a few relevant stats are included below.

Yasuki Oguri: Oguri is not as staunch a supporter of the Regent as he appears, but he is very mindful of the advantages the Crab have gained from their close ties to Okucheo.

Yasuki Hyouchou: Hiruma Bushi 5/Crab Defender, Honor 4.1, Status 4.5, Glory 3.8; Air 3/Ref4, Earth 5, Fire4/Ag5, Water 3, Void 4; Iaijutsu (Focus) 6, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7

Kuni Tansho: Tansho is going to poke around quietly, but since her primary interest is in the Taint, she will find nothing in Shiro Chuda.

Hiruma Kaoru: Kaoru has been ordered by Oguri to see what can be done to make the castle appear to be haunted; unfortunately for her, she will have absolutely no luck with this task as the Dragon are on guard due to the deaths.

Kakita Kyruko: Kakita Bushi 4, Honor 4.1 (2.1 actual), Status 4.0, Glory 5.1, Infamy 2.4; Air 5, Earth 3, Fire 3/Ag4, Water 2, Void 4; Iaijutsu (Focus) 6, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Etiquette (Conversation) 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 5; Kyruko is a skilled duelist and somewhat arrogant about it, but other than her ties to questionable organizations, has little to hide – she is every bit a vain, spoiled samurai as she appears.

Asahina Maemi: Maemi has nothing to hide apart from an Obligation to Doji Oharu.

Doji Fujiko: Fujiko will take the fall for her superior when one of Kyruko's affairs ends badly towards winter's end.

Togashi Hoshi: He's the Dragon Champion. He's not Togashi; he has no magic apart from shapeshifting and immortality. He's a bushi by training, and a monk by inclination, and has a few kiho. He may be one of the most powerful individuals in the Empire, but there are sharp limits to his abilities, and he is well aware of them.

Togashi Ryoko: Ryoko has no secrets; he's just grateful for his second chance, and is interested in making the province all about second chances. The rest of the Empire isn't terribly forgiving, after all.

Kitsuki Mizuochi: Kitsuki Investigator 4, Honor 6.6, Status 6.9, Glory 5.1; Air 4, Earth 3/Will4, Fire 3/Int4, Water3/Per5, Void 4; Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4; Mizuochi has no idea why he's been targeted by the Yasuki family daimyo. He's just nervous about facing a champion with his limited dueling ability, justifiably so.

Mirumoto Ukira: Mirumoto Bushi 3, Honor 5.8, Status 3.0, Glory 3.1; Air 3/Ref5, Earth 3, Fire 3/Ag5, Water 3, Void 4; Iaijutsu (Focus) 7, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7; A man who Destiny forgot. Ukira is content in the Imperial Legion, finally having received some of the recognition he feels he was denied at the Tragedy in Topaz.

Akodo Hayato: Hayato has no secrets. He's still making up his mind about the Imperial Regent, but will support the Lion Clan no matter what.

Ikoma Sho: Sho is exactly what he appears to be; a conservative, honorable spirit. Tradition is important to Lion.

Ikoma Takeshi: Takeshi is genuinely friendly and honorable. He's just got a blind spot where the Hantei is concerned.

Kitsu Shisou: Shisou is fascinated by the effects of the Shrine of the Sun; he is not likely to embarrass himself or his hosts, but he is very eager to study the closed portals in the area.

Matsu Tora: Akodo Bushi 4, Honor 8.3, Status 3.0, Glory 5.3; Air 2/Ref3, Earth 4, Fire3, Water 4/Str5, Void 3; Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Katana, No-dachi) 7, Jiujutsu 5

Moshi Amika: Amika is out of her depth and knows it. She's wondering if her aunt has changed her mind, and sent her to this Winter Court in order to get rid of her.

Yoritomo Takafumi: Takafumi is a brash lout, but utterly loyal to his Clan.

Yoritomo Hitoshi: Yoritomo Bushi 3, Honor 2.8, Status 2.0, Glory 1.5; Air 2/Ref4, Earth 3, Fire 2/Ag4, Water 4, Void 3; Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4

Isawa Taeruko: Master of Earth has no secrets; she wants to hurt the Dragon for their attacking the Phoenix, but not at the expense of the Phoenix.

Asako Yasotaro: Yasotaro is heading north to try to open negotiations with the Yobanjin. He has no idea why, just that the Regent told him to do it.

Shiba Anizu: Shiba Bushi 2, Honor 6.1, Status 2.5, Glory 2.0; Air 3, Earth 2/Stamina 3, Fire 3, Water 2, Void 3; Iaijutsu (Focus) 3, Kenjutsu 2

Bayushi Kanchou: Bayushi Bushi 2, Honor 1.9, Status 6.0, Glory 2.8; Air 3/Ref4, Earth 3, Fire 3/Ag4, Water 3/Per4, Void 3; Iaijutsu (Focus) 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6Kanchou is somewhat hapless, all things considered. He has no idea what his father was up to that got him killed, and no idea that the Clan distrusts him as a result.

Shosuro Tsuyoshi: A Scorpion Returned Spirit with a secret. He used to be someone important.

Ide Yaichiro: Uncomfortable with working in the spotlight, Yaichiro will do what he has to for the Clan now that Tadaji can't be the Unicorn's main face.

Moto Kage: Moto Vindicator 4, Honor 7.3, Status 4.0, Glory 6.2; Air 2/Ref4, Earth 3/Will4, Fire 3/Ag5, Water 3, Void 4; Iaijutsu (Assessment, Focus) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana, No-dachi) 7

Toku Choroihime: Is she an innocent who's really good at pulling blackmail out of people by chance, or a cunning manipulator who just appears to be an ingénue? Not even she knows for sure...

Toku Uzuki: Toku Bushi 4, Honor 6.2, Status 2.0, Glory 3.1; Air2/Ref 4, Earth 4, Fire 3/Ag4, Water 4, Void 4; Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6

Otomo Saruko: There is nothing Saruko won't do to secure the Imperial Families. Nothing.

Seppun Euko: Seppun Guardsman 4, Honor 7.1, Status 3.0, Glory 3.4; Air 3, Earth 3, Fire 3, Water 4, Void 3; Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7; Euko is a devout follower of the Regent, as she believes that the Empire is nothing without a Hantei on the throne.

Miya Shozaru: A man of peace who lives in a society run by warriors, he is constantly frustrated but does a very good job of hiding that fact.

Seppun Nobuatsu: An Imperial scion of high birth, Nobuatsu is almost staid and rather more relaxed than is common among miharul. He has never truly been challenged, and is actually not all that bothered by it.

Player Handout #1: NPC List

This is a list of the most powerful and influential NPCs from their Clans present at the court, in order of Status. More detail can be found in the appropriate Clan's handouts, but this represents what everyone knows about these characters.

Togashi Hoshi: Dragon Clan Champion; Status 8.0, Glory 3.1; Very little is known about the Dragon Clan Champion, making him exactly like every other leader of the mysterious Clan in history. Hoshi's public appearances can be counted on one hand, but his recent actions seem to indicate that is going to change.

Isawa Taeruko: Master of Earth; Status 7.5, Glory 5.4; The Master of Earth is known to be a powerful shugenja and one of the leaders of the Elemental Council. She is related to the Empress, being cousin to both the second Phoenix Thunder and Empress Kaede, and is a force to be reckoned with among the Phoenix Clan.

Yasuki Oguri: Yasuki Family Daimyo; Status 7.0, Glory 3.5; Certainly one of the wealthiest men in the Empire, Oguri is also responsible for distributing the majority of the Crab Clan's resources. His treaties and negotiations are often crucial to gaining the Crab the resources they need to fight on the Wall.

Otomo Saruko: Status 6.9, Glory 5.8; An Imperial courtier of some renown, Saruko is principally a hostess in Otosan Uchi these days. Her presence in a more controversial court may simply indicate that the Imperial Families desire the perspective of an experienced politician on the winter's events.

Kuni Tansho: Status 6.8, Glory 4.1; The wife of Kuni Utagu, the Jade Champion and Kuni Family Daimyo. A powerful shugenja in her own right, she is more generally responsible for providing day-to-day leadership for the Kuni Witch Hunters with her husband's frequent absences.

Moshi Amika: Status 6.4, Glory 3.2; The niece of the Moshi Family Daimyo Moshi Jukio, relatively little is known about her apart from her high birth and her talent as a shugenja.

Togashi Ryoko: Daimyo of Chuda Province; Status 6.0, Glory 1.4; A former courtier and diplomat, Ryoko only recently climbed the mountain to take the Togashi name. He has since done a great deal of work to make the Chuda Province hospitable, though obviously a great deal more still needs to be done.

Akodo Hayato: Daimyo of the Renga Province; Status 6.2, Glory 3.3; A Lion daimyo from a fairly peaceful province, Hayato is known more for logistics than his prowess in battle. Nonetheless, none doubt his dedication to the Clan.

Ikoma Sho: Daimyo of the Shirani Province; Status 6.2, Glory 4.1; A very conservative returned spirit, Sho is the lord of a province that has seen a fair amount of fighting with the Unicorn. Despite this, or perhaps because of it, he is one of the most vocal in his respect for the quality of the bushi the Unicorn field. His first life was before the Unicorn returned, but he appears to view them as nothing more or less than other samurai.

Bayushi Kanchou: Daimyo of the Hizoku Province; Status 6.0, Glory 2.8; Young for his responsibility, Kanchou has only recently stepped up as provincial daimyo. A skilled bushi, it has yet to be seen if he will be able to lead his father's province as well as his sire did.

Shosuro Tsuyoshi: Status 5.9, Glory 1.6; A returned spirit from the early days of the Empire, Tsuyoshi is Shosuro Family Daimyo Shosuro Yudoka's principal political advisor, making him one of the more influential courtiers of the Scorpion Clan, if also one of the least publicly-known.

Ide Yaichiro: Status 5.2; Yaichiro is a traditional Rokugani in most ways, one of the Ide who serves as a mediary between the Unicorn and the rest of the Empire. He is not terribly well-known, but he does have enough influence in the courts to be of service to his Clan.

Miya Shozaru: Status 5.0, Glory 4.1; An Imperial Peacekeeper, Shozaru takes his duties very seriously; he wrote several reports during the Dragon's recent fighting against the Phoenix that resulted in the Dragon losing a fair amount of face in the Imperial court.

Asahina Maemi: Status 4.5, Glory 4.2; An Emerald Magistrate from the southern Crane lands, Maemi is a skilled investigator and a respected shugenja, but relatively unknown in the court.

Kakita Kyruko: Status 4.2, Glory 5.1, Infamy 2.4; Kyruko is a close relative of the Crane Clan's leadership, counting both Kakita Yoshi and Kakita Toshiken as family. Her flamboyant lifestyle has earned her several duels, most of which she has won.

Kitsu Shisou: Status 4.1, Glory 3.8; Shisou is known to be something of an expert on the Spirit Realms, as well as serving as a sensei of the sodan-senzo, but as he avoids the court, little else is known about him.

Toku Choroihime: Status 4.0, Glory 3.7; A surprisingly skilled courtier for a Minor Clan samurai, Choroihime is as friendly as any Monkey, and has had a great deal of success in gaining more allies for her fledgling Clan.

Player Handout #2: News of the Empire

This is a list of the topics of discussion at the beginning of the winter; there will be rumors and gossip that develop through the season, but these matters are relatively easy to discover as most of the court is eager to speak of them.

- This year is the first time a Dragon Champion has hosted a Winter Court in living memory. Very little is known of the enigmatic Dragon Champion Togashi Hoshi; while most in the Dragon Clan believe him to be the son of the kami Togashi, the rest of the Empire is reluctant to accept such a mystical explanation for his nature. Though, as the leader of the Togashi during the War Against the Shadow, he was given the position of Clan Champion by the Emperor, it has never been fully explained why he was chosen as the heir of the Lady Hitomi.
- While it might be expected that the majority of the samurai present would be from the Dragon Clan, some of the guests have noticed a rather greater percentage of Agasha and Togashi than is normal for a Dragon court. There is a wide range of speculation as to why, ranging from a desire to drive home the successful vengeance against the Phoenix to the mystics being present to safeguard the court against the curse of the Chuda lands.
- The destruction of the Legion of the Crow, the peasant rebels responsible for attacking the capital two years ago, has been officially recognized by the Imperial Court. At this point, details of the resolution is uncertain but the peasant rebellion is finished. Imperial General Seppun Murayasu still commands the Imperial Legions, but with the main mission he had dedicated his efforts to for years accomplished, it is uncertain what his precise role in the Empire will be now.
- Most of the forces of the Empire have returned from the Ivory Kingdoms, following the invasion of the Rafiq family's capital of Balishnimpur. A great deal of wealth has been brought back by the collected forces and the Mantis Clan in particular has been recognized for their instrumental part in transporting the bushi of the Empire there. At this point, the only thing to mar the glory has been a late-season hurricane, causing the loss of a dozen ships bringing spoils of war back to Rokugan's shores.
- The child Empress is spending her Winter Court in Shiro sano Ken Hayai, where she has recently begun training in the Akodo Bushi School. The Lion Clan Champion and the daimyo of the Lion families are all in attendance, to reinforce the Right Hand's connection to the throne. The Emerald Champion is undoubtedly quite uncomfortable, surrounded by the upper ranks of the Lion Clan's nobility.
- Tales of the depredations of bandits along the western Empire are getting worse. Mounted raiders have struck trade caravans and small villages from the western Dragon lands to the northern Crab provinces. Some of the daimyo who have suffered their depredations have requested that the Imperial Legions be deployed to deal with the matter.
- Whispers are spreading through the courts that the Emperor had an illegitimate son before the Scorpion Clan coup. This Lost Heir would have a claim that most would consider weaker than Tsudao's, but as he would be of gempukku age, there are some who wonder if the Empire could use a better option for leadership than the child Empress or the dynamic Regent.
- Though the Lion are not known to be forgiving of insult, this last year has seen them reduce some of the antipathy they have borne the Tsuruchi. While the two groups are not likely to be allies at any time in the near future, following a minor trade agreement and a collaborated kyujutsu display, the Lion's border with the Mantis family is rather less tense than it has been since the Wasp Clan was formed. Some, particularly in the Dragonfly, hope that this may mean the Lion are more likely to seek diplomatic solutions in the future.
- Citing the Dragon's claiming of Nanashi Mura as a precedent, the Scorpion Clan has annexed the ronin city of Zakyo Toshi. Though the so-called "Pleasure City" is thought by most to be a den of vice and iniquity, but it can't be denied that it will certainly bring a great deal of wealth into the Scorpion coffers.
- Reports coming north from the Kaiu Wall indicate that the Crab have caught more Lost in the last year than at any time since the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Disturbingly, most of these captured enemy appear to have been heading south, into the Shadowlands, instead of north, into the Empire.
- Rumors are spreading of disease in the central Scorpion provinces. The Empire has not seen a serious plague in several years, and there is some concern that another pestilence could cause thousands of deaths.

Player Handout #3: Crab Letter

To the Staunch Defenders of the Wall,

Well do I know that the warriors of the Crab are more interested in deeds than words, so I shall not waste your time with complicated phrasing or pretty speech. I wish instead to simply invite you to spend the winter months at my Winter Court in Shiro Chuda.

I understand your Clan's concerns regarding the history of this region, and hope to be able to prove that the Empire is safe from such dangers in this area. This will allow you to continue your traditional duties to the South without distraction – which I have been told is often the best gift those of us who do not stand on the Wall can give.

*Togashi Hoshi,
Champion of the Dragon*

The Crab are quite concerned about the history of hauntings and possible Taint to be found on the Dragon Heart Plain. First and foremost, the Clan wishes to determine if there is a danger, and if so, what to do about it. The Phoenix Clan has similar concerns, and whether they are motivated by their recent hostilities with the Dragon Clan or not, the end result is what matters, and a possible alliance should be explored. Apart from that, the Crab's close Imperial ties have left them with few needs.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands (with the obvious exception of members of their families).

NPCs

Yasuki Oguri: Yasuki Family Daimyo; Yasuki Courtier 5, Honor 2.9, Status 7.0, Glory 3.5; Oguri has a pending duel with Kitsuki Mizuochi, as a result of their interactions at the announcement of the Imperial Gift earlier this year. He is publicly a vocal supporter of the Imperial Regent, having done much of the work to get the various resources provided by the Imperial Treasury to the best places along the Wall. (Previous Appearances: The Enemy You Deserve, the Daimyo's Gift)

Yasuki Hyouchou: Oguri's yojimbo; Hiruma Bushi 5/Crab Defender, Honor 4.1, Status 4.5, Glory 3.8; Hyouchou is a professional duelist, trained to accept challenges for other Crab to prevent them from being distracted. He is reserved and distant, though almost always very polite. His body is covered in scars from previous duels, and he keeps them like mementos. (Previous Appearance: The Enemy You Deserve)

Kuni Tansho: Kuni Shugenja 5, Honor 3.2, Status 6.8, Glory 4.1; Tansho is the wife of Kuni Utagu, the Jade Champion. As Utagu is often away from the Wall dealing with his larger duties, Tansho generally takes on the role of Kuni Family Daimyo and de facto leader of the Kuni Witch Hunters. She is undoubtedly present in order to look into the rumors surrounding the Dragon Heart Plain, though her imposing reserve means that she is unlikely to be questioned – or brook questioning for long. Utagu's close dealings with the Imperial Court as the defender of the Empire's spiritual purity has also put them in proximity with the Imperial Regent, and though Tansho is not terribly effusive in her praise for anyone, she has indicated a respect for Hantei Okucheo's strength.

Hida Kiyomasu: Kuni Tansho's yojimbo; Hida Bushi 3, Honor 3.7, Status 3.0, Glory 3.4; a very large bushi of the Crab, Kiyomasu is friendly and outgoing in contrast to his charge. He is a fan of sumai, and takes nearly any opportunity to demonstrate his strength and prowess.

Hiruma Kaoru: Yasuki Merchant 2, Honor 2.3, Status 2.5, Glory 1.8; Kaoru is a pretty young courtier who serves as Oguri's aide and personal secretary. She is quietly competent, and her calligraphy is exquisite, but she has little interest in seeking the spotlight.

Hida Ryoichi: Hida Bushi 2, Honor 2.6, Status 1.5, Glory 1.3; Ryoichi is a typical Hida bushi, present simply to assist with the safety of the important Crab. He is somewhat smaller and quieter than Kiyomasu, with more of a preference for the ono than unarmed combat, but is still a bit rough around the edges compared to other Clan samurai.

Player Handout #4: Crane Letter

To the Keepers of the Empire's Culture,

Since the inestimable Lady Doji gave us the customs and traditions of the court that we follow to this day, the Empire has held the winter months as a season of peace. I would invite you, as representatives of that glorious tradition, to grace my Winter Court in the newly-rebuilt Shiro Chuda with your presence.

Though the setting is undoubtedly not as aesthetically pleasing as that to which you are accustomed, I pray that you will attend and allow my Clan the opportunity to display our best face. If nothing else, your counsel and company will no doubt enhance the event for our other guests.

*Togashi Hoshi
Champion of the Dragon*

The Crane are generally somewhat distant with the Dragon; though there have been indications that the two Clans can work together well (such as the ongoing collaboration between the Kakita and Mirumoto Bushi Schools), the mountain Clan's alliance with the Lion is somewhat troubling. Regardless, there is always opportunities to be had in making new allies, and the Crane would not miss a chance to see the reclusive Dragon Champion, and perhaps determine if he could be induced to a more formal and friendly relationship. It is most important to prevent the Crab from reconciling with the Dragon; though there is no need to cause more friction between them, the Crab have amply demonstrated their lack of a desire for amiable relations with the Crane, so it is imperative that the Crab and Mantis do not form a larger alliance with the Dragon and Lion. The Crane also wish to erode the Crab's influence in court as much as possible, though this is a long-term goal more than an immediate one.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands.

NPCs

Kakita Kyruko: Kakita Bushi 4, Honor 4.1, Status 4.0, Glory 5.1, Infamy 2.4; Kyruko is a beautiful bushi with a mixed reputation as a duelist – there are whispers that she has fought several illegal duels, but given her tendency to issue challenges on public discussion of such matters, few wish to confront her with accusations. She is also something of a hedonist and a shameless flirt; her close family connections to Kakita Yoshi, the Crane Champion Regent, have allowed her more leeway than many other samurai would get away with. As a regular attendee of the Imperial Court, she has made no secret of her support for the Imperial Regent, further complicating her relationship with her distant cousin the Emerald Champion, but few wish to confront her on the issue directly. (Previous Appearance: Ancestral Dictate)

Asahina Maemi: Asahina Shugenja 3, Honor 7.6, Status 4.5, Glory 4.2; Maemi is almost as much of a contrast with Kyruko as it is possible to be; quiet and plain where Kyruko is flamboyant and vain, an Emerald Magistrate who has devoted herself to her duty where Kyruko is almost entirely self-centered, and as much of a pacifist as she can manage within the scope of her duties, where Kyruko gleefully enjoys every iaijutsu duel she can find. Maemi is obviously a supporter of the Emerald Champion, and the brewing conflict between the two Imperial factions is one of the few things that can rouse her temper.

Daidoji Natsuo: Kakita Bushi 3, Honor 7.4, Status 2.5, Glory 4.8; Maemi's yojimbo, Natsuo is a burly warrior like many of his family but moves with incongruous grace due to his training as a duelist. Nearly ten years older than his charge, he appears to view her as a younger sister and is fiercely protective of her; over the course of their duties, he has fought ten duels in her defense or in pursuit of legal judgment on her behalf – duels that he has never lost.

Kakita Sanetomo: Daidoji Iron Warrior 2, Honor 6.8, Status 1.5, Glory 2.8; Sanetomo is an outgoing, gregarious Crane bushi; though his duties are entirely to keep the more important Crane safe, he does make a decent envoy to the other Clans. He earned some Glory on the field against the Crab, but apart from that service, he has spent most of his career as a yojimbo.

Doji Fujiko: Doji Courtier 2, Honor 5.9, Status 2.0, Glory 2.1; Kyruko's aide, Fujiko spends most of her time cleaning up the messes her superior leaves and making apologies that the fiery Kakita is too proud to offer. Fujiko is friendly, when she gets a chance, but she is quite overworked most of the time.

Player Handout #5: Dragon Letter

My Brothers,

The last few years have seen much glory and gain for the Dragon Clan. Nonetheless, we must guard against the dangers of overconfidence and complacency. I ask you to come to the Winter Court in Shiro Chuda, to help dispel the fears of the Empire – both for the lands we have taken and the means that were used to acquire them.

The Empire may face a great challenge in the coming years. We must discuss how to face that challenge, both as a Clan and as samurai. Since the Dawn of the Empire, it has been our charge to stand apart and watch; it is also our duty to guard Rokugan from the threats that it does not immediately see. We must be prepared to do so again.

*Togashi Hoshi
Dragon Clan Champion*

The Dragon have prospered over the last several years, though perhaps at the expense of their reputation in the courts. The fighting against the Phoenix brought both Glory and wealth to the Dragon, and the Clan's alliance with the Lion has been beneficial. However, the Dragon Heart Plain has been reputed to be haunted for centuries, and it is expected that it will take some time to prove it has been cleansed. It is undoubtedly for this reason that Togashi Hoshi has chosen to provide a Winter Court here.

As the hosts of the event, there are obviously more Dragon present than any other Clan. The following is a list of the most important Dragon NPCs at Shiro Chuda. You are here by the Champion's direct invitation, however, so you are not actually assigned to any of these characters. Showing respect to those of higher Status is polite, of course, but you are not required to obey them (apart from the Champion, of course). There are more unnamed NPCs, of course, and an unusually high percentage of them are Agasha shugenja or Tattooed Monks.

NPCs

Togashi Hoshi: Dragon Clan Champion; Honor 6.2, Status 8.0, Glory 3.1; Hoshi remains something of a mystery to most of the Empire. The Dragon generally believe that he is the son of Togashi-no-Kami, here to lead the Clan following the ascension of Hitomi to become the Lady Moon, but that is not commonly accepted in the rest of the Empire. As he has mostly stayed away from the greater affairs of Rokugan, it has not mattered. However, this Winter Court may demonstrate that he is about to change the situation.

Togashi Ryoko: Daimyo of Chuda Province; Kitsuki Investigator 3, Honor 4.4, Status 6.0, Glory 1.4; Ryoko has only recently become the lord of Shiro Chuda and the daimyo of the Chuda Province; previously, he was the governor of Toi Koku, and served with distinction as an interface with the rest of the Empire. When Toi Koku was the site of a peasant uprising, he contemplated seppuku but ultimately chose to climb the mountain and join the ise zumi. Other than his skills as an administrator and diplomat, it is uncertain why exactly Hoshi chose him to tend the new province. (Previous Appearance: One Will Fall)

Mirumoto Kyuujo: Mirumoto Bushi 3, Honor 5.8, Status 3.0, Glory 3.1; Kyuujo is the son of Mirumoto Takejiro, the daimyo of the southern province of the Dragon Heart Plain. Though he has found himself in several unpleasant situations over his young life, he has come through them with assistance, and had become a skilled and dedicated bushi in his own right. He is present to represent his father, though he also serves as a gunso in the Dragon Army. (Previous Appearances: Bonds of Fate, Castle of Water, The Killing Grounds)

Mirumoto Ukira: Mirumoto Bushi 4, Honor 4.8, Status 3.5, Glory 4.9; A gunso in the First Imperial, and the leader of Miya Shozaru's guard, Ukira is a skilled Dragon bushi who has earned a fair amount of Glory since joining the Imperial Legion though he is still more famous for having been the Dragon contestant at what became the Tragedy at Topaz. (Previous Appearances: New Beginnings, Winter Court: Otosan Uchi)

Kitsuki Mizuochi: Kitsuki Investigator 4, Honor 6.6, Status 6.9, Glory 5.1; Mizuochi is the son of the Kitsuki Family Daimyo Kitsuki Yasu, though he has been largely performing his father's duties for nearly five years. He served as a magistrate for several years before that, and is widely considered to be an exemplary member of his family. At the announcement of the Imperial Gift earlier this year, Mizuochi was challenged by Yasuki Oguri, and their duel is scheduled to be resolved this winter. This has the young Kitsuki concerned; while he is familiar with the blade, and not incapable of defending himself, he is not a professional duelist like the Yasuki's champion. (Previous Appearance: The Daimyo's Gift)

Other NPCs: Hitomi Zanshi, a martial monk responsible for the physical security of the castle; Kitsuki Otojiro, a Dragon magistrate also serving as a security consultant for this court; Agasha Kakuzen, another Dragon magistrate present to provide magical security; Agasha Takenao, master sensei of the Agasha Shugenja School (and Kyuujo's uncle)

Player Handout #6: Lion Letter

To the Honorable Right Hand of the Empress,

You are invited to attend the Dragon Clan Winter Court, to take place at the newly-rebuilt Shiro Chuda this year. Let the Clan of Akodo once again inspire the Empire to follow in your courageous example, and dispel the unfounded rumors that have spread concerning the Dragon Heart Plain.

The alliance between our Clans has been one of the greatest privileges the Dragon have gained over the last several years, and I look forward to continuing that relationship into the future. Whatever fate may bring, the knowledge that the Dragon have an honorable ally in the Lion is something I can take pride in.

*Togashi Hoshi
Dragon Clan Champion*

The Lion are, in general, pleased with their alliance with the Dragon; though neither Clan has called upon the other for military assistance, it has not been needed. Instead, the support each has given in the courts has been important despite the usual envious slanders of the other Clans. Interestingly, the Clan the Lion has been most engaged in military action against has also developed into a respectful relationship on both sides – the skirmishes against the Unicorn have not developed into the sort of situation that is likely to cause a full-scale war yet. Unfortunately, the greatest strife facing the Lion right now is internal: many of the Clan are dissatisfied with Kitsu Motso's leadership. As yet, there is no danger of open disobedience or rebellion, but it is not promising.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to treat them as superiors (with the obvious exception of those who happen to be in service to the daimyo).

NPCs

Akodo Hayato: Daimyo of the Renga Province; Akodo Bushi 2, Honor 6.4, Status 6.2, Glory 3.3; Hayato is a short, busy samurai whose martial skills are primarily in logistics. As his province is less militarily significant and more responsible for providing infrastructure to the rest of the Lion lands, this makes perfect sense. Unlike many other Lion daimyo (the Clan not being noted for restraint when it comes to picking sides in any conflict), Hayato is famously undecided between the Imperial Regent and the Emerald Champion.

Akodo Shotan: Akodo Bushi 3, Honor 6.8, Status 3.5, Glory 4.3; Shotan is Hayato's guard, a grim bushi who many think is wasted in the peaceful duties he has in the Renga province. However, as one of the Akodo who lived as a ronin during the time the family was disbanded, he simply wishes to remain in his father's homeland.

Ikoma Sho: Daimyo of the Shirani Province; Ikoma Bard 4, Honor 7.2, Status 6.2, Glory 4.1; Sho is a returned spirit who is renowned for his serious demeanor and traditionalist views. His province has seen a great deal of the fighting between the Lion and the Unicorn, and is one of the wealthiest regions of the Lion lands in resources. He is, albeit in an understated fashion, a staunch supporter of the Imperial Regent, believing in the value of the traditional Hantei leadership.

Matsu Tomi: Matsu Berserker 3, Honor 7.4, Status 4.0, Glory 4.5; Sho's yojimbo, Tomi is an energetic, attractive samurai-ko in her late twenties. She has gained a fair amount of Glory on the field, but is rather more level-headed than what most think of when it comes to the Matsu family.

Ikoma Takeshi: Ikoma Bard 3, Honor 8.2, Status 3.5, Glory 3.0; Takeshi is a friendly courtier who has served as a political aide to Matsu Akane, and was likely sent to this court in order to give the benefit of his advice to the other daimyo in attendance. He is also an Owl, due to his belief in the necessity for a strong Empire; however, he respects the Emerald Champion, and is generally unwilling to hear slanders against him. (Previous Appearance: Divide and Conquer)

Matsu Tora: Akodo Bushi 4, Honor 8.3, Status 3.0, Glory 5.3; A Lion guardsman who has served with distinction against the Unicorn, Tora spent a term of service in the Imperial Legion before fighting broke out on the Lion's northern border. While in the Fourth Imperial Legion, he made friends with Moto Kage, a Unicorn bushi of honor; though they have yet to meet on the field, the two Tora is an enormous, well-muscled bushi with just fame both for his skill in jiu-jitsu and his impeccable sense of honor.

Kitsu Shisou: Kitsu Shugenja 4/Sodan-senzo 3, Honor 7.8, Status 4.1, Glory 3.8; Shisou volunteered to serve as the Clan's shugenja representative, possibly in order to study the effect the Spirit Realms have had on the region. He is devout and dedicated, as certain to defend the Clan from spiritual dangers as the bushi are from physical ones.

Player Handout #7: Mantis Letter

To the Scions of the Storm,

Though the Mantis and Dragon have had little to do with each other in the past, nonetheless, both Clans are important to the future of the Empire. For this reason, I invite you to attend my Winter Court at the newly-rebuilt Shiro Chuda.

Your Clan's valor against the Ivory Kingdoms has proven to the Empire that the legacy of Yoritomo is strong within you. Spend the winter in my lands, that you may show what Osano-wo's blessing means in the bitter winter winds of the north.

*Togashi Hoshi
Champion of the Dragon*

As mentioned, the Mantis have little to do with the Dragon under most circumstances. However, given the fact that the Dragon have just finished a very profitable conflict with the Phoenix, and that their mountains are full of gold, there are certainly things that the sea-faring Clan would like to trade away from the mountains. Finalizing a trade agreement is not necessary, but the first step is to see how receptive the potential customers are. Apart from that, the Mantis are wary of the Scorpion: while the conflict with the Ivory Kingdoms is not technically done with, there is no doubt that the Clan of Secrets is attempting to undermine the glory earned by the Mantis in the fighting, and will likely seek the Champion's life as soon as possible. It is not yet the time to confront them, but be mindful that it will come one day soon.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands.

NPCs

Moshi Amika: Moshi Shugenja 3, Honor 4.7, Status 6.4, Glory 3.2; Amika is the niece of the Moshi Family Daimyo Moshi Jukio, and is her designated heir. She is being groomed for her position carefully, as Jukio does everything carefully. Amika is a young, talented shugenja in her own right, but is gradually maturing under the weight of her impending duties. She is also a supporter of the Imperial Regent, as the traditional Moshi are eager to see Toturi Tsudao, who they think may be the reincarnation of Amaterasu, marry into the Hantei Dynasty and bring stability to the Empire.

Yoritomo Takafumi: Yoritomo Courtier 3, Honor 3.1, Status 3.7, Glory 1.8; Takafumi is a relatively unimportant Mantis courtier, mostly known for being more comfortable with assignments to the inland Clans. He does seem to have a better grasp of the shorebound mentality than many Mantis, though he has yet to produce any significant successes. Takafumi has also been vocal in favor of the Imperial Regent, whose strength and ambition remind him of Yoritomo. (Previous Appearance: Winter Court: Shiro Moto)

Moshi Shogo: Yoritomo Bushi 1/Moshi Guardian of the Sun, Honor 6.3, Status 2.5, Glory 2.4; Amika's yojimbo, Shogo is a self-effacing young man dedicated to keeping his charge safe. While some may think this ambition on his part (the yojimbo of the family daimyo may be about as high as most male Moshi can reach), it appears to be a genuine desire to serve on his part.

Yoritomo Hitoshi: Yoritomo Bushi 3, Honor 2.8, Status 2.0, Glory 1.5; Takafumi's yojimbo gives the impression of a boisterous bruiser, like many of his Clan, but after being rendered mute by a throat injury years ago, his ability to express himself is somewhat limited. As his ability to give orders on a ship was also limited, he was given his current duty to make use of his undeniable prowess at arms; Hitoshi is renowned as a dirty fighter, even for a Yoritomo, and has been known to give a few lessons.

Tsuruchi Hishou: Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter 3, Honor 1.4, Status 2.5, Glory 2.4, Infamy 1.3; A grizzled former Emerald Magistrate, Hishou lost a great deal of face a few years ago when he tried to bring charges against a Scorpion without sufficient testimony. His pressing the issue caused him to lose his position, and he remains somewhat bitter over it since he knows the Bayushi was guilty. Apart from that, he is generally easy to get along with and willing to give others the benefit of his experiences.

Player Handout #8: Phoenix Letter

To the Wise Masters of the Elements,

Though the relationship between our people has been strained of late, it is my devout wish to return to the days of accord between the two most spiritual Clans of the Empire. To that end, I invite you to attend my Winter Court this year, in the restored and cleansed Shiro Chuda.

I ask you to understand that it is my intention to use the Dragon Heart Plain for the betterment of all of Rokugan, not simply for the benefit of my Clan alone. Your counsel would be most welcome how best to bring others to the truth that the region's previous spiritual afflictions are over.

*Togashi Hoshi
Dragon Clan Champion*

The Phoenix Clan, as a general rule, are very unhappy with the Dragon; not only have they waged a war in all but name against the Clan most dedicated to peace, but it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that they wish to gloat about their victory. Still, an invitation from a Clan Champion is difficult to ignore, no matter the Clan, and if the Dragon are willing to listen to advice from their wiser cousins, then perhaps the future will not be as dark as the last few years have been. If they are not, then perhaps seeking an alliance with another Clan that has expressed concern over the situation would be worthwhile...

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands (with the obvious exception of the Master of Earth).

NPCs

Isawa Taeruko: Master of Earth; Isawa Shugenja (Earth) 5, Honor 4.8, Status 7.5, Glory 5.4; The Master of Earth is a somewhat brash woman, younger than many would think for someone with her vast power and spiritual position. Taeruko's family has dominated the Phoenix, and to a certain degree the Empire, for the last generation: her cousin was the previous Master of Earth, the Phoenix Clan Thunder Isawa Tadaka, another cousin was the former Empress Toturi Kaede, and she is therefore closely-related to the current Empress. She is not shy about calling on those connections at need, but her personal power and strength of will are generally enough on their own. Taeruko is highly suspicious of the Dragon, certain that they are meddling in forces beyond their control, and honestly very concerned that the Dragon's expansion bodes ill for the Dragon Heart Plain.

Asako Yasotaro: Asako Loremaster 4, Honor 6.1, Status 3.2, Glory 2.2; Yasotaro is present to advise Taeruko on politics, but is a notable emissary in his own right. Though he is principally known as a scholar, and was recently called upon for some of his knowledge of gaijin culture to assist the Ivory Invasion, he normally uses his learning to analyze and explain the oddities of the other Clans. Yasotaro was recently named to the Owls, granting him access to libraries across the Empire. (Previous Appearance: Winter Court: Shiro Moto)

Shiba Mai: Shiba Bushi 3, Honor 5.8, Status 1.5, Glory 2.0; Yasotaro's yojimbo, Mai is a serious young woman with very little interest in her charge's scholarship, but she is very helpful to him when it comes to dealing with other samurai. Her martial ability does lend him some cachet, and she is better at remembering mundane details than he tends to be. Still, she is a dedicated yojimbo, willing to follow her charge wherever he needs her.

Shiba Nadare: Shiba Bushi 5/Avalanche Guard, Honor 6.4, Status 5.0, Glory 6.8; Nadare is a bulky, powerfully-built bushi in his late thirties, and a taisei in the Avalanche Guard, the Shiba Legion that fights alongside the Isawa Earth Shugenja. While Taeruko does not generally require a yojimbo, Nadare is present to stand for her if necessary and to represent her interests on the field of battle if necessary. He is a confident, career military man with little pretensions as to his place.

Shiba Anizu: Shiba Bushi 2, Honor 6.1, Status 2.5, Glory 2.0; Anizu is a skilled young bushi with a great deal of promise. Unfortunately, his genial nature and acceptance of people makes him both pleasant company and somewhat naïve. It is entirely uncertain as to why he was given a position as an Owl at last year's Winter Court in Otsan Uchi, but it is worth note that he has not advanced in that organization at all. (Previous Appearance: Winter Court: Otsan Uchi)

Isawa Taroemon: Isawa Shugenja (Earth) 3, Honor 4.2, Status 2.0, Glory 3.0; Taroemon is a talented young shugenja who was fortunate enough to be taken under the Master of Earth's wing as Taeruko's apprentice. He serves her as an aide as much as he learns the ways of the spirits from her, but seems to regard the occasional chores as simply part of his lessons.

Player Handout #9: Scorpion Letter

To my Clever Cousins in the Scorpion,

It is said that, whatever your secret is, somewhere a Scorpion knows it. I have known for a long time that my greatest secret is known to the Scorpion, and while many discount it as idle tales, some among you know it for truth. Please understand that my deeds this coming winter are not motivated by a desire to remove that secret from your grasp, but to further the interests of the Empire.

You are invited to join me at my Winter Court at the reclaimed Shiro Chuda, that you may be among the first to observe the reactions of the revelation of some of my secrets. I am certain that you will be able to find other things that some of the samurai of the Empire wish to remain hidden to replace that which I am about to deny you.

*Togashi Hoshi
Dragon Clan Champion*

The Scorpion are wary of the Dragon's plans for the winter, but do not want to miss an opportunity to learn what they can. Politically, the Scorpion are allied with the Phoenix, who seem to be preparing to ally with the Crab against the Dragon; this is not necessarily in the Scorpion's best interests, but it may be possible to turn it to the Clan's advantage. The most important thing to be done is to gather information on what the other Clans plan to do in the near future.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands (with the obvious exception of vassals of Kanchou).

NPCs

Bayushi Kanchou: Daimyo of the Hizoku Province; Bayushi Bushi 2, Honor 1.9, Status 6.0, Glory 2.8; With the recent death of his father, Bayushi Ichiro, under mysterious circumstances in the Crane lands, Kanchou has been thrust into a position that some feel he may not have been ready for. In addition, there are whispers among the Scorpion that Ichiro's loyalty may have been compromised and there are concerns over Kanchou. For his own part, Kanchou is a young bushi who had just begun a promising military career before stepping into his father's position, and he seems somewhat nostalgic for his lost opportunity.

Shosuro Tsuyoshi: Bayushi Courtier 5, Honor 1.1, Status 5.9, Glory 1.6; A returned spirit, Tsuyoshi has been serving as a political advisor to Shosuro Yudoka for the last six years. He has been sent to assist Kanchou in his first appearance in a Winter Court as a daimyo, though many among the Clan believe that he may be present as much to watch Kanchou as to watch over him... Tsuyoshi is fairly handsome, appearing to be in his early thirties, and has proven over the last few years to be one of the smoothest and subtlest courtiers at the Clan's disposal. He is also a quiet supporter of the Emerald Champion, despite Toshiken's recent snubbing of the Scorpion Clan Champion, which has led to some tensions in the high ranks of the Scorpion Clan.

Soshi Mitsuyo: Bayushi Bushi 4, Honor 3.5, Status 4.0, Glory 3.8; An older woman with a great deal of experience as a court yojimbo, Mitsuyo used to serve as back-up for Bayushi Ichiro when he made large public appearances. However, as Ichiro was an accomplished swordsman in his own right, her services were generally only for show. She is friendly and outgoing, well-past the age of casual flirtation, but nonetheless enjoys the company of other bushi.

Bayushi Fimenko: Bayushi Bushi 1/Shosuro Infiltrator 1, Honor 3.2, Status 1.5, Glory 1.7; Fimenko is a simple, quiet guard in the Scorpion entourage. She has very few duties, but always performs them efficiently. For whatever reason, she is almost impossible to find when she is not actively on duty.

Bayushi Itsuwari: Soshi Shugenja 3, Honor 2.2, Status 2.0, Glory 3.4; Itsuwari is along to serve as a spiritual advisor to Kanchou, though there is little doubt that he is intended to protect their contingent from any magical or supernatural threats. He is extremely standoffish, almost refusing to speak to samurai from other Clans, and is little more open with other Scorpion.

Player Handout #10: Unicorn Letter

To the Children of the Wind,

You are invited to spend the winter months at my Winter Court in the new Dragon lands of Shiro Chuda. The insight of such famous explorers and wanderers would be quite valuable to help the other Clans understand the value of the new territory that has been made available.

While the Dragon and Unicorn Clans have never been close, divided as we are by the nature of our lands, neither has there been enmity between us. I hope to improve our relations in the coming months; the Unicorn have an admirable ability to adapt to change, and the Empire may require that facility in the coming years.

*Togashi Hoshi
Champion of the Dragon*

The Unicorn Clan is fairly content with their lot in the Empire currently. Though sporadic fighting is still going on along the Lion border, the violence there at least has some semblance of respect. Their Crane allies have begun to provide some assistance, and the Khan's son will soon be wed to a daughter of the Doji family. Admittedly, this all has little to do with the present Winter Court, but few among the Clan understand the Dragon Clan in general. Perhaps the best that can be done is to learn more of their ways.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands.

NPCs

Ide Yaichiro: Ide Emissary 4, Honor 5.4, Status 5.2, Glory 3.1; Yaichiro is a former protégé of Ide Tadaji, the current Imperial Advisor, and has been serving as a behind-the-scenes power broker for the Unicorn for some time. His contacts, while perhaps not as extensive as those a Crane might command, are still useful to his service to the Clan, and he has been able to provide good political advice to his superiors on numerous occasions. Yaichiro is in his middle years, a distinguished older man with an air of gravity and wisdom, and is perhaps one of the best Unicorn to help the Clan understand the intricacies of the Empire. Yaichiro has been fairly vocal in his support of the Emerald Champion.

Ide Wetashi: Ide Emissary 1, Honor 4.6, Status 2.5, Glory 1.7; Wetashi is an outgoing young man with a promising future ahead of him. Though he was appointed an Owl last winter, he has mostly been taken under Yaichiro's wing to help the Unicorn integrate into the Empire. He seems to view it as his duty to educate the Empire as well as the Unicorn in order to facilitate a mutually beneficial relationship. (Previous Appearance: Winter Court: Otosan Uchi)

Ide Shiniki: Shinjo Bushi 3, Honor 4.7, Status 3.0, Glory 4.9; Yaichiro's yojimbo is an athletic woman in her late twenties. Though she is sworn to the Ide and bears their name, she was born a Shinjo; when the Lady cleansed her family of birth, she chose to find patronage in another family to escape the shame. Shiniki is a skilled swordswoman, and far more comfortable outside than indoors – a difficult prospect at times during the winter.

Moto Kage: Moto Vindicator 4, Honor 7.3, Status 4.0, Glory 6.2; Far more traditional than most members of his family, Kage is in a lot of ways an outsider among a group considered by most of the Empire to be outsiders. He served in the Fourth Imperial Legion alongside Matsu Tora for several years before the fighting between their Clans called him back to his home. Kage is a gifted swordsman, and even more famed for his skills with the spear; his devotion to traditional Rokugani weaponry makes him stand out among the modern Unicorn, but he feels it necessary to honor his ancestors born in the Empire as much as those born outside it.

Horiuchi Bouyou: Horiuchi Shugenja 2, Honor 4.7, Status 2.0, Glory 2.4; Yaichiro's aide, Bouyou is an intelligent, ambitious servant of the Unicorn. One of the many orphans taken in by the founder of the Horiuchi family, he has dedicated himself to increasing the fortunes of the Clan both politically and economically. While fairly friendly, he is somewhat dismissive of the general respect for warriors in Rokugani society; his parents were lost because of the brutality of war, and he sees little point to glorifying the sort of excesses that led to their death.

Player Handout #11: Minor Clan Letter

To the Worthy Samurai of the Minor Clans,

You are cordially invited to the Dragon Clan's Winter Court to be held at Shiro Chuda. Though the fate of the Snake may initially seem to be an inauspicious history for a new castle, I prefer to look upon the current situation as a rebirth of the land; the Dragon Heart Plain can once again be a bountiful resource for the Empire.

*Togashi Hoshi
Dragon Clan Champion*

The proposed Minor Clan Alliance fell apart three years ago, due to a lack of interest among its member Clans. The recent creation of three new Minor Clans, however, has begun to stir life back into the concept, and most of the Minor Clans have expressed an interest in testing its viability once again. A Winter Court at a castle once held by a Minor Clan may not be an auspicious place to begin, but if the Dragon are sincere in their intentions to make it a place of rebirth, it may be worth trying once more.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands.

NPCs

Toku Choroihime: Bayushi Courtier 4, Honor 4.8, Status 4.0, Glory 3.7; One of the premier courtiers of the Monkey Clan (which is to say, one of the only courtiers of the Monkey Clan), Choroihime has a charming air of innocence and naiveté. She is nonetheless quite skilled at the games of court, making allies and gaining favor nearly everywhere she goes. In particular, she is known to have close ties with the Scorpion Clan, and is always eager to promote the alliance between the two Clans. In recent months, she has begun to change her mind on the benefits of working with the other Minor Clans, though precisely why is unclear. Choroihime is also outspoken on behalf of the Emerald Champion, though some believe this due to the preference of her own Clan's Champion rather than her own. (Previous Appearance: Delicate Negotiations, Twisted Fate)

Toku Uzuki: Toku Bushi 4, Honor 6.2, Status 2.0, Glory 3.1; Uzuki is a tough, weathered former ronin who found something to believe in when Toku was rewarded for his service to the Emperor with a Minor Clan. He serves as Choroihime's yojimbo with something of a resigned air; he does not deny her effectiveness, but her rather flighty attitude at times seems to be something he has difficulty dealing with. On the whole, however, he is utterly loyal to the Monkey, and truly appreciates the work she does to the benefit of the Clan.

Toku Kishi: Toku Bushi 1, Honor 5.5, Status 1.5, Glory 1.2; Choroihime's aide is an energetic young bushi with a friendly smile and a can-do attitude. Though he is still inexperienced, and not as versed in the ways of the court as many, he learns quickly and avoids making the same mistake twice.

Fuzake Toyoharu: Dutiful Disciple 3, Honor 5.4, Status 2.0, Glory 2.1; Toyoharu is a member of the relatively rare Fuzake family, who serve the Monkey as spiritual advisors and shugenja. He is devoutly spiritual, though he is inclined to avoid speaking of religious matters for fear of sounding too eager; his piety is an intensely personal thing to him. Toyoharu is not entirely certain why Choroihime requested his service on this trip, but is entirely willing to put his affinity with the spirits to the benefit of the Clan.

Player Handout #12: Imperial Letter

To the Esteemed Imperial Families,

The Dragon Clan humbly asks that you bless our winter festivities this year at the Winter Court to be held at the recently restored Shiro Chuda. Guests of your station would be most welcome, to bring the appropriate air of civility and culture to what might otherwise be an uneventful affair

*Togashi Hoshi
Champion of the Dragon Clan*

The Dragon Clan has caused no small amount of concern among the Imperial families in the last few years. Their aggression against the Phoenix was unprecedented, and their universal support of the Emerald Champion over the Imperial Regent is unique among all of the Empire's Clans. If there is a strong power bloc developing among the Clans, it may center itself on the Dragon, and that is something that the Imperial families are dedicated to preventing. However, one must observe the forms of proper behavior, and in order to serve the Empire, it is necessary to learn as much about the Clan's plans as possible.

The following NPCs are present as well, but it is worth note that you have not been assigned to their service for the duration. As you received a personal invitation from the Dragon Clan Champion to attend, you are here on your own right. While showing those of higher Status than you proper respect is recommended, you are not bound to their will and are not required to obey their commands.

NPCs

Otomo Saruko: Otomo Courtier 5, Honor 5.6, Status 6.9, Glory 5.8; An experienced Imperial courtier, Saruko is an elegant woman in her middle years. She is renowned as a master of the game of go as well as a stern negotiator responsible for managing many political agreements in the past. Her former sensei, Otomo Dsichi, is the leader of the Owls, and though Saruko does not bear their mon herself, there is no doubt as to where her sympathies lie. (Previous Appearance: Delicate Negotiations)

Seppun Enuke: Seppun Guardsman 4, Honor 7.1, Status 3.0, Glory 3.4; Enuke is a returned spirit from the peaceful days of Hantei XXII. She is utterly dedicated to the thought of returning a member of the Hantei dynasty to the throne, and her service here as a guard is likely intended to convey a message about the Dragon Clan's support of the Emerald Champion. Enuke is cold and distant, even for a spirit who spent time in Meido, and she is unlikely to spend much time in the company of Clan samurai. (Previous Appearance: Claiming the Throne)

Miya Shozaru: Miya Herald 4, Honor 6.6, Status 5.0, Glory 4.1; Shozaru is an Imperial Peacekeeper, tasked with overseeing the inevitable conflicts between the Clans and ensuring that all the proper forms of Rokugani warfare are observed. He observed several violations from the Dragon during their fighting with the Phoenix, and made his displeasure known at the time; his presence here is likely to remind them of their lapses in order to ensure such things do not happen again in the future. It is worth note, however, that he did select a Dragon member of the First Legion (Mirumoto Ukira) to head his personal guard at the event. Shozaru is more serious than many Miya, with an absolute dedication to peace and prosperity in the Empire. (Previous Appearance: Time for Vengeance)

Seppun Nobuatsu: Seppun Guardsman 2, Honor 6.7, Status 3.0, Glory 4.6; Nobuatsu is a skilled duelist who serves as Saruko's yojimbo. He has gained some renown for his victory in more than half-dozen duels, resulting in his prestigious appointment for one so young. Nobuatsu is extremely controlled, though he is comfortable in the courts due to his family's high connections in the Imperial families; his great-grandfather was the younger brother of Hantei XXVI.