

# **Smoldering Embers**

**A One-Round Mid-High Rank Adventure for  
Heroes of Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of Shiba, 1142 (Late Summer)**

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The Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator requires your assistance. What will you discover on her behalf?

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

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

**Low End Party** (most/all characters Rank Three): The GM may decrease the TNs of Social Rolls through the module by 5 at their discretion. Decrease the TN to resist the Jiros' poisons by 5.

**High End Party** (most/all characters Rank Five): Increase the TN of all Social Rolls by 5. Increase the TN to resist the Jiros' poisons by 10. Increase the Jiros' Earth Ring to 4, increasing the number of Wounds they can take.

## Adventure Summary and Background

A decade ago, most of the Agasha family, led by Agasha Gennai, chose to leave the Dragon Clan and join the Phoenix in response to then-Dragon Champion Hitomi's growing mental instability. This sparked several years of bloody conflict between the Dragon and the Phoenix, which ended two years ago. As part of the resolution of this conflict, the Dragon were allowed to keep the Agasha family name, while the Phoenix who were once called Agasha took "Gennai" as their family name instead.

Some members of the Gennai family still privately seethe at the loss of their family name, but the family's daimyo is not personally willing or able to take action to regain it. Therefore, Gennai Tomomi, the daimyo of the Mihari province, has taken matters into his own hands, and plans to spark another war with the Dragon so that his family can win its name back.

Tomomi's plan to do this, however, is both morally and legally dubious. He has arranged to attend an art show held by the Shiba Artisan Academy in Nikesake, but not to see art. Instead, he and his entourage will be making contact with contract assassins from the Shosuro family, who he intends to have murder as many marriageable children from the Dragon Agasha family as possible. He expects that the Dragon will correctly accuse the Phoenix of this, and is therefore also arranging for large purchases

of armaments that will allow him to field an impressive army. The Shosuro are more than happy to oblige him, as this will give them significant leverage over Tomomi in the future.

In order to fund these efforts, he has been under-reporting his income to the Imperial Treasury ever since the loss of the Agasha name to the Dragon. This has attracted the attention of the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator, who will deputize the PCs and send them to Nikesake to investigate. Their investigations will be interrupted before they are complete by another of the Tax Fraud Investigator's deputies, but they will likely have learned enough to give Shiba Tsukune information about her clan that may have drastic ramifications for the young Gennai family. They will also have the chance to confront the Shosuro assassins in their hideout.

## Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Membership in the Nightingales or Owls
- Any Artisan skills at 3 or higher (Calligraphy does not count for this.)
- Any Lore skills at 3 or higher
- The Sage Advantage

## Introduction

The PCs begin the adventure in Otosan Uchi, where they are dealing with bureaucratic matters on behalf of their superiors. Each PC rolls **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness**; on a result of 50 or better, the PC gains a point of Personal Status in return for their impressive success (to a maximum of 3.9). On a result of less than 15, the PC loses a point of Personal Status due to their bureaucratic failures.

At some point in the course of their duties, each of the PCs receives a letter from their superior. Bayushi Izumi, the current Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator, has requested the help of high-ranking samurai for a tax fraud investigation about which little is yet known. The PCs' daimyo wish to ingratiate themselves with the Investigator, and so the PCs' services have been offered. The PCs are each instructed to report to the office of the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator on the third day of the Month of Shiba at the Hour of the Dragon, and receive official papers that will allow them admittance to the Imperial Palace for the visit.

Ronin PCs instead receive a letter from the office of the Imperial Treasury, which contains a vague offer of work

that promises 3 koku up front and 3 koku for successful completion. The letter also contains the official papers that will allow them to enter the Imperial Palace on the appointed day.

*The Imperial Palace, a shining edifice of green and gold that sparkles in the morning sun, looms over you as you approach the entrance gates. A line of Seppun guards watches you, missing nothing. One steps forward to receive your papers, and after a few tense moments, finds them satisfactory.*

*Two of the guards detach from the group and walk you into the Forbidden City. They lead you not to the main palace, but to one of the side buildings. A sign in front indicates that this is the office of the Imperial Treasury.*

*As soon as you enter, servants escort you to an antechamber on the second floor of the building, where you wait for only about ten minutes before you are ushered into the office of Bayushi Izumi, the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator.*

*The office is decorated traditionally, with only the finest materials. Izumi's brown lacquered writing desk has mother-of-pearl inlay, and the tall open scroll case behind her is made of ebony that must have come from the Mantis isles, or perhaps even further. The Investigator herself wears a black and red kimono heavily embroidered in gold thread and a mask finished in brilliant gold leaf that covers the left side of her face.*

*She offers a polite smile as you enter, and bows after you have seated yourself. "My name is Bayushi Izumi. I thank you all so much for answering my request on your lords' behalf. I know from your lords' letters that you are only the finest samurai, but that is the end of what I know. Before we get to business, I would love to learn a little more about each of you. Please, would you introduce yourselves?"*

Izumi has multiple purposes for this request, as she wants both to build camaraderie and respect among the group of samurai that will be serving her soon and to see how they present themselves to strangers in preparation for their upcoming mission.

*"Thank you. Now that we have gotten to know each other a little better, I should explain why you are here. I have reason to suspect that Gennai Tomomi, daimyo of Mihari province, is underreporting his income, and therefore not paying all the Imperial taxes that he owes. I would like further investigations to take place, but if I am correct in my suspicions, making my intentions public would only serve to alert Tomomi-san that he*

*should be more careful. Therefore, I would prefer to be discreet."*

*"Tomomi and all of his highest-ranking vassals will be attending a four day art show in Nikesake held by the Shiba Artisan Academy at the end of this month. Tomomi is normally more interested in military matters than frivolities such as art, so I find this suspicious. Nikesake is not far from here, and I have arranged for each of you to be invited to the show. You are each of high enough station or renown that arranging for your invitations did not attract suspicion, and your presence should not be thought of as unusual either."*

*"I have prepared papers showing that you are my yoriki for the duration of the art show. I have no testimony of wrongdoing, so I cannot give you any power greater than this. I request that you make your own investigations in Nikesake about the activities of Gennai Tomomi and his subordinates, and seek the testimony I am currently lacking. I suggest that you not share with anyone that you are in attendance on behalf of anyone other than yourselves, as such knowledge becoming public would make it much more difficult for you to discover anything interesting."*

*"Do you have any questions?"*

- What do we do if we find out what happened? *"You may take sworn testimony on my behalf, but as I said, be careful to whom you reveal your true purpose. Unless you discover something highly irregular, information is all I require."*
- Can you give us something even more official in case we need it to get information from someone? *"I could, but I would strongly prefer not to. If someone blocks you, knowing that is enough for me to later lean on them."*
- Is this some kind of Scorpion plot? *"I requested this position because I believe I am the best qualified to make sure the empire is paid the taxes it is due."* If the PC has Status 4.5 or greater, she will add: *"If you wish to claim that my intentions here are anything less than honorable and can provide testimony to that effect, I would be happy to summon a champion."* A PC who defeats Izumi's Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness of 10k5 plus a Free Raise for every three points of Mental or Social Disadvantages the PC has with a **Investigation (Interrogation)** / Awareness roll discovers that Izumi is being dead serious about this, but that she also feels conflicted about something, and that conflict is the source of her prickliness.

*"Excellent," the Investigator says. "I expect that this will not be too difficult. In my experience, nothing stays*

*hidden long once someone wishes it exposed. Carry the Fortunes.”*

The papers the PCs receive give them Positional Status 2.0 as Yoriki of the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator for the duration of the Shiba Artisan School’s art show.

True to the Investigator’s word, two days later the PCs each receive invitations to an art show to be held by the Shiba Artisan Academy in Nikesake in a week’s time. Each Great Clan maintains an embassy in Nikesake, and rooms at the appropriate embassy are arranged for each PC. The Minor Clans have banded together to maintain a suite of rooms in Nikesake for their diplomats as well, and it is there that any Minor Clan samurai or ronin will be housed.

## Part One: Opening Courts

*The journey to Nikesake from Otosan Uchi takes about a week, and in the late summer is quite pleasant. As you approach, you see that the city itself is surrounded by a shallow moat and whitewashed walls. For all that the Phoenix are generally thought of as a peaceful clan, the city appears quite defensible. When you arrive, the guards at the gate are proper but friendly, and wave you into the city after seeing your invitations and giving you directions to Friendship Street, where the great clans’ embassies are located.*

*On your way to Friendship Street, you notice two things about Nikesake. First, the architecture is highly consistent and highly traditional, and many would consider it to be quite old-fashioned. Second, nearly everyone either has an overly elaborate hairstyle or is wearing some kind of hat. At your embassy, you are shown to small but comfortable quarters, and offered the building’s bathing facilities. You don’t have much time, though, as the show opening is in only a few hours.*

Upon arrival at Nikesake, each PC receives quarters at their clan’s embassy. Minor Clan PCs lodge at the Tanuki Drum House, which is the city’s shared minor clan embassy. Bayushi Izumi arranges for any ronin PCs to stay here as well.

The other samurai at each clan’s embassy are familiar with any PC with Glory 5.0 or higher, Status 3.0 or higher, any Artisan skill at 3 or higher, or membership in the Nightingales. Unless a PC is a member of the Nightingales or has significant skill in one of the arts, however, those other samurai will be somewhat confused about why the PC was invited to attend the art show, though they do not press the issue. Each embassy

also has bathing facilities, which the PCs have just enough time to use before it is time to go to the show opening party.

Each embassy knows the planned schedule of events. Tonight, of course, is the opening party. The second night will feature a performance of noh and kyogen at the Graceful Phoenix theater. A closing party will take place on the third night, and will feature the works of the highest-ranking masters of the Shiba Artisans. More art will be on display during each of the next two mornings, but those displays are not official functions and may be skipped with little consequence.

### Nightingales and Owls

PCs who are members of either the Nightingales or the Owls have a letter waiting for them at their clan’s embassy. For Nightingales, that letter is Player Handout #2. Owl PCs receive Player Handout #3 instead.

### The Opening Party

*The party takes place in the main court chamber of Nikesake castle, which has been set up as a maze of folding screens in which various works of art are arranged: calligraphy scrolls and paintings are hung, while sculptures and ikebana arrangements sit on pedestals. The castle itself would be quite spare if it were not for the painted screens and artwork that surround you, but today the simplicity of the décor only serves to emphasize the quality of the art that is on display.*

Soon after everyone arrives, the hostess gives a short speech.

*“Thank you all for coming. My name is Shiba Yukiko, and I am the head sensei of the Shiba Artisan Academy. Over the next three days, we will feature the best the Shiba artisans have to offer in all of the arts we teach. Tonight, we have displayed the finest works of this year’s graduating class; on subsequent days, you will see what our more experienced students have produced. We have arranged for all of your meals for the duration of the event to be served here, prepared by the most skilled culinary students of our academy. Please, enjoy yourselves tonight, and look forward to more of our school’s work in the following days.”*

From the time of day, one might have expected a dinner party, but instead there are servants circulating the maze with sake and generous quantities of finger foods. If one were sitting down, after all, one would not be able to see all of the art on display. The mood is reserved and

civilized, and the art displays themselves are all quite skillfully executed, although many are stiflingly traditional.

A brief description of some of the prominent art on display can be found in Player Handout #5; this is important for Nightingale or Owl characters.

## Rumors

Characters who wish to do some gossiping may roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll. Phoenix PCs receive a Free Raise on this roll. The rumors include:

- TN 15: Phoenix clan champion Shiba Tsukune makes a habit of attending this event each year, but will be arriving a day and a half late due to travel delays.
- TN 20: Phoenix Provincial daimyo Gennai Tomomi and much of his entourage are in attendance. This is unusual given Tomomi's military bent, although his province is not far from here and he may have political purposes for his attendance.
- TN 25: While all clans maintain embassies in Nikesake, the Crane embassy here is particularly well-known. It was built in response to <that conflict between them>, and ever since then has helped to ingratiate the Phoenix to the Crane. As far as anyone can tell that's about all those stationed at the embassy do, but they do throw great parties.
- TN 30: In recent years, the Shiba Artisan Academy has been increasingly frustrated with the lack of respect that the rest of the empire grants it compared to the Kakita Artisans. Politically minded attendees have no doubt that this art show is an attempt to compete with the Crane.
- TN 35: With the recent destruction of Toshi Ranbo in the fighting between the Lion and Crane, many works of art that had been collected in the city are feared lost. The Crane had evacuated the majority of their non-combatant population prior to the Lion assault, however, and it is hoped that at least a few of the pieces owned by the samurai of that city survived.
- TN 40: The new alliance between the Crab and Phoenix has begun to have significant results for the Phoenix. Kaiu engineers have helped rebuild some of the castles and strongholds damaged by the Dragon years ago, and while their designs are more functional than artistic, it cannot be denied that the new structures are more sound.

Once the PCs have collected rumors, it will become clear who the high-ranking attendees are; they are listed on

Player Handout #1, which the players are free to reference as needed.

## A Spark is Struck

Once the players have processed the list, the following event occurs.

*There is a lull in conversation, and your eye is drawn to Gennai Suzu, Tomomi's court shugenja, where she kneels before her lord with a pained face. "Tomomidono, I can no longer serve you."*

*The daimyo's eyes go wide. "Suzu-san, surely this is not the most appropriate time—"*

*Her voice breaks in relentlessly. "It is the time I have chosen."*

*The room has gone silent. Tomomi speaks more loudly now, as everyone can hear him anyway. "Perhaps we can speak with Gennai-sama about how you might continue serving the clan in other ways."*

*The small woman's eyes show steel. "That will not be necessary."*

*Tomomi sighs. "If you are requesting seppuku..."*

*With a quiet, shaky voice, she speaks one last time. "This... is not... a request."*

*The room stands still as she unties her obi. It drops to the ground, and underneath it, a red stain blooms on her stomach, which expands with a wet, sickening noise. She drops to the ground, clutching her belly, and dies without another word.*

*After a fraught moment, servants scurry toward the body, carrying screens, and use them to block off the woman's corpse. Gennai Tomomi's face twists in rage, and he storms out of the room as whispers begin to spread.*

*Shiba Yukiko steps into the center of the room and opens her mouth as if to speak, but does not seem to know what to say. A Crane courtier wearing extravagant clothing steps forward. "Yukiko-san, The Crane embassy was already planning to hold a social gathering at the conclusion of your event tonight. It would be little hardship if we were to receive guests somewhat earlier than expected. Perhaps this gathering could simply move there now."*

*Yukiko again seems to be at a loss for words, but this time Gennai himself steps out from behind the screens*

*that have been put up to hide the dead body. “Doji Masahiko-san, your offer is both generous and appreciated. Please, lead the way.”*

Everyone in attendance follows the Crane to their embassy, with the exception of Gennai Tomomi and his subordinates Kiyushi, Sadahiro, and Yuudai; these four stay behind.

## Burning Questions

It is about a ten minute walk to the Crane embassy, which has been set up in essentially the same way as the previous party’s room; screens throughout the room create a sort of maze that hides various pieces of art, all of just as high quality as those that the Phoenix had on display, though here the pieces tend to be a bit less traditional. Things are tense at first, but soon the mood lightens significantly thanks to the efforts of several Crane courtiers in attendance, as well as the servants circulating with trays of sake.

Everyone listed in the NPC handout is available, with the exception of Tomomi and his entourage. PCs should have time to talk to no more than one NPC, as the evening quickly grows late.

However, there is someone who wishes to talk to each of the PCs. The diplomats at the Crane embassy pride themselves on their political knowledge, and find themselves rather vexed by the invitations granted to the PCs that are not Nightingales or known to be skilled in the arts. Therefore, Doji Juichi has been assigned the task of ascertaining those PCs’ true purposes. He will approach each of those PCs in turn, remarking that it is nice to see them again if he has met them in one of his many previous appearances. He remarks that he did not know that the PC was interested in art, and asks the PCs’ opinion about a nearby piece.

In many of Doji Juichi’s appearances, he has been little more than a background character to whom bad things happen. Here, he should occur as an actual threat to the PCs, as he is completely in his element—a court setting where art is the topic of discussion.

The six pieces of art, as well as what can be learned about them by looking at them, are as follows.

- A small stone sculpture of a sheathed katana on a sword stand. It is well executed but rough, more a sketch than a finished piece.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Artisan: Sculpture / Intelligence**, TN 25: This was created by someone who could have made

something much more finished, and the piece has no political ambition whatsoever.

- A painted screen showing the Battle of the Land Bridge. It is quite intricate, with many realistic scenes of battle across its four panels, including lost limbs, pools of blood, and fallen demons.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Artisan: Painting / Intelligence**, TN 25: This painting is extremely well executed; in fact, the depictions of gory death are so well executed that it is borderline inappropriate for any venue where one would normally show such an excellent painting.
- An ikebana arrangement of three red blossoms of different shades that is just slightly too crowded.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Artisan: Ikebana / Intelligence**, TN 25: This is meant to mock the Phoenix artisans for trying too hard, and is being a bit uns subtle about it.
- A calligraphy scroll displaying the kanji for “sophistication”, written in a flowing, effortless style, above a highly minimalist ink drawing of a crane.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Calligraphy / Intelligence**, TN 25: The artist behind this piece is skilled, but is tooting the horn of his own clan to a slightly uncomfortable degree. It could be read in context as indirectly mocking the Phoenix for their artistic ambitions, but is not doing so directly.
- An origami piece that consists of about fifty cubes joined together in some abstract shape. The faces of each cube appear as pinwheels of white and blue or two different shades of red.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Artisan: Origami / Intelligence**, TN 25: This was a very expensive piece of art, as it used a great deal of colored paper. It seems to be implying unity between the Crane and the Phoenix, but this statement is likely either naïve or ironic.
- A blue and white kimono with a tortoise-shell pattern embroidered in gold thread over an offset tortoise-shell pattern that was dyed.
  - **Courtier / Intelligence** TN 30 or **Artisan: Tailor / Intelligence**, TN 25: Despite the simplicity of the design, this piece took a great deal of skill, time and expense to produce. It could be viewed as a demonstration of opulence and skill, or a pointless display of luxury and a waste of perfectly good gold thread.

If the PC does not give an answer that displays some sophisticated analysis of the indicated piece of art, Juichi will press him or her further about why the PC has attended. The PC must roleplay an answer and roll **Sincerity / Awareness** against Juichi's **Investigation / Awareness** of 9k4 to give the impression that they have their own innocent reasons for attending. If the PC does not succeed, Juichi allows the subject to drop, but knows that there is something strange going on.

If a PC goes so far as to say why they are actually present, they will find that they are no longer welcome at any Phoenix official function for the duration of the art show, and will also be asked by their clans' embassies to find lodging elsewhere. The Blossoms of Four Seasons Inn will be happy to have any such PCs' patronage.

The party at the Crane embassy dies down soon after midnight, but the diplomats there make it clear that anyone is welcome to visit again any time after the official breakfast and before the official dinner on the following days.

## Part Two: The Heat of the City

When the PCs wake up, they find an invitation to have a private breakfast with Shiba Haruna, the hatamoto to Phoenix provincial daimyo Shiba Sawako. The PCs recognize the name as the one who approved their invitations to the art show.

### Meeting with the Hatamoto

The breakfast takes place within the castle, in a private room. There is a limit to how private a room can be inside a castle, however, and so Haruna will be quite cagey as he offers his assistance to the PCs. He speaks with an air of enthusiastic hospitality, and couches all of his assistance as advice on how to best see the sights of his city. He is doing this, of course, because he does not wish to incur the wrath of the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator.

Haruna is an average-looking man in courtier's robes, and his most notable feature is an extremely tall hat. The room for the private breakfast is slightly smaller than ideal, but it is well-appointed, and the food and service is good.

He is quite busy, and blusters efficiently through the following speech.

*"It is good to finally meet you. When I told Yukiko-sama that you had connections to a noted Bayushi calligrapher in the Imperial city, she did not even ask who it was before insisting that you be invited. I think we can all agree that she need not be troubled by further details. And so it is that you are here."*

*"If I understand correctly, some of you have not had the pleasure of visiting our fine city before. You simply must not miss the merchants' row on Warehouse Street. Nikesake is a trade hub for all of the Phoenix, and few goods that enter or leave our lands do not pass through that street along the way. Nearly every Phoenix shugenja who passes through Nikesake stops at the Crane's Gift Shrine on the way here. And if you feel the need to seek entertainment less stuffy than what we are providing, I recommend the Blossoms of Four Seasons Inn just outside of town. It seems to be where all the transient ronin who pass through the city choose to stay, so it must be the best place for such diversions."*

*"Should you need any more recommendations, I would be happy to meet with such well-connected guests as yourselves again." He smiles a friendly smile that is full of implications and understanding.*

He will answer any further questions, but is not personally familiar with much of the city from an underworld perspective. He is mostly an administrator, and spends much of his time dealing with paperwork, scheduling, and other quotidian tasks. He knows about all the locations listed later with the exception of the Shattered Jug.

In addition, PCs with three or more ranks of the Commerce Skill are aware of Wooden Gate Street's reputation as the foremost place to buy woodblocks for printing in all of Rokugan, PCs that have the Sage advantage or have three or more ranks in a Lore Skill are aware of the Blue Tiled Room's reputation as a center of learning, and PCs with three or more ranks of the Lore: Underworld skill know that the Shattered Jug is the place to go to in Nikesake to ply questionable trades.

After breakfast, the PCs are free to investigate on their own. They have three "slots"—morning, noon, and evening—that they may spend in any way they wish. They may all go to the same place or they may split up; either way, each location will not be willing to give up its secrets without a fight. The default evening activity is the theater show at the Graceful Phoenix theater, but a PC may choose to do something else then if they wish.

The intent of this section is to give players the chance to learn enough to have strong ideas about whom to blame, but not enough to stick an official accusation. If the PCs



do not think to split up, the GM should remind them that this is an option, as they may have trouble learning enough in time if they stay together.

### Blossoms of Four Seasons Inn

The Blossoms of Four Seasons is a roadside inn located just outside of Nikesake on a hill, tucked in among some mulberry groves, and accompanied by a bathhouse and a garden. It is upscale, but not so upscale that a reasonably well-heeled ronin would wish to stay elsewhere. The patrons are split about evenly between well-off peasants, ronin, and clan samurai.

The food, drink, and company are as good as one can expect from a nice roadside inn outside a major city, but the PCs are newcomers and not automatically trusted. Spending some time rubbing elbows with the locals and some money on food and drink will earn them the following information for free. If the PCs seem particularly snobbish, they may need to roll **Courtier (Gossip)** / **Awareness** at TN 30 to learn these things instead.

- Gennai Kiyushi has been using the inn's private room to speak with a number of ronin, and appeared to make some kind of arrangement with many of them. Each of them left the city traveling west within a day of those conversations.
- There's a new ronin in town named Jiro. He has eaten lunch at the inn, but never stayed there. He hasn't looked for any work, which is pretty strange.
- If one were looking for seedier help than the ronin that frequent the Blossoms of Four Seasons, one should go to the Shattered Jug, a hole in the wall noodle shop and sake house at the edge of the merchant's quarter.

If a ronin (or a PC disguised as a ronin) presents himself or herself at the Blossoms of Four Seasons, they receive the following information for free after a similar amount of time and money.

- Gennai Kiyushi seeks reliable ronin for some kind of short-term military work in the near future. Their base of operations will be in Mihari province. You should make sure to talk to her before you leave.
- There's a new ronin in town named Jiro. He's quiet, and seems dangerous, and hasn't looked for any work yet. I'd stay away if I were you.

### The Blue Tiled Room

The Blue Tiled Room is a library full of philosophical texts from around the empire—and a few from outside

it. The samurai who frequent the place pride themselves on their knowledge. The Blue Tiled Room also welcomes anyone from all but the lowest walks of life, and at any time the PCs visit there are one or two peasants present. They do not often speak, but their contributions are welcome as long as they defer to their betters. The atmosphere here is not without tension, however, as the Room's patrons are intelligent and learned men and women who wish to demonstrate to one another just how intelligent and learned they are.

PCs who have no Lore skills with 3 or more ranks and do not have the Sage advantage will find this an unwelcoming place, as few of the patrons will be interested in speaking at length with such an uneducated samurai. Those who know enough to be interesting conversation, however, will be encouraged to stay and speak at length. After a few hours of conversation, such PCs are presented with a blue tile and told that they will be welcome at any time in the future.

Those who have a blue tile can still not learn much from the samurai present, though they can learn the following:

- Gennai Suzu often visited the Room, and was known to be extremely honorable. The scholars here also found her to be prone to grand displays, and are both sad and not particularly surprised that she chose to handle a disagreement between herself and her daimyo in this way. She was not naïve, however, and the scholars believe that her disagreement must have been with something truly worth such a measure.

If a PC receives a blue tile, a peasant doctor named Jinrou will approach the PC and politely request to be told about some of the basic things that one should know in the subject or subjects that the PC has displayed knowledge of. If the PC treats him well, he will inform that PC of the following:

- Suzu came to Jinrou two nights ago and requested help with her impending kanshi. Jinrou provided her with both a painkilling herbal concoction and instruction on the best way to bandage such a wound so that she would live long enough to choose an opportune moment to make her intentions known. When Jinrou asked why she was doing this, Suzu said that Tomomi's desire for revenge was driving him to great dishonor.

### The Crane Embassy

If the PCs return to the Crane embassy in the morning or afternoon, they find that the artistic displays from the previous night's party have been removed, and instead

the building is a maze of smaller rooms. The courtiers there are happy to chat about various happenings around the empire and to share what they know, but not with someone they believe to be indiscreet and not without exacting a price.

To get information out of the Crane diplomats, a PC must chat with them for a while and roll **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at TN 30 to demonstrate that he or she is trustworthy enough to share interesting information with. If there is a Crane PC present, then the information is given for free; if not, a PC must either spend a Crane favor or take a Minor Obligation to the Crane.

The Crane embassy is willing to share the following information:

- Gennai Tomomi brought a larger guard than normal with his entourage when he traveled here, and he is likely protecting some physical object or objects that he believes to be of value.
- Gennai, the Master of Air, was quite bitter about losing the Agasha name to the Dragon for a while, but has made no more recent noise about wanting it back. Gennai Tomomi, on the other hand, still holds a quite a grudge against his former clan for the loss of his family name.
- It is unlikely that Gennai Sadahiro knows about whatever caused Suzu to kanshi, as he is also extremely honorable and even more prone to grand displays than she is. He also happens to be a very, very skilled duelist.

The embassy is mostly deserted during the evening, as the majority of the Crane will be at the Phoenix party instead.

### Crane's Gift Shrine

The Crane's Gift shrine was built by the Phoenix, and is as traditional as traditional can be. The center of the complex contains a shrine to each of the Seven Fortunes, with many smaller shrines to lesser Fortunes and Ancestors. There is a fine ancestral shrine to Asahina here, as well as a quite new shrine to the Fortune of Noble Sacrifice. Traditionally, Phoenix shugenja stop here before they enter Nikesake. True to form, the Master of Air and Gennai Suzu both stopped here before they entered the city yesterday morning.

The monks here will not be especially enthusiastic about talking to the PCs initially, and will encourage them to find a quiet place to meditate. The following information is free, as long as the PCs display sufficient politeness

and piety before asking too many questions. A PC who is more interested in pushing for information than spending time in contemplation will get nothing.

- It is traditional for Phoenix shugenja to visit this shrine on their way into Nikesake. In fact, the Master of Air visited just yesterday! It was very exciting. There was another woman with him too.
- The woman who was with the Master of Air was very distressed. There was something that was bothering her very much, and she spent a great deal of time discussing it with Benkei. When she left, she seemed resolved, but sad.

In fact, Gennai Suzu spent a great deal of time with a monk named Benkei, and they discussed Suzu's crisis of loyalty. To learn more about this, however, a PC must convince Benkei through roleplaying that they will not use this information against her. If they manage this, he will share the following:

- Suzu believed that her lord's ambitions for revenge had consumed him, and was conflicted about how to best deal with it. Benkei spoke with her at some length about this, and encouraged her to find a path other than seppuku, but suspected that his encouragement was not successful. (He will be sad to learn that his suspicions were correct.)

### Peasant Quarter

Talking to the peasants is easy, but one must convince them that they won't be harmed in retaliation for sharing their information. To spend enough time to convince them of this, one or more PCs will need to spend a few hours with the peasants, which will cause a loss of one point of Glory for every two ranks of Glory the PC currently has, rounded down. Following this, success on a **Courtier / Awareness** roll at TN 30 gleans the following information.

- There are quiet rumors that a peasant force is gathering in nearby Mihari province. Some restless peasants have taken what food they could gather and gone to join it, and those peasants have not returned home yet.

### The Shattered Jug

The Shattered Jug is little more than a shack built up along an interior alley near Warehouse Street. It is about twelve feet wide and sixty feet long, all worn cushions and distressed low tables except for a bar and kitchen at the back. There are barely enough lanterns inside, and

the whole place feels like a dark corner of some fancier establishment.

The patrons here are a rough crowd of twenty or so ronin and warehouse workers, the cooks are all burly men wearing sauce-stained clothing, and the wait staff are a trio of jumpy young women who have seen more than their share of violence within these walls. This is not, however, a brothel—any advances on these women will get a PC swiftly beaten and thrown out on the street.

A PC who succeeds on a TN 30 **Lore: Underworld / Awareness** roll and spends some time at the Shattered Jug learns the following. Making the attempt, of course, causes the appropriate Honor loss for the use of a low skill.

- Gennai Yuudai has bought up literally all of the available weapons in town, probably for the peasant force that is rumored to be mustering in Mihari province.
- A highly skilled assassin is in town, but hasn't been seen yet today. He called himself Jiro, which was obviously a false name. No one knows where he is staying.
- Yesterday morning, Gennai Kiyushi was poking around to try to discreetly hire an assassin. She found Jiro, and they seemed to have made some kind of arrangement.

An appropriately grizzled-looking ronin (or a PC disguised as such) who presents himself at the Shattered Jug learns the above things for free, as well as the following.

- Gennai Kiyushi seeks reliable ronin for some kind of short-term military work in the near future. This work will be based in Mihari province. She seems to be attempting some discretion in these conversations, but you should make sure to talk to her before you leave. She was looking for an assassin too, but didn't say anything more about that after she had a long chat with Jiro. Did you hear he's been seen several times in two places at the same time? Pretty strange.

### Warehouse Street

Warehouse Street, the main shopping district of Nikesake, is a wide thoroughway with several squares. Today is market day, and so those squares are filled with stalls that sell a wide and varied selection of goods from around the empire. The majority of these merchants are based elsewhere, but are happy to ply their wares wherever they find themselves.

The merchants here are willing enough to talk, although finding one who knows useful information will require some work. A **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll at TN 30 will discover the following information. Any present PC actually purchasing something on the street will reduce the TN by 5, and purchasing something that costs 2 koku or more will get them the information no matter what they roll. The merchants who operate on this street prefer to be treated as merchants than merely as sources of information, after all, and a PC purchasing something sends an honest signal.

- Gennai Yuudai has been arranging to purchase large quantities of spears and ashigaru armor. Gennai Tomomi has always been a martially focused daimyo, so perhaps his harvests have been exceptionally good lately and he is stockpiling.
- There is a new ronin in town who goes by the name of Jiro. He wears dark brown traveling clothes and is mostly unremarkable. He hasn't looked for any work yet, which is pretty strange.
- It may be worth asking around on Wooden Gate Street as well, as that's where the local merchants are based.

### Wooden Gate Street

Nikesake's skilled artisans and tradesmen have their shops set up here, as well as a few other local merchants. The specialty of the street's vendors is objects made out of the wood of the local mulberry trees, and there are many woodblock print artists here. There is a small amount of cloth printing done here, but any fabric must be imported; however, there are a great many woodblocks on display that are intended for printing use elsewhere.

The merchants here are willing enough to talk, although finding one who knows useful information will require some work. A **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll at TN 30 will discover the following information. Any present PC actually purchasing something on the street will reduce the TN by 5, and purchasing something that costs 2 koku or more will get them the information no matter what they roll. The artisans who operate on this street prefer to be treated as artisans than merely as sources of information, after all, and a PC purchasing something sends an honest signal.

- A Crab merchant patron was running around yesterday looking for arms. Apparently the captain of Gennai Tomomi's guard bought up all the spears and ashigaru armor from the merchants on

Warehouse Street, but the locally-based merchants here don't sell such things. This is a peaceful city!

- There are normally a reasonable amount of ronin available in the city that one can hire to protect caravans of goods going to other cities, but lately things have dried up quite a bit. Rumor has it that there is better-paying military work available to the west in Mihari province, and the merchants in Nikesake have had to pay ronin more to compete.

## An Evening of Theater

The evening's entertainment takes place at the Graceful Phoenix Theater, a large theater complex that boasts several stages. It is the largest one that hosts this gathering. A PC who chooses not to be present at the theater show earns some derisive comments about his or her absence, and loses a number of points of Glory equal to his or her Status Rank.

The play chosen for the evening is "Shattered", an example of the "warrior play" category; it tells the story of Shiba Toriiko, the Phoenix Clan Champion who sacrificed herself at the Battle of the Broken Daisho to end a war between Lion and Crane. The first act features Toriiko's spirit, and the second reenacts the scene of her death at the hands of a blustering Crane commander. In between the two acts, there is a kyogen performance; this short play tells the story of a boy who a lazy sculptor pays to pretend to be a statue. The purchaser of the "statue" is delighted when the statue comes to life, and obeys the statue's every command.

The performances of both works are quite expert; both Matsu Shamate and Doji Juichi, each a well-known expert on theater, lavishly compliment the performance as the crowd returns to the castle for a short social gathering.

At this gathering, everyone on the NPC list is present and available for conversation. The hour is fairly late, however, and the PCs will not have much time to socialize before things break up. As such, each PC may only take one action in this scene, be it try to learn rumors, speak to a named NPC, or do something else.

As soon as the party is in full swing, Doji Masahiko begins to start discussions about which of the Shiba Artisan Academy's graduates might be talented enough to receive an invitation to join the Nightingales. He makes it clear to the other Nightingale PCs that he wants no more than one Shiba Artisan recommended, if that. Otomo Shun, in contrast, wants to support the Shiba Artisans independent of any political affiliation, and will ask any PC Owls to help support them. The artisans listed on Player Handout #4 are the most promising.

Nightingale or Owl PCs may choose to roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** in order to discuss the worthiness of the artisans, or praise the work of the Shiba Artisans. Such PCs may also, if they choose, make a Raise to conceal that this is their own agenda, but the GM should not remind them of this. A PC who rolls at least a 30 meaningfully helps their side, and receives an increase of .3 to the Positional Status that their Nightingale or Owl cert grants. A Nightingale or who chooses not to participate, or who speaks in favor of accepting multiple Shiba Artisans, loses .3 Status from their Nightingale Positional Status. Assisting in this effort counts as a PC's one action for this scene.

Whether or not a PC assists, Masahiko's efforts attract the attention of Gennai Sadahiro, Gennai Tomomi's yojimbo. If one or more Nightingale PCs contribute to the discussion and do not Raise to conceal information, the PC who did so and rolled the highest receives the following challenge. If no PC meets this criteria, Doji Masahiko receives the challenge instead.

***Gennai Sadahiro approaches, a disapproving look on his face. "I understand that you are proud of the artistic organization you represent," he says calmly, but loudly enough to quiet all other conversation in the room, "but this event is intended to celebrate the Shiba Artisan Academy. I believe your words tonight were intended to discredit my clan's school, and I demand a challenge to first blood."***

A bushi who is challenged in this way must fight his or her own duel. If a challenged PC is not a bushi, he or she may choose his or her own champion. If he or she does not immediately nominate a champion, Kakita Katsuko volunteers, scowling at Sadahiro. If Masahiko receives the challenge, Katsuko immediately steps up behind him and presents herself as his champion.

The duel itself takes place in the castle's courtyard. If Katsuko fights the duel against Sadahiro, anyone who cares to observe the duel sees the following scene.

***Gennai Sadahiro and Kakita Katsuko stand within the dueling circle, facing each other. Sadahiro stands motionless, his palm extended, face down, above his sword's handle, and his face a portrait of tranquility. Katsuko is equally still, her hand face up above her sword in the famous Kakita stance, but her stillness is one of tension, not calm. Both duelists draw, but Katsuko's cut goes wild, and Sadahiro leaves a carefully-targeted scratch on the inside of her extended right wrist.***

If a PC fights the duel instead, Sadahiro spends two Void Points on Assessment and rolls 10k7 with the Emphasis. He spends two Void Points on Focus, and rolls 10k10+12. If he won Assessment by 10 or more, he gains a bonus of 2k2 to Focus, increasing his roll to 10k10+20. If he wins the Focus, he spends his remaining Void Point on a Strike, on which he rolls 10k9+5, plus another 5 for every increment of 5 by which he won the Focus phase.

If Sadahiro is defeated, he gracefully retracts his statement, and if he is not grievously injured, returns to socializing as though nothing had happened.

If Katsuko loses the duel on behalf of Masahiko, she mumbles an insincere apology while she stares in disbelief at the small cut on her wrist.

Once each PC has taken one social action, the party breaks up, and the guests bid each other farewell until tomorrow's breakfast.

## Part Three: A Familiar Face

At breakfast the next morning, there is a bit of a stir among the diners—Shiba Tsukune and her entourage have just arrived in Nikesake, and are working on getting settled in the castle. She is expected to join the court soon.

While this is circulating the room, the following exchange occurs.

*Shosuro Ochiba approaches the Shiba Artisan Academy head sensei at the head table. "Yukiko-sama, may I have a moment?" Her voice is loud enough for all to hear, but just quiet enough that the conversation could plausibly be private.*

*Yukiko nods. "Yes?"*

*"Yesterday evening, I received a letter from Bayushi Izumi, the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator. She has deputized me as part of an investigation that is currently underway in Phoenix lands." Ochiba hands her papers to Yukiko, who scrutinizes them for several moments before handing them back.*

*"My superior has other deputies active in the city," Ochiba continues, "and she asked me to share some information with them that relates to their investigation. I know that they are your guests, but I would hope that you would give me leave to speak with them in a private room."*

*Yukiko's face tightens. "And who are those deputies?"*

*A smiling Shosuro Ochiba lists all of your names. Most of the samurai in the room stare at each of you in horror.*

Each PC gains half a rank of Infamy. The PCs are then coldly and efficiently shown into a private room, where they have the honor of speaking with Shosuro Ochiba.

Ochiba is a quiet, pretty woman in her late twenties who has traveled quite extensively, somehow without accumulating the list of enemies that so many Scorpion earn. In the past, she has not taken an active

*"It is nice to see you again," she smiles. "And for those of you I have not met, it is nice to meet you."*

*"Like yourselves, I have been asked to serve as a deputy to Bayushi Izumi-sama. On my way here, I spoke with Gennai Sogano, the young man who was once Gennai Suzu's understudy in Tomomi-sama's court. He had seen some unfortunate things, and was quite willing to share them." She places a scroll in front of you. "This document is his signed testimony that Suzu was reporting shugenja office expenditures well above what she was actually spending on supplies. The discrepancies are enough to explain the reduction in reported income on the province's tax information."*

She is lying; this testimony is entirely forged, although the young man and his position are both real, he has been informed of the testimony that he has "provided", and he is willing to confirm Ochiba's word. He is also not present to confirm or deny anything, and it would take days to reach him. To be certain that Ochiba is lying based on her mannerisms, a PC must defeat her **Awareness / Sincerity (Deceit)** of 10k6 (with the Emphasis and a Free Raise for every 3 points of Social and Mental disadvantages the PC has) with their **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness**.

*"I leave it to you to decide what you wish to do with this information, as you are the primary investigators on this case. But I promise you," she says with deadly intent, "that the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator would find your work satisfactory if you simply acted on this information and walked away."*

Ochiba pauses here, giving the briefest chance for the PCs to ask her questions. She will not betray herself here, but she will suggest to Scorpion PCs that this is their clan's desired outcome.

*She smiles again. "It has been good to see you." She stands and leaves.*

*As soon as she is gone, Shiba Yukiko storms into the room. Her face is red and her mouth is tight. "You hid your true purpose from me. You are no longer welcome at my show."*

*A taller woman's silhouette appears behind her. "I will be the judge of that," the newcomer says with finality.*

*Yukiku turns around, jumps, and prostrates herself. "Yes, Shiba Tsukune-sama." Yukiko stands, scurries out of the room, and leaves you alone with the Phoenix Clan Champion.*

## Part Four: A Visit with the Champion

*Shiba Tsukune sits down in front of you, her face a complete blank. As she sits, the door slides closed, and five armored silhouettes settle into place outside it.*

*"You represent the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator. She wants each of my provincial daimyo to pay the appropriate amount of taxes. I represent the Phoenix clan, and I want to have vassals I can trust." She narrows her eyes. "Something highly untoward is going on in Gennai Tomomi's court, and I intend to make an example out of one or more of its members." She sighs. "I need you to tell me which ones."*

This is primarily a roleplaying challenge. Tsukune knows why the PCs are here, and would prefer to handle things quietly. However, she also wants to make sure she chooses the right person or persons to punish, and so she will press the PCs if she does not find their justifications for an accusation to be sufficient.

If the PCs unanimously agree on a group of people who should have an example made of them and can justify their claims with what they learned during their investigation, Tsukune will simply accept them on their word. If they either disagree or do not put together a convincing case, one PC per distinct argument must make an **Awareness / Sincerity (Appropriate Emphasis)** roll to determine who Tsukune finds most believable.

Once the PCs have agreed on a set of scapegoats, Tsukune begins to speak again.

*"I thank you for your counsel. This—"*

*Running steps approach from the hallway. "Champion-sama! Champion-sama!"*

*"I am busy with guests," she says, loud enough to carry through walls. "Leave us."*

*"Champion-sama, there has been a murder!"*

*Her eyes go to the door. "Who?"*

*"Shiba Haruna, Sawako-sama's hatamoto."*

*She looks at each of you. "You will come with me."*

The Phoenix champion and her five guards escort the PCs out of the castle and to Warehouse Street, then through a short maze of back alleys. At the end of it, in a dead end, and behind a stack of barrels, is the crumpled body of Shiba Haruna. A deep stab wound goes all the way from his abdomen to the small of his back, and red stains bloom around the wound. His right arm is outstretched, and the index finger is covered in blood. Several scrawled kanji are written on the wooden wall in dark red; they read "cherry blossom sake brewery two assassins Jiro."

The Cherry Blossom Sake Brewery is located in the market district, and recently went out of business.

The guards immediately insist on escorting Tsukune back to the castle, but Tsukune requests that the PCs go to investigate. Now.

## Part Five: Confrontation

The Cherry Blossom Brewery is built into a warehouse whose only entrance is a narrow alleyway in the market district. The front door is unlocked, and leads into a small office that has been emptied of all records and furniture. A door leads from the empty office into what must be the brewery itself. When the PCs open this door, they encounter the following scene.

*The main chamber of the sake works is a large room, perhaps fifty feet square. The ceilings are twenty feet tall, and catwalks line the walls about ten feet up. A few ladders here and there lead up to them. There are skylights in the ceiling, but they are currently covered, and the few shafts of light that make it into the room through their covers provide the only illumination.*

*Two giant vats sit in the center of the room, each fifteen feet in diameter, and the catwalks extend from the walls to them across the center of the room. A small, neatly-groomed man wearing dark clothes stands calmly*

*between the vats. “I’m so glad you could make it,” he says. “Please, step inside. We have much to discuss.”*

There are three assassins in the room in total; one between the vats, one hidden on the catwalk just above the door the PCs came through, and one hidden in the rafters above the vats. An **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll of 50 or better is enough to spot the one in the rafters above the vats, though the TN goes down by 5 every time he fires a blowgun dart.

As soon as all of the PCs are in the room, the assassin above the door drops to the ground, and closes and bars the door, while the one in front throws smoke bombs into the midst of the PCs. At this point, all of the characters roll initiative.

The characters are all effectively Blinded while in the main chamber of the sake works, unless something disperses the smoke. (This gives a penalty of -3k3 to any ranged attack rolls, and -1k1 to melee attacks, reduces their base Armor TN to their Reflexes +5, and their Water Ring is reduced by 2 for purposes of movement.) Moreover, the PCs must roll a Contested **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll against an assassin’s **Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility** (10k7e) in order to find a target they are not already engaged in melee with.

The two assassins on the ground will attack from the smoke, giving them the benefit of their Techniques. The assassin hidden in the rafters spends his actions on blowgun darts poisoned with Restful Slumber, preferentially targeting shugenja. He uses his Rank 4 Technique to remain hidden while making one attack per Round until discovered. Because they are fighting on prepared ground, the assassins do not suffer movement penalties for being Blinded, and their attack penalties are unkept dice (-1k0 melee, -3k0 ranged).

Once all three are discovered, or one of the three brothers falls, the remaining assassins attempt to flee via ladders and skylights. Pursuit requires succeeding at two out of three Contested **Athletics / Agility** (10k5) rolls.

#### “Jiro”

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 4	Water 4	Void 3
Reflexes 5		Agility 5		
Honor 0.0		Status -10.0		Infamy 2.0
<b>Armor TN: 30</b>		<b>Reduction: 0</b>		
<b>Attack:</b> 10k6 (shuriken, Simple), 10k5 (ninja-to, simple), 10k6 (blowgun, simple) [+0k1 on all attacks vs. unaware targets]		<b>Damage:</b> 2k2 + poison (shuriken), 6k2 (ninja-to), 2k1 + poison (blowgun)		
<b>Initiative:</b> 9k5				

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Infiltrator 4

*The Path of Shadows:* You lose no honor for using Low Skills or Ninjutsu weapons in the service of the Scorpion. You gain a +2k0 bonus to Stealth rolls.

*Strike from Darkness:* When you declare an attack against an opponent who is unaware of our presence, your Raises are not limited by your Void and you roll additional unkept dice equal to your school rank. You also roll half this amount of extra dice against an opponent suffering from a Condition effect.

*Steel within Silk:* While attacking from ambush as described above or while using ninjutsu weapons, you may make attacks as a Simple Action.

*Whisper of Steel:* After attacking an unaware target, opponents and bystanders must roll **Perception / Investigation (Notice)** against your **Agility / Stealth** to detect you. You may only use this Technique if you attack only once per round.

**Skills:** Acting 5, Athletics 5, Defense 5, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 5, Ninjutsu 7, Sincerity 3, Stealth (Sneaking) 7, (Jiro #1: Etiquette 3) (Jiro #2: Craft: Poison 5) (Jiro #3: Lore: Underworld 5)

**Mastery Abilities:** Ignores movement penalties for Medium Terrain and treats Difficult Terrain as Medium; adds Battle Rank to initiative; adds +1k0 to unarmed damage; may ready a sword as a Free Action; adds +1k0 to damage with swords.

**Poisons:** The Jiro triplets have two custom-made poisons that they use.

*Restful Slumber:* This is a powerful anesthetic that can, if deployed carefully by blowgun dart, be virtually undetectable. A target hit with a blowgun dart with this poison must make a TN 20 Perception check in order to notice, as the needle is tiny, and the poison immediately numbs the wound. Upon impact, the target must make a TN 20 Stamina roll, or temporarily lose 1 Perception and 1 Reflexes for an hour. Multiple doses stack, and if a character’s Perception or Reflexes drops to 0, they fall into a deep slumber until the poison wears off.

*Blind Rage:* This poison is a combination of naturally occurring venom and a potent amphetamine. A character struck by the poison must make a TN 20 Stamina roll. If the character fails, he or she must make a TN 30 Void (Meditation) roll each round for the next three rounds to enter any stance other than Full Attack.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Blackmail (Gennai Tomomi), Silent / Dark Secret (many murders)

If the assassin who began the fight in the rafters dies, he makes a great clinking sound when he hits the ground. The source of this clinking sound is a heavy pouch that contains 200 koku in Phoenix mint, as well as a list of the names of many Dragon samurai. If he escapes, the

gold and the list are gone, and the Scorpion will eventually receive them.

Searching the brewery will turn up nothing of value, though there are a trio of bedrolls in one corner of the brewery.

## Conclusion

Upon returning to the castle, the PCs will be whisked away to the suite that Shiba Tsukune's entourage is using. Any poisoned or injured PCs will receive magical attention from a member of Shiba Tsukune's staff, and Tsukune will demand a report as soon as the PCs have recovered.

At dinner, those who the PCs convinced Tsukune to punish are simply not present, and the conclusion of the art show goes relatively smoothly and without comment on the absences. The farewell breakfast also goes smoothly, though the same people who were not present for dinner are once again missing.

If the PCs were unanimous in their decision about who to blame the tax irregularities on, Shiba Tsukune commends them at breakfast.

*Shiba Tsukune stands to speak, and the room goes silent. "The Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator's deputies did no wrong here. They received orders from one of the throne's chosen servants, and followed them despite how uncomfortable they were. You will not think less of them for their actions here."*

*She sits, and the room returns to its conversations.*

When this takes place, the PCs lose the half-rank of infamy that they gained earlier in the adventure.

If the PCs also brought back the note with the list of Dragon names, she continues.

*"I am profoundly disappointed that one of our clan would engage in such duplicitous tactics. Whatever grievances or concerns exist between the Phoenix and Dragon Clans must be resolved honorably, lest it cause our entire clan to lose face. If another Phoenix chooses to emulate these methods, they will be executed for treason." The room goes silent, and Togashi Yoriko's eyes go very, very wide.*

The next morning's breakfast takes place without major incident, though any scapegoat Phoenix are still not present. Shosuro Ochiba will make a point of congratulating the PCs on their successful investigation;

any PC who wishes to hold a grudge against her for her actions in revealing their mission may list her on their mod sheet as a Sworn Enemy (worth 4 points). As far as she is concerned, it wasn't personal, but she has no intention of being blindsided by someone who decides to make it so.

After that, the PCs are free to return to the Imperial City.

## Epilogue

When the PCs arrive, they receive a request to attend a meeting with Bayushi Izumi to give a report on their investigations.

*The Imperial Palace shines again upon you as you pass through the gates. Just as before, two guards escort you to the office of the Imperial Treasury, and just as before, you wait for ten minutes in an antechamber on the second floor before you are ushered into the Tax Fraud Investigator's office.*

*Izumi does her best to smile, but something clearly weighs on her as she begins to speak. "I have heard rumors of what took place at Nikesake during the art show, but not from those who I asked to attend it. Please, tell me what you have learned."*

The PCs should deliver a report. Izumi uses her **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** of 10k5 (plus a Free Raise for every three points of Mental or Social Disadvantages an opponent has) to attempt to detect any deceptions here, and she asks questions if she feels that she needs to learn any more.

Her response to the PCs' report depends on their approach. Overall, Izumi is idealistic about what should take place in the empire—laws should be followed and taxes should be paid—but is not attached to the manner in which this is accomplished. She will be satisfied if the PCs believe that Shiba Tsukune has blamed and eliminated the tax evaders.

*Izumi nods, but then a sad look appears on the half of her face that you can see. "I apologize for the disruption in your work that one of my subordinates caused. Her information was woefully inaccurate, though I assume she meant well, and I am glad that you persisted through the disruption to ensure that the throne receives what it is due."*

The direction that the conversation goes from here will depend greatly on the PCs, but keep the following guidelines in mind:



- Izumi is both honestly grateful for the PCs involvement and honestly horrified at what the Scorpion Clan forced her to do to attempt to disrupt the investigation.
- If the PCs made a strong recommendation to Shiba Tsukune, Izumi is honestly grateful that they persisted through the disruption to do the work of her office.
- Under no circumstances is Izumi willing to outright confirm that orders from the Scorpion Clan influenced her actions.

At the end of the conversation, if the PCs were polite to Izumi, they each gain Ally: Bayushi Izumi (Influence 3, Devotion 1).

After the PCs' meeting with the Tax Fraud Investigator, they are once again free to return to the duties they were performing before the adventure begins.

**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
The PC contributed to the investigation:	+1XP
The assassins were defeated or driven away:	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience: 4 XP**

## Honor

As indicated in the adventure.

## Glory

As indicated in the adventure.

## Other Awards/Penalties

If the party came to a unanimous decision about what action Shiba Tsukune should take, each PC loses half a rank of Infamy and gains her as an Ally with Influence 4 and Devotion 1. Additionally, Phoenix PCs gain .1 personal Status.

If an Owl or Nightingale successfully assists his or her side in the discussion, that PC's Owl or Nightingale Status increases by .3. If a Nightingale PC does this without Raising to conceal the source, that PC gains Sworn Enemy: Shiba Yukiko.

If an Owl or non-Phoenix Nightingale makes no attempt to assist their side, that PC's Owl or Nightingale status decreases by .3.

## Module Tracking Sheets

Players may take Shosuro Ochiba as a 4-pt Sworn Enemy

## GM Reporting

Did a PC defeat Gennai Sadahiro in the duel?

Which NPC(s) did the PCs blame for the tax evasion?

How many of the assassins survived?

What happened to the rafter assassin's bag of Phoenix gold with the list of Dragon names?

**GM must report this information BEFORE 9/6/2014 for it to have storyline effect.**

## Appendix: NPC List for GMs

### Phoenix

**Gennai**, Master of Air and Gennai family daimyo. Ten years ago, Gennai chose to leave the service of the Dragon clan in response to Mirumoto Hitomi's growing instability during the War against the Darkness. Many of his family chose to come with him. The Phoenix clan welcomed him with open arms, and installed him in the then-open position of Master of Air in recognition of his sizable talents. He attempts to present a friendly but stern public face, and dresses both traditionally and flamboyantly in bright red robes.

**Honor:** 6.5      **Status:** 7.0      **Glory:** 6.0      **School/Rank:** Agasha Shugenja 5

**Goals:** Be a pleasant political face.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Gennai left the Dragon clan in response to Hitomi's mental instability during the War against the Darkness. He did not pressure others from his family into going with him, but many of them came with him anyway. TN 30 – At the peace talks that ended open war between the Dragon and the Phoenix, Gennai began the talks by offering his own life in return for his family keeping his name. The rest of the Phoenix delegation managed to talk him out of this.

TN 40 – Gennai is still privately quite bitter about having lost his name to the Dragon, though he never indicates this in public.

**Previous Appearances:** Proposal of Peace (WiR 2013 Interactive)

**Gennai Kiyushi**, Gennai Tomomi's hatamoto. Gennai Tomomi is a military man at heart, and so it falls to Gennai Kiyushi to do many of the province's political and administrative tasks. One of her duties is to manage the province's treasury, and she is using this power to cook the books, saving enough on taxes to help finance the war with the Phoenix that her daimyo hopes to create. Kiyushi enjoys being out of the spotlight, and both dresses and behaves to best hide from it.

**Honor:** 2.5 (5.5 perceived)      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 5.0      **School/Rank:** Asako Loremaster 3

**Goals:** Hire ronin for the army and some assassins to start the war.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Gennai Tomomi is a military man at heart, and so Kiyushi is responsible for the province's political and financial matters.

TN 30 – Kiyushi does not enjoy attention, and tries to stay out of the public eye as much as she possibly can.

TN 40 – Last month, a merchant that Kiyushi was working with to help supply her province with food was busted for opium smuggling.

**Gennai Sadahiro**, Gennai Tomomi's yojimbo. Gennai Sadahiro was born Shiba, and married into the former Agasha family as part of the Phoenix's efforts to integrate its new family into the larger clan. Since joining his new family, he has served his lord well and loyally. He is also quietly one of the finest duelists in all of Phoenix lands, though he has not fought many public duels. He is highly honorable and somewhat gullible, and has no idea that his lord's imminent plans involve hiring assassins. He dresses flashily, but behaves as a model of restraint and tact.

**Honor:** 8.5      **Status:** 4.5      **Glory:** 4.5      **School/Rank:** Shiba Bushi 4/Shiba Yojimbo path

**Goals:** Challenge anyone who publicly impugns the honor of Gennai Tomomi.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Sadahiro was born to the Shiba, and married into the former Agasha family as part of the Phoenix's efforts to integrate its new family into the clan.

TN 30 – Sadahiro is both extremely honorable and somewhat gullible.

TN 40 – Gennai Tomomi was recently accused of lying to another Gennai daimyo. Sadahiro intercepted the duel, and won in a dominating performance of iaijutsu. Not everyone believes that Sadahiro was in the right, but he certainly won the duel.

**Gennai Suzu**, Gennai Tomomi's court shugenja. Suzu was strongly against her family's defection from the Dragon, and came with Tomomi only after a great deal of cajoling. She still feels partially responsible for the war between the Phoenix and the Dragon. She recently caught wind of her lord's burgeoning plans, and feels that she has no recourse but to commit kanshi. She dresses traditionally in red shugenja robes, and is unfailingly polite to everyone.

**Honor:** 9.5      **Status:** 4.5      **Glory:** 5.0      **School/Rank:** Agasha Shugenja 4

**Goals:** Trigger doubt in Gennai Tomomi's rule through committing kanshi in open court.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Suzu is an extremely honorable woman, and takes the responsibility of being a spiritual link between the kami and ancestors and the rest of Rokugan extremely seriously.  
TN 30 – Suzu was strongly against her family's defection from the Dragon, and came with Tomomi only after a great deal of cajoling. She still feels partially responsible for the war between the Phoenix and the Dragon.  
TN 40 – Lately, Tomomi has been keeping Suzu out of many discussions with his other highest-ranking vassals.

**Gennai Tomomi**, daimyo of Mihari province. Tomomi is a man bent on revenge, still seething about the loss of his family name to the Dragon. He knows that Gennai himself is still somewhat frustrated about the loss as well, and has come to this art show to prepare for, and then create, another war with the Phoenix. He will not personally do anything while he is here, but a few of his vassals will be at work.

**Honor:** 2.5      **Status:** 6.0      **Glory:** 6.0      **School/Rank:** Mirumoto Bushi 4

**Goals:** Buy weapons. Hire ronin. Hire assassins. Don't get caught.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Gennai Tomomi trained with the Mirumoto, and still seethes at the loss of his family name to the Dragon.

TN 30 – Tomomi has privately expressed displeasure that Gennai has stopped attempting to get his name back.

TN 40 – Recently, Tomomi has been cutting his yojimbo and court shugenja out of some of his private meetings.

**Gennai Yuudai**, captain of Gennai Tomomi's guard. Yuudai is an ambitious fellow from a poor family, and quickly rose through the ranks of the Shiba army by doing exactly what his superiors wanted—whether or not it was strictly honorable. This reputation attracted Tomomi's attention, and the men are now fast friends. His goal here is to arrange for the purchase of a great deal of munitions with which to arm Tomomi's peasant army. Yuudai enjoys his newfound status quite a bit; he dresses just short of garishly, and behaves with some tact but a nouveau riche edge.

**Honor:** 4.5      **Status:** 4.5      **Glory:** 4.5      **School/Rank:** Mirumoto Bushi 3

**Goals:** Buy weapons to use for Tomomi's war against the Dragon. Don't get caught.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Yuudai was born to a poor family, rose quickly through the ranks of the Shiba army, and recently became Tomomi's guard captain.

TN 30 – A year and a half ago, Yuudai attempted to claim credit for a military action that saved a remote Phoenix holding from Dragon scouts, but investigation revealed that another soldier deserved the credit instead. Some Phoenix claim that he has been pulling similar things to help him rise through the Shiba army, and that this is just the time he got caught.

TN 40 – Yuudai spent a lot of time on Warehouse Street today, and that is a strange place for the guard captain to be.

**Shiba Haruna**, hatamoto to Enjaku provincial daimyo Shiba Sawako. Sawako concerns himself primarily with military and economic matters, and so has assigned his hatamoto to ensure that the yearly Nikesake art show goes well. Haruna is the one person in Nikesake who knows the PCs' true purpose, and will help them when possible so as to best remain in the good graces of the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator.

**Honor:** 6.5      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 3.0      **School/Rank:** Asako Courtier 4

**Goals:** Make sure that all the art show guests leave Nikesake with a smile on their faces. Assist the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator without anyone noticing.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Haruna managed the invitations for this event.

TN 30 – Shiba Sawako has little interest in political matters, and so Shiba Haruna is perhaps the most important power broker in all of Enjaku province..

**Shiba Yukiko**, head sensei of the Shiba Artisan Academy. Yukiko is a stern and aging woman, whose black hair is streaked with gray. She dresses sternly and traditionally but in very expensive clothing. At least some of the stern face she puts on during this event comes from the stress she feels from the responsibility to have it go well; this event is the widest showcase each year of her students, and her reputation depends on her students' success.

**Honor:** 7.5      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 5.0      **School/Rank:** Shiba Artisan 5

**Goals:** Demonstrate that the Shiba Artisans deserve a greater place in the Rokugani artistic landscape.

**Gossip:** TN 20 – Yukiko has been quite distracted in the past month as she prepares for the show.

TN 30 – Yukiko considers the existence of the Nightingales to be a great threat to the Shiba Artisan Academy, and hopes to use this event to establish her school's relevance in the face of that pressure.

## Non-Phoenix

**Kaiu Shinsaku**, hatamoto to Crab provincial daimyo Kaiu Haru. A Kaiu trained in the Yasuki school, Shinsaku is the Rokugani equivalent of an investment banker. He is responsible for supplying Shiro Kaiu with weapons, food, and building materials, and is here in Nikesake to make commercial arrangements with the many merchants that pass through the city.

**Honor:** 5.4      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 3.2      **School/Rank:** Yasuki Courtier 3

**Goals:** Acquire weapons and building materials for Shiro Kaiu. Show enough interest in the art show for people to remember that a Crab was there.

**Previous Appearances:** The Perfect Weapon

**Doji Masahiko**, head of the Crane embassy in Nikesake. Though Masahiko is very honorable, behind the smiles, bows, and starched blue silks, he is a truly fearsome social predator. He aims here to make sure that the Phoenix's antics do not threaten the Crane Clan's stranglehold on the world of art. He happens to be a member of the Nightingales, and his artistic endeavor of choice is origami.

**Honor:** 8.2      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 5.0      **School/Rank:** Doji Courtier 4

**Goals:** Balance being friendly toward the Phoenix with maintaining Crane artistic superiority.

**Doji Juichi**, Crane diplomat and theater enthusiast. Juichi is every bit the stereotypical Crane courtier: handsome, smooth-talking, honorable, and mysteriously unmarried despite his advancing age. A number of samurai not normally thought of as interested in art have been recently added to the art show guest list, and Juichi has been assigned the task of learning why they are here.

**Honor:** 6.5      **Status:** 3.0      **Glory:** 3.0      **School/Rank:** Doji Courtier 3

**Goals:** Figure out why the PCs are here. Make sure the Phoenix do not look too good by the end of the art show.

**Previous Appearances:** Winter Court: Kyuden Hida, Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei, Knife in the Darkness, The Wasp's Nest

**Kakita Katsuko**, Crane duelist. Katsuko is quiet, and usually content to fade into the background and focus on her study of iaijutsu. Although she is not brash, she is somewhat prickly, and she is not at all afraid to use her considerable dueling talents to make a point for her clan. The Crane mission for this event has the potential to backfire, and she is here in case it does.

**Honor:** 9.1      **Status:** 3.0      **Glory:** 4.3      **School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 4

**Goals:** If a duel comes up, win it.

**Togashi Yoriko**, Dragon monk and sculptor. A young and talented but somewhat sheltered artist, Yoriko was raised entirely within the High House of Light. Her sculpting work has become stale as of late, and Togashi Hoshi has sent her to this event to rejuvenate her store of ideas. She has, of course, been admonished to avoid irritating the Phoenix about the Agasha situation at all costs.

**Honor:** 5.2      **Status:** 2.0      **Glory:** 2.5      **School/Rank:** Togashi Monk 2

**Goals:** See interesting art and meet interesting artists. Don't do anything that would irritate the Phoenix.

**Otomo Shun**, Imperial courtier and owl. Shun served the Imperial Regent as the Imperial Undersecretary of Culture until this past spring. In that capacity, he arranged for the Crane and the Dragon to provide art for last winter's Imperial winter court, but the art that the Dragon sent was not suitable for display, causing a last-minute crisis. Since then, he has been licking his wounds and trying to get back into the Regent's good graces. He also expects that the Nightingales in attendance may be preparing something, against which he is prepared to fight back.

**Honor:** 4.5      **Status:** 2.0      **Glory:** 3.0      **School/Rank:** Otomo Courtier 4

**Goals:** Make friends with Shiba Artisans that won't screw him over the next time he needs art for the Imperial Regent. Also, keep the Nightingales from pulling anything.

**Previous Appearances:** Matters of Commerce (PineCon 2013 interactive)

**Matsu Shamate**, Lion actress. She married out of the Bayushi family and into the Matsu as part of a set of marriages intended to solidify a treaty between the Lion and the Scorpion. She is quite a skilled actress, and is knowledgeable about other artistic fields.

**Honor:** 3.7      **Status:** 4.0      **Glory:** 6.5      **School/Rank:** Bayushi Courtier 3

**Goals:** Show an artistic face for the Lion clan.

**Previous Appearances:** Divide and Conquer

**Yoritomo Tsuboro**, Mantis merchant patron. A former ronin who followed Yoritomo during the Clan Wars and swore fealty to the Mantis when they became a Great Clan, Tsuboro is friendlier and more traditional than most Mantis. This made him an excellent choice to represent them to the Phoenix. He genuinely enjoys Rokugani high culture, and his somewhat naïve delight at the art on display is not at all affected.

**Honor:** 6.5      **Status:** 4.0      **Glory:** 4.1      **School/Rank:** Yoritomo Courtier 3

**Goals:** Make deals with Crane and Phoenix merchants. Enjoy the art show.

**Previous Appearances:** Winter Court: Kyuden Hida, The Price of Weakness, The Wasp's Nest

**Shosuro Ochiba**, Scorpion diplomat. Ochiba is a quiet, pretty woman in her late twenties who has travelled across the Empire and has spent time in virtually every significant court. So far, she has performed her duties with distinction and grace, and has begun to have a reputation for keeping a pleasant face on the Scorpion Clan despite the occasional misstep from her Clansmen. Ochiba is an accomplished calligrapher, and so her presence here is not a surprise to those who know her.

**Honor:** 6.5      **Status:** 5.0      **Glory:** 4.1      **School/Rank:** Bayushi Courtier 4

**Goals:** Initially, don't get the Scorpion into any trouble. After she receives a letter from the Imperial Tax Fraud Investigator, try to keep Gennai Tomomi from being exposed without risking the Scorpion.

**Previous Appearances:** Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei, The Price of Weakness, The Wasp's Nest

**Ide Wetashi**, young Unicorn diplomat. Wetashi is a young courtier currently working under Ide Yaichiro, a very well-connected Unicorn power broker. Wetashi is an Owl, but spends most of his time attempting to facilitate integration between the new Moto and the rest of the empire.

**Honor:** 4.6      **Status:** 3.0      **Glory:** 3.0      **School/Rank:** Ide Emissary 2

**Goals:** Establish that the Unicorn should be part of the Rokugani art world.

**Previous Appearances:** Winter Court: Otosan Uchi, Winter Court: Shiro Chuda

# Player Handout #1: NPC List for Players

## Crab

- Kaiu Shinsaku, karo to Crab provincial daimyo Kaiu Haru (Status 5.0; Previous Appearance: The Perfect Weapon)

## Crane

- Doji Juichi, Crane diplomat (Status 3.0; Previous Appearances: Winter Court: Kyuden Hida, Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei, Knife in the Darkness, The Wasp's Nest)
- Doji Masahiko, Crane ambassador to the Phoenix (Status 5.0)
- Kakita Katsuko, Crane duelist (Status 3.0)

## Dragon

- Togashi Yoriko, monk and sculptor (Status 1.5)

## Imperial

- Otomo Shun, courtier (Status 2.0; Previous Appearance: Matters of Commerce)

## Lion

- Matsu Shamate, actress (Status 3.0; Previous Appearance: Divide and Conquer)

## Mantis

- Yoritomo Tsuboro, Mantis diplomat (Status 3.0; Previous Appearances: Winter Court: Kyuden Hida, The Price of Weakness, The Wasp's Nest)

## Phoenix

- Gennai, Master of Air and Gennai family daimyo (Status 7.0; Previous Appearances: Proposal of Peace)
- Gennai Kiyushi, hatamoto to Gennai Tomomi (Status 5.0)
- Gennai Sadahiro, Tomomi's yojimbo (Status 4.5)
- Gennai Suzu, court shugenja to Gennai Tomomi (Status 4.5)
- Gennai Tomomi, daimyo of Mihari province (Status 6.0)
- Gennai Yuudai, captain of Tomomi's guard (Status 4.5)
- Shiba Haruna, hatamoto to Shiba Sawako (Status 5.0)
- Shiba Yukiko, head sensei of the Shiba Artisan Academy (Status 5.0)

## Scorpion

- Shosuro Ochiba, Scorpion courtier (Status 4.0; Previous Appearances: Winter Court: Kyuden Gotei, The Price of Weakness, The Wasp's Nest)

## Unicorn

- Ide Wetashi, Unicorn diplomat (Status 3.0; Previous Appearances: Winter Court: Otosan Uchi, Winter Court: Shiro Chuda)

## Player Handout #2

My fellow artisan,

I was overjoyed to hear that you would be in attendance for the Shiba Artisan Academy's yearly art show. It is the ancestral duty of my clan to develop the art and culture of our Empire, and it is an honor to be associated through our organization with an artisan as skilled as you.

As members of the Nightingales, we have all reaped the benefits of the Crane Clan's reputation for artistic excellence. You have no doubt enjoyed the unfettered access to the Empire's courts that your membership has granted you, and it is that access that allows our organization to serve all of its many functions. If we did not have the artistic reputation we enjoy, we would simply not be able to operate in the way that Kakita Yoshi-sama intends.

While there are many skilled students of the Shiba Artisan School, we are an elite organization, and must show discretion when we consider whom else we might invite to join our ranks. There does exist the possibility that among this graduating class an artisan is already worthy of such an honor. I expect that after the Noh performance you will hear some speculation about which student might be worthy, and I implore you to remember that only the best artist should be considered for membership among Yoshi-sama's chosen.

Carry the Fortunes.

Doji Masahiko  
Head Diplomat of the Nikesake Crane Embassy



## Player Handout #3

My friend,

When I discovered that you are planning to attend the Shiba Artisan Academy's yearly art show, I was elated. The Shiba Artisan Academy produces some of the finest art in the Empire, and it is a privilege to be able to honor its students.

The Imperial Regent has been sadly disappointed with regard to the quality of artwork provided in the modern Empire to the Imperial Court. Unfortunately, too many disaffected would-be courtiers have chosen to sow discontent, and the harmony of Rokugan has suffered for it.

It would be good if you could find the time to express your admiration for the work of the Shiba Artisan Academy's students during your time here. Providing these artists an opportunity to display their skills before the Imperial Court would be worthwhile for all concerned.

In service to the Regent,

Otomo Shun  
Former Imperial Undersecretary of Culture

## Player Handout #4: Shiba Artisans

These are the most prominent artisans from the graduating class of the Shiba Artisan School whose work has been displayed

**Shiba Rumiko** works in ikebana and bonsai, creating living sculptures of plants

**Shiba Kimitada** specializes in more narrative performance arts: storytelling and theater

**Asako Sakami** like many of her family, is most comfortable with a pen in hand; her poetry and calligraphy are w

**Shiba Tamiko** is the most graceful dancer to come out of the Shiba Artisans in more than a generation

**Gennai Yoshiaga** has an affinity for stone that allows him to find profound sculpture in stone

**Shiba Mabuchi** is a painter whose works appear to come alive on the page