

ADVENTURES
ORIENTAL



SECRETS OF THE CRANE™



*Legend of the
Five Rings*™

SECRETS OF THE CRANE™

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ISBN 1-887953-81-7



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WIZARDS OF THE COAST



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SILK AND STEEL

PART ONE

Fuzake Sekkou and Otomo Taneji sat silently at their table. Their food remained untouched at the table's center. Laughter and conversation filled the sake house from other tables, and the occasional melody trailed in from distant rooms. Finally, Fuzake Sekkou lifted his teacup to his lips. "It has been a strange journey," he said.

A lone, humorless chuckle escaped Otomo Taneji. "Has it? I thought the road from the Crab lands quite dull. Absolutely nothing to look at, and everything was gray. Gray sky, gray dirt, gray water, even gray plants. If we never go back, I will consider it a blessing."

"That isn't what I meant," Sekkou observed. "First we are sent to survey the Lion lands, then we are invited to the Mantis isles in an attempt to involve us in their secret war of succession, then we are drawn to the Phoenix isles and a similar political war zone between Aikune and the Masters. Then our 'discretion' wins us the dubious honor of investigating a supposed conspiracy within the Scorpion, which thereafter leads us to seek allies among the Crab when we find the rumors are true. Now here we are sitting on the outskirts of Crane lands waiting for some mysterious messenger. I find the entire thing odd."

Taneji shrugged. "It is odd, I grant you. But ever since I was a young boy I cannot recall my father staying home for long. At least not during spring, summer, or fall. Winter was my favorite time of year because the family would be stay in one place for a time, even if that place was the Emperor's Winter Court. I have always known my life would involve travel. Not quite like this, perhaps, but who am I to question the Fortunes?"

Sekkou nodded. "I suppose we should be sure to visit the Dragon before we go home." He looked at Taneji with a smirk. "The Unicorn are so close to Kyuden Miya we could make a day trip of it and round out our travels quiet nicely, don't you think?"

The young courtier looked at Sekkou questioningly for a moment, then smiled and laughed. Shaking his head, he reached for a piece of sushi.

Across the room, Miya Hatori sat in the shadows, oblivious to his vassals' conversation. The darkness suited his mood. His expression never changed, though within his soul was torn between despair and anger. The staff at the House of the First Stone had learned to leave him be several nights ago.

How long had they been here? Hatori was no longer sure. It seemed like only yesterday he had been in the Yasuki provinces, receiving a scroll — the scroll — from Yasuki Jinn-Kuen. Yet he knew he had been here for at least three days, waiting to be contacted.

The words from Miya Shoin's scroll played themselves over and over again in his mind. "This morning your son Senkazu, reported that your wife was found missing, her bodyguards slain." That had been two weeks ago. Whatever clues might have led him to her were long since gone. Shoin's only consolation was that the family stood ready to aid him, but Hatori knew they could do little. He would have succumbed to despair long ago, except for second message he had received.

The path he and his vassals had taken from the Crab lands seemed chosen almost at random. Of all the routes they could have taken, Hatori had chosen one that led north toward the Crane provinces where he hoped to secure faster horses. They had traveled as fast as they could, but it was still far too slow for Hatori's tastes. And then, just as they reached the outer borders of Crab lands, they had found the letter.

A tree had fallen across the road, which was not in itself all that unusual, as it was not a commonly used road. What was unusual was that a scroll had been attached to the tree with a short nail and a ribbon. The scroll had been addressed to Hatori, and it had given him instructions to travel to the House of the First Stone and await contact. Otherwise, he would never see his wife again.

"May I join you?" The voice was soft and melodic, and roused Hatori from his brooding. He looked up to find a delicate young woman made up in the fashion of a geisha standing at his table. She looked down at the seat expectantly.

"No," he said brusquely. "I have... matters I must deal with."

"Oh, but what could trouble the great Miya Hatori?" Her voice was like silk. "Surely there is no trouble at home? That would be dreadful."

Hatori's eyes narrowed at once. "Where is she?" he demanded in a harsh whisper.

"I'm sure I have no idea what you're talking about, Hatori-sama," the woman said, sitting down. "My associates sent me to speak with me about another matter."

"What associates?"

"Merely some loyalists. Men and women who serve their Empire and clan in the most direct way possible."

Hatori felt the color drain from his face, but his rage was unabated. "The Tower," he spat. "You and your friends will pay dearly for this."

"How dramatic," she said. Her voice, still soft, had lost its gentle edge. "Were I you, I would wish to be as accommodating as possible." She smiled again. "Now, tell me... are you familiar with the Crane Clan?"

"You know that I am." Hatori's mouth was a grim, thin line.

"How convenient!" She seemed genuinely pleased. The woman withdrew a scroll from her kimono and slid it across the table. "This letter lists a few innocent details about the Crane that my associates need to know. We are sadly unable to gain their full confidence, but you already have that, don't you?"

"I won't commit treason for you."

"Treason? Hardly. If you examine that list, you'll find that the information we require is, as I said, innocent. It will be useful to us, but is hardly damning to the Crane. We simply cannot acquire it on our own." She rose from the table. "I will return in an hour. If you or the letter are still here, I will assume you have declined the offer. That is acceptable to us, so long as you acknowledge that your wife's fate will forever be a mystery to you. If you are gone, I will assume all is well." She smiled again and laid one hand familiarly on his shoulder, drawing a wince from him. "I leave it to you, Hatori."

Hatori watched her walk away, then stared at the scroll on the table. He looked at it for what felt like hours, his soul heavy with the enormity of his choice. Finally, with a shaking hand, he took the scroll and rose from the table.

It was time for a visit to the Crane.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Secrets of the Crane™ is a sourcebook designed for players and GMs alike who are interested in adding more depth and detail to the Crane Clan. Unlike *Way of the Crane*, which detailed the history and the clan's major institutions, this book gives finer detail to the different families, their organization, holdings, vassal families, and lesser-known schools, among other things.

Secrets of the Crane™ is broken down into chapters as follows: The Introduction deals with the Crane Clan's history, some

general customs that the clan as a whole embraces, and several new mechanical options appropriate for Crane characters.

Chapters One through Five each deal with an individual family: the Asahina, Daidoji, Doji, Kakita, and Yasuki. Each chapter presents information on the family's holdings, including several points of interest for each holding and some adventure hooks for GMs, major NPCs within that family, descriptions of vassal families that serve them (explained later in this chapter), and new mechanical options for characters from that family.

Chapter Six: Shiro Giji explores the secret headquarters of the Daidoji Harriers. All the information needed for a GM to use Shiro Giji as the focus of an adventure of campaign are presented here.

Chapter Seven: Behind the Veil details the darkest, most unpleasant truths about the Crane. Every clan has some shame that they bury deep within their histories, and this chapter explores what tragedies or secrets that the Crane hide from everyone, even themselves.

CUSTOMS OF THE CRANE CLAN

BIRTH

Many visitors to Crane lands are taken aback by the lack of celebration that surrounds childbirth among peasants and samurai alike. In truth, childbirth is as welcome and joyous an occasion among the Crane as anywhere else in Rokugan but the Crane feel that to show too much pride during childbirth attracts the attention of vindictive spirits. The spirits of dead children, while tragic figures, are especially dangerous to an infant. The Crane believe these spirits are attracted when a parent displays too much pride. Instead, the Crane express their joy at childbirth in a more subtle fashion.

Neighbors, friends, and relatives are invited over in small groups over several days following the birth, with the closest friends and relatives invited first. These individuals offer expensive gifts and offer lavish compliments to the newborn. The parents are expected to humbly turn the gifts down and brush the compliments aside as a show of humility. The gifts are put aside in storage until the child's fifth birthday, when they are offered to the child again. As the number four represents death, to overcome that number suggests that the child is now somewhat safe from evil spirits, and thus can safely accept the gifts.

A child born with pure white hair is believed to be blessed by the elements and will grow to have great power in magic. Many Asahina are born with such white hair, as was Emperor Toturi's son, Sezaru. This is a rare occurrence, though many Crane appear to have white hair. Most Crane actually bleach their hair shortly after gempukku (as explained in the next section).

The Kakita family has a special tradition regarding childbirth. Whenever a child is born in Kyuden Kakita, be they samurai, heimin, or even lowly eta, the castle gates are thrown open. Four centuries ago the Grand Master of the Elements placed a powerful curse upon Kyuden Kakita. If any child born surrounded by the walls ever drew steel, the blades of the Crane would turn against the castle and it would fall. Though this prophecy was fulfilled during the Clan War, the curse persists even to this day. The infant son of Kakita Noritoshi was the most recent victim, and many Kenshinzen take it as a bad omen that the sensei's son will never touch steel.

GEMPUKKU

The Crane do not practice the traditional gempukku ceremony — the Crane *define* the traditional gempukku ceremony. The parents of a young samurai-to-be seize upon the opportunity to display the extent of their wealth and political connections, so each gempukku tests the parents as much as the child. The most spectacular example of this is most certainly that of the Kakita Dueling Academy, Their annual gempukku festival



invites young men and women from every Great Clan and even a few Minor Clans to a competition designed to showcase the talent of Rokugan's youth. More often it becomes a showcase of Crane opulence as spectators enjoy the luxury the Crane lands have to offer, but the competition is still intense and exciting. Over a period of three days, these young adults compete in a variety of contests raging from poetry to wrestling. The pomp surrounding the competition grew to extraordinary proportions when Hantei XXXVIII began fondly naming the young champions his "Topaz Champions." Since that time the ceremony has continued, with the winner holding the title of "Topaz Champion" for the following year.

Though the Crane avoid open warfare and prefer the peaceful court life, no Crane would ever forget that a samurai's primary duty is that of a warrior, and a Rokugani's primary duty is to stand against the Shadowlands. For this reason, many Crane samurai bleach their hair white shortly after gempukku to honor Daidoji Hayaku, the legendary Crane hero who entered the Shadowlands to find the missing Thunders and retrieve the Ancestral Sword of the Crane.

VASSAL FAMILIES

This book introduces a number of vassal families, lesser samurai who serve the great families. Though described in previous sourcebooks (such as *Winter Court: Kyuden Seppun™* and *Rokugan 2*) these vassal families have never before been specifically detailed.

Vassal families occupy a rather unique social position within the samurai class. Within the family and clan that they serve, they are recognized by their unique family name as a means of recognizing their distinctive service to the clan. Outside the clan, however, they are identified by the name of the family they serve. Favoring one's vassal name above the samurai family that one serves when speaking to an outsider is a presumptuous and arrogant act, one that implies that the individual presenting himself is so well known that the listener would be more familiar with his own lineage than that of the family he serves.

For example: Tsume Izo is a member of the Tsume vassal family of the Doji. To all Doji and other Crane samurai, he is known as Tsume Izo. In the Ikoma histories and to outsiders, however, he is known as Doji Izo. When presenting himself to others outside the clan, Izo may introduce himself as "Doji Izo of House Tsume" or simply "Doji Izo of Tsume." If a member of any other clan should visit Izo in the Tsume family estate near Toshi Ranbo, then he would be entitled to refer to himself by his vassal family name, for it is assumed the visitor realizes that he is in Doji lands.

COURTSHIP

Courtship and marriage rituals are of utmost importance. As many Crane political alliances are cemented through well-placed betrothals, it is considered every Crane samurai's duty to marry well. Generally such decisions are taken out of the samurai's hands and are resolved by professional marriage arrangers, high-ranking courtiers who are experts in creating unions that will be long lasting and fruitful for both the clan and the parties being wed.

Crane marriage celebrations are always lavish affairs. While a high-ranking Crane may not necessarily attend a gempukku or funeral for one of his subordinates, it is considered bad taste to turn down an invitation to a wedding. Thus many Crane samurai put themselves into debt arranging an extravagant wedding ceremony, as such celebrations are extraordinary opportunities to ingratiate oneself with one's superiors.

While most families have firm traditions regarding whether or not the spouse adopts their partner's name, the Doji family is not quite so firm on the matter. Males marrying into the Doji line sometimes take the Doji name as a gesture of respect to Lady Doji, but to keep one's former name or give up the Doji name is no sign of disrespect. Male Doji also occasionally take their partner's name when to do so would prove politically beneficial to the clan.

SUPERSTITION

While the Crane have just as many superstitions as the other Great Clans, they tend to take their superstition less seriously than others. While the Mantis cling to superstition to deal with the randomness of their naval lifestyle, and the Crab adopt superstitions to rationalize the terrors of their existence, Crane superstition is more innocent in nature. Most Crane superstitions involve ways to please the Fortunes for good luck or success in relationships, and some of them are nothing more than courtly games with a light sprinkling of the mystical.

For example, it is said that a woman who sticks herself with a needle while speaking has been unfaithful. For this reason, most women do their knitting and sewing in private so that they will not risk cursing themselves. Wealthy Crane men who wish to ensure their marriage will be blessed see to it that their wives never need knit or sew.

Foxes are extremely lucky animals as they are the servants of Inari, Fortune of Rice, and it is upon rice that the Crane's economy is built. When traveling in the wilderness, it is lucky to carry a handful of rice in one's pocket to attract the attention of Inari. If you see a fox and toss the rice to the fox, happiness is assured for the next year.

The Fortunes can also be appeased through humble rituals to the elements. Throwing peas into a well or river attracts good health, and erecting a circle of stones and praying within them attracts good fortune. Artists, scholars, and priests all favor burning incense for it not only aids in concentration, but also combines the purity of fire with the pervasive nature of air. Rare woods and spices imported from the northern Phoenix forests are especially favored, for it is believed that they grant some shred of that clan's legendary wisdom.

The custom that one should always politely refuse a gift twice before accepting originates in Crane lands. A somewhat less well-known custom that began with the Crane but has recently begun to become popular in other provinces involves the pouring of sake. One should never pour one's own sake, but always pour for another. This custom began among the Daidoji, who started the practice so that bored guards would not drink alone and, without a companion to encourage moderation, become too inebriated to defend their posts.

WAR

While the Crane would never ignore the samurai's duty as warriors, the Crane view open warfare as an option only when all other avenues have been exhausted. They are more pacifistic than any other clan save the Phoenix, despite the fact that they maintain one of the largest standing armies in Rokugan. In their role as the Emperor's Left Hand, it is the

Crane's duty to maintain the Emperor's courts. Politics tend to operate more smoothly in peace than in war, so the Crane do their best to maintain peace in Rokugan. What sets the Doji apart from more pacifistic families like the Miya or Isawa is that the Doji realize that politics operate even *more* smoothly and efficiently under the *threat* of war. So while the Doji are loath to enter open combat, they are not afraid to gain leverage on an opponent through strategic troop movements, subtly applied threats, and the like. It has often been said that the Crane will never begin a war, though when fighting begins they are never unprepared.

Crane tactics vary wildly depending upon whether their troops are acting on offense or defense. When attacking, the Crane seek to end a battle swiftly by taking out enemy leaders. Many Crane generals are Kakita Academy graduates if not actual Kenshinzen. Such generals begin a conflict by viciously insulting the enemy's general's honor, forcing him to either challenge the Crane to a duel or appear a coward in the eyes of his men. If the general accepts, the Crane typically wins with ease, leaving the army disorganized and leaderless. If the enemy does not respond to the verbal baiting, archers concentrate their fire on the opposing general's position. While students of the Kakita Academy would never back down from a challenge, it is worth noting that since the first duel between Kakita and Mirumoto Rosanjin, a Kakita general has never marched into combat against a Mirumoto general.

When fighting defensively, the Crane leave most of the work to the Daidoji. None know the lay of the Crane provinces like the Daidoji family, and these ruthless bushi excel at sabotage and delaying tactics. Daidoji concentrate on making an attacker's life difficult, destroying supplies, harrying troop movements, and generally making an attack too costly to be worthwhile. In the meantime, the Doji and Kakita dispatch their most talented diplomats to any allies the Crane can call to their aid, particularly the Imperial Legions. Even the Crane's most hated enemies in the Lion Clan rarely progress further when they find an Imperial Legion defending their objective. The Crane, in the meantime, relish the irony that so many Lion volunteer to serve in the Legions and are later bound by honor to defend Crane lands against their kinsmen.

The Crane's favored weapons in combat are the katana and the yumi, and most other weapons are viewed as weak or dishonorable in comparison. The yari is an exception among the Daidoji family. As the yari is the favored weapon of Bishamon, Fortune of Strength, the Daidoji believe that all warriors should master its use.

While many Crane consider themselves pacifists, the Asahina are even more extreme. Most Asahina never take up arms even to defend their own lives or home, so despicable do they find the path of violence. The Asahina see their role as spiritual guardians too important to corrupt by engaging in violence. The other families tolerate the Asahina family's extremist philosophy and see to it that all Asahina temples and provinces are well defended by Daidoji samurai.

The only time an Asahina will willingly engage in violence is against the Shadowlands. To the Asahina, the Shadowlands Horde is the physical manifestation of the corruption they stand against. Even the most peaceful Asahina has no objections to using his magic to strike down an oni or Lost samurai. The current Jade Champion, Asahina Sekawa, is the leader of this family's subtle war against the forces of evil, and any Jade Magistrate can count on support and protection while in Asahina lands.

Some Asahina learn the ways of the katana and yumi precisely so that they might be prepared to fight such enemies. The family's natural affinity with the power of Air has led them to produce some of the finest archers ever seen outside the Tsuruchi family. The Daidoji view the Asahina archers' refusal to use their talents against un-Tainted enemies as a sad waste of talent, while the Doji respect their mystical cousin's firmly held principles.

RETIREMENT

Among the Crane, retirement is a just reward for a life well led. A samurai who gives his life in glorious combat for his lord is as a hero, but a samurai who serves his lord, survives, and goes on to provide his wisdom to the next generation is equally well regarded. Even revered sensei show respect and deference to retired Crane monks, and it is not unusual for a Crane daimyo to have a few inkyo in his household for guidance.

Monks also make excellent spies, though few Crane would ever admit to using holy men in such a manner. Samurai generally pay little attention to monks, and are often quite forthright with their faults and problems when a monk is present. While few monks would ever be so disreputable as to share the confidences of others, they can certainly put that information to use when advising their Crane friends and relatives. For this reason the Daidoji family are always respectful toward monks and keep on good terms with several large monasteries (including the temple to Doji which serves as the cover for Shiro Giji, secret training ground of the Daidoji Harriers).

FUNERALS/DEATH

For a family that celebrates life as much as the Crane, death can be difficult to accept. Funerals are somber, stately occasions in which the friends and family pay their respects to the deceased. There is little variation from the norm in Crane funeral ceremonies, as Crane funeral ceremonies are the standard for the rest of the Empire.

A deceased samurai's lord need not attend the funeral ceremony if he is otherwise occupied or simply does not wish to attend, but it is considered an insult not to at least send a representative. This representative usually carries a short message penned by the samurai's lord (or by one of his artisans and approved by the lord), conveys his regrets to the family, and departs.

HISTORY OF THE CRANE CLAN

Formation of the Empire: Prehistory

After the Kami's fall to earth and the tournament that determined which of them would rule the Empire, the Lady Doji marries the humble warrior Kakita. Together, they build a land full of beautiful castles and shrines. The practices they establish throughout Crane lands quickly spread to the other clans and form the backbone of Rokugan's society, culture, and traditions.

Shinsei and the Thunders: year 42

The prophet Shinsei comes to the Crane lands during his search for the mortals who can banish Fu Leng. He initially



chooses Doji and Kakita's son, Doji Yasurugi, but Yasurugi is killed by an oni on the day of his son's birth. All is feared lost until Shinsei discovers that Yasurugi's twin sister Konishiko shares his soul. With Konishiko accompanying them, Shinsei and the Thunders travel deep into the Shadowlands and never return.

Formation of the Daidoji: year 46

Doji's son Hayaku returns from the Shadowlands after three years of searching for his sister Konishiko. His form is larger, with strength built by adversity, and his face is scarred with his voice having been stolen from him by a terrible throat injury. Hayaku returns Ko Nishiko's sword to Doji, who recognizes that her daughter's soul is within it. The Crane rejoice at the return of their Thunder, and Hayaku is awarded the name Daidoji, or "Defender of the Doji" for his valor.

Disappearance of Doji: year 102

After a visit to the Dragon lands and being told that Togashi has died, Lady Doji succumbs to a deep melancholy now that all her siblings save the distant Hida have passed on. With Kakita and her own children long since passed on, Doji offers herself to the sea at sunrise one crisp, cool morning and joins her brothers and sisters in Tengoku.

Emerald Magistrates and Emerald Legion formed: year 153

Dissatisfied with the inconsistency of law enforcement within the Empire, the Emperor commands his friend and military advisor Doji Hatsuo, Crane Champion, to devise a means of correcting this problem. With the aid of noted Scorpion judge Soshi Saibankan, Hatsuo develops the framework for the Emerald Magistrates and the Imperial Legions, a system that remains in place to this day. Doji Hatsuo is appointed the first Emerald Champion, and Saibankan becomes his first and most powerful advisor.

Formation of the Asahina family: year 353

After Crane intervention stops hostilities between the Lion and Phoenix, the Master of Air Isawa Asahina goes on a vengeful rampage through the Crane lands, destroying several villages and caravans in the process. Doji Kiriko, the Crane Champion's daughter, halts his campaign. She refuses to strike him down, but is horribly injured when she chooses to intercept his spells rather than let them kill innocent people.

Moved by her sacrifice and disgusted with his actions, Isawa Asahina halts his campaign of vengeance. He eventually marries the young samurai-ko and is given leave to form his

own family. The Asahina gain early numbers when shugenja lines from the other Crane families join their family to give them more legitimacy.

The Crab-Crane War: year 387-400

Squabbles over border disputes between the Crane and Crab clans escalates to a full blown war when the Yasuki, angry over the constant restrictions the Doji had placed upon their trade practices, defect and join the Crab. This is the first full scale internal war in Rokugan's history, and it lasts for over a decade.

Rulership of the Gozoku: years 391-435

A cabal of three men, including Doji Raigu, son and heir of the Crane Champion, conceive and implement a conspiracy that spans the entire Empire. The three men kidnap the Emperor's heir, turning him into their puppet.

The Gozoku control the Empire for over four decades before Hantei Yugo-zohime, the Empress who escaped their machinations while being fostered to the Lion, finally brings them down.

End of the Yasuki War and formation of the Sparrow Clan: year 400

Failed negotiations and a social blunder on behalf of his son, Suzume, cause the diplomat Doji Onegano to be ousted from the Crane altogether. The Emperor grants Onegano lands to the east of the Crane holdings, but it is harsh and unforgiving territory. There, Onegano builds the fledgling Sparrow Clan and promptly retires, leaving the Sparrow to his son Suzume.

Near the same time, the Emperor issues a formal edict proclaiming the Yasuki a family in the Crab and the war between the Crab and Crane at an end. Furthermore, the edict prohibits future large-scale conflicts between the Great Clans, limiting hostilities to small skirmishes and border disputes.

Suicide of Doji Tanaka: year 510

The charismatic and popular Crane Champion Doji Tanaka stuns his court when he confesses his undying love for an eleven-year-old geisha. Shortly thereafter he hurls himself into the sea just as his ancestor did, delighting the Crane's enemies with the enormity of his scandalous death. Unbeknownst to anyone, Tanaka's suicide is prompted by the bloodsword Passion, created by the traitorous Asahina Yajinden and given to Tanaka on behalf of the Bloodspeaker, Iuchiban.



The Battle of the Tidal Landbridge: year 715

Spying a grossly outnumbered Crab patrol about to be overwhelmed by a vicious pack of oni, Daidoji daimyo Daidoji Masashigi and his hunting party charge over the Tidal Landbridge that links Crab and Crane territories over Earthquake Fish Bay. Masashigi and his men assault Oni no Kinjiro and its foul pack-mates, giving the Crab time to recover their wounded. The Crane fight the oni to a standstill, and the tidal waters gradually rise over the last two combatants: Masashigi and Oni no Kinjiro. The Crab wait for hours, but no survivors emerge. The Hida commission a shrine to Masashigi's memory with the battered helmet that finally washes ashore, cementing a strange bond between the two families for centuries to come.

The Unicorn Clan returns: year 815

When the self-proclaimed Unicorn Clan arrives in Rokugan claiming to be the Ki-Rin Clan's descendants, they are met with armed resistance from both the Lion and Scorpion clans. Representatives from the newcomers reach the Crane and present the fan that was given to Shinjo by Doji before she left the Empire. The Crane enthusiastically support the Unicorn's claims, and they are soon restored to full Great Clan status.

The Battle of the Broken Daisho: year 827

A force of Phoenix samurai appears seemingly from nowhere to intercede in a blossoming conflict between the Lion and Crane. The Shiba die in large numbers without lifting a hand in self-defense, disorienting the opposing armies. They both pull back to consider the situation. The Crane general Kakita Gosano is furious with the Phoenix and duels Phoenix Champion Shiba Toriiko. Toriiko does not attempt to defend herself and is cut down despite her superior dueling skills. Gosano is wracked with guilt over his actions and sends his army home. He enters a monastery and never again takes up the blade.

The Battle at Kyuden Kitsune: year 1090

Attempting to settle a growing dispute between the Fox and the Hare clans, the Crane Champion dispatches Kakita Toshimoko to arbitrate between the two. Toshimoko makes headway into the problem and finds himself smitten with the Fox Clan daimyo's daughter. During the negotiations a group of kumo shapeshifters enter the palace and murder dozens of representatives from both sides. The Crane are blamed for interfering in the matter and Toshimoko is forced to kill his beloved when she demands a duel with him to avenge her murdered father.

Doji Hoturi Kidnapped: year 1127

Intoxicated by the Empress Kachiko, his former lover, Crane Champion Doji Hoturi succumbs to a Scorpion plot and is imprisoned somewhere beneath Otosan Uchi. She uses an ancient artifact called the Egg of Pan Ku to create an exact duplicate of Hoturi that will act to disgrace him in court and among his family. Kachiko does not realize that the Egg is an corrupted artifact, but this becomes readily apparent as the False Hoturi slowly goes mad and assembles a vast army of Tainted madmen to lead against the Crane. The foul creature destroys several important cities and castles before Hoturi escapes and regains his strength. Hoturi and his Tainted reflection face each other in a duel nearly a year after the replacement is made, and the False Hoturi does not survive.

The Second Day of Thunder: year 1128

The armies of the Great Clans unite on the fields outside Otosan Uchi. There, they face the vast hordes of Shadowlands creatures the Emperor, now fully possessed by Fu Leng, has assembled to defend his new home. The Crane armies exact a terrible toll on the Shadowlands, and it is Doji Hoturi who stands beside Toturi and faces Fu Leng in the Imperial Palace. Hoturi is killed, but not before he buries his blade in the Dark Kami's heart. At the same time, Hoturi's trusted comrade Toturi takes off Fu Leng's head.

In the battle's aftermath, Hoturi's brother Doji Kuwanan is recognized as the new Crane Champion and the Crane Clan fully supports Toturi's bid for the throne.

The Emerald Champion's decision: year 1130

After the Emperor Toturi disappears under mysterious circumstances, the samurai of Rokugan blame the Scorpion Clan. Imperial Chancellor Takuan allows Emerald Champion Kakita Toshimoko to pass judgment on the Scorpion. Believing them to be innocent but unable to absolve them amid the mounting circumstantial evidence, Toshimoko banishes the Scorpion from the Empire. There, he hopes that at least they will survive while he searches for a way to redeem them. Before they leave, he has the Scorpion children fostered to the Crane both to spare the children the harsh journey through the Burning Sands and to ensure that the Scorpion will not seek vengeance against the Empire.

Following his controversial decision, Toshimoko fakes his death so that he may seek the true culprit of Toturi's kidnapping without drawing attention.

Crane Civil War: year 1132

Guided by his ancestors, Daidoji Uji leads his troops against the Lion at Shiro no Yojin against Champion Doji Kuwanan's orders and reclaims the castle after years of occupation. The incident polarizes Crane loyalty, and the clan soon divides into two factions, one supporting each lord. Open war breaks out between the two factions, causing a civil war that lasts for several months. Before reconciliation can be found, the suffering and dishonor the war causes awakens the Great Sea Spider near Golden Sun Bay.

Battle of Oblivion's Gate: year 1133

The combined armies of the Great Clans fight their way through the Shadowlands to the distant ruin of Voltturnum, an ancient city of trolls. There, they defeat the minions of the Lying Darkness that are attempting to open a gate to the Spirit Realms and destroy Rokugan's ancestors. The price of victory is extremely high, and Crane Champion Doji Kuwanan lies among the fallen. Kakita Kaiten acts as a regent until Kuwanan's infant son Kurohito can take his place as Champion.

The return of Hoturi: year 1160

A vision of Doji Hoturi appears before Kyuden Kakita with a vow to reappear and bring wisdom to the Crane. Meanwhile Kakita Toshiken lies on his deathbed, and many functionaries from within the clan gather together to honor him as they wait for the Thunder's blessing. The event is quite stressful as the various Crane lords struggle to outdo one another. The proceedings end tragically with the appearance of the duelist Daidoji Megumi, Tainted by the Onisu Yokubo and possessed by the vengeful, tortured spirit of the ronin Dairyu. Megumi kills Toshiken, cripples his yojimbo Doji Reju, and grievously wounds daimyo Kakita Noritoshi before being driven away.

Even as Megumi launches her attack, Hoturi appears. To the Crane Clan's horror, it is not the Crane Thunder but the False Hoturi who has returned. In an effort to demoralize the Crane, Fu Leng has restored the dark magic that created the Egg of Pan Ku and returned the False Hoturi to life. Fortunately the quick action of Yasuki Hachi and Naka Tokei repels the False Hoturi's small army, but the attack causes the gates of Kyuden Kakita to be closed during the birth of Kakita Noritoshi's son, invoking the ancient curse upon the castle.

Kurohito's Gambit: year 1160

Guided by Doji Yasuyo, who is in turn guided by the spirit of Lady Doji and the kenku sensei Kozue, Doji Kurohito allows Violence behind Courtliness City to be retaken peacefully by the Lion. This 'failure' awakens the ghosts within his cursed blade Chukandomo. Yasuyo calls on the power of her mystical blade Naishi to summon the spirits of all the Crane heroes lost in battle at Violence behind Courtliness City. The Kitsu family's aid and Kurohito's indomitable will allows the heroic spirits to defeat Chukandomo's tortured ghosts.

MEGUMI, THE CELESTIAL SWORD OF THE CRANE CLAN

The Celestial Sword of the Crane is the most beautiful of all Celestial Swords. Its hilt and tsuba are worked in gleaming ivory bound in the finest blue silk. The blade is made from the purest white steel, polished to such a brilliant sheen that the weapon looks almost as if it were sculpted from ice. The sword perfectly embodies the way of the Crane in that it enhances its wearer's charm and personality as well as their deadliness in combat. Whether wielded in a duel or simply carried in its sheath, Megumi grants its wielder mastery over the battlefield and the courts.

The Celestial Sword of the Crane had long been set aside by Crane Champion Doji Kurohito in favor of Chukandomo, the sword that was discovered on the day of his birth. When the Crane Champion discovered the curse that followed Chukandomo, he chose to continue to wield the sword until the curse was broken. When the curse was broken, Chukandomo was given as a gift to the Matsu family and the Crane Champion took up Megumi as his weapon.

Like Shukujo, the Ancestral Sword of the Crane, Megumi releases a clear, musical note whenever the true Crane Champion touches it.

D20 SYSTEM™

Megumi is a +5 dueling vorpal katana, and also grants the wielder a +20 sacred bonus to any Charisma-based skill check, or a skill check.

L5R RPG 2E:

Megumi is an Legendary Quality katana, inflicting 3k3 damage and adding 4 to its wielder's Iaijutsu skill. If its wielder is a student of the Kakita Bushi school he may focus an additional four times in any Iaijutsu duel. In addition, the wielder rolls and keeps an additional three dice on any Awareness related skill roll, and re-rolls any dice less than his Awareness on such rolls.

NEW MECHANICS

The Legend of the Five Rings game setting has been officially presented in two separate game systems, the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG 2nd Edition System* (presented in the *Player's Guide* and *Game Master's Guide*) and Wizards of the Coast's d20 System™ (presented in *Rokugan*™, the official supplement to *Oriental Adventures*™). While these two systems are somewhat dissimilar, the setting presented in both versions of the game is the same, and thus it is our intent to present a sourcebook that is useful no matter which of these systems you choose to use when running your game.

Generally, when a new rule or mechanic is presented, whenever applicable we will present equivalent d20 System™ and L5R RPG 2E System versions in close proximity.

Rules and options for the d20 System™ look like this.

Rules and options for the L5R RPG 2E System look like this.

Occasionally, extensive new information may be exclusive to a specific system (such as New Paths for the L5R RPG 2E System or new feats for the d20 System™). In such a case, the information will follow the same convention as above. The d20 System™ material will appear in black and the L5R RPG 2E System material in blue.

In the case of characters, occasionally, a character's name will be followed by a short explanation of his character class in lieu of full statistical information. Such an example might look like this:

TORITAKA TATSURE

[Samurai 6/Berserker 4/Shadowlands Veteran 10; Hida Bushi 5/Hida Avenger 3]

The information presented before the semicolon is the character's class and level in the d20 System.™ The information presented after the semicolon is the character's rank and school in the L5R RPG 2E System.

Sometimes material must be presented for one system or the other. In such cases, this text will be contained in a callout box with a gray background, such as the one below. The headers for these boxes will clearly label which information is for the d20 System™ and which information is for the L5R RPG 2nd Edition ("L5R RPG 2E").

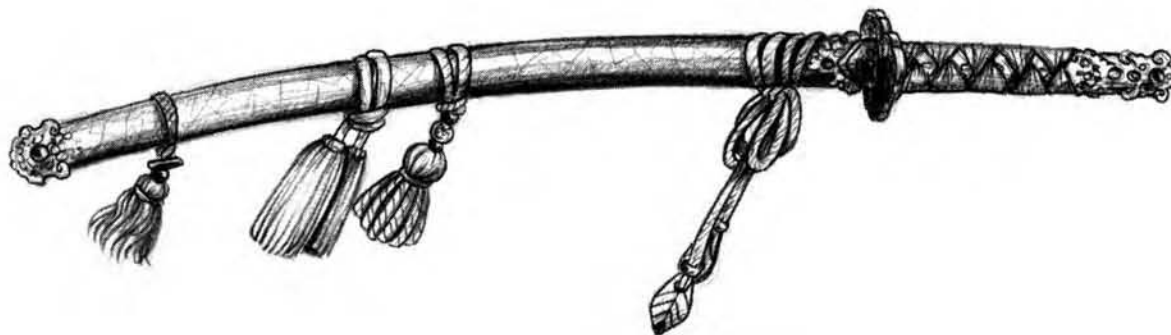
COMPLETE CRANE TECHNIQUE FEAT LIST

The following table lists all feats available to samurai player characters as bonus technique feats, allowing those who wish to make a Crane character to use a single reference when doing so. This list supersedes the ones presented in *Oriental Adventures*™ and *Rokugan*™. Feats that were prerequisites for other feats on this list were added, and some with excessive prerequisites that did not fit the Crane fighting style were removed. To balance this loss, other feats from the *Player's Handbook*™ have been added.

Abbreviations for the locations of these feats are as follows: PHB=Player's Handbook;™ MoR=Magic of Rokugan;™ WoN=Way of the Ninja;™ SoCn=Secrets of the Crane.™

COMPLETE CRANE TECHNIQUE FEAT LIST

Feat	Prerequisite	Location
Armor Focus	Armor Proficiency	Rokugan
Daisho Specialization	+5 Base attack, Weapon Focus: Katana or Wakizashi	Rokugan
Depths of the Void	Void Use, Samurai	Rokugan
Different School	By DM permission only	Rokugan
Dodge	Dex 13+	PHB
Eternal Vigilance	+6 Base attack, Dex 13+, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana), Weapon Focus (katana), Way of the Crane	SoCn
Expertise	Int 13+	PHB
Greater Daisho I	Samurai level 13th+	MoR
Greater Daisho II	Samurai level 15th+	MoR
Greater Daisho III	Samurai level 17th+	MoR
Greater Daisho IV	Samurai level 19th+	MoR
Improved Disarm	Int 13+, Expertise	PHB
Improved Initiative	–	PHB
Improved Trip	Int 13+, Expertise	PHB
Iron Feather	+6 Base attack, Dex 16+, Skill Focus (Move Silently)	WoN
Kakita Technique	+6 Base attack, Dex bonus 13+, Void Use Weapon Focus (katana), Way of the Crane	Rokugan
Know the School	Knowledge (clan or family, 2 ranks)	Rokugan
Mobility	Dex 13+, Dodge	PHB
Quick Draw	+1 Base attack	PHB
Silent Talon	+5 Base attack, Dex 14+, Str 16+, Weapon Focus (any melee weapon)	WoN
A Single Moment	+7 Base attack, Improved Initiative	Rokugan
Skill Focus (Iaijutsu Focus)	–	PHB
Soul Forge	Iron Will or ancestral daisho, Masterwork weapon or armor	MoR
The Speed of Death	Dex 13+, Way of the Crane	SoCn
Speed of the Kami	Dex 13+, +3 Base attack, Improved Initiative	Rokugan
Spring Attack	Dex 13+, Dodge, Mobility, +4 Base attack	PHB
Strike at the Heart	+2 Base attack, Dex 13+ The Sudden Strike	SoCn
The Sudden Strike	+2 Base attack, Dex 13+	Rokugan
Toughness	–	Rokugan
Tread on the Blade	+10 Base attack, Void use	Rokugan
Unforgiving Steel	+8 Base attack, Way of the Crane Void Use, Weapon Focus (any melee weapon)	WoN
Void Use	–	Rokugan
Way of the Crane	Dex 13+, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana), Weapon Focus (katana)	Rokugan
Weapon Focus (katana)	Proficient with weapon Base attack bonus +1 or higher	PHB
Whirlwind Attack	Int 13+, Expertise, Dex 13+ Dodge, Mobility, +4 Base attack Spring Attack	PHB



ETERNAL VIGILANCE

CRANE TECHNIQUE

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Base attack bonus +6 or higher, Martial Weapon Proficiency (katana), Weapon Focus (katana), Way of the Crane.

Benefit: You may draw your katana as a free action at any time, even when it is not your turn or you are surprised so long as you have a free hand. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all attacks of opportunity with a katana, and may make attacks of opportunity with a katana any time one is incurred, even if you are flat-footed.

Note: This feat does not apply during formal iaijutsu duels.

THE SPEED OF DEATH

CRANE TECHNIQUE

You wield the katana with the grace and elegance of a Kakita master.

Prerequisite: Dex 13+, Way of the Crane.

Benefit: You may use your Dexterity modifier in place of your Strength modifier on all attack rolls with a katana or wakizashi. You must wield the katana with both hands to gain this bonus.

Note: If you also have the One With the Blade ability from the Doji Elite Guard prestige class, you gain an additional +1 on attack rolls with the katana.

STRIKE AT THE HEART

CRANE TECHNIQUE

Prerequisite: Base Attack Bonus +2 or higher, Dex 13+, The Sudden Strike.

Benefit: Whenever an opponent readies an action in combat against you, you immediately get an attack of opportunity against them. If this attack strikes successfully, their readied action is lost.

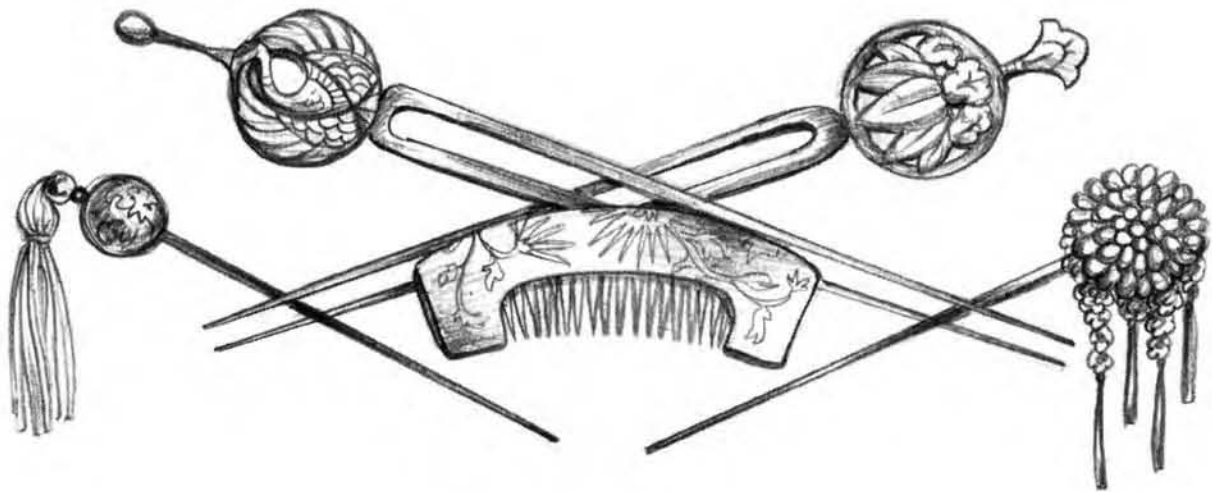
NEW COURTIER ABILITIES

At fourth level and every third level thereafter members of the courtier character class gain courtier abilities chosen from a short list (see page 35 of *Rokugan™*). The following new courtier abilities are available to any Crane Clan courtiers. Members of other clans who have taken the Different School feat and applied it to the Crane may also learn these abilities. The normal courtier abilities are still available for Crane courtiers.

Doji's Beauty (Ex): The courtier gains a permanent +2 bonus to Charisma when this ability is selected, and gains a +1 bonus to all Diplomacy checks (cumulative with the bonus gained from the increased Charisma). This ability may be selected multiple times and its effects stack.

Doji's Blessing (Ex): The talent of Crane orators is noted throughout history; the encouragement of a Crane courtier can mean the difference between victory and defeat. By spending a full minute encouraging an ally (or himself), the courtier can grant a temporary +2 enhancement bonus to the ability score of his choice. This lasts for a number of hours equal to the courtier's level. The courtier may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier plus three. Alternately, this ability may be used to counter the affects of the Scorpion courtier's No More Masks courtier ability, and can be countered by the same. (One use of this ability cancels one use of No More Masks, and vice versa.) This is a mind-affecting, language-based ability.

The Emperor's Left Hand (Ex): The Crane are the architects of Rokugani politics. Even the Scorpion, who have controlled the court from time to time, owe much of their knowledge to techniques and methods devised by the Crane. When chosen, this ability allows the courtier to immediately learn any other courtier ability exclusive to any other clan. This ability may only be selected once.



CHAPTER ONE:

THE ASAHINA

SILK AND STEEL
PART TWO

"Miya Hatori-sama, this is a rare honor," Asahina Handen said, giving an exaggerated bow as the courtier and his entourage entered Shinden Asahina. "It is unusual that a man of your prominence chooses to pay his respects at our humble temple before visiting Kyuden Doji or Kosaten Shiro."

"Kyuden Doji is on our agenda," Hatori replied, returning Handen's bow. "Yet I found it urgent that I visit Shinden Asahina first. After a bleak journey through the blasted lands of the Crab, returning to such serenity does my heart good."

"Ah, our friends, the Crab," Handen replied. A pained look crossed his features for a moment, as if he was uncomfortable with the idea that the Crab were now his clan's allies. "Theirs is an enormous burden. They make all of this possible." Handen gestured to one side, leading the visitors into the temple complex. The low light of many candles cast a pale illumination over the graven walls. The smell of incense filled the air, a blissful counterpoint to the constant chanting of distant sutras.

"For a 'humble' temple complex, I find Shinden Asahina quite extraordinary," Fuzake Sekkou said. The Monkey had been staring in wonder since the temple had come into view. "All the Monkey Clan's temples do not compare to this, and in all the lands I have seen only Kyuden Asako surpasses it."

"Shinden Asahina exists as a symbol of the purity to which we all must aspire," Handen replied. "If I say it is humble, it is only because the temple's glory pales compared to that found within the human spirit."

"Well said, Handen-san," said a tall, grizzled man as he stepped out from behind a shoji screen. A deep white scar cut across the man's chin. He was dressed in the pale blue robes of an Asahina, covered with a green mantle marked with the Imperial Chrysanthemum.

"Lord Sekawa," Handen said with some surprise. "I was not aware that you had returned."

"You know better than anyone that my duties take me where they will, Handen," Sekawa said with a faint grin. "Miya Hatori. It has been a long time."

"Too long," Hatori said, bowing to the Jade Champion. "I was saddened to hear what happened to your sister and uncle."

Sekawa's eyes flicked toward the ground, then focused on Hatori. "Their deaths were a tragedy," he replied, "but their deaths showed me the horrors the Jade Champion must stand against. Hakai made a mistake when he made an enemy of me. Handen, you may return to your duties. Hatori is an old friend, and it has been too long since we had a chance to converse. I will see to his tour of the temple personally."

"Very well, my lord," Handen replied. He bowed to them a final time and made his way down a darkened hallway.

"You have changed a great deal, Sekawa," Hatori said. "When last I saw you, you had the eyes of a priest, and did not carry so much as a knife. Now you have the eyes and the sword of a warrior, and the scars to prove your experience."

Sekawa smiled ruefully, one hand lifting unconsciously to his chin. "I assure you, the man who did this looks worse than I do."

"You sound like a Crab," Hatori said with a chuckle.

"I should," Sekawa said. "I've certainly spent enough time fighting beside them. Sometimes I think they're the only ones who truly understand. Handen and the others give lip service to our alliance

while they chant their sutras against evil, but they fail to realize that it is due to heroes like Kuon and Reiha that the evil they fear does not walk freely among us."

"Too true," Hatori said, his gaze distracted for a moment.

"Is it true that you train your Jade Magistrates here?" Sekkou asked, looking eagerly at Sekawa.

The Jade Champion frowned, irritated at the young shugenja's interruption. Hatori chuckled. "You must excuse my assistant, Sekkou," he said. "Like all members of his clan, he is curious and eager to learn."

"I find no fault in that," Sekawa said. "Yes, Sekkou-san, after the fall of Otsan Uchi all Jade Magistrates are trained here in Shinden Asahina."

"My clan are also Imperial Magistrates," Sekkou replied. "I would be interested in studying your shugenja schools, to see where your techniques differ from our own."

"I would be pleased to show you," Sekawa replied, "but our techniques are complex. I know that Hatori likes to keep moving. I do not think I would have time to demonstrate our tactics adequately."

"I see no reason I could not leave Sekkou behind, so long as he is not a nuisance to you," Hatori said.

"So be it, then," Sekawa answered. "Your assistant is welcome to remain among the Jade Magistrates as long as he chooses. All I ask in return is a favor."

Hatori looked at Sekawa thoughtfully. "Of course," he replied. "What can I do for you?"

"You have traveled the Empire extensively in the last several months," Sekawa said. "I wonder if you might have seen anything that may be of interest to the Jade Magistrates, heard any rumors that may be worth our while to investigate?"

The men walked silently through the halls of Shinden Asahina for a time. Though there seemed to be no one paying undue attention to them, there was no telling where the Shadowed Tower's ears may be found. "No," Hatori said, drawing upon his decades of experience in the court to lie skillfully to the Jade Champion, "other than some unusual civic unrest in the Mantis Isles and some personal hostility from my Ikoma cousins my journeys have been uneventful."

Sekawa shrugged. "No harm in asking," he replied, not seeming to sense any falsehood in his old friend's words. "Let me show you to our new training complex. I think your Monkey friend will find them most intriguing."

THE ASAHINA PROVINCES

The Asahina provinces are the furthest south of any Crane lands. While their territory is wedged between the lands of the militant Crab and Mantis, the Asahina have seen little conflict over the course of their history. In fact, most of the battles that have been fought on Asahina land were during the Clan War, when the False Hoturi led his Shadowlands forces to Shinden Asahina and ultimately was defeated. A few attacks on Asahina territory occurred during the recent Yasuki War, but these were guerilla raids by angry Hida samurai rather than any focused invasion.

The Asahina lands have been relatively free from war as the clans have come to realize any attack on the Asahina is not

worth the trouble. The Asahina are peaceful and reclusive, avoiding political entanglements. Their family is the least wealthy of the Crane families, and thus has fewer prominent targets for an attacking army. Other shugenja families respect the Asahina dedication to peace and contemplation, causing any plan to attack the Asahina to face potential conflict from within before it even begins.

Traditionally the Asahina are devout pacifists, refusing to carry any weapons whatsoever. In recent generations, more and more Asahina have picked up a daisho and begun fighting for their future, if only against the Shadowlands. Small samurai dojo have begun to appear in their lands and many of the newest generation of Asahina believe that they should begin to prepare for war against Daigotsu's armies. Such attitudes have led to the Asahina Battle School's creation (detailed in *Way of the Shugenja*TM) as well as solidifying the position of the Chaneko vassal family of archers and bushi as a necessary part of the Asahina.

Most of the land in Asahina territory consists of plains or beaches, which lends a great deal to the air of peace, comfort and calm that the family wishes to cultivate. It also ensures that the Asahina are well fed with a great deal of arable farmland. The Asahina family's surplus koku is used to feed the poor in areas throughout the Empire once taxes and the families own needs have been attended to. Peasant families from across the Empire will endure long pilgrimages to visit the family's temple and offer humble thanks.

MAJOR ASAHINA HOLDINGS

WALL ABOVE THE OCEAN VILLAGE

(LOCATION CR16 FROM ROKUGANTM)

This small village has long been noted for its friendly inns and sake houses and the beautiful view of the ocean it provides. Seen as an ideal stop between the central and southern Crane provinces, the economy of the town has grown a great deal since the days of the Clan War. It has almost become a city in its own right, dedicated to comfort and peace.

The town features a large marketplace where travelers can find needed supplies as well as trinkets, jewelry and other sundries. During the first days of spring, summer and autumn, Wall Above the Ocean Village has a festival featuring dancers, music, and Dragon hanabi (fireworks) displays. All shops remain open during the festival, offering their wares for a substantial discount to encourage trade. The local temples to Daikoku and Hotei are some of the largest to be found due to the contributions of local businesses. No innkeeper or tavern owner wants to go through the travel season without the blessings of Wealth and Contentment.

HOUSE OF SPIRITED PEACE

This inn is one of the oldest in Wall Above the Ocean Village. It was built shortly after the birth of Hantei XXXVIII in 1078, and is currently maintained by a middle-aged woman named Yukinko. Attached to the inn is a large sake house that Yukinko usually runs with the help of her two sons.

The innkeeper welcomes all clientele so long as they are peaceful and polite. Most travelers are glad to follow Yukinko's rules, as many of the other local inns refuse to cater to non-Crane or charge substantially more to foreign samurai. The inn is clean and well run, and its White Lotus sake is famous throughout the Crane provinces.

JUKAMI MURA

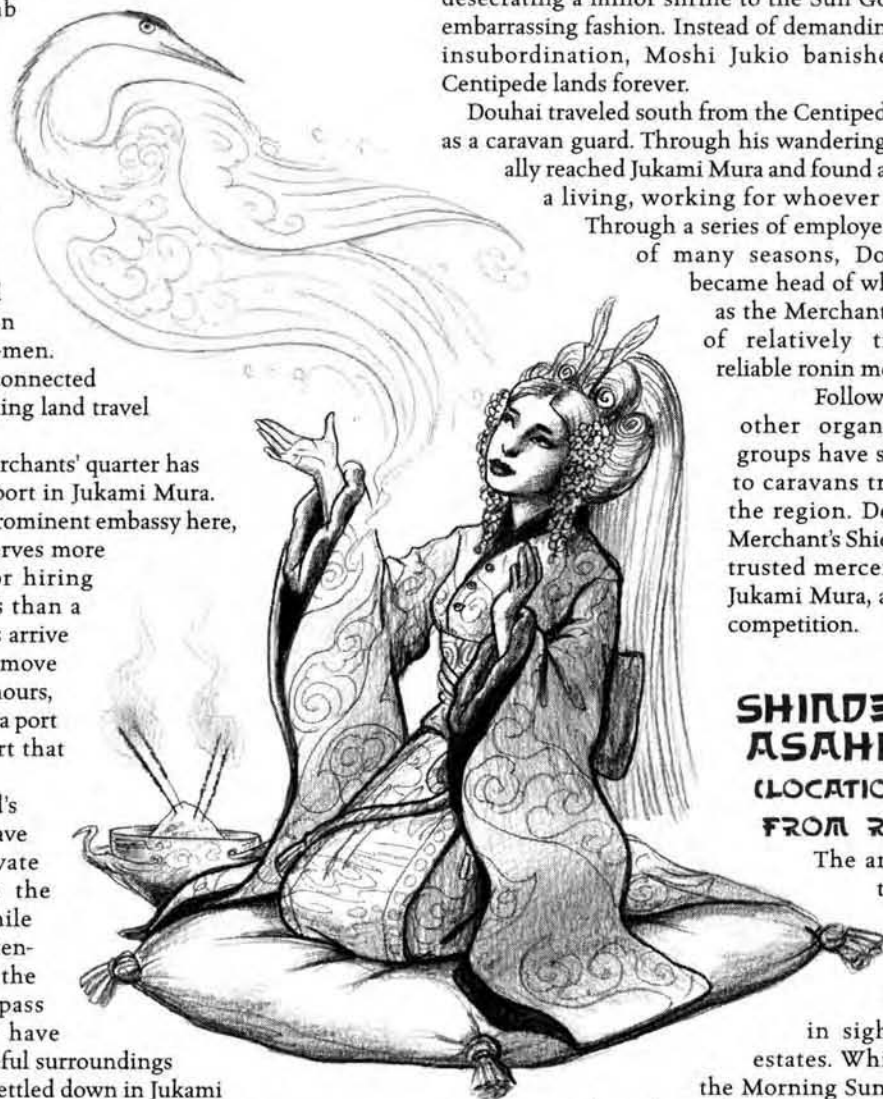
(LOCATION CN17 FROM ROKUGAN™)

A cornerstone of trade with the Mantis and Crab Clans, Jukami Mura is the headquarters for most of the ronin mercenary bands of southern Rokugan. Easy access to kobune traveling along the eastern coast of Rokugan or Mantis ships bound for the Isles of Spice and Silk has made this an ideal location for wave-men. The large village is also connected to major highways, making land travel simple as well.

Over time, a large merchants' quarter has sprung up around the port in Jukami Mura. The Mantis Clan has a prominent embassy here, though said embassy serves more as a meeting point for hiring Yoritomo mercenaries than a center of politics. Ships arrive and depart and sailors move through the area at all hours, lending the Jukami Mura port the nickname "The Port that Never Sleeps."

With the local lord's permission, the Crab have built their own private docking facilities on the other side of town. While the Crab samurai are ostensibly present to guard the Yasuki caravans that pass through town, a few have come to enjoy the peaceful surroundings and have permanently settled down in Jukami Mura.

The Asahina politely welcome all travelers, though they watch carefully for any criminal activity. Many Asahina quietly resent the presence of Crab soldiers, Mantis mercenaries, and ronin scum in their territory, but such individuals bolster the economic prosperity that keeps the Crane strong. Emerald Magistrates and Daidoji warriors strictly patrol the harbor at all times. The Asahina governors "suggest" all non-Crane who wish to enter the city proper leave any weapons outside the town walls. Visitors who do not cooperate will find their traveling papers revoked by local magistrates and will be escorted from Crane territory. Only those with travel papers issued by the Imperial Families (or Emerald Magistrates) can overcome this edict, and most of those voluntarily set their weapons aside rather than insult the Asahina.



DOUHAI

[Samurai 12; True Ronin Bushi 4]

Once known as Moshi Douhai, this old samurai has made a name for himself in Jukami Mura as one of the best caravan masters outside of Unicorn lands. The ronin has a reputation for quick delivery and fair, honest trade.

Douhai was cast out of his clan after an unfortunate encounter with family daimyo Moshi Jukio. Douhai had been drinking a bit too much sake and, after loudly decrying his daimyo's discrimination against men at length, was caught desecrating a minor shrine to the Sun Goddess in a rather embarrassing fashion. Instead of demanding seppuku for his insubordination, Moshi Jukio banished Douhai from Centipede lands forever.

Douhai traveled south from the Centipede Clan's provinces as a caravan guard. Through his wanderings, Douhai eventually reached Jukami Mura and found a new place to earn a living, working for whoever would hire him.

Through a series of employers over the course of many seasons, Douhai eventually became head of what is now known as the Merchant's Shield, a group of relatively trustworthy and reliable ronin mercenaries.

Following Douhai's lead, other organized mercenary groups have started hiring out to caravans traveling through the region. Douhai knows the Merchant's Shield is still the most trusted mercenary company in Jukami Mura, and welcomes the competition.

SHINDEN ASAHINA

(LOCATION CN18 FROM ROKUGAN™)

The ancestral home of the Asahina family lies on the eastern edge of the Fields of the Morning Sun, in sight of the Yasuki estates. While the Temple of the Morning Sun has traditionally been devoted to peace, serenity and the study of the Tao, the clan's leaders have found it increasingly difficult to keep apart from the violent conflicts of the Empire.

Many additional buildings have been added to the temple complex over the years, and each time something new is constructed it is carefully placed so that it adds to the overall beauty of the temple design. The largest temple is made of slightly darker stone than the rest. Its walls are engraved throughout with historical scenes and prayers for peace. One cannot become a master of the temple before reading them all. True understanding of the endless carvings can take a lifetime.

While this temple also serves as the seat of Asahina government, the family daimyo, Asahina Sekawa, is often absent due

to his duties as Jade Champion. It falls to Sekawa's hatamoto, Asahina Handen, to take care of most of the work. Handen is adept with finance and government. He keeps the family's coffers full while seeing to the construction of new temples and funding other enterprises. Handen recently discovered a large amount of funds being diverted to the Asahina Battle School and voiced his concerns to Sekawa. The Jade Champion informed Handen that the school had his full sanction and that it would not be discussed again. While Handen objects in the extreme to the existence of the school, he follows his daimyo's command and keeps the Battle School secret.

HIGHWAYS OF THE ASAHINA PROVINCES

Peaceful Traveler Way (Connects CN15 to CN16) — This road circles around Oni Mura, following the terrain south to Wall Above the Ocean Village. Few travelers notice the dilapidated trail that heads east into the cursed town and pass it by.

Skipping Stone Road (Connects CN16 to CN17) — Named after the arcing path that this route takes, Skipping Stone Road connects Jukami Mura and Wall Above the Ocean Village. Traffic here is mixed between merchants traveling much further north or south and the different mercenary groups that operate out of Jukami Mura.

Asahina's Path (Connects CN17 to CN18) — Leading from Jukami Mura south to Shinden Asahina, this highway was frequently traveled by the first Asahina in his final days. Legend has it that the old shugenja took his last steps along this road after returning from a final pilgrimage to Asahina Seido in the Isawa lands. The ground where he is said to have died is just north of Shinden Asahina and has a small roadside shrine dedicated to his memory.

The Route of Perfect Contentment (Connects CN18 to CN19) — Following the coast along the south edge of the Fields of the Morning Sun from Shinden Asahina to Friendly Traveler Village, this road is well worn from the all the trading traffic to and from Friendly Traveler Village.

ASAHINA ROUKAI

[Shugenja 6; Asahina Shugenja 2]

Son to Asahina Tsukiyoka, Roukai is the resident master sculptor of Shinden Asahina and one of the most powerful crafters of nemuranai that the Asahina have ever known. Born in 1132, during the first of the Twenty-Seven Days of Darkness, Tsukiyoka's child was strangely cursed by the circumstances of his birth: he can only sculpt well while the moon is up. During the day or during the new moon, Roukai becomes irritable and finds that his sculptures, nemuranai and magic all suffer to the point of being twisted and worthless. In return, however, Lady Moon has blessed any creations made while she is the sky. The stone that Roukai carves under moonlight looks as if it could come alive; the pottery he crafts is lighter than a feather and as strong as steel and his magics are extremely potent. While Roukai has learned to deal with his curse, he can become irritable and

short tempered during times when his talent abandons him, and cannot abide anyone complimenting his work. Most of the other Asahina at the temple have learned to appreciate his works in silence.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While visiting Shinden Asahina, the one of the player characters is given a message by one of the younger acolytes training at the temples. It is from Asahina Roukai and he has requested that the characters help him on behalf of the Crane.

Focus: Roukai has been working for several months on a statue of Toturi Tsudao. However, his curse is interfering with his work in a most peculiar manner. During the day, the statue is a hideous mockery of the Lady of the Sun. At night the statue looks almost like a perfect replica of Tsudao. Since the statue needs to be shipped to Kyuden Seppun within the month, Roukai is running out of time. The curse has never behaved in this manner before, and Roukai asks the characters if they will transport a confidential correspondence to the Phoenix Council of Masters so that he may seek their guidance.

Strike: In truth it is not Roukai's curse that is effecting the statue, but a fiendish illusion placed upon the statue by a Scorpion spy. The spy hopes to use the statue to drive a minor wedge between Tsudao and her Crane followers just as the Scorpion present their own statue to the Empress and curry her favor. The Scorpion will do their best to delay the party or destroy the message short of outright violence, for the spy knows it is unlikely that the Masters will not see through her ruse. The spy will flee or surrender rather than fight. It is, after all, a relatively minor plot and not one worthy of placing the life of a trained shugenja at risk.

MINOR ASAHINA HOLDINGS

BUNYA SANO ASAHINA

(LOCATION VVV FROM ROKUGAN™)

Bunya sano Asahina, more commonly known as the Fields of the Morning Sun, has long been held as a sacred place where the most honorable of samurai refuse to fight. A great temple to Jurojin, Fortune of Longevity, has been constructed on the beaches here. The Asahina encourage all who travel through the area to meditate in the peaceful surroundings. The temple Jurojin is the largest in the Crane lands and many Asahina believe it to be their duty to make a pilgrimage to this site at least once a year to encourage the blessings of the Fortune.

ONI MURA

(LOCATION CN15 FROM ROKUGAN™)

Oni Mura is deserted. Rotting huts fill the village grounds, unoccupied for decades. Only foolish ronin or truly desperate travelers will enter the town's stone walls. The peasants that farm the fields around Oni Mura refuse to approach the town and will rarely speak of the area. Only Jade Magistrates regularly enter and leave, never pausing to explain their presence to the locals.

Several years before the Clan War, an army of oni and goblins attacked the village. While the Shadowlands forces were eventually defeated, the town never truly recovered. Something had altered the land's spirit. Villagers sickened or went mad; the wise moved away. Many of the peasants that live outside the village believe that the area is haunted, though stories vary as to what may have taken residence. Some believe an oni has made a home in Oni Mura, while others are sure that some great spirit has a resting place here.

In truth the spirit that threatens Oni Mura is a powerful band of gaki, the collective spirits of countless Asahina who died in combat during the Clan War, War Against the Shadow, and Spirit Wars. These peaceful men and women, driven to violence by the world around them, returned as gaki after their death and wreaked sickness and despair upon the earth.

Jade Champion Asahina Sekawa is aware of the spirits and their origins. He has thus far been unable to find a way to purge its presence from the city. While he is not forthcoming with the nature of the threat to those outside the Jade Magistrates, travelers are strongly cautioned to avoid the area.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: A newly appointed Asahina governor has clandestinely contacted the party and asked them to investigate Oni Mura. They have been instructed to find the truth behind the village's condition, but to do so discretely so as to avoid giving offense to Lord Sekawa, who has forbidden the area.

Focus: While it is difficult to get the peasants near the village to speak, a persuasive and persistent player character will eventually find out about how the town was attacked and that a tomb was built to honor the dead.

The tomb can be found at the edge of town, containing the cremated remains of those who died defending the village from when the minions of the Shadowlands Horde. Most of the Crane involved in the attack survived, but a closer look at the scattered, disorganized records of the fallen reveals that all Asahina involved in the battle were slain. As a result,

the burial grounds were never blessed, and drew the attention of the countless gaki that now haunt the village. At this point consecrating the temple will simply prevent the situation from growing worse, but will not lay the spirit to rest.

Strike: The Jade Magistrates are watching the area, and will act quickly if they realize the player characters are intruding in the area. The last thing they want is more curious samurai dying in the area and adding to the problem. Even if the samurai believe they can find a way to send the gaki where they belong, they will have to deal with the overprotective magistrates first.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL HOLDINGS

ASAHINA SEIDO

Constructed in the year 363, Asahina Shrine has long been a sign of alliance and trust between the Isawa and Asahina families. After ten years of marriage between the first Asahina and his bride, Kiriko, the structure was erected to commemorate the lasting peace borne from the seeds of war. Located near Honored Guest Road, halfway between Pale Oak Castle and Hopeful Rest City, the shrine and the complex of buildings surrounding it see their share of visitors, most of who come to see the beautiful architecture. In fact, many believe that the awe-inspiring vistas of Pale Oak Castle in Phoenix lands were inspired by this humble location.

The monks that tend this shrine are typically a mix of retired Isawa and Asahina. The presence of former members of the two most pacifistic families in Rokugan has made the temple a symbol of peace for the entire Empire. Samurai drafting peace treaties often bring the documents to Asahina Seido to be blessed.



TSANGUSURI DAIGAKU

With the increased usage of tsangusuri throughout the Tsangusuri Daigaku is the Asahina's largest academy instructing the creation and use of tsangusuri. Located in Prosperous Plains City (CN5) just north of the banks of the River of the Blind Monk, this school has grown by leaps and bounds in the last several years due to the influx of new students.

The yearly Shower of Beauty Festival brings merchants and artisans from all over the Empire, who often arrive three or four days in advance and remain for several days thereafter to enjoy the wonders of the temple. One merchant caravan has gone so far as to permanently station two of its members in Prosperous Plains City to be first on hand to see new creations that the school makes and be first in line to purchase them.

More details on Tsangusuri Daigaku and its training methods can be found in *Way of the Shugenja*.™

IMPORTANT ASAHIWA NPCS

ASAHIWA KEITARO, JADE MAGISTRATE

Asahina Keitaro was a once a plump, jovial man, with a quick wit, an easy smile, and a lively jest for any occasion. He began his career as an unremarkable Asahina shugenja, from a respectable, affluent family. He graduated from Shinden Asahina several years ago, and looked forward to a career in the effete, rarefied atmosphere of Crane society, perhaps even Otsan Uchi. But no more. For him, the great change began on the day of the Test of the Jade Champion, when Asahina Sekawa assumed the title of Jade Champion.

The Test of the Emerald Champion was a horrible day, when the Onisu Hakai attacked Kyuden Nio with a horde of slaving bakemono. For many years Keitaro had secretly admired the lovely, talented Asahina daimyo, Kimita. He often daydreamed of ways to gain her attention, fondly recalled the day she complimented one of his poems. Kimita's loss hit Keitaro hard, unknown to anyone except his closest friends. Only they knew of his feelings for her. On the day she died, a darkness entered Keitaro's spirit. His good nature and inherent faith in the justice and beauty of the world suffered a terrible blow, and he has not recovered his former joviality.

Not long afterward, when Asahina Sekawa began to gather candidates to become Jade Magistrates, Keitaro knew where his duty lay. One of the first missions Keitaro performed as a Jade Magistrate was to accompany Asahina Sekawa and Daidoji Tae to a hidden temple, where they encountered the Grand Master of the Elements, Naka Tokei. Naka Tokei entrusted Sekawa with the care of his "son," a strange boy named Nizomi. When Sekawa's duties demanded his presence elsewhere, he entrusted the care of the boy to Keitaro.

Keitaro's experiences with the boy, Nizomi, have left him filled with a strange mixture of hope and horror. In many respects the boy is a wonder, a joy, a breath of fresh air in a life

otherwise filled with dread, strife, and misgivings. But sometimes the words that come out of the child's mouth fill Keitaro with a terror that he is powerless to express. The Empire has seen so much conflict in recent years, but some of Nizomi's words seem to indicate that it is only the beginning, as if the boy knows that worse is to come, and is eagerly anticipating the future. Keitaro has many questions he would like to ask the boy, but he fears the answers he would receive.

Like many Asahina, Keitaro abhors violence except where the minions of the Shadowlands are concerned. Unlike many Asahina, his role as a Jade Magistrate has given him ample opportunity to fight against corruption in a direct and physical manner. The once plump shugenja has become lean and strong from his fights against the Bloodspeakers and other corrupted vermin. Keitaro now accepts that there will be no peace for him, no life of idleness and relaxation.

He fights on so that others might dream as he once did.

ASAHIWA KEITARO

Male human Crane, Shugenja 7/Jade Magistrate 3: CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 10d6+10; hp 56; Init: +4; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +2 katana +6 melee, 1d10+3 damage; AC 19 (touch 14, flat-footed 17); SQ Class Skill: Knowledge (Shintao) (Family bonus), Element Focus (Air), Sense Elements, Watchful Gaze, Strength of Purpose, Jade's Wrath; Honor 3; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +12; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 17; Maximum Void: 2; Ht: 5 ft. 5 in.; Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Kami, Rokugani), Alchemy +6, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +20, Heal +10, Knowledge (etiquette) +10, Knowledge (elements) +10, Knowledge (Fortunes) +10, Knowledge (Shintao) +8, Scry +12, Spellcraft +10; Craft Talisman, Innate Ability (*path to inner peace, detect Taint, watchful spirit*), Self/No Self, Superior Element Focus (Air), Void Use;

Spells per Day (6/7/7/7/5/3; base DC 19 + spell level for Air spells, 13 for other spells; Superior Elemental Focus — Air, Asahina School): Spells Known: 0-Level — *accounts of Shorihotsu, crow's vision, flash of insight, flight of doves, gathering swirl, kami's guidance, minor blessing of Inari, stun the mind, whispers on the wind, read magic*; 1st — *blessed winds, detect Taint, false face, path to inner peace, quiescence of air, wind-borne slumbers*; 2nd — *call upon the breeze, detect thoughts, know the shadows, mists of illusion, mend the spirit*; 3rd — *castle of air, glimpse of the soul's shadow, Kaze's fury, watchful spirit*; 4th — *see the seer, whispering winds, wisdom of the kami*; 5th — *blessing of healing, symbol of air*.

Possessions of Note: *courtier's obi, jade pendant, katana +2, +2 ashigaru armor, ring of protection +2, talisman of summon nature's ally V, tapestry of air*.

ASAHIWA SEIDO

Earth: 3

Willpower: 4

Water: 3

Strength: 3

Perception: 4

Fire: 3

Agility: 3

Intelligence: 4

Air: 5

Void: 3

School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 3/ Jade Magistrate 1

Dojo: None

Honor: 3.0

Glory: 6.5

Advantages: Higher Purpose (Fight Shadowlands), Wealthy

Disadvantages: Idealistic

Spells: (Spells marked with * are memorized) Call Upon the Breeze, Call Upon the Wind, Castle of Air, Commune*, Crow's Vision, Glimpse of the Soul's Shadow, Jade Strike*, Know the Shadows, Mists of Illusion, Path to Inner Peace*, Quiescence of Air, Reflective Pool, Sacred Ground, Sense*, Strength of the Crow, Stun the Mind, Summon Fog, Summon*, Symbol of Air, Secrets on the Wind*, Whispers on the Wind, Whispering Wind, Wind-borne Slumbers, Wisdom of the Kami.

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Courtier 5, Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 5, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Law 4, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Lore: Shugenja 6, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 4, Tsangusuri 3.

ASAHINA SEKAWA, JADE CHAMPION

Until the Test of the Jade Champion, Asahina Sekawa had no idea how quickly life could change. Until then, he had been a prominent Asahina shugenja, overshadowed only by his beloved elder sister Kimita. His entire life had been steeped in duty to his family and his clan, but he learned the true meaning of duty mere moments after he won the Test. Sekawa and Kimita faced each other in the final test, and he defeated her with his skill, insight, and daring. The victory was bittersweet; he exulted in his victory but was saddened at Kimita's defeat.

Mere moments after the Test was over, the Onisu of Destruction and a swarm of ravening bakemono attacked the castle, slaughtering contestants and spectators, including Kimita and Sekawa's uncle Tamako. At Hantei Naseru's command the surviving shugenja brought Kyuden Nio down upon the Onisu. Hakai rose from the rubble unharmed, but the intervention of Naka Tokei, the Grand Master of the Elements, turned the tide of the confrontation. Hakai departed, taunting Sekawa with promises of visiting torment upon the souls of those killed that day.

Sekawa had no time to mourn Kimita or Tamako. Instead he immediately began investigating how Hakai's invasion could have happened, hoping to insure that such a thing would never happen again. He barely had time to assume properly his status and duties as Asahina daimyo, pausing just enough to pass most of his responsibilities to Asahina Handen.

Sekawa's investigations discovered that a group of Blood-

speakers working in the noble district of Otosan Uchi had aided Hakai, helping the Onisu to mask the encroachment of the bakemono that had taken part in the attack. With the help of this cell of Bloodspeakers, Hakai's force of bakemono was much larger than could have been achieved otherwise, making the attack all the more devastating. Sekawa discovered this soon after commissioning his first two recruits, Asahina Keitaro and Daidoji Tae. With these two fledging Jade Magistrates and four Emerald Magistrates borrowed from the Emerald Champion, Sekawa closed in on the Bloodspeaker cell. In the resulting battle, the desperate Bloodspeakers attacked with

aiguchi and bare hands. One of them caught the unprepared Sekawa with a vicious aiguchi slash before Sekawa cut him down. Sekawa barely escaped having his throat slashed wide open, but he was left with a prominent scar across his chin. From that day forward, he has broken the Asahina custom against shugenja wearing armor, and encourages his Jade Magistrates to do the same.

After the fall of Otosan Uchi, Sekawa fell into a deep despair. He viewed the tragic destruction as a personal failure, and grieved the loss of so many innocent lives. This despair lasted only briefly, until he returned Shinden Asahina for a short time. There, he met Nizomi, the strange "son" of Naka Tokei. Strangely, he only remembers that they spoke; he cannot remember what the small child said or what they talked about. But later, he felt as if a great weight had been lifted from his shoulders. A sense of hope and courage invigorated him, and Sekawa returned to the fight with fresh fervor.

ASAHINA SEKAWA

Male human Crane, Shugenja 9/Jade

Magistrate 8: CR 17; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 17d6+68; hp 150; Init: +6; Spd 30 ft.;

Atk +3 *Taint resistant keen wakizashi* +14/+9 melee, 1d6+4 damage; AC 18 (touch 12, flat-footed 16); SA Jade's Mercy, Jade's Fury, Jade's Wrath; SQ Awareness of the Kami, Class Skill: Knowledge (Shintao) (Family Bonus), Element Focus (Air), Sense elements, Strength of Purpose +4, Watchful Gaze; Honor 2; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +10, Will +16; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 21; Maximum Void: 8; Ht: 5 ft. 8in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Kami, Rokugani), Alchemy +7, Bluff +13, Concentration +15, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +18, Heal +8, Hide +5, Knowledge (etiquette) +10, Knowledge (law) +10, Knowledge



MANTLE OF THE JADE CHAMPION

D20 SYSTEM™

From *Magic of Rokugan*™

The Mantle of the Jade Champion is a kimono that confers a +6 armor bonus to AC. It also grants the wearer Spell Resistance 20 and a +1 enhancement bonus on all saving throws. The mantle grants its wearer an additional partial action per round that may only be used toward the casting of a spell. This effect is not cumulative with other effects that grant additional partial actions (such as *haste*). The DC of all spells cast by the wearer is increased by 6 when targeting creatures with the Shadowlands Taint.

Caster Level: 18th

LSR RPG 2E:

The Mantle of the Jade Champion increases the TN when targeting its wearer with spells or magical attacks by 15. Additionally, the Mantle grants its wearer three free Raises that may only be applied toward decreasing the casting time of any spell. It also grants three additional Raises that can be applied to any purpose when targeting creatures with the Shadowlands Taint.

(Elements) +10, Knowledge (maho) +20, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Move Silently +8, Perform +8, Scry +11, Search +10, Sense Motive +13, Spellcraft +10, Spot +14; Depths of the Void (x2), Improved Initiative, A Single Moment, Speed of the Kami, Strike at the Heart, The Sudden Strike (wakizashi), Void Use.

Spells per Day (6-8/7/7/7/6/6/4; base DC 23 + spell level for Air spells, 15 for other spells; Superior Elemental Focus — Air, Asahina School, tapestry of air): Spells Known: 0-Level — *accounts of Shorihotsu, crow's vision, flash of insight, flight of doves, gathering swirl, kami's guidance, minor blessing of Inari, stun the mind, whispers on the wind, read magic*; 1st — *by the light of Lord Moon, detect Taint, evil ward, path to inner peace, quiescence of air, wind-borne slumbers*; 2nd — *call upon the breeze, detect thoughts, eyes shall not see, mists of illusion, mend the spirit, yari of air*; 3rd — *castle of air, glimpse of the soul's shadow, Kaze's fury, watchful spirit*; 4th — *blessings of Isora, jade strike, see the seer, whispering winds, wisdom of the kami*; 5th — *blessing of healing, piercing the soul, purity of air, summon kami, symbol of air*; 6th — *blessings of the four winds, command the clouds, harvest of jade, teleport*; 7th — *borne by the wind, poison of the Windspeaker, tomb of jade, words of the kami*; 8th — *blessings of Jizo, oni warding, slayer's knives*.

Possessions of Note: *haori of charisma +4, Mantle of the Jade Champion, Tapestry of Air, +3 Taint resistant keen wakizashi.*

ASAHINA SEKAWA

Earth: 4

Water: 5

Fire: 4

Air: 6

Void: 4

School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 5/Jade Magistrate 1

Dojo: Shinden Asahina

Honor: 2.5

Glory: 8.5

Advantages: Aligned to the Elements (Air), Forbidden Knowledge (Clay Soldiers), Heart of Vengeance

(Shadowlands), Higher Purpose (Fight Taint), Leadership

Disadvantages: Driven, Sworn Enemy (Hakai)

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Taijutsu 3, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 3, Law 5, Lore: Shadowlands 6, Lore: Shugenja 6, Meditation 4, Shintao 2, Sincerity 4, Spellcraft 5, Tsangusuri 2, Yarijutsu 5.

Spells: (Spells marked with * are memorized) Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, The Blessings of Jizo, By the Light of Lord Moon, Call Upon the Wind, Command the Clouds, Commune*, Echoes of a Breeze, Evil Ward, The Eyes Shall Not See, Jade Strike, Path to Inner Peace, Purify Water, Quiescence of Air, Rise Air, Sacred Ground, Sense*, Slayer's Knives, Summon Fog, Strength of the Crow, Summon*, Summon Kami of Air, Symbol of Air, Tempest of Air, Tomb of Jade, Wall of Air, Whispering Wind, Wind-borne Slumbers, Wisdom of the Kami, The Wrath of Kaze-no-Kami, Yari of Air.

ASAHINA MECHANICS

ANCESTORS

ASAHINA KAMATARI

Asahina Kamatari was Asahina daimyo family in the fifth century. He was born under auspicious portents, the seventh son of a seventh son, and became adept at reading omens and portents himself. He predicted many significant events, including the Scorpion Clan Coup, the Clan War, the Second Day of Thunder, and the ascension of Toturi I as Emperor. Unfortunately because none of the events he predicted occurred until hundreds of years later, his value as a seer was largely discounted in his own time.

In recent years the journals of Kamatari have been revisited, and the Asahina have begun studying them in great detail. The journals point to the existence of a later volume, the location of which is currently unknown. The Asahina seek this volume eagerly, wondering if it may reveal events that have not yet occurred.

OMENS AND PORTENTS

ANCESTOR FEAT: ASAHINA KAMATARI

Your skill at reading omens and portents is remarkable.

Prerequisite: Shugenja 1+, Wisdom 15+

Benefit: Your caster level for any divination spells you cast is considered to be two levels higher. You gain a +4 bonus to all Scry checks.

ASAHINA KAMATARI

(4 POINTS)

Descendants of Asahina Kamatari are guided by his wisdom when reading portents and omens. The character gains two free raises when casting Air and Water spells that involve divination.

ASAHINA TSUKIYOKA

In her youth, Tsukiyoka was a promising student at Shinden Asahina. Even then, her teachers marveled at the beauty and power of her magical creations. She was not only proficient in their creation, she was prolific. The sheer number of tsangusuri she created earned her notoriety, and an important place in the War of Spirits. After the Steel Chrysanthemum killed her youngest son, she threw herself into supporting the war effort. Crane samurai marched into battle with her fetishes in hand. She died during the War of Spirits, a victim of her own resolve. She poured so much of her power and energy into creating objects to help the Crane that she died of exhaustion.

WONDROUS TSANGUSURI

ANCESTOR FEAT: ASAHINA TSUKIYOKAI

Guided by your talented ancestor, you intuitively know ways to make tsangusuri better, faster and more cheaply than normal.

Prerequisite: Charisma 13+, Craft Talisman

Benefit: Whenever you use any Craft Talisman feat, you can create your intended item in half the normal time, with half the normal cost in XP. Furthermore, each talisman you create is made as if its caster level is one level higher (this does not increase the final cost of the item).

ASAHINA TSUKIYOKA

(3 POINTS)

You gain a free Raise when creating Tsangusuri. Furthermore, the time required to create the item is halved.

ASAHINA

Isawa Asahina was violently obsessed with the Phoenix's war with the Lion. The Crane brokered a peace treaty, and Asahina turned his fury upon them for having the audacity to meddle. When a Doji maiden threw herself in front of Asahina's fiery wrath to save the lives of hundreds of villagers, he was so moved that he relented and nursed her back to health. When she was whole again, he married her and was granted his own family within the Crane. The two of them founded Shinden Asahina and started the Asahina family.

Isawa Asahina forsook the use of Fire when he forswore violence and joined the Crane. He turned his talents to Air instead. Nevertheless, he still possessed his power with Fire, even though he never again used it to harm a living creature.

MEMORIES OF FIRE

ANCESTOR FEAT: ASAHINAI

You are descended directly from the founder of the Asahina family, and he confers upon you special insight in Fire spells, as long as you do not harm living creatures with it.

Prerequisite: Shugenja 1+

Benefit: Whenever you cast a Fire spell, you gain a +1 insight bonus to all damage dice. If you ever use a Fire spell to harm a non-Tainted creature, you lose 1d6 points of Honor. Should your Honor ever reach zero, you lose the benefits of this feat until your Honor is at least 2 once again.

ASAHINA

(3 POINTS)

Whenever you cast a Fire spell, you gain two free raises for damage. If you ever use a Fire spell to harm a living, non-Tainted creature, you lose one die of Honor. If your Honor ever reaches 0, you lose the benefits of this feat until your honor is at least 2 again.

NEW FEAT

CRAFT GREATER TALISMAN

ITEM CREATION

You can create magic fetishes of greater power that hold spells until triggered.

Prerequisite: Intelligence 13+, spellcaster level 10+, appropriate Craft skill, Craft Talisman.

Benefit: You can create a tsangusuri, a one-use magic talisman, imbuing it with the power of any spell you know. You must provide any material components or focuses the spell requires. If casting the spell would reduce your total XP total, you pay the cost upon beginning the process in addition to the XP cost for making the talisman itself. Material components are consumed when you begin crafting, but focuses are not. (A focus used in crafting a talisman can be reused.)

A talisman has a base price of the spell level × caster level × 50 gp (a 0-level spell counts as ½ level). You must spend ⅓ of



the base price in XP and use raw materials costing half this base price. A talisman's market value equals its base price.

You may also craft special talismans that are not associated with a specific spell, such as those described in this chapter. Crafting these talismans takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its price. You must expend $\frac{1}{2}$ of the item's price in XP and use up raw materials equal to half this price.

ASAHINA TSANGUSURI

INCENSE OF CONCENTRATION

ITSANGUSURI

These blocks of special incense are especially favored by the Asahina's cousins in the Isawa family. When burned, it restores the user to full Void Points. For the incense to take effect, the user must meditate for fifteen minutes.

Caster Level: 4th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Talisman, drawing the void; *Market Price:* 400 koku; *Weight:* —.

INCENSE OF MEDITATION

This block of special incense restores the user to full Void Points. For the incense to take effect, the user must Meditate for fifteen minutes and succeed at a Meditation Roll.

JADE AMULET

ITSANGUSURI

This amulet made of jade can be formed into any shape that can be worn as a necklace. It provides increased protection against the Taint, better than normal jade. The amulet provides a +4 enhancement bonus to any Fortitude save to resist becoming Tainted. Alternatively, the amulet can be used to ward off the Taint if the wearer is in the Shadowlands. The amulet wards off the Taint for two weeks. After either of these uses, the amulet turns soft and black, becoming useless.

Caster Level: 4th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Talisman, protection from Taint; *Market Price:* 200 koku; *Weight:* —.

JADE AMULET

This amulet made of jade can be formed into any shape that can be worn as a necklace. It provides increased protection against the Taint, better than normal jade. The amulet provides an additional 2k2 to any Earth roll to resist becoming Tainted. Alternatively, the amulet can be used to ward off the Taint if the wearer is in the Shadowlands. The amulet wards off the Taint for two weeks. After either of these uses, the amulet turns soft and black, becoming useless.

CRAFTING TSANGUSURI

The Asahina shugenja long ago mastered the art of creating objects of power and beauty, in the hopes of bringing the whole world closer to enlightenment. Their mastery of the kami of minor nemuranai is unmatched.

Creating a tsangusuri can be a lengthy process. The most common type of tsangusuri is one imbued with the power of a particular spell, but they are not limited to such. The player may discuss her idea for a tsangusuri with the GM, who — if he approves the item — decides what materials are required to create it. If the player wishes to use components other than those assigned by the GM, the GM may assign a higher TN for the item's creation. The GM may even decide that other individuals must be present to take part in the ritual to contribute their energies to the item.

Next, the shugenja must make a successful Intelligence + Astrology roll (TN 15) to determine the most auspicious time for the ritual. The time can be anything the GM deems appropriate, from later the same day to the fifth new moon at the Hour of the Rat.

When the time arrives, the shugenja and anyone else required to be present begin the ritual to invoke the item's spirit. If the item is a minor fetish, such as a one-use item, the ritual may take only one hour. If the item is something of incredible power, something to rival a Celestial Sword, the ritual may require weeks of continuous effort. When this time is over, the shugenja must make a Fire + Tsangusuri roll (TN 15 for minor fetishes, higher for more powerful items). If the roll is successful, the item is ready for use.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE DAIDOJI

SILK AND STEEL
PART THREE

It was rare for Otomo Taneji to be struck speechless. As a member of a prominent Imperial bloodline, one could almost say that it was impossible for him to be struck mute, no matter how impressive the spectacle. Nevertheless, Hatori watched as the young man's jaw gaped. Under other circumstances, he might have enjoyed such a rare incident. Unfortunately, that was not possible at the moment. "Impressive, isn't it?" was all he could manage.

"I have never seen anything like it," Taneji admitted. "I saw the Imperial Legions conducting maneuvers on several occasions when I would visit Otosan Uchi with my father many years ago, but this..." the young courtier's voice trailed off. "It is almost difficult to believe," he finally said.

Hatori nodded. The two men stood on a balcony overlooking a vast field that extended nearly to the horizon. On the fields were hundreds upon hundreds of armored Crane warriors, all in perfect formation, all executing complex tactical maneuvers. That the Crane would so easily allow them to see something like this caused Hatori's heart to sink. The Lion had allowed them to see nothing like this. Even the Crab had steered them around their most sensitive military positions. He did not deserve such trust.

A commotion in the chamber beyond the balcony drew Hatori's attention. Someone was giving orders to the servants who had shown them to these quarters. After a moment, an armor-clad figure stepped onto the balcony. Exquisitely crafted light armor covered beautiful, royal blue clothing of exceptional quality. The man that met them regarded them with quick, intent eyes. He looked at

them for a long moment, then brightened with a slight smile. "Hatori-san," Daidoji Kikaze said. "It is good to see you again."

Hatori bowed. "Thank you, Kikaze-sama. It is good to see you as well. And thank you for seeing us on such short notice. I was sorry to hear news of your mother."

Kikaze only nodded, a look of pain crossing his earnest features. Hatori turned to his vassal. "Allow me to present Otomo Taneji, my karo," he said, quickly changing the subject.

Kikaze inclined his head respectfully. "An Otomo," he said. "I thought your family had been given leave to build a castle near Kyuden Doji. I did not expect to house some of you here personally."

"I did not mean to offer insult by my presence, Lord Kikaze," Taneji said with a graceful bow. "If members of my family are not welcome here, I will leave immediately. I would never offend our most gracious hosts."

The Daidoji daimyo nodded politely, but a flash of exasperation was evident in his eyes. Hatori marveled at Taneji's ability to turn an insult back upon the one who offered it, placing them in an awkward position while making him look gracious. The rigors of extended travel made it easy to forget the young man's strengths. "Of course not," Kikaze said with a note of admonishment. "But I think you know what having a flock of your kinsmen here would do to my ability to lead my men."

Taneji offered a genuine smile. "I know exactly what you mean."

Hatori turned to the young man. "Taneji, could you please excuse us for a while? I need to speak to Kikaze-sama on a matter of some delicacy."

The courtier bowed. "As you wish, Hatori-sama." With another bow to Kikaze, he withdrew from the chambers and disappeared into the corridor beyond.

Kikaze looked at Hatori curiously. "What brings you to the

Daidoji provinces, Hatori? The Doji and Kakita lands are usually more to your liking."

"More suitable to my duty, perhaps, but not to my liking," Hatori said with a frown. "Truthfully, I am on my way north toward the Kakita provinces, but I thought it would be rude not to pay my respects. Your mother was a friend, not only to me but to the Empire. There may be little I can do to aid you, but I would be willing to do whatever I can. To have a friend in the court is not to be underestimated."

"You are right, Hatori-san," Kikaze said. He turned to look at Hatori. "There is little you can do to aid me. My mother is lost in the Shadowlands. What would you do to help me find her? What would you do to retrieve a loved one lost in shadow?"

"Anything I had to do," Hatori said sincerely.

"Hmm," Kikaze said, eyes narrowing slightly. "Well, you are welcome here, Miya Hatori. I can arrange for more suitable accommodations than these if you plan to remain. I fear my servants are accustomed to putting my guests in rooms where they can see the training fields, even though they are smaller."

"You always put your guests in such rooms?" Hatori asked. "Do you not fear a potential enemy counting your troops and learning your tactics?"

Kikaze smiled faintly. "If our enemies think this is all that we have to offer against them, I welcome such a faulty conclusion."

Hatori chuckled. "To tell the truth, I am surprised. I thought there were far fewer troops here than the last time I was your guest."

"Yes," Kikaze agreed. "I have troops committed near our southern border, near our Crab allies, and more near the Lion border. The rest are here."

"Ever vigilant," Hatori observed.

"My family has defended the Crane for over a thousand years. The only chance we have against our foes is to be better prepared." He waved absently toward the fields, as if that explained everything. He sat his helm down on the desk and gestured to a servant to bring tea. "What purpose brings you to Crane lands, Hatori?"

"Curiosity," he said, smiling weakly again. When Kikaze raised his eyebrows questioningly, he continued. "It has been some time since I visited. The Doji and Kakita have been quite busy in recent months, not to mention the Otomo relocating to the Doji lands. I merely wished to see what my old friends were doing."

Kikaze shook his head. "You have no mission? No duty from the Imperial Court? No ancient scrolls to locate?"

"I have no ulterior motive whatsoever, Kikaze-sama."

The Daidoji daimyo frowned slightly and looked at him askance. "I... suppose there is no reason needed for a visit from an old friend of my family. However, I hope you understand that I am needed on the fields."

"Of course, Kikaze-sama," Hatori said. "Thank you for your time. My karo and I will be leaving in the morning."

Kikaze nodded, picked up his helm, and left. Once Hatori was certain he was gone, he left and moved purposefully down the hallway and entered one of Kikaze's personal chambers. There were no guards, as Kikaze had not been expecting guests, and the servants did not meet Hatori's eyes.

Within one chamber was a large map of Rokugan. Kikaze used it for strategy and planning with his generals. A quick glance around proved that no one was about. Hatori withdrew a tiny, dead chrysanthemum from his obi and set it atop the market indicating Ryoko Owari.

With his purpose fulfilled, Hatori left. He prayed it would be enough.

THE DAIDOJI PROVINCES

More so than any other clan, the Crane have a haphazard and seemingly random arrangement of provinces. This is due in a large part to the Doji and Kakita families' political acumen, responsible for expanding their clan's holdings many times over the centuries to the greatest benefit of the clan. While other families focus their holdings on extremely important resources or places of beauty, the Daidoji are given lands that hold strategic value or resources best used in military endeavors. As a result, the family's lands are distributed across the Crane provinces, covering a variety of useful territories. The Daidoji, for their part, are intimately familiar with every single acre that is theirs to defend.

MAJOR DAIDOJI HOLDINGS

Military holdings are of principal importance to the Daidoji. The Crane can ill afford to be caught unaware by enemies, and so the Daidoji have scouted out as many strategically important areas as possible and devoted their full attention to them. Commerce is a secondary concern, and as such they also have a fair amount of commercial interests within their provinces as well. The Daidoji have always engaged in healthy mercantile competition with the Yasuki; now that the Yasuki family is their ally, little has changed.

DAIDOJI TRAINING GROUNDS (LOCATION CN14 FROM ROKUGAN™)

While rather unimaginatively named, these vast fields are among the best kept in all the Empire. Three gardeners from the Kakita Artisan Academy supervise dozens of peasant workers to maintain these fields in pristine conditions at all times. This is far more difficult than it might seem, as the Daidoji armies use these fields daily in their endless drills and exercises.

The Daidoji training grounds are an extension of the family daimyo's personal estate. For the past decade, Daidoji Reikai had overseen the fields personally. Her son, Kikaze, has maintained this tradition. Like his mother, he has vowed that the Crane would always be prepared for war, regardless of political climate. His vow has been taken seriously. During his tenure the Daidoji armies have been kept in a state of readiness unlike anything the Crane have ever known.

THE GREAT BARRACKS

So named because of their enormous size, the barracks at the Daidoji Training Grounds can accommodate a staggering number of troops. They were constructed during Daidoji Uji's time as daimyo after he determined that the energy his armies wasted traveling to and from the fields to practice maneuvers could better be used in actual training. The barracks are efficient if not necessarily luxurious, and can house an entire army in the same space normally filled by a large village.

Logistically, the barracks are a nightmare. So many troops

in such a small area creates an enormous demand for food and drink, not to mention the dangers of having such large numbers of armed troops standing idle. Fortunately for the Daidoji commanders, they have a quartermaster who is as ruthless and efficient as any general. Under his command, the compound runs smoothly and without pause. He acquires large quantities of sake and doles it out in controlled amounts to placate the troops. He arranges a schedule for quiet contemplation, wherein troops are allowed to use private temples for meditation each night.

The Brotherhood of Shinsei would be quite alarmed to discover some of these temples are attended by trained geisha, but the quartermaster does not feel it is anything the monks should be concerned with. The armies are well fed and entertained, and the commanders are given troops who are eager for the thrill of battle.

DAIDOJI GUDETA, GURSO

[Fighter 9/Rogue 3; Daidoji Bodyguard 3]

Daidoji Gudeta is one of many young officers getting their first taste of command with the armies at the Daidoji Training Grounds. When Daidoji Reikai led the charge into the Shadowlands to aid the troops at Hiruma Castle, she sent Gudeta back to report to Lord Kurohito. He did so, and then followed Reikai on foot through the Shadowlands until he rejoined his unit. Reikai promoted him on the spot.

Gudeta is an incredibly gifted archer with an iron will and a refusal to accept failure. He has overcome the difficulties posed by the name his Unicorn mother gave him, but he has yet to shrug off the nickname "Blue Wasp" that was given to him at his gempukku. As long as the archers under his command perform as he orders, he does not care what they call him.

Since the Crane's recent alliance with the Crab, Gudeta has forged a fast friendship with a Crab bushi by the name of Yasuhiro. During the Yasuki war, Yasuhiro and Gudeta faced one another a number of times, with neither ever having a decisive victory over the other. Now that their war is at an end, the two men meet from time to time in Friendly Traveler Village and share tales of their battles across the Empire, as well as their battles with one another.

THE DAIMYO'S ESTATE

The Daidoji daimyo bears a large burden for the Crane Clan, and everyone within the clan knows it. He or she must always have the Crane armies at the ready, yet always be prepared to turn control over to a Kakita or Doji general when the fighting reaches its peak. They are forever the clan's salvation, yet rarely receive the accolades they richly deserve. It is a position of enormous responsibility and little appreciation. One way in which the Crane have thanked those who bear this burden is with the daimyo's estate, one of the finest private estates in all the Crane lands.

Traditionally, the head of a family takes residence within the family's ancestral estate. The Daidoji daimyo does have a large suite at Shiro Daidoji, but also maintains this large, lavish estate, across the Spine of the World Mountains. In theory, this serves to provide the daimyo with a home on both sides of the mountains so that they may coordinate their armies regardless of where the conflict may be. The estate was a gift from the Doji and Kakita as a display of gratitude following the first Yasuki war hundreds of years ago. It is every bit as opulent as the holdings of those families, and contains every comfort a samurai could imagine. Unlike Shiro Daidoji, this

HIGHWAYS OF THE DAIDOJI PROVINCES

Defender's Path (Connects C3 to C4, C5, and C6) — This essential highway serves as the primary supply line for the major Daidoji military installations. Not only does it connect Kosaten Shiro and Shiro Daidoji to the markets at Yufuku and Heigen Toshi, but it also reaches Kyuden Doji, meaning that the Doji can quickly disperse reinforcements should the Daidoji come under siege.

Shinsei's Road (Connects C3 to L18) — The name of this road comes from an old saying that not even Shinsei could bring peace between the Crane and Lion. As might be expected of a road connecting Kosaten Shiro to Shiro Matsu, two of the most prominent military strongholds in all of Rokugan, this road is heavily patrolled.

Trail of Sorrow (Connects CN14 to A24) — This infrequently used highway connects the Crane and Fox lands. The two clans were allies for centuries, but the ill-fated attempt at arbitration in the conflict between the Hare and Fox has left the Kitsune family with a long-standing grudge against the Crane, only briefly ameliorated by a marriage between Doji Hoturi and Kitsune Ameiko (that ended in Ameiko's suicide) and an ultimately unsuccessful political alliance early in Toturi's reign.

household is far from any areas of strategic importance, allowing the Daidoji daimyo the occasional opportunity to relax far from the rigors of duty.

Despite its luxury, the daimyo's estate also serves a utilitarian purpose. Each daimyo has made use of it in their own way, including the three most recent, Uji, Reikai, and Kikaze, who have made excellent use of the remote training fields beyond the estate's gardens and have frequently utilized the estate as a secure planning area far from the fields of battle.

KOSATEN SHIRO

(LOCATION CN3 FROM ROKUGAN)

Also known as Crossroads Castle, Kosaten Shiro is the first line of defense against a Lion invasion. It has become more strategically important than Shiro Daidoji over the centuries due to its proximity to the Lion threat. It is without question the pre-eminent military establishment in all the Crane provinces, though it cannot rival the intimidating fortresses of the Crab and Lion. It is this relative weakness, this comparative lack of military might, that has forced the Crane to depend upon the Daidoji's unorthodox tactics in battle. Any foe contemplating an attack on Kosaten Shiro, or indeed on any Crane holding, must allocate at least twenty percent more troops and supplies than usual to even hope to account for the huge losses the Daidoji saboteurs typically visit upon invaders. The large number of troops stationed here as well as the significant number of students training at the Kosaten Shiro dojo (see *Way of the Samurai™* for more information) dissuade most enemies from considering the castle as a possible target. In the minds of most, laying siege to a Daidoji castle is too expensive to prove worthwhile.

Kosaten Shiro was constructed several centuries ago in response to the constant threat of attack from the neighboring

Lion. Despite that it is an old and venerable institution, the Daidoji look upon it as a new representation of their duties. Shiro Daidoji was created almost immediately following the family's inception, and was in use before the family fully adopted some of their more peculiar philosophies and practices. By the time Kosaten Shiro was built, the Daidoji had accepted that they must sacrifice their personal honor for the clan's greater good, and the castle's construction has come to reflect this difference. Many traps, deadfalls, and ambush points lie hidden in the walls of Kosaten Shiro, and the architecture lends itself to deep, concealing shadows. Those who visit both castles can attest that the overall mood of Kosaten Shiro and Shiro Daidoji are quite different. While the latter is inviting and peaceful, the former radiates an almost palpable hostility toward outsiders, as if the stones of the castle itself were turned toward disposing intruders.

THREE SIDES RIVER

(LOCATION CN13 FROM ROKUGAN)

The most immediate source of water for Kosaten Shiro is Mizu-Umi no Fuko, the Lake of Sorrows. As might be expected, the peasants who work the land have a great many superstitions regarding the lake. It is believed to bear the spirits of those who died at Beiden Pass and were not properly buried. To allay these fears, the Daidoji have commissioned a large number of small shrines devoted to the spirits of the forgotten dead along the lake's shore.

Three Sides River feeds into the Lake of Sorrows. Although political borders vary between families, it is generally agreed that the river marks the border between Crane and Lion lands near the Spine of the World Mountains. Because the river leads to the Lake of Sorrows, it too has become the subject of much superstition. It is believed that anyone who writes the name of their enemy upon a scrap of paper and throws it into the river will bring their enemy terrible fortunes as their name enters the Lake of Sorrows. However, it is cautioned that such a deed is not done lightly. Anyone who would attempt to condemn an innocent soul to such misery will find that the misfortune will be visited back upon him tenfold. Only the truly wrathful and justly wronged dare risk such a thing.

In some peasant villages this river is also referred to as "Three Stone River" after a play written by the famous playwright, Miya Mai. In the play, a samurai believed his wife had an affair with his brother, and commanded his vassal to cast the man's name into Three Sides River. The vassal knew his lord's brother was innocent of the crime and did not wish his foolish lord to be punished, so he tied the note to three heavy stones so that it would never find its way to the Lake of Sorrows. The samurai later makes peace with his brother and wife and the vassal is rewarded for his wisdom.

THE THREE SIDES WATCHTOWER

This innocuous way station marks the Crane bank of Three Sides River. It is large enough to accommodate a small barracks and magistrate's office, but has little else in the way of amenities. To deal with the problems posed by crossing such a wide river, a small inn and ferry have been built alongside the watchtower and are maintained with the industrious nature so typical of peasants in the Daidoji provinces.

The watchtower serves a number of purposes. First and foremost, it serves as an early warning of any Lion advancement. The plains extend for miles in all directions, and it is not

possible for an army to approach without being clearly evident several hours in advance. It also serves as a central headquarters for the Crane magistrates who range north and south patrolling the riverbanks. Perhaps most importantly, the samurai stationed at the watchtower discreetly keep an exact record of everyone who travels both into and out of the Daidoji provinces so that the Crane can keep a close eye on who is entering and exiting their lands.

DAIDOJI OTOMARO

[Samurai 12; Daidoji Bodyguard 3 Daidoji Iron Warrior 1]
 A devoted vassal of Daidoji Kikaze, Daidoji Otomaro seems thoroughly unremarkable man in every respect, which makes him the perfect commander for Three Sides Watchtower. While he executes his duties with precision and fine attention to detail, Otomaro knows that the chances of a Lion army advancing on the Daidoji provinces are slim. The few individuals desperate enough to swim Three Sides River would certainly never dare to do so when a patrol is in sight. While not lax in his patrols of the river, he recognizes his primary duty as detailing the comings and goings of travelers through his family lands.

Those traveling past the watchtower rarely notice Otomaro. His presence is extraordinarily forgettable. He, on the other hand, misses nothing and makes careful, exacting observations about everyone who passes through his territory. More than once, those he finds suspicious have been apprehended by Doji magistrates and determined to be insurrectionists sent by the Crane's enemies.

SHIRO DAIDOJI

(LOCATION CN4 FROM ROKUGAN)

Established well over a thousand years ago, Shiro Daidoji began as the private estate of Doji Hayaku, son of Doji and Kakita. Upon Hayaku's return from the Shadowlands, Hayaku was given leave to form his own family, the Daidoji. Hayaku was all too aware of the horrors the Shadowlands held, and he strongly suspected that the Crab could not contain them forever. Gathering together the strongest and most resolute Crane warriors, Hayaku set out to transform his home into a fortress that would withstand even the horrors of Fu Leng's horde.

Now, centuries and countless wars later, Shiro Daidoji still stands strong. It has suffered greatly during the Crane's many battles, most notably during the Clan War. Each time it has fallen the castle has been rebuilt stronger than before. It is the focus of the Daidoji's duty to the clan, the nexus of their strength and determination, a symbol of their undying vigilance. So long as a single brick of Shiro Daidoji remains, the Daidoji can never be defeated.

Shiro Daidoji is the oldest holding the Daidoji possess, and by far the most venerated. It is a traditional estate, with none of the pomp or luxury the Doji and Kakita enjoy, nor the somewhat brooding atmosphere many other Daidoji strongholds seem to create.

THE DAIDOJI LIBRARY

Many would be quite surprised that such a militant family as the Daidoji has devoted such considerable resources to the creation of a library. Few would accuse the Daidoji of being scholars or philosophers. Nevertheless, the Daidoji Library is quite impressive.

The Daidoji Library is focused toward a specific, focused

area of expertise. The library was founded centuries ago with the intent of collecting a wealth of information regarding the military tactics used by the Great Clans. Some among the Doji and Kakita have speculated that the Daidoji have agents among many Great Clans, ferreting out strategic information from such sources as the original copies of Akodo's Leadership or Bayushi Tange's Lies. A more recent addition to the collection is one of the lost manuscripts of Sun Tao, one of seven copies the great general's assistant created for the Clan Champions but never survived to deliver. The Daidoji recovered this particular copy in a farmer's field, well protected from the elements by a mysterious stone shrine. The manuscript was originally intended as a gift for the Lion Clan, a fact that amuses the Daidoji librarians greatly.

Countless tomes fill the library's shelves, each detailing some strategy the Crane's enemies employ. In addition to more traditional works, there are several tomes within the library that would be considered controversial or even treasonous if their presence was made known to Imperial purists. Next to the endless rows of scrolls are several books of gaijin lore acquired from the Unicorn and Mantis. These books contain detailed assessments of gaijin battle tactics, both those used by Unicorn and Mantis troops and those that they experienced during their travels beyond Rokugan. These assessments are complemented by a series of scrolls, some written by Daidoji Uji before his death, that offer insight into how these gaijin maneuvers can be successfully integrated into existing, traditional samurai tactics as well as how these maneuvers could best be countered should the Crane armies ever meet a foe who utilizes them.

Another important part of the library is its tactical recreation room. The Daidoji have spent countless hours examining every tiny detail of the lands they protect, and have reproduced the most important regions in miniature on large tables. These tables are used to plan large battles, or to recreate battles of the past. These models are kept up to date by seasonal student patrols that detail the exact location of every tree, bush, hill and stone within the area a given model represents. As an interesting side note, every model is made of the finest steel and crafted by master Kakita artisans - in true Crane style, each is a work of art unto itself.

DAIDOJI YARUKO

[Samurai 9; Daidoji Bodyguard 3]

In the eyes of many, Yaruko is a reclusive scholar who researches obscure topics for the Daidoji lords. She rarely interacts with others outside the family, and almost never speaks to anyone who is not a Crane. Daidoji officers, however, understand the enormous value Yaruko has to the Crane military. She has devoted her life to studying the texts within the Daidoji Library. Although she has little first-hand battle experience, Yaruko is incredibly gifted at tactics and anticipating enemy maneuvers. Whenever possible, Daidoji commanders who expect to see battle come to Shiro Daidoji to consult Yaruko on how to best allocate their troops and resources.

IRON CRANE DOJO

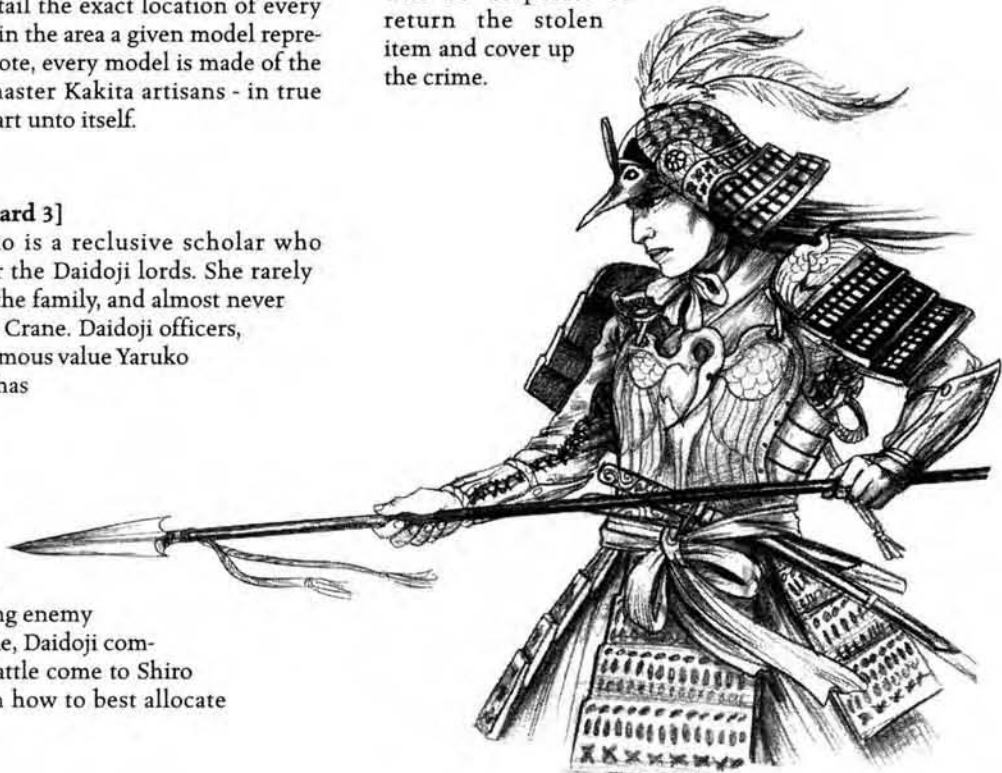
As might be gathered from its name, Iron Crane Dojo is the primary dojo for the Daidoji Bodyguard School. It is the oldest institution of its kind in the family holdings, although it can be argued that the dojo at Kosaten Shiro has grown both larger and more important. Students of Iron Crane Dojo are known for their practical, military mindset and for their older, "purer" fighting style. There is a friendly rivalry of sorts between the dojo, a rivalry that many outsiders mistake for genuine hostility due to the dour nature of most Daidoji samurai. More information on Iron Crane Dojo is available in the New Mechanics section of this chapter.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The characters, preferably including at least one member who has an antagonistic relationship with the Crane, are invited to attend an exposition at Iron Crane Dojo in Shiro Daidoji. These expositions are held periodically to display the dojo's skill and force the students to perform under pressure.

Focus: During the course of the exposition, one character discovers that a personal belonging has gone missing. Ideally, this should be some form of correspondence, travel papers, or a spell scroll. The character must determine a suitable course of action, as the Crane should not be accused lightly.

Strike: A small group of Daidoji Harriers, no more than half a dozen at most, have visited Shiro Daidoji on a wild dare. They have promised among themselves that each one must steal some form of written information from a guest, duplicate it, and return it before they notice. Unfortunately, one of them failed to do so and now the entire group is at risk. Still, the Crane do not endure insult lightly and are likely to bring their political might to bear on anyone who makes accusations against their hosts. Privately, the Crane are worried that the foolish mistake could escalate into a political catastrophe. In the meantime, the Harriers will be desperate to return the stolen item and cover up the crime.



YUFUKU AND HEIGEN TOSHI

(LOCATION CR5 FROM ROKUGAN)

Although the Yasuki family now dominates most Crane mercantile ventures, the family has no interest in relinquishing control of the markets in Prosperous Plains City. This trading center lies along the principle road that connects Kosaten Shiro to Shiro Daidoji and Kyuden Doji. The city's location makes it equally important for military reasons.

THE MARKET OF KAMI-NO-KAZE

This unusual market is unique in the Empire. While it is not uncommon to see merchants selling their wares from a cart or booth in the streets of large cities, Yufuku and Heigen Toshi has a large courtyard devoted to that purpose. Depending on the time of year, from dozens to hundreds of merchants set up their carts or booths and sell every commodity imaginable. To describe it as chaotic would be an understatement; those accustomed to the finery and sophistication of court life who visit the market are confused and disoriented by the sights, smells, and especially the terrible noise generated by hundreds of people shouting at one another in an effort to find a bargain.

The market is named for the wind that constantly blows through it. While some scoff and say that it is caused by the city's layout and the sheer number of people hurrying through the market, many believe that the market's chaotic nature appeals to the unnamed Fortune of Wind, and that the wind is his blessing. Whether or not this is the case, it cannot be denied that windy days see a great deal more visitors and trade.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The player characters are visitors in Yufuku and Heigen Toshi, and have an opportunity to visit the legendary Market of Kami-no-Kaze. Contrary to everything they've heard, the market is almost deserted and little trading takes place.

Focus: The winds have ceased to blow through the open-air market. This has been the case for nearly two weeks, and many merchants believe that the lack of wind is a sign that Kami-no-Kaze has withdrawn his blessing. Many have chosen to move on rather than risk the Fortune's wrath. If the cause cannot be discovered before long, this remarkable commercial phenomenon may cease to exist, causing a significant loss of revenue for the Daidoji merchant patrons.

Strike: A ronin shugenja was wronged by the merchants in the marketplace, and has been subtly influencing the air kami to abandon the area. His magic is subtle, and has managed to avoid detection by the few Asahina within the city. His actions may have more repercussions than he realizes however, as he risks not only destroying the market's profitability, but may also risks angering the Fortune of Wind itself.

MAJOR DAIDOJI HOLDINGS

As the Crane's military arm, the Daidoji must make full use of every resource they possess, even those things that might be considered insignificant to other clans or families. Even holdings that seem unimportant to outsiders still serve a purpose

for the Daidoji. Every village, every field, and every forest has some strategic or logistic value to the family, but most are never be noticed by anyone else.

MURA SABISHII TOSHI

(LOCATION CR13 FROM ROKUGAN)

Although it is a vital city in the Crane's trade relations with other clans, Lonely Shore City has no military value since it lies deep in the heart of Crane territory. Indeed, the only ways in which the city could truly be threatened is by an army that had already marched through the Crane lands or by a substantial naval force. The only two clans who possess the resources for the latter, the Crab and Mantis, both have a vested interest in the trade conducted there. Thus, the city poses no risk to the clan and as such is not regarded as a strategic holding for the family.

The recent addition of a significant number of Yasuki to the clan has caused the Daidoji to relinquish their hold on this city somewhat. Although the Daidoji have supervised the clan's trading practices for centuries, they ultimately consider it a distraction from their military duty and are eager to share their responsibilities with the Yasuki. The only thing that has thus far prevented them from doing so is the hesitation of Daidoji Kikaze and the heated opposition of a number of wealthy, influential Daidoji merchant patrons who do not wish to let the Yasuki usurp their role in the clan. For the time being, the two families share responsibilities for the trade conducted in Mura Sabishii Toshi, but most expect the Daidoji to have fully withdrawn from such activities fully within a generation at most.

THE DAIDOJI TRADING HOUSE

Arguably the most important location in the entire city, the Daidoji Trading House is also among the largest commercial centers on the entire Rokugani coast. The Daidoji embraced the system of merchant patronage centuries ago, and the time-honored practice has created a small number of extraordinarily wealthy samurai families who command an extraordinary amount of influence on trade and commerce throughout the Empire. Known as the Daidoji Trading Council, these families and their allies have established a power base in Mura Sabishii Toshi and adamantly resist the notion of allowing the Yasuki to take over their duties.

The Trading House is an enormous structure that connects several large warehouses to a central chamber that the Council uses to conduct business and trade negotiations. The house is decorated in a tasteful but not ostentatious manner, as the Daidoji recognize open displays of wealth can inspire avarice and resentment in one's business partners.

DAIDOJI HEIZO

[Courtier 9; Yasuki Merchant 3]

Daidoji Heizo is an unwelcome outsider who cannot prove himself to his kinsmen despite his impressive efforts to do so. Oddly enough, he would not have it any other way. Heizo was, until roughly a year and a half ago, a Yasuki in service to the Crab Clan. Never fully satisfied with the methods and lifestyle of a Crab merchant, Heizo saw opportunity during the initial stages of war between the Crab and Crane. The first time he was even remotely near the Crane provinces, he left the Crab and swore fealty to the Crane. Months later, when the Yasuki were split evenly between the two clans, he personally swore his eternal allegiance to Daidoji Kikaze in a private ceremony

along with a few other Yasuki who had proven their worth during the war. When it was decided that the Yasuki would remain both a Crab and Crane family, Heizo remained a Daidoji rather than become embroiled in the complex politics of that family.

Despite Reikai's faith in his loyalty, which has been maintained by her son Kikaze, Heizo has found little acceptance among the Council and their allies. They believe he cannot be trusted, and allow him only the most superficial involvement in their activities. Heizo sees this as an opportunity to prove his true allegiance, and has embraced his new role with great relish. The one thing that sets him apart from the others is his incredible ability to identify with and inspire those heimin merchants who serve him. Under his supervision, their productivity has increased substantially, and there are a few within the Council who are beginning to take note of his spectacular successes.

SHIRO GIJI

Technically, there is no Shiro Giji. There was, once, but that was over seven centuries ago. The castle was constructed with considerable fanfare and was intended to be a major military outpost for the Daidoji family as well as a site for them to host Winter Court, given that Shiro Daidoji and Kosaten Shiro were not particularly lavish. The winter immediately following the castle's construction saw numerous small festivals and celebrations hosted at Shiro Giji, and it rapidly became a popular location for the Crane's guests. Ten months after its construction, late in the spring of 330, Shiro Giji was burned to the ground. A shrine was constructed in the castle's place, and today few remember the name Shiro Giji.

There is far more to the story, of course. For more information on Shiro Giji, see *Way of the Ninja* and Chapter Six of this book.

IMPORTANT DAIDOJI NPCS

DAIDOJI EKIKEN, VENGEFUL HARRIER

As a young man, Ekiken showed tremendous promise as a courtier. His parents and elder brother eagerly anticipated a high-ranking appointment to the Doji courts for the young samurai and tried to prepare him to deal with the pressures of such a duty. Ekiken's adolescence was somewhat tempestuous, but it was nothing that young men did not often experience as they struggled with the transition of becoming a samurai in their clan's service until one unfortunate day.

During the course of his training with the Doji courtiers, Ekiken was attending a court session in the Kakita provinces. Among the guests there was a rather large contingent of Crab samurai. Friction between the two groups was high, particularly among the delegation's younger members. Hida Kuoshi, a samurai several years older than Ekiken, was an old enemy of Ekiken's older brother, Enai. Ekiken was eager to best the

Crab both for his brother's sake and to build his own reputation. The confrontation did not go as Ekiken hoped. The ensuing argument was both noisy and public. Ekiken lost control of his temper in the face of Kuoshi's jibes. The end result was that Ekiken was utterly humiliated in front of the entire delegation.

This disgrace effectively ended Ekiken's potential career as a courtier. The Crab insured that everyone was well aware of Ekiken's humiliation. The Crane courts wanted nothing to do with a man bearing such a disastrous reputation. Defeated and abandoned, Ekiken was left with a burning hatred for the Crab and a lust for vengeance. Ekiken was contacted by the sensei at an obscure branch of the Daidoji School. They could use a man with his talents and temperament, they claimed, and promised that if he was willing to dedicate himself to their teachings they would provide him with the opportunity to find his vengeance. With nothing to lose, Ekiken accepted and soon found himself studying at Shiro Giji, the hidden stronghold of the infamous Daidoji Harriers.

The Harriers' role is to assault and weaken their clan's enemies, destroying their ability to stand against the Crane. Ekiken found the dishonorable work much to his liking, and during the recent Yasuki War he visited a terrible vengeance upon the clan that had ruined his career. The only drawback to his new life was that his brother Enai found it so distasteful, despite that Ekiken only wanted to make him proud.

Shortly before the Battle of Otsan Uchi, Ekiken's life took another turn. He discovered a strange biwa on the beach. Upon touching the instrument, it communicated to him that it was linked to the Great Sea Spider's power. Though he was not foolish enough to succumb to using it, neither could he cast it aside. During the invasion of Otsan Uchi the treacherous spider convinced Ekiken that all was lost, and that only by relying on its help could he ever find survive to have vengeance on Kuoshi. Ekiken summoned the spider but soon lost control of it. The spider cast its foul web over Kyuden Seppun, preventing many Imperial Guardsmen from rushing to the city's defense. When Ekiken realized what was happening, he banished the beast back to the sea through the biwa. The stinging memory of his weakness haunts him still.

Ekiken's folly would cost him dearly. The kumo's enemies from the Realm of Hungry Ghosts attempted to kill Ekiken to ensure the spider's imprisonment, but mistakenly killed his brother Enai instead. What's worse, Enai had recently been forced to duel and kill the famed duelist Mirumoto Ukira because of an offense Ekiken committed, and had not yet forgiven his younger brother. Now Ekiken is alone and filled with hatred, but he does not know how to avenge his brother without causing further damage.

DAIDOJI EKIKEN

Male human Crane Ftr 6/Nin 6: CR 12; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 6d10 + 6d6 + 24 (hp 78); Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); Atk +1 *wounding katana* +15/+10/+5 melee (1d10+3); SQ Class skill — Hide (family bonus), Sneak Attack +3d6, Speed of Darkness; Honor 1; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11; Maximum Void: 2; Height 5 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Climb +8, Hide +15, Jump +8, Move Silently +13, Open Lock +13, Spot +9, Tumble +13; Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Expertise, Mobility, Speed of the Kami, Spring Attack, Soul of the Spider, The Sudden Strike, Whirlwind Attack, Void Use.

Possessions: +1 wounding katana, masterwork ashigaru armor, amulet of natural armor +1, cloak of Shosuro (cloak of elvenkind), sandals of Shosuro (boots of elvenkind), spider biwa (see Chapter Seven).

DAIDOJI EKIKEN

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Strength: 4

Fire: 4

Agility: 5

Air: 4

Void: 3

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 4

Dojo: Shiro Giji

Honor: 1.8

Glory: 3.1

Advantages: Soul of the Spider (see Chapter Seven)

Disadvantages: Brash, Driven (Avenge Enai's death), Sworn Enemies (Hida Kuoshi, students of Mirumoto Ukira)

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 3, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Hunting 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Poison 3, Sincerity 3, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 4, Yarijutsu 2

Kata: Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind

DAIDOJI KIKAZE, DAIDOJI FAMILY DAIMYO

During the early years of Toturi's reign as Emperor, an ambitious young Kakita duelist approached Daidoji Uji with a proposal. The young man offered a sizeable gift to the Daidoji daimyo in exchange for a pledge of marriage to one of Uji's students, the gifted Daidoji Rekia. Ever a canny man, Uji saw through the young man's duplicity; while wealthy, the Kakita's family had climbed as far socially as was possible given their relative position. By marrying one of Uji's most favored vassals, he could parlay his newfound fame into considerable gains in court and station. It was a business deal, nothing more. It benefited Uji and it benefited the Kakita. There was only one problem.

Uji could not stand the duelist. He was handsome, wealthy, and overwhelmingly arrogant. His very presence made Uji's flesh crawl. He apologized, and informed the duelist that Rekia was already pledged to be wed to another of Uji's vassals. The young man apologized for wasting Uji's time and withdrew. Uji then notified Rekia and another of his vassals, Daidoji Kyobu, that they would be wed in a month's time. Reki was outraged, but did not speak against her lord's word.

The marriage was difficult for many years, but in time both Kyobu and Reki came to admire and respect one another for their strengths. They had a son, who was the very image of his father. His parents were very pleased with the young boy's obvious talents, and looked forward to a day when he would bring honor to the Daidoji in battle.

The War of Spirits prevented that from happening. Kyobu was killed in the early days of fighting, and Reki threw herself into the war to escape the pain of her loss. Their first son Ichiro was left alone with their servants. During her infrequent visits home, Reki's pain was magnified by the incredible resemblance between her dead husband and their son. In anguish, she sent him away to study with the Harriers of Mountain's Shadow Dojo.

Ichiro threw himself into his studies, excelling at every aspect of his training. When his gempukku came, he stood

alongside other bushi, all of whom were unaware of his true training, and took the name Daidoji Reki. He received a letter from his mother, who could not attend, but who sent her love and his father's daisho. Kikaze would carry it now.

Kikaze spent many years separated from his fellow Cranes. His only companions were the other Harriers, a surly and unsociable lot under the best of circumstances. The few missions he has undertaken outside the Crane lands often required him to pose as a yojimbo for some important courtier, and Kikaze learned that court is as deadly a battlefield as any darkened enemy camp.

When Daidoji Reki was named family daimyo, she sent for her son. She apologized for their long separation, and asked him to take his place at her side. It was time they were a family once more. Kikaze politely refused. It would be unseemly for the family daimyo to have a Harrier by her side, he wrote, and he would not risk her honor for something so selfish as personal gratification. However, when he learned that she planned to retire, he relented. Kikaze appeared at Shiro Daidoji to be recognized formally as daimyo.

Recently, Kikaze learned that, during a final visit to Hiruma Castle, his mother had fallen in the Shadowlands. He was unprepared for the terrible sadness that overtook him then, just as he was unprepared for the news that Reki yet lives somewhere in the Shadowlands, her honor and mind subsumed by the Taint. He has turned his former comrades in the Harriers into learning all that they can about Daigotsu's City of the Lost, so that someday he might attempt to go there himself and rescue his mother from servitude there.

Kikaze is out of his element as a daimyo. His mother's advisors have remained with him at his behest, and help him daily to muddle through the maze of duties he is required to perform. Assuming control of the Daidoji armies was simple, but dealing with the family's mercantile and political interests are giving him far more trouble. Emotion and consideration for others do not come easily to him. Many believe he will fail, but Kurohito remains firm in his insistence that Kikaze is the only suitable candidate for the job.

DAIDOJI KIKAZE, DAIMYO DAIDOJI FAMILY

Male human Crane Ftr 4/Sam6: CR 10; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 10d6+20; hp 72; Init +10; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (touch 19, flat-footed 18); Atk +1 keen katana +15/+10 (1d10+5 damage); SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill – Hide (family bonus); Honor: 2; AL LN; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 16, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 13; Maximum Void 2, Height 5 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani, High Rokugani), Battle +13, Climb +6, Diplomacy +10, Hide +18, Iaijutsu Focus +10, Intimidate +10, Move Silently +26, Ride +16, Sense Motive +10, Swim +6; Dark Guardian (Ancestor: Daidoji Kasumiko), Improved Initiative, The Sudden Strike, Unforgiving Steel, Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus: Katana, Weapon Specialization: Katana.

Dojo: Mountain's Shadow Dojo; **Kata:** None.

Possessions: +1 keen katana (ancestral daisho), +3 wakizashi (ancestral daisho), +2 ashigaru armor, ring of protection +3, amulet of mind shielding, boots of elvenkind.

DAIDOJI KIKAZE, DAIDOJI FAMILY

DAIMYO

Earth: 3

Willpower: 4

Water: 5

Perception: 6

Fire: 4

Agility: 6

Air: 4

Reflexes: 5

Void: 3

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 4

Dojo: Mountain's Shadow

Honor: 2.7

Glory: 8.2

Advantages: Heart of Vengeance (the Lost), Social Position (Daidoji Daimyo)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (no confidence), Lost Love (mother)

Skills: Athletics 6, Battle 8, Horsemanship 6, Hunting 6, Investigation 5, Katana 6, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 5, Mizu-do 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 8, Subojutsu 5, Yarijutsu 6.

Kata: None.



DAIDOJI VASSALS

THE HIRAMORI FAMILY

The Hiramori share a history of service alongside the Hiramichi family that goes back six hundred years to a little-publicized period in family annals: the Foxfire War. In 520 IC, Daidoji Hira, youngest brother of daimyo Daidoji Kamei, began to act erratically. Whether it was the dead mouse left before the Lion envoy's quarters, the scolding he gave a visiting Kakita for testing sword blades on live criminals, or the time he had to be removed from the village market in a wheelbarrow, Hira finally exhausted Kamei's patience. The daimyo ordered his brother to commit seppuku. Hira obediently nodded, put on the white garments of death, retired to his quarters and in the morning was gone, along with forty-four bushi from the Shiro Daidoji guard. On his tatami mat lay a piece of paper with the message: "You did not set a date for my death, brother. Seek me in the Uebe Marshes if you wish to hasten it."

Incensed at this effrontery, Kamei mobilized a small army and sailed down the coast to the Uebe Marshes, the huge tract of overgrown wetland between Mura Sabishii Toshi and the Golden Sun Plain. Kamei's vendetta lasted for months on end. In the unfamiliar terrain, his troops were impaled on filth-smearing bamboo stakes and lured into bottomless quicksand. Kamei faced unorthodox tactics that made his own Daidoji methods seem traditional by comparison.

Finally, the Kamei abandoned his futile feud, dubbed the "Foxfire War" from the luminous marsh gases. Kamei retired to Shiro Daidoji and found the castle in uproar. Hira's body had appeared in his former quarters, leathery and swamp-hardened, belly gashed with the three cuts of seppuku. Arranged around him was a model depicting the most treacherous ambush points in the Marshes in the same scale as those in the Daidoji library, a detailed map of the marshes with extensive commentary, and a slip of paper with the message:

"Do not let the food and drink of peace make the belly of the Daidoji grow fat. Seek my son in the marshes."

Before retiring to the life of a monk to contemplate his brother's tragic madness, Kamei passed the message on to his daughter and heir, Kasako. Though Hira's actions had eventually brought him great dishonor, Kamei and Kasako agreed that they had learned much in hunting Hira through the rough terrain.

With renewed zeal, Kasako hunted Hira's son, Daidoji Yasuhira, back into the wilderness. Yasuhira proved equally elusive, and by this time had attracted Scorpion and Mantis ronin to his guerrilla band. Kasako had learned from her father's mistakes and within three years had brought her cousin to bay. When Yasuhira was finally captured, he was with only four of his guards and surrounded by new woodland models and maps and the instruction: "My brother Shigehira and my men spit at you from the Wall above the Ocean." Kasako executed the lunatic Yasuhira on the spot and set out to bring his rebellious brother to justice.

Predictably, that mountainous region at the southern extremity of Crane territory became the stage for another period of rough-terrain conflict, continued by Kasako's younger brother Hanzo, and ended by a yari duel between the two commanders on a cliff path. Hanzo won, tripping Shigehira into a spectacular plunge causing the death of his mad kin. On Shigehira's death, the Foxfire Wars were finally concluded and both sides came together to forget the madness that had consumed Hira's line and act as a single family in all things once again.

The Daidoji daimyo, Kasako's sister Kasami, was a practical woman and realized the value of such training despite the tragedy. She gathered the troops that had helped her defeat Hira's followers, proclaiming them the Hiramori family, vassals to the Daidoji. The lessons Hira had taught his family in the wild lands of the Crane provinces would go on to strengthen the clan. The family was named the "Forest Hira," an ironic joke at the traitorous Hira's expense.

The Hiramori family's trap-laying and ambush strategies have become general Daidoji knowledge, but they keep secret methods adapted to the most difficult ground in case anyone cares to follow their retreat. In war, the Hiramori are most valuable when Crane territory is deeply overrun. They operated against the Lion from the Akagi woodlands before and during the Clan War. When Yoritomo retreated through Crane lands during the War Against the Shadow, Hiramori Kedamono's band attacked his rear lines from the marshes so ferociously that the Son of Storms had to give up hope of using Sabishii Toshi as an evacuation point.

Hiramori bushi are reclusive. They speak in a strange backwoods accent and disappear without warning. It is not unknown for Hiramori to cultivate repulsive quirks, muttering to themselves in the Ratling language or keeping a poisonous snake as a pet. Wiser Daidoji wonder if the Hiramori have inherited some measure of their namesake's madness, and take care to never underestimate a Hiramori's resolve. The Hiramori hand-to-hand combat technique rejects armor and specializes in various lengths of improvised stakes and spears. Seldom without an avenue of retreat, they are as ferocious when cornered as any Hida berserker.

The Hiramori are on good terms with the Daidoji Harriers. Many members of this family train at the Harrier school, and a few of the more deadly Harriers venture forth from Shiro Giji to learn the ways of the Hiramori.

AKAGI FOREST AND UEBE MARSHES

The Hiramori have been granted stewardship of Daidoji Hira's original haunts in the Akagi forest, Uebe marshes and southern hills. These lands are both their home and their training grounds. Most Hiramori grow visibly tense when confined in walls of stone. Instead, the Hiramori dwell in widely scattered, deeply dug tunnel complexes, or camouflaged stockades. The rare visitors to the Hiramori hideouts often express surprise that the dwellings are kept spotlessly clean and rustically well furnished: whatever else they may be, the Hiramori are ultimately Crane. They live on whatever they can hunt or gather, but are said to have enormous hidden stockpiles of supplies, courtesy of their cousins the Hiramichi.

THE HIRAMORI FAMILY

Favored Class: Ranger

Starting Honor: 1

Class Skill: Disable Device

Starting Outfit:

1. Bamboo spear, five masterwork darts, wakizashi.
2. Bamboo spear, short yumi, 12 arrows, and wakizashi.

THE HIRAMORI FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Perception

Glory: 0.5

Honor Rank: 1

Special: Hiramori characters may replace one of their starting skills with the Traps skill at the start of character creation.

THE HIRAMICHI FAMILY

The smuggling Hiramichi are the second offspring of Daidoji Hira's pseudo-revolt, and while the mission and origin of the Hiramori are public knowledge, the Daidoji do not openly discuss the Hiramichi. Before his men learned to live off the land effectively, the exiled Hira was forced to rely on illegal sources for supplies of food and war materiel. Descending into the

black market, Hira's third son, Michihira, found unscrupulous ronin traders who were willing to finance the other side. As Michihira's brothers met their fates, he began to wonder if he was right to follow his father's mad path. He began to use his underground connections to ferret information regarding his brothers' troop movements to the Daidoji daimyo, and when Shigehira finally died, Michihira was pardoned for his involvement in the uprising.

When Kasami created the Hiramori family, Michihira made one last voyage to visit all his contacts. Each of them received a curious gift from his hands — a bamboo cage filled with porcelain songbirds. He then visited Kasami and asked to be admitted to the Hiramori, explaining his achievements and presenting her with a sealed list of his underworld allies. He offered her a deal: amnesty for the smugglers' crimes in return for their promise to use their services to help the Daidoji leadership. Kasami was impressed, but did not want to compromise the Hiramori in such shady dealings. She chartered Michihira with his own family, inverting his name to Hiramichi, or "Hira of the paths."

To the smugglers, Hiramichi merely sent a message: "Has the caged bird not sung yet? Then you must be a loyal retainer." They took this blackmail as intended and swore allegiance to Hiramichi. Most were samurai wishing to return to the Daidoji's good graces. Quite a few were Mantis wishing to enter a Major Clan. To this day the Hiramichi have indispensable connections with the Mantis isles.

Significantly, the Hiramichi see themselves not as profiteers, but as practitioners of a military technique. Michihira left behind writings comparing the economic arena to a battlefield and likewise outlining the value of economic pressure in warfare. These writings also differed from the philosophies of Yasuki and Mantis merchants in that Hiramichi at least recognized the contradiction between bushido and trade and sought actively to resolve it. Tax evasion, contraband arms, denial of supplies, bribery of soldiers and generals: all were explained as strategies of war, and all such tactics are reserved for the most extreme times of need in conflict. The Hiramichi choose to make themselves distinctive from the honorless traders of the Crab and Mantis by applying principles of honor in a uniquely Daidoji fashion. To be sure, the vassals are tradesmen above all else, and do not stoop to underhanded or shady dealings unless it could benefit the Crane as a whole in desperate situations. Hiramichi who do not follow the path of honor are chastised as any other samurai, and more than one would-be underworld king has been exiled from the vassal family.

SONGBIRD'S CAGE

The Hiramichi maintain a fortified keep, known as "Songbird's Cage," on the foothills along the coast overlooking Mura Sabishii Toshi. Imperial inspectors aware of the family's reputation regularly pay cordial visits to the keep, hoping to find some trace of criminal activity. Rumors circulate about tunnels under the keep leading to hidden caves and storehouses. These rumors, despite their plausibility, are in fact false. Instead, the Hiramichi spread their wealth and operations among several safe houses in towns along the coast of Roku-gan, far from their home.

THE HIRAMICHI FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 1

Class Skill: Gather Information

Special: Hiramichi samurai must start with at least 2 ranks of Profession (merchant). Practicing this profession to further the interests of their clan does not incur the honor losses associated with a Low Skill.

Starting Outfit:

1. Masterwork yari, 20 koku.
2. Wakizashi, 10 koku.

THE HIRAMICHI FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Glory: 0.5

Honor Rank: 1

Special: Hiramichi characters may replace one of their starting skills with the Commerce skill at the start of character creation.

DAIDOJI MECHANICS

ANCESTORS

The Daidoji recognize that they are often required to sacrifice their honor so that the clan's security may be preserved. They also realize that many of their ancestors have made terrible personal sacrifices toward this same purpose. That these men and women are worthy of their reverence is not in question, and each member of the Daidoji family is expected to be suitably respectable to their ancestors, even if others regard them as criminals.

DAIDOJI NOBUSO

Nobuso was once a great soldier in the Crane armies. He spent decades defending the Crane lands from all manner of enemies, from the Crab armies to large bandit groups that were more common in his day. When an unfortunate injury prevented him from leading from the front lines as was his tendency, the Daidoji family daimyo found a prestigious post for him elsewhere: guarding Doji Raigu, the Crane Champion's young, charismatic son.

As Raigu's chief yojimbo, Nobuso had ample opportunities to prove his skill as a warrior. By the time the young man had reached twenty-five years of age, Nobuso had already thwarted three assassination attempts. It was almost certainly the yojimbo's utter absorption in his duties that caused him to fail to notice the strange alliances his ward had entered. In time, Nobuso noticed that Raigu spent a strange amount of time corresponding with the Scorpion Champion and an influential Phoenix lord who served as the Emperor's personal scribe. Cautiously, fearfully, Nobuso began to focus more on what his lord was doing than in looking for assassins who had not appeared in years.

What the aging warrior discovered horrified him. Doji Raigu had entered into some unholy alliance with Bayushi Atsuki and Shiba Gaijushiko to form a group that had gone so far in its lust for power as to kidnap the Imperial heir. Raigu soon realized that his bodyguard had discovered the Gozoku

Alliance and, in a rare moment of compassion for his friend's lifetime of service, offered him honorable seppuku to show his discontent. To his shock and amazement, Nobuso refused. The Daidoji killed three of Raigu's personal guard in his flight from Kyuden Doji.

Daidoji Nobuso was declared a murderer and a ronin. He was hunted across the face of Rokugan by the finest magistrates and bounty hunters. He was a canny old soldier, however, and proved impossible to find. After more than a year, the Gozoku leaders decided he had either died or fled and was no longer a concern.

This proved a terrible mistake, as Nobuso reappeared years later with a small band of highly trained ronin under his command. Nobuso's band harried the Gozoku's holdings for several years, branded as outlaws until the Gozoku was finally exposed and destroyed by the Empress Yugo-zohime. Nobuso swore fealty to the Empress and, it is said, became her personal spymaster. Over the years Nobuso sometimes disappeared for months at a time, acting on some mission or another at the Hantei's command.

On his deathbed, Raigu's heir pardoned him for all crimes and proclaimed him a hero. His death was mourned throughout the Crane provinces.

RIGHTEOUS WARRIOR

ANCESTOR FEAT: DAI DOJI NOBUSO

You are a valiant force for honor who struggles against the dishonorable and corrupt.

Prerequisites: Must be lawful and honorable.

Benefit: You gain a +1 dodge bonus to AC against opponents who are chaotic, and another +1 dodge bonus against opponents who are dishonorable. These two bonuses, like all dodge bonuses, stack. These bonuses are only gained when fighting human opponents.

DAIDOJI NOBUSO

(3 POINTS)

Your TN to be hit increases by 2 for every Rank by which your Honor surpasses your attacker. This affects only human opponents.

DAIDOJI KASUMIKO

Crane records list a young, unremarkable soldier named Daidoji Kasumiko as being among those killed when Shiro Giji burned to the ground in the early spring of 330. Among certain Daidoji, however, a different story is told of Kasumiko. She was one of the first students of Mountain's Shadow Dojo, the primary school for the Daidoji Harriers.

Kasumiko had no family to speak of, her parents having perished from a minor outbreak of plague several years before. Always a canny student, she was among the first approached by the Daidoji sensei when the plans for the dojo beneath Shiro Giji were being made. Kasumiko hid with other young bushi in the sub-levels beneath the castle while Asahina shugenja protected them from the magically created blaze that consumed the castle.

Kasumiko spent the next twenty years serving the clan from the shadows. Her existence was never discovered by anyone outside the Daidoji; at least no one who learned survived long enough to reveal it. She eventually became a sensei at the dojo and is among the few Harriers to achieve that rarest of fates: she died of old age. Among the students of Mountain's Shadow dojo, she is a legend.

DARK GUARDIAN

ANCESTOR FEAT: DAIDOJI KASUMIKO

You are gifted in the art of silence and in moving undetected.

Benefit: Hide and Move Silently are always class skills for you. If any of your classes offer these as class skills already (or you gain them from a family bonus), you gain a +2 competence bonus for both skills. Also, any Void bonuses you receive when using these skills are doubled.

DAIDOJI KASUMIKO

(8 POINTS)

Spiritual descendants of Kasumiko share her gift for the arts of silence. When utilizing Techniques in either the Daidoji Harrier or Daidoji Bodyguard schools, your School Rank is considered to be one higher than it actually is. For example, a Rank One student in the Daidoji Harrier School would roll two additional damage dice rather than one when attacking an opponent who was unaware of their presence. You do not gain additional techniques from this Advantage; it merely augments Techniques which rely upon your Rank.

DAIDOJI UJI

Possibly the greatest daimyo the Daidoji have ever had, Daidoji Uji lived during a time of great heroes and battles. Under different circumstances, he might have been known as the greatest hero of his age, or he might have gone unnoticed, for the Daidoji often find anonymity more useful than notoriety. Whatever the reason, Uji was placed in a position where his considerable talents were taxed to their utmost. The Clan War ravaged the Crane provinces, and Uji was at the forefront of every conflict, harassing and delaying enemy armies as much as possible to buy time for his allies Doji Hoturi and Kakita Toshimoko to rally the clan's forces. In subsequent years he led the Daidoji armies against Doji Kuwanan's forces when the Lying Darkness's shape-changing minions created discord among the clan. He also joined Kuwanan during the march on Voltturnum and led the Crane forces during the War of Spirits.

Daidoji Uji survived all of these epic conflicts not through sheer force of arms, but rather through his cunning and devious nature. Others feared him and reviled him, for his actions were not those of an honorable samurai. To Uji, the clan's well being was far more important than something so insubstantial as personal honor, and he let his dedication to his clan guide him through acts few other bushi would contemplate. Those whom his spirit guides share a similar outlook and are invariably samurai who perform unsavory yet necessary duties.

SELFLESS SACRIFICE

ANCESTOR FEAT: DAIDOJI UJI

You sacrifice your honor for the Crane's greater good.

Prerequisite: Void Use

Benefit: Once per hour, you may choose to lose a single point of Honor in order to gain a +4 competence bonus to any skill check or saving throw. Alternatively, you may instead choose to lose a point of Honor to gain a +2 bonus to all attacks against a specific target. This bonus expires at the end of the current combat.

If your skill roll succeeds or your chosen target is defeated during that combat, you may regain a point of lost Honor by spending one Void Point. If your Honor ever drops below 1, you may not use this feat until it is at least 1 again.

DAIDOJI UJI

(6 POINTS)

Those guided by Uji's spirit may choose to sacrifice a point of Honor in order to gain ranks in any Low or Bugei skill equal to their Insight Rank, even if they do not possess ranks in that skill. If this is used to increase a skill rank you already possess, it may not increase that skill a number of ranks greater than twice your Insight Rank. This benefit lasts for the duration of one skill roll, or for all attacks against a single opponent during one combat. This may be done once per day.

If the skill roll is successful or the opponent is defeated, all lost Honor is regained by spending one Void Point afterward. If your Honor ever drops below 1.0, you lose the benefits of this Advantage until your Honor increases above 1.0 again.

DAIDOJI HEAVY REGULARS

The Daidoji family provides the Crane Clan with its military might. While Kakita and Doji troops swell the ranks, the core of any Crane fighting force is comprised of Daidoji soldiers. As Crane fighting styles tend to be fairly specialized, such as the Daidoji Bodyguards or Harriers and the Kakita Iaijutsu Duelists, this can make fielding an effective large force somewhat troublesome. Elite units such as the Doji House Guard and the Daidoji Iron Warriors are extremely effective, but are relatively few in number. Given these factors, the Daidoji are constantly seeking means of increasing their soldiers' effectiveness in battle.

One method the Daidoji have embraced is to train some of their troops alongside the Crab warriors atop the Great Carpenter Wall. While the two clans have many philosophical differences, the Crane acknowledge that fighting on the Wall is a great means of improving teamwork and sheer martial prowess. The Daidoji who return from these sojourns are hardened veterans who fight with the fury of ten men. Known as the heavy regulars, these men and women make up the majority of the Crane armies' heavy infantry.

Among the Crab, the Heavy Regulars are known as "Iron Cranes."

DAIDOJI HEAVY REGULAR (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Hit Die: d10

REQUIREMENTS

To become a Daidoji Heavy Regular, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +5 or greater.

Battle: 8 ranks.

Feats: Heavy Armor Proficiency.

CLASS SKILLS

The Daidoji Heavy Regular's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Jump (Str), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Shadowlands) (Int), Listen (Wis), Spot (Wis), and Wilderness Lore (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook*™ for skill descriptions.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

TABLE 2-1: THE DAIDOJI HEAVY REGULAR

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+0	+0	Strength of the Crane Thunder +1
2nd	+2	+3	+0	+0	Improved Weapon Focus
3rd	+3	+3	+1	+1	Strength of the Crane Thunder +2
4th	+4	+4	+1	+1	Improved Weapon Specialization
5th	+5	+4	+1	+1	Strength of the Crane Thunder +3

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Daidoji heavy regular class.

Strength of the Crane Thunder: The heavy regulars' first lesson is that of solidarity. If a heavy regular is fighting alongside at least one other Crane (an ally within thirty feet), he gains a +1 morale bonus to all attacks. This increases to +2 at the 3rd level and to +3 at the 5th level.

Improved Weapon Focus: At 2nd level, the heavy regular gains a +1 bonus to all attack rolls with one large weapon, which must be chosen when the character reaches this level. This bonus stacks with that gained from the Weapon Focus feat.

Improved Weapon Specialization: At 2nd level, the heavy regular gains a +1 bonus to damage with one large weapon, which must be chosen when the character reaches this level. This bonus is cumulative with the Weapon Specialization feat, assuming the character already possesses that feat.

DAIDOJI HEAVY REGULARS (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Any Crane bushi school, rank 1

Path of Egress: Reenter same school at appropriate rank

Technique: Iron Crane Style — The samurai rolls one additional die when attacking with one of the following weapons: die tsuchi, no dachi, ono, or tetsubo (chosen once when this technique is learned). They also add their Insight Rank to all attack rolls any time a fellow Crane is fighting alongside them (an ally within thirty feet).

DAIDOJI TRADING COUNCIL

Economics in Rokugan are complicated and ever-changing. Since the unit of currency, the koku, is based upon a year's harvest, the value of items can fluctuate wildly from year to year, making it difficult or even impossible to anticipate the cost of goods and services (other than rice) from year to year.

According to the prevailing philosophy, mercantile pursuits are beneath a samurai's notice and are best left to heimin. Unfortunately, the lords of major families can hardly afford to let a heimin merchant oversee something so important as a clan's winter food stores. Since a samurai must avoid dealing with such matters personally, the concept of merchant patronage is seen as an acceptable compromise. While even this is sometimes viewed with disdain, most samurai recognize that such things are a necessary evil.

Since the Yasuki family's defection centuries ago, the Daidoji family has by necessity taken on the role of merchant patrons for the Crane. They are willing to deal with such questionable matters just as they are in combat, making them

doubly important to their Doji and Kakita cousins. Most patrons who advance beyond the simplest rank in their numbers become members of the so-called Daidoji Trading Council, a vast network of Crane merchant patrons who combine their resources to better serve the clan. Council members typically have between four and a dozen merchants under their control and can call upon vast amounts of resources for their personal use and the use of their Crane companions.

While it is true that the Trading Council have accepted an unsavory duty in the name of their clan, it is also true that they excel at their work and have used it to advance their family's position within Rokugan's economy. Invariably, Council members can manipulate trade relations between other parties and even cause major economic fluctuations based on the ebb and flow of their operations.

Trading Council members often train initially alongside the Doji Courtiers, gaining the social wherewithal they require in the execution of their duties for the clan. After their initial studies are complete, the Council members spend time in the field fostering ties among their merchant vassals and making overtures to potential allies. Once their basic training is complete, it is not uncommon for them to move on to study at other clan schools so that they might possess a variety of talents to better serve the Crane.

Now that the Yasuki are again allied to the Crane, the future of the Daidoji Training Council is foggy at best. Some members have considered inviting the Yasuki to join the council, preserving the resources and purpose of both groups, while others have too much hatred for the Yasuki to ever consider such a thing.

DAIDOJI TRADING COUNCIL (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Hit Die: d6

REQUIREMENTS:

To become a member of the Daidoji Trading Council, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Bluff: 8 ranks.

Diplomacy: 8 ranks.

Sense Motive: 8 ranks.

CLASS SKILLS

The Daidoji Trading Council member's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Wis), Bluff (Cha), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Innuendo (Wis), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Pick Pocket (Dex), Sense Motive (Cha), and Spot (Wis). (See the *Player's Handbook™* for skill descriptions.)

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Daidoji trading council class.

TABLE 2-2: THE DAIDOJI TRADING COUNCIL

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save
1st	+0	+0	+2	+2
2nd	+1	+0	+3	+3
3rd	+1	+1	+3	+3
4th	+2	+1	+4	+4
5th	+2	+1	+4	+4

Special

Commercial Knowledge, Keen Eye
Skill Bonus
Resource Allocation
Skill Bonus
Courtier Ability, Keen Eye

Commercial Knowledge: Trading Council members have an expansive knowledge of trade and commerce. Council members may make a special commercial knowledge check with a bonus equal to their level in this class + their Intelligence modifier to gain information on commodities and trade relations in their immediate surroundings. The Council member may not take 10 or 20 on this roll. The DC of this roll will be determined using the table below:

DC	Type of Knowledge	Examples
10	Common knowledge among the locals	Major goods trafficked in a certain area, notable merchants
15	Uncommon, known by a few locals	Questionable business practices of local merchants
20	Obscure, known by only a few	Quiet trade agreements between others, debts owed by one person to another
25	Extremely obscure	Exact location of a particular cargo at any given time

Keen Eye: At 1st level the Trading Council member can always take 10 on Appraise, Spot and Sense Motive checks if he chooses to do so. At 5th level, he can always take 20 on such skill checks without increasing the amount of time required to do so.

Skill Bonus: Trading Council members are both wise and powerful, economically speaking. Beginning at 2nd level, the member gains a +3 competence bonus to any two of this class's class skills, player's choice. At 4th level, these bonuses increase to +6. At 4th level, the player may choose instead to give two other class skills a +3 competence bonus rather than stacking them with the original bonuses.

Resource Allocation: Trading Council members have an enormous wealth of resources they can call upon even on short notice. With a successful Diplomacy check, they can generate substantial resources depending upon the difficulty. They can acquire an amount of resources equal to their total class level multiplied by 10 in koku in a single hour (DC 20), an amount equal to their class level multiplied by 100 within one day (DC 25), or an amount equal to their class level multiplied by 1,000 within a single week (DC 35). This ability may only be used in urban environments. The council member is responsible for the resources they acquire in this way, and if it is squandered or used exclusively for personal purposes without being repaid the Council will investigate their use of resources.

Courtier Ability: Trading Council members are in many ways a darker reflection of the Doji courtiers, manipulating people and events with money as surely as the courtiers do with words. Those who recognize the Council for what it is find that its members have considerable social power purely because they possess such economic clout. At the 5th level, the Trade Council member may select any courtier ability as if they were a courtier of identical level. Only Trade Council levels count toward this total, and the Council member must meet any and all prerequisites for any courtier ability they wish to take.

DAIDOJI TRADING COUNCIL (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 1

Path of Entry: None. This is an entry-level Path.

Path of Egress: Doji Courtier 1, Doji Magistrate 1, or Daidoji Bodyguard 1

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Beginning Skills: Commerce 2, Courtier, Defense, Etiquette, Sincerity, any one High or Bugei Skill.

Beginning Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes

Beginning Outfit: (All of Fine Quality) Kimono, katana, wakizashi, steed, traveling pack, 10 koku.

Technique: The Golden Path — A Trading Council member is exceptionally well connected and well funded. At the time of character creation, the samurai gains an additional 20 character points that may only be spent to purchase the following Advantages: Allies, Blackmail, Gentry, Inheritance, Servant, Social Position, or Wealthy.

IRON CRANE DOJO

The Iron Crane Dojo of Shiro Daidoji is fully described in the Province Guide found earlier in this chapter.

Classes: Fighter, Rogue, Samurai, Daidoji Heavy Regular (Prestige Class)

Schools: Daidoji Bodyguard, Daidoji Heavy Regulars (New Path), Daidoji Iron Warriors (New Path)

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Students of Iron Crane Dojo are well known for their severe, almost menacing presence.

Benefit: You may add half your total character level (rounded up) to any Intimidate check.

Benefit: You may add your School Rank to the totals of all Intimidation rolls.

TRAINING BENEFIT

The Daidoji teach their students to be ever versatile so that the Crane may depend upon them no matter the circumstances.

Benefit: You may select any skill in which you possess ranks, whether it is in class or cross class. You gain a +1 competence bonus to all checks with that skill.

Benefit: You begin with one additional High or Bugei skill at Rank 1 in addition to your normal starting skills.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE DOJI

SILK AND STEEL
PART FOUR

"After your time among the Crab, it must be good to return to civilization," said Doji Kurohito, greeting Hatori and Taneji with a humorless smile. The Crane Champion bowed as much as etiquette required and then held out one hand to steer his guests into the garden. Taneji was taken aback by how tall Kurohito was, almost half a foot taller than his guests. Among the Hida family it was not unusual to see samurai near six feet in height or rarely even taller, but among the much smaller Doji, Kurohito's height was unique.

"Admittedly the Hida are not a family that indulges much in earthly pleasures, but they do have certain inimitable resources at their disposal," Hatori replied as he followed Kurohito into the gardens. "Case in point." The herald took a fat bottle from one of his attendants and offered it to the Crane lord.

"And what is this?" Kurohito asked, looking down at the gift curiously.

"A bottle of the strongest shochu found in the Hida provinces," Hatori replied. "Legends claim that a wandering Hiruma scout once found himself in the Shadowlands with nothing but this bottle to defend himself. When an oni came to slay him, he hurled the open bottle into its gaping maw. Within moments, the beast was too inebriated to fight, and the scout escaped."

"This is not the same bottle, I hope," Kurohito replied, now studying the bottle carefully.

"To tell the truth, I'm not certain," Hatori replied, "If it is, I assure you whatever residue may remain on the outside is not

nearly as strong as that which lies within."

"And you give this to me as a gift?" Kurohito asked, raising an eyebrow.

"Pain builds character, it is said," Hatori said. "If this is true, I have tried this brand myself and I cannot think of a more exquisite pain to drive one to excellence. What better gift for the Crane Champion?"

Kurohito chuckled as he accepted the bottle. "Well said," he replied. "Perhaps we can sample some of it later this evening."

"I would not advise that unless you have no important appointments tomorrow," Hatori said.

Kurohito laughed as he handed the bottle to a servant. "So what brings you to our lands, Miya-san?" he asked. "It doubt it was exclusively your desire to poison me. I hear that you have been quite busy in the past year, visiting many great houses throughout the Empire."

"This is true," Hatori replied. "Initially our tour was only intended to survey the Lion lands, but after the Imperial City was attacked our scope was broadened to a tour of all major families of the Empire."

"Is that so?" Kurohito asked, pausing to study a colorful burst of blossoms beside the path. "Why, then, has it taken you so long to see the Doji? I hear that you have already seen the Isawa... the Shosuro... even the lowly Tortoise. Are we Crane such a low priority?"

Kurohito's eyes flicked to one side, toward Hatori. There was no anger there, only patience. That was probably worse than anger.

"As you know each year my family bestows the Emperor's Blessing," Hatori replied. "A gift of koku and labor to whatever clan is the most in need. It was our priority to first visit those lands that we thought might require the Blessing most urgently. The Lion,

Phoenix, and Crab lands are torn by war. The Mantis are undergoing a deadly internal power struggle, though they do their best to conceal it."

"And the Scorpion?" Kurohito asked, looking at Hatori intently.

"My wife was a Scorpion," Hatori replied. "It was her wish that I visit them as soon as possible, to make certain that her relatives who lived in Otosan Uchi escaped safely."

"Of course," Kurohito replied blandly, not indicating in any way whether or not he believed Hatori's story. "At any rate it is good that you took your time in scheduling your visit. Had you arrived earlier in the year, I would not have been here to accept you."

"Oh?" Hatori replied curiously.

"I recently learned of a most peculiar curse that followed a sword crafted by one of my ancestors, the same blade that was found on the shores of Kyuden Doji on the day of my birth. I took it as my responsibility to break that curse, for the good of all Crane. With skill, luck, preservation and the aid of Yasuyo, my cousin and most trusted comrade-in-arms, that goal was recently accomplished."

"An intriguing summary of the tale," Hatori said, "Now I must hear the rest."

"I would be eager to tell it, so that it may be recorded into the Miya Archives," Kurohito replied. "The tale begins over a thousand years ago with Doji Yasurugi, the man that, save for a cruel twist of fate, would have been the Crane Thunder..."

Kurohito continued as he and Hatori made their rounds through the Fantastic Gardens. Otomo Taneji trailed behind, not truly listening to the Crane Champion's words.

"Would you like a tour of the gardens, Otomo-sama?" a pretty young samurai-ko gestured to a side path. "There is nothing else in Rokugan quite like them."

"Yes," Taneji said, glancing at Hatori with a frown. His master nodded vaguely, unconcerned with Taneji's presence. "I think I would like that."

The young courtier's face was drawn with silent worry and confusion. He could not adjust to how calm Hatori had seemed, how careless of their situation. He knew that the old shisha was skilled at concealing his emotions, but Taneji felt that this was almost too much. Since their arrival Hatori had not spoken one word about their quest to gain allies against the Shadowed Tower, not one word about his wife's kidnapping, not even in private. What good did it do you to seek allies if you did not even allow your allies to know that you needed their aid?

"You seem troubled," the girl said, walking close beside him. "Would you like to discuss it?" She smelled faintly of lavender and had pale eyes the color of sapphires. Had not Taneji been so preoccupied, he might have found her quite beautiful.

"I am just tired," Taneji lied.

These were ludicrous. Kamiko could be dead by now. Now not only was Hatori playing foolish courtly games, but he had divided their focus when he left Sekkou behind. Taneji had not seen the Monkey since their visit to the Asahina Temples. At least the Shadowed Tower agents were unlikely to concentrate their efforts on spying upon someone as inconspicuous as Sekkou, and he was safe enough from their maho in the Jade Champion's presence.

And like that, it struck him. Taneji realized what a fool he had been to underestimate his master. Sekkou had been left behind because he appeared inconsequential, so that he could reveal information to the Jade Champion while the Tower's eyes were on Hatori.

"Are you certain there is nothing you wish to discuss?" the girl pressed. "These gardens are sacred, and few would care to follow a mere attendant and an unknown Crane girl." She bent to pick a flower, then held it out for Taneji to smell. Taneji noted that her hands were rough and calloused. Those were the hands of a warrior, not a flower of the court. She wore a katana on her hip.

"What is your name, if I may ask?" Taneji asked.

The girl smiled slightly. "I am Doji Yasuyo, though few recognize me without my sword and armor. Even the servants seem to ignore me." She sighed in feigned disappointment. "Now I ask you again, Otomo Taneji. Now that we are free of prying ears, is there something you wish to tell me? Something your master wishes mine to know?"

"Yes," Taneji said. "I think perhaps there is."

THE DOJI PROVINCES

The Doji are the wealthiest family in the Empire, with holdings strewn across the eastern coast of Rokugan. The Doji are extremely efficient in managing their holdings despite the large amount of ground their provinces cover. Doji provincial governors are widely regarded as the most talented administrators in all of Rokugan, and more than a few governors from other clans have drawn upon favors with the Crane Clan to have a Doji provincial governor review their policies and organizational techniques.

An interesting aspect of the Doji provinces is the political polarity between the holdings north of the Seikitsu Mountains and those to the south. The holdings to the north are by far the cleanest, wealthiest, and most glamorous while those to the south are mostly farmlands, mines, trading ports, and other industrial resources. Vassal families maintain these southern provinces, with only a few true Doji in attendance. Appointments in the northern provinces are rare and treasured, for it is only in the northern provinces that one can progress to the Doji hierarchy's higher ranks. For this reason, politics among the samurai in the southern provinces is extremely cutthroat, as each samurai tries to outdo his colleagues for an appointment in the north.

MAJOR DOJI HOLDINGS

As stated above, the Doji family's major holdings are north of the Seikitsu Mountains. These holdings are centers of trade and production, almost exclusively located near beaches, rivers, or major trade routes. Those rare major Doji holdings established far from trade routes invariably generate new trade routes as merchants near and far know the quality of Crane merchandise.

KYUDEN DOJI

(LOCATION CR 6)

Kyuden Doji stands on a high cliff overlooking Yakamo's Heart, still referred to as the Sea of the Sun Goddess by many who dwell there. The palace is more like a city, covering acres of land and filled with sprawling gardens, shrines, and even several large market places. Those who see Kyuden Doji first hand cannot deny that it is among the Empire's greatest wonders.

For many centuries Kyuden Doji participated in a subtle, unspoken competition with the Imperial Palace. The Doji would monitor the Imperial Palace carefully, making certain

HIGHWAYS OF THE DOJI PROVINCES

Hoturi's Hope (Connects CN6 to A15, passes through CN7) — This rather short road passes between Kyuden Doji and Musume Mura. The road was originally called Five Swords Road in honor of the five swords forged by Doji Yasurugi, but was renamed after the Day of Thunder to honor Doji Hoturi's sacrifice. A few Crane refer to it alternately as either Hoturi's Hope or Five Swords Road. The road is short but heavily traveled by diplomats, merchants, and Crane bushi patrols.

Silk Pass (Connects CN 12 to CN 11) — Also jokingly referred to as "Son of Beiden," Silk Pass is a rare wide, easily navigated pass through the Seikitsu Mountains. Unfortunately, as the pass leads only to the small valley and shore where Umoeru Mura lies, no one really gives it much thought other than the Crane who live there and the Mantis silk traders who stop there regularly.

Sea King's Road (Along the coast from CN 11 to CN 6) — Named after Morehei Yuo, the tragic "Sea King" of Doji legend. This route along the coast line is a frequent trade route for Doji merchant vessels, as Crane vessels are generally not seaworthy enough to dare venture much further from the coast.

that as luxurious, beautiful, and magnificent their palace was that the Emperor's palace was always slightly more so. The idea was that while the Crane must embody excellence, it would be foolish to insult the Emperor by having a palace greater than his own. If the Emperor's palace closed down a garden, the Doji would also close one of theirs. If the palace added a new wing, Kyuden Doji would do likewise but always insure theirs was slightly smaller. The servants and artisans who maintained Kyuden Doji saw this as an amusing challenge.

The castle's destruction during the Clan War was tragic, but allowed the Doji to rebuild the castle with a bit more focus. Numerous different architects had built upon the previous Kyuden Doji over the centuries, and oftentimes practicality gave way to beauty, making the castle's layout disorganized to say the least. The new Kyuden Doji was given a uniformity of style and function that its predecessor lacked, and when it was completed none could doubt that it was even more glorious than before.

With Orosan Uchi's destruction, Kyuden Doji is now the most magnificent palace in the Empire. Now that the Crane are no longer restrained by their unspoken promise to never exceed the glory of the Emperor's Palace, one might think that the castle would begin to expand, but this is not the case. Crane Champion Doji Kurohito has cautiously forbidden any such endeavors. Not only does he believe the family's resources can be put to better use at this time, but he feels it would be practical to wait and see who the new Emperor will be, lest the magnificence of Kyuden Doji unintentionally offend them.

THE FANTASTIC GARDENS OF THE DOJI

A large section of Kyuden Doji is dedicated to what is collectively known as "The Fantastic Gardens." Originally these

were a merely Lady Doji's flower garden, but her children maintained and expanded the garden after her disappearance. Since her time the gardens have grown to the size of a small village. As the name suggests, much of the Fantastic Gardens are comprised of story gardens, sand gardens, rock gardens, and various other sorts of elaborate gardens but in the last twenty years the Gardens have also incorporated tea houses, sake houses, markets, theaters, shrines, geisha houses and nearly any other sort of legitimate enterprise conceivable. These buildings are humbly designed and artfully arranged so that the construction does not disturb the Garden's beauty.

Some elder caretakers of the Fantastic Gardens are disgusted by this change. They feel that it ruins the gardens' serenity and purity to invite such base acts as commerce and theater. The lords of the Doji feel otherwise. The beauty of the Fantastic Gardens draws many visitors, after all, and the Doji are never one to waste an opportunity to establish a good relationship. The Fantastic Gardens have become a tool for diplomacy. Guests are invited to relax and enjoy themselves in the famous gardens while the Doji offer favors, forge treaties, or even arrange marriages. The luxurious atmosphere makes guests more amenable to suggestion, making the Doji courtiers' job easier.

The gardens also generate a large amount of revenue as guests while away their time in the blissful surroundings. The prices in the local establishments are much higher than those in comparable businesses outside the Gardens, and this is no accident. The Doji believe that people will pay extra to enjoy the glory of Doji's garden, and they have yet to be proven wrong.

ASAHINA KYUWA

[Shugenja 7; Asahina Shugenja 3]

The Fantastic Gardens' chief caretaker is a busy man indeed. It falls to him to organize the small army of priests, monks, laborers, and eta required to keep the Gardens as beautiful and inviting as they are. The recent incursion of commerce and entertainment in the Gardens has made Kyuwa's job roughly three times more difficult, but he has accepted the challenges all in stride. Kyuwa believes that his constant struggle to keep the entire Gardens serene and perfect despite the constant intrusion of visitors is a metaphor for the Asahina family's struggle to purify themselves in a corrupt world. He enjoys his job greatly where many others might simply crumble under the stress. His ability to deal with crises calmly and capably is the primary reason he was given the position of chief caretaker rather than a shugenja with greater skill in magic. Kyuwa's talent is in delegation, leadership, and wielding the power of authority. Doji Kurohito knows these gifts are far rarer than magic.

The undercurrent of bitterness among the Garden's caretakers disturbs Kyuwa. He has tried to encourage his brethren to invite change, to look upon it as a challenge as he does, but not all of them appear ready to do so. Kyuwa also accepts this in good humor, though he fears that the more traditional-minded caretakers could do something drastic if the changes in the Garden progress too far.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: A loud argument breaks out in a busy market in the Fantastic Gardens. A thick crowd of visitors has formed and no one can make any progress. The player characters can locate problem's source with a bit of effort, or by flashing credentials if they are high-ranking samurai or magistrates.

Focus: A small, portable shrine surrounded by meditating priests blocks the market's crossroads. Apparently a courtier by the name of Doji Koki has been granted permission to build a gambling house within the gardens, and the monks have had enough. They will not see the gardens of Lady Doji become a home to vice and have sworn to bottleneck all tourist traffic in the gardens until permission for the gambling house is repealed.

Strike: There are a number of difficulties here. The player characters cannot technically move the shrine without defiling a holy temple (portable though it may be) unless they count monks or shugenja among their number. The protesting monks will turn to any such player characters first, attempting to sway them with the righteousness of their cause. If the players choose not to listen, the monks will do everything within their power (short of violence) to hamper the player characters. Alternately, the party may try to help the monks by visiting the courts and speaking out against the gambling house. In this instance, characters with strong contacts or good courtly skills will be useful, as Doji Koki is a high-ranking member of the court who will not appreciate his plans being undermined.

THE EYE OF THE NEEDLE

In the shadow of Kyuden Doji stands a small forest. During his childhood, Hantei XXIII ran away from the court and spent a night in these woods. The Seppun Guardsmen were terrified that something horrible had befallen the Imperial Heir, but when they finally found him he was safe and sound. The young Hantei claimed that a silver fox had taken care of him in the night, bringing berries to feed him and singing songs to keep him company. No one believed him, for he was a child, but no one argued, for he was a Hantei. So, when the young Hantei eventually took the throne, one of his first acts was to declare these woods sacrosanct. Though Hantei the XXIII is long dead, the Doji honor his proclamation still. Despite their rich lumber and abundant game, the Doji allow no logging or hunting here.

Unknown to the Doji, who typically have no reason to enter the woods, the Hantei's story was true. These woods are, in fact, a passage to Chikushudo, the Spirit Realm of Animals. The woods are home to kitsune, tanuki, and various other sorts of spirit creatures. The kitsune, in particular, are quite curious about the Crane Clan. They are grateful that the Doji have honored their promise never to harm their woods, and occasionally send out kitsune in human form to perform favors for the Doji in return. (*More information on spirits and Chikushudo can be found in Fortunes and Winds.*)

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: An ambitious young Doji samurai looks upon the Eye of the Needle and sees wasted resources. Ignorant of the powerful spirits that dwell within the forest, he plans to exploit the lumber there to outfit his soldiers. With a cunningly crafted request, stating his need but glossing over the forest's history, he has gained Toturi Tsudao's permission to harvest the lumber. The Empress is extremely overworked and has little time to pay attention to the fine detail of such documents. If she knew the truth she would revoke permission immediately.

Focus: The tanuki and other aggressive woodland spirits see this incursion as a betrayal of trust. If the Crane continue their harvest, the spirits may openly attack the Doji. The more passive spirits wish a more peaceful solution, but their voices

have been drowned out. They seek out a neutral party to aid them — perhaps the player characters?

Strike: Unknown to both sides, the existence of this passage to Chikushudo has created a strong anchor for the forces of purity. Should the forest begin to fall and the Eye of the Needle weaken, a passage to Gaki-do will open in the seas near Kyuden Doji and skull tides will begin to spill forth from the sea. The Eye of the Needle must be maintained at all costs.

MUSUME MURA

(LOCATION CR)

"Daughter Village" is so named in honor of Doji Mioko, the low-ranking daughter of the Doji family who nonetheless caught the Hantei's eye and became the first Empress. The village is small but luxurious, with a wondrous view of Yakamo's Heart. There is a small fishing industry here, as there always has been, but this takes a sideline to the true business of Musume Mura. This village is home to the Crane Clan's most experienced marriage arrangers. Those Doji who wish to see their children entered into a profitable engagement are well advised to pay a visit to Musume Mura, and members of other clans also have been known to make the long journey to benefit from their advice. Some enterprising Doji even bring their children there immediately after birth so that they will have as much time to arrange a marriage as possible. The village has several large estates dedicated to housing these guests. These homes are well staffed and comfortable; in true Doji fashion, guests will not lack for hospitality while they are here.

Unlike the stereotypical image of a gruff, meddling, heartless marriage arranger, the arrangers in Musume Mura are cautious, compassionate, and always take the best interests of both parties to heart when arranging a union. Of course where marriages for the sake of politics are concerned this is not always possible, but the arrangers do their best.

At some point in its history, Musume Mura acquired a reputation as the sort of place where young women unable to find a spouse wander the streets in large numbers, and as a result the village attracts more than its share of indolent, lecherous bachelors. While the marriage arrangers are always careful to keep the village's young daughters away from these predators, the rumors have become somewhat self-fulfilling. Disreputable businessmen have established sake and geisha houses along the wharf to cater to rich, lazy samurai. The village's convenient location soon attracted smugglers, pirates, and other sea trash, much to the marriage arrangers' chagrin. While the Crane magistrates regularly attempt to clean out the wharf, it seems that the stain of crime and corruption will not so easily be removed. In the meantime, the wharf's denizens have created a strangely profitable tertiary industry of entertainment and smuggling in Musume Mura.

The result is perhaps the most extreme dichotomy in any Crane city. The marriage arrangers' estates, on the high hills on the west side of town, are as cultured and dignified a sort of place as you are likely to find anywhere in the Empire. Near the wharf, however, shady businessmen and lecherous samurai have created an environment as corrupt and seedy as the worst neighborhoods of Ryoko Owari.

DOJI AKURO, CHIEF WEDDING ARRANGER OF MUSUME MURA

[Courtier 7/Mastermind 5; Doji Courtier 4]

Akuro is a plump, pretty older woman who has lived in Musume Mura nearly her entire life. Though she is humble

regarding most details of her career, she is quite a powerful figure in the family hierarchy. She has arranged marriages for generals, governors, daimyo, and magistrates. She has attended four Winter Courts and turned down invitations to three more because she hates traveling. She is always pleasant, courteous, and kind but she takes her position seriously. She is rarely angry, but on those rare occasions she is a terror to behold. Those who try to interfere with her or renege on a contract that she has arranged draw her anger, and soon see the error of their ways. Akuro can be quite intimidating when she needs to be and has connections with several high-ranking Doji, including Lord Kurohito himself. Kurohito respects Akuro greatly and will grant nearly any request she makes with little consideration, for it is upon her work that the clan's political power draws its strength.

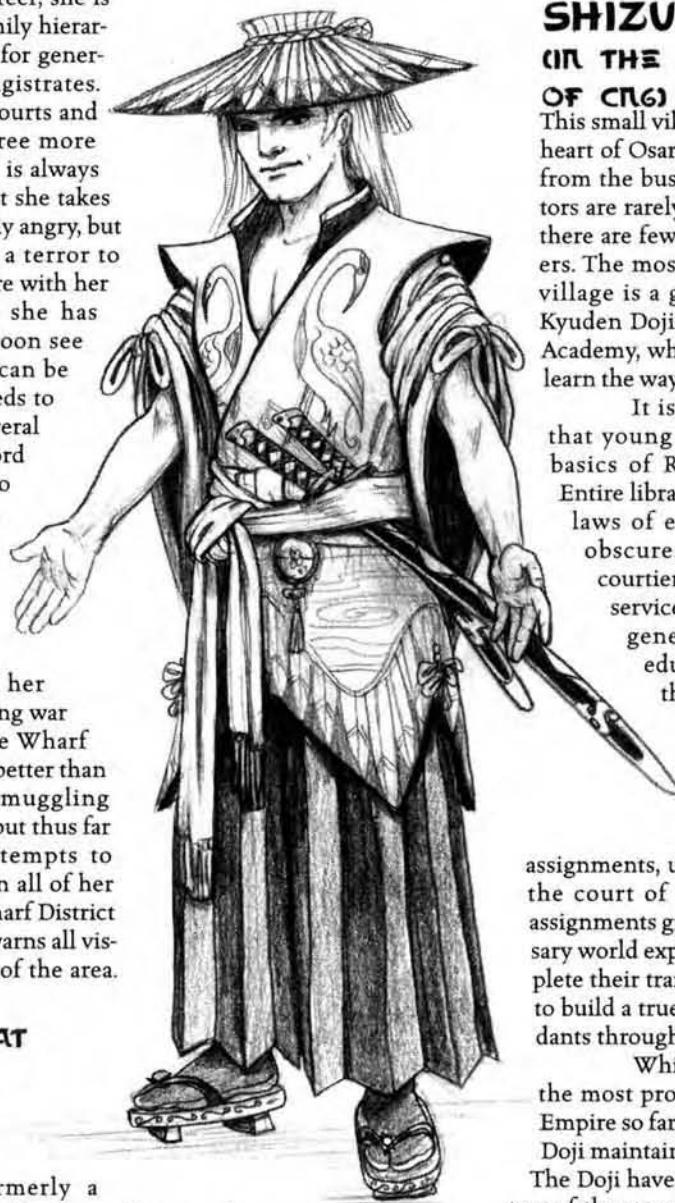
Akuro's one great defeat in her tenure in the village is her ongoing war with the scum that dwell in the Wharf District. She would like nothing better than to see the geisha houses and smuggling rings run out of Musume Mura, but thus far they have defied her best attempts to remove them. She has forbidden all of her guards and vassals to visit the Wharf District except on official business, and warns all visitors in her estates to stay clear of the area.

YASUKI NAOSUKE, KOLAT

OYABUN, SILKEN SECT
 [Fighter 1/Rogue 3/Kolat
 Agent 6; Daidoji Harrier 4]

Yasuki Naosuke is a man with a somewhat colorful past. Formerly a Daidoji Harrier, he was expelled after it was discovered he was selling Daidoji defensive strategies to the Moto. As the Unicorn were never at war with the Crane, it was not deemed a treasonous offense but nonetheless Naosuke was reassigned to a trading vessel far from any combat and forgotten. Daidoji Naosuke swore fealty to the Crane Yasuki more out of disgust toward his Daidoji cousins than out of any loyalty to Yasuki Hachi. His disgruntled nature eventually drew the Kolat Silken Sect's attention. The Kolat saw his Harrier training as a useful tool in gathering the information they used for power and currency. Naosuke was easily recruited, and is now a powerful oyabun.

With the Silken Sect's aid, Naosuke established a foothold in Musume Mura and turned the Wharf District into what it is today. The entire area serves as an information funnel for the Kolat. Despite Akuro's forbiddance, many of her own guards, some visiting parents, and even a handful of future brides and husbands spend time exploring the Wharf District's mysteries. Naosuke and his agents use all matter of earthly pleasures to pry away their visitors' secrets, all for the good of the Kolat.



SHIZUKA TOSHI (IN THE FORESTS NORTH OF CR6)

This small village stands in a clearing in the heart of Osari Forest, well-secluded and far from the bustling Doji marketplaces. Visitors are rarely admitted to Shizuka Toshi as there are few inns and little to offer travelers. The most prominent structure in the village is a grand palace reminiscent of Kyuden Doji. This is the home to the Doji Academy, where the courtiers of tomorrow learn the ways of law, etiquette, and politics.

It is in the Doji Academy's halls that young courtiers are drilled in the basics of Rokugani's complex society. Entire libraries are filled with volumes on laws of etiquette both common and obscure. All instructors are former courtiers who have retired from active service in the courts to train the next generation. Students begin their education here four years before their gempukku (usually at the age of ten) and remain at the academy for three years afterward. Students who have passed their gempukku are dispatched on simple assignments, usually spending the winter at the court of a minor foreign lord. Such assignments grant the young courtiers necessary world experience they will need to complete their training, and allow them to begin to build a true network of friends and confidants throughout the Empire.

While it may seem strange to have the most prominent courtly school in the Empire so far removed from civilization, the Doji maintain that their methods work best. The Doji have a reputation to uphold as masters of the court, and cannot afford to expose their young students to the outside world before they are thoroughly and properly trained. A courtier who bears the Doji mon cannot afford to bear himself with anything less than perfect excellence — anything less is a waste of time.

DOJI NORIE

[Courtier 15; Doji Courtier 5]

The Doji Academy's headmaster is living proof that the way of politicians is only superficially different from the way of warriors. She owns copies of both *The Subtlety of the Court* and *The Book of Sun Tao*, and keeps both on display in equal prominence in her bedchamber. During her career she spent ten years in Ryoko Owari among the Scorpion's court and ten more in Otosan Uchi among the Otomo, Seppun, and Miya. She encourages her students to present a friendly face while never overlooking an opportunity. Though she is usually cheerful and genial, no other instructor at the Academy strikes as much fear in students' hearts as Norie. Those who perform well are praised as they deserve. Those who fail are subject to scathing reprimands and subjected to harsh manual

THE DOJI - THE RISE OF THE DOJI

labor. Norie is an unforgiving instructor for she knows the world of politics is even more unforgiving. She often says "A warrior's failure dooms only himself. A courtier's failure dooms the entire clan."

BENTEN SEIDO

(LOCATION CR8)

Benten, Fortune of Romantic Love, is a patron Fortune of the Crane Clan and the Doji family in particular. For many, Benten Seido marks the dividing line between the elite northern holdings and the lesser southern holdings. All those who are promoted to the northern provinces are expected to pause here and pay their respects to the Fortune of Romantic Love. All who are demoted and sent to the southern provinces also stop here for a time to pray for her guidance. The monks who tend the palace caution all visiting bushi to be kind to any strangers they may meet during their visit - they may see them again one day when passing through the other way.

Lovers seeking guidance also frequent the shrine. As this is the largest temple to Benten in all of Rokugan, a good number of its visitors are from far distant lands, led here by their hearts to seek Benten's guidance. Legends claim that a brave soul whose love is unrequited can throw themselves from the cliffs and, if their love is true, Benten will bear them to safety. The monks try to discourage such behavior; nonetheless one or two grisly accidents normally occur each year.

Though the shrine has many visitors every day, the road to the shrine is rough and difficult. Unbeknownst to the visitors, the monks who tend the shrine go out at night and litter the mountain road with rocks, weeds, and debris. They do this not out of spite, but out of their peculiar religious beliefs. The monks feel that love is not easily found or maintained, and so should it be with love's shrine.

SHIHEI

[Inkyo 5/Courtier 4; Seven Fortunes Monk 3]

The chief caretaker of Benten's shrine is an extraordinarily elderly monk who goes only by the name "Shihei." Though the old man claims to have once been a warrior in the army of a Great Clan, no other monks here are old enough to remember what clan or family he may have retired from. Shihei claims that Benten has granted him a special blessing, to be bestowed only upon the acolyte who can guess his former name and station. It has become an entertaining game among the caretakers, who watch all visitors for any sign of recognition when they meet the old man.

Shihei is amused by the competition. In truth, his name is only Shihei and has always been only Shihei. He was no samurai at all, but an ashigaru in the Daidoji armies. The fact that his acolytes assumed that "warrior" meant "samurai" even though he never stated any such thing strikes him as a harsh lesson in the nature of wisdom.

What one says is not always what others hear, and the truth one seeks is often what one already knows.



MINOR DOJI HOLDINGS

The term "minor holding" is relative where the Doji family is concerned. Even their minor holdings produce more resources and have greater monetary value than many major holdings of less affluent families.

THE DOJI PLAINS

(WEST OF CR 10)

These broad, lush plains lie just to the west of Aketsu, a Kakita trading post. The plains are heavily dotted with farms. The Doji heimin grow mostly rice, but also produce a variety of other crops including barley, millet, various vegetables, and mulberry trees (used for feeding silkworms).

The heimin are masters of a variety of complex farming techniques intended to reap the greatest amount of crops from the overworked soil, and possess a level of agricultural ingenuity greater than any other farmers in Rokugan. These heimin are secretly the Crane's greatest resource and the samurai guard their farmer's techniques with the same pride and tenacity that they would protect the arts crafted by the Kakita Artisans. For their part, the farmers are well treated and proud of their service to the Crane Clan. They guard the farming processes developed by their ancestors with the same pride as a samurai, and would never consider betraying their arts to the heimin of another clan.

The Crane's enemies rarely threaten the Doji Plains, as Minor Clan territories buffer the area on all sides and Imperial Edict forbids instigating war against a Minor Clan. Even so, small Daidoji-constructed fortresses dot the landscape at regular intervals, well stocked with food and supplies. In time of war, samurai patrols hold regular drills in which the local farmers flee to the fortresses and barricade themselves within as quickly as possible. In the event of any attack, the local farmers and trained ashigaru could defend themselves against an attacker for several days while they await samurai reinforcements from Aketsu.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While passing through the Doji Plains, the player characters come upon a curious sight — a band of Crane samurai laying siege to one of their own fortresses. The warriors within the fortress appear poorly armed and equipped, but keep the Crane at bay with a few bows and shoddily made arrows. The Crane have taken no losses, but seem confused as to how to deal with the situation.

Focus: The castle is one of many fallback fortresses designed to protect farmers in time of war. These samurai were chasing a group of bandits who stormed the fortress, overwhelmed the ashigaru garrison, and barricaded it against the magistrates. In the meantime, the Crane are reluctant to destroy their own fortress, and have settled in to wait. Unfortunately, the fortress is well provisioned so it could be some time.

Strike: The bandits are prepared to fight to the end, for they know the Doji will show them no mercy. In the meantime, some members of the original garrison are still alive, held hostage by the bandits. These are not samurai, but simple ashigaru with family in the area. The local peasants plead with the player characters to help them find a way to rescue their

family and leave the fortress intact. Any solution that punishes the bandits and leaves the fortress, provisions, and ashigaru intact will also greatly please the Crane magistrates. Discreet characters willing to keep the embarrassing situation secret will also win the Crane magistrates' gratitude.

UMOERU MURA

(LOCATION CR 11)

Formerly named Hayaku Mura after the renowned Crane hero, this area was renamed "Rubble Village" after a Crab attack ravaged it sixty years ago. The village never really recovered, falling victim to frequent bandit attacks and natural disasters over the years. The village's major export is coal and its secondary industry is trade with the Mantis vessels not important or wealthy enough to journey all the way to Kyuden Doji. Neither industry is at all glamorous in the eyes of the city's Doji lords. As long as the mines have remained intact, the Doji have left Umoeru Mura to its own devices, aiding little in its reconstruction.

The village is in poor shape, with some buildings still lying in ruins even after six decades. Some poorer heimin and eta have scraped out burrows in the rubble piles, referred to as "rabbit holes" by the local samurai. These homes are extremely dangerous given the frequency of earthquakes in the area, and it is not unusual for entire families to vanish when their makeshift homes collapse during a tremor.

The village's name is well known among the Doji courts, as Umoeru Mura is frequently used as a threat for failure. No post is more feared than a station in the accursed village. The mere mention of Umoeru Mura can fill a Doji Courtier's heart with dread, or drive a cowardly samurai to new heights of bravery just to avoid such a terrible demotion.

DOJI MUNOTO

[Samurai 5; Kakita Bushi 2]

The provincial governor of Umoeru Mura is, not surprisingly, an extremely bitter man. He was posted to this position after accidentally insulting one of Kakita Atoshi's favored poets at a Winter Court, and has served here for over seven years. He is unmistakable for his bleached white hair. Ironically, no other Crane in the village that once bore Daidoji Hayaku's name bother to bleach their hair in the hero's honor.

What bothers Munoto most about his position here is the open, bald-faced corruption he sees all around him. His magistrates accept bribes, collect protection money, gamble, and deal in illicit substances with the local peasants and bandits. Every time Munoto attempts to bring justice to the city or requests new troops, he is either ignored or assigned more pathetic failures. Each morning Munoto prays at Daidoji Hayaku's shrine, one of a few structures to survive the Crab attack sixty years ago. He begs the ancient hero for guidance, but thus far none is forthcoming.

The simple truth he has come to face is that no one cares about Umoeru Mura. Everyone, inside and outside the village, is happy that the place has become the cesspool that it is. No one cares enough to make the village a better place. No one has the honor to make a stand.

No one but Munoto, that is, and with each day he cares a little bit less.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Through a grave clerical error, the player characters have been assigned to Umoeru Mura. The party's super-

riors apologize abjectly, promising favors for all the characters for the inconvenience, but they insist that the party spend two months in the village while the paperwork is dealt with.

Focus: Munoto sees the party's arrival as a rare ray of hope. He seizes upon their arrival to show them the sad state of the village and begs them to help him clear up the crime and corruption in the village.

Strike: Munoto is an honorable man in a hopeless situation, but the player characters truly do not belong here. Dare they ask their superiors to remain in the accursed village and make a difference, or will they shake the dust of Rubble Village from their shoes and leave Munoto behind?

OOKAMI TOSHI

(LOCATION CR12)

The rather curiously named Wolf City is a rarity among Doji holdings. It is a heavily armed fortress with little in the way of luxury or ornamentation. Even the name is peculiar, as the term "Ookami" suggests ronin, a group that the Doji family has never had a great deal of respect for.

The city takes its name from Doji Yujiro, a Crane samurai who became a disavowed ronin to take revenge on a courtier named Matsu Kaoru. The Lion had killed the Crane Champion's son in a duel that appeared to be fair in court, though Yujiro knew that the Matsu had used poison to weaken his opponent. Without the social standing to dispute the Matsu publicly, Yujiro was forced to take drastic action. In a strange quirk of fate the Matsu was killed during an attack on the Dragon before Yujiro could complete his mission.

Yujiro was invited back into the clan and privately thanked for his dedication, though the Crane Champion could not acknowledge his mission. Instead he was assigned a prominent position in the southern provinces and forgotten. The city was named Ookami Toshi to honor Yujiro's time as a ronin.

As Yujiro was of a military bent, he immediately girded the small farming village with any and all imaginable defenses. Ookami Toshi became a well-defended fortress, and has been maintained since that time by Yujiro's descendants. These governors have all been somewhat eccentric, and have continued to fiercely gird Ookami Toshi's defenses despite the fact that the village poses no real strategic significance.

DOJI YUJIRO

[Samurai 7; Kakita Bushi 3]

The current governor of Ookami Toshi is named after his illustrious ancestor. In fact, he sometimes believes that he is his ancestor. He will speak at length about his adventures as a ronin, adventures which happened to a man centuries dead. His family and associates all recognize that the man is mad, but they deal with his eccentricity in traditional Crane fashion - they ignore him and make certain he is not given enough true responsibility to harm anyone else.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The player characters are passing through Ookami Toshi when they are invited to have dinner with the governor. During their meeting, the governor's advisor (whose job it is to distract the governor should he begin to embarrass himself) is called away to deal with an urgent matter. Meanwhile, the governor gets a distracted expression and begins telling tales of his adventures as a ronin four hundred years ago.

Focus: If there are any party members skilled in history, they will note that the governor's ramblings pay an extraordinary amount of attention to detail, detail only a student of history would know. Any shugenja, ghost hunters, or mediums in the party feel distinctly uneasy in the governor's presence, as if something is not entirely right about his demeanor.

Strike: The governor is not mad — Doji Yujiro truly possesses him. Many of his predecessors have been possessed as well, leading to the family's reputation for eccentricity. Yujiro's greatest task — the assassination of Matsu Kaoru — was never accomplished and thus each time Kaoru is reincarnated, Yujiro returns as well. For the governor to ever know peace, the party must find a way to help his ancestor's ghost find its final rest.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL HOLDINGS

PALACE OF THE SEA KING (LOCATED JUST SOUTH OF CR13)

Though not technically a Doji holding per se, the Palace of the Sea King is extraordinary enough to merit mention in this guide. Seven centuries ago, the Morehei vassal family was founded and built their castle on a small island located here, just to the south of Mura Sabishii Toshi. The Morehei were talented artisans and masters of courtly graces. Through their friendship with the Asahina they built a large temple to Suitengu, Fortune of the Sea, and dedicated their family to his service. An enormous statue of Suitengu guarded the island's harbor.

After some time, Morehei Island became a lonely place. The island had few natural resources and though the Morehei had great wealth from their mainland holdings, there was little potential for advancement with Kyuden Doji so far away. In an attempt to regain favor with the Crane Champion, family daimyo Morehei Yuo used his wealth to transform Shinden Morehei into a center of luxury. For a time, the island was a favored place of relaxation and retreat for many prominent Crane. Even the Crane Champion often visited the island during the spring, and the Morehei gained great favor in the eyes of their lords.

Sadly, as the Morehei began to gain the favor of their mainland cousins, they neglected the Temple of Suitengu. The vengeful Fortune of the Sea delivered a warning to Yuo through a dream, but the arrogant samurai ignored it. Suitengu was angry, but bided his time. As the Kakita, Asahina, and Doji lords were not at fault, he waited until all the Morehei's guests had departed for Winter Court. As soon as their ships had left port, he struck the island with such a terrible earthquake that it sank beneath the waves. All that remained to mark the island's passing was the statue of Suitengu, still standing high above the waves.

The sailors who traverse this area now call the statue "The Sea King." Wise captains always pause to pay their respects and leave an offering of rice lest they fall to the same fate as the Morehei. The Morehei's city now rests at the bottom of a deep-sea fissure, surprisingly intact for all the destruction that has befallen it. The halls of Yuo's castle are still filled with his family's treasures, though to find and recover them is no easy task.

The reason the ruins are intact is because a large tribe of ningyo now inhabit Shinden Morehei. The curious sea creatures are fascinated by the shining treasures left behind, and often swim out to enjoy the offerings of rice discarded by passing ships. Like many ningyo settlements, Shinden Morehei is also guarded by several orochi, who do not look kindly upon intruders. Any who harm the ningyo will be pursued relentlessly and destroyed. To make matters even more difficult,

Yuo himself haunts the central vault of Shinden Morehei, where the city's greatest treasures are stored. When the earthquake struck, the greedy daimyo ran here to be with his treasures, and now is bound with them forever as a shozai-gaki. Any who take even a single zeni from the vault must deal with Yuo's ghost as it hounds them relentlessly.

Statistics for ningyo and orochi can be found in *Creatures of Rokugan*.™ Statistics for shozai-gaki can be found in *Fortunes and Winds*.™

Statistics for ningyo, orochi, and shozai-gaki can be found in *Fortunes and Winds*.™



IMPORTANT DOJI NPCS

DOJI KUROHITO, CRANE CHAMPION

The Crane Clan Champion is among the most feared men in Rokugan, and for good reason. Kurohito is an implacable enemy on any field, a deadly duelist, a tenacious general and a keen-minded politician. There are many among the Crane that fear Kurohito as much as the clan's enemies, for he is not a man who takes kindly to failure or compromise. Kurohito believes that it is the Crane's duty to stand as a symbol to the Empire, a pinnacle of perfection, elegance, and excellence. Excellence leaves no room for compromise; neither does Doji Kurohito.

Kurohito was born in the year 1130, shortly after Toturi the First's disappearance during the War Against the Shadow. On the day he was born the cursed blade, Chukandomo, appeared on the shore beneath Kyuden Doji, drawn there by the fate that bound Kurohito and the sword together. Kurohito has only vague memories of his legendary father, Doji Kuwanan, who died in the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. The War of Spirits began when Kurohito was only eight and he spent much of his childhood on the battlefield, watching regent Kakita Kaiten as he directed the Crane armies. At fourteen years old Kurohito underwent his gempukku and took up Chukandomo. The instant Kurohito took his adult name the sword revealed its power and origins to him, and the price it would extract for failure. Kurohito determined he would avoid the curse by never admitting failure. At this young age, Kurohito immediately assumed control of the Crane, though Kaiten remained his military and political advisor for many years afterward.

Though Kurohito's past is a story of violence and loss, he is not without emotion. During the War of Spirits he first met the returned spirit Isawa Akiko. Pursued by the Steel Chrysanthemum's servants, who were seeking the secrets of Isawa's Last Wish, Akiko threw herself before the gates of Kyuden Doji and begged for sanctuary. Eager to spite the Chrysanthemum's minions, Kurohito invited Akiko into the halls of Kyuden Doji. During her time there, Kurohito came to respect, admire, and eventually love the daughter of Isawa despite their great difference in age (both physical and mental).

When the War of Spirits ended, Toturi commanded that all returned spirits either die or be exiled from the Empire. Kurohito stepped forward and pleaded mercy for the spirits who were loyal to Toturi. To prove his sincerity, he married Akiko and promised to die beside her if Toturi did not grant some leniency. Akiko also stepped forward, offering to aid the Phoenix in developing the spell that would strip all spirits who swore fealty to Toturi of their connection to the Spirit Realms, making them fully mortal once more. Toturi agreed, complimenting Kurohito on his courage and sincerity.

In his rule over the Crane, Kurohito has performed impeccably. Even in defeat, he has never lost face. Even when forced to retreat from the Yasuki lands he ameliorated the situation by lending troops and aid to the troops on the Kaiu Wall, gaining the Crane great esteem in the courts. Though he came

close to being consumed by Chukandomo many times, he never truly drew its wrath.

Finally, when his cousin Yasuyo came to him with Naishi and revealed her quest, Kurohito knew he could endure the curse on Chukandomo no longer. The sword must be freed to fulfill its true destiny. To this end, Kurohito intentionally surrendered Toshi Ranbo to the Lion Clan, publicly causing his own failure to infuriate Chukandomo. When the spirits of the cursed sword came forth, Kurohito and Yasuyo were ready for them. Though they had no hope of survival, they fought without fear. Naishi lent its aid by summoning forth the spirits of Crane heroes. The Kitsu shugenja, watching the battle that took place in the heart of Toshi Ranbo, used their magic to give the shiryō temporary form. A mighty battle took place between the spirits bound to Chukandomo and the souls blessed by Naishi. In the end, the tormented spirits cursed by Chukandomo were free, and the sword's curse was removed.

In the end, Kurohito gave Chukandomo to Matsu Nimuro, Lion Clan Champion. As the sword was originally intended as a gift to the Lion, he saw it as only fitting. Kurohito now carries Megumi, the Celestial Sword of the Crane.

DOJI KUROHITO, CRANE CHAMPION

Male human Crane Samurai 8/Hoturi's Blade 5/Doji Elite 4: CR 17; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 8d10+24 plus 9d8+27; hp 199; Init +8 (+10 with katana); Spd 30 ft.; AC 27 (touch 16, flat-footed 23); Atk *Megumi* (+5 dueling *vorpal katana*) +33/+28/+23/+18 melee (1d10+14); SA Blade of Whispers 5/day, Doji's Scrutiny 2/day, Hoturi's Speed 5/day, Stroke of Wind; SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill — Knowledge (etiquette), Hoturi's Poise, Soul of Hoturi; Honor: 4; AL LN; SV Fort +16, Ref +17, Will +18; Str 19 (23), Dex 18, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 20 (24); Maximum Void: 5; Height 6 ft. Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy.

Kata: One Leg Stance (katana), Striking as Fire.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Rokugani), Battle +14, Climb +11, Diplomacy +54, Iaijutsu Focus +52, Intimidate +39, Jump +11, Knowledge (etiquette) +7, Perform +32, Ride +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +17, Swim +11, Tumble +18; Improved Initiative, Indefatigable Hero, Depths of the Void, Kakita Technique, Power Attack, Strike at the Heart, The Sudden Strike (katana), Tread on the Blade, Versatile (Spot, Tumble), Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus (katana).

Possessions: *Megumi* (Celestial Sword of the Crane, see introduction), +2 yumi, +5 partial armor, amulet of natural armor +2, haori of resistance +4, kimono of charisma +4, obi of giant strength +4, ring of protection +2.

DOJI KUROHITO, CRANE CHAMPION

Earth: 3

Fire: 4

Water: 4

Air: 6

Void: 5

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 4/Hoturi's Blade 1/Doji Elite Guard 1

Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy

Kata: One Leg Stance, Striking as Fire

Honor: 4.2

Glory: 8.9

Advantages: Balance, Benten's Blessing, Heartless, Large, Multiple Schools

Disadvantages: Contrary, Driven (to push his clan to excellence)

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Courtier 6, Diplomacy 6, Etiquette 6, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 7, Kenjutsu 7, Kyujutsu 5, Oratory 4, Sincerity 5.

DOJI AKIKO, LEGENDARY SPIRIT

Isawa Akiko's earliest memory is that of her aunt being slain by the marauding forces of Fu Leng, and how much her family grieved afterward. As much as she wished to cry tears of loss and tear her hair in mourning, her father Isawa came to her and gave her an important task. She left her room, dried her tears and wore an elegant robe of white to meet two men outside the city gates, telling them politely that they were not welcome, and her father would not see them. The two men, Shinsei and Shiba, ignored her and proceeded into the city. On that day, young Akiko learned that even in failure there is some measure of greatness, so long as one held to one's duty. Akiko was a bright child. She was her father's attendant in all things during the War against Fu Leng until he left at Shinsei's behest. She witnessed marvels that those born in later years would only dream of: the creation of Isawa's Last Wish, Shiba's transcription of the Tao, the gathering of the Seven Thunders.

When her family began its feud with the Asako, Akiko canceled her impending marriage with Asako Sagoten, for she saw this as her duty. Akiko was slain some time later when Sagoten lost control of the Last Wish, unintentionally destroying Akiko, her castle, and himself. For eleven hundred years she lived in Yomi, the realm of the honored dead. Over time, many came to consult her spirit. She accepted this, too, as her duty, and was content with it.

This idyllic after-existence came to an end, as the Battle at Oblivion's Gate opened. Akiko did not doubt that her place was among the armies of the honored ancestors, and marched forth into the mortal realm. Surprised to find herself alive again, she entered battle for the first time in eleven centuries, this time against the forces of the Lying Darkness. It was during this battle when her talents caught the attention of Daidoji Rekai, who welcomed her back to the Empire after the battle was over. Rekai aided Akiko and other spirits in adjusting to their new surroundings, never realizing that this young girl was one of the most famous and powerful shugenja in history.

Soon thereafter Akiko returned to her own clan and found a fractious group of untrusting shugenja, who cared more about political infighting than enlightenment or contemplation. It was the same divisiveness that caused the feud between herself and Sagoten that led to both their deaths, so Akiko turned away from her clan in shame. It was not that she was ashamed of her clan, but that she was ashamed of herself, for she saw the seeds of their vices within her own soul.

Akiko searched for some purpose to her life, and traveled the Empire to see it as it had become. Her journey ended when she became the target of a concerted hunt from the returned Steel Chrysanthemum, who was seeking her to forcibly acquire Isawa's Last Wish (see *Secrets of the Phoenix*,TM p.87 for more details). Fleeing from his wrath, she took refuge in Kyuden Doji, a castle she knew to be allied with her friend, Daidoji Rekai. There, while besieged by the Steel Chrysanthemum's forces, she met the young Crane Champion Kurohito, and for the first time she felt guided by something other than duty.

The two were later wed, and the daughter of Isawa became Doji Akiko. Since that day, she has been more than a wife to Kurohito; she has been a political advisor and confidant, putting her centuries of skill to work for the Crane. She has helped him mature, and tempers his strength and conviction with wisdom. She has risen above her shame regarding her former clan, and has been instrumental in forging bonds of friendship between the Crane and Phoenix.

DOJI AKIKO

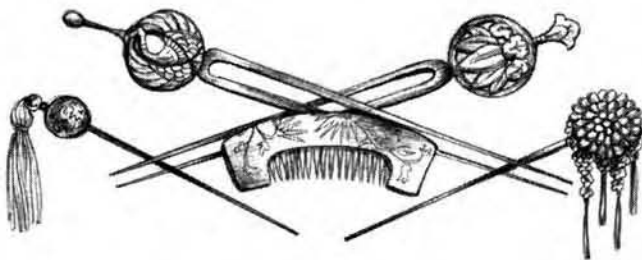
Female human (spirit) Phoenix, Shu 19: CR 21; Medium-size humanoid (human, spirit); HD 19d6+19; hp 105; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 13, flat-footed 16); Att +2 *lawful wakizashi* +14/+9 melee (1d8+5 + 2d6 v. chaotic) or by spell; SQ Denizen of Yomi qualities, Class Skill — Spellcraft, Sense Elements; Honor 4; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +9, Will +23; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 24 (30), Cha 15 (19), Maximum Void 9; Height 5 ft. 9 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language — Rokugani, High Rokugani, Tribe of Isawa, Kami, Yobanjin, Alchemy +12, Concentration +13, Diplomacy +24, Heal +15, Knowledge (Arcana) +20, Knowledge (Etiquette) +17, Knowledge (History) +12, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +11, Scry +9, Spellcraft +25; Depths of the Void, Empower Spell, Greater Depths of the Void, Innate Ability (mass heal, slayer's knives, the inner ocean), Pure Blood Magic, Ritual Magic, Superior Element Focus, Void Use.

Dojo: Tribe of Isawa (Training Benefit: Each spell's total metamagic level increase is reduced by one, if the spell is an innate ability)

Spells Known (6/9/9/8/8/8/8/7/7/5 base DC 24 + spell level for all Earth spells, 20 for all other spells, Tribe of Isawa school, Elemental Focus — Water); 0 — create water, cure minor wounds, daze, detect magic, ghost sound, hands of clay, mending, purify food & drink, read magic, summon; 1 — animal friendship, bless, cure light wounds, detect taint, feather fall, sleep; 2 — bo of water, detect thoughts, lesser restoration, levitate, locate object, wisdom and clarity; 3 — dispel magic, haste, the inner ocean, remove curse, remove disease; 4 — air walk, cure critical wounds, immortal steel, locate creature, near to ice; 5 — atonement, dimension door, healing circle, path of the scorpion, spell resistance; 6 — detect passage, greater dispelling, karma, true seeing; 7 — the flow of time; greater restoration, greater scrying, passage into harmony; 8 — mass heal, regenerate, slayer's knives, the waves are ever changing; 9 — elemental swarm (water only), tsunami, walking the way.

Possessions: *amulet of natural armor* +3, *flute of fog*, *bracelet of water walking*, *cloak of charisma* +4, *periapt of wisdom* +6, *ring of protection* +3, +2 *lawful wakizashi*.



DOJI AKIKO

Earth: 2

Willpower: 3

Water: 8

Fire: 3

Intelligence: 4

Air: 4

Void: 5

School/Rank: Isawa Tensai (Water) 5

Honor: 4.3

Glory: 8.8

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Blood of Isawa (allows her to cast blood magic without invoking Fu Leng), Innate Ability (Passage Into Harmony, Suitengu's Embrace, Path to Inner Peace), Standing Invitation, Voice

Disadvantages: True Love (Doji Kurohito)

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, History 4, Intimidation 3, Lore: Shugenja 5, Medicine 2, Meditation 6, Shintao 5, Sincerity 4, Theology 5

Dojo: Tribe of Isawa (Training Benefit: Free Raise on all Innate Abilities)

Spells: Doji Akiko, as the daughter of Isawa and the Crane Champion's wife, has access to nearly any spell she wishes. Both the Phoenix and the Crane allow her access to their Secret Spells, by virtue of her birth and station, and all other spell scrolls are trivial acquisitions for her.

DOJI TANITSU, FACE OF THE CRANE

When Tanitsu was young, his parents introduced him to a young boy named Sezaru, also of high birth. They explained to Tanitsu that Sezaru was a friend, and even before Tanitsu could understand the wisdom of allying himself an Imperial, he became a true friend to the young Emperor's son. After a time, Tanitsu also befriended Sezaru's clever younger brother Naseru, and his beautiful elder sister Tsudao.

Tanitsu's parents were minor palace functionaries who were fervently loyal to the Toturi family. They were overjoyed that their son had become such a trusted friend with the Emperor's children. Though they never forced their child to use his position in the palace for political reasons, it was clear that he would be prominent no matter which child took the throne. They took great pride in the fact that Tanitsu, for his part, never sought to use his friendship with any of the heirs for his own gain. He was a true, honest friend — a resource most Emperors had in short supply and that Toturi's successor would sorely need.

Eventually Tanitsu's relationship with Toturi's oldest child, Tsudao, grew into something more. In their early teenage years, Tanitsu began an awkward, secret childhood romance with Tsudao. The two found love in each other for a brief time, but before their relationship could develop to scandalous proportions Toturi Kaede abruptly ordered her daughter to end the affair. Even Tanitsu could not fool a mother who was both Empress and Oracle. Tsudao, ever the obedient daughter, ended her romance with Tanitsu and distanced herself from him for a time.

As Tanitsu mourned his loss in the gardens of Kyuden Seppun, oblivious to the politics of the end of the War of Spirits that raged around him, Empress Kaede came and spent several minutes with him. The Oracle wished him to know that she understood the young man's feelings, but the future of the Empire was more important. She, who had also sacrificed love for duty, sympathized with the young man.

Impulsively Tanitsu asked her, "What must I do, Empress-sama?"

Her eyes faded to pure white, and in her voice as Oracle of the Void she told him "Seek love, and you shall not find it. Your fate will not be your own to determine."

Tanitsu was heartbroken, but accepted the Oracle's wisdom. He asked permission to be dismissed from court so he could be far from Tsudao, and was granted it. He stayed away for years, and his abrupt absence in the courts cost his station greatly. He received visits from Hantei Naseru and Toturi Sezaru at Kyuden Doji over the years, but even such high-profile guests did little to improve his standing at court, as it was clear he never intended to use his friendships to his own advantage.

Several years later, Tanitsu had resigned himself to a life of disgrace when Kaneka, the Imperial Bastard, was revealed to the Empire. Intrigued by this tale of a fellow outcast shunned by the Imperial Family, he journeyed to Ryoko Owari to meet Kaneka. Kaneka took an instant dislike to Tanitsu, but the young Crane stood up to the Bastard, even rebuking him for his prejudice against the Crane. This impressed Kaneka a great deal, and the shrewd young Akodo soon saw the value in having an educated Crane courtier as an ally. Tanitsu spent the best part of a year with Kaneka, writing *The Forgotten Son*, a book detailing the Imperial Bastard's early life and adventures. The two became friends of a sort.

Tanitsu drew upon the political connections he had left to distribute the book at the next Winter Court. Kaneka's stirring adventures and bold heroism earned him a great deal of respect among those who once despised him, and the insightful book returned Tanitsu to favor. To this day the original copy of *The Forgotten Son* rests in a place of honor at Shiro Akodo, and Kaneka carries a second handwritten manuscript with him in all of his travels.

Tanitsu eventually returned to Otosan Uchi, convinced that his feelings for Tsudao were well buried. He has even selected a bright young courtier, Kakita Nanami, to publicly court to convince himself that he was no longer in love with the Sword. Though he has fooled the court and fooled himself, Nanami knows that Tanitsu's heart still belongs to Toturi's daughter. For her part, Nanami has quietly promised she will not be wed to a man who loves another.

Today, Tanitsu is an honest and cheerful young man completely confident in his courtly skills. His manner of forthrightness has led many to underestimate him, but he can also be an unpredictable opponent and takes quite pleasure in surprising his enemies. He is remarkably intelligent and extremely experienced, especially given his youth. He has the respect and friendship of all four Winds and the respect of such masters of the court as Ide Tadaji, Bayushi Kaukatsu, and Ikoma Sume.

DOJI TANITSU, FACE OF THE CRANE

Male human Crane Courtier 17; CR 17: Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 17d6; hp 75; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (touch 12, flat-footed 17); Att +1 *aiguchi* +9/+4 melee (1d4+1, 19–20/x2); SQ Class Skill — Knowledge (Etiquette), Doji's Beauty, Doji's Blessing, Gossip, The Heart Speaks, Style and Grace, Talent, Voice, Wealth, Whisper from the Soul, Your Life Is Mine; Honor 3; AL LG; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +16; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 20 (26), Maximum Void 2; Height 5 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language-Rokugani, High Rokugani, Naga, Battle +14, Bluff +32, Decipher Script +9, Diplomacy

+33, Games (Kemari) +17, Games (Sadane) +17, Gather Information +24, Hide +7, Iaijutsu Focus +18, Knowledge (Etiquette) +25, Knowledge (History) +19, Knowledge (Law) +14, Knowledge (Local — Crane Lands) +13, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +24, Listen +9, Mimic +13, Read Lips +14, Swim +4, Search +14, Sense Motive +37, Spot +14, Tea Ceremony +14; Dodge, Endurance, Ichi Miru, Leadership, Legendary Beauty (Ancestor: Doji Nariko), Iron Will, Political Maneuvering, Versatile x3 (Battle, Hide, Iaijutsu Focus, Knowledge (Law), Mimic, Swim), Void Use.

Dojo: Kyuden Doji

Possessions: amulet of natural armor +3, haori of resistance +3, kimono of charisma +6, +2 aiguchi, ring of protection +2, ring of warmth.

DOJI TANITSU, FACE OF THE CRANE

Earth: 3

Willpower: 4

Water: 2

Perception: 4

Fire: 4

Air: 5

Awareness: 7

Void: 4

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 5

Honor: 3.7

Glory: 8.2

Advantages: Allies (many), Ancestor: Doji Nariko, Benten's Blessing, Dangerous Beauty.

Disadvantages: True Love (Toturi Tsudao)

Skills: Aiguchi 4, Appraisal 3, Athletics 4, Cadence 3, Courtier 7, Etiquette 6, Falconry 1, Heraldry 4, Horseman-ship 3, Iaijutsu 2, Kemari 3, Kenjutsu 1, Law 5, Manipulation 5, Mimic 2, Oratory 4, Sadane 4, Seduction 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Storytelling 4, Tantojutsu 4

Dojo: Kyuden Doji

DOJI YASUYO, CRANE CLAN HERO

Yasuyo was amid Crane luxury, with servants to attend her every need. When she attended the dojo, she trained with Nakanu-sensei, head of Kyuden Doji. At fifteen she attended her first Winter Court, along with her brother Nagori and her cousin, Kurohito. Though hers was a life of elegance, she never shied from hard work and eagerly looked forward to testing her mettle as a samurai.

When she was sixteen, she passed her gempukku in exemplary fashion. She stayed at the dojo, training for the day when she would be called to serve her clan.

That day came on Yasuyo's twentieth birthday. While she slept, Yasuyo received a message in a dream. Lady Doji, the Crane's founder, came to her and gave her a sacred duty.

"Yasuyo-chan, you must protect Kurohito," she said. "You are my daughter, Kurohito is my son, and my children must protect each other. Take your grandfather's sword, the Raven Sword, and find the mujina Fuhao. He will take you to Kozue, a great sensei." Upon awakening, Yasuyo left Kyuden Doji and set out on her quest without leaving word with any save her brother and cousin. She did not tell either of them why she had to leave, only that she received a duty from Lady Doji herself. Kurohito trusted his cousin not to run off on a fool's errand, and granted her leave. Yasuyo left Crane lands that same day, taking only Naishi and her armor with her.

She found Fuhao easily, though the mujina delighted in

irritating her as she journeyed to find Kozue, the kenku master of the sword. After several tests of patience and faith, Fuhao took her to Kozue, who tested her skill and courtesy. As with her other tests, Yasuyo rose to the occasion, passing every challenge.

The ancient kenku told her of her true quest — how she was destined to use Naishi to break the curse on her cousin's sword, Chukandomo. He told her that only those of Lady Doji's family could defeat the blade, and end the thousand-year curse. He told her what would come of the curse if left unchecked: a fall from glory that would ultimately crush the Doji family forever. Though it frightened her, she did not shrink from the task. Instead, she grew only more determined.

With little time to train, Kozue took her deep into the Spirit Realms, to Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals. Though only a year passed in the mortal realm, Kozue trained her there for seven years. Emerging into Ningen-do, she found herself thrust into a battle for the fate of Otsan-Uchi. This was, she quickly realized, yet another test. Her kenku training and natural talent allowed her to survive and acquit herself admirably, though the days that followed took their toll on her gentle soul.

The curse was finally broken in Violence Behind Courtliness City several months ago, when Yasuyo used Naishi to summon the spirits of all the noble Crane heroes who had wielded the sword before her. Since that day, when Yasuyo achieved her destiny, she has lived her life in Kyuden Doji, as befits a true Crane hero. Though her life is currently peaceful, she awaits again the day when she is called to serve her clan and Emperor.

Some part of her hopes that she is called soon.

DOJI YASUYO, CRANE CLAN HERO

Female Crane Sam19; CR 19: Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 19d10+38; hp 154; Init +9; Spd 20 ft.; AC 31 (touch 13, flat-footed 28); Att Naishi +30/+25/+20/+15 melee (1d10+10, 17–20/x2); SQ Class skill — Knowledge (Etiquette), Ancestral Daisho; Honor 3; AL LG; SV Fort +17 Ref +12 Will +15; Str 16 (22), Dex 16, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 21 Maximum Void 5; Height 5 ft. 5 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language - Rokugani, High Rokugani, Kenku, Battle +19, Climb +8, Diplomacy +10, Gather Information +19, Iaijutsu Focus +27, Intimidate +11, Jump +11, Ride +13, Sense Motive +16, Knowledge (Etiquette) +9, Knowledge (Law) +9, Swim +16, Tea Ceremony +6; Depths of the Void, Dodge, Eternal Vigilance, Heaven's Claw, Improved Initiative, Indefatigable Hero (Ancestor: Doji Hotei), Mobility, Power Attack, The Same Breeze, Tread on the Blade, Versatile (Knowledge (Law), Gather Information), Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus (Katana), Wing of Thunder.

Dojo: Kyuden Doji

Possessions: Naishi (see the mechanics portion of this chapter for information on Naishi), +3 lamellar armor, ring of protection +5, ring of evasion, amulet of natural armor +5, obi of giant strength +6, cloak of resistance +3.

DOJI YASUYO, CRANE CLAN HERO

Earth: 5

Water: 4

Fire: 4

Agility: 5

Air: 5

Void: 6



School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 2/Doji Magistrate 2/Kenku Kenjutsu 3

Honor: 3.8

Glory: 5.6

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Different School (Doji Magistrate, Kenku Kenjutsu), Great Potential (Iaijutsu), Sensei (Kozue)

Disadvantages: Idealistic, Soft Hearted.

Skills: Courtier 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 4, Falconry 2, Heraldry 3, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 4, Lore (Myth and Legend) 4, Katana 6, Kenjutsu 7, Kyujutsu 4, Law 4, Meditation 3, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 3

Dojo: Kyuden Doji

parcel of land to the young samurai. "Tsume" (the "Talon") Kigura built a small stronghold in the Kintani Valley and attracted a small body of samurai to his lands. His family shared the valley with the Lion and the Phoenix in peace for two generations until Kigura's grandson, Doji Retsu, came to power.

Retsu was an aggressive and covetous man who would not be sated with the small territory Kigura had earned. The young daimyo yearned to bring his family prestige and glory by striking out against the Lion. Soon, his canny tactics and powerful charisma led the samurai under his command to begin calling him by his grandfather's nickname. Eventually, it seemed as if the name had never belonged to someone else.

During Retsu's war the Crane seized Kyotei Castle, the home of the Damasu vassal family, and wiped them out to a man. The now-extinct Akodo vassals' lands expanded the Crane territories at the cost of hundreds of lives. While many were impressed with the Crane commander's skill, more were appalled at his unprovoked brutality. From Kyotei, Retsu staged his final assault on the Lion at Toshi Ranbo and claimed the city. The Talon controlled the city only a short time, and as soon as another Crane general arrived, Retsu swiftly conceded command. He knew that even though his Crane brethren deplored his methods they would be forced to grant him some other reward. To do otherwise would admit to all that Doji Retsu had acted outside the Crane Champion's control and yet benefited the clan. Retsu gained status as a vassal lord and made Kyotei Castle the ancestral home of his dynasty. Crane Champion Doji Satsume's endorsement of Retsu's deeds further heightened tensions with the Lion and played a key role in inciting war between the Lion and Crane.

Retsu's chaotic reign would end nearly as soon as it began. During a session of peace talks with both the Lion and the Phoenix, Retsu was assassinated in his own home. Because Retsu's methods had earned him enemies among his own clan, a group of Emerald Magistrates were called in to take over the investigation. The murder was quickly brought to justice and a new daimyo, Tsume Takashi, assumed leadership of the family.

Takashi served the Crane until the death of Toturi I and has brought some honor back to his family's name through fair and just leadership. Recently, he has chosen to retire. His first son, Tsume Akemetsu, now rules.

VASSAL FAMILIES OF THE DOJI

THE TSUME FAMILY

Four generations ago the Tsume family was barely a gleam in the eye of a canny but lowly courtier. Doji Kigura was a simple ji-samurai when he was brought to the home of his lord to participate in Winter Court. Kigura was a humble man whom most thought harmless, but when a rival Bayushi's plot threatened to ruin his lord, Kigura stepped forth and showed a mind as sharp and deadly as a katana. Using subtle manipulation Kigura tore apart the Bayushi's complex web of lies and exposed the Scorpion plot.

In return for his service, Kigura's lord partitioned a small

KYOTEI CASTLE

The Tsume family's ancestral home lies in the heart of Kintani Valley, south of Phoenix territory and east of Lion territory. The valley is still a contested territory between the three clans but the majority of it is under the Tsume's command, to the distaste of many Lion. Since the Tsume are relatively cut-off from the rest of the Crane they quickly learned to exist autonomously. Because Kyotei Castle was an established fortress before Retsu's army conquered it, the Tsume have had little trouble in making it a viable economic center. Now a large town lies just outside the castle gates and supplies the Tsume with virtually everything they need. In recent years, they have even begun exporting rice and grain.

Kyotei Castle's strategic importance has not been lost on the Crane armies. It lies only a short distance from Toshi Ranbo and has been used as a major staging point for the Crane

armies each time the city has been assaulted. The original territories gained by Doji Kigura lie to the south and east of Kyotei castle. While nowhere near as large as the growing Kyotei town, this province brings in its own share of koku. It has just enough military presence support to grant the Tsume a refuge and fallback in times of war.

TSUME DOJO

By far the most important holding the Tsume family controls is the Tsume Pikemen Dojo. Retsu established the dojo's techniques during his assaults on the Lion to counteract their superior cavalry. The actual building of a dojo did not come for some time after Retsu's death. Even then, the building did not last long. When the Lion-Crane conflicts erupted into full-scale war, Takashi was hard pressed to keep the holdings his father had created. Kyotei Castle was assaulted on numerous occasions and each time the dojo's buildings were destroyed. It was not until after the Day of Thunder that Takashi could actually build a permanent home for the unique fighting style his father had created.

Most Tsume train as Tsume Pikemen. They then go on to study with either the Daidoji Bodyguards, or the Doji Magistrates. The Tsume daimyo are normally sent to study under the Kakita Duelists and the current daimyo, Akemetsu, has not broken with that tradition.

Full rules on the Tsume Pikemen can be found in *Time of the Void*.™

THE TSUME FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skill: Battle

Starting Outfit:

1. Masterwork yari.

THE TSUME FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Agility

Glory: 0.5

Special: Members of Tsume family may purchase Heart of Vengeance (Lion) for 1 less point.

THE KATOGAMA FAMILY

Nearly eight hundred years ago, the Crane suffered its first major war and with it the greatest betrayal they have ever had to endure. The Yasuki split and the resulting conflict with the Crab left the Crane with few fond memories of their former brethren. Even more importantly, it left them wary of betrayal within their own clan.

Three hundred years later, as the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban rose to power and threatened the Empire with his dark magics, the Crane felt the sting of betrayal again. Iuchiban's chief lieutenant was a prominent Asahina, and had turned his peaceful family's mastery of Tsangusuri toward crafting the terrible Bloodswords. Doji Hejiko, the Crane Champion, took it upon herself to destroy the traitor. The Asahina was punished for his transgressions and Iuchiban's forces were thrown down, but the ripples of Yajinden's betrayal spread throughout the clan. If even a sworn pacifist like an Asahina could assault the Empire without the Crane Champion's knowledge, did she truly deserve to lead?

Hejiko considered this question for years until she finally came to a difficult decision. She called in two of her greatest retainers — men that had aided in apprehending Yajinden — and shared her quandary. Hejiko informed the two that she

intended to create a safeguard within the clan in an attempt to find all potential traitors to the Crane. Doji Katomara, the older of her two retainers, spoke up and told his lord this action would cause turmoil within the clan. The second retainer, a magistrate named Doji Machigama, agreed and offered up a different solution.

By the night's end, Hejiko had declared the two retainers to be the daimyo and master sensei of a new vassal family. Officially, their duty called for them to journey through the numerous Crane provinces keeping the peace, monitoring troubled areas and reporting back to the Champion. Unofficially, they were to train ji-samurai to become effective spies loyal only to the vassal lords and the current Crane Champion. Thus were the Katogama born.

The current Katogama daimyo is a talented samurai named Seishiro, who has impressed Lord Kurohito with his abilities. He currently commands a number of samurai near the border of Akodo Kaneka's new territory. His official duty is to watch the Shogun's every move, but he also sends back reports concerning the loyalty of various Crane commanders under his charge.

SHIRO KATOGAMA

The Katogama estates are located to the north and east of Kyuden Doji. The provinces overlap slightly with the Doji lands, and the vassals share their resources openly with their parent family. Shiro Katogama is a small castle built only to host small assemblies of courtiers and dignitaries. The castle has no strategic value and has never been attacked. Even during the Clan War the castle stood untouched, though most of the Katogama were called away to defend the Doji family's more crucial holdings.

The only other holding of any importance to the Katogama is the Aieteru Mori, a forest that borders their homeland. The Katogama use the forest as a retreat and are careful to cultivate the trees rather than log them out. Many small shrines dot the wooded terrain and pathways in the forest. Katogama vassals typically spend their last days at home before a mission in these woods praying and relaxing.

KATOGAMA DOJO

Settled far from Shiro Katogama deep within the Empty Forest is the small Katogama dojo. Due to the family's dual nature they are reluctant to allow outsiders into the school. Doji Kurohito rarely visits the dojo of Katogama, mostly because the sensei there continuously send missives updating him on their current status. This does not mean that the Katogama do not allow visitors to their school. They simply do not demonstrate certain aspects of their techniques while visitors are present.

For the most part, the school is used as a command center for the family's activities. The school's master sensei has always resided within the dojo. This allows the family to have someone available to receive reports from the Katogama daimyo no matter where he resides. It also ensures that someone of rank will always direct the family and allow for no gaps in leadership. The current master sensei, Katogama Mika, is the previous daimyo's sister and normally has more interactions with the family than Doji Seishiro.

Classes: Samurai, Fighter, Courtier

Schools: Doji Magistrate, Doji Courtier, Kakita Bushi

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Benefit: Characters trained at Katogama Dojo gain a +2 bonus when attempting to use the Diplomacy or Sense Motive skill on someone within the Crane clan.

Benefit: Characters trained at Katogama Dojo gain a Free Raise when making Manipulation rolls against a member of the Crane clan.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Benefit: The Katogama sensei have devised training programs that enable their students to capitalize on their family's vast knowledge of other Crane techniques. When a Katogama character begins training in his dojo he may choose one additional school within the Crane clan. The Know the School benefit the character gains for his own dojo applies to this secondary choice as well.

Benefit: The Katogama sensei have devised training programs that enable their students to capitalize on their family's vast knowledge of other Crane techniques. When a Katogama character begins training in his dojo he may choose one additional school within the Crane clan. The free rank of Know the School the character gains for his own dojo applies to this secondary choice as well.

THE KATOGAMA FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skill: Sense Motive

Starting Outfit:

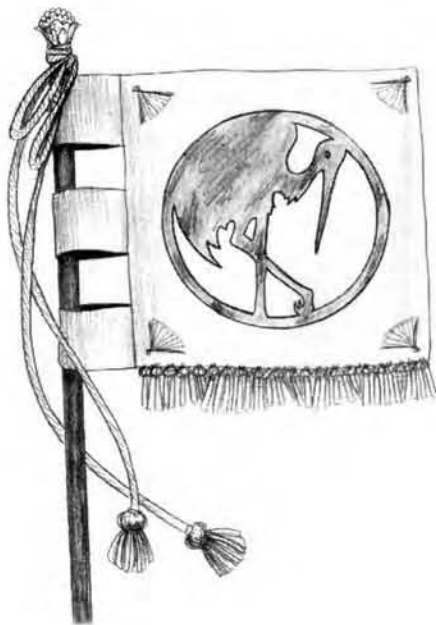
1. Light horse, saddlebags, riding saddle, bit and bridle, and badge of office.

THE KATOGAMA FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Perception

Glory: 0.5

Special: Katogama characters may replace one of their starting skills with the Manipulation skill at the start of character creation.



DOJI MECHANICS

ANCESTORS

The revered ancestors of the Doji family are a diverse lot, including swordsmen, artists, scholars, and politicians. One thing unites all of these men and women — excellence. To do one thing and do it well excuses a great many sins in the Doji's eyes. Even individuals who turn their back on tradition yet attain greatness are fondly remembered. After all, are not the Doji the architects of tradition?

DOJI HARANOBU

Doji Haranobu was one of Lady Doji's favorite vassals. When the time came for Doji Mioko to marry the Hantei, Haranobu swore that he and his brothers would always protect her. They became the Empress' Guard, an elite force of yojimbo dedicated to the Empress' safety. Haranobu died a hero, protecting the Empress. Decades ago Haranobu returned through Oblivion's Gate to reunite the scattered Empress' Guard, and died once more helping them reestablish their place in the Empire. [d20 begin]

HONOR GUARD

ANCESTOR FEAT: DOJI HARANOBU

You possess indefatigable vigilance in the face of distractions.

Clan: Crane

Benefit: You gain a resistance bonus equal to your Honor on any saving throw against an effect that would force you to perform a dishonorable act. If you already failed an initial save vs. an effect (such as *charm person*) and you are forced to perform a dishonorable act, you are entitled to another save vs. the original DC.

DOJI HARANOBU

(2 POINTS)

You may spend any amount of Void Points when making a Test of Honor.

DOJI HOTURI

Though he is primarily remembered for his heroism on the Day of Thunder, Doji Hoturi was a brilliant poet, diplomat, and painter as well as an expert duelist and general. He was the quintessential Doji, the example all others strive to attain. Hoturi never admitted defeat, overcoming torture, deceit, and his own clan's lack of faith in him with the rise of the False Hoturi. He died on the Day of Thunder, but not before dealing Fu Leng a killing blow.

SOUL OF HOTURI

ANCESTOR FEAT: DOJI HOTURI

You possess Hoturi's legendary charm, wit and talent with the sword.

Clan: Crane

Benefit: When using this feat, you may add your Charisma bonus to any attack roll or add your Dexterity bonus to any Charisma-related skill check. You may use this feat once per day per four levels you have attained, minimum one.

DOJI HOTURI

(6 POINTS)

Once per day per Insight Rank you may roll an additional number of dice equal to your Awareness on any Bugei Skill or roll an additional number of dice equal to your Reflexes on any High Skill.

DOJI NARIKO

In her time, Doji Nariko's beauty was a legend throughout the Empire. On the day of her gempukku, a vision of Lady Doji came to her and asked of her a simple vow — that she would only marry once. Nariko agreed, overjoyed that Doji would choose to visit one as humble as herself. She married a handsome Kakita lord and was happy, until Hantei XVI took a fancy to her. The Steel Chrysanthemum sent her husband on a suicide mission among the Yobanjin tribes and forced Nariko to marry him. Nariko could not live with herself, having broken her vow to Lady Doji. Neither could she live with herself for hating the Emperor, cruel and evil man that he was. Nariko threw herself from the cliffs of White Stag, escaping the Emperor's grasp. A young Otomo poet who had also fallen in love with her beauty and despised the Hantei wrote a song in tribute to her courage, a song that quietly spread among those who stood against the cruel Emperor and gave fuel to their righteous anger. Though she was no warrior, Doji Nariko is nonetheless remembered as a hero. The fact that she defied an Emperor is politely ignored whenever the Imperial Families visit her shrine.

LEGENDARY BEAUTY

ANCESTOR FEAT: DOJI NARIKO

You possess beauty that others would die for, fight for, and kill for.

Clan: Crane

Prerequisite: Cha 15+, Void Use

Benefit: As a partial action you may spend a Void Point to verbally encourage any individual within thirty feet. The selected individual gains a +1 morale

bonus to attack rolls, Will saves, and skill checks for every four levels you have attained (minimum one). This bonus lasts for a number of rounds equal to your Charisma modifier. If the individual is attracted to you, the bonus is increased by +1. This is a mind-affecting, language-based ability.

DOJI NARIKO

(3 POINTS)

When taking the Full Defense action, you may spend a Void Point to verbally encourage any individual of the same race and opposite sex within thirty feet. The selected individual adds your Insight Rank to all rolls for a number of rounds equal to your Awareness. If the individual is attracted to you, they also gain a Free Raise to be used at any time during this period.

EMPRESS' GUARD

Throughout the Empire's history, it has been rare for the Emperor to choose any spouse but a Doji. For this reason, the Crane have always seen it as their responsibility to serve as the Empress' Guard. Only the most influential Doji were considered for this honor, and of those only the most talented swordsmen were granted permission to give their lives for the Empress. These men and women were referred to as the Empress Guard.

The Crane Clan viewed the Empress' Guard as the perfect warriors, those who could wield a pen as expertly as the sword and served their Empire in the highest station imaginable.

Then, during the time of Hantei XXXVIII the Empress Guard met their downfall. When the Empress was kidnapped and slaughtered by the Bloodspeakers, the Guard served no further purpose. When Hantei XXXVIII was later assassinated, his successor chose a Scorpion as his bride. The Empress' Guard would not protect Kachiko, and the new Emperor did not even recall the Guard's existence. The Empress' Guard retreated into shame and solitude.

They were forgotten.

During the War of Spirits, Doji Haranobu, founder of the Empress' Guard returned through Oblivion's Gate. Haranobu would not serve the Steel Chrysanthemum, an Emperor who in his lifetime had caused the suicide of his Doji wife. Instead, Haranobu sought out the heirs to his legacy. When he found the Guard scattered in shame and obscurity, he was outraged. Haranobu scoured the Empire for the surviving Guard, reunited them, and renewed their faith in themselves. Though most surviving members were now past well their prime, Haranobu's example inspired them. They agreed to take up their swords reunite



TABLE 3-1: THE EMPRESS' GUARD

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Endless Vigil
2nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Empress' Grace
3rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Technique Feat
4th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Bonus Feat
5th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Haranobu's Blessing

the Guard for one last triumphant ride. A few of the former guardsmen were joined by younger sons or vassals, who would not let the Guard ride into glory alone. Even a young samurai named Doji Masazumi, a direct descendant of the legendary Haranobu, stepped forth to join the Guard.

Their opportunity came in 1140. An influential Doji spirit of Haranobu's acquaintance betrayed the Steel Chrysanthemum with news of a secret ambush. The Steel Chrysanthemum's ninja planned to attack Empress Kaede's caravan. Making use of a powerful magical lamp acquired in gaijin lands, the assassins believed they could bind the kami from in area and negate Kaede's magical powers long enough to murder her and kidnap her infant son, Naseru. There was no time to warn the Imperial Legions—it fell to the Empress' Guard to protect the Empress once more.

Just as Kaede's guard were overwhelmed, the Empress' Guard appeared to turn the tide. Haranobu was mortally wounded and many elderly guardsman were slain. A desperate arrow fired by Doji Masazumi shattered the assassin's lamp. Kaede's magic issued forth with vengeful anger, destroying the remaining attackers. Even so, it was too late to heal Haranobu's wounds. As the old samurai died, Kaede promised that his legacy would not die with him. The Empress' Guard was reborn in the role they were meant to fulfill, with the survivors passing on Haranobu's teachings. The Guard would always protect the Empress, even if that Empress was no Doji. The Guard no longer excludes those of low rank as it once did. After spending so long out of favor, the Guard have recognized that talent and high birth do not always go hand in hand. Their numbers have grown as well, from a handful to nearly a hundred dedicated samurai.

After Kaede's disappearance, the Empress' Guard were disheartened and confused. When Toturi Tsudao declared herself Empress and allied with the Crane, their path was clear once more. Now the Empress Guard stand in watch over Toturi Tsudao's interests both in Kyuden Seppun and across the Empire. As the current Empress is fully capable of taking care of herself, the Guard are frequently dispatched on missions on her behalf. They are loyal to a man, ready and eager to die for the Lady of the Sun, Toturi the Second.

EMPRESS' GUARD (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The Empress' Guard serve as the Empress's most loyal agents. Though at the moment they serve Toturi the Second (Toturi Tsudao) they would just as willingly offer their fealty to any woman the Empire recognized as Empress. Though the Empress' Guard are no longer quite so elite as they were in the past (they will allow samurai of low birth among their ranks and even occasionally accept non-Crane) they still require all members to be well educated as well as talented swordsmen.

Hit die: d12

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a member of the Empress' Guard, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base attack bonus: +4 or better.

Sense Motive: 8 ranks.

Spot: 4 ranks.

Iaijutsu Focus: 8 ranks.

Listen: 4 ranks.

Knowledge (etiquette): 4 ranks.

Feats: Must have at least three feats that count as Technique Feats for your clan, not including Void Use or Depths of the Void. Non-Crane characters must have the Multiple Schools (Crane) feat.

Honor: Must be honorable.

Alignment: Must be lawful.

Special: Must be sponsored and trained by an existing member of the Empress' Guard. Must swear to protect the Empress even at the cost of your own honor and life.

CLASS SKILLS

The Empress' Guard's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Battle (Wis), Climb (Str), Diplomacy (Cha), Iaijutsu Focus (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Jump (Str), Knowledge (etiquette), Knowledge (nobility and royalty), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Ride (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Spot (Wis), Tea Ceremony (Wis). The Iaijutsu Focus skill is described in Chapter 4 of *Oriental Adventures*. The Tea Ceremony skill is described in *Rokugan*.™

Skill Points per Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Empress' Guard prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: The Empress' Guard is proficient in all Simple and Martial weapons as well as with Light, Medium, and Heavy armor. Note that armor check penalties for armor heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket, and Tumble.

Endless Vigil (Ex): At 1st level the Empress' Guard never wavers when protecting his charge. He requires only half the sleep of a normal person, and can go for up to three days without any sleep at all. (Rest requirements for the purposes of possible spellcasting abilities are unchanged.) Also at first level the Empress' Guard gains a +2 to all attack rolls, melee damage rolls, and skill checks in the presence of the Empress.

Empress' Grace (Ex): Beginning at 2nd level, a member of the Empress' Guard applies his Honor as a modifier to all saving throws.

Technique Feat: At 3rd level the Empress' Guard gains any technique feat available to the Crane Clan.

Bonus Feat: At 4th level the Empress' Guard may choose one of the following feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Run, and Toughness.

Haranobu's Blessing (Ex): At fifth level, the Empress' Guard can no longer be caught flat-footed or flanked by enemies with lower Honor or Nil Honor. Also, the attack, melee damage, and skill check bonuses when in the Empress' presence increase to +5.

EMPRESS' GUARD (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 3

Path of Entry: Kakita Bushi 2 or Doji Magistrate 2.

Path of Egress: Either Kakita Bushi or Doji Magistrate, beginning with the lowest Rank the character has not yet achieved.

Technique: Haranobu's Blessing — You require only half the sleep of a normal person and can go for up to three days without any sleep at all. You add your honor total to all melee attack rolls and Perception rolls and gain a number of Free Raises per day equal to your Honor, which can be distributed as you please. When in the presence of the Empress you gain a number of additional Free Raises per day equal to your Insight Rank.

MAGIC ITEMS OF THE DOJI

LADY DOJI'S TEARS

Also called the Tears of the Emperor, there are multiple legends regarding the origins of these rare nemuranai. One telling holds that Lady Doji wept these tears upon hearing of her brother Fu Leng's death. Another tale claims that they are tears of joy, shed by the first Hantei after laying eyes upon his future bride, Doji Mioko, and given to the Crane Champion to secure her marriage. A third tale holds that they were crafted by the father of Asahina Yajinden, the notorious Bloodspeaker, in penance for the evil works crafted by his son's hands.

It is quite possible that all of these tales are true, as there are multiple Tears scattered throughout the Empire. Four are known to be in the possession of Toturi Sezaru, and Kakita Noritoshi, master of the Kakita Dueling Academy, currently holds another one. Two more are in the possession of Daidoji Reikai, and another six are well guarded in Kyuden Doji.

The tears are crafted of clear jade and about the size of robin's egg. The tears shine subtly with their own light, and feel slightly warm to the touch.

LADY DOJI'S TEARS

Each jade tear provides its wearer unlimited protection against the Shadowlands Taint while in the Shadowlands. Carrying one is effectively the same as carrying a finger of jade, except that the tears never rot. The bearer can still accrue Taint through other means such as injury, use of maho, and the abilities of Shadowlands creatures. The tears are extremely fragile, and any tear that is broken bursts in a flash of green light and provides no further protective abilities.

Any tear broken against the flesh of a Shadowlands creature is immediately destroyed, and utterly removes all Taint from the target. In the case of hostile creatures

this may require a ranged touch attack; the tears can be effectively thrown up to ten feet. If the attack is successful, the creature immediately loses the Shadowlands subtype. In the case of natural Shadowlands denizens such as oni, this does not guarantee the creature will no longer be hostile, merely that it will no longer have the Shadowlands subtype. The target is not immune to regaining the Taint in the future. Oni Lords and other unique Shadowlands creatures are immune to this effect.

Any tear broken against a corrupted magical item immediately removes all Shadowlands Taint from that item and strips it of all magical abilities it gained after it was corrupted. Corrupted artifacts are immune to this effect.

LADY DOJI'S TEARS

Each jade tear provides its wearer unlimited protection against the Shadowlands Taint while in the Shadowlands. Carrying one is effectively the same as carrying a finger of jade, except that the tears never rot. The bearer can still accrue Taint through other means such as injury, use of maho, and the abilities of Shadowlands creatures. The tears are extremely fragile, and any tear that is broken bursts in a flash of green light and provides no further protective abilities.

Any tear broken against the flesh of a Shadowlands creature is immediately destroyed, and utterly removes all Taint from the target. In the case of hostile creatures this may require a ranged attack; the tears can be effectively thrown up to ten feet. If the attack is successful, the creature immediately loses all Taint. In the case of natural Shadowlands denizens such as oni, this does not guarantee the creature will no longer be hostile, merely that it will no longer have the Taint. The target is not immune to regaining the Taint in the future. Oni Lords and other unique Shadowlands creatures are immune to this effect.

Any tear broken against a corrupted magical item immediately removes all Shadowlands Taint from that item and strips it of all magical abilities it gained after it was corrupted. Corrupted artifacts are immune to this effect.

NIO'S KIMONO

Doji Nio was the second son of Lady Doji, a master of diplomacy and economics. He was among the great pioneers of Rokugani culture. His sister Konishiko, the Crane Thunder, wove Nio's favorite kimono. When Nio heard of his sister's death, he never wore the kimono again. When Nio lay on his deathbed, he asked that his son keep the kimono, and wear it whenever he required his father's guidance.

Over the centuries the kimono has shown little wear. When Kyuden Doji burned during the Clan War, the kimono was later discovered unscathed among the rubble. The kimono is among the Crane's most treasured artifacts. The Doji family daimyo often lends this kimono to courtiers undertaking a mission of great importance on the clan's behalf. Crane Champions who receive the Emperor as a guest usually greet him while wearing this kimono.

Nio's kimono is a pale sky blue that shimmers brightly in direct light. The sleeves are worked with images of swirling clouds and the back features a crane in flight. The obi that accompanies the kimono was long since lost, and thus it is a matter of taste which obi the wearer chooses to accompany the kimono. Only the finest work is acceptable to comple-

ment such a garment. Anyone who wears an inferior or distasteful obi with Nio's Kimono receives no magical benefits.

NIO'S KIMONO

Nio's kimono grants its wearer a +4 enhancement bonus to Charisma and a +6 bonus to all Will saves. The wearer may also use the Your Life is Mine courtier ability three times per day. If he already possesses this ability, he may use it an additional three times per day and the save DC is increased by 4. So long as the wearer carries no weapons but the wakizashi and makes no threatening movements (including drawing the wakizashi) he cannot be surprised and all attackers must make a Will save (DC 23) or be unable to attack him that round. The kimono is considered an artifact.

NIO'S KIMONO

Nio's kimono increases its wearer's Awareness by 2 when worn (this has no affect on Insight, though it may change the wearer's Air Ring). The wearer can use the Rank 5 Doji Courtier School Technique (described in Way of the Crane) three times per day. If the wearer already possess this technique, the TN to resist it is increased by 10. So long as the wearer carries no weapons but the wakizashi and makes no threatening movements (including drawing the wakizashi) all attackers must make a Willpower roll vs. TN 30 or be unable to attack him that round. The kimono is apparently indestructible, though it grants no additional protective properties to its wearer.

NAISHI

Naishi was the last blade forged by Doji Yasurugi. Unlike the other four blades, Yasurugi was not alone in the creation of this weapon, but was aided by Kozue, his kenku teacher. Shortly after the blade was completed, it was given to the kenku as a gift. From time to time, Kozue has returned the blade, always when a Crane hero was in great need. As soon as the need for the sword is complete, the blade is returned.

The sword was most recently carried by Doji Yasuyo, in her quest to help her cousin, Crane Champion Doji Kurohito, break the curse upon its sister blade, Chukandomo. Kozue has not yet asked for her to return the blade.

NAISHI

Naishi is a +5 ghost touch katana of speed. It is an intelligent sword with the following statistics: Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16, Honor 5, Lawful Good Alignment, Ego 22. The sword is linked to the spirits of Crane heroes who have wielded it in the past. When the current wielder is in need, the spirits can provide assistance, but only if the wielder is honorable. This can take the form of any shugenja spell of up to fifth level, targeted on the wielder. The wielder cannot control when this happens, it is entirely the discretion of the spirits. Shugenja who can open passages to Yomi can allow these spirits to enter the physical world as shiryō, where they have all the power and influence described in *Creatures of Rokugan*. Naishi is an artifact.

THE YASURUGI BLADES

The five legendary blades of Doji Yasurugi and the order they were forged are as follows:

Kunshu — Given to Genji, the son of Hantei. The sword is currently in the possession of the Otomo family.

Shukujo — The Ancestral Sword of the Crane, now set in the heavens forever as a brilliant star.

Chukandomo — Forged to stem the hatred between Lion and Crane, Chukandomo was lost to the sea and cursed. It was wielded by Doji Kurohito, who broke the curse and gave the sword to Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro as a gift.

Kanpeki — Forged but never wielded, Kanpeki was placed in the Crane vaults for centuries. It was recently given to the Emerald Champion, Yasuki Hachi.

Naishi — Forged for the kenku swordmaster, Kozue. Kozue claims that this sword has appeared in the hands of many Crane heroes throughout the centuries, but the sword is always returned when the need for it has passed so records are sparse.

NAISHI

Naishi is a Superior Quality katana, inflicting 5k5 damage and granting its wielder an extra attack per round. The sword can strike and damage any ghost or spirit. When the current wielder is in need, the spirits can provide assistance, but only if the wielder has three or more Honor. This can take the form of any shugenja spell of up to Rank 3, targeted on the wielder. The wielder cannot control when this happens, it is entirely the discretion of the spirits. Shugenja who can open passages to Yomi can allow these spirits to enter the physical world as shiryō, where they have all the power and influence described in *Fortunes and Winds*.

CHUKANDOMO

Chukandomo was the third sword forged by Doji Yasurugi, and its tale is the most tragic of all five blades. Yasurugi had intended to give the blade to the Lion as a gift to stem the hatred that was already building between the two clans. When Yasurugi died, the gift was delayed, and when the sword was finally delivered a freak storm sank the ship that carried it. Since that day the sword's spirit has been bitter and angry, resentful of the great destiny it has been forever denied. Any who wield the blade gain great power, but at great risk. Should they fail to meet the sword's high standards, Chukandomo summons the spirits of all others who have failed wielding the blade to destroy them.

The sword's curse has lost its tooth thanks to Doji Yasuyo and its last wielder, Doji Kurohito. The band of tormented spirits that were tied to the blade have been freed, leaving the sword with little power to back up its threats. In time, perhaps, the sword could grow strong once more from the failure of its wielders. Or, perhaps, the sword's spirit may overcome its bitterness and become a legendary weapon once more.

The sword is currently in the Matsu family's possession, given to the Lion as a gift by Doji Kurohito shortly after he broke the curse.

THE CHAMPION DOJI

CHUKANDOMO

Chukandomo is a +5 keen, lawful, honorable katana. It is an intelligent sword with the following statistics: Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18, Honor 4, Lawful Evil Alignment, Ego 24. The sword grants its wielder a +2 bonus to all ability scores while carried and grants a +4 insight bonus to AC. The sword is content to let its wielder make decisions, but carries a harsh punishment for failure. Chukandomo is linked to the spirits of samurai who have failed to live up to the sword's high standards in the past, and were slain by it. When the current wielder fails to live up to Chukandomo's expectations, the sword summons 4d10 Toshigoku spirits (see *Creatures of Rokugan™*) to destroy the wielder. The sword will then assert its ego to prevent the wielder from fleeing, fighting, or dropping the blade. If the wielder is killed by these spirits or dies in the midst of terrible failure while carrying the blade, his soul is bound to the blade and cannot be resurrected. Naishi is an artifact.

Note: At the current point in canon continuity, the Toshigoku spirits bound to Chukandomo have been released, negating the sword's ability to enforce its curse. In time, Chukandomo may decide to forego its curse and overcome the bitterness that has been its lot until now.

CHUKANDOMO

Chukandomo is a Superior Quality katana, inflicting 5k5 damage plus an additional number of damage dice rolled and kept equal to 5 minus the target's Honor. The sword allows its wielder to roll three additional dice on all Bugei skills while carried and increase the wielder's TN to be Hit by 10. The sword is powerful, but carries a harsh punishment for failure. Chukandomo is linked to the spirits of samurai who have failed to live up to the sword's high standards in the past, and were slain by it. When the current wielder fails to live up to Chukandomo's expectations, the sword summons 4–40 Toshigoku spirits (see *Fortunes and Winds™*) to destroy the wielder. The wielder must make a Willpower roll vs. TN 25 each round or be unable to flee, defend himself, fight, or drop Chukandomo so long as he holds the sword. If the wielder is killed by these spirits or dies in the midst of terrible failure while carrying the blade, his soul is bound to the blade and cannot be reincarnated. Naishi is an artifact.

Note: At the current point in canon continuity, the Toshigoku spirits bound to Chukandomo have been released, negating the sword's ability to enforce its curse. In time, Chukandomo may decide to forego its curse and overcome the bitterness that has been its lot until now.

SHIZUKA TOSHI (NEW DOJO)

Classes: Courtier, Mastermind
Schools: Doji Courtier

SHIZUKA TOSHI BENEFITS

The Doji Academy at Shizuka Toshi is among the most elite learning institutions in a clan that prides itself on excellence. The courtiers who attend this school are well respected both at home and abroad.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

As the most elite Doji courtier school, the students of Shizuka Toshi are highly respected among their clan.

Benefit: You gain a +2 circumstance bonus on all Diplomacy checks with members of the Doji family

Benefit: You may add your Insight rank to all Diplomacy and Courtier rolls during social interactions with members of the Doji family.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Though trained in seclusion, all player characters trained at Shizuka Toshi will have attended a Winter Court in at least one foreign province, giving them important contacts throughout the Empire.

Benefit: You begin play with a minor ally in a clan of the GM's choice. This individual will provide small favors, advice, and aid when you are in need, but will not dishonor or bankrupt himself for your welfare. With time and proper role-playing, this individual may become more inclined to help you.

Benefit: You receive one free Minor Ally in a clan of the GM's choice. If you wish, you may make this a Major Ally, receiving a 2-point reduction in the costs of that Advantage.



THE DOJO

CHAPTER FOUR:

THE KAKITA

SILK AND STEEL
PART FIVE

Despite the impression he often attempted to give others, Hatori was a patient man. Trained by both the Ikoma spymasters and the iron-willed Miya shisha, the old courtier was quite capable of biding his time for events to come to pass. Given the events of past months, Hatori's patience was wearing dangerously thin.

"Perhaps we should find the messenger and ask him who dispatched the missive, Hatori-sama," Otomo Taneji said, sitting across from Hatori in the garden. The two had been waiting the better part of the day for an unnamed party. Taneji could easily tell his lord was not in a mood to be trifled with, and did not wish to directly imply that the message was a forgery. . . or worse, another Shadowed Tower trick.

Hatori's eyes flickered to his vassal in annoyance before he stared once again vaguely in the direction of Shiro sano Kakita. He wasn't looking at anything that could be seen by the outside world, but replaying memories in his mind. Things he could have done to prevent this. . .

"No," the shisha said flatly after a moment. The message bore no chop or any signifier of identity, but that it was enough to gain them entry to the Kakita gardens indicated it had been written by someone with better things to do than lead Hatori to a false meeting.

"A fine afternoon for a brisk walk," a voice came from nowhere.

Hatori's attention snapped back to reality and he saw an aged man in Crane robes standing perhaps five feet behind Taneji. His long white hair hung unbraided around his shoulders. His kind

eyes shone with a pleasant, mischievous look. Given his karo's sudden movement away from the voice and the rare startled look on his face, Taneji had not heard the newcomer approach, either.

"Fortunes!" Hatori swore in surprise. The Miya rose slowly to his feet and did not attempt to hide the grin on his face. "Kakita Munemori!" Hatori nearly laughed the name.

Taneji scrambled to his feet as well as he could without looking more flustered than he already did. He smoothed his kimono and took a step to stand beside his lord. The fact that this was the first time he had heard Hatori laugh since they had left the Crab lands was not lost on him, but he remained silent.

The old Crane also laughed quietly and bowed with the respect one friend gives another. "Yes, yes, Hatori-san. Still warm is the wrinkled skin beneath these expensive silks," Munemori said, giving the Miya a smirk. "Does it surprise you so?"

Hatori returned the gesture and motioned for the Crane to sit. "No, no, old man. I had feared you may have been lost in the attack on Otosan Uchi, but I think my own continued existence in the mortal realm is proof enough the Fortunes protect old fools," he said. The words brought a sorely needed bit of humor to his eyes, and he continued, "I am afraid I am here to meet someone else, but stay a moment, please. I would at least find out where you are staying now that. . ." the shisha's hand motioned vaguely towards the horizon in the direction of Otosan Uchi.

Taneji was somewhat surprised at Hatori's complete change of demeanor within the space of a few heartbeats. Given the Miya's near total disregard for composing himself like a diplomat, Taneji assumed the two were close friends.

"Do you think your attendant would mind if I took his seat, then?" Munemori said, chiding Hatori lightly.

Hatori's face darkened a moment. "I. . . I apologize, Munemori-

san. I have not been... well. This is Otomo Taneji, son of Shikan."

"I am honored to meet you, Kakita Munemori-sama. I have heard of your reputation in the Imperial Court." The Otomo bowed low to the Crane courtier and said earnestly, "I was aware Hatori-sama had influential friends, but I seem to not know the half of it."

"An Otomo's flattery, mixed with your own style of honesty, Hatori-sama." Munemori said with a smile toward the young courtier. He seated himself carefully, grunting as his old bones popped. "I am happy that my years are so numbered, or I think I may have to fear this young one some day."

Taneji lowered his head, wordlessly accepting the praise.

"Some day?" Hatori spoke, resuming his sitting position. "You would do well not to underestimate the abilities of Taneji and his generation." The Miya raised an eyebrow at his old friend, "Or have you forgotten how you and I took advantage of the courts in our youth?"

Munemori's face adopted a look of mock gravity, "We were young once?" he asked. "I seem to recall... yes. It used to be easier to wake up in the morning," the Kakita smiled broadly as a servant appeared and laid out a small pot of tea with three cups. The servant worked deftly, and was gone almost as quickly as anyone had noticed his intrusion. "Now," Munemori said, lifting the pot and offering it to Hatori, "You said you were meeting someone?"

The old Miya gently pushed his cup toward his friend and nodded. "Hai, Munemori," was all he said.

When Hatori's cup was full, the Crane wordlessly offered tea to Taneji. The younger courtier gratefully accepted, but knew he would be too intent on observing the two elder samurai to actually drink anything.

"I see," Munemori said, raising an eyebrow at Hatori. "The great orator and storyteller, Miya Hatori, reduced to a simple 'Hai, Munemori'. You must be unwell." He paused for a moment as his face grew more serious. "How fortunate for you, then, that I am the one that called you here."

Neither Hatori nor Taneji were much surprised by the revelation, as an important figure such as Munemori was not likely to be strolling through the gardens for no particular reason. Hatori reached into his obi and laid the message out between himself and the Kakita. "So, old friend," he began slowly, "You know what has happened to my family, then." His words were laced with suspicion.

Munemori nodded sadly, "I do, Hatori-san. And I believe I can help you, but you must trust me. I know you are wary of so-called friends right now, and you have every right to be. How could I have known of such dark events when the Scorpion have taken great pains to conceal the corruption eating at their heart?" Munemori lowered his voice. "You must be wondering if I am yet another spy or another sent to manipulate you for the benefit of the Tower." he looked at Taneji questioningly.

"Hai," Hatori said, nodding soberly. Hatori leaned forward slightly and narrowed his eyes, "You are my friend, Munemori, but I cannot help but wonder at the things you have just said. How can I know that this is not another trick?"

Munemori smiled broadly, and Hatori recognized the almost feral look of triumph on his old friend's face, the expression he always displayed just before defeating a hated rival. "How could I have known? Let us just say you are not the only one with powerful allies. We share a common cause, and I will see to it both of us benefit not just from your wife's rescue, but from the fall of the Shadowed Tower." The Crane paused a moment, then relaxed his expression into an easy grin once more. "It may make you more at ease to know my motives are, as ever, entirely selfish. It just so happens that right now helping you benefits me as well. Does that not comfort you, to deal with someone honest about his self-interest for once?"

The Miya looked down at his cup for a moment, then back at his old friend. His grin mirrored the Kakita's. "Oddly enough," Hatori spoke, "it truly does."

THE KAKITA PROVINCES

As the second most powerful Crane family, many wonder at the relatively small number of holdings and scattered geography of the Kakita lands. When the Crane Clan was founded, the lands set aside for them by the Emperor were evenly split between the Doji and Kakita houses. When Yasuki was given her own family line, Kakita granted her lands to call her own from the parcel given to him by Hantei. When the Daidoji were founded, they were ceded lands by both Doji and Kakita, though the Kakita were willing to give up more of their territory - their passion was their art, not government. Finally, the children of Isawa Asahina were also given much of their land from the Kakita's southern regions to grant them the isolation they sought.

The scattered Kakita provinces are wedged between other family holdings across the Crane lands. The Kakita claim lands in the cold peninsula in south Rokugan and in the temperate eastern fields near Imperial Lands. The Kakita do not mind being so widely distributed, and there is no political disparity among their provinces as there is in the Doji lands. If anything, the Crane have benefited from having the Kakita family's legendary swordsmen and craftsmen nearby in all of their territories.

MAJOR KAKITA HOLDINGS

SHIRO SANO KAKITA

(LOCATION CR2)

Shiro Kakita. Kyuden Kakita. Shiro sano Kakita. Every samurai knows of the Kakita's perfection in the arts and their tales are so widespread that Shiro sano Kakita has taken on many names. The Kakita's ancestral home is the crown jewel of Crane strongholds. While Kyuden Doji may be more opulent and the Asahina Temples more serene, Shiro sano Kakita represents the simple perfection and versatility of the Crane. Honorable bushi train here alongside artisans and courtiers, and visitors from every clan can be seen on the stronghold's grounds on any given day.

Unlike many noble families, the Kakita house much of their important building here in their ancestral home. The Artisan Academy is here along with the Kakita Dueling Academy, two dojo famous throughout the Empire. Students from every clan flock here to study under the Kakita masters, and only those with great talent or powerful influence are allowed to remain.

Generations ago, a powerful curse was placed on the castle by the Grand Master of the Elements. The Grand Master announced his intentions to visit the Kakita, and they eagerly kept the stronghold's gates open and awaited his arrival. A year later, the Grand Master approached the gates, only to have them blown shut before him by a fierce wind. Angered, he cursed the castle so that any Crane born within the castle's walls when the gates were closed could not touch steel, lest they turn the blades of the Crane against one another.

HIGHWAYS OF THE KAKITA PROVINCES

The Emperor's Road (connects CN2 to A8) — Among the first lengths of the Emperor's Road, this highway connects Shiro sano Kakita to Otosan Uchi through the West Hub Village (A8). Until recently, it was easily among the most splendid and well-used roads in all of Rokugan. Since the Imperial City's destruction, there is little use for a road that leads from the Kakita ancestral home to a burned out husk of a city.

Path of Cold Winds (connects CN9 to A19) — This highway is of great importance to the Kakita, as it is the only overland connection the Crane family has to their most important trading port. The Path of Cold Winds is constantly maintained with as much koku as necessary, though it does not see much use due to its way through the mountains. The Kakita find this road expensive enough to maintain even without attempting to carve a path through the Spine of the World. Crane patrols are assisted by the ronin of Daidoji Yukan-se tower.

The Way of Silk (connects CN10 to A19) — A large amount silk used by the Kakita is imported from the Mantis Islands and brought inland through Aketsu. That silk moves from Aketsu through this highway before being distributed throughout the Kakita lands, giving this road its name. The Kakita value the safety of this road nearly as much as the Path of Cold Winds, and go to great lengths to ensure it is safe for all. Like the Path of Cold Winds, this road passes through Daidoji Yukan-se and is protected by the soldiers stationed there.

During the Clan War, Crab forces attacked the Crane and razed the castle to its foundations. After the Clan War, the Kakita seized upon the opportunity to distance themselves from the curse and rebuild their stronghold elsewhere. However, the ravages of war had left the clan's coffers virtually bare, and they were forced to save resources by rebuilding upon the existing foundation of Shiro sano Kakita.

ARTISAN ACADEMY

Also known as the School of Quiet Arts, the Artisan Academy is the premier dojo for refined arts such as sumi-e (painting), haiku (poetry), and ikebana (flower arranging). The Crane take these arts quite seriously, as they feel it is the ability to create and understand true beauty that makes life worthwhile. The famous Kakita Dueling Academy is but one school in this massive dojo, but the two schools are generally considered separate entities by those outside the Kakita. Training here is taken as seriously as any bushi dojo, and many students do not make it past their first year at the Academy.

The Academy is a large building that is joined to Shiro sano Kakita proper by several covered gardens and open walkways. From a distance, the school gives the appearance of two smaller castles within the stronghold's walls.

SEIDO KAKITA

While smaller than the Artisan Academy and Kakita Castle, the shrine to the first Kakita is a fair sized temple that stands

between the two and can barely be seen beyond the castle walls. Seido Kakita is naturally among the most opulent shrines in the Empire, and is bereft of visitors only at night. Aspiring duelists and artisans often come to the shrine seeking the guidance of Kakita, while more experienced duelists come to meditate upon a recent victory or breakthrough in their studies.

The shrine is tended by a large sect of monks dedicated to the memory of Kakita and his first children, Yasurugi and Konishiko, the twins who shared the soul of Thunder. Though it was Konishiko that would face Fu Leng following her brother's assassination, the Crane honor Yasurugi for the five legendary swords he created. Small shrines have been added since the shrine's construction, honoring other famous Kakita, the most recent of which is a shrine to Kakita Toshiken, the late Emerald Champion. Though some elder Crane remember the hatred and anger that drove Toshiken during his younger days, he rose above his own vices to become a symbol of courage, justice, loyalty, and redemption.

KAKITA YARIGA

[Samurai 8; Kakita Bushi 3]

A well-known sensei at the Kakita Dueling Academy, Yariga, is a good friend of Kakita Noritoshi and a talented duelist in his own right. While he is not as gifted a duelist as many other sensei, he is a patient and honorable without pretension. One of Noritoshi's first edicts as the master sensei was to promote the humble duelist to the status of senior sensei. Noritoshi was convinced that surrounding himself with capable and loyal samurai would ensure stability and discipline. Noritoshi's actions have been rewarded, as Yariga is quite adept at keeping the students orderly and productive.

Yariga appreciates Noritoshi's confidence, but he is disturbed by the hesitation and uncertainty he sees in his master's eyes. He is used to a life of distant service, and is unaccustomed to thinking of his lord as a human being, with the same faults and frailties as any man. Even so, he does his best to bolster Noritoshi's spirits when necessary. Because of his loyalty, Yariga is often left in charge of the Academy when Noritoshi's business takes him elsewhere. For his part, Yariga is all too happy to serve his daimyo without any reservation or duplicity.

SAMUI KAZE TOSHI

(LOCATION CN9)

Cold Wind City rests on the Seikitsu Mountains' outer edge. It stands at the height of a high promontory, so from a distance appears as if the city could topple into the sea at any time. Originally built as a midpoint for naval trade between northern and southern Crane cities, Samui Kaze has become invaluable to the Kakita and the Crane as a whole. Nearly all trade between the Empire's southern and northern coasts must stop at the port city, bringing in a staggering amount of taxes each season. Because the city does not rely on overland travel for its shipments, Cold Wind City never has slow trading season. The Kakita lords here maintain positions of great wealth in power due to the commerce that moves through the city.

Being separated from the Empire by the Seikitsu Mountains makes overland travel to the city difficult. Because of this, nearly all travel to and from the town is by ship. Heimin residents of Cold Wind City are mostly descendants of the first settlers who have never ventured beyond the mountains.

Other than the busy harbor, the city is largely insulated from the outside world. The city has grown steadily over the centuries, though the mountains' presence has doubtless limited this growth somewhat.

COLD WIND PORT

Both the city and its sprawling port take their name from the endless frigid breezes from the Seikitsu Mountains. Cold Wind Port is known to any who make their business in trade over the water, and is one reason the Mantis Clan are always polite to the Kakita in the courts. Being denied access to Cold Wind Port could spell ruin for any merchant that must make trade by boat, though the Kakita reserve this punishment only for those who greatly anger the family. The city of Samui Kaze Toshi lives and dies by the prosperity of this port, which boasts piers and docking platforms that stretch over half a mile along the coast and a quarter of a mile into the water. Much of this network is anchored in a stone foundation so that the recurring taifun that plague the Empire's coasts are of relatively little concern to the men and women of Cold Wind Port.

Much like the city's denizens, the dockworkers and sailors of Cold Wind Port are descendants of the first Rokugani to settle in the area. The relationships between samurai and peasant here are amazingly close for a Crane holding, but are the only logical result from such a long history of isolation. Many of these heimin families have served the Kakita lords for generations, and regard the Kakita not just as their masters, but as their friends.

HOUSE OF RED WAVES

The House of Red Waves is the most popular sake house in Cold Wind Port, though most of its clientele are transients and not the native population. The sake house was named for the waves' color each morning as the sun climbs into the sky, which marks the beginning of a day's labor for the myriad dockworkers. These men and women often stop by the house to fill their stomachs with a cup or sake to warm themselves against the city's cold winds. In the centuries since Red Waves' founding, the house's name has attracted a seedier element from among the kobune and tradesmen that frequent the city. Only the strong, brave, or foolish enter the House of Red Waves after sundown.

The house's colorful reputation sometimes draws the attention of curious Crane nobles passing through the city, seeking

to add a little excitement to their journeys. More often than not these visits are without incident, as the sailors are wise enough not to draw the wrath of the city's Kakita masters.

KAKITA MIKORO

[Samurai 4/Rogue 3; Kakita Bushi 2]

Since the construction of Cold Wind Port, the harbormaster has always been known as Kakita Mikoro. The name and title is passed from father to son, and the line has been unbroken since the city was settled generations ago. To outsiders attempting to delve into the city's history, the practice is a little confusing and frustrating. City natives never seem to have a problem discerning the current Mikoro from his ancestors, and can easily reference the name Mikoro three or four times in the span of a minute without confusing his predecessors or successors.

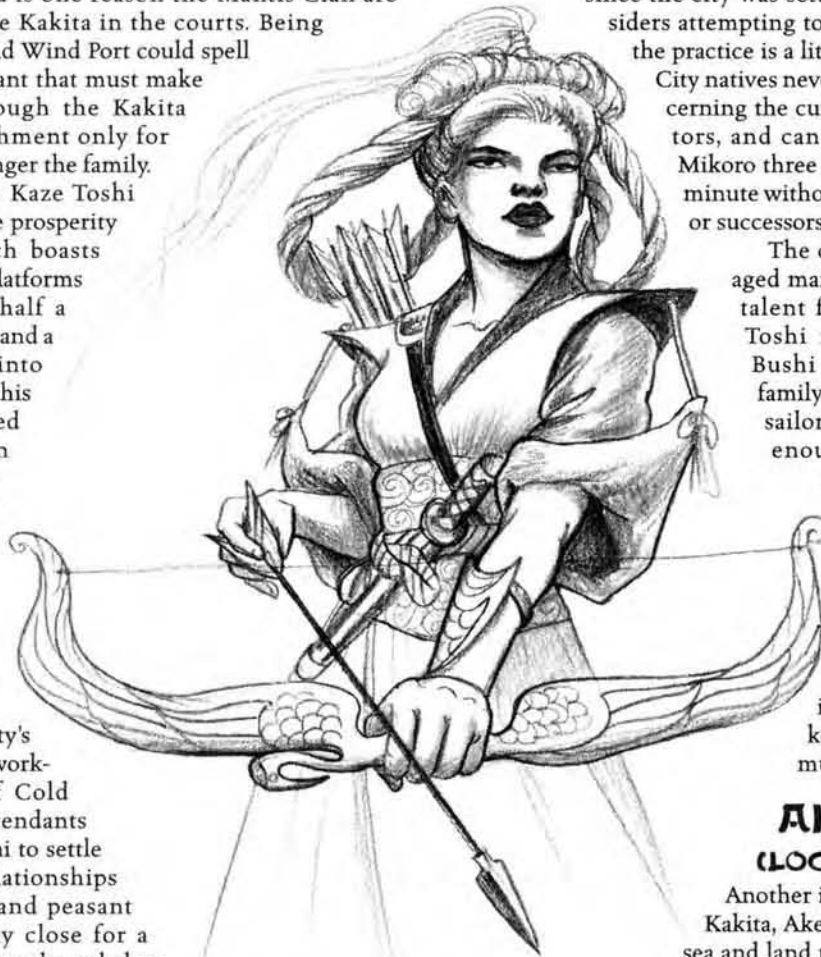
The current Mikoro is a middle-aged man that has shown an unusual talent for the sword (Samui Kaze Toshi maintains a minor Kakita Bushi dojo out of respect to the family). Mikoro's line has long been sailors and tradesmen, and oddly enough, others in Samui Kaze have actually looked upon Mikoro's love for the blade with a small amount of distaste. Few ever bring the matter up to him in person, though, as his charming demeanor and station as the most important noble in the city keeps the discontent to a minimum.

AKETSU

(LOCATION CR10)

Another important trading hub for the Kakita, Aketsu deals in equal amounts of sea and land trade. Any cargo that must be shipped inland along the central coast is usually sent to Aketsu instead of Samui Kaze Toshi. Goods shipped here are directed to nearby Daidoji Yukan-se to the north, and then sent along their way to many points in clan territories. Aketsu is a thriving trade hub mostly because of its central location and relative isolation from coves and forests where bandits may hide. Caravans leaving Aketsu rarely need fear thieves, thus many merchants are all too happy to pay the Crane tax to ship their goods from the water through Aketsu.

Because of Daidoji Yukan-se's proximity to the north and the relative lack of bandits, Aketsu is only lightly fortified. The city has never come under direct attack, and the two occasions when bandit gangs have gathered in force, the ronin of Daidoji Yukan-se have been eager to wipe them out to prove their devotion to the Crane. After generations of protection, the former Crane ronin have almost won the Kakita's support for fealty and acceptance into the clan's ranks. However, there are many among the Kakita who feel that the ronin's desperate need for validation makes them better guards, and to grant them fealty would dilute their loyalty.



KOLAT OUTPOST

Rumors abound that the mysterious Kolat have secured Aketsu as hub for movement of their own goods and illicit items. Magistrates from the Doji, Kakita, and even Scorpion scour the town periodically for any sign of the criminal organization. The supposed haven of Kolat activity is dismissed as a rumor and ignored, only to have more compelling evidence and testimony surface at a later time. Opinions on the phenomenon range from the Kolat being too clever to be caught, to the idea that the constant reports are someone's idea of a recurring joke. While the Crane cannot afford to ignore any such threats to their security, they have taken to sending junior students and fresh graduates of the magistrate school to investigate matters there. Senior magistrates are assigned more productive cases.

The truth is that the Silken Sect of the Kolat maintains a small presence in the city to monitor the flow of trade in Aketsu and nearby Samui Kaze Toshi. Reports of Kolat activity are carefully cultivated by the Kolat agents in an attempt to have the Crane adopt the careless attitude they have. Since the supposed Kolat influence in the city is seen largely as a joke of some kind, the agents here have enjoyed unparalleled freedom.

GOLDEN TURTLE TRADING GROUNDS

The trading grounds of Aketsu are expansive and cramped, with every major caravan master and tradesman competing fiercely to sell and ship their goods. Much of the Crane's trade with the Mantis Clan comes through Aketsu and is ends up on the trading grounds here. The Crane pride themselves on Golden Turtle's reputation for not tolerating any sort of illegal trade or smuggling in Aketsu, and magistrates patrol the trading grounds vigilantly. Few involved in such dealings attempt to even move their goods through Aketsu, there are easier places to conduct such shady deals than Golden Turtle.

Caravan guards and other mercenaries employed by merchants and caravan masters are not allowed within Golden Turtle by the city governor's decree. Some newcomers find this custom unnerving and even insulting, but the magistrates maintain strict security. Like smuggling, theft at Golden Turtle is quite rare. The Kakita believe that without their guards, merchants are less likely to smuggle illegal wares or attempt to use their "guards" to quietly relieve the competition of a few koku worth of goods.

MAJOR KAKITA HOLDINGS

ICE FISH VILLAGE

(NO MAP ENTRY)

This fishing port was founded to supplement the food supply of the Kakita and Asahina families shortly after the Clan War's conclusion. The merciless attack on Crane lands by the Crab, the Lion, and the False Hoturi left many peasants and samurai starving. When a wealth of delicious fish was discovered near this heretofore insignificant village, the Crane took it as a blessing from the Fortunes.

Ice Fish Village is located along the coast just to the east of Aketsu and much a great deal of seafaring traffic from that city passes through Ice Fish Village. The village is growing much faster than was initially expected, and aspiring merchant lords expect it will soon rival Samui Kaze Toshi in importance to sea trade.

Despite the unusual amount of trade being filtered through Ice Fish, the peasants and samurai there focus mostly on the fishing industry. There is at least one fishing kobune for every two peasants. A small temple of Asahina shugenja have begun endeavoring to make the land more fertile to supplement the village's worth as a source of foodstuffs. These attempts have been largely in vain due to the Asahina's limited talent with Earth magic. A Unicorn caravan master visiting the city suggested perhaps breeding livestock instead, an idea many of the citizens found promising. The more traditional Kakita sneer at the thought of creating a slaughterhouse in their lands and trust in the Asahina to aid them.

DAIDOJI SPY HUB

The sudden growth of Ice Fish Village can be attributed in part to the Daidoji family's growing influence in Crane politics. The Daidoji network of spies have long attempted to use the Crane's trade routes for their own ends, but certain key points have remained outside of their control. One such area was Samui Kaze Toshi — a perfect point of contact and travel, from which a single Daidoji could easily and swiftly reach any point along the coast. However, the city's tight security against all criminal activity, ironically, made it very difficult for the Crane's own spies to operate there unimpeded.

The Daidoji invested a large amount of koku to help develop Ice Fish and maintain a subtle presence there. For their part, the Kakita are aware of the Daidoji's involvement and are not completely happy with it. However, the city has quickly begun to produce a great bounty for the clan's food stores, and the unexpected trade traffic adds to their coffers each year. As long as the Daidoji remember who controls the village, the Kakita are content to leave matters as they are.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: As work on expanding Ice Fish Village continues, several peasants uncover the remains of an ancient tomb. Magistrates and historians are called in to investigate identify the tomb's occupant. The characters may be dispatched by their lord to the area or could just be on a journey through when the matter arises.

Focus: The peasant workers are ecstatic to see samurai, especially any holy men among them. They are deathly afraid they have angered the tomb's spirit and are anxious to have the business concluded. The matter has held up construction in the area for weeks, and even the nobles in the area are losing patience.

Strike: Characters with any expertise in History, Lore, or Heraldry may recognize the chop of the first Yasuki. After her death, her wishes were for her body to be entombed near the sea, and the construction of Ice Fish Village has uncovered her forgotten grave. The discovery, if made by the players, could put them in an interesting position regarding relations between the Crab and Crane Clans. Though now allied, Yasuki in both clans will demand that the tomb is rightfully their property.

STEEL CRANE FORGE

(NO MAP ENTRY)

The Steel Crane Forge is located only an hour south of Kyuden Kakita. It is considered a minor holding only due to its small size; its importance to the clan is unquestionable. It is here that the Kakita forge most blades for their family, including the famous Kakita Blades. Bladesmiths come to the Steel Crane from all over Rokugan to learn the craft of weapon-smithing from the Kakita masters. It is an honor to even be allowed inside the building. Those who visit can attest the atmosphere is more like a temple than a forge. The samurai who work here are afforded the same respect as holy men.

The smithy's interior is kept as clean as a forge can be. As staff of smithy and shugenja are in residence to purify the equipment and grounds daily. The smiths refuse to allow any bit of impurity taint their work, be it from spiritual, physical, or emotional sources. Those that find themselves unable to completely devote their focus to the task at hand are commanded to step outside the forge until they can give themselves wholly to their work.

KAKITA KYOBE

[Samurai 6/Master Smith 9; Kakita Bushi 5]

The master of Steel Crane Forge is a weathered and wrinkled old man named Kyobe. He is proud that he can trace a direct line of ancestry from his father to Kakita, and is quick to point this fact out to others. He is used to having things done the way he wishes and will brook no interference from outsiders. Kyobe is an oddity among the Kakita for his general dislike of people, though his strong voice can often be heard while he sings to his creations. The old man prefers the company of his steel and tools to anything else, and is only somewhat genial with his subordinates in the forge. The only people he answers to are the Kakita Daimyo, the Crane Champion, the Emerald Champion, and the Emperor. Others are ignored outright if not hastily turned away when seeking an audience with the master.

Given his advanced age, both Kakita Noritoshi and Doji Kurohito have suggested the man take on an apprentice before he retires. Kyobe genuinely appreciates their concern for him, but has yet to find a student worthy of his attention. His standards are considered impossible by most, and his attitude has turned away more potential assistants than anyone at the forge can count. Noritoshi believes he will soon have to command the old smith to take on an apprentice, but he hopes it will not come to that.

THE CELESTIAL ORE VEIN

The secret of the Kakita Blades is the pure metal used to forge them. When Kakita Yasurugi was killed by Fu Leng's creature, his body was interred in the grounds just south of Shiro sano Kakita. Yasurugi's Tomb was the site of several pilgrimages by Crane nobles who came to pay their respects to his sister Konishiko, the Crane Thunder that never returned from the Shadowlands. Just before his death, Kakita came to meditate at the shrine outside his son's tomb a final time, when the spirit of Yasurugi came to his father and whispered a secret to him.

The next day, Kakita ordered the shrine removed and construction of the smithy that would become Steel Crane Forge began. While some looked on in horror at Kakita's apparent blasphemy, the Crane soon discovered why Kakita had done such a thing. The ground beneath Yasurugi's tomb had become infused with the purity of his spirit, and the ore con-

tained there was the finest the Crane bladesmiths had ever seen. Kakita dubbed the material Celestial Ore and all Kakita Blades are tempered with the mineral as they are folded. In a way, it is said that all Kakita blades are Doji Yasurugi's work, for his purity infuses them all.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL HOLDINGS

TOSHI RANBO WO SHIEN SHITE REIGISANO

(LOCATION CR1)

Violence Behind Courtliness City has been the center of Lion/Crane conflict for two generations and it does not seem as if this fact will change any time soon. Though Toshi Ranbo is a Lion holding by ancestry, two generations ago the Tsume vassal family daimyo made a campaign though Lion lands that ended in the capture of Violence Behind Courtliness City. The Crane commander's attack was brutal and unauthorized by the Crane Champion or any of his hatamoto. However, given the assault's effectiveness, he could only reward the Tsume daimyo or appear unable to control his vassals. This event only heightened the tensions between the Crane and Lion, until open war broke out several years later in the Clan War.

Since that time, the city has changed hands several times through various conflicts and skirmishes between the two clans. There were countless short periods where the Crane lost control, only to retake the city from the Lion months later. Technically, these claims by the Lion have not been long enough for any Crane to formally recognize the city having a new ruler, until recently. Matsu Nimuro held the city for several years until prolonged civil unrest led Hantei Naseru to arbitrate, returning the city to Crane control. This civil unrest was due mostly to the meddling of a ronin organization known as The Order of the Tessen, an independent group of Toshi Ranbo citizens opposed to rule by either Crane or Lion.

The Crane held the city for only a short time before surrendering control to the Lion again. This most recent loss of Toshi Ranbo was a calculated loss on Doji Kurohito's part in order to break the curse on the blade, Chukandomo. After Kurohito's plan was finished, he gifted the sword to Nimuro, as it was intended for the Matsu family, and removed his forces from city without further violence. Along with Lion Champion Matsu Nimuro, both Champions agreed that there would be no hostile military action between Lion and Crane in the city for a period of one year.

Because this more recent exchange was without bloodshed, it has set an unusual precedent of Lions and Cranes coexisting in the city for the first time. While the Lion currently maintain legal control of the city and profit from its taxes, leaving the Crane in their current positions throughout the city has circumvented the upheaval that has plagued the city since the Crane first conquered it. This does not mean that such a relationship between the two clans is going smoothly or even politely. In the first month after the Lion reclaimed the city, three illegal duels were reported to the magistrates and other, similar, acts of violence plague the city to this day. The Order

of the Tessen has been uncharacteristically silent since this latest takeover, mostly due to the presence of large numbers of both Lion and Crane samurai. The last thing these ronin want are the Lion and Crane samurai to unite in their hatred for the rebellious ronin.

KAKITA AIKAWA

[Samurai 8; Kakita Bushi 3]

Aikawa's life has been difficult. His first assignment was as a yojimbo to a courtier sent to the Phoenix lands. A young, charismatic man, Aikawa was distracted by the pleasures of court. He fell in love with a young Phoenix shugenja, and let his attention to his duty slide. When he was recalled to his family's estate, he knew he had failed. A tour of duty among the Crab was the price for his failure, and the things young Aikawa saw while serving on the Wall haunt him to this very day. His Phoenix lover was eager to heal his emotional wounds, but the Kakita lords chose to assign Aikawa to the Lion border, where such a battle-hardened warrior would be most useful. Aikawa's impulsive nature has continued to plague him. He has killed two Lion in illegal but justifiable duels, although he has managed to keep that information secret.

Aikawa is a good and honorable man who serves his lord without hesitation or remorse. He believes his inability to control his emotions places him in harm's way, but in truth it seems to be his destiny to serve in areas of strife and discord. When Aikawa's end comes, he will meet it head on as a Crane, and with no regrets.

DIAMOND MINE

Though the Lion quickly recovered their losses from the Tsume family's initial campaign, the Crane fought desperately to hold Toshi Ranbo for a reason known only to the Lion and the Crane Clans. Near the city lies a rarity among the Empire's resources — a diamond mine. Diamonds are exceedingly rare, quite valuable to wealthy lords who desire their beauty and craftsmen who desire them for use as cutting tools. While the Lion are more than happy to report the mine's production to the Imperial tax collectors, they have taken great pains to ensure other clans do not know of the mine's existence. The Crane have done the same even during times when the Lion control the city. The Crane feel it is only a matter of time before they conquer Toshi Ranbo again; better the Lion control the mines than another powerful clan learn of their existence.

AKODO ROKURO

[Samurai 9; Akodo Bushi 3]

Rokuro is the current governor of Toshi Ranbo, appointed to his position by the edicts of Matsu Nimuro. His perfect blend of Lion loyalty and cool pragmatism made him the ideal candidate for the position in Nimuro's eyes. Where more fervent Lion commanders would allow their hatred for the Crane blind them to any real opportunities the Crane Clan would present, or more sympathetic governors might wish to make a lasting peace with the Crane to avert bloodshed, Rokuro is sure to weigh every matter of importance with a clear view on how it could best benefit the Lion.

Akodo Rokuro has proven to be effective in reigning in the Crane's influence in the city as well, much to their annoyance. The Lion governor has no vices to speak of, no unusual passions other than his dedication to his clan. The only hope the Crane have of finding leverage against the Akodo's effective-

ness is his unwavering support of Hantei Naseru. Should the Anvil fail in his quest to attain the Throne, the Crane may finally be able to weaken Rokuro's position as governor here.

THE PLAIN OF THUNDER

(LOCATION JJ)

Located far from the Crane lands, the Plain of Thunder is dedicated to the Fortune of Fire and Thunder. Osano-Wo is a patron Fortune of bushi, and it is here that the Test of the Emerald Champion is held. Though it is the duty of the Miya family to tend these plains, their responsibilities elsewhere and relatively few numbers lead them to rely heavily on the Kakita, the Empire's foremost dueling family, to maintain the grounds here. The Kakita stage an honor guard that patrols the sacred grounds throughout the year, often joined by the reclusive sohei from the Temple of Osano-Wo to the south.

The plains are also maintained by a contingent of Asahina shugenja who ensure the grounds' purity and sanctity. The sohei of Osano-Wo frequently appear without warning and aid the Asahina in these rituals, and the peaceful priests generally meet the warrior-monks with cool politeness. Holding a position as a guard or shugenja posted to the Plain of Thunder is a great honor, and only the most trustworthy among the Crane are selected for such a post. Four shrines to Osano-Wo mark the plain's four corners, each depicting Osano-Wo in a different aspect - vengeful, protective, meditative, and watchful. These four statues form a rough and uneven rectangle. Small and unmarked paths trail from one shrine to the next, as well as towards the center, where the testing grounds are located.

GROUPS OF THE EMERALD CHAMPIONSHIP

The sacred grounds of the Emerald Championship form a large circle surrounded by low stands. The dais where the Emperor watches the proceedings stands on the far west side, as well as positions for the Clan Champions on either side of the Imperial seat. The Test of the Emerald Champion is always conducted during the afternoon, so that any gazing toward the Emperor will see the sun over his head.

The grounds have several rings meant for tests of personal sword skill, as well as a raised dais before the Imperial seats. It is on this dais that more academic tests are performed, such as testing the depth of a participant's knowledge of law and the customs of the Eight Clans. In addition to being a superb swordsman, the Emerald Champion is expected to speak with the Emperor's voice and must carry himself accordingly.

IMPORTANT KAKITA NPCS

KAKITA MUNEMORI, INFAMOUS COURTIER

To the untrained eye, the aging Kakita Munemori is a minor player in the larger games of court. Many courtiers have never met the gregarious Kakita and will insist that if he were important at all, he would be seen and heard more. For his part, Munemori has made a habit of only being known to important individuals and letting the countless minor functionaries deal with his subordinates. Unlike many Crane, the aging courtier is all too happy to sacrifice recognition in favor of results when it suits him.

This tactic was learned early on when Munemori was a student of Kakita Yoshi, a legend among courtiers. Munemori's father saw a great potential for the young man and called in many favors so he may enter Yoshi's tutelage. The young Kakita was a quick learner, taking to the lessons of example and instruction quickly, but he also learned much from what Yoshi left unspoken or undone. It was clear to Munemori that while Yoshi's skill was undeniable; he was often unable to move with complete freedom due to his high profile. While Yoshi ensured that everyone in the courts knew him, the drawback was that Yoshi had to maintain a careful balance so that his reputation was not damaged, and his overall competence as a courtier nullified. More than once, his presence at an important negotiation was delayed or pre-empted by a relatively unimportant meeting he could not break for fear of angering an ally.

After two years, Munemori began receiving assignments to negotiate or speak in Yoshi's stead. Kakita Yoshi was impressed with the younger courtier's sharp mind and quiet grace, and obviously favored him over several of his fellow students. This earned Munemori great resentment from his fellows, but he was willing to endure such things to enjoy his sensei's personal instruction. Unlike his fellow students, Munemori did not attempt to gather countless tiny alliances in the noble houses, but instead insured he made an impression only on those who were key players in the Empire's courts.

Shortly after he was released from apprenticeship under Yoshi, Munemori became close friends with a Lion courtier known as Ikoma Hatori. The two shared similar viewpoints and principles, and began to respect one another as they were both called upon to settle countless minor disputes between the Crane and Lion clans. Though some within the Crane raised a curious eyebrow to Munemori for openly making true friends with the Lion, none could deny that the relationship had its uses to the Crane. Much like the rest of Munemori's career, his non-traditional methods were often overlooked due to their effectiveness and his connection to the powerful Kakita Yoshi.

Munemori's effectiveness has been invaluable in guiding the Crane through troubled times, though he is always careful to insure others are credited for most of his major accomplishments. The aging courtier has taken great pains to ensure courts at large regard him as a lecherous fool. While Munemori certainly does not have to invent most of the lurid tales surrounding him, he does nothing to dispel the rumors

that grow in his wake. Munemori realizes that as long as the general populace underestimates his worth, he is free to move about and serve the Crane to the best of his ability. Each of Munemori's contacts are willing to help the Kakita maintain his veil of unimportance, thinking that they alone have hit upon a secret link to the powerful Crane nobles.

Recently, he has taken the young Doji Tanitsu under his wing much in the same manner Yoshi taught him years ago. While Tanitsu is hardly the inexperienced courtier Munemori once was, the Kakita courtier's tutoring has allowed Tanitsu to take great strides in his development as a major player in the Empire's politics. More than once, Tanitsu has turned to his trusted advisor for resources and wisdom, and Munemori has yet to let the Doji down. Tanitsu has inquired many times just exactly how the elder courtier can secure such favors and resources in with amazing efficiency and speed, only to be politely refused. More than once, Munemori has playfully insisted his secrets remain his own, lest he no longer be of any use to the Crane.

KAKITA MUNEMORI

Male Crane human Ctr12: CR 12, Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d6+8 plus 4d8+8; hp 61; Init +4; Spd 40ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10); Attack +2 keen tanto +8/+3(1d6+1); SQ — Class Skill: Perform (Family Bonus), Wealth, Talent, Style and Grace, Gossip, Courtier Abilities (Emperor's Left Hand (Scrutiny's Sweet Sting), Your Life is Mine, Whisper From the Soul), The Heart Speaks; Honor 2; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +12; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 20 (24); Maximum Void: 5; Height 5ft. 1in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Bluff +23, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +23, Gather Information +23, Innuendo +17, Knowledge (Etiquette) +20, Knowledge (History) +20, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +20, Listen +17, Read Lips +20, Sense Motive +17, Tea Ceremony +17; Depths of the Void, Golden Words (Ancestor: Kakita Yoshi), Iron Will, Leadership, Perceived Honor, Political Maneuvering, Versatile (Knowledge: Etiquette, Knowledge: History, Knowledge: Nobility and Royalty, Sense Motive) Void Use.

Dojo: None; Kata: None

Possessions: +2 keen tanto, kimono of charisma +4, ring of mind shielding, talisman of protection from arrows.

KAKITA MUNEMORI

Earth: 2

Willpower: 4

Water: 2

Perception: 5

Fire: 4

Intelligence: 6

Air: 5

Void: 3

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 4

Glory: 4.7

Honor: 2.1 (3.1)

Skills: Courtier 7, Etiquette 6, Heraldry 4, History (Crane Clan) 6, History: Hantei Line 5, Kuenai 2, Lore (Imperial Line) 5, Lore: Imperial Courts 6, Manipulation 7, Oratory 5, Seduction 4, Shintao 4, Sincerity 6, Tea Ceremony 4

Advantages: Crafty, Perceived Honor (1 rank)

Disadvantages: Small, Lechery (2 ranks)

Weapons & Armor: wakizashi

KAKITA NORITOSHI, KAKITA FAMILY DAIMYO

It would surprise many people to hear that Noritoshi can describe his life with a single word — trapped. Though he has spent his life attempting to forge his own path and realize a destiny he wishes for himself, time and again the Kakita daimyo has been forced by circumstance to take a role that seems predetermined.

Early in his childhood, Noritoshi was entranced by the beauty of music and sorely desired to become a musician. He had never known his true father, Kakita Ichiro, well enough to know if Ichiro would have approved of this path. Though he was heir to the legacy of his adopted father, Kakita Toshiken, he took a secret joy in the idea that he would make his life how he wished it. When Noritoshi displayed a prodigious aptitude for iaijutsu, Toshiken ordered the young Noritoshi into the Kakita Dueling School, requesting that if he continue to pursue music, he do so as a hobby rather than a profession. The aging Emerald Champion understood Noritoshi had a gift with music, but he knew if Noritoshi was to truly lead the clan, mastery of the sword would gain him greater respect.

Since that time, Noritoshi has felt as if he were a small fish struggling against a great tide. Though he wished to become a close friend of Toshiken's true son, Atoshi, the other Kakita has rebuffed his "brother's" every attempt at peace until

recently. Where Noritoshi was forced into the bushi school, Toshiken allowed his child to choose where he would learn to serve the Crane. Noritoshi envied Atoshi's freedom of choice, while Atoshi envied the attention his father showered on Noritoshi. The younger child, Atoshi, was not content to let his aggravation go unspoken, and has continued to harangue his adopted brother even in public. Out of respect to Toshiken, Noritoshi quietly endures the verbal abuse in tolerable amounts, and Atoshi has yet to cross a line that would cause his brother to lose his temper.

As a student at the Kakita Dueling Academy, Noritoshi found some small solace in the art of the sword. A well-timed kata was much like a well-written song, and he soon learned the music of the blade. His exceptional talent allowed him to rise through the dojo's ranks, and he rose to the position of junior sensei only two years after entering the school. His status allowed him to dictate his own learning process and gave him the freedom to teach small classes as he saw fit. Several years later, he was among the senior sensei at the school, and served directly under Kakita Kaiten, the family daimyo. As Kaiten had no heirs, rumors abounded that the daimyo would retire and name Noritoshi as his replacement as both daimyo and Dueling Academy grandmaster.

Outwardly, Noritoshi was quick to humbly downplay any such rumors, though he insisted he would be honored by any such nomination. Privately, Kaiten had confided that the rumors were true, and began teaching Noritoshi what he would need to know to lead the family. He never revealed to anyone how the proposition filled him with a deep and utter dread. Noritoshi did not desire either position, for he feared he could not live up to such responsibility. Though he understood his duty as a samurai, it galled him to think he would be cast into a situation for which he felt he was so poorly suited. Ironically, Noritoshi's humility and constant drive to better himself made him ideal for both positions, though he refused to recognize it.

When Kaiten was killed in personal combat with Akodo Kaneka, the Kakita family was shocked at the sudden loss of their daimyo. To his own surprise, Noritoshi found the courage to step forward and accept the responsibility Kaiten had given him without hesitation. Acting on Kaiten's dying wishes, he became the master sensei for the Kakita Dueling Academy. Amid cries of vengeance and blood, Noritoshi declared the matter closed by the fair and legal duel between the Bastard and the late daimyo. If the Kakita could not acknowledge a fair duel they did not deserve to name themselves masters of the sword.

Noritoshi was quick to marry his childhood love and conceive an heir, knowing that now the only thing left in his life was duty. There would be no time for his desires, and the fledgling daimyo poured every ounce of his spirit into his new station. Never once did he speak of his wish for another life. Much to his surprise, he found his new role suited to his serious demeanor and the other leaders within the Crane quickly learned to see beyond his young age. Politics, he discovered, also had a certain rhythm if one looked deeply enough, and by finding that rhythm he could guess where others would dance, even lead them where he wished if need be.

Shortly after he assumed his new position, disaster struck. The birth of his son and heir coincided with a surprise attack by the reborn False Hoturi. Just as the castle gates were shut to keep out the assaulting forces, Noritoshi's wife gave birth. While the Kakita daimyo does not regret the fact his son will never be a warrior, he feels as if his curse has passed on to his son, who will also become a slave of destiny. That same night



saw the death of Noritoshi's adopted father Toshiken at the hands of Daidoji Megumi, a former student who had become corrupted by the Taint. Though Megumi was forced off by Noritoshi and the aid of Toturi Miyako, the loss of his father and the sudden assault have left the Kakita daimyo feeling somewhat helpless. To make matters worse Noritoshi was seriously injured in the left eye. He is now nearly blind in that eye, and will bear the scars of that battle for the rest of his life.

The only consolation Noritoshi takes is that since the night of Megumi's attack, a heroic spirit has visited his dreams. The soul of Dairy, the legendary ronin duelist who slew Noritoshi's grandfather Toshimoko, had been driven insane by the Shadowlands but was released and redeemed during the battle between Noritoshi and Megumi. The ronin spirit had no desire to leave the Kakita stronghold. Instead, the spirit insisted he pass his technique on to Noritoshi as reparation for the death and pain he had caused. Now on the fields of dream, Noritoshi has begun to learn the lost techniques of the master swordsman, combining them with the arts of the Kakita Ken-shinzen.

When the minions of the Shadowlands return to challenge him again, they will not find him unprepared.

KAKITA NORITOSHI

Male Crane Human Sam10/Iai10: CR 20, Medium-sized humanoid; HD 20d10 + 60; hp 243; Init +17; Spd 30 ft.; AC 30 (touch 25, flat-footed 25); Attack +5 *keen katana of speed* +31/+26/+21/+16 (1d10+7); SQ — Class Skill: Iaijutsu Focus (Family Bonus), Ancestral Daisho, Canny Defense, Lightning Blade, Strike From the Void, One Strike Two Cuts, Strike With No Thought; Honor 3; AL LG; SV Fort +13, Ref +14, Will +10; Str 15, Dex 18 (22), Con 16, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 20 (24); Maximum Void: 5; Height 5ft. 3in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Balance +16, Craft (origami) +25, Perform +12, Diplomacy +23, Iaijutsu Focus +30, Intimidate +20, Jump +12, Sense Motive +23, Tea Ceremony +13; Cleave, Depths of the Void, Improved Critical: Katana, Improved Initiative, Kakita's Technique, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Self/No Self, Speed of the Kami, The Sudden Strike (Katana), Void Use, Weapon Focus: Katana, Way of the Crane.

Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy; **Kata:** One Leg Stance (Katana)

Possessions: +5 *keen katana of speed* (ancestral daisho), +5 *keen lawful wakizashi* (ancestral daisho), *haori of protection* +5, *kote of armor* +5, *amulet of natural armor* +4, *kimono of charisma* +4, *boots of dexterity* +4.

KAKITA NORITOSHI

Earth: 4

Water: 3

Strength: 5

Fire: 6

Agility: 7

Air: 6

Reflexes: 7

Void: 7

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 5/Kenshizen 3

Glory: 8.6

Honor: 4.1

Skills: Athletics 5, Etiquette 6, Iaijutsu 9, Katana 7, Kenjutsu 1, Kyujutsu 6, Lore: Iaijutsu 8, Origami 6, Shintao 6, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 7

Advantages: Quick, Social Position (Kakita Daimyo)

Disadvantages: Antisocial

Weapons & Armor: Katana, wakizashi, light armor.

KAKITA NANAMI, CRANE CLAN COURTIER

Nanami once thought that she would accomplish nothing in life. Her parents were neither wealthy nor prominent. When Nanami was born, her parents were upset that they had a daughter, who would likely bring no more glory to their family outside of a political marriage to some moderately powerful noble. She was sent to a small local dojo, where she was to join the Kakita Artisans. She was quite adept at acting and was a gifted instructor, but still had little aspiration for anything greater.

Shortly after her gempukku, Nanami was sent to a small village near Kyuden Doji to tell tales to the local peasants. While there, she chanced to meet Doji Tanitsu. Tanitsu spent a day with her, and in that single day he was impressed with her talents. The two kept in loose contact over several years, and Nanami continued her work. When she finished her teaching duties, she returned to Kyuden Kakita and remained there for several years.

When Tanitsu returned to Otosan Uchi, he invited Nanami to join him there. An invitation to join the Imperial Court by one of its most famous courtiers was not to be ignored. Nanami took this news with stoic pride; while it was everything she had ever wanted, she had always been one to put proper thought and deed before a disgraceful show of emotion.

For a time, Tanitsu wooed the charming young Kakita publicly, presenting a face to the world of a budding romance between the two. Rumors buzzed about a possible marriage between the two, though even as the rumors brought her prestige, Nanami was distraught by the entire affair. She had grown to truly love Tanitsu. She soon realized that Tanitsu was still smitten with Toturi Tsudao, a truth not even Tanitsu recognized. She was heartbroken.

Nanami did not plot revenge, for even forever denied her love she could wish Tanitsu no harm. First, she secured a place in the court for herself independent of Tanitsu's favor. Through displays of ingenuity and a series of carefully planned friendships and alliances with several Imperial nobles, Nanami established herself as an important Crane in the court. Second, she began to slowly sever her ties with Tanitsu, distancing him from her quickly enough to be free of his control, but slowly enough as to not attract attention over the collapse of their "relationship". Her meticulous attention to these and other details carried her well for several years, even enduring the loss of Otosan-Uchi.

Eventually, Nanami became known as something of a matchmaker for the court, and after a time she began to arrange several high-profile marriages. Her latest coup in that effort has been the securing of a Crane husband for Toturi Tsudao. To that end, she has secretly arranged a marriage between Tsudao and Tanitsu, an arrangement to which Tsudao has already eagerly agreed. Tanitsu does not know of this arrangement, nor has Nanami told him that she still loves him. Nor will she ever tell him if she has any say.

Nanami is a moderately powerful member of Tsudao's Imperial Court, and is well respected by nearly everyone present. She considers herself quite well off, considering she was initially dragged to court as a public plaything for a young nobleman. The pain and heartache of marrying away the man she loves, she has decided, is tempered by the fact that she has

brought Tanitsu true happiness. Together, she knows, both of them would ultimately be miserable. Now she is free to find her own path.

KAKITA KAKITA

Female human Crane Courtier 10/Artisan 2: CR 12; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 12d6; hp 44; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Att +2 *keen returning aiguchi*, +7/+2 *melee* (1d4, 17–20/x2); SQ Class Skill — Perform, Doji's Beauty, Gossip, Style and Grace, Talent, Voice, Wealth, Whispers from the Soul, Your Life Is Mine; Honor 2; AL LG; SV Fort +3 Ref +8 Will +12; Str 7, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 18, Cha 18 (22), Maximum Void 2; Height 5 ft. 1 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language - Rokugani, High Rokugani, Bluff +27, Diplomacy +27, Disguise +22, Gather Information +22, Innuendo +17, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (etiquette) +16, Knowledge (history) +11, Knowledge (local Crane provinces) +8, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +16, Listen +17, Perform +32, Profession (teacher) +21, Sense Motive +17, Tea Ceremony +17; Iron Will, Political Maneuvering, Skill Focus (gather information), Skill Focus (perform), Soul Forge, Student of the Arts, Versatile (knowledge (law), Heal), Void Use.

Possessions: +2 *keen returning aiguchi*, *amulet of natural armor* +2, *circlet of persuasion*, *cloak of charisma* +4, *ring of protection* +1, *staff of charming*.

KAKITA KAKITA

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception: 4

Fire: 4

Air: 4

Awareness: 6

Void: 2

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 2/Kakita Artisan 1 (Acting)

Honor: 2.2

Glory: 5.2

Advantages: Allies (Doji Tanitsu, Toturi Tsudao, Miya Hatori), Benten's Blessing, Precise Memory

Disadvantages: Small, True Love (Doji Tanitsu)

Skills: Aiguchi 2, Artisan: Kabuki Actor 7, Bard 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 6, Diplomacy 5, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, History 2, Instruction 3, Lore (Kabuki) 3, Manipulation 4, Oratory 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Tantojutsu 3, Tea Ceremony 3

VASSALS OF THE KAKITA

THE IWASAKI FAMILY

The Iwasaki are an old but obscure vassal family who can trace their roots to the earliest days of Rokugan. Kakita Iwasaki was a minor governor in a small city to the south of the Kakita Dueling Academy. His tenure was not productive and when time came for the aging lord to finally prove his worth to his clan he jumped at the opportunity. The reigning daimyo of his family, Kakita Renshu, had a border dispute with a Phoenix shugenja named Isawa Jirichi. It seemed that the Isawa were bent on keeping lands that the Kakita claimed as their own and there was little the Kakita daimyo could do to change

Jirichi's mind.

Iwasaki thought for days on the matter, but could not come up with a way to sway Jirichi. When the time came for him to meet the Phoenix, Iwasaki was ready to accept his failure and face the wrath of his daimyo. Iwasaki told his servants of their impending disfavor, but one among them stepped forward and offered her aid. The young woman was Kakita Sayuri, an obscure courtier who owned several geisha houses in Iwasaki's province. She refused to accept defeat and told Iwasaki of her plan to save his honor. He listened to her plan, but refused at first, thinking that her methods would bring shame instead of glory. The cunning Sayuri pointed out to her lord that while her idea carried the possibility of such shame, taking no further action only guaranteed such an outcome.

Kakita Sayuri journeyed with Iwasaki to meet with the Isawa and sat quietly in the background observing the initial conversations. Once the first day's discussion had finished she thanked her lord and left the castle to visit her finest geisha house, the Golden Lily. She spoke with the oka-san and arranged for the Isawa to receive a gift from the Kakita family that evening. The following morning, due to her observant geisha spies, Sayuri offered Iwasaki a great deal of information that would aid him in the negotiations. Iwasaki was impressed and allowed Sayuri to continue her tactic for the next few days, each time gaining new insight into the Phoenix's motivations and strategies. Finally, the Isawa related and new clan borders were created that strongly favored the Crane.

Kakita Renshu summoned his vassals to meet with him shortly after the negotiations. He decided to grant Kakita Iwasaki vassal family status in return for his great performance. Iwasaki refused, unable to accept the boon and told his lord the truth of what had occurred. He asked instead that he be allowed to retire with another taking his place. Kakita Renshu immediately summoned the youthful Sayuri to his presence and confirmed Iwasaki's tale. He asked Sayuri what had made her think to use the geisha to ply information from the courtier. She responded with what would soon become the Iwasaki family motto: "A flower may go unnoticed, but every man relaxes amid the beauty of nature." Renshu laughed, impressed by the statement and immediately declared Sayuri to be the Iwasaki family's first daimyo, granting her the city her lord had once commanded.

The Iwasaki now serve with the same dedication to beauty as their founder, Sayuri. Because they are a small family they do not have the Scorpion's ability to utilize geisha on a mass scale, they content themselves to holdings within the Crane territories and rarely send geisha outside clan boundaries. Iwasaki train their geisha in their service to manipulate the clan's enemies and allies and, more importantly, to gather all manner of information on them during their conversations. When asked why they do not give up their geisha status and put their abilities to use as true courtiers, the Iwasaki geisha state that the flowers of court are works of art, while they the artisans who shape them.

It should be noted that Iwasaki geisha, like all geisha, are eta. The true Iwasaki are the merchant patrons who sponsor the Iwasaki geisha houses.

SHIRO IWASAKI

Shiro Iwasaki is south of Shiro sano Kakita. The Iwasaki's wish to remain obscure has kept the city's population small. It would not even contain a keep if the Crane Champion did not deem it a necessary precaution. The small family's true pride

lies in the shops and geisha houses within the town. Iwasaki Toshi is dedicated to the geisha arts and also produces the finest crafters of kimono in all the empire. The most talented Iwasaki geisha come from Sayuri's first holding, the Golden Lily. The Iwasaki daimyo have always kept up good relations with the Golden Lily's Oka-san so as to ensure that their prize holding will always be profitable.

THE IWASAKI FAMILY

Favored Class: Courtier
Starting Honor: 2
Class Skill: Perform
Starting Outfit:
1. 300 Koku

THE IWASAKI FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Awareness
Glory: 0.5
Special: Members of the Iwasaki family may purchase the Gentry advantage for 1 point less, but they do not receive an entire village for doing so. Instead, they own a geisha house located somewhere within the Crane territories. Because of the clan's belief in excellence the holdings may not be bought for less than Fine quality.

THE ASHIDAKA FAMILY

Like all Kakita, the Ashidaka vassals focus their entire being on the attainment of excellence in whatever they do. They believe that only by striving for complete perfection can any samurai truly show worth to his lord. In fact, the Ashidaka have trained so long in their craft, attempting to find that complete perfection, that their entire history can be traced back to the Empire's beginnings and the famed weaponsmith, Doji Yasurugi. Yasurugi's five blades inspired his students to begin searching for the techniques needed to craft great blades worthy of even the most honorable of samurai.

It is ironic that the first true Kakita blade was crafted during the same time as the infamous Bloodswords. After nearly five centuries of attempts, a single man named Kakita Ashidaka came upon a way to fashion these perfect blades. It is believed that the souls of all the weaponsmiths who had worked toward the goal of crafting these weapons guided Ashidaka and are housed in the steel of his first blade. Ashidaka tested the blade on a stone outcropping from the Seikitsu Mountains near his home. When he struck the boulder from the mountain, the ringing purity of Ashidaka's blade could be heard even in the Celestial Heavens. The Kakita bladesmiths use the same stone that Ashidaka cut from the mountainside to test every new katana's quality.

When Ashidaka finished his creation he brought the first Kakita blade before the Crane Champion. His lord was so impressed that he immediately gave Ashidaka status as a vassal lord and charged him with teaching his techniques to others. He was given land near the Seikitsu Mountains and quickly attracted fledgling weaponsmiths to his side. Since that time, many famed Kakita blades have come from this family. Even Crane of other families journey to Ashidaka lands to study the famed techniques that will enable them to craft their blades. Though the Kakita forged blades before Ashidaka's time, only those based on Ashidaka's techniques can be called true Kakita blades.

The Ashidaka have not expanded much throughout the centuries due to their relatively reclusive nature. But even though the family has remained small not all of them craft

true Kakita blades. They believe that to attempt to make more than one or two perfect swords a year would tarnish the uniqueness of their work and cause them to produce poor weapons. All prospective Ashidaka are tested and those who do not live up to the master smiths' standards are charged with crafting lesser blades. The swords produced by these weaponsmiths go out to the officers and commanders in the Kakita armies and, next to the Kakita blades, are considered the finest katana in the Crane clan.

There are a few Ashidaka who choose not to take up the craft of swordsmithing. These samurai are charged with caring for the family's political status. Most are sent to the Doji and train as either magistrates or courtiers. Others train as artisans of other crafts.

SHIRO ASHIDAKA

Ashidaka castle is small and fairly plain for a Crane estate. The Ashidaka forges occupy a great deal of space within the castle walls. Only the daimyo's home is used to receive visitors. The Ashidaka are in an unusual location for Kakita vassals. Their castle rests against the Crane face of the eastern Seikitsu Mountains. The famous testing stone lies not far from the castle near a shrine to Kakita. The stone is visited by the bladesmiths before they begin crafting any blade.

ASHIDAKA DOJO

The Ashidaka family "dojo" is actually only a training ground for the family. It does not have its own style of combat, nor does it house great Kakita sensei. Most Ashidaka follow Doji Yasurugi's creed that no man should ever carry a blade that he cannot trust, a blade that he has not seen crafted with his own eyes. The dojo is here because the Ashidaka believe the opposite of Yasurugi's tenet to be true as well and seek to understand all aspects of the samurai's sword. Ashidaka samurai train in Iaijutsu at the dojo as a final test for their blades. The dojo is also home to many copies of Kakita's "The Sword" and every family member studies the text as religiously as the compiled lessons on the crafting of a blade.

Lastly, the dojo holds several Kakita blades that are not currently in use within its guarded walls. These blades are heavily protected by Kakita guardsmen and are never removed from the dojo unless being given to a new owner.

THE ASHIDAKA FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai
Starting Honor: 3
Class Skill: Craft (Int)
Starting Outfit:
1. Masterwork artisan's tools and 200 koku
2. 300 koku

THE ASHIDAKA FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Agility
Glory: 0.5
Special: Ashidaka who train in the Kakita bushi school may replace the option to take a High or Bugei skill with Craft (Weaponsmith); if they choose, they can replace both optional skills to take Craft (Weaponsmith) at a 2.

KAKITA MECHANICS

ANCESTORS

The Kakita believe without doubt that they are descended from the greatest hero the Empire has ever known, and pay homage to him on a daily basis as well as to the many heroes who have borne his name since that time.

KAKITA TOSHIMOKO

A legendary duelist even among the Kakita, Toshimoko refused to dye his hair white in the fashion of his clan, even when it turned gray at an early age. He was Emerald Champion during the Clan Wars, and set an example for a generation of Kakita heroes. Nicknamed the Gray Crane, he never lost a single duel and met his end at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. Toshimoko left his sword sheathed as his nemesis, Dairya, struck at him while surrounded enemies on all sides. While Dairya was overcome with rage and anger, Toshimoko was sent to an afterlife of peace.

ONE WITH THE SWORD

ANCESTOR FEAT: KAKITA TOSHIMOKO

Clan: Crane

Prerequisite: Void Use

Benefit: Iaijutsu Focus is always a class skill for you. You may choose to spend a Void Point at the start of a formal duel to add double your Honor to your Iaijutsu Focus rank for the remainder of the duel.

KAKITA TOSHIMOKO

(5 POINTS)

Increasing your Iaijutsu skill Rank above 1 costs one less point for you per rank. You may spend a Void Point at the start of a duel to add your Honor to all of your rolls for the remainder of the duel.

KAKITA YOSHI

The name Kakita Yoshi has become synonymous with charm, wit, and political acumen. Yoshi was the master of the Imperial Courts during the reign of Hantei the 38th, the Clan War, the War Against the Shadow, and even after his return from the afterlife during the War of Spirits. Yoshi never once failed to champion the Crane when he entered negotiations, and had a habit of making those he had manipulated feel like they were privileged to have dealt with him. Among the courtiers of the Crane Clan, no ancestor is so venerated as Kakita Yoshi.

GOLDEN WORDS

ANCESTOR FEAT: KAKITA YOSHI

Clan: Crane

Benefit: Diplomacy and Knowledge (law) are class skills for you. Once per day, you may spend a Void Point to use a Courtier Ability one more time per day than you normally

can. In addition, you may add your Honor as a bonus to all rolls made with the Favors ability of the Mastermind prestige class.

KAKITA YOSHI

(10 POINTS)

You receive a Free Raise on all Oratory and Sincerity rolls. Once per week, you may spend a Void Point to use the Favor Tables of the Doji Courtier School as if your rank in that school was one higher (you must have at least one rank in the Doji Courtier School to use this ability).

THE ARTISAN ACADEMY

Though the Kakita Dueling Academy's reputation is widely known, many overlook is a single dojo in the Kakita family's grand Artisan Academy. Though the sword is obviously treated with great reverence, the Dueling Academy is given the same attention as all other arts within the halls of the Kakita. The Artisan Academy is the family's heart, and those who study the pursuits of song, art, poetry, and similar crafts eagerly seek out apprenticeship in the school just as a bushi vies for acceptance into the Dueling Academy.

The Academy has stood in some form since the Kakita family was founded. Kakita was a humble and passionate man who sought to embody perfection in everything. Though he was possibly the most talented swordsman of his or perhaps any age, he was never content to define himself by his skill with the blade. Kakita was intrigued by the time he had spent with Yasuki and the rudimentary craft she had taught him to make the first biwa. Both melody it could produce and the art used to craft it piqued Kakita's interest.

As the first Emperor's Champion (the official title of Emerald Champion was not formally established until the rule of Hantei Genji) and the founder of his own family line, Kakita saw fit to create a dojo that would teach his style to his descendants as long as his line flourished. The Champion ordered a curriculum of arts to complement those who studied the sword.

Over the next two generations, it became clear that Kakita's school was more than just a dojo for aspiring bushi. Others from the samurai caste came to study at the school to learn the crafts of pen, brush, or music. Those who did not wish to follow the warrior's path were accepted as openly as bushi, and soon the school was evenly divided between the arts. The artisans began to learn from their own separate sensei in their own dojo, and eventually the school grounds grew to encompass the numerous schools of art. Separate buildings were built surrounding the first dojo in which Kakita began his instruction. Within one hundred years of its founding, the Kakita Artisan School became largely what it is today.

The Academy has always enjoyed great respect, both within the Crane and even from its hated enemies. Within recent generations, the Artisan Academy has seen dark times as the militant leaders such as Doji Satsume and Doji Kuwanan have placed a stronger emphasis on the bushi school and less focus on the other arts. Doji Kurohito is of a similar military bent, though he seems more sympathetic toward the peaceful arts taught at the academy. With the relative uncertainty sur-

MASTERS OF THE ARTISAN ACADEMY

The current heads of different Artisan schools are as follows

Acrobatics — Kakita Buraku (Rogue 6/Artisan 7; Kakita Artisan 4) is a relatively young Master at the age of 27 and is known for both his charm and somewhat seedy acquaintances.

Acting — Kakita Yakono (Courtier 7 / Artisan 8; Kakita Artisan 5) has been the Master of Actors for almost thirty years. The overbearing, stubborn sensei has yet to retire due to the fact she cannot find a suitable replacement.

Dance — Asahina Miko (Shugenja 5 / Artisan 8; Kakita Artisan 4) is known for her displays of Air magic to compliment her performances. Miko's free spirit has made her a welcome face no matter where she goes, a beloved darling of the court.

Ikebana — Doji Seito (Courtier 5 / Artisan 5; Kakita Artisan 4) tolerates little company outside those of his students, his superiors, and the vast portion of the Fantastic Gardens he is responsible for. Few even among his students have ever heard him speak.

Jester — Kakita Sukune (Courtier 4 / Artisan 5; Kakita Artisan 3) may not receive the same level of respect as the other Masters do, due to her young age and unusual school, but she is a feared figure throughout the Empire for her scathing, sarcastic wit.

Music — Kakita Morihime (Sam 5 / Artisan 8; Kakita Artisan 5) is surprisingly military-minded for an Artisan for she was a taiko drummer during the Clan War. She often teaches her students how to inspire the soul of a bushi with their talents.

Oratory — Kakita Sunagi (Courtier 5 / Artisan 5; Kakita Artisan 4) has become somewhat infamous among the council for his isolationist attitude towards the other schools. He has a polite demeanor, but doesn't care much for the other Masters. He has horrible headaches and must drink sake to sleep at night.

Origami — Daidoji Nihan (Courtier 4 / Artisan 7; Kakita Artisan 4) is known for his strict and humorless attitude, as well as the effectiveness it brings to his students. Though his work is unparalleled, he is notorious for falling asleep during his instructions.

Painting — Kakita Arihiko (Courtier 5 / Artisan 10; Kakita Artisan 5) is the eldest of the Kakita Masters, and the others Masters often seek her advice due to her kind and wise nature. She will likely never willingly retire and knows the last of her days are coming quite soon.

Poetry — Kakita Shiko (Courtier 3 / Artisan 6; Kakita Artisan 3) was recently appointed to her position and is the child of famed poet Kakita Shijin. She is somewhat shy and nervously dreads disappointing her ancestors.

rounding the Imperial Throne since the Hantei line's fall, the masters of the Academy have gone to great lengths to ensure the Doji family does not forget the true soul of their clan.

ARTISAN (PRESTIGE CLASS)

Members of the Artisan prestige class (described in *Rokugan™*) may add the following Artisan abilities to the list they may choose from at 1st, 3rd, 5th, 7th, and 9th levels.

Chord of the Soul (musician): A master musician, the Artisan's abilities border on the supernatural and can affect great change in the manner and resolve of others. The Artisan gains the Bardic Music ability (as described in bard character class in the *Player's Handbook™*) but gains the abilities described as if his Perform skill were 4 ranks lower, minimum 1 (for example, an Artisan with 9 ranks in Perform would gain the Inspire Courage, Countersong, Fascinate, and Inspire Competence abilities, but not Suggestion). This ability may be used a number of times per day equal to half the Artisan's character level, rounded down. Selecting Chord of the Soul requires the Artisan to already have selected the Soul of Music ability. Characters who already possess the Bardic Music ability gain two additional uses of it per day and 2 free ranks in the Perform skill if they select this ability. This ability may only be taken once.

Blessed Images (painter): By infusing a work of art with his own chi, the Artisan can create supernatural effects with his paintings. This ability allows the Artisan to cast a carefully engraved symbol once per day with a casting time of one hour. The Artisan may use the discord, fear, hopelessness, or persuasion symbols and casts the symbol as if he were a sorcerer with levels equal to his character level. This ability may not be taken until the character has reach 5th level in the Artisan prestige class.

THE KAKITA ARTISAN

UPDATED FOR SECOND EDITION

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Skills: Courtier, Etiquette, Calligraphy, Lore (Any appropriate to specialty), any one High Skill, and 2 ranks in the character's specialty skill.

Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Starting Outfit: (All of Fine quality), wakizashi, kimono, traveling pack, artisan's satchel, 10 koku, and two items associated with the Artisan's specialty.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Soul of the Artisan

When a character takes their first rank in the Kakita Artisan School, they must choose one of the following skills as their *maya*: Acrobatics, Acting, Dance, Ikebana, Jester, Music, Painting, Poetry, or Storytelling. This skill is the focus of the Artisan's career and the character is as devoted to the art as a Kakita bushi is devoted to the way of the sword. Depending on the *maya* chosen, the character's first rank is one of the following:

Acrobatics: The Rokugani art of acrobatics includes muscle and joint control as well as simple feats of dexterity. An acrobat trained by the Kakita Artisan academy may use their Acrobatics skill in the standard manner as well as situations involving contorting their body in some manner (i.e. — escaping bonds or attempting to slip through an unusually narrow passage). In addition, the Acrobat may add his rank in the Acrobatics skill to his TN to Be Hit.

Acting: An Actor has studied both the arts of flamboyant

Kabuki acting and the reserved Noh theatre. He is a master of evoking emotion in others and a true student of the human nature. The Actor can effectively mimic others well enough to impersonate a specific person or pass themselves off as someone less specific. The TN to impersonate a specific individual can range from 5 (someone you've known well your whole life and resemble) to 35 (someone you've just met or hardly resemble) or more. The Actor may also attempt to pass himself off as someone with a higher Glory, Honor, or possibly Insight Rank, with a base TN of 5 + the number of Ranks simulated. Attempting to portray Ranks lower than your own add nothing to the TN of the roll, and all changes are cumulative (For example, an Actor of Insight Rank 2, Honor 3, and Glory 2 attempting to give the impression he was Rank 3, Honor 4, and Glory 5, has a total TN of 35). It should be noted that attempting such acts can easily be construed as dishonorable if used outside of a staged performance.

Dance: The natural grace required and honed by the Dance school of the Kakita grants the Dancer a Free Raise on all Agility and Reflexes rolls outside of combat. In addition, the Dancer may use his art to mesmerize those watching his performance. If a member of the Dancer's audience would notice something relatively unimportant (like another member of the audience quietly leaving or all the shoji screens being closed slowly), the Dancer makes a Dance / Awareness skill check at a TN of the viewer's Perception \times 5. If successful, the audience member is too engrossed in the performance to notice or care about minor things happening around him. Naturally, this ability is useless in combat or similar around similar situations and does not affect those who are not paying attention to the dance.

Ikebana: Nearly all samurai respect the delicate art of flower arranging, and some find it as relaxing and cleansing as the tea ceremony or meditation. Ikebana Artists use their skill to bring harmony to the soul of an understanding character or balance the energies in a room. The Artisan may make an Ikebana / Void roll at a TN of 15 and place an arrangement in a room to help bring harmony to the spirit of an intended individual, who must be present while the arrangement is prepared. The arrangement may be finished in as little as fifteen minutes, but the Artisan gains a Free Raise on the roll for each additional fifteen minutes spent on the work, to a maximum number of Free Raises equal to the Artisan's Insight Rank. As long as the intended recipient remains within the same room as the arrangement, he adds a single extra Void point to his pool to be spent for the day. These arrangements lose their potency by the next sunrise and may only be created for this purpose a number of times per day equal to the Ikebana Artist's Rank in the Kakita Artisan School.

Jester: A Jester is trained to manipulate the emotions of others through a combination of acting techniques and trained wit. Jesters are intended to lighten a daimyo's mood, but many have a reputation for goading others into less sour moods and tales of skilled Jesters inciting duels are not rare. A Jester may spend a Void Point and make a Jester / Awareness skill check to leave another character feeling either lighthearted or deeply irritated and unfocused for an hour. This technique requires at least five minutes of uninterrupted interaction with the target such as talking or even keeping their attention with subtle gestures of the body and face. The TN for this roll is 10, plus 5 \times the target's Willpower if the Jester is attempting to sour their mood. Characters affected by this ability roll one more or less die on all rolls (minimum one). These effects are not cumulative, and the Jester may perform this on the same person only once per day.

Music: Students of music tend to be the most common and popular Kakita Artisans for two reasons. Unlike plays and dances that can change from season to season, the music of the Artisans tend to be traditional and known throughout the Empire. Though a daimyo could possibly be offended at what an acting troupe has to offer this winter, it is unlikely he would object to songs his great-great-grandfathers once enjoyed. Musicians are adept at soothing others with their art, and may use their skill to quietly calm the emotions of others even if he is not the center of attention. Anyone within earshot of a Musician that has been listening for more than five minutes must make a simple Willpower test at a TN of 10 + 5 \times the Musician's Artisan School Rank to initiate any sort of violent act (including shouting, shaking a fist, etc). Characters may spend a Void Point to forego the roll.

Oratory: This maya encompasses all forms of public speaking, including storytelling. Many Doji courtiers spend at least a season in the Oratory school and it is one of the largest within the Kakita Artisan Academy. A skilled artisan can hold the attention of his audience for long periods of time through the skilled use of oratory. In order to be a capable public speaker, the Orator must possess a great deal of knowledge on many topics, and gains one Free Raise to all Knowledge and Lore skills initially and another when he achieves the third rank of the Artisan school. In addition, the Orator may make any Lore or Knowledge skill roll as if he had at least one rank in that skill (and still gains the Free Raise).

Painting: Painting is generally categorized in one of two distinct styles — the premeditated art of sculpting, brushing, or woodblock creation that designs intricate and stunning displays, or the impromptu art of wayo, which involves the brushing of kanji and other relatively simple designs in front of an audience within a limited time span. Though some wayo are less spontaneous and other paintings are quickly done as wayo, the two styles tend to be rather distinct. Painting is unique among the Artisan schools because the product not only can be given as a gift (such as poetry and Ikebana), but can also be honorably sold and traded for favors from others. Generally a painting has a value in koku of at least of one half the Artisan's Painting rank (rounded up) plus 1 for each week spent crafting it. Creating a worthwhile painting takes at least one week, and the Painter must make a Painting skill check at TN 15 to ensure the art is worth anything. Raises may be made to increase the value of the painting by 1 koku and each additional week spent on the art provides a Free Raise to the roll (which is made halfway through the creation process).

Poetry: The most common form of art is poetry and members of every caste can be found practicing it. Poetry comes in a great variety of forms, though the most common are the haiku and the waka. A haiku is composed in three lines of five, then seven, then five syllables, and the waka which is in a five, seven, five, seven, seven format. Both forms are often composed spontaneously to show wit, and composing such verse without preparation with a partner is a common pastime in the courts. A Poet trained by the Kakita is so adept at the art that he may spend a Void Point and make a Poetry skill check to roll and keep two extra dice on a skill check involving speech (not including spellcasting) that is performed immediately after. The TN for the Poetry check is the same as the TN for the roll it is intended to enhance.

Rank Two: The Soul's Dream:

A second rank Artisan may roll and keep an additional die when making skill checks involving his maya. In addition, the Artisan's study has gained him a unique insight into the wants

of those around him. The Artisan gets a bonus to all opposed social rolls involving a target that has any disadvantages involving a strong need or desire of some kind (such as Greed, Lechery, or Driven). The bonus is equal to twice the number of points of the disadvantages in question.

Rank Three: Free the Spirit:

Due to the growing renown of the Artisan's work, he may use the "short form" of his maya (i.e., the wayo form of painting, or the impromptu form of poetry; Ikebana possesses no short form but may be used in this manner) to inspire others to greatness. A number of times per day equal to his Rank in the Artisan School, the Artisan may use this technique to give up to three other characters Free Raises that must be used within an hour. These Free Raises may be used on any roll, and the number of Free Raises given is determined by a skill check using the character's maya, divided by ten (rounded down).

Rank Four: Undying Name

At this rank, the Artisan gains an additional die to roll and keep whenever rolling skill checks involving his maya. The Artisan has reached a level of notoriety that his work can have a significant impact on others if he so chooses. Once per week, the Artisan may use his maya to increase or decrease another character's Glory by a number of boxes equal to the Artisan's Honor Rank. The Artisan must socialize and otherwise influence the opinions of others, primarily using his art as a medium of the message or simply using his considerable influence. This technique can only raise a character's Glory by one full rank or lower it by two full ranks total. The Artisan may not use this ability on characters of higher Glory Rank.

Rank Five: Walk Among the Heavens

The Artisan is well known throughout all of Rokugan and can easily call in favors except in the most remote reaches of civilization's edge. Each week, the Artisan may use the Doji Courtier favor tables as if he were a Fourth Rank Doji Courtier, but must lose Glory points equal to the Rank of the favor gained. The Artisan may not lose more than five Glory points per week in this fashion.

OPTIONAL RULES FOR IAIJUTSU DUELS

"WHY IS THAT NINJA USING IAIJUTSU TO SNEAK ATTACK?"

Though the Iaijutsu Focus presented in *Oriental Adventures* may be applied in any situation where the character is drawing a weapon on a flat-footed opponent, iaijutsu is not taught in Rokugan to take advantage of such a wide array of situations. As an optional rule DMs are encouraged to allow Iaijutsu Focus to be used in the following situations only:

- When both characters strike in a formal Iaijutsu Duel. This includes the character with the lower Iaijutsu Focus check (assuming he survives the other duelist's strike). Both participants in this duel are considered flat-footed and forego any benefit from an ability or special quality that would prevent them from being flat-footed while they are in the duel.

- As a full-round action when the character is drawing his weapon as his first action for the combat and has a higher initiative than his opponent. The opponent must be flat-footed when the duelist makes his attack, and this action draws attacks of opportunity.
- Iaijutsu Focus may be used against inanimate objects with a single attack that requires a full-round action.

All Iaijutsu Focus mechanics for the Rokugan game world are designed with this optional rule in mind.

"YOU HAVE MORE VOID? I CONCEDE"

Sometimes the tension building up to a climactic iaijutsu duel seems to die down as soon as one contestant realizes that he has more Void than the other. Since he will almost always get the chance to actually strike his opponent first, there is little need for the duelist with higher Void to have any worry about the outcome of the duel. Once the Awareness rolls are made, the excitement of the duel is replaced by a patient waiting for a predictable outcome. For players and GMs wishing to add more suspense to iaijutsu duels in their games, the following rules are suggested to replace those presented in the *Player's Guide*. These rules are purely optional.

- The initial Iaijutsu/Awareness roll has its TN set to 5, but may be used to discern the opponent's Agility, Void, Reflexes, Awareness, or Iaijutsu rank. Raises may be made to this roll, with each Raise providing information on an additional Rank.
- After the initial Awareness roll, each participant in the duel chooses his opponent's Agility, Void, Reflexes, or Awareness. A duelist may only Focus as many times as they have Ranks in the statistic chosen by their opponent, though they may spend a Void point to focus additional times.
- If a character chooses to Focus, he must make a roll against the TN to which he just focused. The duelist rolls a number of dice equal to their Iaijutsu skill, but keeps only a number of dice equal to the statistic chosen by their opponent at the start of the duel. Failure means the duelist must declare a Strike instead of a Focus and immediately resolve the duel.

CHAPTER FIVE:

THE YASUKI

SILK AND STEEL
PART SIX

In his short but distinguished career as a representative of Miya Hatori, Otomo Taneji had opportunity to travel a great deal. He had grown accustomed to the fact that travel was uncomfortable, and took a small amount of pride in his ability to deal with discomfort. In a way, he took his ability to endure minor hardship as a sign that he was not quite as pampered as his Otomo brethren. However, after four days of galloping at a breakneck pace beside a squadron of Jade Magistrates, Taneji no longer had any such delusions. He had never been so sore, so tired, so completely exhausted in his life. Only the knowledge that their cause was just, that the life of Hatori's wife hung in the balance, gave him the strength to continue on.

Even so, he frequently wondered if he might give up his family's fortune for a nice hot bath. Asahina Sekawa gestured curtly, bringing the party to a halt at a crossroads while they paused to get their bearings. Taneji collapsed forward on his horse's neck and struggled to catch his breath.

"How much further, Sekawa-sama?" Sekkou shouted over the sound of galloping hooves, giving voice to Taneji's own silent question.

Sekawa glanced back at the Monkey, then looked ahead at the road again. He said nothing.

"Say what is on your mind, Sekawa," Hatori demanded, shooting the Jade Champion a curt look. "You fear that we are already too late to save her."

Sekawa looked at Hatori, blue eyes narrowing. "Why would we

be too late?" he asked.

"If the Shadowed Tower has infiltrated the Scorpion Clan, there is no reason they should not have eyes among the Crane as well," Hatori said. "That was why I was so cautious in seeking your aid. But even marching out with this small group, as quietly as we departed, there is some chance that they know of our intent. The safehouse Munemori told us of is still days away. By the time we arrive, Kamiko may already be dead."

Sekawa smiled, the deep scar on his chin giving the expression a sinister cast. "Hatori, you have let your bad experiences color your outlook," he said. "It is not yet time to abandon hope." Sekawa looked to the west, down the road they were traveling. His face was calm, expectant.

As if in reply, a quartet of samurai in brilliant green armor appeared on the horizon, sashimono fluttering in the breeze. The leader held up his sword in salute and galloped toward them. Taneji sat up painfully in his saddle, eyes straining to read the symbol on their banners. The young courtier's eyes widened. He exchanged a surprised look with Sekkou.

"Yasuki Hachi," Hatori said, bowing low from his saddle as the horsemen arrived. The Emerald Champion was flanked by three of his loyal samurai, all garbed in the armor of Emerald Magistrates.

"Greetings, Miya Hatori," Hachi said, his expression one of mild amusement. "What a strange coincidence that I should meet you here when not two days ago I had the pleasure of rescuing your wife, Miya Kamiko, from a most unusual predicament. And what distinguished company you keep. Greetings, Jade Champion." Hachi nodded to Sekawa, who returned the gesture.

Hatori dropped from his saddle, staring up at Hachi with wide eyes. "Kamiko..." he said, as if unwilling to believe. "She is alive? She is safe?"

"Indeed," Hachi replied. "You can thank Norachai for that. Few know the City of Lies better than he. Even the Shadowed Tower had nowhere to hide." He nodded to the samurai at his left. The mon over the man's heart indicated that he was a Scorpion.

"Then I thank you as well, Norachai-san," Hatori said, bowing his head sincerely, "but I still do not understand. How could Hachi have known in time?"

"When the Jade Champion is your ally, justice moves as swiftly as the wind," Hachi replied.

"But I only told him the truth days ago," Sekkou said.

"We are old friends, Hatori," Sekawa said. "I knew something wrong about your manner as soon as you arrived. I hope you will forgive me for prying, but your secrets have been known to me for weeks. I passed word to Hachi and simply waited to see whether or not you truly intended to respond to the Tower's coercion. You did not, and I commend you for your bravery, old friend."

Hatori laughed out loud. "Emerald Champion, Jade Champion, both of you have my most sincere thanks and gratitude," he replied. "But where is Kamiko now?"

"You need not worry for her safety, Hatori," Hachi replied. "One of my lieutenants has taken her to the nearest secure household, a place where I think even the Shadowed Tower would not dare strike at her."

"And where is that?" Hatori asked.

"Shiro Moto," Hachi replied. "Your wife is a guest of the Khan."

"I thought that Moto Chagatai was an ally of the Shogun," Taneji said. The enmity between the Emerald Champion and the Shogun was well known.

"Yes, but the Unicorn have been friends of the esteemed Ikoma Hatori for many years," Hachi replied, "and as much as Chagatai dislikes me, he despises the Scorpion more. He protects your wife as a matter of honor, a gesture of friendship toward you. She is in safe hands. Shall I escort you to her, Hatori-san?"

"Yes, Hachi-sama," Hatori replied in a relieved voice. "I would like that very much."

THE YASUKI PROVINCES

Since Yasuki Hachi's controversial oath of fealty to the Crab Champion, nearly all the lands the Crane Yasuki territories have been returned to Crab control. However, the family remains divided between Crab and Crane. The former bitter hatred between Crab and Crane Yasuki has evolved into a friendly rivalry as both sides turn their talents toward benefiting their clans.

Though it was Yasuki Hachi who engineered the alliance, his duties as Emerald Champion frequently keep him away from Yasuki lands. In his absence, he has appointed Yasuki Jinn-Kuen (see *Secrets of the Crab*TM) and Yasuki Nanako [Female Crane Clan Courtier 11/Samurai 4; Doji Courtier 5] to manage the family's business.

Crab Yasuki look after the shipping operations and deal with the actual trade while the Crane Yasuki act mostly in the role of clerks and functionaries, managing the day to day business aspects, researching trade and taxation laws to find the most beneficial arrangements, and establishing contact with potential customers. As such the Crane Yasuki have few true holdings, but oversee the holdings of their Crab cousins. Profits are shared equally between Crab and Crane. Thus far the arrangement has been beneficial as with the combined efforts

of Crane and Crab have made the family's ventures are more profitable than they ever have been.

The arrangement is a peculiar one, especially given the long-time enmity between the Crab and Crane. Whether or not this alliance can outlive the strong leadership that currently binds it together remains to be seen.

MAJOR YASUKI HOLDINGS

As stated previously, the Crane Yasuki have few real holdings to call their own. They instead serve as bureaucrats, clerks, and functionaries in holdings owned by the Crab Yasuki. Even so, the Crane Yasuki are a wealthy and influential family, and their few major holdings are quite noteworthy indeed.

THE CASTLE OF THE EMERALD CHAMPION (LOCATION A3)

For many years the Castle of the Emerald Champion has stood vacant. The former Emerald Champion, Kakita Toshiken, moved to Kyuden Kakita many years ago due to failing health. Toturi never replaced Toshiken out of respect, as the Empire was more or less at peace. The Castle has known no lord, no inhabitants other than the Imperial caretakers that maintain its timeless beauty. Past caretakers have boasted that the castle is the most perfect castle in Rokugan for its simplicity, serenity, and near perfect symmetry.

Now that Yasuki Hachi has replaced Toshiken as Emerald Champion, the empty castle has become his household. With the Yasuki family reunited under a lord that is both Crab and Crane, the daimyo's choice of residence could have been a matter of controversy. In the neutral estates of the Emerald Champion, there is no such problem. In addition, the presence of Akodo Kaneka in Yasuki Yashiki could have proven difficult, as the Shogun has been antagonistic toward Hachi in the past. Hachi has neatly avoided either crisis by making his home in here, apart from both Crab and Crane lands and far from the Shogun.

The Emerald Champion's castle is a luxurious, sprawling estate. There has traditionally been little emphasis on defense. No clan would dare attack the Emerald Champion and the Shadowlands are far too distant to be a real threat. Following the attack on Otsosan Uchi, this has changed. Hachi has ordered defensive walls to be constructed around the castle, and lookout towers to be stationed intermittently about the wide plains surrounding the estate. The caretakers are horrified by how these changes have ruined the castle's peaceful symmetry, but cannot deny that these changes are for the best.

EMERALD MAGISTRATE HEADQUARTERS

The Emerald Magistrates' charter requires regular reports to one's superiors, and at one time Otsosan Uchi served as the destination for all such reporting magistrates. With Otsosan Uchi no longer a suitable headquarters, the Emerald Champion's estate now serves as a default headquarters for Emerald Magistrates. The number of magistrates visiting at all times is a strain on the castle's vast guest facilities, and Hachi has recently commissioned construction on a new guest barracks to house visiting magistrates.

HIGHWAYS OF THE YASUKI PROVINCES

(See *Secrets of the Crab*™ for more details on the Yasuki lands)

The Yasuki currently have no major highways that connect their sparse holdings within the Crab lands, but the merchant family maintains several trade routes that they "forget" to report to the Imperial Cartographers each year.

Black Crane Way (Connects CB18 to CB17) — The Yasuki's most valued secret route skirts the edge of Earthquake Fish Bay and connects the Yasuki stronghold to the Hida family's castle. The path is maintained with the utmost attention, as an interruption of supplies to the Hida in times of emergency could cause a crisis that would threaten the entire Crab Clan.

Path of No Man (Connects CB18 to CB19) — This route travels directly through the mountain range to the north of Yasuki Yashiki and is laid in such a manner that it would be hard to spot even by experienced climbers. The route actually goes into the mountains and emerges a mile or two later at some points and ultimately ends at the base of the mountains near Watchtower of the West. The Yasuki constantly make sure outsiders are aware just how treacherous the mountains are to ensure the pass is never accidentally discovered.

The caretakers are as frustrated by the new construction as they are by the defensive walls and towers, but they realize there is little they can do to dispute the Emerald Champion's wishes. They have repeatedly begged Hachi to build an identical outbuilding on the palace's far side to maintain its symmetry, but Hachi has discounted their wishes thus far as a needless waste of necessary funds.

Even with the new construction, the estates are constantly swamped with visitors. Some magistrates make appointments and then depart to while away the intervening time in Treacherous Pass City, but this is a temporary solution at best.

A day's ride along the northern road stands Zumiki-Mihari, the Agasha family's southern watchtower. As the Phoenix claim that the tower serves no military purpose, Hachi's magistrates have attempted to negotiate with the Phoenix to use the tower as a secondary barracks on three separate occasions. All attempts have failed, primarily due to the fact that the Phoenix secretly use the tower to spy upon the Imperial families and do not want the Emerald Magistrates interfering. Hachi has

grown increasingly frustrated with the Phoenix Clan's refusal to see the magistrates' greater need, but for the moment he has greater problems to deal with.

KITSUKI REMATA

[Samurai 6 / Kitsuki Investigator 4; Kitsuki Investigator 4]

Though Hachi is lord of these estates, he is rarely present here longer than it takes to rest, eat, discover the latest threat to the Empire, and ride out again. In his absence he has appointed Kitsuki Remata to accept the reports of visiting magistrates and oversee the household's daily affairs. Remata excels in this post, for he has an agile mind and excellent memory for detail.

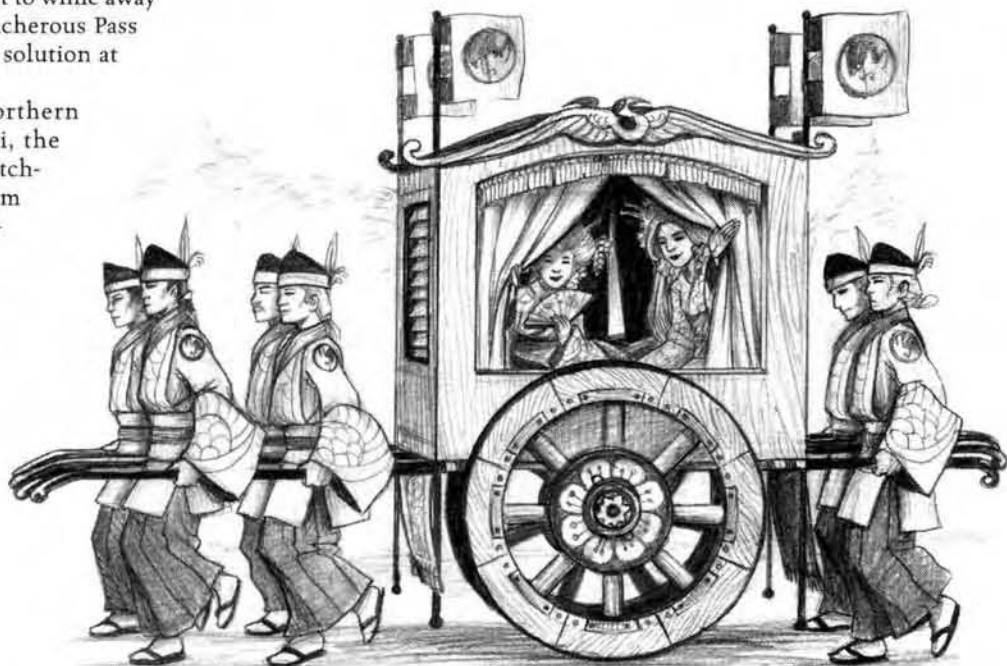
Even so, he wonders if this is not some form of punishment. Shortly after Toturi's death and Hachi's appointment as Emerald Champion, Remata uncovered documents that suggested Akodo Kaneka was the rightful heir to the Yasuki family. Though Remata found the documents suspicious and later discovered them to be forgeries, he never uncovered the party responsible for their creation. In addition, Remata shattered his own wakizashi in fealty to the shogun, an act few other Emerald Magistrates would contemplate. Remata cannot shake the feeling that he has been given this duty to keep him busy, that he has been placed here because Hachi does not entirely trust him.

To Remata, it is all the more frustrating because he believes he can truly help Hachi. He believes he can bridge the enmity between Hachi and the Shogun, if Hachi would only let him. In addition, he believes that there is far more to the Yasuki situation than meets the eye. The entire affair is disturbingly familiar...

How can he solve the mystery if he is burdened by the duties of a bureaucrat?

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Many visitors in the Emerald Magistrate's estates have confessed of peculiar goings-on. Items have turned up missing, strange noises erupt in the dead of night, and nightmares are rampant among the caretakers. These



events are particularly frequent among the laborers constructing the new defensive walls and guest facilities. With the duties of administrating the Emerald Magistrates occupying his time, Kitsuki Remata asks the player characters to investigate this bizarre phenomenon.

Focus: Most magistrates suspect that this is the work of some disgruntled caretaker, angry at the new changes to the estate. The caretakers believe that it is the work of the kami, enraged at how the laborers have disrupted the land's symmetry. The laborers think that it is a ghost, and superstitious workers have already left.

Strike: The laborers are quite correct. The incidents are all the work of a ghost by the name of Tokutomi. In life, Tokutomi was a caretaker and his ashes were strewn across the Plains of the Emerald Champion. The recent construction has disturbed Tokutomi's grave and now his only desire is for the castle's perfect symmetry to be restored. The player characters may attempt to reason with him, if they can find him, but like many ghosts, Tokutomi is difficult to reason with and can only understand his own objectives. Alternately, the party can either try to find Tokutomi's remains and move them so that he will be at rest, or convince the Phoenix at Zumiki-Mihari to allow the magistrates to use their tower so that the new guest barracks will be unnecessary.

FRIENDLY TRAVELER VILLAGE (LOCATION CR19)

Friendly Traveler was a decent if not noteworthy fishing village until several decades ago, when Yasuki Taka turned the Friendly Traveler Sake Works into one of the most successful businesses in the Empire's history. As war tore apart the Yasuki lands, Friendly Traveler became a focus for the conflict between Crab and Crane. Both sides realized that to continue the war there would only destroy the sake works — and thus ruin the prize they both sought — and Friendly Traveler became neutral ground. Even Akodo Kaneka would not bring violence to Friendly Traveler; maintaining peace there was far more lucrative.

More than a few village residents have pointed out the eerie similarity between the village's history and that of the present Yasuki daimyo. The village, like Hachi, went from anonymity to prominence overnight, and then went onto greatness due to its place at the center of conflict. The Shogun's forces may occupy Yasuki Yashiki, but to those among the Crab and Crane Yasuki, Friendly Traveler is the true heart of the Yasuki lands.

The village has expanded greatly since its joint occupation by Crab and Crane. Friendly Traveler is now the heart of the Crane Yasuki's administrative facilities. It is here that Crab traders meet with Crane bureaucrats to arrange new contacts and shipping routes and to share profits.

Though the Crab and Crane are no longer at war, it is generally understood that they are still not entirely friendly to one another. The Crab merchants and sailors frequently report lower profit than they actually accrue on their voyages, and the Crane in turn tend to turn the tax laws to their advantage when shearing the Crab side of the profits. Ironically the graft and corruption on both sides is such that neither truly have the advantage.

Such is the way of the Yasuki.

DOJI KAZO

[Samurai 7; Kakita Bushi 3]

When Doji Kazo's Champion ordered the young bushi to take his armies and conquer Friendly Traveler Village, he never

imagined that he would remain there for over two years. As Kazo was instrumental in the original treaty that secured peace in the village, he has seen it as his duty to remain and maintain that peace. His role, officially, was as a Crane ambassador and advisor to magistrate Hida Shara. Beside the soldiers of the Crab it was he who first realized that the rise in maho activity along the coast was due to the return of Fu Leng — the ascension of a new dark god in the heavens. The news came as a shock, but through its delivery Kazo gained a measure of fame among his clan.

Now that peace has come to the Yasuki family, Kazo wonders if he has any further place in Friendly Traveler. He is a young and successful samurai, a war hero. If he asked it, he could win a post anywhere in the Crane lands, his promotion in the ranks almost assured.

Even so, he finds that he does not wish to leave Friendly Traveler behind. He has watched the tormented village grow into something much more. He has watched archenemies come to terms with one another, and in some cases even work with one another toward ends neither side could accomplish alone. Kazo has many friends among the Crab Clan. He has come to respect the Yasuki family, divided as it is, and wishes to do whatever he can to help Yasuki Hachi maintain the arrangement he has created here. Already Kazo's relatives have begun to urge him to leave the village behind, to shake off the dust of Friendly Traveler and take his place among the great Crane heroes.

Kazo realizes he cannot have both of his desires. If he pursues greatness, he must leave Friendly Traveler behind. If he remains here, it is unlikely he will ever be anything more than a *taisa* in the Crane armies, but he will be accomplishing something worthwhile.

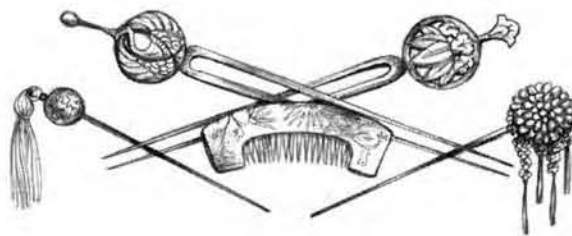
Is that not, in itself, some form of greatness?

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: In the dead of night, a fire breaks out in the Friendly Traveler Sake Works. The peasant laborers are prepared for such an eventuality and quickly muster to put out the flames, but their work is halted when a riot erupts around the facility.

Focus: Peasants serving both Crab and Crane blame one another for the fire, and violence has erupted. Armed samurai have not yet joined the conflict, but it is only a matter of time before someone's valued servant is injured and swords are drawn. It falls to a neutral party (perhaps the player characters) to stem the conflict so the fire can be doused.

Strike: If the party investigates they may discover that neither side is responsible for the blaze. A ship belonging to a rival sake works located in the Mantis Isles entered port only last night. A few more aggressive employees have decided to eliminate competition in a permanent manner. They snuck into the facility and started the blaze, hoping to use the Crab/Crane war to cover their actions.



IMPORTANT YASUKI NPCS

YASUKI HACHI, EMERALD CHAMPION

Yasuki Hachi was born to humble beginnings, for a samurai. His bloodline was once greatly honored, a Yasuki branch that chose to swear fealty to the Daidoji rather than become Crab. That same bloodline later gave birth to Daidoji Tsukuro, the deranged traitor who joined the Shadowlands to avoid punishment for accusations of graft and corruption. After Tsukuro's fall, Hachi's ancestors were given successively less important duties as the Crane tried to forget the curse Tsukuro had borne.

Hachi's parents died during the War of Spirits and his younger sister was fostered to the Scorpion Clan, leaving him essentially alone in the world. As he neared his gempukku, a few of his father's former comrades pitied Hachi enough to grant him an invitation to the Topaz Championship. Hachi placed second in the prestigious gempukku competition, and was awarded with the rank of gunso in the Daidoji legions. He went on to train at the Kakita Academy and became an accomplished duelist. It was also during the Topaz Championship that Hachi competed beside Doji Yasuyo and Doji Nagori, who went on to become to of his closest friends despite their difference in rank.

Though Hachi had already accomplished much for one born so relatively low, he never dwelled on his accomplishments. Hachi soon became well known for his good temper and excellent sense of humor as well as his talent with the sword. Hachi also gained something of a reputation as a ladies' man, but he would humbly argue this reputation was not entirely deserved. Hachi claims he simply has a knack for being attracted to women that get him into a great deal of trouble. A winter affair with a Scorpion samurai-ko (who Hachi did not know was married at the time) led to a duel with her angered husband. Hachi won the duel, unintentionally building his reputation as he did so. Two years later a tryst with a Doji governor's twin daughters (who Hachi swears to this day he did not realize were twins) led to the matter being resolved with a simple apology from Hachi. The Doji knew Hachi had Kakita training, and did not wish to risk drawing the young gunso's wrath.

The tales of Hachi's romantic adventures are numerous, and have only grown more uncanny with his fame. Hachi adamantly maintains that only a select few of these tales are true, though he refuses to clarify the matter further. That fact that Hachi's friend Nagori, now a popular Crane storyteller, takes a secret delight in annoying Hachi probably has a great deal to do with the prevalence of these tales.

When the Yasuki household was left without a daimyo and it was discovered that Hachi bore the closest link to the family line, both the Crab and Crane Clans were shaken to their foundations. Crane Champion Doji Kurohito had little confidence in Hachi's ability to resolve the situation, so he sought to distract Hachi by giving him the "honor" of competing in the Test of the Emerald Champion. Hachi won the competition, but Hantei Naseru's manipulations cast a shadow over the Test, causing it to appear as if Hachi were Naseru's pawn so

HACHI'S SWORD

The katana that Yasuki Hachi carries is Kanpeki, one of the five swords forged by Doji Yasurugi. Of the five swords, Kanpeki is the least famous, as it spent much of its existence laying unused in the vaults of Kyuden Doji. After Hachi proved himself in the village of Shinsei's Last Hope, Doji Kurohito gifted Kanpeki to Hachi to aid him in bringing justice to the Empire.

Though the sword does not seem as powerful as the other Yasurugi blades, Hachi does not mind. He believes that Kanpeki's power has not awakened yet because, unlike the other four Yasurugi blades, it does not yet have a story.

All he need do now is live a tale worthy of the legendary sword he wields.

D20 SYSTEM™

Kanpeki is the katana that Hachi currently uses as his Ancestral Daisho. Should Hachi ever reach 20th level without becoming dishonored or accumulating the Shadowlands Taint, the sword will awaken and become an intelligent weapon.

LSR RPG 2E:

Hachi's sword, Kanpeki, is a Fine weapon that inflicts 3k2 damage and adds one to Hachi's Iaijutsu skill when wielded. Should Hachi ever reach Insight Rank 8 without becoming dishonored or Tainted, the weapon will become a powerful nemuranai.

that the Anvil could continue to manipulate the court from behind the scenes while the Emerald Champion was left powerless.

Hachi refused to be defeated. Though he had asked for none of the honors that had been forced upon him, he strove to be worthy of them. He brought honor to the title of Emerald Champion during the attack on Otosan Uchi, then turned his attention toward uniting the Yasuki family. Hachi realized that the Crane Yasuki would never return to the Crab Clan and the Crab Yasuki would never honor a Crane. Drawing inspiration from the example of Doji Reju (who swore fealty to both Dragon and Crane at the end of the War Against the Shadow), Hachi marched into the Shadowlands, determined to take advantage of the Twenty Goblin Winter and swear fealty to the Crab Clan.

The task was not easy. In the Shadowlands, Hachi faced his ancestor, the Lost general, Tsukuro. In the village of Shinsei's Last Hope the two men battled, and in the end Hachi stood triumphant. Now both Hida Kuon and Doji Kurohito honor him. He is daimyo in good standing in two Great Clans and Emerald Champion.

Now that Hachi has finally gained respect, he has discovered that his work is only beginning.

YASUKI HACHI

Male human Crane Samurai 8/Fighter 4/Emerald Magistrate 3: CR 15; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 12d10+24 plus 3d8+6; hp 150; Init +8; Spd 20 ft.; AC 28 (touch 18, flat-footed 22); Atk +3 keen katana, +24/+19/+14 melee, 91d10+8, 15-20 critical); SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill - Hide (Daidoji family bonus), The Emperor's Seal, Strength of

Purpose +2, Saibankan's Method; Honor: 3; AL LG; SV Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 18 (22), Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 18 (19); Maximum Void: 2; Height 5 ft. 6 in.

Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy; **Kata:** One Leg Stance (katana), Striking as Fire.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Rokugani), Battle +13, Climb +12, Diplomacy +15, Gather Information +11, Hide +11, Iaijutsu Focus +22, Intimidate +10, Jump +8, Knowledge (law) +9, Listen +3, Perform +13, Ride +11, Sense Motive +10, Spot +8; Alertness, Improved Critical (katana), Improved Initiative, Leadership (18), A Single Moment, The Speed of Death, The Sudden Strike, Versatile (Gather Information, Knowledge (law)), Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus (katana), Weapon Specialization (katana).

Possessions: +2 yumi, +3 wakizashi (ancestral daisho), +5 keen katana (ancestral daisho), amulet of natural armor +2, armor of the emerald champion, emperor's eye, kimono of resistance +2, kote of dexterity +4, ring of protection +2, twilight lantern.

YASUKI HACHI

Earth: 3

Fire: 4

Water: 4

Air: 5

Void: 4

School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 3 / Doji Magistrate 2

Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy

Kata: One Leg Stance (katana), Striking As Fire

Honor: 3.3

Glory: 9.0

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Balance, Leadership, Multiple Schools, True Friend (Doji Nagori)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Lechery (1), Nemesis (Tsukuro)

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 5, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 7, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore (law) 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 3.

VASSALS OF THE YASUKI

THE ROBUTO FAMILY, VASSALS OF THE YASUKI

When the Yasuki broke from the Crane Clan hundreds of years ago, the Crane slandered their daimyo, Kiringu, for years thereafter. While the Crab threatened violence in return for these harsh words, the Hida, Hiruma, Kuni, and Kaiu had better things to do than answer for the Yasuki's troubles every day.

Kiringu was a relatively peaceful man, and his years among the Crab did little to change his disposition. He was smart enough not to meet the Crane on their terms, the courts, where he was severely outmatched. Sadly, the Yasuki daimyo did not have the military might to silence his former clan. In an act the Crane mocked as weakness, Kiringu quietly endured the insults and jeers from the Crane while continuing to assimilate himself and his family as important Crab vassals.

Kiringu's second born son, Jiriki, was sent to the Hida Bushi School. For two years, Jiriki ingratiated himself among his peers and strove to make a solid impression upon the Hida leaders. Though Kiringu eventually earned the Crab's respect for his wit and cunning, Jiriki showed the clan that the Yasuki bloodline were not weaklings.

After those two years, Yasuki Jiriki had earned the loyalty of scores of bushi and the confidence of several powerful Hida sensei and generals. At his request, Jiriki was granted command of a legion of Hida bushi and led them in several commands along the Hiruma-Shadowlands border. Soon after Jiriki's rise to gunso in the Crab armies, he led his command to the Yasuki lands and staged an attack on a small Crane village. When the Kakita daimyo learned the Crab had taken one of his holdings, he was outraged. When it came to his attention that the son of Kiringu had commanded the attack, the Kakita lord immediately ordered a counterattack, believing the Yasuki had overextended themselves. The Crane daimyo re-



YASUKI MECHANICS

ANCESTORS

soned that the Yasuki had not been Crab long enough to have earned the loyalty of their clan, and thus the Hida would not act to save such an arrogant vassal.

What the Kakita did not expect, however, was the respect and authority Jiriki commanded. The Crab rulers made it clear that they believed the Yasuki had every right to reclaim their lands and would send whatever aid Jiriki deemed necessary. Not wishing to escalate the act into open war just after large-scale conflict between the Crab and Crane had ended, the Crane quietly withdrew. Thereafter, their mockery of Kiringu's name was far more subdued.

Due to his cleverness, Kiringu bestowed the vassal family name Nobuto upon his first son and charged his descendants with maintaining strong ties to the Crab armies. The Nobuto were greatly influenced by their friendship with the Hida, and place a great emphasis upon military prowess.

This outlook, ironically, is what led to the Nobuto's current state as vassals of the Crane Yasuki. When Yasuki Hachi took the formal title as Yasuki daimyo, the Nobuto daimyo swore fealty to Hachi. While many in the Crab viewed this an act of treason, but the Nobuto maintained that their purpose was to serve as the enforcing arm of the Yasuki daimyo - whether that daimyo was Crab or Crane was irrelevant. Loyalty was all. Though outraged, Crab Champion Hida Kuroda secretly understood the Nobuto's decision and blamed himself for showing weakness.

NOBUTO TOSHI

The Nobuto family's original stronghold still stands within Crab lands, though it is all but abandoned. The Crab have yet to take the time to relocate peasants and magistrates to the abandoned stronghold, and the Nobuto have left their palace behind to live in the lands of their Crane daimyo. Yasuki Hachi was impressed by the Nobuto's show of loyalty. To reward them, he has arranged for a relatively large town just to the south of Shiro Daidoji to come under the Nobuto's control.

Currently, the Nobuto continue to practice the arts of the Hida Bushi School and carry themselves much like the Hida they emulate. However, they are not without honor and understand that they can no longer rightly train new students in the Hida technique without the Crab's approval. Knowing that seeking such permission would be a waste of time, daimyo Nobuto Mirumane has begun making overtures to the Daidoji for an alliance. Mirumane hopes that future generations can maintain their martial tradition by training with the Daidoji. Though he accepts that he and his family are Crane now, the concept of the Nobuto becoming a family of courtiers and artisans turns Mirumane's stomach.

THE NOBUTO FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skill: Battle

Starting Outfit:

1. Masterwork tetsubo and heavy armor

THE NOBUTO FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Strength

Glory: 0.5

Special: Members of the Nobuto family replace any of their starting school skills with one rank of Battle.

Worship of one's ancestors is a peculiar practice among the Crane Yasuki. For those Yasuki who were Daidoji but took the Yasuki name, many of their "ancestors" are Crane traitors who have been reviled for centuries. Likewise for those Crab who swore fealty to the Crane, many honored shiryo are Crane who once stood against the Crab in armed conflict. For almost any Crane Yasuki, there are a number of good, honorable ancestors who nonetheless were the sort of person that one would not normally worship. For this reason, Crane Yasuki can be surprisingly forgiving of their ancestors, openly lauding their virtues while politely ignoring the events in which their ancestors expressed those virtues.

YASUKI KIRINGU

For many centuries few names were more reviled among the Crane than Yasuki Kiringu. Kiringu was the last Crane daimyo of the Yasuki, who led his family to join the Crab during the Empire's first great civil war. The Daidoji sullied his name after his departure, heaping many crimes upon his name (a few of them posthumously) for his betrayal.

Since the Crab and Crane Yasuki have allied, the Crane have ceased to heap shame upon Kiringu's name as a show of good faith. Many Crane, in fact, have come to worship Kiringu as an honored ancestor. A few even rationalize that Kiringu left the Crane not out of any true loyalty to the Crab, but because it was the only way that peace could be restored to the Empire.

For Kiringu's part, the shiryo is honored to be worshipped by his Crane descendants once again. The many years of insult and derision pained the spirit greatly, and he is eager to forgive his errant cousins.

Kiringu now offers his blessings to both Crab and Crane samurai.

PRAGMATIC LEADERSHIP

(ANCESTOR FEAT: YASUKI KIRINGU)

You can make a difficult decision, even at the cost of your own honor.

Clan: Crab, Crane

Prerequisite: Not Dishonorable.

Benefit: You may voluntarily sacrifice one point of Honor to gain a +3 bonus to any Bluff, Diplomacy, Gather Information, Intimidate, or Sense Motive check. If your Honor ever falls below 1.0, you may not use this feat again until it becomes 1.0 or higher.

YASUKI KIRINGU

(4 POINTS)

As long as your Honor is 1.0 or higher you may sacrifice a point of Honor to gain a Free Raise on any High Skill in a social situation.

DAIDOJI KARASU

This famed bushi first came to prominence during the War Against the Shadow. After nearly winning the annual Wasp Clan archery championship, Karasu trained for a time among Tsuruchi's followers. He then began a career as a bounty hunter, hunting across Rokugan for signs of the Lying Darkness' minions. During his hunt he often found unexpected aid from the Yasuki family, particularly daimyo Yasuki Taka. In return, Karasu often guarded Yasuki interests from underhanded competitors.

When many Daidoji swore fealty to the Yasuki, Karasu's four sons sought to repay the debt their father owed the Yasuki by adding their strength to the family name. Now that his bloodline has become one with the Yasuki, the famed bounty hunter continues to protect the Yasuki as he did in life.

KARASU'S VIGILANCE (ANCESTOR FEAT: DAIDOJI KARASU)

You have the alert, ready mind of a bounty hunter.

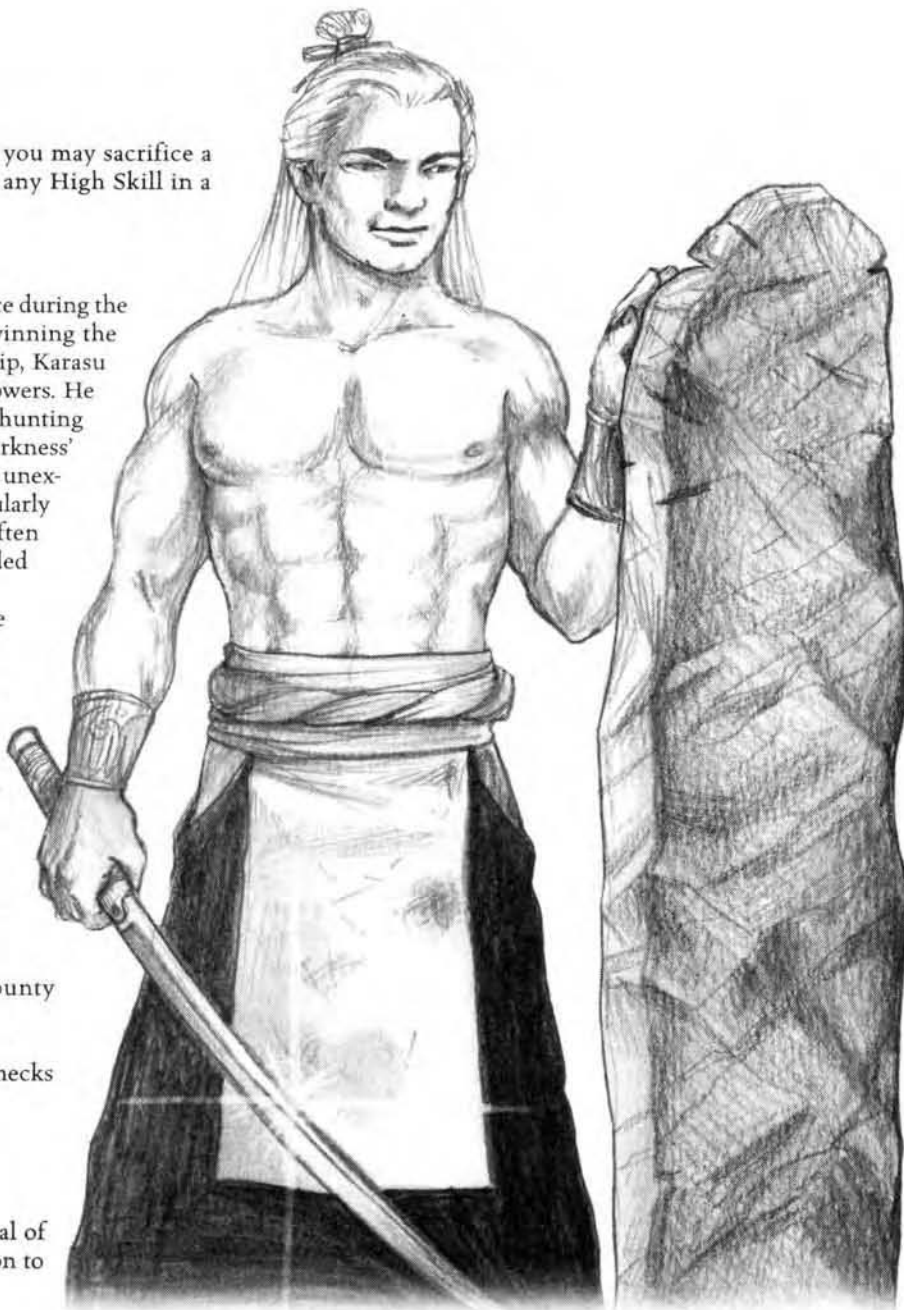
Clan: Crane

Benefit: You gain a +3 bonus to Spot checks and initiative rolls.

DAIDOJI KARASU

(1 POINT)

You may add your Awareness to the total of any Investigation roll and your Perception to the total of any Initiative roll.



NEW MAGIC ITEM

ARMOR OF THE EMERALD CHAMPION

(ARTIFACT)

Among the oldest and most recognizable artifacts in the Empire, the armor worn by the Emerald Champion was crafted centuries ago by the finest armorers in all of Rokugan. Countless enchantments have been placed upon the armor to preserve it and protect the samurai who wears it.

Yasuki Hachi currently owns the armor, and wears it any time he appears in public. Hachi wears it even in social situations, where formal clothing is more suitable, as a constant reminder of his station and responsibilities.

ARMOR OF THE EMERALD CHAMPION

The armor of the Emerald Champion is +3 lamellar armor that allows a maximum Dex bonus of +6. Because of the prestige and renown the armor carries, its rightful owner gains a +1 Charisma bonus as well. The numerous enchantments that protect the wearer from harmful magic grant him a +2 on all saves versus spells.

Caster Level: 20th; *Weight:* 35 lb.

ARMOR OF THE EMERALD CHAMPION

The armor of the Emerald Champion is light armor that provides a total +8 bonus to the wearer's TN to be hit. The armor also grants its wearer a free Raise on all Awareness related skill rolls. The numerous enchantments that protect the wearer from harmful magic increase the TN of all harmful spells by 10.

CHAPTER SIX:

SHIRO GJI

Very few outside the Daidoji family remember the name Shiro Giji. Its existence is recorded in only the most detailed and complete histories. To those who do not know its true nature, Shiro Giji is a castle that stood for less than a year before it a fanatical ronin burned it to the ground. A large shrine to the Crane ancestors, named Giji Seido, remains as a tribute to the samurai who died in the fires. Since its destruction in 329, Shiro Giji has been largely forgotten.

The humble shrine hides one of the Crane's greatest secrets; a dojo and training grounds the very existence of which is only trusted to a select few Daidoji bushi and high ranking Doji samurai. Asahina magic preserved the sub-basements of Shiro Giji, and these underground levels remain intact to this day. The infamous (and publicly denied) saboteurs of the Daidoji train in these passages, leaving and entering under the cover of the shrine above or a remote cave opening far from Giji Seido.

Though the Crane Clan deeply respects the skills of the Daidoji family, the leaders of the clan realize that it is within the underground halls of Shiro Giji that the true threat of the Daidoji is born. The current Crane Champion, Doji Kurohito, has gone to great lengths to support the dojo and has reorganized some of the clan's resources to bolster its funding and manpower.

USING SHIRO GJI IN AN ADVENTURE

Shiro Giji can be most useful as a base of operations for a group of Daidoji characters or other characters associated with the covert military forces of the Crane. Close allies of the Daidoji family may be trusted with knowledge of its existence in a special emergency situation (and nearly any campaign eventually features some special emergency situation or another).

Shiro Giji can also be used as a target. Spies from other Clans (especially the Scorpion and Lion) have spent generations attempting to uncover the location where the Daidoji saboteurs train. The Crane have many enemies, and any number of factions would find this information invaluable.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

Each of the major areas of Shiro Giji is presented here with all the information a GM should need to use it. Each section contains a heading entitled "At a Glance," which summarizes all the various components of that area. More specific portions are given their own descriptions, which may be read aloud to players if the GM so desires. Individual GMs are encouraged to alter or expand the information presented here to suit their own games.

CRANE FORCES

The Daidoji would be quite surprised if any sort of assault were to be directed at Giji Seido and the underlying dojo. However, they are not unprepared for attack. The well-trained guards and twisting, trap-laden tunnels make Shiro Giji most defensible holding the Crane control. The shrine area above is tended by retired Daidoji, all still quite adept in combat should the need arise, so invaders will have to contend with more than just Harriers should their presence be detected.

The dojo's defenders are quite familiar with the layout of the grounds and will make every use of the advantages the intentional slopes, sharp corners, and long narrow hallways can give them. There are enough secreted doors on each floor that the Crane samurai can ambush an attacking group from almost any direction given enough time to gather and prepare. The Daidoji will always attempt to draw attackers away from passages that would lead them further into the dojo as a primary defensive tactic.

DAIDOJI BUSHI

Human Nin4/Ftr2: CR 6, Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d6+8 plus 2d10+4; hp 40; Init +5; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (touch 13, flat-footed 15); Attack +1 *katana* +9/+4 melee, 1d8+4 damage, or *yumi* +1 (short bow) +11/+6 ranged (1d8+1); SQ — Class Skill: Hide (Family Bonus), Ninja Dodge (+1), Sneak Attack +2d6, Speed of Darkness, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); Honor 2; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 10; Maximum Void: 2; Height 5 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Climb +11, Hide +14, Jump +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +14, Search +9, Swim +4, Tumble +10; Dark Guardian (Ancestor: Daidoji Kasumiko), Lightning Stealth, Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, Weapon Focus: Yumi, Void Use.

Dojo: Mountain's Shadow; **Kata:** None

Possessions: +1 *katana*, wakizashi, *kote of armor* +2, +1 *yumi*, 20 arrows.

Note: DMs should feel free to scale the level of these samurai as they are encountered in the deeper levels of Shiro Giji. The Daidoji Bushi will increase their ninja class levels until 10th level, focusing on raising their Climb, Hide, Jump, Listen, Move Silently, Search, and Tumble skills and gaining feats that allow them to kill enemies at range efficiently.

DAIDOJI MONKS

Human Nin4/Mnk4: CR 8, Medium-sized humanoid; HD 4d6+8 plus 4d8+8; hp 61; Init +4; Spd 40 ft.; AC 20 (touch 17, flat-footed 20); Attack unarmed +10/+5 melee, 1d8+2 damage; SQ — Class Skill: Hide (Family Bonus), Evasion, Slow Fall (20 ft.), Still Mind, Sneak Attack +2d6, Poison Use, Ninja Dodge (+1), Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC), Speed of Darkness; Honor 2; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +7; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 12; Maximum Void: 2; Height 5 ft. 5 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Hide +14, Jump +13, Listen +13, Move Silently +14, Tumble +14; Cleave, Deflect Arrows, Power Attack, Weapon Focus: Unarmed, Void Use.

Dojo: None; **Kata:** None

Possessions: *kote of armor* +3, *amulet of natural armor* +2.

DAIDOJI BUSHI

Earth: 3

Water: 2

Strength: 3

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 2

Glory/Honor: 1.3/1.1

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 3, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4, Stealth 5, Yumi 3

Advantages: Quick

Disadvantages: None

Weapons & Armor: Katana, wakizashi, yumi and 20 arrows

DAIDOJI MONKS

Earth: 2

Willpower: 3

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 3

Void: 4

School/Rank: Seven Fortunes Monk 2

Glory/Honor: 2.0/3.1

Skills: Atemi 3, Hand to Hand 5, History: Crane Clan 3, Lore (Crane ancestors) 4, Meditation 3, Shintao 3, Stealth 3, Zangi 4

Advantages: Sage, Ally (Daidoji Daimyo)

Disadvantages: None

Kiho: Ai Uchi, Chi Protection, Falling Star Strike, Freezing the Lifeblood, Grasp the Earth Dragon, Way of the Willow.

Weapons & Armor: None

Note: Secret doors in the Sublevels are generally not concealed from the inside — but are hidden from the outside in case anyone discovers the access tunnels.

The Search DC to discover these secret doors is 25.

These secret doors can be found with an Investigation/ Perception roll vs. TN 20.

GROUND LEVEL: THE SHRINE

AT A GLANCE

The ground floor of Shiro Giji is the public face of Shadow's Mountain Dojo. This is the only part of the structure that the world at large is aware of. The humble monks patiently correct any references to Shiro Giji — this is Giji Seido now. The former Daidoji bushi who tend Giji Seido are aware of Shiro Giji's existence, though they truly are retired monks and spend their time here in contemplation. There are usually no more than seven or eight retired monks tending Giji Seido at any time, with roughly fifteen acolytes. The monks never have any reason to visit the lower levels and are only expected to act violently in defense of the shrine and the secrets below. The monks always politely turn away any new monks seeking to join the shrine. Only retired Daidoji aware of the Harriers' existence are welcome to serve in the shrine.

1. SHRINE HALL

The main hall is the only room visitors are generally allowed to see. The hall dominates the top floor of Shiro Giji and gives the impression it is somewhat larger than it would appear from the outside. This effect is achieved both by architecture and interior design tricks to further the image that there is only a single large hall within Giji Seido. Usually there are three monks here performing duties and tending to visitors with several acolytes on hand. The hallways surrounding the main hall are always occupied by at least one monk and one acolyte to ensure guests do not wander too far from the central room. This is both for the protection of the Daidoji's secrets and the protection of the visitors – outsiders caught further than the humble shrine considered spies or infiltrators of some nature and treated appropriately.

2. SHRINES AND MAP

At the front of the main hall is a large shrine dedicated to the Crane that were killed in the fire that consumed the original Shiro Giji. The shrine has countless alcoves and has come to include representations of many other notable ancestors of the Crane Clan since it was constructed. Notable samurai from every family of the Crane Clan come here to meditate and commune with their ancestors, including the daimyo of the families. Those not of the Crane are usually not allowed near the sacred shrines. If an important figure (such as a family daimyo or otherwise considerably powerful noble) comes to meditate at the main shrine, others are often asked to leave to give the visitor solitude.

On a large table in the shrine, a detailed map gives a detailed view of all the Crane lands. This map is intended to honor the Crane ancestors and details where the greatest heroes of the Crane were born and died. Only the Crane Champion and the masters of the Mountain's Shadow Dojo know the true purpose of this map. Whenever the Crane Champion has need of the Daidoji Harriers, he meditates in Giji Seido and lays a single cherry blossom petal on the map where the Harriers must go.

3. MEDITATION ROOM

The relatively small alcove referred to as "the meditation room" is the most direct passage to the underground tunnels. The monks hardly ever use this room. Just in case visitors somehow gain access to the chamber, it is decorated accordingly with burning incense, several kneeling pillows and countless scrolls filled with koans and passages from the Tao.

The secret entrance to the hidden passage is concealed both by one of the many wall scrolls adorning the chamber. The passage in the sleeping room is hidden in a similar fashion, as well as the entrance from the outside back wall of the shrine.



Detecting the door in any of these three locations requires a Search check at a DC of 30.

Detecting the door in any of these three locations requires a raw Perception roll with a TN of 25.

4. KITCHEN

The relatively small alcove referred to as "the meditation room" is the most direct passage to the underground tunnels. The monks hardly ever use this room. Just in case visitors somehow gain access to the chamber, it is decorated accordingly with burning incense, several kneeling pillows and countless scrolls filled with koans and passages from the Tao.

The secret entrance to the hidden passage is concealed both by one of the many wall scrolls adorning the chamber. The passage in the sleeping room is hidden in a similar fashion, as well as the entrance from the outside back wall of the shrine.

5. SLEEPING ROOM

This room is nondescript and serves a very basic function. The floor of the room is covered in the modest bedrolls of monks and myriad small personal shrines, bundles of clothing and other personal necessities. This entrance to the lower tunnels is used less frequently than the one in the meditation room. Several of the monks can be found here at any given time, either already asleep or preparing to do so.

SUBLEVEL 1: THE STABLES

AT A GLANCE

This is the least populated area of Shiro Giji, as it serves primarily as a storage floor. Most of the equipment used to maintain the lower levels of the school are kept here due to the ease of access to this floor. A tunnel leading from this chamber leads to a cave entrance a little more than a half mile away. Large cargo can be brought in by horse and carried to the storage rooms or taken through the shrine and placed on this floor. Unlike the floor above or the two below, guard patrols are heavy on this floor due to the multiple entrances. Any given area is likely to have a patrol of three or four Daidoji bushi. The stables area has a standing guard of four bushi and three are assigned to watch the tunnel between the cave and Shiro Giji.

6. WEAPONS STORAGE

As most of the weapons actually used in Shiro Giji are either carried or kept by their owners in the barracks, the weapons storage here sees little use. However, the Daidoji are quick to realize the benefit of having a hidden cache of weapons that can supply any Crane army in the surrounding area. Alongside dozens of standard katana, tanto, yari, yumi, arrows, and assorted weapons lay several unusual or high quality items that are reserved for the masters of Shiro Giji. Two guards stand duty at the bottom of the stairs next to the hallway entrance to the weapons storage room. In the case of an

intruder, one will attempt to bar himself in the room and the other will leave to alert the complex.

The weapons storage contains five masterwork yari, seven mighty (+2 Strength modifier) yumi and three +1 keen katana. They are stamped with the signifiers of the Daidoji Harriers, and any non-Crane bearing them could find themselves attacked on sight if they are recognized (questions are usually asked first, but not always). In addition, oddities like gaijin weapons are sometimes stored here if they are brought to the Daidoji. DMs should feel free to include such items if they choose.

The weapons storage contains five yari, seven yumi, and three katana that all allow their bearer to roll an additional die when attacking. They are stamped with the signifiers of the Daidoji Harriers, and any non-Crane bearing them could find themselves attacked on sight if they are recognized (questions are usually asked first, but not always). In addition, oddities like gaijin weapons are stored here if they are brought to the Daidoji. DMs should feel free to include such items if they choose.

7. AMMUNITION AND EQUIPMENT STORAGE

This is the counterpart to the weapons storage room that it is connected to. This room houses all the spare equipment that is not held in the adjoining chamber, such as arrows, rope, candles, armor, and the like. There is one guard in this room at all times. In the event of an emergency, the guard at this door is to bar himself into the room and ensure the guard at the weapons storage door does the same. The room houses no items of any great significance, though arrows of nearly every non-magical variety can be found here.

8. MESS

This is the counterpart to the weapons storage room that it is connected to. This room houses all the spare equipment that is not held in the adjoining chamber, such as arrows, rope, candles, armor, and the like. There is one guard in this room at all times. In the event of an emergency, the guard at this door is to bar himself into the room and ensure the guard at the weapons storage door does the same. The room houses no items of any great significance, though arrows of nearly every non-magical variety can be found here.

9. KITCHEN

Smoke from the kitchen is diverted through the shrine kitchen's oven, which is always kept burning. There are anywhere from three to five Daidoji here preparing meals for their kin. There is no shame in the menial task, as having the Harriers cook for themselves is preferable to having to trust servants. There is a small cache of weapons hidden in the brick foundation of the stove here, due to the central location of this room. The Daidoji who have been assigned the task of cooking have even taken to learning how to use the cutlery in combat in necessary.

10. FOOD AND SUPPLIES

General living supplies such as food, blankets, sake, and other such items are kept here under a strict watch from a guard positioned at both of its doorways. The Daidoji are keenly aware of how important the food supply is in a fortress as secluded as Shiro Giji. Though all those residing in Shiro Giji are discreet and trustworthy, only the most reliable are left to guard this room.

Each day, the single shugenja (Shugenja 6 ; Asahina Shugenja 2) attending the aboveground Shrine comes to this room to ensure the purity of the food and perform a small blessing over it. The only time Shiro Giji was ever infiltrated was preceded by the death of the shugenja performing this duty. Thus, the Daidoji have become extraordinarily protective of their resident shugenja. Any falter in the shugenja's health is seen as a bad omen for Shiro Giji.

11. TACK AND FEED

The equipment for the horses held in the nearby stables is stored here. There is barely enough room for a man to walk in and turn around, as the chamber is packed as tightly as it can be.

12. STABLES

This large room is connected to the surface by a long, curving tunnel that is just large enough for a horse and rider to navigate with little problem. The floor of the tunnel, the large room it leads into, and the stables are all covered in a thick layer of dried grass and other plants to minimize the noise of a horse going either direction. The stables are tended at any given time by one of the two stable masters here, and can house as many as ten horses. The mouth of the cave leading to the surface is almost completely covered by leafy green foliage that defies all but the closest examination and is easily ridden through with little evidence of any disturbance.

In order to find the opening, characters passing by the cave may make a Search check at DC 30, or characters actively searching in its vicinity must make a Search check at DC 25.

In order to find the opening, characters passing by the cave may make a raw Perception roll at TN 25, or characters actively searching in its vicinity must make an Investigation/Perception roll vs. TN 20.

SUBLEVEL 2: THE SCHOOL

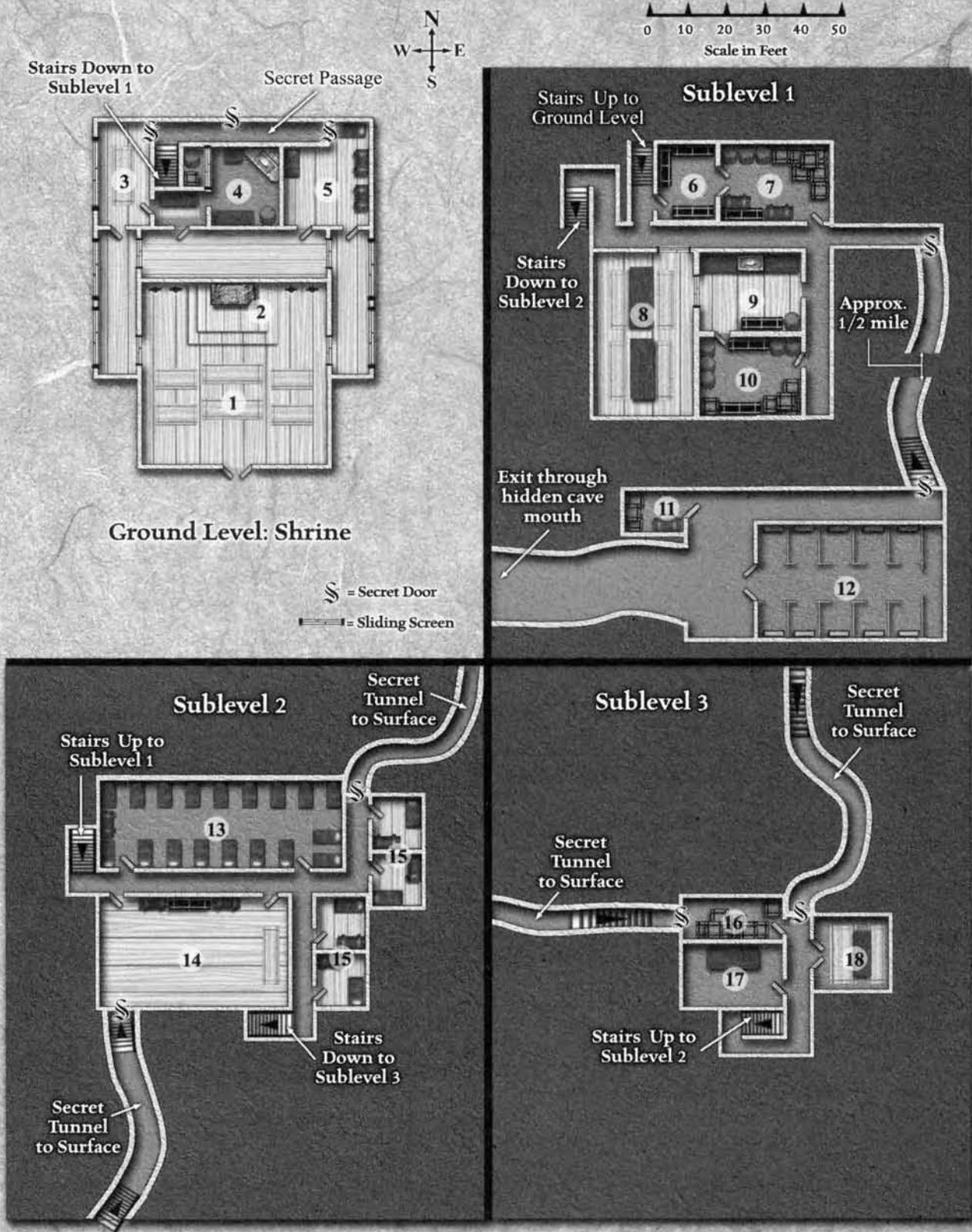
AT A GLANCE

This level of Shiro Giji houses most of the fortress' population. Most students are not assigned any sort of patrol, so are in either the dojo or their barracks if not fetching a meal on sublevel 1. Intruders reaching this level of the building are not likely to make it further, as they must find a way past both the barracks and dojo to reach the lowest floor. Due to the high traffic in all areas of this floor, regular patrols and guard postings are nearly nonexistent. The only such precautions are taken by two guards at the exit that leads to the surface and four in the vicinity of the stairs leading further down.

13. BARRACKS

This level of Shiro Giji houses most of the fortress' population. Most students are not assigned any sort of patrol, so are in either the dojo or their barracks if not fetching a meal on sublevel 1. Intruders reaching this level of the building are not likely to make it further, as they must find a way past both the barracks and dojo to reach the lowest floor. Due to the high traffic in all areas of this floor, regular patrols and guard postings are nearly nonexistent. The only such precautions are taken by two guards at the exit that leads to the surface and four in the vicinity of the stairs leading further down.

SHIRO GIGI



14. DOJO

Along with the barracks, the dojo takes up the bulk of the space on this level of Shiro Giji. Classes are always in session here, with the east and west sides generally holding different classes that overlap in scheduling. At the midpoint of one class, the other is finished and a new class enters, keeping the classroom full at all hours allows the sensei to give each student enough personal attention to ensure they will be able to perform the delicate work the Harriers require.

Important events can disrupt this schedule by requiring the entire classroom at once. Such events are generally limited to the first day of a new group of students or tests of rank to achieve sensei or master sensei status. There is always a high ranking sensei in attendance at any given time (Fighter 6/Ninja 6 ; Daidoji Harrier 4) and the classroom can easily house up to thirty students at any given time.

The access tunnel to the surface here is rarely used, as it comes out on the surface relatively close to Giji Seido. Large movements of the Harriers are mobilized out of the cave exit on sublevel one, but in a pinch, students can be moved directly from the dojo to the surface.

15. SENSEI QUARTERS

These are the quarters of the three sensei who serve under the master sensei of the dojo, as well as a private room for the master sensei. These quarters are identical in content and general layout, with no clues signifying the room of the master sensei. The sensei only use their rooms to sleep, meditate, or pray. Their morning exercises are conducted with their first class of the day.

SUBLEVEL 3: THE RESTRICTED AREAS

AT A GLANCE

Few at Shiro Giji are allowed access to the lowest floor of the structure, and for good reason. It is here the masters of the Harriers meet to plot the future of their school and debate matters with other leaders in the Daidoji family. Only the sensei of the school and a few trusted students are allowed to access these rooms, in addition to the Daidoji daimyo and the Champion of the Crane. The Daidoji aren't forthcoming with details on Shiro Giji even to the other Crane families, and a daimyo outside the family has never set foot in the lower levels of the school (with the obvious exception of Clan Champions).

16. GUNPOWDER STORAGE

Imperial Edict specifically forbids experimentation with gunpowder, and as the Left Hand of the Emperor, the Crane would never admit to dabbling in any such thing. It has passed the notice of many that a law passed many decades ago and buried within the massive legal tomes of the Otomo names a small chain of rooms in the basements of Shiro Giji as an official Embassy of the Ivory Kingdoms. Thus, as this room is technically not Rokugani soil, Rokugani law does not apply here and gunpowder can be stored and experimented upon legally.

Only two people are admitted to this room — the master sensei of Mountain's Shadow Dojo and the master of the adjoining room where gunpowder experiments are conducted. As a rule, not even the Crane Champion is not allowed to step foot in this area if only because his inexperience with

the material could lead to problems, and some Champions are simply better of not knowing of the Daidoji experiments here. So far, none of the Champions have felt the need to overrule this edict, though a particularly bull-headed daimyo would of course be allowed in if he wished.

The room is well-ventilated and can be reached through a two mile long tunnel that opens on the surface near a desolate cove. Asahina magic long ago ensured a slight breeze would keep the tunnel's air fresh and clean.

17. GAJJIN PEPPER LABORATORY

This room is the birthplace of the most exotic methods of destruction at the Harrier's disposal. Grenades, flares, and even self propelled exploding sticks of gaijin pepper have all been designed and tested here. The laboratory does not mass-produce these items, and they are generally only made on a basis of necessity. The bulk of gaijin pepper used in this room is intended for furthering the knowledge of the substance and perfecting its development. The masters of Mountain's Shadow choose three students per year and allow them access to this room and permit them to be trained with the use of the gaijin pepper. The Daidoji are wary of using gaijin pepper in combat except in the most dire circumstances. They are still samurai, after all, and have not lost sight of the fact such tools are in direct violation of Imperial Edict when used outside these chambers.

The master of the gaijin pepper laboratory is a slightly eccentric woman known as Hakumei. The woman's ronin parents were slaughtered during the Crab assault on Crane Lands during the Clan War. Daidoji Uji found her hiding in the wreckage of a farm house during a scouting mission, and brought her back here. The gruff and practical Daidoji daimyo would not explain why he brought the girl to Mountain's Shadow, or why he allowed her to train with gunpowder. He could not explain the connection he felt to the young girl, though a quiet glare ended all inquiries on the matter. Hakumei has spent very little time in the outside world since she was brought to Shiro Giji, and mourned the passing of Uji as if she were his daughter. It is clear she has the resolve and courage of a samurai, as well as a keen intellect the Daidoji have grown to respect and even count on from time to time.

18. WAR ROOM

This room sees very little use, as the Harriers are generally called upon only in the worst situations. Rarely do any outside the school set foot in here, though the Daidoji daimyo is attended here during inspections. The room's walls are covered with tactical maps of the surrounding areas, as well as whatever "hot spots" of activity are prevalent for the day (usually a neighboring Lion or Crab province or two). The maps of the room are updated constantly, and papers are brought in each season detailing the numbers and strength of bordering armies as well as where they can be found. Though the Daidoji cannot be prepared for every eventuality, they do their best to keep a number of contingencies prepared in the event of a crisis.

CHAPTER SEVEN:

BEHIND THE VEIL

THE GREAT
SEA SPIDER

Deep inside the blackest recesses of the ocean waits an unholy beast with a heart fueled by Crane hatred. It is known as the Great Sea Spider, the king of all kumo, and it waits patiently to be unleashed on the Empire again. The creature's true origins are unknown to all but a handful of Crane scholars. Even they have only theory and conjecture based loosely on the cryptic information the Great Sea Spider has revealed during its infrequent rampages. The only opportunity to learn more of the beast would require it to be set free again, something few are mad enough to even contemplate.

Centuries ago, the kumo were virtually unknown in the mortal world. Denizens of Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals, they only entered Rokugan through rare passages into other realms. These spider beings were parasitic in nature, needing to feed on the essences of others to sustain themselves. While the kumo could be sustained by the energy of other animal spirits, it was merely sustenance with little flavor. The king of all kumo sensed the power his children gained when feeding from the essence of mortals, descended from Lord Moon and Lady Sun, and grew covetous. It desired such power for itself, unsatisfied as it was with the essence of weaker beings.

The spider's lust and envy drew the attention of some

dark power within Jigoku, and the shadows reached out to such a kindred spirit. The spider king willingly allowed itself and its children to become susceptible to the Shadowlands Taint, a corrupting influence to which many animal spirits were immune, in exchange for passage into the realm of mortals.

What the spider king did not suspect is that when it moved between realms, other dangers lay in wait. Gaki, hungry spirits from the realm of Gaki-do, assaulted the spider and its kind. The gaki already feasted on the power of Jigoku and on that of mortals, and had no desire to share their prey with another race. The spider king called out to its allies in Jigoku for aid, but the darkness only laughed. It had attained what it desired.

Weak and furious, the spider king and its surviving brood escaped the gaki and arrived in Ningen-do. The creature knew it was dying. Its wounds and the drain of crossing between realms was such that it could not survive unless it fed immediately, yet there was no prey great enough for it to replenish its lost energy. Cursing its fate, the great spider sought a source of energy to heal itself, and found one in the Crane lands.

A civil war had broken out among the Crane when the Yasuki family declared its intention to join the Crab. The strong ties between the Yasuki and Daidoji had been brutally severed, but while the Yasuki embraced opportunity, the Daidoji felt only betrayal and hatred. So strong was their hatred that it served as a beacon for the spider king. The creature willingly and knowingly bound its essence to that of the Daidoji family forever so that it might drink of their hatred and grow strong.

The Daidoji's ill will fed the beast well, and it grew to massive size. Drunk with power, the spider king rampaged across the Crane provinces in an orgy of destruction. Its intoxication made it foolish, however, and it was defeated and trapped by Asahina magic. The Asahina took pity on the spider king, for it was not a true minion of darkness but merely a weak-willed spirit that had given in to corruption. Hoping to grant the kumo time to dwell on its existence and overcome its weakness, they bound the spider king deep in the sea, where its eternal hunger created a great vortex in the middle of the Sea of the Sun Goddess. To the disappointment of those that bound the spider king, it has never seen the error of its ways and continues to plot vengeance on its tormentors with terrible anger.

As the Asahina bound the spider in its prison, so did their magic bear the keys to the beast's release. Twice since that time the Great Sea Spider has escaped. During the war with the Lying Darkness, the Spider made a pact with that primordial entity and was freed by foolish Asahina who had been corrupted by the Darkness. These Asahina crafted a corrupted biwa that allowed the spider to be summoned from its home in the depths of the sea. Once it was released, the spider king cast a great web across Otosan Uchi, allowing the Darkness free reign there. When the Crane attacked it, the Spider fled back to the sea rather than face destruction at their hands.

Recently, the spider escaped again during the Battle of Otosan Uchi. A hateful young Crane named Daidoji Ekiken stumbled over the lost biwa and, deluded by the spider's promises of revenge and power, summoned the beast in an attempt to kill his nemesis, Hida Kuoshi. The attempt failed, and the spider cast its webs across Kyuden Seppun, the rallying point for many forces trying to oust Daigotsu's armies from Otosan Uchi. The kumo and its children consumed many souls that day. Once he realized the enormity of what he had done, Ekiken returned the spider to its home beneath the sea. One of the spider's enemies, a foul gaki, attempted to kill Ekiken to ensure the Spider could not escape again, but failed and killed Ekiken's brother Enai by mistake. Now Ekiken's hatred is redoubled. He does not know how to gain revenge on the murderous spirits who slew his brother without summoning the spider again.

The Great Water Spider is kharmically linked to the Daidoji family, although not even the spider king truly understands the depths of their bond. What the Crane do know is that each time the Spider has escaped, the Daidoji have been involved. The Daidoji provinces were the first to come under attack during its first appearance, and there were many Daidoji present during the fighting in Otosan Uchi when the Lying Darkness unleashed it. Perhaps one day, if they come to understand the nature of their link, they can overcome the spider forever.

THE KUMO

Statistics and abilities for the kumo are detailed in *Creatures of Rokugan*,™ page 38. Furthermore, the Great Sea Spider itself is described on pages 27–28 of that same book.

THE KUMO

Earth: 4
 Fire: 3
 Water: 3
 Air: 3
 Reflexes: 5

Rolls When Attacking: 6k4

Rolls For Damage: 4k3 plus poison (see below)

TN to be Hit: 25

Wounds: 20: +2, 40: +3, 60: +4, 80: Dead

Special Abilities:

Shapechange: Kumo have the ability to transform into human form, a holdover from their spiritual heritage. This change requires one action to perform. Kumo in human form tend to resemble either elderly individuals covered in dust and cobwebs, or strangely alluring young people with a slightly menacing aura toward members of the same gender.

Venom: Kumo are capable of spitting venom up to 10 feet in either form. This requires a Full Attack. If the poison touches an individual's bare skin, they must make a contested Stamina roll versus the poison's Strength of 5. If the target fails the roll, they are paralyzed for 5 rounds.

Webs: Kumo may produce thick webs in either form. In human form, the webs may be spit up to 15 feet, and in spider form they may be shot from the abdomen up to 3 feet. The webs are extremely sticky and require a contested Strength roll for anyone caught in them (the webs have a Strength 6) to get free.



CHANTER
 BIRTHED THE
 SUNDAY

THE KUMO-TOUCHED

Those Daidoji who allow hatred to dominate their lives unknowingly sacrifice a portion of their soul to the Great Sea Spider. Although the Spider itself has become Tainted, it is unable or unwilling to pass this corruption on to those who embody its spirit. Nevertheless, the creature's influence on others is noticeable to those who know what to search for.

NEW FEAT: SOUL OF THE SPIDER

You have a bit of the Great Sea Spider's power, as well as its hunger.

Prerequisites: Dishonorable, must be Daidoji

Benefit: Part of your soul has been replaced with a kumo's spirit, granting you a portion of its resistance to otherworldly effects and some of its speed. You gain a +2 circumstance bonus against all enchantment effects except those generated by spirits. Also, you gain a +2 circumstance bonus to all reflex saves and saves vs. poison. The penalty for this power is high, however. Your temper flares with the slightest provocation, and you must make a Will save (DC 16) when directly slighted or insulted or react violently. Likewise, you find yourself it difficult to forgive any who wrong you, even for minor offenses.

ADVANTAGE: SOUL OF THE SPIDER

(3 POINTS, DAIDOJI ONLY)

Daidoji who succumb to hatred and rage have a portion of their soul replaced by the Great Sea Spider's spirit. Any time you are insulted or angered, you must make a Willpower roll versus a TN of 15 or react violently. If you also have the Brash Disadvantage, this TN is increased to 25.

The spider's touch is not without benefits, however. All magic that would control or influence you has the TN to cast it increased by 5 (except for spells cast by spirits). You also gain a Free Raise on any rolls to resist poison.

THE SPIDER BIWA

This strange musical instrument was crafted by Asahina minions of the Lying Darkness decades ago. It is made of dark wood, nearly black. Strange, web-like patterns are carved across its surface. The strings are made of pale white silk, slightly sticky to the touch. The biwa produces an eerie, haunting melody when played. As it is played it grows warm like a living thing.

While the biwa is being played, the Great Sea Spider can mentally communicate with the player regardless of distance. Generally the spider's first objective is to befriend the player, to teach him how to play the song that will summon the spider king from the depths, and to find a way to force the player to rationalize such a terrible act. Though it is a powerful monster, the Great Sea Spider is also very cunning, and quite adept at manipulating those with hatred or vengeance in their hearts.

THE SPIDER BIWA

Through use of a special song (which the Great Sea Spider is happy to teach) the biwa can cast kumo's black embrace (see *Magic of Rokugan™*) once per day. The biwa cannot be destroyed unless the Great Sea Spider voluntarily turns its back on corruption and endeavors to purify itself.

THE SPIDER BIWA

Through use of a special song (which the Great Sea Spider is happy to teach) the biwa can be used to cast Kumo's Black Embrace (see the following new spell) with no Raises. The biwa cannot be destroyed unless the Great Sea Spider voluntarily turns its back on corruption and endeavors to purify itself.

KUMO'S BLACK EMBRACE

Element: Water

Mastery Level: 6

Duration: 6 hours or until dispelled

Area of Effect: One large source of water (see below)

Range: Line of sight

Perhaps the deadliest water spell ever created, it is the pacifistic Asahina who are responsible for its conception. By casting this spell, a shugenja summons an avatar of the Great Sea Spider, the king of all kumo that dwells at the bottom of a great vortex in the sea off of Rokugan's coast. The Great Spider appears from any source of water at least one hundred feet in diameter (this body of water must be connected to the sea in some way) and attacks any target the shugenja chooses.

The Great Spider's avatar is a cunning and malicious beast, and will attempt to thwart the will of any individual who summons it, trampling allies to reach enemies or 'inadvertently' destroying a protected shrine. The shugenja and the Great Spider must make a contested Willpower roll each time the shugenja gives a new command. Failure means that the Spider willfully misinterprets its orders. The Spider cannot directly attack the summoner or his allies unless first attacked by them. If the summoner or his allies attacks the spider, it is freed from the shugenja's control and will run amok for the remainder of the spell's duration.

A shugenja who summons the Great Spider may also dispel it prior to the spell's duration with a contested Willpower roll. The shugenja rolls two additional dice for this roll. These extra dice are lost if control of the Great Spider is lost (see above).

A Crane shugenja may cast this spell to force the Great Spider to return to the sea. This also requires a contested Willpower roll, but the Crane shugenja rolls four additional dice when attempting to dispel the creature. If the Sea Spider is currently commanded by a shugenja (through use of this spell) then the shugenja who casts this spell to banish the spider must instead make a contested Willpower roll with the original summoner, and gains no extra dice when he does so.

Note: The d20 version of this spell can be found in *Magic of Rokugan™*.



EMERALD AND JADE

The Emerald Champion is arguably the most powerful person in the Empire save the Emperor. The samurai who fills the position is the chief enforcer of the Emperor's laws and often serves as the Emperor's personal champion in many respects. It has also been rather common for the Champion to serve as the Emperor's chief military advisor in the past as well.

Throughout history, the Emerald Champion position has been consistently dominated by the Crane Clan, beginning with the very first Champion, Doji Hatsuo. Hatsuo and his ally Soshi Saibankan created the Emerald Magistrates and the policies that govern that body. Recognizing opportunity, Hatsuo designed the magistrates' structure around that of the Crane military, which was based more on personal achievement and political acumen than other military structures. This allowed Crane samurai to excel in the program while others struggled to adapt to the new and unfamiliar system. Within five years, the upper ranks of the Emerald Magistrates were almost exclusively Crane. In return for Saibankan's assistance in this endeavor, Hatsuo permitted the Scorpion to write much of the policies and procedures the magistrates would follow. Although these procedures were sound and effective, Saibankan was careful to leave several gray areas that his Scorpion kinsmen would be able to exploit when necessary.

As Hatsuo intended, members of the Crane Clan have dominated the order of Emerald Magistrates for centuries. Other clans have significant representation in the order, and there have been Champions in the past who were not Crane, but the basic design of the system encourages Crane samurai to succeed. The order's primary dojo at the Emerald Champion's personal estate is staffed almost exclusively by Crane sensei. When one wishes to retire, the other sensei select a replacement (invariably a Crane). This practice has prevented the rare non-Crane Champions from diluting the dojo's focus with political appointments.

The only other major dojo for the Emerald Magistrates lies within the Doji provinces. It is not as prestigious or as prominent as the order's primary dojo, but it nevertheless trains dozens of new magistrates every year, the vast majority of which are Crane. It is considered poor form for a Champion to appoint samurai of other clans to this dojo, although it is within their rights to do so.

Similar to the Emerald Champion, but lacking the long and prestigious history of that position, the Jade Champion is the most politically powerful shugenja in Rokugan (though the Council of Elemental Masters would argue that point). The position was only reactivated after centuries of disuse a few decades ago. The first new Jade Champion was a Lion. Thus, the order of Jade Magistrates, which number far fewer than their Emerald counterparts, was patterned after the militaristic Kitsu family. Kitsu Okura's tenure as Jade Champion was followed by Kuni Utagu, who cast aside many of Okura's policies and replaced them with the more flexible, intuitive Witch Hunter policies. When Utagu died, a new Test of the Jade Champion was held, and Asahina Sekawa was the victor. As Utagu left many of the governing policies of the Jade Magistrates unwritten, it now falls to the Crane to structure the position fully — a duty the Crane are more than happy to fulfill.

Now that the Crane control both Champion positions, the

clan has unprecedented control over law and its enforcement throughout the Empire. Some less scrupulous lords among the Crane families have advocated using the positions to advance their clan's agenda during these tumultuous times, but thus far Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi and Jade Champion Asahina Sekawa have stamped out such corruption whenever possible. If the Crane are to rebuild the political power they wielded in previous generations, that power must be built upon a foundation of justice.

BLUE CHRYSANTHEMUM DOJO

Classes: Courtier, Fighter, Samurai, Emerald Magistrate (prestige).

Schools: Any bushi or courtier school.

The secondary dojo for Emerald Magistrates, the Blue Chrysanthemum was built shortly following the Battle of Stolen Graves. The Emerald Champion of the time used the recent exposure of Iuchiban to make a case for expanding the power of Emerald Magistrates, and was given leave to do so. He established the Blue Chrysanthemum dojo near his family's ancestral lands as well as a new training compound outside Otosan Uchi. Some speculate that the reason for the Otosan Uchi compound was so that non-Crane could be sent there and not impugn on either the Emerald Champion's personal residence or the Doji provinces. The Blue Chrysanthemum dojo is virtually indistinguishable from any other Crane bushi dojo. The training practices are almost identical, save for the extra emphasis on investigation and similar pursuits.

NOTABLE STUDENTS

It is rare for outsiders to be permitted to study at Blue Chrysanthemum dojo, as it has historically been reserved for the hand-picked assistants of a Crane Emerald Champion, and thus has almost exclusively been populated by Crane students. Yasuki Hachi is notorious for his unique methods, however, and currently has two non-Crane studying there, much to the Crane Clan's chagrin.

HIDA YASUHIGO

[Samurai 4/Fighter 2; Hida Bushi 2]

Yasuhigo is quite an unusual student at the Blue Chrysanthemum dojo. He is nearly a head taller than the other students, and at least six inches broader than his next closest competitor. His appearance is every bit that of a hulking brute with no subtlety or talents beyond simple violence. Few suspect the keen, analytical mind that lies behind his monstrous veneer. Yasuhigo is a powerful combatant, but also a skilled tactician who studied under the great generals of the Hida. It was for this reason that Hachi appointed him to the Emerald Magistrates. His appointment to Blue Chrysanthemum dojo was a quiet message to the Crane: do not be deceived by appearances, and never underestimate a potential foe or ally.

ZESHIN

[Fighter 6; True Ronin Insight Rank 2]

Exactly how Hachi met and recruited Zeshin is unknown. He is a ronin, and rumors abound that he is the grandson of Doji Satsume through an illegitimate child born of a geisha. Others insist he has proof of some dark secret and is blackmailing the Emerald Champion to keep his position, for not even Hachi would dare send a ronin to the Crane's most prestigious dojo.

A third rumor states that he is the son of an Akodo dishonored during the Scorpion Coup who chose, for whatever reason, not to return to the Lion. Whatever his origins, his talents speak for themselves. Bandits and ronin throughout the Empire fear his name, for even before his appointment as a magistrate he rode tirelessly across the Empire in the pursuit of honor and justice. His personal mon, the open red claw of a falcon, is known and feared by many bandit gangs.

In truth, none of Zeshin's rumored origins are true. Zeshin is a self-trained duelist with a compassionate streak and a drive to overcome his humble origins. Hachi discovered him protecting a caravan of refugees of the Yasuki war from bandit attacks and was so impressed with his courage and technique that he added him to the magistrates on sight.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Students of Blue Chrysanthemum dojo find that it is easier to advance through the ranks of the magistrate orders.

Benefit: You may ignore any one skill or feat requirement for entry into the Emerald or Jade Magistrate Advanced Schools.



Benefit: You may select any one skill requirement for the Jade Magistrate or Emerald Magistrate Advanced School. The number of ranks in that skill required for entry is reduced by 2.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Students of Blue Chrysanthemum dojo are taught time-honored investigative procedures that allow them to fulfill their duties with great success.

Benefit: Gather Information is always a class skill for you.

Benefit: You add your Insight Rank to all Investigation rolls.

EMERALD MAGISTRATE MECHANICS

Emerald Magistrates can be best represented in the d20 System™ using the Emerald Magistrate prestige class from *Rokugan*™. Additionally, many Emerald Magistrates possess the following feat.

VIRTUOUS DUTY

The duty you perform for the Empire grants you much esteem in the eyes of honorable samurai.

Prerequisite: Membership in the Emerald Magistrates.

Benefit: You gain a +4 competence bonus on all Diplomacy and Gather Information checks with honorable individuals. You gain a +4 competence bonus on all Intimidate checks against dishonorable individuals.

EMERALD MAGISTRATE ADVANCED SCHOOL

REQUIREMENTS

Rings/Traits: Fire 4, Perception 4

Skills: Etiquette 3, Hunting 3, Investigation 5, Katana or Kenjutsu 4, Law 5

Advantages: Clear Thinker

Other: Honor Rank of 3 or higher. The character must be from a non-shugenja school.

TECHNIQUES

Rank One: Saibankan's Method

The magistrate has grasped the simple but effective methods originated by Soshi Saibankan. Once per session, the magistrate may spend a Void point to gain Free Raises equal to his Insight Rank on any test involving one of the following skills: Courtier, Heraldry, Hunting, Investigation, Law, and Sincerity.

Rank Two: For the Empire

The blessing of the Son of Heaven truly shines upon his defenders. The Magistrate may spend a Void point to negate the damage-reducing abilities of his opponent, inflicting damage as normal for a number of rounds equal to his Honor Rank. School Techniques, Oni powers, Shadow powers, protective effects from spells, and maho-bujin Techniques that reduce damage may all be countered by this Technique.

Rank Three: In His Name

At this level, the burning passion to serve the Emperor permeates every breath the magistrate takes. The magistrate receives a number of Free Raises per day equal to his Insight Rank that may be used toward any task undertaken in fulfillment of his sacred duty.

JADE MAGISTRATES MECHANICS

Jade Magistrates can be best represented in the d20 System™ using the Jade Magistrate prestige class from *Magic of Rokugan*™. Additionally, many Jade Magistrates possess the following feat.

VENGEFUL & PURE

Your magic is far more punishing to Shadowlands creatures than normal.

Prerequisite: Knowledge (Shadowlands) (10 ranks), Membership in the Jade Magistrates

Benefit: Three times per day, any spell you cast on a target with the Shadowlands subtype takes effect as if it had benefited from the Empower Spell feat. If this spell is already affected by the Empower spell feat, all variable, numeric effects are doubled rather than increased by one half. Only damage-inflicting spells are affected.

JADE MAGISTRATE (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 4

Path of Entry: Any Shugenja School Rank 3

Path of Egress: Entry School Rank

4

Technique: Jade Magistrates are handpicked shugenja sworn to rid the Empire of the Taint and Shadowlands corruption. Therefore, they receive special training in the spells and techniques required to combat the minions of the Dark Kami wherever they might be found. The path of the Jade Magistrate confers several benefits.

- You may add your rank in this New Path to any of your former shugenja school ranks. You gain no Affinity or Deficiency for this new Path, but retain any Affinity or Deficiency formerly acquired.
- Gain one unkept die to all rolls involving Perception and Awareness.
- Gain one unkept die to all rolls to resist becoming Tainted.
- Since the office of the Jade Champion works closely with Kuni Witch-hunters and Asako Inquisitors, the Jade Magistrate has access to spells that might normally be unavailable to him. Upon entering this path, the shugenja may choose from the following spells instead of spells he could normally learn. The shugenja may cast and learn any of these spells in spite of any Elemental Deficiency, and casts and learns them as if they were spells from his Elemental Affinity.

1. Benevolent Protection of Shinsei (Earth)
2. By the Light of Lord Moon (Air)
3. Evil Ward (Fire)
4. Jade Strike (Earth)
5. Path to Inner Peace (Water)
6. Preservation (Earth)
7. Purify Water (Water)
8. Strength of the Crow (Earth)
9. Tomb of Jade

(Earth)



THE FALSE HOTURI

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

The period of history known as the Clan War was a dark time for the Empire. It was during this time that it is believed that many of the prophet Uikku's darkest prophecies came to pass. Of these, the Second Doom predicted the rise of the False Hoturi, a genocidal madman bent upon the destruction of the Crane Clan.

Little is remembered about the dragon who called himself Pan Ku, save that he was deceived and slain by Fu Leng shortly after the Shadowlands were created. One of the few remnants of the dragon's existence is the Egg of Pan Ku, a magical artifact that could be used to recreate any living being. Upon that being's death, the egg would return into being elsewhere in Rokugan. Fu Leng planted a seed of corruption deep within it upon the death of the dragon, a seed of darkness undetectable by any mortal.

In time, the egg came into the possession of the Scorpion Clan. Bayushi Kachiko utilized the egg to take vengeance upon her former lover, Doji Hoturi, for the death of their illegitimate son during the Scorpion Clan Coup. The False Hoturi was originally intended to serve the purposes of the Scorpion, to subtly turn the Crane Clan's resources and power toward the benefit of the exiled Scorpion so that they might take their revenge. Sadly, Kachiko was unaware of the darkness that lay within the Egg. The False Hoturi drew upon the power of the Shadowlands Taint. He assembled an army of Shadowlands madmen and embarked upon the wholesale destruction of the Crane Clan.

In the depths of the prison, Fu Leng sensed the False Hoturi's actions and was pleased. The False Hoturi grew in power, boosted by the favor of Jigoku, until few could stand against him.

Demoralized by the apparent willing corruption and betrayal of their former leader and already weakened by the Crab Clan's destruction of Kyuden Kakita, the Crane slowly lost ground before the False Hoturi's army. The real Doji Hoturi eventually escaped his prison and confronted his evil reflection, and the False Hoturi fell on the fields of Shinden Asahina.

THE FALSE HOTURI TODAY

Shortly after the False Hoturi's death, the Egg of Pan Ku reappeared and was lost on the fields of Shinden Asahina. For decades the Egg lay unnoticed on the battlefield. When Fu Leng returned from the Realm of the Dead and began his assault on the Celestial Heavens, he quickly realized that the true focus of the battle was in the mortal realm. So long as the samurai of Rokugan kept faith in the gods and Fortunes, the armies of Heaven would stand strong against him. The Crane Clan, the embodiment of honor and excellence, became his first target. From the Heavens Fu Leng extended his power into the mortal realm, found the Egg of Pan Ku, and restored the magic Kachiko had used to duplicate the Crane Thunder.

Now one of the most feared enemies in the history of the Crane Clan rides again. He is stronger than before, now emulating many of the techniques utilized by Hoturi's Blade, the order of swordsmen dedicated to the Thunder's memory. Fortunately for the Crane, they are not in the same weakened state as they were when the False Hoturi last appeared. Nonetheless, his return has sparked terror and uncertainty. The False Hoturi is a grim, brooding individual. The Empire has changed a great deal from the memories he retains of his stolen life. Even so, all that is important remains the same. In his eyes, the Crane are a clan of arrogant children, dancing in the sunlight and ignoring the beasts that lie in shadows. He hunts his kinsmen because he despises them. He kills them because he is stronger, and needs no other reason. In a strange way, the False Hoturi still strives to embrace the Crane virtue of excellence, a flawless engine of destruction designed to murder all who do not bow before him.

The False Hoturi is a killer, but he is no fool. He has a sound grasp of tactics and a sly, devious mind. He favors attacking en masse with armies of undead and Lost samurai. He is also a skilled duelist and will not shy from a challenge, but memories of his death in single combat with Doji Hoturi are still fresh in his mind. He will not take undue risks, and will flee and replenish his numbers rather than exhaust himself in pointless combat.

Following his retreat from Crane lands, the False Hoturi was inexorably drawn to the City of the Lost. There, he met Daigotsu and became intrigued by the prospect of forging his own destiny, no longer merely a shadow of the true Hoturi. The False Hoturi has sworn his service to Daigotsu's name. He now refers to himself as Daigotsu Hoturi, and answers to no other name.

DAIGOTSU HOTURI

Male human Crane Samurai 13/Hoturi's Blade 5: CR 20; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 13d10+26 plus 5d8+10; hp 185; Init +8; Spd 20 ft. AC 29 (touch 17, flat-footed 25); Atk+4 keen vorpal katana +29/+24/+19/+14 melee, 1d10+15; SA Blade of Whispers 5/day, Hoturi's Speed 5/day; SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill – Knowledge (etiquette), Hoturi's Poise, Soul of Hoturi Honor: 0; AL CE; SV Fort +15, Ref +16, Will +17; Str 19 (23), Dex 19, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 21, Taint +8; Maximum Void: 2; Height 5 ft. 8 in.

Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy.

Kata: One Leg Stance (katana), Striking as Fire.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Rokugani), Battle +14, Bluff +26, Diplomacy +30, Gather Information +21, Iaijutsu Focus +31, Intimidate +19, Ride +14, Sense Motive +16; Daisho Specialization (katana), Eternal Vigilance, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, A Single Moment, The Sudden Strike (katana), Tread on the Blade, Versatile (Bluff, Gather Information), Void Use, Way of the Crane, Weapon Focus (katana). *Shadowlands Powers:* (See Creatures of Rokugan for details) Blood Sense, Child of Darkness, Father of Lies, Protection of the Dark, Thy Master's Will, Unearthly Regeneration.

Possessions: +4 keen vorpal katana (Ancestral Daisho), +4 keen vorpal wakizashi (Ancestral Daisho), +5 partial armor of fortification (moderate), amulet of natural armor +3, haori of resistance +4, obi of giant strength (+4), ring of protection +3.

DAIGOTSU HOTURI

Earth: 4
 Fire: 4
 Water: 4
 Air: 6
 Void: 5
 Taint: 8
 School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 5 / Hoturi's Blade 1 / Kenshinzen 1
 Dojo: Kakita Dueling Academy
 Kata: One Leg Stance, Striking as Fire
 Honor: 0.2
 Glory: 0.0
 Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Luck (3), Cadence
 Disadvantages: Lechery (3)
 Shadowlands Powers: (See Way of the Shadowlands for details) Blood Sense, Child of Darkness, Father of Lies, Protection of the Dark, Thy Master's Will, Unearthly Regeneration.
 Skills: Battle 6, Courtier 5, Defense 5, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 4, History 3, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 6, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Lion Clan 4, Meditation 2, Poetry 5, Political Maneuvering 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 4

YOKUBO, NIGHTMARE OF THE CRANE

A samurai's life is one of restraint. Honor and duty demand that a samurai place their lord's wishes above their own, paying no heed to the base urges that dominate the minds and lives of lesser men. Yet in their heart of hearts, every man hears a small voice that urges them to satisfy every whim. A true samurai learns to ignore this voice. Yokubo, the Onisu of Desire, is that voice given form and terrible strength. It robs samurai not only of their lives, but of their honor and dignity as well, transforming them into creatures of impulse and hedonism before their deaths. It is a fate that can condemn one to Meido or Gaki-do, a fate that the soul of every true samurai struggles against every day.

Yokubo is more than just corruption. It is damnation.

YOKUBO, ONISU OF DESIRE, NIGHTMARE OF THE CRANE

Large Outsider (Evil, Oni, Shadowlands, Spirit)
Hit Dice: 16d8 + 112 (184 hp)
Initiative: +17 (+13 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
Speed: 40 ft., fly 80 ft. (average)
AC: 29 (-2 size, +13 Dex, +8 Natural)
Attacks: 2 claws +24 melee, wing strike +19 melee
Damage: 2 claws 1d10+12, wing strike 1d8+8
Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 10 ft.
Special Attacks: spell-like abilities, enhancement
Special Qualities: Oni Qualities, honorable vulnerability, possession, regeneration 5, rejuvenation, SR 25
Saves: Fort +16, Ref +27, Will +13
Abilities: Str 26, Dex 26, Con 24, Wis 12, Int 15, Cha 28, Taint 9
Skills: Bluff +23, Climb +24, Diplomacy +25, Handle

Animal +18, Jump +24, Knowledge (Crane) +18, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +18, Knowledge (Yume-do) +18, Sense Motive +24, Spot +17

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Expertise, Flyby Attack, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip

Climate/Terrain: Shadowlands, Yume-do, any land or underground.

Organization: Solitary or with Sanru no Oni flock (10-30 oni)

Challenge Rating: 18

Treasure: Standard

Honor: Always 0 honor

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 17-48 HD (Large)

COMBAT

Yokubo strongly resembles a large, heavily armored human with powerful, vulture-like wings sprouting from its back. It enjoys surprising its foes with aerial attacks and will toy with them for as long as possible, diving in and out of combat to weaken its foes until it grows bored and ends their misery.

Enhancement (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Yokubo commits a dishonorable act of desire (such as exploring lust with another outside the bonds of marriage or coveting the belongings of another), the Onisu gains one bonus hit die. All other benefits of advancement (such as higher saves, base attack, and caster level for spell-like abilities) are also gained. This benefit lasts for one week, after which time the Onisu loses one bonus hit die per week until it returns to the above statistics. Each time the Onisu gains ten levels from this ability, it increases by one size category.

Honorable Vulnerability (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Yokubo commits an act of selflessness (such as giving one's life for another, sacrificing something one needs for the benefit of another, etc.), the Onisu receives a negative level. This negative level remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its Enhancement ability. If the Onisu is reduced to zero levels due to this effect, it perishes. Its damage reduction and spell resistance are entirely negated for any opponent who has committed an act of selfless bravery within the last minute.

Oni Qualities (Su): All oni have certain qualities, described on page 5 of *Creatures of Rokugan*.

Possession (Su): Yokubo may choose to dominate the thoughts of any person within 100 feet. The target of this ability must succeed at a Will save (DC 20) or instantly succumb to intense desire, lust, or passion. The character will actively and unwaveringly pursue anything that they perceive as desirable, whether it be material goods, information, or even the company of another person. The person will become violent if their continued attempts to acquire the object of their desire, and will even attack lifelong friends or superiors. The target may make an additional Will save every hour to resist the effect until it is dispelled. Yokubo need not know of the target's specific desires, though they will reveal their desires to Yokubo if they fail their initial save and the Onisu wishes to know.

Regeneration (Ex): Holy and honorable weapons do normal damage to Yokubo, as do weapons that have been immersed in the water of Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams.

Rejuvenation (Su): If slain, Yokubo can be harvested from the Realm of Dreams once more via a special ritual known only to the Dark Lord Daigotsu and the Tsuno Soultwisters.

The Onisu cannot be restored more often than once a month.

Spell-like abilities: at will — *detect passage**, *dispel magic*, *improved invisibility*, *know alignment*, *obscuring mist*, *passage into darkness**, *passage into dream**, *protection from good*. 3/day — *deeper darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *emotion*, *haste*. These abilities are as cast by a 16th level sorcerer (DC 12 + spell level). Spells marked with an asterisk are described in *Fortunes and Winds*.™

YOKUBO, ONISU OF DESIRE, NIGHTMARE OF THE CRANE

Earth: 4

Fire: 6

Agility: 8

Water: 4

Air: 5

Reflexes: 6

Rolls to Attack: 8k4

Rolls for Damage: 6k3

TN to be Hit: 35

Carapace: 5

Wounds: 75: +10; 100: +15; 150:
+20; 200: Dead

Special Abilities:

Carapace: Weapons that have been dipped in the waters of Yumedo may ignore Yokubo's Carapace rating.

Enhancement: Any time a person within 100 feet of Yokubo commits a dishonorable act of dishonorable act of desire (such as exploring lust with another outside the bonds of marriage or coveting the belongings of another), one of the Onisu's Traits (and all associated attributes) increases by one. This benefit lasts for one week, after which time the Onisu loses one bonus Trait per week until it returns to the above statistics. The oni grows slowly larger each time it draws upon betrayal in such a manner.

Honorable Vulnerability: Any time a person within 100 feet of Yokubo commits an act of selflessness (such as giving one's life for another, sacrificing something one needs for the benefit of another, etc.), one of the Onisu's Traits (and all associated attributes) decreases by one. This penalty remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its enhancement ability. If one of the Onisu's Traits is reduced to zero, it perishes.

Multiple Attacks: Yokubo may attack twice per round, using either its claws or its wings to slice or batter an opponent.

Passages: The Onisu can cast detect passage, passage into darkness, and passage into dream at will.

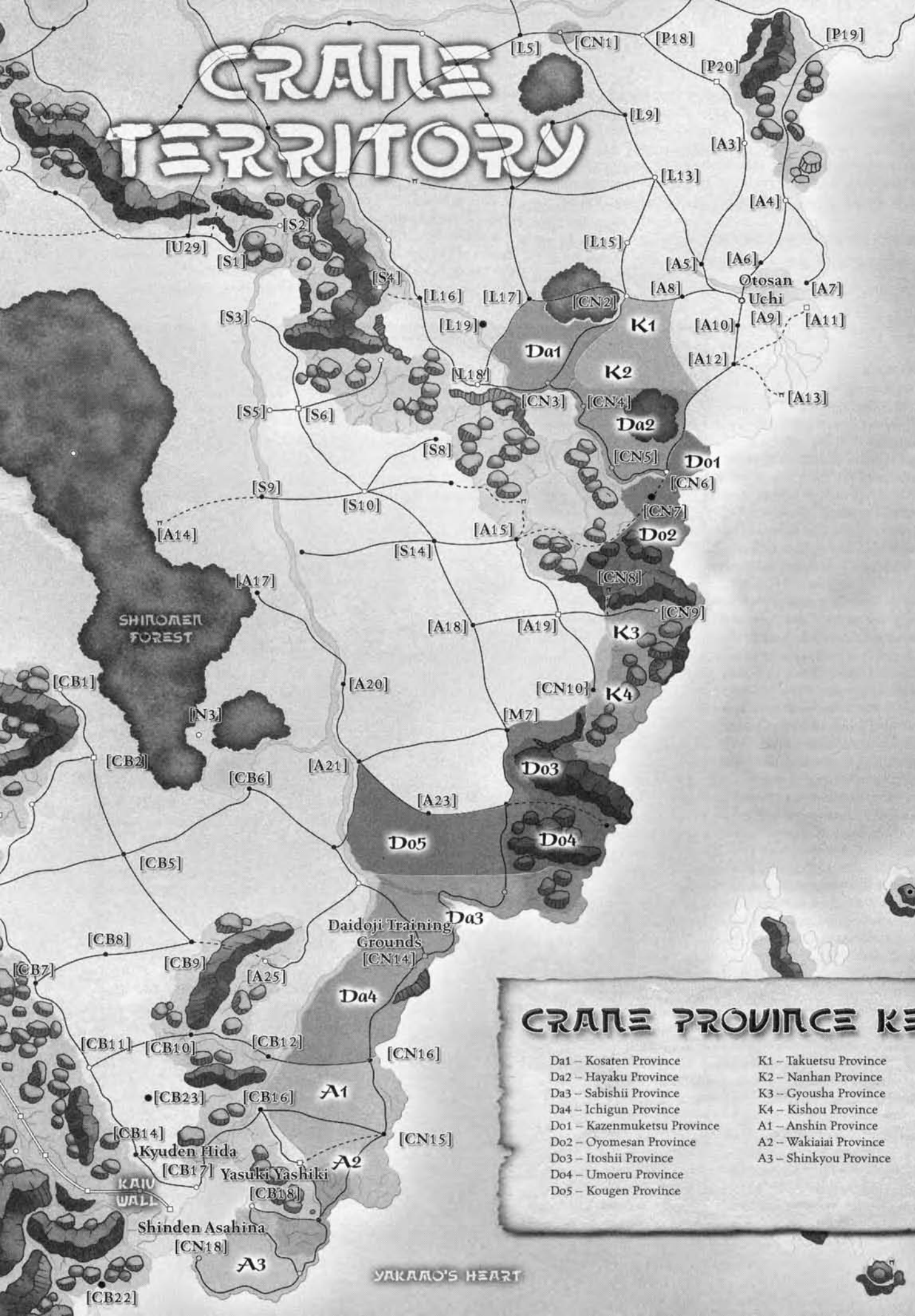
Possession: Yokubo can make an

opposed Willpower roll with any individual within 100 feet. If successful, the Onisu can force that individual to succumb to intense desire, lust, or passion. The character will actively and unwaveringly pursue anything that they perceive as desirable, whether it be material goods, information, or even the company of another person. The person will become violent if their continued attempts to acquire the object of their desire, and will even attack lifelong friends or superiors.

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CRANE TERRITORY



CRANE PROVINCE KEY

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Da1 – Kosaten Province | K1 – Takuetsu Province |
| Da2 – Hayaku Province | K2 – Nanhan Province |
| Da3 – Sabishii Province | K3 – Gyousha Province |
| Da4 – Ichigun Province | K4 – Kishou Province |
| Do1 – Kazemuketsu Province | A1 – Anshin Province |
| Do2 – Oyomesan Province | A2 – Wakiaiai Province |
| Do3 – Itoshii Province | A3 – Shinkyou Province |
| Do4 – Umoeru Province | |
| Do5 – Kougen Province | |



“We are the children of Lady Doji, first in all things. Excellence is our past, our present, our future. Others hate and fear us only because they can never achieve what we have been given”

— Doji Kurohito, Crane Clan Champion

Secrets of the Crane explores the paragons of honor and civility, the Crane Clan. Where others see weakness, however, the Crane have strength held in reserve to crush those who dare oppose them.

Within, you will find:

- An examination of the unique traditions, philosophies, and holdings of each of the Crane families: the Asahina, Daidoji, Doji, Kakita, and Yasuki.
- Mechanics for many groups within the clan, such as the Empress' Guard and the Daidoji Trading Council, as well as a revised version of the renowned Kakita Artisan Academy.
- An extensive history of the Crane Clan, as well as a master list of all their techniques and new abilities for their courtiers.
- Shiro Giji, stronghold of the Daidoji Harriers. Hidden and forgotten. The dark recesses of Shiro Giji provide the dreaded Harriers with a source of strength from which to strike out at the Crane Clan's enemies.
- The darkest secrets of the Crane – the hidden, forgotten shame that they hide from all outsiders... and themselves.

This book is a dual-system supplement for the Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game, Second Edition,[™] and Rokugan,[™] the d20 Companion for Legend of the Five Rings. Players and DMs may also find it useful as a source of interesting new feats and abilities for any d20 System[™] campaign.

Game Masters running the Second Edition L5R RPG will need a copy of the Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Guide[™] and the Player's Guide.[™] Players need only the Player's Guide.[™]

Dungeon Masters running d20 System[™] games will need a copy of the Player's Handbook,[™] the Dungeon Master's Handbook,[™] Oriental Adventures,[™] and Rokugan.[™] Players will need only a Player's Handbook.[™]



Printed in U.S.A. AEG 3037