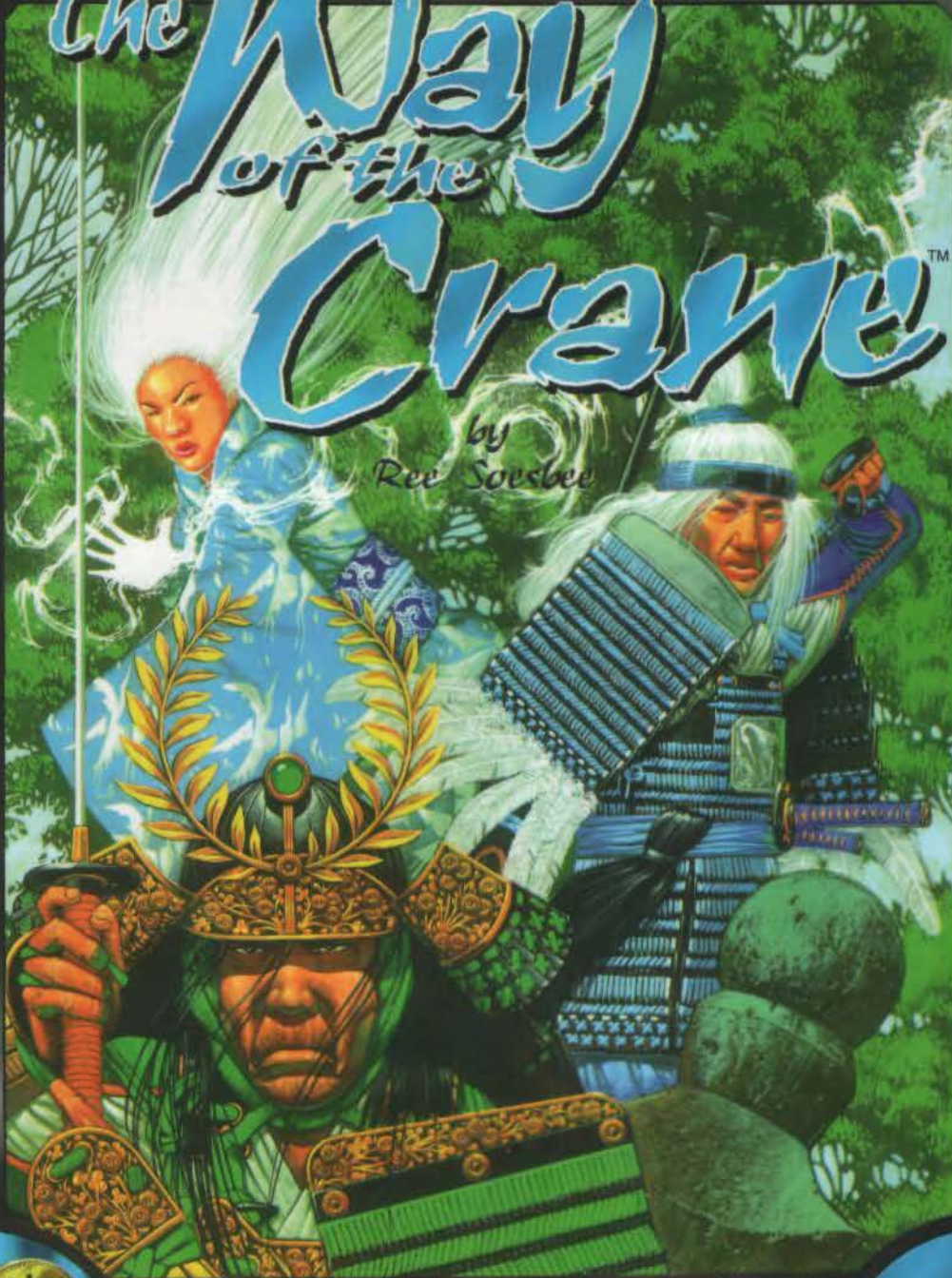


The Way of the Clans: Book Four

The Way of the Crane™

by
Ree Soesbee



Legend of the Five Rings™





Legend of the Five Rings

The Way of the Crane



*Say not that honor is the child of boldness,
Nor believe that death alone can pay its price:
It is not to a single action that honor is due,
But to the life that enfolds it.*

– Lady Doji



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Special thanks to ...

John "Uikku" Wick and Marcelo "Otaku Masero" Figueroa - Two very special gentlemen whose wisdom and encouragement are priceless.

My Dad - For the encouragement, love, and support, even when we don't agree on everything.

Matthew "Wolf" Richardson - For the Isawa Asahina story, as well as his patience, his friendship, and taking me out to munch Chinese food when I was stuck. You're the very best in the world, Matt.

Steve "Isha" Rutledge, Bryan "If it's not dark, I won't play it" Settle, and Andy "Shosuro Taberu" Morris - For the Asahina spells, *mizu-do* techniques, a few of the *nemuranai*, and the Jester's abilities, as well as countless suggestions and pieces of the puzzle.

Rob Vaux - For listening to me babble on about the Yasuki and the Ratlings, and for collaborating with me on the Battle of the Landbridge.

And to countless others, who play the game and who make the world of the Emerald Empire more exciting through their participation, energy and enthusiasm. Thank you for helping to make Rokugan come alive.

Better to stop short than fill to the brim.

Oversharpen the blade, and the edge will soon blunt.

Amass a store of gold and jade, and no one can protect it.

Claim wealth and titles, and disaster will follow.

Retire when the work is done -

This is the way of heaven.

Thank you all.

~ Ree

Table of Contents



A Winter's Evening	4
Chapter One: The Honorable Crane	8
Chapter Two: The Families of the Crane ..	18
Chapter Three: Character	48
Chapter Four: Who's Who	74
Chapter Five: Character Templates	92
Appendix I: The Lands of the Crane ...	104
Appendix II: Mizu-do	112
Appendix III: The Asahina Spellbooks ..	115
Appendix IV: Two Crane Clan Decks ..	120
Appendix V: Miscellany	124
Crane Clan Character Sheets	125

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A Winter's Evening

The palanquin swayed gently, its golden etchings gleaming in the bright morning sun above the lands of the Doji. The men who carried it were hardly burdened by the slight weight of their passenger, their shoulders bearing the long mahogany poles which held the litter aloft. They had traveled long through the lands of the Scorpion and the Crab, escorted by a small honor guard of Crane samurai. Now the journey of so many months was nearly at an end, and the palace of the Crane awaited their return.

As they approached the great gates of the Doji Palace, a wizened beggar sitting by the road lifted his wooden bowl in supplication. With a single word from within the curtains of the palanquin, the procession slowed, and the carriers lowered the litter. The beggar bowed very low, his face nearly touching the ground and his worn and travel-torn kimono creasing beneath him as the door to the palanquin slid gently open. The guards bowed slightly as a young girl stepped forth from the covered carriage. Her dress was rich, her face young and unlined, yet her bearing was exquisite and her voice sounded cultured and confident. With a bright smile, she bowed slightly to the beggar in return, and knelt by the side of the road. Her step was smooth, but rocked in an unusual rhythm - the rhythm of one who had learned to compensate for a marred birth, and a twisted foot.

For nearly an hour the girl sat by the road with the old man, sharing stories and exchanging tales of the world. When they were done, the girl placed several shining golden coins in the wooden bowl, stood, and bowed politely to the old man. One of the samurai approached her as she stepped back to the palanquin. "Forgive me, Shizue-sama, but the man is *hinin*!" His voice

was filled with concern and confusion. She paused by his side and smiled a gentle smile, her pale grey eyes dancing with amusement.

"When the world was young and the First Hantei sat upon the Emerald Throne of Rokugan, our own Lady Doji paused by the side of the road to speak and give aid to a beggar. Should I, her descendant, do any less?" The samurai's eyes were narrow and uncomprehending, but he bowed respectfully. Shizue stepped to the door of the palanquin, her hand delicately resting on its crested roof. Just before she set foot within the litter, she turned back to the armored man beside the road.

"Have you not heard the tale?" she said softly, her cultured voice amused. The samurai paused for a moment, then shook his head.

"No, my Lady. I was only schooled in war. I am but a humble soldier ..."

"Then let me tell it to you." Shizue's white hair blew softly in the gentle sea-breeze that surrounded them, and she reached up to brush a pale wisp behind one small ear. "It was long ago, when the first *kami* of the clans had fallen from the heavens, and the world was still new-forged..."



...The seven stood upon the hilltop, their kimonos barely touched by the fierce winds which blew from an angry sea. They looked upon the world with new eyes, without knowledge of the path ahead.

"The land is at war with itself," one of them said to the others, her voice as soft as silks. "It must be taught civilization. We must find a way to live with the people of this land, and with each other."

"It is not at all what I had expected." A gruff voice from a large man to one side. "It is an untamed world, one which needs dominance and force to guide it."

"No, brother - it is but a child, in need of teaching and wisdom to flourish." This from a slender man with gentle hands, stroking the beard upon his chin thoughtfully.

"It is in need of a leader." The final voice, from a man with waving golden hair and firelit eyes. "We must give it a reason to grow."

Upon that hillside by the tossing waves, the seven engaged in contests of skill and strength, with only one man standing aside, apart from the rest. A silent watcher, who already knew the ultimate outcome of the trials. It was there that the first Emperor was chosen, and the First Hantei claimed his right to rule. The others slowly scattered to the winds, building their domain upon the land and gathering the people of the realm to serve them and form the Empire.



Of them, only two remained on that hilltop when the snows came. Those two were Hantei and his sister, Lady Doji. The first city had been raised upon that hill, and a great palace was being built – a palace that would one day be known as Otosan Uchi, the city of the Emperor. The winter blew its harsh breath over the land, coating it with white frost and thick snow. One day, Lady Doji stood at her window in the high towers of Otosan Uchi and looked down upon the budding city below.

On the road outside of the palace she saw a thin beggar–man, sitting outside the warm houses of the city. His cloak was ragged, and his weathered staff lay by his side with his begging bowl. There were no travelers on that road, only the company of bitter wind and freezing snow.

Lady Doji called to her samurai guards, instructing them to tell the beggar to come inside the palace, that a small room would be found for him. But when the guards returned, they said that the beggar refused their request, and would not listen to what they said.

So, Lady Doji called to her maidservants, and gave them a bowl of steaming rice and fish, and told them to go to the beggar. They went out into the cold winter wind, but although the beggar gratefully accepted the food, he again refused the shelter they offered. Puzzled by his strange behavior, Doji went to her window again, but the little man had not moved. He simply sat by the road, calmly accepting the cold winter day around him.

At last, despite the pleas of her maids, the Lady Doji left the palace and walked down the road away from Otosan Uchi. Bearing only a blanket woven of thick wool, she stood in the thick snow near the little man. “They tell me,” she said softly,

“that you will not come inside. Will you not at least take this warm blanket?”

“Why would I want to do that?” The beggar’s voice was rough, uncultured, but not disrespectful.

“So that you can live. The day grows darker, and the night will bring fierce storms, and snow. Do you wish to freeze and die?”

The wizened beggar looked up at the lady, her face as white as the snow which lightly crusted the ground. “Die?” he chuckled. “You say that word with dread, my Lady.” His thin eyes pinched shut as he calmly took a bite of fish from the warmed bowl.

“Are you not afraid of death?”

“Rather, my Lady, I am not afraid to live.” Doji stared at the man, a faintly puzzled look on her perfect features. “Look around you, Lady. What do you see?”

Doji gazed at the land around her, from the palatial walls of the new construction in Otosan Uchi, down to the rolling ocean on the rocks below. “I see... the world.”

“That is all you see? You do not look right in front of your face.” The little man chuckled, and Doji flushed with mild anger. “Gentle Lady Doji, I do not mean to insult you. Tell me...” he reached down and scooped up a handful of the snow at her feet. “Do you not see the snow?”

“The snow?” she said. “Of course I see the snow. There is snow everywhere.”

“Ah, but do you *see* the snow?” As Doji looked at him perplexedly, he pointed at a large flake which fell near her face. “That one. What do you see there?”

She looked at the tiny flake of snow as it fell lazily past her face, through her fingers, and landed on the ground at her feet. After a moment, she said, “It has seven spires, from a single point.”

“And that one?”

“Three spires – it looks like a dove in flight.” She paused, “I had never noticed...”

“In all the thousands of snowflakes of all the thousands of snowfalls, there are no two which are alike.” The little man chuckled gleefully. “No two in all eternity. If I were to go inside with you now, I would never see that snowflake. Its pattern would never occur again.” He pointed a wizened finger at a slowly falling splinter of ice.

“It is only a piece of water.” Doji watched in fascination as the beggar peered at another snowflake.

“And life is only a single day, one upon the other, until years have passed and you have





grown old, and then you say, 'Where have all the days gone?'" He chuckled again. "Ah! Six spires – like the wheel of a wagon." He paused, and the snow fell silently between them. After a moment, the beggar continued, "How did you spend this morning, Lady?"

"This morning?" The curious question surprised her, and she murmured, "I was weaving – a new kimono for my brother, Hantei."

"Four blocks and a single spire!..." The beggar chortled, pounding his feet upon the ground as he pointed at another flake of snow. After a moment, he continued, "Do you remember each silken string that you wove into the pattern of your brother's kimono?"

"Why, no, of course not!"

"Why not?"

"There are hundreds of fibers in the pattern – thousands of strands in all. How can I remember each one?"

"Yet, I suppose you remember every mistake you made, and the hours it took to correct them."

Doji flushed. "Of course."

"Perhaps if you had taken a moment to see every strand, to understand each fiber, you would never have made those mistakes, neh? Like you did not see the snowflake, you ignore what is around you – you ignore the days of life, to see only the years." He snorted. "You cannot change the passing of years. But you can change the passing of hours – and what you choose to do as that time passes. Will it be something you will remember, or will your days pass you by as if they were nothing but a fog of snow?"

The lady stared at the little man, her vision blurring as the snow began to fall faster, the wind rippling through her hair. "You are more than a beggar, little man." A tear slid down her pale cheek and vanished into the snow – another lost piece of ice, among the millions.

"But are you more than just one life among many?" His voice was soft, but it cut through the wind and rising storm like a scythe. "And when you die, will you be remembered, or will you be another strand in the tapestry – uncounted, and irretrievable? The snow will melt, Lady Doji, and in a few days it will be gone and forgotten forever. Who will remember it?" He paused, and turned from her face to look at the swiftly falling snow. "Who will remember you?"

After a moment, Lady Doji knelt beside the thin monk, and together they sat by the side of

the road as the silent snow fell, piece by piece, onto the plains around them.



Shizue, daughter of the Doji house, stood for a moment by her palanquin, staring past the guard to whom she had been speaking, her eyes distant and her voice fading into the wind. After a moment, she stepped down from the litter and turned again to the samurai.

"Tell me, my friend," she said to him, "if you were to die tomorrow, would your regrets outweigh your memories?" The samurai did not answer as she walked past him.

After a moment, he found his voice. "My lady – your litter... "

Shizue did not turn, walking gracefully toward the huge oaken gates of the Crane, their golden etchings shining before her like the sun itself. "I no longer require my litter, *nikutai-san*. I will finish my journey home step by step." Her twisted foot brushed the ground in long strokes, leaving waves upon the ground like the passing of the tide. The samurai watched the storyteller lift a pale hand to the tall golden gates of the palisades. As they swung wide before her, a flight of ivory cranes leapt up from the gardens on the other side, filling the sky like delicate flakes of snow.



Welcome to this addition to the L5R role-playing game! The book you hold in your hands is designed to assist players and Game Masters alike in understanding and bringing to life Rokugan's most honorable clan – the Crane. The Crane, in all their aspects, are shown here for your information, so that as a player and a Game Master you can add to your vision of Rokugan. We hope this text will provide ideas and background to help shape and expand your campaign, making the game even richer and more enjoyable to play. You will find many resources included here, including the Kakita Artisans, Doji Courtiers, and the heart of civilization in Rokugan – the Imperial Court. Remember, this book is not the final word on the

Crane in your campaign; it is a guidebook and foundation for your own ideas.

How To Use This Book

While you read this book, it is important to recognize that your Game Master may have a differing view of the Crane Clan. It is the Game Master's job to make the last decision on all information in this treatise. We hope that anyone who wants to run the L5R game system will take the ideas presented in this book and use them in their own way. If the GM's concept of the Crane Clan differs from what you find here, you may expect to find some changes when you travel to the lands of the Doji.

The first chapter will relate anecdotes about the Crane clan from the point of view of the other clans in Rokugan. This is designed to give you an idea of how the Crane relate to, and are seen by, the other clans in the land. Since times long past, the Crane have been the keepers of legend and myth, guardians of the stories which formed their civilization. And who better to safeguard the hallmarks of culture, since it was Lady Doji who shaped the feudal system of Rokugan in the time of the First Hantei?

The next chapter discusses the various houses within the Crane clan, giving background, history, and legend. This will include the history of the Asahina family, once a member of the Phoenix house, and the Yasuki family, who have since joined the ranks of the Crab. Their tales and those of the Doji, Kakita, and Daidoji, are recorded in this text to give you a better understanding of the Crane's philosophy of excellence.

In the third chapter, you will find information on building your own Crane clan character, including rules for the new archetypes found in this book, such as the Kakita Artisans and the Doji Courtier. Also, you will find suggestions for creating a detailed heritage for your Crane character and for integrating these new ideas into your existing campaign.

You won't find any "family tree" for the Cranes in this book - we've left much of that up to the imagination of your Game Master. Because of the beauty of the Crane maidens, this

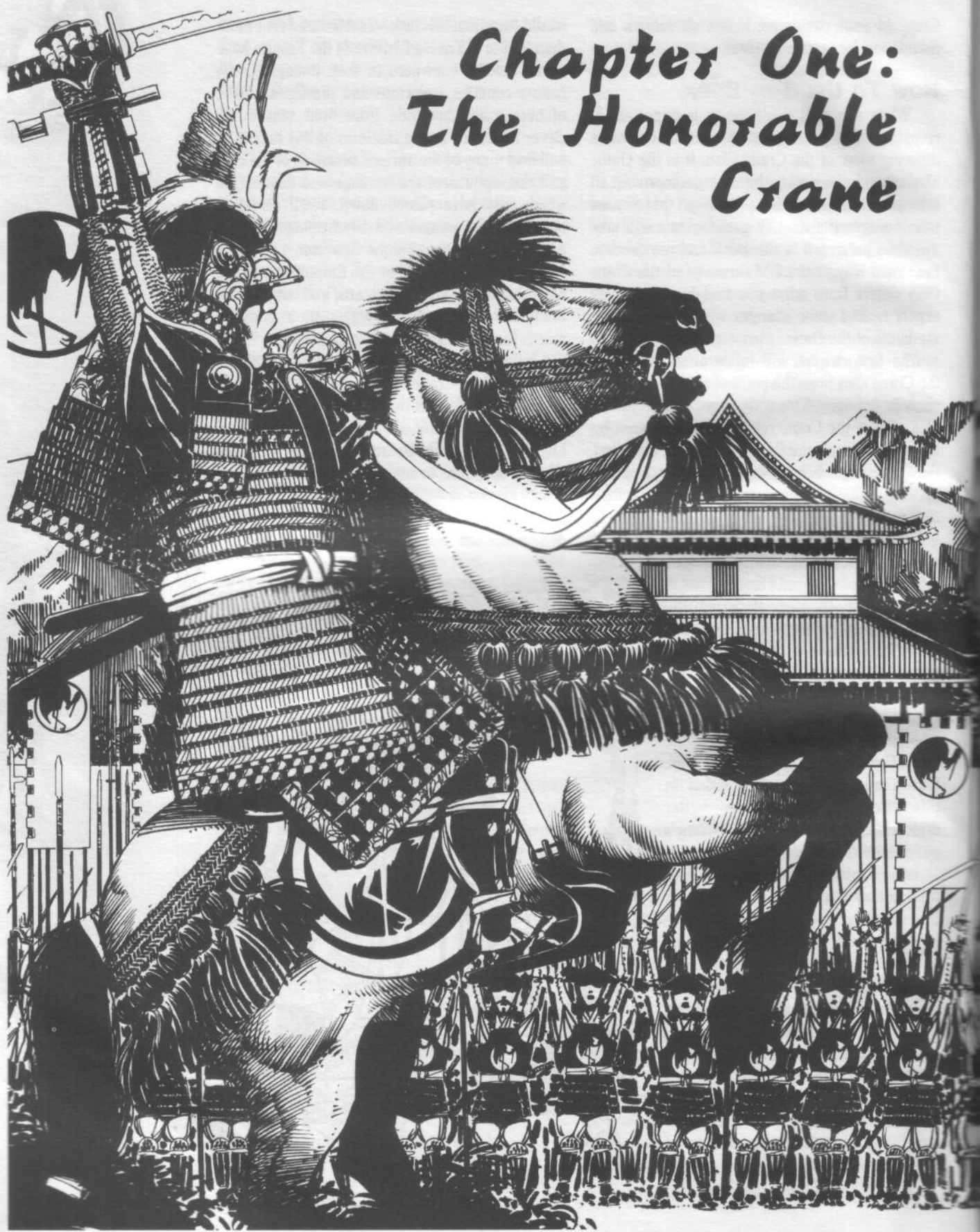
would be a hopeless task - rest assured that more than half of the noble families of the Empire have Crane blood somewhere in their lineage! Crane history contains a glorious and prestigious array of heroes and heroines, from bold samurai to clever tricksters. In the sidelines of this book you will find many of the ancient ancestors of the clan and descriptions of the heritage and advantages which they have passed down. You'll also find new skills, advantages and disadvantages to help you create your own unique character.

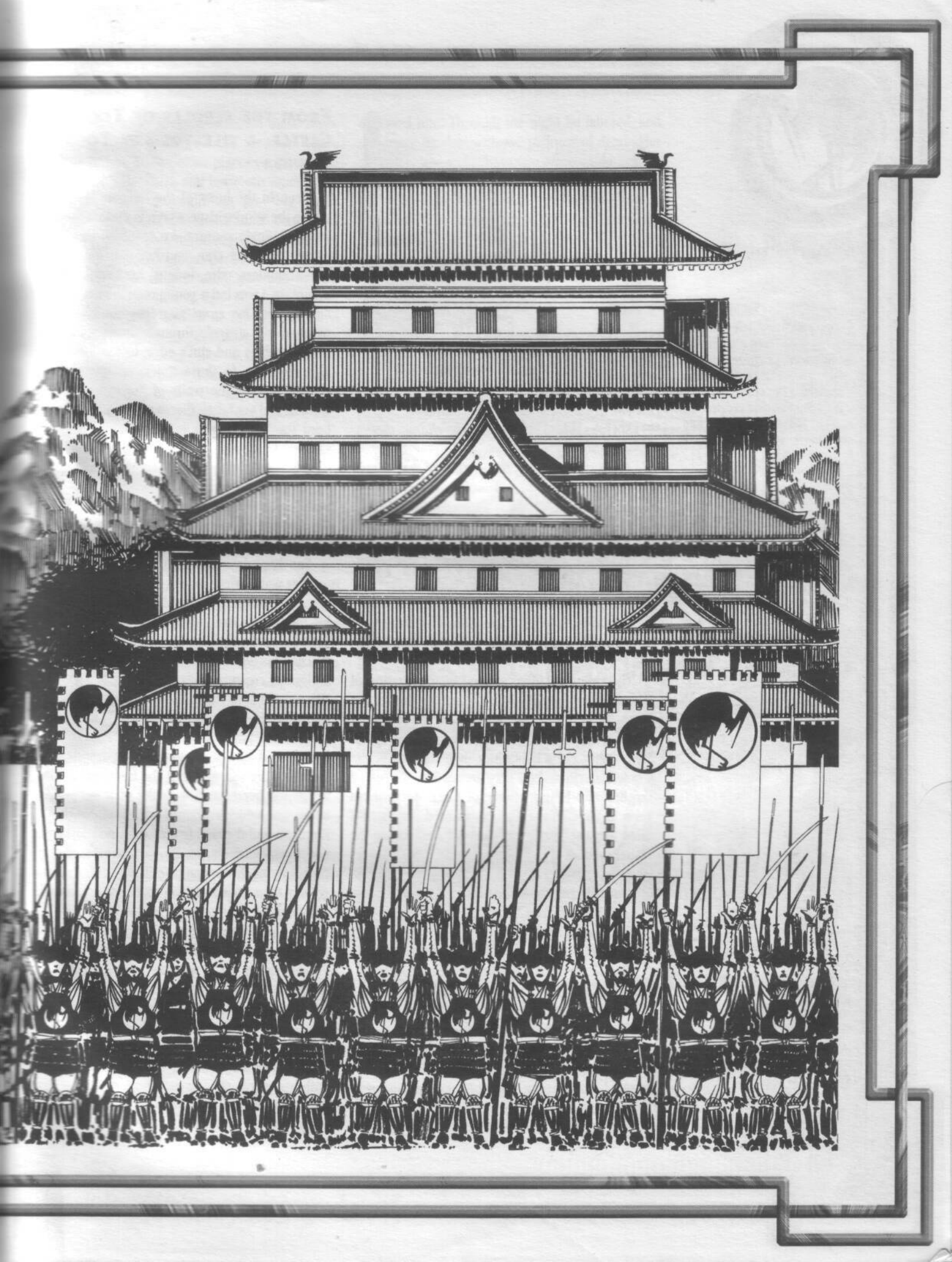
Since the beginning of the Empire, the Crane have shaped the civilization, arts, and language of Rokugan. This book highlights their constant search for perfection and their quest to live life to the fullest, wasting nothing, and living with no regrets. The Crane way of life demands excellence. Perfection in all things is the heart of the Crane, and purity is the fire that guides them. Live life to its peak, because you have only one chance, one time to make this world hear your voice.

One life can make the difference.



Chapter One: The Honorable Crane







AFTER THE FALL

After the Children of the Sun and Moon fell from the Heavens and created Rokugan, Lady Doji shaped the rise of civilization among the crude, barbaric peoples. She created the system of samurai and *heimin*, and the division of the land. Lady Doji invented the Imperial Court, and commerce and economics. Her sponsorship of the arts is reflected in every aspect of noble life in the Empire.

Since her time, the Crane Clan has held the coast from the Mountains of Regret to the tip of the southern peninsula. The Asahina share the far south with the Daidoji, while the Doji and Kakita live in the north.

Chapter One: The Honorable Crane

*The sky and the earth will endure
Streams and mountains never change their
paths*

*The world observes the rhythm of the seasons
Withered by snow, restored by the sun
But man in this is not their equal
In a flash of time he is born,
Lives and passes into the void.
There is no way to transcend life
It must be, and so it is.
So live your time while you can
And when wine is offered, don't refuse.*

– Kakita Toshimoko

The Crane Clan has shaped the civilization of Rokugan throughout history. Since the time of the First Hantei, a Crane has been the Imperial Advisor, and a Doji has been the mother of the Heir. Other clans have their own legends of the Crane, describing how they are seen by the rest of the Emerald Empire. Some of these stories have been gathered here. But be warned, for not all tales are the truth, and not all lies should be disbelieved ...

*Deep the waters of the black pool, colored like
the richest inks
They say a Holy Dragon rests by the lake at
night
Beside the pool they have built a shrine, to
slay the suckling-pig
A dragon by itself remains a dragon
Only men can make a god.*

– Doji Shizue

FROM THE SCROLLS OF TOGASHI CASTLE, A TALE TOLD BY TOGASHI UESHIBA

Deep in the heart of the Dragon Mountains, where the wind whispers secrets that no man can know, a single samurai-ko climbed. Her hands bloody from the crag, and her hair loose about her shoulders, she fought her way up the mountain. I was but a young man then, a stripling among the *ise zumi* guarding the walls. We watched her struggle through the rocky terrain, past brambles and cliff's edge, to the foot of our ancient home. In those times, no women were allowed within the walls of Togashi castle. No woman had yet taken the vow which bound us to Lord Togashi Sakanoe, our Champion. When the samurai-ko reached the walls of our keep, she stared at the closed and silent gateway. We did not know then what we know now, and by our traditions, we could not open our gates to her. As the day passed, she sat on the ground before the tall parapets, her eyes fixed on the entrance.

For three days and nights she watched us. No food or water was brought to her; no rest did she take. At last, Tsuneyo, the Master Tattoo Artist, left his meditation and stood upon the high walls of Togashi castle, looking down at her. Her beauty touched his heart and I heard him murmur, "Such a glorious creature must not be left to die alone." We warned him against his folly, but he would not listen. He went outside the walls to speak to the woman.

She told him she was a Crane, from the far shores of the sea, and that she had seen a vision which led her here. She spoke of a magnificent tattoo, one which enflamed her mind. No man in Rokugan had the skill to create it, and most could not even conceive of its beauty. Despite the simplicity of the design, the flawless pattern was greater than men had skill to create. So she had searched the Empire, and her search had led her to the halls of the tattooed Dragon. The woman spoke to him of her dream, brightly colored and lit as though by a thousand fires. She would rather die here with her vision, she said, than live another day without it. Tsuneyo sat with her for a time, and her dream burned its way into his thoughts. He offered her gruel and water, the fare of the monks within the walls, and went away with her words ringing in his mind.

On the fourth day, Tsuneyo went out to the woman again. "We cannot help you here," he said

to her. "No woman is allowed within these walls, and our tattoos are only for the *ise zumi*. There are other tattoo artists, other places you can fulfill your vision. Seek them and leave our lands."

But the woman would not go. "My vision requires the touch of a Master's hand. None other will suffice. Only you, the Master of your art, can capture my dream. Without perfection, it is better that it was never tried at all. If you will not aid me, then leave me here to die."

The tattoo artist looked at the woman for a long moment. Her face was strangely pale, her blue-grey eyes shining like a storm on the horizon. The wind blew through her white hair, and her beauty mirrored the darkness within a fire, the shadows of its flames cast upon a cold stone wall. Tsuneyo said, "I have seen your vision through your words. Yet I know - if this tattoo is made, if it is allowed to exist, it must be made through the purity of death. Are you willing to pay the cost?"

The woman was silent, but only for a moment. "Death is a small price for perfection."

On the fifth day, Tsuneyo brought out his paints and needles and placed them on the bluff beside the woman. I stood on the wall, guarding our monastery, watching as the tattooed artist began his work. The Crane woman removed her daisho, her obi and her kimono, and rested upon the ground at his feet. In the fading sun, her pale back shone like a piece of white marble, and her hair spilled onto the ground.

He sat by her side and gazed down at the curve of her shoulders. For a span of hours he rested there, not touching her, simply remembering the vision. When the sun rested on the lip of the horizon, I saw him lift his needles and brush, and begin.

The pain must have been excruciating. I, who have had my tattoo at Tsuneyo's hand, I know the torment of bringing forth a part of your own spirit. Each touch of the needle is like a hornet, stinging your soul. But the Crane never moved, never cried out. It was as if something inside her was being freed. As if she knew that to flinch, to move at all, even to breathe, might disrupt the Master and destroy all they hoped to achieve. As each star arrived in the heavens, colors began to appear on her pale white skin. The darkness came, but still Tsuneyo worked, only the light of our torches giving him sight. But as I watched, I knew that even without the torches he would still be able to see. The tattoo he was creating had

obsessed him. Through the night he labored, and she lay at his feet with the stillness of death. Her delicately arched back was no more than a canvas for their creation. When the dawn came, he set aside his brush and bowl and looked down at her body. All I could see from the walls were the miraculous colors of her skin, rich with vermilion, sapphire and cinnabar. There was no movement, no sound, and the *ise zumi* opened



the great gates so that I could cross the bluff and go to them.

The woman was dying, her pain too much for anyone to bear. But as I approached, I heard a faint gasp of breath from Togashi Tsuneyo, and he rested his hand upon her back within the tattoo's





THE DEATH OF KAKITA

Kakita, Doji's husband and writer of the treatise "The Sword," lived his life as an idealist, serving the cause of the Emperor in all things. The love he shared with the Lady Doji is told in many myths and fables; his loyalty to the throne and the Hantei dynasty is his legacy to his descendants. Kakita married the Lady Doji when he was only 19 years old, and he served as the Emperor's servant and personal guard for twenty years.

During Kakita's tenure as the Emerald Champion, he was called to duel against the son of Mirumoto. The two were acquaintances, and their differences of opinion are legendary. On the Emperor's 40th birthday, they were asked to duel by the Emperor himself in order to prove which man's style was the greatest. The day passed as the two men remained perfectly still upon the field, neither drawing his katana. As the sun set, they parted with honored bows, knowing that to strike would have meant certain death for them both.

dark coils. A trembling moment passed, a shuddering sigh from the samurai-ko, and she began to lift herself from the ground. Tsuneyo sat back, a soft smile on his lips, and closed his eyes. As I reached them, the woman draped her rich kimono over her body. I knelt on the cold stone beside Tsuneyo. He smiled, unable to see me through his pain, and he gasped, "She was right... it is... a small price..." Then he was silent, his eyes far away, as if he was looking at the glory of the heavens.

Her voice was as soft and fine as the silk covering her skin. "He knew the price of my vision, and he chose to pay it for me. He chose death, so that his creation would live." As she picked up her daisho, I looked up at her perfect face, and I saw her pale beauty. Her deep grey eyes were soft and sad.

"Please," I said, and my voice was husky with tears. "I..." Words failed me, and there was no way to express the need, the desire, the ache in my heart. She knew what I asked, and she smiled the gentlest smile that has ever touched this earth. Turning, her daisho in her hand, she let her kimono fall to her waist and the dawning sun crowned her ki-rin in flames.

*Summer grass:
Of stalwart warriors' splendid dreams
The aftermath.*

- Basho

A SOLDIER'S REPORT ON THE BATTLE OF OSARI PLAINS, FROM THE FINAL LETTERS OF IKOMA YURI

It was in the second year of the boar, in the reign of the Seventh Hantei. I was sworn to serve in the legion of Akodo Tsetsu-sama, under the Lion daimyo Akodo Kurojin-sama. Our duty was to invade the western lands of the Crane, to capture the plains between Shiro Matsu and the Daidoji stronghold of Kosaten Shiro. If successful, the invasion forces from the Matsu lands would follow our advance, surrounding the castle and freeing the lands from Crane domination. The courtiers and politicians argued in the courts, struggling to prevent our advance, but our commander led us against the petty complaints of the diplomats and the filthy money with which the Crane protected themselves.

Under the leadership of Kurojin-sama, we crossed the border and prepared for battle with the Daidoji forces. Our swords were out and ready, and our hearts were glad to test steel against the soft belly of our enemies - but there were none. The opposing forces of the Daidoji which we had been told to fear had vanished, and there was no sign of resistance. Five hundred men marched across the plain, facing no opposition, no struggle, and no battles. It was as if the Crane had never been there.

Our commander said the Crane had fled, that they feared the fury of our blades! Some whispered that without their politicians, the Crane had nothing to hide behind. Certainly, when we chose to strike, it seemed they had crumbled like so much soft clay. Our legion stopped upon the plain when we saw the spires of Daidoji palace, and made camp. The fields around us were vacant, the waving hills of grain swaying in the wind. No words could keep us from besieging Kosaten Shiro, and once it was ours, we would begin our capture of the Crane lands one by one.

Just before the sun set on the plains, my commander called to me. I was given a letter to take back to Shiro Matsu, telling Kurojin-sama of our imminent victory. His armor shone in the fading sunlight, which gleamed off the palace that I knew would soon be ours. The victory was in Tsetsu-sama's eyes, and I was proud to bear the message to our kinsmen.

I left immediately, running across the plains toward our homeland with the scroll in my hand, and as the dawn rose I saw smoke from the east. Certain of our victory, I stood for a moment and watched the dark smoke curl about in the cloudless sky. "It must be the burning of Kosaten Shiro!" I thought, "The fires must be leaping toward the heavens, warning all the lands of the Crane that the Lion have arrived!" How I wished that I could have stayed to see the battle! Their politicians could not stop us this time! Nothing could stop us! Our strategy had been perfect!

I ran on toward the Matsu palace with joy in my heart, the victory letter clutched in my hand. My steps were long and swift, but soon I heard the thunder of hooves from behind. A single man on horseback galloped toward me, its rider dressed in the pale silver of the Crane. A deserter! I drew my katana and braced for his charge, but it never came. He pulled his horse to a stop a



careful distance from me and raised his voice in peace.

"What have you come for, Crane? Your people are crushed! Can't you see the fires of your palace to the east?" I cried valiantly.

His answer was curt. "You are the messenger that Akodo Tsetsu-san has sent back to the people of the Lion?"

"I am!" I shouted proudly, sure now that his intent was to delay or destroy the message I bore.

"Then carry this back to them as well, with the greetings of the Daidoji." He raised his hand from his side and threw a burlap bag at my feet. "And tell them they would be wise to learn not to camp on a plain that is not empty." With that cryptic remark, he turned his horse and galloped back toward the burning palace. I stepped forward, wary of some trick, and opened the package.

Inside the bag was Tsetsu's head.

I went back to the Osari Plains to see for myself what had occurred. It was true. The fires I had seen were the burning bodies of my kinsmen. Huge pieces of earth had been ripped from the ground by an unknown force, and cavernous tunnels - capable of housing dozens of men - lay beneath them. Arrows were strewn upon the ground, apparently shot by archers from the highest branches of the trees on the far edges of the plain - masterful shots, by men who must have been placed in those trees days before our arrival, with only enough food and water to survive. I smelled the acrid scent of "gaijin pepper," that foulest of substances, and saw the seared marks along the ground where buried casks must have lain, prepared for detonation. A force of no more than fifty men could have hidden here, frozen beneath the hard-packed ground and starving in clumps of high branches, waiting for the moment when our guard fell.

We had walked into their lands, ready for battle, and had been destroyed by our own confidence. If we had only searched the ground, cut down the clumps of trees, but who knew the treachery of the Crane? Though our force was ten times their size, their preparation had been our undoing. Beware, my brothers, of certain victory, for the only thing which is certain about the Crane is their gold, and what men will do for it.

Written on the fifth day of the month of the Dragon, 473, by his own hand. Witnessed, Matsu Cheomo, sword-second at Ikoma Yuri's seppuku.



THE DEATH OF KAKITA (CONTINUED)

On Kakita's 39th birthday they met again, this time on the field of battle. Hojatsu stood before the Lion banner, serving as their aide and military advisor, and Kakita led the armies of the Crane. The skirmish was minor, but both men knew they would never have the chance to test their steel against one another again. The duel occurred on neutral ground; when the strike came, Hojatsu fell dead before Kakita's blade, and Kakita was mortally wounded. He refused to allow himself to be treated, and his son, Kakita Shimizu, brought Hojatsu's sword to his father. Kakita's final words were to the sword of his opponent: "Do your duty to your master." With that, he fell upon the Dragon's blade and died on the field beside Hojatsu.

The two were burned where they fell, lying together on a single pyre. To this day a monument to their honor stands on the field northwest of the Valley of the Two Generals, and is a popular pilgrimage spot for those who wish to ask for the assistance of the greatest duelist that ever lived.



*Cold blows the northern wind
Thick falls the snow
Be kind to me, love me
Take my hand and go with me.
Yet she lingers, yet she ponders –
There is no time to lose
In the wood there stands a grove of oaks,
And in the wilds a doe
With white rushes dressed from head to heel;
A Lady fair as jade...*

– Song of Lady Doji

**FROM THE COLLECTED LETTERS
OF IUCHI XIEN, KARO TO IDE
TADAJI AND UNICORN CLAN
DIPLOMAT TO THE IMPERIAL
COURT**

...and my old companion told me, "That is the way of gift-giving here in Rokugan. You must refuse the gift, so that the giver can show his sincerity." His broken voice cackled quietly as he chewed a thin mint leaf between toothless gums. It is an odd land we have come to live in, stranger than any we have visited in our travels, yet I am assured that this is the land of our ancestors. Though I was born here, I was raised by the Iuchi family, steeped in the traditions and cultures of our ancient travels.

I have served as our ambassador in the Emperor's halls for nearly two years, and yet I have come to no real conclusion about the society of Rokugan. I was lucky to find a friend in Muyoku. His blindness and my ineptitude balance each other well, as we can help each other understand what might not otherwise be clear. Perhaps the Crane who asked me to care for him knew all too well what he was doing, for Muyoku has colored my vision of this land and its people. Especially those who inhabit the court of the Emperor.

"...I see that, Muyoku-sama, as you have told me before. But it is strange. In the lands of my... I mean, in the lands from which my clan has come, it is a deadly offense to refuse a gift. Men are killed for such an offense."

Muyoku smiled, and his toothless grin shook his entire face. "Those are old ways. You are in a new land, and you must learn how to be one with its people. You have been here for nearly two hundred years, Unicorn, and it is time you gave up your *gaijin* culture."

"Yes, Muyoku-sama," I said resignedly. For nearly forty years, Seppun Muyoku had served as a translator to the *gaijin* merchants who had come to this land, and his knowledge of lands outside Rokugan was impressive, although nothing compared to what the Unicorn brought with them. Still, he was the ideal translator and guide, and asking me to care for him seemed a polite way of making certain that the Unicorn clan could be heard in court without insult or misunderstanding. Although most of the Ide were trained to understand the Rokugani courts and their strange ways, the Iuchi were not taught the twists and turns of politics as were other Unicorn diplomats.

"Who is that approaching?" He whispered into my ear, his ancient hand tightening on my sleeve. I turned to look, and caught my breath in wonder.

"A woman, Muyoku-sama, a very beautiful woman – such as I have never seen before."

"Is she a Crane? What colors does she wear?"

"No, Muyoku – she does not wear the blue and silver. Her kimono is scarlet, and she is escorted by a tall, thin man with a long grey beard."

"This man," hissed my companion, "is one of his eyes a strange blue? Swiftly! Tell me!"

I peered at the man, trying to hide my rudeness beneath a soft cough. "Yes, it is, Muyoku-sama." The pair walked down the thin aisle of shining wood toward the high dais, the young woman's movements sleek and sensuous beneath her silken kimono. Her eyes, dark and thickly lashed, pierced my heart, and her ebon hair swept the floor in a maiden's foptail. The man at her side was aged, his hair a distinguished grey and twisted into the high samurai-style. His blue eye seemed to gleam with a withering light, and I noticed the Imperial Guard growing strangely tense and watchful. How strange, I thought, since the old man's hands shook with age and his face was lined and worn. Certainly, he was not the sort of man to inspire fear?

"Ahhh..." Muyoku shifted at my side. "The woman is Shosuro Kachiko, said to be the most beautiful maiden in the Empire today. She is only 16, just past her *gempukku*. Her father, the man with the strange eye, is Shosuro Koshurin, daimyo of the Shosuro. A powerful house within the Scorpion, and a dangerous enemy. What is happening now?"

"They are approaching the dais... The Emperor is greeting them..." I quietly narrated the proceedings, watching closely as the maiden

was introduced to the Emperor and his small son. Suddenly, there was a commotion behind us, and a shout broke the softness of the air. A man dressed in the mon of the Crab marched into the chamber, asking the Emperor's permission to speak. When allowed, he launched into a diatribe of anger, claiming insult from the Shosuro house.

The young Hiruma is aggravated because he was to be married to Kachiko..." Muyoku informed me. "The arrangement was made when they were children, but her beauty caused the head of their clan, Bayushi Shoju, to ask for her hand instead. The Crab has no real complaint against the house, but since Shosuro Koshurin broke the engagement, the young Hiruma has been seeking a reason for a duel." I shook my head, uncomprehendingly. The twisted politics of Rokugan again. In the other land, if a man wanted a woman, he simply bought her from her father, or made an agreement directly with her. Here in Rokugan, life is much more complicated.

"What will happen now?" I asked, as the heady gasps of the court muffled our whispers. "Will Koshurin challenge the Hiruma to a duel? Will there be a battle?"

"If the Shosuro challenges the Hiruma personally, he will no doubt lose - Koshurin is not known for his swordsmanship..." He trailed off into thought for a moment, and I wondered what the blue-eyed man was known for. "Ah!" Muyoku proclaimed, as the Hiruma continued with his challenge, "The Crab is insulting the honor of the maiden now - a bold move, for any who defends her may be accused as well." I watched the Emperor calmly listening to the Crab's tirade as the Scorpion and his daughter knelt solemnly upon their cushions. A Unicorn would have leapt upon the arrogant Hiruma and forced him to swallow his words as he said them.

"The Shosuro have brought only an honor guard?" Muyoku asked, and looking around, I saw that it was true. "If Koshurin allows any of his men to accept the duel, they will surely fail and his daughter's honor will be forever tarnished. Ah, for a Crab, this is a masterful stroke. The timing is perfect!" His faint chuckle echoed, and a nearby courtier shot us an annoyed look. "Either Koshurin gives her in marriage to the Hiruma," Muyoku continued, undaunted, "allowing his daughter to keep her honor but distancing himself from his daimyo, or he accepts the duel, fails, and she will never marry. Hiruma Maruku is one of the finest duelists in Rokugan, despite his

Crab heritage. Any man who accepts the challenge will surely die."

"Never marry?" I said, aghast. "But - even with a tarnished honor, what man could resist..." I let my words trail, looking at the gently curving shoulders and rich black hair of the silent maiden on her cushion.

"No. Her honor will be destroyed, it will shame her family, and she will be forced to commit *seppuku*." Muyoku folded his hands resignedly in his lap.

"Sep...puku..." I breathed. The ritual of death by suicide, an honorable death which would prevent the anger of the ancestors. "The Shosuro is standing now," I whispered, and the aged *daimyo* began to speak. "It seems he is going to accept the duel."

"Then he is a fool," Muyoku hissed. "And a dead one."

Suddenly, a rich voice from the back of the audience chamber interrupted Koshurin's speech. A tall youth, barely a man, whose white hair framed a solemn face stepped forward. He strode toward the *daimyo* and knelt on one knee as a supplicant. With measured, perfect speech, he beseeched the Scorpion to allow him to fight for the honor of the maiden.


"Who is it?" Muyoku's thin, bony finger punched into my ribcage. "Who?" I described the handsome warrior, from the sky-blue kimono to the man's dark, sparkling eyes, and Muyoku's toothless mouth spread in a froglike grin. "Hoturi...!"

"Hoturi?" I peered forward to catch another glimpse of the silent maiden who sat unmoving on her scarlet cushion. "Hoturi who? Is he a Crane?"

"He is the son of the Crane *daimyo*, the Emerald Champion himself, Doji Satsume." I saw no relief, no gratitude in the mismatched eyes of the Scorpion. He merely nodded assent to the samurai, who stood and pointed an accusing finger at the blanching Crab.

"Hoturi's speaking so fast - Muyoku?" I turned to my instructor, hoping he could hear more clearly what the Crane had said in response to the Crab's challenge.

"He says... Beauty is its own virtue, and..." Muyoku strained to hear over the court's whispering, "that the Crab's dishonorable slander should not be allowed to stain an object of such perfection as the Scorpion's beauty." The young Hiruma samurai turned red, and with a bow to



ROKUGAN BIRTHDAYS

In Rokugan, birthdays are a very important event, celebrating a person's position in society, their connection to their ancestors, and their status as a samurai. Rather than remembering the exact day on which a person has been born, all of Rokugan celebrates turning one year older at the Festival of New Year's Day, the beginning of each year. This is also the celebration of the day the *Kami* fell from the sky and founded the Great Clans.

Also, the people of Rokugan consider a newborn child to be one year old. Thus, all ages in Rokugan are actually one year greater than the actual number of years a person has lived, thus counting the current year into the person's life total.

Because the Asahina, and other *shugenja*, find the exact date of a person's birth to be important for astrological purposes, a person's precise date and time of birth is often recorded, if not celebrated. For major noble births, an entire astrological chart may be made at the time of birth, detailing any omens, good or bad signs in the heavens, or other unusual aspects of that person's birth.



KYUDEN NO KIN

Nearly three hundred years ago, an Asahina shugenja named Mifune fell desperately in love with a

Dragon samurai-ko. Mirumoto Tanoshiko did not refuse the shugenja's advances; in fact, she wished to marry him. However, she could not bear the thought of leaving the mountains of her homeland.

Even when he built a palace, surrounded by trickling streams and carved mahogany and jade, she would not go. To further show his love, he had the walls of the palace covered in solid gold, so that they would shine like the sun.

At last, on every window, the finest artisans in the world had etched lifelike mountains upon the glass panes. The glass, a rarity in Rokugan, was a marvel in itself, but to Tanoshiko, seeing her mountains each time she looked out the window was the answer to her prayer. At last the two were married.

The legend of the palace made of gold grew and pilgrims came to see the marvels. Among them was a group of bandits who wished to take a share of the bounty. Disguised as merchants, three of them arranged to spend a night in the palace amid the servants.

the Emperor and a curt dismissal, stormed out the front doors of the audience chamber with his men. The Crane turned once more, and bowed low before Koshurin and his daughter, then followed the Crab.

The audience sat, frozen in an eerie silence. Listening with strained ears, everyone was poised to hear the strike of steel outside as we watched the aged Emperor's emotionless face. The Scorpion maiden, although barely a woman, sat with regal grace and poise. Her fingers were delicately folded in her lap and her stunning eyes downcast, waiting for the outcome which would decide her life. At last, there was a shout outside, and the ringing sound of blade against blade. Within seconds, it was over, and all was silent again.

When Hoturi entered the chamber, his sword was sheathed and a long, thin line of blood trailed down his left arm, the sleeve of his kimono hanging, torn, by his side. He walked to the dais, bowed to the Emperor, and then turned to the Scorpion daimyo and his daughter. "Is it Hoturi?" Muyoku whispered, agitated.

"What? Oh - oh, yes, - yes it is. He's talking to the Scorpions now." When he was done, the Crane samurai stood and turned to leave, but the whisper-soft voice of the Shosuro maiden made him pause. With a barely perceptible nod from her father, she stood and bowed to Hoturi.

"What's she doing? What's that? A fan, she said?"

"Yes, Muyoku-sama, she seems to be giving him her fan," I said, puzzled. Why would a woman give a man a mere rice-paper fan? What use could such a trivial object possibly be to a samurai warrior? Surely, I would never understand Rokugani ways of showing gratitude.





KYUDEN NO KIN (CONTINUED)

Magics strange and wild leapt from the walls of the palace, and servants fled in fear. Screams - Tanoshiko's and Mifune's - echoed, and it is said that the streams ran with blood. The three bandits, so legend tells, killed the palace guards and opened the gates for their bandit horde. When Mifune was not rapid enough in fulfilling their demands, they killed the Dragon samurai-ko.

Mifune's retribution was swift. He was successful, but too late - Tanoshiko was dead. Carrying his wife's body to the roof, he summoned a dark magic, carrying the palace, and everything within it, into the void.

The ground where the palace once stood is considered haunted, and no villager will travel the overgrown path into the hills near Kawa sano Zatu Shudoshi (The River of the Blind Monk). It is said that on certain nights the tortured screams of the bandits can still be heard, and strange lights flicker about the open plain where the palace once stood. Whether these lights are moonlight shining from the golden walls of Kyuden no Kin, or foxfire on the banks of the river, no one knows: superstitions fly like flocks of doves about the empty lands of the Palace of Gold.

"So..." Muyoku said, his breath whistling softly. "The Scorpion maiden's life has been saved, and her honor has been returned." He paused, and I dutifully narrated the bowing, the polite talk, and the Scorpion family's leave-taking. As the maiden and her father passed by, I could smell the sweetness of her perfume, and the gentle movements of her silk kimono made my face fill with heat. "But her heart - her heart has been lost." Muyoku's words were mere echoes of her heartfalls, and I turned toward him.

"Her heart?" I asked. What a foolish thing to say! Of what use is a woman's heart? A swift sword, or an enemy's secret - these are powerful things. But there is nothing a Crane could possibly gain from the favor of a little girl.

"Some will say that what you have seen today is nothing more than another chapter in the book of a Crane's honor. Others will say that it was a political tactic, that Satsume himself planned this in order to gain favor with the Scorpion house." Muyoku leaned heavily upon my arm as I helped him to his feet, the audience chamber slowly clearing of its elegant courtiers and well-dressed diplomats.

"What would you say, Muyoku-sama?" I asked as we slowly walked out to the gardens of Otosan Uchi.

He snorted loudly, and chewed a piece of mint leaf between toothless gums. "I'd say you still have much to learn, Tetsu-san. About Rokugan, about women, and about the unspoken power of beauty." His wrinkled chuckle broke through my puzzlement, and I smiled fondly at the wise old man. "But especially," he said, "about the Crane."

The Families of the Crane

The clan of the Crane consists of four powerful families, each with an equal voice in the operation of the clan. Such egalitarianism is caused by the complete symbiosis of the noble houses of the Crane - no two families overlap in their duties, and all are needed to keep the clan's power intact.

The Doji are the voice of the clan and the heart of its strength. They control most of the political power within Rokugan. Through their efforts, the Crane lead society, help build the arts and civilization, and create political alliances with the other clans of Rokugan. The Kakita, famed for

their Iaijutsu duelists, also are the creators of beautiful things - their artisans are the most respected in the Empire. The Daidoji are the Crane's military power, keeping the Crane borders safe. They also perform the secondary service of being the Crane's underhand - dealing with things too dishonorable or too dangerous for the other families. The Asahina, the only shugenja in the clan, spend their time in peaceful meditation and the creation of items arcane and wonderful.

The Kakita are derived from the first follower of Lady Doji, when she and her brothers fell from the sky and created the nation of Rokugan. Kakita was the first Emerald Champion, the first Champion of the Crane, and husband to Lady Doji. Their children chose to follow either their father or mother's path, and thus were the two houses born. The Daidoji were the children of the fifth son of Doji and Kakita, who followed a different path and created his own house in the service of the Crane.

The Yasuki, once a noble house of the Crane, have their own story. Their path led them away from the Doji and to the Crab lands, and they have been seen as traitors by the Crane ever since. However, they were an important force in the initial formation of the Crane financial empire, and in the first three hundred years of the clan. The story of the Yasuki is included here, up to the point of their defection to the clan of the Crab.

Before the Yasuki left, however, another house joined the ranks of the Crane. The Asahina, an offshoot of the Phoenix Isawa whose leader had fallen in love with a Crane samurai-ko, added their voice to the halls of the Crane. They brought with them the knowledge of creating magic items, and when they joined their gifts with the remarkable works of art formed by the Kakita artisans, the Asahina house quickly became known as the greatest artificers in Rokugan.

The history of the Crane is an illustrious and glorious one, and its stories are still part of the myths of Rokugan. Their past - and their future - is inextricably linked to the Emerald Empire.

東海道
五十三對



Chapter Two



The Families of the Crane



NAMING PRACTICES AND SUFFIX USAGE IN ROKUGAN

Children's names before *gempukku* are simple, reflecting their position in the family and their birth order rather than a personal attempt to separate the child from his or her peers. Until a child reaches their *gempukku* and chooses a new name to reflect their adulthood, they are simply called "first son", "second daughter" or something similar.

Ichiro is a name for a first son. Jiro is one for a second son. Saburo is for a third son, Shiro for a fourth son, and Goro for a fifth son. Some male names end with the *-ichi* or *-kazu* suffix, both of which mean "first son." The *-ji* suffix means "second son," *-zo* means "third son," *-Koji*, *Osuji*, *Ryozo*, *Sanzo*. Typically, these endings were used by noble houses in order to provide a visitor with some idea of a person's standing in the household. If you met the son of the Doji *daimyo*, and his name was Haichiro, it would be an indication that this is the first son, and therefore the heir.

Name endings are equally complex. For someone of lesser station, there is no need to add any ending, but if the person you are talking to (or about) is of equal station, it is important to add the suffix *-san*. *Kakita-san*, *Hitomi-san*, and *Ginawa-san*, are all examples of using the *-san* suffix.

Chapter Two: The Families of the Crane

The Crane house is comprised of four unique families, all distinct and yet intertwined. The Doji, the Kakita, the Daidoji and the Asahina are the strength of the Crane in Rokugan. Unlike many of the other Clans, the Crane are governed by a Council, formed of the four *daimyos* and led by a fifth member: the Crane Champion. If the Champion is also the *daimyo* (which is often the case), the Doji are separately represented by another prominent member of the Clan. This process of governing has led to an equal share of the lands and treasures of the Clan. However, in times of war or emergency, all decisions are made by the Crane Champion, and it is the Champion whose words carry the most weight in council, even in times of peace.

Despite their apparently weak military, the Crane are extremely experienced in war. Defending themselves against both Lion and Crab aggressors have made the Crane battle-ready, and the Daidoji are always on the alert for an attack.

The Crane live in ornate palaces, and are renowned for their political acumen. Indeed, the Crane are said to have allies in every house in Rokugan, on whom they can call to enlarge their army in times of need. Cranes are cultured, sophisticated and elegant. To speak with a Crane is to become immersed in civilization and grace. A Phoenix samurai, defending a Crane artisan against a Crab's brutish verbal assaults, once said, "You fight the war against the Shadowlands so that Rokugan can live. The Crane give Rokugan something to live for."

Stories are told in every clan about the Crane, their beauty, and their gifts. To receive a gift from a Crane is an extremely prestigious event. As those gifts are often items made by the Kakita

artisans, or arcane creations of the Asahina *shugenja*, they are most highly prized even by the Clans who dislike the Crane. After all, would you refuse a katana whose blade could cut as no other? Or a figurine that could heal wounds? Gifts from the Crane Clan are often expensive and exquisitely made, and the Crane have an uncanny knack for knowing exactly what is needed at any given time, so that they always have just the item you were looking for. Such a friend is valuable, and such prizes help to forge solid alliances.

There is a myth about a crane in Rokugani lore, in which a man freed one of these graceful birds from a fisherman's net. In gratitude, the crane changed into a woman. She visited the man the next day, offering friendship and companionship. The two were married, and the woman painted pictures of great beauty for him to sell. Soon the couple became rich, and lived well for the rest of his days. When the man died, legend says that the woman wept at the side of his funeral pyre for three days. At the end of that time, she raised her hands to the heavenly sun, and became a crane once more, never to be seen again. Such dedication, loyalty, and beauty are attributed to the crane, and to the clan which bears its name.

This chapter focuses on families of the Crane, their ways of life, and how their houses interact both with each other and with the rest of Rokugan. It is important to note the difference between what the Crane are, and what they want you to think that they are - underestimation is a powerful tool.

The Marriage of Doji and Kakita

After the first Hantei won the right to be Emperor over the men and women of Rokugan, he set about making the land a place fit to rule. To help him with his endeavor, he turned to his sister, Lady Doji, for her patience and wisdom in the trials had proven her merit.

Doji stood beside her brother and together they created the system of *hinin*, *heimin* and samurai. The land was divided among their brothers and sisters. Hantei chose only the plain on which they had fallen, *Otosan Uchi*. As they constructed the Imperial Palace, a city began to

firm on the plain, and people from all parts of Rokugan traveled there to see the palace of their new Emperor.

When they were done, a great city lay on the once-empty plain, filled with the artistic structures of Rokugani society and the elegance of civilization. The Emperor held a great celebration in the city, decorating it with paper lanterns and holding trials of skill and strength. One of these trials was to determine the Emperor's personal Champion. Matsu, follower of Akodo, entered the contest, and many believed that she would win easily. However, a man from the far northern provinces also attended, and his sword was swifter than a striking serpent. He spoke little, and bowed respectfully to his opponents after each duel. No man could match his skill, and at last, even the great Matsu fell to the ground, disarmed and defeated. Unlike before, the man did not bow to his fallen opponent, and instead simply stepped away to allow her to rise.

The Emperor was pleased to see such skill, and had the man brought to his side. Matsu roared a challenge and claimed insult that the man had not treated her with respect after the duel. The Emperor asked the man if this was so, and he replied, "I did not treat you with respect, Matsu-san, because you did not treat me nor any of your other opponents that way. You believe that the children of the Lion have no reason to respect the common man. But I tell you this: we may be the children of the Earth, but we are not less than you. We live and die as you will, and our place is on this earth beside you. Not crushed beneath your feet." With respect, the man bowed to the Emperor and volunteered to commit *seppuku* for his rash words. But, to Matsu's dismay, Hantei smiled.

"My new Champion is right, of course," he began. "The people of Rokugan may need us, but we too need them. Be at peace, sister of the Lions.

This is a day of celebration, not of war. Let it be known that from this day forward, the Champion of the Emperor is also the Champion of the people, and is entrusted with their care."

Matsu lifted her sheathed katana and pointed at the new Champion. "And from this day forward, there will be enmity between us, little man. Remember that."

"My name," said the man quietly, "is Kakita."



The Emperor and his new Champion spent many hours in conversation as the sun set, and soon the two men were friends. As a sign of his trust in Kakita and his desire to strengthen the ties between them, the Emperor offered his own sister, Doji, in marriage. Lady Doji overheard the offer, and Kakita's acceptance. At first, she planned to refuse the command to marry a mortal, and instead commit *seppuku*. However, she soon had another idea. Lady Doji came to the Emperor's side, bowing low before him. As a



NAMING PRACTICES AND SUFFIX USAGE IN ROKUGAN (CONTINUED)

In Rokugan, there is no difference between addressing a more powerful female and addressing a more powerful male; in both cases one would use the suffix *-sama*, such as *Kachiko-sama*, *Doji-sama* or *Hantei-sama*.

Other suffixes can be used in some cases. For example, the ending *-hime* means "princess," so a woman named *Koi* could be called *Koihime* if she was noble and not married yet. Some female names end with the *-mi* suffix, which means "beauty," or the more traditional "*ko*" suffix, which means "little" or "small." The suffix *-gozen* is used for the wife of a bushi, such as *Shizuka-gozen*. If you were referring to the wife of the *Doji daimyo*, you might use *Ameiko-gozen*, or, because she's more powerful (of greater prestige) than you, you might want to use *Ameiko-sama*.



THE PROPER USE OF MON

A mon is not only the symbol of the people currently in the Clan, it is a representation of the souls of all the ancestors who have fought beneath the banner. Therefore, a Clan or family's mon should never be treated with disrespect or dishonor. To do so is to insult all the ancestors of that house or family.

When a samurai is going to wear his family's mon, he will always wear his Clan's mon on his back, as a gesture of respect. His family's mon can be worn either over his left shoulder, so that the ancestors are close to his heart, or on his right shoulder, so that his ancestors can guide his sword arm.

symbol of their marriage, Doji asked to make a request of her husband-to-be.

"I wish only three small things," Doji smiled a charming smile and fanned herself slightly. "First, I know that you are a wise man, and I wish the world to share that wisdom. I am certain that you can bring the dead to life on our wedding day." Kakita's smile began to fade at her words, but she continued. "Second, I know you are a knowledgeable man. To further the education of all the people of Rokugan, I wish for you to tell the court how large the world is, and how many days it takes to walk the length of it. And lastly, as a final gift, you bring me something of perfect beauty. A wedding day is a time of beauty and celebration, so I wish you to bring me something whose beauty cannot be challenged."

In this way, Lady Doji thought to rid herself of an unwanted suitor. But Kakita had fallen in love with her, and was determined not to be brushed aside so easily. He begged Hantei's permission to seek out the answers to these puzzles. With reluctance, the Emperor allowed Kakita to leave Otosan Uchi. Before he left, Kakita went to the chambers of the Lady Doji and told his bride to be that he would be leaving his sister behind to be her lady-in-waiting. The screen did not move, but he heard the faint laughter of the maids.

Kakita traveled across Rokugan for weeks, seeking answers to his quest. But it seemed there were none. No man had ever traveled the length of the world, and to bring the dead to life was deemed impossible by the shugenja of the Phoenix. However, Kakita would not give up, and still he wandered the land. When he reached the lands of the Lion, he was turned away with rough words and threats, for they had not forgotten this man's treatment of their *daimyo*. Kakita walked on across the land, to the ocean. When he reached it, he saw a small fishing village nestled beneath a tall cliff overlooking the sea.

Kakita went to the village and met with its people. When he told them of his quest, they pointed him to a small hut which sat on the cliffside, and told him to ask the village elder and her son. The son, Torikago, called Kakita by name, bowing politely. With a smile, the fisherman said that his mother had spoken of Kakita and knew that he would come here. Surprised, Kakita stepped into the small house to see an elderly woman sitting on a soft pillow, smoking a hookah. The interior of the hut was lavish, with soft pillows and beautifully carved wooden

furniture. The woman smiled at Kakita and offered him a place to sit and a bowl of fine rice. She chuckled at his amazement, and spoke to him at length.

The woman's name was Yasuki, and she had a rare gift of foreknowledge. Under her instruction, the village had become the most prosperous in Rokugan. Unfortunately, it had no samurai to rule it and defend its riches from the envy of its neighbors. Yasuki was willing to help Kakita achieve his heart's goal – for a price. Her son, she said, was a fine man, skilled with a sword as well as finance. He needed a fine wife, and sons who would become samurai. Surely Kakita knew of some way this could be accomplished? Perhaps Kakita and his new bride could come live on the cliffside above this town, and many fine maidens would visit. In time, one of the noble daughters might consent to marry the son of Yasuki...

With amazement, Kakita laughed at the woman's outrageous proposals. "Marry a samurai maiden to a fisherman?" But Yasuki only blew a delicate ring of smoke.

"As preposterous as a common samurai marrying the daughter of a Goddess?"

Kakita laughed again, and agreed to the old woman's terms. For two days, he lived in the hut with Yasuki and her son, learning how he could succeed in his quest. When he was done, he left for Otosan Uchi.

In Rokugan there is an ancient belief that twins are born 'sharing a soul,' and that some twins are mirror replicas because the soul did not fully separate at birth. Kakita and his twin sister, Kiyamori, were two such souls. At the palace, Kakita's sister Kiyamori remained beside Lady Doji, serving her as she had been instructed. Kiyamori spent many days speaking to Doji about the heroic deeds which Kakita had performed on his way to the Emperor's challenge. Each day, Doji would walk in the gardens of the Imperial Palace with Kiyamori beside her, and each day Doji grew less and less opposed to the wedding. Soon she began to hope for Kakita's return.

When Kakita arrived at the palace of the Emperor, Lady Doji was summoned, and the court watched expectantly to see the outcome of Kakita's famous quest. Although Doji tried to act as arrogant and confident as before, her eyes fell to the ground when Kakita bowed politely to her. Kiyamori smiled slightly from the audience chamber.



"First, my bride," Kakita began, "you asked me to bring the dead to life for our wedding day." From a small bag, Kakita pulled a piece of seasoned driftwood. "I found this on the shore of a small fishing village, miles from the forests. Its death was long ago, in a winter that tore it from its mother tree and cast it to the ocean. It drifted for seasons since, withered and lifeless on the summer rains. Certainly, this qualifies." As an amused Hantei raised an eyebrow in curiosity as Kakita drew a strange stringed instrument from his bag.

"From a piece of the wood I have shown you, I have carved this gift." With gentle fingers, Kakita evoked a love melody from the *biwa*, the first such instrument ever created in Rokugan. The *biwa* sang pure and echoing notes throughout the palace. Everywhere that the music could be heard, the populace stopped to listen in wonder at the beauty of the piece. When he was done, none could argue that the *biwa* had indeed come to life. Lady Doji could only nod.

"Secondly, gentle daughter of Amaterasu, you asked that I tell you how wide the world is, and how long it would take to walk from one side to the other. The answer to your question is not in the journey, but in one's companion. If a man were to awaken when the sun rises from the sea, and travel the land by your mother's side, surely he would find himself at the other side of the world when she sought her rest in the western lands." Kakita's smile was pleasant and broad. "Thus, as Amaterasu herself is my guide, it takes but one day to travel the world." The court smiled, and Hantei had to struggle to contain his laughter at this eloquent answer. Lady Doji blushed slightly in response, and hid her smile beneath a swiftly upraised fan.

Kakita smiled at Doji and continued, "Lastly, my lady, you asked me to bring you an example of perfect beauty - a beauty which could not be contested, even by you." Kakita reached into his bag again, and there was subtle whispering in the court. "It was difficult, my lady, to find the most beautiful thing in Rokugan, but I believe I can show it to you." With closed hands, he drew the final object from the bag and held it before her. Lady Doji leaned toward it inquisitively, and Kakita opened his hands.

Held carefully between Kakita's fingers was a small golden mirror, poised so that Lady Doji could see her own reflection. Lady Doji's heart was fully won. The wedding of Kakita and Doji was held immediately, and the festivities lasted for seven days.

As for Yasuki and her fishing village, it is now the site of Yufuku na Heigen Toshi, a massive trading port on a river near Kyuden Doji. Yasuki's



son was wed son after, to Kakita's twin sister Kiyamori. In the fishing village, a shrine to the ancestors of the Yasuki house was built on the site of the Yasuki hut. Three hundred years later, when the Yasuki betrayed their allegiances to the Crane Clan, the Doji daimyo ordered the shrine to be torn down, stone by stone, and cast into the sea. The land on which the house stood has never been reclaimed, and is now nothing but weeds and dust.



THE DOJI MON

Mon: A crane, holding an eight-pointed snowflake in its beak.

Saying: "Be more concerned with good actions than with great ones."

The words which are the motto of the Doji Clan were the last spoken by the Lady Doji on the night of her death. It is said that she came to the bedside of Doji Ochiba, Doji Nio's wife, and revealed to her several secrets of the Doji household which have been passed down from each Crane *daimyo's* wife to her successor.



The Doji Family

"History is merely the recording of time between wars – it is written by the victor, studied by the defeated, and forgotten by the rebellious."

– Doji Shizue

History

The most well-known family of the Crane is the Doji. Their courtiers are seen in the Imperial Court, and a Doji has always been the mother of the Emperor. Their contributions throughout the course of history have shaped civilization in Rokugan, building the essential ceremonies and protocol that allows the delicate political system

to be successful. The Doji rely more on the power of the mind than the power of the body.

Since the Empire began, there has always been a member of the Crane Clan at the Emperor's left hand, serving as advisor and Emerald Champion. From Lady Doji's gentle guidance of the First Hantei to Kakita Yoshi's current position as the Emperor's personal aide, the Crane have always stood beside the Emperor. Of all the houses of the Crane, it is the Doji who most exemplify the path of their *kami* – do one thing well, and you will do everything well. They are perfectionists. They have to be. The court of the Emperor is a deadly place to make a mistake. Some say that the Kakita are the sole artisans of the Crane, but they are incorrect. To the Doji, life itself is an art, to be lived with finesse and without regrets. Their work in the Imperial Court helps the people of Rokugan remember the purpose of living – to savor the fineness of each moment, and to live in the present, because you never know when the future will end. The Doji have no fear of death, and perhaps this is their greatest strength. When you have lived life to the fullest, with no waste and no regret, what can death take from you?

Lady Doji's second son, Nio, was the founder of the Doji household. Nio took his mother's name and followed in her footsteps, endeavoring to create a better civilization for all of Rokugan.



He served the Emperor as his mother did, and often traveled to the *daimyos* of other Clans in order to facilitate communication and free trade between them. Doji Nio is depicted in story and paintings as a tall man, elegant and refined, possessed of the best of his mother's culture and his father's stoicism. Nio also had a talent above and beyond his diplomatic skills - he was a master of economics and commerce, and he singlehandedly organized the Crane shipping lines and trade routes. Because of Nio's guidance, both in the Imperial Court and in the market places, the Crane fortune has grown from a modest stipend to thousands of koku a year.

Some say that Doji Nio wrote an in-depth monograph on economics, but such a text has never been published, nor does it grace the shelves of libraries in Rokugan. Perhaps it was lost long ago, or never written, or perhaps the Crane have no interest in sharing its wisdom. It is certain that Nio did write several books on court life and the manipulation of the system which his mother created, in order to achieve more political power and prominence for the house of the Doji. These treatises are still in the Doji libraries, and are often studied by the courtiers and diplomats of the Doji school.

The First Crane Thunder

Many years after the house of the Crane had been established, the family of Lady Doji and Lord Kakita lived in a beautiful castle overlooking the sea. One day, Lady Doji gave birth to their first children - twins, much as the first Kakita and his sister had been. Their arrival was heralded through the lands and the people rejoiced at the happiness of their benevolent rulers. Over the years, Lady Doji presented to her husband three more beautiful sons. These five children, on the day of their *gempukku*, chose the names Yasurugi, Konishiko, Nio, Shimizu and Hayaku.

Each of the children of Lady Doji and Lord Kakita were given the freedom to choose their surname - either Doji, after their mother, or Kakita, from their father's line. Thus, the first two households of the Crane were born, and their bonds have remained as close as family. On their *gempukku* day, the twins chose the names Doji Yasurugi and Doji Konishiko.

Yasurugi, took after his bold father, with a keen sparkle in his eye and a ready sense of humor. His skill at *iaijutsu* was unmatched, and there were those who whispered that even Kakita himself could not defeat his eldest son. Unlike his father, however, Yasurugi delighted in creating things, and refused to wield a sword he had not seen forged. "The blade," he would say, "holds part of the soul of its creator. I would not go into battle with a cowardly man, nor would I strike with a coward's sword." In time, Doji Yasurugi took his own wife from the nobles of the court, and was named heir to the Doji line.

The first war with the Shadowlands found the Crane defending the Imperial palace and the Hantei line. The Kakita and Doji houses rose to the challenge, and the efforts of the Yasuki made certain that critical supplies were abundant.

Yasurugi, son of Kakita, followed in his father's footsteps and became a great favorite of the Emperor. Yasurugi's honor was unquestioned, and the swiftness of his blade was legendary. Although the war with Fu Leng's abominations went badly, it is certain that the bravery and skill of the Kakita family kept Hantei alive throughout the violent conflict.

During the months of war, Yasurugi's son was born, and a great celebration was given by his parents and grandparents. The festival was lavish, filled with entertainers and artisans in an attempt to uplift the people's spirits. At the feast, Yasurugi knelt beside his son's cradle and laid a shining sword on the wooden floor. A gift to his newborn son, the sword had been made by Yasurugi's own hands. "One day," he said proudly to the assemblage, "my son will wield this blade in battle. After him will come his sons. And always, a part of my soul will be beside them, to guard them from harm, and to defend the life of the Emperor, the people of Rokugan, and the honor of the Crane." His words were met with approving nods and whispers from the court.

"Oh?" a small, curious voice came from the back of the room. "Would you defend that honor even to death?"

The court hushed, and all turned to the small man in the back of the room, his woven straw hat shielding his eyes, but a slight smile peeking from its depths. Beside him stood a tall, bold Lion samurai-ko and a darkly scowling man whom the assemblage recognized as the famous Mirumoto of the Dragon.



THE FIVE BLADES OF DOJI YASURUGI

In myth, it is said that a sword forged by a peaceful man, when placed in a stream, turns a floating leaf aside, sliding it down the blade with grace and ease. However, a sword forged by a man whose soul yearned for battle cuts the same leaf in two. So, too, does the temper of a blade hold part of the soul of its creator.

The five great blades which Doji Yasurugi created in his lifetime were strong and true, and shone with inner peace and honor. His strength and courage shone from the steel of every blade he created, and his students were the origin of the famed Kakita Mastersmiths.

The first of the great blades which Yasurugi forged was wielded by the Emperor's son in battle against Fu Leng during the Dark Times. The second is *Shukujo*, the Crane Ancestral Sword. Of the last three, one has been lost somewhere in the deep ocean, and the remaining two are among the most prized treasures of the Doji house.



TYPICAL DOJI COURTIER

Rank 2 Doji school courtier

EARTH 2

WATER 3

Perception 4

AIR 3

Intelligence 4

FIRE 3

Awareness 4

VOID 2

Notable Skills: Any Artisan Skill 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 3, Investigation 2, Law 2, Manipulation 2, Medicine 1, Oratory 2, Sincerity 3

Honor: 3.5

Glory: 4

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Benten's Blessing, Allies (variable)

Disadvantages: Obligation, Meddler, Soft-Hearted

At that point, Lady Doji arose from her cushions on the platform at the far end of the room, and her voice whispered in the silence. "Shinsei-sama." She bowed to the small monk, and as she did, a whispered gasp rose from the assembled Crane court. Almost as one, the glittering Clan showed their respects to the little man in simple robes. After a momentary hesitation, Doji Yasurugi bowed as well.

"To fight the evil which has grown in the Shadowlands, I must find the finest mortal souls in Rokugan." As he spoke, the monk approached the dais, pausing to stand before the son of Kakita. He placed a hand over Yasurugi's heart, paused in meditation for a moment, and smiled. "You have the soul of Thunder." Shinsei smiled up at the strong warrior. "Will you, Doji Yasurugi-san, join me in freeing the Empire of this evil which has plagued it?"

A shadow moved in the darkness behind the dais. Before Yasurugi could answer the monk's challenge, a blade slid from the shadow and sheathed itself between the Crane's shoulder-blades. Kakita's sword leapt into his hand as the court erupted into screams, and the haunting laughter of an Oni echoed throughout the room. "Foolish mortal," it howled, its voice filled with blood and hatred. "My Master knows of your little plan, and has sent me to destroy it before it is born. We shall see what you can do with only six of your Thunders!"

The Oni screamed in glee and its voice tore through the peace of the terrified court. Courtiers scrambled back, fleeing the apparition which

stepped through the darkness. Visible, it towered above the small monk with a fiendish grin and a bloody tanto. But before the Oni could move again, Kakita's swift katana sliced its brutish head from its shoulders. Even as the beast fell lifeless to the floor, its laughter remained, and darkened into something blacker and more foul than before. The assembled courtiers, Shinsei, Doji and Kakita, stared in shock at the body of Yasurugi, lying in a pool of dark blood by the cradle of his newborn son.

On the wooden floor of the Crane pavilion, Lady Doji knelt beside the body of her son as the courtiers were dismissed by a ruthless gesture of Kakita's hand. She looked up at the monk and the two men beside him as the blood of her firstborn wept into the pale silk of her kimono. Kakita's face was white, and Yasurugi's young wife held her shrieking babe to her breast tightly. Shinsei looked down at the body of the man he had chosen to bring the spirit of the Crane into battle against the Shadowlands, and placed his hand over Yasurugi's heart. "His soul is gone," the monk



said sadly, "and we are lost without it."

Then came a tearful gasp, and a shuddering. "No." From behind them, Doji Konishiko stepped forward and knelt beside her brother. Her eyes were dark and shattered, and tears fell from them like salt sea foam. Shinsei's eyes widened at the sight of her, and he watched as she lifted her dead brother's new-forged sword. Tears streamed

down her face as she looked into her mother's blue eyes. "His soul is here," she whispered.

"And here." Shinsei bent down and his hand cupped the girl's chin. The monk stared into her eyes for a moment, as if recognizing some essence which was within her. "You are his twin," he said softly, "the twin of Yasurugi?" The girl nodded, and Shinsei burst into laughter, shocking in the cold silence of the once bright pavilion. "Then we are not defeated yet! You share the soul of Thunder. All is not lost while you still live!" Shinsei clapped his hands and pulled the girl to her feet, her brother's sword still dangling loosely in her untrained grasp.

"Send my daughter... into the Shadowlands?" Lady Doji whispered.

"Her!?" Lady Matsu roared at the same moment, pointing her sheathed sword at the petite girl. "She's no warrior. She will die as soon as we enter combat! The youngest child of my clan could kill her with ease - and you would have her fight a god?" The Lion daimyo's scorn echoed through the pavilion, her mocking tone bitingly clear.

With a ringing as loud as a thunderclap, the Lion's pointing katana was knocked from her grip as easily as one would rid a child of a toy. With her brother's sword in her hands, Konishiko faced Lady Matsu grimly. "I hold the sword of my family and my brother's soul. What I lack, he will give me. Our souls are one." Her frame shook with wrath and her eyes matched the strange glow of the sword in her hands. In a strangely resonant voice, she whispered, "Yasurugi is still with me."

"You will die in the first moments of fighting, little girl," the Lion Thunder snarled scornfully, her voice rumbling.

Doji Konishiko reached down and touched her delicate fingers to the dark pool of her brother's blood. With deliberate slowness she drew the blood across her eyes, marking her face from temple to temple with a mask of crimson. "That may be my *kharma*. But I know this, Matsu-sama. I do not need to fight long." Her voice echoed strangely from the steel blade in her hands. "I only need to hit him... once." The sword shone with the purity of a soul dedicated to honor, and her eyes matched its burning flame behind their scarlet veil.

The laughter of the monk echoed through the room, bringing light where there had been darkness and hope where all had been lost.

The Kakita Family

"Those who are skilled in dueling do not become angered,

Those who are skilled at winning do not become afraid.

Thus the wise win before the fight, while the ignorant fight to win."

- Kakita Shimizu

History

The history of the Kakita family begins with its enigmatic progenitor, Lady Doji's husband. Kakita was the first true iaijutsu duelist, and his style became the famed Kakita Iaijutsu school many years later. He was Doji's personal Champion as well as the military leader of the Crane Clan. He is remembered as a samurai devoted both to his Clan and his Emperor, and as one of the most honorable men who ever lived. His dislike of the Mirumoto two-sword style was well known, and his treatise on honorable dueling, *The Sword*, is still studied by every bushi school in Rokugan.

Kakita passed on his knowledge of iaijutsu to all who had the discipline and ability to learn. He created the first *dojo*, and taught his students the ways of honorable combat. Each of his four sons excelled in dueling, defeating all opponents in defense of the Emperor during the first war with Fu Leng. His son Shimizu became the first iaijutsu master of the Academy, and taught his father's lessons to their students.

Even though Lady Doji married Kakita at the Emperor's command, their marriage was a loving one. Kakita Shimizu, their third son, became the founder of the Kakita house and the second Emerald Champion in Rokugan. He trained

STANDARD DOJ HOUSE GUARD

Rank 3 Daidoji school
bodyguard

EARTH 3

WATER 3

AIR 3

FIRE 3

VOID 3

Attacking: 6k3

Damage: 6k2

TN to be Hit: 15 (20
when in armor)

Wounds: 6: -0; 12: -1,
18: -2, etc.

Notable Skills: Archery
2; Defense 4; Iaijutsu 3;
Kenjutsu 3

Special Abilities: If the bushi chooses full defense, they automatically gain the highest (fastest) initiative in the next combat round; TN to be hit is increased by the value of his opponent's armor; 2 attacks per turn.

Items: Approximately one in three of the Doji House guard have been given a fetish - typically one of healing or which improves their offensive or defensive capabilities. These items can only be used once, and the bushi will only activate them in defense of their duty.



THE KAKITA MON

Mon: A crane's wing, outstretched around an unsheathed katana.

Motto: "For the coward there is no life. For the hero, there is no death."

The unsheathed katana is the symbol of war, and to the Kakita family it is also a reminder that they must always be ready to defend the Crane house and the Imperial line from their enemies. For a thousand years, Kakita's treatise, *The Sword*, has been one of two predominant works on swordplay, and is taught in nearly every school of bushido in Rokugan.



beside the son of the First Hantei, and traveled the lands with him in their youth.

Training as a Crane Iaijutsu student is a hard life, but the school's graduates have become some of the greatest masters of the blade in Rokugan history. Since the school's founding, every Emperor has sent his sons to the Kakita to study the art of war and personal combat.

The Kakita are known for two things: their artisans and their iaijutsu masters. The artisans of the Kakita have always been respected masters of the arts, both physical and intellectual. Their founder was the sister of Kakita, Kiyamori. Kiyamori was a poet and a storyteller as well as an artist, and she helped Lady Doji create the written language which is used today. Her stories and paintings have been recorded in numerous texts, and her songs are still sung by the Rokugani peasants as well as in the courts of nobles.

The Kakita Artisans

Kakita Artisans are respected throughout the Rokugan for their contributions to civilization, and their works of beauty. From origami and painting to dancers, musicians and storytellers, the artisans of the Crane have earned admiration and respect. Within the artisan school, there is a saying: "All people are born into life, but the Crane show them what it is to truly live."

The creation of art and literature is a defining factor of civilization. From the Roman statues to the romantic poetry of the Victorian age, art has shaped the greatest cultures in the world. So too in Rokugan, where art and civilization are nearly indistinguishable. Fine artists are welcomed from the highest halls of the Emperor to the peasant squares of lowly Crab villages. Artisans, respected for their learning and intellect, are often chosen

as advisors. Such patronage is rewarded through favors, money or political power.

Reading and writing are not common skills in Rokugan, and many noble lords employ artisans to educate the public, teach the stories of the Tao and instruct them in their duties to their feudal lords. As Shinsei once said, "A man cannot perform his duties if he knows not what is expected of him." Therefore, some Kakita artisans have taken on the task of tutor, and travel Rokugan seeking to educate the public.



about society and the laws that govern the country.

Because of this, the *heimin* in the Crane lands are extremely well educated. Each year, artisans travel the Crane provinces and teach the principles of respect and duty, as well as the words of the Tao. *Daimyos* of other clans occasionally ask Crane artisans to tour through their villages and educate the people. Such a journey is, of course, paid for by the governing lord. At times, artisan tutors will remain in the palace of the clan, instructing young samurai – often the sons and daughters of the major feudal lords – in the noble arts as well as the Tao.

But Kakita artisans are more than mere teachers. They are the soul of Rokugan, gloriously depicting every major battle, singing the songs of heroes past and present, and remembering the ancient myths and legends. They inspire samurai to glorious deeds which are recorded by the storyteller's words or the painter's brush. Perfection, utter devotion, and complete mastery of imagination are the heart of a true artisan.

The Kakita Iaijutsu Masters

It is honorable to be accused by those who deserve to be accused.

– Tao of Shinsei

The most well-known artisans in Rokugan by far are the Iaijutsu Masters, who perfect their skills through years of diligent study at the Kakita Academy. To the Crane, dueling is an art. Iaijutsu demands patience, practice and dedication, and is treated as one of the greatest artistic talents that can be achieved. But, in the end, dueling is only one of many arts taught by the Kakita, and its beauty – the form and function of the sword – is practiced, studied and refined as any other art would be.

The artisans of the blade spend years of their lives meditating on the katana before they are ever allowed to unsheath it. A teaching passed down from Kakita himself is “A hundred days of hand, a thousand days of spear, and ten thousand days of sword.” This is not merely because the sword is the hardest weapon to master, but because it demands a state of mental and physical discipline which is difficult to achieve.

Kakita's famous text, *The Sword*, is a compilation of his dueling knowledge and the training of a master duelist. It is one of the two most famous books on technique in Rokugan, along with Mirumoto's treatise, *Niten*. Of the two, Kakita's school of philosophy and his style of fighting are the most respected, and the most commonly taught by sensei.

Although the Crane are not well known for their military prowess, it is certain that every bushi who picks up a sword has heard of Kakita, his sons, and their famous dueling academy. The Kakita techniques and philosophy have shaped the art of warfare, as his search for the perfect blend of soul and steel invented the Iaijutsu duel.

The Kakita have always followed the ultimate philosophy of the Crane: you only live once, so make every moment worth living. These tenets, and the last recorded words of Doji Konishiko, have led to the famous Crane dueling philosophy. As Kakita Shimizu elaborated, “Perfection requires only one attempt. If you are perfect, your strike will be perfect. Achieve this discipline, master the technique of the sword, and you will never have a reason to regret.”



A treatise on the discipline of steel and the philosophy of its use by Kakita, Champion of the Crane.

(The following is a series of excerpts from the original Iaijutsu treatise written by the first Kakita. It was the first document on swordplay in Rokugan history. This text became the foundation for modern dueling in Rokugan, and includes Kakita's famous philosophy, theory and technique. The paragraphs below attempt to capture the essence of the entire treatise and relate the principles of the work.)



THE SHRINE TO JUROJIN

In the gardens near Umi Amaterasu there stands a great shrine to Jurojin, the Fortune of Longevity. The Crane have built these gardens not for their own pleasure, nor to amaze visiting delegations and ambassadors with the wealth and power of the Clan. Instead, these gardens were built at the command of Kakita Yasuhime, a powerful *daimyo* of the Kakita family, and an Artisan in her own right. The shrine was built in celebration of the 97th birthday of the 20th Hantei Emperor, and has long stood as a symbol of luck and long life.

The gardens are open to all visitors, and the waters of the spring at the base of the great statue to the Fortune are said to be the purest and cleanest in the world. Their healing powers are also renowned, and anyone who drinks from the stream during a ritual to Jurojin is said to have all their wounds instantly healed.



THE DEATH OF LADY DOJI

After the death of her husband Kakita, Lady Doji lived for many years. She continued to dedicate herself to the Emperor, and served as the personal advisor to his sons after his death.

Every five years, she would journey to the palaces of the other clans, visiting each of her brothers. In time, these journeys grew short, as each of the original founders passed into the void. Finally, turned away from the Dragon gates with news of the new daimyo of the Togashi, Lady Doji traveled no more. She was the last of her brothers and sisters.

One sunset long after the *kami* had fallen from the sky, Lady Doji walked the seashore of Kyuden Doji, and stood upon the tall rocks while the tide rolled in. As the thundering waves crashed on the rocks around her, the sun sank below the horizon. When its last rays touched the Lady, she raised her arms toward the sky. Another rushing burst of sea foam crashed on the towering rocks around her, and she was gone.

The Lady Doji's body was never recovered from the sea, and there are those who say she did not die. Legends whisper she instead became a part of the ocean itself, and that she still dances among the waves when the moon shines upon the sea.

Some men will tell you of their duels as if they were counting stones on the shore. I cannot do so. I do not know how many duels I have fought, and I cannot tell you how many breaths I have taken. To number them dishonors the brave men who have fallen before the sword, and transforms the instinctual into something contrived. Dueling is a natural art, one which must be practiced before all other things, and one whose reward for perfection is nothing more than life itself. Wielding a sword should be as natural as being alive. The sword must live within you. The stances are its walk, and the rhythm of the swing is the speech of a warrior. Honor is the heart of the duel – the breath and the blood of the sword.

Sword of a Warrior

Understanding the way of the sword is within the understanding of one's own body. To accomplish this, there must be a time of meditation and contemplation of the self. The wielder must be forged, as the sword is forged. The body must be made ready. There has never been a sword which was not forged until its steel was true, and there should never be a warrior who would wield a sword unless they, too have undergone the fires of the forge. Discipline and practice, these are the fires which harden the student of the blade, and humility is the snow into which he should be thrust. The stance, the hands, and the eye must all be trained, allowing for the quick and correct response to any situation. Whenever striking the opponent, the sword and the body must be as one. Strengthen the spirit as well as the body, and the depths of the soul will become the steel of the blade. To become one with the sword, the practitioner must learn patience, perseverance and humility. To achieve this, there must be a hundred days of hand, a thousand days of spear, and ten thousand days of sword...

Mental Attitude

To observe without moving the eyes, to sharpen the mind as well as the body – the enhancement of the sixth sense should be practiced and refined in order to gain full control of one's mental attitude. In both peaceful times and in war, one's attitude should be the same –

refined, noble, and disciplined. Ascertain the truth from the outside in – take in the broad viewpoint, and sharpen the mind until you find the truth within all things. Even when the body is at rest, the mind should be controlled and in a state of concentration. Walk the path of various arts and skills, broaden your knowledge of the world and do not be deceived. If your mind is strong then your spirit will never be hampered by your physical condition, even when you are exhausted or in pain. When one speaks of “crossing the expanse,” it can be in the context of a small lake or a large sea – it can be a short distance or a long one. In the course of a lifetime, one must cross many waters – both the mind and the body must be prepared for the journey. In order to pass through life, one must have a keen mind and a decisive spirit, so that the weaknesses of the body can be overcome. The body is little more than the vessel for the journey. It must be forged, but the mind must be its guide, or the voyage is failed before it begins.

On the Body Strike

The body is also a weapon. Those who insist on wielding two swords against a single opponent have forgotten that the greatest weapon is the self. The *Kenshinzo*, or Swordmaster, must have mastered his own body before ever touching the sword – and the body is the greatest weapon one has. To disregard it in favor of a second sword is foolish. It dishonors you as certainly as if two men struck the same opponent, and it does not allow the use of the full body – only the arms. It is certain that the greatest of techniques is called the secret sword – the sword of the body. Position, force and the generated power of the chi is the fundamental strength against which no opponent can stand. When attacking a strong force, one would be wise to use strategy and strike where the opponent is weakest. If the opponent wields two swords, they appear strong, but they have forgotten the meaning of true strength. They hide their cowardice behind steel, and are no more than a rice paper cottage behind a stone wall. The strongest weapon a warrior has is not the steel of the blade; it is the true strength of courage, the true sword of bushido. Among other schools, there are some which are partial to using two swords. In my school, this is a sign of cowardice. Attempts to achieve victory by a few extra inches



spirit. To succeed in any one of these is to defeat your opponent. The source of power in swordplay is the swift defeat, not the prolonged strike and block technique. Applying the power of the mind as well as the power of the muscle, the sword will become effectively a part of the body. This is the "secret sword" of the warrior. Mastering the sword requires learning to project power into the weapon. The sword must be respected. Moral and spiritual qualities are required in order to perfect the three initial attacks. It requires a strategy of calmness in thought, patience in action, and a meditative spirit. If one has mastered the body, mind and spirit, the three initial attacks come naturally to the sword of the warrior. Once you have overcome the spirit of the opponent, their weaknesses come to light and one is placed in a position of power. Thus can victory be achieved even before the first strike is made.

of steel is a sign of weakness of spirit. Although those who study such a school have rationalizations for such a path, such rationalizations have no ground when they are seen from the true path of bushido. I have no dislike for the technique of the two swords; only for the spirit which leads to the preference of two swords. It is a true weakness, a weakness of the soul. Is it impossible for one man to win against two opponents? There are many examples where one man has defeated two - or more. In my school of iaijutsu there is a dislike for such a narrow spirit. This should be carefully studied...

The Three Initial Attacks

The three initial attacks are to confuse an enemy, to strike at the mind; to engage with the steel of the sword, to strike at the body; and to intimidate an enemy with your chi, to strike at the

The One Strike

This means to strike an opponent with the strike of a single moment; to perform each action so that no second is needed, to strive for perfection in each kata, each duel and each moment. This is the sharpest weapon of the warrior. Complete objectivity, the "eye outside of the body," allows us to choose our moment. The entire body must be unified with the sword. A single man, a single weapon. They are one. But this is not simply to say that the duelist wields one sword - rather that the duelist is one sword. Thus, perfection of the strike is achieved as naturally as the outward breath. The strike of the body, spirit and sword - this is the strike which the student must master if they are to become a true Kenshinzo, a Swordmaster. If this is mastered, no other strike is needed. The single strike, the One Strike of the attuned weapon, this alone will defeat your opponent. There are those

THE DEATH OF LADY DOJI (CONTINUED)

Whatever the truth, the rocks on which she last stood have become a sacred spot to the Crane Clan. Each Champion spends a night in vigil upon the rocky outcropping before taking the responsibility of leading the clan, seeking the knowledge and wisdom of Lady Doji to guide him on the path. The greatest stone is called the Lady's Rest, or the Champion's Stone, and it is visited each year at the time of the Imperial Chrysanthemum Festival, when it is wreathed in flowers by the maidens of all the Clans. Local superstition says that anyone who does so will have much success in love, and find a husband within the next year.



THE FANTASTIC GARDENS OF THE CRANE

Many people in Rokugan whisper of the delicate beauties of the Crane gardens. Huge tracts of land, often as large as 30 miles, have been converted from arable land into pleasure gardens by Crane *daimyos* past and present.

The Crab have often complained about this "waste of land," but the Crane territories are so rich and vast that they can well afford to spare some for the creation of beauty.

The gardens themselves are works of art. Bonsai trees, flowering bushes and trickling streams, all carefully cultured to create the appearance of "careless perfection," adorn acres of carefully manicured flowers and grasses. These carefully cultivated plants and paths are the result of generations of gardeners, working painstakingly to perfect their art. But the gardens are more than mere art - they convey spiritual and philosophical messages.

who tell you that your opponent will defeat himself in the moment of the strike. This is not true. The defeat comes from the single imperfection that your opponent will carry within their soul. The perfect spirit, the soul which bears no stain and the sword whose temper is true - this is the essence of the One Strike. Meditate on this until you understand the eye outside the body, until you reach a point of unity with the Sword...

To Tread on the Sword

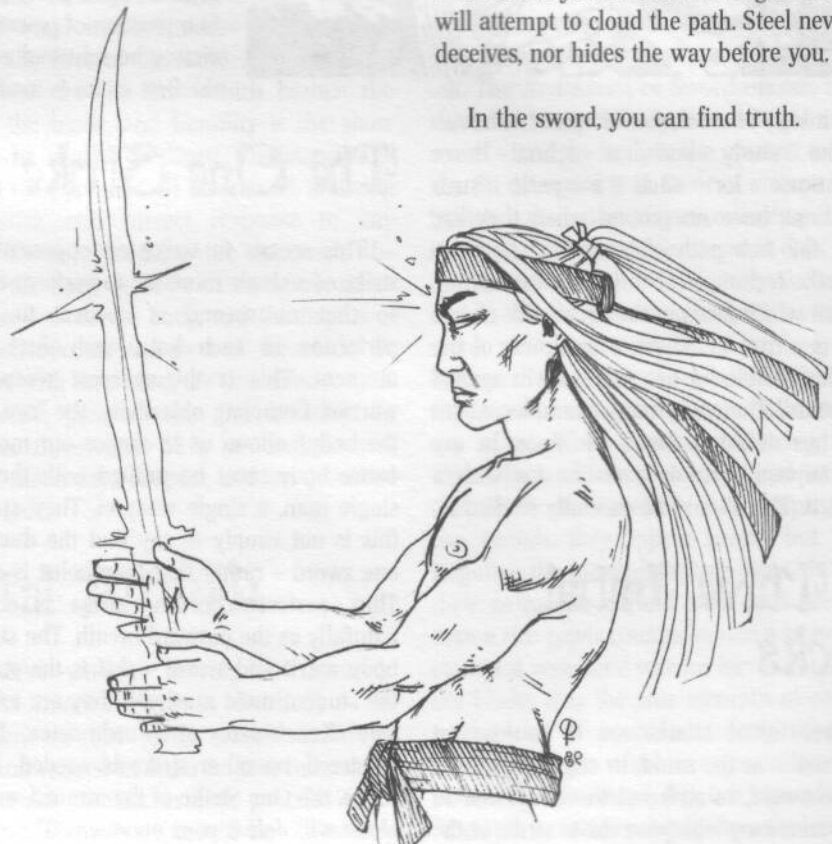
To tread on the sword pertains to fighting against large groups of opponents, even when bows or other weapons are used. Responsive attack is the key. If you are preparing your weapon, you will not be able to seize the opportunity to attack when it arises. It is important to attack while others are firing their weapons, and before they prepare for the next volley. A Kenshinzo can use this method against one opponent as well. The responsive attack is to

tread upon their sword with your own, and strike as they are again readying their attack. One must have the intent to tread with one's body, spirit and sword so as to render the opponent incapable of a second round. To destroy your enemy, whether near or far, one must defeat their spirit. When the spirit is broken, the body can have no power, and a Swordsman can turn his back on his opponent. To seize the opportunity is also to defeat the spirit. When the enemy can no longer attack you, when their weapons are useless and unready, then you will tread upon the sword of your opponent's spirit. Then is their defeat certain.

Understanding Emptiness

The world around us is in a constant state of change. Everything is real only in comparison with reality, only with relation to other things. Have no illusions within your heart, sharpen your spirit as you would hone your sword, and when you clear away your clouds of deception you will always emerge victorious. Men will lie to you. Your eyes will deceive you. Your own thoughts and emotions will attempt to cloud the path. Steel never lies, nor deceives, nor hides the way before you.

In the sword, you can find truth.





THE FANTASTIC GARDENS OF THE CRANE (CONTINUED)

The highly stylized pruning that characterizes the gardens is an attempt to emphasize the essential qualities of each tree and bush. Nothing is left to chance; every living thing in a garden exists for a reason. Every tree, rock or plant is a symbol – whether mythical, spiritual or historical. Messages from the *Tao of Shinsei* have been left in every leaf and tree, every stepping stone and the twist of every brook. Let the Dragon speak of their “story gardens” – the Crane gardens do more than tell a story.

They free the soul.

The Asahina Family

A young boy came to the Asahina temple to learn the craft of the shugenja. He asked the daimyo there, “How long must I study to be a Master?”

“Ten years at least,” the shugenja answered.

“What if I studied twice as hard as all your other students?”

“Twenty years,” replied the Master.

“Twenty years! What if I practice day and night with all my effort?”

“Thirty years,” was the daimyo’s reply.

“How is it that each time I say I will work harder, you tell me it will take longer?” the boy asked, amazed.

“The answer is clear. When one eye is fixed upon your destination, there is only one eye left with which to find the Way.”

*– Carved upon the gates of
Asahina Temple*

History

The history of the Asahina family begins with a young shugenja named Isawa Asahina, once the Master of Air of the Phoenix Clan. Asahina was a great Master of his Element, revered among his clan as a true adept, not merely of Air, but also of Fire. It was said among his peers that he could have been the Master of either element, but on the day of his *gempukku*, he stood with the spirits of Air. Asahina was a natural warrior, disciplined and ferocious. He was raised in times when the Phoenix were forced to war, and Asahina was taught to use his destructive powers against the invading forces of the Lion and the Scorpion. He spent little time in study, but much time being forged in the furnace of combat. Further, he was

the greatest artificer of his time, and his magics, both destructive and creative, were unparalleled.

When the Lion forces retreated from Phoenix lands, and a truce was created between the two clans through the intervention of Crane forces, Isawa Asahina was furious. Certain that without the intervention of the Crane, the Phoenix magics would eventually crush the Lion forces, the Master of Air began a reign of terror across the villages of the Crane. Traveling from town to town, he burned houses, tore down banners and slaughtered animals. Although his peaceful brothers in the Isawa house tried to speak sense to him, he chided them all. “You have forgotten the Phoenix samurai who gave their lives against the Lion!” he roared in anguish. “Their lives must be avenged through blood! The Crane have stolen the meaning from my brothers’ deaths and I will have revenge!”

The Daidoji were mobilizing to the south, ready for an invasion from the Crab forces, and had few men to spare against the mad shugenja. The few samurai who attempted to strike against the Master of Air were soon destroyed by magics of which they had no comprehension. It seemed that many peasants would suffer the wrath of the Mad Phoenix before his whirlwinds and raging fires were doused in his grief.

At last, one brave samurai rode out to accept the warlock’s challenge. When Asahina reached the seaside village of Kimura, he found her there, waiting. “You will not destroy this village, shugenja!” she said, standing steadfastly in the village square. Around her, the buildings echoed with his mocking laughter.

“And what will you do to stop me, girl?” he shouted. “Attack me with your katana? Or perhaps you have twenty men hidden in that barn, to leap upon me from behind?” His laughter was hoarse and bitter. The samurai-ko said nothing, and set her helm upon the ground at her feet. Her dark hair fell in a tail down her back, and her eyes were pale and sad. Although not beautiful, she had a strange serenity which almost made the Master of Elements pause in his destruction. Almost.

The maiden did not draw her katana, or raise her voice in a war shout. She simply stood between the Master and his targets, the frightened villagers crowded in the road behind her. Isawa Asahina raised his tremendous arms and a lightning-strike of wind and flames sped forth toward one of the houses. As swiftly as a striking



COMMON TALISMAN TYPES

Different kinds of talismans commonly made by the Asahina include streamers, amulets, divinatory items and medicinal talismans.

Silk or rice paper streamers, embroidered with characters, are used as protection and can be hung from the ceiling or rafters.

Amulets are small, perhaps 2" in diameter, and carved in elaborate shapes with brightly colored art.

Some amulets require sustenance, conversation (although they never speak back) or other strange methods of placating the spirit of the item.

Divinatory items range from chips of bone to yarrow sticks. Many view these items as unreliable, but those who use them claim they are rarely led astray. Their accuracy is influenced by the amount of time between the questioning and the questioned event. A samurai asking, "Will I have a son?" will get an obscure answer.

On the other hand, asking "Will I survive the duel today?" will probably get a very definite answer.

Another common item is the medicinal talisman, which brings ease to the wounded and aid to the sick. These talismans are rare, and often sought after by Clan warriors who carry them into battle.

serpent, the samurai-ko leapt between the spell and its target, and the fire burst and enshrouded her body in a white-hot blaze.

Asahina roared in fury, and a searing lance of flame leapt from his hand. Again the maiden threw herself before the blazing inferno, the fire burning the locks of dark hair from her head and searing her beautiful armor. When the flames died down, she fell to her knees in the road, but the townsfolk were unharmed. She looked up at the Phoenix, and tears streamed from her eyes.

He stared down at the maiden, and had no words to speak. In his rage, he lifted his hand again toward the heavens, and his fingers were licked with tendrils of blue flame. To his amazement, the samurai-ko lifted herself from the ground in an heroic effort, preparing to throw herself in front of the assault again. "Why?" he asked her, astounded. "Why are you doing this?"

Her voice was hoarse with agony and her eyes had swollen to mere slits. "You cannot be allowed to bring any further shame... to the memory of your kin." She gasped, barely able to breathe. "The Crane entered the war to bring peace..." The dying samurai-ko's voice began to fade, and she sank to one knee in the dusty road. "I will not fight you."

Isawa Asahina stared at the girl before him, and his hand began to fall, the fires dimming. "You would give your life so needlessly?" he murmured.

"Innocents must not die," she said, her eyes sagging shut from the effort of staying conscious. "No more must die in the name of peace."

As she fell onto the rocks of the road, the Isawa stared in shock and horror at her limp form. "Have I fallen so far?" he whispered. The fires around his hand faded and died, and he knelt beside the body of the maiden. "You are right," he breathed, "there has been enough war." Lifting her from that place, he traveled with her to the palace of the Doji and stood before their Champion.

It was many months before Doji Kiriko was well enough to stand on her own, but with the constant dedication of Isawa Asahina, her wounds healed - although she forever bore the scars of her trial. Shortly thereafter, the Master of Air married the samurai-ko, dedicating his life to peace and leaving behind his old ways and old hatreds. He joined the Crane Clan, bringing with him many of his peaceful brothers and sisters and much knowledge from the Isawa libraries.

Together with his new bride, they began the first Crane shugenja school. Thus, the Asahina swore themselves forever to the Crane, and to peace.

The Asahina Shugenja

The Asahina family are the shugenja of the Crane Clan. Once aligned with the Phoenix, they are now a major contributor to the military and political power of the Crane. Although the Asahina maintain a pacifistic view of the world, shunning open acts of warfare and fighting, they are willing to use their expertise to assist their Clan, and the creation of weapons and other implements of war is not unheard of. However, the items which the Asahina create are never malicious or uncontrolled. Instead, they give their more destructive items to the Doji, trusting the Crane Clan to see that they are never ill used. The great skill which the Asahina family have for artifice and enchantment makes them the primary creators of magic items in Rokugan, and their status in the richest clan in the Empire allows them all the materials they need, no matter how strange or expensive.

The Asahina love to create things. Magic is in their Isawa heritage, but the influence of the Kakita bloodline may have something to do with their love of beautiful things. Tinkerers, inventors, creators of the unusual and unique, the Asahina delight in surprising others with their ingenuity rather than their magical power or proficiency.

Various magics exist in Rokugan, from the *maho* (blood magic) of corrupt magicians to the purer spell craft used by most shugenja. The Asahina family have never been the most prolific nor the most powerful of spell casters, but they do have certain secret knowledge which have been lost to other clans, including the creation of certain minor "fetishes," or one-use magical items, which are often used by Crane Clan members.

Some of the magics used by the reclusive enchanters incorporate magic diagrams, talismans and charms. They use forms of calligraphy as artistic emblems, carrying spiritual truths and arcane powers. Their magic is not as esoteric as that of the Isawa or Agasha, and is often geared to mundane needs such as good harvests, building, or protection. The Asahina

family have always been more concerned with the common man than with the creation of new and strange understanding, allowing themselves to focus on the creation of items as a way to contribute their knowledge to the world. Some of these items last long after the enchanter who created them has died, thus giving the Asahina, and the Crane, an eternal legacy.

On another level, the Asahina brought with them much of the knowledge of the Tao which the Phoenix Clan stores in their vast libraries. However, rather than treating the Tao of Shinsei as separate from life, a thing to be studied and pondered, the Asahina believe that the Tao applies to all living things, and that reality is a seamless web. Within this web, all things are interrelated, and something which touches part of that structure touches the whole of reality. Thus, by changing one part of the world for the better,

the Asahina believe that they are changing the whole of the world.

Tsangusuri, the creation of talismans and charms, is a focus of the Asahina school. These talismans, or fetishes, range from the amusing to the powerful, and come in a wide variety of forms. All students of the Asahina house are taught how to create minor fetishes and how to incorporate their knowledge of the kami, in order to bring out the natural inclinations of the five elements. Isawa Asahina spoke of the spirits that lived within the elements in the pages of his journal. "All things," he wrote, "have within them a secret magic, which can be unlocked by knowledge of the elements and the *kami* which govern those elements." While this does not appear distinct from the traditional Isawa and Agasha schools of thought, the journal relates how, by tapping into the spiritual element

contained within an item, the energies of that item can be harnessed for use by any individual. The Asahina further believe that men are able to influence the processes of the universe through participation in ritual and inscription of symbols. They see their magic as very much a part of the natural world around them, rather than as separate and set apart by the 'spiritual' nature of the Tao.

The talismans which the Asahina create are, for the most part, impersonal and



THE ASAHINA MON

Mon: A crane's head, holding in its beak a peach blossom.

Motto: "Knowledge must be earned, not simply learned."

The peach tree is the primary wood used in the creation of fetishes and *nemuranai*, and is used by the Asahina for many things. Because it is so integral to their work, there are tremendous peach trees which line the road to the Asahina temple. The peach blossom itself is the sign of change and of peace - two things which the Asahina wish their work to epitomize.





THE SPARROW CLAN

The Crane are Rokugan's wealthiest Clan, reveling in the luxuries and gold.

Theirs is a tradition of culture and elegance, furnished by the prowess of their lands and merchants. Nearly a hundred years ago, a man named Suzume was born to one of the Crane's wealthiest minor families. He was raised as a courtier with wealth and privilege. Doji Suzume lived in one of the richest palaces in Rokugan, and spent his time in idle philosophy among the other Crane nobles. He is remembered for his wit and humor, not for his sparkling intellect.

One day, while the Crane Champion was a guest in Suzume's father's palace, a heated negotiation about Crane monetary acquisition arose. In an attempt to lighten the mood, young Suzume spoke up. "Perhaps the Crane should simply give all of its wealth to the peasants?"

The silence was deafening.

When the Crane had overcome their shock, Suzume's father made many apologies for his son's rash words, but the Crane Champion stood and took his leave. Later, lesser *daimyo* who were sworn to Suzume's father began to argue about the incident.

designed for use by any wielder. However, some of their more powerful magics are such that only one specific individual can call for the the energy contained in the item. These magics are keyed to the spirit of the wielder, who must have been present through the creation of the talisman.

The Asahina connect all life to five basic components: Wood, Fire, Earth, Metal and Water. Each of these components gives birth to another, in a constant cycle of life. In this way, wood gives birth to fire, fire to earth, earth to metal, metal to water, and water returns again to wood. Some of the other associations relative to these components are listed in the chart below.

These affiliations are important for identification of unknown magic items, and their associations are well-known to shugenja. Also, these associations help an Asahina shugenja create their magic items. It is imperative to use the proper ingredients to create even minor fetishes.

The wood of the peach tree is valued for creating talismans. Many of the more common fetishes are inscriptions on peach wood plaques, or carved in the form of animals. Ink is commonly created from cinnabar and other rare components. Other components are crafted from rare metals or unusual gems. All must be of the finest quality, for only the greatest works of art are sufficient to control the magic within them.

The Rokugan calendar is divided along lunar lines into the thirteen months, each corresponding to an animal; the hours of the day are divided along similar lines. The day and hour of the creation of items is precise to the minute, and every Asahina shugenja has at least basic knowledge of the astrology which governs the

effective creation of their items. In some cases, after the precise day and time of an item's creation has been determined, the shugenja compiles a list of people whose astrological signs are favorable for the creation of the item. Regardless of age or status, those people are asked to attend in order to influence the favorable outcome of the process. Those whose astrology

would be inauspicious are politely asked not to take part in the ritual or the festivities surrounding it. If they do, they may actually incur the wrath of the element whose patronage the shugenja creating the item are trying to appease. The inner spirit of each item from which the Asahina draw their power is integral to the

item's structure. For example, a katana could not be used as an item of healing, nor could an ivory statuette of a fat man be used as an icon for famine. Each color, symbol or design is carefully planned to attune the item to its purpose. The spirit of the item, drawn forth through these icons, actually inhabits the magical fetish. Whether such *chisai kami* (small spirits) are sentient is an argument for philosophers, but it is certain that the greater the *kami* of the item, the more "human" it becomes. In some very powerful items, these spirits are indistinguishable from the human soul. They have minds, purpose and idiosyncrasies. They respond to stimuli, and some, the most powerful of all, can respond and communicate while still "living" within the item.

It is important to recognize that the spirits held within the items are not "trapped" or "contained" in any way. Rather, they represent the





THE SPARROW CLAN (CONTINUED)

"Perhaps the boy was acting on his father's orders," they said, "Our Lord is playing a political game to tell us what he wishes to do, through his son's 'mistake'..." Eventually, they decided it had been no error, and that Suzume's father was planning a bold plot to break away from the Crane. Suzume's father, Doji Onegano, was quietly praised for his careful manipulation of the meeting, and for his wisdom.

The servants of the palace repeated the tale to the peasants, and they whispered Onegano's name with reverence. *Heimin* who had reviled their wealthy master now began to see wisdom in his words, and tales were spread about the gentle heart beating within the merchant's portly breast.

Within weeks, word had spread to neighboring villages, and peasants traveled to live in Onegano's province. "He is going to give away his wealth," they promised each other, "and seek enlightenment."

(continued)

inner spirit of the item itself, given sentience through the arcane rituals and powers of the shugenja. The item itself is "awakened" rather than "given power." The two types of spirits within an item are thus: the *shen*, or benevolent spirit, and the *kuei*, or malevolent force. These spirits are also called the "benevolent" or the "wrathful" aspects of the item, and reflect the Rokugani portrayal of the countenances of the Fortunes in their benevolent or wrathful states.

The Asahina, as a whole, concentrate on bringing out the shen within an item. However, there are stories of rogue shugenja, such as Asahina Yajinden, who specialized in communing with the *kuei* forces. Such magics were used by Iuchiban and his Bloodspeakers; when Asahina Yajinden joined them, their power was made stronger through his knowledge. It has even been said that Yajinden himself called forth the *kuei* in the famous Bloodswords, and that he and Iuchiban fed these *kami* with ritual sacrifices and dark magics. Even in modern times, the creations made by their twisted perversions of the Asahina way are still dangerous. The Iuchiban blades, which have been given such powers that they have become nearly sentient things themselves, await wielders they can control in order to do the will of their makers. The *kuei* within these swords, and the other creations of the Bloodspeakers, are malevolent, destructive and committed to their original purpose, no matter how many centuries pass. The patience of the inanimate, after all, is infinite.

Some talismans are not magical in themselves, and contain no *shen*. Instead, they help commune with the spirits of items before a ritual is performed. In this way, the suitability of a particular item can be determined. The Asahina can thus choose from a roomful of katanas, taking with them only the single item best suited to their purpose.

These meditational talismans, or *tsang*, are useful for other purposes as well. In the same way

that a human soul learns by experience, the inner core of an item remembers traumatic events which have occurred around it, leaving a "mark on the chi" of the item. Through study of the item and application of their *tsang* the Asahina are often able to reproduce events which have occurred in the past, no matter how distant. However, this evidence is rarely more than a flicker of vision, a series of emotions, or a single brief sound.

The final magic which the Asahina have power over is rare indeed. In ancient times, the Isawa Elemental Masters determined that it may be possible to control the spirit of a person in the same way the spirit of an item is controlled. However, such magic, known as *meisho*, is difficult to control and extremely dangerous. Through their studies with the inner spirit of items, the Asahina have uncovered certain secrets of *meisho*. Only the masters of the Asahina house know even a few of its applications. Further, the Asahina believe that they have only scratched the surface of such spellcraft. They refuse to divulge *meisho*'s secrets or to use these powers on any living being, for it not only goes against their pacifistic creed but also endangers the life of the shugenja who draws upon them. Remembering the betrayal of Asahina Yajinden, the Asahina keep such knowledge extremely well protected - never written down, but only passed from master to student verbally. They have never revealed this knowledge to anyone outside of the Asahina Masters, the highest shugenja of their school. The power of *meisho* with which the Asahina draw the spirit from an item is used only on the most powerful of items, creations unrivaled in all of Rokugan. However, the need for these - and the shugenja willing to undergo the risks of their creation - are rare. Some of these items are so awakened that their *shen* has become a fully sentient being. When Asahina Tamako is asked if such things could be true, his only answer is a polite, but silent, smile.

Component:	Wood	Fire	Earth	Water	Metal
Element:	Air	Fire	Earth	Water	Void
Number:	8, 3	2, 7	10, 5	6, 1	4, 9
Virtues:	Benevolence	Propriety	Faith	Righteousness	Wisdom
Emotions:	Anger	Joy	Sympathy	Grief	Fear
Animal:	Horse	Rooster	Tortoise	Snake	Dog
Color:	Blue	Red	Yellow	White	Black



THE SPARROW CLAN

(CONTINUED)

Soon, Onegano's lesser daimyos sought the wisdom of the Shintao monks. "Our

master believes wealth corrupts the soul," they told the Brotherhood. "Is this true?" The monks searched the Tao and replied, "Your master has a keen insight.

Certainly, enlightenment can only be gained by parting oneself from the physical world. Your master is exceedingly wise." The

lesser daimyos congratulated themselves on their enlightened master, and began to tell others about Onegano's marvelous insights.

When the Crane Champion heard that peasants were leaving their fields and traveling to Onegano's lands, he was furious. "He insults his house!" the Champion roared. "If he believes that the Crane live too opulently for their own good, then let him be no longer part of this Clan!"

When Onegano heard the news, he asked to be allowed to commit *seppuku*, but the Emperor forbade him. "I have heard of your plans to seek enlightenment by giving away all your physical possessions," he said, eyeing the wealth of Onegano's lands.

The Asahina Temples

The Asahina still revere the ancient teachings of Shinsei, and his Tao is one of the primary texts in their magnificent libraries. Although they are not as learned as the Isawa, the Asahina spend much of their time in constant contemplation. Their school is far from the well-traveled roads of the Crane, and their doors always stand open, ready to receive any visitor. No clan boundaries or cultural divisions stop their constant patronage of peace, and no blood has ever been shed on their sacred fields. It is forbidden for anyone who has taken a life with his own hands to study among them, and although they offer shelter and comfort to even the most warlike samurai, the Asahina maintain a strictly pacifistic view of the world. This is not to say that they refuse to create items of war. It is also not true that the Asahina would blindly ignore the dangers of offering shelter to a massive Crab army. Members of the Asahina house simply refuse to enter personal combat or to take another's life.

Their creed of pacifism is inscribed on every wall of the Asahina Temple. Although its walls

are covered with stories of the Crane and the parables of the Tao, they never depict any form of death. Life is the spirit of their creations, and it sings in the very stones of the buildings. The Asahina live in their tremendous stone temple, surrounded by wilderness and gently sloping fields. The massive oak gates of the parapets have never been closed in the hundreds of years since the Asahina have made the temple their home.

Behind their open walls and gentle nature the Asahina hide the true secrets of their knowledge. Visitors to the temple are allowed to come and go as they please, and read any of the books of wisdom in the maze of rooms. But none of those books speak of the magical items of the Asahina, or of how to create them. None of the doors are ever locked, yet no vault has been found, and there do not seem to be any hidden passages beneath the buildings.

There are rumors, of course, of many strange things that have gone on behind the stone walls of the Asahina temples. The great rituals and carved walls are enough fuel whispers of spirits that walk in the night, called forth by the magical creations of the shugenja. There are rumors that the walls have a wisdom of their own, and it is

whispered that in certain areas the carvings will change overnight. There are even claims that the stone of the walls can come to life and speak of the things they have seen in the hundreds of years since the temple's creation. Some who have studied in the Asahina shugenja school say that secret knowledge is contained in these carvings, and that when a shugenja is ready to learn and has truly dedicated their life to the path of peace, the walls themselves will teach them. But that is dismissed by most as a rumor. The one thing that is certain is that no shugenja outside the Asahina Clan has ever been taught the magic of *meisho*, nor have the Asahina ever revealed the secret of their instruction.





THE SPARROW CLAN (CONTINUED)

"And, since the Crab are short on Imperial Taxes this year, I have decided to allow you to follow your karma. Take your followers and claim the lands to the west of the Crane, where you can seek wisdom through poverty and hardship. May the light of the Tao guide you."

Onegano's servants and lesser daimyo congratulated him on his skillful manipulation of the Imperial Court, claiming that he had maneuvered even the highest authority in order to have his own way. His peasants gladly traveled to the lands which were reserved for them, and Onegano's daimyos followed their magnificent master, so that they might find the wisdom he offered. All those who followed the new-formed Sparrow Clan congratulated themselves on having a Lord who was so dedicated to the Tao and its ways that he would willingly give up all luxury and opulence. Onegano's name was shouted from the hilltops of the new Clan's land, and his peasants rejoiced in their good fortune.

When Onegano was approached to give his new house a name, he declared, "This is all my son's doing, so let the house of the Sparrow take their name from him." Thus, the family of Suzume was born, and the Clan of the Sparrow founded.

The Daidoji Family

Against those skilled in attack, an enemy does not know where to defend;

Against the experts in defense, the enemy does not know where to attack.

- Sun Tzu

The Legend of Daidoji Hayaku

After the war with Fu Leng, the Crane sorrowed over the loss of its Thunder. Lady Doji's other children tried to console her, but she wept night and day. She had visions and dreams which told her that Konishiko was still alive somewhere in the Shadowlands, and despite her Clan's attempts to rid her of these thoughts, still they returned. Hayaku was a silent child, thoughtful and solemn even in play. He had not inherited his mother's bright laughter nor his father's joy in the sword. Although he studied iaijutsu with his brothers, he excelled in raw combat, tactical strategy and warfare more than the precise discipline of the Kakita. When he heard that Lady Doji believed her daughter to be suffering in the Shadowlands, Hayaku swore to journey into the darkness of the southern lands and seek the lost Thunders.

Hayaku went to the Crab Wall and spoke to the Hida, but they told him he was on a fool's errand, and would not give him aid. So he traveled into the Shadowlands alone. Over three years later, Hayaku returned. The horrors he had seen had changed him - his body was more muscular, and his face was creased as if with age. His hair, once long and dark, had been turned white by the sights he had seen. His voice had

been lost, and a great scar ran across his throat as though the claw of some great beast had torn at his flesh. He came to the Great Hall of the Crane, and knelt silently before his mother. In his hand, he held the sword which Yasurugi had forged, the sword which Konishiko had carried on the Thunders' quest. Without a sound he handed it to Lady Doji and as soon as her hand touched the hilt, the blade sang a single pure note of joy. The twins had, in a way, come home.

Since that day, the wielder of the Crane Clan Ancestral Sword has always been chosen by the single joyous tone which the blade makes upon the first touch of its rightful owner. Hayaku was given the surname "Daidoji" - "Defender of the Doji" - by his parents, in recognition of his bravery and faithfulness. His children became the proud house of the Daidoji, sworn to protect their kinsmen and keep the secret of what Hayaku found in the Shadowlands many years ago. Even today many Crane dye their hair white as a sign of tribute, as a mark of their loyalty to the clan, and in remembrance of Hayaku.

History

The Daidoji family are among the bravest fighters in Rokugan. Their creed is war, and their lineage noble. Descended from the youngest son of Kakita and Lady Doji, the Daidoji recount their history with pride... when they can be persuaded to talk at all. Although they often come to the fine courts of the Crane, the Daidoji are prone to let their Doji cousins do the talking. Instead, the Daidoji busy themselves with the gathering of important information and strategy, and with keeping their eyes open for weaknesses in the enemies of the Crane. Defiantly loyal to the Clan, the Daidoji are renowned through Rokugan for their unusual tactics and stubborn defense of Crane lands and trade.

Long ago the youngest son of Lady Doji and Kakita risked his life to recover his brother and sister's souls from the Shadowlands. Since the day of Hayaku's return, the Daidoji have been heir to the southern lands of the Crane. They serve as military protectors and purveyors of rare goods, and the brave deeds of the Daidoji family are known across Rokugan, although the Crane ardently deny the more scandalous stories as mere Scorpion propaganda.



Daidoji Kuzan, one of the first daimyos of the Daidoji, once said, "The Kakita are the sword – swift and evasive. They win by technique. We of the Daidoji are the spear – we are power, strength and cunning." The Daidoji are the Crane strongarm, the force behind the pretty smiles and glittering gold of Doji political maneuvering. The Kakita duelists have often been likened to a surgeon's scalpel, swift and precise. But the

fortifications, such as the Crab use, but rather on intellect and maneuverability.

Some think of the Daidoji as mere spies, infiltrators and information gatherers. This vastly underestimates the resources and cleverness of the Crane. Although the Daidoji methods seem honorable on the surface, the Daidoji are not above certain tactics of making victory a certainty – so long as they can't be caught. Throughout the

history of Rokugan there have been stories of the suave, debonair Daidoji who outwitted the enemy and gathered needed information or destroyed a delicate tactical position. The tacit approval of their clan, and the adept politics of the Doji courtiers, insures that no matter what must be done, Daidoji honor remains untarnished. The Daidoji focus their attention on two things – attending to the defense of the Crane, and completing any missions which must remain secret. The Daidoji know that it is possible for one man to destroy an army, especially if that man is clever, capable, and swift.

The most important services which the Daidoji perform outside of their defensive measures and merchanting skills involve the illegal smuggling of contraband items. While the Crane traditionally keep their business legal and maintain a certain amount of decorum in their financial transactions, some risks must be taken to stay ahead. Such dealings fall to the Daidoji, and they excel at subterfuge and smuggling. The stereotypical Daidoji smuggler is not a dark, shady dealer in drugs or arms, but is instead the honorable thief,



Daidoji have a different style, using tactics and subtle force to make twenty men capable of standing off hundreds. Their defenses rely not on

risking himself and his honor to keep supplies trickling in to war-torn areas. A Daidoji accepts the most dangerous missions based on his faith in the Crane, and his own ability to handle danger.



Although the Daidoji are often seen in court situations, they rarely are seen leaving by the front door - or by any door at all. The Crane rarely mention exactly what it is that the Daidoji do at such functions, but when sensitive information is found in the hands of the Doji family, a knowing nod and a smile often tell the story of the bravery and stealth of the Daidoji.

Rarely do the Daidoji simply charge onto the field. Those are Lion tactics, used by clans who have the men to sacrifice in such bold attempts. Rather, it is the way of the Daidoji to maneuver their opponents into vulnerable positions, or to simply hold them off until the political finesse of their brethren can turn them back. Even if no political support from the other branches of the Crane house were to come in time, opponents of the Daidoji might still find themselves stranded on the field - with no supplies, no reinforcements, and a trap on every side. The fight would last only long enough for a clever general to surrender. Further, even if the enemy never sees the Crane forces, it would be assured that the Daidoji saboteurs and spies would have anticipated each movement of the invaders and engineered their fate.

The two most famous incidents in which the Daidoji figure prominently are the Battle of the Landbridge, in which the Daidoji stood beside the Hida to prevent the Shadowlands invasion of Rokugan, and the Swordsman's Last Stand, in which the Crane lost the Shiro no Yojin to the forces of the Lion. Their two main lines of defense are Shiro Daidoji (50) and Kosaten Shiro (51) against the Lion, and Niwa Shita no Kage Toshi (129) against the Crab - who were not always as friendly as they have been recently - and against the Shadowlands.

The Daidoji are a tight-knit family, still stinging from the loss of Shiro no Yojin, in what they term the "recent unpleasantness with the Lion". They are fiercely aggressive to the Yasuki (whom they consider traitors) and they rarely forget a past slight. Their house *mon* is tattooed on their body on the day of their *gempukku*, as an outward sign that they will die before deserting their daimyo or their duty.

The Daidoji and the Yasuki

Over seven hundred years ago, the Yasuki left the Crane Clan. When they left, several members of the Yasuki household refused to dishonor their vow to the Crane. Those who chose to stay behind joined the Daidoji family, adding their mercantile expertise to the Daidoji subtlety and strength. Since that time, the Daidoji have openly despised the Yasuki, although there is currently a shaky truce between the two. This peace has been brought about mostly by the Daidoji friendship with the powerful Hida family of the Crab.

Many say that the Daidoji and the Yasuki are two sides of the same coin; the critical difference between the two houses is the Daidoji sense of honor. The Daidoji are often called cunning and clever, but they are never completely ruthless. If faced with the death of a peasant village or the loss of their goods, a Daidoji would always surrender their goods. However, to do so means the Daidoji have a reason for revenge - and their revenge is rarely swift, and never pleasant.

The Library of Shiro Daidoji

The library at Niwa Shita no Kage Toshi (Garden Under Shadow City) contains the single most complete collection of information on tactics that has ever been compiled outside of the Akodo school. There are rumors that the Daidoji have employed spies within the Akodo house, copying important and esoteric texts and smuggling them to the Daidoji lands. The rarest book in the Daidoji library is one of which the *daimyo*, Daidoji Uji, is extremely proud. The sole text on *gaijin* strategy and swordplay, written by an ancient Daidoji *daimyo*, resides in Niwa Shita no Kage Toshi. Partly due to this text, no other library in all of Rokugan has as much information on the *gaijin* who stormed Rokugani shores as does the Daidoji, and no other family was as integral to the removal of the *gaijin* presence as the Crane. Without the warfleet of the Crane (something unheard of in Rokugan, since most battles are fought on land), the Imperial Palace would have been destroyed and the *gaijin* blockade of



THE DAIDOJI MON

Mon: A crane, wings outstretched above a snake, wrapped about a yari.

Saying: "The spear waits not for its master, but rushes forth to guard the way."

The Daidoji respect the spear as a weapon, and many of their bushi learn to use a yari before they learn to use a katana. Their creed speaks of their readiness to leap to the defense of the Clan – both in military and other matters. A Daidoji bushi has his Clan's mon tattooed on his wrists on the day of his *gempukku*, to remind him of his sworn duty to the Crane.



Rokugani ports would have badly damaged the Empire. The Battle of the Raging Seas occurred on the waves of Wan sano Kin Tayo (Bay of the Golden Sun).

Although he does not teach its tactics at the Daidoji bushi school, Daidoji Uji has practiced and learned some of the gaijin's strange *katas*, and has one of their strange, two-edged swords mounted on his wall. Many of the other samurai houses feel that Uji has stained his honor by learning the ways of foreigners, but Uji scoffs at their words. "Without knowledge," he says, "we will not be prepared for defense." Uji has gained moderate proficiency with several of the strange foreign weapons the Unicorn brought back with them, instructing his students to learn them as well. One tactic which is not looked upon with favor is Uji's fascination with "gaijin pepper". Of course, Uji (and all of Rokugan) is forbidden to use the strange matériel in battle, so Uji restrains himself – at least in public – to composing elaborate firework displays for the many festival days of the Crane.

The Daidoji library is a tremendous resource of theoretical knowledge, filled with dissertations of generals, accounts of battles from Rokugan's past and theories of warfare compiled by the most brilliant battlefield commanders. However, the library contains yet another amazing feat of tactical training. Tremendous tables built to display the terrain around various Crane holdings stand in the Daidoji library so that strategic councils can be held to train the bushi. These tables, accurate to within five feet, show all the terrain features and treelines, castle positions, rivers and roads. Each year, the students of the Daidoji school are sent out for three months, to mark the changed positions of trees or other land markers. These changes, dutifully represented on each table's map, keep the Crane forces intimately familiar with every foot of the land they are charged to protect.

Battle of the Landbridge

The Battle of the Landbridge occurred on the shores of Kenkai Hanto (The Peninsula of Hardened Waters). Long ago, the Emperor decreed that this peninsula be split between the forces of the Crane and the Crab, forever to be

held by both clans. Since that day, no military action has ever occurred between the two on land, although some brief sea battles have been fought in the great bay to the west of Kenkai Hanto.

The most memorable battle was not fought between the Clans, but was one in which the Crane and the Crab fought side by side. Several hundred years ago, under the leadership of Hida Bokaru (third son to the Crab Clan Champion and defender of the eastern portion of the great southern wall), the Crab were forced to hold their ground against a tremendous army of oni from the Shadowlands, determined to tear their way past the wall and plunder the rich lands of Rokugan. The eastern line of the wall was lightly defended, as all the Crab advisors and strategists anticipated that the oni armies would travel west, over the plains toward Shinomen Mori.

But the oni had spies within Crab territories. Hidden watchers and clever magics allowed them to see the Crab battle defenses. Their leader, the clever Oni no Kinjiro, led his troops to the easternmost side of the wall, where the gentle seas met the shore. Oni no Kinjiro was wise, crafty and eager for power. He was not the largest opponent the Crab had ever faced, but he was the most intelligent. He drew the Crab forces away to defend the farthest western point of the Kaiu wall and then attacked the lightly defended ocean pass. The army struck at night, their howling voices and shining eyes coming ever closer to the Crab lines of defense, but none of the Crab moved, nor thought to turn away from their duty. They were, after all, Crab, and sworn to defend Rokugan against the Shadowlands with their lives. Hida Bokaru, given few troops, tried to repel the invasion, but it was not enough. With his last samurai beside him, he sent up a flare of magic, hoping that the Crab forces to the west would see it before it was too late, and come to his aid.

But Oni no Kinjiro knew well the ways of the Crab, and as soon as he saw the brightness in the air, he cast darkness to its west, so that the signal could not be seen by the rest of the troops on the wall, and no aid would come. Then he tore open a section of the stone ramparts and prepared to lead his horde onto the plains of Rokugan.

Until a hunting horn cut through the howls of the oni. Across the tidal bridge rode Daidoji Masashigi, the *daimyo* of the Daidoji. Surrounded only by his hunting party, some twenty samurai, he charged into the Oni's ranks, smashing toward the Crab and catching the oni in a pincer-like



wise. Fierce in battle, the Daidoji's *yari* cut through the oni like a reaper's shears, hurling their heads to the ground with each vicious slash. The Crab flare had been seen and the forces of Rokugan had responded. For the first time in history, Crab and Crane stood side by side and fought a common enemy.

Daidoji Masashigi had been hunting with his falcons that day, near the tidal bridge. When he saw the dark creatures overwhelming the Crab, he sounded his hunting horn and raced his horses across the sand. Although his samurai were few, they followed him through the rising waves to the aid of the Hida bushi. As he arrived, he saw Oni no Kinjiro tear through the Hida house guards, reaching the son of the *daimyo*. The Crab thrust his katana into the beast's heart, but the Oni lifted him above its head in sharp, gore-covered claws. As the beast threw Bokeru to the ground, its strength making the area shudder with the impact, a rain of Daidoji arrows pelted its thick hide driving Kenjiro away from the gap in the wall.

The Crab rallied, allowing the relatively fresh Daidoji take the brunt of the fighting and giving the weary Crab samurai a much needed rest. The

Crane fought valiantly and pushed the Oni away from the wall as Hida Bokeru's wounded body was retrieved.

Together, Daidoji Masashigi and Hida Bokeru held the wall, their few men struggling beneath the overwhelming tide of the Shadowlands. Hida Bokeru's legs were crushed, but the Daidoji defended the fallen general, fighting over his comrade as men bound the Hida's wounds. The battle was fierce, and the number of Crab and Crane dwindled. Finally, the remaining Oni, led by Kinjiro, broke through the defenses and rushed toward the sandy beach on the far side of the wall. It was a clever maneuver, and if successful, the Oni would be free on the peninsula, with the ocean swallowing any hope of pursuit.

With only three of his men still alive, the Daidoji charged after them. The Oni turned to counterattack, crushing the Crane beneath onslaught after onslaught of claws and teeth, but the Daidoji refused to fall back. Each time the Oni made for safety on the far side of the landbridge, the Daidoji tore at their retreating backs, and they were forced to turn and fight.

From the other side of the bridge, the two Crab samurai still alive watched the desperate battle,





COURIER PIGEONS

Courier pigeons commonly carry messages from a retainer to their daimyo. Battle plans, secret information and even letters from distant lovers - all have been carried on the grey wings of the pigeon. The Crane began training carrier pigeons in the year 525 of the Empire, in order to carry messages more rapidly. Since then, the use of these reliable birds have spread, and now there is no Clan who does not maintain at least one roost.

Courier pigeons are delicate creatures, and they are treated with great care.

The secret of using the carrier pigeon is this: never feed them on a journey.

Carrier pigeons have an excellent sense of direction and distance, and they will return to the place where they have been fed. Usually, this is the coop in which they were raised, but it is not unusual to feed carrier pigeons at a field house when a battle is occurring far from a palace or village.

their wounds and their duty to their half-conscious general preventing them from joining the valiant struggle. As they watched, the Daidoji fought the Oni until the water rose above their heads, swallowing them all in reddened foam. The Crab stood on the far shore of the landbridge, but not a single samurai, not a single oni, ever came ashore.

On the Crab side of the landbridge stands a small shrine with simple walls. Within it a small table sits; on its surface lies the helm of Daidoji Masashigi, washed ashore several weeks after the battle. Nothing else ever rose from the depths, and its battered and rusted form is the symbol of the sacrifice made that day by the house the Crab now call the "Iron Crane".



Kyuden Kitsune

This battle is one of the most recent in Crane history, occurring only 30 years ago. Two of the smaller clans - the Fox and the Hare - were engaging in skirmishes across their borders, each

seeking to build their own reputation at the expense of the other. Finally, a group of Kakita samurai, led by the then-young Toshimoko, met with the gathered troops of the two families on the border. After persuasion and some open threats, the two Clans agreed to seek a diplomatic solution. But it was not to be. Late that night, a group of assassins, apparently hired by the Hare, slaughtered many of the sleeping Fox Clan dignitaries. The *daimyo*, Kitsune Oshirin, declared war upon the Hare and the two clans met in battle the next morning. The Crane sided with the Fox, and the battle was swiftly over. Rather than being grateful, Oshirin claimed it was their intervention of the Crane that had caused the death of his wife. He challenged Toshimoko to a duel, was cut down, and died on the field.

This battle is also called the "Night of a Hundred Deaths," due to the number of dignitaries killed by the assassins. The Hare Clan has maintained that it did not hire, send, nor assist the attack that night, but few members of the Great Houses believe them. Since that fateful battle, the Crane have overseen the lands of both clans, assisting their rulers in rebuilding and keeping a diplomatic eye on their borders. By command of the Emperor, a Crane was assigned advisor to both daimyos, and any decision can be challenged in the Emperor's name. This has only been done twice in the last 30 years, both times when the Hare Clan threatened again to invade Fox lands. While the Crane advisor has had some difficulty in the court of the Fox, the Crane have stayed as unobtrusive as possible, and relations between the two Clans have begun to be amicable again. The Hare have no such friendship with the Crane. As a result, the daimyo of the Hare has repeatedly sought for a repeal of the Imperial

command, to relieve him of his unwanted "advisor".

The Imperial process of assigning "advisors" to unruly minor clans is an infrequent occurrence, and has only been used some ten to fifteen times in the history of the Empire. Typically, the "advisors" are recalled after three to five years.

Victory With No Strike

Six hundred years ago, the Lion attacked the lands of the Phoenix. Although many died on either side, the war didn't end until the Crane cut off Lion supply lines and proclaimed a trade embargo against Lion forces. A battle at Nemui Kaminari Yama was interrupted by Daidoji infantry backed by the political strength of Doji voices in court. When the Crane came to aid the Phoenix, the Lion were forced to negotiate a truce.

Soon thereafter, a lone Phoenix shugenja, Isawa Asahina, began ransacking villages in Crane territory, killing anyone who stood between him and his revenge. He spent the next week burning down Crane villages, farms and caravans. The Crane daimyo's daughter, Doji Kiriko, rode out to stop him. She met him at every village, stepping between him and the helpless farmers, but she refused to fight. She earned many scars from his wrath, but after many days of passive resistance, she also earned his respect.

Battle of the Raging Seas

On land, the clans fought the Battle at White Stag, but the sea battle of the Crane forces is named the "Battle of the Raging Seas". When the gaijin invaded Rokugan over seven hundred years ago, their intended target was the Imperial Palace of the Emperor, accessible through the Wan sano Kin Tayo (Bay of the Golden Sun). They came with a great fleet, bearing strange implements of war that thundered like the storm-filled sky. The magics of the Isawa defended the palace, but it grew clear that spells were weakening.

The Crane Champion at the time, Doji Sekidera, called upon the power of his merchant fleet to help save the Imperial City. The Asahina shugenja caused a great fog to spring up across the bay, darkening the sea and making vision impossible. Hiding in thick clouds, the small but swift ships of the Crane fleet harried the slower gaijin galleons, eventually tearing them apart.

When the battle on the land was complete, the gaijin were completely routed, their troops

destroyed and their means of passage had sunk beneath the ocean's waves.

The gaijin were defeated and sent home from the Empire, never to return again as a warlike force. Their traders and merchants were, for a time, forbidden to enter Imperial territories, and are still viewed with suspicion today.

Battle of the Sleeping River

A little less than five hundred years ago, Iuchiban and his Blood Speakers posed a major threat to the lands and lives of the Rokugani people. His tainted magics and dark creations were assisted by his *shirekan* (commander, see *Way of the Dragon*, p. 26), Asahina Yajinden, called by some Teh Kurai no Iuchiban (The Dark Hand of Iuchiban). The Crane were infuriated by Yajinden's betrayal, and dedicated themselves to eradicating his *kuei* magics.

During the battle to capture Iuchiban, Doji Hejiko, then Champion of the Crane, charged into the fray with only four followers. She captured Yajinden after Iuchiban's apparent death, and he was put on trial as a traitor and a practitioner of *maho*, the forbidden magic. After much debate within the Imperial court, the Asahina were allowed to decide Yajinden's fate. The Asahina daimyo proclaimed that because of their pacifistic beliefs, Yajinden would not die. Instead he was sealed within the walls of the Asahina palace for 21 days, while their shugenja cast spells and performed elaborate rituals. When they were done, Yajinden had the mind of a babe, and was left to tend the gardens of the Imperial palace, as a reminder of what becomes of those who betray the Crane.

Two hundred years later, Iuchiban rose again to threaten the Emerald Empire. Again, the Clans rose to stop him, this time facing an army of zombies at the battle of Sleeping River. The Crane played a prominent part in the battle, rallying the Empire's forces after the undead had broken through their lines. Historians credit the Crane with preventing a rout, and with keeping the dark forces in check while the Dragon tattooed men recaptured Iuchiban.



COURIER PIGEONS (CONTINUED)

The pigeons, growing hungry after captivity while their carrier traveled from place to place, will return to the last place where they were fed, hoping to be given more food. Thus, a message that is attached to the pigeon's leg will be delivered faithfully home.

Sometimes, the leg-band which the pigeon carries is marked with the symbol of their Clan or their home coop location, so that if the pigeon dies or is wounded on its way home, it is still possible for the message to be recovered.

Courier pigeons can live for as long as two weeks with no food, and can travel great distances in a very short time - thus making them very useful for scouting parties or traveling bushi on a mission far from home.



CRAB AND CRANE DIPLOMACY

Diplomacy between the Crane and the Crab has always been a touchy business. Since the famous Yasuki break, tensions between the two houses have been high.

Furthermore, the Crab's negotiators have traditionally been the Yasuki (the closest things to diplomats which the Crab have). Needless to say, the Yasuki are not welcome in Crane lands, and this has caused some trouble between the clans. Also, the Crab house visiting diplomats in Black Crane Palace, the heart of the Yasuki lands.

Rather than send Yasuki to the Crane lands, or Cranes to the Black Palace, the Crab have trained some Hida and Hiruma diplomats specifically to negotiate with the Crane. Crane courtiers are the only ones allowed to visit Kyuden Hida directly, and the only ones who can make deals without Yasuki interference. This works fairly well, given that the Crane diplomats tend to be Daidoji, and accustomed to Crab bluntness. Since the Daidoji are the only Crane which the Crab respect, negotiations are made easier on both sides.

Night of Falling Stars

This was the famed battle in which Shiro no Yogin was lost to the Akodo legions. Although the Daidoji held their ground for three weeks, they were at last overcome. Threatened with surrender to the forces of the Lion, the men, women and children of Shiro no Yogin threw themselves from the walls of the palace, risking death in the swiftly flowing waters of the river below. Their torches, falling with them from the walls of the palace in the night, give this battle its name.

The great Crane general, Daidoji Yurei, was born on the field when the Crane fled the palace, and many times he tried to retake its hallowed walls. The Lion have held their ground, and the castle has not returned to Crane power. The river below the palace is said to be haunted with the spirits of those who died there, and when the moon is full, the ghosts rise, the fields turn to blood, and the rushing river sounds like the wails of children. Once a year, on the seventh day of the month of the Snake, the Lion bar the gates of Shiro no Yogin. On that night, the spirit of Daidoji Yurei walks the plains outside the castle, and tears any Lion he finds into bloody shreds. Over the years the Lion have held the haunted palace, seven Lions have been outside the walls on that night. All have been found, in pieces, spread across the fields when the morning comes.



A person overwhelmed still lives, a person dishonored died long before their heart ceases to beat.

- Tao of Shinsei

History

This history of the Yasuki family begins with their service to the Crane Clan, and the first Yasuki's sworn allegiance to the house of Doji. The Yasuki married into the Kakita family, but they were not originally of the samurai class. Their history has always been questioned by scholars as the "common born" samurai family of Rokugan. In all their years of service to both the Crane and the Crab, the Yasuki have never fully lost the stigma of their origin.

For the first three hundred years, the Yasuki they served the Crane and furthered the economic and political pursuits of the Doji family. During this time, the first Yasuki made their mark on the culture of Rokugan, instituting a policy of trade through gifts, rather than the "dishonorable" merchanting disdained by the samurai caste of the Emerald Empire. They served as the traveling traders of the early years, when roads were scarce and treaties between the families of the Empire were strained by distance and fresh hatreds. When the first war with Fu Leng began, the constant efforts of the Yasuki kept the troops of Rokugan supplied with weapons and food. One of the first daimyo of the Yasuki was given the title of the Imperial Trade Advisor to the Emerald Throne, a title held for many years by the Yasuki courtiers who served the Crane.

The symbiotic relationships within the Crane house have always stressed that no single family is more important than any other to the clan's survival. For the Yasuki, this meant that they were responsible for running of the various market places, commercial operations and illicit dealings of the Crane, all functions of which the Yasuki were fiercely proud. When the Emperor of Rokugan demanded that these be shut down, it was the Yasuki who were most bitter over the Imperial decree.

The Crab War and the Yasuki Break

From the beginning of the Empire, the Yasuki have been seen as "common". Their roots are among humble fishermen and traders, and the business of merchanting takes up too much of time to bother with noble graces or courtesy

appearances. Money, and money alone, has always been the Yasuki creed. The Yasuki have always flaunted their economic power, and even after their infamous break with the Crane, those who criticize too harshly often find themselves short of supplies when winter comes.

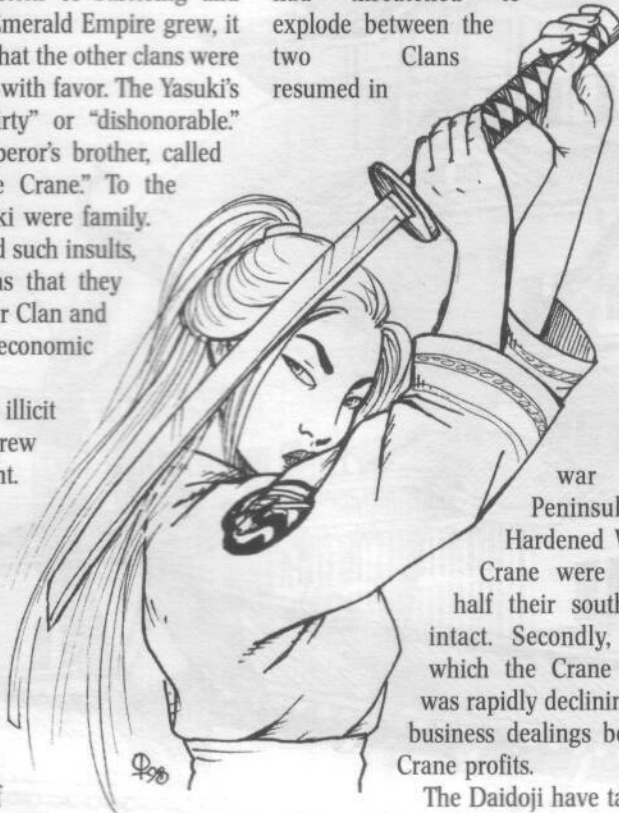
In the beginning, the Yasuki used their gift of economic foresight in order to promote Crane welfare and create a system of bartering and monetary power. As the Emerald Empire grew, it became readily apparent that the other clans were not looking on commerce with favor. The Yasuki's methods were called "dirty" or "dishonorable." Otomo Totogasi, the Emperor's brother, called them "the shame of the Crane." To the Crane, however, the Yasuki were family. Lady Doji often challenged such insults, reminding the other clans that they were not only insulting her Clan and her family, but also the economic foundation of Rokugan.

As time passed, the illicit dabblings of the Yasuki grew more and more prominent. The Crane Champion attempted to keep the Yasuki dealings under his control. The geisha houses, gambling, and drug sales grew to a tremendous level, however, and the Yasuki showed no intention of restraining their markets as long as they remained profitable.

At last, the old Emperor died, and his son took the Emerald Throne in 387. The inexperienced Hantei claimed that such dealings were not only dishonorable, but dangerous, and directly ordered Doji Mizobu to stop all such dealings within his Clan or lose his place in the Imperial Court. Faced with such a dire threat, Mizobu called together a meeting of the daimyos of the Asahina, Doji, Daidoji, Kakita and Yasuki and told them of the Emperor's edict. The Yasuki bluntly refused to withdraw their support of these operations, claiming that they supported Crane armies throughout the southern peninsula. The Crane Champion would not waver from his command, and he banned the Yasuki from his lands. Of course, the Yasuki claimed that the demands were

unfair and they were given no time to accede to the requests of the Emperor.

In any case, this left the Crane with two problems. The Crab rapidly snatched up the outcast Yasuki, using their trade and business acumen to increase their power and break the economic stranglehold which the Crane had maintained. The war which had threatened to explode between the two Clans resumed in



full force, and the Crane were left backpedaling behind Daidoji lines.

Only the command of the Emperor stopped the war over the Peninsula of the Hardened Waters, and the Crane were left with only half their southern territories intact. Secondly, the economy which the Crane had relied on was rapidly declining as the Yasuki business dealings began to assault Crane profits.

The Daidoji have taken the Yasuki betrayal to heart and refused to waver in their hatred. They see the Yasuki as traitors, betrayers who not only refused the direct command of their Champion but also of the Emperor. They have sworn to one day wipe Rokugan clean of the merchant house. However, the Yasuki business acumen and their new Crab allies have provided the necessary resources to keep the minor house alive.

This economic war has gone, for the most part, unnoticed by the other clans. The vast amounts of koku lost and won over smuggling, trade treaties and diplomatic arrangements are too petty for most of Rokugan's samurai houses to dirty their hands with. However, the war between the Daidoji and the Yasuki has given rise to a new power within the Empire, a power which lies in the darkest, most secret tunnels of society - the Kolat.



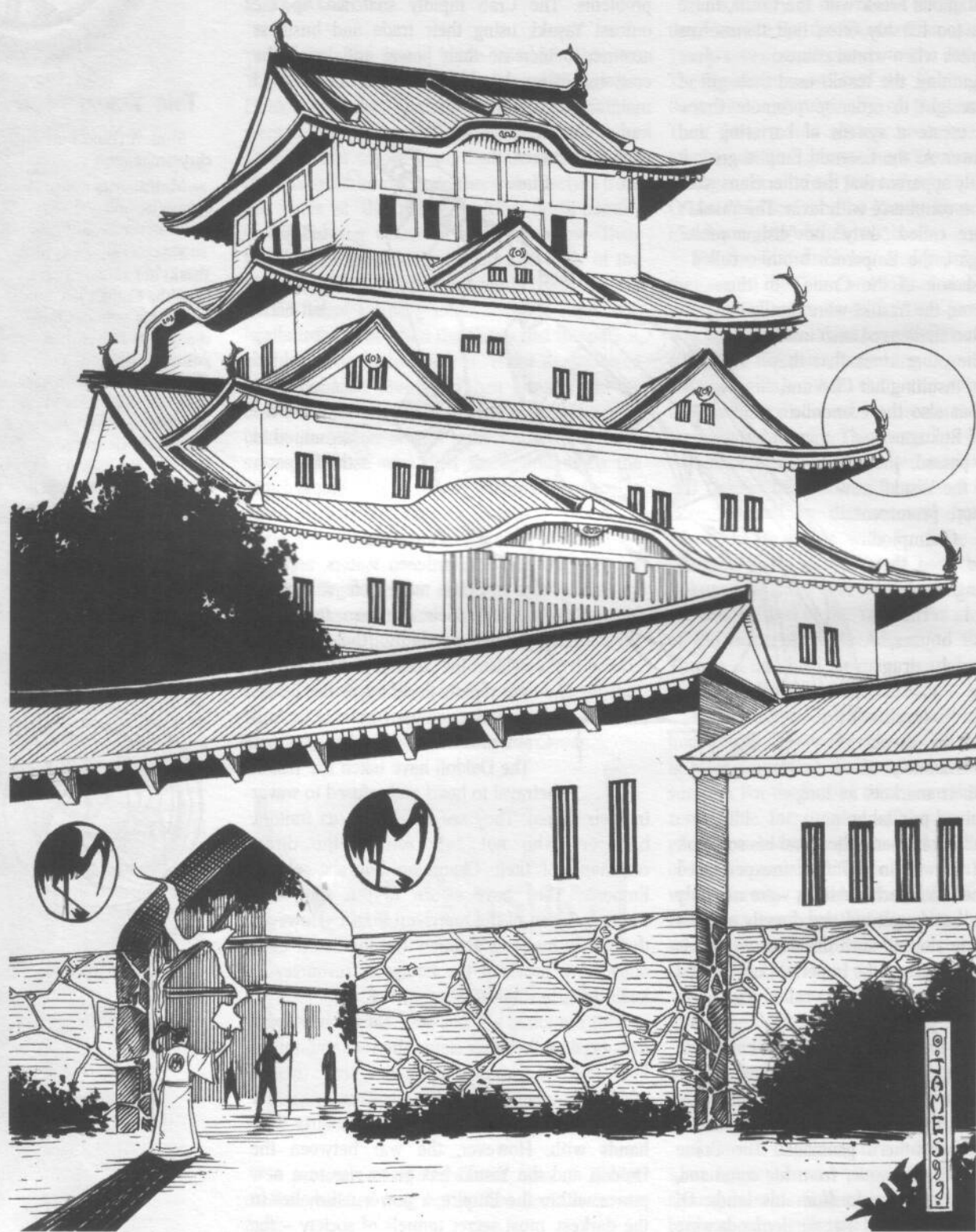
THE YASUKI MON

Mon: A crane with a chrysanthemum.

Motto: "May your cup always be full, and your hands never be empty."

This was the mon of the Yasuki before their break from the Crane Clan. Since then, their *mon* has been changed to reflect their new position within the Crab Clan, but the original Yasuki mon can still be found on ancient items. Many of these items were destroyed - either by the Yasuki themselves or the Daidoji - but some few remain. They are considered to be very bad luck to a Yasuki; if at any time one is brought within the walls of the Black Crane palace, it is said to bring a year of bad trade and ill fortune.





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Chapter Three



Character



Chapter Three: Character

In this chapter you will find new information for Crane characters, including new skills, Advantages and Disadvantages, and Schools such as the Kakita Artisan and the Doji Courtier. It also contains a set of Favor Tables for use with Crane characters, to be used at the GM's discretion. Lastly, we've created a set of optional Heritage tables, capable of customizing your character's history and family lineage. These new additions should be approved by your GM before they are integrated into your game.

New Skills

APPRAISAL (PERCEPTION)

With this skill, characters can determine the approximate value of an item or group of items. Further, a character with the Appraisal skill has a greater chance of identifying forgeries and counterfeits. This is a Merchant Skill.

ARTISAN SKILLS

Acrobatics	Dancing	Ikebana
Jester	Music	Noh/Kabuki
Origami	Painting	Poetry
Storytelling		

These skills are designed to be used by Kakita artisans with their *maya* abilities. However, it is not unreasonable for any character to have working knowledge of an art. These skills grant the knowledge of how to perform the ability, including basic knowledge of things associated with it. For example, a character with the Origami skill would have knowledge of papermaking, and a character with the Noh skill would have knowledge of theatrical literature, makeup

techniques and costume making. These artistic knowledges are not designed to grant complete competency in all their related fields, only to give a working comprehension of those areas. These skills are considered High Skills.

ASTROLOGY (INTELLIGENCE)

This is the skill of identifying heavenly bodies and patterns, such as stars and constellations. It allows a shugenja to determine what astrological omens are currently in effect and what their connotations are. This skill can be used for simple divinations about the future, and for determining the appropriate time for the creation of certain items and fetishes. Also, it can be used to identify certain character traits according to the day, date and year of someone's birth, and to predict certain future events or omens. If a character wishes to use Astrology as a divination tool, their TN is 15, and the Gamemaster should give them a general view of the events in the future, simply supplying a list of adjectives such as "pleasant, peaceful, and uneventful" or "dangerous, death is in the future." This is a High Skill.

MANIPULATION (AWARENESS)

Manipulation is the art of using psychology and character interpretation in order to predict someone's actions. It can be used to determine wants, needs and desires and can also tell the character how to fulfill them. As with many other Awareness-based Skills, conversation is required to use this Skill. This is a High Skill.

ORATORY/RHETORIC (PERCEPTION)

A character with this skill has training in the art of speechmaking. Oratory - the art of performing a persuasive speech before an audience - can be used to convince a large group of people of a certain point of view. Characters with the Voice advantage gain a free raise when using Oratory. Rhetoric is the ability to write persuasive speeches for others to recite, and can be used in conjunction with other artisan skills in order to create a more effective document. This is a High Skill.

POLITICAL MANEUVERING (INTELLIGENCE) (CRANE ONLY)

Everyone in the Emperor's court knows a Crane's heart is an honorable heart. Therefore, in

disagree with a Crane (especially if he has logic on his side) is to turn your back on honor.

With this Skill, the Crane can move opponents into the position of disagreement. This is done through simple conversation, but it must be done in public to gain the best effect. The Crane uses traps of logic to lead someone toward the Crane's chosen outcome. If the Crane is successful, their opponent will find that if they disagree, they appear dishonorable. If they agree, then they must do as the Crane has suggested.

The Crane rolls his Skill + Intelligence against a TN of his opponent's Awareness x 5 (The character gets a free raise if his opponent has the Gullible disadvantage, and is penalized by 5 if his opponent has the Clear Thinker advantage). If successful, the Crane's opponent would be acting without honor if they were to disagree with the supposition, and must perform as the Crane has outlined. On the other hand, if someone is caught in the verbal trap and refuses to give in to the Crane, they will lose one point of Honor. This honor loss may be increased by another point for

each raise the Crane uses on his initial skill roll. This skill will automatically fail if used against someone with a higher Honor rank. This is a High Skill.

TSANGUSURI (ASAHINA SHUGENJA ONLY)

This is the skill needed for an Asahina shugenja to create the minor, one-use magic talismans (or "fetishes") which are popular among the Crane. Such talismans often require an amount of time (as much as a week) to be spent finding the appropriate materials for creation, and a successful use of Astrology must be made to determine the correct time and day for the ceremony to be performed. Lastly, the item must be made on a sacred site appropriate to the item's nature - an ancestral shrine, for example, or on temple grounds. This is a High Skill.

New Advantages

CADENCE (CRANES ONLY) (3 POINTS)

This is the secret language of the Crane artisans, capable of encoding detailed information into song, speech or painting. Certain mythological figures have meanings which can be deciphered by those who have been taught the Cadence. It is never taught to a non-Crane, lest their enemies learn the secret of their exceptional abilities of information gathering. This Advantage can be bought during play if the GM decides a willing Crane mentor can be found.

FAVOR TABLES (3-15 POINTS)

This advantage allows the character to begin the game with a few favors "in his pocket". These favors need to be given a good history and background, and must be appropriate to the concept of the character itself. Purchase of this advantage grants the character one initial roll on the favor tables. It may be purchased up to three times per character. The point cost for this advantage is the table's rank (1-5) times three. The favor tables can be found on page 56.



COURTIERS AND CHAMPIONS

From time to time, a Courtier's honor will be questioned during the course of play. There's no need to throw your Courtier away simply because you have no talent in iaijutsu! Courtiers are allowed to call upon a champion to accept the duel in their place. Most opponents will allow the Courtier one full day to find a champion; more if the contest of honor is a truly serious one, or the Courtier's champion must arrive from a distant place. If their champion is successful, the Courtier's honor is avenged. If unsuccessful, and their champion dies, the Courtier is expected to perform *seppuku* immediately.





CHANGING SCHOOLS

Let's talk for a moment about the practical side of "changing schools."

Let's play a Crane samurai who wants to go to the Scorpion bushi school. First, he has to convince his *sensei*: "Master, while I have not learned all you have to teach me, I have decided that there is nothing else here for me. I want to go across the mountains to the Bayushi and learn from them."

Then, he has to go to his *daimyo*: "My lord, while I am sworn in fealty to your service, I have decided to leave your household and learn the ways of the Scorpion. While doing this, I will not be in your command, because I will have sworn my life to another *daimyo* and *sensei*."

Lastly, he has to go to the Scorpion: "While I have not fulfilled my debt to my lord and did not have the perseverance to complete my training in his school, I would like you to teach me your family's secrets."

Yeah, right.

Go read Doji Kuwanan's history. He's got a lot of reasons for having the *Multiple Schools* advantage. If you want it, you'd better have reasons just as good ... if not better.

Remember, *seppuku* hurts.

INNER GIFT (6 POINTS)

The character with Inner Gift has been blessed with an uncontrollable talent, perhaps empathy, precognition, or the ability to sense when danger is near. It is up to the GM to let the character know when their gift activates, and what that means to the current situation. A character with the inner gift of precognition, for example, might have a series of dreams about a bloody knife, only to wake up one morning and find their dearest friend has been assassinated. A character with empathy might be able to tell when someone is lying to them, or a character with a gift of psychometry (reading emotions from objects) might gain a flash of insight when they pick up a samurai's katana. The gift must be clearly defined at the time a character purchases this Advantage. The Gifts a character can choose are: precognition, animal speech, psychometry, and empathy.

KAKITA BLADE (4; 8 FOR NON-CRANE CHARACTERS)

Kakita blades are the finest swords in the Empire, thinner and more flexible than ordinary katana. A character who carries a Kakita sword has prestige, and draws attention. A character can begin the game with a Kakita blade only under certain circumstances. Kakita blades are rarely given to youths, and only under very special circumstances is one allowed to leave the Crane

lands. These blades are rarely given to non-Crane Characters. A Kakita blade rolls and keeps one extra die when striking to hit an opponent, and allows its user to reroll a single damage die during an *iaijutsu* duel.

MULTIPLE SCHOOLS (5 POINTS)

This is an unusual advantage, in that it can only be bought after a bushi (and only a bushi and only to another bushi school) has progressed beyond level 1 in his school. GM permitting, this Advantage lets the player switch schools without losing his old techniques.

When the bushi switches schools, his old Techniques are "frozen". He won't learn any further techniques from his old school, but he'll begin learning new techniques in his new school immediately. As soon as he gains permission to begin training at the new school, he more-or-less immediately learns the Rank 1 Technique (GM's discretion on the length of training necessary, but probably not longer than 3 to 6 game months). The bushi then begins gaining Techniques in his new school as his Insight goes up, just as usual.

Example: Doji Kuwanan buys the Different School advantage (5 points) and immediately begins training at the Akodo school under Akodo Toturi. After he has gained enough Insight to learn the second Technique, he buys Multiple Schools (5 more points), returns home to attend the Daidoji school, and learns the first-rank





Daidoji technique instead. When he attains enough Insight to learn a new technique, he learns the second rank Daidoji technique. He doesn't learn the second or third rank Akodo technique, since he's no longer at that school. Kawanan now knows the first rank Akodo technique (and will never advance again in that school), and the first and second rank Daidoji Technique. Even though he has the insight of a third rank bushi, he doesn't know the third-rank Technique for either school.

PATRON (ARTISAN ONLY) (1-5 POINTS)

Someone of importance has taken an interest in you. Not to be confused with the Allies advantage, a Patron expects a certain amount of reciprocal trade for their gifts. The patron will call upon the character from time to time, expecting some great work of art or a creation to celebrate the patron's latest achievement. However, such works will undoubtedly be circulated among the patron's followers, and this may cause a certain amount of fame and jealousy. This is similar to the "Sensei" advantage in the basic RPG, but it differs in two ways. One, the patron may not know anything about the art itself, and may therefore be simply an admirer rather than a teacher; and two, the patron seeks to advance the character's political and artistic career by displaying the artisan's masterpieces in courts and public gatherings. Of course, in exchange for this, the artisan is expected to create masterpieces which flatter their patron and give them glory. The artisan is also expected to perform at the request of their patron, whenever the patron has need for the artisan's services.

The more points an artisan spends on a patron, the more powerful and influential their patron will be - and the more often the patron will call upon the artisan to perform their art.

PRECISE MEMORY (3 POINTS)

The character has a phenomenal ability to memorize facts, figures and written material. Their mind records information easily, but this does not make them infallible. Neither does it give them any unusual ability to understand the information, nor learn new skills or languages. Characters wishing to remember something intricate, or precisely memorize large amounts of information, must make a simple Intelligence roll

at a TN of 20. More complex information may require a higher TN to memorize.

WEALTHY (1-10 POINTS)

For each point a character spends on this advantage (up to a maximum of ten), they begin with two additional koku.

New Disadvantages

COLORBLIND (1 POINT)

The Doji tend to have eyes that are paler than most of Rokugan's natives, and sometimes this causes colorblindness. The Colorblind character can see colors as shades of gray, but cannot tell the difference between shades. This tends to make certain tasks more difficult, such as identifying a Clan's *mon*.

EPILEPSY (4 POINTS)

Because the Crane families often interbreed with the Emperor's lineage, some simple genetic problems have evolved. One of these difficulties is epilepsy, a rare disease which can cause rigidity of muscles, shaking symptoms, and even death. Epilepsy is a genetic disfunction which often arises when the character is under stress. Also, flashing lights (such as a fireworks display) can trigger a seizure. The Rokugani believe that a character with this malady has been touched by the *kami*, and that they are a channel for divine influences. Thus, any character who shows obvious signs of epilepsy (shaking fits, spasms, etc.) might be shunned by common society, but treated as a mystic or holy man by those brave enough to come near. When a character with epilepsy is in a stressful situation, they must make a Willpower roll at a TN of 15 to resist a seizure. If the character enters a seizure, they may make a Willpower roll each round at a TN of 20 to end the seizure.

FASCINATION (2 POINTS)

The character has a fascination with something - music, horses, ancient history - and will go to any length to learn new things about it. A character with a fascination for spellcraft might resort to stealing scrolls from other shugenja. Someone who has a fascination with horses would go to any length to purchase (or otherwise obtain) one of the finest steeds of the Unicorn, and someone who was fascinated with the Naga

ROLE-PLAYING NOTES FOR THE DOJII COURTIER

Playing a Courtier in the Emerald Empire is a difficult task which requires a great deal of role-playing and finesse. The Courtier is not ideal for every situation, nor will a group of Courtiers do well in a combat-focused adventure. However, a Courtier character does have certain abilities and traits which are not available to mere bushi or shugenja. The Courtier's ability to handle political situations, the trust which people place in a diplomat, and the instant respect among nobility of any Clan are bonuses which a Courtier provides. Gamemasters should take a Courtier's reputation into account, and the power behind their words. Diplomats speak for the Crane, and often for another house, which has hired them to intercede on their behalf. Aggravating these forces with no legitimate cause could force a minor daimyo to *seppuku*, or cause a war between factions. Certainly, when a Courtier visits an NPC daimyo or feudal governor, they should be treated with respect and honor. This is not to imply that the Champion of the Unicorn will give the character anything they want - only that they will be able to use political pressure to achieve certain goals which other character types cannot.

(continued)



ROLE-PLAYING NOTES FOR THE DOJI COURTIER (CONTINUED)

Politics in Rokugan are integrated so deeply into the culture that a group without a Courtier may not even be allowed access to a daimyo without the intervention of outside forces. Courtiers are trusted to handle delicate situations, investigate misconduct and reprimand dishonor with the full force of their political backing.

Even without a directed mission, the Courtier has enough trust that their word carries great weight in court. A minor daimyo would be hard-pressed to keep their position if the word of a powerful and influential Courtier spoke against them to their feudal Lord, especially if their claims were true!

Courtiers fit in many campaigns, and we've tried to make them as well-rounded as possible, but the majority of their power comes from the campaign. Gamemasters should take into account that Rokugan relies on civilization and courtly proceedings in order to avert full scale war, and that the Courtiers can cause as much havoc as any other member of the party. Their power is subtle, and requires both the Gamemaster and the player to do much role-playing. That's both the reward and the drawback of the Courtier - and it should be played to the hilt.

would leap at the chance to travel into the forests of Shinomen, searching for Naga ruins even if the forest was crawling with monsters.

VANITY (1 POINT)

You are gorgeous and/or brilliant - and you know it. Unfortunately the rest of the world doesn't seem to notice. You'd better make sure they know the quality of person they are dealing with!



The Daidoji tend to be the most physically strong members of the Clan. Their craftiness and cunning are well-known throughout Rokugan, as is their mental fortitude and iron will. A member of the Daidoji family can be identified by his family's *mon*, which is tattooed upon his wrists at the time of his *gempukku*.

Benefit : +1 Strength



*The truth is always simple.
Liars make things complicated.*

- The Tao of Shinsei

While other clans alternately hate and envy the Doji for their ability to influence the Imperial Court and other political negotiations in Rokugan, none can contest the Crane's absolute dominance over its system of intricate favors and compromises - their ability to create opportunity from nothing, to influence people's decisions and to negotiate the best possible outcome to every situation. Although some other clans - most notably the Crab and Dragon - criticize the Crane's political acumen, they are quick to engage the master courtiers and diplomats of the Crane when their own efforts fail.

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Skills: Courtier; Sincerity; Etiquette; Heraldry; Manipulation; Oratory; any one High skill.

Honor: 3, and 5 boxes

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Perfect Gift

The Doji Courtier is part of a tremendously large system of give-and-take between the clans, a system which has resulted in the collection of "favors" from various families and individuals. Often, the Crane will intercede in political situations on behalf of other clans, and from this will gain certain political compensation. A Crane diplomat begins at rank one with the ability to exchange these favors - either on his own behalf or for another. Each chart on the favor tables of the Crane show examples of political favors which the Crane Clan can call upon. At the courtier's first school rank, they must be from the rank one favor table; at the second school rank, they may be from either rank one or two favors, and so on. The Courtier may call upon a maximum number of favors per adventure equal to their Air + School Rank.

Rank 2: A Whisper From the Soul

A second rank courtier has gained a great amount of control over their emotions, enough so that they can affect others with them - for good or ill. Through the study of a person's motivations and desires, the courtier gains a certain influence over a person's mental state - be it one of love, depression, or fear. The ability to influence people's emotions is a powerful one, and can change people's reactions or alter how they perceive their surroundings. Certainly, it can make someone more sympathetic to the courtier's cause, or it can foster trust toward the courtier. With the use of this skill, the courtier attempts to change a person's emotional state to one more



useful to the courtier's goals. A courtier who shifts a person's emotional state toward anger while telling them of an imminent Lion army's invasion might cause their audience to react poorly toward any Lion Clan members they come in contact with - even to the point of offering their services to those opposing the Lion. In order to be successful, a courtier must spend a minimum of five minutes talking to their target, and make a successful Contested Awareness roll.

Rank 3: Test of Honor

Beginning at this rank, the courtier has the ability to challenge another person's action with a test of honor. The courtier can do this a number of times per day equal to the courtier's school rank. Before an action has been rolled by the target (any action, from an etiquette roll to an attack roll), the courtier may challenge the target. If the courtier's honor challenge is successful, the action of the other character immediately becomes a failure, no matter what the roll.

In order to challenge an opponent's honor, the courtier and his victim must make a contested roll based on their Honor ranks (round down). The TN is equal to the opponent's Honor x 5, and any non-Crane character must drop all dice that roll lower than the Crane's Honor. If both contestants succeed on their rolls, the one who rolled higher wins. If neither contestant succeeds, the contest continues to the next round; the action which the courtier contested is "in stasis" and does not occur until the contest is resolved.

Rank 4: The Gift of the Lady

At this rank, the courtier has gained such mastery over the political niceties of the court that such things have become almost effortless.

When the courtier is using Etiquette, Manipulation, Heraldry, Oratory, or Sincerity, they no longer need to roll. Their attempts are automatically successful. The courtier gains no raises when they are using this skill - if they wish to add raises for the skill, they must still roll, but a failed roll in that case is still considered to be a base success, without the bonuses the raises would have applied. This technique cannot be applied to contested rolls.

Rank 5: Your Life is Mine

Once the courtier achieves Rank 5, it is a simple matter for them to gain friends and allies. They can make someone's reaction or opinion of them more favorable, even going so far as to assuage any warlike or offensive feelings. If the person the courtier is trying to influence has a Willpower less than or equal to the courtier, the courtier can automatically manipulate their actions. If they have

a Willpower greater than the courtier, they still must make a successful Willpower + Etiquette roll against a TN of the courtier's Willpower x 5. If successful, they have found a way out of the courtier's manipulation.

If the courtier succeeds, their target is friendly to them, and treats them in all ways as a trusted advisor. Charmed by the courtier's ability, the person affected will consider them to be a friend, and will listen to the courtier's words and counsel. Unless the person affected has a direct reason to mistrust the courtier (obvious signs of betrayal, or



COURTIER OUTFIT

The Doji Courtier begins with the following outfit: (All of fine quality)

Tanto, kimono, traveling pack, 15 koku, small iron box, steed



DAIDOJI OUTFIT

The Daidoji Bushi begins with the following outfit: (All of fine quality)

Katana, wakizashi, yari, light or heavy armor, helm, traveling pack, steed, kimono, any 3 weapons, 10 koku

the courtier asks them to risk their life), the target will continue to treat the Crane as a trusted ally.

However, this ability diminishes over time, and must be maintained carefully by the courtier. For every day beyond the courtier's school rank that the courtier does not have prolonged contact (long conversations, visits or other time spent in the company of the target), or if the courtier asks them to do something against their personal code of ethics, the person who has been charmed may roll their Willpower against a TN of 30. For each successive day, or each request, the charmed person gets an additional +5 to their die roll, until they break free of the courtier's influence.

If the person influenced by the courtier has been treated well, and the courtier has genuinely attempted to be friendly and has assisted their target's own goals and desires, the courtier will have gained a true ally. However, if the courtier has been unreasonable, asking their target to reveal hidden information or risk themselves in some way, the person may feel used and unfriendly toward the Crane character, and may actually become an enemy. In any case, the person is considered to have a Willpower of 2

ranks higher if the same courtier attempts to use this ability on him or her again.

Favor Tables for the Doji Courtier

The Crane Clan is renowned for their ability to procure favors and gifts to reward those who assist them, or those who have been loyal. There is no rolling on these tables - the Crane courtier has the ability to select which gift will be of use in any occasion. However, as any diplomat knows it is not wise to give more than is necessary. The Crane Clan is known for its generosity, but they are not willing to randomly distribute gifts to those who do not serve their interests. The Crane pay particular attention to a courtier's request for a gift. If that gift is used wisely, the Clan may reward the wisdom of its faithful vassal. If the gift is given fruitlessly, or the courtier is guilty of idly bestowing rewards to their friends, you can be assured that there will be some serious repercussions.

If there are other things which a courtier wishes to offer as gifts or favors, the character should approach their daimyo, or a courtier of higher rank, and ask that such an item be given to them for a certain purpose. If the gift is approved, the courtier will be given permission to offer it as a favor. (The rank of such favors is determined by the Gamemaster.) The suggestions below are a guide for GMs. At times, the favors available to courtiers are apt to change because of current political pressures and alliances. At any time, the Gamemaster should feel free to alter the favor tables, and add items or skills appropriate to their campaign as it evolves. The GM should also keep a watchful eye on the uses of the favors, and to whom they are given - for it is assumed the Crane will be watching with equal care.

RANK ONE

2 koku; One item of "fine" equipment; A pony; Safe (escorted) travel to major city or palace; Meditative study (+5 to





insight); A tutor to teach you the Lore appropriate to the Clan – *Crab*: Lore: Shadowlands, *Crane*: Lore: Myth and Legend, *Dragon*: Lore: History, *Lion*: Lore: Bushido, *Phoenix*: Lore: Shugenja, *Scorpion*: Lore: Ninja, *Unicorn*: Lore: Burning Sands; Information on some well-known topic or commonly understood science.

RANK TWO

5 koku; A night with a fine geisha or courtesan; One “exceptional” item; A fine horse; Someone offers to champion you in your next duel; A minor fetish from the Asahina shugenja; You are asked to visit the court of a noble family (gain 1 Glory box); You are offered the chance to perform some notable service (when completed, gain 2 Glory boxes); A shugenja will cast a spell of your choice; Next major battle, you will be placed in a position to gain a Heroic Opportunity; You learn a skill (or +1 to a skill) from a craftsman of a major Clan: (suggested skills) *Crab*: Weaponcraft, *Crane*: Courtier, *Dragon*: Shintao, *Lion*: Battle, *Phoenix*: Meditation, *Unicorn*: Horsemanship, *Scorpion*: Sincerity.

RANK THREE

10 koku; Reonor a dishonored person or ronin; Gain an audience with a minor daimyo; Gain the “patron” advantage for no point cost, at any time in the game – however, no person can have more than one patron at any time; The Crab offer a guide into the Shadowlands; A Crane Artisan will create an artistic masterpiece in your honor (gain 3 Honor boxes); A Kitsuki Magistrate will investigate something for you; A Lion bushi will serve as your bodyguard for a period of months; A Unicorn steed; The Scorpion offer to embarrass/slander someone under your directives; A blessing is placed upon you from a great Monk of the Brotherhood – gain one free raise to be used in your next adventure; You are given the title *hatamoto* (honored advisor) or the rank *gunso* (sergeant) (gain 2 Glory boxes); The Agasha offer you a potion; The Shosuro offer you a mild poison; An Asahina shugenja will make you a minor fetish of your specifications (cost 10 koku, 1 week to create); You are asked to perform a minor service for the Champion of your Clan (when completed, gain 3 Glory boxes).

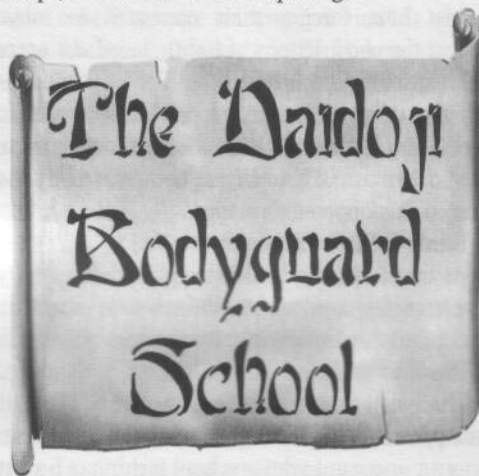
RANK FOUR

20 koku; 1 “exceptional” item; You have the opportunity to marry a daimyo’s daughter, and

gain the advantage Major Ally (any clan, whichever one you marry into); Someone unknown to you feels they owe you an obligation, and will repay unexpectedly in the future; The Asahina ask you to be the bearer of a major *nemuranai*; Gain a Minor Ally in the clan of your choice; One of your Clan members (of common origin) comes and asks to serve you as your personal aide and retainer; Fine quality fetish created to your specifications, no cost; Position as a Magistrate to your Clan (+ 5 Glory boxes).

RANK FIVE

30 koku; Prominent magic item; Minor magic item made to your specifications (GM to determine cost); Position as a Magistrate for the Emerald Champion (gain 1 Glory Rank); A prominent member of your Clan (but not a *daimyo* or other feudal lord) offers to perform a minor service for you, at your request; You are given the opportunity to prove yourself to the *ise zumi* of the Dragon Clan – if successful in their test, you will receive a tattoo; Gain one spell scroll from the Phoenix; A significant service from the Crab, Scorpion, Lion or Unicorn Clan – including troops, information or safe passage.



The Daidoji are among Rokugan’s craftiest fighters, concentrating on defensive maneuvers and a style of fighting that induces their opponents to defeat themselves. They make excellent bodyguards, although these abilities also can be turned toward the “darker” side of life, and many Daidoji work as smugglers, spies and espionage men. The Daidoji aren’t ashamed of their illicit activities, although they don’t go to any extremes to shout them to the world. Similar to underground spies, the Daidoji are the shadows

THE STRONGARM OF THE DAIDOJI

The Daidoji prepare at all times to be invaded from the south by the Crab, or from the west by the Lion. Because of this, half the Daidoji force can be found on the southern peninsula, and the rest are usually positioned along the western border of Crane lands.

Daidoji soldiers patrol along the road known as the “Way of Faint Echo of Glory” (23), from Kosaten Shiro (51) to Shiro sano Kakita (52), and maintain a tight watch on the border divided by the great highway called the “Way of the Elements” (1).

The rest of their troops are located between Toshi Ranbo wo Shien Shite Teigisaho (81) and the Palace of the Imperial Champion (63), on another border with the Lion. This border is far less stable, as the Lion have vowed to one day take back Toshi Ranbo wo Shien Shite Teigisaho, and the Daidoji are sworn to prevent it.



KAKITA BLADES

The Master Smiths of the Kakita family produce the finest blades in the Empire. Outshining all other manufacturers, a Kakita blade is exceptionally fine steel, durable and flexible, and able to withstand the passage of a thousand years.

Since the time of Yasurugi, the first son of Lady Doji and Lord Kakita, Crane smiths have been perfecting, revising and making innovations to the manufacture of swordblades. They will use only Hida steel in their blades, claiming that the steel which the Crab produce far outshines any other steel in the Empire. A Kakita blade is distinctive for three reasons. First, it is lighter than most blades, thinner and more flexible than the typical katana.

Secondly, a Kakita blade has fine lines of bluish tinged damascus running down the cutting edge, causing the entire blade to shine with a slight tint. Thirdly, a Kakita blade is only given to a samurai who has proved their honor and courage, and is rarely given to a non-Crane samurai. One of the finest of these weapons is in the hands of Kakita Toshimoko. His blade is an ancient one, forged over six hundred years ago by one of the first Master Smiths to perfect the technique of damascus.

Kakita Master Smiths regard their work as a form of art, and approach the creation of a new blade as a ritual of the highest order.

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in the court, gathering information and protecting the Doji diplomats. If something is needed, the Daidoji can find it. If there's a shipment that must get through, there's a Daidoji willing to take it there. Let the Doji use their skills to hide any dishonor; the Daidoji are willing to do what must be done, for the sake of the clan.

Benefit: +1 Agility

Skills: Kenjutsu; Defense 2; Iaijutsu; Battle; Archery; any one High or Bugei skill

Honor: 2, plus 5 boxes.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: The Force of Honor

At the first rank, the Daidoji bushi uses his Honor Rank, rather than his Earth Ring, to figure his wound level. Round all fractions down.

Rank 2: Wielding the Inner Fire

At this rank, if the bushi chooses Full Defense, they automatically gain the highest (fastest) initiative in the combat round following the round in which they declared a Full Defense. The bushi does not need to roll, and this overrides any other initiative ability.

Rank 3: Moving the Shadow

The bushi can use his opponent's armor rank against him, forcing their opponent to move against the constrictions of tightly laced *do-maru* and restricted peripheral vision. The bushi dodges and moves in ways which force his opponent to work against the restrictions of his own armor. The bushi's own TN to be hit is increased by the value of his opponent's armor.

Rank 4: Strike Beneath the Veil

At this rank, the bushi has gained the ability to pierce his opponent's defenses to such an extent that they may make two attacks per round.

Rank 5: To Tread on the Sword

The bushi at this rank has learned how to use his opponent's school against him. If the bushi faces an opponent whose school technique he has previously seen, the Bodyguard may choose to spend Void equal to their opponent's School Rank. If he does so, the opponent may not use any of their special school abilities that round.

The Kakita Artisan Academy

The Kakita artisans are the finest creators of art and literature in Rokugan. Their intense study of the arts and their focus on the innate magic inherent in all works of beauty have led them to the development of certain techniques, or *mayas*. They are known throughout the Empire as teachers, instructors and tutors, and their skills are welcomed in every court in Rokugan. Among their artistic endeavors are the students of the art of the sword - the famous Kakita Iaijutsu Masters, detailed in the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG*. Kakita artisans (other than students of the Iaijutsu school) are neither bushi nor shugenja, similar to the *ise zumi* detailed in the *Way of the Dragon* sourcebook.

The Kakita Artisan Academy still trains its students in the traditional "School Rank" system (from ranks 1-5). The most unusual part of this system, however, is that when an Artisan gains enough insight to raise them in overall School Rank, the artisan may choose which *maya* they will learn for their next rank. However, an Artisan cannot choose to learn a *maya* for which they have not already learned the base ranks. This means that while an Artisan can always choose to learn a rank 1 *maya*, they may not attempt to learn a rank 2 *maya* unless they have already mastered the rank 1 *maya* for that art.

Artisans do not have "techniques" per se, nor do they gain spells as a shugenja might. Artisans gain *maya* abilities, as defined below, for each rank they rise within their school. Characters from the Kakita bushi school **do not** gain any of the *maya* abilities outlined below, nor can they choose to take an artisan *maya* in place of their normal school rank.

When a *maya* calls for the Artisan's School Rank, they are asking for the overall School Rank.

of that character, rather than the character's ability with that art. An Artisan who has an insight of 201, and has mastered the *maya* Origami 1, Dance 1, and Ikebana 1 & 2 is still considered a School Rank 4 character.

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Skills: Courtier; Etiquette; Any one artistic skill (choice determined by the artisan's first school rank); Calligraphy; Lore: Myth and Legend; Any one High Skill

Honor: 3, plus 5 boxes

Unlike many schools in Rokugan, the Kakita Academy teaches a variety of subjects, including the famous Iaijutsu Duelist specialization. Both the artisans listed below, and the iaijutsu masters listed in the basic RPG book are considered students of the Kakita Academy. The Crane consider the mastery of the sword to be like any other art - one which must be followed with discipline and dedication, so that the mastery of its abilities reflect on the beauty and strength of the spirit. A duelist and an Ikebana master are, in this way, viewed with the same respect and admiration for their mastery of their respective arts.

When an Artisan begins at rank one, they must choose a specialization from the list below. At rank one, they will gain the first *maya* ability of that specialization. Thereafter, when the Artisan gains enough insight to rise another Rank, they may return to the Crane lands and choose another *maya*. If the Artisan chooses to continue in their specialization, they will gain the second *maya* ability. If they choose to begin another specialization, they may choose one of the other specializations and gain the first *maya* in that school. If an Artisan gains all three *maya* abilities of one specialization, they are considered to be a Master of that art.

In this way, a rank 5 Artisan will have 5 *maya* abilities, chosen from the ranks below. At no point may an Artisan have the second or third level ability within a specialization unless they have already achieved the earlier levels of that art. However, there is no constraint forcing an Artisan to Master in any art, or even to take more than one *maya* from any art. Thus, the five *maya* which are known by a 5th rank Artisan may be from five different arts, or any combination thereof. When an Artisan picks their first *maya* from a specialization, they receive a single free Skill Rank in the corresponding art. Thereafter, the

Artisan must purchase further skills in this art normally.

Unless otherwise specified in the description, each *maya* takes approximately five minutes to perform. Art is a delicate matter, and requires implements, concentration and creativity. Some of the *maya*, such as origami and painting, can be performed at one time and "held" until invoked. Such invocation requires one round of action, and an Artisan can only "hold" a number of finished products equal to their School Rank.

Specializations

The specializations are listed below in the following format:

Art: The actual type of work for which the *maya* is a focus, and a brief description of the art and its applications within society.

Ranks one through three: What the *maya* does, its effect and how it is used. This also describes the limitations and drawbacks, if any, of the ability. Each *maya* is linked to its relevant artistic skill, and to the Fire Ring. In order to use the *maya* ability effectively, the character must make a performance roll using a number of dice equal to their Intelligence + Skill, keeping dice equal to their Intelligence. Unless otherwise specified, all *mayas* last a number of hours equal to the artisan's school rank, and can be performed a number of times per day equal to the artisan's school rank.

The Target Number of the specific action which the character is attempting to perform will be determined by the Game Master, and the artisan may make a number of raises equal to their skill rank. These raises may be used to increase the duration, accuracy, or some other property of the artisan ability, as approved by the GM in each situation. The GM will assign Target Numbers appropriate to the situation, but as a general rule they will range from 20 for a simpler *maya* to 30 or more for a very complex or advanced effect.

ACROBATICS

Acrobatics is a popular form of entertainment in Rokugan. The contortionists and high-flying daredevils of the courts are often called upon to perform stunning acts of balance, flexibility and daring. The first prominent contortionists were a



KAKITA BLADES (CONTINUED)

Days are spent in preparation, purifying the workspace and meditating on the form of the new weapon. After the appropriate period of time has passed, a group of Kakita swordsmiths will approach the forge wordlessly, and will remain silent during the entire process of creating the blade. They believe that even a misspoken word can alter the purity of the blade, and so they work in silence. When the blade is fully forged, its mettle is tested against a massive stone which stands in the mountains above Doji palace. If the sword can carve a wedge from the stone with a single stroke, it is considered to be acceptable as a Kakita blade. It is said that the sword Toshimoko bears was the first blade to be so tested, and that it was the sword which cut the stone free from the mountain. All Kakita blades have individual names, and the Kakita smiths are said to turn out no more than two such blades a year. Any blade which fails the Test of Stone is destroyed, its steel returned to the earth as dust and slag.

A Kakita blade adds one die to roll and keep when striking to hit an opponent, and allows the user to reroll one damage die during an iaijutsu duel. A Crane character can purchase a Kakita blade at character creation as a four-point Advantage.



HATAMOTO

To be made *hatamoto* is a great honor, and one which is given only to dedicated and honorable members of noble families.

A *hatamoto*, or honored retainer, is someone who has been chosen by the *daimyo* of a noble family to be an official representative of the family name. This means that a *hatamoto* can speak with authority for his Lord in their absence, and even agree to minor contracts and negotiations for their family. A *hatamoto*, therefore, has a great deal of political power. Typically, *hatamoto* are only called upon to perform this ability when their Lord cannot attend the negotiation. To be a *hatamoto* means that your *daimyo* regards your advice highly, and that he has placed a special "mark" upon you, so that all will know that you are one of his most favored subjects.

Often, the title brings with it a certain amount of land, on which the retainer is expected to live and continue their service to their feudal *daimyo*. Similar to a military title, to become a *hatamoto* brings with it a great deal of responsibility as well as glory. However, a *hatamoto* is primarily a servant to their feudal lord in whatever capacity they can best fulfill. Diplomatic, artistic, advisory or military *hatamoto* are all possible.

troupe of entertainers who performed their unusual skills between periods of Noh drama, with a traveling acting band. Eventually, the acrobatic performances began to outshine the plays, and they began to travel on their own. When those entertainers were given a permanent position as the Royal Performers to the Prince by the sixth Hantei, it was clear that acrobatics was going to be a major art form in the future. Many practitioners of the more "noble" arts look upon acrobats as "low" samurai and they are often viewed with suspicion. However, the crowds that acrobats draw cannot be denied, and nearly every noble house has at some point hosted the Imperial Acrobatic Troupe within their highest court. For an acrobat to be asked to perform with this troupe either on a single occasion or a permanent basis is a tremendous honor.

The *maya* for acrobatics require no preparatory rounds, and cannot be "held."

Rank one: A first rank acrobat has the ability to escape complex bonds through coordination and control of their joints and muscles. They can escape ropes, gags, or other restraints with a successful Agility + Acrobatics roll. The TN for the roll depends on the complexity of the restraints (anywhere between 10 and 30). Further, the acrobat has the additional ability to move through passages too small for typical human inhabitants, to slide through windows, past bars or other major impediments in a Houdini-like style. Such extreme activity is painful for the acrobat, as it requires dislocating joints or stretching muscles in dangerous ways. Its use delivers a single rank of Wounds each time the acrobat performs the maneuver. The acrobat may perform this *maya* an unlimited number of times per day.

Rank two: When the acrobat reaches the second level of mastery, they have gained the swift reflexes and incredible dexterity needed to dodge missile combat, such as arrows or thrown weapons. When dodging missiles, the Acrobat adds his School Rank x 3 to his TN to be hit. This bonus is only applied if the acrobat is aware of the incoming missiles. This *maya* requires no skill roll.

Rank three: Rank three acrobats are among the most agile people in the Empire. Their movements are blindingly fast, and they have the ability to perceive threats in their peripheral vision. Because of this, an acrobat can instinctively move to correct their position or

balance. If the acrobat chooses a Full Defense and selects a target to defend themselves against, they cannot be hit by any targeted weapons or spells from that individual. This *maya* requires a skill roll each round the character declares their Full Defense maneuver.

DANCING

Traditional dancing is a major aspect of Rokugan culture, and ranges in style from the delicate and gentle movements of the *mai* school to the energetic jumping and stamping of feet known as *odori*. Dancing is not only for the court, performed by the famous Noh actors, but by the *heimin* of Rokugan who have developed some rather unusual styles. Dancing is said to lift the spirits, bring cheer and health, and bless the village. Often, at great festivals, dancers stream through the streets, carrying great paper dragons with which to frighten away evil spirits. Geisha, too, are famous dancers, performing the arts of the sensual dance. Dancing is often an elaborate pageant, with glorious kimono and tremendous golden fans for emphasis and grace. Some more warlike dances involve weapons such as the spear, and are thought to bring honor to the weapon as well as the performer.

Dancers are sometimes mistaken for Kabuki performers, and there are many written plays which are designed to be danced rather than performed by actors on stage. Because of this, dancers are often as knowledgeable about plays, playwrights and performances as theatrical actors, and they know the intricacies of makeup, stage combat, and other provinces of Kabuki or Noh theatre.

Dancing is an art which requires concentration and skill, but which can be performed with almost no preparatory work. Thus, an artisan does not require any preparatory time to use a dance *maya*. However, dance *maya* cannot be "held."

Rank one: Dancers, as performers, are often asked to use the martial skill of *mizu-do* in order to perform staged combat during a performance. Because of this, a dancer often has a better grasp of the martial art of *mizu-do* than the typical practitioner. The skills needed to perform accurate stage combat require hours of concentrated rehearsal, making every action a perfect harmony of body and mind. The rank one dancer gains one level of the *mizu-do* skill for free. A dancer gains a number of free raises equal



to their School Rank anytime they use the *mizu-do* skill (See *mizu-do*, Appendix II).

Rank two: At this rank, if the dancer makes a successful contested roll of their Agility + Dancing versus the viewer's Willpower, they have mesmerized the viewers. Someone who has been mesmerized can break free of the dance by winning the contested roll. A dancer must continue to make these contested rolls with his audience every three minutes. Someone who has been mesmerized is not "frozen" nor ignorant of their surroundings. If attacked, they will respond. However, they will ignore and forget anything which occurs (save their memory of the dancer and his dance) and down not directly affect them. Therefore, if a dancer mesmerizes the *daimyo's* guards, someone could slip past them, steal something from them (with a successful Agility check) or discuss something in their presence, all without the guards' knowledge. And the guards won't even remember they were there.

Rank three: At this rank, the dancer has so sharpened their reflexes, body control and sense of timing that they are able to more effectively perform precise movements in a short period of time. When using the *mizu-do* skill, the dancer may make an additional defensive maneuver each round. (See *mizu-do*, Appendix II)

IKEBANA

Flower arranging, the art of *ikebana*, is a respected and beautiful form of expression. It is the arrangement of flowers, branches, and other plants within appropriate containers. These special containers, prescribed for each form of arrangement by ancient custom, are displayed in homes and gardens all over Rokugan. Branches arranged to represent natural settings, formed around bursts of color from flowering sprigs, brighten the otherwise spartan Rokugan dwellings. Flowers are considered lucky, and their arrangement brings good omens from the *kami* of the household. Scattered petals are said to ward off disease and ill fortune, and are often given to the

sick or the old in order to bring them long life and health.

In general, *ikebana* *maya* cannot be "held," with the exception of their rank three ability, noted below.

Rank one: At this rank, the *ikebani* can bring good fortune to those the artist favors. By spending ten minutes and making a successful Intelligence + *Ikebana* roll at a TN of 15, the artist can grant an individual (himself or another) an additional die to roll and keep for one task. The task to which this additional die is applied must be immediately performed. No more than one die can be given in such a way to a single task.

Rank two: A second rank *ikebana* artist can use the beauty of their arrangements to inspire



confidence and remove doubt. With a successful Intelligence + *Ikebana* roll (TN 20), the Artisan can grant a single Free Raise to any individual they touch, for any one stated task which must be performed within the hour. It takes ten minutes for the artist to confer this benefit. This ability is not cumulative with itself, and an *ikebana* artist may not give more than one free raise to any

ARTISAN OUTFIT

The Kakita Artisan begins with the following outfit: (All of fine quality)

Katana, wakizashi, kimono, travelling pack, Artisan's satchel, basic equipment as suited for their Artisan specialty (paintbrushes, makeup kit, etc.), 10 koku



individual in the span of less than an hour. However, this is cumulative with free raises from other sources, such as a shugenja's free spell raise based on their school.

Rank three: A master of flower arranging has the ability to warp luck around himself, gathering fortune and changing the odds of probability. This ability has two possible applications: beneficial or detrimental, based on the ikebani's choice of luck or unluck. Either effect requires a successful skill roll (Intelligence + Ikebana at a TN of 25).

Once the ikebana Artisan has successfully performed their art (an act which requires five minutes of concentration), they have gained one reroll. This reroll may be used at any time, on any individual in the ikebana's sight, to force the reroll of a single action. Thus, the ikebani can choose to reroll a failed roll performed by himself or one of his companions, or he can force an opponent to reroll a successful action before it can take place.

An ikebana artisan can "hold" this reroll for up to one full day after he has performed the initial arrangement.

JESTER

Jesters, the dancing figures which strut through the court and mock the failings of others, are another type of Artisan in Rokugan. Their satires and public jokes about important figures in the Court are sanctioned only because it is the jester's job. They are some of the few individuals who can speak publicly about another person's loss of face without being openly challenged for it. Even so, they are usually sponsored by a noble who is responsible for their comedic performance.

Jesting does not require any preparation, but it also cannot be "held."

Rank one: At rank 1, the Jester has become adept at manipulating the emotions of others. If the Jester converses with another character, he

can leave that character feeling distracted or care-free, at the Jester's whim. Afterwards, all of the target character's social skill rolls (Tea Ceremony, Etiquette, etc) either add or subtract one die to their roll for a number of hours equal to the Jester's School Rank. A character may only be targeted with this once per hour.

Rank two: The Jester can manipulate everyone else into jumping into a melee before he does. With their skill at taunting and their understanding of basic human impulses, the Jester has gained the ability to start a fight. While this is not a difficult thing in many places of Rokugan, the Jester can do so without



appearing to be at fault. Whether in or out of combat, the Jester can attempt to draw someone into direct combat - luring an archer from safe cover, taunting an opposing shugenja into rushing into combat, etc.

The Jester must perform for two actions, after which the victim must roll their Intelligence against a TN of 15, or charge the nearest individual, whether friend or foe. If the Jester wishes to raise this TN, they must make a performance roll (Intelligence + Jester

at a TN of 20, plus raises for every 5 they wish to add to their victim's TN.

Rank three: Upon reaching Rank 3 in his school, the Jester has become skilled enough to pull an onlooker into his act. Anytime the Jester is making a public performance (at the Imperial Court, during a festival, etc.), he may target someone in the audience. The character targeted is on the receiving end of the Jester's wit. If the Jester defeats his opponent in a contested Intelligence roll, the victim permanently loses a number of Honor points equal to the Jester's School Rank. The Jester may never target the same person twice in less than six months.

MUSIC

Music is possibly the oldest form of entertainment in the Empire, ranging from simple songs of the *hinin* to the elaborate court orchestra of the Emperor. The standard repertory of a court entertainer consists of over 80 numbers on a wide range of instruments. One of the most popular instruments is the drum, ranging from the hourglass-shaped *tsuzumi*, which is played with the hand, to the huge barrel-shaped *taiko*. Members of the musician class are often called the *kodo* or "Children of the Drum". Another popular instrument is the gentle *biwa*, said to have been created by Kakita himself for Lady Doji. The biwa, an instrument similar to the mandolin, has either four or five strings, five frets, and is played with a thin pick made of wood or ivory. Flutes (*hichiriki*), whistles (*sho*) and gongs (*shoko*) are also popular in orchestral settings. The most popular style of melody is known as *gagaku* or "elegant music." Much of this style of music originates in ancient temples and ceremonial rites, and has been carried over into the more popular court tradition. *Gagaku* is solemn, slow and majestic, often performed before temple ceremonies in order to draw the divine spirits of the Tao.

Because of the delicate and precise nature of this art, it cannot be "held." A musician's *maya* require one round of playing before their magical abilities activate, with the exception of the rank two *maya* as noted below.

Rank one: While the musician plays, they create a 10' area around them which makes it more difficult for spells to be effective. All incoming or outgoing spells within 10' of the caster must add +10 to their Target Number. Raises by the Artisan can increase this penalty.

Rank two: At this rank, the musician can summon one die of animals from his area to perform simple tasks. It requires a half hour of playing, singing and performance to summon the creatures. The animals have limited intellect, but can understand the Artisan's will through the music. These creatures are determined randomly by the Game Master, but all are of small size, such as squirrels, dogs, or hawks. The creatures are loyal to the caster, and the *maya* grants them the ability to understand simple commands and perform simple actions without supervision. These creatures will obey the will of the caster for one full day.

Rank three: The final rank a musician can achieve confers the power to enchant listeners to such an extent that they will cease all activity and listen to the musician for as long as they choose to play. Use of this power calls for a contested roll versus the listener's Willpower. If the roll is successful, the listener will cease activity and listen to the music, oblivious to all that occurs around them. If the listener is attacked, moved or roughly shaken, they are immediately freed of all further effect of the song, and cannot be targeted with this ability again for 24 hours. This ability is not targeted, and affects all listeners within earshot.

NOH/KABUKI ACTING

This highly stylized form of traditional theater is popular in all parts of Rokugan, incorporating dance, music, acting, makeup and glittering displays of costume and lighting effects. In some cases, Noh is performed by puppeteers rather than physical actors and actresses, but typically a troupe of Noh performers will consist of a protagonist (the *shite*) and a primary supporting character (the *waki*). The drama consists of slow, rhythmic chants and restrained movements, and follows a very rigid pattern. First, the *waki* calls the *shite* to the stage and asks questions which reveal the situation and the nature of the *shite*. The climax of the play is the formal dance performed by the *shite*, which expresses their character's true feelings. All Noh actors keep their faces expressionless during the performance, preferring to let the words and expressions of the play speak for the character. During an artisan's life, they may be trained to play either or both of these main roles, as well as a host of other characters such as an old man, court noble, spirit or ancestor, or demon. In some performances, there are elaborate masks which the performers wear to hide their faces and express the character's nature.

There are no sets in Noh. A featureless black backdrop, a few simple objects used as props and a host of musical instruments comprise all the necessities of the performance. The emphasis of a Noh play is not the plot - it is the gradual intensification of character and emotion. There are categories of Noh plays: the celebratory plays, the ghost plays, the woman plays, the warrior plays, and the demon plays. In some more rural Noh, there is a sixth type - the burlesque play. Such plays are not popular among the courts of



WACKY ISN'T FUNNY

Let's spend a minute talking about Jesters. Rokugani court Jesters are a little different than the western Jesters we're familiar with. They're a bit more sarcastic and sardonic and a lot less Monty Python.

Just mentioning that name might wrench you out of Rokugan and right into the Dead Parrot Sketch, and that's the danger of having a wacky Jester. The moment you let "wacky" into your game, the players are going to start quoting the Pythons, *South Park* and *Animaniacs* and forget about honor and duty.

Rokugani Jesters sing, dance and tell stories, quote the *Tao of Shinsei* a little wrong, and make sure you know when you've done something inappropriate. They usually speak in rhymes and foretell doom for those who mock them.

Take a look at the Fool in *King Lear*, or for an even better example, check out the Fool in Akira Kurasawa's *Ran* (a slightly different version of the same tragic tale). Now *that's* a Jester.



Rokugan, but have gained great favor with the common man.

Kabuki is a different type of theater, focusing on lively and almost violent action, dancing, and emotional tension. Singers and an orchestra often provide a backdrop for the actors and key information about the setting or characters. The name kabuki comes from *kabuki-odori*, "stylish and shocking dances". It makes use of elaborate costumes and makeup, intricate sets and dramatic special effects. Actors move in stylized patterns known as *kata*. Stage hands, dressed entirely in black, move about the stage during a production, changing sets or portraying ancestral spirits which cannot be seen by the actors. The stage is often constructed with many trap doors, a rotating platform, and other elaborate contraptions. The two major types of Kabuki plays are the *jidaimono*, or "rough stuff style"; and the *sewamono*, or "talk of the town" - the social dramas.

Using raises, the artisan can increase the duration of their ability, doubling the time the ability would be active for each raise declared by the player. Use of any of the Noh/Kabuki *maya* requires ten minutes to perform, and these *maya* cannot be "held."

Rank one: The artisan has gained the ability to impersonate certain individuals, through study and observation. The target numbers for this impersonation skill are:

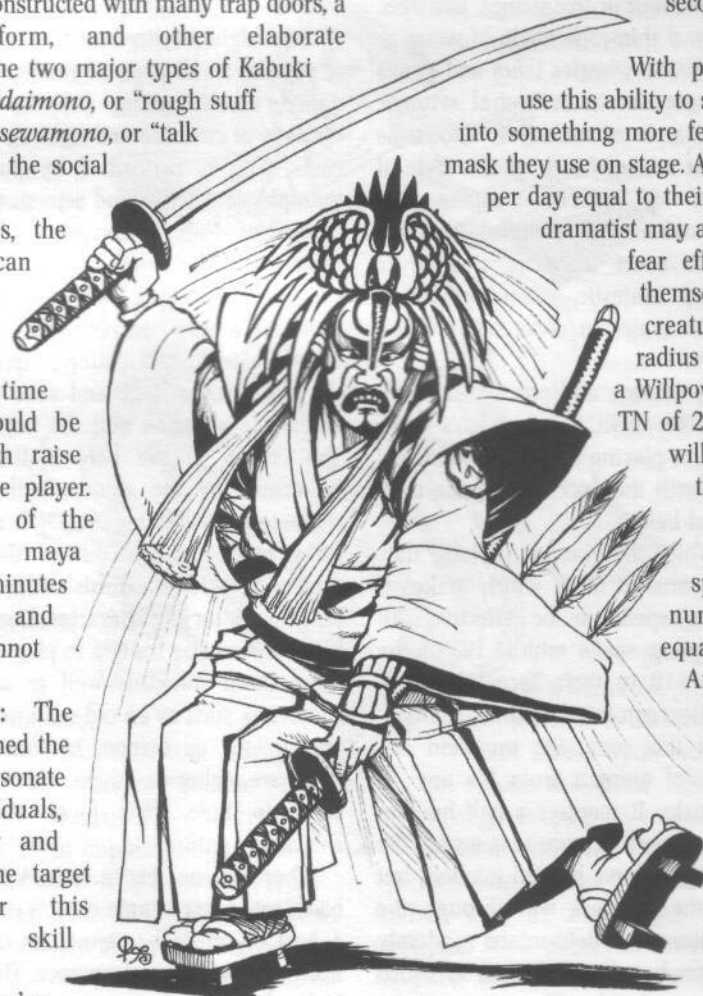
- Someone you've known your whole life: TN 10
- Someone you've known for years: TN 15
- Someone you've known for months: TN 20
- Someone you've just met: TN 25

Through this ability, the artisan's voice, mannerisms, and physical appearance are

changed through the careful application of makeup and use of the acting skill. Certain physical attributes, such as extreme height or an extremely unusual voice, cannot be mimicked through this ability. The artisan needs a makeup kit and simple tools, such as appropriate garb or certification of their identity. (A samurai who is well known for his tattered *saya*, for example, might be questioned if he appeared without it.)

Rank two: At this rank, the Noh dramatist has captured the essence of the more fearsome characters depicted in the plays. Demons, nightmares, furious spirits from beyond the grave - all these archetypes common to the Kabuki and Noh dramas have become second nature to the skilled artisan.

With practice, they can use this ability to shape their visage into something more fearsome than any mask they use on stage. A number of times per day equal to their school rank, the dramatist may attempt to cause a fear effect, centered on themselves, affecting all creatures in a 30' radius who do not make a Willpower roll against a TN of 20. Those affected will cease whatever they are doing and flee the area at top speed for a number of rounds equal to 2 x the Artisan's School Rank. The Artisan does not have to make an Artisan's Skill roll to perform this act, but if they wish to increase the target number



or the radius, or exclude certain individuals from the effect, the dramatist may attempt to roll as per the Artisan's rules, making raises appropriate to their alterations. If this skill check fails, the entire use of the ability is wasted, as if used normally, but no effect is produced.

Rank three: At this rank, the dramatist has gained the ability to physically alter their entire body, so that the dramatist can assume the form of animals. The forms which the actor chooses to become may not exceed the mass of a heavy war horse, and no items (including clothes or weapons) change with the Artisan.

ORIGAMI

The origami master specializes in the creation of beautiful objects and animals from small squares of rice paper. Origami is the intricate art of folding, creating lifelike animals or stunning replicas of other items. For centuries, origami has been used in ceremony and ritual, and the skill is highly regarded in Rokugan. Origami emphasizes straight lines and sharp angles. The earliest uses of origami derive from a monk who lived alone at a shrine to Hotei, the Fortune of Contentment. The crane; a symbol of contentment and long life, is the most popular origami shape, but many of the shapes hold special significance to the Rokugani people. Although differing kinds of paper can be used by the artisan in order to simulate texture, the maya abilities below all require only the finest rice paper, ornamented on one side by a wash of color or patterning. This is called *kawari-e* origami. Each use of a maya to create the effects below destroys the paper which is used in the composition.

Rank one: The artisan can create small, mobile animals. At this point, the creatures made by the artisan have no intelligence, and merely follow commands of the creator. Further, the animals are still formed from paper, and retain their original size and mass. This means that the artisan could create a horse, but it would only be a three-inch high horse. A bird, however, would have the ability to fly, a spider to spin a web, or a dog to bark a (rather faint) warning when strangers approached. These creatures make reliable short-distance messengers, warning alarms and scouts, as they can verbally communicate with their creator in a limited fashion. The artisan is not limited to "real" animals. Creations from the character's imagination are acceptable, as are animals from myth and legend. The items are under the direct mental control of their creator for as long as they are in the artist's sight. These animals last a number of minutes equal to the artisan's School Rank.

Rank two: The artisan has increased their prowess, and has gained the ability to make their inanimate creations real for a short time – small boats, boxes or kimonos could be made for use by the artisan. Regardless of the size of rice paper that the artisan uses to activate their creations, the item becomes the appropriate size and correct (if mundane) material. Such items are always of average quality, and must be of no greater mass than a rowboat. The items still retain a strange, "paper-like" quality which distinguishes them from normal items; they cannot be mistaken for a "real" item of the same type, even under casual inspection. These items last a number of hours equal to the artisan's school rank.

Rank three: At the final rank, the artisan has the ability to create actual animals, fully alive and formed of flesh and bone. The animal may be up to the size of a heavy war horse, and has no real intellect and no magical powers. Therefore, a Ki-Rin would look like a Ki-Rin, but be unable to fly, ignite itself, or use spell-like abilities. A giant eagle, on the other hand, would be able to fly, because a bird's flight is not a magic power. It is completely under the command of its creator, and has the ability to communicate through barks, nods, or other animal actions. It is not intelligent, and cannot read or understand complex orders. The artisan is not limited to "real" animals – creations from the character's imagination are acceptable, as are animals from myth and legend. It is loyal to its creator, and will risk itself for their well-being. These animals last a number of hours equal to the artisan's school rank.

PAINTING

Painting includes the many skills of color and visual art, including calligraphy, sculpting, and woodblock print. One of the most common forms of traditional painting is called bird-and-flower painting, known as *kachoga*, which uses distinctive landscapes and figures upon smooth, flowing backgrounds. Paintings are traditionally depicted and displayed on long, vertical scrolls (*kakemono*) or rolling, horizontal scrolls (*emakimono*). The traditional brushes have bamboo or wooden handles, topped with animal hair. Tubular brushes known as *fude* are used for calligraphy, along with black ink known as *sumi*. There are over 300 kinds of writing and painting brushes, and more than 200 different kinds of hair for their creation. Calligraphy is the artistic writing of Rokugani characters, and is thought to



THE ROLE OF THE WIFE

When Kakita went to battle the Shadowlands, Lady Doji insisted on handling all the financial business of the house, and of the armies of the Crane. She performed these duties so well that it soon became the province of the wife to manage the finances, hire and fire workers, and otherwise improve the house.

The role of the wife in Rokugani society is a very complex one. A wife is responsible for the day-to-day running of the household, from monetary business to organization and formal reception of guests. Although a wife is often chosen by the parents of the samurai, based on status and age, it is the privilege of a maiden to refuse the marriage in order to join the convent of Shintao. Marriage has nothing to do with love, but rather with duty.

A proper Rokugani wife is educated, cultured, and able to perform mathematical calculations as well as social customs. The education of women in the Rokugani society is as intricate as that of the male, particularly in families where it is customary for the woman to rule the house or become samurai-ko. Women are not seen as a lesser class, but rather as a different class altogether, one which has different customs and rules than their male counterparts.



MANNERS

In Rokugan, manners are as important to a samurai as battle skills. One misstep in court, or before a powerful *daimyo*, can lead to the death of a character.

On the other hand, a character that behaves in a cultured, elegant manner will usually be remembered with favor.

Addressing a lord or an equal with the proper titles (covered elsewhere) is only one sign of courtly behavior.

Proper etiquette demands that a samurai always use their manners to ask favors, to ask permission to speak, or to question their *daimyo*. One thing to keep in mind: although your own *daimyo* can order you to commit *seppuku* at any time, any other *daimyo* who is your lord's equal or superior can request that your lord command you to die.

Making friends is very important.

Remember: when in doubt, ask politely. Ask before entering a house, for example, or before picking up a sword that has been placed before you. It's better to appear overcautious than to commit a disastrous breach of etiquette.

embody the spirit of the Crane Clan. No art is more highly valued by the clan, for in calligraphy each movement can be made only once. The ink is indelible, each movement depicted permanently upon the paper without any hope of beginning again. One strike, one brush stroke - one life. *Wayo* is the art form of calligraphy, which is more than the simple writing of words on paper. Often, a person is judged by the beauty of their writing, and treaties have been refused on no more than the flaws in the artist's handwriting on the page. The characters are admired as abstract forms and designs known as *kanji*, embodying the character and state of mind of their renderer. They can be powerful glyphs and wards, and their perfection can hold the power of the word which they embody.

Painting is one of the more difficult art forms, and one which encourages immediate perfection. A painter who does not spend the appropriate amount of time perfecting his technique may end up with some very disturbing results. Painting *maya* require at least fifteen minutes of preparation, but they can be "held." Any glyph which is "held" must be kept in a safe, dry place (spell scroll tubes work), and the GM must be informed which glyphs in particular have been made.

Rank one: At this rank, the painter has the ability to create semi-permanent calligraphic glyphs which are powered by the essence of the word. The painter can use special inks and brushes to impart certain magical qualities to the

character the Artisan creates. The glyphs will remain where they were painted until a number of people have seen them equal to the painter's school rank. Some examples of appropriate calligraphic characters are given below, but players should be encouraged to create their own glyphs and effects.

Confusion: When the painter creates this glyph, he confers the essence of chaos and disorder into his calligraphic character. When someone looks at it, they must make an Intelligence roll against a TN of 15 or become confused for a number of turns equal to (6 - their Intelligence). A confused individual will alternately wander about, attack blindly, recite poetry or stand still. The GM will decide the appropriate reaction.

Protection: When this glyph is drawn, the painter must inscribe it upon the forehead of the individual to be protected. Once placed, it will remain for a number of days equal to the painter's school rank, and add 5 to their TN to be hit. Further, it offers an additional day of resistance to the Shadowlands taint for each school rank of the painter. Only one such glyph may be placed upon any individual at a time.

Rank two: When the Artisan achieves this amount of skill with their medium, they may create paintings of individuals with whom they are familiar. In order to do this, the painter must first create special implements, such as brushes made from the hair of the individual, or a canvas



which is made of the person's favorite kimono. Such personalized tokens allow the magic to connect the painting to the target individual. Once the painting has been successfully completed (an Agility + Painting roll at TN 25), the Artisan can use it to speak to the target over a great distance, by meditating with the work. Such a painting can take a d10 days to create, and requires a great amount of dedication and devotion to the work. Raises to the Target Number can allow the Artisan to see through the eyes of the individual in the painting, or allow the picture to work even at extreme distances, such as into the Shadowlands.

Rank three: The Master Painter has gained the ability to actually travel through his paintings. After he creates a work based on a place with which he is familiar, the Master can meditate on the painting and actually step through it to the place represented by the picture. The creation of a mural of this magnitude can take as long as several weeks, and requires an Intelligence + School Rank at a TN of 30. If the mural is successful, the Artisan can step through and appear on the other side. If unsuccessful, the picture is ruined and work must begin again. Each time the painter attempts this feat, there is a 25% chance that the painting will be ruined. The Master Painter is the only one who can journey in this way.

POETRY

Poetry is admired in Rokugan as the highest form of literature. *Waka*, the traditional short poems and songs, is a type of poetic genre distinguished by its form. Written in short lines with 31 syllables following a 5-7-5-7-7 syllabic pattern, *waka* can sometimes be created spontaneously. A popular form of challenge in the court of Rokugan is to comprise a short poem, sometimes by forming a new poem from the lines of one which someone else has just extemporized, and sometimes by creating it in an alternating fashion, line by line with an opponent.

The earliest and greatest anthology of Rokugani poetry is the *Manyoshu*, a collection compiled by Ikoma Ume. In it are listed over 4,000 individual *waka*, from the great art of masters such as Kakita Kiyamori, Akodo Tomei and the great ronin poet, Rezan. Modern poetry tends to stress a newer style, called the *renga* form, which is based on the five line *waka*, but is always composed by two people in succession -

the first performs the 5-7-5 lines, and the second finishes the verse with the final two 7-syllabled lines. One of the most highly regarded poets of the current era is Kitsune Shikitoro, of the Fox Clan, who has spent over 50 years of her life collecting poems from across the Empire. Her library is said to be quite extensive, and her knowledge of poetic style is unparalleled.

The most famous poetry competition is held on the birthday of the Emperor each year, sponsored by the Crane Clan, in which thousands of people create *waka* based on a topic selected by the Emperor himself. At one of these competitions, many years ago, the great Rezan saved his own life by composing a *waka* and winning the competition. The Emperor had taken offense at the poet's loud criticisms of Imperial policy, and had been prepared to command Rezan to commit *seppuku* for his indiscretions. However, Rezan's recitation at the Imperial Birthday Celebration caused the Emperor to rescind his command and allow the poet to live. Rezan was also the first poet to develop the shortest form of *waka*, known as the *haiku*, and to use it to express deep insights into nature and human life. Until that time, most poetry shorter than five lines was considered frivolous, and used for amusement and colloquial expressions. His style set the standard for modern *haiku*, and in fact changed the way poetry was viewed in the Empire.

Extemporaneous poetry is one of the most loved art forms in the Emerald Empire, and courtiers delight in challenging each other to spontaneous poetic acrobatics. Thus, some poetry can be performed without preparation, while other, more complex works require as much as an hour to create.

Rank one: At this rank, the poet has the ability to create a minor mirage based on his recitation. Descriptions of woods can create the image of a forest surrounding the Artisan; a poem based on a lady's beauty can make her (temporarily) even more lovely. These illusions have no auditory components, and cannot create the illusion of a specific person. However, they could be used to camouflage a party of samurai as bushes, or to enhance a shugenja's spell effect, making it appear as if flames roared from the caster's hand. The *maya* is directed by the Artisan's mind at the time of its creation, and cannot be altered thereafter, except by the use of another *maya*. Anyone attempting to disbelieve



MANNERS (CONTINUED)

Some of the more common manners include: refusing three times before accepting a gift, so that the giver can prove their sincerity; ignoring the actions of a drunken man - such actions are considered bad manners to perform, and even worse manners to mention; never sit so that the bottom of your feet are facing your daimyo or other superior.

SOME COMMON PHRASES

Arigato gozaimasu.
Thank you very much.

Do itashimashite.
You're very welcome.

Sumimasen.
Excuse me.

Gomen nasai.
I'm very sorry.



STORYTELLER SUMMONINGS

Game Masters should sit down with a player playing a Storyteller and go through the character's retinue of stories. Out of the dozens (to hundreds) of stories the character knows, only those he is truly familiar with will allow him to summon the "spirit of the story."

The player and GM should have basic statistics and personalities for these "story characters" pre-made before the game. Yes, it will require a little homework on the storyteller's part, but if he doesn't have the detailed information necessary, he shouldn't be able to summon the character anyway.

Essentially, these characters are not the actual mythic heroes, but expressions of the storyteller's *chi*. None of their Rings can be higher than the Storyteller's School Rank, and they shouldn't have detailed information the storyteller doesn't know.

In other words, if a Storyteller were to summon Kakita, the summoned spirit would appear *exactly* as the Storyteller would imagine him to appear, knowing all things the storyteller knows in the character's repertoire of Kakita stories. For instance, if Kakita hid a powerful sword and the story doesn't tell where it is, then the character and the summoned spirit don't know either.

the illusion must roll their Willpower + Perception against a Target Number of 20.

This maya requires a preparation time from ten minutes to an hour, depending on the complexity of the mirage. Enhancing an already existing object (such as a lady's beauty) is a relatively simple task (ten minutes), while camouflaging a group of people as bushes is a radical change and might take an hour.

Rank two: The second rank poet has the ability to send short messages, composed as a *haiku* or *waka*, which are received as whispers in the ear of the receiver. The receiver may then compose their own poem, in the same style, and whisper it back. If the receiver is in sight of the poet, this ability does not require a Skill roll, and may be done a number of times per day equal to the poet's School Rank. If the recipient is out of sight, the poet must make a Skill roll (Intelligence + Poetry) based on the distance between the two, and must also have some item which is close to the recipient. Typical skill rolls for distance are: TN of 15 for up to 1 mile, TN of 20 for up to 5 miles, and TN of 25 for up to 10 miles. A message can be sent and received across a great distance in this way once per day for each School Rank of the poet.

This maya requires no preparation.

Rank three: The third rank poet has the ability to inspire great deeds through their recitation of poetic events and famous chants. Anyone who sits and listens (up to a maximum number of people equal to two times the poet's school rank) for three rounds (the poet's preparation time) before going into combat will receive a +10 to all of their attack rolls, and a +10 to their TN to be hit for a number of rounds equal to two times the poet's School Rank.

STORYTELLING

There are many types of storytelling in Rokugan, from the serious to the comic. A professional storyteller, known as a *rakugoka*, uses voice, facial expression and expansive gestures. Often, the storyteller will act out the story with only their fan as a prop. Charades, such as the pouring of imaginary tea into an imaginary cup, are commonplace among professional storytellers during their stories. Audiences may already be familiar with the story, to the point of knowing the gestures before the storyteller makes them. However, the excitement of the story is in the way it is told - the original portrayal of

the characters and episodes which the storyteller acts out, and the emotions which the tale evokes from its audience. Storytellers often tutor noble children because of their familiarity with the myths and legends of Rokugan, as well as their methods of teaching the Tao and other skills which a noble child will need later in life. Of all the Artisans, the storyteller most often travels the land, entertaining the populace and reminding them of the traditional ways.

One of the most famous storytellers in history was Kakita Ryoku, author of the novel *Winter*. Her novel is the published papers of her journal, which tells of the stories she heard at winter courts, and it illustrates the intricacies of the Rokugan political system. The novel has been quite popular among the ladies of Rokugan, for some of its stories detail the famous romances of her time. However, it is much more than a romance novel. *Winter* also details many political strategies and secrets which were used by the various clans, and has been considered by some to be the single greatest book on politics and court intrigue that has ever been written.

Storytelling is not a static art. It requires time and creativity to perform, and therefore cannot be "held" as some other artisan maya can. Storytelling requires at least ten minutes to perform - longer if the storyteller is attempting a complex or difficult feat.

Rank one: At this rank, the storyteller has a great knowledge of items and ancient history. If the storyteller studies an item for a ten minutes, she has a chance of understanding its importance in history and any legendary attributes which the item may have. The storyteller may know of the original owner of the item, or any reputed owners, as well. This ability allows her to identify the magical or renowned capabilities of the item, if any. The Storyteller must make an Intelligence + School Rank roll against a TN of 20 to identify most notable items (Bloodswords, Ancestral Items) and their abilities, but more obscure items will have higher Target Numbers. Note that a failed result may result in a misunderstanding, and the storyteller may gain an inaccurate result.

Rank two: At this rank, the storyteller has the ability to cause such belief in their stories that they may actually come true. Whether the storyteller reaches the deepest psychological point of the intended recipient, or whether the ability in some way calls up spirits to do the storyteller's bidding, is unclear. What is clear are the results



The storyteller chooses a myth and recites it in such a way that the target sees a connection between himself and the character, and that myth will come true in their own life. This can have beneficial or detrimental effects which come to pass over a period of time determined by the GM and the nature of the story. For example, if the storyteller influences their target by telling them of a great Oni which eats the feet of the dead and carries the hearts of victims to the Shadowlands, the recipient may find themselves plagued by a strange odor, hearing noises in the night, and over the course of weeks or months actually believing that they are being attacked by such a creature. If they successfully defeat this being (the product of their own imagination), the story loses its power and will plague them no more. Each time the storyteller uses this ability, the roll is a contested one, versus the recipient's Void. The storyteller loses all points of Void in the attempt, whether successful or not, and cannot use this ability again for a number of days equal to (6 - their current Void).

Rank Three: A master storyteller has the ability to bring characters from myth and legend to life. Characters such as Doji Nio, son of Kakita; Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder; or Benten, the patroness of romantic love, can all be created in semi-sentient physical form. Such 'spirits' are not the original characters, of course - they are merely the storyteller's own chi, which has created a constructed being who has certain traits which are attributed to the character. These creatures, if they can be called that, have no intelligence of their own aside from the mythical knowledge of their characters and the direction of the storyteller. A construct of Osano-Wo might be asked to stand and defend the storyteller, for example, but it cannot woo a woman or cast spells, because those aren't part of Osano-Wo's mythical characteristics. A storyteller can only have one character active at any given

time, and must maintain total concentration or the character will vanish and the maya will end. At no time can the construct be out of the Artisan's sight. If the construct is ever killed or destroyed, the Artisan immediately drops to the "Down" wound rank.

Typical constructs will require an Intelligence + Storytelling roll at a TN of 20, but more obscure characters or characters with a great deal of personality may require a higher TN. Players and GMs should peruse the lore of Rokugan as presented in the various clan books and the basic rule book, and decide on statistics for certain constructs which the storyteller chooses to call upon fairly often - an incarnation of love, for example, or of deceit. A word of warning is required, however - the only Artisan bold enough to attempt to bring forth the First Children of the Sun was driven mad and torn to pieces by the power he attempted to channel. Some things are better left alone...



"ROLL TWO DICE"

When the following charts ask you to 'roll two dice,' they are asking for a number from 1-100. In order to achieve a percentile roll, do the following: roll two of your ten-sided dice; multiply the first die by ten and add it to the second die. For example, if you roll a '3' and then a '7,' your percentile roll is a '37.'

Heritage Tables

These Tables are designed to give the player a guide to determining random events which have shaped their family's history - glorious or otherwise. A character may roll on the Heritage Tables up to three times, but each roll costs one Character Point. Begin with Heritage Table 1 and follow the instructions. But be warned, for every family has at least one skeleton in the closet, and not all ancestors are distant spirits.

HERITAGE TABLE 1

Roll	Result
1	Dishonorable Past. Roll on Heritage Table 2.
2-3	Undistinguished Past. No benefits or penalties.
4-6	Distinguished Ancestor. Roll on Heritage Table 3.
7-10	Mixed Blessings. Roll on Heritage Table 4.

HERITAGE TABLE 2 - DISHONORABLE PAST

Unfortunately, we are not all blessed with honorable ancestors.

Roll	Result
1-2	Traitor! A distant family member betrayed a <i>daimyo</i> of your clan. Begin the game with the Black Sheep Disadvantage (see the basic rulebook, p 75). You gain no Character Points for this disadvantage.
3-4	Coward! One of your ancestors failed to prove his worth in battle and ran when he faced the enemy of your clan. You begin the game at zero Glory and must earn twenty Glory points before you reach Rank 1.
5-6	Shameful birth. Your mother was a highly ranked diplomat to another clan. While there, she became pregnant and you were born. You are considered a tremendous shame to your family, because your mother betrayed her loyalty to the clan with her lover. She committed <i>seppuku</i> shortly after your birth, and you begin the game at zero Glory. You were cast out of the clan for her dishonor, and you are a Crane Clan Ronin; a relative raised you in the basics of your school's techniques, but you will need to go to another school to learn advanced abilities.
7-8	Vow! Your family has a long-standing vow to complete. This could be a duel of honor, the recovery of a stolen item once in their care, or the repossession of land taken from your clan in battle. You may not achieve rank 3 in your school until this vow is fulfilled.
9-10	Ruined! Your family lost everything in a battle or political coup. You begin the game with nothing. No family (True Ronin), no money - only the clothes on your back and your outfit (all items are of poor quality).

HERITAGE TABLE 3 - DISTINGUISHED

ANCESTOR:

Roll	Result: One of Your Ancestors...
1-2	...fought at a famous battle. Roll on Table 3A.
3-4	...had a famous romance. Roll on Table 3B.
5-6	...performed a heroic deed. Roll on Table 3C.
7-8	...held a prestigious duty. Roll on Table 3D.
9-10	...died a glorious death. Roll on table 3E

(Tables 3A - 3E are on the next two pages)

HERITAGE TABLE 4 - MIXED BLESSING

Roll	Result
1-2	Your family is renowned for its cleverness. One of your ancestors established their reputation in the Imperial court at the expense of another clan, and you are anticipated to follow in your ancestor's footsteps. Gain 1 Honor rank, and a minor enemy in a clan of the GM's choice.
3-4	One of your ancestors slew a powerful enemy of the Crane Clan. Gain one Glory rank, a Major Enemy from a clan of the GM's choice and the Lore: clan skill for that clan. You are also cursed to always drop your highest die when fighting against members of that clan.
5-7	You have inherited a <i>nemuranai</i> . You have no clue as to the item's potential, but you have been told to treat the item well. It has been in your family for generations, and you are expected to carry it with you. Always.
8-9	You are the last of a once-noble family within the Crane Clan. Your father's land was taken from him to pay taxes, and his samurai retainers have long since been dismissed. You are the only child, the heir to his title and his responsibilities to the Crane, but with that nobility comes the knowledge that all the spirits of your ancestors are watching you, and that you are their last hope for glory and the return of the prestige that your ancestors once had. Gain 3 Glory points.
10	Something's wrong. Your family has always kept a secret from you, but you never minded as a child. People stared at you as if they knew something you didn't, and you've never even known your mother's name, much less met anyone who knew her. Your father won't talk about it - he refuses to mention what occurred, why you were found on the step of his home, or why he's so certain that you are his child. Lately, you've noted some unusual things happening around you - and nobody will explain why. The circumstances surrounding your birth are unknown to you - and you're starting to think your mother wasn't even human...

HERITAGE TABLE 3A - FAMOUS BATTLES

Your ancestor fought in a famous battle of the past, giving you a worthy standard to live up to.

Roll	Result
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1-2	Battle of the Landbridge
-----	---------------------------------

It was at this battle that the Daidoji first made an alliance with the Crab. The valor of the Crane bushi who sacrificed their lives alongside the Hida and Kuni at the great wall has forged a respect between the two clans. Your ancestor was one of the original "Iron Crane." Add 1 to your Glory rank and gain a Minor Ally in the Crab Clan.

3-6	Battle at Kyuden Kitsune
-----	---------------------------------

This is the most recent battle in Crane history, having been fought only 30 years ago. The forces of two minor clans came together, and the Crane were forced to fight for peace between them after an assassination killed many of the nobles of the Fox Clan. Gain the skill Lore: Ninja at Rank 1, add 1 to your Glory rank, and gain a Minor Enemy in the Fox Clan.

4-5	Victory With No Strike
-----	-------------------------------

Your ancestor was part of the diplomatic troupe of bushi which engineered the peace between the Lion and the Phoenix Clan at the borders of Nemuiaminari Yama. Gain a Major Ally in either the Lion or Phoenix Clan.

6	Battle of the Raging Seas
---	----------------------------------

This is the famous sea-battle which occurred seven hundred years ago during the Battle at the White Stag, between the *gaijin* forces and the fleet of Crane ships. Without the Crane to sink the *gaijin* ships, their cannons would have destroyed much of the Rokugani coastline. Gain a Major Ally in the clan of your choice, and the skill Lore: Gunpowder.

7-8	Battle of the Sleeping River
-----	-------------------------------------

It was at this famous battle that the clan united against Iuchiban and his order of Blood Speakers. Doji Hejiko, the Champion of the Crane, led her armies against the Blood Speakers in order to exact revenge on Asahina Jaijimin, a traitorous shugenja. Your ancestor was at this battle. Add 1 to your Glory, and the skill Lore: Maho (Black Magic).

9-0	Day of the Falling Stars
-----	---------------------------------

At this battle, the Crane armies were forced to retreat due to Lion military pressure. Many peasants took their own lives rather than be at the palace when the Lion arrived, and the castle is said to be haunted with their spirits. Gain a Minor Enemy in the Lion Clan, and the advantage Higher Purpose: Retake Shiro no Yagin.

HERITAGE TABLE 3B - FAMOUS ROMANCE

Step One: Roll two dice for the clan with whom your ancestor had a romantic entanglement.

- | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------|
| 01-20 | Dragon |
| 21-40 | Phoenix |
| 41-70 | Crane |
| 71-75 | Crab |
| 76-85 | Scorpion |
| 86-90 | Unicorn |
| 91-00 | Lion, Minor Clan or GM/Player choice. |

Step Two: Now roll two dice for the outcome of the affair.

01-70	Romantic affair.
-------	-------------------------

01-15 Summer affair. Nothing special. Gain Minor Ally in appropriate clan.

16-30 Winter affair. Much more noticeable. Gain Minor Ally in appropriate clan and 5 Glory points.

31-55 Marriage! Add 1 to your Glory rank and Major Ally in appropriate clan.

56-70 A spot of trouble. A parent didn't approve, so the affair was kept secret. Gain a Minor Ally and Minor Enemy in appropriate clan.

71-00	Tragic affair.
-------	-----------------------

71-75 Your ancestor's emotions were unrequited. Gain a Minor Enemy from the appropriate Clan.

76-90 Your ancestor's rival had too much influence, so all your ancestor won was a broken heart.

91-97 A messy affair. Both parties were commanded to commit *seppuku*. You were raised by your uncle/aunt/cousin. Lose 1 Glory rank and switch your family name to another family (Doji to Kakita, Kakita to Daidoji, etc.)

98-00 The affair occurred after your *gempukku* ceremony. The husband/father/wife of your Ancestor's lover demanded justice and killed him/her in a duel. You now have a Major Enemy and others of your family consider it your duty to demand the right to blood feud. Good luck.

HERITAGE TABLE 3C - HEROIC DEED

Roll	Result
1-2	Ancestor saved daimyo from assassination. Gain "Lore: Ninja" and 5 Glory points.
3-4	(Shugenja) Ancestor researched spell. Gain one Air spell as an Innate Ability. (Bushi) Ancestor was famous for his sword technique. Gain one free raise when using iaijutsu, once per day. (Artisan) Ancestor was a master of two arts. Gain one skill, and the first maya of that art, to be used once a day. If you later choose to achieve the second maya of that art, you also gain full standard access to the first maya.
5-6	Ancestor defeated a famous swordsman in a duel. Gain a katana of fine quality and 5 Glory points.
7-8	Ancestor rescued a kidnapped relative. Gain Major Ally (Crane Clan) and 3 Glory points.
9-10	Ancestor single-handedly turned back a sally during a siege. Gain Battle 1 (or +1 Battle) and 3 Glory points.

HERITAGE TABLE 3D - PRESTIGIOUS DUTY

Your character has the following position and rank:

1 - 3	Magistrate of the family (+1 Glory)
4 - 5	Magistrate of the clan (+2 Glory)
6	Magistrate of the Emerald Champion (+3 Glory)
7	Minor Diplomat to the court of the Clan (+ 1 Honor)
8	Minor Diplomat to the court of the Emperor (+2 Honor)
9	Gunso (Sergeant) (+1 Glory, +1 Battle)
0	Chui (Lieutenant) (+1 Glory, +2 Battle)

HERITAGE TABLE 5 - GIFTS

Roll	Result
01-15	1- 10 koku (1d10)
16-35	2-20 koku (2d10)
36-50	Gain minor fetish (tsangusuri) as a token of the Crane Clan's appreciation. Roll on Heritage Table 6, below.
51-75	4-40 koku (4d10)
76-80	You have been made governor over a small bit of land that you must spend at least 3 months of the year tending to. Gain 1 Glory Rank. The revenue of the land is 1 - 10 koku per year.
81-00	You have been made <i>hatamoto</i> (honored advisor) to a <i>daimyo</i> of a family within the Crane Clan - this is an important obligation, and you gain 1 Honor Rank, and the responsibility to attend your feudal lord once every three months.

HERITAGE TABLE 3E - GLORIOUS DEATH

All results on this table also roll on Table 5: Gifts, below.

1-4	Killed in a Duel
5-9	Killed in Battle
Step one: Roll on the Famous Battle Table, above (Table 3A)	
Step two: Roll on table below. All rolls are worth 1 Glory Rank, plus any listed bonus.	
1-2	Killed protecting general. Gain Major Ally from appropriate clan.
3	Killed charging and breaking enemy lines. Gain Minor Ally from your family.
4-5	Rode out before the enemy's army and shouted insults, but died later. Gain and lose nothing.
6	Died defending an ambassador. Gain a Favor from the Doji Courtier Favor Table, page 56.
7	Challenged the enemy's general, but died. Gain 5 additional Glory Points.
8	Carried the Clan Banner into battle. Gain 7 additional Glory Points.
9	Stole the enemy's banner. Gain an additional Glory Rank.
0	Your Ancestor saved a comrade by dragging him from behind enemy lines. Gain a Major Ally from the appropriate clan.
0	<i>Seppuku</i> Your Ancestor committed <i>seppuku</i> to save your family's honor, and your Ancestor left you something to remind you of his sacrifice. Gain 5 Honor Points.

HERITAGE TABLE 6 - ASAHINA FETISHES AND MINOR MAGICS

A full description of *tsangusuri* is given in Appendix III. Each of these items has only one use, unless otherwise specified in the item's description.

Roll	Result
01-10	Incense of Concentration - With fifteen minutes of meditation, user (must be a shugenja) receives 2 spent Void Points back.
11-25	Brooch of Plenty - Once every two days, nourishes the user fully for one day.
26-50	Jade Amulet - Adds 2k2 to resist Shadowlands Taint.
51-65	Makeup Kit - Adds one die to roll for any disguise/impersonation roll.
66-69	Bone Key - Opens any door, even if locked or magically sealed. Any physical traps are negated, any magical ones are triggered.
70-76	Feather of the Crane - Lowers the wielder's weight to 10% of normal for up to one hour. While in this state the wielder takes 3 times normal damage from physical attacks.
77-79	Acorn of Visions - When eaten, this magical nut renders the user comatose for one hour, during which he will receive visions about any subject meditated upon immediately before eating. At times, this fetish can be used as a type of augury to attempt to divine a course of action, or as a semi-reliable form of scrying upon another person.
80-89	Tortoise Shell - Confers protection from all ranged attacks, for the duration of ten combat rounds.
90-97	White Sheaf of Grain - Heals 2d10 worth of damage to one person. The person does not have to be the user, but must be touched by the user as the sheaf is invoked.
98-00	Black Fan - This fan, when used properly, confers a certain amount of awe and fear toward the user. The user may roll 2d10 and add the result to their Glory (in boxes) for one hour. People listening to a speech or command by the user are struck with mild fear and respect. (One free raise toward any Oratory, Command, or Sincerity roll.)

FORTUNE TABLE

A character may only roll on this table once during character creation. This roll costs 4 Character points.

Roll Result

- 1 When you were younger, you got very lucky in a duel against a famous swordsman. Now you have a reputation as one of the best young swordsmen in Rokugan. Sometimes it gets you free board, sometimes it gets you a challenge a day.
- 2 Innate Talent: Raise one of your Skills by one rank.
- 3 You've always been attuned to one of the Elements - It's in your blood, and you find it easy to call on the powers of its path. Add +1 to one trait under the Element of your choice, but lower one trait under the opposing Element by 1.
- 4 The Path of Blood: You gain a free raise whenever you're in combat against one specific clan. You may specify any clan, or you may instead specify "Ninja".
- 5 You are a twin, born identical or fraternal - you have a sibling who shares your name and nature. They may be radically different from you, or you may have the same interests and goals - but even when you're far away, you occasionally sense emotion from your sibling, letting you know what they're feeling, and they can feel the same from you. Pain, anger, joy and concern - all are occasionally transmitted by your strange bond. Its uncontrollable, but you couldn't imagine living any other way.
- 6 You've been cursed. A shugenja of one of the major Clans took offense at your actions and laid a curse on you that no one you know has been able to remove. The exact nature of the curse, and its harmful effects, are up to the twisted imagination of your Gamemaster.
- 7 Heroic Deed: Gain 5-10 Glory points. It's up to the GM to determine the exact nature and circumstances of the deed, and the award.
- 8 Son of a *daimyo*. Gain +1 Glory Rank.
- 9 Fostered to Another Clan: When you were very young, you were fostered to another clan as an attempt to promote understanding and peace between the Crane and that clan. Gain a Minor Ally in the clan of your choice, and the Lore: (Clan) of that clan.
- 0 Cousin of the Imperial Line: All of the Hantei brides have always been Crane maidens. The wife of the current Emperor happens also to be your aunt. Gain +2 Glory points, 2 Koku and a Minor Ally in the Imperial Court.



Chapter Four



**Who's Who in
the Crane Clan**



ANCESTORS

All along the sidebars of this chapter, you will find the tales of great Crane Clan heroes. You will also find point values listed next to their names. Characters (at the time of creation) can purchase these heroes as Ancestors with Character Points. Ancestors cannot be purchased with Experience Points. Of course, technically all Doji have Lady Doji as an ancestor, but those who spend the points have a karmic tie between their character and the Ancestor.

Chapter Four: Who's Who in the Crane Clan

The Doji

DOJI SATSUME (CHAMPION OF THE CRANE; EMERALD CHAMPION)

EARTH: 5

WATER: 3

FIRE: 8

AIR: 5

VOID: 5

School/Rank: Kakita Iaijutsu 5

Notable Skills: Archery 2, Battle 4, Courtier 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 5, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 4, Meditation 5, Painting 3, Shintao 4, Sincerity 4, Tessen 2

Honor: 5

Glory: 9.5

Advantages: Allies (Emperor Hantei XXXVIII), Cadence, Clear Thinker, Social Position - Crane Champion, Social Position - Emerald Champion, Inheritance - Crane Clan Sword

Disadvantages: Driven (increase the strength/political power of his Clan), Lost Love - Doji Teinko

Satsume is the Champion of the Crane Clan, and has the honor of being the Emperor's personal Champion as well. Trained at the Daidoji Bushi school and the Kakita Iaijutsu school, Satsume is one of the best swordsmen in the Empire. Although his personal style may seem ruthless, he is strong, quick and deadly. The epitome of honor, Satsume is hard and uncompromising. He has to be. He has Lions and Scorpions to deal with.

When Satsume was growing up, he was always a reticent child, thoughtful and quiet. The

two things that caused young Satsume to show interest were hunting and war. During his youth, his father often took him into the woodlands around the Doji palace, hunting for game. Ever the Young Prince, Satsume was always aware of his responsibilities as heir. However, he took the Crane ideal, "Take each action as if it were your last" very seriously as well, following in his father's footsteps, and those of his ancestors.

As a youth, he served on the Daidoji line against the Lion, keeping the Akodo legion at bay while his father warred with them. He grew to know and understand the Lion ferocity, and he personally slew the Daimyo of the Ikoma house in single combat when he was sixteen. Ever since, he has had the hatred of Lions to contend with, but he never looked back. He was trained at the Kakita school of Iaijutsu, where he studied side by side with the Emperor-to-be. The two were very close, and they often went hunting together as youths, testing their aim with the bow and the speed of their falcons.

At twenty one, Satsume defeated his father, Doji Chuai, in the tournament for the Emerald Champion. He was the youngest Champion ever to take the position, and he still serves the current Hantei. Although he once was able to perform both tasks - Emerald Champion and Doji daimyo - the recent strife in the southlands have caused Satsume to rely more and more on his son, Hoturi, to maintain the day to day running of the Doji family. Satsume only hopes that his happy-go-lucky son is ready for the challenges to come. As he looks upon Hoturi's handsome face and watches the frivolity with which he leads his life, Satsume is more than concerned about the clan. He is afraid for its future.

Satsume was never considered handsome, but his face has always been full of vigor and life. During his tenure as the Emperor's guard, there was a ninja infiltration of the palace. In defense of the Emperor, Satsume was badly injured, leaving a strange scar running from his eyebrow to the corner of his mouth. A strange half grin resulted from the injury as the scar healed. Satsume's long hair has been traditionally dyed white and it sharply contrasts with his dark, almost black eyes. The unnatural scar on his face only serves as a reminder of his loyalty to the Emperor, and his ferocity in combat. Behind his back, the Scorpion call him the "Grinning Crane" and curse the ineptitude of certain ninja.

Satsume walks bow-legged, a memento of his youth on horseback. His stride is purposeful and direct, as is his speech. His voice is sonorous, but harsh, and carries with it a hint of threat. Satsume's eyes are narrow and clouded, as if he has seen some great evil and fears to look upon the world again. But you can be certain: not only is he aware, he is calculating your every move.

Today, Satsume still serves as the Emerald Champion and Champion of the Crane Clan, leaving the responsibilities of daimyo of the Doji family to his eldest son. At just over 40 years of age, he is expected to be preparing for retirement, but Satsume isn't ready to let go of the reins just yet - certainly not until he is sure his clan will be well tended. He has a strong sense of history and morality, and he is often called uncompromising and inflexible. Satsume is not a tall man, standing only slightly over 5'6", but his bulky frame is covered in tight muscles and his strength belies his stature.

His wife, Kakita Teinko, was the sister of Kakita Toshimoko. The marriage was arranged at Satsume's petition, and her Kakita parents were more than happy to oblige their Champion's request. Although the maiden did not return his love, she married him dutifully when he asked for her hand. She served Satsume faithfully, never giving him cause for mistrust or disapproval, and performed the duties of the daimyo's first wife with flair. She gave birth to two strong sons, although some whispered that she longed for a daughter. When Satsume's brother, Doji Ichihara, died in combat and his wife died in childbirth, Teinko begged her husband to allow her to raise their orphaned girl-child as her own. The Crane Champion adopted the baby and so Shizue was raised with Hoturi and Kuwanan.

Satsume had little use for the crippled girl, and paid her no attention at all. His wife, however, doted upon the child, teaching her many skills and telling her stories of the past. Teinko spent her time with the three young children, teaching them the skills of the Kakita Artisans and helping them to see the world through a Crane's eyes. Her love for them was the center of her life.

Satsume had no time for his children while they were growing up. He had a clan to run, Lions and Crab to defend against, and Scorpion plots to uncover. It was not until his wife's death seven



years later that Satsume took notice of his children again. In their eyes he could see the spirit of the woman he had loved, and perhaps they were the only ones who understood the depth of his grief. Satsume has never remarried in the many years since Teinko's death, and every year on the date of her birth, he travels to the seashore

ANCESTOR:

LADY DOJI

??? TO ???

(6 POINTS)

Lady Doji is the founder of the Crane household, as well as creator of culture and civilization. Her wisdom during the foundation of the Emerald Empire shaped the nature of Rokugan diplomacy and interaction, as well as revolutionizing the use of language and inventing its written form. Lady Doji was the mother of the arts, as well, and helped to invent many of the techniques which are still used by the Kakita Academy.

Characters who choose Lady Doji as an ancestor are considered to have a rank of 1 in all High Skills. If the character wishes to advance in a High Skill, they must pay for rank 1 before continuing to rank 2.

Of all the original *Kami*, Lady Doji was perhaps the least mysterious. She spent her life surrounded by her courtiers, building the language and traditions which lived long past her death. Her life is celebrated by all the Clans of Rokugan by Imperial Edict, on the first day of the month of the Crane.



**ANCESTOR:
DOJI HOTEI
539 TO 582
(4 POINTS)**

Doji Hotei was once the Champion of the Crane Clan. Although happily married for a number of years, he had no children. When his wife died, he went mad, abdicating the position of Champion to his younger brother, Kukojin, who was the Emerald Champion at the time. In the dark of the night, Hotei took one horse and his daisho, and left his ancestral home. Beside him, despite his curses and commands, rode two faithful samurai (Sanzo and Panjuo), who were determined to protect him from his own folly. Hotei traveled Rokugan for years, claiming that his wife had sent him on a great quest.

In his madness, he challenged towering trees to duels and held court before flocks of doves on the beach. His past glorious deeds were forgotten in time and he became an object of ridicule and scorn among Rokugan, even in the court of his own brother.

Many years later when the Crane went to war with the Lion, Akodo Shakato had victory within his grasp.

The troops of the Crane were retreating in fear before the mighty army of the Lion, and all hope was lost. Kakita palace seemed an easy target for the invading general.

and watches the setting sun alone, in commemoration of her faithfulness and his love.

Outwardly, Satsume respects and trusts both his sons, teaching them the ways of the Empire and their duty to the Emperor. Inwardly, however, the Champion has concerns about his elder son's ability to lead. He does not respect the life Hoturi chooses to live, and he hopes that his son will become more serious before he accepts the mantle of the Crane Champion. He criticizes Hoturi in private, and demands to see greater prowess from his son's swordsmanship. Whenever he sees Hoturi with the ladies, he is sure to remark upon it, deriding his son's activities as a waste of time. Satsume doesn't do this because he dislikes Hoturi - indeed, he loves his son very much. He berates Hoturi because he sees it as the only way to forge the youth into a warrior - into the Champion that the Crane Clan will need to lead them into their future.

To be sure of that future, he has recalled his younger son, Kuwanan, from his fosterage with Akodo Toturi - a fosterage at the request of the aging Emperor, who wished the two clans to cease their feuding and learn to live in harmony. Recently, Satsume has given permission for Kuwanan to travel to the lands of the Hida, to study fighting and to learn the ways of war from the Crab. Kuwanan has proven to be a tough fighter and a resourceful strategist - much like his father. Doji Kuwanan is the apple of Satsume's eye, and although he has never admitted it in public, Satsume has his regrets that Kuwanan was not the eldest child. Often, Satsume will spend time sparring with Kuwanan when he is home from his travels, giving him the approval which Hoturi so often misses.

Their father's attitudes toward them has caused some strife between the brothers, but Satsume is quick to stop it when it arises, demanding that there be unity within his house. Satsume sees the difficulties his sons will face - he watches them every day in the Emperor's court. His first wish is to see his clan safely brought into the next generation; after all, someone must protect the Crane from their enemies. Satsume plans to be certain that the Crane are never left unprotected against the Shadowlands - and the jealousy of the other clans.

DOJI HOTURI (DAIMYO OF THE DOJI FAMILY)

EARTH 4

WATER 3

FIRE 4

AIR 4

Reflexes 5

VOID 4

School/Rank: Kakita Iaijutsu 4

Notable Skills: Archery 3, Battle 2, Courtier 5, Defense 3, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, History (Rokugan) 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Lion Clan 2, Meditation 2, Poetry 5, Political Maneuvering 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 4

Honor: (4.1) 5 (See the description of Doji Ameiko, Hoturi's wife.)

Glory: 7.6

Advantages: Great Destiny (Seven Thunders), Bente's Blessing, Luck, Kharmic Tie (Bayushi Kachiko), Cadence, True Friend - Kakita Toshimoko, Ally-Akodo Toturi

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Bayushi Dairu), Compulsion (Love of women - TN 15 to overcome)

Hoturi is the elder son of the Crane Champion, Doji Satsume. He has a ready laugh and a bright smile, a willing heart and is eager to be everyone's friend. Hoturi bears little resemblance to his father, as he is both tall and slender with pale skin. He does have Satsume's black eyes, however. Hoturi moves like a dancer, graceful and swift with easy gestures. He is quick to laugh and smile with his companions, and only seems reserved to those who do not know him, or those he is trying to impress. This helps to make him appear as cool and controlled as his father when in court or other public functions. He has a long scar on his left arm, trailing from his shoulder to his elbow. He will rarely speak of it, and when asked, will only murmur politely, "The Crab was too slow."

Hoturi's father rarely had time to spare from the military engagements and political functions which were required of him, and he left the raising of his sons to their mother. Hoturi spent much time with his mother, Doji Teinko, and her brother Kakita Toshimoko. When his mother died, Hoturi was crushed. At the age of twelve, during his mother's funeral, he told his father that he wished to become an Artisan like his mother. Satsume's only response was bellowed laughter,

and a ringing blow to Hoturi's young face. Stunned, Hoturi hardly heard his father informing him that he would be attending the Kakita Iaijutsu school under the direct guidance of his uncle, Toshimoko. Although he did not wish it, Hoturi did as he was told.

In time, Hoturi became Toshimoko's best student. Toshimoko took the bitter child under his wing and taught him how to be a man. Many times they traveled to the monasteries of the Shintao monks, where Hoturi met his closest childhood friend, Akodo Toturi. Both were outcasts, separated from their fathers, and the boys quickly found they had much in common. Although Hoturi is nearly four years younger than the Akodo, their friendship has grown and continued. Since then, Hoturi has spent much time with the new Lion Champion, learning patience from the Akodo as well as teaching Toturi how to live life with the relish of a Crane. They have shared much over the years, and Toshimoko has fostered their friendship, hopeful that it will prove to be the start of a lasting peace between the two families.

Toshimoko has never spoken against the criticisms that Satsume growls about his eldest son, but Hoturi knows that it is often the wise counsel of the "Grey Crane" that helps father and son understand each other.


Indeed, Hoturi is very much like the Iaijutsu Master in temperament and taste. Whether from the blood of his mother or the influence of his sensei, Hoturi has always seemed as much a Kakita as a Doji. In the lands of other families (when his father is not there to critique his every action), Hoturi often goes on sprees with his sensei, seeking lovely women and fresh wine to pass the evening. He often spends time in the

arms of the ladies of the other clans as well as the women of the willow world.

Hoturi has always been a ladies' man, wooing samurai-ko as well as geisha with his ready charm and easy nature. His handsome face and many victories in tournaments and duels have made him famous, and his exploits with geisha have caused his name to be sighed in many parts of the willow world. The rumors of ladies he has been romantically entwined with range from Isawa Kaede and Horiuchi Shoan even to Ikoma Tsanuri. If Hoturi has any lasting interest in one



of his conquests, he has yet to make his feelings known. Nevertheless, there are many women on the face of Rokugan who dream of the young samurai fighting for their honor in a duel, reciting sweet love haiku to them, or escorting them to the Imperial Palace during the great festivals. Ever the honorable samurai, Hoturi is the man that every woman wants, and every man wants to be.



ANCESTOR: DOJI HOTEI (CONTINUED)

Suddenly, from behind the Crane lines charged an old man and two aging samurai. When the Crane saw the Lions falling before the blade of the "madman", they rallied, and won the day.

Doji Hotei died on that battlefield, surrounded by Lion samurai, his two brave retainers by his side. A shrine to his soul was erected on the Kakita plains, and his daisho still rests where he fell. A character which chooses Hotei as an ancestor gains a minor insanity which may surface periodically during their life. This insanity should be somewhat debilitating, and triggered by some outside influence: a spouse's death, going into battle, being called a coward, seeing a chicken's head. It is up to the Gamemaster's twisted imagination to decide exactly what the insanity is and what triggers it (as well as how often), but it should be appropriate to the character. Descendants of Doji Hotei may spend a Void point in combat to ignore all wounds for one round. The player must declare before the round begins if he wishes to use this ability.

Hotei is remembered on the last day of the month of the Horse.



**ANCESTOR:
DOJI TAEHIME
680 - 745
(5 POINTS)**

Doji Tachime was the ambassador of the Crane to the Scorpion court. Her skill at discovering falsehoods and uncovering plots were unmatched, and many in the court of the Bayushi called her the "Poison Crane." When she was offered a position of some rank in the Imperial Court, she refused it, claiming that she served the Emperor far better where she was. None disputed her.

It is claimed that she held many of the most cherished secrets of the Scorpion daimyo, Bayushi Riozu, and that the two were secretly lovers. Tachime died an old woman, and her possessions - as per her will - were sealed into an iron box and buried somewhere beneath the walls of Kakita palace. "Let all my knowledge go to my family," she wrote, "but let no man betray my trust to the Lord who has been my host for so many years." To this day, no one knows what secrets she uncovered, for she kept her faith with both the Crane and the enigmatic Scorpion daimyo.

Part of his appearance, however, is a facade. Hoturi can be very manipulative. He is not self-centered, but he knows that in order to get what he wants, he has to be completely sure of his own abilities. Thus, he has spent a great deal of his time sharpening his mental skills as well as his physical ones, and using his adept mind in order to secure the love and affection of many of the noble and beautiful ladies of Rokugan.

Since Hoturi's marriage, however, he has changed. Not outwardly - Hoturi still enjoys a good drink or a night listening to music at the geisha houses - but inwardly. The young Doji daimyo has never been disloyal to his wife since the day of their marriage, and although he still enjoys their company, he no longer enjoys ... their company. There is only one woman in Rokugan who could make Hoturi disloyal, but they have not spoken for many years.

Hoturi knows precisely what he is capable of achieving, and he works each day to increase his abilities. Perfection is his goal, as it has always been the goal of the Crane, and Hoturi is determined to become all that is perfect in the son of a daimyo. He doesn't set out to harm others, only to prove to himself that he could have, if the need was great enough. One day, he will lead his clan. When that day arrives, he will need all the allies and secrets that he can gain.

Hoturi's self-esteem is repeatedly crushed by the harsh criticisms of his father. He strives to make Satsume proud of him, and he seeks perfection in everything he does - it is the Crane way of life. But it is difficult for the pleasant and cheerful Hoturi to emulate his father's somber attitude. It is a constant struggle between Hoturi's soul and his father's discipline, and Hoturi walks the edge of that knife very carefully. Hoturi is still learning about life, responsibility and focus. He's a bit vain, but he has a good heart. He knows that his father is disappointed in him, and is trying very hard to earn his respect and to prepare to one day take Satsume's place as the Champion of the Crane.

Only three months ago, Hoturi was married to Kitsune Ameiko, a Fox Clan maiden who studied at the Kakita academy. Although her beauty rivals even that of the wife of the Scorpion daimyo, there are many whispers in the court that imply the marriage was arranged by Satsume as a means of 'chaining down' his wild son. Ameiko is always the dutiful wife, and her love for Hoturi is unquestioned. Her modest birth causes even

more whispering, but the young couple have ignored any vicious political rumors surrounding them. Hoturi is kind and generous to his new wife, and his smile grows warmer when she enters the room - but there is always a hesitancy, a slight sadness that crosses the young daimyo's face when his wife is mentioned.

Currently, Hoturi serves as the Doji daimyo on the council of the Crane, leading his family as he will one day lead the entire clan. He is a little unsure about how to properly proceed, but he has the experience and wisdom of his sensei to help him, and Hoturi is determined not to fail his father.

DOJI KUWANAN

EARTH 3

WATER 4

FIRE 2

AIR 3

Reflexes 4

VOID 3

School/Rank: Kuwanan's School Rank is 4.

Rank 1 Akodo Bushi School; Rank 1 & 2 Daidoji Bushi School; Rank 1 Hida School

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 3, Battle 3, Courtier 1, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 1, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Oratory 1, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2, Tetsubo 3, Weaponsmith 2

Honor: 3.6

Glory: 7.2

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Sensei - Akodo Toturi, Different School: Lion; Multiple School: Crane; Multiple School: Crab; Kakita blade (*Omeka*)

Disadvantages: Driven (to avenge his fiancée's death), Sworn Enemy (Matsu Hiroru), Lost Love (Isawa Nosuriko)

As much as Hoturi is the image of their mother, Kuwanan is his father reborn. He is shorter than his brother, and stocky, with forceful gestures and a low voice that is prone to chuckle rather than laugh. His humor is more earthy, his expression less readable, and his temperament is far less easygoing. He has his father's gift of strategy and his mother's implacable patience. Kuwanan is a quiet young man with many thoughts and an occasional wry chuckle. While he is not as strikingly handsome as his older brother, Hoturi, Kuwanan has a rugged musculature that belies his plain features.

When Kuwanan was 12, he was fostered to the Lion Clan, and studied under Akodo Toturi. From

him, he learned the ways that honor can strengthen a man's heart and boost his soul in battle. From the Lion Clan, he learned tactics, strategy and preparedness. But when he returned to the Crane, he had two more things imprinted upon his mind.

The first thing Kuwanan learned was the love of battle. He had found in himself a desire to learn as much about war, tactics and kenjutsu as possible. Kuwanan loved the thrill of victory, the feeling of challenging another's blade, and seeing first-hand how wars were won. He was one of Toturi's best students, and practiced ruthlessly, preparing himself to be a general at the side of his brother, Hoturi. To

fuel this, when Kuwanan returned to his father's lands, he begged to enter other bushi schools in Rokugan. Satsume, pleased with the progress and aptitude which the young man displayed, agreed. Kuwanan roamed the southern lands of the Crane, learning first from the clever Daidoji, and then traveling to the land of the Crab to study under Hida Kuman, the Crab Clan sensei who taught Hida Yakamo and his sister O-Ushi.

Secondly, Kuwanan learned how to hate. His hatred is so deep that it cannot be quenched by the passing of time, and no amount of suffering can ease its bitter sting. A young man named Hiroru, brother to the Matsu Daimyo, studied in the Akodo school with Kuwanan. The two disliked each other from the beginning, and the

Matsu samurai's taunts and jibes toward the young Crane were sharp. Hiroru was Akodo Kage's best student, and Kuwanan studied under Toturi himself, so they were often matched in mock combat to test their own skills and do honor to their sensei. In one of these trials, Hiroru

"mistakenly" broke Kuwanan's arm. Although the Matsu samurai apologized profusely, Kuwanan could see from the glint in his eyes that the blow had been intentional. However, as a foster in the house of the Lion, there was nothing Kuwanan could do but politely accept the apology. Such occurrences were common, ranging from simple taunting to genuine torments, and always, Kuwanan was forced to stand aside and ignore the painful pranks. When the two samurai - being of similar age - reached their *gempukku*, Kuwanan was betrothed to a beautiful young woman named Shiba Nosuriko. Shortly before their wedding day, the girl hanged herself in her



chambers, leaving no note and no reason. Kuwanan was stunned, and although he never mentions it, he blames her death on the son of the Matsu family, whose advances the maiden had refused. Her death went beyond the petty harassments which Hiroru had visited upon the



ANCESTOR: DOJI TAEHIME (CONTINUED)

When making a roll using Persuasion, Manipulation or Etiquette skills, descendants of Doji TAEHIME may add and keep an additional number of dice equal to their Void.

However, a descendant of TAEHIME may never reveal all they know about any topic, lest their ancestor strike them with sudden ill fortune for their wagging tongue.

The exact date of TAEHIME's death is recorded differently in three different texts, and each is arguably correct. Scholars have spent three hundred years trying to verify the precise day, but to little avail. Thus, her death is celebrated by general consensus on either the fifth day of the month of the Rooster, or the first day of the month of the Monkey.



ANCESTOR:
KAKITA RENSEI
935 TO 962
(2 POINTS)

Kakita Rensei was a famous bushi of the Daidoji school, who forsook his heritage and family to follow the way of the

Daidoji rather than attend the Academy of the Kakita.

Rensei lived a simple life, and followed his heart in all matters, living on faith and instinct rather than training and discipline. Despite his simple way of living, Rensei had an uncanny knowledge of his opponent's weaknesses, and consistently defeated his opposition in duels.

Although he was approached more than once to be the Master of Kakita Academy, he repeatedly refused, saying that he did not want to live his life in a cage, no matter how beautiful the view.

Rensei lived his days traveling from village to village, learning the ways of the other Clans of Rokugan and defeating the best they could offer. At the battle of the Day of the Falling Stars, he offered his services to Daidoji Tenzo as a *shireikan* (commander) of the Crane forces. On the field, none could match his brutal style of iaijutsu, slicing through armor and bone as if they were water beneath his blade. It is said that in one battle, his sword cut through a man on horseback - and continued to cleave the horse in two with the same stroke.

son of the Crane daimyo, and at last, Kuwanan felt free to claim vengeance on Matsu Hiroru. When he went to the Matsu's chambers to demand an alibi, he found that Hiroru had vanished, never to be heard from again. Kuwanan believes that it is cowardice which has caused Hiroru to leave his family, and has vowed to one day make him pay for the murder of Nosuriko. Underneath all his modesty and polite words, Kuwanan has learned well the power of being underestimated. He waits patiently, and he knows that the time for revenge will come one day.

For now, Kuwanan watches his elder brother with an amused eye, listening to Hoturi's escapades and outrageous adventures. He lives vicariously through his brother's deeds, knowing that he would never have had the boldness to try many of them. His mind is not as agile as Hoturi's and his speech is far less witty; some tend to think the thick-set youth is slow. This underestimation has given Kuwanan many victories on the field of battle.

While some men are made to be in the eye of the public, others are content to remain behind the scenes. Hoturi is the former, Kuwanan the latter; but Kuwanan is no less dangerous. As for his family and his place as brother to the Heir, Kuwanan is certain that should anything happen to the Crane Clan, his battle training and study of both the Crab and the Lion will allow him to be ready for whatever his Clan requires.

Kuwanan currently lives in Hida palace with his new sensei, and although he has not yet mastered the first rank of the Crab bushi school, Hida Kuman has often said that the "boy has promise." With dedication and practice, Kuwanan will continue his studies with the Crab, learning their ways of fighting and battle and assimilating their strategies into his own. For him, it is a challenge to master and a new world to conquer.

Today, Kuwanan spends his time in the war school of the Crab, learning the techniques of the Hida. Before Kuwanan left, Satsume called him into his personal chambers and spoke privately to his youngest son. "Live the life I would have wanted for myself," Satsume told him. "and never regret that you are not the heir."

Kuwanan never has.

DOJI AMEIKO

EARTH 2
Willpower 4
WATER 1

Perception 2

FIRE 2

AIR 2

Awareness 6

VOID 3

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 4

Rank 1 Flower Arranging; Ranks 1 & 2 Acting Rank 1 Dance

Skills: Acting 5, Bard 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Dancing 4, Etiquette 4; Ikebana (Flower arranging) 3, Investigation 3, Lore: Myth and Legend 3, Meditation 1, Sincerity 4

Honor: 5

Glory: 6.5

Advantages: Cadence, Can't Lie, Benten's Blessing

Disadvantages: Weak (Strength), Higher Purpose - Foxwife to Doji Hoturi, True Love - Doji Hoturi

Doji Ameiko was born to peasants who left her on the steps of a temple within the Fox Clan lands; she was raised by the nobility of the Fox until she was ten. "It is better," said the daimyo of the Fox clan at the time, "to free a slave's daughter than to condemn a child born samurai."

Ameiko was brought to the Kakita Academy to learn the fine arts. The girl's beauty, grace and poise were so remarkable that she became the sole apprentice of Kakita Shoju, the famous Crane playwright. From Shoju, she learned the arts of Noh drama, dance and poetry, and soon became the finest actress in the Crane troupe. Ameiko played such famous parts as Lady Matsu, Yuki-no-Onna, the mythical snow maiden, and even Lady Doji herself. Compared even to Bayushi Kachiko, young Ameiko is arguably the most beautiful woman of her generation.

Since the time she was a little girl, Ameiko has always felt at home in the forest. In childhood she would slip out of the Fox Clan palace or the Academy, and spend hours alone in the forest. As she grew older, Ameiko spent more and more time in the woods, greatly concerning her tutors. "It isn't ladylike," they would say, "to spend so much time alone and unescorted. What if you were in danger?" But Ameiko never listened. She would only smile her quiet smile and say, "I am with friends there. I am never alone."

Many young men from all the clans of Rokugan came to seek her hand in marriage. The Fox Clan, wishing only that their charge would find happiness in the world, never pressured her to accept the proposals, and Ameiko turned them

all away. The one man in whom she showed any romantic interest was a young samurai named Hoturi. Doji Hoturi, however, spent his time traveling from court to court on errands for his father, and never even noticed the pale young maiden who lived in Kakita Palace. Because of pressure from the well-meaning Kakita family, Ameiko agreed to journey to the Isawa palaces and perform for Shiba Ujimitsu, who had asked to meet the young maiden. Although she begged not to go, her patrons and teachers at the Academy insisted, both for her career and in the hopes that she would find the dark Champion of the Phoenix to her liking.

When she arrived at the court of the Phoenix there was a great festival held in honor of the Artisans, and Ujimitsu himself came to escort her into the palace. The Isawa and Shiba courtiers buzzed with rumors of the stunningly beautiful young maiden who seemed to have captured the heart of their brave leader, but Ameiko rarely left her private balcony, sitting outside and looking over the tall mountains toward the sea. After two months, the troupe returned to the Doji lands with much honor and the favor of the Phoenix nobles. Ameiko traveled home with them.

When her marriage to Hoturi was announced, ripples of surprise whispered through the Crane lands. Ameiko, for all her noble training and courtly manners, was little more than a commoner of unknown origin and birth. Although she was incredibly lovely and had proven her worth to the Kakita troupe, many scorned the Doji daimyo's bride. When the wedding was held, the Scorpion ambassadors refused to attend, and their daimyo remained in his homeland due to his wife's sudden illness. The other daimyos of the land, from Akodo Toturi to the Emperor himself, attended the ceremonies, and the festival was one of the most expensive and elaborate in recent history. The couple's go-between, Kakita Shijin, passed out the expensive hikidemono (guest-presents) to the assemblage, and even grim Satsume seemed less dour and forbidding.

Ameiko has taken her husband's name and lives in the Doji palace, training for her responsibilities as the wife of the Crane daimyo. She is dutiful, adoring, and seems in every respect the ideal young wife. Despite the honors showered upon her for her dedication and perfect etiquette, she passes all glory for her service to her beloved husband. She is often seen with



Hoturi, following his every footsteps and talking to him in a pleasant, cheerful voice. Although it is rumored that the wedding was arranged without the consent of Satsume's son, it is also noted that with each passing day Hoturi seems more and more enamored of the delicate, perfect beauty of his worshipful wife.

Ameiko is not a two-dimensional figure, however much she tries to remain in the background. She has a bright laugh, sparkling eyes, and a dedicated love of nature. When she is not actively fulfilling the duties of her new position, she can be found in the gardens of the Crane, or in the forests – although Satsume has forbidden her to go alone, for fear of kidnappers who would ransom a daimyo's wife. She spends a



ANCESTOR: KAKITA RENSEI

(CONTINUED)

His strength and resilience was legendary, and his desire for freedom has become the topic of many poems and plays. His death is a source of mystery to historians. The last account of Kakita Rensei occurs shortly after the fall of Shiro no Yogin, when he declared his intention to travel alone to the palace of the Matsu and challenge their Champion to a duel. Whether he reached the castle or not still remains a mystery – his body was never found, and the Champion of the Lion vanished three months after Rensei left for his quest. Neither death is recorded and it is still debated whether the fateful duel ever actually occurred.

Those who choose Rensei as their ancestor may not have the damage they deliver reduced, avoided or ignored in any fashion. Abilities which would allow a character to dodge or parry the blow are still effective; only those abilities which negate damage after it has been dealt are ineffective.

Rensei's death is remembered on the eighteenth day of the month of the Crane.



**ANCESTOR:
KAKITA WAYOZU**

450-535

(8 POINTS)

Kakita Wayozu was the first female Mistress of the Kakita Academy, serving as the principal Artisan and sensei to all arts, including the school of Iaijutsu. Although not a student of the sword, Wayozu nevertheless spent hours in the dojo, learning the art of bushido as well as the gentler arts of her school. A respected headmistress and a wise counselor, it seemed that Wayozu would spend her tenure in peace and harmony, and be remembered for her wisdom and gentle nature.

But then a war with the Crab Clan changed her life forever. As the Daidoji forces took tremendous casualties, the Kakita were called upon to defend against the invaders and to protect the Crane from the wrath of the Hida legions. Kakita Wayozu sent out the Artisans from the Iaijutsu specialization and watched as the Iaijutsu Masters were cut down by the Crab despite their best efforts. At last, the Kakita forces retreated to a bridge which spanned a large ravine near the River of White Waters. Wayozu gathered a number of artists from the Kakita school, ready to defend the bridge with their lives.

great deal of her time with Hoturi, teaching him the ways of the forest and its creatures, and reciting poetry or performing charming skits from her career as an actress with the Kakita troupe. She still performs on occasion, particularly for traveling ambassadors and diplomats to the Crane court, and her skills are as remarkable as they have ever been. In fact, more so. Hoturi's house is immaculate, his swords are brightly polished and cared for, and the food Ameiko prepares is of the finest quality. It is almost as if an air of magic surrounds the house, making everything perfect.

In the forest, however, Ameiko is a different person. Her steps race through the brush like the feet of an animal freed from captivity. The forest animals crowd around her, and wild foxes and deer come to eat from her hand and listen to her sing. She knows each rock, each tree of the forest as if she were a part of it, and Ameiko seems incapable of ever becoming lost. Indeed, Hoturi is fond of teasing his wife for her love of nature, calling her his "pet fox" and asking if she is fond of her golden cage. Her only response is an adoring laugh and a gentle, blushing smile.

DOJI SHIZUE

EARTH 2

WATER 2

Perception 4

FIRE 4

Intelligence 6

AIR 3

VOID 4

School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 3

Rank 1 & 2 Storytelling, Rank 1 Poetry

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3,

Investigation 5, Knife 2, Lore: Myth and Legend

4, Manipulation 4, Meditation 3, Oratory 3,

Poetry 3, Political Maneuvering 2,

Shintao 3, Storytelling 5

Honor: 2.5

Glory: 3

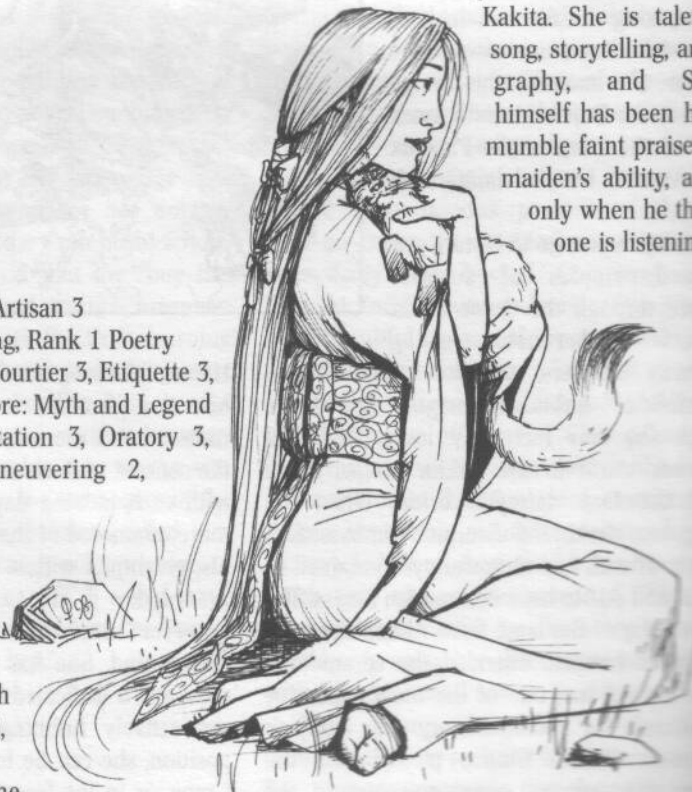
Advantages: Precise Memory, Voice, Benten's Blessing, Kharmic Tie (Matsu Hiroru, although she doesn't know it yet), Luck (2)

Disadvantages: Lame (Right leg), Soft-hearted, Small

Doji Shizue is the only child of Satsume's younger brother. Her father was killed in a skirmish with the Crab, and her mother died within days of her birth. Satsume's wife, Teinko, raised the girl with Hoturi and Kuwanan. She is considered a sister to the two heirs to the daimyo's house, although her lineage is less prestigious. Although she was born with a crippled foot - "twisted in the mouth of Fu Leng" as Satsume gruffly says - she has never let her physical limitation hamper her spirit or her ability.

Shizue is not a great beauty, but she is a lovely girl with bright grey eyes and long white hair. Her smile is quick, and her laughter is like the ringing of silvery bells. Her voice, carefully trained by Kakita Yoshi, can convey a tremendous depth of emotion. Although her step is slow and rhythmic, she moves gracefully, and has remembered some of the art of dancing that Teinko taught her as a little girl. Shizue only passed her *gempukku* two years ago, but already her presence is requested in some of the finest courts of the Empire. Her gift for storytelling is unmatched, and there are those who say she is the reborn spirit of Kakita

Kiyamori, sister of the first Kakita. She is talented in song, storytelling, and calligraphy, and Satsume himself has been heard to mumble faint praises of the maiden's ability, although only when he thinks no one is listening.



Difficulties have only given her a greater strength of will, and a sense of her place in the universe. If there are any who have grasped the Artisan's ideal - "Life is an art; do one thing well and you will do everything well," it is Shizue. She spends much of her time in the gardens of the Crane, telling the stories of her ancestors and helping the Crane remember their past. Shizue is a gentle soul, of noble bearing and lineage, who seems content to lead the peaceful life she has been given. She bears no remorse for her parents' death, trusting that the Tao will reveal her place in the world to her, even as it chose to take her parents from her at so young an age. The only father she has ever known is Satsume, and Teinko was the only mother she can remember.

But Shizue is more than a simple Artisan. Satsume has ordered Kakita Yoshi to train the girl as a spy as well as a courtier, skilled in the art of political negotiations and the discovery of secrets. Her stories often contain delicately coded information which she transmits between Yoshi, Satsume and Hoturi through the secret language of the Crane. Her travels into the courts of other clans allow her the access to gather critical information on their movements and strategies. Although Shizue is small and physically weak, she has one of the greatest intellects in the Empire, capable of memorizing manuscripts in a glance and deciphering codes and hidden messages in script as well as speech. Thus, she has proven herself most useful to her clan, and her teachers regard her highly. Kakita Yoshi himself has said that she might make a suitable addition to the Crane ambassadors to the Imperial Court when she is older.

To the other clans, and to most members of the Crane house, Shizue is no more than a simple goodwill ambassador, her sunny disposition making any room cheerful. She has traveled to Lion strongholds and Scorpion palaces, seen the high libraries of the Phoenix and been a welcome guest in the wintery mountains of the Dragon. Her stories cheer the people through the cold, dark nights and teach the children of all clans about Rokugan's glorious past. Her limping yet graceful stride brings smiles to the faces of many, and her stories of the present make samurai glow with pride for their part in the deeds which she recounts. But still, her loyalty to the Crane guides her, and she carries out her duties to the Clan with the style and grace of a noblewoman, worthy of a daughter of the proud Doji line.

The Kakita

KAKITA YOSHI (DAIMYO OF THE KAKITA FAMILY)

EARTH 3

WATER 4

Perception 6

FIRE 3

AIR 7

VOID 5

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 5

Skills: Bard 3, Commerce 4, Courtier 5, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 4, Investigation 4, Law 4, Lore: Political History 5, Manipulation 5, Oratory 5, Origami 3, Political Maneuvering 5, Shintao 4, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 4

Honor: 4.7

Glory: 9.1

Advantages: Social Position (Imperial Advisor), Major Allies - Scorpion (Bayushi Goshu, Shosuro Toge), Unicorn (Iuchi Daiyu, Ide Tadaji), Lion - (Ikoma Ujiaki, Matsu Seijuro), Phoenix - (Shiba Ujimitsu, Isawa Uona), Crab - (Yasuki Taka, Hiruma Yoshi), Dragon - (Mirumoto Sukune), Voice, Benten's Blessing, Cadence

Disadvantages: Curse (See history), Small

Kakita Yoshi is one of the most powerful men in the Empire, even though he has sworn never to hold a sword. His power is not in the strength of steel, but rather the strength of the courts. He holds great political influence within the Crane Clan and the Imperial Court, as well as controlling debts of honor and large favors from Daimyos of every clan in the Empire. Although he leads the Kakita family, he is in no way the commander of its military. A wise leader, Yoshi leaves battle strategy and war to his elder, Kakita Toshimoko. Toshimoko, master of the Iaijutsu style and the Kakita school of dueling, privately declined the great honor of daimyo because it was too restrictive and demanding. After all, the daimyo of a noble house must be prepared to spend a great deal of time being respectable - and Toshimoko has far too many interests which conflict with being respectable all the time. So, with Toshimoko's blessing, the younger Yoshi became the political head of the Kakita family.

Since the day of his birth, Yoshi has never touched a sword. He has never drawn steel against any opponent, even in defense of his own life. His apparent pacifism is not caused by any



ANCESTOR: KAKITA WAYOZU (CONTINUED)

With a mighty effort, Wayozu began to fuse their abilities, first calling upon the poets, then the dramatists, the painters and the storytellers, until they had created a complete realm of fantasy which existed only within their own art and imagination. Armed with the knowledge and the concreteness of this fantasy world, Kakita Wayozu and several of the other artists released their own souls into the work, destroying their bodies in the attempt to bring life into their creation.

They were successful.

The Hida warriors besieging the bridge vanished without trace, and no remnant of the Artisans nor the Crab remained. At the spot was discovered only a fine book with delicate calligraphy and phenomenal paintings which was written in a language which none in Rokugan has yet been able to decipher. It is said that the book is the tale of the Crab and the Crane, the war which they fought, and the world into which they were all drawn, never to return.

(continued)



**ANCESTOR:
KAKITA WAYOZU
(CONTINUED)**

The pictures depict a Crab army, true, and the characters in the bindings seem to be the Artisans who vanished at the spot as well.

Whether they still live in some world of imagination is unknown, but none of them has ever been heard from again. The battle is remembered with a celebration at Kakita Palace, on the sixteenth day of the month of the Dragon.

Characters descended from Wayozu may, once per day, spend 2 Void Points and attempt to perform any single first-rank maya from any of the Artisan specialties. If the character has no skill in the art needed for that specialty, they must roll dice equal to their Fire Ring, keeping only one die. If the character has the skill needed, they may roll their Skill + Fire, keeping a number of dice equal to their skill. Unless otherwise specified, all mayas last a number of hours equal to the School Rank of their user.

moral debate, but rather from a curse laid upon Shiro sano Kakita long before his birth. A wandering ronin shugenja, called by some the "Master of the Elements," declared that he would visit the Kakita palace. Fearful that the shugenja would not find the gates open when he arrived and therefore would be offended, the daimyo of the Kakita proclaimed that the gates to the Kakita palisade would be left open at all times, until the shugenja's visit.

Six years passed, and still the Master did not arrive. The gates were held open by a long wooden pole, keeping them ready for the shugenja's visit, although some said he would never come to the lands of the Crane. One night, the ronin arrived, unknown to the Kakita Clan. As he stepped toward the open gates, a great wind blew up about him and the high golden doors of the castle, buffeted by the rising storm, slammed shut in his face. Furious, the Master called upon

his powers and laid a curse upon the palace. "Should any child born surrounded by the walls of Shiro sano Kakita ever draw steel," he proclaimed, as the storm blew in torrents around him, "then the blades of the Crane will turn against them, and the Kakita palace will fall."

For four hundred years, no child has been born within the walls of the castle without the gates being opened before the birth, so that the walls will not surround them. The one current exception to that rule is Kakita Yoshi, whose birth occurred during a siege of the castle by invading Lions, so that the gates could not be opened. Therefore, by decree, Yoshi has been forbidden to ever draw steel, be it tanto, wakizashi or katana. He has never learned the warrior's way, never studied iaijutsu or kenjutsu, and never unsheathed the steel of a weapon.

Kakita Yoshi serves as the Emperor's aide and personal advisor, and as Imperial Liaison between

the House of the Emperor and the clans of Rokugan. Dividing his time between the Imperial court and the court of the Doji, Kakita Yoshi's is one of the most known and respected names in Rokugan. Even clans who dislike the Crane risk themselves when they speak ill of Yoshi - for any man in their employ might be his friend. He has allies in every house in the Empire, and his favor is sought after by many. Yoshi is the man who can get anything - "Weapons, my friend? I believe I know just the dealer..." "You say the grain in your fields has been flooded? We can't possibly let your people starve. Perhaps a deal could be made?" Yoshi can get anything he needs, and has enough friends to make it worthwhile. Not only physical goods, but secrets - for knowledge is Yoshi's true trade.

Yoshi is a slender man, his movements quick and precise. His long hair is dyed in the traditional Crane style, and his ice blue eyes are sharp and cold. His voice, however, is the most noticeable thing about



him. Deep and resonant, his speech is measured and rhythmic, carefully practiced. When he speaks, it is clear that he has considered his words. He is often called upon to compose impromptu poetry to amuse Hantei and the other courtiers. With a soft word, Yoshi can capture the attention of his audience and it has been said he could entice music from stones.

KAKITA TOSHIMOKO

EARTH 4

WATER 4

FIRE 7

AIR 4

Reflexes 6

VOID 8

School/Rank:

Kakita Iaijutsu 5

Skills: Acrobatics 3,

Archery 2, Athletics 4,

Courtier 4, Etiquette 5,

Heraldry 3, Iaijutsu 6,

Kenjutsu 4, Lore:

Bushido 5, Meditation 5,

Naginata 4, Oratory 1,

Shintao 5, Sincerity 2,

Tea Ceremony 2

Honor: 3.6

Glory: 7

Advantages:

Ancestor - Kakita,

Strength of the Earth

(2), True Friend - Doji

Hoturi, Quick; Kakita

blade (*Kandaisa*),

Cadence

Disadvantages:

Sworn Enemy - Fox

Clan; Bad Reputation -

Hedonist

The "Gray Crane,"

Master of the Kakita

Academy, Toshimoko is

a man who often laughs, is usually found with a drink, and is rarely serious. His humor is renowned through the Empire, as is his skill with the sword. Indeed, the only time he seems serious at all is when he is in a duel. He has been the sensei to two Hantei; first to the current Emperor and now to that Emperor's son. In his younger days, he was a typical hot-blooded samurai, eager to test his skills on any imagined insult or dishonor. But as the years rolled by and his hair

grew as silver as his sword, he has mellowed into a man whose motto is "Live as if each day is your last, and you will never live to regret."

Toshimoko is an aging man, one who has many stories behind his years. Among the most famous of these is the story of Toshimoko's name. First son of Toshimo, Master of the Kakita Academy, everyone remarked on how much the child looked like his father. For years, the boy was



called "little Toshimo", and he was his father's pride and joy. At his *gempukku*, the boy took his father's name to honor his parent, and the two were extremely alike in temperament, features, and skill with the blade. To tell them apart in conversation, the Kakita family began calling the younger Toshimo "Toshimo-ko", adding the women's diminutive to imply that he was the smaller of the two men. Since his father's death,



ANCESTOR:

KAKITA

???-??? (AGE 39)

(15 POINTS)

Those who are descended directly from the first Kakita are not unusual, but those who have the spirit of his blood in their veins are rare indeed, and they often find along with it the love of the sword. The direct line of Kakita is not merely the blood which became the Doji, Kakita and Daidoji, but is in fact the pure lineage of the first Kakita to walk upon the earth, in the time of the children of Amaterasu. Technically, all the children of the Kakita, Doji, and Daidoji lines are descended from Kakita, but those who purchase this ancestor have a strong karmic tie between their character and the ancestor. The blood of Kakita is a tremendous burden, although it brings with it great courage and an illustrious history. Kakita is said to have been the greatest single swordsman ever to have lived; his fame and his treatise on swordplay have spread through Rokugan and become the doctrine of the sword.

The descendant of Kakita may choose to re-roll any failed roll a number of times per day equal to their Void, in or out of combat, including an iaijutsu strike.

(continued)



ANCESTOR: KAKITA

(CONTINUED)

In place of the initial skill used for this reroll, the character should substitute their Iaijutsu skill level. Further, if the descendant of Kakita is defending the Emperor, the Doji noble family or a member of the Hantei house, they have a +10 to their TN to be hit in any combat, including Iaijutsu duels.

The blood of Kakita has its drawbacks, however, as Kakita was not loved by all. The enemies he made in the

Matsu house are well-known, and even today the Matsu family still seeks to avenge the dishonor to their ancestress. To avenge her is to destroy the original, direct line of Kakita himself, wiping out the last of the taint which dishonored the Mother of their line. Relations with any Lion will be difficult at best, and children of the

Matsu house will seek the character out in order to kill him and avenge their ancestor. The Kakita descendant's battle prowess will be tested, their honor challenged, and they will never find solace in the house of the Lion. In effect, the entire Clan hates her, although only the Matsus act without provocation. But woe if you provoke a Lion.

You may find yourself facing more than a challenge - you may be facing an execution.

"little Toshimo" has kept the additive ending to honor his memory.

Toshimoko stands at slightly over five foot seven, a notable few inches taller than most of his peers. His height may give him an advantage in war, but he cares little for open combat, preferring the swift and precise challenge of a duel. He served in the Imperial Guard as a youth, training at the Kakita Academy and then traveling the southern parts of Rokugan to seek his fortune. Toshimoko has dark blue eyes, like the sea on a stormy day, and wears his hair in an unruly braid which hangs half-way down his well-muscled back. In his younger days, Toshimoko was said to be able to lift a full-grown cow, but that may be a rumor started by the Grey Crane himself. He wields one of the oldest of Kakita blades, an ancient weapon named Kandaisa. Legend says that this is one of the first swords forged by the Kakita smiths, many hundreds of years ago.

He walks with a swagger, his footing easy and carelessly precise, even while walking. His favorite expression is "You'll not regret it," and Toshimoko never does. He lives each day to the fullest, filling his hours with wine, women, and the study of beautiful things. When he is not teaching students at the Iaijutsu school, he is often found on the wharf, seeking compassion in the arms of a lovely young geisha or peace in the song of a beggar by the road. There are those who say that Toshimoko lives this way in order to forget the sadness of his past, and many would agree with them.

Long ago, he courted the daughter of the Fox Clan daimyo. He fell in love with her, and asked her father's permission to marry, but her father refused, no matter what gifts or titles were offered. During the Night of a Hundred Deaths, Toshimoko led the small army of Kakita assigned to defend the Fox Clan against the incursion of the Hare. Despite Toshimoko's efforts, war killed many on both sides. When the battle was over, the Fox daimyo challenged Toshimoko to a duel, claiming that it was the Crane's unwanted love for his daughter that blurred his vision to the truth about the Hare's wickedness. The daimyo claimed that if Toshimoko had been serious about his love for Kitsune Ryoden, the Crane would have sided with the Fox from the beginning, rather than seek a diplomatic solution to the war. Toshimoko, already one of the finest swordsmen in Rokugan, was forced to accept the

duel, and killed the man in a single stroke. Many times he tried to see Ryoden, the object of his affection, but always she refused his letters, or had him turned away at the gate of the Kitsune palace by her uncle, the new daimyo.

Many years later, she came to a Crane festival wearing her father's armor and bearing his sword. Her autumn-red hair had been shorn, and her eyes were cold and murderous. She challenged Toshimoko to a duel, claiming that he had forever smeared her father's name, and insulted Toshimoko's honor. Once again he was forced to accept the duel, and his anger at the maiden's brashness for a moment overcame his love for her. With a single stroke, he cut her head from her body. He immediately asked Satsume to allow him to commit *seppuku*, but the Crane Champion forbade it. Toshimoko had, after all, protected the honor and the name of the Crane, and for that he should be rewarded, not sent to the void. Since that day, he has never spoken again of his love, and he has never married.

Toshimoko has been like a grandfather to his sister's three children, and is especially close to Doji Hoturi. Recently, he has served as Hoturi's aide and advisor, assisting the young man in guiding the Doji house while Satsume serves the Emperor. He is, without question, the finest duelist in the Empire, surpassing even his Champion. Yet Toshimoko has never sought honor or prestige for his skill, never wanted to be any more than he is - a humble samurai in the service of his family, destined to protect his land and assist his friend, Hoturi, to lead the Clan.

The Asahina

ASAHINA TAMAKO (DAIMYO OF THE ASAHINA FAMILY)

EARTH 2

WATER 3

FIRE 2

AIR 6

VOID 4

School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 5

Skills: Astrology 5, Calligraphy 2, History 4, Lore: Maho 4, Lore: Shugenja 4, Meditation 4, Shintao 5, Tsangusuri 5

Honor: 3

Glory: 7

Advantages: Inner Gift - Precognition

Disadvantages: Bad Health, Low Pain Threshold

Spells: (Spells listed with a * are Innate Abilities) Sense, Commune, Summon, Benevolent Protection of Shinsei*, Elemental Ward, Accounts of Shorihotsu*, Benten's Touch*, Know the Mind*, Nature's Touch, Whispering Wind, Blessing of Purity, Torrential Rain*, Reflective Pool, Reflections of Pan Ku*, Gust of Wind, Awaken the Spirit*

Nemuranai: Because Tamako is the Master of the Asahina School, he has access to any form of fetish the mind can create. He knows how to make one-use fetishes, permanent fetishes, major and minor magic items, all with ease. It can be assumed that he can be fully prepared for nearly any situation.

Asahina Tamako is the seventh son of a seventh son, and became daimyo of the Asahina house through a sign from the gods, rather than birth. On the day he was born, the elements were aligned in the sky above the Asahina temples. While still in swaddling clothes, a negligent maid left his crib outside while she went in to attend to his mother. When they returned, a crow was sitting on the side of the crib, looking down at the baby. As the maid shouted in fear, the crow simply looked at her, reached down and gently set its beak against the sleeping baby's face, and then flew away. Since then, it has been said that Shinsei himself guides Tamako's hands.

Tamako is a man of peace, who has dedicated his life to the study of magics and the essence of spiritual study. His talent with the creation of

magical items is unparalleled, and his occasional flashes of insight can be eerie. His light greenish eyes are usually half-closed, and he can sometimes be found in a haze caused by the magics he wields. Even though he is middle aged, his eyes are already narrowed and his face is wrinkled and wan. Tamako is a faithful believer in mental discipline, complete devotion to study



and an aesthetic view of the world. Although he sometimes appears detached or unconcerned with the realities around him, his thoughts are simply taken up by the contemplation of powerful magics. However, his aesthetic visions of the Asahina house have not closed the school entirely to outside influences, as might be expected. Because of pressure from the Doji Clan, and several "visions" he has had which he believes came from Shinsei, Tamako keeps the Asahina school open to all. Although his xenophobia has



ANCESTOR:
ASAHINA YAJINDEN

475-515

(3 POINTS)

Asahina Yajinden was a shugenja of the Crane Clan who lived during the time of the Iuchiban bloodspeakers. Because his will was weak and his thirst for knowledge and power was great, he turned from his brethren and became Iuchiban's greatest lieutenant, taking great strides in researching *maho* magic. Between the blood magic which Iuchiban practiced and his own cunning and skill manipulating the malevolent spirits known as the *kuei*, or darkness within all things, Yajinden created the Bloodswords and other evil items which were used by the armies of Iuchiban. Although his descendants say they can feel his spirit within their blood, it has been whispered that Yajinden never truly died, but rather escaped to haunt the world until Iuchiban's return. The exact date of his death has been forgotten, and is never celebrated.

Those who choose Yajinden as an ancestor have a remarkable affinity with *kami*, and get a free raise anytime they attempt to create a fetish or magic item. However, the call of the darker side of nature is in their blood, and the target number for them to be seduced is lowered by 10.



**ANCESTOR:
DAIDOJI YUREI
960 TO 998
(2 POINTS)**

Daidoji Yurei, an ancient daimyo of the Daidoji family, was also called "Chiyurei" (the Bloodghost) by his enemies. Born on the battlefield as the Crane nobles fled Shiro no Yojin and the oncoming Lion, Daidoji Yurei became one of Rokugan's most feared generals. It was rumored by the peasants that Yurei was inhabited by the spirits of all the samurai who died on that battlefield, and certainly he maintained an uncompromising hatred of the Lion Clan all his life. Dedicating himself to crushing the Lion, Yurei was the first general to use guerrilla tactics, dividing his army into small units and using ambushes to outmaneuver and whittle down his opponent's resources, leaving them stranded with no aid and no hope of retreat. Yurei died in combat against the Lion, and his valiant death is remembered each year on the ninth day of the month of the Dog.

A descendant of this ruthless general can roll and keep an additional number of dice equal to their Fire when they make the contested Perception + Battle roll to determine which side is "winning" in a battle.

given him the reputation of a hermit, he rules the Asahina family with a gentle hand and a great deal of wisdom. He would never call himself wise, of course, and he prefers to say that he guides his family through "Shinsei's wisdom".

He lives in the temples of the Asahina, hiding himself within the walls of his library. His health has never been good, and he is often seen wearing thick robes to keep out the cold. Tamako doesn't mind his frailty because he never intends to leave his home. It does force him to stay inside in the winter, but his acolytes gently take care of him.

As a young man, Tamako tried to seek truth in every book in Rokugan, and although he has never traveled, he has written numerous letters to the Isawa library, requesting certain books be scribed and sent to him at any cost. His letters have sparked a long-distance friendship between Tamako and the Isawa shugenja who answers his letters. Isawa Tomo is perhaps Tamako's only friend, although the two have never met in person. Their letters are long and filled with thought, containing the secrets and insecurities of two men seeking friendship in a remote world. Tomo's world, distant through the reach of the long mountain range, and Tamako's world, distant through his dedication to the aesthetic principles of his forefathers, bind them together in deep understanding. The two have become friends because of their willingness to trust someone they have never met, and through the humanity and understanding they find in letters from the farthest corner of the known world.

The Daidoji

DAIDOJI UJI (DAIMYO OF THE DAIDOJI FAMILY)

EARTH 4
WATER 3
Strength 5
FIRE 2
AIR 4
VOID 3

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 4

Skills: Archery 3, Appraisal 3, Battle 4, Commerce 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore: Gaijin Culture 2, Lore: Gaijin Warfare 3, "Sai-bore" Technique (Gaijin weapon) 2

Honor: 2.5

Glory: 6.5

Advantages: Way of the Land, Quick Healer

Disadvantages: Fascination - Gaijin

Daidoji Uji was the only child of the *daimyo* of the Daidoji. He was trained in the Daidoji school of bushido, and is one of its most exemplary students. Dark and brooding, he has never let his hair grow out of the short samurai topknot, or dyed it in the manner of his brethren. As with all daimyo of the Daidoji since the fall of Shiro no Yojin, he swore three oaths on the day he took his title. First, that he would defend the honor and lands of the Crane with his life and the lives of his men; second, that he would remember the history of his clan and his family and keep it alive for future generations; and third, that he would never betray the secrets of the Daidoji house.

Uji himself is a slightly caustic man with a dark complexion, black hair and deep brown eyes. He rarely wears his armor, although he is as deadly on the battlefield as any other man in Rokugan. Although his personal style of fighting is casual, Uji has displayed his capability as a general time and again. He speaks rarely, and always in a soft voice, sometimes nearly a whisper. His eyes never twinkle, and he rarely smiles. In battle, he wears a Scorpion-like mask over his features, reminding his enemy that he is not to be trusted.

Uji has no personal desire to be involved in politics, nor has he been to the Imperial Palace at Otosan Uchi - he has no interest in court life, and the court has no interest in him. He travels among the strongholds of the Crane, assessing their military preparedness and creating strategies for any possibility. He has never shown interest in women or pleasures of the flesh, always turning his thoughts to battle and to trade. As the Protector of the Crane, Daidoji Uji takes his responsibilities very seriously. There is one thing that Uji enjoys, and that is outwitting an enemy. Whether through battle or economic warfare, Uji has studied every use of Rokugan and gaijin strategy that has ever prevailed. His men are trained for battle as well as the hidden side of combat - monetary and trade warfare.

Although some would tell you that merchanting is a dirty trade which noble samurai should never engage in, the Daidoji would laugh at such views. The Doji cover their trade negotiations under the guise of "gifts", exchanging one valuable commodity for another and



ensuring that the goods flow between the Clans of the Emerald Empire with no dishonor. The Daidoji, however, specialize in economy, and care little for the dishonor it brings. Uji has been trained in trade sabotage, smuggling goods through enemy lines, and infiltrating the economy of the enemy in order to weaken their supplies of armor, weapons, or foodstuffs. He relishes these things as some men would relish the defeat of a hated enemy. "Intellect and strategy," Uji drills his students, "are the strongest weapons a samurai can wield. Without them, you are lost, no matter how sharp your blade."

Daidoji Uji has long held a great respect for the Crab Clan, and often provides its diplomats an escort to the court of the Doji. He has traveled to Hida Palace several times, and when he was young he spent a year walking the length of the Great Wall, studying warcraft under Hida Kisada. Uji has a tremendous respect for the "Great Bear" and his eldest son, Yakamo, and the three men spend time together when Uji visits the lands of the Crab. From a distance, Uji watches the daughter of the Great Bear, Hida O-Ushi, with admiration and respect. He knows she is a cunning enemy, a valued ally, and a woman of many talents. It cannot be said that he is in love with her, for Uji has no time for love or the idleness of courtly romance. Perhaps a better term would be that he respects her, and when he is in the lands of the Crab, Uji always finds time to spar with the daughter of Kisada.

The friendly relations between the Hida and the Daidoji, however, have not lessened Uji's hatred of the Yasuki and everything associated with them. In particular, Uji is constantly on the lookout for a reason to destroy all that the Yasuki have built. His hatred does not rule him, however, as he is far too keen a tactician. Instead, he spends his time gently

pushing the Yasuki toward economic decline, helping the Doji disfavor them within the court, and waiting for the day when he can declare open war on Taka and his "henchmen." Some day, Uji vows, the Yasuki will betray the Crab as they once betrayed the Crane. On that day, the Daidoji will have their long-awaited vengeance.

Until then, Uji has other things to think about. Lion vendettas, information to be obtained from various sources, and the protection of Crane lands occupy the thoughts of the dark Daidoji daimyo. Between defending the Crane and managing the Daidoji spy network, Uji spends a great deal of his time in the libraries of Garden Under Shadow City, studying the *gaijin* tactics which were used against the Rokugani people. Some say Uji is too concerned with the *gaijin*, and that his studies are no more than an idle waste of time. However, if it is an obsession with Uji, he will not say to what extent. His studies are for himself alone, and his fascination with *gaijin* culture and swordplay is known only to the Crane.



ANCESTOR:
DAIDOJI MASASHIGI
690 - 715
(7 POINTS)

Daidoji Masashigi is the daimyo of the Daidoji family who left his palace to defend the landbridge with a handful of samurai. His descendants are among the most celebrated in the Daidoji lineage. Each year, on the twenty-eighth day of the month of the Rat, (the anniversary of his death), his descendants gather at the shrine and do homage to his memory. They do this each year on the sixteenth day of the Dragon: the day when Masashigi and his men died defending the Kaiu Wall.

A character with this ancestor gains a Major Ally in the Crab house, and their TN to Be Hit is increased by 3 for each Wound Rank they take. For example, a character with Daidoji Masashigi as their ancestor would have a +6 to their TN to Be Hit if they were at the -2 Wound Rank.



Chapter Five



Sample Crane Characters

Kakita Iaijutsu Duelist

You are the finest dueling student that has ever come through the Kakita Iaijutsu school. You're certain of it. It's time you took your skills out to the other clans and let them know what they are up against. You graduated the Kakita Academy as a master of the blade, and you are eager to prove that title. During one of the proudest moments of your life - as you like to recount often - you defeated a visiting *sensei* of the Lion Clan. Since then, everyone's been saying you're the next Kakita Toshimoko.

You're sure they're right.

When you graduated the Kakita school, you turned down a position in the Doji guard in order to see the world. You've traveled the coastline of the Crane, dueling people in all the major cities just to prove your worth. In one of those cities, on one of those rather boring missions, you met her.

She was a young Asako maiden, lovely and delicate, carefully schooled in all the womanly arts; you knew that she was meant to be yours from the first time you set eyes on her. After all, what woman could possibly resist you? You spent time in the court, visiting any official who might be able to tell you more about her, and at last you found her in the gardens with her servants. She was married to a Dragon ambassador - an old man, who did not deserve her fine beauty. You sought any reason to challenge him to a duel - but when you did, your sword broke in half at the first strike. Stunned, you were forced to admit defeat, and the ringing laughter of her husband still echoes in your ears. "Come back, young one," he said, "when your steel will not bend against the forge."

You have every intention of returning.

He has your pride, your honor, and the woman who is destined to be your wife. After all, wasn't that what she promised you under those flowering cherry trees? You have a lock of her hair on your *saya*, to remind you of your vow, and you know you will return for her. She's worth any price, any cost, any risk.

Isn't she?





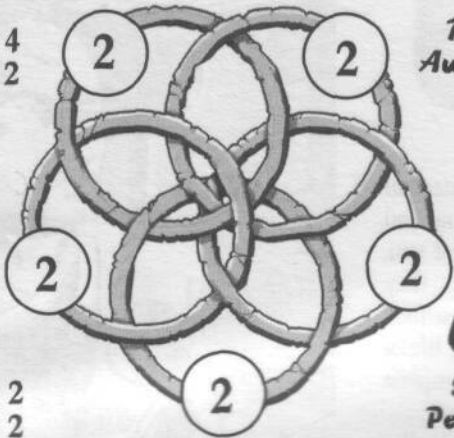
Legend of the Five Rings

Name: Kakita Iaijutsu Duelist
Clan: Crane

Profession: Bushi

Fire
Agility: 4
Intelligence: 2

Air
Reflexes: 4
Awareness: 2



Earth
Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water
Strength: 2
Perception: 2

Void
Void Points Spent:

Insight: 116

Techniques

- Way of the Crane
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Primary Weapon
Katana 3k2

Primary Armor
Light Armor

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
20
(25 in armor)

Skills

Archery	1
Etiquette	2
Iaijutsu	3
Kenjutsu	1
Sincerity	2
Calligraphy	2
Athletics	2
Defense	3

School: Kakita **Rank:** 1

Advantages/Disadvantages

True Love	-3
Insensitive	-2
Vain	-1
Quick	+3

Glory: 1
□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 3
☒☒☒☒☒☒□□□□

Experience Points:

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

Doji Courtier

You were raised in a quiet home, the only son of a peaceful nobleman. You had a happy childhood with little trauma, and were shielded from any unpleasantness. Your parents loved you, and promised you the best life they could afford; in fact, they managed to send you to the esteemed Doji Courtier school. Once there, you looked forward to the quiet, unassuming life of a minor diplomat, never responsible for more than the simplest menial tasks.

Then you were assigned to a famous magistrate in the Scorpion lands, and he expected you to do far more than you had ever thought possible. You were asked to run errands, face nobles on a daily basis, perform delicate manipulation of high-ranking officials. Your world was in turmoil. You asked him to transfer you repeatedly, but he said that you were one of the few trustworthy men he had ever known, and he needed you here in the mountains of the Bayushi. So, you suffered your fate and tried to bring peace wherever you could. Soon the ambition of your Master raised him to one of the highest diplomatic positions that the Crane held in the Scorpion lands, and you were faced with more and more problems, dealing with Scorpions on a daily basis. It was like sleeping on nails.

A few weeks ago, your Master came to your chambers alone - an unusual thing - and gave you his fan. You asked him about his strange behavior, but he only gave you an order never to mention it to anyone, and commanded you back to your rest.

The next morning, he was dead, his body dashed on the stones of the river far below the palace.

You knew you were in danger. You were forced to accept your Master's position until someone could come from the Crane to relieve you, and you spent three cold months in abject fear. When you were recalled to the Crane lands, you breathed a sigh of relief. But you know the Scorpion won't forget who you are, and you have no idea what to do with the fan your Master gave you on the night he died. You pray that your next mission will take you far from Scorpion lands, but you know that there is nowhere you can be safe from the long grasp of the Bayushi.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Doji Courtier

Clan:
Crane

Profession:
Courtier

Primary Weapon
None

Primary Armor
Light Armor

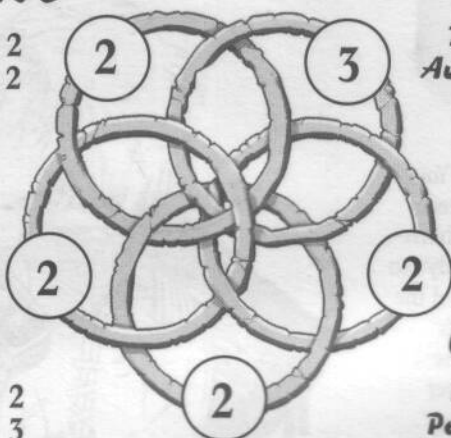
TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
15
(20 in armor)

Skills

Courtier	3
Sincerity	3
Etiquette	2
Heraldry	2
Manipulation	3
Oratory	2
Meditation	2
Mizu-Do	2
Lore: Scorpion	1
Law	1
Medicine	1

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 2



Air

Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 4

Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 3

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Techniques

Insight: 132

The Perfect Gift

School: Doji Courtier **Rank:** 1

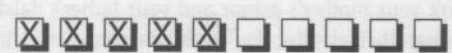
Advantages/ Disadvantages

Inheritance (Fan)	+1
Benten's Blessing	+2
Clear Thinker	+2
Small	-3
Minor Enemy: Scorpion	
Clan Bushi	-2

Glory: 1



Honor: 3



Experience Points:

Wounds

4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

Daidoji Bushi

Your father was a Daidoji – a proud and noble warrior. Your mother was a Crab, of the house of Hida. Somewhere between his subtle espionage and her forthright strength, you were born.

Neither of them cared if you grew up to be a “proper lady”, so your childhood was spent in the wilderness, the swamps and the rough forests of the south. You traveled to see your mother’s people, spent time on the wall of the Hida. You’ve visited the Shrine of the Landbridge. That was the only time you’ve ever cried.

You’ve also traveled to the courts of the Daidoji, and met the sharp smiles of their spies and Daidoji operatives. You haven’t been able to make up your mind as to which of the two were the stronger, the subtle strike of your father’s heritage or the bold ruthlessness of your mother. At your *gempukku*, someone was rude enough to ask you which you preferred; you looked them dead in the eye and replied, “Both.”

You have spent time in the court of the Phoenix and lived in the lands of the Lion, serving as an infiltrator and spy. You excelled in counter-espionage, the forte of your father. He was proud to see you follow in his footsteps, and you were proud to serve your family and your clan. Your first major solo mission was to gather sensitive information from the Akodo family, relaying it through an emissary to the Doji. You uncovered more than you bargained for, and stopped an assassination attempt on one of the prestigious Crane visitors. After you discovered the culprit, you administered a swift, deadly revenge under cover of shadow – but something went wrong. You were seen.

You had no idea of your mistake until you returned home, and found your parents had been murdered by some unknown force. The only clue to the identity of their killer was a battered, unmarked *tanto*. The tanto you used in the lands of the Lion, and had last seen in the back of the Akodo assassin.

On that day, you took the bloody knife and cut off your long white hair, cursing the Lion and everything they stood for. You took your mother’s armor and your father’s daisho and swore to avenge their deaths. You’ve shown your power in the courts, your subtlety and your skill.

It’s time to show your strength.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Daidoji Bushi

Clan:
Crane

Profession:
Bodyguard

Primary Weapon
No-Dachi 3k3

Primary Armor
Heavy Armor

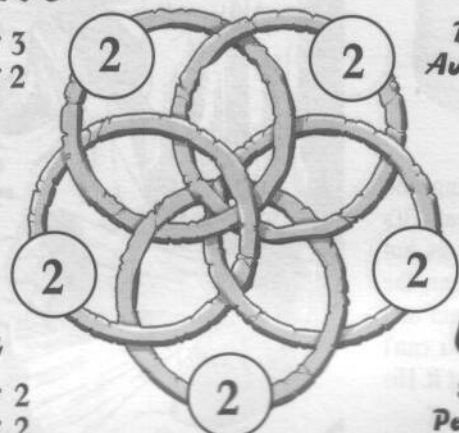
TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
20
(30 with armor)

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 4
Awareness: 2



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 3
Perception: 2

Void

Void Points Spent:

Skills

Kenjutsu	2
Defense	4
Iaijutsu	1
Battle	2
Archery	1
Naginata	3
Lore: Lion	2
Courtier	2
Sincerity	1
Etiquette	1

Techniques

The Force of Honor

Insight: 117

School: Daidoji **Rank:** 1

Wounds

6	-0
6	-1
6	-2
6	-3
6	-4
6	Down
6	Out
6	Dead

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Driven -3
Sworn Enemy: Lion -3

Glory: 1

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 3

☒☒☒☒☒□□□□□

Experience Points:

Asahina Shugenja

He whispers to you at night, when the world is sleeping, and your dreams are haunted with visions of blood and death. It's not proper for a shugenja of your Clan to know such things, but he's been telling you of the thousands of ways to kill a man, the hundreds of sensitive places which you can fill with pain and anguish. It's not the right thing to do, to listen, but you can't help yourself. His voice is with you when you least expect it. His blood is in your veins.

You must not kill. If you did, you would free his soul, and fall to the darkness as Yajinden once did, long ago. His skull still rests in the gardens of the Emperor, but his voice, his soul, his darkness... these things still live. And somewhere in the night, you can hear the Shadowlands rising again. You can hear them, and you wonder if you will go mad.

Your talent with *nemuranai* is remarkable. Your teachers long ago stopped tutoring you, and you have begun to teach others. New fetishes and *tsangusuri* spring into your dreams, your hands form spells and craft items almost without your knowledge. But with each item you craft, each leap of skill, you feel the *kuei* rising. The evil spirit in the item begs for release, but you fight it with all your strength.

Others in your school fear you. They whisper behind your back. They are jealous. Your unkempt appearance and your ravings in the night have forced your instructors to hold you back, to hide you from the clan. Sometimes they wonder if you are a Crane at all. That's all right. You know the truth of your heritage. It sings to you each night, as the moon turns to blood. You are a Crane. You are an Asahina.

And you must not kill - not because of the doctrines of your school, or the morals of your clan, but for the salvation of your very soul.



Kakita Artisan

Your *gempukku* was just last month, and you're filled with hope and great expectations for your life. You're sure that you could have talent, if you tried hard enough. You've been painting since you were a tiny babe, and it has filled your days and nights. You've never been in love, never risked your life, and never seen evil. You're still far too young to be jaded about anyone or anything.

You've spent most of your life in the quiet gardens of the Crane, living peacefully among the Artisans of the Kakita Academy. While many of your peers and teachers say you are very skilled with the paintbrush, you've never been very confident in your abilities. Art has always been a struggle for you; one you've relished, but you know it doesn't come as easily to you as to others. You love what you do, and you're dedicated to it, but you're very shy and sensitive if others compliment you on your work. You aren't very sure of yourself, and will go out of your way to be sure that there's a back-up plan if anyone has to rely on you.

This is one of the reasons you've been overwhelmed by recent events. While completing a painting in the gardens of the Crane, a rich-looking noblewoman came to your side and spoke to you at length of technique and color. Flattered, you relished the opportunity to learn from someone who seemed to know quite a bit about modern style, and your hours in the garden flew past more swiftly than you knew. She seemed impressed by your answers and witty conversation, and it wasn't until she turned to leave that you saw the mon of the Unicorn emblazoned upon her robe.

Two weeks later, your instructor proudly informed you that the daughter of the Unicorn house had asked to be your patron – and you could hardly refuse! She is powerful, a major player in the Imperial Court, and you are expected to bring even more honor to her house, and to the Crane.

Recently, she has asked you to visit the lands of the Unicorn and learn their ways so that your art can be shared with the court of the Unicorn Champion. Terrified, but bound by honor

and propriety, you have agreed, and now you prepare for the long journey across Rokugan. Before you left the lands of the Kakita, one of your instructors drew you aside from the rest of the class and began to teach you the secret language of the Crane Artisans. It was called the "cadence". He said it was in case anything unusual happened to you on your travels, but you know there are deeper reasons. You only hope that once you arrive, you will be able to handle whatever your patron – and your house – ask of you. The whole thing makes you dreadfully nervous, but you have packed up your brushes and you're ready to leave. You just hope your traveling companions don't mind having you along...





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Kakita Artisan

Clan:
Crane

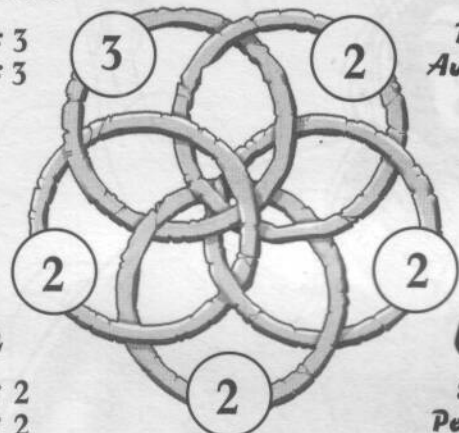
Profession:
Artisan

Fire

Agility: 3
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 2



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 128

Techniques

- Artisan (Painter)
- Glyph Creation
-
-
-

Primary Weapon

Mizu-Do

Primary Armor

Light Armor

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

(15 with armor)

Skills

Courtier	3
Etiquette	1
Painting	3
Lore: Myth & Legend	1
Calligraphy	2
Tea Ceremony	2
Poetry	2
Shintao	1
Mizu-Do	2

Wounds

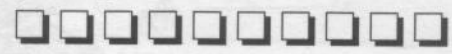
4	-0
4	-1
4	-2
4	-3
4	-4
4	Down
4	Out
4	Dead

School: Kakita Artisan **Rank:** 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Magic Resistance	+4
Patron (Unicorn)	+3
Cadence	+3
Can't Lie	-3

Glory: 1



Honor: 3



Experience Points:



Appendices





BLACK MARKETS

All trade which is considered too dishonorable for open dealings is done in the Crane black markets – the underground roadway for illegal and immoral trade. Because of the ongoing economic war between the Yasuki and the Daidoji, these black markets have become very profitable, almost to the point of becoming the sole resource for the Yasuki family trade. It is easy for a good campaign to be placed in and around these hidden markets, and the character's role in this type of campaign can be almost anything. For gainful employment, the characters could be responsible for the protection of "supplies" up and down the trade routes, or even working for a magistrate to put a stop to a particular dealer.

If the characters wish to follow a darker path, they could be employed by a daimyo who is actively involved in the Black Markets, and given missions such as ambushing the trade routes of opposing factions. A note of caution: all parties concerned with the operation of the Black Market do so in secrecy; if it were to be uncovered that a party member was engaged in such activity, it would certainly bring them great shame.

The Crane Clan is one of the most prestigious in the Emerald Empire, consisting of hundreds of miles of shoreline, thousands of peasant villages, and many acres of arable land. Stories from the creation of the Empire are stored by the Crane, kept for the education of modern generations. The miscellany presented here is designed to give you some further information about Rokugan's most honorable Clan, information that wouldn't fit into the organized format of this book. This appendix is designed to give you adventure hooks, some places of interest, examples of commonly known Crane *nemuranai* and the Asahina spellbooks, all of which are designed to help flesh out the lands of the Crane in your campaign.

Appendix I: The Lands of the Crane

Overview

The lands of the Crane stretch for miles on every side of the great capital of Otsan Uchi. From the foothills of the Mountains of Regret to the north, to the Asahina fields of the far southern peninsula, Crane lands cover most of the coastline of Rokugan. Once, long ago, the castle of the Yasuki was known by another name, but since the Yasuki Clan defected to the Clan of the Crab, it is now simply known as the "Black Crane Palace." The southern peninsula is divided north and south by an Imperial decree. To the west lies Yasuki Yashiki and the Crab lands, and to the east lies Shinden Asahina and the Crane. This division has settled into a peaceful coexistence, mostly due to the constant diplomacy of the pacifistic Asahina family. At the tip of the peninsula lies the fortress of the Crane – the Niwa Shita no Kage Toshi (Garden Under Shadow City) which guards

the Shio Senkyo no Riku (Tidal Landbridge) upon which Daidoji Masashigi died defending Rokugan from the Shadowlands.

The people who live in the lands of the Crane live a good life. The fields are rich, the taxes light and the magistrates pride themselves on their honorable and just nature. Indeed, many peasants of other areas of Rokugan immigrate to Crane lands each year. But there is a price for this peace. The Crane have little military presence to handle disputes within their lands, and sometimes their forces arrive too late to solve troubles with bandits. However, the peasants have adapted by having swift runners able to go for help as quickly as possible, and by keeping themselves practiced and efficient in defense (mostly simple hand to hand combat tactics, as peasants are not allowed to have weapons).

The Lands to the North

Near the plains of Otsan Uchi and the borders of the Phoenix and Dragon, stand the northern bastions of the Crane. Defended by the Daidoji, much of these lands are held by the Doji family and their retainers, hatamotos and minor daimyos. This land is peaceful, filled with prospering merchants who trade Crane agriculture for Phoenix resources from the mountains. The roads twist through rolling hills, past lush hardwood forests and tiny villages. In this area of Rokugan, there are many shrines to Shinsei, and one of the Brotherhood's largest temples resides near a tiny village at the edge of the mountains of the Phoenix. Far from the Lion and the Crab, the northern lands of the Crane have rarely seen war. In fact, they have rarely seen much of anything. Calm, rural, and placid, the northern lands of the Crane have only a small military presence to maintain a token defense against bandits and other, more natural dangers. In the early spring, some of these lands become cut off as melting snows flood the rivers and wash out the roads. Travelers to the far northern demesne of the Crane will find a peaceful place, filled with tiny villages and very little pomp and regalia.

THE IMPERIAL COURT

The lands which are commonly considered the border of the "northern" lands of the Crane and the coastal region of the Doji are held by the Emerald Champion. As that position is often held by a Crane serving as the Personal Champion of the Hantei line, the lands of the Emerald Champion are usually under Crane control. The palace of the Emerald Champion, and the great city of Otosan Uchi, have stood upon the plains for centuries. Since the beginning of the Emerald Empire, the Crane have felt a certain kinship with the family of the Emperor. Every Hantei has chosen a Crane to marry, whether it be a graceful, artistic Kakita or a clever, diplomatic Doji. Blood unites the Hantei and Crane houses - blood and honor.

In the court of the Emperor, centered at the grand palace of Otosan Uchi, the diplomats and courtiers practice the art of civilization - arranging marriages, negotiating alliances, and conducting business for their clans. Within the walls of the Imperial Court, houses rise and fall, wars are fought without loss of life, and agreements are made that affect the fortunes of the nobility. But how does the court of the Emperor affect the lives of common samurai, serving their Lord as they have sworn?

The Imperial Court is not a place, not a conglomeration of walls and rooms, but a living entity comprised of dozens of ambassadors and diplomats, following the Emperor on forays into Rokugan, and serving their clans as they have been instructed by their Champions. The court itself spends six months of the year in Otosan Uchi, and the rest of its time in the court of one of the major clans. To host the Emperor and his entourage is a great honor, one which is given to each clan in turn. Of course, those who have observed the Emperor's journeys through his Empire may note that he is more prone to visit the lands of the Crane and Phoenix than those of the reclusive Dragon or honorless Crab. These latter clans often complain of the favoritism which the Emperor shows the Doji and the Isawa, but their petty bickering is lost in the world of the great court.

The Imperial Court is also called the "World of the Shining Prince," in direct reference to the lineage of Hantei and his siblings, and their mother the Sun Goddess. The city of the Shining Prince is clean and neat, as are all the cities of Rokugan; clean streets, neat houses, and a quiet

atmosphere are the rule, rather than the exception. The gardens of the Emperor spread for miles outside the brilliantly carved and crafted walls of the palace, with spreading trees, lakes and magnificent hedges of flowers covering huge tracts of land. These gardens are often the site of courtly meetings. Discussing matters of war or trade under weeping willows alongside a stream is not uncommon, and such lovely settings serve as a counterpoint to the negotiations.

The setting of any given meeting of the court is often considered carefully by the Emperor's primary advisor, who knows that the Rokugani emphasis on symbolism will color the presence of every tree and flower. Kakita Yoshi, the current Imperial Advisor, goes to great lengths to see that all is perfectly prepared for the Emperor's presence, often sending envoys to the courts which the Emperor intends to visit, as much as six months before the Imperial Caravan leaves Otosan Uchi. These envoys are not only chosen for their ability to prepare the rooms and gardens which the Emperor will inhabit, but also for their trustworthiness and reliability. They are expected to seek out anything which may endanger the Emperor during his stay, including anyone with access to the Imperial Chambers.

Imperial authority, the power of the Emperor, is based on the fact that no one in Rokugan owns land. The Emperor, as the direct descendant of the Sun Goddess, has authority over all lands, and is the only owner of territory in the Empire. All land belongs to the Emperor and his heirs, and he has given certain clans the right to farm and rule them in his stead. The Emperor also authorizes the teaching of the Tao to the people, and has final authority over all religious and ethical debates. The whim of the Emperor, in such cases, can change the religion of the people, although no Emperor has ever been known to alter the Tao itself. Alterations of the readings, however, or of the premises based on the information of the Tao, are entirely within the Emperor's jurisdiction.

The Emperor, wherever he is staying, is the center of the aristocracy. Even the most minute change in the feudal system of Rokugan, from the creation of a *daimyo* to the granting of samurai status to a *heimin*, must be approved by the Emperor, although he often leaves more trivial affairs to his Imperial Advisor. Although it is rarely done, if the Emperor forbade a samurai to become the Champion of their clan, for example, the person simply could not take that position.



BLACK MARKETS (CONTINUED)

Further, the Daidoji and the Yasuki are not the only people who are involved in the illicit negotiations of these hidden markets - the greatest danger is the Kolat, an invisible force which makes all traders look behind their shoulders in apprehension.

In Rokugan, "death before dishonor" is the code even in the black markets, where people's loyalty to their Clan can mean more than their position - it can mean their survival.



THE LADY'S FAN

When Shinjo decided to leave Rokugan, Lady Doji was opposed to the loss of her sister. Because the two were so close, Shinjo swore that her descendants would return, and promised that they would remember the Crane when they did. Doji gave her sandalwood fan to her sister, for luck on her journeys, and so that a part of the Crane would accompany Shinjo on her travels.

Hundreds of years later, when Shinjo Nishijin returned to Rokugan, he came to the court of the Emperor. Doji Ryobu, the current Emerald Champion and leader of the Crane, was among those who welcomed the strange newcomers from afar. When they were introduced, Nishijin reached within his haori, and pulled forth a small jade box. He handed this box to Ryobu, who opened it to reveal a small and very ancient sandalwood fan.

Peasants and samurai would not be required to listen to their orders, nor acquiesce to their demands. A new Champion would have to be chosen, one which the Emperor approved. Major appointments are always approved directly by the Emperor himself, although the advice of the Emperor's personal Advisor weighs heavily upon the man on the Emerald Throne.

The Emperor has the authority to give formal and religious sanction to all events in the Empire, and to delegate such rights to those he finds appropriate. The creation of Imperial magistrates and diplomats, as well as the courtier's official role as the voice of the Emperor, is all a part of his delegation of authority. Of these, one of the most powerful abilities is the right to provide someone with Imperial protection.



The protection of the Emperor confers safety from all harmful actions, whether physical, or mere restraint from fulfilling the duties and obligations which they have been assigned. If

anyone harms someone traveling under the Emperor's protection, the entire Empire will shun them. The wrath of the Emperor and his court can be harsh, including the possibility of removal of Major Clan status, loss of Samurai rank, or even a public execution.

The Coastal Regions

The coastal regions of the Crane Clan stretch along 90% of Rokugan's eastern territories, effectively giving the Crane a complete chokehold over seagoing trade. The market places and ports of the Crane are firmly established along these sea-routes, providing the Crane the fastest and most effective means of transporting goods around Rokugan. Outside of these resources, the

Crane have many inland market places which further establish Crane economic superiority. Trade roads, carefully maintained by the towns of the coast, stretch from the far south all the way to the northern provinces. These roads, often lined with cobblestones and flowering trees, are patrolled frequently by the Daidoji and the city samurai of the major port cities. Theft is not a major problem. Any bandit foolish enough to attempt an attack on a trade caravan would be risking the wrath of the Emperor, whose goods and taxes are often carried by Crane forces to the plains of Otosan Uchi.

The coastal areas of the Crane lands maintain the majority of the population. The cities are packed, filled with people from all the lands of the Empire, teeming with merchants, artisans, samurai and *heimin* alike. The larger cities contain the palaces of

the Crane, from Shiro no Doji and Shiro no Kakita to the lesser known family palaces of the minor daimyos. The tremendous walls of Shiro no



Doji rise from the sheer cliffside over one of the most prosperous port cities of the Crane.

In the center of one such city stands a small garden, whose flowers are kept blooming all year through the magic of the Asahina shugenja who have dedicated their lives to the task. In its center is a small dark stone, no more than three feet in diameter, its surface worn by wind and time. The stone is known as the "Stone of the Sun," and it is said to be the place where the children of the Sun first set foot upon the earth. On the horizon stands the great castle of Otosan Uchi, the Emperor's dwelling-place and the heart of Rokugan.

THE ROAD TO THE SEA-KING'S PALACE

Once there was an island off the southern shores of the Crane lands, near Mura Sabishii Toshi, the famous port city of the Crane. This island was the site of one of the most beautiful palaces of the Crane. Aided by the magics of the Asahina, the gardens of the palace were said to contain cobblestones of gold, and the trees grew leaves of silver. A minor daimyo under the Doji house, Morehei Yuo, lived on the island with his family and several small villages, performing trade with nearby Mura Sabishii Toshi. His palace was the preferred summer home of the noble Doji and Kakita families. In the bay of the island there stood a tremendous bronze statue of Suitengu, the guardian of the waters. The statue itself stood over a hundred feet high, its feet sunk deep in the waters of the bay, and its hands outstretched in greeting.

Nearly 400 years ago, a massive earthquake shook the island, destroying its foundation and sinking it beneath the sea. The statue of Suitengu, now called "The Sea-King" by passing ships, still stands in what was once the bay of the beautiful land, but now all but its shoulders, head and upraised hands have sunk beneath the ocean. Pearl divers who have swum through the area say that the villages still stand, their rock foundations covered in coral and waving sea-grasses. As for the palace and its legendary gardens, where it once stood there is now only a tremendous fissure in the rock bed of the sea, although the road which once led to the castle still leads, in broken chunks and teetering pillars, down into the ravine. No divers have tested the depth of the crevasse, and there are those who say that the

island was sunk by evil sea-spirits who longed to have the palace for their own.

For now, the "Sea King" stands alone in the bay near Mura Sabishii Toshi, welcoming ships that pass into the lands of the Crane.

THE WIFE OF THE FIRST EMPEROR, AND THE NAMING OF MICHU NI MAYOTTA MUSUME

There is a small island in the bay near Doji palace, one of many, known as Michi ni Mayotta Musume (Lost Daughter Inlet). It is a sacred place, not only to the Crane but also to the Hantei family. If the Emperor (or his heir) is to be married, the woman who is to be the new Empress spends one night alone on the island, communing with the spirits of the other women, past and future, who will share the life of the Hantei and bear the children of the next generation. On this island, say the tales, the First Hantei found his mortal bride, a daughter of the Doji family whose origins were common but whose wit and beauty were legendary. The story is told once a year, on the last day of the month of the Dog, when the current Emperor sends pilgrims to the island.

Once, so the ancient texts say, the First Hantei searched the country for a wife. His arrival in the Doji lands was unexpected, and the Crane Clan searched desperately to find the most beautiful women in the territory in order to gain his approval. In those days there was a small town near the sea, known as Ikioto. The women who lived there had been hardened by their work. When the samurai came to look for a suitable maiden, all the women they found were old, or calloused and displeasing. Therefore the Doji did not stay, but continued on their errand.

The samurai did not know that one fisherman had heard of their search, and had hidden his only daughter. Her name was Doji Mioko, and she was as beautiful as the stars on a clear night. Fish would come to the side of the boat when she sang, and her father would simply scoop them in his net each evening. He feared she would be taken away, and he would no longer have the wealth his easy fishing brought. So her father hid her on a small island far from the village, planning to fetch her home when the Emperor had gone.

The Emperor saw the maidens that the Kakita brought to the palace, and though they were noble and honorable women, none of them

THE TEARS OF THE FIRST EMPEROR

The strange chips of jade known as the "Tears of the First Emperor" are treasured by the wife of the Doji daimyo, passed down through history since the wife of Doji Nio, second son of Lady Doji and Lord Kakita. There are well over thirty such chips in a fine silk pouch, each shaped into an intricate teardrop, upon which are carved miniscule portraits of cranes. Although the exact properties of these tears are unknown, they are known to be able to remove the Shadowlands Taint from one willing to be purified, up to an amount of ranks equal to the Tainted person's Honor.



WHAT THE CRANE THINK OF THE OTHER CLANS

"True nobility comes not from being superior to another man, but in being superior to your past."

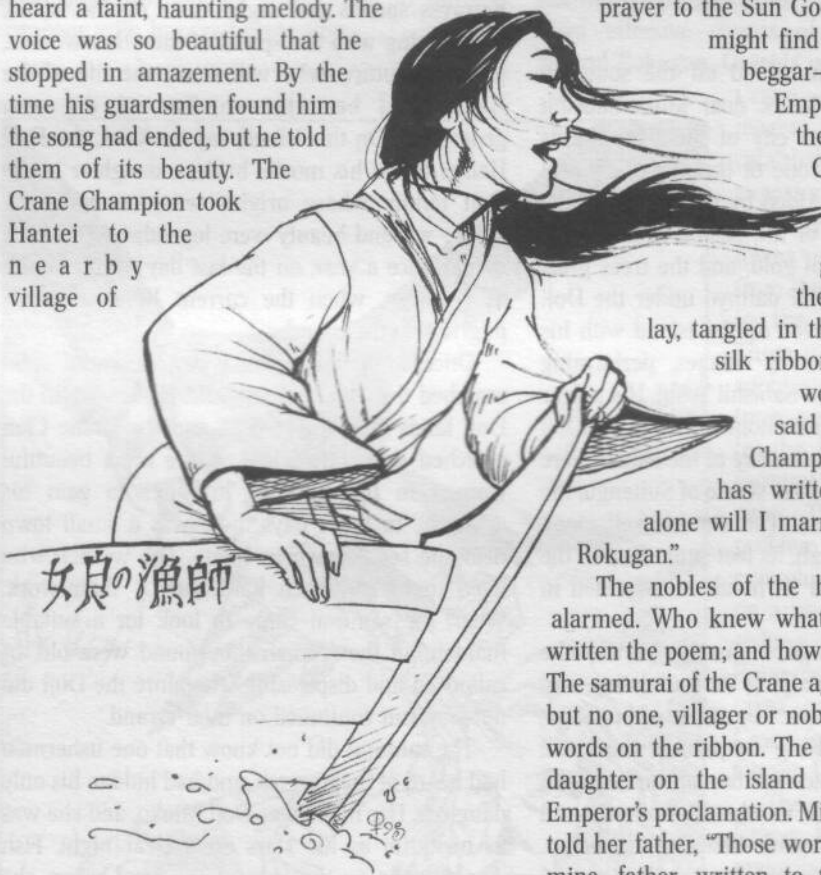
- The Tao of Shinsei

The Crane are both respected and hated by the other Clans of Rokugan, but none can dispute their economic importance to the Empire, and their complete control over the court system. The Crane keep the shipping lanes open, regulate taxation within the Imperial court and prohibit excessive exclusion of trade between warring clans. Simply put, the Crane make sure that the Empire - and their own Clan - keep turning a tidy profit. As for the other clans, the Crane try to keep relations smooth despite what they may really think of their neighbors. After all, it was a Crane who coined the phrase, "Know your enemy and you will defeat him."

Crab: The Crab are brutish fighters, strong and bold, who have forgotten everything except their lust for battle. They have become a part of the Shadowlands itself, with dark magics and darker taints. Their sense of honor and civilization has degraded to almost nothing. We respect and honor their fight, as one honors the dogs who keep the wolves at bay. It is a fool's quest to engage the Crab in direct combat. There are better ways to defeat a scuttling braggart.

stirred his heart. "I have seen the lands of the Lion, the Crab, Scorpion and Phoenix, and yet no woman has caught my eye," he said. "No face I have seen among the courts of the Unicorn has given me pause, and there is none among the mysterious maidens of the Dragon Clan whose heart I would seek." The Emperor spent his time in solitude, and retired to the highest balconies of Doji palace, thinking only of his loneliness.

One morning, the Emperor and his samurai rode across the lands of the Crane, seeking sport and amusement. While chasing a hunting-bird, Hantei was separated from his loyal servitors and found himself on the ocean shore. The wind blew in from the sea, and in the breeze he heard a faint, haunting melody. The voice was so beautiful that he stopped in amazement. By the time his guardsmen found him the song had ended, but he told them of its beauty. The Crane Champion took Hantei to the nearby village of



Ikioto, and commanded the fishermen to take the Emperor to the island just off the shore.

Mioko's father took the Emperor in his small boat, rowing to the island. They sailed all around it, but saw no place to land. "I heard a voice singing on that island, fisherman," Emperor Hantei said. "Who lives there?"

"No one lives on that island, but I have heard that the wind blows through the coral. The noise is said to resemble singing, Majesty," the clever

fisherman said. Finding nothing, the Emperor returned to Doji palace.

That night, the fisherman went to a hidden cave in the island to bring his daughter food. "I saw you sailing this morning, father," Mioko said to him. "Who was the young man in your boat?"

"It was but a beggar, daughter, that I found on the shore."

Mioko had seen the handsome young man from her hidden cave within the cliffs of the island, and she had fallen in love with him. After her father left the island, she tied a thin silken cord to the leg of her pet bird, and on that ribbon she wrote a haiku.

When she released the bird, Mioko said a prayer to the Sun Goddess, hoping the bird might find its way to the young beggar-man. That night, the

Emperor was dancing with the maidens of the Crane Clan when he heard a disturbance in the bushes of the gardens. Within one of the bushes a white dove lay, tangled in the branches by a thin silk ribbon. When he read the words on the ribbon, he said to the Crane Champion, "The maiden who has written these words, her alone will I marry, in all the lands of Rokugan."

The nobles of the house of Crane were alarmed. Who knew what peasant maiden had written the poem; and how were they to find her? The samurai of the Crane again scoured the lands, but no one, villager or noble, could tell them the words on the ribbon. The fisherman went to his daughter on the island and told her of the Emperor's proclamation. Mioko fell into tears, and told her father, "Those words on the ribbon were mine, father, written to the beggar-man who shared your boat. Now the Emperor has claimed them for his own, and I will never see my love."

The fisherman was a clever man, and in this problem, he saw a way to make his life even easier and more wealthy. "I can help you, daughter," he said. "Tell me what was written on that ribbon, and I will tell it to some young woman from the village. The Emperor will marry her, and I will help you find your beggar when they are gone." Delighted, Doji Mioko eagerly told

her father the small haiku, pleading with him to hurry in his task.

The next day, the fisherman went to see the Emperor with a young woman on his arm. The woman told the Emperor the words of the little poem, and the Crane lands rejoiced. But the Emperor was not satisfied. He agreed to marry the village maiden, and the wedding was planned for the following evening.

That night, Hantei followed his bride-to-be to her chambers. "Speak to me more of your poetry, gentle Doji maiden," he beseeched her. "Tell me another haiku like the one you wrote upon the ribbon." The girl tried to create a poem, but her efforts were feeble and there was no love in her words. Furious, the Emperor demanded to know who she was, and how she had known the haiku on the ribbon. Falling to her knees, the frightened girl told the Emperor all she knew of the fisherman and his hidden daughter. The Emperor thought long on the matter, and went to see the fisherman the next morning. Hantei showered the man with gold and jewels, saying, "You have brought the woman I am to marry, and I am pleased with your loyalty. But before I am wed, I wish to hear again the wind in the coral of your island." The fisherman could not refuse, and rowed the Emperor to its rocky shores.

When Doji Mioko saw her father's boat returning, she hid in the cave as she had before. However, when she saw that her father had brought the beggar as he had promised, she ran from the cave to greet them.

The fisherman was caught in his web of lies, and the Emperor saw Mioko at last. It is said that when Hantei approached her, he fell to his knees. "You are the woman I have sought in all the lands of Rokugan, and I will marry you and no other." Tears of joy fell upon the beach at her feet, turning into the purest jade. The Emperor gathered his sparkling tears, and gave them to the Champion of the Crane in exchange for Mioko's hand in marriage.

When Mioko discovered that her beggar was the Emperor, she pleaded that he show pity on her father for his deceptions. The Emperor loved his bride, and agreed to her wishes. Instead of death, the fisherman was condemned to live on the little island for the rest of his days.

The Tears of the First Emperor, small tear-shaped pieces of jade which sparkle and shine unnaturally even in the dimmest light, are still kept by the Crane Clan. They are the province

of the Doji daimyo's wife, who is entrusted to keep them safe throughout her life and pass them on to her child's bride. It is said that they have the power to bring hope and release to those tainted by the Shadowlands or darkened by evil.

The Western Plains

The western plains are one of the keys to Crane prosperity in Rokugan. The fertile farmlands and acres of rich rice fields are cultivated under constant supervision by Crane farmers and *heimin*. Although the western borders of this territory have long been disputed between Crane and Lion, the Crane maintain that it was given to their ancestress, the Lady Doji, when the land was divided among the seven Children of the Sun long ago. The Lion, however, have no respect for that ancient tradition, and continue to make forays into the land in order to plunder its riches. The castle which once stood upon the borderland, Shiro no Yugin, was taken by the Lion in one of their attempts to wrest control of the territory. However, the swift action of the Daidoji has prevented any further progress by Akodo and Matsu forces, and Shiro no Yugin stands as an aberration on the Crane lands.

The crops grown here are one of the primary sources of food in Rokugan. Crane rice and wheat is sold in all the lands of the Empire, particularly to the land-poor Crab and Dragon. The richest of these plains is known as the fields of Osari, named for a farmer who stood against invading Scorpion forces hundreds of years ago. Sacrificing their lives against the troops which flooded from Beiden Pass, Osari and the men of his village held off the Bayushi warriors for three days while the Daidoji forces force-marched to their aid. When the battle was done, only three of the farmers lived. A small empty hut still stands at the site of the village, a tribute to the farmers who gave their lives in defense of their farms.

At the southern edge of these provinces stands the route into the mountains known as Beiden Pass. Many times in the past, the Crane, Lion and Scorpion have all claimed the right to rule this area and control the trade and other passage through the mountains. Daidoji forces captured the pass shortly after Doji Satsume became the Emperor's Champion, nearly 25 years ago, and held it for over 15 years before being forced to retreat in order to defend Shiro no Yugin. Since



WHAT THE CRANE THINK OF THE OTHER CLANS (CONTINUED)

Dragon: High on their mountain, the Dragon Clan are content in their mysteries. But who feeds them, so that their time can be spent in contemplation? We do. Our lands produce enough grain for all of Rokugan, and no other clan partakes of Crane generosity as much as the reclusive Dragon. In some ways they are less human; in others, they are the essence of humanity. Their reluctance to enter society is unfortunate, for what use is philosophy if you can not apply it to life?

Lion: The Lion despise us for our intelligence and are jealous of our rightful place in society. Like bickering peasants, the Lion cling to their futile hatred, and like spoiled children they come to blows over the mildest disagreement. Still, their devotion to the Emperor is unparalleled. If only they could recognize that our duty to the Emperor is just as important - if not as glorious - as their own.

(continued)



WHAT THE CRANE THINK OF THE OTHER CLANS (CONTINUED)

Phoenix: Of all the Clans, the Phoenix are the most like us. Their understanding of society and civilization is matched by their wisdom. Their magics are potent and their hearts are true. Go to the Phoenix for allies, for their magic is worth ten hundred boasting samurai. Their ambassadors to the Imperial Court seek peace, and to assist their efforts is also to help ourselves.

Scorpion: By far, our most dangerous enemy. While the Lion prance and strut, the Scorpion plan. Like the web of a spider, their plans are invisible and far reaching, and every movement could put you in jeopardy. They hide behind masks to cover their lies. We must use our intellect to outmaneuver them.

Remember, the spider's advantage is that he knows where to step. Throw him off balance, and you can catch him in his own web.

Unicorn: We first greeted the Unicorn as brothers when they returned from their journeys, and they have rewarded our kindness with friendship. Their trade is knowledge, for they know far more about other lands than we. But we know more of Rokugan.

Their eagerness for knowledge and their need for guidance makes them malleable, and their military makes them valuable.

that time, the Lion and Scorpion have been squabbling over the mountain corridor, while the Crane wait to see who will win. After all, the easiest enemy to defeat is one who has wasted their strength against another opponent.

Only twice in history have the Crane levied full trade embargo on any of the other clans – once against the Crab, and once against the Lion. The first was during the Yasuki break with the Crane, and the second was due to a wartime effort to force the Lion to come to the negotiation table at Otsan Uchi. The Crane declared that they would no longer trade with the Lion, nor would they support trade with those who continued to ship wartime supplies to the Matsu troops.

Within a few weeks, the Lion army began to run short of needed supplies as all traders in Rokugan began to withdraw their goods for fear that the Crane would stop trading with them. The complete dominance which the Crane hold over all traders in Rokugan is often underestimated, but rarely forgotten twice. Even the bold Yasuki, who for years have had an economic conflict with the Crane, were forced to cease shipping grain to the Matsu troops. When the Lion came to the negotiations, it was another sign of the subtle power of the Doji.

The Southern Border

The far southern lands of the Crane include the peninsula known as Kenkai Hanto (the Peninsula of Hardened Waters), and the cities of the clever Daidoji. The southern border contains most of the military power of the Crane, due to the constantly vigilant forces of the Daidoji. The roads between the cities of the lower Crane provinces are virtually free of bandit activity due to the proliferation of Crane warriors and the loyalty of the Daidoji family to their sworn lords. The bustling cities of the Crane can be found here, as in the coastal region, but in this area they are far more heavily guarded, and many Crab and Lion traders prefer to exchange wares in the southern lands of the Crane.

The far southern reaches of the Kenkai Hanto peninsula are filled with sporadic swampy reaches, riddled with quicksand and deep pits of mud – a dangerous place for the unwary traveler. Those who have been there and returned speak of strange *kami*, spirits of the wild such as *kenku*, *Nezumi* and even the elusive *Naga*. The Daidoji

are quick to warn those who travel there of the swampland's dangers, but rarely venture into the wilds themselves.

Somewhere in the swampland to the far south of the peninsula lies a grove of stones whose origins are unknown. They are said to be formed of shards of long crystal, which jut up at wild angles from the ground like trees. Some say this strange formation is due to the volcanic pressures which rock the southern tip of Rokugan. Whatever the cause, the stones shine in the light of the full moon as if a beacon were upon them, making wild patterns upon the swamp.

Appendix II: Mizu-do

"When I need to I hit people, I hit them with the largest weapon I can find: The ground."

– Kakita Merao

Mizu-do is a martial art developed by the Crane artisans in order to show some realistic fighting in their dramatic performances of Kabuki and other plays. Because the artisans had no intention of harming anyone, or of using real weapons, *Mizu-do* has developed into a very defensive martial art. From that humble beginning, *Mizu-do* has become a Crane tradition, used by many artisans and courtiers to defend themselves in dangerous circumstances. "*Mizu-do*", means "*the way of water*"; the form is also called *umi-do*, "*the way of the sea*." The first *Mizu-do sensei*, Kakita Merao, once said, "The softest thing in the world overcomes the hardest; a thing without substance enters where there is no room. The stiff and unbending is the disciple of death – the gentle and yielding is the disciple of life."

On both the mental and physical levels, *Mizu-do* is an art. Its *katas* are performed as



dance maneuvers, and also within productions of famous plays. Mizu-do focuses on throws and joint locks derived from *kenjutsu*; not on punching or kicking opponents, but rather using their own energy to gain control of them or to throw them aside. Movement, dynamic motion and smooth, flowing control of one's own body and the body of one's opponent are the heart of this unarmed martial style. In performance, the throws are exaggerated and combatants are taught to roll and move in order to receive a minimum of real damage, while still appearing to be badly injured.

Artisans often engage in Mizu-do katas before performances of story or song, in order to compose their thoughts and allow their voice and body to withstand the demands of constant audience attention. The development of the chi, the harmony of the spirit and the body, follows the philosophies set forth in Kakita's, *The Sword*. To some, the idea of a martial discipline which strives for peace and harmony may seem paradoxical, but to the Crane it is the most basic tenet of the art.

Most samurai schools have little or no respect for the practitioners of Mizu-do, calling it a "soft" school, not worthy of the attention of a true bushi. In many ways, they are right, and the Crane have never attempted to popularize their defensive art. Mizu-do is a soft style, characterized by gentle movements that often involve the practitioner jumping or skipping - things which a heavily armed samurai could not perform.

Mizu-do in Rokugan does not teach weapons training. It does teach certain defenses against weapons, but not the offensive use of the weapons themselves. In this way, the student is expected to learn to rely on themselves rather than on equipment. One noticeable characteristic of Rokugani Mizu-do is the absence of foot techniques other than sweeps, movements and stances. Mizu-do was designed to teach the student how to use their bare hands to stop an opponent's attack without harming them. No foot techniques exist because the student of Mizu-do is expected to be expert in dodging, throwing, and capturing an opponent in a joint hold. The final objective in Mizu-do is not to harm your opponent, but rather to immobilize and arrest them. Thus, the main techniques are not the "kick" and "punch" of *jiujutsu* or the Dragon *kaze-do*, but rather "throw" and "hold."

The two greatest physical defenses in Crane Mizu-do are the joint holds and throw techniques. The throws serve as a passive defense, escaping the enemy's grasp or placing them at a disadvantage. By applying the joint holds, the smallest defender can hold down a strong attacker, and even someone of slight build has the ability to restrain a massive samurai. The way that this is accomplished is by using the attacker's own strength against them, making their ability work in your favor. These techniques are not entirely without the potential to harm someone; struggling against a "joint technique" will almost certainly result in an injury.

Mizu-do is a skill which can only be purchased by Crane clan characters. It may be taught to outsiders under some circumstances, but no non-Crane character may begin with the Mizu-do skill.

MIZU-DO (REFLEXES)

This is the Crane clan unarmed combat style skill. When a character purchases this skill at creation, they may choose two of the techniques listed below. These are the techniques which the character begins with. If the character later chooses to advance their studies in Mizu-do, they may select another technique from the list each time they purchase another rank in Mizu-do.

If a character purchases their first rank in Mizu-do after character generation, they only select one of the following techniques, rather than two. They will thereafter continue to learn one new technique per rank, as usual.

Players should record this skill on their character sheet as "Hand-to-hand (Mizu-do)". Further information on hand-to-hand rules can be found in the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG*. Characters who wish to invent their own techniques should be encouraged to do so, with the supervision of the GM. Such "new techniques" are free for the character who creates them, but must be learned by other players as if they were basic techniques: one per rank advancement.

Mizu-do is considered a High Skill.

Mizu-Do Techniques

BEND LIKE A REED

Another form of feint, this maneuver can be used to escape a more direct attack from a striking sword or staff weapon. In order to evade

MIZU-DO:

THE "REACTIONARY ROLL"

All Mizu-do techniques require a "reactionary roll". This implies that the character must declare a full defense at the top of each round, and then may choose to react with the defensive maneuver once their opponent has begun their attack. If the Mizu-do practitioner wants the option to perform a Mizu-do technique this round, they may receive no benefit from declaring a Full Defense.

If the Artisan chooses not to react to an attack, they may not change their mind once the attacker has rolled their strike. If a Mizu-do practitioner is attacked by two or more opponents, they may react to a single opponent of their choosing.

If the reactionary roll is unsuccessful, the Mizu-do artist has been unable to grasp their attacker, and the attacker receives a free raise on their attack this round. A Mizu-do practitioner may not perform any of the maneuvers against someone who is not physically attacking them this round - Mizu-do is a purely defensive art.



WHAT THE OTHER CLANS THINK OF THE CRANE

The truth about a man is not nearly as powerful as what others believe to be the truth.

— Bayushi Shoji

The other Clans of Rokugan think many different things of the Crane and their Iaijutsu masters, based on past events and observations. Some, none, or all of their opinions may be true, but here's a sample of the attitudes a Crane may encounter while journeying in Rokugan. It's important to know how you are seen, so that you can use your enemy's misconceptions to mislead him. As Daidoji Uji tells his students, "So long as the other clans think we are powerless, we have no need to show them the nature of true power."

Crab: The Crane are not willing to sacrifice themselves against the Shadowlands, but if you question their honor, they enter a duel and throw away their lives like trash. What does that say about their values? The day will come when their honor cannot save them, and we will see the true nature of their hearts.

Dragon: It is in men's natures to fight amongst themselves for glittering gold and riches, but it is the balance of honor that allows us to call ourselves civilized.

The Crane rely on the weaknesses of others and forget their own strengths.

the blow, the practitioner must successfully make a Reflexes + Mizu-do versus the opponent's Kenjutsu/ Bojutsu x 5. If successful, the opponent's strike misses, and they may make no further attacks this round.

CATCH THE SHADOW

A common tactic of Mizu-do practitioners is to escape other hand-to-hand grappling attempts. This technique is commonly called a feint; a movement designed to avoid the attacker's strike, unlike a block or parrying maneuver. Although difficult, a successful feint can be done with practice and sharp reflexes. If another person attempts to grapple with a practitioner of Mizu-do who is aware of the attempt, the Mizu-do artist may make a contested Reflexes roll to avoid the grappling attempt before the attacker makes their roll to hit.

DRAGON CLAW

Among the various joint locks which the Mizu-do student learns is this particularly incapacitating defense. It is a basic nerve hold, relying on the sensitive nerve positions on a person's body to cause them enough pain to prevent movement and further attacks.

Like all Mizu-do maneuvers, it requires a successful grappling attempt against an attacking opponent (Reflexes + Mizu-do versus their opponent's Agility x 5), but by using raises, the martial artist may further incapacitate the opponent by rendering non-lethal damage directly to the opponent's nerve centers. This damage is calculated by rolling a number of dice equal to the number of raises plus the Mizu-do practitioner's Strength trait, keeping a number of dice equal to the number of raises. This damage is non-lethal, and will vanish from the wound ranks of the damaged character ten minutes after the practitioner releases his grip. A character cannot be placed below "Out" from use of this technique. Because the nerves can only be accessed by pressing against the skin of the target, this technique cannot be performed if the opponent is wearing armor.

If the defensive maneuver is successful, the opponent is subdued unless they win a contested Agility roll against the Mizu-do practitioner's Agility in order to break away from the hold. A subdued opponent may only attempt to break free once.

THE FARTHER YOU FALL

Much of the success of Mizu-do as a defensive style is based on the throws which the school teaches. This particular throw is one of the more effective, engaging the opponent's own force to hurl them a sizable distance from the Mizu-do practitioner. As the opponent charges (attempts a strike), the character must make a successful reactionary grappling roll (Reflexes + Mizu-do versus their opponent's Agility) in order to grab them and redirect their movement. This is a "sacrifice throw", meaning the defending character must also drop to the ground, rolling onto their back and using their legs to elevate the attacker into the air, causing them to land a distance away. If their reactionary grapple is unsuccessful, the attack continues as normal. If the Mizu-do technique is successful, the thrown character must make an Agility + Hand-to-hand (or Athletics) roll versus 20 + each raise the Mizu-do practitioner added to their original TN. If the thrown character fails, the Mizu-do practitioner inflicts 0k1, plus one die of damage from the fall.

The distance of the throw is based on the Strength of the Mizu-do practitioner x 3 in feet. Any damage taken by the attacker is due to their rough landing, and results in a stun lasting for 1 die of turns minus their Earth. Both characters spend the end of the turn regaining their footing. Remember: the TN to hit an immobile or prone character is 5.

FLIGHT OF DRAGONS

This throw is designed to shift the opponent's body into a position where they will trip over their own momentum. The Mizu-do practitioner must make a reactionary grappling roll (Agility + Mizu-do versus their opponent's Agility x 5). If successful, the thrown character must make an Agility + Hand-to-Hand (or Athletics) roll at a TN of 20, plus one raise for each raise the thrower made. If the thrown character fails, they lurch to a deadfall at the defender's feet, and take an amount of damage equal to the original attacker's (Strength)k1 plus one die of damage from the fall.

HAMMER OF EARTH

This throw is one of the more dangerous, but has the greatest chance of defeating the character's opponent in one maneuver. As the attacker charges, the character makes a reactionary grappling roll (Agility + Mizu-do

versus their opponent's Agility x 5) in order to grip the attacker, then leans back until both the attacker and the Mizu-do practitioner fall. Ideally this will cause the opponent to land on the crown of their head. The original attacker must make a simple Earth roll against a TN of 20 or lose consciousness. Both attacker and Mizu-do practitioner will take damage from this technique. The Mizu-do practitioner will inflict 1k1 to his opponent as usual, and will take 1k1 damage, without adding his own strength to the attack.

THUMB WRENCH

This painful and suppressive hold is one of the most effective joint locks in the Mizu-do school. Using an opponent's own strength to force them into motionlessness, the practitioner of Mizu-do can hold the strongest bushi still with a minimum of effort. As the attacker strikes the defender, the defender must make a reactionary roll to grapple and disarm their attacker. This roll is the customary grappling roll (Agility + Mizu-do versus their opponent's Agility x 5) and an additional roll of (Agility + Mizu-do versus their opponent's School Rank x 5) in order to disarm them - if they have a weapon. Once this is accomplished, the practitioner of Mizu-do has gripped the opponent's thumb and used it to wrench their arm behind their back, into a painful and debilitating lock. If their opponent wishes to break the hold or struggle against it in any way, they may do so by rolling a contested Strength roll against the holder's Agility. Whether this attempt is successful or not, the person in the hold will take an amount of damage to their arm equal to their own (Strength)k(Strength).

New Spells

Asahina spells tend to be peaceful and defensive. This is not to imply that the Asahina are weaklings, but rather reflects the ideals of the original founders of the school, Isawa Asahina and his brothers and sisters. The Crane shugenja school is still closely associated with their cousins in the Phoenix lands, and they often share spell ideas and formulae. The spells and *nemuranai* you find here, however, have been created by past masters of the Asahina school, and are rarely if ever shared outside of its walls.

GUST OF WIND

Base TN: 10

Element: Air

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 8 Actions

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Casting time, duration, force of wind, deflection

Effect: This spell manipulates the air around the recipient, deflecting physical missile attacks or even (with a raise) turning them back on attackers. Anyone trying to hit someone protected by this spell with any sort of projectile must roll to hit with their TN increased by 10 (+10 per raise). If the deflection raise is used, any shots that miss are redirected against whomever fired them, using the shugenja's Air rank. A raise used for duration will extend the spell another 4 actions.

BINDING

Base TN: 20

Element: Air

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 5 Actions

Mastery: 7

Concentration: Focused

Raises: Duration, casting time, area of effect

Effect: This spell slows time within a limited area. Anyone within 10' of the target point of the spell must roll against a TN equal to 5 times the shugenja's Air rank, using a number of dice equal to their Earth rank. If they succeed, the spell is broken and the shugenja must begin again. If the roll fails, the victim is reduced to half movement, half normal attacks, and suffers a penalty of 4 to their initiative. Anyone entering the area while the shugenja is still concentrating is automatically



WHAT THE OTHER CLANS THINK OF THE CRANE

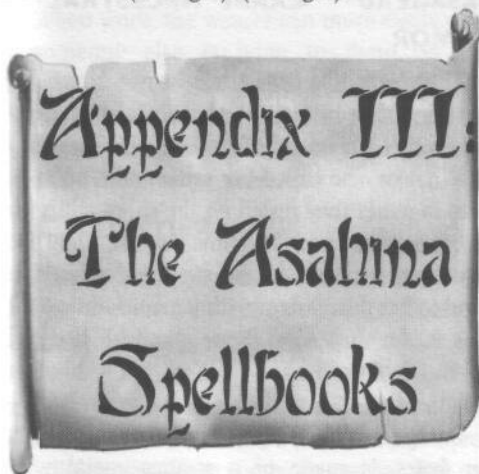
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Lion: The Crane hide behind their mountains of money in the same way the Dragons hide in their mountain keep. Their swordsmanship may be unequaled in a duel, but a battlefield is not the place for philosophy. It is the place for might.

Phoenix: The Crane are a clan admired not for their aptitude, but for their precision. Unlike the Scorpion, who strikes at any offending hand, the Crane have ways to be sure their enemy is removed while converting those who followed him. They are dangerous enemies, and valuable allies.

Scorpion: They are the clan most like us, but they have a public sting. Tear away their honor and they have nothing left with which to fight you. Their Iaijutsu Masters are the power behind their fluttering fans. Never forget that if you know where the head of the snake lies, it cannot bite your hand.

Unicorn: When we returned to this land, the Crane alone welcomed us back. They have treated us as companions, not lost children or ignorant *gaijin*. While the other Great Clans united against our return, the Crane aided us in proving our heritage. They took a risk in welcoming us back to our homeland, and so we will repay them by standing at their side.





affected. The duration is extended by 5 actions per raise. The area of effect is increased by a 5' radius per raise.

AWAKEN THE SPIRIT

Base TN: 5-20 (GM's discretion)

Element: Air

Casting Time: 4 Actions

Duration: 1 Hour

Mastery: 6

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting time, duration, potency of spirit (once only)

Effect: This spell temporarily rouses the spirit of an item, making it better at whatever it is used for. If the item is a weapon, then the wielder rolls an extra die when rolling to hit or damage (choose one before casting). If the item is used to perform a skill, the user may roll an extra die. A single raise may be used to add another die. This spell may not be used on *nemuranai* because their spirits have already been fully awakened.

Nemuranai

The following are some of the more well known magic items which the Crane have created. With the exception of the "merchant coins," they are all still in the possession of the Crane Clan, and kept in the Asahina temples until someone suited to carry them is found. The Crane Clan has the ability, through their shugenjas' potent knowledge of *nemuranai*, to create more, and it is likely that there are many more artifacts unknown to all but a few Crane.

SHUKUJO - CRANE ANCESTRAL SWORD

One of the greatest of Crane Clan *nemuranai* is the ancestral sword, carried into the Shadowlands by Doji Konishiko, daughter of the Lady Doji. The Crane Clan ancestral sword is unique among all the *nemuranai* of Rokugan, because it contains within it two completely sentient human souls. Within the blade rest the souls of the Crane Clan Thunder, Konishiko, and her brother Yasurugi. These souls are so ancient and have been one with the blade for so long that they no longer communicate with their wielder - if in fact they ever did.

Shukujo announces its true wielder with a joyful ringing when their hand first draws the the

ancient sword from its *saya*. Upon grasping the sword, certain gifts and abilities are conferred to the wielder from the twin souls which reside within the ancient katana. The sword may only be drawn by a descendant of Lady Doji and the original Kakita - only by a Kakita, Doji or Daidoji. No one else can draw the katana from its sheath without losing their mind to the fury of the powers within the steel.

Bushi wielding the blade may call upon a number of school ranks in the Doji Courtier school equal to their own School Rank. If the wielder is a Courtier or Artisan, they receive a number of School Ranks of the Kakita Iaijutsu school equal to their rank in Courtier. These additional ranks may only be used while the sword is in their direct possession. Therefore, a third rank Doji Courtier could use the first, second or third rank abilities of the Kakita Bushi School as described in the *Legend of the Five Rings RPG*. A second rank Kakita bushi who wields the sword may call upon the first and second ranks of the Doji Courtier as described earlier in this text.

Additionally, due to the blade's incredible keenness and balance, the wielder of this ancient blade always has the option to strike first in an Iaijutsu duel, no matter which side calls for the strike.

The son of the Crane Champion, Doji Hoturi, wields the blade of his ancestors at this time. It was given to him by his father, Doji Satsume, on the day Hoturi took command of the Doji armies and first joined the Council of the Crane as Doji daimyo.

SASAGERU - CRANE ANCESTRAL ARMOR

The Crane Clan ancestral armor has a long and venerable history, filled with tales of heroes and honor. The day before Lady Doji vanished into the sea, she called her great-grandson to her side. Together they rested on the shore and spoke of honor, duty and devotion. At last, Lady Doji rose from her seat on the sand and offered her hand to her descendant with a gentle smile. As he took it, the sun's light shone about his body and he found himself encased in glittering blue and white armor.

Sasageru, the last gift from the Lady Doji to her heirs, is made of a strange metal which gleams in the sunlight. Rather than a steel grey, the metal shines a pale blue, ribboned with faint

striations of a darker blue. The laces of the plates are white silk, finer than a lady's obi but as strong as metal wire. Enamelled upon the *do* (breastplate) is the outline of a Crane in flight, its wings outstretched upon the wearer's breast. The armor retains no scratch, nor does any blow dent its surface. It seems to be indestructible and remains untarnished even after the passage of hundreds of years.

The Crane Clan armor adds 1 to its wearer's Honor Rank, allowing a maximum Honor Rank of 6 rather than 5. Further, Sasageru allows its user to substitute their Honor for any Trait or Ring. Thus, the current possessor of the Crane Clan armor, Doji Satsume, would have a total Honor of 6 rather than 5 as long as he wears his armor, and he may choose to have an Air, Perception, etc. of 6 as well.

The Five Asahina Nemuranai

The following five items were given to the Crane Clan by Isawa Asahina upon his marriage to Doji Kiriko in the year 353. They have been kept by the Crane, treasured among the most precious items of the Asahina, and are rarely allowed outside of the temple. The only one not currently in their care is the Courtier's Obi, which is held by Kakita Yoshi, Imperial Advisor to the Emperor of Rokugan.

MEMPO OF PURE THOUGHT

(Presented to the Doji family)

When worn, the wearer can more easily detect if someone else is lying to them. In such circumstances, add a number of dice equal to the wearer's Honor rank to both dice rolled and kept during any contested rolls to determine if another person is lying to the wearer.

THE COURTIER'S OBI

(The second gift presented to the Doji)

This is a sky blue obi made of the finest silk. At one end, sewn in white linen, is the Crane mon. At the opposite end is the Doji mon. When tied properly, both mons are visible. The wearer gains a confidence unparalleled in matters of etiquette and diplomacy. When conducting social skill rolls, the wearer may reroll any die equal to or lower than the appropriate skill ranking.

Example: Doji Tetsu has a Void of 2 and a Tea Ceremony of 3. If he were wearing the Courtier's Obi during the tea ceremony, he would roll 5k2, rerolling a single time any die that comes up 3 or less (his Tea Ceremony level).

THE STANDARD OF THE IRON CRANE

(Presented to the Daidoji)

This majestic standard was made to embody the elegance of the Crane Clan while at the same time being a symbol of their military might. The standard itself is eight feet tall and two feet wide. It is sky blue and bears the *mon* of the Crane Clan



and the Daidoji family. It also bears the symbols of Bishamon, the Fortune of Strength, and Fukurokujin, the Fortune of Wisdom. Unlike other Crane standards, the *mon* and script are not presented in white, but in a gleaming steel grey. It is said that Daidoji Yuzan's army carried this banner when they captured Shiro no Yujin from Lion forces. When borne into combat, the bearer's army will become more inspired. Whenever the large scale combat system is used, this army gets a +2 to any roll on the chart. If the army is currently outnumbered more than two to one, all rolls by this army are at a +4 bonus.



ON THE CREATION OF FETISHES AND OTHER NEMURANAI

The Asahina shugenja are the finest makers of magical items in all of Rokugan. Their mastery over the *kami* of items is unmatched, even by the Phoenix in their high mountains. But how are those items created, and more importantly, how can a character make one?

First, the player must come up with an idea for the fetish or item, and discuss it with their GM. Once it has been approved, the Gamemaster will assign the items - and people in attendance - which will be needed for its proper creation. If the player's shugenja wishes to alter any of these needed components, the Gamemaster may assign a higher Target Number for the item's creation. Then, the shugenja must gather the items, convince the people to attend, and make a successful Intelligence + Astrology roll at a TN of 15. Once this is done, the Asahina shugenja will know the proper time of day to perform the ritual.

(continued)



ON THE CREATION OF FETISHES AND OTHER NEMURANAI

(CONTINUED)

When the time arrives and the items are gathered, the shugenja begins a ritual to invoke the spirit of the item. If the item is a minor, one-use fetish, this ritual may only take an hour. If it is a world-class magic item, it may take weeks of unrelenting ritual and fasting. When this is done, the shugenja must make a Tsangusuri + Fire roll, keeping a number of dice equal to their skill. A minor fetish will usually have a TN of 15, with other, more permanent, items becoming progressively more difficult.

For example, an Asahina player wishes to make the fetish known as the White Sheaf of Grain. It is a one-use fetish, and not particularly powerful. After researching the necessary components in the Asahina Scrolls, the character gathers a sheaf of white grain, two feathers of a dove, and a beautifully carved jade figurine in the shape of a cow. After a successful astrology roll, the player knows the proper time for the creation of this fetish is sunset. He asks his bushi companion, to join him, as the bushi was born in the year of the dog, and the Gamemaster has told the shugenja that this astrology roll has indicated this would be very favorable.

THE MERCHANT COINS

(Presented to the Yasuki family, who at the time were still part of the Crane Clan)

The Yasuki family was presented a crimson pouch containing 24 golden coins. Each coin is the size of a standard koku, although they gleam more brightly, and seem to feel slightly heavier. On the back of the coin is the standard "koku" symbol, but the face of each coin bears one of the twelve creatures which represent the hours of the Rokugani day. In the original set, there were two of each creature (Hare, Dragon, Serpent, Horse, Goat, Monkey, Rooster, Dog, Boar, Rat, Ox and Tiger). Anyone who bears one of these coins into trade or economic negotiations during the appropriate hour of the day will receive great luck in their dealings. When making a simple or contested roll pertaining to business, commerce, trading or other profitable negotiations, the keeper of the coin may add a bonus 2k2 to their roll. If the character is also in possession (on their person) of any of the other coins, each one adds an additional die to roll (but not keep) for the negotiation. Alternately, the player may choose to waive the bonuses during the appropriate hour of the coin in order to reroll the skill roll as if he had the Advantage: Luck (whether the first roll failed or not).

Many of these coins were supposedly destroyed during the great Daidoji-Yasuki economic wars. The Doji house still has one full set of the coins, given to them when the Yasuki left the Crane Clan (stolen, the Yasuki maintain, by Daidoji Heuji, the son of the Daidoji daimyo at the time). The second set's whereabouts are unknown, although Yasuki Taka is reported to have at least two of them (and observant traders will note that Taka prefers to do business just after lunch or just after sunset; the hours of the Goat and the Dog).

"HEAVEN AND EARTH"

(Presented to the Kakita)

The gift to the Kakita family was an intricately made *daisho*, with chips of obsidian and jade blended into the forged metal. The handles of these swords are wrapped with sky blue leather, covered in fine white stitching. Each of the *tsuba* are forged of *shakudo*, a blend of copper and gold. On the *tsuba* are the Rokugani characters for "heaven" (on the katana) and "earth" (on the wakizashi).

"Heaven" is the name of the katana. Its blade is shaped from pure copper, shining in the light like a piece of the sun. The spirit of the blade embodies the higher aspirations of the soul and is more powerful for those who possess a sense of duty and loyalty. The bearer of the sword keeps a number of dice equal to his honor when attacking or defending (rather than, not added to, a katana's normal k2 rating.) This sword also gets a 1k1 bonus when being used in an *iaijutsu* duel.

"Earth" is the companion sword to "Heaven," and its spirit is more basic, less noble and far less idealistic. It embodies the essence of passing time, the fleeting traits of man, and will be erased by days passing across the face of the earth. The bearer of this sword rolls a number of dice equal to his Glory when using the weapon, and may keep these dice instead of the wakizashi's k2 rating if the bearer spends a Void Point at the beginning of the combat round.

Other Items

Many of the other items known to exist within the Crane lands may or may not be held at the Temple of the Asahina. Throughout the Crane's history, the Asahina have been given the responsibility to distribute their items to the worthy samurai of the Crane Clan. Although some of these items are in their care, others may be in the hands of various members of the Crane. It is certain, with the abilities of the Asahina to create rare and wonderful items, that more exist than are listed here. The Gamemaster should feel free to expand upon this list, creating items for their campaign that will give it even more depth and variety.

SERPENT'S TOOTH

(A magical *yari* crafted for and wielded by Daidoji Yurei)

The wielder of this magical *yari* may add his school rank to his initiative. If the wielder misses an attack, he may attack again by spending a Void Point, but the TN to hit is raised by 5. The *yari* is crafted from an unusual green wood, and when swung, its blade resonates with a strange hissing noise, like a snake. It is said that its blade hungers for the taste of Lion blood, and those who have carried it into battle have been driven by the need to slaughter any and all Matsu who stood against them.

WINDBLADE

The Windblade is a sword made of a strange silvery material as hard as steel. The blade of the weapon has strange markings which shift and change under the viewer's gaze, and its pommel is wrapped in the hide of some unknown beast. The Windblade is a weapon whose changing nature conforms itself to its wielder's temperament, reflecting the character of its owner. Those who face the Windblade cannot even see the weapon in its wielder's hands unless the opponent's Honor is equal to or greater than that of the wielder of the Windblade. In this case, all defenses save actual armor are negated.

Depending on the purity of the wielder, the Windblade can take many forms. If the wielder has an Honor of two or more, it appears as a large tanto. Three or more Honor gives the Windblade the appearance of a wakizashi, and at four the Windblade appears to be a katana. A wielder with five Honor gives the Windblade its most stunning appearance: that of a tremendous silver no-dachi. The weapon does a base damage of its current class (tanto, wakizashi, etc.) and adds to that amount (if applicable) a number of dice which are rolled and kept, equal to the difference between the wielder's Honor and their opponent's. If the opponent's Honor is greater than that of the wielder of the Windblade, they can see the weapon clearly, and no additional dice are gained by the wielder of the Windblade.

BIWA OF KAKITA

This biwa was made for Lady Doji, carved out of a piece of driftwood from which Kakita brought "life from the dead". It is a deceptively simple-looking instrument, its shining wood glowing from generations of care and attention. Only an Artisan Master is allowed to play it, and even then only on ceremonial occasions.

The biwa adds 3k3 to any artisan's music-related skill roll; the artisan who owns it has their Honor increased by one point.

DOJI'S FAN

This small, fragile, sandalwood fan bears the personal mon of Lady Doji, and a single hair (either Doji's or Shinjo's) which was caught in the blades of the fan. Doji is said to have given it to Lady Shinjo before her sister left for the Land of the Burning Sands, and it was returned to Doji Ryobu when the Unicorn reentered the Imperial court for the first time. The fan itself is kept in an intricate jade box tied with a purple ribbon and bearing the mon of the Unicorn.

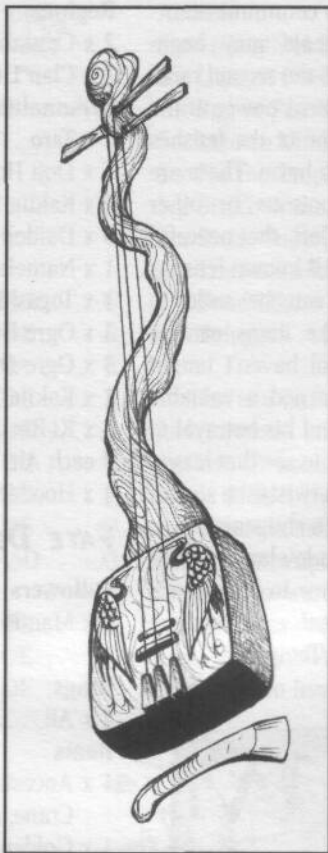
A Courtier who owns this fan gains one School Rank, and all courtly interactions with Unicorn are raised by two dice (persuasions, sincerity, etiquette, etc.).

Common Fetishes

All fetishes are single-use items, and are destroyed in their initial use. Unless otherwise specified, the user is also the person who receives the benefit of that fetish. Most fetishes are small, capable of being held easily in one hand or a small pouch. Unless otherwise

stated, all fetishes are good until used, and are not perishable even if made of vegetable matter. These are not the only examples of fetishes; you can be sure the Asahina shugenja are creating new and unique items all the time. Your Gamemaster has the final say on what is appropriate. To create any of the fetishes below, the shugenja must be in a hallowed site (a temple or library); have the appropriate materials, all of the finest quality, and spend three days of undisturbed meditation and ritual to complete the item. Creating a fetish is a simple roll, using the character's Tsangusuri + Fire, keeping his skill, against a TN of 15.

More complex or more powerful items may require a higher TN and more time spent to create them. Items of "true power", or more



ON THE CREATION OF FETISHES AND OTHER NEMURANAI

(CONTINUED)

After an hour of meditation and ritual, the player rolls his Tsangusuri + Fire, keeping his skill. He makes it successfully. The items used to make the fetish are destroyed, and the spirit of the sheaf of grain has been awakened into the White Sheaf of Grain.

In another example, the same player decides to create an item similar to the Scorpion Clan Ancestral Sword. After completing her Astrology, she finds that she must perform the ritual beginning at sunrise on the twelfth day of the dragon, and that she must forge 12 swords of the finest steel, quenched in the gathered poison of a hundred scorpions. Further, she must have ready three rubies the size of hen's eggs, and a hair of the original Bayushi. When all of that is prepared, the character must ask Bayushi Kachiko, Doji Yosai, Shiba Ujimitsu and the Ronin known as Dairya, and convince them to gather on the Asahina Plains for a week of fasting so that the item can be completed. Once the guests are assembled and the ritual completed (without interruptions, or everything must start again) the shugenja must make a skill roll at a target number of 40. Good luck!



COMMON FETISHES

Incense of Concentration

With fifteen minutes of meditation, user (must be a shugenja) regains 2 spent Void Points.

Brooch of Plenty

Nourishes the user fully for one day.

Jade Amulet

Adds 2k2 to resist Shadowlands Taint.

Makeup Kit

Roll one extra die for any disguise/ impersonation roll.

Bone Key

Opens one door, be it locked or magically sealed; although any physical traps are negated, any magical ones are triggered.

Feather of the Crane

Lowers the wielder's weight to 1/10 normal for up to one hour. While in this state, the wielder takes 3 times normal damage from physical attacks.

Acorn of Visions

This magical nut, when eaten, renders the user comatose for one hour, during which time he will receive visions about the subject meditated upon immediately before eating. At times, this fetish can be used as a type of augury to attempt to divine a course of action, or as a semi-reliable form of scrying upon another person.

permanent items, almost always require more than one shugenja, must be created on a day in which the stars are properly aligned (Intelligence + Astrology roll at TN 15), and demand greater expense and skill. Even then, the spirit of the item may not be exactly as was envisioned. Spirits are alive, and they have personalities, likes and dislikes, and character habits exactly as we do, even if they are too primitive to communicate.

Typically, an Asahina shugenja may begin making fetishes when they reach the second rank, and may create items of permanent power at the fourth rank. You will notice none of the fetishes listed here are intended to cause harm. There are no weapons, no explosives, poisons or other violent items. The fetishes reflect the peaceful doctrine of the Asahina family. All known fetishes are non-offensive, and none can be used to directly injure others. If warlike items can be made, the Masters at the school haven't taught anyone the methods - they learned a valuable lesson from Asahina Yajinden and his betrayal to Iuchiban, and they aren't willing to see that lesson repeated. Creating warlike items twists the soul of the creator, eventually changing a shugenja into a spirit of evil, a servant of the Shadowlands and its Dark Lord. The knowledge of how to create such fetishes, if it exists, is hidden... somewhere within the walls of the Asahina Temple.



"The Divine Wind"

Deck design by Ree Soesbee

DYNASTY DECK: 41 CARDS

Events

Chrysanthemum Festival OER

Imperial Gift OER
Inheritance OER

Holdings

2 x Fantastic Gardens OEU
3 x Jade Works OEC
3 x Gambling House SLC
3 x Merchant Caravan AoDC
3 x Market Place OEC

Regions

2 x Crossroads FKC
1 x Clan Heartland C&JR

Personalities

1 x Taro C&JC
1 x Doji Hoturi SLR
3 x Kakita Shijin AoDC
3 x Daidoji Sembi AoDC
1 x Nameless One SLU
1 x Togashi Hoshi OER
3 x Ogre Bushi OEU
3 x Ogre Outlaw C&JU
1 x Kakita Toshimoko OER
1 x Ki-Rin OER
1 each Air, Water, Earth Dragons OEU
1 x Hooded Ronin SLR

FATE DECK: 44 CARDS

Followers

3 x Mantis Bushi FKR

Rings

1 x All OEU

Items

1 x Ancestral Swords
Crane, Lion Phoenix IEU
1 x Golden Obi AoDR
1 x Obsidian Hand SLR
1 x Imperial Standard AoDC

Actions

3 x Defend Your Honor SLC
2 x Iaijutsu Challenge OEC
1 x His Most Favored FKR
3 x Iaijutsu Duel OEC
1 x Entrapping Terrain OEC
3 x Arr. of the Em. Champion FKR
1 x Oath of Fealty OEC
3 x Block Supply Lines OEC
2 x Counterattack OEU
3 x Focus OER
1 x Egg of Pan Ku OER
3 x Geisha Assassin OER
1 x Emperor's Protection AoDU
3 x Poisoned Weapon OER

This is a Crane deck based on money, money, money. The most important cards in the deck are Kakita Shijin and the Gambling Houses. Make honor, make money, and keep the Ogres for defense. Get one out fast. Use the duelers to keep annoying personalities away, and the brute force for an unexpected counterattack.

"The Crane and the Mantis"

Deck Design by Bryan Settle

DYNASTY DECK: 38 CARDS

Events

Regions of Rokugan TotV ...U
 Imperial Gift OE ...R
 Doom of the Dark Lord IA ...R
 Chrysanthemum Festival OE ...R
 Inheritance OE ...R
 Emperor's Peace OE ...U
 Test of the Emerald Champion OE ...R
 Test of Stone OE ...U
 Strength of the Earth AoD ...U

Holding

3 x Port OE ...U
 3 x Market Place OE ...C
 3 x Jade Works OE ...C
 3 x Pearl Bed SL ...C
 3 x Pearl Divers OE ...C
 1 x Master Smith OE ...U

Regions

1 x Sunken City TotV ...R
 1 x Clan Heartland C&J ...R

Personalities

3 x Doji Kuwanan AoD ...U
 3 x Daidoji Uji OE ...C
 1 x Daidoji Uji (Exp.) .. C&J ...R
 3 x Doji Chomei C&J ...U
 1 x Yoritomo (Exp.) TotV ...R

FATE DECK: 43 CARDS

Followers

3 x Mantis Bushi FK ...R
 1 x Doji House Guard .. SL ...R
 1 x Shiryo no Asahina . TotV ...R
 1 x Shiryo no Yoritomo TotV ...R
 1 x Shiryo no Kakita ... C&J ...R

Rings

1 x All
 (Fire, Air, Earth, Void, Water) ... OE ...U

Items

1 x Ancestral Sword Crane IE ...R
 1 x Ancestral Weap. Mantis C&J ...R
 1 x Ancestral Stand. Crane OE ...R
 1 x Battle Stand. Mantis TotV ...R

Actions

3 x Strength of Purity OE ...U
 3 x Iaijutsu Duel OE ...C
 1 x Egg of Pan Ku OE ...R
 3 x Iaijutsu Challenge OE ...C
 3 x For the Empire TotV ...U
 3 x Strike Without Striking TotV ...U
 3 x Block Supply Lines OE ...C
 2 x Counterstrike OE ...U
 3 x Bend Like a Reed C&J ...C
 3 x Refugees AoD ...C

This is a fast deck, based on honor. The Mantis fuel Yoritomo, and Doji Chomei has his followers. Against an honor deck, it can attack. Against an attack deck, it can defend and win by honor - it's very versatile, and can perform well against a single player or multiple opponents. Use the high chi of the deck to ward off duels, and to initiate them against honor decks, or as defense against an attack deck. With the Ancestral Weapons of the Mantis, Yoritomo can have a chi that's through the roof!



COMMON FETISHES

(CONTINUED)

Tortoise Shell

Confers protection from all ranged attacks, for the duration of ten combat rounds.

White Sheaf of Grain

Heals 2d10 worth of damage to one person. The person does not have to be the user, but must be touched by the user as the sheaf is invoked.

Black Fan

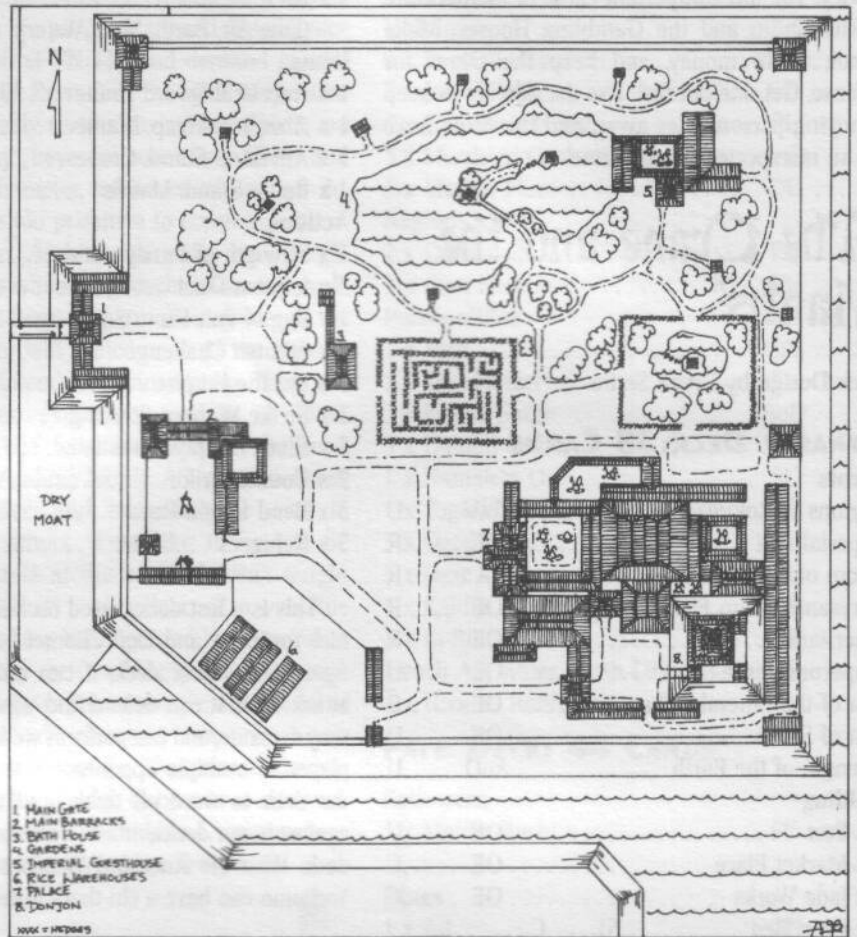
This fan, when used properly, instills a certain amount of awe and fear in those who behold the user. The user may roll 2d10 and add the result to their Glory (in boxes) for one hour. People listening to a speech or command given by the user of the Black Fan are struck with mild fear and respect. (One free raise toward any Oratory, Command, or Sincerity roll.)

KYUDEN

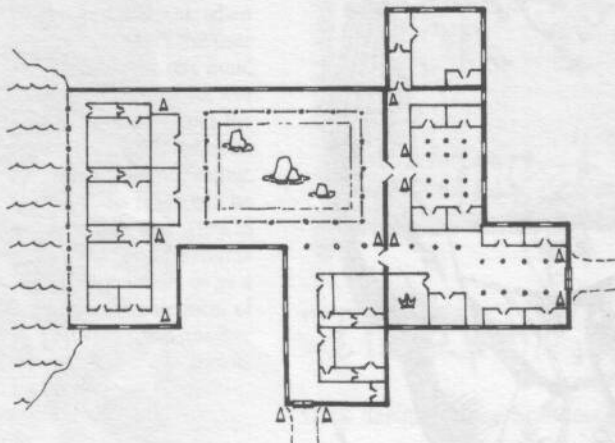


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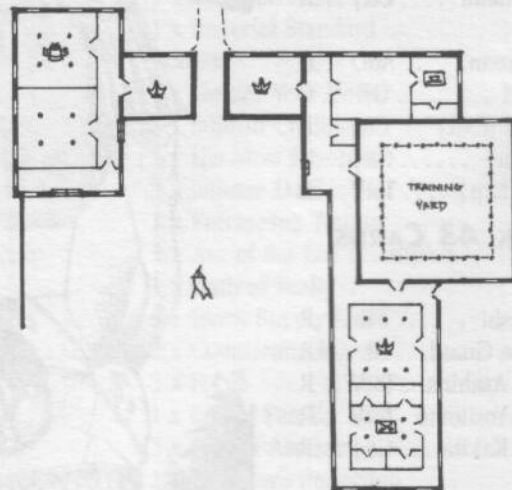
10'



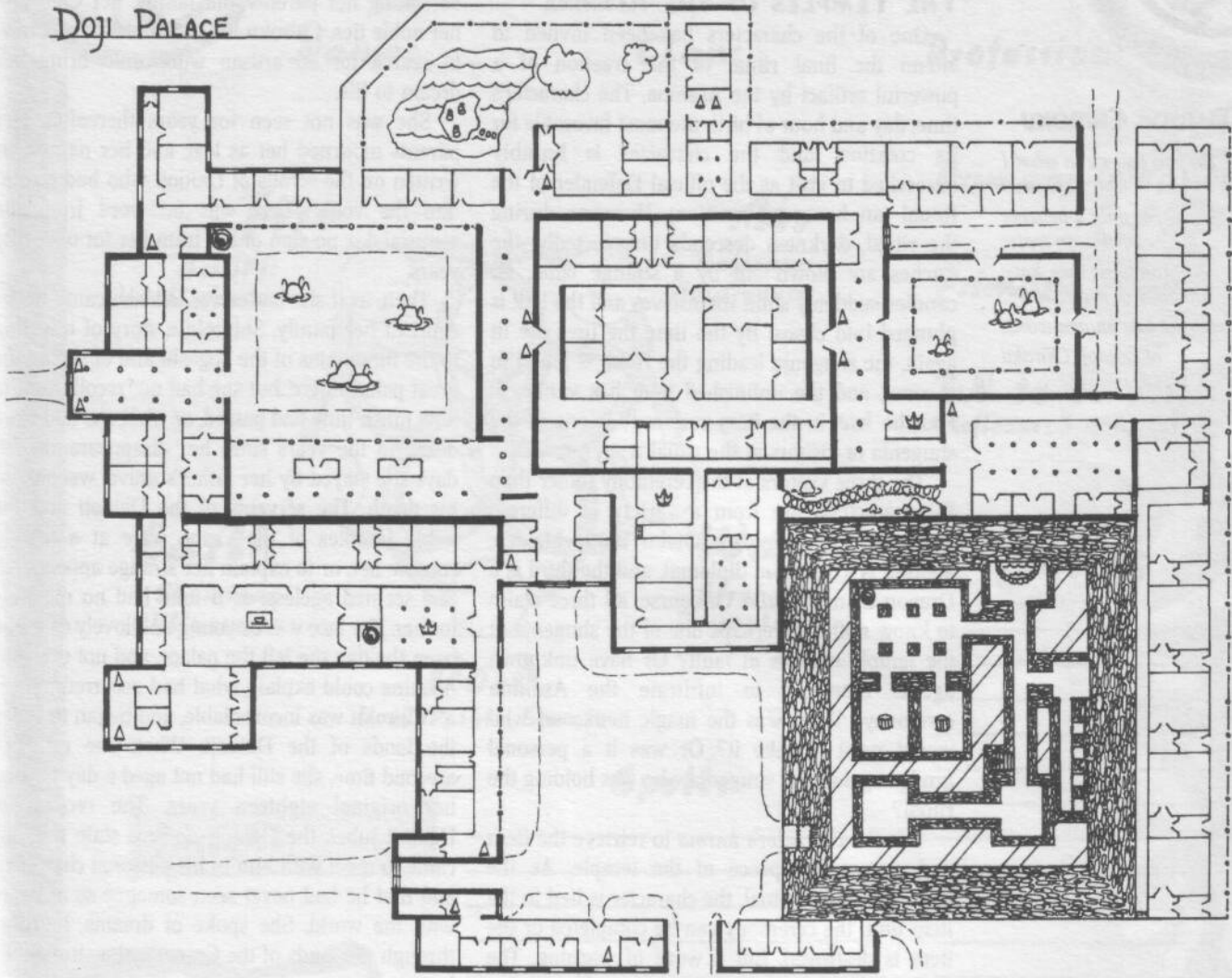
IMPERIAL GUESTHOUSE



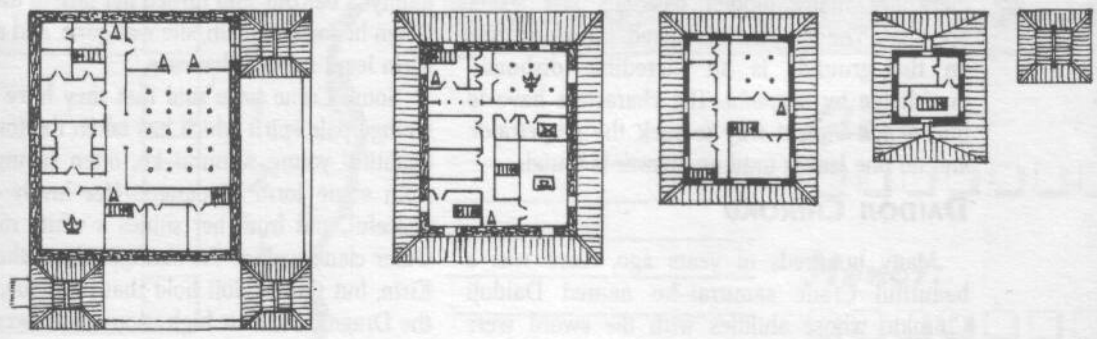
MAIN BARRACKS



Doji PALACE



DONJON





DAIDOJI CHIROKU

*Do you believe in what I
tell you?*

*For only a believer
walks on water*

*And great men have
drowned in these seas...*

*— the last known words
of Daidoji Chiroku*

Adventure Hooks

THE TEMPLES OF THE ASAHINA

One of the characters has been invited to attend the final ritual of the creation of a powerful artifact by the Asahina. The character's time, day and hour of birth are most favorable for its creation, and the character is humbly beseeched to visit as the official Defender of the Ritual (an honorary position). However, during the ritual, darkness descends unexpectedly; the torches are blown out by a strange wind, all candles suddenly snuff themselves and the hall is plunged into chaos! By the time the fires are lit again, the shugenja leading the ritual is found in a coma, and the unfinished item has vanished! Has the *kuei* in the item surfaced? Is one of the shugenja or visitors at the ritual a spy?

The three visitors at the ceremony (other than PC characters) are from a variety of different clans. One is a Unicorn Otaku Battle-Maiden, another is a Scorpion diplomat, and the third is a Dragon Clan *ise zumi*. Of course, all three claim to know nothing. Perhaps one of the shugenja at the temple itself is at fault? Or have unknown agents managed to infiltrate the Asahina ceremony? What was the magic item, and who would want to take it? Or was it a personal grudge against the shugenja who was holding the ritual?

It is the character's *karma* to retrieve the item and restore the peace of the temple. As the Defender of the Ritual, the character is tied to the item until the ceremony can be completed or the item is destroyed. But a word of warning. The Halls of the Asahina Temple are not always what they appear to be. Spirits of past Masters of the School are still watching over its inhabitants, and there are many hidden passages and secret openings. The temples are sacred: killing anyone on the grounds is an incredible dishonor, punishable by *seppuku*. The characters have to find a non-violent way to seek the perpetrator, and no one leaves until an answer is found.

DAIDOJI CHIROKU

Many hundreds of years ago, there was a beautiful Crane samurai-ko named Daidoji Chiroku, whose abilities with the sword were legendary in her time. She was the only daughter of the Daidoji daimyo, and her parents loved her well. One day, while she was meditating on the

sunrise at the edge of the sea, she was suddenly struck by a vision so profound that it cut to her heart and made her weep to think of its beauty. Forsaking her parents and family, her Clan and her noble ties, Chiroku left the lands of the Crane to search for an artisan who could bring her dream to life.

She was not seen for years thereafter. Her parents mourned her as lost, and her name was written on the scrolls of Daidoji who had passed into the void. There was no word from the samurai-ko, no sign of life from her for over fifty years.

Then, as if she had never left, she came to the court of her family. She told a story of traveling to the mountains of the Togashi and of seeing the great palace there, but she had no recollection of how much time had passed, or what she had been doing in the years since her disappearance. For days she stayed by her father's grave, weeping at his death. The servants of the Daidoji and the noble families of the Crane were at a loss to console her, or to explain her strange appearance. She seemed ageless, as if time had no meaning for her. Her face was as young and lovely as it had been the day she left the palace, and not even the Asahina could explain what had occurred.

Chiroku was inconsolable, and began to travel the lands of the Daidoji. When she returned a second time, she still had not aged a day beyond her original eighteen years. The records of Daidoji Jubei, the Daidoji *daimyo* state that she came to meet with him in his personal chambers, and that he had never seen someone so at peace with the world. She spoke of dreams, journeys through the lands of the Crane, and a strange old hermit woman she had spoken to in the far southern swamp. She spoke to him for many hours, and when she was done, she walked to the daimyo's balcony and turned her face to the wind. When he looked again, she was gone, and a Silver Kirin leapt into the heavens.

Some Crane have said that they have seen a strange pale spirit which has taken the form of a beautiful young samurai-ko, often saving them from some form of danger. Her lovely face is peaceful, and from her shines a white radiance. Other clans scoff at the strange tale of the Silver Kirin, but the Daidoji hold that it is true. As for the Dragons in their high mountain towers, they have never spoken a word about the tale, or of their part in its creation.



Legend of the Five Rings

Name: _____

Clan: _____

Profession: _____

Fire

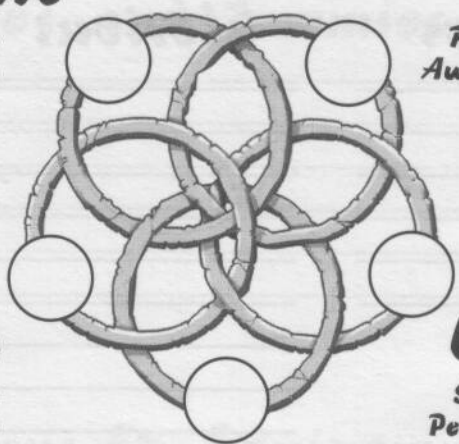
Agility:
Intelligence:

Air

Reflexes:
Awareness:

Primary Weapon

Primary Armor



TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

Earth

Stamina:
Willpower:

Water

Strength:
Perception:

Skills

Void

Void Points Spent: _____

Spells

Insight: _____

Wounds

_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	-0
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	-1
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	-2
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	-3
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	-4
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Down
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Out
_____	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dead

School: _____ **Rank:** _____

Glory:

Honor:

Experience Points:



Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Home Province:

Allies and Enemies

History and Glorious Deeds

Weapons & Equipment

Gifts, Bestowments and Recognitions

Surrounded by opulent
splendor, the Crane have
created a world of culture, beauty and
virtue. For ten centuries they have followed
the path of honor and loyalty to the Emerald
Throne. Discover the intricacies of Rokugan's
most noble Clan.

*The Way of the Crane*TM

- New Character Rules for Courtiers, Kakita Artisans, and the Iron Crane Daidoji
- Secret treasures of the Asahina Shugenja, and rules for the creation of magic items
 - Excerpts from *The Sword*, Kakita's ancient treatise on kenjutsu and the Way of the Sword Master
 - New Skills, Techniques, Advantages and Disadvantages, and Crane Ancestors
 - The Road of the Sea King, the Windblade and the mysterious Temples of the Asahina family
 - *Mizu-do*, the unarmed combat style of the Crane



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