

ADVENTURES
ORIENTAL



SECRETS OF THE MANTIS™



*Legend of the
Five Rings™*

SECRETS OF THE MANTIS™

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SPECIAL THANKS: JED CARLETON WRITES: THANKS TO MY PARENTS
FOR RAISING ME, MY MENTORS FOR TEACHING ME TO WRITE AND MY FRIENDS
FOR KEEPING ME SANE.

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CHASING THE STORM PART ONE

Miya Hatori stood on the docks and watched the Mantis peasants unload his small cargo of luggage. Hatori had never made it a point to travel in any sort of luxury, though his station arguably demanded it. The vessel that had taken them from White Stag was comfortable enough, he supposed. He had never had the "pleasure" of taking a sea journey before, and was not in a hurry to attempt another. His shugenja companion was collecting himself nearby as his body attempted to reacustom itself with solid ground.

"I had always wondered what made the Mantis so... terse," Fuzake Sekkou said brightly, absently flicking a bug off the sleeve of his kimono. "I suppose if I had to get in one of those kobune to get anywhere, I'd be a little cranky myself." The shugenja never let his cheerful expression waver as several Mantis honor guardsmen looked on icily.

The diminutive Otomo Taneji approached the two men. "Everything appears to have withstood the journey, my lord," he said to Hatori with a formal bow. "Although I am inclined to believe that was more good fortune than anything else," the Otomo added quietly, leaning forward so only Hatori and Sekkou could hear. "That boat is little more than a well-painted junk, Hatori-sama. You should be insulted the Mantis would allow a man of your position to travel in such a... thing."

"Oh?" Hatori arched an eyebrow at the young courtier. "Just what would you know of sea travel, Taneji-san?" he asked with genuine interest.

"My grandfather served Yoritomo during the Clan War," Taneji replied with barely concealed pride. "Grandfather Mokihara saved the life of an influential Otomo lord, my great-grandfather Otomo Daimesu. Daimesu-sama gave Mokihara-sama his daughter's hand in marriage, and the end result stands before you today." The Otomo's eyes glittered with unusual humor. "My father honors the path of the Otomo, but knows the strength of the Mantis. He insisted I learned the ways of the sea to honor grandfather Mokihara's spirit."

Hatori nodded thoughtfully as he turned to look toward the imposing Kyuden Gotei on the horizon. Fuzake Sekkou smirked and eyed Taneji. "It would appear Hatori-sama is not the only one with a surprising past," the Monkey said good-naturedly. "I never imagined Taneji had pirate blood."

Taneji raised an eyebrow at Sekkou.

"That is an excellent point, Sekkou-san," the Miya said, interrupting before Taneji could take offense. "The Mantis have carved their way to greatness through luck, perseverance, and mostly unyielding ambition. I do not mean to offend you, Taneji, but it would not surprise me if your grandfather's glorious rise wasn't as accidental as you make it seem."

"I never meant to imply it was," Taneji said frankly. "Mokihara knew the bandits who kidnapped my great-grandfather. Daimesu-sama simply made him a better offer." Taneji smiled.

"Exactly my point, Taneji. Many have underestimated the Clan of the Mantis in the past. And look where they are today," the shisha said, waving his hand to indicate the rich island before them, studded with small but opulent palaces.

"Do you refer to those who opposed the Mantis, my lord?" Sekkou asked, looking about. "I do not understand what you mean. I only see the holdings of the Mantis and nothing else."

Hatori and Taneji shared a knowing look and the Miya said simply, "Precisely, Sekkou-san. Keep your eyes open, both of you. I suspect this shall be an interesting journey." With that, the three men began their slow journey to the heart of the Mantis lands.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Secrets of the Mantis™ is for players and GMs who are interested in adding depth to their visions of the Mantis Clan. Unlike *Way of the Minor Clans™*, which gave only a brief overview of the clans that would eventually become the Yoritomo, Tsuruchi, and Moshi families, this book gives finer detail to the different families, their organization, holdings, vassal families, and lesser-known schools, among other things.

Secrets of the Mantis is broken down into chapters as follows:

The Introduction deals with the recent history of the Mantis Clan, some customs that the clan embraces, and several new rules options for the honorable Mantis samurai.

Chapters One through Three each deal with an individual family of the Mantis Clan: the Yoritomo, Moshi, and Tsuruchi. Each chapter presents information on the holdings of the family, including several points of interest for each holding and adventure hooks for GMs; major NPCs within that family, descriptions of the vassal families that serve them; and new rules for characters from that family. Chapter Four explores the Badger Clan and Tortoise Clan, two important Minor Clan allies of the Mantis.

Chapter Five explores the secret hideout of Moshi Shanegon, Mantis pirate and secret Kolat Master. It contains all the information a GM needs to use Master Coin's Lair as the centerpiece of a campaign, or a player needs to have a background involving the Coin's smuggling ring.

Chapter Six details the darkest, most unpleasant truths about the Mantis. Every clan has some shame buried deep within its histories, and this chapter explores the tragedies and secrets that the Mantis hide from everyone, even themselves.

CUSTOMS OF THE MANTIS CLAN

BIRTH

Though they have always been a wealthy clan, the Mantis population has grown considerably since receiving Great Clan status. With the resources to support more people, the daimyo of the clan are making a concerted effort to increase their numbers.

The past generation of Mantis has been more numerous than any, thanks to this policy of encouragement. Mantis samurai are encouraged to find mates, outside the clan if necessary, and produce as many children as possible. Those who bear at least three children are automatically promoted to a higher position within the clan. Most Mantis generals can brag of at least seven children. The rare exceptions to this rule are Yoritomo Kitao and Yoritomo Kumiko: neither of the self-proclaimed Mantis Champions are currently married.

GEMPUKKU

As might be expected for such an eccentric clan, there is no unified Mantis gempukku ceremony. Each of the three Mantis families has had centuries to develop its own unique practices, and each conducts its ritual with no interference or judgment from the other families.

The gempukku of the Yoritomo, like those conducted at Dojo Raiden, requires the student to demonstrate knowledge of the myriad of skills a Mantis samurai may be called upon to utilize in service to the clan. Martial skills are of utmost importance, of course, and the family continues to train almost exclusively in the use of the peasant weapons that their fighting style demands. Yoritomo samurai are also expected to be able to conduct basic commerce, as many of their number are involved in the mercantile interests of the clan. Sailing skills are also necessary, and the ceremony sometimes tests stealth and other such disreputable activities.

The Moshi practice one of the most traditional gempukku ceremonies in the Empire. Prospective shugenja spend a great deal of time in meditation with the kami. This prayer vigil can be interrupted at any time by their sensei, who can request they cast at a moment's notice any spell they have been taught. Calligraphy and knowledge of the Tao of Shinsei are requirements, as is a command of basic theological and astrological precepts that the Moshi still teach even long after Amaterasu's death.

The gempukku ceremonies of the Tsuruchi are even more unconventional than those of the Yoritomo. The ceremonies begin with tests of athleticism and a mastery of kyujutsu. Perceptive abilities are tested as well; Tsuruchi are expected to be able to hunt by sound alone if necessary. The ceremony culminates with an exercise in tracking and investigation, for those skills are the livelihood of the family's prominent Wasp Bounty Hunters.

COURTSHIP

Mantis who reach the age of 22 without marrying must generally consult a matchmaker, who finds a suitable mate for the young man or woman. This typically provides incentive enough for young adults to choose their own spouses. More than a few Mantis marriages have formed for convenience and fear of the matchmaker.

Neither Yoritomo Kitao nor Yoritomo Kumiko have married or borne children, a fact that is not lost on the clan. While Kumiko's Taint is arguably an acceptable reason for those who know the truth, Kitao has shown no sign of even considering matrimony, and she has expressed disdain for the notion of motherhood. Kumiko's supporters use this as fuel for the fight against Kitao. (See Chapter One for more information about Kitao, Kumiko, and the schism in the clan.)

SUPERSTITION

As a family whose livelihood depends upon the whims of the sea, the Yoritomo are perhaps the most superstitious family in Rokugan. The Moshi likewise have a variety of superstitions and folk magic remedies that once called upon Amaterasu, and have been adapted to honor Lord Sun. Of all the Mantis families, only the Tsuruchi disdain superstition. The former Wasp are far too pragmatic and focused on the physical world to spend much time worrying over upset spirits.

Yoritomo sailors believe that rice tossed into the ocean helps ward off dark forces that prowl the seas. Any sailor who leaves harbor without first praying to Suitengu, the Fortune of

the seas, will never return. Further, the Yoritomo have countless superstitions that relate to calling upon the blessings of Osano-Wo. Every sailor knows at least a handful, and they vary from ship to ship. As one Yoritomo shugenja observed, "The pirates of Umi Yakamo have as many methods of calling upon the Thunderer as grains of sand lay at the bottom of the sea." One universal superstition is that any item struck by lightning is terribly lucky. Any sailor who carries a piece of wood struck by lightning will never be struck himself, for Osano-Wo never chooses the same target twice.

Unsurprisingly, most Moshi superstitions relate to the sun. The Moshi refuse to conduct any gempukku, wedding, seppuku, or other important ceremony outside of direct sunlight, where the Sun can bless it. If Lord Sun does not witness an event, that event was in vain.

Many Tsuruchi have a lucky arrow or lucky bow that they favor, but other than that they are rarely superstitious. As an interesting note, nearly all Tsuruchi (even those who turn their back on the Wasp Code) have an aversion to scorpions, and kill the arachnids whenever they see them.

THREE FAMILIES, ONE CLAN

Though the Mantis became a Great Clan at the end of the Clan Wars, it was not until the Wasp and Centipede clans swore fealty that they truly gained the a Great Clan's power. Both the Wasp and Centipede were relatively small clans, so many samurai of the much larger Yoritomo family joined the Tsuruchi and Moshi through fealty or marriage. As much as the Yoritomo value their heritage, many low-ranking Yoritomo saw opportunity in becoming a high-ranking member of a different family. Because of this, the Moshi and Tsuruchi are several times larger now than they ever were as independent clans. The Tsuruchi family has nearly doubled in size and the Moshi outnumber the former Centipede by three to one.

Though many members of these families are now former Yoritomo or the children of former Yoritomo, they have endeavored to maintain the culture and traditions of their new families. New Tsuruchi have set aside their daisho for the yumi, and new Moshi have taken to calling Moshi Jukio "Grandmother." Despite this smooth adoption on an individual level, the Mantis families have a number of cultural dissimilarities. The Moshi adhere strictly to their religious traditions, the Tsuruchi reject the trappings of the Celestial Order, and the Yoritomo walk a middle ground between the two extremes. An illustrative example is the various families' attitudes towards bushido. The Tsuruchi consider bushido a noble but unworkable philosophy, and have developed an alternate code of their own. The Moshi adhere to the code of the samurai very closely. The Yoritomo have a flexible interpretation of bushido, often at variance with other samurai.

How this variation in practice will resolve itself is unclear, as only the Moshi show any signs of adapting themselves to their new status. The families seem to be adjusting to their differences with remarkable diplomacy, with the flexible Yoritomo serving to bridge the gap between the traditional Moshi and unorthodox Tsuruchi.

THE WASP CODE

Written by Tsuruchi himself, the Code has passed to the Tsuruchi family as a substitute for bushido. As the family eschews most samurai traditions but retains a strong ethical core, the need for a guide to proper behavior was apparent.

The Code is new, though Tsuruchi Hakobe, sensei of Kyuden Ashinagabachi, has written a treatise on the matter modeled after Akodo One-Eye's famed *Leadership*. The new generation of Tsuruchi has adopted the Wasp Code with mixed feelings. Though most Tsuruchi are fiercely loyal to the Way of the Wasp, a handful have pointed out inconsistencies in Tsuruchi's philosophy and wondered aloud whether the Wasp Code is truly better than the path of bushido.

Honesty: Lies have nearly damned the Wasp before, and never again. Those who call themselves 'samurai' will go back on their word and mask the truth with a pretty face, but a Wasp knows the price that is always paid for such things. (Some younger Tsuruchi see this virtue as hypocritical. While the Tsuruchi disdain the traditions of samurai society, they still enjoy the wealth, power, and status of samurai. This idea has sparked much debate within the family.)

Loyalty: No true Wasp will renege on a contract once taken, nor will he cheat the man who hires him. An oath, once taken, is sacred. Though a Wasp works for money, when a Wasp's loyalty is bought, it is as strong as a bond of fealty. (This is typically seen as the weakest part of the Wasp Code, for a Wasp will frequently abandon an employer who violates any of the other Wasp virtues.)

Mercy: There is no sense in killing those that do not deserve it. Such actions will simply bring the wrath of the just upon the Wasp. (Whether or not someone "deserves it" is interpreted through the virtues of the Wasp Code rather than traditional bushido.)

Justice: The Emperor's word is the supreme law of the Empire. A Wasp understands this fact, and works within the spirit of the law. Samurai will twist the words of the law to injustice. (This is another tenet that some among the new generation of Tsuruchi question. How can one obey the Emperor and yet not call oneself a samurai? This is the reason some Tsuruchi have set aside the Wasp Code and now follow bushido.)

Brotherhood: Every Wasp is your brother, sister, parent, and child. Such bonds are as strong as duty, for family is the most precious thing one can have. Wasp will not face their brothers in battle. (This is one tenet even the rebellious Tsuruchi cling to, preventing their dispute from escalating beyond the philosophical.)

Judgment: There will be times when the Code prevents the Wasp from doing the right thing. At those times, the Wasp must do what he feels is right, and answer for his actions later. The Wasp who understands judgment acts from his heart. Indecision is the greatest weakness, for from indecision, nothing at all can arise. (The new generation of Tsuruchi also question this virtue, as it seems to call into question the other virtues and negate the code altogether.)

WAR

War, while far from unknown to the Mantis, is not a practice readily embraced. More often than not in Rokugan, the Mantis observe, war is a wasteful pursuit that stems from some perceived loss of face or honor. The clan has not gone to war except during the rule of Yoritomo, who led them against several foes including the Shadowlands, the Lying Darkness, and the Phoenix Clan. The prevailing philosophy of the clan, however, is that war simply is not cost effective and should not be embarked upon without an exceptional reason.

This is not to say that the Mantis shy away from combat. For centuries, they have offered their services as mercenaries to those who wished to purchase their considerable skill. Individually or in groups, the Mantis have enriched their clan by selling their loyalty for short periods. During the Clan War, the entire clan fought on behalf of the Crane Clan simply because the Crane paid Yoritomo an exorbitant sum of money. It seems that while the Mantis are hesitant to war upon another clan, they do not mind hiring out their services.

This practice is perhaps the single most frequent criticism the Mantis face. How can a family of samurai lower themselves to work for money? It is an unthinkable act, yet one that the Mantis have seemingly embraced. It is an affront to bushido and an insult to the sensibilities of every honorable samurai.

In fact, the dishonor of this practice is borne by a limited number of Mantis. Commerce is not the way of a samurai, even a Mantis mercenary. Those who wish to hire mercenaries must make contact with a merchant patron sponsored by the Mantis Clan. Once payment has been arranged, these merchants inform their patrons of their current assignment. True Mantis samurai never make arrangements themselves, and become quite insulted if someone attempts to hire them directly (though they usually accept a sincere apology and refer the potential client to a proper merchant).

RETIREMENT

The Yoritomo rarely retire. The Brotherhood of Shinsei has few temples on the Isles of Silk and Spice, and thus the influence of the monasteries is very small. Those who do retire tend to enter the Order of Kaimetsu-uo, which often satisfies the new inkyo's taste for action and excitement. Few take up a life of contemplation — it's simply not the way of the Yoritomo family. The Tsuruchi tend to hold a more traditional view on retirement, though few live long enough for the privilege.

In one of the few ways that the Moshi differ from the Yoritomo still, the former Centipede have a conflicted view of retirement. On one hand, the family has obeyed the tradition of inkyo, unchanged since the days when they were Phoenix. On the other, since Moshi Jukio refuses to enter retirement, many reason that they should continue to serve the clan as she does. While Jukio has suggested for decades that her children should retire as is proper, her example leads far more than her words do — and she never presses the point.

FUNERALS

Most Yoritomo samurai are buried as they live — at sea. The body is placed in a ceremonial boat, which is set ablaze and pushed out to sea. The higher the rank of the deceased, the larger the ship that carries him to Yomi. After the funeral, the living are expected to move on with their lives. The dead

have already reached their reward, so those who wish to honor them may do so without the need for further ritual. Peasant burials are far simpler: the deceased's ashes are simply strewn across the sea.

The most notable Mantis funeral in recent decades was the funeral for Yoritomo himself, attended by every Mantis of importance and eight daimyo from other clans. A massive warship containing Yoritomo's body was cast out to sea on the waters of Umi Yakamo and set ablaze by a bolt of lightning. Though most present believed this to be a dramatic trick of the attending Yoritomo shugenja, in truth the bolt was cast by the hand of Osano-Wo himself, a sign of favor for the Thunderer's favored descendant.

The Moshi strictly follow traditional Mantis funerary procedures, with the added tenet that the dead must be honored under the light of the sun. The Yoritomo and Tsuruchi families do not follow those rites, though there is no resentment between the families about the specific manner of the funeral.

Tsuruchi funerals are drawn-out ritualized affairs in which the deeds of the dead are recounted at length. The deceased's bow is burned on the pyre with him, or passed on to a fellow Tsuruchi if that was his wish. Special humming bulb arrows are fired into the sky, creating a mournful sound that can be heard for miles around the ceremony. Invariably, Tsuruchi funerals conclude with lengthy drinking, dancing, and carousing as the friends and family of the dead mourn the passing of their fellow Tsuruchi and celebrate the life they still have.

HISTORY OF THE MANTIS CLAN

Mantis Clan Founded: circa year 80

The Crab Champion Hida Osano-Wo acknowledges his illegitimate son Kenzan as his heir instead of Kaimetsu-uo, his child by his lawful wife. Though Kaimetsu-uo bears his half-brother no ill will, he strikes out across the Empire to find his own destiny and eventually settles on the unclaimed Islands of Spice and Silk. A small army follows Osano-Wo's son to his destiny and proclaim themselves the Mantis Clan. The Mantis are not recognized as a Minor Clan, as the very notion of a "Minor Clan" has yet to be established.

Hida Osano-Wo murdered: year 97

Kaimetsu-uo receives word from his half-brother that an unknown party has assassinated their father, Hida Osano-Wo. Kenzan asks the Mantis Champion to avenge their father, as Osano-Wo would have not wanted Kenzan to abandon his post on the border of the Shadowlands to pursue the matter. Kaimetsu-uo tracks the murderer to the lands of the Phoenix, who unknowingly house the assassin of the Crab Champion. Unwilling to release their guest into the custody of the Mantis, the Phoenix command Kaimetsu-uo away from their borders, confident behind the walls of Shiro Shiba. The son of Osano-Wo cries to his father for vengeance, and lightning smashes open the castle gates. The Phoenix are convinced by this sign from the heavens and turn over the criminal. Soon afterward, the Isawa petition Hantei Genji to grant Osano-Wo the status of Fortune. The Shining Prince agrees, and Osano-Wo becomes the Fortune of Fire and Thunder.

Gusai family name awarded: year 429

The leader of the Mantis, Gusai, is invited to Otosan Uchi to visit the Emperor, who is greatly amused by Gusai's keen wit. To prove the point of the strength of steel over words, the Mantis lord draws a hidden blade and presses it to Hantei's flesh. The Emperor admits Gusai's argument is convincing, and in recognition of his victory awards his followers the official recognition as a Minor Clan and the family name "Gusai." However, the Emperor proves himself correct in the end, as he immediately terminates the new Mantis Champion's reign with an order of execution.

Expulsion of the gaijin from the Imperial Court: year 442

Few history scrolls record the fact that Gusai's heir, Gusai Mori, was the driving force behind the edict that begun the Battle of White Stag. In an alliance that has persevered to this day, Mori struck a bargain with a powerful gaijin family, the Cornejo. This family promises exclusive and covert trade with the Mantis in exchange for the destruction of their rivals — the family heavily funded and almost exclusively represented by the greater part of the foreign expedition. After consulting his aides, Mori agrees, prepares false charges to vilify the Cornejo's rivals, and denounces the gaijin before the Emperor's Court.

Mantis family name removed: year 510

Eager to avenge his grandfather Gusai, Gusai Rioshida attempts a coup by taking hostage the visiting son of the Emperor. The horrified Mantis Clan soon overcomes Rioshida's small band of loyalists. Rioshida and his men are killed and the prince is returned safely. Though the Emperor is grateful to the Mantis for not following their honorless Champion's commands, he cannot forgive the insult to the Hantei line and strikes the name Gusai from the historical records.

The Battle of Cresting Wave: year 716

The Mantis Champion Hotaka leads the bulk of his forces southward along the coast when the Crab send word to the Mantis of their fight against the Maw. In return for their assistance, the Crab Champion promises Hotaka the legendary Ono Osano-Wo carried into battle centuries ago. The Mantis lord swiftly agrees to the Crab's terms, though he is quick to point out his might would have been lent to their struggle even without such a great gift. Hotaka carries the Ono of Osano-Wo into battle but is subsequently lost to the Shadowlands along with the honored weapon.

Sighting of the Revenant and the Eternal: year 897

In an effort to prove themselves to the Clan of the Crab and strengthen relations with their distant cousins, the Mantis send the bulk of their fleets into the corrupted seas near Crab shores. The Mantis vessels forge bravely into the deeper parts of the dark waters for weeks until they are alarmed by the apparent sighting of two gaijin ships cutting through the water toward them. These two vessels decimate the Mantis fleet; few escape the attack. Later, the Crab and Mantis confirm these ships as the *Revenant* and the *Eternal*, two of the gaijin ships that escaped the Battle of Raging Seas by fleeing south. Why these two ships have only now made their presence known after so many centuries is a matter of speculation by the Kuni and the Mantis.

Yoritomo becomes daimyo of the Mantis Clan: year 1117

The legendary Yoritomo takes command of the Mantis Clan, increasing its power within the Empire. Not content to sit by without a family name, Yoritomo vows to lead his Clan to glory and honor at any cost.

Preparation for the Clan War begins: year 1126

As the Empire slowly becomes consumed by war, Yoritomo takes the opportunity to prove the worth of his men. The Crane open their coffers to the Mantis in hopes the Minor Clan will swell their quickly flagging ranks. The Mantis in turn use this koku to purchase the loyalty of countless ronin and Minor Clan samurai not allied with the cause of Toturi. The Mantis banners are seen throughout the Empire, and soon a Mantis samurai's service can be hired practically everywhere. Though many slander the Mantis for taking money for loyalty, none complain: the Minor Clan protects many lords and peasants who find themselves defenseless before the rampaging armies. It is also during this time that agents of the Lying Darkness infiltrate the ranks of the Mantis, using the dizzying growth of the clan to cover their appearance from practically nowhere.

The coronation of Toturi I: year 1129

The end of the Clan War marks the beginning of a new dynasty — one the Mantis is eager to support. On the Day of Thunder, Toturi promised to elevate the Mantis to Great Clan status in return for their aid; now he makes good on that promise. Yoritomo's name is granted to his followers as the first family of the new Great Clan. The Mantis are heralded as equals of the Seven Clans and are given the duty to patrol and guard the unaligned and unprotected lands of the Empire. Several Minor Clans stand with the Mantis in a powerful alliance, among them the Wasp, the Centipede, the Fox, and the Tortoise.

The Mantis and the Scorpion lands: year 1131

The Scorpion, banished after the disappearance of Emperor Toturi, strike a deal with the Mantis. The Mantis agree to watch over the Scorpion lands, publicly citing their duty to Emperor Toturi, but secretly preventing other clans from taking them for their own. In exchange, the Scorpion foster the son of Bayushi Aramoro to Yoritomo. Yoritomo's forces march through Crane lands on their way to the Scorpion holdings, escorted by Crane Champion Doji Kuwanan. When they reach the border, the Crane turn on the Mantis, intending to annex the fertile Scorpion lands for their own, and Yoritomo and his troops must withdraw. It is later revealed that minions of the Lying Darkness have infiltrated both clans to engineer the conflict. This act prevents the Scorpion, who know how to defeat the Darkness, from holding any concrete base of power within the Empire.

Mantis siege of Phoenix lands: year 1132

The ambitious Yoritomo sets his sights on the lands of the Phoenix. After their near-destruction in the Clan War, he says, they are too weak to govern their lands, which therefore fall under his jurisdiction. Though the Phoenix are still recovering from their horrible losses, Champion Shiba Tsukune refuses to cede control to the Mantis, who hope to sweep into the denuded Phoenix lands and overwhelm their defenders. It is at this time Aramasu, Bayushi Aramoro's son, denounces his former family and betrays many of the Scorpion's secrets (as well as those of the Kolat, of which he is a member) to his adopted father Yoritomo. This knowledge greatly assists the Mantis in penetrating the Phoenix terrain. Once again, the bravado of the Mantis is encouraged by the designs of the Lying Darkness to consume the Empire in chaos. Though the Phoenix defend their homeland, they are overpowered by the Mantis army. The Mantis press deep into Phoenix lands until the fury of their shugenja halts the approach. Yoritomo overextends his forces and must retreat to the Mantis isles.

Death of Yoritomo: year 1133

Shamed by the price his clan has paid for his ambition, Yoritomo leads his forces home. It is then that the Elemental Dragons return to the Empire and appear to the greatest heroes of the clans. The Water Dragon approaches Yoritomo, offering to carry his twenty strongest men to defend the Empire at Oblivion's Gate. Wishing to forestall any more suffering among his followers, Yoritomo steps forward alone and declares, "I am my twenty strongest men." He is carried to the battle along with his foster son Aramasu, who has betrayed the Scorpion and served Yoritomo loyally, as a true son. At Oblivion's Gate, Yoritomo faces the master of the Darkness itself — Goju Adorai. Though Adorai defeats Yoritomo, Yoritomo dies content; he has finally faced the darkness without fear. Aramasu, Yoritomo's heir, carries his kama from the battle.

New houses of the Mantis created: year 1134

Back on his Throne, Emperor Toturi grants the Tsuruchi family name to the Wasp Clan. They are offered fealty by Yoritomo Aramasu, and quickly accept. The Centipede are also formally recognized as a family of the Mantis Clan, two years after Moshi Wakiza married Yoritomo. Since the War Against the Shadow claimed Yoritomo, Tsuruchi, and Moshi Wakiza, the Mantis Clan families must all find new leaders. Aramasu commands that the Mantis Clan limit their association with other clans during this vulnerable time.



Fall of the Alliance: year 1137

The ranks of the Mantis clan suffered greatly during the War Against the Shadow. The Fox abandoned the Alliance in the year 1132; now the other Minor Clans agree to formally break their ties with the weakened Mantis. Clan Champion Yoritomo Aramasu views this as an act of hostility and expels all minor clans from his borders. The Mantis Clan becomes hostile toward outsiders. From the shadows, the Kolat encourage this, turning public opinion against them. While the Masters will take no action against Aramasu directly, they seek to insure that the traitor will gain no allies for his struggling clan.

War of Spirits: year 1138

Members of the Mantis Clan are seen acting of their own accord throughout the Empire during the War of Spirits. Without strong guidance or a clear unifying purpose, the houses of the Mantis play major and minor parts in nearly every important aspect of the War of Spirits — on both sides. Notably, Yoritomo Kitao makes a fortune illegally transporting the spirit armies along the coasts of Rokugan, Tsuruchi Ichiro leads several Tsuruchi bounty-hunters after those who betray the Empire by siding with the spirits, and Moshi Mogai parleys with many spirits, searching for information regarding the lost heir of Yoritomo. It is during this time that Moshi Shanegon meets other members of the Kolat and eventually joins them.

Consolidation of the Mantis: year 1143

Weary of the other Great Clans' refusal to acknowledge the Mantis as an equal power, Yoritomo Aramasu initiates a plan. The Tsuruchi are brought under the command of the Yoritomo as messengers, magistrates, and scouts. The Moshi temples are rebuilt to honor Lord Sun, with the priestesses of the Moshi at the left hand of the Yoritomo as counselors. The disorganized clan suddenly moves in unison practically overnight. The Moshi drape an honorable veil over the Yoritomo's less noble activities, while the Tsuruchi remind those who would slander the Mantis just how far the former Wasp Clan's can reach.

Even yet, after years of disorganization and disharmony some wonder if Aramasu's efforts are sufficient. The Kolat encourage this opinion, painting Aramasu as an inefficient and uncertain leader.

Death of Yoritomo Aramasu: year 1159

Shortly after the loss of Toturi I, the Scorpion use the ensuing chaos in the Empire to finally strike against Aramasu. While the Mantis Champion meets with Akodo Kaneka in Otosan Uchi, the Scorpion trap Aramasu and kill him. Kaneka looks on, unwilling to interfere. Few outside the Scorpion know that the treachery of Yoritomo Kitao has enabled the Hidden Clan to take its revenge. Kitao seizes the opportunity to double-cross the Scorpion by ambushing them after Aramasu is slain — although Aramasu's killer, Bayushi Kamnan, escapes. She claims the right to rule the Mantis, and is unopposed. The Scorpion allow Kitao to claim her victory, as they have attained all that they desire.

The Daughter of Storms is revealed: year 1160

Unknown to many, Yoritomo's wife produced an heir shortly before she died of the Taint. Yoritomo's daughter Kumiko has spent most of her life in a monastery learning the discipline to combat her inherited curse — the Taint of the Shadowlands.

She and her few advisors in the Storm Legion finally agree she is strong enough in both body and mind to claim her father's position for her own. She appears to Akodo Kaneka and offers the loyalty of those who follow her. As Yoritomo Kitao had only moments ago refused such a promise, Kumiko immediately gains both a powerful ally and a deadly enemy. Within months, the Mantis Clan are once again divided — not along lines of family, but between loyalties to two self-proclaimed champions.

NEW MECHANICS

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

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

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

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

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

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

TORITAKA TATSUNE

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

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

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

FAMILIES OF THE MANTIS

The Mantis are not described as a Great Clan in the *Second Edition Player's Guide*.™ For ease of reference, the families of the Mantis and the Minor Clans featured in this book are described here.

YORITOMO

The name carried by the ruling house of the Mantis. The Yoritomo pride themselves on their sailing abilities, but they are also talented bushi who bear the blood of the Fortune of Fire and Thunder.

Benefit: +1 Strength

MOSHI

The shugenja of the former Centipede revere the power of the Sun above all else. Though their magic has now shifted to encompass the power of the storm rather than the fury of the sun, they have not forgotten the blessings of Amaterasu.

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

TSURUCHI

The archers of the Tsuruchi are keen of mind and adapt quickly to any situation. Few can match them for speed and accuracy.

Benefit: +1 Agility

ICHIRO (BADGER CLAN)

Strengthened by hardship, the Badger are as indomitable as the mountains that were once their home.

Benefit: +1 Strength

KASUGA (TORTOISE CLAN)

Though not a name officially recognized by any Emperor, the Kasuga have a proud heritage. They serve from the shadows, doing deeds that even a Scorpion would find distasteful.

Benefit: +1 Perception

COMPLETE MANTIS TECHNIQUE FEAT LIST

The table on the following page lists all feats available to samurai player characters as bonus technique feats. This list supersedes the ones presented in *Oriental Adventures* and *Rokugan*. Feats which were prerequisites for other feats on this list have been added, and those with excessive prerequisites that did not fit the theme of the Mantis fighting style have been removed. To balance this loss, other feats from the *Player's Handbook*™ have been added.

A handful of archery-related Mantis feats are not included on this list, as they are not technique feats. (The Tsuruchi generally do not enter the samurai class, and thus they do not require their feats to be technique feats.)

Abbreviations for the locations of these feats are as follows: PHB=Player's Handbook, MoR=Magic of Rokugan, SoM=Secrets of the Mantis, WoSam = Way of the Samurai.

THE ARROW KNOWS THE WAY

MANTIS GENERAL FEAT

Your practiced aim can easily compensate for penalties to strike a concealed target.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +5 or higher, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Benefit: Any time you miss with a ranged attack due to concealment, you may roll the percentile dice a second time and keep the more favorable result. This feat applies to all forms of concealment, including magical invisibility.

RIDE THE LIGHTNING

MANTIS TECHNIQUE

You can make a powerful, if reckless, attack with a charge.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +1 or higher, Way of the Mantis

Benefit: If you have weapons in both hands you may make an off-hand attack following a charge. You suffer the normal penalties for fighting two-handed, as well as an additional -2 circumstance penalty. (The normal bonuses for charging only apply to the first attack.)

STORM RISING

MANTIS TECHNIQUE

You can gain momentum from a series of successful attacks.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4 or higher, Cleave, Power Attack, Way of the Mantis.

Benefit: Any time you make successful use of the Cleave or Great Cleave feat to gain an extra attack, you gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage on all attacks gained from that use of the feat. This bonus is cumulative, and stacks with each additional attack you gain from Cleave or Great Cleave until you finally fail to drop a target, or until you run out of attacks. The bonus does not carry over to subsequent attacks not gained from these feats.

TOUCH OF THUNDER

MANTIS TECHNIQUE

Those who stand against you are awestruck by your strength.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +6 or higher, Power Attack, Way of the Mantis

Benefit: Any time you inflict more than 15 damage with a single attack, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC equal to damage dealt) or be staggered for one round. Targets immune to critical hits are not affected.

NEW COURTIER ABILITIES

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

COMPLETE MARTIS TECHNIQUE FEAT LIST

Feat	Prerequisite	Location
Ambidexterity	Dex 15+	PHB
Armor Focus	Armor Proficiency	Rokugan
Claws of the Mantis	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Str 13+ Weapon Proficiency (kama)	WoSam
Cleave	Str 13+ Power Attack	PHB
Daisho Specialization	Base attack bonus+5 or higher Weapon Focus: Katana or Wakizashi Samurai	Rokugan
Depths of the Void	Void Use	Rokugan
Different School	By DM permission only	Rokugan
Greater Daisho I	Samurai level 13th+	MoR
Greater Daisho II	Samurai level 15th+	MoR
Greater Daisho III	Samurai level 17th+	MoR
Greater Daisho IV	Samurai level 19th+	MoR
Gusai's Technique	Dex 13+ Bluff Skill Quick Draw	Rokugan
Hand of Osano-Wo	Base attack bonus+3 or higher Str 15+ Ambidexterity Two Weapon Fighting	Rokugan
Improved Bull Rush	Str 13+ Power Attack	PHB
Know the School	Knowledge (clan or family, 2 ranks)	PHB
Power Attack	Str 13+	PHB
Quick Draw	Base attack bonus+1 or higher	PHB
Ride the Lightning	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Way of the Mantis	SoM
Soul Forge	Iron Will or ancestral daisho Masterwork weapon or armor	MoR
Soul of the Storm	Base attack bonus+6 or higher Void Use	Rokugan
Storm Rising	Base attack bonus+4 or higher Cleave Power Attack Way of the Mantis	SoM
Strength of the Earth	Toughness	Rokugan
Sunder	Str 13+ Power Attack	PHB
Touch of Thunder	Base attack bonus+6 or higher Power Attack Way of the Mantis	SoM
Two Weapon Fighting	—	PHB
Void Use	—	Rokugan
Way of the Mantis	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Dex 13+	Rokugan
Weapon Focus (kama)	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Weapon Proficiency (kama)	PHB
Weapon Focus (katana)	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Weapon Proficiency (katana)	PHB
Weapon Focus (nunchaku)	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Weapon Proficiency (nunchaku)	PHB
Weapon Focus (parangu)	Base attack bonus+1 or higher Weapon Proficiency (parangu)	PHB
Weaving, Dodging, Rolling	Dodge Tumble (2 ranks)	WoSam

NOBORI RAIU, THE CELESTIAL SWORD OF THE MANTIS CLAN

Though the original Ancestral Swords of the Great Clans numbered only seven, an eighth blade was forged when the Fortune of Steel created Celestial Swords for the Clan Champions. Nobori Raiu was the sword given to Yoritomo Aramasu, who said "it surely must have been forged from lightning rather than steel." When Moshi Jukio studied the blade, she revealed that Nobori Raiu echoed with the power of the late Son of Storms, and that the blade was destined to be wielded by a samurai of Yoritomo's bloodline.

Aramasu, honored by the gift, carried it but never drew it. Knowing of Yoritomo Kumiko's existence, he never wielded the blade that was rightfully hers. Perhaps in the end this led to Aramasu's undoing, as he refused to draw the blade on his Scorpion assassin.

After Aramasu's death, Nobori Raiu was lost. Though the Mantis believe it was stolen by the Scorpion, it was in fact taken by a heimin servant named Chojiro who foolishly believed he might be able to sell it. Once Chojiro realized how difficult it would be to sell, he hid it out of sheer terror.

Both Yoritomo Kumiko and Yoritomo Kitao have searched tirelessly for Nobori Raiu. Both Champions of the Mantis know that the one who claims the sword that houses the soul of Yoritomo will gain great support for her claim. Chojiro cares little for political struggles, but knows that he will surely be slain if any samurai discovers that he touched the blade. He has often considered simply leaving the weapon in a field or tossing it in Golden Sun Bay, but thus far he has found himself unable to do such a thing.

D20 SYSTEM™

Nobori Raiu is a +5 *thundering shocking burst* katana. The bearer of Nobori Raiu may cast *call lightning*, *control weather*, *torrential rain*, and *lightning bolt* once per day each, all as a 15th-level shugenja.

LSR RPG 2E:

Nobori Raiu is an Exceptional Quality katana, inflicting 3k3 damage and adding 3 to its wielder's Kenjutsu and Katana skills. Whoever carries the sword may make a Perception roll vs. TN 10 at any time to predict the weather for the next day. In addition, once per day the wielder may call a lightning bolt down from a clear sky. This can have two different effects. If directed against an enemy, the bolt does 6k6 damage and knocks the target prone unless he makes a successful Stamina roll vs. TN 30. If the wielder directs the bolt against himself, he takes no damage. Instead, his body seethes with electrical energy for a number of rounds equal to his Water. During this time, the wielder takes no damage from fire or electricity and gains seven extra Void Points. Every time one of these Void Points is spent, the sword releases a brilliant burst of sparks on impact.

Kuenai (Ex): Mantis diplomats often find themselves dealing with ronin, mercenaries, and other less reputable members of society. Any time the Mantis encounters a ronin, bandit, or mercenary (or a person known to associate with such individuals) that is higher than third level, he is automatically entitled to a Gather Information check (DC 20 plus the subject's character level or hit dice). If this check is successful, he has heard of the subject, knows his reputation, may make a rough estimation of his Honor (within one rank) and knows approximately how much it will cost to secure their services. When speaking to those who have hired mercenaries, the courtier also knows what sort of troops they typically favor and a general idea of how much they have paid for mercenaries in the past. The information the character discovers may not be relevant to his current investigations, and any information the target has gone to great lengths to conceal will not be automatically available.

Storm Heart (Ex): Yoritomo bushi are renowned for their intimidating nature. The courtiers of the Mantis are no less fearsome, if usually less violent. As a standard action, the courtier may make an Intimidation check against one target within 30 feet. The DC of this check is equal to 15 plus the target's character Hit Dice. If the check is successful, the target must make a Will save (DC equal to the courtier's skill check) or become shaken (-2 penalty to attack rolls, skill checks, and saving throws) for a number of minutes equal to the courtier's class level. This is a mind-affecting fear effect.

Inspiring Presence (Ex): The courtiers of the Mantis are accustomed to the dangers of back alleys and the high seas, so it is not unusual to see Mantis diplomats standing beside their bushi brethren. A courtier with this ability may encourage his fellow Mantis, using the aid another action (see page 135 of the *Player's Handbook*™) on any Mantis within 30 feet, even if the courtier is not within the normal aid another range. The courtier may also spend Void Points on a fellow Mantis' attack rolls, saving throws, or skill checks if they are within range (the normal rules for spending Void Points apply). This is a language-based ability, so the subject must be able to hear you clearly.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE YORITOMO

CHASING THE STORM PART TWO

"This is definitely not what I had in mind," Hatori muttered to himself as he clutched the rail of the kobune. The sea was not gentle, and the boat rocked treacherously as it leapt from wave to wave.

"You do not care for sea travel, Hatori-sama?" asked the strange monk accompanying the historian. His tone expressed no curiosity, but polite conversation was more than Hatori had expected.

"I do not particularly mind it," he answered. "But I had my fill of it in the weeks it took to journey to the Mantis Islands. I had looked forward to a stay on solid land before taking to the sea again, but instead I find myself ushered directly onto another ship."

"My sincerest apologies," Yoritomo Komori replied. "I believed it important to remove you from those who might offer you false counsel. We will be back on land shortly, and none of the usurper's agents will be able to deceive you with their honeyed words and veiled threats."

Hatori frowned. "Usurper? Is that how you refer to the Lady Kitao?"

The monk stared out across the rolling seas. "Her name is like a scorpion's venom. I will not have it on my lips."

Miya Hatori frowned. In all the important negotiations and diplomatic meetings he had attended in his lifetime of service, he had never been around a clan so ready to speak its mind. The Moshi were conventional, but both the Tsuruchi and now the

Yoritomo had proven themselves to be very... frank. Hatori could not decide if it was a blessing or a curse. "Your allegiance is clear, at least," he said to Komori. "I suppose I should be grateful that I do not have to play word games while trying to keep from falling overboard."

If he had been expecting a smile or perhaps even a chuckle, Hatori would be disappointed. "I see no reason to conceal my beliefs," Komori said flatly. "I suppose my time with the Brotherhood altered my perceptions somewhat, but I would like to think that I have always been honest."

"The Brotherhood," Hatori said, remembering his purpose. "You entered a monastery following Yoritomo's death."

"Yes," Komori said. "It was decided that I was the most logical choice."

"Choice?" Hatori inquired.

"Someone needed to stay there and watch over Kumiko-sama after her birth. Someone loyal to Lord Yoritomo, but who would not be missed. Someone who could sever his ties to the Lord of the Mantis without arousing suspicion. The others would have been far too conspicuous."

"What others?" asked the historian.

Komori looked at him with what might have been mild humor and said nothing.

"Of course," said Hatori. "Forgive the question. But the issue remains of Kumiko's heritage. I cannot verify it unless I have all the facts."

"Very well," Komori nodded. "When Yoritomo's wife Wakiza died shortly after giving birth, those of us loyal to Aramasu recognized that Kumiko-sama was Tainted. The entire Empire was arrayed against the Shadowlands, and in those days mercy toward the corrupted was not an option. It did not take a scholar to

realize that if Kumiko-sama's Taint were revealed, she would be destroyed as a precaution. Aramasu and the rest of us would not let that happen."

"So you placed her in hiding."

"Yes." Komori looked out over the ocean, lost in the memory. "It was I who recommended the monastery of Bishamon on the far side of the island. I remained visible as one of Aramasu's advisors, but most of my time was spent at the monastery, watching over Kumiko-sama. Even as a child, the monks taught her to contain the Taint, locking it away where it could never reach her soul." Pride and admiration shone in the old man's eyes. "She is truly a marvel. Much like her father. Much like her adopted brother. Aramasu had his faults, but a lack of foresight was not one of them."

"He ordered you to join a monastery so that you could not be commanded by his successor?" Hatori asked.

"Of course not," Komori said with a severe frown. "To imply that such a thing could be necessary would be quite dishonorable. Aramasu merely suggested that my time of service to the clan was complete."

"Of course."

"Nonetheless, his foresight was extraordinary. I could not have endured fealty to that wretched woman. Had she known of the existence of a true heir, Kitao would have killed her as surely as she murdered Aramasu."

"The Scorpion murdered Aramasu," Hatori said. "If the tales I have heard are true, Kitao was present and avenged the death of Aramasu..."

"The arrow may bring death, but the archer does the killing," growled Komori. "Kumiko-sama is seven times the Champion Kitao will ever be."

"A shame, then, that only your testimony supports her identity as Yoritomo's daughter," Hatori said. "The testimony of a monk would count for nothing when placed against the word of Yoritomo Kitao."

"I am no monk," Komori said.

Hatori frowned. "I do not understand. You retired and entered a monastery."

"No," corrected Komori. "I shaved my head and lived in the monastery. I never abandoned my blades or my allegiance. I did not adopt a new name. I did not undergo the retirement ritual. I am Yoritomo Komori, and I am still samurai."

The aging historian stroked his chin thoughtfully. "That does make things a bit more interesting," he admitted. "Did Aramasu plan this as well?"

Komori shrugged. "When I left, everyone assumed that I had retired. Even the usurper. I am no longer important to her. That is how I will hurt her the most. Now I serve the true Champion of the Mantis, and when Kumiko-sama orders me to kill the other, I will gladly obey."

Hatori could not suppress a mild shudder. Such vehemence from so calm a man, one wearing the trappings of a monk, no less, was quite disturbing. He suspected Komori enjoyed the effect it had on others, if he could be said to truly enjoy anything. "Can you testify that Aramasu would have passed the leadership of the clan to her, had he been given the opportunity?"

"Aramasu brought Yoritomo's kama to the monastery before leaving for Otsan Uchi," Komori replied. "The Daughter of Storms bears them now, as is her right. I was there when the weapons passed from Yoritomo's chosen son to his true daughter. Yoritomo Kamoto also witnessed this."

Hatori nodded. "The Daughter of Storms," he mused.

THE YORITOMO PROVINCES

The Yoritomo live on the archipelago known as the Isles of Silk and Spice. The Isles are directly in line with the Spine of the World Mountains, east of southern Crane lands across Yakamo's Heart (the sea formerly known as the Sea of Amaterasu). In times past the Isles could be seen from Kyuden Doji on a clear day. Since the death of Amaterasu, the sea now called Umi Yakamo (or sometimes Yakamo's Heart) has become far too turbulent to allow clear vision.

The Isles of Silk and Spice contain some of the most unusual and exotic landscapes in the Empire. The volcanic islands have massive mountains, dense rainforests adjacent to staggeringly high cliffs, and crystal lakes hidden deep within caves. Hundreds of visitors journey to the isles each year simply to view their sheer beauty. Despite the constant threat of volcanic activity, only one eruption has occurred in the past three centuries. This eruption formed the island that now features the Imperial city of Koutetsukan (Location A26 in *Rokugan*™; Location A28 in the *GAME MASTER'S GUIDE*™).

Though the seas are rough, contact with mainland Rokugan is not difficult for a skilled sailor. Kyuden Doji is less than a day away for an experienced crew. Outside of the Mantis and Crab, few sailors dare the rough seas. Those seeking to visit the Isles of Spice and Silk are advised to charter a Mantis vessel.

MAJOR YORITOMO HOLDINGS

The most important holdings of the Yoritomo are all located in the Islands of Silk and Spice. Such holdings are extremely defensible, and the Yoritomo can quickly move their resources from them to any of their regular trade points along the coast. This should not suggest that the Yoritomo do not value mainland holdings; those are prized for their strategic value. However, they do not carry the Yoritomo's proud heritage.

KYUDEN GOTEI

(LOCATION M1 IN *ROKUGAN*™; LOCATION A29 IN THE *GAME MASTER'S GUIDE*™)

Kyuden Gotei is a massive monument to wealth, the center of the largest city in Mantis territory. Nearly half of the island is covered by the city. The immense parapets of the castle soar high into the sky, proclaiming the wealth and grandeur of the Mantis Clan. The palace is adorned with gems, gold, silver, and artwork purchased to express the wealth that the Mantis have accrued over the years.

The palace was initially built by Kaimetsu-uo as the first settlement of the fledgling clan. In the beginning, it was a single small building. Since the earliest days of the clan, trade and mercenary work have brought the clan more money than it can productively use, and a significant amount of the excess is spent each year on the enlargement of Kyuden Gotei.

Each decade, the palace has grown substantially. Now, Kyuden Gotei is the second-largest city in the Empire. Only Ryoko Owari (and, until recently, Otosan Uchi) is larger, now that Otosan Uchi has been destroyed.

Until recently, the Storm Legion ruled the city in the name of Yoritomo Kitao. Recently, the Yoritomo Elite Guard seized Kyuden Gotei in a swift and relatively bloodless coup. Now the city is firmly controlled by Yoritomo Kumiko and her supporters. The Daughter of Storms is adjusting well to her new base of operations. The last few Mantis supporting Yoritomo Kitao have been forcibly ejected by the Elite Guard and Kumiko's Crab and Unicorn allies.

BARRACKS OF YORITOMO'S ELITE GUARD

The barracks of the Elite Guard are in the palace's central courtyard. Hallways lead from this courtyard to every floor and major room of the castle. This strategic placement allows the Elite Guard to swiftly deploy anywhere within the castle — a design consideration that many palaces lack. The barracks hold several hundred soldiers, and are commanded by the Yoritomo Elite Guard. All are personally loyal to Yoritomo Kumiko.



YORITOMO SEN, CAPTAIN OF THE YORITOMO ELITE GUARD

[Samurai 9/Yoritomo Elite Guard 5; Yoritomo Bushi 4/Yoritomo Elite Guard]

Sen is the new captain of the Elite Guard, having taken over when his father and predecessor Okan died two years ago. He would like to say that he has served with honor and glory, but sadly he can claim neither. Glory has been lost to him ever since Kitao became Champion. She ordered him into battle as a mercenary working for the Crane, and then to betray his Crane employers. His sense of bushido recoiled at this duplicity, but also compelled him to obey. For months, he fought skillfully (if not honorably) on both sides of the conflict between Crab and Crane.

Then, things began to change. The Daughter of Storms appeared and allied with Akodo Kaneka. Sen was overjoyed, and immediately offered his services to Yoritomo's heir. Not only did Kumiko promise to restore the honor of the Mantis, but she would place Sen in a position to serve his clan with both distinction and honor. Sen offered Kumiko far more than loyalty. Under his leadership, the Elite Guard rallied and ousted Kitao's supporters from Toshi no Gotei, seizing Kyuden Gotei as Yoritomo Kumiko's new base of operations.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: An agent of Yoritomo Kitao approaches a PC, offering the favor of the Mantis Clan in return for infiltrating the Yoritomo Elite Guard's barracks. Kitao knows that the barracks are filled with Kumiko supporters, and she wants to know what occurs within their walls.

Focus: The barracks are constantly guarded, and the PC must figure out a way to either gain the Elite Guard's trust or sneak in. Assuming the PCs discover a way, they discover that the Elite Guardsmen are planning an attack on Kitao's forces at Toshi no Inazuma within the week.

Strike: Whatever the PC reports is accepted gratefully — especially if the PC lies or could not gain entry. The 'agent of Yoritomo Kitao' was an agent of Yoritomo Kumiko all along, sent to test the PC's true loyalties and gauge the security measures of the Elite Guard. Depending on the PC's actions, they might have gained a powerful ally or earned a great deal of trouble.

HEAVEN'S BANK HOLD

In the depths of Kyuden Gotei lies the Mantis Clan's great treasury, Heaven's Bank Hold. The immense chamber was carved out of the castle's stone foundation. The treasury is lit by a handful of nemuranai torches, gifts from the Asahina during the Clan War. Access to the room is severely restricted. Only family daimyo and their hatamoto may enter, aside from the four members of the Yoritomo Elite Guard posted to defend the room.

The room holds gold, silver, and precious gems, all of which the Mantis have in large quantities. Much of the treasure is of gaijin origin. The clan is well aware of the punishment for having such artifacts, and this is a prime reason for the high security around the Hold.

Several nemuranai rest in hallowed alcoves along the walls. Among them are Kaimetsu-uo's ono, Gusai's dagger, several other weapons used by Mantis Champions of the past, and even an enchanted crystal polearm called a 'khadja' imported

from the Burning Sands. One of the most recent acquisitions was the Ono of Osano-Wo, found deep in the Shadowlands and cleansed of its Shadowlands Taint by the Moshi. A small collection of enchanted Ivory Kingdoms katar daggers are also on display, as Kumiko has a fondness for the strange weapons.

YORITOMO GOMBEI, GUARDIAN OF HEAVEN'S BANK HOLD

[Fighter 9/Yoritomo Elite Guard 4; Yoritomo Bushi 3/Yoritomo Elite Guard]

Gombeï is the sort of bushi that many people think of when they envision a Crab — large, strong, and somewhat stupid. This is exactly how Gombei likes it. His physical prowess is rarely questioned, as he has acquitted himself well in the two years since he was admitted to the Yoritomo Elite Guard. Though he has been in battle both against the Crab armies and Kitao's forces, he much prefers his current duty. It is a new task, and just as important as serving on the front lines. He's a passionate man, and has taken to his duty with glee. Privately, Gombei is pleased that his job allows him to spend time with his childhood friend, Yoritomo Sen.

Gombeï is a reasonably skilled tactician, but he hides that skill. While it is true that people underestimate a brute, and prepare more thoroughly when facing a tactician, this is not Gombei's true motivation. Simply put, he is shy. He does not care for glory or admiration; he only cares that the job that he does is done well. In his experience, praise and attention interfere with his work more than they help, so he avoids recognition. And nothing gives him more joy than seeing the surprised face of an enemy who completely underestimated his intelligence.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The Mantis PCs hear of an object stolen from Heaven's Bank Hold. Perhaps they find out that about the problem from an ally in the Elite Guard, or they could perhaps be one of the Guardsmen posted to defend the Hold. Regardless, the PCs are tasked to handle the theft.

Focus: The item stolen is the 'khadja,' a weapon of obvious gaijin make. If word gets out, the Mantis would face the consequences of a flagrant violation of Imperial policy.

Strike: A young Mantis thief named Leli'a has stolen it as a test of her skill. She plans to give the khadja to Yoritomo Kitao to gain a position with the "true Mantis Champion." The PCs have a choice: they can choose not to believe Leli'a and turn her in as a thief, or (if they support Kitao) they can aid her.

TOSHI NO INAZUMA

(LOCATION M2 IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION A30 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

The City of Lightning was founded during a period when the Mantis were just beginning to explore their islands. A party had just landed on a new island, and set up camp for the night in a natural clearing in the rainforest. As they slept, each of the seven men had the same dream. In their dream, Osano-Wo — barely ten years dead — showed them a view of the future. They saw their children and their children's children spread over the Isles, mainland Rokugan, and beyond. The Mantis had grown beyond a small collection of ragtag Crab and Lion refugees to become the dominant military force in Rokugan and beyond. The last image of the dream showed a Mantis Emperor ruling over an Empire from a palace crafted of pure

diamond. "From the City of Lightning will the Mantis grow," said Osano-Wo. A bolt of lightning then struck the ground in the center of the camp, waking the dreamers.

They were pleased to discover they had shared the dream, and promised to work toward its realization. The spot where the lightning had struck became the foundation for the Temple of Lightning and, years later, the promised City of Lightning.

Over the centuries, the city has developed a reputation as a completely open city — anyone is welcome. Even occasional gaijin may visit so long as they keep a low profile. During the Clan War, a refugee from the Cornejo family lived many years safely in Toshi no Inazuma.

Since the Yoritomo Elite Guard seized Toshi no Gotei, Toshi no Inazuma has become Yoritomo Kitao's headquarters. The City of Lightning's inhabitants have a marked dislike for Yoritomo Kumiko. When she appeared to make her bid for Championship, the samurai of Toshi no Inazuma assembled to speak to her. They questioned her long absence, the validity of her heritage. They accused her of opportunism and greed, and when Kumiko could not adequately answer for her years of silence, the City of Lightning threw its lot behind Kitao.

THE TEMPLE OF LIGHTNING

The Temple of Lightning was the first building constructed on the land of Toshi no Inazuma. The spectacular, palatial temple is the tallest building on the Mantis Isle. It is struck by lightning at least once every year, and it is a popular practice among Yoritomo bushi to place bets as to the month and day in which this will occur. As this temple is dedicated to the Fortune of Fire and Thunder, the lightning never harms the building. Instead, the electrical energy dances back up into the sky, twisting into the clouds and creating a beautiful light show. The monks take this as a sign that they retain the favor and blessings of Osano-Wo.

Occasionally, those who pray for guidance in the temple receive a vision from Osano-Wo. This vision is always a matter of great importance, even if only to the one receiving it. Few who are granted a vision ignore it, for the Thunderer is not known for his patience. Those who beg for his aid would do well to accept it.

Traditionally, the priests of this temple to Osano-Wo bless the Mantis daimyo during his coronation ceremony. This sanctifies the reign of the Champion with the patron Fortune's blessing. Kitao has received this blessing; Kumiko has not. Additionally, Kitao is known to have received guiding visions from Osano-Wo in the temple, while Kumiko has not — although she is not allowed into the city, which tends to preclude visions.

YORITOMO EIJIRO, HEAD MONK OF THE TEMPLE OF LIGHTNING

[Samurai 6/Monk 6; Monk (Osano-Wo) 4]

Eijiro is an old man who often finds himself lost in memory. He is old enough to remember Yoshitsune, Yoritomo's father and predecessor. He served Yoritomo on the Day of Thunder, during the Phoenix War, and the War against the Shadow. In each war, he found himself on the periphery of the action, but he was still close enough to feel the reflected glory of his Champion. Eijiro idolized Yoritomo, and unlike many others he remembers the Son of Storms for what he truly was: a man who was not afraid to speak his mind, who was not afraid to let his ambition lead him. In contrast, Yoritomo's successor Aramasu was a cautious and prudent man. Under Aramasu's rule, the Mantis withered.

It was for this reason that Eijiro spoke loudly against Yoritomo Kumiko. He does not see Yoritomo in Kumiko's eyes. He thinks that the girl clings too closely to bushido. Kitao, on the other hand, is ambitious and flexible. While Eijiro knows that she is not a 'good' person, he does not believe that compassion is a necessary trait for a leader. That is the purpose of advisors. Eijiro does not like Kitao, but he respects and obeys her. He has instructed the priests of the Temple of Lightning to keep a careful eye out for potential supporters of Kumiko, and reports such individuals to the Storm Legion.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While praying to Osano-Wo in the Temple, one of the PCs is struck by a vision of his kinsman trading secrets to members of the Scorpion Clan. The vision is brief, but damning.

Focus: The PC is faced with a choice: investigate his kinsman's treason on the basis of a prophetic vision, or ignore the vision and anger the Thunderer.

Strike: The PC's kinsman is not being treasonous; the statements the PC overheard were innocent in context. During an earlier visit to the temple, the samurai in question committed a minor blasphemy that drew the wrath of the temperamental Thunderer. Osano-Wo has chosen to confuse the offending samurai's kinsmen with false visions.

THE HOME OF YORITOMO KITAO

Yoritomo Kitao's need for a secure base of operations placed her in a quandary. While the *Bitter Flower* is secure enough, it lacks the ability to receive guests. Mobile bases are excellent in wartime, but until her conflict with Yoritomo Kumiko becomes open warfare, Kitao needs a place where people can find her. Once her base of operations was located in Toshi no Gotei. Since that city turned against her, she has relocated here, using her great wealth as Mantis Champion to reinforce her original home.

Kitao's home in the city center is in many ways a fortress. Dozens of guards prowl the house at all times, and she has eschewed decorative trappings in favor of a more defensible home. As Kitao was once a smuggler, the castle also features a number of hidden chambers and passageways. The Storm Legion know most of them, though a few are known only to Kitao.

YORITOMO SOETSUKO, CAPTAIN OF KITAO'S HOUSE GUARD

[Samurai 8; Yoritomo Bushi 3]
Soetsuko swore fealty to Kitao as soon as she returned from "avenging Aramasu's death," and has served her admirably since that day. Hers was, Soetsuko thought, to be a life of glory. When Yoritomo Kumiko appeared on the scene and was unable to sufficiently explain her decades-long absence, Soetsuko knew instantly that she had chosen the right daimyo. Kitao may have her flaws, but at least she does not hide the truth of her origins.

Soetsuko's unwavering loyalty and outspoken opinions of Kumiko have earned her a position as captain of Kitao's house guard. When Kitao is away from Toshi no Inazuma, Soetsuko leads the Storm Legion with diligence and determination. She shows no mercy to any who speak favorably of Kumiko; Kitao has privately rebuked her for treating other Mantis with undue violence.

HIGHWAYS OF THE YORITOMO PROVINCES

The Yoritomo lands, being an archipelago, have no major highways. This is not to suggest that there are no roads — the inhabited islands all have roads connecting all the settlements and points of note. However, the roads are rarely named; they are simply referred to as "the road to the Ivory Dojo" or "the pathway to Thunder God Peak."

DOJO RAIDEN

Dojo Raiden is not the first dojo the Mantis constructed, but it is the largest and most prestigious. Located forty-five miles north of the City of Lightning, it is the oldest dojo in the clan, created in the seventh century by a bushi named Iroshu. In Dojo Raiden, students learn to function as full-fledged Mantis.

Students learn kenjutsu and other martial arts, including the art of wielding kama. They also learn peasant trades such as fishing, sailing, and commerce. While no Mantis has ever needed to spend his life performing such tasks, it is still important to the clan that their samurai be capable of them.

See *Way of the Samurai*,TM pages 47–53, for more information on Dojo Raiden.

ROOM OF THE ONE THOUSAND FALLS

One of the most prominent buildings in the dojo compound is a large single-room building overlooking the cliffside. This room is dedicated to the venerable art of jiu-jutsu. The sensei have a strict policy; they soundly and wordlessly defeat all the students who enter. Only when a student begins to adapt and improve do the sensei begin their true instruction. This often doesn't occur in the first few weeks of training, and the student typically is thrown onto his back a thousand times or more in the process of learning. It is a frustrating process, but ultimately rewarding.

YORITOMO HOSHU

[Fighter 6; True Ronin, Insight Rank 2]

Hoshu has an excellent deal, he thinks. He teaches some Mantis children how to defend themselves in unarmed combat, and in exchange the clan feeds, houses, and supports him. They summon doctors when he falls ill, and they provided him with a new daisho when his wakizashi broke. In every way that matters, he is very, very well off.

The War Against the Shadow passed him by, thanks to the crystal pendant an anonymous Ide gave his geisha mother. The War of Spirits occurred without his notice, as he was neither a spirit nor especially loyal to Toturi.

Like his father, he lived the life of a ronin — constantly hungry, looking for money, and without any place to call his own. Then, shortly after the War of Spirits ended, Hoshu heard tales of a Mantis dojo that welcomed sensei of all walks of life. He needed to prove himself to its sensei, starting from a disadvantage — after all, he was still a ronin. It took years before head sensei Yoritomo Chebotai began to accept him.

Hoshu has a manner that is somehow both adversarial and gruff, but he is quite adept at teaching what he knows to his students. As he is fond of saying, very little teaches you how to acquit yourself in hand-to-hand combat faster than fighting

for your life. Over the seven years Hoshu has lived and taught at Dojo Raiden, he has discovered a side that he never knew existed — he genuinely cares about his students, even if half of them once looked upon him as ronin scum. Two years ago, Chebotai stepped down and offered Hoshu a position as sensei of the dojo, along with fealty to the Yoritomo family. Hoshu eagerly accepted.

In hindsight, he wonders if he made the right decision. He watches the struggle between Kitao and Kumiko and wonders which side to support. He doesn't really like either of them, but life on the road taught him what happens to people who sit on the fence. He knows he'll have to pick a side, and soon. Some days he longs for the days when his only responsibility was to himself, but he will not abandon the dojo.



IROSHU'S CLIFF

Dojo Raiden overlooks a large cliff, at the bottom of which are the dojo's shipyards. More significant to most of the students is the cliff itself. When Iroshu built the dojo so many centuries ago, he threatened to toss the students over the cliff if they failed. While that threat has never been executed, a sizable portion of the student body still takes it seriously.

The cliff has become a popular retreat for students of the dojo. Nearly every student trained at Dojo Raiden has at some point climbed the sheer cliff. Some even talk to the kami of the cliff for advice. Stories are told in the children's dormitories of the activities of the cliff kami, which is said to protect the dojo from serious weather incidents. After all, the dojo has stood in place for five hundred years without being burnt down by lightning, blown away in a monsoon or hurricane, or collapsed under the power of an earthquake.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Iroshu's Cliff has become exceedingly difficult to climb lately, with rocks seemingly coming loose spontaneously. Some of the students at Dojo Raiden have been injured because of it.

Focus: People are beginning to think that the kami of the cliff has become angry with them. A shugenja in the party is called in to try and figure out what's wrong.

Strike: The kami itself is perfectly fine — the actual trouble is the unquiet spirit of a girl that threw herself from the cliff several weeks ago, after finding out that her betrothed had died at sea. Her body was washed away before it could be discovered and now no one remains to mourn her. The party must decide what they will do to quiet this sad spirit.

MINOR YORITOMO HOLDINGS

TOKIGOGACHU

(LOCATION M4 IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION A32 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

Tokigogachu is a moderately large village overlooking the Bay of Dark Water. The village is famous for its fish — Tokigogachu's sashimi chefs create wonderful delicacies.

The village is also famous for its celebrations. Its festivals throughout the year have reached legendary status. Tremendous paper dragons dance about the village, colored lanterns are everywhere, and the sake flows freely. Parades, fireworks, and acrobats are common. The splendor of the New Years Celebration at Tokigogachu has reached the ears of nearly everyone in the Empire — both Hantei XXXVII and Toturi I took their families to Tokigogachu in disguise, simply to experience the festivities. Rumor holds that Toturi Sezaru still visits the village each year wearing a magical disguise, entranced by the glory of the festivals and saddened by the memories of his dead father.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While in Tokigogachu for a festival, a PC becomes the target of a local pickpocket. A valuable possession is stolen from the PC, who can see the thief getting away.

Focus: The PC can chase the street urchin back to his home without much difficulty. The thief's home is an unremarkable peasant dwelling, but houses nearly a dozen teenage thieves of varying ages. They claim they work for a man they know only as "Sama," and will return stolen objects if pressured. They care much more about their lives than any object.

Strike: The children work for the magistrate of the village. Every season, the children go out picking the pockets of whoever travels by. Over the course of the season, the magistrate catches them all, and looks very good to his superiors. Of course, the children are freed again for the next festival season, and the cycle begins anew. The PCs must now figure out what to do with this corrupt official.

KAIMETSU-UO SEIDO

(LOCATION M3 IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION A31 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

Kaimetsu-uo was a great Mantis hero. He founded the clan, laid siege to the Isawa castle with fifty men, and ensured the blessings of his father Osano-Wo on the clan for centuries to come. But however great a hero he was, no man lives forever. At the venerable age of seventy-six, Kaimetsu-uo left the clan in the hands of his son and sailed east from Kyuden Gotei, alone.

He passed beyond the Mantis Isles and sailed into the open sea. Several months later a Mantis trading vessel found Kaimetsu-uo's ship, grappled by a ronin pirate vessel. Kaimetsu-uo lay dead on the deck of the vessel, surrounded by the bodies of dead pirates. His face was fixed in a smile, eyes locked on the heavens. The ships were set ablaze, a worthy grave for the Thunderer's son. When the Mantis traders returned, they constructed a shrine in his honor at the first sign of land. One of their number shaved his head and retired immediately, remaining behind to tend the shrine.

Over the centuries, Kaimetsu-uo Seido has been expanded, and is now a complex with seven buildings. An order of monks who honor the son of the Thunderer have come to reside there, though their origins lay beyond the shrine. (See *Way of Shinsei™* for details regarding the monks of Kaimetsu-uo.)

THE COURTYARD

The courtyard of Kaimetsu-uo Seido is something of a training ground for Mantis. Traditionally, those Mantis who claim to be great warriors make a pilgrimage to Kaimetsu-uo Seido at least once in their life to challenge the monks of Kaimetsu-uo to non-lethal unarmed combat. Defeating the monks there affords the bushi tremendous respect from his clansmen. Many Mantis consider it to be worth bragging about, and more than a few Mantis have begun their battle cries with such boasts.

Several years ago, a dark-haired teenage girl came to the shrine and in a carefully controlled voice politely asked to challenge one of the monks. The monk who met her chuckled, but accepted her challenge himself. Thinking he would go easy on her, he used only as much force as he thought was necessary to defeat her. He was surprised as she had him pinned to the ground, standing on him, after only two minutes.

"How did you do that?" asked the astonished monk.

"I am Mineko," she said, bowing to leave.

She has not been seen since. The monks of Kaimetsu-uo Seido have not forgotten her.

MAIGOSERA SEIDO

(LOCATION M5 IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION A33 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

Maigosera Seido is the counterpoint to Kaimetsu-uo Seido. Where the latter is constantly active, Maigosera Seido is a monument to sobriety. The Shrine of Lost Sailors is a deadly, mournful reminder that even the Mantis do not fully master the sea; Suitengu bows to no man.

The shrine itself is small, consisting of a single torii arch and obelisk. Immediately beside it is an enormous stone tower nearly ninety feet high. The top of the tower is wide to accommodate its cargo: a constant raging bonfire.

This massive fire is visible for dozens of miles in every direction, but is directed over the Bay of Dark Water (see next column). The Mantis hope that those who have died at sea and still wander the Bay of Dark Water will see the light and from there, find their way to the realms of the dead. The living find the firelight helpful as well, as sailors in the area use the familiar light to navigate the treacherous waters of Umi Yakamo.

No battle ever takes place here — even Yoritomo Kitao and Yoritomo Kumiko would not confront one another here. Maigosera Seido is a holy place, a memorial for countless thousands whose lives have been lost in inglorious ways. Violating the sanctity of this shrine would be a capital offense.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Ships leaving Maigosera Seido have seemingly vanished. The only hint of the source of the problem is a mysterious ship that stays just at the limit of vision and quickly vanishes when anyone gives chase.

Focus: The ship proves difficult to follow, but with persistence and skill, the characters can trail it back to a cove where they find nine enormous, alien-looking ships. On approach, they discover they are a fleet of powerful new Mantis ships called the Thunder Dragons.

Strike: Yoritomo Heishiro, captain of the fleet, welcomes them without violence, though he is clearly irritated by their arrival. He states plainly that the fleet is a clan secret. None of the PCs are allowed to leave. They may, however, be allowed to crew the Thunder Dragons if they prove themselves loyal. The PCs must decide whether they intend to escape or if the prospect of joining the crew of a dangerous experimental vessel is more attractive.

WAN NO ASAGUROI MIZU (BAY OF DARK WATER)

(LOCATION YYY IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION CCCC IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

Sailors have always thought that the Bay of Dark Water was the dwelling place of a city of horrible creatures. The sailor's superstition of throwing rice overboard came about because rice seemed to keep the creatures of the Bay of Dark Water away, much to the relief of those who sail the bay. The spirits of those lost to the bay have never been seen again, not even in the fields of Yomi.

The truth is even less comforting.

The Naga had many cities throughout Rokugan. Most were destroyed through time and decay, but some remained: Candas, Vyakarana, a scant few more. Another city, whose name has been lost even to the Akasha, once existed in the waters around what would become the Islands of Silk and Spice. This city was a grand arena for the Chameleon and the ningyo to gather — marketplaces, homes, even a palace. The city was the crowning glory of the Chameleon bloodline, and if it still existed, would rival Kyuden Gotei for extravagance.

The Foul, in the form of the Lying Darkness, ravaged the Naga. The now nameless city was one of its most impressive victories. In a single swift stroke, the city was stripped of its name and its inhabitants were twisted and mutated. The first Abominations arose from this city, releasing a terrible poison into the Akasha that would lead to many later mutations. Most died instantly, their new forms unable to withstand the environment that their original bodies thrived in. Some survived, and a few even thrived.

These mutated Naga were so radically altered that they could barely be called Naga. Their connection to the Akasha was severed, and much of their intellect fled. They became brutes, thinking on the level of animals: food, comfort, mating, and shelter were their only concerns. They were stronger, tougher, and even more adapted to undersea life. These abominations even remained fertile, unlike most, but in a strange and horrible way. These abominations infect other living creatures, even non-Naga, transforming them into creatures like themselves.

The Naga war against the Foul and the subsequent Great Sleep left these abominations completely alone. Untouched, they lived in the ruins of their city for thousands of years. When Kaimetsu-uo and his followers moved onto the islands, their presence disturbed these abominations. The creatures destroyed several ships. It was by pure chance that a Mantis pirate passing through the area discovered that tossing rice overboard kept the creatures at bay. It rapidly became customary.

Untainted by the Shadowlands or the Darkness, unable to communicate with humanity, the last remnants of this strange Naga sub-race thrive in the bay. Recently, a Mantis ship under the command of Yoritomo Masaru disappeared while passing

through the bay. Masaru's brother, Katoa, has sworn vengeance upon the "spirits" that dwell in the bay. His ship, crewed with Moshi shugenja and Tsuruchi archers, has sailed into the Bay of Dark Water with an oath to destroy the beasts that hide in the depths.

DARK WATER ABOMINATIONS ID201

"Dark water abomination" is a template that can be applied to any humanoid or monstrous humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the "base creature"). The creature's type changes to "monstrous humanoid" and it gains the "aquatic" and "Naga" subtypes. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities, except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d10, unless already higher.

Speed: Same as the base creature. In addition, the creature gains a base swim speed equal to its normal land speed.

AC: The base creature's natural armor increases by +4.

Attacks: The dark water abomination retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a bite attack if it did not already have one. This bite attack does 1d8 damage and carries the risk of infecting the target with Dark Water Fever (see top of next column).

Special Attacks: A dark water abomination retains all the special attacks of the base creature and also gains those listed below. Note that a dark water abomination becomes a bestial creature and may not be able to effectively use the abilities it formerly possessed.

Dark Water Fever (Su): Supernatural disease — bite, Fortitude save (DC 20), incubation period 1 hour; damage 1d6 permanent Intelligence. This disease affects only humanoids and monstrous humanoids. Unlike normal diseases, dark water fever continues until a remove disease spell is applied or the target is reduced to Intelligence 0, at which time he gains the dark water abomination template and remove disease is no longer effective. If a heal spell or more powerful magic is applied to a transformed victim within twenty-four hours, the transformation can be reversed. Otherwise, the change is irrevocable. If the target creature has fewer than three hit dice, the transformation kills him. Once transformed, the target becomes feral, bestial, and seeks to kill or infect any other humanoids it sees (though it will not risk its life foolishly).

Special Qualities: A dark water abomination retains all the special qualities of the base creature and those listed below, and also gains the monstrous humanoid type and the Naga and aquatic subtypes.

Abomination (Ex): Any non-abomination Naga that looks upon a dark water abomination instantly knows that this is a creature that should not be. A dark water abomination will seek to infect any pure Naga it encounters with its bite, and any true Naga will seek to destroy a dark water abomination as swiftly as possible.

Dehydration Vulnerability (Ex): A dark water abomination takes one point of temporary Constitution damage per hour if its skin is dry. A dark water abomination takes extra damage vs. effects that cause dehydration as if it were a water elemental.

Fast Healing (Ex): A dark water abomination heals 6 points of damage each round so long as it has at least one hit point and its skin is moist.

Resistances (Ex): Dark water abominations have fire, cold, and electricity resistance 5.

Saves: Same as the base creature.

Abilities: Increase from the base creature as follows: Str +4, Dex +2, Con +6, Int -8 (minimum 2), Wis +0, Cha -6 (minimum 1).

Skills: Dark water abominations receive a +8 racial bonus to all Hide, Listen, Move Silently, and Spot checks when underwater.

Feats: Same as the base creature.

Climate/Terrain: Temperate Aquatic

Organization: Solitary, gang (2-5), or school (10-20)

Challenge Rating: Same as the base creature +2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Always chaotic evil

Advancement: By character class

SAMPLE DARK WATER ABOMINATION

This dark water abomination uses a third-level chameleon Naga fighter as the base creature.

Dark Water Abomination

Medium-Size Monstrous Humanoid
(Aquatic, Naga)

Hit Dice: 3d10

Imitative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 40 ft. swim 40 ft.

AC: 20 (+3 Dex, +3 studded leather, +4 natural)

Attacks: short sword +6 melee or bite +6 melee



Damage: short sword 1d6+4 or bite 1d8+2 plus disease

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft. / 5 ft.

Special Attacks: Dark water fever, sneak attack +2d6

Special Qualities: Abomination, dehydration vulnerability, evasion, fast healing 6, immunities, resistances, uncanny dodge

Saves: Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1

Abilities: Str 18, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 5, Wis 10, Cha 4

Skills: Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Intuit Direction +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +9, Search +3, Spot +6, Swim +10, Wilderness Lore +5

Feats: Improved Initiative, Track

Evasion: As the rogue ability.

Immunities: Naga are immune to the influence of the Taint.

They cannot acquire Taint under any circumstances, nor can they practice any activities that inflict the Taint upon those who use them (such as the blood sorcery maho).

Skills: Naga have a +2 racial bonus to all Wilderness Lore checks and Charisma or Diplomacy checks made with other Naga. All Naga have a -4 racial modifier to all Animal Empathy, Handle Animal, and Ride checks.

Sneak Attack: As the rogue ability.

Uncanny Dodge: As the rogue ability.

Challenge Rating: 5

TYPICAL DARK WATER ABOMINATION [2ND EDITION]

Earth: 3

Stamina: 4

Water: 3

Strength: 4

Fire: 1

Agility: 4

Air: 1

Reflexes: 4

Rolls When Attacking: 5k4 sword or bite

Rolls for Damage: 5k2 (sword) or 4k1 (bite)

TN to be Hit: 25

Skills of Note: Athletics 3, Defense 4, Hand to Hand 5, Naga Blade 5, Stealth 5

Abomination: Naga, even abominations, fly into a rage at the sight of dark water abominations. Dark water abominations go out of their way to infect Naga over any other targets. Dark water abominations work together with one another without any fighting.

Dark Water Fever: Any humanoid creature bitten by a dark water abomination must make an Earth roll vs. TN 25 every hour for ten hours, or until three rolls fail. After failing three rolls, the target immediately becomes a dark water abomination. His Void Ring and Void Points now count as Akasha. His Stamina, Strength, Agility, and Reflexes all increase by two points. His Intelligence and Awareness drop by four points, to a minimum of one. The target becomes feral, bestial, and seeks to kill or infect any other humanoids he sees (though he will not risk his life foolishly). The disease can be cured if Path to Inner Peace is cast on the target before he transforms; the shugenja must make four Raises specifically to cure the disease. Peace of the Kami heals all effects of dark water fever instantly up to a full day after transformation.

Dehydration Vulnerability: Any effect that damages or banishes water spirits inflicts 2k2 Wounds on a dark water abomination. If a dark water abomination's skin is not moist,

it suffers 1k1 Wounds every hour that cannot be healed until it moistens its flesh once more.

Regeneration: A Dark Water abomination heals its Earth in Wounds every round so long as its skin is moist.

VILLAGE OF THE GRAND SONG

This is one of the oldest villages on the Isles, and unusually, it was not dedicated to a bushi or a shugenja or a Fortune. Neither was it created to exploit a local resource. Instead it honors a singer, and through him, the very spirit of the Mantis philosophy: the ability to succeed in any task through sheer determination.

Centuries ago, during the reign of Gusai, a young man named Kinei attended Dojo Raiden. Despite the best efforts of his sensei, he managed to be spectacularly incompetent. He was unable to effectively wield a sword, steer a ship, speak to the kami (in those days, Dojo Raiden offered shugenja training), or even sneak around a darkened courtyard properly. Even to the Mantis, who have a place for nearly everyone with any talent to speak of, Kinei was useless. His only virtue was a talent for singing, which his sensei, peers, family, and even daimyo considered worthless.

His sensei encouraged him to go on a *musha shugyo*, a warrior's pilgrimage, to find his purpose. Years later, Kinei returned with an entourage and went directly to Kyuden Gotei. He demanded to see the Champion, and he was admitted to Gusai's presence several days later.

"My Lord," he said. "I have spent five years on a *musha shugyo*, and I have returned to my clan with glory and wisdom."

The Champion's face broadened into a grin. "I have heard of you, singer. You have no talent as shugenja, bushi, or sailor. What possible glory have you brought to our clan?"

Kinei dropped a chest in front of him, which broke open as it hit the floor. Golden Crane and Phoenix koku spilled out. "I have attended the Winter Courts, and been paid handsomely by Doji and Isawa patrons. I am as much a mercenary as any other man — and I have received a lifetime's payment in five years. I am, now and forever, a Mantis."

Gusai nodded and laughed, because he understood the virtue of what Kinei had done — played to his strength and succeeded regardless of what others felt. For his reward, Gusai allowed Kinei to colonize one of the southern islands and found a village. In the Village of the Grand Song, there is a small dojo to teach the fine arts to the rare Mantis who has talent for such things. The famed Mantis poet Yoritomo Yoyonagi spent time at the temple, though she received the greater part of her training at the temples of Tempest Island.

GRAND SONG DOJO

Grand Song Dojo teaches no martial skills, instructing its students only in singing. The training takes less than a year, and few students enter the dojo, so often there are a mere handful of students present. The dojo is small enough that there is rarely a problem with having a small number of sensei, but currently the only sensei of the dojo is Yoritomo Masae. With seven students and no other sensei, the dojo has been a very empty place lately.

SOCIAL BENEFITS

None.

TRAINING BENEFITS

Benefit: You gain a +3 competence bonus to all Perform (singing) skill checks.

Benefit: You roll and keep an extra die on all Oratory/Rhetoric rolls that involve singing.

YORITOMO MASAE, GRAND SONG DOJO MASTER

[Courtier 2/Rogue 3; Yoritomo Bushi 2]

Yoritomo Masae would be a much happier man had he been born a Crane.

He is not a warrior or sailor, though he bears an impressive scar across his throat. He tells many tales of how he earned the wound, a different tale to each who asks. In truth, he injured himself falling from the rigging of a kobune.

Masae gets seasick easily, and much prefers riding his Doji pony to the open sea. In nearly every way that matters, he is not a Mantis. And yet he continues to wear the mon of the Mantis and serve his Champion Kitao.

His gift is that of song. Masae compares himself to the legendary Kinei, who began the instruction at Grand Song Dojo. Masae fancies himself the heir to Kinei's vocal abilities, and claims that the legendary singer watches over him as an ancestor.

KOUTETSUKAN, THE IMPERIAL HARBOR

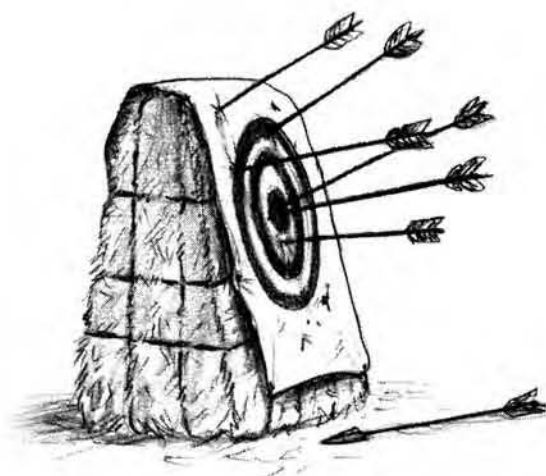
(LOCATION A26 IN ROKUGAN™; LOCATION A28 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE™)

Three hundred and fifty years ago, the Unicorn Clan returned to Rokugan. Very briefly, while much of the Empire was concerning itself with the new variable in Rokugani politics and warfare, the Seppun looked even farther outside of the Empire.

The Seppun reasoned that if the Unicorn could come into the Empire, anyone could. The unprepared Rokugani forces would be vulnerable to an unknown enemy. To forestall such an invasion, the newly returned Unicorn and the samurai of the Badger Clan were ordered to reinforce the Empire's land borders, while Koutetsukan was established on the Mantis Isles to protect the Empire from naval invasion. Koutetsukan was to build a vast Imperial fleet and explore the seas, destroying any potential threats encountered.

Many Mantis flocked to staff the new city's shipbuilding facilities. Preparations lasted nearly a year before a newly crowned Emperor canceled construction of the fleet. Citing Imperial Edict forbidding contact with gaijin, the young Hantei ordered that the plans be scrapped and the fleet scuttled.

Quick thinking on the parts of Mantis and Crane courtiers saved the city and the fleet. The fleet, such as it was, was divided up between the Mantis and the Daidoji. Though the Seppun still laid claim to the city, they cared little for what goes on there. It has effectively become a Mantis city. Koutetsukan's modern Imperial shipwrights build the highest-quality ships available to non-Mantis. Its vast shipyards construct a wide variety of vessels, including the Crab iron turtle warships that give the city its name.



SEPPUN CHISEKAI, GOVERNOR OF KOUTETSUKAN

[Samurai 7; Akodo Bushi 3]

Chisekai is a confident man, assured of his ability to govern a city despite his relative youth. He trained at Shiro no Yojin, studying under master sensei Ikoma Akiuji. He later went on to learn the art of governance from the highly respected Kakita Toriuchi. His third cousin and daimyo Seppun Hotaitaka personally bestowed the position of governor on him two years ago, and Chisekai has determined not to fail in his new position. He is very proud, almost excessively so. He brags of his teachers and his exploits at the side of the Lion armies to any who will listen, and occasionally to those who do not.

Despite his arrogance, or perhaps in part because of it, he is a skilled governor. He is confident in his ability to deal with any problem, and approaches crises with a calm, rational mind. Seppun Chisekai has been the best governor that the city has ever had. His one failing is that his arrogance often leads him to disrespect the many Mantis in his city. He considers them little better than pirates and mercenaries, and avoids dealing with them if he can.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While at a court elsewhere in the Empire, a courtier approaches a Mantis PC about infiltrating Koutetsukan. After all, another Mantis in Koutetsukan will hardly attract attention. The courtier requests that the PC steal the design specifications for a koutetsukan from the Crab shipbuilders, so that his own clan will be able to construct them. Though the mission is dishonorable, the courtier is generous with his payment and assures that the knowledge will not harm the Crab.

Focus: The PC must locate the plans in the office of one of the shipwrights. The manner in which he goes about taking a copy of the plans is irrelevant, though as this is an Imperial city, if he is caught the punishment is very severe and may lead to a diplomatic incident.

Strike: The courtier, when rewarded with the plans, takes them and quickly vanishes. If the PCs track the courtier to his clan, he denies everything and has a solid alibi for his whereabouts at the time. Now the PCs are left to wonder if the courtier is simply good at covering his tracks or if something far more sinister is going on...

IMPORTANT YORITOMO NPCS

YORITOMO KITAO, MANTIS CLAN CHAMPION

Yoritomo Kitao has always been ambitious. She first began to draw notice during the War of Spirits, when she became first mate on the Mantis raiding vessel the *Bitter Flower*. Serving under Yoritomo Leshanu, Kitao smuggled weapons and armor to the spirit armies of Hantei XVI. She did not consider the acts treacherous in the least, as the money that was raised outfitted Mantis mercenaries fighting against the Steel Chrysanthemum. Though most of the details of the operation were of Kitao's invention, Leshanu was promoted, becoming one of Yoritomo Aramasu's advisors. Kitao was made captain of the *Bitter Flower*.

Though she was furious that Leshanu accepted the reward that was rightfully hers, Kitao accepted her duties without complaint. She sailed for years as a pirate, smuggler, and mercenary, waiting for the day when she could gain her revenge. That day came when she stumbled onto a private deal between Yoritomo Leshanu's agents and a Crab merchant patron, Yasuki Jinn-Kuen. Leshanu had been embezzling resources from Aramasu and selling them to the Yasuki. Kitao approached Jinn-Kuen and offered to him her own mercenaries at a discounted rate if he quit buying from Leshanu and reported his dealings to Aramasu. Seeing the better deal, Jinn-Kuen agreed. Leshanu discovered Kitao's plot and attempted to stop her by attacking Jinn-Kuen's ship in transit — but Leshanu was himself ambushed by the *Bitter Flower*. Kitao slew Leshanu and sank his vessel.

Aramasu was outraged when he heard the news. Though Leshanu's treachery disturbed him, it angered him even more that Kitao had destroyed a Mantis vessel. He chastised her for her clumsiness and ordered her out of his sight. In that moment, Kitao determined that the Mantis Clan could never be truly respected so long as fools such as Leshanu and Aramasu were in charge. She put plans into motion to remove Aramasu from power, selling him to his enemies in the Scorpion in return for the wealth she would need to garner support for her own claim. She allowed the Scorpion to manipulate her at times, knowing that she had far more to gain by acting as their pawn for a time.

It was surprisingly simple. Aramasu fell into the trap and was assassinated by the Scorpion. As Aramasu had no heirs to speak of, Kitao quickly settled into his position. She took command of the Storm Legion and soon assumed leadership of the entire clan. It was only after several months as daimyo of the Mantis that she began to hear rumors of Yoritomo's heir — a rightful Mantis Champion who had been in hiding since the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. The idea filled Kitao with suspicion — what true heir of Yoritomo would remain hidden for so long? Did this "heir" pose a threat to her power? Kitao commanded her loyal vassals to scour the Empire for any sign of this lost heir, hoping to dispose of the possible threat. The Storm Legion serves her loyally. As one of their own, they are proud to do her bidding.

Kitao blames herself for not finding Yoritomo Kumiko before she could garner the support that she has. The idea is all the more disturbing because Kitao respects the Daughter of Storms. Under better circumstances, they might have been powerful allies. As things stand now, it is clear that the Mantis will not be whole again until one of them is dead.

Kitao is a cold, ruthless, ambitious person who does not shy from decisive action when it is required. Some consider her mercurial, but her actions spring from a lifetime of experience. Few Mantis have seen as many battlefields as she, and she knows well how to inspire those under her command. She may not be a kind leader, but she is an efficient and forceful leader. Those who acknowledge Kitao as ruler of the Mantis know that she will bring them glory.

YORITOMO KITAO

Female human Mantis Ftr 8/Rog 5/Sto 2: CR 15; Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d10+43 plus 5d6+20; hp 163; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 13, flat-footed 21); Attack +2 *keen kusarigama*, +20/+15/+10 melee (1d6+8 damage); SA Two Weapon Fighting; SQ Class skill — Profession (sailor) (family bonus), Evasion, Riding the Waves, Sneak Attack +3d6, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); Honor: 2; AL CN; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10 (11), Cha 11; Height: 5 ft. 6 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Languages (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani), Balance +8, Bluff +8, Climb +18, Diplomacy +8, Escape Artist +7, Gather Information +5, Innuendo +5, Intuit Direction +4, Jump +14, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Profession (sailor) +15, Ride +6, Sense Motive +5, Swim +17, Tumble +21; Cleave, Cold and Cunning (Ancestor: Gusai), Dodge, Leadership, Power Attack, Soul of the Storm, Strength of the Earth, Toughness, Versatile (Gather Information, Tumble), Void Use, Way of the Mantis (Naga blade, sling), Weapon Focus (kusarigama).

Dojo: Dojo Raiden; **Kata:** Strike at the Cliff's Edge

Possessions: +2 *keen kusarigama*, +3 *ashigaru armor*, gloves of swimming and climbing, *shakuhachi* of the *hai nu* (horn of tritons), amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +2, vest of escape.

YORITOMO KITAO

Earth: 5

Water: 5

Fire: 4

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 5

Dojo: Dojo Raiden

Honor: 2.0

Glory: 8.0

Advantages: Dangerous Beauty, Heartless, Kharmic Tie (Yoritomo Kumiko), Leadership, Storm Legion

Disadvantages: Nemesis (Yoritomo Kumiko), Overconfident, Vain

Skills: Appraisal 3, Athletics 4, Battle 2, Commerce 3, Courtier 3, Defense 5, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kuenai 5, Kyujutsu 3, No-Dachi 5, Sailing 6, Tanto 2

Kata: Strike at the Cliff's Edge

YORITOMO KUMIKO, DAUGHTER OF STORMS

Yoritomo Kumiko is the daughter of Yoritomo and his wife Wakiza, who married shortly before the Battle of Oblivion's Gate. During the battle, Wakiza was gravely wounded in battle with a spawn of Tsuburu no Oni. Yoritomo commanded his shugenja guardian, Komori, to return Wakiza to the islands and protect her. Komori obediently did so, leaving his master to face his death in the troll city. After returning home, it soon became clear that Wakiza had been infected with the Shadowlands Taint. It also soon became clear that she was with child.

Komori knew that the child would be born corrupted, but he could not bring himself to destroy the Son of Storms' only child. As the pregnancy drew closer to term, Wakiza slowly became weaker. She died during childbirth, leaving only Komori and a few members of the Yoritomo Elite Guard with the knowledge that the Son of Storms had a child.

When Aramasu heard the news, he ordered Komori to protect and raise the child. She would be instructed in ways to control her own corruption. She was sent to a distant monastery on a secluded island, far from the stressful political struggles that would otherwise have been the lot of Yoritomo's daughter.

Kumiko's life has been a difficult one. From early childhood, she was forced to fight back the darkness that wells up within her. She has never known sleep without nightmares. Not a single day has passed that she has struggled for her own soul. Though she never knew her parents, she has always felt their guiding spirits, lending her the strength she needs to continue.

She has also never lacked for support. Komori, Kamoto, and other members of the Yoritomo Elite Guard have always been there with advice and support. Though she did not leave her secluded island for decades, she used her time well and mastered the techniques of the Mantis. She has been trained in the Elite Guard's ancient fighting style, and studied her father's campaigns during the Clan War. She is skilled with katana and kama, and has a brilliant tactical mind. All of her efforts to improve herself were never intended to groom her for a position as leader of the Mantis — she simply learned as much as possible to focus her mind and fight back the corruption inside her.

When her adopted brother Aramasu died, Kumiko was outraged. Though she had only met Aramasu a handful of times, he had always been kind and respectful toward her. When Kumiko learned that his betrayer now ruled the clan in his stead, she could not endure it. Against Komori's objections, she emerged from the temple and gathered the Yoritomo Elite Guard. She allied with Akodo Kaneka and began rallying to her banner other Mantis dissatisfied with Kitao. In a remarkably short period of time she has become a serious threat to Kitao's power.

Though Kumiko has little experience, she has an agile mind and adapts quickly to any situation. She greatly values honor and self-control, two virtues that have allowed her to endure despite her corruption. While Kumiko disdains the chaotic, ruthless actions that are so typical of Kitao, she cannot deny the loyalty and obedience Kitao inspires in the Storm Legion. Publicly, she will not rest until Kitao has paid for her crimes. Privately, Kumiko wonders if she truly would make the better leader.

KUMIKO'S SHADOWLANDS TAINT

Yoritomo Kumiko keeps her mild Shadowlands Taint in check through a ritual of exercise, meditation, and herbal remedies, including frequent doses of Tea of Jade Petals. Certain members of the Kuni Witch Hunters are aware of her Taint (they keep tabs on all who purchase the tea). They have chosen not to interfere with Kumiko for now, as she seems to be keeping her corruption in check. In fact, the Kuni are quite impressed with Kumiko's progress, as already she has developed new techniques that allow her to resist the siren song of the Taint. The Kuni continue to watch her with interest.

FIGHT BACK THE DARKNESS

(NEW KATA)

Preparation Time: 10 minutes

Duration: 120 minutes

This kata allows the user to draw upon deep reserves of willpower and self-control, maintaining serenity despite outside influences. Any time the user willingly accepts an influence that corrupts his body or mind (such as conscious use of drugs, alcohol or drawing upon the power of maho or the Shadowlands Taint) the kata is disrupted and all benefits are lost.

D20 SYSTEM:

Requirements: Wisdom 13+, Depths of the Void, Base Will save +5 or higher

XP Cost: 50

Effect: When using this kata, you gain a bonus equal to your total character level to any saves to resist gaining the Shadowlands Taint or to resist any mind-affecting effects. If use of this kata should be prematurely disrupted, you instead suffer a -10 penalty to all such saves.

LSR RPG 2E SYSTEM:

Rank: Insight Rank 3

Cost: 5

Special: Must have 3 or higher Willpower.

Effect: You gain two Free Raises on any rolls to resist effects that would corrupt or subvert your mind or body, including gaining the Shadowlands Taint and mind control spells. If use of this kata should be prematurely disrupted, you instead suffer a -20 to all rolls to resist such effects.

Kumiko is uncertain what she will do if she is successful in deposing Kitao. Already the stress of organizing her supporters is beginning to wear upon her, and she can hear the siren call of the corruption within her. She has begun to investigate rumors that Yoritomo Yukue, the former leader of the Storm Legion who was corrupted at Volturum, cleansed her Taint with the aid of the Naga. Unfortunately the Storm Legion is fiercely loyal to Kitao, and no one knows what ever became of Yukue.

YORITOMO KUMIKO

Female human Mantis Sam 9/YEL 1: CR 10; Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d10+40; hp 121; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (touch 14, flat-footed 16); Attack *Yoritomo's kama* +16/+11/+11 melee (1d6+8 damage); SA Storms Never Fall; SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill — Profession (sailor) (family bonus); Honor: 2; AL NG; SV Fort +12, Ref +8, Will +9; Str 16, Dex 17, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 18, Taint Points 1; Height: 5 ft. 7 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Languages (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani), Balance +5, Battle +17, Climb +10, Diplomacy +10, Intimidate +17, Jump +10, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +12, Profession (sailor) +11, Sense Motive +14, Swim +10, Tumble +16; Claws of the Mantis, Hand of Osano-Wo, Power Attack, The Son of Storms (Ancestor: Yoritomo), Soul of the Storm, Void Use, Way of the Mantis (longsword, sling), Weapon Focus (kama).

Dojo: Dojo Raiden; **Kata:** Fight Back the Darkness (*new kata*, see sidebar), Howl of the Son of Storms, Prayer's End, Strike at the Cliff's Edge, Striking as Water.

Possessions: *Yoritomo's kama* (see sidebar), +2 *ashigaru armor*, ring of mind shielding (variant; prevents her Taint from being detected when worn; does not function for a wearer with a Taint modifier higher than +1), ring of protection +1.

YORITOMO KUMIKO

Earth: 4

Willpower: 7

Water: 4

Fire: 3

Agility: 5

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3, Yoritomo Elite 1

Dojo: Dojo Raiden

Honor: 2.0

Glory: 8.0

Shadowlands Taint: 0.1

Advantages: Ancestor (Yoritomo), Kharmic Tie (Yoritomo Kitao), Taint Resistance

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Tainted), Meddler, Nemesis (Yoritomo Kitao), Proud

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Commerce 3, Defense 4, Diplomacy 3, Hunting 4, Intimidate 4, Kama 6, Kenjutsu 3, Kuenai 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Sailing 5, Tanto 3

Kata: Fight Back the Darkness (*new kata*, see sidebar), Howl of the Son of Storms, Prayer's End, Strike at the Cliff's Edge, Striking as Water

YORITOMO NAIZEN, HATAMOTO TO YORITOMO KITAO

Yoritomo Naizen's name is known up and down the coast of Rokugan. In his youth, he was a cutthroat bandit who raided the holdings of the Phoenix, Lion, Crane, Crab, and Fox. His band of mercenary followers did not confine their exploits to the seas, but frequently wandered inland on raiding missions as well.

Though Naizen was a bold thief, he was rarely disrespectful to those he attacked and never killed a victim who did not attempt to kill him first. He demanded the same honorable behavior of those who followed him. Once, while raiding a Doji caravan, he ordered his mercenaries to halt when he

noticed one of them harassing a pretty young Kakita artisan. He immediately challenged his own man to a duel, cut him down in the road, and apologized to the young woman. Despite his reputation as a charming bandit, the magistrates of the Empire were not amused, and Naizen accrued a substantial bounty on his head. So great was the reward for his capture that even many of his fellow Mantis hunted him.

In time, the life of a fugitive began to wear on Naizen. Though he enjoyed excitement and adventure, the life of a thief had become hollow. Wealth was fleeting, and what he stole one day would be gone the next. What he truly wanted was to be remembered as something other than a criminal. When he studied the ways of bushido he envied those who followed the way of the samurai — heroes who were commended for strength and daring rather than despised.

His chance came when Yoritomo Kitao rose to power as Champion of the Mantis. Naizen's ship encountered the *Bitter Flower* on the high seas. Kitao gave Naizen an ultimatum — abandon his lawless ways with full pardon and join her armies, or die. Naizen immediately swore fealty to Kitao and joined the Storm Legion.

Truthfully, Naizen was relieved, and welcomed the opportunity to serve his clan in an honorable capacity. Given Naizen's experience and resourcefulness, Kitao appointed him

YORITOMO'S KAMA

The Son of Storms was seldom seen without his kama. These were originally a pair of simple weapons Yoritomo snatched from the ground, but they have been awakened by the strength of Yoritomo's legend. His soul is said to dwell within the blades, guiding them for any who fight for the good of the Mantis. Yoritomo gave the weapons to Aramasu upon his death. Aramasu never felt worthy of them, so he passed them on to Kumiko. The fact that Kumiko can wield the kama is the greatest evidence that she is the true Daughter of Storms.

The kama are simple in appearance — they are merely small sickles with handles bound in green silk. They do not radiate magic when not in the hands of a Mantis (unless a Mantis is the one casting the spell to detect magic). However, when wielded by a descendant of Yoritomo their true power becomes apparent.

If the kama are ever separated by more than twenty feet, one always teleports to the other's side. (The one further from the Mantis heir is the one that teleports.)

D20 SYSTEM:

To any Mantis, the kama are +1 weapons. In the hands of a descendant of Yoritomo (such as Yoritomo Kumiko) they become +5 *vorpal kama*.

15R RPG 2E SYSTEM:

In the hands of any Mantis, the kama allow the wielder to roll and keep one extra die on attack and damage. In the hands of a descendant of Yoritomo, the kama allow the wielder to roll and keep extra dice equal to her total ranks in all Mantis bushi schools on attack and damage. If the wielder ever does more than 30 Wounds with a single hit, the target must make an Earth roll vs. TN 20 (after damage is inflicted) or die.

as one of her generals; he has not disappointed her. He enjoys the life of an officer, which he finds every bit as bloody and exciting as the life of a thief, but more respectable. He is vaguely amused by the uncomfortable looks that cross the faces of Crane and Phoenix courtiers when they meet him, well aware of who he once was. He uses his reputation to his advantage, gaining support for Kitao through veiled threats and intimidation where charm does not suffice.

Recently, Naizen was given a rather simple but direct mission — find Yoritomo Kumiko and kill her. While Naizen obediently accepted the task, he had hoped that his cutthroat days were behind him. The thought of assassinating Kitao's rival does not sit well. From what he has learned of Kumiko so far, she seems like a noble and honorable person, making the mission more difficult. Nonetheless, Naizen does not plan to fail his mistress.

Recently, during his travels through mainland Rokugan, Naizen learned that the Temple of Osano-Wo had come into possession of the helm of the Thunder Dragon, the dragon that was mother to Osano-Wo. Hoping that it might grant him the wisdom to find an honorable solution to his dilemma, Naizen claimed it in Kitao's name. Though the helm has brought Naizen significant power, he is still uncertain how to deal with Yoritomo Kumiko without betraying Kitao.

YORITOMO NAIZEN

Male human Mantis Ftr 4/Nin 3: CR 7; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 4d10+8 plus 3d6+6; hp 61; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Atk fine quality Rokugani steel yari (natural +1 enhancement) +12/+7 melee (1d8+7 damage), masterwork mighty yumi (+3 Strength modifier) +12/+7 ranged (1d8+3 damage); AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 15); SA Sneak attack +2d6; SQ Class skill — Profession (sailor) (family bonus), Ninja Dodge +1, Poison Use, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); Honor: 3; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +5; Str 16 (17), Dex 15 (16), Con 14 (15), Int 15 (16), Wis 12 (13), Cha 13 (14); Height 5 ft. 6 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani, High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms), Balance +9, Bluff +8, Climb +7, Hide +9, Jump +10, Move Silently +9, Profession (sailor) +9, Ride +8, Spot +9, Tumble +11; Gusai's Technique, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Void Use, Weapon Focus (yari), Weapon Specialization (yari), Weaving Dodging Rolling.

Dojo: Dojo Raiden; **Kata:** Striking as Fire.

Possessions: 20 masterwork arrows, dragon helm of thunder (see sidebar), excellent quality Rokugani steel ashigaru armor (natural +2 enhancement), eyes of the eagle, fine quality Rokugani steel yari (natural +1 enhancement), masterwork mighty yumi (+3 Strength modifier).

YORITOMO NAIZEN

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Strength: 4

Fire: 3

Air: 2

Reflexes: 4

Void: 2

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 2 (Dojo Raiden)

Honor: 3.3

Glory: 2.4

Advantages: Blood of Osano-Wo, Crafty, Social Position (Kitao's hatamoto)

Disadvantages: Brash, Overconfident, Sworn Enemy (Yoritomo Komori)

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 2, Climbing 3, Commerce 1, Defense 3, Gambling 3, Horsemanship 2, Intimidation 4, Jiu-jitsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Nofujutsu 5, Sailing 5, Stealth 3

THE DRAGON HELM OF THUNDER

Mortal minds have ever sought to understand the enigmatic and powerful Dragons of the Celestial Heavens. Long ago, a clever Soshi shugenja learned the way to contain a portion of a dragon's power within a nemuranai, just as a shugenja would harness the power of a simple elemental kami. Though the shugenja was immolated by the Oracle of Fire shortly thereafter, her apprentices passed on her secrets. Over time, a handful of Scorpion shugenja have secretly used her discoveries to create the dragon helms.

One Dragon Helm of Thunder was in possession of the monks of Osano-Wo until recently, when it was appropriated by Kitao's lieutenant, Yoritomo Naizen. Naizen considers his possession of the helm a sign of Osano-Wo's favor upon his mistress, and he wears it proudly.

D20 SYSTEM:

The Dragon Helm of Thunder grants immunity to fear and sleep effects and a +1 bonus to all ability scores. In addition, the helm allows the wearer to see the Elemental Dragons and their oracles in their true form, no matter what disguises they may take. If the wearer encounters the Thunder Dragon, he may make one demand of her (equal in power to a wish) in return for giving her the helmet.

Caster level: 15th; **Prerequisites:** craft wondrous item, summon nature's ally VII; **Market Price:** 100,000 koku.

LSR RPG 2E SYSTEM:

The Dragon Helm of Thunder renders the wearer immune to all Fear effects as well as any spell or ability that would cause the wearer to fall asleep. This does not prevent the wearer from the natural need to sleep; it merely protects him from outside influences that would cause it. In addition, the helm increases all of the wearer's Rings (but not the associated Traits) by one as long as it is worn. This affects all the number of dice kept on all rolls as well as the potency of shugenja's spells and the number of Wounds a character can take before dying. Finally, the helm allows the wearer to see the Elemental Dragons and their oracles in their true form, no matter what disguises they may take. If the wearer encounters the Thunder Dragon, he may make one demand of her in return for giving her the helmet. The Thunder Dragon's power is such that nearly any request can be granted, though if the wearer is cowardly or selfish the dragon may twist the spirit of the wish, granting it in an unexpected way.

YORITOMO KOMORI, MANTIS CLAN SUMMONER

Yoritomo Komori is the son of a Mantis shugenja and a koumori, the strange bat-spirits of Chikushudo who occasionally take human form and serve as protectors of mortals (see *Fortunes and Winds*™ for details on the koumori). Raised and educated by the koumori to revere all life and protect those in need, Komori honored his spirit-father by naming himself after their race.

Though none other than Komori and his mother know the truth about his father, many suspect that he is not entirely normal. He has always favored darkness and shadows over light. He moves with subtle grace, surprising others who did not notice his approach. Though he practices the magic of the Yoritomo school, his spells are often different from those of other shugenja. He favors summoning spells, but the animals that answer his call are invariably bats. Even the elemental spirits he summons resemble bats. Bats naturally sense Komori's unique heritage, and flock about him as if he were one of them.

Since the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, it has been Yoritomo Komori's duty to protect the Daughter of Storms. Komori took his oath quite seriously, and even went so far as to shave his head and live at the monastery himself. Retired samurai cannot be commanded by their former Clan Champions, so Komori hoped none would inquire too closely into his precise status — for although he went through all the motions, he never explicitly retired.

He is Kumiko's primary educator and protector. To conceal her presence on the island, Komori drew upon his contacts in the Yoritomo Elite Guard and arranged for all samurai who witnessed Wakiza's return to be given duties in the most distant corners of Rokugan. Those with any actual knowledge of Kumiko's birth were either sent beyond the borders of the Empire or confined to the monastery as her protectors. While Komori realizes that he risks these individuals revealing the truth about Kumiko's existence, the alternative — ordering the deaths of members of his own clan — is unacceptable no matter what the cause. Unfortunately, as Kitao's hunt for Kumiko becomes increasingly fervent, Komori worries that he will not be able to keep his hands clean of Mantis blood forever.

Over the years, he has come to view Kumiko as his own daughter. The way she has struggled against the Taint and proven herself greater than the power that claimed her parents fills him with pride. To Komori, she is living evidence that even in death the Shadowlands could not conquer the Son of Storms. His soul lives on within her.

Komori has absolutely no respect for Yoritomo Kitao. If the decision were his own, he would personally seek out and destroy the usurper with his magic, but Komori realizes that such a violent act would inevitably stain Kumiko's reputation. For the moment, he bides his time and continues to protect the Daughter of Storms.

YORITOMO KOMORI

Male human Mantis Shu12: CR12, Medium-size humanoid; HD12d6+24; hp 75; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; Atk wakizashi +7/+2 melee (1d6 damage); AC 17 (touch 11, flat-footed 16); SQ Class skill — Profession (sailor) (family bonus), Shugenja abilities (Elemental Focus — Water, Sense Elements); Honor 2; AL CG; SV Fort +8, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 19 (21), Cha 17; Height 5 ft. 5 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani, Yobanjin), Alchemy +18, Concentration +17, Heal +21, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (Fortunes) +11, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +12, Move Silently +12, Profession (sailor) +12, Spellcraft +18; Blessing of Water, Elemental Insight, Elemental Versatility (×2), Versatile (Intimidate, Move Silently), Void Use.

Dojo: Tempest Island.

Spells Known (6/8/7/7/6/3, Base DC 14 + spell level, Elemental Focus — Water, Yoritomo School): 0 — cleanse, commune with elements, create water, cure minor wounds, flight of doves (summons bats instead), know direction, purify food and drink, purity, read magic, Suitengu's surge; 1st — animal friendship, castle of water, detect taint, obscuring mist, protection from taint, sleep; 2nd — bo of water, cure moderate wounds, distracting spirits, endless seas, hold person, lesser restoration, locate object; 3rd — dispel magic, remove curse, remove disease, summon nature's ally III, water breathing, water walk, 4th — air walk, control water, cure critical wounds, jade strike, torrential rain; 5th — healing circle, strike of flowing water, summon nature's ally V, symbol of water; 6th — contingency, master of the rolling river, summon nature's ally VI, true seeing.

Possessions: +3 ashigaru armor, bracelet of friends (attuned to Yoritomo Kumiko and Yoritomo Kamoto), cloak of resistance +2, periapt of wisdom +2, ring of animal friendship, wakizashi.

YORITOMO KOMORI

Earth: 3

Willpower: 4

Water: 5

Perception: 6

Fire: 2

Intelligence: 4

Air: 4

Void: 3

School/Rank: Yoritomo Shugenja 4

Dojo: Tempest Island

Honor: 2.2

Glory: 4.1

Advantages: Allies (various koumori), Inner Gift (can speak to and understand bats)

Disadvantages: Obligation (protect Kumiko), Old

Skills: Athletics 3, Bojutsu 3, Calligraphy 2, Intimidation 3, Kuenai 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 5, Meditation 5, Sailing 4, Shintao 4, Spellcraft 4, Stealth 4, Tanto 4, Theology 3.

Spells: (asterisk denotes innate abilities) Bo of Water, By the Light of Lord Moon, Call Beasts*, Castle of Water, Commune*, Endless Seas, Heart of Mortality (targeting Yoritomo Kumiko), Heart of Nature*, Master of the Rolling River, Nature's Touch*, Path to Inner Peace*, Sense*, Summon Air Spirit*, Summon Earth Spirit*, Summon Fire Spirit*, Summon Fog, Summon Water Spirit*, Summon*, Symbol of Water, The Tie That Binds, Walking Upon the Waves

VASSAL FAMILIES

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

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

For example: Goraiku Chojin is a member of the Goraiku vassal family of the Moshi. To all members of the Moshi and other Mantis families, he is known as Goraiku Chojin. In the Ikoma histories and to outsiders, however, he is known as Moshi Chojin. When presenting himself to others outside the clan, Chojin may introduce himself as "Moshi Chojin of House Goraiku" or simply "Moshi Chojin of Goraiku." If a member of any other clan should visit Chojin in the Goraiku family estate at Yakamo Seido, then he would be entitled to refer to himself by his vassal family name, for it is assumed the visitor realizes that he is in the lands of the Moshi.

VASSALS OF THE YORITOMO FAMILY

THE HOGOSHA FAMILY

"Neither honorable men nor brigands can survive if the Empire should fall. Is it not, then, our duty to break the bonds of tradition, and place a successor on the throne?"

—Yoritomo Hogosha

Thirty years ago, there were few Mantis in the Imperial Court. As a Minor Clan, they had limited influence outside the Mantis Isles. Then, on the Day of Thunder, Yoritomo earned the Mantis the status of Great Clan. Things began to change. Slowly, the other courtiers listened to the Mantis emissaries. Great Clans lobbied to gain the new Great Clan as an ally. Their words began to carry weight with the other members of the court, and for a time, everyone looked to the Mantis. They were the new Great Clan, and as one of the strongest military forces in the Empire at the time, the direction they took would decide a great deal of the Empire's future.

Yoritomo Hogosha, chief among the Mantis courtiers, was a stabilizing force in a chaotic Empire. He called for leadership during the absence of Toturi, as the regent (a former ronin named Takuan) could unfortunately do little to unify the

fracturing Empire. Along with his ally Kakita Yoshi, Hogosha's Mantis and Yoshi's Crane filled the power vacuum that the loss of the Scorpion created. Hogosha led with the cunning and ambition typical of a Mantis. His career was unfortunately cut short when the maddened Toturi returned and ordered the slaughter of the Imperial Court, but his efforts were remembered.

Though Hogosha's time at the center of the Empire was brief, it hardly went unnoticed. Even through the chaos that was the War Against the Shadow, both Yoritomo and his adopted son Aramasu saw that he had been quite capable of coordinating the clan's diplomatic efforts — and that with more resources and a little more good fortune, the Mantis could have nearly ruled the Empire. As a result, Aramasu heralded him as a success. In the year 1137, just after the fall of Yoritomo's Alliance, Aramasu instated a vassal family of the Yoritomo to posthumously honor Hogosha.

The Hogosha family has done its best to keep track of the four Winds' actions. While the Mantis support Kaneka's claim to the Imperial Throne, only an fool would ignore the other three completely. The Hogosha also attend to the diplomatic necessities of the clan. It was a Hogosha who negotiated the details of the current alliance between the Mantis and the Unicorn.

Despite their responsibilities, the Hogosha are a very small family, with around thirty adult members. Few Mantis find the job of courtier satisfying enough to make it their life's work, and the Hogosha constantly find themselves spread too thin to be effective.

The Hogosha are decidedly neutral in the current struggle between the two Mantis Clan Champions. Instead, they are gathering a base of power for the clan as a whole, and are careful to not be used as pawns by either Kitao or Kumiko. It is a dangerous game they play, but they consider themselves too important to the clan's political dealings to be destroyed in the clan's internal conflict. Kitao has grudgingly accepted their position, but Kumiko has nothing but loathing for the weak-spined Hogosha. Time will tell if this pushes the Hogosha into Kitao's camp.

In order to keep tabs on the Four Winds, the Hogosha have endeavored to establish a presence in all four of the Winds' courts. Their success has been decidedly limited. Aside from the Estates in Yasuki Yashiki, the Hogosha maintain a sizable contact with Hantei Naseru's court in Ryoko Owari. The courts of Toturi Tsudao and Toturi Sezarū have no Hogosha representatives. Sezarū has no use for lowborn vassals, and Tsudao considers them cowardly opportunists.

HOGOSHA ESTATES

Located on the outskirts of Yasuki Yashiki (CB18), the Hogosha Estates house nearly a dozen members of the family, as well as a sizable 'honor guard'. The estate is very large, and it is considered to be the Hogosha's family home, though it does not lie in Mantis lands. Akodo Kaneka gave it to the Hogosha in a rare moment of generosity, and they in turn serve him as diplomats, emissaries, and clerks. There is much work to be done to assist the Shogun in his bid to become Emperor, and the bulk of the diplomatic efforts are based here.

SACRED TRUTH HOME

This ironically named building is the Hogosha's only other significant holding. The home, which houses seven Hogosha, is in the Noble Quarter of Ryoko Owari. The city of Ryoko

Owari is disputed territory — it is the capital city of the court of Hantei Naseru, and the Unicorn and the Scorpion hotly contest its control. For the moment, it is Naseru's city, and he allows the Hogosha to live there.

The Hogosha do their level best to spy on the Anvil, as he is Kaneka's primary concern in the quest to become Emperor. Naseru is well aware of this, and thus the Hogosha rarely have any success, but they persevere. In the meantime, Naseru's agents work to turn the Hogosha to the Anvil's side, encouraging them with promises of wealth and status. Already a few of the Hogosha have begun to reconsider their alliance with the Shogun.

The Hogosha act as the Mantis' arm in Ryoko Owari, supporting the Unicorn claim to ownership of the city. The Hogosha have no desire to allow territory as crucial as Ryoko Owari to fall into the hands of the Scorpion, and have no problems with resorting to dishonorable tactics (or hiring others to use dishonorable tactics) to hinder the Scorpion's efforts.

THE HOGOSHA FAMILY

Characters of the Hogosha family are almost exclusively courtiers. Some choose the path of the multiclass courtier/rogue or even courtier/samurai, but the Hogosha family was made to be courtiers, and that is what they do to this day.

Favored Class: Courtier

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skill: Diplomacy

Starting Outfit:

1. 325 koku
2. Royal outfit (See the Player's Handbook™) and 125 koku

THE HOGOSHA FAMILY

The Hogosha family is far too new and small to have created a school as the other clans' courtiers have done. Because of that, many Hogosha attend the Doji Courtier school at great expense to the clan. A scant few attend the Ide Emissary school, or a bushi school. No Hogosha — or any Mantis — would ever go to a Scorpion school.

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Glory: 0.5

Special: Must purchase Different School and attend Doji Courtier or Ide Emissary School. The character receives a special 1-point discount on this Advantage.

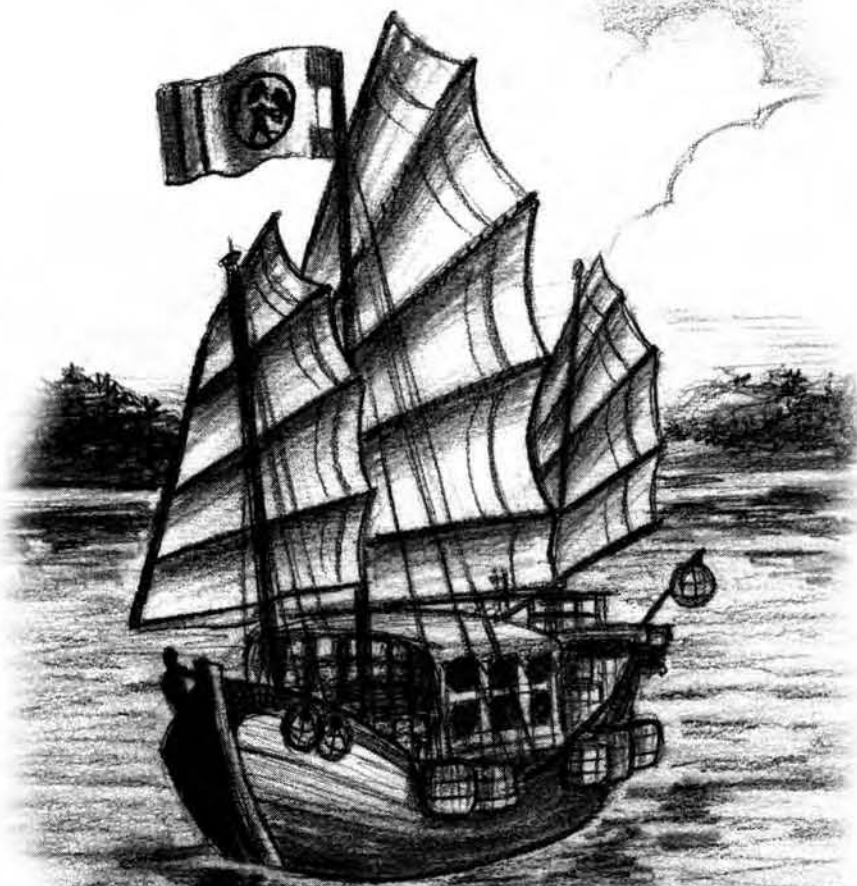
THE WATANABE FAMILY

Yoritomo Watanabe, born simply Watanabe, was a visionary shipbuilder who made significant advances in the stagnant field of shipmaking. When Aramasu began honoring those Mantis worthy to lead a vassal family, Watanabe's name headed the short list.

The trouble was, Watanabe was not a very good leader. He was a fine shipbuilder, and his skills were more than worthy of the honor, but to place him in charge would have led to the family's collapse within a generation.

To avoid this fate, Aramasu chose several aides for Watanabe, chosen from specific bloodlines within the Mantis. These were competent administrators and warriors, leaders and advisors, and they came to Watanabe to found his family. Among them came the finest shipbuilders in the clan — when offered a chance to swear fealty to Watanabe-sama, they leaped at the opportunity.

Watanabe died two years after the founding of his family, and he never learned the truth — the Watanabe exist to do more than simply build ships. After a generation, the Watanabe vassal family is contained entirely of members of the bloodlines of Gusai. Gusai was the first Mantis daimyo to earn the clan a family name, by proving to the Emperor the power of steel over words. His descendants' arrogance cost the family name (and nearly the clan's existence as well), and by Imperial edict Gusai was stricken from the records of the clan and the histories. In fact, those of Gusai blood maintained their brotherhood even within the Yoritomo, being a de facto vassal family. Aramasu, an adopted son of the bloodline himself, knew that he could never violate Imperial edict to forge a Gusai family again.



And so, the Watanabe were born to house the Gusai, and ostensibly to construct the finest ships of the Empire. They are master shipwrights first and foremost — anything less would disgrace Watanabe. However, the blood of Gusai runs strong in their veins, and many of them are also capable assassins. The Watanabe family has a rivalry with the shipbuilders of Koutetsukan (Location A26 in Rokugan; Location A28 in the *Game Master's Guide*.™ See page 22).

SOUTEN BIKO (BEAUTIFUL DAWN PORT)

The unofficial family home of the Watanabe lies on the beach just north of Toshi no Inazuma. Beautiful Dawn Port is the drydock that houses the Watanabe boats as they are built.

The building is a large one, allowing nearly a dozen of the new Watanabe kobune and the older *sengokobune* to be built at once. Hundreds of workers, samurai and heimin alike, work on the Mantis fleets. While the Watanabe style of kobune has always been popular, since the founding of the family, demand has skyrocketed. In the past ten years, Souten Biko has not once had an idle day. Watanabe's kobune rose in popularity even further when Yoritomo Kitao commissioned a new *Bitter Flower*. The Watanabe do not sell their products to non-Mantis, since there are not even enough for all the Mantis who want one.

Watanabe's construction secret is simple. The new style of kobune are constructed piecemeal, and can be assembled or disassembled in little under an hour when the pieces are complete. The pieces are all identical, allowing for faster repairs; the Watanabe kobune is Rokugan's first product made with replaceable parts. The parts must be made to exacting standards; after all, the boat must still be watertight. Unfortunately for the Mantis, Watanabe was not quite the Rokugani equivalent of Henry Ford. Such a level of technology remains far beyond Rokugan's reach.

THE WATANABE FAMILY

Characters of the Watanabe family tend to be rogues, or rogue/ninja. The ancestor feat Cold and Cunning (Ancestor: Gusai) is very common among this family.

Favored Class: Rogue or Expert (player's choice — those with Rogue are the assassins of the family, the Experts are the shipwrights, though the distinction is slight as far as the family itself is concerned).

Starting Honor: 1

Class Skill: Craft (shipmaking)

Starting Outfit:

1. May purchase a kobune for 1,000 koku as the Yoritomo family.
2. Masterwork sailor's kit (provides +2 circumstance bonus on Craft checks related to boats, as well as to Profession (Sailor) checks)

THE WATANABE FAMILY

Many Watanabe attend the Yoritomo Bushi school, but most do not join the clan's armies. The assassins of the clan learn skills like Stealth, Athletics, and Acting to do their jobs — there is no ninja-style school for the Watanabe. Those who focus on the construction end of things often have very high levels of Craft (Shipwright) and Engineering. Both groups often have the Gusai ancestor (see *Way of the Minor Clans*.™).

Benefit: +1 Perception

Glory: 0.5

YORITOMO MECHANICS

NEW ANCESTORS

YORITOMO

The legendary Champion who brought the Mantis the status of a Great Clan, Yoritomo was a man of boundless ambition and strength. He led not just the Mantis but a great alliance of Minor Clans through the Clan War, and stood with the Champions of the great houses on the Day of Thunder. He died in battle against the First Goju and would not kneel before the master of the Lying Darkness even in death.

THE SON OF STORMS

IMANTIS ANCESTOR FEAT: YORITOMO1

Clan: Mantis

Prerequisite: Void Use

Benefit: The unyielding spirit of Yoritomo guides your soul. Once a day, you may spend a Void Point to automatically succeed on any saving throw vs. a mind-affecting effect. If you ever become dishonorable, you lose the effects of this ancestor until you no longer have a dishonorable alignment.

YORITOMO

(10 POINTS)

Your soul carries the indomitable strength of Yoritomo, the Son of Storms. Once per day, you may spend a Void Point to automatically succeed at an Honor Test or resist the effects of something that would cause you to lose control of your own actions (such as a Command the Mind spell or a Fear effect). You gain no Honor for succeeding in an Honor Test in this fashion, and if you ever drop below 2 Honor, you lose the benefits of this Ancestor until you regain your former Honor level.

YORITOMO FURIKAE

Few history scrolls record the name of Yoritomo Furikae, the standard-bearer of the Mantis armies that invaded the Phoenix lands during the War Against the Shadow. Five times the young samurai was wounded by enemy archers and magic, but he continued to stand and hold the war banner of the Mantis house boldly against the sky. Furikae was an inspiration of unconquerable resolve and strength, though few knew him.

STAND WITHOUT FEAR

IMANTIS ANCESTOR FEAT: YORITOMO FURIKAE1

Clan: Mantis

Benefit: Once per day, if a single attack drops you below 1 hit point, you may spend a Void Point to regain enough hit points to be at one hit point again. You may not use this ability if the attack brings you to -10 hit points or less.

YORITOMO FURIKAE

(7 POINTS)

Like your ancestor, you cannot be brought down easily. Once per day, if you are brought to the Down Wound Level, you may spend a Void Point to regain enough Wounds so that you have one Wound remaining in the Wound Level above Down. You may not use this ancestor if you are brought to the Out or Dead wound levels.

NAVAL BATTLE TABLES

Mass combat does happen on the waves, although rarely. The Battle Table given on pages 238–242 of the *Game Master's Guide™* can be adapted for sea warfare with few changes. Most notably, water warfare is less violent than ground combat — skirmishes happen between boats instead of large-scale combat of two forces crashing together. To use the Battle Tables for naval warfare, make the following adjustments:

- Characters in Reserves and Disengaged categories take no Wounds and cannot gain more than one point of Glory each turn. Characters in these categories ignore any result of “duel” or “Heroic Opportunity.”
- Iaijutsu dueling with the waves shifting your balance constantly is nearly impossible. If a “duel” result is rolled, the character instead engages in a skirmish with an NPC with quick stats to the GM's liking for at least one to two rounds before the boats disengage or one vessel is overrun. Glory is gained normally, though Wounds are gained only through the skirmish.
- Certain Heroic Opportunities cannot be used at sea. Entries such as “Pick Up the Banner” are unlikely to occur.
- Battle skill rolls made by characters without the Sailor skill do not reroll 10s. Characters with the Sailor skill may add their total Sailor skill to all Battle rolls, which reroll 10s normally.

THE YORITOMO BUSHI SCHOOL

This school was originally presented in Way of the Minor Clans, with an additional fifth Rank Technique added in Time of the Void. It is reprinted here and updated to Second Edition rules for ease of reference.

Benefit: +1 Agility

Beginning Honor: 1

Basic Skills: Athletics, Battle, Commerce, Defense, Kenjutsu, Sailing, any one Bugei skill

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Fight Without Steel

The origins of the Mantis are noble, but out of necessity they have learned to master a number of peasant weapons. All peasant weapon skills count as High Skills for a Yoritomo bushi. Yoritomo bushi may wield any weapon as if their skill with that weapon were one Rank higher (even if they possess no Ranks in the weapon skill). Finally, Mantis naval training allows Yoritomo bushi to adapt quickly to unstable surfaces. They may ignore any penalties for unsure footing and imbalance in combat.

Rank 2: Voice of the Storm

The Yoritomo bushi may spend a Void Point on Full Attack to negate the normal TN penalties for declaring a Full Attack.

Rank 3: Claws of the Mantis

If the Yoritomo bushi has a weapon smaller than a katana in each hand, he rolls initiative separately for each and gets an attack with each weapon every round. If the character has the Ambidexterity advantage, he may use the higher Initiative result for both attacks.

Rank 4: Yoritomo's Rolling Wave

This technique and the subsequent one were invented by the legendary Yoritomo himself, and employ the Son of Storms' unique weaving, dodging style. While making a normal attack, the Yoritomo bushi's normal TN to Be Hit is increased by his Water Ring $\times 5$.

Rank 5: Hand of Osano-Wo

Masters of the Mantis Bushi school are capable of a savage double overhand strike. While using two weapons smaller than a katana, the samurai may make a single attack with both against an opponent. The damage rating for this attack is that of one of the weapons (the attacker simply chooses the one he prefers) +1k1. In addition, the attacker gains a number of Free Raises on this attack equal to his Water. Multiple attacks cannot be performed while using this technique, and it may only be used on a Full Attack.

THE MANTIS COURTIER SCHOOL

Courtiers of the Yoritomo family may not carry the same prestige of those who have attended the Doji, Bayushi, or Otomo schools, but they fulfill a crucial role within their clan. Mantis courtiers typically serve as mediators or as merchant patrons for those seeking to hire Mantis mercenaries.

In the d20 System™, Mantis courtiers are encouraged to take levels of the courtier class and select Mantis courtier abilities from the Introduction of this book.

THE MANTIS COURTIER SCHOOL

Benefit: +1 Willpower

Skills: Courtier, Intimidation, Kuenai, Poetry, Defense, Poison, any one bugei skill

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Starting Outfit: (all of average quality) Wakizashi, kimono, 10 koku, light armor

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Duty Before Honor

Like their bushi brethren, the courtiers of the Mantis are often called upon to deal with unsavory characters and situations. The Mantis gets a number of Free Raises to his Kuenai skill equal to his School Rank. In addition, the Mantis courtier's willingness to deal with ronin, bandits, and mercenaries allows him to act as if his Glory, Willpower, and Awareness were all 2 ranks higher when making rolls against and dealing with such characters.

Rank 2: Storm Heart

Though not as subtle as the Bayushi and the Doji, the Mantis has his methods of manipulating others. Any time the Mantis courtier spends a Void Point in an Intimidation check, the benefit is doubled. In addition, any attempt to use a fear effect, Intimidate, or Obeiesaseru on the Mantis courtier by a character with a lower Willpower automatically fails.

Rank 3: Command the Winds

Sometimes knowing the truth is not a desirable thing. At this rank, the Mantis courtier makes his words more believable with the force of conviction he puts behind them. The Mantis courtier may use his Intimidation instead of his Sincerity when attempting to convince another character of a fact he believes to be false. The courtier may also chose to spend two Void Points when making an Awareness roll to roll (but not keep) dice equal to half of his Intimidation skill in a social situation.

Rank 4: Will of the Storm

The Mantis courtier's mere presence has become awe-inspiring and unsettling. The Mantis may spend a Void Point to make any Intimidation check against a character with equal or lower Willpower automatically succeed. When faced with enemies, the courtier may make an Intimidation check at a TN of 15 modified by the difference between the number of his allies and his enemies in combat (raised if there are more enemies, lowered if there are more allies). If the check is successful, the courtier's enemies drop their highest rolled die on all combat rolls for a number of rounds equal to the courtier's Void Ring. The courtier's allies each gain a number of Free Raises equal to the courtier's Void Ring, to be divided among any number of rolls they wish. These Free Raises must be used before the end of combat. This technique may be used once per encounter.

Rank 5: Strength in All Things

The courtier has learned to apply the strength of his will to everything he does. The courtier adds his Intimidation skill to all combat and social rolls. The courtier may also spend a Void Point when making a Willpower check to treat all dice that had been rolled as having a result of 10. These 10s are not re-rolled, simply added together. For example, if the courtier would have rolled seven dice and kept six, wit this Technique he is considered to have rolled seven tens and kept six of them, resulting in a result of 60.

MAGIC ITEMS

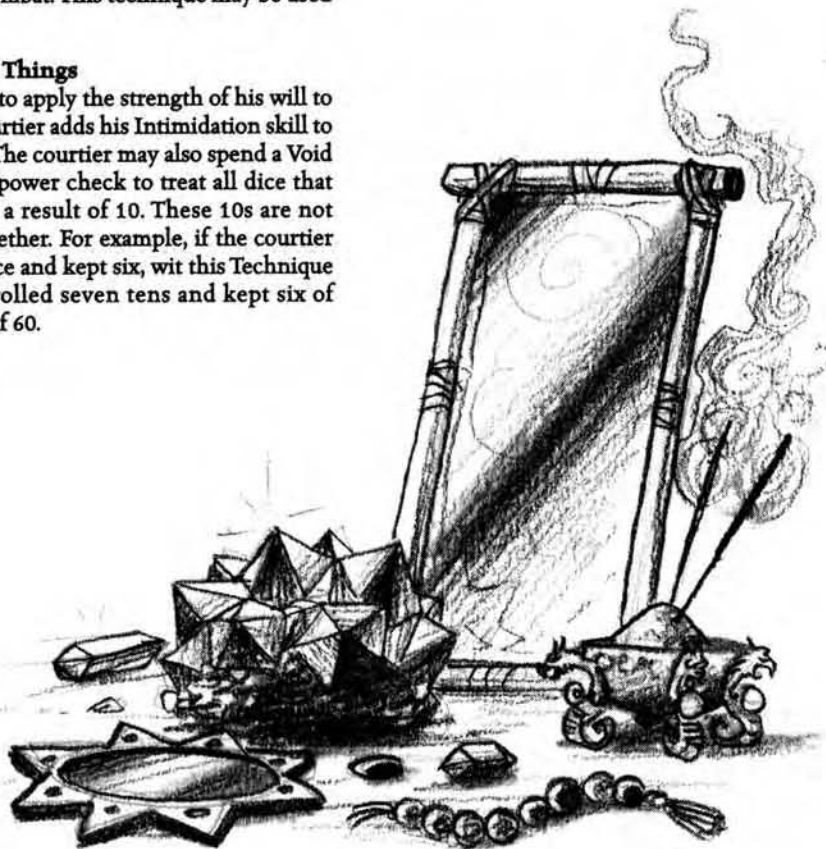
STORM BOTTLE ID201

Enchanted by the Moshi and the Yoritomo shugenja, these potion-like bottles are a common item among the Storm Legion and Mantis leaders. They are simply small bottles that contain angry fire and air kami — the spirits that make lightning and thunder. These items are often used as grenades, thrown with range increments of 20 feet. Upon impact, the bottle shatters and deals 6d6 electrical damage to everything within 10 feet (Reflex save half; DC 15). Mischievous Yoritomo sailors have been known to give these to unsuspecting targets as a drink. Imbibing the contents of the bottle causes the full 36 points of damage to the drinker with no save.

Caster Level: 6th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, lightning bolt; Market Price: 900 gp; Weight: —.

STORM BOTTLE I2ND ED.1

Enchanted by the Moshi and the Yoritomo shugenja, these potion-like bottles are a common item among the Storm Legion and Mantis leaders. They are simply small bottles that contain angry fire and air kami — the spirits that make lightning and thunder. These items are often used as grenades that burst upon impact. The bottle's contents deal 3k3 Wounds to everything within ten feet. Mischievous Yoritomo sailors have been known to give these to unsuspecting targets as a drink. Imbibing the contents of the bottle causes the full 30 Wounds of damage to the drinker.



CHAPTER TWO:

THE MOSHI

CHASING
THE STORM
PART THREE

Hatori had spent the last half of an hour trying to determine what had been bothering him since he and Fuzake Sekkou arrived in the home of the Moshi family. They sipped tea quietly while awaiting an audience with the woman other Moshi nobles simply called "Grandmother." While Sekkou was clearly at ease in a shugenja's sanctum, as soon as Hatori had settled in something began nagging at the back of his mind.

As the soothing chants of the Moshi shugenja surrounded him, the shisha let his mind wander to the journey to the Mantis isles and could find nothing that could cause his unease. Hatori pushed other thoughts out of his head with annoyance — he wasn't some inexperienced novice and had no reason to let his focus waver before such an important meeting. His companion's serene face never changed in the several hours that they waited. Sekkou had learned patience from his teachers. The young Monkey possessed an extraordinary degree of self-control and determination, though he did not realize it.

Hatori's mind returned to the upcoming meeting just as the inner doors to the temple opened. The doors opened just enough for a small boy to emerge and bow low before Hatori and Sekkou. "Honored guests," the child began, his voice betraying a hint of apprehension. "Grandmother Jukio will see you now." He straightened and indicated that the two visitors should follow him through the doors.

As Hatori and Sekkou stood, the doors opened wider and a slight glow began to bathe the chamber where they stood. The light reminded Hatori of the sun at dusk, and Sekkou's eyes widened in surprise. As the inner sanctum became visible, neither could see any source of illumination within. It was as if the very walls radiated light.

The room was sparse and somewhat small, perhaps thirty feet square with the ceiling just above Hatori's head. Clearly this room meant for its occupants to be on their knees. The slight form of Moshi Jukio obscured the shrine where she sat in prayer, and neither man could see all of the holy relics and statues laid out upon it.

Kneeling beside the now fully-open doors, the child called out to Jukio in an unusually loud voice. "Grandmother, we are honored with the presence of the Miya lord and his advisor."

Sekkou winced a little at the volume of the child's announcement, but Hatori was not surprised. If Jukio was even close to the age he supposed, it was very likely the Moshi daimyo's hearing was not what it once was.

"That will be all, child," Jukio's quiet and raspy voice was just above a whisper. Were it not for the silence of the Moshi temple, she would not have been heard at all. Without further ritual, the child quickly stood and left, closing the doors behind him.

"Be careful of your hakama, Fuzake Sekkou-san," the Moshi daimyo said quickly, her voice surprisingly louder.

Before Sekkou could utter a word of question, the great doors nearly slammed shut on the hem of the Monkey's hakama. The shugenja was unsettled enough to jump away from the doors, only to have the entangled part of his hakama trip him and send him sprawling to the ground.

Jukio had never even looked back.

Hatori gave his assistant a critical look before bowing low. "Moshi Jukio-sama, it is my great pleasure to report to you that our arrival in the lands of the Moshi has been without incident." Sekkou stood as quickly as he could, fell into a bow mirroring the depth of his master's, and held it.

No response was forthcoming for several moments. Then, slowly, Jukio turned her head to look at them with a neutral stare. "I know" she said flatly. The old woman allowed the implications of her words to settle into the men while she turned her body to face the two. "I am going to stand, if you don't mind. Sekkou, you may kneel before me, but Hatori," she said, fixing the Miya with eyes that spoke limitless wisdom, "you must not. I would ask something of you, and the Moshi do not ask favors of our lessers."

Jukio stood, leaning heavily on a gnarled cane. When Sekkou did not immediately kneel before the Moshi daimyo, Hatori shot him a glare that could wither stone. While the Miya could understand the youth's confusion at the bizarre situation, he had not brought Sekkou with him so he could gawk stupidly. The Monkey fell into the kneeling form of a supplicant.

"If you will forgive my saying so, Jukio-sama," Hatori began, forcing himself to ignore the reflex to bow before a daimyo, "I must confess some confusion. It is I who have come to ask a favor of you."

"You have come to ask as a formality, Hatori," the aged woman returned in clipped tones. "You will find that the Mantis waste little time on such things when we can dispose of them." Jukio raised a gray eyebrow and smiled thinly. "And as you are in my temple and in the lands of my family, I believe that I can decide what is proper, with none to question me."

Hatori nodded quickly. "By all means then, Lady Jukio, let us not waste time. You know why I am here and you seem undisturbed by this notion. Am I to assume Otomo Taneji was admitted into your libraries the moment he arrived?"

"This is so."

"Then why did you request our presence here to speak with you on the matter? If you had simply allowed my agents access to your libraries immediately, Sekkou would be expediting this part of our journey at Taneji's side."

Jukio took her eyes from the Miya and took a few steps toward the kneeling form of Sekkou. "You are here so I may speak with you about other matters, Miya," she said, eyeing the Monkey shugenja shrewdly. "And he is here because it amuses me." The daimyo poked Sekkou's arm with the butt of her cane.

Hatori was relieved when Sekkou did not react to the elderly daimyo's strange behavior, but merely continued to prostrate himself. "Male shugenja are almost unheard of in my family," she said, though it was clear she was speaking mostly to herself. "I wonder if you are as rash and foolish as your bushi brethren? Ready to call down fire and thunder for your own gain? Willing to sacrifice the blessings of the Heavens for more in this life? Willing to use the blessings of the kami as a weapon?"

As Jukio's voice turned spiteful, Hatori could not help but take a step toward the scene with apprehension on his face. "Lady Jukio-sama," he began hesitantly, "was there something you wished to speak of with me?"

Hatori's voice seemed to bring Jukio back from the edge of some vision and her face relaxed, though she never took her eyes from Sekkou. "Forgive me, Fuzake-san," she whispered with a tinge of shame in her voice. "Please forgive the prattling of an old woman." Sekkou looked up and began to say something, but Jukio waved her hand in dismissal. "Leave us, Sekkou. I fear you rouse memories better left forgotten, and I am sure your lord requires your presence in the libraries."

Relief clear on his face, Sekkou stood, bowed to both Hatori and Jukio, then exited as quickly as he could.

Hatori watched the young shugenja go. "I feel I must be frank, Jukio-sama," Hatori said with a hard edge to his voice, not turning to look at her. "I do not appreciate being toyed with while on Imperial business, and I consider such poor treatment of my vassals extremely inappropriate, even by those superior to me in station."

"Please, Hatori-san," Jukio said in clearly regretful tones. "I am an old woman. Perhaps the oldest in the Empire. Do not let my failing mind cloud our talk. I do not care that you think me a doddering fool, so long as you listen to what I have to say." When Hatori did not respond, the daimyo continued. "I have reason to speak with you about the heir of Yoritomo. The self-proclaimed Champion of the Mantis."

Hatori's jaw tensed, though his discipline prevented him from showing any further sign of his apprehension. The Miya had met the so-called Daughter of Storms, albeit briefly. He had vowed not to become involved in the conflict between Yoritomo Kumiko and her rival, Kitao. He knew the lords of the Mantis would see him, an Imperial historian, as an ideal pawn. "I know of Yoritomo Kitao," Hatori said. "Do you wish me to deliver a message?"

"I would not be so foolish as to believe you do not know of whom I speak, Hatori," Jukio replied, seating herself on the mat she had knelt on previously. "However, if you wish to speak of Kitao, I can do so as well." Her voice took a deadly edge. "Tell me, Miya. What do you truly know about the supposed daughter of Yoritomo? What she deals in... whom she deals with? You have allies among the Emerald Magistrates, do you not? You were once a magistrate yourself, Hatori. During the War of Spirits there were rumors that many Mantis worked secretly for the Steel Chrysanthemum as mercenaries. During that time, none know where Kumiko was. She was in hiding, perhaps to gain wealth and power."

"Why would she do that?" Hatori asked. "Would she not have wealth and power enough as Mantis Champion?"

"Perhaps," Jukio said. "Though some forms of power cannot be gained within the Empire. I have theories, should you wish to hear them. I know you do not wish to involve yourself in this, Hatori. If you do not wish to hear what I have to say, all you must do is open that door and leave. I will never speak to you of Kumiko again."

"No Mantis will speak to you of Kumiko. Ever again."

Hatori's mind raced. It was widely enough known that the Emperor's magistrates had followed the events of the War of Spirits and a chain of testimony against a smuggler that all pointed toward the Mantis. Each trail had ended messily just before it could implicate the Yoritomo.

For a moment, Hatori's hand reached for the door.

But only a moment.

THE MOSHI PROVINCES

The reclusive and mysterious Centipede Clan was once one of the smallest Minor Clans in the Empire, never numbering more than a hundred members. When the Centipede joined the Mantis clan as the Moshi family, it gained the wealth and prestige that come with being associated with a Great Clan, but these benefits came with a price. For over seven hundred years, they had been content in their secluded mountain refuge, letting history pass them by. When they joined the Mantis, their ability to remain unnoticed disappeared, and a sudden influx of new family members has shaken their way of life.

The Moshi family is still trying to assimilate into the Empire, and one of the ways they seek to accomplish this is to set up holdings in the territories of other clans and in the cities of the Mantis. Many political marriages in the last generation have swelled the ranks of this once-tiny family, compelling the Moshi to expand their traditional holdings. They have improved the cultivation of their arable land, and built new additions to the family castle and shugenja school. They have even constructed a road from their high mountain plateau down to the sea, accompanied by a series of docks for easier trade with their Tsuruchi and Yoritomo brethren. The Moshi family's sudden expansion has also led them to form ties with other clans by seeking holdings beyond their narrow borders.

MAJOR MOSHI HOLDINGS

TANI SENSUO, VALLEY OF THE CENTIPEDE (LOCATION A8 IN ROKUGAN; LOCATION AAA IN 2ND EDITION)

The Valley of the Centipede is one of the most geographically isolated areas in Rokugan, and has therefore largely escaped the Empire's notice. The valley is a small shelf of land, perched high above the sea in the Seikitsu Mountains. It is surrounded on three sides by high mountain peaks, with the fourth side overlooking the sea from a high rocky cliff. Far below the cliffs lie a few small beaches where several new docks have been built to facilitate trade. From these docks and beaches, peasant fishermen of the valley ply their trade.

The valley is accessible by two routes, over land and over sea. The only land routes are narrow treacherous trails, just wide enough in places for one person to walk. A few men could hold off armies behind this difficult terrain. In the days when the Moshi family was the Centipede Clan, these mountain trails were guarded by ronin who received food, shelter, and limited respect for their services. When the Centipede joined the Mantis clan, these ronin were accepted into the family and clan and granted small plots of land. Today their children guard the same mountain passes — but as Mantis samurai.

Even though the soil of the high mountain valley is rocky and difficult to till, the peasants here have been improving it for centuries. The available land is lush and fertile with plentiful rainfall. The family has always been able to produce an abundance of food because they have always been small. Even in lean years, when the rest of the Empire was suffering, this valley was able to feed its inhabitants. The Moshi have always attributed this to the favor of the Sun Goddess.

Aside from rice fields, the valley is dotted with small communities of peasants, numbering no more than a few thousand, and a handful of samurai estates. When the family joined the Mantis, a large number of ji-samurai and ronin entered the Moshi family, and the greatest among those were granted modest manor houses in the valley. This recent population explosion led to a frenzy of construction. The settlements have spread up the sides of the mountains. These new homes are generally reserved for the most affluent of the Moshi, due to their seclusion and spectacular views.

AMATERASU'S CLIMB

The only road in the Moshi province is the new path from the upper mountain plateau down to the seaside. Until the Moshi family joined the Mantis Clan, the only means of reaching the seaside from the heights above were the small pulley elevator and the narrow rocky trail that was little more than a mountain goat path. The Moshi family has now built a dizzying switchback path just wide enough for a single cart.

YAMA SANO AMATERASU, MOUNTAIN OF THE SUN GODDESS

Standing like a sentinel at the northern end of the Valley of the Centipede is a towering snow-covered mountain with steep rocky sides. Legend says that this is the mountain where Amaterasu first appeared to Moshi Azami so many centuries ago. Though many temples and geographical locations once named after Amaterasu have been renamed to honor Lord Yakamo, the Moshi have no desire to change the name of this sacred place simply because the Sun Goddess is no more. Her mountain is the highest in the valley, and at its lofty summit is the well-tended shrine built in her name. The shrine is layered in shining gold and is surrounded by twelve crystalline globes that catch the sun's rays and glitter like stars. The globes range in size from one foot to four feet, placed around the shrine in the pattern of the constellation known as the Centipede. The globes are so bright during the day that they can be seen for miles. Mantis sailors use the glinting landmark as an aid to navigation.

This shrine is known as the Touching a Miracle Shrine. It is not to be confused with the Shrine of the Sun Goddess, home of the Moshi shugenja school, which lies near Kyuden Moshi at the foot of the mountain.

Since the shrine rests at the very summit of the mountain, it is well above the snow line. If not for careful tending, the shrine would be covered with snow. One of the duties of Moshi initiates is to climb the mountain periodically and clear the snow from the shrine. The climb to the summit is arduous, and is not undertaken lightly. The way is steep and the snow-covered rocks are treacherous, but the view is breathtaking. The summit is regarded by those few who have visited it as one of the most beautiful places in the Empire. For this reason it is a common place of meditation, particularly for monks. Some say that because the Sun Goddess is dead, replaced by Lord Yakamo, there is no reason for the family to continue to revere her and maintain her decorations and rituals. Even the Moshi shugenja school's affinity to Fire, a sign of the goddess' favor, has changed to an affinity to Air with her passing. Why should the family not accept their goddess' fate? Why remain in the past? The matriarchs of the Moshi family ask in return, "Do we not revere and worship our ancestors, our own dead? Do we not keep shrines to the dead in our homes for centuries after they have gone? What is the proper period of mourning for a goddess? Should it not be longer than that of a mortal being?" The Sun Goddess is gone, but the family's long-standing traditions remain.

The mountain is known to be dotted with caves, sometimes inhabited by monks, peasant vagabonds, and animals. One cave in particular lies just below the snow line, and is occupied by an aged monk who has lived there for as long as

anyone can remember. His name is Tosui. His cave is a small, unremarkable place, containing only his sleeping mat and his bo staff. Its opening is just large enough for a person to stoop through. The ceiling and walls have been darkened by decades of smoke from the small fire pit.

TOSUI

[Samurai 5/Inkyo 12; Mantis Bushi 2 (Insight Rank 6)]

Tosui is a mystery to most, although he appears to be one of the most open and friendly men in the world. He never hesitates to help those in need and to offer tea and conversation to passing travelers. No one in the Valley of the Centipede knows his age, but he has lived on this mountain for as long as anyone can remember. He is 138 years old, and he has lived on this mountain for almost a century. He started his life as a Mantis samurai, and when he visited the Valley of the Centipede in his youth, he knew that there was no other place in the Empire where he would wish to spend his declining years. After his retirement he took his religious vows and for

several years traveled the Empire as an itinerant monk. His path ultimately brought him here to this valley, where he now spends his days in meditation. He lives on a diet of rice and fish. Those who climb the mountain bring him food and drink, and he sometimes enjoys sake on cold winter nights.

His flesh is aged, but his spirit still contains a vitality that is readily apparent. Despite his advanced age, he retains all of his physical and mental acuity; he is quite capable of handling any problem that arises.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: An established practice of the Moshi is to send a group of students from the shugenja school to tend Amaterasu's shrine at her mountain's summit. The group chosen for this task always remains at the shrine to meditate all night long, exposed to the elements. Only those with the magical ability to protect themselves from the cold are chosen for this task. One such group fails to return. The other shugenja from the school prepare for a thorough search of the mountain.

Focus: The following day, a strange flaming creature attacks a group of peasant woodcutters. Only two of the five escape with their lives. The survivors describe the creature as woman engulfed by flames. She screamed like a lost soul, and when she opened her mouth, flame spewed forth and killed the other woodcutters.

Meanwhile, no trace of the missing students can be found. Due to the small number of Moshi shugenja, the loss of these few students is a terrible blow.

Strike: The creature is a Moshi shugenja who has been wandering the mountains for weeks. She had traveled to Otsan Uchi a few months before on a diplomatic mission. She was a powerful shugenja who sought to re-establish the Moshi family's connection to the fire spirits, but her power grew too quickly and attracted the notice of a kansen which attacked her and drove her mad. Now she is lost and alone, wandering the wilderness in a perpetual flaming nightmare. She can no longer control her power and is extremely dangerous. She must be stopped. Whether she can be redeemed remains to be seen...

KYUDEN MOSHI, PALACE OF THE MOSHI

At the foot of Amaterasu's great mountain sits the palace of the Moshi family. Kyuden Moshi is small by the standards of the Great Clans, but it is beautiful and immaculate. Daimyo of the Moshi family have resided here for generations. To approach the castle, one must pass through the weathered gates and beneath a torii arch emblazoned with the symbol of Amaterasu and engraved with the phrase, "Light of All, Truth of All." The gates feature an ancient golden disk over six feet across, split evenly where the gates divide, with streamers of gold like the rays of the sun extending from the disk. The torii arch above the gate was blessed by the Sun Goddess in the early days of the Centipede clan, and radiates a magic that encourages truthfulness. Those who stand beneath the arch can tell no lies, and will volunteer the truth if asked. The blessing of the arch is a well-kept secret of the leaders of the Moshi, and has been a great boon to the tiny family in their dealings with the Great Clans.



The palace is a four-story structure with a small platform on the roof. The lowest floor is just large enough to house a few dozen bushi. The increasingly important members of the Moshi family court occupy the second and third floors, with the family audience hall in the center of the third floor. The daimyo of the Moshi family and her family live on the fourth floor.

The highest point on the castle is the platform in the center of the highest roof, effectively a fifth level, accessible only through the personal chambers of the Moshi daimyo. A narrow staircase leads up to this platform at the pinnacle of the palace, open to the sky and wind. A low rail surrounds the platform, which is about 20 feet square. This is the family daimyo's place of personal retreat, where she goes to view the sunrise, or to meditate, or to meet with honored guests to have private conversation. Only the daimyo and her invited guests may visit the platform. One corner is occupied by a sturdy wooden structure about six feet tall. Few know that this enclosure protects one of the family's most sacred objects, the ancient Eye of the Sun Goddess. This structure is of great importance to the clan and possesses many powerful enchantments that protect it from magical scrying.

The palace decoration is rich but not extravagant. The woodwork and shoji screens are beautifully carved and painted with motifs of the Sun Goddess. The rooms are bright and airy, with large but heavily shuttered windows to admit the sun's blessed rays or to keep at bay the all-too-frequent typhoons that pound the coast during the rainy season. One notable luxury is a complex system of mirrors imported from Unicorn lands. These mirrors reflect the sunlight that passes through the windows of the palace, filling the entire palace with a bright, ethereal light on sunny days.

Kyuden Moshi would be difficult to defend. The family relies on the defensibility of the mountain trails to keep any attackers at bay. The wall around the palace is low by most standards — just under fifteen feet high — and the gate is well maintained but very old. The palace is not large enough to contain any sizable garrison, but the Moshi family has never needed one. The matriarchs have been more concerned with magic and revering the Sun Goddess than with building an impenetrable stronghold. They have little that is worth taking and the effort to take it would be great, and this has always sufficed for the Moshi to remain unmolested.

KYUDEN MOSHI NO MACHI

The town that surrounds the Moshi palace effectively forms the capital of the Moshi territories. It can hardly be called a city at no more than a few thousand souls. Most are peasant servants to the family, but there are some ronin and other ji-samurai, a few merchants, and other Mantis traders.

One of the most noticeable aspects of this town is the prevalence of shrines to the Sun Goddess. Most of these shrines feature respectable effigies of Lord Yakamo, but overflow with exquisitely crafted funeral tablets honoring Amaterasu's passing. New separate shrines to Lord Sun have been erected beside some of the ancient shrines of Amaterasu, leaving these sacred sites the exclusive domain of the departed Sun Goddess. These new shrines are just as beautiful, if not tended with such dedication. While the inhabitants here do not revere Yakamo as they did Amaterasu, they have no desire to incur his wrath.

Rokugani buildings (excepting castles) are traditionally built almost completely from wood. In this valley, however, the great abundance of rocks and boulders collected from the

inhabitants' reclamation of the farmland allowed the builders to use them for construction. Another benefit of the abundant stone is that all the town's streets and the valley's roads are paved, giving the town and other settlements a clean and orderly appearance.

Even the poorest peasant homes are built with windows that open to the sky, so that in years past the inhabitants could admit the light of the Sun Goddess into their homes. Many of the newest buildings do not incorporate skylights; since Amaterasu's death local builders no longer feel that skylights are necessary or even desired.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Yoritomo Mirumachi, a wealthy dignitary, is visiting Grandmother Jukio. He has come to ask permission to establish a permanent trading warehouse for him and his business associates. He is very traditionally minded, and the idea of having women in charge rankles. He commits a serious breach of etiquette while having dinner with the daimyo and her court. To repay the insult, the touchy Jukio invites him to spend the night at the inn, rather than guesting in the castle.

Focus: The next morning Mirumachi is found dead in his room, his face frozen in a grimace of shock and fear. Moshi Jukio is quite disturbed, because after the events of the previous night, suspicion could easily fall on her or her court. She orders a thorough investigation. The reason for his death must be discovered, and the killer brought to justice.

Strike: The longstanding feud between the Mantis and Scorpion clans has spilled into the peaceful Moshi valley. The Mantis dignitary was killed by a Scorpion assassin who is to sow discord between the families of the Mantis by any means available. The assassin was posing as a sake merchant staying in the same inn. When the drunken Yoritomo Mirumachi returned to his room, the assassin seized the opportunity. Of course, the assassin left the inn early that morning, making his way toward the docks where he expects to board a ship bound for the Mantis isles. Even if caught, the assassin is a ronin hired by the Scorpion who knows nothing of the clan's plans or motivation. Untangling this mystery may be difficult indeed.

AMATERASU SEIDO, THE MOSHI SHUGENJA SCHOOL

Just up the slope of Yama sano Amaterasu from Kyuden Moshi lies the real center of Moshi family power, their shugenja school. Amaterasu Seido has been its home for centuries. In these ancient halls have walked generations of Moshi family shugenja, practicing their arts in peace and seclusion. Amaterasu Seido rivals Kyuden Moshi in size, but it has no protective walls. Few would dare attack a place so sacred, or so well protected by magic. It lies a few hundred feet up the slope from the palace, accessible by a broad, paved path. The two structures are also connected by an underground tunnel known only to the daimyo and her immediate family.

The gates of the shugenja school overlook the valley, facing the sun as it rises from the sea. The shrine rests on the roof of the shugenja school, where those wishing to pay their respects to the late Sun Goddess may do so in the radiance of her successor, Lord Yakamo. Like Kyuden Moshi, the shugenja school is bright and airy, with windows and walls thrown open as often as possible. Also like the castle,

the school is four stories tall. The servants and younger students occupy the bottom floors, with students of higher rank on the upper floors.

The center of the third floor is also where the Moshi maintain their solar observatory. A clever series of small windows, lenses, and mirrors direct patches of sunlight onto an intricate map of the sun's course on the floor. The patches of sunlight move in precise paths on the floor of the observatory, and it is these that govern the Moshi calendar: when to perform certain festivals, or when to begin the new academic year.

Near the center of this chamber is a raised platform. Through another series of lenses and mirrors, this platform is bathed in sunlight through the daylight hours. On cloudy days, the light becomes gray and diffuse, but the light remains. This is one of the Moshi family's most sacred places: the Hand of the Sun Goddess.

The fourth floor is where Moshi Jukio instructs the most promising students. Lower-ranking students are trained by lesser shugenja, and not admitted into Grandmother's presence. The top floor is also where the most advanced shugenja perform their experiments, seeking to advance their knowledge in the ways of fire and air. Others seek to commune with the lost spirit of Amaterasu.

The shugenja school's highest-ranking sensei aside from Jukio is Moshi Maiyomi. She sees to the operation of the shugenja school whenever Jukio is absent, which happens ever more often as Jukio's age advances.

MOSHI MAIYOMI

[Shugenja 14; Moshi Shugenja 5]

Maiyomi was a cousin and student of Moshi Wakiza. Her power surpasses that of the Phoenix Master of Air, although she would never challenge one so renowned. She is happy to remain in the valley she loves, where she has lived her whole life. Maiyomi is an elderly woman with a brilliant smile, uncaring that it reveals her crooked teeth. She is pretty, but not beautiful, and she is small, but she does not let her physical imperfections bother her. She knows where her true power lies; the destructive power of fire. She was taught from an early age to avoid violence, so she uses her power to seek to control air, rather than wreak violence and destruction with it. However, if sufficiently provoked, she could become a whirlwind of destruction.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Moshi Maiyomi has heard tales of a new kind of powerful artifact, the Shimmering Spark of Amaterasu, that is attuned to the elements of fire and air. A Yoritomo diplomat mentioned the item at a court function, and Maiyomi suspects that it may be an undiscovered item left for mortals by the late Sun Goddess. She would like to bring the object to the shugenja school and study it, returning it afterwards to its rightful owner. She cannot chase the rumor herself, as her duties require her presence.

Focus: The diplomat to whom she spoke may be found at an inn in Kyuden Moshi Machi, where he is conducting business. He says that the item is held by a Yoritomo shugenja living on a remote island in the Mantis archipelago. The shugenja is quite a reclusive fellow, but the diplomat once landed on his island while searching for trading partners. He can provide a map to the island.

Strike: Things have changed drastically on the island since the diplomat's visit. A band of gaijin pirates have taken it over

and slain the shugenja, stealing his property and servants. They plan to establish a secret refuge for their piratical activities. These gaijin wield powerful foreign magic and unusual weapons, which they will not hesitate to use. The artifact remains in the house of the late Mantis, but not for long; the gaijin intend to transport it back to their homeland. Its exact nature and origins are up to the GM.

MATOMARI NO TOKORO, THE PLACE OF UNITY

Matomari no Tokoro — the Place of Unity — is a small Moshi compound near Kyuden Gotei. Since the Centipede Clan formally joined the Mantis only a generation ago, both knew that harmony might be difficult for two ancient families so accustomed to doing things their own way. This compound was constructed as a post for the Moshi ambassador, to foster understanding between all the families of the Mantis. The matriarchal traditions of the Moshi family seem odd to the rough-and-ready sailors of the Yoritomo family and the deadly archers of the Tsuruchi family. For this reason, the administrator of Matomari no Tokoro is always a man. He answers to the Moshi daimyo, but the great distance between Kyuden Gotei and the Valley of the Centipede affords him almost complete autonomy. The current administrator of the Place of Unity is Moshi Genji.

The compound consists of several single-story structures connected by walkways on four-foot stilts, and surrounded by an eight-foot stone wall. The stilts protect the buildings from the flooding caused by typhoons in the rainy season, while the wall keeps casual eavesdroppers at bay.

One aspect of this place that is not readily apparent is the tremendous amounts of wealth and valuable trade goods that pass through. It is a secret the Moshi do not wish to see exposed. This is because much of the communication between families involves tax levies, loans, and gifts between powerful nobles. For this reason, there are always at least twenty seasoned guards in the compound, featuring a mix of bushi from all three families and at least two experienced Moshi shugenja.

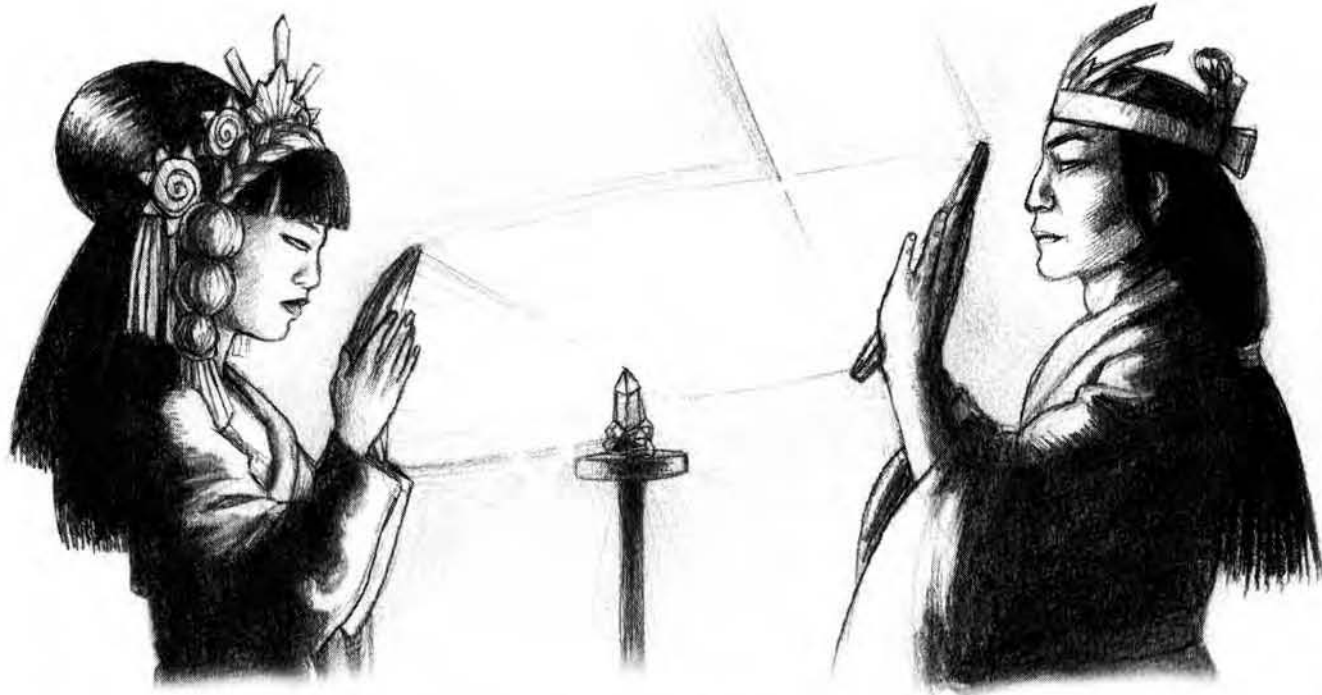
The chief function of this place was to serve as a communication center between the Moshi and Yoritomo families, but over time its accessibility, discretion, and efficiency has led the Tsuruchi family to use it as well. Most messages conveyed between families pass through this location. The Yoritomo and Tsuruchi families know they can trust the Moshi here.

The Moshi welcome the opportunity to resolve disputes between members of the Mantis families, promoting harmony from within. Aside from the administrator, a Moshi magistrate and arbitrator also resides here. Moshi Toba helps members of the Mantis families to settle their differences by non-violent means. Violence and duels are not permitted on within the grounds.

MOSHI GENJI

[Courtier 14; Doji Courtier 5]

Moshi Genji has administrated Matomari no Tokoro for ten years. He is a plump middle-aged man with a kind smile, always perfectly groomed in his opulent robes. He deplores violence, and seeks to end it whenever possible. In fact he is quite adept at soothing ruffled feathers. His Moshi upbringing has instilled in him a great respect for women. If there is a woman present of equal or higher rank, he defers to her. He treats women of lower rank with deference,



often ingratiating himself through his charming and polite nature. Unlike many nobles, he is kind to those below his station. He is loved by all who serve him, even lowly hinin.

With ambition, Genji could become a great statesman, but he lacks the ruthlessness necessary to accumulate power. This is not say that he is weak, and some would say his willingness to accept what comes and adapt to adversity is what makes him such a strong statesman. He will selflessly do whatever is necessary to preserve the unity of the Mantis. That is his mission, and he takes it very seriously.

MOSHI TOBA

[Samurai 10/Wasp Bounty Hunter 3; Yoritomo Bushi 4/Wasp Bushi 1]

Moshi Toba is a tall, sturdy man in his early thirties. He was born a Moshi, but his parents sent him to the Mantis Bushi School as a young man. He learned Yoritomo's ways of fighting and sailed on the high seas. Before long he became fascinated by the incredible feats of archery that came so easily to the Tsuruchi, so he petitioned to join the Tsuruchi school, where he learned some of their secrets of *kyujutsu*. His travels and experiences have left him with a tremendous number of friends and acquaintances. Most Mantis have at least heard of him. These experiences prepared him perfectly for his post at Matomari no Tokoro. He was raised a Moshi, but he understands his Yoritomo and Tsuruchi brethren, and has become an astute judge of character. He is patient but firm. While he does not believe in the Moshi tradition of nonviolence, he respects it, and conducts himself accordingly while within the Place of Unity. He does believe that sometimes the best way to deal with a rowdy drunken sailor involves a solid wooden board.

In addition to his duties as an arbitrator, Toba serves as a clan magistrate, enforcing the peace and seeking out known criminals.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Yoritomo Funewara, a renowned kobune merchant captain, has publicly accused of piracy Tsuruchi Hikari, a well-known relative of Tsuruchi Ichiro. Some weeks ago, Funewara attacked a pirate vessel as it was plundering a Mantis trading ship. The pirates fled, but not before Funewara saw Tsuruchi Hikari aboard their vessel. He did not recognize Hikari at the time, but saw him later at a court function. Tsuruchi Hikari disputes these claims and demands that Funewara retract his words. Both men are honorable and respectable men of influence who hold the same rank, and neither family wishes to bear this dishonor. Someone must discreetly uncover the truth.

Focus: Soon after Funewara makes his accusations, Hikari disappears. He secretly takes passage on a ship bound for the mainland, to a small fishing village about ten miles east of Mura Sabishii Toshi. This village is fishing village only on the surface; it is really a haven for pirates, a collection of ex-Crane ronin. These pirates have been preying upon Mantis trade for over a year, and their captain is a beautiful woman known as Sachiko.

Strike: Sachiko was once a Doji. An unscrupulous Mantis merchant bankrupted her family. Her father committed seppuku in shame, and her mother died of a broken heart. With no home and no family Sachiko became a ronin, but her tutelage at the Kakita Academy has served her well. Now, as a pirate, she preys upon the hated Mantis clan. Hikari met her in a teahouse in the City of Lightning and the two of them fell instantly in love. He was not aware of her vocation until he joined her on a sea voyage, on which they encountered Yoritomo Funewara's vessel. Hikari loves Sachiko, but he does not wish to dishonor his family. He has come to the village to end their relationship and to beg Sachiko to surrender to the Emperor's justice. She is unwilling to do so. The PCs must decide whether they wish to interfere in this delicate situation, or simply report the entire affair to the proper authorities.

AMATERASU'S DEATH

The death of Amaterasu shocked the Moshi to the core. Most expected the Sun Goddess' demise to be merely a temporary situation; many of her Kami children died only to reappear in Tengoku. A few hoped that her successor would take on her spirit, as Hitomi did after the death of Lord Moon. This was not the case. Amaterasu's spirit did not join her successor, but returned to the kharmic wheel to be reincarnated as a mortal.

Why Lady Sun chose to do this is not entirely clear. Some Moshi think that Lady Sun seeks to understand humanity. Others think that she was mortified by humanity's repeated failures and now seeks to aid it from within. All Moshi agree that the reincarnated soul of Amaterasu must be found, and that she needs the guidance of those who once served her.

Moshi Jukio believes that Toturi Tsudao is the most likely person to possess Amaterasu's spirit. She is charismatic, powerful, and comes from a noble bloodline. Jukio has presented Tsudao with a Moshi handmaiden and one of her family's most precious artifacts — the Golden Obi of the Sun Goddess. Those Moshi who follow Jukio's theory hope that, in time, Tsudao will come to accept the divine spirit that resides within her and lead the Empire to greatness.

MINOR MOSHI HOLDINGS

THE LIBRARY OF THE FIERY CENTIPEDE

The Centipede clan was founded by a Phoenix, and the clans honored this kinship until the Centipede joined the Mantis. The Moshi family has continued the tradition of pacifism to this day, despite the wars that have recently plagued the Empire. To foster the exchange of knowledge between the Centipede and Phoenix, the Moshi long ago built a small library in the lands of the Asako, near Morning Glory Palace.

The Library of the Fiery Centipede, built three hundred years ago, is perhaps the most complete repository of Fire-based magical research in existence. Even the Phoenix Masters of Fire have occasionally studied here. The library is built from solemn gray stone, three stories tall. The entrance is a thick wooden door, bound with great straps of iron, which bears a symbol of a flaming centipede. There is no other visible entrance, although a secret tunnel provides an emergency exit that is known only to the Chief Librarian. Unlike most Rokugani architecture, the sides of the building are straight and blockish with no visible windows. Instead, small openings admit the sunlight at all hours of the day. The sunlight is captured and reflected through an ingenious system of lenses and mirrors like the one in Amaterasu Seido. This provides plenty of light throughout the structure. The top floor of the library is lit by numerous skylights that cannot be seen from the ground. Powerful wards have been placed on the library to prevent any unwelcome entrance.

Any creature that attempts to enter the library without the permission of the Chief Librarian activates the wards, immediately incurring a fire spell targeting them. The flame summoned by these wards will not harm any Moshi who enters the library without treachery or deceitful purpose.

The Moshi family's close relationship to the Sun Goddess gave them a special insight into fire magic. Since the death of Amaterasu, this mastery has waned, but the knowledge remains in their libraries. They rarely choose to share this knowledge with anyone outside the Phoenix clan. Permission to study here is occasionally granted, however, and as the Moshi hold few grudges toward any clan or family, any shugenja might be allowed to study here provided he or she behaves appropriately. The Chief Librarian, Moshi Ehime, makes all decisions regarding who is allowed within these hallowed halls, and she always meets those seeking entry over a full tea ceremony that has been known to last as long as eight hours. She makes her decision based on the shugenja's knowledge, bearing, and reasons for wishing to study within the library. She will not grant entrance to anyone who is overtly violent or rash. During the tea ceremony, she asks intricate questions seeking to ascertain as much as she can of the shugenja's true nature.

Those granted the honor of entering the library may immerse themselves in centuries' worth of knowledge. The majority of spells and research focus on the element of fire, but in recent years the element of air has become equally prominent. There is some magical knowledge of earth, but only a little relating to the element of water and nothing that is not available in most shugenja schools. The Moshi family's most potent original spells are stored here to be shared with those deemed worthy. With the Agasha family's discovery in recent years of ways to merge elements within single spells, the Moshi research has produced new spells that are unavailable to any other shugenja school.

MOSHI EHIME

[Shugenja 12; Moshi Shugenja 4]

Moshi Ehime is a prime example of the traditional Moshi woman. She is kind, patient, and confident in her own power and abilities. She is proud of her position here; it is the greatest honor she has ever been given. Therefore, she will let nothing threaten the library or her position. She is very discriminating with whom she chooses to grant admittance to the library. Ehime was raised in the Valley of the Centipede but has spent the last twelve years here in Phoenix territory. Living among them has given her a tremendous respect and love for the Phoenix clan, and she is nearly as loyal to them as she is to her own family.

Her home occupies a corner of the highest level, where she lives with her husband, seven children, and household servants. Her husband is a former Shiba yojimbo once assigned to defend her. They fell in love and were given permission to marry eleven years ago. He took her name and continues to defend her with the zeal and passion he displayed in his youth. Her children range in age from her newborn infant to her twelve-year-old daughter, Emi, whom she hopes will succeed her as Chief Librarian. She is quite proud of her daughter, who shows great magical aptitude as well as the intelligence necessary to oversee the library.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Moshi Ehime's eldest daughter, Emi, is missing. She accompanied her governess and two bodyguards to the

local food market in the morning, hoping to get some sesame cakes while her governess shopped for the evening meal. The governess returned to the library, frantic that her charge had disappeared. The bodyguards stayed behind to search the market and surrounding areas for the little girl.

Focus: Later that day, the bodyguards are found in a narrow alley, unconscious but otherwise unharmed. Found with them is a note with a simple message telling Moshi Ehime to come alone to popular teahouse for a meeting with someone named only Makoro.

Strike: Makoro is a ronin shugenja seeking access to the Library. A few weeks previously, Ehime refused his request to study at the Library because she believed he would use the knowledge he gained for unscrupulous purposes, something she could not allow. Since then he has been plotting how to force her to grant him admittance. He tells her that he will return her daughter if she allows him one day within the Library. If she refuses, he beloved daughter will die. She has one day to decide.

YAMABUSHI RENSHUUBA, MOUNTAIN BUSHI TRAINING GROUND

For centuries, the secluded Moshi valley was guarded by scattered bands of ronin and the few Moshi bushi. Now that the Moshi have joined the Mantis clan, the Yoritomo family has encouraged them to more actively defend the little land they do possess. The result was the construction of a centralized command post and training ground a few miles from Kyuden Moshi near one of the principal mountain passes into the valley — the Mountain Bushi Training Ground.

The Training Ground consists of a mountainside compound of several barracks and buildings surrounded by a 10-foot wooden palisade. A fortified guardhouse at the summit of a steep, narrow mountain trail — the only access to the compound — protects the gate. The Training Ground is operated much like a bushi dojo, but since the Moshi are unfamiliar with military practices they rely on their Mantis brethren to see to the training regimen. The current commander is the taciturn Tsuruchi Chizumo, a battle-hardened veteran of the War of Spirits. He runs the Training Ground with a clenched fist, attempting to organize the traditionally lax ronin volunteers into a cohesive force capable of holding off any attack.

The two hundred bushi who train and live here must ensure the safety of the Valley of the Centipede, a task they take quite seriously. No one knows the intricacies of the mountains as well as these hardened individuals. They know every trail, every pass, and every hidden game trail, allowing them to travel through the mountains quickly or find the ideal place to stage an ambush against hostile troops.

TSURUCHI CHIZUMO

[Fighter 6/Wasp Bounty Hunter 4; Wasp Bushi 3/Mantis Bushi 2]

Tsuruchi Chizumo is a short, barrel-chested man with lean, hardened features and narrow, penetrating eyes. He is nearing fifty, well past retirement age, but he holds little regard for "religious silliness." He intends to be a fighting man until he takes his last breath. He practically grew up on the battlefield, fighting with his Wasp comrades in the War of Spirits, and has fought in the periodic skirmishes of the last decades as often

as he could. His wealth of fighting experience has given him something he never wanted: a command position. He prefers to be where the action is, not walled up in some compound teaching unwashed children how not to trip over themselves. Nevertheless, he throws himself into the task as best he can, trying to impart his skills and knowledge to his subordinates and hoping they will survive when battle breaks out. With all the recent fighting that has plagued the Empire and the growing Shadowlands incursions, he feels it is only a matter of time before his men will be tested.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: A frantic scout returns to the compound, babbling about a force of bakemono and ogres making their way through the mountains toward the Valley of the Centipede. The scout claims to have counted at least twenty ogres and a hundred bakemono.

Focus: The forces of the Dark Lord have never bothered with the Valley of the Centipede before. The Moshi shugenja muster what troops they can and launch a counterattack. The ogre bushi leading this force, known as Stoneskull, immediately orders his followers to surrender and raise a white flag.

Strike: This "surrender" is a ploy to allow Stoneskull to talk to the leaders of the Moshi forces. He is an intelligent free ogre, and has survived outside of the Shadowlands with not only his strength but his cunning. If the humans agree to speak to him, he warns them of a fictitious large force of oni and undead not far behind his troops. If questioned about his motives, he states simply that he no longer serves the Dark Lord. He is a free ogre, with the will to do as he chooses, and he chooses to fight against the horrors of his former master. This last is a lie, but Stoneskull is a skilled and practiced deceiver. As soon as he perceives the humans' guard to be down, even if for a moment, he attacks. If he never gets the opportunity to parley, he simply flees and allows his followers to be slaughtered.

IMPORTANT MOSHI NPCS

MOSHI JUKIO, CENTIPEDE FAMILY DAIMYO

Moshi Jukio is the oldest living member of the Mantis Clan, and perhaps the oldest mortal in Rokugan. Affectionately (sometimes not so affectionately) referred to as "Grandmother Jukio" by the Moshi, for most of her life she was the leader of the Centipede Clan. Though her age has brought her great wisdom, she is also torn with regret for the terrible mistakes she has made in her life, mistakes which have shaken the Empire to its core.

At one time, Jukio was the High Priestess of Amaterasu, and eventually she passed that title to her daughter Wakiza. Wakiza was pious, but did not share Jukio's boundless adoration for the Sun Goddess, being more interested in helping Lord Yoritomo build the Mantis into a Great Clan. In Jukio's eyes, Wakiza neglected her duties as High Priestess and turned her back on the Sun Goddess.

Shortly thereafter, Lord Moon fell in battle with Hitomi, and Amaterasu committed jigai out of sorrow. Moshi Jukio wonders if the Sun Goddess might not have taken her own life if the Moshi had been as ready to serve her as they always had. Jukio blames Wakiza for the death of the goddess, and she blames herself for being too foolish to realize her daughter's weakness. Jukio would never say these things publicly; the Empire considers Wakiza a hero and Jukio would never speak ill of the dead.

Though Jukio does not agree with her daughter's decision to join their family to the Mantis, she is too stubborn to admit it. She knows that without Amaterasu, the Moshi need a new purpose, and serving a fledgling Great Clan seems as good a purpose as any. On the other hand, she makes no effort to hide her distaste for the mercenary activities of the Yoritomo or the controversial tactics of the Tsuruchi. She considers the Moshi stronger, wiser, and generally more important than the other families and only serves the Yoritomo because she "knows her place." Most of those who encounter her find her arrogant, abrasive, and condescending. In truth, Jukio is so abusive of others due to her bitterness over the death of Amaterasu. She is especially rude to male shugenja (she believes males belong on the battlefield, not in the temple) and members of the Crab Clan (whom she resents because their Champion took Amaterasu's place).

With the death of Amaterasu, the Moshi family significantly changed. They no longer rely so heavily on the fire kami, and their magic is not as potent as it was. In addition, elder priestesses of Amaterasu (including Jukio) have been cursed so that they cannot die until they have expressed "a pure and honorable display of loyalty." Jukio believes that this test of loyalty lies in serving Yoritomo Kitao. Jukio neither likes nor respects Kitao; she selfishly and arrogantly believes that the Fortunes made Kitao daimyo merely to test her loyalty.

When Jukio learned of the existence of Yoritomo Kumiko, she was angered and dismayed. She felt that she, of all people, should have been made aware of the existence of her granddaughter. She considers Yoritomo Komori an unworthy protector, and feels that she should have raised Kumiko (as a shugenja rather than a bushi). At this point, she feels that Kumiko has wasted her potential by learning the way of the sword rather than embracing her Moshi blood and becoming a shugenja. She is as much of a disappointment as her mother ever was, if not more so: she has sown chaos in the ranks of the Mantis with her arrogant claim to rulership.

Jukio longs for the day when she will meet Yoritomo Kumiko face to face, so that she can express her distaste and anger toward her granddaughter personally.

MOSHI JUKIO

Female human Mantis Shu18: CR18, Medium-size humanoid; HD18d6-36; hp 49; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (touch 12, flat-footed 21); SQ Class skill — Spellcraft (family bonus), Shugenja abilities (Element Focus — Air, Sense Elements); Honor 3.9; AL LG; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +15; Str 4, Dex 9, Con 6, Int 23 (25), Wis 18, Cha 21 (25); Height 4 ft. 9 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Naga, Rokugani, Yobanjin), Concentration +19, Diplomacy +16, Heal +16, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (Astrology) +17, Knowledge (elements) +14, Knowledge (Etiquette) +15, Knowledge (Fortunes) +19, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +19, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +15, Knowledge (Shintao) +15,

Knowledge (Tengoku) +28, Listen +12, Sense Motive +12, Spellcraft +18, Spot +12; Craft Wondrous Item, Elemental Versatility (x2), Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Maximize Spell, Multi-Elemental Mastery, Void Use.

Dojo: Amaterasu Seido.

Spells Known (6/8/8/8/7/7/7/5/3, Base DC 17 + spell level, Elemental Focus — Air, Moshi School): 0 — commune with elements, create water, daze, detect magic, flash of insight, flight of doves, gathering swirl, purity, read magic, whispers of the wind; 1st — awaken the spirit, blessed winds, evil ward, never alone, obscuring mist, quiescence of air; 2nd — eyes shall not see, importune kami II, know the mind, lesser restoration, mists of illusion, resist elements; 3rd — burn the soul, clairvoyance/clairaudience, cure serious wounds, dispel magic, torrential rain, wind wall; 4th — bridge to Yomi, importune kami IV, restoration, solid fog, wall of fire, wisdom of the kami; 5th — bad karma, commune with nature, improved invisibility, sanctuary of Ningen-do, scrying, Yuki's blessing; 6th — control weather, fires of purity, karma, summon nature's ally VI, teleport; 7th — chain lightning, fire storm, poison of the windspider, Ryoshun's first gift; 8th — call the spirit, importune kami VIII, whirlwind; 9th — look into the soul, storm of vengeance, Suitengu's wrath.

Possessions: amulet of natural armor +3, bracelets of armor +6, haori of charisma +4, ring of fire resistance, major ring of protection +3, tiara of intelligence +2, wind fan.

MOSHI JUKIO

Earth: 3

Willpower: 6

Water: 4

Perception: 5

Fire: 5

Air: 5

Void: 5

School/Rank: Moshi Shugenja 5, Yoritomo Shugenja 2

Dojo: Amaterasu Seido

Honor: 3.9

Glory: 7.3

Advantages: Bente's Blessing, Inner Gift (visions of future), Social Position (Moshi daimyo)

Disadvantages: Contrary, Elderly, Epilepsy, Obligation (chosen of Amaterasu)

Skills: Astrology 8, Calligraphy 5, Courtier 5, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 5, History 6, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Lore (Tengoku) 7, Medicine 5, Meditation 6, Omens 6, Oratory/Rhetoric 4, Research 5, Shintao 5, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 6, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 7, War Fan 3

Spells: As the daimyo of a major shugenja family, Moshi Jukio has countless spells and many innate abilities at her disposal. Assume that she has access to any Fire or Air spells available, and has many innate Air and Fire spells.

MOSHI KALANI, MANTIS CLAN SAMURAI

As a male of the Moshi family, Moshi Kalani was doomed to obscurity, but that never bothered the young Mantis. He was raised in the household of his great-great-aunt, Grandmother Jukio, and gained his distaste for politics by watching the way the ancient priestess abused and manipulated her subordinates. While much of his clan is preoccupied with the current power struggle between Yoritomo Kitao and Yoritomo Kumiko, Kalani is one of a handful that truly could not care less. He tends to take life as it comes, doing what is expected of him but avoiding the sticky politics of the Yoritomo.

Despite his wish to remain out of the spotlight, Kalani has nonetheless gained some small amount of fame. Four years ago he attended Winter Court with Moshi Jukio's retinue. One boring winter day, he wandered into a secluded garden and stumbled onto a game of kemari — a sport in which a circle of players attempt to keep a large leather ball in the air as long as possible without using their hands. The Crab team was one player short, and Kalani eagerly entered the game. He caught on quickly and found that he was quite talented.

Upon returning to the islands, he taught several of his friends the game. Borrowing a small ship from his father, Kalani returned to the mainland and journeyed to Otosan Uchi, where they found many other samurai who also played. The Mantis team surprised the nobles of Otosan Uchi with their athletic talent. The courtiers of the Imperial City placed large wagers upon his games, and Kalani's name became known throughout the courts of the Empire. He and his teammates are unequalled in the sport, and Kalani has become the closest thing the samurai caste has to a professional athlete.

Seizing upon Kalani's popularity, Kitao made several public appearances with the young samurai immediately after her rise to power. This earned Kitao reflected respect during the first few uncertain weeks after she declared herself Champion of the Mantis. Kalani is uncertain if he approves of being used as a political pawn, but he sees no reason to publicly distance himself from the Mantis Champion. All he truly wishes to do is play kemari, and with the Kitao's support he has been free to do that as much as he likes.

With the rise of Yoritomo Kumiko, Kalani is beginning to rethink his indifference. With each day that passes, the conflict between the supporters of Kitao and Kumiko draws closer to bloodshed. Kalani knows that he is perceived as a supporter of Kitao despite his indifference. If violence should erupt and Kitao should fall, he might be seen as a symbol of her regime. On the other hand, if he should try to distance himself from Kitao and she is successful in putting down Kumiko's rebellion, he will be seen as disloyal and punished accordingly.

The young athlete is uncertain how to rectify the situation. He has spent so much of his life avoiding politics that he is entirely unprepared for his current dilemma. His life is no longer the carefree game that it once was, and one wrong move might cost Moshi Kalani his life.

MOSHI KALANI

Male human Mantis Ftr 6: CR 6, Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d10+20; hp 62; Init +3; Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 aiguchi +11/+6 melee (1d4+6 damage); AC 19 (touch 15, flat-footed 14); SQ Class skill — Spellcraft (family bonus); Honor 2; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 14; Height 5 ft. 8 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani), Climb +6, Balance +5, Games (kemari) +12, Profession (sailor) +7, Spellcraft +2, Jump +9, Tumble +14; Armor Focus (ashigaru armor), Bishamon's Blessing, Expertise, Power Attack, Soul of the Storm, Versatile (Games, Tumble), Weapon Focus (aiguchi), Weapon Specialization (aiguchi).

Dojo: Dojo Raiden; **Kata:** Striking as Water.
Possessions: +1 aiguchi, +1 ashigaru armor.

MOSHI KALANI

Earth: 3

Stamina: 4

Water: 3

Fire: 2

Agility: 4

Air: 2

Reflexes: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 2

Dojo: Dojo Raiden

Honor: 2.4

Glory: 2.0

Advantages: Bishamon's Blessing, Great Destiny, Quick Healer

Disadvantages: Dependent (mother), Insensitive

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 2, Commerce 1, Defense 4, Kama 3, Kemari 6, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Sailing 3, Tanto 5

Kata: Striking as Water



MOSHI SHANEGON, KOLAT MASTER

Moshi Shanegon plied the seas for many years as a pirate and a smuggler but, like so many other Mantis samurai, he built his reputation as a mercenary during the War of Spirits. After Hantei XVI could not meet Shanegon's price, he offered to work for the Lion Clan at a reduced rate. While there was less profit to be had, Shanegon saw more stability in working beside the reigning regime. He was placed under the command of young shugenja Ikoma Tsai.

Tsai was impressed by Shanegon's efficient mercenaries. He also noticed how frequently fallen enemies' armor and weapons disappeared after the battle. When he confronted Shanegon, the mercenary coolly denied that he was looting the dead and shipping steel back to the Mantis Isles for resale. He advised Tsai to keep his theories to himself if he did not wish his fellow Lion to learn about the affair he had been having with a peasant girl.

Shanegon calmly produced documents recorded by his own spies. These documents detailed Tsai's comings and goings, including his frequent late night journeys from the command post to a geisha house in the nearby village. It would not hold up as testimony in any court, but Shanegon knew that Tsai's inability to explain his true whereabouts would bring him shame and embarrassment.

What Shanegon did not realize was that Tsai had not been visiting a geisha at all. Tsai was Master Chrysanthemum of the Kolat, and he had been visiting one of his agents. Tsai considered quietly arranging for Shanegon's death, but an unexpected visit from fellow Kolat Master and Ox daimyo Morito saved Shanegon's life. Morito had heard of the ruthless smuggler's talents and was impressed that Shanegon had monitored Tsai without his knowledge. He recommended that Shanegon be offered a position in the Kolat.

Two days later, the offer was made in typical Kolat fashion. Shanegon was drugged, kidnapped, and transported to the Hidden Temple. After being informed of the Kolat's purpose and methods, Shanegon was offered a chance to join their ranks. He wisely accepted (realizing that if he did not, they would slay him) and began his instruction.

Though Shanegon mildly resented being taken to the Temple against his will, he soon forgave the Masters. He was intrigued by the power and organization of the Kolat, and saw much profit to be had through an association with them. Morito — the Kolat called Master Steel — seemed to share much in common with Shanegon. Master Steel's philosophy was simple. Magistrates, laws, and government are important for society to function, but for certain individuals those laws simply need not apply. Morito compared the law to a wolf — a powerful predator to be respected and obeyed, but a predator that must step aside when the bear arrives. The bear nevertheless finds the wolf useful because his howl keeps the hunter away, so the bear allows the wolf to live. The Kolat were a force above the law, but one which found the law a useful tool to insure its own continued survival. Shanegon learned much, and learned quickly, from Morito.

After three years the Kolat trusted Shanegon sufficiently to release him into Rokugani society. They had forged correspondence in Shanegon's hand and sent it to his family during his training, painting the illusion that he had taken a position as ambassador to the Ivory Kingdoms. Shanegon stepped out of the Hidden Temple and seamlessly returned to his position as a mercenary pirate, killing a few of the cutthroats who had usurped his place.

Putting his own network of thieves, smugglers, and assorted scum under the indirect control of the Kolat, Shanegon brought astounding profits to the organization and himself. With the aid of Ikoma Tsai he transported his illicit goods deep into Lion and Crane lands, where there were more profits to be had. With Morito's support, Shanegon quickly gained favor with the Masters. When the time came to choose a new Master Coin, Morito immediately nominated Shanegon.

Shanegon is a dangerous enemy. He is clever, ruthless, and always has an escape route in mind. If he has any true failing, it is that he is somewhat lazy. He tends to cut corners and take the most expedient route when possible. If an enemy proves too much trouble, he simply ignores them or tricks someone else into dealing with them. So long as an enemy does not personally injure or offend Shanegon, he is usually willing to forget a grudge if it is too much trouble to pursue.

More information on Shanegon's personal headquarters, Still Water Cove, can be found in Chapter Five.

MOSHI SHANEGON

Male human Mantis Ftr 3/Rog 4/KAg 6: CR 13, Medium-size humanoid; HD 3d10+9 plus 10d6+33; hp 113; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; Atk +2 wakizashi +17/+11 melee (1d6+3 damage); AC 20 (touch 14, flat-footed 20); SA sneak attack +3d6 damage; SQ Class skill — Spellcraft (family bonus), Evasion, Poison Use, Secret Brotherhood, Tell No Secrets, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); Honor 0 (2); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +18, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 13, Cha 10; Height 5 ft. 5 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani), Appraise +9, Bluff +15, Gather Information +10, Forgery +9, Hide +13, Innuendo +18 (receive) +17 (transmit), Intimidate +9, Move Silently +13, Pick Pockets +20, Profession (sailor) +11, Search +15, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +3, Spot +11; Cold and Cunning (Ancestor: Gusai), Needle Strike, Perceived Honor (x2), Strength of the Earth, Toughness, Way of the Mantis (crossbow, whip), Weapon Finesse (wakizashi), Weapon Focus (wakizashi).

Dojo: Coin Sect Kolat; **Kata:** Strike at the Cliff's Edge.

Possessions: +2 ashigaru armor of silent moves, +2 wakizashi, amulet of natural armor +1, haori of resistance +2, Master Coin's Mask (one of the ten masks of the Kolat Masters described in *Way of the Ninja*™; Shanegon does not normally carry or wear the mask), masterwork thieves tools, oni's tear earring, ring of counterspells (usually set against detect thoughts), ring of protection +1.

MOSHI SHANEGON

Earth: 3

Willpower: 4

Water: 4

Fire: 3

Air: 4

Reflexes: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 4

Dojo: Coin Sect Kolat

Honor: 0.6 (2.6)

Glory: 4.0

Advantages: Crafty, Heartless, Major Allies (Kolat), Perceived Honor (two ranks), Way of the Land (Mantis Isles)

Disadvantages: Bente's Curse, Dark Secret, Obligation (Morito), Obtuse

Skills: Appraisal 4, Athletics 2, Battle 1, Commerce 6, Defense 4, Forgery 4, Hisomu 4, Kama 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kuenai 7, Kyujutsu 3, Sailing 5, Sincerity 4, Sleight of Hand 6, Stealth 4, Tanto 3

Kata: Strike at the Cliff's Edge

VASSALS OF THE MOSHI FAMILY

THE GORAIBU FAMILY

Moshi Goraiku was a devout follower of Lady Amaterasu and a brilliant samurai in the service of the Centipede Clan. In the eyes of Moshi Jukio, he only had one fault: he was male. Even after joining the Mantis Clan, the Moshi were a matriarchal family and rarely tolerated male samurai in positions of authority, regardless of their talent. Goraiku lived under Moshi Jukio's rule and trained the men of the Centipede to defend the clan's holdings.

During the Clan War, Jukio came to rely more and more on the fighting men of the Centipede when he shugenja's fire magic was not enough. Goraiku worked to prove the worth of his men to the Moshi shugenja. He created elite fighting teams that could protect Tani Sensho with wits, bows, blades, and the help of the kami. Yet even with his great achievements, Goraiku was still just a minor advisor to the Centipede Clan's daimyo.

When Moshi Wakiza came to power, things changed. Jukio's daughter was powerful and ambitious. She spoke to Goraiku of her desire to make the Centipede more than they were and of her intention to marry the great Yoritomo. Wakiza knew that if she became the wife of the Mantis Clan Champion, the Centipede would join his clan and enjoy greater wealth and influence. Days before the Battle of Oblivion's Gate, Wakiza married Yoritomo and the Centipede Clan became the Moshi family.

Goraiku petitioned Wakiza to become Rikugunshokan of the Centipede, as he was the only man willing to deal with Grandmother Jukio who had the necessary military knowledge. Wakiza agreed, though she warned Goraiku not to defy Jukio's authority. Lady Sun may have committed jigai after Lord Moon's death, but Moshi Jukio was far from following in her Goddess's footsteps.

Jukio understood that having Goraiku as a leader in the clan was necessary, but also realized that if he was allowed to remain in his position that he would eventually challenge her for leadership of the clan. Goraiku worshiped Lord Sun as fervently as Jukio had ever venerated Lady Sun, and he had followers within the family. The Moshi daimyo's plan was simple: create a vassal family for Goraiku to lead, honoring him for his years of service but subtly pushing him aside with new responsibilities. Such a family would still be a part of the Centipede, but would no longer be a threat to Jukio.

The celebration of the creation of the Goraiku family was a great festival to Lord Sun. To the confusion of the Crab bushi, a great many Hida were invited to attend. Goraiku wished to remind them of their ancestral connections to the Mantis and especially of the Moshi's worship of Lord Sun, who had once been a Crab. He also wanted to forge an alliance of sorts with the Hida, a plan which was partly successful. Hida Hitoshi came to Tani Sensho and spoke with the new vassal daimyo.

After an enjoyable evening, the two forged a friendship. Hitoshi agreed to send Crab samurai to train with the Goraiku in exchange for an equal number of Goraiku's men to serve under Hitoshi.

Goraiku has made sure that his troops are well trained and sends them through intense physical and mental training each day after the Moshi have prayed to Lord Sun at the cliffs of the Moshi holdings. The samurai that have sworn fealty to Goraiku train alongside their Crab guests, considering themselves family in spirit if not in name.

The Goraiku are building a massive temple to Lord Sun on their family holdings, one that should rival the temple to Lady Sun in the Moshi ancestral palace. Jukio is not pleased, but has not forbidden the construction for fear of Lord Sun's displeasure. Further, Jukio currently has her hands full with more pressing matters, such as the threat of civil war between the supporters of Yoritomo Kitao and those who follow Yoritomo Kumiko, Daughter of Storms.

YAKAMO SEIDO

The temple to Lord Sun, in the Goraiku lands near the western pass out of the Valley of the Centipede, is nearly finished and only awaits its final consecration. When complete, the temple will be the first in the lands of the Moshi to officially recognize the ascension of Lord Yakamo. Many Moshi secretly hope that it will return the blessings of the Sun to their people.

The grounds of Yakamo Seido are a strange combination of Crab and Mantis architecture. Some of the statues show Lord Yakamo in battle against great oni, including one of Lord Sun triumphant over the corpse of Yakamo no Oni. Others depict Lord Sun stepping from the horizon over the sea in his daily travel from the eastern sea to the western mountains.

Men of both the Hida family and the Goraiku vassal family tend the grounds of the temple. Once they are finished, a few of the men who originally swore fealty to Goraiku plan to retire, forming an Order of the Sun to give Yakamo Seido more permanent caretakers. Goraiku himself plans to be one of the first monks to join this order.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While traveling through Goraiku territory, the player characters overhear that Moshi Goraiku needs both a Moshi and Hida shugenja to bless the almost-completed temple. Goraiku has secured the services of Hida Fujiyoko, a minor shugenja under Hida Rohiteki. Unfortunately, the Moshi daimyo and Goraiku don't quite see eye to eye, and he has had trouble finding a Moshi shugenja who will perform the ritual. While the Moshi will not refuse Goraiku's honorable request, they always seem to be busy with other duties whenever he comes to call.

Focus: If any of the characters inquire further, the samurai speaking of the dilemma introduces himself as Moshi Tanakin. He has been searching high and low for a Moshi shugenja or a suitable replacement. After looking over the party, he suggests that the characters might be able to help. They would be amply rewarded if they could find a shugenja, or convince Moshi Jukio to allow one of her subordinates to bless the new temple. The Goraiku do not want to offend Jukio despite her disdain for them; they merely wish to honor Lord Sun as he deserves.

Strike: The trek into Treacherous Pass is arduous, as the haunting winds that run through the pass at night are unsettling. Nobody can sleep on the first night of travel. The winds

also cover the noises of a group of bandits sneaking up on the party. During the first night that the party travels through the pass, the bandits attack. While the party should be able to defeat the bandits fairly easily, if any of them search the area, they notice a small scrap of paper, with a watermarked Centipede mon, that bears a partial description of the characters.

The party must decide whether or not to continue towards the lands of the Centipede, and how involved they wish to get in the machinations of Goraiku and Moshi Jukio. The GM can decide if Jukio is actually working against the characters or whether the bandits were just using the Moshi daimyo as a scapegoat. Jukio has many enemies of whom even she is not aware (including the Scorpion, the Kolat, and even the followers of Yoritomo Kumiko).

If the party can manage to acquire a Moshi shugenja to complete the ritual, Goraiku thanks them effusively. The vassal family's daimyo will be glad to perform a favor for them in the future, as long as it doesn't endanger his position or family.

GORAIKU DOJO

Squatting near the eastern cliffs of Tani Senshio, this dojo has trained the samurai of the Centipede for many years. While the main building is above ground, many of the outlying buildings are connected to tunnels that bore down into the earth near the cliff face and the surrounding area. This would allow the dojo to serve as a point of defense if an invading force ever managed to scale the cliffs.

Goraiku comes to watch the morning kata when he's not busy with family business. His son, Goraiku Tishi, is the sensei at the dojo and continues his father's tradition of intense physical training combined with a thorough grounding in guerrilla warfare, kyujutsu and kenjutsu. Classes on wilderness tactics and the occasional practice skirmish typically follow morning training.

Students of Goraiku Dojo typically wear a Centipede mon with a yumi superimposed lengthwise over the centipede, signifying their loyalty to the dojo. The symbol decorates banners and flags around the school.

Classes: Samurai, Fighter, Ranger

Schools: Mantis Bushi, Storm Legion

Students of the Goraiku Dojo typically aren't recognized outside of the Mantis lands, but those who know of the dojo respect the students for their hard work and perseverance. They tend to be as in touch with the wilderness as the Fox, and have learned a great deal about archery from their brethren the Tsuruchi.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

Benefit: Characters trained at Goraiku Dojo gain a +2 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy and Bluff checks when dealing with anyone in the Mantis Clan. This bonus increases to +4 if dealing specifically with male Moshi family members or any member of the Hida family.



Benefit: Characters trained at Goraiku Dojo gain a Free Raise on any social rolls when dealing with those in the Mantis Clan. This increases to two Free Raises if dealing specifically with male Moshi family members or any members of the Hida family.

TRAINING BENEFIT

Benefit: Students of Goraiku Dojo may use any bow as if it were a Mighty bow with a maximum Strength bonus equal to one-fifth their character level, rounded up (+1 at 5th, +2 at 10th, etc.) This bonus stacks with any Strength modifier already built into the bow, but never exceeds the character's current Strength modifier.

Benefit: Once per round, students of Goraiku Dojo may roll an additional unkept die for damage when using a yumi and any type of arrow.

THE GORAIKU FAMILY

Favored Class: Samurai

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skills: Wilderness Lore

Starting Outfit:

1. Masterwork yumi (longbow), set of ashigaru armor, 10 koku

THE GORAIKU FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Reflexes

Glory: 0.5 (rather than 1.0)

Special: Members of the Goraiku family who attend the Mantis Bushi School may choose to give up either Sailing or Commerce from their beginning skills to take Kyujutsu. They may give up both skills to gain a starting Kyujutsu of 2. In addition, due to their extensive and exhaustive physical training, they may take the Combat Reflexes Advantage for one less point.

MOSHI MECHANICS

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

EYE OF THE SUN GODDESS

Centuries ago, when Amaterasu appeared to Moshi Azami at the summit of the great mountain that would bear her name, the Sun Goddess knew that the peaceful ways of the Moshi might be challenged someday by the harsh world. She wanted her favored children to be able to defend themselves, so she gave the family the artifact known as the Eye of the Sun Goddess. It is not only the single most sacred item in the Moshi family, it is also among the most secret.

When Moshi Azami first touched this divine object she immediately felt its dangerous power, and vowed that it would be used only as a last resort.

The Eye, a huge crystal globe of breathtaking brilliance, is kept in a wooden protective structure on the roof of Kyuden Moshi. The Eye's surface is cut into hundreds of fine facets that capture the sunlight and glint with iridescent colors. The globe, about three feet in diameter, rests in a golden scone engraved with hundreds of intricate, intertwining centipedes. It has never been used, but the knowledge of how to use it has been passed down from mother to daughter for centuries. It can be used by any Moshi shugenja, although the Moshi family does not even know of its existence. No one suspects that an object of such incredible destructive power rests in the hands of a family that abhors violence.

Any Moshi shugenja who touches the Eye awakens its power. The kami bound within the globe speak telepathically to the shugenja, telling her how to use it and simultaneously warning her of its phenomenal power. At the user's command, a beam of pure sunlight blazes from the depths of the globe toward a selected target, with a power capable of turning armies into blackened cinders and leveling castles or villages. The user of the globe can direct this beam at will. Since it has never been used, the limits of the Eye's range are unknown.

EYE OF THE SUN GODDESS ID201

Minor Artifact

Only Moshi shugenja may activate the Eye's power. The shugenja must first attune herself to the kami of the globe by spending a full 1d3 rounds in concentration. Once she is attuned, she may unleash the Eye's power at the target of her choice. A beam of blinding sunlight erupts from the Eye and strikes any target within line of sight. From its current location, the Eye has line of sight to almost the entire Valley of the Centipede and a portion of the nearby ocean. The docks and beaches at the base of the cliffs are out of range due to the interposing cliffs.

The beam created by the eye is an area of effect 5 feet wide that travels from the globe to the any feature that blocks the beam of light. Given the current elevation of the Eye, this area of effect can be approximated on the ground by a patch of affected area 5 feet wide and 40 feet long.

Any creature caught in the beam takes 20d6 damage and is blinded. A successful Reflex save (DC 30) negates the blindness and reduces the damage by half. In addition to the obvious effects, a blinded creature suffers a 50% miss chance in combat (all opponents have full concealment), loses any Dexterity bonus to AC, gives a +2 bonus to attackers' attack rolls (attackers are effectively invisible), moves at half speed, and suffers a -4 penalty on most Strength and Dexterity-based skills. Creatures to whom sunlight is harmful or unnatural take double damage. Targets who fail their Reflex saves also catch fire (see the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*,™ page 86).

Shadowlands creatures caught in the beam are dealt 40d6 points of damage and blinded (Reflex save as above). The beam utterly destroys any undead creatures specifically affected by sunlight that fail their saves.

A shugenja may activate the Eye a number of times per day equal to her character level.

Caster Level: 20th; **Weight:** 400 lb.

EYE OF THE SUN GODDESS [2ND ED.]

Only Moshi shugenja may activate the Eye's power. The shugenja must first attune herself to the kami of the globe by spending a full two rounds in concentration. Once she is attuned, she may unleash the Eye's power at the target of her choice. A beam of blinding sunlight erupts from the Eye and strikes any target within line of sight. From its current location, the Eye has line of sight to almost the entire Valley of the Centipede and a portion of the nearby ocean. The docks and beaches at the base of the cliffs are out of range due to the interposing cliffs.

The beam created by the eye is an area of effect 5 feet wide that travels from the globe to the any feature that blocks the beam of light. Given the current elevation of the Eye, this area of effect can be approximated on the ground by a patch of affected area 5 feet wide and 40 feet long.

Creatures caught in the beam take 10k10 Wounds and are blinded unless they make a successful Fire roll vs. TN 30. Shadowlands creatures take double damage. Combustible objects caught in the beam may catch fire.

A shugenja may activate the Eye a number of times per day equal to her Insight Rank $\times$ 3.

**HAND OF THE SUN GODDESS**

During the early days of Amaterasu Seido's construction, the Moshi daimyo had a vivid dream that she remembered perfectly in every detail, even decades later. The Sun Goddess appeared to her with specific instructions for the shrine's construction. She wanted to grant her peaceful followers the means to heal the sick and wounded, to balance the destructive potential of her previous gift, the Eye. In the center of the temple was to be a stone slab, and throughout it numerous mirrors and lenses that gather sunlight to light the interior of the structure. Amaterasu's dictates were followed precisely, so during daylight hours in every season the slab is bathed in sunlight. On overcast days, the golden light takes on a grayish cast, but the light remains. The stone has been worn smooth and shiny from centuries of use.

Any creature placed on the slab in the pool of sunlight is touched by the benevolence of the Sun, healed and lent renewed strength and vigor. Moshi Jukio meditates here daily, and it is said her advanced age can be attributed to her daily exposure to the sun's healing touch. The Moshi feared that when the Sun Goddess died that their sacred Hand would no longer function, but Lord Yakamo's light still blesses the shrine of his predecessor with healing radiance.

Those to be touched by the Hand are placed on the slab, and a Moshi shugenja chants a prayer to the Sun Goddess. The warm sunlight fills with shimmering golden sparks for a few seconds, while the subject feels a cool, soothing sensation. He is cured of all disease and injury, and invigorated for some time afterwards.

HAND OF THE SUN GODDESS [2021]*Minor Artifact*

When the chant is complete, the subject is affected as by the spell heal. For the next 24 hours, all of his ability scores receive a +1 enhancement bonus, with all the accompanying bonuses to hit points, AC, skills, etc.

A creature may receive the Hand's benefits only once per day. Additional attempts have no effect. Shadowlands Tainted creatures that attempt to use the Hand of the Sun Goddess burn to a cinder in an instant.

Caster Level: 20th; Weight: - lb.

HAND OF THE SUN GODDESS [2ND ED.]

When the chant is complete, the subject is healed of all Wounds, poison, blindness, deafness, and disease. The effect does not reattach or regrow severed limbs. For the next 24 hours, the subject rolls one additional unkept die on all rolls, and his TN to Be Hit is increased by 5.

A creature may receive the Hand's benefits only once per day. Any additional attempts have no effect. Shadowlands Tainted creatures that attempt to use the Hand of the Sun Goddess burn to a cinder in an instant.

ANCIENT FAN OF THE CENTIPEDE

This beautiful fan of red silk and polished teak has been used by the Moshi family daimyo for centuries. Woven into the silk is a stylized centipede, which appears to writhe playfully as the fan is used. Despite its great age, the fan appears brand-new.

This fan was presented to the Moshi daimyo by the Phoenix clan over four hundred years ago. The fan was a wedding gift from Elemental Masters when the Moshi daimyo took an Isawa husband. Each of the Masters placed an enchantment upon the fan, but legends say that the power of the fan has grown. Custom dictates that the daimyo of the family keep the fan with her at all times, even on her deathbed. Some believe that the spirit of each daimyo infuses the fan with a portion of her power and knowledge.

The fan is said to possess a variety of abilities, and different feats have been observed at various times over the years, but the daimyo never discusses the fan's abilities nor allows them to be discussed in her presence; the subject is impolite. The fan's secrets are carefully guarded, and it may be used only by the current daimyo of the Moshi family.

ANCIENT FAN OF THE CENTIPEDE ID201

Minor Artifact

The fan grants the user a variety of extraordinary powers, which have been named by the Moshi daimyo over the years. Each ability is usable once per day, and any number of them may act in conjunction.

- *Speed of the Centipede* — The user's base movement rate is doubled. This ability lasts for 10 rounds.
- *Tread of the Insect* — The user gains the ability to climb sheer surfaces as if she were an insect. She is affected as by the spell *spider climb*.
- *Beetle's Carapace* — The user's flesh hardens, becoming like a beetle's armor. She is affected as by the spell *stoneskin*.
- *The Sun's Clarity* — The user gains 1d4+1 Intelligence for one hour.
- *Shining Beauty* — The gains 1d4+1 Charisma for one hour.

Caster Level: 18th; Weight: 1 lb.

ANCIENT FAN OF THE CENTIPEDE [2ND ED.]

The fan is a powerful artifact that grants the user a variety of extraordinary powers. These powers have been named over the years by the Moshi who have possessed it. Each ability is usable once per day, and any number of them may act in conjunction.

- *Speed of the Centipede* — The user's base movement rate is doubled. This ability lasts for 10 rounds.
- *Tread of the Insect* — The user gains the ability to climb sheer surfaces as if she were an insect. She must have bare hands and feet to climb in this manner. Her movement rate is half that of her normal movement. The caster may adhere to walls and can only be pulled free by an outside force if she fails an opposed Strength check. This ability lasts for 1 hour.
- *Beetle's Carapace* — The user's flesh hardens, becoming like a beetle's armor. She gains a Carapace rating equal to twice her Earth for one hour.
- *The Sun's Clarity* — The user gains +2 Intelligence for one hour.
- *Shining Beauty* — The user gains +2 Awareness for one hour.

NEW ANCESTORS

MOSHI AZAMI

Moshi Azami was the family daimyo to whom the Sun Goddess appeared over seven hundred years ago. Since that time, the Centipede have worshiped the Sun Mother. During her conversation with Amaterasu, Azami gained special knowledge of the nature of the cosmos, wisdom she imparts to her descendants.

WISDOM OF THE UNIVERSE

ANCESTOR FEAT: MOSHI AZAMI

You are descended from Moshi Azami, and the insight she gained from her meeting with the Sun Goddess is yours to draw upon.

Clan: Mantis

Benefit: You gain +2 to all saving throws versus fire and air spell effects, and an additional +1 to all Will saves and Wisdom checks.

ANCESTOR: MOSHI AZAMI

(5 POINTS)

You are descended from Moshi Azami, and the insight she gained from her meeting with the Sun Goddess is yours to draw upon. Any hostile Air- or Fire-based spell effect directed at you has its TN increased by your own Fire or Air (use the corresponding Ring for each effect). You gain +1k0 on all Awareness rolls.

MOSHI HOTARU

The young shugenja Moshi Hotaru earned the nickname "Firefly" because of her shining spirit and her special talent for Fire magic. When the gaijin fleet attacked Rokugan, she set aside her pacifist beliefs to defend the Empire at the Battle of White Stag. Despite her gentle soul, she distinguished herself in the battle with pyrotechnic displays that left the gaijin invaders breathless and terrified, allowing the Rokugani forces to press the advantage. After the battle, she married the Phoenix shugenja who would later become Master of Fire, keeping alive the strong bond between the Centipede and Phoenix clans. They agreed that their daughters would remain with the Moshi family, and their sons would live as Phoenix. She bore nine children, seven of whom became powerful and respected Moshi. Her blood also remains with the Phoenix to this day through the descendants of her two sons. The current Master of Fire, Isawa Hochiu, can claim kinship with this proud line.

SPIRIT OF THE FIREFLY

ANCESTOR FEAT: MOSHI HOTARU

Moshi Hotaru imparts to you her special insight into the ways of Fire.

Clan: Mantis or Phoenix

Benefit: Saves against your Fire spells have their DC increased by 2. This stacks with the effects of Element Focus or Spell Focus.

ANCESTOR: MOSHI HOTARU

(3 POINTS)

Moshi Hotaru imparts to you her special insight into the ways of Fire. You gain a Free Raise when casting any Fire spell.

NEW SPELLS

DANCE OF THE FIREFLIES

Evocation [Fire]

Level: Shu 1, Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V,S,DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft.+ 10 ft./level)

Area of Effect: 5 ft. radius

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes

This spell creates a swirling cloud of yellow-orange sparks that looks like a mass of whirling embers. Once the spell has been cast, the shugenja may direct the cloud to move at 10 feet per round. Moving the spell's area of effect requires a Concentration check (DC 15) each round, but the shugenja need not concentrate to maintain the spell. Failing the Concentration check means simply that the mass of sparks does not move that round.

Any creature within the area of effect suffers a painful and distracting barrage of hundreds of hot sparks. The effect causes no damage, but any attempt to cast spells from within the area of effect first requires a Concentration check (DC 15 + spell level). The swirling, burning sparks also make it difficult to see. Any creature that relies on sight for attack and defense suffers a -4 penalty to all attack rolls, and may not add its Dexterity bonus to Armor Class. Any ranged attacks directed into or out of the cloud do so as if the target had one-quarter concealment (10% miss chance).

The sparks do no real damage, but extremely flammable substances may combust when exposed to this spell (DM's option).

Creatures who do not rely on vision, are immune to fire (or have fire resistance 1 or higher), or have more than 8 HD are immune to this spell.

DANCE OF THE FIREFLIES

Fire Spell

Mastery Level: 1

Duration: 3 rounds/School Rank

Range: 100 ft.

Area of Effect: 10 ft. diameter circle

This spell creates a swirling cloud of yellow-orange sparks that looks like a mass of whirling embers. Once the spell has been cast, the shugenja may direct the cloud to move at 10 feet per round. Moving the spell's area of effect requires a Willpower roll (TN 10) each round, but the shugenja need not concentrate to maintain the spell. Failing the Willpower roll means simply that the mass of sparks does not move that round.

Any creature within the area of effect suffers a painful and distracting barrage of hundreds of hot sparks. The effect causes no Wounds, but any attempt to cast spells from within the area of effect first requires a Willpower roll (TN 10). The swirling, burning sparks also make it difficult to see. Any creature that relies on sight for attack and defense rolls one fewer die on all attack

rolls, and its TN to Be Hit is reduced by 5 (minimum 5). Ranged attacks directed at targets within the area of effect require two Raises.

Creatures who do not rely on normal sight, are immune to fire, or have an Earth greater than 3 are immune to this spell.

RIDE THE WHIRLWIND

Transmutation

Level: Shu 2

Components: V,S,DF

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: None

Target: Self

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

The shugenja summons a small but potent whirlwind that lifts him into the air, allowing him to fly. The caster can fly 60 feet per round, ascend at half that speed and descend at twice that speed. The caster has poor maneuverability. Using this spell does not require concentration, so the caster may attack and cast spells as normal. He can carry aloft only as much weight as he can normally lift with no change in speed or maneuverability.

The shugenja can choose to end this spell prematurely as a free action, sending the whirlwind barreling into a target within thirty feet. The shugenja makes a ranged touch attack which, if successful, inflicts 2d6 damage and subjects the target to a bull rush (the whirlwind is treated as if its Strength were equal to 15+the shugenja's caster level for this bull rush).

Should the spell duration end while the caster is still aloft, or the spell is dispelled, the shugenja drops 60 feet per round for 1d6 rounds. If he reaches the ground within that time, he lands safely. If not, he falls the remaining distance (falling damage is 1d6 per 10 feet of fall).

RIDE THE WHIRLWIND

Mastery Level: 2

Duration: 3 minutes/rank

Range: Self

Target: Self

The shugenja summons a small but potent whirlwind that lifts him into the air, allowing him to fly. The caster can fly 60 feet per round, ascend at half that speed and descend at twice that speed. Using this spell does not require concentration, so the caster is able to make attacks or cast spells as normal. He can carry aloft only as much weight as he can normally lift. The caster may end this spell prematurely, sending the whirlwind barreling into a nearby target. This inflicts damage equal to the (caster's Air)k1. The target must make an opposed roll of his Strength vs. the caster's Air. If unsuccessful, the target is hurled backward five feet.

Should the spell duration end while the caster is still aloft, or the spell is dispelled, the whirlwind takes time to disperse. The subject drops 60 feet per round for 1k1 rounds. If he reaches the ground within that time, he lands safely. If not, he falls the remaining distance, taking 1k1 Wounds per 10 feet fallen.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE TSURUCHI

CHASING
THE STORM
PART FOUR

The servant led Hatori through the winding corridors of Kyuden Ashinagabachi. The deceptive hallways seemed at odds with the notoriously forthright Tsuruchi family until one remembered that this was once a Scorpion stronghold. Many secrets lay buried inside its walls.

Hatori emerged from the hallway onto a balcony above the large practice ground that dominated the western face of the castle. The sudden bright sunlight caused the aging historian to wince and shield his eyes. When his eyesight adjusted, he found Tsuruchi Ichiro sitting on a dais overlooking the practice grounds. The servant gestured to the seat next to Ichiro, then went about placing tea on the table between the two cushions.

"I hope you will forgive the rather unconventional location in which I receive my guests," Ichiro said after Hatori was seated. "I find it relaxing to watch over the training grounds. It is here that my family was born, after all."

Hatori watched the young samurai practicing their archery and other combat arts. He was reminded of his vassals, young and enthusiastic samurai who never failed to surpass his expectations. "Ichiro-sama, I do not think this inappropriate at all. I am glad for a change of pace."

"I believe your two associates are enjoying the reprieve as well." He pointed to a figure in the crowd whose brightly colored kimono stood out. "That one is Sekkou, correct?"

"Yes. A fine young man, and an exceptional servant."

"I have always marveled at the enthusiasm of the Monkey Clan. They remind me much of the Wasp many years ago." The Tsuruchi daimyo smiled. "Your journey from the Moshi lands was uneventful, I trust?"

Hatori cleared his throat. "Once I left the Moshi, yes."

Ichiro laughed. "They are an interesting people. Did you meet with Grandmother Jukio-sama?"

"I did."

"She is a remarkable woman," Ichiro glanced at Hatori for a moment. "I remember the first time I met her, during the Clan War. Even then I thought she must be one of the wisest people in the Empire. Yet she has grown wiser in the intervening years." He sat silently for several moments. Finally, he said: "I suppose that you went to Jukio to find out about her granddaughter."

The historian scrutinized Ichiro. "I did go to investigate Kumiko's claim that she is the daughter of Yoritomo and Wakiza, yes. How did you come by that information?"

"Do not be concerned about spies, Hatori-san. I have known someone would come seeking that information since the day I learned of Kumiko's existence. That it is you does not surprise me. What other would the Imperial Court send to determine the authenticity of such a claim?" There was another long pause. "And I assume you found what you were looking for? Or perhaps it found you?"

Hatori stirred in his seat. There was no reason not to tell the Tsuruchi daimyo, even though it seemed somehow conspiratorial. "Yes," he finally admitted. "Jukio does believe that Kumiko is her granddaughter, and I have spoken to the Daughter of Storms. I also believe her claim."

"I believe it as well," confessed Ichiro. "Did you... did you happen to mention Wakiza to Jukio-sama?"

The historian cleared his throat again. "I did offer my condolences to Jukio-sama, yes. I could sense her discomfort at the mention of her daughter, and I changed the subject immediately."

"That was wise. She still will not speak of her daughter's fate. Once, I thought it was because she was angry at Wakiza's choice. Now I think perhaps she simply cannot bear the pain. Wakiza's wounds from the Battle of Oblivion's Gate took her life. Her death was not a peaceful one."

"You know why I am here," Hatori said suddenly. "Are you attempting to avoid the subject? I do not wish to be rude, but I have little tolerance for word games."

"I had heard that about you," Ichiro said flatly. "For such a peaceful family, you Miya can certainly become stubborn when you feel you are being manipulated. I apologize if I gave that impression."

"Then I hope you will forgive me if I am direct, for dancing around the subject ruins my enjoyment of an otherwise lovely view, and in my old age I find that I have less tolerance for such things." He turned in his seat to look directly at Ichiro. "What is the disposition of the Tsuruchi family? Should the Imperial Court be concerned about a civil war in the Mantis Clan?"

"The Tsuruchi, sadly, are divided," Ichiro answered. "Those of us old enough to remember Yoritomo-sama and Tsuruchi's devotion to his cause support Kumiko. She bears the spirit of her father, that much is certain. She is the spirit of the Mantis Clan. Everything that bound the Wasp to them can be found in her eyes."

"But others disagree?"

Ichiro frowned and stood, walking to the edge of the balcony to overlook the field below. "There are some in the younger generation who do not understand," he confessed. "They see only that we have little when others have much. And Kitao, with her ruthless, honorless ways, is a means to correct that problem."

"And where do you stand, Ichiro-sama?"

The Wasp turned and fixed Hatori with a penetrating, unwavering stare. "My allegiance is to the Tsuruchi family and to the Mantis Clan, as my predecessor swore. Kitao is a corruption of everything Yoritomo represented. She has not earned my respect, nor my loyalty. I would no more obey her than I would obey a thief in my master's house — for that is exactly what she is."

"So it is to be war, then," Hatori said. "It appears as though time is the only obstacle."

"I pray that neither I nor my son live to see war among the Mantis," Ichiro said, gripping the rail once more. "That is never what Yoritomo would have wanted. It is never what Tsuruchi would have wanted. We would not survive it."

Now it was Hatori who was silent for a time. "Then let us hope that your Kumiko truly does bear the spirit of Yoritomo, else she might doom that which her father worked so hard to achieve."



THE TSURUCHI PROVINCES

To say that the provinces of the Tsuruchi family are smaller than those of the families of other Great Clans would be a gross understatement. The Tsuruchi family has precious little in the way of resources, and has not materially expanded its holdings since the Wasp Clan's founding a half-century ago. The family's holdings are almost exclusively nestled within the Spine of the World mountains, slightly north of the Sparrow and Fox lands they abut. A handful of other holdings exist in Mantis-dominated areas, but both the first Tsuruchi and his chosen successor Tsuruchi Ichiro felt it unwise to spread the family too thin.

MAJOR TSURUCHI HOLDINGS

The Tsuruchi family has relatively few major holdings, for no other reason than their holdings are so limited. Nevertheless, the Tsuruchi ruthlessly exploit any resource in their possession to the fullest possible extent, knowing as they do that they do not have the depth of resources available to most families. The long association between the Wasp and the Fox, as well as the relative isolation of their holdings, has instilled in the Tsuruchi a respect for natural resources, however. They do not take more than can be replaced, and are careful to ensure that any natural resource under their supervision is renewed so that it may provide for future generations.

KYUDEN ASHINAGABACHI (LOCATION M6 IN ROKUGAN; LOCATION A15 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE)

The seat of the Tsuruchi family's power, the building where the Wasp Clan was born was once a minor Scorpion holding. Although the castle's exterior has been refurbished since it changed hands, the architecture reflects its Scorpion roots, with twisting hallways and many dark, recessed niches. The castle is located in a small valley near where the mountains border on Aki Mizu-Umi. In true Scorpion tradition, it is a defensible location, which the Tsuruchi have used to their advantage for years. No army of any considerable size can advance upon Kyuden Ashinagabachi without being forced through narrow defiles, a tempting target for the numerous archers and traps the Tsuruchi have laced throughout the valley.

Despite its status as seat of the family's power, the Tsuruchi rarely hold court in Kyuden Ashinagabachi. The castle's remote location deters most visitors, and the family discourages them in any event. Most often, the Tsuruchi family meets emissaries in the lands of the Moshi or Yoritomo families, where there are often more representatives of other clans in attendance. Tsuruchi diplomats use these sessions to solidify their decades-old ties with the Crane, Dragon, Fox, Sparrow,

and Unicorn clans. There has been little attempt or interest in trying to reconcile with the Scorpion and Lion clans, even after fifty years. Tsuruchi Ichiro was a student of Tsuruchi, and has inherited his master's deep-seated distrust of those clans.

TSURUCHI'S TEST

On the western edge of Kyuden Ashinagabachi is a great open field. This field is one of the most important parts of the castle, for it is here that every member of the Tsuruchi family undergoes gempukku. Once, it was the field on which every member was trained in the art of the bow, but the family has grown to such a size that other dojo throughout the Tsuruchi lands are used to meet the needs of the growing populace. Now the right to train upon Tsuruchi's Test is reserved for the children of the original Wasp Clan members and students from other dojo who are selected because of their extraordinary skill.

In addition to its training function, Tsuruchi's Test hosts the Tsuruchi's annual archery contest. Begun by the clan's founder, this contest was suspended for a time during the Clan War and War Against the Shadow. Tsuruchi Ichiro began the practice anew shortly after assuming leadership of the clan, and now master archers from all across the Empire travel to Kyuden Ashinagabachi once a year to participate.

The practice fields are equipped to train students in virtually every martial skill, but the obvious emphasis is on archery. Targets at varying range intervals litter the field, as do innovative obstacle courses which require the students to fire at a target while running, jumping, or climbing. In order to encourage athleticism in their students, the sensei of the Tsuruchi dojo have covered the plateau on which the field rests with a thin layer of gravel topped with a thin layer of sand. Beginning students often have difficulty with their footing, but in adjusting to the terrain they improve their balance and ability to recover from being put off-balance.

TSURUCHI HIRO

[Fighter 3; Tsuruchi Archer 1]

Despite his young age, Tsuruchi Hiro reminds many older Tsuruchi of the legendary clan founder. Hiro passed his gempukku only a year ago, but already his startling skill at kyujutsu has surpassed his father's. Some speculate that when he has mastered the techniques of the family's dojo, he will be the finest archer that the Empire has ever seen, including the legendary Tsuruchi and Mukami. Hiro seems unaffected by such speculation, his cheerful attitude shining through regardless of the circumstances.

Despite appearances to the contrary, Hiro is greatly disturbed at the division in the Tsuruchi family. Being a member of the younger generation, Hiro sees more of the dissension than does his father, and suspects that the problem is far greater than the family's elders realize. Hiro feels that he should do something about the situation. As the son of the daimyo, many see him as the link between the old generation and the new. As time progresses, he is growing more and more apprehensive, and the choice grows ever harder to make.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The characters are present at, or perhaps participating in, the annual Tsuruchi tournament. Whether competing themselves or supporting a friend or superior, the characters are impressed by the remarkable skill of one young Crane bushi. Despite his inexperience, the young man is dominating the tournament.

Focus: During a crucial moment, one of the young Crane's shots goes horribly off-target, then swerves miraculously back to hit the target dead center. The rest of the contestants are outraged, condemning the boy for using magic to augment his abilities. The boy insists he is innocent, however, and shugenja called to investigate sense no ability to use magic. Neither is he colluding with onlookers.

Strike: Attending the tournament is a Unicorn shugenja who is magically augmenting the Crane's abilities. Once everyone was watching, he made it obvious that the Crane was cheating. The Crane's father defeated the Unicorn's father in a duel many years ago, and insulted him by allowing him to live with the shame. The Unicorn wants to repay the debt and has targeted the Crane's innocent son for reprisal.

THE IMPERIAL MAGISTRATE'S OFFICE

During the time of Tsuruchi, all members of the Wasp Clan were considered agents of the Emerald Champion. This was due to an unorthodox arrangement between the clan's founder and the Emerald Champion, and was looked upon with considerable suspicion. Once the clan was absorbed into the Mantis as the Tsuruchi, the affiliation was dissolved (though a great number of Tsuruchi become Imperial Magistrates nonetheless). Now, as a show of good faith between the bounty hunters of the Tsuruchi and the imperial magistrates' organization, an imperial magistrate's office has been established in Kyuden Ashinagabachi.

MIYA KYRIEKO

[Courtier 10/Emerald Magistrate 2; Miya Shisha 4]

The youngest daughter of the legendary Imperial Magistrate Miya Katsu, Kyrieko strives to live up to her father's legacy. She was pleased to receive an appointment to the Wasp lands, for her father had always spoken highly of Tsuruchi Ichiro following their brief association during the Clan War. Unfortunately, the appointment has been less than she imagined: Miya Kyrieko is bored. There is very little crime in the Tsuruchi lands; few criminals tempt the Tsuruchi bounty hunters in their home territory. And while Ichiro is always sure to include Kyrieko in matters of court as a courtesy to her position, the court of the Tsuruchi is less intriguing than most.

Kyrieko attaches herself to visitors, eagerly pressing them for news of the Empire beyond the isolated Tsuruchi lands. Tsuruchi Ichiro is growing concerned that her career is being stymied by her post here, and is considering sending word to the Emerald Champion asking for her to be reassigned. Yasuki Hachi has not yet determined a way to remove her without dishonor, and is still mulling the issue.

SHAIGA

(LOCATION M7 IN ROKUGAN; LOCATION A22 IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE)

This very small, very inauspicious village is just south of the Spine of the World Mountains, centered perfectly upon a stretch of fertile land on the plains. The village was established a short time before the beginning of the Clan War, when Tsuruchi recognized that a lengthy Empire-wide conflict was inevitable. Rather than have his men face famine when they were unable to purchase food elsewhere, he recruited a few dozen peasants from the former Scorpion lands and relocated them here. The settlement was to be built well beyond the border of the Scorpion Clan, theoretically safe from potential conflict in that area. Within a year,

the village of Shaiga was completed and producing most of the Wasp Clan's food. When the Clan War began, the Wasp were largely unaffected.

Although there was no knowledge of it during the village's founding, the peasants of Shaiga made a startling discovery a few months after the village's farms began producing significant amounts of rice: the mountain stream that watered the village contained small amounts of gold. Unsure what to do, the village hetman commanded everyone in the village to remain absolutely silent on the matter, then sent a runner to Kyuden Ashinagabachi to inform the Wasp Clan. Two days later, an inconspicuously dressed Tsuruchi and a handful of trusted men arrived to investigate the claim. In short order, the investigating Wasp discovered a vein of gold in the natural caves of the hills east of the village.

Tsuruchi ordered the villagers to remain silent on the matter, and rewarded the village hetman for his discretion. He never reported the mine, thereby preventing its wealth from being taxed, and has taken steps to ensure that the mine is well protected. The gold is mined very lightly to prevent any questions regarding the family's wealth. Though Tsuruchi Ichiro was shocked to hear that the resources were hidden from the Emperor, he has chosen to respect his superior's wishes regarding the mine's secrecy.

THE SHAIGA MINE

The mine just outside Shaiga is barely large enough to deserve the name. The entrance is disguised in order to prevent outsiders from stumbling across it, and the interior is far less elaborate than most modern mines. In fact, if the mine were to be discovered, it would be fairly easy for those responsible for the discovery to mistake it for an illicit operation conducted by peasants or bandits. This is intentional, of course, and the peasants of Shaiga are well aware that if the mine is ever discovered, they will certainly pay the price for the high standard of living the Tsuruchi have permitted them.

No more than four men work the mine at any time, and mining only takes place three or four days a week for a few hours a day. Although this barely scratches the surface of the mine's potential yield, it ensures not only that the Tsuruchi will be able to provide for their samurai and peasants, but also that the mine will continue to produce for many years to come.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While traveling through the Tsuruchi lands, the characters come upon the body of a peasant who appears to have fallen to his death after losing his footing on a cliff face. Although no samurai would ever touch dead flesh, the peasant's belongings were scattered by the fall, and they include a notable amount of freshly mined gold nuggets.

Strike: Naturally, the characters report this incident to the nearest magistrate or, failing that, to Tsuruchi Ichiro himself (Kyuden Ashinagabachi is not far from the site of the peasant's death). The Tsuruchi are outraged, claiming that the peasant must belong to a local bandit group and that the gold must have been stolen from one of their recent tax shipments. The Tsuruchi ask the characters to help them destroy the bandit group so that someone outside the family will be able to provide testimony regarding the bandits' operations.

Focus: The bandits, while genuine, have little to do with the gold. The peasant was a refugee from Shaiga who wanted to become a merchant in Ryoko Owari. The bandits have been

allowed to confiscate enough gold to make them believable scapegoats, however. Will the characters discover the Tsuruchi family's duplicity?

SILENT MOUNTAIN DOJO

This small dojo appears to be abandoned: the practice equipment is in disrepair, the floor is covered in dust, and the scrolls of students show that no one has studied here in nearly a decade. To a visitor, this dojo seems little more than an empty building that once served as a school for the martial arts. This is merely a deception, however, as the Silent Mountain Dojo sees considerable use by the peasants of Shaiga.

Long ago, Tsuruchi realized that this village was perhaps the single most valuable holding the Wasp Clan possessed and that it must be protected at all costs. Of course, moving troops to such a remote village would immediately alert anyone in the area that there was more to Shaiga than met the eye. Tsuruchi therefore had one of his best men establish a dojo in the village where he would train the villagers in the use of peasant weapons. Should the village ever be threatened, its inhabitants would be able to hold off the attackers long enough for the Wasp to respond to the threat.

Since the time of the Tsuruchi's induction into the Mantis Clan, Shaiga has remained a tightly guarded secret. None outside the family are aware of its true importance to the Tsuruchi, and the sensei of the dojo in the village never takes the Tsuruchi name in order to prevent any blame falling upon the family should the dojo's true purpose be uncovered.

RAYOKU,

SENSEI OF SILENT MOUNTAIN DOJO

[Fighter 10; Tsuruchi Archer 2/The Hidden Weapon]

Rayoku's father was handpicked by Tsuruchi to serve as the sensei of the Silent Mountain dojo. It was a very unglamorous duty, but an exceedingly important one. Rayoku's father fulfilled his duty admirably, passing on his peerless knowledge of peasant weaponry to his students and to his star pupil, Rayoku. When he passed on to Yomi, Rayoku requested permission to continue in his stead. Tsuruchi Ichiro agreed and offered him the fealty in the family that his father was denied. Rayoku declined. He wishes to continue in his duties exactly as his father did.

Rayoku is in his early thirties, but appears significantly older. Living and working alongside peasants is a more difficult life than most samurai realize. Still, he enjoys his work and takes great satisfaction that it is his students who protect the Tsuruchi's most valuable resource.

AKI MIZU-UMI

(LOCATION 55 IN ROKUGAN; LOCATION UU IN THE GAME MASTER'S GUIDE)

Also known as Red Lake, Aki Mizu-umi is of great historical importance to the Empire. During a huge battle between the Lion and the Scorpion several centuries ago, ten thousand samurai died during the Hour of the Wolf. The battle was fought entirely at night, illuminated only by torches and the luminescent spells of the shugenja accompanying the generals. The true extent of the carnage was unknown until the rays of the morning sun illuminated the walls of Beiden Pass, where the battle had been fought. The blood of the slain had turned the river and lake red, inspiring their names. Eventually the unpleasant association with this battle caused the Hour of the Wolf to be renamed as the Hour of the Dog.

The years have still not seen the lake's usage return to its previous levels. Once it was fished by the peasants of three clans and was a popular spot for young samurai couples to enjoy the serenity of nature. Now it is fished very lightly, and few come to enjoy the lake's beauty. It is more common to find the descendants of those who died coming to pay homage to their ancestors.

The Tsuruchi, an eminently practical people, use the lake in a number of ways. Its most useful function is as an additional source of food. The tonnage of fish harvested from the lake is relatively minor, but given the absence of other major waterways through the family's lands, it is welcome.

SAKANA MURA

This tiny village is not really a village at all, but a collection of fishermen's huts and a lone sentry outpost. The men who fish the lake do not live in the coastal village, but in villages from the surrounding area. Rather than walk many miles to the coast each day, they have erected a number of temporary houses in which to stay during the several days each week when they work on the lake. The "homes" appear ramshackle, but are soundly constructed to deflect the brisk mountain winds.

There are always one or two dozen men living in Sakana Mura. During the day, all but two or three of them will be on the lake while the others make preparations to receive the catch on the shore. The peasants are invariably superstitious and anxious about fishing upon the lake. Were it not for the insistence of the Tsuruchi, the peasants would abandon the lake altogether. As it is, they believe it is only a matter of time before the spirits of those whose blood stained the lake rise up to smite those arrogant enough to fish their cursed waters.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Several peasants in the area around Aki Mizu-umi have died, their faces twisted into masks of pain and horror. Many villages are on the verge of a panic, certain that they are doomed for daring to fish the cursed waters of Red Lake. The Tsuruchi have little experience in such matters and require outside assistance.

Focus: Each of the victims of the mysterious deaths was involved in some way with the fishing on the lake. Some were fishermen, but many were responsible for the cleaning, transporting, and storage of the fish taken from the lake. Since so many peasants are involved in the process, panic is widespread and grows with each subsequent death.

Strike: The deaths are actually the result of poisoning by a handful of agents of the Scorpion Clan. This is merely the first step in their plan to demoralize and destabilize the Tsuruchi. Now that Aramasu has been killed, some Scorpion believe that the followers of Tsuruchi should likewise be punished. Once they have established a suitable panic, they will extend their operations to terror tactics and begin their efforts in earnest.

THE SENTRY POST OF RED LAKE

The early days of the Wasp Clan were filled with paranoia, for the creation of the clan was a direct insult to both the Scorpion and the Lion, arguably the two most dangerous enemies in the Empire. While Tsuruchi was not so arrogant as to believe he could predict the tactics of the Scorpion, he knew that were the Lion to attack, they would have only two options: move through Beiden Pass and circle through the Scorpion lands, or cross the Spine of the World Mountains.

With so few paths, the only real way the Lion could move a sizeable force south would be to move them across the lake in a legion of kobune. Such a maneuver would be exceedingly unlikely, but more likely than the Scorpion allowing the Lion passage. Accordingly, Tsuruchi placed one of his few shugenja followers in a sentry post watching over the lake. If anything unusual were to occur, the shugenja could notify the forces at Kyuden Ashinagabachi within minutes.

Although the Tsuruchi no longer fear a possible waterborne attack from the Lion, the peasants constantly report spirits on the lake. The leaders of the family do not believe that the lake is truly haunted, but the Tsuruchi did not climb to their current position by being less than thorough. A lone sentry is stationed on the lake's coast at all times, and reports any strange occurrences to the Tsuruchi immediately.

TSURUCHI OTEKE,

SENTRY OF SAKANA MURA

[Shugenja 9; True Ronin Shugenja 3]

A veteran of the War of Spirits, Oteke swore an oath of fealty to the Tsuruchi shortly before the Wasp were absorbed by the Mantis. He is one of a handful of shugenja in service to the family, and occasionally feels the disdain of the Moshi, who consider him an intruder in their domain. Oteke does not react to such treatment, although in truth the embers of resentment smolder beneath his serene facade.

Oteke's solitude and the nature of his duty have eroded his sanity over the years. More than a decade of staring at a lake awaiting a supernatural manifestation has given him an unnatural obsession with blood magic, and he is beginning to listen to the dark whispers in the night. He has become a fledgling maho-tsukai. The Taint has not yet consumed his mind, but that time is growing ever nearer.

ROADS OF THE TSURUCHI PROVINCES

Treacherous Road (Connects M6 to A15 and on to S14)

— This is the primary road that connects the Tsuruchi lands to the outside world. It is named such because the nearest neighbors to the Tsuruchi holdings are the denizens of Shimomura, a village in the Scorpion lands.

The Hidden Path (Connects M6 to A15, S12, and L18)

— This aptly named road is little more than a crude path through the mountain wilderness. Early in the Wasp Clan's existence, Tsuruchi ordered that this path be carved through the mountains so that the Wasp could detect enemies approaching from the Lion lands. If the Lion found out about this path, it might further sour the already poor relations between the Mantis and the Lion.

Forgotten Way (Connects M6 to CN6) — This small, unused road winds through the Seikitsu Mountains to emerge in the southern reaches of the Crane Lands. This was the path Tsuruchi took decades ago to reach the Emerald Champion before his men at Kyuden Ashinagabachi fell to the forces of the Lion and Scorpion. The Tsuruchi watch for any who might try to gain entrance to the Crane lands through this road, although only a handful of people know of it.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: Reports reach Kyuden Ashinagabachi of strange occurrences on the waters of Aki Mizu-umi. Strange lights, figures moving across the waters, and catches of dead, rotten fish are becoming more common. The Tsuruchi send someone to investigate the reports: members of their own family, visiting magistrates, or even just guests of the court (perhaps to distract them).

Focus: The sentry at Sakana Mura is helpful and obviously concerned about the reports, although he claims to have seen nothing. Observation over the course of a few evenings reveals that the peasants are correct. Ghostly figures can be seen moving across the surface of the water late at night. The figures are clad in blood-stained armor and are vaguely luminescent. Sometimes they fight among themselves across the surface of the water.

Strike: These unquiet Toshigoku spirits have been summoned by Oteke, who is experimenting with maho. Once awakened, the spirits will not return to Toshigoku peacefully, but will continue their battles until they reach the shore, where they will begin to kill innocent peasants and Tsuruchi samurai by the score unless they are stopped.

THE TSURUCHI RECORDS

Although they care little for history not involving their own family, the Tsuruchi are meticulous in at least one area of record-keeping: they have a full record of every criminal act that their bounty hunters have ever been contracted to resolve, including many major bandit

groups and opium conspiracies throughout the Empire's history. Each Tsuruchi must write a full account of his experiences with any criminal activity encountered in the line of duty, and these scrolls are collected in a central location. With this incredible resource at their disposal, the Tsuruchi are able to track criminals and their operations far more easily than any other law enforcement agency in Rokugan. The location of these records is a tightly guarded secret, and no one outside the family is allowed access to them save for a handful of highly trained and trusted Emerald Magistrates who also enjoy the privilege of researching their prey here.

The records were once kept within Kyuden Ashinagabachi, but after an unpleasant incident involving a spy, Tsuruchi Ichiro relocated the records to a remote location high in the mountains. Anyone who wished to gain access to the records would have to find the building itself, reach it through the wilderness, get past the considerable security, and then dig out the documents in question. Most subversive groups interested in the contents of the records consider it far too much trouble.

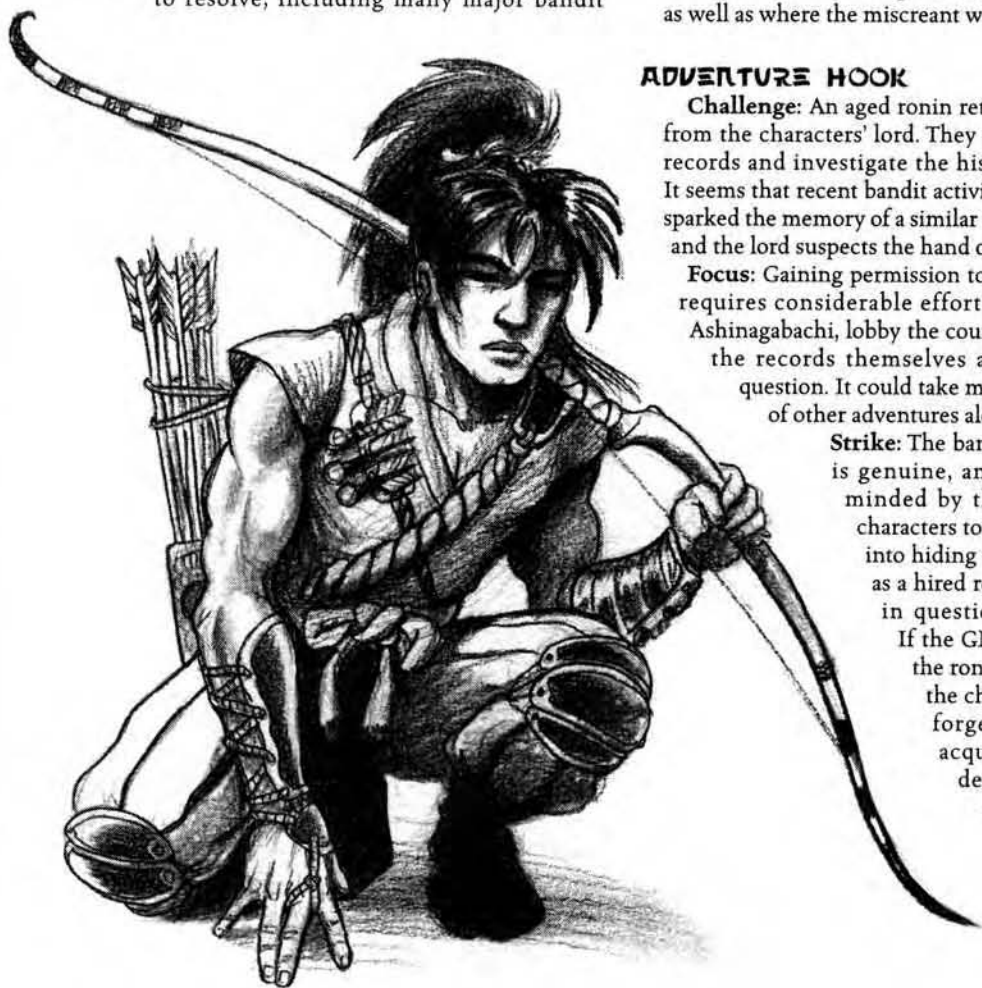
The records are constantly updated by reports from outposts such as the Tsuruchi estates in the City of the Rich Frog. These are constantly being added in and continue to make the records one of the most useful resources in the Empire. The records never mention who paid the Wasp hunters to capture a particular fugitive, nor do they specify the amount. The records merely detail the nature of the crime and the individual responsible for the criminal's capture, as well as where the miscreant was brought to justice.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: An aged ronin retainer arrives with a message from the characters' lord. They are to travel to the Tsuruchi records and investigate the history of a particular bandit. It seems that recent bandit activity in the lord's provinces has sparked the memory of a similar occurrence many years prior, and the lord suspects the hand of his old enemy.

Focus: Gaining permission to access the Tsuruchi records requires considerable effort. They must reach Kyuden Ashinagabachi, lobby the court for permission, then reach the records themselves and locate the material in question. It could take months, and involve a number of other adventures along the way.

Strike: The banditry in the lord's provinces is genuine, and is in fact being masterminded by the bandit he has sent the characters to investigate. The bandit went into hiding years ago and is now serving as a hired ronin in the castle of the lord in question to gather information. If the GM desires, the bandit can be the ronin messenger accompanying the characters, and may have even forged the letter in hopes of acquiring the documents and destroying them, keeping his secret safe.



MINOR TSURUCHI HOLDINGS

Minor holdings of the Tsuruchi family tend not to produce a commodity that the family requires, or hold little or no strategic value for the family or the clan. Despite their relative unimportance, these holdings are defended as tenaciously as Kyuden Ashinagabachi itself. The Tsuruchi do not claim more than they can use, but neither do they allow that which is theirs to be taken from them.

QUIET STREAM VILLAGE

This unassuming village is small enough to make Shaiga seem large by comparison. It provides enough food to provide for the peasants and the handful of samurai who dwell there, with just enough left over to pay taxes. Indeed, the only natural resource to speak of is the vast forest on the village's southern border. For a Tsuruchi, however, this village is extremely valuable: the forest's wood is of exceptional quality for both bows and arrows.

Although many samurai consider fletchery a base skill worthy only of peasants, the Tsuruchi have a different opinion. Would a Lion fight with a sword he had not inspected? Would a Kaiu present his lord with a blade that had not been tested? The Tsuruchi have a similar view on arrows: to ensure their quality and strength, it is best to craft them yourself. Of course, no Tsuruchi has the time to spend several hours a day fletching arrows, and many men and women in Quiet Stream Village are excellent fletchers.

DANCING STEEL DOJO

This small dojo is located on the southern edge of the Tsuruchi holdings, nearly a day's ride from any real road or location of consequence. It is an unassuming structure that looks as if it has seen little real use. In truth, the dojo is less than ten years old, so few bushi have trained here. The dojo began eight years ago when Tozuken, a Wasp samurai who had been wounded in battle and could no longer serve in the field, requested permission to begin instructing younger members of the family. Out of respect for his achievements, Tsuruchi Ichiro granted permission and allotted an out-of-the-way storehouse that had fallen into disuse for the dojo's facilities.

Unfortunately for the Tsuruchi, the dojo was quickly overtaken with younger members of the family that wished to learn the combat styles the sensei had learned among the Yoritomo. Glad to be of service to the family, Tozuken was more than happy to pass on his learning. What he did not realize was that the students coming to him for instruction were those dissatisfied with the status of the Tsuruchi family. The dojo has essentially become the headquarters of a new philosophical faction among the younger generation. Tozuken, realizing what was taking place, retired to a monastery two years ago. He has since been replaced by one of his first students, a gifted young bushi named Tsuruchi Shimiko.

TSURUCHI SHIMIKO

[Fighter 12/Tsuruchi Archer 1; Tsuruchi Kenkyaku 1/Yoritomo Bushi 2]

Shimiko is a singularly focused young woman who has not only mastered several unorthodox fighting styles, but has

begun to develop her own. She was one of the first students to study at the Dancing Steel Dojo, and her incredible drive and innate skill prompted her promotion to sensei when her master retired.

Unlike many of her peers and students, Shimiko bears no ill will toward the elder Tsuruchi. Her drive to study different forms of martial combat is not due to some rebellious impulse against the family's kyujutsu-specific style, for she is a very skilled archer in her own right. It is only her need for perfection that drives her, and she will not rest until she has mastered every weapon in the Empire. Even yet, many of the younger generation see her as a symbol, an example of what a Tsuruchi can become when not bound by the "artificial" traditions inspired by their family's founder.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: One of the characters (preferably one who has a high skill with any weapon other than the katana or yumi) receives a challenge from the master of the Dancing Steel dojo. As this is a very small dojo, no one outside the Mantis Clan will likely be familiar with it.

Focus: Tsuruchi Shimiko has heard of the character's martial prowess and is eager to test her skill. There is no tournament or large, cinematic contest — only Shimiko and her students witness the match. If Shimiko is victorious, she lauds the character's skill and courage, accepting him as an equal with an invitation to practice in the dojo at any time. If she is defeated, she treats the character with the utmost respect and offers him a position as a sensei in the dojo.

Strike: Although Shimiko's challenge is perfectly honorable, not all of her students are willing to risk her reputation on so trivial a matter. Many young Tsuruchi view her as the linchpin of their philosophical rebellion revolves, and will go to nearly any lengths to ensure her victory.

CHINSEI MORI

This small forest lies south of Quiet Stream Village, which is in turn a few hours south of Treacherous Road. The forest is unremarkable in most ways, for it has little in the way of resources that are not readily available elsewhere. Its importance to the Tsuruchi is largely a result of the craftsmanship of the denizens of Quiet Stream Village, who use wood from the forest to make bows and arrows. The mountain stream that gives the village its name continues through the forest, and brings an almost unnatural serenity to the place. As a result, there is a small shrine within the forest, maintained by a handful of monks, devoted to the Fortune of agriculture Kuroshin. The shrine includes an expansive garden, and the monks are always willing to share their harvest with the peasants of the village.

TSUBO, MONK OF KUROSHIN

[Inkyo 6; Seven Fortunes Monk 2]

Once a Phoenix bushi, Tsubo has long since left that life behind. His life now consists of meditation and gardening, and he is more content than at any point during his years as a samurai. Tsubo retired to the monastery several years before the customary age. Having seen the horrors of the War of Spirits and the terror the Steel Chrysanthemum brought to the Phoenix Clan during that time, he found that he no longer could stomach the thought of killing. Rather than disgrace the Shiba with half-hearted service, he left behind the life of a bushi.

Tsubo is a pleasant middle-aged man with a quick smile and a deep tan from many years of working outdoors. He is genuinely concerned for the well-being of all living things and eager to help visitors to the shrine unless they are clearly on a mission of violence. Even then, he is courteous to visitors, even if he is unwilling to aid them.

THE HOUSE OF THE BRISK WASP

Many consider the name of this merchant house, found within a Mantis port city on the coast of Rokugan, to be little more than an amusing coincidence. For many years, that was the case. Recently, though, a handful of older Tsuruchi discreetly purchased the house and are now using it as a front to build their mercantile interests. Once they had no need of such resources, but they have grown large enough that they must trade with other clans or perish. While the Yoritomo currently deal with such issues, the Tsuruchi fear the repercussions of the growing rift in that family between the supporters of Kitao and Kumiko. They would rather have independent means of support as a safeguard.

Tsuruchi Ichiro has only recently learned of this development. He is not pleased that it is necessary, but he has not admonished those responsible. Indeed, he has made additional resources available to them.

THE DANCING CRICKET

One of only four ships in the possession of the Tsuruchi thus far, the *Dancing Cricket* is a large kobune with a distinguished history of service. It was built as part of a large naval force by the Emerald Champion in search of a notorious Yasuki pirate centuries ago. Following the pirate's defeat, the ship was given to the ronin who commanded it in the Champion's name. Since that time, the *Dancing Cricket* has served merchants, pirates, magistrates, and thieves. When the Tsuruchi began their search for their own merchant holdings, the *Cricket* had just been lost by a Crane courtier in a game of Fortunes and Winds. The new owner, a fortunate wave man, was eager to sell it for a reasonable price and the promise of long-term gainful employment by the Tsuruchi family.

The *Dancing Cricket* has a crew of twenty-four experienced sailors, most of whom are hired ronin. There are a few Tsuruchi as well, whose main purpose is to repel boarders. The *Cricket* has been trading with the Phoenix of late, exchanging lumber from the Tsuruchi lands for fine goods. Given the large number of shugenja among the Phoenix, the forests of that land are largely reserved for the creation of scrolls, so the archers among the Shiba must import their lumber.

WASP ARMBANDS

Those members of the Wasp who choose to follow the Wasp Code often show their dedication by wearing silken armbands of black and gold, the colors of the former Wasp Clan. A Wasp can instantly tell whether or not another Wasp chooses to follow the code entirely on the basis of whether or not he chooses to wear these armbands. Tsuruchi Ichiro wears one at all times, as does his son (though Hiro has not yet decided whether or not he agrees with the philosophy of the younger Tsuruchi).

MOSHI TSURIKO, CAPTAIN OF THE DANCING CRICKET

[Rogue 6; Yoritomo Bushi 2]

Born of a Tsuruchi who married into the Moshi family, Tsuriko was treated little different from the male Moshi when it was discovered that she had no talent for speaking with the kami. The female Moshi ignored her because she was not a shugenja. Males either resented her or deferred to her obsequiously. When the Tsuruchi requested her aid to honor the memory of her father, she was happy to offer her assistance.

Being ignored her entire life has allowed Tsuriko to focus on her training to the exclusion of all else. She is an exceptional sailor and captain, and under her command the *Dancing Cricket* is performing well above expectations.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: The characters are hired or assigned to a merchant ship that has been contracted to carry cargo on behalf of an anonymous merchant. The merchant fears pirates and is keen on having adequate protection. (Ronin can be hired; the merchant will call in favors to get samurai from the Great Clans assigned if that's what the party is comprised of.)

Focus: The anonymous merchant is actually a member of the Tsuruchi. One of the ships assigned to the House of the Brisk Wasp has gone missing, and the patrons fear the worst. However, they cannot launch an overt search without drawing attention to their operation. Instead, they hire a ship through a cover and send it along the same route, hoping to find a trace of the vessel.

Strike: The ship was attacked by pirates and escaped—but into a particularly dangerous part of the sea. The ship is trapped on the rocks just off of a small island. The crew is alive on the island, but cannot move the ship without more manpower or the assistance of a shugenja. Even if they escape, the pirates are still a threat.

GATEWAY VILLAGE

Another of the tiny villages that characterize the Tsuruchi lands, Gateway Village sits on the border of the Tsuruchi and Scorpion lands. The village is as distant from Kyuden Ashinagabachi as possible given the layout of the family's holdings. Constant exposure to the Scorpion has made the people of Gateway Village even more defensive and suspicious than their Tsuruchi kinsmen.

Many samurai serving in Gateway Village support Yoritomo Kitao. They see her ruthless and pragmatic ways as being equal to those of the Scorpion, whom they are forced to deal with regularly. To their minds, Kitao has a far better chance of dealing with the Scorpion properly than Kumiko. After all, where was Kumiko when Aramasu died? No one can say. Kitao, however, was there to stand against the Scorpion who took his life. Heritage is unimportant. Results matter. Tsuruchi Ichiro is not the descendant of Tsuruchi, yet he commands the family. Many in Gateway Village consider his support of Kumiko a thinly-veiled effort to establish his son as the heir apparent to the Tsuruchi family, rather than selecting the most suitable candidate when the time comes for him to retire.

WARDENS' BARRACKS

This unassuming structure is the headquarters of the dozen Tsuruchi who patrol the border between the Tsuruchi and the Scorpion. In addition to the normal bushi training,

the wardens have extensive horsemanship and tracking skills. Considering that their primary opponents are Scorpion samurai, the wardens have to be highly motivated and extremely well trained individuals who are capable of the deduction and intuition that normally characterize the Kitsuki family of the Dragon Clan.

Unfortunately, the diligent samurai who work so tirelessly to keep the Tsuruchi family's provinces safe are rarely appreciated. Naturally, a samurai derives satisfaction only from serving his lord faithfully and well, and while this is sufficient for most of the Tsuruchi wardens, a handful resent their lot in life. As time drags on, the ill will between Gateway Village and Kyuden Ashinagabachi grows ever more palpable.

TSURUCHI NOBUMOTO, WASP SKIRMISHER

[Fighter 8/Rogue 4; Tsuruchi Archer 3]

Nobumoto commands the patrols that guard the Scorpion border, and his duties frequently take him across the Tsuruchi lands. What he has seen has convinced him that Kitao is the only hope his family has of breaking what he perceives to be the stranglehold the Scorpion have on his family. Without a leader who thinks like the Scorpion and understands their ways, the Tsuruchi will always be on the defensive against the constant threat of invasion by a superior military force.

Nobumoto is a cheerful, optimistic sort. His only pessimism stems from his view of the family's leadership. Beyond that, he is considered by most to be an agreeable sort with a tremendous sense of humor that makes him popular in most sake houses. His genial attitude belies considerable skill as a warrior, and those who mistake Nobumoto for a fool briefly regret their rash judgment.

EXTRA-TERRITORIAL HOLDINGS

More so than any other clan, the holdings of the Mantis are scattered across the Empire. The Islands of Silk and Spice, the Valley of the Centipede, and the mountainous lands of the Tsuruchi contain much of the clan's wealth, but there are many holdings scattered outside these three centers of power.

THE TSURUCHI ESTATE IN THE CITY OF THE RICH FROG (LOCATION U19)

The Tsuruchi maintain a small but respectable structure in the City of the Rich Frog. The building serves as the base of operations for the family in the western portion of the Empire, including the Unicorn and Dragon lands. Those family members who continue to serve as bounty hunters often use this as a way station, relaying information on the movements of various criminals and bandit groups that they are aware of in the hopes that other Tsuruchi will be able to profit from the information. Once per month, the Tsuruchi here compile all the information they have gathered and send a copy of it back to Kyuden Ashinagabachi for inclusion in their records.

THE TEMPLE OF KAZE-NO-KAMI, FORTUNE OF THE WIND

This unassuming temple is situated in the Moshi lands, alongside many temples dedicated to the late Lady Sun and the Seven Fortunes. With so many temples occupying the valley, it is simple for most guests to overlook the meager temple to Kaze-no-kami, a Fortune not commonly revered by either peasants or samurai. This temple was constructed by the Tsuruchi family specifically to house the lone monk who occupies it: a man who was once known as Tsuruchi.

Tsuruchi's presence here is not well known. He is now known only as Tanari, and only a handful among the Tsuruchi and Moshi know of his location. Near the end of the War Against the Shadow, Tsuruchi was terribly wounded, and he knew that he could no longer lead his clan into battle. His enemies were numerous, and if it were known that he had been weakened they would pounce. Seppuku was not an option; Tsuruchi had spent so much of his life criticizing the way of the samurai he could hardly bring himself to die as one. Instead, he simply disappeared and took a new name.

Though the growing rift in the Tsuruchi family disturbs the monk who once bore their name, he has no desire to be involved in their affairs. Occasionally, Tsuruchi Ichiro comes to the temple to speak with his mentor and seek advice. More often than not, the aged monk merely counsels the younger man to trust in his own judgment. This invariably frustrates Ichiro, but he cannot help but appreciate his sensei's wisdom.

IMPORTANT TSURUCHI NPCs

TSURUCHI HEISHIRO

Heishiro, the son of a former ronin, was one of the first generation of Wasp born into samurai status. By the time of his gempukku, the clan had officially become the Tsuruchi family, and Heishiro was also in the first group of samurai to undergo their gempukku as full family members. He was eager to serve the Tsuruchi in whatever way he could. Even after the Minor Clan's absorption into the Mantis, he considered his first duty to serve the family that had provided for his parents when no one else would. He has always proudly worn the black and gold armband of the Wasp.

Heishiro's first duty was a simple yojimbo mission protecting the Tsuruchi emissary to the Mantis Islands. Heishiro had heard tales of the Islands of Spice and Silk, but had never left the Tsuruchi lands. The experience was intoxicating. Over the course of a year, Heishiro experienced a great deal of the life he had been denied. Many of the experiences were perfectly tame, but there were some encounters in the fast-paced Yoritomo cities that were less than honorable. Afterwards, Heishiro could not seem to turn down an opportunity for something new and exciting.

Eventually Heishiro fell in love with a young Mantis woman named Yoritomo Yoriko. Their passion was intense, but unfortunately short-lived. Yoriko was not discriminating with her favors, it seemed, and in a short time found another suitor. Heishiro was devastated. He confronted the couple late one night on a cliff overlooking the ocean. The exchange became heated, and Yoriko's new paramour, a short-tempered Mantis warrior, attacked the young Wasp in the light of the full moon.

The struggle was brief but brutal, and Heishiro found himself standing over the bloodied body of his opponent. Horrified, he turned to Yoriko... only to find her dead from the strike of a blade as well. Heishiro did not know whose blade took her life, but he blamed himself nonetheless. In a moment of panic, he pushed both bodies over the cliff into the sea and returned to his chambers in secret.

After this terrible night those who knew Heishiro marveled at the change in his behavior. Where once there had been a distracted, hedonistic young man there now stood a solemn, disciplined warrior. Heishiro refused to allow himself the slightest temptation, for he feared he would succumb to the dark impulses that had already robbed him of his honor.

The young Tsuruchi's dedication to duty has not gone unnoticed. The ambassador he served sent glowing reports to Kyuden Ashinagabachi, earning Heishiro much glory and honor when he feared every day that he would be executed for murder. When the time came to return home, Heishiro was greatly surprised to find that he was welcomed home as an honored servant of the family.

Since that time, Heishiro has strived to be worthy of a reputation he feels he does not deserve. His crimes weigh heavily on his mind, and he attempts to find atonement through duty every day. Every day he fails. He will never stop trying. It has escaped his notice that his search for absolution has transformed him into the very example of the honorable warrior that he fears he is unworthy to serve alongside.

TSURUCHI HEISHIRO

Male human **Ftr** 9: CR 9, Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 9d10+9; hp 58; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 15 (touch 15, flat-footed 12); Atk masterwork katana (1d10+2 damage) +11/+6 melee; +1 distance yumi (longbow) (1d8+3 damage) +14/+9 ranged; SA None; SQ Class skill — Craft (fletcher) (family bonus); AL CG; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Wis 13, Int 10, Cha 12; Height 5 ft. 4 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Climb +14, Craft (Fletcher) +12, Jump +14; Called Shot, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Void Use, Weapon Focus (yumi), Weapon Specialization (yumi)

Dojo: Kyuden Ashinagabachi; **Kata:** None.

Possessions: +1 distance yumi (longbow), masterwork katana, fifty masterwork arrows, +1 cloak of protection, quiver of Tsuruchi (Ehlonna), everburning lantern, 60 koku.

TSURUCHI HEISHIRO

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Perception: 4

Fire: 4

Air: 3

Reflexes: 5

Void: 4

School/Rank: Tsuruchi Archer 3

Dojo: Kyuden Ashinagabachi

Honor: 2.6

Glory: 3.1

Advantages: Absolute Direction, True Friend (Tsuruchi Hiro), Way of the Land (Crane, Mantis)

Disadvantages: Dark Secret, Lost Love

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Fletcher 4, Hunting 5, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kyujutsu 5, Lore (Bushido) 4, Shintao 3, Stealth 4

Kata: None

TSURUCHI ICHIRO

As an idealistic young man, Tsuruchi Ichiro swore an oath of fealty to Kyuden Ashinagabachi itself, impressing Tsuruchi and Mukami with his sincerity and intensity. Ichiro served as a Wasp bounty hunter for a few years, but in time his devotion led him to become the caretaker of the castle during Tsuruchi's frequent absences. As the overseer of Kyuden Ashinagabachi, Ichiro rarely left the castle during the Clan War, spending much of his time seeing to the affairs of the Wasp. Occasions did arise that required his personal attention, but they were few and far between. One particularly notable instance was a lengthy adventure that led to Ichiro traveling with and falling in love with a young Miya Yumi. Unfortunately, upon the conclusion of the Clan War, duty separated them, and they never married as they had wished.

Decades later, Ichiro's selection as Tsuruchi's successor upon the latter's retirement surprised no one save Ichiro himself. Realizing that his vow to protect Kyuden Ashinagabachi encompassed the Wasp as a whole, Ichiro abandoned his vow for a greater one: the good of the newly founded Tsuruchi family. Recognizing that Miya Yumi, recently appointed Imperial Herald, could never abandon her duties just as he could never abandon his, Ichiro took a wife in order to ensure the continuance of the Tsuruchi name. While he perhaps never loved his wife, he respected her, and her death while giving birth to their only son was a devastating blow to the aging Wasp.

The absorption of the Tsuruchi family into the Mantis Clan does not sit well with Ichiro. Like many of his contemporaries, he remembers Tsuruchi's struggle to bring respect and honor to the Wasp name. By joining the Mantis, that struggle seems lessened. Nevertheless, Ichiro honors Tsuruchi's vow to serve Yoritomo, and permits the absorption to continue without protest.

Ichiro was deeply saddened by Yoritomo Aramasu's death. Aramasu was Yoritomo's chosen heir, and Ichiro felt that he had led the Mantis where the Son of Storms himself would have had them go. With his death and Kitao's ascension to daimyo, Ichiro began to feel concern that the clan would become the dishonorable cutthroats their detractors always accused them of being. He had begun considering pulling the Tsuruchi out of the Mantis when Kumiko appeared. In Kumiko, Ichiro found a leader who possessed all of Yoritomo's admirable qualities. Together with many of the older Tsuruchi, Ichiro has placed his faith in Kumiko, supporting her bid to supplant Kitao as daimyo of the Mantis.

Although his relationship with the Yoritomo is rocky at best, Ichiro is on very good terms with many others within the clan. He has tremendous respect for the wisdom of Moshi Jukio, even though he believes her devotion to matriarchy causes her to overlook the strengths of male Moshi, and he is disappointed that she had chosen to support Kitao. Ichiro maintains good relations with many of the male members of the Moshi family, including the young courtier, Moshi Mogai.

Beyond the Moshi, the clan's allies among the Badger and Tortoise clans respect Ichiro's forthright nature.

Ichiro is greatly concerned with the increasing schism between the young and old members of the Tsuruchi family. The division of loyalty between Kitao and Kumiko has served as a catalyst, transforming these philosophical differences into something that is rapidly approaching open hostility. Ichiro desperately hopes that cooler minds among the younger generation, such as his son Hiro and the like-minded Heishiro and Okame, will prevail and bring about a more respectful attitude toward Wasp Clan tradition.

Although extremely fit and healthy, Ichiro is nearly 50 years old. He saw the ousting of Miya Yoto many years ago, and takes precautions to ensure that an ambitious young samurai will not remove in a similar manner. He has no plans to retire at the moment, but knows that the time will come when he can no longer benefit the family by remaining. He hopes that when that time comes, his son Hiro will be prepared to assume control of the Tsuruchi family.

TSURUCHI ICHIRO

Male human Ftr8/Was7: CR 15; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 8d10 + 7d8 + 15; hp 90; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30; AC 17 (touch 17, flat-footed 12); Atk +1 *defending katana* (1d10+5 damage) +20/+15/+10 melee, +2 *flaming distance yumi* (longbow) (1d8+4 damage) +25/+20/+15 ranged; SA Ranged Attack Bonus, Increased Range, Quick Shot, Damage Bonus; SQ Class skill — Craft (fletchery) (family bonus); Honor 3; AL NG; SV Fort +13, Ref +10, Will +7; Str 18, Dex 20, Con 13, Wis 14, Int 14, Cha 12; Height 5 ft. 5 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani, High Rokugani), Bluff +8, Climb +15, Craft (Fletchery) +13, Gather Information +19, Hide +12, Intuit Direction +9, Jump +15, Knowledge (law) +8, Ride +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +9; Called Shot, Far Shot, Improved Critical (yumi), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot, Versatile (Gather Information & Knowledge (law)), Void Use, Weapon Focus (yumi), Weapon Specialization (yumi).

Dojo: Kyuden Ashinagabachi; **Kata:** None.

Possessions: +2 *flaming distance yumi* (longbow), +1 *defending katana*, 100 masterwork arrows, quiver of Tsuruchi (Elhonna), bracers of archery, +2 ring of protection, +1 haori of resistance.

TSURUCHI ICHIRO

Earth: 4

Water: 3

Perception: 5

Fire: 4

Air: 5

Void: 4

School/Rank: Tsuruchi Archer 5

Dojo: Kyuden Ashinagabachi

Honor: 3.6

Glory: 7.1

Advantages: Allies (the Miya family), Clear Thinker, Social Position (Daimyo of the Tsuruchi), True Friend (Koan), Way of the Land (Imperial, Mantis, Scorpion, Unicorn)

Disadvantages: Lost Love, Meddler

Skills: Athletics 5, Courtier 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Fletchery 6, History 3, Hunting 5, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 7, Lore (Imperial Families) 4, Lore (Bushido) 5, Shintao 4, Stealth 4, Yodomejutsu 4

Kata: Strike as Wind

THE THREE MAN ALLIANCE

In the time before the Clan War, the Wasp Clan were unified with the Sparrow and Fox in what was known as the Three Man Alliance. This alliance set a precedent for unity among Minor Clans, and is said to have been the inspiration for Yoritomo's Alliance (which eventually led to the rebirth of the Mantis as a Great Clan).

Though the Three Man Alliance is no more, the Wasp are still on good terms with the other former members of the Three Man Alliance. The Fox are close allies of the Tsuruchi (despite the fact that they do not get along as well with the Yoritomo as they once did) and members of the two clans often visit one another in their respective forest retreats. The peaceful Sparrow also have a surprisingly strong friendship with the deadly Wasp, and their emissaries are among the few admitted into Kyuden Ashinagabachi itself.

TSURUCHI YUTAKA

Among the younger generation of the Tsuruchi family, Yutaka is perhaps the most vocal proponent of abandoning the traditions of the Wasp to follow the philosophy of the Mantis Clan. Yutaka was born to former ronin who joined the Wasp Clan by winning one of Tsuruchi's famous archery contests. His father was killed while Yutaka was still a boy. The circumstances surrounding his death remain suspicious, but it is generally believed that he died while attempting to apprehend a fugitive in the name of the Tsuruchi. Sadly, Yutaka's mother could not deal with the pain of her husband's loss, and she took her life a short time later, leaving the young Yutaka an orphan a few years before his gempukku.

Embittered by the loss of his parents, Yutaka has all but forsaken the traditional practices of the Tsuruchi, instead adopting an unconventional outlook and fighting style that would befit a Yoritomo. He firmly believes that adherence to the hypocritical Wasp philosophy directly killed his father and, indirectly, his mother. While he has not yet gone so far as to openly defy his daimyo, his disdain for the way the Tsuruchi family is governed is palpable. His long absence from Kyuden Ashinagabachi is ostensibly because of his contempt for those who dwell there, but many suspect he is afraid of Ichiro's wrath. Though his outspoken philosophy makes him unwelcome in the house of Tsuruchi Ichiro, he remains friends with the daimyo's son, Hiro, whom he met during his training. Though Yutaka disagrees with Hiro's opinions on a number of matters he realizes that they are both Tsuruchi, and thus brothers.

Although many of his fellow dissidents believe that Yutaka is a great leader, in truth he is merely a malcontent. He has no grand plan for how the Tsuruchi family should be governed; he merely opposes every decision. Given the troubled state of the Mantis Clan in recent years, this practice has earned Yutaka many supporters and brought him Kitao's favor. While she realizes the boy has little capacity to lead, he makes an excellent symbol, so she has selected the inexperienced Yutaka as one of her advisors. She is all too aware of Ichiro's support of Kumiko, and has embraced the family schism as a means of gathering more support.

Yutaka is an extremely athletic young warrior who often relies on his own innate physical abilities to the exclusion of his training. Like many great warriors of history, he relies on reflex and instinct to lead him to victory. While this technique has yet to fail him, and while it has led many who master it to greatness in the past, it has also lead countless hundreds of thousands to their deaths. With his fiery temper and unorthodox style, it remains to be seen if Yutaka will ever come into his own as a true warrior, or if he will find an early grave and be forgotten.

TSURUCHI YUTAKA

Male human Ftr4: CR 4; Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 410+8; 30 hp; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 14); Atk masterwork katana +9 melee (1d10+5 damage); SA None; SQ Class skill — Craft (fletchery) (family bonus); Honor 2; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Wis 12, Int 12, Cha 11; Height 5 ft. 3 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani), Climb +10, Jump +10, Ride +8, Swim +10; Dodge, Mobility, Void Use, Way of the Mantis, Weapon Focus (katana), Weapon Specialization (katana).

Dojo: Dancing Steel Dojo (minor dojo, no benefits); **Kata:** Striking as Wind

Possessions: Masterwork katana, masterwork wakizashi, yumi (longbow), fifty arrows, masterwork ashigaru armor, potion of haste.

TSURUCHI YUTAKA

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Fire: 3

Air: 4

Reflexes 5

Void: 2

School/Rank: Tsuruchi Archer 1/Tsuruchi Kenkyaku 1

Dojo: Kyuden Ashinagabachi

Honor: 1.5

Glory: 1.4

Advantages: Crafty, Daredevil, True Friend (Tsuruchi Hiro)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (troublemaker), Brash

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 2, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore (Fighting Styles) 3, Nofujutsu 4, Shintao 3, Stealth 3

Kata: Strike as Fire, Strike as Wind

VASSALS OF THE TSURUCHI FAMILY

THE KAGEHISA FAMILY

When he founded the Wasp, Tsuruchi personally approved every member of the clan. Each year, on the Day of the Wasp, archers would come from near and far to compete against both one another and the Wasp. To have even a remote chance at joining the clan, a competitor had to defeat at least one of the competing Wasp archers. After that, the qualifiers would have to compete against Tsuruchi himself. At the close of the tournament Tsuruchi would choose up to ten of the competitors to receive formal training in the Way of the Wasp and

what would eventually become the foundation of the Tsuruchi Archer School.

The chosen underwent harsh mental and physical training, including instruction in investigation, tracking and the nomadic lifestyle that bounty hunters must lead. While many who attempted the course would be physically capable, the mental challenges were often beyond them. Tsuruchi expected a Wasp to recognize a face seen only once from a crowd of hundreds, intimately know the laws of the lands he was traveling through, and be able to ask the correct questions of total strangers, all with supreme confidence.

Typically, fewer than three of the ten candidates survived Tsuruchi's rigorous courses. Those who failed became part of a larger group of ronin and mercenaries that the Wasp hired to guard the walls of Kyuden Ashinagabachi. Though in a manner of speaking they had failed, these ronin still felt a certain loyalty to Tsuruchi that one wouldn't typically expect of mercenaries. Over time, the group became known as the Wasp's Blade and, while technically still ronin, they were treated as a part of the clan.

When Tsuruchi disappeared a short time before the War of the Spirits, all of the Wasp were disheartened, including the Blade. A ronin by the name of Kagehisa gave an inspired speech to the ronin and Wasp present at Kyuden Ashinagabachi that day and vowed to find Tsuruchi. He led a small detachment of ronin to investigate.

Kagehisa and his men split up and traveled the Empire for a year, searching for clues to the First Wasp's fate. Most of the men came back intact, but without leads. Kagehisa returned exactly a year after Tsuruchi had disappeared, quiet and somber. While most of his men assumed the ronin leader's show of sorrow was because he had failed to find the man to whom he owed so much, those who asked received a short reply: "The man called Tsuruchi is nowhere to be found in Rokugan. May his life after this one be peaceful." Unknown to his men, Kagehisa had found Tsuruchi secluded in a monastery in Moshi lands, gravely wounded and seeking only a life of privacy. The First Wasp asked the ronin to keep his whereabouts secret, but return to the Wasp, knowing that Kagehisa had kept his oath in the manner of the greatest of the Wasp.

For their efforts during the War Against the Shadow, Toturi the First bestowed the Tsuruchi family name upon the former Wasp Clan. Tsuruchi Ichiro became the first daimyo of the Wasp and during the celebration of the Tsuruchi's ascendance, named Kagehisa and his men the first vassals of the Wasp Clan. The leader of the Wasp's Blade smiled and gladly swore fealty to Ichiro, as did all of his men. It had taken a lifetime of work, but the ronin had finally earned a name.

The Kagehisa continue to guard Kyuden Ashinagabachi and train in the castle courtyard. Many of them also safeguard the Tsuruchi Records and Gateway Village. Most of the more prominent members of the Kagehisa, including daimyo Kagehisa Takuna, have trained as Tsuruchi Kenkyaku.

KAGEHISA MURA

The small village that is named after Kagehisa can be found at the mouth of valley that leads to Kyuden Ashinagabachi. The large house at the center of the village belongs to the family daimyo. Kagehisa Takuna can usually be found either here or on the walls of Kyuden Ashinagabachi, serving alongside his men.

THE KAGEHISA FAMILY

Favored Class: Fighter

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skills: Tumble

Starting Outfit:

1. Masterwork lamellar armor and 10 koku.

THE KAGEHISA FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Glory: 0.5 (rather than 1.0)

Special: Members of the Kagehisa family may purchase the Quick Advantage for one fewer point.

Those members who attend the Mantis Bushi School or Tsuruchi Archer School may also substitute Kenjutsu for any one of their starting skills except Kyujutsu.

THE SUGURU FAMILY

All families have a public face which they present to outsiders, and a private face which they use when discussing how best to deal with said outsiders. The Tsuruchi are no exception. At the most recent Day of the Wasp tournament, one of the windiest on record, family daimyo Tsuruchi Ichiro was flagged down by his son. While on patrol, Hiro had found a robed woman stumbling out of a stand of trees at the edge of the tournament field commonly known as Tsuruchi's Test. The brown-clad ronin appeared injured and she had asked to see the ranking magistrate.

Ichiro and Hiro hurried across the Test to investigate. Two guardsmen greeted them at the edge of the woods, along with the ronin, who wore the trappings of a priest of the kami. She introduced herself to the men as Suguru.

Suguru had once served the Unicorn as a magistrate, but was made ronin through political manipulation after having delved too deep into her daimyo's past. She had wandered since then, even serving the First Wasp, Tsuruchi himself, for a short time.

The ronin shugenja presented Ichiro with a scroll detailing an intricate Bloodspeaker plot to infiltrate the Tsuruchi and replace Ichiro with some sort of replica. As Suguru and Ichiro were discussing the scroll's implications, one of the guards that had originally found the wayward priest jumped away from the group, attempting to surprise them. He slashed his arm and used the power of blood magic to hurl bolts of energy at the Tsuruchi daimyo and his son, revealing himself as a maho-tsukai.

While Ichiro dodged the deadly bursts of energy, Suguru called to the air kami to aid her. With a few gestures, the guard-turned-Bloodspeaker was thrown into the air and then hurled back down into the ground. One of Ichiro's personal guard removed the blood shugenja's head, ending the threat.

This had not been the first case of this type of corruption. The ronin shugenja detailed to the Tsuruchi daimyo how she had defeated four other Bloodspeakers over the last year, all of whom had originally been Imperial Magistrates.



Ichiro, impressed by Suguru's initiative and skill, offered her a boon in return for information and assistance. Suguru pondered for a moment and then asked for fealty to the Tsuruchi, a request that Ichiro gladly granted. That day the Suguru family was secretly created and its members would be made ji-samurai, vassals to the Tsuruchi.

The Suguru vassal family has been given the task of rooting out corruption in the magistrates of the Empire. While Suguru has accepted fewer than half a dozen vassals, they have efficiently exposed corruption within the various magisterial organizations of the Empire. Without the secrecy granted to them by Ichiro or Suguru's powerful mastery of the air kami, the fledgling vassal family might have been wiped out before it could do any good. While they work under a constant threat of reprisal from a multitude of enemies, Suguru and her followers have vowed to continue their mission.

HOLDINGS

The Suguru have no family holdings, due both to their small size and their need for secrecy.

THE SUGURU FAMILY

Favored Class: Shugenja

Starting Honor: 2

Class Skills: Listen

Starting Outfit:

1. Two 2nd level divine scrolls (Air spells only)
2. One 2nd level divine scroll, three 1st level divine scrolls (Air spells only) and 25 koku.

Note: Suguru family members use the generic Air shugenja school on page 95 of *Rokugan*™ when selecting their school spells.

THE SUGURU FAMILY

Benefit: +1 Perception

Glory: 0.5 (rather than 1.0)

Special: Members of the Suguru family may choose to purchase either the Read Lips or Clear Thinker Advantage for one fewer point at character creation. They may also substitute Investigation for Astrology as a starting skill if they attend the Moshi Shugenja School.

TSURUCHI MECHANICS

NEW ANCESTORS

Considering the short amount of time that the Tsuruchi family has been in existence, it is little wonder that they have so few revered ancestors. To be sure, the Tsuruchi honor their deceased heroes. Until recently, though, they had no official family name, a distinction which appears to be important in forging karmic bonds between the denizens of Yomi and Ningen-do.

TSURUCHI IKADO

Although not one of Tsuruchi's initial followers, Ikado joined the fledgling Wasp Clan during their formative years. His history before that time is unknown although much debated. He served the clan valiantly throughout the Clan War and subsequent conflicts, and was promoted to head sensei of Kyuden Ashinagabachi dojo shortly before Emperor Toturi's disappearance. During the tumultuous time that followed, Ikado served as a constant, unwavering source of discipline and routine for the young samurai in his care. He continued training the new generation of the Tsuruchi until the War of Spirits, when he was called back into active duty. He acquitted himself well against the forces of the Steel Chrysanthemum, and it is said that he fell in battle only after Hida Tsuneo himself ordered a battalion to crush the archer who took such a heavy toll on his forces. Ikado's spirit still watches over many of his former students, now samurai in good standing of the Tsuruchi family.

FREE YET FOCUSED

ANCESTOR FEAT: TSURUCHI IKADO

Your skill with archery allows you to hit vital spots, inflicting more damage than normal.

Family: Tsuruchi

Prerequisites: Dex 16+, Weapon Focus (long or short bow)

Benefit: You may add half of your Dex modifier (rounding up) to the damage of your ranged attacks.

TSURUCHI IKADO

(5 POINTS)

The spiritual descendants of Ikado are said to be capable of incredible feats of archery, killing multiple targets with a single shot or even defeating a foe using only humming bulb arrows. Those over whom Ikado's spirit watches find themselves with a fraction of his peerless skill. When making ranged attacks, such samurai may add their rank in Kyujutsu to the total Wounds inflicted.

MUKAMI

Although he never took the Tsuruchi name, the man who went by "Mukami" was Tsuruchi's chief lieutenant during his tenure as daimyo of the Wasp Clan. Though once a Scorpion, there was no man trusted more by Tsuruchi, and he was given free rein to make decisions on behalf of the clan while serving with Yoritomo's Alliance in the field.

Mukami died only seven years ago, shortly after the end of the War of Spirits. Having served his family and clan for so many years, he enjoyed his old age with drink and the company of friends. When he finally passed into Yomi, it was with a smile and a sense of satisfaction.

STRIKE & MOVE

ANCESTOR FEAT: MUKAMI

Your skill at kyujutsu is truly amazing, and you can move and shoot with far more athleticism than most.

Family: Tsuruchi

Benefit: A number of times per day equal to one-fifth your character level, you may make a full attack with a bow and perform a move as well. This feat may be used in conjunction with the Shot on the Run feat (if you have it), allowing you to move half your movement, take a full attack action with a bow, then move half your movement again.

ANCESTOR: MUKAMI

(4 POINTS)

Spiritual descendants of Mukami are graced with his natural speed and incredible athleticism. They may add their rank in Athletics to their TN to Be Hit at all times so long as there are no enemies within 10 feet. In addition, they may move five feet farther than normal during a combat round (making their maximum move during a round equal to their Water Ring $\times$ 5 in feet plus an additional 5 feet).

NEW FEATS

BLIND SHOT

[GENERAL]

You have honed your senses to an extent that your arrows seek their targets even when you yourself cannot see them.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot.

Benefit: Any time you miss a target with a ranged attack because of concealment, you can reroll your miss chance percentile roll one time to see if you actually hit. This bonus applies only when the target is within one range increment, and you are aware of its general location.

CALLED SHOT

[GENERAL]

You can target specific parts of an opponent in order to inflict extra damage.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, base attack bonus +6 or higher.

Benefit: On your action, before making any attack roll for the round, you may choose to subtract a number from your ranged attack rolls and add the same number to the damage from these attack rolls. This number may not exceed your Dexterity modifier. The penalty on attacks and bonus on damage applies until your next action.

RANGED DISARM

[GENERAL]

You may attempt to shoot weapons out of the hands of others.

Prerequisites: Dex 13+, Called Shot, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, base attack bonus +6 or higher.

Benefit: You may attempt to perform a disarm with a ranged attack so long as your target is within thirty feet (see the *Player's Handbook*,TM page 137, for rules regarding disarm attempts). The size of your weapon for this disarm attempt is the size of the ranged weapon (in the case of a weapon that fires projectiles, use the weapon, not the projectile).

If you fail in this disarm attempt, the attacker does not get to attempt to disarm you in return.



NEW ABILITIES

BLIND SHOT

It is possible for a character to attempt to fire at an opponent he cannot see. To do so, the character must make an opposed Perception roll versus his opponent's Agility (or Stealth, if the opponent possesses that skill). If the character succeeds, he has located his opponent's approximate position and may fire at him. The opponent gains +10 to the TN to Be Hit for the purposes of this attack, and benefits from cover as normal.

CALLED SHOT

A character may target a specific part of the body by making successful Raises on his attack roll. The Free Raises a Tsuruchi receives as a result of his Techniques may be used for called shots.

- Torso: 1 Raise
- Arm or Leg: 2 Raises
- Head: 3 Raises

DISARM ATTACK

An attempt to disarm a foe requires a number of Raises dependent upon the size of the weapon. The Free Raises a Tsuruchi receives as a result of his Techniques may be used for a Disarm Attack.

- Large Weapon** (no-dachi, tetsubo, die tsuchi): 2 Raises
- Medium-size Weapon** (katana, most polearms, wakizashi): 3 Raises
- Small Weapon** (tanto, peasant weapons, aiguchi): 4 Raises

THE HIDDEN WEAPON

Among the Tsuruchi family's secrets is the village of Shaiga. Rather than alert others to Shaiga's importance by stationing troops there, the founder of the Wasp Clan instead ordered the villagers there to be trained in various fighting styles using peasant weapons. During the decades since that time, the Tsuruchi have occasionally bolstered the villagers in Shaiga with small numbers of trustworthy ronin troops. Those ronin, together with the sensei of Silent Mountain dojo, have developed a unique style that has been passed on to the descendants of those ronin. During the Four Winds era, a few ronin who have mastered this style have ventured abroad in the Empire, either as agents of the Tsuruchi or on their own.

TABLE 3-1: THE TSURUCHI KENKYAKU

Class Level	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1st	+1	+0	+2	+0	Strike and Move, Darting Wings +2
2nd	+2	+0	+3	+0	Bonus Feat
3rd	+3	+1	+3	+1	Darting Wings +3
4th	+3	+1	+4	+1	Bonus Feat
5th	+4	+1	+4	+1	Wasp In Flight, Darting Wings +4

THE HIDDEN WEAPON

IMANTIS/RONIN TECHNIQUE FEAT

You can strike vulnerable spots in an opponent's defense, stunning him and placing him on the defensive until he recovers his wits.

Prerequisites: Weapon Finesse, base attack bonus +4 or higher.

Benefit: As a full attack action, you may attack an opponent in an attempt to strike a vulnerable spot in his defenses. If you land the blow, your opponent must make a Fortitude save (DC = 10 + the amount by which you exceeded his AC) or suffer a -2 to all attack and damage rolls for a number of rounds equal to half your character level (round up). This attack may only be performed using a weapon for which you have the Weapon Finesse feat.

THE HIDDEN WEAPON (RONIN BROTHERHOOD)

Type: Otokodate

Required Traits: Agility 4, Strength 3

Required Skills: Nofujutsu 3

Other Requirements: Only true ronin may join the Hidden Weapon. Ronin cast out from clans are never accepted.

Technique: *Strike the Center* (6 points) — Students of the Hidden Weapon are taught to exploit a superior opponent's weaknesses, rendering him helpless against subsequent attacks. By successfully making two Raises on an attack roll, a student of the Hidden Weapon can strike a vulnerable spot, causing his opponent to be stunned for a number of rounds equal to the Hidden Weapon's Insight Rank. A stunned opponent may spend a Void Point to negate the stunning for one round, but otherwise may only declare Full Defense as his action. This technique may only be used with a blunt peasant weapon. This technique only works on human opponents.

THE TSURUCHI KENKYAKU

The Tsuruchi family and the Wasp Clan have been regarded as masters of the bow since their inception half a century ago. In fact, it was their devotion to the bow over the blade that brought them under scrutiny for many years, perhaps contributing to Tsuruchi's eagerness to join Yoritomo in an attempt to gain recognition for his clan's prowess.

Now, though, the first generation of true Tsuruchi have come to adulthood, and some eschew the traditional ways of the Wasp in order to embrace the martial mindset of their Yoritomo clansmen. Elder members of the clan, particularly daimyo Tsuruchi Ichiro, have expressed concern that the members of the younger generation seem disinterested in the

traditions of the Wasp. There are only so many Tsuruchi, after all, and abandonment of their ways could lead to the family becoming a mere reflection of the Yoritomo. To many, that outcome is unacceptable.

The younger members of the Tsuruchi who choose the blade over the bow usually do so after learning the basics of the Tsuruchi school and not finding it to their liking. These young samurai instead prefer to exploit their athletic training in a new style of kenjutsu that favors speed and precision over power. In many ways, the kenkyaku merge the Lion and Scorpion styles from which the Wasp Clan emerged.

TSURUCHI KENKYAKU (PRESTIGE CLASS)

The young Tsuruchi who identify themselves as Kenkyaku are neither duelists nor swordsmen, but a hybrid. Their fighting style emphasizes speed and athleticism, yet when an opportunity presents itself, they can exploit it with the power of the burliest samurai. Like so many among the Tsuruchi, the Kenkyaku are a dichotomy, split between two extremes.

Most members of the Kenkyaku are very young, a few years past their gempukku. Although most of them are Tsuruchi, a handful from other Mantis families have embraced their ways: Yoritomo who disdain life upon the sea and male Moshi samurai looking to escape the matriarchy of their family. There are others in the Empire with fighting styles similar to the Kenkyaku, most commonly among small, obscure dojo in the lands of the other Great Clans.

Hit Die: d8.

REQUIREMENTS

To qualify to become a Kenkyaku, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +6.

Clan: Mantis.

Skills: Tumble (6 ranks).

Feats: Cleave, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack.

CLASS SKILLS

The kenkyaku's class skills (and key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Search (Int), Sense Motive (Cha), Tumble (Dex), and Wilderness Lore (Wis).

Skill Points at Each Level: 2 + Int modifier.

CLASS FEATURES

All of the following are class features of the Tsuruchi Kenkyaku prestige class.

Weapon and Armor Proficiency: Kenkyaku are proficient in all simple and martial weapons, and in light armor.

Strike and Move: For every five ranks the Kenkyaku possesses in the Tumble skill, he gains a +1 dodge bonus to AC. This applies only when the Kenkyaku is wearing light armor or no armor.

Darting Wings: The style of the Wasp is an agile one. Beginning at 1st level, the Kenkyaku gains a +2 competence bonus to all Tumble checks and Reflex saves. This bonus increases to +3 at 3rd level and +4 at 5th level.

Bonus Feat: At 2nd level, the Kenkyaku may select one of the following feats: Ambidexterity, Great Cleave, Skill Focus



(Tumble), Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Finesse (any), or Weapon Focus (any). The Kenkyaku must meet all prerequisites for these feats, and gains another from the list at the 4th level.

Wasp In Flight: Once per round, whenever the Kenkyaku would be the target of an attack of opportunity, the Kenkyaku may make a Tumble check (DC 25) to automatically dodge the attack.

THE TSURUCHI KENKYAKU (NEW PATH)

Technique Rank: 2

Path of Entry: Tsuruchi Archer 1

Path of Egress: Tsuruchi Archer 2 or Yoritomo Bushi 1

Technique: Darting Wings — A Kenkyaku's gift for fighting is instinctive, not inculcated. The Kenkyaku must select one melee weapon in which to focus his fighting style. The Kenkyaku may add his rank in Athletics to the die total for all melee attacks using that weapon.

YADOMEJUTSU

Yadomejutsu, or "arrow cutting," is an uncommon but highly respected skill typically found among samurai who regularly face skilled archers. The practice originated centuries ago with monks who honed their minds and bodies until they could catch arrows fired at them. This was considered

a demonstration of the clarity and focus that one could achieve through study of the Tao and purification of the body, and was often displayed to others in hopes of encouraging them to embrace Shinseism. At some point, samurai adopted the practice and eventually translated the ability to use the katana rather than their bare hands.

Yadomejutsu is not common. It is generally considered time-consuming to learn and is of only limited use when compared to, for example, kenjutsu. A handful of Lion dojo teach the skill, as the Lion prefer to rush their enemies rather than soften them with ranged fire. The Crane, too, occasionally teach it, as it is considered one of the most difficult elements of the single strike to master. Some particularly skilled Kakita duelists enjoy demonstrating their skill through the use of yadomejutsu.

Yadomejutsu is represented in the d20 System™ by the Deflect Arrows feat.

NEW SKILL: YADOMEJUTSU (BUGEI SKILL, AGILITY)

Yadomejutsu is the practiced ability to cut down arrows in flight, preventing them from striking their target. It is exceptionally difficult to master, and it is taught in only a handful of dojo across the Empire. Samurai wishing to study the skill typically must find someone skilled in the practice and willing to teach.

Yadomejutsu may be used in two ways. With a Full Attack, a samurai may roll Yadomejutsu, keeping Agility, to cut an arrow shot at another individual within ten feet. The TN for this roll is the archer's roll to hit. If successful, the arrow is sliced in two and inflicts no damage. Yojimbo skilled in this practice are rare, but extremely popular.

As a Full Defense maneuver, a character may roll Yadomejutsu/Agility and add the total to his TN to Be Hit for all ranged attacks. This does not increase an individual's TN to Be Hit versus melee attacks.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

TSURUCHI'S YUMI

Although he disappeared years ago and few know of his fate, Tsuruchi's influence is still plain upon the family that bears his name. His disdain for bushido is still felt by many, and his peerless skill in kyujutsu is emulated by hundreds of Tsuruchi warriors throughout the Empire. One of Tsuruchi's greatest legacies, however, is the bow that he carried all his life. The bow was not blessed by the Emperor, nor was it enchanted by a shugenja. Nevertheless, the bow possesses incredible abilities that were awakened in it over the decades that Tsuruchi carried it. Many say that was the force of one man's will forging his own destiny that awakened the spirit of the bow. Whatever the reason, it is one of the most sacred artifacts of the family, and is kept within Tsuruchi Ichiro's quarters at Kyuden Ashinagabachi at all times unless it is being used during wartime or ceremonies.

TSURUCHI'S YUMI 1D201

Minor Artifact

Tsuruchi's Yumi is a +5 flaming yumi of speed and distance. The wielder of the yumi may ignore any concealment bonus that a target would normally receive. Additionally, the wielder of the yumi is treated as if he possessed the feats Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Far Shot, and Called Shot. If the wielder already possesses any of these feats, the range increments of those feats are increased by one increment. For example, a wielder who already possessed Point Blank Shot would find that the benefit of that feat extended to 60 feet rather than the normal 30 feet, and the Far Shot feat would triple the range of the weapon rather than double it. If the wielder of the bow also carries a katana on his person, the bow loses all magical powers and is merely an ordinary yumi (not even receiving so much as a masterwork bonus) until the katana is set aside or the wielder puts the yumi down.

Creator Level: 16th; Weight: 3 lbs.

TSURUCHI'S YUMI 12ND ED.1

The yumi once carried by Tsuruchi adds +3k3 to all Kyujutsu rolls. If the wielder is a member of the Tsuruchi family, he treated as if his rank in the Tsuruchi Archer School is one higher than it actually is. Tsuruchi who are not members of the school are treated as if they possess the Rank 1 Technique while they wield the yumi. If the wielder of the bow also carries a katana on his person, the bow loses all magical powers and is merely an ordinary yumi until the katana is set aside or the wielder puts the yumi down.



CHAPTER FOUR:

THE BADGER
AND TORTOISECHASING
THE STORM
PART FIVE

Fuzake Sekkou stomped the ground several times and looked around. "Solid," he said, satisfied. Turning to his master, the young Monkey shugenja kept a dark look on his face to mask the sickness in the pit of his stomach. "Perhaps next time," Sekkou said, sliding his eyes to the vessel that had deposited the three men onto the docks of the Peninsula of the Dawn, "we can request the humble captain attempt to ride every third cresting wave instead of each one."

Hatori smiled and folded his hands into his sleeves. Sekkou would never adjust to life on the sea, which was acceptable. It was likely the young shugenja would never have to step off the shores of the Empire ever again. "You should be thankful for the experience, Sekkou," Hatori chided him. The shisha allowed his eyes to wander to the west, further into the Golden Sun Bay. He had not seen Otosan Uchi since it had been attacked by the Shadowlands Horde, and he was at once eager and wary to do so. The slow smoky haze rolling across the horizon where the city should be was not encouraging. Dark clouds still gathered around the area, carried on frigid winds and threatening a rain that had yet to come.

"The city..." Otomo Taneji whispered, his eyes fixed on the same sight as Hatori's.

"Fallen, but not forgotten," came the smooth voice of another man from the north. All three men turned to see a thin, poorly

dressed bushi walking toward them from the nearby tower. "That is why the captain had to let you off here. I'm afraid we cannot allow any visitors to enter the ruins of Otosan Uchi without a heavy guard." The man came closer and bowed slightly to Miya Hatori. "I'm afraid this includes even a man of your station, Miya Hatori-san."

"It is sad to see the capital in such a state," Hatori muttered, then mustered a low bow. Otomo Taneji gave him an incredulous look — a noble of the Imperial family bowing so low to a man who looked like a ronin or ashigaru? "Kasuga Taigen-sama," the Miya said formally, "I presume that like many such meetings recently, this one is also not by chance?"

"Kasuga Taigen?" Otomo Taneji almost stammered, then forced himself into an appropriately low bow before the daimyo of the Tortoise Clan. Fuzake Sekkou followed suit with a little less awkwardness.

"Miya Hatori. Otomo Taneji. Fuzake Sekkou," the daimyo greeted them with a nod and shrewd look. "I'm afraid that you are correct, Miya-san. You could have easily been placed in port closer to your home, or even closer to the lands of the Agasha."

Hatori smirked despite himself and didn't bother attempting to discern how the Tortoise daimyo had learned of the shisha's next destination. "I find myself quite at the mercy of the Fortunes of late, Kasuga-sama," the Miya said with a shrug. "If there is something this fool of a Miya can do to assist the Emperor's vassals, please name it." At this point, Hatori had become accustomed to bluntness among the Mantis and assumed the Tortoise would appreciate similar candor.

The Tortoise daimyo nodded. "So be it, Miya. I will be quick. The Imperial Legions have all but abandoned the area. Chaos reigns where the Emperor's Law once stood as an impenetrable

shield over the servants of the Steel Throne. Only the Yotsu, the Wolf Legion, and we remain to keep the ruins of Otsan Uchi from falling to total disorder at the hands of bandits and grave robbers. I require whatever aid you can grant myself and my men." Taigen motioned lazily back at the Dawn Tower behind him. "We refuse to allow this desecration of the Emperor's home to continue."

"I see," Hatori replied, putting his hand to his chin in thought. "And what are you prepared to offer me in return?"

"In return?" Taigen said quickly, seemingly surprised by the question. "I would have thought that the renowned and honorable Miya Hatori would need no incentive to serve the justice of the Emperor."

On either side of the shisha, Taneji and Sekkou both shot Hatori looks that mirrored the surprise in Taigen's words.

"You are correct, of course," Hatori said coolly, taking his eyes away from the daimyo and staring once again back towards Otsan Uchi. "However, you are a Tortoise and used to dealing with far less honorable sorts than myself. I believe you would have an offer prepared if only out of habit, Taigen-san. I would hear what it is."

"I do not understand, Miya-san. What would the humble Tortoise have that could possibly interest a powerful noble of the Miya house?"

"Do not feign stupidity, Kasuga Taigen. It would insult the trust the Throne has given your line all these generations. Further, do not attempt to play this game with me — neither of us has the time." Hatori's words held no insult, only an obvious impatience. "Now, I am willing to spare you what resources my influence can grant you, for I know your goals are honorable and noble. For your part, I must know what you believe is yours to give that is expendable at this time so I may know how it can serve the Empire elsewhere."

Taigen nodded quickly and lowered his eyes. "Many apologies, Miya-san. The strain of the recent weeks has been great. But do not presume to command me in front of my own stronghold on my own soil. I do not doubt you have the resources to crush an annoying Minor Clan at a time like this, but the Tortoise do not need such motivation. Are we clear?"

For a moment, the two nobles locked eyes as they judged one another.

At almost the same time, a wide smile spread over both of their faces. "Perfectly clear, Kasuga Taigen-sama. Now, let us speak further of how we may pool our resources for the Empire's benefit."

BADGER AND TORTOISE PROVINCES

BADGER CLAN HOLDINGS

To say the Clan of the Badger has fallen on hard times would be an understatement worthy of a Lion historian. Shortly before the Clan War, the Badger's ruling family and ancestral home were wiped out by a rampaging oni summoned by one of their own members. Though the oni has since been driven from Badger lands and the clan has come under the control of

Ichiro Kihongo, a distant relative of the ruling family, the Badger have yet to reclaim the lands granted to them by the Emperor at the dawn of the Empire. They are a poor clan, led by the tiny Ichiro family, and thus have never managed to scrape together the resources to truly rebuild their home.

The lands of the Badger still technically belong to the nearly extinct clan and can be found in the northwesternmost point in the Empire. The solitary and stalwart guard towers of the Minor Clan still dot the landscape in that area, though most of them have fallen into disrepair from negligence and lacking resources. For now, very few Badger even remain within the lands of their ancestors. Instead, they wander the Empire as mercenaries attempting to trade their considerable combat skills for koku — the strength of the Badger may yet be enough to claim their place in the Empire once more.

SHIRO ICHIRO

The blasted stronghold of the Badger Clan has been cleared of rubble since the assault of Oni no Hideo, the beast that single-handedly plunged the Badger Clan into its darkest hour. Though the Ichiro hardly have the funds and manpower to rebuild the meager palace, they can still clean up the debris left behind. The stronghold is a crumbling shell of stone and cracked walls, yet still many of the Badger make their home here. It is in this way the stubbornness of the Badger's Crab blood is made clear — the first Ichiro vowed to guard the northern border of the Empire, and his descendants will not abandon that duty even though they can no longer fulfill it in a meaningful manner.

Understandably, visitors in the Badger lands are about as common as *taifun* among the mountains of the Dragon. Since the last major report from the Ichiro stronghold was that of an oni attack, much of the Empire considers the Badger destroyed and their lands haunted. When the Badger appear as mercenaries in any army, they are usually mistaken for ronin. The Badger do not really mind this ignorance, as it keeps other clans from attempting to claim their lands.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: This hook is best suited for magistrate parties or parties in service to the Imperial house. The PCs are sent to recover knowledge of the Ichiro family, take a census, estimate a tax base, and perform other similar duties. Though the Imperial record keepers are fully aware that the Badger do still exist, they have pardoned the Ichiro from taxation and such practices for over a generation due to Toturi's generosity and compassion for the dying family. This command could even come from Hantei Naseru himself, eager to leave no stone unturned in his quest to extend his influence over the Empire.

Focus: Perhaps the hardest part of this quest will simply be finding the Ichiro. Even the most recent Imperial maps indicate roads and outposts long since abandoned by the Badger. Guides and samurai of the area flatly refuse to take the party into the Badger provinces for reasons of either superstition or legality. Few wish to travel into the reported home of an oni powerful enough to destroy an entire Minor Clan, and others do not wish to travel into another family's province uninvited.

Strike: Should the party manage to make their way to Shiro Ichiro, they find the bleak and silent remains of the Badger's homelands. On top of the trials of locating the Badger, the Minor Clan members are extremely wary of outsiders and are likely to attempt pressing the party into their custody.

The Ichiro bow to a token of Imperial authority or, barring that, a PC's victory in some contest of strength. If the party gains the trust of the Badger they will have earned the ability to bring the Badger to the cause of almost whoever is able to pay for their services. Notably, the battered and ruined area around Otsan Uchi is in dire need of spare bushi, and the samurai responsible for bringing aid to the Imperial lands would be fittingly rewarded.

BADGER'S HOME DOJO

Several years after the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow ended, it became clear to the Badger that no end to their struggle was in sight. They were not the Crane, who could purchase the men and materials for a new castle within weeks, nor the Crab, who could spare the manpower and resources for such a task. The leaders of the Ichiro accordingly began searching the Empire for allies. Most clans were either engaged in their own rebuilding efforts or saw no advantage to having the favor of a handful of wandering samurai.

The Mantis, however, felt a special kinship with the Badger and welcomed their agents warmly. Though the Mantis saw a simple solution to the problem by simply offering the Ichiro fealty as a family of the Mantis, the Badger refused politely. In the end, it was agreed the Mantis would build and fund a school and small barracks for the Badger in the lands of the Tsuruchi family. Of course, the Badger did not have an experienced sensei to lead the dojo in the style of the Ichiro family. The Mantis agreed to teach the Badger bushi with Yoritomo and Tsuruchi masters, and the Badger reluctantly agreed. The Way of the Badger would live on in the Ichiro Dojo at the City of the Rich Frog and the clan would survive with the aid of the Mantis.

Several elders of the Ichiro look to the youth in Tsuruchi lands eagerly embracing the ways of the Mantis, and wonder if the Mantis did not get what they wished for after all.

YORITOMO MAKI

[Fighter 11; Mantis Bushi 4]

Maki has overseen the informal dojo of the Badger Clan within the Tsuruchi lands for almost ten years now and knows the name and face of every student. The aging sensei is uncharacteristically kind and calm for a Mantis, traits which made him the ideal candidate for the position. It is Maki's responsibility to welcome new Badger youths to the lands of the Mantis, quelling their fears about becoming traitors to their clan. Maki has spent the past years simply being himself — a nurturing and understanding teacher for frightened children.

Unfortunately, the Mantis sensei's demeanor is little more than a comforting facade for the bitter truth. The Yoritomo and Tsuruchi have accepted that the Badger will not see another generation. Though the Minor Clan is to be commended for surviving the past twenty years, reality must be faced. The Mantis view themselves as the elder brothers of the Badger, protecting them from their own stubborn ignorance. The students of Badger's Home Dojo are the bridge the Ichiro will need when they finally realize the truth.

MAJOR TORTOISE HOLDINGS

Though not technically a house of the Mantis, the Tortoise Clan shares many of their characteristics. The Minor Clan makes its home on the coast of the Empire near the ruins of Otsan Uchi.

The Tortoise attend to the waterways and "low class" tasks such as labor and trade, especially the secret trade the Imperial families conduct with gaijin nations. Yoritomo was greatly disappointed when the Tortoise refused to join the Mantis as the Centipede had, and Aramasu was equally disappointed when the Minor Clan politely rejected the same offer a generation later. The Tortoise have nevertheless always made it a point to keep on good terms with the Mantis, as their paths cross physically and metaphorically quite often.

Though the lands of the Tortoise are small and diffuse even by the standards of a Minor Clan, they are the only clan to hold territory both around and inside the capital city of Otsan Uchi. While the coastlines and plains of the Tortoise may be the least defensible lands in the Empire, few have dared attack the Minor Clan which has traditionally been protected by the attention of the Emperor himself. Since Toturi's death, the Tortoise have kept a low profile. Although they have allied with Hantei Naseru, they realize that even the Anvil cannot always protect them.

The Tortoise are a practical bunch, and their lands reflect this. With the exception of their few holdings within Otsan Uchi, Tortoise lands and buildings tend to be bland in appearance. "Whatever is needed" is both the motto and the excuse of the Tortoise Clan, and this idea extends into everything they claim as their own. If something can be made more sturdy and serviceable, the Tortoise do not hesitate to make improvements even if the end result is unsightly.

NORTH HUB VILLAGE

One of the four major towns surrounding the Imperial City, the North Hub Village is not technically the province of the Tortoise Clan. However, they maintain a significant presence in the day-to-day activities of the town and somehow



find their way into every aspect of the area's government. As the Tortoise can claim the Emperor himself as their daimyo, few have been willing to contest the Minor Clan on such matters. The village headman has been a Tortoise for as long as there has been a Tortoise Clan, and most of the village's resources go to benefit the Tortoise. The peasants of the village do not mind, as the Tortoise are considered practically an Imperial Family by those who deal with them regularly.

The village itself is the settlement closest to the ports and shipyards of the Tortoise Clan, and is also near many ports claimed by the other clans. Because of this, North Hub is often the first stop for wares on their way into the Empire after traveling by sea. The Tortoise operate a large marketplace here on their own terms, and buyers gladly pay inflated prices to be the first to own the rare trinkets and materials the Tortoise have to offer. Other merchants market their wares here, but never seem to be as successful as the Tortoise.

After the attack on Ootosan Uchi, the Tortoise have begun to pick up the pieces of their home. The Hub Villages have survived wars far more protracted than Daigotsu's devastating attack, and the recovery in this case has been relatively quick. Little outside of the Imperial City was damaged; the Shadowlands armies penetrated the inner parts of Ootosan Uchi via water and magic, bypassing the Hub Villages. Though the "curse" ruins of Ootosan Uchi deter quite a few previous clients of the markets here, the Tortoise continue their business as normal.

IRON TURTLE MARKET SQUARE

The vast trading grounds of the North Hub Village dominate the small town. Tradesmen from all across the Empire come and go with the seasons to hawk their goods in temporary tents, but merchants of the Tortoise, Mantis, and Crane clans always have tables set up. The Iron Turtle Square is quiet only in the wee hours of the night and morning and during the poorest weather. There are few illegal goods to be found, as Imperial Magistrates inspect the area regularly and brook no affront to Imperial Law, Tortoise or no. Beyond that, however, nearly anything mortal hand can craft or harvest can be bought here.

The name of the marketplace comes from both the influence of the Tortoise and the general attitude of any merchant found in the North Hub. There is always a throng of potential buyers, so merchants are confident. If this customer does not wish to agree to their terms, another one will, and usually within the hour. Thus the haggling strategy of the merchants resembles an "iron turtle" as they stand inflexibly behind their second or third offer. Tradesmen that live here are quite fond of this reputation and protect it zealously.

KASUGA KYOBE

[Courtier 3/Rogue 3; Yasuki Trader 2]

A portly man of middling years, Kasuga Kyobe is responsible for the Tortoise's interests within Iron Turtle Market Square. Kyobe is the latest in a line of merchants who can trace their methods back to a Yasuki merchant that swore fealty to Agasha Kasuga himself. Though Kyobe does not boast that he uses the secrets of the Yasuki schools — the Crab would likely petition to have him executed — he is as proud of his heritage as any Akodo samurai. Kyobe is an odd Tortoise. He conducts himself as a swaggering samurai, as if he were the lord of a great province instead of a bustling trading ground. Kyobe is nevertheless a Tortoise to the core, and does not allow the concepts of honor and nobility to impede his duty to his clan.

The sly merchant is at present in charge of maintaining the activity level of the Iron Turtle in spite of the destruction of the Imperial City only weeks ago. Thus far, the refugees in the area have made this task a simple one. However, it is becoming clear that the central leadership of Rokugan is but a fond memory. What this means to Kyobe in the short term is that bandits in the area have become ever bolder, as most of the Imperial Legions have gone to follow Toturi Tsudao's commands from Kyuden Seppun. As few merchants are willing to bring valuable and rare items to unprotected ground, Kyobe has stepped up Tortoise hiring of mercenaries.

THE TORTOISE EMBASSY

The Tortoise Clan's service to the Emperor could have afforded them a base of operations inside Ootosan Uchi itself, but the Kasuga chose to locate their embassy in their seat of influence — North Hub Village. The Tortoise enjoy the leverage this location gives them, as important nobles from Ootosan Uchi would have to travel outside their social circles within the Imperial City to contact them. In all cases, visitors would have to navigate their way through the massive trading grounds in which the embassy lies — a disturbing task for the poised and graceful courtiers of the clans.

Shortly after the destruction of the Imperial City, it became clear that the traditional guardians of the area, the Seppun and the Legions, were leaving in great waves. Drawn to the call of the Four Winds or Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi, these samurai felt that there was little worth protecting near the city and left the Hub Villages to fend largely for themselves. Combined with the withdrawal of clan forces to deal with their own conflicts, the Tortoise Embassy soon became the area's last vestige of organized samurai influence. The Tortoise are now without their traditional shield: the protection of the Emperor. Instead they are rallying forces of Tortoise, ronin, and hired Mantis samurai in order to maintain peace around the ruins of Ootosan Uchi. The Tortoise have shifted from the protected minority of Ootosan Uchi to the protectors of the haunted ruins. The Miya have lent their strength to the Tortoise, as have the ronin order of the Sword of Yotsu and the Wolf Legion. Representatives of all these factions can currently be found within the embassy.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While on business in the North Hub Village, the party is approached by the representatives of a Unicorn merchant. The Ide's problem seems straightforward: a honorless ronin has stolen a family heirloom and made off toward the remains of the Imperial City. As the few remaining Imperial Guards and similar authorities are too busy to handle such minor business, the Ide has turned to the first group of capable samurai he could find. The Ide is a master of reading the emotions of others, and appeals to any weakness the PCs present — compassion, greed, or nobility.

Focus: If the PCs agree to investigate, tracking down the thief proves simple enough. Clues and eyewitnesses confirm a man heading toward the northern areas of the ruins and should lead the players almost directly to him. On the way, the PCs get a feel for what has befallen Ootosan Uchi since Daigotsu's attack. Roads are still stained with blood and littered with bodies, human and oni alike. Roaming packs of goblins and minor oni await the unwary, dodging the Yotsu and Wolf Legion squads filtering through the ruins.

Strike: The party locates Seppun Moritoshi, the "thief" of the Ide's "family heirloom." If the players attempt to parley

with Moritoshi, they discover he is hurt, wounded by one of the Ide's personal guards as the Seppun attempted to take back what rightfully belonged to his family. The miharu explains that the Ide merchant employed several ronin and his own guards to loot the city while the forces of the Lion and the Shadowlands fought. The artifact the Seppun managed to get back is a simple tsuba said to have been carried by one of Lady Seppun's first followers. He fled to the ruins not to escape, but to return it to its rightful place in the ruined Seppun home. The Seppun is dying of his wounds, and asks only that the PCs do not aid the Ide in his sacrilege. The PCs are now faced with the option of further causing conflict within the chaotic North Hub by confronting an influential merchant with his crime, or become a part of it and reap a great reward at the cost of their honor.

YOAKE FUSERU

The Dawn Tower rests on the tip of the northern peninsula that encloses the Bay of the Golden Sun. The Tortoise and their Seppun allies watch everything that sails into the port, as the entire port mouth is visible from the tower except in the worst fog. This structure is another of the Tortoise's unofficial bases of operation; it is technically an Imperial outpost manned by the Seppun miharu. However, the Seppun learned generations ago that not only were the Tortoise unerringly loyal to the Throne, they also were wise in the ways of the sea. While the Seppun have manned the tower and served as an honor guard, the Tortoise have controlled the lighthouse and the small port nearby for centuries.

The flat lands of the surrounding area have given the Tortoise a perfect place to train their bushi. The miharu are happy to assist the Tortoise with their weapon training and progression in more spiritual pursuits. There are always several kobune flying the banner of the Tortoise in the bay area nearby as young students of the Minor Clan learn the ways of the sea from the older Tortoise.

The seemingly unstoppable invasion of Otsan Uchi by Daigotsu has cast a shadow of guilt upon the Tortoise of the Dawn Tower. When they saw the black Shadowlands ships approach, the Tortoise and Seppun were shocked to find that their horses had been poisoned and their own ships sabotaged. Runners were immediately dispatched, though they had no hope of reaching the Imperial City in time to warn it. The Seppun of the tower committed seppuku almost to a man. The few who hang on with the Tortoise now try to maintain control in the region and cleanse their shame in other ways.

BARRACKS OF THE TORTOISE

Yoake Fuseru houses the major military might of the Tortoise Clan, though this is a well-guarded secret. As the Tortoise are exceedingly loyal to the Emperor, they have traditionally left the bulk of their forces at Imperial disposal at the Dawn Tower. Their other holdings and lands are hardly lush prizes and require very little in the way of armed defense. Young Tortoise and those who have recently sworn fealty to the Minor Clan must spend at least a year here, learning from the elders of the clan. As the amount of new recruits and young among the Tortoise are exceptionally low for even a Minor Clan, the Seppun do not mind the additional activity in the area.

Like the embassy of the Tortoise, Yoake Fuseru has become a small haven of civilization and law in the chaotic remnants of Otsan Uchi. Its military forces are constantly

working to help with the recovery of survivors, clearing out Tainted beasts from the ruins, and otherwise assisting the few remaining ronin and Seppun in the area. For all intents and purposes, the bushi of Yoake Fuseru have become the only Imperial Legion left near Otsan Uchi, and they are stretched far beyond their capacity by such a responsibility.

As the Tortoise are considered direct vassals of the Emperor, they feel they must maintain an honorable clan dojo to keep up appearances. The dojo at Yoake Fuseru serves as such a place, and many Tortoise boast of the school just as proudly as any Crane would speak of their own school.

YOAKE FUSERU DOJO

Classes: Fighter, Rogue, Samurai

Schools: Tortoise Bushi, Seppun Miharu

Students of Yoake Fuseru are the only bushi privy to the secrets of the Tortoise bushi school and their odd techniques. In addition to learning combat, students are instructed in the ways of the sea, commerce, and more practical, if not glorious, tasks. The Tortoise student is taught from day one that while honor is fine, eventually someone trustworthy must do the dirty work behind the scenes.

SOCIAL BENEFIT

A student of Yoake Fuseru Dojo may choose two Low skills that will not cause him an Honor loss in most circumstances. The use must be practical and justifiable; using Hide or Stealth to stalk and kill an oni within the ruins of Otsan Uchi is acceptable, but attempting to infiltrate the stronghold of another clan is not.

TRAINING BENEFIT

None.

THE SHRINE OF AGASHA KASUGA

Though somewhat more controversial than other family founders, Agasha Kasuga is nonetheless afforded the same respect as his historical peers. All Tortoise revere their crafty ancestor for his patience and limitless cunning. The largest shrine to Agasha Kasuga is on the first floor of the Dawn Tower, and draws Tortoise and even Dragon pilgrims. The shrine is tended by a single shugenja who inherited his position from his father, as it has been handed down since the death of Agasha Kasuga. The shrine dominates most of the first floor, and walls and stairways have been built over time so that runners can climb the tower without disturbing the peace of the shrine.

The decorations of the shrine are whimsical depictions of Kasuga's life that focus on his time as a negotiator and daimyo of the Tortoise. Kasuga's life as a Dragon and a shugenja are rarely discussed by the Tortoise. They choose to ignore the criticism that Agasha Kasuga's bold and non-traditional approach to magic, duty, and religion brought him.

KASUGA MENINOJI

[Shugenja 9; Ronin Shugenja (Insight Rank 3)]

The priest of Kasuga's shrine is a small and unassuming shugenja named Kasuga Meninoji. Meninoji inherited the position of caretaker from his father, and the line of caretakers goes back to Kasuga's own second child, who began the shrine in his father's honor. Meninoji is not much of a holy man,

preferring as he does sake and the company of geisha to the incense and prayer scrolls of his duty. So long as the shrine is properly maintained, however, the Tortoise do not mind Meninoji's eccentricities.

Despite being somewhat lax in his pursuit of virtue, Meninoji is an excellent spiritual advisor. The Tortoise shugenja's ear is always open to his brethren. Meninoji is content, and on the rare occasions when he does complain, the Tortoise of Dawn Tower drop everything to investigate. He enjoys his position for only one reason: Meninoji takes joy in being useful to his clan. No task is too much to ask of the shugenja, and he turns none of his brethren away when they come to him for aid. Though he may be a poor priest, Meninoji is a fine friend.

ADVENTURE HOOK

Challenge: While traveling along the Imperial roadways, the characters are approached by a wandering merchant selling ancient scrolls and similar "valuable" trinkets. Most of the items are junk, albeit old junk. Characters with any sort of merchant or historical skills recognize that some of the man's documents are authentic, dating back centuries.

Focus: If any of the characters choose to examine the documents further, they find the papers incomplete. Several scroll pages are numbered in a series that are missing information central to the document. The merchant, if questioned, simply says he sold the papers to a Crane lord in a nearby city. He claims not to remember the Crane's name. Having no further business with the characters, the merchant makes his way along the road. Several days later, an excited Tortoise approaches the group. The papers were the collected research notes of Agasha Kasuga into gunpowder and other volatile topics.

Strike: With the Emperor dead and the Imperial power structure in ruins, certain enemies of the Tortoise have found a perfect way to strike at the Minor Clan. The Crane lord intends to make the documents of Agasha Kasuga public, dishonoring the Tortoise Clan founder. Should the characters choose to aid the Tortoise (despite the prevailing political climate, the Tortoise are still the direct vassals of the Emperor), they find themselves pitted against a clever and devious Crane. He can be persuaded to hand the documents over to the Tortoise, but the characters may end up owing the Crane favors that they will have a hard time repaying.

SHIRO KASUGA

South of Dragon's Guard City (Location A4) halfway toward the Dawn Tower stands the formal home of the Tortoise Clan. Shiro Kasuga is a humble castle located on the cliff edges along the ocean and surrounded by jagged rocks. Agasha Kasuga oversaw the construction himself, and the architecture is clearly influenced by the man's Dragon heritage. Kasuga and several of his shugenja allies built the foundation of the castle themselves, using Earth magic to fuse the castle's base into the cliff itself. In this way, the castle's "footing" was made completely secure and the Tortoise did not have to risk digging into the area near the cliff's edge.

Shiro Kasuga has never been attacked, as the clans of the Empire fear the retribution of the Emperor. More importantly, the Tortoise have spent centuries not being noticed by the Empire, so few daimyo have ever had cause to attack. The stronghold has very little in the way of defenses due to the protection of the Emperor and the simple fact that the lands the Tortoise claim are hardly enviable. The castle

does not lie on a major road to or from anywhere of particular save for the road to Otosan Uchi, so the Tortoise have never feared becoming an incidental target for a larger campaign.

UNEXPECTED JOURNEY

The main port of the Tortoise Clan has a rather unusual name. Those who inquire as to its origin seldom hear the same story twice. One of the more popular jokes among other clans is that sea travel is so unreliable that the Tortoise named their port to reflect the fact that not even they were sure where their boats would end up. Among the Tortoise, the most common explanation is the tale of Agasha Kasuga himself — the Dragon shugenja had never imagined his life would take the series of turns that it did, but he dealt with them all wisely. Those not comfortable with such an odd name usually refer to the area as the Port of the Tortoise, and leave it at that.

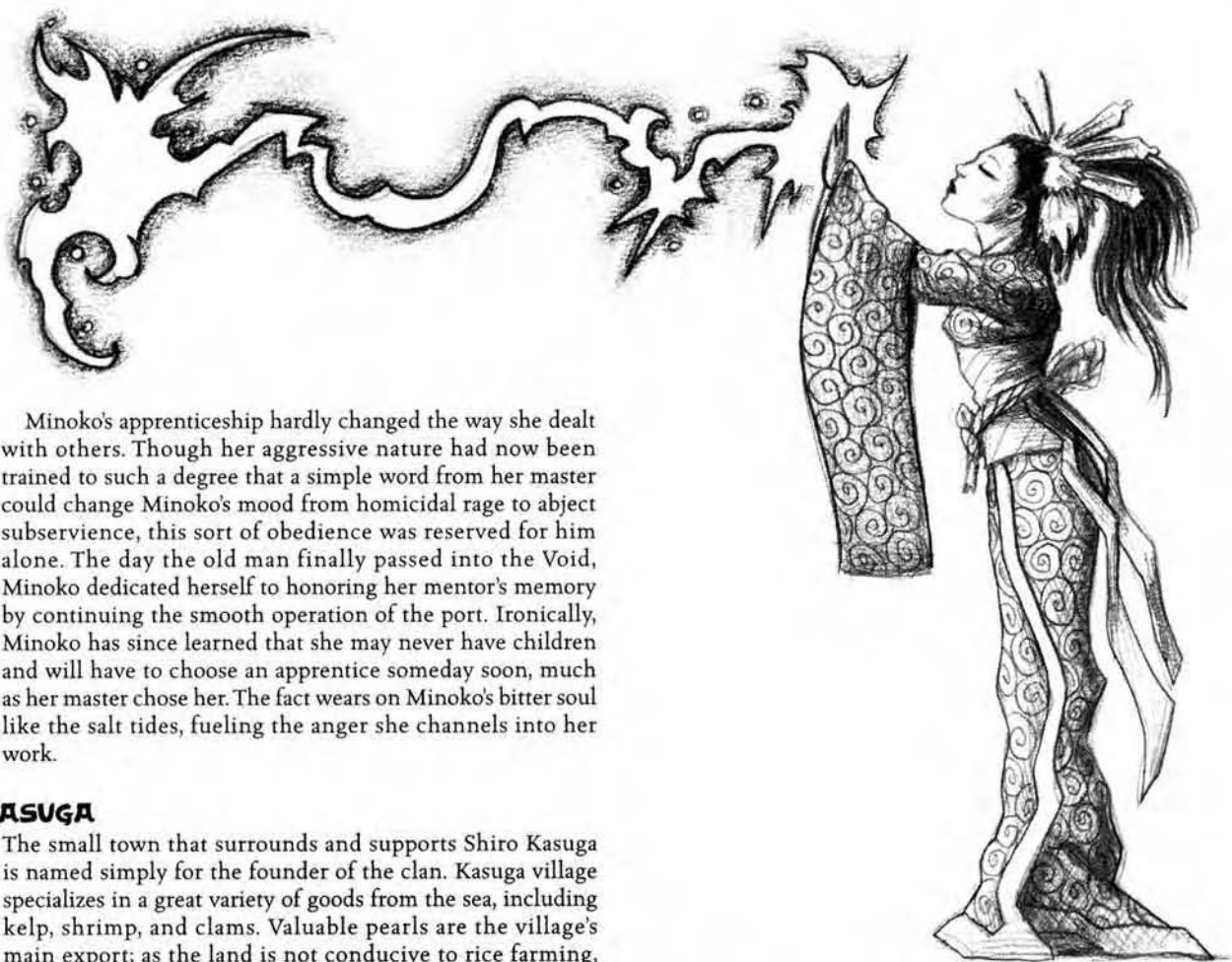
Until the fall of Otosan Uchi, Unexpected Journey was perhaps the second busiest port on the shores of the mainland Empire. However, with the destruction of the Imperial City, much of the traffic usually bound for Otosan Uchi has been routed to the ports of the Tortoise. As this is the largest of the Minor Clan's ports, it has accepted the lion's share of this burden, with mixed results. Unexpected Journey was laid out on an unbroken patch of shore just below and north of Shiro Kasuga's lands. Because of this, expansion is easy and quick, so Unexpected Journey has had little trouble accommodating the increase in business. However, merchants and travelers are not exactly pleased to deliver wares meant for the docks of Otosan Uchi into the port of a Minor Clan. As the closest alternative is farther north in Dragon's Guard City, merchants grumble about the loss of profits, but have little choice but to suffer docking in the Port of the Tortoise or make their way much farther north into the few ports of the Phoenix.

KASUGA MINOKO

[Fighter 6/Rogue 6; Tortoise Bushi 4]

Born into a line of no real importance, the current warden of the Unexpected Journey ports has spent her entire life attempting to carve a position for herself and her progeny. Minoko has always loved the sea, and she displayed leadership talent early. During her years of training at Dawn Tower, the young Minoko was reprimanded for leaving formation to loudly correct other students who were standing incorrectly or performing poorly. Despite the predictions of her sensei and even her own parents, Minoko passed her gempukku eventually and found her way into the Tortoise navy.

Since then, Minoko has done everything she could to prove herself to her superiors, even arguing with them openly and disobeying orders when she had a better plan of her own. In any other clan, Minoko would have probably been cast out as ronin or even ordered to commit seppuku mere weeks after her gempukku. However, the pragmatic leaders of the Tortoise followed her progress and eventually did everyone a favor — Minoko was removed from the Tortoise sea forces and apprenticed to the aging and heirless warden of Unexpected Journey. Minoko's famous temperament was ruthlessly and quickly curbed by the wizened old Tortoise, much to everyone's amazement. The Tortoise woman found herself at once fascinated and utterly cowed by her master. The man's seemingly infinite intellect kept the chaotic port running without incident day to day, and his temper was like the sea itself: unstoppable and quick in its fury.



Minoko's apprenticeship hardly changed the way she dealt with others. Though her aggressive nature had now been trained to such a degree that a simple word from her master could change Minoko's mood from homicidal rage to abject subservience, this sort of obedience was reserved for him alone. The day the old man finally passed into the Void, Minoko dedicated herself to honoring her mentor's memory by continuing the smooth operation of the port. Ironically, Minoko has since learned that she may never have children and will have to choose an apprentice someday soon, much as her master chose her. The fact wears on Minoko's bitter soul like the salt tides, fueling the anger she channels into her work.

KASUGA

The small town that surrounds and supports Shiro Kasuga is named simply for the founder of the clan. Kasuga village specializes in a great variety of goods from the sea, including kelp, shrimp, and clams. Valuable pearls are the village's main export; as the land is not conducive to rice farming, the Tortoise are fortunate they have a large number of pearls to trade. Kasuga also has a reputation of housing some of the finest peasant and eta craftsmen in the Empire. Though the need for such filthy services as tanning and autopsy are not exactly prized, the peasants of the village have been trained by the Tortoise to take pride in their every endeavor. Because of this attitude, a Tortoise peasant tends to be far more motivated and productive than his counterparts in other lands.

The makeup of Kasuga presents an interesting dichotomy between the well-off merchant patrons of the clan and a good number of peasants who are far less financially fortunate. There are a large number of Tortoise houses that are comparable in design and size to the small noble estates within Otsan Uchi before its destruction. Once a visitor travels farther away from Shiro Kasuga proper, however, he goes from being surrounded by opulence to seeing nothing but ramshackle huts. There seems to be no middle ground. There is a 'border' in Kasuga where fine gardens are just feet away from a dirty peasant home. Keen observers notice that there are no homeless or vagrant peasants within Kasuga, however; while the Tortoise do not frown on displays of wealth, they are far more concerned with ensuring the relative comfort of their peasants. The Tortoise do not mind paying taxes in order to provide housing for the populace of their village. This courtesy extends only to the peasants that have lived with the Tortoise for generations — commoners attempting to flock to Kasuga in order to adopt an easy lifestyle are directed to other lands of Tortoise influence.

KIN TAIYO NO GUNKOU, THE PORT OF THE GOLDEN SUN

The Port of the Golden Sun occupies the southern inlet of the Bay of the Golden Sun just south and east of Otsan Uchi. The port coordinates most of the Tortoise's naval operations, including their small navy and fishing fleet. With the possible exception of the Crab Clan, the Tortoise claim the most skilled shipwrights in mainland Rokugan, many of which conduct their business here.

Kin Taiyo no Gunkou also handles the largest amount of exported goods from the mainland to the islands of the Mantis and to other points along the eastern coast of the Empire. The port was once a ramshackle operation of the Otomo and Seppun families, but when the Tortoise were founded they lent their talents to making the area run more smoothly. Since that time, the Imperial families have tacitly ceded control of the Port of the Golden Sun to the Tortoise, as the Minor Clan was obviously far more adept at the task. The port remains the center of the Tortoise's interactions with the Imperial powers (with the exception, of course, of the Emperor himself). The Seppun watch over the port for their allies here, and the Otomo are willing to turn a blind eye to the Tortoise's occasional less honorable incidents as long as they keep the operation running smoothly in the name of the Throne.

SOUTHERN DRY DOCKS

The area of the Port of the Golden Sun reserved for the construction and testing of new sea craft is called the Southern Dry Docks. Though there are no other dry docking facilities in the port, the Tortoise could not call the area "The Dry Docks" for fear of confusing them with similar structures in nearby Otsan Uchi. Though the shipbuilding yards rest on the northern stretch of shore in the area, the port is south of the Imperial City, hence the name.

The shipyards of the Tortoise are a hive of peasant and Tortoise workers toiling endlessly to build, improve, and maintain the Imperial and Tortoise fleets. The occasional Crane, Mantis, and Crab ship can be found here, as the Tortoise exchange money and favors for their superior repair services. More often than not, the Tortoise simply request materials to keep their operations running, and the larger clans are often able to maintain such arrangements.

OTOMO PORT

Few ships were allowed to dock at the harbors of Otsan Uchi even if they had business in the Imperial City. As the ports and waterways away from the city itself had to be constantly kept clear to serve the whim of the Emperor, most ships were directed to the Port of the Golden Sun — specifically the docks the Otomo family maintains here. Since the Tortoise took over the naval operation, the Otomo have maintained only minimal staff here, but the docks are still considered theirs.

It is here that ships and cargo bound for Otsan Uchi were inspected by Otomo and Seppun samurai so that they could be permitted into the city. Only the most influential and trusted vassals of the Throne were allowed to skip this formality, so Otomo Port was constantly busy. However, since the destruction of the Imperial City, Otomo Port has been eerily quiet. Occasional ships bound for Crane lands use the existing docks, but even that is now rare. If the Empire chooses to accept the leadership of Toturi Tsudao from the castle of the Seppun family, Otomo Port will likely resume business as normal.

OTOMO MOTOSHIGE

[Courtier 8; Otomo Seiyaku 3]

Otomo Motoshige has been the imperious master of Otomo Port for almost thirty years. The old Otomo is the stereotypical humorless bureaucrat, insisting on the proper and full pronunciation of his name whenever he is addressed. People refer to him behind his back as "Otomo Tomo" or simply "The Imperial Goat." The latter nickname comes from the aging man's habit of clearing his throat, mimicking a goat's bray with frightening (if unintentional) precision.

Though the old courtier is short on charisma, he is an efficient and flawless leader. Nothing goes on inside the whole of the Bay of the Golden Sun without his knowledge — including the name-calling.

MAJOR TORTOISE HOLDINGS

Like the Monkey Clan, the Tortoise are practically an Imperial family, albeit one many nobles would like to forget about. Because their interests coincide with those of the Emperor,

Tortoise influence has spread into areas where they believe they will do the most good. Tortoise representatives can be found in ports of call all across the Empire, and at prominent trading grounds.

DISTANT TURTLE CITY

The Tortoise maintain a port just outside the walls of Toshi no Inazuma on the Mantis Islands. Both the small port and the fledgling city around it are less than two generations old. The Tortoise and Mantis agreed that the Tortoise would found a city just outside the City of Lightning, demonstrating brotherhood with the new Great Clan even if the Kasuga family refused to join its ranks. The agreement benefited both sides, as the Tortoise gained a foothold of influence, and the Mantis gained another city to house their growing population.

Since the time of Distant Turtle's founding, the Tortoise have had one goal in mind — to watch the Mantis for signs of corruption. The Tortoise understand all too well how power can twist the souls of men and wish to protect the Mantis from such a fate. Though hardly as irreproachable as their Seppun allies, the Tortoise have attempted to quietly steer the leaders of the Mantis toward a noble path.

DISTANT TURTLE PORT

The small port of the Tortoise on the Mantis Islands is poorly located and lightly trafficked, as the ports of Toshi no Inazuma are closer to the markets of the city. The port commonly services sailors who could not afford a pass into the ports of the City of Lightning, but who still wish to visit the Mantis city. Mantis and Tortoise sailors can be found in equal numbers, and their camaraderie is apparent.

KASUGA KIMURA

[Rogue 12; Tortoise Bushi 4]

The governor of the Tortoise settlement on the Mantis islands is the cunning and manipulative Kasuga Kimura. When Distant Turtle City was founded, Kimura was stationed in the city as a trusted advisor of the settlement's daimyo. Kimura was honored by the recognition, but the feeling of gratitude soon soured when the true nature of the city was revealed to him. Surely spying on the Mantis was not only dangerous but a waste. Were they not allies?

Kimura has changed. His lord was assassinated a few years ago for stumbling over a truth hidden deep in the islands of the Mantis Clan. Though the Tortoise were stationed here to keep the Mantis from falling prey to the corruption of power, Kimura and his lord have learned that they were far too late. Evidence of the elusive Kolat's influence has surfaced across the islands, though Kimura has never seen or heard anything conclusive enough to alert those back on the mainland. The death of his daimyo shocked Kimura into silence. Although he has taken over the small spy network the Tortoise has set up over the island, he does not know who he can trust, and is slowly succumbing to paranoia. Though he cannot be sure that the Kolat are truly involved deeply in the affairs of the Mantis, he has vowed to avenge the death of his lord before he steps down from his position in favor of someone better suited.

IMPORTANT NPCS

ICHIRO KIHONGO

Ichiro Kihongo is a huge man in his late forties, his hair beginning to show signs of gray. He resembles his clan's Crab ancestors, with a square jaw and limbs thick with muscle. He wears a heavy suit of custom-made armor at all times during his travels, and is seldom seen without Keibatsu, his favorite sodegarami.

Kihongo was just a boy when his clan lost its home to the rampaging Hideo no Oni. He was visiting the home of the Dragonfly with his father, which was the only reason he survived the attack. He reached gempukku shortly before the Clan Wars, and eagerly fought in Toturi's army. Near the end of the war Kihongo's father died fighting Yogo Junzo's forces, and Kihongo assumed leadership of the surviving Badger. The new Emperor Toturi was so impressed by the tenacity of Kihongo and his brethren that he allowed them to keep their Minor Clan status and family name despite their ravaged numbers.

Now in late middle age, Kihongo's legendary strength and fortitude have waned slightly, but he is still a formidable warrior. As a mercenary, Kihongo has a reputation for loyalty and quality of service. Keibatsu is recognized as quickly, if not more so, than the mon of the Badger Clan. Bandits flee quickly before his rumored arrival, for he is known for his intolerance of them.

Kihongo is on good terms with most large ronin and mercenary bands in the Empire. He is welcomed in Nanashi Mura, the Yotsu Dojo, and all the houses of the Mantis. In the recent war between Crab and Crane, the Mantis hired Kihongo and many of his Badger samurai to supplement their own forces. Kihongo was greatly dismayed when the Mantis switched their loyalties to the Crab after the war began, and was further disturbed when they betrayed both sides and allied themselves with Akodo Kaneka. Expressing his discontent with Yoritomo Kitao, Kihongo withdrew his forces and journeyed north, following rumors that the Lion had attacked Kyuden Tonbo.

Ichiro Kihongo is curious about the sudden appearance of Yoritomo Kumiko, and wonders if perhaps she might prove to be a more reliable Mantis Champion than Yoritomo Kitao. He has dispatched messengers asking to meet with Kumiko, but as of yet has had no response. In the meantime, Kihongo and his clan seek any survivors of the Dragonfly Clan. Their current plight reminds Kihongo of his own clan's fate, and he will do whatever he can to help the Tonbo rebuild.

ICHIRO KIHONGO, BADGER CLAN DAIMYO

Male human Mantis Ftr 9/Sam 1: CR 10, Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 10d10+30; hp 114; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; Atk +4 sodegarami +20/+15 melee (1d4+11 damage); AC 24 (touch 12, flat-footed 22); SQ Ancestral Daisho, Class skill -Wilderness Lore (family bonus); Honor 2; AL LN; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 18 (20), Dex 10, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8; Height 6 ft.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (Rokugani, Yobanjin), Climb +23, Jump +23, Wilderness Lore +16; Armor Focus

(great armor), Cleave, Endurance, Power Attack, Soul Forge (sodegarami), Transcend the Mountain, Void Use, Weapon Focus (sodegarami), Weapon Proficiency (sodegarami), Weapon Specialization (sodegarami).

Kata: Striking as Earth.

Possessions: +3 great armor, +4 sodegarami (Soul Forge weapon), amulet of natural armor +2, gauntlets of ogre power, periapt of health.

ICHIRO KIHONGO

Earth: 4

Water: 4

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Ichiro Bushi 4

Honor: 2.4

Glory: 6.9

Advantages: Large, Strength of the Earth (8 points), Voice

Disadvantages: Driven (to restore Badger Clan), Old

Skills: Athletics 6, Defense 5, Hunting 5, Jiu-jitsu 5,

Kenjutsu 5, Kuenai 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 1, Meditation 3,

Sodegarami 6, Wrestling 4, Yarijutsu 3

Kata: Striking as Earth

KASUGA TAIGEN

Kasuga Taigen does not resemble the traditional clan daimyo. He is greasy, dirty, and speaks with a distinct stutter. In his youth, he was a pickpocket and a petty thief, not because he needed the money but as part of his training in guile, subtlety, and humility. He is a weedy little man who seldom bathes and often forgets to shave. His hair is lank and greasy, and he is missing several front teeth from his many childhood fights. Despite his appearance, Taigen has an undeniable way with people. He has a way of making others listen to him, if only "for just a moment," and the longer he talks, the more reasonable and charming he appears. Though a talented thief, his true talents are as a confidence artist. He can tell quite a bit about someone from a simple conversation, and everything he learns is dutifully memorized and reported to Hantei Naseru.

Taigen has no illusions about how others regard his clan. He knows that even other Minor Clans think of the Tortoise as a band of ruffians, pirates, and criminals. He knows that the Lion and Crane show more respect to peasants than his own clan (peasants, after all, serve an obvious purpose and the Tortoise do not). He knows that if an Emperor ascends the throne who does not understand the importance of the Tortoise spy network, his clan is doomed. For this reason he has thrown his lot in with Hantei Naseru.

Taigen believes that even if the Anvil does not gain the throne, he will at least have a use for the Tortoise and the power to protect them. He is therefore extremely protective of Naseru's interests. Should he seem to be in danger, the bushi of the Tortoise will leap to his defense at Taigen's command. Naseru knows this, but he seldom calls upon Taigen's bushi to act as his protectors. The Anvil knows that the Tortoise's true strength lies in subtlety. Taigen and those like him serve best from the shadows, so Naseru keeps Taigen at a distance. The Anvil does not want Taigen's zealous loyalty to inspire him to do something foolish.

Shortly before the invasion of Otosan Uchi, Emerald Champion Yasuki Hachi uncovered a plot to assassinate Hantei Naseru. The assassin, a sleeper brainwashed by Kolat

agents, was captured in the Imperial Palace. Taigen was horrified: he had no idea that the Kolat operated in the Imperial City. Since then, Taigen has called upon his many contacts to root out evidence of the Kolat, and has ordered his Tortoise bushi to show no mercy to any Kolat agents. Taigen has also drawn upon the substantial wealth of the Tortoise to hire parties of ronin (and perhaps bribe a few parties of magistrates) to aid him in his campaign.

Unfortunately for Taigen, one of his allies in this endeavor is an old comrade from the War of Spirits — Moshi Shanegon. Taigen has no idea that Shanegon is a Kolat, much less one of the Ten Masters. Shanegon is quite amused by Taigen's crusade against the Kolat, and is subtly turning the Tortoise in the wrong direction. If Taigen gets too close, Shanegon will quietly deal with the Tortoise.

KASUGA TAIGEN, TORTOISE CLAN DAIMYO

Male human Mantis Ftr 4/Rog 5: CR 9, Medium-size humanoid (human); HD 4d10+4 plus 5d6+5; hp 63; Init +7 (+9 when wielding nunchaku); Spd 30 ft.; Atk +1 nunchaku +13/+8 melee (1d6+2 damage); AC 18 (touch 13, flat-footed 18); SA Sneak attack +3d6 damage; SQ Class skill — Profession (sailor) (family bonus), Evasion, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC); Honor 1; AL CG; SV Fort +12, Ref +3, Will +7; Str 9, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 18, Cha 16; Height 5 ft. 2 in.

Skills and Feats: Speak Language (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani, Yobanjin), Appraise +9, Bluff +15, Diplomacy +15, Disguise +10, Escape Artist +11, Forgery +11, Gather Information +8, Hide +11, Knowledge (etiquette) +10, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +10, Listen +14, Move Silently +11, Pick Pockets +13, Profession (sailor) +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +19; Improved Initiative, Shell of the Tortoise, Truth of Ages, Void Use, Way of the Tortoise (nunchaku), Weapon Finesse (nunchaku), Weapon Focus (nunchaku), Weapon Specialization (nunchaku).

Dojo: Hidden Dagger; **Kata:** Striking as Fire.

Possessions: +1 nunchaku, +2 ashigaru armor of shadows, eyes of the eagle

KASUGA TAIGEN

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Intelligence: 4

Air: 4

Awareness: 5

Void: 3

School/Rank: Tortoise Bushi 3

Dojo: Hidden Dagger

Honor: 1.0

Glory: 7.0

Advantages: Bente's Blessing, Bland, Crafty, Major Ally (Hantei Naseru)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (Tortoise daimyo), Greedy (3), Small

Skills: Acting 3, Appraisal 5, Athletics 2, Commerce 5, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kuenai 6, Nofujitsu 4, Sailing 3, Sincerity 4, Stealth 4

Kata: Striking as Fire

BADGER MECHANICS

HIDEO NO ONI

Gargantuan Outsider (Oni, Evil, Shadowlands)

Hit Dice: 15d8+75 (142 Hp)

Initiative: +3 (Dex)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 18 (–4 size, +2 Dex, +10 natural)

Attacks: 2 arms +21 melee, stomp +18 melee

Damage: Arms 2d8+10, Stomp 3d10+5

Face/Reach: 20 ft. by 20 ft./20 ft.

Special Attacks: Corpse fling

Special Qualities: Corpse regeneration, damage resistance 20/+4 (crystal), death sense, oni qualities, regeneration 10, SR 20

Saves: Fort +14, Ref +12, Will +8

Abilities: Str 30, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 4, Wis 8, Cha 14, Taint 9

Skills: Climb +28, Jump +28, Listen +17, Search +15, Spot +17

Feats: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Transcend the Mountain

Climate/Terrain: Badger lands

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 11

Treasure: None

Honor: Always 0

Alignment: Always Chaotic Evil

Advancement: 16–35 HD (Gargantuan), 36–45 HD (Colossal)

This oni was summoned by a Badger shugenja who fell to the temptation of maho and stole his brother Hideo's name. Though the original Hideo no Oni was destroyed before it could gain the status of Oni Lord, its spawn still prowl the lands of the Badger. These are the most feared beasts in the Badger lands, both for their awesome power and the bitter memories they inspire in Ichiro samurai.

Hideo no Oni is the terrifying reality of the Witch Hunter tales that keep children awake late at night. Each of the five reported appearances has cost Ichiro lives. The insidious power of the Shadowlands coupled with the strength of a Badger samurai's name created a fury stronger than the mountains the Badger call home.

While some know of the true reasons why the Badger's home was destroyed, many think the Minor Clan is simply wasting away after the staggering losses on that day. The truth is much worse — Hideo no Oni spawn are slowly killing the survivors. Each Badger that is captured by the oni adds to the pile of bodies.

A Hideo no Oni is frightening to behold, a monstrous humanoid creature composed of countless corpses bound together by dark magic. The creature reeks of rotten flesh, and uses the bodies of the dead as both food and weapons.

(More details regarding the origins of Hideo no Oni can be found in *Way of the Shadowlands*™)

COMBAT

Hideo no Oni takes a perverse pleasure from thinking it is the rightful master of the Badger, since it proved itself stronger than the clan that values strength. It mercilessly pounds any who attempt to stand in its way. Opponents that attempt to hide behind their allies or stay away from the front rank of combat earn the oni's special attention. It attempts to overbear opponents until it can engage them in melee combat. Any who fall against Hideo are immediately consumed.

Corpse Fling (Ex): The true form of Hideo no Oni is a small, skinless lizard-creature the size of a domestic cat. The corpses that surround the oni are simply animated extensions of its power. Hideo no Oni may choose to launch one of the corpses that makes up its body in place of an arm attack. The attack has a range increment of 30 feet and is considered a touch attack. Damage from the impact is 4d10+10 bludgeoning damage. This attack causes Hideo no Oni to lose 15 hit points immediately.

Corpse Regeneration (Su): Hideo no Oni may absorb any corpse within 15 feet that is at least 50% whole into its own body as a move-equivalent action. This is a full round action that restores 20 hit points to the oni. Hit points beyond its maximum are gained as temporary hit points, though the oni cannot exceed double its normal maximum hit points in this manner. Dead characters absorbed by Hideo may not be raised or restored by similar means short of a wish or miracle.

Death Sense (Su): Hideo no Oni can sense the presence of all dead bodies within 200 feet, regardless of obstructions.

Oni Qualities (Su): Oni outsiders have a number of abilities detailed on page 5 of *Creatures of Rokugan*.™ Hideo no Oni does not possess the alternate form ability.

Regeneration (Ex): Crystal weapons and any weapon wielded by a Badger bushi do normal damage to Hideo no Oni.

HIDEO NO ONI

Earth: 5

Fire: 3

Agility: 5

Water: 3

Strength: 7

Air: 3

Reflexes: 4

Rolls When Attacking: 9k3

Rolls For Damage: 10k6

TN to be Hit: 20

Armor: 5

Wounds: 35: +5; 55: +10; 95: Dead

Shadowlands Powers: Claws of the Kumo, Death Sense, Unearthly Regeneration, Unholy Strength

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Fear: 2

Invulnerability: Special; Oni no Hideo is not vulnerable to jade, only to crystal and magic.

Corpse Form: Oni no Hideo can take any corpse and add it to its own body. Each corpse added in such a manner heals 30 Wounds. It cannot heal itself beyond twice its maximum Wounds in this manner. Any zombies or other animated corpses absorbed in such a manner are destroyed.

Corpse Fling: Oni no Hideo can attack an opponent up to 100 ft. away by hurling a corpse from its body. Doing so does 10 Wounds to the Oni.

NEW ANCESTORS

HIDA DOMOGU

Hida Domogu was the founder of the Badger Clan — the strongest mortal at the dawn of the Empire. Domogu proved his strength before the very Kami, so impressing the Hantei that the Emperor gave Domogu his own family name and the duty of defending the northwestern mountains of the Empire. Hida Domogu was a quintessential Crab — powerful, brutish, and a master of war architecture. The simple genius of his fortification designs is still studied by the Kaiu family.

MILITARY MIND

ANCESTOR FEAT: HIDA DOMOGU

Clan: Badger

Benefit: Knowledge, Craft, and Profession skills you possess use your Strength modifier instead of any other ability score.

HIDA DOMOGU

(BADGER ANCESTOR, 3 POINTS)

All of your Lore and Craft skills relating directly to warfare (such as Lore: Battle, or Craft: Siege Engines) use your Strength Trait instead of any other Trait.

ICHIRO MAKO

When Hida Domogu earned the right to found his own clan, it was the unfortunate Shinjo Mako that stood defeated before him. Out of respect for Domogu's ability, Mako was the first to swear fealty to Domogu and his new clan. The former Shinjo was not an extraordinary leader, but he was a tireless and trustworthy lieutenant. Much of the Badger Clan's initial development was attributed to Domogu's vision, but could not have been carried out without Mako's direction.

LOYAL VASSAL

ANCESTOR FEAT: ICHIRO MAKO

Clan: Badger

Benefit: So long as you are not dishonorable, you may add your current Honor rank as a bonus (that stacks with any other bonuses) to all saving throws against effects that would turn you from your duty to your lord. This bonus would apply to things such as resisting a *charm* spell or a fear effect that would cause you to stop guarding a post. This would not affect a saving throw against a *fireball* that would kill you in the same circumstance, since the effect isn't directly causing you to fail in your duty.

ICHIRO MAKO

(BADGER ANCESTOR, 5 POINTS)

When you are making a roll to avoid an effect that would turn you from your duty, you may choose to either reroll all dice that equal or fall below your Honor, or cause your opponent to drop all dice that roll under your Honor (in the case of opposed rolls). For example, this ability would apply to resisting a fear effect or opposing someone trying to intimidate you into leaving your post.

TORTOISE MECHANICS

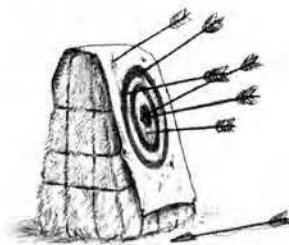
BOVISHI KASUGA, THE BLADE OF THE TORTOISE CLAN

The Emperor traditionally gives the daimyo of a new clan a katana that symbolizes that clan. The Tortoise were a special case, since the Emperor of Rokugan is considered their daimyo. The Hantei instead ordered Kasuga to have a blade forged for him as a symbol of the Tortoise's loyalty to the Throne. The shugenja used his relations with the Agasha family to procure the metals and other materials for one of the finest blades the Hantei Emperor had ever seen. The steel shone with an unearthly glow, and the Emperor named it Kasuga's Eye. The katana's matching wakizashi has been ensconced next to the Emerald Throne since the founding of the Tortoise. Though the Emerald Throne was destroyed, the wakizashi of the Tortoise survived, and has until recently rested beside the one who would rule the Empire. The Steel Throne is now in Kyuden Seppun, but Hantei Naseru moved the Tortoise wakizashi to his estates in Ryoko Owari along with his other personal possessions. For the time being, it seems that the Tortoise continue to serve the Hantei, albeit from afar.

The Blade of the Tortoise Clan is a +3 *shocking burst* katana of speed. The katana is considered to be a +5 weapon when it is employed against an opponent that is in violation of the Imperial Law in some way. Its matching wakizashi has no name, but is a simple +2 *lawful wakizashi* with a unique enchantment. The bearer of the wakizashi may draw and hold it and spend a Void Point to see everything through the eyes of the one who bears the Blade of the Tortoise for a full minute.

The Blade of the Tortoise Clan is an exceptional quality katana that has a DR of 4k3 and grants its wielder an additional die to roll and keep for initiative. It grants its bearer a Free Raise when attacking anyone in direct violation of Imperial Law. The matching wakizashi is an exquisite fine quality wakizashi that has no special power save one — the holder may draw and hold the wakizashi and spend a Void Point to see through the eyes of the one who bears the Blade of the Tortoise for a full minute.

Note: Only those of Imperial blood or who have sworn fealty to the Tortoise may hold either of the blades. All attempts to draw the weapons by others simply fails as the swords stay firmly tucked in their saya.



NEW ANCESTORS

KASUGA KEMMEI

The wise and respected Kasuga Kemmei guided the Tortoise Clan through the turbulent times of the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow. Kemmei was talented in court politics, a rare gift among the pragmatic Tortoise. Kemmei's wisdom kept the Tortoise largely out of the deadly conflicts of the age until they were at the side of Yoritomo and his powerful alliance. It was also the Tortoise courtier's keen mind that was able to turn down Yoritomo's frequent insistence that the Tortoise join as a family of the Mantis while avoiding the Mantis daimyo's disfavor.

PRECARIOUS BALANCE

ANCESTOR FEAT: KASUGA KEMMEI

Clan: Tortoise

Benefit: Choose three of your class skills. Whenever you make a skill check involving one of those skills, you may choose to spend a Void Point to use any ability score modifier when making your skill check instead of the default ability score modifier.

KASUGA KEMMEI

(TORTOISE ANCESTOR, 6 POINTS)

When this ancestor is chosen, choose three skills that were part of your starting skills package. Whenever you use any of those skills, you may choose to spend a Void Point and choose any of your Traits. You make your skill check using the chosen Trait instead of the normal Trait.

KASUGA HARUHIRO

Haruhiro was the naval commander of the Yasuki during the Battle of White Stag and the Battle of Raging Seas. Haruhiro is considered one of the greatest sea tacticians ever, though few realize the dishonorable lengths to which the Crab went in pursuit of victory. Sabotage, betrayal, and assassination all featured in Haruhiro's plans; the Crane simply looked the other way and the Crab didn't worry one way or another. After all, the gaijin did not deserve an honorable battle. When Agasha Kasuga's clan was founded, Haruhiro was the first to kneel before the Tortoise leader.

CRAFTY SAILOR

ANCESTOR FEAT: KASUGA HARUHIRO

Clan: Tortoise

Benefit: You gain a +2 bonus to all Profession and Craft skills relating to the building, knowledge, and working of sea vessels and tactics. Your Honor may never rise above 2.

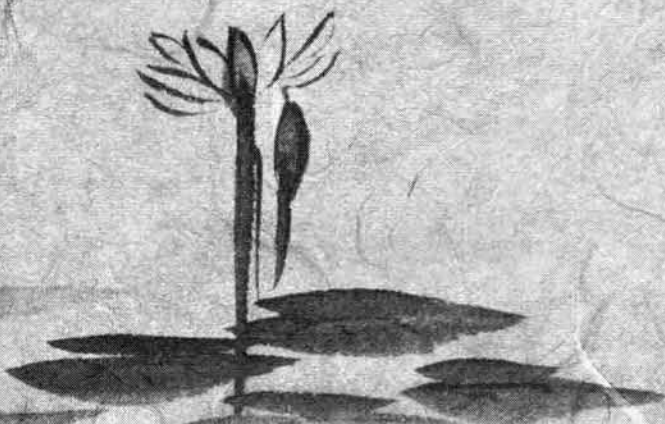
KASUGA HARUHIRO

(TORTOISE ANCESTOR, 3 POINTS)

You gain a Free Raise on all Lore, History, Craft, Sailor, or other skills that directly to the building, knowledge, and working of sea vessels and tactics. Your honor may never rise above 2 and five boxes.

CHAPTER FIVE:

STILL WATER COVE



The screams had long ago lost their jagged, manic energy. Now they were merely hoarse and guttural, the screams of a man whose will was about to break. Such insight was beyond most, of course, but there were certain revelations that came to one after years of such pursuits.

"Come now, Tameyoshi-san," Master Coin said in a warm, friendly voice. He wiped the blood from his long fingertips with a coarse rag and smiled faintly behind his golden mask. "There is no need for such unpleasantness. Surely you must have the information I need. Why subject yourself to such suffering? Do you truly think your lord would do as much for you? Honestly, this is all so unnecessary."

Two dirty, blood-streaked eta held the samurai's head up so that he could look at Coin. His features were twisted with pain and fatigue. He could take little more of this treatment, Master Coin was certain of that.

Unbelievably, the Scorpion samurai coughed and said, "I know nothing of this Shadowed Tower you speak of. Is it a palace? A song perhaps?"

Master Coin smiled sadly. "I am so sorry to hear you say that, Tameyoshi-san. We found the documents you were carrying. We know you have what we want. Why must you make it so hard on yourself?"

"My sensei..." The samurai was wracked with a coughing spasm. His battered body was on the verge of complete collapse.

"My sensei," he continued, "always said I was a poor student."

"Take him to the prison," Master Coin said in a disappointed voice. "Oh, and Kafu, fetch that Cloud sect shugenja hiding out on the eastern dock. Let us make him earn his keep. If the Bayushi will not reveal his secrets to us in life, perhaps his spirit will be more willing. If not, we can begin our own Traitor's Grove out on

the beach." One of the eta nodded and hurried from the chamber. A fearful look crossed the Scorpion's eyes.

"You should not cross my masters," the Scorpion hissed, blood flecking his lips. "Even you are not safe from their grasp, Kolat!"

"Is that so?" Coin replied, rising angrily — but a second Master, a thick man in identical dark robes, entered the chamber. This one's golden mask was marked by the symbol of an unsheathed sword.

"Why, Coin," the man said, his voice distorted by the mask's enchantment, "why do we show such discourtesy to our Bayushi visitor?"

"Master Steel," Coin replied, bowing submissively to the newcomer. "This one was found scouting the coast of the Mantis Isles. He has been spying upon the Yoritomo on behalf of a Scorpion splinter group named the Shadowed Tower. We believe he intended to meet with one of his contacts in Kyuden Gotei."

"Set him free," Master Steel said.

"What?" Coin replied, shocked.

"Release him. Where will he go? This is an island. I think I would like to hear more of this Shadowed Tower, and I think we will learn more through courtesy than torture. Perhaps this Shadowed Tower can be of use to us, and we to them."

"Interesting," Master Coin said, looking at the prisoner shrewdly. The Bayushi silently stared at Master Steel.

"Bayushi-san," Master Steel continued, turning to face the tortured man, "the eta will show you where you can cleanse and feed yourself. Have your wounds tended, then tell them you are ready to negotiate with me."

"And what if I do not wish to negotiate, Steel?" the Scorpion replied.

Master Steel was silent for a brief moment. "Meet with me and you might gain a powerful ally for your organization. To choose otherwise is to choose death. Your spirit will be tortured by our shugenja. The masters of your organization will be discovered, and one by one they will be destroyed. Do you really believe your Shadowed Tower can survive a war with the true rulers of the Scorpion and the Kolat? Choose wisely, Scorpion."

With that, Master Steel turned and left the chamber, leaving Bayushi Tameyoshi to his thoughts.

STILL WATER COVE

In Rokugan, few groups are more secretive than the mysterious Kolat. Although many know of the group, few have any real grasp of its tactics or ideology, and most believe it to have been destroyed in the aftermath of the battle between the Great Clans and the Lying Darkness. They are mistaken, for while the Kolat have gone to ground and are taking drastic steps to conceal their operations, they have expanded and reorganized their hierarchy. The Kolat are more organized than ever, and it is only a matter of time before the Empire feels their iron grip once more.

Regardless of the depth and breadth of their current activities, the Kolat require the same resources that allow other large groups to operate. More specifically, they require the funds to pay for their considerable covert activities. The responsibility for these funds rests solely upon the shoulders of Master Coin, the Kolat master of the Coin Sect. The current Master Coin is Moshi Shanegon, a notorious pirate of the Mantis Clan.

Shanegon has exploited the role of the Mantis Clan in Rokugan for the Kolat's benefit. For every dozen Mantis kobune that sail the seas, one holds cargo controlled by Shanegon and his agents. The fleet of vessels whose crews are under his direct control are scattered among the legions of ships that sail all along Rokugan's coast. Shanegon has at least a dozen secure locations through which he can move his cargo with no questions and no prying eyes. Most of these are clandestine buildings in existing port cities, but a handful are secret bases known only to the Kolat.

The primary base of operations for the Mantis Kolat is a hidden port in an island cove south of the Islands of Silk and Spice. The island appears on no maps, but Shanegon calls the place Still Water Cove. Because of its location, traffic through the area is extremely light. Furthermore, a combination of natural rock formations and carefully prepared illusion magic makes the cove difficult to locate.

USING THE COVE IN AN ADVENTURE

Incorporating Still Water Cove into an adventure is a fairly easy task, but should not be done lightly. The Kolat are a merciless and tireless foe, and while they are not omnipotent, they are extremely powerful and deadly enemies with resources far beyond those of an average band of heroes.

Shanegon's cove can be utilized in several ways:

- The characters might be operatives of Yasuki Hachi, the Emerald Champion. Hachi has recently struck several blows against the Kolat, including the destruction of some

of their most highly placed sleeper agents. He might learn the location of the cove through a captured agent and send the characters to investigate.

- The characters might be agents of the Kolat themselves. Perhaps one of the other Masters wishes to investigate the depth of Shanegon's operations, or perhaps he or she simply wants to sabotage the base to make Shanegon look incompetent. In any event, a rival Master could deploy the characters to the cove with any number of different mission objectives.
- The characters might have stumbled upon a Kolat operation and been captured. With no idea what to do with samurai that might potentially cause problems if they disappeared, the Kolat agents bring the characters to the cove so that Shanegon can deal with them himself.
- Seagoing characters might find themselves lost after a storm, or have their vessel damaged in a storm or battle to an extent that it cannot continue to their destination. Stumbling into the cove might seem fortunate, but will become a problem in very short order.

HOW TO USE THIS INFORMATION

Each of the major areas of the cove is presented here with all the information a GM needs to use it. Each section contains a heading entitled "At a Glance", which summarizes all the various components of that area. More specific portions of the cove are given their own descriptions, which may be read aloud to players if the GM so desires. Individual GMs are encouraged to expand upon the information presented here.

KOLAT FORCES

Shanegon's cove is well defended for a location of its size. In addition to the natural (and naturally-augmented) defenses, the cove has a minimum of 24 armed guards at all times. This number increases if there are several ships docked at the cove at a time, but never falls below two dozen. In addition to these bushi, Shanegon typically has at least three shugenja present to augment his own considerable magical acumen.

KOLAT GUARDS

Human Ftr6: CR 6, Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d10+12; hp 44; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (touch 12, flat-footed 15); Attack masterwork kama +10/+5 melee or +8/+8/+3 melee (1d6+5 damage or 1d6+5/1d6+3/1d6+5 damage), yumi (short bow) +7/+2 ranged (1d8+1 damage); Honor 0; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8; Height 5 ft. 6 in.; *Skills and Feats:* Speak Language (Rokugani), Climb +10, Jump +10, Profession (sailor) +5, Swim +12; Cleave, Claws of the Mantis, Power Attack, Ride the Lightning, Void Use, Way of the Mantis, Weapon Focus (kama), Weapon Specialization (kama); *Dojo:* Dojo Raiden; *Kata:* Strike as Water; *Possessions:* +1 ashigaru armor, yumi, 20 arrows, +1 ring of protection.

KOLAT ELITE GUARDS

Human Nin5/KAs4: CR 9, Medium-size humanoid; HD 9d6+27; hp 53; Init +6 (+4 Dex, +2 Int); Spd 30 ft.; AC 20 (touch 15, flat-footed 20); Attack +1 tanto +15 melee, (1d4+5 damage or 1d6+5 damage to humanoids), masterwork yumi (short bow) +14/+9 ranged (1d8 damage); SA Sneak Attack +5d6, Tiger's Claw; SQ Ninja

Dodge +2, Poison Use, Speed of Darkness, Uncanny Dodge (Dex bonus to AC, can't be flanked), Evasion; Honor 0; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 18, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 10; Height 5 ft. 6 in. *Skills and Feats:* Speak Language (High Rokugani, Ivory Kingdoms, Rokugani), Climb +10, Escape Artist +16, Hide +16, Jump +12, Listen +13, Move Silently +16, Spot +13, Tumble +18; Lightning Stealth, Mobility, Spring Attack, Twist the Knife, Weapon Focus (dagger); *Dojo:* Coin Sect Kolat; *Kata:* None; *Possessions:* +1 tanto, +2 ashigaru armor, masterwork yumi, 20 arrows, +1 ring of protection, 3 doses Night Milk poison.

KOLAT SHUGENJA

Human Shu6: CR6, Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d6+6; hp 32; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30ft.; AC 17 (touch 13, flat-footed 15); Attack wakizashi +3 melee (1d6-1 damage); SQ Element focus (Air), sense elements; Honor 1; AL LE; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 16; Height 5ft. 5in. *Skills and Feats:* Speak Language (High Rokugani, Kami, Rokugani), Concentration +10, Diplomacy +12, Heal +9, Intimidate +12, Poison +8, Scry +6, Spellcraft +7; Extend Spell, Superior Element Focus (Air), Versatile (Intimidate, Poison), Void Use; *Dojo:* Amaterasu Seido; *Kata:* None; *Spells Known:* (6/7/6/4 Base DC 13 + spell level, 17 + spell level for Air spells; Elemental Focus — Air, Moshi School) 0-level — *create water, crow's vision, cure minor wounds, daze, detect magic, gathering swirl, ghost sound, light*; 1st level — *animal friendship, change self, cure light wounds, obscuring mist, sleep*; 2nd level — *detect thoughts, endless seas, resist elements*; 3rd level — *cloak of night, torrential rain*; *Possessions:* +1 netsuke of natural armor, +1 ring of protection, wakizashi, masterwork ashigaru armor, 2 scrolls of cure serious wounds, 2 scrolls of water breathing, 2 scrolls of hold person, scroll of delay poison, 2 scrolls of speed of the hare.

WAY OF THE NINJA CHARACTER OPTIONS

More details on the Kolat Assassin prestige class and New Paths and the specialized feats of these characters can be found in *Way of the Ninja*.™

D20 SYSTEM:™

The prestige class' Tiger's Claw ability allows the assassin an extra partial action each round which can only be used to perform a melee attack against an opponent denied their Dex bonus to AC. The Lightning Stealth feat allows movement at normal speed with no Hide or Move Silently penalty and while running or charging with only a -10 penalty. The Twist the Knife feat increases the damage and critical range of a knife to 1d6/17-20 against humanoid or monstrous humanoid opponents.

LSR RPG 2E:

The Steal the Light Technique allows the Kolat to make two Raises on an attack roll which, if successful, inflicts only one die of Wounds but also blinds, deafens, or mutes the target for a number of minutes equal to the Kolat's Water Ring.

KOLAT GUARDS

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 2

Reflexes: 3

Void: 2

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 2 (Coin Sect Dojo)

Glory/Honor: 1.6/1.1

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Commerce 4, Defense 2, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu 2, Nofujutsu 4, Sailing 4, Stealth 3, Torture 2

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Kolat), Obligation (Coin Sect)

Weapons & Armor: One peasant weapon (kama, sai, or tonfa), light armor.

ELITE KOLAT GUARDS

Earth: 3

Water: 4

Perception: 5

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Air: 3

Void: 2

School/Rank: Yoritomo Bushi 3, Steal the Light (Coin Sect Dojo)

Glory/Honor: 1.1/0.7

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 2, Commerce 4, Defense 4, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu 2, Nofujutsu 6, Poison 4, Sailing 4, Stealth 5, Torture 3

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Silent

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Kolat), Obligation (Coin Sect)

Weapons & Armor: Fine quality weapon (katana or peasant weapon), fine light armor

KOLAT SHUGENJA

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception: 3

Fire: 2

Intelligence: 4

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Moshi Shugenja 2 (Amaterasu Seido)

Glory/Honor: 1.8/1.5

Skills: Astrology 3, Calligraphy 4, Commerce 3, Courtier 2, Etiquette 3, History 3, Kenjutsu 1, Lore (Kolat) 4, Lore (the Seas) 4, Manipulation 4, Meditation 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Theology 4

Advantages: Innate Abilities

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Kolat), Obligation (Coin Sect)

Spells: (Spells marked with a * are innate abilities) Sense, Commune, Summon, Biting Steel, *Echoes of a Breeze, The Fires that Cleanse, Fires of Purity, *Forgotten Murmurs, Heart of Nature, Hurried Steps, Secrets on the Wind, Tempest of Air, *Wisdom of the Kami

THE SURROUNDING SEAS

AT A GLANCE

The waters around the cove are notoriously difficult to navigate due to sharp rock outcroppings, carefully placed by shugenja gifted with earth magic. Further discouraging anyone from occupying this area is the disproportionate number of sharks in the waters around the cove. The animals were always common in the area, but their presence has been encouraged by the Kolat practice of dumping large quantities of blood and fish into the sea every week. The resident shugenja often use their magic to communicate with and control these predators as well, making the effective guardians for the cove. There is a prominent landmark on the outskirts of the cove: a large kobune lies shattered on a rock outcropping. This serves a number of purposes for the Kolat: it draws the attention of others away from the actual cove's entrance, it provides a safe place for a lookout to survey the surrounding waters, and it serves as a marker for other ships, identifying these waters as dangerous.

THE ROCKS

Large, jagged rocks dominate this area of the sea. They spiral up from the ocean like the teeth of some gigantic creature that died just below the surface of the sea. Normally such rocks would be covered with seagulls and their droppings, but these are strangely stark and absent of life of any kind. These outcroppings are so jagged that even the most casual glance of a ship's hull against them would send the vessel to the bottom of the ocean in short order.

THE SHARKS

The water in this part of the ocean is choppy, but not so much so that one cannot see the many large, dark forms moving beneath the surface. The number of sharks in this region is stunning, and makes even seasoned sailors uncomfortable. Some of the shadows underneath the water are twice again as long as a man, and there is little doubt that anyone unfortunate enough to fall into the water in this dark portion of the sea would not live long enough to drown. Of course, the Kolat shugenja can swim the waters without danger. They have come to an understanding with these fierce beasts.

Use the statistics for Shark, Large from the Monster Manual.™ Sharks in Still Water Cove have +2 hit points per hit die and SR 8 due to the experiments the resident shugenja have performed upon them.

SHARK

Earth: 4
Water: 5
Perception: 6
Fire: 2
Agility: 5
Air: 2
Reflexes: 4
Rolls When Attacking: 5k4
Rolls for Damage: 6k4 bite
TN to be hit: 20
Carapace: 3
Wounds per Level: 16: +1, 32: +5, 64: Dead
Skills: Hunting 6

Sharks are ruthless hunters that can track their prey by smell for up to 200 feet. They can smell blood in the water from up to a mile away. Sharks who smell blood or who are wounded will enter a frenzy, gaining two additional rolled dice for all attack and damage rolls until they are driven off or killed.

Magic Resistance: Due to the experiments the Kolat shugenja have performed upon their aquatic guardians, the TN of all spells targeting the sharks of Still Water Cove is increased by 5.

THE SHIPWRECK

High upon a particularly jagged rock outcropping sits the ancient husk of a kobune. The ship was one of the largest types still used by the traders and merchants of the coast. Its position high above the sea level would seem to indicate it was tossed atop the rocks by a storm. Although the waves cannot reach the husk to wash it away, it seems unusual that the ruins have escaped the ravages of subsequent storms.

THE COVE

AT A GLANCE

The cove can be entered through a narrow gap between the cliff walls of a rocky island. The opening is very narrow and is extremely difficult to see unless one knows where to look. Sailing a vessel into the opening requires extraordinary skill, but fortunately for the Kolat it becomes easier with practice. Inside there is a small bay. The Kolat's shugenja ensure that the bay is calm and free of navigational hazards. The beach has a series of piers at which up to five ships can be docked at one time, although there are rarely more than two or three at a time.

THE GATEWAY

Although it is difficult to see, there is a narrow opening in the cliff walls of the small island. The windswept seas in this area make navigating so narrow an opening a daunting task indeed. The opening does not even appear wide enough to accommodate a kobune of any but the smallest size.

Read the following as a ship passes through the gateway:

Although your fears regarding navigating this passage were not necessarily ill-founded, the gateway into the cove does not appear to be as narrow as you initially believed. The structure of the rock is such that anyone looking into the pass from outside the cove will perceive it as far more limited than it actually is. It does not appear to be a magical illusion, but one of the rare and impressive optical illusions that demonstrate the beauty and majesty of natural wonders.

Sailing a vessel through the gateway requires a Sailing roll against a TN of 25. Characters who have been on a vessel (either as the pilot or merely a passenger) that has entered the gateway before may first make a Perception roll against a TN of 15. Success lowers the TN of the Sailing roll by 5.

Navigating the gateway without running aground requires a Profession (sailing) check (DC 25). Individuals who are familiar with the gateway and its navigation (i.e., those who have navigated it before or been on a vessel that has been through) may first make a Wisdom check (DC 15) to reduce the DC of the Profession (sailing) check by 5.

THE BAY

Once through the narrow opening, the sea is suddenly preternaturally still and quiet. There are no waves to speak of in this small bay, likely due to the cliffs that separate the bay from the sea on all sides. Indeed, it seems that the entrance is the only way into the bay. One side of the bay is dominated by a short beach, complete with several docks for ships such as the one on which the PCs are likely traveling. Such a beach on the interior of an enclosed bay like this seems unnatural, and it would appear that perhaps it was created intentionally.

THE DOCKS

The docks upon the beach are ramshackle, but no more so than the docks of any port city in the Empire. The two docks on either end appear to be the largest and most elaborate, with several smaller structures spaced between them so that five ships might be moored here at any one time. Two paths are visible along the beach, moving inland away from the docks and leading into two large cave openings at either end of the beach. A third, smaller opening lies directly in the center of the cliff face.

Successfully docking at the beach requires a Profession (Sailing) check (DC 15).

Successfully docking at the beach requires a Sailing roll against a TN of 10.

THE BEACH

Upon closer inspection, this beach bears little resemblance to others in the Empire. The sand is tightly packed and does not hinder walking, even for those burdened by armor or a heavy load. Also, the sand is free of the usual detritus that one would expect to find washed up on the seashore.

A Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 20) reveals that a powerful enchantment has been placed on the bay, one that protects the cove from the worst effects of the weather as well as keeping the sea calm and still at all times. It is a powerful weather spell, something that most shugenja consider unnatural.

A Spell Research or Lore (Shugenja) roll against a TN of 20 reveals that a powerful enchantment has been placed on the bay, one that protects the cove from the worst effects of the weather as well as keeping the sea calm and still at all times. It is a powerful Water spell, one that most shugenja consider unnatural.

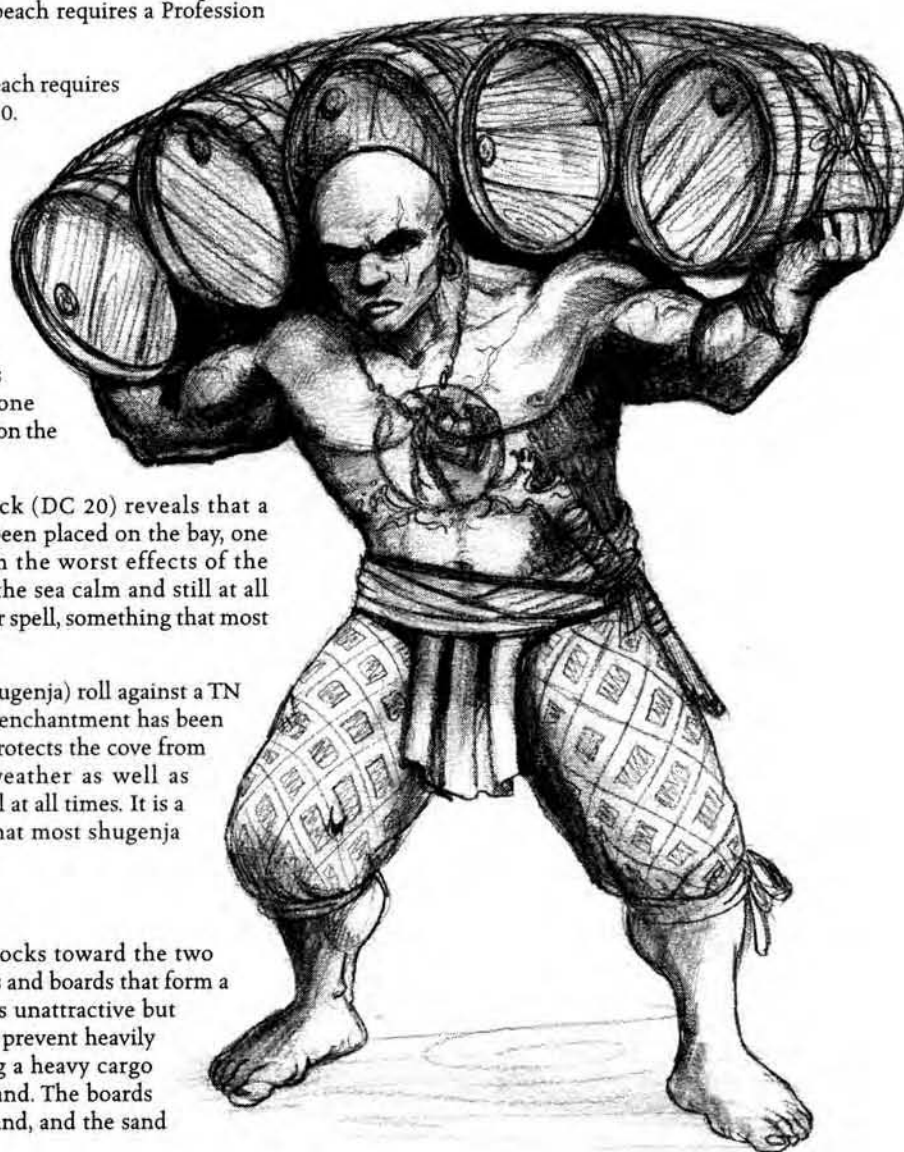
THE PATH

The paths leading from the docks toward the two caves are roughly placed planks and boards that form a crude walkway. The walkway is unattractive but serviceable and would serve to prevent heavily armored men or men carrying a heavy cargo from sinking into the beach sand. The boards appear to have sunk into the sand, and the sand

surrounding the walkways is littered with various broken shells and driftwood, unlike the remainder of the beach, which is free of such litter.

The walkway serves the same function as a nightingale floor: it creaks very noisily when walked upon. Any Move Silently checks made upon the walkway suffer a -10 penalty, although the sands around the walkway are even more difficult (-20 penalty), as they have been deliberately sprinkled with breakable debris that will crunch if any weight is placed upon it.

The walkway serves the same function as a nightingale floor: it creaks very noisily when walked upon. Two Raises are required for any Stealth roll to be successful. The sands around the walkway are even more difficult (three Raises), as they have been deliberately sprinkled with breakable debris that will crunch if any weight is placed upon it.



THE CAVES

AT A GLANCE

The caves in which Master Coin's headquarters have been carved are natural, although they have been significantly augmented by shugenja gifted in earth magic. The caves are very spacious, and have only rarely been used to full capacity. The Kolat use these caves to store cargo that must be kept secure or away from prying eyes. Despite his submissive attitude toward other Kolat Masters (or perhaps because of it) Shanegon enjoys displaying his authority over his underlings and prisoners, and keeps a large audience chamber that is as opulently decorated as the most excessive Crane or Mantis court.

MASTER COIN'S QUARTERS

This is the smallest cavern on the island, and it is still extremely large. It is the residence of Master Coin, decorated in an excess the likes of which are rarely seen in the Empire. Every luxury imaginable is found here. Several items here are unidentifiable, and can only be assumed to be of gaijin origin. Their presence is, of course, a violation of Imperial law and would likely result in the death of all who call these mysterious caves home.

THE AUDIENCE CHAMBER

This spacious cavern vaguely resembles a court chamber. The opulence of this chamber, even when compared to the grandiose courts of the Crane and Mantis, seems almost obscene. The dais upon which the master of the court would normally sit is surrounded by large bushels of coined koku, sitting open in a shameful display of excess. Every imaginable surface bears a golden emblem that features a large circular coin with some unknown mark. Given the surroundings, it would not be terribly surprising if the mark were of gaijin origin; it is certainly not a character used within the Empire.

GM INFO

Shanegon is hardly an effective leader compared to the other Kolat Masters. He is, however, a convincing actor, and he knows how to intimidate those under his command. In addition, Shanegon relies heavily upon an advisor from the Steel Sect dispatched by Master Steel, Morito. During the day, Nadeka can usually be found within the Audience Chamber with Shanegon.

NADEKA, STEEL SECT ADVISOR TO MASTER COIN

Male human Ftr10: CR10, Medium-size humanoid; HD 10d10+20; hp 77; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Attack +1 flaming no-dachi +15/+10 melee (2d6+7 damage); SQ Class skill — Bluff (family bonus); Honor 1; AL NE; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +6; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 12; Height 5 ft. 9 in. **Skills and Feats:** Speak Language (Rokugani, Yobanjin), Bluff +14, Diplomacy +14, Gather Information +14, Ride +14, Swim +16; Cleave, Mounted Combat, Legacy of the Four Winds, Power Attack, Ride-by Attack, Spirited Charge, Versatile (Diplomacy, Gather Information), Void Use, Way of the Ox, Weapon Focus (no-dachi), Weapon Specialization (no-dachi); **Dojo:** Shiro Morito Dojo; **Kata:** None; **Possessions:** +1 flaming no-dachi, +2 lamellar armor, +1 ring of protection, +1 haori of resistance, bag of tricks (rust).

NADEKA, STEEL SECT ADVISOR TO MASTER COIN

Earth: 5

Water: 4

Fire: 3

Agility: 5

Air: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Ox Bushi 3, Tiger Claw (Steel Sect Dojo)

Glory/Honor: 2.1/0.5

Skills: Defense 3, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 4, Intimidation 5, Jiu-jutsu 5, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Kolat) 5, Ox Sword 6, Umayarijutsu 3, Wrestling 5, Yomanri 4

Advantages: Heartless, Precise Memory, Strength of the Earth (4)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (brute), Cruel

Weapons & Armor: Ox sword, fine light armor, wakizashi, tanto

Shanegon is truly depraved, and has installed a unique feature for his own amusement. There is a trap door in the center of the room that he can activate from his dais with a simple switch. Below, it he has imprisoned a half dozen apes taken from the Mantis Islands. The creatures are mistreated and kept in a state of near-starvation so that anyone dropped into the pit is ripped to shreds in seconds. The beasts must be replaced once or twice a year because of the terrible conditions in which they are kept, but Shanegon is more than willing to pay the extravagant expenses.

A Spot check (DC 25) is required to notice Shanegon activating the switch. A Reflex save (DC 25, or 20 if the Spot check was successful) is required to avoid falling into the pit. For the statistics for the apes, see page 193 of the *Monster Manual*.™ Anyone injured by the apes must make a Fort save (DC 20) or contract "the shakes" (see page 75 of the *DUNGEON MASTER'S Guide*™).

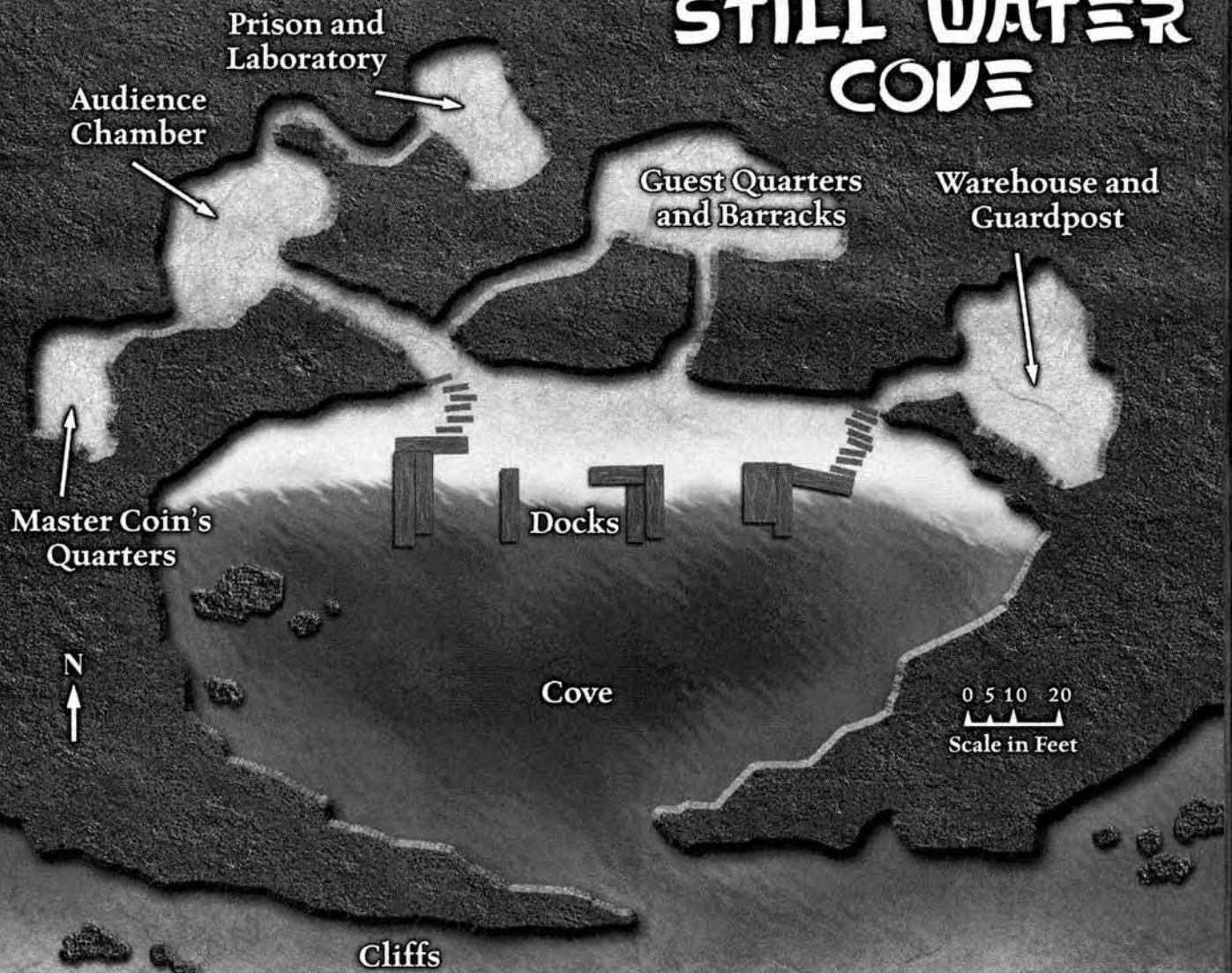
A Perception roll (TN 20) is required to notice Shanegon triggering the switch. A Reflexes roll (TN 25, or 20 if the Perception roll was successful) is required to avoid falling into the pit. For statistics for the apes, see page 108 of the *Game Master's Guide*. Anyone injured by the apes must make a Stamina roll versus a TN of 20 or contract rabies (–2 to all dice pools until treated, fatal within 1 month if not healed by a shugenja or herbalist).

THE PRISON/LABORATORY

Unlike the other chambers, this cavern is bereft of decoration. Indeed, it is not even well lit: a single pair of torches illuminate the dank shadows that shroud the entire room. A sour stench fills the entire room, like milk left in the sun for far too long. The smell is strong enough to make one's eyes water. Large stone tables occupy the center of the room, many of them bearing dark, unpleasant stains. Smaller tables support a variety of strange metal instruments, and desks around the edges of the room appear to bear the trappings of shugenja.

The dominant feature of the room is a great metal cage that takes up the entire back wall of the chamber. Divided into numerous sections, most of the cage is empty. One section contains a body that lies twitching on the ground. The only other occupied cell contains a shrouded figure that sits with its back to the door.

STILL WATER COVE



This prisoner was once a member of the Shinjo family, but his torturers have driven him almost entirely insane. Too strong-willed to be crafted into a sleeper agent, but not strong enough to endure the endless hours of pain and suffering, the man has become than a slaving beast. Rather than display gratitude to those who free him, he attacks anyone he can reach. With patience and long rehabilitation, he may yet recover, but at the moment he is filled with rage and distrusts any human contact.

THE PRISONER

Male human Ber6: CR6, Medium-size humanoid; HD 6d12+6; hp 45; Init +2; Spd 40ft.; AC 12 (touch 12, flat-footed 10); Attack unarmed +10/+5 melee (1d3+3 damage); SQ Rage 2/day, fast movement, uncanny dodge; Honor 1; AL CN; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8; Height 5 ft. 9 in.; *Skills and Feats:* Speak Language (Rokugani), Climb +12, Intimidate +8, Jump +12, Ride +11, Swim +12; Improved Unarmed Strike, Mounted Combat, Void Use, Weapon Focus (Unarmed strike); *Dojo:* None; *Kata:* None; *Possessions:* None.

THE PRISONER

Earth: 6

Water: 6

Fire: 2

Air: 2

Void: 2

School/Rank: None (all Techniques have been forgotten)

Glory/Honor: Effectively 0.0/0.0

Skills: Defense 4, Jiu-jutsu 5, Wrestling 6

Advantages: Combat Reflexes, Strength of the Earth (8)

Disadvantages: Brash, Overconfident

Weapons & Armor: None

BARRACKS/GUEST QUARTERS

Contrasting with the other rooms' opulence, this large chamber is merely serviceable. Most of the chamber is an open room with accommodations for about 50 men in quarters reminiscent of a military barracks. The remainder of the chamber has been set apart by wooden walls that establish private chambers alongside the barracks. From the look of things, the chambers cannot be very large, but they are larger and more lavish than the minimal accommodations given the guards and soldiers stationed here.

THE WAREHOUSE

This large chamber is roughly half-full of crates of varying sizes. Given its vast size, even half-full it has an impressive volume of items. The crates are stacked in neatly ordered sections, with enough space left between the stacks for someone to walk among them and take inventory. Even toward the front of the chamber, it is obvious from the dust that some of these crates have been here for years. Others are still damp from recent voyages. There is a small portion of the chamber's forward section that appears to be devoted to a station for the guards of this area. A few desks, low tables, and a weapons rack are in place in full view of the chamber entrance so that it would be impossible to enter without alerting the guards.

GM INFO

The various stacks of crates in this chamber have every manner of material imaginable contained within them. If the characters open one of the crates, you may roll on the following table to determine the contents:

D10 roll	Contents
1	2d10 weapons (assortment 20% chance to be gaijin)
2	Various forged documents, such as travel papers with the names left blank (to be filled in later) and magistrate seals
3	10d10 counterfeit koku with the Crane mon, and dies
4	1d10+2 gaijin artifacts (not weapons)
5	8d10+50 arrows (20% chance to include doses of a random poison)
6	2d10 exquisitely crafted kimono of various clan affiliations
7	1d10 minor magic items (potions, tsangusuri, scrolls)
8	2d10 pounds of rare spices
9	2d10 works of art
10	1 nemuranai (GM's choice)

In addition, one crate in each stack contains gunpowder. The gunpowder has obvious value as a rare and illegal commodity, but the crates are also marked with a particular symbol so that any of the shugenja who make the cove their home can, in the event of discovery, trigger an explosion with a simple fire spell that will destroy all the evidence of illegal cargo. Obviously, this is reserved for particularly dire circumstances, and no shugenja will set the explosion off without a very real threat of imprisonment or execution by a powerful force of Imperial magistrates or other authorities. Additionally, each crate is rigged with a trap that will detonate the gunpowder if it is tampered with. This is a smaller detonation that will destroy the crate, the crates around it, and the individual tampering with the crate without setting off the other trapped crates in the room.

Attempting to open the crate sets off the explosion, which causes 4d10 damage to everything within 5 feet. A Spot check (DC 20) reveals the trap's presence, and a Disable Device check (DC 25) can prevent the explosion.

Attempting to open the crate sets off the explosion, which causes 8k5 damage to everything within 5 feet. A Perception roll versus a TN of 25 reveals the presence of the explosives.

CHAPTER SIX:

BEHIND THE VEIL

GETTING AWAY WITH IT

"It is interesting, Doji-san, that people would make such slanderous claims about where my clan acquires such materials. So few realize the Islands of Spice and Silk are home to so many wonders. You, of course, are worldly enough to understand this."

— Moshi Mogai

This chapter is intended for GM use only.

While most Rokugani agree that the Scorpion Clan is the least trustworthy, a Scorpion will tell you that the clan outside his own with the largest number of illicit dealings is the Mantis. The Mantis have worked hard to achieve the Scorpion dream — their activities go unknown both in the public eye and the rumor of the courts. The polished Scorpion are widely assumed to deal in illegal trade, but the Mantis conceal their dealings behind a thuggish exterior. After all, how could a young and fractured clan have the resources to trade illegally, smuggle illicit goods, spy on rivals, and assassinate threatening individuals without being exposed?

SMUGGLING

The Mantis deal in all sorts of colorful yet illegal items. When the Mantis were a Minor Clan with no family name, they used their relative anonymity to move caravans

without inspection. As time progressed, the Mantis became bolder, selling more illicit items to greater numbers of customers. Today most of the noble families of the Empire partake of Mantis wares. So subtle are these traders that a handful of their customers fail to realize that the Mantis goods are illegal. Each of these clients believes himself to be one of a small number of purchasers the Mantis work with, a "sole exception" to the rule against trade with gaijin. These clients would be shocked to learn how many "sole exceptions" there are.

The Mantis can afford to conduct such a large scale illegal operation because of their home on the islands. While traveling magistrates and noble lords can easily take a caravan or ride a horse to nearby provinces, few are willing to make the sea journey to the home of the Mantis on a suspicion. Since the Mantis single-handedly control all arrivals and departures from their ports, there is ample warning when a potential problem arises. Even if an investigating magistrate or nosy lord somehow turns up unannounced, the unpredictable weather and unforgiving geography present innumerable excuses to stall a visitor.

The Mantis do not make their less-honorable wares available to every interested party. While those with the koku to pay high fees for such goods are easy to work with and profitable to sell to, the clan tends to favor customers that can offer something more. One such customer is Ikoma Fudai, a herald of the Lion and a loyal supporter of Hantei Naseru. Few within the Empire know of Fudai's passion for the exotic flowers of the Ivory Kingdoms, and the Mantis are his sole suppliers. While Fudai could easily pass off the wild flowers if questioned about their origin,

there is little mistaking their purpose when Fudai dries and burns them in his pipe. Of course, the Mantis aid Fudai by selling the flowers to him already dried, saving him valuable time. If the Ikoma courtier were to find himself unable to afford his shipment of the flowers, his Yoritomo friends would no doubt reassure his Lion superiors that even though a man's fortunes take a bad turn, it should not prevent him from enjoying certain pleasures. They might also point out that Hantei Naseru's Otomo bureaucrats are coming awfully close to noticing discrepancies in the Yoritomo family's tax payments, and that a man with Fudai's contacts could do much to alleviate this problem.

"SLOW DANCING GEISHA"

Early in the development of what the Mantis' illegal trade operations, the daimyo of the Mantis was not as watchful as he should have been. Word of his illicit affairs reached the ears of the magistrates and an agent was sent to inspect the holdings of the Mantis daimyo and his lands. Arrogant in his position and confident of his secrets, the Mantis Champion invited the magistrate into his home as an honored guest and fellow daimyo. The Mantis was unaware the man he was entertaining was not merely a powerful lord, but an agent of the Emperor's law.

The magistrate then spent an evening in the company of the Mantis daimyo's favored geisha. Through polite conversation and careful observation, she began to suspect the true nature of the "daimyo," so she crept into the magistrate's chambers late that night and searched his belongings. When the geisha found the man's symbol of office, her fears were confirmed.

That next day, the geisha danced for the entertainment of her lord and his guest during a small lunch. As the Mantis daimyo ate, not noticing that he was being subtly interrogated by the magistrate, the geisha began to dance slower and slower. Though he had not noticed her at first, soon the Mantis lord's attention was drawn to her strange behavior. The magistrate did not notice, however, so intent was he on drawing the Mantis lord into revealing some scrap of damning testimony.

As the Mantis lord surreptitiously watched the geisha's movements from the corner of his eye, she began to trace in the air the symbol of the chrysanthemum, symbol of the Imperial Magistrates. The daimyo quickly took her meaning and conducted himself in a rigidly proper manner for the rest of the magistrate's stay.

The story is popular among the Mantis, and when someone narrowly avoids a problem by realizing the danger just before it strikes, they say they were visited by a "slow dancing geisha."

THE KOLAT

Like many clans, the Mantis are largely unaware of the existence of the Kolat and do not notice the attention the secretive power group pays them. The Kolat have always watched the Mantis closely, as the clan's founding mirrored

the creation of their organization. Both groups believe strongly in a mortal's right to seize what he deserves. However, where the Kolat once attempted to overthrow the reign of the Kami, the Mantis only wished to be accepted in Rokugani society.

When Yoritomo raised the Mantis to Great Clan status, the Kolat's attitude changed from curiosity to obsession. Yoritomo had done for the Mantis what the Kolat had attempted to do for the humanity — he had raised their status to equal that of the children of the gods, spurning the idea of a Celestial Order and demanding he be recognized for something more than his ancestry. It was shortly after the Clan War that the Kolat began to infiltrate the Mantis in large numbers, as they had previously done with the Unicorn and the Yasuki. Unaccustomed to power, the Mantis seemed eager to accept every individual worthy of the Mantis mon. Unaware of the Kolat's activities, Yoritomo was quick to promote those whom he saw as talented and capable, even if they had only been with the Mantis for months.

The Kolat masters watched with keen interest as Bayushi Aramasu betrayed his heritage to stand proudly beside the Mantis Champion. They approached young Aramasu with promises of power and information that he could use to enrich his adopted clan. It was only a short time after the initial contact that Aramasu was a member of the Kolat and eager to serve them, in order to increase Mantis power. Aramasu eventually betrayed the Kolat and exposed many of their agents within the clan, giving many Kolat a deep and abiding hatred of the Yoritomo family.

Though the average Mantis samurai thinks the Kolat were destroyed, a sizeable percentage of Mantis are Kolat, almost entirely of the Coin Sect. Since Aramasu's betrayal, the Kolat have limited their attempts to infiltrate the Yoritomo, working instead with the Moshi and Tsuruchi. They find the Tsuruchi particularly intriguing — a samurai family that claims not to be samurai at all. The Kolat encourage the Mantis' illegal operations, and shield it when they can. They favor subtly diluting Rokugan's culture with artifacts from foreign nations, eroding the samurai caste system with knowledge that more is possible.

TEETH OF THE TIGER

The life of Yoritomo was marked by tragedy. When he was just an infant, assassins from the Ivory Kingdoms attacked his home. Yoritomo's brother Honzo and his mother were slain; his father Yoshitsune only narrowly escaped the attack. It was not until years later that Yoritomo discovered the motive behind the attack: Honzo had been trading excessively with the Ivory Kingdoms, and Yoshitsune had ordered him to cease. Rather than obey his father, Honzo had hired assassins to kill and replace Yoshitsune, but in the attack Honzo was accidentally slain.

Surprisingly, it was the assassin who revealed the truth to Yoritomo on the day before the young Mantis' gempukku. The assassin had indeed slain Yoritomo's father, and had spent the intervening years masquerading as Yoshitsune. Consumed by remorse, the shapeshifter revealed the entire story to Yoritomo before throwing himself from the cliffs of Kyuden Gotei.

When Yoritomo heard of the Lying Darkness, he concluded that the assassin who had replaced his father must have been a Goju. The truth is far more sinister. The shapeshifting assassin was a member of a secretive and powerful race from the Ivory Kingdoms — a race known as the Rakshasa.

Centuries ago the Rakshasa ruled the Ivory Kingdoms. A race of powerful shapeshifting demons with an appetite for carnage, they treated humans as cattle. Even the gods of the Ivory Kingdoms were helpless. Ravan, King of the Rakshasa, had secured a promise from the gods that no force in heaven could harm his people. Vishnu the Preserver, a powerful Ivory Kingdoms deity, incarnated as a mortal to end the Rakshasa reign of terror.

As a mortal he was known as Arun, the greatest hero of the Ivory Kingdoms. He gathered an army of mischievous but good-hearted shapeshifting spirits to battle the Rakshasa. When they faced Ravan and his brothers in combat, they scattered the Rakshasa to the winds.

Of the Greater Rakshasa (Ravan's siblings) it is believed no more than half a dozen remain. Countless Lesser Rakshasa also exist, aiding their immortal rulers in their plan to reclaim control of the Ivory Kingdoms. The Rakshasa are much weaker than they once were, and some of the Greater Rakshasa are still in hiding. Three of the survivors have made their way to Rokugan.

One, Adisabah the Cruel, had an encounter with the Bloodspeakers and discovered that the Rakshasa's fabled resistance to magic did not extend to maho. He was imprisoned in the Tomb of Iuchiban.

A second Greater Rakshasa, Raniyah the Sly, spent many years in Otosan Uchi impersonating an ise zumi. Eventually the disguise bored her, and she wandered deeper into Rokugan to find other amusements.

The third Greater Rakshasa to visit Rokugan was Bishan the Watchful. Bishan remained in the form of Yoshitsune too long and began to adopt the Mantis champion's personality and sense of honor. He believed that by faking his death and fleeing the islands he could free himself from becoming human. Though he was successful, he misses his life as a samurai. To this day, Bishan lurks in the deep jungles of the Isles of Spice and Silk, watching his former clan with sadness and regret.

GREATER RAKSHASA

The Greater Rakshasa are extraordinarily powerful shapeshifting spirits. Their race ruled the Ivory Kingdoms for centuries until defeated and nearly exterminated by the great hero Arun. Though many Lesser Rakshasa still plague the Ivory Kingdoms, it is believed that only six of the Greater Rakshasa remain. At least three of these Greater Rakshasa have sought refuge in Rokugan, a land where they can operate in anonymity.

GREATER RAKSHASA

Medium-size Shapechanger (Spirit)

Hit Dice: 14d8+56 (119 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 30 ft.

AC: 25 (+3 Dex, +12 natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +13 melee, bite +11 melee

Damage: Claw 1d4+3, bite 1d6+1

Face/Reach: 5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.

Special Attacks: Corrode mind, devour spirit, spell-like abilities

Special Qualities: Damage reduction 40/+6, fast healing 6, immunities, Rakshasa qualities, SR 25

Saves: Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +16

Abilities: Str 16, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 20, Wis 20, Cha 20

Skills: Bluff +17*, Disguise +19*, Hide +10,

Knowledge (arcana) +10, Concentration 5, Listen +9,

Move Silently +14, Sense Motive +19*, Spot +9

Feats: Expertise, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative,

Improved Trip, Iron Will, Multiattack, Skill Focus

(Disguise), Skill Focus (Sense Motive), Spell Focus

(enchantment)

Climate/Terrain: Any land or underground

Organization: Usually solitary, occasionally in family groups of 1–4

Challenge Rating: 18

Treasure: Triple standard

Honor: Nil

Alignment: Usually neutral evil

Advancement: By character class

Though many mistake Rakshasa for outsiders, they are native to the mortal realm. Rakshasa speak their own language and the language of the Ivory Kingdoms. Rakshasa learn languages very quickly, and adopt the native tongue of lands they visit.

COMBAT

Rakshasa delight in causing pain and suffering in others. Though they are quite powerful physically, they prefer to act unseen. They enjoy using their shapeshifting powers to cause misery, dissent, and confusion. If they are discovered, or the game becomes too boring, they shift into their true form and begin murdering everything in sight.

Corrode Mind (Su): Rakshasa telepathy allows them to detect the surface thoughts of others or project their own thoughts at will regardless of language barriers. This ability is similar to *detect thoughts* cast by a 20th level sorcerer, except that the Rakshasa immediately detects surface thoughts and no saving throw is allowed. Effects that protect against *detect thoughts* bar this ability. Non-Rakshasa feel extremely uncomfortable when this ability is used on them (though they may not know why). Those exposed to this ability for longer than one minute suffer a –2 penalty to all saving throws vs. effects produced by the Rakshasa for twenty-four hours.

Devour Spirit (Su): Within one round of killing a humanoid creature, the Rakshasa can spend a standard action standing over the corpse and inhaling deeply. The target is allowed to make a will save (DC 20) as if it were still alive. If it fails this save its soul is devoured by the Rakshasa and the target cannot be restored to life by any means other than a *miracle*, *wish*, or divine intervention (and even the former two cases are ineffective if the Rakshasa still possesses the soul in question).

The Rakshasa can now assume that creature's form at will as a standard action. When in that form, the Rakshasa loses access to all of its own feats and abilities (except shape change) and gains the memories, feats, ability scores, class abilities, and creature type of the target. This form may be maintained indefinitely, but every twenty-four hours the Rakshasa must make a Will save (15 + target's HD + 1 for every day in which the Rakshasa has spent at least twelve hours in the target's form). If the Rakshasa fails this save, it gains the alignment and some character traits of the dead target (GM's discretion) for twenty-four hours. If the Rakshasa fails three of these Will

saves against the same spirit, it permanently becomes the target, losing all Rakshasa abilities.

A Rakshasa can only possess one devoured spirit at a time. If it wishes to possess another spirit, it must first release any it possesses. To do so, it must spend a full round action coughing violently. If the Rakshasa has failed any Will saves to prevent being influenced by the spirit, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 20 for one failed save, 30 for two) or it cannot release the spirit for another week. If the Fortitude save is successful or unnecessary, the lost spirit is vomited forth in a cloud of white mist and passes on to the afterlife.

Spell-like Abilities: At will — *alter self*, *charm person*, *invisibility* (self only); 3/day — *hold person*, *suggestion*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 10th level sorcerer (save DC 17 + spell level).

Damage reduction: An ivory weapon counts as if its enchantment were +3 higher for the purposes of piercing a Greater Rakshasa's damage resistance.

Immunities: Greater Rakshasa are immune to all poison and disease. They are effectively immortal, so long as their lifespan is not prematurely ended by violence. In addition, Greater Rakshasa have complete resistance to all forms of divine magic (including the elemental magic cast by shugenja). They can suppress or resume this ability as a free action. (Note that maho affects them normally.)

Rakshasa qualities: A Greater Rakshasa may choose two packages of additional spell-like abilities from the following list. Optionally, the Rakshasa may instead choose to have the spellcasting abilities of a 10th level sorcerer.

Deadly Warrior (Sp) — At will — *bull's strength* (self only), *enlarge* (self only), *haste* (self only), *magic fang*. 3/day — *Tenser's transformation*.

Faceless (Sp) — At will — *gaseous form*, *polymorph self*. 1/day — *shapechange*.

Plague Fiend (Sp) — At will — *doom*, *ray of enfeeblement*. 10/day each — *bestow curse*, *contagion*.

Seer (Sp) — At will — *clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*. 1/day each — *augury*, *true seeing*.

Summoner (Sp) — At will — *Summon Monster III*. 3/day — *Summon Monster VI*.

Unchained (Sp) — At will — *dimension door*, *expeditious retreat*, *spider climb*. 1/day each — *ethereal jaunt*, *teleport without error*.

Skills: Greater Rakshasa receive a +8 racial bonus to Bluff, Disguise, and Sense Motive checks.

GREATER RAKSHASA CHARACTERS

Greater Rakshasa tend to be a diverse lot, following their own whims. When determining if a Greater Rakshasa with a character class receives an XP penalty, its highest-level class does not count. Greater Rakshasa are not intended as player characters.

GREATER RAKSHASA

Earth: 5

Water: 5

Perception: 8

Fire: 7

Air: 6

Awareness: 8

Skills: Acting 6, Athletics 4, Astrology 3, Defense 4, Hand-to-Hand 5, History 4, Hunting 4, Intimidation 5, Lore (Ivory Kingdoms) 5, Manipulation, Mimic 7, Sincerity 6, Stealth 6, Torture 5

Spells: Rakshasa do not cast spells as the shugenja of Rokugan understand them, but their strange magic allows them to invoke effects identical to those of the following spells as if they were cast by a Rank 5 shugenja: Dominate the Mind, Essence of Air, Mists of Illusion, Secrets on the Wind, Teleport

Rolls When Attacking: 5k5 (with claws)

Rolls for Damage: 5k4 (with claws)

TN to be Hit: 30

Carapace: 6

Wounds: 30: +5; 50: +10; 75: +15; 90: +25; 115: Dead

Special Abilities:

Immunity: Rakshasa do not age upon reaching maturity and are not susceptible to disease or poison. They possess an innate resistance to the magic of the kami and cannot be affected by elemental spells unless they choose to be. Maho affects them normally.

Ivory Weakness: Weapons crafted from ivory ignore a Rakshasa's Carapace rating in the same way that jade and crystal affect creatures with the Shadowlands Taint.

Shapeshifting: Rakshasa may take the form of any humanoid creature they have encountered. This effect takes one round, and grants the Rakshasa an additional 2 rolled dice on all Acting, Disguise, and Sincerity rolls to impersonate the individual in question.

Devour Spirit: The round after killing an opponent, the Rakshasa may spend an entire round standing over the body and inhaling deeply. The Rakshasa makes a contested Willpower roll against the spirit of the dead individual. If successful, the Rakshasa gains all the victim's memories and abilities and can change its form to that of the individual.

While in this altered form, the Rakshasa loses all its abilities (except for shapeshifting) and takes on the skills, Advantages, Disadvantages, and Techniques of the victim. This form may be maintained indefinitely, but to do so risks being influenced by the spirit the Rakshasa has consumed. Every day, the Rakshasa must make a Willpower roll (TN equal to the individual's Insight Rank $\times 5 + 1$ for every day in which the Rakshasa has spent at least twelve hours in the target's form). If the Rakshasa fails this roll, it gains the Honor Rank and some character traits of the dead target (GM's discretion) for one day. If the Rakshasa fails three of these rolls against the same spirit, it permanently becomes the target, losing all Rakshasa abilities.

CRIMINALS OF THE IVORY KINGDOMS

A quick glance at the Ivory Kingdoms may seem to paint a portrait of a land populated by evil cultists and criminals. The two most visible groups to a Rokugani are, after all, the Rakshasa and the Ruhmal and Rafiq sects of Kali-ma's Cult of the Destroyer.

In truth, these groups are hardly a fair representation of the Ivory Kingdoms, a land whose culture celebrates peace, wisdom, and intellectual pursuits. Ironically, these organizations have more contact with Rokugan because of Rokugan's reputation for violence toward outsiders. Only underground groups and criminal organizations dare to trade with the Rokugani. More legitimate organizations fear prolonged contact with Rokugan out of fear that the Empire may take offense and declare war.

A Rakshasa can only possess one devoured spirit at a time. If it wishes to possess another spirit, it must first release any it possesses. To do so, it must spend a full round coughing violently. If the Rakshasa has failed any Willpower rolls to prevent being influenced by the spirit, it must make a Stamina roll (TN equal to 20 for one failed roll, 30 for two failed rolls) or it cannot release the spirit for another week. If the Stamina roll is successful or unnecessary, the lost spirit is vomited forth in a cloud of white mist and passes on to the afterlife.

Rakshasa Qualities: A Greater Rakshasa may choose two packages of additional abilities from the following list. Optionally, the Rakshasa may instead choose to have the abilities of a Rank 4 shugenja (in addition to the spell effect abilities listed above).

- **Deadly Warrior:** Armor of Earth, Katana of Fire, Wind-Borne Speed (at will)
- **Faceless:** Cloak of Night, The Eye Shall Not See, Way of Deception (at will)
- **Plague Fiend:** Choking Death (maho), Curse (maho), Pain (maho), Stealing Breath (maho) (once each per day, these spells do not count as maho when cast by a Greater Rakshasa)
- **Seer:** Echoes of a Breeze, Reflections of Pan Ku, Secrets on the Wind, Whispering Wind (at will)
- **Summoner:** Summon Air Spirit, Summon Earth Spirit, Summon Fire Spirit, or Summon Water Spirit (3 times per day)
- **Unchained:** Call Upon the Wind, Dark Wings (maho), Wind-Borne Speed (at will)

BLESSINGS OF THE SUN

The founding of the Centipede Clan was also the dawn of the Moshi family. Moshi Azami's prophetic visions brought the daughters of her line the blessings of Lady Amaterasu. The Centipede lived secluded from the rest of Rokugan; other families were barely aware of their existence. The Moshi did not mind obscurity, continuing their worship of Lady Sun undisturbed.

When the Clan War came, much changed. Though few among the Moshi (and none outside of the family) know it, the daimyo Moshi Jukio was visited by Lady Sun in her dreams. The Mother of the Kami spoke fondly to her favored priestess, imparting wisdom and showing her visions. Lady Sun spoke of a great ending that would come to pass, brought about by the second Day of Thunder and the actions of mortals. Amaterasu placed a great burden on the Moshi daimyo's shoulders — she would plunge her tiny family into the turmoil suffusing the Empire and stand as a beacon of hope. Her words would guide reckless but well-meaning heroes to the salvation of the Empire.

When Jukio awoke with the rising of the sun, her mind swirled with questions. How could such a small force make any difference in the vast conflict Lady Sun had described? Who would listen to the counsel of such an obscure daimyo? Jukio shuddered to envision a time so dark that Lady Sun herself would warn them of her own volition.

These questions plagued Jukio for long days until a lone samurai rode to the valley of the Centipede. The tired messenger fell to his knees in front of Moshi Jukio and begged her to attend a council of Minor Clans at the behest of Yoritomo, the Champion of the Mantis Clan. Jukio knew she had found her answer.

Few recognize even today the important role the Moshi played in tempering the ambitious Alliance leadership through the Clan War and the War Against the Shadow. When the legendary Yoritomo was spurned by Fox daimyo Kitsune Ryosei, he turned to his loyal and wise allies in the Centipede for a wife. Jukio offered him her daughter Moshi Wakiza as a sign of their alliance, acting as she believed Lady Sun directed her. Surely now the line of the Moshi would stand alongside the line of Yoritomo. The wisdom of the Celestial Mother would guide this newly powerful Mantis Clan in improving the Empire.

Unfortunately for the Moshi, Wakiza was not as humble and wise as her mother. The prestige and power of her position clouded her judgment and fueled her pride. It was under Wakiza's direction that the Moshi became Mantis in full, and the Centipede were no more. Yoritomo's ambitious nature eventually encouraged Wakiza to forsake the ancestral oaths of her very family name.

During the last days of the War Against the Shadow when Lord Moon was slain by the Dragon Thunder, Lady Sun cast herself from the sky in grief and anger. Amaterasu considered herself betrayed by the descendants of her children and abandoned by her eternal husband Onnotangu. Just before



she committed jigai, she visited Wakiza, acting leader of her family even though Jukio was still technically daimyo. Lady Sun sought to speak with Yoritomo's bride in her dreams as she had with Jukio years ago. Where Amaterasu looked for solace in the unflagging devotion of the Moshi, she found instead boundless dreams of glory and desire flooding Wakiza's soul.

The furious Lady Sun pronounced a curse upon the Moshi: their daimyo would never know the peace of death until the family's betrayal was redeemed by a selfless act of loyalty. Though it was Wakiza that had angered Lady Sun, the curse fell upon Moshi Jukio, who had watched silently as the years passed, hoping that she had fulfilled her duty to Lady Sun. Jukio lives to this day, knowing why she cannot find her final rest, but unable to lift the curse.

The Moshi have slowly worked their way into a new role since that time. Without the blessing of the Sun, the shugenja family has turned its talent for air magic to benefit the Yoritomo family they have sworn to serve.

SETTOZAI, NIGHTMARE OF THE MANTIS

The other Great Clans have tended not to take the upstart Mantis Clan seriously. History has proven their strength, however, and Daigotsu was not so foolish as to overlook such a potent threat when crafting the Onisu from the stuff of dreams.

Settozai is the embodiment of all that is foul within the Mantis. Every criminal act that a Mantis commits defies Yoritomo's sacrifices to elevate the clan. Every petty theft robs the clan of its honor. All these things feed the loathsome entity that is Settozai. The creature normally travels alone, but occasionally it consorts with members of the corrupted Goju family.

SETTOZAI, ONISU OF LARCENY, NIGHTMARE OF THE MANTIS

Huge Outsider (Evil, Oni, Shadowlands, Spirit)

Hit Dice: 20d8 + 120 (210 hp)

Initiative: +14 (+10 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

Speed: 60 ft.

AC: 26 (-2 size, +10 Dex, +8 Natural)

Attacks: 2 claws +27 melee, bite +25 melee

Damage: Claw 1d10+9, bite 1d8+4

Face/Reach: 10 ft. by 10 ft. / 15 ft.

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, enhancement

Special Qualities: Oni Qualities, honorable vulnerability, possession, regeneration 3, rejuvenation, SR 35

Saves: Fort +19, Ref +24, Will +13

Abilities: Str 28, Dex 30, Con 24, Wis 12, Int 14, Cha 10, Taint 10

Skills: Hide +30, Knowledge (Mantis) +22, Knowledge (Shadowlands) +17, Knowledge (Yume-do) +17, Listen +21, Move Silently +30, Sense Motive +20, Spot +21

Feats: Cleave, Expertise, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Power Attack, Sunder

Climate/Terrain: Shadowlands, Yume-do, any land or underground

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: 15

Treasure: Standard

Honor: Always 0 honor

Alignment: Always neutral evil

Advancement: 21–30 HD (Huge), 31–40 HD (Gargantuan).

COMBAT

Settozai resembles a gigantic insect. Its thick carapace, the color of rotting vegetation, allows Settozai to blend into the wilderness.

Enhancement (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Settozai commits a dishonorable act of greed or larceny (such as stealing a material possession, sleeping with another's betrothed, or robbing another person of his life for personal gain) the Onisu gains one bonus hit die. All other benefits of advancement such as higher saves, base attack, and caster level for spell-like abilities are also gained. After one week the Onisu loses one bonus hit die per week until it returns to the above statistics. Each time the Onisu gains ten levels from this ability, it increases by one size category.

Honorable Vulnerability (Ex): Any time a person within 100 feet of Settozai commits an act of selflessness (giving a precious commodity to another, aiding someone to the detriment of oneself, etc.), the Onisu receives a negative level. This negative level remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its Enhancement ability. If the Onisu is reduced to zero levels by this effect, it perishes. Its damage reduction and spell resistance are entirely negated for any opponent who has committed an act of selfless mercy within the last minute.

Oni Qualities (Su): All oni have certain qualities, described on page 5 of *Creatures of Rokugan*.

Possession (Su): Settozai may choose to dominate the thoughts of any person within 100 feet. The target of this ability must succeed at a Will test (DC 35) or instantly succumb to intense greed, avarice, and curiosity. The character viciously pursues anything he perceives desirable: material goods, information, or even the company of another person. The target becomes violent if deflected from his desired commodity, even attacking lifelong friends or superiors. The target may make an additional Will save every hour, but the DC increases by 5 for each successive attempt.

Regeneration (Ex): Holy and honorable weapons do normal damage to Settozai, as do weapons that have been immersed in the water of Yume-do, the Realm of Dreams.

Rejuvenation (Su): If slain, Settozai can be harvested from the Realm of Dreams once more via a special ritual known only to the Dark Lord Daigotsu and the Tsuno Soultwisters. The Onisu cannot be restored more often than once a month.

Spell-like abilities: at will — *detect passage**, *dispel magic*, *know alignment*, *obscuring mist*, *passage into darkness**, *passage into dream**, *protection from good*. 3/day — *deeper darkness*, *detect thoughts*, *emotion*, *haste*. These abilities are as cast by a 20th level sorcerer (DC 15 + spell level). Spells marked with an asterisk are described in *Fortunes and Winds*.

SETTOZAI, ONISU OF LARCENY, NIGHTMARE OF THE MARTIS

Earth: 5

Fire: 8

Water: 5

Air: 4

Rolls to Attack: 7k5

Rolls for Damage: 6k5

TN to be Hit: 25

Carapace: 5

Wounds: 25: +5; 50: +10; 75: +15; 100: +25; 150: Dead

Special Abilities:

Multiple Attacks: Settozai can attack twice per round, once with its claws and once with its bite.

Enhancement: Any time a person within 100 feet of Settozai commits a dishonorable act of greed or larceny (such as stealing a material possession, sleeping with another's betrothed, or robbing another person of his life for personal gain), one of the Onisu's Traits (and all associated attributes) increases by one. This benefit lasts for one week, after which the Onisu loses one bonus Trait per week until it returns to the above statistics. The oni grows slowly larger each time it draws upon betrayal in such a manner.

Honorable Vulnerability: Any time a person within 100 feet of Settozai commits an act of selfless generosity (giving a precious commodity to another, aiding someone to the detriment of oneself, etc.), one of the Onisu's Traits (and all associated attributes) decreases by one. This penalty remains for one week, or until the Onisu can cancel the effect with its Enhancement ability. If one of the Onisu's Traits is reduced to zero, it perishes.

Passages: The Onisu can cast Detect Passage, Passage Into Darkness, and Passage Into Dream at will.

Possession: Settozai can make an opposed Willpower roll with any individual within 100 feet. If successful, the Onisu can force that individual to succumb to intense greed, avarice, and curiosity. The character viciously pursues anything he perceives desirable: material goods, information, or even the company of another person. The target becomes violent if deflected from his desired commodity, even attacking lifelong friends or superiors. The target may make an additional opposed Willpower roll every hour, with Settozai gaining a +5 to its roll every hour.

Carapace: Weapons that have been dipped in the waters of Yume-do ignore Nikushimi's Carapace rating.

Rejuvenation: If slain, Settozai can be harvested from the Realm of Dreams once more via a special ritual known only to the Dark Lord Daigotsu and the Tsuno Soultwisters. The Onisu cannot be restored more often than once a month.

NEWS OF THE EMPIRE

The world of Rokugan as presented in the Legend of the Five Rings CCG is a living, breathing, ever-changing place where major events occur all the time. This section is intended to keep you up to date on events that have happened in the Empire, especially those centering on the recent CCG expansion, The Fall of Otosan Uchi, and appearing in weekly fiction on the Alderac Entertainment Group website. (This fiction can be found at <URL:<http://15r.alderac.com/fiction/>>.)

Garen, a gaijin Tainted long ago at the Battle of White Stag, pledges his undead forces and his mighty gaijin warships to the cause of Daigotsu. The price of his fealty is a long lost artifact of great power, the infamous Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng.

With the aid of Naka Tokei, Grand Master of the Elements, Toturi Tsudao discovers the truth behind the mystery of the Tsuno. The beasts can move through the realm of dreams with their bizarre magic, arriving anywhere in the Empire. The Tsuno are torturing the sleeping Naga in order to create portals to virtually anywhere in the Empire.

In a surprising move, Daigotsu uses a great Tainted navy to assault Otosan Uchi. More of his forces arrive through the magic of the Tsuno, and the city is overrun in hours. Countless inhabitants are killed or Tainted, and the samurai within the city struggle to hold off the invaders or assist the citizens of the city in fleeing. Once within the throne room of the Imperial Palace, Daigotsu enacts a powerful ritual using the Porcelain Mask that allows Fu Leng's spirit to escape the realm of the dead and ascend to the Celestial Heavens.

Outside the Imperial Palace, Matsu Nimuro and the forces of the Lion cut a path through the forces of the Shadowlands, striking down the Obsidian Champion Goju Kyoden. The Lion are stopped outside the palace; the wards, strengthened by Daigotsu, allow only those with Imperial blood to enter.

Toturi Tsudao gains entrance to the Imperial Palace and confronts Daigotsu alongside Bayushi Tai, a Scorpion trapped within the Palace. Daigotsu confesses to the murder of the Emperor Toturi and reveals that he is the son of Emperor Hantei XXXVIII. Having taken vengeance for his brother's death by slaying Toturi, Daigotsu claims he has no further conflict with the Winds. Tsudao nevertheless attacks the Dark Lord, severing his arm before he escapes through a portal back to the Shadowlands. Tsudao vows to bring the Empire together under her command and allows Bayushi Tai to take the recaptured Steel Throne to his associates, whom he believes will be able to remove the Taint from it.

In the aftermath of the attack on Otosan Uchi, the Four Winds establish their own capitals throughout the Empire. Toturi Tsudao claims Kyuden Seppun as her home, Toturi Sezaru establishes a headquarters in the Dragonfly ruins, Hantei Naseru relocates to Ryoko Owari Toshi, and Akodo Kaneka remains in his military base at the Yasuki Palace.

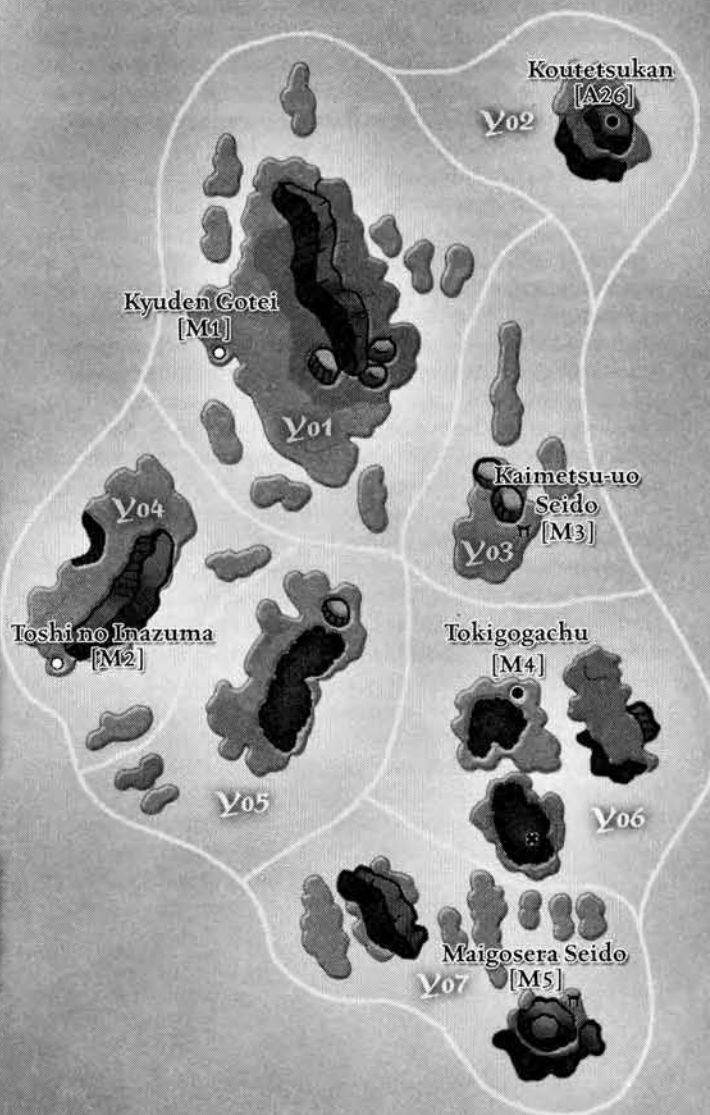
With their lord and master otherwise occupied, the forces of the Shadowlands are unable to prevent Hida Kuon, Champion of the Crab, from retaking six of the seven watchtowers of the Great Wall that had fallen. With the power of Lord Sun and Osano-Wo behind them, Kuon's forces defeat the Horde, but Hida Kuroda, now bonded with Kyofu, calls upon the celestial power of Fu Leng to permanently taint the final tower, marking the Wall forever.



MARTIS TERRITORY

MARTIS PROVINCE KEY

Mo1	Hinome Province	Yo1	Gotai Province
Ts1	Ashinagabachi Province	Yo2	Koutetsukan Province
Ts2	Enzan Province	Yo3	Kaze Province
Ts3	Chuuhan Province	Yo4	Inazuma Province
Ts4	Douro Province	Yo5	Irie Province
Ts5	Shaiga Province	Yo6	Tokigogachu Province
		Yo7	Maigosera Province



"The Mantis are powerful and unpredictable. Some say that they endeavor to be like the sea. I would instead say that the sea wishes to be like the Mantis." — Rezan, ronin poet

Secrets of the Mantis explores the youngest Great Clan from within, illustrating their customs, holdings, and way of life. But beware: the lands of the Mantis are quite hazardous, and he who digs too deeply may not return from the isles. Within, you will find:

- Insight into the culture of the Mantis Clan and the families that comprise it.
- Background on the allies of the Mantis — the Badger and Tortoise Clans.
- Mechanics for lesser-known groups within the clan, including the Tsuruchi Kenkyaku and the secret spells of the Moshi family.
- An examination of Still Water Cove, the hidden lair of nefarious Kolat Master Moshi Shanegon.
- The darkest secrets of the Mantis Clan — the forgotten shames that they hide from outsiders... and themselves.

This book is a dual-system supplement for the Legend of the Five Rings Role-Playing Game, Second Edition,[™] and Rokugan,[™] the d20 Companion for Legend of the Five Rings. Players and DMs may also find it a useful source of feats and abilities for any d20 System[™] campaign.

Game Masters running the Second Edition L5R RPG will need a copy of the Legend of the Five Rings Game Master's Guide[™] and the Player's Guide.[™] Players need only the Player's Guide.

Dungeon Masters running d20 System[™] games will need a copy of the Player's Handbook,[™] the Dungeon Master's Guide,[™] Oriental Adventures,[™] and Rokugan.[™] Players will need only a Player's Handbook.[™]

