



Legend of the Five Rings™



MASTERS OF WAR
THE LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS COMPANION

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MASTERS OF WAR



INTRODUCTION

Though he was now much closer to the end of his life than to its beginning, it occurred to Daidoji Masuhiro that, personally speaking, he had little to regret — certainly not now, as he sat at a comfortable kotatsu congenially discussing the art of war with the twenty or so eager, young Imperial Legion officers arrayed on tatami mats before him in a room in the Emerald Champion's palace. This was as close as the Legions had to a staff college, and he was its sensei. As one who had an unusual gift for talk for a soldier, Masuhiro found himself quite well suited to the job.

In fact, he sometimes felt that his natural gifts did not lie with soldiering, and that he had simply fallen in with that profession when very young. He had been born, after all, into the Family of the Iron Crane. When he was five, he was sent to the Crab Lands as a political hostage; he ultimately forgave the Daidoji for forcing him to live with the Hida, and he also had to admit that the experience taught him much about warfare by default. He returned to the Crane Lands to complete his samurai training, but as one already well-schooled in the art of war.

After serving in the Crane armies during the Clan War, he was recruited into the Imperial Legions, where he served mostly as a staff officer. A little to his surprise, he found life in the Imperial City to his liking, and he became something of a rarity — a soldier who felt equally at home in the barracks and the palace, a warrior who could easily pass for a gentleman of the court. His political canniness had allowed him to survive upheaval, and he had seen Emerald Champions and even Emperors come and go while he remained in Imperial service. Finally, when he became too old for active duty, Yasuki Hachi had awarded him this cozy post so that he could pass on his wisdom to younger officers. No, he had no regrets for himself.

As for Rokugan, however — well, that was another matter. During his adult lifetime, he had seen the Clan War shatter the so-called Thousand Years of Peace; close on its heels came the series of conflicts known as the War Against the Darkness, and then the War of Spirits, when the ghosts of the Empire's past returned to make war on its present and future. And then there had been Daigotsu's destruction of Otosan Uchi in 1159, and the unusually prolonged fight between the Lion and the Unicorn over the City of the Rich Frog that had ended just a couple of years ago. And all of this on top of the usual cycle of skirmishing and raiding between the Great Clans, uprisings by Bloodspeakers and such, and the endless crash

of Shadowlands beasts against the fastness of the Kaiu Wall. Yes, Daidoji Masuhiro had been fortunate, but he had lived long enough to see the Empire that he served loyally and loved dearly bleed, and bleed, and bleed.

At least he had learned to take pleasure in the brief moments of peace, and use them as consolation. To converse with those younger than him about the things he knew best was a pleasure, and therefore, a consolation. At such times, he felt that the worst of his worries was his legs growing cold because the kotatsu needed fresh coals in the brazier — although now, on a chilly winter's day, that was a real worry.

All the same, Masuhiro felt himself in good spirits when, in the middle of a pleasant discussion of his own commentary on Akodo's Leadership, a young student in the back of the room raised her hand and said, "Sensei, which of the Great Clan armies would concern you the most if you were to face them in battle?"

Masuhiro paused and furrowed his brow thoughtfully. An older student in the front of the group, who had participated in his seminars before, rolled his eyes and grinned; he knew how often Masuhiro-sensei was asked this question, and that he had a stock answer prepared. The pause and the ponderous look was a bit of theatrics to make him look spontaneously witty when he did answer. Masuhiro shot him a sharp look.

And then he smiled a wise smile and said: "Since you ask me, I would say: The Lion Clan, because they invented the art of war as we know it; the Unicorn Clan, because they seek to re-invent the art of war as we know it; and the Crab Clan, because they enjoy the art of war more than anyone else."

The young student nodded gravely. Masuhiro suppressed a smile; it always works, that it does. But then she raised her hand again, and without waiting for him to acknowledge her, she asked, "Sensei, which of the Great Clans do you think will go to war next?"

Masuhiro had no stock answer for this. When he furrowed his brow again, the thoughtful look was no pose. But he did not have to think long for an answer. "The Crab," he said, "because they will never know peace as long as the unnamed enemy walks the earth. And I know from personal experience that they will die before they fail in their duty. The Unicorn, because the Khan knows no rest, and his ambition knows no bounds. And the Lion, because if the Unicorn go to war, so will they; an unresolved matter still lies between them."



Suddenly, a clatter sounded in the hallway, and it was not a servant bringing hot coals. A young soldier wearing light armor and the insignia of the Legions burst into the room and dropped to one knee. "Pardon, sensei, but I am ordered to inform you that the Khan has crossed into the Ikoma lands with the Unicorn Clan army. All of your students are to report to their units immediately and await further orders."

Well, so much for an interlude of peace. Shouts and excited murmurs filled the room. Masuhiro deflated, and he could barely make himself heard: "Very well, then. You have your instructions, all of you. Class is dismissed until further notice."

It was hardly necessary, anyway. At the news that the Lion and the Unicorn were once again at war, the students jumped up, gathered up their belongings and began to file out, talking excitedly amongst themselves.

Masuhiro was one of the very last to leave the seminar room. The student who had rolled his eyes moments before fell in beside him. "Well, sensei, it looks like the Khan has made a soothsayer of you."

Masuhiro chuckled, but with unusually little mirth. "Yes, Ryunosuke-kun. Can't you tell how pleased I am about that?"

Though it is an ingrained habit of mind for most Rokugani to believe that the Empire enjoyed a Thousand Years of Peace between the Day of Thunder and the Clan War of the early Twelfth Century, no one could plausibly claim that the art of war played no role in shaping Rokugan during that time. Certainly, it has been one of the constants of Rokugani life since then, bearing out the chronicler's old lament that history is simply a string of one accursed thing after another.

Furthermore, no samurai worthy of his daisho would feel anything less than genuine pride in serving his Family and his Clan under arms. It is rare that a Great Clan bushi would not find himself called to military service in some form at some point in his life. Even shugenja, the vast majority of whom see

themselves as peaceful souls devoted to knowledge and communing with the divine, are called upon to support their Clan's armies with their particular talents. For Rokugani samurai, war — training for it, planning it, steeling themselves for it and fighting it — is an integral part of their duty and, thus, their lives.

But it is also widely acknowledged that talent for the art of war is not spread equally among the Great Clans. Three Clans in particular surpass the others: the Crab, the Lion and the Unicorn. Although they are very different in temperament and history, these Clans are nonetheless in their own various ways masters of waging war, and are universally respected — if not feared — as battlefield opponents.

This book examines each of these Clans through the prism of the art of war to reveal something of the soul of each, as well as a more general understanding of warfare and the role that it plays in the life of the Empire. Each of the following chapters focuses on a single Clan: First, the Crab; then, the Lion; and finally, the Unicorn. Each chapter describes at length the military establishments of each, including the organization, composition and deployments of their armies; their strategic and tactical thinking and how their constituent Families approach warfare; and how their elite military units, strongholds and military-oriented dojo reflect their history and innermost nature. Selected NPCs give some glimpse into the sort of soldiers who make up these famous military units. Finally, you will find an assortment of new Basic and Advanced Schools, Paths and Dojo Benefits to help create your own characters who will take the traditions and reputations of the elite units of these Clans upon their own shoulders.

Enter, then, into the hearts and souls of the Crab Clan, the Lion Clan and the Unicorn Clan. Gird yourself with their armor, take up their weapons, stand shoulder-to-shoulder with their best warriors, heed the call of their taisha and rigunshokan. Fight for victory, glory and the honor of the Clan. Become one with the Masters of War.



Timeline: Wars in Rokugani History

A samurai is a servant, first and foremost, and according to tradition, their first and most sacred duty is to die in the name of their lord if necessary. It is a fate to which most bushi aspire, and even though those who follow the path of a shugenja are ostensibly people of peace, there are many among their number who would relish a similarly honorable death. Fortunately — or unfortunately, depending upon whom you ask — the Empire's history has been full of war and conflict, giving the samurai of Rokugan plenty of opportunity for self-sacrifice. Despite that Rokugan is often described as enjoying a "thousand years of peace" until the early Twelfth Century, scarcely a generation has gone by since the dawn of the Empire in which some sort of conflict was not taking place. That an era with such a name continues to exist in historical records is more a feat of creative record-keeping than anything else, as only the absence of an outright declaration of war allows historians to maintain the façade.

A Battle, But Not a War

There are numerous significant conflicts from Rokugani history that are not included in this list. Conflict between the Empire and the Shadowlands, for example, is essentially constant and exists with no respite or any end realistically in sight. Other major engagements with an extremely short duration, such as the Scorpion Clan Coup or the Battle of White Stag, do not fit the criteria to be considered a war, or even a conflict; instead, they are more correctly described as a single battle taking place over the course of a few days. For the most part, the conflicts included in this portion of the book detail lengthy, protracted battles that required the attention of entire armies for considerable periods of time.

The First Yasuki War

The First Yasuki War took place in the Fourth Century, and was the first major conflict between two Great Clans. The war had many major consequences for Rokugani society, including an Imperial decree that formally forbade the declaration of war between two Great Clans, and the first defection of a Family from one Clan to another. The war also created an ongoing feud between the Crane and the Crab. This bad blood led to innumerable border skirmishes over the centuries, a second war over the Yasuki and an ongoing conflict that history may very well remember as the Third Yasuki War.

The seeds of this conflict were sown when the Crane Clan began censuring questionable practices by the Yasuki Family. The Yasuki leadership protested, claiming that they had been given leave to pursue their duties in their own manner for centuries, and that the Crane had always benefited from the fruits of their labor. The Crane Champion would not relent, however,

and this created a schism between the two. Many expected the Yasuki Daimyo to commit seppuku in protest against his superior, but that was not the Yasuki way.

Instead, the Daimyo solicited the Crab for assistance, and orchestrated a seizure of several key Yasuki provinces by the Crab. When the Crane responded angrily, the Yasuki defected to the Crab and declared their fealty to the Crab Champion. Enraged, the Crane declared war upon the Crab, and the ensuing conflict lasted for over a decade.

TIMELINE

387 – The Yasuki Daimyo, angry over censures from the Crane Champion, secretly solicits the Crab Champion to seize several Yasuki holdings. The Yasuki officially defect from the Crane and throw their lot in with the Crab. The resulting fighting costs the Crane even more territory.

400 – An Imperial decree ends the war, and formally forbids open warfare between the Great Clans. It also tacitly recognizes the Yasuki Family's allegiance to the Crab, and requires the Crab to return portions of the land they occupy to the Crane.

MAJOR BELLIGERENTS: Crab vs. Crane

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: None. No additional Clans were involved.

Running a Game During the Yasuki War

The First Yasuki War took place very early in Rokugan's history, and as the first major conflict of its kind, it created shockwaves throughout the Empire. Virtually every Great Clan took an interest in the conflict. They sent advisors and observers, many of whom only complicated matters, getting involved in ways the belligerents did not anticipate or care for. Criminal activity in the war zone rose dramatically, and the first real ronin activity began as a number of Yasuki abandoned both Clans to seek their own path. Any campaign attempting to capture the feel of this era should focus on the sense by many at that time that the Empire might be torn apart by the war as debates continued to rage in various courts about its legality and what action should be taken in response.

The Clan War

Many historians consider the Clan War to be the greatest, costliest war ever waged on the soil of Rokugan. Although the so called "thousand years of peace" had effectively been ended two years before with the Scorpion Clan Coup, this conflict is generally regarded as the first major war since the First Yasuki War centuries beforehand. The Clan War was manipulated by the dark god Fu Leng, but the Clans were all too eager to war with one another, and even without his influence, it seems likely that the era would have been marked by massive, costly conflict regardless.

The Clan War began with an ill-fated alliance between the Crab and the Shadowlands. United for the first time, these two enemy forces marched into the Empire with the intent of seizing the throne, left vacant by the ebbing strength of the Hantei Dynasty. The Crab-Shadowlands army razed many Crane and Scorpion holdings before being defeated at Beiden Pass by a force of Dragon, Unicorn, and Naga troops led by the

ronin Toturi, the former Lion Champion. Despite their defeat, the Crab's campaign sparks fighting among the Clans throughout the Empire, much of it fomented by forces allied with the Shadowlands, ultimately leading to an unprecedented alliance of the Empire's Minor Clans and a climactic battle at the Imperial City, Otosan Uchi. In the aftermath of the war, Toturi became Emperor and founded a new Dynasty, and the Mantis were elevated to Great Clan status.

TIMELINE

The following events are pivotal to the unfolding of the Clan War, although obviously there is much more going on during this period than can be described here.

1123 – Scorpion shugenja Yogo Junzo opens the Black Scroll called Wasting Disease, spreading a crippling plague throughout the Empire and weakening virtually every Clan.

1126 – Advised by the secretly corrupt Kuni Yori, Crab Champion Hida Kisada forges a temporary alliance with the Shadowlands for the purpose of seizing the throne.

1127 – The Battle of Beiden Pass follows a Crab campaign against the Scorpion lands and southern Crane holdings. The Clan War begins in earnest after the Crab are defeated by a confederation of troops under the command of the ronin Toturi.

1127 – In an attempt to understand the Shadowlands threat facing the Empire, the Phoenix open more Black Scrolls, unknowingly releasing more of Fu Leng's imprisoned essence in the process and giving the Shadowlands forces attacking the Empire greater power.

1127 – The Crab armies assault Otosan Uchi only to discover that the Emperor has become possessed by Fu Leng. Word of this incident spreads and the Empire begins to realize the true threat facing them.

1127 – The Great Clan armies mass on the fields outside Otosan Uchi and assault the city, hoping to kill the newly mortal Fu Leng. Fu Leng is defeated, the Shadowlands are routed, and the ronin Toturi is crowned the new Emperor.

MAJOR BELLIGERENTS: Crab vs. Crane, Crab vs. Scorpion, Lion vs. Crane, Empire vs. Shadowlands

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Dragon and Naga, Crab and Shadowlands, Crane and Mantis, Various Minor Clans (Yoritomo's Alliance)

Running a Game During the Clan War

The Clan War period is among the most popular settings for an L5R campaign because of its high drama and the stakes riding on the outcome of the struggle. However, it can be particularly difficult to put a group of samurai from multiple Clans together during this era due to the massive number of inter-Clan conflicts. But the Imperial bureaucracy at this time, particularly the Miya and the few ranking Emerald Magistrates with sufficient power to assemble their subordinates, recognized the problems facing the Empire and worked desperately to combat it.

The Rokugani tradition of *musha shugyo* presents another viable option for creating a campaign; many samurai temporarily became ronin or underwent a warrior pilgrimage in order to rally to the banner of Toturi, the charismatic Black Lion.

The War Against the Darkness

The War against the Darkness was far less distinct than other conflicts listed here, if for no other reason than for the majority of the period detailed, the Clans were unaware of the exact nature and identity of their enemy. The conflict was sparked by the machinations of an unquantifiable, primordial entity called the Lying Darkness. This entity was a portion of the universe that existed before Lady Sun and Lord Moon gave names to all things, and as a result it could take the form of anything it wished. The entity led the Clans against one another in a convoluted attempt to unmake all of creation, and return the mortal realm and even the Celestial Heavens to the primordial darkness from which it sprang.

It is difficult to isolate when the Darkness' plans first began to take shape, but the conflict engendered by them erupted when its agents kidnapped Emperor Toturi I. The Clans rapidly began casting blame on one another, and the Scorpion became the Empire's scapegoat. They were banished, cast out across the Burning Sands, but this did little to stem the growing disquiet between the Clans.

Agents of the Darkness infiltrated the Clans and replaced key advisors of many leaders and military officials, fomenting chaos everywhere. The Mantis and the Crane fought over control of the Scorpion Lands, and the Crane quickly devolved into a civil war while the Mantis marched on the Phoenix Lands. The Dragon Champion went mad from the Darkness' influence, and inadvertently aided its minions in enacting its will. The Moto nomads from across the Burning Sands came to the Empire accompanied by the Scorpion Clan and the Kami Shinjo, galvanizing many in the Empire to action. The Darkness even manipulated Lord Moon to manifest in the mortal realm, where he was slain and replaced by the Dragon Champion. This prompted the Lady Sun to commit jigai and she was replaced by the Crab Champion.

Afterwards, the forces of the Darkness converged on the ruined troll city of Volturum, where they planned to open Oblivion's Gate and use the artifact to destroy the spirit realms beyond. The Great Clans allied and marched through the Shadowlands to defeat both the Shadowlands and the Darkness at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate.

TIMELINE

1130 – Agents of the Lying Darkness kidnap Emperor Toturi I. The Scorpion are blamed, and summarily exiled from the Empire.

1130 – Dragon Champion Hitomi succumbs to the Darkness' influence and begins tattooing members of other Clans, binding them to her will and setting the Naga against the Dragon Clan.

1131 – The Lion Champion marches a large portion of her Clan's army to the Wall to assist the Crab Clan in the recovery of Shiro Hiruma and the execution of their duties.

1131 – The Agasha Family defects to the Phoenix in shame over Hitomi's actions.

1132 – The Emperor is found alive in Phoenix Lands. Unknown to all, he has become corrupted by the Lying Darkness.

1132 – The Mantis Clan lays siege to the Phoenix provinces.

1132 – The avatar of Lord Moon is killed, and Lady Sun kills herself in grief. Hitomi becomes the new Lady Moon and Hida Yakamo becomes Lord Sun.

1133 – Emperor Toturi commits seppuku to purify himself from the Darkness' influence.

1133 – The Great Clans wage war against the Darkness and the Shadowlands at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate deep within the Shadowlands.

MAJOR BELLIGERENTS: Crane vs. Mantis, Lion vs. Unicorn, Mantis vs. Phoenix, Dragon vs. Naga

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Crab and Lion

Running a Game During the War Against the Darkness

This particular era of Rokugan's history is particularly fractious and can be difficult to sort out. The best option for setting a campaign in this era is to use the Lying Darkness or those it is manipulating as direct opponents of the party. If the party is allied with the Mantis Clan, for instance, then a Darkness-corrupted Crane would be an ideal villain, or a Phoenix manipulated into a dire situation. Deception is the theme of the day, and rampant paranoia, even among party members toward one another, will set the theme in a proper manner.

The War of Spirits

The War of Spirits followed the War against the Darkness, and was in fact a direct result of that first conflict. In addition to a lengthy military conflict, the War of Spirits was also a major theological and philosophical struggle. On one side was the rightful Emperor, Toturi I, endorsed by the Heavens as the sov-

ereign of Rokugan; on the other, the returned spirit of Hantei XVI, who sought to return the Hantei Dynasty to power. The two figureheads on either side sparked intense division among many samurai in each Great Clan; traditionalists supported the rightful claim of the Hantei, while more progressive individuals supported the Toturi Dynasty.

The Battle of Oblivion's Gate, which marked the end of the War Against the Darkness, resulted in the return of thousands — perhaps even tens of thousands — of spirits (no one has ever determined the exact number) from the various spirit realms, among them the spirit of the despot Hantei XVI. The former Emperor, known to history as the Steel Chrysanthemum, wasted little time marshaling his forces and taking stock of the Empire. Traditionalists flocked to his banner over the initial months, and led to a years-long conflict between them and Toturi's adherents. The Battle of Beiden Pass ended the conflict, but cost the Empire one of its key trade routes through the Spine of the World, as the surrounding mountainsides were collapsed to crush the Steel Chrysanthemum's army. After that, Hantei XVI was restricted to a small private estate in the capital city, and the War of Spirits ended.

TIMELINE

1138 – The returned spirit of Hantei XVI publicly demands that Emperor Toturi I cede the throne to him. Toturi I refuses, and the Hantei declares war on the "usurper" Emperor.

1145 – Toturi I rewards the warrior Morito for his campaign against the spirit armies by creating the Ox Clan. Morito gathers many to his banner to increase the fledgling Clan's size to larger than many other Minor Clans.



1150 – Aided by his champion Hida Tsuneo, called the Stone Crab, and by the traitorous Agasha Tamori, the Hantei solicits the aid of the Phoenix after kidnapping dozens of children from the Clan's leaders and high-ranking members.

1150 – The armies of the Steel Chrysanthemum are destroyed when a collaboration of Scorpion and vengeful Phoenix collapse Beiden Pass on the forces as they march through.

1150 – With the bulk of his forces destroyed, Hantei XVI accepts Toturi I's mercy and is placed under house arrest at an estate in Otsan Uchi. The remainder of his forces are permitted to return to Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. As part of the treaty, Toturi's youngest son adopts the Hantei name and is taken in as the Steel Chrysanthemum's student.

MAJOR BELLIGERENTS: Loyalists vs. Traditionalists

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Phoenix and Spirits

Running a Game During the War of Spirits

The War of Spirits is a period rife with conflict and confusion. None of the Great Clans were directly at war with one another, although many Phoenix were blackmailed into cooperating with the Steel Chrysanthemum because many of the Clan's children had been kidnapped.

The Yobanjin Incursion

The conflict referred to in historical accounts as the Yobanjin Incursion is only the second major conflict the Empire has ever had with forces beyond its borders, and it lasted significantly longer than the Battle of White Stag several centuries earlier. Among many other distinguishing features of this conflict was the rise to fame of Toturi Tsudao, the eldest legitimate child of Emperor Toturi I, and the woman who would eventually become Empress Toturi II. It was also the first major engagement to be waged extensively by the Imperial Legions rather than the Great Clan armies.

The Yobanjin Incursion began with an unprecedented event: the unification of numerous Yobanjin tribes under a single warlord. The Yobanjin tribes, normally fractious and at odds with one another, had dwelled among the mountains north of Rokugan since the Empire was founded, with little conflict other than the occasional raid by a desperate tribe. With more than a dozen tribes united under a single leader, however, they became a military threat. The Yobanjin descended upon the Phoenix provinces like a swarm of locusts, burning and looting everything in their path. The Shiba, normally stationed in the southern lands, responded as quickly as possible, but the damage was already done and the enemy entrenched.

The Emperor instantly dispatched the Imperial Legions under the command of his young daughter, and for weeks the forces of Rokugan slowly pushed forward, defeating the gaijin at every turn and regaining mile after mile of Phoenix territory. The final battle took place near the tiny Road's End Village, and Toturi Tsudao defeated the Yobanjin warlord in personal combat.



MAJOR CONFLICTS: Yobanjin Alliance vs. Phoenix, Yobanjin Alliance vs. Empire

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Various Yobanjin tribes, Phoenix and Imperial Legions

Running a Game During the Yobanjin Incursion

The Yobanjin Incursion is an almost completely unexplored era in Rokugan's history. The conflict has never been examined at length and as such can be heavily customized for the needs of an individual campaign.

Running a Game During the War of the Rich Frog

Involving the War of the Rich Frog directly in a campaign might prove difficult because the conflict was restricted to such a relatively small region. Other than a military-oriented campaign wherein the characters are allied with one of the three participating Clans, there are not too many options. However, a campaign might focus on the exploits of characters trapped within the occupied city, or dealing with the various combatants on behalf of an Imperial party of some sort.

The War of the Rich Frog

The War of the Rich Frog was, in many ways, the first of a new type of war in the Empire. It pitted the two greatest military powers in Rokugan against one another, and resulted in a protracted and for the most part, limited war of attrition and patience. In the treacherous post-Clan War climate among the Great Clans, any conflict that risked large-scale battles between two Clans meant that at least one, possibly both, participants would deplete their resources and leave themselves wide open to attack by other Clans. Even the Lion and Unicorn, the two primary participants in the War of the Rich Frog, could not risk such a thing, and as a result the conflict dragged on for nearly a full year (1165-66) before a decisive victory was achieved.

The War of the Rich Frog began over a small but prosperous city predictably called the City of the Rich Frog. Located in the narrow band of unaligned lands between Lion and Unicorn territories, the city had long been protected by the Unicorn, but was claimed as a protectorate by the Lion during the war of succession among Toturi I's heirs. Five years after Toturi III took the throne, the Unicorn attacked in an attempt to retake the city.

The Lion knew the attack was coming (although they did not know the exact timing), and they were eager to test their military might against the Unicorn. The two Clans fought heavily for weeks, then settled into a pattern in which the Unicorn seized Lion holdings around the city, but did not or could not rouse the Lion from their occupation.

The Dragon Clan became involved at the Emperor's request, and attempted to curtail the fighting, but to no avail. Ultimately, the Lion and Unicorn fought a climactic battle at the small town of Sukoshi Zutsu. The two Clan Champions met on the field of battle, and the Unicorn Champion was victorious. The Unicorn held Sukoshi Zutsu, but the Lion were awarded permanent possession of the City of the Rich Frog, effectively ending the war by Imperial decree as enforced by the Dragon Clan armies.

MAJOR CONFLICTS: Lion vs. Unicorn, Lion vs. Dragon, Dragon vs. Unicorn

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Crab and Unicorn

The War of Fire & Thunder

The War of Fire & Thunder, like the War of the Rich Frog that preceded it, was among the first in a new type of war waged by the Great Clans. Like many conflicts before it, the war was created by dark forces craving the destruction of the Empire; in this case, the Phoenix Clan was manipulated by subversive forces within it into a war against the Mantis Clan. It was a relatively simple matter, as the Phoenix reacted with predictable arrogance, and the Mantis were all too eager to resume their on-again, off-again feud with the followers of Isawa.

The war began when Asako Kinuye, a former Bloodspeaker, used her influence to accuse the Mantis in using one of the Black Scrolls to destroy a Phoenix village. The Phoenix were eager to believe such a thing, as it assured them that such a corrupt deed was not committed by one of their own. The respective strengths of the two Clans ensured that the conflict was restricted to coastal skirmishes, as the Mantis overwhelmed any Phoenix venturing far from the coast, and the Phoenix destroyed any Mantis that moved too far inland.

The conflict came to an end only when the Mantis Champion grew impatient and moved her fleet to the Phoenix coast, prompting a response both from the Shiba armies and the Elemental Council of Masters. The battle was interrupted by the appearance of the Dark Wave, a fleet of corrupted Mantis vessels, which only confirmed the suspicions of many that the conflict had been manipulated the entire time. The Dark Wave was largely destroyed, and the Mantis Champion was killed, as was the Phoenix Master of Earth. In the end, the Phoenix surrendered purely out of a desire to prevent more killing, and the Mantis were awarded a chain of islands off the Phoenix coast as a result of their "victory."

MAJOR CONFLICTS: Mantis vs. Phoenix

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: No relevant alliances.

Running a Game During the War of Fire & Thunder

Due to their unique philosophies, both the Phoenix and the Mantis eschewed the assistance of other Clans during this conflict, and as a result it can be difficult to incorporate characters from other Clans into the conflict. However, as always, Imperial forces worked toward peace throughout the war, and a party working on behalf of some Imperial official could become involved in a number of ways, and on either side of the conflict. Alternatively, the rapid construction of Broken Wave City on the Mantis islands off the Phoenix coast could prove a new and interesting location for a campaign, one that explores the aftermath of the war between the two Clans.

The War of Silk & Steel

The War of Silk & Steel ended only recently, after much loss of life on the part of both the Dragon and the Crane Clans. The war was the result of an unfortunate misunderstanding, and infractions against Imperial Law on the part of both Clans. The Crane Champion was unfortunately unaware of certain illicit activities conducted by the Daidoji Family on the Clan's behalf, leading to treat the Dragon's grievances with curt dismissal. For their part, the Dragon believed that the Crane were deliberately concealing dishonor among their ranks, and that unless they were forced to expose it, the Clan would be disgraced before the Empire and cause a systematic breakdown of the Empire's political system.

The conflict began in 1168 when a Dragon scouting party crossed into Crane territory without proper traveling papers or the permission of the Crane. With the assistance of a zoku-jin, the Dragon inadvertently discovered a cache of weapons and gunpowder near the Lion border. They were attacked by a group of Daidoji Harriers, and the gunpowder was detonated by accident. The lone Dragon survivor made his way home to report before dying, and the lone Crane survivor was recovered by his fellow Crane.

The Dragon dispatched magistrates to Kosaten Shiro to search for additional gunpowder, but were betrayed by a Crane hoping to conceal the fact that a member of the Lost was imprisoned there. The disagreement turned into a battle between the castle guards and a small number of Dragon in attendance, a battle complicated by the prisoner escaping and damaging the castle's foundation. The conflict continued to escalate over the late fall and throughout the winter, and only came to an end in the spring when the two Clan Champions held parley. The Crane Champion admitted that she had discovered the disgrace among her ranks, and vowed to end it. The Dragon Champion, satisfied with her word of honor, withdrew his forces from the front line, and the war effectively ended.

MAJOR CONFLICTS: Crane vs. Dragon, Lion vs. Dragon

SIGNIFICANT ALLIANCES: Lion and Crane, Dragon and Scorpion

Running a Game During the War of Silk & Steel

This conflict presents an interesting opportunity for role-playing because, at the time of the conflict, neither participating Clan has any significant enemies elsewhere (other than the Dragon and the Lion, who are at odds with each other). In fact, many in the Empire have no idea why the two Clans are at war, other than that the Dragon attacked Kosaten Shiro in response to some unknown offense on the part of the Crane. This sparked intense discussion of the matter at Court, and an entire campaign could easily be constructed around the political fallout over the fight. Conversely, the ronin village of Nanashi Mura was one of the focal points of the struggle, and a group of characters spending the winter there would bear witness to almost the entire conflict.

Ashigaru Units and Their Role in Rokugani Armies

The discussions of the Rokugani art of war in this book generally do not take into account the numerous legions of ashigaru and other non-samurai forces employed by the Clans. Ashigaru are generally recruited (or draigooned) from the bonge under codes of feudal obligation. Some are mercenaries under meager pay. For more about the ashigaru and their place in the social order, see Emerald Empire, Chapter 4.

The numbers of these forces available fluctuates wildly depending upon the time of year, the location of the battle, and a large number of other considerations. In general, however, you may assume that any army contributing troops to an engagement will have ashigaru levies equal to about a third of their number of samurai. This number can increase dramatically depending upon the circumstances, and it is entirely possible that the ashigaru in an engagement will actually outnumber the samurai for whom they are fighting.

By their very nature, ashigaru are less well-equipped and less trained than samurai. Because of these factors, they are also generally much less reliable in battle than samurai. Their primary virtue is that they can be mustered cheaply, and they are relatively expendable. Most Rokugani generals consider them even more expendable than ronin. They are generally deployed amongst more reliable units, or in parts of the battlefield expected to be relatively quiet. One would not expect them to stand alone against a charge by the Utaku Battle Maidens. Their officers are, ideally, samurai selected for their ability to enforce strict discipline upon their social inferiors; for instance, the Crab Clan relies heavily on its Yasuki Taskmaster bushi to officer their ashigaru units.

MASTERS OF WAR

THE CRAB



Just six hours ago — but an eternity away — Hida Taki had stepped smartly into the barracks room in the Great Carpenter Wall. The room was filled with scarred and rugged-looking men, most of them lounging in hard wooden chairs or applying a whetstone to the spikes on their testsubo. Fresh-faced and eager, Taki scanned for someone who looked like the gunso of the squadron to which he had been assigned, spotted a likely man, and dropped to one knee before him. “This one is Hida Taki, reporting to 3rd Squadron, First Company, Tenth Legion. I wait to be commanded.”

The gunso stared in surprise while the veterans in the room grunted or shook their heads. No dents in that one’s armor yet, that’s for sure. Then the gunso remembered they were expecting a replacement for that youngster they’d lost on patrol last week, when an oni ambushed them, grabbed him from the back of the formation and ripped out his throat before he even knew what was happening. He grunted and nodded towards a corner. “Leave your kit there,” he said to Taki. “And you can drop your swords if you like. We don’t stand on ceremony here, at least when the talsa isn’t looking.”

Taki did as ordered, and happily, though he kept his daisho strapped to his waist. It was a matter of family pride — or rather, his pride in his family — that he should be here. His father had died in a skirmish when Taki was only two, but he had served in the Tenth Legion of the First Crab Army, as had his grandfather — before early signs of madness forced him into the Damned. Although Taki didn’t really remember either man, his mother and grandmother had raised him on tales of their heroic sacrifice for Clan and Emperor. So it pleased him beyond measure when he, too, was assigned to the Tenth of the First after a short stint in the Reserve Army.

And indeed, it had started out as the perfect day to break in an inexperienced bushi to the routines of life along the Wall. The morning was relatively quiet, with nothing happening beyond sentry and lookout duty.

But then the alarm sounded and the gunso rushed from the room. Taki jumped to his feet. The rest of 3rd Squadron cocked their heads and tensed. After a time, the gunso came back and called out in a tone both commanding and familiar: “The Hiruma have gotten themselves in trouble again. We have to fish them out. Equip and muster by the gate immediately.”

The Hiruma have gotten themselves into trouble again. It was the veterans’ sardonic shorthand for the alarming news that a body of Hiruma scouts — who penetrated deeper into the Shadowlands than the Hida patrols, and who frequently moved back and forth between the fastness of the Wall and Shiro Hiruma — had been cornered by a superior enemy force and needed a diversion to get out of it. In response, every available warrior from that section of the Wall would sortie.

Taki scrambled to don his armor, but he couldn’t help noticing the other soldiers around him moving at a more deliberate pace and yet somehow getting themselves ready just as quickly. Outwardly, they remained calm, but even Taki noticed that something had changed: tension beneath their businesslike exteriors, a silent understanding that they were about to deal with something very ugly, but whatever it was, they could not lose heart and they could not fail.

Finally, the gunso led them out of the barracks room, the plates of their heavy armor clattering as they went, though not drowning out the shouts and growls of the muster in the yard below. Lion officers, it was said, barked orders; Crab officers snarled theirs. Most of the Tenth was there, as much as could be rounded for an emergency muster: three line infantry companies and a squadron of shugenja from the reserve company. They barely had time to form up before the talsa ordered them down into the basement tunnels underneath the Wall.

These were the tunnels that the Hiruma had carved out centuries ago, to allow their troops to pass beneath the bed of the Kawa sano Saigo, the River of the Last Stand, and emerge in the rear of the Maw’s army to turn the Battle of the Cresting Wave in the Crab’s favor. The clash of steel plates rang in Taki’s head as he and his comrades moved double-time through the dank, torch-lit space, smelling of centuries of blood and history, until they emerged on the far bank of the river.

The talsa, at the head of the column, paused to get his bearings. In that pause, as Taki stood in the sick and blasted landscape, he realized that he had arrived in the Shadowlands. Suddenly, the tales he had heard of his father and his grandfather were no longer tales. They were part of his duty now.

Then the talsa raised his baton of command and waved them on, and they were off again at double time.

At last, late in the afternoon, they came upon a cluster of rocks amid the broken ground that seemed to be leaning against each other for strength. Here, what remained of the squadron of Hiruma scouts had taken refuge, determined to make their last stand. About a hundred bakemono swirled around their position, trying to dodge the scouts' last arrows. In the center of the goblin horde lurked massive, dark shapes that could only be oni.

There was no time to deploy into line. They would have to attack immediately, right from marching formation, or the Hiruma would all die. "Shugenja to the front, immediately!" the taisa called out. "First Company, forward, by squadrons!"

Immediately, the chui of Taki's company turned to the head of the column: "1st Squadron, forward!" With a bloodthirsty roar, the twenty soldiers of the 1st Squadron surged forward and dove into the fray, followed closely by the 2nd Squadron.

A veteran with a dark slash of a scar that ran from cheek to cheek across the bridge of his nose turned up one corner of his mouth. "Well, boy," he said without looking at Taki, "this is where you learn what it means to be a Hida."

The bakemono, taken in the flank, gave back at the wrath of the Hida. But the spawn of Jigoku did not. They turned and struck back, teeth and claws and limbs in places the design of Heaven had never sanctioned, all ripping into the Hida bushi. Taki's squadron had edged forward, and from his vantage point, he could see the foul things knocking men aside with a single blow. The Hida held to their task and struck at the oni.

But a few froze in place or fell to the ground wailing or edged away. It was nothing they could control -- the power of the oni could strike fear even in the bravest.

And Taki realized: This is how father died. And grandfather -- "3rd Squadron... forward!" A fell and wrathful glare lit up the chui's face. The clatter that had surrounded Taki fell silent, as his comrades stopped tapping their weapons against their armor in anticipation. It was not nerves, but a veteran's understanding that a warrior must face battle with clarity of mind and will.

Then the gunso nodded and turned to face his soldiers. Taki interrupted the prayer to Bishamon that had started running through his head. It would be helpful if the gunso had some words of encouragement right now; perhaps invoking their glorious first ancestor who had killed an oni with his bare hands, or urging them to their best effort for the honor of the Crab and the defense of the Empire.

But the gunso simply raised his tetsubo and waved them forward. A grim smile creased his face. "Come on," he yelled, "did you think you were going to live forever?"

The Crab Families and the Art of War

"Let the Kakita fret over their flower arrangements, and leave the Isawa to their scrolls; we know that only steel and courage can preserve the Empire."

— Crab proverb

While the Crab Clan as a whole does nothing to discourage its reputation as a brash and rough-hewn lot, they actually diverge rather considerably in terms of their temperament and their aptitudes. The Hida set the overall tone as the Clan's largest bushi Family as well as the most important politically. But



the other warrior Families — the Hiruma, the Kaiu and in their own modest way, the Toritaka — each make their own unique contributions to the Crab art of war. The Clan's shugenja Family, the Kuni, stand apart in more ways than one; but they, too, play an integral role by supporting the Hida line soldiers in battle. Finally, the Yasuki, though they receive relatively little respect for it, support the massive Crab military establishment by using their unique talents to make sure that their Clan's armies are never in short supply.

The Hida

Aside from being the undisputed first Family of the Crab, the Hida are also among the oldest and most storied of the Great Clan Families, and one of the Empire's most feared and respected bushi Families as well. They also have a reputation — not entirely unjust — as uncultured boors, thuggish bullies, and loud-mouthed hotheads, crude and intimidating in social situations and extremely dangerous when crossed. They represent both some of the most admirable and also some of the least attractive qualities that one can find in Rokugani samurai: They are resolute and courageous without peer, but also rough, unpleasant and quick to fight when fighting is not necessary. They are the Empire's brutes, but also its saviors.

For their part, the Hida make a point not to care what outsiders think of them. They do not deny that they are coarse compared to most other samurai Families; indeed, they seem to flaunt their lack of interest in refinement. But they are quick to point out that, unlike the other Great Clans, they are at constant war with the Empire's greatest enemy; the choice to fight is never theirs alone. Hida bushi put their lives at risk along the Kaiu Wall at every hour of every day. They therefore have little time for cultured pursuits, and they even argue that to distract themselves from war in order to make themselves as pretty as the Crane or as educated as the Phoenix would doom not only them, but the Empire as well.

The Hida don't mind reminding anyone who seems to need reminding that they bear a unique burden for the sake of the rest of the Empire. At the end of the day, it is they who stand against the horrors that lurk just beyond the southern border; it is they who take the safety of all that the other Great Clans hold dear into their hands. Until someone else can carry the burden of keeping the Empire safe from these terrors, dark things that would curdle the blood of the fancy courtiers in the Imperial City if they so much as glimpsed them, the Hida will behave just as it pleases them. The Hida sacrifice much for the sake of the Empire. But they are not above rubbing everyone else's noses in that fact from time to time.

As the heirs of the Crab's founding Kami, the Hida have always been the Clan's unquestioned leaders, away from the battlefield as well as on it. When dealing with their own Crab cousins, they are just as rough-hewn as they are with outsiders, but the other Crab Families are well used to it by now, and know enough to shrug it off.

At the risk of overlooking the political aspects of their role, it is possible to say that as a Family, the Hida exist to make war and not much else. Even before they begin their formal education, Hida children receive weapons training, usually from their parents or caregivers. As soon as they begin their schooling, they are taught basic principles of strategic thinking, and how to exercise command in a group. Even their traditional

childhood games contain hints of the hard-handed future that awaits them, with names like Find the Oni and Strongwall.

The Hida Bushi School carries this to a more mature level, turning youths into resilient warriors. It is reputed to be the most demanding training ground for young bushi in the Empire. Whereas the Kakita teach efficiency of movement, the Akodo teach precision and accuracy, and the Mirumoto develop blinding speed in their bushi, the Hida expect their warriors to be able to endure anything — as soldiers of the Crab, after all, they will have to stand up to Jigoku itself. Hida Bushi students undergo a grueling regimen of exercises in both weapons training and formation drills, all conducted in full armor and in the outdoors, regardless of weather. Their sensei stress that a Hida must have the strength of Earth, and they push their students to the limits of the endurance to develop it. As a result, Hida heavy infantry can fight and hold formation for hours without tiring; and when an enemy has lost the contest of endurance, they are ripe for counterattack and defeat.

But the Hida's greatness as a warrior Family is not just a matter of pure stamina. Their greatest strength, of course, is the ferocious willpower that they bring to the battlefield, but this quality is not just taught or conditioned; it is inherited as their legacy from the First Crab. The Hida truly refuse to allow themselves to fail. They do not retreat, not so much because they are trained to stand rooted to a spot, but because, by an act of sheer will, they simply refuse to let the enemy get the better of them.

This requires more than just a stolid temperament; such determination in the face of ultimate danger requires reserves of strength, ferocity and even battle lust, and none can draw from a well as deep as the Hida's. Truth be told, the Hida actually enjoy fighting; it is the ultimate expression of everything that they inherited from their First Ancestor. Outsiders who have fought alongside the Hida remark on the weird glee with which they strike down their enemies or even receive the enemy's blows — not rage so much as pure joy. This is also the flipside of what others see as their boorishness. After all, it is unreasonable to expect someone to embrace the arts of peace when he lives so completely for war.

In any event, the Hida give nary a thought to the opinions of others. All that matters to them, as the soldiers who uphold the honor of the Crab and guard the Empire with their blood and toil, is that they prove themselves stronger than any enemy they face. Individual Hida may die... but the Hida Family must not fail.

The Hiruma

"The Hiruma do not live so long as their land is gone."

— Crab saying

For centuries after The Maw overran their ancestral lands, the Hiruma always seemed to be known — both within the Crab Clan and without — as the "fell Hiruma" or the "brooding Hiruma." Dispossessed by a power they hated as their ultimate foe, yet nearly helpless to do anything about it, they haunted the Crab Lands as samurai without a home, too proud to give up their sense of themselves as a distinct Family. Instead of accommodating themselves to their loss, they bore it as a identifying mark; they allowed themselves no Family mon or motto, and without ever expressly hoping that they would return to

their old lands, they vowed that they would have no respite as long as Shiro Hiruma remained in the hands of the enemy. They maintained a vaguely aloof air, almost as if they wished to remind everyone else of their statelessness. The Hida always brushed this aside, of course, as they have never stood on niceties anyway, but the other Crab Families regarded them as somewhat unapproachable.

More than once, the Hiruma launched campaigns to re-take their lands from the clutch of the Shadowlands. None of these succeeded, and each failure brought a bitter cost in loss of life.

But none of this ever prevented the Hiruma from serving the Crab military loyally and even brilliantly on many occasions. They have long provided Crab armies with their eyes and ears, serving as some of the finest scouts found anywhere in the Empire, rivaled in modern times only by the Iuchi and Shinjo scouts of the Unicorn and, in some ways, by the Tsuruchi Bounty Hunters of the Mantis. What distinguishes the Hiruma scouts (especially the elite Stalkers), is the fact that they regularly operate in the least hospitable environment in the known world, the wastes of the Shadowlands.

Some have blithely assumed that the Hiruma's skill at scouting — operating far from base, in small units, and relying on stealth and cunning to defeat the enemy — was an extension of their exile. Without land of their own to defend or in which to base their operations, they were forced to learn how to make do without, living and fighting on the run. But in fact, the tradition extends back to the original Hiruma, the very first samurai who swore fealty to Hida. Hiruma had a natural gift for reconnaissance, and even though Hida honored him by making him his second-in-command, he felt more comfortable operating away from the main army, alone with only his wits and glimpses of the enemy for company. With Hida's permission he dedicated himself to serving as an advance scout, and what he accomplished for his lord was all the more impressive because it was no mortal opponent that he had to face alone, but the manifestation of Jigoku itself.

This is the legacy that Hiruma passed down to his descendants, and so the Family that he founded served the Crab as advance scouts even before The Maw's invasion deprived them of their lands. Their status as exiles within their own Clan's lands simply reinforced the self-reliance that had always allowed them to excel at their role (and going into the Shadowlands in small numbers with anything less than first-rate skills as a scout would be suicidal). It also added to that aura of self-imposed isolation a restless brooding, as they refused to adapt to their dispossession.

Instead, the Hiruma wore it like an open wound and carried it with them wherever they went. Until they could erase the shame of losing their lands to the enemy, they vowed that they would be as smoke in the wind. They kept their ancestral sword in Kyuden Hida, declaring that no Hiruma was worthy of wielding it until the Family could reclaim Shiro Hiruma. They did not even keep their own bushi school; instead, they sent their young warriors to the Unicorn Lands, where they studied with the Moto Family.

The other Crab Families knew better than to pity the Hiruma, however. The Hida in particular believed that pity went against the true essence of Jin (the Virtue of Compassion), for there can be no compassion without embracing the fact that suffering is

an inescapable part of life — and in particular, that struggle is an inescapable part of a Crab warrior's life. Instead, the other Crab always respected the Hiruma's glowering yearning for vengeance, knowing that it was a weapon that would help them defend the Empire from its greatest foe. And indeed, Hiruma warriors fought with absolute fearlessness, regarding death in battle as nothing worse than a small step toward redemption of their failure to defend their lands. If anyone deserved pity, it was those who would have to face their wrath in a fight.

Much changed for the Hiruma when they finally accomplished their long-sought redemption by recapturing what remained of Shiro Hiruma during the War Against the Darkness. In 1130, the Crab and a large naga army marched on Shiro Hiruma and seized it; but the naga quickly abandoned their allies to head northward, driven by news gathered from the Akasha that the Foul had manifested itself in the Dragon lands. The Shadowlands hordes took advantage of this sudden weakness and counterattacked, subjecting the Hiruma to a horrific two-year siege, during which the garrison sustained itself only through the help of a local nezumi tribe that smuggled in supplies through their warren of tunnels beneath the castle. Finally, in 1132, a Lion-led relief army drove off the besiegers. Only then could the Hiruma claim their lands and firmly establish that they had redeemed themselves.

Despite this great victory, the gloom has not fully lifted from the Hiruma's soul. Shiro Hiruma has been rebuilt since its recapture, but it still remains a stronghold in the heart of enemy territory. The Family's ancestral lands as a whole have not been reclaimed in any meaningful sense, for most of them remain wastelands, unfit for wholesome habitation. The Kuni have purged the Taint from the soil, but in doing so they have also purged all other spirits, leaving the ground as lifeless as their own territory. Beasts of the Shadowlands still roam outside Shiro Hiruma, and only aggressive patrolling by Hiruma scouts keeps the enemy at bay. Supply convoys run regularly from the Kaiu Wall to the castle, but they are always subject to enemy attack.

So although the Hiruma are no longer the rootless exiles of the Crab, they hardly revel in their triumph, nor have they lost their vengeful edge. Until their lands can be wholly purified and restored — and this may never be possible — they will not consider themselves fully redeemed, and there will always be a corner of the Hiruma soul that will fight without fear or let-up to recapture their lost honor.

The Kaiu

"The strength of a mountain lies at its base."

— Kaiu

Calm and soft-spoken, the Kaiu tend to go unnoticed beside the more boisterous Hida and the dark-browed Hiruma. They are the intellectuals of the Crab Clan, and as such, their patient and thoughtful manner is often overshadowed by their more colorful peers. Even the coldly flamboyant Kuni and the ingratiating Yasuki will steal attention from them. But as master architects, craftsmen and military engineers without peer anywhere in the Empire, they are just as crucial to the Crab military establishment as the Hida. In fact, the Crab could not be the Crab without the Kaiu and their particular genius.



The Kaiu Family was founded by a blacksmith named Kaiu who became one of Hida's original followers. Kaiu proved his worth by creating the great weapon that slew Oni no Hatsu Suru, and in doing so, he created a legacy of exceptional weaponsmithing and armorsmithing that endures to this day. Kaiu-made weapons and armor are the pride of the Crab, and they are highly valued outside the Crab Lands as well.

Down through the generations, the descendants of Kaiu have extended their expertise to architecture, engineering, siege-craft, and military strategy and tactics. Not only is the design and maintenance of the Great Carpenter Wall their doing, but they also fashion the siege engines that help defend it. The great military road along the Twilight Mountains that supports the Wall garrison is also their handiwork, a fact that is reflected in its name — the Kaiu Road. Their reasoned, methodical approach to warfare has also made them the thinkers of the Crab military. Kaiu strategists and tacticians are present on every high-level command staff, and they are treated as founts of logic and reason, to whom all heads turn when disagreements become heated.

Indeed, the Kaiu like to think of themselves as the unshakable rock that anchors their more emotional Hida and Hiruma cousins. All Crab Families like to think of themselves as innately attached to the strength of Earth, but for the Kaiu, it is a matter of providing both a physical and emotional foundation upon which the other Crab warrior Families can stand. They have built for their Clan the most sophisticated defensive network in the Empire, one of the true marvels of Rokugan, and it would crumble if they were not there to maintain it. Their weapons and armor save the lives of countless Crab warriors, and they never cease re-examining and refining their techniques.

They keep themselves so busy with their work that they have little time for glory-seeking, and that suits them well. They understand the importance of their quiet roles within the Clan, and they don't worry much about whether or not anyone else does.

The nature of a Kaiu education exemplifies their view of their own role within the Crab military establishment. They see themselves as warriors in their own way, but much of what they teach their young samurai is technical. The Kaiu Engineer School teaches weapons skills, but it doesn't spend nearly as much time on combat training as the Hida and Hiruma. It focuses its greatest energy on military strategy and history, practical geology, metalworking, and the principles of architecture. If the Hida understand that wars cannot be fought without courage, the Kaiu understand that they cannot be fought without material, either. Interestingly enough, this understanding also means that they hold the Yasuki's logistical contribution to the Crab military in relatively high esteem — though they express this respect quietly, if at all.

Philosophically, the Kaiu believe in the value of patience and sound planning. These virtues form a cornerstone (as it were) of a Kaiu education; they inform their approach to architecture, craft, and warfare — pretty much every aspect of what they do for the Crab Clan. The Kaiu also tend to look to the long-term, disregarding the concerns of the moment. This is a quality that allows them to plan and build great works such as the Wall and the Kaiu Road with uniformly excellent workmanship, and to invest the time and care into forging weapons of truly exceptional quality.

This seemingly unemotional steadiness sometimes puts them in conflict with their more impetuous cousins from the other Crab bushi Families, but in the end, the Kaiu always

seem to gain a fair hearing for their point of view. This, too, the Kaiu have always accepted as an inevitable aspect of their role within the Clan, and they don't mind it terribly much. They are fond of saying of the Hida, "We temper their passion with discipline. And their swords are stronger because of it."

But there is also a cunning and lighter-hearted side to the Kaiu's endless patience and rigorously mechanical thinking. As much as they relish the intricate process of military planning, these habits of thought also express themselves in a love of puzzles and mechanical toys. An aspect of the Kaiu that rarely comes to public light is the fact that many of their finest craftsmen enjoy fashioning puzzle-boxes, mechanical birds and other such knick-knacks on the side. Those who do know this side of the Kaiu swear that their craftsmanship is the equal of any Kakita-trained artisan.

But these things will always remain a sideline to the Kaiu, and they never really speak of them amongst their Crab bushi cousins. Making puzzle-boxes is not an aesthetic matter, but a reflection writ small of the sort of planning and care that must go into building a fortification that will withstand the ravages of a Shadowlands horde. Similarly, their interest in mechanical toys reflects their cultivated skill at devising siege engines, traps and other field works. Kaiu-devised snags and pitfalls dot the banks of the River of the Last Stand, fill the tunnels beneath the Carpenter Wall, and also defend those parts of the Wall itself where it is anticipated that the enemy may gain a foothold. Thus, despite these strangely diversionary pursuits, the Kaiu see themselves as a bushi Family of a warlike Clan first, foremost, and always — the quiet warriors of the Crab.

The Kuni

The Kuni have always been unique among shugenja Families because of their close — many would say eerily intimate — connection to the Taint. Among Great Clan shugenja, the Kuni are specialists of a decidedly weird sort, as their main purpose is the study of the Shadowlands Taint, how it works on living things, and how it may be counteracted. They have a disturbing fascination with dissection and practical anatomy — both taboos for samurai in Rokugani culture. As a result, they have gained a sinister reputation that discourages others from approaching them too closely. And, truth be told, the Kuni rather like it that way, as it means that outsiders will generally leave them alone and let them work.

But these odd interests do not mean that the Kuni make no contribution to the Crab art of war. To the contrary, they have been closely involved with the Crab military ever since the Family's founder, the scholar and magician Kuni, began accompanying Hiruma patrols into the Shadowlands to learn as much as he could about the enemy and their powers. In fact, the Family's bizarre reputation can be traced back to Kuni himself, who eventually sickened and withered away from constant exposure to the Taint.

Fortunately for the Crab, Kuni's descendants have pursued his determination to dissect (both physically and theoretically) their enemy and understand it. Their research has provided the Clan's warrior Families with practical knowledge about the strengths and weaknesses of the monsters of the Shadowlands, creating both the intellectual underpinnings of battlefield successes and the means by which many a Crab bushi has preserved himself to fight another day.



Kuni shugenja also play an important role on the battlefield itself, using their magic to support the Crab armies. They specialize, of course, in Earth spells, especially those that bind the enemy or strike it down. And they take special care to prepare themselves to fight the hordes of the Shadowlands, specializing in spells such as Jade Strike that are particularly harmful to Tainted beings. The garrison troops along the Kaiu Wall trust their Kaiu-built siege engines to strike the enemy from a distance and wear them down before it comes to hand-to-hand fighting, but they would not want to go to war without Kuni shugenja to support them.

Though the Kuni are not particularly warlike, neither do they share the ambivalence that other shugenja Families feel about military service and using their powers to fight a living enemy. Instead, the Kuni keep in mind the example of Kuni Osaku, who sacrificed her life so that the Crab might gain victory over The Maw. Osaku held the armies of The Maw at bay for 73 days while the Kaiu Wall was constructed, a feat of magic seldom equaled even by the Phoenix Elemental masters. The Kuni Family still reveres her, and they consider what she did, and all that they still do, to be done for the sake of not only the Crab Clan, but the Empire itself.

No one embodies the mixture of theoretical and practical contributions that the Kuni make to the Crab military more than the order of Witch Hunters. Though they are inquisitors by training and original intent — focused on working more like magistrates, ferreting out and neutralizing the Taint wherever they find it — the Witch Hunters have found no shortage of roles in the Crab armies. The Kuni Tower at Shiro Hiruma is garrisoned entirely by Witch Hunters, whose role is not only to support the Hiruma troops with their expertise, but also to fight as regular soldiers when necessary. Witch Hunters, both bushi and shugenja, serve as command staff officers for the legions of the First and Second Armies, examining prisoners who might be Tainted, and looking for signs of contamination among front-line troops. And of course, the special unit of Witch Hunters known as the Watchers of the Damned are posted specifically to keep watch over the Damned berserkers, in case their Taint should overtake them at last.

Despite their aloofness and their unsettling reputation, the Kuni, like all Crab Families, do what they must to support the Clan's war effort. The fight against the Shadowlands is every bit as much their fight as it is that of the Hida and the Hiruma; they simply chose a different aspect of the struggle in which to specialize. The bushi Families have paid for their dedication in blood, while the Kuni have paid in contamination and madness; that is the only difference.

The Toritaka

Formerly the Falcon Clan, the Toritaka Family are a small and, compared to the larger Crab bushi Family, a relatively insignificant part of the Clan's military. Their holdings are concentrated in a small area, the Valley of the Spirits. Like most Minor Clan families, the Toritaka were (and are still) much less numerous than the typical Great Clan Family. They received the chance to swear fealty to the Crab not as a reward for excellent service or a glorious deed, but as a gesture of submission in return for the Crab Clan's aid in putting down a crisis in their home territory.

However, the Toritaka have developed a highly unusual talent that made them attractive to the Crab. Their ancestral land received its name from the fact that the barriers between the mortal realm and the spirit realms seem to be unusually thin there, and they have been forced over the ages to develop an unusually keen ability to detect and fight spirit creatures, especially *gaki*. Creatures from these other realms are sometimes recruited into military alliances with the Shadowlands, and the Toritaka help the Crab to nullify the advantage that such creatures might otherwise provide.

The Toritaka are reserved and soft-spoken by nature, but they are eager to contribute to the Great Clan to which they now belong. Rather than lament the loss of their independent status, they are more than pleased to have the assurance of mutual support from powerful cousins that comes with belonging to a Great Clan. To the extent that their numbers permit, Toritaka bushi serve in Crab line infantry units in all five Clan armies. A small number are allowed to train alongside Hiruma scouts, so that they can use their Family's unique talents on long-range reconnaissance.

Toritaka bushi also serve the Crab as archers, and they have even adapted their gift for spotting enemy targets that are difficult to perceive to create a new archery school. Working in cooperation with the Hiruma, who have traditionally provided the Crab with their bowmen, the Toritaka have set up a training regimen based on techniques in visual perception that they developed over generations of defending themselves from hostile spirit creatures. The Falcon's Strike archers are gaining recognition as the elite archers of the Crab army, and the Toritaka take considerable pride in this reputation. The Family is keenly aware that being part of the Crab makes them inheritors to one of the Empire's greatest warrior traditions, and they want to make themselves a respectable part of it.

The Yasuki

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

— Motto of the Yasuki Family

The Yasuki are seemingly the least likely Family to be a part of the Crab Clan. Sly and subtle, well-spoken and commercially apt, they are the temperamental opposite of the rough and blunt Hida. There is little in their history to indicate an aptitude for war, and much more to suggest a talent for easing their way out of direct confrontations. They let others do the fighting, and in fact, they are much better known for having been the cause of major wars between two Great Clans than they are for having fought in one themselves.

This is, of course, of a piece with their designated role within the Crab Clan; they are diplomats and the Clan's principal representatives at court. They are also merchants and traders of considerable aptitude — deal-makers, not warriors. Little in the way of military service is expected of them, but this puts them out of step with the rest of the Crab.

Their only real contribution to the Crab line infantry is their corps of hard-nosed caravan guards, the Yasuki Taskmasters. Even then, the Taskmasters were not created with soldiering in mind — or even to fight bandits, really. Their main job has always been to browbeat cargo bearers and beasts of burden, keeping them moving and orderly during arduous trading jour-

neys. It was only after the Yasuki defected from the Crane Clan that the Crab discovered the Taskmasters were also quite good at chivvying into line weak-kneed ashigaru levies; the Crab incorporated them into their armies as gunso, and sometimes even higher-ranking officers, for these less dependable units.

The Yasuki were bemused by this at first, and disappointed to lose their best men to regular military service. But they quickly realized that they could always train more caravan guards, while incorporating their Taskmasters into the Crab military establishment gave them a greater sense of belonging in the Clan, as well as a measure of standing with the Clan's warrior Families that they didn't have before. They now view the presence of Taskmasters in Crab military units as something of a tax that they pay the Clan in manpower, in exchange for which they receive a small measure of respect that their activities as courtiers and traders don't ordinarily get them.

The Yasuki also participate in the Crab military as the Clan's quartermasters, in practice if not in formal title. Their vast network of commercial and political connections, which ranges far and wide throughout the Empire, gives them reliable access to a wide array of goods, many of which have direct or indirect military applications.

The most important among these, of course, is food. The Crab must support four full-strength armies and one partial-strength one, and with a fair portion of their ancestral land ruined by contact with the Taint, it is never a given in any year that they will grow enough food to meet their needs. It is up to the Yasuki to make up any shortfall, whether by persuading the Imperial Court to grant them the right to claim farming villages from other Clans, by taking commodities like Kaiu-forged steel to various corners of the Empire and trading for food, or persuading other Clans or even the Emperor to make donations to the Crab for the defense of the Empire. For more about the Crab Clan's import and export activity, see *Emerald Empire*, Chapter 5.

If the Yasuki have any cause to grumble, it is the fact that they receive only grudging respect from the Clan's warrior Families for the work that they do in keeping the armies supplied. Although the Kaiu, at least, seem sensible enough to understand that military logistics is a difficult business, the Hida and Hiruma still scorn the Yasuki because they don't do any actual fighting. In spite of this, the Yasuki keep wheeling and dealing, striking bargains as they have always done down through the generations, knowing that if they do not keep the Clan's armies supplied with food, clothing and new arms and armor, they would fall apart in an instant (as indeed would any army). As under-appreciated as they are, the Yasuki are still Crab, and they must do their part for the defense of the Empire.

Even though the Hida may not openly acknowledge the Yasuki's value as shrewd and efficient quartermasters, they seem to understand it at some subtle level. Some Yasuki traders have been recruited to serve on high-level command staffs in each of the Crab armies, usually serving the rikugunshokan or one of the shireikan. Though they have no official rank, they are tasked with making sure the command they serve is properly supplied at all times and for all contingencies. Although these "official yet unofficial" Yasuki quartermasters are few in number, they confirm to the Family that they are much more important to the Clan than the other Crab Families like to let on.

The Armies of the Crab

The Crab Clan maintains the largest standing military of any of the Great Clans. It consists of four full-strength armies, as well as a fifth that provides the Crab with their strategic reserve and veteran cadres of units that can be augmented to full strength in a hurry. They do so out of necessity, of course, as it is impossible to predict major attacks from the Shadowlands far enough in advance to mobilize to their full and true strength from a standing start. But it is also the case that the Crab have used their enormous permanent military establishment as a political bludgeon, both to remind their Great Clan rivals of the physical danger of antagonizing them, and to justify petitioning the Emperor for more lands with which to support the continued defense of the Empire against its greatest enemy.

The First Army

HEADQUARTERS: The Kaiu Wall
RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Hida Kuon

The First and Second Armies of the Crab are the ribs and limbs of the Clan's defenses against the Shadowlands. They are the garrison troops of the Kaiu Wall, and as such, they inevitably bear the brunt of any attack by the foul spawn of that place. Dominated by rank-and-file Hida bushi, it is they who do most of the fighting and dying in the name of safeguarding the Empire from the minions of Fu Leng.

The First Army's area of responsibility stretches from the Eastern end of the Wall, which overlooks Earthquake Fish Bay, to a point roughly due west of Shiro Kuni. Each legion is assigned to guard a section of the Wall and conduct both short and long-range patrols into Shadowlands on a daily basis. That assignment lasts indefinitely, until the legion is relieved and swapped out for refit.

The only exceptions to this rule are the First Legion (the Berserker legion) and the Second Legion (the legion of the Damned). As elite shock troops who live only for the fight, the Berserkers are regularly assigned and reassigned to whichever sector of the Wall is judged most likely to see the enemy. Relief for them is equivalent to disgrace, so they receive replacements for their fallen but are never pulled from the front line.

Neither do the Damned ever get relief from front-line duty, though for slightly different reasons. Contaminated by the Taint, the warriors of the Damned are deliberately gathered together and kept away from other troops. Since their life expectancy is even shorter than that of most Crab soldiers, they are kept constantly in the front lines to get the most out of them while their life and sanity remain.

Apart from the First and Second Legions, the legions of the First Army are not terribly distinct from each other in terms of their organization. They are veteran front-line troops massed in the greatest single fortification under Heaven, their sole purpose to fight for the very survival of the Empire. They do not

need fancy unit designations or honors; their scars are decoration enough for them, and the role of a Crab warrior sufficient to do them proud. Perhaps if one of them were to be tapped for the Hida Elite Guard they would feel differently, but from day to day they are content simply to be the warriors of the Kaiu Wall.

Except for the First and Second Legions, each legion follows the same organizational scheme. The first three companies consist of line infantry, mostly Hida bushi. The Fourth Company consists of four squadrons of archers (including one of Falcon's Strike archers) and three squadrons of Hiruma scouts. The reserve company consists of two shugenja squadrons and four squadrons of Kaiu Siege Engineers.

TABLE 1.1: ELITE UNITS IN THE FIRST CRAB ARMY

First Legion	Hida Berserkers
Second Legion	The Damned
Third through Forty-Eighth Legions, Fourth Company, 1st Squadron	Falcon's Strike
Third through Forty-Eighth Legions, Fourth Company, 5th-7th Squadrons	Hiruma Scouts
All Legions, Reserve Company, 3rd-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers

The Second Army

HEADQUARTERS: The Kaiu Wall

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Hida Sakamoto

The Second Army's area of responsibility extends from the end of the First Army's zone to the western end of the Kaiu Wall, due west of Razor of the Dawn Castle. Everything that may be said about the organization and duties of the First Army may also be said about the Second; hardened Hida warriors make up the core of these legions. They are truly warriors for the working day, and the fact that their end of the Kaiu Wall overlooks the plains across which the Maw and other spawn of Jigoku have emerged reminds them constantly of their duty as the Empire's sentinels.

The only difference in organization between the First and Second Armies is that the Second has no legion of the Damned; its Second Legion is organized the same as all the others.

TABLE 1.2: ELITE UNITS IN THE SECOND CRAB ARMY

First Legion	Hida Berserkers
Second through Forty-Eighth Legions, Fourth Company, 1st Squadron	Falcon's Strike
Second through Forty-Eighth Legions, Fourth Company, 5th-7th Squadrons	Hiruma Scouts
All Legions, Reserve Company, 3rd-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers

The Third Army

HEADQUARTERS: Kyuden Hida

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Kaiu Umasu

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Kaiu Shun

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Kuni Tansho



The Third Army consists of the garrisons that man the major fortifications backing up the Kaiu Wall, as well as Shiro Hiruma and the village of Shinsei's Last Hope. If the First and Second Armies are the ribs and limbs of the Crab defenses, then the Third Army is its spine. Divided between Razor of the Dawn Castle, Kaiu Shiro, Shiro Kuni, Kyuden Hida and Shiro Hiruma (with heavy emphasis given to the last), the Third Army encompasses many, if not most, of the Clan's most elite and storied units. Each of these garrisons functions as a semi-independent wing of the army, with the constituent legions falling under the authority of the local commander — who, in most cases, is actually a Crab Daimyo.

The most important of the fortresses supporting the Wall is Kyuden Hida — politically and historically, if not militarily. As the traditional seat of power for both the Hida Family and the Clan as a whole, Kyuden Hida is a position of honor, and as such it is reserved for the First through Third Legions of the Third Army. In accordance with Crab tradition, the First Legion is composed of Berserkers, even though these elite shock troops are generally wasted in garrison duty. It is not unknown, therefore, for the First Legion to be detached from time to time and sent to the Wall to keep its troops honed and focused, in exchange for a legion from the First or Second Armies in need of relief.

The Second and Third Legions are composed of Hida Elite Guardsmen. The First Company of the Second Legion is designated as the Champion's Guard. A squadron of the Champion's Guard is detached and assigned to escort the Clan Champion and his entourage whenever he travels (this in addition

to his personal yojimbo detail). Squadrons of the Champion's Guard may also be detailed to escort other high-ranking Clan personages and members of the Champion's immediate family when they travel. The Champion's Guard also serves as the battlefield bodyguard of the Champion and his command staff, and squadrons of the Elite Guard serve equivalent duty for Crab Army commanders. However, these assignments have little effect on the standing strength of the garrison. The commander of the Kyuden Hida garrison is always the Hida Daimyo.

North and west along the Kaiu Road from Kyuden Hida are the three fortresses of Shiro Kuni, Kaiu Shiro, and Razor of the Dawn Castle. They are garrisoned by the Fourth through Sixth, Seventh through Ninth and Tenth through Twelfth Legions, respectively. Hida bushi fill the rank and file of these legions almost entirely.

However, the First Company of each of the legions at Kaiu Shiro is filled entirely with Kaiu Siege Engineers; these formations are not only a point of pride for the Kaiu, but they also provide a trained replacement pool for Siege Engineers and command staff officers who fall in fighting along the Wall. To make up for the fact that Engineers play an unusually prominent role in these legions, the 3rd and 4th Squadrons of their reserve companies are filled with Falcon's Strike archers instead of Siege Engineers.

As one might expect, the command staff in the Shiro Kuni garrison is dominated by Kuni shugenja and Witch Hunter bushi.

The garrison commander at Shiro Kuni is always the Kuni Family Daimyo, although the Kuni, as a shugenja Family, place all military decisions in the hands of the highest-ranking bushi present — generally a shireikan designated as the



Daimyo's military aide. The Kaiu Family Daimyo is always the garrison commander at Kaiu Shiro.

All of the garrisons mentioned above are essentially skeleton forces, their sizes tailored to peacetime needs (or what passes for peacetime in the Crab Lands). With the First and Second Armies manning the Kaiu Wall, there is no need for any of those fortifications to be filled out to their full capacity. Since the construction of the Wall and the Kaiu Road, Crab strategic planning has called for those garrisons to form the core around which each respective fort's defenders will rally. If they are in a position in which they may be directly attacked, each fortification will presumably shelter troops from either the First or Second Army that were driven back from the Wall. In such a case, the commander of the fortress (who may well be a Crab Family Daimyo) has authority to temporarily absorb those troops into the Third Army and reorganize them as he sees fit.

The garrison at Shiro Hiruma is a different case entirely. From the fall of the Hiruma castle to The Maw in the Seventh Century to its recapture in the War Against the Darkness, Hiruma bushi were scattered throughout the various armies of the Crab. They no longer had ancestral lands to defend, so their troops helped defend the lands of the other Crab Families. Each reserve company in the First and Second Armies, as well as most in the other Armies, had a squadron of Hiruma scouts or Stalkers as its Fifth Squadron instead of a squadron of cavalry.

But when the Hiruma reoccupied their old stronghold, the Third Army was given responsibility for garrisoning it, and this forced a massive reorganization. First of all, Shiro Hiruma required a permanent full-strength garrison, as the Hiruma lands remained more or less surrounded by the Shadowlands. Secondly, this garrison had to be comprised almost entirely of Hiruma troops.

Accordingly, the survivors of the Hiruma army that had occupied Shiro Hiruma and then defended it against the Shadowlands counterattack were reformed into 33 legions, the Thirteenth through Forty-Fifth of the Third Army. Those units remain at Shiro Hiruma today as the fortresses' permanent garrison, responsible for defending it from all attackers, as well as raiding and patrolling into the Shadowlands. Many of the riskiest missions fall to the Fifteenth Legion, as all four of its line companies are manned by elite Hiruma Stalker scouts. Together, these Hiruma legions of the Third Army are under the command of the Hiruma Daimyo, who is also formally recognized as the commander of Shiro Hiruma.

The only substantial contingent of non-Hiruma troops at Shiro Hiruma is the Fourth Company of the Twentieth Legion, which consists entirely of Kuni Witch Hunter bushi. These warriors are assigned to guard the Kuni Tower at Shiro Hiruma, which shelters Witch Hunters who come to the castle for a close and personal look at the enemy.

The Forty-Sixth through Forty-Eighth Legions are permanently deployed to the village of Shinsei's Last Hope, which is tucked into a corner near the coast just south of the Kaiu Wall. This odd Rokugani enclave, stuck out beyond the borders of the Empire and just as besieged by the Shadowlands as Shiro Hiruma, persists only because it stands on ground hallowed by Shinsei himself. As such, it cannot be corrupted, and so it can support life that is not Tainted.

The village seems to be a strategic liability, as it is highly vulnerable to attack by the enemy. But the Crab have embraced it as a strategic asset, a thorn stuck in the side of the Shadowlands. As long as it can be supplied and defended, Shinsei's Last Hope serves as an excellent staging area for raids and patrols into the heart of the Shadowlands. The Crab have fortified the village as if it was a castle, with high stone walls with ramparts, battlements and towers ringing the settlement. The constant presence of three full-strength legions also makes it the most heavily guarded village in Rokugan. The Forty-Sixth Legion consists entirely of Hiruma scouts, except for the reserve company. Their workload is probably the heaviest and the most hazardous, as they are responsible for securing the village's supply line with the Crab Lands on top of routine raiding and patrolling. Not surprisingly, given the nature of their duty, the Forty-Sixth contains the highest concentration of Hiruma Stalkers outside of Shiro Hiruma itself. The First and Second Companies consist entirely of Stalkers, and the most dangerous assignments inevitably fall to them. The Forty-Seventh and Forty-Eighth Legions consist mostly of Hida troops. Their primary duty is to man the fortifications, although they come in for a hefty share of short-range patrol duty as well.

The reserve companies of all three legions sacrifice their cavalry squadrons for two extra squadrons of Kaiu Siege Engineers. Since the village's agricultural capacity is rather limited, it is not practical to keep many horses; fodder would have to be brought in from outside, and it is best to keep the garrison's need for external supply to a minimum. Instead, it is much more useful for the garrison to have extra engineers on hand to maintain the walls. Given the village's isolation, any weakness in the fortifications could prove fatal.

Historically, the shireikan in command of the Shinsei's Last Hope garrison has always been someone with considerable experience as a Hiruma scout.

TABLE 1.3: ELITE UNITS IN THE THIRD CRAB ARMY

First Legion	Hida Berserkers
Second, Third Legions	Hida Elite Guard
Second Legion, First Company	Champion's Guard
Seventh, Eighth, Ninth Legions, First Company, Kaiu Siege Engineers, Seventh, Eighth, Ninth Legions, Reserve Company, 3rd and 4th Squadrons	Falcon's Strike
Fifteenth Legion, First through Fourth Companies	Hiruma Stalkers
Twentieth Legion, Fourth Company	Kuni Witch Hunters
Forty-Sixth Legion, First and Second Companies	Hiruma Stalkers
Forty-Sixth, Forty-Seventh, Forty-Eighth Legions, Reserve Company, 3rd-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers
First through Sixth, Tenth through Forty-Fifth Legions, Reserve Company, 5th-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers

The Army of the East

HEADQUARTERS: Watchtower of the East

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Hiruma Todoru

So named because its primary duty is to watch the Crab's borders with its Rokugani neighbors, the Crane and Fox Clans, the Army of the East encompasses both the best and the worst of the Clan's military forces.

Four-legion garrisons at the Watchtower of the East and Yasuki Yashiki, as well as Face of the East Castle, anchor the army. Face of the East Castle is politically the most important of the Army of the East's areas of responsibility, as it has become the place where diplomatic missions from other Clans are traditionally received. The First through Fourth Legions are therefore stationed here as a post of honor, although the Berserkers of the First Legion are sometimes detached for more aggressive duty with the Second Army. The First and Second Companies of the Second Legion are Hida Elite Guardsmen, assigned to serve as an honor guard for visiting dignitaries.

The Fifth through Eighth Legions man the defenses at Watchtower of the East, which has always been regarded as the anchor of the Crab's defenses against attack by its Rokugani rivals. As such, it is the traditional headquarters of the Army of the East, and the legions stationed here are composed of veteran units known for their reliability; many have been reassigned from more dangerous duty along the Wall as a respite. The Fourth Company of each legion consists of Falcon's Strike archers.

Yasuki Yashiki is the Yasuki Family stronghold and is garrisoned by the Ninth through Twelfth Legions. The Eleventh and Twelfth Legions consist almost entirely of Yasuki Taskmasters, and have only four squadrons in their reserve company, two of shugenja and two of cavalry. Their primary duty is to escort and keep order within Yasuki trade caravans, and so half of their number are likely to be abroad from the Crab Lands at any given time. They are not integral parts of the Crab standing military in this sense, although they serve an important — if somewhat specialized — purpose to the Clan. However, in time of crisis, the Crab will muster as much of these two legions as can be integrated into a field army on short notice. Time permitting, they may be filled out with ronin mercenaries.

The Ninth Legion consists of the most experienced Yasuki Taskmasters along with recruited Hida bushi, and is known as the Yasuki House Guard.

The Army of the East's responsibilities also encompass the long-neglected Watchtower of the West. Once an important fortification that dominated the borderlands south of the Shinomen Forest, the Watchtower of the West became much less important to Crab defenses after the construction of the Kaiu Wall, and quickly fell into disuse. However, it was revived slightly after the Crab military establishment began to use it as a dumping ground for soldiers who had committed breaches of discipline that were not severe enough to merit execution or banishment. Soldiers who brawl with each other in barracks, sentries found drunk on duty, men who smuggle concubines into barracks, and the like get sent here; officers found derelict in their duties are sometimes stripped of rank and sent here as a mark of shame if they are not permitted to commit seppuku.

All these miscreants are thrown together into the mix and reformed into two penal legions, the Forty-Seventh and Forty-Eighth (i.e., the army's last legions). Most offenders serve here for a fixed term, then are reassigned. The most trustworthy of them may gain a promotion to nikutai or gunso and win

the right to lead others. But both legions organize around a permanent officer cadre of Yasuki Taskmasters, whose main job is not so much to lead the soldiers as to keep them under control. Even the taisa are experienced Yasuki Taskmasters (the senior of the two acting as garrison commander) who view themselves as prison wardens as much as military officers.

In keeping with their unique nature, both legions consist only of four line infantry companies, and have no reserve company. It is highly unlikely that they will ever be called upon to fight, but if so, they must do so without much support.

The remainder of the Army of the East is scattered along a chain of small fortifications and garrisons on the Crane border. None of these garrisons are more than a single legion in strength, and many consist of no more than a company or two. The smaller ones are usually no more than an unfortified barracks in or near a village. Small cavalry patrols scan the border for any sign of military activity by the Crane (or anyone else, for that matter), and the cavalry squadrons of these legions also serve as messengers linking them with each other.

The Army of the East is regarded as soft duty within the Crab military. They do not face the Shadowlands, and therefore have little to no risk of exposure to the Taint. In case of a major threat from the dark lands, even the Reserve Army will receive orders to march to the Kaiu Wall before the Army of the East. When the Crab are at peace with the other Great Clans, there is little for the Army of the East to do except keep an eye on the borders. They do have responsibility for combating piracy in the waters off of the coast, but sea-borne robbers and cutthroats have not been a major threat since the Yoritomo turned their backs on their pirate past and became respectable samurai.

However, in the case of war with the other Great Clans, it is the Army of the East that will bear the brunt of the fighting. Every year at the beginning of the campaign season, the units of the Army of the East conduct two sets of practice maneuvers, one to simulate mustering to defend the border with the Crane Clan, and the other to simulate mustering for an offensive into the Crane Lands. In the past, these exercises created a certain tension between the two Clans that diplomacy couldn't quite ease, but over time the Crane have simply learned to dismiss them as typical Crab bluster.

TABLE 1.4: ELITE UNITS IN THE CRAB ARMY OF THE EAST

First Legion	Hida Berserkers
Second Legion, First and Second Companies	Hida Elite Guard
Fifth through Eighth Legion, Fourth Company	Falcon's Strike
Ninth Legions	Yasuki House Guard
Eleventh, Twelfth Legions	Yasuki Taskmasters
All Legions, Reserve Company, 5th-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers

The Reserve Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Kuni

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Hida Yoshitaka

As its name suggests, the Reserve Army comprises the Crab's strategic reserve. Although its headquarters are located in Shiro Kuni, its component units are mostly deployed in the Clan's hinterlands, away from both the Kaiu Wall and the Crane Clan

border. Many of these units exist only on paper; in ordinary times they consist of nothing more than a handful of officers whose job it will be to handle a flood of new recruits if and when the order to mobilize comes. In this sense, the Reserve army's chief value is as an administrative body, whose duty is to mobilize reinforcements and send them to the front lines as needed.

Among the units kept permanently at full strength, the First through Fourth Legions form the hard core. As per Crab standard practice, the First Legion consists of Berserkers. The First Legion of the Reserve Army is not a terribly prestigious posting for a Berserker, as it is deployed away from the front lines by design. They will not fight except in case of dire emergency. But the officers of the First Legion are fond of saying that a simmering pot can be brought to a boil in a hurry, and they have no doubt that their warriors will fight all the more fiercely for having had to sit on their hands for a while.

The Second through the Fourth Legions are composed of the Crab's main cavalry force, Tsuru's Legion. They represent the cavalry squadrons that, under the conventional Akodo organizational model used by most Rokugani armies down through the centuries, would be assigned to the reserve companies of the First and Second Armies, plus additional squadrons that were later added to augment the force. Together, they constitute a substantial body of troops that can ride hard and fast to plug any hole in the perimeter of the Crab defenses.

The Fifth through the Twenty-Fourth Legions are the Army's remaining full-strength units. They are composed mostly of young Hida bushi, with a few Toritaka and Hiruma thrown in. As such, they are troops of moderate value at best; besides providing the Crab with a ready reserve, they are used mainly to give warriors fresh from their gempukku some seasoning and a taste of barracks life before they are thrown into the front lines. From time to time, they will be sent forward to the Wall, individually or in small groups, as replacements for the fallen.

Additionally, companies or even entire legions that have been mauled in combat along the Wall will sometimes swap out with an equivalent full-strength unit from the Reserve Army for rest and refit. This provides reserve units with excellent opportunities to season both officers and rank-and-file troops with a taste of front-line duty, while the veteran unit re-equips and incorpo-

rates new members. Reserve units that perform admirably may remain at the Wall and permanently join the First or Second Armies, while the units they replaced either wait for another chance to return to the Wall, or are rotated into the Third Army or the Army of the East. If a legion has been mauled badly enough, however, it disbands, its survivors are dispersed among other units, and the officers are reassigned within the Reserve Army.

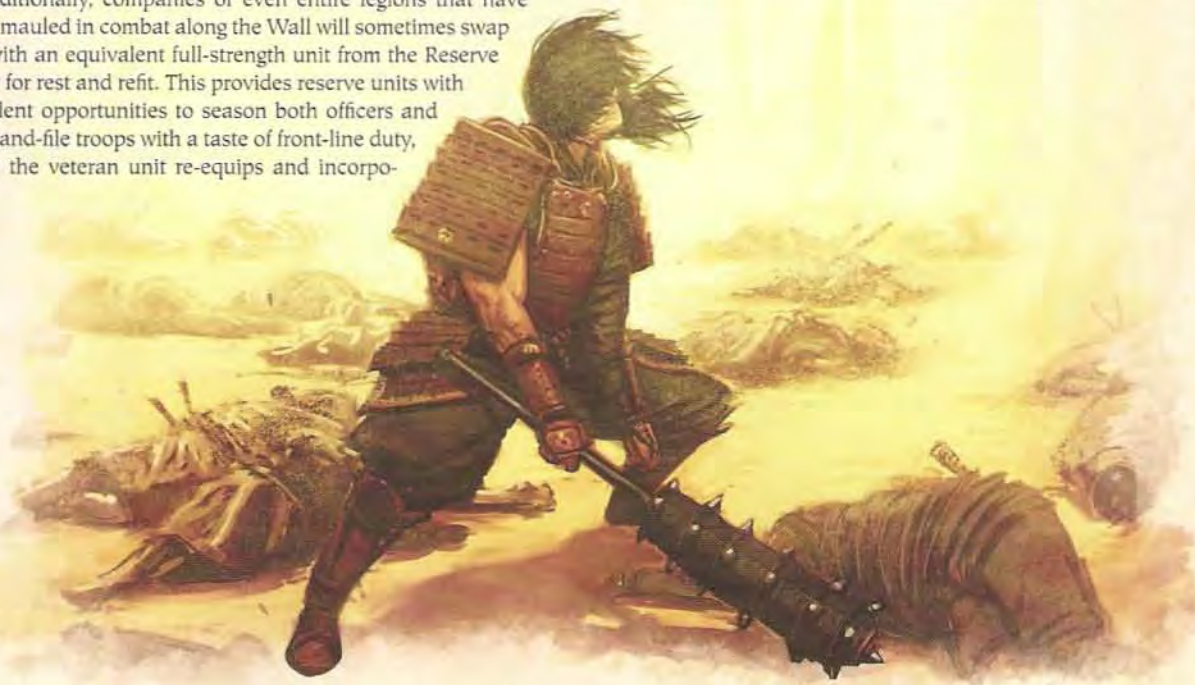
The remaining 24 legions of the Reserve Army exist only as scratch formations in normal times. Only their officers are present in barracks, and they spend most of their time attending to administrative matters. Having the luxury of time, some take extended leave to visit various dojo, either as sensei or as advanced students. Their presence in the army is required mainly to provide an administrative structure in case new full-strength units have to be created in a hurry and the Clan has to mobilize to its full strength. In a crisis, these legions will fill out with new rank and file soldiers, most likely either Crab warriors drafted into service, or ronin mercenaries, or some of both.

These scratch legions also form a reserve officer corps in normal times. Officers of these skeleton units may be detached and sent to other Armies as temporary replacements for officers of similar rank who have been injured, or who have been granted leave to return to their dojo for advanced training.

With the exception of its first four legions, a posting to the Reserve Army is not terribly prestigious. But it serves a necessary purpose for the Crab, providing a reasonably skilled replacement pool for other Crab armies in normal times, and the Clan's last line of defense in a crisis.

TABLE 1.5: ELITE UNITS IN THE CRAB RESERVE ARMY

First Legion	Hida Berserkers
Second, Third, Fourth Legions	Tsuru's Legion
All Legions, Reserve Company, 5th-6th Squadrons	Kaiu Siege Engineers





AUXILIARIES, ALLIES AND MERCENARIES

Not all of the soldiers who fill the ranks of the Crab armies and stand watch along the Kaiu Wall belong to the Clan as such. Historically, the Crab have always been more welcoming of ronin than any of the Great Clans, except possibly the Dragon and the Mantis. This is not so much because they have any particular sympathy for wave men, but rather because they sustain such a constant and relatively steep rate of loss from military operations that filling their ranks with their own samurai is sometimes a problem. Their practice of recruiting new samurai into the Clan through the custom of the Twenty Goblin Winter is well known, but when manpower is short they do not hesitate to hire the services of ronin outright, guaranteeing them pay and accommodations in exchange for a limited term of duty.

In both cases, these ronin and former ronin are generally assigned to the First and Second Armies as replacements for bushi killed and maimed in the constant skirmishing along the Wall. They are not formed into units that would give them a distinctive identity; instead they are fed directly into the meat grinder of the fight against the Shadowlands. The cruel truth is that the Crab consider these warriors expendable, even those brave and skilled enough to have killed twenty bakemono single-handed. After all, ronin who do not live to see the end of their contract do not have to be paid in full. And the Twenty Goblin Winter serves a purpose in and of itself by whittling

away at the hordes of the Shadowlands, so calling them frequently does the Clan no harm, as long as the supply of wave men holds up (and it always seems to do so).

From time to time, the Crab also receive the service of members of other Clans. Many are simply individuals who wish to prove their worth by helping defend the Kaiu Wall; some have deeply personal reasons for wanting to confront the Shadowlands at close range. Many members of the Daidoji Family have a tradition of serving a year of duty on the Wall, a tradition that has earned them considerable respect from the Crab Clan. Also, contingents, or even entire armies from other Clans occasionally march to the Wall as a gesture of solidarity with the Crab.

Individuals who come to the Wall are treated as guests (although Crab hospitality is notoriously rough) and are given duty assignments appropriate to their rank and station. A samurai with some military experience may be given a command staff assignment — a job in which they can just be added to the team without any ceremony or reorganization, and in which an individual Crab of similar rank can keep the guest company. A lower-ranking samurai guest will be assigned to the rank and file, perhaps as a replacement. But it is highly unlikely that he will be allowed to participate in anything really dangerous (or important) until he proves himself in some way. Unlike ronin, the Crab will grant such guests the dignity of treating them as less than entirely expendable.

Adventure Hook: Taint What It Seems

Challenge: A ronin mercenary (or a samurai from another Clan serving temporary duty with the Crab) is found dead near his barracks. His weapon lies near to hand, and it looks as if he might have been killed in an unsanctioned duel. The matter is considered quite serious, and the command staff of his company or even his legion investigates.

Focus: If at least one of the player characters is part of the command staff of the dead samurai's unit, they will be assigned to find out who killed him and why, and to ensure that the killer is punished appropriately. If one of the player characters is the victim's gunso or a higher-ranking officer, similar conditions apply.

If the player characters are rank-and-file comrades of the deceased, they might be inspired to conduct an investigation of their own, perhaps because the proper authorities seem to be incompetent or trying to cover up the truth.

Strike: In fact, the dead samurai was killed by one of his comrades, but not in an illegal duel. If the player characters have the chance to inspect the corpse (or any part of the body), they detect contamination by the Taint. Alternately, an investigation reveals that the deceased showed subtle behavioral and/or physical signs of contamination shortly before his death. Knowing the terrible fate that awaited him, the infected samurai asked his closest friend in his squadron to kill him; the comrade obliged him and staged the scene to look like he had been killed in a duel.

Armies that come to the Wall to fight alongside the Crab are allowed to retain independent command and considerable freedom of action, but they are expected to coordinate all of their actions with high-level Crab commanders. This does not always work to the Crab's benefit, as when the naga army suddenly abandoned the siege of Shiro Hiruma in 1130 to march on the Dragon Lands. But politically, the Crab have little choice but to do so.

Smaller contingents are assigned to a Crab army for administrative purposes, and they are expected to respect the authority of their senior commanders. That being said, however, it is unusual for a visiting contingent to be assigned to a post of great danger right away unless they are an elite unit whose reputation precedes them. An inexperienced or otherwise unreliable contingent will probably be assigned to the Reserve Army, despite the lack of glory that comes with lingering away from the front line. And unless the contingent comes from a trusted ally, it will not be assigned to the Third Army, for fear that it will use the opportunity to spy on one of the Clan's vital fortifications.

The Fourth Imperial Legion

HEADQUARTERS: Toshi Ranbo

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Hida Tonoji

Like all of the modern Imperial Legions, the Fourth is very much a reflection of its commander. Hida Tonoji is known as a hard and ruthless battlefield commander, and an uncompromising leader of men. Under his leadership, the Fourth has gained an Empire-wide reputation as a fighting unit that grants no quarter and would not ask for it in return — that is, in the unlikely case that it would ever find itself in such a disadvantageous position. Its soldiers are sometimes regarded as brutes and cutthroats — a reputation that Tonoji has not discouraged; in fact, he revels in it and quite deliberately set out to create for his legion a reputation that would cow the enemy before the battle started.

Hida Tonoji began his military career in the Crab armies, quickly rising from the rank and file. His first appointment as an officer sent him to the Watchtower of the East as a part of the command staff of the Forty-Seventh Legion of the Army of the East, one of the penal legions formed as punishment duty for derelict Crab soldiers and officers. They were chronic troublemakers, drunks and other hardcases, but also among them were honest samurai who had made an error in judgment and would do anything to redeem their honor. After spending time among these dishonored warriors, Tonoji concluded that, with proper leadership, such individuals could be melded into a highly efficient and utterly ferocious military unit. Unfortunately — and unusually — his superiors in the Crab military did not see that possibility, and continued to treat the garrison of the Watchtower of the East as a dumping ground for the untrustworthy.

Tonoji subsequently left the Watchtower of the East for a series of front-line commands in the Second Army, along the northern half of the Kaiu Wall. Here, he gained his reputation as a ferocious battlefield commander who drove his soldiers without let-up. He eventually rose to command the First Legion of the Second Army — its Berserker legion — where he gained first-hand experience of what highly motivated soldiers could achieve when they thought nothing of their own deaths and even less of their enemies' deaths.

Tonoji cemented his reputation when he led a mixed force of Berserkers and Hiruma bushi escorting a major supply caravan to Shiro Hiruma. It was easily spotted by the foul things of the Shadowlands that haunt the land between the Wall and the Hiruma castle, and suffered a running series of ambushes and skirmishes, with the dark minions always heavily outnumbering Tonoji's command. It was a nightmare that lasted for days, and there were times when only the sheer force of his will kept driving his soldiers on. He lost over half of his force, but he brought the caravan whole and intact to Shiro Hiruma, and left behind him a trail of slain oni, ogres and bakemono.

After that bloody but resolute success, he was recruited into the Imperial Legions and eventually rose to command of the Fourth Legion. As its shireikan, he sought to accomplish what his Crab superiors had not even tried with the Watchtower of the East garrison. Instead of recruiting the best and most obviously trustworthy soldiers, he looked for those who were generally considered unworthy: samurai who had disgraced themselves, either through dishonorable (or outright criminal)

conduct, or through failure in battle. He understood that such as they would either fight hard to redeem themselves or unleash their brutish natures on the battlefield — and that either would work very well in forging his legion into a relentless engine of war. As a result, the Fourth Legion is one of the most feared units in the Emperor's direct service, and that is just as Hida Tonoji wants it.

Crab Strategy and Tactics

Crab strategic and tactical doctrine have changed little since the Clan's founding, and both draw their inspiration from the incomparable strength and fortitude of Hida, the First Crab. The goal of all Crab tactics is to get the enemy to waste his strength by flailing at the hard shell of the Crab; once he has weakened himself, strike back with the claw and crush him.

On the battlefield, this generally means using Kaiu-improvised field fortifications and heavily armored Hida infantry backed by archers to form a defense that can endure any number of enemy assaults, after which a swift and brutal counterstroke by the reserves will win the day.

On the strategic level, Crab generals employ Hiruma scouts — particularly the Stalkers, who are supremely adept at operating alone or in groups small enough to be virtually undetectable — to harass the enemy along his line of march. Given enough time (and they don't need all that much), Kaiu Engineers also lay traps and create other obstructions (such as felling trees along the line of march) to delay and tire out the enemy army. If it can be brought to battle in a tired, frustrated, and whittled-down state, the fight is half won before it even starts, and the Crab army can sometimes go on the offensive right away.

Centuries of practical experience mean that Crab generals have often been forced to tinker with strategy and tactics depending on the fighting styles of their different Great Clan opponents. And of course, fighting against the hordes of the Shadowlands is a science all its own.

THE CRANE CLAN

Though the Crane are not known as a warrior Clan, their art of war poses a particular challenge for Crab commanders. For one thing, the Crane make good use of missile troops, and their archers are both more numerous and, on the whole, more skilled than those of the Crab. The strength of the Hida heavy infantry that make up the core of most Crab armies is their refusal to be moved, but anything that stands still is more easily shot at.

Another key element of Crane battlefield tactics is the use of their elite Kakita-trained duelists, the Kenshinzen. Crane generals like to bring Kenshinzen duelists with them to a battle, not only as yojimbo, but to range across the field in search of enemy leaders to challenge to iaijutsu duels. Such duels, even if they do not result in victory for the Crane challenger, will at least distract an enemy leader during the course of the battle. And a well-timed victory over a well-chosen target can paralyze the enemy's chain of command.

Here, too, the Crab are vulnerable precisely because of the stolidity of their approach to war. To be immovable as the mountain also means that a quick and clever Crane operative will always know where to find you, and it is very difficult to evade him.

To counteract massed archery fire, the Crab place their trust in the Kaiu. Even improvised field works flung up by Kaiu Engineers can offer a decent measure of protection against skillfully directed missile fire. The heavy armor favored by Hida infantry also provides good protection against arrows, although it is always possible for them to find gaps and joints. It is also helpful for a Crab general to have Hiruma scout units on hand to harass Crane missile troops hiding behind the front lines.

Against the Kenshinzen, there is little to do except bring more yojimbo to the field and order them to be extraordinarily vigilant, and perhaps to send yojimbo teams to intercept Crane duelists before they can close with a high value target. Individually, not even a Champion's Guardsman is guaranteed to prove a good match for Kenshinzen swordsman, but a team of bodyguards, who can challenge a Crane duelist in serial, can wear him down to the point where he is no longer effective.

THE DRAGON CLAN

The Dragon Clan pose a challenge to Crab tacticians because the idiosyncratic nature that marks them extends to their art of war. If the Lion are predictable because they established a way of thinking that has become conventional and they continue to adhere to it, then the Dragon are unpredictable because they are so unconventional. Therefore, preparing to make war on them poses the question of how to expect the unexpected.

Crab war planners tend to shrug their shoulders when contemplating the Dragon Clan, and fall back on their traditional strength: the toughness and endurance of the Hida warrior. No matter what the Dragon may throw at them — so the line of thinking goes — the Crab may endure it as long as their heavy infantry keeps the ranks closed and fights with their customary relentlessness.

And what could the Dragon possibly throw at them that would be worse than what they face on a daily basis along the Kaiu Wall? So the Dragon have their Tamori Yamabushi magician-warriors, and their Tattooed Men with glowing bodies. How can they pose a greater danger to a Crab army than hordes of oni or walking dead? At the Battle of the Cresting Wave, a Crab army defeated and killed an Oni Lord while on their last supports, and without much help from the other Great Clans. Let the Dragon remain an enigma; that doesn't mean that the Crab need fear them.

One thing the Crab do know is that the Dragon lack a strong cavalry element that could use mobility to vex the relatively static Crab forces. No matter what else they might summon for a battle, the core of any Dragon army will be the Mirumoto infantry — certainly a fighting force that one should not take lightly, but the Crab will pit their Hida heavy infantry against the foot soldiers of any other Clan without hesitation. Whether the enemy fights with two swords or one matters little to the Hida; they will not be moved either way.



THE LION CLAN

The Crab and the Lion have not faced off against each other very much, but without a doubt the Lion are the Great Clan whose military establishment the Crab most respect and study. This is because the Lion are the great source and repository of Rokugani military tradition. The Crab, like most of the Great Clans, rely heavily on the model created by Akodo to organize their armies, and they have adapted it for their own use with only minor variations. They respect Akodo tacticians as the Empire's best, even if they do feel that it is entirely possible to think too much and fight too little when it comes to the art of war.

So it is only natural for Crab tacticians to ponder how they would handle a confrontation with the Lion, even if history suggests that one is unlikely to happen. Strategically, the Crab would use Hiruma scouts and Kaiu Engineers to harass the Lion army as much as possible. This is standard Crab doctrine, of course, but they consider this aspect of the campaign especially important, since they believe that the best way to counter Akodo stratagems is to disrupt them in the making, before they are ready to be unveiled.

When it comes to an actual pitched battle, the Crab respect the Lion's capabilities enough to alter their standard battle tactics slightly. They know that the Lion understand military engineering better than any Great Clan except their own, and so they keep their Kaiu Engineer units closer to the front line than usual. They assume that the Kaiu will be needed to repair field works in the middle of battle, and later, take apart Lion field works when the Hida infantry counterattack.

The Crab also respect the Lion's elite shock troops — particularly the Deathseekers and the Matsu Berserkers — as in some ways mirror images of their own Hida Berserkers. There is no direct Lion equivalent of The Damned, of course, but the Crab know well enough that the Lion have fearless warriors of similar quality and function in their army. The Crab's natural temptation is to pit strength against strength — to arrange it so that the Crab Berserkers will meet the Lion Berserkers head-on and let fate decide between these two great warrior bands.

But in the back of their minds, Crab tacticians feel concern that the ferocity of the Crab shock troops will have less edge to it if they are not facing the hordes of the Shadowlands. The Damned will fight without let-up because they know that their lives are short anyway. But a crucial part of the Berserker mindset has always been that the Shadowlands deprived them of that which made their lives most meaningful, and Jigoku's minions are marked out as a special target of their rage. Against the Lion — or any other Clan, Great or Minor — they have no such resentment. It seems shameful to wonder if the Berserkers will fight as hard, but the question lingers nonetheless, and in a battle against the Lion that loss of edge would be especially dangerous.

So instead of posting the Berserkers and The Damned in the front of the battle line, Crab tacticians propose positioning them in the reserve, holding them in a reactive role rather than an assertive one. This puts the burden of withstanding the Matsu Berserkers on the shoulders of the regular Hida line infantry, but it allows the Crab elite shock troops to go wherever they are most needed and counterattack at a crucial point, or to launch themselves at a perceived weak point in the Lion line.

THE MANTIS CLAN

Having once assumed the duty of patrolling the Empire's southern coast for pirates, the Crab by habit keep a rather wary eye on their cousins from the Islands of Spice and Silk. The Hida still maintain a small fleet of warships, including their notorious iron-armored "turtle ships," and have a collective memory of the military implications of maintaining freedom of the seas. They understand more completely than any of the other Great Clans (especially the landlocked ones) that the Mantis, should they chose to do so, may descend upon any point on the Empire's coast at will, before anyone can mount an effective challenge to them, or even detect their movements.

Though the Hida still have a navy, they do not have anywhere near enough of one to challenge the Mantis on the high seas, and so they are just as vulnerable to the Yoritomo's strategic mobility as anyone. Instead of challenging them for control of the seas, they adopt a very Crab-like strategy of hunkering down, allowing the Mantis to land wherever they please, and then moving as quickly as possible to their landing site with a powerful army. This last element of the plan is the responsibility of the Army of the East and the Reserve Army, including the hard-riding, hard-fighting cavalry of Tsuru's Legion. Crab strategic planners place special emphasis on controlling the harbors of Earthquake Fish Bay, which are important sources of food and export goods; it is no coincidence that Yasuki Yashiki and the Army of the East's main stronghold of the Watchtower of the West are located nearby.

Crab plans call for giving battle to the Mantis as soon as possible after they make landfall. It may not be possible to deny them control of a key port at first; it is hoped that coastal fortifications will stall them on open ground outside the port until the responding army arrives.

The Crab are entirely confident that they can achieve tactical superiority over any likely Mantis force. The highly skilled and dangerous Tsuruchi longbow archers are a worry because of the accuracy and range of their fire; they are more likely than any other school of archers to find the gaps in a Hida infantryman's armor by aim, as opposed to sheer luck or volume of fire. It is hoped that a combination of Crab archers, Hiruma scouts fighting as skirmishers, and Tsuru's Legion cavalry will keep them busy. Because of the difficulty of transporting horses by sea, it is not anticipated that a Mantis army will be strong on cavalry.

This leaves the infantry to contend with. The Crab understand that Mantis weapons practice emphasizes the peasant-type weapons that the Yoritomo used in their swashbuckling past — small, quick things that could be wielded in the close quarters of a ship and which proved effective enough against unprotected opponents. Crab commanders will therefore trust to the superior reach of their heavier weapons and the protection of their armor to resist the whirlwind of a Mantis attack. The Hida teach, after all, that the mountain does not move, and they believe that a mountain will suffer no more than chips when struck by peasant weapons. If and when it comes down to an infantry fight, the Crab believe that the Hida heavy infantry will simply roll over the more lightly armed and armored (and arguably less disciplined) Mantis.



THE PHOENIX CLAN

Crab military planners find the Phoenix an exasperating opponent to contemplate. It is not the Phoenix Clan's traditional deep-seated pacifism as such that troubles them, even though that is alien to the Crab way of thinking; rather, it is the effect of that pacifism on the way in which the Phoenix approach warfare. The Crab derive their strength from Earth, the Element with which they are most closely connected; it is the strength of the defender who will not yield, who refuses to let even the most ferocious attacker defeat him. But what happens when an opponent cannot be counted on to attack you? What if it is almost certain that he will insist that you strike the first blow? An enemy that refuses to attack will not be weakened by hurling itself against the wall of Hida heavy infantry. As a general rule, Great Clan armies come to the field to fight, not to demonstrate their moral superiority by refusing to fight; this is the unique riddle that the Phoenix present to the Crab.

Crab tactical planning therefore stresses pulling in the Hiruma Scouts as much as possible right before the battle and using them as skirmishers to try to provoke the Shiba bushi into attacking. Archers will also be deployed on the forward flanks for the same purpose. If these light and missile troops can inflict damage upon the powerful Phoenix shugenja, so much the better.

Attacking a Phoenix army directly (instead of adhering to the standard Crab battle rhythm of absorbing an attack, then counterpunching) is also an option. But Crab generals would rather provoke the Phoenix into attacking them first — not only because this fits with their Clan's standard tactical doctrine, but also because they have a nagging sense that to attack first would somehow fight the battle according to the Phoenix's plan and not their own. This is not to say that they are not confident of winning such a battle, but it shows their suspicion of a mindset that is very different from their own.

Crab battlefield commanders also understand that they must take care against the Phoenix shugenja, who show a disconcerting knack for literally reshaping the battlefield to disrupt the enemy rather than striking at them directly. To this, the Crab hope to use their light troops and their own Kuni shugenja to try to get at the Phoenix shugenja and neutralize them. Barring that, they have little choice but to fall back on their ability to stand their ground at all hazard and ride out the Elemental storm as best they can.

THE SCORPION CLAN

If any Great Clan can give the Crab a challenge in the run-up to a battle, it is the Scorpion. Experts in the art of strategic deception, the Scorpion will use every trick they can to misdirect their foe about the location, strength, and direction of their forces. In a campaign against the Crab, it is especially important for the Scorpion to keep the enemy off balance in this manner, for the Scorpion armies are rather mundane as Rokugani armies go, and their best bet — perhaps their only one — for victory is to confuse the Crab forces and tire them out. A Scorpion army and a Crab army in an even-up fight isn't a terribly daunting proposition for the latter. However, a Crab army that has been frazzled and worn down by stratagems and the work of shinobi is another matter altogether.

For that reason, much of the burden of opposing the Scorpion inevitably falls on the Hiruma scouts. A Crab general who knows that he will be going up against the Scorpion will scrounge as many scouts as he can, especially the elite Stalkers, and send them out in a vast fan, searching for any and all signs of the enemy. Their mission places an especially high priority on catching spies on their way to infiltrate the Crab camp, as well as on getting intelligence reports back to the main army as quickly as possible. An experienced Crab general knows that the key to success may be keeping his command staff busy all day and into the night, reading reports and plotting on maps.

If he can avoid the worst of the Scorpions' trickery, the Crab general stands a good chance of victory. His army will preserve most of its superior strength. The sheer willpower that is their legacy from the First Crab will protect them from all but the most potent of the Scorpions' psychological weapons. The battle then comes down to the fighting qualities of the respective armies, and in that, the Crab have the distinct advantage.

THE UNICORN CLAN

For the Crab, it is a good thing that they have a long history of friendly relations with the Unicorn, with only a few minor interruptions. If there is one Great Clan that gives Crab tacticians genuine concern, it is the Unicorn, and in particular the Khol Army, which is the pride and centerpiece of that Clan's military establishment. Their matchless strength — mobility — is also the Crab's only real weakness on the battlefield. Unicorn tactical doctrine calls for their Shinjo Horsebowmen and other light cavalry to strike at the flank and rear of the enemy army, where they are most vulnerable, diverting their attention from the center, where the heavy cavalry will strike hard. The Crab cannot match this strength with strength; the Hida infantry simply are not nimble enough to cope with harassing light cavalry, and the Crab have no cavalry of their own that can match the Unicorn's on the battlefield. The primary value of Tsusu's Legion, after all, is its stamina and speed of strategic movement, not tactical movement and maneuver. In theory, there is nothing to stop a Unicorn army from achieving its tactical goals of enveloping and wearing down a relatively static Crab army.

Crab tacticians faced with the Khol must instead rely on their traditional strength to counterbalance, rather than directly oppose, the Unicorn's advantage in mobility, making the most of their own art of war rather than trying to imitate Unicorn tactics. A Crab general forced to take on the Khol would gather as many Hiruma and Falcon's Strike archers as he could, and draw in his Hiruma scouts as quickly as possible to deploy them as skirmishers against the Unicorn light troops. Even these would be half-measures, as Unicorn light cavalry are mobile enough to dodge missile fire, especially with the help of Baraunghar shugenja. The strength and staying power of the Hida and the ingenuity of the Kaiu will probably have to carry the day in a battle against the Unicorn. Kaiu field works will help protect against horse archery and deter the ferocious charge of the Battle Maidens and other heavy cavalry. Even a simple trench can trip up a horse moving at a gallop, and Kaiu engineers can manage more complex works than that in a hurry.

The Hida infantry will have to pit its strength and heft against Unicorn speed, counting on tightly closed ranks and the strength of their instinctive connection with Earth to prevent the heavy cavalry from breaking their line. A Crab general expecting to face the Khol will train his infantry to fight surrounded if necessary, facing flank and rear so that no part of the formation is truly vulnerable. Each legion will drill in forming squares, one line infantry company per side, with the *taisa* and the reserve company in the middle. Heavy armor, training in defensive techniques, and Crab nerve will have to do against missile fire from Unicorn light troops. If these densely packed squares hold, then the Unicorn should wear themselves out, as do all others who dare attack Hida infantry.

At the strategic level, a Crab general will pit his Hiruma scouts against those of the Iuchi and Shinjo any day. This may indicate an unjustified lack of respect for Unicorn scouts, but it is nonetheless the case that the Crab have every confidence in the superiority of the Hiruma at their specialty. In fact, a confrontation against the Khol is likely to generate as much excitement in the many small skirmishes between the proud and expert outriders on both sides as on the battlefield between the main armies.

THE SHADOWLANDS

The Empire is in one sense fortunate, in that fate could not have picked a Great Clan more suited to stand against the Shadowlands than the Crab. Though one could argue that war is war no matter whom you fight, still, it cannot be denied that the minions of Jigoku present challenges that no human opponent can match.

A samurai who lives for war and has purged himself of the fear of death cannot compare to a zombie who feels no pain and does not bleed when struck, or a *bakemono* driven on by the purest malice and hatred. No Matsu Berserker consumed by battle lust can equal an oni as an opponent, and the fear that the Jigoku-spawn can strike in even the bravest warrior is of a different order entirely than the typical nerves one feels in the moments before contact with the enemy. And no subtle Scorpion poison can compare to the touch of the Taint, for which there is no cure, nor any escape from final madness. When campaigning against another Great Clan, it is all well and good to unfurl the battle maps and ponder the fine points of tactical doctrine. But to make war against the Shadowlands is to fight Jigoku itself.

The Crab have the capabilities to stand against the Shadowlands hordes to a degree that no other Great Clan can match, and they have only refined them over centuries of constant struggle. First of all, the Kaiu are peerless military engineers, easily the Empire's most expert. The Great Carpenter Wall is without a doubt Rokugan's single most impressive feat of engineering, civilian or military. Kaiu-built fortifications have proven strong enough to withstand the worst that Fu Leng's minions can do to them, whether through their demonic siege engines, dark magic, or just the sheer weight of their expendable hordes.

The Crab rely on the strength of their fortifications to maintain physical separation from the Shadowlands monsters — not to hide from them, but to prevent them from bringing the full bulk of their numbers to bear, and to prevent close contact with the Taint as much as possible. Keeping them at arm's length

allows archers to inflict casualties before the enemy can close to melee, and more importantly, it gives the Kuni shugenja the space that they need to work destructive magic against them. A squadron of shugenja casting Jade Strike and similar spells over and over again can have a strong discouraging effect on a horde of Shadowlands beasts. Even the roughly improvised works that the Kaiu engineers brew up on the battlefield can work wonders in this regard.

But Kaiu fortifications can only accomplish so much without stout Hida bushi to man them. And here is the true heart of Crab tactical doctrine against the Shadowlands: It all comes down to the willingness of their heavy infantry to stand against the monsters. Fighting against the foul things that Fu Leng set loose upon the mortal realm is not so much a test of tactical cunning or of skill at arms, or even of physical strength. It is a test of the mind and the soul, a test of will. For all of those other things will come to naught if you cannot stand and face living things so corrupt, so horrid that their very existence is an affront to the Celestial Order.

And so it is the Hida heavy infantry who form the core of the Crab armies that face the Shadowlands along the Kaiu Wall. Their *tetsubo* are designed to rend oni flesh more effectively than katana. Their heavy armor offers better protection against claws and fangs. Their close-packed ranks ensure that every soldier guards the flank of the comrade fighting alongside him. In the end, it comes down to this: The Hida will fight. The Hida may die. But the Hida will not be defeated. That is the Crab Clan's tactical doctrine for fighting the Shadowlands hordes.

Strategically, the Crab understand the importance of raiding and gathering intelligence in the Shadowlands, as it keeps the enemy off-balance and spots threats before they become visible from the battlements of the Kaiu Wall. That is why they send patrols out beyond the Wall and their frontier strongholds of Shiro Hiruma and Shinsei's Last Hope on a daily basis. Hida bushi scour the immediate vicinity of the Wall, remaining out for no more than a day at a time, while Hiruma scouts, who are trained for more sustained operations, penetrate as deeply as they dare into the corrupted lands. In both cases, the goal is to strike at targets of opportunity — small bands of creatures and/or The Lost — as well as look out for large-scale movements of enemy forces and significant changes in the landscape.

Crab Strongholds

It is usually the colossal Kaiu Wall that comes to mind when Rokugani think of the Crab's military fortifications — and understandably so, since it was built to cover the Empire's entire southern border and keep out an enemy deadlier and more fearsome than any gaijin nation. But the Wall is actually part of a larger network of military installations, all of which play their own roles in keeping the Crab Lands safe. Some of them predate the Kaiu Wall and serve functions that are more or less independent of it, while others exist out of recognition that it is wise for the Crab to take notice of what happens in Rokugan while their backs are turned.

Face of the East Castle

Without a doubt, Face of the East Castle is the most hospitable of the Crab fortresses. Though it boasts a sturdy, Kaiu-built citadel and secure walls, the atmosphere lacks the general feeling of gruff vigilance that one finds at most other points in the Clan's defensive network. That is because the Crab really don't expect Face of the East Castle to be attacked – they use it mainly as a reception point for diplomatic embassies from other Clans.

The Crab trust mainly to the location of this castle to keep it secure. It is set well away from any border with a rival Clan, on a plain south of the Shinomen Forest. The looming presence of the great forest also means Shadowlands beasts stay away from it. The entire garrison consists of just two companies of Hida Elite Guardsmen detached from duty at Kyuden Hida, and they are there mainly to serve as an honor guard for visiting dignitaries.

In this secure and relatively serene setting, the Crab have actually created a place that outsiders find welcoming. All of the rooms are comfortably appointed, and decorated with attractive and expensive-looking paintings and art objects. These trappings are all supplied by the Yasuki, of course, who are the only Crab who have any knack for selecting such things.

Far Runner Dojo

The Far Runner Dojo is a unique institution, a training hall run by a Family of one Clan, but actually located in the lands of another Clan. It is a product of the unique friendship that sprang up between the Hiruma and the Unicorn Clan. After the Unicorn returned to Rokugan, they were mostly shunned by the Great Clans, but they found an unusual degree of sympathy from the Crab, who knew what it was like to be looked upon as uncouth and brutish.

The relationship between the two became closer after Moto Tsume and his followers disappeared into the Shadowlands, and the Unicorn realized that they needed to learn more from the Crab about the blighted region beyond the Kaiu Wall. They offered the Hiruma, still brooding in exile and forswearing all signs of their existence as a Family, a place to train their bushi, building a training hall on the White Shore Plains, just across the Firefly River from Shiro Moto. In return, the Hiruma would teach the Moto survival techniques, combat techniques and other forms of lore regarding the Shadowlands.

After the recovery of Shiro Hiruma in 1132, Far Runner Dojo was almost vacated, as the Hiruma flocked back to their ancestral home and began rebuilding it. This, of course, included re-establishing the old dojo of the Hiruma Scout School. They maintained a cadre of sensei at Far Runner Dojo only out of respect for the Moto, who had shown them real generosity in allowing them to set up the dojo. Since then, however, the Hiruma have sent more and more students back to the dojo, keen to make use of the so-called Running Fields that surround the training hall.



The Running Fields is really nothing more than a network of paths cut through the tall grass of the White Shore Plains to allow the students to run wind sprints and work on their foot speed. The ability to run exceptionally fast is not only helpful to the Hiruma Scouts, it is essential to the so-called Falcon's Wings runners (most of whom have historically been Hiruma), who provide communications for the Kaiu Wall garrison.

The paths are deliberately cut in an intricate and potentially confusing pattern, as they are also used for extended field exercises in which students are sent miles away from the dojo and then required to navigate their way back. Not only does the high grass make this difficult, but the White Shore Plains roll markedly here, and sight lines are often less than what one would expect. In addition, the dojo uses the Running Fields for night training exercises, which generally involve stalking and tracking in limited visibility.

Kaiu Shiro

Although the Great Carpenter Wall is the pride of the Kaiu, their ancestral stronghold is nothing to dismiss, in its military value or as a symbolic demonstration of their worth as the Empire's foremost engineers. The walls of the original keep were built so thick and yet so seamlessly that from a distance, it looks like it was hewn from a single block of solid rock, rather than fashioned with cut stones and mortar. Furthermore, subsequent additions to the castle were attached so cleanly that it is impossible for someone unfamiliar with its history to tell where the existing construction ended and the new additions began. It was built to such exacting specifications and with such care because, at that time, the Kaiu had not yet

built the Great Carpenter Wall, and it was assumed that the castle might someday become a front-line fortification in the war against the Shadowlands. But it was also the case that the Kaiu could not, for reasons of Family prestige, stint on the construction of their own fortress.

Over the centuries, however, the western Crab provinces have not proven a popular target of invasion, and so Kaiu Shiro has never been seriously tested as a fortification. The Kaiu, of course, would have everyone believe that this is because their castle is so forbidding that not even the oni dare to challenge it, and there may be a bit of truth in that.

Instead of a fighting center, Kaiu Shiro serves the family as a spiritual and political center. It is home to the Great Forge, the heart of the Family's mastery of forging and metalworking. It is also home to the primary dojo of the Kaiu Engineer School, the Kaiu Engineering Academy. And, interestingly enough, Kaiu Shiro is reputed as hosting the most enjoyable Family courts of any Crab Family except for the Yasuki. As the most accessible of the Crab warrior Families, the Kaiu draw the most visitors from outside the Clan, especially artisans who revere their tradition of metalworking and wish to pay homage.

The Seventh through Ninth Legions of the Third Crab Army garrison Kaiu Shiro. They are composed mostly of Hida bushi, but they also contain substantial contingents of Kaiu Siege Engineers. These units are charged with maintaining Kaiu Shiro and keeping it in good repair, but they also function as training cadres for the Siege Engineer units in the First and Second Crab Armies; most of the rank and file are recent Kaiu Engineering Academy students who have come straight from their gempukku. Every now and then, individuals or small groups are sent to the Wall as replacements for veteran comrades



who have been killed or are no longer fit for active duty. Even though it seems counterintuitive that the Kaiu would trust inexperienced Siege Engineers with their Family stronghold, the castle does sit in a relatively quiet sector of the Crab defensive network, and they believe that their ancestors built it so solidly that its maintenance requirements are modest enough to be met by those who are still learning their craft.

The Kaiu Wall

Since the dawn of Rokugani history, the Crab have understood the need for a permanent barrier to separate the Empire from the Shadowlands. Centuries before the Kaiu built their great wall, Hantei directed Hida to build an extended fortification along the southern border of the Hiruma lands in the hopes that it would keep evil at bay.

And so it did — until The Maw overran the old wall and swept through the Hiruma and Kuni provinces in the Eighth Century, bringing the enemy closer to its goal of destroying the Empire than at any time since the Day of Thunder. The first wall's ruins were lost to the Shadowlands, and even though the Hiruma have since reclaimed their ancient castle, no traces of the old wall have ever been recovered.

The great wall that shields Rokugan from the Shadowlands today was built as a reaction to the loss of that first, Hida-built wall, though not with any real forethought. In fact, its origins date from a moment when it was doubtful whether or not the Empire would have any future beyond the next dawn. The history of the Battle of the Cresting Wave is well-known by now, and it is also described elsewhere in this book. Suffice it to say that the Kaiu-rigged improvisation that was flung up in a desperate attempt to take advantage of Kuni Osaku's gallant self-sacrifice was so successful that it became the basis for the greatest engineering project ever attempted in the history of the Empire.

The original fortification that the Kaiu erected was not nearly so ambitious as what it eventually became. Not even their expert engineers could attempt more in the space of 73 days than to construct a wall with battlements and siege engine platforms that was just long enough to shield Kyuden Hida from The Maw's line of advance. They chose the north bank of the Last Stand River both because that was where Hida Banuken had rallied his battered army, and also because it was a natural defensive barrier that could be augmented through their ingenuity.

But as comparatively modest as it was, it worked, and well enough so that the Battle of the Cresting Wave still stands as an excellent example of the four legs of the Crab military operating in effective concert: Hida stubbornness and the Hiruma's brooding aggression, augmented by Kuni magic attuned to fighting the Taint, and stout Kaiu engineering stopping the enemy in their tracks. It also worked well enough that there was never any debate about what was needed next: It was universally agreed that the Crab had to have a bigger, better wall than the one that Hida had built for Hantei. It would mean conceding the loss of Shiro Hiruma, but it seemed at the time that there was little practical choice but to do so. And a bigger, better wall is what the Crab — and the Empire — got.

Over the generations that followed the Battle of the Cresting Wave, the Kaiu expanded and strengthened their wall, which is also sometimes called the Great Carpenter Wall. It now ex-

tends along what was at the time the entire southern border of the Crab Lands, from the hills overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay to Razor of the Dawn Castle. It runs roughly along the course of the Seigo no Kamae, so that the river forms an effective natural moat, but does not follow it exactly along its entire length.

The Wall now stands 100 feet high, containing six above-ground levels filled with barracks rooms, conference rooms, mess areas, storage rooms and armories. Arrow slits perforate only the top level, as the Kaiu realized that slits at lower levels would make their archers relatively vulnerable to the enemy without contributing to their own rate of fire or effectiveness of aim; the high angle that firing from the top floor and the battlements allows both increases the penetrating power of the shot and protects friendly archers from enemy missiles.

The battlements are 30 feet wide all along the Wall's length, allowing a four abreast column of soldiers to move quickly and easily from one point to another. This degree of width not only allows reinforcements to move quickly along the top of the Wall even while soldiers man the battlements, but it also adds to the fortification's overall strength. Gently tapering battlements serve to deflect enemy missiles without creating too much of a blind spot at the base of the wall. Platforms built around towers set at regular intervals provide a stable base for siege engines, while the towers themselves serve both as communications stations and rallying points for the garrison should the enemy ever gain the top of the walls.

A structure this large requires a massive foundation, and the Kaiu did not stint on that, either. The above-ground portion of the Wall tapers from the base to the top level for the sake of stability. And the base, in turn, is anchored in a foundation that is buried hundreds of feet into the earth below. The Hida may brag that the mountain does not move, but when it comes to the Hida infantry who garrison the Wall, that is only true because Kaiu architects have done such a thorough and methodical job of designing the place where the Hida make their stand.

Kaiu ingenuity has also made a virtue out of the necessity of creating such a huge anchor for the Wall. Three basement levels descend beneath ground level, each of them a maze of catacombs and deliberately disorienting tunnels. They contain cisterns and emergency storage areas, but they are mostly an intricate network of tunnels.

These tunnels are something of a holdover from the original Kaiu Wall — the Crab plan for the Battle of the Cresting Wave called for the lighter Hiruma troops to be held in reserve while the Shadowlands horde wore itself out against the Hida heavy infantry and Kuni shugenja on the battlements. Then, the Hiruma would sortie through the gates and drive them from the field. But for the Kaiu, such a plan was not sufficiently cunning. Why drive the enemy from the field, when it was possible to encircle and annihilate them? They suggested digging tunnels with one end in a basement carved from the foundation of the wall, and the other emptying onto the far bank of the river. If the Hiruma could emerge in the enemy's rear, the Maw's forces would be surrounded. For anyone else, such a task would have been impossible in only 73 days, but the Kaiu managed it. This network of tunnels enabled the complete destruction of The Maw's army (and just as importantly, the destruction of the Oni Lord itself), and they served as the basis for the labyrinth that lies beneath the Wall today.

Several hundred covert tunnels into the Shadowlands currently exist, beginning beneath the Kaiu Wall and opening out beyond the Seigo no Kamae. The exits remain as concealed as possible, to make it difficult for the Shadowlands beasts to find them. And even if they do find them, the Kaiu use their ingenuity to make counter-infiltration difficult. Not only are the tunnels filled with traps known only to the Crab officers who lead the patrols, but they are built as mazes, making it difficult for anyone who is not familiar with their layout to navigate them. Also, the Kaiu regularly change the layout of the tunnels and add and move traps, so that information that was current last year will almost certainly be fatally out of date this year. To make it triply difficult to get through the tunnels, misleading directions are written everywhere, with the direst warnings generally attached to the simplest and easiest paths through the maze. While very few bakemono can read Rokugani, it is nonetheless considered an effective deterrent against the Lost or other human renegades who would try to slip through.

In spite of these precautions, it might still seem that allowing any kind of physical passage between the Crab Lands and the Shadowlands is a threat to the former; why subvert the Wall, which was built at great trouble and cost to keep the Shadowlands out of the Empire? But the Kaiu have thought this problem through, and it is practically impossible for any substantial force to make its way through the catacombs without the permission of the Crab. Most of the tunnels are small and narrow, both to avoid weakening the foundation of the Wall, and also to drastically slow the movement of a large force through it. Hiruma patrols can take their time, but an invading force will have to make haste, lest it be discovered and trapped. All of the passages bottleneck as they lead back to the Crab Lands, becoming so narrow that only one human can pass through at a time.

When one factors in the dizzying array of traps and portcullises installed by the Kaiu, the basement levels of the Wall become impassable to anyone there without the Crab's permission. Kaiu engineers like to say that they can completely seal off the tunnels with one hour's notice, and it is generally regarded as anything but a vain boast.

The Kaiu Wall has a permanent garrison of two full-strength Crab Armies, the First and Second — close to 100,000 soldiers in all — and it could accommodate more than half again as many in a pinch. In a crisis, reinforcements from the Reserve Army would rush to the points of threat, and ashigaru levies would be housed here. The spare capacity also comes in useful when contingents from other Clans come to serve on the Wall, and when ronin descend in response to a declaration of a Twenty Goblin Winter.

The First and Second Crab Armies are filled with battle-hardened Hida infantry, as well as some of the most storied units in the Crab military. Each legion of those armies is assigned to a designated section of the Wall, and is responsible for defending it and patrolling into the Shadowlands so that it will know what is happening to its front. These scouting reports are especially important, and the *taisa* of each legion is responsible for summarizing his patrols' reports and sending them on to his *shireikan*, or directly to the *rikugunshokan*. Legions that have been bled down from combat, or that are showing signs of fatigue, are withdrawn from the line to rest or incorporate replacements and sent to quieter sectors, such as the Reserve Army or the Army of the East.

Squadrons of Kaiu Siege Engineers also fill the ranks of the First and Second Armies. They are charged with inspecting and maintaining the Wall. They are proper soldiers who will wade into the fray when needed, but their primary duty is to make sure that this keystone of the Crab's defenses is always in good repair. Apart from normal weathering and the inevitable displacement of stones from settling and shifting, damage from battle is also a constant. At least once per week, Kaiu Siege Engineer staff officers from each legion make an inspection tour of their sector, looking for structural defects, battle damage, and general signs of age and wear. If they deem something serious enough to require repair — and all Kaiu take the condition of the fortification that bears their Family name very seriously — they will order the Siege Engineer squadrons to attend to it immediately, regardless of all other considerations.

Communication along the Wall is also a serious and complicated matter. Horsemen are generally in short supply; stabling them and finding enough fodder to sustain them is troublesome, the presence of the Shadowlands makes them flighty and unreliable, and cavalry has never been a strength of the Crab military in any event. Instead, the First and Second Armies have found it more efficient to use a network of runners to send messages. For administrative purposes, each army maintains its own messenger corps, attached to the *rikugunshokan*'s staff, but in fact they are all one organization, tasked with serving the Wall from one end to the other.

The towers along the Wall serve as relay posts in the network. Each has a handful of runners on duty at all times; when orders come in that a message must be delivered to a certain point, a runner takes it as his duty to deliver it to the next tower over. If the message must go farther, then a fresh runner takes it to the next post, and so on until it reaches its actual destination. With a continual supply of fresh legs and each runner selected for exceptional speed to begin with, a message can get from one end of the Wall to the other astonishingly quickly.

These runners call themselves the Falcon's Wings — which has led some outside the Clan to assume that they are primarily Toritaka. In fact they are mostly young Hiruma bushi who have been selected for their fleetness of foot. This job tends to take them out of front-line combat duty, which ordinarily would be a disappointment and even something of a humiliation to a Hiruma. But the Falcon's Wings are widely respected for the duty they perform, and they console themselves with the knowledge that being a runner when the Wall is under attack requires great courage as well as athletic skill, as they must deal with the presence of the enemy without wearing armor or even being able to fight back.

As colossal as the Kaiu Wall itself is — and unless the Kaiu are ever forced to build another wall to defend the Empire, Rokugan will never see another feat of engineering quite like it — it is also impressive to behold the array of buildings that has accumulated over the centuries on the Crab side in support of the garrison. It seems at times like a single bustling village hundreds of miles long, and it performs much the same function that the surrounding city does for the troops of a major castle. A permanent garrison of this size cannot exist in a wasteland, after all. For every legion occupying a sector of the wall, an array of shops, sake houses, geisha houses, armors, tradesmen, gamblers and other service providers have set



up on the friendly side of the Wall to accommodate them. A few of these civilians come out of genuine devotion to those who dedicate their lives to keeping them safe from the utter darkness beyond. But the vast majority are here because they know there is money to be made from relieving the strain on those whose lives are wholly devoted to war, lives that constantly swing between boredom and raw fury. If you have a good supply of sake, there is a lot of money to be made when there are Hida around.

Kyuden Hida

Although the Kaiu Wall is undoubtedly the centerpiece of the Crab Clan's defenses, Kyuden Hida is both its primary command facility and the Clan's political center. It is the longtime seat of the Hida Family, and also the headquarters of the Third Crab Army. In the event of a major invasion by the Shadowlands, Kyuden Hida will become the Clan Champion's main headquarters, as operations involving the First, Second and Third Armies will be coordinated from here. Any Reserve Army units sent to the Wall or any of the fortifications under the command of the Third Army will also be expected to take their orders from Kyuden Hida instead of Shiro Kuni upon their arrival.

Kyuden Hida has come to symbolize the character of the Clan to which it belongs. The castle makes no pretense of being anything other than a military fortification. Like the Crab, it disdains all decoration; there are no gardens here, no works

of art on display for the edification of visitors, no pretense of aesthetics to soothe the spirits of its permanent inhabitants. There is little to catch the eye here except for stone and mortar — unless one were to count the fanged skull of The Maw, the Oni Lord killed at the Battle of the Cresting Wave, which hung over the great gatehouse for some 500 years. It is no longer there, as it shattered when The Maw returned from Jigoku and reincarnated, but it stood as the greatest single battle trophy any Great Clan could boast, and represented both the power and indomitability of the Crab warriors.

Although it has never been tested by a siege, Kyuden Hida was nonetheless sited and designed as if the life of the Clan would someday depend on its strength. It was built on a promontory overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay, the base of its high walls melding seamlessly with the natural escarpment so that it seems an extension of the living rock. Kaiu architects built the walls to withstand any siege engine made by human hands. The gatehouse rises 60 feet high and is sited at the base of the escarpment and off to one side, forcing any invader who somehow got past it to traverse a long, narrow path with no cover right under the battlements to get to the castle itself. Kyuden Hida was built to look absolutely impregnable, and in that it certainly succeeds.

Besides serving as the Crab Clan's fortified nerve center, Kyuden Hida also hosts the main dojo of the Hida Bushi School, which is the Clan's largest institution for training its samurai. The dojo occupies an entire wing of the castle set aside for it.

Kyuden Hida is garrisoned by the Second and Third Legions of the Third Army. Both of them are the home units of the Hida Elite Guard, and they provide security for the castle and the personages who live and visit there. The First Legion of the Third Army — its Berserker legion — also maintains barracks at the castle, although it is often sent to the Kaiu Wall to give the Berserkers the taste of combat for which they are so well suited.

Razor of the Dawn Castle

Razor of the Dawn Castle marks the western edge of the Crab defense network, situated as it is near the very end of the Kaiu Wall. It actually pre-dates the Wall, and part of the reason that the Kaiu chose to end the Wall where they did is that they knew Razor of the Dawn Castle already kept watch over the westernmost point at which infiltration from the Shadowlands was likely.

The fortress overlooks the vast, desolate Plains Above Evil from a vantage point tucked in between two peaks of the Twilight Mountains. It is an eminently defensible location, but this is usually a quiet sector of the Crab defensive line. The Plains Above Evil are so desolate that even Shadowlands creatures seldom venture there; in fact, the most activity that Razor of the Dawn Castle generally sees are Hiruma long-range patrols that use the deep ravines of the adjoining mountains as infil-

tration routes to slip into the Shadowlands unobserved. Due to the low level of Shadowlands activity, it is also a popular destination for ronin determined to make the Twenty Goblin Winter pay off for them.

The Tenth through Twelfth Legions of the Third Crab Army form the permanent garrison here. But because this tends to be a quiet post, they have contingency plans for two of the three legions to march to the Second Army's sector along the Kaiu Wall and temporarily attach themselves to the Second Army in case of a major invasion from the Shadowlands. All three legions regularly train in rapid cross-country marching, which is something of a departure from the standard Hida bushi regimen.

Razor of the Dawn Castle is also home to the Razor's Edge Dojo, founded after the Clan War to give the Berserkers a quiet place to train and meditate. For more about the Razor's Edge Dojo, see *Emerald Empire*, Chapter 8.

Sharp Eye Dojo

Nestled in the heart of the Valley of Spirits, the Sharp Eye Dojo is the only training hall of the Falcon's Strike, the elite archers who bolster the Kaiu Wall garrison and some of the garrisons under the command of the Third Army. As its location suggests, it is run by the Toritaka Family, though with the help of the Hiruma, who have provided the Crab with archers for most of the Clan's history.



The dojo is an unassuming place, in keeping with its rustic setting. An uninformed passerby would probably assume that it was a temple, if he did not catch a glimpse of the large open field in back with rows of archery targets. The barracks rooms in which the students are quartered are so unassuming and unmilitary in their appearance that one might easily think monks live there.

The practice field is unusual, in keeping with the Falcon's Strike reliance on visual acuity rather than archery technique. The targets are quite small, no larger than the upper chest of a human being, and they are painted dark green to blend in with the woods at the back of the field. Even at 100 yards, one must peer closely to see the targets with any degree of precision. The sensei also run regular exercises where they deliberately clutter the background behind the targets with distracting objects. Another exercise has the students firing blunted arrows at the targets while assistants run around both in front of and behind the targets.

In all cases, of course, the point is to teach the students to acquire targets even under difficult circumstances. More advanced exercises incorporate these basic lessons while increasing the rate of fire. It is an unconventional approach to military archery, but judging by the respect that the Falcon's Strike have gained in their relatively short existence, it is one that works quite well.

Shinsei's Last Hope

The village known as Shinsei's Last Hope is rarely visited by anyone outside the Crab Clan, and most outsiders don't even realize that it exists. In spite of this, however, the Crab consider it one of their most important settlements. It is an island of purity in the midst of the Taint, and until the recapture of Shiro Hiruma, it was the only place beyond the Kaiu Wall fit for human habitation.

The origin of Shinsei's Last Hope dates back to the First Day of Thunder. After the Seven Thunders defeated Fu Leng, it was a Crab scout who first saw Shinsei and Shosuro returning from the Shadowlands. He greeted the heroes and learned from them of their victory. But before he could leave to spread the news, Shinsei took him aside and whispered a promise to him: "This place where we stand now will never fall to the Taint so long as your children protect it. Guard it well, for it is in this place that the Empire shall find its last hope."

The scout was spellbound by Shinsei's words, and for seven days he stood rooted to the spot, not daring to leave. Histories do not recall his exact identity; not even the Crab remember his name today. All that is known is that after a week of vigilance, another Crab scout found him, and returned to Kyuden Hida with word of Shinsei's prophecy. Kuni shugenja were sent to verify the claim, and they found to their astonishment that the area around where the original scout had planted himself — an area large enough to hold a small village — had indeed been purified. Green plants had begun to grow, and the ground water tested pure.

Within months, settlers began arriving on the site so that the Crab would play their part in Shinsei's prophecy — the sons and daughters of the Clan would guard this place with their lives. Enraged by their audacity, the beasts of the Shadowlands attacked the village, but the Crab always defended it in sufficient strength. Over the centuries, Kaiu engineers added a formidable

wall to encircle the village, built along the border where the pure land ends and the Shadowlands resume. The wall is studded on the outside with bits of jade, which keeps the beasts away except when they are determined and launch an organized assault. Even so, the Crab garrison Shinsei's Last Hope with three full legions of the Third Army — a force of extraordinary size to devote to the permanent defense of a village.

Just as one might expect, Shinsei's Last Hope serves as a staging area for Hiruma patrols venturing deep into the Shadowlands, their last safe haven. It also sees considerable activity whenever a Twenty Goblin Winter is declared and ronin come streaming in, looking for a last bit of rest and safety before they venture into the wastelands.

Shiro Hiruma

Although recovering the ancestral seat of the Hiruma Family from the Shadowlands hordes remains one of the Crab Clan's signal achievements during the Twelfth Century, the Shiro Hiruma that now stands is not quite the Shiro Hiruma that once was. A heroic reconstruction effort began immediately after Hida Yakamo recaptured it in 1130, as not only was the ancient castle in ruins, but the site and surrounding land had to be purified after centuries of contamination.

All of this was accomplished more or less satisfactorily within a generation, as all of the Crab Families contributed what they could according to their talents. Restoring the castle as a military installation was the Kaiu's work, of course, and their best efforts were necessary, since Shadowlands beasts still prowled in the vicinity. The Hiruma had reclaimed their home, but not necessarily liberated the land around it. As brave and skillful as the Kaiu were, their work parties required constant heavy guard.

Over time, however, starting with the citadel and working outward, the ruins that the Hiruma recaptured became a powerful if spare-looking fortress with heavy outer and inner walls, towers that dominated the surrounding countryside, and stout, reinforced gates that could withstand even the demonic war machines of the enemy. Both the Hiruma and the Kaiu have strewn the surrounding ground with hidden pits and other traps, making it doubly difficult for a besieging army to settle in comfortably outside the walls.

The vast network of tunnels and warrens that the Hiruma found underneath the ruins of the old fortress (many of them the work of nezumi who struggled to survive here after the Hiruma were forced to abandon the land) presented a problem, as they could easily become infiltration routes for Shadowlands creatures. These were eventually all sealed up, ensuring that only a breach in the walls would allow enemies into the fortress.

Because of the constant and close-at-hand threat to the castle, Shiro Hiruma maintains a full-strength garrison of 33 legions — over half of the Third Army — at all times. These represent a substantial portion, if not a majority, of the Hiruma's house soldiers serving in the Crab armies. They are quartered in a vast underground barracks complex, built around the old tunnel network. This complex also houses the First Strike Dojo, which represents the Hiruma's attempt to replant their own bushi school on native soil after so many years of dissolution and exile. For more about the First Strike Dojo, see *Emerald Empire*, Chapter 8.

Living and training below the castle like this with 20,000 other soldiers is not the most comfortable of existences, but the Hiruma feel it is important to protect the barracks from direct attack, given that Shiro Hiruma remains deep in enemy territory. These barracks, which are protected by Kuni-crafted wards, also can serve as a base for irregular warfare in case history ever repeats itself and the castle once again falls into enemy hands.

The complex has a total of fifteen exits to the surface, some emerging miles away, others within the fortress walls. The Hiruma placed these exits for the same purpose as they used the tunnels that ran from underneath the original Kaiu Wall at the Battle of the Cresting Wave: In case of attack, they would always have a way to pop up in the enemy's rear and attack him by surprise. Of course, the exits to these tunnels are heavily concealed and trapped. They are also guarded at all times by parties of Hiruma scouts who will annihilate anyone trying to reveal their location. Having lost their home once in their history, the Hiruma are determined not to lose it again.

Shiro Kuni

Shiro Kuni has a reputation as a weird and off-putting place, in part because the Kuni themselves have a reputation as weird and off-putting. But it is also the castle's location — adjacent to the Kaiu Wall, so close that the shrieks and roars of oni may be heard in the night air — that makes most outsiders so uncomfortable.

The castle itself is of marginal military value. Unlike many Crab fortifications, it doesn't even try to take advantage of surrounding terrain that could enhance its defensive properties. It simply sits in the middle of a flat stretch of land, as if it relied on the unsettling qualities of the terrain and nothing else to deter invaders. The castle itself sprawls and is not easily defended. It is large, but its defensive works are not terribly imposing.

Shiro Kuni serves as a command and communications center, as well as a staging area for units of the Reserve Army that are being mobilized, or which have come from outlying barracks. It is the headquarters of the Reserve Army, even though the garrison — the Fourth through Sixth Legions of the Third Army — belong to a different command.

The castle's only other major function is to house the Kuni Laboratories, that grisly collection of research workshops where the Kuni dissect and experiment upon the things of the Shadowlands and look for ways to counter them. Those who find the public aspect of Shiro Kuni unbearably creepy would fall dead from horror if they saw the Laboratories.

Not even the Kuni themselves consider their stronghold fit for visitors. When they wish to hold court, they do so at Face of the East Castle, or at Yasuki Yashiki, with the sufferance of the Yasuki.



Watchtower of the East

Watchtower of the East, which occupies a strikingly scenic vantage point overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay, was originally built to mark the border between the Crab and Crane Lands after the First Yasuki War. Back then, it really was just what its name suggests, a single stone tower from which the surrounding sea and land could be observed. Since that time, however, its location has made it an anchor point in the Crab's defenses that look away from the Shadowlands, towards the other Great Clans. Crab strategic planning now treats Watchtower of the East as the last fallback point in case of an invasion from the southern Crane provinces, where the Army of the East is to make its last stand.

In keeping with its growing military importance, the watchtower also grew in size and complexity. The original tower was strengthened and eventually became the citadel of a substantial castle. A set of walls was added to block off the entire seaward side of the promontory on which the tower stood. Later, an outer wall was added, and the only approach to the main gate was sunk into the ground, forming a canyon that allowed plunging missile fire onto unwelcome visitors.

These last features were added at about the time of the Second Yasuki War, when the castle was also designated as the headquarters for the Crab Army of the East. The Army of the East also began to make a point of garrisoning the castle with only reliable, veteran legions; for although the Army of the East lacks some of the star power of the other Crab armies and does not have as many elite units, its army headquarters nonetheless requires garrison troops of high quality, for symbolic value if for no other reason.

The Fifth through Eighth Legions of the Army of the East form the garrison here, but often, these are actually legions swapped out from more demanding duty with the First or Second Armies and sent to Watchtower of the East for refit and replacements. They are battle-hardened troops, but they have also come here to spend some time on a relatively quiet front before returning to the Kaiu Wall. Even so, they confer upon Watchtower of the East and the Army of the East a degree of respectability with their very presence, and in case of a sudden attack on their front, they will provide a veteran backbone to an army that sees relatively little action.

Watchtower of the West

As strongholds go, the Watchtower of the West doesn't amount to much; in some ways it doesn't really belong in a discussion of the useful and significant parts of the Crab defensive network. It has been neglected since the construction of the Kaiu Wall made it obsolete as an anchor for the Crab defenses in the west. Since then, it has fallen into disrepair and no serious attempt has been made to refurbish it. The battlements are worn and in some places broken, and chunks of masonry have fallen off of the towers without anyone seeming to care. From certain angles, it looks like a besieging enemy could put their shoulders to the walls and shove to create a breach.

However, it is worth mentioning as the location of an unusual experiment in military discipline. The Forty-Seventh and Forty-Eighth Legions of the Third Crab Army are stationed here as punishment duty. Their ranks are filled with warriors who have fallen short in their duties in some way. In other Clans, many of these derelicts would have been allowed to commit seppuku, cast out as ronin, or even executed. But the Crab, ever pragmatic and always needing every soldier, decided to send them to the least useful, most obscure posting that could be conceived to do penance. Watchtower of the West therefore takes on the atmosphere of a prison, which it essentially is, with the soldiers serving under the watchful eyes of Yasuki Taskmaster officers.

Yasuki Yashiki

The great stronghold of the Yasuki Family perches on a dramatically scenic — and easily defensible — cliff's edge overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay. Once the family estate of Yasuki Kiringu, and sited more for its striking view than any thought of military virtue, it became the Family stronghold after the Yasuki split from the Crane and were forced to leave some of their holdings behind in the Crane Lands.

Its relative opulence (especially compared to other Crab Family strongholds, like Kyuden Hida) is quite striking, as it was originally intended to show off the affluence of its occupant. The residential part of the fortress is really more like a palace than anything else. Its public rooms and defensive works are a later addition, dating from after the split from the Crane. However, they are hardly an afterthought, for they were designed by Kaiu architects and military engineers, and the Kaiu never design anything casually. For instance, they reshaped part of the cliffside so that the only approach to the fortress is a canyon-like winding path, with plenty of covered positions on either side that allow archers to fire down onto any unwelcome visitors. The Yasuki now have as their home a rather unusual hybrid of palace and castle.

Three legions of Yasuki house troops — two of Taskmasters and one of the more prestigious Yasuki Family Guard — normally garrison Yasuki Yashiki. During the Four Winds period, however, the palace lay more or less empty as the Crab and the Crane once again fought over the fealty of the Yasuki. It was during this time that the Shogun, Akodo Kaneka, declared himself the rightful heir to leadership of the Yasuki, citing obscure documents that the Miya and the Otomo had provided to him. From then until his death in 1169 at the Battle of Toshi Ranbo, Kaneka used Yasuki Yashiki as the main base for his own personal army, which bivouacked in the storehouses and stables, as well as the open spaces inside the fortress walls. Some Yasuki house soldiers remained in garrison during this time, manning the walls and strongpoints as they always had. Although tensions ran high at times between them and the Shogun's followers, they managed to coexist.

After Kaneka's death, the Yasuki began to reclaim Yasuki Yashiki for themselves. They restored the areas that the Shogun's followers had used to their former functions, and the Yasuki House Guard now stand their posts without having to glance sideways at soldiers not directly beholden to their Daimyo.

Elite and Special Units

As a Clan that never really knows true peace, it is to be expected that the Crab will have many distinctive and even elite units in their permanent military establishment. It should also come as no surprise that many of them are formed by the experience of fighting against the Shadowlands, either as a direct response to that particular threat, or — in the case of the berserkers of the Damned — assembled from the casualties of that unending war.

At the same time, however, the Crab are more than capable of taking on any of their Great Clan rivals on the battlefield. Any Rokugani general who guesses that Crab soldiers will be out of their element in fighting against other untainted humans will soon find himself wanting for a head.

Berserkers

Veteran officers of the Crab Berserker legions like to point out that their soldiers do not embrace a particular military role or an approach to war so much as they embody a way of being. More than anything else, the defining mark of a Berserker is the way in which the meditation techniques that his training teaches him allow him to strip the code of Bushido down to a few bare guiding principles: purity of mind and spirit, disinterest in worldly things, and absolute disregard for one's own life while in service of one's lord. Berserkers should not be mistaken for madmen or brutes. They are simply soldiers who came to the Berserkers prepared to become the perfect warriors, and were able to make good use of the unit's unusual training.

The Berserkers themselves care nothing about what outsiders think of them. Because they do indeed center their entire existences around selected tenets of Bushido and exclude all else, they live only to fight for the Crab Clan, and nothing else matters to them. Though they are all technically proficient bushi, what really distinguishes the Berserkers from other Rokugani soldiers is the astonishing — even alarming — clarity with which they approach the warrior's task.

Crab Berserkers receive a proper degree of weapons training, but it is the extent to which they also study meditation that makes them so distinctive. The peculiar techniques taught by the Hida Berserker School allows a Berserker to channel his emotions and enhance them, whipping up a battle rage that cannot be stopped until his enemies lie dead around him, or until he himself is killed.

Berserkers generally spend several hours before the beginning of a battle meditating on their pent-up rage, allowing it to well up and become a source of strength for them. It is a process that begins in silence and calm, but as it progresses it becomes louder and more active. In the camp of a Crab army in the pre-dawn hours before battle, the shouts of Berserkers in the throes of their preparation may be heard everywhere. Berserkers may also lash out at the nearest inanimate object while summoning their rage — and are generally segregated from the rest of the army for that reason.

By the end of their meditation they achieve within themselves a delicate balance between the power of their emotions and the discipline of being part of an army. As a result, they can face the challenges of battle with absolute clarity, unhindered by conscious thought — especially thought of self-preservation — and wholly bent on destruction of the enemy. They enter what some have described as a trance-like state, marked by the glassy 'dead-eye' stare. This altered state of mind heightens their combat abilities, but it also makes the Berserkers fearsome opponents because their will to fight is impossible to break.

Historically, most Berserkers have come from the Hiruma, although they were trained by the Hida. Although it is not a prerequisite for joining their ranks, the best candidates for the Berserkers have always been soldiers who have lost much of what was dear to them — if not everything of value. Thus, they not only have the requisite combat skills, but also bear within them deep despair and hatred of the enemy. It is this terrible combination of grief and rage that Berserker meditation taps as the source of its power. For much of the Crab Clan's history, most of their bushi who fit this description were Hiruma, who lost everything that belonged to them to The Maw.

However, this has become less the case since the recovery of Shiro Hiruma, and the Family's mindset has shifted from one of shame and rage over the loss of their lands to reclaiming their birthright and defending it against the Shadowlands' seemingly unending counterattack. Now, more warriors from other Crab Families fill the ranks of the Berserkers. They may not have lost their entire lands to the Shadowlands, but many Crab have lost relatives or close friends to the terrible foe beyond the Wall, or to the Taint.

Within the Crab military establishment, the Berserkers are generally well-respected. They receive a place of honor in each Crab Army: the First Legion. However, as a general rule, their officers are not Berserkers. The Berserkers themselves are considered to be excellent tools, but once in their battle-rage state, they are unable to step back and exercise the sort of dispassionate judgment necessary to make command decisions. Serving as a Berserker officer is considered to be a difficult task, as it involves leading warriors who by their nature can be hard to control. It also means spending your last hours before battle in close proximity to the Berserkers as they undergo their alarming preparations. Therefore, officering in a Berserker legion for any period of time is likely to inspire considerable respect in one's peers.

NPC: HIDA RIE, NIKUTAI, 3RD SQUADRON, SECOND COMPANY, FIRST LEGION, FIRST ARMY

Air: 2	Earth: 3 Strength: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Honor: 2.4	Status: 2.0	Glory: 3.0		

SCHOOL/RANK: Hida Berserker 2

KATA: Striking as Earth

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 1, Defense 3, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Meditation 1

Whether or not she was in any sense born to be a Berserker, Hida Rie cannot now imagine any other place for herself than

in one of the Crab's Berserker legions. Unlike the Hiruma who once made up most of the Berserkers' ranks, she cannot claim to have lost her home to the Shadowlands, but as the daughter of a family with a long history of soldiering for the Crab Clan, she has lost more in her still relatively young life than anyone should have to bear. Before she was even old enough to complete her gempukku, she had already seen her father, aunts and uncles and cousins from both sides of her family, and both of her brothers killed in battle against the Shadowlands.

Left with only a wisp of what had been a proud and close-knit family, Rie felt that even as she was embarking on her life as a Crab samurai, she had little left for which to live except service to her Clan. The dead-eye trance and the chance to avenge those whom she loved appealed to her, and she applied to join the Berserkers almost immediately. So far, she has exacted a measure of revenge against the Shadowlands for the blood of her kin, but not nearly enough to satisfy her.

The Damned

There are among the armies of the Great Clans elite warrior units that are feared for their ferocity, their sheer physical courage, their skill at arms, or some combination of the three. But none are feared in quite the same way as the berserkers of the Crab known as the Damned. In all other cases, fear of elite warriors represents the fear of death or wounding, or of defeat at their hands. But with the Damned, it is something else entirely — the fear of annihilation and spiritual desolation that comes with staring madness directly in the eye.

Humans who become infected with the Shadowlands Taint have little of their lives left before they become tools of Jigoku, a menace to all around them. But the Crab have found a way that samurai who are doomed in this manner can yet serve Clan and Empire — and perhaps even find an honorable death — before succumbing to this worst of all maladies. They take these unfortunates who are still manageable and form them into an elite military unit that not only does not fear death, but welcomes it as a release from terrible suffering that will only worsen with time.

The berserkers of the Damned are all bushi who have contracted the Taint, but who have not yet given in to it. The vast majority of them are Crab warriors, as the Crab have the most regular contact with Tainted beings; not only that, but few outside the Crab have enough stamina to hold off the progress of the Taint long enough to go through the screening process and then serve for any length of time.

Candidates for the Damned are sent to the notorious Kuni Laboratories at Shiro Kuni, where the Family's researchers examine them to determine the extent and nature of their contamination. It is not an easy process, as it involves confining them in a dark, miserable cell for up to a week. If it is determined that a candidate has enough time left before madness consumes him, he is sent to the Kaiu Wall under guard, where he joins the Second Legion of the First Army, the designated home of the Damned.

The Second Legion of the First Army is deliberately placed in the Crab army that sees the most combat on a constant basis, as the Shadowlands enemy seems to be more active along the



eastern sector of the Wall than in the west. The Damned are quarantined from other units; all contact between the Second Legion and soldiers from the rest of the First Army is expressly forbidden. Even the soldiers of the legion's reserve company are kept away from them, except for the 5th and 6th Squadrons; these are composed of Kuni Witch Hunters whose duty it is to keep an eye on the Damned and kill on the spot any of them who are finally losing their grip on themselves.

The legion is officered by Crab who are not Tainted, even down to the *nikutai*; no matter what their previous rank or station, the rank and file of the Damned may never rise above the rank of *hohei*. Being an officer of the Damned is not exactly considered a plum assignment, given the hazards involved. But there never seems to be a genuine shortage of sufficiently experienced Hida warriors who are willing to take on the challenge.

For their part, the Damned do not care that they are treated as pariahs by their comrades. They know their condition, and they consider themselves in a race against time to secure a good death before corruption forces a dishonorable one upon them.

Of course, this makes them absolutely fearless in battle, and as an opponent they are incredibly difficult to defeat because nothing short of extermination will stop them. There are elite units in Rokugani armies who are fearsome opponents because they will fight without fear of death. The Damned draw their power from an even more daunting source: They wish to die, and to die quickly — but not before taking as many of the enemy with them as they possibly can.

NPC: HIDA KENTARO, HOHEI, 2ND SQUADRON, THIRD COMPANY, SECOND LEGION, FIRST ARMY

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Honor: 2.0	Status: 2.0			Glory: 3.0

SHADOWLANDS TAINT: 1.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Hida Bushi 2/The Damned 1

ADVANTAGES: Multiple Schools

DISADVANTAGES: Shadowlands Taint (1)

KATA: Shell of Stone

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 3, Defense 3, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 3, Jiu-jitsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Medicine 2, Meditation 1

Hida Kentaro's tale is not terribly unusual for a warrior of the Damned. He was the sole survivor of a Hida patrol that was ambushed by a group of *oni*. Close contact with the *Jigoku*-spawn is a dangerous thing in more ways than one, and the sliver of jade that he carried with him was nearly spent as it was. What happened to him next was unfortunate, but also predictable.

It started with fits of dizziness, then hallucinations. An examination by the Kuni Witch Hunter on the command staff of his legion confirmed that he had been contaminated by the Taint. The diagnosis came as a shock to Kentaro, as might be expected. He was escorted to Shiro Kuni for further testing, and it was determined that he had enough life left to him that service in the Damned was a viable option. He was sent back to the Kaiu Wall, this time to join the Second Legion of the First Army, the home of the Damned.



Hida Kentaro now spends most of his days in silence, and often seems as if he is walking around in a daze. He waits for only one thing — the chance to die honorably in the service of the Crab, and he hopes it will come soon.

Falcon's Strike

Archery has never been as popular a pursuit among Crab warriors as mastery of heavy weapons such as the tetsubo, but since the construction of the Kaiu Wall it has been a very necessary skill to the Crab's overall strategy. Skilled bowmen are essential to making the Wall work properly, both to keep the enemy away and harass their siege engines, and to cover sorties from the walls and Siege Engineer parties making repairs.

For centuries, the Hiruma provided the Crab Clan with its only notably skilled pool of archers, and they were mostly confined to the scouts. But when the Falcon Clan merged with its longtime allies the Crab, it opened up the possibility that the Toritaka Family's exceptional visual acuity, traditionally used to hunt the *gaki* and spirit creatures that plagued their native area, could be adapted to more mundane, purely military uses.

It was the Toritaka themselves who first raised the idea of a joint archery school to be run in cooperation with the Hiruma, eager to integrate themselves more thoroughly with the Crab military establishment. The Hiruma, still wearing their dispossession like a brand at the time, agreed, as long as the Toritaka acted as the official hosts of the school.

Falcon's Strike archers are recruited mostly from Toritaka and Hiruma bushi, but not exclusively. They are taught techniques in seeing and aiming, rather than the physical manipulation of the bow and arrow. Falcon's Strike sensei believe that bow technique is somewhat irrelevant, because if you cannot see your target properly, a steady hand will not help you. Instead, they teach their students to distinguish a target from the background, focusing on it to the exclusion of all else.

Falcon's Strike archers are scattered throughout the Crab Armies, particularly the First and Second. Each legion has at least one squadron, assuring that they help guard every sector of the Kaiu Wall.

NPC: TORITAKA FUYUKI, GUNSO, 1ST SQUADRON, FOURTH COMPANY, THIRD LEGION, FIRST ARMY (FALCON'S STRIKE)

Air: 3	Earth: 2	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Willpower: 3				

Honor: 4.5	Status: 2.8	Glory: 3.0
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SCHOOL/RANK: Toritaka Bushi 3

ADVANTAGES: Fleet 2, Quick

KATA: Striking as Water

PATHS: Falcon's Strike

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Falcons) 2, Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 2, Defense 3, Engineering 2, Etiquette 2, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Falcon Clan 2, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Lore: Spirit Realms 2, Meditation (Void Recovery) 2, Spears 3

Toritaka Fuyuki's roots run deep in his Family; his bloodline can be traced back to the time when the Toritaka were still the Falcon Clan. He takes considerable pride in his heritage

and his main ambition in life — aside from serving Clan and Empire with honor — is to boost the Toritaka Family's standing within the Crab Clan. His dedication to the Falcon's Strike archers is a manifestation of that dedication.

As a youth, Fuyuki displayed unusual foot speed and exceptional quickness. His teachers marked him out as a tracker of spirit creatures, as many of his ancestors had been. Fuyuki, however, wished to serve his Clan more directly, and became an infantry bushi. Shortly after joining the army, however, he became aware that the Family's leadership were pushing the Falcon's Strike as an institution to bring prestige to the Toritaka. Fuyuki immediately decided he would become an archer.

His basic bushi training had given him some experience in handling a bow, but Fuyuki found he had a natural gift for the techniques of seeing that his Falcon's Strike sensei taught him. His sensei also discovered he had some natural gift for leadership, so when he completed his training, he joined a Falcon's Strike squadron at the rank of *nikutai*. He was promoted when his *gunso* returned to the Sharp Eye Dojo as an instructor.

Hida Elite Guard

In theory, the Champion of the Crab Clan is its leading warrior, and as such, it would seem unnecessary that he should have a bodyguard. But in reality, threats abound to any leader of such importance, and many are of such a scope that not even the greatest bushi could be certain of handling them himself. It is only prudent — and not in any sense dishonorable — for personages to gather about them bushi charged with keeping them safe.

A bodyguard detail can take the form of a small team of *yojimbo*, but it can also be a military unit whose members are selected with care and charged with keeping their important person from harm. For the Champion of the Crab, who is always expected to lead from the front in battle, having an official military bodyguard to protect him and his command staff is a necessity. The Hida Elite Guard was formed in response to this need.

There is nothing particularly fancy or elaborate about the Hida Elite Guard's mission. Their job is to secure *Kyuden* Hida, especially the personal quarters of the Champion, his immediate family, and anyone else he designates as important. They also accompany Clan dignitaries, such as high-ranking ambassadors, when they travel. When the Clan Champion goes to battle, the best of the Hida Elite Guard, the Champion's Guard, accompany him and his staff wherever they go.

The Elite Guard are hand-picked from the ranks of the various Crab armies, theoretically providing the unit with the most skilled and steadfast Hida bushi. Crab officers may recommend Hida soldiers from their unit for selection to the Elite Guard, and candidates are sent to the nearest Hida Bushi School dojo for screening in fighting proficiency and strength of character. While this system may seem set up to allow officers to get rid of their troublemakers and other undesirable soldiers, it never works that way. It is a great honor for a soldier from one's unit to enter the Elite Guard; it is taken as a sign of your merit as a leader that you have molded such a soldier, and it helps mark you as a candidate for promotion. Conversely, recommending too many failed candidates is taken as a sign that you are too greedy for advancement and not sufficiently interested in your present duties.

Hida Elite Guardsmen are taught to be mindful that even as they channel their formidable strength in a battle, they must never lose track of their charge. Physical proximity — and the relative proximity of the enemy to their charge — is of absolute importance. However, an Elite Guardsman is never merely a human shield, meant to passively absorb punishment. All threats to whomever (or whatever) he must protect are by definition enemies of the Crab and must be eliminated.

The Hida Elite Guard comprise two legions of the Third Army, the Second and Third. One line infantry company is the home of the Champion's Guard, the selection process for which works similarly to that for the Elite Guard. Whenever a vacancy opens up in the Champion's Guard, distinguished Elite Guardsmen are recommended by their superiors to fill it, and Hida Bushi School sensei review the candidates and select one who is the most worthy.

On the face of it, the matter of rank might seem to be a problem for the Elite Guard; merely to join the rank and file, one must already be a combat veteran of some accomplishment, and such distinction would otherwise often mean promotion. Sometimes, it comes down to a choice between joining the Elite Guard or becoming a gunso or even a higher ranking officer. A samurai who joins the ranks of the Elite Guard starts over in rank as a hohei. Yet such is the honor of being an Elite Guardsman that this never discourages a self-respecting Crab warrior from wanting to become one.

**NPC: HIDA GENDA, NIKUTAI, 1ST SQUADRON,
FIRST COMPANY, SECOND LEGION, THIRD ARMY
(CHAMPION'S GUARD)**

Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 4
Honor: 5.5		Status: 5.0		Glory: 5.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Hida Bushi 5

ADVANTAGES: Bishamon's Blessing

DISADVANTAGES: Soft-hearted

KATA: Shards of Earth, Shell of Stone, Stance of the Wall, Striking as Earth, Unyielding Fury

PATHS: Hida Elite Guard*, Champion's Guard

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 4, Craft: Armorsmithing 2, Craft: Weaponsmithing 2, Defense 5, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 5, Jiu-jitsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 5, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 2

* See The Four Winds, p. 15

There is nothing particularly extraordinary about the fact that Hida Genda was, after long and loyal service to the Crab, rewarded with an appointment to the Hida Elite Guard. While still a bushi in an ordinary line company in the First Army, he distinguished himself as an excellent combat warrior, exceptionally strong and brave. He was renowned within his legion for once having killed an ogre single-handedly without any apparent difficulty.

When he was soon promoted to gunso of his squadron, and eventually his taisa recommended him for admission to the Hida Elite Guard. None of this was surprising; what was unusual was that Genda set a condition for allowing his commander to recommend him. Reluctant to leave his comrades in arms, he insisted he would only join the Elite Guard if the

taisa bested him in a drinking contest. Fortunately for Genda, the taisa showed greater stamina that night, and Hida Genda soon became an Elite Guardsman.

Serving in the Elite Guard, Genda spent most of his time in garrison at Kyuden Hida and saw less combat than he had on the Kaiu Wall. But he continued to distinguish himself as a warrior by fighting friendly duels with other Guardsmen. Sometimes he would even challenge his superiors in the spirit of genial competition. After defeating his taisa in the Elite Guard at wrestling, Genda once again found himself recommended for greater distinction — this time, a posting in the Champion's Guard. But once again, Genda was unwilling to leave his comrades, and only after losing another drinking bout to his commander did he consent to the promotion.

Hida Genda is currently a nikutai in the Champion's Guard, and one of the most popular members of that elite unit. Unusually irreverent and playful for a Hida, he is known for his booming laugh that rings through his section of Kyuden Hida.

Hiruma Stalkers

Given their long experience in operating in small units that rely on both stealth and warrior skill, it is no surprise that the Hiruma would develop an elite branch of their respected scouts. The Stalkers, as they are known, are not the product of a directive from the Family or Clan leadership to train elite scouts, but rather grew naturally from the fact that many veterans seemed to develop the same skills over the course of their duties. After the recovery of Shiro Hiruma in 1132, Hiruma commanders began grouping such soldiers together and sending them on missions requiring those skills, and these ad hoc formations became the basis for organizing the Stalkers as regular units.

All Hiruma Scouts are trained to survive and defeat small numbers of enemy deep in hostile territory, working on their own or in small teams. They are all trained to use stealth and careful observation to avoid the enemy when necessary, and to strike hard and fast when it is time to fight. But the Stalkers take these skills to a truly exceptional level of mastery, practically functioning as Crab versions of shinobi. The Stalkers are often called upon to run routine patrols into the Shadowlands and attack targets of opportunity, much like their fellow Hiruma scouts. But they may also be ordered to act upon intelligence regarding particularly dangerous individual creatures judged to be a threat to Shiro Hiruma, and given missions to locate and kill them.

Some of those creatures, of course, are important and powerful members of the The Lost, who might organize a significant attack on Shiro Hiruma. So the Stalkers also have experience hunting human (or at least formerly human) opponents. If the Crab were to go to war with another Great Clan, it is not at all inconceivable that Stalker teams could be sent to assassinate enemy commanders or other important figures.

The Stalkers are organized into six line infantry companies (even though they are very rarely deployed as line infantry) in the Third Army, divided between the Fifteenth Legion (at Shiro Hiruma) and the Forty-Sixth (at Shinsei's Last Hope). In case of war with another Great Clan, the Hiruma may be prevailed upon to attach one or two companies to the Army of the East, which will have probably have primary responsibility for prosecuting the campaign.

The Stalkers are no longer selected only from hardened veteran Hiruma Scouts. Most candidates are identified earlier in their careers and are sent to the First Strike Dojo for Stalker training.

NPC: HIRUMA DAISUKE, NIKUTAI OF 1ST SQUADRON, FIRST COMPANY, FORTY-SIXTH LEGION, THIRD ARMY

Air: 3 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 3 Void: 3
Stamina: 4

Honor: 4 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Hiruma Scout 3

DISADVANTAGE: Overconfident

KATA: Shell of Stone, Striking as Earth

PATHS: Hiruma Stalkers*

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 1, Defense 3, Hunting 3, Jiu-jitsu 1, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Medicine 2, Stealth (Sneaking) 3, Traps 2

* See *The Four Winds*, p. 15

From the beginning of his military career, Hiruma Daisuke was marked out as a scout of exceptional skill and daring. He was known to prefer to work on his own, to penetrate deeper into the Shadowlands than most other Hiruma Scouts thought prudent, and to use stealth and surprise to defeat enemies more numerous or stronger than him.

His willingness to take risks and his apparent ability to get away with it eventually got him a promotion to the Stalkers — specifically, to one of the Stalker units stationed in Shinsei's Last Hope. So far, his time at this outpost of sanctified ground has been mostly uneventful, except for the time he got the drop on a bakemono scouting party and single-handedly killed half of them before the rest ran away. This daring deed won him a promotion to nikutai and much praise from his superiors.

The reverse of Daisuke's boldness is, unfortunately, a genuine tendency to underestimate the difficulties that face him. It is a blindness that could get him in serious difficulty someday, and if he is ever promoted to a position where he commands a sizable body of soldiers, it could cost them their lives.

Kaiu Siege Engineers

To some degree, the rest of the Empire thinks of the Kaiu Family as the intellect of the Crab Clan. Except for the Yasuki, they appear to be the least purely warlike of the Crab Families. Brilliant builders and architects, expert metallurgists and craftsmen, even strategists and tacticians — next to the scarred and brooding Hida and Hiruma, the Kaiu can seem almost genteel.

But those appearances are deceiving, of course. The Kaiu are soldiers through and through; they just express it in different ways from their fellow Crab. Just about every reserve company in the Crab armies has at least one squadron of Kaiu specialists; the standard configuration calls for two, and most legions in the First and Second Armies see fit to keep four squadrons in total, replacing the Akodo-model standard of two squadrons of cavalry.

These are the Kaiu Siege Engineers. They are trained just the same as their fellows who remain behind the front lines as architects and builders. But their duty is to patch and maintain fortifications, even in the midst of battle, and to overcome or subvert enemy fortifications. And when a Crab force operating in the field, away from a fortified base, needs to go on the defensive suddenly, it is the Kaiu Siege Engineers who dig the traps and trenches and fling up the barricades.

It is a hazardous duty that doesn't always get the respect it deserves. Ask most Rokugani samurai about the military engineer's craft, and they will scoff about digging pits and dragging logs and stones. A true samurai wields his blade in the name of his Clan and lord, they say, and there are even some among the Crab who hold this opinion in the back of their minds.



But the vast majority of their Crab colleagues understand that the Kaiu Siege Engineers do some of the hardest, dirtiest, and most dangerous work of war, and appreciate them for it. Whenever the enemy's fortifications need to be scouted and studied up close, it is the Siege Engineers who do it. Whenever a scaling ladder or a battering ram or a siege tower needs to be deployed under fire from archers and shugenja spells, it is the Siege Engineers who do it. Conversely, whenever a breach in the walls must be patched or a wrenched gate repaired in the presence of the enemy, it is also the Siege Engineers who do it.

The fact that they must do their jobs in the midst of battle without much freedom to defend themselves inspires respect among their more insightful colleagues, and it is a source of pride to the Kaiu themselves. Though each Siege Engineer knows well enough how to handle a weapon, their elan comes from their unflinching willingness to expose themselves to danger to help their Hida and Hiruma peers.

As one might expect, Kaiu Siege Engineers are deployed in strength at every fortification in the Crab Lands, where inspecting the walls and towers keeps them well occupied even in times of relative peace. They are particularly needed in the First and Second Armies, which garrison the Great Carpenter Wall, and also in the Third Army garrisons at Shiro Hiruma and Shinsei's Last Hope. Experienced Siege Engineers are frequently found on the command staffs of each legion, and a senior Siege Engineer on the army command staff oversees the activities of all Siege Engineers in that army.

Along the Wall, inspection tours are generally the responsibility of Siege Engineer command staff officers, and they are made on a weekly basis, or after a major attack. It is their job to identify necessary repairs in their section of the Wall, and the Siege Engineer squadrons of that legion are then tasked with carrying out the repairs. The same is the case at Shiro Hiruma, which boasts an unusually large garrison and bears the brunt of frequent attacks; there, the Siege Engineer squadrons are almost constantly at work, both on the walls of the castle and on building and maintaining field fortifications for the Hiruma forward defenses. At Shinsei's Last Hope, the Siege Engineer squadrons sometimes accompany patrols to tear down any enemy field works that might be found, as it would not do for the beasts of the Shadowlands to establish strong-points close to the village.

At smaller fortifications, as well as at the other major garrisons under the Third Army's responsibility, the Siege Engineers operate under less constant pressure. Inspection tours are less frequent — once every two weeks or even only once per month — and there is less urgency to effect repairs. At the smallest fortifications, such as garrisons along the border with the Crane Lands, there may be no senior Siege Engineers present at all. It is up to each individual squadron to inspect and maintain its own area of responsibility, and each gunso has ultimate responsibility for what gets done and how.



NPC: KAIU RYOKO, GUNSO OF FOURTH RESERVE SQUADRON, TWENTIETH LEGION, SECOND ARMY

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 2
Honor: 3.5		Status: 2.1	Glory: 2.5	

SCHOOL/RANK: Kaiu Engineer 2**DISADVANTAGES:** Idealistic**KATA:** Shell of Stone**SKILLS:** Athletics 1, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 3,**CRAFT:** Armorsmithing 2, Craft: Weaponsmithing 2, Defense 1, Engineering (Siege) 3, Etiquette 1, Heavy Weapons 3, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: History (Military) 3, Traps 2

For Kaiu Ryoko, her present position as a Kaiu Siege Engineer responsible for the maintenance and repair of the Great Carpenter Wall is all that she could hope for in life. For her, the Wall has an almost mystical significance; she feels that somehow it is part of her, not just an important fortification in the Crab defensive network.

And well might she feel that way, as the daughter of a bloodline that has supplied many Kaiu Daimyo down through the centuries. From her childhood, her only ambition was to serve in the Siege Engineers along the Wall. Given her enthusiasm, her demonstrated talent for architecture and engineering, and her pedigree, it was inevitable that she would get a posting to the Wall garrison, and is quite unsurprising that she has distinguished herself enough to merit a rapid promotion to gunso.

Neither hard experience nor the burdens of rank have dimmed Ryoko's enthusiasm or diluted her devotion to the Wall. She has made repairs while under enemy attack, raised field works in battle and dismantled enemy fortifications under the most difficult circumstances. But she remains enthusiastic about her work, certain she has found her destiny, and her superiors predict further promotions are in her future.

Kuni Witch Hunters

The notorious Kuni Witch Hunters are not a distinct military unit in the administrative sense. Kuni shugenja serve in the Crab armies, of course, but they are scattered throughout the reserve companies, and placed as individual command staff members and auxiliaries. However, there are certain duties in the Crab military for which the Witch Hunters are particularly suited, and both by tradition and necessity, almost every one of these elite Kuni samurai serve a tour of duty along the Kaiu Wall or in the Kuni Tower in Shiro Hiruma at some point in their lives.

Every legion in the First and Second Armies has at least one Witch Hunter (usually a shugenja) on the taisa's command staff. Those two armies form the Wall's permanent garrison, and as such, they face the constant threat that their soldiers will come in contact with Tainted creatures or things. Because the Witch Hunters are more expert than anyone else in the Clan at detecting and treating signs of the Taint, having one on hand to keep an eye on the rank and file is a necessity. Whenever a unit that has seen combat in the Shadowlands returns, a Witch Hunter always helps debrief the survivors. Whenever the taisa inspects troops, a Witch Hunter aide is present at his side, a trained pair of eyes always watchful for signs of contamination.

In addition, the 5th and 6th Squadrons of the Reserve Company of the Second Legion of the First Army are always manned entirely by Witch Hunter bushi, instead of the cavalymen of Tsuru's Legion. The Second Legion of the First Army consists of the Damned, but these Witch-Hunters are all untouched by the Taint. They are incorporated into the Damned's legions in order to monitor them, and are unofficially known as the Watchers of the Damned. They all have authorization to strike down on sight any of the Damned who have lost control of themselves, without seeking permission from higher up the chain of command. In battle, the Watchers of the Damned have standing orders to spread themselves among the legion's squadrons and watch continually for any sign that the berserkers are about to lose themselves to the Taint, and put them out of their misery the moment that happens.

In recognition of the squadrons' special status and relative autonomy, their commanders hold the rank of chui. However, on the march and in purely administrative matters, the Watchers of the Damned are subordinate to their company commander. The Crab officers who lead the Damned are not always pleased to have among them enforcers who can execute their soldiers without their authorization, but they learn to live with it.

A posting to the Watchers of the Damned is not considered terribly glamorous by the Witch Hunters, but they do consider it an excellent training assignment for new initiates, as it allows them to work alongside a large group of comrades in a relatively controlled environment.

A small contingent of Witch Hunter bushi is also permanently stationed at Shiro Hiruma, to guard the Kuni Tower. These warriors do not have responsibility for guarding the Witch Hunters who travel between Shiro Hiruma and the Kaiu Wall, however, as most who do so either keep company with supply convoys or Hiruma scout patrols, or they travel in small numbers to try to avoid the enemy all together.

Witch Hunters also serve on the command staffs of the legions of the Reserve Army, and are found in its unit cadres. Though the Reserve Army does not man the front lines against the Shadowlands, a large part of its mission is to stand ready to do so on short notice, so having Witch Hunters on permanent duty is a necessity.

On the battlefield, the primary duty of a Witch Hunter on a legion's command staff is to defend the taisa against Tainted enemies. They are to stay close to the commander unless specifically ordered to do otherwise. In effect, Witch Hunter bushi become yojimbo for their taisa; much the same can be said of Witch Hunter shugenja, who also have responsibility for identifying and countering threats to their commander.

NPC: KUNI KATSUYORI, CHUI OF THE 5TH SQUADRON, RESERVE COMPANY, SECOND LEGION, FIRST ARMY

Air: 3	Earth: 2	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Perception: 3				
Honor: 3.5		Status: 3.1	Glory: 3.0	

SCHOOL/RANK: Kuni Witch Hunter 3**ADVANTAGES:** Bishamon's Blessing, Leadership**DISADVANTAGES:** Driven, Lost Love**KATA:** Striking as Wind**PATHS:** Watcher of the Damned

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 4, Hunting 2, Investigation (Notice) 2, Jiu-jitsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: Heraldry (Kuni Witch Hunters) 2, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Medicine (Herbalism) 3, Meditation 1

It takes a hard, relentless soul to be an effective Watcher of the Damned. The job requires that you be capable of making a dispassionate snap judgment about your fellow Crab warriors. This is even more true of those who would lead the Watchers of the Damned. Fortunately — or unfortunately for him, depending on how you look at it — Kuni Katsuyori is such a one.

Katsuyori embarked on his life as a samurai full of resolve that he would lead a long and satisfying life as a servant of Clan and Empire. But while still a young Witch Hunter, he fell in love with a woman betrothed to another Kuni samurai, one above his rank. Experiencing a hopelessly unrequited love darkened his outlook, and when the great passion of his life turned to ash, he resolved to take on the hard, disciplined lot of a soldier as a distraction from his pain.

He sought, and received, a posting in the Watchers of the Damned. Serving in this unusual unit, he quickly gained a reputation for fearlessness and relentless dedication to duty. It is all too easy for Watchers of the Damned to flinch from doing their duty and confronting those whom they are supposed to oversee, but Katsuyori, feeling that he had little left for which to live anyway, would look any Tainted berserker in the eye without a hint of fear. His superiors noted this, and Katsuyori rose quickly through the ranks to command a squadron. He has never had to execute one of the Damned, but no one doubts that he would without a moment's hesitation if he felt his duty required it.

Tsuru's Legion

With the exception of the Unicorn, cavalry has never been a real strength of Rokugani armies. Although the Moto and the Shinjo have allowed limited export of their steeds, the other Great Clan mounts remain mostly smaller and weaker, more like ponies than true warhorses.

For the Crab, cavalry is even more limited in its usefulness than it is for the other Great Clans. Even without the contamination of the Taint, the rough and swampy terrain of the Shadowlands would be unfriendly to large-scale cavalry actions, and to horses in general. The Taint adds the risk that the horses will become contaminated and unreliable. Tainted cavalry mounts must be slaughtered on the spot, lest they become Onikage, and since horses in general are expensive to acquire and maintain, the Taint makes the investment even riskier.

Traditionally, a posting to a Crab cavalry unit was almost always a one-way ticket to obscurity. Cavalry squadrons were scattered among the Third Army, the Army of the Army of the East, and the Reserve Army; little attention was paid to them and they had little to do except patrol the southern edge of the Shinomen Forest.

This changed due almost entirely to one exceptional leader — Hida Tsuru. By most standards, Hida Tsuru was born into fortunate circumstances, but within the narrow context of his individual aspirations, he was not. Younger brother of the great Hida Kisada, he could boast of a close blood tie to the Clan's

top leadership. But while Kisada was groomed to succeed their father as Crab Champion from a very young age, Tsuru knew almost from the beginning of his life that he would always live in his brother's shadow, and he would have to work hard on his own to find a purpose worthy of the station to which he was born.

He found it while he was still a youth. While accompanying his father on an inspection tour of the Army of the East, he noted that the cavalymen seemed to get relatively little respect among their peers. He asked his father why this was so; the Champion thought for a moment, and replied, "I suppose it is because they have so little to do." Tsuru decided on that day he would devote himself to changing Crab strategic planning, so that cavalry would not be wasted but would become a valued and respected arm of the military.

After his gempukku, Tsuru surprised his family by requesting assignment as gunso of a cavalry squadron in the Army of the East. There, he began to study Crab cavalry doctrine close at hand, combining what he learned with the understanding of grand strategy he had picked up from listening to family conversations as a youth. At the same time, he trained his squadron uncommonly hard, forging in them the toughness and endurance — the birthright of every Crab warrior — he had seen lacking. Tsuru's men learned to ride fast, hard, and long, and to put all thoughts of rest and weariness out of their heads until they had reached their objective. It was an attitude that he was determined to spread to every Crab horseman.

Tsuru had risen to a respectable army command staff position by the time he appeared before his father to propose a top-to-bottom reform of the Clan's cavalry, both in how they were organized and how they were used. He insisted that instead of scattering cavalry squadrons through the reserve companies of the five armies (including the armies garrisoning the Kaiu Wall, where they served little purpose), the Clan ought to concentrate its cavalry into a single strategic reserve. They would use their greatest assets — speed and mobility — to rush to any point on the Crab frontier, delivering reinforcements wherever they were needed.

Tsuru's plan made too much sense for it to be rejected. Cavalry squadrons were stripped from the Wall and formed into a single legion of the Reserve Army, with Tsuru as its commander. Formally designated the Second Legion of the Reserve Army, it was quickly nicknamed Tsuru's Legion. Such was Hida Tsuru's success in carving out a new and important purpose for the Crab cavalry that even as this force grew in time to three legions, all of them taken together retained the name.

Tsuru went on to become a successful army commander, gaining a reputation as a ruthless and implacable foe. But his most enduring legacy continues to be the stamp that he put on the Crab cavalry. He drove his troopers without letup, turning them into engines of sheer willpower. He recruited them based on the strength of their spirit as much as their physical endurance, since they needed plenty of both to stand up to his training. He demanded — and forged from the sheer force of his own will — a significant body of Crab soldiers that could ride for days without wearying and arrive on the battlefield full of fight.

To accommodate the speed and relentlessness with which he expected his command to move, Tsuru also set up strings of relay posts along the major routes from the Legion's barracks

to the key points along the Kaiu Wall and the frontier with the Crane Clan. Each of these posts holds fresh mounts and food and water packed to be consumed in the saddle.

Today, Tsuru's Legion constitutes three legions of the Reserve Army, composed entirely of cavalry except for their reserve companies, which consist of four squadrons of shugenja and two of Kaiu Siege Engineers. Together, they function as a wing of the Army, with the Taisa of the Second Legion — which retains pride of place as Tsuru's original command — recognized as the de-facto shireikan.

Most importantly, they take considerable pride in retaining the fighting qualities their founder bred in their predecessors. Single-handedly, Hida Tsuru turned the cavalry from a neglected and scorned part of the Crab military into a prestigious posting, one to which many young Hida bushi apply, but not all are accepted. They are universally recognized, within the Clan and without, as some of the toughest warriors the famously hardy Crab turn out.

The auxiliary cavalry squadrons attached to the Third Army and the Army of the East, as well as the other legions of the Reserve Army, are not considered to be parts of Tsuru's Legion. Some of their commanders have tried to shape them in Tsuru's mold, but without much support from higher command, they have met with mixed success at best. Only the Second, Third and Fourth Legions of the Reserve Army are the true inheritors of the esprit de corps that Tsuru instilled in his original band of cavalymen.

SKILLS: Animal Handling 1, Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 1, Defense 3, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 3, Horsemanship 3, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 2

* See *The Four Winds*, p. 15

Growing up in a quiet farming village on the plains south of the Shinomen Forest, Hida Ton had a rather more idyllic childhood than many Hida bushi. He spent his formative years in a part of the Crab lands that saw itself as relatively safe from the Shadowlands threat (although the great Shinomen evoked its own sort of threat, of course). Unlike most Crab youths, a lifetime of war should have been far from his mind.

But Ton was also a descendant of Hida Tsuru, the great Crab cavalry master. He was raised on stories of his great ancestor's deeds, and decided early on that he would join Tsuru's Legion and become a great cavalryman.

Upon completing his gempukku, Ton got his wish and was allowed to enlist in Tsuru's Legion. Of course, this has meant serving in the Reserve Army, well away from the constant fighting along the Kaiu Wall. But Ton has served ably and well, and his enthusiasm remains undimmed. In fact, he feels his ancestor Tsuru watches over him and expects great things. He waits with faith and confidence, sure he will someday have an opportunity to prove himself worthy of Hida Tsuru's legacy.

Yasuki Family Guard

It has always been accepted within the Crab that the Yasuki do not play a large role in the Clan's military establishment. Their talents and their inclinations lie elsewhere, after all, and there is no point in pretending otherwise. Even so, the Yasuki have found themselves developing for their own needs a cadre of samurai who function more or less as warriors

— the caravan guards now known as the Yasuki Taskmasters. In time, as they became aware of the Taskmasters and their particular skill set, the Hida came to realize they would be useful as low-level officers of less reliable

NPC: HIDA TON, SOLDIER OF FIRST SQUADRON, FIRST COMPANY, SECOND LEGION, RESERVE ARMY

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 3	Void: 3
	Agility: 3			

Honor: 2.7	Status: 1.9	Glory: 1.9
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SCHOOL/RANK: Hida Bushi 2

DISADVANTAGES: Haunted (1, Hida Tsuru)

KATA: Shell of Stone, Striking as Earth

PATHS: Tsuru's Legion*



soldiers, and began recruiting them for the Crab armies. Thus, the Yasuki's complete innocence of military matters came to an end. The Taskmasters were no longer just lackeys who watched over the caravans; they were soldiers.

That being the case, the Yasuki decided they had to wrest for themselves some small degree of martial pride — and a small degree was pretty much all they expected to gain. Since they joined the Crab, the Hida had always provided for their protection, and the guards at Yasuki Yashiki had, for the most part, been Hida bushi. But once their Taskmasters began joining the army in substantial numbers, the Yasuki started treating them like proper soldiers. They set aside several hundred Taskmasters and used them to replace the Hida guarding the Family stronghold. Eventually, they took over the entire garrison, so that today, all three legions permanently stationed there consist of Yasuki house troops.

As the number of Yasuki soldiers at Yasuki Yashiki grew, so did the sense that the Family deserved — and perhaps even needed — an elite household guard unit, like the Hida Elite Guard. If nothing else, it would serve as a symbol of status, something for the Hida to chew on the next time they chose to look down upon the Family of traders in their midst. They began selecting from the Taskmasters' ranks those candidates who seemed most capable of disciplining themselves as well as others, who truly could maintain the constant watchfulness needed to keep safe the Yasuki's inner sanctum and most important personages.

To add to the ranks, they also recruited bushi from the Hida, in what they regarded as a nice little turnabout for the former loss of Taskmasters to the Crab armies. For the most part, these were Hida warriors looking to salvage some pride after having been rejected for the Hida Elite Guard, but the Yasuki were not fussy. The Yasuki House Guard now fills the line infantry companies of the Ninth Legion of the Army of the East, and Taskmasters comprise the majority, although Guardsmen drawn from the Hida are a substantial minority. Compared to the elite units of the Hida and the Hiruma, the Yasuki Family Guard is a modest thing, but it is the Yasuki's own.

NPC: YASUKI KON, CHUI OF THE FIRST COMPANY, NINTH LEGION, ARMY OF THE EAST (YASUKI HOUSE GUARD)

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 3	Void: 3
Honor: 4.4		Status: 4		Glory: 3.8

SCHOOL/RANK: Yasuki Taskmaster 4

ADVANTAGES: Perceived Honor (2)

KATA: Striking as Water, Striking as Wind

PATHS: Yasuki House Guard

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle (Specific Enemy: Shadowlands) 4, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Games: Shogi 1, Heavy Weapons 2, Iijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Shadowlands 4, Medicine 1, Peasant Weapons (Whip) 2



Yasuki Kon's career is unusual for a Yasuki bushi, but it is a path that is becoming less atypical as the Crab military overcomes its longtime reluctance to use the Family's particular talents for its own benefit. Trained as a Yasuki Taskmaster and currently commander of a company of Yasuki House Guardsmen, Kon has never actually served as a caravan guard. He has handled a whip mainly during his training, using it in service only occasionally when serving as a junior officer in one of the penal legions at Watchtower of the West. He has spent his entire career as a true soldier and has never felt cause to regret it.

When Kon completed his gempukku as a Yasuki Taskmaster, there were no openings for guards on Yasuki caravans. He languished until word reached him that the Reserve Army, having just sent a large contingent of replacements to the Kaiu Wall garrison, needed nikutai and gunso to form cadres for their skeleton units. Experience was not needed; with no crisis on the horizon, there was time to learn on the job.

Kon soon distinguished himself as a young nikutai, and from there he won a series of appointments and promotions, serving in ashigaru units and in the punishment units stationed at Watchtower of the West. He was a chui in the Forty-Eighth Legion of the Army of the East when his taisa suggested he apply for admission to the Yasuki House Guard. Although it meant starting over again in the ranks, the opportunity to serve in the elite House Guard was an honor Kon could not refuse. His natural ability to discipline both himself and others soon showed through, and he was rapidly promoted to chui in the Ninth Legion of the Army of the East.

Kon finds military life suits him well, and he has never once regretted missing the long caravan journeys, the incessant browbeating of exhausted cargo bearers, and the other drudgery that is the duty of so many other Taskmasters.

Yasuki Quartermasters

The Yasuki Quartermasters are not a military unit as such. Instead, the name is an informal designation applied to a small number of that Family who specialize in military logistics. They are traders and merchants by vocation who have been recruited (some would say strong-armed, but the Hida treat everyone in a way that can seem like coercion) into serving the Crab military establishment.

Yasuki Quartermasters are attached to high-level command staffs — as a general rule, they serve no one ranked lower than rikugunshokan or shireikan — as aides with no official military rank. Their standing orders are to oversee the proper supply and feeding of the soldiers for whom their commander is responsible. They inspect the storage depots and cisterns and check on the levels of such staples as rice, spare weapons, arrows and medical supplies. If these items are in inadequate supply, they report to their commander and immediately set about finding additional supplies. As little respect as is given to samurai who handle money, the Crab bushi Families have been forced to admit that no one knows how to scrounge and deal like a Yasuki, and skills like these can prove very useful to an army running low on the things it needs.

When an army is in barracks, a Yasuki Quartermaster's duty will entail tapping into his personal network of contacts for the items needed, and maybe going out into local communities

friendly to the Crab to buy or trade for them. This is a pretty mundane pursuit for a Yasuki trader, and the Quartermasters are usually able to do it in such a way that they can pocket a bit of profit for themselves without their Hida superiors being any the wiser.

When they are attached to an army on the offensive and operating in foreign territory, however, the nature of their mission changes somewhat. In this case, they are much less likely to have friendly contacts to whom they can turn (although with an experienced Yasuki trader, one never knows). More likely, they will have to venture away from the main army — accompanied by a bodyguard of Hiruma scouts or Tsuru's Legion cavalymen, of course — and get what they can from local sources likely to be hostile to the Crab. Here, the Yasuki's traditional gift for striking bargains may yet prove sufficient for him to accomplish his mission. This could involve setting up a local marketplace where Crab soldiers can come to buy what they need, or it could mean an outright purchase or trade for a supplies. But if peaceful persuasion fails, Quartermasters are authorized to seize what they can by force — hence the presence of a suitable bodyguard.

For a Yasuki, though, this last resort is tantamount to an admission of personal failure; he would much rather get what he needs by bargaining. There is no art to taking what you want by strong-arm tactics, after all. To get what you need for next to nothing, and convince your trading partner that he got the better end of the deal — now, that is a glorious deed! And to accomplish it in the service of the Crab is all the better.

Although they are nominally command staff officers, most Yasuki Quartermasters maintain an unofficial staff of their own, consisting of younger traders who help tap into their network of contacts and follow up on leads. When a Quartermaster receives orders to obtain a quantity of rice, medicinal herbs, or anything else, he will typically parcel out the task of contacting possible sources to these assistants.

NPC: YASUKI CHIHIRO, QUARTERMASTER TO THE RIKUGUNSHOKAN, ARMY OF THE EAST

Air: 4	Earth: 2	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
			Perception: 4	

Honor: 3.5	Status: 3.0	Glory: 3.0
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SCHOOL/RANK: Yasuki Courtier 3

ADVANTAGES: Perceived Honor (2)

DISADVANTAGES: Greedy

PATHS: Yasuki Quartermaster

SKILLS: Calligraphy 2, Commerce (Merchant) 4, Courtier 3, Deceit (Lying) 3, Etiquette (Bureaucracy) 4, Forgery 1, Games: Go 1, Games: Fortunes and Winds 1, Kenjutsu 1, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 2, Storytelling 2

Like most Yasuki who end up as Quartermasters, Yasuki Chihiro did not set out in life to become part of the military. She always figured on getting rich in the traditional Yasuki way, bringing things relatively common in the Crab Lands to parts of the Empire where they weren't so common and vice versa, and living the elegant life once she had succeeded. After her gempukku, she apprenticed with her uncle, a wealthy trader of some repute.

But when her uncle caught her making a side deal with one of his trading partners, a deal which would have made a sizable profit for Chihiro at his expense, he dismissed her from his service. Unwilling to completely disown a blood relative, he got her an unofficial post as an assistant to the Quartermaster of the Army of the East.

Serving under one of the rikugunshokan's staff officers gave Chihiro a close-up look at high-level military politics, and she did not waste the opportunity to learn. She developed an exceptional knack for ingratiating herself with her superiors, and eventually rose to become the Army of the East Quartermaster.

Such is her political shrewdness that commander Hiruma Todoroki trusts her absolutely to manage the logistics of the Army of the East. Todoroki, of course, is often distracted by affairs at Shiro Hiruma, which may explain his trust in part. But it is also true that Chihiro has built a deceptively flawless reputation for herself. Her peers and superiors believe her to be absolutely honest; they do not realize she uses her dealings with her suppliers to make a profit for herself whenever she can. The lesson she learned from the debacle with her uncle is that side deals must be kept discreet.

New Mechanics

Several of the units described in this chapter have been included as mechanical options in previous Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition products.

The Hiruma Stalkers appear as a Path in *The Four Winds*, p. 14.

The Kaiu Engineers appear as a Basic School in *The Four Winds*, p. 147.

New Equipment: Whip

The whip is an extraordinarily uncommon weapon for samurai. It is considered the province of the lesser classes, and not something that a samurai would ever choose to sully his hands with. The only groups that make use of it to any extent are the relatively rare Matsu Beastmasters, and the legendary Yasuki Taskmasters of the Crab Clan. It is considered a peasant weapon and generally brings dishonor to any samurai who takes it up, although there are exceptions.

DR: 0k1

SPECIAL RULES: A whip may be used to make a melee attack upon opponents up to 8' away. A successful attack may, if the wielder chooses, be used to initiate a grapple against the opponent who was struck by it. A whip confers 1 Free Raise on any Knockdown attempt made using it.

PRICE: 8 koku

New Basic School: Hida Berserker School (Bushu)

No Clan has suffered at the hands of the Shadowlands as have the Crab. Two of their Families, the Hiruma and the Kuni, have lost their ancestral lands to the minions of Fu Leng at various points. And among individual Crab, there is scarcely a warrior who has not lost a friend or a relative to combat against the great enemy. Some have lost so many among those who were close to them that the endless war against the Shadowlands has left them entirely bereft. It is those who have nothing left to anchor them to this life who can channel their grief and rage into the Way of the Berserker.

The education of a Hida Berserker entails relatively little weapons training, considering that his sole purpose is to fight for the Crab with no regard for his own safety. Instead, Berserkers are taught meditation techniques that allow them to channel their powerful emotions into sheer battle lust, directing their rage and grief against the enemy.

BENEFIT: +1 Stamina

HONOR: 1.5

SKILLS: Athletics, Defense, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo), Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, any one Bugei Skill.

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, any two weapons, light armor, red body paint, kimono and sandals, traveling pack, 3 koku.

TECHNIQUE: Fury of Hida

Whenever you engage in combat, you may enter an enraged state as a Simple Action. While enraged, you ignore Wound penalties for a number of rounds equal to your Earth Ring x3, plus 1 round per School Rank. You still suffer the Wound points, but you suffer no penalties because of them. Further, you may roll and keep a number of extra dice equal to your School Rank when rolling attack and damage. This reflects your ability to channel your rage into your attacks. However, focusing all your energy on inflicting punishment renders you more vulnerable. All damage rolls made against you receive a +2 bonus to the total.

When you are not in an enraged state, you gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to your Fire Ring plus your School Rank. At any time, you may come out of your enraged state by making a Raw Willpower Roll against a TN of 20. If you succeed in calming your rage, you lose all bonuses and penalties granted by this technique while in the enraged state. If you calm your rage within 100' of an enemy, you may not reenter the enraged state for the rest of the day.

At Rank 3, you gain an additional attack per round.

At Rank 5, you gain another additional attack per round, but only while in the Full Attack posture.

New Basic School: Kuni Witch Hunter (Bushi)

Though the Kuni are the Crab's shugenja Family, their elite Witch Hunters do not restrict themselves to accepting only shugenja into their ranks. Fighting the enemy requires a strong sword arm as well as intellect and the gift of speaking with the kami. Down through the ages, the Witch Hunters have developed their own training regimen for bushi who wish to join them in their work. Over the course of time it has solidified into a school unto itself, with small dojo at both Shiro Kuni and the Kuni Tower at Shiro Hiruma.

A Kuni Witch Hunter bushi receives all of the Witch Hunters' accumulated wisdom about recognizing the Shadowlands Taint and how to defeat opponents contaminated by it. These lessons prove useful whether a Witch Hunter bushi serves in the Crab Armies, or as part of a team of inquisitors investigating more subtle manifestations of the Taint.

BENEFIT: +1 Awareness

HONOR: 1.5

SKILLS: Athletics, Defense, Hunting, Medicine (Herbalism), Lore: Shadowlands, any two Bugei Skills

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, one finger of jade, jade pendant, kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 3 koku

Techniques

RANK 1: TO STRIKE THE DARKNESS

The Witch Hunter learns how to block out all distractions when facing an enemy. You gain a bonus to your Initiative Rolls equal to twice your Air Ring. When attacking an enemy with the Shadowlands Taint, you need only call 2 Raises to gain an additional attack on him (instead of 4 Raises).

RANK 2: TO SEE THE DARKNESS

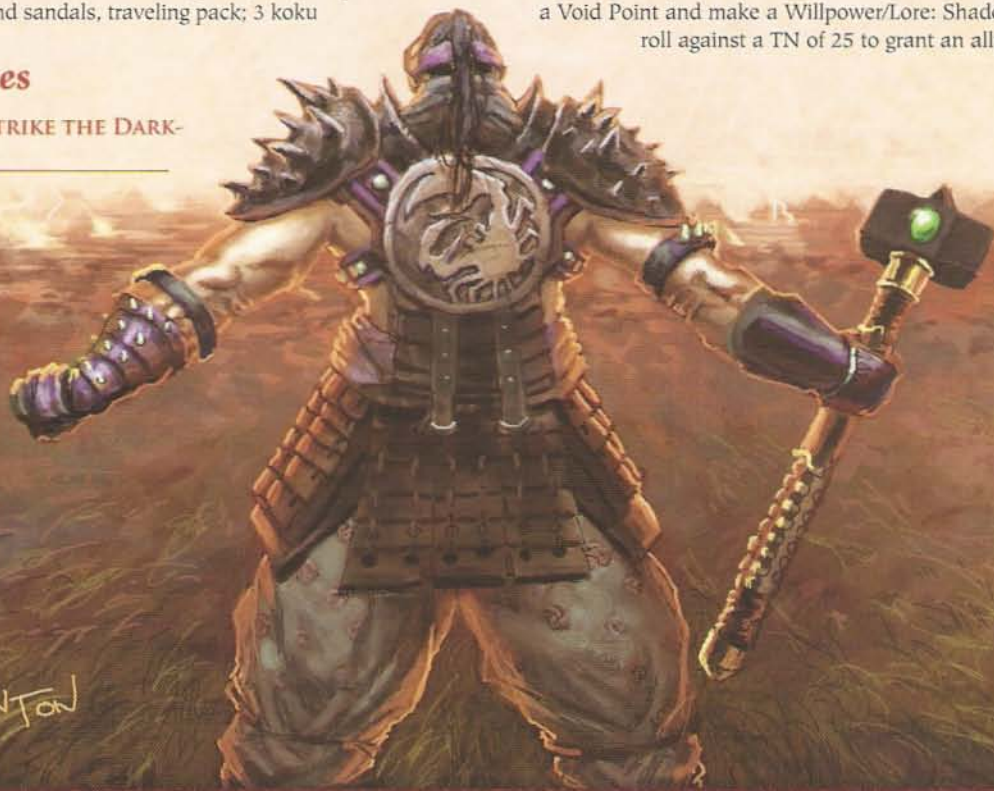
The Witch Hunter becomes attuned to the signs of Elemental corruption. When interacting with others, you can make a Contested Awareness/Etiquette Roll against the target to see if he shows any indications of being a potential maho-tsukai or shows any psychological signs of the Taint. By calling a Raise, you can prevent the subject from realizing he has let something slip. Additionally, if you spend a Void Point, you can make an Awareness/Lore: Shadowlands Roll against a TN of 25 to sense the presence and proximity of the Taint anywhere within 150. You cannot sense Taint in specific individuals, but you do gain a general idea of where it is.

RANK 3: TO RIDE THE DARKNESS

The Witch Hunter's particular understanding of the Taint gives him insight into how best to kill a Tainted foe. When making an unarmed or melee attack, you keep an additional number of dice equal to the target's Shadowlands Taint Rank. You may also spend a Void Point to reduce your Wound Rank Penalty by your School Rank for the duration of the current skirmish. Finally, you gain a bonus equal to your Earth Ring to your TN to Be Hit.

RANK 4: TO REPEL THE DARKNESS

A Witch Hunter resists the effects of maho, and can protect others from this foul magic. Anyone attempting to use maho against you, or anyone with at least 1 Shadowlands Taint Rank who tries to cast a spell on you, must call an additional number of Raises equal to your School Rank. You may spend a Void Point and make a Willpower/Lore: Shadowlands roll against a TN of 25 to grant an ally within



10 the same protection for 1 round. The spellcaster must still match your School Rank, not the protected ally's. You can call Raises to protect additional allies or to extend the protection for additional rounds at 1 Raise per ally or round.

You gain an additional attack per round.

RANK 5: TO SHATTER THE DARKNESS

The Witch Hunter cuts down Tainted enemies with devastating power, and inflicts excruciating pain on the corrupted. When attacking a target with at least 1 Shadowlands Taint Rank, you gain a number of Free Raises equal to your School Rank that can only be used to increase damage or gain an additional attack. If you kill someone with at least 1 Shadowlands Taint Rank, it does not count as an attack for this round. Additionally, whenever you make a successful attack roll against an opponent with at least 1 Shadowlands Taint Rank, you may spend a Void Point to increase the opponent's current Wound Rank penalty by 10.

New Basic School: The Damned Berserkers (Bushì)

A warrior of the Damned lives with hopelessness, but also a peculiar kind of hope. More likely than not, they are condemned to eventual madness or an early death by the Taint (and in the Crab Lands, the former leads mercifully to the latter), and they

have no chance of ever recovering the full measure of their humanity. At the same time, however, the Crab have found a way for their contaminated warriors who have not succumbed entirely to serve the Clan and defend the Empire. In spite of their doom, they may yet achieve something of worth with what is left of their lives.

The Damned are organizationally distinct from the Berserkers, but the two are often spoken of in the same breath because their military functions are similar, and more importantly, because they both fight with little expectation of living to fight another day — or indeed, any desire that they should do so. Hence, their School is generally known as The Damned Berserker School, even though they cannot enter a state of escalated rage, as can the Hida Berserkers.

Although they are trained first and foremost as shock troops who will fight with little regard for their lives, among the first things that a Damned Berserker learns are techniques that will slow or even prevent the spread of the Taint within them. However, this is mainly an expedient to increase their military value rather than a purely humane measure. The best fate one of the Damned hopes for is to die well, exchanging his life for as many of the enemy (preferably a Tainted enemy) as he can manage.

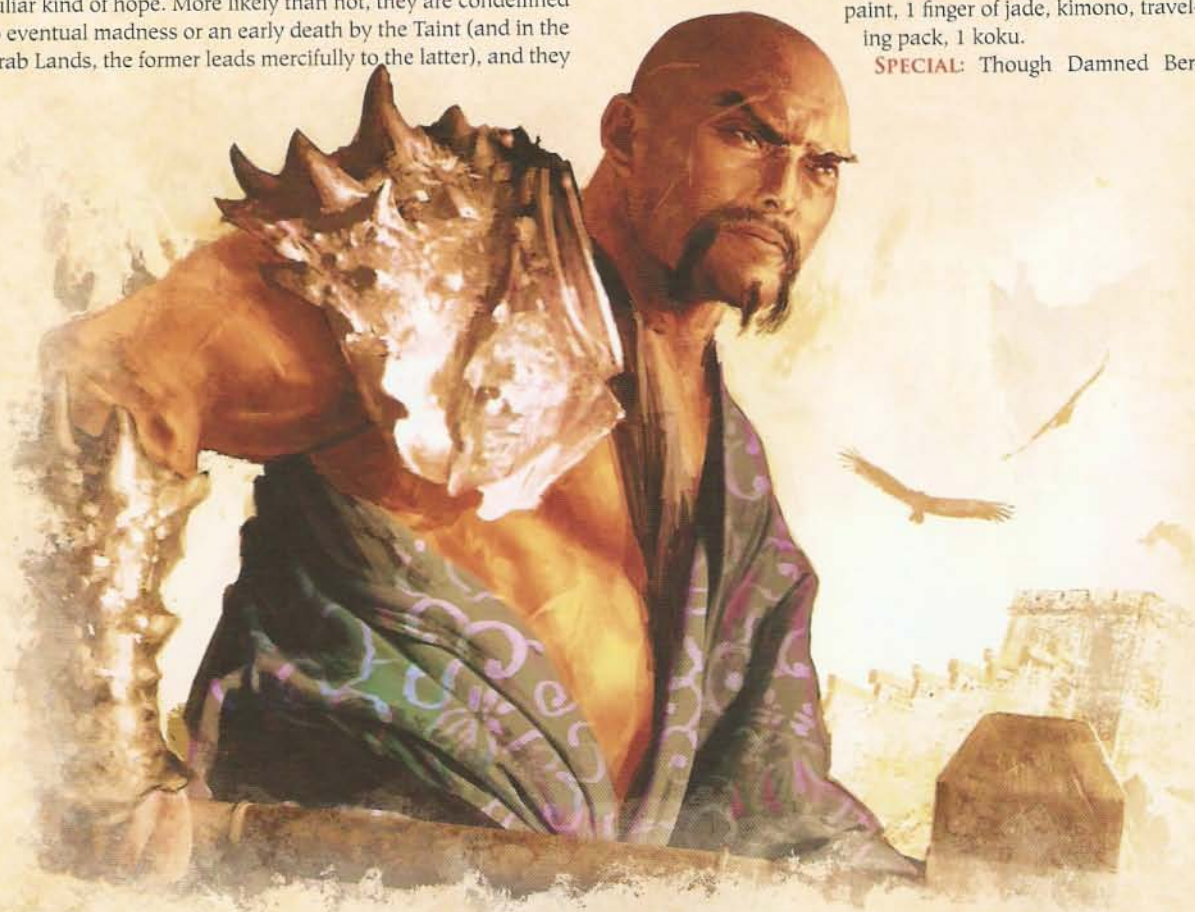
BENEFIT: +1 Willpower

HONOR: 1.0

SKILLS: Battle, Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, Medicine, Meditation, any one Weapon Skill.

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, bow and 20 arrows (any type), any two weapons, light armor, red body paint, 1 finger of jade, kimono, traveling pack, 1 koku.

SPECIAL: Though Damned Ber-



serkers cannot become enraged like those from the Hida Berserker School, Hida Berserkers that become Damned Berserkers may count their ranks in the Damned Berserker School as additions to their Berserker School Rank. This School possesses only three ranks; very few Damned survive long enough to learn all three.

Techniques

RANK 1: BURNING THE SHADOW

You have learned a series of herbal and meditation techniques to slow the corruption tainting your body. Once per month you may make a Void/Meditation Roll against a TN of 30 in order to reduce your Shadowlands Taint by 1 point. You may add your Skill Rank in Medicine (Herbalism) to the result of this roll. You may not attempt this roll more than once per month, whether you succeed or not. You may not reduce your Taint below 1 full Rank, or below 1 Point. You may not remove Taint from someone else.

In addition, your fierce hatred of your own corruption has begun to turn your Taint outward, allowing you to add your Taint Rank to the result of all your attack and damage rolls. You may add twice your Taint Rank to your TN to Be Hit against Tainted opponents.

RANK 2: TURN THE DARK LORD'S BLADE

You walk the razor's edge between embracing your Taint and using it as a weapon against evil. You may permanently gain 1 point of Shadowlands Taint to gain an additional attack each round for the next 3 rounds. If this attack is directed against a Tainted opponent, you lose the point of Shadowlands Taint as long as you personally kill your opponent within those 3 rounds. While making any contested rolls, attack rolls, or damage rolls against a Tainted foe, your Raises are not limited by your Void Ring or Skill Rank. Finally, you gain a bonus equal to twice your Taint Rank to the total of all attack and damage totals. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 1.

RANK 3: SHOT AT THE DARKNESS

At this point, you are likely nearly Lost, but this will not stop you from giving your death meaning. You gain a number of Free Raises equal to your Taint Rank on attack rolls against all Tainted opponents. On a successful attack against a Tainted

opponent, you may double the number of Wounds inflicted. When you do so, however, you gain a full Rank of Taint. You gain a bonus equal to 3x your Taint Rank to the result of all attack, damage, and Bugei Skill rolls. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 2. You also gain a bonus equal to 3x your Taint Rank to your TN to Be Hit against Tainted opponents. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 1.

New Basic School: Toritaka Bushido School (Bushido)

When the Falcon Clan merged into the Crab, the Crab gained a small, but to them quite unique pool of manpower for their armies.

Because of their small numbers, Toritaka bushido are mostly scattered throughout the Crab armies. They are found in greatest concentrations in the elite archery units known as the Falcon's Strike, which the Toritaka themselves help to train. They also populate command staffs out of proportion to their numbers, from which they may be dispatched to wherever their particular talents are needed.

BENEFIT: +1 Willpower

HONOR: 2.5

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Falcons), Hunting, Kenjutsu, Lore: Spirit Realms, Meditation, Spears, and a second Rank in either Animal Handling or Hunting

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, light armor, kimono and sandals, traveling pack, 2 koku

Techniques

RANK 1: THE FALCON'S EYES

You gain 1 Free Raise per School Rank on all your Perception Rolls. You may also attempt to detect the presence of any creatures with the Special Quality Invisible (see Creatures of Rokugan: Third Edition) within your line of sight by making a Raw Perception Roll against a TN equal to the creature's Air Ring x 5. Finally, you gain a bonus to your attack and damage rolls equal to your Water Ring.

RANK 2: THE FALCON TAKES FLIGHT

Understanding the swift movements of the falcon gives you the advantage of quickness over your opponents. You gain a bonus to your Initiative Roll equal to twice your Perception. You gain 1 Free Raise per Rank of Perception on any attack roll against an opponent with lower Initiative.

RANK 3: THE FALCON'S WINGS

You gain an additional attack per round. You gain a bonus to your attack and damage rolls equal to twice your Water Ring. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 1.

RANK 4: VIGILANT AND STRONG

You no longer need to make a Raw Perception Roll to detect the presence of creatures using the Special Quality Invisible if those creatures are within 100' of you. Also, you may make a Contested Perception Roll against the Air Ring of any opponent within 30' to negate any darkness or blinding effects that may hamper you from seeing him or it. You must be aware of the opponent's presence to use this ability. Finally, you gain a bonus to your Initiative Rolls equal to 3x your Perception. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 2.

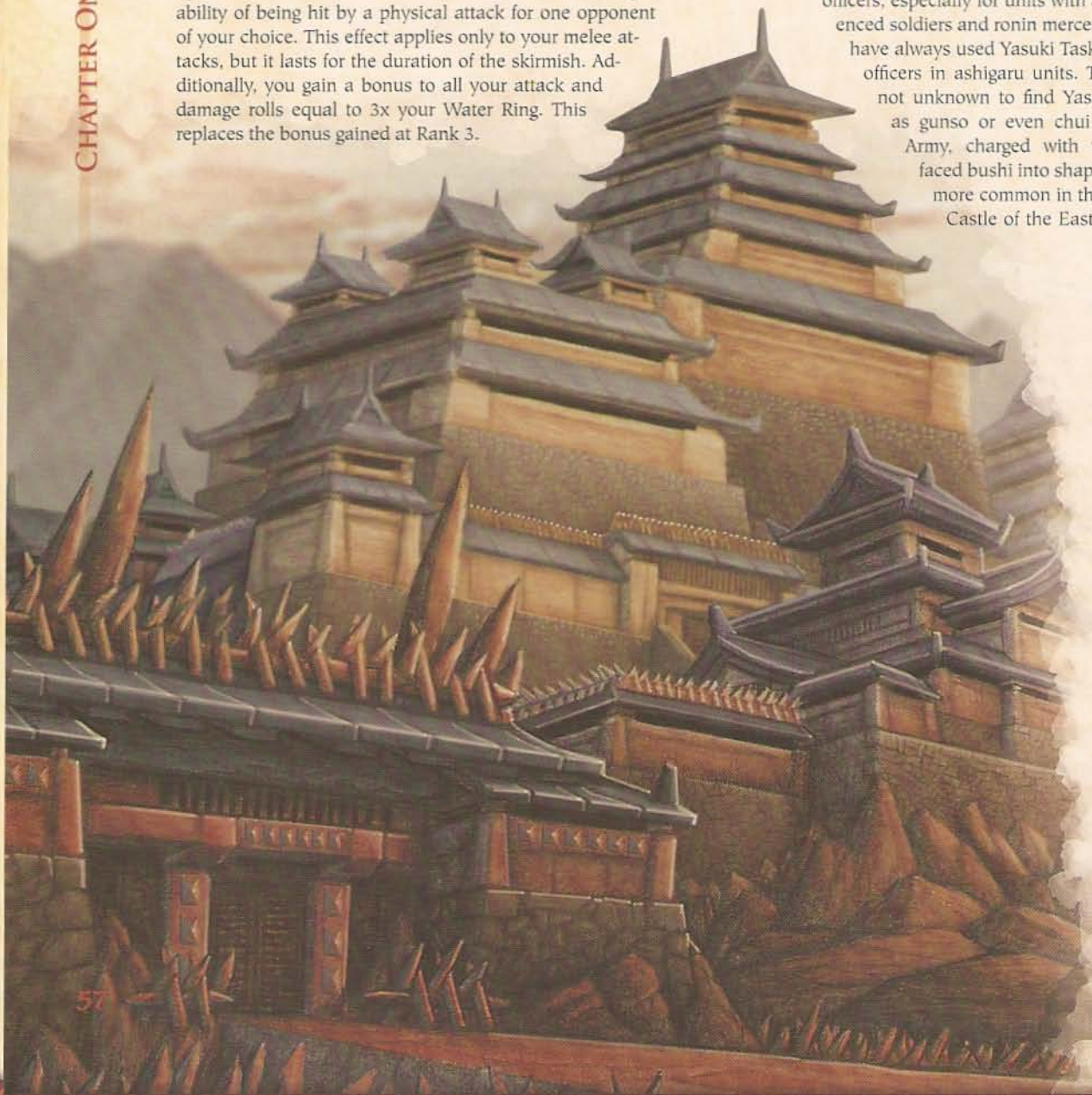
RANK 5: CLAWS OF THE FALCON

You may spend a Void Point to ignore any Carapace rating or Special Qualities that reduce or avoid Wounds or the probability of being hit by a physical attack for one opponent of your choice. This effect applies only to your melee attacks, but it lasts for the duration of the skirmish. Additionally, you gain a bonus to all your attack and damage rolls equal to 3x your Water Ring. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 3.

New Basic School: Yasuki Taskmaster School (Bushi)

The Yasuki are what passes for a courtier Family within the Crab, but their long experience as merchants, running caravans the length and breadth of the Empire, also required that they understand the use of force and discipline, of chivvying one's underlings into line. The Yasuki Taskmaster School began among Yasuki caravan guards who developed it while keeping heimin bearers and beasts of burden alike alert to their tasks.

Over time, Crab generals found that these Yasuki bushi, unconventional though they were, made effective lower-level officers, especially for units with a lot of inexperienced soldiers and ronin mercenaries. The Crab have always used Yasuki Taskmaster bushi as officers in ashigaru units. These days, it is not unknown to find Yasuki Taskmasters as gunso or even chui in the Reserve Army, charged with whipping fresh-faced bushi into shape. They are even more common in the garrison of the Castle of the East, which consists



largely of soldiers demoted and removed from their units for disciplinary reasons.

BENEFIT: +1 Willpower

HONOR: 1.5

SKILLS: Athletics, Defense, Deceit (Intimidation), Jiu-jitsu, Kenjutsu, Lore: Shadowlands, any one Bugei Skill.

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, whip, any two weapons, light armor, kimono and sandals, traveling pack, 6 koku

Techniques

RANK 1: FEAR IS A GIFT

The Taskmaster learns the fine art of cowing those weaker than himself. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all attack rolls and Deceit (Intimidation) rolls against those with lower Willpower. You gain a bonus to your Initiative Rolls equal to your Willpower.

RANK 2: TAKING THE GIFT

You may activate this Technique as a full-round action. Once on, it stays activated until you take another action. If an opponent hits you while this Technique is active, you may immediately attack that opponent once; this attack automatically hits.

You may not call any Raises on this attack. You gain a bonus to this attack's damage roll equal to 3x your Willpower. You also gain a +1k0 bonus to all damage rolls against those with lower Willpower.

RANK 3: GIVING THE GIFT

You may taunt or insult any one opponent who can understand you (even while you are attacking or doing something else), making a contested Willpower/Deceit (Intimidation) roll with that target. If you succeed, you may add the amount by which you succeeded to the result of all attack and damage rolls against that opponent in the following round.

You gain a bonus to the result of your Initiative Rolls equal to twice your Willpower. This replaces the bonus gained at Rank 1.

RANK 4: FEAR'S BANE

You gain an additional attack per round. Also, you gain a +2k0 bonus to all attack, damage, and Deceit (Intimidation) Rolls against those with lower Willpower. This replaces the bonuses gained at Rank 1 and Rank 2.

RANK 5: TEST OF MIGHT

You have mastered the arts of fear and intimidation to the point that they are a part of your very being. Opponents attacking you suffer a penalty equal to twice your Deceit (Intimidation) Skill rank to their attack and damage rolls against you. Once per round, you may spend a Void Point after an opponent makes a damage roll against you to reduce the total by 3x your Willpower, down to a minimum of 1 Wound suffered.

New Path: Champion's Guard (Bushi)

While some Hida Elite Guardsmen who accumulate experience and seniority move on to senior command and staff positions in the Crab armies, others who are particularly renowned for their prowess as fighters graduate to the Champion's Guard. Champion's Guardsmen are among the very finest single combat warriors that the Hida Bushi School produces. Their duty is among the most important of any Crab bushi, for they are entrusted with the lives of the Clan Champion and other of the Clan's most important personages.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 5

PATH OF ENTRY: Hida Bushi 4

PATH OF EGRESS: Hida Bushi 5

SPECIAL: Must have taken the Path Hida Elite Guard

Technique: Hida's Chosen

All Hida Elite Guardsman learn to channel the legendary power of the First Crab, and those who have learned this lesson especially well are recruited into the Champion's Guard. You may gain a bonus equal to 3x your Defense Skill Rank to both your damage rolls and your TN to Be Hit. This bonus replaces the bonus gained through the Hida Elite Guard Path (see p. 51).

It is also the case that your duty demands you devote yourself absolutely to defending the lives of whomever has been placed in your charge. This is not a demand for pointless self-sacrifice; to the contrary, the inspiration you draw from Hida inspires you to succeed in the pursuit of your duty no matter what the hazard. The Hida, after all, may fight and bleed, but they do not fail.

At any point in a skirmish, you may select a single person or creature. As long as you are within 30' of that person or creature and he/she is alive, you may reduce any Wound Penalties that you suffer by your Willpower + Defense Skill Rank. Under these circumstances, you also gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to your Willpower + Awareness.

New Path: Dead-Eyes Berserker (Bushi)

The so called "Dead-Eye" Berserkers are the elite of the Crab Berserker warriors. They have mastered the most difficult meditation techniques taught by the Hida Berserker School, demonstrating an unusual talent for shaping the mind and channeling their mental processes. But in most cases, they are also remarkable for the degree of their personal loss to the ravages of the Shadowlands.

As a result, the Dead-Eye Berserker achieves a state of rage

in battle that is so pure that it is, ironically, almost entirely unemotional. His mind clears of everything except his battle fury; all traces of emotion are redirected into the task of killing the enemy. Rage, in this sense, is not an uncontrolled flame, but a cold, inexorable anger that rises from nowhere and disappears just as swiftly. A Dead-Eye Berserker is, in this sense, an engine of death, made so by his extraordinary training and the terrible burdens on his soul.

There are those who pity the Dead-Eye Berserkers. The Crab know better; they pity their enemies.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Hida Berserker 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Hida Bushi 1

Technique: Endless Rage

This Technique counts as a rank of the Hida Berserker School. At the beginning of each round, you may forsake any number of bonus dice you would gain to your attack and damage rolls as a result of your Hida Berserker School Techniques. Instead, you gain 1 Free Raise to all Athletics, Battle, or Investigation Rolls for each die not gained. If not used by the end of the round, this Free Raise is lost.

New Path: Falcon's Wings (Bushi)

The Falcon's Wings are the runners who are responsible for communication between the various garrison units of the Kaiu Wall. Although their role undoubtedly requires courage and endurance, they are selected not so much for their warlike skills as for their speed afoot. The vast majority of them are quite young, many fresh from their gempukku. Most Falcon's Wings runners are mustered out before they reach their mid-20's, before they lose a step to advancing adulthood.

The Falcon's Wings draws its members from all of the Crab bushi Families, although historically, most have come from the Hiruma, and they move on to become Hiruma Scouts when their time as messengers is up.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 1

PATH OF ENTRY: None; this is an entry-level Path

BENEFIT: +1 Agility

SKILLS: Athletics, Defense, Etiquette, Kenjutsu, Stealth, any two Bugei Skills

HONOR: 1.5

OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, tanto, light armor, kimono and sandals, scroll satchel, traveling pack, 10 koku.

PATH OF EGRESS: Any Crab Bushi School 2

Technique: Fleet as the Falcon

As a Falcon's Wings runner, your duty is very simple: Run as fast as you can and as hard as you can, and cover the ground allotted to you as quickly as possible. Ignore all distractions and do what you must to overcome all obstacles. Just run.

You gain a bonus equal to your Fire Ring to all Athletics Skill Rolls, except if you are performing an action that would fall under the Running Emphasis (regardless of whether or not you actually have the Running Emphasis). In that case, you receive a bonus to your Athletics Skill Roll equal to your Fire Ring + your Perception.

New Path: The Falcon's Strike (Bushi)

The Falcon's Strike are squadrons of skilled archers deployed along the Kaiu Wall. Part sentry, part scout and part elite Bowman, the Falcon's Strike fill a long-standing need in the Kaiu Wall garrison for first-rate missile troops who can deliver reliably accurate and steady fire under the most adverse circumstances.

Warriors selected for the Falcon's Strike train at the Sharp Eye Dojo, a school set up and jointly operated by the Hiruma and the Toritaka. They accept bushi from a wide variety of backgrounds, and warriors from various Crab Families fill their ranks. Among them, however, the Toritaka are most noted for their uncanny speed and accuracy with just about any kind of bow.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Toritaka Bushi 1, Hiruma Scout 1, or Hida Bushi 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Same School at 1 Rank higher

Technique: Spotting the Prey

Training by Toritaka sensei known for their keen vision has sharpened your senses, enabling you to pick out targets and line up shots at vital areas quickly and surely under pressure. You gain a bonus to all Kyujutsu Skill Rolls equal to your Perception and a number of Free Raises equal to your Void Ring. You also gain a bonus to all damage rolls resulting from a successful use of the Kyujutsu Skill equal to your Perception + Void Ring. Finally, you gain a bonus to all Raw Perception Rolls equal to twice your Air Ring.

New Path: Hida Elite Guard (Bushi)

The Crab have traditionally skimmed off the steadiest and most skilled of their bushi to serve as the Clan Champion's personal bodyguard. Over the centuries, the unit has expanded to en-

compass a variety of duties in and around Kyuden Hida and in the Hida Family in general. The role of the Champion's bodyguard detail now belongs to the cream of the Hida Elite Guard, the best of the Hida's best, the Champion's Guard.

But a posting to the Elite Guard is by no means a purely honorary duty; anyone who thinks of it as a cushy reward for a distinguished career is sorely mistaken. Hida Elite Guardsmen receive rigorous training in the art of fighting on the defensive, particularly in techniques that enable them to strike at their enemy while keeping themselves interposed between the foe and a particular person, location or object. In short, an Elite Guardsman is schooled to understand that the best defense is a good offense.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 4

PATH OF ENTRY: Hida Bushi 3

PATH OF EGRESS: Hida Bushi 4

TECHNIQUE: Hida's Strength

The Hida Elite Guardsman has learned to channel the legendary power of the First Crab, adapting readily to attack or defense. You gain a bonus equal to 3x your Defense Skill Rank to either your damage rolls or your TN to Be Hit until the next

round. You must decide on one or the other at the beginning of each round.

Additionally, you may spend a Void Point so that for the next 3 rounds your armor gives an additional bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to its base bonus. However, you may not stack this bonus so that you benefit from it more than once at any given time.

New Path: Kuni Command Staff (Bushi or Shugenja)

Because they stand constant vigil against the Shadowlands, and are therefore in perpetual contact with the Taint, the Crab armies like to make sure that at least some of their command staff are Kuni Witch Hunters. This is particularly true of the First and Second Crab Armies, which garrison the Kaiu Wall, but every Crab army (with the possible exception of the Army of the East) makes it a point to have Witch Hunter staff officers on hand.

A Witch Hunter command staff officer is charged with protecting his commander from any immediate threat presented by corrupted individuals, creatures or objects. The higher up in the army command hierarchy his superior, the more this is true, and it is always his standing order on the battlefield.

But his more important duty is actually to his unit, to function as a sort of human detection and disposal device for the presence of the Taint. It is standard operating procedure for the First and Second Armies that a Witch Hunter staff officer



should inspect all prisoners or unfamiliar individuals taken into custody by that unit — and also to circulate among the ranks on a regular basis, looking for signs that someone in the unit has become infected. The former duty makes a Witch Hunter the most treasured member of his unit at the moment, while the latter inevitably makes him the least trusted. This is a dichotomy to which every Kuni Witch Hunter is well used and

accepts without comment or complaint.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Kuni Shugenja 2 or Kuni Witch Hunter 2

PATH OF EGRESS: School of origin at 1 Rank higher

Technique:

Speaking With the Darkness

Your training and experience enables you to not only detect the likely presence of the Taint in an individual, but it also allows you to determine with reasonable certainty the degree of contamination. You may make a Contested Awareness/Etiquette Roll against an individual with whom you have had direct interaction (speaking, looking directly at him, etc.) for at least 1 minute; if you are successful, you learn the exact extent of the target's contamination, expressed in terms of his Shadowlands Taint Rank and Points.

Additionally, if you spend a Void Point, you can make an Awareness/Lore: Shadowlands Roll against a TN of 20 to learn the number and assortment of Shadowlands Powers that the target possesses (i.e., the total number, and the breakdown by Minor, Major and Greater). For each Raise that you call, you may also learn one exact Shadowlands Power that the target possesses, starting with the Minor Powers, then the Major Powers, then the Greater Powers.

New Path: Watcher of the Damned (Bushi)

It is not a pleasant thing for a Crab warrior to act against a fellow Crab, but it is also part of the Clan's makeup that they do not shirk from doing what they must. It is a Watcher of the Damned's unpleasant duty to observe the Tainted berserkers of the Damned — sometimes at uncomfortably close range — and inspect them for signs that madness has finally overtaken them. If they find that one of the Damned has succumbed, they are to kill him on the spot, to spare him further suffering as much as to terminate the threat that he poses to others. Because of the particular skills and psychological requirements, this is a role limited to the bushi of the Kuni Witch Hunters.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Kuni Witch Hunter 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Kuni Witch Hunter 2

Technique: Compassion and Steel



New Path: Yasuki Quartermaster (Courtier)

You may make a Contested Awareness/Etiquette Roll against any individual to see if he shows any psychological signs of the Taint (i.e., if he is losing control of himself to the Taint). By calling a Raise, you can prevent the subject from realizing he has let something slip. In addition, you gain a bonus to your Initiative, attack and damage rolls equal to your target's Shad-owlands Taint Rank.

New Path: Yasuki House Guard (Bushi)

The Yasuki House Guard are in part an extension of the Family's tradition of maintaining a crack body of caravan guards and drivers (the Yasuki Taskmasters), but also of their desire to attain a measure of dignity within the Crab Clan. The Yasuki House Guard are entrusted with keeping safe both dignitaries of the Yasuki Family and the Family stronghold of Yasuki Yashiki. Their trademarks are watchfulness and exceptional willpower, turning inward upon themselves the Taskmaster's gift for keeping order among others.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Yasuki Taskmaster 2 or Hida Bushi 2

PATH OF EGRESS: School of origin at 1 Rank higher

Technique: Mastering the Gift

Turning the power of commanding others inward makes you unusually resistant to the attempts of others to bend you to their will. You may gain a bonus to your Roll equal to twice your Willpower whenever a Social Skill is used against you. You gain a bonus equal to your Willpower whenever you make a Contested Roll in which Stamina or Willpower are the relevant Traits. Finally, you gain a bonus to the result of your Initiative Rolls equal to twice your Willpower.

Some Yasuki traders serve the Crab armies by making sure that they do not want for necessary supplies. This is no small task, as the Crab maintain a huge military establishment that often places a strain on their agricultural capacity. These quartermasters are permanently attached to high-level command staffs and given more or less free rein to make sure that Crab soldiers are properly fed and supplied.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Yasuki Courtier 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Yasuki Courtier 3

Technique:

We Acquire What We Must

A successful quartermaster knows how to find what the army needs quickly and how to acquire it quickly. Nothing matters except success, and if achieving it requires means that are less than completely honorable, it is all done in the name of necessity. You gain a bonus to Investigation Skill Rolls equal to your Perception + your Yasuki Courtier School Rank. You also gain a bonus to Deceit Skill Rolls equal to your Intelligence.

New Dojo

The following dojo are described earlier in this chapter. The mechanics described below follow all rules and guidelines included in Chapter 8 of *Emerald Empire*. Three more Crab dojo are presented in that book: Razor's Edge Dojo, First Strike Dojo and Kuni Wastelands Temple. Those three dojo have additional Schools and Paths from this book available to them. They are as follows:

Razor's Edge Dojo: Hida Berserker, The Damned Berserker, Champion's Guard, Dead-Eye Berserker, Hida Elite Guard

First Strike Dojo: Falcon's Strike, Hiruma Stalker

Kuni Wastelands Temple: Kuni Witch Hunter, Kuni Command Staff, Watcher of the Damned

Far Runner Dojo

LOCATION: White Shore Plains

SCHOOLS: Hiruma Scout

PATHS: Falcon's Wings

BENEFIT: When running, your movement allowance is determined by your Water Ring + your Earth Ring.

Kaiu Engineering Academy

Heritage Tables

Because of the peculiarities of their geography, the Crab Clan have a military history without parallel among the Great Clans. The ancestors of any given Crab warrior will therefore have a possible range of experiences unlike that of bushi from the other Great Clans. When creating a Crab character and using the Heritage Tables in the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition core rule book pp. 153-55, you may use the following in place of Heritage Table 3A – Great Battles:

Roll Result

- | | |
|-----|---|
| 1-2 | The Yasuki Wars: The Crab and the Crane have fought more than one war over the loyalty of the Yasuki Family. You have an ancestor who distinguished himself in one of them. You gain 1 Skill Rank in Lore: Crane Clan and 1 Skill Rank in Iaijutsu. |
| 3-4 | Shadowlands Skirmish: Because the Crab have never shirked from the doom that geography conferred upon them, they have fought more skirmishes with the monsters of the Shadowlands than any chronicler could possibly tally. You have an ancestor who distinguished himself in one of the smaller fights against the Shadowlands. It may have been in a battle between a Hida or a Hiruma patrol and a horde of bakemono, or perhaps your ancestor was a ronin who won his right to swear fealty by accomplishing a Twenty Goblin Winter. In any event, you gain 1 Glory Point and 1 free Void Point to spend in any skirmish that involves one or more Shadowlands creatures. |
| 5 | Battle of the Cresting Wave: As long as the Empire lasts and there are Hida, Hiruma and Kuni who remember the courage, desperation, and ultimately, the triumph of that day, the Battle of the Cresting Wave will remain one of the signal events in the Crab Clan's history. You have an ancestor who helped spearhead the Crab's defense of Rokugan against The Maw. Whether he was a Kaiu who rushed to build the wall that became Hida Banuken's last hope, a Hida who held the line against The Maw's minions, a Kuni who honored Kuni Osake's self-sacrifice by lashing the enemy from the battlements, or a Hiruma who extracted bloody vengeance in the moment of triumph — it hardly matters. Glory attends all descendants of the victors of that day. You gain 1 Glory Rank and 1 Skill Rank in Engineering. |
| 6 | The Battle of the Thundering Shrine: Shortly after the Battle of the Cresting Wave halted the The Maw's invasion of Rokugan, the Crab Clan fought a series of border skirmishes against the Scorpion. The Battle of the Thundering Shrine was the largest of these, so named because it was fought for control of the area surrounding the Shrine of Osano-Wo. Between the rocky terrain and the fact that the battle was fought in stormy weather, both sides had to function under less than ideal conditions. You gain 1 Honor Rank and 1 Skill Rank in Battle. |
| 7-8 | The Battle of the Kuni Wastes: During the Tenth Century, the Crab made a final push to rid the Kuni lands of Shadowlands influence. Although the Hida and Hiruma played their usual part, it was the Kuni shugenja who drove the campaign, using their spells against the hordes of monsters. Those who fought in it learned many ways to destroy the minions of the unnamed enemy. You gain 1 Glory Point and 1 Skill Rank in Lore: Shadowlands. |
| 9 | Second Day of Thunder: The greatest battle in recent history, the final battle of the Clan War took place on the ninth day of the Month of the Ox in the year 1128. The combined armies of the Great Clans, together with the Minor Clan Alliance and the naga, gathered at Otosan Uchi and declared war on the Ninth Kami, Fu Leng. While the reincarnated Seven Thunders defeated the dark god within the Imperial Palace, the samurai of Rokugan waged war against the fiercest oni army ever seen beyond the Kaiu Wall. For the Crab in particular, it was a chance to redeem themselves after having allied with the Shadowlands during the Clan War. Gain 2 Skill Ranks in Lore: Shadowlands and 1 Glory Rank. |
| 0 | Battle of the Sleeping River: At the remote location of Sleeping River, the Great Clans gathered together to face the mighty undead army raised by the resurrected Bloodspeaker, Iuchiban. The Crab were instrumental in forcing the Bloodspeaker army back, and found themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Scorpion — a rare and peculiar event indeed. Gain 1 Skill Rank in Lore: Shadowlands. |

MASTERS OF WAR

THE LION



The autumn breeze had a slight chill to it, with the promise of much colder weather to follow. Akodo Shunori had lived virtually his entire life in the Akodo Family provinces, with only occasional forays into other Family lands and the western Crane territories. He was perhaps no more than 200 miles from home, and while the land looked much the same, it felt considerably different. Here, much farther west, there were endless, rolling plains, just as there were at home. But while at home the weather would still be warm, perhaps even hot, here the temperature was much cooler, and the winds were stronger. It felt as though they bored into his very soul.

Were these the winds of war, Shunori wondered?

"Shunori!" a voice called.

The young warrior hastened to answer, trotting quickly to the nearby command tent. Ducking inside, he bowed sharply. "Hai, Seiichi-sama?"

The older Lion warrior was sitting on a mat, poring over a scroll. His armor and blades sat on a rack within reach, but were currently unused. He glanced up at Shunori and nodded, signaling the young man to rise. "Contemplating the breeze again?"

Shunori's face grew flushed. "Forgive my flights of fancy, my lord. They will not happen again."

"Every man needs something to dwell upon in those rare few hours when he has no duty to fulfill," Seiichi said with a dismissive wave. "In the days ahead such hours will be rare indeed, so you may as well enjoy it while you can." He smiled wanly. "A few months from now, winter will have set in, and you may well find yourself praying for anything that can distract you from otherwise tedious and uneventful days."

"Thank you, Seiichi-sama."

"In your studies of the area, have you read much on a village known as Tsurai Mura?"

Shunori nodded. "It is small, perhaps two hundred and fifty residents total. It is not predominantly an agricultural village, although they do raise enough food to sustain them and to pay their taxes. Their principle means of support appears to be carpentry."

"Unusual, is it not?" Seiichi asked. "There are no forests of any significant size within a day's ride."

"There was at one time," Shunori said. "It seems they did not manage their resources particularly well, and it has been gone for decades or even centuries. Their tradition of craftsmanship has continued, however, and the Clan brings wood in for them to make into whatever is required."

"How inefficient," Seiichi said with a smirk. "We are expanding our occupation area to include Tsurai Mura. I am dispatching an Ikoma patrol to assess whether or not there are any samurai within the village. I would expect a magistrate and perhaps a few yoriki, but as the village has little tactical value, nothing more."

"Little tactical value?" Shunori asked, puzzled.

"It is of little tactical value to the Unicorn," Seiichi corrected. "I have much grander plans." He paused. "I would like you to accompany the patrol, Shunori-san. Assuming that the village is abandoned or lightly occupied, deal with the matter and then send word back. I will be marshaling the proper forces and supplies to join you there shortly."

"As you command," Shunori said with a bow.

The village was far better defended than Seiichi had anticipated. There was a magistrate, of course, as well as a pair of yoriki, but there was also a Moto patrol stationed there, numbering at least a dozen total. Two of the Ikoma scouts accompanying Shunori were shot from their saddles before any of the other Lion had realized what was happening. Shunori threw himself off of his horse in an instant, rolling as he hit the ground and drawing his blade as soon as he could do so without impaling himself. He felt rather than heard the impact of several arrows in the ground where he had been only moments before. The young Lion came to rest behind a low stone wall near the village's edge. He glanced about, and saw that the Ikoma accompanying him had likewise sought shelter. A third scout lay dead in the road between them, two arrows sprouting from his neck.

"Come out, little Lion!" one of the Moto shouted, drawing laughter from his fellows. "We only want to play!"

"What is your command?" the closest Ikoma called out to Shunori in a low voice. The man was older, but bore no badge of rank on his armor. His eyes were calm and even.

Shunori steeled himself. "We are Lion," he answered. "We face our enemies without fear."



The Lion Families and the Art of War

The Ikoma nodded, then turned and said something to his comrades. Shunori could not hear him over the laughter of the Unicorn.

"Are you afraid?" the Unicorn leader called out, drawing more laughter.

Anger welled up in Shunori's chest. "I am Lion," he said softly, so that no one else could hear. "I do not know how to fear." The young warrior leapt up from his hiding place, holding his blade in a defensive position. "Charge!" he shouted, as if he were leading a vast Matsu army. "Death to the Unicorn! Akodo!"

The Ikoma charged. Shunori saw the Unicorn draw their bows and wondered if he would live to see the sunset.

Akodo Seichi stared around the village courtyard in shock. Bodies were everywhere. More than a dozen Unicorn were dead, and nearly that many Lion as well. The entire area was saturated with arrows. Shunori and two Ikoma stood unmoving in the center, one of the Ikoma leaning heavily on the other, blood streaming from a wound in his side. "What happened here?" Seichi demanded.

"The village was taken, as you commanded," Shunori replied with a bow.

"What manner of resistance was there?" the commander inquired.

Shunori glanced around the village once, almost casually, then turned back to his superior. "None to speak of, Seichi-sama."

The matter was not discussed further.

"Any man can be prepared to kill. A samurai is prepared to die."

— Akodo Toturi, later Emperor Toturi I

Despite their fiercely warlike reputation, the Lion are not mindless, bloodthirsty battlefield killers, as their enemies like to depict them. Far from it, in fact – most Lion embrace the philosophy of the noble warrior in the manner dictated by the code of Bushido.

The Akodo

The Akodo are the founding Family of the Lion Clan, descended from the Kami Akodo. They ruled the Clan as Champions for over a thousand years with only rare interruptions, but lost that position when the Family was disbanded by an Imperial edict from the young Emperor Hantei XXXIX. That situation lasted only for a few years and the Akodo were restored at the end of the War Against the Darkness. The Akodo have not resumed the Clan Championship, however, although it was offered to their first Daimyo following the Family's restoration.

Ironically, although the Akodo are generally the first samurai that are thought of when one mentions the Lion Clan, the traits generally associated with the Clan — belligerence,

hostility, and a propensity for violence — are generally absent from their collective psychology. The Akodo regard their status as members of the samurai caste as an obligation to pursue both spiritual and martial endeavors. The result is a Family of warrior-scholars, samurai with a gift for serenity and calm that is strangely at odds with their incredible aptitude for martial activities.

The Akodo reconcile these two poles of their mindset by regarding war as an art form. To them, it is the perfect expression of physical prowess, mental clarity, and the skill with which one wields the gifts granted by the ancestors. Akodo officers approach their plans of attack like a poet might approach a blank scroll, or a sculptor might approach a block of stone. There is always a beautiful and elegant solution, with beauty and elegance creating an opportunity for victory.

But although individual Akodo devise innovative approaches to war, the Family as a whole prefers to stick to tried and true methods that have served the Clan for years. The Akodo believe that any enemy can be defeated with the tactics they already have at their disposal; it is merely a matter of discovering which approach will best exploit their enemy's weaknesses.

THE AKODO PHILOSOPHY AND THE TENETS OF BUSHIDO

The Akodo are quite literally descended from the one who conceived, wrote, and embodied the tenets of Bushido. If possible, the code means even more to them than it does to the other Families within the Clan, for it came from the hand of their great ancestor, the Kami called Akodo One-Eye. The Akodo consider Bushido to be the sole guideline necessary for a samurai to live a virtuous and honorable life, and they adhere to it very closely.

The basic tenets of Bushido as laid out by Akodo are as follows:

Gi (Honesty) – Honesty is highly regarded by the Akodo because they believe deceit and deception create a stain upon the soul. The exact origin of this belief is uncertain. Some claim it stems from the Family's desire to hold to Akodo's code above all else and at all cost. Others believe that some Akodo samurai fear what lingering effects the Lying Darkness may have on their souls, and giving in to deception can strengthen whatever meager power it may yet hold over them.

Yu (Courage) – The Akodo display boundless courage, as do their Matsu cousins. For the Akodo, however, this comes not from a need to prove that they have no fear, but instead from the certainty brought by their absolute devotion to Bushido. Because they cling so closely to their founder's code, the Akodo know without question that their course is certain, and that their actions will unfold as they must. This frees them from any fear, solely because they know that if they die, they die in fulfillment of their duty and their destiny. What is there to fear from such a fate?

Jin (Compassion) – Generally speaking, the Akodo are perhaps the only Lion Family that truly embraces this tenet, as fully as they embrace the other six tenets of Bushido. The Akodo are warriors, but they wage war because it is their duty. They do not possess the Matsu's bloodlust, and see no point

in fighting when fighting is not needed. To do otherwise would be a perversion of their duty, after all. Mercy can be extended to defeated enemies, because it proves that the Akodo is the better man.

Also, the Akodo loses nothing by showing mercy. Those enemies who squander this mercy to wage war again have only aided in their second defeat, and have given the Lion another chance to wage war in their lord's name. Likewise, the Akodo treat well those who serve them, for anyone who fulfills their role in the Celestial Order is worthy of respect, no matter how gruesome or unpleasant their tasks may be.

Rei (Courtesy) – As with compassion, the Akodo are foremost among the Lion in their demonstration of courtesy to others, particularly those outside the Clan. The Akodo believe that everyone must be treated with courtesy and respect, regardless of the circumstances. In this way, they demonstrate their status as noble warriors, and encourage others to behave similarly through their actions alone. Only those who have irrevocably proven that they are unworthy are treated with dismissal. Criminals, traitors, and disrespectful enemies are among the latter group.

Meyo (Honor) – All Lion embrace the tenet of honor, even if their interpretation of it varies. Honor is particularly important to the Akodo in light of their Family's unpleasant experiences over the last century. Although history has afforded the Akodo that rarest of gifts, forgiveness, they are all too aware how easy it would be for allegations of dishonor to resurface if their behavior or reputation were to be tarnished in any way. For that reason above all others, the Akodo do not tolerate dishonorable conduct among their ranks. There is far more to lose than the reputation of a single warrior, and far worse ramifications than the disapproval of one's ancestors.

Makoto (Sincerity) – Sincerity has always been an important element of Akodo psychology, but in recent generations it has taken on an even more important role. There are some among the Akodo who believe that their liberation from the Lying Darkness decades ago may have some lingering effects, and that by engaging in activities that benefited the Darkness, such as deceit and misdirection, they may somehow empower that entity in some way. Hence, the Akodo place extraordinary emphasis on being true to themselves, speaking exactly what they mean, and generally representing themselves as truthfully and sincerely as possible at all times.

Chugo (Duty) – There is no disagreement or variance among the Lion Families with regard to duty. A Lion given a duty fulfills it without question or pause. There is simply no other option. To the Akodo, this is perhaps their most sacred belief, and one that they hold to lifelong, each and every one.

The Ikoma

The Ikoma are the descendants and vassals of a most peculiar man, a warrior adopted into the nascent Lion Clan by Akodo himself even though the seasoned veteran had very few of the characteristics that Akodo typically sought out in his followers. The original Ikoma was a fighter, to be sure, but more of the sort found in a sake house brawl or a dark alley knife-fight than on the battlefield with katana in hand. If even a fraction of the legends surrounding Ikoma's activities during the dawn

of the Empire are true, then it is no wonder that so little of his background and contributions to the First War can be found in the modern Ikoma family histories.

The Ikoma are practical above all else. They are accustomed to filling whatever role the Clan requires of them, and it is usually a role that the other Families refuse to play, or are not well-equipped to play. Given the exclusively martial nature of the Akodo and Matsu, and the extremely conservative nature of the Kitsu, it is no surprise that the Ikoma have come to be known as the voice of the Clan in the courts. Likewise they are the historians and often the philosophers of the Clan as well, and during the decades when the Akodo Family was dissolved, it was the Ikoma who stepped in and oversaw those duties the Akodo had traditionally performed.

To the Ikoma, war is a game. This is not to say that they do not take it seriously, for nothing could be farther from the truth. On the contrary, it is a game that they are completely committed to winning. Their interest in the historical, social and political ramifications of any battle, even one taking place in the present, renders them somewhat detached from the actual event itself.

This trait is most common among the older Ikoma, the historians and courtiers. The former see a battle in the context of conflicts that have taken place over centuries, and regard it as one might regard a particularly lengthy game of go. The latter group, on the other hand, sees it as a means of generating opportunities in court that they can exploit with ruthless abandon.

The younger Ikoma have inherited this philosophy, although as warriors they apply it differently. They view themselves much as one might view pieces on a go board. In dire situations this philosophy can aid them, as they recognize the value of sacrifice and their role in the larger strategic game played by their lords and their Clan. By and large, however, they take great pride and enjoyment from their role, and it is an aspect of their character that brings them much appreciation from the Akodo and the Matsu.

THE IKOMA PHILOSOPHY AND THE TENETS OF BUSHIDO

The Ikoma are a Family of contradictions when it comes to the code of Bushido. The vast majority of them are honorable warriors who have much in common with their Akodo and Matsu cousins. They embrace the code as any Lion would expect. There is a small subset of the older generations, however, who look upon Bushido with some degree of annoyance, viewing it as an unnecessary restriction that prevents them from bringing the full force of their talents to bear for their Clan. They keep their reservations to themselves, however; although they are very much like their great ancestor, the warrior Ikoma, they know that there is little place within the Clan for a philosophy such as theirs.

Gi (Honesty) – The Ikoma embrace honesty for a number of reasons. First and foremost, as historians, they value the truth for its role in preserving an accurate historical record. Other Clans may delude themselves with lies and half-truths, but there is a reason that the Ikoma histories are so highly respected in the Empire, and that is because the Ikoma record nothing save for the absolute truth as they see it.

Yu (Courage) – The Ikoma do not know fear. They are, as

they like to point out, descended from one of the greatest warriors who ever lived, one who was unafraid even to fight the Kami Akodo in a street brawl. An Ikoma does not fear his enemies, because they cannot possibly anticipate what he will do or say, and they will therefore always be at a disadvantage. Fear is for those who find the possible outcomes of any situation unacceptable. To the Ikoma, there are no unacceptable outcomes; every possibility is an opportunity waiting to be exploited.

Jin (Compassion) – The Ikoma are surprisingly compassionate for a Family that consists of fearless warriors, dispassionate historians, and wily courtiers. This is not necessarily because they embrace the concept whole-heartedly, as the Akodo do, but more because they consider poor treatment of their subordinates to be an inefficient use of resources. Enemies and rivals are treated with mercy because doing so places them at a disadvantage, ensuring that they can be more easily manipulated in the future.

Rei (Courtesy) – The Ikoma often find themselves serving as the Lion Clan's representatives in court, and in the public eye in general. For this reason, they must practice the tenet of courtesy if they are to fulfill their duty adequately. Fortunately for them, their traditional role as historians and heralds has given them the experience necessary to be successful in their assigned tasks. The Ikoma are by and large a gregarious Family, far more so than the other Lion Families. Their belief is that fulfilling their duties requires them to forge alliances, and they can best make new allies by treating others with respect and consideration. From such gestures are the seeds of military alliances grown.

Meyo (Honor) – Everything the Ikoma do, they do for the honor of the Lion Clan. Occasionally this requires them to make decisions of dubious ethical or moral character. But they always keep their ultimate goal of service to the Lion in mind, and it protects them from inadvertently becoming a disgrace to themselves and their Clan.

History has offered no greater lesson to the Ikoma than the experience of the Crane Harriers, who served a similar purpose for the Crane Clan but lost their way and fell into dishonor and shame. The Ikoma have never allowed themselves to fall as far as the Harriers did, for in addition to considering their Clan's honor, they also consider their personal honor and how the ancestors who watch their every move will judge them. While the occasional Ikoma is willing to sacrifice a fraction of his honor for a greater gain for the Lion, none are willing to throw their honor away entirely. It is too precious by far for such a sacrifice, and no true Lion lord would ever ask that of them.

Makoto (Sincerity) – Because of their role as the Lion's voice in the courts, the Ikoma have a somewhat flexible view of the tenet of sincerity. They are generally honest, but they do not always wear their hearts on their sleeves, so to speak. Rather, their ability to express a wide variety of emotions, perfected through centuries of work as warrior heralds for the Lion armies, allows them to mask their true feelings and intentions from others with nothing more than a quick expression.

This is the only thing that has allowed the Lion to maintain their defenses in court against Clans with larger and more skilled contingents of courtiers. While this can be seen by some as a failure to adhere strictly to the code of Bushido, it is done in favor of honoring another, more important tenet:

duty. Because of this, the other Lion Families do not judge the Ikoma for the sacrifices required to perform their duties.

Chugo (Duty) – The Ikoma do not waver in their dedication to their duty. They do whatever is asked for them, no matter the cost or the danger to themselves. They trust that they will not be asked to do anything that is not absolutely necessary, and so they are willing to do whatever is asked without question.

The Kitsu

The Kitsu are descended from an ancient race of creatures that existed before humans walked the Empire. They were nearly driven to extinction by Akodo and his followers, and it was only at the last moment that the Kami realized he was making war not on monsters, but on intelligent and spiritually advanced beings. In restitution for his sins, he offered the remaining kitsu a place among his followers, and created the Kitsu Family to remember their loss forever. Even now, centuries later, the true bloodline of the kitsu is closely monitored for the strange abilities those individuals often possess. These are the leaders of the Kitsu Family, and they are the greatest shugenja in the Lion Clan's service.

The Kitsu Family has the distinction of being the most traditional Family in the most traditional Clan in the Empire. Their philosophy regarding any particular topic is virtually unchanged from that held ten years ago, 100 years ago, or even 1,000 years ago. They approach every new development by first examining their history for similar situations. Barring that, they typically stay true to their knowledge of what is tradition-

ally proper in how to react to such a situation. Bushido and the universal principles of the Celestial Order studied by all shugenja are the guidelines they use to make these decisions.

The Kitsu view war as an unfortunate fact of existence, nothing more. They do not possess the fascination that the Akodo have for it, nor the enjoyment of the Ikoma, nor the zeal and fervor of the Matsu. A priest of the kami is a pacifist by definition, or at least as much of a pacifist as is possible for a member of the samurai caste, and shugenja are therefore supposed to view war as generally unpleasant. The Kitsu are Lion above all else, of course, and so the degree of pacifism they exhibit is less than that of other shugenja Families, but they are by far the least warlike of all the Lion Families.

THE KITSU PHILOSOPHY AND THE TENETS OF BUSHIDO

The Kitsu are easily the smallest, most conservative, and quietest of all the Lion Families. They revere Bushido as much as the other Families within the Clan, perhaps even more so. As shugenja, the Kitsu view the universe as a series of absolute laws that are managed by the Celestial Heavens, and they consider Bushido to be one of those laws imparted to mankind by a son of the Moon and Sun. From that point of view, they believe that they cannot violate the code without significant repercussions relating to their ability to speak to the kami.

Gi (Honesty) – When one can see the truth of the universe, when one can see the Elemental building blocks that make up the mortal realm, the notion of deceit seems almost ludicrous. The Kitsu cannot tolerate dishonesty because, quite simply, it has no place in their lives or in their duties as priests of the kami. To fill one's heart with lies is to make oneself unwell-



come among the kami. Doing that would be an abandonment of a Kitsu's duties to the Clan. That is something that no Kitsu would ever willingly do.

Yu (Courage) – As with most Lion Families, the Kitsu are utterly fearless. This is not because they live for war like the Matsu, or that they have completely accepted that they might die in service to their lord like the Akodo. Rather, it is because the Kitsu have seen what waits in the next world. Uniquely among the Shugenja families, they possess the ability to traverse the barriers between the spirit realms and the mortal realm. They are able to interact with the spirits of their ancestors, either directly or via rituals that they can conduct in the mortal realm. The Kitsu know exactly what fate awaits them in the next world, and as a result they have absolutely no fear of death at all.

Jin (Compassion) – As the priests of the Lion Clan, the Kitsu are responsible for the spiritual well-being of more than a quarter-million samurai and the vast numbers of peasants that serve them. The Kitsu do not coddle or foster weakness, but neither do they turn their backs when their cousins or their subordinates are in need. They regard it as a large part of their duty as priests of the kami, and like all Lion they consider their duty an inviolate part of their identity, both personal and as a Family.

For the same reason, the Kitsu demonstrate mercy to their enemies: It is mandated by the Celestial Order, which they are charged by the circumstances of their birth to maintain. Of

course, while the Kitsu are relatively compassionate and merciful for Lion, they are still among the most militant shugenja Families in the Empire.

Rei (Courtesy) – Although hardly the most courteous Family one could encounter in the Empire, the Kitsu nevertheless make certain to conduct themselves with cool politeness at all times. They have no particular attachment to the behavior in and of itself, but instead regard it as an obligation to their ancestors, who swore fealty to Akodo, and a function of their role within the Clan. In fact, many Kitsu regard it as a somewhat unpleasant necessity, but observe it all the same. Those who interact with the Kitsu on a regular basis would no doubt agree that they are courteous, if not particularly friendly.

Mevo (Honor) – The Kitsu are rigidly honorable. Like so many other elements of their philosophy, this stems not only from their status as Lion, but also from their position as priests of the kami. They are not simply believers in the Celestial Order, they participate in it and witness it all around them on a daily basis. Honor is not a value system for them, it is very nearly a religion, and one that they understand extremely well. Furthermore, their ability to visit the spirit realms and speak with ancestors helps them see the value of honorable conduct.

Makoto (Sincerity) – Sincerity is an essential element of what the Kitsu do as priests, and is absolutely essential in order for them to continue their work for the Clan. The Kitsu believe that their interaction with the kami requires that they be completely genuine at all times. They believe that deceit and deception of any sort sullies their spirit, and drives away the kami, rendering them unwilling to speak to them. Despite



the fact that Scorpion Clan shugenja have never lost the ability to speak to the kami, the Kitsu cling to this belief tenaciously, rendering them spectacularly sincere as a general rule.

Chugo (Duty) – The Kitsu embrace their duty without complaint. Their ancestors were creatures of spirit and duty, and understood the devotion that their descendants would require all too well. The Kitsu have not disappointed their ancestors, and cling to their duties with the same ferocity that the Lion Clan expects from all of its members.

The Matsu

"In my sword, the wind. In my heart, courage. In my eyes, death."

— Lady Matsu in Kakita Morushijin's play, *No Man's Bride*

The Matsu are far and away the largest of the Lion Families; in fact, the current Imperial census identifies them as the most numerous Family in the Empire, although recent conflicts may have altered their position somewhat. Regardless, the Matsu are accustomed to viewing other Families or individuals as weaker than themselves, almost purely as a result of their superior numbers and martial training. They are, as a rule, brash, combative, and somewhat abrasive.

To the Matsu, war is a religion. This is not something that they recognize consciously, nor would they take kindly to such a comparison being made. Nevertheless, war is the essence of their being in every way. They spend their entire lives in preparation for it, and when it comes upon them they embrace it with a passion that would be completely shameful if it were displayed toward almost any other activity. Older Matsu samurai recount their most heated battles as the greatest moments of their lives, and younger Matsu look forward to battle with a vibrant enthusiasm and anticipation that others might reserve for an impending marriage or a prestigious appointment to a high-ranking position. When other young samurai pray to the Fortunes and their ancestors for wisdom, guidance, or clarity, the Matsu pray for the strength to wage war in their Clan's name. Fortunately for the Matsu, their ancestors are typically happy to answer such prayers.

THE MATSU PHILOSOPHY AND THE TENETS OF BUSHIDO

The Matsu have embraced Bushido with every fiber of their Family's collective being. They live for it, and they disdain any who fail to live up to their interpretation of it. This has created a problem in the past, as Matsu were often fiercely hostile toward others whom they considered to be poor samurai because they do not exemplify Bushido in the way the Matsu prefer. Objective observers have occasionally made note that the Matsu seem to be selective in their adherence to Bushido, greatly extolling the importance of courage and duty above other tenets, particularly compassion. Regardless, the Matsu are religiously devoted to observing Bushido, even if their view of the code is an unusually narrow one.

Gi (Honesty) – Honesty is the default position for the Matsu. They believe that lies are told by the weak to hide their weakness, by fools to cover their folly, or by cowards who seek to shield themselves from the wrath of the righteous. A Matsu is honest because he has nothing to hide, and fears nothing.

Yu (Courage) – Courage is exceptionally important to the average Matsu. The notion that he might be afraid to take a certain course of action or face a certain opponent is completely unacceptable. Young Matsu are sometimes easy to manipulate as a result of this, since they will undertake virtually any course of action if it is suggested that they are afraid to do it. As a Matsu gets older, he recognizes the folly of this and instead will simply take insult from whoever suggests that he is afraid, often going so far as to kill in order to defend his honor.

Jun (Compassion) – Compassion is not a particular concern for the Matsu. They protect and provide for those of the lower castes who serve them, and do not persecute them as one might expect from such a belligerent and warlike Family. Beyond that, however, they are not concerned with their treatment of others. A samurai must be true to himself and his lord above all, and concern for others only interferes with this dedication.

The concept of showing mercy to an enemy is almost completely foreign to the Matsu, who typically allow defeated foes to survive only so that they are forced to live with their humiliation and may spread the word of the Matsu Family's prowess.

Rei (Courtesy) – The Matsu extend courtesy only to those who have earned it, either through their actions or because of their rank. Matsu treat one another with the minimal amount of courtesy necessary, simply because it is considered a frill and something that is not important between warriors with mutual respect for one another.

They generally treat samurai from other Clans with contempt if they are of lower rank, with general indifference if they are of equal rank, or with proper deference if they are higher rank. This applies only to those with whom a Matsu has no personal acquaintance, of course. Those who have proven themselves to be worthy opponents or otherwise deserving of respect for their accomplishments are treated appropriately by all Matsu, for to do otherwise would risk staining the Family's honor.

Meyo (Honor) – Honor is all that matters to the Matsu. Every action a Matsu takes is weighed against his own individual sense of honor and judged worthy or unworthy according to that single standard. Only honorable actions are permitted to a Matsu. Even considering a dishonorable act is unworthy of a Matsu, and requires atonement.

Makoto (Sincerity) – A Matsu who does not say exactly what he means at all times is an extraordinary rarity. There is no difference between the thought and the action of a Matsu, save for those occasions when he takes care to restrain himself from an outburst that might be inappropriate under the circumstances. Still, the Matsu are less likely to keep their true thoughts or feelings to themselves when asked than anyone else in the Empire, save perhaps for the ever-forthright Hida Family of the Crab Clan.

Chugo (Duty) – Like the other Lion Families, the Matsu have no real feelings toward their duties. Duties are to be completed without question or hesitation. There is no doubt about this, nor any room for considering the ramifications of one's actions. If a Matsu is given a duty to perform by his lord, he is obligated to perform it to the best of his ability or die in the attempt. To the Matsu, there are no other acceptable outcomes.

The Armies of the Lion Clan

The Lion armies are quite literally the basis on which all other Clan armies are constructed, and the measuring tool against which they are compared. The traditional army structure used (with some modifications) throughout the Empire is the one first conceived and implemented by the great Akodo One-Eye over a thousand years ago. That system remains in use by the Lion today, almost completely unaltered save for a few minor changes that have proven necessary due to the opponents the Lion face in the modern era.

The four armies maintained by the Lion Clan adhere strictly to the principles of war established in Akodo's treatise, *Leadership*, with variations made only when the writings of the Kami dictated that such things should be allowed. Fortunately for Akodo's descendants, *Leadership* is surprisingly vague as to when such decisions should be made, allowing Lion officers and commanders a considerable degree of discretion as to how to alter their forces when anticipating a conflict against a known enemy. Regardless of variation, the typical structure to which Lion armies adhere can be summarized as follows:

Squadron (Guntai) – The squadron is the smallest unit deployed by the Lion when a matter that deserves military consideration arises. It is not uncommon for entire companies to be made up of squadrons that spend extended periods of time away from the army's headquarters on duty assignments. These squadrons are generally referred to as patrols. Unless specifically modified for a particular mission, a Lion squadron consists of twenty men and their gunso, or sergeant. The twenty men in a squadron hold the rank of hohei, or private. One is typically selected to aid the gunso, and is promoted to the rank of nikutai, or corporal.

Company (Kaisha) – Although squadrons can operate on their own, the company is the basic building block of the Lion armies. Lion companies typically spend a considerable amount of time training to work as a cohesive unit, and to work in conjunction with other companies, ensuring that no matter the size of the force, the individual companies within it are always prepared for the engagement. A company consists of seven squadrons and is led by a chui, or lieutenant, and his command staff. A standard company command staff consists of five additional officers.

Reserve Company (Yobihei Kaisha) – Reserve companies are the only units within the Lion military where customization is considered perfectly normal. Akodo envisioned these groups as flexible combinations of specialized troops that could support the line infantry companies, and that philosophy has served the Lion well for over a thousand years. A reserve company typically consists of six squadrons of varying types: two squadrons of shugenja and yojimbo, trained to use their abilities in conjunction with military operations, two squadrons of military engineers, and two squadrons of cavalry. A reserve company is commanded by a chui and his command staff in the same manner as a regular company.

Legion (Daibutai) – The prevailing philosophy among Lion tacticians is that any battle, no matter how severe, can be won by a single Lion legion – albeit under the right circumstances and if it is properly led. Lion legions are autonomous entities, and are typically only combined together when battles of a significant scale are anticipated. (The Lion, however, anticipate such things with regularity, so it is not uncommon for legions to be deployed *en masse*.) A legion consists of four companies and one reserve company, which amounts to roughly 750 troops commanded by a taisa, or captain. A taisa and his legion answer to a shireikan (commander), and beyond that to the rikugunshokan, or general, of the army to which the legion belongs.

Army (Go-hatamoto) – The army is the largest military organization considered to be a single entity by the Lion Clan. The Ikoma and Akodo Families both maintain a single army, and the Matsu Family maintains two. A go-hatamoto consists of approximately 48 legions, meaning that each of the four Lion armies consists of approximately 36,000 troops, for a total of 144,000 trained soldiers willing to go to war on behalf of their Clan at a moment's notice. Of course, these numbers fluctuate according to battle losses and non-combat attrition, so it is rare for all four armies to be operating at full capacity. But they seldom fall below three-quarters strength and do not remain at that level for very long; the Lion will not endure such a thing.

Daimyo vs. General

Technically, the Daimyo of a Lion Family is the rikugunshokan of the army maintained by that Family. This is obviously not always the case, as the Matsu Family Daimyo could scarcely command two armies engaged in different locations simultaneously, and the duties of a Daimyo can often remove them from the situation long enough to require a replacement. In fact, a Daimyo who is not particularly skilled in the realm of battle (such as Ikoma Korin's predecessor, the courtier Ikoma Sume) may require the help of a permanent military aide to exercise actual command of the army that is his by right. For this reason, all armies maintain an unofficial position of "Chief Shireikan," who assumes command in the absence of the rikugunshokan.

The Akodo Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Akodo

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Akodo Shigetoshi, Daimyo of the Akodo

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Akodo Bakin

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Akodo Kobi, Akodo Kuemon

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Akodo Anshiro, Akodo Sadahige, Ikoma Uchito

There is a saying among the Great Clans that no army led by an Akodo has ever lost a battle. This is hyperbole, of course, but in truth the saying is really not as inaccurate as all that. The Akodo are, without question, the greatest tactical minds in the Empire, rivaled by a handful of other groups, but never surpassed. The Akodo army is the precise instrument of the Lion, cutting away enemies quickly and exactly, leaving little or nothing to create future difficulties.

It was the Akodo who stood against the Crane for hundreds of years prior to the current alliance between the two Clans (although admittedly the Matsu were involved as well). Under the Akodo's direction, the Lion lost territory to the Crane less than ten times over the course of a thousand years, and in almost every instance that territory was retaken in relatively short order.

Of all the Lion armies, the Akodo have the highest number of non-Lion among their ranks, although that number is still quite small. There are many in the Empire who are eager to send their young samurai to train with the legendary Akodo tacticians, but there is a price for such a boon: those who train with the Akodo are expected to serve alongside them in the Lion army for a minimum of one year.

Traditionally, the Akodo army uses tactics familiar to the entire Empire. They are, to a large extent, the instrument against which all other armies are measured. They do not often introduce revolutionary or even innovative new practices into their repertoire of military maneuvers; rather, it is the means by which they combine existing maneuvers, and the incredible skill with which they implement them, that makes the Akodo such a dangerous foe. Every single samurai on the field knows exactly what is expected of them, and how they fit into the larger battle plan. In fact, there have been several occasions when an Akodo commander has been killed or incapacitated in some way, but his army continued executing his plan without pause.

Since the retirement of the legendary Akodo Ginawa many years ago, the quiet intensity of his replacement, Akodo Shigetoshi, has been the driving force behind the Akodo Family and its army. Like many of his bloodline, Shigetoshi eschews the limelight, preferring instead to focus on the execution of his duties.

There are certain elements within the Family who believe the Akodo should resume the Clan's Championship. The first to suggest such an idea to Shigetoshi was instantly executed for treason, and no one has ever spoken of it since. Under his guidance, the Akodo represented the Lion on the Dragon front during the War of Silk & Steel, and it was a division of the Akodo army that withdrew to the Imperial capital of Toshi Ranbo in order to defend it from the Khan's assault at the beginning of 1169. The Akodo appeared to have the Unicorn defeated, but were betrayed by Mantis within the capital and the Khan's army gained access to the city despite their efforts. It is not a matter that Shigetoshi or his officers have forgotten.

Present Strength: After participating in the War of Silk & Steel and the Khan's assault on Toshi Ranbo, the Akodo have suffered significant but not overwhelming losses. As of the summer of 1169, while the Matsu and Ikoma plan an assault on the Unicorn provinces, the recovering Akodo are tasked with protecting the Lion homeland, along with the second Matsu army. The Akodo army currently stands at roughly 28,000 men, or roughly three-quarters of its normal full strength.



Unit Structure: It surprises no one that the Akodo have a rigid traditional structure to their military organization. Generally speaking, the ranks of the first ten legions are filled with elite units, both special units unique to the Lion as well as the more mundane troops such as the Lion Regular Elite and the Lion Heavy Elite. They include most non-Family-specific Lion units, including an entire company devoted to the Ikoma-trained wardens. The remaining 26 legions are comprised primarily of Lion Regulars and Lion Heavy Regulars, although there are a handful of special units located within those legions due to their placement on the battlefield. For instance, the Lion Elite Spearmen are found in the Thirtieth through the Thirty-Second Legions, among the reserve companies in place of traditional archer squadrons. As with most military organizations, there is some degree of variance with regard to what unit designation a given unit type receives. There are a number of units that are reserved for specific groups, and whose designations have not changed in decades or even centuries. These reserved designations include those described in Table 2.1.

TABLE 2.1: ELITE UNITS IN THE AKODO ARMY

First Legion, First Company	Akodo Elite Guard
First Legion, Second Company	Akodo Scouts
Fourth Legion, Fourth Company	Deathseekers
Eighth Legion, First Company	Ikoma Wardens
Thirtieth Legion, Reserve Company	Lion Elite Spearmen
Thirty-First Legion, Reserve Company	Lion Elite Spearmen
Thirty-Second Legion, Reserve Company	Lion Elite Spearmen

The Ikoma Army

HEADQUARTERS: Kyuden Ikoma

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Ikoma Korin, Daimyo of the Ikoma

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Ikoma Kosaku

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Matsu Watako

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Ikoma Chikao

OTHER NOTABLE OFFICERS: Ikoma Fujimaro, Senior Chui

The Ikoma army has the distinction of being the most defensively-oriented of all the Lion armies. Although this is a strong statement, it should still be taken in context of the Lion's overall reputation and military capability. Even the least attack-oriented of the Lion armies is easily the equal of most any other Clan's forces on the offensive.

Until the past decade or so, the Ikoma had little need to conduct offensive operations against other Clans, given that their sole purpose is to defend the Lion's western provinces. The Unicorn Clan is the only potential opponent in that region, and historically, the Unicorn have been the Lion's allies. The two Clans only became enemies following the unprecedented Unicorn attack that launched the War of the Rich Frog. Since that time, however, the Ikoma army has become home to thousands of hardened veterans, soldiers who have seen their provinces ravaged by the Khan's forces, and who have vowed that such a thing will never happen again no matter the cost.

Prior to his ascension as temporary regent of the Clan Championship, the noted tactician Ikoma Otemi spent some time in command of the Ikoma army. During that time, Otemi made numerous changes to the manner in which the army was constructed and in which it conducted itself on the battlefield, bringing it far more in line with the traditional Lion model of an army than ever before, while still maintaining its strong emphasis on defensive warfare.

Following Otemi's ascension, the new Family Daimyo Ikoma Korin assumed command. A veteran of the Lion scouts and a pragmatist, Korin has made a number of minor changes, mostly in how the Family's elite units are trained and utilized. Some of Korin's detractors privately criticize his new tactics as unconventional; a few even use the term clandestine (that is to say, vaguely dishonorable). But none can argue with their effectiveness.



Present Strength: At the time of the Khan's assault on the Ikoma provinces during the winter of 1168, a majority of the Ikoma forces were distributed along various stretches of the border and major strongholds. Nevertheless, the Khan's attack took a brutal toll on their component legions, and the Ikoma are still recovering. Their current manpower stands at approximately 23,000 men, or roughly 60% of normal strength.

Unit Structure: The Ikoma use a relatively traditional structure for their military, with the only truly notable exception being a significantly higher proportion of cavalry than is normal among the Lion armies. This is the result of a number of factors, not the least of which is the Ikoma Family's tradition of providing wardens to patrol the roadways of the entire Lion territory, as well as their proximity to the Unicorn Clan and the constant need to prepare for combat against them. Since the ascension of Ikoma Korin to the position of Daimyo and rikugunshokan, the army has increased the scope and breadth of its scouting division as well.

TABLE 2.2: ELITE UNITS IN THE IKOMA ARMY

All Legions, Command Staff	Ikoma Heralds
First Legion, First Company	Ikoma Elite Guardians
First Legion, Second Company	Scout Legion
First Legion, Second Company, Squadrons 1, 2, and 3	Fujimaro's Legion
Sixth Legion, 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Companies	Lion Elite Spearmen
Eleventh through Twentieth Legions	Ikoma Wardens

The First Matsu Army

HEADQUARTERS: Crossroads Castle in Tonfajutsen

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Matsu Yoshino, Lion Clan Champion

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Ikoma Otemi (currently incapacitated)

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Matsu Yokuya (temporary chief shireikan)

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Matsu Eishi

The First Matsu army serves as the personal army of the Lion Champion, a tradition that began when the Lion anointed its first Matsu Clan Champion centuries ago. The number of Matsu Champions since that time has been quite small, but the tradition has endured. Technically, the First Matsu army falls to the Clan Champion to command regardless of circumstances, but often the Champion chooses to forego that authority in place of allowing the Matsu to choose their own commander. This is a gesture of respect that has gained many non-Matsu Champions instant respect from the normally reserved Matsu Family leadership. In the recent past, only the legendary warrior Kitsu Motso chose to take personal command of the First Matsu army during his brief tenure as Clan Champion, but his prowess in battle and his eagerness to engage the Lion's enemies more than made up for what many Matsu privately considered presumption on his part.

The First Matsu army has undergone a number of changes in the past decade. Matsu Yoshino's father, the legendary hero Matsu Nimuro, transformed it into the fighting force it is today. He did not introduce new tactics or a new philosophy of warfare, but the sheer force of his personality inspired the Matsu above and beyond their normal heights of military excellence.

After Nimuro's death, Ikoma Otemi assumed command and initiated a review of the army's tactical doctrines. Although he lacked Nimuro's charisma, his tactical brilliance refreshed and renewed the army. Now, with Nimuro's son Yoshino in command, possessing both his father's charisma and the tactical advice of his chief shireikan Otemi, the army is functioning as a cohesive unit in a manner perhaps never before equaled in the Family's history. That Yoshino has vowed to carve a path through the Unicorn Lands and seize Shiro Moto in vengeance for the Khan's bloody campaign has only increased the zeal of the soldiers who follow him.

Present Strength: The First Matsu Army bore the brunt of the heavy fighting against the Khan's forces during the push to oust the Khol army from the Lion provinces, and took appreciable damage as a result. Still, they fared better than many expected, owing greatly to the fact that the Unicorn were in full retreat at the time and avoided engagement as much as possible. As of the summer of 1169, the first Matsu army boasts slightly over 25,000 men, well under their normal strength of 36,000, but still strong enough to prepare for an assault on the Unicorn Lands.

Unit Structure: The Matsu utilize a much larger number of Lion Heavy Regulars and Lion Heavy Elite units than the armies of the other Lion Families. Typically, the Matsu employ scouts, cavalry, and other units that need more freedom of movement and the ability to cover large amounts of territory very quickly as their light troops. Still, there are Lion Regulars and Lion Elite among their ranks; they simply do not stand out among all the others. Beyond that, the Matsu have the traditional number of specialized units scattered throughout their ranks, although for the most part they can be found within the elite ranks of the first ten legions. The most famous units in the First Matsu Army are listed in Table 2.3.

TABLE 2.3: ELITE UNITS IN THE FIRST MATSU ARMY

First through Tenth Legions, Command Staff	Matsu Beastmaster
First Legion, First Company	The Lion's Pride
First Legion, Second Company	Matsu Elite Guard
Third Legion	Lioness Legion
Fourth Legion, Fourth Company	Deathseekers
Fifth Legion, Second Company	Ikoma Wardens
Fifth Legion, Third Company	Lion Elite Spearmen

The Second Matsu Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Matsu

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Matsu Kenji, Daimyo of the Matsu

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Matsu Takenao

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Matsu Atasuke

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Matsu Aoiko, First Legion Taisa

OTHER NOTABLE OFFICERS: Matsu Ferishi, Chui of the Lion's Pride

While the First Matsu Army serves as the private army of the Clan Champion, the Second Matsu Army is largely concerned with the defense of the Matsu provinces as well as the Kitsu provinces to the north. Static defense is a somewhat ironic purpose for an army of Matsu samurai, since their reputation as a Family rests so firmly on their aggressiveness in the face of

an enemy. The Matsu long for battle, and perceive almost any incursion into their territory as a declaration of war. For centuries they have protected the Clan's western border against the Scorpion, the northwestern border against the Unicorn, and the southern and southeastern borders against the Crane.

There is no more feared force in Rokugan than a Matsu army, save perhaps for the Shadowlands or the massive Hida army that combats them, and even the latter of those is highly subject to debate. The reputation of the Matsu is known to virtually everyone in the entire Empire: they do not fear death, and they live only to kill their enemies. They are the extreme example of everything a samurai should be, with a significant added portion of rage and ill intent. There are few foes indeed that do not waver at the sight of a Matsu army on the horizon, each and every member of which is screaming for the blood of their enemies.

Therefore, many find it amusing (though they will keep their amusement to themselves) that the Second Matsu Army is largely considered a defensive force, since the Matsu concept of defending any given target is simply to destroy anything that threatens it. As a member of the Lion's Pride, this philosophy sits very well with the army commander and Family Daimyo, Matsu Kenji. She takes her responsibilities very seriously, as all true Lion should, and considers the Khan's assault on the Lion provinces during the winter of 1168 a personal failure on her part, an opinion which no one else shares. To ensure that such problems do not occur again, she has recently redistributed much of the Second Army along the shared Unicorn and Dragon borders, while keeping a significant portion at Shiro Matsu in the event of Scorpion treachery. All forces under her command have undergone additional cavalry training in hopes of dramatically decreasing their response time should another unexpected attack occur.

Present Strength: The Second Matsu army suffered very few losses in the battle against the Khan. However, many warriors and even entire units were transferred away after the War of the Rich Frog as replacements for the flagging ranks of the First Matsu Army, and the Second Army has not yet been built back to full strength. Still, it is the largest of the Lion armies as they currently stand, and can field approximately 30,000 soldiers.

Unit Structure: Like the First Matsu army, the Second contains a large number of heavily armored troops like those found among the Lion Heavy Regulars and the Lion Heavy Elite. In fact, no army outside of the Hida can boast such a large number of heavy infantry, each member trained and prepared to fight to the death before surrendering so much as an inch of Lion territory. For the most part, the Second Army mirrors the organization of the First, although they lack a ready contingent of the Lion's Pride beyond those who fight alongside the rikugunshokan's command staff. The most famous units in the First Matsu Army are listed in Table 2.4.

TABLE 2.4: ELITE UNITS IN THE SECOND MATSU ARMY

Rikugunshokan's Command Staff	The Lion's Pride
First through Tenth Legions, Command Staff	Matsu Beastmaster
First Legion, First Company	Matsu Elite Guard
Third Legion	Lioness Legion
Fourth Legion, Fourth Company	Deathseekers
Fifth Legion, Second Company	Ikoma Wardens
Fifth Legion, Third Company	Lion Elite Spearmen

The Imperial Legions

In addition to the armies they maintain within the Clan, the Lion make up the largest portion of the combined Imperial Legions. Of the 100,000 samurai from all across the Empire who serve in the Imperial Legions, somewhere between one-quarter and one-third come from the Lion Clan, making them far and away the largest contributor to the defense of the Empire in this manner.

The truth of the matter is that the Lion could, if they were so inclined, instantly recoup all their losses from Moto Chagatai's winter campaign, the war with the Dragon, and the battle at Toshi Ranbo if they were to recall all of their forces from the Imperial Legions. Doing so would severely compromise that organization, however, and thus far Matsu Yoshino has been completely unwilling to make such a decision.

Although there are Lion officers present in virtually every one of the ten Imperial Legions, there are two in particular that have a heavy Lion presence, most notably their commanders. The First Legion, commanded by Kitsu Dejiko, is by far the most famous and respected of all the Legions. The Seventh Legion is commanded by Toturi Shigekawa, a former Akodo who swore fealty first to Toturi Tsudao (later the Empress Toturi II), serving her as a *taisa* and later a *rikunshokan*, and then later to Toturi Naseru, the Emperor Toturi III. Shigekawa maintains close ties with the Lion, and is in fact one of their primary candidates to assume the throne in continuance of the Toturi Dynasty.

The Imperial Legions do not follow the traditional Akodo structure, having been extensively reorganized during the reign of Emperor Toturi I. The commanders of individual Legions have the right to call upon up to 10,000 samurai to fill their ranks, although some do not choose to recruit quite so many.

The squadron and company composition of the Legions follows the traditional model, but after that, the soldiers are grouped into divisions, which consist of five companies and two reserve companies each, or roughly 1,000 soldiers. There are ten divisions in each Legion, each headed by a *taisa*, and five divisions supervised by a *shireikan*. The *shireikan* in turn report directly to the Legion commander, who is considered the equivalent of a *rikunshokan* for the purposes of making command decisions and requisitioning resources from the Imperial Families.

The First Legion

HEADQUARTERS: Ostensibly Toshi Ranbo, actually mobile

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Kitsu Dejiko

CHIEF SHIREIKAN: Formerly Doji Jotaro, position currently defunct

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Daidoji Kumi

The First Legion is the most prestigious of all the Imperial Legions, and has been for centuries. Before the reorganization of

the Legions, the first ten Imperial Legions were known as the Emerald Legions, and were essentially the private army of the Emerald Champion. The First Legion answered only to him, the Ruby Champion, or the Emperor. Even after the reorganization, the First Legion retained an unusual degree of autonomy within the new structure, following only the direction of its commander and the Emperor, although proper deference was shown to the Emerald Champion if he requested the Legion's service for any reason.

Kitsu Dejiko's history with the First Legion has been long and distinctive. When she was still a young member of the Lion's Pride, she had the good fortune to meet and train alongside the Emperor's oldest child, Toturi Tsudao. Tsudao was greatly impressed with Dejiko's skills (although somewhat troubled by her fiery temperament), and when she was appointed the head of the newly reorganized First Legion, Dejiko was among the first she recruited into her personal command staff. Dejiko served for years, until Tsudao's tragic death.

After her death, Tsudao's command staff was reassigned throughout the Legions. Dejiko found herself appointed as commander of the Seventh Legion, while one of Tsudao's other aides, Toturi Miyako, was given command of the First. This lasted for several more years, during which time Dejiko finally mastered the lessons taught her by Tsudao, and matured into an efficient, brilliant officer. When Miyako left her command, Kitsu Dejiko was appointed to take her place; because of the First Legion's prestige, what might seem to be a lateral move was really a promotion.

Although the letter of the law indicates that the Imperial Legions are all equal in rank and status, the First Legion is certainly the first among equals. The soldiers serving it are

among the finest in the Empire, and often have trained with special elite units within their own Clan before receiving the appointment to serve in the Legions. Dejiko expects absolute dedication and efficiency from her soldiers, and they rarely disappoint. The entire legion, Dejiko included, is currently fuming over the fact that they were conducting raids on various bandit groups near the southern Shinomen Mori when the Khan attacked, and consequently missed the battle at Toshi Ranbo altogether. They are eager to redeem themselves from the shame of their absence from that fight, which they consider to be a serious stain on their honor.

The Seventh Legion

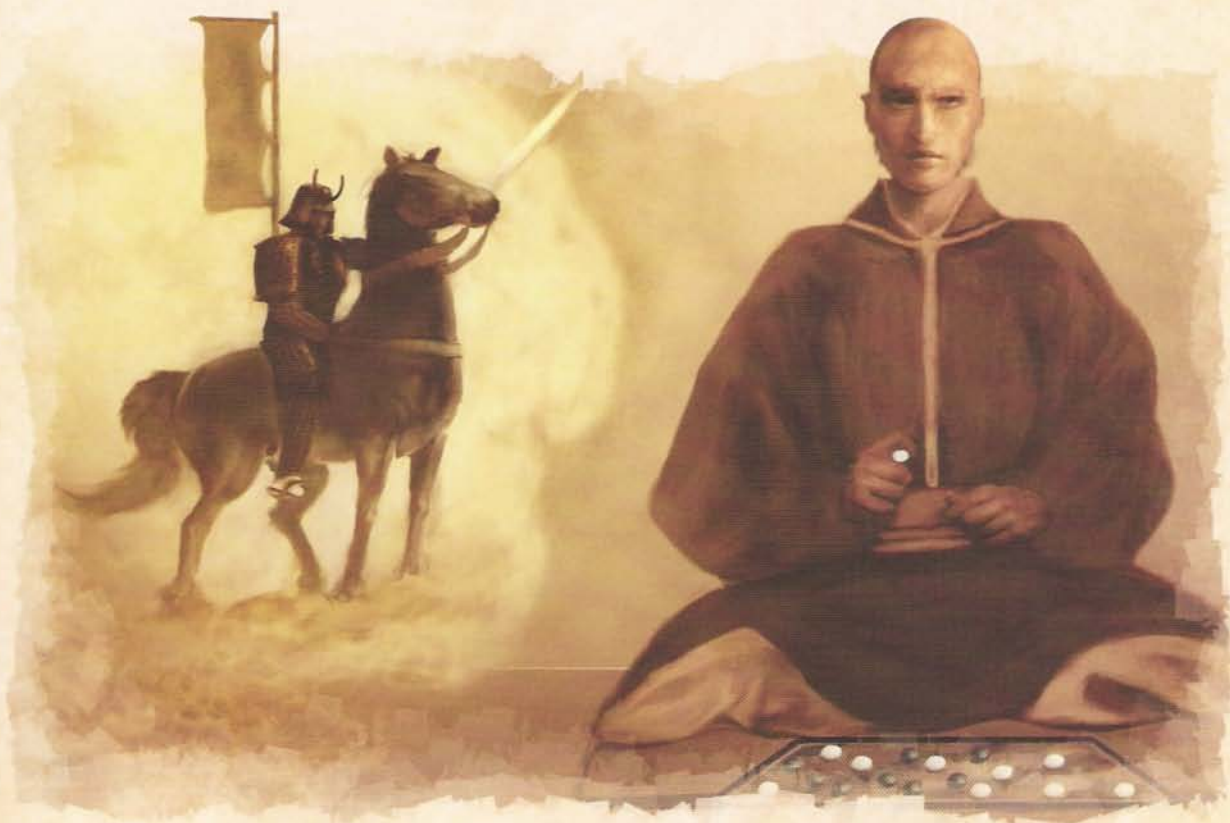
HEADQUARTERS: Kyuden Seppun

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Toturi Shigekawa

SHIREIKAN: Hida Sakamoto

The Seventh Legion is second only to the Ninth in the number of cavalry that it can field in any given engagement. Toturi Shigekawa, the current commander, was a student of Unicorn tactics prior to his Imperial service. He was one of a handful of Lion dedicated to devising counter-strategies in the event of a long-term conflict with the Unicorn, and over time he came to appreciate the virtues of their cavalry tactics. When he was appointed to the Imperial Legions, he filed that information away for the future.

Years later, when he became rikunshokan of the Ninth Legion, he used the powers bestowed upon the position by Toturi I to radically reorganize it, devoting fully half of his allotted troops to cavalry. The result has been a highly mobile, extremely effective legion well known for swift attacks and



rapid strategic movement. The recent unpleasantness in Toshi Ranbo found the Legion well away from the Imperial City when the battle broke out, in the southern Crane provinces. Shigekawa drove his men nearly to the breaking point in an attempt to return to the Imperial City, although the engagement was over long before they arrived. Since then, Shigekawa has petitioned for and been granted permission to base the Ninth at Kyuden Seppun in order to be closer to the capital. This has been beneficial for both the Legion and the Seppun Family, who can now focus their efforts and resources on Toshi Ranbo with their home so well protected.

Lion Strategy and Tactics

The Lion are consummate tacticians. There is no potential opponent anywhere in Rokugan, no matter how remote or obscure, that the Lion have not analyzed extensively to determine the most effective means of countering their strengths and defeating them on the battlefield. Despite what many think, the Lion are not so arrogant as to hold blind faith in their established tactics, and they are more than willing to modify their battlefield practices to suit the opponent in question. Not only that, but they have a long tradition of remembering and studying their infrequent defeats, so that they do not repeat them. This is not to say that they do not cherish their tradi-

tional means of warfare; far from it. Rather, the Lion utilize a number of traditional approaches to war, and combine those different tactics into unique blends suited to whomever they are facing at the time.

THE CRAB CLAN

There have been very few occasions when the Lion and Crab have come into conflict, and those few instances have always been small in scale and extremely brief. The Crab are among the Lion's most respected peers, for they wage war on a daily basis and are frequently unappreciated by other Clans who do not have a proper respect for their burdens. Nevertheless, the inexhaustible Lion tacticians have always prepared contingency plans should war with the Crab ever arise, and they were expanded after the Battle of Beiden Pass 50 years ago, when the Crab allied with the Shadowlands and very nearly reached the Lion Lands.

First and foremost, the Lion recognize that the Crab are more experienced than any force in Rokugan at withstanding a prolonged assault. It is virtually impossible to defeat the Crab by overwhelming them with superior numbers or sheer ferocity, which is of course an approach that the Lion have used against a number of different opponents over the centuries. Against the Crab, however, the Clan's tacticians hypothesize that the Lion forces must be patient and outmaneuver their enemy, as a traditional approach will simply dash the Lion forces to pieces against the stony Crab defense.

The Lion reason that the key to defeating the Crab in battle is to prevent them from establishing a defensible position. Doing so denies them their greatest strength, which is static



defense and their sheer unwillingness to admit defeat. When they must fight on the move, the Crab become at least marginally more vulnerable to attack, and can be worn down more easily through conventional strategies.

Mobility is a key Crab weakness. The Hida have even fewer cavalry resources than the Lion, after all, and their heavily-armored infantry cannot move quickly. The Hiruma are known for their nimbleness, but they tend to operate away from the main battlefield, before and after the fight. Rapid strikes by mobile units are key in exploiting this weakness. The wardens and Lioness Legion are among those groups most often utilized for this strategy, augmented by the occasional odd units like the Matsu Beastmasters or the Lion Elite Spearmen.

One essential element of battle with the Crab that cannot be ignored is the Hida Berserkers, and every Crab army has one full legion of them. These are the only units in the Empire that can truly be compared to the Deathseekers, and the two are very similar in many respects. The simplest means of dealing with these nearly unstoppable shock troops is to pit them against the Deathseekers. Doing so, however, eliminates the tactical advantage of the Deathseekers in the first place, and requires other troops to be moved to the front lines in order to compensate, which in turn creates a sort of cascade effect that can alter an army's entire deployment. Fortunately, the Lion have planned these engagements out well in advance, and have contingencies ready should a conflict with the Crab arise.

THE CRANE CLAN

Historically, the Lion have had no more frequent or vehement opponents than their neighbors the Crane. The feud between the two Clans was born over a thousand years ago, when Lady Matsu fought the upstart Kakita in the first Emerald Championship. While the two Clans have put aside their enmity for the present, and are in fact staunch allies, the Lion still remember the methods that have served them best over the centuries of warfare with the descendants of Doji and Kakita.

The foremost principle the Lion favor when facing the Crane is not to rise to the inevitable baiting by their commanders. This has proven disastrous time and time again, as the Crane commander taunts his Matsu counterpart into a duel, defeats him, and then leads his army to victory over the leaderless Lion forces. Therefore, Lion commanders maintain a respectable distance from the front line when facing the Crane, communicating their orders to their units and subordinates through signalmen and runners. Some Matsu consider this tactic distasteful, but the Akodo regard it as prudent as well as efficient.

Related to the practice of having officers pointedly avoid duels with Crane commanders, the Lion have noticed the practice of highly specialized Crane warriors used specifically to intercept and eliminate key units in Lion formations, disrupting tactics and casting the field into disarray. The most notable of such specialized units are the Kenshinzen duelists, who are deployed against elite Lion units to hinder them by defeating their leaders in duels. Other such targeted units include the Daidoji Iron Warriors and the Asahina Archers, both of whom are trained to target battlefield commanders and can accomplish a similar result.

The Lion answer this through use of targeted elite units of their own, typically Ikoma wardens or Deathseekers. The wardens use their superior mobility and speed to intercept and de-

stroy dangerous Crane units, while the Deathseekers can simply be used without concern for attrition, and at the very least entangle enemy units until such time as they can be properly dealt with.

Given the Lion armies' superior numbers on the battlefield, perhaps the greatest difficulty that they have encountered from the Crane over the centuries has been the unconventional (some might say dishonorable) tactics employed by the Daidoji. While the rank and file of the Iron Cranes are a difficult enough opponent on the battlefield, when their formations and tactics are supplemented by extensive traps, modification of the landscape, and even sabotage (as some suggest), it can complicate matters considerably. After several unfortunate incidents, the Lion have grudgingly admitted that swift entry to the battlefield with the intent of crushing their foe can be a detrimental tactic to use against a prepared Crane force. Extensive use of scouting has become more commonplace in such situations. Once again, this is a matter of contention between the Matsu and Akodo, with the former admitting only grudgingly that the tactic saves lives and has a dramatic effect on the battle's outcome.

THE DRAGON CLAN

The Dragon Clan and the Lion Clan have fought each other many times, and their wars have ended poorly for the Lion surprisingly often. It is not that the Dragon military is so superior to the Lion's, but the Dragon often seem to have luck on their side. Failing that — and much more infuriating to the Lion than bad luck — the Dragon have taken advantage of the geography of their lands in ways that the Lion have had a hard time defeating.

The Dragon are a maddening opponent for the Lion for a number of reasons. First and foremost, the Dragon seem to hew to their own idiosyncratic standard of honor, eschewing the conventions that the Lion and so many others across the Empire hold in such high regard. The Lion Families would hold great respect for the Mirumoto — a Family of hardy, practical warriors with no fear of death — but for the fact that they so frequently and so easily set aside Bushido for the counsel of their own consciences. It makes them unpredictable opponents for the Lion tacticians, who treat the art of war with such care and precision.

Terrain is another significant problem for the Lion when facing the Dragon, and perhaps the single greatest obstacle in their path to victory over the followers of Togashi. Any battle on Dragon lands is quite literally an uphill battle. The mountain passes are exceptionally narrow, are not well mapped by anyone other than the Dragon, and can prove difficult to navigate with any force larger than a squadron. Advancing through the Dragon Lands is therefore painstakingly slow, and made even slower by the ease with which an invading army can be ambushed. The Mirumoto Family's archers and the notoriously militant Tamori Family's shugenja can make advancing through geographical chokepoints impossible without staggering losses. In short, the Dragon know how to make the terrain their friend, and that is why military campaigns against the Dragon that have ventured farther north than Shiro Kitsuki have so often ended in failure.

Overcoming terrain with strategy can be difficult. The most effective means of combating the Dragon in this circumstance, the Lion reason, is to seize and hold territory near the major passes, effectively laying siege to entire provinces and forcing the Dragon to come to the Lion or else starve to death. The Lion and their Crane allies used this strategy in the War of Silk & Steel. It was successful to a certain extent, but it would have worked better had the siege not begun shortly after the harvest season. Had it begun earlier, before the crops had been taken in and properly stored, the Dragon might well have been driven into starvation during the long winter months. This fact has not gone unnoticed by Lion tacticians.

THE MANTIS CLAN

Alone among the true Great Clans, the Mantis have never fought more than very small skirmishes against the Lion, and even they have been recent developments. The two Clans simply have too little overlap in their areas of influence for there to have been any serious conflict between the two. Their conflicts are primarily philosophical in nature, and have remained largely in the domain of the courts. These conflicts have been quite heated, however, and if the two ever went to war, unlikely as that may be, the fighting would be fierce and fueled by considerable hatred on both sides.

The predominant problem Lion tacticians face when considering the Mantis is the Mantis' strength at sea and the protection and mobility this gives them. Although the number of Lion samurai dwarfs that of the Mantis (the Matsu Family alone contains a larger number of samurai than all three Families of the Mantis Clan combined), the Mantis possess a fleet and the expertise to use it that the Lion cannot match or even approach. This makes it impossible for the Lion to strike directly at the Yoritomo Family, the leaders and most numerous of the Mantis. Any attempted attack on the Islands of Silk and Spice, the Yoritomo heartland, would be crushed by the Mantis navy.

By contrast, the Lion have but a single naval vessel capable of combat: the *Deathless*, an ancient but serviceable war ship heavily plated with iron armor. It was recovered by the Lion after centuries of disuse, and was formerly used to patrol the bay of Otsan Uchi. Unfortunately, formidable though the *Deathless* is, even the most optimistic Lion tacticians recognize that it could and would be overwhelmed by sheer numbers long before it reached the islands, and the Lion simply do not have the infrastructure necessary to support it with additional vessels.

The Mantis' naval prowess gives them the ability to land just about anywhere along the coast that they wish, but the Lion do not worry much about this because their territorial holdings lie well inland. Lion tacticians estimate that a direct assault on their holdings by Mantis forces is so unlikely as to be virtually impossible.

Any encounter between the two Clans' forces is likely to either be an engagement in an urban setting, such as what recently took place between the Akodo army and the Mantis in Toshi Ranbo, or the Lion marching upon the Tsuruchi and Mochi provinces, which are the only Mantis holdings on the mainland. Even here, geography creates a problem for Lion military planners because both Families reside in the Spine of the World Mountains, where the rugged terrain would make it relatively easy for the defenders to harry a superior attacker with missile fire or a magical onslaught.

THE PHOENIX CLAN

The Phoenix Clan has proven a most exasperating opponent in the handful of battles the Lion have fought against them. That a Clan of self-professed pacifists have caused the greatest Clan of warriors in the Empire such difficulty is a sore point with many Lion, and the Phoenix are among the most frequent hypothetical opponents put forth in the training sessions of young Lion tacticians. Even though they are the least martial of the Great Clans, the Phoenix still pose unusual problems as a battlefield opponent, each of which has been exhaustingly analyzed by generations of Akodo and Ikoma officers in an attempt to discover the ideal solutions to them.

The first and most obvious aspect of war against the Phoenix that any potential opponent must consider is that Clan's absolute and unquestioned mastery of magic. The Phoenix have at least twice as many shugenja as any other Clan, and there are very few among the Isawa, Agasha, and Asako who are not trained in some way to apply their skills for the good of the Clan. This often includes military applications, although the Lion continue to be disgusted by the notion that many of these shugenja consider themselves pacifists and are reluctant to use their powers directly against their enemy.

Instead, the Phoenix modify the battle's environment to suit their needs. The earth itself pitches and rolls in answer to the Isawa's summons. Winds and lightning appear from nowhere, fire divides soldiers from their commanders, and sudden floods can wash away entire companies. The Lion have virtually no answer to these tactics, save for the magic of a handful of the most powerful Kitsu shugenja. Otherwise, the only tactic at the Lion's disposal is to close with the shugenja's Shiba guardians and defeat them as quickly as possible, making it more difficult for their shugenja to wield magic on the battlefield on a large scale.

Magic is not the only consideration when planning a battle with the Phoenix. The Shiba bushi who comprise the bulk of any Phoenix force, although vastly outnumbered by the samurai of a true Lion army, can be quite problematic. The Shiba fighting style is highly defensive, and works extremely well when multiple Shiba fight alongside one another. Their squadron level tactics are exceptional, and can hold even the withering assault of the fiercest Matsu legions, at least for a short time.

THE SCORPION CLAN

Other than the Crane (and of late the Unicorn), history records no enemy whom the Lion hate more than the so-called Clan of Secrets. The Scorpion are everything the Lion despise, a grotesque reminder of the depths to which a samurai can fall if his honor is not strong enough. Their numbers are significantly less than those of the Lion, and any direct confrontation between the two would almost certainly result in a Lion victory. Unfortunately, Scorpion tactics cannot be easily anticipated or countered, by the simple fact that so many of them are almost completely alien to the mindset of an honorable samurai. What makes the situation all the more maddening is that the Scorpion possess that most dangerous of virtues: patience. They can, and often do, make long-term plans that take years or even decades to come to fruition, and that can make planning successful military engagements against them extremely difficult.

The most important thing to remember when fighting the Scorpion is that nothing can be taken at face value. This is not to say that Lion commanders are encouraged to second-guess themselves or spend an inordinate amount of time considering every action; the poisonous effect that Scorpion misdirection and strategic deception can have on the mind is well-documented, and indecision is a weakness that the Lion never allow among their highest-ranking officers. Instead, commanders are conditioned to have at least one contingency plan in place for any particular operation. A Lion officer with orders in hand may have as many as three plans in place for dealing with counter-moves from the Scorpion.

Another major concern when dealing with the Scorpion is the constant threat of that most treacherous of practices, assassination. The Scorpion are notorious for infiltrating shinobi and other stealthy operatives into the enemy ranks and using poison, ambush, and any number of other unsavory methods to strike — methods that no honorable Clan would ever embrace under any circumstances. The Scorpion excel at these activities, and are capable of crippling an army before the first blow is struck.

Assassination is relatively easy to deal with by increasing the protection afforded to Lion commanders, although many of them dislike having large yojimbo details because of the implication that they are incapable of protecting themselves. To deal with the threat of infiltration by Scorpion agents, the Lion temporarily reassign a significant number of magistrates

to their armed forces. One accompanies each sizable unit, and the hope is that their powers of perception will allow them to detect Scorpion plots before they begin. Poison is more difficult, but when facing war against the Scorpion, the Lion mandate that all water and food supplies be heavily guarded, and that individual soldiers carry as much of their own supplies as possible, thus decreasing the possibility of mass poisoning by sabotaging the relatively vulnerable baggage train.

THE SPIDER CLAN

The mysterious Spider Clan is thus far only a rumor, and not one that the Lion are overly concerned about. Whomever the individuals daring to call themselves a Great Clan may be, they are clearly fools for demonstrating such a disregard for Imperial law. As of yet, there have been no instances of large-scale engagements including these Spider, and no more than a few dozen have ever been seen in any one place at any time. Essentially, the Spider are a non-entity to the Lion at this point. They have not demonstrated sufficient numbers to be a threat, and despite their poor choice of naming themselves, they have thus far taken little action other than to police whatever lands require it in the unaligned regions. So long as these Spider do not trouble the Lion, the Lion will not trouble them. Should that happen, then of course the Lion's full fury would be unleashed upon these upstarts, and they would die the deaths reserved for all ronin scum.



THE UNICORN CLAN

In the past decade, the Unicorn Clan has proven to be the Lion's most implacable and consistent foe. The hatred that has arisen between the two Clans surpasses even the (now abated) hatred that once existed between the Lion and Crane, and it is unlikely that the two will ever be allies while the generations that participated in their more recent wars are alive to keep the hatred fresh. For now, the deaths inflicted by the Unicorn during the War of the Rich Frog and the Khan's unprecedented assault on the Lion provinces during the winter of 1168 ensure that the Lion will almost certainly consider their Clan to be at war with the Unicorn for at least the next half-century, barring some extraordinary event.

Mobility is the foremost consideration for the Lion when facing the Unicorn. The sheer number of cavalry units that the Unicorn bring to bear in any engagement vastly outnumbers what the Lion can muster to counter them. This makes standard attack strategies hard to implement, simply because it is exceptionally difficult for Lion infantry to come to grips with Unicorn cavalry.

To make matters worse, the Unicorn excel at travel-related magic, so even their infantry can, with proper shugenja support, outmaneuver Lion infantry. The Lion answer to this is to use entrenched positions to protect whatever it is the Unicorn are after, and force the Unicorn to come to them. This is not always possible, unfortunately, since the Unicorn's objectives are not always clear. When faced with such a situation, the Lion try to surround and overwhelm as many cavalry as pos-

sible, using what amounts to human wave tactics in order to eliminate the enemy Clan's innate advantages. At the Battle of the Firefly River in 1136, Akodo Ginawa and the Akodo Army were able to defeat the Unicorn under Moto Gaheris by isolating part of the Unicorn army in a place where it could not maneuver, and pounding at it until it broke.

The other great difficulty represented by the Unicorn is the fact that their entire art of war, compared to that of the other Great Clans, is almost completely idiosyncratic. This includes both their weapons of choice, which are often not Rokugani in origin; the different types of magic that they employ in battle; and the strategies they use. The Unicorn wandered the world for the greater part of a thousand years, after all, and have accumulated a vast array of influences from gaijin peoples, in war as in culture and manners.

Fortunately for the Lion, most of these idiosyncrasies have relatively simple solutions. Equipment is not a concern for the Lion, as they have the perfect weapon in the hands of each individual samurai regardless: the katana. Likewise, the strange magic employed by the Unicorn rarely has an impact greater than that of traditional magic, so despite the oddities involved, they do not require anything more than a tweaking of existing anti-magic strategies. With regard to non-conventional tactics, the Lion choose not to second-guess themselves. Gaijin thinking cannot be anticipated, so a Lion commander must proceed as he would against any other foe, and refuse to allow himself the luxury of constant wondering he is employing the right maneuver. A samurai acts with certainty, and that is all.



Lion Strongholds

War and honor are the lifeblood of the Lion Clan, and of the Families that serve the Clan with zeal and distinction. Throughout their provinces, there are very few holdings that do not possess military value of one form or another. If there is no military reason to build a village, castle, or city, then the Lion simply do not build it. The only exceptions to this rule are the shrines that each Family maintains to honor their ancestors, and the temples that the Kitsu maintain throughout the Lion provinces. Even these most sacred sites have value to the Lion armies, however, as they serve as rallying points and morale boosts to the legions of warriors eager to give their lives in service to the Lion.

The network of fortresses and castles across the Lion provinces is a carefully maintained and efficient system that ensures that no Lion stands alone in the face of an enemy attack. Should any one target be attacked, troops can immediately be brought in from another nearby facility to reinforce the garrison and halt the enemy advance. Throughout history, this system has failed only once. When the Unicorn Clan marched into Lion territory during the winter of 1168, their shugenja used magics that changed the weather to hinder the Lions' response. The Lion forces reacting to the invasion simply could not move through the thick winter storms quickly enough to catch the mobile Unicorn army, and the Lion lands suffered terribly as a result.

Since the Khan's campaign, the Lion have tried to improve the mobility of their armies. They have substantially increased the number of cavalry available at all major installations, and have taken steps to ensure that their shugenja are well trained in attempting to counteract such wide-scale magical effects.

Bishamon Seido

Bishamon Seido is the largest temple to Bishamon, the Fortune of Strength, that exists anywhere in the Empire. Bishamon is easily the Fortune most respected by the Lion, for what else does a warrior need to guide him save strength and the code of Bushido? The shrine was constructed centuries ago to honor the exploits of Matsu Itagi, the Lion Clan Champion of his generation.

Itagi was a prideful man, one some went so far as to call a braggart. With no real enemies to speak of, Itagi turned his attention to the one foe his Family had never truly faced: the Shadowlands. He traveled to the Crab Lands and demanded to be allowed entrance to the Shadowlands, boasting that he could reach the Festering Pit and defeat Fu Leng single-handedly, thus ending the threat of that dark realm forever. The Crab resisted, but ultimately bowed to the will of a Clan Champion, and Itagi disappeared into the Shadowlands. When his Family later accused the Crab of having played some role in his disappearance, the Crab Champion traveled alone into the Shadowlands, found the wounded and battered Itagi deep within the twisted lands, and the two returned together. They died shortly thereafter, but both were remembered as heroes

by their two Clans. Bishamon Seido was constructed both in honor of Bishamon, for bestowing his blessings so clearly upon Itagi, and in honor of Itagi himself.

Bishamon Seido is situated near the border between the Kitsu and Matsu provinces, and so it is only fitting that it is a major collaboration between two rather different Families. The shrine has no less than 100 Kitsu tending to it at all times, as well as a significant number of monks from the Fortunist order that reveres Bishamon. Additionally, the temple serves as perhaps one of the largest dojo for the Matsu armies in the Lion Lands. While the sheer number of troops stationed at Crossroads Castle in Tonfajutsen and the barracks at Shiro Matsu is larger, the number of students training to join the Matsu legions at Bishamon Seido is greater than at any other dojo in the Lion provinces. At the same time, it is one of the largest temples for the training of Kitsu shugenja, second only to the Kitsu's ancestral home, effectively bringing entire generations of Matsu and Kitsu together in a spirit of cooperation.

During the recent winter campaign of the Unicorn Clan, Bishamon Seido was one of a handful of fortifications that the Khan's army bypassed, even though it lay directly along their invasion route. While the number of Matsu stationed there was considerable, most were students, and would likely have posed little threat to the seasoned soldiers of the Khol and Baraunghar armies.

It was instead the large number of battle-hardened Kitsu shugenja, more than a hundred, all trained for war, that kept the Unicorn at a distance. The Baraunghar shugenja outnumbered the Kitsu by a wide margin, of course, but the possibility that the conflict would take too great a toll on the Unicorn, or delay their progress until the Matsu armies could arrive, was simply too great. As a result, Bishamon Seido became one of the secure points along the Unicorn's path, and was a rallying point for those driven from their homes by the Khan's aggression. Thousands of refugees flocked to the shrine from Kyuden Ikoma, various outposts, and over a dozen villages. The shrine's supplies were sorely taxed, but the Kitsu made them last as long as was necessary, until the thaws reopened the routes between the various Lion outposts.

Function: The principle purpose of Bishamon Seido is as a shrine and temple. Beyond that, however, it is also well known throughout the Lion provinces as a major dojo for both the Kitsu shugenja and the Matsu bushi. Not only is it the largest Kitsu dojo, but those trained here are the most militant of their number, and most go on to serve within the four Lion armies. In the aftermath of the Khan's assault in 1168, the shrine has taken on the role of a re-supply point and a source of replacements for Lion forces. Each spring brings at least a legion's worth of young Matsu bushi prepared to receive an appointment to the Matsu armies, and it is from this location that they deploy to join their brothers and sisters in arms.

Authorities: The ultimate authority over Bishamon Seido lies with the shrine's Grand Master, a position that answers only to the Kitsu and Matsu Daimyo, and of course to the Lion Clan Champion. The position is currently held by a wizened old shugenja named Kitsu Fusashi. Fusashi is of Ikoma descent, and has developed a reputation over the years of embracing the philosophies of the original Ikoma to great effect. While there is some debate about his character, no one can deny the terrible effectiveness of his students on the battlefield.

The Matsu dojo facilities on site fall under the province of the senior Matsu sensei. That position is currently held by Matsu Yufu, a sensei of such advanced years that even Fusashi seems relatively young by comparison. Having reached retirement age twice over, Yufu is nevertheless sharp-witted and extremely observant, even if she has long since lost the ability to conduct kata herself. Despite her age, Yufu remains the most respected and prestigious of all Matsu sensei, and has trained four generations of Lion warriors, including the previous Family Daimyo Matsu Ketsui, and the current Daimyo Matsu Kenji.

Facilities: The shrine itself is the largest in the Lion provinces, and can easily accommodate up to 500 people at any one time. It rarely operates at full capacity, purely because there is no need for so many shugenja and monks at any one time. The shrine is adjoined on its western side by a large village that serves the needs of the monks and priests living within the temple. The plains to the north of the shrine are extremely fertile, and provide food for both the village and the shrine's occupants. To the east is a large campus that houses and trains up to 12,000 students at any one time. The surplus from the village fields is used to feed the students, although typically a large amount of food must be imported from other areas as well just to keep the students fed properly. The Ikoma and Akodo maintain a significant number of siege weapons here as well, hoping to expose the normally uninterested Matsu in that aspect of warfare while they are yet young.

Forces: The majority of the military forces at Bishamon Seido comprise the thousands of young Matsu students training there at any one time. Although not full members of the Matsu army, these students are nevertheless highly capable and extraordinarily enthusiastic regarding the possibility of fighting on behalf of their Clan. What these young people lack in polish, they more than make up with sheer enthusiasm, fearlessness, and raw numbers. The combat ready forces of Bishamon Seido include:

- Approximately 10,000 Matsu students, ranging in age from twelve to sixteen years.
- Approximately 100 Kitsu shugenja
- Approximately 250 monks of the Order of Bishamon
- 100 Lion's Pride members in training
- The Eleventh through Fifteenth Legions of the First Matsu Army

City of Honor's Sacrifice

The history of this city is one of rigid traditionalism. That the Lion still revere and believe firmly in the virtues espoused by the legend of its creation is used by their critics to demonstrate how inflexible and ultimately unrealistic they are; obviously the Lion disagree with this contention.

The story of the city's name begins in the Second Century. A young Ikoma samurai-ko, who was known for her glorious service in the name of her lord, was revealed to have a lover, who lived within a small city whose name is no longer recorded in the Ikoma records. During this time, it was believed that no samurai-ko could truly serve her lord if she loved another man, and a tremendous scandal surrounded the young woman. She pledged to take her own life in proof of her devotion to her lord, and as restitution for her crimes, but was shocked when,

at the time for the ceremony, her lord handed her a wooden blade. The message was clear: He did not believe she was sincere in her repentance, nor did he believe she was capable of completing the ritual of seppuku. The young woman took the wooden blade and, to the amazement of everyone, completed the ceremony with it. Her act of courage and dedication is one that has never been repeated — at least none exists in the Ikoma records — and it filled her lord with such shame that he soon abdicated his position to his eldest son and entered a monastery. The city where the woman's lover lived, and where her ceremony was conducted, was renamed the City of Honor's Sacrifice, and all mention of its former name was erased.

Primarily because of its origins, the City of Honor's Sacrifice has become a place where a Lion's secrets can be kept without fear of exposure. It is where otherwise honorable men can come to engage in the occasional vice. The ever-practical Ikoma consider this a benefit, as it allows their men to excise whatever disruptive urges they may accumulate over time.

The other Lion Families are not so favorable in their opinion of the city, but at the very least the incident that gave rise to the city's name has gradually lessened the rigidly inflexible view of how a samurai should behave that caused it. In the centuries since its re-naming, the notion that a samurai-ko cannot serve her lord and know love has largely been abandoned, as has the policy of demanding oaths of celibacy from young women serving their Families and Clans.

Until the annexation of the City of the Rich Frog, the City of Honor's Sacrifice was among those Lion holdings closest to the Unicorn provinces after the former Ki-rin returned to the Empire. Due largely to that fact, the city became an important hub for trade between the Unicorn, Lion, and Dragon Lands, with additional traffic from occasional Crane and Phoenix merchants as well. Although samurai do not involve themselves in commercial matters, neither do they disregard the importance of such things to ensuring that an army is fed and clothed, and as such the City of Honor's Sacrifice has become well fortified and defended over the years. This was particularly true during the War of the Rich Frog, when the city became the Lion's principal command post for coordinating troops against the Dragon offensive.

Function: The City of Honor's Sacrifice is among those Ikoma holdings positioned to serve as the new front line of a war with the Unicorn if the City of the Rich Frog should ever fall to the always-ambitious Khan. Toward that end, the city has additional housing for troops that are not currently stationed there, and constantly attempts to stockpile surplus supplies. Obviously, it is the intention of the Ikoma Family that the city never be needed for such a purpose, but the Ikoma are ever practical. In the interim, the City of Honor's Sacrifice is a key re-supply station for the northern Ikoma provinces. Shipments of all manner of supplies leave and arrive daily, and are constantly catalogued by the quartermasters there. Some refer to the city as "Little Tonfajutsen" for this reason.

Authorities: The City of Honor's Sacrifice is a provincial capital, and as such the city is overseen by a governor responsible for a large number of other villages, cities, and temples throughout the region. The ranking military officer within the city also serves as a chief advisor to the governor, whose duties typically prevent him from maintaining the responsibilities of military rank. The current governor is Ikoma Tomiko, a ten-

year veteran of the Lion Elite Spearmen who fought in the War of the Rich Frog before being promoted to this position. Her chief military advisor, the commander of the Thirty-Seventh Legion of the Ikoma Army, is a young officer named Ikoma Tatsunori, who fought with great distinction in the Battle of Toshi Ranbo after having been a minor representative to the Imperial Court only a few weeks beforehand.

Facilities: As described above, the city's status as a re-supply center and a fallback position in a potential war with the Unicorn Clan means that the city actually has a large number of facilities that are empty during most of the year. There is a large dojo and a massive barracks compound, only a portion of which is in use at any given time. The additional barracks are utilized as storage space for the massive quantity of supplies that enter and exit the city on a daily basis.

Forces: The garrison at the City of Honor's Sacrifice is relatively small compared to that of other major cities and castles. Still, in comparison to other Clans, it seems a significant military hub purely because of the number of troops in place to protect the massive amounts of cargo and trade goods that move through the city.

- Thirty-Sixth through the Thirty-Eighth Legions of the Ikoma Army
- Second Company, Fourth Legion of the Ikoma Army (Elite Spearmen)

City of the Rich Frog

There is no greater center of military activity in Lion provinces, at least in the modern era, than the City of the Rich Frog. Up until a few short years ago, the city was governed entirely by the ronin Kaeru Family, and was ostensibly, if not officially, watched over by a benevolent Unicorn Clan. During the tumultuous Four Winds era, however, the Kaeru became increasingly concerned for their city's safety, particularly considering the surprise attacks conducted by the mysterious Tsuno on many vital Lion installations, and the strange activities rumored to be taking place in the Shinomen Mori only a few days' ride to the south.

Unwilling to risk an attack on their city, the Kaeru formally petitioned the Imperial Court for protection. The youngest son of the late Emperor, Hantei Naseru (who would later become Emperor Toturi III), shocked the Kaeru by announcing that whatever Clan wished to defend the city was free to do so. First to respond were the Lion, and Daimyo Ikoma Sume journeyed to the city and extended to the Kaeru Daimyo an offer that was almost impossible to refuse without dramatically worsening the city's situation. The Kaeru became Ikoma vassals, and the City of the Rich Frog became a Lion protectorate.

After a short time under Lion control, however, the City of the Rich Frog was unexpectedly attacked by a massive Unicorn army. The Unicorn had taken offense at the loss of the city, it seemed, and were intent on recovering it from the Lion by force. Some alleged that the Lion were aware of the Unicorn's





intentions, and took no steps to stop the attack because the Clan Champion and his advisors desired a war with the Unicorn, to prove that their armies were no match for the Lion's. Regardless, the incursion sparked a war that lasted more than a year, saw massive casualties on both sides, and eventually introduced a third belligerent when the Dragon intervened at the Emperor's subtle urging. The Dragon tilted the balance in the Lion's favor. Ultimately, the Lion retained the city, but lost a small nearby outpost called Sukoshi Zutsu.

Following the War of the Rich Frog, the city was reinforced again and again, the garrison constantly increasing in size. It became the Lion's frontier, their westernmost point and the most likely target should the Unicorn decide to strike again. The Lion stationed there were the hardest, most battle-tested in the Clan, and they stood ready to endure a long siege.

In the winter of 1168, however, the Khan's armies bypassed the city altogether, and instead struck deeper inside the Ikoma provinces before forging on into the Matsu territories. The troops stationed at the City of the Rich Frog were enraged that they had been denied the chance to stand against the Khan, a role they had long assumed was theirs by right. When the Khol army retreated from the Lion provinces with the first thaws of spring, the soldiers of the City of the Rich Frog took a terrible toll upon them when they passed through the region, fleeing before the Matsu army.

Given the length and vehemence of the conflict with the Unicorn, the City of the Rich Frog is among the most heavily fortified Lion cities. It is among the major staging areas for

the Ikoma army, and has numerous legions currently on loan from both the Akodo and Matsu as well, in preparation for the Lion's impending incursion into Unicorn Clan territory.

Function: The City of the Rich Frog is primarily a defensive outpost for the Lion Clan. The forces there are intended for long-term static defense, up to and including a siege. Although up to half of the troops are also trained for rapid deployment into the Unicorn territories, Lion strategists generally regard the idea of an attack out of the city unsupported by other forces to be a desperate gamble. Because the City of the Rich Frog is under constant scrutiny by the not-too-distant Unicorn forces, it is rarely used as a rallying point. Instead, large-scale incursions are planned, marshaled, and executed from well behind the front lines in order to ensure as little warning as possible.

Authorities: The City of the Rich Frog is the province of the Kaeru Family, former ronin who now serve the Ikoma. Although the city's importance has increased exponentially since the Kaeru first joined the Clan, they remain in nominal control of the city's civilian affairs. They are not generally given control over military matters.

Kaeru Shioko is the city governor, and oversees all non-military matters, up to and including the logistics and provisioning for the massive number of troops stationed in and around her city. Shioko is an adamant supporter of the Ikoma, and works nearly around the clock to ensure that the protectors of her city are well-provided for. Military matters are the concern of Ikoma Kosaku, one of the senior military officers of the Ikoma

Family and the chief shireikan of the Ikoma Army. Although somewhat belligerent in temperament for an Ikoma, Kosaku recognizes the value of Shioko's work, and the two have established a strong, if not particularly close, working relationship.

Facilities: Because of the nature of the threat that looms constantly over the City of the Rich Frog, it has become something of an oddity in terms of its construction. In most Lion cities, and indeed throughout the Empire as a whole, the city surrounds the central castle or fortress. In times of siege, the people of the city either flee altogether or retreat within the grounds of the fortress to wait out the attack and aid in the defense as best they are able. After the War of the Rich Frog, however, the number of troops stationed at the city soon matched and, at certain times, exceeded the number of citizens. Recent additions to the fortifications have been constructed outside the city, surrounding it and enclosing it as one might encase a delicate treasure in a steel box. Anyone attempting to assault the city itself would find they had to fight their way through nearly 20,000 Lion soldiers to reach their objective.

Forces: The number of troops stationed in the City of the Rich Frog is impressive indeed. Sixteen full legions of the Ikoma Army — a third of its ranks — are stationed in and around the city. Their numbers are bolstered by four legions from the First Matsu Army, and another four from the Akodo Army, bringing the total to 24 legions, or approximately 18,000 samurai ready for war. Among these forces is an entire legion of Ikoma Wardens, the Twentieth Legion, whose sole purpose is to scout the surrounding area. Current forces stationed at the city include:

- The Twenty-First through Thirty-Fifth Legions of the Ikoma Army
- Various companies of elite Ikoma units taken from the first ten legions of that army, enough to constitute two legions' worth of troops.
- The Sixteenth through the Twentieth Legions of the First Matsu Army
- The Forty-Fourth through the Forty-Eighth Legions of the Akodo Army

Crossroads Castle

Located in the city of Tonfajutsen, Crossroads Castle is situated in the most centrally located city within the Lion provinces. Not only is the city a short distance from the lands of all four Lion Families, but it arose at a convergence of the five largest and best-maintained roads in the Clan's provinces as well. It is for this reason that the city became the center for movement of supplies throughout the provinces. Indeed, Tonfajutsen has been a logistical center for the Lion military for centuries, and has rarely been threatened throughout that time despite its enormous importance to the Clan. Also because of its central location, the city has frequently been used as a staging ground for large numbers of troops.

Less than a year ago, Crossroads Castle did not exist. In its place was a smaller, less secure structure simply called Chushimbo Shiro, or Central Castle. Because of its location in the center of the Lion provinces, there was little consideration given to what might happen if the castle was attacked, simply because that scenario was considered virtually impossible. The Khan's winter march through the Lion provinces proved

that belief wrong, however, and Central Castle was badly damaged during the Khan's assault on Tonfajutsen.

Reconstruction began even before the winter snows thawed, and the castle was dramatically increased in size, defenses, and the volume of housing available to standing troops. Whereas Central Castle could hold a garrison of 5,000 troops and an equal number of ashigaru, Crossroads Castle can house more than five times that many soldiers within it, the city, and the grounds surrounding the area. Upon its completion, the Lion Champion Matsu Yoshino renamed the fortress Crossroads Castle, and swore that it would never fall again. With the sheer volume of troops stationed there on a regular basis, it seems highly unlikely that Yoshino's claim will be proven wrong any time soon.

Tonfajutsen is easily the fastest growing city in the Lion Lands, and at the rate it has continued to grow for the past decade, it will become the largest Lion city in a matter of a few years. It is possible this would have already happened had not Yoshino commandeered so many resources and peasant craftsmen to complete the construction of Crossroads Castle so quickly. As it is, the rate of civilian construction within the city is increasing once again, and soon its expansion will be completely unchecked.

Ironically, perhaps, it is because of this rampant expansion that the city sees such a large number of visitors from outside the Clan. Artisans, merchant patrons, and magistrates visit the city frequently, although for considerably different reasons. Because of this traffic, the Matsu Daimyo Matsu Kenji recently doubled the number of Family magistrates within the city, constructing a barracks exclusively for their use and including them in the official organization of the city's garrison. The Ikoma wardens also have a heavy presence in the city, but generally do not interfere with the Matsu magistrates; instead, they use the city as a centrally located station from which to conduct their patrols of the Clan's five major roads.

Function: Crossroads Castle is the largest and most frequently used marshaling ground in all of the Lion provinces. The city of Tonfajutsen actually came to prominence precisely for this reason, and over time it has grown more and more important to the Clan. The vast majority of military supplies that are distributed throughout the Lion lands pass through Tonfajutsen at least once, and exhaustive records are maintained in Crossroads Castle so that every ounce of goods can be accounted for if necessary. Because of these two functions, Crossroads Castle has the largest number of storehouses and barracks of any Akodo or Matsu fortress. It is not at all uncommon for there to be a minimum of 10,000 troops stationed here at any one time, and often far more since it was appointed the headquarters for the First Matsu Army.

Authorities: Ostensibly, the military proceedings at Tonfajutsen fall under the province of the senior military officer in residence. As often as not, that person is none other than Matsu Yoshino, the Lion Clan Champion, whose personal army is headquartered within the city. Yoshino is not in attendance regularly, however, and in his absence, the position defaults to the next available senior officer. Occasionally this is his principal advisor Ikoma Otemi. Otemi is often with Yoshino when the Champion spends time at Shiro Matsu, however, and in their absence shireikan Matsu Yokuya becomes the ranking military officer.

In reality, the city governor, whose duties are essentially those of a senior quartermaster in the Matsu Army, commands a significant amount of authority, as does the master sensei of the sizable dojo located within Crossroads Castle. The current governor is an aged Matsu samurai named Matsu Suburi, and the principle sensei is a surprisingly quiet man named Matsu Atasune.

Facilities: There is very little that is not available to the Matsu forces stationed at Crossroads Castle. The barracks, while rather cramped, nevertheless ensure that every single soldier has a small area to call his own for the entirety of his stay while at the castle. Likewise the training grounds are massive, taking up several square miles of land that would otherwise be useless, as the city is located on a lowland plain that is not arable for any of the crops grown by the Lion.

Forces: The garrison of Tonfajutsen is perhaps the single largest concentration of Lion forces in the Empire, with the possible exception of Shiro Matsu. As the headquarters of the First Matsu Army, many of that army's personnel and support staff call the city their home. Forces stationed within the city include:

- The First through Tenth Legions of the First Matsu Army, except those squadrons and companies that are distributed throughout the Clan provinces on other assignments
- The Twenty-First through Thirty-Fifth Legions of the First Matsu Army

The Hall of Ancestors

There is no location in all of Rokugan that is more sacred to the Lion than the Hall of Ancestors. Reverence for their ancestors is without question the defining quality of Lion psychology, and the Hall of Ancestors is where all Lion remember their Families. There are of course thousands of shrines to various ancestors throughout the provinces, but every Lion samurai makes a pilgrimage to the Hall of Ancestors at least once during their lifetime, and many at least once a year, to pay homage to those ancestors interred within.

The Hall has existed nearly as long as the Lion Clan. It was constructed shortly after the first generation of Lion, those who had sworn their oaths of fealty either to Akodo himself or his immediate followers, began to die from old age. Their children and grandchildren wished to honor their memory, just as the great Akodo had honored his parents, and the Hall of Ancestors was the result. A great hall was constructed for each Family, where the ashes of its greatest heroes could be interred. While only a fraction of the samurai who have served the Lion are allowed admittance to the Hall, there is virtually no branch of any Family which does not have at least one ancestor remembered as a hero somewhere within its walls.

The Hall of Ancestors is so vital to the Lion Clan that it appointed its own unique military officer to oversee its protection. The second-born child of the Matsu Daimyo, or the first-born in the event that the eldest son cedes his position to the eldest daughter (as is frequently the case), is considered the Defender of the Hall, a position also called Guardian of the Hall of Ancestors. The Defender of the Hall traditionally commands a large contingent of Matsu Elite Guard, along with a sizable number of other troops. Being assigned to protect the Hall of

Ancestors is among the greatest honors that can be bestowed upon any Lion, although the Matsu consider it their personal responsibility more so than any of the other Families.

Historically, the Hall of Ancestors has never been threatened by any enemy, even when the Scorpion made their failed incursion into Lion lands centuries ago, an incursion that came within miles of the Hall itself. Many believe that no sane foe would ever threaten the Hall deliberately, for it is generally accepted that to do so would cause the Lion to swear an unending blood feud the likes of which the Empire has never seen. Over a decade ago, however, the mysterious beings called the Tsuno began a series of sudden attacks against various Lion holdings, appearing from nowhere immediately before the attack and disappearing immediately afterwards. The Hall was among their targets, and their temerity drove the Lion as a whole into a rage. The Tsuno's assault is a terrible slight against the Lion's honor, and one that the entire Clan longs to avenge. Unfortunately, the ability of the Tsuno to appear and disappear seemingly at will made it all but impossible for the Lion to seek vengeance as they would have liked. By the time the Tsuno threat was fully understood, word reached the Clan that the Tsuno might well have been completely eradicated by, of all enemies, the assembled Nezumi tribes. That the Nezumi could have done such a thing fills many Lion with a sense of shame that they were unable to find and destroy their enemies. Others, however, find themselves in the position to admire the Nezumi for ensuring the defilers of the Hall of Ancestors were brought to final justice.

Function: The Hall of Ancestors is a temple and shrine above all else. Although the soldiers who travel here to seek their Family's blessings before battle typically number in the thousands, there is no marshaling at the Hall, nor are the troops stationed here ever deployed elsewhere. The troops stationed at the Hall understand that their duty is to protect it at all costs. The purpose of the Hall is to remind every Lion warrior of the burden and the honor that their ancestors place upon their shoulders.

Authorities: Two individuals share authority over the Hall of Ancestors. The first is the Temple Master, a senior Kitsu shugenja responsible for overseeing both the shugenja and monks that tend to the temple. He is also responsible for conducting the various rituals and ceremonies that are held within the temple on a daily basis. The position is currently held by an old shugenja named Kitsu Tanoyame. Tanoyame is well known for being anti-social and brusque, but the solemn atmosphere here is well suited to his temperament.

The other individual with ultimate authority within the Hall is the appointed Defender of the Hall, a position currently filled by the younger brother of the Matsu Daimyo, a young man named Matsu Aritomo. Aritomo has accepted the duty knowing that it is only his until his sister's children reach the proper age, and he has no intention of allowing any harm to come to the most sacred of all Lion temples so long as he lives.

Facilities: Despite its size and prestige, the Hall of Ancestors is surprisingly sparse in its facilities for bushi. The location is a temple first and foremost, and even the militant Lion are reluctant to disturb the sanctity of the area with barracks, dojo, and the like. The troops stationed at the Hall have only the most basic amenities, and even many of those are located in a village roughly one mile from the Hall.

Forces: The most important forces included in the Hall of Ancestors' deployment are 50 Matsu Elite Guard, known more commonly as the Matsu House Guard or the Hall Honor Guard. This is the largest division of that unit to exist in any one place, fully one-third of their number. These men are under the direct command of the Defender of the Hall, and serve as his officers and command staff when he directs the other forces stationed at the Hall.

Among the other forces stationed permanently at the Hall are two legions of Lion Heavy Elite from the Second Matsu Army, as well as various other companies, brining the total number of defenders to nearly 3,000 men.

- Squadrons One and Two of the Matsu Elite Guard, First Company, First Legion, of the Second Matsu Army
- The Eleventh and Twelfth Legion of the Second Matsu Army
- Squadrons One and Two of the Ikoma Elite Guardians, First Company, First Legion, of the Ikoma Army

Kenson Gakka

Kenson Gakka was once a Lion stronghold called Shiro no Meiyo, the Castle of Honor. Six centuries ago, Shiro no Meiyo was captured by the Scorpion Clan at the command of their ambitious and inscrutable Champion, Bayushi Tsuya. For fifteen years, Tsuya held the castle, and during that time it was simply called the Lion's Shadow. It is unknown why the Lion permitted this occupation to continue for so long without a concerted attempt to retake the castle. Some whisper that the Lion Champion of that era had a lover within the city, one he was unwilling to risk, but for the most part it is not discussed, and the matter is not mentioned in the Ikoma records. Regardless of the reasons why, the occupation lasted until the ambitious Tsuya attempted to extend his control northward toward Kyuden Ikoma.

The Scorpion threat to Kyuden Ikoma was unacceptable to the Lion Clan. The castle was too important to the Clan's western defenses, and far too close to the Hall of Ancestors for any such incursion to be permitted. The full force of the Matsu armies was unleashed upon the Scorpion, who were destroyed utterly. Unwilling to allow even a vestigial Scorpion presence, the Matsu Daimyo personally led the Clan's armies south to the Lion's Shadow, where he and his men slaughtered every living soul within the castle and the city surrounding it. No man, woman, or child survived. The castle was renamed Kenson Gakka, or Humility's Lesson, a name that persists to the present day. The Lion Champion retired to a monastery shortly after the castle was retaken, and his reign is generally spoken of infrequently among Lion historians.

The history of Kenson Gakka, and the outrage expressed by the Scorpion Clan over what they called a grotesque overreaction from the Lion, have resulted in the city being considered a significant security risk by the Clan. There have been periodic attempts at infiltration over the years, although none could be traced with any certainty to the Scorpion, and the Lion have taken careful steps to ensure that there is no chance the Scorpion can succeed. There are controls in place to prevent any one official, other than the governor himself, from wreaking too much havoc if he is replaced by a Scorpion agent. The governor himself is always protected by a number of highly trained and extremely perceptive yojimbo, making him virtually impervious to assassination.

There are a significant number of troops stationed at Kenson Gakka, and after Shiro Matsu, it is considered the front line of defense against any possible attack by the Scorpion Clan. The city is located too far south in the Matsu provinces to be considered a viable target of attack for other enemies, but the city governor takes steps to ensure his men are prepared



regardless. Unfortunately, due to the nature of the threat presented by the Scorpion, the possibility of infiltration creates a highly charged, somewhat paranoid atmosphere among the troops stationed here.

In an attempt to alleviate this, the city governor holds periodic tournaments to engage the troops and take their minds off of the situation. As might be expected, the tournaments are largely martial in nature, but occasionally there are tests of other types of skill, just as a means of defusing the constant threat of violence between those stationed in the city. The experiment has proven largely successful, but the games must be held at least once a year in order to maintain a low level of tension in the city.

Function: Kenson Gakka is a bastion against Scorpion incursion into Matsu territory. Like Shiro Matsu, the city has lost some of its purpose in the aftermath of Beiden Pass' collapse at the end of the War of Spirits, because moving a Scorpion army into the Lion Lands from the south is now virtually impossible. The city now stands as a reminder that the Scorpion cannot be trusted, and that the Lion must constantly stand vigil to ensure that Scorpion saboteurs and infiltrators not be allowed to enter the Lion provinces.

Authorities: The city of Kenson Gakka is intimately tied to the Lion military structure, and as such there is no division between city governor and military commander as there is in many cities of similar size in the northern provinces. Matsu Kouji is the current commander, and has held his position for over a decade. He is in many ways the quintessential Matsu warrior, but he has the methodical mental processes of an Akodo or Ikoma. His careful consideration and tactical mind have allowed him to avoid making rash decisions that could very well have left Kenson Gakka in ruins.

Facilities: Space is at a premium within the confines of Kenson Gakka, which has walls protecting not only the castle itself but almost the entire city as well. The barracks are cramped and barely adequate for the number of troops stationed within the city, and the dojo are full to the point of having a constant rotation of troops using the facilities. The city is home to a larger than average tournament grounds, however, where all manner of samurai can pit their skills against one another in the contests of prowess for which the city has become famous in the past generation.



Forces: Kenson Gakka has a substantial garrison assigned to it, well out of proportion to its apparent military value to the Clan. The troops are maintained there both because the Matsu remember the Scorpion treachery that led to the city's renaming, and because a city of its size is necessary to ensure that all the troops of both Matsu armies are properly supplied.

- The Thirteenth through Twentieth Legions of the Second Matsu Army
- The Fifteenth Legion of the Ikoma Army, consisting almost exclusively of the Ikoma Wardens and their support staff

Kyuden Ikoma

Kyuden Ikoma, or Sacred Watch Castle, has always been the key to the defense of the western Lion provinces. For much of the Clan's history there was little need for such defense, as the lands to the west were mostly unoccupied. Traditionally, it has been the Clan's eastern and southern borders that required defense, with occasional flare-ups requiring similar attention paid to the northern border as well.

Despite its position as the key to the defense of the western Lion lands, historically Kyuden Ikoma has been the least defended of all Lion ancestral estates, at least until recently. The palace has always been well protected by geography, since it is shielded on one side by the Mountain of the Seven Thunders. It also has historically had the most visitors from outside the Clan of any estate within the Lion lands, and the Ikoma, as the voice and presence of the Lion in court, did not wish to seem overly hostile to their visitors. The palace has, in the past, hosted a far larger number of civilian Clan officials than any other Lion city, as well as a disproportionate number of monks, who have been responsible for tending to the many historical shrines located in the city and throughout the Ikoma provinces.

Kyuden Ikoma has been attacked only twice during its long history. The first was during the War against the Darkness. During that time, the primordial entity called the Lying Darkness, an enemy that could not be understood and against whom a defense could hardly be mounted, targeted the extensive libraries in the palace. The libraries were utterly destroyed, a loss that devastated the Ikoma Family. The records were slowly and painstakingly rebuilt as the Family requested duplicates of records found all across the Empire. It was a difficult defeat for the Lion, but one that, in retrospect, could not have been anticipated because of the strange nature of the foe.

Then, in the winter of 1168, Kyuden Ikoma was the first major target of the Unicorn Clan's winter campaign through the Lion provinces. The Ikoma had only hours' notice before the Khan's attack, and they were insufficiently prepared to repel an incursion of such size, even though they had been reinforced by the personal forces of Lion Champion Matsu Yoshino. It was a crushing defeat for the Ikoma and the Lion as a whole, and one that nearly cost the life of Yoshino's chief advisor, the great hero Ikoma Otemi. Ultimately, the castle was sacrificed in order to allow the Lion to fall back and prepare for another battle at Bishamon Seido. Fortunately, the Unicorn had little interest in holding the palace or the city, and sacked it and left it behind them unoccupied. Despite the defeat, therefore, Kyuden Ikoma remained largely intact.

Since the spring thaws of 1169, when the Unicorn were forced from the Lion lands, Kyuden Ikoma has been repaired and rebuilt, and now it has been designated as one of the forward command centers for the Lion Clan's imminent counter-attack on the Unicorn provinces. The Ikoma Army now considers Kyuden Ikoma their headquarters in more than name, and a reasonable portion of that army can be found here at any one time, along with their commanders and staff.

Function: Kyuden Ikoma serves as the headquarters for the Ikoma Army as well as the diplomatic center for the entire Lion Clan.

Authorities: Kyuden Ikoma is the home of Ikoma Korin, the Daimyo of the Ikoma Family. Unlike many Family Daimyo, Korin remains at his Family's estate a greater portion of the year, choosing to eschew the political battlegrounds at various courts and instead focusing exclusively on the defense and protection of his home and the Lion provinces as a whole. His visit to the Imperial Winter Court in 1168 was a rare and, from his viewpoint, regrettable interruption to this tradition.

Facilities: As the ancestral home of a Lion Family and the headquarters of one of the four Lion armies, Kyuden Ikoma has virtually everything one can imagine as being needed for a major army encampment. Dojo, stables, barracks, training grounds, supply posts, and dozens of other major facilities are all present in abundance.

Forces: As the home of the Ikoma Army, there are vast numbers of soldiers stationed within the borders of Kyuden Ikoma and the city surrounding it at all times.

- The First through the Tenth Legions of the Ikoma Army, save those squadrons and companies that are distributed throughout the Clan provinces on other assignments
- The Eleventh through Fourteenth Legions of the Ikoma Army, consisting almost exclusively of the Ikoma Wardens and their support staff
- The Thirty-Eighth through Forty-Fourth Legions of the Ikoma Army

Ninkatoshi

The importance of Ninkatoshi, also called Permission City, has been dramatically reduced in the past few years due to the unprecedented alliance between the Lion and Crane Clans. Prior to this alliance, Ninkatoshi was one of the key installations along the Lion-Crane border, and was garrisoned by a large number of troops from both the Akodo and Matsu armies. However, this is no longer the case.

Up until the Clan War, Ninkatoshi was a simple farming village. It was only after the disgrace and dissolution of the Akodo Family that it became something more, when the newly appointed Lion Clan Champion, Matsu Tsuko, decentralized all important Clan functions away from the primary Akodo provinces. In doing so, she relocated the coordination point of the Lion-Crane conflict from Shiro Akodo to the relatively quiet Ninkatoshi. Almost overnight, the village was inundated with soldiers and craftsmen sent from the Matsu provinces. Within a month, the village's size had doubled. Within a year, it had quadrupled. By the time the first major battle of the Clan War erupted, Ninkatoshi was a major Lion outpost, and one that had become a significant source of concern for the neighboring Crane Clan.

Decades later, during the era of the Four Winds, relations between the Lion and the Crane began to improve for the first time in centuries. The two Clans' Champions mutually agreed to cede all claims to the oft-contested Toshi Ranbo in order to allow it to become the site of the new Imperial City. Relations continued to be somewhat tense, however, throughout the ensuing years, up until the ascension of Doji Domotai to the position of Crane Clan Champion. Domotai had been fostered to the Lion as a youth, and trained with the Matsu. She commanded the respect of both Clans, and her leadership effectively ended hostility between the vast majority of Lion and Crane samurai.

The alliance between the Lion and Crane reduced Ninkatoshi's military importance to almost nothing. The mood in the city is now one of cooperation rather than hostility, and Lion and Crane come into closer contact here than anywhere else except the Imperial City. The city is the home of a bold experiment, a dojo simply called the Feathered Claw Dojo. It was originally constructed by ambitious military officers on both sides in hopes of learning the other Clans' secrets. That ambition has faded over time as the sensei learned to trust one another, and now it serves more to teach those still resistant to the alliance to trust one another and respect the others' level of skill.

Even so, Ninkatoshi's location makes it a valuable waypoint in the network of warden outposts scattered throughout the Lion provinces. It serves as one end of a route that wardens follow to travel through the center of Lion lands, one that begins at Shiranai Toshi in the Ikoma lands. As is often the case, the wardens do not enforce order within the city itself, leaving that instead to a collaborative effort between the Akodo and Doji Families. They simply use a large outpost within the city to house their supplies, stable their horses, and spend a few precious hours in between patrols.

Function: Ninkatoshi's current purpose is to base reserve troops that can rapidly respond to any conflict not only within the Akodo and Matsu provinces, but within the Crane lands as well. The units forming the current garrison were chosen mostly for their ability to muster rapidly and march at a high rate of speed. Feathered Claw Dojo is the only dojo in the Empire that currently hosts both Lion and Crane sensei. Its students are a mixture of both veteran and inexperienced troops.

Authorities: Two figures are the principle authorities in Ninkatoshi. The first is the senior military officer of the Lion forces stationed within the city. This individual also acts as the city governor, for the Clan is unwilling to allow the city to be controlled by anyone outside the proper military organization. The second is the senior Crane official on site, who generally serves as the principle advisor to the city governor. The current chief Crane official is a man named Doji Kusari, who is admired and respected by virtually everyone within the entire region. Kusari is the husband of Crane Clan Champion Doji Domotai, and while it seems unusual for a man of such rank to be placed in such a position, the reasoning becomes more obvious when one considers that prior to his marriage, Kusari's name was Ikoma Kusari. As the son of the Ikoma Daimyo, Kusari is well known and well liked by the Lion stationed at Ninkatoshi, and his presence has only increased the spirit of cooperation between the men there.

Facilities: Ninkatoshi is a relatively small outpost, but has a significant number of Akodo troops stationed both for the purposes of tradition as well as a show of solidarity with their Crane allies. Many are used for patrol duty with mixed personnel from both Clans. Other than the Feathered Claw Dojo, there are relatively few remarkable facilities within the city.

Forces: In addition to the Lion forces stationed within the city of Ninkatoshi, there are some Crane units as well. The two work and train together, even patrolling jointly to ensure that their mutual border is safe from bandits and other threats. This arrangement has been in place since the two Clans entered into their unprecedented alliance some years ago. While uncomfortable at first, the two Clans have come to appreciate one another and function well as a joint fighting force.

- The Twelfth through Twentieth Legions of the Akodo Army
- The Nineteenth and Twentieth Legions of the Ikoma Army, consisting almost exclusively of Ikoma Wardens and their support staff

Shiranai Toshi

The lands upon which Shiranai Toshi is built once belonged to the Utaku Family, centuries ago when they were still known as the Otaku. Only a short time after the Ki-rin Clan departed the Empire, an Ikoma witnessed a mountain rise inexplicably from the plains. The Lion considered this a sign of divine intervention, although they could not explain how or why. (The Lion remain unaware to this day that the mountain was transplanted from the Phoenix Lands by an early use of the artifact called Isawa's Last Wish.) Construction of the village that would one day become a city called Shiranai Toshi began within a week's time.

Shiranai Toshi stands a short distance from Lookout Mountain, the only mountain in the Lion Lands that is not part of the Spine of the World Mountains. Its name, Darkness City, comes from the fact that for at least half the day the city falls entirely within the shadow of the massive Lookout Mountain. The presence of the mountain no longer strikes the Lion as an oddity, and they long ago accepted its presence without question or speculation. In addition to serving as the impetus for the city's construction, the mountain is also a major source of its value to the Clan, as it is an incredibly rich source of copper. Indeed, the copper mines are the most productive in the Lion Lands, and they have remained so for very nearly a thousand years despite constant mining.

In addition to its value as a mining city, Shiranai Toshi is a vital element of the system of wardens maintained by the Ikoma Family. The wardens scour the roads of the Lion provinces to maintain law and order and protect the peasantry from bandits, and their largest dojo and stable is the one located within Shiranai Toshi. The stables at Shiranai Toshi represent the beginning of the long, arduous route that the wardens travel on the main highway through the central Lion Lands, a highway that culminates at another warden stable in the city of Ninkatoshi.

The warden dojo is one of many aspects of Shiranai Toshi that have been dramatically improved and expanded in the past generation. The impetus for these improvements, many believe, was as simple as Ikoma Otemi maintaining his per-

sonal estate within the city. Prior to his service as Clan Champion in regency for Matsu Yoshino, Otemi was a hero of the Ikoma Family and the commander of the Ikoma army, as well as the nephew of the Ikoma Family Daimyo and the apparent successor to that position.

Otemi's long-term presence within the city galvanized those admittedly meager forces responsible for protecting it, and allowed him the opportunity to make decisions regarding the replacement of officers upon their retirement or reassignment. Over only a few years, Otemi transformed the entire military culture of the city, a change that has had dramatic, ongoing effects that continue to the present day.

More recently, Shiranai Toshi has become the home of a smaller military force that is commanded by another hero, albeit a much lower ranking one. The veteran soldier Ikoma Fujimaro is beloved by many for leading to safety a contingent of Lion trapped behind enemy lines in the Phoenix territory over a decade ago. His valor and leadership have not been forgotten, and today the old man leads a group of scouts well known for their efficiency and tenacity, simply called Fujimaro's Legion. The group has its only dojo at Shiranai Toshi, although their duties frequently call them away for months at a time.

Function: Like the City of Honor's Sacrifice, the principle function of Shiranai Toshi within the Lion military is as a secondary defense point in the event that the Unicorn overrun the Lion front line. Should the City of the Rich Frog fall, Shiranai Toshi is one of the points around which the Ikoma will rally to ensure that the Unicorn press no farther into the Lion Lands, at least not while a single Ikoma soldier draws breath.

Authorities: Like most major Lion cities, the duties of governing Shiranai Toshi are split between the civilian city governor and the ranking military officer stationed within the city. The governor of Shiranai Toshi is a scholar, poet, and historian named Ikoma Akiyama. Akiyama has never served with the military per se, but instead has spent his life maintaining the Ikoma records and representing the Clan in courts throughout the Empire. Although he is not a soldier, he has a keen understanding of military matters and is devoted to strengthening the Ikoma Army by any available means. Ironically, the military commander he works alongside, Ikoma Noda, is trained as a courtier and herald, but has served the military his entire life and risen through the ranks based on merit.

Facilities: As a secondary defensive position, Shiranai Toshi has relatively limited facilities. The exception is the outpost provided for the Ikoma Wardens, which is considerably larger than most of its kind.

Forces: The forces stationed at Shiranai Toshi are, for the most part, designated as reserves for the Unicorn front. Most have received basic horsemanship training, so that they can ride to any strategically necessary point rather than march. Forces stationed in the city include:

- The Forty-Fifth through Forty-Eighth Legions of the Ikoma Army
- The Sixteenth through Eighteenth Legions of the Ikoma Army, consisting almost exclusively of Ikoma Wardens and their support staff
- Squadrons One, Two, and Three of Second Company, First Legion of the Ikoma Army (Fujimaro's Legion)



Shiro Akodo

The largest military outpost in the Akodo provinces and the former key to the military front between the Lion and Crane Clans, Shiro Akodo is rivaled only by Crossroads Castle and Shiro Matsu as the largest fortress in the Lion provinces. It is the home base to the Clan's greatest tactical minds — and the foremost Lion tacticians are, by definition, the Empire's best.

Shiro Akodo bears little resemblance to the ancestral estate of a great Family. Indeed, if not for its sheer size, its stark and unceremonious exterior could easily be mistaken for any of a number of smaller outposts or fortresses that secure the Akodo provinces from the threat of attack. The other Families consider it fortunate that even when the Akodo ruled the Clan as Champions, they left all diplomatic matters to their Ikoma cousins, for the Akodo lands are virtually bereft of all creature comforts or even the most basic decorations, and nowhere is this more evident than at Shiro Akodo.

The entire castle is functional, practical, and pragmatic, with almost no attention paid to finery whatsoever. Those unfortunate enough to receive a long-term appointment as ambassadors to the area resign themselves to enjoying lavish comfort only when they venture out to the various inns and teahouses in the region, all of which attempt to capitalize upon the fact that the Akodo Family's lack of interest in such things starve their guests of accustomed luxuries.

The serenity of Shiro Akodo is another aspect of its character that is seemingly at odds with the different roles it plays. At least once a season, a visitor is overheard to remark that the

castle bears a remarkable similarity to a monastery or a temple, and that description is not at all inaccurate. The Akodo have little of the passion that so often characterizes the other Lion Families. They are very methodical in their approach to education and to warfare, and their training grounds are often deathly silent even when dozens or hundreds of Akodo are practicing together.

The calm of Shiro Akodo disappears when it is time to go to war, however. The quiet and serenity of the average Akodo soldier becomes an intensity that would give pause to even the most jaded veterans. In times of war the castle becomes a perfectly coordinated machine, where every individual knows their duty exactly and performs it perfectly.

Near the perimeter of Shiro Akodo is a large personal estate that sits completely empty and unused. Until the relatively recent Battle at Toshi Ranbo, this was one of a number of personal estates owned by Kaneka, the late half-brother of Emperor Toturi III and the Shogun of Rokugan. Kaneka had not visited the estate since his oath of fealty to the Phoenix Clan nearly a decade ago, and it has not been touched in all that time. However, it has been well protected by the Akodo, who viewed Kaneka as one of their own. Today the estate is regarded as a shrine for the lost Shogun, and it is not at all uncommon to find dozens of Akodo meditating outside the gates.

Function: Shiro Akodo is the headquarters for the Akodo Army, and as such it fulfills an important role in the Lion military. It is the command post for the defense of the Clan's eastern and north-eastern borders, as well as preparations for



the forthcoming Lion offensive against the Unicorn provinces. The castle has an enormous barracks attached and a major assembly ground on its western edge, and it often serves as the mustering point for various legions before they deploy. Shiro Akodo and the Castle of the Swift Sword were both major assembly points for the Akodo Army when it engaged the Dragon during the War of Silk & Steel, and afterwards when the Akodo marched to the defense of Toshi Ranbo.

Authorities: Shiro Akodo is the Akodo Family's ancestral estate, and the seat of their power. As such, the Family Daimyo Akodo Shigetoshi makes his home within the castle, and he is the ranking authority over everything that occurs within its walls. Like so many Lion Daimyo, however, Shigetoshi's duties extend well beyond Shiro Akodo, and as such he is not in attendance for roughly half the year. During his absences, his chief shireikan Akodo Bakin, a man whom some say has achieved Enlightenment during the recent era of the Keepers of the Elements, oversees the Akodo provinces.

Facilities: Although stark, Shiro Akodo has virtually every facility required for the training, housing, and maintenance of a large army. Barracks, dojo, training grounds, and defensible positions are in abundance, as well as everything else required for any sort of military operation imaginable.

Forces: As the center of the Akodo army operations, Shiro Akodo has a sizable contingent of troops, although perhaps not as many as found in comparable places such as Crossroads Castle and Shiro Matsu. This is because the Akodo split much of their forces between Shiro Akodo and the Castle of the Swift Sword, not to mention the many outposts throughout the Akodo provinces. Forces stationed at Shiro Akodo include:

- The First through the Tenth Legions of the Akodo Army, save those squadrons and companies that are distributed throughout the Clan provinces on other assignments
- The Twenty-First through the Thirty-Second Legions of the Akodo Army

Shiro Matsu

With the possible exception of Kyuden Hida, Shiro Matsu is likely the largest military fortress in the Empire, and it almost certainly contains the largest number of standing troops in any one location. Because the Matsu are the largest Family in the Empire, they can afford to maintain two standing armies, one of which concerns itself with the safety and security not only of the Matsu provinces, but much of the Kitsu as well. The other protects Shiro Matsu and the surrounding area from threats that include infiltration by the Scorpion from the southwest.

For more than a thousand years, Shiro Matsu was a massive fortress that bristled constantly at the potential threat of war from the southwest. The Scorpion, while not the Lion's most implacable foes, have nonetheless been bitter rivals for most of history.

At the conclusion of the War of Spirits, however, the collapse of Beiden Pass left many in the Shiro Matsu garrison with a faltering sense of purpose. Moving an army through Shamate Pass into the Lion lands would be virtually impossible for the Scorpion, at least not without having weeks or even months to move all their forces through the narrow passage. As a result, the Lion Clan's greatest fortress is now located many days'

march away from even the most marginal threat, other than the possibility of tiny units of Scorpion attempting to infiltrate the Matsu provinces.

The Matsu Family's leaders are not particularly pleased with the situation, but there is little they can do about it. Even if it were possible to relocate the Family's center of operations, Shiro Matsu is built upon the site where Lady Matsu and Akodo One-Eye first met, and no living Lion would ever even suggest that a site of such historical and cultural importance should be abandoned for any reason.

Until recently, Shiro Matsu's value as a center of diplomatic relations for the Clan equaled its military significance. Given that the Clan Champion is currently a Matsu, and that both the Champion and the Matsu Family Daimyo maintain their private quarters within the castle, it was no surprise that many outside the Clan seek an appointment here with the hopes of gaining the ear of powerful Lion leaders.

This ended with the brief Championship of Ikoma Otemi, however. Otemi's reign saw the Clan's diplomatic endeavors moved to the Ikoma territories, where that Family's diplomats and courtiers have had much greater success in cultivating diplomatic relations with other Clans. When young Matsu Yoshino took command of the Clan, one of his first official decrees was that the Ikoma would maintain control over the Clan's principal court. While this decree inadvertently placed numerous guests of the Lion in danger when the Ikoma provinces came under attack by the Khan in 1168, Yoshino has given no indication that he intends to retract this policy.

Although it is very nearly obsolete, Shiro Matsu remains the pride of the Lion, for it is easily one of the most formidable fortresses ever built by man. The Matsu Family, the warriors who strike fear into the hearts of the Lion's enemies, look upon it with pride and admiration, and maintain a heavy guard out of respect despite the improbability of it ever being attacked again. As the Tsuno attacks of several years ago demonstrated, however, there is no way to be absolutely certain that an enemy will never strike at it.

Function: Shiro Matsu serves as the headquarters for the Second Matsu Army, the army commanded by the Matsu Daimyo and charged with the defense of both the Matsu and the Kitsu provinces. As the largest fortress of the Lion Lands, it is also the central defense point in the event of an incursion by the Scorpion from the southwest. Because Beiden Pass no longer exists, and because the Scorpion military is so much smaller than that of the Lion, the Clan's leaders regard a direct Scorpion attack as extremely unlikely. Nevertheless, the Matsu remain ever vigilant in the event that the Scorpion attempt something so foolish.

Authorities: Matsu Kenji is the final authority in all matters concerning not only Shiro Matsu, but the entirety of the Matsu provinces and the Second Matsu Army as well. Her word can only be overruled by Matsu Yoshino, but she is wise and intelligent enough that he has to-date never countermanded any of her orders. Yoshino is actually present at Shiro Matsu on a regular basis, but he very rarely chooses to interfere with Kenji's command over the goings-on there.

Facilities: By virtue of its sheer size, Shiro Matsu includes literally every manner of military asset known to exist and be utilized by the Lion.

Forces: Shiro Matsu is one of the larger military bases in the Empire, and as such it commands a staggering number of troops. Although rarely all present at the same time, there are nonetheless thousands of Matsu soldiers here at any given moment. The garrison includes:

- The First through the Tenth Legions of the Second Matsu Army, save those squadrons and companies that are distributed throughout the Clan provinces on other assignments
- The Twenty-First through the Fortieth Legions of the Second Matsu Army

Shiro sano Ken Hayai

The Castle of the Swift Sword is the greatest of all Akodo dojo, and the location of the master sensei not only of the Akodo Bushi School, but of the Akodo War College as well. Because of the importance of those who teach here, and because the castle is situated in the otherwise lightly defended Kitsu provinces, it is among the largest and most well-defended strongholds in the entire Lion Clan territory, with sufficient troops to mobilize for a large-scale engagement within a matter of hours.

Much like Shiro Akodo, the Castle of the Swift Sword spent years in semi-dormancy after the Akodo Family was officially disbanded by Imperial edict following the Scorpion Clan's failed coup in 1123. Unlike Shiro Akodo, however, the Castle of the Swift Sword never spent any time completely abandoned, essential as it is to the defense of the northern Kitsu provinces from attack by the Dragonfly or Dragon Clans. While such attacks are almost unprecedented historically, the Lion were unwilling to allow even the possibility of such an event. New Lion Champion Matsu Tsuko ordered the Ikoma to take over the defense of the area using the Castle of the Swift Sword as their cornerstone. This order was issued at dawn of the first day following the dissolution of the Akodo, and continued until the day the Akodo were reinstated by an Imperial edict from Emperor Toturi I.

The location of the Castle of the Swift Sword is a bit of an oddity, as it lies outside the Akodo provinces altogether and across the border into the provinces governed by the Kitsu. The reason for this lies with the origins of the Kitsu Family, and the overwhelming guilt felt by the Kami Akodo for having hunted the kitsu race nearly to extinction. Although the kitsu accepted the offer to join his Clan, Akodo never fully overcame the enormity of his mistake. His descendants remembered this, and it was his great-grandson who ordered the relocation of the Castle of the Swift Sword within the Kitsu lands so that the Akodo sensei could learn from the newly-human Kitsu, and protect the Kitsu provinces so that their line could have the opportunity to develop unimpeded.

There is a rare historical contradiction that the Ikoma have debated for centuries, one that calls into question whether it was Akodo's son or his great-grandson who in fact ordered the relocation, and at least one record indicates that the site was chosen because it was where Akodo and Matsu first met, a claim the Matsu also make regarding Shiro Matsu. Regardless

of its origins, the endeavor, while unusual, was wildly successful. Within two generations, the reputation of Swift Sword Dojo was unparalleled within in the Lion Clan, and was known throughout much of the Empire as well. The Kitsu and Akodo work well together, and their cooperation only increases the potency of their mutual endeavors on the field of battle.

The northern Lion border has never been very active in terms of military activity. The border the Clan shares with the Crane has ever been the more involved and drawn more of the Clan's resources. Still, the Lion are not the sort to take unnecessary chances, and while relations with the Dragon Clan have been amiable for much of history, the Lion have never neglected their northern border. In fact, the recent conflicts with the Dragon in both the War of the Rich Frog and the War of Silk & Steel have only confirmed that the Lion Clan's practical nature always serves them well, no matter how long in coming the benefits may be.

Function: The principle function of the Castle of the Swift Sword is a dojo for the Akodo Family. The number of students in training there at any one time easily numbers in the hundreds, and it has surpassed a thousand at numerous points in history. Because of its location, it is also the key rallying point for any and all Lion forces defending the northern border. The brutal campaign of Akodo Ijiasu against the Dragonfly Clan two decades ago, a campaign which very nearly destroyed the Minor Clan, was coordinated from this location, as was the Lion offensive against the Dragon Clan during the more recent War of Silk & Steel.

Authorities: The veteran samurai Akodo Nakama is the provincial governor as well as the master of the Castle of the Swift Sword. Because of the extent of his duties on behalf of the Akodo Family, Nakama currently holds no military rank, although he once served as a *taisa* in the Akodo army. While Nakama laments the loss of his former position, he understands that dividing his time between the sheer enormity of managing an entire province, a major dojo, and his duties in the military would result in none of them being performed properly, and he is a wise enough man to recognize that the Clan's needs must come first.

Facilities: The Castle of the Swift Sword is home to the most prestigious dojo maintained by the Lion Clan. While Shiro sano Ken Hayai has a variety of other military assets, none are as important or as well known as the vast system of dojo, which includes a massive training ground, dozens of indoor and outdoor classrooms, and perhaps the finest staff of sensei anywhere in the Empire.

Forces: As might be expected, the Castle of the Swift Sword is well garrisoned for any potential threats that might arise from the north. Forces stationed at Shiro sano Ken Hayai include the following:

- The Thirty-Third through the Forty-Eighth Legions of the Akodo Army
- Various elite companies and squadrons from the first ten Legions of the Akodo Army, enough to comprise at least two legions' worth of Lion soldiers at any one time

Elite and Special Units

Unique Lion Units

Although the Lion are by far the most traditional of all the Great Clans, there can be no question that they, like others, make use of highly specialized troops. Each of these units has a very clearly defined purpose and function within the greater Lion armies, ensuring that the Lion war effort runs smoothly in virtually any situation.

Akodo Elite Guard

The tradition of an Elite Guard is one that began with the Phoenix centuries ago, and quickly spread to other Clans. The Lion were not the first to adopt it, as they do not necessarily feel that the Daimyo of a warrior Family needs protection, but over time they recognized the importance and significance of giving their most important leaders effective bodyguards. Now, all three Lion bushi Families have elite bodyguard units for their Daimyo.

The Akodo have learned to take what seemed at first like a shameful necessity and turn it into a means of recognizing the most noble and honorable among their ranks. After the Family's reformation two generations ago, the Family's leadership was considered more precious than ever, and only the most skilled and reliable warriors could be trusted with their

lives.

The Family Daimyo and those who were responsible for his protection were among the few Akodo to have endured their years of life as a ronin and emerged unscathed. When they were reinstated, the Family was comprised of a mixture of descendants of true Akodo long since lost, and a great number of samurai born from the naming of the Lying Darkness. This latter group came into being only after being given the name Akodo by the new Lady Moon. The issue of who could be trusted with the most important duties was a vexing one, and appointment to the Akodo Elite Guard became a way of rewarding those judged worthy.

The Akodo Elite Guard are responsible for the safety and security of major Akodo strongholds and prominent members of the Family. This includes the Daimyo, of course, but also the senior sensei of the Akodo Bushi School, the Family's representatives to the Imperial Court, high-ranking military officers, and the Daimyo's immediate family. Some might consider them *yojimbo*, which is technically correct. But they are also trained and experienced soldiers who can fight on the battlefield just as well as in rooms and hallways. The same can be said of those Elite Guardsmen responsible for the protection of key Akodo fortresses. Such warriors might be called sentries, but again, that would be a gross disservice and a dismissal of everything that makes them a unique unit.

It should come as no surprise that martial ability, while very important, is not the most essential quality used to determine whether or not a samurai is invited to join the ranks of the Akodo Elite Guard. A proper mindset is required, and the Akodo look for those with clarity of perception, the ability to coolly assess even the most chaotic environment, and the ability to rapidly choose a course of action that maximizes an individual or unit's chances for success. Those chosen are consummate warriors and officers, far more than simple soldiers, *yojimbo*,



sentries, or any other of a dozen labels that can be applied to them based on their duties. It would be more accurate to call them tacticians, officers, commanders, or leaders; they are the quintessential Akodo samurai, and can fill literally any niche required in the Lion armed forces without difficulty or complaint.

Tactics: The Akodo Elite Guard are a fascinating blend of the tactics employed by their Matsu and Ikoma equivalents. Like the Ikoma, they place great emphasis on the protection of their charges, but like the Matsu, they are quite capable as shock troops on the attack. Indeed, the philosophy of the Akodo Elite Guard might well be summarized by simply saying that a strong offensive is the best means of defending a valu-

able charge or target. Toward that end, the Akodo Elite Guard remain with their charge during battle unless an opportunity to strike at the opposing command staff opens up, in which case they move forward with lightning speed. In a pinch, they can also be used as a tactical reserve and thrown into the line to stiffen a defense or aid in an attack.

Unit Assignment: Like all Lion Elite Guard, the Akodo Elite Guard are assigned to the First company of the First legion of the Akodo Army. They are perhaps the most elite fighting force within the Akodo ranks, which is a genuine distinction given the Family's reputation as consummate warriors and tacticians. A dozen of them protect the Akodo Daimyo at all times, and others are stationed at various important Akodo holdings, including Shiro Akodo and the Castle of the Swift Sword.

NPC: AKODO TERUMOTO, ELITE GUARD OF THE AKODO

Air: 2 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 4 Void: 3
Reflexes 4

Honor: 3.6 Status: 4.0 (Senior Gunso) Glory: 4.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Akodo War College 3/Akodo Elite Guard 1

ADVANTAGES: Combat Reflexes, Leadership, Quick

DISADVANTAGE: Idealistic, Overconfident

KATA: Hand of Akodo, Striking as Fire, The Perfect Stacne

SKILLS: Athletics 4, Battle (Mass Combat, Skirmish) 7, Courtier 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu 4, Instruction (Battle, Investigation) 3, Investigation (Notice) 6, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 4, Lore: Heraldry 4, Stealth 3

Akodo Terumoto has always been a soldier of distinction. Much of his service since his gempukku, however, has been of such a nature that he has been positioned away from the great battles the Lion have fought. That all changed at the Battle of Toshi Ranbo, and as a result of his heroics there, Terumoto is privileged to serve in the Akodo Elite Guard, tasked with protecting their Daimyo, Akodo Shigetoshi.

In his youth, Terumoto was distinguished from his peers by a remarkable clarity of thought. His sensei marveled at his ability to instantly assess any situation and respond appropriately. This manifested within months of his entering the dojo as a child, and he was sent to study at the Akodo War College rather than the larger, more traditional Akodo dojo, simply because his sensei believed that his talents would be better served by that training. Their expectations proved correct, and Terumoto flourished. He quickly developed a reputation as a strong unit leader, and was marked early for command of his own squadron. He received an appointment as a nikutai, a corporal in the Akodo legions, upon completion of his gempukku ceremony.

Terumoto and his unit trained relentlessly. Their first duty post was patrolling the Lion border nearest the Dragon Lands, a mission considered a prudent precaution against lingering ill feeling from the Lion Clan's aggression against the Dragonfly Clan less than a decade

beforehand. When the stalemate against the Unicorn at the City of the Rich Frog continued to tie up considerable Clan resources, the Akodo deployed additional troops to the city and recalled Terumoto's unit to garrison the Castle of the Swift Sword. The end result was that Terumoto and his men missed the Dragon army's advance to the city by a matter of days. The two-front war that the Dragon's arrival created resulted in another redeployment, and Terumoto found himself in the strategic reserves during the War of the Rich Frog.

Sadly, Terumoto and his men were never positioned on the front lines of the war, and it was concluded before they ever saw any combat. They remained on duty in the area for several months after the battle that ended the conflict. It was shortly thereafter that Ikoma Korin himself recommended their unit for honor guard duty in Toshi Ranbo. Although it was a prestigious posting, and one that many units with more experience eagerly sought, Terumoto believed that it was likely a result of his unit having had such a lengthy service record with no instances of combat, and privately viewed it as something of a punishment.

Terumoto's tenure in Toshi Ranbo was uneventful, but not so much as he had feared. The young warrior quickly caught the eye of Lion ambassador and former Death-seeker Akodo Setai, and found himself promoted to taisa of the watch over the Lion estates within a year of his appointment. Training with the Akodo Elite Guard was part of his new duties, and it gave Terumoto a prize opportunity that he had dreamed of since childhood.

Even so, the young warrior had largely resigned himself to a life of service and duty without honorable combat when word of the Khan's march reached the Imperial City. Terumoto was tireless in his preparation, and under his command the Lion estate was transformed into a virtual fortress. When the Khan did arrive, the young officer and his men finally saw the combat they had craved for so long, and acquitted themselves with great distinction. They were personally recognized by their Family Daimyo for their valor, and all received prestigious appointments within the Akodo Elite Guard. Terumoto himself was granted a post in Akodo Shigetoshi's private guard, and continues to serve there to this day.

Lion House Guards

The Akodo House Guard, Ikoma House Guard, and Matsu House Guard are not distinctive units in and of themselves. Despite the difference in name, they are actually contingents of the Elite Guard of each Family. The name House Guard is typically used to describe the units of the Elite Guard that are assigned to guard the ancestral home of each Family. The Akodo House Guard are the Elite Guards assigned to protect Shiro Akodo, the Ikoma House Guard are the Elite Guards assigned to protect Kyuden Ikoma, and the Matsu House Guard are the Elite Guards assigned to protect Shiro Matsu. Regardless of what they are called, the House Guards consider themselves Elite Guards first and foremost, and take the responsibility they have been given to be far more important than their lives. To be selected for service with the House Guard is considered a great honor, even among the distinguished warriors who serve in the Elite Guard.

Deathseekers

When any samurai army takes the field, it is virtually impossible to find a single soldier willing to admit to feeling fear. For those who take the field against the Lion, however, there is always an undercurrent of anxiety and concern, for they know that among the Lion's front line will be at least a handful of the dreaded Deathseekers. No other unit in the Lion armies, or indeed perhaps even the combined military forces of the entire Empire, is as feared and as fearsome as the Deathseekers. They are a fixture in literature as well as in the minds of those who face them, for the tragic nature of their quest for death, as

well as the sheer horror they inspire in their foes on the battlefield, has captured the imagination of playwrights and poets for generations.

Deathseekers are Lion soldiers who have in some way disgraced themselves to such an extent that, in similar circumstances, a samurai from another Clan might well request the right to commit seppuku. Even a disgraced Lion keeps the Clan's military well-being in mind, however, and centuries ago the Deathseeker tradition arose in an attempt to serve the Clan's perpetual need for warriors who will feel no fear on the battlefield.

It specifies that a Lion samurai who has disgraced himself has the option of continuing to serve his Clan rather than choosing death or exile (although exile is still an option for Daimyo looking to punish particularly disgraced individuals). By taking the oath of the Deathseeker, a Lion is stripped of all rank and responsibilities other than to the army to which he is assigned. He takes his place on the front lines of the army, and hopes to die in honorable combat in the name of his Clan. Those who succeed in this goal are considered to have expunged the dishonor they brought to their family name, and are remembered as they were before their disgrace took place.

By taking this oath, a disgraced Lion spares his family the shame of his sins, and absorbs the entire responsibility for his failures himself. Due perhaps to the Lion Clan's belligerent nature, most Deathseekers achieve their goal within a year, although there have been rare instances of warriors of such caliber that they are constantly victorious over their foes, and as such continue to serve for years.

One such warrior, Akodo Setai, served for so long and with such distinction that his crime was eventually forgiven. He was even allowed to leave active military service, and in time he rose to the rank of senior Lion representative to the Imperial Court. Setai is looked upon by the Deathseekers with a degree of reverence that most would reserve for a Fortune.



Tactics: Compared to other Lion, Deathseekers take a simple, almost brutal approach to combat. Given that they do not wish to survive any given battle, they are extremely direct in their approach to the enemy. They traditionally take their place among the front lines on the battlefield, and they are the first to make contact with the enemy.

This is not to say that the Deathseekers care nothing for victory or defeat, however. They can only truly redeem their names by dying in honorable combat, and a death achieved in the name of defeat is not typically considered to meet this criterion. To the Deathseekers, victory is the only outcome that is acceptable, and though they may rush to face their foes with every intention of dying, it is also their intent that their death pave the way for a Lion victory.

Unit Assignment: Deathseekers are only present in any significant number among the Akodo and Matsu armies. They are virtually absent from the Ikoma Army. Each of the three armies that admit Deathseeker units reserves the Fourth Company of the Fourth Legion for them. This is due to an ancient superstition that regards the number four as unlucky, and associates it with death.

There are rarely enough Deathseekers for all of these companies to be fully staffed. It is not uncommon for several squadrons within the company to be filled with other troops, typically those who have angered their superiors in some way. These troops are looked upon with pity by other soldiers, for to fight alongside the Deathseekers is to have death become a near certainty.

When not called to active duty due to a lack of any current conflicts, Deathseekers are traditionally stationed away from other units. Shiro no Shinjin, a small stronghold in the city of Rengai Mura, is the unofficial base for all Deathseeker units while waiting for action.

Ikoma Elite Guardians

The traditions of the Ikoma Elite Guardians extend centuries into Rokugan's past, and are among the stranger of those Lion units detailed here. Part of the reason for this is that the current incarnation of the Elite Guardians is so radically different from the unit as it was maintained throughout most of history. This alone is highly atypical for the Lion, who generally do not embrace change, but beyond that, the previous duties and inclinations of the unit were so strange as to be completely unique.

The first Ikoma Elite Guardians were not soldiers at all, but rather an association of yojimbo serving the Lion courtiers and ambassadors in Otosan Uchi. Because of their position within the Empire's capital of learning, and because these men typically shared their Family's characteristic curiosity, they were regarded by most as both warriors and scholars, and they were well-liked by all but the Lion's staunchest enemies. At some point a number of these yojimbo were seconded to the Seppun guardsmen protecting the city, and took to using the no-dachi as their weapon of choice. In a matter of generations, this tradition spread into various corners of the Ikoma Family, and the Elite Guardians were created.

For centuries, the Elite Guardians were a fixture in Otosan Uchi. They were afforded special status by the Seppun to allow them to assist in the Imperial City's protection, and they were beholden to no provincial governor or any ranking authority outside their Clan and the Imperial hierarchy. The Ikoma were very restrictive about whom they permitted to join this group, not wishing to allow anyone who might disgrace the unit by falling short of its exacting standards.

Generations of these elite warriors lived up to the Ikoma's ideals and benefited the Lion with their honorable service. That all ended with the destruction of Otosan Uchi.



NPC: MATSU SHOKEN, DEATHSEEKER

Air: 2 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 3
Reflexes: 3

Honor: 2.8 **Status:** 1.0 (Hohei) **Glory:** 0.0 (Deathseeker)

SCHOOL/RANK: Matsu Berserker 2/Deathseeker 1

ADVANTAGES: Daredevil, Death Trance

DISADVANTAGE: Anti-social, Bad Fortune (Gempukku scar healed), Deathseeker

KATA: Striking as Fire, The Soul's Roar

SKILLS: Athletics 2, Battle 3, Defense 3, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana, No-dachi) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 1, Lore: History 3, Meditation 1, Spears (Nage-yari) 4, Theology 1

No one truly knows Matsu Shoken. She is a solitary creature, and speaks only when asked a direct question by one of her superiors. She seems to have no reason for existence save to fight, and when battle is not available, she is withdrawn, quiet, and utterly forgettable. This is not by accident, but rather a conscious choice she has taken, and it is merely one of many sacrifices she has made in hopes of one day atoning for her terrible weaknesses in the past.

Five years ago, Matsu Shoken was a young woman only a year past her gempukku. She was typical of many Matsu of her age, with a considerable amount of belligerence and an eagerness to engage in battle that permeated most of her waking hours. Unlike many, however, she was not averse to enjoying the small pleasures in life, and was known to engage in a bit of revelry in the evenings once her duties had been completed. After six months serving as an evening sentry at a governor's estate in a quiet, remote Kitsu province, Shoken began drinking sake while

on duty. She never drank enough to become intoxicated, just enough to take the edge off of her nerves and alleviate the incredible tedium of the average night.

One night, Shoken had imbibed only a single cup of sake, ostensibly to ward off the evening's chill. When she caught sight of an intruder, she leapt at the chance for action and chased him. The man fled from her, but she caught up with him after a brief but tense pursuit through the winding corridors, and cut him down with a single strike. It was only after he had fallen that she realized how young he was. With dawning horror, she realized that the "intruder" she had cut down was only a child.

In the days that followed, much came to light about the situation. The "intruder" was a student, a distant relative of the governor, who had forgotten something important in the castle's dojo. He was attempting to retrieve it so that he would not shame himself before his sensei and bring dishonor to the governor's family. Questions were raised as to why Shoken did not sound the alarm, but these were not particularly accusatory — at least, not until her consumption of sake came to light.

Shoken was disgraced before her lord and her colleagues. She expected to be given the chance to commit seppuku and atone for her shame. She was horrified beyond measure when her lord indicated that he would cast her out as a ronin. Only the counsel of his advisor, who had looked favorably upon Shoken, convinced him otherwise, and instead she was given the choice of execution or joining the ranks of the Deathseekers. She chose life with the hope of redemption rather than face absolute disgrace.

Shoken does not speak or indulge herself in any way these days. She has not smiled, laughed, or engaged in any form of earthly pleasure since her disgrace. That path is what led her to this place, after all, and she has no intention of further embarrassing those whom she loves.

Since the destruction of the first capital, the Ikoma Elite Guardians have taken on a role similar to that of the Elite Guard units found among the Akodo and Matsu. Some are still to be found in the new Imperial City of Toshi Ranbo, but the Ikoma Elite are also responsible for ensuring the safety and security of essential Ikoma strongholds and the Family's leaders and respected elders.

The recent sacking of Kyuden Ikoma by the Unicorn has therefore affected them deeply. They consider the fact that the Unicorn campaign succeeded to the extent it did to be an affront to their honor, and they see the castle's near destruction as a black mark against their unit and its traditions. The Ikoma Elite Guardians have repeatedly requested the right to stand in the Lion's front ranks when the Clan strikes back against the Unicorn, so that they may redeem themselves.

Their Daimyo, Ikoma Korin, seems reluctant to agree, however; he is hesitant to weaken the defenses of the Family's key holdings. But the Elite Guardians' zeal seems to have attracted the personal attention of Clan Champion Matsu Yoshino, who supports their desire for retribution against the Clan's enemies.

Tactics: Unlike most Lion units, the Ikoma Elite Guardians are trained to fight purely on the defensive. They will not strike at an enemy unit unless attacked first, or unless directly and specifically ordered to do so. However, once they are attacked or ordered to fight, they are as implacable as any legion of Hida warriors. In the recent conflict with the Unicorn, Kyuden Ikoma was conquered by the Khan's forces, but not before he had to eliminate every last Ikoma Elite Guardian defending the castle; they simply would not surrender or retreat.

Ikoma Elite Guardians use their weapon of choice, the no-dachi, to full effect. Its longer reach and larger blade allow them to strike at an enemy while remaining outside his range, and to inflict substantial damage with even a glancing blow.

Unit Assignment: Like other Lion Elite Guard units, the Ikoma Elite Guardians are assigned to the First Company of the First Legion in the Ikoma Army. Being appointed to this unit is a tremendous honor to any Ikoma, and it is a statement indicating that the Family's leadership has judged that individual to exemplify all that the Ikoma hold in high regard.

NPC: IKOMA HANSHIRO, IKOMA ELITE GUARDIAN

Air: 2 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 4 Void: 4
Awareness 4

Honor: 3.6 Status: 3.9 (Gunso) Glory: 3.3

SCHOOL/RANK: Ikoma Omoidasu 1/Ikoma Tactician 2/Ikoma Elite Guardian 1

ADVANTAGES: Multiple Schools, Wary

DISADVANTAGE: Meddler

KATA: Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire

SKILLS: Battle (Battle Lore) 4, Courtier (Gossip) 3, Defense 6, Etiquette (Sincerity) 4, Heavy Weapons 2, Investigation 3, Instruction 4, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 3, Lore: Philosophy 4, Storytelling (Bragging) 2, War Fans 3

Ikoma Hanshiro is many things. To those whom he calls his friends, he is an affable man learned on many subjects, who will go to whatever ends are necessary in order to aid those whom he loves. To the men he works alongside, he is a brilliant tactician, capable of rallying the men under his command no matter how grim the odds, and snatching victory from almost certain defeat. And to his enemies, he is a merciless killer who speaks not at all, but simply moves from one opponent to the next, leaving a trail of corpses in his wake.

In his youth, Hanshiro was an omoidasu who found himself appointed to serve a higher ranking courtier in the Imperial Court. He served dutifully and without any trace of personal ambition. Over time, his efficiency caused his superior to depend on him almost exclusively to ensure that the Lion delegation was functioning smoothly.

On one occasion, his superior asked for his assessment during a planning session. Hanshiro surprised everyone by recounting an incredibly detailed and insightful examination of all the individuals involved in the situation, and accurately predicted how they would react to the proposal the Lion were planning to put forth. So uncanny were his predictions that both his Family Daimyo, Ikoma Sume, and the Matsu Family Daimyo and mother of the Clan Champion, Matsu Ketsui, heard of it and approached him. It is likely that Sume would have attempted to recruit Hanshiro to join his hand-selected agents, but Ketsui's superior station and Hanshiro's honorable nature won out, and he was sent to study at the Ikoma Tactician Academy in order to serve his Clan on the battlefield.

Hanshiro excelled at tactics just as he did at his work in court. His curt manner and conservative nature were not disadvantages on the battlefield as they had been in court, where they would likely have ensured that he remained behind the scenes his entire career. He quickly rose through the ranks to serve in the command staff of the Ikoma rikugunshokan, Ikoma Otemi, nephew of Ikoma Sume. Wishing to make full use of Hanshiro's talents, Otemi promoted him to gunso of the Ikoma Elite Guard, and since that time he has remained in that post, serving the various Ikoma Daimyo as both a lead yojimbo and a military advisor.

Ikoma Wardens

In many ways, the Ikoma Wardens are the essence of the Ikoma Family and the very embodiment of their role within the Lion Clan. That is to say, the wardens serve a number of different purposes, many of which are seemingly at odds with the traditional manner in which the Lion have conducted their affairs for more than a thousand years.

The first purpose of the Lion Wardens has always been law enforcement agent. They are similar in many respects to Clan magistrates, but with a more limited jurisdiction. More specifically, the wardens have always been charged with supervising, patrolling, and protecting the major roads and highways of the Lion provinces. At first, their jurisdiction included only the Imperial roads, but in relatively short order it was extended to cover other major highways as well.

Trained as warriors rather than magistrates, the Wardens policed their territory with the firmness one would expect of a Lion enforcing the Clan's laws: Anyone found encroaching upon their roads without the proper permissions was arrested, if he did not appear to be an immediate threat, or killed if he did. This served as an adequate deterrent against crime and banditry along the Lion highways for the majority of recorded history.

Eventually — owing perhaps to the influence of the Ikoma Elite Guardians and their role in helping to defend the Imperial City — the Wardens were invited to extend their protection to the network of roads immediately surrounding Otosan Uchi. This of course made the Crane — traditionally the Lion's rivals — extremely uncomfortable, but the policy endured for centuries without prompting incident. Now that the Clans are allied and the new capital city, Toshi Ranbo, sits astride the border between the two, the Wardens share their Imperial duties with the Daidoji Family, and continue to ensure that the roads surrounding the Imperial City are safe.

In addition to their general duties as law enforcement agents, the Wardens are also responsible for patrolling the Lion Clan's western border. This is of course a duty of incredible importance due to the Clan's ongoing state of hostility with the neighboring Unicorn Clan. Prior to the winter of 1168, the Khan made two relatively minor incursions into the Lion provinces in preparation for his campaign. The Wardens failed to halt (or even detect) these incursions, a fact that brought great shame on the entire unit and resulted in the seppuku of several high-ranking officers.

Since that time, the entire organization has devoted itself to guaranteeing that such a thing will never happen again, and the Lion's western border is now by far the most secure of all the Lion borders. The Ikoma Family consider it a matter of honor that the Clan's defenses not waver in the face of even the most aggressive foes. Ikoma Korin has publicly vowed that he will see the Ikoma provinces put to the torch before he permits an enemy to move through them to attack the other Lion Families.

Tactics: The Ikoma Wardens are the largest and best-known cavalry force within the Lion Clan military establishment. Their tactics are not particularly inventive, and have been in use for hundreds of years without significant change, but they are effective all the same. The only significant changes made to the traditional Warden cavalry tactics have been to incorporate various techniques for fighting other cavalry units, an adjustment made due to the Lion Clan's ongoing conflicts with the Unicorn.

Unit Assignment: The Eleventh through the Twentieth Legions of the Ikoma Army are designated as Ikoma Warden units. This constitutes the vast majority of the Clan's cavalry, as the Akodo and Matsu maintain only a company of Wardens each (as well as a small number of their own cavalry). As a result of this, the Wardens are frequently scattered, and are rarely if ever assembled in one place for any reason.

While individual Wardens occasionally lament that they will likely never have the chance to ride into battle on a large scale, by and large they consider it their duty and privilege to protect the homelands of the Lion while their cousins make war upon the enemy. In their minds, their protection of the Families of soldiers makes it that much easier for those soldiers to focus upon the eradication of the enemies of the Lion; and so the Wardens do their part.

NPC: IKOMA CHIKAO, WARDEN

Air: 3 Earth: 2 Fire: 3 Water: 2 Void: 2
Perception 3

Honor: 3.2 Status: 5.1 (Warden Chui) Glory: 4.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Lion Warden 1/Akodo Bushi 1

ADVANTAGES: Ebisu's Blessing, Heart of Vengeance (Unicorn), Way of the Land (Ikoma Provinces)

DISADVANTAGE: Bad Fortune (Nightmares about the fall of Kyuden Ikoma), Doubt (Battle)

KATA: Striking as Earth

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 3, Horsemanship 2, Hunting (Tracking) 3, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 5, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: Law 4, Navigation 2, Spears (Yari) 4, Stealth 3, Storytelling (Oratory) 4

Ikoma Chikao is a man with an unfortunate tendency to find himself in the wrong place at the right time, although there are others who might consider his fortunes to be exactly the opposite. Chikao received an appointment to serve with the Ikoma Wardens shortly after his gempukku, following his first duty post as a yoriki to a magistrate in the city of Rengai Mura. Chikao served for a year along the southern Ikoma border without incident, and quickly developed a reputation as an efficient and honorable enforcer of the Clan's laws.

As the winter of 1168 loomed, Chikao and his men were among those brought in to serve as a mobile strategic reserve at Kyuden Ikoma, near the border. Because of sheer happenstance, Chikao's position as a magistrate left him as the ranking officer of the castle garrison when a fever crippled the Ikoma Elite Guardians overseeing the castle.

The responsibility of overseeing the safety of such an essential installation was intimidating to a young low-level officer. Fortunately, most of the important personages in the Ikoma Family were elsewhere in various courts, so Chikao hoped only to be in command for a very short period of time before those who should rightfully oversee such an important duty could resume command.

Fate is rarely so considerate, however, and it was during this narrow window of opportunity that the Unicorn Clan launched their surprise attack against the Lion provinces. Chikao found himself receiving reports that several

Kitsu Spirit Legion

The Kitsu Spirit Legion is a recently created unit, one that has its origin in the days and months right before the outbreak of the Clan War. The group is an anomaly of sorts among both the Kitsu and the Lion, for while the unique abilities they command are far from traditional, it is nevertheless in keeping with the Kitsu Family's incredible bond with the spirit realms.

The name "Spirit Legion" is a misnomer of sorts, as the gifts required for inclusion in this group are rare even among shugenja; only the ability to commune with the kami of the Void is rarer. At present there are only twelve individuals known

nearby way stations and other targets had been attacked by Unicorn forces, and that the arrival of a major Unicorn army was imminent. He instantly realized that there was simply no way that the castle could withstand an attack of such magnitude, and there was no hope of reinforcements arriving before the Khan's forces began their assault.

With no suitable options available to him, Chikao ordered the guests of Kyuden Ikoma evacuated to the nearest major stronghold that could be held against the Khan's army, the temple of Bishamon Seido. He also guessed (and rightly so) that the Khan's primary interest was in the vast stores of supplies kept on hand at Kyuden Ikoma, and he ordered those evacuated as well. Unfortunately, the supplies were so numerous that instant evacuation was essentially impossible, and it seemed as though Chikao's efforts would be in vain.

It was then that the personal forces of Matsu Yoshino, the Lion Champion, arrived.

Yoshino had received word of the invasion and ordered the forces under his direct personal command to march at top speed through the night to arrive before the Khan. He arrived scant hours before the Unicorn army, but it was enough to improvise a defense. Yoshino actually commended Chikao for his actions — which stunned the young magistrate — and ordered him to continue. Chikao did exactly that, although less than half the castle's supplies were successfully evacuated before the battle began in earnest.

There was discussion of a battle plan relying on ambush in hopes of eliminating the Khan and breaking his chain of command. Chikao immediately volunteered, but it was Yoshino's chief advisor Ikoma Otemi, the former Clan Champion, who took that honor. Although the plan was unsuccessful, the Unicorn progress was halted, and Chikao was given the task of escorting the gravely wounded Otemi to Bishamon Seido.

Despite his youth and relatively short term of duty, Chikao is now a high-ranking officer among the Ikoma Wardens, and he now oversees the patrols for no less than three entire provinces. He answers directly to his lord Ikoma Korin, and has on more than one occasion been asked to join Matsu Yoshino's command staff for temporary duty. His rise to such a prestigious appointment has been rapid, and the young magistrate often finds himself wondering exactly how such a thing could have happened in the first place. But he offers no complaint and merely continues to serve to the best of his ability.

to possess the gifts necessary to train with this group. Oddly enough, of that number, only five are members of the sodan-senzo, the Kitsu shugenja that can trace their ancestors back to the kitsu race; the remaining seven are ordinary Kitsu shugenja, who historically have a far weaker tie to the spirit realms than their sodan-senzo cousins.

The Spirit Legion has its origin in an unfortunate incident that occurred very shortly before the Clan War. The conflict itself was nothing unusual on the face of it, but rather another in a seemingly infinite series of skirmishes between the Lion and Crane Clans over control of Toshi Ranbo. The conflict was in part manipulated by a Scorpion instigator, with the assistance of a traitor from within the Kitsu Family. The two somehow collaborated to create an artificial spirit portal to Toshigoku, the Realm of Slaughter. This allowed the bloodthirsty spirits found there entry to the mortal world, where they drastically escalated the battles between the two Clans. While the conflict was brief, the artificially created spirit portal seemed to have a dramatic effect on the Kitsu, because it was within a matter of months that a Kitsu shugenja first demonstrated the affinity for summoning spirit realm denizens.

Shugenja invited to join the Spirit Legion must possess this unique ability to reach across the gulf that divides the spirit realms and bring individual spirits to the mortal realm, albeit temporarily, and bind them to the shugenja's will. This ability has never been documented outside the Kitsu Family, and no one outside the Lion Clan, other than the Elemental Masters of the Phoenix Clan, is aware that it even exists.

Almost invariably, this ability draws spirits from Toshigoku, although one current Spirit Legionnaire appears to draw upon Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals. These abilities have sparked a tremendous debate among the Kitsu Family. There are those who believe that binding spirits to one's will in this manner is blasphemous and ought not to be tolerated, no matter what the benefit to the Clan. Others argue that, by allowing these spirits to serve the Clan, even briefly, the shugenja summoning them are not only granting them a temporary respite from their torment, but allowing them the opportunity to overcome the karma that binds them to the Realm of Slaughter in the first place. Regardless of whether the latter is true or not, it is certain that the spirits summoned to the mortal realm are in no genuine danger; the most that can happen to them is that they are dispatched from the mortal realm and returned to Toshigoku.

The more experienced shugenja in the Spirit Legion are able to summon and control up to a dozen of these spirits. Less powerful members of their order can summon perhaps two or three at a time. Regardless of how many are summoned, the spirits seek the release of battle, just as their kind always do, but they will only engage when given direct orders by the shugenja. The longer they remain in the mortal realm, and the more battle they see, the stronger their will seems to become, and even the most powerful Spirit Legionnaire dares not maintain his hold over such entities for more than an hour.



Tactics: Although they are samurai, the Kitsu Family elders, and indeed the Lion Clan as a whole, recognize the rarity and value of the Spirit Legionnaires. They are taught that they are not to risk their own lives under any circumstances. This is not followed to the letter, of course; a recent skirmish between the Lion and Unicorn saw one of these Legionnaires risk his life to save that of his Daimyo, Kitsu Katsuko. Generally speaking, however, members of the Spirit Legion use their abilities to offer support from a position of relative safety, and remain as distant from the conflict as possible without dishonoring their Family and Clan.

Unit Assignment: Members of the Spirit Legion do not have a standard unit assignment. There are so few of them that they are assigned to serve on the command staffs of rishogun, and only then on an as-needed basis. Typically, after an engagement is concluded, a Legionnaire returns to his ancestral homeland until another situation requiring his specialized attention arises.

KITSU INEKO, SPIRIT LEGION

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 3	Void: 3
Awareness 3		Intelligence 3		

Honor: 3.6	Status: 2.0	Glory: 3.3
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SCHOOL/RANK: Kitsu Shugenja 2/Kitsu Spirit Legion 1

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Elemental Masters, Soul of Shiba), Friendly Kami (Earth), Half-Blood Kitsu Ancestry

DISADVANTAGE: Obligation (Elemental Masters)

SPELLS: Due to her time with the Elemental Masters, Kitsu Ineko knows all Water spells of Mastery Level 3 and under as innate abilities; Sense, Commune, Summon, Sacred Ground, Wall of Water, Elemental Ward, Tremor, Echoes of a Breeze, Sense Ancestor

SKILLS: Calligraphy 5, Horsemanship 3, Know the School: Isawa Shugenja 4, Know the School: Isawa Tensai 3, Lore: Ancestors (Lion Clan) 5, Lore: Elements (Water) 5, Lore: History 4, Lore: Spirit Realms 4, Meditation 3, Spellcraft (Spell Research) 5, Theology 3

Were it not for the unexpected manifestation of Kitsu Ineko's abilities, it is unlikely that anyone outside the Lion Clan would be aware that the gifts that gave rise to the Spirit Legion exist at all. Unfortunately, when Ineko's natural talents first manifested themselves, she was a student of the Phoenix Clan's Elemental Master of Water, a position filled at the time by Doji Akiko, the returned spirit of Isawa's daughter. Although she was later revealed to be an architect of the Gozoku movement, Akiko apparently chose to keep Ineko's secret within the Elemental Council, and it seems that no Phoenix outside of that august group are aware that the Kitsu Spirit Legion exists — at least, for now.

Ineko's position as a student of the Elemental Masters came about partly as restitution for the loss of life sustained by the Lion when Shiba Aikune wielded Isawa's Last Wish against their representatives years ago, incinerating the honorable Matsu Shinya and his delegation instantly. Although the Masters were not involved in the incident, they offered to train a Lion shugenja as restitution, and the Lion reluctantly agreed.

Lioness Legion

Often confused with the Lion's Pride by those outside the Lion Clan, the Lioness Legion is actually an elite unit geared toward younger warriors in service to the Matsu Family. Like the Lion's Pride, the legion does not accept male members, although many recognize that it prohibits some of the Family's finest warriors from participating in its most prestigious units. Tradition is difficult to change for the Lion, even when it interferes with practicality.

The origins of the Lioness Legion go back to the Tenth Century, during one of many battles between the Lion and the Crane Clans, this time over possession of Shiro no Yojin. The terrain surrounding the castle was such that a rapid approach would prove difficult, if not impossible. The Daidoji occupying the castle therefore had plenty of time to spot the advancing Akodo army and shore up their defenses. By the time the Lion approached, their enemies had secured every possible point of entrance, ensuring that the castle could only be taken by siege. The resulting engagement lasted for days, then weeks, and threatened to run into months. The outcome was never truly in question, for the Crane had no means of sending for reinforcements, but capturing the castle cost time

Ineko was selected due to her skill as a shugenja, her ability to remain calm even in the most trying of circumstances, and her exceptional memory, which many hoped would allow her to retain sensitive information she might be exposed to during her months of training with the Phoenix. Although somewhat unsure of her role as a student, Ineko accepted the responsibility, and traveled farther from home than she had ever been.

Life among the Phoenix was not so different from life among the Kitsu, Ineko was surprised to discover. Their mixture of methods versus expectations was somewhat different than the training she received as a Kitsu, but that was to be expected. She learned many things from Akiko, some of which she could immediately see had strong battlefield applications. It was not until she attempted to master an esoteric Isawa taryu-jiai dueling technique during a training session that Ineko inadvertently reached through the barrier between the spirit realms and summoned a spirit of Toshigoku. Her inexperience with such things led to the spirit running amok before it was finally banished by Akiko herself.

Ineko was shocked to discover that, rather than being punished, she was brought before the Elemental Council and asked to repeat the feat. The Masters were fascinated, and aided her tremendously in learning to control her talents. Her tenure in the Phoenix Lands could have gone on indefinitely if not for a letter from her Daimyo, politely thanking the Masters for assisting Ineko and requesting that she return home immediately.

Since her return, Ineko has found herself a valuable commodity to the Kitsu. Her rare talents, combined with her training by the Masters, has elevated her skill level well above that of most of her contemporaries, and she is currently assigned as the chief shugenja advisor of Ikoma Korin, Daimyo of the Ikoma Family and commander of the Ikoma Army.

and casualties well out of proportion to its actual strategic value. Frustrated, the Akodo Daimyo sent word to his Champion, who was prompted to turn to one of his oldest and most trusted advisors, Matsu Yuriko, for suggestions on how to deal with the matter. Yuriko considered the matter, then offered a solution if the Champion would but give her leave to pursue it. He readily did so.

Yuriko returned to the Matsu provinces and began to attend the training sessions at all the major dojo. She did not look for sheer martial prowess or ferocity, but instead for raw athleticism. Ferocity could be inspired in others, she reasoned, but natural speed and strength could not. After a month, Yuriko gathered together the 50 finest natural athletes she could find and brought them to her personal estate, where she maintained a large and well-staffed private dojo. The students were all female; Yuriko was an unmarried, ruthless sexist with no use for men whatsoever save for those who outranked her, and she quickly inculcated her students in her philosophy of female superiority on the field of battle.

At Yuriko's dojo, the new recruits were trained from dawn until dusk in what was perhaps the most extensive and grueling combination of physical conditioning and weapons training seen in Rokugan up until that point. The work was almost inhuman, but not a single recruit voluntarily left the program. A handful had to be dismissed due to health concerns, but all were given personal commendations by Yuriko and offered their choice of assignments to new dojo.

Just when the remaining students were accustomed to Yuriko's brutal training regime, she made them begin to wear their armor during exercises. At the end of the summer, she had nearly 40 highly trained and extremely mobile samurai at her service. She named them the Lioness Legion, and offered their services to her Champion as shock troops who could break any enemy, no matter how well fortified.

For more than two centuries, the Lioness Legion has stood in the front lines alongside other units like the Deathseekers and the Lion Elite Spearmen. Their

purpose, however, is to deploy across the battlefield as rapidly as possible and seize or eliminate specific targets, including rally points, enemy units, opposing commanders, or any other objective a commanding officer can envision. The Legion is trained to move quickly, exploiting the natural athleticism for which its members are selected to cross the battlefield at a pace that can only be rivaled by cavalry, and strike before the enemy realizes that the Lion are upon them.

Tactics: As described above, the Lioness Legion's primary purpose is their almost supernatural speed. They are a rapid attack unit trained to reach and eliminate targets, catching them off guard as often as not. The Legion sees extensive use in encounters that could bog down into long sieges, or in any battle where terrain prevents the use of cavalry. To maximize their speed, members of the Legion carry virtually nothing save their armor and their daisho. To make up for this, their training includes a course in jujitsu and improvised weapons.

Unit Assignment: The Lioness Legion is a prominent and popular unit among the Matsu Family, and many Matsu girls dream of joining it. While not as prestigious as the Lion's Pride or the Matsu Elite Guard, Legion members are nevertheless very well respected among the military, and they occupy the Third Legion of both Matsu Armies.

Lion's Pride

Even in a Clan that reveres its elite military units, none stand higher than the Lion's Pride. More so than any other Lion force, the Lion's Pride are the picture of the quintessential Lion warrior. The unit is irrevocably connected with the identity of the Matsu Family, and many imagine that all Matsu are exactly like the members of the Lion's Pride.

This is hyperbole, of course, but there is an element of truth to it: Only the fiercest, angriest, and most highly skilled warriors are selected to join the Lion's Pride. They are, without question, the finest the Matsu Family has to offer, and are the ideal to which virtually every young Matsu samurai aspires.

The tradition of the Lion's Pride is nearly as old as the Lion Clan itself. Only a few years after the Kami Akodo gathered his followers, a number of young women approached Lady Matsu. These women had not been offered a place in the Clan, or in any Clan, and owed fealty to no one. They would be called ronin in modern Rokugan, but in that ancient time they were simple hill-maidens and farmers who had gained access to weapons and who considered themselves warriors.

As a group, these women approached Lady Matsu, bowed before her, and laid their weapons at her feet. They were not content to be wives, mothers, and farmers. They had the souls of warriors, and they were willing to risk their lives in approaching the notoriously tempestuous Matsu on the slightest chance that she would accept them into her service. Moved by their sincerity, and finding something of herself within them, Matsu accepted them as her vassals, and appointed them as her personal guard.

MATSU TANIKO, LIONESS LEGIONNAIRE

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 4	Water: 2	Void: 3
		Agility 5	Strength 4	

Honor: 3.2	Status: 3.3 (Gunsō)	Glory: 4.1
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SCHOOL/RANK: Matsu Berserker 3/Lioness Legion 1**ADVANTAGES:** Death Trance, Fleet (2 points)**DISADVANTAGE:** Can't Lie**KATA:** Striking as Fire, The Soul's Roar, Tsuko's Storm**SKILLS:** Athletics (Running) 6, Battle 4, Defense 4, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3, Ijijutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Know the School: Utaku Battle Maiden 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 2, Meditation 2, Spears 3, Staves 2, War Fans 3

The family line of Matsu Taniko has a history of honorable service, but it has never been distinguished by any particular act or individual. Most of her ancestors, up to and including her grandparents and her parents, have served the Lion as heavy regulars or, on occasion, in the Lion heavy elite infantry. Beyond that, none have ever been selected for a prestigious appointment. Taniko grew up understanding this, and while she of course desired to make her ancestors proud, she was likewise content with the idea of serving as her line had always done, and continuing what she considered an honorable tradition. Perhaps it was this sense of belonging that fostered in her a love and mastery of sports during her youth. There was no game that her peers loved that she could not excel at, from kemari to footraces. When she received word that she had been chosen to study at the Lioness Legion dojo, Taniko was stunned beyond belief. She accepted, but was extremely apprehensive about rising so far above her family's station.

As it turned out, she needn't have worried. Throughout her entire childhood, Taniko had never met anyone with the same natural athletic talents that she possessed. Games, while still enjoyable, had lost all pretext of competition and were simply opportunities for enjoyable physical exertion. Among her fellow Legion trainees, however, Taniko found equals, and even superiors. The training regimen challenged her, and she was forced to push herself in order to remain competitive. For the first time, she began to believe that she was capable of achieving more than her ancestors, and that she could honor them in a way that no one of her line ever had. The notion set fire to her soul, and she redoubled her efforts, quickly rising to become one of the most prominent trainees in her class.

Since her gempukku, Taniko has served with the Lioness Legion in a number of conflicts, including the War of the Rich Frog, the War of Silk & Steel, and with the Matsu forces that drove the Khan's Khol army from the Lion provinces following the Battle of Toshi Ranbo.

Matsu's decision may have been looked upon with curiosity by some, but of course no one dared openly question her. With her as their sensei, the young women quickly took advantage of their natural talent and burning drive to succeed, and became fierce warriors one and all. In those days, some jokingly referred to Matsu as "the Lion," which was of course an indictment of her temper and ferocity, and the joke soon extended to her handmaidens, who became "the Lion's pride." The name was soon appropriated by the women to use for themselves, and quickly spread throughout the Clan. The name has remained in use for over a thousand years.

The Lion's Pride are elitist, even by Matsu standards. They do not often fraternize with their fellow samurai. They train separately, live in a private dormitory with their own extensive dojo, take their meals together, and generally are secluded from others at all times. While this preserves the mythos of the unit, it has also generated some mild resentment from other Matsu veterans who see the Pride as snobs.

To some extent this is a fair characterization, but the unit's seclusion is designed to foster overwhelming loyalty to one another. In combat, the Pride functions almost as a single organism, with each member anticipating and responding to the actions of every other member. It is this solidarity, this uniformity of purpose and thought, that has allowed the Lion's Pride to become one of the most feared military units in all of Rokugan.

It is rare almost to the point of impossible for non-Matsu samurai to gain membership in the Lion's Pride. Nevertheless, there are at least a dozen recorded instances of Ikoma and Akodo samurai being admitted, although only female applicants are welcome; there has never been a male member of the Lion's Pride, owing to their founder's belief that men are awkward, anti-social, and irrational creatures.

It is also rare that individual members of the Lion's Pride are promoted outside of the unit, although certainly they produce very capable officers. This has happened only twice in recent memory, one of these instances being so much more remarkable because it involved one of those exceptionally rare non-Matsu members: Kitsu Dejiko was promoted to an officer's position within the Imperial Legions, and later rose to command her own Legion. Similarly, Lion's Pride member Matsu Aoiko has been promoted out of the unit to the position of *taisa* within the second Matsu Army.

Tactics: The tactics employed by the Lion's Pride are favored by those who find the ruthless assault techniques employed by the Matsu Elite Guard too tame. The Lion's Pride exists for one purpose and one purpose only: to destroy the command structure of opposing forces. In battle, they are unleashed and immediately seek out the most dangerous units on the front line. Those are destroyed quickly and without mercy. Then the Pride works its way through the ranks, never flagging in its inexorable march toward the enemy commander. The Pride insist on being the last to leave the field, and they often insist on the right to serve as the army's rear guard.

Unit Assignment: The Lion's Pride is the foremost fighting force of the entire Matsu military organization, and even predates the formation of the Matsu Elite Guard. Because of this, the Matsu eschew the tradition of maintaining their elite guard unit in the First Company of the First Legion, instead reserving that placement for the Lion's Pride in the First Matsu Army. The second Matsu army does not have a Lion's Pride contingent.

NPC: MATSU AOIKO, TAISA OF THE LION'S PRIDE

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 4	Void: 3
		Stamina: 4	Agility: 5	

Honor: 4.1	Status: 5.6 (Taisha)	Glory: 6.2
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SCHOOL/RANK: Matsu Berserker 2/Lion's Pride 2**ADVANTAGES:** Combat Reflexes, Higher Purpose (Cleanse her grandfather's blade.), Inheritance (Grandfather's daisho)**DISADVANTAGE:** Driven (Aoiko is driven to punish gaijin for killing her grandfather), Small**KATA:** Hand of Akodo, Striking as Earth, Striking as Water, The Soul's Roar**SKILLS:** Battle 5, Calligraphy 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Heavy Weapons 1, Horsemanship 3, Investigation 3, Jiu-jitsu 1, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 5, Lore: History 3, Spears (Magari-Yari) 4, War Fans 2

Some say the blood of heroes runs in the veins of Matsu Aoiko, while others say that her family's legacy is one of villainy. Aoiko's grandfather was the infamous Matsu Gohei, a hero of the Clan War whom some called "the Butcher" for his ruthless tactics and his complete lack of mercy toward his enemies. Gohei left the Empire during the War against the Lying Darkness, and perished in the distant lands across the Burning Sands, but he is remembered even decades later for his ruthless enforcement of the Lion's will.

Aoiko was marked for great things at an early age, and she has never disappointed those who have taken an interest in her career. Her ferocity, her natural gift for combat, and her absolute fearlessness have led some to call her a living vision of Lady Matsu. She was invited to join the Lioness Legion, and she gladly accepted, but her performance in training with that group was so exemplary that she was summoned to the halls of the Lion's Pride before she even completed her work there. Aoiko accepted this as her destiny, and gleefully took her place among the Pride.

Lion Elite Spearmen

The Lion Elite Spearmen are an odd unit, and one that is, in many ways, now largely obsolete. By and large, the niche the unit once filled was taken over by trained archers centuries ago, but tradition dictates that the spearmen continue to hold a place in the Lion armies. However, as is typical for the Lion, the spearmen fulfill their role with such zeal and martial prowess that they continue to serve the Clan well, even if their presence is somewhat anachronistic.

The Ikoma records do not contain an exact account of when the Lion Elite Spearmen were first formed or why. There are two major schools of thought on the matter. Some believe that the spearmen were formed because the Kami Akodo considered the bow to be a weapon for hunting rather than warfare. While popular, this account seems at odds with other records indicating that Akodo, a tremendous hunter himself, was an exceptionally skilled archer. This could merely be a by-product of his divine birth, of course, but there are those who claim that Akodo would never have chosen to eschew a weapon that could be put to such devastating use in battle.

During her first year with the Pride, Aoiko was privileged to serve alongside such great heroes as the Family Daimyo, Matsu Ketsui, her student Matsu Kenji, and other young and rising stars like Matsu Ferishi, with whom Aoiko forged a close bond of sisterhood. The two stood side by side when the Pride was dispatched to serve Akodo Shigetoshi in purging a fresh wave of oni from the ruins of Otosan Uchi, and both young samurai-ko acquitted themselves well. The infestation of the ruined city was worse than initially believed, and after the Akodo Daimyo was called away for other concerns, Aoiko found herself promoted to command the Lion forces present. It was during her lengthy stay near the ruins that she first met Hida Kisada.

The first meeting between the two did not go well. Aoiko doubted the man was who he claimed to be, and she deliberately attempted to goad him into a confrontation. Kisada would not be goaded, but neither would he endure insult. He answered Aoiko with a devastating backhand strike that set her soldiers on the brink of assaulting the former Fortune. Aoiko realized that such a course of action would accomplish nothing, however, and stood down. She and her forces aided Kisada in defeating the dark sorcerer Iuchiban and his followers. Kisada later apologized for his actions, prompting Aoiko to do the same.

Since then, Aoiko has been promoted to the rank of taisha in the Matsu Army. She has stayed in contact with Kisada, even going so far as to visit the Crab Lands during an extended break in her duty schedule. Some believe that she is as entranced with the man as are his followers among the Crab, and there are whispers that if he were to make a bid for the throne, she would be among his most ardent supporters. Others simply believe that the two have developed romantic feelings for one another. Neither group is willing to speak their beliefs aloud in Aoiko's presence, however.

Another, somewhat more widely received notion, is that the Lion Elite Spearmen were formed after Akodo lost an eye, a wound that would have dramatically limited his ability to use a bow. This line of thought holds that the spearmen were formed in order to provide the Clan with ranged attack support in battle, but without using the bow that would remind their lord of his loss. Opponents of this theory believe that Akodo would never have allowed his followers to abandon a possible military advantage for so sentimental a reason, but again, there is no way to be certain one way or another at this point.

Regardless of their origins, the Lion Elite Spearmen fill a unique niche in the Lion army. They serve as a sort of cross between archery and infantry. Each member of the unit carries what amounts to a quiver filled with small nage-yari, which can be thrown or used in melee combat with equal proficiency. It is difficult to master every aspect of the nage-yari, but those who can, can use them with every bit of the lethal force normally associated with the katana.



In addition to their rather unconventional weapon choices, the Lion Elite Spearmen wear specialized and highly stylized light armor that is crafted specifically for their unit. This armor, in addition to having a rather fearsome appearance, is customized to provide adequate protection from both melee and missile weapons, as well as enough freedom of movement to throw the nage-yari accurately at long range. The armor also has a detachable quiver, for holding a large number of nage-yari.

Tactics: As described above, the Lion Elite Spearmen are a hybrid unit that can fight both as missile and melee troops. They are typically found in the front line, meaning that they often fight alongside the Deathseekers and other elite shock troops. When the enemy approach close enough so that Lion archers can no longer fire at them, the spearmen begin firing, often while advancing at a quick pace. When the two lines meet, the spearmen keep hold of their nage-yari and become shock troops. There is a sizable attrition rate among the Lion Elite Spearmen, but like most Lion units, this does not in any way impact the number of samurai who volunteer to serve with the unit.

Unit Assignment: The Lion Elite Spearmen have no uniform assignment within the various armies of the Lion Clan. In the Ikoma Army, they are found in various squadrons in the Second, Third, and Fourth Companies of the Sixth Legion. Among the Akodo, Lion Elite Spearmen units replace archer squadrons in the reserve companies of the Thirtieth through the Thirty-Second Legions. Both of the Matsu armies contain the spearmen as well, in the form of a single company of them in the Fifth Legion of each army.

MATSU OUKA, ELITE SPEARMAN

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 3	Void: 2
		Agility 3	Strength 4	
Honor: 3.6		Status: 1.2		Glory: 2.4

ADVANTAGES: Ambidextrous, Lucky (3 points)

DISADVANTAGE: Contrary

KATA: Striking as Water

SKILLS: Battle 4, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Jiu-jutsu 5, Ken-jutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: History 4, Spear (Nage-yari) 5

The Matsu Family is not known for its contribution to the ranks of the Lion Elite Spearmen. Indeed, as a Family, the Matsu are not particularly fond of any manner of missile weapon, preferring the visceral appeal of melee combat. They do not begrudge those who have a talent for such things, and readily recognize the contributions of spearmen and archers to the Lion art of war. But neither do they embrace it.

Matsu Ouka was therefore always something of an oddity for a Matsu. She was fierce enough, but lacked the rage that always seemed to simmer beneath the surface of the average Matsu samurai. Upon her gempukku ceremony, she received an appointment to join the Lion heavy regulars, the traditional assignment for the majority of young Matsu samurai. Ouka accepted this without complaint, for it was what she had expected, and she reported for duty with her fellow Lion.

Continued on next page.

Ouka trained with the heavy regulars for six months, participating in operations near Tonfajutsen and Bishamon Seido. It was purely by happenstance that, during a month of maneuvers in the fields near Shiro Matsu, that she demonstrated great accuracy with the spear. Her gunso, a nephew of an officer among the Lion Elite Spearmen, filed a report with his superior. The report traveled several steps up the chain of command until it reached the taisei in charge of Ouka's unit. She requested a demonstration of the young warrior's skill and, upon seeing it, immediately authorized her transfer to the Lion Elite Spearmen, pending approval from the sensei of the unit's dojo.

Ouka found her atypically serene personality a better fit with the spearmen than with her own family. For the first time in her life, she was one of the more hot-tempered of her peers. She found the situation to her liking and soon blended in well with them.

Ouka and her unit participated in the battle of Sukoshi Zutsu, the finale of the War of the Rich Frog. Given her position in the front lines, Ouka was one of a handful of samurai to be present when her Clan Champion, Matsu Nimuro, was killed in personal combat with the Unicorn Clan Khan, Moto Chagatai. Seeing her lord lying slain in the mud, Ouka felt a rage that she had never known settle over her, and she fought like a demon to try and reach the Khan and avenge her master. Unfortunately, the Moto White Guard were too numerous, and she could not reach Chagatai. It is likely she would have died that day as well, had Nimuro's advisor and successor, Ikoma Otemi, not sounded a withdrawal. Even in the throes of her first true Matsu rage, Ouka would not disobey orders, and withdrew with the remnants of her unit.

Since that day, Ouka has mourned the loss of Nimuro, a man whom she admired even more than her own ancestors. Since the ascension of his son, Matsu Yoshino, to the position of Clan Champion, however, Ouka has begun to feel hope for her Clan once again. Even though he is still only a boy, Yoshino has the fire she saw in his father, and has already demonstrated the same keen eye and clarity of thought. She has become one of Yoshino's most ardent supporters, and she has persuaded her comrades to feel the same, so that the Lion Elite Spearmen have become among Yoshino's leading advocates within the Clan.

Matsu Beastmasters

The Beastmasters are not a military unit in the traditional definition of the term. Instead, they are individual specialists who are typically attached to reserve companies in the Matsu armies. Beastmasters typically train with one another, but there are so few that they could not fill a single squadron, much less a larger unit. Nevertheless, they are a prized addition to any Matsu army, both for the benefits they offer to morale, and for the symbolism of their role.

Beastmasters are a unique breed. Although individual Beastmasters do train with one another as well as with their deadly warcats, the basic talents required to join their ranks cannot be taught; they must be born with them. Only a handful of such

individuals are born into any generation, and even then only a few ever discover their innate talents; the circumstances for such self-discovery simply are not very common.

Those who do discover their preternatural affinity for animals often become cavalry or even falconers. But those who have this gift and who are also fortunate enough to find themselves in a situation where their ability to bond with warcats or feral lions is discovered, are taken to Shiro Matsu to be evaluated by the Beastmasters for admission into their ranks.

Newly accepted Beastmasters develop their talents while working with relatively tame lion warcats, but more advanced students have the chance to select their own pride from young cubs. When raised from cubs by their handlers, lion warcats are the most loyal and steadfast companions any samurai could wish for, and in combat, they are terrible to behold.

The most effective Beastmasters teach their pride to rely upon a subtle system of cues and commands, so that their communication seems nonverbal and instinctive. For this reason, other Lion often consider their talents to be supernatural in nature, and relatively inexplicable. It is widely believed that Beastmasters have been somehow touched by the spirit realm Chikushudo, the Realm of Animals, but this has never been substantiated in any way.

Tactics: Beastmasters and their warcats serve a number of functions within a Lion army, all relatively minor but highly visible. First and foremost, the Beastmasters are a tremendous asset to Lion morale. The snarling, noble beasts they command are an inspiration to all but the most seasoned or jaded Lion warriors. The potent combination of Beastmasters working hand in hand with Ikoma omoidasu to raise the spirits of a Lion army has often spurred the Matsu into a berserk rage, giving them an unbeatable morale advantage on the battlefield.

Conversely, Beastmasters and their charges put a terrible scare into their enemies. There are few foes so calm as to withstand the sight of armor-clad lions charging them. Beastmasters make an incredibly effective anti-cavalry unit. Even the best-trained steeds of the Moto have difficulty following their masters' commands when faced with raging Matsu warcats. This is an advantage the Lion have exploited time and time again when facing the Unicorn.

Unit Assignment: Beastmasters, rare as they are, are typically assigned to the command staff of a reserve company, and typically only those of the first ten legions of each Matsu army. It is also not uncommon for the rikugunshokan of an army to call one or more Beastmasters in his forces up to his personal command staff.

NPC: AKODO MICHIO, BEASTMASTER

Air: 3 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 3 Void: 3
Awareness 4 Willpower 4 Agility 4

Honor: 3.5 Status: 1.6 (Nikutai) Glory: 3.3

SCHOOL/RANK: Akodo Bushi 1/Matsu Beastmaster 2

ADVANTAGES: Death Trance, Inner Gift (Animal Ken)

DISADVANTAGE: Antisocial (2 points)

KATA: Striking as Earth

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Warcats) 5, Athletics 5, Battle (Mass Combat) 3, Defense 3, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: History 1, Medicine 4, Spears (Magari-yari) 3, Storytelling 1

Akodo Michio is one of perhaps a half dozen Beastmasters known to history who are not of Matsu blood.

Michio's talents were discovered mere months before his gempukku ceremony. Up until that point, he was an apt student, but not one who had distinguished himself overmuch from his fellow students. During a training exercise in the field, several miles from the dojo and established patrol routes, Michio and his fellow students were attacked by a bear. The incident was something of a shock, for bears are exceptionally rare in the Lion Lands, and none had been seen in over a decade. How one came to be in the Akodo provinces, no one could say for certain. After the fact, some theorized that the bear might actually have been a spirit from Chikushudo come to reveal Michio's destiny, but the sort who believe such things are those likely to believe anything fanciful.

Regardless of the bear's origins, it attacked the party of Akodo without warning. Outside of the forest, lost in the plains, the creature was denied its normal sources of food, and was near starvation. The patrol leader was killed almost instantly, and never even had the chance to draw his weapon. Two of Michio's fellow students fell almost immediately thereafter, and then young Michio found himself staring into the bear's eyes as it charged toward him. He drew his blade, but he knew he could not survive. He never took his eyes from the bear's, determined to meet his fate without fear.

The bear halted its charge. Michio did not know what was happening, only that he felt some strange connection with the beast, yet at the same time he knew that if he broke eye contact, the bear would tear him to pieces. Without breaking contact, Michio slowly moved forward, blade in hand, and slit the beast's throat in one quick move, ending its misery in the only way he knew how.

Needless to say, the incident caused quite a stir at Shiro Akodo. Hunting parties were dispatched to ensure there was no other strange wildlife in the area, and Michio quickly found himself transferred to a sensei at Shiro Matsu, far to the south. Upon his arrival there, Michio was extensively interviewed by a panel of three samurai, after which he was taken to a small stable-like building near the city's edge and introduced to the warcats that were kept there. The cats accepted Michio without complaint, and he was immediately inducted into the order of the Matsu Beastmasters, the first Akodo in more than two centuries to be included among their ranks.

Michio has flourished among the Beastmasters. He is among the most famous of their number, partially because of his unusual Family affiliation, but also because of his unusually strong bond with animals. He has even developed an affinity for the magari-yari, an unusual weapon favored by certain members of the Matsu Family. Michio is a contemporary of Matsu Benika, by far the best known Beastmaster in the Empire, and some have whispered that the two might seek a marriage. Some wonder what mastery over nature a child produced by such a union might possess, but ultimately such things are known only to the ancestors.

Matsu Elite Guard

Although there are many in the Empire who might claim otherwise, a strong case could be made that the Matsu Elite Guard are the most formidable military unit in the Empire. Their aggressive nature, their martial prowess, and their absolute, unwavering devotion to victory at any cost has earned them a reputation that would give even the most courageous opponent pause. Of all the Matsu legions, only the Lion's Pride are more feared than the Matsu Elite Guard, whose members are selected for being the strongest and fastest soldiers in the army, and for possessing the highest number of confirmed kills in battle.

The history of the Matsu Elite Guard is tied closely to the line of Lady Matsu herself. Matsu may have loved the Kami Akodo, and he is known to have loved her, but she married another so that she would not be known to history simply as Akodo's wife. As head of her own Family, Matsu established a proud, often matriarchal tradition that would stand for over a thousand years.

As part of this tradition, she established that the Matsu Daimyo's eldest born child would inherit the position (although it is not uncommon for male Matsu heirs in this position to cede the position to the eldest sister out of respect for their ancestor's preferences). The duty of the second born — or in the case of an abdication in favor the eldest daughter, the eldest male child — is to defend the Hall of Ancestors, perhaps the most sacred site in all the Lion Lands. For the first few generations after the Hall was completed, its protector looked after it largely alone, aided only by the monks and shugenja who maintained it.



When a protector perished killing a Scorpion saboteur, his young nephew took over. Little more than a boy, the new protector was wise enough to recognize that he needed assistance in defending the hall, and recruited a dozen of the Family's finest warriors. These men began the tradition of the Matsu Elite Guard.

It is possible that the elite guard tradition, which now exists among all the Great Clans as well as several Minor Clans, began with the Matsu Family. Certainly the Matsu believe this, and the Ikoma support their claim with accounts from their historical records. Regardless, the Matsu Elite Guard were, in their first incarnation, an exclusive group charged with protecting the Hall of Ancestors. This was a sacred duty, and these soldiers were looked upon with the same reverence one might give to a priest of the kami. Many hoped to be appointed, but no more than two dozen were ever stationed there at any given time, each of them chosen because they had the strength and courage of ten ordinary warriors.

**NPC: MATSU BUNKA,
ELITE GUARD OF THE MATSU**

Air: 3 Earth: 4 Fire: 3 Water: 4 Void: 3

Honor: 3.5 Status: 3.2 (Gunso) Glory: 5.2

SCHOOL/RANK: Matsu Berserker 3/Matsu Elite Guard 1

ADVANTAGES: Ally (Ikoma Noda - Influence 2 / Devotion 2), Balance, Ebisu's Blessing, Irreproachable (2 points)

DISADVANTAGE: Brash, Fascination (Books about Bushido)

KATA: Fury Without End, Striking as Earth, The Soul's Roar, Tsuko's Storm

SKILLS: Battle 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 1, Instruction (Matsu Elite Guard, Lore: Bushido) 5, Horsemanship 2, Investigation 1, Jiu-jutsu 1, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 5, Lore: History 3, Meditation 1, Storytelling (Bragging) 3, Tea Ceremony 1

To say that Matsu Bunka is an angry man would be a gross understatement. Even as a child, he was constantly angry. Most attributed this to the death of his parents during the War of Spirits, a grim fact that relegated him to being raised by distant relatives in what was more or less an orphanage.

Bunka was angry that his parents had been taken from him by an enemy that, because of the circumstances of their defeat, he would never be able to face to gain vengeance. He was angry that he grew up in an environment completely devoid of any pleasure or happiness, and grew bitter as he watched other young children enjoying their idyllic existence. He was angry because of the beatings he endured from larger, older children in the same situation, looking to express their frustration physically. These conflicts between children were not particularly discouraged by the overseers of the orphanage, who believed that such things would make their charges stronger in the long run. Bunka had resigned himself to a life of misery when he realized that the students abusing him had moved on to more entertaining targets, namely younger children.

In time, one of the Hall's protectors advised his elder sister, the Matsu Daimyo, that he had found far more suitable candidates for the position than he could possibly use. Would such men not be better suited for other positions, either among the Daimyo's personal guard or overseeing the protection of other important locations? While his sister eschewed the use of men in her personal guard, she did see the wisdom of her brother's suggestion, and the Matsu Elite Guard became a significantly larger organization.

The Matsu Elite Guard is comprised almost exclusively of male samurai, and generally selects from those candidates who have the skill to meet the entry requirements of the Lion's Pride, but cannot join because of their sex. There is a sort of friendly rivalry between the two units because of this, although this is not generally acknowledged to outsiders.

Tactics: The Matsu Elite Guard believe that in order to defend an individual or location, they must destroy that which threatens it. They will remain close to their charge until the moment that an opportunity to strike at the enemy presents itself. At that point, they launch a completely relentless attack that does not stop until they are all dead, or the enemy and the threat they represent is destroyed utterly.

For the first time, Bunka found a way to cope with his rage. He was miserable, but he would not let others suffer as he did. He came to the defense of younger children who were being bullied and receiving a terrible beating for his trouble, but he injured two of the assailants so badly that they required a shugenja's attention. Bunka was cast out of the orphanage for his actions, and he expected that nothing more than a ronin's life awaited him. He was surprised, therefore, when he was taken in by a sensei at the dojo in the same town where he had lived almost his entire life.

Under the sensei's guidance, Bunka began training as a warrior nearly two years before other children. Upon his graduation, his obvious enthusiasm for protecting others got him an appointment as a yojimbo to the Kitsu Family. Unfortunately, that appointment did not end well, as Bunka's temperament made him prone to perceiving threats where there were none, and the Kitsu were unwilling to risk their honor by continuing to employ him.

Bunka returned to the Matsu provinces with a cloud hanging over him, but even the dishonor of being released from his duties by the Kitsu was not enough to overcome his reputation as one of the most overpowering warriors in his generation of Lion. After a few months of serving in various duty posts, Bunka was tentatively invited to study with the Matsu Elite Guard, with the condition that his acceptance would only be possible if he proved able to meet the group's exacting standards.

Bunka met or exceeded all the Guard's standards for weapons training, unarmed combat, and sheer physical conditioning. He was allowed to join, and his temperament, somewhat abated, now serves him well. Periods of inactivity are not uncommon, given the nature of the Guard's duties, and during those periods Bunka slowly becomes more and more temperamental until the inevitable conflict, when he purges himself of his anger by visiting it upon his enemies.

Unit Assignment: Unlike the Akodo Elite Guard and the Ikoma Elite Guardians, the Matsu do not follow the Lion tradition of appointing their Elite Guard units to the First Company of the First Legion of their armies; the First Matsu Army reserves that designation for the Lion's Pride, relegating the Matsu Elite Guard to the Second Company of the First Legion. The Second Matsu Army places them in the First Company of the First Legion. Because of the sheer size of the Matsu Family, there are more individuals worthy of protection, and more major strongholds. Thus, it is not unreasonable for there to be twice the number of Elite Guard among their Family.

New Mechanics

Several of the units described in this chapter have been included as mechanical options in previous Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition products.

- The Deathseekers and the Ikoma Wardens appear as a Path in *The Four Winds*, p. 16.
- The Lioness Legion appears as a Path in *The Art of the Duel*, p. 71.
- The Matsu warcats appear in *Creatures of Rokugan: Third Edition*, p. 132.

New Equipment: Magari-yari

The magari-yari is a spear with a trident-like head. The Matsu elite units have used this rather exotic weapon for centuries, but they are the only Rokugani to do so. Like the yari upon which it is based, it may be thrown or thrust. Its heavier tip also reduces its effectiveness as a cavalry weapon.

DR: 3k2; 1k2 if thrown, maximum range of 15'

Special Rules: Unlike the traditional yari, the magari-yari confers no bonus to damage when used by a mounted samurai. It also has a significantly reduced thrown range because of the heavier tip.

Price: 8 koku

New Advanced School: Lion's Pride (Bushì)

There is no more feared force within the Lion Clan than the Lion's Pride. They are the living embodiment of Lady Matsu's teachings and traditions, and have a well-deserved reputation for ferocity and tenacity. When they are deployed into battle, death is the only outcome, whether for the enemy or the Lion's Pride. Every young Matsu woman desperately aspires to membership in this most elite and secretive group of samurai-ko.



Requirements:

RINGS/TRAITs: Agility 5, Strength 4, Stamina 4

SKILLS: Battle 4, Kenjutsu 5, Lore: Bushido 4, four Weapon Skills at Rank 1

ADVANTAGES: Combat Reflexes, any Honorable Higher Purpose

OTHER: Matsu Family only (Akodo, Ikoma, and Kitsu members must purchase Different School to join); only female samurai are accepted into the Lion's Pride; Honor Rank 3+

SPECIAL: You may waive one of the required Advantages by raising all Weapon Skill requirements by 1, or waive both of the Advantages by raising all Skill requirements by 1.

Techniques:**RANK 1: THE FURY OF MATSU**

You give a bonus to all your party members' attack and damage rolls equal to the lowest honor rank in your party or squad. You also gain a bonus to your attack and damage rolls equal to twice your Honor Rank.

RANK 2: THE CROSSWAYS CUT

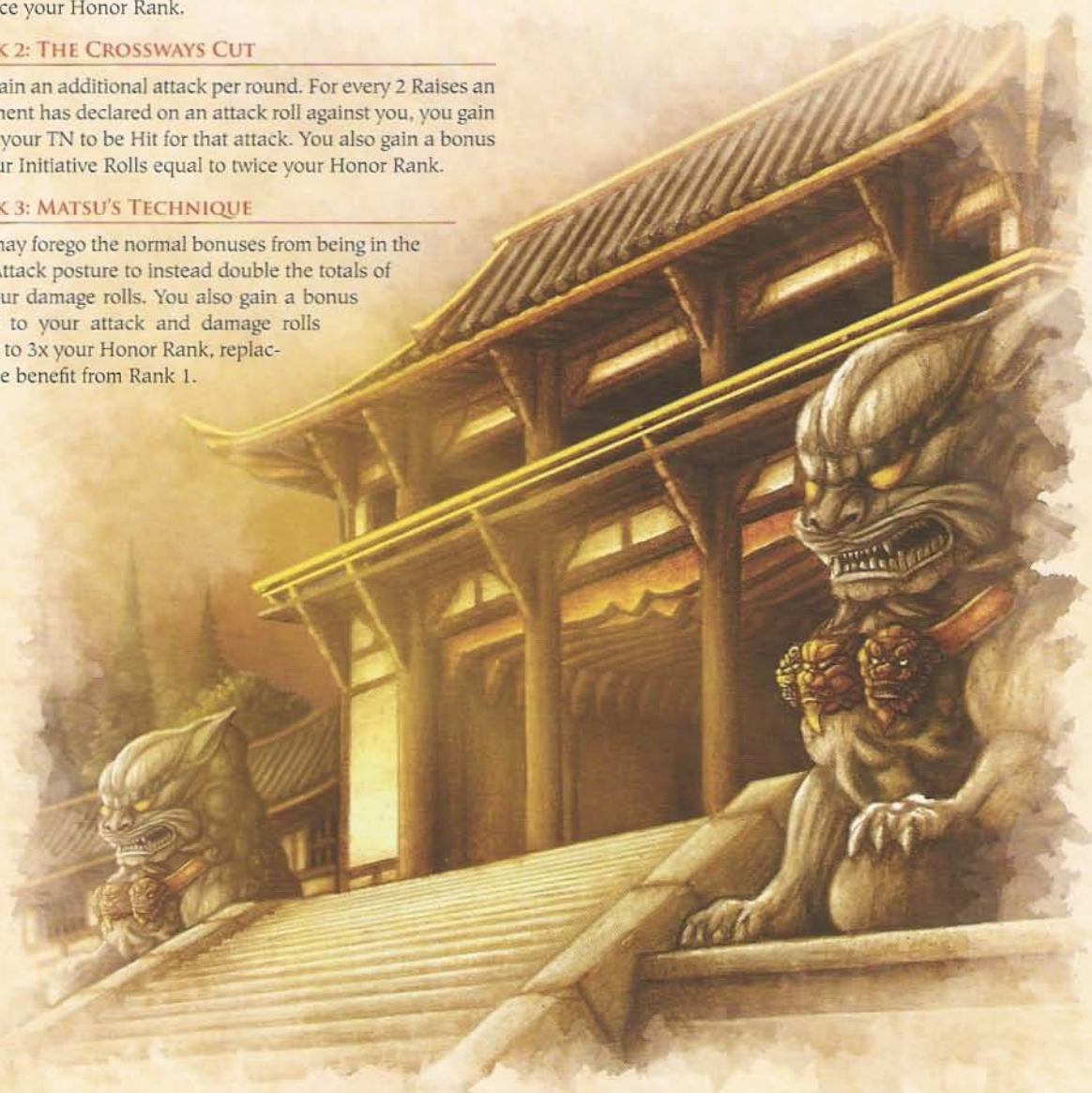
You gain an additional attack per round. For every 2 Raises an opponent has declared on an attack roll against you, you gain +5 to your TN to be Hit for that attack. You also gain a bonus to your Initiative Rolls equal to twice your Honor Rank.

RANK 3: MATSU'S TECHNIQUE

You may forego the normal bonuses from being in the Full Attack posture to instead double the totals of all your damage rolls. You also gain a bonus equal to your attack and damage rolls equal to 3x your Honor Rank, replacing the benefit from Rank 1.

New Advanced School: Matsu Beastmaster (Bushu)

The Beastmasters are a unique Matsu Family tradition, and one that differs considerably from similar groups within other Clans, such as the Ki-Rin War Dog handlers of the Unicorn Clan. The Lion regard their warcats as equals, owing most likely to the fact that Akodo selected the animals to serve as the symbol of his Clan. The greatest Beastmasters are those who are born with an innate affinity for animals, a rare gift that surfaces occasionally among certain branches of the Matsu Family.



Requirements:

RINGS/TRAIT: Agility 4, Awareness 4, Willpower 4

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Warcats) 5, Athletics 5, Jiu-jitsu 3, Peasant Weapons 3 or Spears 3

ADVANTAGES: Death Trance, Inner Gift (Animal Ken)

OTHER: You may waive one Advantage by increasing all required Skill ranks by 1 per Advantage ignored in this manner.

SPECIAL: Beastmasters are traditionally trained to fight with a whip or the trident-like magari-yari. When wielding a whip, a Beastmaster loses no Honor for using a peasant weapon.

Techniques:

RANK 1: ONE WITH THE PRIDE

Beastmasters possess a bond with their warcats that defies all description. Your trained cats will never attack you under any circumstances unless you attack them first, and even feral lions will not attack you so long as you maintain eye contact with them. When in combat alongside your warcats, you may expend a Void Point to grant a Free Raise to any one of them. Any number of Void Points may be spent in this manner per round. Additionally, any Free Raises you have from other sources may be used instead by your warcats if they are making the same type of roll (Free Raises on attack rolls may only be used for the warcats' attack rolls, for instance).

RANK 2: THE LION'S STRIKE

You have learned to strike with the ferocity and animal spirit of the warcats you fight alongside. When fighting unarmed, with a whip, or with a magari-yari, you may ignore your opponents' armor. You gain a bonus to your DR for unarmed attacks equal to +0k1 + your Water Ring + 2 for every warcat in your pride that is present in the skirmish.

RANK 3: WITH THE SOUL OF A LION

The bond between a Beastmaster and his pride cannot be broken, for they are brothers in all but birth. When in combat, you may declare what actions the warcats of your pride take, including Standard Attack, Full Attack, or Full Defense. For every Experience Point you receive, you gain an additional Experience Point that may only be used to improve the abilities of 1 warcat among your pride. Traits and Skills are increased in exactly the same manner for warcats as for characters, with the same costs.

Lion Regulars & Heavy Regular

There is no mechanical representation for the Lion Regulars or Lion Heavy Regulars mentioned repeatedly in the Units portion of this chapter. All Lion soldiers, whether Akodo, Ikoma, or Matsu, begin their training as Lion Regulars. Those who utilize heavy armor or heavy weapons are placed in the Lion Heavy Regulars. Any Rank 1 character created without using a New Path that specifies a particular unit is generally considered a Regular. Members of the Regulars are expected to pursue nearly constant training in their Weapon Skills and other abilities related to battle. Lion Regulars and Heavy Regulars make up 60-75% of the samurai in any Lion army.

Lion Elite & Lion Heavy Elite

Drawn from the ranks of the Lion Regulars and the Lion Heavy Regulars, the Lion Elite and the Lion Heavy Elite are an intermediate step between the rank and file Regulars and the special units described in this section. While it is possible for a soldier to be promoted to a special unit without first serving with the Elite, it is highly unusual and typically denotes an individual of particular skill. Promotion to one of the elite units usually comes after a minimum of two years' service in the Regulars, and a demonstration of skill to one's sensei or officers. Alternately, any soldier who survives ten engagements against the Lion's enemies, and who demonstrates the behavior of an honorable warrior, is eligible for immediate promotion. Lion Elite and Heavy Elite units comprise 10-20% of the samurai in any given Lion army.

New Path: Akodo Elite Guard (Bushi)

Few Families have so checkered a recent past as the Akodo. Perhaps as a result of their history, the Family is quick to defend its honor and its reputation as skilled warriors. The Akodo master sensei relentlessly track the progress and development of their students, even years after their gempukku and duty assignments, to find the very best of them. These individuals are honored with the chance to join the Akodo Elite Guard, the Family's greatest swordsmen.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 4

PATH OF ENTRY: Akodo Bushi 3 or Akodo War College 3

PATH OF EGRESS: Akodo Bushi 3 or Akodo War College 4

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Akodo Family only, Honor Rank 3 or higher

Technique: Akodo's Cut

An Akodo warrior does not expend his energy in multiple attacks when a single attack will suffice. When declaring an attack against an opponent, you may sacrifice 1 or more subsequent attacks to be made that round in order to gain a bonus equal to 5x your School Rank to your damage roll. This Path is considered part of the Akodo Bushi School for the purposes of determining this bonus.

New Path: Akodo Scouts (Bushi)

It has taken generations for the Akodo Family to repair the damage done to it by the Lying Darkness in the War Against the Darkness era. The passage of time since then has adequately demonstrated that the Family bears no trace of that sinister entity's dark influence. Nevertheless, there are a handful of Akodo born in every generation with an almost preternatural gift for stealth, a fact that some attribute to the Family's strange history. Those few are watched carefully for any signs of aberrant behavior, and when none arises, they are recruited to a small, private dojo where they are trained to become the eyes and ears of the Akodo Army. Although they are not spoken of out of respect for the honor they imperil with their activities, the Akodo scouts are greatly appreciated by the entire Family.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Akodo Bushi 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Akodo Bushi 3, Akodo War College 1, or Ikoma Tactician 1

Technique: Honor in the Shadows

Akodo scouts are taught to remain unseen at all costs, observing their enemies and gathering as much information as possible before reporting back to their lord. You gain a Free Raise on attack rolls against an opponent of your choice each round for every round you spent observing that foe while taking no other actions. This bonus only lasts for the first 3 rounds of the skirmish. The maximum number of Free Raises you may gain in this manner is equal to your Akodo Bushi School Rank +1. You also gain a bonus to all Stealth (Sneaking) Rolls equal to your Akodo Bushi School Rank.

New Path: Fujimaro's Legion (Bushi)

Fujimari's Legion is a unique unit headed by the well-known scout and gunso, Ikoma Fujimaro. The name is a bit of a misnomer, as the unit consists of three squadrons, and as such is far smaller than a company, much less a legion. Still, they are infamous for their proficiency. The group first came to prominence after the Unicorn Clan's early incursions into the Lion provinces before the Khan's winter campaign of 1168, when they proudly fought alongside Clan Champion Matsu Yoshino in repelling the second incursion. It was then that Yoshino-sama coined the phrase "Fujimaro's Legion," after which it has come into widespread use.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Any Lion bushi 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Reenter the same School at Rank 2, or Akodo Scout

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: All members of Fujimaro's Legion are hand-selected by Ikoma Fujimaro, and may not gain entry into the unit without his express consent.

Technique: Fujimaro's Technique

Like the seasoned veteran who leads your platoon, you have mastered the art of knowing when to strike and when to withdraw without being seen. When making a ranged attack with a bow, you may add twice your Honor Rank to the total of both the attack and damage rolls. When retreating from an opponent with superior numbers, you may add twice your Honor to the number of feet you may move per round.

New Path: Ikoma Elite Guardians (Bushi)

Generations ago, the Ikoma Elite Guardians patrolled the streets of Otosan Uchi, defending the capital and its inhabitants in the name of the Emperor. During the Clan War, however, the Lion were forced to withdraw their forces from the increasingly dangerous city, and the Elite Guardians have served as part of the core of the Ikoma Army ever since. Wielding their deadly no-dachi with alarming proficiency, the Elite Guardians have become well known indeed to those who have faced the Lion on the battlefield.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Any Lion bushi 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Reenter the same School at Rank 3

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Ikoma Family only

Technique: Defend an Empire's Honor

The Ikoma Elite Guardians protect their charge above all else. When you take your action, you may sacrifice an attack to grant a Carapace rating equal to your Insight Rank + 1 to one person of your choosing, who must be within 20' of you. This rating lasts until your next turn, at which point you must either sacrifice another attack or end the Carapace benefit. Using this technique also gives you a Carapace rating equal to half that conferred to your charge, which lasts the same amount of time.

New Path: Ikoma Herald

There are some among the Ikoma who begin the life path of studying history and the lore of other Clans and discover that it is simply incompatible with the core of their beings. As Lion, they resign themselves to their fate, but the Ikoma Family occasionally seeks out such individuals and puts them to better use for the Family. The Ikoma Heralds are a unique blend of historian and warrior. Their role is to stand alongside the warriors of the Ikoma Army and shout out the tales of the greatest Ikoma heroes. Their fervor inspires their brothers in arms, and many enemies' resolve has been shattered by the bloodthirsty shouting of the heralds as they wade into battle, inspiring others to shout, sing, and chant alongside them.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Ikoma Omoidasu 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Matsu Berserker 1 or Ikoma Tactician 1

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Lore: History 3

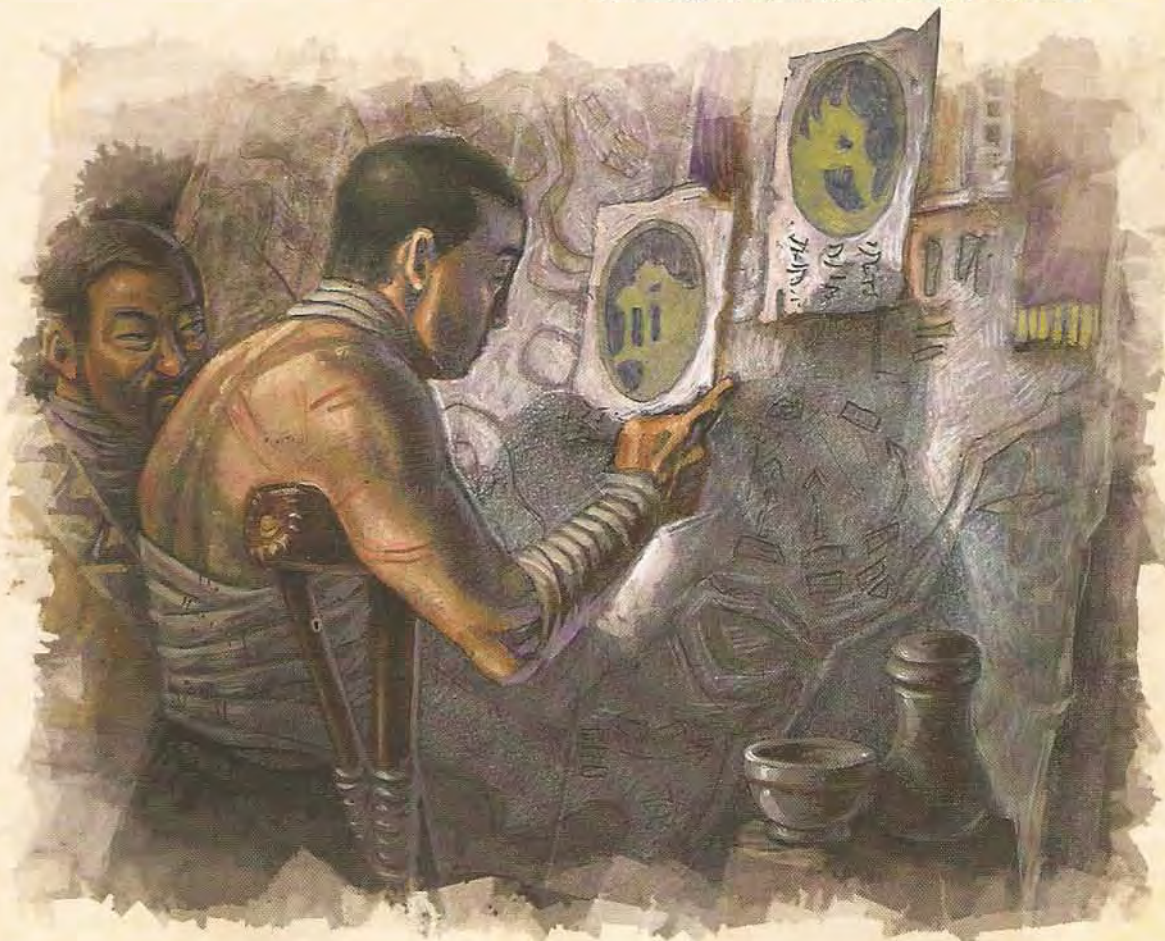
Technique:

The Hand of Our Ancestors

The Ikoma are able to spin tales of the Lion's history appropriate to any combat situation, rallying the troops and steeling them for the battle to come. You may make a Lore: History Roll against a TN of 20. If the roll is successful, you and a number of troops equal to your Insight Rank x 5 receive a +5 bonus to their Initiative, Tides of Battle, and attack rolls for the first 3 rounds of the next combat encounter. These troops gain an additional +5 bonus for every increment of 10 by which you exceed the TN (rounded down), and an additional +3 for every Raise made.

New Path: Kitsu Spirit Legion (Shugenja)

Relatively new to the Lion, the Kitsu Spirit Legion consists of those shugenja who have been dramatically affected by the influence of the spirit realms on the Lion Lands over the past few decades, and who are now able to reach across the boundaries between the realms and summon warrior spirits to aid them. Although not particularly useful in large scale combat, the Spirit Legion excel at small unit tactics and are often deployed to assist commanders overseeing border patrols and other such basic duties.



TECHNIQUE RANK: Variable; if used as a Rank 1 Path, use the following information:

BENEFIT: +1 Perception

HONOR: 3.5

SKILLS: Calligraphy, Lore: Ancestors (Lion), Lore: History, Lore: Spirit Realms, Spellcraft, Theology, any one High or Bugei Skill

AFFINITY/DEFICIENCY: Like the primary Kitsu Shugenja School, the Kitsu Spirit Legion have an Affinity for Water spells and a Deficiency for Fire spells.

SPELLS: Sense, Commune, Summon, 3 Water spells, 2, Air spells, and 1 Earth spell

OUTFIT: As Kitsu Shugenja School

PATH OF ENTRY: Kitsu Shugenja School

PATH OF EGRESS: Reenter the same School at the appropriate rank

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Only Kitsu Family members may join. Other Families entering the Kitsu Shugenja School via the Different School Advantage may not join. The only exception is the Akodo, who may join if they pay double the normal cost for the Different School Advantage.

Technique: Wrath of the Realms

You are able to reach across the border between the mortal realm and the realms of spirit, and to summon forth spirits to do your bidding. Each day, you may summon a number of these spirits equal to your Insight Rank + 1, plus an additional spirit for every Insight Rank you possess above 5. After 1 hour, you must make a Contested Willpower Roll against each spirit or lose control of it. You may voluntarily banish these spirits at any time so long as they are under your control.

NEW CREATURE: SPIRITS OF SLAUGHTER TOSHIGOKU SPIRIT

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 0	Water: 2
		Agility: 4	Strength: 3

Rolls when Attacking: 8k4
TN to Be Hit: 20

Rolls for Damage: 6k2
Wounds per Level: 6

SPECIAL: Equipment (Light Armor, Katana, Wakizashi, Tanto), Skills (Defense 3, Kenjutsu 4, Knives 2), Spirit Qualities (see *Creatures of Rokugan: Third Edition*)

New Path: Lion Elite Spearmen (Bushu)

Service among the Lion Elite Spearmen is not a simple matter. Serving as a cross between the Lion's archers and their infantry, the Elite Spearmen are often called upon to soften an enemy's front lines with ranged attacks, and then either assault them directly or receive their charge.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Any Lion bushu 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Re-enter the same School at Rank 2

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Lion Clan samurai only



Technique: Let Fly the Talons

The Lion Elite Spearman wield their unusual weapons in a manner most would consider almost inhuman. When wielding a nage-yari or magari-yari, your Strength is considered 1 Rank higher for damage rolls. You may make 2 attacks per round using a nage-yari or magari-yari, using any combination of melee and ranged attacks. For instance, you may make 2 ranged attacks, 2 melee attacks, or 1 ranged and 1 melee attack. You may ignore all off-hand penalties for attacks made with either of these two weapons.

New Path: Matsu Elite Guard (Bushii)

The Matsu Elite Guard are perhaps the most fearsome Lion troops on the battlefield, the fear they generate eclipsed only by the psychological advantage wielded by the Deathseekers. For the most part, the Elite Guard is the home of those male warriors with the prowess and abilities to serve in the Lion's Pride or Lioness Legion, but who are ineligible to join those groups due to their sex.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 4

PATH OF ENTRY: Matsu Berserker 3

PATH OF EGRESS: Matsu Berserker 4

OTHER REQUIREMENTS: Matsu Family only, Honor Rank 3 or higher, Glory Rank 3 or higher

Technique: Relentless

Once roused to attack, a true Matsu does not cease until his enemy is defeated, no matter the cost. When you successfully strike an opponent during a round, you gain an additional 3 rolled dice to use on any subsequent attacks against that opponent made during the same round. These dice may be used on attack or damage rolls, or divided between the two.

New Dojo

The following dojo are described earlier in this chapter. The mechanics below follow all rules and guidelines included in Chapter Eight of The Emerald Empire. Three more Lion dojo are presented in that book: Bishamon Seido, Sacred Watch Dojo, and Swift Sword Dojo. Those three dojo have additional Schools and Paths from this book available to them. They are as follows:

- Bishamon Seido: Kitsu Spirit Legion, Lion's Pride, Matsu Elite Guard.
- Sacred Watch Dojo: Ikoma Elite Guardians, Ikoma Herald.
- Swift Sword Dojo: Akodo Elite Guard, Akodo Scout.

Akodo's Dojo

LOCATION: Shiro Akodo

SCHOOLS: Akodo Bushi, Akodo War College, Kensai

PATHS: Akodo Elite Guard, Akodo Scout, Deathseeker

BENEFIT: Students of Akodo's Dojo may purchase any Lion Clan kata for 1 point less than normal, to a minimum of 1 point.

Crossroads Dojo

LOCATION: Tonfajutsen

SCHOOLS: Matsu Berserker, Matsu Beastmaster

PATHS: Lion Elite Spearman, Lioness Legion, Matsu Duelist, Matsu Elite Guard

BENEFIT: When purchasing the Social Position Advantage in order to gain a higher rank in the Lion military, students of Crossroads Dojo may do so for 1 point less than normal, to a minimum of 1 point.

The Dojo of Our Ancestors

LOCATION: The Hall of Ancestors

SCHOOLS: Kitsu Shugenja, Matsu Berserker

PATHS: Matsu Elite Guard

BENEFIT: Students of the Dojo of Our Ancestors gain a +1k0 bonus to all Defense Skill Rolls.

The Dojo of Sacrifice

LOCATION: City of Honor's Sacrifice

SCHOOLS: Ikoma Omoidasu, Ikoma Tactician

PATHS: Ikoma Elite Guardian

BENEFIT: Students of the Dojo of Sacrifice may select any one Low Skill. The Honor penalties for using this Skill are reduced by one-half.

Feathered Claw Dojo

LOCATION: Ninkatoshi

SCHOOLS: Akodo Bushi, Kakita Bushi

PATHS: Akodo Elite Guard, Kenshinzen

BENEFIT: Students of Feathered Claw Dojo may purchase the Allies Advantage for 1 point less when purchasing Lion Allies (if the student is Crane) or Crane Allies (if the student is Lion), to a minimum of 1 point per Advantage.

Humility Dojo

LOCATION: Kenson Gakka

SCHOOLS: Ikoma Tactician, Matsu Berserker

PATHS: Ikoma Herald, Lion Elite Spearman, Matsu Duelist

BENEFIT: Students of Humility's Dojo begin with 1 rank in Know the School, with any Scorpion School as the chosen School. This is considered a School Skill.

Lookout Shadow Dojo

LOCATION: Shiranai Toshi

SCHOOLS: Ikoma Tactician

PATHS: Akodo Scout, Fujimaro's Legion, Lion Warden

BENEFIT: Students of Lookout Shadow Dojo gain 1 bonus rank in either Hunting or Investigation. This Skill is treated as a School Skill for all mechanical effects that specify School Skills.

Heritage Tables

The Lion are particularly attentive to the history of their ancestors, and can recite a litany of deeds dating back generations, often even back to the dawn of the Empire, when their ancestors served the great Akodo One-Eye himself. Because of their attention to history, and their love of all things military, the Lion have a much broader portfolio of engagements that their ancestors may have been involved with. When creating a Lion character and using the Heritage Tables in the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition core rule book pp. 153-55, you may use the following in place of Heritage Table 3A – Great Battles:

Roll	Result
1	Guardian: Though your ancestor was never involved in the great battles that define the history of Rokugan, he steadfastly defended an important rice village from bandit attacks. He spent his entire life in the region, content to stay home and guard an asset of the Clan. Gain the Way of the Land Advantage that applies to the province he guarded. Your Glory is considered to be 2 Ranks higher while in that province.
2	Battle of White Stag: Centuries ago, barbarians from the east sailed into the Emperor's harbor and initiated diplomatic negotiations. Two years later, a fleet of barbarian ships assaulted Otosan Uchi with superior weapons and attempted to kill the Empress, a Lion-trained warrior. The army of Rokugan defeated the barbarian fleet in the first major naval battle in Rokugan's history. Gain 2 Ranks of the Athletics Skill.
3	Battle of Kenson Gakka: In 533, the Scorpion Clan was overcome by foolishness and arrogance, and attempted to seize control of Kyuden Ikoma. Their attempt failed, and the Lion were enraged by it. In retaliation, the Matsu attacked Shiro no Meiyo, the only Scorpion holding the Lion had allowed north of Beiden Pass, and killed everyone within it. The city was renamed Kenson Gakka, or "Humility's Lesson." The Scorpion have never forgotten the brutal Lion attack, and neither have the Matsu. Gain 2 Ranks in the Skill Lore: Scorpion Clan.
4	Battle of the Cresting Wave: The Maw's great assault on Rokugan was stopped because of the heroism of the Crab, and of those Clan allies (including the Lion) who stood alongside them in their darkest hour. Kuni Osaku sacrificed her life to buy time for samurai of all Clans to complete the Kaiu Wall. Working together, the assembled samurai were ready for the Shadowlands army and destroyed it. Gain 2 Ranks in Skills that are taught by any Crab Bushi School.
5	Battle of the Great Climb: Insulted by a Dragon ambassador, a vengeful Akodo general marched upon the Dragon Lands in partial restitution for a slight against his honor offered by the Dragon's defense of the Dragonfly Clan nearly a decade before. The Dragonfly Daimyo challenged the Akodo to a duel in order to protect the Dragon, but lost. The general declared himself master of the Dragonfly Lands, and was summarily killed in a second duel by the Dragonfly Daimyo's son. Gain 1 Rank in the Skill Iaijutsu.
6	Battle of the Sleeping River: At the remote location of Sleeping River, the Great Clans gathered together to face the mighty undead army raised by the resurrected Bloodspeaker, Iuchiban. The Lion were instrumental in forcing the Bloodspeaker army back, and found themselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with the Scorpion — a rare and peculiar event indeed. Gain 1 Rank of the Lore: Shadowlands Skill.
7	The Night of Falling Stars: The Akodo army laid siege to the Daidoji forces protecting Shiro no Yojin, one of many targets along the oft-disputed Lion-Crane border, for more than three weeks. A Lion victory was certain, of course, but the Daidoji earned the name Iron Cranes during that tense siege. When it became clear that the Lion would take the castle, every man, woman, and child within the fortress leapt from the battlements with a lit torch (hence the name of the engagement). Gain 2 Ranks in the Skill Lore: Crane Clan.
8	Battle of Beiden Pass: In 1127, the Battle of Beiden Pass marked the beginning of open warfare between the Clans as the Clan War began. This set off a chain of events that led directly to the Second Day of Thunder more than a year later. Toturi the Black successfully outmaneuvered the huge Crab army bolstered by Shadowlands allies, with his army of fellow outcast Lion, and allied Dragon and Unicorn forces. Gain 2 ranks of the Battle Skill and 0.3 Honor.
9	Second Day of Thunder: The greatest battle in recent history, the final battle of the Clan War took place on the ninth day of the Month of the Ox in the year 1128. The combined armies of the Great Clans, together with the Minor Clan Alliance and the naga, gathered at Otosan Uchi and declared war on the Ninth Kami, Fu Leng. While the reincarnated Seven Thunders defeated the dark god within the Imperial Palace, the samurai of Rokugan waged war against the fiercest oni army ever seen beyond the Kaiu Wall. Gain 2 ranks of the Lore: Shadowlands Skill and 1 Glory Rank.
0	Battle at Oblivion's Gate: Among the largest battles in history, the Battle at Oblivion's Gate took place only a few decades ago and cost many young samurai of the modern era one or both parents or grandparents. The assembled armies of the Clans battled through the Shadowlands to reach Oblivion's Gate, an ancient artifact that opened a portal to the spirit realms. The ancestors of a thousand samurai spilled forth and helped defeat the Lying Darkness, but the cost was high. Gain 2 ranks of the Skill Lore: Spirit Realms.

Matsu's Dojo

LOCATION: Shiro Matsu

SCHOOLS: Kensai, Lion's Pride, Matsu Beastmaster, Matsu Berserker

PATHS: Deathseeker, Lioness Legion, Matsu Duelist, Matsu Elite Guard

BENEFIT: Students of Matsu's Dojo may purchase Lion Clan kata for 1 point less than normal, to a minimum of 1 point.

Rich Frog Dojo

LOCATION: City of the Rich Frog

SCHOOLS: Ikoma Omoidasu, Ikoma Tactician

PATHS: Akodo Scout, Ikoma Elite Guardian, Ikoma Herald, Lion Warden

BENEFIT: Students of the Rich Frog Dojo may gain 2 additional Character Points when taking the Heart of Vengeance Disadvantage targeting the Unicorn Clan.

Mass Battle Tables

No Clan in the Empire relishes the opportunity to prove themselves in battle quite like the Lion. It is the essence of who they are, the perfect embodiment of everything that is their birthright, and they will go to any lengths to make the most of each opportunity that arises for them to engage their enemy in honorable combat. When using the Mass Battle tables found in the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition core rule book pp. 207-8, you may substitute the following two tables for the Engaged and Heavily Engaged Battle Opportunity tables. New entries on these tables, marked by italicized text, are described following the tables.

MASS BATTLE TABLE 1C: ENGAGED

0 or less	Skirmish (1-2 samurai of equal Rank to PC)
1-2	"Hold This Ground!"
3-4	Enemy Officer (Skirmish, 1 samurai of Rank +1 to PC)
5-6	Protect the General
7-8	Be Prepared to Dig Two Graves
9-10	Overwhelm
11-12	Cavalry Skirmish (1 samurai of equal rank to PC, mounted)
13-14	Save a Wounded Opponent
15-16	Attack the Archers
17	Pick Up the Banner
18+	Break the Line



MASS BATTLE TABLE 2D: HEAVILY ENGAGED

0 or less	Skirmish (1-3 samurai of equal Rank to PC, 1 shugenja of equal Rank)
1-2	Skirmish (1-3 samurai of equal Rank to PC)
2-3	Overwhelm
4-5	Skirmish (2-4 samurai of equal Rank to PC)
6-7	Window of Opportunity
8-9	Show Me Your Stance!
10-11	Attack the Shugenja
12-13	Few Against Many
14-15	A Clear Shot
16	"Take Your Place!"
17	"Hold This Ground!"
18+	Take the Enemy Banner

"Take Your Place!"

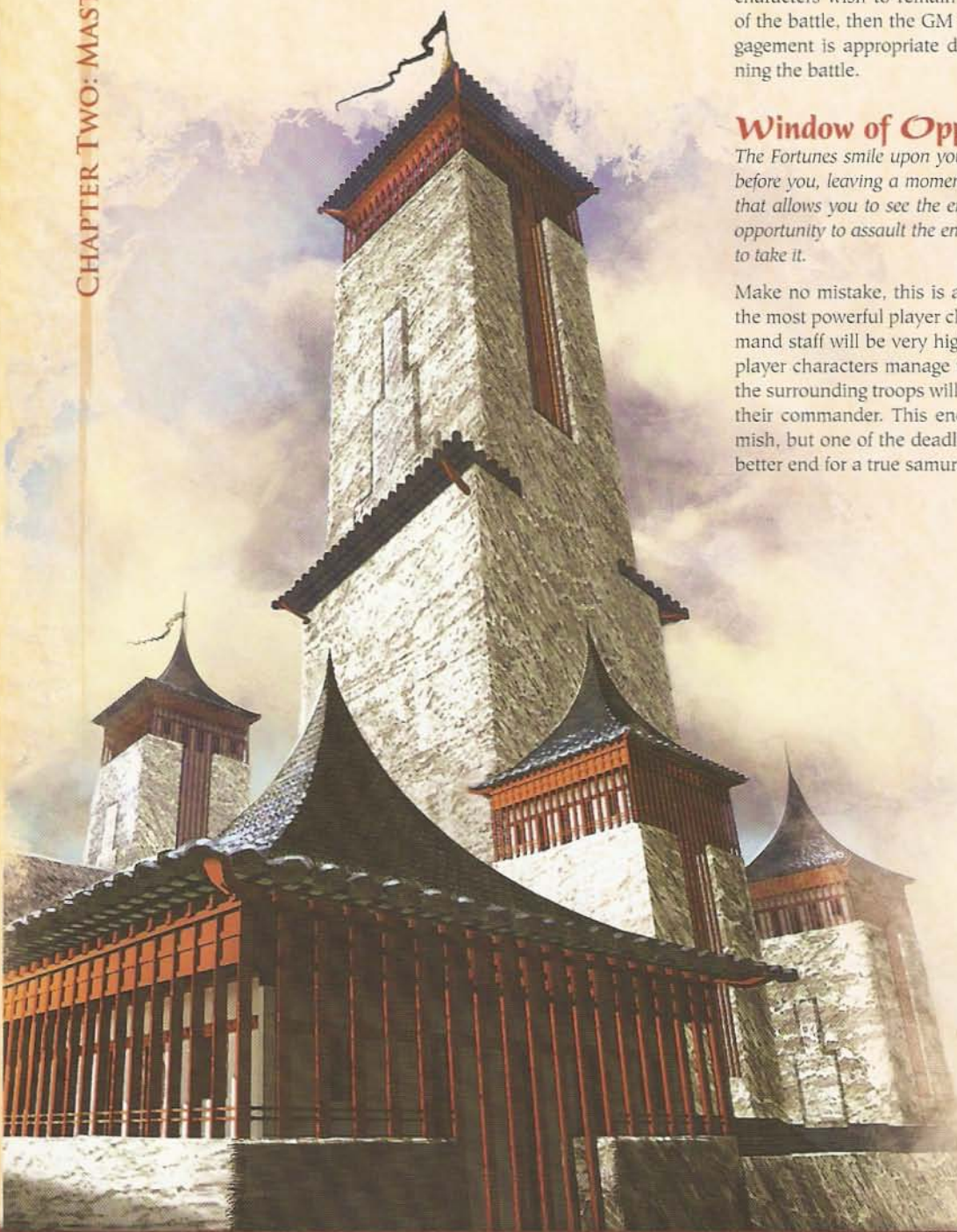
As the battle rages around you, you find yourself fighting alongside the Elite Guard that protect your general. One of their number falls, leaving a dangerous hole in their defenses. Their gunso looks around and sees you. He points to the empty position and shouts for you to, "Take your place!"

To be asked to fight alongside any of the Lion Elite Guard units is a tremendous honor. The possibility exists that, should the player character perform well enough during the battle, he or she will be offered the unbelievable opportunity to join the Elite Guard. In order to earn this opportunity, the character must remain Heavily Engaged for at least 3 rounds. If player characters wish to remain with the Guard for the remainder of the battle, then the GM should determine what level of engagement is appropriate depending upon which side is winning the battle.

Window of Opportunity

The Fortunes smile upon you as the enemy army shifts and parts before you, leaving a momentary corridor open through the ranks that allows you to see the enemy command group. You have the opportunity to assault the enemy general and his staff, if you wish to take it.

Make no mistake, this is a virtual suicide mission for all but the most powerful player characters. The general and his command staff will be very high-ranking samurai, and even if the player characters manage to last for more than a few rounds, the surrounding troops will react very quickly to any attack on their commander. This encounter is most suitable as a skirmish, but one of the deadliest and most dramatic kind. What better end for a true samurai?



MASTERS OF WAR

THE UNICORN



The plains of the Utaku provinces were vast and unending, even by the standards of the open lands that dominated the territory of the Unicorn Clan. Those fortunate enough to find themselves alone on the wind-swept plains could easily imagine they were in some distant realm of spirit, an untouched vista free of man's ambition and aggression. That was the perfection of the beauty in this place, even now as winter loomed, heralded in the bitter kiss of the cool autumn breeze.

But such an illusion would not last long.

The sound was faint at first, like distant thunder promising a storm in an hour's time, or even a day's. Then it grew louder, then louder still, far more quickly than any storm could move. Clouds did not gather on the horizon, but seemed to spring upward from the ground and spread to the sky. And then the source of the thunder arrived.

The Utaku. Throughout history, they had been the most feared and fearsome cavalry force that had ever operated within the Empire. They rode the magnificent, legendary Utaku steeds, a gaijin breed of horse the Unicorn had brought with them when they returned to the Empire from their centuries of travel in distant lands.

It was all Utaku Jung-jie could do not to shout her joy aloud as she raced across the plains alongside her sisters in arms. She had dreamed of moments exactly like this her entire life. It was not merely the thrill of the ride that caused her heart to soar; that was one of her greatest pleasures in life, to be sure, but not one with which she was unfamiliar. No, it was her appointment to the Utaku Battle Maidens, the Shiotome, that filled her with such rapture. She had longed and trained for such a duty all her life, had spent nearly a decade serving in a variety of challenging positions without question or hesitation, before she had finally been granted a post with the Shiotome. It was a position patrolling the eastern border, and a notoriously uneventful post, but Jung-jie did not care about that.

Of course, the grim fussing about of the Lion Clan legions only a short distance to the south held the promise of battle to come in the near future.

After some time, the gunso of the unit signaled for them to stop and dismount. In the stillness after their ride, none of them spoke, save for a few whispering to their beloved steeds, rubbing their necks and offering quiet encouragement. Finally the gunso spoke. "Jung-jie, what are our closest options for re-supply in this region?"

The young Utaku raised her eyebrows in surprise, but answered at once. "There is a patrol waystation perhaps ten miles to the north, gunso-san. There is also a village roughly twenty miles to the south. Tsurai Mura, I believe."

"Tsurai Mura," the gunso nodded. "I received word this morning that Tsurai Mura has been taken by the Lion." She waited for a moment to allow the news to sink in. "It seems they wish to occupy this region, northward and into the Utaku provinces."

"They will regret that decision," one of the others offered.

"It seems the Lion reputation as master strategists is grossly overrated," another said.

The gunso smiled. "I am glad to see your thoughts mirror my own, sisters. The orders I received were to maintain patrols and ensure that the Lion do not encroach further into our Family lands." She paused for a moment. "I do not recall that they forbade us to attack and reclaim that which is rightfully ours."

Jung-jie frowned. The idea seemed reckless, but she did not wish to seem cowardly, or to question her superior's orders. "What manner of resistance is to be expected?" she asked.

"Does it matter?" her gunso answered curtly. "The Lion seized the village from us. Their officers have retreated, leaving only their brutish minions to defend the region. It has no ultimate value, save that their presence offends the Khan and those who are loyal to him. They have taken something that belongs to us, and for no other reason than to flaunt their alleged superiority. I, for one, will not endure it. Will you?"

"No," Jung-jie agreed emphatically. "No, I will not."

"So be it." The gunso flashed her a wild, triumphant grin. She leapt atop her steed and swung around to look at the troops surrounding them. "A village in our territory has been taken by our enemies!" she shouted. "Will we stand by while those who serve us cannot be free? While they live under the burden of Lion captivity?"

Her soldiers shouted their defiance.

"The Lion are entrenched. Their men are positioned throughout the village, secure in their defenses and awaiting our arrival. Their numbers are superior, but they reckon without one thing." She drew her blade and held it aloft. "They do not understand that we would die before we surrender our freedom! They will not hold the village, not while we live!"

The Utaku roared their assent and mounted their steeds as one. The thunder came again, and rang out across the plain, descending upon the tiny village where the Lion waited.

The Unicorn Families and the Art of War

"Do they scoff at the strength of the Unicorn? Our Three Armies will erase their grins."

— Moto Chagatai

The Unicorn Clan is one of the most unusual of the Great Clans. Their ancestors traveled through lands beyond the Empire and were greatly influenced by the gaijin cultures they encountered during their centuries-long journey. Not surprisingly, most samurai of the other Great Clans view the Unicorn as a strange and barbarous people who have embraced gaijin culture, architecture, and weaponry. Some sages even suggest that most of the fighting techniques taught at the Unicorn bushi schools have more in common with the barbarian tribes they encountered long ago than with any traditional Rokugani combat styles and methods. The ways of the Unicorn Clan are unique. Not surprisingly, the philosophies of war of their six Families are as singular as each of their samurai.

The Moto

The Moto have long been driven by a single goal: to prove themselves to all those who would mock their Clan. They want to show that Unicorn samurai are as skilled and worthy as any other Clan samurai in the Empire. Since the time when the Shinjo family were dishonored by Kolat infiltration and Lady Shinjo proclaimed the Moto as the new leaders of the Clan, the Moto have become even more driven.

Some Unicorn samurai even dare to say that the Moto are in fact obsessed with the need to prove their own worth to the rest of the world. This, however, is not the entire truth. For it is not how the other Great Clans regard them that bother the Moto, but how the rest of the Empire views the Unicorn Clan as a whole. One day, the Moto believe, the Unicorn will have the true respect of all of Rokugan. Until then, it is up to them to lead the way and ensure that the Unicorn do everything in their power to show their worth to the rest of the Empire.

And the Moto know only one way of accomplishing this goal: Victory in war.

Anything less than complete success in battle would only prove to their enemies that the Unicorn are weak, and the Moto would rather die than live with even the perception of weakness. Therefore, Moto warriors attack without hesitation, and never worry about their personal safety while they are on the battlefield. This attitude has earned them the reputation of being merciless opponents who show no fear or remorse. Many, in fact, call the Moto maniacal foes who practice a wild and unpredictable combat style.



But the truth is more complicated than that. Moto samurai value power and precision, two qualities that are essential in carrying off the difficult battlefield maneuvers for which they are famous. This requires order and discipline, and the warriors under the command of Moto officers must perform rigorous drills and other military exercises on a regular basis. These maneuvers allow them to hone their skills not just as individual warriors, but also as essential and irreplaceable parts of larger units. For the Moto bushi, the squadron, legion, or army to which he belongs is more important than any individual in the group, including himself. Paradoxically, a Moto soldier cannot appear wild and unpredictable to his enemies without exceptional discipline and training.

The Moto are used to living with paradox. These former nomads have long held the belief that in order to become one with the universe, a samurai must surrender to his most primal instincts. This philosophy would appear to contradict key aspects of the Moto art of war, namely the hard discipline and elaborate training so that many function as one. But the Moto understand that ultimately, they must follow their instincts in order to succeed in battle. Simplest put, the Moto are well-organized warriors who rely on a mixture of intuition, dedication, and training to crush their foes.

The Shinjo

Like the Moto, the Shinjo have a lot to prove. Their motivation, however, has little to do with the reputation of the Clan, and everything to do with the stained honor of their own Family. They have never quite shaken off the shame of their former association with the Kolat, which Lady Shinjo herself uncovered during the War Against the Darknes. Many in the Empire still believe the Shinjo are nothing more than a band of corrupt, vile, and untrustworthy criminals, and the former leaders of the Unicorn Clan are given only the slightest amount of respect, when they are given any. The descendants of the Shinjo samurai who once led the Unicorn Clan to greatness now live in obscurity, serving the demands of the Clan's Moto rulers. It is the dream of all Shinjo samurai to reclaim their family's honor and restore the greatness and glory they once enjoyed.

The Shinjo remain a hopeful family despite their trials. They believe their compassion, wisdom, and courage will eventually bring honor back to their Family. In these trying times, as a new war looms with the Lion Clan, the Shinjo have concluded there is no better way to reclaim their honor than to lend the Unicorn Clan Champion, the Khan, their unconditional support.

Although the Clan's current Moto leaders are more militaristic than the Shinjo ever were, the samurai of the Shinjo Family know much about war. They led the Unicorn Clan for centuries before their name was discredited by Kolat infiltration, and under their guidance the Unicorn never wanted for victory over their enemies. Today the Shinjo view war not only as necessary for the defense of the Clan, but also as one of the greatest tools available to them. Through warfare, the Shinjo may be able to prove once and for all, to themselves and the rest of the Empire, that they are not the dishonorable weaklings many claim they are. For the modern Shinjo, war is the key to their Family's salvation.

Although they are skilled soldiers, Shinjo samurai are also compassionate and forgiving, perhaps more so than any of the other Unicorn Families. They would rather see an enemy sur-

render than be slaughtered. The Shinjo also make a practice of showing respect to their foes, even in the heat of battle. Having encountered many different warrior traditions among the gaijin, Shinjo samurai recognize the value of a good warrior and they respect a worthy opponent, no matter who he is.

Perhaps most importantly, the Shinjo believe that in both personal duels and in war, there is nothing more honorable than a fair fight. This attitude toward war, along with their great compassion and their joyful spirits, is slowly but surely earning the Shinjo a reputation as truly honorable combatants.

The Utaku

Like their great ancestor, Lady Otaku, the Utaku believe in action and determination. Most of the children of Otakuvself seldom speak unless they have something truly important to say, and many among them are as stern and determined as the Silent Thunder herself. The majority of Utaku samurai do not like arguments and despise talking about trivial matters. Above all, the Utaku have absolutely no patience with lies, deceit, and deviousness, and are generally honest to a fault. As one might suspect, the Utaku make poor diplomats.

It also means they meet their enemies straight on, whether at court or on the fields of battle. The Utaku always prefer action to talking. It is said that the Utaku are always quick to decide on a course of action, and swifter still to follow it. In everything they do, the Utaku are fast, intense, and convinced. This is especially true in time of war, for both the Utaku men and women have earned reputations as swift and deadly warriors. Once they decide to attack an enemy, they do so with steely resolve.

Since Otaku's time, it is the matriarchs of the Utaku Family who lead their children, both in peacetime and during war. Only female warriors are allowed to learn the intricate and unique techniques of mounted combat that the Silent Thunder herself first developed. Thus, only the Utaku women are allowed to ride mounts in battle, and the elite Battle Maidens, for which the Family is so widely known and respected, are considered the most fearsome cavalry in the Empire.

Traditionally, the men of the Family raise and care for the legendary Utaku steeds that carry the Battle Maidens. But the men, too, are beginning to be recognized as an important military force. The Unicorn Clan has always used the Utaku Infantry to support its cavalry tactics, and today, with the Clan at war with the Lion, they are more important than ever.

The fearsome reputation of the Utaku, male and female alike, is in part because they train with an intensity few in Rokugan can match. All the bushi of the Family are expected to devote themselves entirely to the art of war, and spend the majority of their time training for battle. The Utaku see no point in preparing for battle if one does not devote oneself entirely to it. The art of war is, after all, the most important thing any bushi can master.

To the Utaku, there is no such thing as failure; there are only setbacks. They do not fear the shame of defeat, and unlike their Moto brethren, they do not believe retreat is always a dishonorable thing. Instead, the Utaku believe battlefield setbacks are only meant to strengthen their resolve, to shed light on their mistakes, and to allow them to make corrections to prepare for the next time they engage in battle. The Utaku feel they can learn a great deal from defeat. Defeat is therefore only an unfortunate pause on the path toward ultimate victory.

The Ide

Historically, the Ide are the Unicorn Family least interested in war. But despite their centuries-long devotion to the ideals of peace, the Ide have aligned their recent efforts with the rest of the Clan's more warlike attitude. This is mainly due to the ambition of Ide Tang, the Family's current Daimyo, who strongly believes in the vision of Moto Chagatai. Tang believes so strongly in Chagatai that he is convinced the Khan will lead the Unicorn to renewed glory, and win them the prestige long denied to them by the other Great Clans of Rokugan. Although not everyone in the Family shares Ide Tang's beliefs, they will follow their lord and the will of the Clan.

Despite Tang's change of course, the Ide Family remains the most peaceful — and the most cautious — family of the Unicorn Clan. The greatest strengths of the Ide have always been their ability to relate to others on a personal level and their capacity to adapt to new customs, ideas, and values. The Ide are also well known for their remarkable ability to see past the masks of sincerity behind which so many Rokugani courtiers hide. They have always made a point of avoiding major confrontations with the other Great Clans, both in court and on the fields of battle.

This attitude, combined with their ability to anticipate difficulty and avoid it, has allowed the Ide not only to survive for many centuries, but also to become one of the most influential Families in the Rokugani courts. The other Great Clans often fail to recognize just how much influence the Ide actually have, and the Ide courtiers are quite happy to allow their influence to remain obscure. They believe they would lose it if it were to come into the light.

Although the Ide serve the Unicorn Clan primarily as diplomats, not all of them train as courtiers. Although a few samurai of the Family are able to learn the ways of the shugenja, most Ide who do not study at the Family's renowned courtier school instead follow the ways of the warrior. Ide who become bushi understand, far more than any other members of the Family, that war is sometimes inevitable, and crushing an enemy is often the only way to ensure a long and lasting peace. War is therefore simply diplomacy conducted by less gentle means.

For the Ide bushi, war is also the ultimate test of character, and thus one of the best ways to show the other Clans the strength and honor of the Unicorn. They are, after all, the strongest military force in the Empire, and it is about time the other Great Clans understand that.

The Ide have a unique way of fighting, and their philosophy regarding personal duels, skirmishes, and mass warfare is closely related to their singular talents. Ide bushi, like most members of their family, have an aptitude for reading people, and they have become notorious for their ability to read an opponent's fighting style and anticipate their maneuvers. Also like the courtiers of their Family, the Ide bushi are utterly calm and unwavering, which can make them rather intimidating opponents.

The Iuchi

Much like their Ide cousins, most Iuchi samurai do not needlessly commit themselves to violence, and many among them view war as the last resort for dealing with other Clans. The reasons for this lie with both the pacifistic nature of all shugenja and the specific influence of the wise and highly skilled shugenja the Family has produced over the centuries.

The Iuchi shugenja have a unique and even contradictory view of magic. They believe their spells need to be set free and their magic should remain as natural as possible. At the same time, they strongly believe that magic — any sort of magic — needs to be carefully controlled and monitored. Because of both this oddly contradictory view and their innately peaceful natures, the Iuchi shugenja avoid using their magic for destructive purposes. Instead, they focus the bulk of their study on spells that heal the injured or make other samurai stronger, tougher, stealthier, and faster.

The Iuchi's philosophy concerning the magical arts also influences how they view warfare. For the Iuchi, war is just like magic. They believe all warriors should rely on their free will and instincts, and should remain as respectful of nature as they possibly can. At the same time, the Iuchi believe warriors should follow a strict set of rules so that the commanders of their armies can control their efforts.

Although they dislike conflict, the Iuchi are not wholly pacifists in the manner of the Isawa or the Asahina, and even their most peace-loving shugenja are always more than willing to join a battle once war becomes unavoidable. In fact, the smallest of the three Unicorn armies, the Baraunghar, is composed of a mix of bushi and Iuchi battle-shugenja, who form roughly half of its troops. Their magic lets them hamper their foes as well as bolster the speed, endurance, and strength of their comrades, and make the Baraunghar army a difficult and perplexing opponent.

To the Iuchi, war is an art — and the art of magic or diplomacy, the art of war requires regular practice. Consequently, they are as dedicated to warfare as they are to any other skill that deserves to be honed. This lets them resolve the contradictions — between waging war and practicing peace, as well as between a samurai's natural instinct and his need for order and discipline — that lie at the heart of their philosophy.

Ultimately, it is these very contradictions make the Iuchi such flexible and unpredictable opponents. Despite their peaceful nature, the Iuchi know war is a necessary evil and they are always willing to risk their lives to fight the enemies of their Clan.

The Horiuchi

The smallest of the Unicorn Families, the Horiuchi, are also the most diverse. The family was founded by the gentle shugenja Horiuchi Shoan. In order to build a Family deserving of her name, Shoan welcomed war orphans born to samurai parents, regardless of their aptitudes and origins. This diversity of thought and occupation persists among the Horiuchi to this day.

Although the Family has many shugenja, the Horiuchi are not truly considered a Family of magicians. In fact, there are almost as many bushi among their ranks as there are shugenja. Most Horiuchi, regardless of their training, agree that many things in life must be done out of necessity. And warfare happens to be one such thing.

Because the Family is extremely small, they are largely left out of Rokugan's politics, and their voice is almost never heard at the Imperial Court. Even in the courts of the Unicorn Clan, the Horiuchi have barely any influence. This actually suits the Horiuchi just fine, as it allows them to pursue any endeavor they might wish to undertake — such as magical research or the study of the Tao — undisturbed.



Since the Moto reorganized the Unicorn military forces into three distinct armies, many of the Horuchi have been accepted in the Baraunghar Army, and they now serve alongside the Iuchi shugenja they have sworn to protect.

The Armies of the Unicorn Clan

Every Clan has its own unique bushi schools, its own peculiar philosophies on dueling and warfare, and its own military customs. However, the Clan armies are all organized in much the same fashion, based on the model established by Akodo in his legendary treatise *Leadership*.

For centuries, this was also true of the Unicorn military. In fact, before the Moto took the reins of leadership of the Clan, the only thing that set the armies of the Unicorn apart from those of other Clans was the Clan's preponderance of cavalry.

This changed a generation ago, when Shinjo appointed Moto Gaheris to lead the Clan. The Moto dissolved the existing military structure and reorganized the armies of the Unicorn on the same model their own Family had used for generations, living and fighting as nomadic herders and raiders in the Burning Sands. They abandoned the traditional Akodo model of legions and armies in favor of a structure based on three

distinctive armies, each with its own characteristics and duties: the Baraunghar, the Junghar, and the Khol.

The Baraunghar, the smallest and most specialized of the Unicorn armies, contains large numbers of shugenja trained by the Iuchi Family. They are used to bolster the speed, strength, and endurance of their troops, to heal the injured, and to confound the enemy — such as by summoning a concealing mist as they advance upon an enemy force. The rest of the Baraunghar Army is comprised of yojimbo for the shugenja and warriors experienced in skirmishes and hit and run tactics.

The second Unicorn army is the Junghar. Much larger than the Baraunghar, it is charged with the duty of protecting Unicorn holdings. These soldiers are masters of defensive tactics, and are posted at key locations along the Clan's outer borders. They patrol regularly to ensure no enemy approaches the Unicorn Lands undetected.

The third Unicorn army, the Khol, is the Khan's personal army. It is also the largest and most impressive of the three Unicorn armies. While the Baraunghar shugenja and soldiers are used for special assignments and the Junghar is charged with preserving the territorial integrity of the Unicorn Lands, the Khol is all about bringing war to the enemy. It is the most aggressive of the three, and its soldiers are trained to take the offensive and stay on it. When the Unicorn Clan wages war, the Khan personally leads the soldiers of the Khol into battle.

Because they each have different duties, it comes as no surprise that each of these three armies has its own structure.

The Baraunghar Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Iuchi

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Horiuchi Nobane

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Iuchi Hanae

The Baraunghar, commonly referred to as the Right-Hand Army, the Army of the Right, or the Army of the West, is the smallest of the three Unicorn armies. Unlike the Junghar and the Khol, which more closely resemble a typical Rokugani army, the Baraunghar is a highly specialized force that focuses on the use of cunning Iuchi magic. Originally designed for lightning raids in the vast desert, the Baraunghar is now an important element of the Unicorn art of war. What makes the Baraunghar particularly dangerous is the unit's ability to move both quickly and with great stealth, striking down the enemy before they can prepare.

The deadly and lightning-fast raids of the Baraunghar can be explained by the presence of highly trained shugenja in its ranks. Despite what outsiders might expect, these shugenja do not throw deadly magic at their opponents in a dazzling display of might. That is not the Iuchi way. Instead, the Baraunghar shugenja focus on magic that enhances the movement and abilities of their fellow soldiers. Thanks to their spells, every soldier in the Baraunghar can become faster, stronger, stealthier, or more skilled, as the situation requires.

The rest of the Baraunghar is composed of yojimbo assigned to protect the shugenja in battle and veteran bushi specializing in ambush tactics. These men and women are specially trained to work alongside the Iuchi shugenja, so their movement and attacks

are always well coordinated. From the moment a samurai is accepted into the Baraunghar, he begins rigorous and extensive training. Through a series of complex exercises, including strangely patterned drills, foot races, and horsemanship techniques, the soldiers of the Baraunghar master the intricate teamwork required on the battlefield. The fact that both warriors and shugenja train together is of extreme importance to the Baraunghar. While a shugenja might not be as good with a blade as a bushi, he nevertheless needs to understand how the weapon is used in order to truly boost the combat prowess of the warriors around him. Similarly, he needs to understand how a group of warriors move in battle, how they protect each other and strike at their enemies. This understanding allows the shugenja to move with his comrades without interfering in their maneuvers and tactics. More importantly, this intimate knowledge of the warrior's mentality allows the shugenja to use his spells more effectively, making the Baraunghar an efficient and deadly force. The same is true of the bushi, who must learn to shield their shugenja from harm while at the same time attacking the enemy.

Membership in the Baraunghar is exclusive (as opposed to, say, the Junghar, which has lower recruiting standards). This highly specialized army recruits only experienced Iuchi shugenja capable of defending themselves in battle, veteran bushi who have proven themselves to be masters of ambush and hit and run tactics, and experienced yojimbo. Because the Baraunghar is a small army and does not often need to fill out its ranks, its leaders are careful to select only the most promising candidates. Some of these are chosen from veterans



of the Junghar or the Khol, but many yojimbo are handpicked by Iuchi who have worked with them in the past. Promising students of the Iuchi Shugenja School are regularly tested by their sensei to evaluate their potential worth to the Baraunghar. Candidates who pass these tests are invited to serve in the Baraunghar — a great honor for any Iuchi shugenja.

The presence of so many Iuchi shugenja also makes the Baraunghar the most versatile of the Unicorn armies, able to serve on both attack and defense, wherever a small, fast, and unpredictable unit is needed. Small elite Baraunghar detachments are often sent on particularly important missions, such as surprise raids on enemy strong points, intercepting enemy detachments operating on their own, striking at key enemy commanders, or flanking an enemy army to set up the death blow from the Junghar or Khol.

Because the Baraunghar is the only Unicorn army with shugenja among its ranks, small units are often detached to provide magical support to the Junghar or Khol. Similarly, legions from the other two Unicorn armies sometimes bring assistance to the Baraunghar. This is particularly true in the case of the Battle Maidens, who possess the speed and skill to be an asset to the Baraunghar when they need to perform hit and run attacks.

The specific tactics of the Baraunghar vary from one situation to the next, but they always rely on surprise and mobility. Because they are not made to withstand extended contact with the enemy, the Baraunghar usually avoids direct confrontations with large enemy forces. The Iuchi shugenja use spells to move the Baraunghar unseen, and once their unit is in position to strike, they bolster the strength and speed of their men, allowing them to strike like a deadly whirlwind at the unsuspecting enemy. Once the initial attack is completed, the Baraunghar use their enhanced mobility to fall back and regroup, either to plan another surprise assault or return to their base.

The Baraunghar Army is divided into five legions of approximately 2,000 troops each, for a total strength of roughly 10,000. Each of these legions includes approximately 950 shugenja, 600 yojimbo, and 450 veteran bushi.

Each legion in the Baraunghar corresponds to one of the Five Elements, and has its own specialty. The Legion of Air is also called the Stealthy Legion, for its soldiers are as quiet as a gentle breeze and its shugenja are exceptionally skilled at fooling their foes' senses. The soldiers of the Legion of Earth, also called the Legion of Steel, are masters of defensive tactics, and the shugenja focus on making their warriors stronger and tougher. Units from the Legion of Earth are frequently attached to the Junghar army to bolster the defense of the Unicorn provinces. The Legion of Fire is sometimes called the Reckless Legion, for it favors quick forays deep within the heart of enemy territory. Fast, bold, and deadly, these soldiers are feared throughout the Empire. The Legion of Water, or the Strong Legion, specializes in bolstering the efficiency of warriors in battle. The shugenja of this outfit frequently are frequently attached to the Khol Army to boost the effectiveness of its soldiers. The last unit, the Legion of Void, is better known for the atypical magical effects that its shugenja weave. This Legion is often called the Strange Legion, for no other shugenja in the Empire can hope to learn the weird spells it masters.

None of the legions has a numerical designation, since that would imply ranking and pride of place, concepts that do not apply when discussing the Five Elements. Only the Elemental designation of each is used. In their other aspects, however, the Baraunghar legions are a bit more conventional. Each legion is divided into ten companies. Each company is led by a chui and consists of ten squadrons of 20 soldiers each. The chui, who is always an Iuchi shugenja, also has a command staff of three other officers of lower ranks. Each squadron under his command is led by a gunso and two nikutai. The first company of each legion is composed of Iuchi Scouts.

Though the Baraunghar are a single administrative unit, they are actually seldom deployed to the field in intact legions, much less as an entire army. Instead, the soldiers of the Army of the Right usually work in small groups at the squadron or company level, and are either attached to another of the Unicorn armies or sent on special assignments where skill is more important than size.

The Baraunghar took exceptionally heavy casualties in the Battle of Toshi Ranbo, including its commander, and is now undergoing extensive reorganization under new rikugunshokan Horiuchi Nobane; it will likely be some time before it takes the field again. The command staff normally includes two taisa, five chui, and twenty other minor officers of gunso and nikutai rank, serving courier and administrative duties. The two taisa are Nobane's most trusted personal advisors, and both have a great deal of experience in warfare. One of them is a shugenja trained by the Iuchi Family; the other is a veteran warrior who knows the ins and outs of the Baraunghar Army. They can, if need be, temporarily take the place of the commander of a legion, should its commander fall in battle, but their duty is mostly to assist the rikugunshokan and the shireikan who lead each of the five Baraunghar legions. Each of the five chui is attached to a particular legion. They are the official liaison between the rikugunshokan and the legions.

The rikugunshokan's personal guard is comprised of twelve of the most experienced yojimbo the Unicorn Clan has to offer. They are led by a chui, also a veteran bodyguard.

Because of the importance and specialization of the Baraunghar army, it is not a taisa who leads each legion, but rather a shireikan. The five shireikan are all shugenja and have served for most of their adult lives in the Baraunghar army. Each commander has his own command staff, which includes a dozen officers of various ranks, including one taisa — also a shugenja — who acts as his second-in-command. The other officers typically include three chui: another experienced shugenja, a bushi specializing in battle tactics, and a yojimbo who acts as the personal bodyguard of the commander. Under the chui are eight gunso and nikutai charged with various administrative tasks.

TABLE 3.1: ELITE UNITS IN THE BARAUNGHAR ARMY

Legion of Air, First Company	Iuchi Scouts
Legion of Earth, First Company	Iuchi Scouts
Legion of Fire, First Company	Iuchi Scouts
Legion of Water, First Company	Iuchi Scouts
Legion of Void, First Company	Iuchi Scouts

NPC: IUCHI HANAE
SHIREIKAN OF THE LEGION OF AIR

Air: 4 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 4
 Awareness 5 Willpower 5 Intelligence 4

Honor: 3.0 **Status:** 5.8 **Glory:** 5.5

SCHOOL/RANK: Iuchi Shugenja 5/Baraunghar 1

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Moto Chagatal 4/1), Blessing of the Elements (Earth, Water)

DISADVANTAGES: None

SPELLS: Armor of Earth*, Armor of the Emperor*, Banish, Cloak of Night*, Call Upon the Wind*, Commune, Counterspell, Courage of the Seven Thunders*, Earth's Protection, Earth's Touch, Essence of Air Force of Will, Heart of Nature*, Immortal Steel, Nature's Touch*, Path to Inner Peace*, Quiescence of Air*, Rejuvenating Vapors, Regrow the Wound, Reversal of Fortune, Sacred Ground, Sense*, Summon, Summon Fog*, Wave-Borne Speed*, Way of Still Water*, Wind-Borne Slumbers

* Denotes an innate ability

SKILLS: Battle (Skirmish) 5, Calligraphy 5, Defense 4, Horsemanship 4, Jiu-jitsu 4, Kenjutsu 6, Lore: Burning Sands 5, Spellcraft 6, Stealth 5, Theology (Fortunes) 5

Iuchi Hanae was long regarded as an atypical member of the Baraunghar. Quiet, even shy, Hanae had the skills to become a powerful shugenja, but she did not seem to have the heart of a warrior. Instead, for the better part of a decade, Hanae explored the world, traveling to the Burning Sands and other lands beyond the borders of Rokugan. She was happy to discover new sights, meet new people, and learn new customs.

When she returned to the Empire at the age of 29, her family realized her particular talents would be a great asset to the Baraunghar Army. She was quickly accepted into the army's ranks, but it took her several years to adjust to her new life. Over time, however, her talent and intelligence emerged, and she began to climb in the ranks. After a dozen years in the service of the Army of the Right Iuchi Hanae was granted the title of Commander, and she now leads the prestigious Legion of Air.

Like most members of her family, Hanae would prefer to resolve conflicts in a peaceful manner, but she never hesitates to enter battle. She treats the soldiers under her command well, be they shugenja like herself or bushi, and her soldiers respect her immensely.

The Junghar Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Shinjo
RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Shinjo Shono

The Junghar army is also known as the Left-Hand Army, the Army of the Left, or the Army of the East. It is the Unicorn Army that most closely resembles the traditional Akodo model. But, being a Unicorn army, it does have its own peculiarities.

For one thing, it has an extremely high proportion of cavalry compared to other Clans' armies. Approximately half of the Junghar is trained and equipped for mounted combat, with several whole legions of light and heavy cavalry. Another pe-

culiarity of the Junghar is that their reserve companies never include shugenja. Instead, just like the Khol, the Junghar relies on detachments from the Baraunghar to provide magical support when needed. A typical Junghar reserve company instead has two squadrons of military engineers, two squadrons of mounted scouts, and two squadrons of War Dog Masters.

The Junghar was originally designed to defend the Unicorn's long eastern border. In former times, when the Moto dwelled in the Burning Sands, the Junghar was the largest of their armies. With the reorganization of the entire Unicorn army under the Khan's rule, however, the Khol has become much larger. Still, the Junghar is an essential part of the military strength of the Unicorn Clan. In addition to patrolling the Clan's borders, the Junghar is also responsible for internal security and safety for the Unicorn lands. Such a responsibility is not to be taken lightly, and the soldiers of the Junghar consider their duties sacred.

The Junghar is comprised of roughly 36,000 troops, divided into 48 legions of 750 soldiers each. Although the soldiers of the Unicorn Clan frequently refer to each legion by a nickname, such as the Unexpected Legion or the Blue Legion, officially these units are simply designated by a number: the First Junghar Legion, the Second Junghar Legion, and so on.

The First through Sixth Legions are heavy cavalry, and both the soldiers and the horses of these units are extremely well armored. These legions are the Junghar's mobile strike force, and they are sent to whatever provinces currently need the strongest military presence.

The Seventh through Twenty-Fourth are light cavalry. These troops, less armored and more mobile than their counterparts, generally patrol the eastern and southern borders of the Unicorn Lands. The Seventh through Fifteenth Legions are considered the best of the Junghar's light cavalry; their troopers are recruited based on stamina and riding skill, and are considered some of the toughest horsemen in the Empire. All of these light cavalry legions are extremely fast and can move quickly through even rugged terrain. Their duty is to provide first warning to the Unicorn provinces of any threat coming from the unclaimed territories of the north and west. However, the Khan does not expect any trouble from these parts, and the light cavalry legions are regularly recalled from their patrols to support other operations.

The Twenty-Fifth through Forty-Eighth Legions of the Junghar consist of infantry. These legions are typically spread out along the eastern border, each one assigned to protect a particular sector or important Clan holding. Like most Unicorn infantry (and unlike most infantry from other Clans), these legions do have horses at their disposal, allowing them to relocate quickly or follow a cavalry unit into battle. Once it is time to fight, however, the horses are left behind and the infantrymen fight on foot.

The Junghar soldiers study many different weapons and tactics, to maximize their flexibility on the battlefield. However, all Junghar soldiers have one thing in common: they excel at fending off their enemies' attacks. Junghar infantry and Junghar cavalry are trained to work in concert in battle, the solidity of the infantry complementing the speed and aggressiveness of the cavalry. The cavalry depends on the infantry to hold the enemy in place, allowing the cavalry to strike and regroup. The infantry counts on the speed and mobility of the cavalry to wreck havoc on the enemy, breaking up their formations so the infantry can finish the job.

The Junghar is traditionally a meticulous and methodical army in battle. Its soldiers seldom take foolish risks, preferring to hold their position rather than risk exposing their flanks to the enemy. This defensive philosophy has served the Junghar well, though many soldiers — especially those of other Clans — view it as a sign of weakness. In truth, the Junghar soldier can be as bold as any warrior, but the safety of his comrades must come first.

The exception to this rule is the Junghar's light cavalry units, which are used to scout and attack the enemy flank and rear. Often, these troops even bring the offensive to the enemy's camps, attacking quickly, doing maximum damage, and then retreating behind their infantry lines.

The Junghar is the least exclusive army of the Unicorn, and the vast majority of the Clan's bushi begin their careers in the Army of the Left. Many soldiers from the Junghar eventually move on to the Khol, or sometimes even to the Baraunghar, but the majority who serve in the Army of the Left remain with it for their entire lives. Those who truly master the defensive tactics of the Junghar eventually ascend to be senior officers, or become sensei and teach the next generation of warriors.

The Junghar are usually deployed as whole legions, with each legion assigned to a single post; for instance, the Second Junghar Legion (the "Unexpected Legion") patrols the area around the watchtower on the bank of the River of the Unexpected Hero (location U24 on the map of Rokugan).

As with most armies, the Junghar companies are divided into squadrons. In the Army of the Left, there are five squadrons per company and 30 soldiers per squadron, including three nikutai responsible for nine warriors each. A gunso leads each squadron.

The Junghar army is led by Shinjo Shono. His command staff totals five shireikan, one of whom acts as his second in command, while the other four serve as wing commanders, with each wing consisting of twelve legions. There are also six taisa master tacticians, twelve chui, and three dozen lower ranking officers charged with routine administrative duties. While the five shireikan are the general's most trusted advisors, the taisa also play an important role helping the general devise strategies for the Army of the Left. The twelve chui are responsible for maintaining communication between all the legions of the Junghar.

NPC: MOTO KAZUO, JUNGHAR LIEUTENANT

Air: 2	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 3	Void: 2
Reflexes: 4	Stamina: 4	Agility: 3		

Honor: 3.4	Status: 3.0	Glory: 2.1
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SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 3/Junghar 1

ADVANTAGES: Gaijin Gear, Large, Leadership

DISADVANTAGES: Brash, Overconfident

KATA: Howl of the Moto, Striking as Fire

SKILLS: Athletics 3, Defense 4, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 5, Kyujutsu (Horse Archery) 3, Polearms (Lance) 4.

Moto Kazuo has always been larger than most people, and long since became used to the (sometimes unwelcome) attention this brought. Like most Unicorn bushi, he joined the Junghar immediately after his gempukku. In the years since, he has proven himself to be not only a talented warrior, unafraid of the toughest fights, but also an inspiring leader with a natural talent for command. Several senior officers of the Army of the Left have noticed his burgeoning skills, and he has begun a rapid climb through the ranks. Now in charge of several squadrons of heavy cavalry, Moto Kazuo finds himself with far more responsibilities than before, but is confident of his ability to handle them, especially with the help of his small but experienced command staff. The Junghar leadership expect great things of him.



The Khol Army

HEADQUARTERS: Shiro Moto

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Moto Chagatai

OTHER SHIREIKAN: Moto Utaemon, Moto Sen

NOTABLE LEGION COMMANDERS: Moto Sen

The Khol, also called the Army of the Center or the Khan's Army, is both the largest and the most elite of the three Unicorn armies. The Khan himself is rumored to select each and every soldier who serves in the Army of the Center. While many believe this to be an exaggeration, in fact the Khan does use his most trusted representatives to handpick the soldiers worthy enough to serve in the Khol. Thus, the Khan's Army contains some of the most fearsome soldiers in the Empire.

The soldiers of the Khol are selected for tactical knowledge, physical strength, prowess in battle, and exceptional skills in horsemanship, tracking, and survival. Only veteran soldiers with an exemplary record can hope to join the Khan's Army, and all bushi of the Unicorn Clan consider it a great honor to be selected.

All the Unicorn Families have substantial representation within the Khol, and the Khan and his generals go to great lengths to ensure this remains true. This not only ensures the respect and loyalty of the Families, but also allows the Khan to skim off the very best veteran soldiers from each of them. Since the skills and training of these soldiers vary greatly, the Khol is also the most flexible and versatile army of the Unicorn Clan.

Like the Junghar, the Army of the Center is organized into units roughly following the traditional Akodo model. However, these units are often much larger in size. A Khol legion, for instance, can be anywhere between 600 and 2,000 troops rather than the typical 750 soldiers found in

other Clan's legions. In total, there are 80 legions in the Army of the Khan, nearly 75,000 soldiers, roughly two-thirds of them cavalry. 24 legions are light cavalry and 36 legions are the mighty heavy cavalry for which the Army of the Center has become so famous. In addition, several special units also bolster the ranks. For example, the First Khol Legion is the home to the White Guard, the Moto fanatics who clad themselves in ghostly white armor, while five legions boast the dreaded Utaku Battle Maidens.

While the Khol's cavalry is undoubtedly its most impressive element, its infantry is not to be trifled with either. Like the infantry of the Junghar, the foot soldiers of the Khol use horses for strategic movement, but fight on foot once they reach the battlefield. They train regularly alongside their mounted comrades, and are expert at supporting them. Skilled with the bow, spear, and sword, the Khol infantry are a powerful force, as good as any infantry in Rokugan.

While the Baraunghar provides magical support and the Junghar focuses on defending the borders of the Unicorn provinces, the Khol is intended to carry the offensive to the enemy. The army specializes in aggressive, even reckless strategies, designed to completely obliterate the enemy. The Khan's army seldom shies from a challenge, even when confronting much more numerous opponents. Typically, the Moto and Utaku heavy cavalry lead the attack, seeking to break the center of the enemy's line and shatter their cohesion. On those rare occasions when the enemy has a cavalry force large enough to matter, the Khol's heavy cavalymen always oppose them.

While the heavy forces hit the center, light cavalry and horse archers strike at the flanks and rear of the enemy army, seeking to cut off retreat and block any enemy reinforcements. Once the heavy cavalry has punched through the enemy line, the infantrymen move forward to pin the remaining enemy in place, allowing their final destruction.



Like the Junghar, the legions of the Khol are designated by simple numbers. As already mentioned, several of these legions contain elite or highly specialized troops. The First Khol Legion is comprised of the infamous Moto White Guard, which reports directly to the Khan. Utaku Battle Maidens form the Second, Fourth, Sixth, Eighth, and Tenth Khol Legions, while the Shinjo Elite Guard fill the ranks of the Third and Fifth Legions, and Shinjo Horsebowmen man the Seventh, Ninth, and Eleventh Legions.

The Twelfth through the Nineteenth Legions, as well as the Thirty-Second to the Fortieth Legions, are composed of light cavalry regulars. The Forty-Fifth through the Eightieth Legions comprise the heavy cavalry of the Army of the Center.

The Twentieth through the Thirty-First Legions are infantry, including three Utaku Infantry legions (the Twenty-Third, Twenty-Seventh, and Thirty-First). The Forty-First through Forty-Fourth Legions contain infantry troops specialized in using polearms to repel enemy cavalry charges.

The legions of the Army of the Center vary in their numbers more than most armies in Rokugan. Legions of cavalry and infantry regulars are composed of anywhere from 600 to 800 soldiers. These troops are divided into five companies of 120 to 160 each. The cavalry legions consist of five line companies, with no supporting troops attached, while the infantry legions are divided into four line companies and one reserve company. The line companies are subsequently divided into six to eight squadrons of 20 soldiers each, commanded by a gunso with two nikutai in support. The infantry reserve companies typically contain approximately 150 samurai. These are divided into five squadrons of roughly 30 soldiers: two of siege engineers, one of Iuchi Scouts, one of Shinjo Scouts, and one of the controversial War Dog Masters and their beasts.

Although the Khan personally leads the Khol Army, there are three Moto rikugunshokan, or generals, under his command. Each of these generals is responsible for roughly one-third of the Army of the Center, and each has a command staff nearly as large as the Khan's. Three shireikan (commanders) serve under each of these generals. Each shireikan is responsible for five to twelve legions, depending on the units. For instance, an Utaku commander oversees the five legions of Battle Maidens in the Khol, while a Moto commander is responsible for twelve regular heavy cavalry legions. Because of the complex organizational work such a vast military force entails, hundreds of low-ranking officers serve in the Khol as administrators. These are assigned to the command staff of each general and commander in the Khol. Each commander also has several veteran officers, taisa and chui with experience in a variety of fields, such as siege engineering or cavalry maneuvers.

TABLE 3.2: ELITE UNITS IN THE KHOL ARMY

First Legion	Moto White Guard
Second, Fourth, Sixth, Eighth, Tenth Legions	Utaku Battle Maidens
Third, Fifth Legions	Shinjo Elite Guard
Seventh, Ninth, Eleventh Legions	Shinjo Horsebowmen
Regular Infantry Legion, Reserve Company, 3rd Squadron	Iuchi Scouts
Regular Infantry Legion, Reserve Company, 4th Squadron	Shinjo Scouts
Regular Infantry Legion, Reserve Company, 5th Squadron	War Dog Masters

NPC: MOTO UTAEMON, SHIREIKAN OF THE KHOL

Air: 4 Earth: 3 Fire: 4 Water: 4 Void: 4
Reflexes 5 Stamina 5

Honor: 4.2 Status: 3.9 Glory: 4.5

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 5/Khol Bushi 1

ADVANTAGES: Heartless

DISADVANTAGES: Brash, Overconfident

KATA: Shinjo's Breath, Striking as Air, Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 4, Athletics 4, Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Defense 5, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4

As a young man, Moto Utaemon spent several years traveling the length of the Empire. While he regularly returned to the Moto Bushi School to learn from its sensei, Utaemon also spent a lot of time with the bushi of other Clans. He trained with the samurai of both the Crab and the Crane Clans, and even spent a year in Lion territory where he rode alongside several renowned Matsu cavalry masters. As he observed the combat techniques of other Clans, Utaemon both perfected his own fighting style and learned how the samurai of the other Great Clans waged war.

This diverse knowledge made him into the keen tactician and strategist he is today. On the battlefield, very few military commanders can match his cunning and unpredictable tactics. What makes these maneuvers especially effective is Utaemon's extensive knowledge and understanding of his enemies. Utaemon is a formidable tactician, but he is first and foremost a master in the art of anticipation.

When he finally stopped traveling and settled in Unicorn territory, Moto Utaemon offered his services to the Junghar. After four years of loyal service in the Army of the Left, he had already earned so much prestige that Moto Chagatai himself invited him to join the Khol. As a member of the Army of the Center, Utaemon did not disappoint, and he quickly climbed the ranks to become one of the most influential officers in the entire army.

Utaemon is reputed to be one of the most widely traveled Unicorn of his generation, and his confidence, skills, and uncanny knack for anticipating his enemies have made him one of the most effective officers in the Army of the Center. After commanding the Twelfth Khol Legion for five years, Utaemon has now been promoted to the rank of shireikan, and commands an entire wing of the massive Army of the Center.

The Eighth Imperial Legion

HEADQUARTERS: Shinomen Tower (frequently mobile)

RIKUGUNSHOKAN: Horiuchi Nobane

SHIREIKAN: Moto Choon-yei

In addition to the three Unicorn Armies, the samurai of the Clan also form the majority of the Eighth Imperial Legion. Led by Horiuchi Nobane, a shugenja master tactician and a former officer in the Baraunghar, the Eighth Imperial Legion closely

resembles a Unicorn unit. Not only does it have more cavalry than any other Imperial Legion, but Nobane also enlists shugenja from both the Iuchi and Horiuchi Families to support the warriors under his command, seeking to emulate the speed and versatility of the Baraunghar.

Although the Eighth Imperial Legion does not quite have the uncanny speed of the Baraunghar, Nobane's efforts have not been in vain. The magical support of the Legion's shugenja give it tremendous quickness and flexibility.

The Eighth Imperial Legion follows the traditional Akodo unit structure, though modified somewhat to accommodate the army's size. Each company is led by a chui who reports to Horiuchi Nobane. Heavy cavalry troops fill the ranks of the First and Second Companies, while light cavalymen make up the Third Company. The Fourth and Fifth Companies are comprised of infantrymen, but these soldiers are also equipped with horses in order to make them more mobile, as Unicorn tradition requires. The Sixth Company is the legion's reserve company. It is divided into six squadrons: two squadrons of siege engineers and four squadrons of shugenja especially trained in warfare tactics.

Unicorn Strategy and Tactics

THE CRAB CLAN

When the Unicorn forces face the Crab samurai in battle, their generals have one thing in mind: strike hard and to strike fast. The Crab army is known for mobility, but its soldiers specialize in stubborn defensive tactics, and once they have had time to organize a proper defense, their ranks become extremely hard to breach. Crab soldiers (thanks to their Kaiu military engineers) have a knack for preparing devastating defenses in a remarkably short time. Once these defenses are raised, the soldiers of the Crab Clan can wait and wear down their opponents — a situation any Unicorn general wishes to avoid at all cost. In order to prevent the Crab from organizing a proper defensive strategy, Unicorn tacticians must take full advantage of the unmatched mobility and speed of their troops, and must be extremely aggressive in their attacks.

When attacking the Crab, many Unicorn strategists prefer to avoid a full-on engagement in favor of lightning-fast hit and run tactics, trying to cause as much damage as they can in as little time as possible. Once they have struck their targets, they retreat quickly, regroup, and organize another attack elsewhere before their enemies have time to react.

The Unicorn also try to use their Shinjo scouts as much as possible, searching for any weaknesses in the Crab positions. This means not only looking for vulnerable places in the Crab lines but also searching for routes into the enemy flank and rear.

If Unicorn generals manage to take a Crab force or stronghold by surprise, before it can organize its defenses, they send everything they have against it. They use the shugenja of the Baraunghar Army to bring all their troops as close to the enemy as they can, then unleash a legion of Utaku Battle Maidens

to lead the heavy Khol cavalry against a specific point in the Crab defenses, trying to overwhelm them quickly. Meanwhile, the light cavalry begin to circle the Crab forces to strike the flanks and rear.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen and Utaku Infantry usually play a major role when attacking the Crab, providing a secure base to cover the cavalry units while they strike, retreat, and regroup. If and when a specific point in the Crab defenses is actually breached, the Untaku and Khol infantry moves forward to quickly exploit it before the Crab can recover, while the archers and light cavalry continue to strike at the enemy flanks.

THE CRANE CLAN

Unicorn tacticians generally feel that the Crane armies are nothing terribly special, and can be dealt with rather simply if they can find a way to deal with the Crane's skilled use of their Kenshinzen duelists. To that end, the Unicorn try to seize the initiative immediately and keep it throughout the battle, hoping their aggression will set the Kenshinzen squads back on their heels and restrict their ability to select targets.

The Unicorn Clan's standing plans call for the use of light cavalry to flank and encircle Crane formations, forcing them to react lest they be surrounded. Meanwhile, the regular heavy cavalry are, as usual, deployed at the center of the line, supported by infantry. Specialized units, such as the Shinjo Horsebowmen, the Iuchi Scouts, and the War Dog Masters, operate on the edges of the battlefield to isolate it and forestall the arrival of reinforcements.

So long as the Unicorn can avoid losing too many officers to the Crane duelists, they are confident no Crane army can ultimately stand up to a swift, determined heavy cavalry charge.

THE DRAGON CLAN

The quickness and courage of Mirumoto-trained warriors make the Dragon infantry impressive opponents, and their Clan is notorious for unpredictable and idiosyncratic behavior that can surprise the most skilled general. However, the armies of the Dragon Clan lack a truly effective cavalry unit. Therefore, Unicorn tacticians anticipate using the unsurpassed speed and mobility of their cavalry units to great effect against the Dragon. Their real concern is one of terrain, since the Dragon mountains are some of the most formidable defensive territory in the Empire. Therefore, whenever possible the Unicorn will seek to face the forces of the Dragon Clan in the open field, allowing their light cavalry and deadly Shinjo Horsebowmen to flank and pin the Dragon infantry in the classic manner. With the enemy threatened on the flanks and weakened with missile fire the Utaku Battle Maidens and other heavy cavalry can attack head-on to deal the crushing blow.

In short, the Unicorn intend to use their traditional strengths — speed and striking power — to deprive the Dragon of battlefield initiative and restrict the impact of their characteristic unpredictability.

THE LION CLAN

The Lion embody the ideal model of a Rokugani army, and they were among the first opponents the Unicorn faced in battle after they returned to the Empire in the Eighth Century. Much of what is now standard tactical doctrine for the Unicorn was developed in response to the Lion way of war.

The Unicorn begin any attack on a Lion force by deploying their troops in a wedge formation. The mighty Battle Maidens spearhead the assault, while the heavy Khol cavalry support them. The Shinjo Horsebowmen flank these units and, in turn, light cavalry regulars are deployed further out from the point of attack. The infantry legions, meanwhile, are deployed in the center, forming several massive columns behind the heavy Khol cavalry.

The first troops that move during the attack are the light cavalymen, who attempt to circle the Lion force in order to attack the rear. At the same time, the Horsebowmen position themselves on the enemy flanks and open fire, supported by regular infantry archers. Then, the heavy cavalry launch their attack.

If the charge breaches the first Lion line of defense, the cavalry continue to push forward until they break through into the rear of the formation. If the heavy cavalry charge does not immediately break the Lion defenses, however, they retreat and regroup while the infantry maneuvers to form two columns with a wide gap between them. This allows the Battle Maidens and the heavy cavalry to launch another charge through this gap into the center of the Lion line. Eventually, as the Lion buckle, the Horsebowmen and light cavalry close in on the crumbling flanks and rear, and destruction is complete. These complex but well practiced maneuvers have allowed the soldiers of the Khan to win several victories against the mighty forces of the Lion, and they form the basis for the Unicorn Clan's tactics against any infantry army.

THE MANTIS CLAN

The Unicorn simply do not understand the ways of the Mantis, no doubt because they have no experience of what it means to live off the sea. However, the Unicorn are themselves accustomed to being underestimated or misunderstood because they are unusual. Therefore, they try to respect the traditions of the Mantis, no matter how strange they might seem. Similarly, even though the Mantis military is far smaller than their own, the Unicorn do not take them lightly, and show them the same respect as they would any other military force.

The likelihood of a major battle between the Mantis and Unicorn is small, especially given the great distances between them and the fact that the Unicorn have no naval capability whatsoever. Furthermore, relations between the two Clans are excellent. However, the Unicorn do make contingency plans for fighting the Mantis should it ever become necessary.

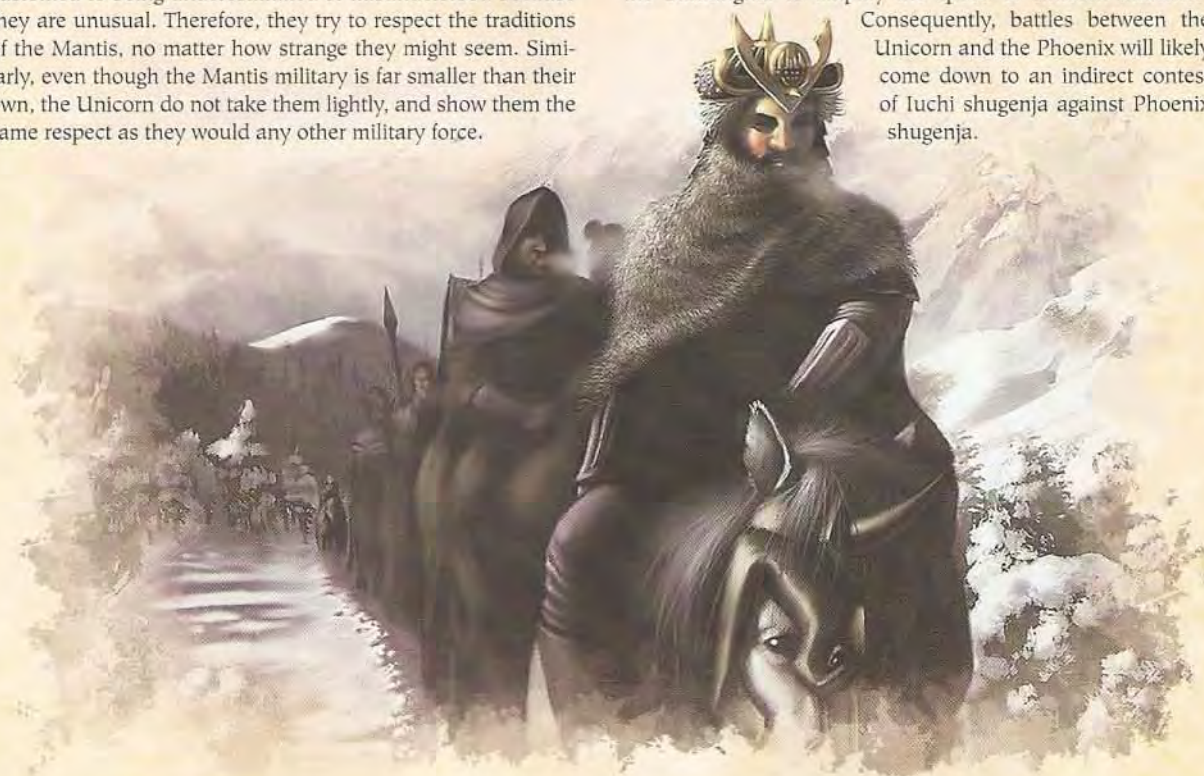
In the event of battle with the Mantis, Unicorn generals intend to use the same basic stratagems as they would against a Lion army, launching a wedge attack with heavy cavalry supported by flanking light cavalry. However, the Unicorn plan to keep approximately one-fourth of their most mobile troops in reserve. The reason for this is to counter the Mantis Clan's known capacity to strike quickly in unexpected places. The Mantis' peculiar fighting style, combined with the superior range and accuracy of their elite Tsuruchi longbowmen, make them dangerously unconventional opponents, and the Unicorn feel that a large reserve is wise.

THE PHOENIX CLAN

When facing the Phoenix in battle, the standard Unicorn tactical model proves rather less effective than it does against other Great Clan armies, in large part because the Phoenix army relies so heavily — more so than any other Great Clans — on the skill and power of their shugenja. This is not to say that Phoenix shugenja can fully neutralize an entire Unicorn army. But they can certainly negate the mobility advantage of the Baraunghar Army, thus depriving the Unicorn of one of the pillars of their military doctrine and one of their key strategic and tactical advantages.

To defeat the Phoenix, then, requires defeating their shugenja. This means closing with the enemy quickly, so their shugenja cannot unleash their spells from a safe distance. This in turn means, under Unicorn tactical doctrine, using the Baraunghar to amplify the speed of Unicorn attackers.

Consequently, battles between the Unicorn and the Phoenix will likely come down to an indirect contest of Iuchi shugenja against Phoenix shugenja.



In the event of a Unicorn attack on a Phoenix army, the Iuchi would be expected to weave spells that hamper vision, such as summoning a great mist or unnaturally darkening the sky. This would give their troops a chance to advance upon their foes unseen. If possible, the shugenja would also try to weave magic that dampens sound, further enhancing the chances for surprise. If the Unicorn managed to get close enough to launch a charge, the shugenja would switch to spells that enhance speed and mobility, allowing both the infantry and cavalry to quickly close the remaining distance to the Phoenix troops. Such elaborate surprise assaults require the use of much smaller forces than Unicorn generals usually prefer, but they intend to always keep a portion of their troops in reserve anyway when fighting a Phoenix army.

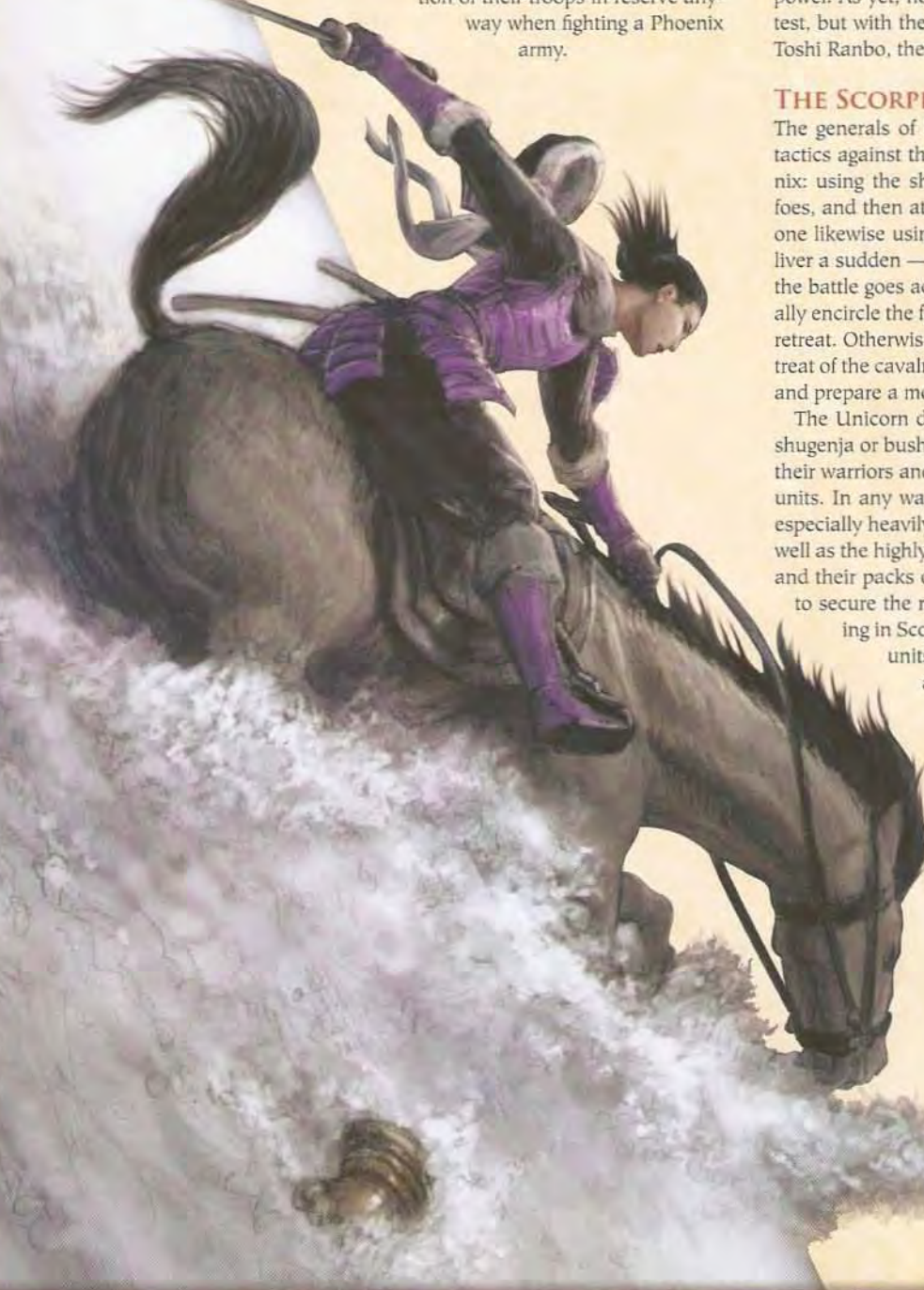
An actual assault on a Phoenix army would comprise three consecutive waves. First, a small number of heavy cavalry and quick-marching infantry, supported by Baraunghar shugenja, would try to hit quickly and create as much chaos as possible in the ranks of the enemy. The Unicorn believe that if the Phoenix are caught by surprise the magic of their spells is much less effective. After this initial charge, the remainder of the Unicorn heavy cavalry would close in, while the light cavalry and Horsebowmen would begin their usual flanking and circling maneuvers. Finally, the third assault, comprised of all infantry soldiers who did not participate in the initial attack, would charge home. The Unicorn believe this combination of maneuvers and attacks, properly executed, would let them destroy a Phoenix army despite its considerable magical power. As yet, no actual war has put this tactical plan to the test, but with the Empire in chaos after the Khan's attack on Toshi Ranbo, there is no telling what the future may bring.

THE SCORPION CLAN

The generals of the Unicorn Clan intend to employ similar tactics against the Scorpion as they would against the Phoenix: using the shugenja of the Baraunghar to surprise their foes, and then attacking in three consecutive waves, the first one likewise using the magic of the Baraunghar Army to deliver a sudden — and hopefully deadly — surprise assault. If the battle goes according to plan, the Unicorn troops eventually encircle the forces of the Scorpion to prevent any possible retreat. Otherwise, their infantry deploy to ensure the safe retreat of the cavalry, allowing the Unicorn forces to regroup and prepare a more conventional wedge assault.

The Unicorn do not fear the battlefield power of Scorpion shugenja or bushi nearly as they dread the deceitful tactics of their warriors and, especially, their highly specialized shinobi units. In any war with the Scorpion, Unicorn tacticians rely especially heavily on the talent of Iuchi and Shinjo Scouts, as well as the highly developed instincts of the War Dog Masters and their packs of trained animals. These units are expected to secure the rear and flanks of any Unicorn army operating

in Scorpion lands, leaving the army's conventional units free to charge down upon the Scorpion army. Their duty is to track down and locate any and all hidden enemy soldiers who might sabotage supply lines, assassinate commanders, launch sneak attacks, or otherwise disrupt the Unicorn forces. They are supported by Horsebowmen and the Shinjo Elite Guard, both fast cavalry units that can be redeployed wherever they are needed quickly, but which have enough combat power to destroy any skulking shinobi they encounter. With this strength backing them up, the Unicorn's scouts become a force to be reckoned with, and even the deceitful Scorpion shinobi would be wise to stay clear of them.





Unicorn Strongholds

Shiro Moto

Shortly after Moto Gaheris became Unicorn Clan Champion, he commissioned the construction of a new castle for his Family. Thanks to the Shinjo Family's vast wealth, which he had recently acquired, the construction of this castle was completed in a few months' time. Shiro Moto is obviously of gaijin design, and opinions as to its beauty vary greatly according to who offers them.

To most Unicorn samurai, this castle is wholly magnificent, an exquisite blend of gaijin style with traditional Rokugani architectural motifs. The complexity of Shiro Moto's architecture makes the place one of the most wondrous in the Empire, but many samurai, especially those of non-Unicorn descent, fail to see the intricate design as anything more than a grotesque reminder that the Unicorn are not wholly from Rokugan.

For Moto Gaheris, the injection of foreign design elements was quite deliberate. The Unicorn are forever separated from the rest of the Empire by the influence of the many gaijin tribes they encountered during their great journey. Gaheris and many other Unicorn see this as a point of pride, despite what other Rokugani might think. Thus, while those outside the Clan think Shiro Moto the most hideous piece of architecture ever built, the samurai of the Unicorn Clan find it beautiful.

Regardless of what anyone might think of its aesthetics, Shiro Moto is one of the strongest fortresses in all of Unicorn lands. Although there are no troops officially appointed to garrison it, the Khan keeps at least two or three Khol Army legions close to his capital at all times. The Khan's personal safety is not at issue; in the Unicorn samurai's mindset, the Khan is more than capable of defending himself, and to think otherwise would imply that he is not fit to lead the Clan. Thus, there is no house guard or other protective force in Shiro Moto. The Khan keeps troops nearby not for his own safety, but because Shiro Moto itself is too important to risk seeing it fall into enemy hands.

The White Guard maintains an austere barracks within Shiro Moto, and their troops are frequently posted to defend the castle's walls, as well as using the vast fields around Shiro Moto to hone their skills. This is especially true in times of peace, when the Khan is frequently home receiving visitors at his court. The other Khol legions assigned near Shiro Moto, however, never enter the city. Instead, they make their presence as discrete as possible, camping in the fields several miles from the great Unicorn castle. Typically, the Twentieth, Twenty-Second, Thirty-Seventh, and Forty-Third Khol Legions are positioned in the vicinity of Shiro Moto. The commanders of these legions uphold the ancient Unicorn tradition of keeping a close watch upon their capital city without interfering in its politics.

As one of the most elaborate fortresses in Unicorn Clan territory, Shiro Moto boasts imposing watchtowers and thick, seemingly impregnable stone walls. The gates of the surrounding city, however, are seldom closed, allowing anyone to venture inside.

Shiro Moto is home to the prestigious Dojo of the Khol Army. This great school can be found within the city proper, and the sensei of the Dojo of the Center regularly select some of their finest students to defend the home of the Khan. Officially, these newly graduated students are assigned to the Army of the Center, but they spend their time in the city, watching over it carefully. The presence of these graduates, policing Shiro Moto, makes it one of the safest places in the Unicorn provinces. It also prevents the Khan from having to dirty his hands dealing with common thieves and assassins, since such matters are dealt with by the Khol students assigned to the city. The current leader of these unofficial city guards is Moto Qing.

The Dojo of the Center

Aside from being the Khan's home and the Unicorn Clan's capital, Shiro Moto also hosts the primary dojo for the Khol forces. From the moment Moto Gaheris ordered the construction of Shiro Moto, the Khan also decided the school of the Army of the Center should be close to his home, just like the Moto Bushi School, which was moved from Outsider Keep to the capital city.

Although the largest of the Unicorn armies seldom brings many soldiers to Shiro Moto, all its students have studied there at one time or another. The instruction of Khol soldier forces is of great importance to the Khan, and the secrets behind the offensive strategies and unique fighting techniques taught at the Dojo of the Center are closely guarded. The sensei of this dojo teach their students not only fighting techniques, but also to respect the lives of the citizens who dwell in this important city. Thus, when they are in the capital of the Unicorn Clan, the members of the Khol Army remain disciplined and honorable, help maintain law and order, and never meddle in affairs that do not concern them. Doing otherwise would be an insult to the Khan himself.

Any bushi from the Unicorn Clan is welcomed to apply at the Dojo of the Khol, but only those deemed worthy enough to be part of the greatest of the Khan's Armies are accepted. The sensei who teach at the Dojo of the Center are all retired veteran soldiers, men and woman with impressive careers of their own within the Khol Army. The sensei tend to prefer students from the Moto and Shinjo families, but the Khan has ordered that all Unicorn Families must be equally represented in the Khol, so the sensei — rather grudgingly — accept experienced soldiers from any Family, so long as they meet the school's high standards.

Because of the predominant role of cavalry in the Army of the Center, the Dojo focuses strongly on horse-riding techniques and mounted combat in all its forms. But the Army of the Center, like the other Unicorn armies, needs expert infantrymen as well. Thus, the school offers training in the use of virtually every weapon imaginable, both standard Rokugani arms and a remarkable array of gaijin weapons. The sling, the longsword, the saber, and the lance are particularly popular weapons at the Dojo of the Center, and all students are required to learn to wield these gaijin arms as part of their regular training.

When practicing mounted and infantry maneuvers, the students of the dojo use the vast open fields around Shiro Moto. The drills they perform in these plains model the techniques used by Unicorn generals on the battlefield. Learning these maneuvers is a vital part of preparing the Unicorn for war, since they must be prepared to perform them flawlessly amid the chaos of battle. And Unicorn samurai, especially those who serve in the prestigious Army of the Khan, are always prepared.

The White Guard Barracks

Another place of great importance within Shiro Moto is the White Guard Barracks, home to one of the most infamous fighting forces in the Empire: The Moto White Guard. The Barracks are a seemingly unimpressive collection of dark gray stone buildings that lack any kind of common architecture. Some of them seem to predate the construction of Shiro Moto, but the majority are obvious recent additions. Their styles range from common Rokugani architecture to strange gaijin designs only the Unicorn Clan could hope to appreciate. Despite the complex's hodgepodge appearance, it is designed to be easily defended, with arrow slits in the walls instead of windows, and heavy metal doors that can be barred to protect those within.

The members of the Moto White Guard frequently gather in the Barracks to train and study. The place offers both regular military training facilities and also temples and shrines for those who wish to pray, meditate, or study the Fortunes and the Tao. The White Guard also gather here to screen and select replacements for fallen members of the unit.

The White Guard Barracks look more like religious shrines than the home of a Unicorn military unit. This is because the White Guard can train almost anywhere, including in the wide fields around Shiro Moto. They use the barracks as a haven of peace and tranquility, where they can meditate and study in peace. There are several monks charged with caring for the White Guard Barracks. These men live among the soldiers of the White Guard, but generally keep their distance from them. No one outside these few monks is allowed inside these buildings. This is a show of respect for the White Guard — and not fear of them, as many samurai outside the Unicorn Clan would claim. The monks' duties are to maintain the Barracks grounds, care for the temples and shrines, and make sure that the stone dwellings are always stocked with provisions in the event of a siege around Shiro Moto. Because the monks take care of maintaining the place, the White Guard can concentrate on more important things like training and meditation, activities that take up the bulk of their time.

Toshi No Aida Ni Kawa

The City Between Rivers guards the junction between the Sleeping River (Kawa Nemui) and the River of the Lost Valley where they merge together to form the Firefly River (Hae Moete Kawa), which in turn heads south toward the Drowned Merchant River and the Three Sides River. Unsurprisingly, it is a key trading center for the Unicorn, as it is a natural collection point for resources from both the northern and western reaches of Unicorn Lands. But it is also one of the Clan's most important defensive outposts.

Originally, the City Between Rivers was but a simple stone castle with a small village outside. Thanks to its ideal geographical location, the village soon became one of the most important trading centers in the Unicorn provinces. As the decades passed, the village grew exponentially until it became one of the largest cities within the Clan's territory. Because of the commercial importance of the City Between Rivers, and the abundant resources stored in the city's great warehouses, the Unicorn place a large permanent garrison here, including both a contingent of the Junghar and three legions from the Khol.

The Fifteenth Junghar Legion, one of the most prestigious units in that army, has primary responsibility for the city's defense. It is supported by the Twenty-Eighth, Twenty-Ninth, and Forty-Fourth Khol Legions. The Fifteenth Junghar Legion keeps the peace within the city and patrols the vast fields around it, making sure no harm ever comes to its citizens. Meanwhile, the three Khol legions serve as a dissuading force, discouraging bandits, ruffians, and rival armies from even thinking of threatening the city. The soldiers of both the Khol and the Junghar legions generally keep away from the many merchant warehouses built along the banks of both rivers, since private guards in the employ of those merchants already ensure their protection.

Watchtower

Facing the River of the Unexpected Hero, the Watchtower is an extremely tall fortress made of dark blue stone. Built in the middle of a vast, open field some distance north of the great Shinomen Forest, the tower is a large but very simple piece of architecture. Extremely broad at its base and narrowing only gradually, the massive stone tower stands almost 100 feet high, dominating all other structures in the area and allowing clear views of the surrounding terrain for miles in all directions. An interior staircase, also made of stone, connects the various levels, many of which serve as barracks for the soldiers posted here. Arrow slits pierce the thick exterior wall of the Watchtower, allowing defending archers to repel enemy attack from a practically impregnable position.

The Watchtower stands in the southwestern portion of Unicorn territory, close to the unclaimed lands to the west. This places it seemingly in the middle of nowhere, and many outside the Unicorn Clan wonder why it was ever built. In fact, no one has ever attacked it, and many outside the Clan believe it is unimportant. The truth, however, is that Moto Gaheris was unwilling to leave any opening in the Clan's defenses, no matter how slight the risk. He ordered the construction of the great Watchtower to ensure no menace from either the western gaijin lands or the Shadowlands to the south could ever threaten the Unicorn borders.

The Second Junghar Legion is assigned to the Watchtower, and their regular drills and exercises have rendered the surrounding plains flat and barren. Many have dubbed this unit "the Unexpected Legion," after the river where the Watchtower stands. Since the area the Watchtower protects is relatively close to the Shadowlands, the soldiers of the Unexpected Legion are responsible for reporting any unusual activities from the realm of Fu Leng. In times of war, several other legions from both the Junghar and the Khol armies come to the Watchtower to bolster the Second Legion's ranks.

Duzaki Toshi

This small city is situated near the Ide provinces' western border. It houses the private estates of prominent samurai from several Unicorn Families, including the lavish private homes of the Utaku and Shinjo Daimyo. These residences are among the most impressive in Unicorn territory, although outsiders would argue that they are nothing compared to what other Families have built.

Duzaki Toshi was once a proud center of government, but since the Shinjo ceased to be the leaders of the Clan, the city has lost much of its prestige. After dishonor befell the Shinjo Family, many abandoned the city, preferring to relocate closer to the new center of power in Shiro Moto. Although the city does not receive as many visitors as it once did, it remains an important part of the Unicorn Clan's trade network. Over the years, many important treaties have been signed in Duzaki Toshi, and the place is still the home of a significant military force. Perhaps more significantly, the Dojo of the Left, which trains new recruits for the Junghar, is also situated in Duzaki Toshi.

The Sixth Junghar Legion and the Khol's Thirty-First, Thirty-Fifth, and Forty-Second Legions are posted here. These soldiers are responsible for the protection of every citizen in the city, and long ago learned to call this place their home. While Duzaki Toshi might not be the most easily defendable place, the city's walls are high, well maintained, and constantly manned by the soldiers of the Sixth Junghar Legion.

The Dojo of the Left

The Dojo of the Left is the primary training camp for new recruits of the Junghar, the Army of the Left. Veteran soldiers from this army also regularly come here to hone their skills and learn new techniques from their sensei.

It was Moto Gaheris who selected Duzaki Toshi to house the Dojo of the Left. He personally chose this location because the city was located deep within the Unicorn provinces and thus safe from any potential invasion, whether from one of the Great Clans or the vile forces of the Shadowlands. Of course, if a gaijin force were to invade the lands of the Unicorn, the city would be one of the first to be attacked, but the Moto consider that possibility too remote to be of serious concern. Besides, with the Sixth Junghar Legion, three additional legions from the Khol army, and the many students of the Dojo of the Left present in Duzaki Toshi, the city is well defended. In fact, it is arguably one of the most heavily guarded cities in the Unicorn provinces.

Sensei from every major Bushi School in the Unicorn Clan can be found at the Dojo of the Left. The school offers a wide range of techniques and fighting styles, from traditional Unicorn cavalry training to intricate infantry maneuvers. In addition to traditional Unicorn combat techniques, the sensei of the school are also masters of the defensive maneuvers which have become the trademark of the Junghar.



Because the sensei are particularly open to new students, almost any promising samurai from the Unicorn Clan can be accepted at the Dojo of the Left.

Because of this, the vast majority of warriors in the three armies of the Unicorn Clan began their careers in the Junghar, and most of them have, at one time or another, studied at the Dojo of the Left. Most members of the Khol, in fact, first completed several tours of duty in the Junghar before they were chosen to serve in the Army of the Center. Similarly, many of the bushi and yojimbo sworn to protect the Iuchi shugenja of the Baraunghar were chosen from the best warriors of the Junghar. However, the Junghar generals make sure plenty of their best bushi continue to serve in the Army of the Left.

Legions of the Army of the Left regularly come to train in Duzaki Toshi. They receive advanced training and continue to hone their battle and maneuver skills. This happens throughout the year, whenever the Army of the Left is not out performing military maneuvers. In times of peace, as many as one-third of the Junghar forces may come to the Dojo of the Left at once. Such truly peaceful times are rare, however, and more typically most of the Junghar legions are busy all year round, patrolling the borders of the Unicorn provinces or defending one of the Clan's key cities and military outposts.

Shiro Ide

The Ide castle is an extremely tall structure, just over 90 feet at its highest point. Built in 817, two years after the Unicorn's stunning return to the Empire, the castle was one of the very first permanent strongholds of the Clan to be constructed. In many ways, Shiro Ide symbolizes the Unicorn Clan's wish to remain a part of the Empire, and to integrate themselves into its rich culture.

Shiro Ide is both a functional and beautiful place. It comprises several towers, and is defended by high protective walls of the sturdiest stone, as well as many fortified barracks housing the hundreds of soldiers who form the castle's permanent garrison. Situated on the northeast shore of Chrysanthemum Lake, this great castle was built to meld with the surrounding environment, making Shiro Ide a wondrous piece of architecture. In fact, the spires and walls of the castle blend so perfectly with the Seikitsu Mountains in the background that many would be hard pressed to tell the castle's actual size.

Despite all these qualities, Shiro Ide is a poor fortress. When it was first built, the castle was made to impress the samurai of the other Great Clans. Its architects, however, never designed the place to be a military stronghold. All they wanted to do was build a wondrous palace that would affirm the genius and wealth of the Ide and the Unicorn. The Ide have systematically refused to allow any major changes to their most important



castle. It is, after all, in the Ide's nature to negotiate a peaceful solution for every problem. Thus, no additional fortifications or improvements were ever made, and Shiro Ide remains a difficult place to defend despite its visually impressive walls and towers.

There has been little conflict around Shiro Ide since the castle was built. Nevertheless, the Khan has decreed the Thirtieth Junghar Legion be posted here, just in case the Ide diplomats ever fail to dissuade a would-be invader. Additionally, the Khan has ordered four legions from the Khol be posted near Shiro Ide at all times. Several miles east of the city is a large military camp, the permanent residence of the Fifty-Second, Fifty-Third, Fifty-Seventh, and Sixtieth Khol Legions.

The presence of so many warlike bushi in and near their home is a source of frequent complaint by the Ide Family, but true to their nature, they avoid any conflict. No troubles have ever been reported between the bushi and any of the castle's residents.

Since Calm Heart Dojo, which trains the famous Ide emissaries, is located in Shiro Ide, many of its students have begun to view the presence of the Thirtieth Junghar Legion as an opportunity to further hone their craft. Thus, many of them have befriended these soldiers while practicing their oratory and negotiating skills. While many in the Clan believe a posting to Shiro Ide is one of the dullest assignments any warrior could have, the soldiers of the Thirtieth are happy with this duty, as it allows them to get to know the friendly, diplomatic Ide and even learn from them. Should war erupt, the men of the Thirtieth Junghar Legion would do everything in their power to ensure that Shiro Ide remains standing.

Turo-Kojiri

This small city is situated just a few day's ride to the southeast of Shiro Ide. It is a modest, quaint settlement, not unlike many other small cities in Unicorn lands. Great rice paddies can be found all around Turo-Kojiri, and many peasants have built their homes near the roads that lead to the city.

Although not technically a fortified place, Turo-Kojiri is extremely important to both the Ide and the Unicorn Clan in general. The iron mines to the northeast of the city produce nearly one-third of all the steel for the weapons of the Moto and Shinjo Families. Because of the steady supply of ore in the city, many smiths have made this place their home, and some among them have become famous for the quality of their craftsmanship. Over the generations, this small city has earned a reputation for producing some of the finest weapons in all of the Unicorn provinces. Of course, many of these weapons are strange gaijin arms that only a Unicorn samurai could appreciate.

Turo-Kojiri is also an important source of food, as the fields around the small city produce over 2,000 koku worth of rice each year. Because of this, the Khan has recently decreed Turo-Kojiri as one of the most important places in Unicorn territory.

Since Moto Gaheris became Khan, two legions from the Junghar regularly visit Turo-Kojiri: the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth. Though they are not officially posted here, they are nevertheless charged with defending the city, the productive rice fields around it, and the rich mines to the northeast of it.

When they need to practice military maneuvers, these soldiers regularly come to one of the wide, open fields close to the city, making their presence known to any who would prey on the citizens of Turo-Kojiri.

Shinomen Tower and the Walls of Iyotisha

This great watchtower casts a vigilant eye over the Naga city of Iyotisha. The Unicorn have always considered the Naga's awakening to be a highly serious matter. Shinomen Tower is an impressive piece of work, one of the most easily defensible strongholds in Unicorn territory. Although simple in its composition, the tower is a solid structure designed to withstand even the most powerful of assaults. Observers from outside the Unicorn Clan say nothing short of powerful magic could level it, and no one has ever attempted to lay siege to the place. Both the great tower and the massive walls that surround Iyotisha were raised to ensure the protection of those who inhabit the sleeping city.

The Khan gave the duty of protecting the Unicorn's sleeping Naga allies to the Twenty-Eighth Junghar Legion, one of the most prestigious units in the Junghar. The soldiers of the Twenty-Eighth have always had a reputation for taking their duties extremely seriously. While some would consider the duty of protecting the sleeping Naga to be a punishment, the soldiers of the Twenty-Eighth believe it is a great honor, and fulfill their task with pride.

Hisatu-Kesu

A mountain city located several miles to the south of Shiro Iuchi, Hisatu-Kesu runs for miles alongside the high foothills of the massive Spine of the World Mountains. The place attracts countless visitors each year, partly because of the multitude of hot springs that are found throughout this part of the mountains. Within the walls of the city, these springs have been turned into impressive bath houses, attracting visitors from across the Emerald Empire. Some of the most powerful and influential people in Rokugan attend these baths, although only the wealthiest samurai can afford to pay for such luxury. Unfortunately, this has also made the city extremely popular among con men, thieves, disreputable merchants, and any others who dream of making a fortune at the expense of others.

Since the destruction of Beiden Pass and the opening of the Seikitsu Pass, Hisatu-Kesu has attracted a great many new visitors and residents, mainly because it has become suddenly much easier to reach. Its importance as a trade center has also risen significantly. In recent years the Iuchi have become almost overwhelmed by the responsibility of maintaining law and order within the growing city.

This has caused the Khan to take a closer look at Hisatu-Kesu, which had formerly been considered of secondary importance. In the past year, following the Khan's recommendations, the generals of the Army of the Left have posted the Fortieth Junghar Legion just outside the walls of Hisatu-Kesu. Although the army has no official jurisdiction inside the city, the mere presence of the Junghar soldiers seems to make criminals think twice about preying on citizens and visitors. Reports from Hisatu-Kesu suggest that criminal activity is now lower

than a year ago, before the Fortieth Junghar Legion was assigned to the city.

Although some in the Unicorn Clan openly question the value of placing soldiers here, the city's location in the foothills of the Spine of the World Mountains does make it a tempting target to any invading force. The Unicorn generals believe Hisatsu-Kesu must be defended at all cost.

Shiro Iuchi

The Iuchi family's ancestral stronghold is another impressive structure in Unicorn lands. Dominated by a tower that stands surprisingly high above the outlying walls, spires, and buildings of the fortress, Shiro Iuchi is a place of unsurpassed beauty and true architectural wonder. Many artisans and nobles have come to Shiro Iuchi simply to admire its design, or to enjoy the countless beautiful paintings that decorate many of its buildings. Shiro Iuchi takes its nickname, Gatherer of Winds Castle, from the clouds that seem to constantly swirl around the summit of its impressively high tower. Many speculate these clouds are summoned by strange Iuchi spells, but the family insists it is a naturally occurring phenomenon.

As it happens, Shiro Iuchi is an easy castle to protect, and even the most experienced Crab generals who visit the place agree it is a highly defensible structure. It is virtually impossible to mount a surprise attack against Shiro Iuchi, as the vast plains surrounding the castle offer excellent visibility in all directions. This gives the Unicorn plenty of time to organize and deploy a substantial defending force. Because it is so difficult to gain a march on the Unicorn, Shiro Iuchi has only been attacked a handful of times in all of its long history. Each of these times, the Unicorn army rushed to its defense and crushed the attackers before they could even begin a siege.

Shiro Iuchi once served as a central point of diplomatic activity, as envoys and diplomats from the other Great Clans frequently visited the place. However, Shiro Ide and Shiro Moto have since become much more important places, and most of the Unicorn Clan's diplomatic negotiations are now held there.

Still, Shiro Iuchi continues to attract visitors, many of whom visit several times a year. The Ninth and Thirty-Sixth Junghar Legions are responsible for defending it. Although Unicorn bushi tend to believe that garrison duty is dull and without challenge, the soldiers of these two legions are extremely proud to protect one of the most ancient holdings of the Unicorn Clan.

Because of Shiro Iuchi's strategic location and value, the Khan has also decreed that a strong Khol force be posted nearby. The Seventieth, Seventy-Third, Seventy-Seventh, and Seventy-Eighth Khol Legions camp only a few miles north of the city. Although these legions would probably be called away in time of war, their peacetime presence near Gatherer of Winds Castle reinforces the authority of the Junghar forces assigned to guard the place.

The Dojo of the Right

Not surprisingly, the Dojo of the Baraunghar, the highly specialized Army of the Right, is located inside the fortified walls of Shiro Iuchi. For many centuries now, the shugenja of the Family have come to Gatherer of Winds Castle to master the

spells and special techniques that only the Iuchi sensei could teach them, and it is the logical place to train the Baraunghar.

The great Iuchi Plains outside the fortress serve the shugenja of the Family as an outdoor training ground on which they can practice their craft. Because the Iuchi specialize in large-scale magical effects to enhance the performance of their armies, they need a place vast enough to properly practice their spells. The Iuchi Plains offer them just that, and from the moment the Khan reorganized the Unicorn armies to follow the Moto model, Gatherer of Winds Castle was clearly the place to house the Dojo of the Right.

Because about half of the Baraunghar force is composed of shugenja, the Dojo of the Right attracts many who have the ability to speak with the kami. Only the most gifted of them, however, are accepted. In order to gain admission to the Dojo of the Right, a shugenja must prove not only that he has the requisite connection to the kami, but also that he is a talented rider and soldier, able to fend for himself in the heat of battle. He must demonstrate the ability to cast spells from horseback, to hold his own in a fight, and to learn the Family's very special kinds of magic.

For a bushi to be accepted into the school, he need only prove his ability to protect shugenja. Not surprisingly, many career yojimbo are chosen to be part of the Baraunghar Army, but veteran soldiers with experience in ambushes and hit and run tactics are also sought.

In times of peace, troops of the Baraunghar often practice large-scale military maneuvers in the open fields around Gatherer of Winds Castle. The new recruits of the Dojo of the Right frequently join them in these complex exercises, while the sensei of the school watch and comment from the highest tower of the castle.

Iuchi Pass

To the southwest of Shiro Iuchi lies Iuchi Pass, a small and often overlooked pathway that allows safe passage across the Spine of the World Mountains. Although the other Great Clans have long ignored the Iuchi Pass, preferring instead to use at first Beiden Pass and later Seikitsu Pass, the Unicorn Clan have used this route regularly over the centuries. Since the time of Moto Gaheris, Iuchi Pass has been constantly guarded by a contingent of the Army of the Left to ensure no other Clan would ever be able to deny it to the Unicorn, or use it as an invasion route.

Presently, the Nineteenth and Twenty-Ninth Junghar Legions are charged with the defense of Iuchi Pass. Their soldiers are posted at several key locations throughout the pass and make sure no rival army can block or use one of the most important — and safest — pathways through the Spine of the World.

Iuchi Scout Dojo

The Iuchi Family has become famous for producing cunning shugenja, as well as some of the best yojimbo in the Emerald Empire. Their many years of service in the Baraunghar Army have also earned them a reputation for both efficiency in combat and loyalty to the Khan.

The Family, however, has developed another specialty over the years, and are now known for the great skills of their scouts. The Iuchi Scout Academy is known throughout Rokugan as one of the most prestigious institutions of its kind. For the Unicorn Clan, the graduates of the Iuchi Scout Academy represent the adventurous and forward-looking spirit that their ancestors embodied, when they journeyed for centuries through previously unknown and uncharted regions of the world. In many ways, the Iuchi Scouts are regarded as the true heirs of the Ki-Rin.

The techniques used by the Iuchi Scouts were first developed centuries ago, out of necessity, when the Unicorn were struggling to pass through the Shadowlands to return to the Empire. The first scouts of the Family were shugenja who understood the ways of nature, and by combining traditional Rokugani magic, new spells inspired by gaijin traditions, and their instinctive grasp of the wild places of the world, they were able to guide their fellow Unicorn to a safe return to Rokugan.

Over the years, the primitive techniques used by these original scouts were developed, tested, and integrated into bushi fighting techniques. Today, the Iuchi Scouts have nothing to do with the famous shugenja of the Family, for their strange ways do not rely on magic. Rather, they employ the natural instincts and skills they have developed over the course of several centuries. Only the sensei of the Iuchi Scout Academy know all of these secrets, and every Iuchi Scout zealously guards the techniques that make him the resourceful and lethal warrior he is.

The Iuchi Scout Dojo is situated several miles west of Shiro Iuchi, some distance north of Iuchi Pass. High in the Spine of the World Mountains, the institution is well hidden and only those most fervently committed to finding the place can hope to uncover its location. The Academy sits in a clearing on a

high plateau, surrounded by tall evergreen trees. It is comprised of three simple but extremely large buildings, set on stone foundations to help them blend in with the surrounding rock. The walls and roofs are made of sturdy pine and spruce, painted green to deceive spying eyes. The first test of a candidate who wishes to join the Iuchi Scout Academy is to defeat this camouflage and locate the institution.

Once a samurai has found the place, he needs to succeed at another, even more difficult test: survive without food, water, weapon, or tool for an entire week in the harsh wilderness of the Spine of the World Mountains. Once a potential candidate has passed this ordeal, he is accepted into the Academy and invited to learn its special techniques. Although the vast majority of those who study here are members of the Iuchi Family, the Academy accepts candidates from any samurai Family. Even non-Unicorn samurai can join the prestigious institution, although it is rare indeed for someone from outside the Unicorn Clan to seek out this school.

The Iuchi Scouts are the only military unit of the Iuchi Family that works outside of the Baraunghar Army. The Scouts form a handful of small, highly specialized reserve squadrons in the Khol legions. There are about 5,000 Iuchi Scouts currently serving in the Army of the Center. The Iuchi Scout Academy typically only has about 50 to 100 students at a time, new students and veterans learning or honing their techniques.

Seikitsu Pass and the Great Crater

As one of the few viable crossing points in the Spine of the World Mountains, Seikitsu Pass is highly valuable to the Unicorn, and they have made defending it a matter of vital importance.



Seikitsu Pass is essentially a vast crater encircled by two easily navigable paths. These are called the Way of Night and the Sun's Arc Way, because one is constantly bathed in shadows, even at high noon, while the other is warmed by the heat of the sun during the daytime. The Eleventh and Twelfth Junghar Legions are assigned to protect these paths, as well as to collect a trade tax, which provides the Unicorn Clan with a small fortune each year. Since most of the trade that crosses the Spine of the World Mountains must go through Seikitsu Pass, the place crawls with merchant caravans and other visitors almost all year round.

These Junghar troops are not the only Unicorn here. Many Iuchi shugenja frequent the Pass in the hope of uncovering some small essence of the Celestial power that opened it up less than a half-century ago. The Junghar soldiers posted in Seikitsu Pass inhabit several outposts built on each side of both paths. These simple structures are made of wood, but they are built into the foothills to provide as much protection to their soldiers as possible. Many of these outposts seem to blend in with the surrounding mountains, making them impossible to clearly discern from more than half a mile away. Because of these well-hidden outposts, many outside the Clan fear the Unicorn might one day decide to ambush those who use the pass. While this could very well be an option for the Junghar if war breaks out, they have no reason to attack passersby as long as peace is maintained.

Bikami

Situated around the base of the northern mountains, Bikami is often referred to as the last glimpse of civilization before one begins the journey to Far North Village. To many Unicorn samurai, this remote city is a testament to the perseverance, willpower, and faith of the Utaku, in whose lands it stands. The Utaku have turned the high plains around Bikami into great wheat and barley fields, and the city now collects one of the most important harvests in Unicorn territory. This by itself makes Bikami a valuable Unicorn holding, and one well worth defending in strength.

The city is a highly fortified place, with thick stone battlements and several watchtowers overlooking the surrounding area. Despite its remote location, the city is not only well built but a truly beautiful place. Colorful exterior designs, odd gaijin structures mixed with traditional Rokugani houses, and lavish gardens can be spotted throughout the city, making it both attractive and unusual, a memorable place to visit or dwell in.

Because of the vital resources Bikami produces, two Junghar legions are posted here at all times: the Seventeenth and Thirty-Third Legions. If war breaks out, several more legions are assigned to reinforce Bikami, ensuring that this vital source of food never falls into enemy hands. The soldiers posted in Bikami are also responsible for ensuring no gaijin force approaches this northernmost Unicorn province undetected, so regular weekly patrols are sent to the north, watching for any possible threat.



Akami

Often called Bikami's sister city, Akami marks the northeastern boundary of the Utaku lands, as well as the very edge of Unicorn territory. With the exception of Bikami, which is relatively close by, Akami is far from any other Unicorn holding, but its location near Dragon lands makes it a place of strategic value, well worth guarding. Akami also shares Bikami's importance as a major producer of grain.

Because of Akami's location near Dragon lands, the Khan chose to post a large garrison of the Khol Army here. For the past decade, the Twelfth through Fourteenth Khol Legions have been responsible for the defense of Akami. Should war break out, these legions could well be recalled to join the main Khol army, but in that case they would be immediately replaced by legions from the Junghar. Several Junghar legions regularly patrol the area, even in peacetime, so Akami is one of the safest places in Unicorn territory.

Many peasants work in the fields of both Sister Cities, and outsiders speculate that if any Unicorn Daimyo needed to press ashigaru soldiers into service, they would come from Akami and Bikami. Of course, removing a portion of the vast peasant population would also mean less food to support the Unicorn armies, so such a course of action seems unlikely at present.

Shiro Utaku Shoji

Shiro Utaku Shoji rests in the center of the Unicorn Lands. Built in the middle of lush fields, the castle's architecture offers a perfect balance between daring gaijin styles and classic Rokugani design. Although many claim Shiro Moto is just as grand as Shiro Utaku Shoji, if not grander, the ancestral castle of the Utaku Family has long been regarded as the epitome of a Unicorn stronghold, a perfect example of simplicity and functionality, and no one in the Unicorn Clan would dare say the place needs more flashy decoration. For the Unicorn, Shiro Utaku Shoji is near perfect.

Regardless of appearance, Shiro Utaku Shoji is above all a great fortress. A massive stone wall encircles the city, and many inner walls, nearly as strong, separate the city's various districts. The strong battlements around the city protect the soldiers who defend the place, and high towers are set throughout Shiro Utaku Shoji, ensuring no opposing force can ever approach the city unseen. The ancestral palace of the Utaku Family itself is so well guarded no one would dare enter its grounds uninvited.

The great plains around Shiro Utaku Shoji are sacred to the members of this Family, for it was there that Otaku first swore fealty to Shinjo. It was also from these fields that Otaku Shiko joined Shinjo on the legendary Exodus of the Ki-Rin. Only the most elite Battle Maiden are allowed to patrol these great open plains. Those appointed to this task consider it the highest of honors.

Although the Khan would never admit it, Shiro Utaku Shoji is probably one of the most important places in Unicorn territory, if only because it requires a substantial portion of the Utaku forces to garrison it.

The famous Utaku Battle Maidens train in Shiro Utaku Shoji. The Khol army's legions of Battle Maidens are stationed here in times of peace. The Unicorn find this advantageous,

as Shiro Utaku Shoji's location in the center of the Unicorn Lands allows the Battle Maidens to join the rest of the Khol wherever it may be in a short period of time.

The Utaku Infantry Dojo can also be found in Shiro Utaku Shoji, and the presence of three highly trained legions of Utaku Infantrymen likewise contributes to the city's defenses. Of course, in the event of a major war, most of these garrison forces would leave to join the Khol army, and the Junghar would have to defend Shiro Utaku Shoji along with the rest of Unicorn lands.

Battle Maiden School and Utaku Testing Grounds

The famous Utaku Battle Maiden School is situated in Shiro Utaku Shoji. Since the Shiotome legions of the Army of the Khol are normally stationed in the city, these troops have regular access to the wisdom of their sensei. The Battle Maidens constantly train, both inside the walls of the dojo as well as on the open fields around the city, striving to better themselves.

Most young women reared in the Utaku Family can aspire to a place in the ranks of the Battle Maidens only after completing years of rigorous training. In order to be accepted into this elite unit, young Utaku women must pass a serious of rigorous tests designed to gauge their athletic and martial ability before they are even accepted into the dojo.

Between Shiro Utaku Shoji and the wide forest to the west lie the Utaku Testing Grounds, where these arduous tests take place. The girls must succeed at a variety of tests of their honor, courage, and skill. Once they have successfully passed their gempukku, they are accepted into the Utaku Battle Maiden School, where they will eventually master the techniques that make them the greatest cavalry warriors in the Unicorn Clan. The Testing Grounds also serve as a training field, where the Battle Maidens perform drills and practice complex maneuvers to work better as a unit.

It is also in these fields that the Battle Maidens connect with their famous Utaku steeds. Although few outside the Utaku Family know it, it is actually the horse which chooses the Battle Maiden it will serve, not the other way around. The bond between a Shiotome and her animal is so strong that both horse and warrior would do anything in their power to save their companion. Male Unicorn samurai are strictly forbidden to step upon these sacred grounds.

Utaku Infantry Dojo

Situated to the south of the River of the Lost Valley, the Utaku Infantry Dojo shows obvious signs of major construction within the past generation. This is because the school only recently was deemed a site of importance, as the members of the Utaku Infantry gradually claimed a place within the armies of the Unicorn Clan.

The Utaku Infantry train here throughout all four seasons, and the grounds near the dojo have been worn to dirt for a distance of several miles. All year round, the fierce shouting of the Utaku Infantrymen can be heard, echoing across the plains, as new recruits and veterans alike perform complex field maneuvers or practice their defensive techniques, sometimes in the middle of the nearby river.

The Utaku Infantry Dojo borders the Battle Maidens' sacred Testing Grounds, a situation which has raised some concerns among the Shiotome commanders and sensei. Although no one from the Infantry dojo would dare set foot upon these grounds, they frequently perform complex military maneuvers on the very border of the Utaku Testing Grounds. A single misstep during these exercises could violate the sacred grounds, an unbearable shame which could mean exile or worse for the offending male. The Battle Maidens do not appreciate such risky behavior on the part of their family's male warriors, but so far, to the pride of the Infantry Dojo's sensei, the students have never set a single foot upon the sacred grounds.

The installations of the Utaku Infantry Dojo also serve as barracks for the Utaku Infantrymen. In times of peace, the three legions of Utaku Infantry assigned to the Army of the Khan can be found here almost all year-round. These legions can be quickly redeployed to any part of the Unicorn provinces, of course, but otherwise they remain here, practicing alongside the new recruits of the Dojo.

Far North Village (Kibukito)

Far North Village is a city on the remote northern edge of Unicorn territory. Oddly designed and highly disorganized, it is also in a rather inaccessible location. Its population is mainly comprised of the relatives of those who have been banished from the Empire and forced to leave to the north, through Exile's Road. These people, together with their descendants, have built a simple community for themselves. Almost no one from the outside world ever visits this place, since it is commonly believed that only the dregs of Rokugani society live there.

Although Far North Village is not a fortified place, its location so near to the Burning Sands makes it an important outpost. The Forty-Sixth Junghar Legion is stationed nearby. Although it seldom comes close to Far North Village, the population nevertheless feels protected by the presence of this legion.

The main duty of the Forty-Sixth Legion is not to protect the village but to patrol the area north of it, ensuring no gaijin army comes close to Rokugan's borders. The soldiers of the Forty-Sixth believe every single fragment of the Unicorn Lands, even Kibukito, is a vital piece of their Great Clan's territory, and accept that this stretch of the border must be protected at all costs.

Yashigi

The small village of Yashigi benefits from having the Emperor's Road run directly through it, but in recent years the prosperity of the place has come mainly from the small jade vein north of the town. The Emperor's Road skirts the border with the Lion Lands as it passes through Yashigi and connects the town with both Shiro Shinjo and Shiro Utaku Shoji. The resulting traffic has allowed the village to grow surprisingly fast during the last few years, but its remote location has kept it from becoming overcrowded.

Because of the lucrative mining operations in the area, Yashigi has attracted the attention of the Khan. Today, a permanent garrison is posted in Yashigi: the Forty-Eighth Junghar Legion, responsible both for maintaining peace in the area and protecting the jade mines from bandits. Two Legions from the Khol Army also make camp near Yashigi. The Thirtieth and

Forty-First Khol Legions ensure that the Lion Clan thinks twice about any potential incursion into this particular part of Unicorn territory.

Dark Edge Village (Kurrayami-ha Mura)

Although there appears to be nothing special about Dark Edge Village at first glance, most samurai in Rokugan are well aware of its existence. It is not the small farming community or any of its inhabitants that attract notice, but the rather the famous dueling fields that lie so close.

It was at the grounds around Dark Edge Village that the first Emerald Championship was held eleven centuries ago. It was here that Kakita defeated Matsu, and it was here that the long feud between their families began. Because of this historical significance, the fields around Dark Edge Village are well maintained. They are considered sacred grounds, and only the most virtuous samurai are allowed to duel here. It is believed those who enter a duel on the fields around Dark Edge Village are blessed by Osano-wo. Many important duels and countless minor challenges are fought here every year, as members of all samurai Families — not just the warriors of the Unicorn Clan — come to Dark Edge Village to settle their differences.

In the middle of the tournament fields stands a shrine dedicated to the memory of Kakita, the first Emerald Champion. Three statues stand behind this shrine, one representing Kakita himself, one representing Osano-wo, and one representing Hantei. Several minor shrines are scattered at the feet of these great statues, dedicated to the memory of the Emerald Champions who succeeded Kakita. Statues representing the last four Emerald Champions have recently been added.

Those who come to duel in the sacred fields around Dark Edge Village frequently make a pilgrimage to one of these shrines, praying to the spirits of Kakita, Osano-wo, or past Emerald Champion before they enter battle. It is believed these spirits provide both guidance and courage to those who pay proper homage to them.

There is no military unit officially assigned to protect Dark Edge Village, but several Junghar legions regularly patrol the area and check on the statues and shrines.

Shiro Shinjo

Originally a Fox Clan stronghold, Shiro Shinjo was expanded and modified several times by the samurai of the Lion Clan during their rule of these lands. Eventually, however, the Lion abandoned it, since it had very little strategic value for them. When the Unicorn returned to the Emerald Empire, the castle was nearly in ruins. The Shinjo Family instantly felt a kinship with the long-forgotten castle, which still stood strong despite years of neglect. The Shinjo rebuilt the place, incorporating design and construction techniques from a dozen cultures beyond the Burning Sands. The result was a uniquely solid and yet intricate-looking piece of architecture, triangular in shape, rising to three smaller triangular towers. It was both beautiful and easily defensible, something the Shinjo Family could take pride in as the seat of their family and Clan. Although the Shinjo no longer rule the Unicorn, they still take great pride in their castle and the city that grew around it, believing it to be among the most impressive holdings in the Unicorn Lands, if not the greatest in the Empire.

Shiro Shinjo is a small place compared to other major Family castles, but it holds all the comfort one could ever imagine. The smaller buildings that surround it are each unique in their design and colors, shades of blue, green, red, and purple making them stand out from typical Unicorn designs. Inside the palace itself, the Shinjo display strange trophies of hunting and war, as well as countless oddities collected from the various civilizations they encountered during their centuries of travel.

Many dignitaries from the Lion and other Great Clans have visited Shiro Shinjo at one time or another. The main hall of the castle, where diplomats and nobles are usually received, has even been described as one of the most luxurious places in all of Rokugan. This only adds to the pride the Shinjo feel for their main residence, for few outside the Unicorn Clan believe the members of this long-exiled group capable of such sophistication. The wonderful architecture and luxury Shiro Shinjo has to offer stand as indisputable proof that the Unicorn are as civilized as any of the other Great Clans — or so the Shinjo sincerely believe. Within the walls of Shiro Shinjo can be found an embassy of the Hare Clan. Although many assume this embassy exists because of the long friendship between the Hare Clan Champion and the Daimyo of the Shinjo Family, the true reasons actually go deeper. It is certainly no secret that both groups suffered terribly at the hands of the Kolat several years ago. Since the Hare know the methods of the Kolat better than anyone else in the Emerald Empire, they offered to maintain a vigilant eye for any signs of renewed infiltration within the Shinjo Family. This arrangement suits the Shinjo Family just fine, since it ensures the terrible shame they

suffered does not return to blight them again. The handful of dignitaries from the Hare Clan must be discrete in their investigations, however, for the Shinjo also cannot afford any damage to their fragile, slow-recovering reputation.

Although Shiro Shinjo was once the seat of government of the Unicorn Clan, today far fewer visitors come to the place. Still, some dignitaries from the other Great Clans do occasionally visit Shiro Shinjo to admire its remarkable architecture and luxury.

The Khan believes the ancestral palace of the Shinjo Family should be well protected, so both the Seventh and Twenty-Third Junghar Legions garrison Shiro Shinjo and use it as their base of operation. There are occasional speculations, of course, that the Junghar soldiers' presence is actually designed to let the Khan keep an eye on the samurai of a dishonored Family.

The Shinjo Bushi Dojo

The Shinjo Bushi School was the primary warrior dojo for the Unicorn Clan before the Shinjo Family was dishonored. When Lady Shinjo launched her purge of the Kolat agents who had infiltrated the Family, she could not find any fault with the revered sensei of the Shinjo dojo. Although suspicion of treason fell upon every corner of the Family, former students of the dojo from other Great Clans rallied to the school's defense, adamantly proclaiming the honor of the school's sensei to Shinjo and before the Imperial Court. By allowing students from outside their Clan, the Shinjo family thus inadvertently ensured the honor and survival of one of their most valued institutions.



It has long been claimed that the Shinjo Bushi School trains the best cavalry warriors in all of the Empire. This could very well be true, for many of the best cavalymen in both the Khol and the Junghar armies have studied here before joining the ranks of these military outfits. The dojo has more non-Unicorn students than most Unicorn schools, and the sensei of the dojo maintain contact with those non-Unicorn students who have graduated in years past. This allows the Shinjo Family to maintain political alliances in spite of its sordid recent history. In many ways, the Shinjo Bushi School has become the most important political tool the Shinjo Family now has at its disposal. Many Shinjo believe their redemption in the eyes of those outside the Family depends almost entirely on the highly regarded sensei of this institution.

Shinjo Elite Guard Dojo and Barracks

Within the Shinjo Bushi School grounds is a large building reserved for the elite of the Shinjo warriors. This place, the Shinjo Elite Guard Dojo, provides advanced, highly specialized training in the art of fighting from horseback. Its students and sensei are strictly limited to members of the Shinjo Elite

Guard, who in turn are selected on the basis of military experience, proven skill at arms, loyalty to the Shinjo Family, and purity of character. Thus, only those who are truly devoted to the Shinjo — especially those who work hardest to reclaim the Family's lost honor — are allowed to be a part of this school. For many Shinjo samurai, admission to the Elite Guard Dojo is as great an honor as they could ever hope to receive. The Family considers the graduates of this academy to be the best soldiers in all the Emerald Empire — though doubtless many other schools and dojos would disagree.

Historically, the Elite Guard originated as a small unit dedicated to the protection of Lady Shinjo as she set about purging her Family of Kolat influence. Their service left no doubt as to their strength of character and their loyalty to Family, Clan, and Emperor. Even so, the Shinjo Elite Guard still bear the weight of the shame attached to their entire Family name, and work to redeem that name.

The Elite Guard does not serve only the Shinjo Daimyo, but is also devoted to helping the Khan in any way possible. They have done so nobly and well, and many Unicorn leaders believe the deeds of the Elite Guard will surely allow the Shinjo Family to eventually reclaim its lost honor.



The sensei of the Shinjo Elite Guard Dojo teach fighting techniques that make their students especially efficient horseback warriors. The Shinjo Elite Guard has always been a heavy cavalry unit, and its samurai are trained in ancestral methods that only the greatest among them can master. Unlike the Unicorn light cavalry and the Shinjo Horsebowmen, the greatest strength of the Shinjo Elite Guard is shock and melee combat. Those who have faced the charge of the Shinjo Elite Guard and lived to tell about it would do almost anything to avoid repeating the experience.

In the past decade, several buildings have been added to the original school of the Shinjo Elite Guard. These serve as barracks for the two Shinjo Elite Guard legions, the Eighth and Ninth Khol Legions.

Egami Mura

Egami Mura is a large village surrounding a colossal complex of stables. Located in the midst of the Shinjo provinces, Egami Mura is dedicated entirely to the breeding and equipping of horses. Several types of horses can be found in this village, from the famous Shinjo steeds to the more typical Rokugani war ponies, and even including rare breeds of gaijin steeds. Even camels, the favorite mount and pack animals of desert caravan masters, are raised in the stables of Egami Mura. Only the extremely rare Utaku warhorses, reserved to the Battle Maidens, are not bred here.

Visitors from all Clans come to Egami Mura hoping to purchase animals and riding equipment. Even those who openly despise the samurai of the Shinjo Family frequently send representative here, hoping to purchase some of the finest horses in the Empire. Of course, the Shinjo are well aware of what others think of them, and they do not hesitate to set their prices accordingly.

The most famous stable in Egami Mura, the Red Eagle Stable, is about as large as Shiro Shinjo itself. Built exclusively from stone to avoid any risk of fire, the Red Eagle Stable is the most impressive institution of its kind, and looks more like a fortress than a place where horses are bred. A handpicked squadron of Shinjo Elite Guard protects these stables at all times, a task they consider a great honor indeed. All who wish to steal or harm the horses are dealt with swiftly and mercilessly.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen Dojo

A small fortress can be found in the midst of the great open plains several miles east of Egami Mura and north of Shiro Shinjo. Built of burgundy stone, this building stands alone amid wild Unicorn fields. Built some two hundred years ago, the fortress' walls are covered with moss, and in the spring flowers bloom upon the few stubby trees and shrubs that surround it. This simple but extremely sturdy place was built to last, and many who do not know of its true purpose believe this minor fortress to be nothing more than one of the many watchtowers raised by the Unicorn Clan. Although the fortress does serve this purpose, it is much more than a simple defensive outpost. This place houses the renowned Shinjo Horsebowmen Dojo, and the three Khol Legions of this outfit are posted here.

For many generations now, the sensei of this dojo have taught the unique techniques that have made the Shinjo Horsebowmen tough, deadly, and unpredictable. Although many samurai believe that the Shinjo Horsebowmen are disorderly and of relatively little military value, in actuality their unique fighting style, taught only to members of the Shinjo Family, makes the Horsebowmen powerful and effective soldiers. Although the Horsebowmen are specialized in the use of the dai-kyu (horse bow), they are also trained in a variety of gaijin weapons. Their dress, manners, and weird fighting style make them strange even compared to other Unicorn samurai, but their gaijin look and seemingly disorganized combat techniques are but deceptions to fool their enemies into underestimating them.

Like all Shinjo samurai, the Horsebowmen bear the shame of their Family, but they have proved many times to the Khan that they are a valuable asset in times of war. Because of this, the Unicorn military establishment shows tremendous respect for the Horsebowmen legions, despite their Family's shame.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen combine normal Unicorn mobility with the long-range striking power of the dai-kyu, making them one of the deadliest fighting forces in the Unicorn armies. There are three legions of Horsebowmen currently serving the Khan: the Sixteenth, Twenty-Fifth, and Thirty-Third Khol Legions. Two of these are normally posted to the Shinjo Horsebowmen Dojo, while the third watches Exile's Road. Two legions is very much an oversized permanent garrison for a small watchtower, but from there they can be easily deployed anywhere within the borders of Unicorn Lands.

Exile's Road and Exile's Watchtower

One of the most notorious locations in the Unicorn Lands is also one of the most dreaded places in the Empire. Exile's Road, as the place has come to be known, is one stretch of the Unicorn Lands no Rokugani samurai ever wants to see. All those who commit crimes so dishonorable that only banishment from the Empire is a suitable punishment must leave via Exile's Road, never to return. To ensure the banished criminals actually walk down that road, and to make sure they never return, a legion of Shinjo Horsebowmen patrol the road, accompanying those who walk into exile, ready to shoot down any criminal who tries to return against the Emperor's will.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen posted along Exile's Road are also charged to patrol the area to make sure that no gaijin force approaches Rokugan. They are housed in several barracks at the base of Exile's Watchtower, a high stone tower from which the guards can see for miles around. Although many believe this tower's purpose is solely to prevent any exiles from returning, its location at the very edge of the Empire also makes it an important military outpost. The garrison at Exile's Watchtower is responsible for protecting the northwestern borders of the Unicorn territory.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen who guard Exile's Road are officially attached to the Army of the Khol, and can be recalled at any time should war erupt. Because of this, the Khan has ordered the Thirty-Seventh Junghar Legion to reinforce them. These soldiers, although not officially attached to Exile's Watchtower, are charged to patrol the area and frequently make permanent camp just east of Exile's Road. Should the Shinjo Horsebowmen be reassigned, the Thirty-Seventh Junghar Legion would take their place.

Shinden Horiuchi

Shinden Horiuchi lies in the Spine of the World Mountains, a few miles off of Shōan's Way. Initially built as a monastery some 50 years ago, the place was given to the shugenja Horiuchi Shōan when her Family was first recognized. This old temple was originally only a tiny group of simple monastic dwellings, but newer and more attractive buildings were added over the years. Now, the main residence of the Horiuchi Family boasts a court chamber and one of the most well-tended gardens in the Unicorn Lands. Shinden Horiuchi is now the prized jewel of the Horiuchi Family.

Shinden Horiuchi is known throughout the Empire as a place that welcomes anyone. When the Horiuchi Family was founded, three generations ago, it needed plenty of good men and women to strengthen its ranks. Many war orphans who had no other place to go found their way to Shinden Horiuchi, and they were accepted into the Family. Today, both Shinden Horiuchi and its inhabitants are recognized as some of the welcoming in the Emerald Empire. Although the stronghold is far from being a popular resort, many samurai from other Clans come to Shinden Horiuchi during their travels to pray to the Seven Fortunes. All have only good things to say about the place and its inhabitants.

Although Shinden Horiuchi is not a place of high importance in the Unicorn Clan's defenses, the Khan and his generals strongly believe that the official home of any Unicorn Family should be well protected. After all, failing to do so would imply that the Family is not as important as the others in the Clan, a situation that would inevitably cause dissension. Thus, the Khan has charged the Twenty-Eighth Junghar Legion with the duty of protecting Shinden Horiuchi.

Despite its remote location, pilgrims and traders frequently pass through the small village, bringing valuable wares they hope to sell to important Unicorn samurai. The soldiers of the Twenty-Eighth Junghar Legion have long ago earned a reputation for honesty and efficiency, and their duty includes inspecting the merchandise that passes through Shinden Horiuchi. They are also among the most polite and discreet soldiers in the Unicorn army, keeping far from the pilgrims who come to pray at the temple where Horiuchi Shōan retired.

War Dog Master Dojo

Several miles to the south of Shinden Horiuchi, about half way to Shiro Iuchi, sits a small cluster of old buildings. Built in the foothills of the Spine of the World, these simple wooden dens appear to be the dwellings of poor peasants, but they actually house the War Dog Master Dojo. The War Dog Master Dojo is not a popular school, although it attracts students each year. A great many samurai in the Unicorn Clan — to say nothing of the rest of the Empire — utterly fail to understand the appeal of such a school. However, a handful of Unicorn samurai actually do feel a strong kinship with the Ki-Rin war dogs, and seek out the school.

Because the ways of the War Dog Masters are unpopular at best, this dojo does not benefit from the prestige that accrues to most other Unicorn institutions. The leadership of the Clan tends to neglect it, in fact, and the school's budget always seems to be tight. The sensei of the War Dog Master Dojo must rely

on their students to care for the place. Many of the buildings are simple open kennels for the resident war dogs. These are not typical pens built for animals by other Rokugani samurai, since the war dogs are free to come and go; instead, they simply provide a roof over the heads of these powerful animals.

The War Dog Master Dojo also houses about two dozen artisans. They are, for the most part, former students of the school who did not have what it takes to earn the trust and leadership of a pack of Ki-Rin war dogs, but who nevertheless did feel a strong connection with these beasts. Although many samurai would pity these students for having failed to fulfill their dreams, the sensei of the institution actually regard them as kindred spirits who are important to the continuation of their school's traditions. Most of these artisans are specialist armorers. They design and produce barding similar to that used by the heavy cavalry, but these suits of armor are made especially for the muscular bodies of the Ki-Rin war dogs.

The Ki-Rin war dogs themselves dwell here year-round, except when they are sent to war. It is said the baying and howling of these dogs can be heard for miles around the dojo, echoing from the summits of the Spine of the World Mountains and throughout the great, flat fields east of the school. Because of these dreadful sounds, many travelers make it a point to avoid the place, preferring instead to journey further east. This is part of the reason why there are no villages in a wide area around the War Dog Master Dojo — a situation that suits the sensei and students of the place perfectly well.

The sensei of the dojo — the most experienced handlers of these animals — are responsible for the early training of the Ki-Rin war dogs. From the moment these animals are born, they begin an intensive series of exercises especially design to strengthen their bodies and teach them courage and resolve. The dogs are trained in their special barding at all times, so they become accustomed at a young age to wearing armor.

Ki-Rin war dogs are unusually intelligent animals, and a good portion of their training involves learning to recognize orders. The War Dog Masters use a mixture of strange, guttural sounds mixed with very precise high-pitched whistling to order their packs even through the din of battle.

The Unicorn are fond of saying that no other breed of Rokugani dogs even come close to the Ki-Rin breed in terms of raw power, skill, and cunning. They are the pride and joy of the sensei and students who live among them and fight at their sides.

Although the samurai who study at the dojo learn all sorts of tricks to control their Ki-Rin war dogs, the most important thing they learn is to become part of the pack. Indeed, the strength of the War Dog Masters is not only that they can control the mighty beasts under their command, but also that they bond with them in such a way that these beasts recognize them as their own.

Only those who show a particular talent with the Ki-Rin war dog breed are accepted into the War Dog Master School. All willing candidates are welcomed at the dojo, but each of these potential students is rigorously tested before being admitted. Only those who show both genuine respect for the Ki-Rin breed and the ability to bond with the beasts can hope to study here. Thus, although this dojo is not a particularly popular one, it remains one of the most exclusive of the Unicorn Clan.

The War Dog Masters are also warriors, and most of them have some training from another bushi school before they join this dojo. Some of the techniques they learn at the War Dog Master Dojo are very similar to the methods taught at other bushi institutions of the Unicorn Clan. The War Dog techniques, however, are based on instincts rather than logic, on raw talent rather than rigorous drills and repeated exercises.

When the War Dog Masters train for battle, they do so alongside their packs of Ki-Rin dogs, and they learn to move and fight as part of the pack. To be effective warriors, they must let the animal instincts within them take control. This does not imply that War Dog Masters fight like savage beasts, but they do rely on their instincts as well as those of the war dogs under their command. This is what makes the War Dog Masters truly effective in battle, but it also makes them greatly misunderstood by most bushi. The War Dog Masters, however, do not particularly mind this. In fact, they believe the less their enemies understand them, the greater the edge they will have over them in battle.

Although no legion from the Unicorn armies officially protects the War Dog Master Dojo, both the Forty-Fifth and Forty-Seventh Junghar Legions regularly patrol this area of the Spine of the World Mountains. Like most people who journey through the region, however, they give the War Dog Master School a wide berth, preferring to avoid any possible encounter with the Ki-Rin war dog packs. The dojo is well protected by those who study there and the many beasts they breed, so the Junghar see no real need to fortify the place. No one in his right mind would dare attack the Ki-Rin war dogs on their home territory.

There are always between 100-200 Ki-Rin war dogs at the school, the majority of them old enough to fight. The dojo can also rely on at least a dozen students, all of whom are experienced bushi.

Elite and Special Units

The Unicorn samurai have always been known as masters of cavalry warfare, surpassing any other Clan in the Empire in this field, and their ranks include many elite, specialized cavalry units. However, the armies of the Unicorn Clan also contain many other specialized units, some of which are just as important as their cavalry, if less impressive.

Moto White Guard

The White Guard of the Moto Family is an elite group, even among the already handpicked forces of the Army of the Center. The samurai of this unit are a special breed of Moto warrior, and only those who are both extremely pious and truly devoted to the Moto family's cause can hope to join their ranks. Even if he possesses these qualities, a Moto samurai must still display such a wide array of skills, both in battle and outside of it, that few warriors have what it takes to even be considered as candidates for the White Guard.



The White Guardsmen are immediately recognizable by the ghostly white armor they wear and the pale makeup that covers their faces — not unlike the Kabuki-style face paint favored by the Kuni, but less deliberately decorative, so that it makes them appear like the ghosts of long dead warriors on the battlefield. The White Guard are the most fearsome unit of all the Unicorn armies, rivaled only by the famous Utaku Battle Maidens.

Despite the fierce reputation they have always enjoyed, the White Guard long lingered under a cloud of disgrace, much as is still the case with the Shinjo Family. Three centuries ago, the Moto Daimyo, Moto Tsume, led his forces deep into the Shadowlands, arrogantly believing he could destroy Fu Leng's realm forever. The White Guard, and indeed the bulk of the Moto army at that time, was almost annihilated. But that was not the worse of it, for many of those who were lost did not actually perish, but succumbed to the Taint. Those who had fallen rose again to form the Dark Moto, sometimes called the Black Guard, a twisted and perverted form of everything their former comrades sought to embody.

These Dark Moto warriors retained their training and military expertise, and immediately became one of the most fearsome forces of the Shadowlands. Merciless and without fear, blindly dedicated to Fu Leng, they struck constantly at the borders of the Empire, spreading death and devastation wherever they went. Their leader, Moto Tsume, became one of the Shadowlands' most fearsome generals, and a terrible scourge on Rokugan. To the surviving samurai of the Moto Family, these Dark Moto were an unbearable disgrace.

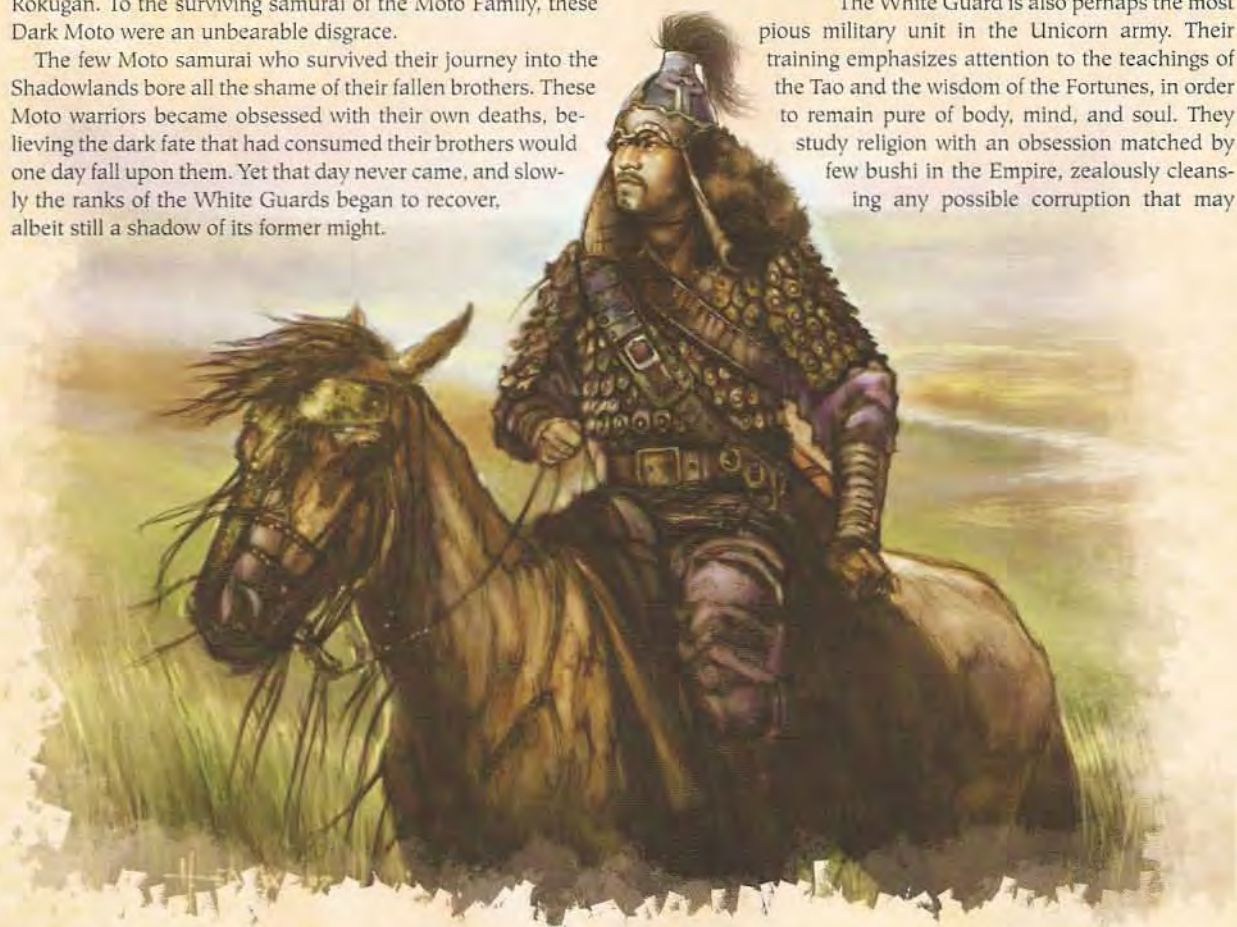
The few Moto samurai who survived their journey into the Shadowlands bore all the shame of their fallen brothers. These Moto warriors became obsessed with their own deaths, believing the dark fate that had consumed their brothers would one day fall upon them. Yet that day never came, and slowly the ranks of the White Guards began to recover, albeit still a shadow of its former might.

The White Guard dedicated itself to destroying the Dark Moto and restoring the family's honor. They were grim and humorless warriors, obsessed with their own deaths, but they were also fearless and utterly determined to erase the shame of their corrupted brothers.

They finally achieved their goal in 1133; as the Battle of Oblivion's Gate raged, Moto Gaheris led a Moto army spearheaded by the White Guard into the Shadowlands for a final battle against the Dark Moto. The battle turned on the fortunate treachery of Otaku Kamoko, who sacrificed her honor to assume command of the undead Moto and led them to their destruction. The White Guard finally erased the stain on their family's honor.

Today, the White Guard is returned to its former glory. They ride with their Khan, forming the most elite unit of the Khol forces. Since the Dark Moto have been crushed, the objective of the White Guard has changed. Now, every member of the White Guard is wholly devoted to serving the Khan. They do this not only because they believe it is the right thing, but also because Moto Gaheris personally helped them reclaim their honor. They are totally devoted to their Clan Champion, and serve the Khan both by defending his person and crushing his enemies. White Guard samurai never hesitate to risk their own lives in order to protect their Khan, nor do they shy from a fight with anyone or anything the Khan has named as an enemy. The bushi of the White Guard consider it a great privilege to die for their Khan in battle.

The White Guard is also perhaps the most pious military unit in the Unicorn army. Their training emphasizes attention to the teachings of the Tao and the wisdom of the Fortunes, in order to remain pure of body, mind, and soul. They study religion with an obsession matched by few bushi in the Empire, zealously cleansing any possible corruption that may



have infected them. By remaining as pure as they can, they believe they can avoid the shameful fate that befell their brothers a century earlier. Some claim the warriors of the White Guard are so pious that even the kami respect their devotion.

The combination of the White Guard's unsurpassed abilities with the horse, their singular skills in battle, and their intense religious devotion turns these samurai from simple warriors into something more like unrelenting forces of nature. The White Guard have the speed, mobility, and power of all Unicorn cavalry, but they also have the strength of their convictions.

The White Guard are very particular about who may join their ranks. Only Moto samurai with years of service and outstanding martial skills are accepted, and on top of those requirements, all successful candidates must demonstrate truly exceptional piety, as determined by the sensei of the White Guard dojo.

The White Guard fill the First Legion of the Khol Army, an oversized legion with a strength of 2,000 men. They accompany the Khan almost everywhere he rides, especially in times of war.

Utaku Battle Maidens

The Utaku Battle Maidens are considered the most elite cavalry warriors in all of Rokugan. They are also the most exclusive unit of the Unicorn Clan's army. Although their numbers are small compared to other great warrior Families such as the Moto, the Hida, and the Matsu, the Utaku Family nonetheless produce truly exceptional bushi, and their native martial qualities suffuse the very essence of the Battle Maidens. Known throughout the Empire for the lightning speed of their attacks

and their fearlessness and unwavering determination in battle, the Battle Maidens train with an intensity few military units in Rokugan can match. Nevertheless, it is the spiritual bond the Battle Maidens share with their steeds, inherited from Otaku herself, that makes these warriors so deadly and efficient.

Battle Maidens ride the famous Utaku steeds, with which they share an intimate connection. Unquestionably the finest breed of horse known to Rokugan, the Utaku steeds are larger, faster, and stronger than other horses; compared to them, the standard Rokugani horse seems more like a pony than a proper warhorse. In combat these steeds are as bold and fearless as the Battle Maidens who ride them. Surprisingly, while only the women of the Family can ride these magnificent horses, there is an old tradition among the Utaku dictating that it is the men of the Family who must breed and care for these legendary steeds. Over the course of generations, this tradition has turned the Utaku men into the most accomplished horse breeders of the Unicorn Clan.

A Battle Maiden shares a nearly spiritual bond with her warhorse. This almost empathic rapport makes the Utaku steed especially devoted to its Battle Maiden, and to a lesser degree to all other Shiotome. It takes many months for rider and horse to become truly bonded with one another, but once this connection is made, it can never be severed, as only death may part a Battle Maiden from her Utaku mount. The Utaku battle horse is so devoted to her that it would willingly give up its own life in order to protect her from harm. Similarly, many Shiotome have given up their own lives in order to save their beloved steeds. It is said that when a Battle Maiden loses her horse, a part of her

NPC: MOTO SEN, SHIREIKAN OF THE WHITE GUARD

Air: 4	Earth: 4	Fire: 4	Water: 4	Void: 4
Reflexes 5		Agility: 5	Stamina 5	
Honor: 4.3	Status: 6.0		Glory: 5.0	

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 4/White Guard 3

ADVANTAGES: Allies (Moto Chagatai 4/1), Balance

DISADVANTAGES: Ascetic, Idealistic

KATA: Howl of the Moto, Moto's Burning Strike, Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 4, Athletics 4, Battle 6, Defense 5, Horsemanship 7, Jiu-jitsu 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Horse Archery) 5, Lore: Burning Sands 5, Polearms (Lance) 4, Shadowlands Lore 2, Stealth 2, Theology (Fortunes, Tao) 5.

Moto Sen comes from a long line of warriors who have given up their lives in the service of the White Guard. Some of his direct ancestors were in fact part of the Moto White Guard army that succumbed to the Taint of the Shadowlands so many years ago. Despite this dark side of his heritage, Moto Sen is extremely proud of his bloodline. Like his father and grandfather, from whom he learned early in life of the importance of honor and discipline, Sen has worked hard all his life to become the best and purest warrior he can possibly be.

As a young boy, Sen dreamed of joining his father and grandfather in the White Guard, but he understood that gaining acceptance into this elite military unit was no easy

task. As soon as he joined the Junghar, Sen wholeheartedly devoted himself to mastering the Unicorn way of war. For years, he fought alongside the Khan's army and the White Guard without ever being allowed to even approach the White Guard Barracks. As he gained experience, however, Sen eventually attracted the attention of several samurai, and one of them finally invited him to join the Khol.

In the Khol Army, Moto Sen was one step closer to his goal, but he was not satisfied with only partial success. Redoubling his efforts, he continued to study the Tao and the Fortunes as his father had taught him. To his frustration, however, he could not seem to gain any sort of enlightenment from his studies.

One fateful day, however, everything changed. In the heart of the Burning Sands, fighting savage desert raiders, Moto Sen almost lost his life. Left for dead after a terrible battle in which his squadron was nearly wiped out, Sen struggled to survive in the desert without supplies. After clinging to life for weeks, he stumbled upon a wild horse, and eventually befriended him.

When Sen returned to Rokugan, those who had known him before this ordeal believed that he had been purified by his experience. Among them were officers of the White Guard, friends of his family, and he was finally invited to join the Guard. He has fought proudly alongside the Khan ever since, participating to countless armed conflicts, including the famous last battle of the War of the Rich Frog. Today, Moto Sen commands the entire White Guard, and is one of Moto Chagatai's most important commanders.

dies along with the animal. It can take months or even years for a Shiotome whose steed has fallen in combat to establish a meaningful rapport with another Utaku battle horse.

This unique relationship between rider and steed requires that the Shiotome have some of Otaku's blood coursing through her veins. Because of this, women from outside the Clan are almost never allowed to join the Utaku Battle Maidens. The presence of non-Unicorn women at the Utaku Battle Maiden Dojo is also considered bad for the student's morale and focus. On a few extremely rare occasions, women from other Great Clans have been allowed to become Battle Maidens, but they were exceptional individuals who had true Otaku blood and possessed all the virtues needed to be a Shiotome.

When Otaku swore she would never teach a male of her lineage to ride the steeds of her Family, and decided her title, power, and wealth would be passed on to her firstborn daughter, she set events into motion that would completely define her descendants' way of life. It is the women of the Family that have followed her footsteps as warriors, and the secrets she taught them built the foundations of the Utaku Battle Maiden Dojo. Every girl accepted into the school is expected to have the spiritual purity of her legendary ancestor. Otaku was known for her unwavering devotion and her unquestionable loyalty. She also held herself above worldly desires, making the safety of Shinjo her only concern. The Battle Maidens, who embody the virtues of their foremother, are thus expected to have the same purity of body and spirit.

Because they consider the propagation of their house vital to the Utaku Family, the Battle Maidens recognize the need for their members to retire, marry, and have children. To the Shiotome, this is no shameful thing, but there are rules to be followed. A Battle Maiden must serve her Clan for at least ten years before she is allowed to retire and have children. If she retires before that time, she is dishonored. In fact, the camaraderie and elan of the Battle Maidens is such that the vast majority of them refuse to have children until they are in their thirties, preferring to remain in active duty for as long as they can. Indeed, some have served in the unit for decades. Battle Maidens who have had children occasionally return to active duty, while others become sensei at the Utaku Battle Maiden Dojo.

The Battle Maidens are always assigned to the Khan's Army. Each of their legions is much larger than the standard Akodo legion, consisting of approximately 1,800 troops. In combat, the Battle Maidens are often deployed to charge the enemy line head-on, but they may also be tasked with countering a threat from the enemy's best cavalry.

When fighting other cavalry, they prefer to use their great speed to hit the enemy as fast and hard as they can, then move away and regroup.

When deployed for a shock charge, the Battle Maidens form up in close order, almost saddle to saddle, to create a concentrated irresistible mass. When charging with other heavy cavalry, they lead the way and bear the brunt of the collision with the enemy line. Of course, the point of placing the Battle Maidens in such a prominent place is that their obvious ferocity can shatter the enemy's nerve, making it much easier to break their formation. In fact, it requires more courage to withstand a Shiotome charge than it does to deliver it.

If they cannot break the enemy's will through intimidation, the sheer mass of the Utaku steed and Battle Maiden rider moving at full gallop frequently does the trick. The physical

impact of crashing into heavily armed warriors formed up in line can kill both attacker and defender, and causes significant physical displacement among the defenders, usually enough to open a significant hole that the second wave of the charge can exploit. And if that still does not achieve the desired effect, the Battle Maidens have more than enough courage and skill to fight it out with the enemy at close quarters and prevail.

NPC: UTAKU GORGANE, TAISA OF THE FOURTH KHOL LEGION (BATTLE MAIDENS)

Air: 3 Earth: 3 Fire: 4 Water: 4 Void: 3
Reflexes: 5 Stamina: 4

Honor: 5.0 Status: 5.8 Glory: 6.5

SCHOOL/RANK: Utaku Battle Maiden 5

ADVANTAGES: Quick, Way of the Land (Unicorn provinces)

DISADVANTAGES: Gaijin Name

KATA: Moto's Burning Strike, Otaku's Void, Striking as Wind, Victory of the Wind

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 5, Athletics 4, Battle (Skirmish) 5, Defense 5, Horsemanship 6, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Horse Archery) 4, Meditation 3, Polearms (Lance) 5

Utaku Gorgane bears the name of a gaijin. Although this brought no small amount of embarrassment to her when she was younger, she long ago decided that if the samurai of other Clans judge her on the sole basis of her name's gaijin origin, they were certainly not as civilized as they pretended to be.

Gorgane and her younger brother, Durh, were orphaned a few years before she passed her gempukku, and she became a surrogate mother by necessity to him. When she came of age, however, Gorgane decided to entrust Durh to her uncle, while she herself passed the series of rigorous tests that would allow her to enter into the prestigious Utaku Battle Maiden School. While she struggled through the first few years of her schooling, Utaku Gorgane had true Otaku blood in her veins, and would not allow herself to fail. She worked with relentless devotion to master the secrets of horsemanship and to hone her skills with the blade, bow, and lance. Eventually she succeeded, becoming one of the foremost Battle Maidens in the dojo, and going on to prove herself many times on the battlefield.

As swift and deadly as any of her sisters, Utaku Gorgane is proud of her accomplishments, but even prouder of the women she now commands. Taisha of the Fourth Legion of the Khol Army, Gorgane performs her duty solemnly and treats every soul under her command as a daughter. Calm-headed, knowledgeable, and compassionate, Gorgane is much appreciated and admired by both her fellow Battle Maidens and her other comrades in the Khol. Her expertise and the exploits of her legion have made her one of the most renowned Shiotome. Although her duties prevent her from seeing Durh as often as she would like, Gorgane remains very close to her brother, who is now a member of the Utaku Infantry.

Utaku Infantry

Since the day that Otaku decided to cut the males of her lineage out of their inheritance, the men were given other responsibilities while the women rode off to war as Shiotome cavalry. The males of the Utaku Family who wished to serve as bushi were forced to become foot soldiers (unless they were fortunate enough to be accepted into another Family's or Clan's bushi school).

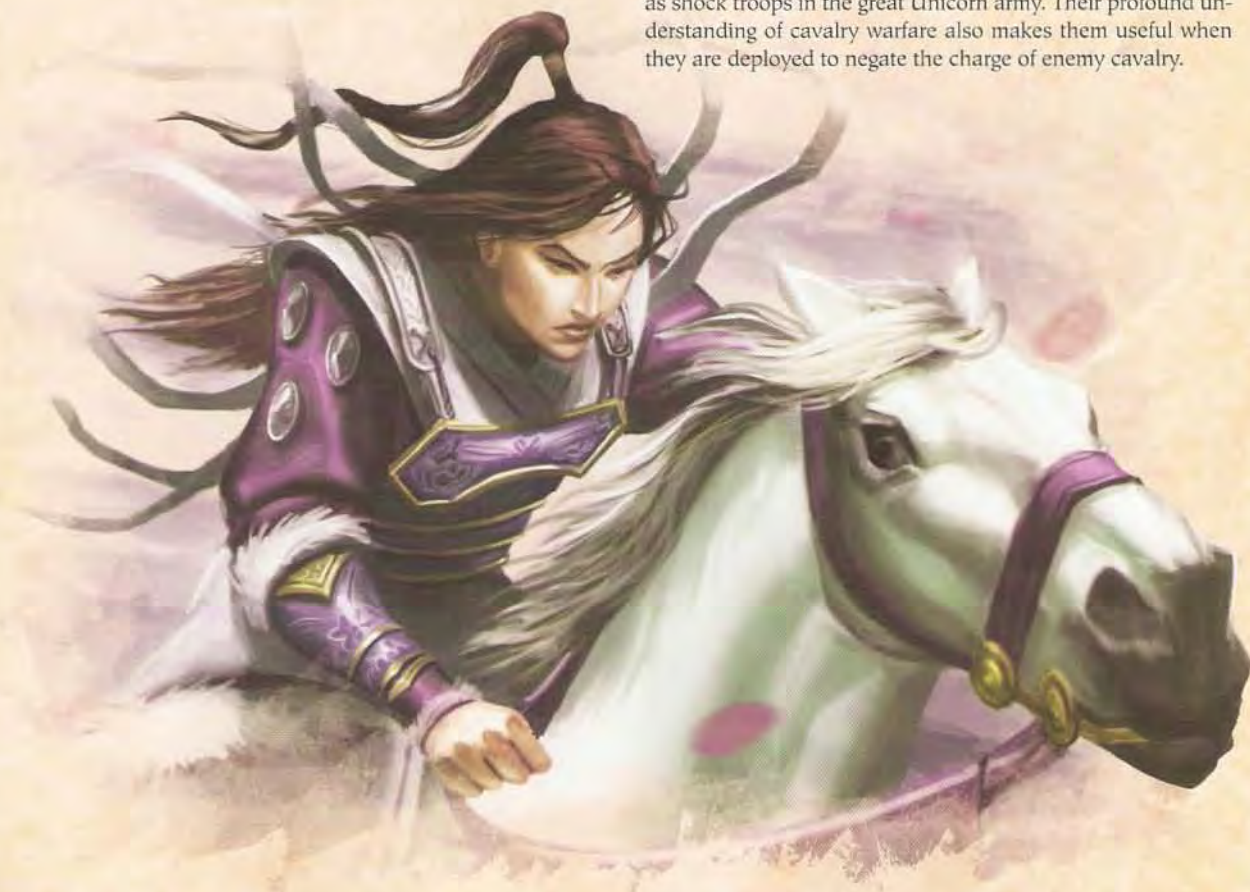
In compensation for being forbidden to ride horses into battle, the males of the Utaku were granted the privilege of learning all of their foremother's secrets on the caring and breeding of their family's magnificent steeds. Caring for the most valuable assets of the Family is considered not only an essential duty, but a great honor.

Not every Utaku man, however, can or is willing to become an honored stable master. Those who wish to become bushi are forced to learn to fight as infantry. Over the course of several generations, the Utaku males developed their own set of fighting techniques, eventually founding the Utaku Infantry School. Although some Unicorn samurai continue to pity the males of the Utaku Family for their second-class status within their own Family, the reputation of the Utaku Infantry has grown exponentially over the last decade. Their reputation as an elite force on the battlefield has been proven many times, and they are gradually winning the respect of other samurai... although some continue to view them as second-class warriors.

The typical Utaku Infantryman knows that most Rokugani view him as only a pale shadow of the great Battle Maidens. The knowledge that his enemies take his skills for granted only strengthens his resolve. The Utaku Infantryman is fearless and fast, able to move like the wind while on foot. His training makes him master of a weapon of his choosing. Let the enemy underestimate him; he will pay for his error in blood sooner or later. To an Utaku—be he a male Infantryman or a female Shiotome—failure only means that the task is not yet accomplished.

All Utaku Infantrymen learn their craft at the Utaku Infantry School. Officially, this highly exclusive school only accepts Utaku men as their students, but on rare occasions samurai of other Families have been allowed to join their ranks if they were willing to forsake their right to ride horses. On the battlefield, the Utaku Infantrymen are as silent and intimidating as was the Thunder Otaku. They do not shout orders or utter battle cries the way other samurai do. They do not even brag about their accomplishment or try to intimidate their foes with words. They believe silence unnerves the enemy more than noise, and is better suited to preparing oneself for battle.

Over the last decade, the reputation of the Utaku Infantry has greatly improved, especially within the Unicorn Clan. Because of this, Utaku men are now regarded as elite warriors, though not in the same league as the Battle Maidens. Because they have helped the Unicorn Clan win many victories, the Utaku Infantry have gained respect from the Moto, who now frequently invite them to march alongside their ranks in the legions of the Khol. The Utaku Infantry, like the Shiotome, serve as shock troops in the great Unicorn army. Their profound understanding of cavalry warfare also makes them useful when they are deployed to negate the charge of enemy cavalry.



**UTAKU DURH, CHUI OF 1ST COMPANY,
THIRTY-FIRST KHOL LEGION (UTAKU INFANTRY)**

Air: 3 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 3 Void: 2
Stamina 4

SCHOOL/RANK: Utaku Infantryman 3

ADVANTAGES: Bland, Daiko's Blessing, Way of the Land (Unicorn provinces)

DISADVANTAGES: Gaijin Name

KATA: Shinjo's Breath, Striking as Fire, Thundering the Sky
SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 3, Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 4, Calligraphy 2, Commerce 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Jiu-jitsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 2, Medicine 1, Meditation 1, Spears (Yari) 4

A young man of few words, Utaku Durh is the epitome of the Utaku Infantryman. He is a quietly dedicated man, and has quickly climbed the ranks to become one of the Utaku Infantry's youngest lieutenants. Mostly raised by his sister, Utaku Gorgane, and his great-uncle, a now

retired Stable Master, Durh bears the name of his gaijin father with dignity and honor. He remains close to both his great-uncle and his sister, who is now the *taisa* of an entire Battle Maiden legion, the Fourth Khol. He strongly believes that someday her deeds will be the subjects of songs and legends, and he is extremely proud of her. Until that day comes, Utaku Durh does everything he can to follow the example of his elder sister.

Utaku Durh does not feel comfortable in social situations. While he is completely at ease with his brother Infantrymen, he knows that other samurai — even other Unicorn — fail to understand Otaku's decision to prohibit the males of her bloodline to ride horses into battle. While he does not feel obligated to explain this decision, he does feel uncomfortable around those who view him and his brothers as a lower class of warrior. Durh is thus doubly dedicated to prove that the Utaku Infantry is a unit not only with its own merit, but also one as essential as the fearsome White Guard or his sister's renowned Battle Maidens.



The Utaku Infantry is divided into three separate legions, and the warriors of each specialize in a different kind of weapon. When an Utaku Infantryman begins his training, he must select among the katana, the yari, and the yumi as his specialty. From this point forward, he receives intensive training in the use of this weapon, and it will shape his identity as an Infantryman for the rest of his military career.

The soldiers of the Twenty-Third Khol Legion have mastered the katana, and their unit is also called the Swordsman's Legion. The soldiers of the Twenty-Seventh Khol Legion have mastered the yari, and are usually tasked with holding off enemy cavalry charges; they are also called the Pikeman's Legion. The Thirty-First Khol Legion train with the yumi, and it is called the Bowman's Legion.

Regardless of their choice of primary weapon, the Utaku Infantrymen all wield wide shields, which were introduced to the Ki-Rin during their many centuries in the Burning Sands. Holding these shields over their heads in an overlapping pattern, the Infantrymen can form an almost solid barrier against missile fire, making themselves less vulnerable on the advance. The shields are also used to form defensive walls, preventing the enemy from breaching the tight formations of the Utaku Infantrymen. This tactic is especially favored by the pikemen, who use the reach of their weapons to attack and the bulk of their shields to protect themselves.

During a long battle, the men frequently shift position, allowing those who have fought on the frontline to take a respite while fresher soldiers take their place. When an Infantryman is wounded, he is instantly replaced by a comrade, allowing him to move further back in the formation. Even the bowmen are trained to fight in this close formation, and they too carry the large shields. When confronting another unit of archers, half of the bowmen fire their weapons simultaneously, then take cover behind the shields held by the other half of the unit. This unique style of fighting has served the Utaku Infantry well in the past, and in recent years it has finally earned them the respect of their peers.

Shinjo Elite Guard

From the time that Lady Shinjo began her great journey through the unexplored lands beyond the borders of the Empire, there was always an honor guard charged to protect her. These soldiers, handpicked by Shinjo herself, rode beside her, and for hundreds of years they shielded her from harm as much as they possibly could. The honor guard of the House of Shinjo returned to guard her when she re-appeared in the Empire in 1132, and stood at her side when she purged the Kolat from their family. Many of them were killed fighting Imperial forces loyal to the corrupted Toturi I when Lady Shinjo attacked Otosan Uchi, but they stuck to their duty without flinching, and rode with her throughout the War Against the Darkness until the moment she departed for the Celestial Heavens.

The soldiers of the Elite Guard continue to uphold the tradition of their Family, but even they bear the stain of the Shinjo's past dishonor. Today, the Shinjo Elite Guard still exists, but they now serve the Khan in the name of war and glory. Those who serve in the Elite Guard continue to represent the best of what the Shinjo Family has to offer. Indeed, the warriors who are invited to join this very exclusive unit are not only proven bushi with experience in battle, but they are first and foremost paragons of honor and virtue.

Despite this, the Shinjo Elite Guard still has a lot to prove. The other Families of the Unicorn have a habit of ignoring the distinctions between the soldiers of the Elite Guard and the samurai who were corrupted by the Kolat. The Elite Guard is sometimes mistrusted and unfairly judged, but its members take it upon themselves to prove to the rest of Clan not only their own worth, but the worth of their entire Family. They know it will take a long time for the other Families to completely trust them, but the Shinjo Elite Guardsmen believe one day their Family will reclaim its rightful place at the head of the Unicorn Clan. When that day comes, the Elite Guard will be there to serve the Champion of the Clan, but until that time they have a duty to perform: They have to prove to the world they are as honorable as the name of their unit implies.

The Shinjo Elite Guard is a heavy cavalry unit, and forms two legions in the Khol Army. Like many bushi of their Family, they are expert horsemen and deadly warriors. They are well equipped and well trained, and used to fighting alongside other troops, particularly the Shinjo Horsebowmen with whom they regularly train.

In combat, the greatest strength of the Shinjo Elite Guard is the shock charge. In this, they are just as expert and courageous as the Utaku Battle Maidens. One of the favorite tactics of the Elite Guard is to form a massive triangle, with each soldier holding lances and shields. They use the shape of their formation and the weight it focuses in the forward point of the triangle to charge and break the enemy line. Because they have no effective way of protecting themselves against enemy archery, the Elite Guard often specifically target enemy archer units, unless they are working in concert with other units that can take care of such a nuisance.

Shinjo Horsebowmen

Unlike the Shinjo Elite Guard, which has now become the most prestigious Shinjo unit in the Unicorn Clan despite the Family's great dishonor, the Shinjo Horsebowmen are widely regarded as a group of disorganized misfits who would not know one end of a sword from another if their lives depended on it. This is in part because of the complexity and unpredictability of the Shinjo Horsebowmen fighting style. However, the soldiers of this unit actually enjoy this reputation, and do nothing to discourage it. Although their style, dress, manners, and reputation are strange — even by Unicorn standards — the Shinjo Horsebowmen are nevertheless an elite fighting unit that has been a significant asset to the armies of the Unicorn Clan over the years.

The Shinjo Horsebowmen are as talented as any bushi of their Family in horsemanship, but their fighting style derives from techniques tried, tested, and perfected by gaijin, and so it is virtually a given that other Rokugani will look down on them. The Shinjo's tradition of mounted archery is not something they brought with them from Rokugan; instead it originates with a barbarian tribe Lady Shinjo stumbled upon during her travels. Although only a few members of Shinjo's Family tried to master these techniques at first, they soon realized the way in which they combined the speed of the horse with the power of ranged attacks would be a considerable advantage in battle.

NPC: SHINJO RISA, TAISA OF THE THIRD Khol Legion (SHINJO ELITE GUARD)

Air: 4 Earth: 4 Fire: 4 Water: 4 Void: 2
Stamina 5

Honor: 4.1 Status: 5.8 Glory: 4.5

SCHOOL/RANK: Shinjo Bushi 5/Shinjo Elite Guard 1

ADVANTAGES: Way of the Land (Unicorn provinces)

KATA: Shinjo's Breath, Striking as Earth, Striking as Fire, Striking as Wind, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 4, Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Defense 5, Etiquette (Bureaucracy) 3, Games: Shogi 3, Horsemanship 6, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu (Yomanri) 4, Lore: Shinjo Family 5, Medicine 2, Meditation 1, Spears 5

Shinjo Risa's ancestors were among those who succumbed to the perversion of the Kolat, and she has always worked hard to prove, both to herself and the rest of the world, that she is an honorable samurai. As a child, Risa looked up to the soldiers of the Shinjo Elite Guard, and she regularly skipped her studies in order to spy upon them as they trained for battle in the fields. She learned much from watching these veteran soldiers, and when she was accepted into bushi school, it was with a single idea in mind: to one day become a soldier of the Elite Guard.

After her gempukku, Risa spent two decades working her way up through the ranks of the Unicorn military, initially serving as a private in the Junghar before being promoted to a light infantry unit and eventually to the Khol, where she finally fulfilled her dream of joining the Shinjo Elite Guard.

Shinjo Risa has been blessed with her Family's eternal sense of optimism, and nothing seems to deter her spirits. Friendly and compassionate, Risa has never lacked for friendship, but she remains dedicated to restoring the name and reputation of her Family. As a member of the Elite Guard, it is her duty to make sure the name Shinjo once again stands among the great Family names of Rokugan, as it should be. Until that time comes, she is more than happy to lead by example. Now in her late forties, Shinjo Risa commands one of the two legions of Elite Guard that serve in the Khan's Army.

In the centuries that followed, the Shinjo built on these techniques by incorporating elements from other gaijin peoples. After their return to Rokugan, the Horsebowmen even allowed archery techniques taught by other Clans to influence their own, and their fighting style evolved into its present form. The Horsebowman fighting style, perhaps more than any other, is a malleable one, and many scholars believe that a century from now it will be altogether changed.

The Shinjo Horsebowman style combines the great strength of Unicorn mobility with the long range of the dai-kyu, and is only taught to those accepted into this unit. The men and women who are accepted are all masterful riders and proven archers, and all hail from the Shinjo Family.

NPC: SHINJO JO, GUNSO OF 1ST SQUADRON, 1ST COMPANY, TENTH Khol Legion (SHINJO HORSEBOWMEN)

Air: 2 Earth: 3 Fire: 3 Water: 3 Void: 2
Reflexes: 3

Honor: 2.2 Status: 1.9 Glory: 2.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Shinjo Bushi 3/Shinjo Horsebowman 1

DISADVANTAGES: Brash, Dependent (Sister)

KATA: Shinjo's Breath, Striking as Wind, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling 3, Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 1, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 3, Jujitsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Horse Archery, Yomanri) 5, Medicine 2, Spears 3, Stealth 3

Shinjo Jo never dreamed of becoming a Horsebowman. He never even thought he would be a soldier. But necessity is a curious thing, and his path in life, it seems, was chosen for him. The son of a samurai artisan, Shinjo Jo always wanted to follow in his father's footsteps and pursue a quiet life of craft. But like so many of his disgraced Family, he swore an oath of allegiance to the new Moto Champion and, following his father's advice, learned to become a warrior. The first years of his training were especially taxing on young Jo, for he was a quiet, shy boy and had no heart for bushi training. The sensei of the Shinjo Bushi School even suggested he become a hunter and tracker, for Jo seemed much more comfortable working alone.

But in spite of these rebukes and setbacks, Jo continued to study to become a bushi. When he discovered that he had a talent for the bow, he truly became interested in the profession. The sensei, impressed by Jo's talent, encouraged him to concentrate on archery, ensuring he would grow to his full potential. Shinjo Jo completed his training and served several years in the Junghar as an infantryman, where he earned quite a reputation as an archer.

Eventually, Jo was invited to join the Shinjo Horsebowmen, where he has flourished. Shinjo Jo remains a soft-spoken man at heart (although he can be harsh and direct when giving orders or disciplining wayward subordinates). He does not speak to others unless he needs to pass along an order. However, everyone in his unit knows he is perhaps the most talented archer among them, and believe he has a great career ahead of him.

Although often misunderstood and underestimated by their foes, these mounted bowmen have time and again disrupted the plans of even the most confident enemy commanders. There are several reasons for this. For starters, a group of Shinjo Horsebowmen looks like a gaijin troop, with the soldiers having very little in common in the way of dress, equipment, and armor. Even the horses they ride come from various stocks, and the weapons they wield in combat often differ from one soldier to the next. The only truly uniform part of their equipment is their dai-kyu, in which they are all expert.

This Shinjo Horsebowmen also move like no other group on the battlefield. Although their maneuvers are actually well thought-out and calculated, they seem to lack any kind of pur-

pose or unity, and thus an enemy force encountering a group of Shinjo Horsebowmen can seldom predict what they will do next. This is one of their great strengths, and it guarantees that the Horsebowmen seldom, if ever, lost the initiative to their opponents.

Even though they wield different sorts of melee weapons, the Shinjo Horsebowmen seldom move close enough to the enemy to actually use them. Instead, they roam ceaselessly across the field, continually maneuvering to find the most effective angles from which they can strike with their bows. An enemy without missile weapons is helpless against their harassment, and will be worn down with time; but even an enemy with missile weapons will have a hard time targeting the Horsebowmen because of their speed and unpredictable movements.

A favorite tactic of Unicorn generals forced to fight on the defensive is to send the Shinjo Horsebowmen at an attacking enemy to harass them with missile fire and slow them down. This not only inflicts casualties before the enemy has even made contact, but it is also a drag on their morale and lessens the impetus of their attack. On the battlefield, these archers seem to be everywhere at once, firing arrows continually as they move. And an enemy who comes to a stop (or even slows down significantly) under such harassment becomes vulnerable to a countercharge by the Unicorn heavy cavalry.

Shinjo Horsebowmen tactics rely on two techniques they have learned from their nomadic friends and later refined. Both of them are deceptively simple and devastating in their effect. The first of these techniques, simply called arcing fire, allows the Horsebowmen to arc their arrows' trajectory. This grants them greater range, albeit at the cost of accuracy, but when an entire squadron of Horsebowmen uses this technique at the same time, the sheer weight of arrows released into the air is enough to inflict significant casualties. Arcing fire also allows the Horsebowmen to fire their arrows over friendly units, allowing them to benefit from the protection of another unit while they do what they do best.

The other technique, volley fire, calls for an entire formation of Horsebowmen to fire in unison at a signal, directing their fire at an area instead of individual targets. This brings a large concentration of archer fire down upon an enemy unit, and Horsebowmen officers are well-schooled in the art of anticipating enemy movements and aiming for where they will be when the arrows fall. The combination of these techniques, arcing fire and volley fire, makes the Horsebowmen among the most effective missile troops in the entire Unicorn Army.

Only members of the Shinjo Family can join the Horsebowmen. Since the Shinjo's disgrace, their number has dwindled, and the Horsebowmen have suffered along with the Family as a whole. Now, only three legions of Shinjo Horsebowmen remain. These serve in the Khol Army and are often sent into battle along with the Shinjo Elite Guard. Where speed and surprise is of the essence, the Shinjo Horsebowmen's particular expertise becomes quite useful.



Iuchi Scouts

For centuries, the Iuchi have been the leading shugenja Family of the Unicorn Clan. As such, most of them have become great scholars and teachers, but even among the peaceful Iuchi some are universally feared. This is mainly because the most militant among them make up a good portion of the Baraunghar Army, where they are masters of a particular application of the shugenja's art in war. The Family is also famous for producing loyal yojimbo, who serve with their shugenja in the Baraunghar.

Most importantly, however, the Iuchi have also produced scouts of such strange skill that even the Tsuruchi Bounty Hunters of the Mantis Clan fail to understand their ways. The Iuchi Scouts are the only Iuchi military unit to exist outside the Baraunghar. Initially formed out of necessity during the Unicorn Clan's journey through the Shadowlands, the Iuchi Scouts originally counted many shugenja among their ranks, who used different kinds of magic, both conventional and unconventional, to help them seek a safe path through the treacherous terrain of the land of Fu Leng. These scouts found a way back to the Emerald Empire and led their people to safety. They also established the basis of a tradition the Iuchi have found well worth keeping alive. The Family sees the importance of having people capable of leading them through all sorts of terrain, no matter how treacherous it might be. The profession, however, has gradually changed over the years, as new ideas and techniques are incorporated into the Iuchi's strange and cunning ways.

Now, hundreds of years later, these scouts have very little in common with the trailblazing shugenja who founded them. In fact, the modern Iuchi Scouts are all bushi. But in spite of their lack of magical aptitude, these contemporary Iuchi Scouts have developed an intuitive understanding of the land around them that allows them to move through rough terrain as easily as if it was the inside of their own house. Though they seldom use horses, they can move with impressive speed. Perhaps even more impressive, however, is their ability to remain unseen as they journey through almost any type of terrain.

The Iuchi Scouts' unfathomable knowledge of the ways of nature, however, is not their only asset. From very early on, the Scouts have learned to wield all sorts of weapons, from traditional Unicorn weapons to all types of gaijin arms. Combat techniques, military drills, and battle tactics are taught to all Iuchi Scouts. These techniques, combined with the Scouts' capability for speed and stealth, make them expert ambushers. It took very little time for the Iuchi Scouts to earn a reputation among their Unicorn comrades for being one of the Clan's most capable fighting units. This secret, however, is well guarded, and very few outside the Clan actually recognize the existence of this highly specialized fighting force.

The Iuchi Scouts long ago earned their place among the forces of the Khol Army. Today, the Khan uses them in his reserve companies, and the services they provide to the Khol Army are innumerable. Iuchi Scouts serve as cunning explorers, stealthy patrollers, and deadly ambushers. In times of peace, they explore the lands beyond Rokugan, practice their



fighting techniques, and hone their survival skills. In times of war, they lead Unicorn units through difficult and unfamiliar terrain, and spy out enemy positions.

Most importantly, however, the Iuchi Scouts are skilled in stealthy combat tactics. Hiding themselves in the wilderness, they frequently ambush enemy units, striking hard and fast before disappearing into the wild. Unicorn generals find them useful for harassing an advancing enemy, ambushing enemy supply caravans, keeping enemy scouts in check, and deceiving the enemy about the Unicorn's location, strength, and strategic movements. The Iuchi Scouts are an especially crucial part of all existing Unicorn plans for war against the Scorpion, whose shinobi are notorious spies, saboteurs, and assassins as well as scouts, and for whom strategic misdirection is central to the art of war.

There are roughly 5,000 Iuchi Scouts currently serving in the Khan's army. Although the Iuchi Scout School is a small and exclusive institution, it recently earned the praise of the Khan himself. Anyone from the Iuchi Family can hope to study at the dojo, provided he already has some sort of warrior training.

NPC: IUCHI TERUO, CHUI OF RESERVE COMPANY, TWELFTH KHOL LEGION (IUCHI SCOUTS)

Air: 3 **Earth:** 3 **Fire:** 3 **Water:** 4 **Void:** 2
Reflexes: 4 **Strength:** 4 **Agility:** 4

Honor: 3.2 **Status:** 1.9 **Glory:** 2.0

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 3

DISADVANTAGES: Overconfident

KATA: Striking as Fire, Striking as Water, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Horses) 3, Athletics 3, Defense 4, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4

Iuchi Teruo has always known that he wanted a career in the Unicorn armies, and believed his path in life would surely bring him to one of the Clan's elite units. What Teruo did not quite realize was that he would one day become one of the most important Iuchi Scouts in the Khol.

Teruo began his career like many other bushi of his family, and studied to become a yojimbo, hoping he would one day be allowed to serve in the prestigious Baraunghar alongside so the shugenja of his family. However, Teruo was blessed with insight few outside the Iuchi would understand. It was his older sister Tadako, herself an accomplished shugenja, who discovered Teruo's talent and made him aware of it. She also introduced her brother to the man who would later become his mentor.

In no time, Teruo became a cunning Iuchi Scout, and he reveled in learning the ways of this strange and often misunderstood profession. He served for years in one of the reserve companies of the Khol, and has finally been promoted to the rank of chui, in command of the entire company.

A friendly and outgoing man, Iuchi Teruo enjoys the prestige his position brings him, but the frequent praise he receives from his superiors makes him feel uncomfortable. Still, he knows the soldiers under his command well, and with them by his side he will continue to support the future successes of the Unicorn Clan.

War Dog Masters

During their travels through the Burning Sands, the Unicorn Clan encountered all sorts of foreign tribes. From these people they learned many techniques, which included the way of the horse as well as several fighting styles from which their own peculiar combat techniques have since evolved. One of the strangest things they encountered during their travels, however, was undoubtedly the war dog trainers, whose specialty was to train aggressive dogs to fight alongside their masters in battle.

Often used by the tribes of the steppes, pack dogs served as hunting animals. In times of war, however, some of these dogs were used in battle, set loose against their unsuspecting enemies. The first time the people of the Clan of the Ki-Rin encountered a pack of war dogs, they paid in blood. Caught by surprise and overwhelmed by the sheer ferocity and tenacity of these animals, the Ki-Rin learned an important lesson. They too would train their dogs for war. Through peaceful negotiations, the tribes who trained these war dogs eventually joined the Ki-Rin Clan. Their experts learned from the Ki-Rin how to create makeshift armor for their animals, which increased their chances of survival during combat. In return, the Ki-Rin also learned all of their training secrets, which they now zealously protect.

Today, the Ki-Rin war dogs form a very special breed of animals. Large, fast, and as merciless as wolves, the Ki-Rin dogs are rigorously trained from the moment they are born. These dogs are also trained to wear armor, a type of barding adjusted to fit snugly over the body of this especially large breed of dog. Because they are bred for strength and speed, and learn to live with armor from a very young age, these dogs seem just as agile with their armor as without. Although there are not many Unicorn samurai who would want to spend their days surrounded by dogs, those who do proudly call themselves the War Dog Masters.

The War Dog Masters are a very small group of about 800 samurai. Each War Dog Master owns and controls a pack of Ki-Rin war dogs which are loyal to him. Each pack numbers between 20-40 animals, not counting the young pups who will eventually replace older or wounded dogs. Each dog in a pack obeys its master and would gladly give up its own life to protect him. In times of peace, the Ki-Rin dogs are often used for hunting and tracking, and thus War Dog Masters are sometimes called to work with Shinjo trackers and Iuchi Scouts.

Generally speaking, the War Dog Masters are a misunderstood lot, even within their own Clan. All that is certain is that the bond they share with their animals seems almost as strong as the nearly spiritual connection between an Utaku Battle Maiden and her steed. The War Dog Masters, however, say this is not so, that the kinship they share with their animals goes beyond even that. They argue that they are not separate from the pack – they are an essential and indispensable part of it. Just as any of his dogs would die to protect him, a War Dog Master would surely do everything in his power to save the lives of his dogs. A War Dog Master would never kill one of his dogs, even one that has spun out of his control (though no evidence suggests this has never happened). Even old dogs that are no longer fit for war remain with the pack, and these are often the favored companions of veteran War Dog Masters. While many view this as a sign of weakness on the part of the Masters, they argue it is the proper way of showing respect to their old companions, as well as the best way of acknowledging all their old dogs have done for them.

NPC: IDE MOMOKO, WAR DOG MASTER

Air: 4 Earth: 3 Fire: 4 Water: 4 Void: 4
Stamina: 4

Honor: 2.2 Status: 2.9 Glory: 2.5

SCHOOL/RANK: Moto Bushi 2/War Dog Master 3

ADVANTAGES: Bland, Daikoku's Blessing, Way of the Land (Unicorn provinces)

DISADVANTAGES: Gaijin Name

KATA: Shinjo's Breath, Striking as Fire, Thundering the Sky

SKILLS: Animal Handling (Dogs) 6, Athletics 4, Defense 5, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 5, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4

Ide Momoko is the youngest War Dog Master of the Unicorn Clan. Even as a child, Momoko always preferred the company of her pets, and found it excruciatingly boring to spend time with people. She never really enjoyed the games the other children of her Clan played, and spent every possible moment of her precious time with her animal friends. Reserved and studious, Ide Momoko had everything to succeed in life in a properly retiring profession, but despite her parents' wishes, she decided not to become a courtier. Instead, she boldly followed the footsteps of the strangest and least understood of her uncles, a man who lived among dogs.

Under the tutelage of this veteran War Dog Master, Momoko learned everything she had ever wanted to learn. She is now content to spend her days with her pack of dogs, which she considers her only true friends. Like most of her profession, Momoko is reclusive, and she rarely spends any amount of time with people. The only human beings she sees are the other soldiers of the Khol, but none of them ever fraternize with her. Instead, they watch her dogs from a distance, with a strange mixture of awe and fear in their eyes. Still, Ide Momoko is glad to serve in the Army of the Khan, and she does everything in her power to make sure that the dire reputation of the War Dog Masters continues. One day, she might even find someone worthy of her teachings, but until that day comes Ide Momoko is perfectly content with her pack of Ki-Rin war dogs.

War Dog Masters and their packs serve in the Khol. Unlike most other exclusive units of the Unicorn Clan, the War Dog Masters do not form legions. Instead, they serve in the reserve squadrons of the Khan's Army. Sometimes deployed to protect siege engineers and other specialists, War Dog Masters also excel at breaking the ranks of an enemy formation through shock charge. Indeed, the simple sight of a pack of large and heavily armored Ki-Rin war dogs is often enough to unnerve even the bravest of soldiers. When they attack under the guidance of their masters, they can wreck havoc in an enemy line. The war dogs have proven especially effective against elite enemy units, since most of them have no experience in fighting savage animals. (It would probably be unwise, however, to employ war dogs against a Crab elite unit.) War dogs are also used to exploit openings in the enemy line and pursue fleeing soldiers.

Although anyone can become a War Dog Master, only candidates who display a great affinity with the Ki-Rin breed can hope to learn the art. Because there are very few packs of Ki-Rin war dogs available, and because there are only a limited number of War Dog Masters in the entire Unicorn Clan, only pupils who demonstrate they have both the will and empathy to become great pack leaders and the vocal cords to shout orders through the din of battle are accepted into this strange, elite profession.

New Mechanics

Two of the units described in this chapter have been included as mechanical options in previous Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition products.

The Unicorn White Guard appear as a Path in *The Four Winds*, p. 19.

The Shin[Jo Scouts appear as a Basic School in *The Four Winds*, p. 179.

New Basic School: Utaku Infantry School (Bushi)

There was a time when serving in the Utaku Infantry was considered a consolation prize thrown to the men of the Family. But under the Khans, this has gradually changed, as the Utaku Infantry have been incorporated into Khol Army tactics and doctrine as crucial follow-on forces, assigned to press any advantage gained by heavy cavalry charges, as well as keeping the enemy busy while the cavalry regroups.

In keeping with the new respect they receive from their Unicorn peers, Utaku Infantrymen receive intense training in battlefield tactics as well as their chosen weapon specialty. These tactics emphasize speed and quickness of both thought and action; a key point of doctrine is that the enemy must always react, never act. This approach applies mainly to battlefield maneuvers, but it also serves the Utaku Infantryman well in skirmishes and individual combat.

BENEFIT: +1 Agility

HONOR: 2.5

SKILLS: Athletics, Battle, Defense, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu (Yomanri), Spears, any one High Skill

STARTING OUTFIT: As Shinjo Bushi (see *The Four Winds*, p. 179), minus steed

Techniques:

RANK 1: CHOOSE YOUR WEAPON

When he begins his training in earnest, an Utaku Infantryman chooses to specialize in one of the three main weapons taught by the school: the yari, the katana, or the yumi. You gain a free Rank in the weapon skill chosen and a free Emphasis in that skill. This Rank does not count towards your maximum Skill Rank during character creation. You gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to twice your Agility while using that weapon.

RANK 2: SPEED OF MY SISTERS

While Utaku males are forbidden from riding the famous steeds of their Family, nothing prevents them from learning to move like the wind to keep up with their kin. You move as if your Water Ring is 2 Ranks higher. Additionally, you gain a bonus equal to your Fire Ring to your attack rolls.

RANK 3: ATTACK ON ALL FRONTS

Otaku, the Family's founder, smiles upon all her children. Those who join the Utaku Infantry are no exception. Like their Battle Maiden sisters, the male bushi of the Family also learn to be not only quick on their feet, but also to make surprisingly speedy attacks. You may make an additional attack each round while using your chosen weapon. In addition, you gain a bonus in rolled dice equal to your Honor Rank to your Initiative Rolls.

RANK 4: THE UTAKU'S THUNDER

Like the famous Battle Maidens of their Family, the men of the Utaku Infantry are guided by the purity of their souls. After making a skill roll or damage roll, you may spend a Void Point to re-roll all dice with a result of less than your Honor +2. You may choose to keep either your original result or the second result for the dice re-rolled in this manner. You may not choose to re-roll more than once per roll. In addition, you may move your entire movement allowance (i.e., your Water Ring x 10') as a simple action. Finally, you gain a bonus to your attack rolls equal to double your Fire Ring; this replaces the bonus gained at Rank 2.

RANK 5: EPIC OF MY NAME

At the highest level of training and skill the Utaku Infantryman becomes a dizzying whirlwind on the battlefield. Your movements are unpredictable and unavoidable. You may gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit equal to (your Agility minus your attacker's Agility) x 5, with this bonus being calculated separately for each opponent. At the start of each round, you may choose to forego all instances of this bonus during that round in order to gain one additional attack that round. You may only use this additional attack against opponents with lower Agility.



New Advanced School: War Dog Masters

The Unicorn War Dog Masters is one of those elite groups that is both select and self-selected. Only substantial experience and demonstrated talent for the handling of animals will qualify one to even train to become a leader of a Ki-Rin war dog pack, and only a small, distinct group feel the calling to join the War Dog Masters. No matter how much one may learn about handling animals from study and hard experience, it is almost impossible to become a competent War Dog Master without an innate, almost mystical, bond with animals in general, and the alarming, yet splendid Ki-Rin dogs in particular.

REQUIRED RINGS/TRAITs: Air 4; Perception 4, Stamina 4

REQUIRED SKILLS: Animal Handling (Dogs) 5, Defense 4, Hunting 4, any one Weapon Skill 4

OTHER: Only samurai from the Unicorn Clan can join the War Dog Master Dojo.

Techniques:

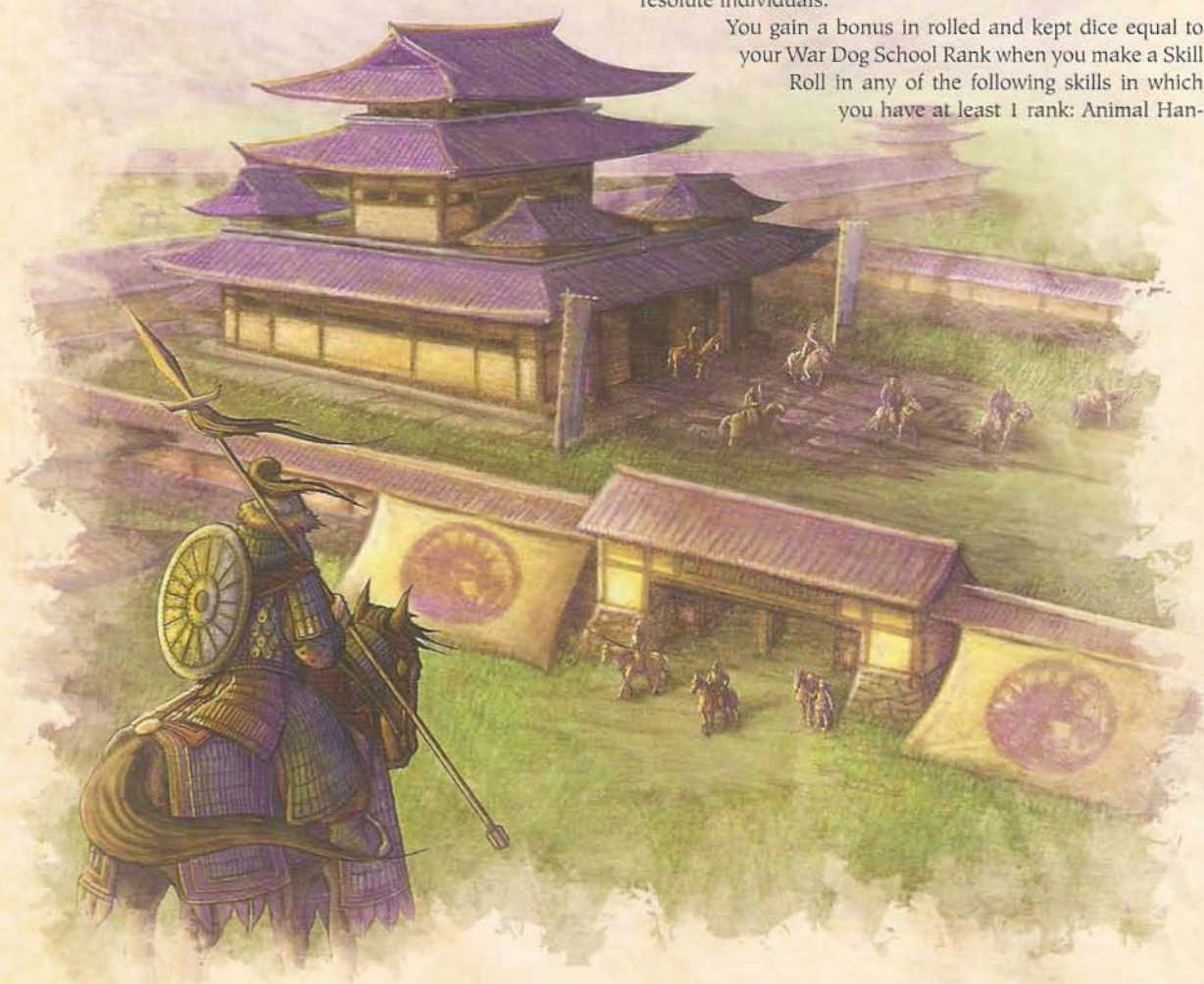
RANK 1: SPEED OF THE KI-RIN

War Dog Masters are trained to move as fast as the animals they command. In addition to being surprisingly speedy when they move across land, they are deceptively quick in battle. You may move as if your Water Ring is 2 Ranks higher. Also, you gain a bonus in rolled dice equal to your War-Dog School Rank to your Initiative Rolls. Furthermore, when you are within 10' of a Ki-Rin war dog, you gain a bonus of +5 to your TN To Be Hit, and all of your war dogs that are within 10' of you gain a bonus of +5 to their TN To Be Hit as well.

RANK 2: RESOLVE OF THE KI-RIN

The Ki-Rin war dogs are relentless beasts wholly devoted to any task to which they set their minds — or more properly, any task to which their master sets them. The War Dog Masters who command them are just as single-minded and their very special training makes them extremely resourceful and resolute individuals.

You gain a bonus in rolled and kept dice equal to your War Dog School Rank when you make a Skill Roll in any of the following skills in which you have at least 1 rank: Animal Han-



dling, Athletics, Deceit, Hunting, Stealth, Traps, or any Lore Skill. In addition, when you spend a Void point to reduce the number of Wounds you take from a single attack, you reduce the number of Wounds by 15 (rather than the usual 10). Finally, all of your war dogs that are within 10' of you gain a +1k1 bonus to their attack rolls.

RANK 3: FEROCITY OF THE KI-RIN

The Ki-Rin breed is an especially ferocious type of dog. When a War Dog Master bonds with Ki-Rin war dogs, he teaches a lot of tricks to the animals, but he also learns a lot from them. One of the qualities the War Dog Master comes to share with his war dogs is the beasts' bloodthirstiness in battle.

You gain a bonus to the totals of your attack and damage rolls equal to your Honor Rank +1. You also gain a +1k1 bonus to all damage rolls. In addition, you gain a bonus to your Stamina Rolls equal to your Water Ring.

Finally, all of your war dogs that are within 10' of you gain a +1k1 bonus to their damage rolls. You may spend a Void Point to reduce damage done to one of your dogs that is within 10' of you by 15.

NEW CREATURE: KI-RIN WAR DOG

Air: 1	Earth: 3	Fire: 2	Water: 4
Reflexes: 3	Stamina: 4	Agility: 4	

Rolls When Attacking: 4k3	Rolls For Damage: 2k2
TN to Be Hit: 20 (25 in armor)	Wounds Per Wound Level: 9

SPECIAL: A Ki-Rin war dog's movement is calculated as if its Water Ring was 2 Ranks higher.

The Ki-Rin war dog is a breed trained exclusively at the War Dog Master Dojo. Originally used only by the Moto Family, this very special type of dog is now the exclusive possession of the Unicorn as a whole. Only the sensei and graduates of this school can hope to truly bond with these wondrous animals. Compared to domesticated dogs or even their feral counterparts, Ki-Rin war dogs are stronger, tougher, faster, smarter, and more aggressive.

Most of them also wear armor especially designed for them. These suits of armor are the equivalent of a typical light armor worn by many samurai and bestow on the Ki-Rin war dogs a +5 bonus to their TN To Be Hit. Each suit of this armor costs 10' koku.

New Path: Baraunghar Warrior (Bushy)

The Baraunghar Army is a unique institution in that it is an army in which bushi play a secondary role to shugenja. Their main duty on the battlefield is to protect the Baraunghar shugenja at all times — physically attacking the enemy is something of an afterthought. It requires a special kind of training to fill this role — something like a yojimbo, but with the ability to function as a line infantry unit when necessary.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Moto Bushi 2, Shinjo Bushi 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Re-enter the same school at rank 3

Technique: The Yojimbo's Blade

Arguably the most important duty with which a bushi of the Baraunghar is charged is protecting its shugenja. You are especially well trained at defending comrades-in-arms in the midst of battle. At the beginning of a skirmish, you may declare anyone to be your ally. As long as you are within 10' of that designated ally, you and your ally both gain a bonus to TN to Be Hit equal to your Water Ring + 5. Also you gain a +0k1 bonus to your damage rolls when you are within 10' of your ally.

However, if a shugenja is designated as an ally by more than one Baraunghar Warrior and is in range of more than one, this bonus does not stack. The shugenja must choose one Baraunghar Warrior as his designated protector for that round.

New Path: Baraunghar Shugenja (Shugenja)

The shugenja of the Baraunghar Army are a crucial part of the genius of the Unicorn Clan's art of war. They are trained to use their powers of manipulating the kami to support the Unicorn soldiers, but in a highly focused and unusually powerful way. As a shugenja of the Baraunghar, you are expected to focus on one thing in battle, and one thing only: enhancing the mobility that already constitutes a great strength for your Clan's soldiers. Your abilities are somewhat narrower than most of your shugenja peers, but in exchange, you may carry with you the pride of knowing that victory for the Unicorn rides on your intimacy with the kami.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Horiuchi Shugenja 2, Iuchi Shugenja 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Re-enter the same school at rank 3

Technique: Warrior of the River

One of the most important roles of the Baraunghar Shugenja is to augment his allies and stymie his enemies with blessings and curses from the kami. When targeting an ally with a spell that grants bonuses of any kind, you may spend 2 Raises to target another ally with the same spell. The spell is still only

considered to have been cast once; it simply gains an addition target. The second target must still be within the range of the spell, however.

In addition, you also gain a Free Raise whenever you cast Counterspell.

New Path: Iuchi Scout (Bushi)

Once trailblazers for the Unicorn Clan, the Iuchi Scouts have more recently settled into a purely military role, serving in both the Baraunghar and the Khol. Their role is to scout out the surrounding terrain as well as reconnoiter and harass the enemy. The earliest Iuchi Scouts were shugenja whose unusual understanding of nature enabled them to cope with difficult and mysterious terrain with uncommon ease. Their descendants take that tradition and use its basic principles to move and strike quickly and stealthily.

On campaign, Iuchi Scouts will usually find themselves detached from the main body of the Khol, looking for enemy dispositions and ambushing their scouts whenever possible. The Khan, in fact, relies on the Iuchi Scouts to help keep the enemy blind as to his position and movements. They also have standing orders to strike at targets of opportunity, such as enemy supply depots. They are used to operating alone or in small groups far from friendly lines, returning to the main body of the army only to report and receive new orders.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 1

BENEFIT: +1 Perception

HONOR: 2.5

SKILLS: Athletics, Hunting, Investigation, Kenjutsu, Kyujutsu, Stealth, any one Skill

STARTING OUTFIT: Katana, wakizashi, yumi, 20 arrows, light armor, kimono and sandals, traveling pack; 8 koku

PATH OF ENTRY: This is an entry-level Path

PATH OF EGRESS: Any Unicorn Bushi School 1 (if criteria to join is met)

Technique: Locate the Foe

Reconnaissance of enemy military units and neutralizing enemy scouts looking for the Unicorn are now two of the Iuchi Scouts' primary duties. Their early training emphasizes finding the enemy and staying alive once you have found him.

You gain a bonus to your Horsemanship, Hunting and Stealth Skill Rolls and your Initiative Rolls equal to your Perception.

New Path: Junghar Defender (Bushi)

In the Junghar Army, soldiers' approach to individual combat mirrors their strategic doctrine. Designed as a defense force, the Junghar do not train to take the offensive, but to patrol the Unicorn Lands and hold them against an attacking enemy. In a fight, individual Junghar soldiers are trained (no matter what they may have learned elsewhere) to assume a defensive crouch first, and to attack the enemy from that posture, and only at moments when the likelihood of success is high.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 3

PATH OF ENTRY: Any Unicorn Bushi School (except Utaku Battle Maiden) 2, Any ronin bushi school (if you are a Unicorn bushi) 2

PATH OF EGRESS: Re-enter the same school at Rank 3

Technique: Shield of the Khan

While in the Full Defense posture, you may immediately make one free attack against any foe that attacks you and misses your TN to Be Hit by 10 or more. This attack is treated as a Standard Attack Action (and occurs while you are in the Full Defense posture). You switch to the Attack posture after your attack, and you may not switch to the Full Defense posture during this round or the next.

Additionally, while in the Full Defense posture, you gain a bonus to your TN to Be Hit and your attack rolls equal to your Water Ring.

New Path: Khol Raider (Bushi)

If the Junghar soldiers are trained to defend first and attack later, the soldiers of the Khol Army are trained to attack first and also attack later. Individual combat training in the Khol, at its highest levels, teaches you to raise your energy level as the number of foes increases. It also teaches you to draw strength from your comrades, for while a single warrior of the Khol is to be feared, a group of them fighting in cooperation with each other will never know defeat.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 4

PATH OF ENTRY: Any Unicorn Bushi School (except Battle Maiden) 3, Any ronin bushi school (if you are a Unicorn bushi) 3

PATH OF EGRESS: Re-enter the same school at Rank 4

Technique: Blade of the Khan

The soldiers of the Khol specialize in offensive strategies and fighting techniques, and anyone invited to join the mightiest

of the three Unicorn armies must learn to attack as his first instinct.

At the beginning of each combat round, you gain a bonus of +1k0 for each samurai within 30' of you, or +2k0 for each Unicorn samurai. The maximum number of dice you may gain with this technique is equal to your Path of Entry School Rank plus one. These dice may be divided up as bonuses to any attack or damage roll, or any other action you wish to take during that round. Any dice not used by the end of the round are lost.

New Path: Shinjo Elite Guard (Bushi)

Though they are superb battlefield warriors, the Shinjo Elite Guard have never forgotten their origins as Lady Shinjo's own personal bodyguards. To this day, their reputation as bushi re-

lies most heavily on their individual skill in mounted combat, particularly in using the height, reach, and speed granted by their steed to defeat a foe, or even a number of foes in rapid succession.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 4

PATH OF ENTRY: Shinjo Bushi 3

PATH OF EGRESS: Shinjo Bushi 4

Technique: Shinjo's Speed

The Shinjo Elite Guardsman's mastery of mounted combat is breathtaking. While mounted, you gain a Free Raise on all Bugei Skill rolls, and an additional Free Raise on all attack rolls against infantry (i.e., 2 Free Raises total when attacking an unmounted target). You also gain a bonus equal to twice your Water Ring to your TN to Be Hit and attack rolls.



New Path: Shinjo Horsebowman (Bushi)

The Unicorn are the unquestioned masters of mounted archery, and the Shinjo Horsebowmen are the finest horse archers the Clan has to offer. They are trained in various obscure and (to the average Rokugani warrior) confusing tactical maneuvers to aid them on the battlefield, but the core of their strength is mastery of the dai-kyu and their exceptional skill in delivering accurate, rapid fire from a horse moving at speed.

TECHNIQUE RANK: 2

PATH OF ENTRY: Shinjo Bushi 1

PATH OF EGRESS: Shinjo Scout 1

Technique: Hanari's Technique

Devised by Shinjo Hanari, a Unicorn master of horse archery, this technique allows the Shinjo Horsebowmen to fire rapidly from horseback without sacrificing accuracy. While you are on



horseback, all penalties to Kyujutsu Skill Rolls are reduced by 5. You gain 3 Free Raises to make an additional attack while using a bow from horseback.

New Dojo

The following dojo are described earlier in this chapter. The mechanics described below follow all rules and guidelines included in Chapter Eight of *The Emerald Empire*. Three more Unicorn dojo are presented in that book: Dojo of the Center, Gatherer of Winds Temple and Shinjo Dojo. Those three dojo have additional Schools and Paths from this book available to

them. They are as follows:

- Dojo of the Center: Khol Raider.
- Gatherer of Winds Temple: Baraunghar Shugenja.
- Shinjo Dojo: Shinjo Elite Guard, Shinjo Horsebowman.

The Dojo of the Left

LOCATION: Duzaki Toshi

SCHOOLS: Moto Bushi, Shinjo Bushi, Shinjo Scout

PATHS: Junghar Defender, Shinomen Guard

BENEFIT: Students of The Dojo of the Left gain a +1k0 bonus to all Defense Skill Rolls.

The Dojo of the Right

LOCATION: Shiro Iuchi

SCHOOLS: Iuchi Shugenja

PATHS: Baraunghar Shugenja, Baraunghar Warrior, Moto Priest of Death

BENEFIT: Students of the Dojo of the Right gain a +1k0 bonus to their spellcasting rolls when casting Water spells.

Heritage Tables

To say that the history of the Unicorn Clan is unique among the Great Clans is something of an understatement. Because so many historical events are peculiar to them and have not really affected other Clans, the list of battles in which they have been involved is quite unusual. When creating a Unicorn character and using the Heritage Tables in the *Legend of the Five Rings* Roleplaying Game Third Edition core rule book pp. 153-55, you may use the following in place of Heritage Table 3A – Great Battles.

Moto characters should subtract 3 from the result of the roll.

Roll	Result
-2-0	The Blood War: Well out of sight of the rest of the Empire, the Moto fought the first battles against the Living Darkness. Your ancestor was one of the few who survived. You gain 1 Glory Rank and an extra Void point that you may spend when you are engaged in a skirmish with servants of the Shadow Dragon. This Void Point is no longer available after the skirmish ends.
1-2	The Moto War: While the other Great Clans gathered to fight the Living Darkness at the Battle of Oblivion's Gate in 1133, the Unicorn fought their own desperate struggle to finally crush the Dark Moto and end the stain on the Clan's honor that they represented. You gain 1 Glory Rank and an extra Void Point that you may spend when you are engaged in a skirmish against Shadowlands creatures. The Void Point is no longer available when the skirmish ends.

3-4	A Battle in Gaijin Lands: You have an ancestor who distinguished himself in a skirmish or battle fought in a corner of the world that, to the Rokugani mind, will forever remain obscure. It is remembered within the Clan by those who honor the history of the centuries of exile, but not outside the Clan. You gain 5 Glory Points and 1 Rank in Lore: Gaijin Cultures.
5	The Return of the Unicorn (The Kaiu Wall): Your ancestor distinguished himself in the initial assault on the northern Kaiu Wall during the Unicorn's return from the gaijin lands. You Gain 1 Glory Rank and 1 Rank in the Battle Skill.
6-7	The Return of the Unicorn: After riding through the Crab army, the Unicorn faced the combined armies of the Lion and the Scorpion Clans. The terrain allowed the Unicorn's obvious superiority in cavalry to make up for their lack of numbers. You gain 1 Honor Rank and 1 Rank in the Battle Skill.
8-9	Battle of the Chrysanthemum Petals: Your ancestor was among the Unicorn army that fought off the invading Dark Moto horde led by the corrupted Moto Tsume in 827. You gain 1 Glory Rank and 1 Rank in Lore: Shadowlands.
0	Battle of the White Shore Plains: In the mid-Ninth Century, the Scorpion offered to aid the Lion in a war against the Unicorn, expecting an easy victory by the former. The Lion army, however, stood by while the Unicorn focused on the Scorpion army and shattered it. You gain 1 Glory Rank, a Minor Ally (Devotion: 1) in the Akodo Family and a Sworn Enemy in the Bayushi Family.

The Battle of the Cresting Wave, 716

The Battle of the Cresting Wave is a signal event in the Crab Clan's history and the history of the Empire as a whole. It also stands, even after 450 years, as a textbook illustration of all the principal aspects of the Crab art of war: their engineering skill, their indomitable willpower on the defensive, and their raw fury on the attack.

The battle was the climax of The Maw's attempt to destroy the Empire by military force, and the history of that campaign is well known. After overrunning the Hiruma and Kuni lands with a vast army of oni and other foul spawn of the Shadowlands, The Maw marched north toward the Seigo River to crush the Hida and lay open the rest of the Empire to destruction. When Crab Champion Hida Banuken reorganized his forces at his last remaining stronghold, Kyuden Hida, he realized that he would have to make what could be the last stand of the Crab on the northern bank of the Seigo, or else allow a debilitating siege of his castle.

A pitched battle on open ground, however, was out of the question. Banuken could muster barely more than 20,000 soldiers, including ronin and scattered detachments from other Clans. While no precise estimate of the Shadowlands horde could be made (nor have any historians since then hazarded one), a quick visual inspection made it plain that the Crab would be swamped.

The Kaiu could build defensive works to keep them at bay, but with The Maw only two days' march from Kyuden Hida, they had no time. However, a young shugenja named Kuni Osaku stepped forward, working powerful magic that kept the Shadowlands army from crossing the Seigo River for an astonishing 73 days, until the effort drained the last life from her body. Her sacrifice allowed the Kaiu engineers just enough time to erect stout defensive works that later became the basis for the Great Carpenter Wall. These defenses included a network of tunnels that extended beneath the riverbed and emptied out onto the far bank.

During this time, The Maw, unable to nullify Osaku's enchantments, could only wait on the southern bank. When she finally expired, the waters of the Seigo subsided, exposing the riverbed and allowing the Shadowlands horde to cross. Banuken and his small force stood ready for them, with the Hida heavy infantry, intermixed with ronin and Clan allies, manning the walls, while the fell and revenge-crazed Hiruma waited in reserve to avenge the loss of their homelands. The Maw's minions launched themselves in an unending wave against the Crab fortifications, but the newly-erected works held, and the genius of the Kaiu and the will of the Hida kept them at bay (see map 1).

But an Oni Lord is not easily deterred, and The Maw rallied his forces to launch them again and again against the Crab defenders, who fought back with siege engines and destructive spells as well as steel. Hida Banuken himself patrolled the battlements, rushing with his personal guard to wherever the Shadowlands beasts seemed most likely to gain a foothold.

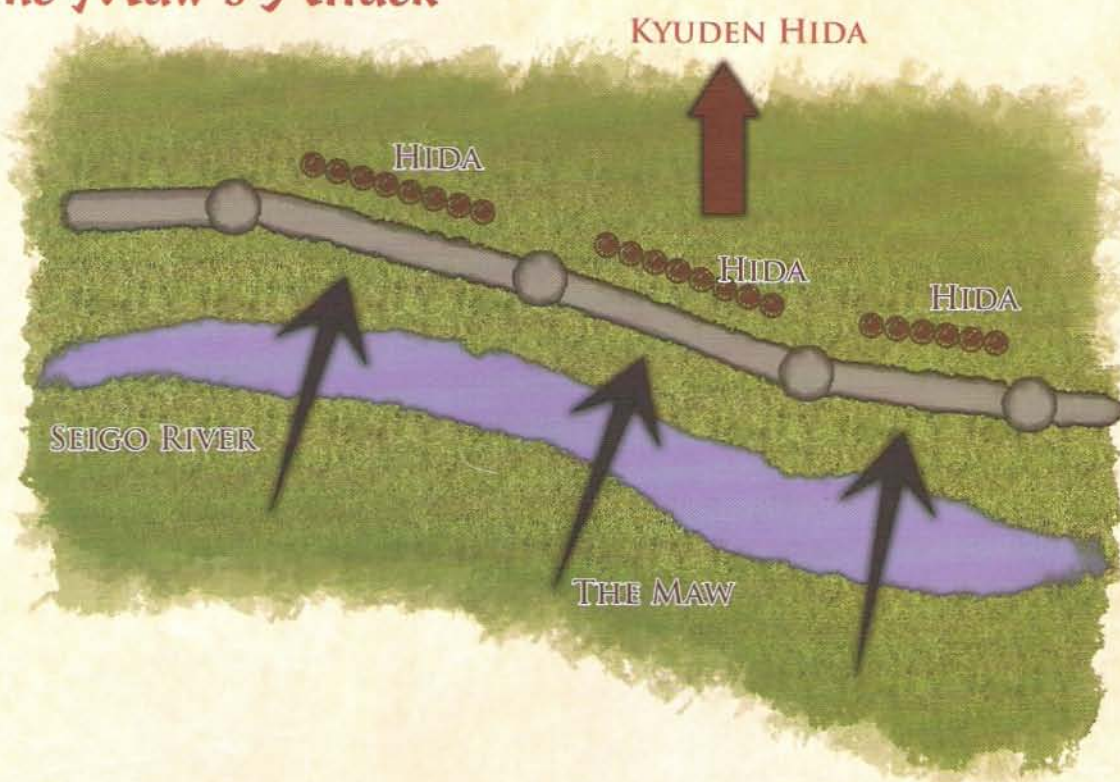
Finally, near the end of the day, both the Hida along the walls and the Shadowlands horde approached exhaustion. Thanks to the fortitude of the Hida, Banuken had not had to commit his reserves. Now, he sensed the time had finally come for his counterstroke. From the walls, he gave the signal to advance, and 10,000 Hiruma warriors, grim yet elated at the prospect of revenge, rushed through the tunnels. They emerged into the dry riverbed, squarely in the rear of The Maw's wearied army (see map 2).

Pinned against the fortifications by a fresh body of troops intent on a man on their slaughter, the Shadowlands horde dissolved. Most fell to the Hiruma's wrath. The Maw himself was killed, overpowered by more Hiruma bushi than he could destroy, supported by Kuni shugenja who were themselves determined to extract vengeance for their own lands and for Osaku, already revered as a heroine.

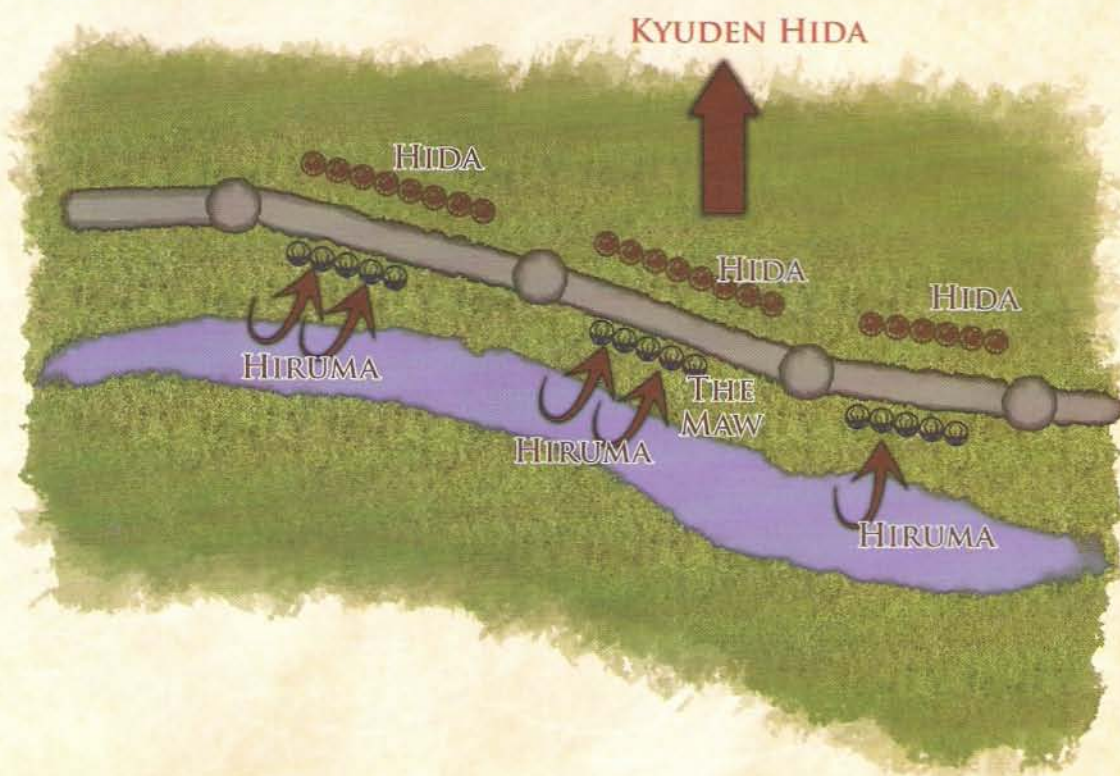
By nightfall, the enemy had disappeared from in front of the walls, save for the shattered remains of those monsters destroyed in the battle. Hida Banuken's army had suffered heavy casualties — some 40% killed or wounded — but they had destroyed an entire army, and an Oni Lord for good measure. The Maw's skull was taken to Kyuden Hida, where it hung as the Clan's most prominent battle trophy for nearly five centuries. The Seigo River was renamed Seigo no Kamae, the River of the Last Stand, in honor of the battle.

Not for the first time, nor for the last, Crab will and the sacrifice of Crab blood saved the Empire from its worst enemy.

The Maw's Attack



Hiruma Counterattack



The Battle of the Firefly River, 1136

Though but one battle in the Lion Clan's storied history, the Battle of the Firefly River stands as a classic example of the value of Lion discipline, tenacity, and strategic and tactical skill — all the more so because they prevailed against one of the most formidable military forces modern Rokugan has known: a Moto-led Unicorn army.

In 1136, Khan Moto Gaheris decided to strike at the Lion, seeking both to expand his territories and to test the strength of one of the Unicorn's natural rivals. As Toturi I had only recently reinstated the Akodo Family, Gaheris assumed (not without reason) that the strength of the Lion was at a low ebb and would only get stronger over time. If there was a time to strike, it was the present.

Accordingly, he assembled an army organized according to the Moto model, consisting largely of cavalry, with Utaku infantry and Iuchi shugenja from the Baraunghar Army for support, and marched southeast, toward the City of the Rich Frog. The Ikoma, seeing that an invasion of their lands was imminent, opened negotiations with the Unicorn, and served their Clan well. Feigning weakness, they persuaded Gaheris the Lion might cede lands to him without a fight if only he would wait for a formal reply to his demands. Convinced more strongly than ever of his advantage, the Khan bided his time.

The Lion, of course, used that time to mobilize. The Akodo family daimyo, Akodo Ginawa, marshaled an army of his own Family's forces, newly trained and organized according to the traditional Akodo model, along with a small contingent of Matsu shock troops, and headed for the Firefly River. When the Ikoma diplomats received word that Ginawa was on the move, they finally broke off the parlay.

Gaheris, still convinced the Lion would not challenge him, proceeded at a leisurely pace. He crossed the Firefly just upriver from the City of the Rich Frog in an offensive posture, throwing his infantry across as a screen, the cavalry following across the narrow ford. He sent his Iuchi Scouts and light cavalry out on his flanks to observe the enemy and cut off their avenues of approach. But the left flank detachment could not find a suitable ford closer to the main army than ten miles upstream, and the right flank detachment could not cross except at a single-file bridge leading into the City of the Rich Frog. The Akodo army's sudden descent caught the Khan by surprise.

The battle commenced at mid-morning, the Unicorn having begun their crossing shortly after dawn. Ginawa was outnumbered, but he knew he would never have a better chance, with his enemy divided and unable to use their fearsome advantage in mobility. He hastily deployed his army into two waves, with the Matsu Berserkers and the Deathseekers in the center of the front (their traditional post) and his most dependable Akodo samurai in the second wave. (See map 1).

The first wave smashed into the screen of Utaku Infantry, arranged in a crescent to cover the cavalry's crossing, and pushed it back toward the bank. The five legions of the Utaku Battle Maidens were the only Unicorn mounted units to have made it across the river, and if they had not been on hand to launch periodic countercharges, the Unicorn bridgehead would have collapsed. As it was, Gaheris' remaining cavalry remained on the far bank; they quickly formed up but were unable to cross the ford in sufficient numbers to have much effect on the battle. The Khan and his personal bodyguard, the White Guard legion, crossed and aided the Battle Maidens in shoring up his position, but no other force of note was able to do so.

By midday, the initial attack had lost much of its impetus, and even the Berserkers and Deathseekers needed to regroup. The Unicorn infantry had also taken heavy losses and were compelled to contract their bridgehead. At this point, Ginawa sent his second wave forward, surging through gaps in the ranks of the first wave (see map 2).

By now, according to Moto doctrine, the Unicorn light cavalry should have made its presence felt on the flanks, pressuring the enemy and giving the Unicorn tactical momentum. But they had crossed the Firefly too far from the main battle and did not reach the field until noon, even with the aid of Baraunghar shugenja to hasten them along. Even so, they could potentially have turned the tide of battle, taking the Lion in the rear just as Ginawa had committed all of his reserves. However, Ginawa broke off a detachment on his right flank, which smartly marched out to meet the Unicorn cavalry and held them off for the remainder of the battle.

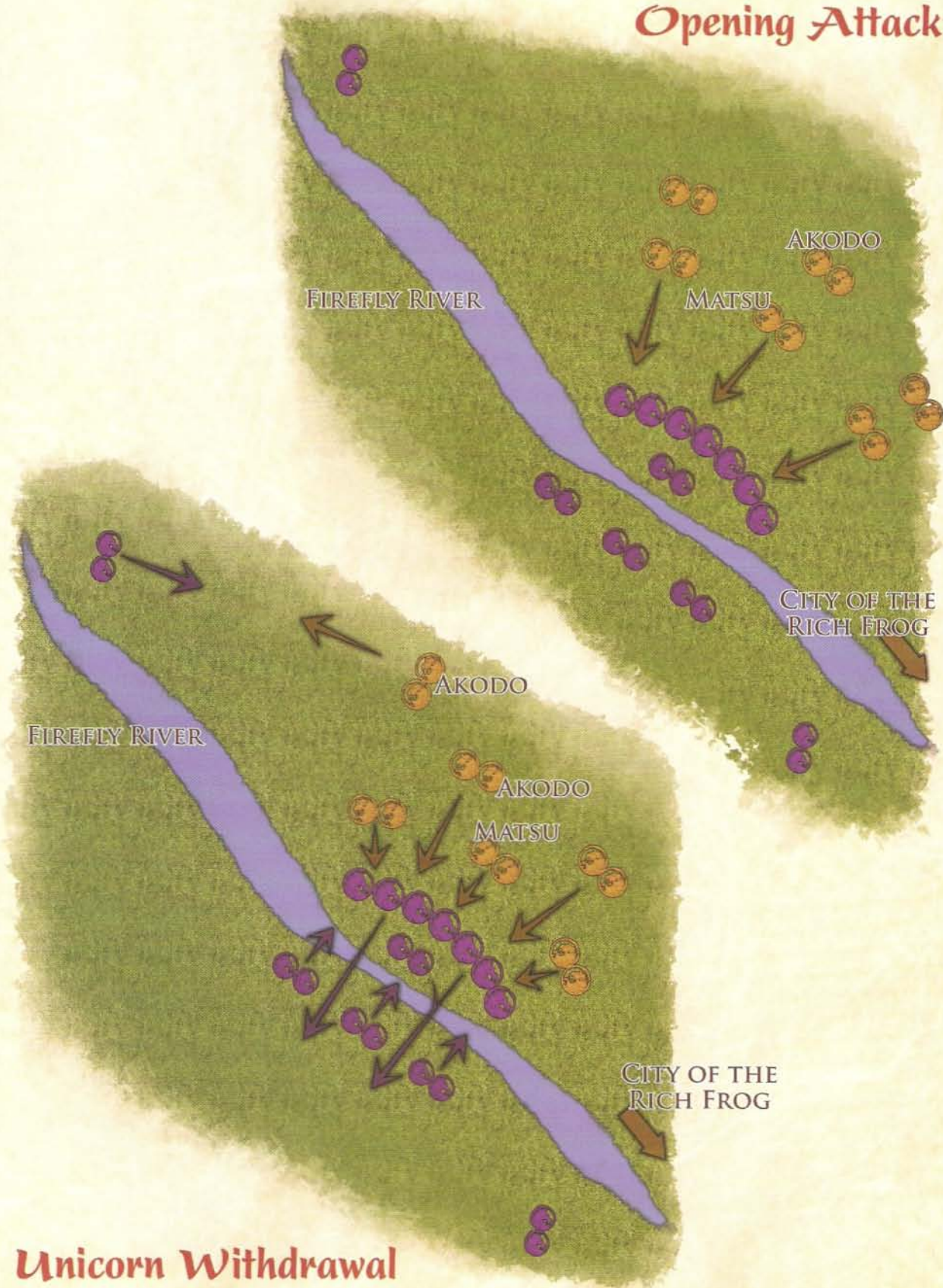
Seeing that half of his army was close to breaking and the remainder was in little position to reinforce them, Gaheris began a withdrawal. The Battle Maidens pulled back first, then the screening infantry broke off squadron by squadron, retreating across the river covered by Shinjo Horsebowmen deployed on the far bank. The fresh Akodo warriors kept up the pressure, of course, and in the end only the sacrifice of a handful of Utaku officers, challenging any and all comers to individual duels, prevented a wholesale collapse of the line before the withdrawal could be completed.

Ultimately, the Unicorn lost about a quarter of their force, while the Lion only lost half as many as their foe. Moto Gaheris, having tested the Lion's strength, retreated from the banks of the Firefly, thoroughly disabused of any notion of their weakness.

Akodo Ginawa and the Lion, on the other hand, had won a significant victory. In the finest Akodo tradition, Ginawa showed flawless tactical and strategic judgment. He took full advantage of the time the Ikoma bought him, and when he saw his enemy was in a position where they could not use either their full numbers or their unique tactical skills, he attacked without hesitation. He committed his reserves at exactly the right time, and responded to crises with calm and grace.

In doing so, he restored the lost pride and honor of the Akodo. With scarcely a half-day's work, he broadcast to the rest of the Empire that they had returned to their rightful place in the Lion Clan.

Opening Attack



Unicorn Withdrawal

Appendix: Optional Rules — Ancestors

The people of Rokugan believe in the Celestial Order. This grand design dictates not only one's station in life, but how one rises or falls based upon one's actions. It is a commonly accepted notion that every soul has a destiny, a single purpose for which it was created. Until this destiny is achieved, the soul is continually reincarnated, gaining or losing rank within the Celestial Order based on merit. Souls that achieve their destinies are honored by the gods with a place in the Spirit Realm of Yomi, the Realm of Blessed Ancestors. Here, the souls may rest, their lifetimes of toil rewarded with an idyllic existence. The spirits of this realm, called shiryo, possess the ability to see into the mortal realm. Many shiryo offer subtle guidance to their descendants, blessing them with vestiges of the expertise they once possessed.

The Rokugani revere their ancestors. Every social class, from eta through to the Imperial Families, acknowledge and thank their predecessors for their deeds, accomplishments, and insights. Every samurai extends respect not only to his immediate ancestors, but to the great heroes of his family and Clan as well. Every member of the Great Clans knows his relationship, however distant, to his Clan's Thunder.

In a society like Rokugan, where familial ties and social standing are considered as important as individual merit, it is no wonder that samurai honor their ancestors. The family name, social rank, and opportunities for advancement a samurai enjoys are largely due to the accomplishments of his predecessors. Bushi, for example, need only look to the daisho, traditionally passed down from grandparent to grandchild, to be reminded of the continuity between generations.

Rokugani spend a great deal of time acknowledging the deeds of their ancestors. Most families have a shrine to their predecessors upon their estates, and many samurai spend time during meditation reflecting on the lessons and experiences of their ancestors. A samurai's relationship with his ancestors reflects upon him in the same manner that the state in which a bushi keeps his weapons indicates his worthiness as a warrior.

The people of the Empire know that their ancestors watch over them, guiding their actions and lending them insight. Even though only a few shugenja can actually see ancestors in the Realm of Mortals, everybody can see the evidence of their influence. A perfect cut in a duel, the burst of inspiration during research, just the right phrase in a tense negotiation — all of these are clearly gifts from ancestors.

Outsiders to the Empire such as the nezumi, naga, and gaijin find the obeisance Rokugani give to their ancestors to be bizarre. Aside from a handful of shugenja, few Rokugani can honestly say they have directly observed an ancestor, or clearly felt their guidance. Even those favored by their forefathers can rarely point out examples of their intervention. Most of the Empire accepts the existence and power of ancestors in a combination of faith and tradition.

Mechanics

Every character may begin play with a single ancestor Advantage. This Advantage costs no Character Points, although the base abilities conferred by it may be improved with Character Points if you wish to do so.

STEP ONE: CONCEPT

The ancestor's concept comes first. This may be as simple as selecting a historical figure from Rokugan's past to serve as the ancestor, then assigning appropriate mechanical benefits. Instead, you may wish to create a new ancestor closely tied to his character's past and abilities, like a grandfather or sensei. Generally speaking, ancestors only offer guidance to those who maintain the same Clan affiliation, although it is not unheard of for a spirit to watch over his descendants who have married into another Clan.

STEP TWO: PROFESSION

The first mechanical benefit an ancestor confers comes from the spirit's profession in life. The tasks assigned a samurai by his lord hold great importance, even in the next world, and a lifetime of expertise can be of considerable assistance to a young samurai. From the list below, select the primary profession the character's ancestor held during his life, and gain the listed mechanical benefit:

Administrator: Your ancestor oversaw a holding for his lord: perhaps a village, fortress, or city. You gain 1 Free Raise on any Social Skill roll made with someone over whom you are in a position of authority.

Artisan: Your ancestor was an artisan of exceptional skill, creating works of art for her lord and his guests. Select any 1 Artisan Skill: you gain a +2k0 bonus to all Skill Rolls using this Skill.

Courtier: Your ancestor was an elegant courtier. He moved among the courts, forging new alliances for his Clan and manipulating his enemies to keep them at a disadvantage. You gain 3 additional Character Points at the time of character creation that must be spent on the Allies Advantage. You may combine these points with others from your normal amount when purchasing Allies.

Daimyo: Your ancestor was a Daimyo in command of land, troops, or other valuable holdings. She may have been a provincial Daimyo, or even a Family or Clan leader. You gain 0.5 additional Status at the time of character creation, and you may purchase the Leadership Advantage for 3 points less than normal.

Duelist: Your ancestor was a great duelist, wielding his steel for the honor of his lord, his family, and his Clan. For every Focus you make in a duel, you gain a +2 bonus to your Iaijutsu Roll when making your strike.

Magistrate: Your ancestor was a magistrate, enforcing the laws of his Emperor and his Clan. You gain 3 Free Raises per day that may be used on any Hunting, Investigation, or Lore: Law Skill Roll.

Monk: Your ancestor set aside his oaths and took up the Tao instead, joining the Brotherhood of Shinsei as a monk. Choose any 1 Skill taught by a Monk Temple (as listed in the Book of Air section of the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition* core rule book). You gain 2 Ranks in that Skill. These Ranks are added to any existing Ranks in that Skill, but may not increase your total Skill Rank above 3.

Ninja: Your ancestor sacrificed his personal honor for the good of his people, instead taking to the shadows. You gain a +1k0 bonus to any Stealth or Ninja Ranged Weapon Skill Roll.

Officer: Your ancestor was a great leader on the battlefield, inspiring those who served beneath him to feats of greatness. When making any Cooperative Skill Roll, you are considered to have +2 Ranks in the Skill in question.

Outcast: Your ancestor was cast out of his Clan and wandered the Empire as a ronin. Choose one of the following Skills: Animal Handling, Horsemanship, Hunting, Underworld. You gain 2 Ranks in the chosen Skill. These are cumulative with other Ranks, but may not increase your total Skill rank above 3.

Priest: Your ancestor was a priest, and much beloved by the kami. Choose one of the following Skills: Lore: Elements, Spellcraft, or Theology. You gain 2 Ranks in the chosen Skill. These are cumulative with other Ranks, but may not increase your total Skill Rank above 3.

Scholar: Your ancestor possessed a deep love of learning, and was expert in many fields of knowledge. Select any 1 Lore Skill. You gain a Free Raise on all rolls made with this Skill.

Sensei: Your ancestor was a gifted sensei, honored by his Family and revered by his students. You gain 2 Ranks in the Instruction Skill. These are cumulative with other Ranks, but may not increase your total Skill Rank above 3.

Soldier: Your ancestor was a soldier in his lord's armies. When you spend a Void Point to gain a +1k1 bonus to any Bugei Skill Roll, you gain an additional +3 bonus to the total.

Spy: Your ancestor was a spy, sacrificing his honor and putting himself at tremendous risk in order to gain valuable information for his lord. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all Acting and Deceit Skill Rolls.

Tactician: Your ancestor was a gifted tactician, advising his lord's generals and bringing victory on the battlefield. You gain 1 Rank in the Battle Skill. This is cumulative with other Ranks, but may not increase your total Skill Rank above 3. You may purchase the Tactician Advantage for 3 points less than normal.

Yojimbo: Your ancestor was a valiant yojimbo, protecting his charge from harm, ignoring any danger to himself. When using the Full Defense posture, you may apply your increased TN to 1 extra opponent.

STEP THREE: DRIVE

Perhaps even more important than an ancestor's duties is the force that drove him. What single trait compelled the spirit's actions more than any other? What strength or failing drove the ancestor toward his destiny? The tenets of Bushido are common drives for many samurai, although there are less pleasant impulses that likewise inspire some to greatness. From the list below, select the primary drive the character's ancestor had during his lifetime, and gain the listed mechanical benefit.

Ambition: A lust for personal power drove your ancestor, perhaps to greatness, perhaps to disgrace. You may gain a +1k0 bonus to any Social Skill Roll through which you are attempting to gain more personal power or prestige.

Duty: Enacting the will of his lord was the only driving goal of your ancestor. You gain 3 additional Void Points that may only be spent in fulfilling a specific task given to you by your lord. For instance, "Defeat Daidoji Etsumi" is specific; "destroy the Crane Clan" is not.

Compassion: A deep respect for the welfare of others marked your ancestor as a beloved figure in his time. You may add your Insight Rank to the total of any roll made to assist someone in need, whether defending them in combat, using the Medicine Skill to treat their wounds, or crafting an object they need to perform a duty.

Courage: Your ancestor knew nothing of fear, and was in turned feared by those who faced him in battle. You gain a +1k0 bonus to any roll made to resist a Fear effect (whether a creature ability, spell, or Technique) or a Deceit (Intimidation) Skill Roll.

Courtesy: Protocol and sophistication were the hallmarks of your ancestor, a famously well-mannered representative of his lord. You may add your Insight Rank to the total of any Social Skill Roll made when interacting with others, so long as you maintain a courteous, non-threatening demeanor.

Honor: Your ancestor's honor was his life. Nothing else mattered. Your Honor is considered 1 Rank higher whenever you make an Honor Roll or a Test of Honor.

Judgment: Your ancestors found the flaws within others, and strove to better himself by using others as examples of weakness. You gain a +1k0 bonus to any Contested Roll against an opponent who has more points' worth of Disadvantages than you.

Justice: The law drove your ancestor, who never stopped hunting those who defied the Emperor. You may add your Insight Rank to the total of any roll made against an opponent who has broken the law; this must be corroborated by legitimate testimony or evidence, not merely suspicion.

Passion: Love and lust drove your ancestor; some may remember his indiscretions as well as his name. You gain 1 Free Raise on any Deceit (Seduction) Skill Roll, or on any Etiquette (Sincerity) Skill Roll targeting a member of the opposite sex.

Sacrifice: Your ancestor gave of himself that others might flourish. You gain a bonus equal to your Insight Rank to any roll made when you are sacrificing yourself for others (acting as a diversion so others can escape, committing a dishonorable act for the benefit of others, etc.).

Sincerity: Your ancestor believed that word and deed were one, carefully choosing his words so that he never spoke an untruth. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all Etiquette (Sincerity) Skill Rolls.

Vengeance: The need to avenge insults drove your ancestor, and he is remembered as a fearsome and implacable foe. You gain a +1k0 bonus to all Skill Rolls made in the process of avenging an insult to yourself, your Family, or your Clan. Ultimately, it is up to the GM's discretion whether or not a given roll is relevant, but this bonus should only apply to acts that apply directly to the process of gaining vengeance.

STEP FOUR: DEVOTION

The degree of reverence a samurai has for his ancestors strengthens the bonds between them. Once a samurai understands the bond he shares with those who have passed on to Yomi, it is possible to strengthen that bond. In doing so, the samurai becomes more like his ancestor, and the ancestor offers greater guidance.

The final step of constructing an Ancestor is the Devotion attribute. All Ancestors default to Rank 1. It is possible to increase Devotion through the expenditure of Character Points or Experience Points, although in order to retain the Ancestor's increased mechanical advantages, you must perform certain duties. If you are forcibly prevented from doing so, the requirements are waived until such time as you are once again capable of performing them. If you ever choose not to fulfill the requirements, the Ancestor automatically drops 1 Rank and cannot be raised again except through the expenditure of additional Experience Points.

Rank: Ancestor Advantages begin at Rank 1, and may be increased up to a maximum of Rank 4 as described under the discussion of Cost (below). Under certain circumstances, Ancestor Advantages may be reduced to Rank 0 as described the discussion of Requirement (below). A Rank 0 Ancestor confers no mechanical benefit.

Requirement: Ancestors require their descendants to behave appropriately if they wish to retain the ancestor's guidance and blessing. The higher an Ancestor's Rank, the more stringent the requirements become. The most common requirement is to visit a temple of appropriate dedication and offer prayers to one's ancestors. The frequency and duration of these visits is determined by Rank. A Rank 1 Ancestor requires only that his descendants visit the temple once per week and offer prayers for a short time (even a

few minutes will suffice). Rank 2 requires at least an hour of prayer once per day, and so on. Table A2.1 describes these requirements. All prayers must be completed while in the temple.

Circumstances legitimately beyond your control can prevent you from making the proper expression of devotion. The ancestors understand this. A samurai stationed deep in the wilderness who has no access to a temple will retain his benefits so long as he offers the appropriate number of prayers. But a samurai who chooses not to complete the requirements has his Ancestor Advantage reduced to Rank 0 if he misses 3 consecutive increments (3 weeks for a weekly temple visit, 3 days for a daily visit, etc.). Regaining an Ancestor Rank requires a number of weeks of appropriate behavior equal to twice the Rank (2 weeks of weekly prayers to regain Rank 1, 4 weeks of daily visits to regain Rank 2, etc.). Such a character must also pay the normal cost for increasing an Ancestor Rank as described under Cost below.

Rank 4 Ancestors are particularly demanding of their descendants, and require an indulgence of their living Drive as well as the normal temple prayers. A samurai with a Rank 4 Ancestor must demonstrate that Ancestor's Drive in some way each day. An Ancestor with the Drive of Honor must behave honorably at all times, while one with the Drive of Passion must demonstrate love or obsession for another individual or for a particularly cherished object or activity each day. This is highly subjective, and ultimately up to the GM's discretion. Ultimately, the connection between a samurai and a Rank 4 Ancestor is so great that the Ancestor's personality and interests become part of that samurai's personality, kharmically uniting the two.

Cost: There is no cost if a samurai retains his Ancestor at the default Rank of 1. Increasing the Ancestor's Rank may be done at character creation through the expenditure of Character Points, or during a campaign by spending Experience Points. In either case, the point expenditure is the same. It costs 4 points to increase an Ancestor from Rank 1 to Rank 2, 8 points to increase from Rank 2 to Rank 3, and 12 points to increase from Rank 3 to Rank 4. Ancestors of Rank 5 and above occur perhaps once in a generation, and should only be achieved by a samurai who performs some monumental task for his ancestors. This is a highly individualized process and should be determined by you and the GM in accordance with what is appropriate for the campaign.

It is possible for Ancestor Advantages to be reduced to Rank 0. If this happens, you must meet certain requirements (see "Requirement" above) to bring the Ancestor back to Rank 1. It costs 4 points to return a lapsed Ancestor from Rank 0 to Rank 1.

Benefit: For each Rank of Devotion an Ancestor possesses, you gain an additional benefit from either Profession or Drive. If the Ancestor grants Skills, you receive an additional Rank in the chosen Skill. If the Ancestor grants Free Raises or Void Points, you receive an additional Free Raise or Void Points. If the Ancestor grants additional die on a roll, you receive an additional die on that roll. If the Ancestor grants a bonus to the result of a die or a roll, you receive an additional +1 to the result of that die or roll. You may not increase the bonuses granted by the Courtier and Daimyo Professions, however.

For example, if you possess a Rank 2 Outcast/Vengeance Ancestor, you could choose to add 1 additional Skill Rank from your Outcast component, or gain a +1k0 bonus from the Vengeance component. Gaining a higher Rank in an Ancestor also increases the maximum benefit allowed. In the Outcast example above, the maximum rank in the selected Skills would increase to 4 rather

than 3. You could choose to increase a different Skill each time your Ancestor Rank increased, or you could instead increase the same Skill's bonus ranks repeatedly.

TABLE A2.1: ANCESTOR REQUIREMENTS AND COSTS

Rank	Requirement	Cost
1	Visit temple once per week, pray to ancestor	None (default)
2	Visit temple daily, pray for 1 hour	4 points
3	Visit temple daily, pray for at least 3 hours total	8 points
4	Visit temple daily, pray for at least 3 hours, indulge Drive daily	12 points

Example Ancestors

There are many possible combinations of ancestor options. Combining them in different ways can create a wide variety of unique themes for characters. Particularly powerful spirits may even confer different benefits on different descendants. For example, each of the Four Winds were blessed by their father, the Splendid Emperor Toturi I, in different ways. The ancestral Advantages they possessed might have looked something like this:

TOTURI: THE BLACK LION (OUTCAST/COURAGE/1)

In the days before the Clan War, the ronin Toturi rode among the people. The suffering he saw there opened his eyes, and he saw the signs of impending war long before many among the Great Clans. Setting aside pride and any vestige of previous allegiances, Toturi gathered a mighty army of ronin, eventually bolstered by his allies among the Dragon, and rode forth to guard the Empire against those who would harm it. Though many doubt his motives, Toturi's son Kaneka wishes to protect his father's Empire — now his brother's — from a similar fate, and rides among the people as his father once did.

TOTURI: COMMANDER OF THE IMPERIAL LEGIONS (OFFICER/DUTY/3)

The Empire's histories remember Toturi I as a proponent of justice and law. Under his rule, the Emerald Magistrates and Imperial Legions were strengthened considerably, aiding the Emperor's Champions in ensuring that all his subjects were protected. In this regard, Toturi's greatest legacy was his daughter Tsudao, who embodied his zeal for justice throughout her brief life.

TOTURI: EMPEROR OF ROKUGAN (ADMINISTRATOR/SINCERITY/1)

Despite his training as a warrior and an officer, the Splendid Emperor never failed to control his Imperial Court with a firm but gentle hand, preventing the power games of misguided courtiers from exploding into unnecessary martial conflicts. Toturi's successor and youngest son Naseru shares his father's gift for guidance, and uses it to ruthless effect in manipulating his enemies.

TOTURI: STUDENT OF THE TAO (SCHOLAR/JUDGMENT/2)

In his youth, Akodo Toturi was sent to a monastery. There, he combined his interest in military tactics, such as those found in Akodo's Leadership, with the simple wisdom of the Tao. Despite the many hardships he faced, this love of learning never left Toturi, and even after he became Emperor he devoted time each day to reading. These scholarly traits were passed on to his son Sezar, who spent much of his youth in the capital city's temples and libraries.

“DO THEY SCOFF AT THE STRENGTH
OF THE UNICORN? OUR THREE
ARMIES WILL ERASE THEIR GRINS.”

— MOTO CHAGATAI

Of the Great Clans of Rokugan, three have always embraced the art of war with a dedication that their peers cannot match: the Crab, who keep the Shadowlands at bay by sheer force of arms; the Lion, whose founder literally wrote the book on military strategy; and the Unicorn, whose tradition of exceptional horsemanship and unconventional ways have made them a formidable opponent on the battlefield. *Masters of War* views each of them through their contributions to Rokugani military practice and history.

Here you will find:

- Detailed description of each of the three Clans' standing armed forces, including elite units and new Paths and Advanced Schools that allow you to incorporate them into your PC or campaign.
- Descriptions of each of the three Clans' fortifications and strongholds, including a detailed cross-section diagram of the Kaiu Wall.
- Discussions of how the art of war has influenced the outlook and histories of the Families of these Clans.
- A timeline of major conflicts that have shaped the Empire's history, plus commentary on selected individual battles.

Masters of War reveals the soul of three of Rokugan's Great Clans in unprecedented detail. It is a crucial resource for anyone interested in the Crab, the Lion or the Unicorn — or indeed, anyone interested in the Rokugani art of war.

Masters of War is a rules supplement and its use requires the Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Third Edition core rule book.

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