

Legend TM of the Five Rings









Combat Summary

- 1: Initiative: All combatants roll 1 die and add their Reflexes.
- 2: Declare Actions: All combatants (from lowest Initiative to highest) declare their actions. Combatants declare one of the Three Maneuvers.
- 3: Resolve Actions: All combatants take one Action (from highest Initiative to lowest).

Target Numbers

- 5 = Mundane
- 10 = Easy
- 15 = Average (default)
- 20 = Hard
- 25 = Very Hard
- 30 = Heroic
- 35 = Never Done Before
- 40 = Never Done Again

Wounds Taken and Glory Gained During Current Battle Round

YOUR ARMY IS:	① YOU ARE IN THIS PART OF THE FIGHTING:					
	Reserves	Disengaged Reserves	Engaged Disengaged Reserves	Heavily Engaged Engaged Disengaged	Heavily Engaged Engaged	Heavily Engaged
② WINNING						
EVEN						
LOSING						
1-3	2 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	4 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	5 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points Duel	6 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points
4-6	2 dice of Wounds 0 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	3 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	4 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points Duel	4 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	5 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points
7-9	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	3 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	4 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points Duel	4 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity
10-11	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point	2 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point Duel	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity	3 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points Duel	3 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity	4 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points Duel
12-14	0 dice of Wounds 1 Glory Point Duel	1 die of Wounds 1 Glory Point Duel	2 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity	3 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity	3 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity
15-17	0 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points	1 die of Wounds 2 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity	1 die of Wounds 3 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 4 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 6 Glory Points Duel	3 dice of Wounds 8 Glory Points Duel
18+	0 dice of Wounds 2 Glory Points Duel	0 dice of Wounds 3 Glory Points	1 die of Wounds 4 Glory Points Duel	2 dice of Wounds 5 Glory Points	2 dice of Wounds 7 Glory Points Duel	2 dice of Wounds 10 Glory Points Heroic Opportunity

③ **ROLL ONE DIE. ADD THE RESULT TO YOUR WATER+ BATTLE, AND FIND THAT NUMBER IN THIS COLUMN. READ ACROSS.**

④ **MODIFIERS:**

- Bushu, not wearing armor: +1 die of Wounds
- Bushu, wearing heavy armor: -1 die of Wounds
- All Shugenja: -1 die of Wounds
- Subtract Earth Rank from Damage Received

The Three Maneuvers

Standard Attack:
Roll normal attack dice.
TN to be hit = Reflexes \times 5

Full Attack:
Two additional dice for attack roll. TN to be hit = 5

Full Defense:
No Attack this Turn.
TN to be hit = Agility \times 5,
but all dice that roll lower than Reflexes + Defense are dropped.

Hit Location

Random Hits

18+	Head
14-17	Upper Torso
12-13	Left Arm
11	Right Arm
8-10	Lower Torso
6-7	Left Leg
2-5	Right Leg

Melee Hits*

Head	18+
Upper Torso	14-17
Left Arm	13
Right Arm	12
Lower Torso	9-11
Left Leg	7-8
Right Leg	2-6

*For Right-handed Attacks.

Reverse left and right targets for left-handed attacks

The Simple Roll

1. Player declares an action and the GM assigns a Target Number.
2. Roll a number of dice equal to the character's Trait + Skill, keeping a number of dice equal to your Trait.
3. Compare the total generated by the roll with the TN.
4. If the roll is greater than or equal to the TN, the action is successful. If it is lower than the TN, the action fails.

The Contested Roll

1. Player declares an action that involves another character or NPC.
2. Both characters roll a number of dice equal to their appropriate Traits. The TN is equal to the opponent's Trait \times 5.
3. Both characters must drop all dice that roll lower than their opponent's Trait.
4. Compare totals. One of 3 results occurs:
 1. If only one Contestant succeeds on his roll, his action is successful.
 2. If both Contestants succeed on their rolls, the one who rolled higher wins, but only marginally.
 3. If neither Contestant succeeds their roll, the Contest continues to the next round.

Working Together

When more than one character takes the same action:

- 1: Choose one Primary character.
- 2: Determine appropriate Trait + Skill.
- 3: Roll one additional die for each Supporting character.
- 4: Primary character keeps a number of dice equal to his Trait.

Examples of Raises in Combat

- 1 Raise - Striking the torso
- 2 Raises - Striking the arms or legs, drawing blood without doing significant damage
- 3 Raises - Striking the head, neck, or hands.
Disarming attempts.
Striking the joints in the opponent's armor.
- 4 Raises - Trimming the opponent's mustache

Jaijutsu Duels

1. TN to hit both characters is 5.
2. The character with the highest Reflexes is first to either Focus (bid up TN by 5) or tell his opponent to "Strike".
3. Characters may only Focus a number of times equal to their Void Rank.
4. Focusing continues in turn until one duelist decides or is forced to tell his opponent to "Strike."
5. The first character to strike attempts to hit his opponent at the last TN he bid up to.
6. If he survives, the second character to strike attempts to hit his opponent at the last TN he bid up to.
 - If any strike is successful, roll normal damage + 1 die per Focus

Weapons

Name	DR
Swords	
Aiguchi	1k2
Katana	3k2
No-Dachi	3k3
Tanto	1k2
Tessen	0k2
Wakizashi	2k2
Pole-Arms	
Die tsuchi	2k2
Nage-yari	2k2
Nagamaki	4k2
Naginata	3k3
Ono	3k3
Sasumata	0k2
Sodegarami	0k1
Tetsubo	2k2
Yari	4k2
Arrows	
Ya	2k2
Armor-piercer	1k2*
Watakusi	3k3*
Karimata	1k1
Humming Bulb	0k1
Peasant Weapons	
Bo	2k2
Jitte	1k1
Jo	0k2
Kama	2k2
Nunchaku	2k2
Sai	1k1
Tonfa	1k2

*see page 124

Rings and Traits

Earth:	Stamina, Willpower
Water:	Strength, Perception
Fire:	Agility, Intelligence
Air:	Reflexes, Awareness
Void:	Void Points

How to calculate Clan War statistics

- The five Ring values are equal to the *average* of the two Traits instead of the lower. Round up fractions.
- The character's base TN is 5. Add 1 while wearing Light Armor, and 2 while wearing Heavy Armor. Add further bonuses for the character's Air Ring: see the table below.
- The character's Wounds stat is equal to the his Earth Ring.
- The character's base ATT is +0/+0. Add Close Combat stat bonuses for the character's Fire Ring, and add Ranged Attack bonuses for the character's Air Ring: see the table below.
- The character's base DAM is +0/+0. Add Close Combat and Ranged Attack stat bonuses for the his Water Ring: see the table below.
- The character's #S is the number of attacks his School Techniques allow him to make in a round.
- A Shugenja's Magic rank is equal to his Air Ring plus his School Rank.
- Skills with variable levels have a colon after them. Write in the character's level in a Skill, and any skills not listed here.
- Add other information in the "Special" area, such as whether or not the character is mounted.

Skills Useful in Clan War

Battle (variable)
Charge
Counter-Charge
Daisho Technique
Defense (variable)
Engineer (variable)
Frenzy
Horsemanship
Iaijutsu (variable)
Leadership (variable)
Magic (variable)

Ring Value	3	5	7	9
Stat Modifier	+1	+2	+3	+4

Abilities Useful in Clan War

Double Chi
Fearless (variable)
Go Master
Magic Resistance (variable)
Revered Sensei (variable)
Stalwart Defender
Tactician (variable)



Legend of the Five Rings

Gamemaster's Pack

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The Karma Rule

A samurai is always ready to die for his lord, to throw away his life at a moment's notice. While this makes for wonderful samurai drama, it can also make for a high mortality rate *L5R* campaign. Players can – understandably – get quite tired of every character they make ending his life with his own sword in his gut.

Because *L5R* can have such a high mortality rate, we suggest you implement the “kharma rule” described here. You may also wish to employ the kharma rule if a character has died honorably, gloriously, or selflessly, or if his death fulfills that character's destiny.

Essentially what the kharma rule does is transfer points from a player's dead character to his next character. There are many ways to justify the transfer of points, but it's up to you and your player to determine the reason.

Kharma and Dharma

The Rokugani believe in reincarnation (the rebirth of the soul in another body). Two important concepts in reincarnation are kharma and dharma.

Dharma is a character's “soul duty.” When he is born, his destiny is already put in place. He is part of the Celestial Order. His dharma is his “soul duty”, his place in the Celestial Order. His kharma, on the other hand, is a measurement of how well he performed that duty. Those who perform their dharma well have great kharma, which will follow them into the next life.

It is that last phrase, “the next life”, that has brought so much controversy to the shugenja schools across Rokugan. When is the “next life”

that Shinsei spoke so cryptically about? Are Rokugani born again in another world that will exist after this world is dead and gone, or will they be born again in this world to continue their role in the Order? None can say for certain.

Using the Karma Rule

When a character dies, it is up to the GM to determine if he fulfilled his dharma. Did he serve his role in the celestial order, or did he deny his role and attempt to live his life “under his own terms” as many young samurai are now choosing to do?

We'll provide you with an example player – Ted – and his recently deceased character to show you how the GM used the Karma Rule.

TED AND SHIBA USOBE

Ted's favorite character – Shiba Usobe – recently passed on. He died while protecting his daimyo, Shiba Ujimitsu. Usobe was watching Ujimitsu enter into a duel with a dishonest Crane and saw the glint of poison on the Crane's blade. Usobe shouted a warning to his lord and killed the Crane with an arrow. Another Crane diplomat demanded justice for the samurai's interference. Ujimitsu reluctantly agreed and Ted's favorite character was forced to commit *seppuku*.

At the end of the game session, the GM announced that Ujimitsu himself wrote a haiku to the memory of his devoted samurai – which raised Usobe's Glory total by one Rank. Then he asked Ted to make a new character. The GM reminded Ted that Usobe did have a daughter, and that his next character could be her.

In this case, the GM would be using some of Usobe's Traits, Honor and Glory to determine starting points for Ted's new character. To begin with, the GM decides to use Usobe's Glory 6 as a guide for Ujiko's (Usobe's daughter) starting Glory. Since Ujiko was Usobe's first-born child, she begins with a starting Glory one Rank lower than her father. Ujiko's starting Glory is 5.

The GM also decides to use Usobe's Insight to determine Ujiko's starting Character Points. He decides to not include points Ted used on Honor, Advantages or Disadvantages. Usobe's Insight is 176, and the GM tells Ted that he can spend those Insight points in the following manner:

Raising a Trait: 10 Points
Raising Void: 12 Points
Raising (or buying) a Skill: 1 Point
Advantages and Disadvantages: List cost
Honor: 3 Points
Glory: 5 Points

Once all the points are spent, Ted figures Ujiko's Insight total (which could be significantly different from her father's). The GM tells Ted that if Ujiko meets the Insight qualifications for a higher Rank in the Shiba School (Rank 2 or 3, for instance), that she automatically qualifies for that School Rank and gains the appropriate Techniques as well. However, the GM also tells him that raising her School Rank will not affect her Glory Rank, because that's determined by her heritage.

Ujiko also inherits her father's sword which happened to be a *nemuranai*. She also inherits any lands and titles he may have acquired. Since Usobe was a magistrate, she will fill that title (Ujimitsu was generous to the daughter of his favorite magistrate).

Now Ted has a brand new character who carries on the legacy of his old character. There

are some reminders of Usobe still lingering in the air (his sword on her hip, his title, his lands, etc.), but Ujiko has many characteristics that are distinctly her own.

Conclusion

There is no hard and fast formula for using the Karma Rule. It's a tool, just like the other rules we've provided. Put it in your GM toolbox and take it out when you find a use for it. Play around with it, adjust it to your own needs or just ignore it completely. Some GMs use it so players will not have to be playing a Rank 1 samurai in a group of Rank 3 and 4 samurai, while others like the feel of the passing on of tradition. It's also a great incentive for true samurai drama. Reward players with bonus points if they perform especially fearless deeds. Remember that a samurai gives up his life so his family can have better position in the Clan. The Karma Rule provides GMs and players with a tool that allows samurai to throw away their lives with the certainty that their sons and daughters will have a better life.





(OR, "NEVER GIVE A PLAYER AN EVEN BREAK")

In the basic book, we outlined a whole bunch of advice for the GM to use when he ran his game, but let's face it, players always read the GM section. That's why we've included the following advice here, in the GM Pack. Granted, its not strictly forbidden for players to buy a GM Pack, but they are less likely to do so, so we've dropped in the following information, for your eyes only.

It isn't easy being the GM. It takes creativity, improvisational skills and a whole lot of planning. But it also takes one other element that many players are not aware of (or they just lie to themselves in order to avoid recognizing the truth).

The GM cheats.

Not just little white cheats, but big nasty cheats that his players would lynch him for if they ever discovered the truth.

So, how do you cheat and get away with it?

Easy. You break rules that aren't written down.

Use the System

One piece of advice we gave playtesters was "Use the system, don't let the system use you." Curiously enough, the best way I can illustrate this came from one of our players, not a GM.

You see, there was this Crab samurai and a Scorpion shugenja. The Crab was downright rude - beyond the call of duty - always treating the Scorpion like dirt. One day, after a particularly nasty skirmish with an ogre, the Crab told the

Scorpion to use her healing spell to deal with a deep cut on his leg. The Scorpion pulled out her scroll and cast the spell... and failed. She bowed politely, told the Crab what happened and went on to heal the other samurai.

Now, what happened on the table was this: when the Scorpion rolled her dice, she re-rolled her ten (which turned out to be a seventeen) and paused a moment, deciding which dice she would keep. She smiled and asked me if she could keep her ones and twos.

I was taken aback. I thought for a moment and said, "Sure. You can keep whatever dice you want." She kept the one's and two's, informed the Crab that her spell failed and went over to the handsome Crane and healed him right up to zero Wounds. Now, she had to make a Sincerity roll to ensure that the Crab didn't take the whole incident as an insult, but I gave her a couple of extra dice to roll as a bonus (always reward creativity if you can).

That's just one example of using the system. The reason we designed the system the way we did was so you could really use it to its fullest. Whenever a character wants to use Raises, let him. If a Scorpion shugenja wants to keep her low dice, let her. Use the system to your advantage, don't let the system use you.

Hitting Below The Belt

Some RPGs tell you to be fair.

Others tell you to be arbitrary.

Not us.

We tell you to hit your players below the belt.

Never give 'em a break.

Never let up.

Never take it easy on them.

Why? Because they'll hate you if you do.

The fact of the matter is, players are a masochistic lot. They want you to run their characters through the grinder. They want you to take advantage of their character's weaknesses, to pummel them mercilessly and leave them in a bloody pulp.

However - and here's the tricky part - they also want to win.

If you've ever seen the *Die Hard* movies, you know exactly what I'm talking about. At the end of every film, John McLane is bruised, bloody and

busted up beyond all hope of repair. But he also got the better of the bad guys. That's what players really want. They want to come out heroes, but they want to do it by the skin of their teeth.

Here's an example.

During a session of the upcoming adventure "The Anvil of Despair", the characters spent months lugging a huge cursed anvil across Rokugan. All manner of bad fortune had fallen upon them (it never stopped raining the whole time), and they were cold, wet and exhausted. They finally reached the Festering Pit of Fu Leng and were ready to throw the Anvil into the Pit when an Oni flew up out of the gaping, slimy maw of the Pit and attacked the exhausted characters.

The magic of the Anvil didn't allow them to heal properly, so they were all sorely wounded. To reflect the exhaustion of their battered bodies, I took away the highest die they rolled. I forced them to miss Perception checks. The Oni was spitting acid. The shugenja couldn't cast her spell because she dropped the scroll in a puddle of mud. The Oni grabbed the party's most powerful shugenja and began leaching the life right out of him. Finally, two of the shugenja got together for a Tomb of Jade and blasted the Oni... and the

shugenja it was sucking life from. When the spell was done, the Oni was entombed and half of the shugenja's face had been turned to jade. Permanently. Finally, they dropped the Anvil in the Pit and started their long walk home.

The characters had been through hell. All of them had permanent scars from the journey. None of them would ever be the same again.

And they showed up next Friday, eager to play again.

Go ahead. Hurt your characters. After all, pain builds character.

How To Handle the Power Player

There are many ways to build the "ultimate samurai" with the character creation system we've provided. The phrase "The GM has final authority over all characters" is enough to keep players from "minmaxing" (minimizing your losses and maximizing your gains) the system. But let us suggest to you a different technique for handling a power player.

Let us suggest you give him everything he wants.

Here's an example.

Early in the game's development, one player abused the system to its fullest. He put all of his points into combat. He maxed out his physical Traits, ignored his mental Traits, and put the rest of his points into combat skills. He took one of the other characters as an enemy so he could raise his Strength another point. He also took the Shadowlands Taint as a Disadvantage so he could get the extra to hit and damage dice. His philosophy was simple: *I'll roleplay the mental stuff. John never makes me roll for it anyway.*

He was right. I rarely make players roll when



they roleplay well. I took one look at the character sheet and saw what he was up to. I had a choice. I could tell him to re-make his character, or I could let him play the character as it stood.

I chose the latter, and dealt with him accordingly.

It's true, I hardly force people to roll when they roleplay well.

But NPCs always roll. And when an NPC makes a Contested Roll, that means the player has to roll as well...

One day, the characters were in court, preparing to be sent out by their lord on a special mission they had been hand chosen for. The player in question had created a big, mean Crab who was perfect for the mission (rescuing Phoenix shugenja in the Shadowlands). They were in their daimyo's court, ready to receive the commission, when a Scorpion samurai stepped forward, demanding to replace the Crab samurai. When the daimyo demanded an explanation for this outrageous claim, the Scorpion was armed to the teeth. He claimed the Crab was unworthy of going. He had the Shadowlands Taint, which made him unreliable. He held a grudge against the Crane samurai he would be riding with. He had no knowledge of the Shadowlands itself (it was true, he failed to purchase the Shadowlands Lore Skill), and was nothing more than a bully with no wit, wisdom or cunning. Obviously, the Scorpion was the better choice.

The Crab was outraged and demanded that his honor had been compromised. I told him that he would have to explain that to his daimyo in order to get justice. He made a passionate and poetic speech. I listened patiently. When he was finished I told him to make a Contested Sincerity roll against the Scorpion.

You should have seen the look on his face. He looked at his 1 Awareness and watched as I counted up six dice. "Are you ready?" I asked him. "If you fail, you realize your Honor and Glory will be compromised." He nodded, rolled, failed and stayed home while the Scorpion took his place. Soon after the adventure, the player asked me if he could make another character. I told him that was no problem, and even gave him some extra points to keep up with the other players' more experienced characters.

The One Rule You Shouldn't Break

It may sound as if I'm encouraging you to have fun at your players' expense. I'm not. When I said the *L5R* Golden Rule was the only rule you should never ignore, I meant it. Roleplaying is supposed to be fun. Sure, sometimes it's frightening, tension-filled fun, but that all depends on what kind of group you are going to be playing with.

What a good GM needs is a sense of responsibility. Your players are counting on you to make their evening an enjoyable one. They're counting on you to show them a good time. Don't let rules get in the way of that. Heck, don't let a lack of rules get in the way of that, either. If your players enjoy playing by the rules, then by Amaterasu's sake, play by the rules! Everyone's got their own house rules for *Monopoly*; why not have a set of house rules for *L5R*?

Have fun, and don't let the dice and charts limit your imagination.

That's a rule.



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TETSUBO AND DIE TSUCHI DAMAGE

The following clarification has not made it into any of the previous official supplements for the L5R RPG.

Tetsubo and Die Tsuchi both ignore the effects of armor. This means that a character using one of these weapons rolls against the TN of his opponent, unmodified by armor bonuses.

Note that "special" modifiers to TNs (such as monster armor and spell effects) still apply.

Clarifications and Errata

Why are the combat rules so unforgiving? I mean, one hit from a katana and my samurai is down three or four dice!

When we first started designing the combat system, we brought on a professional consultant. His name is Tony Kull (yes, that's "Sensei" Tony from the credits page), and he comes in once a week for our kenjutsu lesson. Tony is also accomplished in several other martial art forms.

I explained to him the idea of the classic "five second combat round," and asked him how many times he could hit me in five seconds.

Sensei Tony smiled his wicked smile and said, "I only need to hit you once."

The fact of the matter is, our combat system is very forgiving. Many samurai are able to survive one or two hits from a katana before they go down. In real life – just as Sensei Tony says – all it takes is one.

Consider this little historical fact for a moment:

In feudal Japan, the method for testing swords involved slicing through a pile of convicted criminals. If the sword couldn't slice through at least four criminals, it wasn't a good blade.

If this still doesn't convince you that our combat system isn't "heroic enough," you aren't thinking like Sun Tzu and Musashi. Yeah, one hit takes your samurai down three or four dice, but one hit takes your opponent down, too.

Choose your battles carefully. If you go

charging blindly into combat, you're going to get yourself killed. Fight wisely, and you'll live a long Glorious life.

For those of you who still want a more heroic campaign, you can have super-human samurai with a simple adjustment to the Wound stat. Simply multiply the character's Earth by 3 instead of 2 to determine Wounds.

On the Crane Clan Page (pg. 81), the Asahina Shugenja School says shugenja learn "3 Air, 2 Earth and 1 Air." What's the deal?

This should clear things up. Asahina shugenja learn 3 Air, 2 Earth and 1 Water.

On the Crab Clan Page (pg. 79), the Kuni Shugenja School says shugenja learn "3 Earth, 2 Force and 1 Water." What's a Force spell?

It should read "2 Fire." Sorry, no Jedi in Rokugan.

Under Gaki (pg. 192), it says that Gaki can only be sensed with an Intuition roll. And on pg 193, it says that Kitsune are considered to have an Empathy of 6. What's wrong?

Both Intuition and Empathy are really Awareness in disguise.



On the Crab Clan Page (pg. 79), the Rank 1 Crab Technique reads: "He adds his current Earth to all to hit and damage rolls." Does this mean he adds dice to the roll equal to his Earth?

No, it means he adds his Earth to the total roll. For instance, a Crab with a 4 Earth rolls a 14 to hit. Since he adds his Earth to the roll, he then adds 4 to his roll of 14, making it a total of 18. Pretty handy.

Are the Traits listed in parenthesis after each Skill the only Traits you can use with that Skill?

Certainly not. We only listed those Traits with those Skills to show the most common Trait associated with that Skill. The GM can call for a roll with any Trait + any Skill.

Sometimes the rules are ambiguous about extra dice. When the rules say I get to roll additional dice, are they dice I get to keep?

No. If the rules tell you that you get to roll additional dice, that's what you get to do. If the rules say you gain an additional die you can roll and keep, then you get to keep it.

Do I have to keep the highest dice I roll?

Heavens, no! You can keep any of your dice, even the low ones. Sometimes victory lies in failure, after all.

I count two different ways to figure Insight. How do I do it?

Just add up your Rings and multiply the total by ten. Then, add up your total Ranks in Skills. Add these two totals and you have your Insight Total. The character creation example in the rulebook is correct.

What Skill do I use when I use a pole-arm?

You use the Yarijutsu Skill.

What's up with the Survival Skill?

For all intents and purposes, the Survival Skill does not exist and you should refer to the Hunting Skill in its stead.

What's up with page 246?

For some reason, we've ended up with an entire page missing from our basic book. Page 246 is really page 146.

So, what was on page 246?

Well, it was the wrap-up of John's afterward as well as the suggested reading section. We asked

John and he said printing his afterward here would be a bit out of order, but we've included his suggested reading section below for your perusal.

Essential Reading

Miyamoto Musashi. *A Book of Five Rings*.

Sun Tzu. *The Art of War*.

Stories

McAlpine, Helen & William. *Japanese Tales and Legends*.

Mackenzie, Donald A. *Myths of China and Japan*.

Murasaki Shikibu. *The Tale of Genji*.

Roberts, Moss. *Chinese Fairy Tales & Fantasies*.

Russel, Sean. *The Initiate Brother and Gatherer of Clouds*.

Sakai, Stan. *Usagi Yojimbo*.

Tyler, Royall. *Japanese Tales*.

Yoshikawa, Eiji. *Musashi*.

Philosophy

Doubleday, Tony & Scott, David. *The Elements of Zen*.

Inazo Nitobe. *Bushido: The Soul of Japan*.

King, Winston L. *Zen & the Way of the Sword*.

Lao-Tzu. *Tao Te Ching*.

Sadler, A.L. *The Code of the Samurai*.

Suzuki Shosan. *Warrior of Zen*.

History

Hiroaki Satō. *Legends of the Samurai*.

Morris, Ivan. *The World of the Shining Prince*.

Ratti and Westbrook. *Secrets of the Samurai*.

Sawyer, Ralph D. (trans). *The Seven Military Classics of Ancient China*.

Turnbull, Stephen. *Samurai Warriors*. (and anything else you can find by the good doctor!)

Films

Anything by Akira Kurosawa, including:

Ran

Throne of Blood

The Seven Samurai

Yojimbo

Rashomon

ALL YOU NEED IS AN SASE...

If you've got any questions about the L5R RPG, feel free to drop us a line and ask us. Please make sure you include a self-addressed stamped envelope with your question. We can't guarantee any response to questions that have no accompanying self-addressed stamped envelope.

Send questions to:

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空

USING BLACK MAGIC

- To cast maho, the shugenja uses: Earth + Shadowlands Rank.
- The shugenja must bleed a number of Wounds equal to the Mastery Level of the spell. This blood can be his, or someone else's.
- For every additional sacrifice of blood (equal to the required amount, above), the shugenja gains one Free Raise.
- Finally, the shugenja gains a number of Shadowlands Points equal to twice the Mastery Level of the spell.



Many Rokugani believe that all things are made up of the Five Elements. There is, in fact, a sixth Element, created by the presence of Fu Leng. It is the Element of corruption, and its power is so great that it has dampened the presence of the Five Elements in the Shadowlands. Fires do not burn in that place, the air is foul, the water is black and rotten and the earth is spoiled.

Many Crab shugenja (almost the entire Kuni family line) have devoted their lives to studying the Sixth Element, but they have learned only a little. They have learned that, like a disease, Corruption is contagious, carried in the blood of creatures and humans. Prolonged proximity to Corruption can cause contamination. Many Crab samurai gain what the Kuni shugenja call "the taint."

Once infected, the samurai's appearance and behavior begin to change. His skin turns pale and translucent and his hair turns greasy and thick. When confronted with violence or threats of violence, the samurai typically responds with swift, unthinking brutality. Over time, his condition worsens. Skin flakes and peels away, eyes sink deep in his skull and his breath turns putrid. His behavior becomes even more erratic, until finally, he is nothing more than a rotting, diseased, slime-drooling madman.

The Phoenix shugenja have developed spells to counter the "Shadowlands sickness," but they are far from reliable. Often times, the will of the samurai is too weak to fight off the supernatural corruption turning his blood to tar. Some speculate the Crab shugenja may even encourage their samurai to gain the infection. After all, the sickness does bring supernatural strength and a

berserker's courage along with the putrid countenance. And only a Crane would worry about his appearance ...

THE ELEMENT OF CORRUPTION

All creatures from the Shadowlands (goblins, ogres, oni, etc.) carry the Shadowlands Element. Characters can also acquire the taint - for better or worse. It is Ranked from 1 to 5 and each Rank is made of 10 Shadowlands Points (just like Honor and Glory).

As was said above, prolonged exposure to the Element is what causes the taint. For every 24 hours spent in the presence of the Element, a character must make a Simple Earth roll. The TN for the roll is 5. If the character succeeds, his Earth has successfully resisted the corruptive effects of the Shadowlands Taint. If he fails, he has been Tainted (see Tainted Characters, below). For every additional 24 hours, the TN goes up by 5.

Example: *A samurai spends 24 hours in the Shadowlands. The GM calls for a Simple Earth roll at a TN of 5. The character makes his roll, so he escapes the corruptive effects of the Shadowlands. At the end of 48 hours, the samurai must roll again, but this time, the TN is 10. At the end of 36 hours, the TN raises to 15. This process continues until the samurai is clear of the corruptive element.*

The Power of Jade

After a thousand years, the Kuni have found a few methods of staying off the Shadowlands element. They have discovered that samurai who carry pieces of jade with them seem to stave off the effects of the Shadowlands. Samurai who carry jade with them into the Shadowlands find the jade turns slowly black and soft as it absorbs the corruptive elements.

A single piece of jade (about the size of a man's finger) is enough to protect the samurai from all corruptive effects for about a week. This means that after the week has passed, the Earth rolls start up 24 hours later at TN 5.

Multiple pieces of jade provide extended protection, but only to a point.

- One jade 7 days
 - Two jade 12 days
 - Three jade 16 days
 - Four jade 19 days
 - Five jade + 21 days
- All times are approximate.



Likewise, shugenja can become infected with the taint through the use of black magic (see below).

Tainted Characters

The first time a character becomes infected with the Shadowlands Taint, he gains 1-5 Shadowlands Points (roll a die and divide by 2). There are advantages and disadvantages for being infected with the Shadowlands Taint. A character may add his Shadowlands Rank to any Strength, Agility, Stamina or Reflexes rolls, but this trick adds another Shadowlands Point to his total.

Also, characters must subtract a number of dice equal to their Shadowlands Taint from any social interaction rolls.

If the Shadowlands Element ever becomes a character's highest Element, he is overcome by the Taint and becomes a slave of Fu Leng. In short, the character becomes an NPC under the direction of the Game Master.

Getting Rid of the Shadowlands Taint

There is only one known way of getting rid of the Shadowlands Taint. The combined efforts of the Crab and Phoenix shugenja have provided Rokugan with the "Purification" ritual.

PURIFICATION

Base TN: 10 + Shadowlands Rank of Target x 10

Casting Time: 1 hour

Duration: N/A

Mastery: 8

Concentration: Total

Raises: Shadowlands Points Destroyed

Effect: This complicated and complex ritual demands at least an hour's worth of concentration and effort in order to cast properly. If casting is successful, a number of Shadowlands Points equal to the number of shugenja in the ritual are destroyed. However, all shugenja involved in the ritual automatically gain one Shadowlands Point. Each raise will destroy one extra Shadowlands Point outright.



空

CURSES: TOO MUCH OF A GOOD THING

When you're considering a curse, ask yourself: "Will it be fun for the player?"

Remember, having a curse put on a character is taking control away from the player. Make a curse a challenge, but also make it fun for the player and the group as a whole. The best way to do this is to employ the "Too much of a good thing" rule.

For example, you have a player who has created the archetypal handsome, lady-killer Crane samurai. You could curse him ugly... or you could curse him irresistible. Imagine what would happen if every woman he meets falls instantly in love with him. It's a little less mean and a lot more entertaining, and it's what the player wanted in the first place: a character that no woman could resist!

The Magic of the Nameless Ones

The three shugenja best known for their knowledge of "forbidden lore" are Nakanu, Yajinden and Iuchiban. The family names of these shugenja have been erased, so no dishonor will come to their families.

Knowledge of the first two is very hazy. However, much is known of Iuchiban. Three hundred years have passed since his entombment, and still, children scare each other with ghost stories of the sorcerer.

Iuchiban was one of the most prominent shugenja in Rokugan, trusted by the Emperor himself. It was a Unicorn shugenja and a Lion samurai (both magistrates of the Emerald Champion) who discovered the shugenja's researches in maho, and together they were only barely able to thwart Iuchiban's plans to assassinate the Emperor.

The shugenja was put to death, but even that did not end his evil. Eventually, Iuchiban was bound in jade and entombed deep in Shinomen forest. His tomb is guarded by traps both supernatural and mundane (the tomb was constructed by Crab engineers and Scorpion and Phoenix shugenja), and despite the fact it has remained undisturbed for three hundred years, even mention of the sorcerer's name is enough to give even the boldest samurai the shivers.

THE FORBIDDEN SCROLLS

Only three documents record the forbidden formulae of maho. Many industrious shugenja have attempted to make copies of these documents, but despite the best efforts of the Phoenix Clan, all attempts have been unsuccessful.

The most prominent document, known as the "Iuchiban scrolls," fully details the rituals involved in raising the dead, laying curses, summoning oni and other forbidden magics. The other two documents, the Nakanu and Yajinden scrolls, are less detailed and reliable.



Traditional magic involves summoning the energy of the Elements and petitioning the Fortunes with prayer. Sorcerers have only one source of energy to worry about: Fu Leng. All black magic involves prayer to the Dark God trapped under the earth in the Shadowlands. In order to gain favor with Fu Leng, sorcerers must spill blood. There is good news, however: it doesn't have to be the sorcerer's blood ...

Because black magic involves such a tremendous strain on the physical and mental strength of the caster, Earth (+ Shadowlands Rank) is used whenever black magic is cast. A shugenja gains no bonus dice for his Shugenja Rank when using *maho*, but he may gain Free Raises for spilling blood. For every additional sacrifice of blood equal to the required amount that is bled at the casting of the spell (from the caster or another source), the caster gains a Free Raise.

Maho may seem more powerful than "normal" spells. They are. But those who use this dark magic pay a terrible price. Those who call upon Fu Leng for power fall deeper and deeper under his control. Every time a character successfully uses maho, he gains a number of Shadowlands Points equal to twice the Mastery Rank of the spell.

Example: *Isawa Tadaka is researching the black magics of the Shadowlands. He successfully casts a maho with a Mastery Level of 5. He gains 10 Shadowlands Points (Mastery Level 5 x 2 = 10).*

Spell format is similar to the spells listed in the basic book.



Base TN: This is the base TN of the spell. Whenever using maho, sorcerers use Earth to determine the number of dice they roll to beat the spell's TN. Sorcerers may add their Shadowlands Rank to their Earth Rank, but they only keep a number of dice equal to their Earth.

Casting Time: The number of Actions required to cast the spell.

Duration: How long the spell lasts

Mastery Level: If a shugenja has an Earth + Shadowlands equal to or greater than the Mastery Level of the spell, he gains all the benefits of spell mastery listed in the basic rulebook. Also, maho requires a number of Wounds (blood) be sacrificed equal to the Mastery Level of the spell in order for the spell to be effective.

Concentration: Concentration levels (when appropriate) are listed here.

Raises: Maho requires blood sacrifice. For every additional sacrifice of Wounds equal to the Mastery Level of the spell, the caster gains a Free Raise.

ANIMATE THE DEAD

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 10 Actions

Duration: 1 month

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Concentration: None

Raises: Additional Targets, Duration, Casting Time

Effect: Cast upon the remains of a sentient being, this spell animates the corpse into a Shadowlands undead. The shugenja can animate additional undead with one additional target per raise. If the corpse has been dead longer than one week it revives as a Skeleton, pulling itself upright from any remaining flesh and shedding any excess tissue. Corpses animated less than one week after death become Zombies whose faces are covered by a mystically appearing porcelain mask. These creatures are slow and generally weak, but serve the shugenja without thought.

BLOOD OF MIDNIGHT

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 8 Rounds

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Concentration: Casual

Raises: Additional Target, Duration

Effect: Imbues a bloodlust to the target (with an additional target per raise), increasing his/her attack and damage dice by four. The target must

spend one round after killing a foe to further butcher the body and taste its blood. Each foe slain increases the duration of this spell by 2 Actions. After the spell's duration, the target must make an Honor Test equal to five times the number of foes slain, or else lose one point of Honor. While under the influence of this spell, the target is fully aware, but not under control of his actions (and may in fact attack friends as well as foes). If the target of this spell is unwilling, the TN becomes the target's Earth times five.

CORRUPTION OF THE EARTH

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 4 Actions

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 8

Concentration: Total

Raises: Duration, Area, Casting Time

Effect: If successful, the earth within three feet of the target of this spell transforms to deep mud which begins swallowing all within its radius at a rate of two feet per action. Characters trying to escape must make Earth roll of TN 15 to move three feet. Attempts to move (successful or not) cause the character to sink an additional foot unless a Water roll at TN of 10 or greater is made. Once to the edge it takes an Earth roll to pull free. The TN of this roll is equal to TN five times the number of feet submerged. Anyone in the morass at the end of the spell's duration must be dug from the earth, but can be assisted by any number of people who can reach the target. If the spell stops short of its duration for any reason, the earth spirits will retaliate against the shugenja by immediately releasing the targets and reversing the spell's effect upon the shugenja's area. Each Raise increases the radius of the morass by three feet. Should the Shugenja lose concentration, the Morass is dispelled and the ground slowly firms up, giving those trapped ample opportunity to escape.

CURSE

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: See below

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Concentration: Complete

Raises: See below

Effect: This is a generic curse spell, usable by anyone intimate with black magic. Curses are simple, but require a sympathetic component: a

More curses:

- The Scorpion samurai who finds that everyone trusts every word he says
- The Dragon who couldn't dream
- The Crab who couldn't lie
- The Unicorn who cannot sleep under the same roof twice
- The Lion who couldn't whisper
- The Phoenix who draws too much power when casting spells
- The Crane who can't be quiet
- Vampire Curse: this character has a super-powerful Trait that drains from everyone else's Trait

Consider curses very carefully. They can ruin a player's good time, and that's not what being a GM is about.

空

SO YOU SUMMONED AN ONI

Now that you've summoned it, what does it look like?

Well, you see, that's the problem. Summoning oni is a tricky process, and you're never quite sure of what you'll get when you're done.

As a general rule, the more Raises the caster uses, the bigger, badder and meaner the oni will be.

Alternately, Raises can symbolize more control over the beast.

Legend has it that the

Blood Speakers had summoning oni down to an art form, but three hundred years of corrupt texts have diluted the true method into guess-work, leaving modern *maho-tsukai* with less than perfect rituals that don't always give you what you ask for.

lock of hair, a fingernail clipping, an ounce of blood, etc. It is not enough to gain a piece of clothing of the subject of the curse; the caster must gain something that contains spiritual energy of the target.

If the curse is successful (see previous page's sidebars for curse suggestions), the caster must keep the item in physical contact at all times. If the caster ever loses the item, the curse is broken. This is the only way to break a curse.

DARK DIVINATION

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 1 Action

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Concentration: Complete

Raises: Questions

Effect: This spell allows the caster to ask questions to the GM. Each question gains the caster 8 Shadowlands Points (Mastery Level x 2). The GM must answer the question honestly, but is only required to answer with a "Yes" or "No." For every Raise, the character can ask an additional question.

SUMMON GAREGOSU NO BAKEMONO

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: N/A

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 9

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time

Effect, Single Use: Successfully cast, this spell summons a tentacle-horror known as Garegosu no Bakemono who fights for, and obeys, the Shugenja until the sun rises. The Shugenja involved need never fear Garegosu no Bakemono.

GAREGOSU NO BAKEMONO: SHADOWLANDS CREATURE

Earth 3

Fire 3

Water 4

Air 2

Attack 4k3

Damage Earth Rank + 5

TN to Hit: 25 (Heavy Armor equivalent)

Wounds: 9: -1; 20: -2; 35: Dead

Special Abilities:

Eating: Each time the Garegosu no Bakemono kills an opponent it consumes the body and adds the digested meal's former Earth Rank to its own

(increasing its damage and wounds).

Fear: Garegosu no Bakemono is a horrific creature resembling a large cancerous octopus about the size of an elephant. Whenever anyone sees Garegosu no Bakemono for the first time they must make a simple Willpower check at TN of 15 or flee from its sight. Witnessing a Garegosu no Bakemono eating requires another Willpower check at TN of 20 or flee from its sight.

SUMMON ONI

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 10 Actions

Duration: See below

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Concentration: Complete

Raises: Casting Time

Effect: This spell (and its companion below) calls oni from the depths of Fu Leng's underground kingdom. A sacrifice of blood (5 Wounds) is required as well as a name. The procedure is as follows:

First, the caster must make a circle of bones. Second, the caster must place a scroll within the circle. Written on the scroll is the name of a living man or woman. (If the person named on the scroll is not cooperating willingly with the summoning, the shugenja must make a Contested Roll of his Void + Shugenja Rank vs. the target's Void. If the shugenja loses the contest, the TN to summon the oni increases by 10.) Lastly, the caster must chant the name of the oni it wishes to summon as he spills blood on the scroll within the circle.

If the ceremony is performed correctly, the oni is summoned within the circle and bound to the name written on the scroll. The mortal whose name was written on the scroll is also bound to the oni. The oni and the mortal share a symbiotic relationship from that point on, until the scroll is destroyed. Slowly, the mortal loses strength to the oni. His skin turns pale, his bones grow brittle and his will leaks away.

In game terms, when an oni is given a samurai's name, he begins to gain Shadowlands Points. The rate of corruption depends on the Earth Rank of the samurai:

Samurai's Earth Rate of Corruption

1	1 Shadowlands Point per 36 hours
2	1 Shadowlands Point per week
3	1 Shadowlands Point per two weeks
4	1 Shadowlands Point per four weeks
5+	1 Shadowlands Point per eight weeks

Jade does not protect the samurai from this



process.

Whoever possesses the scroll (assuming its not the caster) has control over the oni. The oni must obey all of the caster's commands. If the scroll is ever destroyed, the connection between the oni and the mortal is severed, and the oni returns to the underworld of Fu Leng. If the mortal is overcome by the Shadowlands taint, the oni gains permanent status in the world and the caster loses his command over the oni's will.

SUMMON SWAMP SPIRITS

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 25 Actions

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 7

Concentration: None

Raises: Casting Time, Number Summoned

Effect: The spell must be cast near a still body of water. It calls forth minions of the swamps to do the caster's bidding. These swamp spirits are blue-green humanoids that appear to be made of the clay found at the bottom of Rokugan's swamps. The spell calls forth one swamp spirit and one additional one swamp spirit can be summoned per Raise, but this increases the casting time by one action.

SWAMP SPIRIT: SHADOWLANDS

CREATURE

Earth 1

Fire 2

Water 3

Air 1

Attack 3k2

Damage 3k2

TN to Hit: 10

Wounds: 4: -1; 10: Dead

SUMMON REVENANT

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 5 Actions

Duration: 1 hour

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 7

Concentration: None

Raises: Duration, Casting Time

Effect: This spell summons an undead champion who appears at the end of the spell and thereafter fights for, and obeys, the Shugenja for the spell's duration. At the end of the spell the Shugenja can permanently enlist the undead champion (making the spell permanent), but must permanently sacrifice one point of his/her Earth Rank (both Stamina and Willpower) to do

so. If enlisted, the champion thereafter fights and obeys the shugenja until destroyed or the shugenja dies. If there are no dead bodies within a quarter mile of the casting shugenja, the scroll will destroy itself without effect.

SHADOWLANDS REVENANT

Earth 5

Fire 4

Water 2

Air 2

Attack 6k4

Damage Weapon's DR + 5

TN to Hit: 20 (Light Armor)

Wounds per level 15: -1; 30: -2; 45: -3; 60: -4;
75: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear 3.

STEALING THE SOUL

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 8 Actions

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 8

Concentration: Full

Raises: Casting Time, Duration

Effect: Ritual. The spell's target loses one from each Ring and Trait for each Shugenja participating in the ritual until the duration expires (no Ring or Trait can be reduced below one).

This terrible spell was used to incapacitate Hida Shonojo, the legendary Crab *daimyo*, immediately before his assassination. Its dread power is said to come from a boiling black pit in the Shadowlands.

TOUCH OF DEATH

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: NA

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Concentration: NA

Raises: Range, Casting Time, Damage.

Effect: Strikes the target with lethal energy, summoned directly from Fu Leng, through the casting shugenja and into the target. The target must be within 10 feet plus 2 feet per raise of the casting shugenja. The skin and hair of the target age rapidly under the influence of this spell. The hair loses all color, turning white and falling out in great clumps, while the skin blackens as the flesh ages too rapidly to fall away. The DR of this spell is seven.

CHARACTERS AND REFERENCE MATERIALS

As this is an introductory adventure, it is best that the players choose from the templates located in any of the *Way of the Clans* books or design their own starting-level PCs. Due to the nature of the adventure, no shugenja are required (though they would certainly help during certain scenes).

Suggested Character School Ranks: 1

Suggested Number of Characters: 1-4

Suggested Clans: Any

Suggested References
L5R RPG, Way of the Lion, Way of the Scorpion



Introduction

ADVENTURE NOTES

The Silence Within Sound makes ample use of the charts provided on the GM Screen which came with this book, providing specific examples of how to use each in play. As such, it serves well as the first adventure for a given group (and their GM), even if the characters are not a cohesive group when the game begins.

Also, several of the themes and NPCs found here also appear in the upcoming *Legacy of the Forge*, a full-sized adventure focusing on the tensions between the Lion and the Crane. Should you be interested in that adventure, you may consider running this as a prequel, making use of the foreshadowing elements included.

GAMEMASTER'S NOTES

First and foremost, you will need to read all of this mini-module. Even seasoned Gamemasters find it difficult to generate adventure on the fly, and handling spur-of-the-moment deviations from the plotted text is no different. You must be prepared to respond to your players' questions and adjudicate their actions, which cannot be done without knowing the environment of play.

Next, choose whether this adventure will be run alone or as the first adventure in an ongoing campaign. This decision should affect the level of severity with which you treat the rules. For instance, it is generally not a good idea to kill player characters in the first session of a campaign.

The Adventure Structure

This adventure assumes nothing. There is no universal path to victory, nor is there one thing the PCs must accomplish without utterly failing. The players are essentially thrust into a volatile situation and asked to make do.

The Silence Within Sound is presented as a timeline of events (see p. 19); if the players sit and do nothing, the events of the adventure will simply play out as written around them. Instead of complex descriptions and boxed text for a few specific locations, there is basic information about a wide number of them, allowing the GM to add detail as he desires. This format is useful in developing GM skills, as well as accommodating the kind of unexpected madness that players demonstrate.

The characters may be of any clan, family, and school they like, and they need not know one another before beginning the adventure. Each of them is simply "in the wrong place at the wrong time", and presented with a stream of unusual circumstances to investigate.

Gamemaster Resources

Immediately hereafter, you will find the Background, Order of Events, and Timeline, which will guide you through the rest of the text. Read them first. They are the core of the adventure.

The bulk of the text is broken down into three main Stages with associate sections describing individual scenes. They are presented in the order the players will most likely encounter them, though it is possible to jumble them according to PC actions without harming the overall flow of the piece.

Next is the Conclusion and Consequences section, which details the aftermath of the adventure and how to incorporate it into an ongoing campaign. It also includes further details for linking this to *Legacy of the Forge*.

Major NPC Backgrounds follow. Two NPCs (Noshin and Sozui) and the Monks of Yaruki Jukko have intricate histories which effect current events, and are described there. If anything presented about them confuses you, check there to see if it clears the issue up.

Finally, you may consider reading through the sidebars for each section as you proceed through the text. They contain NPC statistics, GMing hints, and additional background information to help you run the module.

BACKGROUND

The Scorpion have been trying to retake Kenson Gakka ever since the Lion – in response to a failed Scorpion attack at Kyuden Ikoma – descended upon it in savage retribution. Slaughtering every man, woman, and child in the palace of Shiro no Meiyo, they occupied the territory and renamed it Kenson Gakka, “Humility’s Lesson”. (For more on Kenson Gakka and the surrounding lands, please see the *L5R RPG*, p. 236, and *Way of the Lion*, pp. 112-113.)

But the proud Lion are unaware of the extent of the Scorpion’s forethought; the minor conflicts along the border are only a smoke screen for their true intentions. Six hundred years ago, Shiro no Meiyo was considered a Scorpion holding on borrowed time. Knowing that the Lion would eventually take the castle, but not when or how, the Scorpion prepared. They constructed an extensive series of passages within the walls and floors of various innocuous buildings throughout the city, connecting them to the castle and an underground river that stretched nearly to the clan border.

They arranged the establishment of an unassuming Shintao temple beside the closest bridge across Three Sides River. Some twenty miles from the city by road, the temple and its monks (thought mainly to be retired Scorpion bushi) were not seen as a threat. But beneath the temple, the subterranean tributary of Three Sides passed, and when they gained access to its banks, they had access to Shiro no Meiyo as well.

The Scorpion carefully concealed their intentions beneath a veil of ordinary activity, backfilling the passages to conceal them and placing only one or two within the monastic order who knew the truth of their deception. Accurate details of the taking of Kenson Gakka have faded with the centuries, and all but the monks and their superiors have forgotten.

Losing the castle was not incredibly painful for the Scorpion. But the violent deaths of the families therein was another matter altogether. The Scorpion were not fully prepared for a strike when the Lion came, having committed too many troops to their failed occupation of Kyuden Ikoma. They had not expected the rapid response of the Lion, nor the level of retribution they would demand.

It is said that a Scorpion is most dangerous when he is given time to think and prepare. But

the truth of the matter is that – just as any other – the worst comes when they are incensed. Shocked and disgusted by the actions of the Lion, they choose not to directly retake the castle, or even to attack the general who took it. Instead, secure in their access to the castle, they waited until they could cause greater damage...

THE SETTING

The adventure revolves around the Festival of the Humble Turtle, held annually at Kenson Gakka to mark the events surrounding the Lion’s capture of the city. The Scorpion plan corresponds with this festival, and forms the bulk of the adventure. The monks of Yaruki Jukko (the temple established by the Scorpion near the castle) have carefully cultivated a relationship with a sister monastery near Shiro Daidoji (#51 on the map of Rokugan), and have invited them to attend a separate ritual they are hosting on the same day. The Crane monks have accepted, and – at the request of the Daidoji daimyo – are bringing an ambassador (Daidoji Handen) with them.

These monks are the only Scorpion welcome at Kenson Gakka during the festival. Of those, eleven of fourteen are now Shosuro Actors whose placement in the order has been discreetly arranged by their clan. But their leader, a man named Noshin, was not placed by the clan and is an unknown quantity; therefore, they have also sent Bayushi Sozui, a well-trained instigator who takes the role of a Dragonfly courtesan throughout the first half of the scenario.

Prior to the arrival of the guests, the Actors have prepared the castle’s labyrinth, clearing several of the secret passages and memorizing the complicated paths within. They have also studied the activities and mannerisms of the Lion guard, and prepared outfits so that they can impersonate them when the time comes. One of them in particular has spent several weeks watching the Lion general posted at Kenson Gakka, Akodo Ikare, and plans to take his place after Sozui and the others kill him early in the adventure.

ORDER OF EVENTS

The PCs are assumed to either 1) already be at the castle for some reason, or 2) have arrived to observe or take part in the festival. Either way, by the night of the nineteenth day of the Monkey, most of the guests have arrived, including Daidoji Handen, his yojimbo, and the Crane monks. Being

WHERE TO FIND THE EXAMPLES

Chances to use all the relevant charts on the GM Screen have been worked into the text of this adventure. Most of them are presented in non-combat locations (such as court and festival events) first. Here is where you can find them (by “Hours” within the adventure text):

- **Battle Table:** Serpent, Hare (Day Two)
- **Combat Summary:** Dragon, Dog, Hare (Day Two)
- **Examples of Raises in Combat:** Dragon, Dog, Hare (Day Two)
- **Iaijutsu Duels:** Serpent, Hare (Day Two)
- **Random Hit Locations:** Dragon, Dog, Boar, Hare (Day Two)
- **Target Numbers:** Dragon, Serpent, Dog, Boar, Hare (Day Two)
- **The Contested Roll:** Hare, Dragon, Boar, Hare (Day Two)
- **The Simple Roll:** All
- **The Three Maneuvers:** Dragon, Dog, Hare (Day Two)
- **Working Together:** Dragon, Monkey

Note that the **Rings and Traits** and **Weapons** tables are not included in this list, as they are purely informational. For those interested, examples of important uses of Void Points can be found in the Hour of the Monkey.

TWO TYPES OF GAMES

The chain of events presented here is set up to support both primary styles of play in RPGs today.

For those who desire a scripted series of scenes, leading their PCs through the challenges of each in turn, it has been presented in the most probable order.

However, should you as GM decide that you would like a more fluid setting, it can be accomplished quite easily by simply allowing the PCs to do and go where they may. With the following order of events, you will already know where people and things are, which will make it easier to judge their reactions to the characters.

Just keep track as you go and make decisions for the bad guys according to their backgrounds. More details for handling this kind of game are located within the adventure text.

naturally isolationist, the latter have chosen to remain at Yaruki Jukko throughout their visit.

To keep the schedule of the festival, the morning meal and court begin very early the next morning. Here, PCs are introduced to most of the primary NPCs of the piece, including Noshin, Sozui, Ikare and his family, Matsu Kioma (the present daimyo of the castle), and any others that the GM chooses to include.

Noshin and several of his monks aid in the opening ceremonies before returning to their temple that afternoon. Their presence is questioned, however, when several of their actions are perceived as blatantly insulting to all in attendance. Noshin falls under suspicion of disrupting the festival, rapidly becoming the scapegoat for the actions of the infiltrators beneath him. This suspicion should propagate throughout the first Stage of the adventure, giving the PCs reason to question Noshin's motives and investigate his order.

Sozui and the true culprits impersonate several guests at the castle, wreaking havoc, casting more doubt on Noshin, and gently giving everyone reason to think that the Lion at Kenson Gakka resent the arrival of the Crane. This will create turmoil between the Lion and their visitors, preparing all of them for the Scorpions' deception and diverting attention away from their true movements. Throughout, the characters have the chance to collect information about the odd movements of Noshin, the monks, and perhaps even Sozui.

Meanwhile, Scorpion forces move in and take the Lion outpost at the shore of Three Sides River (about five miles from the Yaruki Jukko temple). They replace the soldiers there with their own and send a unit of archers into the forested hills between the temple and Kenson Gakka. By noon, they have control of everything west of the city, with the single exception of the temple.

At Kenson Gakka, Sozui and several of her monks dispatch the Lion General, Ikare, and replace him with one of their own. The PCs might notice the difference in his behavior thereafter if they are watchful. But they are quickly distracted by the attempted theft of an idol within the Shrine to the Fortunes in the city. The burglar turns out to be a *zokujin*, one of a race of beings used by the Lion to mine copper along their western border. It claims that Three Sides River

has become Tainted, and corrupted their natural food source – the common rocks of the mines.

Unknown to all involved, this predicament has been caused by the kami of Three Sides River, which has abandoned its home and fused with the body of Noshin (see his Background on p. 42 for more). After six years, the kami's absence has caused the river to become stagnant and mired with poisonous silt. The animals that feed from it are dying and the saturation of its shorelines has affected all the farms and villages along its length. This has been a gradual process, however, and its source proves difficult to discover.

As the PCs are looking into this dilemma, further chaos ensues at the castle. The Scorpion Actors stage the abduction of Akodo Ikare's son from his chambers, spiriting him off into the labyrinth. Sozui vanishes at this point, taking the underground river route toward the Yaruki Jukko temple. Noshin also disappears during this time, embarking on his own investigation of the events at Kenson Gakka.

Throughout the search for "his" son, the Actor impersonating Ikare grows more and more irate, ensuring that his emotions are seen by all. This is also intended by the Scorpion to support their deception, and aid in the ultimate disgrace of the Lion Clan.

Finally, the PCs discover incriminating evidence when they recover the child. Feigning a loss of self-control, Ikare gathers a regiment of soldiers and storms toward the temple, where the monks have retired for the evening. Daidoji Handen, fearing for the monks in his charge, follows, and the PCs are welcome to accompany them as well.

The ultimate Scorpion goal in the adventure is for the the Actors' simulated rage to reach a head here. "Ikare" orders his men to slaughter the monks within – all but one (another Scorpion plant), who is allowed to escape into Scorpion lands and inform the armies waiting there that the attack on the city of Kenson Gakka may commence.

Open hostilities threaten to explode between the Lion forces before Sozui stages a violent interruption that sparks the attack of the Scorpion army from across the bridge. Retreating, the Lion still loyal to their clan lead Handen back into the forest to escape and return to Kenson Gakka.

By this time, Noshin has made his way into the labyrinth, where evidence of the Scorpion plan

Adventure Timeline

This adventure is set in the Month of the Monkey (the ninth of the Rokugani peasant calendar). The original siege of Kenson Gakka lasted only one day, from pre-dawn to late that night. The annual Festival of the Humble Turtle recreates the events of that day, complete with ceremonial recreations of the famous battles, contests of skill, and an immense feast following the ultimate Lion victory. The adventure begins on the 20th day of the month.

In the following timeline, italicized entries denote deviations from the Scorpion plan, or unexpected “ripples” in the course of the adventure. GMs are encouraged to introduce more upsets in the Scorpion plan, or eliminate those presented, depending on the progress of their characters. Use this timeline to guide their investigations and secure a satisfying climax to the tale.

Day Before Adventure (Monkey 19)

Bayushi Sozui arrives, impersonating a courtesan

Night Before Adventure (Monkey 19)

Daidoji Handen arrives with entourage
Crane monks remain at Yaruki Jukko

Day One, Hour of the Hare (5 – 7 am)

Court; all major NPCs are introduced

Day One, Hour of the Dragon (7 – 9 am)

Festival begins; PCs may join in events
Actor-monks hidden within labyrinth

Day One, Hour of the Serpent (9 – 11 am)

Battle recreation; Scorpion actors humiliate Noshin

Monks impersonate people and cause turmoil
Scorpion forces overrun the Lion outpost, replacing them and moving into the forested hills

Day One, Hour of the Horse (11 am – 1pm)

A zokujin breaks into the Temple of the Fortunes

Sozui kills Ikare and replaces him with one of her Actors

Day One, Hour of the Goat (1 – 3 pm)

Ikare’s son is kidnapped by Scorpion Actors
Sozui leaves for the monastery (through underground tunnels)

Noshin goes missing (actually investigating the abduction)

Day One, Hour of the Monkey (3 – 5pm)

Actor-Ikare feigns more and more rage at his “loss”

Child recovered (by PCs) and evidence found that points to monks having stolen the child

Day One, Hour of the Rooster (5 – 7 pm)

Actor-Ikare and his men march to monastery, with Daidoji Handen in tow

Possible discovery of the Scorpion plot

Day One, Hour of the Dog (7 – 9 pm)

Actor-Ikare, “unhinged”, orders his men to slaughter the Crane monks, with Handen and the PCs as witnesses

One Actor-monk allowed to escape toward Scorpion lands (to signal the attack)

Actor-Ikare and Handen may face off, but Sozui’s sneak attack prevents bloodshed.

Scorpion Forces descend upon the temple, and the remaining Lion retreat with Handen back to Kenson Gakka

Day One, Hour of the Boar (9 – 11 pm)

Actor-Ikare prepares to take the castle with Bayushi Kaseru (the Scorpion general leading the assaulting forces)

A zokujin arrives to lead the PCs (and perhaps Handen) into the underground tunnels, where they face Sozui in an effort to rescue Noshin

Day One, Hour of the Rat (11 pm – 1 am)

Noshin, the zokujin, and the PCs must make their way back into Kenson Gakka before the Scorpion fall upon the city, warning those within of the truth before violence erupts

Scorpion forces arrive at Kenson Gakka, claiming victory over the forces of General Ikare. They demand the castle back for the atrocity at the temple, (possibly) citing Handen and the PCs as witnesses

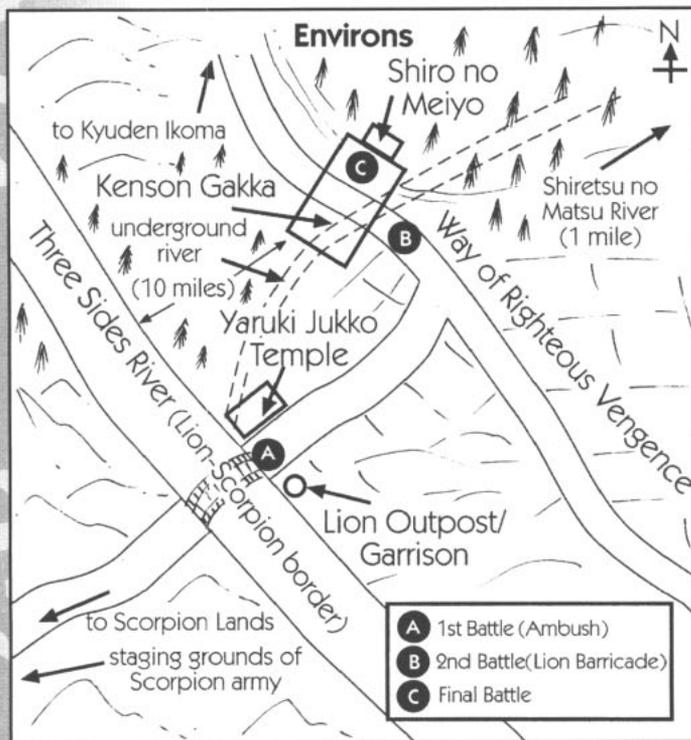
Day Two, Hour of the Hare (5 – 7 am)

[If it has not already] The siege of Kenson Gakka begins

can be found. But he falls prey to one of the traps left behind by the builders and, unable to escape on his own, sends one of the zokujin to find help. It comes to the PCs wherever they are, and leads them back to aid him. But Sozui is lying in wait, and intends to end their heroics, even if it means burning the castle itself to the ground.

The Scorpion forces arrive at Kenson Gakka, presenting the staged events at the monastery, and laying claim to the castle and its surrounding areas. The Lion – uncertain of the true actions of their own general – fall upon the leadership of Matsu Kioma, whose natural instincts side with war (see his description in the sidebar on p. 29).

By dawn, unless something is done to prevent it (*i.e.* the PCs discover what is happening and arrive in time to warn those within before the Scorpion arrive), the city of Kenson Gakka will be under siege by the forces of the Scorpion, with no hope of redemption save victory.



Stage One: Festival at Kenson Gakka

The primary thrusts of the first Stage of the adventure are introduction and investigation. The PCs have the chance to discover certain seemingly unconnected facts and events which will be of use later in the adventure. The reason for this is simple – the most effective settings establish a sense of normality prior to crisis. That way, when the central events of the adventure appear (in Stages Two and Three), the players will already have a frame of reference for what is unusual.

In this Stage, strive to present a typical Rokugani festival (though perhaps one with a few snags – see below). Introduce all the NPCs you wish, set the tone and tempo of the adventure, and let the players ease into their surroundings. Utilize their perception – describe things through their eyes, making adjustments for how their characters understand what they are seeing. Experiment. Have fun.

Hour of the Hare: Court

Due to the fact that the festival roughly follows the events of the original battle in which Kenson Gakka swapped hands, court is held with the rising sun. The morning air is crisp and the sounds of autumn can be heard beyond the city walls. All is calm; much of the populace will not rise until the festival at the Hour of the Dragon. Until then, the party and all those present (about 100 – 200 people) are left to themselves.

Court is held at the Civic Hall (shown on the Kenson Gakka map), and the tone is subdued. The rooms are a quiet drone of stately concourse, and the gentle chords of three *fue* can be heard



throughout. There is not a great deal of space within the Civic Hall, though its confines are accustomed to such a gathering. Everywhere there are private chambers and corridors for independent conversations, and the grand ballroom on the second floor opens up onto four tremendous balconies facing the three walls of the city and Shiro no Meiyo.

The PCs are welcome to mingle as they wish, but it is unlikely that they will have time to meet everyone. Instead, focus upon the central characters you wish them to meet. Give them the illusion of grand spectacle. Do not allow them to become wallflowers. The longer they remain idle, the more you will have to work to keep them engaged later. Allow them only a few moments' respite between introductions, discussions, and debates.

Try to keep the party in one place during this scene. Each time a party splits up, it doubles your workload, making it difficult for you to maintain the attention of each. Try to keep each engaged with the present conversation. For instance, should your group meet and begin a conversation with a Crab dignitary, make one of his assistants an avid fan of Go. Perhaps one of the players would like to play a round? (Any game will do; the best are those with some degree of strategy involved.)

If the PCs insist on splitting up, try to give each something to do while the others are roleplaying with you. If one, for example, wanders away because a pretty girl has caught his eye, tell him to compose a spontaneous haiku dedicated to her beauty and give him bonus Raises for its quality when he makes his roll. This frees you up to handle the rest of the party while he writes.

If your group is particularly large or you feel overwhelmed, take one of the players aside (preferably one with a history of proven roleplaying skill) and ask him if he is willing to play one of the NPCs for a time. Have his character retire to the rock garden or take a walk and then introduce the NPC that he will be playing. Some players will be especially accepting of this idea if you allow them a hand in conceiving the NPC profile. Others might be better suited to the role of a GM's assistant, who can roleplay with one group while you handle another. The two could even be coordinated, with the GMs meeting every few minutes to confer.

INTRODUCING THE CENTRAL CAST

Introduce the adventure's main characters during this scene, using the illustrations throughout the adventure to represent them. Try to intersperse them between other NPCs of your own creation, making each a unique individual. The five major NPCs to present at this point in the adventure include:

Noshin (see p. 42): Throughout this scene, Noshin is busy directing the monks of Yaruki Jukko in preparation for the festival. He will not approach the PCs, though neither will he rebuff them, should they approach him. He is kind and forthright, though rather distracted, and answers their questions quickly and concisely.

Bayushi Sozui (see p. 44): In her courtesan guise, Sozui makes the rounds like a seasoned veteran of the social arena. Her powdered face shines in the crystalline morning air like a beautiful snowflake. She is a consummate master at reading the expressions of those around her, subtly weaving her way into important meetings and influencing their outcomes. PCs who succeed with an Awareness + Manipulation or Courtier roll contested by her own notice her smooth orchestrations. The PCs should not recognize her as a threat in this scene – only as a woman completely in charge of the emotions of those around her.

Matsu Kioma (see p. 29): Following the example of Madame Miko (Ikare's wife; see below and in the "Random" NPCs sidebar), the daimyo of Kenson Gakka will make it a point to introduce himself to all who attend the festival's sunrise court. He is gracious and warm, though it is apparent with a Perception + Etiquette or Oratory roll (TN 15) that he is unhappy with his duties. He does not really care for any of his surroundings. There is a fire within him, though, and astute students of character may see that it burns for something far away.

Akodo Ikare (see p. 26): Akodo Miko makes the rounds with her husband in tow, but it is obvious that he is a warrior, and his eyes are drawn consistently away toward the parade grounds nearby. Characters may engage him in a discussion of tactics with little trouble, though Miko will certainly try to steal him away after a few minutes. Be sure that he is alone and approachable at least once, however; it is important that the PCs see him as a likeable fellow.

"RANDOM" NPCs

On the subject of NPC profiles, it is important that there be a wide selection of people to speak with at the festival. While a long and dry list of such NPCs could be included here, we found it more useful to show you a quick and dirty way of generating such characters for immediate use. Answer the following questions, in the following order, for each:

- 1) What clan are they from?
- 2) What is their name?
- 3) What is their profession (including designation – bushi, shugenja, ronin, none)?
- 4) Why are they at the festival?
- 5) What do they find of interest in the PCs?
- 6) What do they have of interest to the PCs (similar interests, information / rumors, comedic relief, love interest, idle conversation, etc.)?
- 7) What is their most distinguishing physical trait or behavior?

This list of questions should go a long way toward fleshing out the NPC in question, and should give you enough information to handle simple dialogue and description.

(Continued)

"RANDOM" NPCs (CONTINUED)

Here is a short list of examples:

- Lion - Akodo Miko - samurai (bushi) - wife to Akodo Ikare - kindly; desires to know all "her guests" - may act as their guide and confidant during the adventure - pink crescents alight her cheeks when she smiles
- Crab - Yasuki Genji - merchant (none) - selling wares at the marketplace - desires a pendant owned by Akodo Miko (that is not for sale); could the PCs perhaps help persuade her for a cut in the profits? - can offer them exotic items and information... for a price - nods head slightly while listening
- Crane - Daidoji Shiko - yojimbo (bushi) - bodyguard to Daidoji Handen - enamored with one of the PCs - irresistible sense of humor - radiant silver hair
- Dragon - Agasha Todaro - Bard (shugenja) - traveling storyteller - a tale from beyond the mountains - one of their stories in return - speaks in long, rambling sentences
- Phoenix - Isawa Riju - Astrologer (shugenja) - drawn here by "celestial patterns" - tell their fortune or grant them information (that he came here because he saw doom in the sky) - nothing more than their time - has trouble making eye contact



Daidoji Handen (see p. 24): The Crane ambassador to Kenson Gakka spends the majority of his time surrounded by his yojimbo, quietly observing the proceedings with a critical eye. He is impassive throughout most of morning, only allowing a slight smile at Sozui's masterful diplomacy.

Your group will rapidly figure out who the most important NPCs are (after all, you're showing them pictures of some, while obviously winging others). This is natural in an introductory adventure, and can be played off as the "feeling" a PC gets when he meets someone important. Let the players focus on these five if they wish - it can only make your life easier.

Note, however, that this scene is a remarkable opportunity to present new NPCs within a neutral environment, allowing you to flesh them out as they interact with the PCs. Note which ones the

players are receptive to, and periodically insert them into later scenes for a sense of continuity.

As you may have noted, there is no real threat in this scene. This gives the PCs time to grow attached to their surroundings, and they will provide the impetus when the true challenges come.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

Of course, other options also exist for your characters. They could decide to take a morning walk through the city (though they will find it a lonely place, with most everything closed or empty at this early hour), or they might just explore, getting used to the lay of the land. The setting allows for a great deal of description without additional interaction. It is also possible for them to forego court altogether, as several of the guests at the festival do (though this will cast a unfavorable shadow over them with many of the more "proper" NPCs).

Hour of the Dragon: Festival Begins

This is a lengthy affair, with a great deal of formality before the events. But unlike the long somber moments of sunrise court, the festival is filled with life. The entire city is awake by this hour, and thriving with the sights and sounds of celebration. Fireworks sparkle within Merchant's Row, and children happily twirl in the streets. All but the palace are decorated with an abundance of bright yellow and orange, interspersed with the contrasts of black or dark, blood red.

The parade grounds are the center of attention during this hour, but the garden and courtyard beside them have also been prepared for guests, and are a welcome relief from the constant excitement.

The festival begins with a procession of Lion soldiers, marching in ranks along the main thoroughfares before the crowds. They are dressed in the full regalia of war, complemented by all the finery of peacetime grace. This spectacle draws many to the festival, even some who have no interest in the other events. After making a full circuit, the soldiers end their march at the parade grounds, where they take up watchful positions at the edge of its rough ground.

Another group of soldiers - one for each century the Lion have held the castle - arrive with tall sashimono bearing the Lion mon. They place the mon within a row of shafts cut into the earth at the far end of the parade grounds (between them and the Merchant Row). This officially signals the festival's commencement. Kioma appears, and with a single clap, the first events begin...

THE EVENTS

Most of the contests held during the festival are martial in nature. Many are based upon the teachings of the Akodo War College and other Lion military schools. There are feats of strength and dexterity, and challenges of the mind and intuition. Any or all of the PCs are welcome to compete - they must only present themselves at the beginning of the event they are interested in. The details and rules for handling several of these contests follow:

Yabusame (Targeting)

In this event, mounted samurai fire arrows at targets placed on tall poles to their right and left as they ride by them. Each round, the targets become smaller and are placed farther and farther away from the rider. Those who miss a target are removed from competition, and the last qualifying archer is declared the winner.

Mechanics: Each round, each character involved must make a Simple Agility + Archery roll against the TN for that round. The TNs begin at 5 in the first round, and increase by 5 for each additional round of attempts. It is safe to assume that by TN 25 (should any of the PCs get that far), there will only be as many others left as there are PCs.

Each opponent rolls an average of 6k3, though you are welcome to change that if you desire. You should play through the final rounds with as much drama as possible, making each die roll seem as important to the competition as the shot it represents.

Inu ô-mono (The Chase)

Here, a small and quick beast (such as a piglet) is released into a fenced field, and the samurai follows on horseback. He is to subdue or kill the animal with as few arrows as possible. He will be rated according to the number of arrows used, his skill with the bow and upon horseback, and his grace throughout.

Mechanics: Each participant must make an Archery attack (Agility + Archery) against the animal's TN to be Hit (15) each round. Raises may be made to increase damage. They must also make a Simple Horsemanship roll each round with a TN of 10 plus 5 for every Raise they attempt with Archery (even if they failed). Additional Raises may be made with Horsemanship to improve one's style or presence, but failure against the modified TN of any Horsemanship roll results in the PC falling from his horse and being disqualified.

The final score is equal to the number of rounds it took to kill the beast, minus one for every two extra Raises made with Horsemanship (beyond those required by his Archery attacks) - minimum 0. The lowest score wins. If there is a tie (entirely possible), all eligible "winners" are given ribbons at the end of the competition (see below).

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"RANDOM" NPCs (CONTINUED)

- Unicorn - Otaku Raniko - Battle Maiden (bushi/ronin) - here to observe battle recreations - nothing (though the PCs can try all they want) - nothing (though her cautious watch of the PCs may lead them to think otherwise) - stoic and emotionless at all times; keeps a distance and watches people

- Fox - Kitsune Kiden - diplomat (none) - here to stay for the winter - with enough incentive (or just enough friendly chatter), a stay at her daimyo's home - their friendship and the contacts they can provide - long, thin hair and delicate, glass-like features

This system works best if you prepare a few characters of your own before the session. Jotting down some initial ideas using this formula can make a world of difference at the table, saving you valuable time when describing the scene. Also, the game benefits if you design the NPCs intentionally for the characters, playing off of their likes, dislikes, goals, and histories.

DAIDOJI HANDEN

EARTH: 3

WATER: 2

Strength 4

FIRE: 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

Skills: Appraisal 2, Archery 3, Athletics 2, Battle 2, Commerce 2, Courtier 4, Dance 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Law 2, Lore: Lion 2, Oratory 2, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3

Honor: 4.1

Glory: 5.2

School: Daidoji Bushi Rank 3

Advantages: Ear of the Emperor, Irreproachable (Rank 2)

Disadvantages: Fascination (Geology), Idealistic

Sumai (Wrestling)

Each of the participants must be fully armored. They are placed within a small circle drawn in the dirt – without weapons of any kind – and told to try to force the other out, pin him, or knock him unconscious. The winner is determined by a best 2-out-of-3 ratio, and progresses to another match (knocking your opponent out is considered an automatic victory). This continues until only one contestant remains. Beside throwing (which is a legal maneuver in the sport of sumai), no special moves are allowed.

Mechanics: Full armor adds 5 to all TNs involving movement (*i.e.* all of them in this case). Using the Combat Summary, Three Maneuvers, Simple Rolls, and Contested Rolls Charts on the GM's Screen, conduct the wrestling match between contestants as a normal combat. All damage is considered temporary, and for the purposes of knocking the opponent out only; when they awaken, they will retain only one Wound per -1 modifier they have sustained. When trying to pin an opponent or push them out of the circle, the same mechanic is used – a Simple Strength + Wrestling roll vs. the opponent's Strength x5. If both contestants attempt the same action (attacking or pushing at one another), then the rolls become Contested.

Encourage the players to describe their actions each turn, though be sure they understand that no special maneuvers are allowed (*i.e.* they can make no Raises). Opponents of the PCs have Strengths of 2 - 3 and Wrestling Skills of 1 - 4, as you wish.

Oriru ("Dismount")

In each round of this competition, two riders bear down at one another, racing toward each other on horseback. They try to seize and unhorse their opponent, dragging him to the ground. The event progresses in rounds until only one victor remains.

This is a fast-paced contest. It is favored greatly by Master Kioma, who studied extensively in the Unicorn lands as a youth.

Mechanics: Each round, the opponents make Contested Strength + Horsemanship rolls. The winner progresses to the next round. Those who fall take 1 die worth of Wounds to a random location (using the Random Hit Locations Chart). NPC contestants have Strengths of 2 - 3 and Horsemanship Skills of 1 - 4, as you wish.

Seikakusa ("Accuracy")

Each round, a master swordsman faces the contestant (both of whom have boken) and asks him to strike a particular location on his body. If he succeeds, he progresses to the next round, where the location to hit becomes more difficult. This competition is decidedly different (and quite a bit more difficult) than others at the festival. It demands an excellent knowledge of kenjutsu and, like *inu ô-mono*, allows for more than one person to "win".

Mechanics: All rolls are Contested, pitting the PCs' Agility + Kenjutsu against that of the master (who rolls 7k3). The first round, challengers are required only to hit him (anywhere on the body), which requires no Raises. The second round, the target is his torso (which, according to the Raises Chart, requires one Raise). The third round, they must try for his sword arm (two Raises), and the fourth and final round, his neck (three Raises).

Kenkyo Kame ("Humble Turtle")

During the original Lion attack upon the city, there was a period of fighting in the streets, when the Scorpion had firm control of the palace and the hill-fortress, and attempted to push the invaders out through the city gates. Historically, the Lion won by simply overwhelming the Scorpion, but there has been much debate since then that the Scorpion seemed less committed to the city's defense than they could have.

This competition posits a greater Scorpion defensive force (which has been distributed thoughtfully through both locations), and asks challengers to propose the best course of attack outside a direct assault. As many contestants may work together on any proposal as they desire. At the end of the festival, General Ikare and his subordinates will study the various entries and decide upon a winner. The conditions for victory are creativity, tactical acumen, and consideration for one's forces. This competition runs the course of the entire festival.

Mechanics: Photocopy the map of the city (and the environs if you feel ambitious) and allow the PCs to come up with a plan of their own, utilizing all the standard methods and equipment of war (if they can come up with it, the Lion probably had access to it – archery, cavalry, siege machines, etc). Do not rush them. Let them tinker with it throughout the remainder of the adventure (they don't have to turn it in to the War Offices until dusk today – during the Hour of the Rooster,



see p. 36). This kind of activity can be very useful during those moments when you must deal with one half of a split group (see p. 21).

After they are done and have turned it in, have them choose a primary character who will make the Skill roll (don't tell them what Traits and Skills they will be using). Then have that character make a Perception + Battle roll vs. a TN of 25, modified as per the Working Together Chart. Grant them one or two Free Raises if you feel their plan was particularly bold or creative. If they succeed (and the city does not change hands), they are informed at the end of the festival that their plan was the winning selection, and gain the standard awards.

PRESENTING THE EVENTS

The contests will continue throughout the day, even through the more scandalous scenes seen hereafter. Your players should feel as if the festival is consistently in the background. Do not let such distractions interfere with the natural progression of the adventure, however; they should exist as an entertaining segue alone.

The Awards Ceremony

Champions in each event receive a ring of copper with dyed silks sewn around it. These are presented by cavalry, a tall lance lowered before the seated winner with the ring about the tip.

DAIDOJI HANDEN (CONTINUED)

Background: Handen has always been uncomfortable listening to the opinions of others or imposing his own on the world. After his *gempukku*, when it became clear that these characteristics would not fade, the Crane began grooming him for a liaison position, realizing that his "open mind" would be useful in the far regions of the Empire (and unlikely to spark controversy at home).

Roleplaying Handen: Daidoji Handen is the observer in this adventure. His high sense of moral standing and level-headed demeanor are should be used as a gauge for the events of the adventure. Use him to show the characters how bad things are getting politically and socially during play. If he is becoming ruffled or tense, chances are that his report to the Crane (and subsequently to the Emperor - see his Advantages) will not be favorable for any involved. On the other hand, the more enigmatic and defensive his expressions become, the more chance there is that things are progressing well (though the PCs will more than likely still worry at his elusive behavior).

Finally, note that Handen is perhaps the most skilled swordsman in the adventure, which is intentional (that way, there is more chance of him surviving to place a report and continue the adventure thread after the action is over).



DAIDOJI HANDEN

MATSU KIOMA

AKODO IKARE

EARTH: 3

Stamina 4

WATER: 3

Strength 4

FIRE: 3

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

Skills: Archery 4, Athletics 4, Bard 2, Battle 4, Defense 3, Etiquette 4, Hand-to-Hand 3, Heraldry 2, History 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 2, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: Ancestors 3, Oratory 3, Shintao 4, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 3

Honor: 4.2

Glory: 6.3

School: Akodo Bushi Rank 4

Advantages: Allies (many in Lion armies), Benten's Blessing, Leadership

Disadvantages: Dependents (wife, son), Nemesis (Bayushi Kaseru)

GM Note: Ikare's stats are provided here in the eventuality that they are required *before* his death during the Hour of the Horse. Thereafter, use the Scorpion Actor numbers. If it seems to you that the sudden shift in his abilities will tip off the players too quickly, feel free to "fudge" some of the Scorpion's rolls and actions until it no longer matters that they find out. But remember, the fact that these stats vary *should* represent that difference, so be judicious.

They become minor celebrities in the city, and receive 3 Points in both Honor and Glory.

Hour of the Serpent: Repeating History

The final morning event is a recreation of the first Battle of Kenson Gakka, which took place originally on the southern Way of Righteous Vengeance, where it meets the divergent road into Scorpion lands today (see the Environs map). All are invited to watch, and bushi may participate if they wish. The battle is a fairly straightforward conflict of mock Scorpion forces defending the pass from Lion aggressors. Imitating the first foray of the Lion army at the time, the goal is simply to gain control the pass and slaughter as many of the enemy as possible.

General Ikare conducts the Lion forces, while Matsu Kioma acts as the notorious Scorpion general who defended Kenson Gakka at the time - Bayushi Takida. The forces meet upon the parade grounds after all the other contests and events are done (around 10 AM). The PCs may portray either Lions or Scorpions during the recreation, and will be given false armor (padded and thinner than common armor would be) with the mon of the proper clan. They are also issued boken to be used in lieu of katana for the event.

For the purposes of tabletop play, utilize the Battle and Iaijutsu Charts on the GM's Screen for this scene, along with the rules for mass combat on p. 114 of the *L5R RPG*. Assume that each Round of the battle takes about 30 minutes of time, and allow the PCs to choose their positions in the fighting as normal. There is no Reserves category in this battle - if the PCs choose to be in the Reserves for a Round, it means that they have "bowed out" of the fighting for a time, and are standing at the sidelines. Throughout the combat, each player should keep track of his Battlefield Glory Total, a value equal to the total Glory and Honor he would have gained or lost during the battle. This determines who "wins" the competition within the battle.

At the outset, the battle is considered Even for the purposes of Advantage, though this may change as time goes by. Each Round, allow one of the PCs within a clan to make the roll for their general to see who is "winning" the recreation (PCs with Lion armor would roll for Ikare; those



with Scorpion armor for Kioma), using the general's stats (see their sidebars). This will set the Advantage for the coming Round.

The battle recreation flows as per the skill of those involved, not adhering to the course of the original engagement. It promotes personal glory and heroic deeds over victory for the masses. If a duel is initiated with one of the PCs, conduct it according to the Iaijutsu rules (*L5R RPG*, p. 108) using the following stats, as desired: appropriate School Rank (ranged from 2 - 4), Traits (ranged from 2 - 4), and Skills (from 1 - 4). Opponents should be comparable to the PCs. Note that any Glory or Honor gained or lost during such a duel is applied to the player character's BGT, point for point.

Heroic deeds during the recreation may be drawn from the list within the rulebook (p. 116-117), or from the list on p. 45 of this adventure, as desired.

If any PC takes damage as part of the battle, it is assumed to be incidental. For drama's sake (and according to the complicated battle recreation rules the Lion have concocted), anyone who "dies" on the battlefield must leave the parade grounds and is out of the game. PCs only take one real Wound per -1 modifier they receive while in the battle (cumulative with other real Wounds they received during the earlier contests).

The "winners" of the recreation are those who have accumulated the highest Battlefield Glory Total (BGT) during the battle. They are given seats of honor beside Kioma's box, where Daidoji

Handen observes the festivities. From there, they find themselves the focus of the closing ceremonies for the morning portion of the festival (prior to the festival spilling out into the countryside beyond the city walls).

They receive a ribbon and 1/5 of the BGT they gain during the recreation, rounded up, in both Honor and Glory points. For example, if they acquire a total BGT of 8 during the recreation, they would gain 2 Honor Points and 2 Glory Points from the event.

During the last moments of the festival, a sense of serenity overtakes the field. Samurai who have participated in the competitions stand before the crowds, and the monks of Yaruki Jukko, who have been working behind the scenes to pull all of the events together, finally appear among them. They carry wooden crates that presumably contain war-hawks trained by Lion falconers. The birds' release into the sky is meant to officially mark the transition into the next phase of the festival's ceremony.

The crowds watch, hushed, as the birds are released, but a shuddering rumble arises when it is seen that they are not war-hawks at all. One hundred tiny doves pierce the sky above the fields, their white feathers soon nothing more than tiny flittering dots upon the cool blanket of afternoon blue. (Doves - unlike hawks - are not a pleasant sight in Rokugan. They are an omen of war, and a harbinger of dark tidings.)

Immediately, a hushed gasp of shock ushers through the crowd, and the eyes of Kioma, Ikare, and others responsible for the festival turn to Noshin and his monks. A brief encounter follows between Noshin and Kioma, who is irate at the obvious insult the monks of Yaruki Jukko have made toward the castle and all its guests. He demands that they leave immediately.

For his part, Noshin is apologetic and conciliatory, looking sidelong at his fellows half with confusion and half with thinly-veiled anger. The monks withdraw quietly, all rather flustered and not a little surprised by the doves themselves. Characters who roll Perception + Acting against a TN of 20 get the feeling that there is more to the monks (including Noshin) than meets the eye.

Noshin remains at the castle through the rest of this scene, though he keeps a low profile. Players who wish to speak with him about the matter will have to wait until after the proceedings; the monks have been ordered

directly from the grounds and to approach them so soon after the incident could be perceived as suspicious, or even insulting (-2 Honor). They will also have to make a Perception + Hunting roll vs. a TN of 10 to find him (he is at the well outside the Shrine to the Sun Goddess).

Unsure of the PCs' intentions, Noshin will be reticent at first, but can be eased into a conversation with a successful Awareness + Shintao or Oratory roll (TN 15). Even with failure, he remains considerate and talkative, but will avoid discussing the incident with the PCs and excuse himself if they press the issue. If he opens up, however, he tells them that although he inspected the crates this morning before the contests began, anyone could have gotten to them before their release. He doesn't understand why someone would do such a thing. "It is like casting a bad spell upon the entire festival."

While talking to him, secretly make a Perception roll (TN 25) for the PC with the highest Perception. Success indicates that they spot the shadow of a man lingering around a nearby corner, as if listening. If they investigate, the figure begins slowly walking toward the corner, rounding it just before they arrive. It is merely an old man, feebly walking home. He makes his way across the square and enters one of the private homes that face the well. If the PC asks, he is now unsure whether he saw the shadow standing attentively or walking carefully toward the corner. If the PCs announce themselves at the private home, no one answers; if they somehow manage to enter the room within, it is empty. There are no other exits, and searching reveals nothing.

Events like this one plague the city for the rest of the day. Every 60 minutes hereafter, make another Perception check (same TN). Success indicates that a random PC (or one of your choosing) notices something strange as it happens.

Note that all but one of the following are perpetuated by Scorpion Actors in disguise, and ultimately serve their end goals (causing friction between the Lion and the Crane). Follow this pattern when devising your own encounters (most, but not all, should be Scorpion-related).

Here are a list of examples:

- The same old man, shambling forward into the immense entryway of the hillside fortress. When they ask of the man at the guardhouse, the bushi (Shosuro Actors) claim that none have

AKODO IKARE (CONTINUED)

Background: Akodo Ikare is a likeable man. He is good to his men and courteous to civilians. Though he quietly rebels against the pomp and circumstance of Lion ritual, he cannot dispute its practical effect upon the fighting man, and seeks always to support it in public. If a social purist were ever to study him, they would find him lacking in dedication to his status, but that is one of the things that makes him all the more enjoyable to be around. Ikare is a great leader, and were he not killed during this adventure, would have the potential to become even greater.

Roleplaying Ikare: Remain careful and guarded when acting as Ikare, until you see that someone shares his interests (including disdain for protocol). Then begin a careful - almost systematic - approach, testing the waters with them a little at a time. Akodo Ikare is a careful man, and is not going to make the simple mistake of acting beneath his station with those who would not appreciate it.

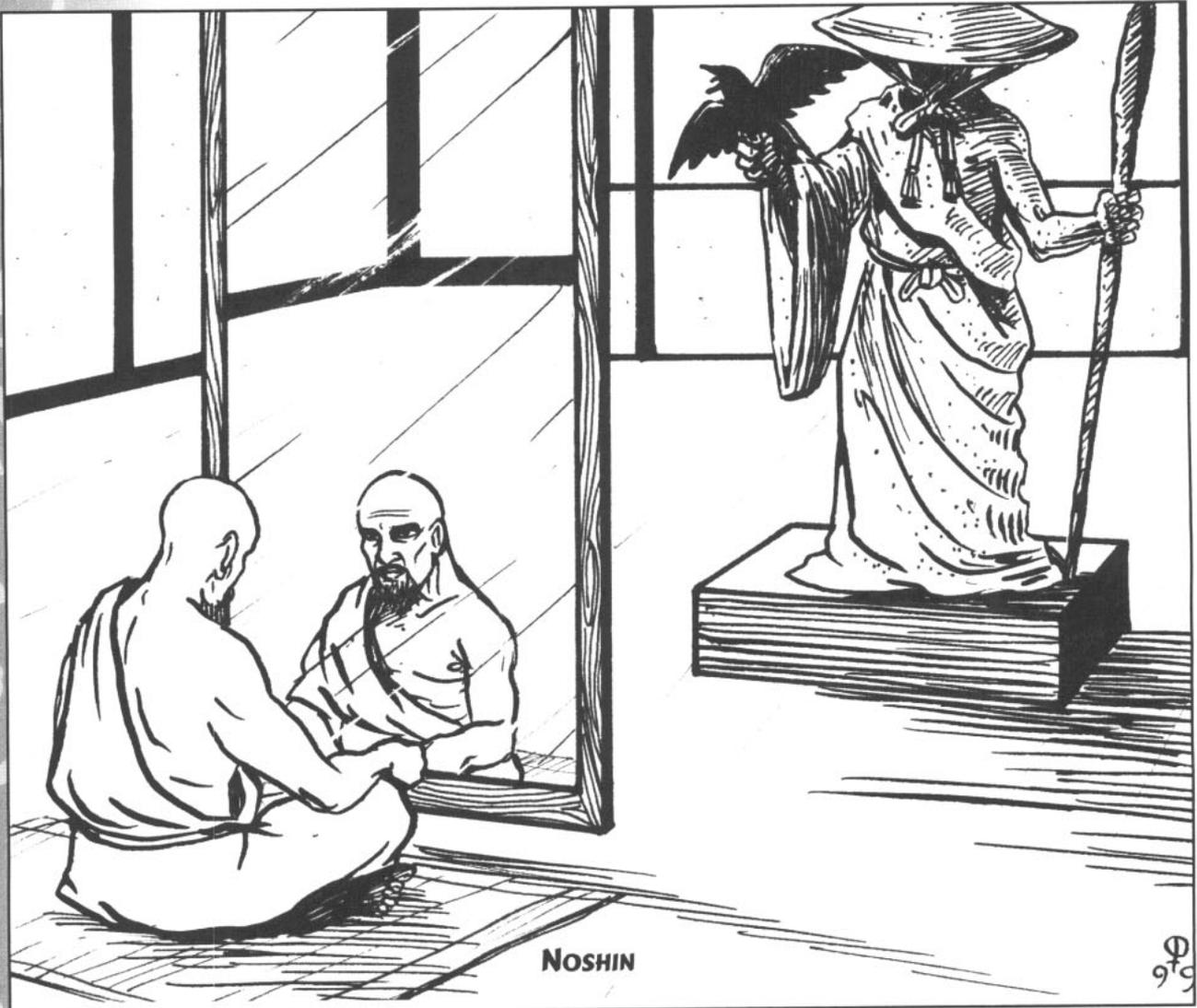
passed through in the last several minutes. If the PCs are persistent, a Lion gunso will appear from within the castle to dissuade them. He, too, is a Shosuro Actor, and will thank them for their attention, but assure them – politely – that “they saw nothing”.

- One man (a harmless merchant) haggling argumentatively with those at a trading house. When he completes the transaction, he walks to the opposite trading house, where he performs the same procedure all over again, trading the goods he received at the first one. Then he returns to the first again, and the whole cycle renews. This continues until the PCs intervene, when he mumbles something incoherent, glares at them (or the merchant he is with), and walks away.

- Noshin (another Actor) arguing loudly with Matsu Kioma, who is trying to calm the man down. Noshin screams that his order was

betrayed by someone in the castle, and demands an apology for Kioma’s earlier outburst. If the PCs do nothing and wait for the scene to explode, Noshin pushes the confrontation to the limit of Kioma’s tolerance, then exits, disappearing shortly thereafter.

- Daidoji Handen (an Actor) having a very public lunch with Akodo Miko. Both are laughing, though Miko’s behavior is well within the boundaries of etiquette. Handen’s loud exhibition is blatantly shameful, a blemish upon his clan and an insult to the Lion (particularly Ikare, who is the subject of the scene he is causing). If the PCs try to intercede, warn them that they will become part of the scene (and therefore lose Honor). If they persist, they lose 2 Honor Points, but gain Miko’s thanks (and support through the rest of the adventure).



NOSHIN

979

• One of Handen's Crane yojimbo (another Actor) gambling at the end of an alley behind the sake brewery. (This is not inherently suspect in itself, but presents the visiting Crane in a dubious light.)

• Far up on the ramparts of the fortress, the PCs see Akodo Ikare making the rounds and inspecting his men. As he approaches one of them, he begins screaming and pointing, though the PCs cannot make out the words. The guard seems fearful, and backs away from him. This apparently enrages the general even further, and soon he bears down on the man, nearly pushing him over the rampart's edge. Before anything permanent can occur, however, he rises up, screams out another order, and storms away. (The theme of this scene could be the source for several more, as the Scorpion impersonating these people – see below – are particularly interested in unnerving the soldiers of the city.)

THE REAL THREAT

All of this is the work of Noshin's fellow monks, who are really Shosuro Actors. Their goal is to spread unrest and turmoil in preparation for the coming abduction of Ikare's son. They wish the people and guests of Kenson Gakka to be uncomfortable and on edge when they must make tough decisions, hard-pressed to keep a clear mind. The Scorpion focus on the central power figures of the city – Matsu Kioma, and Akodo Ikare, in particular – but are not above shaking up the peasantry as well; after all, every flustered person will be one fewer able-bodied warrior when their soldiers attempt to retake the city.

If the PCs are close enough to see an instigator's neck in any of these scenes, make secret Perception rolls for the group (using the highest Perception among them) against a TN of 20. Success indicates that the PC notices what appears to be a small mark upon the back of the NPC's neck, below the hairline. Success in more than one instance will greatly help the PCs clue together what is happening (at least letting them know that there is a way to identify some of the perpetrators).

This mark allows others loyal to the Scorpion cause to recognize their allies. This clue plays a major role in later scenes of the adventure (such as the Hours of the Rooster and the Rat).

Hour of the Horse: The Shrine of the Fortunes

At some point during the early afternoon, a throng of people gather before the Temple dedicated to the Fortunes. Their attention is rapt, focused upon the front of the structure. The PCs know that this is particularly strange; Rokugani are socialized from birth to ignore outbursts, scuffles, and other interactions that shame those involved. The center of their attention is something different...

Should the party investigate, they will see several samurai standing about the double doors leading into the temple, discussing something quietly amongst themselves. Their stances are doubtful and nervous. They are turned away from the crowd, avoiding its furtive glances. Any questions posed to those within the garden garner a series of unlikely answers, all centering on the presence of a creature (some use the term "demon" or "beast") hidden within the temple. Pressed, the commoners tell the PCs that "something like a thin man with large, empty eyes and a mane of thick brown hair" leapt out at someone (no one can say who) as they were entering the temple a few minutes ago, and continue pointing to samurai at the entrance.

Should the PCs approach the samurai, they will not be noticed until within feet of the men. The first to see them – a Hiruma Crab – will nearly jump, startled by their "sudden" presence, but quickly nods his head in respect to their equal station. All four of the samurai are of the same social positions as the PCs, and similarly bow to them and introduce themselves. Their names are Daidoji Wiyuko (one of Handen's entourage), Hiruma Gareii, Kitsu Tsuntsen, and Ikoma Aseru (actually a Shosuro Actor who just arrived on the scene).

All the samurai are sure of is that something is within the temple. The Crab is the most vocal about his opinion, saying that everyone should wait; he has sent a messenger to a Kuni Witch Hunter within the city. The Kitsu and the Crane have little time for theory, too busy tossing thinly-veiled insults at one another. And the Actor-Ikoma just watches the rest, curious at this odd circumstance...

MATSU KIOMA

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

Perception 4

FIRE: 3

Agility 4

AIR: 3

Reflexes 5

VOID: 4

Skills: Appraisal 2, Archery 3, Athletics 2, Battle 4, Courier 2, Hand-to-Hand 4, Heraldry 2, History 4, Horsemanship 1, Hunting 1, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Rhetoric 2, Shintao 3, Sincerity 1

Honor: 2.1

Glory: 6.8

School: Matsu Rank 4

Advantages: Gentry, Hands of Stone, Social Position (Rank 2; minor daimyo)

Disadvantages: Contrary, Obligation (post)

Background: Desiring little more than to serve on the field of battle, he opted for the life of a warrior at his *gempukku* ceremony. But he was denied a combat assignment due to his lack of respect for (and knowledge of) Akodo's Leadership. This slight burns within him every day, threatening to explode. His blood connection to the Imperial line has granted fealty at Kenson Gakka, a location considered "safe" and of little import. That, too, burns...

Roleplaying Kioma:

Always appear conciliatory on all counts. He is well aware of his own shortcomings, including his hatred for convention. However, should he be challenged or slighted, his control will likely slip...

空

KAKERA, THE ZOKUJIN

EARTH: 6

WATER: 2

Perception 4

FIRE: 3

AIR: 2

VOID: 4

Skills: Advanced Medicine 3, Archery (yumi) 2, Bard 2, Bo Stick (jo) 2, Calligraphy 3, Craft: Weaving 4, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Herbalism 3, Investigation 4, Lore: (several) 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 4, Oratory 1, Research 4, Spellcraft 3, Stealth 2

Honor: N/A

Glory: N/A

School: None ("Spirit-speaker")

Advantages: Absolute Direction, Clear Thinker, Elemental Attunement (Earth), Precise Memory

Disadvantages: Dependents (all zokujin), Phobia (bright light), Small

If the characters try to enter the temple, Gareï reaches his hand out as if to stop them (not touching them, however – this is considered both rude and unclean), and remind them that the Kuni is coming. "He is trained for this..." the bushi says. The PCs may wait for him if they wish. His name is Kuni Udorei, and he is a very old man. He arrives through the crowd some ten minutes later with the leaden gait of a man who should have retired long ago. It takes him another three minutes to walk from the garden to the steps of the temple, where he turns slowly to the group of samurai and speaks directly to Gareï, without bothering to bow.

"There is no Taint within," he says simply in an aged, breathy voice, then begins the long trek back across the square. Should the characters follow him, he will ignore them, his sharp mind already focused on something else. They will not be able to retain him for questioning save by force, which would be an obvious (and very public) slight. Which leaves the players right back where they started, except for a very quiet (and embarrassed) Gareï.

Entering the temple (at the outset or after Udorei's exit) presents them with an eerie and hollow interior. All of the candles normally illuminating its interior have been doused, and there is an unusual smell in the air, like that of rusted metal. Somewhere within, they can hear a rumbling sound like grating stone...

The Truth of the Matter

The being within the temple is a zokujin, one of the "copper goblins" who serve the Lion within their deep mines. Being the equivalent of a shugenja ("spirit-speaker") for its race, the zokujin has arrived through a secret passage located within, seeking to consult the *kami* about a problem with Three Sides River (see "Background" and below).

The main room is unremarkable, meditation mats placed about the central pillars and candle racks lining the walls (which the zokujin can crawl beneath if it wishes). There is also an extensive series of rafters above, which it can reach with a single round of movement. The altar at the far end is where the creature is located when the PCs arrive, hunched behind one of the seven idols to the Major Fortunes. Should the characters approach this area, they will also see a small (and recent) offering of rice, dried meat, and incense before the altar.

Allow the players to inspect the central room of the temple, moving about in the dim light from outside. As soon as they make any noise within (not actively using Stealth when they move), the grating sound stops. If they are careful – making Agility + Stealth rolls and Perception checks (both TN 10), they will be able to sneak up on the creature inside. Otherwise, it notices them and begins actively avoiding their search. It assumes that drawn weapons are meant as a threat, but is also careful not to incite violence with quick movements.

If the PCs are aggressive or violent, it will try to escape their grasp (probably traveling upward to where they cannot reach it), though it will not leave the temple. If they are kindly and careful, however, it will consider them from a distance for a long moment, then cautiously approach them.

It looks humanoid, smaller but in rough proportion. It is thin, but not scrawny, its muscles lean beneath a rough hide-like skin. Its predominant features are its immense, pale-colored, pupil-less eyes and a thick coat of hair that falls from the sides of its slender, rat-like face. It wears a thin parka-like dress made from a peasant fabric. It appears to be female.

Allow the scene to progress to an uncertain moment, and then inform the party that someone has entered the room – the hunched figure of one of Kenson Gakka's *eta* class. His clothes are filthy, and he walks with the aid of a makeshift cane (actually a tall piece of wood, smooth with years of faithful service).

The man's name is Hoji, and he is a caretaker who cleans out the musty halls of the labyrinth deep beneath the castle. He knows the small zokujin better than any in the city, and has named several of them. He refers to the one present as Kakera ("morsel"), due to its small size and the many predatory beings that he claims inhabit the lower levels.

The creature speaks with a slow and methodical pattern, expressing little variation in vocabulary and an incredibly logical mind. Zokujin are long-lived, and believe that they have all the time in the world to explain themselves. Listening to them can become tedious, but the GM should strive to balance this with Kakera's inherent charisma. Of all of her kind in this area, she has grown the most accustomed to humanity, and the most able to relate to them in an appealing way.

KAKERA, THE ZOKUJIN (CONTINUED)

Background: Kakeru is the most "Rokuganized" of her kind, at least among the zokujin near Kenson Gakka. She has learned most of their language and even begun the long introduction to their culture and manners. She is a spiritualist among her people, which means that she regularly communes with the "kami", treating them more like fickle residents around the zokujin than forces of nature. Her greatest interests, however, lie in the forum of adventure and saga (though she would never say it out loud).

Roleplaying Kakeru: She is an adorable being, but does not like being patronized. She has more power than most of the PCs, but either doesn't recognize it or is the most modest creature in the Empire. Remember everything that she encounters, because she *will*. Forget nothing that has been done against her or her people, because she *won't*. Ask many questions, and seek many answers.



Recently, Kakeru says in a voice like an avalanche, the zokujin population along Three Sides River (which she simply calls "the Great Water") has grown ill and haggard. This is due to the contamination of their natural food source - the ground-rocks of the area - by its runoff. "There is something very wrong with the Great Water," she tells them. "We believe its spirit is gone."

Soon, she will grow pensive and begin pleading (in her systematic way) for their aid in discovering and rectifying the problem with the river. It will not reveal the secret passage that it came through, fearing that humans would threaten what little independence her tribe has obtained.

Kakeru points to the offerings at the altar and says, "I came here to speak with the man who brought these." When asked why, she tells them that they "smell of the Great Water, a scent that has been long missing from its shores..."

The offering was brought here earlier this day by Noshin, to request the guidance of the kami. He does not realize the damage that his existence is causing the river or the indigenous life along its banks. He is only sure that he cannot acknowledge the kami within him anywhere but here. The monks of Yaruki Jukko would never accept his "enlightened" faith in their walls if they knew the truth.

By this time, Matsu Kioma - finally freed from the tremendous weight of this day's activities - enters the temple. He will be surprised by the zokujin's presence, and immediately press for its return to the labyrinth - "where its kind belongs." Kakeru will look to the PCs for help, even asking out of turn if necessary (which will only serve to spark more of Kioma's ire).

The PCs will have to be very careful how they handle this situation. Kioma is quite upset at another interruption of the festival. If they wish to prevent the zokujin from being carted back to the

空

BAYUSHI KASERU

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

Perception 4

FIRE: 3

Intelligence 4

AIR: 3

Awareness 5

VOID: 3

Skills: Archery 3,
Athletics 3, Battle 5, Cipher
3, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand
2, Heraldry 3, History 3,
Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 3,
Intimidation 2, Investigation
3, Kenjutsu 4, Knife 2, Lore:
Lion Tactics 3, Manipulation
3, Oratory 3, Poison 3,
Shintao 3, Sincerity 4,
Stealth 3

Honor: 1.6

Glory: 6.5

School: Bayushi Bushi
Rank 4

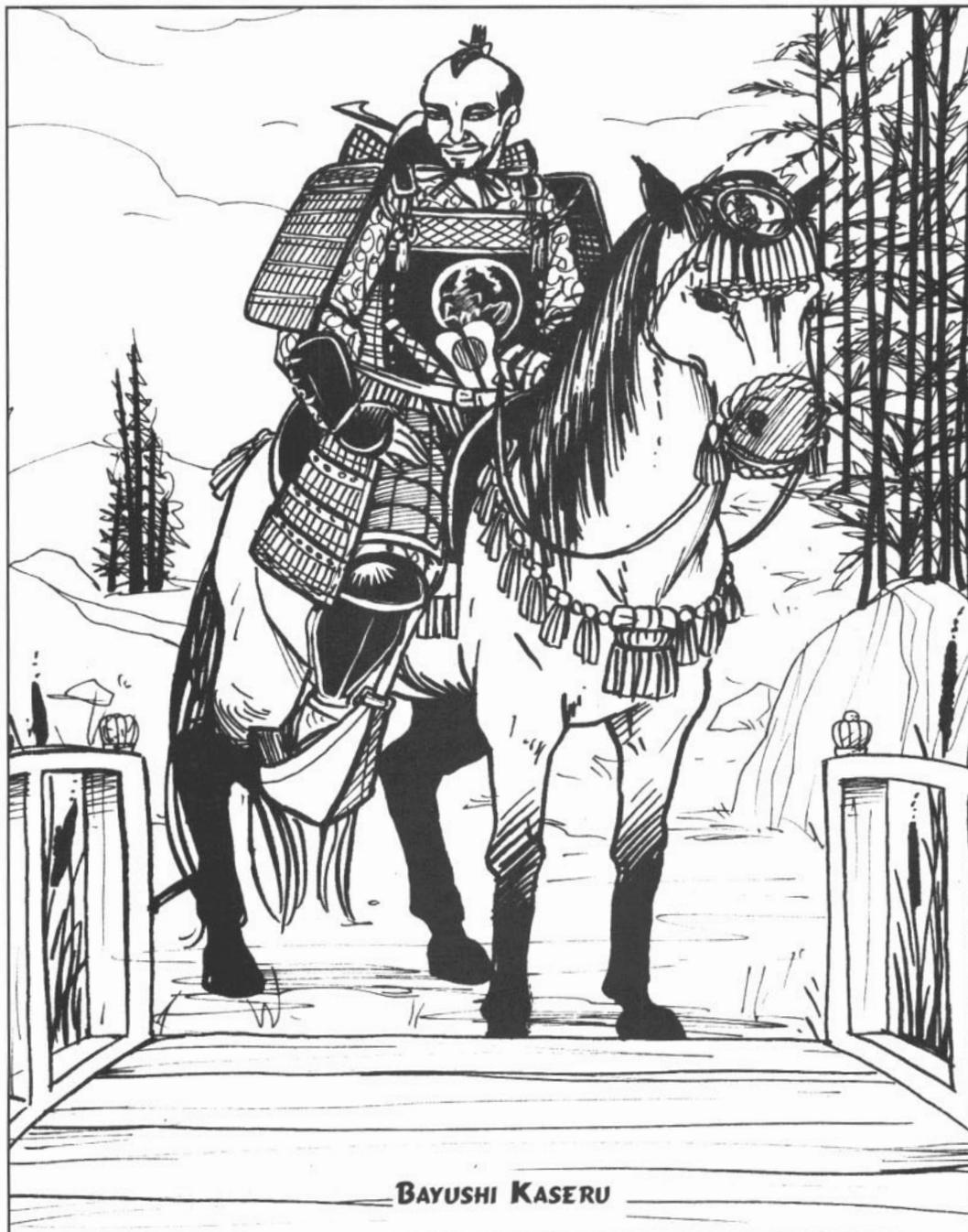
Advantages: Clear
Thinker, Crafty, Heart of
Vengeance (Lion)

Disadvantages:
Antisocial (4 points),
Nemesis (Akodo Ikare)

labyrinth, they are going to have to offer Kioma something fairly substantial. Ideally, they will agree to "responsibility" for her (the GM may wish to work this into Kioma's words if the PCs cannot think of it - "Are you saying that you will take responsibility for it...?"). But if this is not an option for some reason, or the PCs are unwilling to do so, then they may have to come up with another way of convincing him to let her go (possibly involving Sincerity or Oratory).

If the PCs are unsuccessful or do not try, Kakera is taken away by city guards, followed shortly by Hoji. His eyes remain sadly fixed to the floor; it is obvious he cares a great deal for Kakera, and fears for her safety.

Otherwise, the group has acquired a new quest. Unfortunately, the only way to solve the river problem is by getting Kakera within ten yards or so of Noshin, whom she will sense "has the spirit of Great Water within him".



Stage Two: Slipping Toward Chaos

All the critical groundwork has been laid. The PCs have been introduced to all the major players, and they're raring for action. This is the stage in which things rapidly begin to slide downhill. The scenes from this point should be run at a breakneck pace, with few or no intermissions. If the adventure up to now has taken a session to play through, then you can expect all of the remainder to take another (and not much more). Do not give your players a chance to breathe here. "Shotgun" them through to the climax without pretense or pause, never slowing until the Scorpion army can be seen on the horizon...

Hour of the Goat: The Abduction

Soon after the zokujin scene, word begins to spread throughout the city that Akodo Ikare's son, Ujide, has been kidnapped. Details are sketchy on the street (where the PCs most likely are), but rumor maintains that the child was stolen from its crib within the General's quarters of the castle.

The festival slows but does not stop, due mainly to the efforts of Matsu Kioma to retain order and goodwill, especially in light of the city's foreign (read: Crane) visitors. By this time, small battle recreations are being staged throughout the city and the various merchants, craftsmen, and artisans are operating at full swing; it takes some time for word of the event to reach the entire city.

The hetman's mansion is the center of the largest crowd in the city, where a temporary two-sided kabuki stage has been set up and various Lion drama-comedies play interminably. The

main streets of the city are clogged with people too immersed in celebration to be bothered. But if the characters are persistent (rolling a Willpower + Oratory or Intimidation check vs. a TN of 15), they can discover the following rumors/facts. Each Raise or new roll in another district grants them another rumor. They are learned in the order presented.

- Akodo Ikare's wife, Miko, is distraught, and unable to leave her chambers. Her endless crying can be heard from the front gates of the fortress. [exaggerated, but true]

- The Crane ambassador, Daidoji Handen, had a couple of his yojimbo steal Ikare's child. "After all, they are never with him. How are we to know where they are or what they are doing?" [false]

- Guards were stationed outside the General's quarters when the baby was stolen (and since the Crane arrived). [true]

- The "copper-goblins" [zokujin] of the labyrinth were responsible for the theft of the child. They are going to use it to buy their freedom from the mines. [false]

- Akodo Ikare is beside himself with grief, consumed with a violent rage that threatens all those around him. He stalks the castle halls with open fury, storming through the chambers in search of his son. [true, though it is all acting on the part of the Scorpion now playing him. The true Ikare was killed by Sozui last Hour - see the Timeline]

- "This is the vengeance of the Fortunes after the goblin defiled their temple." [false]

- Many of Ikare's soldiers are beginning to fear for his sanity. [true]

- One of the castle guards was said to have seen Ikare sitting calmly within the garrison offices, his face expressionless, immediately after hearing the news of his son's abduction. Whether this was shock or something else, he could not tell. [true - again, the Scorpion]

- "This is karma for the deaths of so many Scorpion six hundred years ago." [true, though karma has nothing to do with it]

Allow the PCs to follow up these rumors as they desire. During the Hour of the Goat, all that is important is that you set the stage for the later drama (see Hour of the Monkey).

GM Note: Noshin is not present within the city at this time, having gone underground to search for the child. The *kami* within him has sensed its cries echoing from the shores of the

BAYUSHI KASERU (CONTINUED)

Background: Kaseru's best traits are those that set him so far apart from the rest of the world. His brilliant mind and keen ingenuity can erase the margin an enemy is counting on to win without alerting them to the fact that they've already lost. But it is this kind of unclean, convoluted thinking that has prevented him from having any lasting friends.

Roleplaying Kaseru: When in battle (and that is all we ever see of him in this adventure), Kaseru should be portrayed as a keen man who enjoys the advantages his intellect offers him. This often comes off as conceit, but in reality it is merely pride. Kaseru hates the Lion for their successes over the Scorpion, and believes in his heart that he can reclaim the martial integrity that has been stolen from his clan.

空

THE SHOSURO ACTORS (II)

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

FIRE: 2

AIR: 3

Awareness 4

VOID: 2

Skills: Any one Art Skill (Poetry, Origami, etc.) at 1, Acting 3, Athletics 2, Bo Stick 1, Calligraphy 1, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Forgery 2, Hand-to-Hand 2, Herbalism 1, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Knife 2, Locksmith 2, Lore: Yaruki Jukko 3, Manipulation 2, Meditation 1, Poison 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 1

Honor: 1.2

Glory: 0.2 (only in Scorpion lands)

School: Actor Rank 3 [Shintao monk personas]

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: None

Roleplaying the Monks: Be careful when using these NPCs. They are included in several scenes of the adventure (commonly in shadow or acting behind the scenes), and their power is incredible when they act together. As a rule of thumb, there should be no more than one of them in a scene per PC unless the group is making quick work of them (throwing a few more in from the shadows or behind a corner is always possible, but reducing the number after you've introduced them is trickier).

underground river beneath the city, and he has followed its direction. The kami also realizes that this event could topple the careful balance between the clans it feels responsible for (the Lion, the Crane, and the Scorpion - see Noshin's personal history, p. 42). This means that Noshin will be well out of range of Kakeru's ability to recognize him.

Hour of the Monkey: The Search for Ikare's Child

As the Hour of the Monkey approaches, the atmosphere within the city has subdued greatly. The streets are less full and there is a sense of anxiety in the air. The people of Kenson Gakka have all heard of their General's loss, and their grief has found the hearts of visitors as well.

There is still celebration, and Matsu Kioma continues his rallies for the festivities to continue. But he begins to show the strain of the abduction's burden. His face appears more solemn, and his men are less animated than they were just over an hour ago. Daidoji Handen, for his part, can be seen standing beside the Lion everywhere he goes, a silent, impassive symbol of his clan's capacity for kindness.

Ikare and his men scour the city, searching for the child. His rage grows by the minute, and his screams can be heard well beyond the buildings he storms through with uncaring brutality. The people are growing scared of him, giving him a wider and wider berth. Even his soldiers step gingerly nearby; it is said that at least one is nursing a broken arm caused by his frenzy.

THE EARTH WEEPS

Somewhere near the end of this Hour, make silent rolls for each of the PCs (Simple Perception checks with a TN of 15). Tell the character who succeeds by the most that he hears something like the yowl of an injured animal nearby. If he investigates, it becomes clear that it is in fact the cry of a child, echoing through the area like a phantom wind.

Pinpointing the source will be difficult at first - 5 minutes minus one for every five they beat a Perception check (TN 15) by. The sounds are coming from deep within one of the wells (whichever the PCs were closest to when the

initial roll was made for them). The baby sounds scared, and quite a ways down.

Getting to the child themselves will require a successful Strength + Athletics check with a TN of 15 (to climb down the well without slipping). As they descend, the sound of running water will also be heard beneath the wailing. (This comes from a fast-moving underground river that the well passes over.)

Once at the bottom (some forty feet down), the baby can be seen hanging precariously from a sharp root jutting out from the side of the well cavern. At first glance, it appears that the baby fell into the well, only saved by the sheer luck of having snagged upon the root. But if the PC asks (and only if he asks), allow him to make a Perception + Investigation roll (defaulting to Perception alone without the Skill) to notice that the child's clothing has been carefully wrapped around the root. In addition, a successful Perception check (TN 25) by a successful rescuer reveals that the baby has an odd scent to him, like a dry talc of some kind. When the PC lifts the baby, his hands come away with sprinkles of white dust clinging to them (from moisture in the air causing the powder on the baby's clothes to gel and stick).

Make it very clear to the PC that each new Skill roll made at the bottom of the well requires an additional Strength + Athletics check, and that the TN for each new check is increased over the former by 5 (i.e. the first at the bottom will be TN 20, the second 25, etc.). Returning to the surface with the child in tow will require another check with a TN of 20 (or 25 if any checks were made at the bottom). Remind the PC of his Void Points at this juncture - saving the child is not only a glorious action, but a terrible thing to fail at.

Failure with any Strength check means that the character slips toward the rushing river below. A kindly GM should allow him to spend a Void Point to dig in with his feet a few inches above the bottom of the well, and retry the climb. GMs with a cruel streak could just have him plummet into the river. If they are carrying the baby when they slip, it goes with them. Otherwise, assume it retained its position at the root as the PC sped past it and splashed into the icy waters.

Should the PC crash into the river, he will take one die of Wounds from the fall (unless he was right where the baby hangs, in which case he only takes a total of 2 Wounds). If he is carrying the

baby at the time, remind him of the dangers of impacting with water from a fall (particularly ice-cold water). If he chooses to shield the child from harm, increase his damage by 2 Wounds, but give him 4 Honor Points in exchange. Either way, the baby will be sopping wet hereafter and become quiet (he is unharmed, however).

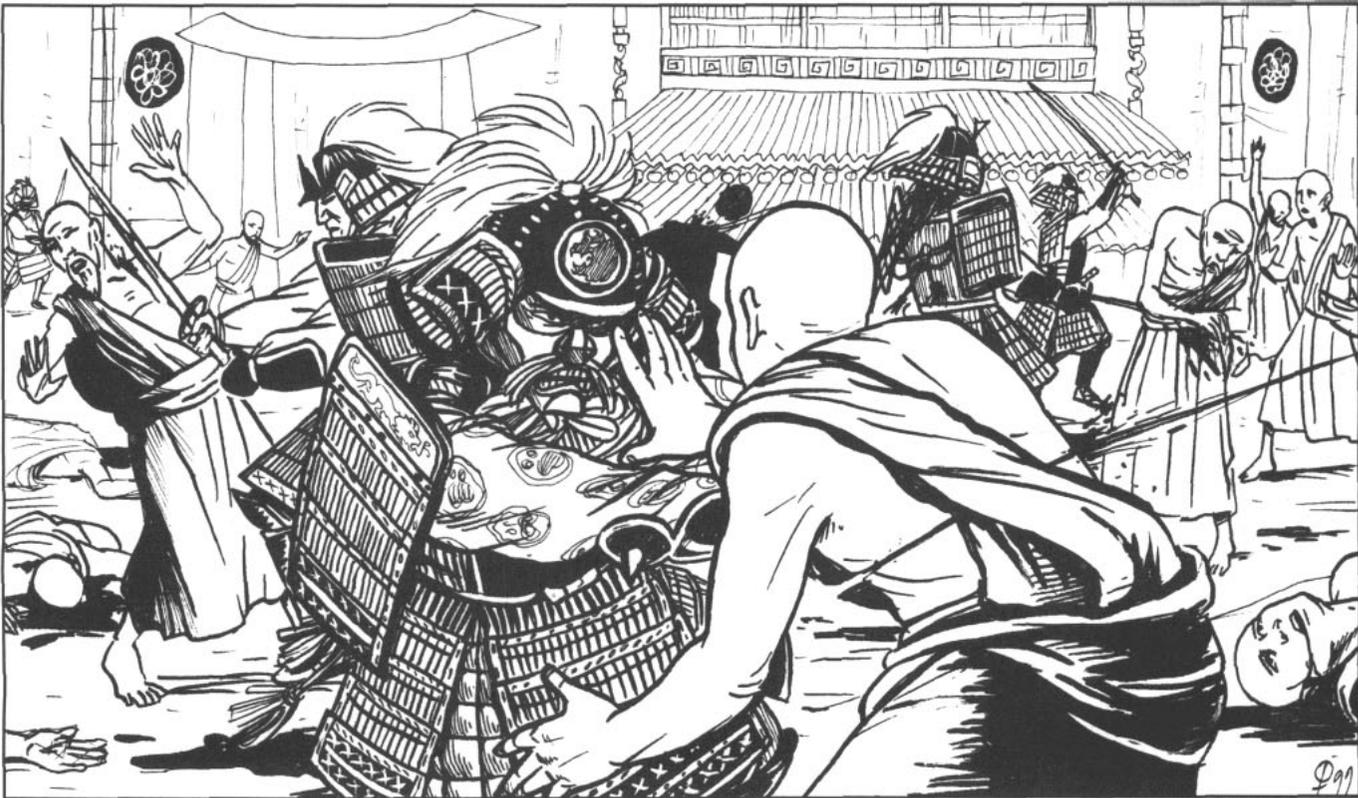
The river is dark, except for the faint light spilling in from the well mouth. If the PC specifically asks where he thinks the river comes from or goes to, allow him a Perception + Investigation check (if he has the Absolute Direction Advantage, he automatically succeeds). Success allows him to discern that it passes below the castle from the hills beyond and heads southwest toward the river. Success with three Raises (and knowledge of the temple's location) also reveals that it passes by or beneath that structure as well.

Getting back up into the well requires another Strength + Athletics roll (TN 20), as does reaching the surface (per the guidelines above). Remember that Kakeru may aid a PC who is having trouble, particularly if the group has been helpful to her. Under these circumstances, use the Working Together Chart to resolve Skill checks.

Once the baby is safely back at the surface, allow any interested to make Intelligence + Investigation rolls (TN 15) to figure out what the powder upon his clothes is. Those who succeed know it as Sanju powder, a talc-like substance ground from pollinating flowers of the Rokugani coastline, and favored by certain exclusive dojos across the Empire (though nowhere near here).

Eventually, Actor-Ikare appears. He is overcome with relief at the recovery of his child, though anyone asking for and succeeding at a Perception + Sincerity roll against the Shosuro's Acting Skill x5 can tell that he is hiding something. As soon as he picks the baby up and notices the powder, however, his expression fades. (Another Perception + Sincerity roll against his Acting Skill x5 will reveal that it was almost as if he was expecting the powder to be there.) Moments later, Ikare takes his child and storms off, which triggers the next scene.

Any or all of the PCs might be growing suspicious by now: something beyond their immediate sight is influencing events in the city. This is a good thing. Let them fidget and try to work it out.



空

**SHINDEN YARUKI
JUKKO**

The "Temple of Courageous Reflection" was built during the initial wave of conversion to Shinseism after an Imperial edict merged the religion with that of the Fortunes. Legend indicates that the site may also have been considered holy by the *kami* of the area, though this has never been substantiated.

The monastery has joined the recent Shintao movement, and follows the common cleansing, purification, and prayer rites of that faith. The monks of the community celebrate all the proper festivals, have taken vows of celibacy and poverty, and shave their heads. They are treated as farmer *heimin* and have given up their family name. None of them leave the temple except to visit nearby villages, where they perform what amounts to self-prescribed community service.

The building contains all the necessities of life, including a small farm tended by the monks when they are not busy with other activities. Within the dojo-like heart of the temple stands the original statue of Shinsei that the edifice was built around and a single tall mirror suspended from the rafters. The monks pray before this scene each day, hoping to see the image of Shinsei in the mirror. They believe that such an occurrence means that their hearts have finally gained enlightenment.

**Hour of the Rooster:
March to the
Monastery**

After retrieving his son, Akodo Ikare strides directly toward the castle garrison, his soldiers following closely behind. He ignores all attempts to distract him, and all questions about his intent. The players can trail behind him as well, and receive uncertain glances from the soldiers in his command if they do. He is a man consumed, very nearly a force of nature.

When he reaches the garrison, Ikare requests his horse and gathers a *guntai* (squad) of five Lion cavalry to accompany him. He tells none of them where he intends to go, passing his son into Miko's thankful arms. It will not be until Daidoji Handen arrives just before the *guntai* is ready to leave that he finally speaks. Handen addresses him courteously, bowing to his station, and asks of the rescue of his son. Ikare identifies the PC who saved the boy, and Handen smiles broadly at them, nodding his head in thanks.

When Handen asks Ikare's destination, however, his smile fades. "Shinden Yaruki Jukko" is all Ikare says. Immediately, Handen calls for his own mount, as well as those of his *yojimbo*. He appears very concerned. The PCs should believe that his concern is more than an idle reaction to Ikare's intensity; Daidoji Handen has a personal stake in this matter.

Those who follow Ikare and Handen continue into the next scene, while those who remain behind will continue in Stage Three.

PRESENTING THE TRIP

The terrain *en route* to the temple is serene, a strange contrast to the emotions of the General and his companions. Handen focuses his attention on the various rock formations throughout the hills, but obviously suppresses some inward burden. If the PCs ask of it (and succeed with an Awareness + Etiquette or Sincerity roll; TN 15), he tells them of the companions he left at Yaruki Jukko, and how he worries for their safety.

The pace quickens the closer the party gets to the temple. By thirty minutes past sunset, they are nearly at a full gallop. The General will not be swayed from his consistent orders for more speed, and is not open in any way to dialogue.

THE MARK

If at any point during this scene the PCs check to see if Ikare or his men bear the mark (possibly) seen during the Hour of the Serpent, allow them a Perception + Investigation roll with a TN of 20. One raise is required for each additional person a single PC is watching. Success reveals the Shosuro marks. Only one such attempt may be made per Actor over the course of the journey.

Informing Handen of the marks confirms his suspicions that something strange has come over the General and his men, and will alter his actions in the coming (crucial) scene. Care must be taken during these observations, however. Should the PCs tip their hand, alerting the Actors to their knowledge of the mark, the next scene will go far worse for them. Have each PC trying to discuss such things or watching more than one Actor make an additional Awareness + Stealth check (TN 15) to avoid being spotted by the Shosuro.

**Hour of the Dog:
Slaughter at Yaruki
Jukko**

All of the men riding with the PCs and Handen to the Temple of Yaruki Jukko are Shosuro Actor plants. So far, all has gone according to plan for the Scorpion, who are about to complete their masterstroke - the slaughter of the monks at the temple. The PCs, Handen, and the *yojimbo* will be their witnesses, who take word of the "General's" crazed betrayal back to Kenson Gakka, sullyng the reputation of the Lion forever.

As they arrive at the temple, Akodo Ikare orders his men to dismount and "collect the monks". Handen seems ready to protest this action, but holds his tongue for the moment, diligent in his diplomatic mission. The "Akodo" dismount and stand before the temple, announcing themselves in loud, forthright tones. A moment later, several monks (three Scorpion and several Crane) appear at the doorway.

At "Ikare's" command, the monks line up in the cool evening air outside the temple, eyeing the Lion General and his men nervously. Handen has moved to flank them opposite the General. The PCs may move wherever they like. The following

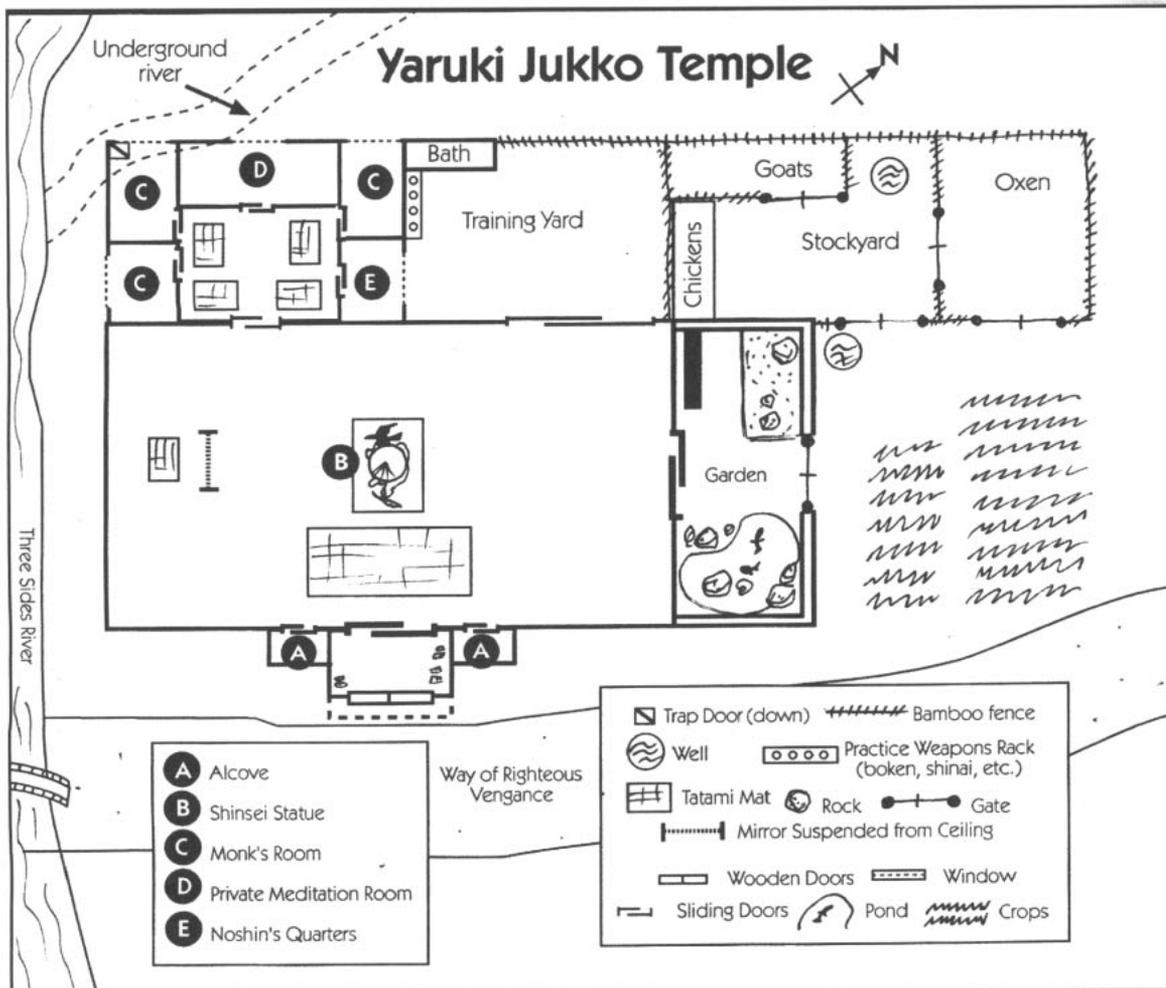
moments are perhaps the most critical in the entire adventure. The exact details of the scene depend upon many of the previous actions and discoveries of the PCs throughout the scenario.

- *If the PCs have not discovered the Shosuro conspiracy yet, "Ikare" questions the monks about the abduction of his son, at first feigning an attempt at equanimity, then ordering his "men" to kill them. A moment later, several of the monks are dead and the rest are fleeing. The scene degenerates as the Lion soldiers flank out to cut them down, followed closely by Handen's yojimbo. As their subordinates clash out all about them, Handen challenges Ikare to a mortal duel. Unless the PCs intervene during Ikare's questions, they will not be able to react until the slaughter has already begun (at the end of this description).*

- *If the PCs know about the conspiracy (through the watermarks or intuition), and the Actors are unaware of this knowledge, the PCs may react at any time during the description*

above, including at the moment of Ikare's order. They should be given the benefit of the doubt, and allowed to roll Initiative totals against Ikare to act before his order.

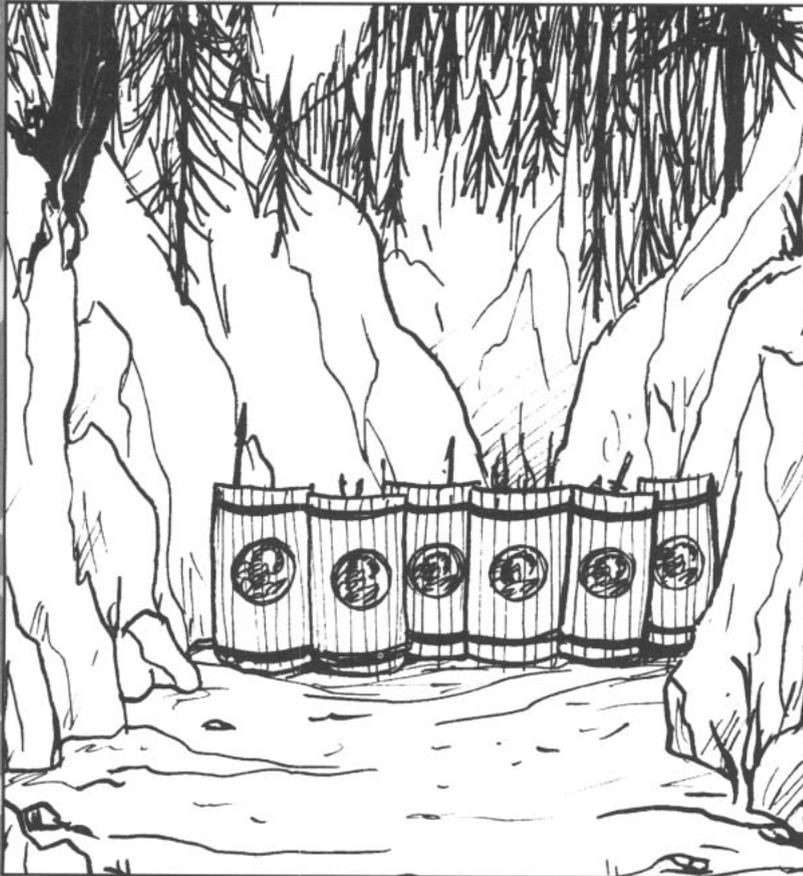
- *If the PCs have somehow keyed the Actors into their knowledge of the conspiracy, things will go very differently. Knowing their witnesses are no longer useful, they will not stage the slaughter. Instead, Ikare vehemently questions the monks for a time, and then composes himself, seemingly satisfied by their answers. He releases the monks back into the temple, his silence all the apology they or Daidoji Handen will ever receive. Thereafter, he leads them to the outpost at Three Sides River, where – unless they do something first – they will be assaulted by the full might of the Scorpion army. This will likely lead to a desperate charge back to warn Kenson Gakka, with the army of the Scorpion hot on their heels...*



THE NEXT STEP

The goal of the Shosuro Actors in this scene is to convince the PCs and the Crane that Akodo Ikare and his men have ruthlessly murdered the monks without provocation (there is no clear-cut evidence supporting the theory that the monks took the baby). Ideally, one of the Scorpion monks will be able to slip away and signal the Scorpion forces at the Lion outpost, who can then descend upon the temple, forcing the witnesses to retreat and warn Kenson Gakka of the Lion's betrayal.

If the Shosuro are confident that the witnesses are still useful, they will work to keep them alive to spread word of Ikare's dishonor, even intervening in the duel Handen demands. Sozui is nearby, hidden within the temple, carefully considering her options throughout this scene. Should her aid be required in this capacity, she strikes from darkness, her actions quick and antiseptic, before vanishing into the forest (to join the Scorpion archers who have taken up positions there). Otherwise, she will simply return to the city through the underground tunnels, arriving in time for the siege.



Stage Three: The Siege of Kenson Gakka

The final stage of the adventure details the last frantic hours of Kenson Gakka before the Scorpion attack. The PCs are summoned by a third party to rescue the monk Noshin, whose private investigations into the abduction of Akodo Ikare's son has led him into a very old and very cunning magical trap left behind by the Scorpion builders of the castle and its labyrinth.

Hour of the Boar: Into the Labyrinth

Shortly after entering the labyrinth in search of the missing child, Noshin stumbled into hidden Scorpion stronghold, and fell prey to traps left behind by the Shosuro mastermind, Sozui. The remaining zokujin, not knowing his identity as the "spirit-speaker", but realizing his need for aid, have sent scouts out to search for assistance.

Depending upon the outcome of the scenes in Stage Two, the characters could enter this scene from any of various angles, or not at all. The catalyst for this scene could be the Lion caretaker, Hoji (replacing the zokujin scout, he is looking for the PCs), or even Kakeru, if she did not remain with the party.

- *If any of the PCs remained within the city,* contact is made by a catalyst of the GM's choice, who approaches them and requests their aid in rescuing Noshin from the trapped labyrinth.

- *If any of the party is moving overland, returning to the city,* they may be approached by a zokujin and led into the underground river through a naturally concealed cavern, hollow tree trunk, or similar means. They could then be led

into the labyrinth through its connection to the underground river.

• *If the entire party is secluded for some reason, or too distant to have an impact on this scene, it can be assumed that Noshin eventually escapes on his own (though not in time to affect the coming siege with knowledge of the Scorpions' plans).*

The PCs might decide to bring others into the labyrinth with them – perhaps commanders or officials of Kenson Gakka – so that they might reveal the Scorpion plans. Let them – they may need the edge when the siege comes. Note that Matsu Kioma will not accompany them under any circumstances, far too busy elsewhere to be drawn away.

THE TRAP

Noshin is trapped in part of the hidden Scorpion headquarters within Kenson Gakka's labyrinth (marked upon the map for your convenience). He is caught within one of the original rooms enchanted by Scorpion shugenja loyal to its builders.

Based on the principle of distraction, the magics of the room reflect infinitesimal sounds made within back upon those inside, producing an effect similar to the "Wind's Distractions" spell, but far more powerful (and, in theory, permanent). As the effect is Air-based and the zokujin – though magical in nature – are attuned with the Element of Earth, they are particularly susceptible to it, and cannot attempt a rescue on their own.

Once the group reaches Noshin, they must overcome the effects of the distraction room. Within the chamber Noshin can be seen, swaying back and forth as if mesmerized by some unseen force.

No attempts to get his attention succeed; one or more of the PCs will have to enter to bring him out. Until he is removed from the room, he is effectively oblivious to all outside stimuli except for the spell effect. Entering the room requires a Reflexes roll (TN 30). If the PC has the Clear Thinker or Elemental Attunement (Air) Advantages, reduce this TN by 10 each. Magic Resistance reduces the TN by 5 per Rank. A TN of less than 0 indicates automatic success. Failure means that the character is trapped beside Noshin, his eyes fixed on the dancing spirits of air within the room. Success means that they have drawn Noshin out.

SOZUI

At some point, Sozui arrives. She will refrain from attacking the party directly, preferring to ensnare (and hopefully kill) them instead. She watches them from the shadows for a moment, considering her options (and allowing the GM to make a secret Contested roll against her generated Stealth total to see if they notice her). If no PCs spot her, she takes a barrel of oil from the storage rooms and leave a trail all the way around their position, lighting it before she leaves. If the GM is feeling kind, he might allow them one more secret Contested roll before she lights the fire.

Should the PCs become trapped within the burning area, their best hope for survival will be through the underground river (see the map). The only barrier between them and freedom will be a single locked gate between the labyrinth and the tunnel system, which Sozui graciously sealed after returning from the temple. The lock is several feet beneath the surface, at a location that was once a lower level of the labyrinth. Although Noshin is able to breathe underwater (see his statistics on p. 42), the PCs can't, and will have to hold their breath while trying to pick (or break) the lock (which Noshin cannot do alone).

Picking the lock requires an Agility + Locksmith roll (TN 30) to complete. Every round a PC continues to try (remaining underwater), they get another roll with a Free Raise. But there is a catch – they may only remain without air for a number of rounds equal to their Earth Ring before having to come up for air. Each additional round beyond that demands a Stamina check (TN 15) to remain under. Failure results in them rising to the surface with a die of Wounds.

Breaking the lock requires a Strength + Weapon Skill roll (TN 30) and the PC must "hit" the lock for a total of ten "Wounds" before it shatters. The rules for remaining under the water remain the same.

PRESENTING THE LABYRINTH

This scene is not your typical "dungeon crawl". It should be very fast, giving the PCs little time to consider their next action. They are working against the clock; not only must they rescue Noshin as soon as possible (they should not realize that the trap is not fatal), but they must get word of the secret Scorpion base back to Matsu Kioma and the others on the surface, warning them of impending siege.

LION SOLDIERS

EARTH: 3

WATER: 2

Strength 3

FIRE: 2

Agility 3

AIR: 2

VOID: 2

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Bard 1, Battle 2, Defense 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, History 2, Horsemanship 1, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 3, Lance 2, Shintao 2

School: Akodo Bushi Rank 2

Roleplaying the Lion:

These samurai are the Lion ideal – fast, strong, and completely committed to their forefathers.

SCORPION SOLDIERS

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

Perception 3

FIRE: 3

AIR: 3

VOID: 2

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 2, Knife 2, Poison 1, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2

School: Bayushi Bushi Rank 2

Roleplaying the Scorpion:

These samurai betray the stereotype most people maintain about their clan. They are forthright, courageous and honorable. Their assignment to Bayushi Kaseru has blemished this reputation, yet they remain absolutely loyal to their lord.

空

THE TRUE MONKS OF YARUKI JUKKO

EARTH: 1
Willpower 3

WATER: 2

FIRE: 2

AIR: 2

Reflexes 3

VOID: 2

Skills: Any one Art Skill (Poetry, Origami, etc.) at 1, Athletics 2, Bo Stick 2, Calligraphy 2, Craft: Any One 1, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Hand-to-Hand 2, Herbalism 1, Kenjutsu 1, Lore: Farming 2, Meditation 4, Shintao 3, Tea Ceremony 2

Honor: 3.9

Glory: 0.5

School: Retired (no School Techniques)

Advantages: None

Disadvantages: Ascetic

Roleplaying the Monks:

Be careful how the monks are portrayed within your game. They will not begin fights, but if pressured, they certainly try to finish them.

At first glance, they may appear to be feeble and naive, but the fact of the matter is that they have more insight than most characters will ever acquire.

Their codes are simple, but strict, and they adhere to them without thought.

Hour of the Rat: The Humble Turtle

The Scorpion army arrives during the final recreation of the festival, which is based upon the battle after which the fall of Kenson Gakka is named (Humble Turtle). Several dozen Lion soldiers block the southern Way of Righteous Vengeance, wearing mock Scorpion armor and carrying large wooden shields. It is important to note that, historically, the Scorpion had the upper hand in this battle. (It means that they will have the advantage again, unless the PCs have warned the city of the approaching army or the secret base).

- *If the PCs have not warned the city*, then the Scorpion arrive, claiming to have dispatched Akodo Ikare, and demand the city in return for his blatant dishonor in cutting down the monks (they assume that none in the city know the truth of what happened at the Yaruki Jukko, or are counting on Daidoji Handen or the PCs to back up their claims). When Kioma refuses, archers bombard the undefended Lion from the hills on either side while Scorpion units bash through their center. The remaining four Shosuro Actors (hidden within their ranks) join their fellows, and the entire Scorpion army - led by General Bayushi Kaseru - marches into the city through the front gates. The siege begins.

- *If the PCs have warned the city*, then it becomes a race to ferret out the four remaining Shosuro Actors before they can trigger the assault on their own. The Lion recreation outside the city gates will never be staged, and the Scorpion forces arrive at a castle fully prepared to defend itself. When the siege begins, the only advantage the enemy forces will have are the four infiltrators within, who dedicate themselves to getting the gates open or providing another way for the Scorpion army to advance into the city proper (and only if they have not been found by the group first).

Of course, finding these individuals will prove difficult (especially without knowledge of the Actor marks). Industrious GMs may choose to run one or more scenes in which the PCs search for them while the siege continues.

Hour of the Hare: Eye of the Storm

This scene details the siege of Kenson Gakka. It is best to use the Battle Chart to resolve the overall siege, while portraying the events generated on that table as a backdrop to what the PCs are doing. Please refer to the accompanying sidebars for material of use in running this type of scene.

The Scorpion general Bayushi Kaseru has spent his life working out the best ways to get under an opponent's skin. His tactics are, as a rule, unconventional and extreme. He specializes in maintaining an environment where the minds of the enemy (in particular their leaders) is never steady. Some of the tactics he may use during this battle include:

- Storming the castle through the labyrinth (which could prove very interesting if the siege begins prior to the PCs escaping).
- Bragging like a Lion before Matsu Kioma (effectively "getting his goat").
- Ordering men under his command to brutally (and very publicly) butcher the Lion, making a point of running the bodies over with cavalry or pinning them upon the field of battle with lances.

- When (and if) the Scorpion forces make it into the city, they will begin stuffing everything the Lion have built with straw and setting it on fire, leaving their own original structures alone.

Kaseru focuses on inciting the Lion to anger, which will keep them from fighting with their minds (and therefore give the Scorpion the upper hand). Compared to Kioma's defense, which is straightforward and strictly adheres to Akodo's *Leadership*, the Scorpion's tactics are decidedly superior on the field. But Kioma's natural talent as a warrior may yet shine through.

Two final notes.

One - if the PCs (or Handen) are still witnesses in Kaseru's eyes (probably determined during the Hour of the Dog - see p. 38), then the Scorpion forces will have orders not to kill them. This does not mean that they get to ignore damage taken on the field, however - for game purposes, they only receive 1/2 the Wounds indicated on the Battle Table, rounded up. On the other hand, if the ruse is still active and Handen or the PCs know of the conspiracy, then they will be targeted by the

Scorpion General (receiving an additional 2 Wounds beyond anything indicated on the table, if injured in a round).

Two - don't forget the fire that Sozui starts in the labyrinth to trap the PCs in the Hour of the Boar. Though it will take a while to spread, once it does all forces in the city will be having a hard time of it. Flames are liable to crop up almost anywhere - even through the floorboards of the sake brewery...

Consequences and Rewards

The Scorpion plan presented herein is the brainchild of Bayushi Sozui, and has all the trademarks of her slightly skewed mind. The entire operation hinges upon an unlikely chain of events and assumed reactions, and one might wonder how the clan ever expected for it to succeed.

In truth, they didn't.

Regardless of the final outcome of the siege, the Scorpion believe that the most important aspect of the operation - the deaths of the Crane monks at the hands of the presumed Lion forces - has little chance of failure (and without the intervention of the PCs, they're right).

Should their bold plan succeed and word be spread about the deaths of the monks at the hands of a corrupt Lion general, the reputation of the Lion will be stained for many years to come. This will be particularly true with the Crane; if he lives, Daidoji Handen will be irate at the actions of "Akodo Ikare", and at the very least demand a mortal duel as a result. Tensions between the clans will become increasingly worse over coming months, and the Emperor (who currently supports a lasting peace between the rival clans) will be hard-pressed to maintain diplomacy.

And this is precisely what the Scorpion desire. In the end, all of this has only been another step in a long complicated string of Scorpion maneuvers. Beyond that...



空

NOSHIN

EARTH: 2

Willpower 3

WATER: 6

FIRE: 3

Intelligence 4

AIR: 2

Awareness 4

VOID: 4

Skills: Advanced Medicine 2, Astrology 4, Athletics 3, Battle 2, Bo Stick 4, Calligraphy 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand 3, Herbalism 4, Kenjutsu 1, Knife 2, Lore: Folk Magic 4, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Ancestors 1, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Poetry 2, Research 1, Shintao 4, Spellcraft 3, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 1

Honor: 0.9

Glory: 0.2

School: Soshi Shugenja Rank 4 (retired); Sensei of Yaruko Jukko Shintao

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, Amaterasu's Blessing, Blessings of Purity, Call Upon the Wind, Calling the Elements, Calm Mind, Courage of the Seven Thunders, Earth's Stagnation, Force of Will, Know the Shadows, Quiescence of Air, Reversal of Fortunes, Sharing the Strength of Many

Advantages: Balance, Death Trance, Great Destiny (kami's quest)

Disadvantages: Antisocial (4 Points), Ascetic, Bad Reputation (with Lion), *Junshin*

CONNECTION TO "LEGACY OF THE FORGE"

To link this adventure with the upcoming *Legacy of the Forge*, there are several things you should know (though you do not have to work them into your campaign immediately). In fact, it may even benefit the GM to hold a few of them back, tying up "loose strings" in a few adventures while preparing the party for their next big adventure...

The Yaruki Jukko temple has been overrun by the Scorpion in their march. Nothing remains but rubble, a testament to a six hundred year-old plan that (hopefully) failed – or so the world thinks.

After the end of this adventure, Noshin becomes well-known to the zokujin (both through his own charms and Kakeru's discovery that he is carrying the spirit of "Great Water"). Eventually, Kakeru will aid him in separating himself from the *kami* within him, returning it to its home in Three Sides River, where it begins to repair the damage done over the six years of its absence. Yet he still retains a small part of the *kami* within him, a tiny kernel of the Water Element buried deep within his soul. He calls it a "gift from the Fortunes" and claims it guides his hand long after the presence of the *kami* is gone.

Noshin takes back his former name, claiming that he has "lost his former sense of enlightenment". He feels little but passion now, which contradicts the tenets of Shintao. Never having been reinstated in the Scorpion Clan, however (and having no desire to be), he does not reclaim his family name, remaining only "Tankenka".

In the weeks or months that follow (up to the GM and his campaign plan), he grows idle at Kenson Gakka, alleging that he "feels the imminent call of death within him." Collecting on many favors owed, he arranges to become a regent of the Imperial Throne, dedicated to preserving the peace his heart longs for. In this new capacity, he dons the ceremonial grave clothes known as *shinishozoku* and begins another Long Walk – this time northeast, toward another destiny.

Eventually, he will request the help of the player characters, whose bravery and stout ideals he recalls from Kenson Gakka. But that is another story...

EXPERIENCE AWARDS

The preceding adventure is worth an average of two to four Experience Points. As few as none or as many as five may be awarded if you feel that the players performed exceptionally poorly or well. Use the various victory conditions detailed in the text as a guide.



The following are detailed backgrounds for all the primary NPCs of this adventure. Statistics, physical descriptions, and notes for how to roleplay these characters can be found in the sidebars throughout.

Noshin

The current leader of Yaruki Jukko monastery was, before his retirement, a shugenja known as Soshi Tankenka. Heralded within his clan for his natural affinity with the elements, he was expected to go far in their ranks. But ten years ago, he was assigned to a small regiment of Scorpion troops who were to take a small village north of Kyuden Suzume. Abhorring the Scorpions' plan of promoting terror among the Minor Clans, he consciously failed to cast an illusion the general ordered, and the villagers were able to flee before they could be cut down.

In response, his fellow clansmen dubbed him *Junshin* ("pure of heart", a dreadful insult within the Scorpion Clan), and denied him schooling beyond Rank 4. Crestfallen, Tankenka left his ancestral home a dishonored man. He traveled Rokugan for three years without a home or family, searching for what would become the next

stage in his life. He found the detachment intoxicating, and looked forward to gaining a degree of insight not possible within the confines of his family.

Then he felt a distant tug, drawing him back toward Scorpion lands, to a simple monastery at the shores of Three Sides River, founded and inhabited by Scorpion but built upon the lands of the Lion. The *shinpu* of the temple, a former sensei of his from the Soshi school, was dying and desired to pass his mantle to another, but felt that none of his students were ready for the challenge. As it happens, however, the *shinpu* was far more than he seemed...

SANSHIEN, THE KAMI OF THREE SIDES RIVER

On rare occasions, kami take human form – perhaps to better interact with humans, or maybe just to disguise themselves. One of these beings, named Sanshien after the Three Sides River which it guides, chose to take the form of the *shinpu* of the Yaruki Jukko temple. It was the reason that Tankenka came to the temple; it had called him there. When he arrived, the kami revealed itself, and explained its ultimate purpose. It claimed to be able to feel the corruption within the temple, knowing somehow of the Scorpion founders' ulterior motives, and of the need to prevent their goals from becoming a reality.

Falsely believing he had the blessing of an ancestral *shinpu* guiding the temple, Tankenka followed the kami's direction, eventually rising to become the *shinpu* of the Order himself. Under the kami's direction, he incorporated more and more martial training into the monk's religious routines, eventually developing one of the most demanding prayer regiments of any faith in the Lion territories.

Just over two years ago, during a terrible fever, Tankenka saw Sanshien for what it really was, and in a fit of terror, tried to attack it. Sanshien rebelled, taking the opportunity of Tankenka's weakness to overpower him. The kami entered the monk's body and took up residence, fusing their forms and permanently subduing Tankenka's conscious mind (or so it thought – see "Noshin Today").

Shortly thereafter, Tankenka adopted the single name "Noshin" (a term typically reserved for those who have gained enlightenment in their lifetime), an act that has drastically reduced public opinion of the monastery.

NOSHIN TODAY

Two separate mentalities currently exist within the body of the man formerly known as Soshi Tankenka. But instead of warring with one another, they have somehow formed an unexpected union. The man known as Noshin is no longer kami or man, but an amalgam of both. How long this balance can be maintained is anyone's guess.

Mentally and spiritually, Noshin believes he has moved on to a higher level. He thinks that the emptiness within himself has only bettered him, allowing him to plumb his own inner spiritual depths without hindrance. Yet he still looks on himself as merely an adept of life. "If I accept my state, I shall stop growing, and might as well commit *seppuku*."

Noshin is spry for his fifty-nine years, physically fit and incredibly focused. He is well aware of the coming end of his astrological cycle (at his sixtieth birthday), and feels that he must find resolution between the Scorpion, Crane, and Lion before then, or something disastrous will happen (whether this is true or not is outside the bounds of this adventure, and left for the GM to decide, unless he decides to follow it up with *Legacy of the Forge*, where most of the answers can be found).

Disconnected from the world he resides within, Noshin is often mistrusted by society. The similarities between shugenja and maho to the common eye do not help this situation, and he is often mistaken for the leader of a cult rather than a monastery. His *Junshin* status with the Scorpion causes even more problems for him and his beleaguered students. The only respite he receives from this relentless criticism are the quiet support of Lord Kioma of Kenson Gakka (who has been a friend of his since his arrival here seven years ago), and the rare moments he spends with Rokugani children (who are fascinated with his knowledge of Folk Magic).

As a result of his union with the kami, Noshin exhibits a few strange habits and opinions. He is increasingly methodical, inwardly questioning his own motives and philosophy at every turn. He thinks of the martial arts as a both a career in society and a way of life. But on several occasions, he has also shown an irreverent disregard for them, twisting many of the ideas laid down in Akodo's *Leadership* to his own needs.

NOSHIN (CONTINUED)

Natural Abilities: Due to the kami inhabiting his body, spells cast upon Noshin have their TN raised (like the Advantage Magic Resistance): Water (+15), Fire (+10), Air (+10), Earth (+5). He also has the ability to breathe underwater, amongst other (as yet unidentified) powers.

Background: See the Major NPCs Section.

Roleplaying Noshin: Always maintain a flat vocal pitch (almost a monotone, yet with a little inflection when he is dealing with his quest). Do not use large body movements, and always keep your eyes level. At the start of the adventure, present him as you would an old friend; he is much more amiable than his students, and will go out of his way to speak with the PCs. By the end of the adventure (when he returns), he will move with an awakened intent, quick and with purpose. Remember, however, that he is the prime suspect throughout most of the piece.

空

BAYUSHI SOZUI

EARTH: 3

WATER: 2

FIRE: 4

AIR: 2

Reflexes 4

VOID: 1

Skills: Acting 4, Archery 3, Athletics 3, Battle 2, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Explosives 2, Hand-to-Hand 3, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Locksmith 2, Lore: Subterfuge 2, Manipulation 4, Mimic 2, Poison 3, Sincerity 3, Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 3, Traps 2

Honor: 0.4

Glory: 1.2

School: Bayushi Bushi Rank 4

Shadow Points: 1 [2 Shadow Brands]

Shadow Ability: Stealth (see below)

Advantages: Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Daredevil

Disadvantages: Driven (Scorpion Agenda), Insensitive

Background: See the Major NPCs Section

Stealth Ability: According to the rules presented on page 153 of *The Way of Shadow*, Sozui gains a bonus of 2 dice, rolled and kept, for any actions involving stealth (even if she does not utilize the Skill).

Sozui

Twenty-two years ago, the houses of two families – one of the Kakita and the other of the Matsu – made an arrangement. In response to outside tensions and as an act of goodwill, they would forge an alliance. They hoped that the act would quiet the hostilities between the two clans, that their lesson would reach others beyond their houses. They believed that it would strengthen both families, and reduce the threat of outsiders. As an act of faith, they agreed to exchange children for one year. That way, neither would have any opportunity to renege and betray the other. Further, the children would learn from their foster families, bringing that knowledge and understanding back home with them. By the end of one year, they assumed, the alliance would be sealed, and all could return to normal, safer for all involved.

They could not have been more wrong.

On route to the respective lands, both escorts were slaughtered and the children stolen, never to be seen by their loved ones again. Both families blamed the other for the event, and relations between them worsened. Today, the two houses remain locked in bitter dispute, spearheading the current tensions between the clans.

Which is exactly what the Scorpion wanted. They were responsible for the deaths of the escorts and the capture of both children, and although the Matsu never resurfaced, the Kakita was reshaped into a new agent of the Scorpion's dark schemes. Brainwashed and branded by the masters of shadow, her original name has been lost with her innocence. Instead she takes many different identities for many different purposes, and when she returns home, it is to the Scorpion, who are all she has ever known. To them, she is known as Sozui.

At an early age, the Scorpion learned that Sozui was like an unchanneled river of energy, ready to burst free. They had expected a well-groomed child, but she presented promise as a warrior beyond any they had seen in one so young before. She could clear her mind at will, absorbing training like a sponge, with little or no subjective opinion about what she was learning. It was as if she were cut off from everything but her lessons; by the time she had a moment to consider something, it was already a part of her.

Today, Sozui continues her lifelong act with the Scorpion. She does whatever they ask –

without thinking, without conscience – seemingly happy fulfilling her duty. Her only serious flaw, it seems, is the fact that she cannot perceive extremes, acting always with severity in everything she does. Perhaps this is her greatest weakness, but none have ever found a way to exploit it.

The Monks of Yakuji Jukko

For many centuries, the Yakuji Jukko monastery remained largely innocent of Scorpion corruption. There has almost always been at least one informant within their ranks, if for no other reason that to keep the flow of information at the border and about their former castle coming. But in recent years, the sudden shift in public opinion has left it largely unmolested, and it has become easier for the master deceivers to plant their own within its walls. With their long plan for revenge approaching fruition, the Scorpion have slowly filled Yakuji Jukko with agents.

There are currently only fourteen members of the small monastery, eleven of whom are absolutely loyal to the Scorpion. These eleven are actually Shosuro Actors posing as monks, who have been very well prepared for the role. All of them adhere to the martial and mental disciplines of Yakuji Jukko, and are also fully prepared to die for their cause (retaking Kenson Gakka for the Scorpion, and inflaming the currently strained relations between the Lion and the Crane). They are the Scorpion equivalent of Deathseekers, ready and willing to take any action, including the sacrifice of their own lives, to accomplish their goal.

As for the remaining three monks, they are included as another resource the GM may draw upon during play if the characters are having a rough time of it, or perhaps as another source of information for them. They fully support Noshin as their shinpu, and have wholeheartedly embraced the ways of their Order.

During play, use the same statistics (found in the sidebar on page 40) for all the monks – Scorpion and Crane. Actors, however, have their own sidebar, located on page 34. Please refer there when portraying them.

New Heroic Opportunities

The following is a list of new Heroic Opportunities to incorporate into your battle sequences:

- Destroy a Siege Engine: You have the chance to disable one of the enemy's siege machines. With a successful Water + Battle roll (TN 30), you ruin one of them, gaining 3 Glory.
- A small number of your soldiers are cut off, and you have the opportunity to clear a path to them (Stamina + Kenjutsu roll at TN 20); success gains you 2 Glory and a Minor Ally.

- Take an injury to save a standard bearer – and continue fighting. Receive 3 Wounds, but gain 3 Glory and may change Battle Declaration next Round – after the roll is made.

- Have the opportunity to second for another during a duel, allowing him to continue directing the fight. Gain 2 Glory and consider this a Duel result.

- Receive a “field promotion” by their commander / general (more Glory if by general). Temporary unless Glory gained during this battle exceeds 10 Points.

- Raid the opponent force's headquarters and steal their *hata* (war banner). Gain 3 Glory and become Heavily Engaged next Round.

- Disorganize and disorient the taiko drums of the opponent army. Opponent Victory (General's Perception + Battle) total reduced by 5; gain 2 Glory

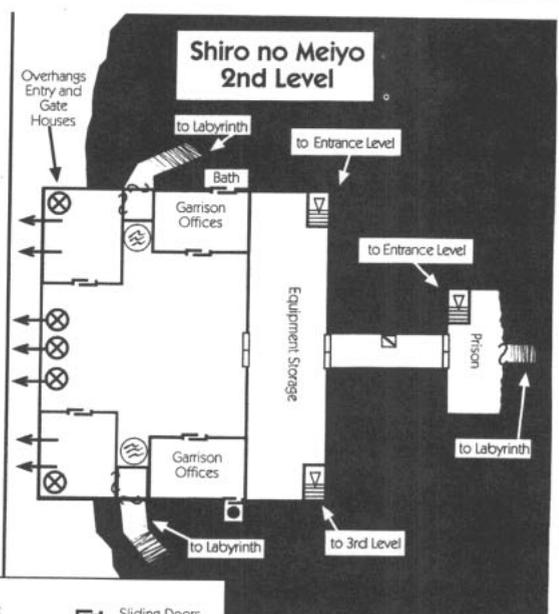
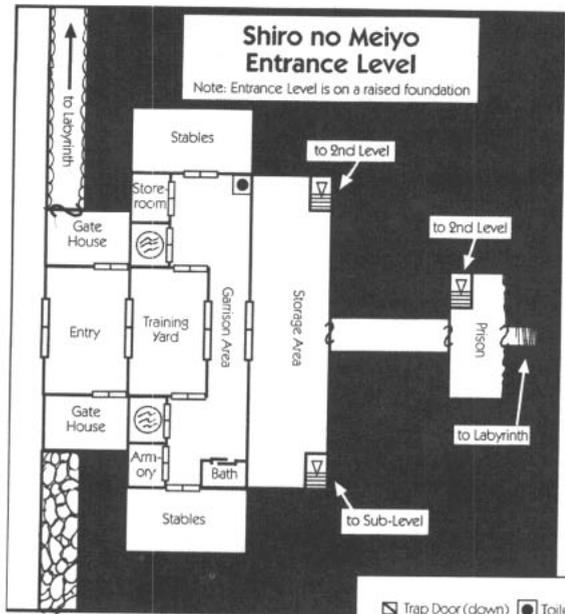
- The player is left the highest ranked soldier on his part of the battlefield. He makes the next Round's Victory total using his own Perception and Battle values. Gain 3 Glory if winning at end of next Round; lose 3 Honor if losing.

- Intimidate an entire unit of the enemy. Gain 2 Glory.

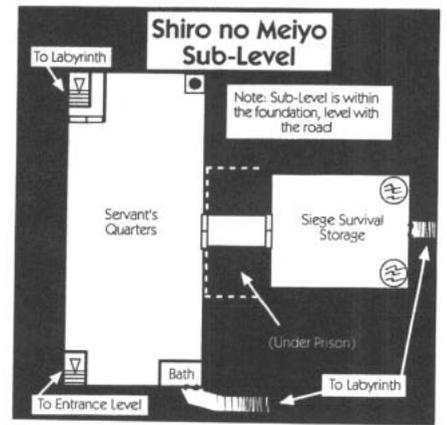
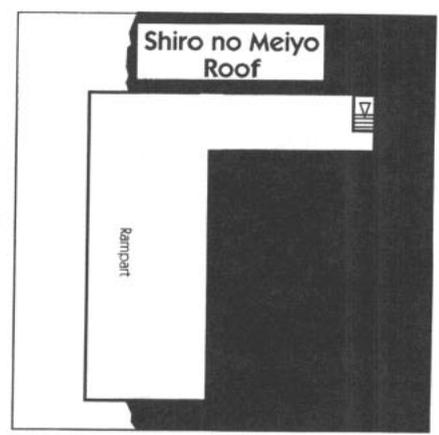
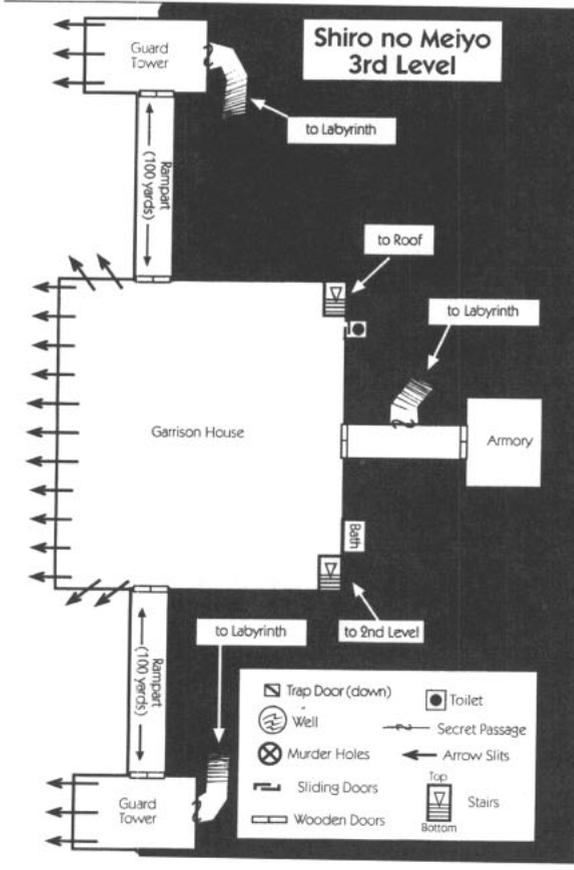
BAYUSHI SOZUI (CONTINUED)

Roleplaying Sozui: Sozui is a perfectionist to the core, utterly and completely dedicated to her surrogate family's plots. She will rarely show her true face, and the PCs might have trouble discerning it if she did. She should appear to the PCs first as a stately and refined courtier, perhaps only guilty of the odd manipulation (which nearly all courtiers could be blamed for). But as the adventure comes to a conclusion (by the time the PCs are discovering her true intentions), she should be presented as an elegant, sharp, and precise killer. Remember also that she is very good at knowing when to give up a ruse and vanish.

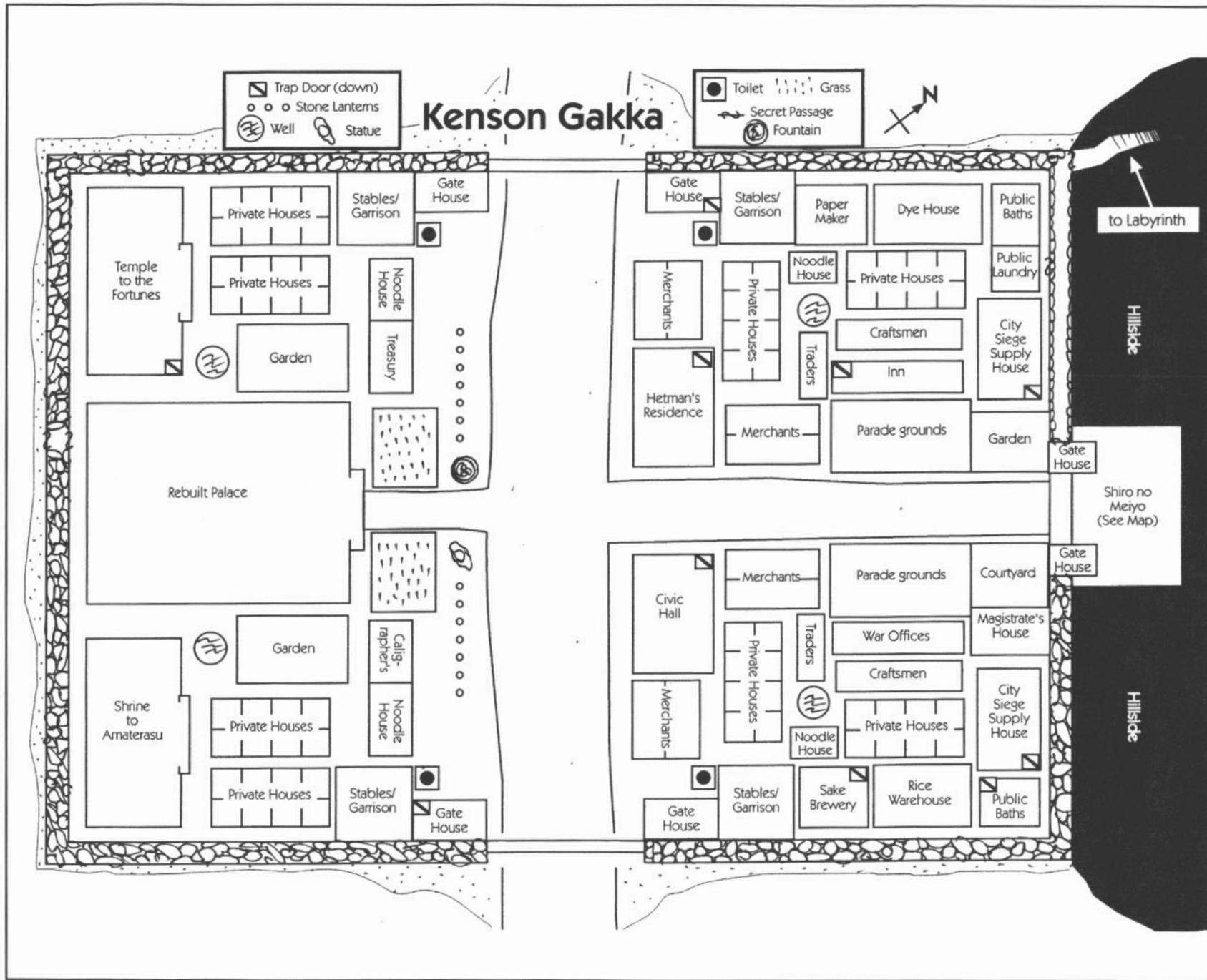




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Unexpected Allies

Summer



Know your enemy.