



# SECOND CITY THE PEOPLE

*Legend of the  
Five Rings*







## THE PEOPLE

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Second City: The People



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# INTRODUCTION



Welcome to Book Two of the Second City Box Set: The People. While Book One of this box set presents the city itself, its districts, and a light sampling of its inhabitants, this book will allow the GM to truly flesh out the Second City and bring it to life by populating it with an array of compelling NPCs, ranging from the political elite who rule the Colonies down to the simple people struggling to live out their lives in this strange new land.

- **Chapter One: The Ivory Court** discusses the structure and organization of the Second City's government and its court, the so-called "Ivory Court." GMs who wish to run campaigns of high-level political intrigue in the Second City will want to start here, but the material in this chapter can also be useful for developing lower-level plotlines that link only occasionally to the top tiers of the Second City's government.
- **Chapter Two: Movers and Shakers** describes the major NPCs within the upper tiers of the Second City's government, from the notorious Imperial Governor, Otomo Suikihime, down to the heads of the various Ministries who serve her. Although these NPCs are intended to fit into the world of the Second City, all of them are designed to be interesting and compelling personalities in their own right, allowing creative GMs to relocate them into any other setting where they might be useful.

- **Chapter Three: People of the Second City** describes a host of lower-ranking bushi, courtiers, and shugenja from the Great Clans, the Imperial Families, and the Spider Clan. These characters range in significance from clan ambassadors to simple guardsmen, and offer a wide range of stories and plot-hooks which the GM can use to bring the Second City to life – or any other city, for that matter.

- **Chapter Four: The Common Folk** presents a modest array of Minor Clan samurai, ronin, monks, and commoners as NPCs. Because L5R is so heavily oriented toward Great Clan samurai, many GMs overlook the plot possibilities to be found among lesser samurai and the lower castes. Almost any adventure set in a village, town, or city can be made more interesting by the presence of well-developed NPCs, and the Second City is no exception.

- Finally, the **Appendix** presents an array of new game mechanics for the L5R 4th Edition RPG, including new Alternate Paths oriented toward the world of the Colonies and two sample Ivory Kingdoms Basic Schools for GMs who wish to mechanically flesh out their gaijin NPCs.













# THE IVORY COURT

When Ikoma Katsuru, the first Governor of the Imperial Colonies, arrived in the Second City, much had already been done to ensure he was met with familiar surroundings. The layout and conventions of the city's court, indeed the entire nature of the Imperial district itself, were carefully crafted to mirror the life and courts of Toshi Ranbo. It was as if the colonists had directly lifted the Imperial Court from its place in the heart of Rokugan, carried it across a vast distance of barren sands and hostile tropics, and placed it at the center of the sparse frame of the Second City. To Katsuru, such a court was the final key element of the Second City, the life-giving water that nourished the seeds of Rokugani culture in the Colonies and allowed them to take root and slowly grow and flourish.

The city's Imperial District maintained a very traditional air under the first Governor's rule. The rest of the Colonies from the beginning adapted much more readily to their surroundings, picking up the new ways required by the strange environment and developing a culture somewhat distinct from the mainland. Within the Imperial District of the capital, however, the traditions of Rokugan were at first carefully preserved. After the unexpected death of the first Governor, the same care was taken to preserve this tradition in anticipation of the arrival of his successor. Hand-chosen by the Empress herself, this new Governor would find herself in a mirror of the Imperial City in Toshi Ranbo, and life would continue as normal.

However, the new Governor was not who they expected her to be. Otomo Suikihime did not want to live in the same

city she had left behind on the mainland. She did not aspire to re-create the same traditions, the same culture, or the same society as in Rokugan. She hoped to find something new, something the world had never seen before. When she arrived in the Second City and saw how the traditional ways had been preserved, she decided she would have to play a more direct hand to bring about her dream.

Her first act was to restructure the entire court. After all, the city itself was planned; architects had seized the opportunity to break convention, to prevent the complications that unplanned expansion had caused to other cities of the Empire. She reasoned she should follow suit on the political side. The court itself would be planned and restructured, rebuilt to more efficiently suit the needs of the fledgling civilization in the Colonies.

Many of the advisors to the previous Governor were appalled. They left in protest, returning to the Empire with their topknots severed in shame. Only a few were accepted back into their respective clans; the rest joined monasteries and lived out their lives as monks. Some even committed seppuku in defiant protest of the Governor's violations of precedent.

However, many others were intrigued by what the new Governor was trying to do. They were quick to assist her with all she needed. Thus, in practice she had no real opposition to her actions – the courts of the Second City became a blank canvas before her brush. She was free to recreate them into whatever image she desired.

What she created was called the "Ivory Court."





# The Nature of the Ivory Court

Despite its great distance from Rokugan, the Ivory Court is still highly influenced by the courts of the mainland (after all, they were the primary influence on the Imperial Governor herself). There are enough similarities that new courtly visitors will immediately recognize the general nature and atmosphere of the court itself, only slowly becoming aware of the key differences that set it apart from the courts of Rokugan.

The Ivory Court is held year-round within the Imperial Governor's primary estate in the Second City. The quarters provide designated audience chambers, clan embassies, guest chambers, and all that is needed to keep the court running smoothly. The Governor herself is usually present, but even on days when she is not present the court continues as normal. The Great Clans and other significant factions within the Colonies maintain a constant presence within the Ivory Court, meaning a court functionary can seek an audience with any

embassy at any time. This is in contrast with Rokugan, where court activity varies widely by seasons.

One of the first differences a courtier may notice is that it is far easier to gain audience with a high-ranking official in the Ivory Court than in any of the mainland courts of Rokugan. In the mainland, individuals of high status are sequestered from those of lower rank. This distinction is not as well-maintained in the Ivory Court, however, and it is actually common for lower-ranking courtiers to brush shoulders with those of much higher status. For instance, it is far more likely that a lowly artisan, fresh from gempukku, might accidentally come across an Imperial daimyo in the Ivory Court, something not at all common in the mainland Empire. Since situations such as these take place more frequently, they can also be capitalized upon more regularly, making the Ivory Court an ideal place for the talented or the ambitious.

Similarly, whereas a private audience with an important lord must be earned on the mainland by maneuvering through the proper bureaucratic channels, it is far more common to simply directly approach such an individual in the Ivory Court. One must still have adequate influence to receive an audience, but the obstacles have been largely





removed. This flexibility is as much of a danger as it is an advantage, however. By being in the presence of higher-ranking samurai, minor courtiers risk drawing unwanted attention and scrutiny as readily as they can gain praise and approval. Furthermore, with the common excuses for denying an audience removed, a rejected courtier stands to lose more face and influence than he otherwise would, especially if he is denied in public. After all, the proper rules of etiquette and humility still apply in the courts of the Colonies, and a low-ranking courtier who believes direct access to men and women of power will always make his job easier is in for a rude awakening.

The Imperial Governor deemed it essential the highest-ranking individuals be more accessible in the Colonies, where dangers and problems are more acute than in Rokugan and swift reactions can be far more necessary. Many do agree with her wisdom; it encourages a more functional government and makes things more efficient. However, the Governor also implemented the change because the potential for scandal it encourages brings her great secret amusement, and it entertains her to watch the many tiers of society trying – not always successfully – to work together under one roof.

The matters discussed at court largely pertain to the business of running the Colonies, especially expansion, exploration, and the establishment of new villages and communities. Since such duties must be delegated, the Great Clans seek them for themselves, and vie for new territory and new duties within the Ivory Court. The Governor has recently encouraged this by issuing proclamations allowing the clans to lay claim to any new land they can take under control. Matters of law and disputes between various parties are also commonly dealt with by the court, along with discussions of business pertaining purely to the Second City and the pursuits of powerful individuals within the city.

Less common, however, are some matters that regularly come up at the courts of the mainland. The Colonies see far fewer border disputes, fewer declarations of war or announcements of treaties. After all, the issues facing the Colonies are far different than those on the mainland. Attacks by raiders, the security of trade routes, the rate and distance of expansion, and the security of resources are in the interest of all of the Colonies' inhabitants, so the pursuit of more conventional inter-clan rivalries is often considered to be in bad form. If such serious disputes do arise (and they occasionally do), they are most likely to be resolved by duel; it is not prudent within the Colonies to waste manpower and limited resources on military skirmishes, much less outright inter-clan warfare. Whether this will remain true in the future is uncertain, however; recent years have seen growing tensions between some of the Great Clans within the Colonies, most notably between the Crane and the Mantis.

## The Structure of the Ivory Court

The Ivory Court is made up of three circles of influence. Within these circles are smaller tiers of power and status. The innermost circle of power, at the very top of the court structure, is the Governor and her personal entourage. The Governor herself holds the highest position of power within not only the Second City but all of the lands surrounding it. She is followed closely in influence by her immediate family; directly beneath them are the members of her personal retinue.

The other two circles of power are the court functionaries, who run the court on the Governor's authority, and the Great Clan Embassies, which have their own circles of influence within and throughout the courts.

### The Governor's Entourage

The so-called "entourage" of the Imperial Governor is not an official tier of government. It is not codified or specifically outlined in the Governor's plan for the courts, and being a member of her entourage is not an official position by any means. However, none can deny the Governor bestows her favor on a select few, and those few seem to form an elite circle of power within the Ivory Court. They alone have her complete confidence and they alone are allowed constant close proximity by her guards. Thus, the Governor's ear is always theirs. That alone makes this otherwise theoretical tier of power very real indeed.

The Governor's entourage is made up of those individuals who are closest to the Imperial Governor and those who attend to her daily. It essentially comprises her immediate family, her hand-chosen advisors, and the heads of each of her five Ministries. It may also include those she considers friends, her personal retinue of yojimbo (if she trusts them adequately), and even possibly the current darlings of the court. Anyone can potentially become a member of the entourage, but only by gaining the favor of the Imperial Governor.

While one can advance within other circles of power through talent, ability, training, and hard work, or sometimes even on reputation alone, one can only hold the highest offices in the Colonies by the Governor's own appointment. Otomo Suikihime is notorious for her hands-on approach to government, and while others may recommend individuals for such positions, she alone has the power to grant the highest titles in the Ivory Court.







This means that appointments to the highest offices of power can only be gained by being liked or befriended by the Imperial Governor. While Otomo Suikihime would never choose an individual she doesn't consider to be capable of the task, whether or not she cares for the person tends to be considered before their actual ability. Suikihime is constantly attended by her entourage, after all, and she prefers to surround herself with individuals she actually likes – or at least finds tolerable.

It is thus not uncommon to find the Ministries that run the Colonies are staffed by very capable individuals... except at the topmost levels, where rank is based on social position, favors, and connections to the Governor. Long-term success for such high-ranking individuals often hinges not on personal ability but on the knack to recognize competence in subordinates and then delegate work to them. This reality is generally recognized by those second-hand to the power of the highest ranks, but it is not mentioned in polite company, and never in the presence of the Governor herself. It is not wise to imply that the Imperial Governor, appointed by the Daughter of Heaven to oversee the Colonies, does not know what she is doing. Besides, the actual ability of the ministry heads could be argued as inconsequential. It is the duty of a samurai to make his lord look good, while favor is rare and always volatile.

Experienced courtiers of the Ivory Court are always careful to consider how the Governor views any specific individual or position. Such views are likely to determine proper courses of political action. Individuals who are disliked by the Governor are not actually considered threats, but those she likes tend to accumulate power and favors with frightening speed.

The Governor's entourage is often changing, as it is surprisingly easy to rise and fall out of favor. A courtier may spend her entire life trying to break through to the Governor's inner circle to earn a place by her side, but once this is done and the struggle finally ends, another one is just beginning. Every day is a battle to maintain the favor and power bestowed by the Governor. Careless members of her entourage are easily undone by their own machinations – or those of younger and more ambitious courtiers. While the Governor rarely revokes granted titles and positions (doing so would imply she'd made a mistake), it becomes very apparent from her attitude toward an individual that he has fallen out of favor and thus no longer wields the same amount of influence he once did. Naturally, this makes that unfortunate soul vulnerable to the schemes of rivals.

There is a complex web of alliances within the Governor's inner circle. None dare to speak of it out loud, but not all within the entourage are friendly towards one another, and not all admire or trust those the Governor keeps close by. If someone among the entourage has displeased her, ambitious courtiers are always quick to take advantage in the hope they may supplant the unfortunate soul. A few have even suffered mysterious illnesses or accidents that leave their positions open. Yet there is no end to the ambitious souls who will gladly risk such fates for the sake of power.

As another complication, the size of the entourage is not constant. The Governor often adopts a "play it by ear" attitude towards her own plans and courtly appointments, and is not above inventing new positions and titles at her whim – which is perfectly within her power. Her entourage always consists of at least her immediate family and the Ivory Champion, but beyond those it can vary greatly. Some even suggest (in suitable whispers) the Governor is easily bored and sometimes makes appointments based purely on their entertainment value. Whether or not this is true is a matter for debate, preferably far from the ears of those who would repeat such words to Otomo Suikihime.

Naturally, the Imperial Governor is well aware of how others view her entourage, and also how they use it as a factor in their own machinations. Such things tend to delight her, and she herself will sometimes use this to her advantage. Bestowing sudden and inexplicable favor on an unsuspecting courtier is both an excellent ruse to draw out those that wish to get close to her, and an excellent source of private amusement.

## THE MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNOR'S ENTOURAGE

Although the entourage varies on the whims of the Governor, there are some who are long-established within her inner circle. Although they are not invincible, it would take a great deal of cunning and influence to unseat them. (Full NPC write-ups for most of these characters are found in Chapter Two later in this book.)

**The Governor's Family:** Ever-present in the workings of the Ivory Court, the closest family of Otomo Suikihime assist her regularly in her courtly activities. She appointed her two younger brothers, Takama and Moritaka, as her court chancellors, and in her absence they guide all court proceedings. Suikihime's cousin, a mischievous woman named Otomo Nami, is at the center of court gossip and often serves as the Governor's eyes and ears. Finally, her elderly granduncle, Otomo Nishige, lends the Governor his wisdom as her personal advisor.

**The Ivory Champion:** As the personal yojimbo to the Imperial Governor, the so-called Ivory Champion is always considered a member of her personal entourage. When not seeing to his other many duties, he is usually by her side, ready to defend her honor against any challengers.

**The Governor's Favorites:** Included in the inner circle are a select few of Otomo Suikihime's favorites, subordinates that are exemplary in the performance of their duties, who have become close enough to the Governor to earn her favor, who have proven themselves wiser and more useful than their stations would originally suggest, or are otherwise amusing to her.

Among these is Shiba Fusimi, the Governor's personal scribe and confidant. A withered leg robbed Fusimi of the chance to become a yojimbo in service to her lord, but her exemplary calligraphy and keen attention to detail earned her a spontaneous position as Suikihime's scribe. Fusimi is explicitly trusted by the Imperial Governor, is fiercely loyal, and would betray her to no one.



The Governor's court musician, Kakita Amiko, has long enjoyed her personal favor. Rumors persist that they were childhood friends in Toshi Ranbo. It is well-known that Amiko has the Governor's ear in most matters, and they are said to be very close.

When Otomo Suikihime arrived in the Second City from Toshi Ranbo, she brought not only Kakita Amiko with her but also a single Imperial Nakado. Bayushi Hurunayi is a joyless man who goes about his duties with a logical and efficient air, delegating all but the most important appointments to his subordinates. The general suspicion is that the Governor keeps him around to have a voice in any arranged marriages in her court... and to amuse her as the object of both her teasing and her cousin's mischief. The truth, however, is somewhat darker; see Hurunayi's description in Chapter Two for the full story.

The so-called "darling of the court," the person who has become the focus of each court season, is often counted amongst the Governor's entourage as well. However, as fame is fleeting, these persons leave the entourage as quickly as they reach it.

## The Court Functionaries

The functionary ring of the Ivory Court is the second-most influential circle of power within the Second City. It is made up of all of the officials and bureaucrats who keep the court running and ensure the Governor's laws and decrees reach the people. Although they are merely servants of the Governor and her entourage, the court functionaries wield a great deal of power over their own spheres of influence.

The functionaries of the Ivory Court are organized into five Ministries, each directly serving the Governor. The Ministries organize and consolidate the governance of the people and regulate the influences of the court. Their highest-ranking members are hand-chosen by the Governor herself, and the heads of each Ministry appoint other members and issue decrees under her authority. However, they all answer directly to her.

Each Ministry is given a specific aspect of government to run, and each Ministry acts with the authority of the Governor in all matters pertaining to its sphere of influence. Of course, members of the Ministries must cooperate with one-another to accomplish their duties (especially where they overlap, which is often), so inter-Ministry diplomacy is a constant. In addition, the other members of the court must regularly seek audience with higher-ranking Ministry members in order to accomplish their goals. All of this makes the Ministries a major hub of activity and power within the Ivory Court.



## THE FIRST MINISTRY: THE MINISTRY OF THE CENTER

Also known as the Ministry of Courtesy, this is the Ministry that most directly serves the Imperial Governor. It is made up of heralds, advisors, court attendants, scholars, and court scribes, and has the Minister of Courtesy as its head. Some within this ministry also run the other Ministries, such as the Ivory Champion, who is the personal yojimbo to the Governor. It is also common for the Governor to appoint her family members or trusted allies into important positions within this Ministry.

Duties of this Ministry include attending to the Governor and any visiting Imperials and other major dignitaries from the mainland; to be attended to by this Ministry implies much importance and is considered a great honor. However, an equally important duty is the maintenance of written records, compilations of colonial histories, and the supply and training of court scribes.

This Ministry also maintains a court diviner whose role is to convene with the heavens and read astrological signs so as to supply the Governor and the other Ministries with an accurate calendar by which to plan their yearly duties. Spiritual advisors are also supplied, so many shugenja are also found within this Ministry. Of all of the Ministries, this is the one that has the most regular contact with the rest.

## THE SECOND MINISTRY: THE MINISTRY OF RITES

This ministry manages civil matters within the Colonies. Duties of this Ministry include the maintenance of civil offices and the appointments to those offices; in concert with the recommendations of the different branches and the Governor's office, the Ministry bestows and regulates appointments within the other branches. Judges, magistrates,







## THE FOURTH MINISTRY: THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE AND JUSTICE

The primary purpose of the Fourth Ministry is to enforce the law of the Colonies. This branch is made up of the Colonies' magistrates, the Second City guards, appointed judges, and the personal retinue of the Governor's yojimbo. Cartography is also considered one of the duties of this Ministry, so the new office of the Imperial Explorers fall under its authority as well. Other duties of the Ministry include the military defense of the Colonies, the enforcement of the Governor's decrees, maintaining the public peace (e.g. suppressing riot and rebellion), and all other matters of law and justice, including trial and

punishment. Minor tasks include the regulation and training of horses, the training of drummers and military couriers, and maintaining accurate maps of the lands within the Colonies' borders. This Ministry is headed by the Ivory Champion, who faces frequent tensions with the experienced and long-serving commanders of the Second City's military forces, Akodo Tsudoken and Daidoji Hondo; they consider the creation of this Ministry and the appointment of the Ivory Champion to head it as usurpations of their authority.

librarians, and other important stations are awarded by this branch (rather than by the Ministries with which they are actually associated), giving it considerable influence throughout the Colonial government. This Ministry also distributes the taxes that are collected by the Ministry of Taxation; thus other duties include the institution and maintenance of public works, the maintenance and creation of bridges, roads, and harbors, the institution of dojo, the promotion of schooling, and working with the Ministry of Defense and Justice to provide relief from natural disasters.

## THE THIRD MINISTRY: THE MINISTRY OF CEREMONIES

This ministry manages all matters of ceremony, etiquette, and social activity, and serves as a liaison between the Ivory Court and other spheres of power. Duties of this Ministry include overseeing important festivals, funerals, and commencements, maintaining tombs, temples, and mausoleums, receiving visitors to court and seeing to their proper housing, hosting, and care, and coordinating visitors' presentation to the Governor. Thus they are in charge of caring for all guests of the court and all guests of the Embassies as well. They also have more pleasant duties such as providing entertainment for the court, sponsoring musicians, artisans, and actors. (A peculiar exception to this responsibility is drums and drummers, which are considered to be in the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Defense and Justice.)

## THE FIFTH MINISTRY: THE MINISTRY OF TAXATION

The fifth ministry is charged with the task of managing Colonial funds and overseeing taxation. This branch maintains the treasury of the Colonies, oversees the Colonial census, regulates the accumulation of taxes (and what qualifies as acceptable payment), determines tax exceptions, and regulates the expansion of the Colonies. This Ministry is directly dependent upon the Ministry of Defense and Justice, and as the Colonies expand, the pressure on this Ministry grows with them. However, on the other hand the Ministry of Rites is directly dependent upon this Ministry, because this is the branch that procures the funds that allow the Ministry of Rites to perform its duties.





## Embassies of the Ivory Court

The third circle of power in the Ivory Court is comprised of the Embassies. These groups constantly lobby with the Governor, her Ministries, and one another. They are usually associated with one of the Great Clans, although a few other influential groups (such as the Imperial families and the Minor Clan Alliance) also maintain embassies to conduct court business.

Each clan has a vested interest in the politics of the Colonies. Whether they are seeking resources, alliances, or just the honor of performing specific duties on behalf of the Empress, all of the Great Clans are involved to some extent in the Colonies' affairs. Their individual Embassies exert their influence and seek the favor of the Imperial Governor. By appointing a samurai to one of the Embassies, his lord is demonstrating great trust and confidence. Due to the great distance between the Colonies and mainland Rokugan, not to mention the inconvenience and danger of travel between them, members of a clan's Embassy cannot regularly confer with their superiors in the Empire. Therefore each Embassy must exercise a great degree of autonomy from the clan it is representing, and operates under the assumption – indeed the implicit trust – that it is pursuing the clan's goals even during long periods without contact. Because of this necessary autonomy, delegation heads within the Colonies are effectively as prestigious and influential as clan champions – albeit only within the social microcosm of the Colonies themselves. Most lords try to only appoint individuals of unquestionable honor and loyalty to such positions.

Every recognized Embassy is afforded a section of the Second City to serve as their headquarters. Here the clans construct dojo, shrines, barracks, and other such necessities of samurai life and diplomatic operation. Each Embassy has its own inner circles of power and rank, closely mirroring those of the mainland. Buke and Kuge still observe certain degrees of social separation here, sensei still teach ancient techniques to eager students (the youngest of which have never even seen the Empire to which they own allegiance), and the traditions of each clan are carefully preserved within its Embassy.

The Embassies lobby not only with the Imperial Governor but also between themselves. While some grudges and rivalries from the mainland cannot be forgiven, the colonists' close proximity to one another and the hostile nature of the lands surrounding the Second City have sometimes made for strange bedfellows. It is not uncommon for clans that are feuding with one another in the mainland of the Empire to simultaneously be allies within the Colonies. After all, it takes considerable time for word of an inter-clan conflict to reach the Colonies, and even then many delegation heads wisely choose to focus on local conditions. Conflict is rarely practical for the inhabitants of the Colonies, after all.

Unfortunately, the opposite is also true. The close proximity and conflicting duties of the colonists are just as likely to breed rivalry as they are to create alliance. Some conflict is unavoidable, and sometimes the sparks can yield flames. It is ultimately the duty of the Imperial Governor to ensure order is kept within the Colonies and to see that the Empress' edicts have the same power within these isolated lands as they do in Rokugan. It is a duty she often delegates to the Ivory Champion, and while some conflict is tolerated, the clan Embassies are loathe to take their disagreements too far under his watchful eye. Duels and other symbolic methods of conflict are thus far generally preferred to outright warfare.

Aside from the eight traditional Great Clans, both the newly-raised Spider Clan and the Minor Clan Alliance also maintain a presence within the Second City. The Minor Clan Alliance embassy is staffed primarily by members of the Tortoise and Bat Clans, who are most comfortable in the strange atmosphere of the Colonies. The Spider do not have an officially designated "embassy," but their Clan Champion maintains a personal residence in the Peasant District and they are permitted to place some diplomats in the Dragon Embassy under the latter clan's overall duty of watching the Spider.

The Imperial families each maintain a strong presence in the Second City to keep an eye on the Governor and plant seeds of future political influence within the Colonies. Finally, the monks of the Brotherhood of Shinsei maintain a strong and influential presence in the city as well, although they make it a point not to participate in games of political intrigue. The Brotherhood is frequently not considered to be an influential power in the Second City at all, but the wiser among the court believe that assessment to be a mistake.





# Positions of Power

This section briefly discusses the more well-known positions in the Ivory Court. Naturally this is far from a complete list, as the Imperial Governor has the tendency to invent new positions as they suit her, but it offers a suitable example of power bases and influential positions for a campaign set within the courts of the Second City. NPC profiles of the individuals currently occupying these positions may be found in Chapter Two later in this book.

## THE IMPERIAL GOVERNOR OF THE SECOND CITY

This is the absolute highest political position in the Colonies, bestowed exclusively by the Daughter of Heaven herself. The Imperial Governor's duties are similar to those of governors on mainland Rokugan, but are expanded somewhat by the combination of a larger area of responsibility and great distance from higher authority.

The Governor is the highest administrator within the whole of the Colonies and the de facto ruler of the Second City itself. He or she determines policy and law for the entirety of the Colonies and is the ceremonial head of the Imperial magistrates there as well (though in practice, the First Magistrate fulfills this function). All of the various Ministries of the Ivory Court ultimately report to the Governor and serve at his or her whim. In addition to this, the Imperial Governor directly represents the authority of the Empress within the Colonies and has the official backing of the Imperial Court for her words. Essentially, the Imperial Governor is the highest daimyo

of the Colonies, answering only to the Empress herself, and effectively wielding the same influence as one of the Empress' Chosen.

Of course, this power is limited only to matters pertaining to the Colonies. While outside of the Colonies the Imperial Governor, while still a person of high status and respect, is not afforded anything close to the same amount of influence or power. In the past there was little reason for the Imperial Governor to leave the Colonies, however, so this limitation was rarely effective.

In the default setting of Second City, the current Imperial Governor is Otomo Suikihime, who took the office in the year 1198. Before this appointment, she was noted for the highly personal approach she took to all of her duties. It is not especially well known, but her sensei and aunt is Otomo M'Kira, a former member of the Spider Clan who married into the Otomo after she was found to be free of the Taint. In spite of her connections to the Spider, Suikihime seems to actively loathe the new clan, and their presence in the Second City is tolerated only due to the essential duties they perform on behalf of the Empress.

The position of Governor suits Suikihime well. She is eccentric, experienced, calculating, clever, and very ambitious. She wants to create something new in the Colonies, something the world has never seen before. Only time will tell if she succeeds.

## THE IVORY CHAMPION

A sort of unofficial counterpoint to the Emerald Champion of mainland Rokugan, the Ivory Champion is a position invented by Otomo Suikihime shortly after she reorganized the Second City court. Although the specific duties of the Ivory Champion are not well-defined, it is generally accepted that he acts as the Governor's personal yojimbo, seeing to her defense and the protection of her family. By extension, the Ivory Champion is charged with the enforcement of the Governor's decrees, the organization of her personal guard, and the protection of her honor. The Governor has also seen fit to appoint the Ivory Champion as the head of the Fourth Ministry, which means the Lieutenant Magistrate of the Colonies and the leader of the Imperial Explorers both must report to him.

The position of Ivory Champion is one that is coveted by many within the Colonies, almost to the same extent that samurai on the mainland covet the position of Emerald Champion. However, the creation of this position has generated something of a scandal among Rokugani traditionalists. After





all, all of the other “Jeweled Champion” positions in the Empire’s history were directly created by an Emperor’s decree, whereas the Ivory Champion was created by a mere Governor acting under remote Imperial authority. This is an unprecedented use of Imperial sanction, one that has caused many in mainland Rokugan to question the Imperial Governor’s intentions. In the eyes of the other Jeweled Champions, the Ivory Champion is not a true position comparable to theirs, and they simply dismiss the matter as inconsequential. Whatever one’s opinion, anyone who wishes to seek an audience with the Imperial Governor must often interact with the Ivory Champion, and his influence throughout the Colonies is considerable, making him a powerful man.

The current Ivory Champion is Shinjo Tselu. Most of those within the Ivory Court (even those others who are rivals for the position) agree she made her choice wisely. Tselu has impressed many within the court in the relatively short amount of time he has held his office, even managing to earn the respect of Akodo Tsudoken, the hatamoto and good friend of the previous Governor. Tselu is young, idealistic, and honorable, and perhaps didn’t fully understand the ramifications of the position he accepted. Regardless, he has proven himself to be fully capable of handling every duty handed to him. Due to the nebulous nature of his authority and assignment, his general competency has proven essential. He is good-natured, courteous, and generous, but takes his duties very seriously.

When the Imperial Governor first announced the position of Ivory Champion, she purposefully left its duties ill-defined. It is the habit of the Governor to invent new duties for the Ivory Champion as they occur to her. Tselu takes every newly invented duty in stride, without hesitance or complaint, seeking only to honor the example of his ancestors. This has caused some rivals to whisper that he is simply a glorified lapdog, but those who are honorable themselves recognize the strength of Bushido in his quiet resolve and the way he unquestioningly carries out his duties.

## THE LIEUTENANT MAGISTRATE

The Lieutenant Magistrate is effectively a *hatamoto* (sworn vassal) to the Ivory Champion, answering directly to the Champion. He is in charge of the Imperial magistrates of the Colonies, overseeing all of their activities and reporting them regularly to the Ivory Champion, and in turn passing the Champion’s orders down to those who keep the Imperial law in the Colonies. It is a thankless job, but a highly honored position and thus one eagerly sought by the ambitious.



## HEAD OF THE IMPERIAL EXPLORERS

An Imperial-authorized coalition of cartographers, navigators, and scouts drawn from multiple clans, the Imperial Explorers are the second branch of the Fourth Ministry. Their duty is to follow in the wake of the Empress’ so-called “Conquerors” (the Spider Clan) as they push slowly deeper into the hills and jungles of the former Ivory Kingdoms. The Explorers explore, identify, and carefully map the new lands for future settlement. In addition, they are charged with the identification of possible local threats, the classification of exotic flora and fauna, and officially reporting on the progress of the Spider Clan to the Imperial Governor. These duties are not considered particularly glorious, but they are essential to the survival and future expansion and prosperity of the Colonies.

The leader of the Imperial Explorers is personally selected for the task by the Ivory Champion himself and must report regularly to the Champion. However, his duties mean he is rarely at the Second City in person, so his reports are usually delivered in writing by a courier. His duty is to manage all aspects of exploring the land and to keep the Governor (through her Champion) regularly updated on the progress of the Colonies’ expansion. There is little glory to be had leading this organization, but the position is very appealing to those with curious or adventurous hearts, those whose eyes are forever seeking a new horizon.







## USING THE SECOND CITY COURT IN OTHER CAMPAIGN SETTINGS

The court structure, offices, and NPCs presented in this chapter are designed to represent the specific world of the Second City. However, the GM should not view these materials as a trap that forces him to only use them in that context. Any court-intrigue focused campaign can make extensive use of the materials here.

Otomo Suikihime need not be the Governor of the Colonies. With only a few changes she can be relocated to serve as the Imperially-appointed Governor of a major city within Rokugan, such as Ryoko Owari.

The GM can freely clip out individual NPCs, concepts, or Ministries to use in other campaign settings. For example, a campaign in which the PCs are forced to serve in the Imperial Bureaucracy could make use of the interlocking Ministries and the various NPCs associated with them as a model for the nightmarish political world the PCs would have to navigate.

A truly adventurous GM could relocate the setting to the Imperial Capital and depict Otomo Suikihime as an eccentric Empress (perhaps a Hantei Empress whose oddities were later white-washed out of the official histories), re-creating the court structures and Imperial government as the whim takes her.



## THE IVORY MINISTERS

For each Ministry there must be a Minister whose duty is to organize and run that Ministry. Every member of a Ministry ultimately answers to its head, just as every samurai ultimately answers to his daimyo. Likewise, the Ministers answer directly to the Governor, making this position one of the highest and most influential within the Colonies. Due to the regular contact they must maintain with the Governor, the Ministry heads are considered to be among her inner circle of power.

Each Minister must be a capable leader, diplomat, and politician. This is because he is expected to be an authority over his own position, able to work with the other Ministries, and an effective manager of the resources at his disposal. Actual experience in the duties of the Ministry is less important than the ability to manage it effectively. The most successful Ministers know how to recruit capable underlings and delegate authority to them as needed. Naturally, all Ministry heads need the favor of the Governor, who expects their loyalty in return.

## THE COURT SCRIBE

Considered to be a minor courtly position by most, the court scribe is actually within the Governor's innermost circle of power and thus is more influential and powerful than most would believe. The court scribe functions as the personal herald and scribe of the Imperial Governor. Amongst her many duties, the scribe must record every court session, must train and manage all lesser scribes assigned by the Ministry of the Center, and is in charge of all court heralds.

The court scribe also acts as the Governor's personal assistant, often keeping track of her many scheduled appointments, reminding her of important dates and meetings, and screening guests who lobby for her audience. The position thus requires intelligence, tact, excellent calligraphy and diction skills, and a knack for juggling many different responsibilities at once.

The court scribe is usually the one who writes the Governor's official papers and personal letters, giving her tremendous knowledge of what the Governor is doing at all times. Indeed, she spends most hours of the day by her side, answering to whatever she might need, as well as managing all ingoing and outgoing correspondence with her office. The court scribe is thus both a servant and a confidant of the Imperial Governor, and the position is usually awarded to someone she truly trusts.

Although it has no real power of its own, the position of court scribe is hugely influential and everyone in the court knows it. Despite her low personal status, the court scribe is usually afforded the respect of one with far higher station, and is the target of considerable envy among the ambitious of the courts.

## ATTENDANTS OF THE GOVERNOR

Any position that requires regular personal contact with the Imperial Governor is considered a lofty and important one, regardless of its actual responsibilities. Among these persons are the head of the court musicians, who oversees her courtly and personal entertainment; the court diviner, who consults the stars and advises the Governor on celestial matters, and the Governor's advisor on fashion, who is in charge of her personal wardrobe.

When it suits her, the Imperial Governor can bestow the services of her personal attendants upon her guests. It is a great honor to have one's wardrobe re-arranged by the Governor's own fashion advisor, or to have the official court diviner consult the Heavens on one's behalf, or to obtain the services of musicians personally trained by the head of the Second City court musicians himself. The Governor often does this to show favor, reward loyalty, or to replay a boon performed for her.











# MOVERS AND SHAKERS



This chapter describes the most prominent figures in the court of the Second City, those drawn from the Governor's inner circle and the heads of the various Ministries. It also includes several individuals who, while they hold only minor offices, are nonetheless influential due to their close associations with the Imperial Governor. We have included L5R 4th Edition game statistics to facilitate using the NPCs in play, and of course the GM is free to lift out any of them for use in other settings.

## OTOMO SUIKIHIME

### THE IMPERIAL GOVERNOR

Throughout her life, Otomo Suikihime has been respected and feared. Even as a child, she was always beautiful, charming, insightful, and sharply intelligent – she excelled in the courtly arts from the moment she began her education, and her peers feared she would outshine and humiliate them. When she became the most promising adept of her sensei's unusual philosophies, her betters feared her capabilities. When she became a rising star of the Imperial Court, her rivals feared her aspirations, ambitions, and unknown goals. Most of all, the traditionalist older courtiers who convened around the Empress feared that a shining star such as Suikihime would someday supplant them. That is why her name was whispered into the ear of the Empress, why her rivals commended and recommended her for the promotion to Imperial Governor of the Colonies. In those distant Colonies she would no longer be a threat to them, no longer a rising star in the only political world that mattered to them. She would be shunted forever into a distant and obscure place. But where they saw a position that would neutralize her powers, Suikihime saw opportunity.

For in truth, they were right all along to fear her. Although quiet and soft-spoken, courteous and obedient, Suikihime was a young woman of dangerous intelligence and insight. She had always been fully aware of how others feared her, fully aware of her talents and capabilities, and her ambition knew no bounds. And as the Imperial Governor she would finally have the power and influence to achieve what she always wanted: the creation of something truly new.

As a child, Suikihime's natural prowess was obvious to each of her teachers. To cultivate this talent, she became a personal student of her aunt, the former Spider known as Otomo M'rika. Sensing the child's innate talents and realizing her young mind was as unworked clay to one with the right approach, M'rika took her niece under her wing and taught her everything she knew.

M'rika's teachings were deeply influential to the way Suikihime saw the world. Her sensei taught her to actively observe everything around her as if it existed within her own mind, to see others in the light of the ways in which they could be changed to her needs. Other courtiers treat sources of political power as if they are heavy and nigh-immovable objects, planning around them or trying to position them like pieces on a shogi board. From M'rika's teachings, however, Suikihime realized that such permanence was just an illusion, that one such shogi piece could just as easily become another. She learned how to alter the structures of power to suit her plans and change the paradigm under which she operated. Such changes would disrupt the plans of others while suiting her own. All it required was the insight of what something could be, the knowledge of how to change it, and the will to carry out her plans.







As such, Suikihime truly became a courtier of vision. With almost zen-like serenity, insight, and confidence, she lives in a world of constantly shifting possibilities. She sees things not as they are but as what they could be if only circumstance will allow it. For the first time in her life, she is in a position of complete control over those circumstances, and thus the courts of the Second City have become both brush and paint for her canvas.

Upon becoming Imperial Governor, Suikihime's first act was to rearrange the structure of the Second City's courts to something more unique and thus more to her liking. This was her first chance to create something the Empire had never seen before, and she took full advantage of it. Virtually overnight, as if to her very whim, the bastions of courtly power shifted and changed. Then, in a number of decrees and appointments, she became the primary architect of what she called the "Ivory Court," the seat of power from which she would oversee the progress and change of the Imperial Colonies.

Unlike the Governor before her (or the majority of district and city governors on the mainland, for that matter), Suikihime adheres to a very "hands-on" approach to leadership, preferring to have a great many positions of power reporting directly to her. She oversees many aspects of the court directly and balances many of its

needs and functions herself. Despite this heavy burden she approaches everything with graceful calm and confidence, but all the while she keeps possibilities open and as flexible as possible. If there is a void of power, she creates a position to fill it. If there is a duty that has been overlooked, she delegates it. If a position requires the ability to do something, she invents it. It is common for Suikihime to grant positions of power and then assign duties after the fact as needs arise, and even more common for her to consolidate power in ways that are not mirrored on the mainland. Even she is not always certain what the exact nature of every position she invents is... but she always knows what they could be.

Though unconventional, unpredictable, and sometimes purely self-motivated, Suikihime is an extremely gifted courtier and is quite generous to those who please her. The logic of her decisions is always sound (albeit difficult to discern by many), and her decrees often prove to be very practical. She is a good judge of character and can often read a person very swiftly based only on a few interactions. Her keen insight allows her to see the capabilities of anyone under her scrutiny, but more importantly, it lets her see who they could be with the proper guidance. Yet for a person so in tune with the emotional states of others, she is oddly distant and unemotional herself. Though she







navigates social interactions with the ease of one who was once named the darling of the Imperial Court, she keeps very few close friendships, confiding in only a handful of individuals she knows she can trust. Surprisingly to some, she values these friendships very highly, and goes out of her way to ensure that those close to her are comfortable and well-cared for.

Suikihime has the soul of an innovator. She is not bound by the rules and is more than willing to create exceptions to existing social constructs. Such things generate excitement and amusement for her. She has no patience for insignificant details or small hang-ups, which she often leaves to those under her. A woman of strong opinion, she can be extremely generous and kind, but also unyielding and cold depending on the situation. She is motivated by the desire to create, and she hopes one day to present the world with something completely new, far beyond what she has already accomplished in the Second City. Something unrivaled by anything seen before.

All her life, Otomo Suikihime has always been feared. How right and wise they are to do so.

### OTOMO SUIKIHIME, IMPERIAL GOVERNOR

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 5 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3				
Honor: 3.5	Status: 8.0	Glory: 7.3		

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 4*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 8, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Courtesy) 7, Games: Go 5, Games: Sadane 4, Intimidation (Control) 7, Investigation 3, Lore: Colonies 4, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 2, Perform: Oratory 4, Sincerity (Honesty, Lying) 7, Temptation 5*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Gentry, Servants, Social Position (Imperial Governor), Wealthy*

*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (taught by Otomo M'Rika), Driven (to create something new), Sworn Enemies (many)*

## OTOMO TAKAMA

### CHANCELLOR OF THE LEFT

Even as a child, Otomo Takama always admired his older sister Suikihime. From the moment he was old enough to express such things, Suikihime has always had his unquestioning loyalty. It was never a spoken agreement, never explicitly affirmed. Yet it was obvious to all that his ultimate loyalty was to her. It came as no surprise when she made him a court chancellor, and he continues to serve as perhaps her most loyal follower.

Takama is one of the court's two "*Daijo Daijin*," the other being his younger brother. As the eldest of the two chancellors, he is known as the "Chancellor of the Left," and his duty is to oversee court proceedings while his sister is not present. As chancellor, he has the authority to speak on her behalf and the power to carry out her wishes.

He is also her primary advisor in virtually all political matters, being himself extremely well-versed in law and courtly precedent. As such, Takama is the highest-ranking court official in the Second City, second only to his sister.

Even more than his sister, Takama is a reserved person, rarely speaking until a response has fully formed in his head. Organized, practical, and very concerned with details, Takama often finds himself taking charge of his sister's projects. Whereas she tends to think and decree in the abstract, Takama is fully concerned with practical reality, and as such he is usually the one who refines his sister's plans so they can actually be implemented.

Takama also possesses much of his sister's enthusiasm and energy, but he chooses to direct it inwardly, eschewing creativity in favor of more practical outlets. Possessing the mind and attention of a scholar, Takama enjoys learning whenever he can, especially if there is a way he can apply such knowledge to his duties. He can often be found in the libraries sifting through lore related to his sister's latest projects. He is an endless wellspring of obscure facts and esoteric lore, and he usually knows at least a little bit about whatever subject is being discussed. He enjoys learning new facts, and the more obscure they are, the better.

Perhaps unexpectedly, Takama is also an enthusiast of incense-making, perhaps his only creative hobby. He finds the challenge of creating and combining incense to be very relaxing. Those he invites to courtly functions or evening meditations are often unknowingly honored by one of his personal incense combinations; those who genuinely complement the unusual scents will have unknowingly earned his favor.

Takama is a product of the traditional Otomo Seiyaku dojo; he understands intimately how to manipulate others around him, though he does so solely in the service of his sister. He often knows exactly what to say in order to control the emotions in others, and he is especially good at inspiring individuals into action. It is a trivial thing for him to acquire allies and set ambitious courtiers against one another. However, Takama does not condone discord for its own sake. Such a thing would embarrass and dishonor his sister, and he will not tolerate that possibility. Takama wields his abilities in ways that sustain the reputation of the Imperial Governor and the order of her court. In many ways, he is her courtly sentinel, always seeking to preserve what she has built in the Colonies.

Takama is a man who believes in order and loyalty. He takes his duty seriously, often working long hours and late into the night, seemingly sustained purely by his own determination. He is a man who takes genuine enjoyment from his work, one who is proud of both his and his sister's accomplishments. He is truly fond of his sister and very protective of her, and is motivated primarily by an honest desire to see her plans come to fruition – though in truth, he does not really know what her true plans are.





### OTOMO TAKAMA, CHANCELLOR OF THE LEFT

AIR: 2 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 3

AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 3 INTELLIGENCE: 3 PERCEPTION: 3

Honor: 5.5 Status: 7.0 Glory: 4.3

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 3*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Courtesy) 5, Intimidation (Control) 4, Investigation 2, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Law 2, Meditation 3, Sincerity 4, Temptation 3*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Sage, Social Position (Chancellor of the Left)*

*Disadvantages: Obligation (Otomo Suikihime)*

### OTOMO MORITAKA

#### CHANCELLOR OF THE RIGHT

Otomo Moritaka is the youngest of Governor Suikihime's two brothers. Of the two he is easily the most charming, and indeed is one of the most popular courtly officials in the Second City, at least with the ladies of court. Moritaka is handsome, witty, and sly; the court is always rife with rumors concerning the young man's love life, constant speculations as to who Moritaka is courting, who he was spotted with alone in the gardens after dark, or which young woman now has his eye. His reputation as a ladies' man precedes him wherever he goes, and although he has many young ladies-in-waiting, he never stays tied down for long, nor has he announced any plans to marry.

Moritaka is the second of the court's "Daijo Daijin." As the younger of the two, he is known as the "Chancellor of the Right." Besides having the authority to speak for his sister and oversee the courts while she is away, he also offers her advice on the character of those she meets. Being extremely sly and insightful, Moritaka often greets those who have arranged for meetings with the Imperial Governor and tries to glean what these persons really want, what sort of character they have, and whether or not they are honest and genuine. This information he immediately reports to

his sister prior to the meeting. He thus serves a sort of "social intelligence" duty for her, a role he shares with his little sister Nami.

Moritaka is a natural-born charmer. His wit and boldness makes him popular with most of the men at court, and his handsome features, easy humor, and penchant for romance draws women, especially naïve or romantic women, to him like moths to flame. Although he is not cruel with the hearts of those who pine for him, he is not above using their affections to get what he wants. He thrives on the scandal his private affairs create, but he is never public about his indiscretions. Such would shame his sister, and he would never do that willingly. He keeps his matters of romance politely discreet, and as such it is anyone's guess as to how true the rumors about him really are.

Otomo Nami, Moritaka's younger sister, considers him to be her personal project. She is always looking for the right woman for him, someone who can tame his wild side and prove that even in matters of romance one can fulfill one's duty. Conversely his grandfather, Otomo Nishige, is disgusted with the young man's scandalous activities and believes he is shaming the family name. He has tried many times to find a party that is willing to arrange a marriage for the young man, but Moritaka's reputation precedes him every time, which makes such a thing difficult.

For his part, Moritaka does not care what either of them thinks; he is having fun, and his private life has not impeded upon his duties nor created shame for his sister, so what does any of it matter? The Imperial Governor seems to agree, for she has not discouraged his behavior, sometimes even going out of her way to point out young ladies at court who might amuse him. Some even whisper that she uses him as a way to teach the more attention-grabbing women at court a lesson in humility. All the better for him, in the end.

Yet some insist that beneath his countless affairs and lover's games resides a deep and complex man, a soul who only wishes to be loved and yet due to demands of station cannot allow himself to be. That his indiscretions are simply all that he can allow himself without sacrificing his duty. Whether this is the truth, or merely the way that naïve and forlorn ladies justify his behavior, only Moritaka knows for sure.

### OTOMO MORITAKA, CHANCELLOR OF THE RIGHT

AIR: 2 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 3 WATER: 2 VOID: 3

AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 3 PERCEPTION: 3

Honor: 4.6 Status: 7.0 Glory: 5.2

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 3*

*Skills: Artisan: Poetry 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Intimidation (Control) 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 4, Sincerity 5, Temptation (Seduction) 6*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Benten's Blessing, Sage, Social Position (Chancellor of the Left)*

*Disadvantages: Compulsion (Lechery)*



# OTOMO NAMI

## HOPELESS GOSSIP

As the youngest child in Suikihime's family, Otomo Nami had the greatest freedom to pursue her interests. Even as a baby, her eyes were always wide open and watching, and she was always curious about what was happening around her. As a child Nami engaged the world around her with eagerness and energy. Her parents had great hopes that her curiosity would lead her to become a brilliant scholar, historian, or perhaps even an astrologist. What they didn't know was that her curiosity was not about any of those things; it was about people.

Otomo Nami is a personal attendant and advisor for her sister, the Imperial Governor. While she holds no official title, Nami is very close with Suikihime and has her sister's ear in virtually all matters. This makes her a very influential individual in court, in many ways the equal of any Minister.

Nami loves gossip. It does not matter who or what the rumors are about, it does not matter if they are minor details or vast scandals, she embraces them all. Her knowledge of court rumor is almost encyclopedic, and she can usually trace the rumor to its source and verify the validity of rumors by their nature and origin. Thus she serves as the Governor's eyes and ears in the court, informing her of what her subjects are talking about, sometimes even of what will be on the lips of the court next week or next month. Before meeting with any individual, the Governor always checks with Nami to see if there are any rumors circulating about that individual. This, combined with Moritaka's uncanny insight, gives her the advantage in every social meeting.

Nami is a social butterfly, very popular with the court at large. She is courteous and compassionate, although she has a taste for scandal. Her kind and gentle disposition often causes those around her to lower their guard, and she is often underestimated. But even though she is courteous and easy to talk to, she is still an Otomo, and secrets revealed to her ultimately make their way to her sister's ears. Ultimately, her loyalty lies with her family and her sister.

Nami's health has never been very good. All her life she has been sickly and prone to fevers. As such, she has spent most of her life sheltered within palaces and courts. The Imperial Governor hoped the climate of the Colonies would have aided her health, but if anything the weakness of her body seems to have grown slightly worse in the hotter and more humid environment of the former Ivory Kingdoms. One of Nami's greatest desires is to travel throughout the Colonies and see the new land her sister is forging, but her health simply will not permit this. On those rare occasions when she does get to leave the city, her sister ensures it is always strictly necessary and is kept on a tight schedule, with abundant guards and escorts along with a team of personal handmaidens to tend her every need. Nami does not openly complain about such attention, although she is prone to pouting about it in private.

Although she is frail, Nami has a strong spirit. She still hopes one day to be able to travel the Colonies at her own behest and see them with her own eyes. Recently she has heard rumors that some of the other courtiers in the Second City are relying on native healers to deal with the strange diseases and unhealthy climate of the Colonies, and she wonders if this might be an option for her as well.

Nami currently has strong romantic feelings for Seppun Ishitata, the Minister of Rights. Up until recently she was indifferent to him, thinking him boring, but not long ago she witnessed him single-handedly defeat three opponents in an attempted raid on a caravan they were accompanying, and this changed her attitude completely. Now she admires and idealizes him, believing that in his humility and devotion to duty he has kept the more exciting aspects of himself hidden away from the talk of the court. She often entertains a fantasy that if they were married the two of them could explore the Colonies together, with him serving and protecting her on this journey. She speaks highly of him at every opportunity, often praising him in public, hoping he will perhaps take a liking to her in turn. If she catches his eye, she smiles and blushes.

The Governor is well aware of Nami's crush on Ishitata. It seems to entertain her in some way, for she subtly encourages it.

### OTOMO NAMI, THE GOVERNOR'S SISTER

AIR: 2	EARTH: 1	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 2
AWARENESS: 3 WILLPOWER: 2 INTELLIGENCE: 3				
Honor: 5.0		Status: 4.0		Glory: 3.6

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 2*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Gossip) 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Intimidation (Control) 2, Investigation 3, Lore: Colonies 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Ivory Court 6, Sincerity (Honesty) 4, Temptation 2*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Social Position (sister to the Governor)*

*Disadvantages: Bad Health, True Love (Seppun Ishitata), Weakness (Stamina)*







## OTOMO NISHIGE

### ELDERLY ADVISOR

The venerable Otomo Nishige has seen many things in his long life. Born during the War of Spirits, Nishige grew up in the Imperial district of Ootosan Uchi, the old capital of Rokugan, where his parents directly served the Emperor Tutori I. Although he was clearly a capable pupil of the Otomo dojo, Nishige failed to stand out in any particular way, being merely adequate in the course of his duties. On this path he was destined to do little more than fulfill some minor functionary position in the Empire, never rising to prominence.

Nishige was twenty-two years old when the Imperial City fell due to the invasion by the Dark Lord Daigotsu. Everything he had known was destroyed in the course of a few days. His own parents refused to leave the city, equating evacuation with cowardice, and died as Nishige fled with his betrothed to join the retinue of Hantei Naseru in Toshi Ranbo.

All these years later he can still recall the sight of his childhood home burning to cinders. The Imperial palace, ten stories of glorious beauty, erected as a testament to Heaven, blessed to last forever... he watched it fall before him, over one thousand years rendered to dust and ash. This left a profound effect on Nishige, scarring and burning his soul as surely as it did the city, in both cases leaving an empty wasteland behind. In its place emerged a new man, a man of stoic determination.

In the wake of this tragedy, Nishige became a prominent diplomat in the courts of the new capital, Toshi Ranbo. Witnessing the destruction of his home at the hands of

the Lost gave him a sort of renewed strength, a purpose he had been lacking before. He was one of the men who oversaw the reorganization of the Otomo family in the years following the conflict. He was among those who accepted the proposal of Doji Tanitsu to rebuild Kyuden Otomo in the Crane lands, and in the following years he worked tirelessly in the courts of many clans to ensure his family had a home and purpose in a sometimes hostile Empire. By the time Toturi Naseru became Emperor Tutori III, Nishige was well-known as a master of the Otomo techniques, a powerful man with countless allies. He eventually became an honored sensei within the dojo of the Otomo, held in high esteem by hundreds of courtiers both within his own family and throughout the Empire.

The lessons he had learned as a youth surfaced again and again in his teachings. To accept the impermanence inherent in the world itself, to be ever vigilant, and to conduct oneself with honorable stoicism, even in the face of the direst hardship.

But a man with an injured soul does not forgive his enemies. Otomo Nishige never forgot what he witnessed on that day, and even after the Empress' decree legalizing the Spider Clan, he never forgave the descendants of the Lost for what they did to Ootosan Uchi. He blames the followers of Daigotsu for the death of his family and the destruction of the Toturi line. When the Spider became a "great clan," at least in name, he remained silent... but his honor demanded action. For a long time he contemplated performing *kanshi* before the Empress, taking his life in protest of her decision. But the courts were changing and he was growing old; perhaps instead it was time to join a monastery, retire from a world that no longer made sense to him, leave his former life behind forever.

Then he received a message that would change his destiny for a second time. From a Scorpion contact named Soshi Yoshihara came a letter saying that his grand-niece, Otomo Suikihime, had become the Imperial Governor of the Colonies at the command of the Empress herself. It also told him that Suikihime had learned under the sensei Otomo M'rika, who was herself a former ronin, and that she had taken to M'rika's teachings. But the most shocking information was what came next: M'rika was actually a former member of the Spider Clan. His grand-niece had unknowingly abided by the teachings







of a follower of Daigotsu, one of the same people who had burned her ancestral lands to the ground.

The shame and horror of this realization weighed heavily upon Nishige. Now he realized that he could not give up his position just yet, and to kill himself would be merely irresponsible. Once more in the wake of personal tragedy he found renewed purpose. Left with no other honorable recourse, he decided he would travel to the distant Colonies and become an advisor to his grand-niece, undoing whatever damage M'rika had inflicted upon her.

Nishige's sudden intention to join the Colonies shocked his colleagues, but in the end they could not deter him. Many simply accepted this as the eccentricity of an elderly sensei, and the Otomo leaders, hoping they could establish a predominant dojo in the Second City, were thankful that one of their sensei had volunteered to travel there. It did not take long for him to attach himself to his grand-niece's retinue, and within days of his arrival he was staying at her estate as her personal retainer.

For her part, Suikihime quietly tolerates the old man's presence with the respect that is due to one's elders. Deep down, however, she resents him. He was never an active presence in raising her, and Suikihime believes he is latching on to her as a last desperate grab for power. After all, she did not ask for him to come, and she sees his traditionalist ways as distinctly out-of-place in the Second City. She does not seek his advice, yet he is often quick to give it. In her view he is simply too old-fashioned, the product of an Empire that no longer truly exists even in its own lands let alone the Colonies; a man who is trapped by the past. He frustrates her with his rigid adherence to tradition, his constant interference into her affairs, the way he tries to "correct" the behavior of her siblings, and his constant reminders of precedence and convention. Yet for all of her influence, it is not within her power to remove him; as an honored sensei of the Otomo and a survivor of the attack on Otsan Uchi, Nishige is far too respected for her to simply dismiss him or order him into retirement. Indeed, if she were to act against him it could diminish her own esteem in the eyes of her court. Besides which, he has willingly made himself useful to her in ways that younger and less experienced courtiers could not. She may be a master of politics, but he is a wily old man with a lifetime of political experience. For better or for worse, he has inserted himself into the court and made himself essential to its operation. He is untouchable, at least for now.

Perhaps she would regard him differently if she knew the truth of why he is here. But Nishige has not revealed the true identity of her sensei to her, nor has he spoken one word of the letter he got from the Scorpion. To his mind, such a thing would shame her, and that would be unacceptable. He tests her character to see if she is strong, to ensure that her sensei did not stain the honor or spirit of the Otomo line. He serves her as her retainer, aiding in the function of her court. And he endures her resentment with the stoic nature of a stubborn old man... or if one can see past the façade, an injured but honorable soul.

## OTOMO NISHIGE, ADVISOR TO THE GOVERNOR

AIR: 1	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 1	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 5 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3				
Honor: 6.4		Status: 5.0		Glory: 6.3

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 5*

*Skills: Artisan: Ikebana 3, Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Gossip, Manipulation) 7, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Courtesy) 8, Intimidation (Control) 5, Investigation 4, Lore: Bushido 4, Lore: Heraldry 6, Lore: History 3, Lore: Imperial Families 5, Lore: Theology (Shintao) 4, Meditation 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 6*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Higher Purpose (honorable stoicism), Social Position (advisor to the Governor)*

*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (identity of Otomo M'rika), Driven (to destroy the Lost and the Spider Clan), Weakness (Reflexes, Strength)*

## SHINJO TSELU

### THE IVORY CHAMPION

None of Shinjo Tselu's peers expected that he would one day occupy one of the most powerful positions in all of the Colonies. All things considered, neither did Tselu himself. Yet amongst all of the brave and skilled warriors who pledged their swords to the service of the Imperial Governor, Tselu was the one chosen to be her personal champion. The Ivory Champion.

Shinjo Tselu is a young, inexperienced samurai who has never seen true combat or war. Merely twenty-one years old, he is the youngest of the court's Ministers. Before his appointment, he had never held any real position of actual authority or power. However, in spite of these shortcomings, Tselu is known to be a fierce and dedicated samurai. As the top student of his dojo, Tselu served as an assistant instructor under his sensei, often doing as much teaching as they did. He was also known to have a strong sense of duty instilled in him ever since he was a child. His father served as a gunso under family daimyo Shinjo Shono himself as a young man, while his grandfather was Shinjo Sanetama, regarded as a hero during the Clan Wars. Thus, when his sensei were approached by an Imperial representative asking for their best students to participate in a tournament before the new Governor, Tselu's name was on the top of the list.

Shinjo Tselu was greatly honored to participate in the Governor's tournament. It proved a significant ordeal, testing him and the others for a handful of skills and virtuous aspects. Tselu performed as best he could; he did not desire victory, seeking only to honor his sensei and his ancestors. Tselu bested the other contestants in a mass combat, proving his superior skills in melee, and placed second in the archery competition. But it was the test of delegation that most impressed the Governor; presented with several different scenarios, Tselu demonstrated the ability to deploy troops efficiently, recognize the strengths of subordinates, and adapt to different situations.





In short, he'd shown her he could be a leader, he was loyal, and he wanted only to serve. And because he was young and inexperienced, she knew she could control him. Thus he met all of the criteria she was looking for in her new Champion. When the tournament was finished, she announced Shinjo Tselu was the winner and then, shocking all who witnessed, immediately named him as the Ivory Champion.

Tselu soon found himself thrust into a position whose duties were not yet clearly defined, a position that had not existed before the very moment the Governor created it. He'd never been in a position of power before, but as the weeks passed, he proved more than capable of the task. He was, after all, an honorable man and thus both respectful of his peers and willing to heed of the wisdom of his elders, both important qualities in his new role. Through his strength of character he soon earned the respect and admiration of the many officials, military officers, and courtiers he had to deal with.

When Tselu first became Ivory Champion, the Governor defined his duties as being similar to a yojimbo; he was charged with her personal protection and that of her family. Within days, however, she had assigned him a new duty: the oversight of the City Guard of the Second City. Weeks after that, in a fit of impatience with the current chief Imperial magistrate, she decreed that all of the Imperial magistrates of the city would report to the Ivory Champion, and this soon became an additional official duty. Suikihime soon made a habit of assigning Tselu new duties on a whim. By the time she had formally arranged for the new structure of the court, the Ivory Champion was in charge of the Fourth Ministry.

However, despite this continual escalation of his responsibilities, Shinjo Tselu remains undaunted. Each change in his duties he embraces without question or

hesitance, merely accepting everything that is asked of him. He wants only to live up to the expectations of his Governor. There is no task too grand in scope and no duty too minuscule for his attentions. He performs as commanded without question, shouldering additional tasks and duties with stoic obedience. The men and women under his authority are often moved by his perseverance and honor, and go out of their way to assist him in his tasks.

Most in the Second City courts believe this is evidence of the "active leadership" philosophy that the Governor is famed for. By making his duties malleable under her command, she is forging

him into a great leader, and creating much respect for the Ivory Champion's position going into the future. Whenever Otomo Suikihime hears these rumors, she merely smiles.

Tselu is the very model of an ideal samurai in virtually all aspects. He is unquestionably loyal and possesses no selfish ambition. He follows orders without hesitation, committing himself fully to whatever task is at hand before moving to the next one. Although he has never led before and has never seen true combat, whatever potential the Governor saw in him has clearly blossomed since then. He has also – by necessity – become quite skilled at identifying who is best suited to a task and delegating it accordingly. Yet he remains humble to those around him and unyielding in his personal ideals. He has no motivation other than to serve the Governor and to live up to the example set by his father and grandfather before him.

### SHINJO TSELU, IVORY CHAMPION

AIR: 2	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4		STRENGTH: 3	
Honor: 6.7		Status: 7.0		Glory: 8.4

*School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 2 / Imperial Explorer*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu (Dai-Kyu) 4, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: Ivory Court 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Spears 2*

*Advantages: Ally (Imperial Governor), Leadership, Quick, Social Position (Ivory Champion), Virtuous*

*Disadvantages: Idealistic*



## DOJI HARASHIGE

### MINISTER OF THE CENTER

In the eyes of many, Doji Harashige is the very example of a foppish Crane. Born into a highly wealthy and influential family with many Imperial ties, Harashige spent his entire life in and around Imperial courts. As he grew into adulthood, he acquired a taste for the finer things in life, a taste he maintains even in the Imperial Colonies.

Although his name had been spoken in her presence before, Harashige finally earned the attention of the Imperial Governor by outperforming his predecessor in open court. At the time, Suikihime was entertaining a displeased Imperial guest who happened to sit at Harashige's table. The Governor was aware that the guest, a representative from the Empress' court, did not want to be in the Colonies and his displeasure at his assignment was painting his attitude. What she did not know was that the important guest had received only minimal care and courtesy from the Ministry of the Center. Harashige, as he had always been taught, sized up the representative and correctly guessed his preferred tea, sending a servant to retrieve it from his own vast personal stores. By the time the court had concluded, the Imperial's mood had changed entirely, as Harashige had successfully seen to the man's comfort and occupied him with pleasant talk while he waited for the Governor to grant him an audience. When he finally met with the Governor, the visitor was quick to sing the young man's praises, mentioning he had outperformed whoever was in charge of his care. "You should make that man your Courtesy Minister," the Imperial remarked, and Suikihime decided to do just that.

Harashige does not appear to be a particularly bright man, nor is he especially deep. Conversations he conducts always steer towards the interests of the one he is conversing with, but they tend to remain somewhat superficial in tone. If left to his own devices, he talks endlessly about obscure facts and interests that seem to demonstrate he is severely out-of-touch with current affairs. He quotes the Tao often, but only in the most superficial context, missing the deeper meanings of the phrases entirely. His priorities are always on appearance; if in mortal danger, he is likely to calmly finish his tea before retreating under the care of his yojimbo. His aloofness often places him at odds with the more practical and serious members of the court, but he does not seem to realize this.

Many in the court underestimate him, but there are some who recognize a method to his madness. For all his foppish exterior, he remains frustratingly calm in the face of whatever he is witnessing. He pointedly ignores any cause of tension, maintaining a cheery smile and even making light jokes at every opportunity. This almost zen-like detachment from reality makes him a difficult man to predict, and his exemplary courtesy disarms guests who might otherwise cause trouble.

Like the Governor, Harashige prefers a hands-on approach to government, often

seeing to the comfort of guests personally. He goes out of his way to learn the personal preferences of everyone under his care. Not a single detail goes unnoticed or unaccounted for. If a guest mentions that he likes a particular painting, that guest will find a similar one in his quarters by the next day. If a guest comments positively on a specific food, he will find it plentiful for the rest of his stay. If a guest mentions a love for the sunset, he will be given quarters that overlook it. Even when Harashige does not seem to be paying attention, he manages to pleasantly surprise the Governor's guests. Which is exactly as she would have it.

Harashige has little understanding or experience in the other important tasks of the Ministry, such as maintaining stables for the Ministry heralds, supplying officials with scribes and yojimbo, and crafting an accurate calendar. Harashige delegates these tasks to his assistants and advisors, and also relies heavily on the assistance of the Minister of Rites, Seppun Ishitata, and the Minister of Ceremonies, Isawa Chisaki.

### DOJI HARASHIGE, MINISTER OF THE CENTER

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4	WILLPOWER: 3	PERCEPTION: 3		
Honor: 4.7		Status: 5.0	Glory: 4.3	

*School/Rank: Doji Courtier 3*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation, Rhetoric) 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 7, Games: Go 3, Games: Letters 4, Games: Sadane 4, Investigation 3, Lore: Bushido 1, Lore: Heraldry 5, Lore: Theology 1, Perform: Oratory 3, Perform: Poetry 4, Sincerity 4, Temptation 2*

*Advantages: Balance, Paragon (Courtesy), Social Position (Minister of the Center)*

*Disadvantages: Infamous*







## SEPPUN ISHITATA

### MINISTER OF RITES

Seppun Ishitata never foresaw himself as the head of an important government ministry. In fact, he didn't foresee himself traveling to the Colonies at all. Ishitata had hoped to join the Imperial Guard and live a simple life in service as a samurai. A low and uncomplicated station such as that would have suited him just fine. Fate, however, dictated otherwise.

The second son of an important Imperial diplomat, Ishitata grew up in Toshi Ranbo in close proximity to power, but never showed any kind of ambition. His family had long held important diplomatic positions, and while his brothers and sisters went on to exemplify this tradition, impress their sensei, and achieve high stations throughout the Empire, Ishitata was content to merely perform adequately. Unlike his siblings, he did not want any political power or glory for himself. He did not like to draw attention. His parents had hoped he would take to politics or diplomacy, and arranged for him to meet with the sensei of several different courtier schools. But these attempts were fruitless. Ishitata lacked the attention and intelligence for politics and diplomacy. The only thing he was good at was making a plain face. The sensei all praised his skill at maintaining his On... and then quietly suggested he join a bushi school. Eventually, his parents gave up and enrolled him among the Miharu of the Seppun.

Ishitata showed much skill and promise in the arts of combat. He was clearly an excellent pupil, rising above his peers and excelling in the ways of the warrior. However, his successes caused embarrassment for his parents. Courtiers chuckled when they spoke of their second son, praising him back-handedly for "breaking family conventions." Eventually, his family decided he was simply too much of an embarrassment to deal with any longer, and when they learned there was a need for trained guardsmen in the new Imperial Colonies, they made sure Ishitata's name was spoken.

Ishitata didn't particularly mind being "exiled" to the Colonies by his family. In fact, he had high hopes that perhaps there he could finally live a simple warrior's life. Unfortunately he was recognized as his father's son almost as soon as he arrived, and the reputation of his family of diplomats preceded him wherever he went about his duties. Many assumed that because the rest of his family were such accomplished courtiers, he was surely one as well. It must have been poor luck and circumstance that left him stuck with the duties of a simple guard! When it came time for the Imperial Governor to appoint a Minister of Rites, she asked for names of skilled diplomats who could be entrusted with the granting of titles. Ishitata was named purely due to his family's reputation, for by then speculation had grown into conviction. Suikihime was moved by the story of a skilled diplomat who due to unavoidable necessity served as a simple guard, an honorable man who did not complain about his lowly duty. She summoned Ishitata to the court and immediately promoted him to Minister of Rites while he stood silent,

transfixed in horror. To refuse would be an insult, and so he simply bowed his head and accepted.

Ishitata enjoys a high reputation in the eyes of the court. Most see him as a great warrior who rose through the ranks through hard work and perseverance. They know he is not an outspoken or glib courtier like many of the other Ministers, but he is nonetheless admired for his steadfast, quiet, and stoic warrior manners. When asked a question, he is silent for a long while before answering; the court sees this as a demonstration of his wisdom, carefully considering everything and formulating the best course of action before speaking. They know he is an accomplished swordsman and they believe his warrior's eyes have made him a good judge of character. So high is the court's respect for him, in fact, that a few brief words from his lips will sway virtually the entire trend of opinion toward that position. His subordinates look up to him as an ideal samurai, a man who was appointed for his warrior spirit and honor.

How the court perceives Ishitata, however, is of course not how he truly is. Beneath his flawless On is the soul of a man who trembles under the pressure of his position. He secretly doubts his every decision, questions whether he can perform his duties successfully, and fears the great power he wields. His lengthy silences, which others interpret as the careful consideration and contemplation of a wise man, are actually born of uncertainty and indecision. He sits quiet in court because he hopes he will be overlooked. He says nothing when addressed because he can think of nothing meaningful to say. He often makes his final decisions based on sudden whim, followed by weeks of crippling uncertainty. His greatest fear is that he will make some great mistake that will cause the entire Ivory Court to fail and shame his family for generations. He keeps such fears closely guarded, of course, and not even his closest subordinates know the truth; if they did, they would be horrified.

However, none of his decisions have backfired yet. Perhaps he is unknowingly good at his job, or perhaps he simply benefits from skilled and knowledgeable subordinates. Perhaps his reputation and image as a stoic samurai inspires others to rise beyond their own limits, and thus no matter which option he chooses, all beneath him push to ensure success. Or perhaps he is merely lucky. Whatever the reason, Ishitata is certain he will eventually fail, badly, and the entire facade will come crumbling down. Until that day comes, he moves through the court cautiously and quietly, never speaking, avoiding attention, and always with his flawless and stoic on in place.

He does not know whether or not the Governor is aware of his secret uncertainty. However, though she has made no outward sign that she knows, the way she looks at him and smiles makes his skin crawl and fills him with doubt.

Notwithstanding his deep unease with his current office, Ishitata remains a very confident and competent warrior. On the very rare occasions when he is called upon to defend himself in combat, all doubt instantly washes away, and the uncertain Ishitata is replaced by a true fearless samurai. It is a very subtle change, as his stoic outward expression remains in place even in the midst of action and carnage. But those who are watching closely can see



the shift in his eyes. Every morning, young aspiring bushi and admiring courtiers gather before the gardens to watch Ishitata perform his daily kata. His technique is nearly flawless, every movement rife with confidence, discipline, and skill. Some whisper that he even allows himself the slightest parting of the lips, a smile so faint one would easily miss it passing by.

This warrior transformation has cost one political enemy his life, a man named Bayushi Taji. Taji always suspected Ishitata was not the man others made him out to be, and being an ambitious sort believed he could take advantage of this weakness. One day, watching Ishitata forced to make a decision before an anticipating court, Taji gleaned his uncertainty and realized the wisdom of the Minister of Rites was a sham. Empowered by his discovery, it was effortless for him to manipulate circumstances that forced Ishitata in a duel of honor against him. Taji believed the minister's indecision and hesitance would translate to cowardice on the dueling grounds. On the day of the duel, Taji was shocked to discover a very different Ishitata standing before him. The courtier was cut down in an instant, and Ishitata has remained unchallenged since.

Only one other time has this transformation ever taken place, and it went unnoticed by those present. While returning to the Second City after an important errand, Ishitata's caravan was surprised and ambushed by desert raiders. The raiders targeted the courtiers accompanying him, among them Otomo Nami, the Governor's youngest sister. They seemed intent on taking her hostage and killing her handmaidens and advisors, and they would have succeeded... except Ishitata and his sword were there. Within moments of overtaking Nami's personal guard, two of the three attackers lay dead by Ishitata's blade, and he

single-handedly disarmed and drove off the remaining one. This bought enough time for the guards to rally, and the raiders were driven off.

Ishitata was hailed as a hero upon returning to the Second City. His actions seem to have won the admiration of Otomo Nami, and she takes every opportunity to sing his praises in public, much to his quiet and desperate horror. He tries to avoid her as best he can, knowing she will inevitably draw more attention to him, the one thing which he most dreads.

The story of his single-handed defeat of the raiders is still one of the most popular tales at court. The Imperial Governor requests its telling often, especially if Ishitata is present. He is always silent and plain-faced during these retellings... but surely, the court says, this is just a sign of his noble humility.

### SEPPUN ISHITATA, MINISTER OF RITES

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	WILLPOWER: 4	AGILITY: 4		
Honor: 6.0	Status: 5.0	Glory: 6.3		

*School/Rank: Seppun Bodyguard 3*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 2*

*Advantages: Allies (several), Quick, Fame, Social Position (Minister of Rites)*

*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (in over his head), Doubt (Etiquette)*







## ISAWA CHISAKI

### MINISTER OF CEREMONIES

Of all the ministers of the Ivory Court, none are quite as cheerful nor admired as Isawa Chisaki. She was born in the Empire, but Chisaki's family traveled to the Colonies when she was very young, and she has no memory of Rokugan. To her heart, the Colonies are her homeland, and she possesses a great love for the lands of the former Ivory Kingdoms.

Chisaki is a shugenja of the exclusive Illusionist school, the sole student of a lone Illusionist brought into the service of the previous Imperial Governor. Delighted by the young woman's optimism and energy, he took her under his wing and imbued her with the techniques pioneered so many years ago by Shiba Tsuma. Chisaki took to the schooling easily, enthralled with the games the kami of fire and air would play at her urging. By the time Otomo Suikihime took office in the Second City, Chisaki had completely mastered her sensei's techniques.

At Suikihime's coronation, Chisaki performed impressive feats of illusionary magic, holding nothing back. The audience saw the full dazzling display, the joy in her heart given fleeting form in fire, light, and air. Stunned and impressed by her mastery, Suikihime believed she was witnessing a powerful display of magical prowess and made a point of remembering Chisaki's name. After all, she might soon have use for a powerful shugenja.

When the Governor organized her court into five Ministries some time later, Chisaki was placed at the head of the Third Ministry. While many others would have balked at the scope of the position, Chisaki was delighted. Nothing could diminish her excitement or optimism, and from that day forward she pledged to honor the position she had been given.

Isawa Chisaki is often seen smiling in the course of her duties. On those rare occasions when she honors the court with a magical performance of her own, she openly

displays the light of her soul for all to see. She is not ashamed to show the joy she feels in her heart, for it is the joy of the kami, singing even in lands far from the heart of the Empire. She considers herself a steward for the kami of the Colonies, taking it as her personal duty to erect temples and shrines throughout the lands for them. These kami have gone far too long without shugenja to tend to them, after all.

Chisaki is helpful, generous, giving, and kind. She is passionate, given to laughter, and even playful and joking in speech. She tends to talk quickly, eyes glittering, as if she can barely contain her excitement. Such behavior would rarely be tolerated in subordinates, but as a Minister under the Governor, more traditional and subdued shugenja and courtiers have little choice but to politely tolerate her boundless energy. Her bright personality and forgiving nature has endeared her to the common people of the Second City, who hold her in very high regard.

Some interpret Chisaki's mannerisms as childish, and some even question her intelligence. These individuals are fools. Chisaki has the kami of air whispering in her ears and the kami of fire inspiring her in every waking moment. She is sharply intelligent and keenly aware of the social climate around her. Although she gives orders sweetly and with a broad smile, they are no less demanding and no less effective. Under her guidance, the blessings of the Fortunes shine down on the Imperial Colonies, festivals and ceremonies occur as scheduled and without improper incident, and the most suitable performers for any given situation are always arranged properly and promptly. She has proven herself to be more than capable of running the Third Ministry, and her enthusiasm is, if anything, contagious to those working under her. Here again, the courts murmur, the Governor has shown her wisdom in the selection of her subordinates.

Isawa Chisaki is the head of the Ministry of Ceremonies. As such, she oversees every major ceremony, festival, and commencement within the Colonies. Her followers are responsible for the care of courtly guests, the maintenance of the land's temples, and the entertainment afforded to the Ivory Court. Relishing these duties, Chisaki balances all of her tasks harmoniously, moving from one to the next with boundless energy and optimism. She is a bright and shining force within the Ivory Court.

### ISAWA CHISAKI, MINISTER OF CEREMONIES

AIR: 4	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 4
WILLPOWER: 3			PERCEPTION: 4	
Honor: 5.7		Status: 5.0		Glory: 4.6

#### School/Rank:

*Isawa Shugenja (Air) 4/Shiba Illusionist Path*

*Skills: Artisan: Illusion 3, Calligraphy 5, Courtier 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Lore: Shugenja 5, Lore: Theology 4, Meditation 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 4, Spellcraft 5*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Elemental Blessing (Air), Social Position (Minister of Ceremonies)*

*Disadvantages: Can't Lie*





## YORITOMO ASUKA

### MINISTER OF THE CENSUS

The Minister of the Census is a unique and complicated woman. She was born the daughter of a senior Mantis functionary in Rokugan's Imperial Treasury, and her family used their connections to garner her a position within the Treasury immediately after her gempukku. She displayed remarkable talent with numbers and figures, to the point where she gained favorable notice from Yoritomo Utaemaro himself during his last years in the office of Imperial Treasurer. However, she seemed to have little ambition – much to the frustration of her family – and within a few years it seemed that despite her natural gifts she was destined to relative obscurity.

All of this changed when she was sent as a liaison to Colonies on behalf of the Imperial Treasury. At the time this was seen as an inglorious assignment, so it went to Asuka instead of her more ambitious cohorts. She was given a particularly inept assistant upon her arrival. While Asuka lacked political drive, she had a fierce devotion to duty and was appalled at her underling's ineptitude; her public castigation of him both shocked the court and amused the Colonial Governor herself. After Asuka broke the third such underling with a similarly viperish attack, the Governor began to take a direct liking in her. She interviewed the young woman and was favorably impressed, ultimately seeing to it that Asuka not only rose to a prominent post within the Colonial Ministry of Taxation but was soon also named the Colonial Minister of the Census.

To call Yoritomo Asuka a taskmaster would be something of an understatement. What she lacks in personal ambition she more than makes up for in her perfectionist tendencies. She is particularly demanding of her subordinates, and indeed she has acquired an infamous reputation in the halls of the Ivory Court for the public reprisals she metes out on those who fail to live up to her almost impossibly high standards. Her heavy-handed methods have led to frequent shifts in position among her subordinates, demotions for long-standing bureaucrats, and the corresponding sudden rise of relatively new or unknown functionaries. Asuka is well known for her distaste for nepotistic or status-based selection of duties, and chooses her underlings based purely on her views of their merit. More than one duel has been fought over her vicious retorts and demotions, but to date the Governor has stood behind her decisions, perhaps because it amuses her to sometimes see the lofty sent crashing down.

Asuka cares nothing for political power in its own right; she holds the position of Minister not because she sought it but because it would have been politically impossible to refuse the appointment. Besides, she enjoys the work. As both liaison to the Imperial Treasurer of Rokugan and as the Colonies' Minister of the Census, she maintains and pours over a voluminous assortment of financial data. She can focus her energy on the numbers she loves, numbers which tell her far more detailed stories about the world and its people than mere talking or travel ever could. The



numbers show what people want, what they care about, even what they will not admit to themselves. From the viewpoint of the Governor, Asuka's nature makes her a considerable asset – all she desires is to carry out her work efficiently and uninterrupted, and to discipline and promote her underlings as she sees fit. In return she carries out her duties with a skill and efficiency that few of the Governor's other servants can match. In return for this the Governor is more than happy to indulge Asuka's somewhat eccentric nature, as well as to smooth over with Asuka's Mantis lords the fact that she has not yet wed. Few, after all, would dare to attempt to court a woman known for such a viperish tongue.

Yoritomo Asuka is not usually considered to show a very intimidating presence – indeed she is physically attractive by most standards, and when her ire is not roused she tends to come across as somewhat vague and distracted. She has few pastimes outside of her duties; though she is an avid player of Go, she only plays against those she considers to be serious opponents, limiting any value of the game as a social diversion. Asuka does not brook fools lightly, and her bland demeanor can turn into harsh criticism in a moment if she feels someone is displaying ineptitude or irresponsibility in their duties. Thus, most samurai in the Second City prefer to give her a wide berth if at all possible. Unfortunately for them, the Minister's duties ensure she is a near-constant presence, making regular contact with most or all of the other Ministries in the Colonies, and her severe eye can be very hard to avoid.

### YORITOMO ASUKA, MINISTER OF THE CENSUS

AIR: 3	EARTH: 5	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 5		
Honor: 4.5		Status: 5.0	Glory: 4.0	

*School/Rank: Yoritomo Courtier 4*

*Skills: Artisan: Sculpture 3, Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 3, Commerce (Appraisal, Mathematics) 7, Courtier (Manipulation, Rhetoric) 5, Etiquette 5, Games: Go 4, Intimidation (Control) 6, Jiu-jitsu 1, Meditation 3, Perform: Oratory 2, Sailing 1, Sincerity 5*

*Advantages: Friend of the Elements (Earth), Great Potential (Commerce), Language (Ivindi), Precise Memory*

*Disadvantages: Contrary, Failure of Bushido (Compassion), Fascination (Mathematics)*





## SHIBA FUSIMI

### THE COURT SCRIBE

Between all of the Governor's many advisors, servants, family members, and friends, none truly understand her as Shiba Fusimi does. The two grew up together in the Imperial City and were close friends from earliest childhood. Fusimi was born with a withered leg, so it was known from the beginning that she would be unable to attend the prestigious Shiba Bushi school or serve as a yojimbo as her parents did. Fortunately, Fusimi had a keen mind and an interest in academic study, so she eventually became a scribe and scholar in service to the Phoenix. However, she remained close friends with Otomo Suikihime through a steady exchange of letters, and when Suikihime became Imperial Governor of the Colonies, she petitioned Fusimi's lord for her services. Naturally, he readily granted the request of such an influential Imperial authority. Fusimi now serves Suikihime as her personal scribe, attendant, and confidant.

Shiba Fusimi is a contrast to her more powerful friend in many ways. While the Governor is spontaneous and active, Fusimi is quiet and thoughtful. Her movements are deliberate and calculated, and she is always planning ahead. Fusimi thrives on tight scheduling and reacts poorly when she is forced to adapt to changing circumstances. She is not a very bold speaker and tends to stumble over her words in public, but she is otherwise diligent and enjoys attending court nonetheless. Secretly she often wishes that she were more like her friend Suikihime, and she secretly longs for the courage and carefree nature that the Governor

seems to embody... but she has long accepted that such a nature will never be hers.

Fusimi often worries about Suikihime's bold actions in the Colonies. In fact, she worries about virtually everything the Governor herself does not; Suikihime has often said she has no time for worries, so Fusimi has taken it upon herself to worry on her behalf. Suikihime can be very critical of this tendency to worry, but her words are never mean or malicious – she simply wishes her old friend would concern herself less with what could happen and more with the delightful possibilities of what might happen. Fusimi, for her part, wishes her friend would be less reckless; she cannot help but fear that Suikihime is storing up trouble that may erupt in some unexpected or catastrophic future crisis.

In the end, though, Shiba Fusimi is a genuine and loyal friend to the Governor, wanting only to help her and to enjoy her company. She believes she will never betray Suikihime, no matter how many doubts may claw at her. After all, what could ever come between two such devoted friends?

### SHIBA FUSIMI, THE COURT SCRIBE

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 3		INTELLIGENCE: 3		
Honor: 5.5		Status: 4.0		Glory: 3.8

*School/Rank: Shiba Artisan 2*

*Skills: Artisan: Painting 2, Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 5, Courtier 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Ivory Court 3, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2, Perform: Poetry 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 3*

*Advantages: Ally (the Imperial Governor), Social Position (Court Scribe)*

*Disadvantages: Frail Mind, Lame*



## KAKITA AMIKO

### HEAD OF THE COURT MUSICIANS

Kakita Amiko is both admired and feared by the Ivory Court at large. Growing up, Amiko had a foul mouth which even her parents could not cure her of. Since she showed early talent in music, they hoped training at the Kakita Artisan Academy would clean up her language where they could not; however, the masters of the Academy had a different plan in mind for her. Rather than clean up her language, they demonstrated to her how a biting wit and sharp tongue could be used to the benefit of her lord, honing her abrasive nature into a mastery of the skills of insult and mockery. Though her language as an adult is now far less vulgar, it is more biting than ever before. Nor did she neglect her artistic talents; Amiko graduated from the Kakita Academy under Sensei Kakita Noriko, one of the most accomplished musicians of her time.

Although she is an extremely talented musician and has written some brilliant pieces for the court (her solo piece for the Koto, "Moonlight Dragonfly," is the Governor's favorite), Amiko earned her position through her other talents. After performing a moving song in court, she came under criticism from a rival musician and replied with an acidic denouncement of her critic, comparing his poor taste in music to his poor taste in cheap geisha. This would undoubtedly have led to a duel if the Governor had not been so amused by the affair that she took the young musician under her patronage on the spot.

Before long, Amiko was named the Head of Court Musicians, which both placed her in charge of their training and also granted her the honor of composing all court music. She and the Governor became very good friends, second only to Shiba Fusimi in closeness. This has led to the rumor that Amiko was also a childhood friend of Otomo Suikihime, but this is not true. Rather, they are just very compatible people with similar senses of humor... namely, humor at the expense of others.

Amiko and Fusimi have a minor rivalry between them. Amiko encourages the Governor in her spontaneous decisions and behavior, which Fusimi constantly worries Suikihime will get herself into trouble. The two rarely see eye-to-eye on these matters and they sometimes argue privately. However, aside from this disagreement the two get along rather well, and courtiers who seek to pit the two against one another soon discover their rivalry is overridden by their shared loyalty to the Governor.

When not performing in court, Amiko acts in many ways like a Kakita Jester (despite not receiving training in that art), acerbically refuting criticisms of the Governor while verbally hindering those lobbyists who she judges are not worth her lady's time. It is an awful thing to fall under the verbal assault of Kakita Amiko, for her skills at mockery are nigh-legendary. Nor has any samurai dared to court her lest he find her disapproval turning to courtly derision; she remains unmarried despite being presumably one of the most desirable matches in the Ivory Court.

## KAKITA AMIKO, COURT MUSICIAN

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 4				
Honor: 4.6		Status: 2.0		Glory: 5.6

*School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 3*

*Skills: Artisan: Music 5, Courtier (Rhetoric) 5, Etiquette 2, Games: Sadane 5, Investigation 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Music 4, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 3, Perform: Music 6, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Ally (Imperial Governor), Great Potential (Perform: Music), Social Position (Court Musician)*

*Disadvantages: Infamous (acidic tongue), Failure of Bushido (Courtesy), Sworn Enemies (several)*

## BAYUSHI HURUNAYI

### IMPERIAL NAKADO

Bayushi Hurunayi appears for all intents and purposes like a man who would rather be anywhere else. Dour, quiet, and always frowning, Hurunayi is a man who seems to have absolutely no humor or amusement in his life. One of the few Imperial Nakado in the Colonies, Hurunayi was sent along with the Governor to ensure that marriages among the new lines of nobility in the Colonies would be orderly and follow precedent. His job is an unhappy one; he never wanted to be an Imperial Nakado, and had nursed high hopes to serve directly under his Clan Champion. He was given to the Governor as a punishment, and now he suffers in a land that is unfamiliar to him, arranging marriages for people he couldn't care less about. As a dour man, he is often the subject of teasing and jokes from the Governor's personal entourage. He is quite obviously displeased with his mistress and may be biding his time for an opportunity to act against her. One day, he will have a chance to undo everything that the Governor has made, and he will enjoy it thoroughly when that day comes.

Such is the story that Bayushi Hurunayi would have others believe.

In reality, Hurunayi was assigned to the Governor for an entirely different purpose. He is one of the most skilled shinobi the Scorpion have ever trained. Knowing there would be many in the Colonies who would want Suikihime to fail, the Scorpion Champion assigned Hurunayi to her side with the explicit mission of rooting out those who would plot against her and to be her spy amongst the disloyal factions of the Second City.

While he really does serve the Governor as an Imperial Nakado, Hurunayi's displeasure and dourness is just an act. By seeming dissatisfied and unhappy with his present situation, Hurunayi presents a target for those who wish to recruit high-ranking individuals into conspiracies against the Governor. They come to him like moths to flame, exposing their plans while fully believing he will join them. Hurunayi plays along, never dropping the façade







even for a moment. Then, when night falls, the opposition vanishes... leaving no trace that a conspiracy ever existed.

Suikihime is well aware of Hurunayi's true nature and activities. She is grateful for the foresight of the Scorpion Champion, but all the same she is wary. Hurunayi's occasional reports of dispatching of one of her unknown enemies always reminds her of a disturbing fact: she now owes the Scorpion Clan Champion, Bayushi Nitoshi, a favor. Such debts are seldom cleared easily if they can be cleared at all.

### BAYUSHI HURUNAYI, IMPERIAL NAKADO

AIR: 4	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 5		PERCEPTION: 4		
Honor: 2.1		Status: 2.0	Glory: 4.2	

*School/Rank: Shosuro Infiltrator 4*

*Skills: Acting 5, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Defense 6, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Investigation (Notice, Interrogation) 7, Knives 5, Lore: Heraldry 4, Meditation 4, Ninjutsu 6, Sincerity (Lying) 8, Stealth 5, Temptation 6*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Perceived Honor (2 Ranks), Crafty, Great Potential (Sincerity), Social Position (Imperial Nakado)*

*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (shinobi)*

## MOSHI CHINTAKO

### COURT DIVINER

Moshi Chintako was always looking forward to the future. She always had to be the first to know something, especially in the relatively small community of the Moshi ancestral lands. As she grew older, Chintako directed her attentions to fortune-telling, seeing the entire world as a big puzzle she could decipher. While she was very successful at casting fortunes, she was also a constant source of frustration for her sensei and peers. Thus when the opportunity came they were quick to get rid of her. She

was assigned to the Colonies, where she could play out her obsessions without drawing any attention. Or at least that was what was intended, if Chintako hadn't caught the attention of the Imperial Governor.

Chintako is the fourth court diviner the Ivory Court has had since the Governor took power. Many see this as a poor sign; four is a terribly unlucky number. Yet of all of them Chintako has been the most consistently successful. She accurately predicts the weather several days in advance, her readings of the Heavens are used by the First Ministry to compile and amend the calendar, and most of her personal predictions have come true as well. The Governor has come to rely on her more and more as the days pass, and now she will not even hold a court until Chintako has cast a blessing upon her and her retinue.

Unfortunately, Chintako's strengths are also her weaknesses. Though her eyes are ever on the Heavens, her head is always in the clouds. She is hopelessly scatterbrained, unable to juggle multiple commitments or duties with any efficiency. Rather than pay attention in court, Chintako is usually reading a fanciful story or watching the faces of courtly attendants. She has a poor attention span in most matters, finding focus only when attending to the kami or casting fortunes.

Nonetheless, the accuracy of her readings has earned her the trust of the Governor, often to the chagrin of Otomo Suikihime's other advisors. Chintako has no political ambitions of her own – she only wants to do a good job and learn about the future. Thus for now, at least, the other advisors do not see her as a threat no matter how much she may irritate them. Outsiders, on the other hand, see in her a naïve figure who can, perhaps, be manipulated or used.

### MOSHI CHINTAKO, COURT DIVINER

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4		
Honor: 6.0		Status: 2.0	Glory: 3.4	

*School/Rank: Moshi Shugenja 3*

*Skills: Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 5, Courtier 2, Defense 1, Divination 7, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Investigation 2, Lore: Omens 6, Lore: Shugenja 3, Lore: Theology 5, Meditation 6, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Ally (Imperial Governor), Social Position (Court Diviner)*

*Disadvantages: Gullible*

## BAYUSHI SHIBATA

### RESOURCEFUL EXPLORER

If ever a man earned his place within the Governor's inner circle, it is Bayushi Shibata. An instrumental man in the reconstruction of the Scorpion provinces after the Destroyer War, Shibata became well-known for his ability both to navigate bureaucracy and to manage limited resources adeptly. Although he was often seen as cruel, cold, and inhumanly calculating, Shibata nonetheless



restored the Scorpion lands to working order in only two-thirds of the time the Scorpion Champion was originally quoted. His peers could not comprehend how he was able to manage such limited resources with such success. His lords did not ask, nor did they want to know.

In time, the continuing expansion in the Colonies called for a restructuring of agencies governing the Imperial Explorers. Rampant uncontrolled expansion would be harmful to the Colonies; growth had to be balanced against the limited resources at their disposal. Bayushi Shibata's name came up in court and he soon won the nomination for the task. Shibata was sent to the court of the Colonies' first Imperial Governor, Ikoma Katsuru, and quickly rose to pre-eminence, managing the expansion of the Colonies with a careful eye.

When Katsuru met his end and Otomo Suikihime arrived to take over, Bayushi Shibata learned she planned to do away with his branch of the colonial government. It took all of his sheer cunning, relentless logic, and a direct demonstration of his usefulness to convince the new Imperial Governor to reconsider. He successfully demonstrated that production of food was not an issue for the colonists; rather, it was distribution where the real challenge lay. In the end Shibata was permitted to keep the resource-management branch of the Explorers... on the condition that he report directly to the Governor. On that day, Shibata effectively became a liaison between the Imperial Explorers and the Imperial Governor, ensuring that the organization's interests were maintained and presented to the court on a regular basis. Shibata also serves as Suikihime's personal advisor on the

exploitation of colonial resources, and as an accountant of the expenses of the Explorers, an aspect of his duties that regularly puts him at odds with the Ministry of Taxation.

Of all within the Governor's inner circle, Shibata is the only one who earned his place not with charm or with connections, but by pure effort and ability. Thus, while there are few within the court who actually trust him, most will admit his duties to the Colonies are essential to their healthy function and expansion.

Shibata is a practical, logical, and cold man. He asks many questions and always approaches things from an empirical standpoint. He is seemingly only motivated by a desire to be of use to his lords, but some suspect that he derives genuine joy from the efficient performance of his duties. Regardless, he seems to have only one loyalty: to his work.

**BAYUSHI SHIBATA, IMPERIAL EXPLORER**

AIR: 3EARTH: 2FIRE: 3WATER: 2VOID: 4

AWARENESS: 4WILLPOWER: 4INTELLIGENCE: 4PERCEPTION: 3

Honor: 3.5Status: 2.5Glory: 3.7

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 3

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Commerce 5, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Investigation (Notice) 5, Lore: Colonies 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity (Honesty, Lying) 4, Temptation 3

Advantages: Allies (many), Balance, Clear Thinker, Social Position (Explorer liason)

Disadvantages: Ascetic, Failure of Bushido (Compassion)









# PEOPLE OF THE SECOND CITY



This chapter presents an array of NPCs from each of the Great Clans as well as the Spider Clan and the Imperial families. Some of these are fairly prominent political figures, such as the heads of the various clan embassies, while others are simply interesting individuals who the GM can use to create stories in conjunction with the PCs. For the sake of convenience, these NPCs are organized by faction, allowing the GM to locate them quickly as needed.

It should be noted that while these NPCs are designed for use in the Second City, most of them can be easily relocated into other settings with only a few changes. A character such as Yasuki Kaito or Akodo Toshigure can be just as effective in a mainland Rokugani setting as in the Second City, and the GM should feel free to “mine” this chapter for ideas, plots, and characters.

## People of The Crab Clan

In contrast to some of the other clan delegations, the Crab have relatively little interest in the Colonies as a whole. Their commitment to the new land is largely dominated by a single and simple mission: locate resources useful to the Crab and exploit them ruthlessly. Naturally, this means the Crab activities in the Colonies are to a con-

siderable degree dominated by the mercantile Yasuki family. While most other Crab samurai prefer to stay in Roku-gan and serve on the Wall as they always have, the Yasuki have eagerly flocked to the Colonies and all the new opportunities it offers, infiltrating their trade and business interests into every corner of the new land. Even in cities dominated by the Crane or the Mantis, it is hard to go around a corner without encountering a Yasuki merchant plying his trade with a greasy smile.

Aside from the Yasuki, the strongest Crab presence in the Colonies is from the Kaiu family, who have been responsible for many of the construction projects there – especially in the Second City itself, where the Kaiu built and still maintain the formidable walls and towers of the Military District. The other families have only relatively minor presence in the Colonies, although the Kuni have sent some of their researchers and Witch-Hunters to investigate the remaining supernatural threats that are still lurking in the former Ivory Kingdoms.

Outside of the Second City, the Crab have no major settlements or strongholds of their own within the Colonies, although they contribute garrison troops and Hiruma scouts to many locations.







## HIDA KOTONE

### HEAD OF THE CRAB EMBASSY

Although most of the Crab in the Colonies appear to be pursuing their goal of commercial exploitation with all the grace and subtlety one normally expects of their clan – “like a drunken bull in a shrine,” as one Mantis has been heard to say – there are disturbing indications that the head of the Crab embassy is more adroit at political and economic maneuvers than one might expect from someone of her background.

Casual observers think of Hida Kotone as nothing more than a typical Crab bushi. She looms over most of the people she meets, she is taciturn in public, and her hand is never far from a weapon – even if that weapon is a sake cup. (She has excellent aim.) Those who spend time with her, however, are startled to discover that she has a keen and perceptive mind... when she can be induced to share it.

Kotone’s orders from the Crab Champion suit her well, since they leave a great deal to her discretion. Although she sends conscientious reports back to the Empire, she often suspects the Lord of the Crab would rather not be bothered with the details.

Unlike many of those residing in the Colonies, Hida Kotone was not sent to the Second City because she offended someone (well, not primarily). The truth is that she was starting to find duty on the Wall monotonous, a dangerous frame of mind for any warrior, and she craved a new challenge. Her

duty here allows her to dabble in a little of everything, from politics and economics to espionage and blackmail. She is a great believer in effective delegation, but she always takes an active interest in her subordinates’ efforts. In particular, she is developing a surprisingly good sense of the local commercial markets, and she pays close attention to the Isawa’s archaeological findings in the Colonies on the hunch that they will prove useful someday. Her chief advisor, Yasuki Noa, thinks this last interest is mere foolishness, but does not presume to openly contradict her superior.

Most people who care to find out know that Hida Kotone is separated from her husband, a Hiruma scout who still lives in the Empire proper. The two never loved each other, and their relationship can best be described as a coldly formal partnership. For all that, Kotone respects her husband’s acumen, and relies on his correspondence for a frank view of events in her old homeland.

As might be expected in such a situation, both Kotone and her husband have taken lovers. Kotone’s latest dalliance is with a Scorpion entertainer, Shosuro Shuji. She appreciates his ability to make her laugh, though she is certain he reports their meetings to the head of the Scorpion Embassy, Bayushi Ayaka. It lends their affair a certain tension and piquancy. At some point the romance will have to end, of course, but Kotone is determined to enjoy it to the fullest while it lasts. She thinks she might take another Scorpion lover next, just to continue the game. Anything to keep boredom at bay.





## HIDA KOTONE, CRAB AMBASSADOR

AIR: 3	EARTH: 4	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	STRENGTH: 4			
Honor: 3.6	Status: 4.0	Glory: 4.8		

*School/Rank: Hida Bushi 4*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Commerce 4, Courtier 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Games: Go 3, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 5, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation (Bullying, Control) 4, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 3, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Temptation 3*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Clear Thinker, Social Position (Crab ambassador)*

*Disadvantages: Bitter Betrothal, Large*

## YASUKI NOA

### ADVISOR TO HIDA KOTONE

The Crab in the Second City like to tell a story about how Yasuki Noa was chosen to accompany Hida Kotone to the Colonies. Two nights before the recommendations were submitted to the Clan Champion, the story claims, Kotone sat down to play go with some courtiers. Kotone won all the games but one, and the one she lost was to Yasuki Noa. Of course, the reason she lost was that Noa cheated. When it came time to discuss the various potential advisors, Kotone raised an eyebrow at Noa and said, "That one. She plays good go." Noa, startled and embarrassed, privately confessed to Kotone that she had cheated at the end of the game when they were counting territory. Her victory was a lie. Kotone looked at her impatiently and said, "I know. That's why." Conceding defeat, Noa agreed to consider the position. She might as well have said yes outright.

Noa is a high-strung young woman and tends to hurry from appointment to appointment with a constant air of impending disaster. Since she is both busy and fairly important, it is often difficult to get in to see her, and meetings with her superior Kotone must usually be arranged through her, giving her significant influence. She is not averse to taking a few bribes to smooth the process, although she prefers bribery via information rather than physical wealth. Noa has a reasonably good network of informants throughout the city, but is always scrounging for more news. She works especially diligently to maintain good ties with the Scorpion, and it is a source of vexation to her that Hida Kotone often knows what the Scorpion are up to before she does, despite seemingly making very little effort to gather information.

For all her anxiety, Noa often gets swept up in the appeal of playing politics for its own sake, and Kotone must sometimes remind her that their primary objectives are not favors and alliances for their own sake, but material advantage for the Crab. Noa also is involved in some of the more covert trading activities in the Colonies, telling herself that these side deals with certain restricted

goods do the Crab no harm and Kotone would prefer to have plausible deniability anyway.

Noa does not altogether enjoy life in the Colonies; indeed, lately she has been growing homesick, though she does her best to conceal this. A Crab's life is duty, but she had not realized the Colonies' tremendous difference in climate and environment would bother her so much. She gets sick frequently, a problem for many Rokugani in the Colonies, and bemoans the many days she must waste on rest and recuperation when she could be pursuing her political tasks. She has begun to console herself with the hope that she may be able to escape – albeit temporarily – by serving as an emissary back to the Crab Clan Champion. Ordinarily she and Kotone would send a lower-ranking messenger, but surely she can contrive some message so important that only she can be trusted with it. She has not found this pretext yet, but she is looking hard and believes it is only a matter of time. In the meantime, she clings to every crumb of news that she can find about how things are going back home... and tells herself she doesn't resent Hida Kotone for bringing her here. After all, where else would she have had so many opportunities to pursue the arts of political manipulation?

### YASUKI NOA, ADVISOR TO THE AMBASSADOR

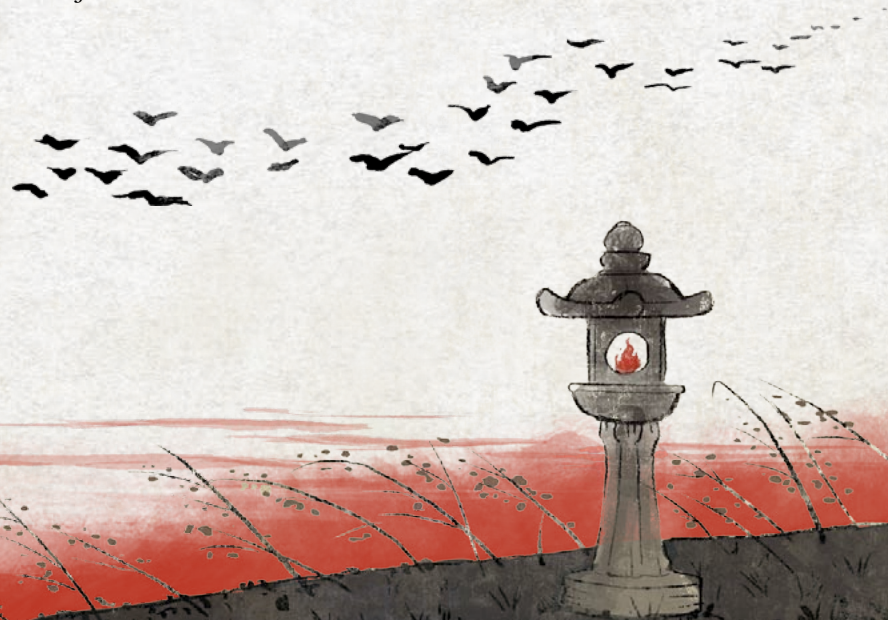
AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 3 INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4				
Honor: 2.8	Status: 3.0	Glory: 5.6		

*School/Rank: Yasuki Courtier 4*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Commerce (Merchant) 6, Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Games: Go 5, Games: Letters 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 5, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Ivory Court 4, Sincerity (Lying) 5, Temptation (Bribery) 4*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Social Position (Crab Ambassador), Spy Network*

*Disadvantages: Bad Health*





## KAIU MASA

### YASUKI NOA'S YOJIMBO

Kaiu Masa is an unassuming man of average height, with a slightly stooped posture and a habitual absentminded smile. Most people who first see him fail to realize he is actually quite a good swordsman, but Hida Kotone did not choose him for his ability with a sword. Rather, she saw him drawing up battle plans during a goblin outbreak and saw immediately that he had a gift for tactics; as she put it to her husband, "That man understands ambushes."

Masa used to have two brothers and a sister, all of whom died in various missions for the Crab. He spent very little time openly grieving for them, instead pouring all his focus into the arts of battle. Perhaps there is still a reservoir of grief within him, waiting for a suitable outlet, or perhaps he truly erased his loss through his work. Regardless, for a long time he believed that battle and tactics were all he could expect in his life, and thought this more than enough for any Crab samurai.

Masa's assignment in the Second City has changed his mind. Guarding Yasuki Noa is never dull – she is fond of creating situations in which her rivals must challenge her or lose face – and watching her operate has made him realize there are other battlefields than the ones fought over by armies. He doesn't love Noa, precisely, but he has come to admire her tremendously, and more and more he feels that as a simple warrior he is unworthy of her.

Lately, Kaiu Masa has started dipping his toes into court intrigue, hoping to uncover some plot or nugget of information that Yasuki Noa will find useful. The process is slow and frustrating, as he has no experience in this realm, and he often worries he will be caught or exposed in a way that brings shame to the Crab. Still, no matter how often he tells himself he should give it up and stick to the skills he already has, he always manages to persuade himself that learning a little more in this field will enable him to better serve Noa.

### KAIU MASA, YOJIMBO

AIR: 2	EARTH: 4	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4	STRENGTH: 4		
Honor: 4.0	Status: 2.0	Glory: 3.7		

*School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3*

*Skills: Artisan: Poetry 2, Athletics 5, Battle 3, Calligraphy 1, Courtier 1, Defense 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Games: Go 2, Heavy Weapons (Tetsubo) 4, Iaijutsu (Focus) 5, Intimidation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Sincerity 2, Spears 2*

*Advantages: Bland, Strength of the Earth*

*Disadvantages: Lost Love (siblings)*

## YASUKI KAITO

### EPICUREAN MERCHANT

Yasuki Kaito is a low-ranking functionary in the official Crab delegation at the Second City, in charge of managing the embassy's resources and supplies. He can frequently be heard complaining that all he does is go over ledgers and contemplate lentils, and if you catch him over a cup of sake, he will regale you with a long catalogue of things he hates about legumes of all kinds. What makes this worse, from his perspective, is that he is actually quite good at his job – even though he doesn't much enjoy it.

Kaito's childhood ambition was to become a cook. He was crushed when he realized his parents had future plans for him and those plans did not involve a lowly servant's job like cooking. Nevertheless, in between studying shady accounting techniques and ruthless negotiation tactics, he often sneaked off to the kitchens to spend time with the household servants and learn the craft and art of food preparation.

Once he reached adulthood, Kaito managed to set himself up as a successful merchant patron with a small estate and an excellent cook through whom he could live vicariously. That pleasant life came to an abrupt end when the Yasuki daimyo decided to send him to the Second City;





Kaito's protests were to no avail. Some belated inquiries revealed that a more powerful merchant, Yasuki Shika, had maneuvered to have him sent in her stead. By then it was too late to change the situation, but at least Kaito knew who to blame for his bitter fate.

People have remarked on Kaito's relentless energy at his new post, the dedication with which he manages the Crab embassy's supplies despite his frequent and bitter complaints. In fact, he has ventured into the markets for some of the more unusual food items on offer in the Colonies, often defying the disgust of his more conventional peers. However, what they see in Kaito is not actually devotion to duty but rather a very focused desire for revenge. Kaito is convinced that if he digs hard enough, he will be able to find exotic new poisons in the Colonies – poisons that the magistrates back home will have a very hard time tracing. He has not yet actually decided for sure that he wants to murder Yasuki Shika, but he tells himself it always pays to explore all of your options. Besides, even if he decides to settle on something more mundane for his revenge – a spot of blackmail, perhaps, or a commercial attack – there is always a profitable market for illicit substances like poison.

### YASUKI KAITO, MERCHANT

AIR: 4 EARTH: 4 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

Honor: 2.3 Status: 2.0 Glory: 3.8

*School/Rank: Yasuki Courtier 4*

*Skills: Artisan: Cooking 3, Calligraphy 4, Commerce (Mathematics, Merchant) 7, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Intimidation 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Poison 4, Sincerity (Lying) 6, Temptation (Bribery) 5*

*Advantages: Great Potential (Artisan: Cooking)*

*Disadvantages: Driven (vengeance against Yasuki Shika)*

### KUNI ITSUKI

#### SHUGENJA AND HERBALIST

Kuni Itsuki is the son of two well-respected Crab witch-hunters. Both his parents expected him to follow in their footsteps, but Itsuki was interested instead in herbalism and alchemy. Thinking that some actual exposure to the strange world of the Tamori would change his mind, his mother arranged for him to study with an alchemist of her acquaintance for two years. The plan backfired; Itsuki returned with even more enthusiasm for the subject. His parents decided he was a lost cause and left him to pursue his own path, instead focusing their energies on Itsuki's precocious younger sister, Chikako.

Itsuki, who both resents and loves Chikako, found life at home increasingly difficult to handle, and ultimately decided to remove himself from the situation by volunteering to join the Crab delegation to the Second City. Here he has found a genuine use for his interests in

herbalism, for the Colonies are burdened with numerous strange fevers and diseases, not to mention hordes of bloodsucking insects and poisonous snakes. For a time he attended Yasuki Noa, assisting her with her perennial sicknesses, but lately she has been relying on a native healer, a choice which stings Itsuki's pride and which sometimes prompts him to spread gossip against her. The loss of his regular role in the Crab Embassy affects him considerably, and he often pushes his herbal tonics and incense blends on visitors, entreating them to try the remedies and report back to him as to whether they had any effect in cleansing their bodies or keeping away pests. Some among the court like to joke that someone should come up with a blend to keep away overly enthusiastic Kuni... but they usually do so out of Itsuki's hearing. After all, someone with his particular talents is bound to know about poisons as well as remedies.

More recently, Itsuki has found that some of the local Unicorn delegates have begun to call on his expertise. Itsuki has no particular experience with equine maladies, but it is undeniable that Rokugani horses fare poorly in the Colonies' hot and humid climate, and given his focus on dealing with local illnesses and pests it is actually rather unsurprising that the Unicorn had sought him out. So far Itsuki has not been able to offer any definite cures, but the plight of the animals is starting to bother him more than he might wish to admit. Itsuki never would have suspected himself of being sentimental toward animals – he handled his share of dissections in his youth among the Kuni shugenja, before he visited the Tamori temples. Perhaps the Unicorn are rubbing off on him.

### KUNI ITSUKI, HERBALIST

AIR: 3 EARTH: 3 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4

Honor: 4.0 Status: 1.0 Glory: 3.5

*School/Rank: Tamori Shugenja 3*

*Skills: Animal Handling 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 2, Craft: Alchemy 5, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Alchemy 5, Lore: Shugenja 4, Medicine (Antidotes, Herbalism) 6, Meditation 4, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Different School*

*Disadvantages: Soft-Hearted*





## People of the Crane Clan

The Crane have enjoyed much success in establishing themselves in the Second City. From the first day, agents of the Crane wasted no time in claiming influential political and economic positions, and thanks to this aggressive action the Crane now control one of the two major ports on the Ivory Coast. Moreover, all the riverside docks of the Second City itself are Crane properties.

The Crane were also quick to establish a prominent dojo within the city, opening the Colonies' first school of swordplay to anyone who showed skill with the blade. Although they do not share the true secrets of the Kakita Technique with outsiders, they happily teach the basics of swordplay while accumulating favors among their students. For the first few years, until other dojo were established, it seemed as though every guard, yojimbo, and soldier in the Second City trained under Crane tutelage. Needless to say, this created a large pool of men and women in the Second City who feel indebted to the Crane Clan and are sympathetic to their needs.

The Crane tend to be among the more traditionalist samurai in the Colonies and make their strongest allies among the other traditionalists in the courts of the Second City. Crane excellence, meanwhile, lands many Doji courtiers influential positions as advisors, delegates, and diplomats to high-ranking politicians, while Kakita artisans are welcome in the home of every lord.

Outside of the Second City the Crane have established several military strongholds. The Daidoji currently hold two large fortifications, one placed near the Second City ports as a watch-post, and another that serves as an outpost for the Imperial Explorers. The Daidoji have shown their scouting skills to be indispensable in the progress of the Imperial Explorers, and with the Governor now beginning to open exploration up to all the clans the Daidoji intend

to be at the forefront. If they are not opposed early, it is possible they will claim a great deal of territory for the Crane Clan... and keep it out of the hands of their rivals.

The Crane position in the Second City is far from unchallenged, of course. The Mantis and Yasuki both encroach on the economic influence of the Crane at every turn and show only contempt for their port levies. The Scorpion quietly undermine Crane efforts to get close to the Governor. Likewise, attempts by the Asahina to rise to preeminence in the Second City temples have been largely unsuccessful, despite good relations with the Brotherhood, due to the dominant influence of the Phoenix and the Dragon. And while the Crane have been at peace with the Lion for several generations, that relationship is showing signs of eroding as well.

The Crane Clan's primary goal is political power in the Ivory Court. This means opposing the Scorpion in court and establishing as many high-ranking Crane as they can. Although they have seen much success in this area, the mercurial nature of the Governor's court can make every appointment fleeting, and the Crane prefer something permanent. To this end they are covertly seeking a suitor for the Governor. They hope to either influence the Imperial Nakado into suggesting a Crane husband, or to present the Governor with someone who will impress her into seeking the match herself.

Currently the Crane are also heavily involved in an ongoing feud with the Mantis. Although primarily a commercial rivalry, it is creating enough tension to risk escalation into a more general conflict. While the Crane do not seek war with the Mantis, they are not backing down from the prospect. More astute members of the clan see conflict as inevitable and have been preparing accordingly; for example, the Crane have been actively concealing the fighting capabilities of their sea vessels, working to develop a fleet strong enough to meet the Mantis on their own terms. Of course, Crane diplomacy is the first barrier to open conflict, and so far it has held the line against violence. Doji courtiers are working hard to pressure the Mantis into bowing to their demands, to abandon their more ambitious economic plans and submit to Crane port levies. It remains to be seen what will happen when the Mantis push back.

### DOJI YUKA

#### CRANE CLAN AMBASSADOR

Doji Yuka loves surprises; in fact, she thrives on them – especially when she is the one doing the surprising. As one of the youngest courtiers to ever hold a position as the head of a Crane embassy, she is a bit of a surprise herself. She owes much of her current success to her ability to surprise her opponents and keep her peers guessing.

As the child of a Crane and Scorpion union, Yuka was not often trusted as a youth. It is far more typical for such children to take to the art of the bushi, as their inherited reputations tend to sabotage any chance they have of making it in the courts. But Yuka became an exception to this. Her mother, a former Bayushi,







taught her from a young age that to be underestimated and overlooked is an advantage, and she showed her how to use that advantage to maximum effect. Under her mother's guidance, Yuka grew up as a cheerful and intelligent young woman who was also a superb manipulator, and she quickly proved herself adept in the courts.

Yuka is only twenty years old and appears young for her age. Those who arrange appointments with the leader of the Crane at the Ivory Court are often surprised when they finally meet her, since they usually expect someone much older. Yuka's youthful mannerisms and bright expressions imply the inexperience of youth, and she projects a naïve innocence and a considerable willingness to trust. The combination of her youthfulness and her matching mannerisms often cause others to underestimate her, expecting to take advantage of her inexperience and thus lowering their guard. These unfortunate souls do not realize her behavior is in large part an act, and by the time they realize she has maneuvered them into a politically vulnerable position it is far too late.

It is important to note that Yuka is not one to weave webs of deception around her. In fact, she highly values honesty and is well known for her integrity and sincerity. It is not her fault that she has a youthful face, nor is it her fault that others believe her to be inexperienced. But if they make a misstep, if they believe she is incapable of standing toe-to-toe with the powerhouses of the Ivory Court, it is not her place to correct them. She simply allows their preconceptions to work against them. As far as she is concerned, there is no need to insult her opponents by proving her worth to them directly. They will see the folly in their assumptions soon enough.

As delegation head, Yuka oversees the entire political agenda of the Crane in the Colonies and speaks for Crane interests to the Governor in court. As a young, unmarried, and influential woman with many connections and allies, Yuka is one of the more popular members of the court and is always a center of attention. Her penchant for keeping others on their toes and capitalizing on misconception, all the while keeping her own honor and public image spotless, has caused many of the older and more experienced courtiers to become quite wary of her. There is considerable gossip as to why was made the head of the Crane delegation, but it is rumored she sought the position of her own free will. Why such a traditionalist young Crane would do this, though, none can truly say.

### DOJI YUKA, CRANE CLAN AMBASSADOR

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4	INTELLIGENCE: 3	PERCEPTION: 4		
Honor: 5.0	Status: 4.0	Glory: 6.4		

*School/Rank: Doji Courtier 3*

*Skills: Artisan Ikebana 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier (Rhetoric, Manipulation) 6, Etiquette (Courtesy) 6, Games: Letters 5, Games: Sadane 3, Investigation 3, Lore: Bushido 4, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 2, Lore: Theology 4, Meditation 3, Perform: Song 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Temptation 3*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Benten's Blessing, Social Position (Crane ambassador), Voice*

## KAKITA YUSUGI

### THE BLUE WOLF

The head of the Crane delegation is never publicly seen without the presence of her loyal yojimbo, Kakita Yusugi. Similarly, Yusugi is never seen without his characteristic slight smile and cocky tilt to his head. Virtually inseparable, the two seem to share an unspoken understanding with each other. From his time spent with her, Yusugi knows who Doji Yuka truly is beneath the surface of her naïve exterior... but to his dismay, she knows him just as well.

As a youth, Yusugi was a troublemaker. He was stronger and faster than the other students at his dojo, and his father was a wealthy and influential duelist amongst the Crane. Yusugi routinely bullied other students; he knew he could provoke them into attacking him and then he would be within his rights to retaliate. When sparring he approached his opponents with the same seriousness and force as he would an actual opponent, holding back nothing. He reveled in fights, seeking any excuse he could to exercise his skills. He enjoyed the emotional rush to be found in dominating others and receiving their respect and fear. Other like-minded students flocked to his side, becoming followers and sycophants, and for the majority of his training Yusugi was a terror within his dojo. He knew his sensei would not dare punish him for his behavior lest his influential father demand retribution. Yusugi believed himself untouchable.

Yusugi was wrong. When the other students graduated, Yusugi alone was determined by his sensei to be unprepared to advance. He was to be held back for three more years. Yusugi was outraged. He knew he was the superior student, and he defiantly challenged his sensei, claiming he could beat any of his peers and prove he was the best student. The sensei accepted, and chose the weakest student in the dojo to fight him.

The terms of the duel, however, were a bit unusual. Each student was instructed to protect an ikebana arrangement from the other opponent. If the fragile ikebana was damaged in any way that student would lose. When the fight began, Yusugi launched himself from his own corner and lashed out in vicious attacks, holding nothing back. Taller, faster, and considerably stronger, he easily disarmed his opponent and cast him aside. With all of his force, he struck out at the flower arrangement, but at the last moment the weaker student threw himself in Yusugi's path, saved the ikebana, and took a terrible blow on his own back, one that would have killed him if they were not sparring with wooden bokken.

The sensei declared the fight was over. Yusugi thought that he had won, for he had vanquished his opponent. But to his shock he saw that his flower arrangement had fallen over, the flowers scattered across the dojo floor. His initial violent leap from his corner had knocked it over. The sensei spoke, and to this day Yusugi still remembers his words: "You may be strong, Yusugi-san, and you may be keen with your blade, and you may even have political influence and a mighty fighting spirit. But you are not worthy to become samurai, because you do not understand the very purpose of a samurai. You are like a wolf holding



a sword in its teeth, and as such, when you harm others the blade also cuts yourself. You misunderstand the entire purpose of our teachings. The spirit of a warrior is not simply a tool for killing, not a means to destroy that which opposes you. It is the spirit of protection for all beings. A samurai serves. That is his purpose. Ask yourself, what good was the defeat of your opponent? You injured the thing that was your duty to protect. Do you think you are worthy to become a samurai of this dojo?"

His face red with shame, Yusugi replied, "No, sensei."

Yusugi is three years older than all of his peers, the oldest in his class to complete his gempukku. Some whisper he was assigned to the Colonies as punishment. They say his cockiness got him here, and they would be right. But while he is still cocky, still carries the arrogant air of one who knows his skills are unmatched, Yusugi keeps his sharp tongue carefully tucked behind his teeth and stands protectively by his charge at all times... as if he is quietly atoning for some great mistake in his past. He doesn't even react when his charge calls him by her

favorite nickname. For Doji Yuka knows him quite well, just as well as he knows her.

She was, after all, his sensei's daughter. She calls him *ookami*. Her pet wolf.

### KAKITA YUSUGI, YOJIMBO

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4			
Honor: 4.9	Status: 2.0	Glory: 3.4	Infamy: 2.0	

*School/Rank:* Kakita Bushi 3

*Skills:* Athletics 3, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Iaijutsu (Assessment, Focus) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: Heraldry 2, Meditation 2, Perform: Kata 3, Sincerity 3

*Advantages:* Quick

*Disadvantages:* Infamous (youthful disgrace), Failure of Bushido (Courtesy), Obligation (Doji Yuka)







## DAIDOJI ISHIDA

### BOLD EXPLORER

Daidoji Ishida is a charming man in his late twenties, a man captivated by the notion of exploration. He possesses a true romantic streak and is in love with the concept of discovery. To him, the purpose of life is to test the boundaries of what is known. This passion is one of the reasons he was chosen to spearhead the Crane's exploration initiatives in the ruined kingdom.

Ishida is an adept of the Daidoji scouting school, like his mother before him. His sensei chose him to go to the Colonies before he even reached his gempukku, and where many samurai might have been upset by such a decision, Ishida was perfectly happy with his new duty. He was already fascinated by the stories of returning cartographers and adventurers and he longed to see this exotic and alien land for himself. The maps of the mainland were largely complete, after all, and there was nothing left to explore in his own homeland. The lands of unfinished maps seemed almost to call his name.

For a long time, Ishida lobbied unsuccessfully for the Crane to launch their own expeditions into the jungles rather than relying on the Spider and the Imperial Explorers. These efforts met with limited successes; it was politically difficult, to put it mildly, to undertake a task which was already entrusted to other entities, and the Crane leadership saw little advantage to exploring on their own. However, now that the Governor appears to be changing the official policy on this matter, Ishida finds himself with multiple Crane patrons eager to support and fund his expedition.

Ishida now searches for the last few members to join him on his expedition into the jungles. He intends to claim as much land for the Crane as possible, and he has already spent much time in preparation. Although he has never attempted an expedition of this size or scope before, he remains optimistic he will succeed and become a legend in his own time.

### DAIDOJI ISHIDA, EXPLORER

Air: 3	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 3
Reflexes: 4	Agility: 4	Perception: 4		
Honor: 4.0	Status: 2.0	Glory: 2.8		

*School/Rank: Daidoji Scout 3*

*Skills: Athletics 4, Courtier 2, Craft: Traps 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Hunting (Survival) 5, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 4, Knives 3, Kyujutsu (Yumi) 5, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 3, Sincerity 2, Spears 3, Stealth (Sneaking) 4*

*Advantages: Seven Fortunes' Blessing (Benten)*

*Disadvantages: Fascination (exploration)*

## ASAHINA MICHIO

### DISPLACED PRIESTESS

All her life, Asahina Michio wanted only to accomplish three things: to glorify the kami as a temple priestess, to inspire serenity and happiness in others, and to excel at her duty. A bright and gentle child, Michio showed considerable childhood aptitude with the kami as well as a keen memory, an essential trait to recall the numerous ceremonies and rituals of the Kami no Michi. Born into the Kakita, Michio was fostered to the Asahina when her gifts were recognized, and she flourished under the tutelage of the Heaven's Wisdom Temple. As she grew older, tales of the Colonies and their temples reached her ears, and it caused her to wonder: if the kami existed even in that foreign land, then surely the Kami no Michi was the true way of the entire world! Inspired by the prospect, Michio volunteered to travel to the Colonies as soon as the opportunity arose. Although her peers were somewhat concerned for her safety (she had never left the temples before), she knew in her heart it was her destiny to study the spirits of that strange land.

It is a decision she has come to regret. Overwhelmed by the Second City and its strange lifestyle, Michio soon found herself strangely adrift. She was unfamiliar with the politics of the city and was not prepared for the nature of court life. Soon the previous Crane delegation head identified her as a liability and reassigned her into the service of one of his trusted military officers, Daidoji Senshi.

Senshi was and is a total brute. He had no patience for Michio's gentle nature and no interest in spiritual matters. He relied on her only to further his own causes. He made her bless him before he met with rivals or attempted to seize assets in the courts. He had her use the kami to spy on his enemies. He ordered her to trouble the waters and skies whenever Mantis ships arrived at port, in the hope this might damage them or their cargo. He even used her readings of the Heavens to identify opportune moments to act against the rivals of the Crane. Senshi was a man without qualms, unconcerned with such trivialities as ethics or morality; only results mattered.

Needless to say, Michio could not relate to Senshi in any way; he was a man who longed for war against his hated enemies, while Michio saw such desires as folly. She was a true pacifist who wanted no part in her lord's inexplicable vendetta against the Mantis Clan and anyone else he identified as an enemy. She hated the way he used her talents and the gentle games of the kami to accomplish such vile and dishonorable tasks. Yet as his subordinate she was powerless to do anything but obey him. Michio hated the things she was made to do, but she never complained where others might see. At night, she lay alone in her chambers, listened to the laments of the kami, and wept with self-loathing.







## DAIDOJI SENSHI

### VENGEFUL TAISA

Daidoji Senshi grew up in the Crane port city of Mura Sabashii Toshi on the Rokugani mainland. He spent the greater part of his youth on the water, fascinated by seafaring and the ships that were always arriving at the harbor. A descendant of the legendary Daidoji Yurei, Senshi venerated his lineage and sought to become an ideal Daidoji. He believed honor and principle meant little without victory, and that his place was to protect the Crane at any personal cost. He was prepared to do anything for the Crane, without hesitation.

When he was nineteen years old, only a few months after his marriage, the Mantis seized control of Mura Sabashii Toshi. By purchasing virtually all of the merchant patronage in the port, the Mantis effectively bought the ability to strong arm any economic deal they wanted. The Daidoji were not prepared for this action; the Mantis had effectively taken control of the city and the Crane could not contest them.

On the day his family's ancestral lands were subverted by Mantis mechanizations, Senshi appeared before the Yoritomo estates and issued a challenge for a duel of honor to decide who would control the port city. He cursed the Mantis with all of his heart and voice, screaming obscenities and foulness at the locked gates, shouting they would forever be painted as cowards if they did not answer his challenge. Yet none appeared to answer his challenge, and when the sun set on the horizon Senshi returned to his home in humiliation. His home which now belonged to the Mantis.

Senshi never forgave the Mantis. Even after the city returned to Crane control barely one year later, he still clutched hatred for the Mantis in his heart. Everywhere he looked he saw more evidence of their meddling in Crane affairs, their abuse of their clan charter, and their insufferable ambition and greed. He saw them as an immediate threat that the Crane leadership seemed uninterested in confronting. After days of meditation before the shrine of his beloved ancestor Daidoji Yurei, he realized what he had to do. Senshi swore an oath to haunt the Mantis for their crimes against his Clan; in the manner of his ancestor, he would become a vengeful ghost, a saboteur, dedicating his life to their elimination.

For years Senshi studied his enemy. He learned their tactics, their ways, and their weaknesses. From military treatises and the mouths of seafaring veterans he learned how to conduct war at sea. He devised strategies against the Mantis naval tactics and learned the weaknesses in their ships. He learned the advantages of the Crane Clan's own ships, designed for trade rather than war, and how to best use these advantages in conflicts. Covertly, over time, he influenced the Daidoji daimyo into funding a new fleet for the Crane navy.

With time, the Mantis traveled to the Colonies and became leaders in the expansion that led to the creation of the Second City. Daidoji Senshi followed them there.

Finally, the previous delegation head retired and was replaced by Doji Yuka. By sheer chance Michiyo met Yuka during an inspection of the coastal fortifications under Senshi's command. Sensing something troubled the shugenja, Yuka arranged a private meeting. Michiyo was suddenly nervous... why would someone of such rank wish to speak with her?

It took only a short time for Yuka to glean the source of Michiyo's troubles. She ordered the shugenja-ko to endure Senshi's authority for a while more. Eventually, she promised, one of her plans would come to fruition and Michiyo would then be able to fulfill her true life's purpose. Michiyo did not really understand, but she bowed obediently and felt some of the weight lift off her heart.

Asahina Michiyo still remains at the beck and call of the brutish Daidoji Senshi, but as of late he has called on her less and less. She considers this a sign of Yuka's favor, or perhaps simply good fortune. Although her heart may have been irreparably damaged by what she has been made to do in the name of duty, Yuka's promise gives her hope to endure to the next day.

### ASAHINA MICHIO, TROUBLED SHUGENJA

AIR: 4 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 3

Honor: 6.7

Status: 1.0

Glory: 2.4

*School/Rank: Asahina Shugenja 2*

*Skills: Artisan: Paper Folding 3, Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Lore: Shugenja 4, Lore: Theology 5, Meditation 4, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Spellcraft 4*

*Advantages: Elemental Blessing (Air), Precise Memory*

*Disadvantages: Bad Fortune (assigned to Daidoji Senshi), Soft-Hearted*





Under the explicit patronage of the Imperial Governor, Senshi seized control of the Ivory Kingdom's ruins along the coastline and built an impressive fortification, the Aerie. Though the purpose of this fortress was to stand sentinel against possible threats coming from the coast, Senshi used his new holding to hide the new Crane fleet he was building and to launch his sabotage campaigns against the Mantis. Unseen and unknown, he undermined Mantis trade and expansion within the Colonies, his efforts fueled constantly by his hatred of his enemy.

Now over 47 years old, at an age when many samurai retire to a monastery, Daidoji Senshi senses a conflict may at last be on the horizon. This is the time he has been waiting for, and he refuses to shave his top-knot and retire now when his vengeance is so close at hand. He has alienated his wife and children, who he left back home in the Empire, and the Crane delegation keeps him away from the eyes of the court lest they become uncomfortable with his brutal militarism. He is a man possessed by only one thing, the drive to destroy his enemy. Daidoji Senshi waits alongside his loyal chui, Doji Mitsuru, for the open conflict he is sure will come. Soon, he is sure, Crane and Mantis tensions will come to a head, full retribution will be justified by his courtly peers, and his day will come at last.

And if it doesn't happen soon... perhaps he will make it happen.

### DAIDOJI SENSHI, VENGEFUL TAISA

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
REFLEXES: 4	WILLPOWER: 4	STRENGTH: 4		
Honor: 4.3	Status: 4.0	Glory: 5.8		

*School/Rank: Daidoji Iron Warrior 4*

*Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 5, Courtier 2, Defense 6, Etiquette 3, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 3, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Knives 2, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: War 4, Sailing 3, Sincerity 3, Spears (Yari) 5*

*Advantages: Heart of Vengeance (Mantis Clan), Sage, Social Position (Taisa)*

*Disadvantages: Driven (destroy the Mantis), Failure of Bushido (Compassion)*

### KAKITA NATSUME

#### INSUFFERABLE ARTIST

The stereotypical Crane is aloof, over-privileged, and haughty; Kakita Natsume is all of these things. Born the only daughter to a wealthy family, Natsume was spoiled from birth and remained that way even after her gempukku. She is a woman of expensive and exotic tastes, preferring only the finest things in life. She does not let the fact that she serves the Crane delegation of the Second City hinder her enjoyments.

Natsume is impressively arrogant and flatly insufferable. She is always talking in the most verbose possible manner, always using the High Rokugani court dialect. She is concerned with appearance first and foremost and her

favorite subject of conversation is herself. She believes she is an expert on fashion, gardening, sake, fine foods, and literature, when in truth her talent is exclusively found in criticizing. She seems incapable of grasping anything below its surface meaning, yet presents her superficial observations as though they were deeply philosophical. She believes she is clever, but often she is simply repeating common convention. Most of her peers avoid her at all costs lest they get roped into another pointless and endless conversation about one of her fleeting superficial interests.

As if this is not enough, Natsume is also a self-indulgent woman who prefers only finery. She collects exquisite kimono, drinks only the most expensive and popular tea, and always claims to like whatever music is currently the most popular. She is addicted to kazami and is frequently encountered while smoking. And all of this pales in comparison to her inflated sense of self-importance.

Natsume's one saving grace is her skill at the five classic arts of her homeland. She is an expert at the tea ceremony, creates beautiful calligraphy that rivals that of the highest masters, has been praised by daimyo for her incense combinations, and is sought for her skill at both ikebana and woodblock paintings. To those who know her well, it is inconceivable that a woman who is so shallow can produce works of such deep artistry. Many of the rooms within the Ivory Court are furnished with Natsume's creations. The Governor herself has an impressive collection; an entire wing of her personal quarters is lined with a set of Natsume's woodblock paintings depicting a sunset along the coast, something the artisan is sure to mention every chance she gets. Fully aware of her abilities, she believes she is more than entitled to what she characterizes as her "little eccentricities."

For now, the popularity of her works makes her of great value to the Crane despite her poor reputation, and her art is highly sought by individuals of power. Her unusual style and subject matter applied to ancient and traditional arts has made her one of the Imperial Governor's favorite artists, and thus her poor attitude and questionable tastes are tolerated. However, it is only a matter of time before Doji Yuka's patience runs out; when that happens, Natsume will doubtless be taught a lesson in humility.

### KAKITA NATSUME, INSUFFERABLE ARTIST

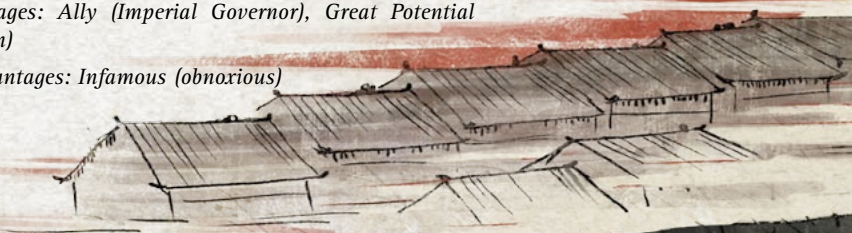
AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4	AGILITY: 3		PERCEPTION: 3	
Honor: 4.5	Status: 1.0	Glory: 4.8	Infamy: 2.4	

*School/Rank: Kakita Artisan 2*

*Skills: Artisan: Ikebana 5, Artisan: Woodblock Painting 6, Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 5, Courtier 3, Craft: Incense 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Lore: Art 3, Lore: Theology 1, Meditation 2, Perform: Tea Ceremony, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Ally (Imperial Governor), Great Potential (Artisan)*

*Disadvantages: Infamous (obnoxious)*





## The People of the Dragon Clan

True to its enigmatic nature, the Dragon Clan has remained largely absent from the politics of the Second City. Their chief duty in the Colonies is to watch over the Spider Clan, and they devote most of their efforts to that. The Dragon delegation is split on the matter of their Spider-related duties. There are many among them who do not believe the Spider will remain loyal to the Empress and the Governor; they fear that when the moment is right, the Spider will turn on the Empire. These Dragon prepare themselves for this inevitability. However, there are also those within the Dragon who believe the Spider Clan can be redeemed, and these samurai take every opportunity to lead the Spider by example. They hope the Spider will see the virtue of their teachings and fully turn away from the path originally laid out by their dark masters. Only time will tell if the Dragon are successful in this task.

With the exception of the Kitsuki, the Dragon have little to gain from political dealings in the Ivory Court. They have much more interest in the Colonies' spiritual development, and they were quick to join with the Phoenix

and the Brotherhood to help erect temples and shrines in the Second City and indeed throughout the Colonies. For their part, the Kitsuki offered themselves to the colony magistrates and many of them soon earned prominent positions. The previous Imperial Governor was very traditionalist, limiting the Kitsuki influence somewhat, but the new Governor Otomo Suikihime's tendency to disregard tradition has worked in the Kitsuki's favor. More weight has been afforded to their methods and in some cases their evidence has even been given equal weight to testimony – albeit only when doing so would not directly offend another clan delegation. Still, this is more respect than the Kitsuki have on the mainland. For the first time in history, the Kitsuki Method is treated with something approaching the consideration the Dragon believe it deserves.

Despite their self-imposed separation from the political affairs of the Colonies, the Dragon have inexplicably made an enemy. Affairs with the Lion Clan have become tense of late, for reasons the Dragon cannot discern, and the Kitsuki are quite curious as to why the Lion have suddenly soured towards their clan.







## KITSUKI SHIMADA

### DRAGON CLAN DELEGATION HEAD

Kitsuki Shimada is a very respected man. Stories of his youthful successes are well-known throughout the Second City, especially in the docks. Of all the magistrates in the City's short history, Shimada had the most arrests and convictions by far. He is revered by yoriki, admired by heimin, watched by his peers, and feared by criminals.

Shimada always looked up to his grandfather, a man who was revered as a great magistrate and a master of deductive reasoning. When he came of age, he took his grandfather's name and swore to live up to his example. He was stationed in Dragon lands under a minor Kitsuki lord, and perhaps he would have lived out a simple life if he had not uncovered an assassin's plot to eliminate his master. After that day Shimada began to rise in the ranks of his peers, eventually being considered for a Sensei position in the Kitsuki dojo. Although he ultimately did not receive the position, to even be considered was a great honor.

For such a celebrated and keen magistrate, it is somewhat puzzling that he was sent to the distant Colonies. Some speculate he was sent to bring order to what is often perceived as a disorderly region. Others believe the Dragon value his perception and chose him to aid in their sacred task of overseeing the Spider. Shimada himself does not speak on the matter; it is a dark secret that he will take to the grave, if the Fortunes will it so.

In truth, his life in the Colonies is a self-imposed punishment. When Shimada was nearing the age of retirement, a mysterious wave of assassinations swept the Empire in what came to be known as the Night of the Assassins. At the time, Shimada was stationed at the castle of his lord, a castle which was also home to a prominent Kitsuki sensei. Not only did he fail to realize the assassination had occurred, but he allowed the assassin to escape his grasp; disguised as a simple servant, the killer walked past Shimada unmolested and left the castle grounds before the alarm was raised.

In the moment where he and the assassin crossed paths, Shimada noticed his features were too pale to be a sun-baked servant's and his clothes were ill-fitting. Yet he did not think to stop the man. It simply never occurred to him. When the alarm was raised, and he learned that both his lord and the sensei had died, he realized he'd allowed their killer to escape. He had not trusted his instincts. For a samurai, especially for a Kitsuki, it was unforgivable.

Shimada kept his failure a secret, telling no one. He has carried it with him for all the years since. For while he did not stop the intruder when he had the chance, he still remembers the man's face. When offered the chance to retire as an Inkyo, Shimada turned it down. The Kitsuki believed he was devoted to his duty, but in truth, Shimada felt he was not worthy. Painstakingly, over the course of two decades, he followed a virtually invisible trail left by the intruder, uncovering who the assassin was. Shimada now knows the intruder was a member of the Spider Clan.

Now an old man, Shimada has followed the trail to the Colonies, a self-imposed exile from a life of peace and self-contemplation. Accepting a position as the Dragon Clan's delegation head, Shimada uses the connections and high reputation of the office not only to serve the Dragon's interests in the Colonies, but also – and from his view, perhaps more importantly – to find the man who eluded him a quarter-century ago. Then he will be able to settle this final matter of honor.

### KITSUKI SHIMADA, AGING AMBASSADOR

AIR: 3	EARTH: 1	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 4				
Honor: 4.5      Status: 4.0      Glory: 7.3				
School/Rank: Kitsuki Investigator 5				
Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Games: Go 3, Games: Shogi 4, Iaijutsu (Assessment) 4, Investigation (Notice, Interrogation, Search) 8, Intimidation (Control) 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Law 5, Meditation 4, Perform: Poetry 3, Sincerity 4				
Advantages: Allies (many), Social Position (Clan ambassador)				
Disadvantages: Dark Secret (let his lord's assassin escape), Driven (find his lord's assassin), Weakness (Stamina)				

## TAMORI MIYUKI

### BORED SHUGENJA

Of all the members of the Dragon delegation within the Second City, none draw more attention than Tamori Miyuki. Striking in her dark beauty, the charming shugenja is best known for four things: her graceful singing voice, her woodblock paintings, her untraditional fashion sense, and her impulsive nature.

Miyuki spent her youth in the rocky crags of the Tamori provinces. She used to watch the birds as they flew overhead and wistfully wonder what it was like to fly. Taking early to artistic pursuits, Miyuki as a child created woodblock prints of vast landscapes, high mountains, and cloudy terrains. Her parents believed her mind was always in the clouds, but the truth was much simpler: Miyuki wanted to escape the lands of her birth. She wanted to feel free.

As she grew older, this longing intensified. She was restless in her martial and spiritual studies, and her lack of focus agitated the kami. She could not identify the source of her restlessness, but neither could she ignore it. She became uneasy and excitable, wild and willful. To be sure, a brash and fiery temperament is common amongst the Tamori, but Miyuki's elders found her inexplicable longing to be far more detrimental to her studies. She was warned countless times to control the desires of her heart, but every day it grew more difficult. To put it plainly, she was bored; bored with the mountains, bored with her peers, and bored with her studies. She could never admit it, not even to herself, and so she remained unenlightened to the cause of her troubled heart.





That changed when rumors and tales of the Colonies reached her ears. Discoveries made by the Imperial Explorers caught her imagination, and she suddenly realized the source of her restlessness. A desperate wanderlust took hold of her heart, and she decided the Colonies were where she belonged. Given her poor performance as a student, her sensei was more than happy to wash his hands of her and send her out of the Empire. She accepted duties within the Dragon delegation to the Ivory Court, knowing such was her ticket to the Second City.

That was four years ago... and today, again, Miyuki is bored. What she thought would be a future filled with exploration and discovery has instead been spent within the Second City. As a woman of spirit, talent, and beauty, she easily captivated the court, and her woodblock paintings quickly came into high demand. But any insightful onlooker could see in her art that she was restless and desperate. She thought she would find balance and peace in her new life, but instead the life she wanted, while within sight, is still out of her reach.

Now entrenched in the courts and temples, and bored with her regular life, she has begun to stir up trouble purely for her own entertainment. She wears bold fashions that expose her shoulders to see who would look. She shows up other shugenja in fantastic displays to honor the Governor. She nurses rivalries with other artists to challenge her talents. She engages in multiple affairs, hoping that each new lover will somehow maintain her interest. And above all, she dives into gossip, willingly participating in the spinning of the courtly web. Every new

tidbit and every juicy secret is a momentary distraction from the dull monotone of her daily life.

Now that the new Governor is opening up exploration of the Colonies, Miyuki finally sees her chance. For the first time in four years of boredom, she has something to strive for. She wants to be on the forefront of the new wave of exploration. For the first time in years, she has found the focus to accomplish her goals.

Her duty to the Dragon delegation remains her biggest obstacle. In spite of her longing and wanderlust, she is still loyal to the Dragon, and she is still a samurai. She will not abandon her clan like a common heimin. Instead, she will find a suitable replacement and then pull as many of her court-accumulated favors as needed to free herself. Though she has a limited time to do it, she is confident that she can find someone talented enough to replace her.

### TAMORI MIYUKI, BORED SHUGENJA

AIR: 3    EARTH: 3    FIRE: 3    WATER: 2    VOID: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 4

Honor: 3.9    Status: 2.0    Glory: 4.0    Infamy: 1.5

School/Rank: Tamori Shugenja 2

Skills: Artisan: Woodblock Painting 5, Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Courtier 2, Defense 1, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Games: Letters 2, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Shugenja 2, Lore: Theology 4, Meditation 3, Perform: Song 5, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 4

Advantages: Voice

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (troublemaker), Contrary, Driven (to not be bored)

### TOGASHI ANGO

#### CONTROVERSIAL MONK

Amongst his own kind, Togashi Ango has always had a reputation for his unusual interpretations of the Tao. A monk all of his life, he has had much time to meditate on the meanings of Shinsei's teachings. By the time of his gempukku he already had many theories but had come to a single important conclusion: that the way of nature and the way of man were ultimately incompatible. Harmony, from where he stood, was merely an illusion; it was defined by man, not by nature. The world was inherently hostile to the presence of mankind, if only because man was so different from everything







else, and what others called “harmony” was actually victory over one’s own surroundings, not the balance it was purported it to be. When he looked upon humanity from his lofty position in the High House of Light, when he looked upon the ways of the clans, on the wars that mankind had waged, he saw a race of people who did not belong in their own world.

His views were considered controversial, to put it mildly, even amongst the normally accepting monks of the Togashi. It was conventional wisdom that balance was a result of harmony with one’s surroundings, and Ango’s interpretation of the Tao contradicted this teaching. Even so, it was not the way of the Dragon to discourage their own disciples, and Ango’s philosophy was not especially blasphemous, nor was his nature self-destructive or harmful. Thus Ango was not discouraged from pursuing what he saw as the truth. But he did face countless debates with his fellow tattooed men, as is the way of the Togashi.

Ango took to the notion of shepherding the Spider Clan with great optimism. To his mind, they were an extreme example of his philosophy; a group of fierce warriors seemingly at odds with the natural world. Although misguided, they were an extreme reaction to a world that was hostile to them. For this reason, he was among many who believed they were capable of redemption. At the first opportunity to travel to the Colonies, Ango petitioned to join the caravan. He wanted to meet and understand the banished Spider better.

Ango’s most recent fascination is with “Fudoism,” an interpretation of the Tao that emphasizes a self-centered approach to life, and one that seems to appeal to many within the Colonies. Ango sees this, on the surface, as a skewed vision of his own understanding of the world, but at the same time he knows little of it. He intends to gain a greater understanding of the philosophy, if only to satisfy his own curiosity. Of course, to do this, he must find a master of Fudoism. This is easier said than done.

Togashi Ango comes across as a very strange man to most that he meets. He is a monk, yet he is not especially esoteric, nor are his words difficult to understand. Indeed, Ango makes himself as accessible as possible, always extending warm greetings and keeping his manner and speech as simple as possible. Yet his words are deeply odd to any normal Rokugani. He describes himself as an “ally of humanity,” although his philosophy does not view the Heavens as a foe in the same manner as (for example) the Kolat. To him, the world is a test, and he seems interested in how everyone else is performing within it.

## TOGASHI ANGO, CONTROVERSIAL MONK

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 4				
Honor: 4.5		Status: 1.0		Glory: 3.8

*School/Rank: Togashi Tattooed Order 4*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Calligraphy 2, Craft: Tattooing 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Hunting 2, Investigation 3, Jiu-jutsu (Kaze-do) 6, Lore: History 4, Lore: Spider Clan 3, Lore: Theology 5, Medicine 3, Meditation 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 4*

*Tattoos: Centipede, Ki-Rin, Ocean, Void*

*Advantages: Higher Purpose (“ally of humanity”)*

*Disadvantages: Infamous (unconventional views), Fascination (Fudoism)*

## MIRUMOTO NIWA

### FAILED YOJIMBO

Some whisper that Mirumoto Niwa was doomed for failure from the day of her birth. The fourth daughter of a fourth daughter, Niwa was born under a very peculiar star, and at her birth, the shugenja attending her mother’s side identified an unfortunate birthmark on her back. Alone, these signs of misfortune could be overcome with guidance. But combined, they formed an omen of a dark future for the child. Her mother was advised to either dispose of her or give her to the Togashi to live in seclusion. But her mother was overcome with compassion for her doomed child, and chose to keep her and raise her alongside her other children. The shugenja, fearing for the future of the family, petitioned the Dragon Clan Champion to force the mother to turn Niwa over to the Togashi. But it is the way of the Dragon to allow their members to choose their own destinies; the Champion ruled it was her mother’s choice to make. Thus Niwa was raised within her family in the Mirumoto and trained in their ways.

At first, Niwa was shunned by all of her family except for her mother; for the most part she was tended to only by servants. Other samurai whispered rumors about the strange child growing up on the family’s estate. But as she grew older, Niwa matured into a bright and cheerful child, albeit somewhat timid. Moon-faced, charming, and quick to grin, Niwa gradually won her family over. Her talents with the blade impressed her instructors, her joking and mischievous nature won her many friends, and her wide-eyed wonder stole the hearts of her family. By the





time she was twelve, the dark omens of her childhood were largely forgotten.

Niwa rose to prominence among her peers as an excellent student of the Mirumoto technique, becoming an assistant to her instructor at the dojo. Well-liked and popular, Niwa was best known for her compassion and easy humor. She performed well during her gempukku ceremony and chose the name “Niwa” because it was lucky when combined with her family name. She had performed well enough to impress her sensei, and on graduation she received the duty of becoming yojimbo to a respected Kitsuki courtier.

She had heard tales of yojimbo becoming friends with their charges, even lovers in some cases. But Kitsuki Togai was cold and distant from the first day of her assignment, as if he believed she was somehow a hindrance to his duties. Her kind and cheerful manner seemed only to disgust him, and every attempt she made to befriend him was met with rejection. Soon she stopped altogether, accepting that this would never be anything more than an unpleasant duty.

One night, Niwa went to her charge’s room to retrieve something she had forgotten there. When she stepped into the room, she found him slitting his palms and pouring his blood into a bone chalice. Their eyes met; instantly she recognized the foul practice of Maho. But she did nothing. She was frozen, her nerve lost, overcome with her inner timidity.

She never discovered the purpose of his ceremony. Her charge vanished into the night, and it wasn’t until he was gone that she realized she had failed to protect his honor. She

reported immediately to her lord and confessed her failure, requesting permission to commit seppuku. Her permission was denied; Togai was too important to draw undue attention to his disappearance. Thus a more suitable punishment was found: Niwa was reassigned to the Colonies.

Mirumoto Niwa now serves as a gunso for the Dragon military forces in the Second City. She is currently assigned to the protection of the Temple of the Rising Dragon, although the delegation head is careful never to assign her too many or important tasks. The temple, after all, does not need protection; it is sacred to everyone within the city. It is an unspoken fact that she cannot be trusted. Niwa is timid; she does not possess the courage to do what must be done in the course of her duties. She will never again be entrusted with the safety of the Dragon. It is a great shame, and every night she wishes that she had been granted the kiss of cold steel against her belly. She knows it is only out of respect for her sensei that she is tolerated.

She has not given up, however. Her time spent with the monks of the Temple of the Rising Dragon has inspired her to try for redemption. She knows now that her reincarnated soul carried the weight of much karma, and her failure was atonement for a terrible deed she’d done in her previous life. Her timidity cost the Dragon a valued servant and robbed her of her face; it may have cost Togai his humanity and certainly his honor. She has vowed to purge the timidity from her being. Every day, she works to grow harder and colder, hoping that if the chance for redemption ever comes she will have the courage to do what must be done.





## MIRUMOTO NIWA, FAILED YOJIMBO

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4	STRENGTH: 3		
Honor: 4.8	Status: 1.0	Glory: 2.5		

*School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Courtier 1, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu (Assessment) 5, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Katana, Wakizashi) 6, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Shugenja 2, Meditation 3, Perform: Poetry 2, Sincerity 2*

*Advantages: Higher Purpose (Redemption)*

*Disadvantages: Bad Fortune (karmic weight), Dark Secret (former charge was a maho-tsukai), Failure of Bushido (Courage)*

## KITSUKI GAIKUSHI AND KITSUKI NONAMI

### CLEVER TWINS

Kitsuki Gaikushi and Kitsuki Nonami are among the youngest members of the Dragon delegation, having only just completed their gempukku in the last year. The two are identical twins born into a prestigious family of Kitsuki courtiers, and like most twins their birth was seen as very fortuitous. They offer a unique perspective compared to many others within the Dragon delegation, for they were never sent to the Colonies; they were born here. They have never seen the Empire to which they owe allegiance. They know no other land nor any other way of life.

The twins are proud of their heritage. They know only tales of their homeland; they know that an Empress has come from their own family's bloodline, but they don't comprehend what that truly means. When visitors from the Empire come to the Dragon delegation, they eventually encounter the twins, who bombard them with questions. The nature of the Empire and its denizens are like a puzzle to the twins, and with every interview they construct a more complete picture, piece by piece. They hope one day to visit the lands called "Rokugan" and learn what its people are truly like. They hope one day to visit the lands of their ancestors.

The twins are alike in most ways. Indeed, it is easier to list the ways in which they differ. Both twins are very intelligent, but Gaikushi is more "bookish" while Nonami is far more active and practical in her approach. They both possess good humor and are always joking, but while Nonami's humor is warm, Gaikushi's jokes are dry and observational. Gaikushi is extremely good at deductive reasoning and often depends on it. On the other hand, Nonami relies mostly on inductive reasoning, and thus tends to reach conclusions before her brother. They both have a near-encyclopedic knowledge of the ruined kingdom's flora and fauna, and they both have an intimate understanding of how humans think and act. They have both studied Kitsuki's Method and apply it to their social interactions. Although this makes their expertise somewhat

more limited than the typical student of the method, it also makes them invaluable to the Dragon delegation in court.

Gaikushi and Nonami are very perceptive individuals, known for their cleverness. They both possess a great interest in people, and they spend much time in the markets and tea houses studying the population. As twins, they share a very close connection with one-another. They are almost always seen together, whispering, chuckling, and comparing their notes.

The twins are very good at reading individuals. Even the most carefully constructed On can be seen through by looking for the right clues, after all. They can judge a person's mood and character based on body language, choices of fashion, vocabulary preferences, and dozens of other such cues. Individually, each one is a prodigy at such personality reading, but combined they rival even the Kitsuki masters. If only they would pay as much attention to their surroundings as they do people, they could be the youngest masters of Kitsuki's Method to come along in generations. But they are young, and there is plenty of time for their talents to grow.

### KITSUKI GAIKUSHI, BOOKISH TWIN

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
		INTELLIGENCE: 4	PERCEPTION: 4	
Honor: 5.5	Status: 1.0	Glory: 2.9		

*School/Rank: Kitsuki Investigator 2*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Games: Go 2, Games: Letters 3, Investigation (Search) 5, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 5, Lore: Law 2, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Kharmic Tie (Kitsuki Nonami), Sage*

*Disadvantages: True Love (Kitsuki Nonami)*

### KITSUKI NONAMI, EMPATHIC TWIN

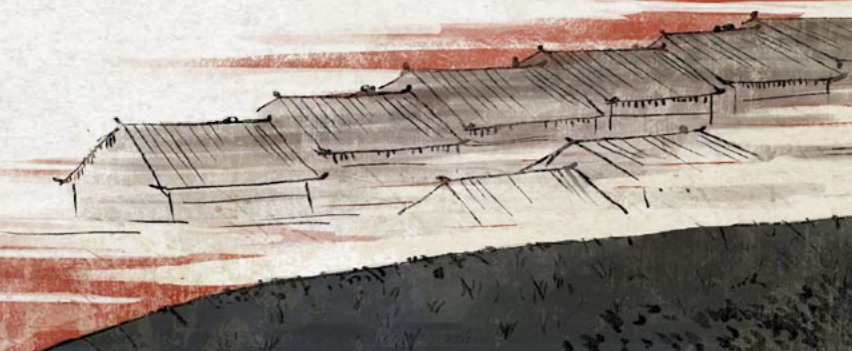
AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4			PERCEPTION: 4	
Honor: 5.5	Status: 1.0	Glory: 2.9		

*School/Rank: Kitsuki Investigator 2*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Defense 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Games: Go 3, Games: Letters 2, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 5, Kenjutsu 1, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 5, Meditation 3, Sincerity 4*

*Advantages: Kharmic Tie (Kitsuki Gaikushi), Luck (1 rank)*

*Disadvantages: True Love (Kitsuki Gaikushi)*







## The People of the Lion Clan

The Lion Clan finds itself at odds with the Second City and to a lesser extent throughout its presence in the Colonies. For over a thousand years the Lion viewed themselves as the Emperor's Right Hand, his sword in the world to defend and fight against his enemies. Now they find themselves in a strange and alien land where their traditions seem to crumble away day by day, and while they are still under the command of the Divine Empress, the Imperial Governor and the power she wields seems to subvert that as well. This comes on the heels of the shame from allowing the previous Governor, a Lion, to die under bizarre and mysterious circumstances, calling into question their duty and their place in the Colonies.

As the most traditional of all clans, the Lion find the culture shock and practical adjustments imposed by the Colonies to be extremely difficult to deal with, and many of them believe the Empire would be better off to leave these strange lands entirely. More than any other clan, the Lion are uncomfortable and unhappy in the former Ivory Kingdoms and seek wherever possible to recreate the life and culture of Rokugan in this place. The new Governor's embrace of the new and the strange for its own sake disturbs them deeply, and the willingness of so many other clans to follow her lead disgusts them.

Like the Crab, the Lion have no major strongholds of their own within the Colonies, and most of their colonial samurai are part of military garrisons in the Second City and the other major settlements.

### IKOMA KASARUZU

#### HEAD OF THE LION EMBASSY

Ikoma Kasaruzu claims a direct lineage to the original Ikoma, and few who have spent time with him would argue otherwise. Kasaruzu is loud, boisterous, perhaps occasionally even obnoxious, and enjoys good drink and the company of beautiful women. But while he may embody those less desirable qualities of Ikoma, he also is one of the strongest, most cunning, and most dedicated Lion samurai in the Second City.

Kasaruzu was among the best of his class in the Ikoma Omoidasu school, distinguished not only by his eloquence but also by his exceptionally sharp and precise memory, constantly picking up new information for him to use later, sometimes even after months or years. However, his loud and passionate nature seemed a poor match for the

sedate courts of the Empire, and he was eventually sent to the Colonies to serve alongside Governor Ikoma Katsuru. When Katsuru died, the shame to the Lion for failing to protect him was immense, and Kasaruzu's eloquence in court was probably the only thing that saved the Lion from losing face entirely.

Despite the persistent rumors of activities which are beneath a proper samurai, Kasaruzu has been a formidable opponent in the courts of the Second City, and many of those seeking to strike a blow to the Lion's power have struggled to undermine, disgrace, or manipulate him only to meet with defeat in one form or another. A cunning courtier seeking to pry valuable information from Kasaruzu after he has had his fill of sake is met only with crude humor and a laugh, while those who seek to expose his behavior as unbecoming a prominent diplomat are soon made all too aware that Kasaruzu is no fool to be easily undone by a few rumors. By contrast, he is quite adept at turning his opponents' own mistakes against them, however small they might be. Even such a simple act as not offering a proper gift to a local daimyo fifteen years before becomes a grievous breach of etiquette once Kasaruzu mentions it in the courts, and more than one political rival has been forced to flee the Ivory Court in embarrassment or shame, not to be seen in public again for many days.

Ultimately, although Ikoma Kasaruzu embraces his lineage openly and willingly, he uses it as a source of strength where many would see only weakness. He is not ambitious and does not have his eyes set on higher positions of status or authority – he wishes to continue serving the Lion as he does now, and to destroy any political opposition the clan may face in the Ivory Court. Currently, Kasaruzu suspects that someone is plotting a move against the Lion to try to damage their political and military position in the Second City, and he is stepping a bit cautiously until he can learn more. He is maintaining a neutral status with the other clans for the most part, trying to establish what they are looking for from the Lion.

#### IKOMA KASARUZU, LION CLAN AMBASSADOR

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 4		STRENGTH: 4
Honor: 5.2		Status: 4.0		Glory: 6.3
School/Rank: Ikoma Bard 4				
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Courtier (Gossip, Rhetoric) 5, Defense 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Horsemanship 3, Investigation 2, Intimidation 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 4, Lore: History 5, Lore: Lion Clan 3, Lore: Theology (Ancestors) 5, Meditation 2, Perform: Oratory 6, Perform: Storytelling 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 5				
Advantages: Allies (many), Crafty, Social Position (Lion ambassador)				
Disadvantages: Brash, Compulsion (sake, women)				



## AKODO KISHIMORA

### KASARUZU'S YOJIMBO

If Ikoma Kasaruzu is truly a descendant of Ikoma himself, the idea that Akodo Kishimora is descended from Shinsei would not be too far of a stretch. While most Lion can only tolerate Kasaruzu in small amounts, and often suddenly remember other obligations when he appears, Kishimora is the embodiment of patience and wisdom and quietly accepts his charge's often loud or eccentric behavior.

Akodo Kishimora was born under a starless night, and his parents feared he might not attain any great position in his life. He showed very little skill with a sword in his youth and exhibited no magical talents. His parents ultimately enrolled him in the Akodo bushi school in the hope that he might be a late bloomer or, at worst, might learn enough not to disgrace his family name.

As it turned out, his parents were both right and very wrong about Akodo Kishimora and his path in life. When he was in his first year at the Akodo School, Kishimora awoke one night with a sense that something was very wrong. He had not heard any noise, nor could he see anything in the pale moonlight of late night, but nonetheless he took up his bokken and began to explore the dojo, eventually

coming to one of the elder sensei's rooms. There he heard movement, and when he slid open the door to he saw what had awoken him. Looming over the sensei was a goblin, club in hand, ready to kill the man in his sleep. Though Kishimora was not even through his second year and in no way was prepared to fight a creature of the Shadowlands, he leapt forward, shouting, and placed himself between the sensei and the beast which sought to murder him. The goblin was able to knock aside Kishimora with ease, but not before guards arrived and slew the beast.

The following day, when his teachers asked how he had found his way to the sensei's room, Kishimora just shrugged and said, "It just felt like something was wrong, and I had to find out what it was." A Kitsu later confirmed that Kishimora was in fact lightly connected to the spirit realm of Meido, the Realm of Waiting, and as such might be blessed with a spiritual sense for imminent danger. From that day forth, Kishimora was trained to serve as a yojimbo, both as a reward for saving the sensei and as a way to put his unique heritage to proper use. Although he never developed the skill with a sword that many of his Akodo cousins possessed, nor did he show much skill tactics of battle, what he lacked in those areas he made up for by being dedicated, steadfast, and loyal. As a yojimbo he somehow always managed to find trouble right before it found him... or his charge.







Akodo Kishimora views his life as blessed by the Fortunes, and he accepted his assignment to the Colonies as a reward for hard work and dedication rather than the punishment most Lion see it as. He accepts his service to Ikoma Kasaruzu without complaint and even sometimes functions as an advisor for the Lion ambassador, but for the most part he simply stands in silence, always wearing a slight smile, never losing his vigilance. He is always alert for the warning feelings that tell him trouble is near. If those instincts ever failed him, it could be the first thing that would truly break his mental harmony.

#### AKODO KISHIMORA, GIFTED YOJIMBO

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4	STRENGTH: 4		
Honor: 6.9	Status: 2.0	Glory: 4.3		

*School/Rank:* Akodo Bushi 3

*Skills:* Athletics 4, Battle 1, Defense 5, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu (Focus) 3, Jiu-jutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: Theology (Ancestor Worship) 2, Meditation 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 2, Spears 2

*Advantages:* Balance, Inner Gift (danger sense)

*Disadvantages:* Dark Fate

### KITSU MAI

#### BESOTTED SHUGENJA

When Kitsu Mai was ordered to the Colonies, she was deeply conflicted. On the one hand, she had been given what could be viewed as an honor – to be part of the group of Lion who would establish their clan's presence within the Colonies, setting the precedents and expectations of

her clan for generations to come. On the other hand, she was deeply disturbed by the prospect – what would it mean to be so far away from her fellow Kitsu, so far from the sacred Kitsu Tombs and the voices of the ancestors? Would she even be able to commune with the ancestors or the kami in that distant land? How would her ancestors look upon her when she sought their guidance in a foreign land once thought to be home to nothing but barbarians and monsters? Mai worried, as many Lion did, that this new settlement in the Colonies would call into question the absolute truths the Lion Clan had revered for centuries.

Initially, the settlement in the Colonies was indeed a difficult change for Mai to accept. The new land was hot and humid, making traditional robes

a torment to wear. The kami heard her voice, but they were strange in their responses. The other clans seemed to embrace the new world to the point of forsaking their true heritage as Rokugani. However, with time she came to realize she had been given a tremendous opportunity: instead of losing her heritage or culture, Mai saw this was the perfect opportunity to preserve the teachings and heritage of Rokugan and carry the legacy of the ancestors into a new place. Mai came to see the Colonies as a place where she could spread the teachings of the ancestors to a new generation, to expand their influence and protect the colonists from losing their connection to the history of Rokugan.

However, in finding this new purpose and coming to terms with her place and role within the Colonies, Mai has had another experience which often makes samurai question themselves and their ability to serve their clan...

She has fallen in love.

Mai has been working with many other shugenja in the Colonies, and especially closely with a young Scorpion shugenja studying the nature of the kami in the Colonies. They sought to determine whether or not there were any differences to the way in which Rokugani could communicate with them here. Over the months they worked together Mai began to develop a powerful fondness for the young Scorpion, and eventually she found herself having given him her heart without even quite realizing it. She has kept this quiet from everyone but one or two close friends, those whose advice she trusts beyond question. She has prayed to her ancestors for guidance as well. All of them have given her the same answer – love cannot allow one to abandon duty. And so Mai continues to hold her love for this young man a secret, fearful of what might happen to her samurai dedication if he ever learned the truth or, worse, returned her feelings. Could she continue serving the Lion fully if that happened? And how long can she manage to control and hide her true feelings?



## KITSU MAI, BESOTTED SHUGENJA

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4

Honor: 5.7

Status: 1.0

Glory: 2.0

*School/Rank: Kitsu Shugenja 2*

*Skills: Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier 1, Etiquette 3, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: History 3, Lore: Shugenja 3, Lore: Theology (Ancestor Worship) 6, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 5*

*Advantages: Allies (several), Higher Purpose (teach the ancestors' ways in the Colonies)*

*Disadvantages: True Love (Scorpion shugenja)*

## MATSU SAKIKO

### NAÏVE BUSHI

Matsu Sakiko is much more concerned with what fashion trends are popular right now in the Colonies than she possibly could be about her status within the Lion Clan or how they are doing in the Second City. She often finds herself in the company of Crane and Scorpion courtiers, discussing the new clothing of the Colonies or the latest fascinating incense and perfume made from the exotic plants to be found there. She has no time for politics, war, or other such tiresome topics. In fact, given her nature and interests many think Sakiko should have been born a Crane... though of course they would not say so in the hearing of the Lion Clan.

Sakiko is, in truth, a young girl who never grew up. As a child she spent her time exploring the gardens around her family estate and watching the courtiers who came through, focusing on the patterns of their kimono or how they wore their hair. She wanted to be a courtier ever since she could remember; she refused to face the fact that the world she lived in was a world of death, fighting, and wars. Naturally, her family had little patience for her attitude. A proud line of warriors and tacticians going back generations, they refused to listen to her ideas and sent her to the Matsu School to learn the ways of the blade. They were sure she would soon give up her childish dreams, accept her role, and bring honor to her family and their proud warrior history.

When Sakiko heard she was going to be training at the Matsu School, she fell into deep despair. Nothing she liked about the world would be at the Matsu dojo, which were notorious for their harsh and ascetic spirit and the rigor of their training. She could not endure the thought of spending years in such a place, years training in how to kill another man. After all, the Destroyer War was over and the Empire was at peace. However, she loved her mother and father very much, and the thought of disappointing them upset her just as much as her impending training.

A twist of fate gave Sakiko the opportunity to not only honor her parents but also to experience the life she wanted, the life the Lion mostly pushed themselves away from. An alliance had been struck between two daimyo of the

Lion and Crane, and as such there was also an agreement to exchange several students of both clans. By chance, Sakiko's family was chosen for one of the exchanges, and she was overjoyed when she learned she would be sent to study at the Kakita Bushi School. There in the Crane lands she was constantly surrounded by the world she had always wanted, the world of court and art and beauty, while still honoring her parents by studying the sword. Though her heart was never truly devoted to the ways of the blade, she still learned enough to pass her gempukku.

As someone who had been trained among the Crane, a clan with great influence in the new Colonies, it was a natural choice for Sakiko to be assigned there, a decision which her family accepted as an honor. For herself, Sakiko was delighted to learn that many of the friends she had made during her training. Now she spends all her free time with them, talking about the finer and more civilized things in life. Sakiko has never had to kill anyone, indeed never even had to draw her sword since her gempukku. She has never ventured beyond the safe zone around the Second City, never witnessed the dangers that lurk in the jungles of the former Ivory Kingdoms. She views the world through a prism of safety and naïve confidence, confident that her friendships will endure any threat.

Whether her pleasant life will endure, however, remains to be seen...

### MATSU SAKIKO, NAÏVE BUSHI

AIR: 2 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 2

REFLEXES: 3 STAMINA: 3 AGILITY: 3 STRENGTH: 3

Honor: 6.5

Status: 1.0

Glory: 1.0

*School/Rank: Kakita Bushi 1*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Courtier 1, Defense 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Iaijutsu (Focus) 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Fashion 4, Meditation 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 3*

*Advantages: Allies (various Crane), Different School*

*Disadvantages: Gullible*

## AKODO TOSHIGURE

### BITTER DUELIST

Akodo Toshigure has become rather well known in the Colonies, but not for any good reasons. In the last year alone, Toshigure has been involved in no less than seven officially sanctioned duels with other samurai in the Colonies. He has only killed one of them, but the rest have taken scars or been maimed to the point that they are walking reminders of Toshigure's wrath. Most samurai do their best to avoid crossing the Akodo's path, and his short temper and vindictive nature have made him one of the most feared bushi in the Second City.

However, Toshigure was not always like this. He was once a bright and optimistic young man who did not wish to kill, and when he did have to draw his sword





against another he always sought to do so in a way that would end without death or even serious injury. He was the embodiment of compassion toward his enemies, and indeed he was hard to anger or provoke at all, for he maintained his on even in the face of the worst insults. He was soon promoted in the ranks of the Lion and was betrothed to young woman from a prominent family, a woman he liked and might even have had the good fortune to come to love. For Toshigure, all was truly right with the world and he looked forward to a long life of honorable service and happiness.

All of this changed when, barely a week before his wedding, Toshigure was told he would be part of the Lion contingent going to the Second City to help establish the clan's presence there. They would assert the clan's power in the new world and see to it the Right Hand was not to be questioned by any of the other clans. Toshigure was greatly frustrated to be leaving the Empire so soon after he was to be wed, but his wife encouraged him, urging him to embrace the adventure and excitement of a new posting, to bring honor to his name and to take his smile and warm heart with him into the new land. He should accept this duty with open arms, for very few were being trusted to bear such a burden. And she promised him they would meet again soon.

Toshigure accepted his wife's advice, and the thought of coming back to visit her was something he could look forward while he was in the Second City. He accepted his new post, traveled to the Second City, and followed his duties as best he could, always looking forward to his return. He and his wife exchanged letters often, even though they sometimes took months to reach each other.

Then, one day, he received a letter – not from his wife but from his family, informing him she had died of a sickness. Toshigure was overcome with grief and anger, furious that he had been taken away from his beloved and left in a strange land that he considered little short of Hell for a samurai. His happy and cheerful demeanor vanished, replaced by a darker outlook. Where he once avoided conflict, he began to seek it out whenever he could, seeking challenges and fighting without mercy, leaving those of his opponents who survived with an awful reminder of his grief.

Akodo Toshigure has become so infamous that even the Lion themselves have grown concerned. They try to keep him occupied with his duties and away from others as much as possible, but he still seems

to always find himself in the right place at the right time to overhear insults to the Lion Clan... and to make sure others answer for them.

### AKODO TOSHIGURE, BITTER DUELIST

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4    STRENGTH: 4			
Honor: 4.3	Status: 1.5	Glory: 4.3	Infamy: 2.8	

*School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 3*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Battle (Mass Combat) 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu (Focus, Assessment) 5, Intimidation 3, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 3, Lore: History 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 2, Spears 3*

*Advantages: Prodigy*

*Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (lethal duelist), Lost Love (wife)*

## The People of the Mantis Clan

The Mantis are among those clans most aggressively committed to the Colonies, seeing them as a boundless opportunity for both physical settlement and commercial expansion. Due to the relatively tropical climate of their own islands, the Mantis have adapted to the Colonies much more quickly and practically than the other clans, and have also suffered less from threats like tropical disease and exotic animals.





The Mantis have focused their strongest efforts on the southern coast of the Colonies, partially because this plays to their strengths as an ocean-going clan and partly because it is where their first ships reached the Ivory Kingdoms and is thus the most familiar part of the region for them. They control their own lesser strongholds on the coast and also are the dominant clan in the largest and most prosperous coastal port, Kalani's Landing. However, they are now facing fierce competition from the mercantile arms of the Crane and Crab Clans, with the Daidoji Trading Council and the Yasuki family both making deep inroads into the lucrative markets of the Colonies. Recently a major dispute has emerged between the Crane and the Mantis over Mantis ships' refusal to pay port fees to Crane authorities, and this issue has led to rapidly increasing tensions between the two clans at all levels.

A notable difference between the Mantis and most of the other clans in the Colonies is that the clan of Yoritomo is quite willing to study the ways of the surviving gaijin and even to learn from them directly. This should not be all that surprising, ultimately, when one considers that the Mantis had accepted the fealty of an Ivory Kingdoms kshatriya named Rama Singh well before the Destroyer War even took place. Indeed, so far only the Crab and Unicorn Clans have really matched the Mantis Clan's willingness to embrace the ways of the Ivory Kingdoms' former inhabitants.

The Mantis Clan's goal in the Colonies is simple: to gain as much land and wealth as possible. To that end, they constantly push to expand the influence of their merchants and to resist the corresponding influence of their rivals, especially the Crane and Crab. They have also forged a loose alliance with the Unicorn, working together to gain territory and squeeze out their rivals.

## YORITOMO KAISHOU

### MANTIS CLAN DIPLOMAT

Were it not for the mon emblazoned on his clothes, most would assume the boisterous voice and almost oafish visage of Yoritomo Kaishou to belong to a Crab warrior. He stands easily six and a half feet tall, his large frame rippling with muscles. (Simply fitting him into court clothes can be a difficult battle for seamstresses and tailors, who are known to grumble about him when he is not present.) Nor does Kaishou's similarity to the Crab end at his physical appearance. He is a loud and aggressive man, known to laugh openly, smile broadly, and wear his emotions boldly on his sleeves. There is a twinkle that shows up in his eye, particularly when the opportunity to spin a yarn is afforded, that causes the more traditional of souls to cringe within themselves, knowing the verbal torrent that is about to erupt from his mouth.

Kaishou has served for almost his entire life in the Colonies, and knows

little to nothing of the mainland Empire. The Second City is his true home; even his parents' own recollections of Rokugan are distant at best, since they have spent most of their lives on the high seas. In contrast to many Rokugani, Kaishou has freely spent time among the surviving native population, studying their ways and learning the particulars of their culture like the back of his hand.

Kaishou's appointment to the Ivory Court, despite his relative inexperience in politics, resulted from the implied suggestions of a few members of the Governor's entourage in the last few years. Until then he had spent years on the coastline, protecting the naval routes back to the Empire and snuffing out piracy and banditry. His occasional visits to the Second City caused considerable discomfort to some of the more traditionally-minded of the city's inhabitants, but despite his braggadocio he never caused enough distress as to actually solicit any sort of reprisal. He appeared to have a knack for causing others distress without creating too much actual trouble – and from the Governor's viewpoint that made him a perfect addition to the court of the Second City.

Yoritomo Kaishou has taken to the Ivory Court with surprising ease. Despite his far greater familiarity with local culture than with Rokugani court etiquette, he has a gift for pleasant conversation and a flexible mind that has allowed him to quickly adapt to the world of his new duties. Despite his crude exterior he is more adept than most bushi at navigating the courts, he makes use of his more aggressive 'gifts' to cause others to underestimate him and misinterpret his goals. For the most part the Mantis use him as a simple functionary and aide, and his superiors tend to send him along as an assistant to more experienced courtiers, either to put martial samurai like the Crab at ease... or to keep more refined samurai on edge with his personality.







## YORITOMO KAISHOU, MANTIS CLAN DIPLOMAT

AIR: 3 EARTH: 4 FIRE: 3 WATER: 4 VOID: 2

AWARENESS: 4

Honor: 2.0 Status: 2.0 Glory: 5.5

*School/Rank:* Yoritomo Bushi 4

*Skills:* Athletics 3, Artisan-Origami 2, Commerce 4, Courtier 4, Defense 4, Etiquette (Conversation) 5, Jijutsu (Improvised Weapons) 5, Kenjutsu 3, Knives (Kama) 4, Perform-Storytelling 5, Sailing 2

*Advantages:* Languages (Ivindi), Large, Seven Fortune's Blessing (Hotei), Voice

*Disadvantages:* Greedy, Soft-Hearted

## KITSUNE KAMEYO

Kitsune Kameyo is by Mantis standards both a curiosity and a tragedy. She is one of only a tiny handful of Kitsune family shugenja specifically assigned to the Colonies, a status that may seem to be a great honor bestowed upon her but at the same time is a means of removing her as far from the company of her fellows as possible. She is in her mid-twenties, older than usual for a samurai-ko to be unmarried, but in the courts whispers surround the raven haired priestess hinting that special dispensations were pleaded to the Mantis Clan Champion on her behalf by none other than the Kitsune family daimyo.

This is only partially true. In fact, Kameyo is one of the rare individuals in the history of the Kitsune who bears a curse upon her head from the realm of Chikushudo. Though she is seemingly a gifted and highly skilled shugenja of her school, early in her training her sensei discovered that the animal spirits of the Kitsune Mori reacted to her with open hostility and aggression. Kameyo was connected by bloodline to the small kuge elite of the Kitsune family, and the idea that one of their children might be so cursed was of deep concern and more than a little shameful to them. Careful and veiled inquiries were made to not only the spirits of Chikushudo but also to the Kitsune and Ikoma families, endeavoring to find the source of the young woman's apparent karmic imbalance. But no matter how deeply her family searched, they could find nothing. For whatever reason, Kameyo was doomed to be hated by the very spirits she trained to commune with.

This carefully guarded reality was of course a considerable embarrassment not only to herself but to the family at large. Some even suggested she was a sign of what was to come – that the spirits of the forest were beginning to forsake the Kitsune as punishment for their choosing to join the Mantis Clan rather than facing their

sacred duties alone. However, Kameyo's family connections were strong enough to keep such talk under control and eventually ensure that she passed her gempukku, but this left the problem of what to do with her going forward. After considerable debate, it was decided that her talents as a priestess and scholar could be best put to use well away from the family's traditional home and duties, and she was dispatched to the Mantis Isles and from there appointed to the Second City as a Mantis representative to the Ministry of Ceremonies. Private insistence by the Kitsune daimyo has prevented any inquiries of marriage from going further; the family does not want to risk the spread of her unfortunate 'condition.'

Despite this unusual flaw in her nature, Kameyo has risen to her new duties with surprising grace. While she may have no ability to speak with the spirits of animals, she does have considerable gifts for understanding the ways of human society. This has helped her navigate the treacherous and prickly courts of the Second City with ease. While she has yet to achieve any higher appointment, she is already a valuable contact point for the Mantis in a department of the Colonial government to which they do not always have much direct access.

Despite her strong and serene exterior, Kameyo is a somewhat troubled soul. Though she has accepted it is her karma to bear the burden of her curse, that burden is compounded by the added knowledge that she will never be allowed to marry. She smiles on the surface, carefully keeping others at an emotional distance, but in her private chambers the loneliness of her existence often threatens to throw her into despair. She visits local geisha houses when time and resources permit it, seeking the comfort of a listening ear, even if she never can willingly divulge everything that concerns her. If a sympathetic samurai ever were to see through the façade and show affection for the real Kameyo, her heart would doubtless be swiftly overwhelmed, but so far no man has taken such an effort.

## KITSUNE KAMEYO

AIR: 3 EARTH: 4 FIRE: 2 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

AWARENESS: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 3

Honor: 4.3 Status: 3.0 Glory: 3.8

*School/Rank:* Kitsune Shugenja 3

*Skills:* Calligraphy (High Rokugani) 5, Defense 3, Etiquette 6, Hunting 1, Medicine (Herbalism) 3, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 2, Lore: Shugenja 3, Lore: Theology 5, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 4, Tea Ceremony 3

*Advantages:* Languages (Ivindi), Paragon (Courtesy), Sage  
*Disadvantages:* Cursed by the Realm (Chikushudo), Compulsion (lechery)





## MOSHI JIRO

### SHIP CAPTAIN

Rare is the ship captain who actually enjoys spending long periods of time on the ground, but then again Moshi Jiro has never considered himself to be a particularly common man. Trained amongst his small family's few bushi and then sent to study with the Yoritomo, Jiro demonstrated from the first a knack for leadership and skills at combat that his superiors were unwilling to let languish on the remote borders of the Valley of the Centipede. Consequently, not long after his gempukku Jiro was shipped off to serve as a yojimbo and assistant to a prominent Moshi navigator, Hikari. This allowed his training to see use while also letting him study leadership skills and perhaps one day become a kobune captain in his own right.

Jiro proved himself more than capable, first as a yojimbo, then as an officer on several successive Mantis ships. After several years he was finally promoted to captain of his own vessel, the Tiger's Claw. In the years just after he took over the ship, it was stationed off the coast of the Colonies, watching and protecting the trade routes back to the Empire. However, as Jiro grew in fame and began to develop a rapport with the local natives, his ship was permanently assigned to Kalani's Landing and re-commissioned as a mercantile vessel. Being based

permanently in the Colonies gave Jiro the opportunity to travel inland from time to time, working his way into the lower echelons of the Second City's courts, as well as to pull a few strings and acquire his former charge's daughter as his ship's navigator. The young woman is frequently seen in Jiro's company. He uses her prayers to send word to his vessel at the coastline whenever the Claw needs to sail, and departs for the coastline for a few months each year to conduct trade on the behalf of his clan.

By most accounts, Jiro is a somewhat unpleasant man who most people put up with more because he can get things done than out of any desire to share his company. He is a pragmatic soul, unlike most of the Moshi, and his time with the Yoritomo has only enhanced this tendency. Despite his skills he suffers from a certain amount of mental laziness which has manifested more strongly now that he has attained high rank. His first mate is more than competent to ensure his vessel is well cared for when he is not present, so he spends much of his time in the Second City, visiting the courts and playing at political games for which he has only moderate skill. However, he does have enough connections with the Mantis navy to let him call in favors for those in need of swift and discrete shipping, and this allows him to maintain his position in the city despite his unpopularity.

If Jiro could be said to have any true vice – other than his laziness and an occasional taste for too much







sake – it is probably his navigator Miyako. He became infatuated with the young woman during the last year of his service to her mother Hikari. Numerous attempts to convince her matronly mother to permit him to marry the girl have failed, but his political connections have at least secured him her services as a subordinate. He dotes on her constantly, behavior she tolerates with a calm and silent patience well beyond her years.

### MOSHI JIRO, SHIP CAPTAIN

AIR: 3 EARTH: 4 FIRE: 4 WATER: 4 VOID: 3

Honor: 3.8 Status: 5.5 Glory: 6.5

*School/Rank:* Yoritomo Bushi 2, Kobune Captain 2 (*Insight Rank 4*)

*Skills:* Athletics 4, Battle 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 2, Commerce 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jiu-jutsu (Improvised Weapons) 5, Kenjutsu 5, Knives (Kama) 3, Lore: Theology 1, Lore: Underworld 4, Spears 5, Sailing 5, Sincerity 1

*Advantages:* Allies (several), Leadership, Social Position (Kobune Captain), Servants

*Disadvantages:* Compulsion (sake), True Love (Moshi Miyako)

### MOSHI MIKAYO

#### NAVIGATOR TO MOSHI JIRO

Moshi Mikayo considers her life to be a cursed one, though she would never openly admit such thoughts. Only a few years past her gempukku she has been assigned as the navigator to Moshi Jiro, a ship captain with political ties to the courts of the Second City. The reality of her duties has left this attractive young lady frequently away from the sea where she expected to serve her clan. Instead, she has spent almost her entire career lingering within the penumbra of the Second City court as a minor but perpetually active functionary and assistant to Jiro.

The story of her assignment is a fairly simple one, but one that to her mind proves the disfavor of the Fortunes. Her mother Hikari owed numerous political favors, ones that Jiro managed to repay on behalf of their family. In doing so, he managed to convince – or more accurately, coerce – her mother into permitting her assignment as a “Navigator” on his vessel. Given that the Tiger’s Claw very rarely leaves its port unless absolutely necessary, her duties have seldom encompassed the traditional role of a navigator in the Mantis navy. Instead she spends her time working as an aide and magical assistant to Moshi Jiro, offering him advice and using her prayers to send messages to his ship from a distance. Her duties are made all the more onerous by the fact that Jiro is not even subtle in his attempts to win her affection.

Mikayo has long been accustomed to such unwanted attentions from men – she is, after all, quite attractive, with long raven-black hair and blue-gray eyes. She has developed an almost unnerving patience in dealing with such would-

be suitors, but when the suitor is also her superior and an oafish man besides, even her dedicated patience is strained. Mikayo takes her oaths as a priestess and a servant of the Mantis extremely seriously, and the very idea of allowing personal feelings to intervene in her work or her home life is abhorrent to her. However, she lacks the political influence to escape her service to Jiro, who stands considerably above her in the hierarchy of the clan. So thus far Mikayo has suffered his attentions with carefully phrased and patiently displayed neutrality on the surface, leaving her growing resentment to stew under the surface.

The young navigator is far too honorable to take matters into her own hands, but she keeps an eye on all opportunities to work on the behalf of clan and Empire that do not interfere with her duties for Jiro. Perhaps one of these opportunities will gain her the attention of someone with more pull or status than Jiro and allow her to escape his service. For now, though, she waits and serves in fulminating silence, like a thunderhead on the horizon.

### MOSHI MIYAKO, NAVIGATOR

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 3 VOID: 2

WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 3

Honor: 5.5 Status: 1.0 Glory: 1.0

*School/Rank:* Moshi Shugenja 1

*Skills:* Athletics 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Divination 2, Etiquette 3, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 2, Sailing (Navigation) 3, Spears 3

*Advantages:* Dangerous Beauty, Irreproachable, Virtuous

*Disadvantages:* Idealistic, Obligation (Moshi Jiro), Unluck

### TSURUCHI NARIAKI

#### AGED MAGISTRATE

Tsuruchi Nariaki is not a young man. Indeed, he is nearing the age of retirement, but defiantly refuses to actually yield to the passage of years despite graying hair and a missing eye. Scars riddle every inch of his body, speaking to years of service as a bounty hunter and Ivory Magistrate. There are stories behind every last one of these scars, but Nariaki almost never speaks of these events. He has lived most of his life as the killer of his clan and Empire’s enemies and has seen things no polite courtier would ever understand or be willing to speak of, and he has next to no interest in discussing such things with those who cannot understand him.

If Nariaki had his way, he would still be out in the field serving as an Ivory Magistrate. His last assignment, however, resulted in the third in a series of debilitating injuries that have made it impossible for him to continue to hunt down criminals and enemies of the Empire. He would be a liability in the field, and he knows it. His retirement from the Ivory Magistrates was met with accolades for his years of service, but rather than go to a monastery he used what political connections he still possessed to retain status as a Clan Magistrate of the Mantis. The clan, well aware of his weakened physical state, assigned him as a





legal attaché in the Second City. Serving as a functionary and aide within the Ministry of Defense and Justice makes use of his old contacts and knowledge without putting him where he could cause more harm than good.

Nariaki is a pervasive presence within the Ministry, a gnarled old oak of a man who stumps through the halls with a perpetual glower on his face. While he does not have much political clout or command the favor of those close to the Governor, people nonetheless almost naturally defer to him as he passes. Some of this stems from the simple fact that Nariaki is an incredibly intimidating old man who knows human nature – especially its darker side – as intimately as the courtiers of the Second City know the halls of justice. He has crushed the spirit of men stronger, larger, and years younger than him with barely a look. In his life he has killed more men than many seasoned soldiers, and there is not a man, woman, or child who sees him in the Second City who cannot read this fact from his cold stare and threatening demeanor. His fearsome presence is, if anything, only made worse by the fact that he always maintains proper decorum and his gravelly voice never changes, even when he is angered. Lesser courtiers give him a wide berth and even his superiors seem leery of the baleful gaze of his single all-seeing eye.

In truth, Nariaki is not quite the terrifying killer he seems. Although his twenty-five year career as a magistrate and bounty hunter boasts an impressive list of enemies he has outlived, most of his accomplishments were less impressive than people might believe, and the decades have colored the

stories of his deeds into far more fanciful adventures than the truth. Certainly Nariaki is a skilled and intimidating man, but he is not omniscient. Still, he is willing to make use of people's beliefs to his benefit, and he privately enjoys their whispers and stares. Their fearful admiration makes it easier for him to stave off retirement until he has no choice, as well as offering the simple pleasure of watching those around him jump at his bidding. If he cannot fight in the field, at least he can browbeat the occasional upstart clerk and try to keep the Ministry running properly. Such duty is not what he truly desires, but it will do. Anything to avoid the meaningless boredom of retirement.

#### TSURUCHI NARIAKI, AGED MAGISTRATE

AIR: 2	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 3		WILLPOWER: 4		PERCEPTION: 4
Honor: 0.9		Status: 4.0		Glory: 4.2

*School/Rank: Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter 3*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 5, Hunting (Tracking) 5, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation (Control) 7, Investigation 6, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 7, Lore: Law 4, Lore: Underworld 5, Sincerity 2*

*Advantages: Great Potential (Intimidation), Strength of the Earth, Wary*

*Disadvantages: Bad Eyesight, Disturbing Countenance, Lameness, Permanent Wound*





## The People of the Phoenix Clan

The Phoenix Clan has a relatively small presence in the Colonies, and the clan's efforts are focused almost entirely on the spiritual and magical aspects of the new land. They have devoted great effort to building up the temples and libraries of the Second City, ensuring Rokugan's religion and culture will be properly transferred into the new land. Unsurprisingly, the Phoenix have one of the largest proportions of traditionalists among their ranks, exceeded only by the Lion Clan. Many in the clan believe their primary goal in the Colonies should be to protect and ensure the spiritual well-being of those Rokugani living in them.

However, the Isawa have another goal: to secure any and all gaijin magical artifacts left behind by the destruction of the Ivory Kingdoms. They have pursued this goal with almost single-minded determination since they first arrived in the Colonies.

### ASAKO SOUTA

#### HEAD OF THE PHOENIX EMBASSY

Souta is a mystic whose devotion and tranquility have earned him respect among his peers even though he has only minor influence over the kami. His brother, Asako Kouhei, is a former Inquisitor who was physically crippled in a vicious ambush by maho-tsukai. Souta nursed his brother during his recovery, such as it was, and during that time they spoke of many matters, including the spiritual welfare of the samurai in the new Colonies. As Kouhei pointed out, it was all very well to send the Spider there

under the watchful eyes of the Dragon, but the Dragon had a certain reputation for doctrinal flexibility. Far from the homeland, who knew what blasphemous beliefs would develop among the samurai of proper clans like the Phoenix or the Crane?

Although Souta disliked the thought of leaving his home in the cold mountains, he swore to his brother he would journey to the Colonies and do whatever was possible to bring moral rectitude to the people there. Obtaining the assignment was not as difficult as he feared it would be. Given their intensely traditional and somewhat isolationist views, most Phoenix naturally considered the posting an undesirable one, especially after the previous delegation head retired in response to what looked like it might have been Spider blackmail. Souta wrestled with some second thoughts, but in the end he could not face the thought of disappointing his brother, and he carried through with his plan. Still, his doubts persisted for some time even after his arrival in the Second City.

The Phoenix delegation in the Second City has two competing agendas: the first and most prominent, which Asako Souta champions, is ensuring the spiritual safety of the colonists. However, the second agenda has recently begun to gain in support, especially among the Isawa: lobbying for the right to explore the many ruins left in the Ivory Kingdoms after its destruction by the Cult of the Destroyer. The Isawa cannot help but be fascinated by the thought of how many ancient relics and mystical secrets may be hiding within the crumbling ruins of the fallen civilization. This being the Phoenix, the conflict between these two views is of course excruciatingly polite; nonetheless, Souta has grown increasingly concerned by the Isawa demands.

In recent months, Souta has become even more devoted to his task due to a tragedy at home. At the last Ivory Court, he sponsored an initiative to import more Inquisitors to the Colonies to keep watch for any spiritual threats that might be growing unobserved. Soon after, he learned from a letter that his brother back in the Empire had been murdered, and the unknown killer was still at large. Souta is convinced there is a connection between his brother's fate and his own activities in the Colonies, and this has only made him more determined to fulfill his promise to Kouhei.

Souta's main rival within the Phoenix delegation is the elderly shugenja-ko Isawa Yuzuki, whose demands for more expeditions into the jungles of the Ivory Kingdoms have been growing bolder of late. They meet regularly over







tea, but the meetings have taken on a decidedly cool tone, and with each month their differences are only growing larger.

### ASAKO SOUTA, PHOENIX CLAN AMBASSADOR

AIR: 3 EARTH: 3 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 4

INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4

Honor: 5.7

Status: 4.0

Glory: 3.9

*School/Rank:* Asako Henshin 3

*Skills:* Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Rhetoric) 3, Defense 2, Games: Shogi 3, Etiquette (Conversation) 5, Investigation 2, Jujutsu 3, Lore: Elements 5, Lore: History 3, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 6, Sincerity (Honesty) 3

*Advantages:* Higher Purpose (protect the spiritual development of the Colonies), Social Position (Phoenix Clan ambassador)

*Disadvantages:* Idealistic

### ISAWA YUZUKI

#### AGING SHUGENJA-KO

Isawa Yuzuki came to the Colonies at an advanced age despite the wishes of her adult children. They protested her decision with great vehemence, warning that she would most likely die in a strange and hostile land, far from family. She acknowledged this as true but insisted on going to the Colonies nonetheless. After a long and only modestly distinguished career as a Phoenix shugenja, she could not help but wish to leave more of a legacy to Rokugan. Years of study in the shrines of the Phoenix left her unsatisfied; perhaps the answer lay outside of Rokugan.

In the Second City, Yuzuki discovered an unexpected kinship with a younger shugenja, Isawa Teiko. Already she thinks of Teiko as a surrogate daughter and has started neglecting to write to the family she left behind in the Phoenix mountains. True, Teiko's insatiable curiosity unnerves some people, but Yuzuki is certain this excessive passion is merely a side-effect of youth and can be channeled to positive uses. The two are united in their conviction that valuable knowledge – perhaps vital knowledge that could prevent another Destroyer War or similar disaster – is locked away in the remote ruins of the fallen Ivory Kingdoms. It is imperative for the Phoenix, the Empire's foremost scholars and the guardians of all mystical secrets, to get to this knowledge before looters, Spider explorers, or the ravages of nature destroy it. Yuzuki has no doubts that even the best-intentioned samurai of the other clans would wreck the sites in their ignorance.

While she continues to carry on her campaign for recovering the gaijin secrets, Yuzuki has also found other ways to occupy her time, including a hobby of sampling all the local teas and herbal tisanes in the Colonies, using them to try to score points against Asako Souta during their endless meetings over tea. She brings a new and more exotic brew to each meeting, hoping she will one day find

one that forces him to grimace and show displeasure. As hobbies go it is a petty one, but Yuzuki is an old woman and can feel death creeping a little closer each month; she feels she is owed a few minor indulgences. Beside, she cannot help but be vexed by Souta's narrow focus on spiritual dangers when other threats are just as pressing, and she is determined to find some way, however minor, to punish him for his small-mindedness.

### ISAWA YUZUKI, AGING SHUGENJA-KO

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 3 WATER: 2 VOID: 4

AWARENESS: 5 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3

Honor: 5.8

Status: 3.0

Glory: 6.3

*School/Rank:* Isawa Shugenja (Air) 5

*Skills:* Calligraphy (Cipher) 5, Courtier 2, Craft: Scrolls 3, Defense 2, Etiquette (Conversation) 5, Investigation 4, Lore: Elements 3, Lore: Shugenja 5, Lore: Tea 4, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 5, Perform: Tea Ceremony 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 4, Spellcraft 5

*Advantages:* Ally (Isawa Teiko), Sage, Social Position (diplomat)

*Disadvantages:* Driven (learn from the Ivory Kingdoms), Weakness (all physical Traits)

### ISAWA TEIKO

#### EAGER SHUGENJA-KO

Isawa Teiko has always been fascinated by the earth's secret byways. As a child she explored the caves around her home, prying loose strange oddments from their crevices: potsherds, broken chopsticks, acorns, and once a glittering red-white jewel that her sensei confiscated and refused to speak of further. As an adult shugenja she soon showed great affinity with the earth kami and often converses earnestly with them on abstruse topics like sediment layers and seismic disturbances. Her parents were happy that their second daughter's childhood penchant for running around in mud-streaked kimono developed into a more fitting interest in the kami, but all the same they were perhaps a little relieved when Teiko announced her intention to go to the Second City. Shugenja with odd preoccupations are nothing new, but Teiko displayed a somewhat alarming disregard for authority during her training, and her family hoped that a time spent overseas would temper her youthful enthusiasm.

Teiko's low status and inexperience make her a relatively minor member of the Phoenix delegation, but hardly an invisible one. She speaks often and passionately about the riches of knowledge that are surely available in the ruins scattered across the Colonies, and she is a known favorite of Isawa Yuzuki, the senior shugenja in the clan embassy. As such, she is often privy to policy meetings where Yuzuki discusses how to gain access to the ruins. Everything must be done through proper channels,







after all, and if the Phoenix make a good case they are sure to prevail eventually. So Yuzuki says, and if Teiko finds it difficult to accept such dictates, for now she still obeys. In the meantime, Teiko consoles herself with dreams of someday finding another treasure like the one her sensei took from her so many years ago. Perhaps, if she looks hard enough, she will even find it again: a red-white jewel with a heart like a secret star, singing her name.

### ISAWA TEIKO, EAGER SHUGENJA-KO

AIR: 2	EARTH: 4	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 3				
Honor: 5.0		Status: 1.0	Glory: 3.6	

*School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja (Earth) 2*

*Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier (Rhetoric) 3, Etiquette 2, Investigation 3, Lore: Elements (Earth) 4, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 2, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 3*

*Advantages: Ally (Isawa Yuzuki), Contrary*

*Disadvantages: Dark Paragon (Knowledge), Fascination (Earth)*

## SHIBA SORA

### ISAWA YUZUKI'S YOJIMBO

Shiba Sora is a middle-aged veteran, a bushi of both great skill and great discretion. His ancestors have served Isawa Yuzuki's family for generations, so it was only fitting that he accompany her to the Second City. In doing so he had to leave behind his wife and three children; his wife was perfectly willing to come with him, but the youngest child, a girl, has always been sickly, and they suspected the climate in the Colonies would only worsen her condition. Sora remains devoted to his distant family and sends letters home regularly, along with occasional parcels with interesting curiosities.

Sora completely respects Isawa Yuzuki and her vision for the Phoenix delegation, although naturally she rarely discusses policy directly with him. In his youth he lost many comrades in the Destroyer War, and he is a firm believer that the best defense against a recurrence of that tragedy is information. He knows that as Yuzuki's yojimbo his behavior must always be above reproach so as to deny her enemies any hint of scandal. His vices are few; no sake or opium, no gambling, only a small weakness for pillow-books of the tamest kind.







Nevertheless, Sora is also in a position to watch the increasingly affectionate relationship between Yuzuki and young Isawa Teiko, and to his dismay his heart is growing hard against his charge. Although he does not know what Yuzuki writes in her letters to her family, or they to her, it is his job to observe everything around her... and what he observes is that while her family writes to her very regularly, she frequently neglects to respond, and spends more and more time with young Teiko. He cannot help but think of his own family in the distant Phoenix lands, how much he misses them, how hard it is when his wife writes of the children's latest antics and the accomplishments they want to show him when he finally returns home. It is especially difficult thinking of his sickly daughter, and he feels himself beginning to resent Yuzuki's lack of care for her own family, even though he knows her children are all grown adults and doubtless in good health.

Although Yuzuki's relationship with Teiko is far from improper, Sora is growing more and more bitter about it. Intellectually, he knows he must purge this emotional weakness before it compromises his ability to do his duty, but he has not yet figured out how to do so. And it is hardly as if he can confront Yuzuki herself... although that idea is starting to become dangerously appealing.

#### SHIBA SORA, YOJIMBO TO ISAWA YUZUKI

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
REFLEXES: 4	AGILITY: 4			
Honor: 5.0		Status: 2.5		Glory: 4.7

*School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 4/Shiba Yojimbo*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 1, Courtier 1, Defense 6, Games: Go 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Iaijutsu (Assessment, Focus) 5, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Shugenja 2, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Spears 4*

*Advantages: Social Position (yojimbo to Isawa Yuzuki)*

*Disadvantages: Jealousy (Isawa Teiko), True Love (his family)*

#### ISAWA NATSUKI

##### RESENTFUL COURTIER

Isawa Natsuki has always been ambitious, a personality trait encouraged by her Scorpion grandmother, and her combination of beauty, wit, and intelligence has made it easy for her to accumulate more friends than enemies. Although capable of cunning manipulation at need, she generally deals fairly with those who are fair to her. In court some call her naïve, but her disarming smile is surprisingly good protection against any hurtful gossip.

Last year Natsuki became involved in a minor scandal back in the mainland. She had enjoyed a winter's affair

with a Lion bushi, but the Lion wanted to pursue matters beyond their natural conclusion and when Natsuki did not return his desires, he sought to retaliate in the courts. The matter became somewhat difficult, but Natsuki saw an opening to resolve it safely by allowing the Lion to believe he had maneuvered her into banishment to the Second City. In truth, Natsuki's ambitious nature was already looking toward the Colonies as a place where she might better display her talents, so the situation was a victory for her in every way.

Alas, Natsuki's hopes for a dynamic political career in the Second City have so far come to naught. Isawa Souta considers her too frivolous and does not entrust her with any significant duties. Her hopes of finding another avenue to power were dashed when Isawa Teiko quickly emerged as the pet of Souta's major rival, Isawa Yuzuki. Natsuki has tried befriending Teiko, but the younger woman is both gauche and unnervingly intense, especially when she launches into long discussions of surface weathering and marble quarries.

Other avenues to power still remain, of course. Natsuki has worked hard to develop her connections within the Ivory Court, hoping to make herself the voice of the Phoenix in the political circles of the Second City, but progress has been frustratingly slow. Starved for attention, she has found herself falling into a state of infatuation toward Yuzuki's middle-aged yojimbo Shiba Sora, a feeling that leaves her in a deeply confused state. So far, Sora suspects nothing about her feelings, and in her more calm moments she fully intends to keep it that way. She is keenly aware of his love for his family, after all, and knows he is the type of man who would never so much as contemplate an extramarital affair.

In order to distract herself from her troublesome emotions, she has taken on some casual affairs of her own, but they are little more than petty amusements. She will just have to rely on Sora's obliviousness until her uncontrolled feelings subside. In the meantime, she continues to struggle to build her political reputation, all the while seething at the lack of support from her superiors in the clan embassy.







### ISAWA NATSUKI, FRUSTRATED COURTIER

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 4		
Honor: 4.9		Status: 1.0	Glory: 3.5	

*School/Rank:* Asako Loremaster 3

*Skills:* Artisan: Ikebana 2, Calligraphy 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Etiquette (Conversation) 3, Games: Letters 3, Games: Sadane 2, Investigation 3, Knives 1, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 4, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity 3, Temptation 3

*Advantages:* Benten's Blessing, Bland

*Disadvantages:* Sworn Enemy (her former Lion lover), True Love (Shiba Sora)

### AGASHA FUMATO

#### ASAKO SOUTA'S ADVISOR

From childhood, Agasha Fumato was a very quiet boy, given to hours of meditation while sitting in his family's gardens. Interest in gardening and fertilizers led him to fruitful studies in alchemy, but he never lost his intensely spiritual nature. When word arrived of the strange agricultural challenges in the Colonies, he spent some time considering the wisdom of a move and then finally requested permission to come to the Second City.

Asako Souta found in Fumato a calm, level-headed sounding board for his own thoughts, and it turned out they were both concerned about the spiritual ramifications of life in the Colonies. Fumato is more practical than Souta, however, and often manages day-to-day affairs on his behalf. Agriculture and gardening remain his special interests, but he also pays attention to the Phoenix Clan's economic and political gains in the new lands. His latest project involves overseeing systematic attempts to catalogue the food plants of the Ivory Kingdoms and develop strains that better suit the Rokugani palate.

People who deal with Fumato tend to find him pleasant in manner but implacable once he comes to a decision. He rarely loses his temper outright, but he meets anything he perceives as foolishness with intense opposition and a certain calm contempt. Isawa Yuzuki, for one, considers Fumato to be maddening and avoids dealing with him if at all possible... which suits both Asako Souta and Agasha Fumato perfectly well.

In his spare time, Fumato usually meditates by a potted azalea that he brought with him from his family garden back in Rokugan. Despite the care he lavishes on it, the shrub has not prospered and seems to be in danger of dying out. There are perfectly ordinary explanations for this, he knows, but he is perturbed by what he feels is an unpromising omen.

### AGASHA FUMATO, ADVISOR TO ASAKO SOUTA

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3		
Honor: 5.8		Status: 2.0	Glory: 4.6	

*School/Rank:* Asako Loremaster 3

*Skills:* Artisan: Gardening 3, Commerce 4, Courtier 3, Defense 1, Divination (Omens) 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Investigation 2, Lore: Elements 2, Lore: Farming 3, Lore: Gardening 5, Lore: Plants 5, Lore: Shugenja 3, Meditation 6, Sincerity 2

*Advantages:* Allies (many), Social Position (advisor to Asako Souta)

*Disadvantages:* Contrary, Fascination (Plants)

## The People of the Scorpion Clan

The Scorpion Clan sees the Colonies as a place of boundless opportunity, but also a huge challenge. Notwithstanding the Divine Empress' official sanction of the Spider Clan, the Scorpion remain deeply suspicious of the Spider and are determined to watch them closely and, if possible, discredit and destroy them. Much of the Scorpion Clan's expansion and development within the Colonies is likewise designed to block or defeat the Spider, although the clan is not unmindful of the need to deal its with political rivals in the Crane Clan as well.

A notable change to the Scorpion Clan's policies in the post-colonial era is in its relations to the Crab Clan. Through most of Rokugan's history the Scorpion and the Crab have been bitter enemies, but the emergence of a second Festering Pit in the Scorpion lands at the end of the Destroyer War has forced the Scorpion to change their tune and seek closer friendship with the Clan of Hida. This change has carried over to the Colonies, where the Scorpion and the Crab have worked closely together to protect their settlements and to keep a wary eye on the Spider. In fact, the two clans have even formed a unified military unit, the Ivory Daggers, and a unified embassy in the Second City, the so-called "Embassy of the Claw."



## BAYUSHI AYAKA

### HEAD OF THE SCORPION EMBASSY

Bayushi Ayaka was sent to the Second City because of the combination of her known acumen in court and an embarrassing family connection. Her older brother Hibiki was a junshin who made some unfortunate accusations against a Scorpion magistrate. While the matter was to some degree hushed up, Ayaka's promising court career in the Empire fell victim to the scandal. Her superiors decided the best solution was to send her to the Colonies, where her talents could be exercised without the burden of her family's loss of face. They made clear that skillful and effective service to the clan might allow the family to recover its reputation from her brother's foolishness.

For her part, Ayaka is not discontent with her new role, even though she might have chosen another path for herself if she had the power. She sees Hibiki as a fool, a naïve man who wastes his energy on trivial matters of petty corruption when the Scorpion face the corruption of the Empire's very ideals in the form of the Spider Clan. She intends to serve the clan properly, as he could not. Her mandate is to expand Scorpion holdings in the Colonies in such a way as to check Spider ambitions, and she has taken this mission to heart. Of course, she knows the Scorpion risk offending the

Dragon by being too open in their monitoring of the Spider, not to mention that the Spider themselves can't be expected to take such interest kindly. But Ayaka does not let such concerns worry her too much. Let others occupy themselves fighting for status and political power in this barbaric hinterland. She knows what the Scorpion really need, and she is determined to serve her clan in all the ways that her brother failed to.

Ayaka strives to look at the Colonies the way a Spider would and to anticipate their goals so she can frustrate them. Unfortunately, she is so focused on the Spider Clan's activities that she has not been as diligent as she could be about ferreting out and correcting the weaknesses among her own people in the Colonies. She is growing increasingly worried that Spider expansionism in the Colonies is accelerating, not slowing down; she believes there has to be a way to turn this to her advantage, but she doesn't see it yet.

For some times now Ayaka has been playing a (largely harmless) game of coded messages with the head of the Crab Embassy, Hida Kotone. She believes that keeping Kotone amused with this game is a good way to keep the Crab Ambassador from doing anything rash or unwise toward







the Scorpion Clan. Lately, however, Ayaka has begun to wonder if she can manipulate the Crab into moving overtly against the Spider, given that those two clans have even less reason to get along than the Scorpion and the Spider. This would be a dangerous gambit – after all, Crab adherence to duty is legendary, and there is a good chance that if Kotone figured out what was going on, it would jeopardize the Crab-Scorpion alliance – but Ayaka is growing desperate to do something before the situation with the Spider becomes too far beyond her control.

### BAYUSHI AYAKA, HEAD OF THE SCORPION EMBASSY

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		WILLPOWER: 3		PERCEPTION: 3
Honor: 3.5		Status: 4.5		Glory: 7.6

*School/Rank:* Bayushi Courtier 5

*Skills:* Artisan: Poetry 4, Calligraphy (Cipher) 5, Commerce 2, Courtier (Rhetoric, Manipulation) 7, Defense 2, Etiquette (Conversation, Courtesy) 7, Games: Letters 5, Games: Sadane 4, Intimidation (Control) 3, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2, Perform: Oratory 4, Sincerity (Honesty, Deceit) 6, Stealth 2, Temptation (Bribery) 6

*Advantages:* Allies (many), Blackmail (many), Social Position (clan ambassador)

*Disadvantages:* Driven (defeat the Spider), Obligation (to the clan)

### BAYUSHI SHIZUKA

#### THE KINDLY COURTIER

Bayushi Shizuka comes from Ryoko Owari Toshi, the Empire's infamous City of Lies, and was groomed from a young age to serve her family in a variety of corrupt endeavors. Unfortunately, as her grandmother discovered, is that she has a soft heart. Shizuka tried to hide this character defect early on, but two years ago she jeopardized a mission by sparing a rival courier she should rightly have ordered killed by a family enforcer. Her older brother, who cares for her deeply, helped her deal with the political mess that resulted, but he was obliged to report the incident to their grandmother, the head of their family. Although Shizuka's record was otherwise impressive for a young courtier, her family believed they could no longer rely on her, and they began planning to relocate her somewhere where she would not be a liability to them. Ultimately, they sent her to the Second City.

Bayushi Ayaka is aware of Shizuka's character flaw but believes she can actually make it into an asset for the clan. She specifically assigns Shizuka to deal with people who are probing the Scorpion for weaknesses: in other words, she uses the young courtier as bait. Shizuka realizes what is going on and tried to play her assigned role to the best of her ability. Curiously enough, life in the Second City is gradually making her harder of heart. She

deals with a great many people who have either chosen to come here because they fail to fit in back in the Empire proper, or who were effectively exiled for similar reasons as her own. As a result, she is starting to develop strongly traditionalist attitudes, feeling an increasing contempt for those who embrace the peculiarities of life in the Colonies. She does her best to maintain what she feels is proper Rokugani decorum, even to the point of risking frequent heat-stroke in the summer months by wearing full court kimono. She particularly deplores the local cuisine and makes a point of never eating it, even when this forces her to make do on little more than rice and pickled vegetables.

Recently, Shizuka's brother has made noises of journeying to the Second City to join her there. Shizuka realizes he is probably being sent to check up on her, and worries he will not like the person she has become. It is something of a paradox: her life in the Second City has made her more suitable to carrying out the family's interests (and by extension those of the clan), but her brother's opinion matters to her, and she has always believed he had an underlying respect and affection for her gentle nature. She has been writing him diffident letters, hoping to put him off from his planned visit, but she fears sooner or later he is going to follow through on his intentions, and she has no idea how she is going to deal with him when he arrives.

### BAYUSHI SHIZUKA, KINDLY COURTIER

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		WILLPOWER: 3		INTELLIGENCE: 3
Honor: 5.8		Status: 3.0		Glory: 6.3

*School/Rank:* Bayushi Courtier 2

*Skills:* Artisan: Poetry 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier (Rhetoric) 3, Etiquette (Conversation, Courtesy) 4, Games: Letters 2, Investigation 3, Lore: Heraldry 3, Perform: Oratory 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Temptation 2

*Advantages:* Paragon (Courtesy)

*Disadvantages:* Soft-Hearted

### SHOSURO CHIHARU

#### AMBITIOUS MUSICIAN

Shosuro Chiharu started her adulthood as a promising courtier with a talent for music, but in the past few years she has squandered her abilities by pursuing increasingly unorthodox musical forms while neglecting her political connections. Her failure was epitomized by an incident in which she was invited to perform at Winter Court and declined the invitation because she was deep in the throes of a new composition, a strange piece that her sensei derided as "no better than Unicorn travel poetry." In exasperation, her mother arranged to have her sent to the Second City – not so much as a punishment as to deliver a wake-up call. Surely, her mother reasoned, a bright young woman like Chiharu would understand the message and change her behavior accordingly.



As it turned out, her mother's plan backfired. Chiharu found in the Second City a willing audience for her acoustic experiments. Perhaps this is because the Colonies are essentially a cultural backwater where even an artisan of dubious reputation is better than nothing at all; regardless, Chiharu has thrived here. She does play a traditional repertoire at official banquets and court functions, but she spends most of her spare time in her residence experimenting with new musical techniques and even with the native instruments of the Ivory Kingdoms, whose strange sounds ignite her creativity in a host of ways. Freed from the stifling expectations of traditional Rokugani society, Chiharu feels she can breathe again, and she is developing a network of admirers among the fellow iconoclasts of the Second City. Her interests are specific: musical innovation, in both style and sound. She exerts what political influence she has both to support her own musical experiments and to serve as a patron for other up-and-coming musicians in the Colonies.

Chiharu is not quite as oblivious to politics and intrigue as she appears. Her career offers her many opportunities to keep track of who in the courts wants what, why, and when. She has devised a musical code that allows her to pass on her information to Bayushi Ayaka's agents during her performances, though she has been distressed to notice that not all of what she learns is put to effective use – Ayaka seems more interested in opposing the Spider than in developing other resources for the clan. Regardless, this approach has enhanced Chiharu's value to the Scorpion in the Second City, and it secretly delights her that something as abstract as music can be put to such a pragmatic purpose. She hopes her usefulness will allow her to continue to rise in the ranks of the Scorpion and attain great prominence in the Second City; she has no intention of ever going back to the Empire, with its stifling conventions and conformity, although she still sends appropriately penitent letters to her mother from time to time.

### SHOSURO CHIHARU, AMBITIOUS MUSICIAN

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 3 WATER: 2 VOID: 3

AWARENESS: 4

Honor: 3.2 Status: 1.0 Glory: 5.7

*School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 2*

*Skills: Artisan: Music 6, Artisan: Poetry 3, Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Courtier 2, Etiquette (Conversation) 3, Lore: Music 4, Meditation 2, Perform: Biwa 4, Perform: Samisen 4, Perform: Song 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Temptation 2*

*Advantages: Allies (several), Great Potential (Artisan: Music), Voice*

*Disadvantages: Driven (musical experimentation)*



## SHOSURO SHUJI

### INFATUATED ENTERTAINER

Shosuro Shuji was not born a samurai; he was a child of peasants, blessed with good looks and extraordinary agility. The Shosuro family bought him from his heimin parents and adopted him, recognizing that he would be a superb addition to the ranks of their actors. Shuji has never regretted his good fortune, although he does feel a slight sense of obligation to his birth-parents and sends them occasional tokens of his esteem: out-of-season fruits, sturdy bolts of cloth, new sandals. Naturally, Shuji never physically visits them – that would imply ingratitude to his Shosuro patrons – but he does have an informant check in on them from time to time; when he learned his youngest sister was asking for stories of the Colonies, he suddenly felt an almost irresistible urge to visit the Colonies himself and find out what life was like there. He began quietly petitioning his superiors for permission to join the Scorpion contingent in the Second City.

Shuji's masters in the Scorpion Clan were not averse to his request. They know that life in the Colonies can often be harsh and uncivilized compared to the Empire, and a great deal of political benefit can accrue to anyone who can offer the more refined aspects of life to the colonists. Accordingly, the Shosuro have made a point of dispatching entertainers of various types, both commoners and samurai, to the Second City.

Shuji's most basic duty is simply to offer amusement to the courts. He spends a good deal of his time dancing, juggling, telling stories, and acting out parodies for the amusement of the Second City's most influential people. He does not resent this task; after all, it lets him employ his talents to the fullest... and people tend to let a lot of things slip around their toys.





However, the head of the Scorpion Embassy, Bayushi Ayaka, has set Shuji to a more difficult task: seducing the head of the Crab Embassy, Hida Kotone. Shuji has a healthy sense of self-preservation – a legacy, perhaps, of his peasant childhood – and had grave reservations about trying to manipulate a veteran Crab warrior in such a way. Still, orders were orders, and he felt it was unlikely that a pragmatic and hard-nosed woman like Kotone would be vulnerable to any such blandishments, no matter his efforts. After all, most people in the Second City believed she had separated from her husband because she was uninterested in amorous activities of any kind.

To Shuji's great surprise, Kotone welcomed the dalliance. Surprise soon gave way into genuine infatuation: for all that Kotone pretended to be a stereotypical Crab brute, she had a subtle mind and a complex personality, and she treated with Shuji with as much respect and affection as anyone could expect, especially considering their relative stations. Shuji quickly found himself feeling guilty that he was reporting on the affair to his clan, and tried to console himself with the thought that Kotone surely already knew what was going on.

Lately, however, Bayushi Ayaka has been pressing Shuji to manipulate Kotone into taking direct action against the Spider Clan. Shuji believes it would not be too difficult to plant such an idea in his lover's mind – by now he knows just how starved for a real challenge Kotone is. But doing so without exposing himself may be considerably more difficult, and the inevitable result – the painful end of their pleasant covert romance – is almost too painful to contemplate. Still, orders are orders, and Shosuro Shuji knows that without the Scorpion Clan he would have spent his life working in a rice paddy. Thus far he has managed to put Ayaka off by claiming that he needs more time to work up to the idea, but he knows she will soon demand concrete results.

And then there are those subtle, worrying, heart-wrenching signs that Kotone may be starting to grow bored with him...

## SHOSURO SHUJI, INFATUATED ENTERTAINER

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 2

Honor: 1.8 Status: 1.0 Glory: 3.7

School/Rank: Shosuro Actor 2

Skills: Acting (*Kabuki*) 4, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette (*Courtesy*) 3, Investigation 2, Knives 2, Meditation 3, Perform: Dance 4, Perform: Juggling 3, Perform: Poetry 3, Sincerity (*Deceit*) 3, Temptation (*Seduction*) 3

Advantages: Allies (*Shosuro family*), Dangerous Beauty

Disadvantages: Dark Secret (*born a peasant*), Obligation (*Shosuro family*), True Love (*Hida Kotone*)

## YOGO HIDEKI

### SMALL-TIME ENFORCER

The Scorpion are great believers in the use of disposable agents, pawns, and cats-paws to carry out their more dangerous duties. Yogo Hideki is one of many expendable agents that Bayushi Ayaka has brought with her to the Second City, minor samurai who perform minor duties until the time arrives for them to be sacrificed on behalf of some Scorpion plot.

Hideki's parents died in a mysterious fire when he was quite young; he was taken in by his aunt and uncle, but proved a disappointment to them. Although he showed talent with weapons of all sorts, he had the kind of blunt, straightforward outlook one would expect more from a Crab or a Mantis, and showed almost no sign of proper Scorpion cunning. Hideki, for his part, was frustrated they were unable to be content with his clear martial prowess, and he left his family behind at the earliest opportunity. He maintains minimal contact with them out of a sense of obligation, but his occasional letters to them tend to be brief and curt, and their responses are likewise chilly.

Hideki hoped the Second City would be a more hospitable place for someone with his particular talents, but it turns out Scorpion are Scorpion wherever they go. He frequently receives orders to intimidate this merchant or threaten that innkeeper, and while he always follows his orders, he is never clear on the machinations going on behind the scenes. He knows this lack of knowledge is deliberate, maintained for reasons of security, but this does not console him much. He longs to have a clear role, to serve in a place where his position in the larger picture is plain and where he can get the recognition he feels he deserves.

Recently Hideki's superiors have asked him to keep an eye on the Spider bushi who like to congregate at the Second City's Red Vine sake house (a place known for serving every form of alcohol available in the Colonies other than sake – see Book One for details). At first Hideki regarded this assignment with anger – like most Scorpion, he was deeply embittered toward





the Spider, blaming them for the new Festering Pit that opened in the Scorpion lands twenty years ago. However, he has belatedly discovered that many of the Spider are people after his own heart: blunt-spoken, straightforward, and with a respect for force and vigor. They were not exactly welcoming to him, but they have grown to tolerate his presence at the Red Vine, and occasionally he and the Spider samurai exchange veiled stories of the kinds of dirty work they do for their respective masters.

What began as an unpleasant but unavoidable duty is now becoming one of Hideki's favorite activities. Intellectually, he knows he cannot trust the Spider, but he tells himself that at least they make no secret of their agenda, unlike the Scorpion masters who use him like a cheap puppet. Increasingly, Hideki seeks out their company even when he is off-duty, justifying his actions to himself with the thought that it never hurts to learn more about your enemies.

### YOGO HIDEKI, ENFORCER

AIR: 3 EARTH: 3 FIRE: 2 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

REFLEXES: 4 WILLPOWER: 4 AGILITY: 4

Honor: 2.0 Status: 1.0 Glory: 1.3 Infamy: 2.6

*School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 3*

*Skills: Athletics 3, Commerce 2, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 1, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation (Bullying) 4, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Spider Clan 2, Lore: Underworld 3, Medicine 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Spears 2, Staves 3, Stealth (Sneaking) 3*

*Advantages: Strength of the Earth*

*Disadvantages: Infamous (thug), Frail Mind*

### SOSHI HIROAKI

#### KUROIBAN SHUGENJA

Soshi Hiroaki fell into the ranks of the Kuroiban order sideways, as it were, by listening at doorways he should not have been aware of. The story is such a familiar one that it hardly merits discussion among the Scorpion. Still, when he was caught eavesdropping his sensei remarked that he was, after all, a skilled shugenja and his talents at snooping might as well be put to use if he could manage to learn the value of discretion. He didn't have to add that Hiroaki's family would suffer alongside him if he proved less than reliable in his new role.

As one of the Kuroiban's newer members, Hiroaki was sent to the Second City to help keep an eye on the Spider. Like Yogo Hideki, Hiroaki is considered expendable, and knows it. However, by the same token as an expendable agent he has a great deal of freedom of action, freedom he would not have had back in the Empire proper; he enjoys that, at times even finding it downright exhilarating.

What Hiroaki does not find exhilarating is the climate of the Colonies and especially all the strange and unpleasant new sicknesses that lurk there. In Rokugan proper he had always enjoyed excellent health, so it was appalling and



deeply frustrating to find himself reduced to a helpless, retching invalid every time a new fever swept through the Second City. Although he does his best to keep up with the activities of the Spider Clan, his poor health means he must rely on agents sent in his stead far more often than he would like.

In order to deal with his bouts of illness, Hiroaki has emulated several other samurai in the Second City and begun to rely on the services of one of the surviving Ivory Kingdom natives, a young gaijin woman by the name of Abhya. He resents her strange herbal infusions and cloying incense, but the truth is that her treatments have been more effective than anything he has been able to come up with on his own. His fellow shugenja among the Scorpion have likewise had little luck in devising blessings that can ease the new land's sicknesses, so Hiroaki feels he has no choice but to continue using Abhya's services. For her part, Abhya is always calm, patient, and deferential to an almost unsettling degree; Hiroaki cannot help suspecting she is up to something, but so far he has been unable to pin anything on her.

### SOSHI HIROAKI, KUROIBAN

AIR: 4 EARTH: 3 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 4

Honor: 1.6 Status: 2.0 Glory: 4.3

*School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 4/Kuroiban*

*Skills: Calligraphy (Cipher) 4, Courtier 3, Defense 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Hunting 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation (Interrogation) 4, Kenjutsu 2, Knives 2, Lore: Maho 4, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Lore: Shugenja 3, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 3, Spellcraft 4, Stealth (Sneaking) 4*

*Advantages: Allies (Kuroiban), Servant (Abhya)*

*Disadvantages: Bad Health, Meddler, Obligation (sensei)*





## The People of the Unicorn Clan

The Unicorn are one of the more successful and prominent clans in the Colonies and this has only increased recently with the ascension of Shinjo Tselu to the office of Ivory Champion. Since a Unicorn also currently holds the office of Emerald Champion within Rokugan itself, this means the clan is currently enjoying some of the highest political influence in its history, making them a very dangerous foe to any who might cross their path.

The Unicorn maintain a substantial garrison within the Second City and also control Journey's End Keep, one of the largest secondary strongholds in the Colonies. This also gives them effective control of the overland route between the Colonies and the Empire, an advantage which they exploit quite readily. They see the Colonies as a land of opportunity, a place where they can operate on an equal footing with the other clans and gain immense new wealth, territory, and political influence.

### SHINJO IZANAGI

#### HEAD OF THE UNICORN EMBASSY

Shinjo Izanagi was one of the first Unicorn samurai to volunteer for service in the Colonies, accompanying the Spider in their long journey across the wastelands to the former Ivory Kingdoms. Though he was one of the younger men in that first Unicorn expedition, he showed a very sharp mind and was quick to adapt to the untested environment. Where many others might have been bewildered and confused by the strange sights, sounds, and creatures of the fallen kingdom, Izanagi kept his head and soon maneuvered himself into positions where he could publicly support and assist in the development of the Second City and the growth of the Colonies as a whole.

Izanagi is not a dishonorable individual as such, but to imply he is not a shrewd would be a disservice to him. Though trained as a bushi, he recognizes the political realm is very much a battlefield as well, and his experience as a scout helps him to understand the political positions of the clans within the Colonies. From the beginning he has been

constantly pondering how best to use this understanding to the Unicorn Clan's advantage.

When the previous Governor died in mysterious circumstances, Izanagi was one of the samurai who took the lead in searching for his murderers. This ensured that when the new Governor took over she recognized and praised Izanagi's exploits. It was a natural choice at that point for the Unicorn Champion to appoint him head of the clan's embassy in the Colonies. Izanagi took to his new status with incredible vigor, moving quickly to secure relations with several friendly clans while immediately working to undermine the positions of the rest. The Lion were considered technically responsible for the death of the previous Governor, and Izanagi exploited this political weakness to the fullest, eventually wresting control of guarding the Governor's Estate from the Lion themselves. Of course, he also saw to it that the Lion saved considerable face during the transition so they would not immediately seek retaliation through force of arms. Nonetheless, the Lion were not unaware of the implications in the loss of their duty, and while hostilities between the two groups within the Second City are purely rhetorical for the moment, there are constant rumors that the Lion have not forgotten the insult the Unicorn showed them.

Currently, Shinjo Izanagi is using the status of the Unicorn to slowly push for more control of the Second City, being careful to highlight the deeds of the Unicorn while also carefully pointing out the weaknesses of the clans who do not call the Unicorn their allies. He tries to also use Shinjo Tselu, the Ivory Champion, to support his political campaigns – however, this is not always as easy as it might seem, since Tselu is both politically naïve and infuriatingly idealistic. Izanagi has also taken a great deal of time to develop a close relationship with the head of the Mantis Embassy, and the two are working together to seize as much control in the Colonies as they can get away with.

### SHINJO IZANAGI,

#### HEAD OF THE UNICORN EMBASSY

AIR: 4 EARTH: 3 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 4

Honor: 4.2

Status: 4.0

Glory: 2.8

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 5

Skills: Artisan: Poetry 4, Calligraphy (Cipher) 5, Commerce 2, Courtier (Rhetoric, Manipulation) 7, Defense 2, Etiquette (Conversation, Courtesy) 7, Games: Letters 5, Games: Sadane 4, Intimidation (Control) 3, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2, Perform: Oratory 4, Sincerity (Honesty, Deceit) 6, Stealth 2, Temptation (Bribery) 6

Advantages: Allies (many), Blackmail (many), Social Position (clan ambassador)

Disadvantages: Driven (defeat the Spider), Obligation (to the clan)





## HORIUCHI UTAERU

### INNOCENT SHUGENJA-KO

Horiuchi Utaeru was born just after the tragic bloodshed of the Destroyer War came to an end. She saw first hand the devastation the war had inflicted on her home and her family, of whom only a few scattered remnants survived. She watched her mother spend every moment and every ounce of energy she possessed rebuilding not only their home but the courage and spirit of everyone around them. While still a little girl, Utaeru swore to always help her fellow man in time of need. She felt it was her calling as one of the last of the Horiuchi to be a symbol of hope for all those around her.

Utaeru was skilled with the kami of water, and when it came time to begin settling the Colonies the Unicorn felt it would be wise to send a mixture of older experienced samurai with talented younger ones so the two could support and learn from each other. When Utaeru's aging mother asked her if she wanted to journey to the Second City, Utaeru couldn't help but shout with joy at the thought. This was her opportunity to truly fulfill her childhood vow, to do good not only for the Unicorn Clan but also for the Empire as a whole. She would bring the

hard work and generous, tranquil nature of the Horiuchi to the Colonies and to infuse their spirit into the efforts of the Empire to expand.

Utaeru took the new experiences of the Colonies in stride, always seeking to better understand the strange new world the Rokugai now found themselves a part of. Her considerable talents with the kami of Water made her an important resource in this strange land, especially given the frequency of illness and injury among the early settlers. The children of the settlers in particular came to treasure her presence, as she often would perform tricks with the kami or spend evenings telling them stories.

Despite her somewhat naïve and carefree nature, however, Utaeru is aware the political situation in the Second City is very tense, and so far she has been careful not to be swayed by the words of other clan samurai or to let herself to be put into a situation where her actions might bring dishonor to the Unicorn. Of course, she is hardly a political mastermind, so there is no assurance that her efforts will always be successful. In the meantime, however, Utaeru continues to be a beacon of positive spirit in the Colonies, exerting as much influence as a single woman can manage. She hopes that she will someday be able to look back and see all the good she has done for the Second City and the Empire.







## HORIUCHI UTAERU, INNOCENT SHUGENJA-KO

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 4 VOID: 3

Honor: 6.0 Status: 1.0 Glory: 4.5

*School/Rank:* Horiuchi Shugenja 2

*Skills:* Athletics 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 1, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 2, Investigation 1, Lore: Shugenja 2, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Perform: Storytelling 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Spellcraft 3

*Advantages:* Higher Purpose (symbol of hope), Paragon (Compassion)

*Disadvantages:* Idealistic

## MOTO GAHNIL

### SULLEN YOJIMBO

Moto Gahnil was once a member of the Moto House Guard, one of the chosen elite tasked with protecting the Moto family daimyo, Moto Chen. Gahnil was a stoic man who carried himself with the quiet pride of one who always did his duty to clan and lord. He wanted very little for himself, and actively sought to avoid marriage negotiations so as to not be distracted from his duties by a wife. In many ways Gahnil was an example of a true samurai – he served without question, fought with a tenacity rarely seen outside the berserkers of the Crab Clan, had no personal agenda and nursed no grudges or resentments. In Gahnil's mind, the battlefield was almost a different plane of existence – what happened there remained there, and those who walked away should call one another friend, for they have confronted death and returned to live another day.

When Moto Chen and his wife Akasha disappeared, Gahnil's entire purpose in life seemed to have escaped him like a fleeting spirit in the night. He had failed – and worse yet, he wasn't even there to put his life on the line to stop it. For the first time in his life, Gahnil experienced a complete crisis of being. What was he to do? He considered seppuku, but concluded it would be a hollow act, a cowardly way to atone for his failure. Then he considered taking a musha shugyo, a warrior's pilgrimage, to travel the Empire and seek out his missing Clan Champion. But such was not meant to be.

Gahnil was awarded the honor (or rather, in his mind, the punishment) of being one of the escorts for the Unicorn as they traveled to the Ivory Kingdoms and began

to establish themselves in what became the Colonies. Secretly, Gahnil hoped something would go horribly, terribly awry on the journey so that he could give his life in service, as he had always sought to do, but such did not occur and he arrived alive and well in the new land. Gahnil reluctantly accepted this as a sign from the Lords of Death that he was to remain alive and continue fulfilling his duties to the Unicorn Clan until they deemed him worthy for judgment.

Gahnil is, to be blunt, too good at his job. No matter how often he may long for death and judgment, no matter how many times he is attacked by the creatures and bandits of the Colonies or even by dishonorable fellow Rokugani, he triumphs over and over again. He simply cannot bring himself to fail a second time. Now, he serves as the personal yojimbo and chief military advisor to Shinjo Izanagi, the head of the Unicorn Embassy. While Izanagi does not tend to get into trouble often, but Gahnil still secretly longs for the day when he can give his life in glorious battle for the Unicorn, purging his shame and going to be judged by the Lords of Death. This wish colors every aspect of his personality, leaving him sullen and almost bitter, though as a samurai he does his best to avoid showing his true feelings.

### MOTO GAHNIL, SULLEN YOJIMBO

AIR: 2 EARTH: 4 FIRE: 3 WATER: 3 VOID: 3

REFLEXES: 4 AGILITY: 4 STRENGTH: 4

Honor: 4.8 Status: 2.5 Glory: 3.6

*School/Rank:* Moto Bushi 4

*Skills:* Athletics 4, Battle 4, Commerce 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 1, Heavy Weapons 3, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3, Jiu-jutsu 2, Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 6, Knives 2, Kyujutsu (Dai-Kyu) 5, Lore: Theology (Lords of Death) 3, Polearms 4, Sincerity 2, Spears 4, Stealth 2

*Advantages:* Luck (2 ranks), Quick, Social Position (yojimbo to Shinjo Izanagi), Strength of the Earth

*Disadvantages:* Driven (not to fail again), Doubt

## UTAKU KIMIONO

### BITTER COURTIER

Utaku Kimiono was born with something very rare in the blood of any Unicorn family, but most especially within that of the Utaku – a fear of horses. At a young age, her family discovered this terrible dishonor, and despite all of their efforts, Kimiono could not get within a few feet of a horse before she would collapse to the ground, shaking, crying, and screaming in uncontrolled terror. Deeply embarrassed, her family moved her as far away from the Utaku as they possibly could, hopefully shielding themselves from the dishonor their daughter brought to the family name. She was sent to the Ide for training, and her family did their best to forget about her and focus their attention on their second daughter... who showed all the connection and ability with horses that had been missing from Kimiono.





From the time she enrolled with the Ide until the day of her gempukku, Kimiono's family spoke to her but a single time: at the gempukku ceremony itself, where her mother spoke words of pride and honor that, while they seemed genuine to most, were clearly forced to Kimiono's ears. She knew her family would always see her as a stain upon their name and she felt nothing but anger and resentment at her mother's flowered words. However, thanks to her training with the Ide she maintained an outward face of tranquility, the unflappable calm that the Ide are so known for.

What Kimiono lacked in swordsmanship and athleticism, she more than made up for with her sharp mind and superb awareness of the people around her. Perhaps because she felt rejected by her own blood, she was fascinated by foreign cultures and studied them whenever she got the chance. By the time of the Destroyer War her reputation in this field was such that the clan leadership called on her knowledge in search of some small advantage against the fearsome gaijin invaders. She also managed to advance her career through a certain ability to manipulate others, particularly those with dark pasts that might become exposed; her training had taught her that a tranquil, peaceful exterior could disarm her opponents, a tactic the Ide employed often throughout the Empire's history. However, Kimiono used this tactic to mask her cold and bitter feelings for other people, and exploited their conceptions of an 'innocent' Ide to manipulate and destroy anyone who opposed her.

When word came that the Unicorn were to be sending a contingent of samurai to the Colonies to establish an embassy and presence in the new Second City, Utaku Kimiono was easily able to position herself for the role. She did not push to be the ambassador for the Unicorn, since that would make her too much of a public figure. Instead she supported Shinjo Izanagi to take the role for himself, accepting a lesser position within the Unicorn delegation where she could operate with fewer eyes on her. Kimiono feels she is best able to control other people if she is thought below notice, and will often use her image as a peaceful and serene courtier to insinuate herself into others' counsels and even to destabilize other clans' political position within the Colonies. She was especially instrumental in weakening the Lion Clan's standing after the death of the previous Governor.

Lurking beneath all of Kimiono's activities is her enduring hatred toward her family. While she does work on behalf of the Unicorn Clan as a whole, she will

go to great and terrible lengths to ruin the life of any Utaku, male or female, who comes into her presence. It is a life-long quest for vengeance, one which will likely only end with her death.

### UTAKU KIMIONO, BITTER COURTIER

AIR: 3 EARTH: 2 FIRE: 2 WATER: 2 VOID: 3  
 AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 4 INTELLIGENCE: 3 PERCEPTION: 4  
 Honor: 3.6 Status: 2.0 Glory: 3.5

*School/Rank: Ide Emissary 3*

*Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Intimidation (Control) 3, Investigation 3, Lore: Gaijin 6, Lore: Heraldry 3, Perform: Poetry 2, Perform: Storytelling 3, Sincerity (Honesty, Deceit) 4, Temptation 3*

*Advantages: Perceived Honor (2 ranks), Clear Thinker, Crafty, Heart of Vengeance (her family)*

*Disadvantages: Failure of Bushido (Loyalty), Phobia (horses)*

### IUCHI SAOTOME

#### CURIOUS EXPLORER

The Unicorn are often said to be most at home on the open plains, following the wind as they journey through the world in search of new knowledge and understanding. For Iuchi Saotome, however, the open plains are a place to be avoided. In his youth he discovered a small cave in a forest near Shiro Iuchi, a cave containing a long forgotten shrine to the Fortunes; ever since, Saotome has







sought to discover the hidden, dark, forgotten parts of the Empire. Not for him the ride across the open field, but rather the painstaking exploration of obscure places and dark corners. His skill with the kami made it inevitable he would be enrolled for shugenja training, but while many Iuchi focus on the healing and beneficial properties of the element of Water, Saotome was much more interested in using the Kami to explore the world and uncover secrets Rokugan had forgotten.

In the early years of his adulthood, during the peace that followed the end of the Destroyer War, Saotome enjoyed a quiet and simple life of exploring mountains, forests, and caves. He was known as a rather socially inept young man who committed the occasional faux pas in court, and thus when the time came to select samurai to journey to the Second City his daimyo passed him over. Saotome, however, was not to be deterred from the opportunity to be one of the first to explore an uncharted foreign land. He begged his family for help, and with some reluctance they called in political favors to have him added to the expedition. In some ways they saw this as a blessing, since his peculiar interests could be something of an embarrassment.

Saotome had always preferred the remote, dark, and unlit parts of the world. But when he saw the Colonies for the first time, it was as though he had finally come home. The vast jungles, dotted with ruins, held countless wonders without end, just waiting to be discovered. Saotome was not one to seek glory or station from his discoveries; he wanted only to share them with the world, a world which often found them much less interesting or exciting than he did.

Iuchi Saotome is widely considered to be the foremost expert on gaijin artifacts and ruins in the Second City, and he is often sought out for assistance in identifying relics or exploring the strange ruins left behind by the peoples of the Ivory Kingdoms. While there are other scholars of gaijin matters in the Second City, Saotome

is by far the most knowledgeable of them, his academic studies supplemented by numerous trips into the jungles and ruins that surround the settled regions of the Colonies. He is always happy to help others who share his interests, but his superiors Shinjo Izanagi and Utaku Kimiono make sure to use his skills and knowledge as political levers to win favors and support from the other clans, especially the Phoenix.

### IUCHI SAOTOME, SHUGENJA EXPLORER

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 4	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4 WILLPOWER: 3 INTELLIGENCE: 4				
Honor: 4.9		Status: 2.0		Glory: 6.3

*School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 4*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 3, Courtier 2, Defense 1, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 4, Investigation 4, Lore: Gaijin 3, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 6, Lore: Shugenja 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 2, Spellcraft 4*

*Advantages: Dark Paragon (Knowledge), Forbidden Knowledge (Ivory Kingdoms), Language (Ivindi)*

*Disadvantages: Fascination (secret corners of the world)*

### SHINJO SHIMIKOTO

#### CRIME BOSS

The Unicorn have always maintained a thriving economic base in the Empire, helped along by both the wealth of their lands and their extensive (albeit often covert) trade with the Burning Sands. Their skilled, intelligent merchants serve the clan with hard work, smart business decisions, and dedication to their duty. Shinjo Shimikoto outwardly exemplifies all of this, but his view of his role within the Unicorn Clan is much, much different from others'.

When he was a young man fresh past his gempukku, Shinjo Shimikoto saw an elderly shopkeeper assaulted by a group of ronin, supposedly working for a local merchant from the Crab Clan. The shopkeeper owed the Crab money, or so the ronin claimed, and they were there to collect. The poor merchant was brutalized and eventually handed over all the money he had, leaving him with a ruined shop, one eye swollen shut, and half the teeth knocked from his mouth. Shimikoto watched this scene not with horror or disgust, but with curiosity and fascination. He realized these ronin, who might have been perfectly willing to abuse and rob commoners on their own, were under the control of a Great Clan samurai and thus their dishonorable actions were being focused in a positive direction for the Crab. To his mind their cruelty and criminality were as unavoidable as the Jade Sun rising every morning, but they were being focused, controlled, and used in a way that benefited the man in charge of them.

Shimikoto concluded that he, like the mysterious Crab he had never met, would control the scum and criminals in the Empire, even if it meant he had to become like them in order to succeed. He saw great benefit for the Unicorn in this endeavor – while he was only an average





bushi in skill, he could offer unique service to the clan in this new role. His family was wealthy, so it was relatively easy for Shimikoto to become a merchant patron; with his business established, he began hiring the scum of the area and putting them to work for the Unicorn. Once he began on this path, Shimikoto soon found himself drawn steadily deeper into the criminal underworld and involved in all manner of sinister dealings – extortion, opium smuggling, supplying weapons to commoner gangs, or even bribing rival gangs to stage fights with each other in the establishments and businesses of rival Great Clans. Shimikoto recognized his actions were quite dishonorable, but in his mind this was made acceptable by their greater purpose: to benefit and strengthen the Unicorn, regardless of cost.

Shinjo Shimikoto volunteered to travel to the Colonies; with the steady expansion of the Second City, he saw a new market ripe for his activities. Although the city has little in the way of a criminal underclass as yet, Shimikoto believes it is only a matter of time before this changes, and he has already begun establishing contacts and networks among the ronin and commoners of the city. Soon, he trusts, his efforts will come to fruition and the Second City will be dominated by criminals who he controls. In the meantime he only needs to avoid the attention of any over-curious magistrates or Great Clan samurai who think he does his job a little too well.

### SHINJO SHIMIKOTO, ASPIRING CRIMELORD

AIR: 3    EARTH: 3    FIRE: 3    WATER: 3    VOID: 2

Honor: 3.2    Status: 1.0    Glory: 2.4

*School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 2*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Commerce 5, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 1, Intimidation (Bullying, Control) 5, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 3, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Underworld 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 4, Spears 2, Stealth 3, Temptation (Bribery) 4*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Perceived Honor (2 ranks), Dark Paragon (Control), Wealthy*

*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (crimelord), Failure of Bushido (Honor)*

## The People of the Imperial Families

The Imperial families do not have any kind of unified agenda or goal in the Second City, aside from the desire to maintain the primacy of the Empress and their own positions as her personal vassals. Individual members of the three families usually follow their own agendas, which can range from political ambitions to merely collecting art.

### MIYA CHIKAKO

Miya Chikako is an aide to the head of the Imperial Explorers, and as such she is a frequently seen presence in the courts. She is a favorite of the current leader of the Explorers and is regularly brought in from the field to present reports to the courts on behalf of Explorers working at the far edges of the Colonies. Her popularity is little surprise once one meets her; she is cheerful and friendly, yet radiates a certain demure shyness that is generally seen as signifying both naiveté and a pure spirit. None within the halls of the Second City would dare think ill of her, and she has acquired a wide circle of friends who collectively protect her reputation and ensure her experiences in the court is always a pleasant and productive one. Indeed, her periodic visits are often seen as something of a breath of fresh air in the stifling intrigues of the Ivory Court.

In reality, the shy and demure behavior which others perceive is driven by fear. Miya Chikako only returns to the courts of the Second City because her duty requires it. In the court she is perpetually surrounded by crowds, hundreds of people who she does not know, whose intentions are a mystery; the experience always leaves her feeling emotionally overwhelmed. She would never dare to defy her orders, of course, but in truth she much prefers to spend her days out in the wilderness with the Explorers, well away from the noise and bustle of the Second City. Animals are more amenable company to her than people. To make matters worse, she is convinced she is not particularly skilled as a herald; though she has been trained in the family techniques, she finds it difficult to concentrate on such matters. The wilds hold her attention far more thoroughly than human society.

Perhaps unfortunately, much of the love Chikako has for her work comes out naturally when she speaks about her duties or tells stories of her journeys. Consequently, her reports to the court have an almost spellbinding quality that earns her greater and greater favor. This ensures she will continue to be a popular visitor to the Second City and will continue to serve as her superior's favored spokesperson. In all likelihood she will eventually receive a permanent posting as a representative of the Explorers in court, and while she would never refuse such a duty, she privately dreads the prospect.

### MIYA CHIKAKO, UNHAPPY AIDE

AIR: 3    EARTH: 3    FIRE: 3    WATER: 3    VOID: 2

Honor: 7.1    Status: 2.0    Glory: 2.0

*School/Rank: Miya Herald 2*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Courtier (Rhetoric) 2, Defense 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting (Trailblazing) 5, Lore: Heraldry 1, Perform: Storytelling 4, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Absolute Direction, Touch of the Spirit Realms: Chikushudo*

*Disadvantages: Doubt (Lore: Heraldry), Phobia: Crowds*





## OTOMO HANAKO

### UNHAPPY TRADITIONALIST

Otomo Hanako hates her life. Raised in a highly traditional and orthodox Otomo family, she knew about the Second City only through alarming stories whispered by her classmates in between their studies. These tales were laced with lurid tales of barbaric gaijin, filthy and almost inhuman Spider, horrible heat and oppressive humidity mixed with torrential storms lasting months at a time, and the most scandalous clothing imaginable. Imagine her horror, then, when shortly after her gempukku she was told her family had arranged her marriage to a Phoenix functionary in the Second City. She was just one more Imperial married into the Great Clans to maintain the Otomo family's influence over them.

When Hanako arrived in the Second City, she found that every rumor she had heard was all too true. Blessedly, her future husband Shiba Tatsune lived within the Imperial District, and its tall buildings and the walls of the surrounding Military District did at least separate her from the filthy gaijin hordes she could see from a distance. The city was full of them, strange-smelling people who spoke an outrageous and horrific language. The Imperial district was incredibly claustrophobic but at least the people who lived there were familiar... after a fashion.

Otomo Hanako is hopelessly stubborn in her behavior, a traditionalist to the most extreme limit. She dresses as much as possible in accord with the fashions she is familiar with from her last year in the mainland Empire, no matter how suffocating the heat and humidity may become. She goes out of her way to make her future husband's life difficult (within the bounds of propriety, of course), both to punish him for bringing her to this terrible place and in the remote hope that he may call off the engagement. She tries to gather whatever political support she can for traditionalist attitudes, hoping to keep pockets of the 'real Rokugan' alive within the city. However, her efforts are doomed to failure. Faced with the nearly overwhelming influence of the Imperial Governor and her favored advisors, Otomo Hanako is all but powerless, unable to do more than spin rumors. Most of the senior diplomats of the court largely ignore her in favor of those members of the Otomo family who actually carry real influence, such as the Governor's siblings. Her only followers are among some of the younger and less connected guests of the court, who have failed to grasp the nature of her status and attempt to curry her favor merely because of the fact that she is an Otomo.

Meanwhile, the date of her marriage creeps slowly closer, the date when she will be inextricably bound to the Second City for the rest of her life. It is a prospect she finds all but unbearable.

### OTOMO HANAKO, UNHAPPY TRADITIONALIST

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 3	VOID: 2
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 3		
Honor: 5.5		Status: 2.0		Glory: 1.0

*School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 1*

*Skills: Artisan: Poetry 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Defense 1, Etiquette 3, Intimidation (Control) 3, Investigation 2, Knives 1, Perform: Oratory 2, Sincerity 2*

*Advantages: Social Position (member of the Otomo family)*

*Disadvantages: Bitter Betrothal, Rumormonger*

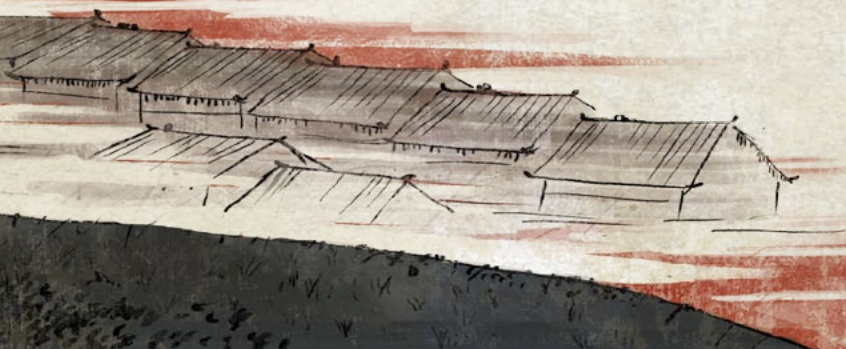
### SEPPUN JUROU

Seppun Jurou is an elderly priest who works in the Ministry of Ceremonies, serving as a mid-tier functionary – the same duty he has followed since his arrival in the Second City more than a decade ago. He is one of a dwindling number of traditionalist hold-outs of the era before the current Governor took power. Many of his fellow traditionalists have resigned from their posts or even committed kanshi in protest of the many changes the new Governor has initiated, but Jurou has not followed them. He remains within the court, quietly tending to his work.

Despite being a rigid traditionalist, or perhaps even because of it, Jurou finds himself unwilling to offer open opposition to the Governor's more radical policies regarding the maintenance of the Colonies and the organization of her court. No matter how much her actions may disturb him, the fact remains that Otomo Suikihime is the chosen appointee of the Divine Empress, and as such she is entitled to his obedience regardless of whether he agrees with what she does. This leaves the aging priest in a perpetually uncomfortable position.

The blessing of his position within the Ministry is that he has been permitted to continue to preserve and uphold traditional religious practices within the Colonies, a task that stays well within his sense of honor and propriety since Suikihime's more unusual choices have not been in the field of religion. He prays nightly that she will continue to avoid outright blasphemy and his faith in her as a servant ordained by the Heavens' representative will remain justified.

Seppun Jurou can usually be found at the fringes of religious assemblies, available when needed but otherwise quiet. Despite considerable skill as a priest and many years of experience, he has never been an ambitious man, and his life has been spent in lesser functionary roles rather than those which his age and name might suggest. Nor does he hold any favor in the eyes of Governor Suikihime,







who appears to simply be patiently waiting for him to retire or die. Thus he remains a minor if ever-present force in the background of religious activities.

Jurou is an old man, calm, a bit dour, and slow to speak. He rarely participates in festivals or other such frivolities, and spends most of his evenings in solemn prayer and meditation. His wife has long since passed and his children left years ago to undertake their own duties. Although he makes little effort in politics, he can be a powerful (if constrained) ally to those who share his cares and attitudes. And he does take a certain quiet joy in seeing or hearing of his grandchildren back in the Empire, training in the spiritual arts – the bloodline of magic is strong in his family. If anyone were to actually ask about his family, he could probably spend hours talking about little Hiroshi and Kunio, who seem to be one of the only pleasures left in his waning years.

### SEPPUN JUROU, AGED SHUGENJA

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 5		
Honor: 9.5		Status: 4.0	Glory: 4.0	

*School/Rank: Seppun Shugenja 4*

*Skills: Calligraphy (Cipher) 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, Investigation (Notice) 4, Lore: History 3, Lore: Shugenja 5, Lore: Theology 5, Medicine 2, Meditation 4, Sincerity (Honesty) 4, Spellcraft 5*

*Advantages: Social Position (high priest of the Imperial District Temple)*

*Disadvantages: Frail Mind, Weakness (Reflexes, Agility)*







## "DAIGOTSU SEITO" (GOJU SEITO)

SPY

Daigotsu Seito vaguely recalls a time when he was not Daigotsu Seito. He whispers the shattered fragments of old memories to himself every night before bed, like a nursery rhyme, chuckling about how valuable some think such things as memories are. In truth, he is not even sure the memories he recalls are really his or those of some other poor soul consumed by the Shadow Dragon.

He doesn't really care.

Seito is the perfect example of a willing servant of the Shadow Dragon.

Even though he has not been fully consumed, he knows it is only a matter of

time before he becomes a faceless tool of the darkness, a living blade used at its whim. It allows him to retain the face he wears like a mask only because it suits its purposes to do so. To him this is as it should be. His face is a tool, after all, no different than a kusari-gama. A tool that disarms the public and makes them ignore him that much more, leave him to his petty and meaningless duties. His memories are tools too, weapons to disarm the curious with glimmers and recollections of his "father" and "mother," of "good old grandfather Benkei" who once slew three bandits in a raid on their compound. Stories such as these disarm all but the most suspicious of individuals, and avoiding those ones' notice is a simple matter of never doing anything that actually draws their attention.

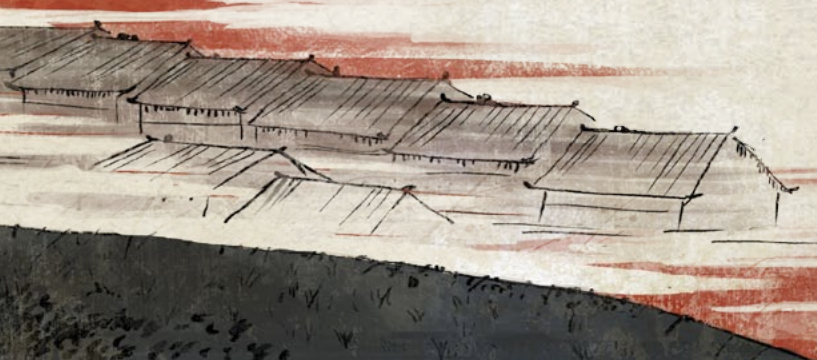
Seito's true function is simple: to watch. He is the eyes and ears of numerous Spider functionaries in the Second City. Most of them do not openly serve within the court of the Imperial Governor, but nevertheless there must be means by which swift contact is maintained, and "Daigotsu Seito" is a swift and ready messenger when the time comes to send word. He is free of the Taint and easily forgettable, exactly the sort of Spider that others prefer to have around, the sort who doesn't reek of oozing sores, the sort they can simply pretend doesn't exist. And while they are ignoring him, he is listening to them, to all of them.

Seito has no ambition, no desire other than to serve the Shadow Dragon. He has spent years subverting the last shreds of his humanity and exists as little more than an empty shell with a gift for avoiding notice, hearing what others say, and seeing what others think nobody is paying attention to. He serves sometimes as a minor functionary, sometimes as a ji-samurai nobody notices, sometimes even as a peasant. None remember him passing by, and few recall him even when they have given him some task in person. All is as it should be. He is, after all, utterly unimportant in the grand scheme of things. He only matters for what he sees and hears.

## The People of the Spider Clan

The Spider Clan faces a far more constrained role within the Colonies than the established Great Clans or even the Imperial families. The Spider are here on the command and the sufferance of the Divine Empress, who both exiled their Tainted members from the Empire and ordered them to conquer the former Ivory Kingdoms in her name. Thus, most of the Spider live in small strongholds along the edge of the settled region of the Colonies, dispatching constant raids and patrols into the barbaric jungles. The clan is under constant supervision from the Dragon, who are tasked with overseeing its activities, and also faces constant hostile scrutiny from the other Great Clans, especially the Scorpion and the Crab, both of whom would dearly love to find reason to exterminate the Spider entirely.

Only a minority of the Spider Clan visits or resides within the Second City, where they are generally regarded with suspicion, hostility, or at best grudging toleration. It is a measure of the Spider's position that they have no true embassy in the Second City and their Clan Champion's residence is located in the Peasant District. For the most part, the clan simply endures these privations, focusing itself on its duties and believing that its loyal veneration of the founder and Dark Kami Daigotsu will someday be rewarded.







A Note for GMs: The default mechanical depiction of Goju Seito is the “Shadowspawn” creature found in Chapter Seven of the L5R 4th Edition supplement *Enemies of the Empire*. However, if your campaign is using the option for Goju characters from the L5R 4th Edition supplement *The Great Clans*, Goju Seito may be represented by the following stat bloc:

### GOJU SEITO, SHADOWSPAWN SPY

AIR: 3	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 2
AGILITY: 4		PERCEPTION: 4		
Honor: 0.0		Status: 1.0		Glory: 0.5

*School/Rank:* Goju Ninja 2

*Skills:* Acting (Disguise) 5, Athletics 3, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation (Notice, Search) 5, Kenjutsu 3, Ninjutsu 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 6, Stealth 5,

*Advantages:* Bland, Read Lips

## DAIGOTSU ABALENDU

### GAIJIN CONVERT

Daigotsu Abalendu is not a person easily forgotten once one sees him. His garments and mon identify him as Spider, but also as Tainted. Although he shows no outward signs of Jigoku's touch, he clearly and openly admits his condition, hiding nothing from any scrutiny and following the letter of the law pertaining to where he is permitted. At first glance most would assume his lineage to be that of a Mantis. His skin is much darker than a typical Rokugani, albeit not in the fashion sometimes caused by the Taint. Instead, his clearly Ivindi features hint at intermarriage in the previous generation with the local population of the Ivory Kingdoms. His name, too, is more reminiscent of Rama Singh's people than of anything the Rokugani know.

Abalendu does not speak of his parentage, allowing the wagging tongues of those who consider him a disgusting and perverse curiosity to flap unabated. It is not something he thinks about with other than very mild curiosity. Under nearly constant surveillance by a Dragon handler from the Togashi family, he nevertheless behaves as if he is in absolute command of everything he sees. He maintains silence whenever possible, his accented voice being something that causes as many stares as his complexion, and this silence has given him a reputation as a man of considerable poise and training. In truth, his only concern is to ensure he is always completely prepared for any occasion when the Spider Clan requires his talents. He is one of the finer duelists available to the Spider.

Abalendu was found as a boy among the remnants of the Ivory Kingdoms populace, and was willing to receive the Taint in order to better his life and defeat the monsters who slew his family and friends. He received many gifts from the Taint, including great strength, and used them to crush the remnants of the Cult of the Destroyer. Although he has grasped Rokugani society to some extent, he still only barely understands it. The only aspect of its culture

he truly has mastered is iaijutsu, a practice in which he shows unique talent. In this way he can continue to serve the clan which gave him the change for vengeance.

### DAIGOTSU ABALENDU, GAIJIN CONVERT

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
REFLEXES: 4		AGILITY: 4		
Honor: 0.4		Status: 2.0		Glory: 4.0

*Shadowlands Taint:* 3.0

*School/Rank:* Daigotsu Bushi 3

*Skills:* Athletics 3, Battle 4, Etiquette 1, Games: Go 4, Heavy Weapons 3, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 5, Intimidation 4, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 4, Lore: Shadowlands 1, Lore: Shourido 3, Meditation 5, Sincerity 1, Stealth 3

*Advantages:* Balance, Dark Paragon (Perfection), Languages (Rokugani, Ivindi)

*Disadvantages:* Dark Secret (Gaijin)

*Shadowlands Powers:* Monstrous Strength, Unholy Beauty

## DAIGOTSU KAZUNA

### CONQUERER

When the people of the Second City's court speak of 'the conquerors and their depredations,' Daigotsu Kazuna is one of the first faces that comes to mind after Daigotsu Kanpeki himself. It is not that she is the vanguard of their forces, or even the most powerful warrior among them. It simply because her appearance is unmistakably and horridly memorable. Irrevocably Lost for as long as she has ever been seen in public, Kazuna's pitch-black skin gleams with a shine like polished metal. Her glowing red eyes seem to burn into whoever speaks to her with unbridled contempt.

Kazuna is never seen in any actual court functions, for no court would ever permit one of the Lost to enter it. Instead she serves as the military liaison between the Spider units assigned for the defense of the Second City and those in the field carrying out their duty to conquer the Ivory Kingdoms. As such, she is readily available at all times, but makes little to no effort to involve herself in anything beyond her military duties.

Kazuna despises her job and views everything around her that is not Spider with the utmost contempt. Attempts to manipulate her are fruitless, for as one of the Lost her mentality is no longer subject to normal human impulses; she simply refuses to comply with anything she has not been ordered to do by her superiors. She does not speak unless spoken to, and when she does her husky, rasping voice drips with hatred and derision, like an old and smoldering fire.

To Kazuna, other human beings are worthless bugs who have failed to acknowledge the rule of her god and his son. They rely on their degraded fantasy of "honor,"



on prayers to impotent spirits, on a weakness which they parade as being 'pure.' They are all weak, and she watches them with all of the patience of a rumbling volcano, waiting for the moment she is permitted to crush their pathetic little skulls. She privately makes a small game of considering which ones will run screaming from her when that moment comes and which will actually attempt to put up a fight.

In the small number of hours that Kazuna is permitted to herself, she paints. It is the only element of actual Rokugani society she still retains, being in all other ways nothing more than a chained monster. She uses this little pastime to depict the untold horrors she wishes to inflict on the cretins she deals with daily. The majority of these paintings are burned after completion, and few have ever been seen by others even within the Spider. Still, they give her something to occupy her time while enduring the mind-numbing banality of her duties in the Second City, duties she despises but nonetheless carries out because they are her master's command. It is not hers to question,

but to wait and to serve. As one of the Lost she truly has no choice but to do as Daigotsu wishes her to do.

## DAIGOTSU KAZUNA, CONQUERER

AIR: 3 EARTH: 5 FIRE: 4 WATER: 5 VOID: 3

REFLEXES: 4

Honor: 0.0 Status: 2.0 Glory: 1.0 Infamy: 4.3

*Shadowlands Taint: 5.7*

*School/Rank: Daigotsu Bushi 4*

*Skills: Artisan: Painting 4, Athletics 5, Battle 5, Defense 3, Hunting (Tracking) 4, Intimidation (Bullying) 6, Investigation (Notice) 4, Jiu-jitsu (Claws) 8, Kenjutsu (Katana) 1, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Spears 3, Stealth 3*

*Advantages: Hands of Stone, Strength of the Earth*

*Disadvantages: Antisocial (4 points), Infamous*

*Shadowlands Powers: Blackened Claws, Blessing of the Dark One, Chosen of Fu Leng, Strength of Madness*

*Shadowlands Mutations: Demonic Eyes, Discolored Skin (Ebony Black)*

**GM Note:** As one of the Lost, Kazuna cannot spend Void Points.

## SUSUMU MINORU

### SPIDER DIPLOMAT

Susumu Minoru has one of the most unenviable jobs in the entirety of the Second City: he is the only representative of the fledgling Susumu family that has been sent to the Colonies. The family is far too small and has far too few resources to support one of its own at a distance, so Minoru operates under the distant and diffident protection of the Daigotsu family and the sometimes-erratic members of the Spider Clan's monastic orders. This means he is effectively on his own in terms of political support, but to avoid sending any representatives to the Second City court would have been seen as an irretrievable sign of weakness. Besides, the Spider Clan could not afford to pass up any political opportunities in the Colonies, and the tiny Susumu are the closest thing to a diplomatic family that they have. So Minoru is here, perhaps as a sacrificial lamb to the Colonies' existence, completely alone save for the minimal support the Daigotsu family can offer. Yet despite these difficulties, he seems to have proven himself up to the task.

While Minoru is competent at handling himself within the court, he was not selected for this assignment due to exceptional skills or capabilities. Those with obvious talent are far too rare and valuable, too badly needed in the mainland of the Empire itself. Rather, he was considered just skilled enough to perhaps be able to navigate a threatening and dangerous court, while possessing a few unusual gifts that would be more useful there than in the Empire. He is also one of the few people who seem blessed to be able to easily endure the hotter and more humid climates of the





Colonies, and thus often dresses in far more traditional kimono than most Second City residents.

Minoru is a clear-thinking, calm, ordered, and disciplined man. Always neat and orderly, he is meticulous to a degree that would make one of his Asako ancestors proud, though they would surely frown on the allegiances he has claimed in joining the Spider. He is thorough to the point of being almost obsessive, something that allows him to operate extremely well on his own (he seldom makes significant errors) but which makes him a poor aide to the sometimes grand schemes of the rest of the Susumu family. He is considered by some of his cousins to be a touch slow-witted, less due to any weakness of his mental faculties as to the way he seems to completely lose himself in the most mundane of tasks. Left to his own devices, however, while he may not always move as quickly as his superiors might wish he consistently gets results, usually without causing unnecessary problems. This made him the ideal choice for the family's sole representative in the Colonies.

Minoru is more than willing to perform the role of a sacrificial lamb. He has long since recognized that he is not as gifted as his cousins and he does not expect this to change. He is, however, just good enough to avoid causing harm to their interests, and not ambitious enough to overstep his limited capacities. This makes him perfectly suited to serve as essentially an available conduit for those within the Second City who wish to make contact with the Spider Clan, either there or back in the mainland.

### SUSUMU MINORU, SPIDER DIPLOMAT

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 2
AWARENESS: 4		PERCEPTION: 4		
Honor: 1.1		Status: 4.0	Glory: 3.1	

#### Daigotsu Courtier 3

*Skills:* Acting 3, Artisan: Poetry 3, Athletics 2, Calligraphy (High Rokugani, Cipher) 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Defense 1, Etiquette (Courtesies) 5, Games: Go 3, Games: Kemari 3, Investigation 2, Knives 1, Meditation 3, Perform: Oratory 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 3, Temptation 2

*Advantages:* Clear Thinker, Social Position (Spider Clan diplomat)

*Disadvantages:* Consumed by Shourido: Insight (Meditation)

## ISAMU

### UNSTABLE MONK

The monk known as Isamu appears by all accounts to be a very typical member of the Order of the Spider. Like nearly all of the Order, he bears absolutely no touch of the Taint. He shares the view of his brethren back on the mainland that to submit himself to the Taint would be a sign of weakness, and a weak man who requires a crutch is unworthy to serve Daigotsu.

Isamu is an earnest, stoic, and dour man who speaks only infrequently and prefers to allow his imposing

presence to overwhelm those who meet him. He assists the Ministry of Ceremonies as a liaison point with the Order of the Spider, and as such is a man of some small influence even though he is one of the most reviled and disliked members of the Second City's court in general. Even more than his Tainted brethren, Isamu's existence represents the distance the Celestial Order has traveled from the familiar realm that existed prior to the Second Day of Thunder. A Tainted warrior is easily understood, even if it is allowed to live for one reason or another, but Isamu serves as a functionary for a religious sect that would have been considered tantamount to blasphemy not thirty years prior. And to many in the Empire and the Colonies alike, Isamu still is a blasphemer.

The monk seems to enjoy and even to an extent revel in the loathing he perceives around him. To him it demonstrates opportunities to remold and cleanse these weak-minded fools of their preconceived notions. Although he realizes their stubbornly recalcitrant ways will likely not be changed by anything other than raw force, he is still bound and determined to find the few within the court who have what he would consider some real potential within them.

What few realize about Isamu, however, is that while he does not bear the Shadowlands Taint, there is still a reason he was sent away from the Empire. Originally a peasant, he was captured in the midst of a Moon-touched fit of insanity. The touch of the Obsidian Moon has stood on him for his entire life, and his recruitment into the Order was as much in order to teach him the mental techniques to protect himself as it was to train him in their ways. Though he has managed to achieve considerable mental discipline, enough to protect himself from succumbing easily to the Moon's curse, both he and his fellows in the Order are aware that the fits could still return in the future. Tetsuo, the master of the Order of the Spider, determined that the Spider Clan could not afford the ramifications if one of its number ran amok in the Empire; in the Colonies, on the other hand, such an incident would cause far less difficulty and the clan might be able to blame it on the strange environment and supernatural threats of the former Ivory Kingdoms.

Thus does Isamu find himself in the Second City, striving to serve his clan and his Order while still laboring for the mental control that will avert any future bout of madness.

### ISAMU, UNSTABLE MONK

AIR: 4	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 4	WATER: 3	VOID: 3
WILLPOWER: 5				
Honor: 4.2	Status: 1.0	Glory: 1.0	Infamy: 2.4	

*School/Rank:* Order of Spider Monks 3/Dark Paragon 1

*Skills:* Athletics 5, Craft: Farming 3, Etiquette 1, Defense 4, Hunting 4, Intimidation 3, Jiu-jutsu 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Theology 4, Meditation 4, Polearms 5, Sincerity 1, Stealth 3

*Advantages:* Ascetic, Dark Paragon (Determination)

*Disadvantages:* Infamous, Lord Moon's Curse (TN 15)









# THE COMMON PEOPLE



While almost any L5R game will of necessity focus on the lives and activities of Great Clan samurai, but in truth they comprise only one-tenth of the population of Rokugan. Any well-rounded L5R campaign should include interactions with Minor Clan samurai, with wave-men, and even with the lower castes, both monks (who occupy an uneasy social position in between commoners and samurai) and the peasants themselves. This is even more true in the Second City, where the stresses of building a massive new settlement in a distant foreign land have resulted in closer cooperation between samurai and peasant than would be the case back in the mainland.

This chapter presents a modest assortment of ronin, monk, and commoner NPCs for the GM to use in adding depth to the Second City. Many of these can also be used in other cities or smaller towns with little to no change, making them a useful asset for GMs in any setting.

## Minor Clans and Wave-Men

The proportion of Minor Clan samurai and ronin in the Colonies are both significantly lower than in the mainland Empire. Although the Minor Clans are certainly interested in the opportunities posed by the Colonies, most of them have few resources to spare for actually trying to explore and settle this distant land. The strongest presence among

the Minor Clans is the Tortoise, whose commercial nature makes the trade opportunities in the Colonies a natural fit.

Wave-men, for their part, are rarer mainly because the settlements in the Colonies are only a quarter-century old and thus there have been relatively few opportunities for new ronin to be created. Thus most of the ronin in the Colonies are men and women who traveled there from the mainland, hoping for better opportunities to improve their lives or to find a lord who will accept their fealty.

## KOMORI TAIGO

### WANDERING SHUGENJA

Komori Taigo is an odd and esoteric man who is often found wandering the streets of the Second City... when he is not in the jungle. Taigo is a man with two motivations: to find the legendary Temple of the Golden Monkey somewhere in the deepest jungles of the Colonies, and to recruit anyone who is willing to join his quest. That the Temple he's looking for might be nothing more than a legend is of little consequence to him.

When Taigo first heard the legend of the Golden Monkey Temple, it captivated him in a way nothing else could. He became fascinated with the concept: a sandstone temple, lined with gold and copper, hidden away in the deepest jungle and surrounded by banana trees, falling water, and sapphires as common as stones. A temple populated with







monkeys as intelligent as people, monkeys who could fly on clouds and who possessed a secret martial arts technique that doubled their physical strength. It seemed an impossible tale, but from the moment he heard it Taigo knew in his heart the legend was real.

Komori Taigo has led multiple expeditions into the jungle in search of this legendary temple. He does not desire its riches, nor does he seek the secrets of the monkeys purported to live there (although these both would be a boon to his still-tiny clan, the Bat Clan). Rather, he wants simply to prove it is real, and thus to challenge the very essence of what is possible in this world. Tracking the legend and poring over ancient maps, Taigo slowly searches the unexplored portions of the Colonies. Each of his expeditions was authorized by the Governor herself, both from esteem for the Bat Clan and her secret amusement at his obsession. Each expedition has suffered a high mortality rate, and none have found anything so far. But Taigo remains hopeful that he will find the hidden temple on his next try... just as he hoped each time before.

For now, the Bat Clan continues to fund Taigo's attempts. As far as they are concerned they have little to risk. Taigo is a very self-reliant man and a capable improviser, his expeditions cost very little, and most of the companions he has roped into his quest were desperate samurai who willingly risked their own lives. And if he were to ever succeed, the benefit to the Bat Clan could be enormous. Now that the Governor is opening up exploration to the clans at large, the Bat face no obstacles to continuing Taigo's search, and Taigo himself has a new pool of young hopefuls from which to build his next expedition.

Taigo is currently looking for samurai to conduct his next expedition into the jungles. He is an intelligent man, observant and perhaps a little manipulative, and more than a little over-optimistic. He continues to hope for the

best even in the face of all his previous failures, and he is absolutely convinced the next expedition will find the legendary temple. Then his name will live forever...

## KOMORI TAIGO, WANDERING SHUGENJA

AIR: 3	EARTH: 3	FIRE: 2	WATER: 3	VOID: 2
INTELLIGENCE: 3				
Honor: 4.5	Status: 1.0	Glory: 2.7	Infamy: 1.5	
School/Rank: Komori Shugenja 2				
Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 2, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Hunting (Trailblazing) 4, Investigation 4, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 4, Lore: Shugenja 2, Lore: Theology 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3				
Advantages: Higher Purpose (find the Golden Monkey Temple), Leadership				
Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (obsessed with the Golden Monkey Temple), Driven (find the Golden Monkey Temple)				

## TOMOE

### YOJIMBO FOR HIRE

In many ways the Second City is more dangerous politically than the Imperial capital. News takes a long time to reach the mainland, subordinates cannot always reach their superiors for advice, and the Imperial ban on inter-clan fighting does not extend to the colonies. Thus the demand for yojimbo is very high, and those who sell their sword-arm can always find employment. When a courtier or shugenja requires a yojimbo, if their clan cannot provide one they often turn to the ronin in the city. And if they want the best yojimbo, they seek Tomoe. She can be commonly found at a noodle stand she frequents in the Merchant District.







No one knows for certain which clan Tomoe belonged to before she became a ronin. Those who have seen her fight claim she uses the same footwork as a Matsu. Others who have seen her duel say that she strikes like a Kakita. Some compare her style to the Shiba school, recognizing her skill at protecting her charge. Wherever she learned her techniques, whatever clan she once hailed from, no other ronin in the city shares her lofty reputation. She has told no one of her past. Indeed, she rarely speaks at all.

Tomoe's record speaks for itself. She is the victor of four skirmishes and seventeen duels, five of which were to the death. She has killed no less than twelve assassins and survived six poisonings. Twice she was hired to fight for the Crab Clan, emerging victorious both times. Once she even saved a rare Phoenix manuscript from a burning building. Of all the experienced yojimbo in the Second City, Tomoe's name is always the first on the lips of potential employers.

Her reputation is such that even Colonial samurai within the Great Clans know her name and respect her. When samurai learn their opponent in a duel is Tomoe, they usually concede defeat before the first strike is made. Once she was hired to represent a Mantis courtier in a duel; her opponent never arrived, sending a servant instead to deliver a letter claiming he was ill and could not duel. Another opponent bowed lower before the duel began, acknowledging her as the superior opponent before even witnessing her stance. Notwithstanding this level of respect, she is still a ronin, a shameful position in Rokugani society. Yet on the field of battle, before a duel, or when facing another samurai, it is impossible to ignore the strength of her warrior spirit. These are the only moments when she is equal to other samurai; perhaps that is why she continues on the path she has chosen.

Yet Tomoe is perhaps even more well-known for her unusual rules. Whereas most ronin will sell their swords to whoever pays the highest price, Tomoe is in a position to choose her employers, and she informs them of her rules before agreeing to any contract. Tomoe will not serve any man or woman she perceives as not being a person of honor. She makes no exceptions, not even for vast amounts of money. She will serve an employer only once, and when the job is done she will accept no more tasks from that patron. She works only one job at a time. She will not accept jobs of a dubious or dishonorable nature; where other ronin will do whatever is asked of them, Tomoe refuses to stain her hands with questionable work. Many believe her arrogant for making these demands, especially as a mere lowly ronin, and more than a few prospective employers have taken offense at her standards. But honorable samurai look into her eyes and understand. Even as a ronin, she still values her honor, and she will not compromise it.

Tomoe has been known to work simple jobs for little pay on behalf of heimin. Once she performed a job for a heimin child in exchange for a few measly zeni, treating it with the same reverence and seriousness as she would a job for a samurai. On another occasion she was offered three times more money by her employer's rival to abandon her contract and switch sides. She refused, simply stating she

was currently at work with a job and could not accept another. It appears jobs are not about the money for Tomoe – a very unusual attitude for a ronin – but what deeper meaning she pursues is known only to herself.

Few have seen the “true” Tomoe. Those who have know she is a quiet and kind soul, highly intelligent, with a very strong spirit and a keen tactical mind. She is practical yet respectful of tradition. Children of the city claim she makes simple wood carvings and can play the *hotchiku* flute. When she speaks at length, some may notice a stutter, and it is believed she cannot read or write. She will not accept contracts that require her to ride a horse; some think this is because she cannot.

Ultimately, it is up to the GM to decide what truly motivates Tomoe and what secrets lie in her past.

### TOMOE, HONORABLE RONIN YOJIMBO

AIR: 3	EARTH: 4	FIRE: 3	WATER: 3	VOID: 4
REFLEXES: 5	AGILITY: 4	STRENGTH: 4		
Honor: 7.3	Status: 0.0	Glory: 6.8		

*School/Rank: True Ronin (Insight Rank 4)/  
Gaze of Sun Tao*

*Skills: Artisan: Wood Carvings 3, Athletics 4, Commerce 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu (Assessment, Focus) 5, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 5, Knives 2, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Bushido 3, Perform: Flute 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 2, Spears 2*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Paragon (Honor)*

*Disadvantages: Bad Fortune (illiterate), Benten's Curse, Social Disadvantage (ronin)*

## SOSUKE

### RONIN PLAYWRIGHT

For those seeking to arrange quick entertainment for their guests in the Second City, one need look no further than the Thousand Cherry Blossom Kabuki Troupe, which resides in the Artisan District. Their leader, a ronin named Sosuke, is an accomplished writer and actor, although his work seems to come in and out of demand somewhat arbitrarily. One season Sosuke will be celebrated and held in high esteem, enjoying wealth and success far above that of most ronin. The next season he will be destitute and desperate, living hand-to-mouth. Some blame the whims of the Fortunes for his erratic life; others blame sake.

Even for a ronin, Sosuke is recognized for his skill. He has written several prominent Kabuki plays, one of which – called “The Secrets Beneath Lord Hiragawa's Calligraphy” – is among the favorites of the Governor herself. Sosuke is quick to remind potential employers that Otomo Suikihime owns an original copy of that play, penned by his own hand. His Thousand Cherry Blossom Troupe is known for assembling plays at quick demand and with little planning. The performances are adequate and the price is reasonable... especially if Sosuke is in danger of starving when the contract arrives.





Sosuke is a charming and witty man, physically weak but very clever. He is able to mimic many sounds and voices and understands the technical aspects of Kabuki acting very well. He has the makings of a great actor if he could better apply himself. Unfortunately, this is not the case – although he is talented and well-meaning, he is also irresponsible, and it seems to take a growling belly to properly motivate him. If he sometimes creates great works of art, it seems to be almost by accident. He has a weakness for sake and geisha, and is known to spend great amounts of money on multiple-day binges on the Street of Crimson Lanterns. He has alienated many other actors and actresses in the city with his careless day-to-day lifestyle and sense of self-importance, so the members of his troupe are always changing.

Recently, Sosuke has become fascinated with puppets and puppet theater, and in between Kabuki projects he is trying to develop a *bunraku* show. He is seeking a patron who will permit him to complete this work without having to interrupt it in favor of other employment. If anyone catches his eye and seems to enjoy his work, he is certain to approach them and pour on the charm... but so far, he has had no takers.

### SOSUKE, RONIN PLAYWRIGHT

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 1	VOID: 3
AWARENESS: 4		INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3		
Honor: 3.5		Status: 0.0	Glory: 5.3	

*School/Rank: True Ronin (Insight Rank 2)*

*Skills: Acting (Kabuki) 3, Artisan: Playwright 6, Commerce 3, Courtier 2, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Kabuki 3, Lore: Puppet Theater 2, Perform: Oratory 3, Perform: Poetry 3, Sincerity 3*

*Advantages: Allies (many), Benten's Blessing, Great Potential (Artisan: Playwright)*

*Disadvantages: Compulsion (geisha, sake), Frail Mind, Weakness (Strength)*

## The Brotherhood of Shinsei

The Brotherhood of Shinsei has taken a rather open mind towards the Colonies and the unexplored lands that surround them. After all, the path toward enlightenment can take many forms, and a new place such as the Colonies is simply another opportunity to seek understanding and harmony with the universe. While not all members of the Brotherhood feel this way, most members agree that the presence of their Order in the Colonies is necessary for the continued spiritual guidance of the Rokugani who live there now.

The Brotherhood has established itself strongly in the Temple District of the Second City, operating dozens of shrines there to serve the people of the city. They also staff the one major temple in the Imperial District and dozens of smaller shrines in the major settlements scattered around the Colonies. They are vigilant against the strange beliefs and philosophies found among the remnant population of the Ivory Kingdoms and the documents and relics they have left behind; while samurai may think these things to be harmless curiosities, the Brotherhood fears such knowledge may exert a subtle influence on the piety of even the most traditional Rokugani. For perhaps the first time in its history the Brotherhood sees itself not merely as pursuing enlightenment but actually as protectors of the Empire, helping to guide the people of the Colonies away from dangerous beliefs which may disrupt or undermine the very foundations of society.

### TAKUMI

#### CHIEF ABBOT

When talk first began of sending Brotherhood monks to the Second City and the Colonies, the only real question in their ranks was who would undertake the demanding journey. Takumi was an obvious choice, for he had been one of the senior members of the Brotherhood for many years. He shared the concerns of many of his fellow monks that the ruins of the Ivory Kingdoms might contain strange wonders, traces of foreign beliefs and religions, that might sway the peasantry or perhaps even the more weak-minded samurai into dangerous practices. He declared the Brotherhood's presence would be of the utmost importance in keeping the people of the Colonies secure on the path of enlightenment and piety, and thus there was no argument against the choice to place him in charge of the first expedition to that foreign land.

Takumi was part of the very first group of monks to make their way to the Colonies, and assisted in the construction of the first temple within the Second City. Ever since then he has remained in the city, making it a point to visit the court and the various Embassies of the clans regularly to offer the guidance of the Brotherhood for all who might need it. He also undertakes





weekly tours of the other districts of the city, speaking with samurai and commoner alike, offering the help of his order and the wisdom of his own long life. To his mind, the Brotherhood must be constantly diligent and maintain daily contact with the people of the Second City in order to serve as a connection between this new world and the traditions of the Empire.

TAKUMI, CHIEF ABBOT

Air: 4	Earth: 3	Fire: 3	Water: 3	Void: 4
Willpower: 4 Intelligence: 4				
Honor: 4.5	Status: 1.0	Glory: 4.8		

School/Rank: Four Temples Monk 4  
Skills: Athletics 3, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 2, Craft: Cooking 3, Defense 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Jiu-jutsu 4, Lore: Theology 5, Medicine 4, Meditation 6, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Staves 4  
Advantages: Allies (many), Fame (chief abbot)

CHORO

MILITANT LOYALIST

Takumi seeks to protect the Empire's spirit by being a source of constant guidance and light for the people of the Colonies. Choro, by contrast, believes a more direct approach is required to combat the spiritual dangers in the Second City. Unlike many of his fellow monks, Choro actually has studied gaijin cultures fairly extensively, and he is old enough to remember the horrors of the Destroyer War; he uses his knowledge to actively root out any sources of corruption or holdovers from the various beliefs that existed before the Rokugani came to the Colonies.

Choro spends a great deal of time traveling through the Second City and the nearby settlements, constantly watching for signs of spiritual corruption. When he finds evidence of such cultural contamination, he condemns it ferociously and often seeks to recover and destroy any artifacts or other items associated with it – a policy that leads to frequent clashes with Imperial Explorers and Phoenix scholars. Choro is, if anything, even fiercer in his approach to commoners, and there are rumors that he has sometimes resorted to violently 'educating' misguided peasants on the errors of their ways, leaving them to reflect on the teachings of Shinsei and the guidance of the Fortunes... as well as to nurse their bruises and occasional broken bones.

Abbot Takumi is not pleased with all of Choro's behavior, but he does admit that the fervent monk does a great deal of good and is perfectly willing to sacrifice himself in order to protect the people. Thus, for now Takumi allows Choro to continue his work with only an occasional quiet reminder to restrain his fiercest impulses.



CHORO, MILITANT MONK

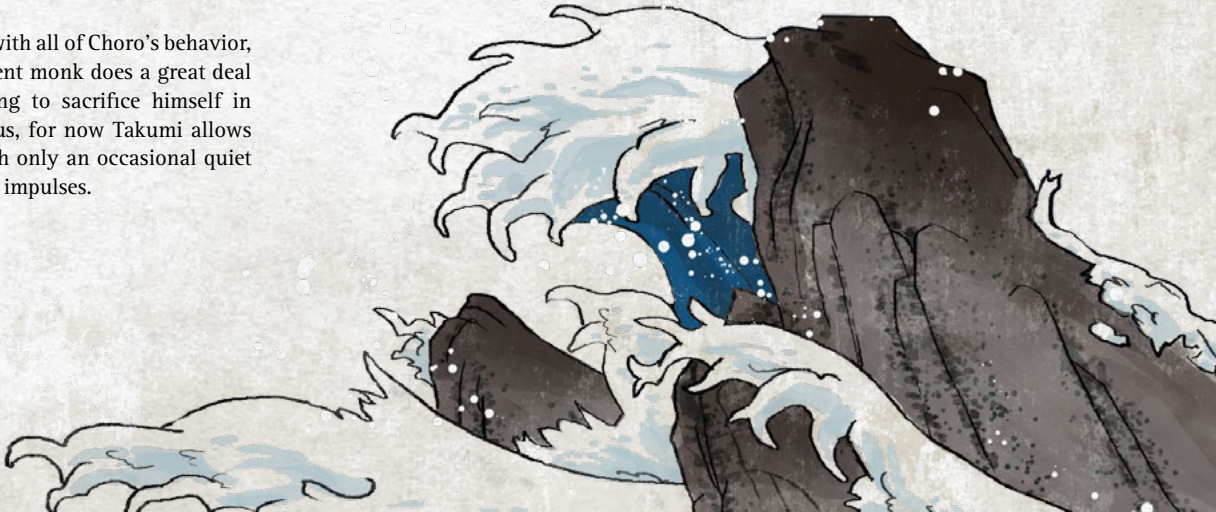
Air: 3	Earth: 4	Fire: 3	Water: 2	Void: 3
Agility: 4 Strength: 3				
Honor: 5.0	Status: 1.0	Glory: 4.3		

School/Rank: Temple of Osano-Wo Monk 3  
Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Hunting 2, Investigation 4, Intimidation 3, Jiu-jutsu 5, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms (Destroyers) 4, Lore: Theology (Fortunes) 4, Medicine 3, Meditation 4, Sincerity (Honesty) 3, Staves 3  
Advantages: Allies (many), Hands of Stone  
Disadvantages: Driven (to destroy dangerous gaijin influences)

AYUMI

FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE

Ayumi is a younger nun, still in her late twenties. Like most of the Brotherhood she seeks enlightenment and offers education and instruction to the common people, but she does so in a completely different manner than Choro. In her mind, the various beliefs and cults that existed before the Rokugani came to the Colonies are not meant to be feared, but instead looked upon clearly so as to understand them for what they were. She believes







## Commoners and Locals

the gaijin religions brought about their own destruction, and consequently many lessons can be learned from their failures for those who are willing to listen.

Ayumi walks among the people of the Second City as often as she can, and is greatly loved by most of the common folk, especially the peasant children who roam the streets of their district. She believes in leading by example; by exemplifying those qualities which she believes makes her a devout follower of Shinsei, she will keep others on the correct path without any need to be over-protective or violent.

Though Ayumi often finds herself in conflict with Choro and other such strict monks over the proper way the Brotherhood should handle their foreign surroundings, she believes they are more in agreement with her than they might realize. After all, they only seek to protect the people of the Second City and to prevent any subversive or destructive influences from making their way into the hearts and minds of the people in their new home. The Brotherhood stands outside of clan politics and personal grudges, and this gives them an excellent perspective on the world around them, allowing them to serve the people while also maintaining the traditions of the Empire. So she believes, at any rate, and given her immense popularity among the peasants it is difficult to truly gainsay her.

### AYUMI, FRIEND OF THE PEOPLE

AIR: 3    EARTH: 2    FIRE: 3    WATER: 3    VOID: 3  
WILLPOWER: 3

Honor: 4.8    Status: 1.0    Glory: 3.2

*School/Rank:* Order of Heroes Monk 2

*Skills:* Athletics 2, Courtier 2, Craft: Farming 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Jiu-jutsu 3, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 3, Lore: Theology (Fortunes) 3, Medicine 4, Meditation 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 3

*Advantages:* Allies (many), Hero of the People

*Disadvantages:* Soft-Hearted

There are of course an almost limitless number of commoner personalities who can be found in the Second City, and in addition to the ones presented here we have also included a few specific ones in the various Districts in the previous book (Second City: The City). GMs should feel free to use these characters as starting points to extrapolate other commoners as needed.

## ABHYA

### GAIJIN HEALER

Abhya is a native of the former Ivory Kingdoms, one of the small minority who lived through the murderous rampage of the Cult of the Destroyer. She is a plain, quiet woman with the dark skin and broad eyes of her people. By character she is a pragmatist, and from early on she saw that the Rokugani were determined to prosper in her former homeland. She decided the best way to survive was to attach herself to them.

Abhya was originally taught the arts of healing by her mother, but her mother died while she was a teenager and she never completed her training. Nonetheless, she correctly predicted that many Rokugani would have difficulties in the Ivory Kingdoms with unfamiliar diseases. Her remedies usually combine a basic knowledge of the body's rhythms with a great familiarity with the properties of local herbs. At first it was difficult to make any progress, since the Rokugani were inclined to distrust her no matter what she did; however, her methods largely worked, and her reputation has slowly grown among the more open-minded of the colonists – including a few prominent figures, such as the Crab diplomat Yasuki Noa.

Since the Rokugani can pay far better than her own surviving people, Abhya spends little time tending to the latter. For their part, many of them regard her with distrust, only coming to her for assistance when they are desperate. This state of affairs bothers her more than she openly admits. Once a month she ministers to the needy, as was her mother's custom, but recently she has begun wondering if it's worth making the effort when her people so clearly resent her.

This is not the only problem Abhya faces. Recently, samurai have started asking her questions that are almost certainly designed to draw out her knowledge of local poisons. She can't tell what clan or clans these samurai are affiliated with and she recognizes she has little recourse against them. Furthermore, a few weeks ago, she returned from a trip to the market to find that her store of herbs and incense had been broken open and searched. Abhya keeps careful note of her supplies and knows some of her rarer medicines were stolen. Perhaps it's time to hire an assistant, as she has meant to do for a while – especially if she can find one who knows weapons.







## ABHYA, GAIJIN HEALER

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 3	WATER: 2	VOID: 1
AWARENESS: 3 STAMINA: 3 INTELLIGENCE: 4 PERCEPTION: 3				
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 3.0	

*School/Rank: Gaijin commoner (Insight Rank 2)*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Commerce 3, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Investigation 2, Knives 2, Medicine (Herbalism) 5, Lore: Herbs 5, Sincerity 2*

*Advantages: Allies (Yasuki Noa, Soshi Hiroaki)*

*Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (gaijin commoner)*

## CHIYO

### DOUBTING WEAVER

Chiyo is one of the thousands of *heimin* brought to the Second City to labor for the samurai colonists. A weaver by trade, Chiyo was scared at first to leave the village of her birth in Lion lands. The long sea voyage to the Colonies and the march inland to the Second City passed in a haze of misery. Her only comfort was her cousin Haruto and his wife Emi, farmers who had also been forced to migrate.

It turns out that while life in the Second City is not precisely pleasant, it has opened up some questions for Chiyo she never would have contemplated before. She always knew gaijin existed, of course, but it was quite another thing to actually meet some of the surviving natives. How could the Celestial Order be infallible if entire peoples lived their lives without any concern for it? True, the Ivory Kingdoms were obliterated as a civilization, but in Rokugan the reign of Empress Iweko – directly appointed by the Heavens – had been marked by repeated calamities. Chiyo could only conclude that the Celestial Order was vastly overrated. She doesn't express these thoughts aloud, of course, save in the most veiled terms – and even then, only to her cousin and his wife.

Otherwise, Chiyo keeps busy producing fabric for the merchants of the Second City. She is especially pleased by the novel dyes available here, and she visits the local dyers regularly to learn of their latest experiments – when she's not busy thinking seditious thoughts about her place in the universe.

### CHIYO, DOUBTING WEAVER

AIR: 2	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 1	WATER: 1	VOID: 1
AGILITY: 2 PERCEPTION: 2				
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 0.8	

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Commerce 3, Craft: Weaving 4, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Knives 1, Lore: Gaijin 2, Staves 2, Sincerity 2*

*Advantages: Great Potential (Craft: Weaving)*

*Disadvantages: Disbeliever, Social Disadvantage (heimin)*

## HARUTO

### LOYAL FARMER

Haruto is a very traditional and pious *heimin*; he was considerably upset to have to leave his farm in Lion lands and undertake a long and difficult journey to a new home, a home scarcely fit for Rokugani. Still, he had no choice but to obey his lord's commands, and in any case Haruto is a great believer in obedience. He likes to explain to his wife Emi that when the Fortunes made the world, they intended for samurai to deal with samurai matters while farmers dealt with farm matters, and it's folly to mix the two.

Farming in the Colonies is a continual struggle. Like many of his kind, Haruto knew very well how to grow crops in his original home: the weather patterns, the proper timing for transplanting the rice seedlings, the proper season for fertilizing and for planting vegetable gardens. In the Colonies he had to start from scratch without the wisdom of his parents and grandparents to guide him. Despite years of experience, he still often feels deeply frustrated and sometimes resorts to drinking to ease his feelings... though even the drinks taste wrong here.

Haruto has noticed that his cousin Chiyo keeps making odd remarks about their samurai masters, and this makes him nervous. Additionally, he resents her for adapting more readily to life in the Second City. The high quality of her fabrics is attracting favorable attention. While she doesn't flaunt her increasing prosperity, he can't help but think an unmarried woman has no real use for all that extra money. Those extra koku could get better food and clothes and medicines for his wife and children... or maybe get him a decent drink, if only for one night.

So far Haruto has avoided expressing his resentment of Chiyo, because his wife Emi admires the other woman and he knows Emi has few friends here in the Colonies. He tries to encourage her to get to know the other women in their neighborhood, not least because of a nagging sense of guilt for sometimes neglecting her, but his remarks have met with little success. As soon as he can get Emi to realize there are more suitable friends, he means to distance himself from his dangerous cousin.

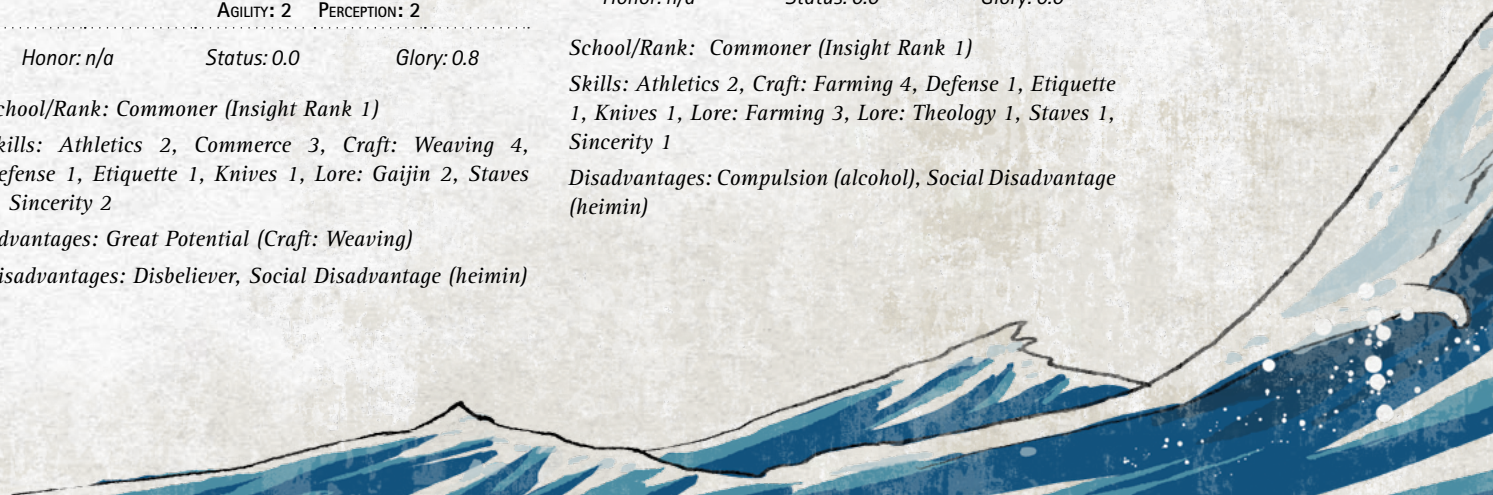
### HARUTO, LOYAL FARMER

AIR: 1	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 1	WATER: 2	VOID: 1
REFLEXES: 2		INTELLIGENCE: 2		
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 0.0	

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*

*Skills: Athletics 2, Craft: Farming 4, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Knives 1, Lore: Farming 3, Lore: Theology 1, Staves 1, Sincerity 1*

*Disadvantages: Compulsion (alcohol), Social Disadvantage (heimin)*







## EMI

### ADDICTED FARMWIFE

Emi, the wife of Haruto, didn't start out as an addict. In her home village she was, if not precisely gregarious, at least a reasonably well-liked woman. All that changed after she was uprooted. Emi always liked listening to storytellers and she has an active imagination. The length of the journey to the Second City – especially grueling for someone who had scarcely traveled in her life – only gave her time to imagine the exotic terrors that surely awaited them in their new home.

At first, Emi tried to cope with her fears on her own, but she suffered from recurring insomnia, and when she did sleep she had terrible dreams: tiger-headed savages, sickly smiles, sacrificial pits. She sought comfort from her husband, but in the evenings he was often out drinking, and when he was home he was too busy brooding over his own troubles to pay attention to her distress.

So Emi found someone in the marketplace who would sell her a medicine to soothe her nerves and help her sleep. The seller, a merchant's assistant, refuses to tell her the name of the medicine, but Emi doesn't care. What matters is its effectiveness.

Emi has become psychologically dependent on her medicine, unable to sleep without it. She has been pilfering money from her husband's cousin Chiyo to pay for her supply, a betrayal made easier by Chiyo's trust. In truth, Emi is not entirely feigning her attachment to Chiyo – the two got along well back in the Lion lands. But the more she steals, the guiltier Emi feels and the more she compensates by becoming ever more clingingly friendly. She hopes Chiyo will never find out, but the nightmares have been coming back, and soon she will need more of her medicine to stave them off...

## EMI, ADDICTED FARMWIFE

AIR: 1 EARTH: 1 FIRE: 2 WATER: 1 VOID: 1

AWARENESS: 2 STAMINA: 2

Honor: n/a

Status: 0.0

Glory: 0.0

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*

*Skills: Athletics 1, Craft: Cooking 3, Craft: Farming 2, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Investigation 1, Sincerity (Deceit) 2*

*Disadvantages: Compulsion (sleeping medicine), Phobia (Ivory Kingdoms), Social Disadvantage (heimin)*

## HARUKA

### AMORAL MERCHANT

Most people who know Haruka think she must have once been a Phoenix samurai. Haruka denies any such thing. She claims to have a distant working relationship with a family of Yasuki merchants. Her love of books, from the scholarly to the scurrilous, is merely an escape from the dreary mercantile tasks of accounting and haggling that she had to practice since childhood.

Haruka's bookshop is small but astonishingly diverse in its offerings. The interested browser can find obscure accounts of famous battles, gaijin cookbooks complete with illustrations, pillow-books about the adventures of entertainer-spies, and exquisitely scribed scrolls of haiku or tanka tied with slim silken ribbons. There appears to be no particular organizational scheme, but Haruka knows the location of every book in her shop. People looking for specific works are often disappointed, but Haruka can find something appropriate for any kind of topic ("scandalous travelogues").

Although the bookstore is located in one of the more crime-plagued neighborhoods of the Second City, Haruka is rarely troubled by local thugs or enforcers. The truth is that she is supported by one of the Second City's fledgling criminal organizations, sponsored by the aspiring Unicorn crimelord Shinjo Shimikoto. She supplies information to the group – including information on people looking for embarrassing or illegal books – in exchange for their protection. Haruka doesn't know Shimikoto is behind the group, and her contacts usually only make themselves by dropping off small anonymous notes. They first assisted her over a year ago when thieves stole some of her most valuable books; not only did they retrieve her missing stock, they offered her a substantial loan to help her recover and expand her business. Although she has been conscientious in paying back the loan, the situation left her feeling deeply obligated to them.

Of course, Haruka knows perfectly well that shadowy criminal organizations never offer help out of altruism. She's read the appropriate pillow books, after all. On the other hand,





she recognizes the value of their protection. And besides, all she deals in is books. As long as dead bodies don't show up at her door, she is content with the current state of affairs.

**HARUKA, AMORAL MERCHANT**

AIR: 1	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 1	VOID: 1
AWARENESS: 3		INTELLIGENCE: 3		PERCEPTION: 2
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 1.3	

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*  
*Skills: Commerce (Merchant) 4, Courtier 1, Defense 1, Etiquette 2, Investigation 2, Lore: Books 3, Staves 1, Sincerity 2*  
*Advantages: Allies (Shinjo Shimikoto's criminal gang), Wealth*  
*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (criminal connections), Social Disadvantage (heimin)*

**ITSUKI**

**THIEF**

Itsuki is the older brother of an entertainer, the dancer Kiyoko. Their mother was also a dancer and hoped to bequeath a better life to her children, but her samurai lover, a Scorpion, insisted on bringing her with him to the Second City. When he died during an altercation with some Spider samurai, she took her own life.

In order to survive Itsuki began working as a small-time thief, while Kiyoko turned to dancing since she had inherited their mother's beauty and grace. Itsuki wishes he could find her a different and more respectable profession. He is convinced it's only a matter of time before she shares their mother's fate, and she is the only family he has left.

Driven by his concern for his sister, Itsuki has been attempting riskier thefts in hopes of getting enough money to secure their future. However, he has very few plans for what to do next if he should actually be so lucky as to succeed. There is little time to think about the long term when he spends most of his days and nights jumping at shadows. Inevitably he sees less and less of Kiyoko, but that can't be helped; he tells himself it will only be a little longer before he can give her the future back.

**ITSUKI, THIEF**

AIR: 1	EARTH: 2	FIRE: 2	WATER: 1	VOID: 1
REFLEXES: 3		PERCEPTION: 2		
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 0.0	

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*  
*Skills: Athletics 3, Craft: Laborer 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Investigation 2, Knives 2, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Stealth 3*  
*Advantages: Crafty*  
*Disadvantages: Dark Secret (thief), Social Disadvantage (heimin), True Love (Kiyoko)*



**KIYOKO**

**DESPAIRING DANCER**

Itsuki's sister Kiyoko is a talented dancer who despises herself for falling into her mother's life. Sadly, she cannot see a way out. Dancing is her only skill, and she would be a fool to give it up in exchange for the life of a beggar.

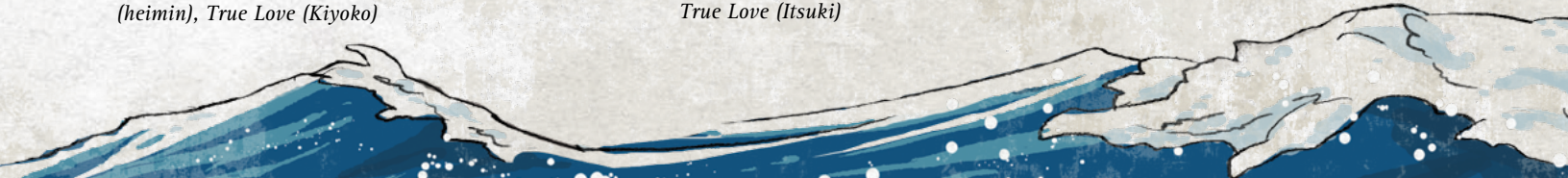
Several lovers help support Kiyoko, although her needs are modest and her spending habits are remarkably limited. Two of her patrons, a merchant and a ronin poet, are becoming rivals for her affections. This frankly terrifies Kiyoko, so she has been attempting (not very successfully) to extricate herself from both relationships.

Kiyoko worries about her older brother Itsuki, who she adores. She knows he has been stealing out of concern for her, and it's only a matter of time before someone catches him. She wishes she could get him to stop, but she knows she may wind up needing his help in spite of her better judgment; recently, her joints have begun to pain her. It has not yet affected her dancing, but it is getting slowly worse, and if it goes on it will threaten her livelihood. Inquiries to various healers have met with little success, and she is starting to consider confessing the situation to her brother and begging for his help.

**KIYOKO, DESPAIRING DANCER**

AIR: 2	EARTH: 1	FIRE: 1	WATER: 1	VOID: 1
AWARENESS: 3		STAMINA: 2	AGILITY: 3	
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0	Glory: 2.1	

*School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)*  
*Skills: Athletics 2, Commerce 1, Etiquette 2, Knives 1, Perform: Dance 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 3, Temptation (Seduction) 3*  
*Advantages: Allies (her patrons), Dangerous Beauty*  
*Disadvantages: Bad Health, Social Disadvantage (heimin), True Love (Itsuki)*







## JUN

### STREET URCHIN

Sometimes while walking the streets of the Second City, particularly in the Temple, Merchant, and Peasant Districts, one may come across a moon-faced child with bright eyes, big ears, and a mop of black hair. This child is known simply as Jun and she is well-known to the inhabitants of these districts. Many initially mistake her for a boy, but Jun is really a young girl, no older than eleven years (although she does not know her own age). Jun is one of many street urchins who wander the streets of the Second City, orphaned by the difficult life in the Colonies.

No one is sure who Jun's parents were; generally they are believed to be dead. Jun claims to be the child of a samurai, but if that were true, surely she wouldn't be wandering the streets of the city. She has survived for several years by selling information to those who seek it. She is an informant and errand-runner for many unscrupulous individuals, and in exchange for coin she will offer information about anything that has come to her ears.

Jun is not particularly bright, but she is swift and difficult to contain. She is known to slip out of bonds and has escaped from capture more than once. The city magistrates find it easier to use her as an informant than to go to the trouble of handing her over to the Brotherhood as an orphan; besides, she has no interest in becoming a nun. Indeed, Jun is surprisingly strong-willed and defiant for a child, having no respect for authority figures unless they get on her good side with a small coin or ball of rice.

Although she does not wish to join the Brotherhood, Jun likes the monks and priests of the Temple District, and seems to hold them in esteem even though she calls most of the monks "silly old men." She has made friends with most of the inhabitants of the Temple District, and from conversations with them she has a surprising grasp of the Tao and Fortunism, even if she knows no technical terms or occasionally gets the lessons wrong. She usually sleeps in the Temple District, relying on the help of those who feel pity for her. The monks fear that if she is not properly raised she will eventually turn to a life of criminality, and some wish to bring her into the Brotherhood by force to avert this outcome, but so far the senior monks have been unwilling to resort to such methods.

If one is searching for someone or wants to know about the goings-on in the Temple, Merchant, and Peasant Districts of the Second City, Jun is an excellent source of information. She usually knows not only what is going on, but who is behind it.

### JUN, STREET URCHIN

AIR: 1	EARTH: 1	FIRE: 1	WATER: 1	VOID: 1
AWARENESS: 2 WILLPOWER: 3 INTELLIGENCE: 2 PERCEPTION: 2				
Honor: n/a		Status: 0.0		Glory: 0.6
School/Rank: Commoner (Insight Rank 1)				
Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 1, Etiquette 1, Investigation 3, Sincerity 1, Stealth 3				
Advantages: Allies (many), Spy Network				
Disadvantages: Contrary, Rumormonger, Social Disadvantage (heimin)				

sking me to count all the sand on the beach."











# APPENDIX

## NEW GAME MECHANICS



### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: CRANE CLAN: AERIE FALCONER

Although the Aerie is the smaller of the two main ports established within the Colonies, it is nevertheless a very important holding for the Crane Clan. It allows them to challenge the Mantis Clan's dominance of trade in the Colonies, and it is the seat of their diplomatic relationships with the Dragon Clan. The Crane seek to emphasize the city's value and contributions to the Colonies at every opportunity. The falconers of the Aerie are unquestionably the finest in the Colonies, and some would even say in the Empire as well. Falconry is a noble sport, a pursuit suitable for courtiers, warriors, and even the occasional priest who finds it of interest. A great many important political negotiations have begun or ended on the hunting fields, with raptors on arm, often between individuals who might otherwise not have found common ground.

#### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: CRANE AERIE FALCONER

- Technique Rank: 2 (or 4)
- Replaces: Doji Courtier 2, Kakita Bushi 2, Daidoji Iron Warrior 4
- Requirements: Animal Handling (Falcon) 3

#### TECHNIQUE: SPIRIT OF THE FALCON

A gifted falconer can use his bird as if it were an extension of his own body, a weapon of amazing range and ferocity. When hunting with a trained falcon, if you spend a Void Point on a Hunting Skill Roll you also gain a number of bonus unkept dice equal to half your Animal Handling (Falcon) Skill (rounding down). Additionally, you may issue a verbal command as a Free Action to a trained falcon already in the air to attack a particular enemy, as long as that enemy is not a large obvious predator the falcon would fear (such as a bear or a lion).

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: DRAGON CLAN: OVERSEER

With the wholesale relocation of the Spider Clan to the Colonies, the Empress had need of trusted vassals to oversee the unstable Spider while they operated so far from her supervision. For this most dangerous task the Empress turned to the clan of her origin, the Dragon. The role fit them well given their traditional nature as teachers, and they have undertaken the duty with great devotion. Indeed, the Spider have found their oversight somewhat more stifling than they expected, and while the Dragon treat the Spider with genuine consideration (something few other clans are willing to do), many among their ranks find the Dragon's hands-on style of supervision quite frustrating.



## FALCONER SCHOOL ACCESSIBILITY

Although the Aerie Falconer is a Crane Alternate Path, intense training in the art of falconry is by no means limited to the Crane Clan. Some GMs may wish to represent this by making the Aerie Falconer Path into a more “generic” Path available to characters from multiple different clans (assuming they are trained in appropriately thematic Basic Schools). In particular, any School affiliated with the Toritaka family of the Crab Clan, or the Kitsune family of the Mantis Clan, would probably be appropriate for this Path.



### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: DRAGON OVERSEER

- Technique Rank: 2
- Replaces: Kitsuki Investigator 2, Mirumoto Bushi 2, Taoist Swordsman 2, Togashi Tattooed Monk 2
- Requirements: Lore: Shadowlands 2, Lore: Theology 3

### TECHNIQUE: THE EMPRESS’S GUIDING HAND

Those tasked with oversight of the Empress’s most malevolent vassals, the Spider, have a penchant for using philosophy to manage their charges. When interacting with those who have a lower Honor Rank than you, if your Lore: Theology Skill is higher than your Courtier or Etiquette Skill, you gain bonus rolled dice equal to the difference on all Contested Social Skill Rolls with those individuals. If your opponent possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they suffer a penalty of -2k0 to their roll as well.

Additionally, if you impart a theology lesson to a willing target (represented mechanically by a conversation lasting at least one minute, followed by a Lore: Theology / Awareness roll at TN 25), they gain a bonus of +2k0 to any rolls made during the next 8 hours to resist gaining the Shadowlands Taint. This ability may not be used on the same person more than once per day.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: LION CLAN: DE BELLIS LEGIONNAIRE

A generation ago the Lion Clan came into possession of a most curious gaijin artifact, one of those things called a “book.” But this was not simply any book, but rather a copy of *De Bellis Yoditorum*: an ancient treatise on the many tactics and strategies employed by the Yodotai, a vast and ruthless culture of warriors that lies far north and west of Rokugan. After significant difficulty, the Lion scholars were able to translate the text into the Rokugani language, and examination of its contents began in earnest.

Although the Lion have considerable appreciation for the information in the book, its existence has only enhanced their disgust toward cultures other than their own. Nevertheless, they have carefully studied everything within, training special units of their soldiers to employ and to counter the gaijin tactics on the field of battle. Some among the Lion believe their understanding of the book has placed them in a unique position to defeat the Yodotai, should those conquerors ever trouble the Empire. However, scholars who are more familiar with the text are deeply troubled by references that imply it is but one of a larger series of works.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: DE BELLIS LEGIONNAIRE [BUSHI]

- Technique Rank: 4
- Replaces: Akodo Bushi 4, Matsu Bushi 4
- Requirements: Battle 3, Lore: Gaijin (Yodotai) 1

### TECHNIQUE: I STAND WITH MY BROTHERS

Students of Yodotai tactics have honed their ability to fight as a unit to an even greater degree than normal for a Lion army, which is no mean feat. At the beginning of a skirmish, you may make a Battle / Awareness Skill Roll (TN 15) as a Free Action. If successful, you gain a number of bonus unkept dice equal to the number of allies in your group, plus one for each Raise made on the Battle roll. You may not gain more total bonus dice than twice your School Rank. You may use these bonus dice on any attack or damage rolls during the current skirmish, but cannot use more on any one roll than your School Rank.

During Stance declaration, when assuming the Full Defense Stance, you may also spend these dice on your Defense Skill Roll.

Unused bonus dice are lost at the end of the skirmish.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: MANTIS CLAN: KITSUNE SUMMONER

The addition of the Kitsune family to the ranks of the Mantis Clan was a triumph for the Yoritomo family, but regarded as little more than a necessary evil by a great many Kitsune. It was the only way the family could ensure its survival, and many Kitsune had deep private reservations about the possible effects on their ancient traditions. Thus far, however, the arrangement seems to have been beneficial. As per their oath, the Yoritomo have made only meager demands of the former Fox Clan, allowing them to pursue their own endeavors and govern themselves as they have for centuries. In return, the Kitsune have shared their unique brand of magic with the rest of the Mantis Clan.







### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: MANTIS KITSUNE SUMMONER [SHUGENJA]

- Technique Rank: 3 (or 4)
- Replaces: Kitsune Shugenja 3, Moshi Shugenja 4, Yoritomo Shugenja 4
- Requirements: Animal Handling 3, Hunting 2

#### TECHNIQUE: ESSENCE OF THE WILD

The Kitsune are much beloved by Chikushudo, the spirit realm of Animals, and the denizens of that realm will come to a Kitsune's aid readily. You may summon an animal spirit of Chikushudo by spending an Earth spell slot and making a Spell Casting Roll with a TN equal to 5 + (5 x Earth Ring of animal being summoned). Any natural creature from the L5R RPG 4th Edition rulebook and the Bestiary chapter of the L5R 4th Edition supplement *Enemies of the Empire* can be summoned. The summoned creature will appear within the next three Rounds, at an exact time chosen by the GM.

Manifested animal spirits are more intelligent than normal animals and can understand simple commands. They are friendly toward you, but do not regard themselves as your servants; instead they are allies, and will act accordingly. Spirits summoned in this manner remain in the mortal realm for a number of hours equal to your Earth Ring; they have the Spirit trait in addition to their normal abilities (if any).

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: PHOENIX CLAN: ISAWA ARCHAEOLOGIST

The death of the Ivory Kingdoms has left the region rife with overgrown ruins, collapsed cities, and lost temples. It is a land filled with buried secrets, forgotten lore, and abandoned culture. While all of the clans of Rokugan believe their own culture is greatly superior to that which has been eradicated, there is nonetheless considerable curiosity about it, and none feel this more keenly than the Phoenix. Throughout history, the Phoenix have been the masters and keepers of ancient and forbidden lore, and the sudden presence of so much completely unknown has been like a feast offered to a starving man. Many Phoenix in the Colonies have taken up the pursuit of these secrets in earnest and train to make it their primary duty.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: ISAWA ACHEOLOGIST [SHUGENJA]

- Technique Rank: 2
- Replaces: Isawa Shugenja 2, Agasha Shugenja 2
- Requirements: Lore: Gaijin (Ivory Kingdoms) 3

#### TECHNIQUE: THERE ARE NO SECRETS

The scholars of the Phoenix Clan are masters of prying the secrets of a dead nation from its ruins, regaining vast amounts of knowledge that might otherwise have been lost forever. When casting a non-damaging spell on an object, creature, or willing individual (not yourself) for which you have at least 3 Ranks in an applicable Lore Skill, you gain a +1k1 bonus on the Spell Casting Roll.

The GM is the final judge on whether a Lore Skill is applicable. For example, Lore: Shadowlands would apply when casting a spell on an oni, but not when casting it on a gaki.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: SCORPION CLAN: SONS OF SHADOW

The Colonies are a vast area in which many dangers and secrets are hidden. The other clans are interested in those secrets, interested in what resources and power might be contained or unleashed by them, interested in how they can benefit from such things. But while the clans understand the physical dangers of such things, only the Scorpion understand the spiritual threat. Only they know the razor's edge on which they walk, risking the integrity of their honor and indeed their souls by studying such gaijin artifacts. The two branches of the Soshi family, those who follow the path of the priesthood and those who follow the ways of combat





and law enforcement, have both dedicated themselves to ensuring the danger presented by the Colonies is never fully realized. Whatever horrors they must perform, they accept them as necessary burdens to prevent even greater horrors from being unleashed. If all goes as planned, the other clans will never know the suffering the Scorpion have spared them.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: SONS OF SHADOW

- ☉ Technique Rank: 3
- ☉ Replaces: Soshi Magistrate 3, Soshi Shugenja 3
- ☉ Requirements: Lore: Shugenja 3 or Lore: Law 3 (whichever applies to the opposite School)

#### TECHNIQUE: NONE SHALL KNOW MY PATH

The Sons of Shadow train extensively with their cousins throughout the Soshi family, learning the skills of both of the family's schools. If you are a Soshi Shugenja, you may as a Simple Action spend a spell slot to gain temporary ranks equal to your School Rank in Athletics, Defense, Intimidation, or Lore: Underworld. If you are a Soshi Magistrate, you may as a Simple Action spend one Void Point to gain temporary ranks equal to your School Rank in Calligraphy, Courtier, Etiquette, Lore: Theology, Spellcraft, or Stealth.

These temporary Skill Ranks last for one hour. No Mastery Abilities are gained for any of these temporary Skill ranks.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: SPIDER CLAN: COLONIAL CONQUEROR

The dangers of a new land are ideally suited to unleashing the full power and horror of the Spider Clan. When the Divine Empress struck her bargain with the forces of darkness at the end of the Destroyer War, she knew what would become of those corrupted vassals entering her service. She would send them away, to ensure that her own people, the just and the honorable, would be spared their company and their threat. What she could not know, what she did not foresee, was the incredible joy the Spider would take in fulfilling her command: "Go forth, and conquer in my name."

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: COLONIAL CONQUERER [BUSHI]

- ☉ Technique Rank: 3
- ☉ Replaces: Daigotsu Bushi 3, Order of the Spider Monk 3
- ☉ Requirements: Earth 3, Strength 3

#### TECHNIQUE: ALL FALL BEFORE ME

A Spider Conqueror is an unstoppable juggernaut of destruction that crushes all in its path without hesitation or remorse. Once per Round when you make a successful melee attack, you may immediately take a Free Action to make a Contested Willpower Roll with your opponent. If you win the Contested roll, your damage for that strike is doubled.



### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: UNICORN CLAN: THE DOOMSEEKERS

The Doomseekers are a Rokugani adaptation of an ancient Burning Sands order dedicated to bringing "death to the deathless" by rooting out and destroying immortal supernatural evils. The original targets of their technique were the heartless sorcerers known as khadi, but over the centuries they expanded their mission to include other immortal threats such as demons and rakshasa. (Ironically, it was actually a rakshasa, Adisbah the Cruel, who introduced the Doomseeker technique to Rokugan in order to avenge himself on the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban.) Within Rokugan the technique is extraordinarily rare and is only taught person-to-person; thus far, there has never been more than one Rokugani Doomseeker in the same generation.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: UNICORN DOOMSEEKER [SHUGENJA]

- ☉ Technique Rank: 4
- ☉ Replaces: Iuchi Shugenja 4, Horiuchi Shugenja 4, Moto Death Priest 4
- ☉ Requires: Willpower 5. Must find a personal teacher who will share the secrets of the Doomseeker tradition.

#### TECHNIQUE: PATH OF THE DOOMSEEKER

The Unicorn Doomseekers learn to root out immortal evils, primarily khadi but also other such immortal and demonic entities who cannot be readily identified. Any time you are in the presence of a hidden demon, monster, khadi, or similar entity, you may roll Willpower at TN 25 to sense the presence and location of the creature. (Some GMs may wish to make this roll secretly in order to avoid tipping off the players.) With a success, you are able to pick up subtle clues that give away the entity's true nature to you.







## WHO CAN BECOME A DOOMSEEKER?

In the canonical version of Rokugan, the Doomseeker Technique is limited to the Unicorn Clan. However, this is mainly due to an accident of history – the first Rokugani to learn the Technique was Iuchi Karasu, a Unicorn shugenja. It could just as easily have been a shugenja from another clan or even a ronin.

GMs who wish to add more variety to their version of Rokugan may choose to let PCs from any clan or background learn the Doomseeker Technique if they can find someone willing to teach it to them. For example, the Campaign book in this boxed set includes a gaijin NPC, Suwat the Doomseeker, who could potentially teach the Doomseeker Technique to any shugenja PC who qualifies for it.



If you have become aware of the presence of such a creature (either through this Technique or in some other way), you may spend a spell slot as a Complex Action to make a Contested Willpower roll against the creature – with a success, you gain a spiritual insight into the entity's true nature and learn one key piece of information (GM's choice) about how it can be unmasked and/or defeated.

The second part of this technique cannot be used against the same target more often than once per month.

## NEW ALTERNATE PATH: THE IMPERIAL EXPLORERS

The Imperial Explorers are the most recently created facet of the Imperial bureaucracy, one that is limited entirely to the Colonies. The Explorers were created to break the stranglehold on exploration by the Spider and Mantis clans, allowing the Imperial families to maintain control over the situation in the Colonies. They were initially founded based on the recommendation of the first Imperial Governor, who received the permission of the Divine Empress to create them. At the Governor's command a group of sensei were assembled from multiple clans; they were housed in a training compound a day's travel south of the Second City, and young and ambitious samurai from the various clan delegation were nominated for training.

Young samurai who join the Explorers endure a minimum of a year's training before they are considered fit for active duty on the frontier, and typically operate in teams for greater safety. Anything they discover during

## IMPERIAL EXPLORERS AS NON-BUSHI

The Imperial Explorer Path is normally limited to bushi characters, but there are no combat abilities associated with it. This is because the sensei of the Explorer dojo believe only bushi possess the skills and physical toughness to survive on the dangerous frontier of the Colonies. However, in theory the training could also be offered to samurai from other schools or even to shugenja. GMs who wish to run an Explorer-focused game may wish to make this Path available to characters regardless of their school.



that time becomes the property of the Imperial families. After the first year, Explorers are permitted to operate on their own and any resources they find are divided evenly between the Imperial families and the Explorer's clan. For this reason, the clans tend to send only talented and loyal young samurai to join the Explorers, hoping thereby to eventually enhance their own prosperity.

### NEW ALTERNATE PATH: IMPERIAL EXPLORERS

- Technique Rank: 2
- Replaces: Any Bushi School at Rank 2
- Requirements: Lore: Cartography 3

### TECHNIQUE: SEEKING NEW PATHS

An Imperial Explorer forges the way for the vassals of the Empress to follow. You gain Absolute Direction if you did not already possess that Advantage, and you gain a bonus of +1k0 to the total of all Bugei Skill Rolls made in a region for which you possess the Way of the Land Advantage. After spending at least two days in any city or province-sized area, you may make an Intelligence / Lore: Cartography Skill Roll (TN 20) to create a map of that region. Anyone who possesses the map is considered to have the Way of the Land Advantage for that region as long as they keep the map in their possession.

## NEW ALTERNATE PATH: THE SECOND CITY GUARDSMAN

Without question the most elite and prestigious military unit in the Colonies is the Second City Guardsmen. They were formed early in the colonization of the former Ivory Kingdoms, when the Second City was little more than a village of tents and ramshackle buildings. Agents of the Cult of Ruhmal, still active in the region, attempted to assassinate the group of military officers who formed the fledgling city's leadership (at this point the position of



Imperial Governor had not yet been created). The attack was thwarted by a handful of sentries and vigilant samurai in the area, and the cultists were slain to the last man. The highest-ranking officer in the city immediately ordered these samurai to form a new unit, one solely tasked with ensuring the safety of the city and all within it.

Decades later, the Second City Guardsmen are revered throughout the Colonies for their near-flawless track record, protecting the city and its inhabitants from all manner of threats. However, this record suffered a severe blemish when the previous Governor was assassinated. In the wake of his death, the commander of the Second City Guardsman, Akodo Tsudoken, took control of the city until a replacement Governor could arrive from the Empire. Anguished over his failure, Tsudoken instituted several draconian measures intended to root out any remaining threats within the city; these alienated the populace and tarnished the reputation of the unit. Comparisons to the Seppun family's failure to protect Emperors in previous eras became common. Even after the source of the attack was finally revealed, the Second City Guardsmen continued to suffer a damaged reputation for quite some time.

It may be noted that the Second City Guardsmen include shugenja in their ranks; however, since they are primarily a military organization and the vast bulk of their ranks are bushi, the only actual Technique they have developed is a bushi Technique.

#### **NEW ALTERNATE PATH: SECOND CITY GUARDSMAN [BUSHI]**

- Technique Rank: 2
- Replaces: Any Bushi School at Rank 2
- Requirements: Defense 4, any one Weapon Skill at 4

#### **TECHNIQUE: THE GOVERNOR'S ARMOR**

The Second City Guardsmen are among the most prestigious groups in all of the Colonies. Your Status Rank is considered one higher throughout the Colonial territories. When you are fighting within the Second City or another city-sized Colonial settlement, and you are in the Defense or Full Defense Stance, if your opponent attacks and misses you before your Turn for the Round you may immediately change your Stance to Attack. You lose all bonuses to your Armor TN from your previous Stance.

#### **NEW ALTERNATE PATH: THE RAJYA KE VARISA ("HEIRS OF THE KINGDOM")**

The Rajya ke Varisa are a group of Crab, Unicorn, and Mantis samurai who study the fighting techniques of the Ivory Kingdoms kshatriya and find ways to use them in conjunction with Rokugani combat techniques. The gaijin-turned-Mantis known as Yoritomo Singh also contributes to the organization's training, seeking to preserve some aspects of his former culture. So far they have managed to devise only one technique, albeit one of significant value.

#### **NEW ALTERNATE PATH: RAJYA KE VARISA [BUSHI]**

- Technique Rank: 4
- Replaces: Hida Bushi 4, Shinjo Bushi 4, Moto Bushi 4, Yoritomo Bushi 4

#### **TECHNIQUE: LEGACY OF THE KSHATRIYA**

The Rajya ke Varisa have learned to emulate the kshatriya technique that calls on religious devotion to strengthen their force of their blows. However, instead of calling on blasphemous gaijin gods, they call on the power of their devotion to the Fortunes. Twice per skirmish, before making an attack you may take a Free Action to spend a Void Point; if the subsequent attack succeeds, you may add unkept dice to your damage roll equal to your rank in the Lore: Theology skill.







## Ivory Kingdoms Schools

For the most part, it is unlikely that Rokugani PCs will learn the Schools presented here. They are provided mainly for the use of GMs who want to present Ivory Kingdoms NPCs. However, there are circumstances in which these could be player character Schools – for example, if the GM allows a player to run a *kshatriya* character who swears fealty to a clan (like Rama Singh in the canonical history, who becomes Yoritomo Singh), or if a Rokugani PC becomes a student of a *Sainika* fighter.

We have refrained from presenting gaijin weapons and equipment, mainly due to space considerations. In general, most gaijin weapons will not be significantly different in mechanical terms from their Rokugani counterparts (e.g. a *kukri* dagger will still be a 1k1 weapon, just like a *tanto*).

### NEW BASIC SCHOOL: THE KSHATRIYA WARRIOR

This is the standard fighting school of the Ivory Kingdom's *kshatriya* warrior caste, whose social role was roughly equivalent to a samurai. The *kshatriya* are now largely extinct, but a few survivors still carry on their fighting traditions, including Yoritomo Singh within the Mantis Clan. Under normal circumstances this School is only available to Ivinda natives of the *kshatriya* caste, although some of the techniques are now being studied by the Rokugani group calling itself the *Rajya ke Varisa*, trying to adapt them to Rokugani war-fighting.

#### NEW BASIC SCHOOL: KSHATRIYA WARRIOR [BUSHI]

- **Benefit:** +1 Agility
- **Skills:** Archery, Defense, Hand-to-Hand, Horsemanship, Lore: Theology (Ivory Kingdoms), Spears, Swordsmanship, any one appropriate High skill.
- **Integrity:** 5.0
- **Outfit:** Sword, shield, spear, bow, light armor, steed, elegant clothing, 10 koku (equivalent).

#### TECHNIQUES

##### RANK 1: THE STRENGTH OF INDRA

*Kshatriya* are taught to be fearless warriors, relying on the strength of Indra the God of War. You gain a +1k0 bonus with all your School Weapon Skills. When rolling to resist a Fear effect, your Willpower is considered one Rank higher.

##### RANK 2: THE WARD OF VISHNU

Vishnu the Protector teaches the *kshatriya* to guard themselves even as they strike down their foes. If you are carrying a shield, on your Turn you may take a Simple Action to make a Contested Roll of Defense / Agility against one opponent's [Weapon Skill] / Agility. If you succeed, that opponent must call three extra Raises to be able to strike you. This effect lasts until the start of your next Turn.

## "HONOR" AND GAIJIN SCHOOLS

Gaijin cultures like the Ivory Kingdoms have their own codes of ethics and proper behavior, all of which are significantly different than Rokugan's Code of Bushido. Thus, giving them an "Honor" stat is not really appropriate. However, some GMs may wish to have some statistical measure of a gaijin's overall moral fortitude (particularly for things like resisting Temptation and Intimidation rolls, resisting Fear, etc). If this is desired, the GM may introduce an "Integrity" stat as a replacement for Honor, representing the basic moral strength of a gaijin character.



##### RANK 3: THE SPEED OF THE MONGOOSE

The *kshatriya* strikes with the speed of the legendary mongoose, enemy of serpents. You may make melee attacks as a Simple Action when fighting with a sword, spear, or unarmed.

##### RANK 4: THE VIRTUE OF THE GODS

Your attacks are infused with the virtues of the Gods. Once per skirmish after a successful attack you may spend a Void Point to add a number of unkept dice to your DR equal to your Rank in Lore: Theology (Ivory Kingdoms).

##### RANK 5: THE COURAGE OF SHIVA

The final lesson of the *kshatriya* is to never give up, even in the face of terror or certain death. You gain an additional +1k1 to resist Fear effects. If you are reduced to Out or Dead, on your next Turn you may take one final Simple Action which suffers no Wound penalties.

### NEW BASIC SCHOOL: THE GURU SAINIKA FIGHTER

The culture of the Ivory Kingdoms has its own martial arts tradition, dating back to ancient times before the land was unified by the *Maharajah*. The tradition was maintained by the *gurus*, wise men drawn from the *brahmin* caste, who saw it as being as much a religious devotion as a fighting art. They taught some of their techniques to the *kshatriya* caste, from which they eventually migrated into the Cult of the Destroyer, but the *gurus* retained the true secrets of their arts.

Since the fall of the Kingdoms, *Sainika* has been fading away as the remaining *gurus* age and die without students. The handful of surviving *gurus* are deeply concerned about this and many of them are actively seeking students to preserve their techniques; it is possible an open-minded Rokugani might be able to take on this role.



## NEW BASIC SCHOOL: SAINIKA FIGHTER [GURU]

- **Benefit:** +1 Void
- **Skills:** Athletics, Defense, Hand-to-Hand, Knives, Lore: Theology (Ivory Kingdoms), Medicine, Meditation, any one High skill.
- **Integrity:** 6.0
- **Outfit:** Simple clothing, knife, sandals
- **Special:** The gurus live extremely simple lives of self-denial and religious devotion. In game terms, any student of Sainika will be expected to take up an Ascetic lifestyle.

### TECHNIQUES

#### RANK 1: HARMONY

Through a rigorous program of physical training and intense meditation, the beginning student of Sainika learns physical flexibility, spiritual harmony, and the basics of defense, making himself more difficult to harm both physically and mentally. You may add your Void Rank to your Armor TN. You may also add your Void Rank in unkept dice to any Contested Roll you make to resist Social Skill Rolls, Social Techniques, and Fear effects.

#### RANK 2: VISION

The sainika fighter studies his opponent, gaining insight into his strengths and weaknesses so as to exploit them in action. During a skirmish, you may spend a Void Point and take a Simple Action to assess your opponent. For

the remainder of that skirmish, you gain a +Xk0 bonus to your attack rolls against that opponent, where X is the opponent's lowest Trait.

#### RANK 3: UNDERSTANDING

At this level, practitioners of sainika gain an all but supernatural awareness of their surroundings, rendering them impossible to surprise. You roll additional dice on all Perception-based rolls equal to your Void Rank.

#### RANK 4: UNITY

The advanced sainika fighter moves fluidly from one target to the next, as both offense and defense become a single integrated action. When fighting unarmed or with a knife, you may make attacks as a Simple Action.

#### RANK 5: PURITY

True masters of sainika can deliver blows that cripple not only the body but the spirit. When attacking an opponent with an unarmed blow or a knife, you may spend a Void Point to also strike at the opponent's spiritual being. If your attack hits, you make a Contested Void roll against the opponent. (The GM may substitute Willpower for creatures which do not have a Void Ring.) With a success, the opponent suffers a -Xk0 penalty (where X is your Void Rank) on his Skill Rolls. This lasts until the third Reactions Stage from now.

Your attack still does normal physical damage in addition to this effect. The spiritual effects of this Technique cannot be stacked, although the duration can be extended by using it again on later Rounds.











# SECOND CITY THE PEOPLE



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