



*Legend of the Five Rings™*

# Bells of the Dead



Rich Wulf



# Legend of the Five Rings™



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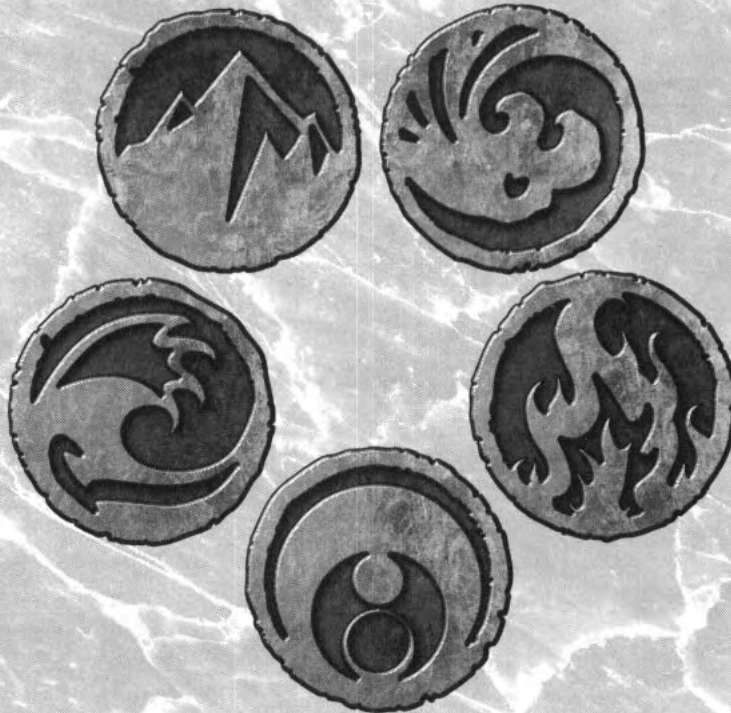
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# Bells of the Dead



*"It takes one man to keep a secret, two to break it. Conspiracies don't work."*

— Yasuki Taka, wily trader

## What is Bells of the Dead?

Bells of the Dead is the second of the "I," or "Intrigue" series of adventures. The adventure presented in this book presents the tale of complex conspiracy, dark betrayals, and desperate heroes. It is the tale of a revolution within the most clandestine organization in Rokugan, and a battle to prevent a greater evil from being born.

Though intended for a experienced magistrate characters, Bells of the Dead could be adapted for any party. The three part adventure also offers side quests in "Challenge - Focus - Strike" format. Through these side quests, Bells of the Dead could be expanded into a larger campaign. The only limitation is the desire of the players and the GM to hunt the conspiracy to its roots.

This adventure picks up in the wake of adventures presented in other Legend of the Five Rings products, such as The Hare Clan (from the first Game Master's screen) and City of Lies. It also draws from Way of the Minor Clans and The Merchant's Guide to Rokugan. It is a sequel to Haunting of Usagi Castle, from the 2nd Edition Game Master's Guide. None of these products are necessary to use this adventure. Everything you need is reprinted within.

### The Theme of Bells of the Dead

If there is one overbearing theme it is uncertainty. The player characters are never sure who their friends are, or what they've stumbled into. The characters find themselves hunting noble samurai and assisted by sinister Kolat. The characters take a trip into the heart of a haunted realm of unrestful spirits, following the footsteps of a forgotten legend. If they succeed, a clan will be restored to honor and a powerful evil will be banished. If they fail..

Let's not think about that.

Don't worry. It'll be fun.

Now let's go. The Kolat aren't the sort of people you keep waiting.

—Rich Wulf





— Tomoe

I do not know if this shall find you in good health.

I do not know if this shall find you at all.

I do not know why I write this, for even as I put the words to paper the chance grows slimmer that either of us shall survive. I can smell the hounds nipping at my heels. Every time their jaws snap shut the escape is narrower than the last. Worse than the magistrates, who do what they believe to be right, are the ones I cannot name. The ones responsible for the death of our father and the obliteration of our clan.

No, they have a name.

They are everywhere. They are everyone. Every time I accept a hand in friendship, I fear the other hand holds a knife. Every time I meet a stranger on an empty road, I wonder whether the meeting was by chance. I have encountered the Kolat on three occasions since my escape on that terrible night, and I shall tell you of them now.

The first was in the village near Mori Kage, where Yukio's code sent me. Shadowy men burned the magistrate's home to the ground and left me to take the blame.

The second was in a back alley in the fallen city of Ryoko Owari. The man's name was Koda; he told me so just before he drew his wicked farmer's blade. Only Kennō saved my life on that day. I severed Koda's head and left him to rot among the garbage. No one would notice another corpse in the City of Stories.

My third encounter was the strangest of all.

In the village of Nanashi Mura, the magistrates set their snares. I peered out the window of the shoddy inn where I rested to find a squad of magistrates marching into the village. That blasted Miya was at the head. I do not know how he finds me, but he never fails. I should have known better. A hare who sits still too long is prey. I grasped Kennō in both hands and prepared to meet my doom.

Then I saw the most curious thing.

A shabby little man in the garb of a trader led the samurai away, claiming loudly that he knew where they could catch the "Usagi fugitive." I thought him mad at first, but as he led the hunters off into the dark tangle of forest, he glanced over his shoulder directly at my position. With a wink and a smile, he led the magistrates away, mouthing a single word as he departed.

"Run."

He was not there by chance, I can tell you.

Still, I took his advice. Even with his help, I barely escaped Katsu's clutches. The Miya is clever and relentless, and I cannot help but respect him despite my position.

Ever since that day, I wonder. Why did the merchant help me? Am I part of some larger plan? Do the Kolat wish to torment me or kill me themselves? Is there something larger that I do not understand? Do I have allies that have not even revealed themselves? It seems almost too much to hope for.

Is this all some sort of damned game?

I pray that I will find the answer.

I pray that I will find you, my sister.

I pray for us all, for I fear that this cannot end well.

— Ozaki







# Background

*"Only fools and dead men search for secrets. The wise accept what they know."*

–Akodo Kage, revered sensei

No one defies the Kolat.

No one escapes the Kolat.

No one defeats the Kolat.

Everyone who challenges the Kolat dies.

The Kolat have worked a long time to plant this reputation in those who know. The Kolat exist solely because of their aura of secrecy. If they were exposed, they would be destroyed. Every time they kill an enemy or wipe out a potential competitor, they risk exposure. It's much simpler if their enemies believe from the start that they cannot win.

Are the Kolat as invincible as they claim? What happens when someone finds a way to escape the Ten Masters?

You're about to find out.

There are two groups of Kolat in this adventure. The true Kolat are not the villains in this adventure. They're not heroes, but they're not the problem. The other group, a splinter faction led by Daidoji Dajan, has rebelled against the true Kolat. Dajan wants what the Kolat want – to rule the Empire. He's just a bit less patient about it. He's pretty sure he knows just how to finish the job. Only a few things stand in the way.

1.) The true Kolat

2.) Usagi Ozaki

3.) The player characters

• In Act One, To Hunt a Hare, the party embarks on a search for the fugitive Hare, Ozaki. Their quest may lead to the heart of the once-proud land of the Scorpions, or through the gloomy forests of the Toritaka.

• In Act Two, Gang War, the player characters catch up with Ozaki in time to become trapped in a village torn apart by Kolat manipulations.

• In Act Three, the player characters confront the rebel Kolat Daidoji Dajan. In order to stop Dajan's diabolical plan they'll need luck, skill, and a bit of help...

## A Quick Word About the Kolat

*"Conspiracy is stronger than any magic."*

–Isawa Korekado, shugenja

What are the Kolat? As presented in *The Merchant's Guide to Rokugan*, the Kolat are an ancient organization dedicated to casting down the samurai caste. They have a very long-term view, concentrating upon slow accumulation of influence and secrecy. They utilize extortion, smuggling, and assassination, but also hold a lot of power in legitimate business. A Kolat businessman doesn't have to worry about preserving secrets if he operates within the law. Legitimate businesses make excellent cover for the odd spike of income that results from extortion or robbery. The Kolat obey the law whenever possible, and when that doesn't work, they change the law. If it takes a long time, so be it. The Kolat are very subtle, and very patient. They don't like making waves, which is one of the reasons why Daidoji Dajan angers them.

At a glance, the Kolat don't seem much different from your typical criminal organization, but there are two important things that separate a Kolat from typical gangsters, spies, or Scorpions.

1.) Heresy – The Kolat want to cast down the kami and abolish the samurai. In a world where the kami are your ancestors and guide your every action, the very idea is insane! The Kolat maintain that their motives are pure. They remember the world before the kami. Mortal man does not need divine puppeteers controlling his actions. The Kolat know exactly how dangerous these ideas are, so they keep their religious opinions to themselves. They believe that their goals will, in the end, redeem their actions. The ends will justify the means, for those ends are just and cannot be denied.

2.) The Oni's Eye – The Ten Masters possess one of the most powerful nemuranai in Rokugan. It is a great crystal that can spy on any location and produce tears which the Masters use to monitor agents in the field. The Oni's Eye gives the Kolat unmatched communication, organization, and espionage capabilities. They would not exist without it. The Masters believe it is infallible, that no one can hide from its gaze.

They are wrong.





## Getting Started

*"Destiny spoils the best-laid plans."*

—Al Hazaad, gaijin wanderer

The adventure begins as the player characters are summoned to Kyuden Suzume. Their invitation is not signed, it merely has an Imperial Seal.

This adventure works best if the player characters fit one of the following requirements:

- 1.) The characters are magistrates.
- 2.) The characters have completed The Hare Clan or Haunting of Shiro Usagi adventures.
- 3.) The characters have battled against the Kolat.
- 4.) There is a Kolat agent in the party.

In the first two scenarios, the characters receive the mission because of their reputation, or because of previous experience.

In the last two scenarios, the characters are recommended to Miya Katsu by an agent of the Kolat! Katsu is not a Kolat, but one of his superiors is. (Ikoma Soko, a Kolat Master!) Katsu is a skilled magistrate, but he's too high profile. Dajan's agents can see him coming from a mile away. Katsu knows that he needs outside assistance, and the true Kolat have secretly supplied

it in the form of the player characters. If the characters are enemies of the Kolat, the true Kolat hope that they'll be just as skilled in sniffing out Dajan or, better yet, that the characters and Dajan will kill each other off. If the party has a Kolat agent, then that agent is well aware of why he's been sent. Whether he shares his information depends upon how much he values his life.

(Note: In the first two scenarios, the true Kolat have nothing to do with the player characters' involvement.)

If none of the above apply, then Katsu knows of the characters by reputation. If they are not magistrates this paints a somewhat

desperate image of Katsu, which is not wholly inappropriate. He's run into a lot of dead ends and is willing to try anything.

## Timeline

*"All delays favor the patient."*

—Doji Akae, moneylender

Each item on the timeline is labeled with a letter. Most NPC's have a Timeline listing in their description, detailing what they know. Items in parentheses are not known unless noted with a "+" in that character's description. (For example, if "J" is known, the character only knows that Dajan and Nakiro disappeared. If "J+" is known, then that character also knows why they disappeared.)

Please note that this timeline is only meant as a guide. The course of the party's past exploits may have changed some of these occurrences. For instance, the events in the Hare Clan adventure are presented after the events in City of Lies, simply to maintain consistency with the calendar presented in Way of the Minor Clans. Your own campaign's calendar may vary. The GM is encouraged to edit this timeline appropriately.

### A) 1???

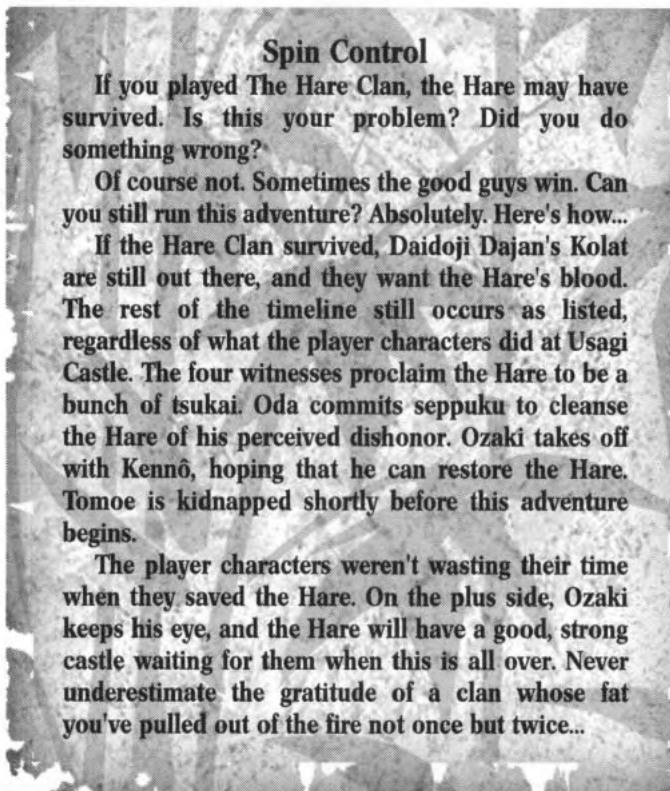
The kami fall. A few humans do not accept their rule. The louder rebels are struck down. The wiser rebels flee. They name themselves the Kolat, a word unheard of in the language of the kami.

### B) 129, Month of the Horse

The Oni's Eye is discovered in the Twilight Mountains by Kolat agents. Using the Eye, they begin expanding their influence immediately.

### C) 387-398

The Crab Crane War – The first true test of the Kolat. Agents incite war between the Crab and Crane. Their manipulations cause







chaos throughout Rokugan and, eventually, cause the Emperor to become a pawn of the gozoku – a political consortium unaffiliated with the Kolat. The Kolat act openly in Rokugani society, and are nearly destroyed when the Yasuki family discovers their existence. Over the next several centuries, the Kolat do their best to wipe out all memory of their folly. Even yet, there are many among the lower classes that remember the shadow organization.

## D) 750, Month of the Hare

After Iuchiban's defeat, a young ronin named Reichin distinguishes himself for selfless bravery and cunning. He is awarded with the family name "Usagi" by Hantei XI. Reichin takes his new Minor Clan's name from the month, because it sounds lucky.

## E) 830, Month of the Rooster

A group of twelve shugenja journey to Wall Above the Ocean Mountains to investigate an outbreak of plague. All die in combat with the Shimushi, a powerful evil spirit. They banish it with the last ounce of their strength. Peasant folklore refers to the spirit as an oni, but the Toritaka believe that it was, in fact,

a powerful gaki who served in the armies of Iuchiban before his death. In memory of the shugenja, a shrine is constructed in the lonely mountains. So long as the bells ring regularly, the shugenja spirits prevent the Shimushi from returning. The monks who tend the macabre shrine dub it the Bells of the Dead.

## F) 1088, Month of the Horse

Asako Nakiro, a young Inquisitor, embarks upon a quest to study the Shimushigaki. He sets out from his home near Mori Kage, but contracts a terrible illness near the Bells of the Dead. (Nakiro survives through the intervention of Yasuki Taka. The Crab notices that Nakiro has signs of severe Taint, but says nothing. Nakiro retires to the lands of the Falcon to study gaki phenomenon.)

## G) 1093, Month of the Dog

A small sake works opens in Aiso Ni Ryokosha Mura – Friendly Traveler Village. The liquor quickly grows a reputation for being the greatest in the empire, due in no small part to the mercantile cunning of its producer, Yasuki Taka. (Also due in no small part to money extorted by Taka from Asako Nakiro.)

## H) 1102, Month of the Serpent

An enterprising young samurai named Daidoji Dajan is assigned as ambassador to Falcon territory, where he meets Asako Nakiro. (Dajan is an agent of the Kolat, reassigned to a meaningless task to curb his unseemly ambition. Nakiro is old, bitter, and penniless after years of blackmail.)

## I) 1101, Month of the Rat

Yasuki Taka becomes the daimyo of the Yasuki family. Within a year, trade along the Kenkai Hanto Peninsula triples. Taka is regarded to be responsible for the economic boom, and is gifted with a daisho from his cousins in the Kaiu.

## J) 1103, Month of the Dragon

Asako Nakiro and Daidoji Dajan disappear, leaving no trace of their passage. (They have discovered a means by which the Oni's Eye can be circumvented and vanish, abandoning the Kolat and going into business for themselves.)

## K) 1120, Month of the Boar

Soshi Seiryoku is kidnapped en route to Ryoko Owari. Her soul is bound to an oni by individuals claiming to be the Kolat. The true Kolat have no knowledge of this incident. (Dajan's new Kolat are responsible.)

## L) 1121, Month of the Horse

Bayushi Tomaru launches an ill-conceived attack upon the Sparrow. He is repulsed and roundly humiliated by the Three Man Alliance. Bayushi Shoji chastises the Scorpion for his incompetence.

### Haunted?

If the characters have played Haunting of Usagi Castle, then they may have picked up an unwanted guest in the form of Usagi Oda's ghost. Oda's ghost can actually be quite helpful during this adventure, and is more lucid than usual. In fact, every time the party turns up a clue leading to finding Ozaki or exposing Dajan's Kolat, Oda will appear in the haunted character's dream and restore a number of wounds equal to the haunted character's Void, or simply provide a refreshing night's sleep instead of the usual horrific nightmares. After a while, the character may realize that Oda's blessing is a sign that they are on the right track. When the adventure is completed, Oda will finally lie at rest (assuming, of course, that the Hare Clan is restored...)



## M) 1122, Summer

Chaos erupts in Ryoko Owari. Three opium cartels battle one another after antagonism flares between the Scorpion families. Unicorn involvement is suspected. The Kolat are baffled by this incident, which was executed using their typical methodology. (Again, Dajan's Kolat are responsible.)

## N) 1122, Month of the Ox

Usagi Ozaki presents his sister, Tomoe, to the nobility of Ryoko Owari in hopes of attracting suitors. They stumble onto a meeting between Matsu Akira and Soshi Yukio. Ozaki and Tomoe are violently confronted by Yukio, who dies in the ensuing combat. (The siblings discover a scroll covered with strange code, which Tomoe later deciphers.)

## O) 1123, Month of the Goat

The armies of Bayushi Tomaru arrive at Usagi Castle, demanding satisfaction for the death of Soshi Yukio and the return of "stolen property." Usagi Castle falls. Hare daimyo Usagi Oda is slain. Usagi Tomoe is taken hostage by Tomaru. Usagi Ozaki disappears with Kennō, the Ancestral Sword of the Hare. (In reality, Tomaru attacks the Hare at the prompting of Dajan's Kolat, and later violates his agreement with them.)

## P) 1123, Month of the Hare

On the three hundred and seventy third anniversary of their clan's founding, the Hare are officially disbanded by Hantei XXXVIII. Kitsune Hamato, Daidoji Unoko, Toritaka Bonugi, and Yasuki Taka testify that the Usagi are maho tsukai. Repairs on the ruins of Shiro Usagi are forbidden. (Inquisitors and Witch Hunters investigate Hare territory. No arrests are made.)

## Q) 1123, Spring

The Scorpion Clan Coup - Shortly after the Coup, Scorpion influence in Ryoko Owari is removed by the Nineteenth Imperial Legion. The ruling family flees. Bayushi Tomaru disappears. (His bride-to-be, Usagi Tomoe, vanishes shortly before.)

## R) 1123, Month of the Goat

Ozaki arrives in a village near the ruins of Mori Kage. He visits Ide Gonkuro, an elderly magistrate. The house bursts into flames and Ozaki narrowly escapes. Emerald Magistrates led by Miya Katsu arrive the next day, searching for Ozaki. (Ozaki had been following clues in the scroll deciphered by his sister. The magistrate had poisoned himself to escape the Kolat, and warns Ozaki to beware the Kolat before he dies.)

## S) 1123, Summer - 1124, Fall

Miya Katsu begins an Empire-wide manhunt for Ozaki. Though the famed magistrate comes close on many occasions, Ozaki's skill, luck, and desperation allow him to repeatedly elude justice.

## T) 1124, Month of the Dog

Miya Katsu stumbles over peculiar information regarding the Usagi case. Apparently, he was dispatched to arrest Ozaki for the murder of Ide Gonkuro two weeks before Gonkuro was slain. Before he can follow up on his investigations, he is invited to the Emperor's Winter Court. When

Katsu returns, the dates on all records have been altered.

## U) 1125, Month of the Dragon

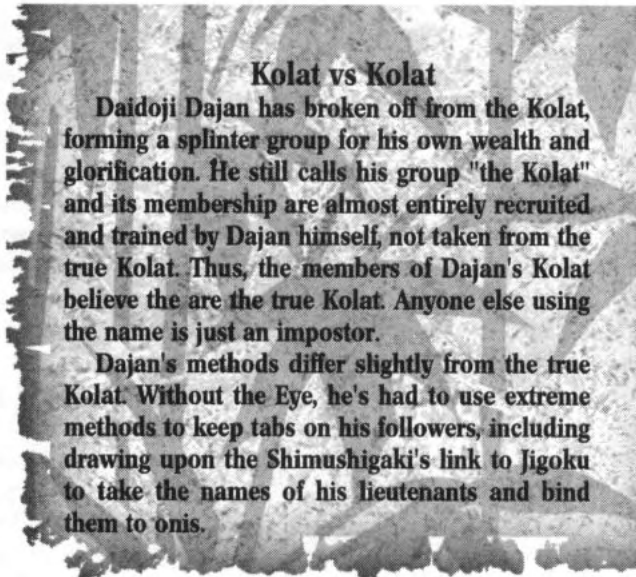
Toritaka Bonugi is murdered in his home. Guards discover him hacked to pieces in his library. A look of utter terror is painted on the dead Falcon's face. Hare involvement is suspected. (The true Kolat are responsible.)

## V) 1125, Month of the Serpent

Kitsune Hamato vanishes, abandoning his family and taking nothing of value from his opulent home in Kitsune Mori. Most suspect that Hamato was kidnapped by Usagi patriots, and wonder if Taka or Unoko will be next.

## W) 1125, Month of the Horse

The present day. The player characters receive an urgent invitation to visit Kyuden Suzume.







# Act One: To Hunt A Hare

*"Every power is subject to another."*

—Shinjo Yokatsu, Master of the Four Winds

Once the characters arrive in the Suzume Hills, Kyuden Suzume is difficult to find. It is small and rough by most standards (Daidoji Uji once mistook it for a stable). However, the interior is breathtaking, featuring an impressive collection of sumi-e and armor. Suzume Kashira, the Sparrow daimyo, gives the characters accommodations, and allows them to get settled. Though they arrive early in the day, they are informed that they shall meet with Miya Katsu for breakfast tomorrow. Then, the Sparrow politely ignore the player characters. They have no business with them, and are doing Katsu a favor by holding this meeting in their home.

The characters may have heard of Katsu (Glory 2.9, Honor 2.6). He is a sometimes unorthodox, but effective instrument of the law. He has been commended by Hantei XXXVIII on two occasions. Katsu is a methodical man, and though he will meet the characters beforehand, he will not discuss business. In fact, he will not acknowledge that he sent for them. He simply pretends as if they have arrived by coincidence.

In the meantime, Katsu's servants are watching. This is a test of character. If anyone does anything dishonorable or bizarre (like prowling through Katsu's quarters), Katsu dismisses those characters. Others who don't shame themselves can find their less honorable colleagues later. If the characters are polite but wary, not lowering their guard and asking discreet questions about the situation, Katsu respects them. This is the sort of samurai he is looking for: wise, but discreet. When Katsu meets with the characters the next morning, read the following.

*The dining room is small, but tasteful, much like the rest of Kyuden Suzume. Miya Katsu rises and bows as befits your stations, his dark eyes flickering in silent greeting. Behind him to the right, a*

*young woman in a peaked black hat and a yellow kimono embroidered with sparrows bows deeply. Katsu's yojimbo stands to his left, eyes not leaving the party as he bows.*

*"Please, sit," Katsu whispers, gesturing to the table. "We have much to discuss. Kashira-sama could not join us. We must persevere without the Sparrow's tales."*

*As you seat yourselves, the servants deliver tea, rice cakes, and bowls of fruit. Katsu sips his drink slowly, pausing to consider the flavor and aroma. The girl watches you with large eyes, though she quickly averts her gaze when you notice. The yojimbo recedes into the shadows and remains standing, watchful. You notice Katsu's katana and the girl's wakizashi are placed on the floor to their right, out of reach. The yojimbo keeps his weapons.*

*The servants finish their tasks and depart. As soon as they are gone, Katsu lifts his head, listening. When he is sure they are gone, he turns to you.*

*"I apologize for my rudeness. I trust that your honor is strong enough to withstand the paranoia of an old man?" He grins slightly; Katsu's weathered face is unused to smiling. "I do not know any of you, except by reputation. I have found myself in a strange situation. The only friends I can trust are strangers. May I depend upon your discretion?"*

If the characters waver, remind them that Rokugani society is based on favors. A powerful man in an Imperial Family is asking for one. This is a great opportunity. When the characters reply in the affirmative, Katsu continues...

*"Excellent," he says. He sets his cup down deliberately, then gestures toward the woman. "May I introduce Miya Sasami, Imperial Cartographer." There is a faint but unmistakable note of pride in his voice.*

*"Konichiwa," the girl replies, bowing again and smiling.*

*"Sasami is surveying and mapping the territories of our new Emperor," Katsu explains. "However, she requires an escort. Surely a group of samurai like yourselves could easily bear such a light burden? She is most efficient. I'm certain the task will take little of your time. The Miya would be grateful."*

At this point the characters may be a bit confused. The Miya have plenty of connections, so why hire out strangers? If anyone makes a statement along such lines, or seems irritated that Katsu is wasting their time, Katsu addresses the next toward them directly. If not, he simply works it into the conversation later on.

*"While I have you here," Katsu says, his sharp eyes fixing each of you in turn. "I would appreciate it if you addressed a matter of minor note. Two years ago, the ronin Ozaki supposedly murdered a magistrate in the village near Mori Kage Toshi. Circumstances have demonstrated to me that Ozaki was not responsible, and that he has in fact been accused unjustly. I cannot know the truth of the matter*



*until I speak to him personally. I have had little luck finding him. It seems almost as the Fortunes conspire to keep him free," Katsu chuckles ruefully. "I wonder sometimes if one not so entangled in politics might have better luck. I'm sure you wouldn't mind taking a look for this ronin? It would be on your way..."*

Of course, the surveying mission is nothing more than a smokescreen. If the characters seem confused, reluctant, suspicious, or just aren't getting it, Katsu will be plain. "Listen," the old magistrate says, a steely growl filling his voice. "It is clear to me that some sort of shadow play is taking place here. My orders to arrest Ozaki were issued weeks before any crime occurred. When I returned to examine the records, they had been replaced with forgeries. There's a conspiracy afoot, one powerful enough to manipulate Emerald Magistrates and, I suspect, wipe out Ozaki's former clan, the Hare. Do you want that power lurking near the Son of Heaven?"

*"If you're not willing to sacrifice your own pride in order to serve the Emperor, tell me now. I shall find others worthy of the burden."*

If the characters agree to assist, he gets down to business and shares all the information he can. Katsu knows items D, L, M, O, P, Q, R, S, T, U, V, W from the Timeline, but he doesn't know about Ozaki's scroll. Katsu cannot risk offering further assistance until Ozaki is found, out of fear that the conspiracy will turn its attention toward the party. This is why he met them anonymously. Katsu trusts the Sparrow. His instincts are correct; there are no Kolat in the Sparrow, and the characters will begin the adventure outside of the awareness of their enemies.

Katsu is sincere and helpful. He gives the party all the time they require to complete the quest. After two years, he's willing to wait in order to see the job done right.

(For more information on Miya Katsu, see Winter Court 2: Kyuden Kakita.)

## Where to next?

*"He that fails to question, fails to learn."*

—Shosuro Emon, assassin

Ozaki's trail could lead just about anywhere. If the characters aren't sure where to go first and the GM doesn't feel like watching them stumble around, Katsu can offer a few suggestions.

- 1) **Ryoko Owari** – The closest city to Hare territory. A frequent haunt of Bayushi Tomaru.
- 2) **Kyuden Bayushi** – A dangerous place to visit, but some clue of Bayushi Tomaru's whereabouts may be found.
- 3) **Kyuden Usagi** – Survivors of the Hare linger near the burnt wreckage.

4) **Mori Kage Village** – It's a long way, but it might hold a few clues.

5) **Otosan Uchi** – Perhaps the Imperial Records hold more details regarding the Hare's destruction?

6) **Kosaten Shiro** – Daidoji Unoko, one of the witnesses who brought about the destruction of the Hare, lives here.

7) **Tani Hitokage** – The Valley of the Spirit was once home to Toritaka Bonugi, the witness who was recently murdered.

8) **Kyuden Kitsune** – Also home of one of the four witnesses.

9) **Yasuki Yashiki** – The Black Crane Estates are the home to Yasuki Taka, another one of the witnesses.







After leaving the Suzume Hills, Act One becomes nonlinear. The characters might wander for months, never turning up any clues but having countless adventures. As long as you're having fun, take as long with this part as you like. On the other hand, the party might go directly to Yasuki Yashiki and find Ozaki right away, hurtling headlong into Act Two. Here's what clues can be found in each area:

## 1) Ryoko Owari

The city is under martial law, enforced by an Imperial Legion led by Taisa Seppun Nakao. Very little is found here. No one has seen Ozaki or Tomaru in years. A character with Scorpion connections may be approached by a member of the Bayushi underground. Perhaps a meeting with Tomaru can be arranged, for a price?

## 2) Kyuden Bayushi

The only things living here are ghosts. Oh, and a bunch of Scorpion bushi. The Scorpions are hidden well, and the characters are unlikely to find any clues in the burnt out wreckage. If there is a Scorpion in the party, they may be approached and allowed to see Tomaru, who now lives deep in the castle. (If played before the Coup, the castle is in better shape, but Tomaru is still quite busy.)

## 3) Shiro Usagi

There is a small, ramshackle village in the shadow of the Hare ruins. Those who live here are former Hares. They are extremely paranoid about outsiders, especially Scorpions and Foxes. If the player characters seem sincere that they mean Ozaki no harm, a ronin named Muso (Honor 2.7, Glory 0) will agree to answer questions. Unfortunately, no one admits to having seen Ozaki since his escape. The Hares can provide detailed descriptions of Ozaki, Tomoe, and the Ancestral Sword of the Hare. The Hares are unlikely to share information if a Scorpion or a Fox is in the party.

If the characters know Genko (from Haunting of Shiro Usagi) then they may get the farmer to admit that he's seen Ozaki since. Ozaki has stopped in a few times to check upon his little brother, Otu. Ozaki never tells Otu who he is, and little Otu doesn't recognize his big brother anymore. Ozaki always stays briefly, takes a bit of

food and water, and leaves in the night. He was last here one week ago.

## 4) Mori Kage Village

The long journey to Mori Kage is worth the few clues found here. The village is small; a few public buildings and a dozen or so craftsmen's homes. There's also a rather creepy castle in the forest, but the villagers do not recommend going there. (In fact, it's a red herring. Mori Kage Castle has nothing to do with the Kolat.)

The new magistrate is a dull fellow named Shiba Eitoku (Honor 3.5, Glory 2.3) who can't offer much besides the fact that Ide Gonkuro was "murdered by some Hare." He is very polite and friendly, since he doesn't get samurai visitors often.

The local stable master, a merchant named Doru (Honor 1, Glory 0), can tell a lot more. Ide Gonkuro spent a lot of time in the stables tending his Shinjo steed. So far from home the stables were the only familiar place in the cold northern provinces of the Phoenix. While he whiled away the hours, Gonkuro spoke often with Doru. Doru considered Gonkuro a friend.

Doru knows that before his death, Gonkuro had been investigating the disappearance of

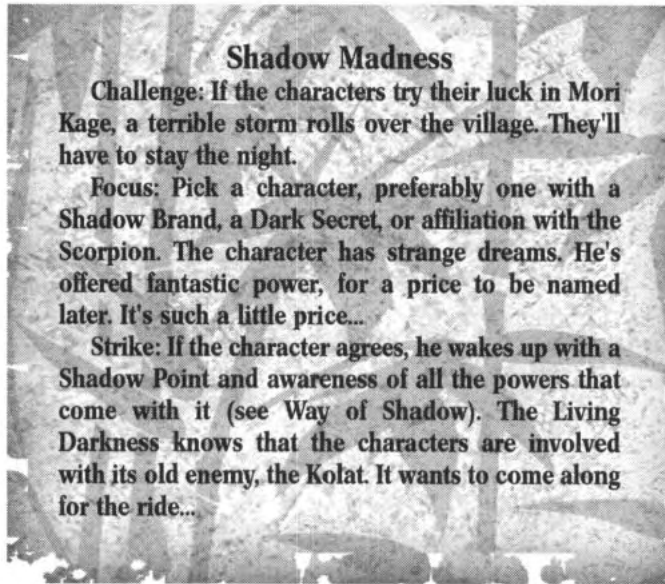
an Inquisitor named Asako Nakiro. Doru never learned the details, but he knows that after Gonkuro began his investigations, he was visited often by mysterious figures. Shortly afterward, he was murdered and his house was burned to the ground. Doru believes that Ozaki killed Gonkuro at the behest of these figures.

## 5) Otsan Uchi

The characters will need impressive connections just to enter the Imperial City, let alone arrange a search through Imperial Records.

If the characters ask about Asako Nakiro, some of the older magistrates have heard of him. Nakiro was obsessed with the study of gaki (hungry ghosts), and he retired to the Falcon Lands over three decades ago. Surely, he's dead by now.

The characters learn little about the four witnesses against the Hare here, except that Yasuki Taka did not arrive with the others. In fact, he gave his own testimony over a week later.

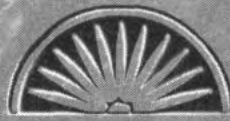


### Shadow Madness

**Challenge:** If the characters try their luck in Mori Kage, a terrible storm rolls over the village. They'll have to stay the night.

**Focus:** Pick a character, preferably one with a Shadow Brand, a Dark Secret, or affiliation with the Scorpion. The character has strange dreams. He's offered fantastic power, for a price to be named later. It's such a little price...

**Strike:** If the character agrees, he wakes up with a Shadow Point and awareness of all the powers that come with it (see Way of Shadow). The Living Darkness knows that the characters are involved with its old enemy, the Kolat. It wants to come along for the ride...



If the characters search for Katsu's original orders, they discover that they were issued by a Seppun Fumiki. Fumiki was recently assigned to Badger territory, a long, long way from Otosan Uchi. If they make the long trek to find Fumiki, they'll learn two things: 1) she hates the weather up there, and 2) she never gave Katsu any orders. The forgeries are so skillful that even Fumiki is surprised if shown them.

## 6) Kosaten Shiro

Daidoji Unoko (Honor 1, Glory 2.1) has escaped her enemies in a rather unique manner. She retreated within herself. Two months ago, she had a complete mental breakdown. She now sits by a pond in the gardens making little origami boats. Sometimes, she cries.

Unoko is Dajan's cousin, and an agent of his Kolat. Dajan utilized Unoko to seduce important figures and dig up blackmail. She isn't aware of the existence of the true Kolat. Shortly after Bonugi was murdered, Dajan offered to help her escape, but for a price. He wanted to bind her to an oni for her protection. She flatly denied the offer. Dajan left, then sent Nakiro to Kosaten Shiro to silence her.

Nakiro could not bring himself to harm her (he's not quite as evil as Dajan thinks) but he convinced her to feign insanity for her own protection. Nakiro promised it would not be for long. She agreed, and retreated into herself.

There's not much chance the characters will get anything of Unoko, but if they can use magic or another form of enticement to bring her out of her simulated fugue, she knows a few important clues. The best bet is persistence. If the characters stick around for several days asking questions, she may snap out of it for a few moments to make them go away.

First, she knows the following items from the timeline: H, J, N+, O+, P, U, V. Unoko thinks that Dajan had Toritaka Bonugi killed.

Second, she knows for a fact that Yasuki Taka is not one of Dajan's agents. She doesn't know why he testified.

Third, she has seen Ozaki. He visited her before her breakdown. She remembers that he asked a lot of questions, and seemed angry, but never drew his sword. In the end, he left. He wanted to know where his sister had gone, and Unoko did not know.







## 7) Tani Hitokage

Toritaka Bonugi was another agent of Dajan's Kolat, but no evidence of the connection exists. Bonugi's body has been cremated and there are no clues or witnesses to the murder. The true Kolat had Bonugi killed. Bonugi was the nail that stuck out the farthest, so the Kolat hammered him down to see who they could flush out.

If the characters ask about Asako Nakiro, the older residents will be able to assist. Nakiro was a strange man who kept to himself. He studied *gaki* quite often, and seemed interested in the prospect of summoning them. He lived among the Falcon for fifteen years. The Falcon were respectful of Nakiro because he was an Inquisitor, but he also frightened them. They believe that *gaki* should not be meddled with: to trifle with the hungry dead is to invite them to feed upon you. Nakiro disappeared twenty-two years ago, and the Falcon assume that whatever he was looking for found him. It happens all the time in the gloomy Falcon lands.

If the characters want information about *gaki*, the Falcon are the undisputed experts on the spirit realms. The Falcon will gladly share any information in the "Ghosts" sidebar in Act Three.

Other than this, the only oddity at Tani Hitokage is that Toritaka Roku, Bonugi's brother, disappeared shortly after Bonugi's murder. Some believe that he set out to find the murderer, and has not returned.

## 8) Kyuden Kitsune

Kitsune Hamato had no close friends or relatives, and was not well liked among the Fox. Those who knew him regarded him as obnoxiously arrogant. Most are glad he's gone, and are not going to great lengths to find him. There is a lot of bad blood between the Fox and Hare, and Hamato's testimony against the Usagi is generally regarded to be the only worthwhile thing the man ever did.

Hamato is not dead. He fled when he learned what happened to Bonugi, fearing he would be next. The true Kolat followed Hamato out of Kyuden Kitsune, hoping he would lead them back to Dajan.

To their frustration, he quickly lost their trail and vanished, even escaping the all-seeing Eye.

## 9) Yasuki Yashiki

The characters arrive at Black Crane estates to find that Yasuki Taka is not home. The characters are greeted by Taka's hatamoto, Yasuki Yukinaga (Honor 0.7, Glory 6), a skinny young man whose greasy hair is already receding from the stress of big business.

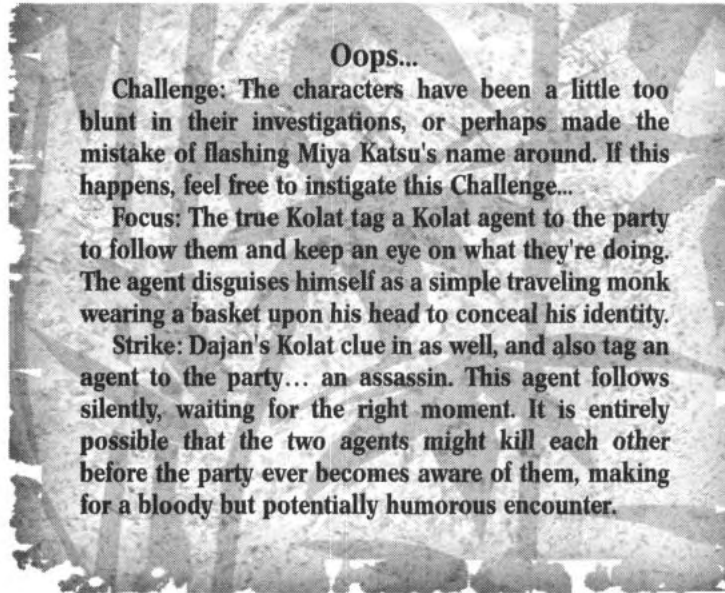
"Taka-sama won't be returning for some time," Yukinaga announces, "but you are more than welcome to remain here in his absence. He will return tomorrow."

Characters skilled in etiquette may realize that "He will return tomorrow," is a polite way of saying "I don't know when he'll be back, but you can wait here."

Yukinaga is nervous, and doesn't know how to react to a bunch of magistrates on his doorstep while his master discreetly fights a gang war in the south. If the player characters are persistent, Yukinaga reveals that Taka is currently in Aiso Ni Ryokosha Mura (Friendly Traveler Village). He insists that they avoid the area.

"Friendly Traveler Village is... unfriendly... this time of year," he explains lamely.

When the characters finally get fed up and leave, they may notice that they're being followed...



### Oops...

**Challenge:** The characters have been a little too blunt in their investigations, or perhaps made the mistake of flashing Miya Katsu's name around. If this happens, feel free to instigate this Challenge...

**Focus:** The true Kolat tag a Kolat agent to the party to follow them and keep an eye on what they're doing. The agent disguises himself as a simple traveling monk wearing a basket upon his head to conceal his identity.

**Strike:** Dajan's Kolat clue in as well, and also tag an agent to the party... an assassin. This agent follows silently, waiting for the right moment. It is entirely possible that the two agents might kill each other before the party ever becomes aware of them, making for a bloody but potentially humorous encounter.

## Finding Ozaki

*"Go out and find your destiny, before it finds you."*

— Yoritomo Masasue, sailor

For all of the party's searching, Ozaki finds them first. The few clues Ozaki salvaged from Gonkuro's home led him to believe that there was something important in the Yasuki provinces. The fact that Taka testified against the Hare made the clue all the more urgent. For two years, Ozaki has visited the area repeatedly, hoping to find another clue, hoping to get a chance to question Yasuki Taka.



How Ozaki clued in to the party is up to the GM, and can be brought about by many different circumstances in the story. These are best options, but feel free to invent others.

1) If the player characters visited Shiro Usagi, the Usagi secretly ferreted the information to him.

2) If the characters spread their names all over Ryoko Owari, then news got back to Ozaki. Hares have large ears...

3) If one of the characters is haunted by Usagi Oda, the spirit led Ozaki to him in nightmares. Ozaki is also haunted by his father.

4) Ozaki stumbles onto the party by pure chance as they exit Taka's estates.

Ozaki tails the party subtly, and they're unlikely to notice him in the crowded streets. If a PC specifically watches to see if they're being followed, then the TN to notice Ozaki is an opposed roll between the observer's Awareness + Investigation and Ozaki's Awareness + Hisomu (Ozaki rolls 8k5). A character haunted by Usagi Oda immediately notices Ozaki and recognizes him.

If the characters realize that someone is following them, there is less chance of being surprised by what happens next.

To your surprise, you recognize the man following you. It is none other than Ozaki, the ronin you've been searching for!

Before you can alert your companions, an enormous man with a jagged scar circling his throat lurches up behind Ozaki, seizes his shoulders in both hands, and throws the Hare through the front wall of the nearest sake house. Wood and torn paper doors explode. Ozaki rolls to his feet and draws a gleaming katana.

"Koda?!?" the Hare exclaims.

The assassin answers by hurling a fruit cart into Ozaki with a crunch.

A large doshin scrambles in front of the man with tonfa drawn, but Koda cuts the man in half with a wicked chopping blade. The huge man advances on Ozaki without any concern for any passersby, though he nods and grins at your party.

## Meet Koda

If the player characters act quickly, they may be able to interrupt before Koda kills the doshin. If they stand there and gawk, Koda keeps killing innocent people as he makes his way to Ozaki. He'll always attack a player character in preference to a bystander – samurai are more worthy opponents. Koda fights without any concern for his own welfare (see his description).

After Koda dies, his body blackens and melts into a puddle of black goo (1k1 damage to anyone touching this substance). When the characters check on Ozaki, he is alive but unconscious. After the characters deal with Koda, Act Two begins.

## Who's Who in Act One...

### Miya Sasami

Earth: 2

Water: 2

Perception: 4

Fire: 2

Intelligence: 4

Air: 2

Void: 2

School/Rank: Miya Shisha 1

Honor: 2.7

Glory: 1.5

**Advantages:** Way of the Land – Three Man Alliance, Way of the Land – Crab, Meek, Great Potential – Cartography, Absolute Direction

**Disadvantages:** Small, Soft-Hearted

**Skills:** Courtier 2, Defense 1, Diplomacy 1, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 2, Cartography 4, Tea Ceremony 1

**Timeline:** D, E, G, I, L, O, W







### Bayushi Tomaru

**Earth:** 3

Stamina: 4

**Water:** 3

Perception: 4

**Fire:** 4

**Air:** 4

**Void:** 3

**School/Rank:** Bayushi Bushi 4

**Honor:** 1.8

**Glory:** 0 (4 in a pre-Coup campaign)

**Advantages:** Heartless, Quick, Strength of the Earth (once)

**Disadvantages:** Brash, Obligation - Kolat (4)

**Skills:** Archery 4, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Poison 4, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2, Athletics 1, Gambling 4, Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 3, Knife 3,

**Timeline:** D, L, M, N+, O+, P, Q+, U, V

Once, Tomaru was a ruthless general and implacable foe. He took the most direct route to his opponent, crushing opposition and casting aside obstacles through sheer determination. He was one of Shoji's finest front-line officers. Now he is a fugitive in an empire that hates his clan as much as the Hare he once destroyed.

Tomaru is a strikingly handsome man, with a large build and an arrogant cast to his features. He has always been a brash and churlish individual, and sees the need to thank others as weakness. Even in his current situation, he manages to maintain much of his arrogance, lording over the ruins of Bayushi Castle as if they were his own. (Only in his Lady's absence, of course).

After Tomaru's failed attack on the Sparrow, Kitsune Hamato came to him with an offer. "They" would provide an opportunity for him to regain his reputation, and all he had to do was destroy an enemy of their choosing. Tomaru agreed, so long as that enemy was no ally of the Scorpion. Years later, Hamato returned, naming that enemy as the Hare, and their price as the children of the Hare daimyo, Ozaki and Tomoe.

Tomaru looks disturbed if asked about Tomoe. Before Tomoe vanished she was making quite an effort to understand the dark Scorpion general, to know why he attacked her castle. No one had ever cared about Tomaru so much, and he genuinely fell in love with her. He attempted to keep her for himself, but Hamato and a few other agents appeared, slipping through Scorpion security and explaining to Tomaru in no uncertain terms what the Kolat would do to him if he reneged on their deal. In the end, he relented, and hates himself for it.

Tomaru is not prepared to become entangled in a war with the Kolat, though he misses Tomoe greatly. He's simply too concerned

Sasami is young, beautiful, and shy. She always wears clothing with Sparrow motifs, as she was raised by the Suzume. Her true love is travel; she loves to explore new worlds. If a player character shares this particular joy, she may open up and develop a close friendship. Otherwise, she merely acts as instructed.

Sasami is a skilled cartographer, sincere in her wish to map the Empire in the name of the new Hantei. She knows little about the hunt for Ozaki or anything else regarding the mission, so she cannot compromise vital information. However, she does know that her uncle Katsu sent these samurai with her for a reason, and she'll do her best to help them (usually by staying out of the way).

Sasami knows a lot about the Suzume Hills and the surrounding area. She can tell the player characters a thing or two about the Bells of the Dead if they ask, though she's far too shy to volunteer the information.

If there are no other female characters in the party, Sasami is chaperoned by an elderly maid named Konoe. Konoe fears that Sasami will die an old maid if she doesn't loosen up, and makes every effort to foster romance between Sasami and the most honorable player character.



with the Scorpion's current situation. However, he tells the characters that he knows of the "Kolot" and that Kitsune Hamato is one of them. Of course, he'll try to put on a good show of "What will you give me in return?" before he answers but, in the end, he wants to help the characters. He just won't go with them.

(If occurring before the Coup, Tomaru is absorbed in military maneuvers for his clan. Shoji knows something is up with Tomaru, and tries to keep him busy so he won't run off and do something stupid. He's too valuable a military asset to waste.)

## Koda

Earth: 4

Water: 1

Strength: 5

Fire: 2

Agility: 4

Air: 2

Void: 4

**School/Rank:** Tortoise Bushi 2 (rolls and keeps two extra dice to attack with the parangu, a thick, machete-like blade)

**Honor:** 0.0

**Glory:** 0

**Advantages:** Large, Ambidextrous, Combat Reflexes, Hands of Stone, Immortal (see below)

**Disadvantages:** Frail Mind, Overconfident, Greed (3), Obligation - Daidoji Dajan & Asako Nakiro (4)

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 2, Commerce 1, Defense 2, Kenjutsu 1, Sailing 3, Nofujutsu 4, Gambling 2, Intimidation 5, Sumai 3

**Timeline:** Irrelevant; Koda doesn't want to talk.

Koda is a huge, dark skinned man. He wears rough clothing and has a jagged scar encircling his entire neck. He smells terrible, threatens people, and oozes arrogant confidence.

Koda is a savage fighter, and regularly attempts to make four Raises in order to attack two opponents simultaneously. With his

Tortoise Rank 1, he rolls 10k5 to attack with his Parangu, so four Raises is not difficult. He spends Void on all damage rolls and fights on Full Attack most of the time. He is unafraid of death. If he dies his soul will return to the Shimushigaki. Within twenty-four hours, the gaki can transfer Koda into a new body, twisting its shape until it resembles Koda's in all ways, complete with the scars from the wounds that killed him last. That's where the nasty scar on his neck comes from. He had a run-in with Ozaki in Ryoko Owari, and the Hare decapitated him.

If captured, Koda has no useful information. He's far too stupid to be privy to Dajan's plans; he's just a killer. Dajan sends him out of the castle blindfolded, so he's not even sure where he comes from. Koda can be easily bribed, but Dajan has a staggering amount of money. It would have to be well worth his while (several hundred koku at least) to risk betraying Dajan. Even then, Koda might lie.

Koda hates being confined, and will do everything possible to escape if caught, including killing himself (it's only temporary).







## Act Two: Gang War

*"Any barrier created by man can be destroyed by man."*

– Isawa Osugi, prodigy

After dealing with Koda, the party discovers that Ozaki is not well. A shugenja can heal the Hare's wounds, but he remains weak, pale, and unable to walk. If the player characters revive him, he utters a single sentence before slipping away once more.

"Fox," he mumbles. "Fox has... Hu Xiang..."

Yasuki Yukinaga arrives quickly, accompanied by a group of armed doshin. Yukinaga is distressed, especially if anyone reports the aftermath of Koda's demise. (If the player characters do not give Yukinaga the details, a bystander does. Yukinaga will not be pleased if the party does not volunteer the story immediately.) Koda has the stink of the Shadowlands, and that just makes Crabs nervous. The doshin then evacuate and search the area for signs of the Taint. Yukinaga absolutely insists that the player characters bring Ozaki back to the castle so that Taka's shugenja can examine him. He brooks no argument. Crabs take no chances with the Shadowlands.

Yasuki Garou, Taka's personal shugenja, dutifully examines the unconscious Hare. Garou reports that the illness is indeed supernatural. He believes that an evil spirit has entered Ozaki's soul somehow, and only banishing it will restore him to health. Garou advises against moving Ozaki far, for extended travel will likely kill the Hare in his condition. Though Garou cannot heal him, he claims to know someone who can.

*"You must bring him to the Temple of Jurojin on the Fields of the Morning Sun," the shugenja says. "It is a day and a half's travel south of here, in view of Friendly Traveler Village. There, the monk Moruko will tend to his illness. He was a Toritaka, and is skilled in Shinsei's healing arts. He is a difficult man, but if any can banish this spirit, it is he."*

Any character paying attention may make an Awareness + Sincerity roll of 15 or higher can notice that Yukinaga seems a bit upset at the mention of the village. If pressed, Yukinaga admits that Yasuki Taka is currently in Friendly Traveler Village, tending to some business. He begs the characters not to interrupt Taka. He even offers to have his own men transport Ozaki while the characters remain at Black Crane Estates. (By the way, if they take Yukinaga up on his offer, Ozaki dies, and the players should be slapped silly for letting NPC's finish their mission.)

If the player characters search Ozaki, they discover little. The only items he has of value are Kennō (the Ancestral Sword of the Hare) and three scrolls rolled tightly and tucked into his bedroll. The first scroll is covered in a strange code, but the message has been deciphered in a woman's handwriting.

### **The first scroll.**

OUR MASTER HAS LEARNED OF AN INVESTIGATION IN FOREST SHADOW CITY. DEFEND OUR AGENT BY KILLING THE MAGISTRATE AND GIVING THE APPEARANCE OF SUICIDE.

### **The second scroll.**

THE BLACK CRANE SEES THROUGH AN ONI'S EYE.  
THE BLACK CRANE KNOWS THE FATE THAT BEFELL THE HARE.

THE BLACK CRANE WILL KNOW WHERE THE BELLS TOLL  
A Heraldry or Law roll with a TN of 25 can identify the seal as Ide Gonkuro's.

The third scroll is the letter from the beginning of the Introduction.

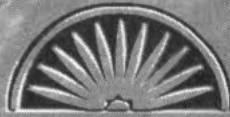
## The Fields of the Morning Sun

*"The difference between faith and desperation is a matter of timing."*

– Ikudaiu, monk

Garou requests permission to accompany the party so that he can introduce them to Moruko. Yukinaga provides a palanquin for Ozaki, and offers six doshin to guard their journey. Though Garou is sincere, one of the guards isn't. He's a spy. If the characters get near Friendly Traveler, he slips away to warn Taka. If the characters turn down Yukinaga's offer, he relents. Instead, he covertly sends a few of his merchants to tail the party.

Feel free to make the journey to the temple as dramatic as you like. Instill the belief that Ozaki will die if the party travels too far. Roll some dice behind a screen and frown. Have Ozaki "relapse,"



requiring the shugenja to stop often and cast healing spells to keep him stable. Tell them each time that it was "just enough." Work this angle so that the players believe they reached the temple just in time. It doesn't matter how long "just in time" takes, so long as it's "just in time."

The temple is rather small, the size of a small house. Even yet, it has a serenity and holiness that cannot be denied. The Fields of the Morning Sun stretch in every direction, blazing with a thousand wildflowers [or sparkling with the white crystal of new-fallen snow, if it's winter]. The ocean can be seen to the east, and the air is filled with the mournful calls of gulls. A few monks sit on the beach, deep in meditation. They seem unconcerned with your arrival. Garou leads the party directly to the temple and kneels upon the steps as a monk hurries to fetch Moruko.

A few minutes later, a small man emerges. His face is creased with age, but he walks with a spry step and his grey eyes are quick. After a moment, he rubs his chin.

"Garou," he nods.

"Moruko-sama," the Yasuki bows in respect. Moruko ignores him.

"One of you is sick," the monk says pertly. "Inside. Now."

With that, he disappears into the temple.

The temple's interior smells of incense and herbs. A small pallet for tending the ill lies in one corner. After the characters bring Ozaki inside, Moruko (Honor 3.4, Glory 2) quickly waves them back out. Any query

about how long the healing will take is answered with a sharp, "As long as it takes. Get out!"

Understandably, the player characters will not wish to abandon Ozaki to the whims of a strange monk. If they insist, Moruko allows one of them to remain while he heals Ozaki. (Preferably a monk, shugenja or Falcon.) In the meantime, the others wait outside. Hours pass. The sun goes down. The monks finish their meditations and go inside. Nothing. A monk emerges and politely recommends Friendly Traveler Village, a twenty minute walk from the Temple. It's better than sleeping on the ground. Unless the characters have tents or similar equipment, they'll risk exposure and possibly death by sleeping on the chilly, windy beach.

(Note: Any player character who pushes the monks out of their temple so that he can sleep inside should be subtly reminded not to mess with the servants of the Fortunes on their own turf. Be imaginative.

Jurojin is the Fortune of disease as well as healing.)

Friendly Traveler is quite a nice village. There are two inns, both quite excellent, though the prices are a bit high. Friendly Traveler sake is said to be the finest in Rokugan. A true connoisseur will discover that Friendly Traveler brew is good, but not quite as good as the rarer beverages produced by the Mantis and Unicorn. The Mantis and the Unicorn don't have Yasuki Taka to promote their product.

A skilled observer (Perception + Investigation at TN of 25) may notice a few odd things about the village. The outer buildings seem hastily repaired and recently constructed. Several of the young village men look bruised and cut. The streets are soaked and littered with debris. For a village that prospers off of tourism, there are few guests in the inns. Also, there seem to be a lot of shadowy figures on the pier, watching the ocean...







## Friendly Traveler Village

"A secret is one's greatest enemy, and one's closest friend."

—Kouta, entertainer

The following passages cover the more interesting locations in Friendly Traveler Village. Note that all the buildings are built on stilts, to protect against floods. However, this doesn't protect against the monsoons that ravage the village once a year. The only buildings built to withstand monsoon season are Taka's home, the Fortune's Mercy, the Temple of Daikoku, and the sake works. Even so, all these buildings sustain heavy damage and need to be repaired yearly.

### 1) Temple of Daikoku

The Fortune of Wealth is popular here. It is rumored that Daikoku favors Taka, and provides the purest water in Rokugan for his sake. In fact, the temple conceals an underground cavern housing a natural freshwater spring. Every morning, the monks of Daikoku troop back and forth from the temple to the sake works with buckets of fresh water. They charge nothing for this service, though Taka donates five bottles of daiginzyoo-syu to the temple every year.

### 2) Friendly Traveler Sake Works

The sake works covers the village with a fruity, earthy smell. Some visitors find the scent of brewing refreshing, though others are nauseated by the stench of fermentation. Only Taka, the monks of Daikoku, and Friendly Traveler employees are allowed in the sake works. Taka keeps the secrets of his brew as close as any Scorpion. Magistrates may be granted a tour, provided they don't touch anything. The sake works is run in Taka's absence by Oshuko, a large woman who doesn't take any lip from her employees and just barely endures it from samurai.

### 3) Strange Building

Yes, that's really the name. Strange Building holds the special mold used by the sake works to make koozi (see sidebar). An elderly eta named Razan lives inside, tending the mold. Razan is quite proud of his position; Friendly Traveler wouldn't be what it is without his fungus. Razan is beginning to get old, however, and he keeps a sharp eye out for someone to take over the burden of farming Taka's mold. Only Taka, Razan, and Oshuko have keys to Strange Building.

### 4) Rice Storage

This building houses several tons of Taka's sake rice are stored here.

### The Friendly Traveler Sake Works

Friendly Traveler is perhaps Taka's most lucrative holding. The sake works produces roughly 60,000 gallons of sake a year (240,000 bottles). Most of this is the standard brew, good quality and rather inexpensive. This year it goes for about 3 bu per bottle. Some is Ginzyoo-syu, a sweeter, milder, and more expensive sake that goes for about 2 koku a bottle. The rarest sake produced in the village is Daiginzyoo-syu, a refined version of the Ginzyoo-syu. This sake takes a long time to prepare and utilizes very expensive rice. The works makes about 1000 bottles a year, which sell for 20 koku a bottle, and those who try it swear it is worth every penny. When people say that Friendly Traveler makes the finest sake in Rokugan, they refer to Daiginzyoo-syu.

The village specializes in a unique form of sake available only within its borders: Nama-zake, boiling hot sake served directly out of the fermentation vats. It spoils quickly, and you're taking your life in your hands by drinking it (sometimes the bacteria in the brew hasn't completely died), but it is unlike any other sake, and connoisseurs consider it worth the risk. Both inns in town serve Nama-zake for those who are daring with their drink.

### 5) Sake storage

These buildings contain enormous barrels of sake, ready to be bottled. Ginzyoo-syu is rarely kept here, however (it sells quickly) and daiginzyoo-syu is never kept here. (Taka stores that in his home.)

### 6) First Wave

This inn is usually the first building to be demolished when the storms come in. The owner doesn't care. He makes enough money from the steady flow of tourists that he can afford to rebuild. First Wave is not quite as nice as The Fortune's Mercy, but it's cheaper.

### 7) Taka's house

This large home is a monument to Yasuki Taka's success. Guests can expect to be treated royally; Taka spends so much time disguised as a humble merchant that he enjoys the rare opportunity to flaunt his wealth. However, Taka is not currently accepting guests for any reason.



## 8) The Fortune's Mercy Inn

Thirty-three years ago, Taka was just another merchant. Friendly Traveler was a flyspeck on the map, so poor they could not even afford a temple. Three Horse village, a small Daidoji settlement further up the coast, dominated the sake business.

That year, a terrible monsoon struck. Taka organized the villagers and everyone took refuge in this inn, which had no name. The next morning, everyone awoke to find that they were alive, much to their surprise. The only two buildings that had not been reduced to splinters were the inn and the sake works.

- Three Horse village had been wiped off the map.
- Construction of the Temple of Daikoku began the very next day.

## 9) Market Place

Though it's small compared to Peddler's Row, make no mistake: this is where Taka started his career. Nearly anything can be found here by those who can pay the price. The most popular items are jade, steamed fish, and pottery. (Taka's always looking for good pottery to bottle his sake.) This is probably a good place to obtain a crystal or jade weapon, though the characters probably don't realize that they'll need such a thing...

## 10) Docks

Only a few villagers bother to make a living by fishing. Everyone knows where the real money is, but fishing remains a matter of pride for some. Thus, a handful of fishing junks still lie in the harbor. The fishermen are poorer than most of the villagers, and put up with a lot of abuse from the more affluent residents.

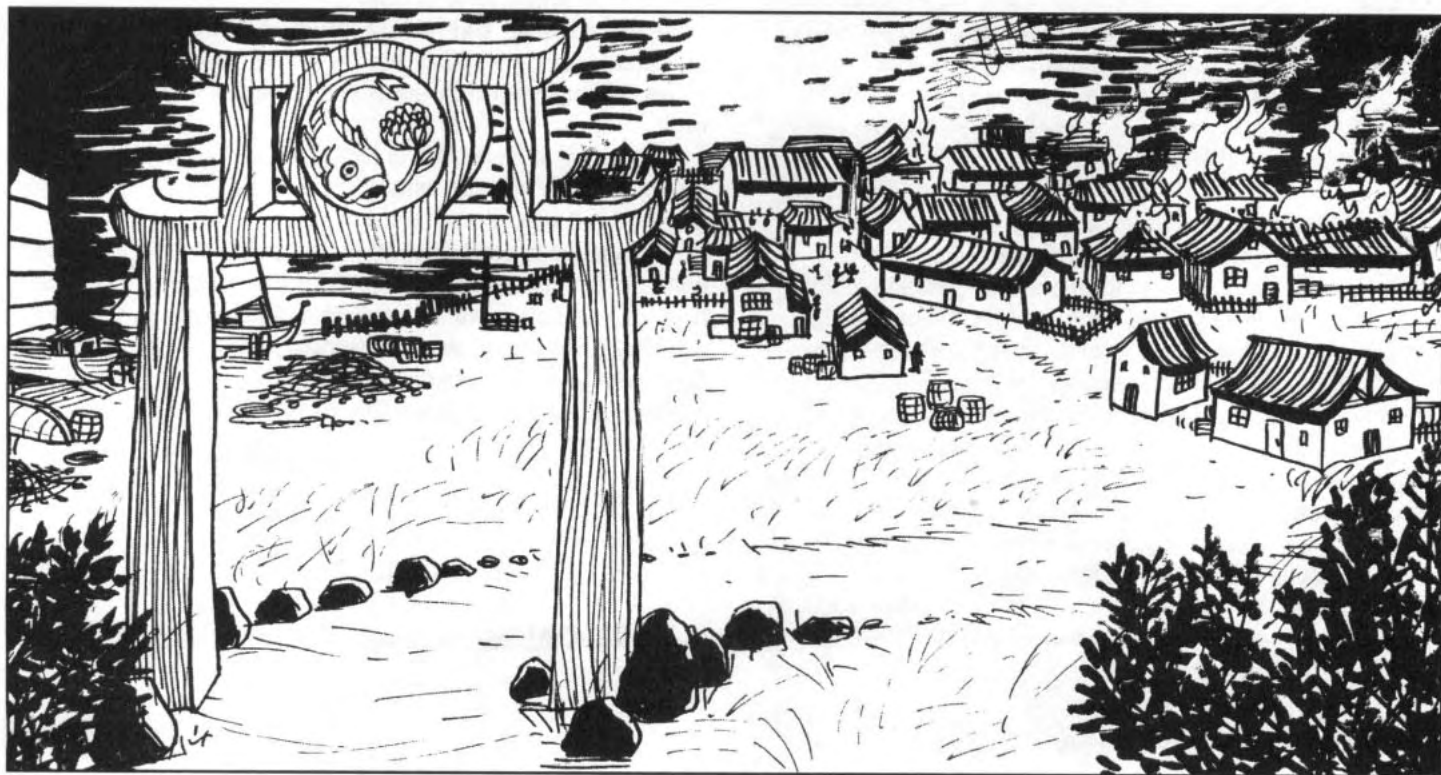
One oddity that may draw the characters' attention is the presence of a miniature Koutetsukan, or Iron Turtle, a Crab warship. This one looks suited to hold about three dozen crewmen, rather than the standard hundred plus. It belongs to Taka, a gift from the Great Bear, Hida Kisada.

## 11) Magistrate's Office

There is no magistrate in Friendly Traveler. (He was killed in a street brawl days ago.) The office is neat and tidy and there's a small jail cell in the back.

## Other features

Directly to the southwest is a large expanse of rice paddies. This is not ordinary rice, but the dark rice used to brew sake. All of the farmers have moderate skill in hand to hand combat, and someone







is guarding the paddies at all times. Dajan would have attacked the rice fields to annoy Taka, but rice paddies are too hard to burn.

## The First Wave

*"One must stand very high to see her own fate."*

—Ikoma Soko, Imperial Guardsman

At midnight on the night after the characters first arrive at Friendly Traveler, a tsunami hits.

Yes, you read that correctly.

### Brewing Sake

Sake serves multiple purposes for the Yasuki; it brings in a lot of koku, it loosens the tongues of visiting dignitaries, and it helps their Hida cousins unwind after a hard day on the Wall. The following is a crash course in sake brewing.

1. The most important ingredients are water and rice. (Everything else is details.) First, water must be gathered and filtered. The purer the water, the better.

2. The rice must be painstakingly shelled and cleaned. Sake rice is a rarer and more expensive breed of rice than most. The brewers then steamed the rice and mash it in the water.

3. The brewers add a small amount (about 2 parts for every 5) of a mixture called koozi to the mash, along with a smaller amount (about 7 parts for every 100) of another mixture called moto (no relation to the Unicorn family, though the coincidence amuses the Yasuki to no end). Koozi is a mixture of rare yellow rice mash and a special fermenting mold, which dies soon after being added to the mixture. Moto is a mixture of koozi and yeast (Taka uses natural yeast found in the air, which ferments the koozi after many days).

4. Ferment for 20 to 30 days. Slowly, the molds and yeast transform the sugar in the rice into alcohol. The most potent sake is about 20% alcohol.

5. Press the bags of fermenting mash to squeeze out the liquid. Let this sit for 10 more days, then filter and heat the sake to purify it.

Sake!

There's very little warning. At most, a shugenja or monk character with a strong affinity for Water or Earth awakens with a start, realizing that something is "wrong." Otherwise, the first warning comes when the watchers on the docks start screaming at the thirty foot wall of water approaching the city. The player characters have approximately twenty rounds to grab whatever they want to save and run for cover before the wave hits.

The villagers mob the streets. Though some panic, most look like they've experienced this before. They move in mobs toward the temple, Taka's house, and the Fortune's Mercy. Taka's doshin stand at the door to each of these buildings, ushering people inside (even into Taka's house). Smart characters will clue in and follow the villagers. If not, they can learn to surf.

Anyone still outside when the wave hits is in for a lot of pain. The tsunami causes 9k5 damage and washes everyone not inside of a sturdy structure out to sea. Those who seek refuge somewhere other than the above mentioned areas are pushing their luck. There is a flat fifty percent chance that any structure will be destroyed and washed out to sea. (In a flood of irony, the First Wave is washed out to sea.)

Characters washed out to sea must make an immediate Endurance roll vs TN 20 or drown. Those who don't will submerge for a number of rounds equal to two dice (re-rolling tens). Survivors should try to grab a piece of floating wreckage and swim for shore.

Characters who take refuge in a safe area will overhear something rather interesting. Just before the wave hits, an old man covers his head with both hands and grumbles, "Second time this week..."

Anyone still at the Temple of Jurojin will see the tsunami happen, though it doesn't hit the temple. It's a small tsunami, and seems almost as if it were aiming at the village.

The tsunami is not natural. It's being caused by Kitsune Hamato from a ship a half mile out to sea. He cast Earthquake on the ocean floor with six Raises, which is enough to create a wave of requisite size. This is the second time in five days he's done this to Friendly Traveler Village. A character out on the docks before the chaos begins has a chance - Perception roll at TN of 30 - of noticing Hamato's ship.





## Riot

*"A man is a noble beast. It is men who are fools."*

—Kuni Shimura, healer

The following morning, everyone pitches in with rebuilding. The characters don't have to help, but the villagers would be grateful for their assistance. This is a good chance to meet and speak with Yasuki Taka since he's out cleaning debris and patching houses with everyone else. Taka will be friendly, but evasive. If asked why he's in town, he claims that he came to oversee a large shipment of sake bound for the Island of Silk. (There is a Mantis kobune arriving in three days, but that's not why Taka's here.) If he's shown Ozaki's scrolls, he feigns confusion with a skill to shame the students of the Shosuro.

"Black Crane. That's what they call Yasuki. There are lots of Yasuki; we're a large family. How would I know what that means?" (Note: Taka never lies. He evades. There's a big difference, especially to magic and the Kitsuki.)

Meanwhile, strange rumors circulate around town. Three prominent fishermen have disappeared in the last week. The merchants, brewers, and fishermen aren't on the best of terms in

Friendly Traveler. There's already been one violent confrontation this week, and things don't look like they're calming down.

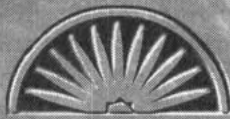
In fact, a riot erupts soon after the repairs begin. A group of two dozen brewers armed with staves and tonfa square off against equal number of fishermen with sticks and knives. The fight spills into the ruined market, where the furious merchants begin attacking both groups. Taka's bodyguards quickly form a tight ring around their daimyo, who sighs and looks annoyed.

The riot was started by a single agent of Dajan. All morning, he's spread rumors to the fishermen – rumors that the brewers and merchants planned on taking advantage of the tsunami to expand into their territory, pushing them out of town. Heated words turned into an exchange of blows. Now the villagers are fighting openly in the streets. One building near the First Wave catches on fire! If the players are magistrates, Taka begs their assistance in quelling the riot. If they're not, the riot comes to them. (See sidebar for details on peasant rioters.)

- If the characters investigate the fire, they find a man and child trapped inside of the small house. Three villagers are unsuccessfully trying to form a bucket brigade. They welcome any help they can get.







Dealing with the riot itself takes a combination of power and tact. Knocking in a few heads may get the mob's attention, but chopping off heads will just turn their anger against the party.

The agent who started the whole mess is currently paddling out to sea in a skiff. If the characters can put a lid on things and find out what happened, they may have time to catch him. (He has Kolat Agent stats.)

- If the characters can put down the riot, Taka shows an appropriate amount of gratitude. If the players deal with the fire then the villagers feel indebted to them for their heroism. If they catch the agent, he merely laughs maniacally and makes mindless threats, promising that Taka and "all of his kind" will be destroyed. The agent doesn't really know what that means, he was simply instructed to say that if he was captured.

- If tortured, he reveals that he was headed back out to his ship. The agent says that he works for "the Kolat." (Which he believes is nothing more than a powerful criminal organization). He also reveals that his boss is Kitsune Hamato. If the player characters can coerce the agent into helping them, he knows how to find Hamato's ship. Skip ahead to "Finding Kitsune Hamato."

After the riot, Taka confesses that the village seems to be a target for strange happenings of late. If the characters performed well during the riot, he may ask for their help in keeping peace and in getting to the bottom of what's going on. If asked about the Kolat,

Taka claims that he heard they were only a legend. Like the ninja. (That's not a lie. He really did hear that. He just knows it isn't true.)

## The Second Wave

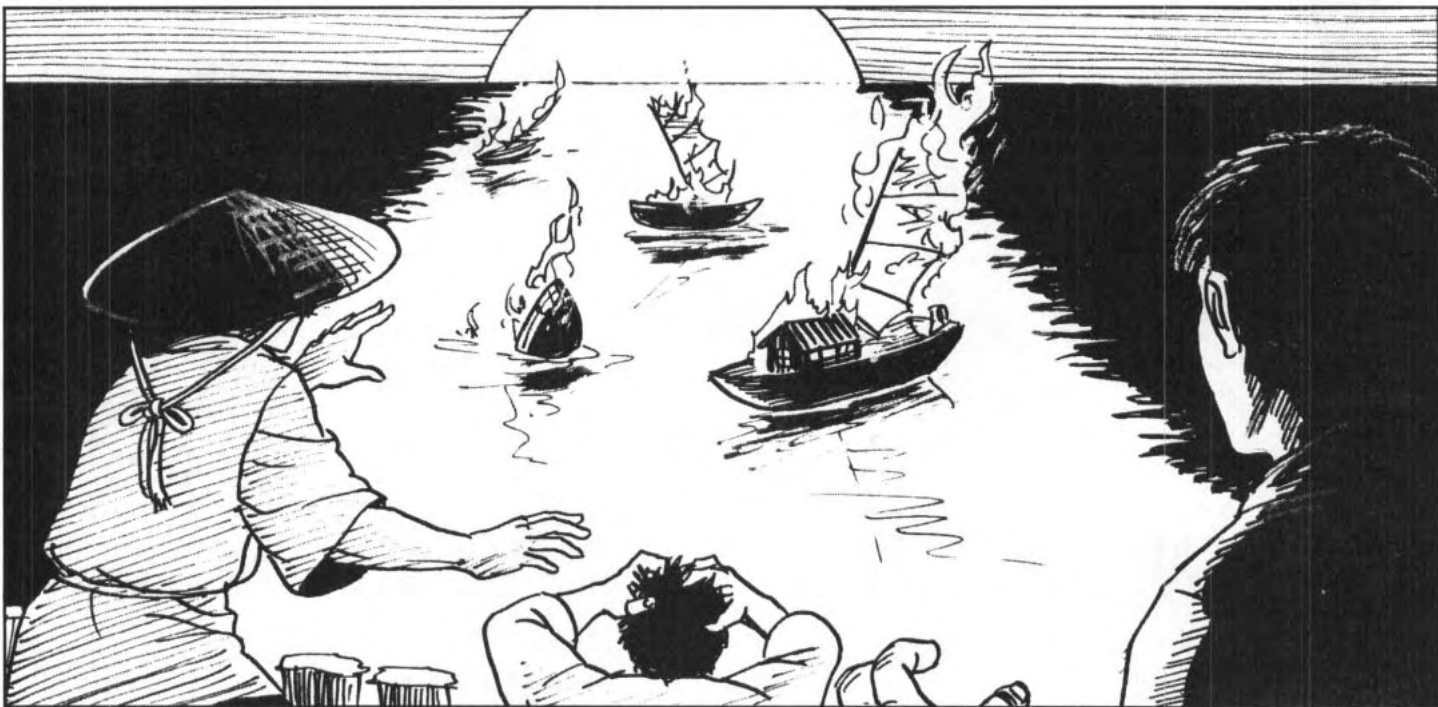
*"If you must make an enemy, the ones that underestimate you are best."*

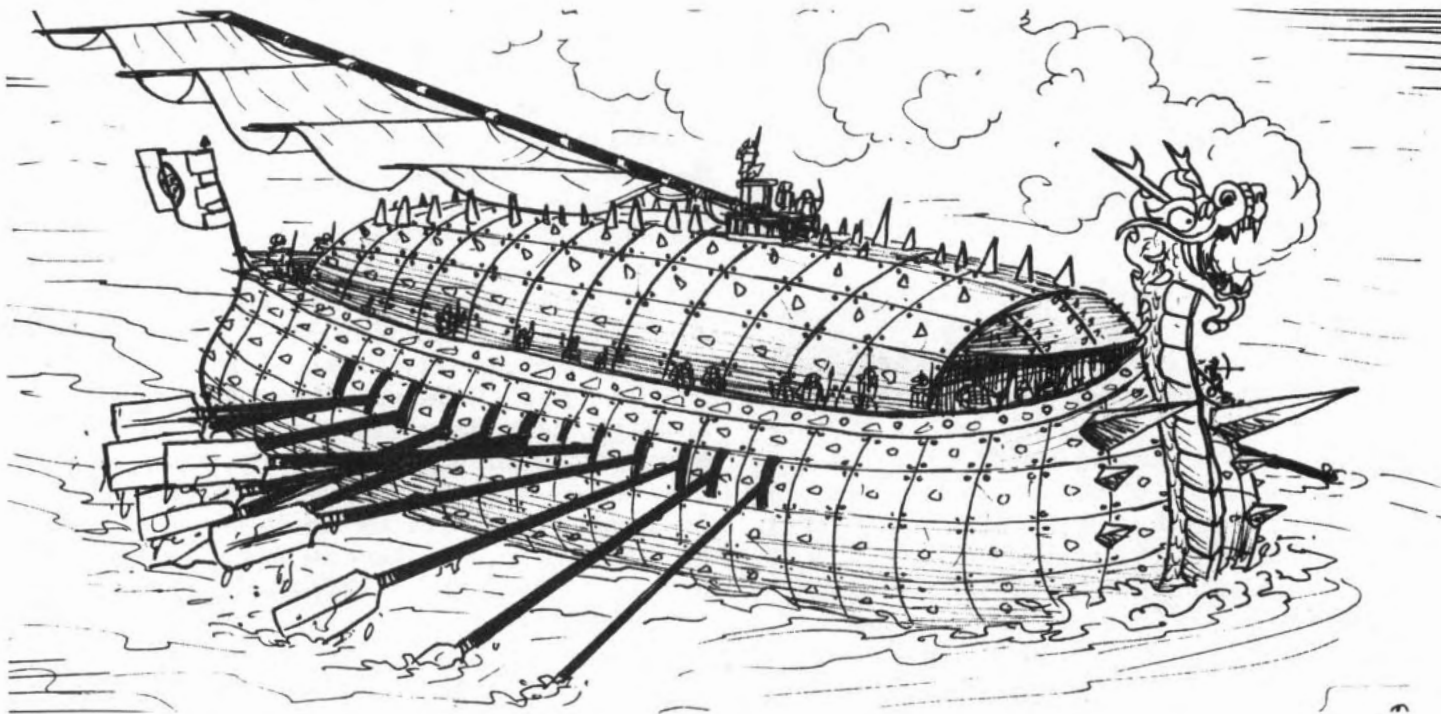
– Togashi Yoshi, ascetic

If the characters check in on Ozaki, he shows little improvement. Moruko seems disturbed.

*"I have seen this before," the monk says, scowling at each of you in turn. "This spirit. It is the Shimushigaki, a ghost with many faces. Part of it is close by. I have heard him rant in his delirium about something named Hu Xiang. If you want your friend to live, find the thing he raves about and bring it back here. He might not have much longer. The last victim of the Shimushi that I treated did not survive..."*

Three days later, Friendly Traveler village bustles with activity. The brewers eagerly prepare for the Mantis ship that is due today, and the fishermen quickly move their junks out of the harbor so they won't get in the way. Taka stands at the edge of the docks, a look of tense expectation on his face that has nothing to do with sake. He warns the characters to be on their guard.





Right as the sun is about to set, a commotion erupts at the sake works. A pair of saboteurs have hacked enormous holes in the storage drums and the brewers are in a frenzy as they struggle to scoop up the precious sake before it soaks into the earth. The village reeks of alcohol and it isn't long before the streets flow with sake. Saving the sake is clearly a losing battle. Taka looks angry, but unmoved. If the characters rush off to help at the sake works, they might miss what comes next.

A ship appears on the horizon, but it's not the Mantis kobune. This is Kitsune Hamato's ship, again. He's ready to deal out another tsunami and finish off the village.

## Finding Kitsune Hamato

*"Power is a burden only to the foolish."*

—Chinoko, entrepreneur

- If the characters notice Hamato's ship, or if they captured his agent and want to chase him down, they can commandeer one of the fishermen's junks with little argument. Look forward to an exciting naval combat. Hamato circles the ship while his archers attempt to sink the junk with flaming arrows. If the players are skilled and clever, they can board Hamato's ship and overcome the crew. Good luck.

- If the player characters are smart, however, they'll ask Taka if they can borrow the Iron Turtle. If they explain what they want, Taka agrees. The brewers and fishermen will line up for a chance to crew the ship, if it means getting a shot at the guy who's been destroying the village. Hamato's kobune is no match for the Turtle. The Crab sailors easily outmaneuver Hamato and ram him. Then, the boarding begins. Kitsune Hamato is not a brave man. He hides behind his crew (twenty Kolat agents armed with bows and knives, but without poison), but laughs maniacally at the character's faces when they see his bodyguard – Koda – alive again and good as new.

- If the characters kill Koda or significantly injure Hamato, he crumples to the ground and begs for mercy.

*"Wait!" the Fox cries, throwing his satchel of scrolls to the deck and holding up his hands. "I give up! Don't harm me! I know when I've been beat! Let me live and I'll tell you how to beat them!"*

- If Koda is still alive at this point, he tries to kill Hamato himself. If not, Hamato continues...

*"The bells!" Hamato cries. "The bells can put him back to sleep!"*

- If Hamato gets this far, then the Shimushi steps in and solves the problem. Hamato, like many of Dajan's chief agents, is bound to the Shimushi through an oni. Hamato's particular oni is a small, green, scaly creature resembling a fox with no fur or skin. It's been feeding off of Hamato's soul, and there just wasn't much there to sustain it. It chooses this moment to tear its way out of Hamato's





stomach, hop over the side of the ship, and swim toward the Shadowlands. If the characters can get a good hit with a weapon made of crystal or jade, the oni dies.

• If the characters search below decks, they discover an ancient forty pound bronze bell, covered in kanji and wrapped in silk. One of the few markings that is legible is a name.

### Hu Xiang Who?!?

The last words of Usagi Ozaki refers to Asako Hu Xiang, a Phoenix henshin who died about two hundred years ago. He originally belonged to the Unicorn, but upon returning from the Burning Sands, he took one look at the mountains of the Phoenix and never looked back. Hu Xiang was one of the greatest healers in history. He served as the leader of the twelve shugenja that were killed by the Shimushigaki and are now remembered at the Bells of the Dead.

Anyone with Lore: Ghosts or Way of the Land: Three Man Alliance can call up the information at a TN of 35.

Taka knows more about Hu Xiang, but he won't share the story.

Not yet.

### Asako Hu Xiang

Finding this item begins Act Three. If they don't find it, you can be nice and have a fisherman salvage it later. Then again, it might be fun to make them go back....

## Who's Who in Act Two

### Yasuki Garou

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Fire: 3

Air: 2

Awareness: 3

Void: 3

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 2

Honor: 2.0

Glory: 1.0

**Advantages:** Clear Thinker, Ratling Ally, Ancestor (Hiruma Kazuma)

**Disadvantages:** Lechery (2 points), Unluck (2)

**Skills:** Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Kenjutsu 1, Meditation 2, Shadowlands Lore 3, Medicine 3, Tetsubo 2, Lore: Ghosts 3, Ratling Speech 2, Poetry 3

**Spells:** (Spells marked with an asterisk are memorized) \*Sense, \*Commune, \*Summon, Hands of Jurojin, Tetsubo of Earth, \*Jade Strike, Evil Ward, Wings of Fire, Path to Inner Peace, Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Strength of the Crow, Heart of Mortality

Garou is rather quiet and soft-spoken, a little too unfocused for a Crab. Some time ago, he had a disastrous encounter with an oni on his first trip into the Shadowlands (he would have been killed if a Nezumi hadn't saved him). He hasn't worked up the courage to return since. He was subsequently assigned to his uncle, Taka, since Taka's business doesn't often take him into the Shadowlands and the boy's talents are too great to waste. As soon as the characters reach Friendly Traveler, he will likely attach himself to his boss, Taka, rather than join the party.

### Yasuki Taka

Wily Trader and Yasuki Family Daimyo

(Have Taka's statistics from Way of the Crab improved? Maybe. We have a sneaking suspicion that Taka lied on his character sheet the first time...)

Earth: 3

Water: 3

Perception: 5

Fire: 3

Intelligence: 4

Air: 4

Awareness: 6

Void: 5

School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant 5

Honor: 1.0

Glory: 7 (Yasuki Family Daimyo)

**Advantages:** Absolute Direction, Clear Thinker, Blackmail (a lot), Luck (3), Read Lips, Voice, Major Allies (Kolot)

**Disadvantages:** Small, Dark Secret (Kolot), Dark Secret (Disillusioned with the Kolot)

**Skills:** Acting 3, Appraisal 5, Cipher 3, Defense 3, Forgery 2, Intimidation 4, Ratling Speech 1, Gossip 3, Bo Stick 1, Gambling 3, Stealth 2, Courtier 4, Bard 3, Heraldry 3, Sincerity 4, Commerce 5, Shadowlands Lore 2, Lore: Kolat 5, Kuenai 4, Hisomu 4

**Timeline:** A, B, C, D, E, F, G, H, I, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, U, V

Yasuki Taka knows more about what's going on here than anyone would guess. How much of it he chooses to share is entirely



up to the party. If they're honorable, and seem to truly have the Empire's best interests at heart, then he'll bend over backwards to help them restore the Hare and stop Dajan. If they seem selfish or stupid, he won't do anything more than he has to. Taka is a busy man and he has no time for fools.

### Taka's Bodyguards (5)

**Earth:** 4  
**Water:** 3  
**Fire:** 2  
 Agility: 3  
**Air:** 3  
**Void:** 3  
**School/Rank:** Hida Bushi 3  
**Skills of Note:** Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Defense 3, Sailing 4

### Kitsune Hamato

**Earth:** 4  
**Water:** 2  
 Strength: 3  
**Fire:** 3  
**Air:** 3  
**Void:** 3  
**School/Rank:** Kitsune Shugenja 2

**Honor:** 0.9

**Glory:** 1.3

**Advantages:** Heart of Vengeance (Hare), Heartless

**Disadvantages:** Dark Secret (Kolats), Dark Secret (Bound to an oni), Extreme Cowardice

**Skills:** Calligraphy 2, Defense 2, Herbalism 3, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 2, Meditation 3, Archery 4, Lore: Maho 3, Sincerity 3, Research 3, Spellcraft 2, Sailing 3

**Spells:** (Spells marked with asterisk are memorized) \*Sense, \*Commune, \*Summon, \*Traceless Passing, Know the Ground, Tremor, Cloak of Night, \*Way of Deception, \*Path to Inner Peace, Echoes of a Breeze, Secrets on the Wind, Call Upon the Wind

**Timeline:** E, F, J+, K+, L, M+, N+, O+, P+, Q+, U+, V

Hamato is a weak-willed spineless little man who joined Dajan's Kolat when his own ineptitude and cowardice prevented him from progressing any further in his clan. Hamato knows of the true Kolat, and it's his current mission to begin a war with them to wipe out their most visible member - Taka. Hamato thinks he can win the war. In reality, it's just a distraction while Dajan finishes up his real plans.

Hamato willingly bound himself to an oni at the Dajan's request, not because he thought it was a good idea, but because he was too frightened to refuse. Dajan considers Hamato a fool, but a powerful fool. In the end, he's expendable. Hamato's instinct for survival has kept him alive thus far, but his karma will catch up with him sooner or later. In fact, his very instinct for survival led him to steal one of the Bells of the Dead from Dajan, just in case...

### Average Peasant Rioter

These villagers aren't stupid, and won't attack samurai except in self defense, or if odds are at least five against one.

**Earth:** 2  
**Water:** 2  
**Fire:** 1  
 Agility: 2  
**Air:** 1  
 Reflexes: 2  
**Void:** 1

**TN to be Hit:** 12 (Ashigaru armor)

**Rolls When Attacking:** (with peasant weapons) 4k2

**Damage:** varies by weapon





## Act Three: Bells of the Dead

*"The weak find solace in the words of others. The strong make their own wisdom."*

– Daidoji Dajan

Whether the characters find the bell by taking it from Hamato, or by discovering it in a fisherman's net, it's the next piece of the puzzle. If Taka sees the bell, the characters are in for a rare treat. They get to see him surprised. He only loses his composure for a moment, but it happens. He obviously recognizes the bell, and is so stunned that his invulnerable facade crumbles. The party can question him if they like, but right now they might be more interested in helping Ozaki. Taka's not going anywhere.

Obviously, the bell and Ozaki are somehow connected; it's up to the characters to figure out how. Just bringing the bell to Ozaki doesn't accomplish much. He's still delirious. Ringing it in the Hare's presence, however, has a dramatic effect.

*The bell's tone is unlike what you suspected. It is not bright, clear, or loud. Instead, it releases a steady, throbbing hum that fills the air and hangs there. As soon as the note fills the temple, Ozaki cries out. He twists and writhes in pain. Moruko and the other monks rush to his side, holding down his limbs until the spell passes. In moments, the sound vanishes and Ozaki's eyes become clear. He pushes the monks away and sits up quickly. His single eye regards you suspiciously.*

*"Where is my sword?" he demands.*

If the characters have met Ozaki before (in The Hare Clan), he is no less suspicious. He has been through hell, and doesn't trust anyone. If they return Kennô to him, he calms down somewhat, though he remains wary. If the characters tell him that they intend to prove his innocence and restore the Hare, a look of hope flickers across his face, then vanishes. Ozaki is far too cynical to believe them, yet.

If questioned, he proves surprisingly helpful. He's so confused by what he's seen, he doesn't mind sharing that confusion with others. He's sick to death of secrets. He'll share any information the characters want. (See his description to find out what he knows.) When asked about the bell, he seems surprised. He doesn't know why he was looking for it, only that it had something to do with his father's ghost. (If your players have been through the Haunting of Shiro Usagi adventure, then they may be able to enlighten Ozaki a bit.)

Ozaki can tell them something about the two scrolls, but not much. The first came from Soshi Yukio, and the second was stolen from Ide Gonkuro's home just before it caught ablaze. Ozaki knows that "Black Crane" is a nickname for the Yasuki, and that Taka testified against his family. He thinks that the "Black Crane" in the scroll is Taka.

He's right.

## Taka

If confronted with the scroll and the bell, Taka agrees to speak with the characters. Privately.

He immediately returns to his house, and orders Garou to accompany him. The shugenja agrees, though he seems a bit stunned by his uncle's terse manner. When the party arrives, they are admitted to a small room with no windows and only a single door. Taka waits inside, and offers them tea. As soon as they are settled, he begins.

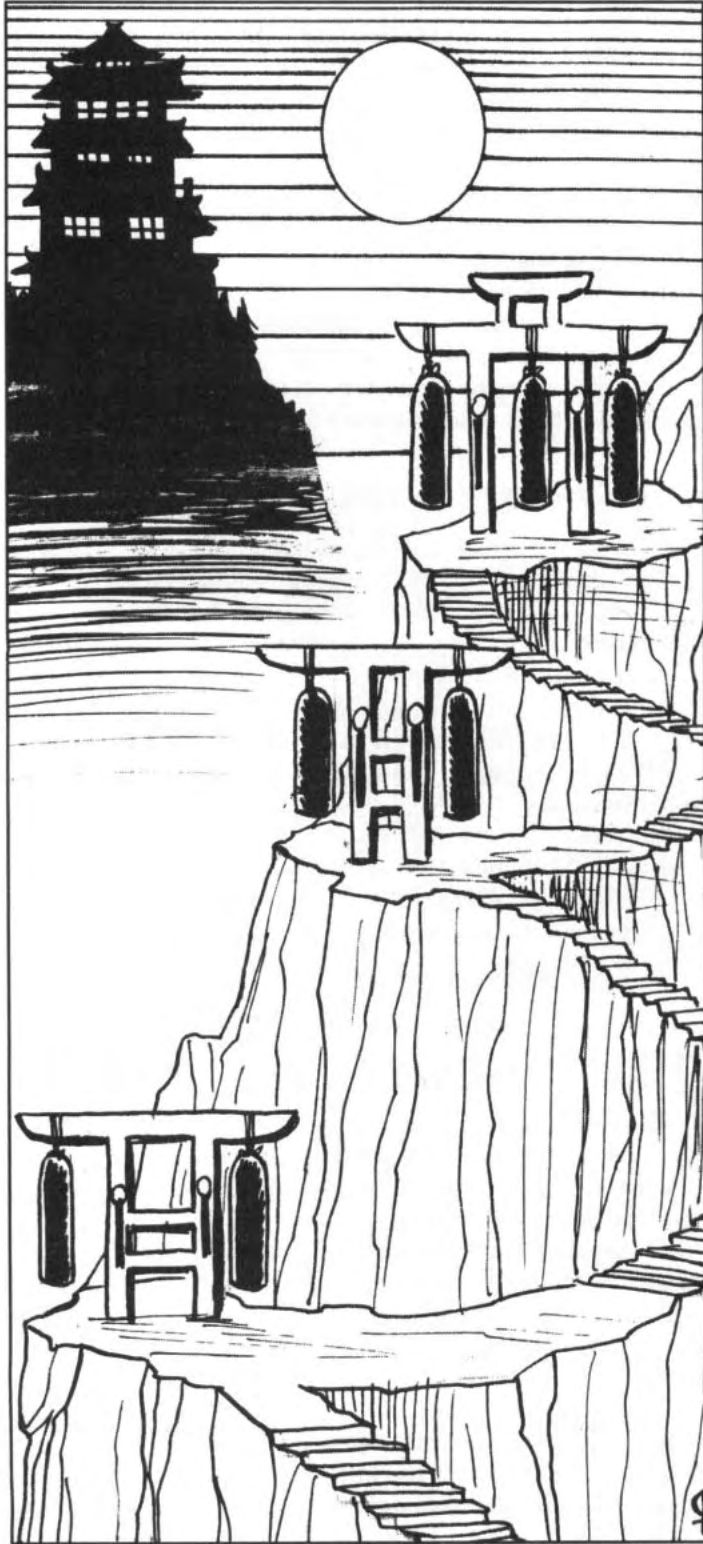
*"First," the wizened old merchant says, holding a crooked finger before his face. "You must promise me that the words I say go no further than this room. For your safety and for my family's, what I am about to reveal must remain secret. Upon the souls of your ancestors, do you agree?"*

If the characters can't agree, Taka dismisses them. Period. He's a family daimyo of a great clan. If they keep hounding him, he tells them to contact him through Lord Kisada. The end.

If they swear to uphold Taka's trust, he continues.

(For those paying attention, the following monologue contains a good mixture of truth and Taka's trademark evasions. There's enough truth in here to put the party on the right track. If they can take down Dajan and prove themselves worthy, maybe Taka will tell them the real story someday.)

*"When I was a young man, I knew I would be the Yasuki daimyo, but that wasn't enough. I wanted to deserve my position. I saw Friendly Traveler as the means to that end. However, I needed money to get started. One day, I found myself traveling through some mountains and I came upon a strange sight: an Inquisitor named Asako Nakiro, half dead from illness. His arms and hands*



were scarred and bleeding, his eyes shot with blood and his gums blackened.

"I am a Crab. I know a tsukai when I see one.

"I am a Yasuki. I know an opportunity when I see one.

"Do you know what I did? I carried him out of the mountains in my cart. I snuck him past the Hida patrols and carried him to Friendly Traveler. I took him to Moruko to be healed. Do you know why?

"Because the Phoenix Clan are a very rich clan.

"I blackmailed that Asako. I drained him dry and built Friendly Traveler with the money. In the end, I saw it as a good deed. All the money I took from that pathetic tsukai, funded the Crab's war against the Shadowlands. It went on for years. Soon, I didn't even need the money. I just kept blackmailing him, though. I felt he deserved it.

"I should have killed him when I had the chance.

"Shortly after I became daimyo, Nakiro disappeared off the face of the earth. He joined a secret criminal organization called the Kolat, adding his maho to their shadow plays and underworld contacts. For over twenty years, they have been a bane to the Empire. Their manipulations began the Opium War in Ryoko Owari. Their vengeance destroyed the Hare.

"Yes, I testified against the Hare as well, but with a purpose. I wanted Nakiro to know that I remembered, that I was watching him. I wanted him to know that I would find him. I wanted him to make a mistake.

"Now," he gestures at the bell, "that mistake has been made. I know where he is, and I feel a fool for not realizing it all these years. That bell is one of the twelve Bells of the Dead, the symbol of a brave man's sacrifice, stolen from a shrine miles away.

"Find that shrine. The Kolat won't be far."

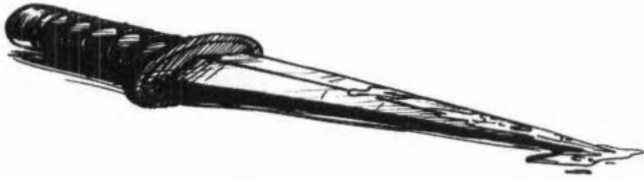
Taka won't accompany the party on their journey. He's had enough adventures in his life. On the other hand, he'll lend the characters anything they need for their journey, including any important equipment they might have lost in the tsunami. If they ask, he may even be able to arrange a crystal weapon.

If Ozaki is with the party, he becomes angry at Taka. Taka seems unperturbed.

"Your clan was already destroyed, Hare," Taka shrugs. "What harm does one more testimony do? However, consider this. Kill Nakiro. Destroy the Kolat. Prove to me that this has been done, and I'll rescind my testimony. My word carries much weight in the courts. Some good may come of this yet."

Moruko remembers Asako Nakiro. He was the monk's other patient who suffered the Shimushi's curse, the one that "did not survive." It's true. Nakiro's soul did not survive. What shambled out of Moruko's temple that day was no longer human...





## For Whom the Bells Toll

The end of this adventure is deadly. Characters who attempt a frontal assault are likely to get killed quickly. Wise parties will either sneak into the castle (the climb is treacherous, but possible) or make a quick jaunt to Kyuden Suzume to requisition help from Katsu. (Taka might even lend out a few of his bodyguards, including Garou.)

If the players are smart enough to get backup, Katsu can supply a half dozen Legionnaires. True, players should never let an NPC finish an adventure for them, but there's a subtle difference between relying on NPC's and foolishness. No samurai assaults a fortified castle alone. That's foolishness.

If Miya Sasami is with the party, Katsu forbids her to journey to Dajan's castle. Her mission is complete.

Ozaki, on the other hand, will accompany the characters. You'd have to kill him to keep him away.

The trip to the Bells of the Dead is as uneventful as you desire. If the players are having an easy time, then have Dajan's goons stalk them at every turn. If they're half dead from the tsunami and the fight against Hamato, give them a break. A few days of quiet travel will do them a world of good. Things are hardly quiet later.

If the characters ask around, the locals can direct them to the shrine holding the Bells of the Dead. If the characters display Asako Hu Xiang's bell, the farmers look confused. They do not believe that the characters carry Hu Xiang's bell. After all, if the Bells of the Dead aren't rung every night, the Shimushigaki will escape and kill them all.

The shrine is small and open to the air. Twelve large bells hang within. Yoshō (Honor 0.1, Glory 2), the hermit who lives here, rings them each night. He'll gladly let the travelers come in and look around, but looks nervous if they examine too closely. He gets very nervous if he sees that they're carrying Hu Xiang's Bell.

If the characters realize that the bells are fake, or if they carry Hu Xiang's bell, Yoshō knows the jig is up. He's not the real hermit who tends the temple. He's one of Dajan's agents, bound to an oni.

The oni chooses this moment to take charge, tearing poor Yoshō's mortal shell apart, and leaping into combat. It's a strange creature,

like a large fish covered in spikes and teeth. It looks almost like a pincushion, but with six mouths and long, springy legs.

After the combat, a miraculous spectacle appears to the characters...

A ghostly figure hovers in the air nearby, an elderly man in long robes of violet and fiery orange. The kanji upon its robes matches that upon the bell, and there can be no mistaking his identity.

Asako Hu Xiang.

He smiles, a kind, sad smile.

*"Come," the spirit says in a voice barely audible over the sounds of the breeze. "I will show you the way."*

With that, the spirit glides away over the tall grass. It stays just within sight, but is clearly impatient for you to follow.

**Abandoned...**

**Challenge** – On their way to confront Dajan, the party comes across a small farm. As far from civilization as they are, it looks like a good place to rest for the night.

**Focus** – The doors stand open and no one works the fields. The furniture is broken and there seem to be signs of a struggle. It looks like a family of three once lived here.

**Strike** – Nothing, just yet. This is merely a clue that things are coming to a head up in the mountains. Dajan needs offerings for the Shimushigaki, and he's through being subtle about it.

## The Fortress

The spirit leads the party for several hours. (For the best effect, make sure it's nightfall when they reach the fortress). When it seems like they're getting nowhere, and that the ghost has gotten them good and lost, Hu Xiang vanishes.

Let the party curse and swear for a little while, then have them make Perception checks. Whoever gets the highest roll sees a fortress suddenly appear on the mountainside in front of them, right where they had been staring a moment before. Welcome to Daidoji Dajan's house.

Dajan's fortress is a mystery. When seeking the Shimushigaki, he simply found the castle here, waiting for him. No one knows who built the fortress, though the amount of deadly traps and secret passages suggest a Scorpion architect. No record of the castle exists



in any history. Those who wander through the mountains never find it, but it appears to those who know what to look for without fail.

The truth is, the castle does not exist. It is simply an extension of the Shimushigaki. It wanted to impress its new minions, so it gave them somewhere to live. Once the gaki is banished again, the castle disappears, depositing everything that was once inside upon the face of the mountain.

Because of the castle's origins, many obviously supernatural phenomenon take place within. Dajan is amused by such manifestations as the dojo and the well. The other agents who live here try to avoid thinking about their ghostly house guests. There are two dozen Kolat agents in the building, not including Nakiro and Dajan. They fight to the death no matter what the odds, resist all torture, and show no mercy to intruders...

## 1) The Front Gates

The gates are immense, 15 feet high and three feet thick, made of solid oak reinforced with steel, and barred from the inside. To the right, the mountain wall rises into the sky. To the left, the gate is supported by expert stoneworking. Beyond that the cliff drops off to the valley and



jagged rocks below. The party can try to scale the rugged mountain terrain, but this is extremely difficult – Agility + Athletics at a TN of 35 for three consecutive rolls. A failed roll means a slip. Two failed rolls means a fall. The characters are very vulnerable for the ten minutes or so it takes them to climb around the wall.

Trying to bludgeon the door down or blow it away with magic is an option, but will alert the agents in the castle above.

## 2) The Climb

the road is very steep. Horses can make it, but just barely. (A poorly trained horse won't even try.) The cliff drops away on one side as the mountain wall climbs away on the other. As the characters approach the castle (by this path or any other) the sky above suddenly darkens. Clouds gather as if a storm is about to begin. If the sun is out, it vanishes completely, leaving the mountain in eerie twilight.

## 3) The Dojo

It is obvious from its state of disrepair that this building has not been used in some time. Anyone who goes inside finds a large training room. A rotted white practice mat covers most of the floor, with two polished silver naginata laying in the middle. When the wind whistles through, the rickety dojo shudders as if in anticipation. Any character foolish enough to pick up one of the naginata finds that the other springs to life and begins attacking. Only fleeing the dojo or destroying the naginata will stop the attack.





## Ghosts

A samurai encounters ghosts every day. When he feels hot with fever, that's the influence of a gaki. When he feels a quick rush of strength, that's a proud shiryo. When he meets a stranger alone on the road, that may well be a ghost, so be careful. The supernatural is a living, breathing part of life in Rokugan, and while many feel uncomfortable about it, they learn to accept it.

The Falcon Clan are experts on ghostly phenomenon. They believe that hungry ghosts (gaki) exist in the material world (Ningen-do) as well as in their own realm (Gakido). Some, like the Shimushi, also dwell in Jigoku, giving them the power of Fu Leng in addition to their own impressive abilities. Such gaki are often mistaken for oni, and can only be harmed by things that also exist in all the spiritual realms.

Jade.  
Crystal.  
Magic.

### Naginata Spirit

Earth: 2

Water: 3

Fire: 4

Air: 3

School/Rank: None

Rolls when attacking: 6k4

Rolls For Damage: 6k3

TN to Hit: 45 (only destroying the naginata stops it, dodges all attacks except those from the other naginata)

Wounds: 80: Dead

### 4) The Well

Those who approach the well hear a strange dripping sound, and may notice dark puddles on the ground. The puddles are composed of blood, and the well is full of the same. There is no apparent source for the blood. In fact, the dripping sound (if someone investigates) comes from the blood in the well falling, drop by drop, up into the sky! This is merely a creepy manifestation of the Shimushi, but the GM should feel free to exact whatever nasty curse he feels fitting on a character who touches the haunted blood.

### 5) Guest House

This small house is dominated by a large tea room, where four beautiful women and a young man enjoy tea and laugh brightly at one another's conversation. They eagerly invite the characters to share tea with them, but won't rise from their seats.

Anyone who joins them finds the teapot and cups full of crusted filth. The tea evaporated long, long ago. If questioned as to their identities, the strangers suddenly twist into long-necked, clawed monsters with segmented eyes. They hover in the air, as they have no legs (that's why they were sitting down). These guests are actually a gathering of four angry spirits. They like to pretend that they're not dead, and become violent toward anyone who reminds them of their true nature.

### Tea Drinking Ghosts (4)

Earth: 5

Water: 4

Fire: 3

Air: 2

Rolls when attacking: 5k4

Rolls For Damage: 6k1 (hands)

TN to Hit: 20

Armor: 5

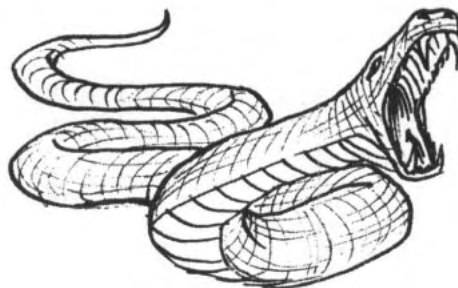
Wounds: 15: -1, 30: -2; 45: Dead

**Special:** Blood drinking: may heal themselves of up to 6 Wounds by dealing an equal amount of damage. May only be harmed by Jade and Crystal.

**Vulnerabilities:** The spirits may not leave the guest house. Burning down the guest house will send the ghosts to their eternal rest.

### 6) Stables

Fourteen horses are kept here. An expert on horses will quickly notice that the horses are scrawny and sickly. Horses can sense spirits, and living so close to so many angry ghosts has not done wonders for their health.





## 7) Death Chutes

Two foot wide circular holes open at the base of the thirty foot wall: chutes leading up to the next level. Any fool who tries to climb into one discovers their function as a Kolat agent up above dumps a two foot wide stone sphere into the chute. The stones do 5k5 damage to anyone they strike, and automatically strike anyone in one of the chutes, hurling them back out into the courtyard. (Where they'll probably be crushed by the next stone that comes rolling down.)

The chutes are designed for use against large groups of invading soldiers. Three Kolat agents man each chute, watching the courtyard carefully. They'll try not to reveal themselves unless someone climbs into one of the chutes. Dajan's Kolat prefer to deal with intruders in the Murder Room, where they can't escape.

## 8) Murder Room

The gates here are unlocked and easy to open – from the outside. However, they close once the characters enter. The room is completely dark, and dozens of slits on the walls rise above the strangely pockmarked floor. As soon as the doors close, the slits light up as six agents hiding in the walls uncover their lanterns and open fire with yumi. (If you're feeling wrathful, have the archers use Night Milk.)

The only hope is to break down one of the doors (six inch thick reinforced wood) or knock out the archers through the four inch thick stone walls. If the characters breach the door and make it into the castle, six more agents wait on the other side with katana. In addition, any remaining archers and the six guards stationed at the Death Chutes will sneak around to attack the characters from behind once they hear the sound of combat. (The door in the Death Chute area leads into the secret area where the archers hide.)

If the characters get caught in the murder room, these twelve guards wander the castle in pairs, chatting among themselves, eating, or sleeping off sake in the guest rooms.

The six archers always stand guard in the walls.

## 9) Meeting room

This room features a large, dark table of dark black marble, and is richly decorated in silk paintings. Most feature the same subject matter – a great black crane soaring toward the sun, escaping the clutches of a fearsome oni with ten tentacles and one very large eye. Here, Dajan meets his agents and discusses business.

## 10) Guest Chambers

Guests of Daidoji Dajan stay in these lush quarters, each with a fantastic view of the mountain. There's nothing of note in here,

though the whistle of the wind through the paper shutters sounds strangely like a lullaby.

## 11) Kitchen

A well stocked kitchen. One of Dajan's archers is a skilled chef, and supplies the castle's meals from this room. The cabinet against the southern wall hides a door leading to area 12.

## 12) Storage

This room holds crates of orange fruits, small cages, jars of honey, a large crystal bowl filled with colorful fish, and jars of a salty white crystal powder.

Everything in this room is poisonous. The orange fruits are used to make fuantei shi, the cages contain live scorpions, the honey is tainted with jeruku ropu pollen, the fish are pufferfish, and the jars contain Dajan's poison of choice, Night Milk. Dajan distributes these poisons to his agents whenever an enemy needs to be dealt with.

## 13) Storage

The crates in this room contain (non-poisonous) food and mundane supplies. A large crate full of rope and blankets in the corner hides a trap door leading to area 14.

## 14) Basement

There are no lights in this area, save what the characters bring with them. The room is dark and stinks of human filth. Each of the small cells are no more than three feet high and four feet deep, and

### Broken Falcon

**Challenge** – The characters discover that not all of the cells in the basement are empty. One of them contains Toritaka Roku, the missing brother of the murdered Falcon witness, Bonugi!

**Focus** – Roku is half starved and mad from confinement. When the characters release him, he's a wreck. "I'll do it I'll do it I'll do it take my name," is all that he says, over and over.

**Strike** – The characters are just in time. Roku was about to surrender to Dajan's programming and give his name to an oni. If they can get this poor guy out of here in one piece and help him regain his sanity, he knows a lot about his brother's former allies. His testimony would do much to get the Hare back on their feet.





## Dodging the Oni's Eye

Dajan has learned several limitations to the all-seeing Eye, of which none of the Ten Masters are aware. The Eye seems very strongly tied to the power of the earth. It sees everything the earth sees. If someone moves more than thirty feet from the earth (such as in a ship in deep waters) the Eye cannot find them. If the earth is confused, in pain, or maddened, then the Eye paints an image of it wants to see instead of the truth. It will create an image of harmony where there is none.

If you're wondering how the earth can be in pain, look no further than the Shadowlands. Areas of heavy Taint don't show up on the Oni's Eye. The Eye fills such places with its own illusions, and Masters who have tried peering into the Shadowlands quickly go insane. The realm of the Shimushi serves the same purpose. The Eye can't see an area so close to Gakido. It just picks up empty mountains. Asako Nakiro is so absorbed by the power of the Shimushi that he carries a bit of this "dead air" with him. The Eye can never spy on Asako Nakiro, nor can its tears be used in his presence. When Dajan discovered that his Oni's Tear clouded in Nakiro's presence, he realized that his dream of breaking off from the Kolat was truly possible.

## 16) Treacherous Pass

The end of the hallway contains a huge hole in the wall. It's not clear what made the hole, but a big section has been violently torn away. If someone leans out and peers over the edge, a very narrow, treacherous trail twists back under the castle. (Perception + Mountaineering at TN 20 to notice the path.) The climb is tricky, with a TN of 20 to either Athletics or Mountaineering. Securing a rope to the castle and tying the characters to one another will make the task easier and prevent unnecessary accidents. As long as one secured character makes their skill roll, everyone makes their skill roll.

## 17) The Shimushi's Lair

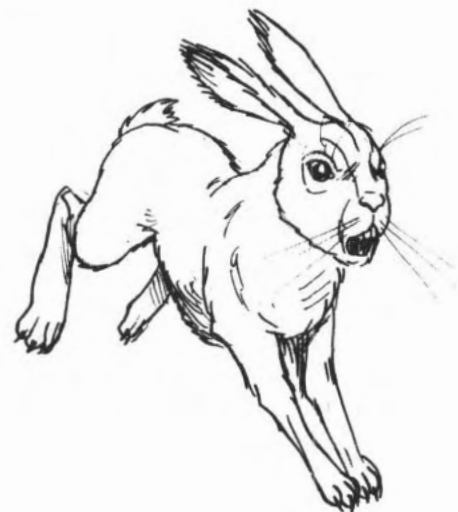
Shimushigaki dwells in this cave, where the mortal world of Ningen-do closely touches Gakido, where he has dwelled in agony since the twelve shugenja led by Asako Hu Xiang banished him. Nakiro is deep in meditation, breaking down the last few barriers separating the Shimushi from Rokugan. Koda paces the room eagerly, slicing the air with his parangu in anticipation. Dajan waits quietly at the rear of the room wearing heavy armor and his daisho. The six remaining agents stand guard around the perimeter of the room, protecting Dajan and Nakiro. The eight niches on the wall each contain a hostage, offerings to the gaki. Among these hostages are the three missing fishermen, the heimin family from the abandoned farm, one of Dajan's own agents (he needed another offering), and Usagi Tomoe. Though she's weak from her long imprisonment, her eyes light up as Ozaki enters the room (assuming he's here). The prisoners are alive, but they won't be for long if the player characters fail...

each has a heavy iron door with a stout lock. Here, Dajan brainwashes those that will not join his cause voluntarily, binds their souls to oni, and sends them into the world. Soshi Seiryoku (from City of Lies) was once one of Dajan's guests.

One of the cell doors has been tampered with. Opening this cell reveals several large woolen sacks, containing the eleven stolen Bells of the Dead (minus the one Hamato stole when he broke the lock).

## 15) Top Floor

Dajan's personal quarters are surrounded by nightingale floors (+25 to any Stealth rolls), and the balcony features more arrow slits. The room is rather sparse. Anyone looking for secret files or scrolls detailing master plans will be disappointed. Dajan has a photographic memory, and keeps no such incriminating evidence. Dajan is not in his quarters, and doesn't return. He's busy in Shimushi's lair.





## We can't beat the Kolat!!!

Your players may be familiar with the Kolat. They may know what sort of influence the Ten Masters wield. They might even know that Taka is a Kolat. The difference between in character and out of character knowledge is critical. Remind them firmly that their characters don't have a clue. In the end, they really don't. Only you know what's really going on.

What happens when they realize they're up against "the Kolat?"

What if they freak out and believe they're all going to die? That they haven't got a chance? That you're a bad GM who wants to kill them all?

Let them think that.

Then, have some ancestral spirits appear to their cowardly descendants with a message.

Being a samurai isn't about being afraid. It's about protecting the Empire. Now get out there and fight, or you don't deserve to be samurai.

## Final Battle

*"He who builds a life upon betrayal is already dead."*

– Asako Nakiro

If the characters don't want to let Dajan give his final villain speech and just jump right into a fight, fine. Just have him say the following while he's throwing down with the characters.

*"Ah, you're finally here," says the large man in Crane armor, smiling as he strides forward to meet you. He looks like a man of advanced years, but carries himself with the strength and confidence of a youth. "I suppose you're hoping I'll explain a few things. Sorry. If there's one thing the Kolat have taught me, it's to never explain. Also, never make mistakes. If you make a mistake, make it an opportunity. I learned that one well with the Hares, and I'll teach it to you as well. You see, there's one final item that Nakiro-san's ritual needs before it is complete, and that's the Life's Blood of a Hero. I expected just the Hare, but I suppose any one of you will do."*

With that, Dajan throws himself into combat. He doesn't care if he dies. He doesn't care if Nakiro dies. (Nakiro doesn't care either. He's already finished his task, and will just sit calmly and wait for his destiny.) Dajan focuses his efforts on one character (whoever looks like the leader or attacks first). Just one. His agents and Koda

will hold off all the others. He only needs one dead hero to complete the spell, and the Shimushigaki has promised to restore him if he is killed. Once he adds his power to the gaki's they will be unstoppable.

Or so he thinks.

## Nakiro's Revenge

*"Die."*

– Shimushigaki

When Dajan is defeated, read the following. Even if Nakiro was killed in the previous fight, the following still occurs.

*The wicked Crane slumps to the ground, blood trickling from the corner of his crooked smile.*

*That smile quickly transforms to a look of utter horror as a ghostly wind howls through the cavern. You're nearly borne off your feet by the force of the gust, but the wind is not intended for you. Translucent claws tear through the Daidoji as his soul is torn from his body and carried screaming toward the form of Asako Nakiro. Nakiro's head snaps back and the aged shugenja releases a final scream of defiant laughter as the power of the Shimushigaki flows into him.*

*The old man stands, the black power pulsing through his veins, feet hovering six inches from the floor.*

*"It is done. The sacrifice of a hero," he says, an inhuman voice echoing from his throat. "A strange sort of folk, these Kolat. For all the evil they bring to the world, they still consider themselves heroes..."*

Now that the Shimushigaki has a human form, it gets down to its true goal. That, of course, is the destruction of every last living creature in Rokugan, starting with the player characters and any remaining Kolat agents. Dajan's surviving henchmen have about an equal chance of staying to fight off the gaki or running for their lives.

### The Shimushigaki (in Asako Nakiro's body)

**Earth:** 5

**Fire:** 5

**Water:** 4

**Air:** 3

**Rolls when attacking:** 7k5

**Rolls For Damage:** 7k2 (bare hands)

**TN to Hit:** 25 (special, see below)

**Armor:** 5

**Wounds:** 30: -1, 60: -2, 90: Dead

**Special Abilities**





## The Bells of the Dead

The twelve Bells of the Dead are powerful magical artifacts, but with a very specific purpose. Each of the bells is engraved with the name of one of the twelve Phoenix who bound the Shimushigaki in Gakido, and each carries that shugenja's spirit. When rung in the presence of those afflicted by the Shimushi, the bells have dramatic effects (see the description of the Shimushi). In addition, those attuned to the spirit world (Kitsu and Falcon characters particularly) can sense the presence of the twelve shugenja, fighting the Shimushi in the spirit world even as the player characters battle it in the material.

The Bells are weathered by time, but seem to be indestructible. Each is pure bronze and weighs forty pounds.

### *Drink Blood:*

This is a more powerful version of the blood drinking attack utilized by many gaki that linger close to Jigoku. The Shimushi can perform an attack which does 10 Wounds to the target, immediately healing that much damage to the Shimushi. Any creature killed by the Shimushigaki raises its Earth by 1, permanently. Recalculate Wounds accordingly. (If the gaki isn't stopped here, his capacity for power is nearly infinite.)

### *Illness:*

If a target is lowered to the Down or Out level in the Shimushi's presence, the gaki can spend one round instilling incapacitating illness in a subject. It can extend this power through Koda, and the illness will plague the character until he dies, or until he hears the tone of one of the Twelve Bells. (This is what it did to Ozaki.) The Shimushi will not bother using any of these effects in the final battle. The time for subtlety is over.

### *Oni Binding*

The Shimushigaki's proximity to Jigoku allows it to summon minor oni, binding them to mortals. Of course, they have to accept the bind willingly. Dajan supplies mortals (such as Soshi Seiryoku from City of Lies and Kitsune Hamato) and breaks their will through torture. The Shimushi can control and monitor all of these oni from afar. Dajan likes to call this ability "my own Oni's Eye."

### *Invulnerability:*

The Shimushigaki is invulnerable to all weapons and magic.

### *Vulnerability:*

Each time one of the Bells of the Dead is rung in its presence, the Shimushigaki becomes vulnerable. Roll dice equal to the Void of the individual ringing the bell, and keep one. This is how much total damage the Shimushigaki can sustain this round. It must be struck and injured normally, but any weapon or spell can now harm it. If multiple bells are rung in the same round, the effects are cumulative. Crystal and Jade weapons do double damage. If all twelve Bells of the Dead are rung simultaneously within earshot of the Shimushi, it becomes stunned and unable to act for five rounds.

Until it took Asako Nakiro's body through a strange and lengthy ritual, the Shimushi could not leave the mountains surrounding the Bells of the Dead.

### *Possession:*

While in Nakiro's body, the gaki can call upon all of the Inquisitor's spells.

The Shimushigaki was once a powerful Bloodspeaker in Iuchiban's armies. In death, it is cursed to feed upon the death of others. The gaki doesn't mind. It is a genuinely evil creature and enjoys causing death. For years, it has existed as a tool of Dajan's Kolat, for it approved of their assassinations, cruelty, and manipulation. After waiting for centuries, it was willing to be patient for a few decades.

Now, however, it wants to be free. It has no loyalty to Dajan, and will gladly eat the Kolat master's soul when Nakiro's ritual takes effect. At that point, all bets are off. The gaki is on no one's side but its own. Every mortal that opposes it will die.

The Shimushigaki can sense the Bells of the Dead, and knows well what they can do. Anyone holding one of those accursed things dies first.

## Resolution

Once the Shimushigaki returns screaming to Gakido, Nakiro's body falls, finally, mercifully dead. The party will emerge from the cavern to find the castle gone, as if Dajan's Kolat never were.

The first order of business should be to return the Bells of the Dead. No sense going to all that trouble to have the whole thing happen again.

Next, they should see about bringing Ozaki to Miya Katsu. Katsu will confer with Ozaki and the characters at length until he learns enough to form some kind of report. In the end, he doesn't seem completely satisfied, but he commends the characters on a job well



done. Surviving Kolat agents, (including the one that was to be offered to the Shimushi) are surprisingly helpful. After coming an inch away from having their souls devoured, they have no further loyalty to Dajan. They tell the characters anything they want to know about the Kolat. (They don't know much, sadly. Like most of Dajan's henchmen, they think Dajan is the true Kolat.)

Taka is true to his word. He rescinds his testimony, claiming that the naferious Dajan blackmailed him. He publicly begs Ozaki's forgiveness, and promises to do everything in his power to see the Hare restored. Ironically, Taka still comes out on top. Ozaki's a ronin – even if he wanted to punish Taka, he doesn't have a leg to stand on. On the other hand, if he accepts the apology, he'll have Yasuki funds to help him rebuild Shiro Usagi and restore the Hare. The Crab, in the meantime, will gain a Minor Clan as an ally.

Ozaki accepts Taka's offer, and his father's spirit finally rests in peace.

Everyone thinks that the Kolat have been destroyed. Even the Ten Masters are pleased with the outcome.

Of course, the story isn't over yet. Remember, this whole ordeal started when Ozaki tried to find a wife for his sister. After Tomaru's siege and two years of poverty, the Hare need to replenish their numbers even more.

Characters who participated in this adventure for a reward may end up with a Hare spouse...



**Skills:** Lore: Iuchiban and the Bloodspeakers 3, Athletics 3, Kenjutsu 4, Iaijutsu 2, Defense 3, Battle 2, Hunting 4, Jujutsu 4, Stealth 3, Lore: Kolat 2, Kuenai 3, Hisomu 3

**Timeline:** D, L, M, N, O, P, Q, R, S, U, V

## Who's Who in Act Three

### (Usagi) Ozaki

**Earth:** 3

**Water:** 2

Perception: 3

**Fire:** 3

Agility: 4

**Air:** 5

**Void:** 3

**School/Rank:** Usagi Bushi 3 (Ozaki's adventure has put him an inch away from inventing his own Rank Technique, but he's not quite there yet.)

**Honor:** 1.2

**Glory:** 0

**Advantages:** Daredevil, Perfect Balance, Quick, Inheritance (Ancestral Sword of the Hare Clan), Ancestor: Usagi

**Disadvantages:** Dark Secret (knows the truth), Driven (to find sister, to avenge father and clan), Haunted (father), Missing Eye, Bad Reputation (Criminal)

### Kennō (Clever),

The Ancestral Sword of the Hare, carries the following abilities and curse.

#### *Speed of the Hare:*

Any Hare who carries the clan sword in battle rolls for initiative as if his Reflexes score was ten points higher.

#### *Protection from the Hunter's Arrow:*

The wielder cannot be struck by any normal missile. Only enchanted arrows, spells, or the like have a chance and their TN is increased by 15.

The Curse of the Bloodspeaker: when the sword's carrier faces a Bloodspeaker, the sword carrier loses 5 wounds at the end of every combat round and the Bloodspeaker gains 5 wounds. Incidentally, the Shimushigaki was a Bloodspeaker in his past life, and the curse follows.

Ozaki is a young man, slightly shorter than average (the Usagi are generally small). He constantly frowns and the left side of his face is covered with a bandage; he lost his eye to a Scorpion arrow





as he fled the siege of Shiro Usagi. He once was described as having a weak chin and a soft face, but his journey has weathered and hardened him.

In the end, Ozaki only wants to have his life back the way it was before all of this started. He's just a normal samurai, in a very abnormal situation. He wants it all to be over, and will not quit until he's hunted down every last one of the ones responsible for his father's death, his sister's kidnapping, and his clan's destruction.

Ironically, the ordeal will make him the strongest daimyo the Hare Clan has ever seen.  
If he survives.

### Daidoji Dajan Kolat Renegade

Earth: 4

Water: 4

Fire: 4

Air: 4

Void: 4

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 3

Rolls when attacking: 8k4

Rolls For Damage: 8k4

TN to Hit: 32 (+12 from Fine Heavy Armor)

Skills: Kenjutsu 4, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 4, Battle 2, Archery 3, Sincerity 3, Kuenai 3, Commerce 5, Forgery 4, Lore: Kolat 5,

Intimidation 4, Knife 3, Law 3, Meditation 2, Lore: Literature 3, Lore: Ghosts 4, Lore: Maho 3, Stealth 3

**Equipment:** Carries a fine katana with Immortal Steel cast by Asako Nakiro. Also uses Night Milk on the blade, so the first damage roll will be 10k4

**Timeline:** Knows nearly everything, but he won't tell.

Once, when Dajan was a child, he visited the castle of Ide Fei, an old Unicorn trader. He saw many strange and wonderful things from the Burning Sands. Among them was a strange toy: a gaily painted doll, split in the center like an egg. When Dajan opened it, he found a smaller doll, more intricate and more colorful than the first. When he opened that, there was another. And another, and another, each one more beautiful and complex than the last. It was the most remarkable thing Dajan had ever seen...

Until the month afterward, when Ide Fei's brother brought Dajan to the Hidden Temple. That was remarkable...

But not as remarkable as the year afterward when he met Asako Nakiro, the Phoenix Inquisitor with the deadly secret. The Phoenix had been so afraid when he discovered what Dajan knew. Truly remarkable...

Still, not quite so remarkable as five years after that, when he first presented his plan to Nakiro and broke off from the Kolat, going into business for himself. Indeed, very remarkable...

However, such a thing pales in comparison with Dajan's life today. He has survived for over twenty years, beating the Kolat at their own game. The fools should never have denied him a position

### Dajan

Dajan sees himself as a genius.

He's removed every obstacle to his power. The Oni's Eye. The Bells of the Dead. Even Taka is nothing before him. The Shimushigaki is power incarnate, but an unfocused, mindless power. Dajan is certain that he can seize control of the gaki once they become one, the same way he has overcome every other obstacle in his career.

Dajan's hubris has finally bitten off more than it can chew.

Asako Nakiro began a quest to master the gaki long, long ago, and he's not about to give that power up to someone else. Dajan's Kolat need Nakiro. Dajan needs Nakiro. On the other hand, Nakiro isn't really sure how much he needs them anymore. He's had enough of implanting oni into helpless innocents and playing second fiddle to a would-be criminal mastermind.

Dajan may be a genius, but Asako Nakiro has a plan.



as a Master. Give him another ten years, and he'll have Otsan Uchi in the palm of his hand. Unfortunately, his enemies seem to have caught his scent, but if he can obtain the power of the Shimushi, they will all be as nothing before him.

Thinking back, that little doll hardly seems remarkable anymore. It was a wonderful doll to be sure, a masterpiece of complexity. There isn't a day Dajan doesn't think of that doll, each face smaller and more detailed than the one that hid it. As wonderful as the doll was, it was only a toy.

Daidoji Dajan is the reality, a face within a face within a face...

(A note for characters haunted by Usagi Oda - Dajan is the "shadow master" referred to by the restless ghost.)

## Asako Nakiro Kolot Tsukai

Earth: 5  
Water: 2  
Perception: 3  
Fire: 3  
Intelligence: 4  
Air: 3  
Void: 4

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 4

Honor: 0.3

Glory: 0 (he's effectively dead)

Shadowlands Taint: 4.9

Advantages: Forbidden Knowledge (4), Major Ally - Daidoji Dajan, Elemental Attunement (Earth)

Disadvantages: Unluck (once), Antisocial (4), Fascination (maho)

**Skills:** Calligraphy 3, Investigation 2, Meditation 4, Shintao 3, Theology 3, Lore: Ghosts 5, Lore: Maho 5, Advanced Medicine 3, Torture 4, Knife 2, Oratory 3, Spellcraft 4

**Spells:** (Earth Affinity; Spells marked with asterisks are memorized) \*Sense, \*Commune, \*Summon, \*Summon Earth Spirit, \*Elemental Ward, Fires From the Forge, \*Katana of Fire, The Fires That Cleanse, \*Path to Inner Peace, Fires From Within, Aura of Flame, \*Hurried Steps, Immortal Steel, \*Armor of the Emperor, Reflective Pool, \*Spikes of Earth, Wall of Earth, \*Drain Life

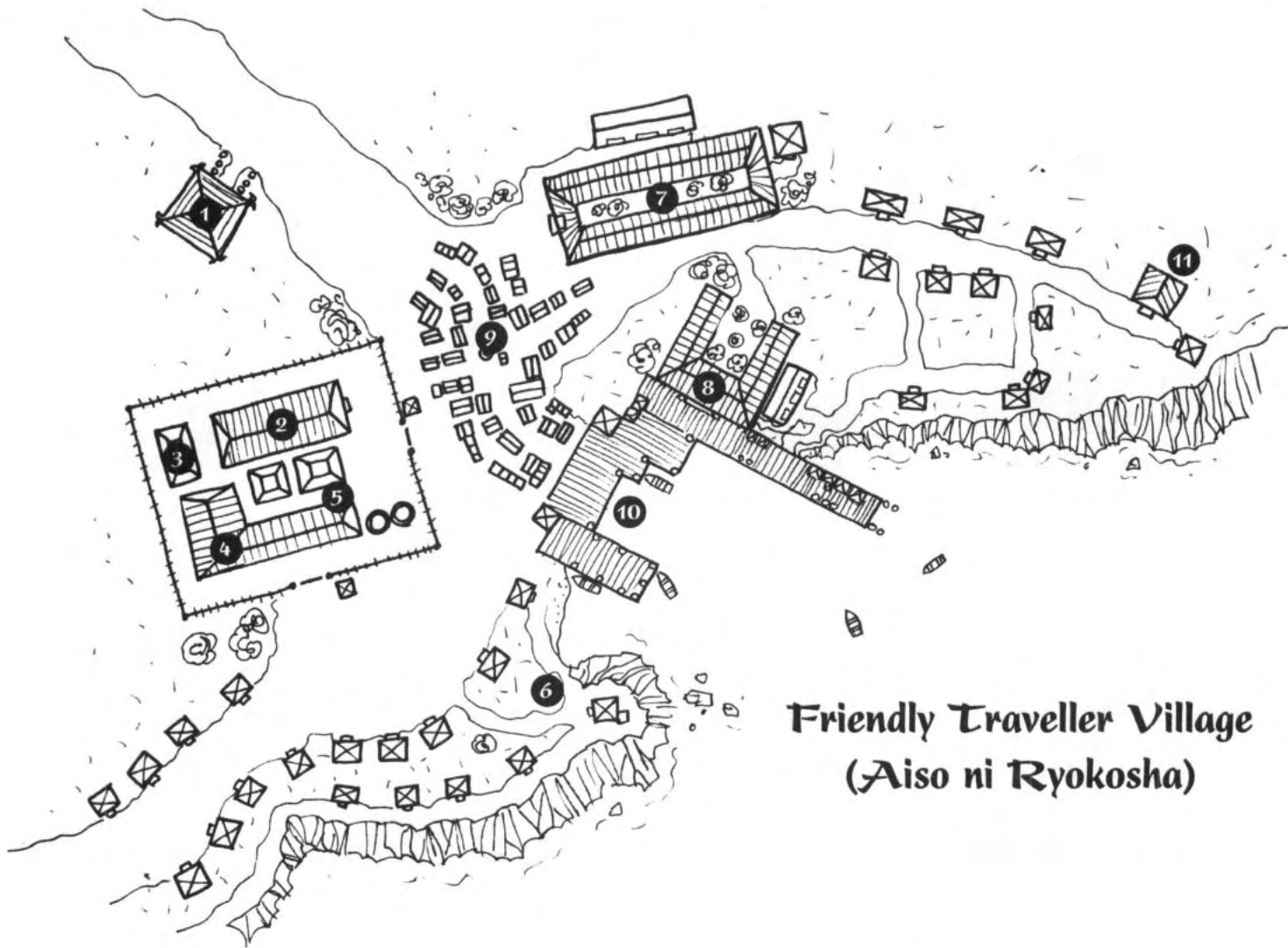
**Timeline:** Irrelevant

Nakiro is a broken man. In his youth, he was attacked and nearly killed by the Shimushigaki. He has spent nearly thirty-seven years living with a piece of it in the center of his soul, forcing him to do terrible things, forcing him to cater to Daidoji Dajan's ego so that they could gain power enough to bring the Shimushi into this world. Nakiro once fought against the Shimushi, but is too weak to do so any longer. All he wants to do now is wipe that smirk of Dajan's face before he dies.

Nakiro is incredibly old, his body ravaged by Taint spread from the Shimushigaki. His hair is long and frayed. His skin is pulled tightly over his features, as if it might snap and fly free at any second. His eyes are wide and he constantly grins because the skin of his face is so tight for any other expression. His palms bear the eye tattoos of an Inquisitor, but the eyes are bloodshot and tears of blood run from the corners down his forearms

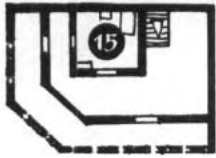




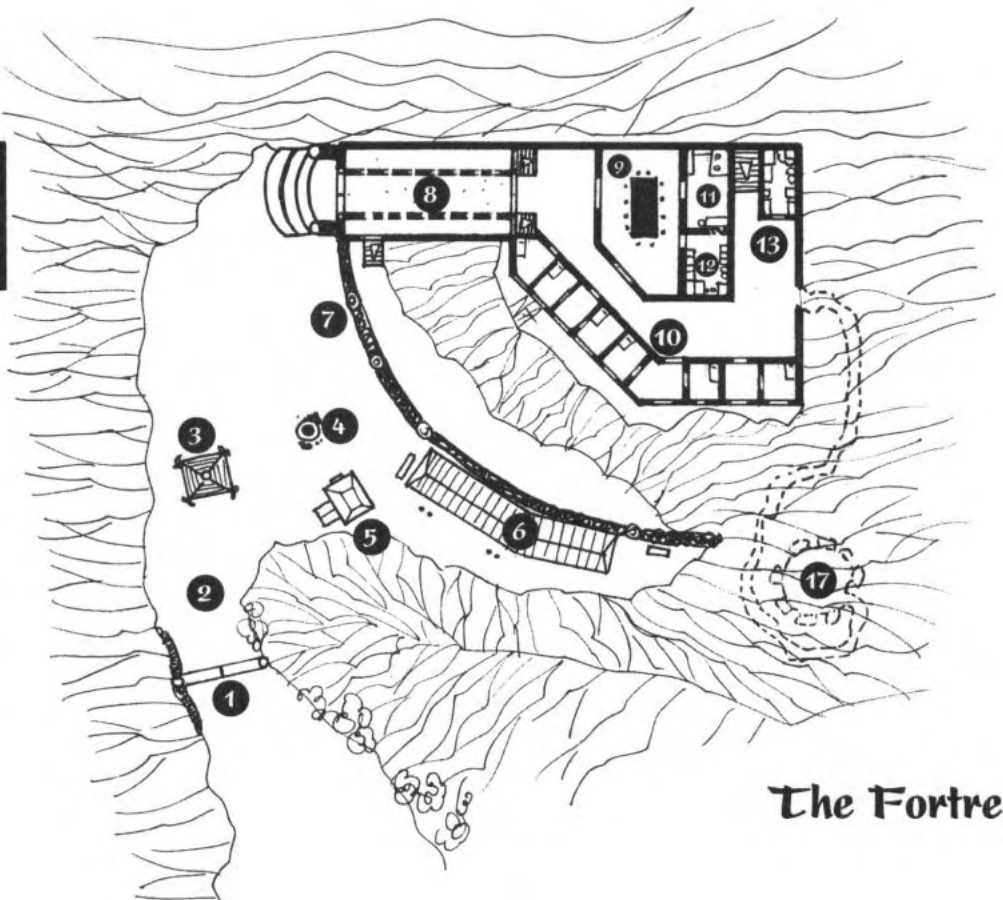


**Friendly Traveller Village  
(Aiso ni Ryokosha)**

**Second Floor**



**Basement**



**The Fortress**



# Legend of the Five Rings™

## Bells of the Dead

**When the bells fall silent, an ancient evil will rise.**

For generations, the Bells of the Dead have tolled across the lands of the Yasuki, their holy tones holding a malevolent spirit at bay. But now, a dark conspiracy has stolen the bells for their own secretive purposes, threatening to break their protective spell. Unless a stalwart band of samurai can find them and return them to their rightful place, the Emerald Empire will learn just how terrible their silence can be.

Bells of the Dead is a complete self-contained adventure for the *Legend of the Five Rings* role-playing game, designed for a group of mid-level player characters. The party must battle a secretive conspiracy in order to locate some of the Yasuki lands' most important artifacts. It requires copies of the *Legend of the Five Rings* basic books to be played

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