



Legend of the Five Rings™

Twilight Honor

by
Jim Long

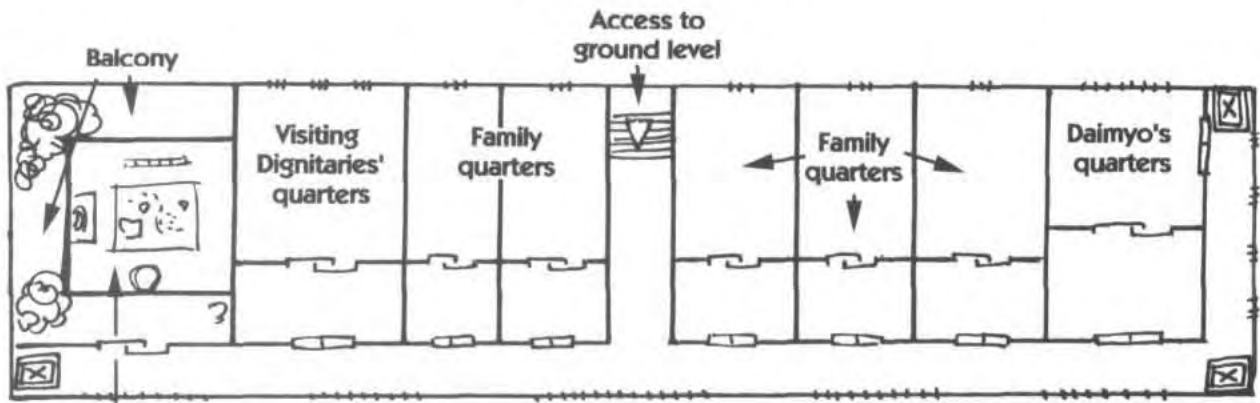


S-2

Shadowlands
Series

An Adventure of Corruption and War

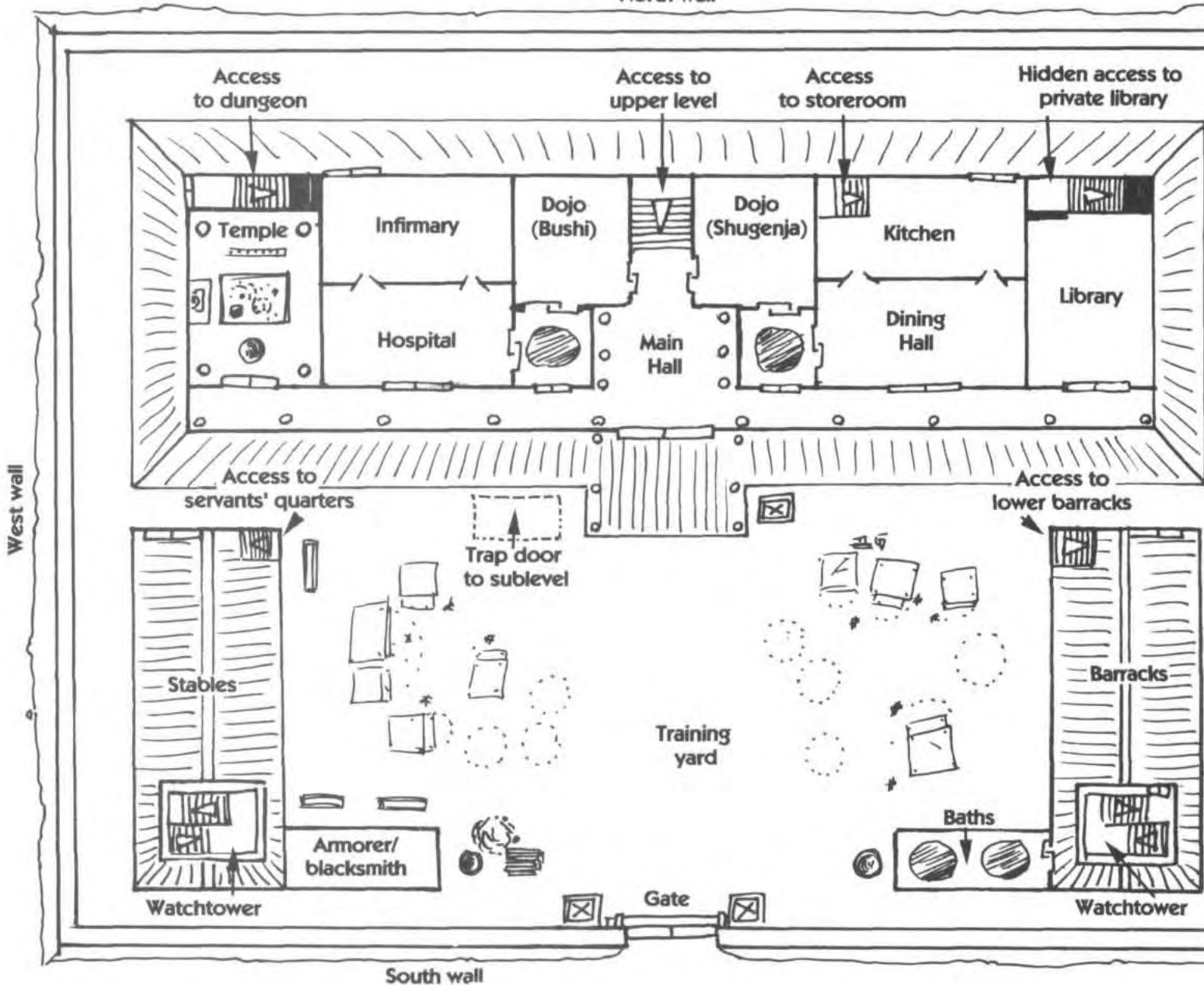
Upper level



Open temple ceiling

Ground level

North wall



Kaiu Wall



Legend of the Five Rings

Twilight Honor



*"The first duty we have to the Empire is
to die in its defense. All else is secondary."*

- Hiruma Makasu



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Lives in the heart of God's Country.

Those of you from the same area know exactly where that is.

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These adventures were written with the following parameters in mind. Parties comprised of other groups of PCs can still use these adventures, but the GM may need to make some slight modifications to adjust the level of the challenge appropriately.

As with any task that involves the Shadowlands, this adventure is very lethal. PCs who expect to do well (*i.e.* survive) should be properly skilled. It is strongly suggested that the characters have Shadowlands Lore and above average combat skills. The gifts of Absolute Direction, Way of the Land, and Quick will also be helpful. Shugenja with the spells Tomb of Jade, Jade Strike, and Path of Inner Peace will be extremely beneficial. Finally, the players should remember that there are all sorts of nasty creatures in the Shadowlands, some of which are immune to normal weapons. Although there are opportunities throughout the adventure to gain the means to combat oni and the like, players should carefully consider all actions before and during this adventure.

Suggested character School Ranks: 1 to 2
Suggested number of characters: 1 to 3 Bushi, 1 to 3 Shugenja
Suggested References: L5R RPG, Way of the Crab, Book of the Shadowlands



BOXED AND ITALICIZED TEXT

When you see boxed text in *Twilight Honor*, that means that you are looking at text which should be read to the PCs. This information is for their benefit, detailing what they see, or how an NPC speaks or acts. Be sure to look it over before you read it to the players, so that you know exactly what is about to happen.

Italicized text, on the other hand, is information (usually speech) from an NPC which is only available if the NPC is pressed to speak on a specific issue. This text should be read to the players if a certain question is asked, or if they press further about an issue.

Introduction

WHAT IS *TWILIGHT HONOR*?

Twilight Honor is the second adventure supplement in our Shadowlands (S) series, and it's designed to teach your players a few things about the Crab and their eternal struggle against the dark forces of the Shadowlands. Inside this story pack, you'll find a full-length adventure filled with challenges, brutal struggle against almost impossible odds, and the heroism which comes from fulfilling your duty to the Empire – even at the cost of your own life.

This is not to say that *Twilight Honor* is in any way designed to 'kill off' characters – rather, it is designed to encourage them to risk themselves for a greater goal, to protect life in a land of undeath and foulness, and learn the lesson of sacrifice. We hope that your characters will live through this dangerous tale, but if they do not, they join the thousands of Crab Clan warriors who fought for their Empire, and met death on the fields of Shiro Kuni.

Each 'story pack' in the *Legend of the Five Rings* RPG is intended as part of a larger campaign for your players. *Twilight Honor* can be used as a stand-alone adventure, or the NPCs and events in this adventure can be woven into a much larger plotline. In the larger *L5R* RPG campaign, *Twilight Honor* is designed to come after the *Code of Bushido* story pack.

This adventure was designed to help Game Masters integrate the deadly potential of the Shadowlands into their campaign, without tearing down the Kaiu Wall. The Shadowlands contain the most deadly creatures in Rokugan, from goblin packs which attack by the hundreds to fierce Oni with bizarre supernatural powers granted to them by their Dark Kami. If the characters are successful, they will have many brave stories to tell of the horrible creatures which swarmed the Wall, and how they stood firm against the onslaught, and the Crab will owe them a debt of gratitude.

If not, then they will have participated in events which have changed the Emerald Empire forever.

THE THEME OF *TWILIGHT HONOR*

The theme of *Twilight Honor* is a straightforward one, and brings with it a comprehension of 'duty to the Empire'. The characters' actions will be decided by their sense of loyalty and courage. Their time on the Crab Wall should serve to teach them respect for the duty of that brave clan, as well as proving their own dedication to the Empire. No one who has stood against an invading horde can look at the peaceful slopes of Rokugan again without realizing the sacrifices being made for the peace and prosperity of their Empire.

In *Twilight Honor*, the characters will discover the truth about a general who has been entrusted with the defense of the wall. In investigating further, they find that his mind has been broken by the horrors he has seen, and the weight of deaths on his conscience. His slowly failing mind has led him to believe that the Shadowlands cannot be defeated, and so he plans a final, glorious battle against the forces of the Dark One, hoping to die with honor.

When the horde comes, the characters must be willing to give their lives for the Empire, fighting to the last man and watching death claim their comrades. There is little time for choices or delicate decisions of honor and courtly grace. There is only battle, duty, and glory.

If they succeed, they will save an Empire.

– RS



Gamemaster Notes

relentless attacks against the Shadowlands for ten long years.

Makasu is ruthless even by Crab standards. He personally directs the activities of all those who use Shiro Kuni as their home. He outlines the path for every scout, organizes the defense of every caravan that must leave his care, and dictates the plan of action for every patrol. He even leads these patrols on occasion, despite the warnings of his advisors. He has the gift of tactics and the ability to quickly and clearly see to the heart of a problem. He demands the utmost from his men and they, in turn, love him like a father. He is their *daimyo* and more. There is nothing the bushi under his command wouldn't do for him, even if he were to command them to walk naked into the Festering Pit of Fu Leng.

Makasu is a genius; unfortunately, he is on the verge of losing his mind, his soul, and his honor. The myriad details required to do his duty and the daily pressure of commanding so many men is beginning to wear down the daimyo. He has seen too many good men fall only to rise again to fight their brethren. His decisions have begun to take longer to make and his memory is starting to slip. He confuses small details and forgets the names of his men, an act that would have been unthinkable only months ago. Worse still, his temper regarding such lapses has grown steadily more violent. None dare correct him or offer to help for fear of swift punishment beyond all reason. This has further isolated Makasu from his men and his environment, hastening his descent toward madness. There seems little anyone can do to help the daimyo. However, if he is not cured, it could well mean the destruction of the castle and the lands beyond.

Synopsis

The adventure begins when the characters are asked to travel to Shiro Kuni at the request of Togashi Yokuni, champion of the Dragon Clan. As outlined in *Way of the Dragon*, Yokuni knows much about what is happening in the regions of Rokugan, although what he does with such knowledge is often unknown. In this case he has chosen to act, although indirectly. To directly confront the Crab would be a grievous breach of honor. Certainly he could not accuse a respected leader of the Hiruma clan of losing his mind. Likewise, he could not question his handling of

Background

Shiro Kuni, Castle of the Nation, is the solid backbone upon which the defenses of the Crab are based. Although visitors are rarely impressed upon approaching the structure, they are always awed by the activity within the solid walls. From here the generals of the Crab plot their attacks on the Shadowlands, plan the patrols of their scouts, and prepare for the near-constant raids across the Carpenter Wall. A small army of Crab bushi is always stationed here, although when needed, the castle can house an entire army of troops.

Shiro Kuni is the southern fortress of the Kaiu Kabe, the Carpenter Wall. The walls are scarred and burned from repeated attacks by the Shadowlands creatures that perceive the fortress to be the weak link in the Crab's defense. Few creatures foolish enough to attack the walls survive to warn their fellows of the stalwart defenders and solid fortifications. To the south, Doro no Oriru Warui, the Road of Descending Evil, leads to Hida Palace. To the north, behind Carpenter Wall, Demo Koshin no Itami, the March of Pain, leads to the Carpenter Pass.

The western wall of the castle looks over the Last Stand River. On all sides, the blood of the defenders mixes with the ichor of countless Shadowlands creatures to stain the walls a rich crimson. Sections of the wall appear to have decayed, but do not be fooled. They are as secure as any in the Empire. Grim Crab samurai patrol the walls at all hours of the day and night, ever vigilant for the first sign of attack. It is from this point that Hiruma Makasu has launched his





CHANGING TIMES

At this point, some GM's might be asking, "But what if Kisada's not the Crab Champion in my campaign?" Easy enough. Replace Kisada with your campaign's Champion, whether you are playing years in the past, or even if you've killed the Great Bear in your campaign.

This holds true for all the major NPCs in Twilight Honor. If those NPCs are inappropriate for your campaign, simply rename them and continue with the adventure as written.

the troops under his command or the defenses of the castle. Yokuni knows, however, that if something is not done soon, the castle and all the lands in the surrounding lands are doomed. If Shiro Kuni falls, it is likely that Hida castle and Kaiu castle would fall shortly thereafter. He therefore asks the characters only to travel to the castle and observe.

The characters travel to Kyuden Hida, the ancestral home of the Hida. There, they announce themselves to the lord of the clan and ask his permission to travel to Shiro Kuni. Hida Kisada is not available, however, and the characters must pass the night with his eldest son, Yakamo. At the feast that evening, he decides to test them to see if they are worthy of continuing their quest toward the Kaiu Wall.

If the PCs pass his test, they are encouraged to continue their mission. If the characters fail their test, they can continue, but they will have to prove themselves in their eyes of their guide. The characters travel with a cousin of Yakamo's, Hida Shiroy. Although not initially enamored with the task, Shiroy takes the characters to the castle where they are introduced to a momentarily lucid Hiruma Makasu. Shiroy decides to stay with the PCs when he learns that Makasu plans a raid into the Shadowlands the next day.

Makasu leads the force himself, a practice that is becoming increasingly rare. Two days into the patrol, however, this force is ambushed when Makasu leads them into an obvious trap. Because of Makasu's error, the majority of the patrol is injured in the attack, and the patrol must retreat to Kuni Castle. Working together, the PCs and Shiroy should manage to get most of the rest of the bushi back to Shiro Kuni, despite constant attacks by the Shadowlands creatures. When they are within sight of the walls, however, an Oni appears. A gallant stand is required to save the wounded survivors before the characters can return to the safety of the Wall.

Once inside, Makasu claims all of the credit for saving the patrol. Shiroy's part in the event is lost, as is that of the characters. Disturbed at such inappropriate behavior in his uncle's trusted *daimyo*, Shiroy decides to stay a while longer.

In the days to follow Makasu's actions become more violent. His decisions are more erratic and his commands seem bizarre. Several patrols fail to return and those that do are ordered to commit *seppuku* when their reports do not verify Makasu's assumptions. It is now obvious to the

characters that many samurai will needlessly die if they cannot remove Makasu from power.

Suspicion runs high in the castle, and to prove their loyalty, Makasu orders the characters to make a patrol of Shadowlands. Once there, they discover a massive Shadowlands army preparing for an assault against the Wall. Made bold by the erratic behavior of the patrols and the apparent lack of vigilance on the part of the Crab defenders, the creatures have gathered for battle. Escaping, the characters arrive at the castle a mere two days before the ensuing attack.

Makasu orders his samurai to prepare for the fight, giving the characters command of several units. The Crab hold out as well as they can, but in the end they are forced off the wall and back to the castle. The Shadowlands forces siege the castle and prepare to storm the walls. Makasu, driven completely insane by his bloodlust, ignores the Kuni commanders and prepares to initiate a counterattack. Only the intervention of the personal forces of the Crab Champion prevents his plan from being launched.

Furious at being usurped (even by his own *daimyo*), Makasu plans a mutiny, to force Kisada and the Crab to fight the Shadowlands 'without hiding behind walls'. To that end he attempts to open the main gates at the height of the battle. There he plans to die as a hero, overwhelmed by the Shadowlands creatures. Of course, his madness may spell the doom of the castle, his *daimyo*, and perhaps all of the lands of the Crab. Only the PCs stand in his way.



Part I: A Simple Task

The setting for the first encounter of *Twilight Honor* can take place in the lands of any clan, in any area of Rokugan. The PCs should be traveling, with no pressures or demands to occupy their next few weeks.



Travel has made you weary, and the wind is cold on your face. You've been watching the storm build for hours, wondering if you'd find a dry place to spend the night before the rain broke. Just when you're sure it's time to start looking for a thicket of trees, you see a telltale curling of smoke. Doubling your pace, you arrive in the modest courtyard of a small building just as the first heavy drops of rain begin to slash about you.

Although the common room is small, it is very clean. Light spills from the kitchen as well as from the small hearth. The innkeeper rushes out of the kitchen and bids you welcome as he ushers you to one of three tables. He backs into the kitchen, promising to return quickly with your evening meal. A young boy pokes the fire into life, warming the small room and taking away the chill in the air. You sit at a quiet table with your companions as the wind begins to howl. This is no night to be outside.

Suddenly, your eyes catch the briefest hint of movement along the far wall. Your companions also look up, as a man emerges from the dark corner – a man you would have sworn had not been there when you entered.

The powerfully built samurai wears heavy armor with the ease of a Crab, but his footfalls make no more sound than a kimono-clad Scorpion. His powerful arms rest at his side, hands near his daisho. An ornate helmet and mempo conceals his face, giving you no clue of his age, identity or intent. Only his eyes, which seem to reflect the light of the fire, are visible. On his daisho, you see the ancestral *mon* of the Dragon Clan. In a voice that is impossible to forget, he addresses you.

"Konbanwa. The Seven Fortunes favor any who may pass a night such as this under a sturdy roof." His voice rumbles and seems to fill your mind as if you were listening with your entire soul. *"Your journey has been hard, but the darkest roads still lie ahead."*

"I wish you to do a service for me. Travel to the east, to the lands of the Crab. At Kyuden Hida, proclaim yourself to the clan daimyo. Ask to go to Shiro Kuni, the Castle of the Nation, for study of the Shadowlands and a brief term of service on the Kaiu Wall. The Walls of the Crab are broad and thick, but the greatest strength cannot hold back hatred. You may learn that there is much that you can see from the height of the Wall."

"I do not ask you to accept lightly. Know that you will meet danger, betrayal and war. All is not well in the lands of my brother Crab, and your risk may be great."

"If you choose this path, you shall receive honor and glory from the Clan of the Dragon, as well as other rewards, should such be your desire."

With a faint gesture from the stranger, a metal token appears on the table. *"This will serve as introduction to both Hida and Mirumoto."* You



TOGASHI YOKUNI

Togashi Yokuni, the mysterious visitor in the inn, is possibly the most powerful entity in Rokugan. He is the Champion of the Dragon Clan, and has mastered the powers of both samurai and shugenja – something otherwise unheard of in the Empire.

He is also, secretly, the original Togashi, son of the Moon and the Sun, the primary deities of the Emerald Empire. Although the PCs certainly do not know this, it gives Yokuni the ability to go anywhere and do just about anything he wishes. Only his nature – that of an enigmatic recluse – tempers his power.

If Yokuni wishes to know something about your PCs, he knows it. If it is necessary to alter the opening scene to be more appropriate to your PCs, feel free to do so.

More information on Togashi Yokuni can be found in *Way of the Dragon*.



THE TOKEN

The token is a *nemuranai* of the Dragon clan, specifically belonging to Togashi Yokuni. When presented to another, it will convey the feeling of mild respect, attributed to the person who owns the token. Unless the bearer was doing something obviously illegal or harmful, the viewer is inclined to consider any logical and sensible request from the bearer. This power cannot be used more than once on any single individual.

The token, in effect, makes the way straight. A guard will allow the bearer to seek an audience. A daimyo will grant an audience. The token is not a passkey. It will not open every door, nor will it allow the bearer to break the law.

Upon the completion of the task outlined by Yokuni the token will vanish. The token will also disappear if the bearer is not using it toward reaching Yokuni's stated goal (to reach Shiro Kuni), or tries to use the token for dishonorable purposes. In effect, Yokuni withdraws his favor from the undertaking, once and for all.

can almost picture a faint smile as he continues, "I almost envy you the journey. Would that I had time to make it myself." Then, with a fractional bow, he passes through the door of the teahouse, vanishing into the night. No one moves until the innkeeper steps into the room with a tray of steaming soup.

"I am glad of the company, noble travelers. You are the only visitors I've had for three days and fear I will grow lazy with lack of work." He smiles and laughs briefly as he places his hands on his round belly "Enjoy. I will return shortly with more." He returns to the kitchen leaving you together with your soup, your token, and your questions.

Any Dragon Clan character will easily recognize their Clan Champion's identity, as will any character with the Heraldry, Courtier or Bard skills. Others, particularly those with any background involving the Dragon Clan, may make a Perception roll against a TN of 15 to recognize the mysterious figure.

Now What?

From here the PCs have several choices. That the Dragon Clan Champion addresses them at all, much less as directly, is nothing short of amazing. That he's given them a task is probably one of the greatest honors they've ever received.

Unfortunately, great tasks require even greater sacrifices. The PCs will probably be curious and concerned about the nature of this *suggestion*. Let the players decide for themselves. The players may already want to cooperate with Yokuni's 'task'. If not, here are some suggestions.

Magistrates: Although the summons is rather cryptic, none can doubt that the Dragon seeks what is best for the Empire as a whole. Surely such a journey would be well within the scope of your duties.

Dragon: Dragon samurai will recognize Yokuni by reputation, if not by actual appearance. They will have little doubt of his identity when he disappears into the storm. For them it is a simple matter of honor. Their Clan Champion has "suggested" they do something. That should be good enough.

Crab: A chance to visit the Wall is always a good idea. A token and a reason to seek out the clan daimyo is even better. Although all know

Hida Kisada to be a hard man, he values samurai with talents and connections. Certainly letting the daimyo and his court know that you're valued by the Dragons would be a good thing. Besides, didn't the Dragon imply that there was something wrong at Kuni castle? Better travel there yourself and make sure all is well than let others do the job.

Scorpion, Crane: So, the Crab have a secret. Who better to bring it to light than one of your clan? Certainly an introduction to the Crab court will be a benefit. There are other advantages as well, including knowledge of the Crab and their precious Wall.... and possibly darker secrets.

Phoenix, Unicorn, Lion: A chance to travel to the Crab clan court is all right, but the chance to actually enter the Shadowlands is an opportunity not to be missed. This trip will allow you to see for yourself the foul creatures on the other side of the Kaiu Wall. Perhaps you could even participate in a raid or scouting mission as well. There are lessons to be learned for the scholar, and blades to be bloodied for the warrior, all on the far sides of the great Wall.





Ronin: It sounds like the Dragon would owe you a favor. Certainly there is something going on at the court of the Crab and besides, this is a good way to get introduced to the daimyo. Maybe you can even convince someone to teach you that next school rank... Opportunities abound.

Once the players decide to follow the Dragon's suggestion, they should travel to Kyuden Hida. There isn't a pressing time schedule; however, as GM, encourage your PCs to avoid unnecessary delays. Yokuni knows that all will pass as it should, but the PCs still have their part to play.

The innkeeper will talk with the characters as much or as little as they like. He is busy, but pleasant. He knows nothing about the Dragon the PCs say they saw, but he will remain as diplomatic as possible. The characters can have their pick of rooms and will likely pass the night in quiet comfort.

If the characters take the time to examine the token, they notice it is similar to those given out to the Emperor's magistrates. This token is made of steel, two by five inches, a little more than half an inch thick. There is a green tassel looped through a small hole that has been bored in one end of the token. The Togashi family mon has been stamped on one side of the token. The steel is of extremely high quality and the edges of the mon are in crisp relief.



Depending on where the PCs are located when they are discovered by Togashi Yokuni, the trip to Hida Palace could take from a few days to many weeks. If necessary, the characters should be reminded that they've accepted a mission from the Dragon and therefore owe their patron their best and swiftest effort. The magical token should further assist their rapid travel to the Crab lands.

You travel toward Kyuden Hida, tired from the journey and ready for even the simple hospitality of the Crab. As you approach the tremendous keep, you are confronted by a grand view of the Last Stand River as it spreads out and spills into Jinshin Sakana Wan, Earthquake Fish Bay.

As you approach further, what you first considered merely impressive reveals itself to be truly imposing. Kyuden Hida may be the mightiest fortress in the Empire. As you approach the gigantic doors, you see samurai marching along the road, and numerous guards along the walls. The cold wind blows down from the Twilight Mountains, bringing with it the stale smell of the Shadowlands. In the distance, beyond the castle, you can see the shadow of the snow-covered Kaiu Wall.

You approach the gate, passing between the granite walls as a pair of steel doors lie open before you. The captain of the guard steps to block your path, flanked by twenty men. He looks each of you in the eye and turns instinctively toward the bearer of the token. He is unshaven, fully armored and he smells of dirt, but his daisho shines with meticulous care. In a deep voice, he demands, "What is your business here?"

The Crab Captain

The captain of the guard, Hida Sekau, is gruff and direct. He knows his duty and he's fully prepared to do whatever he feels is necessary to keep the gates secure. The nineteen men behind him will quickly move to back their captain up; however, such action is rarely necessary. The guardians of the Palace gate are hand-picked samurai chosen from the bravest of the clan. Sekau was picked as their leader by besting all in combat.

If any character other than the token bearer speaks, Sekau cuts them off with a slash of his hand and an icy stare. If they continue, he may well attempt to teach them a lesson - with his tetsubo. If shown the Dragon token, Sekau pauses and eyes the party gruffly.

After several seconds he motions to a young samurai. "Take these samurai to Okuno-sama. He will make the proper introductions." With a slight nod to the token bearer, he withdraws.

HIDA SEKAU, CRAB CLAN CAPTAIN

Earth: 4
Fire: 3
Agility: 4
Water: 2
Air: 2
Reflexes: 3
Void: 3

Attacking: Tetsubo 8k4 (+4); Katana 7k3 (+4)

Damage: Tetsubo 6k2 (+4); Katana 7k2 (+4)

TN to be hit: 25

Wounds: 8: 0; 16: -1; 24: -2; 32: -3; 40: -4; 48: Down; 56: Out; 64: Dead

Honor: 2.4

Glory: 4.3

School Rank: Hida 2

Skills: Battle 3, Defense 3, Jujitsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Shadowlands Lore 3, Tetsubo 4

Sekau prefers to use his tetsubo for duels unless he feels he is engaging a worthy adversary (opponents with rank 3 or higher in their school). If struck first in a duel, Sekau will make his rank 2 school roll to resist the damage. If successful he will continue the attack claiming the attack failed to wound. He will only do this once per duel and only if his opponent gets the first attack

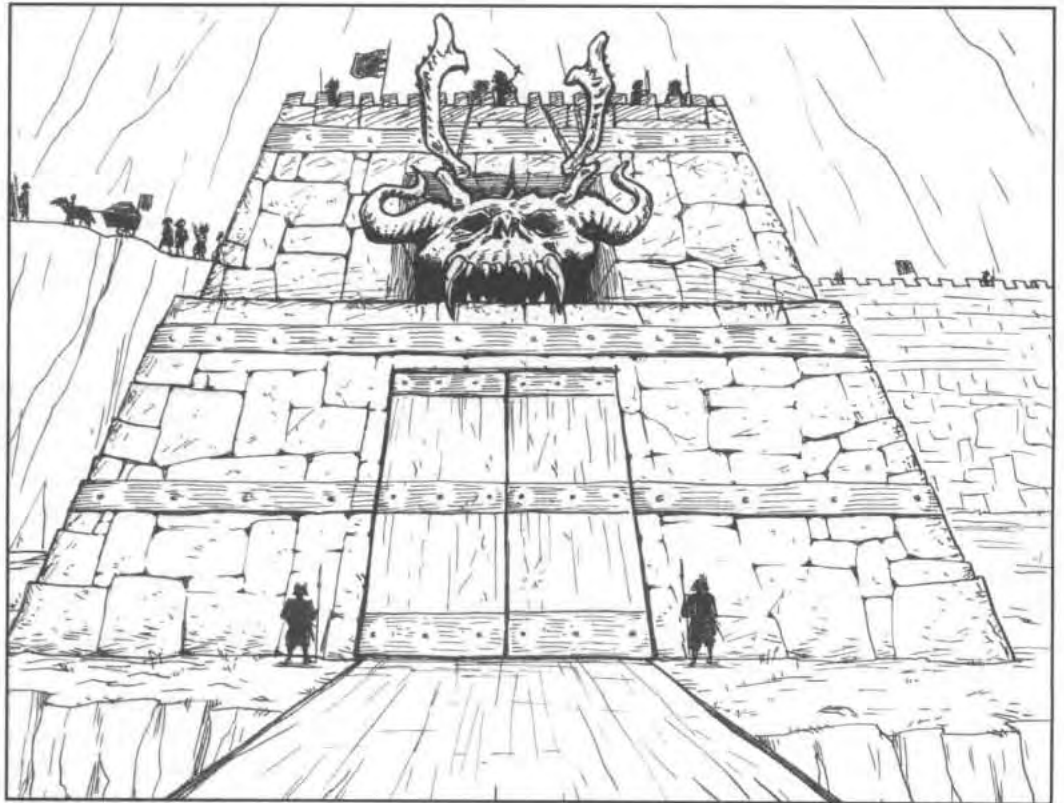


HIDA YAKAMO

Hida Yakamo is the eldest of the Crab Champion's three children, and is already one of the most feared generals in the Empire. His brash manner and impolite mannerisms only serve to highlight that he is a warrior above all else – the ways of court and finesse are not his.

Some years ago, he killed a Dragon Clan samurai, the son of the Mirumoto daimyo, in a duel. Although some claimed that Yakamo cheated by using his tetsubo rather than a katana, the errant mouths of courtiers were swiftly quieted by his father's complete approval of his son's actions.

Since then, tension between the two clans has been high, and the Crab are wary of Dragon 'ambassadors.' Even if Yakamo likes the characters, or is impressed with how they handle themselves in the Crab Court, he will certainly send a 'guide' with them to the lands of the Kaiu.



The characters are led toward the heart of the palace. Their guide is quick and efficient. He answers yes or no questions with a nod or a shake of his head. Questions that can't be answered with head movements he ignores. He leaves the PCs in a simple room. On one wall is a table with a water basin, pitcher, and plate of fruit, jug of sake, and several cups. There is a slight wait during which the characters can wash their faces and hands. After twenty minutes, Hida Okuno arrives.

Hida Okuno is a large man dressed in finely kept heavy armor. He carries a tessen with the Hida mon. His movements and speech are quick and sure. He is polite but comes directly to the point. If shown the token, he examines it for several minutes, seemingly lost in thought. If the PCs choose not to show the token they have to convince the samurai that they deserve an audience.

Although Okuno is gruff and taciturn, he understands the importance of the token which the characters bear. He simply wants to be certain that *they* understand why they are here.

Okuno tells the characters that Lord Hida is not currently at the palace and is not expected for several days. They are welcome to present

themselves to Hida Yakamo-*sama*, the daimyo's eldest son. Perhaps Yakamo can respond to their request.

The Young Hero

Okuno leads you to a tremendous throne room carved from the side of the mountain. At its end, tall red doors open to allow you entry. Within, courtiers' robes swish upon granite floors, and the stoic walls of the Crab throne room stare bleakly back at your questioning eyes.

Although the room contains little of the bustle and eager manipulation of the Crane or Phoenix courts, you recognize representatives from all the houses of the Crab as well as ambassadors from the Unicorn, Crane, and Lion. As you approach, you see a tall man with well-combed mustache pacing before the tall black throne. Motioning for you to remain a few paces behind, Okuno steps forward. As Yakamo turns and glares indiscriminately at him, Okuno bows politely.

"My Lord," he says. "These honorable visitors request a moment of your time." He bows again, steps back, and waits for you to step forward.

Okuno waits until the young Crab stops and turns to him before speaking. Once introductions are made Okuno retreats into the background, leaving the characters to fend for themselves.

If presented with the token, Yakamo nods, but does not touch it or take it from the PCs. He can easily see the Togashi *mon*, and that is good enough for him. The PCs have to convince him of their request.

Yakamo paces angrily as he talks and gestures with his hands often (a very rude mannerism for the usually restrained Rokugani) while making his point. His voice rises and falls with his passions, making his emotions easy to read. He is not unreasonable, but at the same time he is not likely to grant frivolous requests. He will be certain to ask the opinion of any Crab character in the group. There are several ways to convince him to grant permission to travel to Kuni Castle.

FIRST

The characters can state that they want to help fight against the Shadowlands. Yakamo will counter by saying that the duty of other clans is clearly determined by the Emperor. Only Crab samurai are required to fight the Shadowlands.

Are the PCs implying that the Crab are incapable of carrying out this duty? If they say yes, then there will certainly be a duel. If the PCs answer no, then he will dismiss them, claiming that he has no need of their 'assistance.' Yakamo is looking for an intelligent and reasonable answer, not simple agreement or dissent. If the characters have a good response, he will relent.

SECOND

The PCs can state they have business with the daimyo of Kuni castle. This, or any other lie, will probably convince Yakamo (he has no reason to believe that the ambassadors of Togashi Yokuni would knowingly lie). Although this statement is true in the barest sense, it means an immediate one point honor loss to all the characters. If they seem to be in dissent about the lie, however, Yakamo will certainly interrogate the character further, and possibly catch them in the untruth. If the characters are caught lying publicly to the daimyo's son? Another duel in the making.

If the characters are successful with a reasonable deception, Yakamo will allow them to pass.

THIRD

The PCs can say, bluntly, that they've been asked by the Dragon Clan Champion to go to the castle, and that they don't know why. This is probably the last thing normal players will do, but it is the response that is most likely to be successful. Yakamo is skeptical, but he knows the curious ways of the Dragon, and is pleased that the PCs have been completely honest with him. In this case, he will certainly allow all of the PCs to continue.

If Yakamo agrees to allow the characters to continue their journey he must have been convinced of their purpose. As such, he will provide them with a room and invite them to dinner this evening. 'Simple Crab hospitality,' he says, frowning roughly. Of course, refusing would be considered terribly rude. Okuno bows in respect to his Champion (and the characters should, too), and then will lead the characters to their room. The party is given a single room with cots, blankets, and a well-stocked fireplace.

A SIMPLE MEAL

Yakamo's 'simple meal' is attended by 40 samurai in full armor. Although the PCs are not exactly the center of attention, their presence draws continued stares as the servants bring plates piled high with food. PCs used to courtly life will be in for quite a shock if this is their first meal with the Crab.

The tables line three walls of the large room. The fourth wall has a door leading to the hall and on to the kitchen. Samurai sit on one side of the table allowing an unrestricted view of the center of the room. The fare is simple, but abundant. Conversation is sparse, and musicians play marching songs in the background. Okuno will answer questions if asked during the meal, but will not stop to speak unless spoken to first. When the meal is ended and the sake flows more freely, it is time for entertainment.

Two samurai approach in simple kimonos. They bow to Yakamo, who nods in return. No words are exchanged. The two step away from one another and after brief bows, drop into a fighting stance. Okuno explains the two have a disagreement that can not be settled. They've agreed to fight here to resolve their differences. The challenged samurai chose hand-to-hand combat. Shouts of encouragement resound across the hall and the PCs see more than one wager



HIDA YAKAMO (CONTINUED)

Hida Yakamo is a very powerful samurai, and has many skills with weapons, military tactics and the ways of war – he's been fighting at his father's side since he was very young.

He cannot be bullied, intimidated, or cowed, and he has no interest in love or politics. Courtiers annoy him, and anyone who tries to seduce, manipulate or coerce him is in for a rude surprise. His response to such actions is immediate, and the courtier had better have a very good champion.

They're going to need one.

Further information and statistics for Hida Yakamo can be found in *Way of the Crab*.



HIDA UGAMO

Earth: 3

Fire: 2

Agility: 3

Water: 2

Air: 2

Void: 2

Attacking: Katana 6K3

(+3)

Damage: Katana 7K2

(+3) (bonus for Large advantage)

TN to be hit: 25 (15 + Heavy Armor)

Wounds: 6: 0; 12: -1; 18:

-2; 24: -3; 30: -4; 36: Down;

42: Out; 48: Dead

Honor: 1.0

Glory: 2.2

School Rank: Hida 2

Skills: Defense 3,

Kenjutsu 3

Ugamo will use his Void points to prevent damage when struck. He will make his rank 2 school roll to resist the first two successful attacks. If successful he will continue the attack since no blood was drawn.



being made. As the characters watch, a brief combat ensues, culminating as one samurai spins and sends his opponent flying with a *sumo* throw. There is a crack as the man lands on his shoulder, followed by a hollow pop as the thrower dislocates his victim's shoulder. The fallen samurai taps the granite floor twice with his hand and is immediately released. He is helped to his feet by the victor. Yakamo points toward the victor and nods. The two depart without a word amid the shouts of the samurai.

Other duels are fought, once with two samurai in full armor and katanas, once in kimonos and tetsubos. By this time the Crab samurai in the hall are much less restrained. Too much sake has robbed some of their senses.

Nearby, a disagreement spills over to the center of the room. Two armored Crab samurai begin shouting, gripping each other and wrestling about on the tables. Okuno leans over and offers a brief explanation. "Lord Kisada would never allow such a thing, but his son prefers a much more relaxed table."

If there are any courtiers or female characters in the group (unless they are obviously samurai), Okuno will suggest they retire for the evening. His request is, as he will say, 'for their own safety.'

The PCs watch as one samurai pushes the other to the brink of the tables. Suddenly, the defender flings his opponent toward the PCs.

With a crash, their table gives way and the PCs find themselves unseated amid broken plates and pottery. As they attempt to disentangle themselves from the samurai who was literally thrown at them, one PC is yanked to his feet.

Suddenly, you find yourself nose-to-chest with a huge Crab in heavy armor, and the thick smell of *sake* on his breath is nearly overwhelming. "I demand an apology!" he roars, standing up amid the rubble of your dinner and crockery. "Your presence here insults me! My armor is stained, and you should be thrown out of our lands!" He's moderately drunk, but you can see the gleam of cunning beneath the thin veneer of reckless debauchery. "I challenge you to a duel, you *onna tarashi!*" The term means 'fop,' and it's certainly intended as an insult.

The Crab will continue to provoke the character until a challenge is accepted. As the Crab steps back to prepare for the duel, Okuno will be sure to tell the character that such fights are usually fought to first blood, with whatever armor and weapons the payer currently has with them. The statistics for the challenger, Hida Ugamo, can be found in the sidebar of this page.

In reality, Hida Yakamo has arranged for the confrontation, asking two of his samurai to arrange a mild offense, and a duel. Although Yakamo doesn't want to see anybody killed, he does want to make sure that the PCs have what



it takes to challenge the Shadowlands. He is not about to send them to Kuni Castle without testing their ability. He wants a fair test, however, so the samurai will choose the best fighter in the party (to the Crab's way of thinking) to fight against Yakamo's man.

If the character defeats Ugamo, Yakamo approaches and smiles. *"I knew you had what it takes to enter the Shadowlands. Tomorrow you'll be on your way to Shiro Kuni."* If Ugamo defeats the character, Yakamo sadly shakes his head. *"I suspected as much. You hope to enter the Shadowlands, yet you cannot defeat a single samurai who'd had a full measure of sake. Perhaps you should reconsider your request."*

If the PCs wish to continue their journey after a loss to Ugamo, they have to convince Yakamo that they are worthy. If they persist, the Crab Clan Hero will arrange one more contest. Three men are selected from Yakamo's guard. The PCs must select three of their number to defeat these three in a small melee. This battle is also to first blood, meaning anyone that is wounded must withdraw.

PCs are given light tetsubo (1K1), and may wield them using either the tetsubo skill, subojutsu, or bojutsu. Yakamo's men are used to working together in the Shadowlands, the very point Yakamo is driving home. If one begins to falter, another will jump to his aid. If the characters manage to defeat the three samurai, Yakamo strides toward the characters who are still standing. *"Hai! You are greater together than you could ever be apart. Mend your bruises. You'll soon be on your way to the Shadowlands."*

The next morning, a maid comes with clean garments and more bandages (if anyone is injured.) Behind her, Okuno strides into your room with a welcoming bow. As he enters the chamber, you see another samurai standing in the hallway, waiting to be introduced. As he bows, Okuno says, "This is Hida Shiroi, a nephew of Hida Kisada, the Great Bear. He will be your escort to Shiro Kuni." Shiroi looks at each of you in turn, with a displeased glare.

"We leave tomorrow morning," says the newcomer. "Make your peace and prepare to meet your ancestors. Meet me at the eastern side of the Last Stand Bridge at dawn." With a curt bow, he turns and leaves the room.

Another Chance?

So, the PCs don't have the mettle to get past the first challenge? At least they're still alive. Perhaps they'll gain insight and try again. If they want to continue, one hour after the Okuno leaves a lone samurai enters the room.

The samurai is short, with a bald pate beneath his formal helm. "You don't look like much, but perhaps you'll do. I am Hida Shiroi, a distant nephew of the Great Bear. I listened while you pleaded your case to my cousin, Yakamo. Although you may lack the skill to survive, I believe every samurai has the choose the hour of their death. If you'd still travel to Shiro Kuni, meet me tomorrow at on the eastern end of the bridge, and I'll escort you."



The day dawns cool and overcast with the promise of rain. Servants are already up and about, however, they avoid you and your tasks. Tightening the straps of your armor, you exit the castle as the first drops of rain begin to fall. The crowds part as you descend from the castle and make your way toward the bridge. The silent stares of the guards watch your every move with casual, but complete, attention. Ahead you see the bridge and Shiroi.

The Road North

No matter what the circumstances, the PCs should meet with Hida Shiroi as he waits by the bridge. Shiroi's mood will largely be determined by how the PCs did in their tests. If the PCs won the first challenge he will be polite to the victor,

THREE-MAN MELEE

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

Attacking: Tetsubo 5k2 (+3)

Damage: Special
Tetsubo 4k1 (+3)

TN to be hit: 20 (10 + Heavy Armor)

Wounds: 6: 0; 12: -1; 18: -2; 24: -3; 30: -4; 36: Down; 42: Out; 48: Dead

School Rank: Hida 2

Skills: Defense 2,

Tetsubo 3

Each samurai in the three-man-melee attacks in tandem, using their skills as a unit, rather than individual fighters. They receive a single free raise on any maneuver they attempt which combines their abilities effectively. They have fought together in the Shadowlands on patrol, and they understand how to work together as a team.



HIDA SHIROI

Earth: 4

Fire: 3

Agility: 4

Water: 3

Perception 4

Air: 3

Reflexes: 4

Void: 3

Attacking: Tetsubo 8K4
(+4); Fine Katana 7K3 (+4)

Damage: Tetsubo 6K2
(+4); Fine Katana 8K2 (+4)

TN to be hit: 30 (20 +
Heavy Armor)

Wounds: 8: 0; 16: -1; 24:
-2; 32: -3; 40: -4; 48: Down;
56: Out; 64: Dead

Honor: 3.4

Glory: 5.6

School Rank: Hida 3

Skills: Battle 4, Courtier
1, Defense 4, Etiquette 2,
Kenjutsu 3, Meditation 4,
Shadowlands Lore 4,
Sincerity 1, Tetsubo 4,



but largely ignore the rest of the non-Crab team. If the PCs lost the first duel, but won the melee, he will treat all with an equal measure of respect and distance. He respects that the PCs want to go to the Shadowlands, but he's convinced that the PCs have little chance of ultimately surviving their request. He will talk with any Crab PCs specifically to find out why they choose to travel with those of other clans.

If the PCs are tagging along at his request, he'll keep his distance. Conversations will be brief and to the point. Although he will not be openly hostile, he will view the characters as little more than fodder for the monsters on the other side of the Kaiu Wall.

If the characters manage to get on his good side, Shiroi can give them a wealth of information. How much he tells will depend on their approach and how well they accounted themselves last night. Like all of his clan, he respects strength.

If PCs choose to try to get information from Shiroi, they must use their wits, good role-play, and successful Awareness roll at a TN of 15.

SIMPLE SUCCESS:

"You seem to be in a great hurry to die, but that is little business of mine. Still, one must respect courage. Should you enter the Shadowlands, be wary. You do not have to kill every creature you encounter. Shepherd your strength so you can return and slay more. Always remember to carry jade. This simple green stone will keep you safe as you travel in the tainted lands."

I RAISE:

"Shiro Kuni is a good place to begin a campaign against the Shadowlands. The walls are thick and tall and the Crab samurai are very well trained. The castle is one of our strongest havens against the Shadowlands. As long as its walls stand resolute, we will always find the strength to hold back the evil tide. The loss of Shiro Hiruma was bad enough. I don't believe we could ever recover should the Shadowlands overwhelm Shiro Kuni."

2 RAISES:

"If you wish to enter the Shadowlands, you must speak to Hiruma Makasu, commander of the forces at Shiro Kuni. He has led many successful raids into the Shadowlands. You would do well to study him if you truly wish to learn more of the monsters on the other side of this wall.

"Should Makasu fall or step down it would be a tremendous blow to our defenses. He is well respected by his men, and by the clan."

Shiro Kuni

In the distance you begin to see the outline of a formidable fortress. Located atop a small rise in the landscape, the castle easily commands a view of the surrounding region. Smoke from the forges and cooking fires drift upward. Solid walls anchor barbicans in all directions. As you come closer you see that soldiers are constantly on patrol along the walls, the tips of their yari just visible above the top of the wall. Family and clan standards move in the light breeze, but you are still too far away to make out any crests.

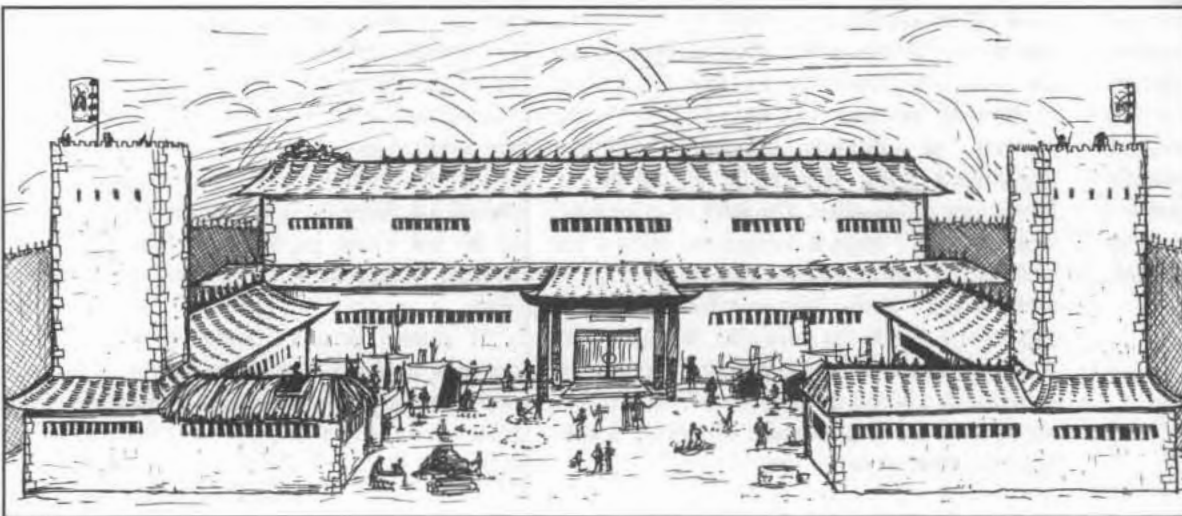
All around the castle, samurai practice their craft. An archery range stands to the east. To the northeast is a corral with practice dummies set along an oval course. You see several dueling circles cleared away with small knots of Samurai practicing the techniques of their school. Furthest to the east you spy a small knot of shugenja engaged in their studies. And of course, scattered throughout it all are the *heimin* and *hinin* who serve the samurai.

As you approach, the sounds of the castle begin to be clearer. Peddler's tents ring the base of the keep, fluttering with brightly colored banners and the sounds of street salesmen hawking their wares. You hear the shouts of warriors practicing, the metallic ring of hammer on metal as blacksmiths work the forges, and at the base of the castle, you see a pair of huge iron-wrapped gates guarded by twenty men in Kuni colors.

Shiroi walks directly toward the captain of the gate and begins speaking in a low tones. After a couple of minutes he returns to you with good news. Shiroi tells the PCs that they will soon be introduced to the Commander of the Guard, Hiruma Makasu. This introduction is very important and the result will have a strong impact on their status while they stay at the castle. The characters should return to the front gate in four hours. Until then they are free to look around.

Unlike most castles, there is no actual town near Kuni Castle. With the Shadowlands so close, merchants are reluctant to set up any type of permanent shop. As a result, the tents of Peddler's Row supply the castle with all it needs. With all the comings and goings, Kuni Castle is rather chaotic. Entry into the castle itself is tightly controlled. Visitors must have a purpose for entering the castle, and their stay is limited. The most common reason to enter the castle is to volunteer for a mission into the Shadowlands.

When a samurai volunteers, he or she enters the castle and is presented for review. This review is normally witnessed by Hiruma Makasu or one of his lieutenants. The candidate is expected to





'BUYING' ITEMS IN THE MARKETPLACE

The typical samurai has no need to 'buy' an item in a marketplace, as his or her daimyo provides for all their needs. However, in the Shadowlands, a distant daimyo may not be able to provide for each samurai as rapidly as gear is needed. To facilitate this, peddlers and traders have set up shops outside Kuni castle.

If a character is working under the auspices of a prominent daimyo, any wares they wish to take will be 'billed' to their clan. However, on the whole, merchants prefer to trade items for those which are of less use in the Shadowlands.

Although items can be bought for koku, there is no such thing as 'standard prices'. Traders will take note of how impressive (rich) the samurai appears, and how obviously they are in need of the item.

Whatever 'price' they feel they can successfully bargain for - either koku or merchandise - is what they will ask.

answer several questions: why they want to enter the Shadowlands, and why they would view themselves as worthy of such an opportunity. If the candidate seems worthy, they will be asked to demonstrate their technique. If sufficiently skillful, the candidate will be added to the list of guardsmen eligible for service. The Crab again review the candidate for as long as six months, after which the candidate will be assigned to a post.

As can be expected, the samurai of the Crab are not all alike. Some are skilled in the long days and nights of the Shadowlands, while others are the superior of their school. The Crab bushi often look for a samurai with the skills of each school. A samurai who is a skilled duelist to be quickly trained to a post.

The Yasuki family comprise most of the merchants, although they are joined by traders of the Unicorn and Crane. In all cases, the merchants set up shop and when they've sold the majority of their wares, they leave. This gives the entire market area a very transitory feeling. When PCs look for a specific item, they must make a Perception roll at a TN of 15 to find it. Given the continual flow of travelers to Kuni Castle, this roll can be made once each day for all items. The PC may make an Awareness roll at a TN of 20. If successful, the PC has discovered a fine quality item, which is available at ten times normal cost.

At some point the characters will probably be interested in something that will heal their wounds, especially when they discover spell casting in the Shadowlands is risky at best. If a character is looking for some type of healing salve make a Perception roll at a TN of 20. If successful, they have discovered one application of salve. This roll can be made by each player once per week. When applied to a wound, the salve heals one die of Wounds within minutes. Note that if the injury being treated did less than this amount of Wounds, the salve can only heal up to the amount of Wounds caused. Additional applications of the salve to the wound do not have a cumulative effect. The salve costs (at least) items equal to 1 koku. It is expensive because the Crab use it so often, and the traders can afford to make a good profit. Wily merchants will only display and release the salve after they have cash in hand. Purchasers are told that if the salve is mixed with a small quantity of jade dust it will not spoil in the Shadowlands. Otherwise, it goes bad after three days.

Life in the Castle

Kuni castle is, more than anything, a permanent military camp. As a result, there are several things that may appear different to the PCs. First, the *daimyo* of the castle. Kuni Yori rules the family. As he is a shugenja, he leaves much of the military detail to his advisors and lieutenants. There are several military commanders assigned to the Kuni areas of the Kaiu Wall. The Commander of the Guard, Hiruma Makasu, is one such leader. His obligations include the personal defense of Kuni Castle, as well as scouting missions and forays to keep the wall clear of infestations.

Makasu commands his own legion of samurai, all of whom call Kuni Castle home. The loyalty of these samurai is to Makasu, not Yori. While this may appear to be a source of problem within the Kuni family, in practice it is not. All of the samurai living in Kuni castle are focused on keeping the Shadowlands hordes contained. This dedication provides them with a constant goal that prevents any problems within the castle.

Making a Name For Yourself

As the characters wander the castle grounds, they will often see bushi engaged in duels. Although the weapons differ, the duels are exclusively to first blood.

As you walk among the massed Crab bushi, you see a young samurai in blue armor arguing in a friendly fashion with two Hida bushi. As you approach, the young Crane steps from their number with a faint smile, and bows low. "Excuse me, honored sirs," he says as he rises. "I see that you are newcomers. Please allow me to introduce myself. My name is Daidoji Jinshi, and I am one of the few Crane loyalists who have chosen to dedicate their time to the defense of the great Wall.

"I require your assistance in a matter of personal ability. I suspect you to be a worthy opponent for my blade and respectfully ask permission to prove to my companions that mine is the superior technique."

The young Crane, Jinshi, steps forward and challenges the PC with the finest daisho and challenges the PC with the finest daisho to a duel. He bears the person challenged no ill will, and intends only for this to be a duel of skill, to first blood rather than a more dangerous sport.

Refusal is possible, but since the Crane has made the challenge in public, it would be dishonorable for the character to decline. If the selected character refuses, he will lose one point of honor. The Crane then politely challenges another samurai in the party until all have been challenged or until someone accepts. If all samurai in the party decline the challenge, all who refused lose an additional point of honor (two total), as word of their cowardice makes its way around the castle.

Once accepted, the Crane will lead the character to a dueling circle. There, a member of the Kuni family watches the duels with a critical eye. He will not interfere with the duel, no matter what the outcome, however, he will make a complete report to Hiruma Makasu at the end of the day.

This is an duel to first blood. The winner gains two points of glory.

DAIDOJI JINSHI

Jinshi is takes pride in his technique and in his clan. Especially for a Daidoji, he is an accomplished duelist, having won three formal (to the death) duels since his *gempukku*. His white hair is worn in a long pony tail. He smiles often; however, his smile is slightly lopsided, which may cause some to believe Jinshi is sneering at them.

Jinshi believes in the 'purity' of a duel. Although his successes could give Jinshi cause to boast, he does not. He is confident, but not cocky. He knows there is little honor to be gained by defeating an obviously inferior opponent. No matter what the outcome of the duel, Jinshi will be friendly to the PCs, allowing them a contact within the established bushi of the palace.

The Hiruma and Kuni in the ranks are familiar with Daidoji Jinshi, and consider him a credit to their cause. Although he is not fully accepted, he is treated as a valued friend in the ranks, and is occasionally placed in charge of scouting missions into the Shadowlands.



DAIDOJI JINSHI

Earth: 2

Fire: 3

Water: 2

Air: 3

Void: 3

Attacking: Fine Katana

6k3

Damage: Fine Katana

6k2

TN to be hit: 20 (15 + Light Armor)

Wounds: 4: 0; 8: -1; 12: -2; 16: -3; 20: -4; 24: Down; 28: Out; 32: Dead

School Rank: Kakita Bushi 2

Skills: Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Meditation 2, Sincerity 2, Shadowlands Lore 1

Will use the sudden strike to raise target by 3, not 5, during an iaijutsu duel



Hiruma Makasu

After the duel, the characters should be encouraged to meet with Shiroi at the gates of the castle, for their interview with the Commander of the Guard. Even though it is busier inside the great castle, events move with a military precision. The pace required to keep up with Shiroi does not allow the characters much time to look about, but they will notice that the Crab seem well prepared to defend this castle should the need arise.

Shiroi leads you into a well-maintained guard room covered with maps on low tables. Seated at one of the tables is a samurai in well-worn Crab armor. You wait patiently as the man addresses a trio of burly Crab bushi. Despite his diminutive size, the man seems to command their complete respect. With low bows, the three finally depart. As they do, the man turns sharply to face you, his eyes catching your every movement. He locks eyes with Shiroi, then with each one of you in turn. Behind his dark eyes you sense power, resolve, and something more.

Shiroi steps forward sharply, his bearing revealing his military training. "Makasu-sama," he says, may I present to you <PCs' names and clans>, who have come to learn of the Shadowlands."

Makasu stares at you for a moment longer, then dismisses Shiroi with a curt nod. Bowing again, Shiroi steps back out into the hallway, and you are alone with the Commander of the Guard.

"I am Hiruma Makasu. I have been told that you desire to battle the Shadowlands. It is an honorable task you have set for yourselves. If you wish to fight, you must prove yourself worthy."

Once the characters have been introduced Makasu asks each member of the party a single question. He asks the following, one at a time, to the individual members of the group:

Why do you wish to enter the Shadowlands?

Why do you feel you are worthy of such an honor?

What do you seek in the Shadowlands?

Who do you expect to find in the Shadowlands?

How will you defeat the Shadowlands?

If there are more than five players, Makasu will begin again with question one. Once each PC has answered, Makasu will ask to see their stance. He asks each character to demonstrate the technique of their school. Each character should make an Air + School Rank roll at a TN of 15. If successful, Makasu nods and welcomes the PC. If the character succeeds with one or more raises, Makasu whole-heartedly welcomes the character. In addition, he works to keep the character close to him during the upcoming trip to the

Shadowlands. If the PC fails, Shiroy eventually convinces Makasu to allow the PC to enter the Shadowlands, but Makasu has no hopes of the character's survival. Once finished, he addresses the PCs.

"Tomorrow I will personally lead a patrol into the Shadowlands. For weeks I have suspected the foul creatures beyond the wall are marshaling their forces for an attack on this castle. We will seek the truth of this suspicion. All who accompany me are hand-picked, chosen by me to ensure the success of this task.

"If you wish to learn of the Shadowlands and our war, I bid you welcome. You may accompany me and my men on this mission. Perhaps in the Shadowlands you will find the answers you seek."

Makasu tells you that all patrols from the castle leave at dawn. The patrol will assemble at the Kaiu Wall for departure. With that, he dismisses the characters, and Shiroy steps back into the room to lead the party to their new chambers.

Of course, no one selected for such a patrol would dare stain the family honor by being late or failing to show up. Until dawn, the PCs are free to wander around the grounds or the castle, as they see fit.

Part IV: Into the Shadowlands

While in the Shadowlands, the troop is divided into three parts: scouts, troopers, and Makasu's bodyguard. Makasu has chosen twenty samurai for this patrol, including the party. The scouts are given the most dangerous assignments. Any characters who failed their technique test will be assigned to the scouts. There are a total of five scouts in Makasu's patrol. Troopers make up the main body of samurai. There are ten troopers,

including any character who passed his technique test. The final group are the bodyguards. These individuals stay close to Makasu during the patrol. In theory they comprise the reserve and the shock force, should such be needed. Any character who passed the technique test with one or more raises will be assigned to bodyguards, as will any shugenja in the party. There are five bodyguards, one of which is Shiroy. Daidoji Jinshi has also been selected for the patrol.

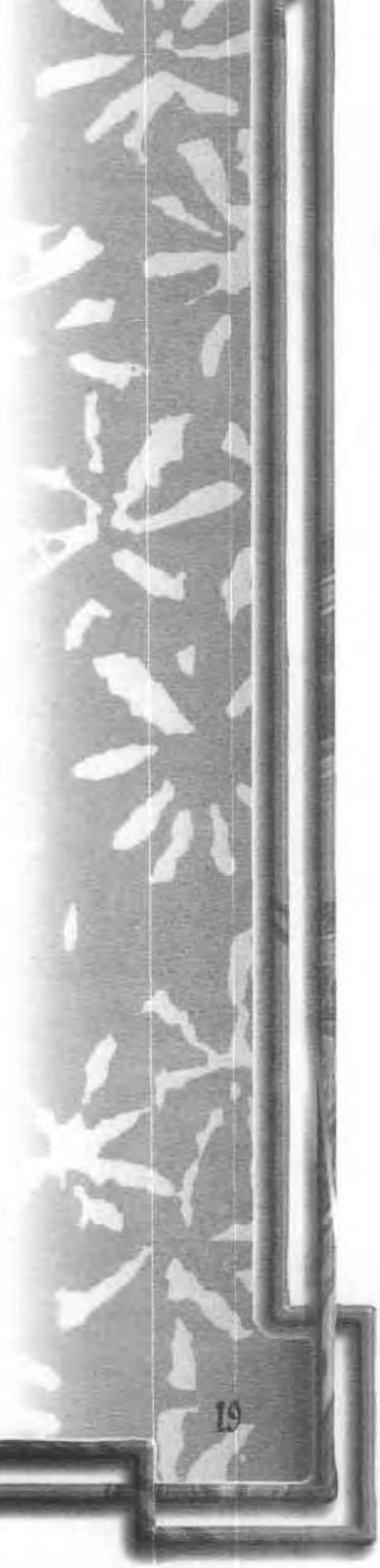
In this case, the PCs will be going over the wall instead of being taken into the Shadowlands through the Kaiu-built maze underneath. With so many non-Crab individuals, Makasu has decided that he does not wish to risk the security of the Wall to a group of outsiders. Perhaps, after a few missions, the characters will be led through the maze. Until then, the characters will make do with ropes and lifts.

The first light of dawn has yet to break the sky and already Kuni Castle and the adjacent Kaiu Wall is a flurry of activity. Makasu moves among the men and assigns each to a squad. In a matter of moments all is ready and the scouts are lowered down the wall by stout ropes. The five samurai move quickly to the waiting boats and the troopers, then bodyguard are lowered into the Shadowlands. Makasu is the last to enter.

Rowing across the Last Stand river, you are instructed to hide the boats in the tall reeds of the river's edge. Led by the scouts, you move toward the west. In the beginning the land is not that different from the green valleys on the other side of the wall, however, with every step west the land withers and dies. By the time you lose sight of the wall, the land is almost completely corrupted. At first even breathing in this corrupted region is difficult, but your lungs slowly become used to the corruption and filth of the Shadowlands and you begin to regain your wind. Makasu demands a swift pace which the Crab warriors fall into with ease. By the end of the first day you are well out of sight of the Kaiu Wall.

The second day of the patrol begins much like the first. After a small portion of rice, Makasu points to the west and instructs the scouts to fan out. Shadows seem to crouch at the corners of your vision, but when you turn, there is nothing there. Nerves begin to fray under the constant tension, but still there is no sign of the enemy.

All of that changes at noon.





Courtiers

But what if you don't really want to go into the Shadowlands? To the straight-forward Crab, there is no other reason to be at Kuni Castle, so it might be hard to explain why the character doesn't want to go on the patrol. If one or two of the PCs would like to stay behind, they could arrange it with Makasu with a successful Manipulation + Awareness at a TN of 15. With two raises, Makasu will even think it was his own idea. While in the castle the character can talk to Kuni shugenja or the Yasuki merchants. This should give the character some information on recent events in the castle, but won't go very far in telling what is going on with Makasu (who, at this point, is not really the topic of conversation).

Shadowlands Weapons

The PCs may feel that they don't have the weapons necessary to go out into the Shadowlands. Once they have been assigned to a patrol with Makasu, the Kuni can help equip them. After all, only magic, jade, and crystal can hurt some of the tougher denizens of the

Shadowlands. Unless you are running a magic-rich campaign the PCs probably are not equipped for the Shadowlands. (They aren't supposed to be. That's what makes the place so scary.) If you want to relent, however, and give them some assistance, here are some ideas.

Arrowheads - Characters can be given ten arrowheads of crystal or jade. Characters should make an Agility + Weaponsmith at a TN of 10 to properly attach the heads to existing shafts. Failure means the arrows are improperly balanced and all to hit rolls with these arrows are at -1 dice.

Jade shards - Crab characters (and only Crabs) will be offered a replacement tetsubo with embedded jade if they ask for such a weapon.

Jade powder - PCs can be given a small quantity of jade dust to put on their weapons. This single application will injure creatures with Invulnerability (as described in *The Book of the Shadowlands*, page 107).

Ambush

The scouts will discover that the land rises sharply to form a narrow canyon ahead. Although the stretch is not particularly long, the walls are



too steep to climb and the path too narrow to pass except by single file. It would take several extra hours to back-track and select an alternate course, and scouts recommend avoiding the canyon due to possible ambush.

If they return and report this to the Commander, Makasu will hear none of their 'excuses.' In an uncharacteristic manner, he questions the bravery and loyalty of the scouts. Makasu is convinced the Shadowlands horde he is seeking lies a short distance beyond the canyon. In his mind it is critical that they discover the truth of his suspicions. There is little the scouts can do except to brave the canyon followed by the main body.

Before they leave, Shiroy reminds the PCs that Makasu is known to be a brilliant leader. He's survived more raids into the Shadowlands than any other member of the patrol, and their duty is to obey him. With that, the scouts have no choice but to enter the canyon.

The ravine is just over 100 yards long. All goes well for the first 75 yards, and the body of the troop will be ordered to follow within 25 yards of the forward scouts.

Just as the end of the canyon is in sight, it is suddenly and completely blocked by the impressive bulk of an ogre. The forward scouts shout a warning, drawing their katana and raising their bows. As the scouts look back to alert the main body, they can see the rear has been blocked by another ogre. The canyon was, indeed, a trap.

Makasu sees the second ogre, and snarls in rage. As he screams a battle-cry, several goblins appear on the cliffs above, holding weapons and shouting taunts and insults. Their trap sprung, the goblins begin rolling rocks and boulders down onto the defenders as the two ogres approach with gleeful grins.

All characters assigned as scouts or troopers make an Agility + Defense roll at a TN of 20. If successful, the character has dodged the first round of incoming rocks. If unsuccessful, the character (or NPC) is hit by a boulder for 3k1.

The ogre blocking the way forward is Muago, an ogre bushi. He stands at the mouth of the canyon where he has room to maneuver his ample girth. He rests a tremendous tetsubo on one shoulder in challenge. The ogre blocking the retreat is Hupa. Although not as large as Muago,



he is an impressive adversary.

Makasu calls for an advance toward the front of the canyon, but soon the boulders make this impossible. The way is blocked off by a wall of stones which make it impossible to advance. Makasu stands in silence. When Makasu refuses to call the retreat, Shiroy does it for him. Given the narrow sides of the canyon, only two people may directly attack Hupa at a time. Archers and spell casters could stand back and attack, but all actions require a raise to hit Hupa, and unsuccessful shots may injure comrades on a roll of 1-5 on a single die. Given the placement of Makasu's patrol, only members of the bodyguard may attack. If all members of the bodyguard go down, then troopers may attack, then scouts.

While some members of the patrol are trying to clear the way, the rest have to dodge the boulders as best they can and look for ways to return fire, either with arrows or spells. During each turn of combat with Hupa, all PCs who are not bodyguards must make an Agility + Defense roll at a TN of 15. The TN is 20 if the character is attempting a spell or missile attack. If successful, the character has dodged all incoming rocks. If



MUAGO

Earth: 2
Stamina: 7
Fire: 3
Water: 2
Strength: 6
Air: 2
Fear: 3
Attacking: 5k4
Damage: 8k2 (special)
TN to be hit: 30
Armor: 8
Wounds: 20: -1; 40: -2;
60: -3; 80: Dead

Muago is big, even by Ogre standards. His tusks are capped in bronze and his greasy hair is pulled back into a tail. Muago cannot be goaded and he's ever wary of a trap. His *nemuranai* weapon, Strikes with Thunder, can be found on pages 28-29.

HUPA

Earth: 2
Stamina: 6
Fire: 3
Water: 1
Strength: 6
Air: 1
Fear: 2
Attacking: Club 4k4
Damage: Club 8k2
TN to be hit: 25 (20 + light armor)
Armor: 7
Wounds: 15: -1; 30: -2;
45: -3; 60: Dead



ZOMBIES

Earth: 0
Stamina: 3
Fire: 1
Water: 1
Strength: 3
Air: 0
Fear: 4
Attacking: Tetsubo or
Katana 1k1
Damage: Tetsubo or
Katana 5k2
TN to be hit: 15 (5 +
heavy armor)
Armor: 7
Wounds: 60: Dead
Notes: Zombies are
invulnerable per the L5R
RPG, page 198.

The number of zombies is equal to the number of characters in the party, plus

2. These recently slain samurai still retain many of the items they carried in life, including their heavy armor, daisho, and tetsubos.

Although they have only been undead for a little while, there is little chance the scouts will recognize them, but they are still a fearful sight.

unsuccessful, the character is hit by a bouncing boulder for 3k1 Wounds. In addition, during each round of combat one remaining scout and one remaining trooper, each chosen at random, will also be hit. Given the number of goblins, return fire may kill some of the attackers; however, there are too many goblins for such tactics to stop the flow of boulders. There is no natural way to climb the sides of the canyon.

As these are rolling rocks, not missiles, spells that specifically target missiles won't work. Tempest of Air, for example, is ineffective. Some spells, Earthquake for example, would actually make things worse, raising the TN to avoid incoming boulders by 10 while in effect. Of course, any shugenja hit by a boulder while casting a spell will have to start over.

Assuming the patrol manages to overcome Hupa, they can attempt to escape. PCs may help downed samurai if in the scouts or troop. Each fleeing individual, PC or NPC, must make a final Agility + Defense roll at a TN of 15 to avoid further boulders as they flee the canyon. The TN is 20 if assisting a downed comrade, 25 if carrying an unconscious body. Although escape from the group will not be easy, the remaining scouts will claim that the patrol has a slim chance if they can get to the river.

Makasu and Shiroy both survive this encounter.

A Long Walk Home

The remains of the patrol stagger away from the cursed canyon, dragging their wounded comrades. Makasu and Shiroy lead the way, shouting encouragement as he scouts follow behind, ordered to check for the first signs of the pursuit. After two hours, Shiroy calls for a rest. It is time to consider a plan of action which will allow the patrol to escape back to the Kaiu Walls.

Makasu refuses to talk about the events in the canyon or those that led to the decision. In addition, he refuses to consider what should be done to save the rest of the patrol. He sharpens his katana and readies his tetsubo, and makes no move to plan for the future other than to ready his weapons. He will not stop the PCs from taking control of the mission, and will follow the patrol's decisions, if it is led by a strong figure. This 'following' is not meek or submissive, rather, Makasu seems to retain his authoritarian attitude,

even if he is not genuinely the one making the decisions. If one of the PCs does not assume leadership of the patrol, Shiroy will be forced to speak up.

Shiroy will gladly confer with the PCs to determine plans to get out of the Shadowlands now that the original purpose of the patrol is ruined. He is not familiar with this area of the Shadowlands, but he knows much more general Shadowlands Lore than the typical PC. He will quickly point out that wounds quickly begin to fester, if the injured are left here for too long. If any of the wounded are to have a chance of survival, the patrol must get back over the Kaiu Wall.

Shiroy suggests that he and Makasu take point, leading the main body of the patrol back toward the Kaiu Wall. If possible, he believes that the patrol should delay the pursuing force or find a new trail around a likely ambush. If that is not likely, they should simply take the fastest course toward the river, and help protect the wounded as they move toward the wall.

Assuming the characters agree, they'll have their work cut out for them. They probably don't know the Shadowlands, and it is likely they're wounded. If the PCs feel that they're too battered to be the scouts, they'll be assigned wounded samurai to assist. In that case, they will not encounter any more Shadowlands creatures until they get to the wall. As scouts, however, their lives are much more interesting.

Ahead of the patrol a small group of samurai approaches. At first the scouts believe they've encountered another Crab patrol, but in the half-light of the fading sun they see the truth. Approaching them with weapons drawn is a band of zombies. They wear the tatters of Crab clan armor and bear blood-stained weapons. Soundlessly, they attack. (See sidebar, *Zombies*.)

Delaying the Inevitable

Darkness has long since fallen in the Shadowlands, giving the land a life of its own. Strange sounds and smells assault you as you help guide the remainder of the patrol back to the Last Stand River. As the scouts trail behind the patrol, a shout goes up from the farthest bushi. Peering into the darkness, you see movement as well. You draw your weapon as the other scouts

confirm your initial impression: your pursuers have found you.

Your eyes catch movement as you hear the tell-tale chattering of voices. Seconds later you confirm what you'd initially suspected: Goblins. A dozen swarm past the boulders and rocks and charge your position. Within seconds you are drowning in a green tide.

Muago's first pursuit comes in the form of a pack of goblin berserkers. Although small in number, this pack makes up for the lack of numbers by sheer exuberance. When they attack the goblins select one person to attack first. All members of the horde target that individual until the scout is down, out, or dead. Once done, they move on to a second opponent as a swarm. They continue to fight until they win or die. Statistics for the goblins can be found in the sidebar.

These goblins live to fight and care for little else. They throw themselves at the enemy with even more recklessness than a "normal" goblin, which says quite a bit. They attack with knives, teeth, claws, or whatever they can find to inflict damage on their enemies. Muago doesn't expect this force to stop the patrol from reaching the river, but he knows that the berserkers will sell their lives at a high cost. If he can delay the patrol he has a much better chance of reaching the patrol with his main force before the Crabs reach the river.

If the scouts defeat the goblins, they will have a momentary glimpse of Muago's main horde as it snakes its way toward them. Muago is driving his horde as fast as possible, but discipline is not one of their strong characteristics.

A Gallant Defense

Lady Sun begins to rise in the east as you see your destination. Rising on the far side of the Last Stand River is the Kaiu Wall. You redouble your pace as you hear the clamor of the approaching horde. You've covered over a day's march in a single shadow-filled night. The wounded are exhausted beyond mere weariness. Already their wounds have started to fester. On the Wall in the distance, you can hear the sounds of allies as they recognize you and your peril. Help is close, but still too far away. Between you and the Kaiu Wall, the river rushes past.

The scouts rush past the main body of troops as Shiroy attempts to coax just a little more speed out of the exhausted samurai. Shiroy urges the characters to usher the bushi toward the waiting boats. As the first of the wounded is being lowered into the deck, the horde breaks through the blackened grass near the river's edge.

Goblin spearmen swerve toward the cluster of soldiers and shout to the rest of the horde. You hear the war cries of the goblins and ogres, mixed with the laughter of something hideous. Shiroy looks to the scouts as Makasu steps into the lead boat and attempts to push off. Somebody will have to buy time to get the boats away or the entire patrol will be caught at the water's edge. Gritting your teeth, you turn to face the enemy yet again, standing side by side with the last of the Crab scouts.

You stand at the river's edge, surrounded by all manner of monstrosities. You see goblins of every shape and size. Some are clothed in a mockery of samurai, others wear nothing at all. Three ogres stand to the side in a loose, defensive formation around the huge foe who originally blocked the canyon. Their hate is almost a tangible force, yet they do not move toward you. You suddenly realize they are waiting for something.

Daring a glance over your shoulder, you see that the rest of the boats are already in mid-stream. Led by Makasu, the rest of the patrol moves toward the far bank and the safety of the strong Crab wall. It might as well be on the other side of the Empire.

There is a murmur in the horde and your attention snaps back to the creatures before you. The goblins begin to hop excitedly, slapping their weapons against the ground. Moving to the remaining boat might be safer, but you reject the idea as soon as it's formed. You'd be overwhelmed before you could cast off.

Suddenly, the frenzy stops. For an instant there is a dead silence, then, directly before you, something appears. One moment there is nothing, but the next, a foul Oni squats before you. Fat beyond measure, the creature seems nothing so much as jaws, stomach, and long grasping hands. Fetid breath washes over you as a snake-like tongue whips across gore-smeared lips. From behind you hear the sharp intake of the Crab scout's breath. *Tsuburu*. Death incarnate, the demon of a child's nightmare. Hands reach out to you as the last scout screams, "*To the boat!*"



GOBLIN WARMONGER

Earth: 3
Fire: 3
Water: 2
Air: 1
Attacking: Katana 5k3
(7k2 for Full Attack)
Damage: Katana 5k2
TN to be hit: 15
Armor: 5
Wounds: 10: -1; 20:

Dead

GOBLIN BERSERKERS

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 1
Air: 1
Attacking: Katana 3k2
(5K2 for Full Attack)
Damage: Katana 4k2
TN to be hit: 10 (5 for Full Attack)
Armor: 3
Wounds: 6: -1; 12: Dead

Berserkers always choose a Full Attack. They never defend nor do they do a standard attack.

There will be two goblins and a Warmonger plus one additional goblin for every PC.



ONI NO TSUBURU

Earth: 1

Stamina: 7

Fire: 1

Intelligence: 2

Water: 1

Strength: 7

Air: 1

Fear: 5

Attacking: 1K1

Damage: HTH: 3k2;

Teeth: 3k1; Stomach 1k1

TN to be hit: 5

Armor: 20

Wounds: 28: -1; 56: -3;

150: Dead

Special Abilities:

Invulnerability, Teleportation

Notes: Oni no Tsuburu are detailed per the Book of the Shadowlands, page 102.

The Oni will grapple one of the characters at random. If the Oni wins a contested strength roll, it has successfully held the character and may devour him the next round. The character has one chance to break free, with a contested strength roll! If the Oni can be resisted twice, the characters can launch the boat and escape to the other side of the river. Those in the boat look back as the Oni vanishes away. The ogres and goblins soon follow.

The Oni no Tsuburu is supremely confident of its ability to destroy the remains of the patrol. Unfortunately, he can't vanish into the river. Although he can see it, he sinks immediately. Therefore, if the characters can escape the immediate danger of the clutching claws, they have a chance to escape.

Some bright PCs may decide that the boat is too slow and take to the water directly. Swimming the Last Stand River takes Strength + Athletics roll at a TN of 20. The weight of light armor requires one successful raise. Heavy armor requires two successful raises. Failure means the character sinks to the bottom. Any character that sinks may make a Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 20. If successful, the character has clawed

their way to the bank. They've managed to fight their way to the far side, but take one die of Wounds from inhaled water. If any character goes under they will lose 1-3 random weapons and/or items to the river. These are lost and gone forever.

Medic!

By the time the characters stumble back from the Shadowlands it is reasonable to expect they're beaten up. Worse, in the Shadowlands even a small wound can get infected and fester. When the PCs return they can seek medical assistance from the Kuni shugenja at the castle. Due to the never-ending struggle against the Shadowlands,





the Crab keep a cadre of shugenja at the castle who specialize in healing the wounded. This is not, however, a free hospital.

The first two characters seeking assistance may make an Perception + Etiquette roll at a TN of 20. Crab samurai get a free raise. If successful, the Kuni shugenja heal a rank of Wounds, plus one for every raise. The shugenja are not interested in payment, as they expect their work to be of service to their clan.

This healing is not available each time the characters return from the Shadowlands. The Kuni have many troops to heal, and few spells. If the PC misses the roll, they cannot return the next day and try again.

Life in the Castle

Those who survive the encounter with the Oni will be collected by the Crab defenders and taken over the wall. As Makasu was the leader of the patrol, and the individual with the most glory, his is the only word that truly matters. The following day, the characters may be shocked by what they discover.

The survivors of the patrol are feeling much better after a good night's sleep. The castle is abuzz with the latest exploits of Makasu and his patrol into the Shadowlands. The PCs begin to hear rumors, regaled with one fantastic tale after another regarding how Makasu singlehandedly saved the survivors of the ill-fated patrol from certain death.

Makasu is taking all the credit for the work they did. He's even taking the credit for pulling the patrol back from the canyon. There is no mention of his order to enter the accursed ravine in the first place.

If the characters seek out any other member of the troop, they will be met with gruff denial. All of the other members seem to be willing to let Makasu's word stand as the truth. If they find Shiroi, he will tell them the following:

"I know your mind. The Makasu I once knew seems to have been replaced by one who rests on the abilities of others. I do not like it any more than you do; however, we know the truth of the patrol, as do our ancestors. What does it matter that he claims a measure of our success? Isn't it the right of any commander to claim the victory of his army?"

"It is true that Makasu is acting strangely. Perhaps he's been too long in the Shadowlands. If that's true, then the defense of the entire Wall may be at risk." Shiroi pauses and looks at each of you in turn. "You've certainly arrived at an interesting – and dangerous – time."

The next few days are eventful, but hardly rigorous. Depending on how they originally met, the PCs may notice a strong change in Shiroi. He no longer treats them as a nuisance. Although it would be incorrect to assume they have his trust, he now feels the PCs have passed 'the final test' – actual combat in the Shadowlands. Of course, any character who did not join the patrol still gets the cold shoulder from the Crab samurai.

Now is the time for courtier characters to earn their keep. Reward any PCs who attempted to learn more about the background of the castle, and Makasu, with additional information. If the PCs are missing information about what is going on, now is a good time for them to catch up. They can certainly work to improve their relationship with Jinshi and Shiroi, as well as make additional contacts among the defenders at the castle or the merchants who work Peddler's Row.

Now is also a good time for the PCs to strengthen their ties to the Crab clan, assuming they haven't done so already. As one of the more misunderstood clans in the Empire, such knowledge could be very valuable should the characters survive. Of course, getting to know a Crab samurai usually involves proving your worth, which can be potentially painful. Feats of strength, drinking, and weapon skill are all paths that lead to a Crab bushi's respect.

The characters are free to wander about the grounds and talk with anyone. As the PCs are here to observe, they may notice several things. Of course, to get all the information they will have to take a more active role, which may be difficult if injured. For each day listed, a character with the appropriate skills may make an Awareness + Etiquette roll at a TN of 15. Alternately, the character may make an Intelligence + Investigation roll at a TN of 20. Failure means nothing new is learned.

Day 1

Rumor: Another patrol is overdue back at the castle. It actually left the day before Makasu's patrol. Given the attack on Makasu's patrol, there seems to be little hope of any survivors.

HIRUMA MAKASU, COMMANDER OF THE KUNI GUARD

Earth: 4

Fire: 4

Water: 3

Perception 5

Air: 4

Void: 3

Attacking: Tetsubo 8k4 (+4); Fine Katana 8k4 (+4)

Damage: Tetsubo 4K1 (+4); Fine Katana 6k1 (+4)

TN to be hit: 30 (20 + Heavy Armor)

Disadvantages: Small

Wounds: 8: 0; 16: -1; 24: -2; 32: -3; 40: -4; 48: Down;

56: Out; 64: Dead

Honor: 2.2

Glory: 7.2

School Rank: Hida 4

Skills: Battle 5; Courtier 1, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Hunting 4, Kenjutsu 4, Medicine 2, Meditation 4, Shadowlands Lore 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 2, Tetsubo 4

Makasu's disadvantage is already figured into his weapon and damage rolls.



HIRUMA MAKASU

So what is wrong with Makasu? Hiruma Makasu is a brilliant leader and a dedicated foe. He has served his lord, Hida Kisada, faithfully for years. Unfortunately, Makasu has seen too much fighting. He has witnessed horrors that would drive strong men to their knees. He has battled through injuries, both physical and psychological, and the strain has finally taken its toll.

Makasu is not tainted by the Shadowlands, but his mind is fractured. Makasu feels a tremendous amount of guilt brought on because he has survived when other members of his family have died. This is compounded by what he views as a lack of success in his efforts. Surely so many noble, honorable sacrifices should have resulted in concrete gains.

Makasu is heading toward a total breakdown.

He feels guilty about surviving, however, his sense of duty to his clan and family will not allow him to commit *seppuku*. He is developing an increasingly strong death wish. How this will impact his clan and the Empire remains to be seen.

Rumor: Makasu is sending another patrol into the Shadowlands. He is not going himself.

1 Raise: The patrol will take the same route as Makasu's original patrol.

2 Raises: They've been warned about the canyon, but have been told not to avoid it. They are supposed to fight to the other side if possible.

3 Raises: If they can't get to the other side of the canyon, they've been told not to bother returning.

Second Rumor: A patrol has returned from the expedition, claiming to have been attacked by goblins along the way. However, none of the survivors were able to find any indication of a horde preparing to attack the castle.

1 Raise: Makasu plans on having the survivors executed for failing in their duty.

DAY 2

Rumor: Makasu is sending out a double-strength patrol into the Shadowlands. He has hand-picked all members of the patrol.

1 Raise: All members of the patrol are veteran Shadowlands fighters.

2 Raises: Veterans in the castle say the patrol is too big to be stealthy and too small to be

aggressive. The soldiers are almost certainly doomed.

Rumor: The body of a Crab samurai was pulled from the river. This rumor requires a TN of 15 to acquire.

1 Raise: The woman was part of the patrol going to the canyon.

2 Raises: Although severely injured, the woman is still alive.

There seems to be a strange lack of activity in the castle by the end of the day. The castle is quiet, and many of the usual courtiers and rumormongers have returned to their chambers.

Rumor: Makasu has closed himself into his room and has left orders not to be bothered for any reason short of a direct attack. He is questioning yesterday's survivor with the assistance of a Kuni shugenja.

DAY 3

Rumor: Another patrol is being sent into the Shadowlands tomorrow. This one is somehow special.

1 Raise: Makasu has left his room and is in conference with his most trusted advisors.

2 Raises: Makasu has not eaten in days. He's driven to some goal that only he knows. His closest advisors fear their commander is on the verge of collapsing.

3 Raises: Yesterday's survivor died while being questioned.

Shiroi may have some of this information, but he will not have it all. The PCs should ask questions, both of Shiroi, their contacts in the castle, and the defenders on the wall. When they compare notes the GM should feel free to expand on what they've learned to fill in the gaps (without giving them knowledge they didn't earn).





Part V: You Want Us To Go Back?

should turn to Hida Kisada, Shiroi will admit that his uncle may be the only person who can decide what to do about Makasu.

Shiroi's parting words echo in your mind: "If I were asked for advice I would keep my own counsel. Makasu is still a respected and admired leader of our clan. Many samurai would follow him blindly. Do not assume that because we know the truth that others know as well."

Shiroi leaves the next morning. Before then, characters may want to take this opportunity to attempt to get him to reveal any information they don't have. Good role playing as well as a good rank in etiquette will help.

After Shiroi leaves, PCs should realize that they are in a difficult and delicate situation, and that they are almost completely alone. Although they may very well be sure that Makasu is losing his grip on reality, there is nothing they can do about it. As outsiders to the clan, the characters have very little power and absolutely no authority. At best, they can watch and wait, and see what happens. If they are careful, they can use subtle methods to try to save as many lives as possible until Shiroi returns with an answer.

Makasu still commands much loyalty. Fifty percent of the men believe in him wholeheartedly. Twenty-five percent suspect their commander has suffered some type of malady, but they will still follow his orders. The remaining twenty-five percent are convinced their commander is either Tainted or ill. They are willing to consider actions that are not exactly what their commander ordered, or could be convinced to act in their own best interest, convinced the commander is no longer capable of good decisions.

Outside the castle, there are rumors of problems regarding the commanders in the castle, but the rumors are much more lurid:

One of the commanders has been possessed by an evil spirit.

A great Shadowlands army is marching toward the castle.

One of the commanders is allowing his favorite geisha to run the castle.

A great army is being assembled to enter the Shadowlands and retake Shiro Hiruma.

A creature stalks the halls of the castle claiming the lives of those who wander late at night.

The events of the last week disturb you greatly. Although the time has healed your body, it has exacted a price on your soul. Hida Shiroi shares your suspicions and the overwhelming sense of dread; however, he is as honor-bound as you to do nothing. Although Makasu's actions seem rash, he's done nothing publicly that would call for his replacement. He is, after all, a hero of countless battles. His testimony still carries much more weight than yours. Others in the castle are not blind. One week after your return from the Shadowlands, Hida Shiroi makes an announcement:

"My friends, and I hope that I can name you as such, the situation here is very grave. We have all seen the strange actions of our commander, however, until this evening we had no proof that would call for his dismissal. I have talked with one of Makasu's private guards. As you may know a survivor was pulled from the river several days ago. Although it is possible she would have survived her wounds, she did not survive Makasu's questioning. The guard is prepared to testify that Makasu strangled one of his own samurai when her report did not verify what he suspected."

A Difficult Situation

Shiroi wants to leave the castle and get somebody who can sort out this whole mess. Unfortunately, he has significant doubts about talking to anyone about Makasu's 'illness' because of what it will mean to Makasu and his men. As a result he will need to be talked into any course of action. If, at some point, the conversation



STRIKES WITH THUNDER

The tetsubo carried by Muago is the *nemuranai* weapon Strikes with Thunder. This tetsubo was originally created by Kaiu Kako, the daughter of the Kaiu daimyo, as a wedding gift for her groom-to-be, Hiruma Mashiroisho. Unfortunately, Kako was killed by goblin raiders as she traveled to her wedding. Mashiroisho discovered his dead bride and undelivered weapon and, speaking to no one, traveled alone into the Shadowlands. He returned five days later, sorely wounded, but grimly satisfied. Upon his death years later the weapon was passed to his son (by a later wife). The tetsubo was passed from father to son for over 100 years until it was lost in the Shadowlands more than fifty years ago.

Strikes with Thunder is a massive tetsubo, over five feet in length. When held, the weapon is much lighter than normal, almost as if the center of the weapon was hollow; however, the balance of the weapon seems subtly wrong. As a result the weapon can be unwieldy.

(continued)

The Emperor is due to arrive at the castle within the next two weeks.

As can be expected, the truth of what is happening has not made its way to any of the other clans. If the PCs have any allies, they may be able to put them to good use. Although it is unlikely that they will be able to contact their allies directly, they will be able to get word to them about what they believe is going on. Allies in the camps of the various clans could provide additional information about what is going on. Additionally, these allies can be used to stop the spread of rumors regarding what is going on in the castle.

News of Shiroi's departure makes its rounds inside the castle for most of the morning. As friends of Shiroi, the PCs may be questioned about his sudden departure.

Gong with Shiroi

Some of the PCs may feel that they are better suited to go to the Crab clan court than they are in sticking around the castle. If some or all of the party would like to go with Shiroi to Hida Palace, then let them go.

Shiroi will lead those going with him back to Hida Palace. While there his first stop will be with Hida Okuno. Shiroi trusts Okuno and wants to get his opinion on how best to approach Hida Kisada. However, Shiroi is not a courtier, and lacks the social graces to be able to adequately speak to Kisada without insulting wither the Kuni or Makasu himself. If a player character travels with Shiroi, he will ask them to assist him, guiding his actions or even speaking in his place, although it is Shiroi's testimony (as a Hida) which is the linchpin of Makasu's political downfall.

How things proceed from here also depends on how the PCs left the palace. If they were asked to go home and went with Shiroi against the wishes of Yakamo, they'd be better off keeping a low profile. On the other hand, if they went to Kuni Castle with Yakamo's blessing, he may be pleased to see them return.

Shiroi and the PCs must make a report of the events of Kuni Castle before the entire clan court. Kisada will listen, but won't say anything at first. Although Kisada doesn't want word of his clan's problems getting out, he takes his duty very seriously.

Kisada knows that there are political reasons for some of his clan to speak for or against Makasu; however, the PCs would receive no benefit from their testimony against Makasu, and therefore, should be above such actions. He speaks to them directly and asks pointed questions. This is the time for the players to really role play their characters. Passionate speeches about the events at the castle could be what it takes to determine Kisada's course of action.

Assuming success, the PC has two days to wait until Kisada announces his decision. The PCs should be warned, either by Shiroi or by a Crab courtier, that Makasu will undoubtedly hear of the PC's 'treason', and be looking for a way to retaliate. During this time the players may continue to make contacts with the Crab court. Additionally, there are representatives at the court from many major and minor clans. PCs can use this opportunity to talk with members of their clan and seek advice or send messages to outside influences and allies.

Unlike the rest of the adventure, which is fairly straightforward, things in court can get pretty messy. The characters may be forbidden to speak of matters at Kuni Castle by Kisada, while also being required to tell their clan what is going on. Yakamo may become a powerful contact or a deadly enemy. In addition to all this, 'normal' events are still happening around the palace: marriage proposals, intrigue, administration of justice, duels and challenges, and the Hida dojo's *gempukku*. Until Kisada makes up his mind, the characters can easily find no end of trouble to get into.

Eventually, the PCs are summoned to the gate. Kisada has decided to go to Kuni Castle and see matters there for himself. The characters are, of course, to return with the Great Bear should their testimony be needed.

A Bad Idea

Read the following text to the players whose characters remained behind with Hiruma Makasu at Kuni castle.

It is just before noon and you are making your way toward the dining hall when two Kuni guardsmen approach you. "You are summoned to the chambers of Hiruma Makasu," they say



STRIKES WITH THUNDER (CONTINUED)

When used in battle Strikes with Thunder provides two advantages and one disadvantage. First, the weapon is astoundingly fast. When rolling for initiative the bearer may roll two dice for initiative and keep the best die. Second, when rolling for a hit, the bearer must roll one fewer die than normal, due to the poor balance. Finally, when the weapon strikes an opponent a clap of thunder often accompanies it. Strikes with Thunder rolls 2k2 for damage; however, any and all dice that roll a 10 may be kept for damage. If two or more dice roll 10, a clap of thunder will accompany the strike. The more dice that roll 10, the louder the clap of thunder. For example, if the bearer, Strength 2, rolled 6, 7, 8, and 9 for damage, the weapon would do 17 points without a clap of thunder. If the same bearer rolled 5, 12, 15, and 17 for damage, the weapon would do 42 points with a loud clap of thunder.

gruffly. There are only two guards, but honor and your mission demand that you follow.

You are ushered into a small room as the guards quietly depart. You don't have long to wait. Several seconds after the guards leave the opposite screen slides open. Makasu enters swiftly and the screen is quickly closed. You kneel before the commander, who acknowledges your presence with a slight nod.

"Friends of my clan, we face a grave danger. Although it pains me to ask, duty to my lord, my family, and this very castle demand no less. Only you have the knowledge necessary to fulfill my request.

"I know with absolute certainty that a Shadowlands force is en route to this castle. Unfortunately, I do not have adequate intelligence of the size, nor the composition, nor the time of their arrival. If we are to defend the Wall, all of these things must be determined. I cannot order you to scout the Shadowlands for this force; I will ask for the sake of Empire that you grant this request.

"Time is of the essence. Should you agree, you must leave immediately. Servants prepare provisions even as I speak, in anticipation of your answer. I will further grant each of you a quantity of jade from my personal possessions. Tell me, what is your answer?"

As may be assumed by his speech, Makasu seems to be in firm control of his faculties. He is sincere and earnest. He could order the characters into the Shadowlands, but he wishes them to go willingly, and is firmly convinced of the necessity of the mission. He will answer polite questions but his patience is not limitless.

Why us? *"I suspect the Shadowlands horde was initially camped just beyond the canyon in which we were ambushed. You are the only remaining samurai who know the canyon's location, and are strong enough to travel."*

How large will the scouting force be? *"As speed and stealth are of vital importance in this manner a smaller force will have a greater chance of success. To that end, you will be the only samurai in the patrol."*

If the PCs respectfully request another samurai, possibly someone they have met at the castle in the last few days, their request will be granted. Certainly, if Daidoji Jinshi survived the first foray, he will be eager to go along.

Can we delay the start of the patrol? *"I wish we had the luxury of time, but such is not the case. We must move with speed if we are to adequately prepare our defenses."*

What if we say no? *"I would ask you to seriously reconsider. You are the only ones who know the exact location of the canyon. If we do not discover more information about the force that approaches us we will be hard-pressed to mount any type of defense, even with the additional samurai camped outside the castle."*

Any other question: *"Surely such matters can wait until your return."*

If the PCs answer yes: Makasu opens the sliding panel and issues a series of orders. Samurai scatter to carry out the wishes of their lord. A servant hands Makasu an ornate wooden box, which Makasu opens and offers to the characters. Inside are several jade statuettes (one per character). Makasu insists that the characters take the statuettes to protect themselves from the Shadowlands taint. After this, Makasu leads them directly to the Kaiu Walls. Samurai and *heimin* alike clear a path for Makasu and the PCs and they storm out of the castle and up the wall. It is important to narrate this scene as if Makasu is a heroic figure as he leads the way to the great Wall. Note that all the PCs on the Wall – and we mean *all* – will be sent on the patrol. Even if they stayed behind during the original foray, or if they were badly injured, Makasu will insist. Any PCs with *absolutely nothing* except courtier skills should have been encouraged earlier to go with Hida Shiroi to Kyuden Hida.

If the PCs answer no: *"So be it,"* he says. When the PCs turn to leave, they are confronted by two naginata-wielding samurai. Two more samurai appear from behind the characters via the panel that Makasu exited. The leader of the guards will be very clear. *"I am here to escort you. You will either enter the Shadowlands as requested by my lord, Hiruma Makasu, or you will be escorted to the basement of the castle. There you will await the judgment of our lord. The choice is yours."* At this point, players should be made to understand that Makasu's request has officially become an order. Makasu is not willing to compromise: the PCs will go, or die.

Players might need a gentle reminder why fighting the guards is a very poor idea. They are deep within Kuni Castle. They are surrounded by superior numbers and weapons of superior reach. They are in a cramped room, with no space to



ON THE BLOODY BATTLEFIELD

PCs may make a Perception + Investigation roll at a TN of 15. If successful they discover several potentially useful items scattered among the remains of the lost patrol.

Any PC who searches for three rounds will find a small pouch of jade powder, which can be used to dust cutting weapons (as described in the Shadowlands rule book on page 107). If successful with one raise they find five jade arrows. If successful with two raises they find ten jade arrows. If successful with three or more raises they discover a rank one crystal katana. (Crystal weapons are also described in the Shadowlands rule book on page 107). There is only one katana, which will be found by the character who rolls highest with three or more raises. Other characters find ten jade arrows instead.

maneuver. Their mission will surely fail if they attack their host or his men. If the PCs insist on fighting the guards, they find themselves at a significant disadvantage. The room is very small, which hampers movement. If there are four or more people in the room they will have almost no room to maneuver. The PCs will roll one less die for all physical actions for each PC in the room over three. The guards have the advantage of reach. All TN to hit them will be 5 higher. If one of the guards is killed, the alarm is sounded, bringing more guards to the fray. There is literally no end to the guards, and they will fight until the PCs are killed. Down or Out characters will be slain as they fall.

If the PCs stop fighting at any time before a guard is killed the guards will stop fighting also. Both choices are still open to the players. Crabs understand the urge to fight, after all. If the PCs kill a guard, however, the guards will fight until all PCs are killed.

A REALLY BAD IDEA

If the PCs decide to disobey Makasu, but not fight, read the following:

You are escorted to the below-ground levels of the castle. Led along a winding path, soon your sense of direction fails you completely. You doubt you could retrace your steps through this impenetrable maze.

Ahead, a heavy wooden door is pulled open. The leader of the guards stops outside and motions you inside. Your new quarters are dark and bare. A single paper lantern provides the only illumination. There are no cots or furnishings of any kind. A variety of odors assail your nose, causing you to gag. The Crab leader stands before the doorway, his face in shadows.

"I am allowed to ask you once: do you reconsider your decision? If so, you may still enter the Shadowlands as samurai in the honorable service of our lord. Consider carefully."

If the players are sure of their decision, read the following.

"So be it." The guard steps out of the doorway. The heavy wooden door swings shut with a thump. You hear a wooden bar being slid into place.

Your prison is ten feet wide and twelve feet long. The single door is the only break in the solid

stone walls. The door itself is solidly built with bands of iron along the top and bottom. Faint light slips in beneath the door, but not from the sides or top.

If the players reconsider, go on to the next section, *The Lesser of Two Evils*. If they are happy with their choice, they stay in the cell until the Twilight Battle. At that point Hiruma Makasu will be forced by circumstance to let them go. The PCs will be returned to their room where they will have one day to make preparations before the start of the battle. Go to *All Quiet on the Kaiu Wall*, and reduce the character's glory by three ranks, for disobeying a superior officer (they are lucky to have been left alive). Further, they will be treated by all members of the Crab Clan as if they have an honor of 0 until they have rehonored themselves. Note the events listing in the previous section will still take place, even if the PCs will not take part. Due to the poor conditions and the lack of food or water it is impossible for the characters to heal their wounds. Characters may meditate to regain Void points; trying to sleep on the damp floor does not count as a night's rest. The characters only have the possessions that were on their person when summoned. Any traveling packs or supplies are still back in their room.

The Lesser of Two Evils

You quickly find yourself atop the Kaiu Wall staring into the waiting Shadowlands. Servants arrive, handing you packages of food for your journey. You tuck the provisions into your obi and move to the edge of the Wall.

As with the previous patrol, you are lowered to the bottom of the Wall, toward the waiting boats. Pushing off, you quickly paddle to the other side and hide the boats in the long grass of the bank. With a final look over your shoulder, you head into the Shadowlands following the path of the ill-fated patrol.

Although the PCs may choose not to travel directly to the canyon, as long as they're headed in the general direction they will be able to complete Makasu's mission. Paranoid players may make all sorts of safeguards, which is



appropriate given their conditions. Anything to help their defense or prepare for an ambush should, to some degree, help them when they do encounter Shadowlands creatures.

The PCs may feel like they're being sent to their doom. That's not far from the truth. They've been handed a difficult task and there is a real possibility that they will be injured or killed in attempting to complete it. If necessary, remind them that they are to report on the horde's size, strength, and location. They are not expected to engage. Don't go soft on the players. Make this task tough, and they'll have a real reason to celebrate their return to the Kaiu Wall.

The PCs have only half a day to travel before it grows dark. Just before nightfall they come across a recent battlefield.

As you crest a small hill, you see before you the site of a recent battle. In the waning light you can pick out broken weapons and bits of armor, but no bodies. Moving closer you see the shattered shaft of a naginata sticking in the ground. A broken no-dachi lies nearby, covered in bits of heavy armor. You pick up a *haidate* and beneath it you find a bit of cloth with a Crab mon. In another location, you see a small piece of cracked porcelain. You brush away the dirt and reveal a broken mask.

Although it is hard to be certain, it seems likely that these are the remains of the large patrol Makasu sent out less than one week ago. If you are correct, they certainly didn't make it very far into the Shadowlands before being destroyed. You have no desire to stay near this battlefield, so despite the darkness you all agree to move on. Perhaps you can find a defensible spot.

Have interested PCs make a Perception + Heraldry roll at a TN of 15. If successful, they will identify the mon as belonging to the Kuni family.

PCs may make an additional Awareness + Investigation (or Battle) roll at a TN of 15. If successful they notice that equipment at the battlefield match that belonging to soldiers on Makasu's large patrol. With one raise, the PCs can tell the soldiers met a slightly larger force. With two raises, the PCs can tell the valley is actually the site of two battles, one of which took place several days earlier. It seems likely that a previous patrol was ambushed by zombies. The dead from that patrol strengthened the zombies, who then

attacked the second patrol. Now the dead from both fight against the Empire.

The PCs can find a secluded spot after an hour's walk in the dark. The spot is sheltered by boulders on three sides, which also provide a lookout spot for the night guard. It is not possible to build a fire, as wood from the Shadowlands does not burn. The night passes uneventfully, notwithstanding the "normal" Shadowlands noises. The characters should relish the rest. It is the last they're likely to get for a while.

The Other Side of the Ambush

As the characters make their way toward the canyon where they were originally attacked, a successful Perception + Hunting at a TN of 15 will notice:

Approaching you, but obviously unaware of your presence is a small band of goblins. You can smell them almost as easily as you can see and hear them. They wear a variety of armor, most of





GLUTFINGER TRIBE

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 1
Air: 1
Attacking: Improvised
weapon 3k2
Damage: Improvised
weapon 4k2
TN to be hit: 10
Armor: 2
Wounds: 6: -1; 12: Dead

TONSU, GLUTFINGER SHAMAN

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 2
Air: 1
Attacking: Club 3k2
Damage: Club 4k2
TN to be hit: 10
Armor: 2
Wounds: 10: -1; 20:
Dead
Spells: Heart of Nature,
Nature's Touch

All spells cast by Tonsu
have their TN increased by
5.

which consists of metal chunks that have been gracelessly tied to their torsos and limbs. They wield an array of weapons; pitted swords, clubs, and crude spears. On their faces and armor, they have crudely painted the image of a finger, torn from its hand, with the bloody bone protruding from the finger's stump. It seems to be their *mon*. The leader, who walks at the front of the column, carries an iron-shod tetsubo in large hands. This motley band is winding its way south and will pass very close to your position.

There are only two dozen of the creatures and the PCs have the element of surprise. It is probable that the PCs will choose to ambush them. If the PCs wish to try, have one character (the lead scout) make an Awareness + Hunting roll at a TN of 15. If successful, he finds a suitable spot for an ambush. Each raise that character makes on this initial roll provides all PCs with a free raise on the next test. Have each PC make an Agility + Hunting roll at a TN of 15 or an Agility + Stealth roll at a TN of 10. If all PCs are successful, the goblins of the Glutfinger Tribe march into the trap. Each PC may perform one free action. The goblins may take no actions other than defending themselves while the PCs are performing these actions (they are considered to have a standard defense). Once every PC has performed all of their free actions, normal combat rounds begin.

If one or more PCs fail their roll, they may not take free actions. In addition, the goblin shaman senses something is amiss. She drops back and does not walk into the trap. As a result, no PC may take free actions against Tonsu. The shaman uses her troops as a living shield, casting her spells from the rear of the unit. If the fight goes badly, Tonsu will flee while her troops keep the PCs occupied.

The goblins will continue to fight until the shaman dies and they are reduced to half strength. At that point the survivor(s) will flee, shrieking at the top of their lungs. Players may make a contested roll to chase down a fleeing goblin. Players roll Agility + Athletics at a TN of 15 for the goblins, TN of 20 for the goblin shaman. Goblins roll 3k2, the shaman rolls 4k3.

If the PCs catch at least one goblin, they can question the creature. Roll Awareness + Torture at a TN of 10 for each goblin captured. Alternately, characters may roll Awareness + Investigation at a TN of 15. A success reveals one

item of information, with an additional item per raise. Information will be revealed in the following order, so note that the characters must capture several goblins (or raise several times) to get all of the information. Note there is some information that can only be acquired by capturing the shaman.

"We march south to join horde. There be a big bunch fight go on, ready to smash puny Crab castle."

"Lots of ogres – maybe big Oni – in the war band. We tear you apart and feast on your bones!"

"Big war band gathering near Dead Castle. They stay while many march to come. When ready, they come strike wall down!"

"Muago, Big Muago! He lead ogres. He smash goblins, if we not quick enough. Many fight Muago – many die. The heads of dumb samurai line the walls of Dead Castle."

"March of walking dead, they come too. They stay on north wall, we stay on south. We stay away from walking dead, we do, because we not want to become them."

"I saw big Oni speak to Muago. He fight with us. You will die at goblin hands, with big Oni by our side!"

Glutfinger Shaman only:

"Glutfinger Tribe march in three nights. Then come horde. Then, you die."

"Oni no Akuma much cunning. It fight nasty humans, big long time, kill them all. Why think you different? Me not think so. Akuma will come, Akuma will kill, and we will eat your dead."

At this point the PCs know much about what they've been sent to learn, but they don't know everything, even if they learned all they could from the goblins. They don't know numbers, but they may know when the attack will be launched. To complete their mission they must press onward. If the PCs didn't get enough successes to know where they're heading, they should, at least, be given hints to guide them to the south.

Haikyo no Hiruma

Armed with a bit more knowledge, you make your way south toward Haikyo no Hiruma. Although you're no longer heading toward the canyon, this is clearly the path you must take to complete your mission. Just before midnight you see the faint glow of cooking fires to the south.



If the PCs choose to camp here, they will certainly be ambushed by goblins or undead. Those who continue toward the ruins should be read the following text:

With extreme care you crest the last hill and there before you lies the ruined castle of the Hiruma family. You count more than twenty goblin cooking fires scattered around the outside of the castle. From the shadows you see the hulking figures of ogres as they wander about the camp. It appears that the castle has been filled to overflowing.

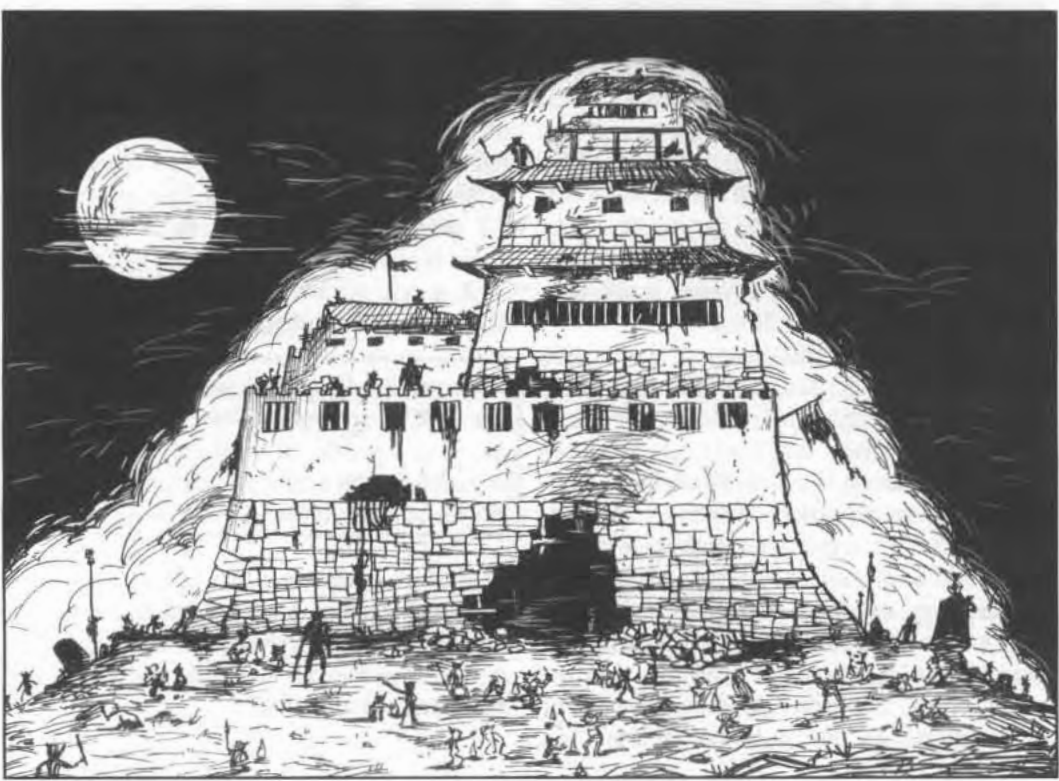
With a successful Perception roll at a TN of 15, the characters will also note an anomaly among the goblin and ogre masses. There appear to be several creatures that must be Oni, although these lesser creatures pale in comparison to the creature encountered on the bank of the river. To make matters worse, they note the misshapen forms of several huge Oni, organizing the horde into a unified army. The PCs can assume that the numbers of creatures here rank in the *thousands*.

If the PCs remain at the ruins for more than a few hours, or if they make any attempt to move closer to the encampment, warn them that they will almost certainly be discovered by the

numerous roaming bands of goblin and ogre scouts. If they still persist, they will be discovered by a band led by their old 'friend' - Muago.

Although it is unlikely Muago remembers these particular samurai, he knows that they are not supposed to be at the castle. With a snarl he charges the characters, swinging his tetsubo. The PCs may not realize it at first, but Muago is alone. Muago would like a bit of sport before the main attack, so he has decided to deal with the characters himself. If he takes more than 60 Wounds, however, he will howl for reinforcements. Muago's stats can be found on page 21.

Reinforcements come in the form of fifteen goblin troopers. These goblins gladly swarm over the PCs in an effort to make themselves look good in the eyes of Muago. As a result, they will attack to the last goblin, or until Muago falls. Muago will attempt to disengage and retreat while the goblins keep the PCs busy. If the characters can slay Muago, the goblins will fall back when they have been reduced to half strength. At that point the goblins will scatter, screaming an alarm as they go. If Muago survives, he will also sound the alarm. It is truly time for the characters to retreat.





MUCKER'BOUT GOBLINS

Earth: 2
Fire: 2
Water: 1
Air: 1
Attacking: Improvised
weapon 5k2
Damage: Improvised
weapon 4k2
TN to be hit: 10
Armor: 2
Wounds: 6: -1; 12: Dead

IEEOGI, MUCKER'BOUT WARMONGER

Earth: 3
Fire: 3
Water: 2
Air: 1
Attacking: Katana 5k3
Damage: Katana 5k2
TN to be hit: 15
Armor: 5
Wounds: 10: -1; 20: Dead

Back to the Castle

After the attack, the PCs will know that the army has been alerted to their presence. They should be encouraged not to waste time – the pursuit has begun, and they have no choice but to flee with the information they have gained.

The night passes in a fatigued blur. As the first rays of the sun begin to cast a glow in the east, you sit down for the first rest since leaving the ruins of Hiruma Castle. Several times you were sure you would be caught; each time you've managed to lose your pursuers. Drawing from meager supplies, the group tries to catch your breath and determine your position. Clearly you're still several miles from the Wall, but how far? If you make a dash, you could outdistance the pursuit, but if you begin the run too early, you could end up exhausted for no reason. You begin to consider the problem, looking at the haggard faces of your comrades. Suddenly you hear the sounds of goblins. They've found your trail again.

The goblins have done their best to catch up with the characters over the night. Each PC should roll Agility + Hunting at a TN of 15. A PC takes a Wound for each point by which they missed the roll. A roll of seven, therefore, takes eight Wounds as the character stumbles over rocks, through brambles, and down gravel slopes. Armor will not protect PCs from this damage. PCs who make the roll take no Wounds. In addition, each PC must roll Agility at a TN of 10. A character who fails the roll has suffered an unfortunate, but not immediately deadly, injury like a sprained ankle or twisted knee. This injury does nothing immediately, however, it will slow the character down in the future.

Although the PCs don't know it, they're only three miles from the Kaiu Wall. The intervening distance is hilly and rough, with brambles and gravel slopes. Near the banks of the river, however, the terrain begins to flatten out.

Each PC should make a Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 10 as they once again move toward the river. Characters who have suffered an injury because they failed the Agility roll must raise once to succeed. If successful, the PCs manage to keep ahead of the pursuit. If a character does not make the roll, they have lagged behind and will be overtaken by the pursuing goblins. Any

character who makes the roll may choose to fall back with slower characters if they wish.

The forward characters are not caught by the goblins immediately, although each PC should make a final Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 20 as the first round of combat begins behind them. PCs who have suffered an injury must again raise once to succeed. Any character may make an additional raise to sprint ahead and search for the boats before the rest of the PCs arrive. The additional time could be well worth the effort. If they do not succeed this roll, the PCs are caught, and must enter into combat (effectively at the beginning of the second round).

If the characters are not caught at all, they find themselves at the banks of the Last Stand river. They must search for their boat (or any other) to get across the river. Alternately, they can try to swim the river.

To search for a boat the PC should roll Awareness at a TN of 20. If successful, they have found a boat. If not, they are caught by the goblins as they search. Any character that sprinted ahead may make a second roll to look for a boat if the first is unsuccessful.

To swim the Last Stand River make a Strength + Athletics roll at a TN of 20. The weight of light armor requires one successful raise. Heavy armor requires two successful raises. Failure means the PC sinks to the bottom, and drowns in three rounds. Any PC that sinks may make a Stamina + Athletics roll at a TN of 25 the first round, 30 the second round, and 35 the final round. If any of these are successful, the PC has managed to fight their way to the far side, but takes one die of Wounds from inhaled water. They will also lose 1-3 random weapons and/or items to the river. These are lost and gone forever.

If, at any point a character is caught by the Mucker'bout Tribe of goblins, they will see:

As you run, the goblins surround you. A green tide of filthy, screaming goblins attempts to keep you away from the river. Behind them, a Goblin Warmonger with a torn ear howls in delight and lifts his battered katana over his head.

The front-runners will throw themselves at the exhausted samurai, attacking one character at a time, holding them down until the Warmonger arrives, then moving on to the next. They will attack until all are killed.

Part VI: Defense of a Clan

Despite your exhaustion, your report cannot wait for rest. Summoning the last of your reserves you follow grim Crab guards as they escort you toward Hiruma Makasu. As he approaches in the castle's central area, you kneel, silently thankful the proper show of respect allows you the opportunity to rest. "What news do you bring?" Makasu asks.

At this point the PCs must make their report to the commander. Makasu will not retire to a less public place, nor will he keep this conversation private. The players should role play this scene carefully, for any misstep could cause Makasu's legions to panic. After all, the news that the Hiruma ancestral home is the base for the impending attack will likely be a heavy blow.

Once the characters have made their report, Makasu asks questions, speaking loudly and looking at the surrounding bushi as he speaks. Makasu is determined to use this public report to encourage his armies to prepare for an attack - an attack that he already knew was coming. With a gleeful expression, Makasu encourages the characters to describe the ruins, the creatures and their leaders, the foul Oni. As they do (or as Makasu is forced to do it for them, if the PCs are cautious), the surrounding samurai recoil, and faint fear shows in the least experienced bushi's eyes.

As he speaks, Makasu grows more animated, strangely eager to see the battle. Although much of his charisma and leadership ability is there (and many of the Crab samurai cheer at his words), others will note that Makasu seems almost *too* eager for the war to begin.

The PCs' information about the army give Makasu new energy and focuses him on the task

at hand. He demands to know the number and type of troops, leaders, their current location, when the attack may come, and the details of any siege equipment the characters may have seen. If the characters admit the attack originates from Hiruma castle, the commander becomes even more animated. He asks additional questions about the condition of the castle and the lands surrounding the keep, using the information in a diatribe to rally the numerous Hiruma who are standing on the Wall, or in the courtyard, listening to Makasu's every word. He asks specifics about the structure: where is the wall breached? What is the condition of the tower? Is the main gate functional? By the time he is finished, the armies of the Crab are angry enough to fight anything that comes near them - and are much more confident in Makasu's command skills and ability to led them to victory.

Characters who take the time to listen to rumor and loud arguing after Makasu has retired to 'look over maps of the area' will note that the bushi are eager to fight, even if it means sending all the armies of Shiro Kuni into the Shadowlands to engage the horde before it reaches the Wall. Such attitudes are unusual - and dangerous. If the armies left, who would defend the Wall?

Also, with the news of the attack, the castle becomes a frenzy of activity. Although it is an armed camp, the news focuses the efforts of the defenders to an even greater extent. In addition to helping with the defenses, the characters have three days to rest and attempt to heal any wounds they may have recovered during their scouting mission. During the activity, Makasu is a calm in the eye of the storm. He works tirelessly to ensure the castle is prepared. He talks with samurai to bolster their courage. He works with engineers to ensure they have proper equipment and supplies.

The first day behind the Wall, PCs should make an Awareness roll at TN 10. Those who succeed hear news of a small group of Crab who entered the Shadowlands without permission, in order to attack the oncoming horde. This rumor will circulate through the castle fairly freely. With one raise, the characters learn that it is suspected that Makasu secretly approved the assault, and allowed the bushi to go on their suicide mission. With two raises, they will discover that one samurai survived, but instead of being told to commit *seppuku* for going over the Wall without leave, Makasu is treating him as a war-hero, an





HIDA SCOUT

Earth: 2

Stamina 3

Fire: 2

Water: 1

Air: 2

Void: 1

Attacking: Tetsubo 4k2
(+2)

Damage: Tetsubo 4k2
(+2)

TN to be hit: 20 (10 +
Heavy Armor)

Wounds: 6: 0; 12: -1; 18:
-2; 24: -3; 30: -4; 36: Down;
42: Out; 48: Dead

School Rank: Hida 1

Skills: Defense 2,
Tetsubo 2

Scouts are often given the most dangerous assignments while in the Shadowlands. It is their task to locate and identify troops of Shadowlands creatures, and warn the Crab when they gather for an attack on the Great Kaiu Wall.

unheard of response from a 'disobeyed commander'.

Early on the second day, PCs may make another Awareness roll, this time at a TN of 15. If successful they overhear that some of the commanders beneath Makasu's control are concerned about the relentless pace the Commander of the Guard is keeping. With one raise, the character learns that several of Makasu's closest advisors have asked him to pause in his work for much needed rest; otherwise, they fear, he will be too tired to be of value during the battle. With two raises the character learns that Makasu has not slept since he spoke with the PCs. His commanders fear he will collapse at some point and privately worry it will be at a critical point in the attack.

Over the course of the next day the samurai camped outside the castle move inside. The Kuni warlords advise all non-samurai to leave the area and head for the shelter of other cities.

Even with many of the servants gone, Kuni castle is packed to overflowing. There is an uncomfortable eagerness apparent in the castle's atmosphere, the feeling of men waiting to die for their cause. Makasu spends time speaking to the warriors and patrolling the Wall, encouraging his men to be brave and fight with dignity. Makasu's eyes grow distant as he speaks, and a sort of quasi-religious fervor overcomes him. Characters who make a Perception roll at a TN of 15 can see signs of madness in his demeanor, although none of the Crab here will listen to talk of such things.

THE KUNI DEFENSES

Kuni Yori, the castle's *daimyo*, has a personal bodyguard of twenty samurai who accompany him during the upcoming battle and advise him on martial matters. Yori also directly commands the seventeen Kuni spell casters within the castle. He is much more knowledgeable about spellcraft and he leads the force with zeal. In addition he personally commands the Crab reinforcements which consists of 100 infantry troops, 50 archers, and 100 Kuni House guards.

West Wall: Kuni Yoshiko. Yoshiko has a record almost as glorious as Hiruma Makasu. Although a Kuni, she is a bushi, not a shugenja. As a result, the honor of guarding the second most heavily attacked wall will fall to her. She has 100 infantry, 250 archers, and 75 Kuni House guards.

South Wall: Hiruma Makasu. As a dedicated foe of the Shadowlands, Makasu has been given

the honor of defending the main gate, which is set in the south wall. The south wall of the castle is the direct assault line from the Shadowlands, and is part of the Kaiu Wall. Although both the West and East walls flank the Great Wall and are therefore subject to attack, the South is the more important target, and will certainly be hit. Unless the creatures pass through the South Wall defenses, no assault will reach the North Wall or the lands of Rokugan. Makasu commands 250 infantry, 300 archers, and 100 Hiruma House guards.

East Wall: Kuni Chokau. Chokau is very near retirement and rumors of his failing health are rampant. Yori cannot deny the aged warrior a chance to prove himself in defense of his home, however, Chokau has been given the wall which is likely to see the least action. He has 150 infantry, 100 archers, and 50 Kuni House guard.

Kaiu Wall: Half of the force assigned to the castle will be at the Kaiu Wall (South Wall) when the battle begins. When it appears that it is time to retreat inside Kuni castle, the defenders will pull back while covered by their counterparts on the walls of the castle. As stated earlier, Hiruma Makasu has been given the honor of leading the defense of the Kaiu Wall as well as the South Wall of the castle.

All Quiet on the Kaiu Wall

The sun begins to set on the evening of the second day. All the occupants that have decided to stay have been quartered behind the thick walls of Shiro Kuni.

You were beginning to make your way to the dining hall when the rumble of a distant drum catches your attention. You're used to the war drums favored by the Crab, but the cadence of this drum carries an urgency even those outside the clan can hear. Although you half expect the sight from atop the wall, nothing has prepared you for the harsh reality of it.

Across the Last Stand River, stretched out as far as you can see in the dwindling twilight, is a massive army. The bulk of the army is a multitude of goblins. Lead by their Warmongers, their chittering carries across the river like the wail of an excited child. Their lines are reinforced



by the tremendous bulks of armored ogres, who stare in near-silence as they march, with only the rising chant of the ogre tongue performing a cadence for their steps. Scattered about the horde are creatures that seem to defy description. Oni. Crude ladders and small siege engines make up the rest of the force, and you have little doubt there are crude boats to cross the river.

"We were told we'd have three days," a samurai near you whispers. "Our defenses are not prepared for this!"

Without a word Makasu strides forward, walking directly toward the frightened soldier. In silence he draws his katana and strikes in a single motion. Those not looking directly at the commander do not even realize he has moved until the anonymous bushi has already died. "Coward!" Makasu screams. "Would anyone else wish to shame their ancestors by quivering in fear?" There is absolute silence along the wall. Makasu's words have shocked the bushi into silence, but you sense something more.

As if in answer to Makasu's words, the horde across the river charges.

Makasu has correctly determined the focus of the horde's attack. As a result, he will be at the center of the fighting, although it is possible that he won't always be heavily engaged. As noted in his statistics in the back of the book, Makasu rolls 8k3 for his battle roll.

Makasu is opposed in this battle by an Oni no Akuma spawn that leads the horde from a safe distance. Although the Oni has no skill in battle, it rolls 5k5 for the horde's engagement, using the battle charts on page 115 of the *L5R RPG*.

It will not be immediately clear to the PCs who the opposing general is during the initial engagement, although they sense that the horde is acting and reacting with an obvious intelligence and unity. If the PCs remain on the Kaiu Wall all night, they will see the Oni no Akuma near dawn.

Twilight's Battle

Although there is no moon during the battle, Crab shugenja keep the battlements lit with torches as well as magical light, roughly equivalent to twilight. The night's battle will last for eight rounds. During each round, Makasu rolls versus the Oni no Akuma. Due to the overwhelming force facing the Crab defenders,

they must roll higher five times during the night and get four heroic events (Heroic Opportunities or Duels) to beat the Shadowlands forces. If Makasu does not win five of eight or the PCs do not roll heroic events, the defenders withdraw at dawn to the safety of Kuni Castle. If the Crab defenders are successful, they will drive back the horde for another day.

If Makasu wins the night, he will have the day to rest before the battle begins again. During the second night, Makasu must win six rounds against the Oni and the PCs must get five heroic events. If successful, on the third night he must roll seven wins and another five heroic events. At last, on the fourth night the Crab defenders must have eight wins with six heroic events. On the fifth night the attackers will swarm over the walls. Unfortunately for the Crab defenders, by the fifth night the attackers are simply too numerous and too determined to stop.

PCs may select to be heavily engaged, lightly engaged, disengaged, or in reserves as normal. In addition, if Makasu wins a round of combat, PCs may add one to their roll for that same round on the battle result chart. If the Oni no Akuma wins the round, they must subtract one. Remember, winning a duel counts as a heroic event.





HIDA KISADA

Earth: 9
Fire: 5
Water: 5
Strength: 6
Air: 5
Void: 4
School Rank: Hida 5
Skills: Athletics 2,
Battle 5, Defense 5, Hand-
to-hand 5, Heraldry 1,
History 2, Hunting 3,
Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 4,
Law 3, Shintao 3,
Shadowlands Lore 5,
Tetsubo 5, Wrestling 5

Hida Kisada, the Champion of the Crab, is one of the most feared men in Rokugan – and with good cause. His younger days were dotted with quests into the Shadowlands, and his battles with Oni are the stuff of legends. He is dismissive and condescending to all non-Crabs, believing them to be mewling kittens hiding behind him for safety. He rarely leaves his homelands, and his contempt for the Emperor is an open secret.

At six feet, six inches, he is easily the tallest man in Rokugan, with weight and bearing to match. He has well earned the nickname 'the Great Bear.'



During the battle, Makasu will react in an increasingly erratic manner. He speaks little, and is often found in the thickest part of the fighting. Frustrated, yet gleeful, he allows himself little rest. As the battle continues over several days read the following information to the players, but only if Makasu manages to prolong the Twilight Battle. Once Makasu is beaten, go directly to the next section, *The Coming of the Great Bear*.

DAY 1

As dawn approaches, you see Makasu slumped against the wall. His head is bowed and he appears to be in deep thought. As you approach he snaps to attention and whirls to meet you. For a moment you believe he is going to draw his blade, but then he relaxes and turns to the Shadowlands. The attacking army has withdrawn for the day, but you get the impression Makasu is disappointed that they've not pressed the attack. With his hand on his katana, Makasu walks past you toward the castle.

Any attempts to engage Makasu in conversation fail completely. Further attempts to meet are useless.

DAY 2

During the day, one of the PCs will be approached by a companion that they have met while here at the Wall, preferably Daidoji Jinshi. "Have you seen the commander? Makasu-san behaves like a man possessed. Twice last night he ordered a counter-attack. Against what? Did he expect us to climb the wall?"

Another man also speaks up, "I heard he killed one of his own men at the mere mention of Haikyo no Hiruma. He is greatly shamed that the Shadowlands are using his family castle as a base for their attack."

DAY 3

The last of the goblin stragglers limp out of bow shot as you marvel at the night's battle. Around you defenders slump in exhaustion. Moving slowly, you notice a small ensemble set apart from the rest. As you watch, a man in blood-covered armor steps forward, draws his katana and slays the Crab archer before him.

With a flash, you recognize the armor-covered man as Hiruma Makasu. Beside you, a grizzled Crab samurai shakes his head. "Cowardice. Sotusan was executed for cowardice. You'd be better off to stay away from the commander." The veteran scowls. "It doesn't seem to me that an archer is a coward for refusing to charge when he's still got a full quiver of arrows, but I'll not be the one to question Makasu. Not today."

In the course of the battle the PCs will likely have the chance for a Heroic Opportunity. If that is the case, use the table on page 45. Take the listing in order until each has been used once. These events represent pivotal times of the battle. After all of the specific events have been used, roll



Duels are handled differently as well. As the Shadowlands warriors have no honor they are unlikely to offer a duel; however, there may be times when the opponent is so fearsome none of the nearby samurai are willing to engage the foe. In that case the PC has the option of engaging the creature in single combat. If the opponent has a fear rating, the character must first overcome the fear. If successful, the PC may duel the creature; otherwise he may not. Roll randomly for the opponent. If a PC has jade powder, he will have time to apply this to his weapon prior to the duel. Optionally for fighting Oni, the GM may allow other characters to help the dueling PC when engaged with an Oni. Such assistants cannot have rolled a heroic opportunity this round.

The Great Bear

Despite your best efforts, the forces of the Shadowlands could not be contained. Wailing like the spirits of the dead, they swarmed over the walls and forced you to fall back to the walls of Shiro Kuni. Drums call the retreat, samurai shout warnings as they prepare to close the gate. As you fall back, you notice a curious sight.

Approaching from the west along the road is a small group of samurai, engaged by three Oni and a small horde of goblins. You see several of the samurai pulled down as one man slaughters an Oni with a bloody tetsubo. Moments later several other samurai slay a second Oni. You can barely make out the frenzy of activity as goblins and the remaining Oni attempt to defeat the Crab samurai. The creatures are cut down like ripe wheat.

Makasu stands at the gate preparing to give the word to seal the castle. His left leg is heavily bandaged, and his armor is battered. He appears to be standing by willpower alone.

Shiroi marches directly toward the characters as the remaining members of Kisada's guard file into the castle. As Kisada receives the ritualized greeting from Makasu and the Kuni daimyo, the characters get their first good look at the man the rest of the Empire refers to as "The Great Bear." Hida Kisada, Champion of the Crab, stands nearly seven feet tall, with imposing armor and a massive steel helm which have been designed to intimidate - and he does a good job. Although and approaching the age of retirement, Hida

Kisada has shown no sign of turning over the leadership of the Crab to either of his sons.

"Just in time, my lord. Hiruma Makasu appears to be ready to close the gate. I suggest we join our forces on the inside." Shiroi is polite and deferential to his uncle, and is met with a nod and a brief grunt. Several goblin berserkers have outdistanced the main body, charging with foaming mouths and red-rimmed eyes. As Kisada reaches the threshold, Makasu brings down his hand. The massive gate doors begin to swing shut. Several berserkers slip through the dwindling gap between the doors, but they are dispatched silently by Kisada's bodyguard.

The characters have until noon to rest, as Kisada meets with the nobility and military commanders of Kuni castle. During that time Shiroi talks with the characters briefly, also meeting with his other contacts in the castle. There is no doubt that the arrival of the Clan Champion, even with so small a retinue, has raised the spirits of the defenders. Although the wall was overrun, there is still a chance the Shadowlands army can be refused; the attackers must take the keep before they can venture deeper into the Empire.

When Shiroi summons the PCs, they are asked to report to Kisada's chamber. Hida Kisada is first and foremost a Crab, which means he is direct and honest, as opposed to sincere. He respects strength, honesty and forthright answers, but that does not mean that the PCs can be openly rude or offensive. Each PC should make an Intelligence + Etiquette roll at a TN of 10. If successful, they have adopted the proper attitude to respect due the Champion. If unsuccessful, the character has misjudged how to deal with Kisada. That PC's interactions with Kisada will roll one fewer die until the end of the battle for Kuni Castle.

Shiroi tells the characters that he knows what has happened during the most recent parts of the Twilight Battle, including any superior acts of bravery on the part of the PCs. He recounts them for the benefit of Kisada. Shiroi then tells Kisada that he trusts the characters and has no doubt of their good intentions toward his clan (unless the characters have given Shiroi a reason to think otherwise). Shiroi asks the PCs to speak freely about Hiruma Makasu. Kisada will remain silent, having already instructed his nephew as to what

HIDA KISADA (CONTINUED)

Kisada is a quiet man who speaks with the power of a gathering storm. He wears his armor at all times and has never been seen without a weapon in his hands. Scars criss-cross his face and mar the perfection of his steel-grey beard. He carries old injuries with silent pride, smiling enigmatically whenever someone mentions them. If he chose, he could tell exactly how each one came about, and exactly which opponent inflicted them. Of course, he never talks about his exploits in such a vainglorious manner, but it is widely held that no one - man or Oni - has ever injured him and lived.

Kisada's purpose at Kuni castle is twofold: one, to find out why the Shadowlands were allowed to become so powerful, and execute judgment on those who failed in their duty to the Crab; and two, to defend the Empire.



HIDA BODYGUARD

Earth: 3
Fire: 2
Agility 3
Water: 3
Air: 2
Void: 2
Attacking: Tetsubo 5k2 (+3)
Damage: Tetsubo 5k2 (+3)
TN to be hit: 25 (15 + Heavy Armor)
Wounds: 6: 0; 12: -1; 18: -2; 24: -3; 30: -4; 36: Down; 42: Out; 48: Dead
School Rank: Hida 2
Skills: Defense 3; Meditation 1, Shadowlands Lore 2, Tetsubo 3

Members of the Kuni bodyguard have distinguished themselves in battle versus the Shadowlands. They can be counted upon to do their duty when in a difficult situation.

questions to ask. This is as much a test for Shiroi, in his uncle's eyes, as for the characters.

Courtiers should realize they have been placed in an extremely precarious position. A successful Awareness + Courtier roll at a TN of 20, will allow a character to correctly gauge their response to Kisada's questions. Successful (and cautious) characters should be aided by the GM with hints as to Kisada's facial expressions, nodding, or body language, to help them answer in a 'correct' manner.

Honest PCs will likely divulge the rumors they know. If the PCs repeat any rumor that questions Makasu's honor, Kisada appears displeased. In order to influence Kisada's decision, the characters will need to avoid hearsay, repeat only events they have personally witnessed, and leave the final decision of what he events imply about Makasu's mental condition completely in Kisada's hands.

Once the PCs have finished, Kisada rises. It is clear that the conversation is at an end. He leaves abruptly and without comment. Shiroi stays in the room to talk privately with the PCs. He knows Kisada is troubled by these events. An army of this magnitude should never have been allowed to form. Successful scouting missions should have detected it and aggressive patrols should have reduced the horde's strength. At the very least, there should have been time to summon more defenders. Kisada does not yet know who to blame, but when he finds out, they will pay with their life.

The immediate question is how to defeat the Shadowlands forces. The castle commanders and Kisada agree that the horde will continue to attack the castle until it is destroyed or until they are defeated. Shiroi suggests to the PCs that they prepare for an all-out assault on the castle that does not end until one side is destroyed. He suspects the battle will start at dusk.

As dusk approaches, Hida Shiroi approaches you - this time, wearing the official badge of a minor commander of the Crab Guard. "I have spoken to Kisada-*sama*," he begins. "We have been ordered to join the defense of the south wall. It will place us under Hiruma Makasu's command, but it will also provide us with the best chance to watch him. Should you disagree with an action Makasu commands of you during the course of the battle, you should say, 'Hida Shiroi

ordered me to do otherwise.' I will stand behind you, regardless of the consequences.

"Kuni Castle is all that stands between this army and the lands of the Crane and the Crab. If this castle falls, so too falls the Crab Champion. That is a double blow from which we are unlikely to recover. If the Crab falls, who will man the Kaiu Wall? Who will contain the Shadowlands?"

"I stand before you and tell you in all honesty that you fight not only for Kuni Castle. You fight for the Empire itself. If we fall, so too falls the Emerald Throne."

The Battle for Kuni Castle

You stand atop the south wall of Shiro Kuni. Darkness descends across the lands and the last remaining Kuni shugenja cast their magical illumination. The shadows grow longer, creeping up the walls of the castle as the horde waits just beyond bowshot.

Moments later, the massive horde leaps forward. As they grow near, you can see some carry assault ladders in rotting hands. Skeleton archers move into position, their finely boned hands gripping rotted bows. Zombies charge blindly, and goblins join the fray with shrieks of joy.

The first flight of Crab arrows arches over the wall of the castle. Shafts whistle home, but few of the dead men fall. With silent, plodding steps the zombies approach the wall. Skeletal archers respond, and the first of your defenders fall back clutching ancient arrows that pierce their skin. Soon, the first of the scaling ladders is put into place and the undead begin their climb. Behind this first wave, you can see subtle movement among the horde as separate groups of goblins and zombies wait to support the undead at the base of the walls.

The first creature to appear over the wall has been pierced by a dozen arrows, yet still struggles over the palisades. You hear a thump and risk a quick look at the base of the wall before you. As you suspected, a scaling ladder has been placed, and a rotting, undead samurai slowly climbs to meet you.

The battle for Kuni Castle will take place in a slightly different manner from a normal battle. In



KUNI GUARD

Earth: 2
Stamina 3
Fire: 2
Water: 2
Strength 3
Air: 2
Void: 2
Attacking: Naginata 6k3
(+2)
Damage: Naginata 6k3
(+2)
TN to be hit: 20 (10 +
Heavy Armor)
Wounds: 6: 0; 12: -1; 18:
-2; 24: -3; 30: -4; 36: Down;
42: Out; 48: Dead
School Rank: Hida 1
Skills: Defense 2,
Naginata 3

this case the attackers are committed to attack until they are dead or until they've overrun the castle and slain all the defenders. The PCs will play a pivotal role in the outcome of this battle.

Although Hida Kisada is the Clan Champion, and therefore the overall commander, the decisions of the wall commanders will still have a dramatic effect on the outcome of the battle. In this case, the south wall is the pivotal wall of the encounter and that means Hiruma Makasu (*i.e.* the PCs) will make the battle rolls. As before, he rolls 8k3. His opponent, the Oni no Akuma, rolls 5k5. Each round represents one hour of time. For the first ten hours of the battle, it is night, so Makasu is -1 to his roll. The Oni no Akuma is +1. For the next fourteen hours it is daylight. Makasu is +1 to his roll and the Oni is -1. After that, the cycle starts again.

The battle lasts until one of two things occurs. The battle ends if Oni no Akuma wins 14 battle rolls. In that case, the Shadowlands army has managed to breach the walls. The Oni and their allies swarm through the breach and utterly destroy the castle. Anyone still alive among the defenders is ruthlessly slain. The other way for the battle to end is if the PCs achieve all of the Heroic Opportunities listed on pages 46-47.

It is very likely the PCs will be wounded during this battle. Any character can rotate out of the fighting, and their place will be taken by a soldier from one of the other walls. While away, the PCs may not roll on the battle table. In addition, each round the character 'sits out,' they lose one glory from the total they've accumulated during the battle. While out of the battle the PC may make a Perception roll at a TN of 25. If successful, they have discovered a Kuni shugenja who offers to heal one rank of Wounds. (The shugenja will additionally heal one rank per raise). The PC may only make one roll, no matter how many rounds they sit out.

If the PC returns and then withdraws again they may make another Perception roll at a TN of 30. If successful they find a shugenja. If three characters have been healed, all others will discover that the shugenja have cast all of their spells.

As with the Twilight Battle, each time the PCs roll a heroic event, take the next event on the chart. If the PCs achieve all of the listed heroic events before the Oni defeats Makasu in the battle rolls, they successfully defend the castle. During this battle, duels are handled differently as well. If the PCs are asked to duel as a result of the Heroic



Opportunities, a die roll that results in a duel should instead be considered a Heroic Opportunity.

HIDA SHIROI AND DAIDOJI JINSHI

Shiroi and Jinshi will be fighting along the south wall with the PCs, assuming they have survived to this point in the adventure. Their role in the conflict is up to the GM. Ideally, the PCs will roll all of the heroic opportunities. If they need help, say, with the scorpion-tailed Oni, Shiroi or Jinshi can lend a hand. You can keep track of their battle damage as you see fit (depending on how much help you want to give the players). These two additional characters could be what the PCs need to accomplish the tasks before them; however, it wouldn't be heroic if non-player characters were rolling heroic opportunities and the PCs were helping them. On the other hand, if the player characters are just too beat up to finish, one of these NPCs could jump in.

The Aftermath

You slump against the southern gate, exhausted. Although you still wield your katana, you are unsure if you could defend yourself against even a single goblin. Moments pass and you begin to notice a strange silence. Focusing on the lack of sound, you realize that the fighting around you is coming to an end. Looking to the left and right, samurai fill your field of vision. You cannot see a single goblin, or zombie, or Oni.

Looking up you can see the walls have been swept clear of attackers. It appears the fighting has come to an end.

Through a thick swirl of smoke you see a giant form approaching. Your hand goes to your katana, but you relax when Hida Kisada appears, flanked by his stone-faced guard.

Although all you can see is death and destruction, the *daimyo* is exuberant. "We've won a great victory." He lifts his tetsubo to indicate the entire courtyard. "This, this we can rebuild. The dead go to their ancestors with glory. A samurai can ask for nothing more." You point to the lifeless form of Hiruma Makasu.

"And what of him?" you ask. The Great Bear looks at his fallen commander with a rueful glance. "It is a sad ending to a once-great samurai." Kisada shrugs. "He joins his ancestors."

With that, the Champion turns and walks slowly away.

You turn to the fallen form of Makasu, and find Hida Shiroi *If he survived. Another Hiruma, if Shiroi has died.* kneeling beside the fallen form of his Crab brother. "Did you find what you were looking for, Makasu?" He whispers, lifting an aged *daisho* from the Hiruma's *obi*. "How will your ancestors judge you, Makasu?" Shiroi pauses and looks skyward. "And how will ours judge us?"

Kisada stays for several days before returning to Hida Palace. He summons the PCs to join him for an evening meal the night before he leaves. Unlike most formal dinners, this is only the surviving characters, Shiroi, Daidoji Jinshi, (if they survived) and the Kuni *daimyo*, Yori. Kisada speaks with the characters about the battle, the Shadowlands, and ultimately their mission. He is intrigued about the PCs' arrival in Crab lands just when they were most needed. If the characters describe their meeting with Togashi Yokuni, the Great Bear will nod knowingly. If the PCs decide not to tell him about the reasons for their mission, that is all right also. Kisada cares less for secrets than most in his position.

After dinner a Kuni maiden serves the characters *sake*. Although conversation is sparse, the PCs pass a pleasant evening in the company of the Crab Champion. When it is time for the dinner to end, Kisada summons a servant, who returns with several small packages; one for each player. He asks that each PC accept the small gift as a token of appreciation from his clan for the service they have performed. Remember, in Rokugan, it is polite to refuse a gift three times, in order to allow the giver to show their sincere wish to give the token.

Inside the packages are exquisite jade statues, each carved in the likeness of the PC's clan namesake. Each statue is slightly over eight inches tall and six inches wide.

The next day the characters are free to do as they wish. Kisada gladly recognizes the glory of any Crab clan characters. The PCs can stay at the castle and heal or depart. They can even enter the Shadowlands to scout the retreating force if they wish.

OTHER ENDINGS

Suppose the PCs fail and you don't want your Empire overrun with all sorts of evil creatures?



Change the ending. You can't find it in your heart to kill the PCs? Go ahead, change the ending. After all, it's your game. Besides, the players probably suspect you don't want the Shadowlands invading the Empire too early. There are several options available:

Shiroi – Shiroi can step up and take over when the PCs die. He performs the heroic actions required to finish the story. This will likely kill him, resulting in a dramatic aftermath, and possibly Shiroi's desolate spirit, haunting the countryside – or the PCs.

Hida Kisada – Kisada steps into the breach and, with the help of his loyal Hida House guard, repulses every Shadowlands attack. This is the stuff of legends and just the thing to be attributed to the Great Bear. Of course, he'll have to replace his entire bodyguard, as they will all be killed in the defense.

Hiruma Makasu – If the characters haven't confronted Makasu, he can save the situation. If the PCs die, he delays the Oni victory long enough for the reinforcements to arrive, and still has his 'honorable and tragic death.' If he loses the battle with the Oni, he leads a gallant counter-attack that clears the field, but this action results in his death. It turns the tide of battle, but at massive cost – the Crab will be greatly weakened for years (if not generations) to come.

Reinforcements – If the player characters are too beat up to continue, you could allow them to stall until the reinforcements arrive. In this case the horde is caught between the hammer of the reinforcements and the anvil of the Kuni defenders.

Players – If the players are doing well, but Makasu can't beat the Oni in the battle rolls, you could give them a break and let them fight until they play out the heroic opportunities or die.

If the GM has to rescue the castle, that doesn't mean the players are off the hook. Any of these endings might save the castle, but the PCs will still have a price to pay for their failure. There are several options the GM can use, depending on how well the players did. These adventure hooks can be used any time the PCs are wandering through the Emerald Empire. After all, can they ever be certain that some Shadowlands-related horror that's terrorizing the countryside didn't enter the Empire when *they* failed to hold the walls?

Oni Rampage: Villagers approach the PCs as they walk down the road. An Oni is terrorizing the trading settlement up ahead and the villagers are powerless to stop it. Only a band of heroes can stop its rampage.

Ruined Village: The characters enter a ruins of a once-prosperous trading village. All the inhabitants have been killed in a gruesome manner. A slime-smearred trail leads off into the nearby mountains. Perhaps the beast that did this carried off a survivor?

Fu Leng's Governance: A red-skinned, humanoid Oni has set himself up as the leader of a small village. The entire village seems to serve the creature willingly. Perhaps it is the astoundingly prosperous fields this season, or perhaps it is something more sinister.

Once Sworn: The PCs are invited to a wedding, but the groom is a Tainted survivor of the Battle at Kuni Castle. When he loses control, the PCs must step in to save the wedding party. The bride seems determined to help her future husband.

Tall Tales: For unknown reasons one of the few available passes through the nearby mountains has been closed for weeks. Nobody who has gone toward the pass has survived. Who, or what, has camped in the pass?

LANDS OF THE DRAGON

At some point the PCs will likely want to go to the lands of the Dragon and report to Mirumoto Sukune in Shiro Mirumoto. When they make it to Mirumoto castle, they can use the token to quickly gain an audience with Mirumoto Sukune.

You arrive at Shiro Mirumoto, home of the Dragon clan, nestled in the mountains the Dragon calls home. You present the token originally given to you weeks ago and are quickly ushered into a private room. You are served *sake* while you wait.

After a brief time, you are joined by a middle-aged Dragon samurai. He enters the room quickly, bows, and sits down opposite you. "Greetings. I am Mirumoto Sukune. You come with the token of my *daimyo*. In truth, I was told to expect you last night by the daimyo himself. I am glad to see you well." Sukune smiles at you and you believe he is genuinely glad to see you.

"My daimyo has said that you have a story to tell. If you do not object, I would like this to be recorded, so future generations will know of the service you have done our Empire." To the side of the chamber, at Sukune's gesture, a paneled door



LESSER ONI

Earth: 5
Fire: 2
Water: 2
Air: 2
Attacking: 4k2
Damage: 5k2
TN to be hit: 15
Armor: 4
Wounds: 10: -1; 25: -2;
50: Dead
Abilities: Fear: 1,
Invulnerability

Roll for appearance on
charts in *Shadowlands*
book, page 110-111.

slides open. On the other side, you see the slight figure of an ancient scribe. Sukune's servants pours sake and you sit back. It will take time to do full justice to the tale, but it appears you have all the time you need.

Sukune is sincere when he says he wants future generations to know what the characters did. He will also make sure those in the Imperial Court know as well. Unfortunately, if the characters exaggerate their part in the proceedings, or in any way imply that the Crab were not capable of defending the Wall, they will most likely be opening a door to another adventure with angry Hida and Hiruma NPC's wishing to clear the 'slander' of their family's name. Four months after the PCs tell Sukune what happened, the epic poem *Twilight Battle* debuts at the Imperial Court. Although the poem is hardly complimentary to the Crab, it remains very popular among the court and populace of Otosan Uchi.

Sukune will recognize the glory of any Dragon characters. The characters may stay in Mirumoto castle for a time, as the guest of Sukune. At some

point, however, they will likely want to travel on. After all, there are more adventures and more glory to be discovered down the road.

Consequences and Rewards

EXPERIENCE

At the completion of each task in this adventure, the GM should award experience points as follows.

Part 2: Hida Palace

- Gaining the trust of Hida Yakamo without telling him you suspect something is wrong at Kuni Castle: 1 experience point
- Winning Yakamo's test to enter the Shadowlands, either 1st or 2nd chance: 1 experience point

Part 3: Kuni Castle

- Proving to Hiruma Makasu you are worthy to enter the Shadowlands by passing his test: 1 experience point

Part 4: Into the Shadowlands

- Escaping the ambush with 10 or more samurai: 1 experience point
- Serving as scout during the retreat back to Kuni Castle: 1 experience point

Part 5: You Want Us To Go Back?

- Going with Shiroi and successfully navigating the Hida Court: 2 experience points
- Capturing the goblin shaman and gaining at least 1 piece of information: 1 experience point
- Slaying Muago: 3 experience points
- Successfully scouting the ruins of Hiruma castle: 1 experience point



- Slaying all goblin pursuers: 1 experience point

Part 6 Defense of a Clan

- Each day of the Twilight Battle past the first: 1 experience point
 - Defeating Makasu and sealing the gate without Shiroi's help: 2 experience points (participants only)
 - Slaying Muago: 2 experience points (participants only)
 - Slaying Scorpion-tailed Oni: 1 experience point (participants only)
 - Defeating the Shadowlands horde before the Oni breaches the wall: 1 experience point
 - Surviving the mission: 5 experience points



Clear the ladders: You rush forward to the defense as the first of the ladders reach the wall. Moving quickly, you wait until the goblin climbers have almost reached the top before pushing the ladder over. The resulting confusion keeps this section of the wall clear for hours.

Rally the line: Goblins have swarmed over a section of the wall, threatening to breach your line of troops on the wall. Moving quickly you rush the knot of green-skins. Consigning your soul to your ancestors, you attack with savage fury to push them back. Within moments there are no more goblins to slay as your furious attack sends them screaming back over the wall. Your reckless attack is not without a price, however, as you take an additional die of Wounds.

Blood Magic: You have been singled out by a goblin shugenja, who attacks you with blood magic. You take an additional die of Wounds. If you remain standing, the sight of your battered, but unbowed body inspires those around you to

greater acts of heroism. Gain 1 glory point. Makasu adds 2 to his next battle roll.

Refuse the Walls: Goblins swarm over the walls, spilling out into an ever-widening breach. Summoning the samurai nearest you, you lead them into the heart of the enemy. You fight for what seems like hours in a confusion of steel and flesh, but finally the goblin line is destroyed. You send the few wounded survivors tumbling over the wall. You take an additional dice of Wounds.

Rally Troops: Zombies have held a section of the wall and the terror they bring causes the line to waver. Make a fear test at a TN of 20. If successful, you shout encouragement to the troops and move among them to bolster their flagging courage. As a zombies shamble toward your position you see the fire rekindled in your comrades' eyes. Fighting with the renewed vigor, they repulse the attackers and send them back over the wall. Gain 1 glory. If unsuccessful, you are automatically disengaged next round.

Defend the breach: A section of the Kaiu Wall has started to crumble, making it possible for the attackers to scale the wall without ladders. This breach would be catastrophic to the defenders if it cannot be held. Make a Water + Battle roll at a TN of 25. If successful, you have defended the breach and gain the following additional glory:

Reserves	0
Disengaged	2
Engaged	4
Heavily Engaged	6

Carry the Banner: The Crab clan standard bearer is felled by a swarm of goblin arrows. You grab the banner before it can hit the ground and swirl it mightily above your head. Around you, Crab samurai cheer at the sight of their banner. For the rest of the night you bear the Crab banner. You gain 1 additional glory point, however, all your actions for the rest of the night roll one fewer die.

Katana of Fire: The situation has become desperate, but hope still remains. You see a Kuni shugenja prepare a spell and suddenly point at you. Suddenly your katana catches fire. Around you goblins fall back in fear. Moving like the whirlwind, you jump into the heart of your foes, who seek only to escape the flaming blade. By the time the spell subsides you have cleared a small section of the wall of attackers. Gain 1 glory point.



SCORPION ONI

Earth: 4
 Fire: 4
 Water: 4
 Air: 4
Attacking: Claws: 5k5;
 Tail: 4k2
Damage: Claws: 6k5;
 Tail: 3k1 poison
TN to be hit: 25
Armor: 8
Wounds: 25: -1; 50: -3;
 100: Dead
Abilities: Fear: 5,
 Scorpion tail

Roll for this Oni's appearance on charts in Shadowlands book, page 110-111. This Oni has no special magical abilities; however, it does have a second attack which it can make at the end of the round with its scorpion tail. If poisoned, make an Earth roll at a TN of 20. If successful nothing happens. If the roll is failed, the victim rolls one fewer die for all physical actions for the next hour. Note that this Oni does not have invulnerability.



GLORY AWARDS & MAXIMUMS

Remember that all Glory is awarded to the PCs through their daimyos, and that means that in order to achieve recognition of the Glory they have earned, a trip home will be necessary. For Crabs and Dragons, this is instituted into the adventure, but for others, a special journey may be necessary. Glory awards are not automatic - a good GM knows when to give Glory, and when to find some other, more appropriate, reward.

In any case, no player should be allowed to earn more than two full ranks (20 points) of Glory during the battles in *Twilight's Honor*. If you find your characters skyrocketing in glory, change their reward to better suit the circumstances of your campaign. *Nemuranai*, prestigious titles and other honors are often bestowed on the battlefield, and can be a dramatic substitution.

Also, all Glory awards for the Heroic Opportunities in *Twilight's Honor* are given in terms of Glory points, not ranks, unless specifically stated otherwise.

OTHER HEROIC EVENTS

Rally Archers: You rally a group of archers preparing to flee the battle. You decide to stay with them during the next round of battle. You are automatically disengaged. Gain 1 glory point.

Field repairs: You lead a team of engineers as they attempt to make repairs on the Kaiu Wall. Roll Water + Battle at a TN of 20. If successful gain 2 Glory. If unsuccessful take one additional dice of Wounds.

Solid defense: You form an anchor in the lines from which the other samurai draw their courage. Roll Earth + Battle at a TN of 20. If successful, you've held the line and gain 2 Glory. If unsuccessful you will automatically be heavily engaged next round.

Direct shugenja: You move toward a unit of shugenja and personally direct their fiery attack at a unit of zombies. The aged bones blaze like kindling. Gain 2 Glory.

Avoid Fate: The fortunes watch over you. Ignore all Wounds this round.

The Strength of my Ancestors: The heat of battle has possessed you. You have an additional 2 Void Points to spend until the end of the Twilight Battle.

Bodyguard: Several members of the Hiruma House guard have fallen. Makasu selects you to act as his bodyguard. You are automatically disengaged for the rest of the night. Gain 2 glory points.

Rescue: You see a Crab samurai fall under a swarm of goblins. Moving quickly you cut a path and drag the man to safety. Gain 2 Glory. Take an additional die of Wounds. Next round you are automatically in the reserves as you help him to safety. At the end of the Twilight Battle the man presents you with a tetsubo with rows of jade shards (2K2).

Command: You are hastily given command of a group of four Crab samurai. These samurai fight with you for the rest of the night. You gain an additional 1 Glory for each round in which you are not in the reserves.

SHADOWLANDS DUELS

Goblin Warmonger
Goblin Warmonger
Goblin Shugenja
Goblin Shugenja
Goblin Shugenja
Lesser Oni

Lesser Oni
Lesser Oni
Lesser Oni
Lesser Oni

FIGHTING ONI

It is strongly suggested that the GM roll the appearance of individual Oni when they are dueling PCs. Use the charts on pages 110-111 of the *Book of the Shadowlands* to determine characteristics. This will add to the drama of the duel and give the players something to remember their fight by. Statistics for the Oni can be found in the back of the book. It is recommended that due to the already deadly circumstances of the fight, these Oni not have any special characteristics such as special attacks, spell ability, poison claws, or poison tail.



Defend the South Wall: Zombies swarm up the south wall. Make a fear test at a TN of 20. If successful you lead the defenders against the undead. Gain 1 Glory. If unsuccessful, you flee in fear, and spend the next round automatically in the reserves.

Rescue: To your surprise, you see Hiruma Makasu and his remaining bodyguards overwhelmed by a swarm of goblin berserkers. Moving without thought you cut a path through the attackers and rescue the Hiruma commander. You help him to his feet and escort him away from the worst of the fighting. He seems somehow disappointed. Gain 2 glory points. You spend the next round automatically disengaged.

Duel Goblin Warmonger: A Warmonger bursts from a pack of goblins and charges directly toward you. You fight a duel.

Bodyguard: You are summoned by Hiruma Makasu. All of his Hiruma house guards have been slain, and the commander requires a bodyguard. You must accompany Makasu until another bodyguard can be acquired. You are automatically disengaged until the heroic event *Call the reinforcements* occurs. At that point, Makasu selects another bodyguard and you are given another assignment. Gain 1 glory point.

Clear the Walls: Through sheer determination you and your fellow defenders manage to clear the walls of all goblin and zombie attackers. Gain 1 glory point.

Refuse the ladders: Goblin troops attempt to climb up the south wall. Moving quickly, you refuse the invaders by knocking over all the ladders. Gain 1 glory point.

Hold the line: Another section of the wall has been crested. Once again you have goblins, Oni, and zombies atop the walls. You quickly organize an effective defense by taking command of a small group of five samurai. From your position you hold their superior numbers at bay. Gain 2 glory points.

Desperate defense: The wall has been crested on both sides of your position. You are cut off from your comrades and in dire danger of being overrun. Taking the only choice open to you, you put your back to the wall and fend off all attackers. Roll Water + Battle at a TN of 20. If successful, your ferocity pays off and the attackers turn to easier prey. If unsuccessful, take an additional 2 dice of Wounds. Gain 1 glory point.

Duel Muago: (Skip this Opportunity if Muago was slain in the Shadowlands.) A huge ogre swings his leg over the top of the wall and heaves his bulk to a standing position. Wielding a tetsubo, he dares you to come forward. Any PC nearby who is not in the reserves and who has not rolled a heroic opportunity this round may sacrifice any further actions and choose instead to assist the character fighting Muago, if desired. To do so the assisting PCs must roll a fear test at a TN of 15.

Call the reinforcements: You are sent to the rear to bring back reinforcements. You return as quickly as possible with the last Crab reinforcements. You are automatically disengaged next round.

Lead the charge: You direct the reinforcements, who charge into the fray like avenging spirits. Their charge sweeps all opposition before them. You are given much of

the credit for the successful assault. Gain 2 glory points.

Oni duel: A scorpion-tailed Oni begins carving a path toward you. Within moments it will be upon before you. You have no choice but to fight. Any PC who is not in the reserves and who has not rolled a heroic opportunity this round may elect to assist the character fighting the Oni, if desired. To do so the assisting characters must roll a fear test at a TN of 10. The Oni's statistics can be found on page 45. All characters who participate receive 1 glory point.

Defend the breach: Constant battering by Oni has caused a breach in the south wall. Summoning all samurai within hearing range, you charge into the breach and lead the defense. You are automatically heavily engaged for the rest of the battle.

Duel Makasu: You spy Makasu at the south gate. He appears to be trying to open the gate! You move quickly to stop him, but before you reach him, he manages to unbar the gate. His madness must be stopped. You must fight Makasu, or lose Kaiu Castle forever. Makasu enters the duel with three levels of Wounds (he rolls two fewer dice). If you lose, another PC must take up the challenge. Any PC who did not roll a heroic opportunity and who is not in the reserves may challenge Makasu, but only after the PC who initially rolled this engagement has fallen in combat with Makasu.

Seal the Gate: Although the gate is closed, the doors are no longer barred. The horde outside is attempting to push the gates open. All characters who did not roll heroic actions this turn can help bar the gate, unless they are in the reserves. Each PC makes a Strength roll at a TN of 20. The PCs must achieve a combination of three successes or raises to reseat the gate.

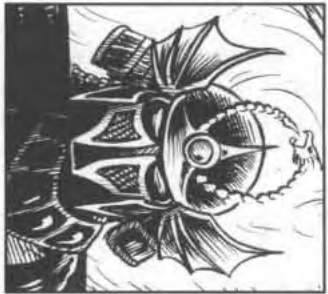


WHAT ABOUT HIDA SHIROI?

That question is really up to the GM. Shiroi may agree to accompany the characters for a time if they have performed exceptionally well, or if he has formed some type of attachment. He does have duties in Crab lands, however, so it is unlikely he would be able to accompany the PCs indefinitely. In the end it will up to the GM to determine.

One the other hand, Shiroi will certainly be a contact within the Crab court. Despite the characters' heroic actions, it is unlikely they could ever call upon Kisada, but Shiroi will certainly be favorably inclined toward them. If Shiroi (or the GM) is especially impressed with a PC's actions you can even make Shiroi an ally.

After the duel with Makasu, one of the other commanders will take over. If needed, this commander rolls 6k2 for Battle rolls.



TOGASHI YOKUNI
CHAMPION OF THE
DRAGON CLAN
(PAGE 7)



HIDA YAKAMO
SON OF THE CRAB
CLAN CHAMPION
(PAGE 10)



HIDA SHIROI
NEPHEW OF THE CRAB
CLAN CHAMPION
(PAGE 14)



HIRUMA MAKASU
COMMANDER OF THE
KUNI GUARD
(PAGE 18, 25)



HIDA KISADA
CHAMPION OF THE
CRAB CLAN
(PAGE 38)



TONSU
SHAMAN OF THE
GLUTFINGER TRIBE
(PAGE 32)



DAIDOJI JINSHI
CRANE DUELIST
(PAGE 17)



MUAGO
OGRE BUSHI,
COMMANDER OF THE
HORDE
(PAGE 21)

Dramatis Personae — Twilight Honor



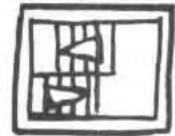
Legend of the Five Rings



Kuni Castle

Towers

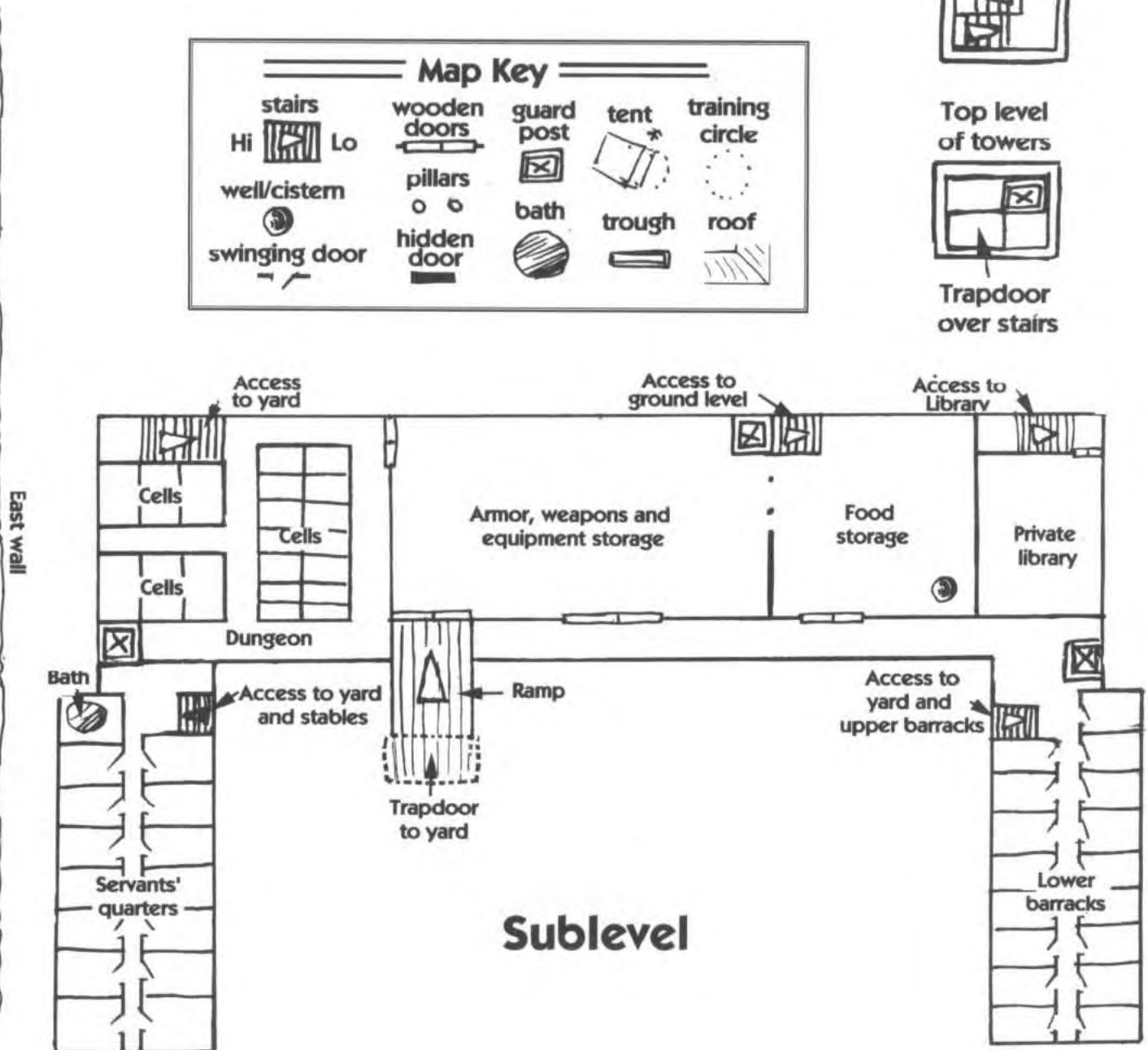
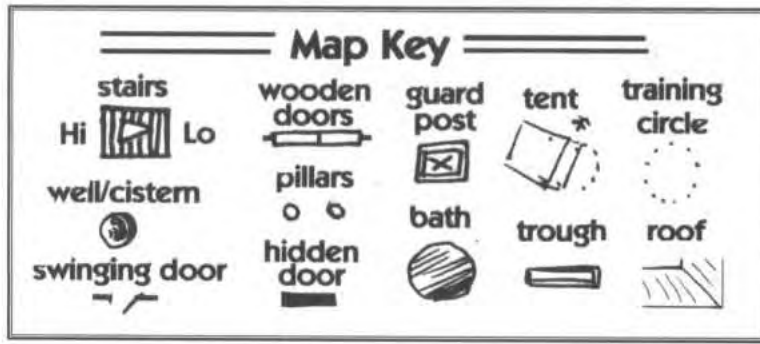
2nd level of towers



Top level of towers



Trapdoor over stairs



Twilight Honor

"When you have stared into the maw of the Shadowlands and slain your companions as they rise beyond death, only then will you understand."

– Hida Shiroi

In the Shadowlands, honor is a crutch that serves only to weaken duty. On the Great Kaiu Wall which separates the Empire from the rising tides of darkness, the Crab Clan give their lives willingly – a sacrifice to contain the evil of that foul realm.

But recently, the horde has grown powerful, and threatens to overwhelm the guardians of Kuni Castle. Their defenses mysteriously weakened from within, the southern outpost of the Crab may not withstand another assault.

If the Wall falls, the Emerald Empire will be destroyed. Armies of undead will swarm across the green plains of Rokugan and terrible Oni will carry out their Dark Lord's vengeance.

Are you strong enough to stand between the darkness and the light?

- Suitable for 3-6 mid-level (ranks 2-4) player characters.
- Filled with full-scale combat, *Twilight Honor* can be used independently or as part of an ongoing campaign.
- Requires a copy of the *Legend of the Five Rings* basic rules.



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