

The Way of the Clans: Book Three

The Way of the Crab

by Rob Vaux



Legend of the Five Rings™





Legend of the Five Rings

The Way of the Crab



Twenty million drown in blood if I am weak.

– Hida Yakamo



Credits

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**ADDITIONAL MATERIAL BY JOHN WICK, REE SOESBEE, CRIS DORNAUS,
CHRISTIAN VIKANDER AND ZEN FAULKES**

REPRINT THANKS

For the second printing of *Way of the Crab*, we asked to hear about things people really wanted to see changed. Those who answered the call included Chris Bigg, Ray Colina, Corinth, Lucien Cristofaro, David J Dolph, Tim Ellis, Luc Gadioux, David R. "Sanzo" Henry, Thomas Iverson, G Michael Jacobs, Ron James, Shosuro Kanzaki, Kathleen, Rob Kenny, David V Krieger, Otaku KunLiu, David E. Loewen, Stewart MacWilliam, Richard Maddy, Ian McAuliffe, Andrew McGregor, Craig Mercer, Andrew Meyer, Wayne Ogle, James Ojaste, Scott M. Parrish, Chris Payne, Dieter Pearcey, Ramón Peña, Devon E. Sanders, SkidMarxst, John Stepp, Martin Sweeney, Jay Swygert, Tengu, Foxtrot & Vex, Kyle Voltti, and Jay Wrobel. (If we've left your name out, we're very sorry - we tried not to miss anybody from the 2.5 MB of email you sent us!) Special thanks go to Scott Gearin, who went way above and beyond the call of duty in his contribution.

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Ree Soesbee helped clarify relations between the Crab and the Crane, worked on the Osano-Wo section, and made silly ratling noises whenever she could.

Zen Faulkes rustled us up some Crab decks.

Cris Dornaus came up with the adventure hooks.

David Williams made sure the rules worked, as always.

D.J. Trindle trimmed the text down to fighting shape.

Arnold Schwarzenegger provided inspiration whenever the creativity well ran dry. This never would have been finished without the last twenty minutes of *Predator*.

Frank Miller wrote the original version of Yakamo's quote, which we freely lifted. It actually belongs to a much bigger hero.

DEDICATION

This book is for Anita, who understands.

-RV

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What Does Not Kill Me

Hida Yoritoko – called “O-Ushi” almost since she was born – came of age four years before her *gempukku* ceremony. No one knew save her brother, and he never told a soul.

She used to watch him before he went out, standing at the ramparts of the Great Wall and staring out into the fog-shrouded wasteland beyond. She never bothered him during these meditations, but today was different. It may have been the way the fading light caught his form, or the intensity in his eyes; like one of their legendary ancestors. The time seemed right to ask him.

She crept up behind him softly, her black eyes twinkling. Her sandals were silent on the twilight-soaked stone as her chubby hand reached up to his belt. She snatched his katana from its saya with a snap, and brandished it fiercely in front of her. Yakamo spun around, his contemplation forgotten. Snarling in mock anger, he grabbed the thief by the scruff of her ten-year-old neck and lifted her up to his scowling face. O-Ushi was unperturbed.

“If I was a Scorpion, you’d be dead now,” she beamed at him.

“If you were a Scorpion, I’d break your neck for touching my sword,” he growled. With his free hand, he plucked the katana from her hand and replaced it in its saya. His eyes never left her face.

“And what should we do about this great dishonor you have inflicted upon me?” he asked.

“A duel to the death is the only proper way to erase such a blotch,” she replied with mock solemnity. “Fortunately for you, I’m in a forgiving mood. Let me down, and I won’t have to kill you.”

“Oh, now you are forgiving me? I thank the fortunes my little sister has taken pity on me.” He shook her viciously, then let her drop to his feet

with an undignified plop. She glared up at him, anger and mirth flashing in equal proportions across her face.

“I take it back. When you come back from the Shadowlands, I’ll have your head,” she threatened.

“I’m sure you will.” Yakamo’s face broke into a tired smile, and he knelt down where she lay. “What are you doing up here, O-Ushi? Besides stealing my sword, that is.”

The light dimmed in her eyes and her smile vanished.

“I want to go with you. Into the Shadowlands.”

“Do you?” he said. “And do you know what such a task entails?”

“Sensei says my *tsuchi* technique is the best he’s seen. And I was quiet enough to take your sword before you saw me.”

“I see. And you believe that strength of arms and fleetness of foot is all you need to face the Fallen God?”

She looked at him silently. He sighed.

“Do you suppose I can do my duty while protecting you at the same time?”

“I can take care of myself.” She was serious now, all traces of her former levity gone. Yakamo watched her face silently for a time, then rose.

“If courage were water, you’d have drowned long ago. Go back to your quarters, O-Ushi. I’ll only be gone a day or so, and I’ll tell you about it when I come back.”

“But I want to go with you.”

“When you’re older, little sister, you’ll think differently. Go, and I won’t tell father you touched *Chikara*.”

She flinched at the remark, and for a moment he thought she would launch herself at him. Then she rose to her feet, and bowed curtly before him.

“*Hai*, Yakamo-sama.”

She ran back the way she had come, her silence trampled beneath her flapping feet. Yakamo watched her go, then returned his gaze to the ghostly wasteland before him.



The door to the quartermaster’s storage room opened slowly. O-Ushi peeked in and made a cursory sweep of the room before her. Sacks of grain lay stacked by the walls, flanked by hung strings of dried fish. A score of coarse bedrolls stood rolled up on the far side of the room, while

shelves of empty water bottles stared down just within reach. Satisfied she was alone, she crept into the room and began collecting what she needed.

She had dressed conservatively, her dark gray clothes blending in well with the shadows. A pair of short knives were sheathed at her belt and her favorite hammer lay secure across her back. She didn't think she would need them, not after she reached her brother, but it was best to be prepared. She took a pair of water bottles, reminding herself to fill them at the well before she left. A side of fish came down with a little prodding from her knife, which she placed in one of the bedrolls.

She was interrupted by the sound of the door opening behind her. Spinning around, she tensed her arms as a hunched figure stepped into the room. The man's eyes widened at O-Ushi's slight form, and the girl relaxed as she recognized him. Quartermaster Kaiu Rioto.

"Hida O-Ushi!" he scolded. "What do you think you are doing, creeping around my storeroom like a rat!?"

"It is of no concern of yours, little clerk," she drew herself up to her full height and glared at him fiercely.

"You impertinent whelp," Rioto hissed. "I should tan your backside for speaking to me like that."

"I need a finger of jade," she continued, as if he hadn't spoken. "Where do you keep them?"

"Get out!" he shouted. "Get out and be thankful that I don't bring you before the daimyo!"

O-Ushi stopped and fixed him with a clear and unwavering gaze.

"The daimyo is my father," she spoke evenly. "And he would be displeased if he discovered one of his quartermasters selling supplies to cover gambling debts."

Rioto started with disbelief.

"What... what are you talking about?"

"Call it blackmail if you want." She gave him a sunny smile. "I heard it from the Yasuki. One finger of jade, little clerk, or I'll make you wish they had thrown you to the goblins."

The Kaiu began to sputter. "You..."

"Are the daughter of Hida Kisada, and not given to idle banter. The jade. Now."

He gaped at her, his mouth opening and closing like a fish. O-Ushi glared back him, and turned around as if to leave. That settled it. The

color drained out of Rioto's face; his shoulders slumped in defeat. Reaching behind a pile of sacks, he produced a stoutly locked iron box. He fumbled with the catch for a minute, then opened it with a snap and produced a thick wand of creamy green. Eldritch symbols had been carved into its side, and as O-Ushi took it, it seemed to her that it almost glowed with power. Her dark eyes glittered and she bowed low before the quartermaster.

"*Domo arigato*, little clerk. This can stay our secret, yes?"

She scampered out the door with a snicker and almost laughed aloud as the Kaiu slammed it shut behind her.



The moon shone bright across the River of the Last Stand as O-Ushi emerged from the bushes on the southern bank. The tunnel had led straight through beneath the waters, as she had known. The Kaiu engineers would throw fits if they knew that a ten-year-old had found one of their secret passages. She turned and looked back at the Kaiu Wall, rising like a mountain on the river's far side. Lanterns twinkled across its top, marking the sentries who stood watching for signs of attack. Very cautiously, she raised her arm and flashed a hand signal back towards the guards. If they spotted her, she wanted them thinking that she was a Hiruma scout lest they riddle her with arrows before she had gone a yard. She got no response from the wall; if they saw her they weren't letting her know. She stared hard at them for a few more minutes, then scurried away into the underbrush.

She moved cautiously at first, taking care to remain quiet. Here, with the wall practically within sight, it seemed almost silly. She had been raised on tales of the Shadowlands, on the way the landscape seemed to come to terrible life around you. She saw none of that here. Beneath the silver moon, the trees and bushes looked no different than those she played in around Hida castle. The wind did not shake their branches nor did any small animals rustle through their leaves, but that was all. For a kingdom of ultimate evil, it seemed a bit disappointing. Still, she had no intention of being caught, and disguised her movements accordingly.





She located Yakamo's path within an hour. Her brother's heavy footsteps marked the mud like a road sign, and two men who traveled with him made no pretense of hiding their tracks either. They followed what appeared to be a well-laid track, beaten from many other, smaller footprints. Combined with the moonlight, it made following them childishly simple.

The night moved towards morning as O-Ushi traveled on. The footprints moved steadily south, deeper and deeper into Fu Leng's Realm. The landscape changed subtly as she went along, so subtly she almost didn't notice. The trees took on ominous forms, their branches reaching silently across her path. The sounds of the night slowly returned, but they had an unnatural cadence to them – as if they were trying to sound ordinary and not quite succeeding. Although the path she followed remained clear, the ground beneath it had taken on an odd hue, almost like rotting flesh. The moon went down and utter darkness set in; O-Ushi realized that she had brought no form of light and while she could feel footprints beneath her fingers, she could barely make them out amid the dim starlight. Suddenly, she wanted to find Yakamo very quickly.

She began to hurry along the trail, now very conscious of the noise her movements made. The twitterings in the dark became louder as hints of grey streaked the sky to the east, now seeming to close in on her location. She moved to a trot, then a run, no longer watching where she ran. She thought of tugging her hammer free from her back, but couldn't reach it at a full sprint. The noise came louder, this time appearing in front of her. She set her teeth and continued to run, refusing to move from her brother's path. She did not notice that the light was growing brighter, and was unaware of the battle until she skidded headlong into it.

The clearing was lit by Yakamo's sword, burning jade fire into the early morning air. He grasped the ancestral weapon easily in his huge right fist, while spinning his tetsubo one-handed in his left. A pair of bushi flanked him in a triangular pattern, keeping their foes from circling around behind them.

They were surrounded by a mob of goblins, some thirty or more swarming into the clearing. The goblins held rusty weapons and sharpened sticks in their clawed hands, and seemed to disregard their opponents' obvious prowess. They leapt towards the nearest samurai in a wave,

burying him beneath the force of their numbers. His knees buckled under the weight, even as he cleaved his foes in half. He stumbled, then fell backwards with a shout as the goblins overwhelmed him. They took no notice of Yakamo, who swung his weapons with practiced ease in an effort to dislodge them from his comrade.

O-Ushi's hammer was in her hands almost before she could think. Her fear forgotten, she uttered a high pitched war-cry and leapt into the fight. The first goblin never saw her coming; she caught it behind the ear with a wet cracking sound. It uttered a surprised bark as it flopped sideways, the blow spinning it like a top.

"O-Ushi!" Yakamo's surprised yell echoed across the clearing. The goblins, apparently finished with the fallen bushi, now turned their attention to the new combatant. With a universal hiss, they sprang up and charged towards the young girl. Her eyes widened as she raised her hammer and prepared another blow.

It never fell. With a monstrous jerk Yakamo grasped his sister's collar and pulled her behind him. The surge of goblins crashed and broke against his armor. He swayed slightly, but did not fall; his lips curled in a snarl as he swung his tetsubo with blinding speed. The force of goblins shattered under his blows, the mob breaking into panicked groups of three or four. One goblin caught the full force of his blow, and flew backwards like a shattered kite. Another managed to grasp the tetsubo's spiked tip, and tried valiantly to shake it loose from its owner. It too went flying, landing on the packed earth with a meaty thud. Yakamo's remaining comrade took advantage of the distraction to slice a pair of goblins in two. They never saw the blade which killed them.

Sensing the battle was turning, Yakamo shifted his stance and redrew his katana. The jade symbols carved into it blazed anew, searching for foes to destroy. The sight of it was more than enough for the remaining goblins. They turned and fled, ignoring their brethren's dying cries in a desperate attempt to escape. The two samurai ran the stragglers down mercilessly. The goblins' shrieks had soon diminished to one or two rapidly quieting voices. With a satisfied grunt, Yakamo returned to the clearing.

O-Ushi watched it all with rapt attention, her eyes lit with excitement. She had killed a goblin at her brother's side! Her fear and anxiety were



forgotten, replaced with the flush of victory and the pride of accomplishment. She smiled broadly as her brother tramped back into view, and prepared to welcome him.

Her words faltered, however, when she saw the look on Yakamo's face. He gave her a black scowl that drained her emotions dry. He nodded to the other bushi, who walked silently up behind him.

"Go back to the wall, Koshi. Tell them that the goblins of Mura Shunobi are no longer a problem. We will remain here and tend to the remains."

The samurai bowed and turned to go.

"And Koshi..." Yakamo called after him. "Make no mention of my sister to anyone. Understand?"

"*Hai, Yakamo-sama.*" Without further word, he was off.

Yakamo knelt by the body of his fallen comrade and examined it closely. O-Ushi wanted to see what he was doing, but couldn't bring herself to approach him. His calm hid a hurricane. After a time, he grasped the dead man's daisho and pulled it free. Finally, he rose and strode towards her, closing the distance between them with alarming speed.

"Come here, O-Ushi," he gestured softly. There was no disobeying him. "I want you to sit here and watch the body with me."

"You want..."

"*Sit down, O-Ushi. Right. Now.*" She dropped instantly. He wiped the blood from his sword and sheathed it before kneeling down beside her. The fallen samurai's body lay in front of them, surrounded by shattered goblins. It had been pierced in five or six places; the gaping holes leaked blood which slowly began to pool around him. It didn't bother O-Ushi tremendously; she had seen men die before. Something in her brother's tone, however, suggested a greater solemnity than the situation seemed to warrant. She hugged her knees and waited for Yakamo to pronounce judgment.

They sat in silence for a long time, as the grey in the east continued to brighten. She dared not utter a word and he showed no inclination to speak either. They watched the body quietly while flies gathered around the corpses.

"Did you bring any jade with you?" he asked at last. She held the stone up. "Good. You're less of a fool than I thought."

She said nothing.

"What were you doing, O-Ushi? What did you think you could accomplish with this display?"

"I-I wanted to show you how strong I was."

"By throwing your life away?! Strength of arms and physical power are not enough to sway our foe, O-Ushi. The Shadowlands will not rest until they have snatched our souls and twisted our bodies to serve their whims. If you had not found us, it would have swallowed you whole."

"But I did find you..."

"And were almost killed in the process! We are less than six hours from the Kaiu Wall – what you saw today is *nothing*. Further south lie horrors you can scarcely imagine, O-Ushi: creatures whose foulness corrupts the very air they breathe. If you cannot handle a small band of goblins, what chance have you against one of them?"

She was quiet for a moment, then spoke again.

"But I can never meet that challenge until I can face these smaller ones."

"You are not ready to face these smaller ones, sister. A Crab is brave, but also wise. He does not throw his strength away on useless displays of courage. *Whom would you have benefited if you had died? Who would know or care if you traded your life so cheaply?*"

She remained silent as the words sunk in.

"I want you to watch," he continued. "And we will see if you are ready."



Morning dawned, cold and misty, the sun hidden beneath the clouds. The flies had landed in great swarms, feasting merrily on the dead. The stench would probably attract larger scavengers, and O-Ushi wasn't sure she wanted to be here when they arrived. Yakamo refused to move, though, staring stonily ahead at the fallen bushi.

Suddenly, his arm shot out, and he pointed his finger at the rising cloud of flies.

"*There!*"

The samurai's body began to shudder. Its limbs twitched and its neck creaked upwards as a low moan escaped its lips. Blackened blood trickled out of its mouth, matching the still-gaping wounds in its chest and belly. O-Ushi repressed the urge to scream and gripped her hammer tightly. The corpse planted its hands in the dirt and began to rise, its groans raising the hair on the back of her neck. It lurched to its feet and looked around dully as its glazed eyes settled on



the two Hida. It opened its mouth in a hideous scream, and began to shamble towards them.

"Kill it," Yakamo stated flatly. She hesitated.

"Kill it now, O-Ushi!"

The steel in her brother's voice egged her on. Clenching her fists around the handle of the hammer, she uttered what she hoped was a harrowing cry and ran towards the walking dead. Her first blow struck it square in the chest, knocking it backwards and leaving a flat impression where it connected. Moving quickly now, O-Ushi allowed her training to override the fear which gnawed at her heart. She swung her hammer again, this time striking the creature's jaw. Its head spun around with a bone-crushing snap, and hung limply on its side. O-Ushi smiled grimly and waited for the thing to collapse.

Instead, to her surprise, it seemed unperturbed. It lunged forward again, catching her clothing in its bloated hands and dragging her roughly to the ground. She struggled to maintain her composure as she felt its icy breath against her cheek. It wrenched its head forward again, its shattered jawbone sticking out of its cheek. It shifted its claws to her throat and began to squeeze the breath out of her.

Her hammer fell to the ground as her hands flailed behind her. Her eyes bulged and she could feel her gag reflex kick in, only to be cut off by the zombie's tightening grip. Frantically, almost blindly, she grasped the twin hilts of her knives and whipped them back around. The first plunged deep into the zombie's broken neck; the second caught it in the temple. It uttered a short chirp and released its grip ever so slightly. O-Ushi reacted instinctively; she ripped free of her opponent's claws, then slammed her head back into the zombie's face. The force of the blow, combined with the damage from her knives, was enough to take its head completely off. The skull popped free and bounced to the ground like a child's ball. The body stiffened and for a moment, O-Ushi thought that would renew its grip. Then it tumbled away from her, robbed of its locomotion by the loss of its head.

She stood there for a moment, waiting to see if it would rise again. It didn't. When she realized that she was out of danger, the shudders overwhelmed her and she fell to her knees. She stayed that way for some time, until she felt Yakamo's warm hand on her shoulder.

"It-it wanted to kill us," she shook.

"Yes," he agreed. "Every human being who dies in the Shadowlands rises again as one of these. Without soul, without memories, hungering only for the living flesh of those they once called kin." The zombie jerked spasmodically and O-Ushi flinched. "This is the power we fight, O-Ushi – the power to utterly destroy who we are. Can your courage stop this from happening to you? Can your strength or martial skills?"

"No... no," she muttered quietly. "It would take more."

"It requires a willingness to do what no one else will. It takes the ability to strike down a comrade before he can strike you down. Look at me, O-Ushi."

He grasped her chin and lifted her head, his eyes burning holes in her face.

"If you had to kill me in this fashion, could you do it? If I were to rise, as he did, and take arms against my Clan, could you take my head and send my soul screaming into the void?"

Her eyes went black, as if a small light had been extinguished.

"Yes," she whispered. "Yes I could."

Yakamo smiled fiercely.

"Then you know what it means to be a Crab."

Rising up, he took his sister by the hand and led her away.



Welcome to *Way of the Crab*, the third in our *Way of the Clans* series. This sourcebook is designed to help players and Game Masters develop their own versions of the harsh and unbending Crab Clan. Since the coming of Shinsei, the Crab have defended Rokugan's southern border against the unholy forces of Fu Leng. Their task has shaped them into one of the strongest forces in Rokugan, yet they remain deeply misunderstood by the other major clans. This book is intended to shed some light on those misunderstandings, and to try and convey the unique way in which the Crab look at the world.

As usual, the Gamemaster has the final say over all matters in his or her game. If he or she envisions a Crab Clan different from the one described here, expect some discrepancies from what you read.



The first chapter contains some letters and anecdotes explaining the relations between the Crab and the rest of Rokugan.

The second chapter covers the long history of the Crab's battle with the Shadowlands, their squabbles with the other Clans, and the lives of their greatest heroes. It also includes information on the five families that comprise the clan, and the duties they fulfill.

The third chapter contains expanded information on creating a Crab character, including new families, schools, skills and advantages.

The fourth chapter details the most important members of the Clan, including their Traits, Rings, and Skills.

The fifth chapter lists five ready-to-play characters, complete with portraits and character sheets. All you have to do is photocopy the sheets out of the book, and you're ready to go.

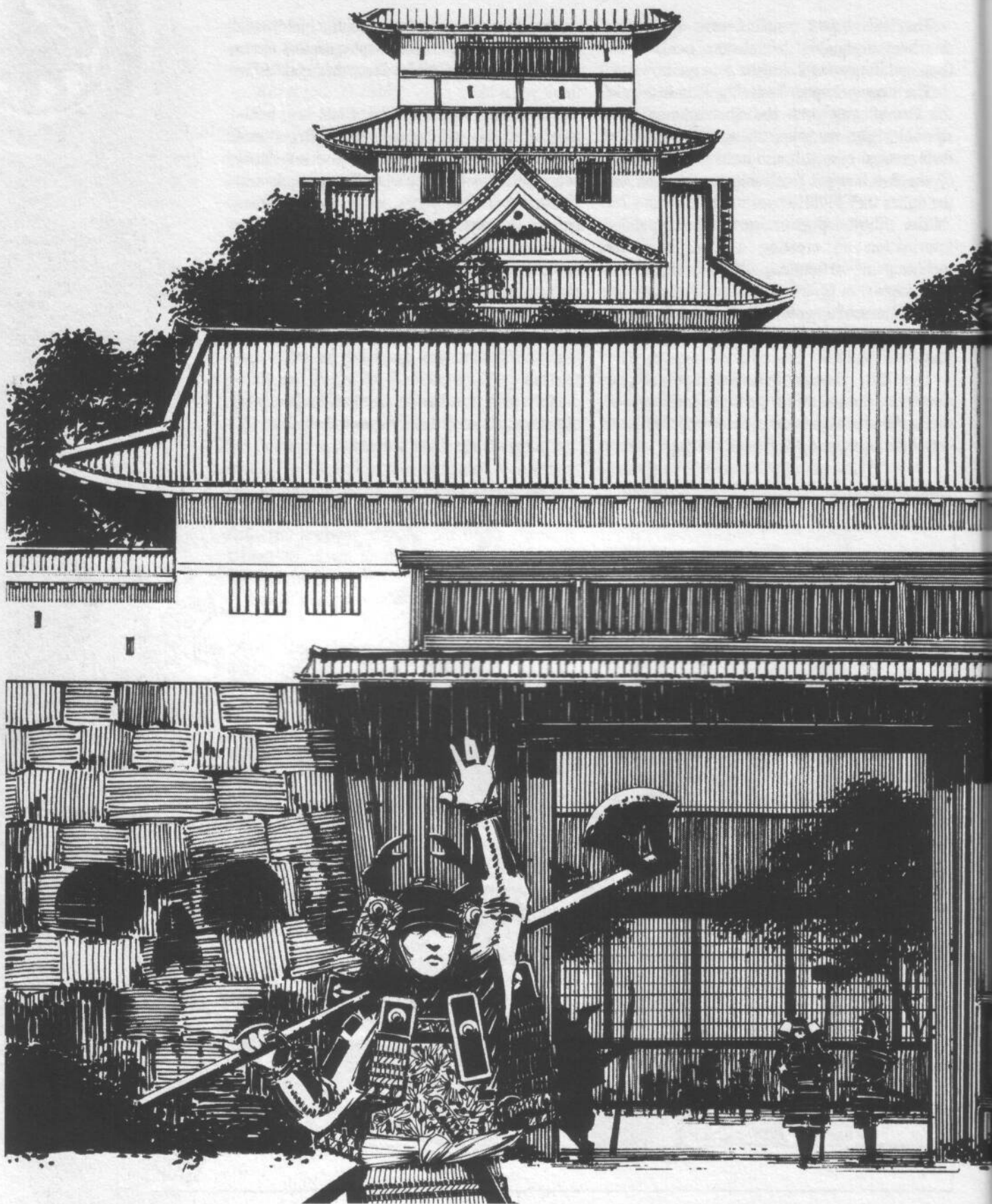
Finally, we've included some additional material on the Crab's philosophy, combat tactics, spells, magic items, and a few other goodies we think you'll like.

While the rulers of the Crab are bound together as kin, parts of their "family trees" have been deliberately left blank, so you may insert your characters into the Clan hierarchy. As with the first two Clan books, we've included many famous Crab heroes of the past; if one of them strikes your fancy, you may take him or her as an ancestor for your character – for a certain amount of character points, that is.

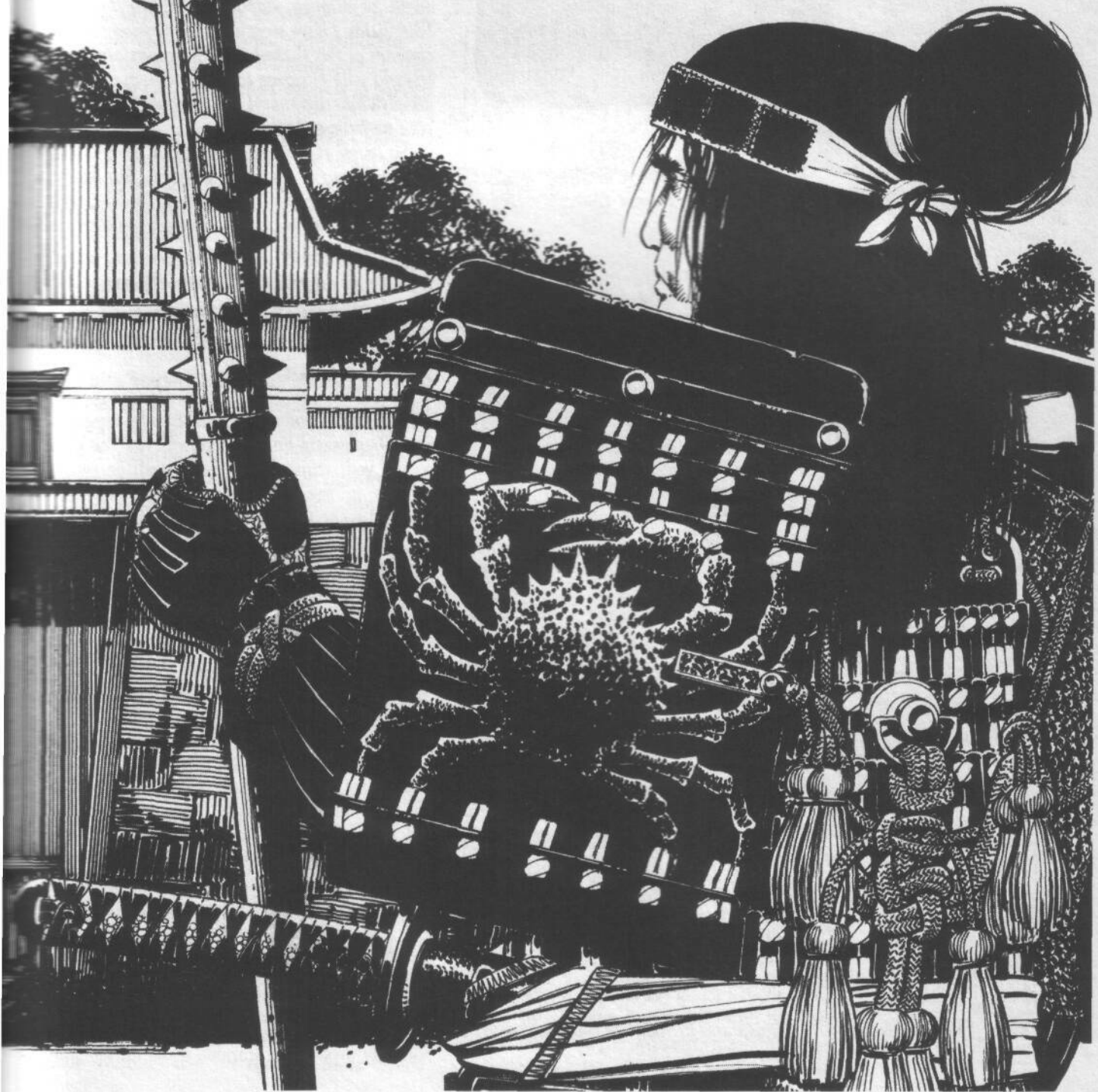
For ten centuries, the Crab have stood guard against the greatest enemy the Emerald Empire has ever known. Are you ready to learn their secrets?

Then grab your katana and don't forget a piece of jade; you'll need them where we're going. Courage is not just a word.





Chapter One: The Mighty Crab





HIDA'S GIFT

Once when the world was young, a little crab named Hida was swimming in the river, looking for a wedding gift. "I *have* to find a gift for the Emperor and his bride," he said as he scuttled from riverbed to riverbed, but he could not.

Finally, he found a stone that flashed with all the colors of Lady Sun's robe, hidden deep beneath the mud of the riverbed. Content that he had found the best gift that he could, Hida went to Otosan Uchi.

By the time he got there, it was dark. The wedding had been over for many hours. Hida went looking for the Emperor and his bride, to give them their gift.

He looked all through the palace, but he could not find them. Finally, he thought he heard a noise behind a door, and he peeked in. He saw the Emperor lying back on his bed, covered in sweaty fear.

Peering deeper into the darkness, Hida saw why.

Sitting on the Emperor's chest was a scorpion, its tail ready to sting. Hida gasped. The Emperor had married a scorpion in disguise!

The crab threw himself at the scorpion, just as her stinger struck at the Emperor's chest. But the force of Hida's blow threw her off balance, and as she fell, Hida felt her stinger pierce his flesh. Suddenly, his limbs grew cold as the poison worked its way toward his heart. He saw the scorpion on the window sill, but could do nothing.

(continued on p. 14)

Chapter One: The Mighty Crab

Something bearing my father's face and weeping my mother's tears comes clawing up from the depths, screaming for me to join them. I feel its talons against my armor, snapping leather and metal as if they were origami. I reach for my tetsubo as I hear its hideous laugh, and I know that one blow is all it will allow before it tears the entrails from my bones.

And you sit in your palace and lecture me on courage.

The wall stretches a thousand leagues long, filled with samurai preparing for siege. A sea of goblins stands before me, howling unnameable curses into the air. As they begin to cross the river, I hear that the Crane have launched another foray against our borders to the north. Yet I can do nothing but stay where I am and ensure that no goblin escapes to terrorize the same Cranes who steal our land.

And you lie in your garden and tell me about duty.

The dismal stink of the Shadowlands surrounds us. A towering Ori grabs a pair of bushi and shakes them like children's dolls, snapping their bones into powder. I hear their pleas for help and ignore them, knowing that I am condemning them to a fate worse than death. My daimyo is depending upon me to escape this horror, or hundreds more will die as my companions have.

And you stand in your silk robes and explain to me what honor is.

You are children playing games to fill your empty lives. You are infants squalling for your toys, pretending that nothing else holds meaning in this world. You are old women hunched around the fire, telling yourselves that the shadows beyond cannot hurt you.

I am the Crab. I have witnessed horrors that you can scarcely conceive of and watched the death of enough samurai to fill a hundred battlefields. I have seen what lies beyond the soft confines of this make-believe kingdom, and I am charged with ensuring that your dream does not dissolve into nightmare. I am the sole protector of your pathetic existence.

So laugh at me if you will. Mock my uncouth behavior, start at my crude language. But do not speak to me of courage, little man. Do not speak to me of duty or honor. You haven't the slightest idea what they mean.

LETTER ADDRESSED TO AKODO HIRANO, LION CLAN DAIMYO, FROM IKOMA YURI, AMBASSADOR TO THE SCORPION CLAN.

Greetings, Akodo-sama, and may the blessings of our benevolent Emperor find you well this day! As per your request, I have recorded the events leading to the injury of Bayushi Kiyogimi, nephew to the venerable Bayushi daimyo. While my lord has doubtless heard news of the scandal, he may not have heard the shocking details surrounding Kiyogimi's insult. Never in the annals of diplomacy have I heard of such a disgraceful and dishonorable sight as I witnessed that day.

The diplomatic corps of Bayushi palace had assembled to celebrate the birthday of Bayushi Mochiko, the daimyo's mother and dowager of the Bayushi family. The crowd was dressed in finery befitting such an august occasion; as per Bayushi custom, we had allowed ourselves to be bathed by the family's servants just prior to the proceedings. Having never experienced the tradition before, I confess to suffering a strong anxiety at the thought: after all, if the Scorpion wish to dispose of an adversary, there will never be a more opportune time than when he is naked and vulnerable in their own house. I mention this because it has important bearings on what happened next.

The ceremony was held with all the pomp the normally mysterious Scorpion could muster. The

celebration which followed contained all the subtleties one would expect from such a gathering. The plots grew and multiplied beneath the cheerful decor, and we were all soon engaged in brokering relations between our mighty Clans – as is natural for such an occasion. Our business was disturbed, however, by the arrival of a late visitor to the proceedings. He appeared at the door like a spectre, leaving a trail of confused servants in his wake. He strode quickly through the assemblage, who quieted their politicking at the sight of his huge form. His helm bore the crest of the Crab Clan – the only such crest to be seen at the celebration.

The samurai's decor stood in sharp contrast to the remainder of the room. He was in full armor, nicked in a hundred places and spattered with mud from the road. His face was unshaven and his katana hung easily from his belt – ready to be drawn at a moment's notice. Scorpion masks – both metaphorical and actual – revealed no trace of emotion, but the shock at seeing such a man in such a condition could be felt in palpable waves throughout the room.

"I have been taken from my duties at the Kaiu wall to attend this... celebration," the Crab rumbled, adding a note of disdain to the last word. "Apparently, you all feel that a milestone in one woman's life means more than the continued safety of Rokugan. Nevertheless, you have called, and the Crab will adhere to the tenets of etiquette. At the behest of my Lord Hida, I have come bearing a gift for the dowager." He opened his hand to reveal a small egg, crafted of jade and ruby. At a touch, the egg sprang open; within it lay a scene of dancers and acrobats, who moved with mechanical precision across its surface. Its artistry was all the more inspiring for the unclean oaf which held it. He placed it on the ground before the speechless dowager, bowed low before her, and turned to go.

The Crab moved swiftly back towards the entrance, intending to exit the way he had come. This seemed to assuage the crowd's anxiety and talking slowly returned to the room – albeit in hushed and scandalous tones. Kiyogimi, however, was not to be left in such a manner. He followed in the Crab's wake, apparently planning to pursue the matter further.

What happened next was difficult to fathom. I know that Kiyogimi approached the Crab just before he reached the stables, and I know that he made overtures that the rumped bushi should

stay awhile. My colleague in the Phoenix clan maintains that Kiyogimi had expressed gratitude for the Crab's gift, and asked that the samurai remain and wash the dust of the road from his tired form. When he demurred, Kiyogimi insisted, stating that it was tradition that all present bathe as a courtesy to their hosts.

Apparently the statement did not go over well with the Crab, and I was close enough to see the



response. In a flash he tore the young Scorpion's mask asunder and demanded that Kiyogimi draw his katana so that he could "die like a man." The color drained out of Kiyogimi's now-bare face, and he haltingly asked what he had done to deserve such treatment.

"You ask me to lower my guard in your house, yet you do not even lower your own," the Crab snarled. He tucked the Scorpion's mask in his belt and folded his arms, as if daring Kiyogimi to push





HIDA'S GIFT (CONTINUED)

The Emperor rose quickly. He grabbed his sword and pulled the steel free into the cool air. The scorpion sniggered. "You have a choice, my lord," she said. "You can chase me, or you can save the little crab who saved your life."

The Emperor knew there was no choice. He sheathed the sword and took the tiny crab into his hands as the scorpion scuttled away. He thanked the crab for his courage, and said a quick prayer as Hida's soul slowly slipped away from his flesh.

But then, a flash of sunlight came from the crab's gift in the doorway. The Emperor saw the stone and took it into his hands. "You are in luck, my friend," he told Hida. For this is one of my mother's tears. I shall use it to heal your wound."

By morning, Hida was well and the Emperor thanked him for saving his life. Then, he gave the crab a gift: the small rock that was the tear of Lady Sun.

"Take this with you wherever you go, my friend," said the Emperor. "Let it be your new home."

And that is how a crab saved the Emperor's life, and why all crabs now carry their home on their backs – to protect them from scorpion stings.

his luck. After staring at the Crab for several moments, Kiyogimi turned away, lowering his head in shame. The Crab mounted his horse and stormed out, the mask still hanging from his belt. During the entire episode, no one had thought to ask him his name.

Certainly, you are aware of the uproar which followed. The Bayushi demanded restitution for the insult; the Crab maintained that their emissary had acted properly. The Bayushi demanded that the mask be returned; the Crab intimated that they were welcome to take it if they could. The Bayushi threatened retribution; the Crab responded with stony silence. Finally, the matter seemed to settle in the background, with the Bayushi retreating – presumably to plot some vengeance – and the Crab continuing their duties as if the incident never occurred. We doubtless have not heard the last of this from either party.

The incident and its repercussions demonstrates the great danger in inviting the Crab to any civilized affair. They lack the manners and inclination to behave like proper Rokugani. Leave them to their duties, my lord, and their barbaric demeanor will never trouble you. Invite them into your house, and you court disaster. Should you ever feel the need to bring one of them to your own gathering – be it military, personal or diplomatic – I urge you to bear this incident in mind. I would sooner see a herdsman's swine at court than any of their dour and hateful faces.

Your Most Obedient Servant,
Ikoma Yuri

EXCERPT FROM A TREATISE ON THE RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY OF KUNI MOKUNA BY DAIDOJI NAZOKO

...There have been many tales spread about my master – some truthful, most distorted beyond reproach – yet no one has ever asked how I came to meet him. I find this curious, since I have endured countless questions as to how an Iron Crane – an established bushi with no hope of ever learning the shugenja way – could apprentice herself to a Kuni "madman." But be that as it may, my relationship with Mokuna-sama began thus:

I was fifteen years old and had just completed my *gempukku* ceremony at the Daidoji school.

Word reached us that an ogre bandit had been preying on our southern territories, operating out of the nearby Kuni Wastes. My *sensei* swore he would bring the monster to justice, and together, the two of us set out in search of its lair. We tracked the beast for several days. It had apparently gotten word of our pursuit, for the path led further and further south into the wastelands. After a lifetime spent amid the gardens of the Crane Clan, the blasted landscape came as quite a shock. Nothing lived or breathed on the Kuni plains – not a bird, not a flower, not a blade of grass. It was all cracked soil and shifting sands, as if a mighty fire had seared the earth itself. Occasionally, a deadened tree could be seen, or a rundown building would become visible on the horizon. We never approached any of them, for they marked the territory of the Kuni magicians and we had no wish to intrude upon their solitude.

We journeyed on, gradually growing closer to our prey. At last we spotted what appeared to be its campsite, just within sight of a great shattered tower. My *sensei* pointed the building out and whispered to me. "There lies the dwelling of Kuni Mokuna, the most terrible shugenja since Iuchiban himself. We must not draw his attention, lest he come to assist our quarry." I shuddered in agreement and clutched my naginata closer as we prepared to engage the ogre.

We charged into his campsite as one, brandishing our weapons with the peak of all our skills. The creature looked up from its crude campfire and grinned fiendishly at us, a great club clutched in its hands. It laughed as it rose to meet us, a sound which haunts my nightmares to this day. As we pressed the attack, it uttered a short bark, then swung its club before the fire.

We never heard them coming.

My *sensei* barely had time to turn before the second ogre attacked; its blow shattered his skull like a melon. My war-cry fell silent at the sight, and as I backed slowly up, I saw a third ogre clamber into firelight to the right of the other two. Sensei's body shuddered in a death spasm, and the trio of ogres advanced almost mockingly towards me. I stood in the center of their circle, vowing to make my death a costly one and swinging my naginata in slow sweeping arcs. Their leader, the bandit we had tracked so far, lifted his club high above me and prepared to crush the life from my body. It was then that Mokuna struck.

He stood at the edge of the firelight, all but invisible in the shadows. He whispered strange words, entreating the *kami* spirits to come to his aid. The ground crackled and shook as bolts of light erupted from his fingertips and slammed into the nearest ogre. The force lifted the beast off the ground and threw it flat, even as it seared unearthly burns across its leathery skin. I saw the bandit's face lose its grin at the sight of him, and its eyes betrayed a hint of fear for the first time in the encounter. Mokuna took advantage of the hesitation by repeating his spell, this time loosing its fury on the one who had killed my sensei. It howled in pain as the light engulfed it, the flesh peeling from its bones like parchment.

That was all the bandit needed. With a quick yelp, it spun on its great legs and prepared to flee into the night. But Mokuna struck before it could move, launching a third spell directly on the heels of the first two. Later, I would marvel at his unearthly stamina – how could he invoke the *kami* so rapidly and with so much power? Its effectiveness, however, was never in dispute. The last ogre uttered a brief cry before being engulfed in magical energy. I could feel it shimmering around me like water, cold and exhilarating. When it faded, the bandit was gone. In its place stood a jade statue, carved perfectly in its likeness and echoing with its screams.

I was speechless, both in awe of his magical prowess and in fear at seeing the dread Kuni Mokuna for the first time. There could be no doubt that my rescuer was the same man *sensei* had warned me about not two hours earlier. He stood shorter than I was by a hand-span, a toughened sinewy man of approximately forty-five years. His hair was tied back beneath a broad peasant's hat, and his body was swathed in a coarse gray robe. He clutched a pair of scrolls in each of his hands, the writing on them glowing with an unearthly light. Only later did I recall how his fingers quivered, as the cost of casting so many spells took its toll on his fortitude. He stepped into the firelight and slowly surveyed his handiwork, the scrolls never leaving his clutches.

"How... how did you do that?" I finally managed to gasp at him. He looked up from the smoldering corpses and gave me a cheerless smile.

"By knowing them as I know myself," he replied.

I would not leave his side for another twenty years.





Chapter Two



The History of the Crab



**"KNOWLEDGE,
PREPARATION,
ACTION."**

This statement is the creed of the Crab Clan, symbolized by the Kuni, the Kaiu, and the Hiruma. The Hida make a decision. Then the other three are expected to carry that decision out: the Kuni learn as much as they can about the issue in question. They then turn their knowledge over to the Kaiu, who transform it into concrete form: defenses, weaponry, etc. With the preparations in place, it is up to the Hiruma to implement them.

It's rarely this simple, of course, and practical necessity has dictated a certain amount of overlap, but in theory, this is how Crab families are supposed to function within the Clan.

Chapter Two: History of the Crab

Crab history is defined by one thing: the Shadowlands. No other clan has such a threat to deal with; no other clan is so focused in purpose. Everything the Crab does is balanced against and judged in relation to their sacred duty of protecting Rokugan from the forces of darkness. For one thousand years, it has been the sole purpose of their being.

The First Crab

When the sons and daughters of Heaven fell to the Earth, they held a series of contests to determine who among them was fit to rule. Hida, by far the largest and strongest of the eight, easily won all of the tests involving power and endurance. In the contests which required wits and insight, however, he was sorely outmatched by his more canny brothers and sisters. During the final test, he was the first of the eight to fall. Counting on his tremendous strength to compensate for his simple tactics, he was no match for Lady Shinjo, whose speed and cleverness quickly rendered him helpless. The humiliation at such a loss – and so early in the test – was more than he could bear, and he stalked away from his brothers and sisters to fume in solitude. He berated himself for hours, cursing his clumsiness and his inability to marshal his strength effectively.

His brooding was broken by the appearance of a little old man with a shaved head, dressed in simple robes. A raven sat on the old man's shoulder. He sat down opposite the hulking Hida, who did not stir at his approach.

"Why are you angry, my son?" the old man asked. Hida didn't look up.

"I am angry because I am weak, and because my strength could not save me from that weakness."

The old man smiled – sadly it seemed – and spoke again.

"Knowing your weakness is a form of strength, First Crab. Seek the truth in that, and you will never be beaten again."

Hida's head rose from his hands as he looked at the old man.

"But my weakness caused me to fall first," he replied.

"No. Your inability to accept your weakness caused you to fall first. But now you know it, and in knowing it, you transform it into strength. Lies are told by those who would deny their weakness. The truth can only live in those who see what they are."

Hida stared in wonder as the old man's words sank in.

"Why did you tell me these things?"

"Because you wanted to hear them."

With that, the old man bowed and went on his way.



Hida pondered the discourse for many hours after that before finally rising and returning to his brothers and sisters. As the years went by and Rokugan grew and prospered, the First Crab sought to apply what he had been told. He learned to temper his strength with strategy, and engage opponents on his terms, not theirs. He developed ways to goad his enemies into an unthinking rage. He watched the Lion and Dragon closely, working to gain their tactical knowledge and apply it to his own style. And he came to appreciate the concept of calculated loss, of expending only part of his power to exhaust and undermine his foes. Twenty years later, when the army of Fu Leng rose to challenge the Hantei, Hida had become the most feared warrior in the Emerald Empire.

The battle against Fu Leng gave the first Crab an opportunity he could not resist. Where others saw only death and destruction, Hida saw a test: a test to see if he – and his brothers and sisters – were truly strong enough to rule. While the Lion Akodo led the Armies of Hantei and the Crane Doji formed the Emperor's personal guard, it was

Hida who stood at the vanguard of the battle. The monstrous spirits of Fu Leng had to fight their way through the Crab before engaging other units, and Hida's forces took horrendous casualties. Even so, they ensured that the Oni paid for every step. Legend has it that Hida engaged Fu Leng himself at one point during the war, shattering his personal guard and delivering a painful injury to the dark lord.

Through these actions, Hida was able to help slow the advance of the forces of darkness. When Shinsei appeared and made his offer of assistance to Hantei, Crab efforts had ensured that there were still enough men to engage Fu Leng one last time. Though depleted more than any other Clan, the Crab forces were still strong enough to form the heart of the Emperor's army. Hida sent his own son, Hida Atarasi, as one of the Seven Thunders who would journey into the Shadowlands with Shinsei. Though he knew it meant the boy's death, he would not hear of sending anyone else. "If Shinsei will not have my strength or my weapons," he said, "then I will give him my future."

With Shinsei's help and the sacrifice of the Seven Thunders, the Army of Light was able to destroy Fu Leng's forces. The First Crab fought like a man possessed, slaughtering more oni than any three other bushi. Standing on the battlefield afterwards, surrounded by the bodies of a thousand dying demons, Hida swore to battle the Shadowlands until Lord Moon and Lady Sun fell from the sky. The battle continues to this day.

The Beginning of Meaning

Hearing Hida's vow and impressed with his performance in the war, the Emperor charged him with protecting Rokugan from any further attacks.


"Our safety is on your shoulders, brother," Hantei said. "For only you are mighty enough to bear its weight."

Gathering his followers together, the First Crab traveled to the southern reaches of the Empire, a harsh and rocky place where the Elements themselves had grown strong. At the foot of a great mountain range, Hida stopped, and turned to the followers.

"This is where we will live," he boomed. "And where we will work to ensure that He Who Must Not Be Named can never threaten the Emerald Empire again. My son has been swallowed by his evil; only those willing to make his sacrifice can be trusted with this task. I need the best among you to help me fulfill our sacred duty. Who is strong enough to pick up the burden with me?"

The assemblage fell silent, for none felt worthy to answer the Crab Lord's call. Hida's smoldering eyes gazed across the unmoving figures, waiting. Finally, three men stepped forward and knelt before him. The first had a soft green kimono and a quiver of arrows upon his back. The second was dressed in a sooty smock, and held a blacksmith's





hammer in his meaty arms. The third wore a hooded robe and carried a satchel of scrolls upon his belt. Hida furrowed his brow and looked down at the trio.

"What are your names, you who would stand beside me?" he asked.

"I am Hiruma, hunter of a thousand hares," the first replied.

"I am Kaiu, builder of ships and armor," the second spoke.

"I am Kuni, seeker of that which is hidden," the third answered.

"What have you done to deserve such confidence as I will place in you?"

The threesome looked up into Hida's eyes, meeting his gaze with their own

"Nothing," Hiruma said quietly.

"Nothing?"

"Nothing we have done can match the task now set before us." The other two nodded in agreement.

"Then why do you step forward?"

"Because we know we are worthy."

"Do you, now?" his face darkened. "We will see." He pointed south, to the desolate wastelands that marked the beginning of the Shadowlands.

"When the Oni army was vanquished," he began, "they left behind a guardian, a lieutenant of He Who Must Not be Named, charged with watching the lands of men. Its name is Oni no Hatsu Suru and its very touch brings neverending pain. Find it and kill it. Then I will know that you are worthy."

The trio bowed again, and gathered their possessions to travel south, away from their assembled Clan.

At the edge of the wastelands, they stopped, to talk about what they must do. Kuni studied his scrolls – the writings of Shinsei and various Phoenix shugenja – for some bit of knowledge that might help them. Kaiu built his forge in the hollow of a rock, and prepared lengths of steel and jade to transform into weapons. Hiruma ventured into the Shadowlands to search for some signs of their foe. As the Sun set in the west, the trio gathered together by the light of Kaiu's forge to discuss their findings. Hiruma spoke first.

"There are signs of the creature's presence all across these plains," he said. "It has great reptilian footprints the size of a riding pony. And I found scales." He brought forth a handful of leathery scraps, covered with strange wiry hair.

Kuni grasped one and brought it into the light, studying it carefully. It was as hard as armor and inflexible as steel.

"We cannot destroy this with ordinary weapons," he said, opening one of his scrolls and peering at its



contents. "We need magic – the magic of the spirit world – to have a chance.

"Look here," he pointed. "We can form a boundary, using jade and magic. If we can lure the thing into it, it will be trapped."

Kaiu nodded. "I can forge a weapon of jade and steel for us to attack it once it is encased, for no oni can tolerate the purifying touch of jade."

Hiruma smiled. "I can locate the beast and lure it wherever you like."

Kuni returned the smile. "It appears, then, as if we have a plan.



All that night, the trio worked, preparing their trap. Kaiu's forge blazed, as a new katana took shape in the molten steel. Kuni chose a site for the trap and began etching symbols into the earth, forming a strangely-shaped boundary as large as the moon's shadow. And Hiruma set about marking a bloodtrail – slitting his palm and letting the blood flow to the ground – for the Oni to locate and follow. As night slowly gave way to daybreak and the blackened sky became tinged with grey, their tasks grew close to completion.

The roar came just as Kuni finished his inscriptions. It was some ways off, but still shattered the air with its impact. Several moments later, Hiruma scrambled into sight, his breath coming in short gasps.

"The beast... the beast is on its way," he panted.

Another roar punctuated his remarks, this one closer. Kaiu stepped forward.

"My work is done." He held forth the katana for the other men to see. It was still dark with the soot of the fire, but as they looked they could see characters of green decorating the blade. The cunning blacksmith had etched words in jade along the length of the sword, fusing stone and metal together in perfect symmetry. Hiruma, still puffing and blowing, took the katana from Kaiu, and bowed in thanks to his companion.

The sounds of crushing underbrush and the snorts of something not meant to be reached the ears of the three men. Kuni stepped forward, scroll in hand.

"The spell requires utter concentration. You must keep our foe away from me until the binding is complete." He closed his eyes, and

began his entreaties to the spirits of Earth and Air. Hiruma and Kaiu took places alongside him.

The predawn light was shattered once more as the Oni made its presence known. As it shambled into view, the men could see it for the first time and their hearts were filled with fear. It stood huge, as large as a house and nearly as wide. Its razor-sharp claws tore up great chunks of earth, rending the ground beneath it like a *heimiri's* plow. Rough, hairy scales covered its body from head to toe, and its prehensile neck whipped back and forth in a hypnotic pattern. Its face was eerily human, a vision made more horrifying by the multiple rows of sharp teeth lining its mouth. And for all its beastly mannerisms, the light of intelligence gleamed in its eyes. It grinned fiendishly, and launched itself at the three men.

With a scream of defiance, Hiruma silenced his fears and rose to meet their foe. His katana flashed once, and the Oni let loose a terrible bellow as the blade cut through the armor of his hide. It had not expected its prey to sting so painfully. Shifting its body to keep Hiruma in front of it, its darting eyes located Kuni – lost in concentration. The shugenja was trying something, it could see. It raised its claws and prepared to crush the chanting spellcaster beneath its weight.

A second sting sprang from Hiruma's hands and the Oni was forced to draw back again. It aimed another swipe at the shugenja, this one designed to rip him in two. As the blow fell, however, Kaiu leaped in front of his companion. The claws bit deep into the blacksmith's chest, scraping against the bones of his ribcage. Kaiu winced and fell backwards, blood spurting from his terrible injury. The oni grinned again and opened its mouth inhumanly wide, intending to swallow Kuni whole. Before it could strike, however, the spell took effect.

The symbol in the earth began to glow as if alive, sending shafts of greenish light stabbing upward. The oni's motions stopped, and it began to shake uncontrollably as a new, powerful force entered the fray. Its head whipped back and forth, its screams sent shudders down the three men's spines, but its claws did not move. It was transfixed.

A sweat broke out on Kuni's brow, and Kaiu could see the effort taking its toll on his companion's face. He propped his body up from where it lay and shouted at Hiruma, his voice hoarse with pain. The hunter turned and saw his



ROKUGANI CURSES

As a clan best known for its directness and blunt manners, the Crab are the unquestioned masters of the outraged rant. A Hida samurai with his wind up can spew enough epitaphs to make a Mantis sailor blush with shame. Incidents of shouting matches leading to duels pepper the court histories, and most diplomats tread very carefully when approaching a Crab in conversation.

In order to help you role-play a Crab samurai to the fullest effect, we've provided a list of some of the more common Rokugani curses. Keep in mind that no one of noble rank (outside of the Crab, that is) would ever stoop to using such uncouth language, and the random hurling of oaths can easily result in honor loss or worse. Be ready to back your words up with strength.



CRAB THREATS

Itaime-ni – Want to feel some real pain?

Fu-tsugo ga arimashitaka – Do you have a problem?

Hame wo hazusu – Make merry or suffer the consequences.

Uchi no kaisha – Stay away from my family.

Kenka uten noka – Are you looking for a fight?

Ome wa dare da! – Who do you think you are?!

Mapputatsuni hiki sakuwayo! – I'll tear you in half!

companions, one drenched in blood, the other engaged in a battle of souls to hold the oni in place. With lightning speed, he spun on his heel and launched himself at the monster's head. His blade fell as he rose.

The blow was solid, striking between the creature's neck plates. Hiruma felt the katana shear through muscle, sinew and bone; heard the oni's shouts turn into cries of pain, then choking gurgles as black blood flooded its throat. It spat a great goblet of bile as its head separated from its neck. Its fluids burned the ground where they fell, and the oni's great body collapsed with a colossal thud. The severed head continued to sputter and gnash its teeth for some time after the body had stopped moving.

Hiruma rose from where he had fallen after the leap and turned to examine his comrades. Kaiu had managed to regain his feet, and was doing his best to close his wounds. Kuni had come out of his trance, and was gazing at the shuddering oni with a strange smile playing across his face. Hiruma attended to Kaiu's wounds, which were deep but not mortal, and the trio lay down to rest, their goal accomplished.

They returned to Lord Hida the next day, bearing the carcass of the beast before them. Entering his tent (for the great Hida palace had yet to be built), they bowed before their lord and placed the kill at his feet. Hida gazed at their handiwork with admiration for many moments.

"Which of you destroyed this enemy of the Emperor?" he asked at last.

"Kuni did, for only he knew how to trap it," said Hiruma.

"Kaiu did, for only he could create the means of its destruction," said Kuni.

"Hiruma did, for only he could lead the beast to our trap," said Kaiu.

A fierce grin broke across Hida's face as he looked down at them.

"Now I know that you are worthy."

From that day forward, the trio became the first lieutenants of Lord Hida. Each of them was granted permission to found their own family line, aligned under the banner of the Crab, but distinct from the ruling Hida family. Since Hiruma had struck the killing blow, he became Hida's right hand, second in stature only to Hida himself. The Kaiu family was granted the honor of coordinating the defense against the Shadowlands, while the Kuni family was permitted to study the enemy, learning as many

ways of destroying them as possible. The weapon they used to slay the beast became filled with their essence, and has since been used by the heir to the Clan daimyo.

The Son of Storms

After Hida's first son was lost to the Shadowlands, he swore he would never have another child. This passionate oath would only last three years.

One day, while wandering the lands of the Crab, Togashi-*kami* saw his brother Hida prowling the walls of his castle, his head hung low with sorrow. The Dragon flew off to the Dragon Lands and told of Hida's sorrow. The tale was so moving, the Dragon of Thunder took a human form.

The scene has been told in many Crane plays as a romantic and dramatic event, but the actual "wooing" was far from poetic, and – quite honestly – the only way she could seduce the Great Crab. She showed up on his balcony during a terrible storm, dressed only in mist and rain. As the thunder shook the towers, and lightning flashed her shadow across his room, she spoke in a voice that made the world shake.

"I am the Queen of Storms," she said to him. "And I love you."

A year later, she arrived on his balcony. This time, she carried a son in her arms.

Having born a human son, she had lost her own immortality. She promised to spend the rest of her life with the Crab, and they were quickly married.

At last, Hida had lost his sorrow, washed away in the stormy embrace of his new wife. His son grew quickly and grew up strong. While he was mortal, he was also the child of a *kami* and a dragon. He stood beside his father, young, powerful and never-aging. When Hida finally left his position to his son, Osano-Wo was ready to lead the Clan. And his first action was an attack against the Kingdom of the Trolls, which lay just south of Hiruma castle.

His war against the trolls was so complete and terrible, the entire race – what was left of it – was forced to abandon their cities and live in the dark moors and swamps of the Shadowlands, where Osano-Wo could not find them.

Osano-Wo's passionate war on the Shadowlands cost the Crab Clan mightily.



Thousands died, more were injured and could not fight. Slowly, Osano-Wo began to realize that he had a choice: either slow down his assault on the Shadowlands or find more resources on which to draw. There was no way he was going to cease his war on the Shadowlands, so he would need to marry into a wealthy family.

He did not trust the Scorpions ("I'm not leaving a Scorpion alone in my house while I'm at battle"), the Phoenix were too pacifistic, the Crane did not have the military might he wanted, the Unicorn had gone north, and the Dragon ... there was no response from the Dragon.

The choice was simple: he needed a Matsu bride. He sent a messenger to the Matsu castle, informing them that they had the honor of sending him a wife. The messenger came back two weeks later. Only five of his bones weren't broken.

He sent another with the message: "When will my new wife arrive?"

This time, the Matsu were more thorough.

Finally, he decided to go himself - to expedite the process. He presented himself at the gates of Matsu castle, crying out, "I am Osano-Wo! Where is my bride?"

A moment passed, and the gates opened. Standing in the opening was a High Lady of the Matsu family. She was beautiful. She was tall, strong and surrounded by a thousand warriors, and when he looked into their eyes, he knew they would all die in a heartbeat for their Lady.

"You want a bride?" she asked. "Then marry me."

Osano-Wo's cheer was heard across the world. A shugenja from a nearby village was summoned to perform the ceremony. Unfortunately, however, they did not live happily ever after. Osano-Wo thought he would enjoy having a "feisty, spunky and fiery" Matsu wife. Unfortunately, she was not exactly what he wanted. She pointed out strategic errors in his commands and troop structure. She complained about his inhospitable palace and threw out anyone in his court who had the slightest hint of

the Shadowlands taint. All Osano-Wo could do was hope for a son. Soon.

On the day she announced her pregnancy, he went into the Crab villages where a great celebration was taking place. He drank much *sake*. Too much *sake*. The next morning, he awoke in a little peasant hut with a little peasant girl who handed him his tetsubo with a smile.

Nine months later, two children were born... on the same day. No one knew which was born first, and Osano-Wo acknowledged both as his sons. The peasant child was brought to the castle to be raised alongside his brother.





INSULTS

- Dekai guzo** – idiot
Zurui chibi – sneaky dwarf
Kusatta Ningen – rotten people
Chikusho – uncultured beast
Dani – tick or leech
Onna tarashi – Fop
Urenokori – Ugly old maid
Ojamamushi! – Bothersome insect!
Kono yaro! – You insignificant worm!
Ojo-sama – Ineffective member of another Clan – especially a bushi (literally “spoiled rich girl”)

As the boys grew, they were encouraged to compete against each other by their father and his Matsu bride. The samurai child won nearly every contest – but not by much. As the two boys' came closer to their *gempukku*, the court began to ask the inevitable question: “Which boy will hold *Chikara* in his obi?”

Finally, the day arrived. Osano-Wo took the ancestral sword in his hands and turned to his peasant son. With a proud smile, he offered it to the boy who bowed and accepted. As Osano-Wo turned to leave, his bride stepped in front of him, blocking the door.

“Why?” she shouted. “Why do you insult my family in this way?”

“Because your son won every contest he has ever entered. He is a fine warrior. A fine Lion. He knows what it means to win. But he does not know how to lose ... and keep trying.”

Osano-Wo's wife was infuriated. The next morning, she and her servants gathered up all of their belongings and left the Crab territories forever. She couldn't return to the Lion, nor could she go to the other Great Clans. Instead, she shaved her head and left for the islands off the coast of Crane lands. There, her son and those who followed him killed the creatures who inhabited the islands and the grandson of the Thunder Dragon established the family line that would one day be called the Mantis.

The Crane War and the Yasuki Break

The first internal war in Rokugan took place between the Crab and the Crane some three hundred years after the defeat of Fu Leng. During the First Settlement, the Hida family established outposts on the southern border of the Empire. But they also built forts and shipyards along the Kenkai Hanto Peninsula to watch for an attack from the water. The Crane had settled the Peninsula as well, using the natural harbor and favorable shoreline to improve their already thriving shipping trade. Conflict was inevitable.

The Crab claimed that the Crane didn't need the Peninsula to peddle their wares. The Crane claimed that the Crab were foolish to set up defenses so far from the Shadowlands. When the squabbling escalated, Lady Doji Mizhime sent emissaries to the Emperor, asking him to solve

the dispute. Lord Hida Ichido was not interested in hearing the Emperor's opinion. He launched an attack almost before the Crane ambassadors left.

On the battlefield, the war was pathetically brief. The Crane samurai were no match for Lord Hida's forces, and within two weeks, he had secured nearly all of Kenkai Hanto. His victory, however, was short-lived. Using their influence at Court and wielding the considerable power of their merchant guilds, the Crane cut the Crab off from all supplies. Lord Hida, unwilling to draw many troops away from their Shadowlands posts, could not hold his position on the Peninsula. As food and munitions ran low, the Crane launched a counterattack, and gradually forced the Crab armies to retreat.

It was the Yasuki family, then of the Crane clan, that came to Lord Hida's aid. The Yasuki had run many of the illicit and illegal businesses the Crane were involved in. Eager to bolster her position in court, and determined to maintain the moral high ground, Lady Doji ordered the Yasuki to cease their operations at once. The Yasuki protested, claiming that their duties maintained peace in an otherwise dangerous sector of the economy. Lady Doji ignored their arguments and again ordered them to shut down their businesses. The Yasuki responded by breaking away from the Crane.

Eager to have a group of merchants on his side, Lord Hida immediately offered the family protection in his ranks. The Yasuki agreed, and soon, the Crane stranglehold on Crab supply routes was broken. Heartened by the change in fortunes, Hida ordered another attack on the Peninsula, this time with greater success. Before the conflict could escalate further, however, the Emperor commanded both sides to lay down their arms. He decreed that Kenkai Hanto would be split between the two clans, and made the border inviolable until the peninsula was swallowed by the sea. Both sides grudgingly agreed.

Unable to return to the Crane, the Yasuki family lobbied the Crab to join their clan full time. Hida readily agreed. He needed liaisons to the outside world, and the Yasuki more than fit the bill. Since then, the Yasuki have acted as the diplomats and ambassadors of the Crab clan, explaining their actions and conducting negotiations with the rest of the Empire. Their mercantile activities – both legal and otherwise –

continued as well, bringing much-needed wealth and resources into the Crab coffers.

The Crane, however, were unwilling to let their renegade kinsmen off the hook. As the First War drew to a close and life returned to normal, they began another war – an economic one – against the “scuttling” traitors. Crane villages were closed to Yasuki traders; Yasuki businesses soon found themselves in fierce competition with Crane merchants who suddenly “popped up” nearby. More illicit activities became the targets of

became the target of mysterious accidents. Their response, of course, was to keep the pressure on.

Both sides were far too clever to allow these activities to get out of hand – the Crane had no wish to involve the Emperor in what they considered an internal Clan affair, and the Yasuki were too proud to request any help. Instead, the war seethed beneath the surface, its skirmishes all but invisible to the outside world. Businesses rose and fell, mountains of koku exchanged hands, all under the auspices of “natural” mercantile trade.

But beneath it lay a battle as fierce as any since the dawn of time. It has ebbed and flowed throughout Rokugan’s history, and continues to this day, as Crane and Yasuki both seek to establish unquestioned control over Rokugan’s economy. They both believe the conflict to be under their control, but it has long since grown to encompass far more than they could ever realize. What started as the simple treachery of a single family has given rise to the enigmatic order known as the Kolat...



magistrate crackdowns, and Crane diplomats ensured that Yasuki pleas for clemency went unheard.

The new Crab family, however, was not one to take a challenge lying down. Their daimyo, Yasuki Tsanumi, began soliciting ronin bushi for “protection” and plotting his own strikes at his adversaries. Soon, the Crane began to feel the effects of Tsanumi’s actions, as their businesses

occasional skirmish between them is not unheard of, each Clan tends to recognize and respect the strengths of the other. With common enemies in the Crane and the Scorpion, and little reason to clash over land and wealth, the two seem content to leave each other alone and concentrate on other concerns.

The closest they came to all-out war was approximately six hundred years ago. Matsu Itagi,



CURSES AND OTHER EXPRESSIONS

Zakennayo! – A catch-all expression of anger and frustration. The Crab use it a lot.

Cho-yabe – damn, we blew it.

Kuchi ni chakku – Shut up!

Okesho wa doshitano, geisha-san?! – Where’s your make-up, you geisha?!

Rakki yaro – Lucky bastard.

Lion and Crab

As the two most powerful military clans in the Empire, the Crab and the Lion would seem to be natural antagonists. Such is not the case, however. While relations are sometimes testy, and the



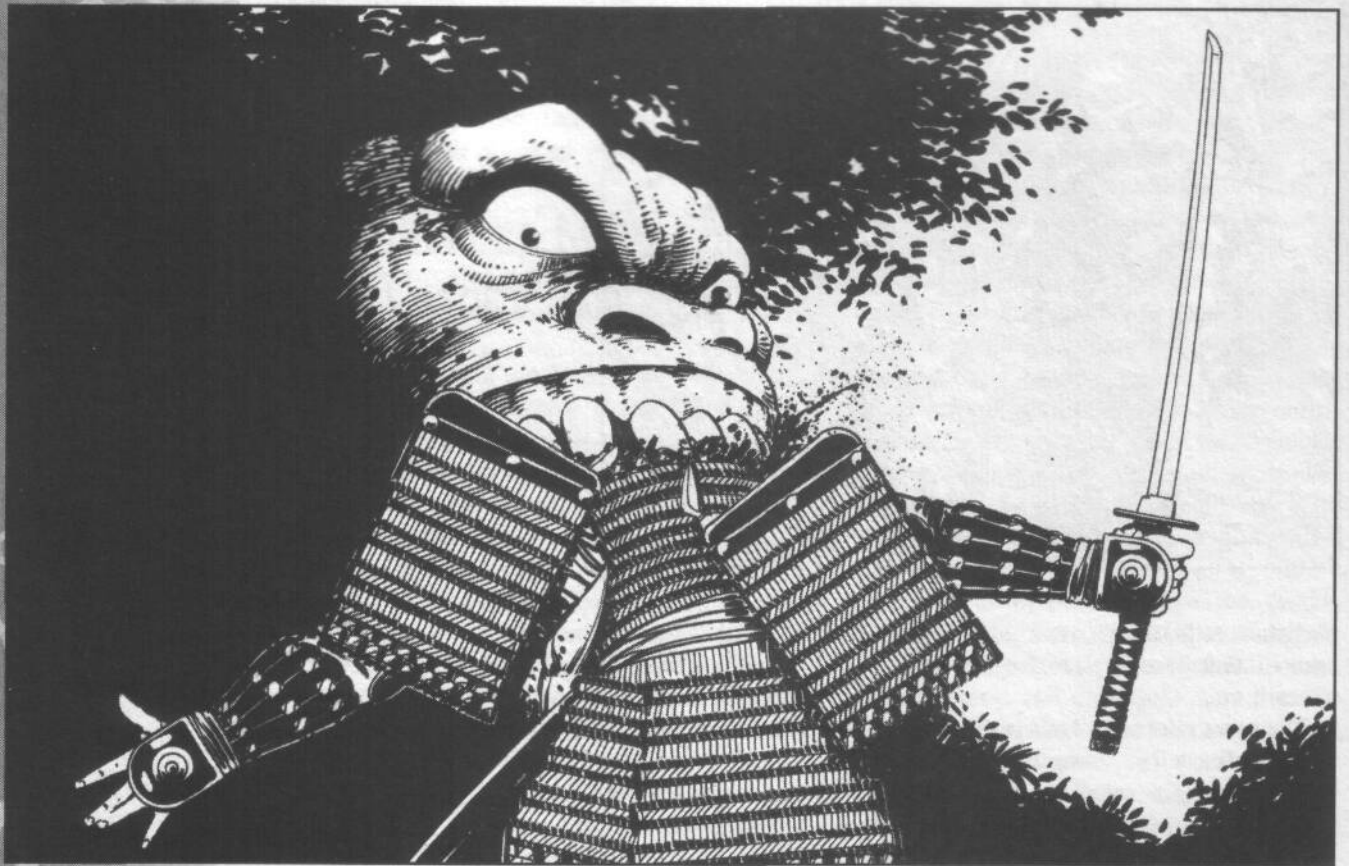
the Lion champion, was a giant bull of a man, proud of his strength and his military prowess. He could claim a hundred victories on the battlefield, and had survived no less than two dozen Iaijutsu duels unscathed. He had long been considered one of the most powerful heroes in the Empire, approaching the strength of the first Akodo himself.

The Crab's unending fight with the Shadowlands, however, was something of a thorn in Itagi's side. His achievements were great and his valor unquestioned, but he had never faced an inhuman foe – had never challenged the might of Fu Leng as the Crab did every day. "How can the Lion claim greatness when the fiercest battle is fought for them?" he asked himself. "How can the Emperor's Right Hand fail to act while his oldest foe is still a threat?" He pondered the perceived inadequacy for weeks, debating how he could overcome it. Finally he hit upon a plan, one which he announced the next day to a stunned assemblage at the Emperor's feast hall: he would go into the Shadowlands himself, alone, and close the Festering Pit of Fu Leng. With the pit blocked,

Rokugan's greatest foe would be trapped in the underworld forever. He then knelt at the Emperor's feet and begged his lord for permission to undertake this quest. The Emperor looked down at Itagi, saw the intensity and desire on his face, and quietly nodded his consent.

The Imperial court flew with hushed whispers at the audacity of the announcement, but none dared suggest that he was being foolhardy. Many praised his bravery, and a few even volunteered to go with him, knowing that he would turn them down. He went alone from Otsan Uchi to the lands of the Phoenix, asking them for protection from the corrupting elements of the Pit and the Shadowlands.

The Lion Champion arrived at the gates of Hida castle some three weeks later, armed for battle and protected with all the sigils and wards the Phoenix could place on him. The Crab daimyo, Hida Tadaka, admitted Itagi and his entourage with as much pomp as his utilitarian palace could muster. The courtiers sneered at the drab decorations and lifeless food that had been



prepared, but Itagi seemed undisturbed. He had not come here for a banquet.

At dinner that night, Hida Tadaka finally voiced what no one else was willing to. As delicately as he could, he suggested that Itagi's quest was a foolish one, which could only result in the loss of one of the Empire's greatest heroes. Itagi stopped short at the remark, the blood rushing to his face.

"Are you suggesting that I am incapable of completing this task?"

"I am saying that none are capable of doing what you propose," Tadaka replied. "Not even the greatest hurricane can put out the sun."

"But I can," the Lion retorted, his gaze narrowing. "If we are to be free of the scourge of He Who Must Not Be Named, it will take men like you and I – men with the blood of gods in our veins – to do it. If I am incapable of sealing the pit, Hida-san, then no one is."

Tadaka looked at the Lion for a long time. Finally he spoke. "Go, then. The consequences will be on your head."

The next day, Itagi set out from Hida palace, with only weapons, jade protection and a small stock of food and water. He stopped at Hiruma castle to resupply, then vanished into the unending grey of Fu Leng's realm.

A day passed, then a week, with no sign of the Lion's return. Hiruma scouts reported finding his tracks, but that they vanished near the Black Finger River. Another week passed. The food Itagi had taken with him would have long since been depleted, and the Champion's followers – still stationed at Hida castle – began to despair of ever seeing him again. A third week passed and there seemed to be no question of Itagi's fate. Word was sent back to the Lion lands that their Champion had died.

Itagi's younger sister, however, was unwilling to let the issue rest. Matsu Oki had idolized her brother from a very early age, and refused to believe that the Shadowlands could swallow him up. After hearing of the exchange between Itagi and Tadaka on the night before he vanished, she became convinced that the Crab had orchestrated his death out of jealousy. She organized an army and marched towards the Crab lands to exact vengeance.

Tadaka could scarcely believe it when he heard of the approaching army. His own forces were committed to the Shadowlands defense, and he lacked the resources to make an effective

counterattack. So when Oki approached with her army, he asked for a parlay and rode out to meet with her. She wasted little time with pleasantries.

"Produce my brother, Crab. Produce him or I will take your castle as restitution."

"He went into the Shadowlands, as he vowed."

"After you had threatened him at your own table!" The anger was barely concealed on her face.

"After I had warned him about what he faced. Are you so thick-headed that you cannot tell the difference?"

Oki hissed and drew her sword from its sheath. Before she could strike, Tadaka held up his hands.

"Hold, Lion. I have no quarrel with you. If my blood will pay for his, I give it to you gladly. But strike me down and you must accept that he is gone forever."

She paused, he sword above her head.

"What are you saying?"

"If your brother somehow lives, then someone will have to go into the Shadowlands to find him. You cannot, and I will not risk any of my men on such an errand. So I will go. Myself. Alone into the Dark Lord's Realm to retrieve Itagi whether alive or dead. This I swear to you on the blood of my ancestors."

Oki looked skeptical. "And what if you return without him?"

"Then you may take my head in retribution, and leave my lands in peace."

Oki considered this carefully.

"I accept your proposal," she said at last. "My brother has been gone for five and twenty days. I give you that much time to make good on your word."

That very day, Tadaka set out for the Shadowlands. He carried no weapons save his katana. A piece of jade with strange sigils was wrapped around his neck, and a pouch of colored glass beads was tied around his belt. He moved with stealth, yet purpose, keeping to the shadows and making no more sound than a mouse.



It took two days to locate the nest. Built crudely of sticks and hide, it crept out of a copse of twisted trees like a tendril. It was tall and round, like a giant gopher warren, and a dark

**"OH, HOW
SINCERE."**

(SEIITSU)

For the Crab, nothing is more insulting than the feeling you are being played for a fool. Almost ninety years ago, the Crab daimyo Hida Nakiro was confronted by a weeping Scorpion in the Emperor's court. The Crab had no time or patience for such frivolity. He simply responded, "Oh, how sincere." Then, he turned away from the Scorpion, leaving him with a brutal, cunning and public bruise.

Since that day forward, it has been the common practice of Crab samurai to refer to anyone whom they feel is less than up front with them as "sincere," inferring that the speaker is acting rather than putting forth genuine emotion.



THE FINE ART OF CRAB DIPLOMACY

Most Crab have neither the time nor the patience to play the subtle political games other Clans revel in. In most cases, they rely on the Yasuki family to interests to the rest of the Empire; the Yasuki have the tactfulness required to hold a diplomatic post, and can move throughout the halls of power with ease. When ambassadors arrive from other parts of Rokugan, the Crab house them in Yasuki castles, and rely on the Yasuki to tend to their needs.

There is a significant exception to this rule, however. The Crane Clan reviles the Yasuki as traitors, and the Crane family daimyo have refused to allow Yasuki ambassadors onto their lands. Similarly, they will not send their ambassadors to Yasuki holdings, calling it an irreproachable stain on their honor. The Crab have responded by allowing Crane diplomats from the Daidoji family stay at Hida castle, and have sent Hida or Hiruma family members to Crane lands in return. Many blame the terrible state of Crab-Crane relations on this arrangement.

(continued)

opening gaped from its nearest end. It was difficult to see in the shaded half-light of the Shadowlands; had he not known where to look, he might have passed it completely.

Crouching beside the dark opening, Tadaka uttered a sharp chattering noise, like an animal's cry marked with strange intelligence.

A face shot out of the warren, pointed and whiskered, framed by a tattered pair of ears. The Nezumi held a spear in its paw-like hands as it hissed at the Crab in the same chattering tongue.

"Why you come here, man-man? We kill you, eat your bones for food!"

"I am Hida Tadaka, Nezumi, and I am here to bargain with you."

The ratling continued to hiss.

"What you have that we want-want?"

Tadaka held up a single glass bead, its red surface gleaming in the half-light. He shook the pouch at his belt, rattling the other beads inside. The ratling's eyes widened at the sound.

"A man passed near here, a man like me," Tadaka continued. "He came through your tribe's scrounging territory. Did you see where he went?"

The furry face regarded him for a moment, then vanished into the hole. It reappeared an instant later, the spear no longer in its hand.

"Yes, we see man-man. He go-go where bad things are. Why you want find him so bad-bad?"

"He can stop a war. Do you know if he is still alive?"

"Maybe yes, maybe no. Why we tell you such things as we know-know?"

Tadaka held up the pouch. "All of it. Yours if you tell me where he is."

That was enough for the ratling.

"Yes. Man-man come by many day ago. Tell us he kill-kill great evil. We laugh at him, but his sword sharp, so not laugh too long. He go-go that way." The ratling pointed towards a low set of hills, visible in the distance.

"You are certain of this?"

"Yes-Yes! Taktak, great hunter, follow him to see what he do-do. I tell you, man-man go into hills and not come out!"

Tadaka tossed the bag to the ratling, who snatched it greedily out of the air.

"You have the thanks of the Crab clan, Nezumi," he spoke gruffly.

The ratling greedily shook the multi-colored baubles into its outstretched paw. As it stroked

them, it looked back at Tadaka, its eyes narrowing with menace.

"Hey man-man. Tell us why we no kill you now."

In a flash the Crab's katana was out, arcing towards the rodent-like visage. The ratling let out a panicked squeak and disappeared into the nest, beads flying in its wake. Tadaka chuckled to himself, then sheathed his sword and moved on.

It took Tadaka another day to reach the hills, trudging through the dough-like sludge that passed for ground here. "Hills" was actually an inexact term; they seemed little more than great rocks poking up through the swampland. Tadaka stopped at their base, and knelt down slowly. With a tug, he pulled the jade amulet around his neck free, and hung it in front of his eyes. It swung back and forth like a pendulum, then suddenly stopped, mid flight, and shot to the right, towards the hills. It remained in that position, tugging like a dog against a leash. Tadaka smiled ruefully – the Shadowlands had not yet claimed Itagi's soul.

The pendant led him like a compass into the jutting rocks. He picked his way carefully over rises and dips, staying as close to the amulet's path as he could. As the hills grew larger and divided amongst themselves, finally, the Crab found what he was looking for.

He was wedged into a narrow pass and leaning against the rock face for support. His armor was ripped like paper, his body cut in a thousand places. Dirt and mud caked his face, as did the bursts of pain that came from every movement. And his left arm had been shorn off just above the elbow. A crude tourniquet had stopped the bleeding, and a blackened burn marked how he had seared the wound closed. His shortened limb shivered and twitched like a snake.

Yet still he was the Champion. His eyes blazed with ferocity and the katana in his remaining hand looked no less dangerous for the blood and ichor that stained it. He swung around in challenge to Tadaka, but lowered his sword when he saw who it was.

"I take it you did not reach the Festering Pit," Tadaka greeted him.

"You've come to gloat then," the Lion whispered.

"No, to take you back. Your dream is over, Matsu Itagi; it is time to awaken."

Itagi's eyes squeezed shut.

"I cannot go back like this. Not before I reach the pit."

"You will never reach the pit. No man ever has."

"Then I will die trying!" he hissed. The Crab remained unchanged.

"And that is what you are doing here? Waiting to die?"

"I am waiting to meet my ancestors, Hida. There are... things out there, coming for me. They said they would hunt me down like a dog. I will not run."

"Running and retreating are two different things. Are you so foolish that you cannot see the difference?"

"Leave me, Crab," the Lion whispered. "This fate is mine alone."

"I beg to differ, Itagi. Even as we speak, your sister is preparing to make war upon my lands. Only your return will deter her. You must remember your oath, Lion. And a war between our peoples will only strengthen the Emperor's enemies. Come with me. Return to your duties and remember the lessons you have learned here. There are others who need to hear them."

A shudder wracked Itagi's body as he spoke between clenched teeth.

"I... WILL... NOT... LEAVE."

Tadaka saw the iron flare in the Lion's eyes and slowly nodded.

"Then I will stay with you. We will defend this pass together."

Itagi lowered his head, hiding the tears of pain that welled up in his eyes.

"We cannot defeat these, Crab. They are horrors such as I have never seen."

"I know." Tadaka drew his katana and offered his shoulder for the Lion Champion to lean on.

Three days later, a Hiruma scout spotted an oversized figure staggering through the fog. Notching his bow, he aimed his shaft at the approaching thing before Tadaka's hoarse shout stayed his hand.

The Crab Champion closed the distance between him and the scout, hauling Itagi's unmoving form on his shoulders. Both men were drenched in blood, their weapons dangling uselessly from their hands. Tadaka collapsed to his knees before the scout, lowering the still-breathing Itagi to the ground.

A squad of bushi was assembled to take them back to Hiruma castle. Matsu Oki received the message and an escort to the castle as rapidly as

one could be arranged. She arrived just as they were brought into the courtyard, the stretchers stained red.

Itagi motioned with his remaining hand for his sister to come close. She leaned over him, near enough to feel his dying breaths against her cheek.

"We were not defeated," the Lion smiled quietly.

The pair were buried with full honors together at Otosan Uchi. Their example has been enough to keep the two Clans from full-scale war for over six centuries.

The Destruction of Iuchiban and the Rise of the Witch Hunters

Some five hundred years ago, the *maho* wizard Iuchiban rose to terrorize all of Rokugan. Wielding terrible magics and commanding black Maho powers, he and his band of Bloodspeakers launched an attack against the Emperor himself. Through the actions of a brave pair of magistrates, the plot was uncovered, and the Seven Clans united to destroy the base of Iuchiban's power. The sorcerer was put to death and his followers scattered, but so powerful was the magic he commanded that death was not enough. The Emperor commanded the Kaiu family to build a tomb for him – one full of clever traps and endless mazes that would prevent any followers from reaching Iuchiban's body.

The Kaiu spent three months and every ounce of their engineering skill to obey the Emperor's orders. The Tomb of Iuchiban was a masterpiece of construction, a multi-layered death trap bristling with the most fiendish pitfalls that Kaiu imagination could conceive. Bound in chains, Iuchiban's body was placed in the Tomb, then sealed with powerful Phoenix and Scorpion magics to ensure he never escaped. The Tomb's chief architect, Kaiu Gineza, remained behind to set all of the traps, knowing that he would never again leave his creation. His sacrifice marked the last life lost to Iuchiban's evil.

Or so it seemed. One hundred and fifty years later, the shugenja's spirit was somehow revived and managed to escape his confines. Again the Seven Clans rose to smite him and again he was



THE FINE ART OF CRAB DIPLOMACY (CONTINUED)

While the Yasuki are skilled at smoothing over their clan's rougher edges, the Crab rarely make a good impression on visiting dignitaries. They're blunt, rude, and see no need to engage in the dance of words which most forms of politics depend on. Ambassadors from other clans do not consider a post in the Crab lands desirable. In fact, they look upon them as career death sentences, earned only by offending a superior or failing at every other opportunity presented. In the Crab lands, they will be subjected to every form of slight imaginable, to which they must respond with all the tact and delicacy in their power. It's a grueling, thankless proposition, made worse by the Crab's dubious definition of hospitality. An ambassador used to the opulent palaces of the Crane or the Scorpion's intricate webs of policy will be in for a rude shock the first time he enters the cold hallways of a Crab fortress.



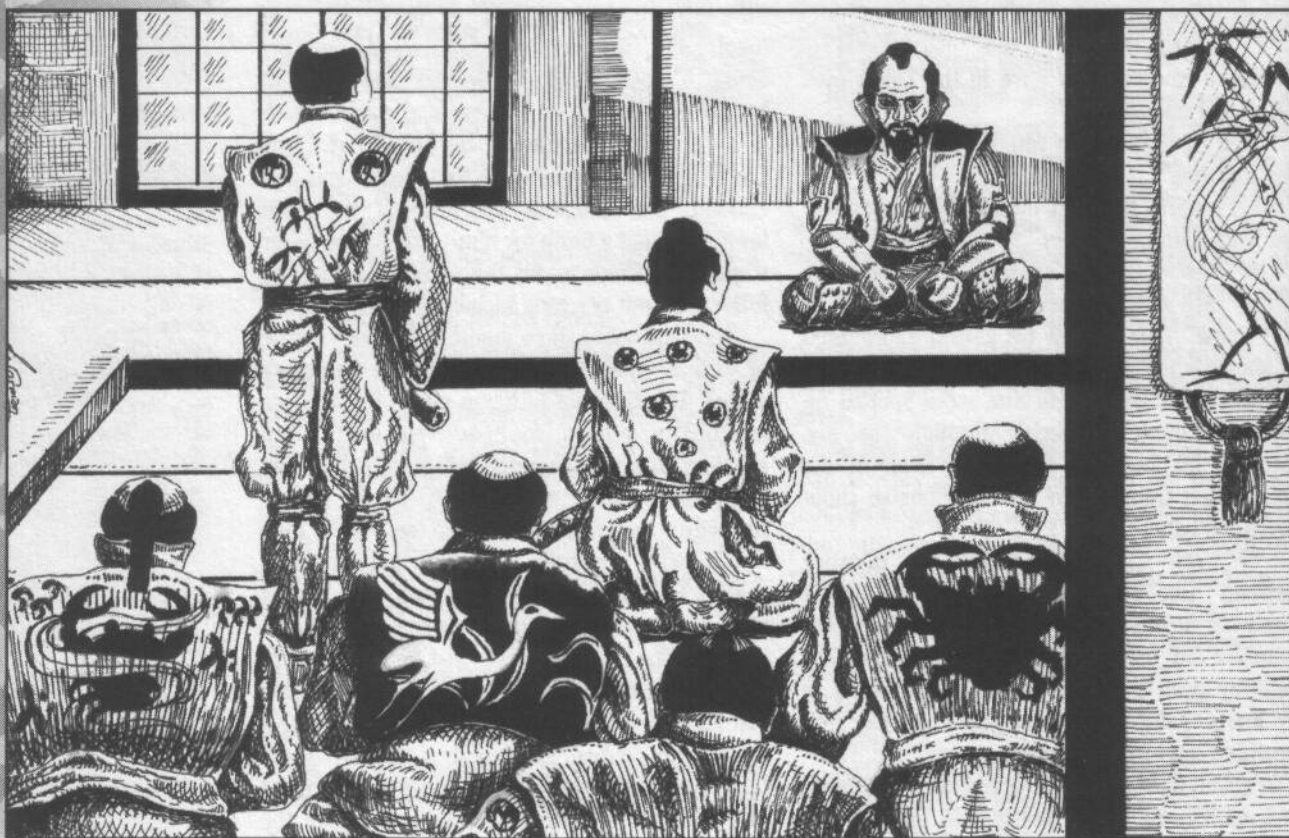
imprisoned within the Tomb. This time, his soul was bound to the very stones of the place, imprisoned within the walls themselves. Here again, the Kaiu's construction proved eminently suitable for the task. So cunning was the layout of the Tomb that Iuchiban's spirit could find no escape. Trapped within the twisting corridors and shifting rooms, Iuchiban lost what remained of his sanity. The Tomb now echoes with his mad cackling, and the walls themselves have begun to slowly warp under his pernicious influence. Some believe he himself twists the Tomb's construction to match his madness. Others maintain that the Phoenix magics protecting the place have done so, ensuring that the insane spirit can never find a way out. And still, the Kaiu-built chambers hold their captive as soundly today as they did five hundred years ago.

Iuchiban's rampages raised unsettling questions within the Emerald Empire – where he gained his powers, how he rose so quickly, why it took such an effort to finally stop him. The Emerald magistrates wished to know where he had found his knowledge, the Emperor's court wished to know where his followers had come

from, and the Phoenix shugenja wished to know how his power had become so great, so quickly. No answers came forth, which made the lingering questions all the more unsettling.

More than anyone else, however, the Kuni family worried about Iuchiban and the implications of his rise. The Crab were expected to keep such evil out of Rokugan, and yet he had appeared in the very heart of the Emerald Empire. The Crab were busy enough trying to hold back the might of the Shadowlands; how could they respond to threats such as Iuchiban? In addition, they felt something of a personal responsibility for Iuchiban, for it was rumored that he had based his twisted magics on Kuni family teachings. If that was so, then they must ensure that his evil would never be repeated.

The Kuni daimyos debated for days on what to do. Finally, they arrived at an agreeable solution: they ordered one hundred family members to leave their studies behind and travel the length of the Emerald Empire, searching for signs of evil. The daimyo selected them based on their hardiness, on their potential combat skills, and on their knowledge of the Shadowlands. They were



to destroy any creatures of Fu Leng found north of the Kaiu Wall. The group embraced their newfound role as only Crab could, and soon were known throughout the Empire as steadfast bulwarks against the horrors of the night. The Kuni Witch Hunters, as they came to be called, developed their own techniques to recognize and defeat their supernatural enemies. They grew into an autonomous brotherhood, only loosely affiliated with their fellow Kuni, and fought ceaselessly against the evil spirits and Bloodspeakers who would prey on mainland Rokugan. Some say they do nothing but wait, observing the signs for Iuchiban to rise again. But those who owe their lives to a Witch Hunter's timely intervention, or have seen the rites and exorcisms the brotherhood specializes in, know that their role is anything but passive.

The Battle of the Cresting Wave

The Crab had always stood as a bulwark against the Shadowlands, but in the year 716 came a threat even they were powerless against. A mighty Oni calling itself the "Maw" had raised an army unseen since the days of Fu Leng. This was no band of goblins or lurching undead; it was a thousand monstrosities, each one more hideous than the last. They moved and struck as with one mind, directed with supernatural precision by their unspeakable general. They overwhelmed the Crab ramparts and struck deep into Clan territory. Entire villages were wiped out, their occupants transformed into ghastly caricatures that marched alongside the invaders. The landscape was razed and twisted, its soul corrupted by the unclean beings which stalked upon it.

The Crab army, its defenses overwhelmed, retreated to Hiruma castle and prepared for a siege. The castle had stood as a hard point in the Crab defenses, and had resisted Shadowlands invasions for almost six hundred years. If there was any place to hold the line, it was here. Their enemy, however, had counted on that, and launched a terrible plan to sunder the Hiruma walls. Utilizing secret Earth magics and sacrificing the essence of dozens of oni, the army spirited a contingent of the most bloodthirsty demons beneath the walls of the castle. Their rampage was bloody and terrible, and even though the

defenders eventually prevailed, the damage had been done. When the Shadowlands army arrived, they found the walls ruptured and undermanned. It was child's play to bring the ancestral home of the Hiruma crashing down. The fires from the sundered castle spat black smoke into the sky for miles around, searing the hearts of those Crab who managed to flee.

The Kuni school of magic, located in the heart of a vast rolling plain, was next. Its teachers and students had abandoned the place before the army could reach it, taking its library and wealth of knowledge with them. But before they left, they planted a series of traps – both magical and mundane – to slow the invaders' advance. More than a few Oni lost their lives in the twisting corridors of that place, but in the end it made little difference. The very foundations were torn asunder, leaving nothing to indicate the school had ever existed.

Now, the great Hida fortress was all that stood between the Shadowlands and the whole of Rokugan. The Clan Champion, Hida Banuken, convened a hasty meeting of the daimyos to decide on a course of action. With two lines of defenses already breached, there was little hope of establishing a bulwark. The Shadowlands army could cross the Saigo River and outflank the castle, starving it out before striking at the rest of Rokugan. Many plans were suggested, but they all required time to prepare. The Maw's army was less than two days away.

Finally, a quiet voice begged permission to speak. It was Kuni Osaku, a revered teacher at the shugenja school. Though only twenty-one, she had demonstrated more power than shugenja twice her age.

"How long will it take you to erect defenses along the Saigo River?" she asked.

Banuken considered carefully. "Sixty days, perhaps a little more."

"I will give you that time," she said simply.

The next day, as dawn approached, Osaku climbed to the highest tower in the castle. From there, she saw the mouth of the Saigo River opening into the Sakana Wan Bay. Kneeling, she drew a series of mystic runes into the floor, then produced a very old and weather-worn scroll. Whispering a prayer to the Seven Fortunes, she began the spell.

The Shadowlands army moved like a hurricane across the landscape, devouring the distance between them and the river. The Crab



POMP AND CIRCUMSTANCE

As a graduation exercise, each Hida school student must venture into the Shadowlands, and return with an enemy's head. Approximately one out of every ten samurai does not return from this task. In theory, they should bring back the remains or largest and most fearsome Oni they can find. In actuality, the Crab realize that throwing young talent away like that is wasteful, and most samurai get by with a goblin or small ogre head. Those who return with greater kills show tremendous promise, and are usually groomed for command positions. Those who return with rattling heads are exiled, never allowed to return to the Crab lands. (The maxim "know your enemy" is very important to the Crab, and they make sure their trainees remember it.)



ADVENTURE HOOK

A part of the Kaiu wall has collapsed and a group of Oni are taking advantage of the situation. They have crossed the river and crawled into the catacombs beneath Kaiu Kabe, where they could widen the breach. The Crab daimyo asks the players to hunt the Oni down while the Kaiu engineers work to rebuild the wall. They must stalk the oni through the hidden catacombs while protecting the engineering squad from attack.

army was strung impossibly thin along the other side, a twig ready to snap at the slightest breeze. The first Oni waded into the river, their lips slavering in anticipation. The samurai clutched their weapons and steeled their spines, determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible. Then Osaku's spell reached its climax.

Standing atop the tower, her words had become a torrent. She spoke with the power of thunder and the roar of the tides. Her very being seemed to focus towards the river, channeling unspeakable energies towards its shimmering surface. And then, her roars were drowned out by a far greater one – a tsunami approaching from the bay.

The tidal wave swept up the riverbed and along its path, turning calm waters into a boiling cauldron. Awkwardly at first, then with increasing vigor, the river reversed its course, flowing upstream with power and fury. The tsunami added its weight to the push, throwing back hundreds of years of natural progress in a single minute. The Oni had reached the midpoint of the river when a thousand tons of water crashed down on them. Most were destroyed by the sheer weight of the tsunami; the strongest were swept far upstream to be crushed and drowned against the rocks. The other Oni howled in anguish as they watched their brethren carried away, but the crest did not diminish. Indeed it seemed to swell with each moment, becoming rougher and more frenzied. Strangely, the flimsy Crab defenses were untouched by the water; they never felt so much as a drop.

Banuken climbed to the tower to see what the shugenja had wrought. She had not moved from where she stood, her voice echoing the roar of the river far below. Her younger brother, Hohiro, knelt nearby, gazing reverently at his sister's form. He turned as Banuken approached, his eyes damp with sorrow.

"Every time the sun rises, she will age one year," he whispered. "You have your sixty days, my Lord."

Banuken did not waste an instant. He charged down from the tower, shouting for the daimyo to attend him immediately. Within the hour, their course of action was set. Every peasant and nobleman, every soldier and merchant, every geisha, housewife and samurai-ko capable of work was brought to the shore of the river. Farms were abandoned, towns left empty. No one could be spared for mundane activities. All that

summer, the Crab lands beyond the river lay silent. Favours were called in from the Crane and the Scorpion to provide food and supplies, and a hideous vengeance was promised against any who would take advantage of their vulnerability.

The assembled populace set to work, building a wall that no enemy could breach. Stones were laid into the shore of the Saigo, linking the thin sprinkling of outposts into a solid line. Shugenja bound the foundation with mighty magic, calling upon the Earth itself to hold it firm. Battlements and ramparts arose with inhuman speed, as a desperate combination of magic, engineering, and manpower accomplished in days what might have taken years. The fractured Crab army reassembled itself, their ranks swollen by the Lion and Dragon soldiers who came to defend the Empire. And as the wall grew higher, battle plans were laid.

Spring stretched into summer. Each day, Osaku weakened a little more, every sunset claiming another year of her life. Her radiant face soon became creased with wrinkles, her black hair fading to grey, then white. But still she shouted, still her unspeakable roar guided the swollen riverbed on its course. The Oni army was powerless to cross it, their hideous ranks held at bay by the wall of water. But it could not last forever; with an inhuman patience, the Maw waited for the river to subside.

Seventy-three days after beginning the spell, Osaku spent the last of her being. Her decrepit body, depleted of its last remaining energy, pitched forward as her hoarse voice at last fell silent. Her brother, standing vigil, cradled her in her arms. Sorrow and pride in equal amounts imprinted his face, and as he stroked the last of her snowy hair, he saw what the Oni had been waiting for: the river below began to subside.

From far away the Maw had heard the shugenja's death rattle, and ordered his army to advance. The river crested and fell, the rushing waters first stilling, then receding to nothing. As one, the Oni launched themselves into the breach, charging across the draining riverbed to claim their long-denied prize. They found the Crab ready for them.

The stone walls stretched high, anchored in the living rock of the earth itself. Samurai and bushi stood on the ramparts, a thousand soldiers ready to hold the line. As the Oni threw themselves against the wall, ballistae loosed their missiles at the horde. Boiling tar poured down upon them



while great balls of pitch launched from Kaiu catapults. Magic flashed through the sky as the Kuni shugenja cast their terrible spells. And still the Oni pressed on. Inhuman claws gouged at the great stones. Gibbering flying things tried to clear the battlements. A gruesome tower of the living, the dead, and the dying scaled the sides of the walls, hoping to overpower the bushi atop. None could break the implacable defense.

As the push slowed and the Oni battered themselves into weariness, Banuken launched his counterattack. From a hundred secret tunnels the Crab army emerged into the now-empty riverbed, pinning the Maw between them and the walls. The Hiruma samurai led the charge, screaming for vengeance at the loss of their home. Tired and wounded, their monstrous strength blunted by the power of the walls, the Oni were unable to mount





A CRAB PROVERB

A grateful Crane once told a Crab that he could have anything in the world he wanted. The Crab replied, "a good night's sleep."

a defense. The Crab army rushed into their ranks, cutting down all before them. The Oni were slaughtered like goats, the riverbed filled with their stinking corpses. As night fell, the army retreated behind the walls, counted their dead and celebrated their victory.

The river was renamed Seigo no Kamae in honor of the battle. The Maw's gigantic skull hangs over the gates of Hida castle, a testament to the strength of Clan Crab.

Kuni Osaku's name is revered among the greatest heroes of the Empire.



The Crab still consider the northernmost portions of the Shadowlands theirs: ancient homelands captured by an unholy foe. The Hiruma family, in particular, is anxious to gain back its lost territory, and many expeditions have been launched to recover their ancestral estate. All have failed. The Hiruma castle has become a rallying point for Shadowlands denizens to attack the Emerald Empire, and no task force – however large – has been able to hold the fortress for more than a few weeks. The ancestral Hiruma lands remain twisted and misshapen, as much a part of the Shadowlands today as they were 300 years ago.

The Kuni have fared somewhat better. From the bastion of the Hida fortress, the Crab have been able to launch substantial incursions into former Kuni lands, destroying the monsters they find and liberating the countryside from the overt taint of the Shadowlands. In the past three centuries, they have recovered almost all of what the Kuni once claimed as their own. Unfortunately, the corruption of the Shadowlands could not be fully destroyed; where there were once rolling fields, there is now a scarred wasteland, covered with sand and populated by the stunted trunks of dead trees. The Kuni have moved back to this desert in great numbers, reestablishing their presence in the place they once called home. Things were never the same again, however. The ashes of the Kuni school lay undisturbed; a replacement was never built. Instead, each shugenja went his or her own way, establishing havens and sanctuaries along the spiritual nexuses criss-crossing the area. The family became very solitary, pursuing their own

insights alone and rarely meeting in any number. Their lonely huts and ramshackle towers dot the landscape to this day.

In the years following the Battle of Saigo River, the Crab waged a series of skirmishes with their Rokugani neighbors. Having lost so much land to the Oni, they turned their eyes north for new space, demanding compensation for their sacrifice on behalf of the Empire. Some were willing to cede to their demands (either out of genuine gratitude or fear of the Crab's might). Others weren't. The Scorpion, in particular, refused to grant any land to their neighbor, and a long series of battles ensued. The squabbling didn't end until the arrival of the Unicorn nearly one hundred years later. In the end, the Crab gained most of the land they had asked for, but it cost them many samurai, and the Clan's favor at court fell drastically. Scorpion tongues ensured that the loss would be felt for years to come.

The Return of the Unicorn

The coming of the Unicorn Clan some two hundred years ago threw the previously delicate balance of Rokugan politics into disarray. Moreover, the nature of their arrival – along the edges of Shadowlands and straight through a Crab army who thought they were oni – sowed deep distrust amongst other Clans, a distrust which has yet to subside. (See *The Way of the Unicorn* for more information on the Unicorn's tumultuous return). But the Crab welcomed the horsemen back to Rokugan with open arms.

After the initial shock had subsided, the Crab took stock of these interlopers, and found much which they could respect. The Unicorn had fought against the darkest evil of the Shadowlands in their struggle to reach Rokugan, risking their lives and souls to return home. They had not flinched when the Crab army challenged them, yet they did not waste precious resources by extending the conflict any more than necessary. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, they were outsiders like the Crab – outsiders who would need assistance and could offer many things in return. In every way conceivable, the Unicorn were a boon to the Crab.

The two Clans have maintained a firm alliance ever since. The displaced Hiruma family has

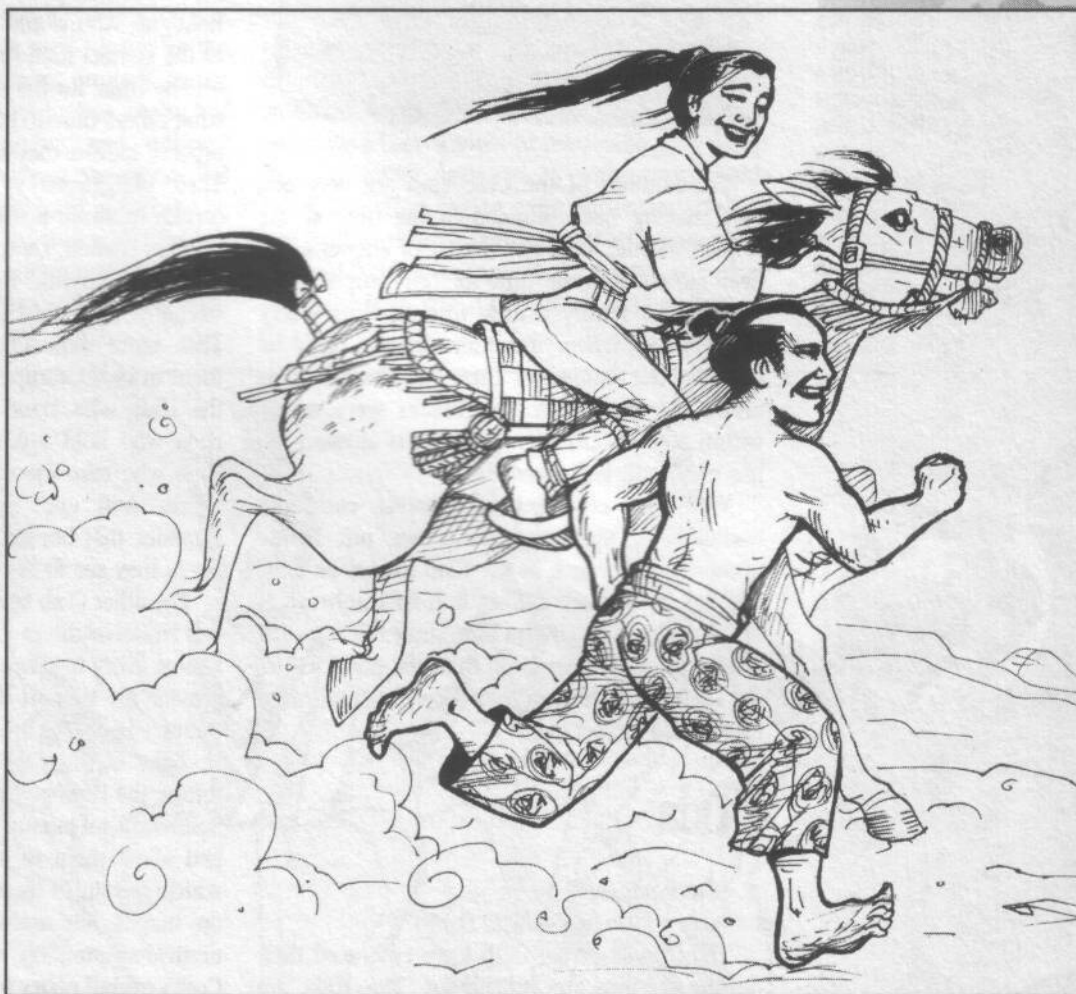


reestablished their "school" as a branch within the Moto school, sending their youth there to be trained. Yasuki diplomats have often used the Ide as go-betweens in their dealings with the Crane, and the Ide have similarly used the Yasuki to send messages to diplomats who cannot or will not do business with them. Even their combat units have something in common, and Crab generals will welcome Unicorn cavalry to their ranks far more readily than any other bushi. The two, it seems, have become linked in ways which transcend the occasional misunderstanding that crops up between them.

feels that final victory can be achieved only if the other clans lend their strength to his. By uniting all of Rokugan behind the Crab's leadership, Kisada believes he can reconquer the Shadowlands and defeat Fu Leng once and for all. His opinions have sent ripples through the courts, and some whisper that Kisada may be plotting a coup. The Emperor himself has privately voiced his "distress" at these rumors. In any case, the

The Present

After a thousand years, the Crab continue to guard Rokugan's border as they always have. They shed their blood along the Great Wall in a war which has never ended for them. They suffer casualties daily and have buried more dead than they can count, yet they have never broken under the strain. They have sacrificed much in their grim duty, and are proud of their accomplishments — accomplishments which they believe no other clan can match.



From the battlements of the Wall, the Crab look back upon the mists of history and they are glad.

Lately, however, there has been a shift in Crab philosophy, and the clan has begun taking a larger role in internal Rokugani affairs. The current daimyo, Hida Kisada, has become increasingly vocal in his criticism of the Emperor; he believes that the Son of Heaven is not strong enough to properly lead the Empire, and has grown increasingly frustrated at Otosan Uchi's ignorant dismissal of the Shadowlands threat. He

Crab have become much more prominent in the affairs of the Empire, a change many feel is for the worse.

Still, the Crab's first duty has never been forgotten, and their strikes against the Shadowlands have never abated. With the recent increase in Shadowlands activity and the rise in skirmishes along the border, the other Clans believe that Kisada's saber rattling will vanish in the face of the real enemy.



THE HIDA MON

All Crab families, with the exception of the Yasuki, integrate the image of a crab into their mon – reflecting their position within a larger entity and their responsibilities to that entity.

The Hida mon depicts a blue crab on a field of slate-grey, clutching a tetsubo in its pincers. It signifies both the family's great strength and their duties as sentinels for the Emperor.



Families

The families of the Crab clan are very old, most having been founded in the time of the original Hantei. Like any matter of etiquette, the Crab simply have no time for the complications that a new family brings with it. Why worry about names when your entire lineage could be trampled flat tomorrow? There were four families under the first Hida; the Yasuki were added within a few hundred years. That is all the Clan has ever wanted or needed.

With such old families, however, come old traditions – traditions which are not lightly broken. Each branch of the Clan knows its duty, and has never shirked from it. It isn't unheard of to see a Kuni warrior or a Kaiu shugenja, but such are far more the exception than the norm. Of all the Clans, the Crab are most likely to conform to established stereotypes.

Hida

*"I will not fail."
– the motto of the Hida family*

The leaders of the Crab have embraced their destiny as few are capable of. The Hida are among the oldest, proudest and most storied families in Rokugan. No other family holds their duties in such high regard, and no other family performs them so ruthlessly. The Hida is larger by far than any of the others, and dominates the political life of the Clan. The distinction between "Hida" and "Crab Clan" does not exist; the two are effectively the same entity.

The Hida represent all the best and worst aspects of the Clan. They plan the Clan's military tactics, lead its armies and coordinate its defense. They are the unquestioned leaders, acting

efficiently and decisively whenever a decision is called for. They enter battle with a controlled fury and resist assaults that would topple mountains. Yet they are also impulsive, bullying, hot-headed. They do not take insults lightly, and lash out with murderous force when crossed. They tend to shout when they speak, and use their large frames to intimidate those around them. They have been accused of bullying in the past, and are held in contempt by the remainder of "civilized" Rokugan, who would rather see the crafty Yasuki or the genteel Kaiu in charge.

The Hida, for the most part, couldn't care less what others think. They do not deny their coarser aspects; indeed, they almost flaunt them at times. Their obligations to the Emperor demand a certain mindset, a mindset which requires some rougher aspects. Deny them, and the Hida would also be denying their greatest strengths – strengths they need to survive in their position. That, more than anything else, is what allows them to be so abrupt. At the end of the day, it is the Hida who stand against the darkness, the Hida who hold Rokugan's southern border, the Hida who take the safety of Rokugan into their hands. And until someone else steps up to shoulder that burden, the Hida will continue to act as they see fit.

The other Crab families have never questioned the Hidas' right to rule, and defer to them in almost every instance involving Clan policy. They provide the support the Hida need to fulfill their duties – need, but must ultimately defer to others in light of their awesome responsibilities. In return, the Hida give the smaller families enough autonomy to pursue their interests unimpeded, and allow them to advise the Clan on matters which pertain to them. A Kuni daimyo speaking on magic, for example, will have the Hidas' undivided attention, and can usually control the Crab's overall policy in that regard. Once the Hida have decided, however, the discussion is over; to debate further is to waste energy and denies the family's status as Clan leaders.

This system has proved surprisingly efficient in determining Clan policy. The four smaller families have a large amount of influence in their areas of expertise, but cannot impede the Hidas' overall leadership or decision-making skills. The result allows diversity to flourish without threatening the Clan's ability to act quickly.

Hida children understand that a great burden has been placed on their shoulders, and spend



their entire lives learning to endure it. From the day they can talk, they learn what is expected of them and are prepared for the duties they must someday uphold. Children are trained to make command decisions even as they learn the rudiments of reading and writing, and most can swing a katana before they can walk. Even their childhood games contain elements of this preparation, and unique Crab pastimes with names like "Find the Oni" and "Strongwall" are popular amongst the Hida youth.

The Hida bushi school is well known as the most relentlessly brutal training grounds in the Empire. Students undergo a grueling regime of kenjutsu drills, mock combat and military philosophy, designed to sharpen the mind and toughen the body. Hida bushi train in full armor, a unique characteristic that fits well with the Crab philosophy of strength and endurance. Unlike the Hiruma, who emphasize speed and tact, the Hida

need their students to be strong, and will push them to the limits of their endurance. As a result, Hida bushi have the stamina to fight for hours without tiring, and can hold a formation against any aggressor. Their training gives them the power they need to defend Rokugan against the Shadowlands, and forms the backbone of the Crab military machine.

Hida thrive on the pressures of battle, and take joy in combat as no others do. With so much of their lives given over to warfare, there is little time for the family to enjoy the small pleasures of life. They make up for it on the Kaiu Wall. They strike out at their enemies with gleeful mirth and some have been known to shout with joy even as they are being devoured by some unspeakable thing. The effect can be quite unnerving on those unfamiliar with the family; observers often speak of the "cackling madmen" they have witnessed along the Kaiu Wall. Celebrations, rare as they are





THE HIRUMA MON

No mon.
No saying.
The Hiruma do not live
so long as their land is
gone.

in the Crab lands, are conducted with equal enthusiasm, and the Crane have joked that a Hida at leisure is as dangerous as a Hida in combat.

Hiruma

The Hiruma are a sad tragic example of how much the Crab have paid in fulfilling their duties. Once the vanguard of the Crab army, they have lost their ancestral homelands to the power of the Shadowlands, and now skulk about Rokugan in permanent exile.

The Hiruma family traces its lineage back to the first samurai who swore fealty to Lord Hida. Although the blacksmith Kaiu and shugenja Kuni were instrumental in defeating Oni no Hatsu Suru, it was Hiruma who struck the fatal blow. Afterwards, he became second-in-command to Hida himself, but rather than rest on his laurels, he continued doing what he did best. He volunteered his services as an advance scout of his army, and quickly became a master of forward intelligence. His eyes were eagle-sharp; he could determine the size of a force with a single glance. He remembered colors and unit insignia with flawless skill, and knew every commander – human, goblin or oni – that he ever fought against. Without his keen observation, Lord Hida would not have been able to defend the Empire as well as he did.

Since then, the Hiruma have served as military spies and advance scouts for the Crab. They were able to blend in with their surroundings, and watch entire armies pass by undetected. They could run with the stamina of a horse, and deliver messages between units who lay days apart. The Hiruma have made it possible for the Crab armies to act with inhuman precision.



Sadly, all of their skills could not help them at the Battle of the Cresting Wave. The forces of the Maw struck with such ferocity that not even their vaunted scouts could prepare them for it. They were overwhelmed in an instant, and their castle fell to the unholy invaders. Their swift speed and knowledge of the terrain allowed almost all of them to escape, but the shame of losing their home was almost more than they could bear.

Now, they continue their duties in exile at the Hida clan castle. They still serve as an advance warning system, and their speed and intelligence-gathering abilities are second to none. But now, they embrace their roles with the fatalism of the damned. They view death no longer as a victory for the Shadowlands, but as a release from their own shame. Once their scouting duties are fulfilled, they ride into battle with an unparalleled abandon. Many are berserkers, cold-hearted warriors who seek to take as many with them into the next life as they can. Hiruma units achieve a sort of Zen bloodlust in combat, a cold

and unfeeling trance that grants them frightening strength and stamina. They claim to have no memory of the time they spend in battle, and show little joy in coming out of their berserk trances. To die under the influence of such a trance is the greatest honor a Hiruma can receive.

The Hiruma have no banner, and refuse to carry one into battle. "Until our shame is erased," they say. "We are as smoke in the wind." Their ancestral sword is said to render its user utterly tireless. None carry it, however, for none has earned the honor of restoring Hiruma castle to the clan. It sits on a wall within Hida castle, waiting until its family reclaims it.

There is no Hiruma bushi school; it was lost to the Shadowlands three hundred years ago. Instead, most Hiruma samurai are sent to the Shinjo school in the Unicorn lands, where a branch catering to the lost family has been established. They were strange and difficult to master at first, but the Hiruma endured, and found the Unicorn emphasis on speed and stamina very close to their own teachings. The Hiruma style reflects their studies under the Shinjo philosophy. The Crab's general friendliness towards the Unicorn has helped cement ties between the two, and Hiruma-Shinjo marriages are not uncommon. The Hiruma sympathize with the loss of the Moto family to the Shadowlands, and some have taken to wearing the blank Moto crest as a show of solidarity.

Shadowlands scouting duty is a dangerous business. The minions of Fu Leng are constantly looking for interlopers into their realm, and a lone man is all but helpless if discovered. More importantly, the Shadowlands' dark influence will eventually overcome anyone who lingers too long in them. More than one Crab unit has been swallowed up by such corruption, their minds breaking under the pernicious taint of their surroundings.

In order to counteract this disturbing phenomenon, Crab scouts undergo rigorous preparations prior to their duty. Wards and sigils are painted on their bodies, designed to keep their subject hidden. The scouts receive a series of jade talismans before they leave, which will hold back the Shadowlands' corrupting power for some time. Finally, they are required to spend a day in silent contemplation, to keep their minds clear when performing their duties. Only then are the Crab Clan scouts allowed to take up their posts in the twisted shadows beyond the Great Wall.

Needless to say, only those of strong mind and vigorous body are chosen for such hazardous duty. Members of all families will occasionally serve as scouts, but the Hiruma have shown the most aptitude for it, and the vast majority of Shadowlands observers come from their ranks.

Scouting rotations last a week, and are designed to prevent any large-scale threats from approaching undetected. The scouts are expected to stay hidden for as long as possible, and collect their data by watching and remembering. If threats arise, they are trained to flee rather than fight. Reliable information is far more important to them than a glorious death. They carry a minimum of equipment and are often chosen for the running speed and stamina. After a week-long rotation in the Shadowlands, they are either assigned to the regular garrison, or to messenger squads along the Wall (which one they go to depends on the speed and strength of the individual in question). They must remain out of the Shadowlands for no less than four weeks while their bodies recuperate from the strain.

Kaiu

*"The strength of a mountain lies at its base."
— attributed to the original Kaiu*

Those who have dealt with the other Crab families are often surprised by the Kaiu. They are quiet, soft-spoken and display none of the infamous tempers of their brethren. Where other Crab are expressive, Kaiu are reserved. Where other Crab are angry, Kaiu are calm. While other Crab charge headlong into action, Kaiu act with a foresight that Shinsei himself would envy. They are the refined architects of their clan: calm, cool, and always under control.

The Kaiu are the builders, the planners, the engineers. Their founder was a blacksmith who proved himself worthy by creating the great weapon that slew Oni no Hatsu Suru. Since then, they have tried to live up to his legacy by producing the most potent weapons and ingenious defenses in the Empire. The great war machines which help hold the Kaiu wall are designed and built by Kaiu engineers. The magnificent road through the Twilight mountains was conceived by Kaiu architects. The mighty defense network — all that stands between Rokugan and the Shadowlands — is under the permanent jurisdiction of the Kaiu daimyos.



THE KAIU MON

The Kaiu mon represents their sturdiness and position as the great foundation to the clan. It portrays the blood-red claw of a crab, surrounded by brick, on a field of white. The bricks represent protectiveness, a shield against danger, while the claw represents the hidden weapons, striking if their defense is ever breached.





Kaiu like to think of themselves as the rock anchoring their Hida and Hiruma cousins. The Crab's support and defense network would be paralyzed without them. They have been charged with maintaining the Crab's defensive structure and providing the highest quality weapons to the army on the wall. As such, they have little time to go searching after glory on their own, which suits them just fine. They know how important their quiet roles are.

Kaiu engineers train to build castles and other structures intended for the protection of the Clan. The Kaiu school emphasizes patience and planning as the cornerstone of strong design. Students learn military strategy, metalsmithing and the fundamentals of architecture. As a graduation exercise, they are expected to design a siege engine for placement on the Kaiu wall; if they pass, their first duty is to build the machine

they just designed. Kaiu structures, be they walls, catapults or tetsubos, are renowned for their intricate structure and ease of use. Most Kaiu bushi have a strong understanding of defensive strategy as well – so they know how to put their creations to good use.

Kaiu constructions do twisted things to the laws of physics, performing far better than most laymen would imagine. Kaiu ballistae have longer ranges, their walls have thicker foundations, and their katanas maintain an uncanny sharpness for centuries after they are forged. They are also skilled in designing boobytraps, and have riddled the shores of the Seigo River with all manner of pits, springs, and spikes. Hiruma scouts know better than to try and ford the river without a Kaiu guiding them.

The ancestral home of the Kaiu castle lies on the shores of Seigo River. The Kaiu wall was built



around it during the Battle of the Cresting Wave, and has since grown to encompass the Castle. No one is quite sure where the Kaiu fortress ends and the Great Wall begins. Not that it matters to the Crab; the Kaiu rule both with equal care and equal efficiency. Kaiu lands comprise most of the Twilight Mountains, which makes engineering know-how almost a practical necessity. Most of the peasants in these lands work at iron mining, harvesting the raw materials the Kaiu need to produce their masterpieces. Some villages also produce tea, and the curious Kaiu habit of chewing tea leaves probably originated with the magistrates of this area.

The Kaiu's tradition of design and construction grants them a patience unheard of in other Crab families. They see things in the long term, examining the implications of actions years after they are made. Their philosophy emphasizes the larger picture, and long-term benefits instead of short-term gains. They speak only after long contemplation and only with the greatest of care. Since caution isn't a virtue among the Crab, they are often derided by their hot-blooded cousins. Some have suggested that their patience and thoughtfulness are the only possible way of dealing with the other Crabs' taunts. Nevertheless, the Clan daimyos understand the need for the Kaiu's cool-headedness. Rare is the war council where Kaiu suggestions are ignored. For their part, the Kaiu feel they provide balance to the Crab forces, preventing Hida enthusiasm and Hiruma determination from doing more harm than good. "We temper their passion with discipline," they say. "And their swords are stronger because of it."

The Kaiu love to plan, and enjoy seeing the intricacies of a well-laid scheme coming together. The Hida's remarkable military prowess is of constant delight to them, and they love adding their own touches to a Hida war plan. They also share a common fascination with toys and puzzles, which many tinker with in their spare time. From puzzle boxes to mechanical birds to ever-opening eggs, their knick-knacks are well known for their amusement and entertainment value. It is rumored the Emperor himself maintains a collection, and more "civilized" Clans have often expressed regret that the Kaiu concentrate so much on military matters.

The Kaiu, of course, see things a little differently. Building walls and fortifications is much like building puzzle boxes: the only

difference are the stakes. Their love of toys becomes a passion on a larger scale, and Kaiu military designs reflect the same cleverness that their knick-knacks do. There's a nasty intelligence to the Kaiu, an intelligence reflected in all of their construction. Someone stepping into a Kaiu trap, for example, will be able to marvel at its wondrous intricacy – just before it shears their head off.

On rare occasions, the Kaiu have provided other Crabs with modified weapons and other devices. While not magic themselves, these creations are immensely useful, and highly-prized by those that receive them. A Kaiu who gives you something built with his or her own hands has made a serious gesture of respect and friendship.

The Kaiu school focuses on engineering, metalsmithing, and geology. Most Kaiu are charged with maintaining the Great Wall, as well as the ballistae and siege machines that help keep the Shadowlands at bay. The Kaiu are unparalleled at establishing and breaking sieges, and invading clans have been rudely surprised by their continuing ingenuity.

Kuiu

"I have seen eternity and I am not afraid."

–from the works of Kuiu Mokuna

The Kuiu family represents some of the most feared and enigmatic sorcerers in Rokugan. Their founder was a strange man who spent most of his life in secluded study. When the Crab first settled in their ancestral lands, the original Kuiu was ordered to discover a means means of combating the dark Shadowlands magic. He emerged from seclusion and traveled with the first Crab patrols into the Dark Lord's realm – gathering as much information as he could. He supplied his Clan with the first real defenses against the Shadowlands taint. Thanks to him, the corrupted frontier beyond the Crab borders could now be faced on something resembling equal terms.

There was a price for such knowledge, however. As time went by, Kuiu became more and more obsessed with his task, as he sought to uncover secrets best left undisturbed. His journeys into the Shadowlands became solitary, and he would return maddened and feverish, requiring weeks of bed rest. While he recuperated, his apprentices would record his half-crazed rantings, and applied what they learned to what



THE KUIU MON

The Kuiu mon is a pair of red crab claws, crossed over a cream-colored field and surrounded by a circle of blue. It represents the Kuiu's search for the great mysteries of the universe, and reminds them that such mysteries may often be found within themselves.





they already knew. Their discoveries were tremendous – ways to bind errant spirits, extending the protective properties of jade, the secret weaknesses of different oni – but the toll could be seen in Kuni's increasingly haggard face. Eventually, he sequestered himself again, this time for good. Within the walls of his private chambers, he went slowly mad, contemplating the horrid imaginings his unwholesome research had produced. His children and apprentices swore that he would not suffer in vain, and bent their own studies towards similar ends. Thus has followed the great tradition of the Kuni family.

Kuni shugenja are skilled in the arts of the physical form; they understand anatomy and the mixture of the five elements that occurs within

every body. By understanding it, they hope they can undo it when it doesn't please them. Kuni shugenja schools are thus heavily steeped in biology and the construction of living forms. Their magic tends towards wards and bindings, intended to hold bodies in a fixed location or prevent them from entering or leaving a particular space. The concept of possession is of great interest to the Kuni, as are methods of rending the spirit from the body. As all Oni are merely spirits made flesh, Kuni studies in this regard have proven effective against the denizens of the Shadowlands.

Shugenja of the Kuni school are not taught in organized groups, as most shugenja are. The actual school burned down centuries ago, its storehouse of knowledge scattered amongst hundreds of family members. If a student wishes to learn Kuni magic, she must seek out a single shugenja, one who holds the knowledge they need and is willing to take on an apprentice. Qualifications vary from instructor to instructor, and what is mandatory learning for one shugenja may be useless drivel to another. Outsiders become very frustrated at the haphazard methods of Kuni learning. Children of the Kuni family are often selected by close relatives as apprentices, and spend most of their formative years under the wing of a beloved uncle or cousin. All potential Kuni shugenja must possess a strong stomach and a burning desire to understand the nature of the Shadowlands. Without them, an apprentice cannot hope to learn anything.

Dissections and the close examination of various body parts (human and otherwise) are a staple of the Kuni curriculum. The family will sometimes commission hunting expeditions to trap Shadowlands creatures for experimentation; a live subject can bring generations of fruitful knowledge in the space of a few weeks. The apprentice studies the form and function of the captured being, and observes ways in which the elemental powers may be controlled in physical form. They are expected to take





DEAD FLESH

Kuni do not share the usual Rokugani aversion to touching dead flesh. The practical necessity of examining corpses – both human and otherwise – has rendered the tradition obsolete, at least in the Kuni workshops. They will wear gloves or other protective garments during dissections, but beyond that are as unclean as any *eta*. Of course, no one says anything about it, at least not directly. It is considered bad manners to ask a Kuni about her experiments, for doing so draws attention to her more “unclean” habits. And the Kuni have a certain pride, after all.

rigorous notes of their studies, and apply those notes once they become full-fledged shugenja. In this way, knowledge is passed from student to teacher without becoming dependent on a single well of knowledge.

Each Kuni has a part of the family library in his or her care. The sum of Kuni knowledge is scattered among hundreds of family members, who have been entrusted with their care by parents, mentors and siblings. The system has its own set of advantages and disadvantages. Exchanging knowledge is difficult, and few shugenja have an all-encompassing mastery of the school. But at the same time it is difficult to destroy any significant portion of the Kuni's learning. An enemy would have to work through a hefty percentage of shugenja, distributed over a wide area. In a place where the Shadowlands is but a few days away, a decentralized approach to spell storage is almost a necessity.

Once a year – every winter equinox – the Kuni meet at Hida castle to discuss their findings, recruit new shugenja, and engage in scholarly matters concerning the Clan. There, they exchange spells and other esoteric bits of knowledge, and bring potential threats from the Shadowlands to light. This is also the time when the secretive Kuni witch hunters return from their wanderings, and select new members (see below).

These yearly meetings go on behind closed doors, and no one outside of the family may directly participate (although the Hida daimyo receives a detailed transcript of the discussions). It is considered a matter of family pride to keep prying eyes from Kuni business, and whispered rumors of the horrible fates which befall eavesdroppers keep most away.

THE TAIN

Much has been made of the Kuni's sinister nature, and of the “Shadowlands taint,” which clings to them like a second skin. The Kuni are more than happy to encourage such talk, which enhances their reputation and convinces most Rokugani to leave them alone. There is a kernel of truth to the rumors, however, and the family is very aware of that fact.

As the Crab began retaking Kuni lands from the Shadowlands, they cast numerous purification rites to cleanse the earth of Fu Leng's taint. It wasn't easy. The trees, the plants, the very soil itself had been warped beyond redemption. In order to reclaim their homeland, the Kuni

shugenja had to completely destroy its spirituality, then rebuild it as if from nothing. These spells eliminated all spiritual activity within a given space, obliterating the corrupting influence. The result pushed the Shadowlands taint back – causing the infected landscape to wither and die – but was unable to restore the elements to their earlier harmony. Instead, the land became a spiritual null zone, exhibiting neither harmonious nor unholy elemental mixtures. The Shadowlands could not find a foothold, but neither could the wholesome forces of nature. The plains south of Hida castle thus became a blasted waste of rock and sand, incapable of supporting anything save a few skeletal trees and the crumbling ruins of Kuni holdings.

The Kuni reflect this bleakness within their souls. Where others share a spiritual connection with the rest of the universe, the Kuni have only a great emptiness. Through the use of *feng shui* and other arts, they have begun reweaving the pattern of their lands. But thus far, it has only been enough to establish a tenuous web of spiritual ley lines, linking each shugenja's dwelling to others nearby. The result has allowed the Kuni to continue their research (and to cast spells as other shugenja do), but at the cost of their elemental harmony.

As a result, others are often ill at ease around Kuni, sensing a coldness or vacuum while in their presence. Animals shy away from them and spirits respond to their summons more out of fear than respect. When coupled with their excursions into the Shadowlands themselves – and the fact that ogres and other Shadowlands creatures still wander the Kuni wastes – it comes as no surprise that the Kuni have such an unsettling reputation.

WITCH-HUNTERS

Since the days of Iuchiban, a very small branch of the Kuni have taken a more forceful role in the battle against Fu Leng. They feel that the Dark Lord must not be allowed to spread into the Empire, and have dedicated themselves to wiping out all traces of evil in Rokugan proper. These rare Kuni are known as *tsukai-sagasu*: the hunters of evil. They are still required to learn the mystic secrets of their family, but they also journey with their brethren and study the martial arts. When they are ready, they set out in the world, using their knowledge and weaponry to destroy the Shadowlands taint wherever it may



THE YASUKI MON

The Yasuki mon is a stark contrast to the other Crab families. It depicts a golden carp surrounding a flower of deep azure. The carp is considered an animal of good fortune, and the mon is intended to bring wealth and prosperity to all the Yasuki under it.



be. Almost all of them travel north, wandering the roads and fields of Rokugan in search of Shadowlands creatures who may have slipped past the Crab defenses. Rumors of hauntings or demonic sacrifices draw them like flies, which has made the Hunters the subject of popular legend among the peasantry. The tales elevate them to a status paralleling the *ise zumi*, and it comes as no surprise that the Hunters and the Dragon Clan tattooed men greet each other with respect.

Hunters only choose students of the Kuni school. There are rare instances of non-Kuni becoming Hunters, but Crab historians can count them on a single hand. No one ever actually chooses to be a Hunter: they are chosen. On the day of the Winter Solstice (the longest night of the year), those who wish to become Hunters travel to Hida Castle. All Hunters who are not pursuing more pressing business also travel to the Castle, where they meet with prospective "apprentices." Only a few are chosen; the rest return to their masters and continue their studies as shugenja. Those who are chosen leave with their new masters and are taught the skills they will need on the road.

Once on the road, the apprentice learns his or her skills "the Hunter's way," through example and experience. He or she trains in swordsmanship, wards and bindings, ways of detecting angry spirits, and combat techniques against ogres, goblins and other adversaries. When the time is right, the apprentice leaves his master and goes his own way. He is now a part of a select brotherhood devoted to hunting down and exterminating Rokugan's most potent threats.

Yasuki

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

— motto of the Yasuki family

The Yasuki are among the greatest merchants in Rokugan, and as such have seemingly little in common with the Hida. Originally a family in the Crane Clan, the Yasuki broke with their avian brothers some seven hundred years ago. In that time, they have adjusted to their new roles within the Crab, as well as maintaining their ancestral interests and fending off assaults from the unforgiving Crane. Despite these obstacles, they have adapted well.

The Yasuki still focus primarily on their mercantile interests. Unlike most noble families, the Yasuki revere and value the merchant class. To them, money and commerce are as valuable to the Empire as the strongest samurai or wisest shugenja. Trade is the lifeblood of Rokugan, they argue, increasing the fortunes of all who participate in it. Their traders are among the best in the Empire, and the family has amassed a network of merchants surpassed only by the Crane. Yasuki love the art of the deal, and delight at providing products their customers both want and need.

There is still a marked difference between Yasuki merchants and their Crane counterparts, however. While both cunning and wily, the Yasuki have a reputation for the same rough honesty that marks all Crabs. They dicker on pricing as all merchants do, but make no bones about why they do it. "Necessity dictates that I sell a product for all it is worth," states their daimyo, Yasuki Taka. "And I cannot know its worth until I know how much a customer is willing to pay for it." The nobility find such forthrightness crude; the *heimin* usually appreciate knowing where they stand. And for all their gouging, the Yasuki rarely sell shoddy or inferior products. The buyer knows he will get what he pays for.

The Yasuki's more illicit operations are presented in the same manner as their legal dealings: up front and with as little fanfare as possible. They cheerfully admit to supporting paralegal enterprises, often with an admonition to try such forbidden delights before condemning them. While Imperial magistrates and other high-ranking members of society fume at such brazen debauchery, the Yasuki claim they are merely providing a desired service. "Supply must rise to meet the demand," they say. "One cannot blame the supplier for the existence of the demand." They further claim that the Crane engage in the same underground business ventures, only the Crane are too hypocritical to admit it. The Crane respond with with outraged shock to such accusations, and the result has fueled the rivalry between the two camps. The laws of decorum and the Crab's continued support of the Yasuki are all that have prevent outright warfare. Behind the scenes, the economic battles between Crane and Yasuki continued with as much ferocity as they can muster, and form the basis for Rokugan's organized crime.



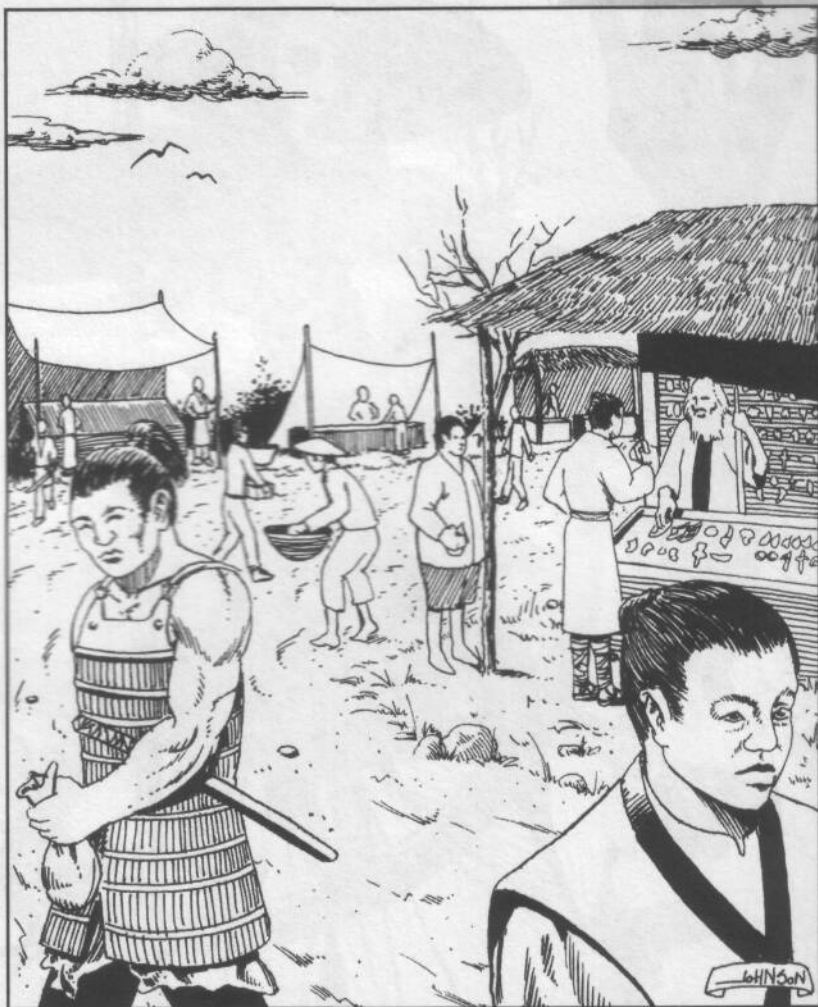
Smuggling is also a favored Yasuki profession. Family traders often sneak supplies across the Crane border through the mountains, or sail them down the bay to locations on Kenkai Hanto Peninsula. Shipments to the Lion lands must often be smuggled as well, since neither the Scorpion nor the Crane wishes to see their rival armed with Crab steel. The Yasuki have learned all manner of tricks to evade the Imperial magistrates, and they take a perverse pride in sneaking their wares right under their rivals' noses. Yasuki smuggling operations are a huge thorn in the Crane's side, perhaps the biggest ever.

Besides their commercial interests (both legal and otherwise), the Yasuki also serve as the ambassadors and diplomats for the Crab clan. This may seem impossible in light of their rivalry with the Crane, but they have persevered more through practical necessity than anything else. The other Crab families have no wish to waste their time with politics, yet the rest of the Empire needs to stay in contact with them. The Yasuki form the perfect middlemen – supporting Crab interests while presenting those interests with tact and aplomb. The courtiers from other Clans (excluding the Crane of course) much prefer the Yasuki – who have some understanding of face and manners – to the boorish antics of the Hida or Hiruma. Most ambassadors traveling into Crab lands are placed under Yasuki care, and those that aren't often wish they were: Hida hospitality can be quite spartan at best. The Yasuki house visiting diplomats at the Face of the East Castle near Shinomen forest, a place known for both its scenic location and its distance from Crab military strongpoints. The ancestral Yasuki palace holds too many secrets to trust outsiders there.

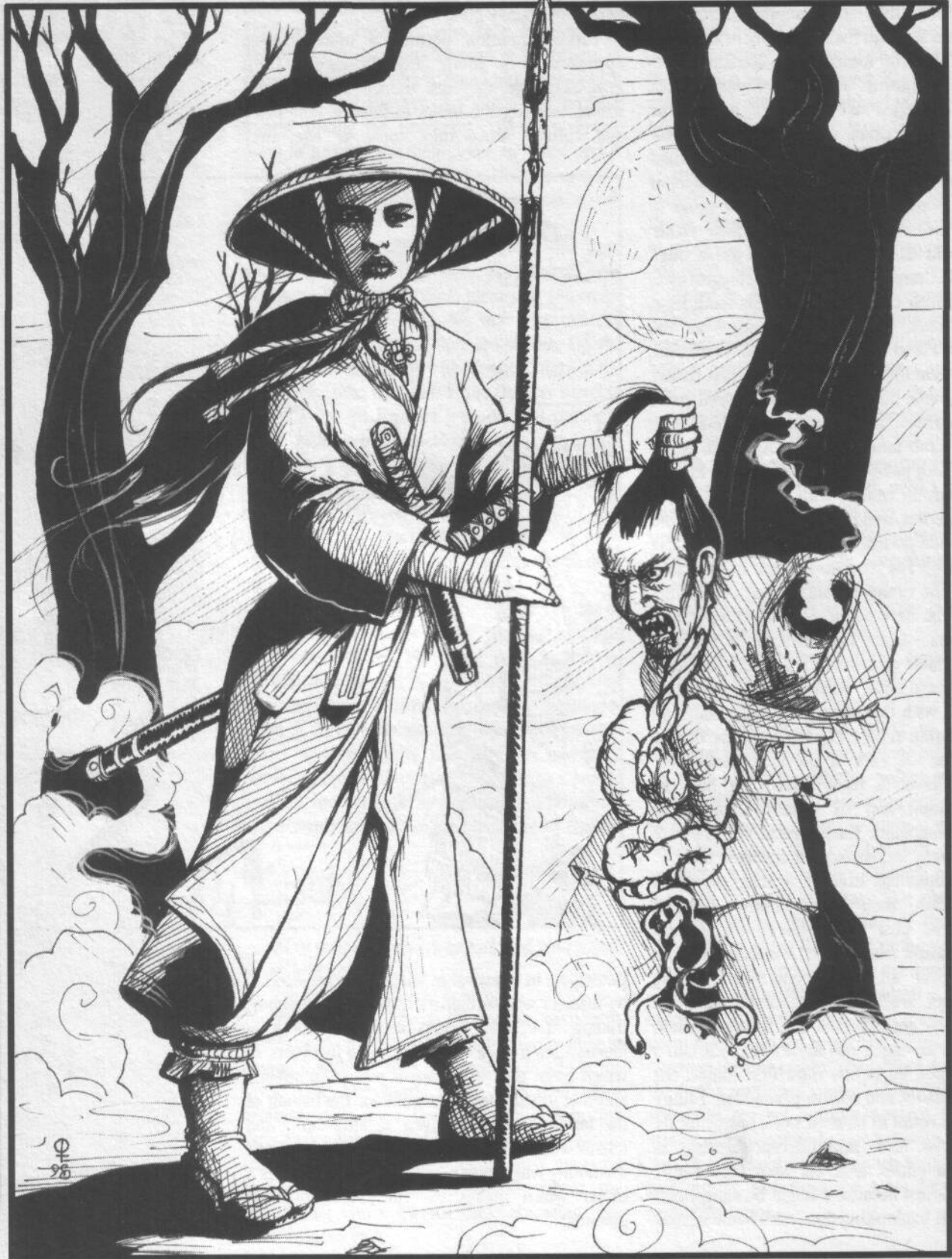
Yasuki diplomats exercise a large degree of power within their own family, and an ambassadorial post is considered the highest reward a Yasuki can receive. Ambassadors hold authority over all family operations in the province they are assigned to, and control the flow of family goods in and out. Before a Yasuki merchant or smuggler can move his goods into a given province, he or she must first contact the local ambassador and receive permission. Failure to do so can result in botched sales, hostile locals, or even arrest. Most Yasuki accept the risks as part of their duties; after all, what Crab would refuse a task just because it might be dangerous? The family is bankrolling the Crab's battle against

the Shadowlands, and must keep careful track of where the money goes.

Family tradition permits a more flexible approach to a young Yasuki's career. Until *gempukku* age, they are trained at the Yasuki school, learning the basics of finance, diplomacy and culture. Once they come of age, they



participate in a festival at which they are selected by masters who further train them in smuggling, trading and other Yasuki arts. They serve as journeymen to their master for up to five years, at which point they are given a two koku stipend and told to use their new skills for the benefit of the family. Usually, a given Yasuki's skills and talents will have emerged during this process, and the family will subtly guide him or her towards a career which makes the fullest use of their potential.



Chapter Three



Character



A NOTE ON SHADOWLANDS LORE

Shadowlands Lore is a vital skill for Crab characters, and covers a wide array of knowledge – everything from jade protection to recognizing different oni to protection from *maho*. If a Crab character has a Shadowlands Lore of 3 or higher, he automatically gains either Goblin Culture 1, Ratling Speech 1, or Maho-Tsukai Lore 1. This is not applicable to skill ranks the character already has. A character with a Ratling Speech of 2 will not gain a Ratling Speech of 3 upon reaching Rank 3 in Shadowlands Lore.

Chapter Three: Character

This Chapter includes expanded information for Crab Characters. Rules for creating berserkers and Kuni witch hunters are included, as well as complete information on the Hiruma, Kaiu and Yasuki families. We start with a list of new Skills, Advantages, and Disadvantages which the Crab specialize in.

New Skills

ENGINEERING (INTELLIGENCE)

Engineering is the ability to design, build, and repair large structures. This can be as simple as constructing a lean-to in the forest or as complex as strengthening the foundations of the Kaiu wall. A character skilled in engineering knows how to survey the land for optimum building sites, can find the best places to cross a stream, and can warn other characters not to smash that load-bearing wall. All Kaiu are expected to have a point or two in Engineering. This is a Merchant Skill.

GOBLIN CULTURE (INTELLIGENCE)

Goblins do not have a "culture" as such, but their activity is based around a pattern of imitating human customs. An observer who knows goblins well enough will be able to identify their purpose and intent at any given time. He or she can thus make sense of their bizarre activities and even predict what they are going to do next. This skill also covers any attempts to communicate with the goblins on a meaningful level – bartering with them, scaring them off, etc. Needless to say, it is considered a Low Skill.

INTIMIDATION (WILLPOWER)

Intimidation is the ability to coerce others through fright or the intention to harm. Crab samurai are the unquestioned masters of menace, and can intimidate others with a mere pause or the raising of an eyebrow. It is a Bugei Skill.

MAHO-TSUKAI LORE (PERCEPTION)

Characters with this skill are knowledgeable in the ways of black magic and can identify those who practice it. This is not the same as learning *maho*; those who have it cannot summon oni, drain the soul, or perform other unwholesome *maho* spells. Rather, it gives them an overview of the discipline, allowing them to recognize signs of *maho* activity if they come across it. They also know which particular spell is being practiced and the protective wards against it, if any exist. It is rare to find this knowledge outside of the Kuni witch hunter, for only they have need of it. It is a Bugei Skill for the witch hunters, a Low Skill for anyone else.

ORIGAMI (AGILITY)

This is the art of paper-folding, the ability to transform scraps of tissue into cranes, horses, and other figures. A character skilled in origami can use tiny creases in the paper to create a likeness of just about anything. It is primarily practiced in the courts of Rokugan and is considered a High Skill.

RATLING SPEECH (INTELLIGENCE)

The Nezumi tongue is unlike the Rokugani language, and takes an amount of training to speak. Characters with this skill are fluent in ratling speech and may communicate with the Nezumi as they would a human being. A character will lose one Honor point every time he or she uses ratling speech outside the presence of Nezumi. This is a Low Skill.

SIEGE (PERCEPTION)

If Engineering is building, Siege is tearing down. Siege represents a character's ability to gauge the strength of a given fortress and devise the best way to breach it. By observing the target for a given length in time, a siege master can determine the number of samurai guarding it, the shifts in their patrols, possible escape routes from the castle, and the most effective direction to launch an attack. It also covers the ability to



operate a siege engine – such as a catapult or firebreather – and to direct it where it will inflict the most damage. It is considered a Bugei skill.

TRAPS (PERCEPTION)

This is the ability to build, set, and detect all manner of booby traps, from the merely incapacitating to the gruesomely lethal. Not only can a character with Traps design and construct such pitfalls, but he knows how to conceal their presence until they are sprung. Consequently, he can identify the tell-tale signs of a hidden trap, and may roll to detect it before it goes off. This is a Bugei Skill for the Kaiu, a Low Skill for anyone else.

New Advantages

BLOOD OF OSANO-WO (5 POINTS, 3 POINTS FOR CRAB AND MANTIS)

You are a descendant of the great Osano-Wo, the Crab warrior whose stamina and battle fury rivaled that of the elements themselves. His blood has rendered you resistant to cold, heat and extremes of temperature. You cannot be harmed by any naturally occurring weather-related phenomena and always succeed at any Stamina checks involving temperature changes.

CRAB HANDS (6 POINTS; CRAB AND MANTIS ONLY)

You have a familiarity with many forms of weapons, and can wield most of them with some degree of effectiveness. You fight with any weapon, even weapons you have no skill rank in, as if your skill ranking were 1 higher. All weapons skills must still be purchased as normal. **Example:** Hida Shitoki has the Crab Hands advantage, a Kenjutsu Rank 3 and no Tetsubo Rank. He fights as if he has a Kenjutsu Rank 4 and a Tetsubo Rank 1. If he purchases a Tetsubo Rank through experience, he will fight as if he had a Tetsubo Rank 2.

HANDS OF STONE (5 POINTS; CRAB ONLY)

Crab hand-to-hand combat techniques are brutal in the extreme, and make good use of the Hida's great size. But you are a prodigy even by their standards. In bare-handed combat, you may keep 2 dice of damage instead of just 1.

KAIU SWORD (5 POINTS; 8 POINTS FOR NON-CRAB)

You have inherited one of the fabled Kaiu katanas, a magnificent weapon which has been in your family's hands for generations. It keeps an extra die of damage (3k3), but it must never leave your side. If anyone outside of your family touches the blade, you lose 1 Honor point. If you ever actually lose the sword, you lose two Honor Ranks permanently.

See "The Kaiu Forge" in Appendix 3 for more information on Kaiu katanas.

RATLING ALLY (2 POINTS; CRAB ONLY)

You have a friend among the Nezumi, one who will help you in time of need. He can act as a liaison between you and tribe, provide accurate information on the surrounding landscape, or even assist you in covert tasks like scouting or hiding from oni. You should design a name and personality for your Ratling friend (See the *L5R* rulebook, pg 195 or *The Book of the Shadowlands* sourcebook for more information), as well as a





CRAB VICES

For a Clan with such little regard for etiquette, Crab discipline is exceedingly high. A Crab bushi is expected to be ready for battle at any moment and must maintain his focus even during so-called "leisure hours." The Clan allows a certain leeway for off-duty troops and turns a blind eye towards the geisha houses, sake houses and other dens of ill-repute within their lands. After all, battling the Shadowlands is exhausting work, and a few rewards are expected for those who risk their lives against such a foe. That lenience ends, however, the instant a bushi stands a post. Samurai are expected to know their limits, and never let their leisurely pursuits interfere with their duty. A soldier appearing drunk or otherwise unfit along the Kaiu Wall is a threat to himself, to his comrades, and to the Empire he protects. Those who cannot maintain discipline are harshly punished – either demoted to menial duties or, in extreme cases, ordered to commit seppuku.

reason why the two of you are connected. While other Rokugani may look upon you with distrust for keeping such a tie, the Crab Clan knows your real value and will treat you with respect.

New Disadvantages

SHADOWLANDS TAINT (1-5 POINTS)

You have journeyed into the Shadowlands and left a tiny piece of your soul behind. As a result, you have been infected with the madness of Fu Leng's realm. For every point you take in this disadvantage, you gain 2 points of the Taint. (see the *Shadowlands* sourcebook, pg 27, or the *GM's Pack*, pg 11 for rules on the Taint.)



The Hiruma family has learned how to travel great distances without stopping, and ways to survive on an absolute minimum of food and water.

Benefit: Stamina +1

HIRUMA SCOUT SCHOOL

The Hiruma have no formal school; it was lost along with their ancestral lands. However, a branch of the Shinjo school houses a vast majority of Hiruma, and has become a *de facto* family school. It emphasizes stealth and observation techniques, as preparation for the Shadowlands scouts.

Benefit: Perception +1

Skills: Stealth 2, Archery, Athletics, Hand-to-Hand, Kenjutsu, Shadowlands Lore

Beginning Honor: 2, plus zero boxes

Equipment: Katana, wakizashi, clothing, running sandals, carved piece of jade, black body paint

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: Dance the Razor's Edge

The first thing Hiruma bushi learn is how to avoid their enemies' blows. The forces of the Shadowlands have taken their homeland, but they must not be allowed to take them as well. Thus do the Hiruma maintain the balance between duty and vengeance. For every school rank the bushi has, add 5 to his TN to be hit by any Shadowlands creature.

Rank 2: Run Like the Wind

The Hiruma Scouts must be able to outdistance the horrors of the Shadowlands and report back to the Kaiu wall. Those who reach this rank know how to push their endurance beyond normal human limits. They can maintain a running pace for a number of hours equal to their Stamina times two, after which they must rest (no activities and little movement) for the same amount of time. Assume they can keep a pace of at least 10 mph during the length of their run.

Rank 3: Smell the Dark Lord's Touch

At this Rank, the Scout has learned how to detect the subtle nuances of the Shadowlands Taint. It grants her a sense of absolute direction when traveling through Fu Leng's Realm – how far into the darkness she has gone, where the Taint is strongest, and the nearest path back to the Crab lands. The Scout can never become lost while in the Shadowlands and always succeeds on any rolls involving direction therein. Also, the Scout gains the ability to sense the Shadowlands Taint in nearby sentient creatures. The aura of awareness extends a distance of approximately 10 feet times his School Rank.

Rank 4: Harness the Falcon

The bushi learns to translate his fleet footedness to combat. At this level he may make 2 attacks per turn against Shadowlands creatures.

Also, the Scout's memory facilities are enhanced considerably. At any time, he can hold a image in his head, and recount the details of that image on demand with perfect clarity, as if he were still standing there. He may only hold one image at a time in such a manner.

Rank 5: Veil of the Spirits

The Scout has learned how to keep himself perfectly still, and to remain hidden within that state. By spending a Void point and remaining still, the Scout gains an effective "invisibility," unable to be seen by any creature. He or she must be making a conscious attempt to hide – using

available cover, wearing camouflaged clothes, etc. – and can conduct no actions while hidden; any movement at all disrupts the effect.



Daimyo Kaiu Utsu stresses the ability to gather and properly interpret information. Its members must understand the concepts of engineering, and know how to apply those concepts to practical situations. **Benefit: +1 Perception**

KAIU ENGINEERING SCHOOL

Students at the school learn architecture, construction, and physics. They must show an aptitude for hands-on experience since the Kaiu are known as much for *building* a given structure as for conceiving or designing it. They also study military strategy, siege methods, and the construction of long-range artillery; a Kaiu must know how to destroy a building as well as she knows how to put one up. Kaiu, as combat engineers, are bushi.

Benefit: +1 Intelligence

Skills: Siege, Engineering, Traps, History, Armorer, Battle, Weaponsmith

Beginning Honor: 2, plus zero boxes

Equipment: Katana, wakizashi, heavy armor, kimono, surveying tools, drawing paper and pens, scroll case.

TECHNIQUES

The Kaiu understand the ebb and flow of large-scale battles, the fundamentals of civil engineering, and the practical crafts of armor and weaponsmithing. The Kaiu school emphasizes these crafts, and focuses on the more subtle elements of military conflict.

At each successive Rank, the Kaiu picks one of the seven skills taught by the school. He or she may roll and keep an additional die for that skill

whenever a check is called for. He or she is not limited to the number of times a skill can be improved in this manner; for example, a Rank 2 Kaiu could opt to roll and keep an additional die for Battle and an additional die for Weaponsmith, or opt to roll and keep two additional dice for Weaponsmith only. The only limits are the GM's discretion and the character's willingness to specialize.



KUNI WITCH HUNTERS

Kuni Witch Hunters (*tsukai-sagasu*) do not join a school *per se*, but are trained on the road with a witch hunter sensei. Hunter characters have passed their master's strenuous requirements, as well as an early rudimentary education from the Kuni shugenja school. For this reason, Kuni Hunters have a wide variety of skills. Although they do not begin with it, and although they are not shugenja, they may learn the Spellcraft skill, which is ordinarily restricted to shugenja (see sidebar).

Since Hunters are so rare, and since they are a solitary bunch to begin with, the GM should only allow one Witch Hunter character per adventuring group.

Benefit: +1 Awareness

Skills: Shadowlands Lore or Maho-Tsukai Lore, Defense, Hunting, Herbalism, 2 Bugei Skills, Athletics or Stealth

Beginning Honor: 1, plus 5 boxes

Equipment: Katana, wakizashi, traveling clothes, jade pendant symbolizing their status as a hunter.



NEW SKILL: SPELLCRAFT (INTELLIGENCE) (KUNI WITCH- HUNTERS ONLY)

This skill provides the *tsukai-sagasu* with enhanced knowledge of magic and the kami. A witch hunter with this skill can roll Intelligence + Spellcraft versus a TN of 20 to sway a kami's view of them from hatred to mere dislike, or neutral to friendly. Further, it can be used to identify spells being cast in the area, and to understand complexities about an unfamiliar spell. Lastly, a successful use of Intelligence + Spellcraft at a TN of 25 can determine if a spell has been cast in the area recently, or to identify what spell has been cast on a person. This skill can be used to identify the residual effects of a spell that was cast in the recent past (up to 1 hour per level of Spellcraft). This is a High Skill.

(This skill originally appeared in *Way of the Phoenix*.)



ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters are asked by a Crab magistrate to escort his son to a celebration within the Crane lands. The son is a boorish, uncultured bushi who has never left the Kaiu wall. The players must ensure that he behaves himself, does not dishonor the family and is not taken advantage of by the other courtiers in attendance. The festival lasts seven days, during which they must fend off the schemes of all manner of courtiers, diplomats and noblemen, bent on using the Crab youth for their own ends.

TECHNIQUES

Rank 1: To Strike the Darkness. The apprentice has learned how to block out all distraction when facing their foe. He or she gains two attacks per turn against any creature with the Shadowlands Trait.

Rank 2: To See the Darkness. The Hunter learns the tell-tale signs of the Shadowlands Taint and can attune his or her senses to its elemental corruption. This is an intuitive sense, dependent upon the Witch Hunter's instincts rather than any tangible evidence. He or she can detect the presence and proximity of a Tainted being, out to about fifty ken-an (fifty yards) by rolling Awareness + Shadowlands Lore at TN 15. (20+ if the person/creature is adept at hiding its nature; GM's discretion).

Rank 3: To Ride the Darkness. The Hunter's proximity to evil lends him great strength when he battles against it. In close range combat, the hunter may keep a number of additional dice to hit equal to his opponent's Shadowlands Rank. Against native Shadowlands creatures, they may keep a number of dice equal to the following:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Goblins and Zombies | 1 die |
| Ogres, Pennagolan and Ghosts | 2 dice |
| Oni | 3-5 dice, |

depending on their power (GM's discretion)

Rank 4: To Repel the Darkness. At this level, the hunter can focus his will to resist the effects of dark magic. He or she becomes immune to *maho* and can make another character resistant for one round by rolling Willpower + Maho-Tsukai Lore TN 25. Raises allow the hunter to extend this resistance, one round per 5 TN raise. The hunter can also make himself resistant to any magic being cast by a character with the Shadowlands taint; add 5x the hunter's School Rank to the Tainted caster's TN to cast a spell targeting the *tsukai-sagasu*.

Rank 5: To Shatter the Darkness. The hunter is now a true enemy of the Shadowlands, and can cut down Fu Leng's minions with devastating power. If a Hunter's damage roll kills a Shadowlands opponent (a creature of Fu Leng or human with the taint), it does not count as an attack for the round.



YASUKI MERCHANT SCHOOL

The Yasuki Merchant School does not teach techniques, but as the merchant grows in Insight, he shows a greater ability to acquire what he needs. With each Rank, the Merchant is able to appropriate more valuable objects. In addition, the time required to gain an object decreases significantly. It takes approximately one week to gain an item, but two days less to acquire an item from a previous School Rank.

For example, if a Rank 3 Merchant wishes to gain a Rank 1 item, it will take him 7 days minus 4 (2 fewer days x 2 Ranks). Thus, the Rank 3 Merchant can gain Rank 1 items in 3 days.

To gain an item, the Merchant must make a School Rank + Commerce roll to beat a TN set by the GM. The Merchant may make Raises to increase the quality of the item, decrease the amount of time required to acquire it or increase the number of items acquired. Each Raise takes away one day required to gain the item. A Merchant will always need at least one day to gain an item. Each Raise doubles the number of items that can be acquired. For instance, three Raises will gain a Merchant eight items.

Yasuki merchants are not considered bushi.

RANK ONE ITEMS

Cart, bolt of cloth, lantern, clothes, pots, "peasant weapons," pans, wicker backpack, trinkets (which may be mistaken for real jewelry).

RANK TWO ITEMS

Boat (raft), pony, weapon of average quality, safe travel to the next town, real jewelry of average quality, any two Rank 1 items.

RANK THREE ITEMS

Safe travel to a distant town (within the same province), "finger" of jade, expensive jewelry, illicit goods including but not limited to: forged papers and other "merchandise of doubtful provenance," recommendation to an average quality geisha house, any four Rank 1 items, any two Rank 2 items.

RANK FOUR ITEMS

Safe travel out of the province (with or without papers), armor, warhorse (non-Unicorn), weapon of fine quality, boat (sampan or junk), recommendation to a fine quality geisha house), any eight Rank 1 items, any four Rank 2 items, any two Rank 3 items.

RANK FIVE ITEMS

Unicorn horse (bad color, born on a bad day, etc.), official travel papers (unlimited travel), minor *nemuranai* (with appropriate consequences), introduction to a high quality geisha ("You mean that sake house is really a tea house?"), a girl with green eyes, any sixteen Rank 1 items, any eight Rank 2 items, any four Rank 3 items, any 2 Rank 4 items.

Benefit: Perception +1

Skills: Etiquette, Heraldry, Sincerity, Defense, Commerce, Craft, Gambling.

Within the Yasuki family, Commerce is not considered a dishonorable skill.

Beginning Honor: 0, plus 5 points

Equipment: Kimono, katana, wakizashi, traveling clothes, wicker backpack, sleeping roll, (all average quality), traveling pony with storage packs, 8 Koku.

All Yasuki, regardless of their school, start with an additional 2 Koku from the family coffers.



More than any other Clan, the Crab employ "dead-eyes" berserkers within their ranks. Most Crab bushi embrace the code of *bushido* as a rock to anchor them against the horrors of the Shadowlands. If one can keep the warrior's creed pure within the heart, then one's opponents – no matter how terrifying – pose no threat. Those who embrace *bushido* to the exclusion of all else go into a sort of trance during combat, heightening their strength and stamina to inhuman levels. Some claim the Crab need berserkers to equal their enemies' ferocity. Some say the Hiruma's great loss makes them perfect receptacles for the dead-eyes philosophy. Some even say the Crab's natural temperament leads them to mindlessly throw their lives away. Whatever the reason, berserkers have found a home amid the Crab as they could nowhere else. With the Clan in a constant state of war, their unique talents are always needed.

The majority of Crab berserkers belong to the Hiruma family, who have been driven to it by the loss of their homeland. The Hiruma embrace *bushido* as the only thing worth living for, and have learned to focus their frustration into a deadly trance. Hida berserkers are less common, and most come to it out of a love of battle rather than a need to erase any dishonor. Rage plays a large part in a Hida berserker's life: a rage carefully filtered through inflexible *bushido*.

Most berserkers spend several hours meditating before a battle. There, they allow their emotions to burst forth, and shape the resulting energy into a death-like trance. They harness their anger and frustration by the strength of their warrior's philosophy, sharpening it as the would a weapon. Most berserkers exhibit signs of their process as their meditation continues: screaming,

"RETIRE?!"

Crab monks are relatively rare, since fewer Crab samurai survive to retirement age than any of the other Great Clans. Many samurai – including the current daimyo, Hida Kisada – refuse to enter a monastery, opting instead to continue the fight until their lives are finally claimed in battle. Crabs who do become monks can often be found teaching or wandering Rokugan in search of enlightenment. Crab practicality makes a lifetime spent in the seclusion of a monastery seem arrogant and wasteful.





foaming at the mouth, occasionally striking the wall or other nearby objects. Those around them quickly learn to leave them in peace during such times. When the battle itself dawns, the berserker has achieved an almost Zen-like balance between discipline and emotion, where the combined power of both comes to him in a great rush. The results are awe-inspiring.

In combat, the berserker strikes with heedless abandon, raining down blows like a thunderstorm. Their eyes become glassy and distant and their mouth curls back in a hideous grimace. They move with the speed of a panther and attack with the ferocity of wolves. A berserker in full combat mode can easily kill ten men within the space of a heartbeat, slaughtering them as he would a sow or a chicken. A few berserkers will cackle or howl like wild animals when they enter the fight, but most remain deathly silent as they plow through their foes. It is difficult to say which of the two is more

unnerving. Berserkers do not change their countenance when fighting inhuman foes, and will attack the largest Oni with the same abandon that they strike at the weakest goblin. All are the same in their deadened eyes.

THE BERSERKER "SCHOOL"

In order to become a berserker, a character must create a character from a Crab family, and then spend points to take the Death Trance Advantage (*L5R* rulebook, page 73). He must further renounce any schools he previously belonged to (giving up their advantages and techniques), and drop his Honor Rank to 1 (unless it was already 1 or lower), reflecting an increased callousness and disregard for social niceties. If he does this, he has achieved enough focus to enter a berserk rage. He may later increase his Honor through Character Points or experience.

Benefit: Stamina +1

There is no berserker school, just instinct and the passion with which one adheres to bushido. When berserkers go into their trance, however, they forget the tenets of other battle philosophies and so cannot use any of the special abilities of their home school. In exchange, they gain an inhuman strength and the ability to absorb incredible amounts of damage. The benefits of being a berserker increases as time goes on: as he gains experience, he learns how to harness his rage more and more effectively, and can thus strike with greater and greater amounts of power. The Ranks of the "Berserker School" reflect this increased effectiveness.

When a berserker enters combat, he ignores wound penalties for a number of rounds equal to his Earth x2, plus one round per Rank. (The wounds are suffered, they just have no effect on him.) Furthermore, he may roll and keep an extra die of damage for every Rank he has, reflecting his ability to focus his rage into his attacks. These extra dice are rolled regardless of what the berserker is attacking with, be it a tetsubo, katana, or his bare hands.

There is a price to be paid for such power, however. After a number of rounds equal to his Earth x2, the berserker is spent, and his rage collapses into a semiconscious daze. He is considered Incapacitated for the rest of the combat, and must be protected by his comrades if he wishes to stay alive. Because of this, many berserkers along the Kaiu Wall live short, brutal lives, despite their combat effectiveness.



Heritage Tables

After choosing which family a character came from, a player has the option to roll on the Heritage tables to see what sort of family line the character was born into. A player may roll on the Heritage tables up to three times as desired, but every roll costs one Character Point.

Begin with Heritage Table 1 and follow the instructions. Be warned, not everything is fair along the Kaiu Wall.

HERITAGE TABLE 1

| Roll | Result |
|------|---|
| 1-2 | Dishonorable Past. Roll on Heritage Table 2. |
| 3-5 | Undistinguished Past. No benefits or penalties. |
| 6-9 | Distinguished Past. Roll on Heritage Table 3. |
| 10 | Mixed Blessings. Roll on Heritage Table 4. |

HERITAGE TABLE 2 – DISHONORABLE PAST

Unfortunately, we are not all blessed with honorable ancestors – especially among the Crab, where honor is a luxury they sometimes cannot afford.

| Roll | Result |
|------|---|
| 1 | Corrupted! One of your family fell to the Shadowlands and returned as a monster to attack the Clan. You begin the game at 0 Glory and lose 1 Honor rank. |
| 2-3 | Ruined! Another clan betrayed your family's trust and all but destroyed it. You begin with no money, no family name, just your outfit (all of which is poor quality). Choose the clan responsible. |
| 4-5 | Fool! Your family fell for a subtle Crane or Scorpion ploy. Roll a die: if even, you have a Dark Secret; if odd, you owe an Obligation. Choose the clan responsible. |
| 6 | Weakling! One of your ancestors lacked the courage to face the Shadowlands, resulting in the deaths of many bushi. You start with no Glory, and must earn twenty Glory points to reach rank one. |
| 7-8 | Deserter! For some reason your parents forswore their loyalty and left the clan. This happened shortly before your <i>gempukku</i> . You are a clan ronin. |
| 9 | Cursed! Your family banished a powerful oni, who inflicted a curse upon them before returning to the pit. Lose two points of Honor, and you do not get your family Trait benefit. |
| 10 | Traitor! Even Crabs can betray their clan; your father took money in exchange for information. He was banished, and his name struck from Clan histories. Your clan will give you no land or title, and will not trust you with important information. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3 – DISTINGUISHED PAST

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | Venerable Blood: The blood of your original ancestor flows strong in your veins. Gain 1 Honor and one Void. This result may only occur once. Treat subsequent rolls as no effect. |
| 2-5 | Battle Veteran: A family member fought at a tremendous battle. Go to Table 3A, Great Battles. * |
| 6-7 | A Hero's End: One of your ancestors died a hero's death defending the Emerald Empire. Go to Table 3B, Glorious Death. * |
| 8-9 | Meritorious Service: Your ancestor performed prestigiously while occupying a high-profile position in the clan. Go to Table 3C, Prestigious Duty. |
| 10 | Famous Affair: Your family has romantic ties with another clan – probably the Unicorn, but possibly any Clan in the Empire. Roll a die: if even, a politically expedient marriage was arranged, gain a Minor Ally from another clan and you can attend that family's school without buying the advantage; if odd, the affair was troublesome, and you gain a Minor Ally and Minor Enemy from that clan. All rolls of six or less indicate the connection is with the Unicorn clan. |

(Tables 3A-3C are on the next page.)

* Yasuki characters must re-roll this result. Accept the result if they get it a second time.

HERITAGE TABLE 4 – MIXED BLESSING

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1-3 | As an Imperial Magistrate, your ancestor revealed another family's dishonor. Gain a Major Enemy, 1 Rank of Honor, and 1 rank in Investigation. |
| 4 | Your family had regular dealings with a Nezumi tribe: gain the Ratling Ally advantage. |
| 5 | Your ancestor was associated with an infamous Yasuki smuggler. Gain +1 to any Trait that is rank 2, and one rank in Commerce. You have a Social Disadvantage and Bad Reputation for all non-Crab Rokugani. |
| 6-7 | Your ancestor slew another clan's hero in a duel. Gain a Major Enemy, an additional Glory rank and a (Enemy Clan) Lore, rank 1. |
| 8-9 | Your family has struggled financially. You have no koku, and all your items save one are average. Gain four bugei, craft or low skills at rank 1 as you struggle to get by. |
| 10 | You have inherited a magical item. It is said it was taken from an oni by a distant relative. You aren't sure if it's magic, and if it is, if it's cursed or tainted. |

HERITAGE TABLE 3A - GREAT BATTLES

Your ancestor fought in a famous battle of the past, giving you a worthy standard to live up to. Yasuki characters subtract two from this roll.

Roll Result

-1-1 The Crane War

The first great Clan war took place between the Crab and the Crane, fought over possession of the Kenkai Hanto Peninsula. There were several pitched battles between the Crab forces and the Daidoji family, at which your ancestor fought. Gain 1 point "Crane Clan Lore" and 1 point Iaijutsu.

2-4 A small battle

Stationed on the southern border, the Crab have fought a large number of pitched battles against the Shadowlands - almost more than can be counted. Your ancestor distinguished him- or herself during one of these. Gain 1 point of Glory and a free Void point to spend in every battle against Shadowlands creatures.

5 The Battle of the Cresting Wave

Your ancestor helped spearhead the defense of Rokugan against the Maw and his army. Everyone who fought at the battle also helped erect the Great Wall, planting its foundations while Kuni Osaku held the Maw's army at bay. The battle was relentlessly brutal, and only the best and bravest samurai survived. Gain 1 Glory rank and a point in the Engineering skill.

6-7 The Battle of the Thundering Shrine

Following the Cresting Wave, the Crab engaged in numerous border skirmishes with the Scorpion Clan. The Battle of the Thundering Shrine was the largest of these, fought for the territory surrounding the Shrine of Osano-Wo. The rocky terrain was subjected to fierce storms, which made fighting difficult for both sides. Gain 1 Honor rank and 1 point in Battle.

8-9 The Battle of the Kuni Wastes

150 years ago, the Crab made a final push to rid the Kuni lands of the Shadowlands. The Kuni shugenja fought with powerful spells as they drove the ranks of oni, goblins and zombies deep into the Shadowlands. Those who battled beside them learned many ways to destroy the minions of Fu Leng. Gain point 1 Glory and 1 rank in Shadowlands Lore.

10 Battle of Sleeping River

This was the famous battle in which the Clans united against Iuchiban and his evil order of Bloodspeakers before he could seize the Emerald Throne. Your forefather was instrumental in putting the mad shugenja down and shattering his dark power. Add one to your Honor and gain the skill *Maho-Tsukai* Lore at rank one.

HERITAGE TABLE 3B - GLORIOUS DEATH

Your ancestor died an honorable death which has emboldened the family ever since.

- 1-3 Killed fighting the Shadowlands: Gain 1 rank in the weapon of your choice and you are immune to the fear generated by Shadowlands creatures as you strive to avenge your ancestor.
- 4-5 Killed in a duel: Gain 1 rank in Iaijutsu and three Character Points for the example that was set for you.
- 6-9 Killed in battle: Roll once on Great Battles (gaining whatever benefit) and roll again here:
 - 1 Saved the day: gain a Major Ally from any clan or family on your side.
 - 2 Killed while charging the enemy lines. Gain a Minor Ally from your Clan.
 - 3 Died protecting a clan general: gain a Minor Ally from a clan on your side.
 - 4-5 Killed an important foe, a clan hero or a mighty oni: gain 1 Glory.
 - 6 Saved a wounded samurai: go to Gifts.
 - 7-9 Fought well: gain 1-10 points of Glory.
 - 10 Carried the clan standard into battle. Gain 7 additional Glory points.
- 10 *Seppuku*: Your ancestor committed suicide to spare the family honor, leaving you with a token of remembrance. Go to Table 3D: Gifts.

HERITAGE TABLE 3C - NOTABLE AWARDS

Your Ancestor served the Crab well, and was granted a hereditary position within the Clan. Your character starts with the following position and rank:

- 1-3 Magistrate of the family. Gain 1 Glory Rank.
- 4-5 Magistrate of the Clan. Gain 2 Glory Ranks.
- 6 Magistrate of the Emerald Champion. Gain 3 Glory Ranks.
- 7-8 *Gunso*. Gain 1 Glory Rank and 1 Battle.
- 9 *Chui*. Gain 1 Glory Rank and 2 Battle.
- 10 *Taisa*. Gain 2 Glory ranks and 2 Battle.

HERITAGE TABLE 3D - GIFTS

All gifts are subject to Game Master interpretation.

- 1-6 Money (between 1 and 20 koku).
- 7-8 Land. (Must be tended to at least three months of the year. Gain 1-10 koku per annum.)
- 9 Items of high quality.
- 10 A minor *Nemuranai*.

Crab Fortune Tables

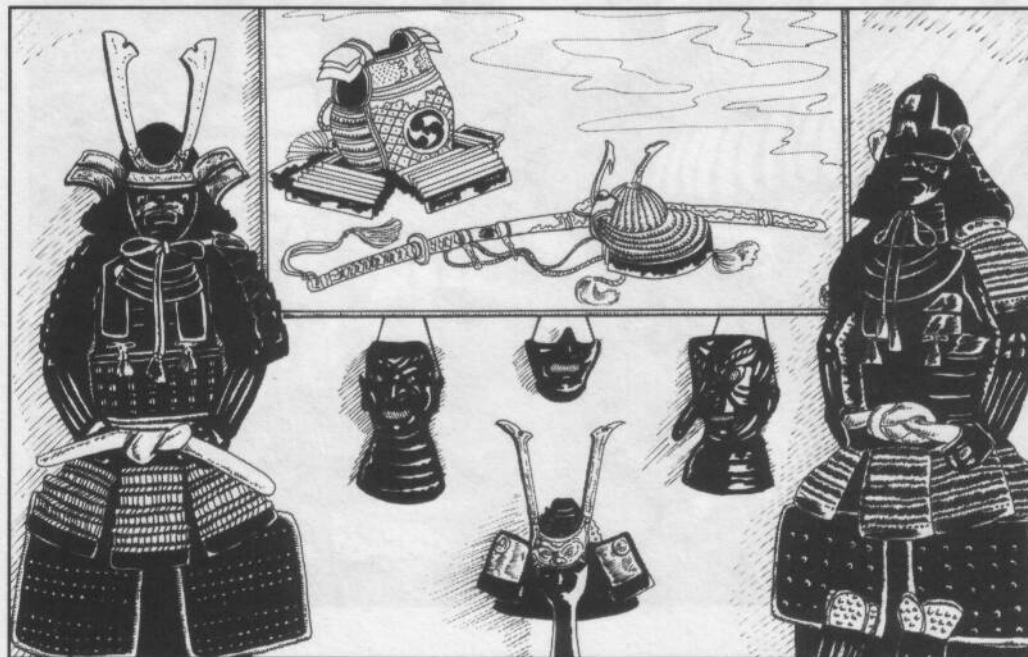
You cannot always control the hand of fate. Every Crab character has the option to roll on this table once, at a cost of 3 Character Points, to see what fate has dealt them. First, roll a die to determine whether the Fortunes have been good to you. If it's even, roll again on the Good Fortune table; if it's odd, roll on the Bad Fortune table.

GOOD FORTUNE TABLE

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1 | Shugenja: You have an extra spell. All others: You have an item of excellent quality. |
| 2 | You are a natural combatant; add 2 ranks to any one Bugei skill. |
| 3 | You have an heirloom item, several hundred years old (tea set, painting, helmet). |
| 4 | You have a potion with five doses. Each cures one die of wounds. |
| 5 | You have an item of magical curiosity (a go set which can play against you, a wakizashi that draws itself on command, a kimono which never gets stained or wet). |
| 6 | Noble blood: gain three points of honor. |
| 7 | Prodigy: +10 insight. |
| 8 | Windfall: Roll one die and divide it by two, retaining fractions. You have this many extra koku. |
| 9 | You have a ceremonial suit of armor. Roll two dice to determine its value in koku (re-rolling tens). |
| 0 | You have friends in another clan (less than a Minor Ally, more than nothing). |

BAD FORTUNE TABLE

| Roll | Result |
|------|--|
| 1-2 | You lack two items from your starting outfit (Game Master's choice). |
| 3 | You grew up secluded in the Crab lands, and are completely unfamiliar with the cultural subtleties in the rest of Rokugan. You may not start out with a skill in Sincerity or Etiquette, and your Honor can never be greater than 2. |
| 4 | You have an heirloom item, which is incomplete. You think you know who has the rest... (a shogi set minus one set of pieces, a katana without the saya). |
| 5 | You broke your family katana. Lose one rank of Honor and make do with a 2k2 katana until you find a better one. |
| 6 | Overconfident: lose 1 rank in your highest skill (choose randomly if there are more than one). |
| 7 | Disruptive Student: -10 insight. |
| 8 | Gambling losses: lose 1-10 koku. |
| 9 | Gambling debts: Lose all but 1 koku. The next 1-10 koku you get must be turned over to your creditor. |
| 0 | No bad fortune. Yet. No, don't worry about it. I'm sure your Game Master will forget all about this. |





Chapter Four



*Who's Who in
the Crab Clan*



ANCESTOR: HIDA

DIED 210?

10 POINTS

The first Crab, the primal warrior, the patriarch of the guardians of Rokugan, Hida is the paramount of strength and stamina. He was the embodiment of pure power and raw emotional rampage. It is said that Hida once wrestled an oni to the ground with his bare hands, ripping it apart with his fingers and teeth.

When Hida sent away his only son with Shinsei to walk in the Shadowlands, the Crab was convinced he would see his son again.

None of the other "Thunders" would return, but Hida's son would certainly have the strength to survive whatever challenges Fu Leng would throw at them. Of course, only Shosuro returned, and died on the Emperor's throne room. Hida had no chance to learn his son's fate, and that fact haunted him his entire life.

(continued on p. 62)

Chapter Four: Who's Who in the Crab Clan

The Hida

HIDA KISADA, "THE GREAT BEAR"

EARTH: 9

WATER: 3

Strength 6

FIRE: 5

AIR: 3

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 5

Skills: Heraldry 1, History 2, Hunting 3, Law 3, Shintao 3, Athletics 2, Battle 5, Defense 5, Hand-to-Hand 5, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu 4, Shadowlands Lore 5, Tetsubo 5, Wrestling 5

Honor: 2

Glory: 9

Advantages: Crab Hands, Clear Thinker, Large, Magic Resistance (6 points), Strength of the Earth (8 points)

Disadvantages: Brash

When Hida Kisada was five years old, he went on a journey with his father, the Clan daimyo, to the Imperial City. Along the way, they stopped at an inn in the Lion lands, an inn near a fairly large patch of woods. While Kisada's father arranged for rooms, Kisada wandered into the nearby village, staring with iron grey eyes at the new world around him and dwelling – in a five-year-old way – on their meaning and purpose.

He was startled from his meditation by the sound of other children. Turning a corner, he came upon a trio of Lion boys tormenting the son of a peasant. The peasant stood by helplessly while the Lions taunted and beat his boy, shoving him into the mud again and again. Kisada

watched silently, then asked the peasant why he did not interfere. The peasant bowed low and told the young boy that he was forbidden to interfere. The Lions were the sons of the local magistrate and as nobility, were above him. To act against them in any way was to court death. Kisada nodded silently and watched the brawl continue, then turned and walked away.

The next day, it rained, and Kisada's father was forced to postpone the journey. Again, Kisada went walking in the village, and again, he came upon the Lion boys bullying a young peasant. This time, there were no adults about, and the Lions attacked with the savagery of their namesake. The child was struck so many times that he could not move from where he had fallen. He was unable even to raise his hands in defense.

Kisada sized up the situation and stepped forward, speaking to the trio in a calm, even voice. He asked them why they were doing this, and what honor was gained in beating a peasant child so. The lead boy spun on him with an intensity the young Crab had not expected. "Do not question your betters!" the older boy screamed, launching a calculated blow at Kisada's face. It struck him on the right temple and he fell backwards, landing on the muddy road next to the peasant. The Lions then turned back to the peasant, renewing their attack with fresh anger. Finally, tiring of the game, they walked away, laughing.

Kisada sat in the mud while the peasant boy staggered to his feet, his eye swelling up from the blow. The child turned and gave him a pained look, then limped slowly home, blood flowing from his mouth and nose. Kisada watched him go, the grey in his eyes boiling like a storm cloud with unseen fury. He sat there, unmoving, for several more hours. Finally, he decided what he would do.

The sky cleared the next day, and Kisada's father prepared to continue his journey. When he came down for his morning meal, he was greeted by the sight of his son covered with dirt and nursing a black eye. It was obvious that he had not slept, but he neither shivered nor wept. He looked his father in the eye, and asked if he would delay the trip by a single hour. The daimyo stared at his son's countenance, then nodded curtly. Kisada bowed low, promising to be back promptly.

He found the Lion boys lounging near the village tea house, their lizard grins reigniting the



insult of the previous day. They stopped talking as Kisada walked up to them, their idle voices falling silent. Kisada positioned himself some twenty feet away, then launched a vicious barrage of insults at them. The rage he had kept bottled up all night came boiling out, as he cursed the boys with the foulest and dirtiest epitaphs he could think of. The Lions stood shocked, unwilling to believe that someone could speak to them like that. Then, as one, they launched themselves toward the young Crab.

Kisada turned on his heel and flew from his attackers, moving with a speed and strength that belied his size. The Lion chased after him, cursing him for a coward and howling for revenge. He led them out of the village and into the woods, leaving the trappings of civilization behind. Still they pursued him, their anger overwhelming all other considerations. So taken up were they in chasing him down that they did not notice the pit until it was too late.

It was fairly deep, and covered with branches so as to be invisible to the naked eye. For the creation of a child, it was executed with remarkable skill. Kisada was able to sidestep it just as his pursuers came crashing through the underbrush. The three boys tumbled over each other as they fell down the hole, their arms pinwheeling backwards in a futile attempt to defy gravity. Kisada heard the snapping of bones as they hit the pit floor and their shouts of anger turning to cries of pain. He walked slowly to the edge of the pit, and looked down at the Lion boys, their faces filled with anguish and fear. He stared solemnly at each one of them, marking their eyes with his own. Then he covered the pit with branches and returned to the village.

During their journey home, Kisada and his father stopped back at the same inn. As evening came on, Kisada went out to the woods and found the pit he had dug. Three rotting bodies still lay in it, undiscovered after all those weeks. Kisada looked at the corpses for a long time, his face unmoving. Finally he spoke, a single sentence crossing his five-year-old lips.

"This is what it means to challenge a Crab."

Since that time, Kisada has grown up to be one of the mightiest samurai in Rokugan. He has consistently demonstrated a tactical genius and a lust for battle unheard of in recent times. His anger is apparent to anyone who sees him in combat, as is the way he has learned to use it: keeping it on a leash like a trained dog and



releasing it when he feels the time is right. The devastating effectiveness of his combination of foresight and passion has made him feared and respected throughout the empire. The Lion Champion Akodo Toturi may be his match strategically, but none can compare to the sheer combat prowess of the Great Bear.



ANCESTOR: HIDA

DIED 210?

(CONTINUED)

Legend says that Hida lived to be two hundred and ten years old. Of course, Lion historians view this to be an apocryphal fact. Crabs could care less. If Hida wanted to live to be a thousand years old, they say, he could have. Nonetheless, when Hida had reached this venerable age, he rose from his throne, took his tetsubo in hand and announced that he was going to find his lost son. No-one questioned his judgment. On that day, the greatest Crab who ever lived walked through the gates of Kaiu castle, calling out his son's name. He was never seen again.

Characters who take the primal Hida as an Ancestor gain a great benefit – and a great burden. Those who carry the soul of Hida within them gain an additional Void point for each Crab who stands with them. Likewise, those Crabs who stand with him in combat gain an additional Void point. However, the character also takes a Wound point each time one of his fellow Crabs is wounded.

His younger days were dotted with quests into the Shadowlands and countless poems have been written about the fearsome oni he has defeated. He disdains combat with other Clans, considering Fu Leng the only enemy worth his efforts. Ironically, the Shadowlands creatures he has confronted are the only beings he gives any real respect to. He is dismissive and condescending to all non-Crabs, believing them mewling kittens hiding behind him for safety. He rarely leaves his homelands, and his contempt for the current Emperor is an open secret. Some even whisper that he may be plotting a coup. At the age of fifty, he is ten years past the retirement age for most samurai. No one as yet has had the courage to ask him why he continues.

The Lion boys who earned his enmity all those years ago would be surprised at how gigantic Kisada has become. At six feet, six inches, he is easily the tallest man in Rokugan, with weight and bearing to match. He earned the nickname “the Great Bear” by using his size and weight against his opponents, often physically overpowering them before cutting them down with his katana. He is one of the few samurai who relishes close quarters combat with the creatures of the Shadowlands.

He has been quite happy with the progress of his eldest two children – his son Yakamo and his daughter O-Ushi – and feels that the Crab will be in good hands when he finally decides to step down. His younger son, however, is more of a problem. While Sukune has displayed a brilliant knack for strategy and a willingness to learn from his elders, his physical ailment is of great concern to Kisada. The Great Bear often wonders whether such a weakling can be trusted to defend the Empire if the need arises.

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 them exactly how each 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.

HIDA YAKAMO

EARTH: 7

WATER: 3

Strength: 5

FIRE: 4

AIR: 2

Reflexes: 4

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 4

Skills: Hunting 3, Athletics 4, Battle 3, Defense 5, Hand-to-Hand 4, Iaijutsu 2, Intimidation 3, Kenjutsu 3, Shadowlands Lore 3, Tetsubo 5, Wrestling 5

Honor: 2

Glory: 8.3

Advantages: Ancestor: Hida, Crab Hands, Great Destiny, Strength of the Earth (4 points)

Disadvantages: Brash, Nemesis (Mirumoto Hitomi), Unluck (3 points)

Hida Kisada's first-born son has been groomed from an early age to assume his father's place as Crab Clan daimyo. Everyone has commented on how much Yakamo resembles his father, and few feel that his reign as daimyo will differ from the elder Crab. Like Kisada, he is quick to anger and very hot-headed. Like Kisada, he speaks in a frank and direct manner. And like Kisada, he is one of the most fearsome warriors in the Emerald Empire. With all this to take in, few have noticed the subtle differences between father and son, and the way Yakamo has already grown beyond Kisada's shadow.

Yakamo's accomplishments are few, but speak volumes. His battlefield prowess is unquestioned. Most graduating Crab bushi go out into the Shadowlands and come back with a goblin head or perhaps a minor oni; Yakamo returned with a great carcass almost thirty feet in length. When asked how he defeated such a fearsome beast, he replied simply, “Persistence.” Subsequent raids into the Shadowlands have produced similar results, and the troops on the Great Wall regard him as a *de facto* general. His personal guard contains the very best bushi in the Crab army.

His dueling skills are equally impressive, and he has won a dozen in the past five years. The most notable was against Mirumoto Satsu in the court of the Scorpion, in which he killed the older Dragon samurai with his tetsubo. While kenjutsu purists were aghast at the blatant disregard of duelist protocol, the fact that he used such an awkward weapon without being cut to pieces by his opponent is amazing. Courtiers have talked



incessantly about the duel since it took place; he never gave it another thought.

On the surface Yakamo appears the very image of his father. He speaks bluntly and forcefully, and has a habit of waving his arms when he speaks. His hair-trigger temper is also reminiscent of Kisada, and those close to him have learned to choose their words carefully.

His abrasiveness has earned him a bad reputation in the Emperor's court; he sees politeness and etiquette as burden to endure, rather than an honor to uphold.

But beyond these impressive military skills, beyond the quicksilver temper, beyond the constant comparisons to the Great Bear, lies a very canny and perceptive man. His bluntness and open talk are well known, but few take the time to see the intelligence behind them. Yakamo is a clever man, clever enough to understand his own nature and the impression he has on others. He notices how his bluster affects people around him, and is learning to time his rants for maximum impact. There's nothing Machiavellian or premeditated about them – his temper and mannerisms are all too genuine – but there *is* a certain deliberateness, a timing intended to keep onlookers off-balance. He's getting better at it with practice.

His bouts of anger are numerous and rarely forgotten. Privately, he sometimes regrets that his anger gets the better of him; the loss of control bothers him a great deal. But at the same time, he's proud of its purity and the way it focuses his emotions to the task at hand. "Anger magnifies action," he has said. "And if your anger is righteous, then the actions it magnifies are also righteous." Hardly the thoughts of an incoherent brute, as some would dismiss him.

Yakamo values honesty above all other traits, and equates his word with his honor in all things. Just as he would never sully his honor by acting shamefully, he never tarnishes his word by lying to another. Similarly, "politeness" equals deceit in

his eyes, and he would never dishonor another by pretending to enjoy their company if he doesn't. His blunt and forthright manner has earned him few friends outside of the Crab, but those he has understand the value his friendship carries.

He is also wise enough to know his place in the world. He is still young, and will often defer to age and rank if the situation necessitates it. He lacks Kisada's perfect melding of passion and



judgment, but at least realizes the value of both. He's learning to take a few deep breaths before going off half-cocked.

Yakamo is a tall man, though not as tall as his father. He moves with the ease of an experienced warrior: graceful, yet full of power and menace. At twenty-seven, he has come into his prime as a samurai, and looks it. He is all muscle and sinew; no part of his body has been allowed to go to



waste. He wears his long hair tied back in the traditional samurai topknot, and has recently grown a short beard to complement his long mustache. When he speaks, he is all fire and brimstone, the waving of his arms punctuating his agitated remarks. His bright eyes flash with passion and insight, scanning his surroundings for sign of attack. He usually dresses in full samurai armor, with his katana stuck into his belt and his great tetsubo in his hands. For the rare civil occasions he attends, he will wear more ornate armor, or a kimono decorated with his family mon.



HIDA O-USHI

EARTH: 4

Willpower 5

WATER: 3

FIRE: 3

Agility 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3

Skills: Heraldry 1, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Investigation 3, Law 3, Athletics 2, Battle 4, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 4, Intimidation 5, Kenjutsu 2, Shadowlands Lore 2, Tsuchijutsu 5, Wrestling 4, Gambling 2

Honor: 1

Glory: 7.5

Advantages: Benten's Blessing, Crab Hands, Clear Thinker, Way of the Land (Crab Lands only)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation – Bully

The middle child of Hida Kisada, Hida O-Ushi has become Rokugan's definition of the unruly tomboy. When she was born, Kisada had absolutely no idea what to do with her. He didn't want to marry her off to some scheming nobleman, and the thought of one of his progeny bowing and scraping in the Emperor's courts was enough to turn his stomach. So he did what any Crab would do: he ignored the precedents of tradition and raised his daughter the same way he raised his sons. No one, of course, wished to contradict him.

O-Ushi grew up with some of the toughest samurai in Rokugan as playmates, and it shows. War is a game to her, and she brings a sense of rough-and-tumble fun to the battlefield which seems undampened by the grisly facts of armed conflict. A disemboweled corpse may hold as much humor to her as an Imperial Acrobat, and she treats both with equal irreverence. She has been charged with defending the Crab's northern border, a responsibility some would see as second-rate. O-Ushi undertakes it with a maddening glee unheard of among her Clanmates on the wall.

As a samurai, she was trained to battle the denizens of the Shadowlands. She has taken those tactics to her current assignment, adapting them against the bandits and marauders of the northern frontier. She waits for her opponents to strike first, sometimes provoking them with an open challenge or a ripe target. She then overwhelms them with devastating force, assaulting from as many directions as she can.

The effect is rather like being struck by a tidal wave after splashing in the surf, and survivors speak of the "stunning" power her units have unleashed.

Kisada and Yakamo are renowned for their individual achievements; O-Ushi has become recognized as a leader of soldiers. Her battlefield movements are invariably *en masse* and she is almost always seen with her personal guard in tow. Not that this makes her timid or overly reliant on support. In every charge her unit has made, she has stood at the vanguard, and combats of any size always find her in the thick of battle. She shares her brother's quick temper, and is notorious for the fiery speeches she delivers to her troops. Unlike Yakamo, however, she is unwilling to let her anger get the better of her. Instead, she has honed it into a keen wit almost as deadly as the great hammer she carries on her shoulder. She goads, she taunts, she brings others to anger before they can adequately prepare for her. By dictating the tone of battle, she can destroy her opponent before he has even begun to fight. She also relies on fear and uncertainty to gain an advantage over her opponents. She excels at concealing troop movements, disguising her numbers and diverting attention away from the brunt of her attack. She applies the same principles to personal combat; few individual samurai find her slight form a threat on the battlefield – and one strike is all she needs to bring her adversary down.

Off the battlefield, O-Ushi is equally prickly. Having been raised around soldiers, she thinks like a soldier, and expects to be treated like other soldiers are. Like Yakamo, she doesn't shrink from the truth, and speaks with a frankness and liberation that few other women are capable of. She also refused to take the vow of celibacy that many samurai-ko do and has been known to openly comment on the pleasures of "the beast with two backs." She seems to relish the shock such statements cause, and has no problems answering insults with blows. The last samurai who taunted her with the "harlot" epithet is no longer capable of eating solid foods. Despite her bawdiness, she has never married, and the idea of raising children is appalling to her. Speaking of either topic around her earns a look that would wither oaks. She is very protective of her younger brother, Sukune, who she feels has been dealt a bad lot in life. She secretly hopes that he will one

day overcome his physical impairment and become a great hero.

O-Ushi is pretty, or would be if she ever left the barracks. Her armor is notched in a dozen places and her eyes peer out from behind her helmet with black mischievousness. She is small but stocky, and cannot be knocked off her feet easily. While she has a daisho, as all samurai do, she much prefers her beloved hammer and wields it with the enthusiasm of a peasant on Feast Day. No one has ever seen her without it at her side.

HIDA SUKUNE

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

Perception 4

FIRE: 2

Intelligence 4

AIR: 2

Awareness 3

VOID: 2

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2

Skills: Etiquette 1, Heraldry 1, Battle 4, Defense 2, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 3, Tetsubo 3, Shadowlands Lore 2

Honor: 2

Glory: 5.9

Advantages: Great Destiny

Disadvantages: Low Pain Threshold, Weakness

Hida Sukune is an anomaly in his family, and in some ways a source of shame. He is weak where his siblings are strong, quiet where they are noisy. He was born two months early, and his mother became sick after giving birth to him. Many thought that the scrawny infant would die within a week, but somehow he managed to endure the first few terrible months of life. He was always sickly, however, and plagued by poor health even as he began training as a bushi. His mother, the beautiful Hida Tsuriko, never recovered from the ordeal; she died from a protracted illness some five years after Sukune's birth. Sukune secretly blames himself for her suffering.

From the start, Sukune has had to rely on his mind to sustain him. He lacked the strength and stamina of his classmates, and needed to use other methods to excel. The grueling windsprints and exhausting combat regimes took him to the limits of his endurance, but the quieter lessons of military strategy held him spellbound. He devoured the writings of Rokugan's greatest



ANCESTOR: KUNI

BIRTH AND DEATH UNKNOWN

4 POINTS

The very first Kuni lent his knowledge to his companions to gain Hida's favor. He spent his life in service to the Crab Clan, a service that cost him greatly. It is said his spirit lives in the blood of those who take his name, and he watches over them as he would his own children.

Those who take Kuni as an Ancestor always roll twice when determining if they gain the Shadowlands Taint and use the higher roll.



generals, reliving every battle and campaign as if he were there. He remembered everything that he read, and quickly began to apply his learning to the Hida school's combat drills. His keen grasp of tactical fundamentals, and the ready way he could apply them to actual situations, allowed him to hold his own for the rest of his training. He graduated to bushi status along with his classmates.

Since then, he has served as a strategist and tactical advisor in his father's fortress. He has seen his share of combat, although his health makes

alleviate the pain of remaining away from the Great Wall.

His tactical prowess, on the other hand, is nothing short of amazing. His anticipation of Shadowlands attacks and the unique way he has of reacting to them have already caused quite a stir within the Hida castle. He takes the teachings of the great generals and applies his own spin to them, shaping time-honored strategies into innovative techniques. His grasp of the pragmatics of combat is equally impressive, and he has demonstrated an ability to change tactics on short notice that is nothing short of breathtaking. The only thing he lacks is experience; with only a few battles under his belt, he has yet to taste a truly important conflict. The Crab warlords have every confidence in his abilities, however, and if he can stay alive, he will provide invaluable strategic innovations for his Clan. Great things are expected from him.

Sukune's weakness still plagues him and the physicians assigned to care for him have yet to produce a permanent solution. He is thin for a samurai, and his small body is often wracked with coughs. His dark eyes are large and observant, and his mouth has a tendency to tremble slightly, an aftereffect of his cough. He speaks quietly, conserving his judgment until he has heard the feelings of everyone in the room. When he proposes a course of action, he does so with understated certainty; despite his shortcomings, he is still a Crab and used to being heard. He is passive and silent at family meetings, allowing his louder siblings to dominate the conversations. He saves his greatest respect for his father, however, and if an argument arises will invariably support Kisada's position. He is very aware that he has never quite measured up to his father, and will do almost anything if he thinks the Great Bear will approve.

In battle, he dresses in an elaborate suit of armor, designed to look like an attacking crustacean. He finds it disorients his opponents and gives him the time he needs to size them up. While he tries to conserve his energy, he is unafraid of combat and is not so weak as to shirk an individual challenge if one arises. When personally confronted, he has a tendency to react instead of act, waiting until his opponent makes a move before countering with one of his own. In such situations, his unnerving



extended conflict extremely dangerous, and he has since been ordered behind the front lines. He chafes a bit at the perceived dishonor, but deep within his heart, he knows it is for the best. His formal position in the Crab army is carrier of the great Battle Standard, a position which helps

battle dress is a vital advantage; without it, his days would most certainly be numbered, tactical prowess or no. Like many Crab, he prefers a tetsubo to the traditional katana, and carries a lighter variation of his brother's great war club into combat.

HIDA AMORO

EARTH: 6

WATER: 1

Strength 5

FIRE: 2

Agility 3

AIR: 1

Reflexes 3

VOID: 1

School/Rank: Berserker 3

Skills: Athletics 5, Hand-to-Hand 5, Intimidation 3, Kenjutsu 5, Tetsubo 5, Wrestling 5

Honor: 0

Glory: 2

Advantages: Large, Strength of the Earth (8 points), Death Trance (variant)

Disadvantages: Bad Reputation, Brash, Compulsion, Driven, Insensitive

The majority of berserkers in the Crab army, both Hida and Hiruma, are "dead eyes" – practiced in the technique of disconnecting from the world around them. Not so this young nephew of Hida Kisada. Amoro is every negative Crab stereotype rolled into one – rude, short-tempered, and engulfed in a killer rage at the slightest provocation. He has been banned from every palace outside the Crab lands, a situation which suits him just fine. Diplomacy and courtliness were never his strong points.

Amoro's mother, the youngest of Kisada's siblings, died giving birth to him. His father was often absent, leading patrols in the Shadowlands, or conducting Clan business elsewhere. From the earliest age, Amoro was an uncontrollable child. He was always large for his age and delighted in tormenting the other children at Hida palace. He fought almost daily, inflicting savage beatings on any who would challenge his will. In schooling, he fared little better. At the age of twelve, he killed one of his own sensei during the demonstration of a wrestling move. His formal training ended there, and he never received acknowledgement of his bushi status from the Hida school.

Not that this bothered Amoro for an instant. His inhuman strength and uncontrollable temper have more than made up for his lack of training. He became a screaming madman on the battlefield, cutting down opponents like sheaves of wheat. He seemed not to care about the numbers or strength of the opposition; he would



launch himself into the fray with the same frightening glee every time. He looks forward to each battle with the eagerness of a child, and strikes with a brutality only given to berserkers. Thanks to his informal status, he does not usually command troops, but his kill total is greater than most units of thirty.



Unlike most berserks, whose trances are self-induced and the result of years of discipline, Amoro's rage is the natural product of his temper. This is no "dead eyes" anger, bringing detachment and cold efficiency. This is a white hot frenzy that sweeps him in its grasp like a tidal wave. It comes upon him every time he steps onto the battlefield, and does not subside until long after combat has ended. He howls like a banshee and attacks with the abandon of a maddened god, slaughtering

unfortunate enough to cross his path. He often ventures beyond the walls alone to face whatever beasts fate may send his way, and has personally destroyed several Oni of power and repute. He effectiveness against the Crab's enemies, coupled with the belief that his luck will run out sooner or later, have prompted the Crab commanders to quietly ignore his tantrums off the battlefield.

Amoro is an angry scar of a man, his features constantly reddened with rage. He treats the world like a personal insult, and has been known to kill men with no provocation whatsoever. He stands over six feet tall, and has the hardened body of an experienced warrior. His eyes burn with undying light, and his teeth are constantly clenched in rage. The muscles of his neck stand out like cords when he speaks, as if the effort of opening his mouth tests his strength in some way. There are those who say that Amoro's unbalanced chi - untempered by study of Shinsei's Way - betokens a bad end for him in the future.

Social skills are not Amoro's forte. He speaks bluntly and rudely to any who would engage him in conversation. He sees other people as pests to be tolerated - at best. His voice is low, yet tinged with arrogance, and he often punctuates his remarks by screaming at the top of his lungs. Needless to say, no one approaches the man unless they are in dire need of something. He is usually stationed along the Kaiu wall, waiting for the next time his rage can be unleashed.



friend and foe alike with equal ferocity. He claims not to remember any of the actions committed while under "The Wave," and often seems surprised by the amount of damage he has caused.

His uncle Kisada has stationed him more or less permanently at the Kaiu Wall, where he can vent his anger against any Shadowlands creature

HIDA TSURU

EARTH: 4

WATER: 3

Strength 4

FIRE: 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 4

Skills: Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 3, Archery 2, Athletics 2, Battle 4, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 4, Naginata 4, Tessen 3

Honor: 1

Glory: 7.9

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Perfect Balance, Way of the Land



**ANCESTOR: YASUKI
FUMOKI**
635 - 671?
3 POINTS

Fumoki was a notorious pirate who preyed upon Crane merchant ships traveling up and down the coast. He hijacked or sank over a hundred vessels in before disappearing in a violent thunderstorm. Survivors among his crew claimed they were attacked by a huge sea monster, and that Fumoki was last seen ramming his katana into the beast's mighty gullet.

Those with Fumoki as an ancestor have a deep affinity for the sea and her secrets. They can predict the weather within a 24-hour period with perfect accuracy. Also, Fumoki's sea legs grant them an uncanny sense of balance; they gain a free raise to any non-combat rolls involving agility.

Disadvantages: Sworn Enemy (Shinjo Hanari)

The Great Bear's younger brother, Hida Tsuru has filled an unappreciated post in the Crab army: that of cavalry master. His units are reservist, intended to bolster any defensive lines which become weakened. The shaggy ponies his forces ride are no match for the great Unicorn warhorses, and Tsuru has tried to make up the difference by pushing his men to their extreme. The result is a cavalry command perfectly suited to the Crab way of war.

Growing up beneath Kisada was difficult for Tsuru. While quite adept at military skills and a fine samurai, he could not hope to match his brother's size and strength. Kisada was prepared for leadership of the entire Crab, while Tsuru was only expected to fulfill the basic duties of a samurai. So he began looking for his own niche to fill, a position which would not be constantly compared to the Great Bear's. With the cavalry, he found it. The Crab's mounted units were small and undertrained, used mainly for patrolling the borders to Shinomen forest. Upon completion of his *gempukku*, he asked for and was granted command of the cavalry.

Since then, he has forged his units into embodiments of Crab philosophy. Trained in the Hida bushi school, Tsuru's men are chosen for their stamina, endurance and force of will. The ponies are likewise chosen for their hardiness and ability to keep moving across harsh terrain. They can march for days without rest, and still fight with the energy of fresh troops. They survive on minimum rations and cross distances with inhuman speed. Tsuru undergoes all of the hardships he puts his men through, and as a result, has retained an uncanny amount of loyalty. His men are near-fanatics and would follow their leader to the mouth of Hell itself.

Within a few years of Tsuru's command, the cavalry was moved from the north border to a reserve position along the Great Wall, where they have served to back up the defenses there. The few times Kaiu Kabe has been breached and the forces of the Shadowlands poured into Rokugan, they have always found Tsuru waiting for them. None have ever proceeded further.

Tsuru is infamous among other clans for his ruthlessness and unflinching cruelty. During a recent skirmish with the Unicorn Clan, he demonstrated his wartime resolve by slaughtering the mounts of a captured unit. The act has blemished the otherwise cordial relations

between the Crab and the Unicorn, and Tsuru is no longer welcome in Unicorn lands. The Unicorn commander, Shinjo Hanari, took great personal offense at the deed, and has quietly sworn to make the Crab general pay for it.

The Crab see the act somewhat differently. Against an implacable foe like Fu Leng, Tsuru has no illusions about what needs to be done. Why should he change his tactics along with his enemy? "What some call ruthlessness is only clarity," he once said. "Seeing what needs to be done and doing it, without hesitation, without qualms. Such is the harsh reality of war." With the constant threat of the Shadowlands, few can argue his logic, and the Crab are more than willing to let Tsuru continue at his current position.

Off the battlefield, little changes in Tsuru's demeanor. He lacks the Crab's characteristic temper, but more than makes up for it with dedication and drive. He speaks softly, but efficiently and refuses to waste his breath with eloquence. He has an unspoken intensity about him, as if each moment were his very last. He expects nothing but the best from those around him and accepts no excuses for failure. "Impossible" is not a word he comprehends. Few are able to approach him comfortably: the tension holding him together is just too great. Like many Unicorn, he prefers the solitude of his morning rides to the presence of others, and has been known to go on long patrols alone during times of peace. He claims this provides him with all the relaxation he needs.

In battle he wears a great chitinous suit of armor, like his nephew Sukune's, but even more elaborate. His face is completely hidden beneath a crustacean mask which fits seamlessly with his helmet. Many opponents mistake him for an Oni when they first see him, an irony he finds deeply amusing. His dark hair is often tied back in a ponytail under his armor, and his rough face matches the landscape over which he rides.

Tsuru has always been in his brother's shadow, but he accepted it long ago. He has resolved to fill his position such that no one else will ever be able to replace him. Failing a duty, however minimal, is a sign of weakness to Tsuru, and he has ridden himself hard for every mistake he has ever made. Despite that, he has been an outstanding general and an integral part of the Crab war machine. For Hida Tsuru, that will have to be enough.



ANCESTOR: KAIU

**BIRTH AND DEATH
UNKNOWN**

5 POINTS

Kaiu the blacksmith was one of the original followers of Hida; he forged the weapons which the Crab used against the Shadowlands, including the mighty *Chikara*. In reward for his service, he was granted his own family line.

Characters who choose Kaiu as an Ancestor gain a number of free Raises equal to their Void when using any Craft Skill.

The Kuni

KUNI YORI

EARTH: 5

WATER: 3

FIRE: 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Kuni Shugenja 5

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Medicine 3, Sincerity 2, Defense 2, Intimidation 3, Meditation 3, Shadowlands Lore 5, Stealth 3, Theology 2, Knife 5, Torture 4

Honor: 2

Glory: 8.3

Advantages: Clear Thinker, Great Destiny

Disadvantages: Benten's Curse

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, Counterspell, Benevolent Protection of Shinsei, Earth's Stagnation, Biting Steel, Jade Strike, The Path to Inner Peace, Amaterasu's Blessing, Tomb of Jade, Fist of Osano Wo, By the Light of Lord Moon, Cloak of Night, Mists of Illusion, Fear, Minor Binding, Major Binding

Throughout the whole of Rokugan, there is no man spoken of with more fear than Kuni Yori. Those who meet him never forget his piercing eyes, his eerie voice, or the smile that twists with sarcasm every time he speaks. Shugenja from other clans whisper that his soul has been claimed by the Shadowlands, but no one has as much knowledge of that evil place as he does. He is the unquestioned leader of the Kuni family, and the final authority on all things dark and dangerous.

Yori began his life as the rather unremarkable second son of daimyo Kuni Kaiden. He was groomed for a shugenja's position, studied the mystic arts under his uncle, and established his home in an old guard tower near the edge of the Shadowlands. He thought to spend the remainder of his days conducting quiet research... until a terrible accident claimed the life of both his father and older brother. The exact details of the accident are unclear to this day, but it is known that the two were preparing for an elaborate ritual when it occurred. Those who inspected the smoking ruins of their quarters claim that they had summoned something they were unable to control. Others who saw the building from a distance claimed that a mighty explosion took their lives. But few who saw their twisted corpses or the strange ichor covering the blasted rubble around them have ever forgotten it. After a thorough investigation, the Great Bear decided to leave well enough alone, and installed Yori as the new head of the Kuni family.

Since attaining the position of daimyo, he has balanced his time between family duties and his own personal research. He keeps tabs on other Kuni's fields of study and has displayed a remarkable ability to remember everything he has been told. Each year at the family symposium, he questions individual family members with a clarity that borders on telepathy. He expects the Kuni to make progress in their studies, and has been known to demote or otherwise punish those who don't. His habit of entering other Kuni dwellings unannounced has unsettled more than a few of his brethren. Still, under his short tenure, the family has made great progress in their understanding of the universe.

As for his own research, the less said, the better. His interest in the Shadowlands is common knowledge and he has acquired an immense expertise on the subject - through both first-hand study and extensive research of ancient





tomes. He has written numerous treatises on the biology and magical nature of Shadowlands denizens, and is the sole caretaker of the works of the great Kuni Mokuna, a shugenja whose knowledge of Fu Leng's realm has yet to be surpassed. Ostensibly, he claims that such knowledge works for the betterment of the Crab, but the energy and excitement he displays when discussing it suggests a less than objective viewpoint. Many say his interests have gone too far, that the Shadowlands madness has already crept into his blood. Others point to the death of his father and brother, and wonder aloud if he is not attempting to duplicate their fatal experiment.

Whatever the reason, no one knows more about Rokugan's greatest foes than he does. He has given invaluable advice to the Hida warlords on the strengths and weaknesses of countless oni. He has devised new means of destroying zombies that have leveled entire armies of the feared undead. It is even rumored that the Shadowlands denizens have learned his name, and fear him as they fear no other Rokugani. He often accompanies armed Crab patrol south, and those who travel with him have attested to the detached sadism he applies to his "specimens" he finds. Tainted or not, Kuni Yori has done more to fight the Shadowlands than any three samurai combined.

Yori has the ear of Hida Kisada, and has been called to advise the Great Bear in times of emergency. He is tight-lipped about his relations with Kisada, but has never failed to appear at his daimyo's bidding. Kisada alone seems unaffected by Yori's disturbing demeanor, and shrugs aside all suggestions that his chief advisor has been compromised by the enemy. "He has sacrificed more to our cause than you, little squeaker," is his typical response to such suggestions – enough to bring the conversation to a screeching halt.

Yori himself rarely reveals what he thinks to anyone. He never speaks to other unless he wants something from them, and then only in a time and place of his choosing. For a Crab, he can be very manipulative; he controls his appearances to others with unsettling precision. He has learned the fine art of watching, and his unflinching gaze can disturb the mightiest Lion. He always speaks as if he has just committed some ghastly joke at the listener's expense, and his eyes shine with a fierce glee to punctuate his cutting remarks. He studies the movements of others like a scientist conducting a lab experiment, focusing on them as

if they were another subject. Few can comfortably tolerate his presence for longer than a few minutes. He has gone through no less than five apprentices during his short tenure as daimyo, none of whom will discuss what they saw under his tutelage.

Yori dresses in the black velvet robes of the Kuni school which cover every inch of his body. His pale face lurks hidden beneath his hood, and a large mystic symbol is usually painted over his features. His long moustache waggles when he speaks, punctuating his acerbic comments with incessant movement. He moves slowly and deliberately, as if every action carries great consequence. His official age is twenty-eight, but his features are as ageless and unmoving as a marble sculpture. Yori who carries many secrets, all of which remain hidden in the deepest recesses of his soul.

The Hiruma

HIRUMA KAGE

EARTH: 4

WATER: 3

FIRE: 4

AIR: 3

VOID: 4

School/Rank: Berserk 4

Skills: History 3, Hunting 2, Meditation 2, Shadowlands Lore 3, Athletics 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4

Honor: 3

Glory: 8.5

Advantages: Death Trance, Quick, Ancestor (Hiruma)

Disadvantages: Driven, Haunted (1 point)

Since the loss of the Hiruma lands, each successive family daimyo has vowed to return them under his watch. And each successive family daimyo has failed. The burden weighs especially heavy on the current leader, Hiruma Kage. Immediately after his *gempukku* ceremony, he led an expedition of Crab forces into the Shadowlands in an effort to liberate the Hiruma fortress. They found a small group of Oni residing there, committing blasphemous rites to their dread lord, Fu Leng. Kage's forces slew the Oni, but memory of their unspeakable acts – committed in the same great hall where Hiruma heroes once passed – could not be so easily erased. Soon thereafter, the Crab were forced to

**ANCESTOR: HIDA
TADAKA**
376-412
4 POINTS

Characters who take Hida Tadaka as an ancestor feel his selfless sacrifice in their veins. They may lend Wound points to other Crab characters. They may also lend Wound points to non-Crab personalities, but this costs them a Void point.

The character must be touched in order to "pass on the spirit of the Crab." He may transfer as many wound points as he wishes, but he loses any Wound points he transfers – mark them off as you would any normal injury.



ANCESTOR: HIRUMA

DIED 127?

5 POINTS

The quick-footed and quick-witted Hiruma is the archetypal Rokugani hunter. Tales of his exploits in the Shadowlands border between inhuman bravery and foolhardy bravado. Those who choose Hiruma as an Ancestor can re-roll any roll by expending a Void Point. This may only be done a number of times per day equal to the character's Void Rank.



abandon their position at Haiko no Hiruma; Kage had to be physically dragged from the fortress by his lieutenants. He has yet to forgive himself for that failure.

Despite what he sees as an irredeemable blemish, he has managed to turn his attention away from his family honor to more pragmatic matters. He took control of the family some five years ago after his father, Hiruma Yoshi,

remains in constant contact with the generals at Hida palace, fulfilling their orders with disciplined precision. He is regarded by footmen and daimyo alike as a born leader, one who has not allowed his family's legacy to obstruct him from his duties.

Secretly, however, Kage cannot forget what he saw at the Hiruma palace, and how he was unable to stop it. He seeks release in a glorious

and heroic death, one which will grant him the honor and recognition he now feels he needs. If he cannot liberate Haiko no Hiruma (and he has not attempted to do so since his first effort), then he must set an example which will inspire his descendants to do so. His position along the wall allows him to engage in battle personally, which provides him with myriad opportunities for a glorious conclusion to his career. He faces a horrifying death every day, a death he prays for each morning. Yet at the same time, he has not forgotten his duty to the Empire – a duty that must not be tarnished by a pointless suicide. Balanced between a wish for death and a duty to survive, Kage has become a stunningly effective killing machine. He enters nearly hopeless battles, striking without hesitation at the greatest and most terrible foes. He has brought down creatures which had destroyed entire regiments, and successfully turned back offensives that many considered

unstopppable. All of this he has done out of a carefully hidden death wish. Like Hida Amoro, Hiruma Kage is a berserk. Unlike Amoro, Kage's rages are not a natural state. They were learned over years of harsh discipline and fed with the disgrace of the Hiruma family. Kage is a "dead eyes" berserker, one who conditions himself to enter a state of cold detachment before each battle. The two men could not be less alike. Where Amoro is all-consuming, Kage is all-containing. Where Amoro is headstrong and impetuous, Kage is cold and

unstopppable. All of this he has done out of a carefully hidden death wish.

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calculating. Everything that is wild about Amoro is as a coiled spring in Kage – a spring that is only released in times of need. Kage thinks about everything he does and weighs the consequences of his intended actions. Once committed, however, his passion becomes overwhelming and he will act without further thought or hesitation. He has never allowed his secret emotions to get the better of him, but when he deems it proper to unleash those emotions – heaven help whatever is in his way.

Physically, Kage is an unimposing man of approximately twenty-five. His wiry build conceals immense stamina, and his small frame hides a tremendous strength. He speaks very calmly, almost casually, and his gaze never wavers. His armor is usually simple and unadorned, sometimes limited to greaves and leg guards. When asked about it, he replies that most of his foes can tear up armor like paper; he'd rather maintain his maneuverability in combat than rely on inadequate protection.

The Yasuki

YASUKI TAKA

EARTH: 2

WATER: 2

Perception 5

FIRE: 2

Intelligence 4

AIR: 3

Awareness 6

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Yasuki 5

Skills: Acting 3, Bo Stick 1, Gambling 3, Stealth 2, Courtier 4, Bard 3, Heraldry 3, Sincerity 4, Commerce 5

Honor: 1

Glory: 2.7

Advantages: Absolute Direction, Clear Thinker, Blackmail (you don't want to know how many), Luck (3 points), Read Lips, Voice

Disadvantages: Small

Few would suspect that this tiny, wizened old man was the leader of one of the most powerful merchant families in Rokugan. Leaving his palace in the care of proxies and magistrates, he travels the countryside as a common peddler, selling his little trinkets and baubles to whoever will pay the price. Most people in Rokugan know him by now, and all are happy to see him come riding up the road. He always seems to have just what everyone wants, and haggles in a friendly and engaging manner whenever it comes down to the deal. No one seems to care that he always emerges on top. No matter how much he gouges his customers, he always make them feel as if they came off with the better end of the bargain.

From a young age, Taka eschewed the diplomacy and high-stakes economic maneuvering favored by his family in favor of simple trade and salesmanship. He traveled the length and breadth of Rokugan, honing his craft and observing everything he saw. When the time came to assume command of the family, he refused to give up



**ANCESTOR: KAIU
GINEZA**

BORN 459

**DIED 511
(CONJECTURED)**

1 POINT

Kaiu Gineza helped construct the original Tomb of Iuchiban. When it was completed, he opted to remain within the tomb and set the remaining trap, knowing that he would ultimately perish there.

Characters who choose Gineza as an Ancestor may sacrifice their own Wound points to inflict additional Wound points to creatures and characters with the Shadowlands Taint. Before damage is rolled, the character can sacrifice a number of Wounds less than or equal to his Earth. The target creature or character takes as many Wounds as were sacrificed by the character, on top of whatever damage was inflicted on it from other sources. Gineza's ability can cause Wounds to creatures with Invulnerability.



**ANCESTOR: KUNI
OSAKU**

695 - 716

6 POINTS

The valiant Kuni Osaku may have single-handedly saved the Emerald Empire when she sacrificed herself to keep the army of the Maw at bay at the Battle of the Cresting Wave.

Characters who choose Osaku as an Ancestor may spend a Void point to gain a number of Free Raises equal to their School Rank when casting a spell.

his wandering ways, instead incorporating them into his methodology. While he still visits the family palace for important events, he can most likely be found on the road, doing what he has done every day for the past thirty years.

Through this low-key wandering, Taka has maintained the family's burgeoning empire of mercantile trade. Every town and village he comes to has at least one Yasuki-owned business, and Taka always ensures that he spends a few hours speaking with the local family members. He delivers messages and instructions to them, organizing and guiding his empire one shop at a time. Some might question the effectiveness of such a method, but Taka has no problems with it. Indeed, his "micromanaging" has led the Yasuki into an unheralded era of fortune and prosperity. Other family members wonder how he is able to cross so much ground so quickly, and some whisper that he has powers far greater than his humble exterior would suggest.

This isn't to say that Taka doesn't enjoy the smaller things in life. The art of the deal is his joy and passion, and he still takes great pleasure in haggling for wares – whether it be a pinch of tea leaves or the jewel of an emperor. Why sit around in a palace, surrounded by wealth, when you can feel the thrill of earning it with your own skills and abilities? He likes giving people what they want, or what they think they want, and sees nothing wrong with wanting to make some money out of it. Certainly, he is not entirely without ethics – he never sells people more than they can afford, and can be particularly kind to the poor or unfortunate souls he comes across (his own way of looking after the peasantry, perhaps). For the wealthy or arrogant, however, he shows no mercy. His favorite target is the Crane, who have officially banned him from their lands. The Crane magistrates have worked themselves into a frenzy trying to figure out how he keeps crossing the border, and indeed how those repeatedly warned against dealing with him still manage to engage in heavy trading...

Taka is a small man, about fifty years of age, with simple clothes and a wide-brimmed peasant's hat. His face is creased with wrinkles, but he still smiles wide and bows low before his customers, be they eta or daimyo. He loves his life, and his love shows in everything he does. He carries his wares in a small cart pulled by two oxen, and can set up shop in a manner of minutes. He is equally at home in a great lord's

house or in a dusty peasant village, and always has something to interest those nearby. He is also one of the richest men in Rokugan, and if need be, he can arrange for a breathtaking amount of resources to be quickly brought to bear. He has made a timely escape from several Crane ports through the rapid purchase of a fisherman's junk at the last instant – who knew such an unencumbered man could carry so much gold?

The Kaiu

KAIU UTSU, SIEGE MASTER

EARTH: 3

WATER: 3

FIRE: 2

Intelligence 5

AIR: 2

VOID: 3

School/Rank: Kaiu 3

Skills: Engineering 4, Booby Traps 3, Siege 4, Archery 1, Armorer 2, Tessen 3, Weaponsmith 3, Battle 4, Kenjutsu 1, Origami 4

Honor: 2

Glory: 5.5

Advantages: Social Position (Family Daimyo)

Disadvantages: none

The cheerful Kaiu Utsu represents a marked departure from the Crab's ordinary gloom and doom. Calm, friendly, and entirely unassuming, Utsu has a quiet joy for life that few would suspect from the Crab's master of the siege. Not even the ugly scar across his face can diminish the warm glow of his smile.

As a boy, he was fascinated with models, and learned the art of origami before he could walk. He could often be found in the rock gardens of Kaiu palace, placing his carefully-built models among the landscape. He occasionally held mock battles with his paper armies, battles that wreaked havoc with the gardens' order and serenity. The monks would scold him for his indiscretion, but he took secret pride in the attention his work received.

Utsu was born with an uncanny eye for structure, and for the points of a building's key strengths and weaknesses. He took that intuition into the Kaiu school, where he applied it towards the art of war. While his bushi skills were adequate, his strategic knowledge was second to none, and he could plan a defense like no one who had come before him. Following his



gempukku ceremony, he took a strategic post within Kaiu Castle – studying the Crab army and the best way to hold their defenses. He continues this passive role to this day, analyzing the plans to a hundred stations on the Kaiu wall and advising the Hida daimyo on the best possible method to hold them. By anticipating possible shortcomings, he can help the Crab forces withstand the relentless assaults of Fu Leng's army. He often personally assists with the upgrades he has authorized, and travels up and down the Kaiu Wall to examine first-hand the fortifications he is improving.

He also studies the other great fortresses in Rokugan, searching for ways to breach their walls. The Crab believe in thoroughness, and Utsu plans for every contingency – including a day when his Clan may have to turn on other Rokugani. He realizes the ominous implications of such research, but has convinced himself that it serves the best interests of Rokugan. After all, it is better he notices such things before a true enemy does...

During combat, he can be found amid his Clan's artillery units, watching them rain destruction down upon their enemies. The catapults and firebreathers along the Kaiu Wall hold an intense fascination for him, and he delights in watching them sunder the Shadowlands forces like the paper soldiers of his youth. His presence lends a sense of security to the men around him, who know and appreciate the role he plays. How can your defense buckle if the man who knows it best is standing directly beside you?

Utsu is tall, with warm brown eyes and a broad grin. His face is broken by a scar across his left cheek, which he received after the battlement he was bolstering collapsed on top of him. He hasn't let the injury affect his good nature, however, and often jokes about how much more "Crablike" it makes him look. He keeps in good shape, but lacks the muscle tone and flexibility of most combat veterans; he seems more at home in a general's headquarters than on the bloody field. His armor is strong, but unblemished, and the katana in his belt is more ceremonial than functional. He tries to maintain his kenjutsu skills, but realizes that the martial arts are more of a luxury for him than others. He knows that his true strengths lie away from personal combat.

Utsu maintains his childhood love of models, and his quarters are decorated with scale replicas of the major Crab fortresses in Rokugan – replicas which he has built himself in his spare time. He claims they are accurate to the square yard of the buildings they represent, and insists he be informed whenever a new construction goes up. He still enjoys origami as well, practicing it in his spare time and whenever he has a spare moment. He can create wondrous figures in the blink of an eye and usually carries a small supply of paper with him under his armor – to keep his busy hands occupied during idle moments.



ANCESTOR: HIDA BANUKEN

684 – 739

2 POINTS

Hida Banuken was daimyo of the Crab Clan during the Battle of the Cresting Wave, and orchestrated the defense of Rokugan from the terrible army of the Maw. He rallied the forces of several clans and oversaw the Crab's miraculous construction of the Kaiu wall.

Those who choose Hida Banuken as an Ancestor are able to adapt their own strengths to complement the strengths of others. When they fight side by side with another, they may strike simultaneously with their ally, regardless of initiative rolls, and vice versa. The ally must be determined before initiative rolls are made.



Chapter Five



**Sample Crab
Characters**

Hida Berserker

You were always different from the other bushi training in Hida castle. To them, bushido was just another tool, to be applied when and where the circumstances permitted it. But you saw it as more than that. It was a strength to cling to in times of weakness, a light to guide you through the darkness. It was a wild love that you rode like a wave, an emotion you could neither deny nor resist. When you went into combat, it traveled with you, whispering in your ear as clearly as any sensei. And when you felt its purity running through you in battle... it became an epiphany.

As you grew older, your formal training fell aside, replaced by something greater. You feel it every time you don your armor – a wild lust that washes everything else beneath it. When you filter it through your beloved code, you become akin to a god: an unstoppable killing machine that crushes everything in your path. Others have noticed it and talk among themselves. They call you *kichigai*, berserker, and you suppose the title fits. Certainly, your emotional power holds more for you than any formal martial art.

It's not always easy, however. Sometimes you have problems controlling your baser emotions. It makes you angry that the mighty Crab do not adhere to bushido as closely as the Lion or Dragon. It upsets you that not every battle can be won, that you must sometimes retreat in order to protect the greater good. You live the bushido code, but you must constantly struggle to cap your overwhelming feelings.

Because of that, battle becomes all the more important to you. You seethe with anger, but you know better than to vent it against your comrades. Bushido forbids it, and you would die before you went against the code. Instead, you hold it in, and wait until the right moment to unleash it against the real enemy. When you do, nothing else holds any meaning.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Hida Berserker

Clan:
Crab

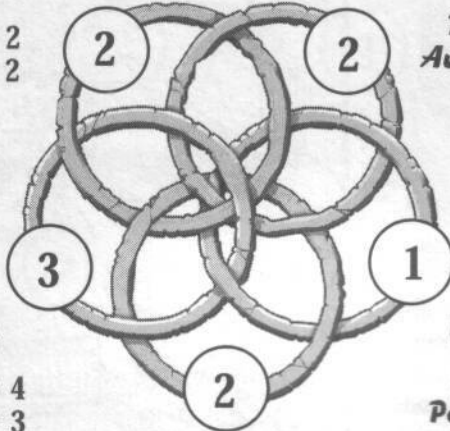
Profession:
Bushi

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 2



Earth

Stamina: 4
Willpower: 3

Water

Strength: 4
Perception: 1

Void

Void Points Spent:

Insight: 109

Techniques

Primary Weapon

Tetsubo 2k2

Primary Armor

Heavy

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

(20 in armor)

Skills

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Archery | 1 |
| Battle | 1 |
| Defense | 1 |
| Hand to Hand | 1 |
| Kenjutsu | 1 |
| Shadowlands Lore | 1 |
| Tetsubo | 1 |

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 6 | -0 |
| 6 | -1 |
| 6 | -2 |
| 6 | -3 |
| 6 | -4 |
| 6 | Down |
| 6 | Out |
| 6 | Dead |

School: Berserker

Rank: 1

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Death Trance +3
Large +1

Glory: 1

Honor: 2

Experience Points:

Kiruma Scout

You listen to legends of the mysterious ninja and chuckle grimly, for you spend every day trying to be as swift and silent as those storybook terrors. In your position, you need to be.

You grew up along the Kaiu wall, watching your cousins and comrades battle against the Shadowlands. You saw enough terrors to freeze your bones forever and enough valor to fill a hundred Lion history books. Battlefields were your playgrounds then, a soldier's barracks your mythic kingdoms. Games and reality blended together in a pantomime of the Crab's ancient struggle. Empty suits of armor became deadly oni, kitchen rats a horde of rampaging goblins. Somehow, even at that age, you understood how important the fighting was.

You were never very big, but you had speed and that was enough. Your father sent you off to the Unicorn lands where you learned to run like their famous horses. You also learned of your family's terrible loss, and of their struggle to maintain honor in its wake. Your games took on a new significance then; now, you had something to win back.

You became a Shadowlands scout immediately following your *gempukku* ceremony, and have since served your clan by acting as its eyes and ears. You rotate duties between advance scouting in the Shadowlands and carrying messages along the great wall. You far prefer the former duty. You patrol your family's ancestral lands like a ghost, watching the foes who possess them and marking their every move. They never see you, and they never hear you. You can slip through their ranks like fog, and run like the swiftest hare to outdistance their clumsy fumbings. And when the time is right, you make sure you're there when your comrades make them pay.

In many ways, you're still playing a game – only now your opponents are real and the stakes are higher than you'd ever imagined.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Hiruma Scout

Clan:
Crab

Profession:
Bushu

Primary Weapon

Katana 3k2

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

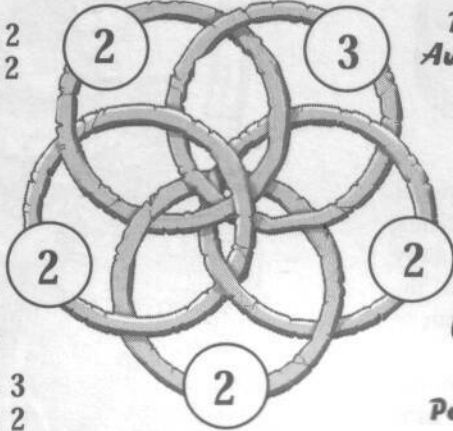
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Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 2

Air

Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 3



Earth

Stamina: 3
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Skills

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Stealth | 3 |
| Archery | 1 |
| Athletics | 1 |
| Hand to Hand | 1 |
| Kenjutsu | 3 |
| Shadowlands Lore | 2 |
| Ratling Speech | 1 |

Techniques

_____ Dance the Razor's Edge

Insight: 122

School: "Hiruma" Scout **Rank:** 1

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

Advantages/ Disadvantages

Ratling Ally +2
Clear Thinker +2

Glory: 0

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 2

□□□□□□□□□□

Experience Points:

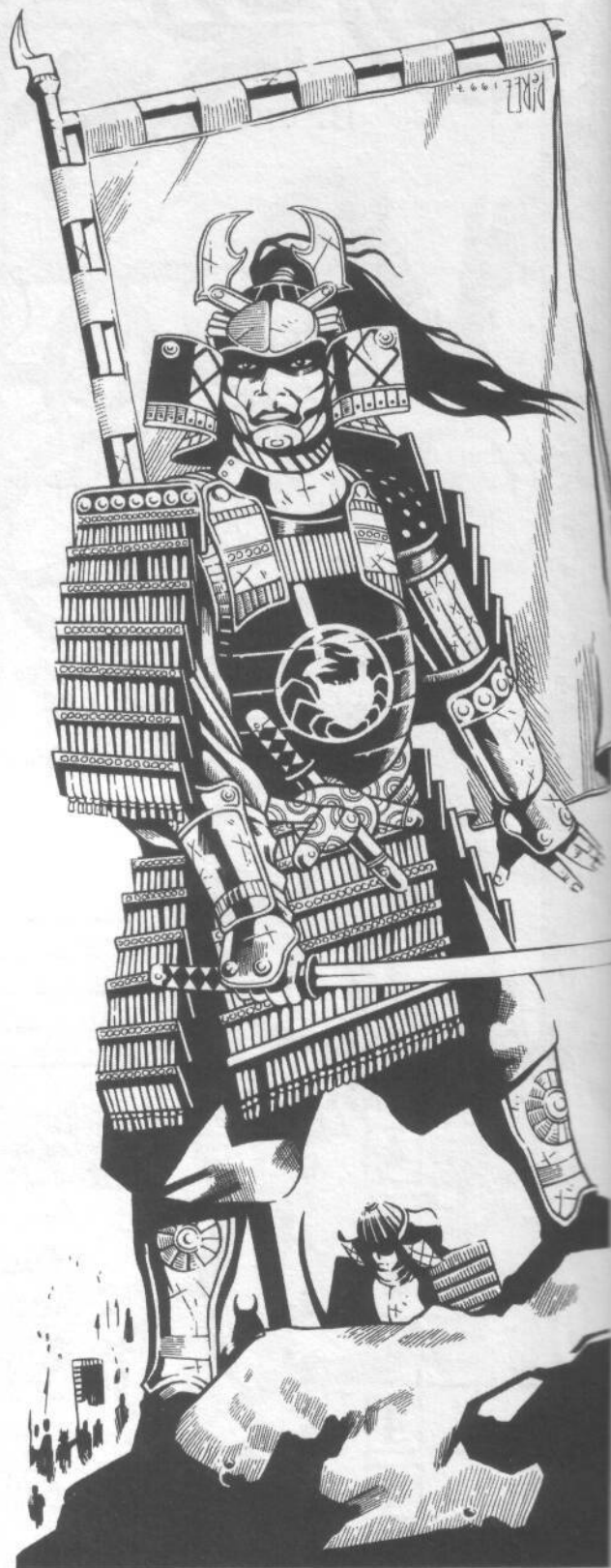
Kam Battle Master

Nothing enralls you like a plan coming together. Orchestrating the movements of a thousand men, watching them all move in perfect symmetry – it takes the breath away. Fighting seems so chaotic when you are in the thick of it. You have to step back in order to see its real beauty – its breath, its life, its perfect symmetry.

As the assistant to a great Hida general, you have ample opportunity to observe military movements. You understand how armies function, know their ebb and flow as you know the seasons. And by watching the patterns armies form on the battlefield, you know which side will emerge triumphant. The Crab clan understands how valuable that is, and have placed you in a command staff position that makes the greatest use of your strategic talents.

Something is wrong, however. For all your knowledge, and for all the joy you receive watching a battle unfold, you have yet to see actual combat. Your reputation is built primarily upon abstract philosophies and long distance observation – not genuine military experience. To make matters worse, you have no stomach for bloodshed, and the thought of disemboweling a man is enough to make you sick. You can't even watch farm animals being slaughtered, let alone the horrors of the battlefield.

So you remain behind the lines, watching the conflicts from a distance and never becoming involved. From there, you can revel in war's beauty without having to face its other half. So far, you have never been called upon to enter combat, which is for the best. You have no wish to dishonor your family by appearing cowardly, but you know in your heart that you will not be able to face the full horrors your craft has created. Your sword lies clean and shiny in its saya, unblemished by the blood of an enemy. You pray that it will always remain that way.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Kaiu Battle Master

Clan:
Crab

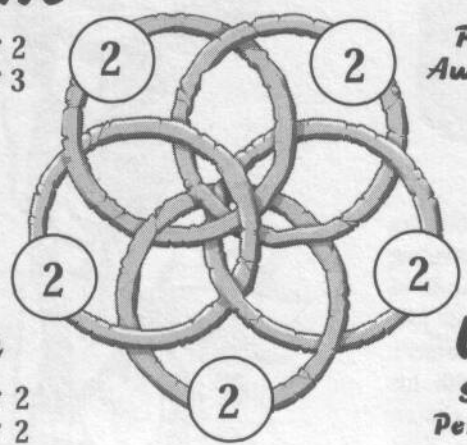
Profession:
Bushi

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 2



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 5

Void

Void Points Spent:

Primary Weapon

Katana 3k2

Primary Armor

Heavy Armor

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10
(20 with armor)

Skills

| | |
|-------------|---|
| Siege | 3 |
| Engineering | 3 |
| Traps | 2 |
| History | 2 |
| Armorer | 1 |
| Battle | 3 |
| Weaponsmith | 2 |

Insight: 113

Techniques

School: Kaiu Engineering **Rank:** 1

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

Advantages/ Disadvantages

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Clear Thinker | +2 |
| Dark Secret | -5 |
| Soft-Hearted | -2 |

Glory: 2

□□□□□□□□□□

Honor: 2

□□□□□□□□□□

Experience Points:

Kuni Investigator

As a child, you listened to the tales of Kuni witch hunters with fascination. They seemed so noble to you – traveling lonely roads and empty wastelands, protecting the weak from the terrors of the night. You knew that one day you would join their ranks, for none but the Kuni ever became witch hunters. You studied your spells and helped your master with his experiments, preparing diligently to become one of the chosen few. When you came of age, you journeyed to the Kuni symposium every year, praying that they would select you.

They never did.

Year after year, you were passed over for membership; year after year you tasted bitter disappointment. You would leave each symposium dejected, forced to defer your dream again and again. Finally, your *gempukku* ceremony arrived, signaling the end of your eligibility. You were a Kuni shugenja now and forever, and could never be anything more. You cried yourself to sleep that night, convinced that life was no longer worth living.

But you didn't give up. Leaving your master behind, you set out alone, determined to become a witch hunter in deed if not in word. You traveled the length and breadth of Rokugan, pursuing rumors of ghosts, *maho*, unholy hauntings. Sometimes, you found nothing; other times, the horrors were all too real. But always, your spells and your heart more than made up for your lack of "proper" witch hunter training. You knew enough to send those terrors screaming back to their masters, and the villagers you saved were too grateful to care about your credentials.

In time, it no longer mattered what you were trained in, and the sting of rejection soon faded. It no longer mattered whether they had accepted you or not. You were a hunter in almost every sense of the word, and the battles you fought were as breathtaking as you imagined. Destiny, it seems will not be deterred – not even by the Kuni.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Kuni Investigator

Clan:
Crab

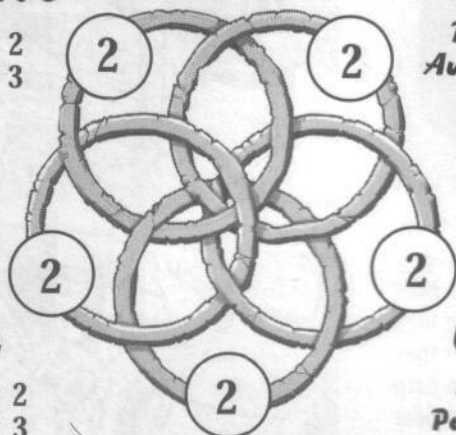
Profession:
Shugenja

Fire

Agility: 2
Intelligence: 3

Air

Reflexes: 2
Awareness: 3



Earth

Stamina: 2
Willpower: 3

Water

Strength: 2
Perception: 3

Void

Void Points Spent:

Primary Weapon

Tessen Ok2

Primary Armor

None

TN to be Hit

(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)

10

Skills

| | |
|------------------|---|
| Calligraphy | 1 |
| Defense | 1 |
| Kenjutsu | 1 |
| Shadowlands Lore | 3 |
| Hunting | 1 |
| Investigation | 2 |
| Tessen | 2 |
| Stealth | 1 |
| Maho Tsukai Lore | 1 |
| | |
| | |
| | |

Insight: 114

Spells

- Sense, Commune, Summon,
- Benevolent Protection of Shinsei,
- Jade Strike, Tomb of Jade,
- Minor Binding, Amaterasu's
- Blessing, Blessing of Purity

School: Kuni Shugenja

Rank: 1

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

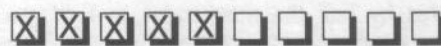
Advantages/ Disadvantages

Absolute Direction +1
Higher Purpose +2

Glory: 1



Honor: 1



Experience Points:

Yasuki Smuggler

You grew up in the port cities of Rokugan, moving from place to place with your parents. As Yasuki merchants, they plied their trade up and down the coast, moving their boat wherever there was work. You watched with fascination as they bargained with their clients, always amazed at how much they managed to wring from them. Sometimes, you'd have to help make a quick getaway, and you learned how get the boat moving in a very short time. Who knew that perfectly honest merchants could raise so much ire in their customers?

When you grew up, you inherited your parents' boat, and continued to pursue Yasuki business interests wherever you went. After a while, you got pretty good at it. You had a knack for finding out what people wanted, and could get it to them with a minimum of fuss and hassle. They got their goods, you got paid, everybody was happy. And there were never any misunderstandings like the kind your parents always ran into. You went on for years this way, doing your job and filling the family coffers with koku as regular as clockwork.

It got boring after awhile. There wasn't any challenge to mere merchanting, and you missed the breakneck escapes of your early days. So you added a little twist to your business interests. The cargo you moved wasn't the sort you want to draw attention to. Weapons, chemicals, even legal wares you didn't feel like paying taxes on – all of them could be slid past the magistrates with a little finesse and planning. You've smuggled everything at one time or another. As long as the price was right, it didn't matter what you were carrying.

That's when the heat came back. Governors, bushi, even Imperial Magistrates – all of them took umbrage at your little ventures and tried to put a stop to them. You've been chased out of more ports than you can remember and by now you must be wanted by half the magistrates in Rokugan. But you're too clever to get caught. You're quiet enough to move around discreetly, and the other Yasuki always offer you a harbor when the storm gets too fierce. You're loving every minute of it.





Legend of the Five Rings

Name:
Yasuki Smuggler

Clan:
Crab

Profession:
Merchant

Primary Weapon
Katana

Primary Armor
None

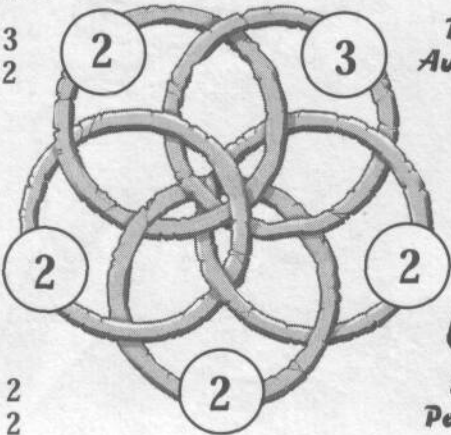
TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)
15

Fire
Agility: 3
Intelligence: 2

Air
Reflexes: 3
Awareness: 3

Earth
Stamina: 2
Willpower: 2

Water
Strength: 2
Perception: 3



Void
Void Points Spent:

Skills

| | |
|-----------|---|
| Etiquette | 1 |
| Heraldry | 1 |
| Sincerity | 3 |
| Defense | 2 |
| Commerce | 3 |
| Craft | 2 |
| Gambling | 1 |

Techniques

Insight: 123

Wounds

| | |
|---|------|
| 4 | -0 |
| 4 | -1 |
| 4 | -2 |
| 4 | -3 |
| 4 | -4 |
| 4 | Down |
| 4 | Out |
| 4 | Dead |

School: Yasuki Merchant

Rank: 1

Advantages/Disadvantages

| | |
|-----------------------------|----|
| Allies | +2 |
| Luck | +3 |
| Bad Reputation ("criminal") | -2 |

Glory: 1

Honor: 0

Experience Points:



Appendices





Appendix I: Strategy

CRAB BATTLE STRATEGY

"Those who are first on the battlefield and await the opponents are at ease; those who are



last on the battlefield and head into a fight become exhausted. Therefore, good warriors cause others to go to them and do not go to others."

– Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*

Crab battle philosophy begins with this passage by Master Sun. "Outlast the enemy" is the creed of the Hida. Let him force himself to exhaustion by delaying him, ensnaring him, and absorbing his punishment until he is spent. Then destroy him.

In skirmishes with other Clans' forces, this philosophy manifests itself as a process of weakening and draining. Hiruma guerrilla units harass and bedevil their opponent, conducting hit-and-run raids designed to sow fear and confusion in the ranks. Supply depots are favorite targets. Nighttime raids are common as well, and are often timed to disrupt the sleep pattern of as many bushi as possible. The raiders always leave some evidence behind them, in order to draw the opposition in the direction they want. Traps and delaying tactics are laid on the path, draining more strength from the enemy. Then, at a time and place of their choosing, the main army attacks. The charge is swift and brutal, the assault making the most of the surrounding terrain. A properly executed Crab attack occurs in the space of minutes: one instant, the enemy is contending with a few cowardly skirmishers, the next, they feel an entire army of Crab pressing down on them. The suddenness of such an attack after dealing with nothing but traps and skirmishers has a very demoralizing effect on the opposition, and the ensuing combat is typically nasty, brutish and short.

The same philosophy applies when the Crab take on the Shadowlands, with one key difference – the gloves come off. Traps that would merely harry or incapacitate fellow Rokugani become truly devastating against Fu Leng. Divisive tactics meant to split an army apart are more necessities than luxuries. Few mere mortals are capable of taking on an oni in close combat, but the Crab have found ways to even the odds – with armor, hideous bloodletting weapons, and magic designed to strike at the very foundation of an oni's essence. Using the ballistae, catapults and siege engines of the

Kaiu, coupled with the tactics of the Hida and the unmoving stone of the Kaiu Wall, the Crab can destroy a Shadowlands army over three times their own size.

The Crab maintain one of the largest standing armies in Rokugan, but because they are constantly at war with the Shadowlands, attrition is high. At any time, there will be some 300,000 bushi serving in the Crab lands. Almost three quarters of those are stationed at the Kaiu wall; the rest guard the northern borders and patrol internally, assisting the magistrates in carrying out their duty. The harsh nature of Crab military life has winnowed the weak and vulnerable, making them pound for pound the most powerful army in Rokugan. The Lion may have strength in numbers and tactics, but an individual Crab is more than a match for their single soldiers.

A WORD ON THE NAVY

Navies in Rokugan are far less powerful than armies. For a country as vast as Rokugan – and one which has no maritime neighbors to speak of – there is little need for ships to wheel and jockey for supremacy. A nice land-based army will do just fine, thank you. Those “navies” which do exist are usually used as transports, moving units of men quickly from one position to another. The Mantis Clan from the Islands of Silk and Spice are well known for such tactics. So, too, are the Crab although far less energy is spent here than elsewhere. Crab ships comprise a rapid strike force, used most often to outflank advancing armies from the Shadowlands. The ships will sail up the coast, deploying their soldiers in the dark of night, then weigh anchor and watch for the signal to bring them back. Such tactics work well to disrupt supply lines and harry the enemy's rear, but cannot function on any large scale. Ships are just too expensive and valuable to make such an endeavor worthwhile.

The idea of using missile weapons on board ships – as well as the idea of ship-to-ship combat – is ludicrous, of course. While a few desperate pirates might utilize such tactics in order to secure a ship, it is far too impractical to consider using with an entire army. After all, who on earth would make a navy that important?

Appendix II: The Lands of the Crab

Dominated by the Twilight Mountains in the south and the Wall Above the Ocean to the east, the Crab lands consist of some of the rockiest and least hospitable terrain in the Empire. It is a harsh, windswept area, matching the character of the people who occupy it. The only viable farmland lies on a thin strip of territory sandwiched between the Twilight Mountains and the Hidden Forest – a strip the Crab hold very dear. The farmers here all grow rice, to the exclusion of anything else. Almost none of their crop is exported; it all goes to feed the samurai on the Kaiu Wall. The total output is barely enough to keep everyone fed, and the Crab requires imported rice to fill their storehouses.

Thankfully, the Crab are not solely dependent upon their rice crop. Despite the harsh terrain, the land has other resources – resources which allow them to trade for the goods they need. Earthquake Fish Bay, whose shores are held by the Yasuki, contains some of the best fishing areas in Rokugan. Crab fishermen can work the warm waters year round, while their Crane and Mantis brethren are subject to the seasonal whims of the Umi Amaterasu. In addition the Twilight Mountains and Wall Above the Ocean are suitable for growing tea, and the more “civilized” parts of these ranges are dotted with plantations. Finally, the Crab have access to the richest iron deposits in Rokugan, and the Kaiu blacksmiths are absolutely without peer. Most Kaiu-produced weapons go directly into the hands of the Crab army, but enough surplus is available to trade with the rest of Rokugan. Crab weapons are highly prized for their quality and durability.

All of these resources are greatly augmented by the business savvy of the Yasuki family. No one drives a harder bargain, or knows how to produce



CRAB ARMY RANKS

All Crab samurai are ranked within the Crab army, which facilitates a smooth transition if one regiment must combine or support another. Upon their gempukku ceremony, every Crab samurai receives the rank of *Hohei* (private). As their Glory goes up and they gain experience, their army rank improves. The chart found on page 26 of *The Way of the Dragon* details each rank; it is reprinted here for your convenience.

Glory Rank

- 8 – Daimyo
- 7 – Rikugunshokan (General)
- 6 – Shireikan (Commander)
- 5 – Taisa (Captain)
- 4 – Chui (Lieutenant)
- 3 – Gunso (Sergeant)
- 2 – Nukutai (Corporal)
- 1 – Hohei (Private)



KUNI LIVING CONDITIONS

Accommodations among the Kuni are a stark contrast to the opulent palaces of other Clans, or even the coarse comforts of Hida castle. The Kuni prefer solitary locations on which to practice their art, and the scorched wasteland where they live can no longer support large-scale dwellings. So instead, they reside alone, dwelling in tiny huts, ruined garrisons or the remnants of peasant villages. They invariably choose living space that grants them a wide view of the surrounding area – atop a hill, perhaps, or in the midst of a flat field. Such locales provide plenty of warning if an intruder approaches.

Kuni quarters are cluttered affairs, overflowing with spell scrolls, spirit totems and random notes. Some Kuni carefully order and catalog their libraries; others let them fall where they may. But since each Kuni is charged with maintaining a certain amount of the family library, they all know exactly where their spell scrolls are located.

(continued)

something out of nothing like the Yasuki. Their continued efforts ensure that the Crab can concentrate on protecting the Empire, without worrying about where their supplies are coming from.

Crab peasants by and large are a dour, no-nonsense group, concerned solely with work and survival. They have some small understanding of the Shadowlands threat, and are eternally grateful to their rulers for protecting them from such a gruesome enemy. They are very humble before the samurai and magistrates who cross their path, having learned what happens if they do not show proper respect. In return, the peasantry is blessedly free from banditry or other such crimes. The Crab take their responsibilities to the *heimin* seriously; Crab justice is swift, certain and utterly without mercy.

The Clan has lost much land to the Shadowlands over the years. All of the Hiruma lands have been swallowed up, of course, but they have also lost many sacred sites and artifacts. The shrine where the Chosen Trio prepared to battle Oni no Hakai Suru, the pass where Hida Tadaka and Matsu Itagi met and fought – all of these have fed the gullet of Fu Leng's horde. The thought of such places befouled by goblins and Oni is almost more than the Crab can bear. But they are buried so deep in the Shadowlands that they dare not launch a campaign to reclaim them. To do so would cost many thousands of lives and achieve nothing beyond some corrupted land and an abstract notion of vengeance. Crab duty is stronger than that.

The valley between the two mountain ranges belongs to the Hida family, as do most of the tea plantations and iron mines in the foothills. The Kaiu control the area surrounding their great wall and most of the Twilight Mountains in the bargain. The Yasuki maintain the mercantile areas near the coast while the Kuni are content with their blackened wasteland. The Hiruma, of course, lost their ancestral home to Fu Leng some three hundred years ago.

Hida Castle

The capitol of the Crab lands and ancestral home of the Hida family lives up to the reputation of those who dwell there. There is nothing subtle about this fortress: no gardens surround its walls, no paintings adorn its

staterooms. It has been built seemingly of the mountains themselves, anchored to the surrounding landscape by solid rock. Its towers and battlements stand in eternal readiness for the assault of a foe that defies the merely human. In a thousand years, no Rokugani has dared to assault this, the mightiest fortress in the Emerald Empire.

Hida castle serves as the headquarters for the Crab army, where the Crab daimyo coordinates the defense of the Great Wall. The road to the castle is wide and well-maintained, though it is often full of messengers traveling to and from the Crab military units. Generals and noblemen crowd around it, each adding their expertise to the ever-expanding defensive plans. When it comes to ideas, the Crab are remarkably open-minded, and will listen plans from any of the assembled personages. Once the Hida daimyo has spoken, however, all discussion is ended; the Crab value differing opinions, not insubordination.

The Hida bushi school is also located here, and a small wing of the castle has been set aside for students and teachers.

The gates of Hida castle are often kept open, but a standing guard of one hundred family bushi stand ready to close it at a moment's notice. Above the thick iron gates sits the fanged skull of The Maw, perhaps the greatest enemy ever faced by the Crab. The horned head exhibits an aura of menace even now, and visitors to the castle have often complained of its unsettling effects on their disposition. Its gaping mouth is wide enough to swallow a horse; the hollow sockets of its eyes seem to take in all of the surrounding light. For attackers – human or Oni – its meaning is clear: the Crab have defeated greater foes than you, and they do not fear your power.

The Kuni Wastes

The ancestral plains of the Kuni family were once grassy and green, dotted with villages and branches of the Kuni shugenja school. That all changed with the coming of the Maw. Its armies marched inexorably across the Crab lands, destroying everything in its path and laying waste to entire provinces. The Kuni were hit particularly hard – their shugenja school fell beneath the Maw's claws, and every town and village in their territory was lost to the marauding army. Most of the family managed to escape and the peasants



scorched and flattened in its wake. The plains stretch out to the horizon in a mosaic of blowing sand and cracked mud. The ground has been baked hard as a rock by the sun; nothing can grow within it now. Here and there, outcroppings of rock have clawed their way to daylight, sprouting from the ground like trees. The trees themselves are long gone, of course, although some of the larger specimens remain as huge dead trunks. The entire area reeks of emptiness. You can look to the horizon and see nothing between it and you, nothing but hardened dust and loneliness.

This isn't to say the Wastes are entirely empty. Even though the Shadowlands Taint

KUNI LIVING CONDITIONS (CONTINUED)

In contrast, Kuni laboratories are organized, sturdy and fastidiously clean. Experiments, both with live subjects and inert materials, are terribly dangerous, and the shugenja wish to eliminate as many variables as possible. They are often built underground, and are always difficult to find without the assistance of the Kuni in question. Apprentices must often clean up the laboratory after an evening of their master's tests, as part of their established duties. But sometimes, even the hardest scrubbing cannot remove the ominous stains on the walls...

under their jurisdiction had fled long before the Maw's arrival, but the damage had been done: the Oni destroyed everything they touched and twisted the green and fruitful landscape into an abomination.

Thankfully, it did not remain that way. After the defeat of the Maw, the Crab launched a ruthless campaign to take back their stolen lands. They drove the remaining Oni from the Kuni Plains, destroying the Shadowlands corruption with methodical thoroughness. The Kuni shugenja undertook a spiritual cleansing of the land, and wiped every piece of the Shadowlands Taint away in an unflinching scorched earth policy. Here, in the blasted ruins of their former homes, the Kuni have returned to reclaim what is theirs.

After three hundred years of this, the land has yet to recover from the damage. It is as if a great fire had rushed through it, leaving everything

no longer infects the landscape, Fu Leng's minions have not entirely abandoned the place, and one can still find lone Oni or small goblin tribes if one looks. Such creatures tend to stay hidden by day and move only by night. They have all developed a healthy respect for the Kuni, and go to great lengths to avoid detection by the sinister magicians. Still, the landscape will occasionally echo with an inhuman cry or hideous laughter – signs that the Shadowlands still hover nearby.

The Kuni remain the undisputed rulers of the Wastes, although their numbers are scattered far and wide and they lack the manpower to patrol with any regularity. After wrenching the area back from the Shadowlands, they have settled in as best they can. While a few of the hardier buildings survived the warfare, most were destroyed or simply vanished beneath the ground. The Kuni have occupied most of the ruins which still stand, and rebuilt new dwellings where the



SPELLCASTING WITHIN THE KUNI WASTES

All Kuni shugenja understand and can sense the spiritual ley lines in their home provinces. Thus, they suffer no penalties when casting spells. Other shugenja, however are not so lucky. All spellcasters not of the Kuni family have a 10 TN penalty when attempting to work spirit magic in the Wastes. This penalty is ignored if the shugenja is within a Kuni dwelling.

Away from the Wastelands, Kuni may still cast spells as normal.

landscape permitted. They seemed to relish the few signs that anything had stood before the Shadowlands came, and do their best to render the old ruins habitable. They tolerate travelers who leave them alone, but have no patience for those who forget who the land belongs to.

Yasuki Territory

The Yasuki lands lie in stark contrast to the remainder of the Crab territory. Members of the Crane Clan for some three hundred years, their home provinces reflect their rich and prosperous heritage. The drab villages and no-nonsense defenses vanish here, replaced by refined dwellings and elegant landmarks. The Yasuki have developed much of the area, and the fishing villages and mountain inns are connected by a well-maintained series of roads. Yasuki merchant caravans wind their way through the Wall Above the Ocean mountains while junks and flat-bottomed riverboats ply their trade along Earthquake Fish Bay and the River of Gold. The family's greatest trading route lies along the River, where they intermingle with merchants from the Scorpion and various minor clans. They trade Crab weapons, tea, and raw iron for food and silks, which the Clan often lack. And of course, there's always enough left over for the Yasuki to turn a tidy profit.

Fishing is another staple of the Yasuki provinces, and the shores of Earthquake Fish Bay hold hundreds of fishing villages under Yasuki control. The warm waters of the bay provide excellent fishing year-round, and the Yasuki maintain a monopoly on all operations on in the northern half of the bay. Most of the villages along the shore are friendly, open places, unlike the sullen suspicions which mark most Crab villages. The smell of fish is everywhere along the shore, and almost all of the local dishes contain some form of fish.

As one might expect, the Yasuki provinces are a hotbed of illicit activity. Although not nearly as corrupt as they seem, the family is notoriously lenient on gambling houses, geisha houses and other dens of ill repute: there's a great deal of money to be made on "harmless vices." The Yasuki make no effort to hide these activities, and a given village will often have several openly illicit businesses – taxed and monitored by the local magistrate. The family insists that they fill a

vital economic niche, and refuse to curtail any activities in their provinces – even though their existence offends many Rokugani. Regular Hida patrols in the area ensure that violence is kept to a minimum, and racketeers and extortionists are dealt with quite harshly. The Crab's lenience does not extend to robbery.

The Yasuki maintain another palace, far away from their native lands. The Face of the East castle, on the western edge of Crab territory, holds the various lords and diplomats from the remaining Clans. It stands on a wide hill overlooking the Shinomen forest, and the Yasuki have decorated it as opulently as any Crane or Unicorn fortress. Here, the Clan conducts most of its negotiations with the rest of the Empire, and where they allow grievances to be aired and treaties discussed. The Yasuki have absolute control over the palace, although the Hida dictate the policies they will support and expect detailed reports on anything which transpires within its walls. Yasuki members who become diplomats rather than merchants are all based at this western outpost.

THE TIDAL LANDBRIDGE

The entrance to Earthquake Bay is guarded by Shiro Senkyo no Riku, one of the natural wonders of Rokugan. At low tide, it sits uncovered by the water, forming a landbridge almost half a mile across. Both Crab and Crane use the low tide to send men and supplies back and forth. When the tide comes in, it slowly smothers the landbridge with waves, until it is completely submerged. The Yasuki merchant fleet uses the opportunity to travel around the peninsula and north towards the remainder of Rokugan. The balance between low and high tide is tricky, and travelers must always time their trips across it, lest the water engulf them midway through or the retreating tide strands their boat among the rocks.

The Crab and Crane have argued for centuries over who owns the Bridge, but the more practical sides of the two Clan realize the point is moot. These days, it is used more as a bargaining chip or an excuse to start an argument than anything else. The Daidoji maintain a small garrison on the eastern side, registering anyone who comes across and noting any ships that may pass. The Crab do likewise (although many of the ships coming through belong to the Yasuki). Pirates and bandits would often use the Landbridge as an escape route, skittering or sailing across just as



the tide rose or fell. Both the Hida and the Daidoji have recently taken steps to curtail this activity, and brave indeed is the bandit who risks their combined wrath.

PEDDLER'S ROW

"Psst! Hey you! Samurai! Just back from a foray into the Shadowlands, are you? I can tell. You have the look of battle in your eyes, a look that no human foe can grant. Tell me, mighty warrior, how many hated Oni did you send back to the Pit? Three! May the heavens be praised you were not killed! Rare is the man who can face such odds and emerge triumphant. Yes, yes, even the Lion cannot claim so much. So, my lord, did you happen to keep a reminder of your epic clash? No?! Forgive me for aspiring above my lowly rank, but now how will you have proof of your deed? Yes, yes, of course your word is beyond reproach; I would not dream of thinking otherwise. But surely you have enemies... foes who discount the accomplishments of a powerful samurai such as yourself. Yes, those Scorpion can be treacherous, can't they? But if you would be so kind as to step over to my stall here, I may have just the thing to keep those wagging tongues from staining your good name..."

The Kaiu Road has long been the lifeline of Crab defenses. Built and maintained by generations of Kaiu engineers, it serves as the primary artery for moving large numbers of troops. It winds through the hills like a river, a waist-high wall marking its passage. It is wide enough to allow up to forty soldiers to pass, shoulder to shoulder, and the roadbed is well-maintained, with smooth cobblestones and mortar marking the way. Guards are posted at regular intervals; during times of emergency, lanterns are used by the sentries to send messages from the Kaiu wall to the remainder of the Empire.

At any time, one may expect to see throngs of samurai

heading to and from the Crab borders. The road is the only place where samurai from other clans may pass freely; all other roads require strict documentation and permission from a Crab magistrate. Most samurai come to test their mettle against the Shadowlands, to help defend the Kaiu wall, or to seek knowledge or artifacts from Fu Leng's realm. They are allowed to pass, so long as they show proper respect to the sentries and remember their place as "guests" of the Crab. Troops within the Clan march with smart precision, staying within their units and observing military protocol. All travelers are expected to give way for moving Crab troops.

The size and strength of the Road is not its best-known asset, however, nor are the flocks of samurai who travel it. Over the past ten centuries, the Road has become a hotbed of merchants, tradesmen and hucksters looking to profit from the heavy traffic. So many of them flock here, in





ADVENTURE HOOK

The characters are traveling along Earthquake bay when they are waylaid by a gang of marauders. The bandits escape and head towards the Tidal Landbridge, where they hope the rising tide will discourage the characters from pursuit. The players should catch them just as the tide starts to come in, leading to a climactic battle halfway across the bridge. If they aren't careful, they will lose their stolen possessions to the waves, or even be swept out to sea.

fact, that the Road's official name is used in formal matters only. Its common title is Retsu no Gyoshonin, or Peddler's Row.

It certainly lives up to the name. You can hardly pass a dozen yards without coming across another merchant, ready to sell you the bargain of a lifetime. Here, there's a peddler offering dried fish strings. There, it's a juggler hoping to earn a few coins from passersby. There are even impromptu geisha houses – set up using a few small tents – for lonely samurai looking to feel a loving touch one last time before journeying into the heart of darkness. If you want it – or even if you don't – you'll find it somewhere along Peddler's Row.

Conducting business on it isn't always easy, however. Access to the road is strictly controlled by the Yasuki family, and non-Yasuki tradesmen looking to make a profit must pay a tithe to the family daimyo. The amount of the tithe depends on the merchant and his or her standing with the Yasuki. For a favored peddler, payment is a mere formality, while hated rivals will be gouged to within an inch of their economic life. Crane Clan merchants are banned from the Row completely. Needless to say, most of the peddlers on the Row belong to the Yasuki. Those who aren't have learned to ply their wares with modesty and discretion.

Newcomers journeying along the Row are amazed at its seemingly endless variety. Like passing through a marketplace that has no end, the Row just keeps going and going. One line of barkers gives way to another... then another... then another. Eventually, the traveler must ignore them outright, lest he lose all his money and precious amounts of time extracting himself from the hordes of peddlers. Experienced samurai have learned to keep their business on the Row as brief as possible.

If adventurers are moving along Peddler's Row, you'll probably wish to have them encounter one of its denizens. Feel free to create any merchants or con artists you wish; if you need to make a peddler on the fly, roll three dice or simply choose from the following chart to determine the nature of his or her wares:

3-5 – “Oni ears.” 15-20% of them are real, the rest are modified donkey ears. Alternately, selling teeth, vertebrae, or other easily portable monster detritus.

6-7 – Three card monte/shell game, or other form of gambling.

8-9 – Patented anti-Shadowlands jade charms (50% of which actually work).

10 – Bargain-basement Noh play in progress.

11-14 – Foodstuffs of varying quality.

15 – “Cure-all” tea from the mountains (no actual medicinal properties).

16-17 – Poetic scrolls relating the exploits of various heroes.

18 – Traveling copies of the Tao of Shinsei.

19 – Scrolls full of risqué pictures.

20 – A poet offering to transcribe the samurai's exploits for a modest fee.

21-23 – Weapons of varying quality.

24 – A blacksmith offering to repair arms or armor.

25 – A “magician” performing sleight of hand illusions.

26 – Jugglers and/or acrobats.

27 – Healing salves and cure-alls (these actually work: they heal 1 dice of wounds per application).

28 – Hardened ceramic “mess kits” for preparing food on the road.

29 – Roots and herbs designed to keep a samurai awake for days on end.

30 – Shrine of Shinsei, available for prayer (small donation necessary to enter).

As far as prices go – feel free to gouge your players for all they're worth.

The Kam Wall

The original wall, which Hida built at the behest of Hantei, stretched along the length of the southern Hiruma border and served as the main defense against the forces of Fu Leng. It stands no longer, destroyed some three hundred years ago when the Oni army took the Hiruma lands. Its ruins have long been engulfed by the Shadowlands, and although searches have been made, no sign of the mighty wall can be found. It is as if Fu Leng simply swallowed it up.

Along the Cresting Wave River, however, another defense has been erected, one which dwarfs any structure in the Emerald Empire. It stretches the length of the Crab's southern border, from the Razor of the Dawn castle to the beginning of the Kuni Wastes. It is held by over a hundred and fifty thousand samurai, who live in

a permanent state of war. Initially constructed in sixty days, it is the single strongest defense Rokugan has against the Shadowlands. They call it the Kaiu Miracle.

The original defense line – built in haste while Kuni Osake held an army at bay – was intended merely to hold the northern shore of the river until a counterattack could be executed. It was augmented by siege engines and bolstered by the most powerful magics the Kuni could work, but lacked the permanence such a structure needs. In the three hundred years since the Battle of the Cresting Wave, however, the Kaiu engineers have rectified the situation.

The walls of Kaiu Kabe are now over one hundred feet tall, with foundations sinking many hundreds of feet into the soil. Its top is almost thirty feet wide, providing enough room for two companies of horsemen to pass each other. The insides of the wall are riddled with planning rooms, map rooms and storehouses designed to support the troops stationed here. There is enough rice stored within the Kaiu Wall to feed an entire army for two years. More structures and buildings lie along the north side of the wall – barracks, smithies, even geisha houses and gambling dens where soldiers can spend their money. While not a true “city”, these buildings run the entire length of Kaiu Kabe, enough to support two hundred thousand people.

Strongpoints are located every fifty yards along the wall, each housing a permanent siege engine and crew to man it. Catapults, ballistae, and firebreathers point towards the Shadowlands, ready to unleash a volley of rocks, spears and flaming pitch at encroaching foes. A second regiment of bushi archers and samurai are deployed between each strongpoint, ever-vigilant for signs of attack. Every eye and ear of every vigilant bushi and shugenja is strained in lookout for signs of activity within the Shadowlands. Their purpose is unified, their goal clear: the forces of Fu Leng must not be allowed to cross Seigo no Kaeme.

Communications along the wall are maintained by an elite unit of runners, mostly Hiruma, who convey messages up and down the lines. Each of them sprints a distance of one mile, before handing his message off to a fresh runner. The system is surprisingly effective, and the Crab have been able to coordinate movements along the entire length of the wall through the speed and diligence of this corps. They call themselves

the Winged Falcons, a title carried with as much pride as they can muster.

Each strongpoint along the wall houses two regiments of Crab troops. The first is a siege crew, charged with operating and maintaining one of the countless Kaiu war machines. The second is much larger – a contingent of 50-100 men who defend the section of the wall between their post and the next. Outsiders are amazed at how quickly these guards can spring into action. A few men watch while the rest relax – eating, talking, or even playing games. The instant a cry is raised, however, they are all business. Weapons are readied, ballistae are primed, and eyes are peeled in search of the enemy, all in as much time as it takes to draw a breath. This rapid turnaround time and intensity of focus has come as a result of the unpredictability of the Shadowlands. Most samurai have time to prepare and meditate before a battle, but the Crab have no such luxuries. They must be ready on a moment's notice, or else Fu Leng will once more make his presence known in Rokugan.

The wall is further bolstered by the River of the Cresting Wave, which flows along the south side of the Crab defenses. The Crab have taken steps to ensure that no one can cross it without their permission. The Kaiu have sunk the foundations deep into the river bed, turning the river into a mammoth moat which the enemy will have to cross if he wishes to attack the wall. Cunning traps have been laid into the riverbed, capable of slaughtering dozens of Oni. And of course, the soldiers who stand guard on the wall will prepare a suitable welcome for any of Fu Leng's creatures who try to cross. While the precise border of the Shadowlands may vary from one conflict to the next, the Crab consider the waters of the Seigo to be irretrievably theirs.

The catacombs beneath the wall are an equally impressive (although less well-known) engineering triumph. The Crab maintains several hundred openings into the Shadowlands to provide their advance scouts with an easy means of infiltration. To prevent Oni from exploiting the entrances, the Kaiu have established a bewildering network of traps, mazes and dead ends designed to prevent anything from getting through. Each year, more traps are added, and the catacombs are in a constant state of growth and change.

The Hiruma scouts and their Kaiu guides know the quick and painless ways to get through

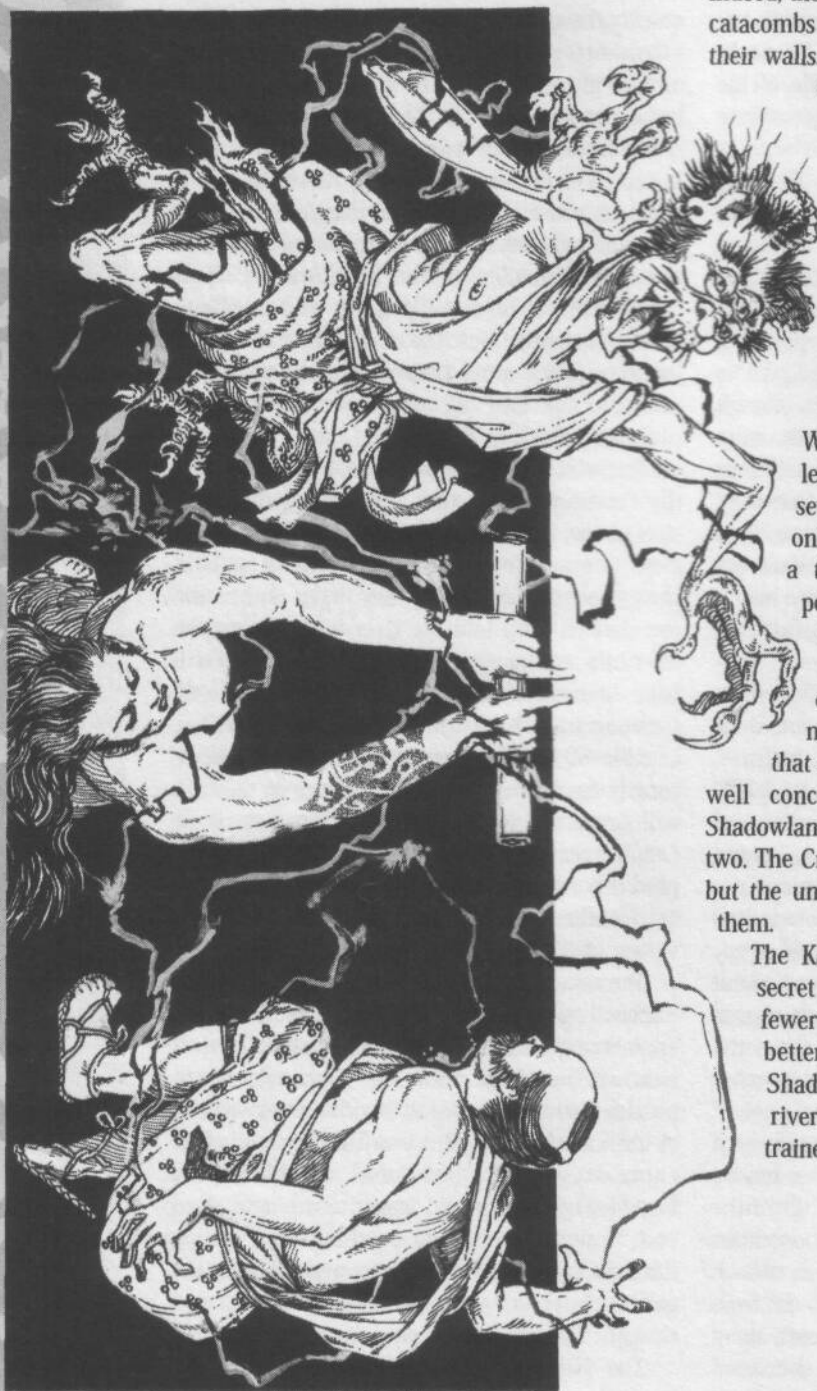


ADVENTURES IN THE CATACOMBS

If you're interested in a good old fashioned dungeon crawl, then the catacombs beneath the Kaiu Walls are perfect. The Crab have concentrated on manning the entrance, and keeping the scout paths safe. The rest of it however, has been left to itself. There's literally hundreds of miles of corridors and rooms that have been built and forgotten – containing untold numbers of traps, obstacles, and monsters who have wandered in and gotten lost. An entire ecology may have developed down there, unknown to and unknowing of anyone above. Samurai wishing to test their mettle but wary of the Shadowlands may travel down here to reclaim part of the passages for the Crab. Such parties are shown the entrance, then promptly left to their own devices. GMs wishing to run an adventure in the Kaiu catacombs are welcome to come up with any maps they desire, and fill them with all the twisted abomination and deadly traps that their fiendish minds can devise. There's more than enough room down there to do whatever you want.



the maze, but woe be to the samurai who makes a wrong turn. Forgotten traps lie in wait around every corner, so many that even the Kaiu have lost track over the last three centuries. Rumors abound that Oni seeking ways into Rokugan have become lost down here – rumors fed by the occasional inhuman howl that echoes through the halls.



Warnings and misguided directions are written all across the walls of the maze, designed to confuse anyone who would pay attention to them. Those who know the ways in and out have proper directions committed to memory; they ignore the scrawlings on the walls. Those who don't soon find themselves lost within the tunnels and can rarely – if ever – find their way back. Indeed, the shortest and easiest ways through the catacombs contain the most dire warnings along their walls.

One would assume that openings into the Shadowlands like this constitute a breach in the Crab defenses – that the forces of Oni or goblins will be able to make their way through unseen by the guards above. The Crab have thought of such tactics, though, and have taken steps to prevent them. Most of the catacombs are fairly small and narrow, to avoid carving into too much of the Great Wall's foundation. All of the passages leading back to Crab lands bottleneck in several points, drawing so narrow that only one man can pass through them at a time. Add of this a complement of portcullis, fire traps and murder holes, it makes it all but impossible for any sizeable force to get through. A squad of Kaiu engineers with one hour's notice can secure the passages so well that no one can get in or out. The exits are well concealed and difficult to find; each Shadowlands Scout knows the locations of only two. The Crab have many worries about security, but the underground catacombs are not among them.

The Kaiu don't like showing outsiders the secret ways through the catacombs. The fewer people who know about them the better, and Adventurers going into the Shadowlands will be escorted across the river by boat, unless they have a properly trained Crab with them.

Appendix III: Miscellany

Crab Philosophy

ON DEATH

When it comes to the Shadowlands, the Crab concept of honor is tinged with a heavy amount of pragmatism. No Crab fears death, but death must have some purpose for it to mean anything. Their first duty is to protect Rokugan, and one cannot protect Rokugan if one is lying in the grave. In skirmishes with the Shadowlands, a wise Crab knows when to retreat, to save his strength for a later conflict. A Lion or Unicorn samurai would rather be torn limb from limb that admit defeat, but the Crab will look at the bigger picture: what is gained by my death? Will others die as I have? What action should I take that will do the most good? If, in the long run, it is best to live to fight another day, then the Crab will not hesitate to beat a hasty retreat. If, on the other hand, a Crab's death will result in his companions escaping, or if it will delay the opposition until such time as the Kaiu Wall can be warned, then he will embrace his destiny without a second thought. It all depends on the circumstances and the Crab's opinion on the best way to serve his Clan.

STRONG VS. WEAK

The Crab's belief in ruling through strength is often misunderstood by other Clans. They dismiss the Crab as swaggering bullies, unable or unwilling to see the complex philosophy beneath their actions. In so doing, they lose the ability to comprehend what the Crab are all about.

The Crab feel that the strong have a divine right to rule over the weak. The rights of nobility

come from those who can take it and defend it. If they are incapable of holding onto power, then they cannot be trusted to use it wisely.

Strength, of course, comes from many areas, and is not simply a "might makes right" proposition. Administrators and diplomats show strength in their own areas, as do the peasants toiling in the field. Each is skilled enough to fulfill his or her role properly. When it comes to leading, however, the bar gets raised. A ruler is the man or woman who has the right combination of intelligence, perception, willpower and physical prowess to hold the throne from the assaults of others and look out for the best interests of the people under him or her. Often, that requires a certain ruthlessness and a willingness to sacrifice the few for the good of the many. Again, only the most powerful have the right to make decisions like that.

What most people do not understand is that the Crab relationship of ruler to ruled isn't one way. Certainly, those beneath the powerful must show them proper respect, and obey them when commands are issued. But power is more than just a right; it is a responsibility. The strong must protect those who are incapable of protecting themselves – much as the entire Crab Clan protects the remainder of the Empire. The farmer, the monk, the merchant... all of these have their place in the order of the universe, and must be allowed to fulfill their duties in peace. In a world where such a balance is imperfect, they must be protected from those who would hurt them. It is the responsibility of the strong to do so. If the villagers you rule are attacked by bandits, the shame is not theirs, it is yours. If a young noblewoman in your castle is seduced by a Lion samurai, it is not she who is dishonored, it is you. The burden of these and countless other examples falls upon those in power, for only they are strong enough to shoulder it. The Crab take this responsibility quite seriously, which is why the weak or incompetent have no right to rule. They endanger not only themselves but the people under them. Without the power to ensure that everyone has a chance to fulfill their role in life, they threaten the celestial pattern. Therefore, they must be disposed of as quickly and painlessly as possible, to be replaced by those willing and able to live up to expectations.

In return, the Crab expect those they rule to know their place, and perform their duties as well as they can. Crab peasants are expected to work



ADVENTURE HOOK

The players are contacted by an Crab soldier on the verge of death. He tells them that his squad was wiped by an oni in the Shadowlands. Their remains and possessions (including several important family heirlooms) are now part of the oni's trophy wall. He was to be eaten, but managed to escape and make his way back to the Kaiu wall. He begs them to kill the oni for him and return the possessions to his squad's heirs so that their spirits may rest.



as hard as possible to ensure that their crop grows. Bandits or inclement weather are beyond their control, but they still must overcome such hardships as best they can. Complaints are not tolerated, as are shortcomings that cannot be adequately explained. Similarly, Crab merchants and diplomats are expected to fulfill their roles to the best of their ability. To do less is an insult to those laboring to protect them.

A proper perspective of one's place in the universe at all times is vital. When the downtrodden fail to acknowledge the samurai's protection, it is tantamount to calling that samurai weak and incompetent. The Crab reputation for bullying arises from incidents where "lesser" men have (in their opinion) delivered such an insult.

ON SHINSEI

"Introspective" is not a word that comes to mind when describing the Crab. Their worries are in the here and now, in the concrete threats of the present, not in some abstract notions of destiny and the soul. "Follow your duties in this life," is a popular Crab saying. "Destiny will take care of itself." It shouldn't come as any surprise, then, that

Crab philosophy is colored by a high amount of practical necessity. When a Crab reads a passage of Shinsei, or hears a piece of wisdom from a monk, his immediate reaction is to translate it into something pragmatic. "How does this affect the real world?" he'll ask. "What actions should I take that will bring it about? How can its lessons be repeated in a significant fashion?" Rather than waiting for enlightenment to come, he goes and seeks it out. Rather than concerning himself with the afterlife, he applies what he learns immediately.

This isn't to say that the Crab aren't patient, or that they lack the subtlety to comprehend such concepts as infinity or the soul. They simply don't see the point of grappling with them if they can't affect the present. If life is an attempt to understand mankind's place in the universe, then it should not be squandered in a useless effort to grasp the ungraspable. To do so not only disregards the lessons of this life, it assumes that there will be no time to contemplate them in the next life, and thus serves to insult the Celestial Order. The ephemeral must remain closely tied to the tangible, the Crab philosopher believes, just as mankind as a whole is tied to greater forces



such as Fate and Destiny. In so doing, the philosopher can come to understand the importance of this life and this world, in a universe large enough to dwarf the concept of the individual.

RELATIONS WITH THE NEZUMI

Most Rokugani despise the Nezumi as Tainted pests, but the Crab know better. Before the coming of Fu Leng, the ratlings claimed the Shadowlands as their home, and no one knows its nooks and crannies like they do. Somehow, their race has resisted the Shadowlands taint, and the Crab would dearly like to know how they have done it. (Several unscrupulous Kuni have even taken to performing experiments on captured Ratlings to discover what keeps them "pure." Such practices are kept hidden from the remainder of the clan). In any case, the Nezumi are far too valuable a resource to discard out of hand.

Hiruma Scouts will often make use of ratlings as additional eyes and ears. In exchange for food, low-grade weapons, or even cheap jewelry, they can give scouts detailed information on local conditions, goblin tribe movements or the presence of particular Oni. For their part, the ratlings are more than happy to help the "pink ones" in their endeavors – as long as they don't have to do the dirty work themselves. Nezumi are firmly attached to life, and under no circumstances will they put their own necks on the line for the sake of the humans' silly quests.

Occasionally, an individual ratling or tribe will betray the Crab to their Shadowlands adversaries. The Crab take betrayal very seriously, and will spare no expense at making an example of the offending Nezumi: often the entire tribe will be wiped out, down to the last snout. Such incidents are rare, however, and the ratlings have learned that the Crab make better allies than Fu Leng does.

Some samurai have established long-term relations with a particular pack, coming to them again and again for assistance. These *bushi-no-Nezumi* will in turn try to assist their Ratling friends in other manners – reclaiming a tribal relic, for example, or thinning the ranks of a particularly bothersome goblin tribe. The Crab scouts look upon such tasks as the price of doing business: if it helps foster good relations and provide another ally against the Shadowlands, then it's worthwhile.

More complicated are the interactions between different ratling tribes; while Nezumi are not so self-destructive as the goblins, tribal identities are very strong, and two or more often come into conflict over limited space or resources. Occasionally, a Crab scout will be asked to help one tribe at the expense of another. The Hiruma do their best to stay above such squabbling, but it is sometimes necessary to become involved. Samurai who do so are urged to minimize any evidence of human involvement, and trust the tribe they are assisting to handle the repercussions. Nevertheless, the Crab have lost the goodwill of several tribes due to overzealous Scouts making their presence known.

Knowledge of the Nezumi language is mandatory for any samurai wishing to scout the Shadowlands. The Hiruma hold special classes in the Hida fortress teaching ratling speech, and often send instructors to the Shinjo school to train the Hiruma there. It is a high-pitched, chattering language that hurts the ears of most civilized Rokugani. The Hiruma consider it proper to use only in the presence of their ratling allies.

RELATIONS WITH OTHER CLANS

Crane

The Crab hate the Crane as they hate no other. They are everything the Crab despise – weak, elusive, relying on commerce and politics to offset their spineless cowardice. They have no military might, yet own more land than any other Clan. They do not defend themselves, yet rely on the Emperor to justify their actions. They speak of honor, yet never show any of their own. As far as the Crab are concerned, the Crane are a waste of valuable space. The Emperor's edicts and the necessities of battling the Shadowlands are all that have kept them from launching a war.

The immense philosophical differences are only one of the reasons these two Clans are at odds. They share a common border, and squabble over its exact placement constantly. They both wish to control the valuable Kenkai Hanto Peninsula, with its rich fishing resources and easy access to the great Amaterasu Sea. And the Yasuki break has been neither forgotten nor forgiven. Mutual misunderstanding and the clash for specific resources ensures that the two Clans will be at each others' throats for generations to come.

There is, however, an exception to this rule: the Daidoji family, called the "Iron Cranes" by their neighbors to the west. The Daidoji have a long-



DEALING WITH THE RATLING PROBLEM

Crab peasants often leave gifts of beads and bundled rice to keep the ratlings from ravaging their fields. During spring planting and fall harvest, bundles of gifts are hung by poles on the outskirts of the fields every night until they are taken. The peasants believe such gifts hold "evil spirits" at bay, and the ratlings are content to propagate the fallacy. They also feel a certain amount of gratitude when they find such gifts, and have learned to leave farmers' fields alone in areas which prominently display "presents" for them to take.



ADVENTURE HOOK

The players are asked to investigate a series of thefts from a local village; several valuable objects have been taken, as well as part of their winter food supply.

The culprit is a tribe of Nezumi who raided the village and have since moved on. It should be no problem to track the tribe down.

The Nezumi want no trouble, but they're unwilling to give back the supplies they've taken. They would be willing to return the village's items, but only if the players will do something for them in return – namely, kill an ogre bandit who stands in the way of their migratory path. If the ogre can be removed, the tribe will be able to move on and scavenge enough supplies to make up for what they've taken.

The players may fight the ratlings if they wish, but the tribe numbers over thirty and they can evade the characters quite easily. In the long run, it will be easier just to kill the ogre.

standing military tradition and carry themselves as noble bushi are expected to. They do not scurry behind the Emperor's robes like their brethren, and are willing to meet steel with steel. Three hundred years ago, a Daidoji daimyo led a contingent of men across the Tidal Landbridge to fight the the Battle of the Cresting Wave. He was the only Crane to have done so. The gesture was even more significant because the Tidal Landbridge slipped beneath the waves soon after the Crane crossed it. They would stand and die with the Crab, no matter what the cost, and the Crab have not forgotten the sacrifice. The Daidoji are responsible for what little civility exists between the two Clans. (See the *L5R RPG* rulebook, page 243, and *Way of the Crane*, p. 39, for more information on the Daidoji.) The Crane daimyos have thus decided to leave all dealing with the Crab to the Daidoji: all Crane diplomats and ambassadors to the Crab are from the Daidoji family, and all Crane lands bordering Crab territories belong to them. In this way, the Crane family keeps the peace.

Otherwise, the Crane are content to ignore the Crab. They have no wish to waste resources in futile warfare with a superior foe, and are too caught up in their rivalry with the Lion and the Scorpion to pay "the scuttling braggarts" much mind. Crane daimyos are also aware that the Crab lie directly between them and the Shadowlands, and are more than willing to let their bellowing neighbors take the brunt of Fu Leng's wrath.

The exceptions, of course, are the Yasuki. The ex-Crane family is an affront to their honor and the biggest challenge to their economic dominance. Crab might protect their adopted brothers from most direct attacks, but the economic rivalry between the two is extreme. The Crane see the Yasuki as a greater threat to their interests than the rest of the Crab combined. (See Chapter Two and *The Way of the Crane* for more information on the Crane-Yasuki rivalry.)

Dragon

Few in mainland Rokugan can perceive the mysteries of the Dragon Clan, and the Crab are no exception. Simply put, the Crab don't understand them. At all. And what they don't understand, they don't trust.

The most infuriating aspect of the Dragon, at least as far as the Crab are concerned, is their steadfast isolation. The Togashi monks refuse to come down from their mountaintops and take

part in the battles and intrigues of the Empire; what is so important that their lives should be wasted in such a way? The Togashi's usual enigmatic responses try Crab tempers to the breaking point, and their continued "fence-sitting" contemplation is all the evidence the Hida need to dismiss them as cowards.

Other Dragon families fare better. The Mirumoto are respected for their military skills and the Kitsuki magistrates do honor to their dealings with the rest of the Empire. The Agasha, while aloof, have forged an interesting relationship with the Kuni shugenja. Kuni seeking the answers to biological riddles have often turned to the Agasha alchemists for help. Goblin entrails and oni ichor are sent by special courier into the Dragon lands for identification. The Agasha's uncanny ability to pinpoint rare compounds and mixtures has been invaluable to the Kuni, and their assistance is both acknowledged and appreciated. Coupled with the Dragon's great distance (both physically and philosophically) from Crab interests, it's been enough to keep the Crab's frustration in check. What could have been an open antipathy has become a cordial neutrality, thanks in part to the Kuni-Agasha connection.

As for the Dragon's feelings about the Crab... who can say what they think?

Lion

The Crab have a grudging respect for the Lion. The emphasis is on the "grudging." The Crab don't care for the Lion as a general rule and try to associate with them as little as possible. Even the mightiest Hida, however, must acknowledge the power and tactical skills of the Lion armies. To deny the truth is to deny all, and the Lion's military is truly the finest in the Empire. As the Emperor's designated defenders, they are owed the same respect and obedience as the Emperor himself.

What the Crab disapprove of is the philosophy which guides the Lion. Their boasts of honor and of defending the Emperor ring hollow in Crab ears. Honor is an empty concept without deeds to back it up and the Lion's achievements – however impressive – just aren't as tremendous as they boast. "What honor have they attained that they did not make themselves?" ask the Crab. "What enemy did they defeat that matches ours?" And while their unflinching courage is a cause for admiration, their rigid adherence to abstract notions of honor often cause that courage to be

wasted. The Crab expect more than arrogant posturing and temper tantrums from the greatest military force in Rokugan.

For their part, the Lion are just as divided in their feelings for the Crab. Their staunch defense of Rokugan and obvious military prowess earns a nod of appreciation from the Emperor's Right Hand, and the lesson of Matsu Itagi has never been forgotten. But the Crab's boorishness and quick dismissal of Lion achievements do not sit well. Honor is everything to the Lion, and they don't like seeing it brushed aside by the likes of the Hida family. Despite that however, and despite the almost constant animosity and tension, there are very few actual incidents between them. Simply put, the two have more important things to do.

Phoenix

Ironically, it is the pacifistic Phoenix Clan that the Crab have developed the most respect for. Situated on the far sides of the Empire, the two have never had reason to quarrel over land, and their other interests are so disparate that overt clashes between them are rare. The Phoenix's constant cries for peace are dismissed as childish whining by the Crab daimyos, but their openness is refreshing in light of the internecine politics of other clans. The Phoenix speak their minds, the Crab say, and despite their naive weakness, they at least have the courage to stand by their arguments in the face of all opposition.

Unlike Phoenix rhetoric, Phoenix magic is *never* dismissed. Their understanding of the mysteries of the universe, and the breathtaking power displayed by their shugenja have taught the Crab that strength lies in many forms. If a Kuni needs advice on the nature of Oni, or a Kaiu wants to know how to bind Earth magic into her walls, the Isawa family is the first place they go.

For their own part, the Phoenix are content to let the Crab be. "Their violence is truly reprehensible," they say, "but they are too far away and too engaged in their duty to trouble much over."

Scorpion

With the possible exception of the Crane, there is no clan the Crab hates more than the Scorpion.

Like the Crane, they are everything the Crab detest; deceptive, tricky, substituting words for courage and arguments for honor. Unlike the Crane, however, the Scorpion have earned at least the wary respect of their southern neighbors, who know all too well how much damage their schemes can cause.



Most Crab refuse to have anything to do with the Scorpion, fearing that they will be caught in some labyrinthine plot. Needless to say, the Scorpion have found ways to twist Crab reluctance to their own advantage. The Crab's open approach to the problem leaves much to be desired. If a Crab suspects he is being





manipulated by a Scorpion, his initial response is to confront the Scorpion with his suspicions. Often, such confrontations lead to a duel or worse, which is usually exactly what the Scorpion wanted.



Despite the ease at manipulating the Crab, the Scorpion have learned to approach them with kid gloves. The Hida would just as soon gut a Scorpion as look at him, and don't need much of an excuse. Woe be to the individual Scorpion who leaves himself open to Crab challenges. Such unfortunates are typically dismissed as weaklings by the Scorpions. After all, if his plots were so well-designed, then why did he let himself be called out by a Crab?

Unicorn

The Crab view the Unicorn as kindred spirits, or at least naive younger siblings who need looking after. Their "barbaric" ways and strange customs mark them as outsiders – much like the Crab – and their martial prowess and unmatched cavalry mark them as warriors – much like the Crab. The Unicorn lands border the northernmost edges of the Shadowlands, and the horsemen face more threats from Fu Leng's minions than any save the Crab themselves. For all those reasons, the Crab see the Unicorn as brothers.

Yet at the same time, their camaraderie is tinged with condescension. As newcomers, the Unicorn are unskilled in the workings of Rokugan, and sometimes need guidance as to where to go and who to speak to. The Crab feel it is their duty to point the Unicorn in the proper direction and "protect" them from the more manipulative clans. Some Unicorn resent the implication that they cannot take care of themselves, or that they would need a Clan as blunt and straightforward as the Crab to "instruct" them on the niceties of Rokugan culture. Nevertheless, allies are allies, and the two have formed a fairly stable bond in the years since the Unicorn's arrival. Many of the displaced Hiruma family come to Unicorn bushi schools to learn their trade, which has helped smooth over some of the rougher edges of the alliance.

Minor Clans

The Crab view the minor Clans with a large degree of favor. They respect them for their relative strength, and for the tenacity they have shown in the face of the seven great powers. In addition, sharing a border with the Hare, the Fox and the Sparrow provides them with a buffer between the hated Scorpion, and the relative weakness of all three ensures that depredations in Crab lands are kept to a bare minimum. While the Crab have occasionally demanded border territories as "payment" for the defense of the Shadowlands, such occurrences are rare. The Crab

have enough problems without worrying about hostile border states.

The daimyos of the nearby minor Clans are far too wise to antagonize the Crab, and view them as a sort of ace-in-the-hole should relations with the Crane and Scorpion become tenuous. The Crab, of course, are more than happy to stand against their larger neighbors, and nothing helps a little Clan's position more than a big, grouchy Clan supporting it.

Crab Magic

Crab magic is fairly easy to learn, and the Crab generally do not keep their spells secret. Part of this involves their duty to stop the Shadowlands – if a Crane shugenja is willing to learn a spell that will thwart Fu Leng's minions, then so much the better. But it is also due to the decentralization of the Kuni library; because so many Kuni have access to their family's spells, the chances of finding one willing to teach them to you increase dramatically.

Earth Spells

ARMOR

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 3 rounds

Duration: Number of rounds equal to the Earth of the target + School Rank of shugenja

Mastery: 4

Concentration: Full

Raises: Casting time

Effect: This spell fortifies the Earth in its target, making him even more resilient than the standard Crab. Whenever damage is rolled against him, the attacker cannot re-roll 10's.

BINDING (MINOR AND MAJOR)

Base TN: 20, plus Shadowlands Rank of target x 5

Casting Time: 3 days

Duration: N/A

Mastery: 5

Concentration: Full

Raises: N/A

Effect: There are two binding spells taught by Kuni shugenja. The first is Minor Binding. This spell can be used to immobilize any creature with the Shadowlands Taint – but not oni or *maho-*

tsukai. The spell is very complex and requires much preparation. First, the shugenja must learn the true name of the creature it wishes to bind. Then, the name must be written on manacles of some kind. Finally, the manacles must be placed on the creature, who is then immobilized.

It is a dangerous and tricky spell. It is usually performed as a ritual with a few Kuni Witch Hunters around to do the muscle work.

The shugenja must meet the TN of the spell three times: once while chanting the true name of the creature, then while writing the name on the manacles and lastly while it is being bound. If all three rolls are successful, the creature is bound and cannot move or use any special abilities until the manacles are removed.

Major Binding is a more powerful spell than its counterpart, but is identical in most other ways. Major Binding is the only spell that can bind oni and *maho-tsukai*. The same process and materials are used.

WALL OF EARTH

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 2 actions

Duration: Number of rounds equal to the School Rank of the shugenja

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Full

Raises: Duration, Casting Time, Height, Width

Effect: By communing with the spirits of the Earth, the shugenja calls forth a great wall from the Earth. The height and width of the wall is 10 feet x the School Rank of the shugenja (2 Raises add 10 feet to either measurement). The wall has a number of Wounds equal to the Earth of the shugenja x 10.

Fire Spells

LAST RITES

Base TN: 5 x Shadowlands Rank

Casting Time: 1 action

Duration: N/A

Mastery: 2

Concentration: Full

Raises: N/A

Effect: This is the only spell known to the Clans to completely remove the Shadowlands taint from a living body. There's just one catch. It kills the target.



ADVENTURE HOOK

A powerful Kuni shugenja bids the party to venture into the southern Shadowlands to acquire diamonds for a ritual he is planning. After they endure the arduous quest for the gems, they return to discover that their employer is a *maho-tsukai* who intends to use them as part of the sinister ritual as well.



Last Rites is only performed upon dying samurai and shugenja who have been infected (or are suspected to have been infected) by the Taint. The spell is cast to keep old comrades from coming back as shambling horrors muttering the Dark Lord's name. A successful roll indicates that



Air Spells

FEAR

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 2 actions

Duration: Shugenja Rank (see below)

Mastery: 3

Concentration: Complete

Raises: See below.

Effect: This spell was taught to the Kuni by a Daidoji shugenja two hundred years ago. It is rarely used by the Kuni, but those who excel in it are valuable in the ranks of the Hida. This spell causes the air spirits to create terrible sounds of screaming and pain in the language of the listener. The effect can be quite disheartening to both Shadowlands creatures and mortal enemies alike.

When the spell is cast, any targets within hearing distance must make a Contested Willpower roll against the successful casting roll of the shugenja. If the roll fails, they flee in terror (TN to be hit: 5) for a number of rounds equal to the School Rank of the shugenja. If they succeed, they are frozen in fear (no action but Full Defense) for one round. Obviously, Raises will increase the possibility of the targets failing their Willpower rolls.

Nemuranai

Unlike most other clans, who do not use their ancestral weapons except in times of dire need, the Crab make full use of all their resources. Their nemuranai are far too powerful to be squandered as wall decorations, and can usually be found in the hands of Clan leaders along the Kaiu wall. The only exception is the Hiruma family's ancestral katana, Hiko, which the Hiruma refuse to use until they regain their homeland.

the body is clean from the Taint. A failed roll, however, means that the spirit of the comrade will never rest, but haunt the land of the living forever.

This spell cannot be cast on an unwilling target. It requires the combined will of both the caster and the target to completely destroy the Taint. If the target is unwilling, the spell is automatically unsuccessful.

CHIKARA: THE CRAB CLAN ANCESTRAL KATANA

The first Kaiu forged Chikara as he, Kuni and Hiruma prepared to battle Oni no Hatsu Suru. Formed from a near-magical combination of steel and jade, it struck down the monstrosly powerful beast with but a few blows from its wielder. It remained in Hiruma's hands for many years afterwards, until he finally presented it to

Lord Hida at the ceremony opening Hida Palace. It became customary for the Hida daimyo's heir to carry the sword as a symbol of the role he would one day take. The tradition continues to this day and the sword currently rests in the belt of the daimyo's first-born, Hida Yakamo.

Chikara appears as a long, well-made katana forged of steel and inlaid with jade symbols. The jade runs up and down the blade and appears to have been fused with the metal perfectly. No amount of prying or gouging can separate the jade from the steel. The handle is carved from polished ebony and covered with gray silk stitching. It connects seamlessly to the blade and has been rendered all but unbreakable by the first Kaiu's cunning skill. It has no permanent saya; a new one is created for it each time the weapon changes hands.

CHIKARA'S POWERS

Kaiu created the blade to battle the Shadowlands, and its powers reflect that purpose. Subsequent owners have put it to effective use against their inhuman enemies, which has further augmented its mystical abilities. Its jade lettering glows in the presence of Shadowlands creatures, warning the user of their approach. It can detect a Shadowlands creature as far away as a hundred yards, its glow growing brighter the closer the creature gets. It also renders its user immune to the Shadowlands Taint as long as it is on his or her person. In combat against Fu Leng's minions, it moves with a life of its own, guiding the wielder to strike the most vulnerable parts of his or her opponents. Anyone wielding Chikara against a denizen of the Shadowlands gains a number of free raises equal to his or her school rank times 5.

The jade in Chikara's blade does not rot while in the Shadowlands.

YAMA: THE CRAB CLAN ANCESTRAL WAKIZASHI

The great Hida Tadaka carried this short sword, leaving it in his daughter's hands before he set out in search of Matsu Itagi. In the centuries since then, some say, it has become infused with Tadaka's great stamina – the endurance of the earth itself. They say Tadaka's spirit reaches up from the ground to brace the user, allowing them to partake of his unearthly strength.

Yama appears to be an ordinary wakizashi, with a tempered steel blade and carved ivory hilt. It displays no special symbols or iconography, and

displays nothing to suggest that it is any more than a normal sword. Only when its user enters combat does its powerful magic come to light.

Hida Tsuru, the daimyo's younger brother and Crab Clan cavalry master, currently wields Yama. His followers believe that as long as he carries it, no bushi in his command may be knocked from their horses.

YAMA'S POWERS

Anyone carrying Yama cannot be knocked down. Ever. No matter how much force overwhelms him, no matter how mighty a blow he sustains, he will remain standing, drawing strength from the ground on which he stands. All Stamina-based rolls made during combat have their TN lowered by 10, and all checks made to see if he remains standing automatically succeed. Similarly, any horseman carrying the blade can never be unseated from his or her mount. Nothing save death can dismount the user.

KETSUEN, THE ARMOR OF THE SHADOW WARRIOR

This awe-inspiring suit of armor was worn by Hida himself during the great war against Fu Leng. It became covered with his blood during the fighting, which seeped into the armor's metal and stained its cloth bindings black. It has been worn by every Crab daimyo since then, and has become a symbol of Crab duty and endurance.

Ketsuen is a huge suit, impossible for most Rokugani to put on. Only someone taller than six feet can wear it and still move properly. It is undecorated and reflects a dark smoky hue in the light. It covers every inch of the body, leaving nothing exposed to attack. Similarly, its helmet covers the entire face, save the eyes, giving the impression that the armor moves with a life of its own. It becomes difficult to see in the haze and smoke of combat, and a bushi properly trained in its use will become all but invisible (hence the armor's common name).

Hida Kisada currently wears the armor, as expected of the Crab daimyo. He is rarely seen in public without it, in fact, and will have it nearby even during his rare diplomatic missions. It never leaves either his sight or the sight of his personal armorer, Kaiu Bugati, who keeps it in a special case when Kisada isn't wearing it.



CRAB SPELL NAMES

Unlike the spells listed in the RPG or in other *Way of the Clan* books, Crab spells do not have poetic titles. Like the men who cast them, Crab spells have very utilitarian names. Imagine a Crab daimyo shouting to his shugenja, "Cast *Our Blessed Lady Sun's Beatific Blessing!*" during the clamor of battle. The Crab are a little too practical for that. A simple and direct name, giving a general idea of the spell's effect without fanfare, will do just fine.



CRAB SENSEI

The Crab live in a permanent state of war, and their largest school shows it.

Crab sensei and military instructors are drawn from the ranks of veterans no longer able to fulfill soldiering duties. A bushi who has been mauled by an oni, for example, or a samurai with a missing hand, has no place serving along the Great Wall. Instead, they travel to the Hida castle to impart their lessons on the young. Drill instructors have the scars of experience to strengthen their words, and graphic evidence of what happens when you come up short against the Shadowlands. In addition to making effective use of otherwise irreparably injured bushi, the Hida school brings its recruits face to face with the realities of soldierly life.

KETSUEN'S POWERS

Ketsuen has been imbued with the chi of Hida himself, and thus imbues its wearer with his preternatural endurance. It adds +10 to its wearer's TN to be hit, and allows him or her to ignore a number of wound levels equal to his or her Hida school rank plus one.

In addition, spiritual energies slide off it like water, rendering the wearer all but immune to magic and magic-based effects. Any shugenja, Oni or other creature launching a magical or magic-related attack at the wearer must raise the TN to hit by 5 times the wearer's Earth score. Even if the attack causes damage, the armor itself will remain intact. It cannot be harmed by magical means.

YASUKI HOHIRO'S BAG OF NECESSITY

Yasuki Hohiro was a merchant of awe-inspiring skill who lived some five hundred years ago. According to legend, he made so much money that no palace could possibly hold it. So instead, he traveled up and down Rokugan, giving kind and generous souls whatever money they needed to ease their pain. Whether the story is true or merely Yasuki propaganda depends on whom you ask. But in any case, the magic bag which supposedly belonged to him exists, and has ridden the belt of every Yasuki daimyo for the last four centuries. It is currently in the hands of Yasuki Taka, who never breathes a word about its mystic powers.

The Bag of Necessity appears as an oversized pouch bound together by a thick silk strap. It can be worn across its bearer's back or around his or her belt like a wallet. Subtle designs and symbols of good fortune are sewn along its sides, promising golden dawns and brighter tomorrows to the reader. It holds items as any normal pouch would, about one-half ken-o (4 pounds). If the user ever needs money he or she does not have, however, the bag will provide as much as he or she needs. They merely need to reach into the bag, and they will find exactly enough to cover their expense. The bag always produces the exact amount of money the user needs.

It is important to keep in mind that the amount of money the user *needs* is not necessary the amount they *want*. The bag will provide enough resources to fulfill its owner's immediate needs – food, drink, lodging for the night – but rarely anything more. For example, it will contain

enough money to spend the night at a country inn, but not enough to buy the inn. It is immensely helpful to someone on the road (and thus carried almost exclusively by Yasuki merchants), but does little to help a daimyo in his castle, or a bushi whose needs are cared for by the local barracks. Wealth is a subjective thing, after all, and whatever supernatural force is behind the Bag understands that very well.

KAIU'S FORGE

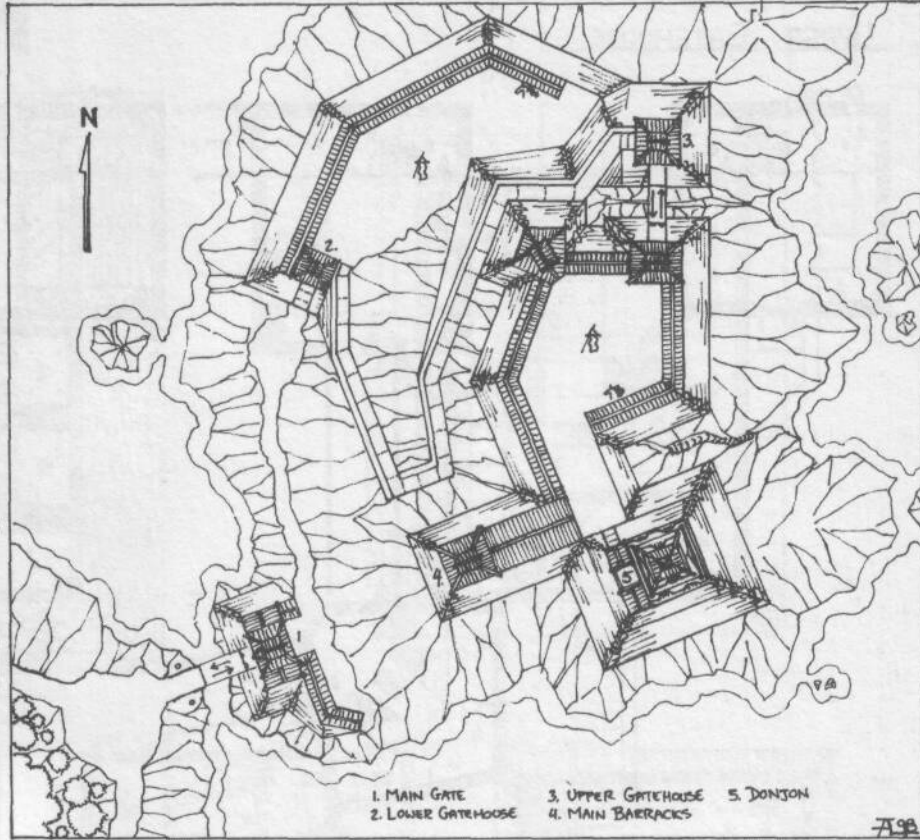
Deep within the heart of Kaiu Shiro, in a room guarded both night and day, lies the ancient Forge of Kaiu. Assembled from several pieces (hammer, tongs, anvil, fire pit, bellows) belonging to the family founder, the Forge serves to remind the Kaiu of their duties to the clan and their vital purpose in holding back the Shadowlands. The blaze in the pit is always alight, and a diverted stream of cooling water runs constantly though a cleverly designed aqueduct nearby. Every year, the Kaiu Master Smith travels down to the forge, and creates five swords from the best steel Crab mines can provide. The resulting weapons are among the most prized in the Empire, for they can never dull or break, even after centuries of use. They will retain their razor edge, legend has it, until the Forge itself is destroyed.

In order to create the katanas, all five parts of the Forge must be used in conjunction; if any one element is missing, the resulting weapons will be warped and useless. The katanas must further be forged according to a specific rhythm, one which only the Master Smith and his chosen successor know. Unless they adhere to the rhythm perfectly, the sword will not achieve the proper balance and the forging will never end successfully.

Once completed, a Kaiu Forge katana never needs polishing, sharpening, or cleaning. They do not rust, nor do they ever lose their edge. They can only be destroyed by returning them to the fires of Kaiu's forge; nothing else will even blemish them.

There are some four thousand Kaiu swords in existence, most of them in the hands of Crab nobles. For rules purposes, treat them as High Quality katanas which keep an extra die (3k3) of damage. Players may take a Kaiu sword at the beginning of the game as a 5 point Advantage (see Chapter 3 for more details).

KYUDEN



KEY

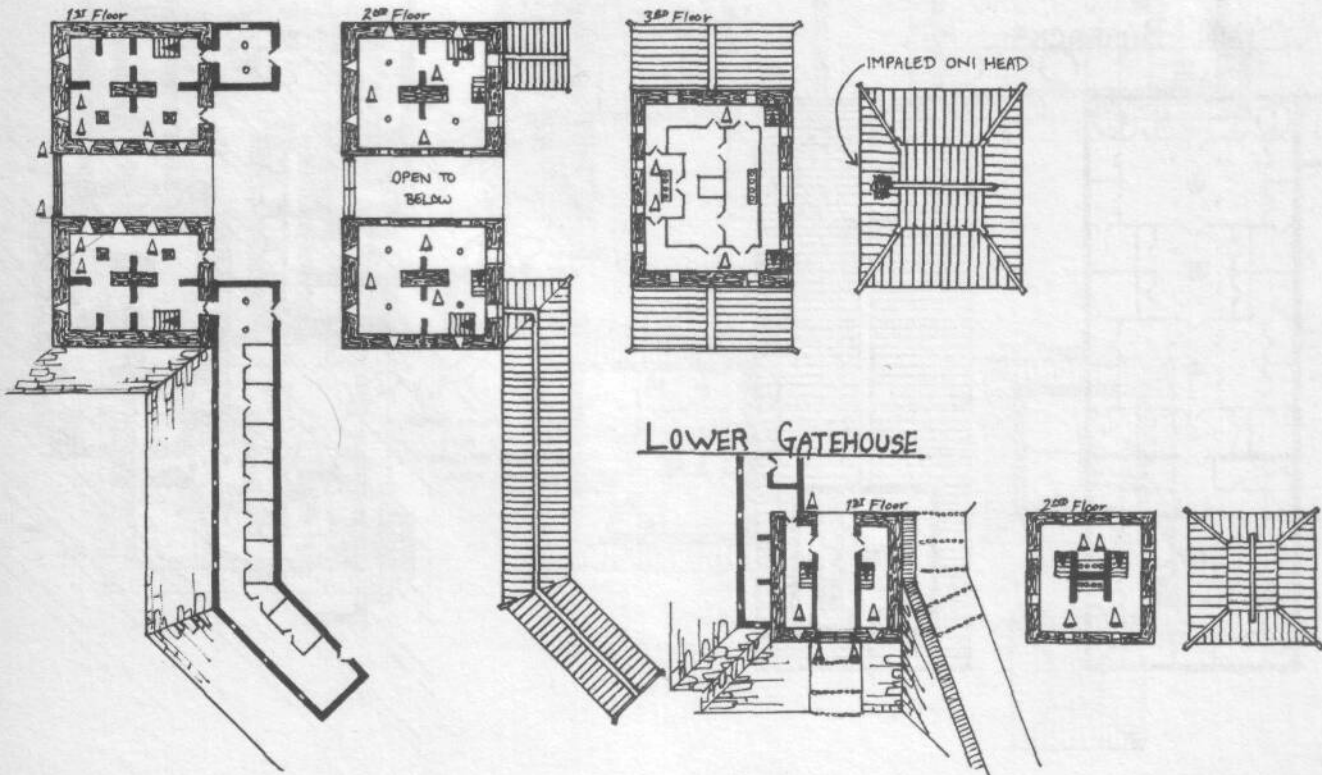
| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| □ WINDOW | ▤ MURDER HOLES | ▨ FALSE DOOR |
| ▤ DOOR | ▤ STAIRS | ▤ SECRET TRAP DOOR |
| ▤ SECRET DOOR | ▤ INCLINE MARKER | ▤ RETRACTABLE DRAW BRIDGE |
| ▤ ROCK WALL | ▤ TUNNEL | ▤ PILLAR/SUPPORT |
| ▤ FILL w/ ROCK/ EARTH | ▤ FALSE LEAD | • PILLAR |
| ⊙ WELL | ▤ PARADE GROUNDS | ⊙ STATUES |
| ⊙ CISTERN | ▤ WAR OFFICES | ⊙ GARDEN |
| ⊙ TRAINING RING | ▤ KITCHENS | ⊙ FOOD STORAGE |
| ▤ HORSE RAMP | ▤ STABLES | ⊙ ARMORY |
| ▤ STRONG WALLS | ▤ BARRACKS | ▤ GUARD POST |

1" = 10ft.

1. MAIN GATE 3. UPPER GATEHOUSE 5. DONJON
2. LOWER GATEHOUSE 4. MAIN BARRACKS

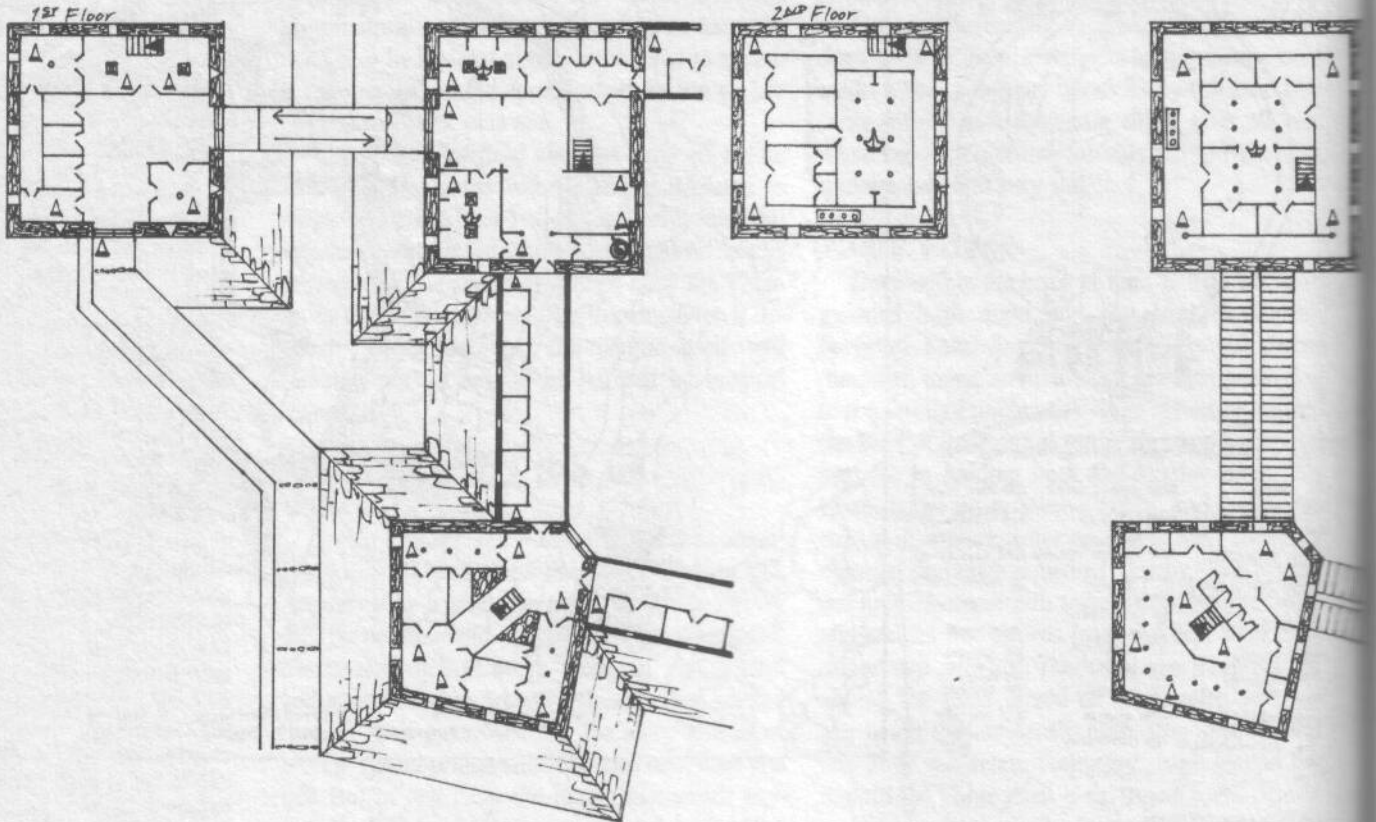
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MAIN GATE

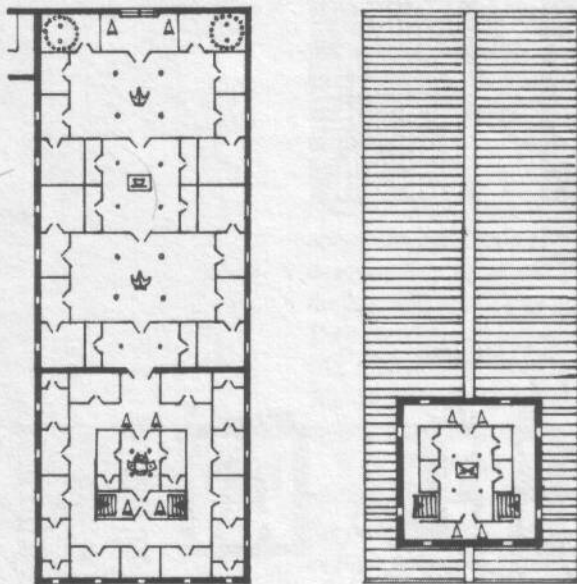


KYUDEN

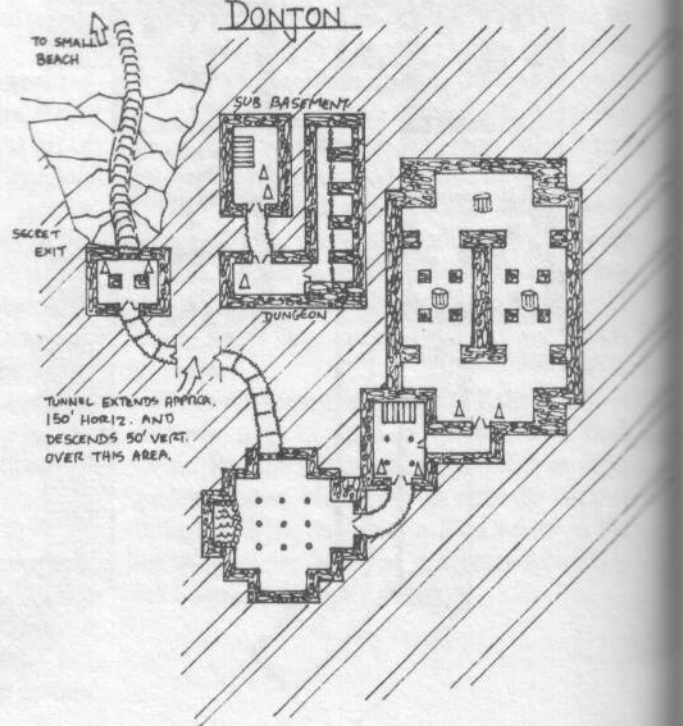
UPPER GATEHOUSE



MAIN BARRACKS

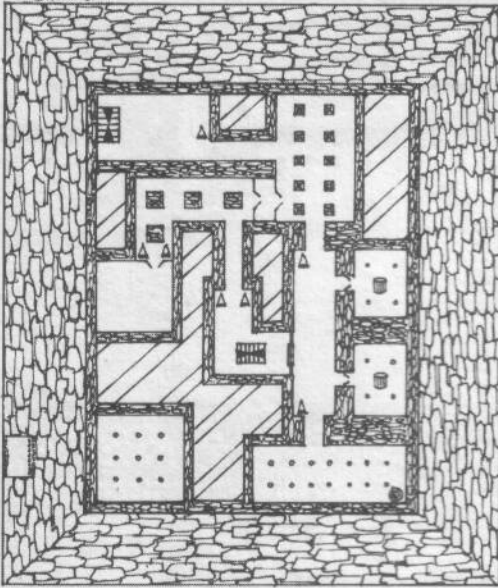


DONTON

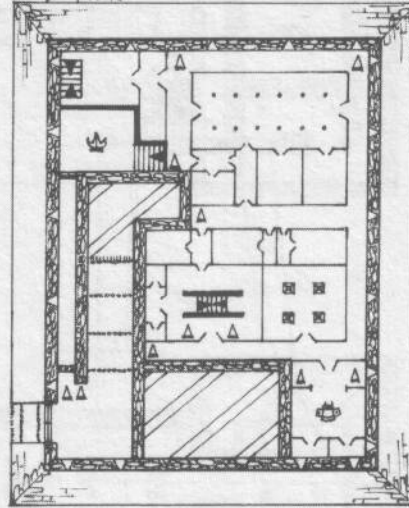


HIDA

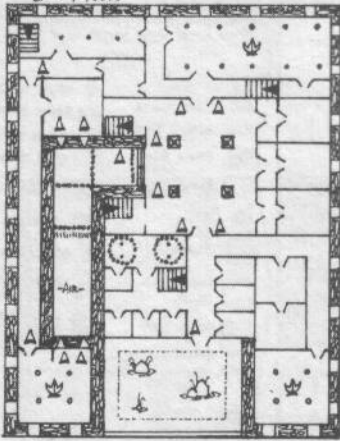
BASEMENT



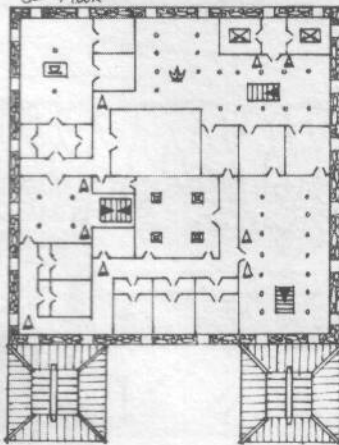
1ST Floor



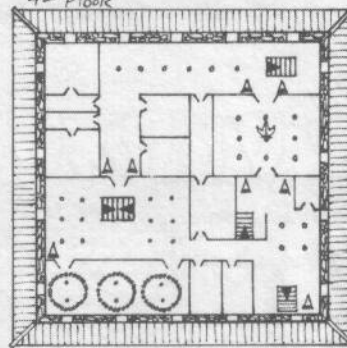
2ND Floor



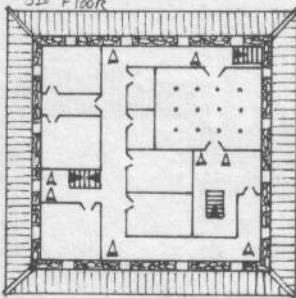
3RD Floor



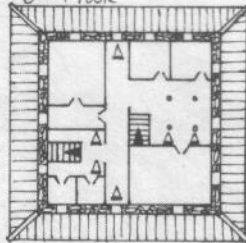
4TH Floor



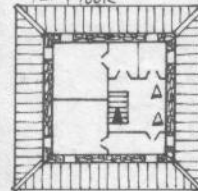
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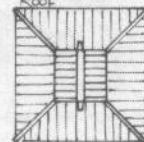
6TH Floor



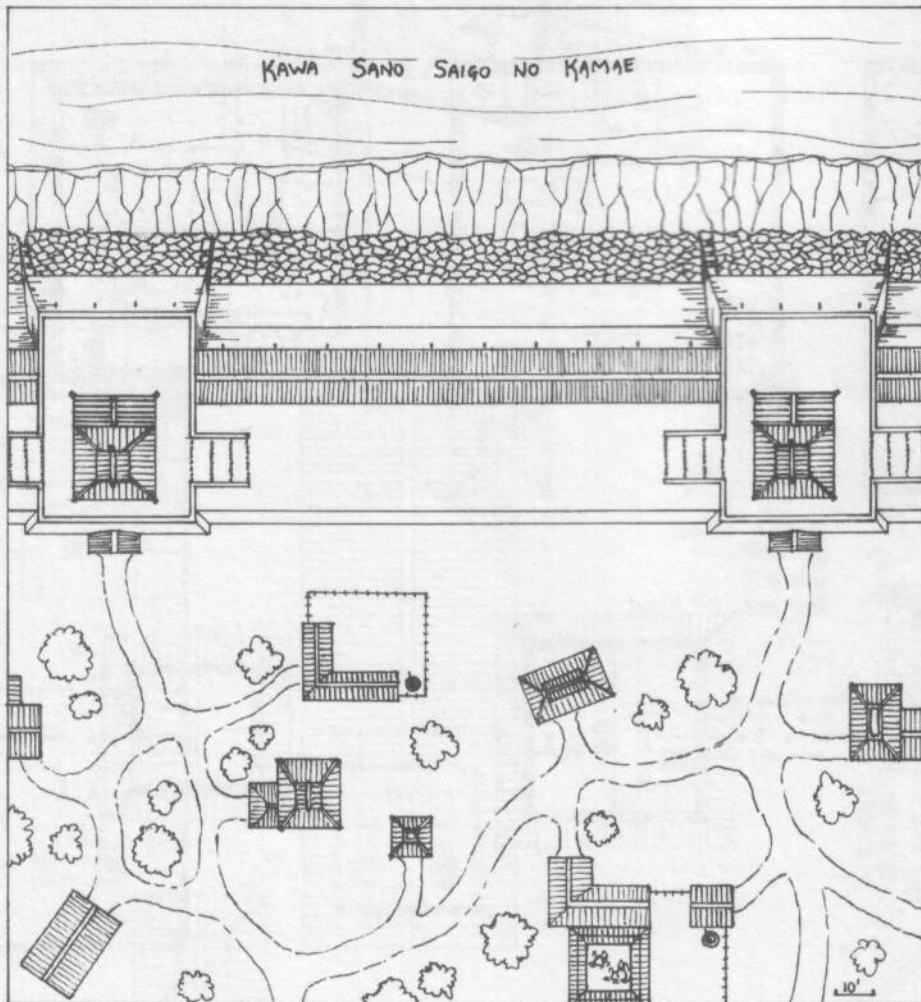
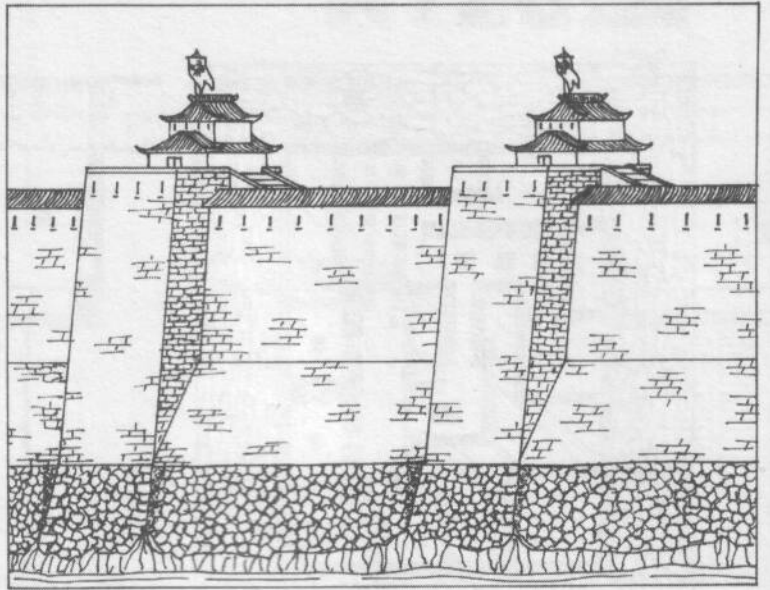
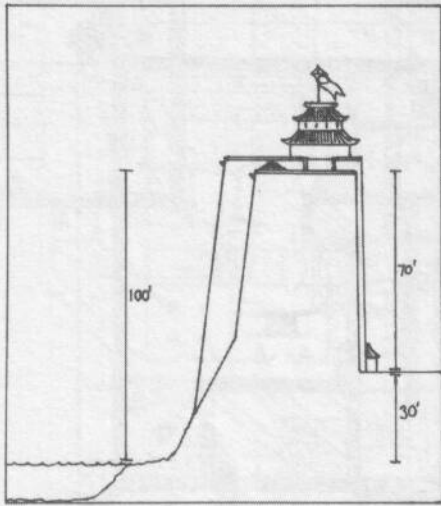
7TH Floor



Roof



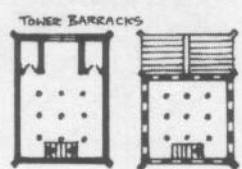
KAIU KABE

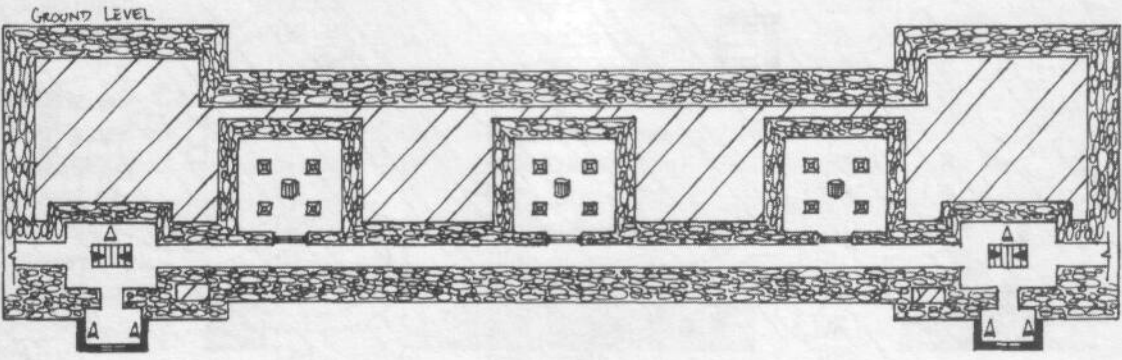
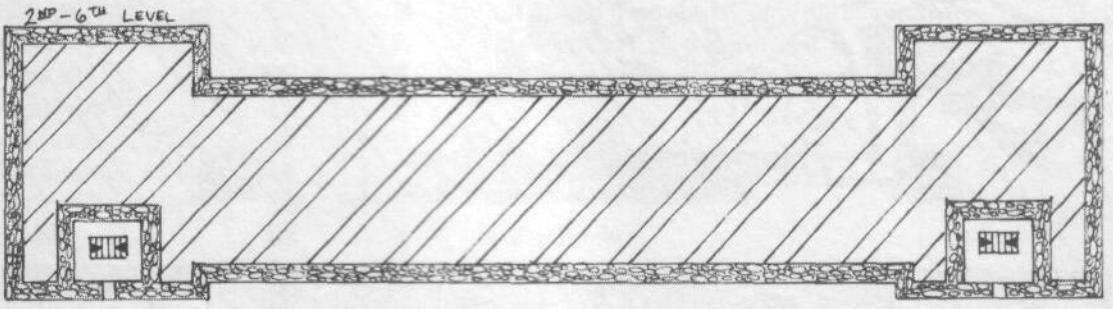
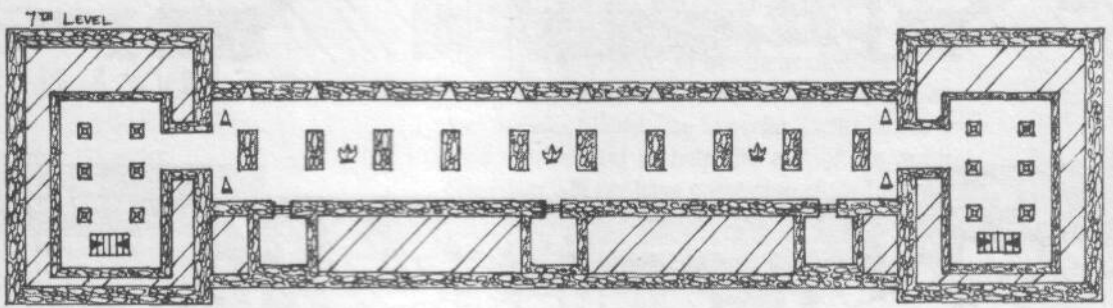
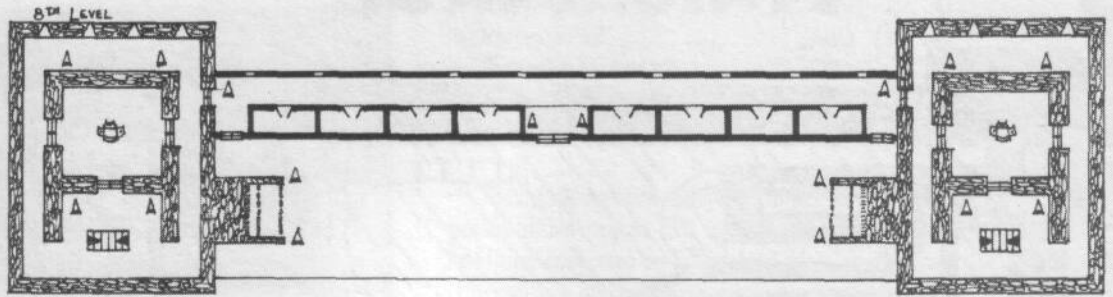


KEY

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| WINDOW | FALSE LEAD |
| DOOR/GATE | FALSE DOOR |
| SECRET DOOR | SECRET TRAP DOOR |
| STONE WALL | WAR OFFICES |
| EARTH FILL | KITCHENS |
| WELL | STABLES |
| CISTERN | BARRACKS |
| TRAINING RING | PARADE GROUNDS |
| HORSE RAMP | RETRACTABLE DRAW BRIDGE |
| STRONG WALL | PILLAR/SUPPORT |
| MURDER HOLES | PILLAR |
| STAIRS | STATUES |
| INCLINE MARKER | GARDEN |
| GUARD POST | FOOD STORAGE |
| TUNNEL | ARMORY |

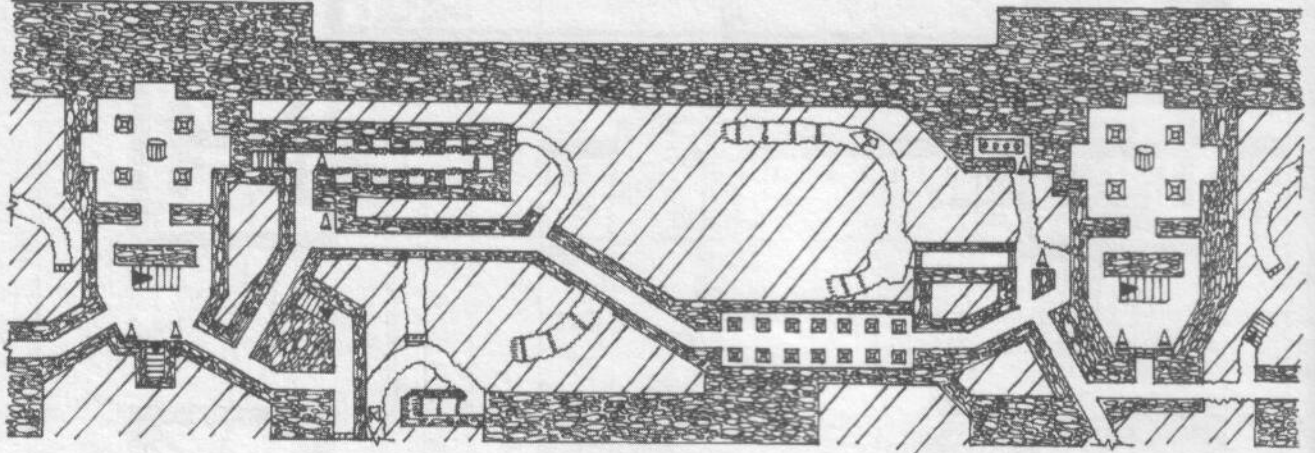
10'



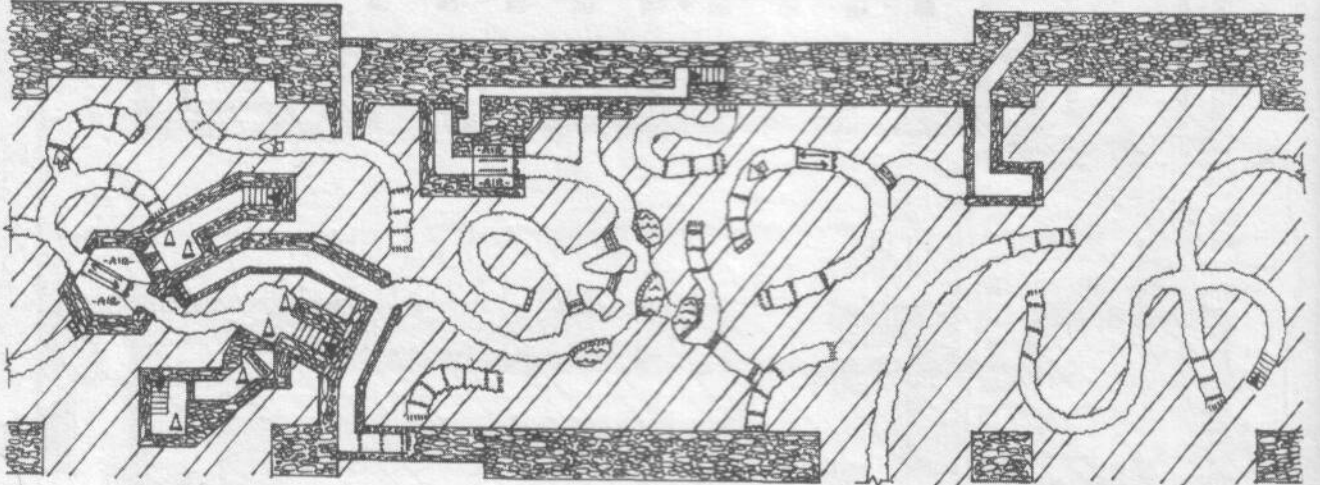


KAIU KABE

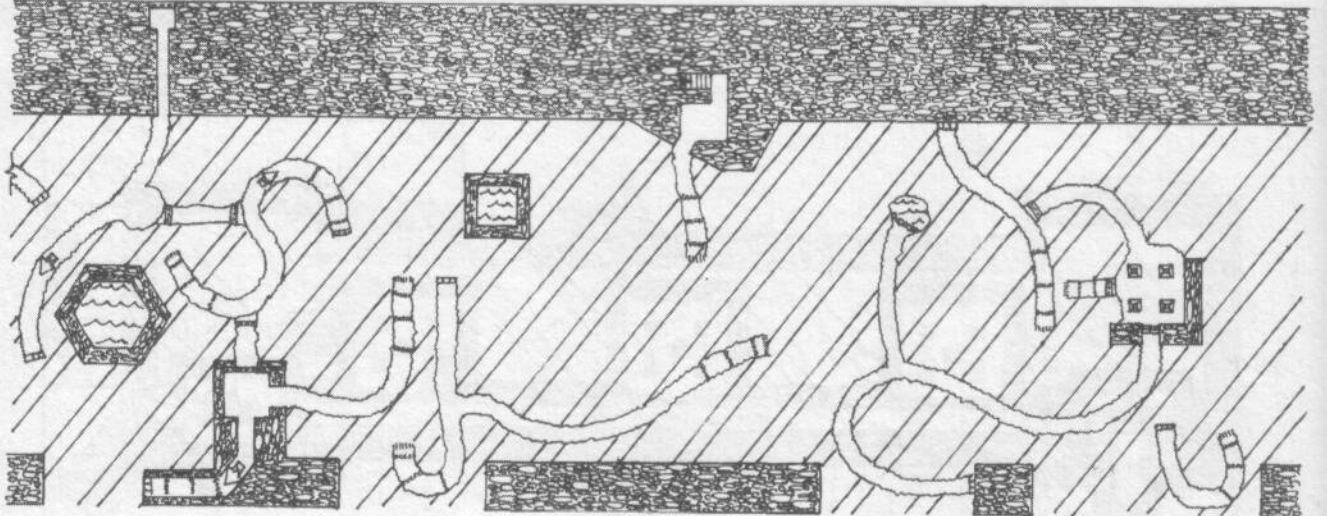
SUB LEVEL 1



SUB LEVEL 2



SUB LEVEL 3





Appendix IV: LSR CCG Crab Decks

| | | |
|---------------------|------|---|
| Sneak Attack x3 | OE | R |
| Rallying Cry x3 | OE | C |
| Refugees x2 | AoD | C |
| Superior Tactics x2 | OE | C |
| Test of Courage | TotV | R |
| The Egg of Pan Ku | OE | R |

This deck has one purpose: to get as many big personalities out as fast as possible. Most of the holdings cost zero to bring into play, so you can concentrate on bringing out your personalities while your money stacks up. With One Koku, it is possible to get Hida Amoro or Hida Yakamo out on the first or second turn. Frenzy and Evil Portents make sure you have enough force to take out provinces early. Remember that Evil Portents will kill Hida Amoro, so use them carefully.

Sneak Attack and Deadly Ground will put an end to most battles. Use Superior Tactics to move your Oni around to help the rest of the army. Since you will not have possession of the Imperial Favor, Confusion At Court and Test Of Courage will keep your units in the battle. It's worth losing one province from an attack if you can Counterattack to destroy at least one province. Remember you will get another attack phase almost immediately after, so use this to your advantage. You must watch your honor carefully and not to drop it too quickly early on. Remember to attack as soon as possible and as often as possible to keep the pressure on your opponent.

"Evil is Good!"

By Christian Vikander

STRONGHOLD

The War Fortress of the Crab

DYNASTY DECK: 34 CARDS

| | | |
|------------------------------|------|---|
| Corrupted Iron Mine x3 | SL | C |
| Hida Amoro x3 | OE | U |
| Hida Amoro (Exp.) | TotV | U |
| Hida Yakamo (Oni) x3 | OE | R |
| Hida Yakamo (Exp. Oni) | AoD | R |
| Iron Mines x3 | OE | C |
| Kuni Wastelands | FK | R |
| Kyoso no Oni x2 | OE | U |
| Merchant Caravans x3 | FK | C |
| Ogre Outlaw x3 | C&J | U |
| Oni no Akuma | OE | R |
| Oni no Ugulu x2 | TotV | C |
| Small Farms x3 | OE | C |
| The Darkest Day | AoD | U |
| The Festering Pit of Fu Leng | SL | R |
| The Return of Fu Leng | AoD | R |
| There is No Hope | AoD | C |
| Unexpected Allies | OE | U |

FATE DECK: 34 CARDS

| | | |
|------------------------|-----|---|
| Breach of Etiquette x3 | OE | U |
| Confusion at Court x2 | SL | C |
| Counterattack x3 | OE | U |
| Deadly Ground x3 | OE | C |
| Evil Portents x3 | OE | R |
| Frenzy x3 | OE | U |
| Night Battle x2 | AoD | C |
| One Koku x3 | C&J | C |

"Oni Hunter"

By Zen Faulkes

STRONGHOLD

The Great Walls of Kaiu

DYNASTY DECK: 38 CARDS

| | | |
|----------------------|-------|----|
| A Time Of Legends | Promo | * |
| Blacksmith x3 | OE | C |
| Crystal Gate x3 | TotV | C |
| Dealing With Shadows | FK | U |
| Heartbeat Drummers | SCC | C |
| Hida Yakamo (Exp.) | C&J | R |
| Hida Yakamo (Exp. 2) | TotV | F |
| Hiruma Osuno x3 | SCC | C3 |
| Hiruma Kage x3 | SL | U |
| Iron Mine x3 | OE | C |
| Jade Works x3 | OE | C |
| Kunji Sensin x3 | TotV | C |



| | | |
|--------------------------|------|---|
| Merchant Caravan x3 | FK | C |
| Morito Tokei x3 | OE | C |
| Light of The Sun Goddess | C&J | R |
| Naming the True Evil | C&J | R |
| Temple of Bishamon | SL | C |
| The Hero's Triumph | TotV | U |
| The Great Bear | C&J | R |
| Unscalable Wall | OE | C |

FATE DECK: 34 CARDS

| | | |
|-------------------------------|------|---|
| An Oni's Fury | C&J | U |
| Ancestral Sword of the Hantei | FK | R |
| Bad Karma | C&J | R |
| Courier x2 | C&J | C |
| Crystal Katana x3 | OE | C |
| For the Empire x2 | TotV | U |
| Iaijutsu Challenge x2 | OE | C |
| Iaijutsu Duel x2 | OE | C |
| Inner Fire x2 | C&J | U |
| Jade Hand | OE | R |
| Shadowlands Sickness x3 | SL | U |
| Shiryō no Hiruma | AoD | R |
| Stale Wind x2 | SL | U |
| Stall Until Sunrise x3 | AoD | C |
| Strength of Purity x3 | OE | U |
| Superior Tactics x3 | OE | C |
| Touch of Despair | SL | R |
| You Walk With Evil | C&J | R |

You may not get very far against everyone else, but boy, will this one pound on the Shadowlands decks! And if your opponent isn't playing a Shadowlands deck, there's some spells to give other folks "the taint." Some of the Hiruma get Chi bonuses against Shadowlands, so dueling features prominently. Go do the goblin stomp!

"Festung Kisada"

By Rob Vaux and David Williams

STRONGHOLD:

The Great Walls of Kaiu

DYNASTY DECK: 55 CARDS

| | | |
|-------------------------|------|----|
| Blacksmiths x3 | OE | C |
| Bridged Pass x2 | C&J | C |
| East Wall of Otsan Uchi | SCC | R1 |
| Enlistment | TotV | U |
| Fort on a Hill | OE | R |
| Hida Amoro x2 | OE | U |
| Hida Kisada | OE | R |

| | | |
|---------------------------|------|----|
| Hida O-Ushi | SL | R |
| Hida Sukune x3 | OE | C |
| Hida Unari x3 | AoD | C |
| Hida Tampako x3 | OE | C |
| Hida Tsuru | OE | U |
| Hida Yakamo | OE | R |
| Hida Yakamo (Exp.) | C&J | R |
| Inaccessible Region | AoD | U |
| Iron Mine x3 | OE | C |
| Jade Works x3 | OE | C |
| Kaiu Castle | SCC | R |
| Kaiu Suman | FK | U |
| Master Smith | OE | U |
| Moat | OE | C |
| North Wall of Otsan Ushi | SCC | R2 |
| Quarry x3 | SCC | C3 |
| Rebuilding the Kaiu Walls | TotV | U |
| Sanctified Temple | OE | C |
| South Wall of Otsan Uchi | SCC | R1 |
| The Bronze Gong of Hantei | AoD | R |
| The Gates of Hida Castle | FK | R |
| The 38th Hantei Falls | SCC | R1 |
| Unscalable Walls x3 | OE | C |
| West Wall of Otsan Uchi | SCC | R2 |
| Yasuki Taka x3 | OE | C |

FATE DECK: 33 CARDS

| | | |
|-----------------------------|------|----|
| Armor of the Shadow Warrior | C&J | R |
| Avoid Fate x3 | OE | R |
| Block Supply Lines x3 | OE | C |
| Deadly Ground x3 | OE | C |
| Defenders of the Realm x3 | SCC | C2 |
| Hida House Guard | SL | U |
| Lieutenant Sukune | SCC | R3 |
| Mantis Bushi | SL | R |
| Medium Infantry x3 | OE | C |
| Refugees x3 | AoD | C |
| Ring of Earth | JE | U |
| Ring of Void | JE | U |
| Shiro no Hida | C&J | R |
| Shiro no Kaiu | TotV | R |
| Spearmen x3 | OE | C |
| Test of Might x2 | SL | C |
| Tetsubo x2 | SL | C |

This is the god-king of turtle decks, designed for long-term multi-player games. Get those fortifications out, plus the big ugly Crabs to defend them and no-one's going to be able to touch you. Beware of one-on-one games and speed decks – they'll eat you for breakfast. But any match of three or more is going to be hard-pressed to take this one down.



Legend of the Five Rings

Name:

Clan:

Profession:

Fire

Agility:
Intelligence:

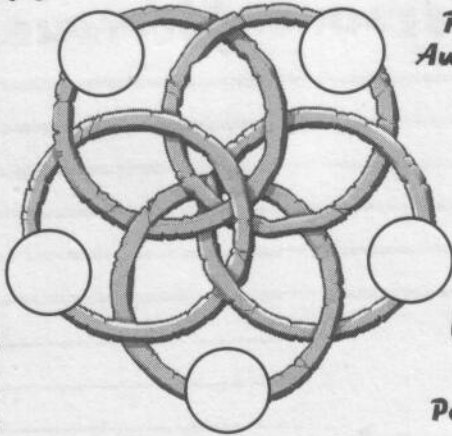
Air

Reflexes:
Awareness:

Primary Weapon

Primary Armor

TN to be Hit
(Reflexes x 5 + Armor)



Earth

Stamina:
Willpower:

Water

Strength:
Perception:

Skills

Void

Void Points Spent:

Spells

Insight:

Wounds

| | |
|--------------------------|------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -0 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -1 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -2 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -3 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | -4 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Down |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Out |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Dead |

School: Rank:

Glory:

Honor:

Experience Points:

For a thousand years, the brutal Crab Clan has guarded the borders of Rokugan from the horrors of the Shadowlands. Now, learn what drives the Emerald Empire's grim defenders and discover the tactics they use to keep their unholy foes at bay.

*The Way of the Crab*TM

- New Character Creation rules for Berserkers, Hiruma scouts, and the dreaded Kuni Witch Hunters
 - The history of the Crab Clan, including their titanic battles against the Shadowlands and the untold legend of Osano Wo
 - New Skills, Techniques and Advantages, plus unique Crab Ancestors
 - The Crab's unusual philosophy and the secrets of their ancestral lands, including the lost Hiruma Castle
 - Kaiu's Forge, The Armor of the Shadow Warrior, and Chikara, the ancestral sword of the Crab Clan
 - How to Curse like a Crab
 - And More!



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