

Corrupt Officials

A Two-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Sapphire Throne)

Round Two

by Rob Hobart

The Emerald Magistrate Akodo Torokai has been tasked with cleaning up the corrupt Scorpion city of Toshi Aitate. Assisting him may prove to be a more difficult task than defeating the Shadowlands itself. Bayushi-family PCs may not play this event!

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half hours.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

This adventure is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and should only be played by Rank 1, 2, or 3 characters. Characters of Insight Rank 4 or higher will be too powerful for the challenges presented here.

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

This adventure contains suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of

additional reward – or punishment. The following may be considered as guidelines:

- Performing an act of selfless, sacrificial loyalty to one's daimyo or clan: +1 point of Honor.
- Abiding by the tenets of bushido when one could gain an obvious advantage from breaking them: +1 point of Honor.
- Betraying or disobeying your duty, Clan, or family: lose 1-10 points of Honor and Glory, and possibly Status, depending on the severity of the failure. Gain the same amount of Infamy.
- Crying out in pain when injured: lose one point each of Honor and Glory.
- Using sneaky, underhanded, or treacherous methods when at an Honor rank higher than zero: lose 1-5 points of Honor. If caught, also gain 1-5 points of Infamy.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison). If caught, also gain the same amount of Infamy.
- Performing a socially acceptable public act of extreme courage and skill: +1 point of Glory.
- Drunk, insulting, or otherwise ill-mannered in public: lose 1-5 points of Glory. For extreme abuses, also gain an equivalent amount of Infamy.
- Playing entire adventure without doing anything of note: lose 1 point of Glory (this cannot reduce Glory Rank below Insight Rank).
- Made ronin: Status drops to zero.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank 2.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end or high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (average party Insight Rank is less than 2):

- Reduce the TNs for Skill and Trait rolls by 5.

High End Party (half or more of the characters are Rank Three):

- GM may, discretionally, increase Skill roll TNs by 5.

Adventure Summary and Background

The Scorpion Clan is currently in the throes of an internal power struggle between the Bayushi and Shosuro families. The daimyo of the Shosuro, Shosuro Hido (“the Spider”) has been steadily expanding his influence in the Empire’s criminal cartels and underworld, and various Bayush-backed cartels have opposed him. Two years ago, Bayushi Kisai, the third-highest-ranking member of the Bayushi family and the head of their crime cartels, attempted to strike at Hido by having a Scorpion-hating Emerald Magistrate assigned to Hido’s main power-base of Ryoko Owari. Hido retaliated by arranging for the Magistrate, Kakita Makito, to be audited and disgraced for corruption.

Now, Hido is striking back. For the past eight years he has been muscling into Kisai’s territory in Toshi Aitate, the city of (highly regulated) vice and corruption which lies in the southern Scorpion territories. Now he has arranged for another Emerald Magistrate, Akodo Torokai, to be assigned to Toshi Aitate to “clean up” the City of Vice. Hido knows that Kisai is heavily involved in Toshi Aitate’s criminal enterprises, so an honorable and capable magistrate like Torokai will inevitably act against him... clearing the path for Hido’s own cartels to eventually take control of the town.

The PCs became involved in this tale when they were assigned to Akodo Torokai as yoriki. In the first round of the adventure, they arrived with Torokai in the city and begin the task of cleaning up by arresting the local Scorpion Clan magistrate. Having survived this task, in Round Two they must now move against Bayushi Kisai himself, a hazardous enterprise that will also bring them into confrontation with a dangerous assassin.

Special Case: Bayushi PCs

Obviously, the Bayushi family is not about to allow any of its samurai to participate in an investigation against its interests. Therefore, Bayushi-family PCs cannot play in this adventure unless they explicitly choose to reject their family’s commands – in which case, they are made *ronin* before the adventure begins.

GM’s General Notes on Toshi Aitate, the City of Vice

The City of Vice is a den of indulgence and sin – a city of geisha houses, gambling dens, opium dens, brothels, and other such disreputable occupations. For centuries,

the Scorpion have taxed and regulated the city, turning its disgraceful businesses into useful income for their Clan. Those who visited Toshi Aitate and sampled its shameful pleasures were mostly *ronin* and wealthy merchants, mixed with the occasional furtive samurai, and the Scorpion saw no reason why their sins should not benefit the Clan.

In the last century, however, things have changed. The influx of wealth into the Empire from the gaijin trade has weakened the social order. More and more samurai have succumbed to their vices, coming to Toshi Aitate to indulge themselves out of view of the rest of the Empire. As the wealth flowing into the city has magnified tenfold, the Scorpion have found it increasingly difficult to maintain control. Over the last three generations, a powerful yakuza gang, the Broken Songbirds, has taken control of the businesses in Toshi Aitate, first extracting protection money and then skimming off profits directly. The vast profits from these activities have allowed them to bribe the magistrate and governor of Toshi Aitate, subverting the city’s original principle of “regulated vice.” It has also made both those officials and the gang’s leaders some of the richest men in the Empire.

Eight years ago, as part of his overall campaign to take control of organized crime in Rokugan, the Shosuro family daimyo Shosuro Hido ordered a gang he controlled, the Smiling Tigers, to open a chapter in Toshi Aitate, with the goal of wresting control of the city from the Broken Songbirds. The gang has enjoyed some modest success, and the conflict between it and the Songbirds has led to escalating violence and unrest throughout the city. It is this effort which prompted the city governor, Bayushi Kisai, to strike at Hido’s own power base in Ryoko Owari. And now it is this violence and disorder which Hido has used to bring Toshi Aitate to the attention of the rest of the Empire, forcing the office of the Emerald Magistrates to pay attention to the city’s far greater popularity and corruption. Akodo Torokai’s assignment to “clean up” Toshi Aitate is the result.

Shosuro Hido has manipulated this with the intention for Torokai to eliminate the Broken Songbirds and the governor, Bayushi Kisai, thereby leaving a power vacuum which Hido’s own Smiling Tigers can fill.

IMPORTANT GM’s Note on Running This Adventure

“Corrupt Officials” is set in an extremely corrupt and immoral city, and thus deals (albeit indirectly) with fairly mature subject matter such as drug addiction and

prostitution. The GM should be careful to handle such material carefully, using judgment and good taste, especially if some of the players are of younger age or are uncomfortable with such themes. Ultimately, the point of this adventure is the characters' attempt to confront and overcome the corrupt men who rule the City of Vice – the GM should keep the action focused on that goal, and keep the vices themselves in the background.

The Weather

Rokugan is suffering through an unusually hot and dry summer during this adventure. Throughout the day, the PCs must endure blazing sunlight and oppressive heat. At night, the temperature drops only slightly, and the air feels close and stifling. Fluttering fans are ubiquitous, as everyone struggles to keep themselves from overheating.

Introduction

Round Two begins a few days after the conclusion of Round One. If the PCs succeeded in Round One, the Scorpion magistrate Bayushi Honmitsu has committed suicide rather than be arrested for corruption. The PCs' superior, the Emerald Magistrate Akodo Torokai, is pleased with this victory but, at the same time, disappointed that Honmitsu died before he could be interrogated.

At the start of this adventure, Torokai invites the PCs to take an evening walk with him through the streets of Toshi Aitate.

As always, the Street of Gold is packed with evening revelers, men and women of all ages and from both the samurai and heimin castes flocking to the restaurants, noodle shops, sake houses, and the many large and colorful gambling houses and geisha houses that line the long street. Street entertainers – musicians, jesters, tricksters – weave through the crowd, performing for tips. You pass many people who are clearly drunk, or perhaps under the influence of opium or the new addiction Crimson Flower. Such persons are easy to spot, for they violate every rule of etiquette, staggering about singing, laughing, and grabbing at random passerby. Barkers call the virtues of their establishments, and hand out flyers to those who pass by, but fall briefly silent and still as you stride past them. As usual, pairs of Bayushi samurai occasionally stroll down the street, wearing round straw hats and carrying jitte which they brandish at anyone who obstructs their way. At the sight of you,

they scowl and then step aside, bowing ostentatiously.

Akodo Torokai strides briskly through the dense crowd, ignoring the uncouth spectacles which cross his path. At the far end of the Street of Gold, he halts before the huge gaudy pagoda of the Shrine of Daikoku. “Let us stop here for a time,” he suggests, and walks up the stone path under the seven torii arches to the main gates. A pair of monks in saffron robes bow politely as you enter.

Within the vast front hall of the Shrine you are greeted by a tumult of noise, for the place is a gambling hall, hundreds of visitors sitting at low wooden tables where they test their luck with Fortunes and Winds, Oichu-Kabu, and other games of chance. Smiling shaven-headed monks toss the dice and cards, and scoop gleaming coins across the polished wooden surfaces.

A monk will approach the PCs and asks what game they wish to try. Torokai leans forward and speaks to the monk in a low voice, and the holy man nods, bows, and leads the party through a back door. The sudden quiet of the inner hallway, its floor covered in woven tatami mats and its walls lined with carved and polished wooden shoji, is a startling contrast to the noisy gambling hall. The distant sounds of chanting sutras echo through the halls, and monks of differing ages pass on silent bare feet, bowing to their visitors.

The monk leads Torokai and the PCs into a private meeting room, warmly lit by several lanterns, and slides the wooden shoji closed behind them. After a moment, a young acolyte arrives with a tray containing a pot of tea and several cups.

Once they are alone and have had a chance to drink some tea, Akodo Torokai will begin the discussion. *“This shrine is the one place in Toshi Aitate where neither the Bayushi nor the gangs have any influence. I judged it the best place for us to be able to meet privately.”*

Torokai explains that he is not satisfied with merely eliminating a corrupt magistrate. *“It seems clear to me, from all that we have learned so far, that the corruption in this city extends all the way to the top: the governor, Bayushi Kisai. However, attempting to arrest a city governor is not something to be undertaken lightly, given his status. We will have to build a powerful case. And of course,”* he chuckles wryly, *“we cannot expect him to sit back and wait while we work against him. I have no doubt he will be*

attempting to undermine and obstruct us at every turn.”

The PCs can make suggestions if they wish, and Akodo Torokai will listen to them attentively. Some of the PCs may have made some useful contacts in Round One, such as seducing the governor’s son Akira or subverting the loyalty of Bayushi Shinkuji, Captain of the City Guard.

Torokai will eventually explain his intentions. ***“Due to the suicide of Bayushi Honmitsu and his wife, we do not have any evidence or testimony which would allow us to arrest and interrogate the governor. However, I believe we have uncovered a weakness in his position. There clearly seems to be a connection between the Scorpion authorities in this city and the yakuza gang known as the Broken Songbirds, whose thugs attacked us when we went to arrest Honmitsu. Therefore, I believe our best route of attack is to go after these Broken Songbirds – especially their leaders. If we dismantle the leadership of this gang, I have little doubt we will uncover strong evidence of Governor Kisai’s corruption.”***

Akodo Torokai will, again, encourage the PCs to pursue these investigations in whatever way seems best to them. However, he will draw their especial attention to the two unsolved samurai murders which Bayushi Honmitsu attempted to conceal: the deaths of the ronin woman Tomoe and the Dragon samurai Tamori Takaji. “Honmitsu undoubtedly had compelling reasons to quash these investigations.” He will encourage the PCs to focus their energies on solving those two crimes, especially since it will also serve a dual purpose: solving samurai murders will show that law and order are returning to Toshi Aitate.

Torokai intends for the PCs to carry the burden of the investigation, while he runs the ordinary day-to-day business of the magistrate’s office. ***“I am almost certainly being watched, and as the recent ambush showed, our enemies regard me as their primary target. You will be able to operate with far less interference than I will.”*** If the PCs noticed the ronin Kagekaze following Torokai in Round One, and mention this, he will regard it as further proof that he should remain prominently at the magistrate’s office while the PCs investigate.

Some of the PCs may suggest some of them should stay at the residence to guard Torokai. He will be somewhat amused by this suggestion. ***“I am a bushi, my friends, and do have some capability to defend myself... even if I look like a man who enjoys his meals too much.”***

He pats his stomach. ***“However, I do not think our enemy will be bold enough to actually attack the magistrate’s residence.”***

Once the discussion has run its course, Torokai will remind the PCs that time is of the essence – the Emerald Champion will be visiting the city within a few weeks, and if they cannot demonstrate substantive progress by then, they will be shamed (and potentially worse).

A Friendly Meeting

Once Torokai and the PCs are finished with their discussions and leave the guest room, they will be met in the hallway by the Abbot of the Shrine to Daikoku. This jolly, round-bellied man, of indeterminate age, will thank Torokai and the PCs for their efforts to bring law and order to Toshi Aitate. ***“This city is a place blessed by Daikoku, but wherever wealth is abundant, the sin of Desire cannot be far behind. Your efforts will face much opposition, but if there is any way in which the Order can assist you, do not hesitate to ask. We have resided in Toshi Aitate for many years, after all, and our knowledge is considerable.”***

The PCs can ask the monks questions now or later, as they see fit. The following is general information they can offer:

- **The gangs:** the monks know that the Broken Songbirds control most of the businesses in the city, and bribe the authorities to maintain their power and wealth. They also know that the Smiling Tigers are a new gang that arrived in the last few years.
- **The governor:** the monks are quite sure that the governor is corrupt, but he is undoubtedly more subtle about it than Bayushi Honmitsu. ***“Governor Kisai is a wise man, and doubtless understands that using the magistrate as his main contact with this city’s... less reputable elements... makes it easier to protect his own reputation.”***
- **The murders:** the monks do not know anything specific about the two samurai murders. However, the shugenja Tamori Takaji did visit the Shrine to pay his respects to the Fortune Daikoku. The monks recall sensing that he seemed distracted and un-centered. Some of the monks believe, based on his behavior, that he was afflicted with the Sin of Desire. ***“An all too common sin in this city, sadly.”***

- If the PCs ask where stolen weapons or gear might be pawned, or where they might go to track down a missing person, the monks confess to knowing little about such matters. However, they point to a street vender named “Quick” as a useful source of information on such matters.
- If the PCs are trying to track down specific gang members, such as One-Thumb Seiju or Mugen, the monks will again recommend “Quick.”

An Uncertain Meeting

As Torokai and the PCs are passing back out of the Shrine through the gambling hall, allow each PC to roll **Perception/Investigation (Notice)** at TN 20. With a success, they notice the ronin Kagekaze sitting at a gambling table, watching them with hooded eyes. If the PCs show recognition of him, he nods to them politely. If they point him out to Akodo Torokai, he observes the ronin with interest, but does not approach him.

If the PCs ask the monks about Kagekaze, they describe him as a stranger who has recently come to the city. “He seldom visits any of these businesses – in fact, I believe this is the first time he has visited the Shrine.” All of the monks who speak with Kagekaze can tell he is a dangerous man, but also comment on his humble and polite manner.

If any of the PCs decide to actually speak with Kagekaze, he will be polite, soft-spoken, and noncommittal. If they ask why he is here in Toshi Aitate, he remarks that “a wave-man goes where his work requires.” If any PC openly asks who he is working for, or whether he is targeting them or Torokai, he lets out a small sigh. “It would be... dishonorable, for me to speak about my employer.”

Part One: Starting on the Murder Cases

Regardless of what happened in Round One, the PCs should now have the basic information on the two unsolved samurai murders. They involve a ronin woman, Tomoe, who died four months ago, and a Dragon samurai, Tamori Takaji, who died last month. The basic information from the case reports is as follows:

- Tomoe was found dead in a side-street in between the House of Shining Joy and an adjacent sake house. She was discovered in the morning by the

eta cleaning refuse and trash from the streets. The report states that her clothes were in disarray and lists the cause of death as “beating.” Her name was determined from a personal chop found in her sleeve. The report does not state where she was staying or when she arrived in the city. Any PC rolling **Intelligence/Lore: Law** at TN 15 will know that this is most unusual, since normally this basic information would be sought for any murder victim of samurai rank, even a ronin.

- Tamori Takaji was found in the refuse-barrel behind the Inn of the Brass Fan, where (according to the report) he was staying. He was stabbed in the back with a blade. According to the report, he had been staying in the city for about seven weeks.
- Both bodies were initially discovered by eta, who reported their discoveries to the City Guard. The Guard, in turn, notified the Magistrate’s office. The members of the Guard who saw the bodies are listed in the reports.

There are a number of basic ways in which the PCs can gain more information on these incidents, as outline below.

What Actually Happened?

The two murders are, indeed, both connected to the oyabuns of the Broken Songbirds.

Tomoe, the ronin woman, had the misfortune to attract the lust of the oyabun Nakamura. When she rejected his advances, he beat her to death in a fury, then called on his gang thugs to dispose of the body.

Tamori Takaji’s story is more complex. He fell in love with a geisha, Okae, who works at the elite geisha house known as the Chrysanthemum. Unfortunately for him, she is the mistress of another Broken Songbirds oyabun, Gyumei. He ordered his thugs to warn off Takaji, but the shugenja responded with magical violence, burning one thug to death and severely injuring another. Gyumei could not allow such defiance of his gang to go unanswered, and ordered Takaji killed.

Both cases were quashed by Honmitsu, in exchange for bribes from the gang.

Questioning the Yoriki

Although the ronin shugenja Kodo is either dead or fled by the end of Round One, Honmitsu’s other two yoriki – Bayushi Akai and Bayushi Tamanara – should still be

alive. Akodo Torokai will have ordered them confined for their participation in Bayushi Honmitsu's corruption, with a recommendation to their lords that they commit seppuku. In the meantime, however, they are available for further questioning, should the PCs require them.

The PCs can easily learn that Akai was the investigating officer on Tomoe's murder, while Tamanara was the investigating officer for Tamori Takaji.

If the PCs speak with Akai, he will be cooperative. His spirit has been broken by his arrest. He can share the following information:

- He took the initial report on the ronin's murder from two members of the City Guard, Bayushi Koitsu and Bayushi Densetsu. They said they had identified the body as a ronin woman based on her garments and the swordsman's calluses on her hands.
- Akai did not view the body himself, although he briefly visited the alley-way where it was found to look for clues. He found nothing of interest.
- If the PCs think to ask whether the guards were acting suspiciously or concealing something, Akai will think back, frowning. "I'm not sure. They looked a little shifty-eyed, perhaps, but they often look shifty-eyed."
- He presented the initial report to Bayushi Honmitsu. The next day, Honmitsu ordered him to drop the investigation and move on to other things. If the PCs ask why he did this, or whether it was unusual, Akai shrugs. "Honmitsu-san got a visit that evening from one of the Broken Songbirds oyabuns – Nakamura, I think. I assumed there was a connection."

If the PCs speak with Tamanara, he will be somewhat less cooperative, claiming not to remember this particular case. "There are many corpses found in the streets of Toshi Aitate, samurai-sama. You expect me to remember one particular corpse from last month?" However, this is a lie, as any PC can determine by defeating his **Awareness/Deceit (Lying)** of 7k3+4 with their **Perception/Investigation (Interrogation)**. If the PCs role-play effective pressure on him (threats of torture or a dishonorable execution will work), he will "crack" and tell the truth:

- He received the report on the dead Dragon samurai from a member of the City Guard named Bayushi Gorobei. Gorobei described the body as a man in Dragon colors, with personal belongings that included a chop and scroll-satchel (from which it appeared he was a shugenja). The man died from a knife-wound to the back.
- Tamanara briefly visited the crime scene and collected the dead man's belongings from the eta who were cleaning the body. He sent the belongings back to the family a week later. He lists them, in total, as a chop, scroll-satchel with several shugenja scrolls, and a small writing kit. There was no money, from which Tamanara concluded that the motive for the crime was probably robbery.
- Tamanara did a minimal amount of research on the case before writing up his initial report, and learned that Tamori Takaji had arrived in the city about six weeks earlier. He will confess that such a long stay in the city is unusual.
- That evening, when he presented his reports to Bayushi Honmitsu, the magistrate told him not to bother further with Takaji's murder. Tamanara recalls him as saying something to the effect of, *"The man was clearly killed for his money, and the odds of finding the culprit are vanishingly low. We have better things to do with our time and resources than pursuing some hopeless case."*
- If the PCs ask whether this was an unusual attitude on Honmitsu's part, Tamanara says that it was quite common with respect to deaths among the heimin and hinin, but unusual when dealing with a samurai victim. *"Typically, Honmitsu-san wished to punish any attacks on samurai, since those could harm the city's reputation and attraction with the rest of the Empire."* He suspects the case was quashed at the request of the Broken Songbirds, but cannot testify to any proof of that.

The Crime Scenes: The Alleyway

If the PCs visit the locations where the two bodies were found, they will not find much in the way of physical evidence, since it has been many weeks – in Tomoe's case, many months – since the bodies were discovered.

The alley-way where the ronin woman's body was found is a narrow, dark, dirty passage between two large buildings. Searching the area will find no

physical clues of any kind, since the alley has been swept clean by eta innumerable times since then. However, if a shugenja PC uses the *Commune* spell, the PCs can learn some useful information. (The spell will have to be *Commune: Earth*, since there are no other spirits here which were present at the time of the murder four months ago.) Depending on what questions the PCs ask, the Earth kami can offer the following information:

- The woman's body was left here by two men. They brought it here wrapped in "woven earth" (a tatami mat).
- The spirit cannot describe the men much beyond their gender, but if the PCs ask the right questions, it can say that one of them was much shorter than the other, and "had a lot of Water" (meaning strong), and was missing a thumb. It can also say that neither man carried samurai weapons.
- The spirit can say which end of the alley-way the men arrived from (the back), but cannot otherwise say where they came from. However, a clever PC may think of asking whether these men have come here at other time. In this case, the spirit will report that they come here from time to time, leaving bodies of men and women.

The Crime Scenes: Inn of the Brass Fan

The rubbish-barrel behind the Inn of the Brass Fan is a large wooden barrel where the employees of the Inn dump refuse, trash, and garbage to be collected every morning by the city's eta. It reeks unpleasantly, and the dirt alley-way around it is also stained and foul-smelling from the garbage which is sometimes spilled here. If the PCs stay here for long, a maidservant will come out of the Inn to dump a load of trash, only to squeak and prostrate herself at the sight of samurai.

There is one physical clue which can be found here if the PCs search the alley-way thoroughly and roll **Perception/Investigation** at TN 25. With a success, the PCs find a crumpled, rotting paper fan against the wall behind the rubbish-barrel. The fan is painted with the image of a golden chrysanthemum – the symbol favored by the geisha house of the same name.

A shugenja can learn more by *Communing* with the spirits here. There are Earth spirits in the alley which can say that the dead man was brought here by a man "touched by Fire spirits." There is also a single weak Water spirit in the garbage-soaked ground which can be

evoked with three Raises for clarity. It will show an image of a large, thuggish man covered with fresh burns staggering down the alley with Tamori Takaji's body over his shoulder. He dumps the body in the barrel and staggers away again, clearly weaving somewhat from pain. A PC who rolls **Raw Perception** at TN 20 while watching this image can spot the fan falling out of the dead samurai's sleeve.

The Fan: If a shugenja *Communes* with the Earth spirit in the fan, s/he can learn that the fan used to belong to a "young woman," but she gave it to a man in grass-colored clothing with "many Fire spirits around him" (Tamori Takaji). The spirit can also describe what happened to the man, if the PCs ask and made at least one Raise for Clarity:

- Takaji was walking through an empty street late at night, when three men came up behind him and stabbed him in the back with "sharp earth." One of the three attackers had been burned by Fire spirits. They took some small Earth objects out of Takaji's sleeves and then the burned man picked him up and carried him away.
- If the PC follows up by asking whether the spirit witnessed the attacker getting burned (or a similar question, such as whether Takaji ever used the spirits to burn anyone), the spirit will say that several men approached Takaji while he was in a "place with many water spirits." They spoke loudly to Takaji, he did as well, and then he summoned fire spirits and burned two of the men. The other men fled, dragging the burned ones with them. If the PCs ask the right questions, the spirit can confirm that one of the men who was burned was the same man who participated in the later murder and dumping of the body.

The Inn Employees: The innkeeper and his servants did not witness anything directly connected to the crime. They can report that Tamori Takaji stayed at the inn for about seven weeks, and was gone almost every night, returning in the late night or early morning hours. Presumably he was visiting the various establishments on the Street of Gold.

If the PCs specifically ask about the night that Takaji died, they can learn that he went out as usual that evening, but did not return. The next thing they knew about him was when an eta found him in the rubbish-barrel.

Speaking With the Eta

The PCs may decide to seek out the eta who found and disposed of the bodies of Tomoe and Agasha Takaji. To do this, the PCs will need to go to the eta district and track down the specific eta who clean those places.

The eta district is a very different place from the rest of Toshi Aitate. Small, simple huts huddle together in the open land outside the city, surrounded by a low fence that separates them from the rice fields beyond. A crematorium stands in the center of the district, and black smoke belches from its squat stone chimney every day as the eta cremate corpses (of men and animals both) and burn refuse.

The eta are accustomed to being ignored by the city authorities and oppressed by the Broken Songbirds. Consequently, they will be dully uncooperative with the PCs. In order to find the right eta, the PCs will need to roll **Awareness/Investigation** at TN 25. (If they make some bribes, the TN is lowered by 5.) With a success, the PCs can locate the specific eta who cleaned those streets. The two are slump-shouldered men dressed in the drab, plain clothing of their caste. Despite their lowly and disgusting duties, they manage to stay moderately clean. They will be extremely submissive and craven toward the PCs, but cannot share much information.

- **Tomoe:** looked like she'd been beaten, and her clothes were torn up, "like a man had been at her." She had no property on her other than her clothing and a few zeni and a personal chop (which the eta couldn't read) in her kimono sleeves. They knew she was a ronin, though, because she had swordsman's calluses on her hands.
- If the PCs ask whether there was anything else around Tomoe of interest, they claim they saw nothing. However, this is a lie (the eta's **Awareness/Deceit** roll is 6k2). If the PCs press them on the issue, they will reluctantly, uneasily confess that they noticed one of the Scorpion guards pick up a piece of paper and stuff it up his sleeve. They didn't see the paper closely but say it resembled the flyers that many gambling houses and geisha houses hand out on the street. "We pick up hundreds of them after a busy night."
- Since Tomoe had no known family or contacts, the eta took her clothing and other property. (This is traditionally considered their right as the disposers of the dead.) They have long since sold the

clothing and spent the coins, but if the PCs demand it, they can supply the chop.

- **Tamori Takaji** was wearing a high-quality green kimono and apparently had all his personal belongings – a scroll-satchel, a small writing kit, and a personal chop. However, there was no money on the corpse.
- Takaji was killed by a stab-wound to the back. The eta describe it as being characteristic for a knife (they have seen many knife-wounds over the years).
- If the PCs specifically ask whether the eta found anything odd on or about Takaji's body, they think about it for a while, then mention that there were smears of ash and some kind of fluid, perhaps blood, on his clothing.
- Takaji's property was given to the magistrate's office – the eta don't know what happened to it after that. His ashes were sent back to his family in Dragon lands.
- If the PCs ask where stolen weapons or gear might be pawned, the eta will be reluctant to say. (They do a fair amount of such fencing themselves, after all.) However, if the PCs are persistent, they will attempt to "pass the buck" by naming a street vender called "Quick" who knows many such things.

If the PCs do acquire the **chop** from the eta, it is a small piece of wood, hand-carved with the kanji for "Tomoe." The workmanship is simple but not without elegance.

- If a shugenja PC casts *Reflections of Pan Ku* on the chop, the spell grants a vision of a highly attractive young woman carving the wood with a paring knife.
- There is a minor Earth spirit in the chop, which the PC can *Commune* with by taking a Raise for clarity. The spirit can say that Tomoe was killed inside a room by a "big older man" and that other men came, wrapped her in "woven earth" (tatami mat), and carried her to the alley-way. The spirit cannot normally explain where this was other than that it was in a building with many people, and that Tomoe usually slept in the room where she died.

It is possible that clever PCs might realize that one of the Broken Songbirds thugs was killed by Tamori Takaji. If they ask the eta whether they collected the corpse of a burned man around the same times that Takaji died, the eta confirm that they did dispose of a badly burned man, a member of the Broken Songbirds. “They brought him in a cart, said he died in a house fire.”

- They readily admit that he probably died in some other way, but they know better than to question the Broken Songbirds.
- If the PCs ask for details on who brought the body, the eta recall that one of the men who delivered it was also burned, although not as badly. He complained a lot about how much it hurt. The other men called him “Mugen.”

Quick the Street Vender

“Quick” is a small, neat, precise man who sells grilled fish from a wheeled stand on the Street of Gold. The PCs are unlikely to differentiate him from any of a hundred other such food vendors unless they learn, from the monks of Daikoku, the eta, the Bayushi guards, or the employees of the Inn of Golden Rest that he is known as a good source of information.

“Quick” is not actually a food-vender (though he makes a profit on his good-quality grilled fish). He is an information vender and a go-between who arranges meetings between interested parties.

The PCs are most likely to visit him if they are trying to track down a place which fences stolen goods (such as the ronin Tomoe’s swords). For a small fee (a bu is his standard for this level of information), “Quick” will identify the merchant shop “Simple Needs” as a place where stolen goods are often fenced.

Once they learn about “Quick,” the PCs might try to use him as a source of other information. He can share all the general information on the Broken Songbirds gang and the oyabuns of that gang. In addition, he knows the following specific information:

- If the PCs ask about Tamori Takaji, “Quick” knows that he was known to be obsessed with one of the geisha at the Chrysanthemum, visiting there almost every night. It is generally assumed “on the street” that he ran afoul of someone else who loved the same geisha.

- If the PCs ask about Tomoe, “Quick” has heard a rumor that she ran afoul of the Broken Songbirds oyabun Nakamura, but he does not have any details. However, he does know that she was in the city for only a couple of weeks, and was staying at the Inn of Golden Rest.
- If the PCs ask “Quick” about a gang-member with only one thumb, he will identify this man as One-Thumb Seiju, a member of the Broken Songbirds. When not on duty, One-Thumb can often be found in the Street of Red Petals, availing himself of the “businesses” there.
- If the PCs tell “Quick” they are looking for a gang-member named Mugen, or a gang-member who was badly burned last month, he can identify that person as Mugen, and says he works at a sake house called the Last Drop.
- If the PCs ask about the two different gangs in town, or specifically about the Smiling Tigers, he can explain that the Broken Songbirds have been running the town for many decades, while the Tigers only just arrived in the last few years. The level of violence has gone up significantly since they came to town.

The Guard Witnesses

The crime reports contain the names of the members of the City Guard who initially saw both crime scenes. Alternatively, if the PCs subverted the loyalty of the guard captain, Bayushi Shinkuji, in Round One, they can simply ask him for the information.

The guards who saw Tomoe’s body are named Bayushi Koitsu and Bayushi Densetsu. They both knew she was a ronin when they saw the body: ***“You don’t mistake a swordsman’s calluses – or a swordswoman’s, in this case.”*** If the PCs ask them if they remember anything about her, they say she was an attractive young woman, or she was before she was beaten to death.

If the PCs ask whether there was anything else of interest in the vicinity, the guards deny it, but they are lying. Any PC who rolls **Perception/Investigation (Interrogation)** and defeats their **Awareness/Deceit (Lying)** of 5k3+2 can tell they are concealing something here. (*Whispering Wind* will reveal the same, of course.) If the PCs press them on this issue, they grudgingly admit that they found a crumpled advertising paper from the House of Shining Joy (a gambling house) lying on the ground near her body.

Densetsu took it and later tossed it in the trash – *“Didn’t see any need to drag them into it, they’re a respectable house and play their taxes.”*

- If the PCs ask where stolen weapons or gear might be pawned, the guards will hem and haw, reluctant to discuss such matters. A persuasive role-play appeal and a roll of **Awareness/Etiquette (Sincerity)** at TN 20 will convince them to talk. (So will a bribe of at least 3 bu.) They identify a merchant shop called “Simple Needs” as a place where stolen goods are often fenced.

The guard who found Tamori Takaji’s body is named Bayushi Gorobei. He describes the scene much as it is in the crime report, although he takes a certain relish in adding grisly details (“the blood had soaked into the garbage in the barrel, and a swear I saw a rat licking it up, though the little thing ran off before I could stab it”). Gorobei is very much a “hard-bitten cop,” turned cynical and cruel by years of service in the City of Vice.

If the PCs ask whether Gorobei noticed anything strange or unusual about the crime scene, he thinks for a while, then shrugs. *“Well, there was something smeared on his kimono, looked like ashes and maybe grease or blood. Of course, it could have just been garbage from the barrel.”*

Tracking Tomoe at the Gates

Clever PCs may think of checking with the guards at the city gates to learn when the ronin Tomoe arrived in Toshi Aitate. This will require a **Willpower/Courtier (Bureaucracy)** roll at TN 20 to sift through the rather complex records system and its unhelpful Scorpion clerks. With a success, the PCs locate a report from over four months ago that records her arrival in the city. She listed her purpose in visiting as “looking for work” and said she would be staying at the Inn of Golden Rest. Based on this report, she was in the city for less than two weeks before she was murdered.

Part Three: Learning What Happened

Once the PCs have looked into the background and crime scenes of both cases, they should have enough information to begin secondary investigations into what actually happened to both victims. The key locations here will be the gambling house known as the House of Shining Joy, the Inn of Golden Rest, the Inn of the

Brass Fan, the merchant shop Simple Needs, and the elite geisha house known as the Chrysanthemum.

The House of Shining Joy

This is a large, bustling gambling house, one of the most successful on the Street of Gold. Like most of the gambling houses here, it is controlled by the Broken Songbirds, and PCs who look for threats will notice yakuza thugs lounging in the area.

The PCs will most likely come here if they learn that the ronin Tomoe was frequenting this place. Most of the employees of the Shining Joy do not even remember her, of course – they get hundreds of ronin through the place every month. However, if the PCs are persistent and drop a few bribes, they can roll **Awareness/Investigation** at TN 25 to locate a young dice-thrower named Koji at one of the tables who recalls the “pretty ronin girl” who played at his table a few months ago. He will be quite reluctant to speak about her further, however, darting anxious glances at the yakuza thugs who lurk in the corners.

The PCs can persuade him to speak in a number of ways. The most obvious would be a bribe (a koku will do the trick), but other methods could include implying that he has more to fear from the PCs than from the yakuza (backed up by a roll of **Willpower/Deceit: Intimidation** at TN 25), or an attractive female PC could flirt with him and gain his cooperation with a roll of **Awareness/Deceit: Seduction** at TN 20. Regardless, if the PCs gain his cooperation, he shares the following information:

- The girl was lucky and won a lot of money at Fortunes and Winds. She was drinking a lot too. She left late in the evening and headed back to her inn, the Golden Rest, to celebrate her success.
- Right after she left, one of the Broken Songbirds came over and asked her name and where she was staying. Koji saw the yakuza report back to an older man who he guessed to be one of the oyabuns. “I’ve seen him in here once in a while, wandering around, watching, checking on things.” He describes the man as a wide-waisted older fellow with a balding head, dressed in a very nice kimono, and with an “eye for the ladies, always flirting with the serving-maids.” PCs who have met the oyabun Nakamura in Round One will recognize this description.

The Inn of Golden Rest

There are a number of ways that the PCs can track Tomoe to this inn, such as through the records of the City Guard, by asking at the House of Shining Joy, or by asking the information vender “Quick” about her.

The Golden Rest is a large, low-grade inn which caters to ronin and commoners who have a modest amount of money, but are not poor. The building has two floors and offers simple, clean rooms with no special frills. As is typical at a place like this, the owner is male, but most of the employees are female – maidservants and attendants who serve meals, clean rooms, and generally scurry about performing menial tasks.

The **innkeeper**, Mateba, is a middle-aged man with a salesman’s smile. He will initially claim to know nothing about a ronin woman, explaining that “hundreds of ronin stay here every year, samurai-sama.” However, he is lying (his **Awareness/Deceit** roll is 4k2). If the PCs pressure him, he will fold pretty quickly, but claims he doesn’t really know what happened. *“She was staying here, yes, she came back drunk that night and tossing coin around like it was nothing. But after she went up to her room, that was the last time I saw her! Next thing I hear, she’s been found dead in an alleyway. Probably out carousing with a man, if I had to guess.”*

This is still not even close to the whole truth. However, in order to get further information, the PCs will have to either bribe him very generously (a minimum of four koku, to make him risk the enmity of the Broken Songbirds), or role-play an effective threat. A frightening and authentic physical threat will break him, or a subtler psychological assault backed up by a roll of **Willpower/Deceit (Intimidation)** at TN 25.

With a success, the innkeeper will confess (in a low voice and with many darting glances back and forth) that the oyabun Nakamura visited the inn that night. *“I don’t know what he did, he went upstairs and I minded my own business while his bully-boys sat in the common room and drank my sake. Later he came down, looking all flushed and frazzled, and snaps off a bunch of orders to them. They go upstairs and later they bring down a long bundle wrapped in a tatami mat. I didn’t ask anything, didn’t look, just waited until morning and then had the serving-maids clean the room.”*

- He can name the serving-maid who worked on the room as Aya. (The PCs can also locate Aya by

asking around and rolling
Awareness/Investigation at TN 15.)

- If the PCs ask about the “bully-boys,” he doesn’t know any of them by name, but he does remember that one of them was a short, muscular man and had a missing thumb on his right hand.

If the PCs locate the **maidservant Aya**, she proves to be a shy, nervous, unmemorable girl who is quite terrified by samurai yoriki. If the PCs ask her about cleaning the room the next morning, she will confess that she found blood and scraps of clothing there, that the furnishings were tossed around and one of the tatami mats was missing off the floor. If they ask about the night that the murder took place, she will confess that she passed the room and heard loud shouts and thumping sounds (she was delivering a tray of tea to another room). She knows nothing else, and did not see the yakuza removing the body from the room. She will confess that she feels sorry for the poor ronin woman, who was “so pretty, I wish the Fortunes had blessed me with a face like hers, then I could have been a geisha and live in a nice house with all the food I liked.”

If the PCs visit the **room** (the innkeeper will readily allow it if they have bribed or intimidated him into cooperation, or they can simply “pull rank” and do it without his permission), they find it to be an unremarkable place. All the traces of the crime have long since been cleaned away and the missing tatami mat replaced – the crime was four months ago, after all. However, shugenja PCs will find this a fruitful place to investigate, since there are both Earth and Air spirits which can be reached through the *Commune* spell.

Both types of spirits will say that a “large man” came into the room and spoke with a “young woman” who was here. They spoke in loud voices, and Air spirits will specifically say that both of them became angry. The man struck the woman, several times, and she died. He left the room and then three other men came in, wrapped the woman in “a piece of woven Earth, taken up from the floor” and carried her out. If the PCs ask for descriptions of the three other men, the spirits will be uninformative – the Earth spirits say they were simply “men,” and the Air spirits describe them as “angry” and “cruel.” However, if the PC Raised for clarity on this specific question, both types of spirits will recall that one of the men was missing a thumb.

The Chrysanthemum

The Chrysanthemum is the most prestigious geisha house in Toshi Aitate, a place of elegance and refinement that caters to the wealthy and sophisticated.

PCs who approach the place will be met at the door by a very polite and respectful bouncer, Takujiri, a ronin dressed in a clean and well-cut kimono and carrying his swords in polished saya (sheaths). He bows low to all who approach the place and inquires, very politely, whether they have an invitation. If the PCs proclaim their yoriki authority, he admits them into the house's large and elegant garden, and summons the madam, Shizuku.

Shizuku is a lean, middle-aged woman, her face concealed beneath layers of makeup, who caters to her customers with flattery and unctuous humility. She will use a similar approach with the PCs, praising their dedication, drawing attention to any who are exceptionally handsome or muscular, and proclaiming her eagerness to assist them. At the same time, however, she will be quite insistent that the PCs not trouble her customers, whose status and wealth will be a frequent topic of mention. She will speak with the PCs in the garden, with her customers (all of them wealthy and elegant samurai) walking by, ensuring that the PCs' actions and words will be witnessed.

If the PCs ask about Tamori Takaji, she will flutter her fan disparagingly. ***"Moh, yada, what a tiresome man! Here every day, long after it was obvious that he had no hope! There's nothing more disgusting than a man who can't face disappointment."*** Presumably the PCs will ask for more information. Shizuku will explain that Takaji was infatuated with one of her girls, Okae. ***"As if a minor samurai like him were a suitable match! Besides, she already has a patron. He simply wouldn't get the message, kept coming back and offering gifts, asking to see her..."*** She sighs theatrically, waving her fan and shaking her head. ***"Tragic, of course, what happened to him. But not surprising, for a man so foolish."***

Much of this is an act – Shizuku knows a great deal more about what happened, but has no wish to gain the enmity of her masters in the Broken Songbirds. She will offer the PCs an endlessly obsequious song-and-dance while giving them as little information as possible. She will also do her best to refuse them a meeting with Okae, insisting that she is busy entertaining clients and should not be disturbed.

The PCs cannot really directly overawe Shizuku without openly breaking the rules of Rokugani etiquette

and society – she knows this, and will exploit the rules of etiquette to avoid cooperation whenever possible. She is also quite wealthy as commoners go, and cannot be bribed. There are basically three approaches the PCs can take in dealing with her:

- Try to be subtly threatening enough to overcome her resistance. This will be a difficult balancing act. If the PCs are too subtle, she will simply ignore their implications, but if they are too blatant, she will be loudly "shocked" at their cruelty for threatening a "poor old woman," an act which will quickly draw negative attention on the PCs from her customers (and cost them significant Glory, at least a half-Rank). The best approach will be to make the indirect point that the arrival of Akodo Torokai and the PCs, and the death of Bayushi Honmitsu, heralds a shift in the power-structure of Toshi Aitate, and she would be wise to adjust her behavior accordingly. Such an approach, delivered with a **Willpower/Deceit (Intimidation)** or **Awareness/Etiquette (Sincerity)** roll at TN 25 (which skill depending on whether the PCs are trying to be menacing or merely convincing) will persuade Shizuku to be more cooperative.
- A male PC could come to the Chrysanthemum alone and pose as a customer, seeking a meeting with Okae. This will require a roll of **Awareness/Deceit (Lying)** at TN 25 to convince Shizuku that the PC really is interested in her geisha. The PC will also have to offer gifts with a value of at least 10 koku. If both these conditions are met, she will consent to arrange an evening meeting between the PC and Okae.
- Escalate to physical force. This will lead to a confrontation with the bouncer Takujiri, but he is not suicidal and will not fight if he is clearly outmatched by the PCs. Shizuku will submit to such a crude, dishonorable approach, but this sort of path should gain the PCs a Bad Reputation (one Rank of Infamy) and a number of Honor points equal to twice their current Honor Rank (minimum of 1 point).

If the PCs get Shizuku herself to cooperate, she will allow them a meeting with Okae. If the PCs ask, she will confess that Okae's patron is the Broken Songbirds oyabun Gyumei. More importantly, if the PCs specifically ask whether Gyumei knew about Tamori Takaji, she will grudgingly admit that she mentioned the "foolish samurai" to him more than once. She will not admit that this might have had anything to do with

Takaji's death. *"How am I to blame, simply because I told Gyumei-sama that a samurai was bothering me?"*

If any of the PCs manage to meet with **Okae**, they find her to be a stunningly beautiful woman of nineteen, at the peak of her career as a geisha. She fits the Rokugani ideal of gentle, modest femininity, and can captivate a man with a single sidelong glance. She speaks in a soft, breathless voice and always uses most deferential and self-effacing manner possible. She will try to avoid talking about either Tamori Takaji or her patron Gyumei, attempting instead to change the subject and speak about "more pleasant things."

A PC who is meeting Okae under the pretense of being a client will have to persuade her to open up and talk about such matters. This will require good role-play accompanied by a roll of **Awareness/Deceit (Seduction)** at TN 20 (if the PC is being deceptive) or **Awareness/Courtier (Manipulation)** at TN 20 (if the PC is simply trying to be convincing).

If the PCs convince Shizuku to let them formally interview Okae, she will still try to avoid talking about these matters, but if they are insistent, she will reluctantly speak.

Either way, Okae can share the following information:

- She will admit Tamori Takaji was one of her clients, but the mention of his name saddens her and she tries to change the subject. If the PCs bring her back to the topic, she admits that he was in love with her and was trying to convince her to run away with him. *"He wanted to buy my contract, but he couldn't afford the price that Shizuku-sama wanted, and then he became... frantic. He kept coming back over and over again, even after Shizuku-sama made it clear he wasn't welcome."*
- Her patron is Gyumei, one of the oyabuns of the Broken Songbirds. She admits that he is one of the leaders of the gang, but describes him as a "kind man" who cares for her and has promised to buy her contract and make her his concubine.
- If the PCs ask about the other gang leaders, she will make a face, and complains about Gyumei's "brother" and fellow oyabun, Nakamura. *"He is very... unpleasant, the way he looks at women. Of course he never bothered me, he would not dare anger his 'brother' Gyumei. They both came up through the ranks of the Broken*

Songbirds together, you see. Gyumei says they always look out for each other."

- She will reluctantly admit that Shizuku told Gyumei about Takaji's harassment. She will not willingly admit to knowing anything further about the crime, but this is a lie (her Awareness/Deceit roll is 6k3). If a PC presses her on this issue, and rolls **Willpower/Investigation (Interrogation)** at TN 20, she will finally break down in tears and admits Gyumei told her what happened. *"He sent some of his men to warn Tamori Takaji-san to leave me alone, but the Dragon burned them with magic, crippled poor Mugen! So then he had to send Mugen back to kill him. He didn't want to, but he couldn't let word get around that someone had defied him and killed one of his men."*

Simple Needs

The merchant's shop "Simple Needs" is located on the edge of the merchant district, less than two blocks from the Street of Gold, and is essentially the Rokugani equivalent of a pawn shop, buying and selling personal property from those who need quick money. The owner of the shop is a hunch-backed, overweight commoner man in his late forties, named Ozu.

The PCs will most likely come to this shop in an attempt to track down the ronin Tomoe's missing swords and other personal gear. Ozu will initially try to avoid discussing such matters, but he is a weak and cowardly man, and PCs can easily gain cooperation from him with either a bribe or a physical threat.

Then shop has a section of weapons and other ronin gear, and if the PCs search for a ronin's daisho set, they can locate one easily enough. There is a spot on the side of each saya (sheath) where an embossed personal mon was scraped off.

If the PCs ask Ozu where he got these swords, or simply ask whether he bought a set of ronin's swords four months ago, he will admit to purchasing the daisho set from a Broken Songbirds member known as Seiju One-Thumb. If the PCs ask where One-Thumb can be found, Ozu says the man is often found on the Street of Red Petals. "That's where he spends most of his money, from what I hear."

If the PCs demand to know why he bought a samurai's daisho set from a yakuza thug, Ozu tries to be both submissive and defensive. *"I am a merchant in the City of Vice, samurai-sama. I buy and sell whatever is available. Of course, if there had been a mon*

proving ownership of the swords, I would never have bought them.” The PCs can demand that he hand over the swords as evidence – however, if they try to buy them, he will ask 25 koku.

A shugenja who *Communes* with the swords will find spirits from all four Elements inside them, due to the way in which swords are forged. The spirits can describe (or in the case of the Water spirits, show) everything that happened to Tomoe. This will allow the PCs to both identify the murderer (the oyabun Nakamura) and Seiju One-Thumb, the man who helped dispose of the body and who sold the swords to Ozu.

Mugen the Burned

The PCs will most likely locate Mugen by asking the information-vender “Quick,” or the Smiling Tigers oyabun. Also, a PC with the proper skills can find him by asking around on the streets and rolling **Awareness/Underworld** at TN 25.

Mugen works at the Last Drop, a sake house on the Street of Gold, where he serves as a bouncer. He is a tall, lanky man, and carries a tonfa which he uses to threaten or bludgeon customers who get out of line. Mugen has clearly suffered severe burns at some point in the relatively recent past – his skin is purple-red and slick, his scalp largely hairless except for a few straggly bits here and there, and his lips are partially gone, causing him to continually show his teeth and to speak with an odd lisp.

Mugen will normally claim to know nothing at all about the Broken Songbirds, the death of Tamori Takaji, or anything else related to the case. He is essentially a loyal member of the gang and believes he is safe from any outsider samurai. He will not be openly defiant (he knows samurai sometimes lose their tempers and kill people) but he will stubbornly insist that he doesn’t know anything.

However, if the PCs have investigated thoroughly, they should enough evidence to arrest and question Mugen. The key element to make an arrest is a witness identifying Mugen as being involved in the crime – specifically, Okae the geisha. Alternatively, if the PCs suspect that Gyumei sent someone to deal with Takaji, they can ask around and learn who was Gyumei’s most favored strong-man – this can be traced to Mugen with a roll of **Awareness/Underworld** at TN 20, or **Awareness/Investigation** at TN 25.

- Magical evidence, such as the testimony of spirits, is not sufficient to make the arrest, a fact which the

PCs will recognize if they roll **Intelligence/Lore: Law** at TN 15. If the PCs choose to abuse their magical knowledge to arrest Mugen, they will lose Honor. Each PC who participates in this act will lose a number of points of Honor equal to their current Honor Rank.

If the PCs arrest Mugen and have him tortured, he will eventually “crack” and confess the truth: the Oyabun Gyumei ordered him and his friends to “warn off” the Dragon samurai from pestering his girl, Okae. *“We was going to just muscle him a little, make a few threats, show him what was what, you know? We herded him into a back-street and started to lean on him, but then all of a sudden he whips out some kind of fire spell and burns us! My anniki (gang brother) Taji died, and I was burned so bad that now all I’m good for is scaring drunk customers. How was Gyumei-sama supposed to let that go? We let some samurai do that to us, we’ll lose all our face, and the Smiling Tigers will walk all over us.”*

“Two of us slipped up on the Dragon later that night and took him down. He wasn’t so tough without his spells.”

He will confess that Gyumei ordered both the initial “warning” to Tamori Takaji and the later “hit.” He will also name the other gang member who helped him with the hit. PCs who arrest that gang thug will be able to extract a similar confession from him.

One-Thumb Seiju

If the PCs go looking for One-Thumb, they should know that he frequents the Street of Red Petals, where he patronizes several of the disreputable businesses there. If they did not learn this from any other sources, they can find out by asking around on the streets and rolling **Awareness/Underworld** at TN 25.

As with Mugen, the PCs will need eyewitnesses connecting One-Thumb to Tomoe’s murder – basically, the innkeeper at the Inn of Golden Rest, or Ozu the merchant.

If the PCs search the Street of Red Petals for One-Thumb during the evening, they can roll **Perception/Hunting** at TN 30 to locate him. If they spread some bribes around, or if they have at least two Ranks in the **Underworld** skill, the TN is 20. With a success, they locate him as he is leaving one of the brothels, weaving slightly from drink.

One-Thumb will sober up quickly enough when the PCs confront him, and will do his best to resist arrest, attempting to flee from the PCs and trying to break free if they catch him. He will not use lethal force but will not hesitate to try to trip, knock down, or disable the PCs with his fists and the tonfa he carries inside one sleeve. The PCs will have to completely restrain him or reduce him to Down in order to catch him.

Once One-Thumb is captured, he, like Mugen, will be defiantly uncooperative. He is a tough, vindictive man, a loyal “soldier” of the Broken Songbirds. However, like Mugen, he can be broken with torture. Once the PCs break him, he will confess to witnessing the crime:

“Yeah, I was at the Golden Rest. Nakamura-sama wanted that ronin girl, so we waited down in the common room while he went upstairs to have his fun. But next thing we know he calls us into the room and she’s dead, beaten to a bloody mess, and Nakamura is swearing at her corpse, saying she had no right to defy him like that. He told us to get rid of the body, so we wrapped it up in a tatami mat and hauled it out of there.” He can identify the other thugs who were present at the Golden Rest and who helped him remove the body.

Making the Arrests

In order to arrest one or both of the oyabuns, the PCs will need evidence tying them to the murders of Tomoe and Tamori Takaji.

In the case of Tomoe, the best evidence the PCs can get is the testimony of One-Thumb against Nakamura, but the combined testimony of the other witnesses at the Inn of Golden Rest will also be enough to make an arrest. For the murder of Tamori Takaji, the PCs’ only real option is to find and arrest Mugen and get him to confess to Gyumei’s involvement in the death.

Once the PCs present sufficient evidence to Akodo Torokai, he will immediately order the arrest, and commandeers a squad from the City Guard to ensure that no violence occurs. In the face of this show of force, the Broken Songbirds will not offer active resistance, and the oyabuns can be taken into custody. (They will initially claim innocence, naturally.)

The oyabuns are brutal men, but they are not accustomed to physical pain. Once they are under interrogation (torture), they will try to hold out as long as they can, but will eventually crack and confess to the murders.

Akodo Torokai will also begin questioning them about bribery and subversion of justice, including payments to the Governor. They will be somewhat more stubborn on this topic, however – they know the Governor has a plan in place to dispose of Torokai.

Part Four: Other Investigations and Alternatives

Some of the PCs may wish to pursue other routes for trying to convict the governor or the yakuza oyabuns. For example, the widespread use of opium in the city may prompt some PCs to try to make a case for drug trafficking.

Learning More About the Broken Songbirds Gang

The PCs may realize that it would probably be a good idea to learn more about the Broken Songbirds gang, especially their leadership. This can be done by asking around the city, or speaking to the monks at the Shrine of Daikoku or the oyabun Chukatsu. The monks or Chukatsu can supply all of this information if the PCs ask appropriate questions. Otherwise, the PCs will need to roll **Awareness/Underworld** at TN 20 or **Awareness/Investigation** at TN 25 to gain this information.

- The Broken Songbirds are ruled by three oyabuns (bosses). They are named Nakamura, Tadashiro, and Gyumei. All three reside in fine houses in the Merchant District.
- The oyabuns do their best to keep themselves out of the public eye, but a small amount of information on them has leaked out over the years. Tadashiro is known to be the oldest one, and is seldom seen outside of his house. Nakamura and Gyumei are “brothers” in the Songbirds organization, and came up through the ranks together.
- Nakamura is also rumored to be a man with an insatiable desire for attractive women. Gyumei does not have such a reputation, although he is rumored to keep a mistress.

Talking with the Smiling Tigers

The PCs may decide to contact the rival gang, the Smiling Tigers, for help or advice, especially if they

had the Tigers' assistance in bringing down Bayushi Honmitsu in Round One.

The Smiling Tigers oyabun, Chukatsu, will meet with the PCs readily enough if they have made previous friendly contact with him. He is a portly man in his mid-forties with thick jowls and narrow, piercing eyes. His teeth are crooked and yellow, so he speaks without opening his mouth more than absolutely necessary. A tattoo of a grinning tiger is visible on his neck, rising up from the collar of his kimono. He has a soft, low voice, makes thoughtful pauses before he speaks, and is generally smooth, polite, and respectful toward samurai. However, there is an aura of subdued menace about him, and speaking with him should be an unsettling experience.

Although Chukatsu does not have any direct evidence or proof on what happened with Tomoe and Tamori Takaji, he does know more or less what happened with both killings, and can enlighten the PCs if they ask:

- Tomoe: *"She caught Nakamura's eye, from what I hear. So I would imagine she died because she didn't return his interest. He may well have done the deed himself, then had his boys dispose of the body."*
- Tamori Takaji: *"The Dragon samurai was known to be besotted with a geisha at the Chrysanthemum. Word on the street is that it was Okae, who is the mistress to one of the Broken Songbirds bosses... Gyumei, I think. From what I heard, he tried to warn off the Dragon and got one of his boys burned for his trouble. After that, he had to act."*

If the PCs need help tracking down gang members (Mugen, One-Thumb), Chukatsu can find them within a day.

If the PCs ask him about the Governor, or about the possibility that someone may be following them, he will prove to know something on the topic. *"The word on the street is that Kisai has an assassin on retainer, ready to move if he feels threatened."* If the PCs specifically mention the ronin Kagekaze, Chukatsu will raise his eyebrows. *"You've met him, here? That's bad. Kagekaze is a... a known name in the underworld. If he comes after you, you'd best commend your souls to the ancestors."*

The Governor's Son

It is possible that a female PC may have seduced Bayushi Akira, the Governor's son, in Round One. (If they did not do so in Round One, they will not have the chance to initiate a seduction in Round Two – the Governor is now in a defensive mode and will warn his family against any sort of contact with the PCs.)

If the PC did establish a relationship with Akira, however, he will be reluctant to give it up, even after the death of the magistrate Honmitsu. If the PC continues to contact him, he will remain infatuated and will be a useful source of information. He will not actually betray his father, but he will try to "warn off" the PC from conducting further investigations. *"Father is getting very worried about this Akodo Torokai, especially after what happened to Honmitsu-san."* If the PCs are actively looking into the two murders involving the Broken Songbirds, he will be quite concerned about where this may lead. *"Father says he's done something to take care of the threat from Torokai, but he won't tell me what it is. I think he's trying to protect me if things turn out badly."*

Given the chance, Akira will try to convince the female PC to either abandon her duties to Torokai, or to sabotage the investigation so that his father can be safe. It will be up to the PC how to respond to such overtures, of course.

The Guard Captain

Bayushi Shinkuji, the Captain of the City Guard, is addicted to the new drug Crimson Flower. PCs have learned about this in Round One (or may be able to pick up on it in Round Two, if they skipped investigating him earlier). The knowledge of his addiction can be used to blackmail him and suborn his loyalty to the Governor.

Unfortunately for the PCs, Bayushi Shinkuji does not have much information on either of the samurai murders the PCs are investigating. However, he does know that the Governor has hired an assassin, a ronin named Kagekaze, to deal with Akodo Torokai if it looks like his position is in serious danger.

Part Five: Confrontation with an Assassin

If the PCs arrest at least one of the oyabuns, Governor Bayushi Kisai will become increasingly alarmed that their investigation may succeed in bringing him down. When that happens, he will call in Kagekaze and pays

the rest of the fee for the ronin to assassinate Akodo Torokai. (Up to this point, he has had Kagekaze “on retainer,” but the ronin refuses to perform a killing until his huge standing fee is paid in full.)

If the PCs do not manage to make an arrest of one of the oyabuns, the Governor will still eventually decide to dispose of Akodo Torokai, although in that case he will wait for over a week before finally giving the order.

Kagekaze is a peculiarly honorable and idiosyncratic assassin, and after many days of observing Akodo Torokai, he has decided that his target is an essentially honorable man and deserves to die by a duel rather than from a stealthy ambush or an arrow-shot. Since duels are the ultimate arbiter of justice in Rokugan, Kagekaze believes that it is only appropriate that he allow any targets who display the slightest shred of honor the chance to defend themselves properly. The ronin will approach some of the PCs at the magistrate’s office on a bright, warm morning:

A slump-shouldered man in middle age walks slowly up the path through the garden. He is a ronin, but clean and well-dressed, his hair carefully tied back in a samurai topknot. (If the PCs have met Kagemaze before, or have noticed him watching them, they recognize him now.) *He bows politely to you. “Good morning, yoriki-samas. I would like to speak with your superior, Akodo Torokai-san, regarding a matter of honor.”*

If the PCs refuse to summon Torokai, or demand more information, Kagekaze will continue to politely explain that he is here on a matter of honor and must speak directly to Akodo Torokai. His etiquette is impeccable and he never raises his voice. However, any PC who rolls **Awareness/Battle** at TN 20 can sense a powerful underlying menace from Kagekaze – he is preparing to fight his way inside if need be. Hopefully the PCs will summon Torokai to meet with him.

Once Torokai arrives, Kagekaze bows low. *“Akodo Torokai-san, I am called Kagekaze. I regret to say that I have been retained to seek your death. Therefore, I request the opportunity for a duel.”*

Akodo Torokai goes very still, visibly sizing up Kagekaze’s skills. *“May I ask who has retained your services, Kagekaze-san? And why?”*

Kagekaze replies: *“Honor does not permit me to name my client, Akodo-san. However, I can readily explain why I have been hired. My client accuses you of*

foully murdering a kinsman, Bayushi Morotai, in the Imperial Capital last year, and using your magistrate’s station to blame the crime on a certain Matsu Yabu.”

Akodo Torokai frowns. *“These accusations are false. It was Matsu Yabu who murdered Bayushi Morotai, along with many other innocent victims.”*

“I expected you to say so, Akodo-san. Shall we let the duel prove the truth of the matter?”

If any of the PCs have played the adventure “Way of Death,” they should recognize the names being bandied about here (if the players have trouble remembering, their characters can roll **Raw Intelligence** at TN 10 to recall the details).

Akodo Torokai will immediately recognize how deadly Kagekaze is, and will do his best to discourage the PCs from attacking him, even going so far as to make calming hand gestures or shake his head if some of the PCs appear to be about to attack. He will spend several minutes agonizing over what to do, which will give the PCs the opportunity to converse with Kagekaze.

The ronin is extremely polite and will listen patiently to any arguments or claims the PCs might make. However, he is unshakable in his convictions and cannot be argued out of fulfilling his contract. The key to dealing with him is to convince him that he has been hired under false pretenses (as outline below under “Convincing Kagekaze”). Aside from that, these are suggestions to how he may respond to PC arguments:

- Kagekaze will quietly insist that he has his own code of honor, his “assassin’s code,” and must follow it. If the PCs try to argue that an assassin cannot be honorable, he will point out that every Clan in Rokugan has its own interpretation of bushido, citing the examples of the Scorpion and Crab.
- If PCs suggest that it is wrong to kill for money, he will point out that all ronin do so, and that his own path is more honorable than any wave-man thug who kills on the battlefield. “During the Clan War, Toturi I was hired by the Dragon to lead their armies, was he not?” He will also point out that Clan samurai kill for their lords, and in return are cared for and rewarded. “How am I any different?”

Convincing Kagekaze

PCs who played “Way of Death” should have assisted Akodo Torokai in the investigation of Matsu Yabu, and can testify that Yabu killed Bayushi Morotai and Torokai is innocent. If the PCs speak up and testify to this, Kagekaze smiles thinly and bows to them. *“The loyalty of your yoriki does you credit, Akodo-san.”*

In order to convince Kagekaze, the PCs will have to keep pushing on this point, firmly assert the truth of their claims, and roll **Awareness/Etiquette (Sincerity)** at TN 25. With a success, Kagekaze pauses and looks thoughtful. *“There have been times, in the past, when a client has been so foolish as to employ me on false premises. It would be most... unfortunate... if this has happened again. I shall have to speak with my employer after we complete our business here.”*

If any of the PCs ask why he cannot go “speak with his employer” now, Kagekaze smiles and bows apologetically. *“I have taken payment and given my word of honor to carry out my task. I cannot go back on that now.”* If any of the PCs are Tsuruchi bounty hunters, he will nod at them: *“I am sure you can understand, since your own code is similar.”*

The Duel

Akodo Torokai recognizes the level of Kagekaze’s skill, and realizes he cannot hope to win a duel against him. However, by the same token he also recognizes that refusing the duel will almost certainly result in the deaths of both him and his yoriki. Therefore, he will ultimately choose to accept the duel. *“My friends, please ensure that my swords are returned to my family. I will trust to complete our tasks here in the city and deliver the final report to Kitsuki Jiro-sama when he arrives.”*

- If the PCs object, or suggest joining forces to fight Kagekaze, Torokai smiles and chuckles. *“I appreciate your loyalty, my friends. But if you die at my side, what becomes of our duty to the Emerald Champion? No, I must order you to live.”*

Torokai walks out onto the street and faces off against the slump-shouldered wave-man. The two samurai face off for a long moment, while the blazing summer sun beats down on them and the close, dry air seems to choke everyone’s breathing. Finally, Torokai’s hand slides around the hilt of his katana. Kagekaze does not so much move as he seems to blur, leaving a cloud of dust behind. Torokai’s sword stops halfway out of its

sheath as he topples forward, dead before he hits the ground.

Kagekaze whips the blood off his sword, sheaths it, and bows respectfully, first to the fallen Lion, then to the PCs. *“A brave man.”* If the PCs have successfully testified to Torokai’s innocence, he adds, *“I believe I shall be visiting my employer now, to ask him certain questions.”* Either way, he will depart unless the PCs try to detain him.

Fight with Kagekaze?

It is possible that the PCs may decide to disregard Akodo Torokai’s orders and fight Kagekaze, either before or after the duel. This is extremely unwise, and if they do this before the duel starts, Torokai will do his best to dissuade them. Also, Kagekaze will prioritize killing Torokai in the event of battle, thereby ensuring that his contract is fulfilled.

Kagekaze is a supremely deadly swordsman, and if a combat occurs, it is quite likely that he will wipe out the entire party (with or without Torokai’s presence). However, he is not bloodthirsty – if the PCs recognize they are overmatched and attempt to back down, he will allow them to live if they role-play a humble apology and successfully roll **Awareness/Etiquette (Sincerity)** at TN 25. Alternatively, if the PCs simply give up and run away, he will not pursue (although this sort of abject flight from a combat they initiated should cost them a few points of Honor and Glory).

In the unlikely event that the PCs actually manage to bring Kagekaze down, he will try to spend a Void point to commit suicide by falling on his sword – his code of honor will not allow him to accept a criminal’s death. If the PCs somehow manage to take him alive, he will absolutely refuse to break under torture, or to offer any sort of testimony against his patron. Unless the PCs wish to hang him for fighting an illegal duel, they will have to let him go.

Kagekaze Visits Kisai

If the PCs convinced Kagekaze that Akodo Torokai was innocent, he will go to the Governor’s residence and kill Governor Bayushi Kisai (along with several bodyguards) for hiring him under false pretenses. PCs who tag along can witness Kagekaze reaving through the Governor’s residence like an avenging wind. Of course, this may present a bit of a moral quandary for highly honorable PCs, since Kagekaze is committing multiple murders. (Failing to intervene is definitely a loss of Honor, probably two to four points, for any PC with an Honor Rank of 3.0 or higher.) Wise PCs will,

instead, remain at the magistrate's residence and wait for news.

Once the Governor is dead, Kagekaze will depart from the city of Toshi Aitate, not to be seen again in this adventure.

Conclusion

With the death of Akodo Torokai, the PCs will be left in a holding pattern, administering the magistrate's office and doing their best to keep the city running. If Governor Kisai died, the city will be without leadership, and the PCs will be the main authority remaining in place.

- If the PCs successfully arrested one or both of the Broken Songbirds oyabuns, these men will now confess to bribing the Governor. Their gang will go into a defensive crouch and will avoid making any trouble for the PCs for the remainder of the adventure.
- If Kisai died, Bayushi Akira will leave the city, swearing vengeance on the PCs. All the PCs gain Akira as a 3-point Sworn Enemy. If a female PC seduced him, he is especially deeply embittered against her, and she gains him as a Nemesis.

On the other hand, if the PCs failed to unleash Kagekaze on Governor Kisai, the Governor will do his best to sabotage and obstruct the PCs in every way. He will appoint his son Akira as the new Clan Magistrate to administer law in the city, and will order the Broken Songbirds oyabuns handed over to him for "further interrogation."

The Emerald Champion Arrives

At the end of the month, **Kitsuki Jiro** arrives to take the PCs' report. He is an arrogant, overconfident, pretentious man in his late twenties, and looks down on everyone else, including his fellow Dragon, as well as Lions and Crane – he will never miss an opportunity to sneer at those Clans or subtly insult them. (He knows that his Status protects him from the consequences, since the PCs must grit their teeth and endure his gibes.)

How Jiro will judge the PCs will depend on the outcome of the adventure up to this point:

- If Kisai died and the PCs arrested at least one of the Broken Songbirds oyabuns, Kitsuki Jiro is delighted, and declares their mission a success.

"The sacrifice of Akodo Torokai has struck a powerful blow against corruption and law-breaking." The PCs gain Glory and Jiro will arrange for one of them to be appointed as an Emerald Magistrate (see "Rewards for Completing the Adventure" for details).

- If Kisai died, but the PCs did not arrest any of the oyabuns, Kitsuki Jiro will grudgingly accept that they have made some positive accomplishments, though probably not enough to compensate for the loss of a valuable Emerald Magistrate like Akodo Torokai. The PCs still gain some Glory, but none of them get an appointment as Emerald Magistrate.
- If the Governor survived, the PCs have effectively failed, and Kitsuki Jiro condemns them as incompetents and failures. *"I had expected better from a Magistrate as well-reputed as Akodo Torokai-kun. Clearly, I was unwise to entrust this task to a man of his... limited talents. A pity. The cleansing of Toshi Aitate will have to await a magistrate of greater skill and honor."* He dismisses the PCs to return to their lords and resume their normal duties. Needless to say, this failure is severely damaging to the PCs' Honor and reputation.

The Unlikely Outcome: Torokai Lives

It is remotely possible that Torokai and the PCs managed to kill Kagekaze. In that case, if they have managed to arrest one or both of the oyabuns, they are able to "break" them and carry out large-scale arrests against the Broken Songbirds. This eventually allows them to accumulate enough evidence to arrest Governor Kisai for corruption. This is a decisive win for the PCs, and Kitsuki Jiro is downright effusive in praising them. All of the PCs gain Glory and one of them is appointed as an Emerald Magistrate.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	1 XP
Good role-playing:	+1 XP

PCs successfully arrest at least one oyabun: +1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 3 XP

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs succeed, each of them gains 8 points of Glory and 4 points of Status (ronin do not gain Status, but are paid 5 koku for successfully completing their mission). In addition, one PC, chosen randomly, is named as an Emerald Magistrate. (This can be a ronin, but cannot be a PC who is already an Emerald, Jade, or Sapphire Magistrate.)

If the PCs are condemned by Kitsuki Jiro, they each lose one full Rank (ten points) of Glory and five points of Honor.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Akodo Torokai, Lion Clan Samurai and Emerald Magistrate

FIRE 3	AIR 2
	Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in light armor)

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 2

Rank One: Ignore armor or gain a Free Raise when attacking. Gain a Free Raise on first melee attack, or against any opponent who declared a Raise against him since his last turn. Add Water to total of rolls for Damage and for Opposed Battle rolls.

Rank Two: Before rolling to attack, declares whether to increase Attack roll or Damage by Honor Rank x 2. May spend a Void Point to make an Honor Roll even if one has already been made, and loses half normal for failed Honor Rolls and Tests of Honor.

Honor/Glory/Status: 3.6/2.7/4.5

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle (Mass Combat) 1, Courtier 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 2, Hunting (Tracking) 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation (Interrogation) 2, Jiu-jutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Law 3, Medicine 1, Meditation 2, Storytelling 1, Theology (Ancestor Worship) 1.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Luck (rank one), Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)/Can't Lie.

Equipment: Kimono, traveling clothes, light armor (usually not worn), daisho set, jitte, steed (Rokugani pony), magistrate's badge.

Bayushi Kisai, Governor of Toshi Aitate

FIRE 3	AIR 3
Intelligence 4	Awareness 5
EARTH 2	WATER 2
Willpower 4	Perception 4
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 3

Rank One: When making a Contested Social Skill roll, gains one Free Raise for every 2 points of Disadvantages you know your opponent has, or one for every 4 points which the opponent has but you are unaware of. Any time you succeed in a Contested Social Skill roll, you gain a Free Raise on your next such roll against the same opponent.

Rank Two: Observe an opponent for one round, spend a Void point, and make a Contested Awareness roll to learn the opponent's lowest Trait, and rank in that Trait (Void counts as a Trait for this technique). Raises on the Awareness roll can learn additional Traits, from lowest to highest. When an opponent attempts to use a skill or technique to learn your Traits, you may spend a Void point to give false information.

Rank Three: Once per day, while having a conversation with an opponent, may make a Contested Awareness roll to learn information about the opponent. Opponent must choose to reveal either two Disadvantages, all Advantages, his three highest Traits, or the ranks and emphases of all his Skills. If the opponent chooses anything other than Disadvantages, or reveals information she already knows, he cannot re-roll 10's on Contested Social rolls against her for one full day.

Honor/Status/Glory: 0.7/6.0/3.6

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Commerce 2, Courtier (Manipulation, Political Maneuvering) 5, Deceit (Lying) 5, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Sincerity) 5, Investigation 5, Lore: Heraldry 4, Lore: History 5, Lore: Law 3, Meditation 2, Storytelling (Rhetoric) 3, Theology 3.

Mastery Abilities: Adds 5 to the total of any Contested social roll made against him.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Bayushi Honmitsu, Broken Songbirds), Social Position (city governor), Wealth/Dark Secret (corrupt), Dependent (wife).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine court dress, wakizashi, fan, 20 koku.

Bayushi Hanami, wife of Governor Kisai

FIRE 2 Intelligence 4	AIR 2
EARTH	WATER
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Bayushi Courtier 2

Rank One: When making a Contested Social Skill roll, gains one Free Raise for every 2 points of Disadvantages you know your opponent has, or one for every 4 points which the opponent has but you are unaware of. Any time you succeed in a Contested Social Skill roll, you gain a Free Raise on your next such roll against the same opponent.

Rank Two: Observe an opponent for one round, spend a Void point, and make a Contested Awareness roll to learn the opponent's lowest Trait, and rank in that Trait (Void counts as a Trait for this technique). Raises on the Awareness roll can learn additional Traits, from lowest to highest. When an opponent attempts to use a skill or technique to learn your Traits, you may spend a Void point to give false information.

Honor/Status/Glory: 0.9/3.0/3.1

Skills: Artisan (Ikebana) 2, Calligraphy 4, Commerce 3, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Deceit (Lying, Seduction) 3, Etiquette (Sincerity) 4, Investigation 2, Knives 2, Lore: Heraldry 3, Lore: History 3, Performance (Dance) 4, Performance (Music) 4, Storytelling (Poetry) 2, Theology 2.

Mastery Abilities: Adds 5 to the total of any Contested social roll made against her.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (city governor's wife), Wealth/Dark Secret (corrupt).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine court dress, tanto, fan, 10 koku.

Bayushi Akira, Eldest Son of Bayushi Kisai

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in light armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 1

Rank One: Roll additional Initiative dice equal to School Rank. Enemies cannot use Combat Reflexes to trade initiative with him. Adds +5 to his TN to be Hit against opponents with lower Initiative.

Honor/Status/Glory: 1.2/2.0/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 1, Commerce 1, Courtier (Political Maneuvering) 2, Deceit (Lying) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Forgery 1, Games 1 (Go), Iaijutsu 2, Investigation (Notice) 2, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Law 1, Meditation 1, Storytelling 2.

Mastery Abilities: Add 5 to TN of Social rolls made against him; add Defense skill ranks to TN to be Hit.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (son of the Governor)/Lechery (2 points).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor (usually not worn), daisho set, 5 koku.

Bayushi Shinkuji, Captain of the Guard for Toshi Aitate

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2 Stamina 3	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 23 (28 in light armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 3

Rank One: Roll additional Initiative dice equal to School Rank. Enemies cannot use Combat Reflexes to trade initiative with him. Adds +5 to his TN to be Hit against opponents with lower Initiative.

Rank Two: When making a Feint maneuver, gains two Free Raises instead of one. If an opponent attacks him and misses, gains a number of Free Raises equal to Air Ring for any attacks made on that opponent before their next turn.

Rank Three: Gain a Free Raise when attempting a Called Shot, Disarm, or Knockdown. During Disarm attempts, opponents roll and keep one fewer die (minimum of one). May make two additional Raises on a Disarm attempt in order to end up holding the Disarmed weapon.

Honor/Glory/Status/Infamy: 1.4/2.0/1.5/2.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Deceit (Lying) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Law 2, Lore: Toshi Aitate 2, Medicine 1, Storytelling 1, Theology 1.

Mastery Abilities: Add 5 to TN of any Social rolls made against him. Adds Defense skill to TN to be Hit.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Captain of the Guard)/Compulsion (Crimson Flower), Dark Secrets (drug addict, corrupt).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, daisho set, chop, 5 koku.

Bayushi Guards (interchangeable)

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 23 (28 in light armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 1

Rank One: Roll additional Initiative dice equal to School Rank. Enemies cannot use Combat Reflexes to trade initiative with them. Add +5 to their TN to be Hit against opponents with lower Initiative.

Honor/Status/Glory: 2.5/1.0/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 1, Courtier 2, Deceit (Lying) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation (Notice) 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 2, Spears 2, Theology 1.

Mastery Abilities: TN of any contested Social Skill roll made against them is increased by 5. Add Defense skill rank to TN to be Hit (except when incapacitated/unaware, or in Full Attack).

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, daisho set, yari, bow and 20 arrows.

Nakamura and Gyumei, Broken Songbirds Oyabun

FIRE 1 Intelligence 3	AIR 2 Awareness 3
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EARTH 2 Willpower 4	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: No school. Insight rank 2.

Honor/Glory/Status/Infamy: 0/0.5/-3/3.0

Skills: Commerce 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 3, Deceit (Lying) 4, Etiquette 3, Games (Gambling) 4, Investigation 4, Knives 2, Lore (Law) 3, Lore (Yakuza) 5, Stealth 3, Underworld 6

Mastery Abilities: TN of any contested Social Roll made against him is increased by 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Broken Songbirds gang, fellow oyabuns), Wealth/Bad Reputation (oyabun of Broken Songbirds gang), Social Disadvantage (heimin). Nakamura has Lechery (4).

Equipment: Commoner clothing, sandals, knife, fan, 4 koku.

One-Thumb Seiju, Yakuza Thug

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 1 Reflexes 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 1	

TN to be Hit: 18

School/Rank: None (Insight Rank 1)

Honor/Glory/Status/Infamy: 0/0/-3/0.5

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Games (Gambling) 1, Investigation 1, Jiu-jitsu 2, Knives 2, Staves 2, Stealth 2, Underworld 1.

Mastery Abilities: Add Defense skill ranks to TN to be Hit.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Broken Songbirds gang)/Bad Reputation (member of Broken Songbirds gang), Social Disadvantage (heimin).

Equipment: Commoner clothing, sandals, tonfa.

Takujiri, Ronin Bouncer

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 with light armor)

School/Rank: Ronin Warrior 2

Rank One: When the declared target of an attack, gains one additional rolled and kept die to attack or damage rolls against that opponent each round. (Must be declared at beginning of round, and may be switched on subsequent rounds.)

Rank Two: If wounded by an opponent, gain an Initiative bonus on the following round equal to the Wounds received. If attacking that specific opponent on that round, roll two extra dice.

Honor/Status/Glory: 1.8/na/2.8

Skills: Athletics 3, Commerce 1, Courtier 2, Deceit (Lying) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Games (Gambling) 3, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Jiu-jitsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 2, Peasant Weapons 1, Stealth 2, Storytelling 2, Underworld 2.

Mastery Abilities: Add ranks in Defense to TN to be Hit. Add 5 to TN of any Social roll made against him.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Patron (the Chrysanthemum) Quick, Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Kimono and sandals, daisho set, 1 koku in coins.

Kagekaze, Honorable Assassin

Kagekaze is clean-shaven and well-kept, and wears his hair in a traditional topknot. His kimono is of good quality, in neutral shades of light gray, dark blue, and tan. His swords are currently stored in his room, and with or without them he behaves always with great restraint and decorum, speaking in a soft voice. Physically, he appears to be in his early forties, with a thin, narrow frame and long, lean arms and legs – he gives the general impression of being somewhat worn down by the rigors of life.

Kagekaze is a civilized and educated man, and will converse pleasantly with any PCs who approach him. He has a significant amount of money, and is not looking for work – he is simply passing through here on his way elsewhere. If any of the PCs ask how he got his money, he will smile and say, “A man of my skill is always well paid.” He will carefully avoid talking much about his past or what he does for a living.

Any bushi PC who speaks with Kagekaze for more than a few moments can roll **Raw Awareness** at TN 15 to come to the hair-prickling realization that they are actually speaking with what is possibly the deadliest man they have ever encountered. Kagekaze is actually one of the half-dozen most dangerous swordsmen in the Empire. If a PC expresses fear or unease around him, he will be quietly amused, but is far too polite to draw attention to their fear.

FIRE 4 Agility 6	AIR 4 Reflexes 7
EARTH 6	WATER 5
VOID 5	

TN to be Hit: 60

School/Rank: Ronin Duelist 5/Kagekaze’s Path 3

Duelist Rank One: Adds twice Agility to the total of all Initiative rolls.

Duelist Rank Two: May choose to take no action in order to study an opponent. (This may be done while in Full Defense.) For each round spent doing this, gains an additional rolled die on all attacks made against that opponent for the remainder of the day. Each round spent Focusing in a duel is considered to count for this technique.

Duelist Rank Three: Gains an additional attack per round.

Duelist Rank Four: The benefit from Rank Two is changed: now, for each round spent studying the opponent, the duelist gains a rolled *and kept* die against that opponent for the remainder of the day.

Duelist Rank Five: Study an opponent for a number of rounds equal to their Insight Rank. The round after this is complete, may make a single attack. If the attack is successful, make an Opposed Void roll. If the target loses the roll, they are immediately reduced to Down. This technique may only be used against opponents of equal or lower Insight Rank.

Kagekaze’s Path Rank One: The Way of the Assassin. Kagekaze conforms to his own path of Honor, which involves faithfully carrying out all contracts to their completion, and always killing his targets with weapons rather than with cowardly methods such as poison or deceit. While performing a contract, he adds twice his Honor rank to the total of his Attack and Damage rolls.

Kagekaze’s Path Rank Two: One Against the World. Gains an additional attack per round. When outnumbered by five-to-one or more, gains an additional attack per round beyond that one.

Kagekaze’s Path Rank Three: Riding the Wind and Waves. Adds the total of his Air and Water Rings to his TN to be Hit at all times (unless unaware or immobilized), adds his Air Ring to the total of all his Attack rolls, and adds his Water ring the total of all his Damage rolls.

Honor/Glory/Status/Infamy: 4.1/3.0/na/2.5

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 2, Calligraphy 4, Commerce 3, Courtier 3, Deceit (Intimidation) 4, Defense 8, Etiquette 6, Games (Go) 3, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 5, Iaijutsu 8, Investigation (Interrogation, Notice) 5, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu

10, Knives 4, Kyujutsu 6, Lore: Heraldry 5, Lore: History 3, Lore: Law 2, Investigation 5, Meditation 3, Spears 3, Stealth 5, Tea Ceremony 2, Theology 4, Underworld 5.

Mastery Abilities: Add 5 to TN of any Social rolls made against him. Adds twice his Defense skill to TN to be Hit and may declare Full Defense when Initiative is rolled. When using Kenjutsu or Kyujutsu, wound penalties are reduced by Skill Rank and gains a Free Raise, and may spend an additional Void on damage with Kenjutsu. 9's explode when rolling with Kenjutsu. May Focus an additional time and may roll an additional die when focusing in an Iaijutsu duel.

Kata: Kagekaze's Wind. Prep time 20 minutes. May sacrifice all extra attacks to make one single deadly attack. If this attack hits, roll additional unkept damage dice equal to Reflexes.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bishamon's Blessing, Bland, Combat Reflexes, Higher Purpose (fulfill his assassin's creed), Quick, Strength of the Earth (rank one)/Bad Reputation (ronin assassin), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set, tanto, traveling pack, 18 koku, light armor (usually not worn), bow and 20 arrows (usually not carried).

Appendix 2: Toshi Aitate

The City of Vice is oriented almost entirely toward a single goal: extracting wealth from the guests (merchants and samurai alike) who visit. The vice industries and entertainment industries which accomplish this are almost all located on the city's main north-south road, known as the Street of Gold.

The **Street of Gold** is lined from one end to the other with businesses designed to cater to vice, weakness, and personal indulgence: mainly gambling dens and geisha houses, as well as numerous restaurants, inns, and teahouses which routinely offer sake and opium alongside their meals. Most of these businesses do not open until the late afternoon, but remain open until nearly dawn. Toshi Aitate is a city which lives at night and sleeps through much of the day – only eta and low-status commoners are out in the mornings, cleaning up from the previous day's activities and preparing for the next night.

At night, though, Toshi Aitate is a noisy, colorful, gaudy wonderland. The Street of Gold and the establishments which line it are illuminated by thousands of colored-paper lanterns. Musicians stroll up and down the street, beating drums or playing samisen, flute, or biwa. Accompanying them are a variety of other street performers – jesters, acrobats, magicians, actors in costume – performing acts or stunts to earn tips from the crowds. The noise is further intensified by the barkers stand outside each business, calling the virtues of the food, games, and women to be found within – or, more frequently, handing out small sheets of folded origami paper with their business name and attractions inscribed upon them. Many barkers have adopted a practice of folding these papers into a fan and snapping it sharply against their palm to attract attention, then thrusting the paper into the hands of any passerby who notices the noise.

Most of Toshi Aitate's business establishments attempt to distinguish themselves with bright, gaudy decorations and clever or pretentious names (such as "House of Shining Joy" or "Fortune's Blessed Sake House"). A few take the opposite approach, seeking to create an image of elegance and wealth through fine architecture and understated names such as "The Chrysanthemum" or "Iron and Silk." All of these places employ ronin as bouncers, to deal with customers who become overly rowdy or violent. Typically these ronin are also in the pay of whichever yakuza gang controls that particular business, ensuring that the yakuza can enforce their rule without interference.

The map (Map #1) shows the names of the prominent geisha houses and gambling houses on the Street of Gold, as well as the major districts and locations of the city.

Notable Geisha Houses:

The House of Shining Joy: The "low end" for geisha houses in Toshi Aitate, the women in this place are those who lack the skills or beauty to be snatched up by one of the higher-end establishments. Although still fairly high-quality compared to the women in a typical geisha house elsewhere, they are definitely the least impressive here, and the prices at the House of Shining Joy are quite low. The House thrives by catering to less-wealthy (or unlucky) visitors seeking an evening of cheap distraction.

The House of the Green Lantern: This geisha house emphasizes the exotic, offering women with unusual colors of eye, skin, or hair. Green-eyed or blue-eyed women, those whose gaijin ancestry has given them darker skin or red-tinged hair, all may be found here. Of course, they are also well-trained geisha, able to match any woman from the other houses in the arts of music, dance, or conversation.

The House of Earthly Perfection: The main geisha house owned by the Smiling Tigers gang, this establishment is not noticeably different from the others except for the large number of yakuza thugs who lurk in the area, watching for trouble from the Broken Songbirds.

The Chrysanthemum: A high-class geisha house designed to appeal to prestigious customers. The style of this place is very much "understated elegance" and it strives to insulate its customers from the noise and indignity of the crowded streets.

The House of the Peach: Although this place is nominally a traditional geisha house, in actuality it is simply a high-priced, high-quality brothel. Consequently, it does a booming business among those rich men unwilling to sully their pride or reputation by visiting the Street of Red Petals. The madam, a plump middle-aged woman named Usoko, plays along with this deception by carefully avoiding any open mention of what she is selling, instead employing euphemisms like “companionship.” Bayushi Shinkuji is a regular customer here.

Notable Gambling Houses:

Fortune’s Blessed Sake House is the largest and most successful of the half-dozen “low end” gambling houses that line the Street of Gold. It offers the usual assortment of basic games – Fortunes and Winds, even-odd, and the card game known as Oichu-Kabu – in a simple, basic, and very noisy environment, with pretty serving maids offering drinks and snacks to the patrons. Opium is readily (if semi-covertly) available, and the air is full of smoke (tobacco as well as the illegal opium).

The Jade Cup: A mid-range house that tries for a less-hectic atmosphere than Fortune’s Blessed and its imitators.

Iron and Silk is one of the two “high class” gambling houses on the Street of Gold (the other is the House of Wisdom), a two-story building with superior but understated design and architecture, and a staff well-versed in appealing to the vanity and arrogance of rich samurai and top-level merchants. Unlike all the other houses on the Street, Iron and Silk allows samurai to keep their weapons while they are inside – it would be an insult, after all, to suggest that any of their customers might lose control of themselves.

The house has a covered walkway which connects to the Chrysanthemum, allowing customers and employees to pass between the two establishments without dealing with the crowds on the Street of Gold. It is not uncommon to see gamblers at Iron and Silk enjoying music, dance, or a shiatsu massage from a geisha while they toss their dice.

The House of Wisdom and the **Gambler’s Tengoku** are the two gambling houses controlled by the Smiling Tigers, and there are always a few Tiger gang members hanging around to back up the bouncers in case the Songbirds try to cause trouble (which they do on roughly a weekly basis). Since this frequent violence has a tendency to drive away customers, these houses have compensated by making the odds more favorable to their customers, accepting a lower profit margin as the price of stealing away customers from the other gambling houses.

Thematically, the House of Wisdom attempts to cater to a higher grade clientele, with an elegant atmosphere and well-dressed employees, while Gambler’s Tengoku is a somewhat cruder, lower-class establishment with an all-female staff, designed to appeal to wealthy but crass merchants and ronin.

The Shrine of Daikoku

It should come as no surprise that Toshi Aitate is not a very pious city. Most of the shrines here are small, token obeisances to the religion that the rest of the Empire reveres so highly. There is, however, one large temple located on the Street of Gold itself: the shrine of Daikoku, Fortune of Wealth. The front half of this vast pagoda-roofed three-story temple is in fact a gambling house, run and administered by the monks of Daikoku, and all money lost by the guests here is taken as donations to the Fortune. This is the one place in town which is immune to the pressures from the two yakuza gangs – neither the Broken Songbirds nor the Smiling Tigers have the chutzpah to harass the Brotherhood of Shinsei. (At least, not yet.)

The Street of Red Petals

A side-street branching off from the Street of Gold, and lined with small two-story buildings who hang gaudy red lanterns outside their doors. These are small brothels, each typically “employing” four to six young women. Those seeking the satisfaction of crude physical desires, rather than the refined, delicate, feminine companionship of a geisha, come to this street. In most Rokugani cities, outright prostitution is illegal – it is regarded as a dangerous embracing of the Sin of Desire. Here, it is simply one more business to be taxed and regulated.

The Merchant District

Located to the east of the Street of Gold, the Merchant District has one goal: keep the Street of Gold supplied with everything it needs. Needless to say, given the enormous wealth pouring through Toshi Aitate, the merchants who live here generally thrive, and many of them are wealthy enough to themselves be customers for the Street of Gold's businesses. Many of the houses here are quite splendid, as fancy as any samurai's residence. Unlike many cities, the merchants here generally do not hire ronin to guard their warehouses or businesses (the yakuza have taught them the futility of that), but most of the wealthier ones do employ ronin as personal or household guards.

The two senior oyabun of the Broken Songbirds yakuza reside in this district, in houses just as magnificently splendid as any other rich man. If their neighbors are uneasy at having yakuza living nearby, they are careful to keep their opinions to themselves.

Residential District

Located to the west of the Street of Gold, this sprawling district is home to the hundreds of laborers, entertainers, craftsmen, and other lowly commoners who make Toshi Aitate function. Over 3,000 people live in this densely populated district, most of them packed into small one-room tenement apartments between narrow, winding streets. A scattering of low-class noodle shops and sake houses offers them a pale echo of the splendid entertainments available to their betters.

This place is also home to most of the yakuza gang members, and each of the gangs maintains a chapter-house here where the membership can gather to eat, socialize, and receive orders from their superiors. The oyabun of the Smiling Tigers lives in their chapter house here.

Eta District

In a city as busy as Toshi Aitate, the eta are kept quite busy, and there are around 300 people living in this small district. As is typical, it is located outside the walls, and is accessed via the Regrettable Gate. Eta are normally only allowed into the city during the morning, when they dispose of the rubbish, waste, and occasional anonymous corpse left behind by the night's revelry. When an eta is needed at other times (typically when someone dies and the corpse must be dealt with), the city guards will go to the Regrettable Gate and summon them, escorting them to and from the appropriate location.

Governor's Residence

In contrast to many cities, the governor of Toshi Aitate does not reside in a palace or fortified castle. Instead, his home is a large two-story samurai residence, surrounded on three sides by a magnificent walled garden. A twelve-foot wooden exterior wall shelters the garden and residence alike from the view of the passing crowds. The residence is always protected by at least eight bushi from the city guard, and during tense or uncertain times this garrison may be doubled or tripled.

Noble District

A relatively small area located southeast of the Governor's Residence. The fine houses here are home to the small number of actual samurai who live in Toshi Aitate (as opposed to the city garrison, who reside in their barracks). Bayushi Shinkuji lives in this district.

Magistrate's Residence

Located at the north end of the Street of Gold, opposite from the Governor's Residence. A large, fine-quality single-story samurai residence with a small but excellent walled garden in front. The magistrate Bayushi Honmitsu and his family lived in this house, along with the magistrate's yoriki, but after the PCs arrive they relocate to the governor's mansion.

The Walls and Defenses

Like most Rokugani cities, Toshi Aitate is walled, but the walls are more of a token gesture than a true military fortification. They stand about twelve feet high and are only four feet thick. There is a walkway atop the wall, but it is usually left unpatrolled, and anyone who really wants to get in or out of the city unobserved can do so easily enough.

There are six towers located along the length of the walls – three each on the east and west sides of the city. In addition, each of the two main gates is bracketed with heavy fortified towers. There are three total gates into the city: the Gate of Auspicious Luck (north), the Gate of Superior Fortune (south), and the Regrettable Gate (access to the eta district).

Map #1: Toshi Aitate

