

# Blood of Midnight

**A One-Round Multi-Rank Adventure for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald Empire)**

**Part Six of *Shadow's Path***

**by Rob Hobart**

**A ronin's plea takes you to the lands of the Crane. A subtle evil is overwhelming the purity of the Emperor's Left Hand. Can you preserve any hope for the future of Doji's children?**

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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 Multi-Rank adventure. This means that it has two sets of statistics for NPCs, one for low-end parties (Ranks 1, 2, and 3) and one for mid/high-end parties (Ranks 2 through 5).

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.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

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, depending on the severity of the failure.
- 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.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison).
- 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.
- Made ronin: Glory drops to zero.

## Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Multi-Rank adventure, and contains two sets of statistics for the villains: one for Low-End parties (School ranks 1-3, average 2) and one for High-End parties (School ranks 2-5, average 3.5).

The Skill and Trait roll TNs listed in the module are for high-end parties. For a low-end party, reduce the TNs by 5.

The GM may need to make additional "tweaks" for parties which lie at an extreme end of the power curve. Suggested tweaks are listed below:

### Low End Party (most/all characters Rank One):

- Goju Hoseki will not directly engage the PCs in combat, regardless of circumstances.
- If the PCs attract a pack of Goju Assassins in the city, they will number three less than the total number of PCs.

**High End Party** (average party Insight Rank is Four or higher):

- Goju Hoseki will actively fight the PCs during any attempt to rescue Doji Ameiko, day or night.
- Goju Hoseki has the ability to hurl a Shadow-Bolt once per day. Those struck by the bolt must roll **Simple Void** at TN 20. Success means they take 2k2 damage. Failure means they take 4k3 damage and automatically gain a Shadow Point.
- If the PCs attract a pack of Goju Assassins, it will number only one less than the number of PCs.

## Adventure Summary and Background

Doji Hoturi, the Champion of the Crane Clan, has resumed his old romance with Bayushi Kachiko, the new-widowed mother of the young Scorpion champion. Hoturi, who has never abandoned his youthful passion for Kachiko, could not help but succumb when she approached him at her husband's funeral. He willingly betrayed his oaths to his wife Ameiko, a fox-maiden, even though she is with child.

Unfortunately, the "Bayushi Kachiko" who has seduced Hoturi isn't really Kachiko at all: she's Shosuro, the Mistress of Deception, one of the oldest and most powerful servants of the Living Darkness. Her silken touch has opened Hoturi's soul to the mark of darkness.

Darkness spreads in the lands of the Crane. Hoturi, acting on Shosuro's urging, has hired the army of his old friend Toturi to fight in the Phoenix lands. Toturi is deeply Tainted, and Hoturi is now Tainted as well. The Crane Champion has imprisoned his fox-wife bride, and allows the corruption of the Shadow to spread among his people, turning Kyuden Doji into a citadel of darkness and terror. One of the Shadow's more powerful servants, Goju Hoseki, has moved into Kyuden Doji to assist in these foul plans.

All is not lost, however. A former Crane bushi, Kakita Shingen, has spent the last year questing for Toturi, convinced that he can redeem the fallen Akodo. Shingen knows that Toturi possesses one of the legendary Bloodswords, and hopes against hope that he can reveal the truth to Toturi and redeem him. His journey has taken him to the Crane lands, where Toturi went to hire on for the Dragon-Phoenix war. There, Shingen has learned some of the truth of what has

happened to Hoturi and his castle. Desperate, he sets out for help... and with luck, finds the PCs.

**NOTE on RUNNING THIS ADVENTURE:** Prior to beginning the adventure, it should be made clear that none of the PCs have visited Kyuden Doji in the more than two months since the end of winter. (Most likely they were surveying the Phoenix lands in the "Shadow of an Iron Citadel" adventure arc.) In particular, if any of the PCs are Cranes who would normally dwell in Kyuden Doji, they have not been home since spring.

## Introduction

The PCs are in Shiro Sano Kakita, the seat of the Kakita family, for the Topaz Championship, an annual combination tournament/gempukku ritual to which only the finest young samurai of the Empire are invited. The Emperor himself traditionally attends the event to crown the winner "Topaz Champion," and this year is no exception. Hantei the 39<sup>th</sup> himself is in attendance, accompanied by the Emerald Champion and the Imperial Chancellor. Consequently, almost all of the Clans have sent representatives to the tournament – even the Unicorn and Crab, embroiled in civil war, have managed to send one or two token attendees.

*The Son of Heaven sits quietly beneath an awning of golden silk, watching the competitions of the Topaz Championship with regal dignity. Standing stiffly behind him to his right is the Emerald Champion, Otaku Taro, hands clasped tightly before his waist. To the left, the Imperial Chancellor, Kakita Torikage, sits alongside Kakita Kaiten, the fierce young daimyo of the Kakita family. Even from a distance, the tension between Kaiten and the Emerald Champion is palpable.*

*The audience prefers to turn its attention to more pleasant sights. The foot-race, one of the more spectacular portions of the Topaz Championship, is well underway, and polite applause ripples through the crowd in response to the impressive speed and agility of the competitors.*

The PCs are here as guests, not competitors – the Topaz Championship is open only to those who have not yet completed their *gempukku*. It is possible that some PCs, notably members of the Kakita family, may have been lucky enough to compete in the Topaz Championship when they were younger. The competition lasts three days.

## Fellow Guests

The PCs are part of a large audience of spectators, mostly courtiers and members of the Crane Clan, but also including bushi (bodyguards and escorts, and duelists trying to scope the new prospects) and the occasional shugenja. The GM should feel free to improvise any NPCs who seem appropriate, but the following individuals should definitely be present:

**Otomo Hiroshi:** Hiroshi is a spare, slim man with a small goatee and a traditional samurai topknot. He is handsome in a rather plain way. Hiroshi is an Imperial historian, well-acquainted with current events in the Empire, and will happily gossip with anyone on almost any topic (although he shies away from discussing the horrors of the Shadowlands).

**Kuni Nakiro:** A young scholarly shugenja from the Crab Clan, and a contestant in last year's Jade Championship. Nakiro spent two years studying in the Phoenix lands, enabling him to miss much of the Crab civil war, and has since become a diplomat on behalf of his lord, Kuni Yori. Courteous and efficient, Nakiro is in many ways the opposite of the "Kuni cliché," but is completely loyal to Kuni Yori and Hida Kisada, and will defend them strongly against the "slanders" made against them by Hida Sukune's rebel faction. He will show a quiet satisfaction in the rumors of the rebels' recent defeat.

**Kakita Geinin:** This man is an elegant Crane with long white hair, a handsome face, and a smooth, cultured voice. He is a famed Crane poet and playwright (Glory 3.8). Geinin is always splendidly and perfectly attired, moves with precision and grace, and is constantly accompanied by a servant with a writing table and supplies, in case inspiration strikes. Geinin comes across as charming and talkative, if a bit arrogant, and is especially friendly to PCs from other "civilized" Clans like the Phoenix and Scorpion. He will flirt subtly with any attractive female PCs (more for entertainment than out of any serious intentions).

**Kakita (Goju) Naiya:** A beautiful and athletic Crane samurai-ko, her white hair tied back in a maiden's foxtail. Naiya is actually a Goju, devoured by the Shadow, and is here to help the Shadow to spread chaos and distrust throughout the Empire. She will use her courtly skills to the best effect for this mission. If any PCs speak to her later about (Kakita) Shingen's reports of trouble in Kyuden Doji, she will dismiss Shingen as a "grubby ronin with delusions of grandeur, who should never have been allowed to sully the Crane Clan."

**Ikoma Katsu, Lion bard and historian:** This representative of the Lion is a short, flat-faced man with large, clumsy-looking hands, his hair shaved and tied into a strict samurai topknot. He speaks slowly and carefully, with great dignity and weight, and always cites the examples of great samurai and famous battles to back up any assertion he might make.

**Shosuro Taberu:** The so-called "Poison Crane," a quiet and self-effacing courtier of fearsome skill and slavish loyalty. Taberu has been suborned by Shosuro, and like Kakita Naiya will do his best to fan the flames of distrust, bitterness, and war between the other Clans.

**Kitsuki Yasu:** The daimyo of the Kitsuki family is a tall, thin, imposing man in his mid-thirties, with a head shaved bald and decorated with elaborate tattoos. He is harshly judgmental and has a particular hatred of the Scorpion Clan. Yasu has an unnerving habit of staring directly into others' eyes as he speaks, as though trying to bore through into their soul. He takes a dim view of anyone of questionable honor, and is also quite disgusted with Mirumoto Yukihera, the current leader of his own Clan's Mirumoto family.

## Conversational Topics

The most prevalent topic will be the relatively disappointing selection of contestants in this year's Topaz Championship. Even the Crane "class" is not as impressive as usual, and there is gossip that the most promising youngsters have been recruited by the Daidoji School to rebuild the Clan's armies.

- The Dragon-Phoenix war – now increasingly called the "Northern War" as it draws in more and more Clans – is the other favored topic. The Dragon have advanced toward the Shrine of Jurojin, and the Phoenix and their Lion allies are resisting. Word has spread that Toturi the Black's ronin army has recently joined the fighting on the side of the Phoenix.
- It is rumored that Miya Yumi, the new daimyo of the Miya family, has gone north in hope of negotiating a peace. Some courtiers, however, will raise questions as to whether she can still follow the path of peace while being married to Lord Yoritomo of the Mantis, among the most warlike daimyo in the Empire.
- There is also much talk about the unexpected Lion-Scorpion war. Scorpion armies have crossed the border between the Clans and besieged the city of

Kenson Gakka. They have also tried to force Beiden Pass, but so far have failed to break the Lion defenses there.

- Fighting has likewise resumed in the Crab civil war, and the early rumors (seeping out through the Mantis-occupied Yasuki territories) are that the “rebels” have suffered a grievous defeat.
- There is a scandalous rumor that the Naga “snake-men” who were imprisoned in the Imperial dungeons last year have somehow managed to escape. Nobody is sure how they did it (or whether they really escaped at all).
- If any PC mentions the Emperor, they will soon hear gossip that one of the Emperor’s concubines is with child. This raises questions about the status of the Empress Kaede, and many courtiers will make quiet note of Kaede’s absence from the Imperial traveling party.
- The GM can also add other, more diverse or personal, gossip as seems appropriate.

## Scene One: Shingen Appears

As the first day’s competitions conclude, all the guests and contestants are welcomed into Shiro Sano Kakita for a splendid evening meal, after which they circulate, gossip, flirt, and generally enjoy the evening.

During this time, the PCs will become aware of a minor commotion from the castle’s front hall. A young ronin in Crane colors is pleading with the guard and servants in the hallway, desperately asking for an audience with Kakita Kaiten. “Please,” he begs, “it is of vital importance to the Crane Clan!” The guard is unyielding: “Lord Kakita Kaiten-sama does not have time to speak with a filthy wave-man.” Dismissed, the ronin retreats with slumping shoulders.

The ronin is Shingen, formerly of the Kakita family. If any PCs have previously met him, either in the module *Stain Upon the Soul* or in play (he is a former Player Character), he will spot them and immediately approach, hoping to win their support. He will also approach any ronin, Crane Clan, or Scorpion Clan PCs (his wife is a Scorpion). Otherwise, it will be up to the PCs to show interest in him.

**(Kakita) Shingen** is a young Crane on a *musha shugyo* (warrior’s pilgrimage) – although he still wears

Crane colors, his clothing is tattered and filthy with hard travel, and he wears no mon. He also shows scars, rough skin, and other signs of a tough childhood – he was born a ronin and was adopted into the Kakita family after several heroic deeds.

Normally Shingen is a friendly and honorable young man, but he now looks haunted and worn, with dark circles under his eyes and a shaky, fidgety manner. He starts at loud noises and keeps darting his eyes at dark corners and shadows.

### Speaking with Shingen

If the PCs speak with Shingen, he will try to explain himself as best he can, although his nervous mannerisms will keep interfering:

*“I have come from Kyuden Doji... well, I should explain, yes. You see, I have spent the last year and more on a quest to seek out the fallen Akodo, the one they call Toturi the Black. There is... something I wanted to tell him. At the end of last winter, I learned he had moved his ronin army to Kyuden Doji in the heart of Crane lands, perhaps anticipating a resumption of the war with the Lion. I set out for there, hoping to finally speak with him. But...”*

He shivers and hugs himself, looking around before continuing. *“When I arrived, Toturi’s army had just left, taking ship for the Phoenix lands. But they left something behind them. A darkness which lay upon Kyuden Doji, turning its beauty to shadows and madness. I saw things there I never imagined to witness outside the Shadowlands.”* (If no Crab PCs are present, he will instead say, “the lands of the Crab.”) *“Samurai killing innocent peasants, and corrupted things walking the streets at night.”* He shudders violently. *“I fear Lord Doji Hoturi has fallen to some terrible evil, something brought to him by Toturi’s followers.”*

If the PCs seem in any way sympathetic or intrigued by Shingen’s story, he will speak with them further, forcing himself to recall more details of his experience.

PCs who are curious about Shingen’s truthfulness can attempt a **Contested** roll of their **Investigation/Awareness** or **Ichu Miru/Awareness** against his **Sincerity/Willpower**.

- Shingen describes Kyuden Doji as “lying under a shadow of night” and claims he never saw the Sun while he was there. He says the local commoners lived in terror and hide inside their dwellings at night.

- He claims some sort of madness had overtaken the Crane bushi in the city. “Most of them seemed not to notice what was happening, as though they were asleep even as they walked and spoke.” Others seemed to have been consumed by the darkness, and engaged in acts of cruelty and malice. “I saw bushi cut down or mutilate innocent peasants, for no offense at all. Any who questioned their deeds were struck down in turn.”
- Shingen tried to visit the castle itself and speak with someone in authority, but he was denied access. “Instead, the bushi who stood guard at the gates tried to take me prisoner. I barely escaped.” He will not explain the details of his escape, except to remark that “I was not always of the Crane Clan, and I still retain some memories of a... less honorable past.”
- Later, after escaping arrest, Shingen managed to speak briefly with some of the servants from the castle, while they were out performing errands. He learned that Doji Hoturi’s wife, Doji Ameiko, is a prisoner within Kyuden Doji’s palace complex.
- If any of the PCs are Crane Clan, Imperial Family, or Emerald/Jade Magistrates, he will also say something else: “The servants confessed to me, samurai-samas, that lady Doji-sama is with child. I shudder to think of what will become of her and her child in that place.”

Shingen finally managed to slip out of the city after three days in hiding. He noticed that Kyuden Doji’s bushi were patrolling aggressively around the city and intercepting anyone who approached. He also noticed that ships were still sailing in and out of the harbor, although he doubted any of their crews came far ashore.

Shingen does not know what can be done about this catastrophe. Nobody here at Shiro Sano Kakita believes his story, and he has been unable to gain an audience with Kakita Kaiten. He fears that it may already be too late to save Doji Hoturi or his wife from whatever awful fate has befallen the city.

## What Now?

At this point, it is up to the PCs what to do next. The “logical” approach, in the context of Rokugani society, is to try to warn higher authorities that something is perhaps dreadfully wrong at Kyuden Doji. Unfortunately, the only evidence the PCs have is the

testimony of a Crane *ronin*. Although no other guests at Shiro Sano Kakita have been to Kyuden Doji since spring, they will be thoroughly unwilling to listen to wild stories of darkness and evil in the seat of the Crane Clan. Most NPCs will dismiss such ideas out of hand, and make fun of the PCs behind their backs for believing such a bizarre story.

The only NPC of significant rank who will listen to the PCs is Kitsuki Yasu, the harsh, judgmental daimyo of the Kitsuki family. Yasu is well aware that there is some kind of dark force threatening the world (among other things, he has Kitsuki Kaagi’s journal), and will quickly make the connection to Shingen’s story. However, he is well aware that as the daimyo of the Kitsuki, he cannot involve himself in the internal affairs of the Crane Clan. (He will, however, subtly encourage the PCs to look into the matter further, and will even give them travel papers if they ask for them.)

Ultimately, it will be up to the PCs to either investigate themselves, or to give up and end the adventure.

## Seeking a Meeting with Kakita Kaiten

It is possible that some PCs may be of sufficient rank and influence that they might try to act as intermediaries for Shingen, seeking an audience with Kakita Kaiten to warn him about the problems at Kyuden Doji.

In order for a PC to succeed in such an effort, they must possess one or more of the following:

- Glory rank 5.0 or higher.
- Be willing to “cash in” (erase) a Major Ally (or two Minor Allies and/or Favors) with the Crane Clan.
- Ear of the Emperor.

If the PCs do meet with Kaiten, it will be unproductive. The proud young daimyo will listen politely but will absolutely not believe that anything could be wrong with Kyuden Doji. He hero-worships Doji Hoturi and will be angry if he feels the PCs are slandering his Clan Champion. He is also intrinsically hostile to Unicorn (due to death of his Sensei, Kakita Toshimoko, at the hands of Otaku Taro) – although he is aware that his Clan is currently allied with the Unicorn and will therefore try to avoid any open incidents.

## Does Shingen Go Along?

The PCs may suggest that (Kakita) Shingen accompany them back to Kyuden Doji. He will be extremely reluctant to do this – his experience there has broken him, destroying his former mental equilibrium, and now that someone has stepped forward to deal with the problem he wants nothing more than to go home to his wife, abandon his *musha shugyo*, and live out his life quietly.

In order to convince Shingen to accompany the party, the PCs will have to make an eloquent and effective role-play appeal, focusing on duty, courage, and the dire times confronting the Empire. If the GM judges the appeal sufficiently eloquent, the PC who speaks can make a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll against Shingen's **Willpower x 5** (15).

## Travel Papers?

If the PCs do decide to investigate conditions in Kyuden Doji, they will need travel papers (their own papers only authorize them to attend the Topaz Championship). Obviously, this will not be an issue if some of the PCs are Emerald or Jade Magistrates (who can issue travel papers whenever they please). If not, however, the PCs will have several options:

- PCs can “cash in” (erase) a Favor or Ally with the Crane Clan to acquire travel papers.
- PCs who have Otaku Taro as an Ally can “cash in” that Advantage to appeal directly to him with their story. The Emerald Champion will listen gravely and will quickly issue travel papers for the PCs to investigate the situation in Kyuden Doji.
- PCs with certs that provide “useful items” or “useful information” once per adventure can use those abilities to acquire travel papers.
- PCs can appeal to a daimyo or other authority who is present at the Topaz Championship. This will require skillful and effective role-play, particularly in the case of Kakita Kaiten. Besides Kaiten, the only NPC here who can issue travel papers is Kitsuki Yasu (who will do so willingly if the PCs tell him Shingen's full story).

Some PCs may decide to risk traveling without papers. This will result in their arrest by magistrates, either of the Crane Clan (if they go overland) or the Imperial City (if they try to take a ship from the capital). Such

PCs will eventually be released, but they will be out of the adventure.

## **Scene Two: Journey to Kyuden Doji**

For the rest of the adventure, it is assumed that the PCs have decided to investigate Shingen's story.

In order to reach Kyuden Doji, the PCs have two options: they can go overland south through Crane lands, or they can go east to the Imperial capital and take a ship. (Kyuden Doji is a coastal castle and home to a trade port.)

## Going by Land

From Shiro Sano Kakita, the PCs' route will take them five days south to the major castle of Kosaten Shiro, located in the shadow of the white-topped peaks of the Spine of the World Mountains. The trip is uneventful, although the PCs are stopped several times by Doji Magistrates – the Crane Clan is still struggling to restore order in its lands after the ruinous war of the last year. Kosaten Shiro itself is a beehive of activity – the castle is the center of the Crane Clan's military strength, and with war still engulfing the more northerly Clans the Crane are hurriedly trying to rebuild their forces.

From Kosaten Shiro, a road winds southeast along the edge of the mountains, taking three days to reach Shiro Daidoji, the northern seat of the Daidoji family. It is a modest-sized but extremely formidable fortress, and the PCs will not be allowed admittance unless they are of the Crane Clan – otherwise they are given rooms in a nearby Inn.

- Nobody at either of these castles has heard of anything bad happening in Kyuden Doji, although if any PCs are Crane or Phoenix, they can get confirmation that Toturi's Army passed through here at the end of winter, heading for the Doji castle.
- If the PCs ask the right questions, and roll **Investigation/Awareness** at TN 15, they can determine that there has been very little traffic FROM Kyuden Doji to these castles in the last five weeks – mostly just couriers carrying letters.
- Nobody here will be willing to believe any stories from Shingen or the PCs. Shingen himself never told his story here – as a former member of the

Kakita, he headed straight north to Shiro Sano Kakita.

From Shiro Daidoji, it is three more days of travel to Kyuden Doji. The trip will be uneventful until the afternoon of the third day (see “Arrival by Land” in Scene Three below).

## Going by Sea

The PCs may decide to take a ship instead, either because it is faster or because Shingen mentions that the port at Kyuden Doji was still in operation (suggesting it might be easier to approach the city by that route).

It is three days from Shiro Sano Kakita to the Imperial capital, Otosan Uchi, which is the nearest major port. There are numerous Crane and Mantis kobunes plying the coasts of Rokugan, and so long as the PCs have travel papers they will be able to hire passage on one of them easily enough. Most merchant captains will ask 1 gold koku per passenger, although PCs willing to engage in grubby, dishonorable merchant behavior can bargain this down to 3 silver bu per passenger. PCs who are unwilling to pay can resort to other methods, such as cashing in Allies or Favors, or simply “pulling rank” (which will work especially well for Magistrate or Imperial Family PCs).

It will take two days of sailing to reach Kyuden Doji. The trip will be uneventful, and the spring weather is clear and pleasant most of the way. See “Arrival by Sea” in Scene Three for details of what happens at Kyuden Doji.

## The Dream

If any of the PCs have strong connections to the spirit realm, those PCs will receive a dream warning/plea from Doji Ameiko. This will occur on the last night before the PCs reach Kyuden Doji. PCs who are to receive the dream must meet the following criteria:

- PCs with a Kitsune Taboo, or with the ancestors Osusuki and Akomachi.
- Half-blooded Kitsu, true Sodan-Senzo, and PCs with the ancestor Kitsu.
- Ise Zumi PCs (and other PCs with Dragon Clan tattoos) who have a Void of 4 or more.
- Shugenja PCs with a Void of 5 or more.
- PCs with Shintao skill of at least 5 and Void of at least 4.

The following restrictions also apply:

- No PC with Taint higher than a half-Rank, or with 3 or more Shadow Points, will receive the dream.
- No PC with an Honor rank of zero will receive the dream.
- No PC with the cert for the “Curse of the Kitsune” (from the adventure *Twisted Forest*) will receive the dream.

PCs who meet all these criteria experience the dream (HANDOUT #1).

## **Scene Three: Arrival at Kyuden Doji**

When the PCs are within ten miles of Kyuden Doji (by land or sea), they will find the sky filling with ominous dark gray clouds. The weather also grows unseasonably cold, with a bitter wind that cuts through the PCs’ clothing.

### Arrival by Land

*As you descend toward the coast and spot the dark blue expanse of the Umi Amaterasu, Kyuden Doji appears before you. A large port city rests on the shore, the bay crowded with the masts of kobunes. The Doji palace itself perches above the bay on a high cliff, approached by a single road. The castle of the Doji family is one of the most splendid in all the Empire, second only to the Hantei Palace itself (indeed, the Doji have always prided themselves on their castle’s magnificence being just below that of the Hantei, without ever matching or exceeding it).*

*Although the city and castle appear normal enough from a distance, you do notice a distinct lack of traffic on the nearer streets. The blue and white colors of the palace walls, roofs, and banners seem drab and washed-out, although that may be just due to the heavy cloud cover.*

*In any case, you do not have long to observe such details, for a troop of Cranes on ponies is trotting quickly toward you, clearly intent on intercepting you before you can travel farther.*

The patrol consists of a Corrupted Doji Magistrate escorted by eight Corrupted Doji Bushi (see stats at the end of the module). These samurai are mentally warped by the Shadow, and have both Shadow Corruption and a small amount of Taint. However, at present the Shadow still has to maintain appearances here, so if the PCs have valid travel papers, offer a good story, and stick strictly to the rules of etiquette, the patrol will have little choice but to grudgingly allow the PCs entrance to the city.

If the PCs are aggressive, openly wearing armor and brandishing battlefield weapons, or have a very weak excuse for visiting the city, the patrol will either order them to depart or attempt to arrest them. PCs who openly brandish crystal, or otherwise show blatant knowledge of and hostility to the Living Darkness, will simply be labeled as “bandits” and attacked.

If (Kakita) Shingen is with the PCs, the Corrupted bushi will attempt to arrest him, naming him as a wanted murderer and traitor to the Crane Clan. If the PCs don’t want to see him arrested and executed, they will have to fight.

The city gates themselves are guarded by a group of four Corrupted Crane bushi, but if the PCs made it past the outer patrols, these guards will not even bother to check their papers. Within the city, the streets are oddly lightly trafficked, with commoners skulking along with their heads lowered. PCs will glimpse frightened faces peering at them through cracked shutters. Small groups of Crane samurai patrol ostentatiously down the streets from time to time.

## Arrival by Sea

*As your ship approaches the coast, riding the heavy waves of the Umi Amaterasu, you catch your first glimpse of Kyuden Doji. A large port city rests on the shore, the bay crowded with the masts of kobunes, and you pass another ship leaving anchorage. The Doji palace itself perches above the bay on a high cliff, looking down on the bay like a proud father. The castle of the Doji family is one of the most splendid in all the Empire, second only to the Hantei Palace itself (indeed, the Doji have always prided themselves on their castle’s magnificence being just below that of the Hantei, without ever matching or exceeding it).*

*Although the city and castle appear normal enough from a distance, you do notice an unusually heavy military presence on the docks. The blue and white colors of the palace walls, roofs, and banners seem*

*drab and washed-out, although that may be just due to the heavy cloud cover.*

*As the crew of your ship works the oars, stroking the vessel in toward an open dock, you can see that a troop of Crane bushi is standing on the quay, clearly intent on checking out your ship.*

Again, the Crane force will comprise one Corrupted Doji Magistrate and eight Corrupted Doji Bushi. They will board the ship as soon as it ties up, demanding to see travel papers and bills of lading. Again, they will be suspicious and hostile toward the PCs.

Fighting the guards here is much more hazardous than when approaching from land, since there are numerous other guards on the docks, checking the various ships and keeping tabs on their crews. Any combat will attract reinforcements – another equivalent patrol – every six rounds, unless the PCs can manage to get away and foil pursuit.

Again, if (Kakita) Shingen is with the PCs, the Corrupted bushi will attempt to arrest him, naming him as a wanted murderer and traitor to the Crane Clan. If the PCs don’t want to see him arrested and executed, they will have to fight.

The guards will order the ship’s crew to stay aboard and to visit only those business establishments located on the wharf (various low-grade teahouses, sake-houses, inns, etc). “In these difficult times, we cannot allow visitors to travel freely in our cities,” they explain.

PCs with valid travel papers (and who avoid trouble) will be able to circumvent these restrictions. Alternatively, the PCs may decide to stay on the wharf and avoid trouble until they can find an opportunity to sneak into the city later.

## Conditions on the Docks

PCs who arrive by sea (or who visit the docks after arriving by land) will find that conditions on the city docks are rather strange. The businesses here, designed to cater to the needs of sailors for food, drink, lodging and entertainment, are all open – but there is a distinct air of forced gaiety and barely-suppressed fear about them, which PCs can pick up with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20. The entire docks area, and the businesses on it, are patrolled regularly by Crane bushi, and none of the commoners working here will speak openly of what is happening in the city.

If the PCs leave the docks area, they will discover that Crane bushi watch all the streets leading into the city, and stop any sailors or merchants who try to leave the area. Again, PCs can force their way past such obstructions by politely insisting on their rights as samurai (although ronin PCs will probably not be able to force the issue unless they can claim to be working for another PC).

### Stealth Option?

Some PCs, especially Crabs, Scorpions, or ronin, may decide to take a stealthy approach, trying to sneak into the city (whether from land or from the docks) under cover of darkness. Such efforts, as long as they are undertaken with reasonable preparation and intelligence, will appear to succeed – the PCs will get into the city without anyone stopping them. However, they will soon be hunted by a pack of Goju Assassins (see “The Assassins” under Scene Four below).

## Scene Four: A City of Darkness

Kerai Toshii (Servant’s City), the port city which serves Kyuden Doji, is a large and (normally) prosperous settlement, with a population of almost 4,000. Now, however, it is a terrified city in the grip of the Living Darkness. The commoner inhabitants hide indoors at night, venturing out only briefly during the daytime. Most of the Crane bushi have been Corrupted to various degrees by the Darkness, and either lack the self-will to resist the evil here or willingly take part in it. Those with enough strength of will to retain their own souls have for the most part been killed, although a few are imprisoned, or going along with their comrades out of fear or blind obedience.

### Exploring the City

The city has all the amenities which one might expect in a prosperous Crane port – numerous merchant warehouses, many fine private dwellings (for both samurai and wealthy commoners), and a variety of artisan’s shops (not only typical things like blacksmiths and silk weavers, but also more exotic and specialized businesses such as jewelers, portrait painters, and tattoo artists). There are several inns and teahouses, assorted restaurants and noodle-shops, three geisha houses, a Noh theater, and so forth.

Due to the strange conditions in the city, these various businesses are enduring a peculiar sort of “half-life,” going through the motions of staying open and serving

customers, even while the proprietors live in growing terror.

The city is patrolled regularly by groups of Corrupted Doji similar to the patrols which intercepted the PCs. They will stop, and attempt to arrest, any PCs who are openly walking around in armor, carrying heavy weapons, or otherwise breaking the normal rules of proper behavior. They will also ostentatiously interrupt any extended conversations which the PCs might be having with the local commoners.

### The Execution Square

In the city’s central square, where the marketplace is located, a strange and horrible sight awaits the PCs. The center of the market is deserted, all the merchant stalls crowded around the edges. In the large open space, a huge gallows has been erected, thirty paces long. Two dozen corpses hang from the gallows.

Some of the bodies are weeks old, rotting and picked by crows, while others are more recent. All of them appear to be the bodies of samurai, some dressed as ronin, others as Crane (although all mons have been stripped from the blue cloth). PCs who roll **Law/Intelligence** at TN 15 will know that hanging is normally reserved only for those samurai who have committed grievous crimes (treason, *maho*, murder) and been refused the chance to commit seppuku. To find so many samurai executed in a short time is unprecedented. Likewise, to leave them rotting and unburied is a grave violation of traditional Rokugani funeral rites, even for criminals.

Nobody in the marketplace will speak openly about the bodies – the merchants will mutter and avert their eyes. However, if the PCs do make an effort to find out what has been happening here, one merchant – a thin, trembly, hollow-cheeked fellow with a Yasuki mon on his stall – will suggest in a whispered voice that the PCs visit him later at the Toshizuke Inn. Immediately after, he will anxiously offer to sell the PCs something, while looking around for guards. “Jewelry for your wife, samurai-sama? Of course, of course, I have just the thing!” This fellow is named Kiokure (Nervous) – the PCs may possibly have met him in the adventure *Arrows From the Woods*.

Periodically, one of the Doji patrols sweeps through the marketplace. If the PCs ask them about the hanged bodies, the guards are dismissive. “Traitors and criminals,” they say shortly. If PCs press them about the number of bodies, or the failure to dispose of the corpses, the guards will become suspicious and hostile

– if the PCs do not quickly back down, the guards will try to arrest them.

## The Common Dead

PCs who explore the city for long will notice (with a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 15) a faint odor of corruption and death hanging over the city. Some of it comes from the bodies on the gallows, but that is not the only source. Searching the city carefully will eventually discover numerous dead bodies, lying in back allies and drainage ditches throughout the city. (None of them are out in the open – the PCs will have to make a choice of turning down side-streets and otherwise looking in “dark corners” in order to find them.)

The corpses are those of commoners – peasants, workers, and *etc.* All have been slain with stabbing or slashing injuries – as though by samurai. Again, no commoners will speak openly of this while in public, and the Crane samurai will merely shrug. “Commoners die. Why is this your concern, samurai?”

## Visiting the Businesses

PCs who visit the merchants, inns, artisans, and other businesses during the day will find their proprietors tense and fearful, especially whenever a Crane samurai comes by to make a purchase or request a task. Darting looks, terrified whimpers, and other such evidence of deep fear will be the order of the day. If the PCs speak with these persons, they will normally attempt to pretend that everything is alright and perfectly normal:

- “No, honored samurai, nothing is wrong. Our city is peaceful and prosperous as always.”
- “It is unfortunate that the weather has been poor lately, I agree, samurai.”
- “Bodies? That is most unfortunate, samurai, but I have seen none myself.”
- “An odor? Not that I have noticed, samurai, but my senses are doubtless less attuned than yours.”
- “The gallows? I am sure they are all criminals, samurai, properly convicted by our Clan authorities.”

Such denials will be delivered with trembling voices and every sign of emotional strain – after weeks of terrorization, the city inhabitants are rapidly losing their mental equilibrium. However, if the PCs are persistent

and sincere, a few of the braver commoners will suggest that the PCs visit the Toshizuke Inn that evening.

## The Geisha Houses

The three geisha houses of Kerai Toshi are the only businesses which seem to be “normal” and operate in their usual fashion, staying open every night and filling the dark streets with music and laughter. Unsurprisingly, all three places have been fully absorbed by the Shadow, and their lovely workers are Goju through and through. Any PCs who spend an evening in one of these establishments will enjoy pleasant conversation, fine sake, and romantic flirtation – but if they participate whole-heartedly and without caution, they must make a **Simple Void** roll at TN 10 to avoid getting a Shadow Point.

A PC who is foolish enough to brandish crystal or otherwise provoke the Darkness while in any of these three houses will come under overwhelming attack from the employees, all of whom are actually standard Goju. Given that each house has twenty-thirty employees, all of whom have been consumed by the Shadow, the PCs will be lucky to escape with their lives.

## Servants from the Castle

If the PCs spoke at length with (Kakita) Shingen or Daidoji Hitokiri (see Scene Five), they know that both men spoke with servants from Kyuden Doji. Even if they did not learn this, wise or cunning PCs (especially those accustomed to contacts with commoners, such as magistrates, ronin, or Tortoise) may think of trying to look for such a source of information.

Some of the servants do visit the city periodically, mostly to make purchases and pick up supplies for the palace. Locating these visiting servants, and speaking with them successfully, will require a roll of **Kuenai/Awareness** at TN 15, **Courtier/Awareness** at TN 15, or **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 20. The servants are terrified of what has happened to their castle, and many of them have been partially Corrupted by the Shadow (although it has been focusing its attention on the bushi). They will speak hesitantly and with many terrified glances around themselves.

- Lord Doji Hoturi used to be a kind and compassionate man, but he has become distant and cruel in recent weeks. He has tortured and executed many of his own Clan for daring to question their orders. Servants have sometimes been executed on the spot for minor failures,

something which would have been unimaginable before.

- If the PCs specifically ask about strange or unnatural behavior by Doji Hoturi (behavior beyond mere cruelty), they will find one terrified servant who remembers seeing Hoturi late at night when he went out to visit the outhouse. *“He was in the middle of the gardens, dancing with a beautiful woman who was dressed all in black. It was a strange dance, wild and violent, like nothing I’ve ever seen, samurai-sama. I was so frightened I ran away that very moment.”* This particular servant has three Shadow Points. If the PCs ask for more details, all he remembers is that the strange woman wore a silk “ninja” mask covering the lower half of her face.
- If the PCs ask about Clan ambassadors, the servants will quickly mention that the Crab Clan ambassador, Kuni Takaoka, is dead – Doji Hoturi himself cut him down in court when he claimed that “Fu Leng’s darkness” had invaded the palace.
- The servants say that the Phoenix ambassador, Isawa Furukeshii, was imprisoned for similar remarks, but was later released and now seems to pay no attention to the strange things happening in the city.
- The only other ambassadors in the castle are from the Scorpion and Lion clans. Neither has done anything for or against the situation. (The Scorpion is a woman, Bayushi Suki, while the Lion is a man, Ikoma Tasuki.) The Unicorn ambassador left for his own lands at the end of winter, due to an urgent message from there, and there is not presently a Dragon ambassador here.
- If the PCs ask about Hoturi’s wife Doji Ameiko, they learn she has been kept sequestered in the Imperial Guesthouse since last month. The guesthouse is under constant guard, and none of the servants who tend to her are allowed to leave the grounds of the Doji palace.
- If the PCs have taken a compassionate or friendly approach to the servants, at least one of them will volunteer that Ameiko is with child – otherwise, the PCs will have to specifically ask in order to get this information.
- None of the servants will dare to give the PCs specific information on the garrison or defenses of Kyuden Doji.

## Attacks on Sleeping PCs

If the PCs sleep anywhere in the city except the Toshizuke Inn, they are liable to be attacked in their dreams by the Shadow. This will certainly happen to any PC who spends the night in one of the geisha houses, or in Kyuden Doji itself. Away from those dens of Darkness, it will happen to any sleeping PC who already has at least one Shadow Point.

The Dream Manifestation which attacks the PC will take the form of someone with whom the PC has a strong, and preferably negative, emotional connection. This person will attack the PC with an appropriate weapon while babbling strange, personal emotional tirades. The attacked PCs will have one weapon of their choice with which to defend themselves, but no armor. If the PC loses the dream-fight (drops to Down or lower), the PC gains a Shadow Point.

“Damage” taken from the dream is illusory, but leaves slight aches and bruises when the PC awakes. Void or spells which are expended in the dream do not return on waking.

## The Assassins

If the PCs go out and start exploring the city at night, or if they sneak or fight their way into the city without successfully appeasing the guards and patrols, the Shadow will quickly become aware of them and will begin to stalk them.

A pack of Goju Assassins, numbering two less than the number of PCs, will begin to trail the PCs, scrabbling across rooftops, leaping gaps between buildings, and flitting from shadow to shadow with unnerving speed and unpredictable patterns. To spot these assassins, the PCs must make **Contested Rolls** of their **Hunting/Perception** or **Investigation/Perception** against the Assassins’ **Stealth/Agility**.

The PCs will have two chances to make these rolls. The first roll, if successful, will spot the assassins while they are still some distance away – the PCs will be able to flee, turn to attack, hide in a building, or even try to prepare an ambush of their own.

The second roll, if successful, will afford the PCs a few brief moments of warning before the Assassins attack – enough to draw swords, pull out scrolls, and perhaps get into an open area free of shadows.

## Scene Five: The Toshizuke Inn

Although there are several Inns in the city, the Toshizuke is the only one where the PCs can potentially learn more about the enemy they are facing.

This is due to a fluke of chance – several years ago the Inn’s owner, in a bid to earn exotic prestige for his business, replaced his lanterns with gaijin curiosities of metal and glass. As a result, since the darkness fell upon the city, the Crane bushi have been oddly reluctant to visit the establishment. It has become a haven for many of those who retain enough self-will to dream of resisting what is happening.

The innkeeper, Shobu, is a skinny man with narrow, piercing eyes and a weak chin. He speaks in a low voice and limits himself to short, pungent sentences. He usually stays behind the counter, and carefully watches each person who enters the Inn before asking what they want. He does not ask visitors to leave their weapons behind, and PCs who do place their weapons in the closet by the door will find they are the only ones doing so.

- Shobu is a canny survivor. He is not quite sure why the Crane have been leaving his Inn alone in the last few weeks, but he knows better than to question his good fortune.
- He will guard his words very carefully around the PCs, fearing that they may be enemies trying to trap him.
- He can explain the crystal panes in the inn’s lanterns, since he does not realize they are important: “Our patron, Doji Akae, spent a lot of money a few years ago to give us an exotic look.” PCs can roll **Commerce/Intelligence** or **Lore: Crane/Intelligence** at TN 15 to recognize Doji Akae as a very wealthy Crane nobleman with mercantile interests throughout the Empire.
- If the PCs ask about the lack of use of the weapons closet, Shobu remarks that “nobody here wants to start a fight,” and tries to change the subject.
- If the PCs observe the absence of Crane bushi here, Shobu tries to shrug it off. “We’ve always been more popular with merchants than with bushi,” he remarks, a partial truth.
- If the PCs develop a successful alliance with Daidoji Hitokiri, Shobu will warm up to them

somewhat, and will become more communicative. He can confirm that the problems in the city began after Toturi’s Army came through and shipped out to the Phoenix lands. He will also confirm that people come to his Inn to avoid the “trouble” elsewhere in the city. “Crane leave us alone here,” he says. “Don’t know why, but I know better than to question it.”

**The Guests:** Aside from Shobu, the Inn is frequented by various commoners trying to drown their terror with sake. These persons will not be very communicative with the PCs, especially if some of the PCs are Cranes. However, there are also three individuals at this Inn who can offer the PCs concrete information and help: Kiokure the merchant, the Crane harrier Daidoji Hitokiri, and his ronin flunky Genji.

Hitokiri and Genji usually sit together in a corner, sipping sake and putting on an excellent imitation of a pair of down-on-their-luck ronin. Kiokure sits at a table with other commoners, trying to avoid notice.

**Kiokure the Merchant:** PCs may have met this anxious, furtive, sunken-cheeked merchant in the adventure *Arrows From the Woods*. If the PCs met him in the marketplace earlier, he will approach them soon after they arrive at the Inn. Otherwise, he will wait and watch until the PCs do or say something to suggest they are trying to discover the truth about Kyuden Doji. At that point he will approach them, with much furtive hand-wringing and stuttering, to offer his information.

- Kiokure is a Yasuki-sponsored merchant, and was unlucky enough to be visiting the city when things changed last month. *“A ronin army spent a few days in the city, before boarding ships and sailing away. It was then that the weather changed and the clouds shrouded the Sun. After that, the Crane samurai began to act strangely, more every day.”*
- Kiokure nerved himself to leave the city, but by the time he had worked up the courage (a couple of weeks), the Crane had built the gallows and begun executing samurai. “They killed those who showed compassion or who hesitated to carry out cruel orders.”
- Kiokure does not know what is happening in Kyuden Doji itself, but he has noticed that no-one has been allowed to leave the castle except for bushi patrols and servants.

- Kiokure knows that almost nobody within the city has been allowed to leave. Ships which dock at the harbor are kept there, and their crews are not allowed into the city proper. Kiokure has heard rumors of city residents trying to escape by sneaking onto the ships, but has no confirmation that it has ever been done successfully.
- Kiokure is desperate to escape the city alive, especially since he is running out of merchandise to sell (at which point he will have no way of keeping himself housed and fed). If the PCs seem in any way sympathetic, and come across as reasonably capable, he will try to enlist them for an escape attempt, promising them the gratitude and wealth of his Yasuki patron.

**Genji the Ronin:** This dirty, unshaven man sits in a corner with another ronin (actually Daidoji Hitokiri) and sullenly nurses his sake. If any PC approaches him, he will show a mouthful of crooked, broken teeth in a grin, and asks if they are looking for work, tapping the well-worn hilt of his sword. However, anyone who beats him on a **Contested Awareness** roll will be able to notice the sidelong glances he shoots at his companion (who he names as “Tetsu,” which means “Iron”). Genji clearly takes his cues from the other man.

Genji has worked for Hitokiri once before (in the adventure *A Hidden Blade*) and now that he is trapped in this Shadow-haunted city, has attached himself to the Harrier for survival’s sake. He does not really understand what is happening to the city, but tries to put up a brave and boastful front for others. Until Hitokiri decides to speak, Genji will carry any conversation (remarking of his companion, “Tetsu doesn’t like to talk much”).

- He came to the city because he heard that Toturi’s Army was here, and hoped to hire on with them. “I hear they pay better than anywhere else,” he remarks. “But I got here a couple of days too late, they’d already sailed.”
- He says the weather was already cloudy when he got here, and has not changed since. “Damnedest thing I’ve ever seen, in the Crane lands in spring.”
- He describes the changes in the Crane as a gradual transformation. “At first they just started tightening the restrictions on travel, keeping the sailors by the docks, that kind of thing. Then they started executing any folks who broke the rules, even slightly. Then they started executing any

samurai who didn’t go along with executing the commoners.”

- Genji is convinced that all the Crane in the city have gone mad, and thinks there might be something poisonous in the water. “I’ve been drinking nothing but sake since I came here, and I’m still fine,” he remarks. If a PC mentions that the “poisonous water” is used to cook the soup and rice which Genji eats, he will be somewhat nonplussed. “Huh. Well, maybe it isn’t the water. But *something’s* sure gone wrong here.”
- Genji does not know anything that is happening in the Doji palace, and does not want to know. “They’ve all gone mad, obviously. Who would want to know more?”

**Daidoji Hitokiri (“Tetsu”):** This man is a Daidoji Harrier, but that will not be immediately apparent, since he is masquerading as a grubby ronin and keeps his wrists, with his trademark Daidoji tattoos, carefully turned down and inside his sleeves. Hitokiri is a slim, athletic man with long hair held in a carefully-braided ponytail. (This small vanity is a flaw in his ronin disguise.) His swords are of high-quality, although the saya (sheaths) are scuffed and dirty. He moves with the grace of a dancer or a master swordsman, and his unremarkable face is usually blank. (He has the Bland advantage.) However, any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 while speaking with him will detect a carefully-veiled sense of menace.

Hitokiri will stay out of the conversation and try to gauge the PCs’ attitudes and intentions. If they show signs of knowing more about what is happening here than he does, or show what seems to be a sincere interest in learning the fate of Doji Hoturi and his wife, Hitokiri will enter the conversation and quietly suggest that they meet in a private room.

It is possible that some PCs may remember Hitokiri and consider him an enemy, due to his actions in the module *A Hidden Blade*. If they insist on rehashing those matters, he will quietly try to turn their concerns aside – as far as he is concerned, he was simply serving his Clan, and the present crisis should outweigh any such past grudges. He may suggest meeting the PCs later for a duel, if they feel this is warranted. (This is a lie – Hitokiri has no intention of throwing his life away on a duel – but he will say whatever is needed to get the PCs into a cooperative frame of mind.) If the PCs are relentlessly unwilling to cooperate, Hitokiri will dismiss them and go back to operating on his own.

## Meeting with Hitokiri

If the PCs do meet privately with Daidoji Hitokiri, he will explain his situation: he came here four weeks ago with orders to ship to Phoenix lands and support Toturi's Army, but was so disturbed by what he saw here that he decided to remain behind when the rest of his unit shipped out. ***"I have visited this city twice before. It was evident to me that some dark power was tightening its grip upon the place, and this has only become more obvious since my arrival."***

- Hitokiri has jade powder, and has determined that there is no obvious Taint among the people here. However, he believes there may have been Taint in Toturi's Army, and suspects there was a connection between that and what has happened here. "Perhaps some sort of *maho* ritual or other evil, to bring madness without actual Taint." If the PCs share Shingen's information about Toturi's Bloodsword, he will be even more convinced of this.
- Hitokiri has questioned servants from the Palace, as well as a few samurai who he judged to not yet be controlled by the madness in the city. He knows that Toturi spent several days visiting with Doji Hoturi before the ronin army shipped out. "It is known that the two men were friends before Toturi's fall, so perhaps this is not so strange... but I think the connection in time is significant."
- Hitokiri knows from the servants that the Crab ambassador, Kuni Takaoka, was cut down by Doji Hoturi himself after claiming that Kyuden Doji was afflicted with "Fu Leng's taint."
- Hitokiri does not know anything directly about Doji Hoturi's status, but he does know that both Hoturi and his wife Ameiko are still in Kyuden Doji, along with ambassadors from some of the other Clans. "I have heard that the Phoenix ambassador has been imprisoned, and that the Unicorn left before this began. Rumors only, of course – one cannot be sure of anything said by commoners."
- Hitokiri knows the Toshizuke Inn has been largely left alone by the Crane bushi, but he does not know why. He strongly suspects the Inn is under surveillance at night, and will warn the PCs not to go out into the city after dark. "I have been attacked twice, and each time barely escaped with my life." He describes the attackers as men dressed in dark clothing and masked like ninja.

- Hitokiri has not heard that Doji Ameiko is with child.
- If any of the PCs tell him about the Living Darkness, he will be inclined to disbelieve them (simply because he has never heard of such a thing), but will listen nevertheless.

Hitokiri intends to accumulate as much information as he can and then slip out the city to report to his daimyo, Daidoji Uji, who is based at Shiro Daidoji just three days' travel away. He will urge Crane PCs to follow a similar course of action. However, if the PCs favorably impress Hitokiri, and if he learns that Doji Ameiko is with child, he might be willing to join them on a mission to rescue her from Kyuden Doji.

Hitokiri has a large amount of equipment stashed in a safe-house elsewhere in the city, including "ninja-type" outfits, assorted small and medium-sized weapons (wakizashi, tanto, throwing stars, various peasant weapons), several pouches of jade powder, and climbing gear (climbing claws, grapple hooks, pitons, and several lengthy coils of silk rope). Depending on how much the PCs impress him, he may be willing to share some or all of this equipment with them.

If Hitokiri does join the PCs in a rescue attempt, Genji will not tag along – he is much too self-preserving to commit himself to infiltrating Kyuden Doji. He will, however, be willing to perform other tasks such as arranging passage on a ship. (See "Escape by Sea" in Scene Eight.)

## Scene Six: The Execution

If the PCs remain in Kerai Toshi for more than a single day, they will have an opportunity to witness an execution in the marketplace.

A large troop of Crane samurai marches down the winding road from Kyuden Doji. In their midst, an elegant, splendidly-dressed Crane bushi rides on a fine pony: Doji Hoturi, the Champion of the Crane. Behind him, bound in heavy ropes, staggers a young man in the tattered remains of a Crane kimono. His face is misshapen by bruises, and his expression is hollow-eyed and despairing.

The troop marches into the center of the marketplace. A noose is slung over the mighty gallows and made fast around the neck of the prisoner, who is weeping silently. Doji Hoturi watches impassively, one hand idly flapping a fan to keep flies away.

One of the bushi, who wears the mon of a Clan magistrate, steps forward and reads from a scroll. ***“Let all hearken to the judgment of our glorious Clan Champion! The samurai calling himself Doji Kauketsu has been found guilty of disobeying orders and of consorting with traitors to the Crane Clan! Lord Doji Hoturi-sama, in his wisdom, decrees that for his crimes Kauketsu shall be stricken from the rolls of the Doji family, and hanged from the neck until dead! Let all praise his justice!”*** The magistrate steps back and makes a gesture, and two bushi haul on the rope, lifting the prisoner into the air. His kicks and struggles last for some time.

At last, when the prisoner is clearly dead, Doji Hoturi turns away and rides back up toward the palace, followed by the troops.

It is possible that the PCs will interrupt this incident, either to plead for mercy, to request an audience with Doji Hoturi, or to attempt a rescue.

### Pleading for Mercy

Any PC who steps forward and asks to know details of the case, or who pleads for Doji Kauketsu to be allowed the privilege of seppuku, will be immediately confronted by the Corrupted magistrate who is reading the charges. “Who are you, and how do you dare question the judgment of our glorious Clan Champion?” he demands. Several of the bushi escorts step forward menacingly.

If the PCs do not back down immediately, Doji Hoturi will make a slight gesture with his fan, and the escorts will attempt to arrest the PCs. If they do not immediately flee, they will have to fight their way out.

### Requesting an Audience

PCs who attempt to request an audience with Doji Hoturi will be summarily dismissed by his magistrate flunky, unless at least one of the PCs has Major Allies or multiple Favors with the Crane Clan, has the Ear of the Emperor, or a similar powerful social Advantage. In such a case, Hoturi will make a lazy gesture and the flunky will say, “The magnificent Doji Hoturi will deign to consider your request if you present it at Kyuden Doji in proper fashion!”

### Attempting a Rescue

If the PCs are foolish enough to try to rescue Doji Kauketsu from his hanging, they will most likely get themselves killed. There are a total of twenty-four

Corrupted Bushi and a Corrupted Magistrate accompanying Hoturi himself, and they will fight to the best of their ability against the PCs.

It is possible that clever shugenja PCs may be able to come up with ways to use magic to rescue Doji Kauketsu without exposing themselves to annihilating attack from Hoturi’s escorts. Likewise, other PCs may come up with unusual tactics or ruses to try to rescue him, rather than simply charging in to fight. The GM will have to adjudicate the success or failure of such efforts. In general, while the majority of Hoturi’s escorts will always stay near his side, any which set out in pursuit of PCs will do so in large groups – 6 to 8 bushi at a time.

### Hoturi’s Status

Some PCs may have the ability to sense Shadowlands Taint (Kuni witch-hunters, Moto bushi). Such PCs can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to sense a strong aura of Taint from Hoturi, and a weak aura from a few of the bushi.

PCs from the Crystal Tears Dojo may be able to detect the presence of Shadow Corruption. Such PCs will know that Hoturi and all the bushi with him are marked by the Living Darkness.

If a PC is foolish enough to try to approach Hoturi openly with a piece of crystal (perhaps hoping to shine a light through it onto him), such a PC will be immediately attacked by Hoturi’s escorts.

## **Scene Seven: Into Kyuden Doji**

It is likely that the PCs will eventually want to enter Kyuden Doji itself, either simply to investigate, or for the specific purpose of rescuing Doji Ameiko. If any of the PCs are Cranes with Glory 5.0 or better, or members of the Doji family with Glory 3.0 or better, they have actually visited the palace before – give such PCs MAP #1 (Kyuden Doji layout). Other PCs can gain the same information by rolling **Lore: Crane/Intelligence** at TN 15 or **History/Intelligence** at TN 20.

The entire splendid castle complex is located on a level cliff-top, halfway up the side of a sheer mountain. A single wide road sweeps up the side of the mountain to the gates. The road is normally quite busy – the Doji Palaces are famous throughout the Empire for their magnificence, and receive frequent visitors – but now it

is empty except for the troops of bushi who periodically march up and down.

## Guide to Kyuden Doji

The entire complex is surrounded by a fifteen-foot-high wall, topped by a roofed parapet. On the two seaward sides (the south and east), the wall is open to a sheer drop, five hundred feet down to the ocean. Those sides of the complex typically have only one or two guards on station during the day, watching the ship traffic in the harbor, and a single guard patrolling at night. Likewise, the northern side (which gives onto a four hundred foot drop to the base of the mountain) usually only has a single sentry, watching the road which climbs the mountain.

The western side of the complex is separated from the rest of the mountain by a twenty-foot-deep dry moat. The road crosses the moat to the main gate on a single narrow causeway. There are always six bushi on duty on this section of wall, four of them immediately above the gate, and a Magistrate is posted inside. If visitors approach, the Magistrate will go out through the postern door to speak with them. The main gates will be opened only with his permission.

Within the entire complex, there is a weakening of light and color, a “grayness,” a sense that vividness and energy has been slightly leached from the world. This is due to the powerful influence of the Living Darkness here. There is also a very faint aura of Taint (which Witch-Hunters and Moto can detect with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 30) which is centered on the top floor of the Doji castle (where Doji Hoturi resides).

**Main Barracks:** A large multi-building complex which houses the bushi and magistrates who guard Kyuden Doji and protect the city below. There are a total of 185 bushi and 16 magistrates housed here, although at any given time about half of them are down in the city, patrolling and suppressing unrest. A handful of others are watching the walls and the main gate. Almost all of these men and women have become Corrupted to a greater or lesser degree, and the few who retain self-will are too terrified to resist their orders.

If the palace complex is attacked, the off-duty barracks complement can be ready for action (without armor) in about five minutes. If they are granted a half-hour or more, they will don armor as well.

**Bath House:** A suitably lavish facility, with separate male and female sides, each large enough to serve twenty bathers at once.

**The Gardens:** A very large part of the palace complex, the legendary Doji Gardens include a large lake (with a central island reached by an arched wooden bridge), a hedge maze, ten small shrines dedicated to various Fortunes, and a larger shrine to the Lady Doji (the latter located within a large hedge and next to a splendid koi pond). The Imperial Guest House is located in the midst of the gardens.

This area is all but abandoned now – except for the servants, who continue to maintain it, the corrupted inhabitants of Kyuden Doji have lost interest in things of beauty and harmony. PCs who hide in the gardens, or at the various shrines, will be safe as long as they do not draw attention to themselves.

**Imperial Guesthouse:** A splendid house, of mixed wood-and-paper construction, where the Emperor and his entourage stay when visiting the Crane Clan. This place has now been converted into a comfortable but isolated prison for Doji Ameiko. She and her servants remain inside the building, although the servants can occasionally be glimpsed on porches or through windows. The building is guarded by ten Corrupted Bushi, who sleep in one of the rooms (five of them are on duty at any given time). It is also stalked by Goju Hoseki, the Ninja Mystic, and two Goju Assassins. (See “Scene Eight: A Rescue?” for further details.) The layout of this building is shown on MAP #2: IMPERIAL GUESTHOUSE.

**Rice Warehouses:** Much of the Crane Clan’s huge rice surplus is stored in these large wooden buildings, which are otherwise unused.

**The Palace:** This is a huge, sprawling single-story complex of guest rooms, audience halls, dojos, shrines, gardens, servants’ quarters, kitchens, and stables. Construction is of the classic Rokugani wood-and-paper mix, with tile roofs. There are 18 Corrupted bushi on guard in this place, day and night, although no more than two of them will be found in the same area.

The various Clan ambassadors reside at this place. If the PCs are admitted to the Kyuden Doji complex, this is where they will be housed.

**“Donjon”:** This is the castle proper, a five-story edifice of astonishing workmanship and beauty. The bottom two floors are of stone exterior construction, with interior walls of wood; from the third story and up,

exterior construction is wood and interior is wood-and-paper. There is only one entrance, a ramp which begins at a parade ground in the Palace complex and wraps around two walls before leading in to the second floor.

There are another seven Corrupted bushi on guard within the castle at all times (no more than two to a floor). Various courtiers and shugenja reside here, all of them Shadow Corrupted, and Doji Hoturi himself lives on the top floor, although he spends much of his time elsewhere in the castle.

## Getting Inside

If the PCs wish to enter Kyuden Doji, there are basically three approaches they can take: they can attempt to make a “normal” visit, using etiquette to bluff their way in; they can assault the place (probably not a good idea); or they can try to get in stealthily, either physically or with magic.

## A Social Visit

The PCs can try to make a “normal” visit to Kyuden Doji, bluffing their way in with a request for hospitality, a claim of diplomatic duty, or a request for an audience with Doji Hoturi. This is not as foolish an approach as it may initially appear. Although the Living Darkness is taking hold here, for now it must still maintain a minimal outward appearance of normality, and PCs who can approach with a “legitimate” reason to visit the Doji palace will have a chance of being admitted.

The PCs will be stopped outside the complex gates by the Corrupted Doji bushi who stand guard above, and a Doji Magistrate will come out through a postern gate to speak with them. The PCs will need to role-play a legitimate reason for visiting Kyuden Doji – although this can be something as simple as wishing to pay their respects to the daimyo while passing through the city. Depending on how the PCs make their approach, they may need to roll either **Sincerity/Awareness**, **Etiquette/Awareness**, or some other suitable social skill (such as **Manipulation**). The TN should be 20, reduced to 15 if the PCs come up with an especially clever or persuasive approach. (If the PCs already managed to arrange an audience with Hoturi during the execution in Scene Six, they will be admitted without difficulty.)

Note that the PCs will need to follow all the tenets of etiquette in order to pull this off, which will mean (among other things) that they cannot be wearing armor or openly brandishing battlefield weapons. (Keeping such gear bundled up on a horse would be acceptable.)

See “Guests in Kyuden Doji” for details of what will happen if the PCs get into the palace complex successfully.

## Frontal Assault

Especially bold PCs may decide to simply assault Kyuden Doji, perhaps with the assistance of magical power. This is unlikely to succeed unless the PCs are extraordinarily powerful, and Daidoji Hitokiri will certainly refuse to be a part of such an action, which he will regard as suicidal.

The Corrupted bushi who guard the outer walls will quickly rally to any attack, using their bows to best effect, while the Magistrate will race to the Barracks to alert the other guards, then on to the castle itself. If the PCs cannot intercept him, the main force of guards and magistrates will be ready for action and heading to reinforce the walls within minutes.

The main gates are incredibly strong and well-made, and cannot be breached by a PC (although very powerful destructive magic might work). The small postern door can be broken down by a PC with a heavy bludgeon (tetsubo, dai tsuchi, or improvised battering ram) who can roll (**weapon skill**)/**Strength** at TN 25 or **Simple Strength** at TN 35. Only one person at a time can get through, and the Corrupted Crane bushi will do their best to block the door and skewer anyone coming through with yari.

Unless the PCs can get inside quickly and then find someplace to hide (such as the gardens), they will soon be swarmed and overwhelmed by masses of Corrupted bushi. In the unlikely event that they seem to be winning such a fight, Goju Hoseki will begin harassing them with her magic, and Doji Hoturi himself might even come out to slaughter these upstarts.

## Sneaking In

PCs who are wise enough not to make a frontal assault, but are unwilling to risk a “normal” visit, may want to attempt less honorable methods of getting into the castle complex. If Daidoji Hitokiri is cooperating with the PCs to try to rescue Doji Ameiko, this is the option he will argue for.

The most obvious way to get in subtly is with magic – any kind of flying or concealment magic can potentially work, depending on how it is employed, and other spells such as *Know the Ground* might be used to sneak in as well. The GM should adjudicate such efforts, but

in general, any creative and intelligent use of magic should be rewarded with success.

Lacking such magical methods, the PCs can attempt to scale the walls into the complex. This will require either climbing the rocky cliffs below the castle, or crossing the dry moat which separates the complex from the mountain.

- The sheer cliffsides which surround three sides of the complex can be scaled on the landward side with three rolls, or from the seaward side with four, of **Athletics/Agility** (TN 20), **Mountaineering/Agility** (TN 15), or **Climbing/Agility** (TN 15). If the PCs are properly equipped (with ropes, climbing claws, etc), they get a Free Raise on these rolls. If a PC fails a roll, that PC has one chance to roll **Simple Agility** at TN 20 to grab something before falling – otherwise the PC will plunge to certain death. (If the PCs are roped together, those who do not fall must make **Athletics/Strength** rolls against the **Water x 5** of the falling PCs to hang on.)
- PCs crossing the dry moat will need to make a single **Athletics/Agility** (TN 15) or **Mountaineering/Agility** or **Climbing/Agility** (TN 10) roll to get down into the moat, and another roll to climb the other side (reaching the base of the wall itself). Failing these rolls results in a fall to the bottom of the moat for 2k2 damage.
- Once the PCs have made it up the cliffs or across the moat, they will need to scale the smooth face of the wall itself. This will require a single roll of **Athletics/Agility** (TN 20), **Mountaineering/Agility** (TN 15), or **Climbing/Agility** (TN 15). Note also that the PCs will need to avoid drawing the attention of the guards who patrol the top of the wall.
- Clever PCs will send a single skilled climber up with a rope. Climbing a rope over the same distances will require only a series of **Simple Strength** rolls at TN 5.

## Guests in Kyuden Doji

If the PCs “bluff” their way inside, they will be escorted to the Doji palace complex, where servants will lead them to guest rooms and encourage them to bathe and change their clothing. They will be expected to follow etiquette by leaving their horses (if any) at the stables and most of their gear in their rooms (they can

wear their swords around the palace, but no other weapons).

Needless to say, if the PCs do anything suspicious or aggressive, their equipment is likely to go missing, and they will probably be ambushed by Goju Assassins or, more likely, simply arrested and thrown in the dungeons.

If the PCs are here for an audience with Doji Hoturi, they will be forced to wait for several days before he will find time for them (hopefully offering many opportunities for the Shadow to invade their dreams).

If the PCs spend a night asleep in Kyuden Doji, all of them will be attacked in their sleep by a Dream Manifestation, unless they manage to find a way to sleep while bathed in the light of a crystal. As with the attacks which can take place in the city, the Dream Manifestation which attacks the PC will take the form of someone with whom the PC has a strong, and preferably negative, emotional connection. This person will attack the PC with an appropriate weapon while babbling strange emotional tirades. The attacked PCs will have one weapon of their choice with which to defend themselves, but no armor. If the PC loses the dream-fight (drops to Down or lower), the PC gains a Shadow Point.

“Damage” taken from the dream is illusory, but leaves slight aches and bruises when the PC awakes. Void or spells which are expended in the dream do not return on waking.

## The Ambassadors

If the PCs are guests in Kyuden Doji, they may decide to seek out the ambassadors from other Clans. At present, due to the death of the Crab ambassador, there are only three Clan representatives here: the Phoenix, Lion, and Scorpion.

**Isawa Furukeshii**, the Phoenix ambassador, has been completely consumed by the Shadow and is now a Goju. He will deny any stories of his being arrested by Doji Hoturi, claiming such are malicious gossip and blaming the late Kuni Takaoka, a man he describes as an “uncouth slanderer who deserved what befell him.” Due to his transformation, he no longer has the ability to use magic at all, and will find excuses to do nothing if any Phoenix Clan PCs ask him for magical help.

**Ikoma Tasuki**, the Lion ambassador, has been partially Corrupted and, in an attempt to escape his relentless nightmares, has crawled inside a sake bottle.

He will avoid meeting any PCs except fellow Lions, who he will drunkenly try to warn. “Things... are all wrong here. Can’t think straight. I’d leave but... too hard. You should go.”

“**Bayushi Suki**,” the Scorpion ambassador, is actually Goju Hoseki, who murdered the real Bayushi Suki and took her place. Hoseki will only meet with the PCs indoors during the day (at night she is busy watching over Doji Ameiko at the Imperial Guesthouse). She will play the role of the Scorpion courtier to the hilt, subtly goading and threatening the PCs while pretending to be a “simple courtier” who cannot imagine why the PCs would think anything is wrong at Kyuden Doji.

## An Audience with Hoturi

If the PCs stay in Kyuden Doji for at least three days without taking action, they will be granted an audience with Doji Hoturi. PCs will be expected to leave all weapons, spell-scrolls, and other impedimenta of battle in their rooms for this audience – those who refuse will not be allowed to attend.

*You are led into one of the many splendid audience halls of Kyuden Doji. Doji Hoturi awaits you, seated cross-legged and resting his left arm on a wooden armrest. His sheathed swords sit on the floor, laid courteously to his right. The Champion of the Crane is a splendidly handsome man in his late twenties, his eyes a piercing gray, his long white hair tied back in a ponytail. His light blue kimono is immaculate, and every motion is a study in perfection.*

Hoturi will be polite but distant, asking whether the PCs are enjoying their stay at Kyuden Doji, and inquiring blandly as to “how the Clan of the Crane can assist you.” He will speak with them for only a short time (“as the Clan Champion, my time is valuable”) and will be as uninformative as possible, while still following every tenet of etiquette.

As mentioned before, Hoturi is both Tainted and Shadow Corrupted if the PCs have the ability to detect such things. (Needless to say, brandishing crystal during the audience will get the PCs arrested.) PCs who make **Contested Awareness** rolls against Hoturi will be able to detect a powerful undercurrent of passion and dark emotion beneath his placid exterior. Finally, any PC who watches Hoturi closely and rolls **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25 will be able to catch occasional dark shadows drifting across his eyes, clouding the clear gray.

- Hoturi will shrug off any PC concerns about conditions in the city, pointing out that the Crane have only recently ended their desperate war with the Lion. “It is to be expected that conditions will be somewhat... tense and chaotic... after such a difficult struggle. Such matters are an internal Crane problem, and we will deal with them in our own time.”
- If the PCs ask about the recent visit by Toturi’s Army, Hoturi will smile pleasantly. “Although his fate has been bitter, Toturi remains my friend, and a skilled commander. I am honored that he would agree to serve the Crane in battle.”
- If the PCs ask about the dead Crab ambassador, Hoturi’s eyes will briefly flash with anger, although he does not change his placid expression. “There are certain insults which cannot be forgiven, even from an ambassador.” If any Crab are present, he will go slightly further: “Surely, Crab-sama, when your own Clan is subject to such unfair suspicions and accusations, you can understand our own displeasure at such behavior?”
- If the PCs ask about his wife Ameiko, Hoturi will snap, “My family affairs are hardly your concern, samurai-san,” and terminate the audience.

Unless the PCs are foolish enough to make open accusations or launch a physical attack (in which case the room will suddenly fill with aggressive Doji bushi), the audience will end peacefully, with Hoturi dismissing the PCs and thanking them for paying him such a pleasant visit.

## Arrested?

It is possible that one or more PCs may get themselves arrested during this adventure, due to drawing the ire of the Doji patrols in Kerai Toshi, interfering with the execution, or breaking the rules once they enter Kyuden Doji itself. Such PCs will be disarmed, searched, and heavily bound (not only with ropes, but also by running bamboo poles between their back and elbows to immobilize their arms). They will be taken to Kyuden Doji and imprisoned in the castle’s first-floor dungeon.

Once there, imprisoned PCs will be chained up, gagged, and subjected to extensive torture. Each night they will be assaulted by Dream Manifestations of the Living Darkness. Also, each day the PCs are held prisoner, they suffer 1k1 Wounds, and due to exhaustion and torment, do not heal.

If the imprisoned PCs do not succumb completely to the Shadow (five Shadow points) within seven days, they will be executed.

Escape attempts will be impossible unless the PCs are exceptionally capable or ingenious. (Shugenja will not be able to cast spells with their mouths gagged, for example.) If some of the PCs escaped arrest, a rescue attempt may be possible, either by storming the castle or by waiting for the arrested PCs to be taken to the marketplace for execution. The GM will have to adjudicate the details of such escapades, which go beyond the scope of this adventure.

## Scene Eight: A Rescue?

It is to be hoped that the PCs will attempt to rescue Doji Ameiko and her unborn child from the clutches of the Living Darkness. This is a difficult proposition, but not an impossible one, especially if the PCs can manage to infiltrate Kyuden Doji.

Ameiko is being held in the Imperial Guesthouse, where the Emperor stays when he visits Kyuden Doji. The layout of this place is shown in MAP #2. There is only one door to the building, which is guarded at all times. However, PCs can easily cut through the building's paper walls (the exterior walls are wood on the bottom half and paper on the top half), and the west wall of the building is open to the lake – PCs can swim the lake or wade along its edges to enter via that route.

- Doji Ameiko is normally restricted to the building's interior garden and a few of the other interior rooms, and sleeps in the interior chamber marked "Ameiko's Room."
- There are a total of ten Corrupted bushi guards posted in the building – at any given time, five of them are sleeping in the room marked "Barracks" and the other five are standing guard at the locations marked "G" on the map.
- There are eight servants in the guesthouse. Many of them have been partially Shadow Corrupted, but none are yet "usable" by the Darkness. At night they sleep in the two rooms marked "Servants."
- Goju Hoseki, the Ninja Mystic, is often at the building during the day (except when she has to play the role of "Bayushi Suki"), and always at night. Sometimes she masquerades as a serving girl, while at other times she takes her own form: a

slim, beautiful, athletic woman in a tight-fitting black silk "ninja" outfit. When Ameiko is asleep, Hoseki lurks in one of the rooms adjacent to hers, probing the Foxwife's sleeping mind.

- Finally, there are also two Goju Assassins on the grounds, but they remain concealed in the shadows at all times unless Hoseki calls on them for action.

## Assaulting the Guesthouse

The PCs can choose to strike at the Guesthouse during either the night or the day. Striking during the day will allow the rest of the Doji complex to react more quickly, but will make the PCs far less vulnerable to Goju Hoseki and her minions from the Living Darkness. Striking at night will create the opposite situation – the Doji forces will react slowly, but the Goju will be able to exploit the darkness and will be far more threatening.

**If the PCs attack during the day**, and make any significant amount of noise or spectacle (shouting, clash of swords, big fire spells, etc), or allow any guards to escape to sound the alarm, other Doji guards will begin to respond from both inside the building and elsewhere in the complex (the palace and the barracks).

The five remaining guards in the Guardhouse will join the fight after three rounds, although they will not be wearing armor. Six fully equipped guards will arrive at the Guesthouse to investigate after twelve rounds, and six more after twenty-four rounds. If combat continues, the alarm will be spread throughout the entire complex, the reserve guards in the barracks will mobilize, and after fifteen minutes Doji Hoturi himself will emerge from the palace to look into the threat to his wife.

Regardless of whether the PCs are noisy or not, they will draw the attention of Goju Hoseki and her two Assassins. Hoseki will stay out of sight but will use her magical abilities to harass and weaken the PCs. The Assassins will only strike if they get an opportunity to attack PCs without being seen by the guards, and will in any case lack the ability to use their "shadow jump" ability while in daylight.

**If the PCs attack at night**, the two Goju Assassins will attack the PCs within a few rounds, regardless of whether the PCs have managed to avoid making noise or creating a spectacle. Goju Hoseki will "shadow leap" out to alert Doji Hoturi that his bride is under attack.

The off-duty guards will take substantially longer to awaken and prepare for action – if the PCs attract their attention, it will take them eight rounds to awaken and get their weapons. Reinforcements from elsewhere in the complex will only come if the PCs are extremely noisy, set off giant fireballs, or otherwise draw large amounts of attention to themselves. In this case, reinforcements will arrive as listed above under “daylight attack,” but will take twelve rounds longer – thus, the first reinforcing group will take twenty-four rounds to arrive, the second will take 36 rounds, etc.

On the other hand, Doji Hoturi will arrive very quickly, courtesy of Goju Hoseki, who will bring him back with a “shadow leap” after he has prepared himself. Hoturi and Hoseki will arrive at the Guesthouse twelve rounds after Hoseki leaves to fetch him. Both of them will immediately attack the PCs to the best of their considerable ability.

### Combat with Hoseki

If the PCs get into a fight with Goju Hoseki, she will fight as unfairly as possible, using her “shadow leap” ability to strike the PCs from unexpected directions, employing her spell-like powers to weaken them, and so forth. She will also verbally harass the PCs, and mock them by shaping her face to resemble loved ones, enemies, dead friends, etc.

If any of the PCs played through the adventure *Command of the Kami*, Hoseki will remember them from that time, and will make mocking references to any items or weapons which the PCs lost there. She will take especial pleasure in mocking PCs who lost precious gifts such as Kakita Blades.

Goju Hoseki is a unique Goju and, as such, cannot return if she is killed. If she is seriously wounded (within ten Wounds of Dead), she will escape the next time she has a chance, shadow-leaping away and staying out of the adventure thereafter.

### Combat with Hoturi

Doji Hoturi will not normally enter a fight without having his court shugenja cast *Reversal of Fortunes* on him and *Immortal Steel* on his katana. He will also receive a *Silent Waters* spell, binding a six-round *Force of Will* into his soul. It will trigger if he falls.

Doji Hoturi is utterly fearless, and will fight the PCs to the very best of his ability. When he fights, dark shadows swirl in his eyes and spill across his skin, giving him an eerie appearance. His blood is streaked with oily black, and lets off small streams of smoke.

If his *Force of Will* is triggered, Hoturi will normally retreat to seek healing, offering the PCs a menacing salute as he goes. “We will meet again,” he promises. If Goju Hoseki is still alive, she will use her “shadow-leap” ability to help him withdraw. If any PCs pursue him and continue to fight, Hoturi will do his best to destroy them.

### Escaping with Ameiko

Doji Ameiko is a gentle, placid, beautiful young woman with flecks of green in her lovely eyes. She will be reluctant to leave her beloved Doji Hoturi, even though she knows there is an hideous evil force within him now, and he is no longer the man she loved. In order for the PCs to convince her to escape with them, they will have to role-play an effective and emotionally persuasive appeal (pointing out the impossibility of saving Hoturi, the need to protect her unborn child, etc.) and roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15. With a success, she will agree (with tears brimming in her eyes) to flee with them.

Alternatively, the PCs can simply use force – Ameiko is no warrior, and cannot resist if the PCs pick her up and carry her out. However, carrying Ameiko for any distance will require an **Athletics/Strength** roll at TN 15. Using such a crude method on a delicate, honorable woman may entail some Honor loss, depending on the PCs involved.

### Getting Out of Kyuden Doji

Escaping the castle complex itself will most likely require reversing one of the methods which the PCs used to get inside – climbing the walls or cliffs, using magic, or assaulting the gates. The TNs for descending the walls and cliffs are the same as for ascending.

Some additional approaches to escape may be possible. For example, the spell *Wings of Fire* could be used to fly down into the city (the spell allows gliding, not true flight). A foolishly brave or super-heroic PC could even attempt to dive from the castle walls into the ocean below (requiring an **Athletics/Agility** roll at TN 30 – if successful, the PCs takes only 3k2 damage from the dive, but if it fails, the PC is killed).

If the PCs are trying to escape with Doji Ameiko, this will present a problem – she has neither the strength nor the skill to climb ropes or cliffs. If a PC carries her while climbing, the PC must make two Raises over and above the TNs already required in order to scale the walls and cliffs.

Daidoji Hitokiri, if he participated, will escape down the landward cliff-side, using his climbing gear. He will volunteer to carry Ameiko if none of the PCs are able to do so, but in that case, he will be attacked during the climb by any surviving Goju Assassins (and Hoseki, if she is still alive). The PCs will have to take action to save him and Ameiko.

## Pursuit

If the PCs escape the castle after an assault (whether or not they rescued Ameiko), unless they managed to completely eliminate all witnesses, their enemies will quickly organize pursuit. Within five minutes, couriers will ride out from the castle to warn the guards in the city. Within thirty minutes, all the guards in the city, both those patrolling the land approaches and those watching the docks, will have descriptions of the PCs and will attempt to arrest them on sight.

If it is night-time, Goju Hoseki will pursue the PCs directly (with the assistance of any of her surviving Assassins), even running down the walls and cliffs to chase escaping PCs. Of course, this will not happen if she has been injured too seriously to risk it.

Half an hour after the PCs leave Kyuden Doji, a full-fledged pursuit force will set out to search for them. This will consist of thirty armored Doji bushi, led by two Doji magistrates. If the PCs rescued Doji Ameiko, Hoturi himself will also accompany this force (unless the PCs already killed him or forced him to retreat). These troops will begin systematically searching the entire city for the PCs.

## Escape by Land

Very aggressive and fast-moving PCs may be able to stay ahead of the couriers and get out of the city before the guard patrols have been given their descriptions. However, the guards will still try to stop anyone leaving (especially at night), demanding to see the PCs' travel papers and attempting to intimidate them into staying in the city. Bold or clever PCs may be able to bluff their way past with skilled role-play, such as by exploiting superior social position (Imperial PCs or Emerald/Jade Magistrates will have the strongest advantage here) or using the rules of Rokugani society to insist on their rights. The guards will back down in the face of such an approach, if it is delivered with skill.

If the PCs cannot bluff the guards, or if they are unable to get out ahead of the couriers, they will have to fight the guards. If the PCs can eliminate the guards within three rounds, and without using flashy spells, there will

be no reinforcements. Otherwise, a second guard patrol will arrive after ten rounds, and a third fifteen rounds after that. The PCs will have to defeat or escape all of these patrols in order to escape.

If a chase/pursuit situation occurs, the GM should use **Contested** rolls of **Athletics/Agility** or **Horsemanship/Agility** (depending on whether it is on foot or mounted). If the PCs win three such rolls in a row, they escape. If the guards win three in a row, they catch up and a battle ensues.

## Escape by Sea

Prior to any rescue attempt, if the PCs discuss escape options, Daidoji Hitokiri will advocate escaping on a ship. If the PCs agree, he will send Genji the ronin to negotiate passage on a ship. If the PCs don't agree, or fail to discuss the topic at all, he will still send Genji on this mission, as a back-up plan.

Alternatively, the PCs can enlist the merchant Kiokure to try to arrange a ship for them. He can do so successfully, as long as the PCs agree to bring him along. However, he will also insist on a strict schedule for when he can expect the PCs to board the ship, and if they miss their appointed time, he will leave without them.

Some PCs may decide to make such arrangements on their own. It will require a minimum bribe of five koku to arrange passage on a ship. Most ship's captains will start out demanding considerably higher amounts, requiring bargaining (or strong persuasion) to get them to bring down the cost.

If the PCs can make a swift escape from Kyuden Doji to the docks, they can get there ahead of the couriers and cast off without interference. Otherwise, one of the dock patrols will attempt to intercept them. (At night, there will be only one patrol – during the day, there are four, and the others will reinforce their comrades at the rate of one patrol every eight rounds.)

Desperate PCs may attempt to seize a ship without making prior arrangements. During the day, this will be feasible if the PCs are willing to pay a very large bribe (minimum 10 koku, more likely 15 or 20). If the PCs don't have the money, or are escaping at night, they will have to use force/intimidation to make a ship's crew help them (a risky strategy, since a shanghaied crew will probably look for a chance to turn on the PCs and dump them in the sea).

Alternatively, if some of the PCs have the Sailing skill, they can try to steal a ship for themselves. The smallest fishing ships will require two separate PCs rolling **Sailing/Intelligence** at TN 20 in order to get out of the port successfully. A full-sized kobune will require four PCs making those rolls.

In any case, there are no military ships in port, so if the PCs can make it out of the docks, they will be safe.

## Conclusion

Once the PCs escape from Kyuden Doji, where do they go, and who do they tell about their experiences? This will be especially important if they have managed to escape with Doji Ameiko, since she carries the future heir of the Crane Clan in her womb. Ameiko has no suggestions of her own – the loss of her beloved Hoturi to the Taint and Living Darkness has left her heartbroken, and she does not really care what happens next.

Daidoji Hitokiri, if he accompanied the PCs and survived, will want to go to Shiro Daidoji, report to his lord Daidoji Uji, and place Ameiko into Uji's care. He will argue for this very strongly, and will be quite upset if the PCs attempt to take Ameiko to somewhere outside the Crane Clan. He will also argue that the PCs should keep their knowledge of what happened in Kyuden Doji secret, since it is an internal Clan problem.

If the PCs do go to Shiro Daidoji, they will be granted a short audience with Daidoji Uji himself. The daimyo of the Daidoji family is a short, athletic, swarthy man who conceals most of his face beneath a heavy leather mask. He listens carefully and asks brief, pertinent questions, learning as much as he can. Afterward, he will quietly thank the PCs for their efforts on behalf of the Crane Clan (especially if they rescued Ameiko), and asks them to keep what they have learned a secret from the other Clans. He will be especially insistent on this if Doji Hoturi is still alive.

Regardless of where they ultimately go and who they inform, if the PCs rescued Doji Ameiko they will be rewarded. Doji Ameiko will thank them personally, offering her fan to the most honorable PC, and promises to dedicate her next dance (after the birth of her child) to their courage and honor. Although she will never reveal it, she is a kitsune forest spirit, and her fellow spirits will reward the PCs as well.

- The PC with the highest Honor receives Doji Ameiko's fan. Cranes win ties. Otherwise, break a tie based on the role-play of the PCs in question.
- PCs who suffer from the Curse of the Kitsune (from the adventure Twisted Forest) will find the curse lifted. All other PCs will receive the Gift of the Kitsune (cert).

## 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 rescue Doji Ameiko:	+2 XP
PCs kill Doji Hoturi:	+1 XP

**Total Possible Experience: 5 XP**

### Honor

All PCs gain +2 Honor for successfully rescuing Doji Ameiko.

### Glory

Daidoji PCs (only) gain +1 Glory for escaping and reporting to Daidoji Uji, and an additional +1 Glory for rescuing Doji Ameiko. No other Glory is awarded, since the Crane Clan tries to keep this incident secret.

### Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who rescued Doji Ameiko may rid themselves of the Curse of the Kitsune. PCs who do not have the Curse instead gain the cert for the Gift of the Kitsune. Doji Ameiko gives her fan to the PC with the highest Honor.

If the PCs did not kill Doji Hoturi, but successfully rescued Doji Ameiko, they gain Hoturi as a **Sworn Enemy**.

# Appendix #1: NPCs

## (Kakita) Shingen, Crane bushi on Musha Shugyo

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

**TN to be Hit:** 20 (25 in light armor)

**School/Rank:** Kakita Duelist 2

**Honor/Glory:** 2.8/0.9

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 2, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Kuenai 2, Kyujutsu 3, Law 2, Lore (fighting styles) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 3, Theology 2, Yarijutsu 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Musha Shugyo/Adopted Blood, Dark Secrets (Toturi's bloodsword, state of Kyuden Doji), Fascination (fighting styles), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

**Equipment:** Daisho set (fine quality katana, 3k2), light armor, kimono, traveling pack, 3 koku.

## Daidoji Hitokiri, Crane Clan spy and saboteur.

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

**TN to be Hit:** 29 (school technique)

**School/Rank:** Daidoji Harrier 3

**Rank One:** When attacking an unaware opponent, the harrier gains unkept damage dice equal to his school rank.

**Rank Two:** When wearing no armor, the harrier adds his School Rank and his rank in Athletics to his TN to be Hit.

**Rank Three:** Whenever an opponent attacks the harrier and misses, the harrier adds +5 to initiative for the next round and gains +10 to his next attack on that opponent.

**Honor/Glory:** 1.3/1.6

**Skills:** Acting 4, Athletics 6, Battle 3, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Explosives 2, Forgery 4, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 4, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 5,

Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Law 2, Sincerity 4, Stealth 5, Traps 3, Yarijutsu 3.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Allies (many), Bland, Crafty, Heartless, Quick/Driven (to protect the Crane Clan), Small.

**Equipment:** Daisho set, kimono, assorted "ninja" gear.

## Genji the Ronin

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

**TN to be Hit:** 15 (20 with light armor)

**School/Rank:** None (true ronin)

**Honor/Glory:** 1.1/0.6

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Defense 3, Gambling 2, Iaijutsu 2, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kuenai 3, Law 2, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Ally (Daidoji Hitokiri)/Social Disadvantage (ronin).

**Equipment:** Daisho (2k2 katana, 0k2 wakizashi), light armor, kimono, 1 koku.

## Doji Ameiko, Foxwife to Doji Hoturi

FIRE 2	AIR 2 Awareness 6
EARTH 2 Willpower 4	WATER 1 Perception 3
VOID 4	

**TN to be Hit:** 10

**School/Rank:** Kakita Artisan 4

**Honor/Glory:** 5.0/6.5

**Skills:** Acting 8, Bard 4, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 5, Dancing 9, Etiquette 6, Ikebana 4, Investigation 3, Lore (myth and legend) 5, Meditation 2, Sincerity 7.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Cadence, Can't Lie, Benten's Blessing, Higher Purpose (Foxwife to Doji Hoturi)/Lost Love (Doji Hoturi), True Love (Doji Hoturi).

**Equipment:** Fine kimono, fan.

## Appendix #2: Villains (Low-End Stats)

### Corrupted Crane Magistrate (use interchangeably)

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 1	

**Shadowlands Taint:** 0.3

**Shadow Points:** 2 (no actual Shadow abilities)

**TN to be Hit:** 15 (20 in Light Armor)

**School/Rank:** Doji Magistrate 1

**Honor/Glory:** 0.5/2.0

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Law 2, Sincerity 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Position (Crane magistrate)

**Equipment:** Daisho (fine quality, 3k2 katana, +1 skill die to wakizashi), light armor, kimono, magistrate's badge.

### Corrupted Crane Bushi (use interchangeably)

FIRE 2	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 1	

**Shadowlands Taint:** 0.3

**Shadow Points:** 2 (no actual Shadow abilities)

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

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 1

**Honor/Glory:** 1.5/1.0

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Sincerity 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** None.

**Equipment:** Daisho (fine quality katana, 3k2), light armor, fine bow (+1 skill) with 20 arrows, kimono.

### Generic Goju, faceless servants of Shadow

FIRE 2	AIR 2
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EARTH 2	WATER 2
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**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Attacks:** 3k2

**Damage:** Ninja-to (3k2), Shuriken (2k1), or Garrote (2k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

**Skills:** Stealth 3

**Wounds:** 24: Dead.

**Special Abilities:** Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

### Goju Assassins, powerful servants of Shadow

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

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Attacks:** 4k3

**Damage:** Ninja-to (4k2), Shuriken (3k1), or Garrote (3k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Stealth 4

**Wounds:** 36: Dead.

**Special Abilities:** Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-Walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet. They also have the ability to walk on horizontal surfaces as easily as on flat ones.

### Dream Manifestations of Shadow

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Attacks:** 4k3.

**Damage:** By weapon (hand-to-hand, katana, yari, etc., as appropriate).

**Skills:** All Bugei skills at 4.

**Wounds:** 32: Dead.

### Goju Hoseki, minion of Shadow

FIRE 4	AIR 3
	Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Attacks:** 6k4 (with ninja-to) or 4k4 (shuriken).

**Damage (includes Strength):** Ninja-to (4k2),  
Shuriken (3k1).

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Defense 6, Ninjutsu (ninja-to) 6,  
Ninjutsu (shuriken) 4, Stealth 5.

**Wounds:** 54: Dead

**Special Abilities:** Hoseki can create spell-like effects resembling the spells *By the Light of Lord Moon*, *Quiescence of Air*, *Earth's Stagnation*, and *Way of Deception*. These are each a single action to use and do not require scrolls. She also has the complete set of Shadow abilities: **Shadow Invulnerability** (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks); **Shadow-Walk** (move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet); **Insubstantial** (pass through solid matter); **Mimicry** (perfectly imitate any other person); and **Shadow Stealth** (keep two extra dice on Stealth rolls).

### Doji Hoturi, Fallen Clan Champion

FIRE 4	AIR 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3

**[Wounds are at +2 per rank due to Shadowlands Gift]**

**Shadowlands Taint Rank:** 4.4

**Shadow Points:** 4. Due to the dominance of Hoturi's Taint, he cannot use most Shadow abilities. However, he does take half damage from normal and magical attacks, except for jade and obsidian (full damage) and crystal (double damage).

**TN to be Hit:** 20 (27 in Fine Light Armor)

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 5

**Honor/Glory:** 0.4/8.6

**Skills:** Battle 4, Courtier 9, Defense 6, Etiquette 9, Heraldry 6, History 5, Iaijutsu 8, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (archery) 6,

Lore (Lion Clan) 4, Meditation 4, Poetry 10, Political Maneuvering 6, Shintao 5, Sincerity 10, Tea Ceremony 7.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Benten's Blessing, Cadence, Luck (rank 1)/Compulsion (women), Dark Secret (illegitimate son, Bayushi Dairu), True Love (Bayushi Kachiko/Shosuro).

**Magical Protections:** Unless the PCs catch him completely by surprise, Hoturi will prepare for combat by having his court shugenja cast several spells on him. He will be under the effects of *Reversal of Fortunes* and will have *Immortal Steel* on his katana. He will also receive a *Silent Waters* spell, binding a six-round *Force of Will* into his soul. It will trigger if he falls.

**Shadowlands Gifts:** Eternal Health (immune to all diseases and poisons), Greater Blessing of the Dark One (+2 Wounds per rank), Unholy Beauty (no visible Taint symptoms).

**Equipment:** Excellent daisho set (Kakita blade, 2k2 weapon, +1 kept die on attack rolls, reroll one damage die in iaijutsu duels), excellent kimono, fine light armor (+7 TN).

## Appendix #3: Villains (High-End Stats)

### Corrupted Crane Magistrate (use interchangeably)

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

**Shadowlands Taint:** 0.3

**Shadow Points:** 2 (no actual Shadow abilities)

**TN to be Hit:** 15 (20 in Light Armor)

**School/Rank:** Doji Magistrate 2

**Honor/Glory:** 0.5/2.0

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Law 2, Sincerity 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Position (Crane magistrate).

**Equipment:** Daisho (fine quality, 3k2 katana, +1 skill die to wakizashi), light armor, kimono, magistrate's badge.

### Corrupted Crane Bushi (use interchangeably)

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

**Shadowlands Taint:** 0.3

**Shadow Points:** 2 (no actual Shadow abilities)

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

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 1

**Honor/Glory:** 1.5/1.0

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu (Archery) 4, Sincerity 2.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** None.

**Equipment:** Daisho (fine quality katana, 3k2), light armor, fine bow (+1 skill) with 20 arrows, kimono.

### Generic Goju, faceless servants of Shadow

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Strength 3

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**Attacks:** 4k2

**Damage:** Ninja-to (4k2), Shuriken (3k1), or Garrote (3k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

**Skills:** Stealth 4.

**Wounds:** 24: Dead.

**Special Abilities:** Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

### Goju Assassins, powerful servants of Shadow

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

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Attacks:** 4k3

**Damage:** Ninja-to (4k2), Shuriken (3k1), or Garrote (3k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Stealth 5.

**Wounds:** 36: Dead.

**Special Abilities:** Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-Walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet. They also have the ability to walk on horizontal surfaces as easily as on flat ones.

### Dream Manifestations of Shadow

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 4	WATER 3

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**Attacks:** 5k4

**Damage:** By weapon (hand-to-hand, katana, yari, etc., as appropriate).

**Skills:** All Bugei skills at 5.

**Wounds:** 46: Dead.

### Goju Hoseki, minion of Shadow

FIRE 5	AIR 4
	Reflexes 5
EARTH 3	WATER 3
	Strength 4

**TN to be Hit:** 25

**Attacks:** 7k5 (with ninja-to) or 5k5 (shuriken).

**Damage (includes Strength):** Ninja-to (5k2), Shuriken (4k1).

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Defense 7, Ninjutsu (ninja-to) 7, Ninjutsu (shuriken) 5, Stealth 6.

**Wounds:** 54: Dead

**Special Abilities:** Hoseki can create spell-like effects resembling the spells *By the Light of Lord Moon*, *Quiescence of Air*, *Earth's Stagnation*, and *Way of Deception*. These are each a single action to use and do not require scrolls. She also has the complete set of Shadow abilities: **Shadow Invulnerability** (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks); **Shadow-Walk** (move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet); **Insubstantial** (pass through solid matter); **Mimicry** (perfectly imitate any other person); and **Shadow Stealth** (keep two extra dice on Stealth rolls).

### Doji Hoturi, Fallen Clan Champion

FIRE 4	AIR 4
	Reflexes 5
EARTH 4	WATER 3

**[Wounds are at +2 per rank due to Shadowlands Gift]**

**Shadowlands Taint Rank:** 4.4

**Shadow Points:** 4. Due to the dominance of Hoturi's Taint, he cannot use most Shadow abilities. However, he does take half damage from normal and magical attacks, except for jade and obsidian (full damage) and crystal (double damage).

**TN to be Hit:** 25 (32 in Fine Light Armor)

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 5

**Honor/Glory:** 0.4/8.6

**Skills:** Battle 4, Courtier 9, Defense 6, Etiquette 9, Heraldry 6, History 5, Iaijutsu 8, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 4, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (archery) 6, Lore (Lion Clan) 4, Meditation 4, Poetry 10, Political Maneuvering 6, Shintao 5, Sincerity 10, Tea Ceremony 7.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Benten's Blessing, Cadence, Luck (rank 1)/Compulsion (women), Dark Secret (illegitimate son, Bayushi Dairu), True Love (Bayushi Kachiko/Shosuro).

**Magical Protections:** Unless the PCs catch him completely by surprise, Hoturi will prepare for combat by having his court shugenja cast several spells on him. He will be under the effects of *Reversal of Fortunes* and will have *Immortal Steel* on his katana. He will also receive a *Silent Waters* spell, binding a six-round *Force of Will* into his soul. It will trigger if he falls.

**Shadowlands Gifts:** Beyond the Elements (all non-maho spells add +10 to their TN to target him, but maho gets a Free Raise against him), Eternal Health (immune to all diseases and poisons), Greater Blessing of the Dark One (+2 Wounds per rank), Unholy Beauty (no visible Taint symptoms).

**Equipment:** Excellent daisho set (Kakita blade, 2k2 weapon, +1 kept die on attack rolls, reroll one damage die in iaijutsu duels), excellent kimono, fine light armor (+7 TN).

## Player Handout #1: Spirit Dream

You seem to be walking through a lush green forest. Young red-furred foxes prance and gambol to either side of you, urging you forward, and when you look at them you see that their eyes are vivid green, shining brightly even in the dappled, uncertain light beneath the trees. You realize you are unclothed, and the grass is soft and pleasant beneath your bare feet.

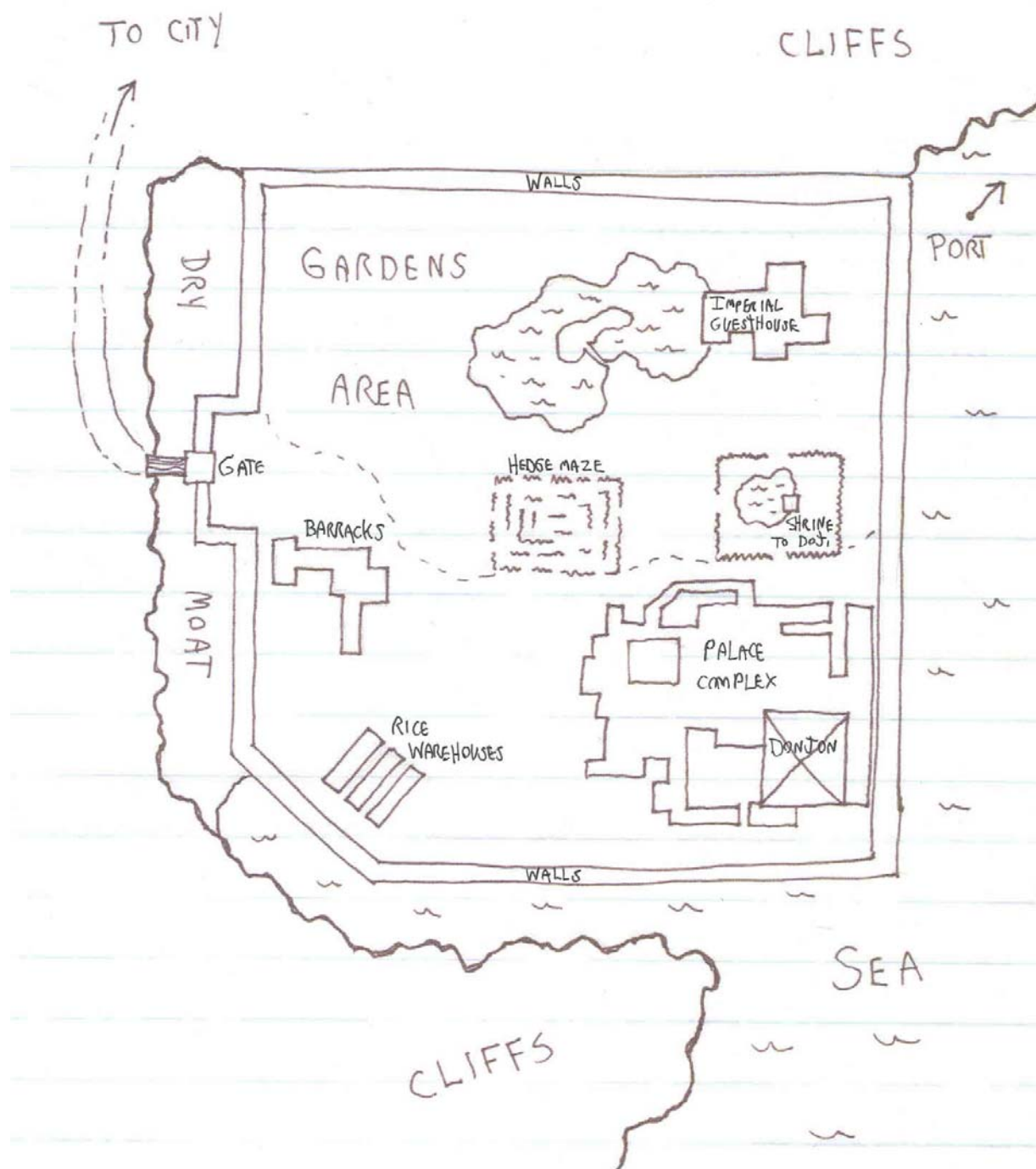
You come to the edge of the forest and look out on a pleasant and prosperous land, the gentle hills terraced into rice paddies. Peasants are singing as they work in the fields, and Mother Sun bathes them in warm light. In the distance, you can see the blue sparkling expanse of the ocean. Walking through the field, arm in arm, are a man and woman dressed in the formal garb of the Crane Clan. Both of them are extraordinarily beautiful, and their long white hair flutters in the breeze, wreathing them like a cloud. You realize they are a married couple, and a swaddled child is cradled in the woman's arms. They do not seem to notice you.

But the foxes circling your feet begin to whine and whimper with fear. Looking around, you see that a strange darkness is moving across the fields, turning the bright green grass to a dull gray color. As the discoloration spreads, the peasants fall silent, and the light of Mother Sun herself seems to dim. The Crane woman sees the approaching shadow, and clutches at her husband in fear. He, however, is oblivious, and makes soothing gestures. The woman grows more frantic, but cannot bring herself to leave her husband.

The darkness reaches them. The man's hair dims, his skin turning gray as the shadow flows over him, and the smile vanishes from his face. The woman seems untouched by the shadows, which flow around her like water. The man sets his hand on her arm, reaching for her child, and she struggles to pull away, trying to shield the babe from his touch. As she does, her face turns toward you, and she seems to see you for the first time. Her face takes on an expression of desperate pleading and forlorn hope, and she holds out the swaddled infant toward you, as though pleading for you to take it. You see that both she and the child have eyes of a bright green.

Behind them, all the color is leaching out of the world, leaving only a place of dim, shadowy grays. The foxes whimper and retreat into the forest. You awaken in a cold sweat.

Map #1: Kyuden Doji



## Map #2: The Imperial Guesthouse

