

# **Damning Evidence**

## **The Hidden Temple, Part One**

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

**by Rob Hobart**

The Setsuban Festival is a tense affair in the contested city of Kenson Gakka. A Scorpion stands accused of murder, and conspiracies move in the shadows.

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

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

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

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

## GM's Information

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

This adventure is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and is designed for characters of ranks 1 through 4. This adventure was not written with Rank 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

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 Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party with an average Insight Rank of between Two and Three.

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

**Low End Party** (most/all characters Rank One or Two):

- Lower skill roll TNs by 5.
- Reduce the number of Raises needed for successful investigative spellcasting by one.
- Tonbo Genso has Sincerity of 4.

**High End Party** (average character Rank is Three and Four):

- Raise skill roll TNs by 5.

- Add one to the number of Raises needed for successful investigative spellcasting.

## Adventure Summary and Background

Shosuro Tajiki is an assassin, a loyal servant of the Scorpion Clan. For many years he has performed ruthless and dishonorable deeds for his Clan while masquerading publicly as a simple bushi and an Emerald Magistrate. But in recent months, he has begun to accumulate evidence of a real and profound threat to the entire Empire: a sinister conspiracy, all but unknown to the rest of Rokugan, manipulating the Clans and even the Imperial House from the shadows.

Tajiki has discovered the Kolat, the ancient cabal of fanatics dedicated to overthrowing the Emperor and ending the Celestial Wheel of reincarnation. At first, the Kolat ignored his minor investigations, which seemed unlikely to lead to any result. But in recent weeks he has begun to uncover real information about the Kolat. He has intercepted some of their messages, broken several of their ciphers, and unmasked some of their deeply hidden agents. He has even met Matsu Hiroru, the “White Ninja,” one of the Kolat’s deadliest enemies.

The Kolat has decided that Shosuro Tajiki must be destroyed, not merely killed but dishonored and discredited, his name and deeds expunged from the history of the Empire. To this end, it has launched a careful plot to frame him for a brutal murder, ensuring that he will be executed and forgotten as a shameful criminal.

The PCs will step into the middle of this when Tajiki asks for their assistance in one of his investigations. When he is framed, they will have a chance to try to clear his name. It is unlikely that they will succeed – the Kolat has done its work well – but succeed or fail, through their efforts they can become the inheritors of his crusade against the Kolat.

**Notes on Running This Adventure:** It is intended that the PCs will probably not be able to succeed in clearing Tajiki’s name. The purpose of this adventure is to drive home to the PCs just how powerful and dangerous the Kolat is, and how difficult it is to take them on. It is also intended to sow the seeds for the later conclusion of the Hidden Temple story arc, in which the PCs will have a chance to raid the Kolat Temple itself.

It is possible that some PCs may be agents of the Kolat themselves (having acquired the “Owned by the Kolat” cert). These PCs will find themselves forced to work against the rest of the party, sabotaging the investigation into Tajiki’s frame-up. Although some players may be unhappy at having to work against their fellows, this is the price which must be paid for enlisting with the most sinister conspiracy in Rokugan.

It is also possible that some PCs may dislike Shosuro Tajiki enough not to help him. Tajiki has appeared in several previous adventures, and in such stories as *Satsume’s Tournament*, *A Foreign Legacy*, and *A Chance Meeting* he has established himself as a dishonorable Scorpion hit-man. Such PCs may prefer to watch Tajiki “twist in the wind” as he is condemned for a crime he did not commit.

## Player’s Introduction

If any of the PCs have successfully worked for Shosuro Tajiki in some of his previous Kolat investigations (in the adventures *In Time of War* and *Way of Deception*), or have established themselves as his friends/allies, they will receive a letter from him (HANDOUT #1) asking that they meet with him in the Lion city of Kenson Gakka, during the Setsuban Festival. The letter is accompanied by travel papers authorizing the PCs to make the trip, and they will have just enough time to get there in time for the Festival.

PCs who have not played either of those adventures, and who have established a neutral or hostile relationship with Tajiki in other adventures (such as *Satsume’s Tournament*, *A Chance Meeting*, *A Foreign Legacy*, or *Funeral Pyre*) will receive a different letter (HANDOUT #2). As before, the letter will be accompanied with travel papers.

PCs who meet neither of these qualifications will receive a third letter (HANDOUT #3). Once again, travel papers will be included.

*It is the eighth day of the month of the Monkey, the day of the Setsuban Festival, when summer turns to autumn and war pauses for the harvest. Banners flutter above the walls of Kenson Gakka, snapping brightly in the early autumn sunlight. The city which the Lion call “Humility’s Lesson” is brightly decorated for the beginning of the Setsuban Festival, and samurai throng its streets.*

*The tension which lies beneath this celebration, however, is heavy and thick. The city earned its name*

*when the Lion took it from the Scorpion six centuries ago, and neither Clan has forgotten that time. More recently, tensions between the Lion and Scorpion have been high ever since last winter, when the Lion tried to accuse the Scorpion of opium smuggling. In recent weeks, since the shocking incidents at the funeral of Bayushi Shoji and the equally shocking defeat of a Lion army by the ronin Toturi the Black, tensions have been higher yet. Rumor has it that Scorpion troops have been seen on the border.*

The PCs have just reached Kenson Gakka, near midday, and the festival is in full swing. Happy crowds fill the streets, music drifts through the air, and jugglers and other performers are at every corner. However, the Lion bushi watching the city gates are stern and alert, and review the PCs' travel papers carefully. If the PCs show the papers from Tajiki (which they will have to do unless some of them are Emerald or Jade Magistrates themselves), the Lion will be especially suspicious. "If you are a friend of that Scorpion, you are not welcome here," they growl.

If sympathetic and honorable PCs ask the Lion why they are so hostile to Tajiki, they will explain that Tajiki has recently been assigned here as an ambassador. They claim that since his arrival Tajiki has offended both the daimyo of Kenson Gakka, Matsu Kiyone, and the local Rikugunshokan (general), Matsu Kaneda. "Only our daimyo's sense of etiquette has prevented her from expelling this Scorpion dog from our lands."

Unless the PCs choose to take offense at the guards' anti-Scorpion attitudes, they will eventually be admitted to the city. If the PCs do try to make trouble, the guards will refuse them admittance to the city, suggesting that they have drunk too much sake and should return when their heads are clear. (This gives the PCs a chance to back down, save face, and return later in a more humble frame of mind.)

In the event of violence, the guards will employ non-lethal methods (jiujutsu, wrestling) to subdue the PCs and expel them from the city. The sacred Setsuban truce forbids spilling blood on this day. If any PCs consider using weapons or spells, remind them of this. (If they persist, they will suffer major losses of Honor and Glory – see the end of the module.)

## Kenson Gakka

Kenson Gakka is a small walled city in the northern Lion lands, located astride the Way of Righteous Vengeance and about two hours' march from the Three

Sides River, which marks the border of Scorpion territory. Kyuden Ikoma lies a day's travel to the north.

Kenson Gakka houses about 500 people, with another 2,000 living in the villages and farmlands around it. The city is laid out in a rectangle, bisected across by the road (the Way of Righteous Vengeance), passing through gates in both walls.

On the northern end of the rectangle is Shiro no Meiyo, a fortified castle built into the side of a steep, forested hill. Once a Scorpion castle, this is now home to the local Rikugunshokan (general), Matsu Kaneda, along with about half the military garrison of the city.

The other half of the garrison lives in the garrison/stable buildings located next to the two main gates. With the Lion at war and tensions with the Scorpion at a peak, large contingents of troops are always posted in the two gatehouses and on the city walls, inspecting visitors and watching for any threat.

Across the city, opposite from the fortress, is a three-story palace – this was razed to the ground when the Lion took the city six centuries ago, then rebuilt in the austere, practical style favored by the Lion Clan. The daimyo Matsu Kiyone and her husband Akitare live here, along with Matsu Kaneda's wife Aoi and son Yamagata. The various Clan ambassadors to the city also reside here.

On either side of the palace are the city's two temples, one dedicated to the Seven Fortunes and the other to the goddess Amaterasu.

Other notable buildings in the city include the Civic Hall (containing the offices of the local government bureaucrats, the local Clan and Emerald magistrates, and so forth), the Inn of the Humble Turtle, and the local geisha house, the House of the White Lotus.

A simplified map of the city is found in Appendix #2.

## What to Do in Kenson Gakka

The city's sole Inn, the Inn of the Humble Turtle, is located close to Shiro no Meiyo, next to the parade grounds where the Lion drill their troops. Today, for the Setsuban Festival, the parade grounds have been taken over by entertainers: musicians, jugglers, acrobats, puppet theaters, and so forth. Throngs of commoners circulate about, enjoying the day's celebrations, even a small stage offering comedic plays by actors in farcical costumes and masks.

The PCs are supposed to meet Tajiki in the Inn at the Hour of the Dog (7-9 pm), so they have some time to kill. Although they will probably not want to rub shoulders with celebrating commoners, there are a fair number of samurai (some visitors, some local) wandering through the crowd, enjoying the festival entertainments. The PCs may also wish to pay a visit to the Palace and present themselves to the local daimyo (which is a general point of etiquette when arriving at a new city or castle).

**Circulating Through the Crowd:** The PCs will encounter a variety of Lions, as well as a smattering of Crane, Phoenix, and ronin. No Scorpion are present (the only Scorpion in the city is Tajiki), and with the Lion at war with the Dragon Clan, Dragon and Dragonfly samurai are not welcome either. The Unicorn and Crab are both fighting civil wars, so their only representation here will be PCs (if any).

Regardless, if the PCs speak with other samurai they can pick up a variety of news and gossip:

- Recent news from the western Empire has confirmed earlier rumors that the Imperial Legions suffered a catastrophic defeat in the Shinomen Forest. The Fists of the Emperor Legion has successfully retreated to the southern Unicorn territories, but the word is that all the other Legions have been destroyed as military formations (although hundreds of individual survivors made it out). This news casts a pall over the entire festival, and most samurai quickly change the subject after this comes up.
- The Unicorn civil war is said to be still raging, although most expect that even the “barbaric Unicorn” will respect the Setsuban truce, at least for one day. It is said that the faction of the “returned Shinjo” has gained the upper hand in the fighting, although nobody knows for sure.
- The Setsuban truce also seems to have brought a halt in the Dragon-Phoenix war, at least until next spring. The Lion Clan’s recent defeat in Dragonfly lands, at the hands of Toturi the Black’s ronin army, has deprived the Phoenix of their most potent ally in the war, and many suspect that they may soon seek a negotiated end to the war. Mirumoto Yukihera, the acting Dragon daimyo, has also occupied a significant portion of the Unicorn Clan’s northeastern lands, impinging on their harvest and seizing several of their diamond mines. With the Unicorn busy fighting each other, the rumor is that Yukihera will apply to the

Emperor to be appointed as administrator of those lands.

- The Miya daimyo, Miya Satoshi, will soon be getting married. Rumor has it that he will marry the sister of Matsu Gohei, the notorious “Butcher” of the recent Lion-Crane war. The Crane, needless to say, are outraged at rumors of such a match. Meanwhile, it is reported that his cousin Miya Yumi will also marry, although her betrothed has not yet been announced.

**Meeting the Daimyo:** If the PCs present themselves at the Palace, they will be allowed to wait for an hour or so before being granted a brief, perfunctory audience with Matsu Kiyone. She is a fit, round-faced woman in her late twenties. Although dressed in court garb, she clearly has the build of a warrior. Sitting to her right and slightly behind her is her husband, Akitare, who wears the school mon of the Ikoma (he married into her family). Her children are too young to be allowed into such public meetings.

Kiyone listens to the PCs’ greetings politely, welcomes them to Kenson Gakka, and invites them to enjoy the Setsuban Festival. She will not ask their business here, but if any of them mention Shosuro Tajiki, she will frown. “Tajiki-san is a topic we prefer not to mention,” she says quietly, and dismisses the PCs.

## Part One: A Meeting at the Inn of the Humble Turtle

The Inn of the Humble Turtle is a large two-story building, and is currently housing most of the samurai who have come to Kenson Gakka to attend the Setsuban Festival – the PCs will have to stay two to a room (unless one of them is a lone female) in order to get rooms here. As evening settles in, the common room is packed with samurai, ronin, and wealthy commoners, all enjoying dinner, drinks, and friendly conversation.

If the PCs speak with the innkeeper (a pudgy man named Uboe) about meeting with Tajiki, he will lead them back to a private dining room behind the main common room. If the PCs do not take that step, Tajiki will eventually arrive at the Inn and look for them, sending the Innkeeper to fetch them if necessary.

### Shosuro Tajiki

A young Scorpion man in his early twenties. Tajiki is athletic, good-looking, and usually smiling, although

now his expression is serious and focused. He dresses like a bushi (he has the mon of the Bayushi bushi school, but is actually a trained Shosuro assassin), and wears a minimal silk mask designed to accent his handsome features.

Tajiki will leave his swords in the Inn's weapons closet and hurries back to the private room to meet with the PCs. He will order the Innkeeper to bring them food and tea, but no sake ("we need our wits about us this evening").

Once the PCs have gathered in the room with Tajiki, and they are alone, he will begin by taking off his mask. This startling act should inform the PCs that something unusual is at hand. That done, Tajiki starts speaking to any PCs who have not participated in the adventures *In Time of War* or *Way of Deception*.

*"I have recently discovered that there is a troubling... pattern... to certain events in the Empire. As though they are being manipulated by some larger force, some conspiracy in the shadows. A conspiracy which seeks to control the Empire, make it dance like a puppet, and uses even the Scorpion Clan as a tool for its plans."*

Tajiki will then turn to PCs who have played either or both of those previous adventures.

*"These samurai have assisted me on previous occasions in investigating certain... unusual events, which were connected with this conspiracy. Thanks to their help, I have begun to accumulate a large body of evidence on this conspiracy, its activities, and its membership."*

Tajiki goes on to explain that he suspects a connection between his investigation and the recent civil war which has erupted in the Unicorn Clan. *"Rumors say that this so-called 'returned Shinjo' has accused Shinjo Yokatsu and his followers of being in league with a 'gaijin conspiracy' to overthrow the Celestial Order. I cannot help but draw a connection. I have found hints that the conspiracy I hunt also seeks to overturn the Celestial Order, to end mankind's submission to the descendents of the divine Kami."*

*"And I have found a name, associated with this conspiracy. A name whispered in the darkest corners of the criminal underworld, in places where even a Scorpion must step cautiously: Kolat."*

Having made these introductions and connections, Tajiki will attempt to enlist the PCs into a joint

campaign to uncover and destroy the Kolat. *"For many of you, I am not a man who you would consider honorable. I serve my Clan in ways that you cannot. But I am no less a samurai than you, and those I hunt are enemies of all the Empire, your Clan no less than mine. I ask that you help me to bring down these enemies together."*

Tajiki will also claim that he has found another ally in his crusade: a nameless man who he calls, half-mockingly, "the White Ninja." *"A strange man, who dresses in a garment like that which ninja wear in peasant tales... except the clothing is white, and is difficult to look upon. If one does not focus on it most carefully, it seems to fade and vanish. He would not give me his name, but we have met several times, and he has placed me on the path of further clues about our enemy. I believe this 'Kolat' is his enemy as well, and that he was once a Clan samurai, before it drove him into hiding."*

PCs who roll **Lore: Ninja/Intelligence** at TN 20 have heard peasant rumors of a man who dresses in a white outfit that makes him difficult to see.

## Part Two: The Magistrate Arrives

At some point, after Tajiki has conveyed most or all of the information in the previous section, the conversation will be interrupted:

*There is a commotion outside, and then the door to the room slams open. A slim man in courtier's garb strides in. His kimono is an array of colors, almost like a rainbow, but he wears the sash and mon of an Emerald Magistrate. A half-dozen Lion bushi crowd into the door behind him.*

*The man's face is calm, his eyes moving to take in the entire scene before he steps forward and hands a folded piece of paper to Shosuro Tajiki. "Shosuro Tajiki-sama, I am Tonbo Genso, Emerald Magistrate assigned to Kenson Gakka. I must present you with an Order of Appearance, commanding your arrest for the murder this evening of Matsu Kaneda, rikugunshokan of Shiro no Meiyo. I humbly request that you accompany us to the castle."*

Tajiki accepts the paper with raised eyebrows. *"This is a most remarkable charge, Genso-san. When and where was I supposed to have committed this supposed crime?"*

***“Earlier this evening, Shosuro Tajiki-sama. As for where, at the House of the White Lotus, where Kaneda-sama had gone for relaxation. We have many witnesses.”*** He turns and gestures to one of the bushi, who steps forward, holding a sword sheathed in a saya of Scorpion red. ***“We also have this.”***

The bushi draws the blade, showing it to be smeared with blood.

***“Your guilt is clear, Shosuro Tajiki-sama. I would suggest that you confess immediately.”***

Tajiki is clearly surprised by the sight of the blood on his sword, but quickly schools his features. ***“I shall do no such thing, since I am innocent of the charge. These samurai can testify that I have been in their presence for some time, and certainly could not have been elsewhere murdering a Lion general. Why would I do such a thing?”***

***“I cannot speculate on the motives of Scorpions.”*** Genso regards the PCs thoughtfully. ***“I must ask that you also accompany me to the castle, samurai-samas, so that I can discuss this matter further with you.”***

## What Do the PCs Do?

Although Tonbo Genson has phrased it as a request, it is obvious that he will not accept a refusal from the PCs. Indeed, if they suggest they have no interest or involvement in this investigation, he will frown and point out that their testimony is relevant to the case, giving him the power to bring them in for questioning whether they wish it or not. ***“I would prefer not to resort to crude compulsion, samurai-sama.”***

Some PCs may object that Genso, as an Emerald Magistrate, does not have jurisdiction over this crime, which is a matter for a Clan magistrate. Genso replies, ***“Since this crime involves a member of another Clan, the daimyo of Kenson Gakka, Matsu Kiyone, has appointed me to investigate it, ensuring that there are no questions of bias.”***

If any of the PCs are Emerald Magistrates themselves, Genso will be more polite toward them, but still insists that they offer their testimony on the case. If any of them try to “pull rank” and take over the investigation by virtue of their higher Glory, he calmly but politely refuses, pointing out that he has been assigned to this case by the local daimyo. ***“While I appreciate your offer of assistance, samurai-sama, I have been given this task by Matsu Kiyone-sama and I would be remiss***

***in my duties if I failed to carry it out.”*** He will absolutely not budge on this.

If the PCs are actually stupid enough to try to resist Genso violently, they will suffer serious losses of both Honor and Glory as a dozen Lion bushi swarm into the room, trying to wrestle and disable the misbehaving PCs. Continued resistance will eventually lead to arrest, imprisonment, and major additional Glory losses, possibly resulting in reduction to ronin or seppuku.

More likely, the PCs agree to accompany Genso and avoid this unpleasantness.

## Questions and Answers

Genso and the Lion soldiers will escort Tajiki to Shiro no Meiyo, where he is led inside to the castle dungeons. Meanwhile, Genso will question the PCs.

- He will ask the PCs to explain why they were meeting with Shosuro Tajiki. If they describe any of Tajiki’s claims about a sinister conspiracy, Genso will express polite skepticism, and may question the PCs more carefully, suspecting that this improbable tale is cover for something more serious.
- Genso will question the PCs very carefully about how Tajiki appeared and behaved when he met with them. ***“Did he seem out of breath? Was there blood on his garments, or his hands?”***

If any of the PCs behave in a way which seems suspicious or guilty, Genso will suddenly accuse them of complicity in the crime. ***“You were intended to offer Tajiki an alibi, were you not? Confess now, samurai, and I may be able to persuade the daimyo to show you mercy!”***

After the PCs deny this, Genso will nod and bow. ***“Your words and reactions prove you innocent. My apologies, samurai-san, but you understand that I must be sure of all possibilities.”***

Once Genso has questioned all the PCs, he will consider their words and conclude that their testimony does not exonerate Tajiki. ***“The murder took place at some point between the Hour of the Rooster and the Hour of the Dog. It would have been a simple matter for Tajiki-san to have slain the general and then gone to his meeting with you. Perhaps he thought that would provide him with protection from his crime.”***

Genso will answer a limited amount of questions from the PCs:

- Matsu Kaneda was found slain in a private room at the House of the White Lotus. His head was cut from his body. The madam of a house and eleven samurai who were guests there all identified Shosuro Tajiki as coming to the house and visiting Kaneda's room.
- Genso refuses to speculate as to why Tajiki might murder Kaneda. "I am not one to try to read the mind of a Scorpion." PCs who suggest that Tajiki's crime is too "obvious" for a Scorpion will not impress Genso. "Even the Scorpion sometimes fail to be subtle. Perhaps the very openness of the crime is a message."
- If the PCs ask why Genso was assigned to investigate, he again refuses to speculate, although he will remark that Tajiki's relations with the local authorities have been poor since his arrival. "I myself did not witness the problems. If you wish to know more, I would suggest you speak with Matsu Kiyone-sama and her court."

After speaking with the PCs, Genso will explain that Tajiki will be held in the castle prison and be given a chance to confess his crimes (meaning that tomorrow, after the Setsuban truce expires, he will be tortured). If he refuses to confess, Genso will present the case to Matsu Kiyone and her court tomorrow night.

## Meeting with Tajiki

After the PCs speak with Genso, a message will arrive from Shosuro Tajiki, asking them to meet with him in the dungeon of Shiro no Meiyo. It is up to the PCs how to respond.

If they do agree to meet with Tajiki, they will not be allowed to do so alone – Lion guards will be present at all times. Genso will apologize for this: "The Lion regard Tajiki as a cunning and dangerous man. I regret that they will not accept your word that your meeting is not part of some plot of his."

***The prison of Shiro no Meiyo is located underground, far back into the hillside, and you can feel the oppressive weight of earth above your heads as you walk into the cramped, candle-lit chambers. A pair of Lion bushi stand on either side of the entrance, their postures rigid and their faces pointed directly ahead.***

***Shosuro Tajiki still wears his fine kimono, but his silken mask is gone, and his hands are fettered in heavy iron chains. A livid bruise discolors the left side of his face, Nevertheless, he manages a pleasant smile as you approach. "It seems I am to enjoy the hospitality of the Lion. I must say I do not care for the accommodations they have offered me."***

Despite his brave front, Tajiki knows he is in trouble – the combination of eyewitnesses placing him at the scene of the crime, and the blood-stained sword, is truly damning evidence by Rokugani standards. He will make only the briefest of small-talk before moving on to his situation:

"My friends, I am innocent, but it seems someone has set out to frame and destroy me. After what I told you earlier this evening, you can guess at my suspicions – it seems I have drawn the attention of the evil conspiracy I have begun to uncover."

Tajiki will ask the PCs to investigate on his behalf, and to try to break the frame-up. "As an accused criminal awaiting trial, I will not be allowed to investigate. I would ask that you act on my behalf."

If any of the PCs have Obligations to the Scorpion Clan, Tajiki will invoke those Obligations to force them to work on his behalf.

Assuming at least some of the PCs do agree to investigate for him, Tajiki will share all possible information with them. He can tell them the following:

- His assignment here was quite recent, only a few weeks ago (after the funeral of Bayushi Shoji). He was ordered here by one of his superiors in the Shosuro family (he will not give a name), to replace the previous ambassador. No reason for the replacement was given. Tajiki suspects the whole thing was a set-up from the start, although he has no evidence.
- Tajiki was ordered to be as menacing and belligerent as possible, especially toward the general (Matsu Kaneda), in order to keep the Lion angry and off-balance. He tried to fulfill his orders to the best of his ability.
- Tajiki swears he did not go to the House of the White Lotus. "I have never been there – such amusements do not interest me."
- Tajiki claims that during the earlier part of the day, he was in his quarters at the palace. He left the

palace around midday to participate in the Setsuban Festival. He was there until he went to the Inn to meet the PCs. “I confess I have always enjoyed the spectacle presented by festivals – a personal weakness.”

- Tajiki had his swords with him until he arrived at the Inn, when he placed them in the weapons closet before going to visit the PCs.

If any PCs express concern that Tajiki will confess under torture, he will smile thinly. “As we all know, torture has no power to compel the innocent.” He is clearly steeling himself to resist compulsion.

### Who Actually Did It?

The Kolat has taken advantage of the Setsuban Festival to move several of its agents into the city, both commoners and samurai. Among them is Hida Rokotsu, a crude, bluff warrior who is actually a clever and ruthless Kolat agent. It is Rokotsu who has masterminded the frame-up. He is staying at the Inn of the Humble Turtle, and was at the geisha house (the White Lotus) during the murder to serve as a “witness.” However, it is extremely unlikely that the PCs will ever find any evidence against him.

The actual murder and other work (cleansing of spirits, planting blood on the sword) was committed by several nameless Kolat ninja.

### A Message From the Kolat

If any of the PCs have the cert “Owned by the Kolat,” they will find a note on rice paper in their next meal. The note says simply: “Tajiki is guilty. Do not allow anyone to conclude otherwise.”

## **Part Three: Preliminary Investigations**

If the PCs agree to help Tajiki, or if they just decide to look into matters for themselves, they will probably have to ask Tonbo Genso for cooperation (otherwise they will not be allowed to examine the bodies or the sword).

Genso will be reluctant to allow the PCs to involve themselves in the case. There are several possible approaches the PCs can take:

- A PC who delivers a well role-played appeal (perhaps citing the need to assure justice, or vouching for Tajiki’s character) can roll **Sincerity**/

**Awareness** at TN 15, **Courtier/Awareness** at TN 15, or **Manipulation/Awareness** at TN 20 (or another social skill, if the GM judges it appropriate) to persuade Genso to cooperate.

- PCs who are Emerald Magistrates can simply ask to review the case for their own information and satisfaction. As long as the request is couched politely, Genso cannot really refuse. (No die-roll needed.)
- PCs who have Glory of 4.0 or better, or who invoke advantages such as Ear of the Emperor, have enough clout to force Genso to let them look into the case. A social skill roll will still be needed, but the TNs are reduced by 10.
- PCs can “cash in” an appropriate Ally or Favor (such as one with the Lion Clan or, since Genso is a Dragonfly, with the Dragon Clan) to get permission to investigate. This will not require a die-roll.

If Genso does not cooperate, the PCs will not be allowed to view or examine Tajiki’s sword. They can try to view the body on their own, but without Genso’s permission they will have to persuade Matsu Kaneda’s family to let them do so.

### Speaking with the Lion

If the PCs ask to speak with the Lion authorities, they will have to wait until at least the next morning – the Lion will not meet with them tonight.

At any future meetings, Matsu Kiyone and her husband will also be accompanied by the family of their dead general: his widow Matsu Aoi and his formidable son, Matsu Yamagata, a bushi recently returned from the Lion-Crane war. Aoi, a woman in her late thirties, is a traditional Rokugani wife – quiet, reserved, and modest. Yamagata, for his part, is very much the classic “young Matsu” – fearless, brave, honorable, and outspoken.

Matsu Kiyone will lead any discussion, but Yamagata will periodically unleash angry condemnations of Shosuro Tajiki.

- Matsu Kaneda, the general of Shiro no Meiyo, is described as an “honorable and dedicated samurai” who has served the Lion Clan for over twenty years. He has been assigned here as general for five years.

- If any PC asks pointedly about why Kaneda was in a geisha house when he died, the Lion will look shocked that the PC would even bring up the topic. Matsu Yamagata's sword-hand will twitch as he visibly restrains himself from drawing. Finally Kaneda's widow Aoi will speak in a small, restrained voice: "My husband was an honorable man. He understood which things should be kept private and which should not."
- PCs who are uncouth enough to pursue this topic further will be expelled from the palace, and will be running a serious risk of a duel with Matsu Yamagata.
- Shosuro Tajiki has been assigned here for almost a month. The Lion describe him as an "ungenerous guest" who has abused hospitality and spread discord. "His words are poison," Kiyone says coldly. "Meant to drip into our ears and infect our thoughts. Not even the previous Scorpion ambassadors behaved so."
- Kiyone will also say that, as soon as she heard of Kaneda's murder, she suspected Tajiki. Her reason for this was a conversation last week during a dinner at the palace. Tajiki made several "veiled threats" about the Scorpion Clan recovering Kenson Gakka. *"When Matsu Kaneda-sama retorted that his troops would repel any such attacks, Tajiki remarked, 'cut off the head and the body dies.' I think we know, now, what he meant by that."* Her description of the conversation will be confirmed by her husband, as well as by Aoi, Yamagata, Tonbo Genso, and several other courtiers and ambassadors at the palace, all of whom were present at the dinner in question.
- If the PCs ask about military actions, border tensions, and so forth, Matsu Kiyone says that there have been many recent reports of Scorpion troops maneuvering on the border. *"Matsu Kaneda-sama believed this to be mere posturing, to try to intimidate us and gain an edge in the courts. However, with his death, I must wonder whether the Scorpion intend something more bold."* She will look very hard at any Scorpion PCs.
- If the PCs ask to examine Kaneda's body (due to not getting permission from Genso), they will have to be respectful and polite, and couch their request in terms of trying to learn the truth. (Showing open sympathy for Shosuro Tajiki, or expressing

confidence that he is innocent, will guarantee failure.) If the PCs do offer an effective and well role-played appeal, they can roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 20 to convince the Lion to let them view the body.

- If (due to examining the body) any PCs ask whether Kaneda indulged in opium, his family will be shocked – and probably deeply insulted, unless the PCs are very careful about how they ask (and perhaps roll **Etiquette/Sincerity** at TN 15). They will insist that Kaneda never used opium, although (as his daimyo Kiyone puts it) "he was not averse to a cup of sake after a long day."

## Speaking with Other Ambassadors

Besides Tajiki, there are two other ambassadors at Kenson Gakka, representing the Crane and Phoenix Clans. There is also a representative of the Unicorn Clan, but due to the current Unicorn civil war he is not sure which side he is representing, and will try to stay out of this entire affair.

**Kakita Satsuki** – A pretty young woman with the perfect etiquette, artistic skill, and flirtatious manners of an ideal Crane courtier. She is always accompanied by a pair of hand-maidens (for propriety) and also has a yojimbo, Daidoji Remata (one of the witnesses at the House of the White Lotus), although he only joins her when she travels.

- Satsuki was at the dinner where Tajiki made his threatening remarks, and remembers them clearly. "We were all shocked that a Scorpion would be so blunt," she remarks. "Such is not usually their way. They must be feeling more aggressive now that young Dairu is their Clan Champion."
- If in the company of fellow Cranes, Satsuki will confess that she is not particularly unhappy with this turn of events. "The Lion suffer the tragic loss of an able general, and the blame is affixed on our greatest rivals, the Scorpion. How can a Crane not be pleased with such a turn of Fortune?"

**Isawa Manetawa** – A quiet, calm man with a short goatee beard and piercing eyes. Manetawa is an Air shugenja and is a skilled courtier, possessed of great perception and self-control. He is escorted at all times by a silent Shiba yojimbo.

- Manetawa recalls the dinner where Tajiki spoke his threats. However, he remembers it slightly differently from everyone else. "It seemed to me

that Tajiki-san was a bit uncomfortable at speaking such blunt threats, as though it was a disagreeable duty.”

- Manetawa has no official opinion on the crime, but to a fellow Phoenix PC he will express his personal suspicion that the whole thing is a little too pat. “As though we are all actors on a Noh stage.”

**Ide Chogutsato** – The Unicorn representative is a thin, nervous man with a long nose and thinning hair. His usual expression is an anxious frown, although he will do his best to smile and be charming when speaking with those outside his Clan. He is clearly very distracted by the news from his home Clan, and finds it difficult to focus on current events here.

- Chogutsato was at the dinner where Tajiki spoke, and can confirm Kiyone’s description. He expresses a certain shock at how threatening the Scorpion was. “I thought the Scorpion were trying to avoid provocations after the whole opium accusation last year.”
- If any of the PCs are Unicorns, he will try to draw them aside and speak about news from home. “I have heard that the desert Moto have returned, and joined the faction calling themselves followers of the true Shinjo. Is this true?”

## Examining Kaneda’s Body

Matsu Kaneda’s body has been taken to the basement of Shiro no Meiyo, where eta will wash and prepare it for funeral and cremation. In order to examine the corpse, the PCs will have to get permission from either Tonbo Genso or from Kaneda’s family (Aoi and Yamagata). If the PCs do not get permission from either of these individuals, they will not be allowed to view the body unless they can bluff/overawe the Lion sentries guarding the room. Lion or Imperial PCs with Glory 4.0 or better, and other PCs with Glory 5.0 or better, can do this with a well role-played approach and an appropriate social skill roll (**Sincerity**, **Intimidation**, etc) at TN 20. Exploiting Advantages such as Ear of the Emperor, or cashing in Allies with the Lion Clan, can also work.

*The corpse of Matsu Kaneda lies on a stone slab, waiting to be cleansed and prepared for funeral. He was a healthy, fit man in his early forties. His body is still dressed in the bloodstained kimono which he was wearing when he perished. His severed head has been placed a few inches from the stump of his neck.*

- Kaneda is dressed in a rather plain but good-quality kimono, with no mons except for the Lion mon on the back. Clearly he was trying to be somewhat incognito while at the House of the White Lotus. There is nothing obviously strange or suspicious about the kimono.
- A PC who examines the kimono closely can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice some spilled liquid which soaked into one sleeve. It smells of sake, but with a strange undertone.
- Kaneda was beheaded with a single blow delivered with great force. A roll of **Kenjutsu/Intelligence** at TN 10 or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 15 can tell that whoever delivered the strike used a large sword (katana or no-dachi) and was quite skilled.
- Kaneda’s face is set in a dying expression of surprise and outrage. There is no sign of pain.
- If the PCs examine Kaneda’s mouth, or ask about poison, they can roll **Medicine/Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25 to notice an odor of sake around his lips, mingled with another less-familiar scent.
- PCs who have noticed the strange odor on Kaneda’s lips or his kimono can roll **Poison/Intelligence** at TN 15, **Herbalism/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Medicine/Intelligence** at TN 20 to identify the drug known as “liquid void” – liquid opium, suspended in sake. PCs who are opium addicts get a Free Raise on this roll.

If the PCs wait until the next day, the corpse will already have been washed and dressed in funeral white. The blood-stained clothing has been burned, the facial expression has been re-made into one of serenity, and no evidence of the drugs remain. The only information available at that point is the nature of the lethal blow.

## Examining the Geisha’s Body

The body of the slain geisha has already been taken to the crematory outside the city. The PCs will not need any special permission to see it (Genso and the Lions have already dismissed it as unimportant), but they will need to see it on the night of the murder – by the next morning, it will have been cremated.

The eta at the crematory will be quite surprised by PCs wishing to see the geisha’s corpse, but they will

obediently bring the cloth-wrapped body out for examination. The geisha is still dressed in the blood-soaked ruin of her kimono, and the pale make-up on her face makes her death-pallor seem even more eerie. Examining her (with the *eta*'s help, unless the PCs want to dishonor themselves by touching dead flesh) can yield the following information:

- The geisha was killed by a massive sword-blow to her back, opening her body from the shoulder straight down to the hip. The blow was clearly delivered with great force. A roll of **Kenjutsu/Intelligence** at TN 10 or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 15 can tell that whoever delivered the strike used a katana, and was quite skilled.
- The geisha's last expression seems to be one of confusion.
- If the PCs closely examine her lips or mouth, or say they are looking for any signs of poison or drugs, they can roll **Medicine/Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25 to notice an odor of sake, blended with something less familiar. There is also a slight discoloration of her rouged lips, as though she was drinking something.
- PCs who have noticed the strange odor can roll **Poison/Intelligence** at TN 15, **Herbalism/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Medicine/Intelligence** at TN 20 to identify it as "liquid void." Again, PCs who are opium addicts get a Free Raise.

## Examining the Weapon

In order to examine the supposed murder weapon, the PCs will need permission from Tonbo Genso. He will grant it, provided that a Lion bushi remains in the room at all times.

The sword is a fine-quality katana, and is smeared with blood. Carefully examining the blood, and rolling **Kenjutsu/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Battle/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 25 will convince a PC that the smearing of the blood is not consistent with striking blows against a body – instead, it looks as though it was smeared on with a blood-soaked cloth. However, this is a matter of interpretation – if they show this to Tonbo Genso, he will suggest that the blood was smeared when the sword was put back in its saya (sheath).

## The Samurai Witnesses

Tonbo Genso has assembled all the samurai who witnessed Shosuro Tajiki's supposed presence at the House of the White Lotus. They total eleven samurai – eight Lion bushi, a Crab traveling bushi (Hida Rokotsu, actually a Kolat agent), a Crane bushi (Daidoji Remata) from the Crane ambassadorial contingent, and a ronin named Fukaze.

The eleven witnesses were all guests at the House of the White Lotus except for Fukaze, who works there as a guard/bouncer. (He has been employed by the House for fifteen months.)

**Most of the guests** (the Crab, the Crane, and seven of the Lion) tell similar stories: they were in the main common room of the House of the White Lotus, enjoying sake, conversation, and music, when they noticed a Scorpion bushi come into the House and speak with the madam. After a brief conversation, he went into the back hallways (where the guest rooms are). The witnesses all noticed that he carried his swords, which was most unusual – normally, a samurai surrenders his swords when entering a geisha house. A couple of minutes later, the Scorpion rushed back out of the House. Shortly after that, a scream was heard – a maid had discovered the murder while delivering sake to the room.

One of the Lions, **Matsu Genjishiro**, has a different story: he was coming out of one of the guest rooms and saw the Scorpion in the hallway, rushing out of a different room and hurrying down the hall to leave. He thought this strange, especially since the Scorpion was carrying his swords. However, he did not look into the room (that would have been rude) until a few minutes later, when he heard a scream from there.

The ronin bouncer, **Fukaze**, was watching the front door when the Scorpion arrived. *"I asked him to place his swords into my care, as is traditional. But he refused and asked to speak with the oka-san (madam) personally. She doesn't like trouble, you know, so I let him step into the front room and speak with her. I don't know what he said – he spoke low, you know, but I saw him give her something. Looked like a purse. Then she let him go on into the house with his swords. He ran out a bit later, in a great hurry, and rushed off across the road toward the Inn."*

- All of the witnesses describe the man they saw as a young, fit, athletic Scorpion, dressed exactly like Shosuro Tajiki and wearing a silk mask like his as well.

- They will all identify Tajiki as the man they saw, although they complain that he doesn't look the same without his mask.

With the exception of Hida Rokotsu, none of these witnesses are lying – they all sincerely believe that Tajiki is the man they saw. Rokotsu is an extremely skilled deceiver and it is unlikely that the PCs can see through his words.

## The Investigating Troops

Some PCs may decide to speak with the Lion troops who accompanied Tonbo Genso on his investigation. These troops were the ones summoned to the House of the White Lotus when the crime was first reported. They describe the crime scene as follows:

- Matsu Kaneda lay dead on the floor, his head severed from his body and lying several feet away. It was clear that he was caught by surprise and slain before he could rise to his feet.
- The geisha lay a couple of paces away. It appeared that she tried to get up and run, and was cut down from behind.
- The killer left no obvious trail or mark, but several geisha and samurai guests volunteered that they had seen a Scorpion rush out of the room. The Lion detained all the samurai witnesses. After Tonbo Genso arrived, he questioned all of them.
- After speaking with the witnesses, Genso asked the Lion to summon Shosuro Tajiki. Investigation quickly revealed that Tajiki was not in his quarters in the palace. After some additional questioning, Genso decided to seek him at the Inn of the Humble Turtle, where he found blood on Tajiki's sword.

## The Inn of the Humble Turtle

PCs may decide to question the innkeeper, servants, and guests about the status of Tajiki's sword, which was left in the weapons closet in the front hallway while he was speaking with the PCs.

Nobody, employees or guests, will remember seeing anyone meddle with the weapons closet. However, three of them – a ronin named Agatsu and two Inn workers, a young teenaged boy named Korohito and a maid named Nami – will remember that Korohito found the weapons closet left open while he was

carrying some trash out the front door. (This was a short time after the Scorpion arrived.) Korohito assumed one of the guests had been in a hurry and failed to close the closet after taking their weapons. The ronin was flirting with the maid at the time, but noticed the boy closing the cabinet door.

All of these people are sincere. However, the boy, Agatsu, and Nami have had their memories clouded by a Kolat spellcaster. If a PC speaking with any of these three persons makes a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 30 (or **Ichu Miru/Awareness** at TN 25), the PC notices an odd hitch in their behavior, as though they are trying to remember something.

A *Sense Air* spell, or any ability that allows detecting spirits (such as the Cloud tattoo), will detect the faint residue of an Air spirit in the minds of these three witnesses. The effects of the spirit can be removed by casting *Commune* (Air) with six or more Raises. (The spirit will not, under any circumstances, actually talk to the PCs.) Once the spirit is removed, the three witnesses will be able to describe what they saw:

- The weapons closet was open, and one of the swords – the one with the red saya – was moving. But nobody was holding it – it moved on its own, as though possessed. Then it suddenly stopped. All three experience a moment of confusion here: "It's very strange, samurai-sama, but then... I just went on as though nothing had happened. Why would I do that?"
- The ronin Agatsu remembers seeing a vague, blurry man-like outline holding the sword. The others do not remember this.

## Communing with the Spirits

Although the testimony of spirits is not legally admissible, the PCs may decide to conduct magical investigations anyway, in hopes of gaining useful information that can lead them to real evidence. The following outlines what they can learn:

- The **garments** of both Kaneda and the geisha contain no spirits strong enough to notice their surroundings. The sake spill in Kaneda's kimono does contain a single weak Water spirit which can be invoked by casting *Commune* with three Raises. It can show an image of Kaneda drinking sake, then looking dazed and dropping his cup (spilling it on his sleeve). Then he turns toward someone, looking outraged, and starts to speak in the instant

before a katana cuts through his neck. The spirit does not remember anything else.

- Shosuro Tajiki's **katana** and **wakizashi** contain minor spirits of all four elements (Earth, Water, Fire, and Air). The Earth spirit can be invoked without Raises, the Fire spirit with two Raises, and the Air and Water spirits with four Raises. However, all of these spirits have been badly confused by a Kolat spellcaster, and will be unable to say when the blood got on the katana. A PC who rolls **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 15 or better can guess that a high-powered shugenja has meddled with these spirits.
- The **saya** (sheaths) of Tajiki's swords contain Earth spirits. They have been confused in a manner similar to those in the swords themselves.
- A PC who *Communes* with the Earth in Tajiki's katana with at least six Raises can instead speak with the *kami* of the katana itself. This *kami* can tell the PC that a man smeared the blood on the sword. The *kami* cannot describe this man – he was “concealed by Air spirits.”
- There is only one weak Earth spirit in the **weapons closet** of the Inn of the Humble Turtle. It will take three Raises to invoke this spirit, and it has been confused in the same manner as the spirits in the swords.
- The only other spirit which could conceivably have witnessed anything happening in the weapons closet is the Fire spirit in the lamp by the doorway. However, that spirit is new and ignorant – the fire which was burning when the crime occurred was blown out, and a new flame kindled in its place.
- For details on what the PCs can learn from the spirits in the House of the White Lotus, see Part Four.

## Part Four: The House of the White Lotus

At some point, the PCs will probably want to go to the geisha house where the murder took place, in order to examine the crime scene, interview the house employees, and perhaps conduct magical investigations.

### The Madam

The oka-san (madam) of the House of the White Lotus is Hisuei, a plump middle-aged woman who always dresses in a fine kimono and wears the heavy makeup of a geisha to conceal her aging features. Although she tries to put on the front of a proper hostess, Hisuei is actually a shallow, greedy woman, a weakness which the Kolat exploited.

If the PCs wish to interview Hisuei, they will have to either bribe her (at least one koku), threaten her (**Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 10), or charm her (**Seduction/Awareness** at TN 10, or **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15). Otherwise, she will insist that the evening's events have left her much too shaken and weak to speak with anyone. Besides, this uncouth matter is best forgotten.

If Hisuei does speak with the PCs, she will flutter her fan, bat her eyes, and generally try to play a charming innocent. This is a front to protect her from the consequences of her actions – she allowed herself to be bribed into letting the assassin enter the house and visit Kaneda's room.

- Matsu Kaneda was a regular customer, visiting once a week or so. The geisha who died with him was his favorite, Atsumi.
- Hisuei will try to claim that the “awful Scorpion” threatened her, and she had no choice but to tell him where Kaneda's room was. This version of events does not jive with what her ronin doorman, Fukaze, said. A **Contested Awareness** roll (her Awareness is 2) will show she is lying.
- If the PCs press her on her truthfulness, or confront her with Fukaze's testimony, she will break down and admit (with much cringing, whining, and excuse-making) that the Scorpion bribed her. “I would never have allowed it if I had realized what that awful man intended – I thought he just wanted to talk privately with Kaneda-sama!” This is more-or-less true – Hisuei allowed herself to believe this rather than admit that she might be helping an assassin.
- Hisuei will describe the assassin as a “handsome Scorpion in a silk mask.” She will positively identify Tajiki as the assassin, if given the chance to see him. However, a Contested Awareness roll will show that she is not really sure of the identification – she is just saying what will make her Lion overlords happy. She will not change her

story on this – she must live here with the Lion, and the PCs are merely visitors.

- If the PCs have discovered opium in the sake served to Kaneda, they may ask the madam about this. Hisuei will be honestly outraged at the idea – she huffily informs the PCs that the House of the White Lotus is a respectable establishment that would never serve opium to its guests. “Besides, Matsu Kaneda-sama would never indulge in such a vice.”
- If the PCs ask to speak with any of the other geisha, or to visit the murder scene, she will try to balk. The PCs can again try to bribe, threaten, or charm her. PCs of sufficient rank (Glory 4.0 or better) can simply overawe her and demand cooperation.

## The Other Geisha

The other geisha of the House of the White Lotus are all pretty young women, skilled in the arts of music and conversation. Currently they are all stricken with grief at the loss of Atsumi, and will quickly break down in tears while speaking with the PCs.

The geisha have little to add to what the PCs can learn from other witnesses. They will confirm the version of events described by Fukaze and the various samurai guests. At least two geisha saw the assassin emerge from Kaneda’s room and hurriedly leave the establishment.

If the PCs ask the right questions about the dead geisha, Atsumi, they can learn that she seemed worried and unhappy in recent days. The other geisha have different theories about why she was unhappy – most of them think she was having trouble with one or another of her clients – but none of them realize the truth (she was being blackmailed by the Kolat).

The geisha who found the bodies is Tamae, a 12-year-old apprentice who delivers food and drinks to the private rooms. She went to the room to deliver a meal, and walked in on a slaughterhouse. Tamae is still shaken by the sight, and will go into hysterics if the PCs behave crudely or threateningly. Her description of the murder scene matches that given by the arresting Lion troops.

All of the other geisha can confirm that the House never uses or serves opium.

## The Dead Geisha’s Quarters

Some PCs may wish to view the private room of Atsumi, the geisha who died with Matsu Kaneda. It is a small, unremarkable room, crowded with a cosmetics stand, clothing racks, and other elements of a geisha’s life.

Carefully searching through the cosmetics desk (rolling **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25) will discover an old lock of hair, carefully tied off with a silk ribbon, hidden in the back of a drawer. The significance of this is unknown – Atsumi kept it a secret from her fellow geisha.

There are no spirits with useful information in the room.

## The Murder Scene

If the PCs visit Kaneda’s room **on the same night**, or **early the next morning**, it has not yet been cleansed and purified, and some limited evidence will be available.

*The room is well-lit, and the paper walls are painted in a pleasing shade of yellow, while several shoji screens display paintings of landscapes, samurai, and legendary figures. The tatami mats which cover the hardwood floor are well-woven and dyed Lion gold.*

*Huge pools of blood have soaked into the tatami mats in two different places. You can clearly see where both Matsu Kaneda and the geisha fell. A smashed tea-set, an overturned sake-warmer, and several sake bottles lie on the floor between the dark stains of their mortality. Although several incense sticks have been placed in the corners, the room smells of death, and you notice a few flies buzzing around.*

The blood-stains are consistent with the manner of death. There are no tracks on the floor – the killer avoided the blood-sprays.

PCs may notice (with a **Kenjutsu/Perception** roll at TN 15 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20) that there is no stain from a “blood-flick” (whipping a sword to shake the blood off the blade). However, there are a few scattered droplets and spatters near the death-sites, suggesting that the sword was not immediately sheathed. (The killer wiped the blade with a cloth, soaking up blood with which to stain Tajiki’s blade. Some of the blood spattered on the floor while he did this.)

The only other physical clue to be found in the room is in the sake bottles. A PC who examines them, or the

stains on the tatami mat where they spilled, can roll **Medicine/Perception** at TN 15, **Herbalism/Perception** at TN 15, or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice a strange odor mixed with the smell of alcohol.

This is the same odor found on the lips of Matsu Kaneda and the geisha – liquid opium, suspended in sake. If the PCs have not yet identified it, they can do so now by rolling **Poison/Intelligence** at TN 15, **Herbalism/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Medicine/Intelligence** at TN 20.

If the PCs wait until **late the next morning** (or later) to visit the murder scene, the room has been cleaned up, and a shugenja from the Temple of the Fortunes is performing a purification ritual. At this point there will be no physical evidence available, and the Water and Fire spirits in the area are gone. (See “Magical Investigations,” below.) Clever and quick-witted PCs may still be able to track down the stained tatami mats before they are burned.

## Magical Investigations

The murder scene contains a few weak Air and Earth spirits who can be invoked with two Raises, and the lights have a couple of Fire spirits that can be awakened with three Raises. All of these spirits can describe the murder of Kaneda, but cannot add any details to what the PCs already know.

- If a PC asks about the death of the geisha, the spirits can report that the killer spoke with her and took something from her. (A small bottle, if the PCs ask.) She stood up and started to walk away. Then the killer struck her down from behind.
- If a PC specifically asks what the killer did with his sword afterward, the spirits can say that the killer wiped down the blade with a cloth, which he tucked inside his kimono.

A PC can *Commune* with a Water spirit (found in the stains from the spilled sake and/or tea) by making four Raises. This Water spirit can show the same brief, blurred view of the murder as the spirit in Kaneda’s sleeve: Kaneda drinking sake, looking dazed and dropping his cup, then turning toward someone, looking outraged. He starts to speak in the instant before a katana cuts through his neck.

- With a second casting (or an additional two Raises) the PCs can also witness the death of the geisha. She looks down at the body of Kaneda, horrified;

then the killer speaks to her. She hands him a small bottle from inside her obi belt, then stands, turning to leave. The killer strikes her down from behind.

- A third casting (or, again, two more Raises) will let the PCs see the killer wiping down the blade and saving the bloody cloth. This is the only Water vision which will give the PCs a clear view of the killer, who appears to be a slim, handsome Scorpion with a silk mask over his face. He seems quite calm as he collects the blood, sheaths his sword, then turns and rushes out of the room. A **Simple Perception** roll at TN 35 will convince the PCs that this man is not Shosuro Tajiki.

Some PCs may decide to speak with the *kami* of the House of the White Lotus. This will require casting *Commune* (Air) with at least eight Raises. The *kami* of the House (which is feminine, gentle, and soft-spoken) can describe everything which happened inside the place. It is clearly upset that its harmony has been disrupted by this gruesome crime.

## Part Five: Miscellaneous Investigations

The PCs may be able to think of other avenues of investigation. For the most part, the Kolat has not left any clues or loose ends, but the PCs may be able to find some off-beat paths to follow. The following section attempts to cover most of these.

### Trailing the Kolat

If the PCs realize that someone meddled with Tajiki’s sword, they may try to track this person, either by looking for tracks or other physical evidence, or by magic.

- The man who meddled with the sword left no tracks or physical marks of any kind. Kolat assassins are highly trained and seldom leave the slightest evidence.
- Although there are no ordinary spirits nearby which remember what happened, powerful shugenja may be able to find other options – for example, *Commune* (Earth) with eight or more Raises could invoke the *kami* of the Inn itself. These sorts of high-level spirits will readily recall that a man “hidden by Air spirits” came into the inn and smeared blood on the sword.

- It will be impossible to find the source of the Air spirits – the Kolat shugenja is too skilled to leave any clues behind.

Likewise, if the PCs realize that the assassin at the House of the White Lotus was not Tajiki, they may try to tail him to or from there.

- Again, no tracks are available. The assassin stuck to streets crowded by the Setsuban Festival, left no clues or marks behind, and was not noticed by anybody outside the House itself.
- Magic can track the assassin into the house from the street, and out of it as far as the alleyway next to the Inn of the Humble Turtle. Prior to and after those times, he was shrouded by Air magic. The PCs will not be able to find any spirits which can help them track the man while he was concealed – again, the Kolat shugenja is more than powerful enough to erase his trail.

### Follow-Up with Hida Rokotsu

It is possible, though unlikely, that the PCs may figure out that Rokotsu is lying about what he saw in the House of the White Lotus. (He knew the assassin was not Tajiki, but merely a look-alike.) It is also possible that some PCs may become suspicious when they realize that Rokotsu is staying at the Inn of the Humble Turtle (although there is no doubt that he was in the White Lotus at the time that Tajiki's sword was being blood-smeared).

- Rokotsu claims to be on a trip to collect reports from Kuni Witch-Hunters operating in various parts of the Empire. He is currently en route from southern Lion lands to Unicorn lands, and has stopped in Kenson Gakka to enjoy the Setsuban Festival.
- If any PCs ask Rokotsu which faction of the Crab civil war he supports, he will tailor his answer to their own preferences. (He is a master at reading people and telling them what they want to hear.)
- It is possible that the PCs may figure out that Rokotsu is lying to them. However, he will not change his tune, and will relentlessly stone-wall the PCs until they give up. Following him will not be useful – since his mission is already complete, he will not meet with any of the other Kolat agents, and will depart the city in two days, traveling on toward Unicorn lands.

### Speaking with Ancestors

Although most ancestors will not be directly helpful in this situation, the ancestor Ikoma can be quite useful to an investigation. He can accurately answer one yes-or-no question per adventure. Clever PCs can use this to figure out if they are on the right track, or even to figure out who their real enemy is.

Some *sodan-senzo* PCs may think of trying to invoke the spirit of Matsu Kaneda, the murder victim. This, however, will not be successful. Kaneda is still awaiting judgment by Emma-O, the God of the Dead, and will not reach the blessed realm of Yomi for several weeks.

## **Part Six: Resolution**

The Kolat has done its work well – even if the PCs realize that Tajiki has been framed, it is vanishingly unlikely that they will be able to assemble enough evidence to prove it, let alone learn who really committed the crime.

Tombo Genso is convinced of Tajiki's guilt, and will not be persuaded by any evidence the PCs accumulate. If the PCs are determined to defend Tajiki's innocence, they will have to appear at Genso's hearing before the daimyo, Matsu Kiyone, the following evening.

Genso's presentation of the case will be a formal inquiry held in the main audience hall of the Palace, with the full Lion court in attendance (including Matsu Kaneda's widow Aoi and his son Yamagata). Tajiki himself will be present, disarmed and closely guarded by several Lion bushi. Tonbo Genso will present the full case for the prosecution, after which the PCs can offer their own evidence and arguments.

If the PCs do not attempt to prove Tajiki's innocence, they will still be invited to attend the public hearing where Genso presents his case to the court.

### Genso's Statement

*“Honored samurai, you came to me with the news that your general, the honorable Matsu Kaneda-sama, had been found dead in the House of the White Lotus, and entrusted me to conduct the investigation into this crime. This I have done to the best of my ability.”*

*“I began by examining the body, with the assistance of an eta. Kaneda's head had been severed with a single clean blow, while he was in the company of a geisha and unable to defend himself.”* Shocked murmurs from the audience. *“The geisha was also*

*slain, with a blow to the back as she attempted to turn and flee. Both were clearly delivered by a swordsman of great skill."*

*"I next spoke with the witnesses at the House of the White Lotus. These included ten samurai – eight Lions, a Crab, and a Crane – as well as the ronin who serves the House as a guard. All of them agreed that the murder was committed by a young Scorpion, who bribed the madam of the House to be allowed into Matsu Kaneda-san's room with his weapons."*

*"Based on previous reports of Shosuro Tajiki-san's antagonism toward Matsu Kaneda-sama, I asked that he be brought before me for questioning. However, he was not in his room – the servants reported that he had gone out several hours earlier, supposedly to enjoy the Setsuban Festival. Through searching and questioning, we eventually tracked him to the Inn of the Humble Turtle... which was also where the assassin had last been seen running."*

*"Entering the Inn, we found Tajiki-san's swords in the weapons closet. His katana was still smeared with blood. This seemed to me to be conclusive evidence, and I ordered his arrest."*

Genso will conclude his presentation by remarking that Tajiki has so far refused to confess, and asking the daimyo, Matsu Kiyone, to therefore render judgment against him for his crime.

## Defending Tajiki

PCs who decide to defend Tajiki in court will now have their chance to make whatever arguments they wish. Much will depend on what tone they take, since in the courts of Rokugan the appearance of honor and sincerity can count for a great deal.

In order to raise enough doubts about Tajiki's guilt, the PCs will have to secure two important pieces of evidence:

- The presence of opium in Kaneda's sake. Kaneda never used opium, and the PCs can easily confirm that the House of the White Lotus had no opium on the premises. Since Genso's theory is that Tajiki simply came in and murdered Kaneda, the presence of opium argues for some kind of subtler conspiracy.
- The ronin Agatsu's testimony about a magically-concealed figure meddling with Tajiki's sword. This at least suggests the possibility that the blood

on Tajiki's sword was planted. As a ronin, Agatsu is not the most reputable of witnesses, but he is at least a member of the samurai caste. The Inn servants who saw the same thing are useful only in so far as they can lend some small additional weight to Agatsu's testimony.

Citing the testimony of spirits will not be effective – the Emperor has long since decreed that spirit testimony is inadmissible in court, since it can be controlled by the shugenja who delivers it. PCs who attempt to employ spirit testimony will quickly earn the ire of the Lion. A scowling Matsu Kiyone will coldly remark, "Are you unaware, samurai-sama, of the Emperor's decrees regarding the testimony of the *kami*?"

Smart PCs, however, may remember that there is one sort of spirit who the Lion will respect: ancestors. If one of the PCs is a *sodan-senzo*, they can employ the testimony of ancestors on their behalf. Although Matsu Kaneda will not be available, other ancestors may be helpful – in particular, Ikoma.

- PCs who effectively employ ancestors on their behalf can substitute this for one of the two pieces of evidence listed earlier.

## Failed Defense

If the PCs are unable to offer at least two pieces of effective evidence on Tajiki's behalf, Matsu Kiyone will render her verdict. *"It is clear that Shosuro Tajiki is guilty as charged. Since he refuses to confess to his crime, I have no choice but to order that he be hanged. His ashes will be returned to the Scorpion Clan, for them to deal with as they see fit."* She rises to dismiss the gathering.

At this point, Shosuro Tajiki will take a half-step forward (prompting a nervous bristling from his Lion guards) and then prostrate himself. *"Matsu Kiyone-sama. Since you choose to make this judgment, I ask that I be allowed to confess and perform the ritual of seppuku, so that my name and deeds shall not bring dishonor to my family."*

The Lion daimyo, surprised to hear such honorable sentiments from a Scorpion, will give her consent. If the PCs made any significant effort to prove Tajiki's innocence, he will ask that they be permitted to accompany him in his meditations, as he prepares himself for his death. Unless the PCs have severely insulted her, Kiyone will agree to this as well.

## Successful Defense?

If the PCs have successfully brought forward at least two pieces of evidence (as outlined above), their spokesman must roll a **Contested Sincerity/Awareness** roll against Tonbo Genso.

If the Contested roll fails, Kiyone dismisses their evidence and renders her verdict as above. (The PC may choose to make an Honor Test at TN 20 as a back-up to the roll.)

If the roll succeeds, Kiyone grudgingly admits that the evidence is not clear enough to convict Tajiki without a confession. “I order you to leave these lands at once, Shosuro Tajiki-kun, and never return.”

At this, Matsu Yamagata springs to his feet, hand on his katana. *“No! This travesty of justice will not be endured!”* He strides across the room and spits at Tajiki’s feet. *“I name you, Shosuro Tajiki, the murderer of my father, and demand that you face me with your sword in hand, so that I may prove the truth of my words!”*

Tajiki is trapped – he knows such a challenge cannot be refused, although he can stretch it out a few weeks by requiring permission from his daimyo. Rather than go through such a useless charade, he agrees to face Yamagata the next morning. He proposes to spend the night meditating and composing a letter to his daimyo, and asks the PCs to share his vigil. The Lion will agree (assuming the PCs do).

## Tajiki’s Last Night

Whether he is awaiting a duel or an execution, Tajiki knows his death is certain. (Matsu Yamagata is a far more skilled swordsman.) He will try to get at least some of the PCs to spend the night with him.

Tajiki is convinced (correctly) that the Kolat has destroyed him. If the PCs seem to agree, or at least acknowledge that something very strange and improper has happened to him, he will urge them to take up the struggle on his behalf. *“This conspiracy is the enemy of all in the Empire, my Clan as well as yours. All of us serve the Empire in our own ways, but these evil men and women serve only themselves. If I must die at their hands, so be it... it is an honorable death. But I would not have my efforts be in vain.”*

If the PCs are willing to carry on the fight, Tajiki will smile grimly. *“So be it. I will ask the Lion that you be given my belongings, to take back to the Scorpion lands. Among those belongings is a small puzzle box,*

*painted in a pattern of blue and red. It contains directions. Follow them, and you will be able to continue my quest.”*

If the PCs were able to collect enough evidence to force a duel, and if at least one of them is a Scorpion, Tajiki will offer a gift: his swords. He will make this offer to whichever Scorpion PC made the best effort on his behalf (GM’s judgment). “Of course,” he remarks with a smile, “you will have to wait until I have finished using them.”

Finally, if Tajiki is performing seppuku, he will ask one of the PCs (preferably the same one he offered his swords to) to serve as his second. If for some reason none of the PCs are willing to do this, Tombo Genso will offer to serve as his second.

## Tajiki’s Death

If Tajiki **commits seppuku**, he will read a brief haiku expressing loyalty and devotion to his Clan, then wraps his wakizashi blade and performs the three cuts. He makes it through two of them before lowering his head for the second’s beheading stroke.

Aside from the PCs, the only witnesses are Matsu Kiyone, Matsu Yamagata, and Tonbo Genso.

If Tajiki **faces Matsu Yamagata in a duel**, the entire court assembles to witness the fight, along with many of the samurai who were in the city for the Setsuban Festival. (Hida Rokotsu is not present – he travels on as soon as Tajiki’s fate has been sealed.)

Tajiki fights with skill and courage, but it is clear that he is outmatched. After the first passage of arms, he is already wounded; after the third, wounded again; after the fifth, he falls, and Yamagata takes his head. The Lion warrior takes only one minor wound.

## Tajiki’s Puzzle Box

If the PCs follow Tajiki’s wishes and take his belongings back to Scorpion lands, they will find the red-and-blue patterned puzzle box. Opening the box will require an **Investigation/Intelligence** roll at TN 30, **Cipher/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Nazado/Intelligence** at TN 25. Up to two PCs may try together (one rolling, one assisting). Each PC may make no more than two attempts (rolling or assisting) to open the box.

Inside the puzzle box is a small folded paper, covered with writing in Tajiki’s personal cipher. Breaking this cipher will require a **Cipher/Intelligence** roll at TN 20,

**Nazado/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 30. The restrictions on number of attempts, and assisting, are the same as for opening the box.

PCs who decipher the document will find directions to a hidden compartment in a small, abandoned forest hut in Shosuro lands.

## Epilogue: The White Ninja

If the PCs decipher Tajiki's papers and go to his hiding place, they discover a wooden box packed to the brim with papers and notes: the accumulated records of Tajiki's investigations into the Kolat. Reading these papers grants the PCs two free Ranks in the skill **Lore: Kolat**. It also earns them the enmity of the Kolat (unless they are a member of it): Minor Enemy: Kolat, unless they already have the Kolat as a **Minor Enemy**, in which case it is upgraded to **Major Enemy**.

As the PCs leave the hut, have them make **Simple Perception** rolls at TN 25. Those who succeed glimpse a man in a strange, shimmering-white outfit watching them through the trees. If they see him, he nods once, then drops back into the trees and vanishes.

## 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                                       | 2 XP  |
| Good role-playing                                                   | +1 XP |
| PCs get Tajiki's papers                                             | +1 XP |
| PCs get enough evidence to force a duel between Tajiki and Yamagata | +1 XP |

**Total Possible Experience: 5 XP**

### Honor

Scorpion PCs get +1 Honor if they accumulate enough evidence to force a duel between Tajiki and Yamagata.

PCs who violate the Setsuban Truce lose 1 point of Honor each time they spill blood.

PCs who refuse to cooperate with Tonbo Genso lose 2 points of Honor. PCs who violently resist Tonbo Genso lose another 3-5 points of Honor, depending on their behavior.

### Glory

PCs who spill blood during the Setsuban Truce lose 2 points of Glory each time they spill blood.

PCs who refuse to cooperate with Tonbo Genso lose 3 points of Glory. PCs who violently resist Tonbo Genso will lose at least 5 more points of Glory, possibly more if their behavior is especially egregious.

### Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who find and read Shosuro Tajiki's papers gain two free Ranks in the skill **Lore: Kolat**.

If the PCs get enough evidence to force a duel between Shosuro Tajiki and Matsu Yamagata, Tajiki will give his swords (certed item) to the Scorpion PC who was most helpful to him (in the judgment of the GM).

Any non-Kolat PCs who read these papers gain the Kolat as a **Minor Enemy**. If they already have the Kolat as a Minor Enemy, it is upgraded to **Major Enemy**.

# Appendix #1: NPCs

## Shosuro Tajiki, Scorpion assassin, Kolat hunter, and Emerald Magistrate

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| FIRE 4  | AIR 3        |
|         | Reflexes 4   |
| EARTH 3 | WATER 3      |
|         | Perception 4 |
| VOID 3  |              |

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Shinobi 3

**Honor/Glory:** 0.7/4.2

**Skills:** Acting 6, Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Explosives 3, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 6, Law 3, Medicine 4, Ninjutsu (shuriken) 5, Poetry 3, Poison 4, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Stealth 6.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Apparent Honor (2), Dangerous Beauty, Heartless, Shadow Brand (1), Social Position (Emerald Magistrate, Ambassador to Kenson Gakka)/Dark Secrets (Shosuro assassin, knows about the Kolat), Sworn Enemies (many).

**Equipment:** Kimono, daisho set (fine quality), sash of an Emerald Magistrate.

## Tonbo Genso, Emerald Magistrate assigned to Kenson Gakka

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

**TN to be Hit:** 10

**School/Rank:** None

**Honor/Glory:** 2.8/3.9

**Skills:** Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, History 1, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 4, Kenjutsu 3, Law 6, Medicine 2, Meditation 3, Poetry 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Clear Thinker, Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)/Social Disadvantage (Minor Clan)

**Equipment:** Kimono, daisho set.

## Matsu Kiyone, daimyo of Kenson Gakka

|                |         |
|----------------|---------|
| FIRE 3         | AIR 3   |
| Intelligence 4 |         |
| EARTH 2        | WATER 2 |

|             |              |
|-------------|--------------|
| Willpower 4 | Perception 4 |
| VOID 3      |              |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 2

**Honor/Glory:** 4.4/6.8

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Bard 3, Battle 3, Courtier 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 4, History 3, Iaijutsu 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand to hand) 1, Kenjutsu 3, Law 2, Lore (government) 4, Lore (bushido) 2, Meditation 3, Oratory 2, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 2, Tessen 3.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Gentry, Leadership, Social Position (daimyo of Kenson Gakka)/Proud

**Equipment:** Fine kimono, tessen, fine daisho set.

## Matsu Yamagata, son of Matsu Kaneda

|           |              |
|-----------|--------------|
| FIRE 4    | AIR 3        |
| Agility 5 | Awareness 4  |
| EARTH 3   | WATER 3      |
|           | Perception 4 |
| VOID 4    |              |

**TN to be Hit:** 15 (27 in heavy armor)

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 5

**Honor/Glory:** 3.8/5.2

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 6, Jiu-jutsu (hand to hand) 3, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 3, Kenjutsu 6, Lore (bushido) 4, Sincerity 4, Yarijutsu 3.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Death Trance, Heart of Vengeance (Shosuro Tajiki), Quick, Social Position (general's son), Strength of the Earth (rank two)/Brash, Driven (avenge his father).

**Equipment:** Daisho set (fine katana, +1 Kenjutsu, inherited from his father), kimono, fine heavy armor (not worn unless in battle).

## Hida Rokotsu, Crab Bushi and Kolat Agent

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| FIRE 3         | AIR 3       |
| Intelligence 4 | Awareness 4 |
| EARTH 4        | WATER 3     |
|                | Strength 4  |
| VOID 3         |             |

**TN to be Hit:** 15 (25 with heavy armor)

**School/Rank:** Hida bushi 3

**Honor/Glory:** 0.0/3.2

**Skills:** Acting 6, Archery 4, Athletics 5, Battle 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand (kubo) 5, Horsemanship 2, Kenjutsu 5, Law 5, Lore (Kolats) 9, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 5, Stealth 6, Tsubojutsu 7, Yarijutsu 4.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Allies (Kolats, Daidoji family), Apparent Honor (1), Large, Strength of the Earth (rank 3)/Bad Reputation (anti-social), Dark Secret (Kolats).

**Equipment:** Kimono, heavy armor, Rokugani pony, daisho set, tetsubo, tear of the Oni.

### **Generic Lion Bushi**

|                     |                       |
|---------------------|-----------------------|
| FIRE 2<br>Agility 3 | AIR 2<br>Reflexes 3   |
| EARTH 2             | WATER 2<br>Strength 3 |
| VOID 2              |                       |

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

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 1

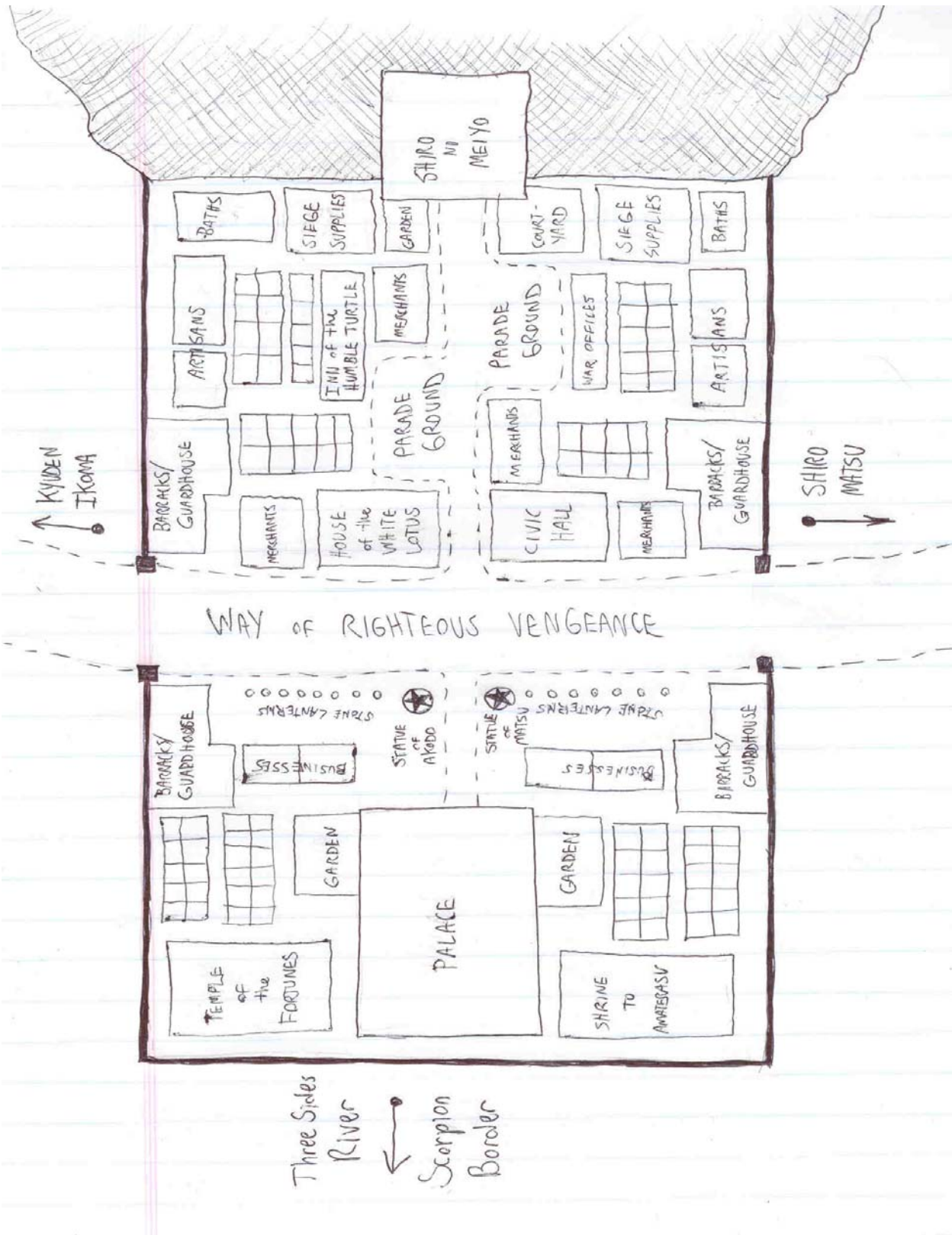
**Honor/Glory:** 3.5/1.0

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

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Death Trance/Brash

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

## Appendix #2: Map of Kenson Gakka



## Player Handout #1: Tajiki's Letter to Allies

*My friend,*

*In the past, you have assisted me in investigating certain unusual matters, strange crimes which seemed to point at a threat unlike any other in the Empire.*

*In my capacity as an Emerald Magistrate, protector of the Empire and its laws and citizens, I have continued my investigations into these matters, and have met with some success. I believe we are facing an evil which, if left unanswered, could threaten not merely the authority of the Emperor, but the future of the Celestial Order itself.*

*As a servant of the Emperor, I ask that you meet with me to discuss these matters further, and consider what steps may be taken to protect the Empire.*

*I have recently been assigned as the Scorpion ambassador to the city of Kenson Gakka, in Lion territories near the Three Sides River. I ask that you meet me there on the eighth day of the month of the Monkey, the day of the Setsuban Festival. I shall await you in the Inn of the Humble Turtle during the Hour of the Dog.*

*Yours in the service of Emperor Hantei the 39<sup>th</sup>,*

*Shosuro Tajiki  
Emerald Magistrate*

## Player Handout #2: Tajiki's Letter to Non-Allies

*Honored samurai,*

*I write to you in the Emperor's name, for as one of his magistrates, I serve him directly, spreading the blessings of law and peace throughout his splendid and beautiful Empire.*

*We have met in the past, and while our previous relations may not have been the best, I must now ask you to believe that in this matter I act on behalf of the entire Empire, and for the good of us all. A Scorpion I may be, but the Scorpion serve the Emperor, even as Bayushi served the first Hantei.*

*In my capacity as an Emerald Magistrate, I have uncovered something quite unlike any other threat or crime I have previously encountered. I believe we may be facing an evil which, if left unanswered, could threaten not merely the authority of the Emperor, but the future of the Celestial Order itself.*

*I have need of allies who I can trust to pursue such a grave and desperate investigation, even at the risk of their own lives and reputations. I suspect, from our previous meetings, that you may fit this measure. If you agree, I would request that you meet with me.*

*I have recently been assigned as the Scorpion ambassador to the city of Kenson Gakka, in Lion territories near the Three Sides River. I ask that you meet me there on the eighth day of the month of the Monkey, the day of the Setsuban Festival. I shall await you in the Inn of the Humble Turtle during the Hour of the Dog.*

*Yours in the service of Emperor Hantei the 39<sup>th</sup>,*

*Shosuro Tajiki  
Emerald Magistrate*

### Player Handout #3: Tajiki's Letter to New Recruits

*Honored samurai,*

*I write to you in the Emperor's name, for as one of his magistrates, I serve him directly, spreading the blessings of law and peace throughout his splendid and beautiful Empire.*

*I am involved in a most grave and dangerous investigation, one which I believe represents a serious threat to the peace and security of the Empire. In my capacity as an Emerald Magistrate, I have uncovered something quite unlike any other threat or crime I have previously encountered. I believe we may be facing an evil which, if left unanswered, could threaten not merely the authority of the Emperor, but the future of the Celestial Order itself.*

*I have need of allies who I can trust to pursue such a grave and desperate investigation, even at the risk of their own lives and reputations. Although we have never met, I have heard of your reputation, and believe that you may fit this measure. If you agree, I would request that you meet with me.*

*I have recently been assigned as the Scorpion ambassador to the city of Kenson Gakka, in Lion territories near the Three Sides River. I ask that you meet me there on the eighth day of the month of the Monkey, the day of the Setsuban Festival. I shall await you in the Inn of the Humble Turtle during the Hour of the Dog.*

*Yours in the service of Emperor Hantei the 39<sup>th</sup>,*

*Shosuro Tajiki  
Emerald Magistrate*