

Peasant Defense

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

**by Parvez Yusufji
and
Robert Hobart**

War stalks the Empire, and crime thrives in lands where samurai are absent. An Emerald Magistrate asks you to defend a helpless village against the onslaught of a vicious bandit gang.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS is a registered trademark of Alderac Entertainment Group. Scenario detail copyright 2003 by AEG and Organized Play. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without permission.

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. This means that only Rank 1 through 3 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 4 or 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 of average Rank Two.

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):

- All of the bandits use the Normal Bandit stats (no Elite Bandits).
- TNs for skill checks may be lowered by 5 at the GM's discretion.

High End Party (average party rank above Two):

- There will be a total of fifty-five bandits (add four Normal Bandits to attack #1, three Normal Bandits to attack #2, and three Elite Bandits to attack #3).

Adventure Summary and Background

The Lion-Crane war has raged for over a year. On the main southern front, where armies have marched back and forth repeatedly, there is no local authority left, and the peasants are struggling to get by on their own. This has made fertile territory for bandits, and a huge bandit gang is now terrorizing the area, raiding village after village.

Although neither the Crane nor the Lion Clan can spare any force to deal with this problem, it has not gone completely unnoticed. Otaku Taro, an idealistic Unicorn Emerald Magistrate, has been scouting the area, trying to track down the bandits' camp and organize a force to destroy them.

Unfortunately, Taro has just been summoned back to Unicorn lands. Desperate not to leave the bandits unopposed, he sends out messages asking the nearest samurai to come to his aid. The PCs are the recipients of these appeals.

This scenario presents the PCs with a fairly straightforward challenge: they must defend the village of Utsuwa no Mura from a major bandit raid. This will require not only combat skills, but also the ability to rally and train the local peasants. PCs who can bring themselves to cooperate with these "half-people" will find this mission much more feasible than PCs who are too proud or traditional.

Defeating the bandits, however, will not be the end of the story. A Lion army will pass through the area, and soon after a Crane force will begin to scout for an attack on them. The PCs may find their efforts undone as the village becomes a battleground. Some PCs may even willingly participate on one side or the other.

Credit Where it is Due: This adventure was inspired by the classic Kurosawa Akira film, *Schichinin no Samurai* ("Seven Samurai"), about a remote village which hires seven ronin to defend it from an upcoming bandit attack. The scenario is designed to offer a Rokugani variant of the story – complete with an ethical conflict at the end. GMs wishing to give this scenario the proper flavor (especially with respect to characterizing the peasants) would be well-advised to watch this excellent film.

Player's Introduction

The scenario begins in late spring 1123 IC. It is presumed at the start that all the PCs are located within a few days' travel of the Crane province of Takuetsu, the northernmost province of the Kakita territories. (This is most logical if the PCs are currently in or around the Imperial capital, Otosan Uchi, but it can also work if they are anywhere in southern Lion or northern Crane territories.)

Each PC meets a panting, exhausted commoner, obviously a courier, clutching a pouch with a small bundle of letters. Between gasping breaths, the courier asks, politely, if the PCs are currently performing any duties for their lords. "If you are free, my lord, I have a letter for you from an honorable Emerald Magistrate," he explains.

Ronin PCs, obviously, are free of any duties. It may be presumed that Clan PCs are momentarily free as well, or at least free enough to read a letter from an Emerald Magistrate.

The letter is from Otaku Taro. Each letter (they are more-or-less identical) is written in a smudged, hasty scribble, in a style notable more for clarity than for artistry. The letters ask whatever "brave and honorable samurai" read them to come to the Inn of Silver Breath, located in the village of Senzo no Mura in Takuetsu Province. Taro explains that he has need of "followers of bushido and friends of justice" to provide "assistance in enforcing the Emperor's laws." He promises to meet the PCs there and explain himself fully.

If the PCs question the courier, he knows only that "a fierce young Unicorn samurai" gave him the bundle of letters and paid him to deliver them to "any samurai who is not tied down with current duties." It is up to the PCs how they respond; however, refusing the requests of an Emerald Magistrate is a cause for losing Honor.

Part One: A Meeting with Otaku Taro

Takuetsu Province is a rich and fruitful land, and has been the sight of several recent battles and skirmishes in the ongoing Lion-Crane war. A few days' ride to the north is Shiro no Yojin, a former Crane castle taken by the Lion some forty years ago, and supposedly haunted by the spirits of the Crane courtiers who threw themselves from the walls rather than surrender. Several armies have moved through the province since

spring began, and as the PCs travel, they will see many signs of this: trampled fields, wrecked wagons and slain horses or oxen, and occasional remains of a battle or skirmish (arrows in the ground, broken banners, etc). They also pass many small groups of bedraggled peasant refugees, fleeing southward to get away from the fighting.

The village of Senzo no Mura is a nondescript place, much like scores of other villages in Crane territories, home to about 700 people. The Inn of Silver Breath has a sign-board showing a plump man blowing a cloud of silver steam off a cup of tea. The PCs arrive at the Inn over the course of about four days, and have plenty of time to get to know each other while waiting for Otaku Taro to show up (he is not at the Inn when they arrive.) The GM should use this as a chance for the PCs to introduce themselves and do some role-playing.

The PCs can also pick up some of the current gossip from merchants, ronin, and traveling monks who stop at the Inn for a meal or a night's sleep:

- A few days' ride to the west, the Lion have just captured a small Crane city, renaming it (with the brutal practicality typical of the Matsu) from "Brittle Flower City" to simply, "Captured City."
- Fighting has also erupted between the Phoenix and the Dragon Clans, with a Lion army fighting on the side of the Phoenix. At present it is not clear which side is winning.
- Emperor Hantei the 39th will soon marry, to his fiancée Isawa Kaede. Currently, Kaede is back in Phoenix lands. She is expected to return and marry the Emperor during the Chrysanthemum Festival. Many hope that the Emperor may use the occasion of his wedding to force the various Clans to make peace.
- The Imperial families are also pressuring the Lion Clan to make peace with the Crane. However, it is widely rumored that their reasons have more to do with a current quarrel between the Imperial house and the Mantis Clan than any real desire for peace.
- It is reported that the Unicorn, Crab, and Mantis Clans have formed a military alliance. Many wonder what ambitions lie behind this alliance.
- Recently, stories of a Crab civil war have reached even this corner of the Empire. Many of the commoners express worry that such an internal conflict may make it impossible for the Crab to

properly defend the Empire from the Shadowlands.

Taro Arrives

Assuming the PCs do not get tired of waiting and leave, Otaku Taro will finally arrive on the evening of the fourth day:

Entering the inn is a small, slim man with long flowing hair pulled into a loose pony tail. His lithe body is clearly muscular and fit, which makes an odd contrast with his soft, almost effeminate facial features -- noticeable even underneath a layer of dirt and mud. He wears the colors of the Unicorn, but his rugged cloth kimono is dirty and torn. It is obvious that he has been outdoors for many days.

Leaving his katana in the weapons closet, he motions brusquely for the innkeeper while walking directly toward you.

"Konichiwa. I am Otaku Taro, Emerald Magistrate. Please accept my apologies. I was unavoidably detained. If I may beg your indulgence a little bit further, I would like a chance to bathe and eat."

Presumably the PCs will be courteous enough to let Taro bathe. After cleaning up and making himself somewhat presentable, Taro will eat dinner with the PCs while making some minor, polite small-talk. (See "Notes on Role-Playing Otaku Taro" for some idea of how Taro will converse with the PCs.) Once the meal is finished and the innkeeper serves tea and sake, Taro will get down to the matter at hand.

What Taro Wants

The text below should be taken as a guideline to Taro's discussion with the PCs. He will deliver this information in a discussion, not as a speech.

"Samurai-sans, the reason I have asked you here is not to assist me personally, but to help those who cannot help themselves. I speak of the peasants of this land." If any PCs should balk at the suggestion of helping peasants, Taro will be quietly angry, and lectures them on their duties as samurai: "It is a part of the celestial order that those of noble birth are here to protect the heimin."

Assuming the PCs don't refuse to help, Taro explains the situation. *"During these times of inter-clan... strife, bandits have found many opportunities to prey upon the undefended. The Crane have been forced to turn their attention to matters of war rather than*

protecting their peasants. The Lion armies that rampage through seek only conquest, and will not stop to handle these bandits. Until the Emperor declares that this war is over, I fear the bandits will continue their wanton activities unchecked."

See the notes on role-playing Taro for how he will respond to any Lion PCs who get upset with his remarks.

"Originally, I had meant to ask you to assist me in attacking and destroying the bandit gang which is preying on these lands. However," Taro grits his teeth as he forces himself to admit, *"I have been forced to change my plans. First, I now know the bandits are more numerous than I had suspected. I believe they number near 200, more than we can deal with. Second..."* Taro draws a breath and seems to almost physically force himself to keep speaking. *"Secondly, I have been called away from here by Clan duty."*

If the PCs ask for details, Taro will only say that he has received a summons from his Clan Champion, an order he cannot disobey, however much he might wish to remain here and deal with the bandit problem personally. A **Simple Awareness** roll against TN 15 determines that Taro truly does wish to stay here and confront the bandits, but is trapped by duty to his Clan.

"I do not ask you to face 200 bandits by yourselves. That would surely be suicide. However, it may still be possible for you to thwart their plans. I have been tracking them and studying their methods for many days, and I am nearly certain where they will send their next strike force."

Taro explains that the bandits have followed a predictable pattern, sending out raiding parties of 30 to 40 men roughly every three weeks. These raids strike at peasant villages, a different village each time, looting them for food and other supplies, after which the main bandit camp relocates. Meanwhile, smaller raiding groups seek out richer prey: merchants and stragglers from the Lion and Crane armies.

"I am fairly confident, from tracking the pattern of their movements, that their next target will be the village of Utsuwa no Mura, a small settlement about a half day from here. They hit the village some months ago and slew many of the young men, so it will be an easy target for them now."

Taro believes, based on the pattern, that the attack will occur between 5 and 7 days from now.

"I would ask you to defend Utsuwa no Mura. If you can stop the bandits from getting the food, it will slow and weaken their main force. Hopefully, I will be able to return within three weeks with more help, enough to handle them."

If any of the PCs are ronin or Wasp, Taro will offer to hire them for this task, at the rate of 2 koku for ronin and 4 koku for Wasp.

Taro does not advise taking action against the bandits' main force, especially since their leader, while somewhat predictable, also seems to be fairly tactically proficient. It clearly galls Taro not to be able to simply attack and single-handedly wipe out these "mere bandits."

Taro will be of the opinion that the PCs should be able to defend Utsuwa no Mura on their own against "a mere raiding party," although he will also off-handedly suggest that "you can surely find uses for the peasants, such as building fortifications."

If any of the PCs are reluctant to help with this task, Taro will clearly be angered by their attitudes, and invokes the virtues of bushido to persuade and shame them into helping. He will also point out that, as an Emerald Magistrate, he has a right to cooperation in defending the Empire from the threat of "general lawlessness," which the bandits clearly represent. If any of the PCs still refuse, they will be out of the adventure, lose Honor, and Taro regards them as personal enemies thereafter.

Assuming this unhappy result can be averted, Taro thanks the PCs for their assistance, and spends the night at the Inn before leaving for Unicorn lands early the next morning. Assuming the PCs likewise sleep before departing, they will reach the village by noon the next day.

Notes on Role-Playing Otaku Taro

Taro is a proud and driven young man. A male born into the matriarchal Otaku family, he is personally convinced of his ability to equal or beat anything a woman can do. This conviction is tested daily, however, not only by the women of the Otaku family but also by the angry spirit of his dead father Otaku Taizo, who constantly berates him for not measuring up to the excellence of the famed Otaku Battle Maidens. This spiritual torment drives Taro to push himself even harder, trying to prove his father wrong. He believes there is nothing he cannot do, and it always is a severe

blow to his pride to have to back away from a situation or ask for help.

Taro will be very uncomfortable around any Otaku Battle Maidens, and will clearly have a very hard time forcing himself to ask them for help. He tries not to openly insult them, since that would be dishonorable and would sabotage his goal of defeating the bandits, but he will have a lot of trouble swallowing his pride. Aside from Battle Maidens, however, Taro has no problem with women and will be polite and respectful toward women of other Families and Clans.

Taro will also sometimes appear oddly distracted, as though he is hearing something others cannot (when his father's spirit is screaming at him). Any PC with the ability to see spirits (such as a sodan-senzo) will notice the angry ghost of Taro's father floating around his head.

Taro is quite idealistic, and takes the rules of bushido very seriously. He especially prizes the virtue of compassion, and as a result, has an unrealistically high opinion of the Crane Clan (and a corresponding low opinion of the Lion). He considers the current Lion-Crane war, and the accompanying bandit problems, to be solely the product of foolish and pointless Lion aggression. Taro will not directly insult any Lion PCs here, but he makes it clear that the blame for this situation lies on their Clan. His opinion on this matter is quite strong, and if any PCs try to argue with him, Taro will start to debate them, pointing out all the ways in which he believes the Lion have misbehaved... before catching himself with an effort. ***"We are not here to debate such matters. My apologies, samuraisans, sometimes I allow my... opinions... to get the better of me."***

Taro also has a high opinion of the Crab Clan (he was one of the major advocates of the current Crab-Unicorn alliance), and will not allow anyone at the table to speak ill of the Crab. "Whatever problems they may be suffering now, I am confident of the honor and valor of the mighty Crab. It is solely due to their sacrifices that the rest of the Empire stands whole and pure. Our own quarrels insult their courage."

Taro has been marked by the Living Darkness and has three Shadow Points. He is struggling against the power of the Darkness, and so far has resisted its seductive calls. He will not reveal this unless the PCs themselves confess to having encountered the Shadow at some point. However, he always carries a crystal brooch to try to protect himself from the power of Shadow.

Finally, Taro has one *very* dark secret, one he does not even know himself: his sword is actually the fifth Bloodsword, Treason. The sword is currently Rank One, and its influence is slowly beginning to affect Taro's judgment. Thus, while he will do his best to swallow his pride and avoid starting any quarrels with the PCs, if one of them insults him unendurably (especially if they are Lion or Scorpion), he will lose his temper and demand a duel. Although Taro will try to keep the duel non-lethal, his sword compels him to keep high dice for damage and to re-roll all 1's... so a duel might well be fatal.

Part Two: The Village of Utsuwa no Mura (Bowl Village)

It takes about four hours of vigorous walking (slightly less on horseback) for the PCs to reach Utsuwa no Mura (Bowl Village). Assuming the PCs leave in the morning, they will reach the village by noon.

This section of the adventure is very free-form once the PCs are past the opening encounter ("Arrival," below). It will be entirely up to the PCs how they go about interacting with the locals and preparing for the bandit attack. If they are to succeed in defending the village, it will be important that they form an effective partnership with the villagers. This will force them to meet and interact with folk who they normally regard as nameless "half-people." The major village NPCs are listed below, along with sections discussing the different ways the PCs might go about preparing for the upcoming bandit attack.

For the most part, the villagers should be portrayed as good, honest, hard-working folk, albeit somewhat superstitious and cowardly (as peasants are supposed to be). They are doing their best to fulfill their place in the Celestial Order, know very little about the outside world, and are certainly completely uninvolved in war and Clan politics. All they wish to do is farm their land and provide service to their lord.

There are two maps of the village provided in the appendix. The Player's Map should be shown to them once they arrive in the village, allowing them to make plans for the defense of the village. The GM's Map shows where the bandit attacks will take place.

Arrival

The PCs will approach the village via the southern road (see the maps in the Appendix).

The narrow dirt road is lined on the right side by a dense grove of trees. On the left side the ground slopes down into a rocky ravine containing a sluggish stream. Beyond the stream is more forest, but a bit less dense, harvested for brush and firewood. The path is only wide enough for two men to walk abreast, or a single horse to ride.

As you proceed, you can see the forest ending on the left, giving way to a cleared area containing many peasant huts: simple wooden structures, often slumped or crooked, with thick straw roofs. There are also a few huts on this side of the ravine. Ahead, a simple wooden bridge crosses the ravine into the village.

Before you reach the bridge, you come across a small boy and girl, bent over a bramble patch and picking berries. At the sight of you, the little girl drops her basket and runs into the village. The boy does not run, but faces you with his head lowered and legs trembling.

The boy, Kenji, is not deliberately insulting the PCs. He believes them to be bandits, and is waiting for death. He is only 7 years old and cannot tell the difference between a bandit and a samurai (the village normally only sees one samurai a year, the annual Crane tax collector).

Kenji will not speak until someone speaks to him. He will be nearly fainting with fear, but does his best to face his fate like a man. PCs who speak with him, rather than striking him down as an insolent peasant, can quickly figure out the situation (if nothing else, by rolling **Simple Awareness** at TN 5). Compassionate samurai will reassure him, which will require a **Sincerety/Awareness**, **Diplomacy/Awareness**, or **Kuenai/Awareness** roll at TN 10. PCs who role-play the situation well should get a Free Raise to the roll. If the PC makes TN 20 or better, Kenji will be instantly convinced of their virtue and becomes an ally thereafter, doing his best to help the PCs.

If the PCs are harsh or cruel to Kenji, as soon as he realizes they are not bandits he will throw himself prostrate, begging for mercy. He will not be any help to the PCs later unless one or more of them go out of their way to comfort him and make skill rolls as above.

Regardless, once the PCs finish speaking with Kenji, he will scamper ahead of them down the road, across the bridge, and into the village (where he will either rush to inform Jitsu of the truth, or simply hide, depending on how the PCs treated him).

Crossing the narrow, rickety bridge, you pass several huts, each unique, the results of many generations of careful repairs in the face of weather and wear.

In the middle of the village is a large open area, a sort of plaza of hard-packed earth. On your right is a crude bell-tower, a tall wooden post with slatted cross-pieces forming a ladder. A middle-aged peasant man is scrambling up the ladder. He sees you approaching, and a look of fear crosses his face as he hurries even faster up the ladder. However, upon getting to the top, he doesn't ring the bell. Instead, he curls up behind it, as though hoping you somehow won't notice him.

Gathered in the center of the plaza are ten men, most of them middle-aged or elderly, dressed in the ragged, drab-colored garb of peasants. Most of them are holding clubs, staffs, or sharpened bamboo poles. They huddle together, holding out the weapons in clumsy defensive postures, backing away as you walk toward them. A few other men and a couple of women emerge from other buildings and join the crowd, most of them carrying similar makeshift weapons.

One man, who looks to be in his mid-thirties, stands in front of the others, holding a staff in a defensive guard. While clearly frightened, he seems a little firmer in his resolve than the other peasants.

This man is Jitsu, the functional leader of the peasants (Danyu, the actual headman, is in the crowd behind him). Like Kenji, the villagers are assuming the worst. However, if any of the PCs are Crane, they will relax somewhat (they know what Crane colors look like).

If the PCs were kind to Kenji, he will rush to Jitsu and explain what is happening. Jitsu will visibly relax and then bows low to the PCs, the other villagers copying him after a moment. On the other hand, if the PCs were cruel to the boy, he flees through the crowd and hides in one of the huts (which causes much consternation among the already terrified peasants).

If Kenji does not explain the situation, Jitsu will stand firm and wait for the PCs to approach, while the rest of the small crowd cowers behind him (because the fellow on the bell-tower is too frightened to ring the bell, most

of the villagers are out in the fields working). Once Jitsu is convinced that the PCs are samurai and not bandits, he will immediately bow low and apologize for the peasants' behavior. "Our village was attacked by bandits three months ago, samurai-sama, and we live in fear of their return."

If any of the PCs should take offense at the suggestion that they resemble bandits, Jitsu will apologize even more profusely, prostrating himself and begging forgiveness for the villagers' ignorance. "We seldom see samurai here, honored visitor, but we should have realized your true nature at once from your noble bearing. The fault is entirely mine, samurai-sama."

Smart PCs will smooth over this situation, explain why they are here, and set about organizing the peasants for defense.

Buildings in the Village

Utsuwa no Mura is not a large village, and does not have many craftsmen or artisans. There is no true Inn – the PCs will have to stay with the peasants (most likely in Danyu's hut). Aside from the various peasant huts, the only notable structures are the tea-house, the mill, the silk works, the carpenter's shop, the bell-tower, the granary, the ox pen, and the town square.

- **The Tea House:** This nameless one-room business offers tea and shochu (a cruder, stronger version of sake), as well as simple meals (soup, rice porridge, etc). The proprietor is Moriko, an old woman who lives in another room attached to the back of the building. The shop's supplies of food, tea-leaves, and booze are stored in an earthen pit under her room – the bandits didn't search hard enough to find them, last time. During the evenings, many of the peasants will gather here to gossip about village affairs (or to talk over more serious topics). If the PCs want to make friendly contacts with the peasants, sharing a few meals here will be an excellent way to do so.
- **The Mill:** A large and very old wooden building with a heavy waterwheel that turns slowly in the sluggish current of the stream. Inside, the dusty air echoes with the slow but steady *thump-thump* of the giant mortar-and-pestle which grinds the village's grain. This place is the domain of Hippy, the "old man of the mill." He sleeps on a tattered futon in one corner of the main room.
- **Silk Works:** the village's silk farms take their product here to be made into cloth. As silk works
- go this is a modest one, producing only just enough cloth for the village. Until this year, it was run by a married couple, Yusuke and Kaname, their three children, and their two surviving parents. The husband, Yusuke, was killed during the previous bandit raid when he tried to keep his wife from being raped. Now the widow and her children and relatives are struggling to keep the place running on their own. The entire family lives in a one-room hut behind the main building.
- **Carpenter's Shop:** A large open-sided structure with a sizable hut attached. Eizou, the village carpenter, and his assistant "Ox" can be found here most of the time, working on furniture and tools, or sawing boards and posts to repair the village buildings. "Ox" is responsible for making the crude "weapons" which the peasants had at the start of the adventure – Eizou disapproves of violence and has so far refused to make any weapons.
- **The Bell-Tower:** This is basically an oversized ladder, about twenty-five feet high, with a narrow platform on the top, just wide enough for a man to sit with his legs dangling over the side. Above the platform is a small bell. The villagers ring the bell to announce the end of the work-day, to gather everyone for important meetings, or to celebrate holidays. It can also be used to warn of bandits, as when the PCs arrive.
- **Granary:** A large wooden building with a heavy thatched roof. This is where the peasants keep their supplies of rice, barley, millet, and buckwheat. Currently, the supplies are significantly depleted – the bandits stole a lot when they raided the place before. If any more of the supplies are lost, the villagers will starve to death before the autumn harvest.
- **Ox Pen:** The village's five oxen are kept here, in a large pen with heavy wooden fencing. A roofed-over three-walled barn at one end provides shelter from the wind, and holds ricks of hay. The oxen (all that survive of eight when the bandits attacked before) are collective property of the whole village, and are used for spring plowing and planting, as well as other heavy labor (such as hauling in lumber for the carpenter to use). They are much too valuable to slaughter for food. The twin boys, Kyumo and Ryomu, are supposed to work here, but often sneak off to play in the woods.

- **The Town Square:** A large open area, sloping down from north to south, where the villagers gather during festivals, special meetings, and emergencies. The village well is located in one corner of the square, and in peaceful times is a popular place for the village women to gather and gossip while collecting water for their homes.

Notable People in the Village

Danyu, the Headman: Danyu is a lean, withered man in his forties, with sunken cheeks and thinning hair. He lives in a large, double-sized hut with his aged wife Shizume (their children, both daughters, have married into other households).

Danyu inherited his position from his father before him. Unlike his father, however, he is a poor leader... and knows it. He does not like making decisions and hates having others depend on him for important matters. He relies heavily on Jitsu to actually make decisions. Everyone in the village goes to Jitsu first if something needs to be done, then consults Danyu out of respect. Although Danyu sometimes feels bitter about this, he is too shamed by his own incompetence to take open offense at the way Jitsu runs the village.

Once the PCs arrive (and are clearly not bandits), Danyu will step forward and do his best to appear in control of the village. However, he will frequently look to Jitsu for help and advice.

His flaws notwithstanding, Danyu is basically a good man who loves the people of his village. Although he is as cowardly as any peasant, if it comes down to a choice of his life for the village, he will die willingly.

Jitsu, the Leader: As described above in “Arrival,” Jitsu is a sturdy farmer in his thirties, rather handsome in a simple working-class way. He is married and has three children, the youngest still an infant.

Although Jitsu is not the Headman, and has no aspirations to be such, he is well-respected throughout the village for his good nature, common sense, and willingness to help others. Most of the villagers go to Jitsu first whenever there is a problem, and he can usually find a solution. Since the last bandit attack, it is Jitsu who has tried to organize some sort of defense for the village, collecting improvised weapons and telling everyone to gather and fight when the bell is rung. However, he lacks any real understanding of combat and thus cannot hope to succeed without samurai help.

Jitsu has no ambitions for himself, other than the simple desire to protect his family and fulfill his karma as a peasant. A devout man, he fully believes that he will be rewarded in the next life for his labor in this one. He respects Danyu and will not admit to being the real leader of the village unless the PCs press him on the issue. In front of Danyu, he will do everything he can to make it look like the other man is in charge.

If the PCs can win Jitsu’s support, he will be their staunchest ally, working as hard as necessary to defend the village and its people.

Chiziru, the Wise Woman: This wizened toothless crone, whose age is somewhere past fifty, is the village midwife and herbalist. She is normally a sharp-tongued woman who does not hesitate to scold those she thinks deserve it (although she will usually be more polite to samurai). Chiziru lives with her apprentice, Aoiko, in a decrepit hut on the southern edge of the village, next to the forest. The locals refer to her as “obaa-sama” (honored grandmother) and provide her with food, clothing, and other needs in return for her irreplaceable services.

Chiziru employs traditional herbal remedies and folk treatments passed down for generations. She is semi-literate, and has some very limited skills with the spirits – nothing resembling a true shugenja’s talents, but enough to cast a few minor spells from memorized formulas.

Chiziru will not willingly reveal her magical skills to outsiders, since she suspects she might be punished for such activities. However, if the PCs talk to her in a friendly manner and show a real concern for the well-being of the village, she may eventually confess her true abilities to them. (She will become markedly quieter and humbler when speaking of such things.)

If Chiziru comes to truly trust the PCs (which will require a substantial effort on their part to achieve a rapport with her), she may also confess to her deepest secret: she possesses a scroll, passed down through her family for generations. Supposedly, the ritual on the scroll will summon the protection of one’s ancestors.

If a PC talks Chiziru into letting them read the scroll, they must roll **Calligraphy/Intelligence** or **Research/Intelligence** at TN 15 to decipher it and determine that it is, indeed, a spell of some kind. Another roll, of **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** or **Spellcraft/Intelligence** at TN 20, can ascertain that the spell does, indeed, invoke the power of one’s ancestors in some way.

Aoiko, Apprentice Healer: Aoiko is a pretty peasant girl in her late teens, and is modest and gentle, easily flustered by the attentions of a samurai. She is Chiziru's apprentice, and has been studying under the old woman since she was eight years old. Her shyness and uncertainty disappear whenever she is dealing with a health crises (injury, sickness, etc).

Unlike Chiziru, Aoiko has no ability to speak with the kami. Consequently, Aoiko feels inadequate compared to her elder, and worries that she will not be able to serve the village as well as old Chiziru. However, aside from her lack of magical ability, she is a very skilled apprentice and an excellent healer. She cares strongly about her fellow villagers and is always trying to learn more to help them. If any of the PCs demonstrate skills in the healing arts (e.g. employing the Medicine or Advanced Medicine skills), Aoiko will begin hovering around them, trying to work up her courage to ask them about their techniques.

Hippu, the Old Man of the Mill: This ancient fellow is the oldest man in the village, a bitter shell of a man who spends all his time in the mill, puttering around trying to keep it in repair. His teeth and hair are all gone but his vision still works, and he does not hesitate to share his opinion with others – even samurai. Hippu is much too old to fear death, especially since he expects the bandits to arrive soon and kill him along with everyone else. “The only reason I was spared last time is that they were in too much of a hurry to find me. I’m sure the Fortunes won’t favor me the same way twice.”

Hippu has a dim view of the samurai caste. He feels that the samurai have forgotten their duty to the heimin in their false anger against each other. As a result, the peasants are the true casualties of this war. “If a samurai dies in battle, everyone says he fulfilled his role in the celestial order. People sing his praises and laud his courage. If a peasant dies because the samurai did not protect him, no one notices, no one sings. Only his wife and children lament his passing.” If the PCs mention territorial disputes, the old man snorts. “While you are busy arguing over who can tax the Emperor’s lands, bandits are free to slaughter and steal.”

Once the bandits attack, Hippu will refuse to leave the mill. Unless the PCs physically remove him (he doesn’t have the ability to resist), he will stay there to the death. *“I was born in these walls. I have lived in these walls. If today is my time, I will die within these*

walls. Now, go on, samurai. There are others for you to save.”

Kyumo and Ryomu, twin boys: These two energetic 12-year-old boys are constant fixtures in the village, running about, getting in trouble, and earning shouts and scoldings from adults. As twins, they were considered auspicious, and their parents have been somewhat indulgent in raising them. They are supposed to help tend the chickens, oxen, and other village animals, but actually spend much of their time playing and exploring the nearby woods.

Like many 12-year-olds, Kyumo and Ryomu think they are immortal and nothing can hurt them. (They do, in fact, have one rank of Luck each.) Once the PCs arrive, they will also contract a strong case of hero-worship, and will constantly lurk around, offering help, volunteering information, and generally making nuisances of themselves. PCs who can put up with their behavior, however, can gain valuable help: the boys know all the paths through the woods, and can get themselves (and the PCs) anywhere in the forest quickly and secretly.

Oushi (“Ox”), the Carpenter’s assistant: “Ox” is a huge man, built like the animal whose name he bears. His shoulders are as broad as two normal men, his spatulate hands look strong enough to bend iron bars, and he never seems to get tired. (Strength 5, Stamina 5.) Ox has no family of his own (his mother died bearing him) and was raised as an adopted son by the carpenter Eizou. He works tirelessly, not only at the carpenter’s shop but also cutting wood in the forest, helping with construction and other heavy labor, and generally pitching in wherever needed. He is well-liked in the village and everyone treats him like one of the family. The children of the village especially like him, since he always takes a few minutes to play with them in between his jobs.

Ox speaks slowly and deliberately, and sometimes gives the impression of being a simpleton. This impression is enhanced by the fact that he is a very peaceful man, taught by his foster father to never hurt anyone. During the last bandit raid, the bandits beat and tormented Ox unmercifully once they discovered that he wouldn’t fight back. That still didn’t make him willing to fight, but the casualties among his fellow villagers, and the threat to the village children, has convinced him that something needs to be done.

Ox has made most of the crude weapons which the peasants had when the PCs arrived, and he will try to make more whenever he can, despite his foster-father’s

disapproval. He also has a number of ideas on how to defend the village. He will propose these to any PC who seems sympathetic and willing to listen. The first is to dam up the stream in such a way that it can be unleashed quickly, catching the bandits off guard and drowning them. Another idea is to dig holes and put sharp wooden stakes in the bottoms, then cover the holes with straw and try to lure the bandits onto them.

If the PCs fight to defend the village, Ox will want to fight as well. During any battle, he will always try to keep an eye on where the young children are. If things go badly, he will defend them to the bitter end.

Eizou the Carpenter: Ox's foster-father is a quick-witted, sarcastic fellow in his early forties. He likes to drink, loves to deliver put-downs and good-natured insults, and flirts with every pretty woman in the village (but has never married). Beneath this irreverent exterior, he is a gentle and moral man, as is demonstrated by his upbringing of Oushi ("Ox"). He knows better than to trade jokes or insults with a samurai, but will show his true self around ronin or other PCs who seem more "down to earth" (such as monks).

Eizou hates violence, and when the bandits came before he gave them everything they asked for, hoping they would leave quickly. He will prefer to try that again, hoping the village can somehow "get by" rather than risk fighting the well-armed bandits. He does not know about Ox's plans for fighting, and will be surprised and hurt if he discovers them. "Didn't I raise you better than that, boy?"

If the PCs directly order Eizou to make weapons, he will do so. Likewise, he will only fight if the PCs force him to do so.

Other NPCs

The personalities listed above are only a small sampling of the village residents, who number over 120 even after the losses they suffered from the last bandit attack.

The GM should feel free to improvise additional peasant personalities to round out the village. A few possibilities:

- Moriko, the kindly old woman who runs the tea house.
- Kaname, the brokenhearted (and pretty) widow who runs the silk works.
- Hanba, a hard-working peasant and dutiful husband, but reluctant to fight because he has no skill at it.

- Jika, a cowardly peasant who urges the others to run away and hide.
- Attou, one of the few unmarried young men left in the village, who dreams of becoming an ashigaru and winning promotion to the samurai caste.
- Hoiku, a cranky middle-aged man who worries that the samurai PCs will abuse his beautiful teenage daughter Maru.

Sharing a Meal

The peasants will invite the PCs to share a meal at the teahouse immediately after they arrive. Whether they do or not, the PCs can have a similar encounter later by visiting the teahouse during the evening hours.

Most of the notable male NPCs in the village visit the teahouse during the evening, along with some of the women (notably Chizuru and her apprentice). They will be polite and cautious around the PCs, but any PC who makes an effort to be friendly will quickly be able to break through the peasants' reserve.

PCs who pay attention will notice that the peasants always eat very small meals (whether eating at the teahouse or at home), while offering full portions to their samurai guests. The food will always be spare and simple – rice, millet, some dried fish, a few vegetables. The villagers will not make any kind of fuss about the size of their meals, or about how much the PCs are eating, but it should be plain that they are getting by on as little as they can.

Training the Villagers to Fight

Smart PCs will realize that they should train the villagers as ashigaru (spearmen) in order to bolster the defense against the bandits. There are a total of 34 able-bodied men left in the village (between fifteen and fifty), plus a dozen boys who are old enough to fight to some degree. Some of the villagers, however, will be reluctant to fight (out of either cowardice or hatred of violence), potentially requiring persuasion (or threats) from the PCs to get them into line. The women will not fight unless the PCs specifically order them to, and will not do as well as the men.

There are not enough weapons for more than a fraction of the villagers. "Ox" will try to make more, although his efforts are crude and unimpressive. His foster-father Eizou the carpenter is reluctant to make any weapons, since he opposes violence. The PCs will have to directly order him in order to get him to make weapons. Once so ordered, he can make enough

spears, staffs, and other weapons to equip everyone of fighting age within two days.

None of the peasants have any experience in combat – they have lived in happy isolation under the protection of the Crane for uncounted generations. In order for them to be effective against the bandits, they will have to be trained. A PC who wishes to train the peasants effectively will need to be either a bushi (belongs to a bushi school) or possess Skill Rank 3 or better in either Battle or an appropriate Bugei skill (Bojutsu, Naginata, or Yarijutsu). Each PC can teach five peasants per day.

Except for a few key individuals (Jitsu, “Ox”), any peasants who are not trained will most likely break and run once the bandits attack. See Part Three (“Bandit Attack!”) for details.

Boosting Morale

The PCs may decide to try to boost the fighting spirit of the peasants. Possible methods could include telling courageous stories, singing songs, reciting epic poems, or even bragging about their own abilities in order to convince the peasants of their ability to lead them to victory. Some PCs might also try offering physical or magical demonstrations of their own prowess in order to impress the peasants. Clever PCs may come up with other creative ways of inspiring the peasants.

Each time a PC makes such a morale-building effort, they must make an appropriate skill roll (Bard, Poetry, Oratory, etc.) at TN 20, with the **Awareness** trait. Good role-playing earns a +5 bonus on the roll.

The PCs must accumulate a total of four successful morale-building efforts in order to influence how well the peasants will fight during the battle. See Part Three (“Bandit Attack!”) for details of how this will influence the battle.

Fortifying the Village

Smart PCs will realize that the village is wide-open to attack and needs to be fortified. If they don’t figure it out on their own, a **Battle/Perception** or **Siege/Perception** roll at TN 15 will let them realize that there are too many approaches to the village.

The most obvious vulnerability is the forest to the west of the village – bandits can come through the forest and strike anywhere in the village. Again, if the PCs do not realize this from looking at the map, they can figure it out by rolling **Battle/Intelligence** or **Siege/Intelligence** at TN 20. There is plenty of wood available for

building barricades, and the peasants will eagerly pitch in to any proposed effort block this route.

The peasants will not be willing to permanently block the northern bridge, since that is the access to their rice and grain fields where they must work every day (not to mention the Mill). However, they will go along with building mobile barricades that can be used to block off the bridge during an attack.

The peasants will also be reluctant to block the south bridge (the one which the PCs crossed to originally enter the village), since some of them live on the far side of it – including Chizuru and her apprentice – and the silk farms are there as well. The peasants are especially reluctant to abandon their homes, since they might be destroyed and rebuilding them would be a massive effort. The PCs will have to argue persuasively (or be quite threatening and forceful) in order to force the peasants to abandon these huts and block the bridge.

The eastern approach to the village is difficult (a steep, rugged hill), but the PCs may decide to place obstacles there as well.

The GM will have to adjudicate how much work the PCs can get done before the bandits attack. In general, any reasonable fortifications can be constructed, but remember that there is a finite supply of labor (especially with some of the peasants being trained to fight). In addition to building the fortifications themselves, the work will also involve getting raw materials (lumber, etc), either by tearing down buildings or cutting wood in the forest. As a guideline, it will probably take twenty people working for two full days to build a basic barricade along the western (forest) approach to the village.

It should be noted that some of the villagers still have to work in the fields every day, tending their rice and grain crops. The women will help with this work, but they cannot do it all themselves. As a result, the PCs will never have more than thirty male villagers (boys and adults) available on a given day for work or training. Also, this means that the village will not be able to simply “turtle up” and keep everyone inside until the bandits arrive.

Scene 3: Bandit Attack!

The bandit attack will occur in the afternoon five days after the PCs arrive in Utsuwa no Mura. Hopefully, the PCs have done as much as they can to prepare the village and make plans of defense. The GM should

make sure the players have access to Player Handout #1 (Player's Map) so they can make plans and indicate where they are deploying themselves and their peasant allies (if any).

The first sign of the bandits will be in late afternoon, when the peasants in the fields spot a large mounted force riding up the northern (main) road. If the PCs are keeping an observer on the bell tower, s/he will spot the bandits at around the same time. The peasants run for the village as fast as they can. The bandits, seeing what is happening, pull back for a few minutes to prepare for attack. The PCs will have a short time in which to make their final defensive preparations.

It is at this time that word will come that Hippu refuses to leave the Mill. It is up to the PCs what, if anything, to do about this. If they abandon Hippu to his fate, he will be slain by the bandits during Attack #1.

The Attacks

A total of 45 bandits will attack the village. They are reasonably brave, well-armed, and considerably more skilled at fighting than the peasants. Fifteen of them have mounts (Rokugani ponies). Against an average (Insight Rank Two) party, thirty-four of the bandits will be Normal and eleven will be Elite.

It is most likely that the PCs will split up their forces to defend the different approaches, perhaps with one or two PCs reinforcing each area. Smart PCs will also keep a central reserve, and may try to position archers to cover the town. (Ranges from the Bell Tower, the obvious "high ground," are listed below.)

The bandits will attack in four separate strikes, marked and numbered on the GM's Map.

Attack #1: 15 bandits on foot (twelve Normal, three Elite) will run up the northern road and charge the bridge, attempting to break through into the village. There is a clear line of sight to the road and bridge from the top of the Bell Tower, but the range is 150 yards (TN penalty +15).

Attack #2: 15 bandits on horseback (nine Normal, six Elite) will come up the south road at the same time, hoping to catch the village focusing its attention on the north. If the PCs have not fortified this approach, they will be able to charge directly into the village. From the Bell Tower, the range is 50 yards (TN +5 penalty).

Attack #3: While the PCs and villagers are dealing with the first two attacks, 10 bandits on foot (nine

Normal, one Elite) will move through the forest to attack from this direction, hoping to hit an undefended flank. If the PCs have befriended the twin boys Kyumo and Ryomu, they will spot the bandits approaching and run in to warn the PCs, giving them a few minutes to prepare. Otherwise, the first warning will be when these bandits burst out of the tree-line. Range to the tree-line from the Bell Tower is 100 yards (+10 TN penalty).

Attack #4: A few minutes after the bandits from the forest attack, the remaining 5 bandits (all Normal) will come running down the steep, rugged hillside, hoping to simply rush into the village and strike a weak point. In order for the PCs to spot them, someone with a clear field of view will have to roll **Battle/Perception** at TN 10 or **Simple Perception** at TN 15. (A PC who has specifically said s/he is watching the hill will not have to roll.) Otherwise, no one will spot them before they reach the village.

If the bandits in Attack #4 are spotted before they reach the village, the PCs will have four rounds to shift forces or use ranged attacks. The range from the Bell Tower is 100 yards (TN penalty +10).

Running the Battle

In order for the peasants to offer effective resistance to the bandits, they must either have been trained by the PCs, or inspired by the PCs to offer fiercer resistance. Peasants who have been neither trained nor inspired will break and run as soon as the bandits attack. (Exceptions: Jitsu and "Ox" will always fight as best they can.)

To determine how well the peasants do, match up their numbers defending each area against the number of attacking bandits. Every two trained and inspired peasants, or every three peasants who are either trained or inspired (but not both), will be able to defeat one Normal Bandit. To defeat an Elite Bandit will require one extra peasant. In general, the peasants (being fearful types) will prefer to engage the Normal Bandits rather than the Elite ones.

If the peasants are defending themselves behind a barrier or fortification, they can defeat one extra bandit (of either Normal or Elite type) over and above the total number which they could normally handle.

Jitsu and "Ox" count as two peasants for the purpose of making these calculations.

If the peasants cannot stop all the bandits who are attacking at a particular location, the PCs will have to deal with the remainder. If the PCs do not defeat the extra bandits within four rounds, the battle in that area will be lost and the leftover bandits from there will move on to attack elsewhere in the village.

These abstractions of the battle are designed to prevent things from bogging down into long sessions of die-rolling. The GM should strive to run this combat quickly and dramatically, switching back and forth between locations and battles.

Ambush?

If the PCs have earned the trust of Kyumo and Ryomu, the twin boys will spot the bandits sneaking through the forest (Attack #3). They will hurry back (via secret paths which only they know) to warn the PCs. They will also offer to lead the PCs back to the bandits.

If any of the PCs agree, the boys lead them at a run along a winding, twisting trail through the woods. The PCs (and any accompanying peasants) will be able to attack the bandits by surprise, getting one free round of attacks (during that round, the startled bandits will be TN 5+Armor to be Hit).

Chiziru's Scroll

If the PCs have won Chiziru's trust, she may have confessed her possession of a scroll which can summon ancestors to fight. In this case, the PCs may decide to use the scroll during the battle. Chiziru will prefer to keep the scroll and cast it herself, but will hand it over if the PCs are insistent (especially if they show her sympathy and demonstrate superior wisdom in dealing with magic and spirits).

If Chiziru kept the scroll secret, she will not use it unless the battle seems to be on the verge of being lost. In that case, just as all is coming apart in chaos and disaster, Chiziru will suddenly appear in the doorway of one of the huts, reading the scroll in a raw, raspy voice.

Either way, casting the scroll will require that the reader spend a Void point. The effect is a one-shot – once it is cast the scroll crumbles into dust. The effect of reading the scroll is as follows:

The air seems to shimmer, and you hear many voices as though from a great distance, crying out in anger and sorrow. Peasants with pale skins and mournful faces materialize in the middle of the village, as though stepping out of holes in the air. Although

their bodies appear solid, you can see that their legs fade away into nothing instead of ending in proper feet. With angry moans they turn on the bandits, reaching out with pale fingers to grapple and strangle.

Twelve peasant ghosts will materialize. They will slay or drive off a total of nine bandits (random choice whether these are Normal or Elite bandits) before departing back to the spirit world.

If any of the PCs have karmic Ancestors or are Haunted by ghosts, those spirits will also materialize. However, Ancestors will only partially manifest, as ghostly shadows of their true selves (this lowly scroll does not have the power to command the full manifestation of someone like Doji or Mirumoto).

Each samurai ghost will defeat one bandit before departing. Ancestors with a point value higher than 5 will defeat two bandits before departing.

Note that these ghosts and ancestors will be able to speak and interact with everyone here for the duration of their stay. This should make for some interesting role-play, especially if some of the PCs have poor relations with their ancestors...

Failure?

If the defenders lose the fight in one of the four attack areas (due to not enough peasants, no PCs in support, etc), the surviving bandits from those areas will quickly move to strike other defense areas from the rear. If the PCs have kept a central reserve, they can use it to reinforce a faltering position or to block a breakthrough. Heroic individual PCs can also attempt to block breakthroughs on their own.

If the bandits win in two of the three main attack areas (#1, #2, and #3), the defense will collapse as the peasants flee in panic. "Ox" will try to protect the children in the village, while other peasants will run to their homes, trying to escape or to protect their own families and possessions. (It is at this point that Chiziru will cast her scroll, if she has kept it secret up to now.)

It is still possible that the PCs will be able to win the battle, single-handedly or with the help of the ghosts and ancestors. If not, they will have to decide whether to flee or die fighting. If they flee, the bandits will not pursue – they are more interested in looting their hard-won prize. If they fight to the end, the bandits will not take any prisoners – they hate and fear samurai, and

know they could expect no mercy if the roles were reversed.

Aftermath of Battle

The combat with the bandits is meant to be a difficult and dramatic struggle, mainly due to the sheer numbers of bandits. However, if the PCs have adequately prepared the village and townspeople, they should be able to successfully defend the village.

After the combat, Chiziru and her apprentice will hurry around the village, treating the injuries of the peasants (and of the PCs, if they ask for it). Chiziru can also cast a healing spell similar to *Path to Inner Peace* (it will heal three Wounds, and she can cast it three times), although she will avoid displaying this ability unless there is desperate need.

At least one bandit downed by the peasants will survive in the Down wound rank, and can be taken prisoner. This bandit, Rikdo, will offer to tell everything he knows, bowing and scraping, promising to follow a peaceful life in the future, and so forth, hoping desperately to convince the PCs to spare his life. (If the PCs do spare Rikdo, he will keep his promise and flees the area, never to be a bandit again.)

Rikdo will tell the PCs that the main bandit army is nearly 250 strong, and confesses the location of their main camp. Furthermore, he will warn them that their leader, “Boss Chojin,” will bring the entire army here if the raiding party doesn’t return within a week! (Rikdo is being truthful, if the PCs try to test his veracity with **Contested Awareness** rolls.) This should give the PCs more than a little anxiety. They cannot possibly defend the village against 250 armed men, and help from Taro is still over two weeks away.

Scene 4: Now What?...

The next morning, while the PCs are still pondering the prospect of a hopeless battle against 250 bandits, the following scene occurs:

Three armored figures stride out of the early morning mist which shrouds the village. They are Clan bushi, dressed in the gold and brown colors of the Lion. Their hands rest on the hilts of their katana as they look around the village, taking in the evidence of battle with practiced eyes.

These men are scouts for a Lion army of over 1,200 men, commanded by a general named Matsu Morishige. They name themselves Matsu Ichinori,

Matsu Sokai, and Ahikoto (fallen Akodo). They will be cautious and suspicious of the PCs (especially if there are Cranes among them), but will be suitably impressed by the defeat of the bandits.

Assuming the PCs avoid provoking a fight, the Lions will relax after the situation becomes clear. They explain that their general is leading his forces back to Lion territories (due to an Imperial edict commanding him to withdraw from the Crane town he was attacking). They are scouting ahead to watch for any Crane ambushes. The army should pass through this area late this afternoon, and will make camp at the far edge of the village grain fields.

Some of the PCs may be distressed at the thought of a large Lion army moving through the village they just fought to defend. The scouts will be polite but unyielding, and suggest the PCs take up any complaints with Matsu Morishige-sama when he rides through at the head of the column.

The Lion Army Arrives

As the scouts predicted, the Lion army marches through the village in late afternoon. The Lion troops are highly disciplined and pass through the village without pausing, hardly offering more than a glance at the aftermath of the PCs’ battle.

This can potentially be a very tense scene if the PCs include Cranes or other anti-Lion types. The Lion troops will do their best not to get into an altercation, but their ranks include many bold Matsu, many of them resentful at having to withdraw by Imperial decree. If the PCs are hostile or insulting the Lion will eventually respond with violence. The officers will not allow this to escalate too far, but small brawls or duels could easily occur.

If the PCs try to speak with Matsu Morishige, they will have to have Glory of at least 4.0 or better (3.0 or better if they are members of the Lion Clan, 2.0 or better if they are Imperial Family), or an applicable social Advantage (such as Ear of the Emperor, Allies or Favors within the Lion Clan, etc). Alternatively, if the PCs have played the adventure *Ancestral Dictate*, they may have met Morishige there, and he will be willing to see them again (unless they earned his enmity on that occasion). Otherwise he will simply ignore them.

If the PCs do have enough rank/pull to speak with him, he will gruffly thank the PCs for dealing with the bandits who were “preying on lands which will soon belong to the Lion Clan.” He explains that he has no

wish to cause “undue damage” to the locals, and promises that his army will move on in the morning.

Some PCs may try to convince Morishige to destroy the rest of the bandit army. This will require a well role-played appeal and a suitable social skill roll (most likely **Sincerity/Awareness**, although PCs could substitute **Oratory**, **Rhetoric**, **Manipulation**, or **Political Maneuvers** depending on their approach) at TN 15. PCs can gain a +5 bonus to their roll by “cashing in” (erasing) an Ally or Favor advantage with the Lion Clan.

With a success, Morishige agrees to divert his army’s march the next morning and attack the bandits. Otherwise, he declares that his duties do not permit him to deviate from his march, and growls that he has no time for “magistrates’ tasks.”

Regardless of what happens, the Lion will set up a precise, well-planned camp on the far side of the grain fields. They pitch tents in orderly rows, prepare their evening meals, light torches and set watches for the night. None of them leave the camp except for a few men who fetch water from the stream.

The Crane Arrive

In the early evening, while twilight is holding and the Lion are settling in, a pair of Daidoji soldiers will slip into the village and observe the Lion camp. They will approach any Crane, Dragon, Unicorn or ronin PCs, asking for information on the Lion force – size, strength, and movements. If the PCs cooperate, the Daidoji will tell them they are going to engage the Lion army in a night battle, and suggest evacuating the peasants to keep them from being caught in the midst of the struggle. (The peasants, needless to say, will be extremely reluctant to abandon the village, even temporarily.)

If some of the PCs are Lion, or try to obstruct the Daidoji from learning about the Lion camp, the two Cranes will become cautious and suspicious, asking the PCs what they are doing here. If any of the PCs try to provoke a fight, the Daidoji will probably flee – they are under orders to preserve their lives and bring back useful information. Barring that, they will try to actively discourage the PCs from staying in the area (without openly admitting that they plan to attack).

If the PCs urge the Cranes not to attack, pleading for them to protect the peasants (especially if they have already convinced the Lion to deal with the bandit threat), the Daidoji will politely explain that this matter

must be taken up with their commander, Daidoji Uji. If the PCs request a meeting, the two Cranes will take them to Uji’s camp – however, they will politely request that any Lion Clan or Phoenix Clan PCs stay behind. If PCs from the latter Clans insist on speaking with Uji, the two bushi offer to take them there... if they will put on blindfolds.

Meeting with Daidoji Uji

The Crane army is composed of only 300 troops, over half of whom are Daidoji harriers. Finding them without guides will be extremely difficult – they are camped well inside a nearby forest, with no campfires or other exterior lights. Uji himself is located inside a tent made with a special heavy cloth, allowing him to light a lamp inside and study his maps and plans.

If any of the PCs try to find the Crane camp without guides, they will have to roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 20 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 25. Failure means they wander around for hours but never find the camp. Failure on a roll of 5 or less means that they stumble across a Daidoji patrol (three bodyguards and two harriers) and will have to surrender, run, or fight. If such PCs surrender, they will either be executed (if Lions) or held until after the battle (if from other Clans).

If the PCs do manage to find the camp on their own, and decide to approach it, they will have to convince the Cranes not to attack them as spies. This will require some good role-playing (skills such as **Obeisaseru** can also be useful). Assuming they can avert violence, they will be grudgingly allowed to meet with Uji.

Daidoji Uji is a swarthy-faced young man in his mid-twenties, with piercing dark eyes and a sardonic smile. His helmet with its infamous leather mask is set to one side while he pores over a map and listens to the reports of his scouts, trying to put together a plan to ambush the Lion army. He will not have much time to spare for the PCs – they will have to make their appeal quickly and eloquently.

Whether the PCs try to simply persuade Uji not to attack, or convince him to deal with the bandit problem, they will have to make a well role-played appeal and a suitable social skill roll. Again, as with Morishige, the most likely skill will be **Sincerity/Awareness**, although PCs could substitute **Oratory**, **Rhetoric**, **Manipulation**, or **Political Maneuvers** depending on their approach. The TN is 20 to convince Uji – he is very angry at the Lions and wants to punish them before they slip beyond his grasp. PCs can gain a +5

bonus to their roll by “cashing in” (erasing) an Ally or Favor advantage with someone in the Daidoji family (general alliances with the Crane Clan will not help).

Lion vs Crane?

If the PCs do not convince Morishige or Uji, there will be a battle in the cool, dark hours before dawn. If some of the PCs warn the Lions that there are Daidoji in the area, they will be alert and ready for trouble. Otherwise they will be caught by surprise and badly bloodied. Either way, the battle lasts three rounds on the Battle Table (L5R GM's Guide, page 239).

PCs may decide to join the battle on one side or the other. Lion and Phoenix PCs will be welcomed to fight in Morishige's army, and members of the Crab Clan and most of the Minor Clans (except the Dragonfly) will be allowed to fight as well if they volunteer. Members of other Clans (Dragon, Scorpion, Unicorn, Dragonfly, and obviously Crane) will not be trusted enough by the Lion. For the Crane, the pattern is largely reversed – Cranes, Unicorns, and Dragons will be welcomed, while Phoenix and Lion will not be trusted. Crab and Scorpion will be accepted if they volunteer.

The Lion will hire ronin for 1 koku, the Crane will pay 2 koku.

If the Lion are not warned of the Crane presence, they will be caught by surprise. The Lion will be Losing and the Crane will be Winning for the first two rounds of the battle. On the third round the Lion will begin to rally, and the battle becomes Even. The Crane withdraw at the end of the third round.

If the Lion have been warned, they react more quickly and effectively. They will still be Losing on the first round, but rally to Even on the second round. Uji will order a withdrawal and leaves a rear-guard to delay the Lion – the rear-guard is Losing, and the Lion are Winning, during the final round.

If any PCs participate in the battle, the GM should use the standard Heroic Opportunities suggested in the L5R GM's Guide (page 240). Duels should use the Typical Matsu and Typical Daidoji stats at the end of the module. At the GM's option, high-Glory/high-Rank PCs might draw a challenge from Morishige or Uji.

Regardless of how the battle begins (or ends), the village will be devastated as the fighting spreads from the Lion camp and flows through the village streets and houses. Several dozen innocent peasants will be killed,

mostly by accident, in the confused night fighting. The place will be left in ruins the next day, and the PCs have failed in their primary mission.

Crushing the Rest of the Bandits?

If the PCs convince Morishige or Uji to attack the bandits, they will march there the next morning and wipe out the bandit gang in a brief, brutal struggle. If the Lion are fighting, the battle lasts one round, and if the Crane attack, the battle lasts two rounds (simply because the numbers are close to even). Either way, the samurai are Winning and the bandits are Losing throughout the battle.

PCs can participate in this battle if they wish. As before, Heroic Opportunities should be taken from the rulebook. Duels will not occur (the bandits are too cowardly to duel) unless the GM decides to give one of the PCs a chance to duel Boss Chojin.

If the Bandits are not Destroyed

If the PCs do not convince either the Lion or the Crane to destroy the bandits, then regardless of the outcome of the Lion-Crane battle, the PCs will face a difficult choice – fight a suicidal battle against 250 bandits, or convince any surviving villagers to flee. The PCs can probably talk the villagers into evacuating, although this will take a great deal of effort – many of the villagers will prefer to die in their homes rather than flee to an uncertain future. The PCs may have to use force to get some of them to flee.

If the PCs do manage to evacuate most or all of the villagers, Otaku Taro will arrive three weeks later with a troop of 120 Unicorn cavalry. They will easily destroy the bandits (PCs may participate in the one-round battle), and Taro will arrange to supply the surviving villagers with enough money to rebuild Utsuwa no Mura.

Regardless, if the PCs made a sincere effort to protect the village (from both the bandits and the Lion-Crane battle), Taro will express his personal gratitude (all PCs will gain him as an Ally).

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 defeat the bandit raid:	+1 XP
PCs save the village (from both the bandits and the Lion-Crane battle):	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

PCs from Clans which value Compassion, or who place a high value on protecting their peasants (Crane, Phoenix, Crab), gain +1 point of Honor for successfully protecting the village. Similarly, these same PCs lose 2 points of Honor if they fail to protect the village. PCs who refuse to help Otaku Taro lose 1 point of Honor for failing to assist an Emerald Magistrate.

Glory

If the PCs successfully defend the village from the bandits, Otaku Taro will praise their deeds in court. All the PCs gain 2 points of Glory.

PCs who fight on the Battle Table gain 1 point of Glory for each Heroic Opportunity and 1 point of Glory for each victorious duel. (Defeating Uji or Morishige is worth 5 and 3 points respectively.)

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs made a sincere effort to protect the village, they gain Otaku Taro as an Ally.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Otaku Taro, idealistic and cursed Emerald Magistrate

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (22 in armor)

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 4.1/5.1

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 2, Courtier 2, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 3, Kenjutsu 5 (+1 for sword), Law 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2, Yomanri (gaijin archery) 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (many), Ancestor (Moto Chai), Ear of the Emperor/Contrary, Dark Secret (his sword), Haunted (his father), Idealistic, Meddler, Shadow Corruption (rank 3).

Equipment: Light armor, fine kimono, fine daisho, crystal brooch, sash of an Emerald Magistrate, Bloodsword Treason (3k3 weapon, +1 kenjutsu skill, rank 1 bloodsword).

Typical Normal Bandit (use interchangeably)

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

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Athletics 2, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu (archery) 3, Nofujutsu 2, Stealth 3, Tanto 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (bandit), Social Disadvantage (heimin)

Equipment: Poor-quality Katana (1k2), average quality bow and arrows (1k2), light armor.

Typical Elite Bandit (use interchangeably)

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

VOID 1	
--------	--

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

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Athletics 3, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (archery) 4, Nofujutsu 3, Stealth 3, Tanto 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bad Reputation (bandit), Social Disadvantage (heimin)

Equipment: Poor-quality Katana (1k2), average quality bow and arrows (1k2), light armor.

“Boss Chojin,” Bandit Leader

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

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

School/Rank: None (true ronin)

Honor/Glory: 0.7/0.5

Skills: Athletics 3, Defense 5, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 4, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu 4, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Leadership, Quick/Bad Reputation (bandit), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set, bow with 20 arrows.

Typical Peasant (use interchangeably)

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

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 1.3/0

Skills: Athletics 2, Craft (farming) 4, Hunting 1, Nofujutsu (peasant weapons) 2, Stealth 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (heimin)

Equipment: Sandals, clothing, peasant weapon (1k1 or 0k2).

Typical Matsu bushi (use interchangeably)

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

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

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 1

Rank 1: The Lion's Roar. When in Full Attack, creates Fear equal to School Rank +1.

Honor/Glory: 3.5/1.0

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

Advantages/Disadvantages: Death Trance/Brash

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

Matsu Morishige, Lion Clan general

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 with Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 3

Rank 1: The Lion's Roar. When in Full Attack, creates Fear equal to School Rank +1.

Rank 2: Matsu's Fury. When in Full Attack, gain one additional attack per round.

Rank 3: With My Ancestors Beside Me. Add Honor Rank x 2 to all initiative rolls.

Honor/Glory: 3.2/5.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 5, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, History 3, Iaijutsu 3, Katana (specialized weapon skill) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 4, Lore (Lion Clan) 4, Sincerity 3, Tessen 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Natural Leader, Social Position (Lion officer)/Haunted (Akodo Arasou).

Equipment: Daisho set, tessen, heavy armor, kimono.

Typical Daidoji bushi (use interchangeably)

FIRE 2	AIR 2
--------	-------

Agility 3	Reflexes 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

[Wounds are at +2 per Rank]

TN to be Hit: 20 (light armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 1

Rank One Technique: Add Honor rank to total of each Wound rank.

Honor/Glory: 2.7/1.0

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Bard 1, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Law 1, Medicine 1, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank one).

Equipment: Light armor, fine daisho, bow with 20 arrows, yari.

Typical Daidoji Harrier (use interchangeably)

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
VOID 2	

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

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 1

Rank one technique: When attacking a foe unaware of his presence, the Harrier adds unkept damage dice equal to his school rank.

Honor/Glory: 1.6/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Climbing 2, Defense 3, Explosives 2, Iaijutsu 3, Jiujutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Stealth 4, Traps 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Light armor, daisho, bow with 20 arrows, yari.

Daidoji Uji, Crane Commander

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

[Wounds are +2 per rank.]

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 in Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 4

Rank One: Add Honor Rank to total wounds at each Wound Rank.

Rank Two: If Uji takes Full Defense, he automatically wins initiative the next round.

Rank Three: Uji's TN to be Hit is increased by the value of his opponent's armor.

Rank Four: Two attacks per round.

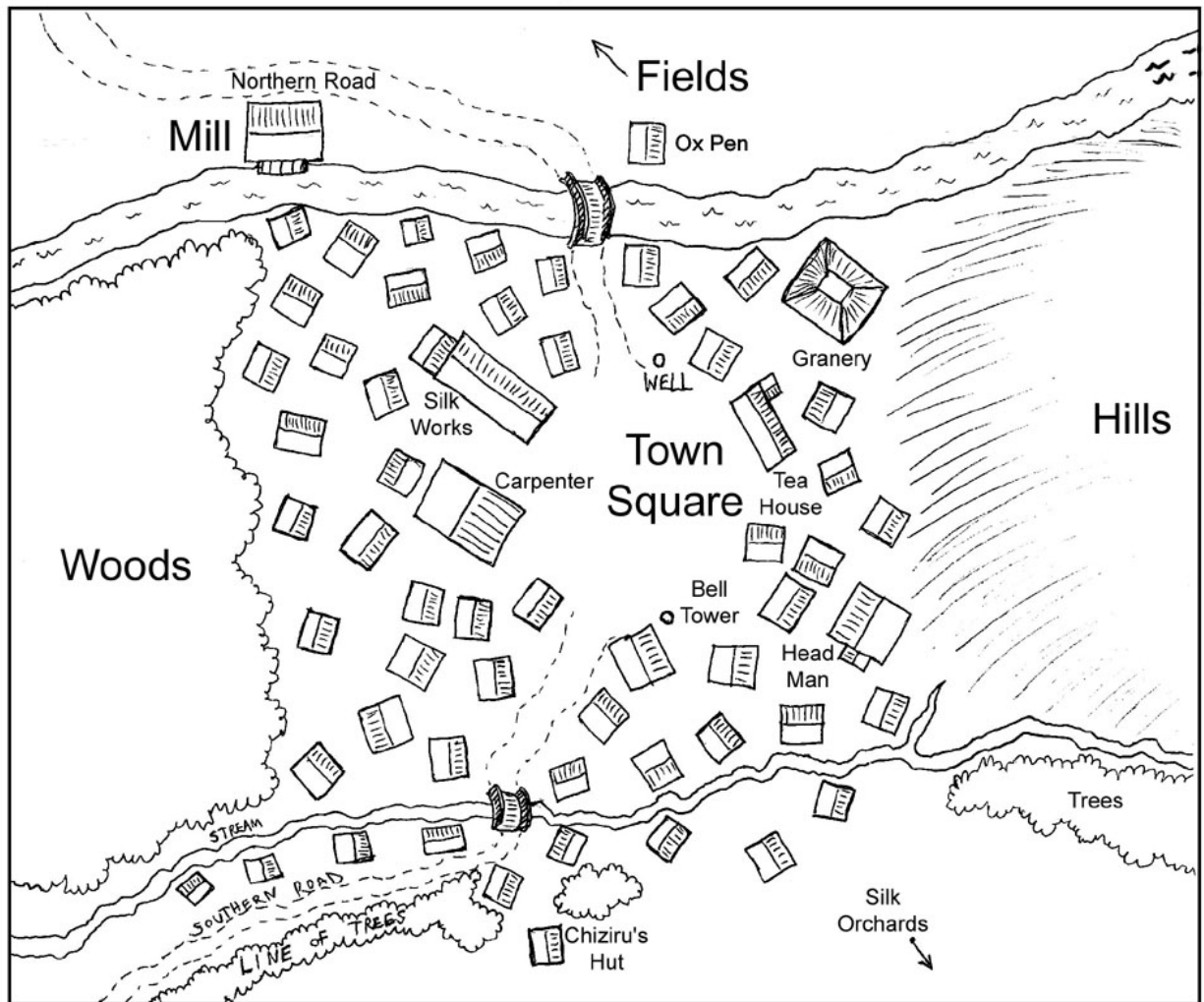
Honor/Glory: 2.5/6.5

Skills: Battle 7, Commerce 6, Defense 9, Etiquette 3, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 8, Kyujutsu 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick Healer, Way of the Land (Crane lands)/Fascination (gaijin).

Equipment: Heavy armor, fine daisho set (3k2/2k2), fine bow (+1 Kyujutsu), 20 fine arrows (2k2 damage).

Appendix #2: Player's Map of Utsuwa Mura



Appendix #3: GM's Map of Utsuwa Mura

