

The Soul of Akodo

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

The Lion and the Crane, Part 3

by Robert Hobart

You have been invited to witness a Lion gempukku ceremony at the Castle of the Swift Sword. It is said that the legendary sensei Akodo Kage will be making an important announcement. And there's a small matter of two rival duelists...

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. 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 TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! Please read the scenario thoroughly before trying to run it.

This adventure is a Low-Mid Level adventure. This means that only Rank 1, 2 or 3 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 4 through 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

The end of this adventure lists 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):

- Lower all skill-roll TNs by 5.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank Two and Three):

- Selectively raise skill-roll TNs by 5.
- The Generic Bushi in the kenjutsu tournament are Rank Two and have Void rings of 3.

Adventure Summary and Background

It is the early spring of 1122 IC. The Lion Clan have invited samurai from all across the Empire to attend the spring gempukku (coming-of-age) ceremony at Shiro Sano Ken Hayai, the Castle of the Swift Sword, the home to the Akodo School. The PCs are there, along with everyone else, to participate in this demonstration of the Lion Clan's power and strength. The clear intent of this event is to remind the rest of the Empire of the Lion Clan's military might. Undoubtedly, the recent military clashes between the Lion and Crane at the city of Toshi Ranbo also plays a part in this deliberate demonstration of power.

While the PCs are here, they will find themselves in the midst of a personal/political struggle involving a bitter rivalry between a minor Phoenix daimyo, Shiba Tsumenitsu, and a Dragon general, Mirumoto Sanbe. The PCs may be able to avert a war by intervening in this incident – or they may wind up accelerating one. The Lion, of course, will be quite upset if the PCs allow a violent incident to disrupt their ceremony.

Meanwhile, a Scorpion agent, Shosuro Tajiki, is taking advantage of this public event to deliver a blackmail notice to one of the Lion sensei, Akodo Kansei. The threat will so unnerve Kansei that he will attempt to maneuver someone into killing Tajiki.

As the ceremony ends, word comes of the Lion's Matsu family launching raids into Crane territory. War is coming, however much it may be resisted. And one other event of significance will occur at this ceremony: the revered Lion sensei Akodo Kage will retire, giving his swords (including one most peculiar blade) to his finest student, Akodo Toturi, Champion of the Lion Clan.

Notes on Running This Adventure: The events in this scenario will normally follow a specific pre-determined sequence. Whether this sequence changes is up to the players. Depending on the Clan make-up of the party and the personalities and motivations of individual PCs, some player characters may wind up working on different sides of the various plots. For example, Scorpions will probably be helping their Clan's blackmail and theft schemes, while Lion PCs may or may not help Akodo Kansei in his attempt to thwart the Scorpion.

The GM should be prepared to modify the events and plot-points of the scenario to take account of player-character actions.

Introduction

Cool sunlight sparkles on the walls of Shiro Sano Ken Hayai, the Castle of the Swift Sword, home to the Akodo Bushi school. Tomorrow, on the first day of spring in the year 1122 of the Imperial Calendar, over two hundred young Lion samurai will complete their training here and undertake their gempukku ceremony, stepping into adulthood and becoming soldiers of the Lion Clan. The Lion, in an unexpected move, have invited samurai from across the Empire to witness this year's annual ceremony.

This afternoon, blessed by a clear day lit with the radiance of Amaterasu, the guests arrive. Akodo Toturi, the champion of the Lion Clan, stands at the gates and greets each guest personally, even the occasional ronin who is here only in hopes of employment.

Toturi is a tall young man in his twenties, with clear, piercing eyes and hair dyed Lion gold. His voice is clear and compelling. He will greet each of the PCs by name, ask after their health, and so forth. Have each player describe their character as they are introduced to the Lion Champion. Toturi will also greet the notable NPCs (see the list below, in Scene One, under "The Other Guests"), allowing the GM to establish them in the minds of the players.

Scene One: A Pleasant Evening with the Lion

After the introduction with Akodo Toturi, the PCs are led into the castle grounds by servants and given a chance to settle in and wash. After that, the guests gather in the main audience hall of the castle while they wait for dinner. Everyone mills around, doing a meet-and-greet, as the last few guests arrive. This is a chance for the PCs to interact with the various NPCs and to catch some of the news and gossip which is going around, and to watch the interactions of the NPCs with each other.

The Other Guests

Besides the PCs, there are numerous guests here, representing every Great Clan in the Empire, along with Miya Satoshi of the Imperial Families, some Minor Clan representatives, and a few ronin. The GM should feel free to improvise NPCs from various Clans,

according to the composition of the party and their interests. Regardless, the following persons will definitely be present (statistics for these individuals are found in GM's Aid #1, "NPCs"):

Akodo Toturi, the Lion Clan Champion. Toturi is a tall, handsome man in his late twenties, and wears his hair dyed in the traditional Lion gold. He was raised in a monastery in his youth and took over the Lion Clan eight years ago when his older brother, Akodo Arasou, perished in battle at Toshi Ranbo. Toturi is a personal friend to the Doji family daimyo, Doji Hoturi, and would like his clan to live in peace with its neighbors. He wages a never-ending struggle with the more militant and numerous Matsu family to keep the Lion out of war. Now he fears that struggle may be failing. He views this public ceremony as an opportunity to impress the other Clans with the strength of the Lion, and hopefully to remind them of the risks of provoking the angry Matsu. Unknown to him, his sensei Kage is plotting to ruin him with a "gift" at the end of this ceremony, and the Matsu are already preparing to launch his Clan into war.

Akodo Kage, Honored Sensei. Kage is the oldest and most revered teacher of the Akodo school, and Toturi himself was once his student. Kage is also secretly one of the ten Kolat Masters, and is plotting to bring down his Clan (and especially Toturi) in order to hasten the fall of the Hantei dynasty. Outwardly, however, Kage puts on the perfect front of a wise old man who loves his Clan and reveres the code of bushido. Nothing will crack his façade. He expresses no desire for war, but offers the warning that the Lion cannot endure the "insults and arrogance" of the Crane Clan forever. At this ceremony he plans to announce his retirement and give Akodo Toturi his swords – including the Bloodsword Passion, which the Kolat secretly recovered some months ago.

Matsu Tagemuchi, rising Lion general. Tagemuchi is a fierce man in his early thirties who wears a closely trimmed beard and moustache. He hates all the enemies of the Lion, especially the Crane ("fancy posers") and the Unicorn ("dishonorable barbarians"). He led Lion forces to the City of the Rich Frog last summer, where they nearly went to war with the Unicorn. Tagemuchi is still convinced that the Lion should have attacked the city.

Tagemuchi has risen from the rank of gunso (sergeant) all the way to a field general; he is proud of his accomplishments and disdainful of those who have not served in battle. He tends to speak his mind, and is

temperamental and easily provoked – except on the battlefield, where he is cool and self-controlled.

Tagemuchi is aware that the Matsu family is planning to launch a war with the Crane this spring, and he may let hints of this slip to Lions (and especially Matsu) who seem properly hostile to the Crane Clan. He also knows that there is a secret alliance between his family and the Shiba family of the Phoenix Clan, although he will be careful not to mention this to anyone he doesn't trust implicitly.

Akodo Kansei, Lion sensei. Kansei is a lean, bony-faced man in his early forties, with graying hair worn in a loose topknot. Despite his advancing age he is a formidable swordsman and a famed instructor in combat and dueling. He is currently the second-oldest sensei at the Akodo school (after Akodo Kage) and is much-revered by the younger Lion – thousands of former students look up to him as a leader and teacher. He is also, unfortunately, the father of an illegitimate child by one of his long-ago students, Akodo Momiji. Momiji became ronin rather than reveal who her secret lover was, and Kansei has lived with that guilt ever since. Now the Scorpion have learned of this past indiscretion, and are about to make him pay for it.

Shiba Tsumenitsu, Phoenix Minor Daimyo. Tsumenitsu is a muscular man in his thirties, with a confident and swaggering air. He is a swordsman of considerable repute, and was appointed as a daimyo late last year due to his many accomplishments as a swordsman – especially his stunning victory in a Phoenix Clan kenjutsu tournament last autumn. He is the bitter enemy of Mirumoto Sanbe, with whom he fought a famous duel at Winter Court two years ago. The duel was provoked by Sanbe insulting Tsumenitsu's swordsmanship, and ended in a draw when both men were severely wounded in the opening pass of arms.

Tsumenitsu quickly becomes angry if his skills with a sword are questioned. He has a tendency to harass members of the Dragon Clan, especially his bitter enemy Mirumoto Sanbe. Tsumenitsu is noxiously proud of his elevation to daimyo and will not hesitate to use his position and status to insult and belittle any Dragon samurai (especially low-ranking PCs) at the dinner. He also tends to look down on Unicorn (for their barbaric foreign ways), Crab (for their crudity and reputation for Taint), and ronin (for being ronin). When dealing with those who are not on his "hit list," however, Tsumenitsu is a charming and elegant man with style and flawless etiquette.

A PC who rolls **Courtier** or **Lore** (any Lore category judged suitable by the GM), with the **Intelligence** trait, at TN 15 may have heard stories of Tsumenitsu's famous duel with Mirumoto Sanbe. A PC who rolls **Simple Intelligence** (or **Lore: Phoenix Clan/Intelligence**, or **Lore: Kenjutsu/Intelligence**) at TN 15 knows the circumstances of Tsumenitsu's recent promotion to daimyo.

Tsumenitsu has brought with him a famous Crane sword, Karatekawari Hana ("Flower-Cleaver"), which his family won from the Crane in a border war many generations ago. He plans to present the katana as a gift to the Lion general Matsu Tagemuchi at the conclusion of the ceremony tomorrow. He will speak of this with anyone he finds sympathetic. Officially, this is merely a way of honoring the Lion for their invitation, although it is also a symbolic way of reinforcing a secret alliance between the Shiba and the Matsu.

Shiba Tsumenitsu is accompanied to this ceremony by two assistants, Isawa Imoko (a shugenja-ko) and Asako Hoichi (a chronicler and personal aide).

Isawa Imoko, shugenja-ko. Tsumenitsu's shugenja-ko assistant is a delicate, ethereal young woman who is an apprentice to the Phoenix Mistress of Air, Isawa Uona. Imoko is normally quiet and self-effacing, and seeks the company of other shugenja (especially Air shugenja) to discuss the mysteries of the spirits. She routinely casts *Whispering Wind* and *Benten's Touch* on Tsumenitsu before any important meeting.

Imoko's calm nature is deceptive. She has a passionate heart beneath her quiet exterior, and has gone through several brief, violent love affairs in the two years since she completed her gempukku. A PC who rolls **Courtier/Intelligence** at TN 25 after meeting her or hearing her name may have caught the faintest whiff of scandal attached to her name. During this adventure, she will conceive a sudden passion for one of the male PCs, a passion which will dangerously distract her from her duties to her lord.

Asako Hoichi, chronicler and personal assistant. Tsumenitsu's personal scribe is a skinny, slightly unkempt young man who carries a large writing kit, a folding table, and a pouch of scrolls which is constantly threatening to spill across the floor. This harmless and easily-startled courtier, the Rokugani equivalent of a nerd, spends most of his time trailing anxiously after his superior. Hoichi is oblivious to Isawa Imoko's true nature and will probably never even

realize what she is doing – although he may inadvertently clue others in by his innocent remarks.

Mirumoto Sanbe, Dragon Clan General and Duelist. Sanbe is a short, wiry man with a head prematurely bald. His eyes are a deep, piercing black, and he seems to be constantly alert, always on the brink of springing into violent action. Sanbe is openly hostile to all members of the Shiba family and barely civil to the rest of the Phoenix Clan. He is also suspicious of Lion samurai, having heard a rumor that the Lion have secretly allied with the Shiba. Unlike his sworn enemy Shiba Tsumenitsu, however, Sanbe does not have the rank of daimyo and cannot insult other samurai with impunity. He will try to avoid giving offense to those of higher social status. However, he is intensely proud of his skills as a duelist and will quickly lose his temper if anyone questions or denigrates those skills. He also looks down on those from other Clans who claim to be "duelists," believing absolutely in the superiority of the Dragon Clan techniques.

A PC who rolls **Courtier** or **Lore** (any category judged suitable by the GM), with the **Intelligence** trait, at TN 15 may have heard stories of Sanbe's famous duel with Tsumenitsu, which ended when both combatants were severely wounded in the initial passage of arms. A PC who rolls **Lore: Dragon Clan**, **Lore: Bushido**, or **History** (all with the **Intelligence** trait) at TN 15 has heard of Sanbe's recent involvement in border incidents and skirmishes between the Mirumoto and Shiba territories.

At this event, Sanbe's hatred of Tsumenitsu will drive him to dishonorably seek the help of the Scorpion Clan.

Kitsuki Chikaku, personal assistant. Sanbe is accompanied by this man, who serves as a scribe, personal assistant, and general factotum. Chikaku is trained as a Mirumoto bushi, but retains his family's taste and talent for acute observation and meddling in mysteries. An honorable and dutiful man, he is generally open-minded toward those of other Clans, but distrusts ronin.

Doji Takashi, daimyo and sword-collector. The senior Crane guest at this event, Doji Takashi is a wealthy minor daimyo and a collector of rare and excellent swords. He is an honorable and rather intense man, his pale eyes stabbing deep into those who speak with him. He wears his hair in the usual Crane white-dyed ponytail. A skillful duelist, he knows both Shiba Tsumenitsu and Mirumoto Sanbe, respecting their skills but despising their "childish rivalry," which threatens to embroil the entire Dragon-Phoenix border in war. He

is also aware that Tsumenitsu possesses the fabled Crane sword Karatekawari Hana, and is angry at rumors that he plans to gift the blade to the Lion Clan. This is one of the few conversational topics which will bring a genuine display of temper from him, and he observes with some heat that the Crane have been the best allies of the Phoenix, while the Lion have fought with them repeatedly. “Why then insult the Crane by giving our blade to the savage Matsu?”

Apart from these topics, Takashi is polite and friendly to all, has no hidden agendas, and enjoys sparring with those from other clans to test his skills.

Takashi is accompanied to this event by his wife, Doji Kimi, a pretty young woman who was formerly of the Asahina family and is, in fact, cousin to Asahina Tamako, the family daimyo. PCs who have played the adventure *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* have met Takashi and his wife before, and may (or may not) be aware that Kimi had a torrid affair with an Isawa shugenja shortly before her marriage. So far, this indiscretion has remained secret...

Daidoji Hitokiri, Crane secret agent. A calm, quiet young man, short of stature and with hair that is worn undyed. Hitokiri is seemingly a Daidoji bushi, here to observe the ceremony. In actuality, he is a spy and saboteur, and was the man who arranged the near-clash between the Lion and Unicorn at the City of the Rich Frog last summer. PCs who played the adventure *A Hidden Blade* may be aware of his activities there.

Hitokiri is always very quiet and reserved, speaking only when spoken to. If any PC makes accusations against him, he blandly insists he has no idea what they are talking about. “It is true I have visited the City of the Rich Frog, samurai-san, but then, so have you. Does that make you a criminal?” If the PC is persistent, Hitokiri will quietly suggest that they arrange a future duel, at a time when both their daimyos can be petitioned for permission. He has no intention of showing up for such a duel, of course.

Hitokiri has no role in this scenario and, from a game standpoint, is here simply to annoy and worry those who know of his true nature.

Hida Hirose, grim crab samurai. Aside from any Crab PCs, the only guest here from the Crab Clan is this grim, muscular, hard-faced man. PCs who have played the adventure *Lies, Lies, Lies* may have met him there. Hirose has no particular opinion on anything outside the Crab lands, although he likes the Mantis Clan (which he views as “honorary stepchildren” of the

Crab). Apart from that, he views this ceremony as a “bunch of foolishness” and an opportunity to drink sake, make crude jokes, and sneer at any courtiers or Scorpions he meets.

Soshi Himiko, daimyo’s wife. This elegant and stylish woman, with a delicate mask and an alluring smile, is the quintessential Scorpion seductress – an image she cultivates carefully, since she is actually completely faithful to her husband, Soshi Amano, a mid-ranking Scorpion daimyo. Himiko is technically here as a guest to observe the Lion gempukku ceremony. Her real mission is to deliver the Scorpion Clan’s message of blackmail to Akodo Kansei. She knows that Ide Rivan is already being blackmailed by the Scorpion Clan, although she has no specific plans for Rivan at the moment. Himiko is escorted, supported, and protected by a nondescript “handmaiden,” Soshi Tohya.

Soshi Tohya, Shosuro actress. Himiko’s “handmaiden,” supposedly a young apprentice shugenja accompanying Himiko to ensure her modesty, is actually a Shosuro actress and assassin. She looks about 14 (and puts on the persona of an innocent young girl) but is actually in her late twenties. Tohya will not “break character” and display her real abilities unless her or her mistress’ life is in danger.

Ide Sowasora, Unicorn diplomat. A charming, remarkably friendly man, short and swarthy of feature (the heritage of gaijin ancestors). Sowasora’s personable manners and perfect etiquette easily compensates for this minor fault, however. Most people soon come to enjoy the company of this skilled ambassador, although Matsu Tagemuchi and Shiba Tsumenitsu will cling to their prejudices to the bitter end. Sowasora has no particular mission here, although he would like to maintain good relations with the Lion Clan – the Unicorn still hope to annex the City of the Rich Frog, and would prefer not to get into a war with the Lion over that. Sowasora will be especially friendly to Crabs, since there is now a loose alliance between his clan and theirs.

Ide Sowasora likes and respects his wife Rivan – perhaps even loves her – and has no idea of her dark past.

Ide Rivan, blackmailed shugenja-ko. Sowasora’s wife, a shugenja born into the Iuchi family, married him and took his name five years ago. They have a single child (who stayed home when they went on this trip). Although this plain shugenja-ko has a perfectly Rokugani appearance, her name is most thoroughly un-

Rokugani, a consequence of her Unicorn heritage. She is wearily accustomed to the prejudice she encounters from this.

Several years ago, Rivan accidentally killed a Lion samurai (Matsu Takeru), mistaking him for a bandit who was raiding her family's holdings. Terrified of the consequences she might face, she hid the body and never revealed the truth to anyone. Unfortunately for her, some of the local heimin witnessed the crime... and now the Scorpion clan knows about it. Rivan has been blackmailed by the Scorpion for the last year, and the weight of this dishonor is slowly grinding down her spirit. The PCs may be able to detect this, if they involve themselves in the blackmail plot surrounding Akodo Kansei.

Kitahachi, Mantis bushi. A rugged, athletic looking man in his early thirties, Kitahachi has the rangy muscles and work-roughened hands of a sailor, but speaks with eloquence and conviction. He is here to seek converts to the Mantis Clan's crusade for Great Clan status. PCs who have played the adventure *A Mantis and his Rat* may have met Kitahachi before, and may even have seen him wielding a ratling as a weapon. Since then he has left the sea and taken up a new task as an ambassador for the Mantis clan. Kitahachi will remember such allies fondly and will try to use his friendship as a way of persuading them to his cause. He is suspicious of Crabs, however (especially Yasuki) due to their involvement in a gaijin pepper smuggling operation.

Miya Satoshi. This intense, sharply-handsome young man (just over twenty years old) is the heir to the aged Miya family daimyo, Miya Yoto, who has remained at home for reasons of health. Satoshi is a bitter and temperamental man, and was raised by the Lion Clan after his mother died. He admires the Lion and believes that his own family must set aside its peaceful ways and embrace the path of the warrior if it is to achieve future greatness.

Satoshi spends much of his time speaking with the Matsu here (especially Matsu Tagemuchi), encouraging them in their warlike plans and dreams.

Scene Two: Meeting and Greeting

After their introduction to Akodo Toturi, the PCs will be free to circulate around, speak with each other, and get to know the various NPCs. The GM is encouraged to arrange encounters between suitable PCs and the

various NPCs who are present. The PCs can also pick up the following general gossip (from any suitable source):

- The Crab and Crane were recently on the brink of war in the south. The Crab Clan's Yasuki family was recently involved with smuggling gaijin pepper. Although two Yasuki daimyo committed seppuku in remorse, the Crane insisted that more punishment is required. However, it is rumored that the Clans reached an agreement this last winter for a public apology by Yasuki Taka, the family daimyo, to settle the matter for good. It probably didn't hurt that the Crab dispatched Hida O-Ushi, the notorious daughter of their Clan Champion, to take command of their border forces. (Doji Takashi and Daidoji Hitokiri will suggest that the Yasuki are too dishonorable to ever offer a proper apology, while Hida Hirose will snort about "Cranes who seek excuses to attack us while we guard the Empire." Kitahachi the Mantis will express sympathy for the Crab.)
- Rumor has it that the Unicorn will soon announce that they will annex the City of the Rich Frog. Other rumors report that the Unicorn and the Lion Clans have agreed to send their magistrates to govern the city jointly, much to the displeasure of the ronin who rule the place now. (The Unicorn NPCs will not comment on such tales, although they will mention that their relations with the Crab have been much improved lately. The Lion are outraged at the mere mention that the Unicorn might take the city, and suggest that such a decision would mean war. Both Clans will acknowledge that they have sent magistrates to investigate the illegal opium trade in the lawless city.)
- Peculiar rumors continue to circulate about Scorpion lands. It is said that some sort of terrible secret has been discovered in a cave unearthed beneath Kyuden Bayushi two years ago. By rumor's account, Bayushi Shoji, the Scorpion Champion, has been spending long hours closeted with his shugenja, discussing the secrets they have found. There are also reports that the Crab Clan's Kun shugenja family has been secretly pressing the Scorpion for permission to see what they have found. (The Scorpion guests will blandly deny any knowledge of these matters, and Hida Hirose knows nothing of any "Kuni plots.")
- There were several armed clashes on the Dragon-Phoenix border last fall, with each Clan blaming

the other for the problems. Rumor holds that both the Mirumoto of the Dragon and the Shiba family of the Phoenix sought alliance with the Lion Clan in the event that the clashes continue this spring. Nobody knows whether such efforts were successful, although several Phoenix-Lion marriages have been announced. (The Dragon will deny all responsibility on these problems, and also deny any alliance with the Lion. The Phoenix, especially Tsumenitsu, will blame the Dragon for the troubles and suggest the Dragon would be “wise” to avoid further provocations. The Lion refuse to comment on the matter, and Akodo Toturi will insist that his Clan has no interest in joining or encouraging any war between “the two most enlightened Clans in the Empire.”)

- The Lion are circulating stories of a Crane duelist, Kakita Kaguri, whose family sword (allegedly one of the famed Kakita blades) has been revealed as a cheap forgery. Kaguri has been claiming that the real sword was stolen and replaced with the forgery. The Lion sneer at such excuses as “cheap Crane lies such as they always tell when caught.” (Mirumoto Sanbe and Shiba Tsumenitsu have both heard of this story – Tsumenitsu dismisses the matter as “scurrilous rumor,” while Sanbe sneers at duelists who depend on the quality of their blades rather than the skill of their hands.)
- Yoritomo, the ambitious daimyo of the Mantis Clan, has launched a campaign to demand Great Clan status for the Mantis. So far his efforts have met chiefly sneers and dismissal, but the Crab are said to be sympathetic. (The Mantis guest, Kitahachi, will speak at some length on his Clan’s ancestry and its right to stand beside the other Great Clans. Hida Hirose knows nothing of such political matters, but he likes the Mantis, who he refers to as “little cousins.”)
- Almost no one has seen the Imperial heir, Hantei Sotorii, since he was rescued from the Bloodspeaker Cult last spring. Rumors are rife that he has been Tainted for deformed by the experience. Miya Satoshi, the only Imperial representative, knows no more about this than anyone else, and refuses to dignify such “disgraceful rumors.”

Dinner, a Dance, and an Announcement

After the PCs have had a good chance to role-play with each other and the NPC guests, a servant will announce that it is time for dinner. The whole crowd follows the servants inside the school, to a large dojo which has been converted to a dining hall.

The food is simple but of high quality, as befits the Lion Clan. Servants move with silent economy to serve the guests, bringing fresh supplies of tea and sake to anyone who asks. During the meal, the guests chat about the same topics as before. At least one PC should be seated next to Akodo Kage, the revered Lion sensei, while another PC (not a Phoenix) should be seated next to Mirumoto Sanbe and his aide Kitsuki Chikaku.

- Kage will discuss his upcoming retirement, his hopes that his old student Akodo Toturi can lead the Lion Clan well, and the possible threat of war with the Crane or the Unicorn. (“I hope the Lion will be able to avoid a war, especially a war on two fronts. But we will not shrink from honor or duty, if the Fortunes put war in our path.”)
- PCs who observe the Lion guests at the dinner will notice that all the Matsu sit together, visibly distinguishing themselves from the Akodo. They will also notice that Matsu Tagemuchi is the highest-ranking Matsu here. Neither Matsu Tsuko nor any of her senior daimyo have attended, which is an obvious insult to Toturi. The Lion Champion is too honorable to take open offense, and will make excuses if anyone asks (“the honorable Tsuko-sama has many duties which kept her from attending”). Other, lower-ranking Akodo, however, will be angry, and mention rumors that the Matsu are plotting to launch attacks on the Crane as soon as the ground is dry enough to support marching armies. (The Matsu refuse to comment on such rumors.)
- Mirumoto Sanbe will grumble to anyone who seems sympathetic about his enmity with Shiba Tsumenitsu. He has heard rumors that Tsumenitsu plans to give the famed Crane sword Karatekawari Hana to the Matsu, and this infuriates him. “The Phoenix cowards know that, on the battlefield, their paltry forces are no match for the might of the Mirumoto. This gift is no doubt part of an effort to gain the alliance of the Lion against us. I cannot allow this!”

- Kitsuki Chikaku looks very nervous about his master's words, but says nothing aloud unless approached separately. If so, and if the PC who speaks with him is honorable, sympathetic, and discreet, Chikaku will confess, "I fear the General has allowed his anger to cloud his judgment and distort his Honor. He may do something foolish."
- During the dinner, Akodo Kansei finds a note in his rice, telling him to wait in the garden later that evening. He glances at the note, then surreptitiously tucks it under his obi belt. PCs can notice this little incident with a **Stealth/Perception** roll at TN 15 or an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 25.
- See "GM's Appendix Two" for details on what the PCs can learn if they start asking about the background and history of Sanbe's quarrel with Tsumenitsu.

The Dance

As the dinner is winding down, Akodo Toturi stands and addresses the guests. "Honored guests. We are privileged to have visiting us Kakita Odoriko, a student of the famed Kakita Artisan School. She has brought us a splendid gift: her newest dance, to commemorate the turning seasons and the arrival of spring. I trust you are all as honored as I am to witness such a thing." He bows and seats himself as the dancer, a slim elegant Crane with long white hair, glides out into the center of the dojo.

The Crane woman moves with an almost supernatural grace, her body and limbs imitating the graceful motions of a fluttering bird. The bird welcomes the arrival of spring with song and soaring flight, and Kakita Odoriko evokes its energy and emotion perfectly. Music of flutes, taiko drums, biwa and samisen accompany her flowing movements. The dance ends with the bird landing and resting for the night, content. A soft murmur of awed praise runs through the crowd as Odoriko rises from her final posture and bows, acknowledging their praise.

After the display of Kakita Odoriko's skills, the guests begin to rise from their seats. They are halted, however, when Akodo Kage clears his throat. "With your permission, Akodo Toturi-sama, I wish to make a small announcement." At a smile and gesture from Toturi, his old teacher walks to the head of the table.

"I have served the Lion Clan for many years, first as a bushi and then as a sensei at the Akodo school. It has been my honor to teach many of the finest samurai in our Clan, including our Clan Champion. But now the time approaches for me to end my service to the Clan and begin a new life in the service of Shinsei. I will retire at the end of the gempukku ceremony tomorrow." He smiles and bows at the murmurs of "No! Not yet!" from many of the Lion guests. "I thank you for your loyalty, my friends. But I am already past the usual age of retirement, and I long for the peace and contemplation of the Brotherhood. Only my lack of an heir has kept me here this long – for in a sense, all who I have taught here are my heirs, my children." He bows again, this time deeply, and turns to Akodo Toturi. "Toturi-sama... since I have no son to inherit my swords, I ask that I be permitted to give them instead to you, my finest student."

Akodo Toturi smiles and bows in turn, politely refusing twice before finally graciously accepting Kage's offer. The old Lion sensei concludes his speech by requesting a poem to commemorate his departure from the Lion Clan.

If none of the PCs offer poems, Soshi Himiko will step forward, eyes politely lowered, and offer the following poem:

*Life and love burn bright
Birthing secrets together
A setting sun fades*

Any PC who observes the crowd for reactions to this poem can roll **Simple Perception** (or **Ichi Miru/Awareness**) at TN 15 to notice uneasy reactions from Akodo Kansei and Ide Rivan.

Scene Three: Socializing and Conspiring

After dinner, the guests will circulate, socialize, and gossip for a couple of hours until retiring for the evening. Many of them wander around the Akodo school, viewing the training dojos and the spare, traditional artwork which adorns the walls. Others go outside, enjoying the crisp night air of early spring.

During this period, several important events will take place:

Kansei is Blackmailed

Akodo Kansei obeys the note he received and goes outside, to the quiet, severe rock gardens which are the only artistic part of the Castle of the Swift Sword. There he finds Soshi Himiko and her “handmaiden” Soshi Tohya waiting for him. After an uncertain moment, Himiko suggests, “Would you walk with us, Akodo-san, and enjoy this fine garden by moonlight?”

The trio walks back and forth through the garden, speaking in low voices, to outward appearances merely viewing the gardens – although anyone watching them can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 10 to detect the rigid tension in Akodo Kansei’s posture. Himiko quietly appraises Kansei of his situation. “I am sure you understand, Kansei-san, what it would mean for your family if such a thing were revealed. Why, I believe your son’s inheritance would be in question.” Kansei answers mostly in monosyllables, seemingly crushed by this revelation.

If a PC actually interrupts this conversation, or is spotted trying to overhear it, Himiko will smoothly change the subject to a discussion of the gardens. In order to learn what is happening, nosy PCs will have to sneak close enough to hear (requiring a **Contested** roll of their **Stealth/Agility** against Soshi Tohya’s **Investigation/Perception**) or use magic.

Eventually, once Himiko has made the situation plain, Kansei departs with a stiff bow, and wanders away through the gardens and into the castle. He is deeply depressed and racking his mind for a way out of his predicament. At some point during his gloomy wanderings, he will spot Isawa Imoko slipping off to her dishonorable rendezvous (see “Imoko Makes her Move,” below).

Sanbe is Humiliated

During the general conversation and socializing which follows the dinner, Mirumoto Sanbe approaches Shiba Tsumenitsu, bowing with stiff politeness. A bubble of quiet seems to form around them as Tsumenitsu smiles blandly, snapping his fan open and closed. Sanbe’s eyes burn, but his words are flatly self-controlled. “Shiba Tsumenitsu-sama. I believe we had begun a duel some time ago, before it was regrettably interrupted. Perhaps we might conclude it tonight?”

Tsumenitsu smiles coldly and pops his fan open as he replies. “Ah, Mirumoto Sanbe-san, I believe? Yes, I do recall some such matter. But I have no time for such things now, I am afraid. My new rank places many demands on my time, and I can no longer indulge in the

trivial quarrels of youth.” His smile is acidic as he turns away, deliberately snubbing the lower-ranking Dragon. “Now, if you’ll excuse me, Sanbe-san...”

There is a soft ripple of laughter, hidden behind fans or turned heads, as Sanbe is left standing alone. His face flushes an angry dark red, and for a moment he is on the brink of drawing his blade. Then he masters himself and turns away, stalking out of the hall and into the garden. If any PC follows him, he refuses to speak unless they are fellow Mirumoto (in which case he explodes into a maddened rant the moment he is safely outside) or Scorpion (in which case he will speak with them for a time while he works up his nerve, then asks them to help him steal Karatekawari Hana).

Imoko Makes her Move

Meanwhile, Isawa Imoko makes her romantic approach to her chosen PC. She will preferentially choose a handsome PC (one with Benten’s Blessing or Dangerous Beauty), or one of exceptional masculinity (high Earth and Strength scores). She will show a slight preference for shugenja over bushi, although good looks will outweigh this. If none of the PCs are male, or if none of them possess the minimum of basic looks and manners to attract her, Imoko will choose an NPC (Kitahachi the Mantis) as her target.

Imoko will flirt with her chosen target, at first subtly, then more openly once she senses that her advances are returned. Eventually Imoko will suggest that she is tired, making noises about retiring for the evening – and ask where the PC is staying. This is a Seduction attempt, a **Contested** roll of Imoko’s **Seduction/Awareness** (7k5) against the PC’s **Willpower**. A PC who fails the Contested roll can make an **Honor Test** at TN 20 to come to his senses in time. If Imoko targets Kitahachi, the Mantis will be quite amenable to Imoko’s advances, and the two soon depart – separately, but spending the night together.

Regardless of whether Imoko visits a PC’s room or Kitahachi’s room, her stealthy trip will be noticed by Akodo Kansei, who is gloomily meditating in a shadowed corner. The Lion samurai will immediately realize what is happening, and begins plotting what he can do with the information.

It is possible that other PCs may realize what is happening with Imoko, or spot her sneaking off to her late-night rendezvous. The GM should adjudicate this based on what the PCs are doing as the evening winds down.

Sanbe Approaches Himiko

At some point after his public snubbing by Tsumenitsu, Mirumoto Sanbe will track down Soshi Himiko in the gardens (she has completed her “talk” with Akodo Kansei). If he was already speaking with a Scorpion PC, he will lead that PC to the gardens and sound out him/her about helping him “humiliate that cursed Tsumenitsu,” with particular attention to the sword Karatekawari Hana. In the midst of this conversation Sanbe will spot Himiko and add her to the discussion.

If a non-Scorpion PC is speaking with Sanbe, he will find an excuse to give that PC the brush-off and then go speak with Himiko.

PCs who happen to be out in the gardens at this time, or who are looking around for Sanbe or the Scorpions, will notice the three walking together. Himiko speaks pleasantly, smiling, while Sanbe keeps his eyes fixed on the ground and mutters into his chest. Tohya, as always, walks quietly behind her mistress while observing their surroundings.

Soshi Himiko will be quite understanding of Sanbe’s plight, especially remarking on Tsumenitsu’s “inconsiderate arrogance, dishonoring you in public” (she was listening in on the conversations in the main room with magic, while she spoke with Akodo Kansei). Her “handmaid” Tohya listens and nods gravely. Both of them agree that Sanbe is deserving of their help. Himiko explains that her “handmaid” will be able to handle the problem, since “we wouldn’t want your own hands dirtied with this matter, Sanbe-san.” The Shosuro actress departs into the dark as soon as the conference ends, while Himiko goes back into the castle, socializing for a little longer before retiring for the evening. If any Scorpion PCs are in the meeting, she suggests they do the same. “There is nothing we need know about this matter. I trust Tohya-san’s discretion, don’t you?”

Again, if any PCs are trying to overhear this conversation, they will have to be either stealthy (**Contested Stealth/Agility** against Tohya’s **Investigation/Perception**) or employ surveillance magic.

Soshi Tohya Steals the Sword

Once the Scorpion Soshi Tohya departs from her mistress Himiko, she will return to her own room and change into a “ninja” outfit, complete with mask, black pajamas, and climbing claws. Tohya activates her Shadow Brand, slips out the window of her room, and scales the wall to Shiba Tsumenitsu’s quarters. She

slips in, steals the sword, wraps it in black silk, and departs by the same route. Tohya hides the blade in her room until morning, when she will give it to Mirumoto Sanbe.

During this time, Soshi Himiko will be socializing in the main rooms of the castle. If anyone asks about her “handmaiden,” she remarks that “I’ll be retiring soon, so I sent Tohya-san to make sure my room was ready. These Lions tend to expect guests to fend for themselves,” she chuckles pleasantly.

Whether anyone notices any of Tohya’s activities depends on where they are. PCs who are themselves retiring for the evening might possibly notice a faint noise from Tsumenitsu’s room if they can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 30. PCs who are looking out their window, or actively trying to spot Tohya (perhaps as a result of overhearing the earlier conversations), can make a **Contested** roll of their **Investigation/Perception** against Tohya’s **Stealth/Agility** to spot her climbing up the side of the castle. Remember that Tohya gets to keep an extra die on Stealth rolls due to her Shadow Brand.

PCs may wind up spotting Tohya in some other way, depending on the circumstances. (For example, if they are using magic to keep watch over part of the castle.) The GM should adjudicate such possibilities.

Tsumenitsu Discovers the Theft

Late in the evening, as the after-dinner social party is breaking up, Shiba Tsumenitsu goes to his room to retire for the evening. He discovers that Karatekawari Hana is missing. After a moment of panic, he goes searching for his shugenja-ko assistant, Imoko, who is unfortunately enjoying a night of passion elsewhere.

PCs who roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15 (or who are keeping an eye out for Tsumenitsu) will notice the Phoenix daimyo hurrying around the castle, his expression harried, trailed by his hapless scribe Asako Hoichi. If the PCs are fellow members of the Phoenix Clan, or if they impressed him earlier as samurai of sympathy, honor, and discretion, Tsumenitsu may confide in them. (He will at all costs avoid confessing the problem to members of the Dragon Clan or Matsu family, and will probably try to avoid confessing to Scorpions as well.)

Tsumenitsu suspects that Sanbe was somehow involved in the theft, since “that honorless Dragon dog” would like nothing better than to see him publicly humiliated. If the PC(s) seem sympathetic to his plight,

Tsumenitsu will quietly ask their help in locating the sword before noon tomorrow... when he has promised to present his gift.

Some PCs may decide to approach Tsumenitsu on their own. His reaction will depend on what the PCs say, what Clan they represent, and any previous impressions they may have made on him. Needless to say, he will not confess anything to members of the Dragon Clan (unless they have made it abundantly clear that they repudiate Sanbe's behavior). He will also be quite suspicious of Scorpions. Toward Lions he will be embarrassed, trying to avoid confessing the nature of the problem unless they share useful information with him on their own initiative.

If the PCs have definite information (such as overheard conversations, or eyewitness sights), Tsumenitsu will try to act on their information immediately. Otherwise, he will show them to his room, letting them search for clues, and then wait for the morning to continue investigating.

Tsumenitsu's Room (post-theft)

Shiba Tsumenitsu's quarters are located on the fourth floor of the castle, a level above most of the other guests (as befits his status as a daimyo). If the PCs visit Tsumenitsu's room after the theft of the sword (either on their own, or with his permission), they will be able to gain the following information:

- There are two sword-racks in the room, one for a daisho set (which holds Tsumenitsu's own blades when he isn't carrying them), the other for a single weapon (where he was keeping Karatekawari Hana).
- If a PC searches the room for signs of an intruder, they at first find nothing. A PC who specifically says they are checking the window can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice very faint smudge marks on the windowsill. If a PC checks the castle wall outside the window (and brings a light-source – remember, it is night), another **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 25 to spot a few faint scratches on the outside of the castle wall. However, unless the PCs can use magic to float outside the castle, they will not be able to follow these scratches back to Tohya's room.
- If a shugenja PC uses *Commune* to interrogate the spirits in the room, they find plenty of Air and Earth spirits, as well as Fire spirits in the lamp.

There are no Water spirits, however. The spirits can all recount that a “dark woman” slipped in and took the sword. They cannot describe the woman except to say that she was “dark” and “hard to see.”

- Air spirits can trace the “dark woman” back to her room is the PC made a *Raise* on the *Commune* spell. Earth spirits can do the same with two *Raises*.

The Scorpions' Rooms

If the PCs decide (for whatever reason) to visit the Scorpions' rooms after the theft, they will be committing a serious breach of etiquette (especially if they are male). Both Tohya and Himiko are in their quarters preparing for bed, and will be outraged at unwelcome visitors. The two Scorpion women will not hesitate to accuse the PCs of all manner of evil (attempted rape, for example), will call for champions to fight duels, and otherwise use the full strength of their social position against such fools.

See “Investigating in the Castle” in Scene Four for details of what the PCs can accomplish if they wait until the next morning to visit the Scorpions' rooms.

Scene Four: A Morning Demonstration

The light of Mother Sun is just barely peeking over the horizon when the servants awaken you. It seems the Lion make a practice of rising early. As you gather outside the dojo complex, blinking in the pale light, you see that the entire class of graduating Lion samurai – two hundred eighteen of them – has assembled on the field. They stand stock-still, at rigid attention, their eyes unwaveringly pointed straight ahead. They bow in perfect unison as the half-dozen sensei of the school stride out in front of them.

“Good morning, students,” Akodo Kage says, and the students chorus, “Good morning, sensei,” in response. “This morning,” Kage says, “our guests will be our instructors. They will demonstrate to us the swordsmanship and skills of their schools and clans. We should be honored to have their example before us. Are you not honored, students?”

“HAI, SENSEI!” they shout.

Kage smiles and bows. “We are indeed. Please, honored guests, perhaps a simple kenjutsu tournament, displaying your techniques? Our

students will learn more from such a simple contest than our poor skills have taught them in a year.”

With the offer couched in this manner, it is difficult for any honorable samurai to refuse, and few of the NPCs will even attempt it. This “kenjutsu tournament” will take up most of the morning, and throughout the event, the 218 students stand rigid and unmoving, their eyes focused with eerie precision on the combatants. It is a deeply intimidating display of perfect discipline.

The “tournament” (more of a full-scale skill demonstration) is fought with real swords – the combatants are expected to exercise enough self-control to avoid killing each other. No armor is worn. If anyone questions the wisdom of fighting with bared steel, Akodo Kage remarks: “Perhaps the other Clans feel that mere wood and bamboo is sufficient to hone their skills, but we of the Lion have always agreed with our founder Akodo One-Eye that only the bared blade can truly test a bushi’s skill.”

PCs who wish to can enter the tournament and display their skills. Matsu Tagemuchi, Doji Takashi, Mirumoto Sanbe, Hida Hirose, and Miya Satoshi will enter the tournament as well, along with an assortment of other guests (use the “Generic bushi” stats at the end of the module). Shiba Tsumenitsu will at first attempt to beg off of joining the tournament, explaining that as a daimyo he has many demands on his time. Soshi Himiko, however, goads him into the tournament with a few well-placed words: “Surely a duelist of your stature, Shiba-sama, would not wish to dishonor our Lion hosts by refusing to demonstrate your skills?” Tsumenitsu smiles tightly as he replies, “No, surely not,” and joins the competition.

Resolving the Tournament

The tournament progresses slowly, with long pauses between each match while the combatants warm up, introduce themselves, and so forth. The other guests watch the proceedings with interest (real or feigned), engage in conversation, comment on the various sword-fighting styles on display, and continue with any discussions or negotiations begun the night before.

During this time, a variety of events take place, as outlined in the sections below (unless superseded by the actions of PCs).

Combatants may honorably concede defeat in a match at any time. If neither opponent concedes, a match will continue until one of the combatants is no longer able to stand (reduced to the Down or lower Wound Rank).

There will be a total of 16 participants in the kenjutsu tournament. Those combatants who are not PCs or named NPCs should be represented with the “Generic Bushi” stats listed at the end of the module. If any of the PCs participate in the tournament, the pairings will break down as follows:

Round One

All PCs face Generic Bushi except for two random PCs, who will face Miya Satoshi and Matsu Tagemuchi. If no PCs compete, these two will defeat generic NPCs. Mirumoto Sanbe and Shiba Tsumenitsu will always defeat generic bushi opponents. Doji Takashi will defeat Hida Hirose (much to the Crab’s anger).

Round Two

Match 1: Shiba Tsumenitsu – vs – PC/Satoshi or Generic NPC. Tsumenitsu will automatically win against anyone but a PC.

Match 2: PC/Tagemuchi – vs – PC or Generic NPC. Tagemuchi will win against a generic NPC.

Match 3: Mirumoto Sanbe – vs – PC or Generic NPC. Sanbe will win against a generic NPC.

Match 4: Doji Takashi – vs – PC or Generic NPC. Takashi will win against a generic NPC.

Round Three

Winner of Match 1 vs winner of Match 4. If this pits Tsumenitsu against Takashi, Tsumenitsu will win, Takashi graciously conceding after the first clash of blades.

Winner of Match 2 vs winner of Match 3. If this puts Sanbe against Tagemuchi, Sanbe will win. Tagemuchi fights until he suffers a serious wound to the arm, then concedes.

Round Four (final)

The last two combatants face each other. If this is a battle of Tsumenitsu against Sanbe, see “A Duel Refought” at the end of this section.

Kage’s Offer

Akodo Kage will offer, as a personal gesture, to spar with anyone who wishes to test his skills. He uses bokken (2k1) for the duel, and explains that his swords are in his room, waiting to be handed over later today. Kage’s old student Akodo Toturi takes him up on the offer, and is soundly defeated. “You are still the best of us, sensei,” Toturi offers with a smile. “Are you sure you wish to retire?”

Any PC who wishes may challenge the famed Akodo sensei. He will concede if a PC can disarm him or drive him to the Down rank.

Besides Toturi, several lower-ranking Lion will test their skills (all unsuccessfully) against Kage.

The Sword Passes to Sanbe

In the midst of the kenjutsu “tournament,” while Shiba Tsumenitsu is busy fighting his second match, Soshi Tohya and Soshi Himiko will present the stolen sword Karatekawari Hana to Mirumoto Sanbe. They bring the blade in a heavy red-and-black silk wrapping and offer it to him quietly, standing at the back of the crowd. Sanbe unwraps the silk just enough to assure himself it is the real blade, and then gleefully hands it over to Kitsuki Chikaku, with orders to keep it in their quarters. Chikaku is quite unhappy with this (he suspects what is going on), but feels he has no choice but to obey.

- PCs can witness this event if they are deliberately watching Sanbe or the Scorpions. They can also spot the exchange if they roll **Simple Perception** at TN 25 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20.
- If any PC interrupts or approaches, the Scorpions will claim to be presenting Sanbe with a private gift from Himiko’s husband, Soshi Amano. “A mark of respect to a distinguished duelist,” Himiko explains pleasantly. Sanbe will back up this story with a nervous smile. (His anxiety can be easily detected with a **Contested Awareness** roll.) If anyone demands to see the sword, Sanbe will pretend insult and may even demand a duel.
- After the sword comes into his hands, Sanbe is in an exuberant mood, and may even brag to sympathetic PCs that “that arrogant cur Tsumenitsu” will soon meet with a come-uppance.
- A clever PC may decide to approach Kitsuki Chikaku as he is carrying the sword back to Sanbe’s quarters. The young Kitsuki will refuse to let anyone see the sword, citing his duty to his master “Sanbe-shogun-sama,” but will clearly be made quite uncomfortable by the situation. If the PCs who speak with him are honorable and decent people, Chikaku may confide in them later. (See “Chikaku Heeds his Conscience,” below.)

The Scorpions Throw the Match

The Scorpion are quite interested in seeing the Dragon and the Phoenix go to war, since conflict between other

Clans favors them. Therefore they are determined to ensure that any duel between Tsumenitsu and Sanbe ends in a draw.

At some point during the tournament, if it becomes clear that Sanbe and Tsumenitsu are going to end up facing each other, Soshi Himiko will quietly approach Ide Rivan. Under the guise of a soft-voiced conversation, Himiko suggests that Rivan use her magic to weaken Sanbe and Tsumenitsu’s blades. “Otherwise, I might need to inform the Matsu of the fate of one of their kinsmen.” Rivan’s eyes widen, and then her whole face turns pale and tight as she realizes her situation.

If any PCs are being blackmailed by the Scorpion Clan, or have commitments or obligations to the Scorpion, Himiko will approach them and politely suggest that they ensure that Rivan is able to work her magic undetected. Himiko will not use any actual Scorpions for this task... she does not want any direct connection to her Clan in this matter.

Unless a PC intervenes, Rivan will approach each of the two men (timing her actions to when they are distracted talking to others) and subtly casts the spell *Penetrating Drop* on their swords. A **Simple Perception** roll at TN 25 or an **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 20 will notice her lurking near each individual. A **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** or **Spellcraft/Intelligence** roll at TN 15 will recognize that she is casting a spell. If Rivan is approached or interrupted during her spell-casting, she will break it off and try to behave as though nothing happened.

Confronting Rivan?

If the PCs confront Ide Rivan and accuse her in any way, she will deny everything quite stridently. If a PC mentions her spell-casting, she insists she was merely saying a prayer to the Fortunes for health and good fortune to all the duelists. If PCs press the issue, she will retreat to her husband, who quickly takes offense: “Are you questioning the honor of my wife, samurai-san? If so, you question my honor as well.”

If a PC approaches Rivan quietly, and in a subtle or sympathetic fashion, she may be induced to hint at her true situation. She will not openly say what is happening, but may indicate she is being blackmailed. She begs the PC to say nothing, “not for me, but for the honor of my husband. If he knew his wife was being used by others, the disgrace would be more than he could bear.”

If the PCs realize what has happened, they can choose whether or not to warn the two bushi of the damage to their swords.

Kansei Makes his Move

During the tournament, Akodo Kansei will approach Isawa Imoko and speak to her in a low voice, using the noise of one of the duels to cover himself. He suggests (with a cruel bluntness that contrasts sharply with his low, even tone) that she has irredeemably dishonored herself... but he will keep the secret of her scandalous behavior if she will manufacture a lethal shugenja duel with Soshi Himiko. Kansei hopes that eliminating Himiko will protect him (he does not realize the importance of the “mere handmaiden” Tohya).

- If the PC who was seduced by Imoko is also a shugenja, Kansei will deliver the same ultimatum to him as well. Otherwise, he will leave the PC alone, letting Imoko explain the situation.
- After this conversation, Imoko will be tense with carefully-hidden fear. She will inform her lover of the problem (if he doesn’t know already) and will ask for help, suggesting either a way of provoking the duel Kansei demanded, or a way of forcing Kansei to back off.

Tsumenitsu Asks for Help

If any of the PCs showed the slightest sympathy to Shiba Tsumenitsu earlier, he will approach them before the first round of the tournament and urge them to search the castle for the sword Karatekawari Hana. “I cannot leave the tournament myself without attracting comment. I suspect those Scorpions are involved somehow – why else would he be so eager to tie me down here?”

- If any PC asks about Tsumenitsu’s shugenja assistant Imoko, he will complain about her absence the night before. “The timing could not have been worse. She may have been compromised somehow.”
- Tsumenitsu will not think of asking his other assistant, Asako Hoichi, for help. “That boy is no use for such subtle matters.” If a PC speaks with Hoichi in person, the young scribe will innocently mention Imoko’s flirting of the night before, and also mentions Akodo Kansei’s visit with the Scorpions last night. “I thought the Lion didn’t

like the Scorpion, but Kansei spent quite a while viewing the gardens with them.”

Investigating in the Castle

PCs who investigate the theft of the sword can still find the evidence in **Shiba Tsumenitsu’s room**, if they didn’t investigate it the previous night.

If any PCs decide to search **Soshi Tohya’s or Soshi Himiko’s rooms**, they will have to be careful or quick – Himiko has an Air spirit monitoring these rooms, and will be immediately alerted to intruders. PCs who approach these rooms can roll **Spellcraft/Awareness** at TN 15 to notice the presence of the Air spirit. Sodan-senzo PCs, PCs with the Elemental Attunement advantage, and PCs with the Cloud tattoo can also notice the spirit with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20. At the GMs option, certain spells might also detect the spirit. It can be diverted from its task by a shugenja PC casting *Commune (Air)* with four Raises. Other methods of distracting or dismissing the Air spirit might work as well – the GM should reward creativity.

If the PCs do not manage to get rid of the Air spirit will have less than a minute to search these rooms before Himiko and Tohya appear and confront them. The PCs had better be prepared to talk fast if they want to avoid a lethal duel, expulsion from the castle, or similar sanctions.

If the PCs do manage to search Soshi Tohya’s room (or scrye it magically, perhaps) prior to the second round of the tournament, they can find the sword, wrapped in red-and-black silk and tucked under her futon.

If the PCs search **Mirumoto Sanbe’s room**, they will not find anything of interest until after the second round of the tournament. After that time, the sword Karatekawari Hana will be here, still wrapped in the Scorpion silk. Kitsuki Chikaku leaves the sword openly on Sanbe’s weapons rack, a subtle protest against his master’s dishonorable behavior.

There are no magical protections on Sanbe’s room. The Scorpion are quite prepared to let Sanbe pay the price for his dishonor.

If one or more PCs decide to search **Akodo Kansei’s quarters** (perhaps in hope of overturning his blackmail), they will need to either sneak or bluff their way onto the castle’s fourth floor. (This is also where Tsumenitsu is staying, so PCs who are visiting his quarters with his permission might be able to sneak

aside and visit Kansei's rooms.) There are no magical protections on Kansei's room, but servants are common on this floor, and an armed Lion bushi patrols the area every fifteen minutes.

A thorough search of Kansei's room will take half an hour and an **Investigation/Perception** (or **Nazado**) roll at TN 20. (Or, a single casting of the spell *By the Light of Lord Moon*.) Success will discover a hidden compartment in the wall which contains a selection of letters going back over a decade. The letters are from the ronin woman Momiji (formerly Akodo Momiji), and are mostly accounts of her day-to-day life... and the life of their son, Kotobe, now twelve years old. Kansei, still wracked with guilt over his abandonment of his young love, has not had the heart to destroy these letters.

Scene Five: A Duel Refought

If no PCs fight in the kenjutsu tournament, both Tsumenitsu and Sanbe are certain to advance to the final round. (This may happen even if PCs do participate, depending on the outcome of their combats.) The chance to fight another duel, even if an officially non-lethal one, will be clearly welcomed by Sanbe, and Tsumenitsu will show a certain grim anticipation as well.

If Ide Rivan successfully cast her spells on their blades, the duel will turn out as follows:

A hush falls over the field as everyone realizes who is preparing to fight. Mirumoto Sanbe has an expression of fierce joy on his face as he runs through a few practice kata. Shiba Tsumenitsu stands stock-still, focussing himself, for several minutes before drawing his katana and pacing carefully onto the field. A moment of utter stillness passes... and then both samurai explode in a blur of motion. There is a ringing CRACK as the warriors' katana both snap, broken by the sheer force of impact. Sanbe's wakizashi flashes in the sunlight as it snakes forward to strike – and Tsumenitsu catches it between his palms. A stifled gasp rises from the crowd as the two men stand locked together, each straining to overcome the other. The standoff continues for so long that it begins to seem almost eternal, as though these two men have battled thus since the founding of the Empire. Then there is another CRACK as Sanbe's wakizashi snaps as well. The two warriors stagger apart, and for a moment it appears they will lunge at each other with bare hands. Then Akodo

Kage steps forward, placing himself carefully between them. "Enough," he says quietly. "You have both proven your skill and honor." There is a soft sigh from the crowd as the combatants step apart, breathing heavily, and bow stiffly to each other.

A PC who has **Astrology** can make a skill roll with **Intelligence** (TN 10) to recognize that all three swords breaking is an extremely bad omen, implying dishonor and defeat lie in the future of both men. A PC who is able to sense spirits (sodan-senzo, an Ise Zumi with the Cloud tattoo) can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to sense the outlines of two other samurai straining against each other above the two real combatants.

A PC who watches the Scorpion NPCs during this event can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to notice a faint pleased look on their faces. If the PC makes TN 30 or higher, s/he also notices a faint nod from Akodo Kage, apparently directed at the Scorpion.

Finally, a PC who watches the other faces in the crowd for reactions can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 to notice a brief look of shame cross Ide Rivan's face.

A Tie Averted?

If the PCs prevented Rivan from using her magic on the swords (whether by interrupting her, persuading her to stop, or what-have-you), or if they warned the two bushi in time for them to change their swords, the duel will have a somewhat different outcome:

- If Rivan weakened one bushi's swords but not the other, the duel ends in an instant victory for the one wielding the unbroken blade (much to the humiliation of the other).
- If neither sword was weakened, the duel is a spectacular kharmic strike, with both combatants reeling to the ground bleeding after the first, blurswift clash. As shugenja rush forward to treat their injuries, Sanbe staggers to his feet and lurches forward, clearly intending to stab his crippled opponent to death. There are cries of surprise and horror from everyone watching. Unless a PC steps forward and stops him, Sanbe will murder Tsumenitsu. The crippled Phoenix whispers a hateful death-curse in the moment before the blade strikes home: "All your filthy Clan will pay in blood for your deeds!"

Scene Six: Meals and Resolutions

With the “kenjutsu tournament” concluded (whether or not Sanbe and Tsumenitsu fought each other), midday arrives. Kage offers congratulations to all those who fought: “You have brought honor to our school, and education to our students.” Lion servants escort the guests to the baths to cleanse themselves, while others prepare tables for the midday meal. The various remaining plot threads of the scenario will come together during this time.

Imoko Hatches a Plan

During her visit to the baths, Isawa Imoko will come up with a plan for provoking a duel with Soshi Himiko. (Unless her PC lover has come up with some other, better, plan, such as using the letters from Kansei’s room.) If a shugenja PC is involved with the Akodo Kansei/blackmail plot, she will confide her plan with that PC: “I will claim to have overheard Soshi Himiko in the bath, plotting with her handmaiden to dishonor my master Shiba Tsumenitsu. She is a Scorpion, after all – who is to say such a plot does not exist? She will deny it, naturally, and I will insist on a duel to prove my word. Lord Tsumenitsu will surely grant me permission.”

Kitsuki Chikaku Heeds his Conscience

If any PCs have impressed Kitsuki Chikaku as honorable and noble men (or women) who are above Clan quarrels, there is the possibility that Chikaku will approach them at some point. When this happens will depend on how often the PCs have spoken with Chikaku and how closely they have followed the quarrel between Mirumoto Sanbe and Shiba Tsumenitsu.

If Chikaku does approach a PC, he will walk up to them in a public place (such as during or shortly after the kenjutsu tournament) and speak in a low voice. “Honored samurai... I find myself facing a conflict. How would you resolve a clash between honor and loyalty? Between serving one’s lord and serving the ideals of bushido?”

If the PC gives answers which promote the ideals of bushido over duty to one’s lord, it will be possible to persuade Chikaku to confess. This is a role-playing encounter, and the GM should judge the PC’s words carefully. Those who seem enlightened and wise will

be more likely to persuade Chikaku than those who are crude, militant, or childish. Skills such as Manipulation or Sincerity will be of little use here – remember, Chikaku is a Clear Thinker.

If Chikaku does confess, he will explain that the sword is in Sanbe’s quarters, and quietly suggests that the PC(s) arrange to recover the blade and return it to Tsumenitsu without letting either man know what has happened. “It would be best for the cause of peace and honor if this event simply never happened.” He will leave it up to the PCs how to accomplish this. Chikaku will not personally participate in recovering the sword – he feels that he has done enough for the cause of Honor by arranging an end to this vile affair.

Isawa Imoko Makes her Move

Unless a PC has managed to blackmail Akodo Kansei into backing off, Isawa Imoko will have no choice but to seek a duel with Soshi Himiko. Just as the midday meal is about to begin, Imoko will suddenly stride across the room and slap Himiko in the face. “Scorpion harlot! Your plan will not succeed!”

Imoko will deliver her accusation, claiming that “with the aid of the Air spirits” she has overheard a plot by Himiko to seduce and dishonor her master Shiba Tsumenitsu. Himiko will deny this and tries to laugh the whole thing off, suggesting that a shugenja-ko as “inexperienced” as Imoko has misheard the spirits. However, Imoko refuses to back down even when Shiba Tsumenitsu suggests that she do so. Eventually Imoko will demand a magical duel to prove the truth of her words. “Let us see how inexperienced I really am, Soshi-san,” she snaps.

The Lion are clearly embarrassed and angry about this uncouth incident. However, in the midst of the excitement Akodo Kansei will speak with Clan Champion Akodo Toturi in a low voice. (PCs can notice this with **Investigation/Perception** rolls at TN 15.) Kansei suggests that a duel would be the quickest and most honorable way to resolve the situation. Toturi reluctantly agrees, and asks the shugenja to step outside and resolve their quarrel.

At this point, any PC who is watching the Scorpions will see Soshi Tohya shoot a darkly significant glance at Ide Rivan. She will also shoot the same glance at any non-Scorpion PCs who are blackmailed or controlled by the Scorpion Clan. The intent of the look is clear: “Intercede on our behalf.”

Ide Rivan will step forward after a moment, her face set and tense. “Isawa Imoko-san, you have dishonored yourself, the Lion Clan, and all of us here with your contemptible public tantrum. Before you continue with this charade, I demand that you face me.” Her husband looks shocked and tries to hold her back, but Rivan is adamant: “I cannot allow this travesty of a duel to blight the noble house of the Lion.” She is lying, of course, and her husband senses as much... but has no choice but to let her continue.

A PC shugenja can choose to make a similar intervention, and if they are of higher Glory rank Rivan will give way to them (with considerable gratitude). A samurai or courtier PC can also intercede, although if they wish to challenge Imoko, she will be able to claim a champion of her own. (Shiba Tsumenitsu will not champion Imoko – he is startled and confused by this whole matter – and she will pick some other PC to defend her, perhaps even her lover of the night before.) A courtier PC could potentially issue a challenge of art or poetry, which would be answered by Imoko herself or by Asako Hoichi, depending on the nature of the challenge.

Resolving the Mess

If Isawa Imoko and Ide Rivan fight a shugenja duel, Rivan will be victorious (although only just). Imoko is carried from the field unconscious, and Shiba Tsumenitsu apologizes on her behalf to everyone present. (He is clearly quite upset at this public loss of face, especially coming on the heels of the frustrating duel with Sanbe.) PCs who watch the crowd can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to see a look of crushing disappointment briefly cross the face of Akodo Kansei.

If a PC shugenja fights a duel with Imoko, use the rules for shugenja dueling (Taryu-Jiai) on page 167 of the *L5R Player’s Guide*. Imoko will use her Air ring when dueling, of course.

If a PC duels Imoko and wins, the result is the same as if Rivan defeated her. If the PC loses, Imoko will insist on immediately resolving her duel with Soshi Himiko. Himiko will stall as much as possible, but ultimately has no choice but to accept. However, Imoko has been weakened by her prior struggle with the PC, and Himiko not only defeats but kills her. In practice, this is the same result as if Rivan had defeated Imoko, although the general reaction is more grim now that a life has been lost.

Confronting the Scorpions

Some or all of the PCs may realize that the Scorpions are behind much of what is happening here. Should they choose to confront the Scorpion women directly, however, they will make little progress. Himiko and Tohya will blandly deny everything, behaving shocked that the PCs would make such uncouth accusations. They will try to maintain this posture as long as possible, exploiting all the rules of Rokugani society and etiquette to the fullest.

If the PCs manage to present incontrovertible evidence (such as the discovery of the sword in Tohya’s room), the Scorpions shift tactics: Tohya will “take the fall” and pretend to be a rogue ninja.

Suddenly the modest handmaid rips off her silken mask. Her features seem to shift and slide for a moment before resolving into those of an older woman. “I have worn a dead girl’s face long enough,” she laughs crazily, and hurls an egg-shaped object on the floor. Thick white smoke boils up from the impact, choking you.

Tohya attacks the PCs amid the choking, blinding smoke for a round or two, then flees. She will attempt to retrieve her gear from her quarters and then escape the castle. Under no circumstances will she let herself be taken alive – she will cut her own throat or bite through her tongue first.

Himiko will pretend to be as shocked by this as everyone else. “This ninja fiend must have murdered and replaced my faithful handmaiden,” she sobs softly. Under the circumstances, it will be extremely difficult for the PCs to prove otherwise.

Scene Seven: The Honor of the Lion

Throughout the midday meal, the 218 graduating Lion samurai have remained standing at attention in the field outside the castle. As the meal concludes, the Lion sensei and daimyo return to the field, followed by their guests, to begin the gempukku ceremony.

Each young Lion steps forward and demonstrates the basic techniques and kata of the Akodo school. The assembled sensei watch silently, offering a simple nod to each young samurai as he completes the demonstration. Each successful youth swears an oath of obedience and loyalty to the Lion Clan, and concludes by cutting their own palm with their wakizashi, symbolizing their readiness to shed their

own blood for their lord and Clan. A shugenja from the Kitsu family invokes the blessings of the ancestors and Fortunes on the new-made samurai, completing their passage into adulthood.

If the PCs have not managed to recover the sword Karatekawari Hana, and if Shiba Tsumenitsu is still alive, he will look increasingly uneasy as the gempukku ceremony continues. Anyone who makes an **Investigation/Awareness** roll at TN 15 will be able to perceive his alarm, as well as the expectant look on Matsu Tagemuchi's face and the sense of hidden triumph from Mirumoto Sanbe.

The Fate of Karatekuwari Hana

As the gempukku ceremony concludes, Tsumenitsu must present the gift of the sword. **If he has the sword**, the following scene occurs:

As the last of the students complete their oaths, Shiba Tsumenitsu approaches the senior Lion and bows politely. "Honored hosts. I have been deeply moved by this demonstration of the skill and honor of the Lion. Permit me to offer a small gift to express my appreciation." He gestures minutely, and Asako Hoichi steps forward holding the wrapped sword. "This is Karatekawari Hana, the legendary blade forged by Kakita Ajito in the reign of Hantei XXVII. I present it here to the Matsu family, in recognition of their courage and honor."

Matsu Tagemuchi will go through the obligatory two refusals before accepting the blade with a smile of triumph. PCs will be able to easily notice furious disappointment on the face of Mirumoto Sanbe, and surprised anger from Doji Takashi.

If Tsumenitsu has not been able to retrieve the sword, he remains silent at the end of the ceremony. Matsu Tagemuchi's expectant look turns to one of puzzlement and then anger. He waits until it becomes clear that Tsumenitsu will take no action, then strides across the field, deliberately approaching the Phoenix daimyo. "Is there something you have forgotten, Tsumenitsu-sama?" he asks.

Tsumenitsu breaks out in a fine sweat as he stammers an apology. "I am afraid... circumstances have intervened, honored Matsu-sama. I am very sorry." The Matsu general snorts, turns his back, and marches away, publicly snubbing the Phoenix. Tsumenitsu retreats from the scene, his face flushed with anger and humiliation. Anyone watching Mirumoto Sanbe during

this event can roll **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 to see a triumphant look cross his face.

Afterward, Sanbe can be seen speaking to Matsu Tagemuchi, quietly suggesting that the Lion should side with the Dragon rather than the Phoenix.

Kage Retires

Immediately after the resolution of Tsumenitsu's gift, Akodo Kage steps forward and bows to Akodo Toturi. "Honored Champion, the time has come. I must depart the dojo of the Swift Sword, and begin a new life. With your permission, Toturi-sama, permit me to present you with my swords."

Toturi eloquently urges the aging sensei to remain and continue to impart his wisdom to new generations of Lion. Kage politely refuses. "I have taught young Lions for more than twenty years, great Lord. Now it is time for me to begin learning again. I shall take up a musha shugyo, a warrior's pilgrimage, and search the Empire for new learning." He bows again. "Please forgive the willfulness of an old man."

Toturi nods, smiling. "There is nothing to forgive, sensei. But please, at least keep your swords to protect you on the distant roads you will travel."

Kage chuckles and looks around at the gathered students. "Do any of you truly believe I will need swords to protect myself on my journeys through our Empire?" The assembled Lion grin and bellow, "NO, SENSEI!"

Kage removes the two swords from his belt and kneels before Toturi, offering them in uplifted palms. "These blades have served my family for many generations, Toturi-sama. May they serve you as well as they have me." Toturi accepts the blades with a grave nod.

The katana which Kage is offering is actually the Bloodsword Passion, which the Kolat acquired some months ago. If any PCs have played the adventure *Drawing Out the Darkness*, they may have seen or wielded the sword. Such PCs can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to sense something uncomfortably familiar about the sword which Kage has just given to Toturi. If they actually used the sword in combat, the TN is only 10.

Epilogue: The Shadow of War

As Kage concludes his gift-giving ritual and walks quietly back into the castle, the crowd begins to break up, samurai forming smaller groups to talk, congratulate each other, and say farewell before going on with their lives.

Suddenly, the happy scene is interrupted by galloping hoof-beats. A Lion courier rides into the castle complex, dismounts, and hurries inside. Within minutes, murmurs spread his news throughout the crowd: Matsu troops have launched attacks across the northern Crane border, near the village of Renga Murai. They claim to have been “unendurably provoked” by Crane border forces.

The Matsu and younger Lion greet the news with jubilation, shouts of “Banzai!” and “Yatta!” Matsu Tagemuchi can be seen marching through the crowd, smacking one fist into the other palm. “At last,” he growls, smiling with fierce courtesy at any Cranes in the area. “At last.”

Akodo Toturi looks grave... but can’t seem to stop looking at his new sword.

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	1-2 XP, GM’s discretion
PC solved the theft of the sword (if Lion, Phoenix, or honorable/disinterested)	1 XP
OR	
PC kept sword theft unsolved (if Scorpion, Mirumoto, or anti-Phoenix)	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

Honor

A PC who is seduced by Isawa Imoko loses 3 points of Honor.

If that PC is blackmailed into killing Bayushi Himiko, he loses an additional 2 points of Honor.

A PC who blackmails Akodo Kansei into backing off loses 1 point of Honor.

A Scorpion PC who helps with a successful theft of the sword gains 1 point of Honor (unless they are Junshin, in which case they lose 2 points of Honor).

If the Scorpion are exposed, Soshi Tohya will “take the fall.” All other Scorpions who participated in the sword-theft lose 2 points of Honor from failing in their mission (unless they are Junshin, in which case they gain 1 point of Honor).

Glory

If Shiba Tsumenitsu is unable to present the gift of the sword Karatekuwari Hana, all members of the Shiba family are publicly embarrassed and lose 2 points of Glory.

If Mirumoto Sanbe murders Shiba Tsumenitsu in the kenjutsu tournament, all Mirumoto PCs lose 1 point of Glory for their association with this despicable act.

Any PC who defeats Akodo Kage in a sparring match gains +1 Glory

Other Awards/Penalties

None. However, if any PCs actually deduces the identity of Toturi’s new sword, that PC gains **Dark Secret: Toturi’s Blade**.

GM's Appendix #1: NPC statistics

Akodo Toturi, the Lion Clan

Champion

FIRE 3 Intelligence 7	AIR 4 Awareness 5
EARTH 4	WATER 4 Perception 5
VOID 5	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 3.1/9.0

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 10, Courtier 9, Defense 6, Etiquette 8, Heraldry 5, History 9, Iaijutsu 4, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 7, Kenjutsu 8, Law 5, Lore (many) 3-10, Meditation 7, Oratory 8, Rhetoric 5, Shintao 9, Theology 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (many), Ear of the Emperor, Great Destiny, Natural Leader, Sensei (Suana, Akodo Kage), Social Position (Champion of the Lion), Tactician/Obligation (Akodo Kage), True Love (Hatsuko the Geisha)

Equipment: Kimono, excellent daisho set (+1 skill die, +1 damage die).

Akodo Kage, Honored Lion Sensei

FIRE 4 Intelligence 6	AIR 5 Awareness 7
EARTH 6	WATER 4 Perception 6
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 5

Honor/Glory: 4.2 (0.5)/6.2

Skills: Acting 8, Athletics 6, Battle 8, Commerce 7, Courtier 4, Defense 8, Etiquette 4, Intimidation 4, Investigation 4, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 10, Kenjutsu 10, Law 3, Lore (bushido) 4, Manipulation 10, Oratory 3, Shintao 5, Sincerity 6.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (4), Blackmail (many), Crafty, Major Allies (many), Natural Leader, Social Position (Lion sensei) /Dark Secret (Kolai Master), Dependent (Akodo Toturi), Proud, Sworn Enemies (too many to count).

Equipment: Kimono, fine daisho, Bloodsword Passion.

Matsu Tagemuchi, Rising Lion

General

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 3.4/4.2

Skills: Athletics 4, Bard 3, Battle 6, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, History 3, Iaijutsu 4, Jiu-jutsu (hand to hand) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (war) 5, Lore (bushido) 3, Oratory 4, Sincerity 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Death Trance, Heart of Vengeance (Unicorn), Leadership, Social Position (general), Tactician/Brash

Akodo Kansei, Lion Sensei

FIRE 4	AIR 4
EARTH 3 Stamina 4	WATER 3 Perception 5
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 2.8/5.4

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 7, Courtier 2, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Intimidation 2, Investigation 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 5, Kenjutsu 6, Law 2, Lore (bushido) 5, Oratory 3, Shintao 1, Sincerity 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (Lion sensei), Tactician/Dark Secret (illegitimate son by Akodo Momiji), True Love (Akodo Momiji).

Equipment: Kimono, excellent katana, fine wakizashi.

Shiba Tsumenitsu, Phoenix Daimyo

FIRE 4 Intelligence 5	AIR 5
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Perception 5
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 25 (32 in armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 4

Honor/Glory: 2.4/5.8

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 4, Calligraphy 3, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, History 3, Iaijutsu 7, Jujutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Kenjutsu 6, Law 3, Lore (iai-jutsu) 3, Manipulation 4, Oratory 2, Poetry 3, Rhetoric 4, Shintao 4, Sincerity 6.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Matsu family, Shiba family), Gentry, Kharmic Tie (Mirumoto Sanbe), Luck (rank 1), Social Position (daimyo)/Jealousy (swordsmanship), Proud, Nemesis (Mirumoto Sanbe), Sworn Enemy (Mirumoto Sanbe).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine light armor, fine daisho set, Crane sword *Karatekawari Hana*

Isawa Imoko, Phoenix Shugenja-ko (and man-chaser)

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 5
EARTH 2	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Isawa Air Tensai 2

Honor/Glory: 1.8/2.4

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Etiquette 4, History 2, Lore (shugenja) 4, Meditation 3, Poetry 3, Seduction 4 (+3 for Dangerous Beauty), Shintao 2, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 2, Theology 3

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Air) *Benten's Touch, Call Upon the Wind, Whispering Wind, Quiescence of Air, Mists of Illusion*, (Water) *Sympathetic Energies, Path to Inner Peace, Regrow the Wound*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dangerous Beauty, Sensei (Isawa Uona, Mistress of Air)/Compulsion (men), Unluck (rank 1).

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel.

Asako Hoichi, Phoenix chronicler and personal aide to Tsumenitsu

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

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 3.6/1.0

Skills: Calligraphy 5, Courtier 2, Etiquette 3, History 4, Meditation 4, Research 5, Sincerity 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable/Antisocial (2 points), Can't Lie, Low Pain Threshold.

Equipment: Kimono, writing kit, folding table.

Mirumoto Sanbe, angry Dragon General

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

TN to be Hit: 28 (38 in armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Duelist (Swordmaster) 3

Honor/Glory: 1.8/3.7

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 6, Courtier 3, Defense 5, Etiquette 3, History 2, Jujutsu (kaze-do) 4, Kenjutsu 6, Lore (battle) 4, Lore (kenjutsu) 3, Oratory 4, Poetry 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Weaponsmith 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Mirumoto family), Quick, Kharmic Tie (Shiba Tsumenitsu), Social Position (general)/Driven (to defeat Shiba Tsumenitsu), Nemesis (Shiba Tsumenitsu), Sworn Enemy (Shiba Tsumenitsu)

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set.

Kitsuki Chikaku, Sanbe's assistant

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

TN to be Hit: 21 (26 in armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 2.8/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 2, Jujutsu (kaze-do) 2, Kenjutsu 4, Shintao 2, Sincerity 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker/Idealistic, Meddler

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, daisho

Doji Takashi, Crane Daimyo and sword collector

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

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

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 3

Honor/Glory: 3.5/5.3

Skills: Archery 4, Bard 2, Courtier 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, History 2, Iaijutsu 5, Jujutsu (Mizu-do) 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (swords) 6, Oratory 3, Poetry 4, Shintao 2, Sincerity 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Gentry, Social Position (minor daimyo)/Fascination (swords)

Equipment: Kimono, light armor (both of fine quality), daisho set (exquisite quality)

Daidoji Hitokiri, Crane Clan spy and saboteur.

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Daidoji Harrier 2

Honor/Glory: 1.3/1.6

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 5, Battle 3, Climbing 4, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Explosives 2, Forgery 4, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 4, Jujutsu (hand-to-hand) 4, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Law 2, Sincerity 3, Stealth 5, Traps 3, Yarijutsu 3.

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

Equipment: Daisho, kimono.

Soshi Himiko, Scorpion diplomat (wife of minor daimyo Soshi Amano)

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

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 1.7/4.6

Skills: Acting 3, Calligraphy 4, Courtier 5, Etiquette 6, Investigation 5, Law 6, Manipulation 4, Meditation 4, Poetry 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 6, Sleight-of-Hand

3, Spellcraft 4, Stealth 2, Tea Ceremony 4, Theology 4

Spells: (Air) *By the Light of Lord Moon, Cloak of Night, Know the Shadows, Mists of Illusion, Secrets on the Wind, Way of Deception, Whispering Wind, Wind-Born Slumbers*, (Water) *Reflections of Pan Ku, Reflective Pool, The Tie That Binds*, (Fire) *Biting Steel, Evil Ward, Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Earth) *Earth's Stagnation*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Blackmail (many)/True Love (husband)

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel

Soshi Tohya, Himiko's "handmaiden" (Shosuro Actress)

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Shosuro Butei 4

Honor/Glory: 0.6/1.4

Skills: Acting 6, Athletics 5, Calligraphy 3, Climbing 6, Courtier 4, Dance 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Forgery 3, Investigation 5, Jujutsu (Hand-to-Hand) 4, Locksmith 6, Meditation 6, Ninjutsu 7 (ninja-to, shuriken, nageteppe, climbing claw), Poetry 2, Poison 4, Seduction 6, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 7, Stealth 6.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Shadow Brand

Equipment: Fine kimono, assorted costumes, disguises, and make-up, ninja-to (1k2), shuriken (1k1), nageteppe (smoke grenades), climbing gear.

Hida Hirose, grim crab samurai

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

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

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.7/1.8

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, History (Crab lands) 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (crude).

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor (not worn at court), daisho set, assorted other weapons (not with him at present)

Ide Sowasora, charming Unicorn ambassador

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Ide Emissary 3

Honor/Glory: 3.3/4.0

Skills: Bard 4, Commerce 3, Courtier 5, Dance 2, Etiquette 6, Horsemanship 4, Law 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 3, Kenjutsu 3, Manipulation 3, Poetry 4, Sincerity 6

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine daisho

Ide Rivan, Sowasora's wife, compromised Unicorn shugenja-ko

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 1.4/3.4

Skills: Acting 3, Calligraphy 4, Dance 2, Defense 2, Herbalism 3, Horsemanship 5, Hunting 4, Law 3, Meditation 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Spellcraft 3, Tantojutsu 3, Theology 3, Yarijutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Water) *Reversal of Fortunes, Ties That Bind, Sympathetic Energies* (innate), *Wisdom and Clarity, Penetrating Drop* (innate), (Air), *Nature's Touch, Yari of Air*, (Earth) *Fires From the Forge, Speed Growth, Hands of Jurojin*, (Fire) *Extinguish*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Ally (husband, Ide Sowasora), Innate Abilities (*Sympathetic Energies, Penetrating Drop, Benten's Touch*)/Dark Secrets (murdered Matsu Takeru, blackmailed by the Scorpion), Gaijin Name

Equipment: Fine kimono, tanto.

Kitahachi, Mantis Clan Bushi

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Mantis Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.5/3.0

Skills: Athletics 5, Battle 3, Commerce 6, Courtier 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, History 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 4, Manipulation 3, Sailing 6, Sincerity 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large, Quick, Blood of Osano-Wo/Phobia (Claustrophobia, rank 2).

Equipment: Clothing, daisho set.

Miya Satoshi, heir to the Miya family

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (27 in armor)

School/Rank: Miya Shisha 1/Matsu Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 2.8/7.6

Skills: Archery 4, Battle 3, Calligraphy 1, Courtier 1, Defense 2, Diplomacy 1, Etiquette 3, Heraldry 4, History 2, Horsemanship 2, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Manipulation 2, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes, Multiple Schools, Social Position (Miya family heir)/Brash, Insensitive, Overconfident.

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine light armor, fine daisho.

Generic Bushi

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

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

School/Rank: Rank 1 (any Great Clan)

Honor/Glory: 3.0/1.5

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu 3, Sincerity 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, daisho set.

GM's Appendix #2: The Quarrel Between Sanbe and Tsumenitsu – Who is Really at Fault?

Some PCs may be interested (or frustrated) enough by the quarrel between Sanbe and Tsumenitsu to try and learn the truth behind it. Who is really at fault, and why do these two men hate each other so bitterly over a seemingly minor incident?

The Incident

Two years ago, Mirumoto Sanbe and Shiba Tsumenitsu first met each other at Winter Court. The two seemed to conceive an instant dislike of each other, a dislike which grew over the course of the winter. Many small incidents and quarrels served to feed into their enmity, until it seemed as though it was all they could do not to simply draw and attack each other. Perhaps only the fact that they were in the Winter Court of the Emperor prevented them.

The final straw came when Tsumenitsu was offering a demonstration of the Shiba Technique to a crowd of admiring courtiers. Sanbe happened upon the scene and began to belittle Tsumenitsu's skills, declaring that any technique so "shallow and sloppy" could never prevail against the superior Niten style. Tsumenitsu declared that his Clan had been insulted, and demanded satisfaction. After a couple of weeks of negotiations, a duel was arranged.

At the duel, both combatants drew and struck in the same instant, and both were critically wounded. Quick action by shugenja on both sides was able to save their lives, but there was no possibility of continuing the duel. The Emperor himself declared that he would not have the matter trouble his winter any further, and both samurai were not invited to the Emperor's court the following winter.

The Truth

The real truth is that Sanbe and Tsumenitsu are both reincarnations of earlier enemies, a pair of generals who fought each other to a bloody, futile draw in a long-ago war between their Clans, a war largely erased from the Imperial histories. It was fought over the right to possess the then-fertile lands at the edge of Heigen Ryo Kokoro, the Dragon Heart Plain, with the bushi families of each Clan laying claim to the lands. The leaders of the two Clans could not (or would not) stop the war, and the Emperor at the time, Hantei the 27th, was weak and ineffectual, unwilling to pay attention to such troubles. The two families, Mirumoto and Shiba, battled into bloody stalemate

for five years before the threat of an invasion by the Lion Clan forced their superiors to order them to accept the dishonor of peace.

The two most famous generals on either side, Mirumoto Kyobou and Shiba Adauchi, clashed ten times on the Dragon Heart Plain, and their battles became epic struggles in which first one side, then the other, was victorious, but neither was able to force a decisive outcome. For a time, the Crane Clan sided with the Dragon, but then withdrew from the conflict.

In the end, Kyobou and Adauchi refused to accept the peace agreement of their superiors, and met one final time on the Dragon Heart Plain, fighting with only their personal escorts. Finally, the two generals met in single combat and slew each other, each promising to finish the struggle in Hell.

Emma-O, God of the Dead, condemned these two warlike souls to seven centuries in Gaki-do, the Realm of Hungry Dead, before allowing them to be reborn into the land of the living. But the fires of their old enmity still smolder within them, and a chance meeting at Winter Court two years ago reignited their ancient enmity.

Neither Sanbe nor Tsumenitsu realizes any of this, of course. Each of them knows only that they hate the other, and that everything their enemy does makes them angrier.

It is highly unlikely that the PCs will be able to learn any of this. However, if a PC learns the true back-story of Karatekawari Hana (see below), they may also decide to look into the war in which the sword was lost to the Phoenix. A **Research/Intelligence** or **History/Intelligence** roll at TN 25 will uncover the full story of this near-forgotten conflict. A PC who looks into the family backgrounds of Mirumoto Sanbe and Shiba Tsumenitsu can make a **Research/Intelligence** roll at TN 20 to determine that these two individuals are directly descended from Kyobou and Adauchi.

Finally, a PC with the ability to sense ghosts or ancestral spirits may be able to realize (with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 30) that these two individuals are reborn souls with heavy karmic burdens.

Karatekawari Hana

The Crane blade which Tsumenitsu plans to hand over to the Lion also has a connection to the same era. The blade was the last one created by the famed Crane weaponsmith Kakita Ajito, who died midway through the reign of the afore-mentioned Hantei the 27th. His final creation, a sword so perfectly sharp that flower-petals dropped on its edge were sliced cleanly, was given to a Crane general, Daidoji Koei. Ajito's dying wish was that his final blade be used in the service of restoring peace to the Empire, but instead, Koei carried the blade to war, siding with the Dragon Clan against the Phoenix. He fell in a duel with a Phoenix bushi. The Phoenix Clan, furious that the Crane had sided with the Dragon, kept the weapon as a prize of war.

PCs can learn the basic background of Karatekawari Hana (the creator of the sword, its original owner) with a **History** or suitable **Lore** skill roll (**Intelligence** trait) at TN 15. The full story, including all the details and the name of the Emperor, can only be learned with a TN 30 roll.