



Legend
of the
Five Rings
ROLEPLAYING



SHADOWLANDS

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO THE
DOMINION OF FU LENG

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9th Day of the Month of Shiba, 1117, somewhere four days' march into the Shadowlands

Hiruma Gakuto shielded his eyes from the piercing sun and squinted at the riverbed. "We've been here before," he muttered.

A hard smack. Gakuto sprawled in the dust, Hida Kiyo Sue glaring down at him with a red palm.

Kuni Ritsuko winced but said nothing.

"Idiot!" Kiyo Sue hissed at the scout. "You have given our location away!"

Gakuto's welt traced a red line down his face. "We're going in circles!" he protested.

"It's an illusion, you dumb goat!" barked Kiyo Sue.

"You really trust what you see out here?!"

Gakuto rubbed his eyes. Only wind stirring shriveled grass. No riverbed. No river.

Kiyo Sue grunted in disgust. "Whelps."

Ritsuko silently watched her commander as he turned, fidgeting absently with the jade finger around his neck. *He's never done that before*, she thought. *Has the Shadowlands finally gotten to him?*

She waited until the others followed him away from the clearing. Then, she knelt beside Gakuto and lifted a bandage to wipe his face.

He flinched. Inched away. Avoided her eyes.

They were all like that. She was a Kuni, a walking shroud, her face kabuki-painted to fool the demons. Only the brute spared her more than a glance. The others kept her at arm's length.

She was used to it.

"Hold still," came her steady voice. She dabbed at his cut and readied a salve.

"It is nothing," he said. He stared where the riverbed had been. "Just a scratch."

"You know what a mere scratch can do out here."

He swallowed.

They found the cave before long. It was little more than a partially covered hole, like something a giant trap-door spider would have dug. Ritsuko sandwiched a rat femur in her palms, whispered a prayer, then tossed it. It pointed into the dark opening.

"This is the lair," she whispered.

Kiyo Sue readied his tetsubō. "Light some torches. We're going in."

It was Gakuto who dared speak, bowing. "Hida-sama, we should smoke it out, if it is home! Let us gather some grass. We can fight it in the light."

Kiyo Sue slammed his tetsubō into the dirt inches from Gakuto's face. Ritsuko's jaw clenched at the resulting dust cloud. Had Kiyo Sue slipped even a bit...

"Are you all cowards?" the Hida demanded. "Since when did the Crab cower at darkness? I'll go in alone if I must, and you can tell the Great Bear that you abandoned the hunt for the oni at his doorstep!"

Gakuto made to speak, but Ritsuko interrupted, her decision clear if not easy.

"I'll follow," she said. Ignoring Gakuto's stunned face, she approached the commander.

Kiyo Sue grunted. "See? The Kuni knows—"

Pale light poured from her fingers as Kiyo Sue was engulfed in green flame. His body fell just as the last prayer left Ritsuko's lips.

The clearing resounded with swords leaving sheaths. But then a cough from the fallen Hida. Then another. And then.

It was as if a pyre had been lit inside Kiyo Sue's gaping mouth. Formless black curtains poured out. From the smoke, something lunged, bony legs outstretched, reaching for Ritsuko's throat.

A ward was already in her hands. Its scream was like shattering glass.

Silence. Ritsuko drew back. "It's gone." She smiled in spite of herself. That was easier than she'd anticipated.

The others rushed past to their fallen commander. *Serves him right*, came a thought. *He didn't deserve to lead, behaving like that.*

"He'll live," she said. "The Shadow Oni needs a living host, a mind to fill with hubris and vice."

"H-how did you know?" Gakuto managed.

"His jade finger," she replied, cutting it free from the commander's neck. "It's actually malachite."

Before, they looked at her with fear and suspicion. Now, their eyes glittered with admiration. Respect.

You're their leader now, another thought came unbidden. *And you'll be a better leader than that drunken brute ever was.*

A cold realization fell over her.

Gakuto bowed. "You are now in charge, Kuni-sama. What are your orders?"

Ritsuko thrust out her hands. "Chain me to the tree," she said, "and get another Kuni."

It didn't speak again until the last scout was gone. Its voice scraped the inside of her skull like an iron nail. *Foolish girl*, it said, *I could have made you great.*

"Foolish demon," she whispered with steel in her voice, "I will make you dead."

Welcome to the Shadowlands

To the south of Rokugan lies the Shadowlands. Created when the Dark Kami fell to Rokugan and descended into the underworld of Jigoku, it is a nightmarish place of demons and monsters. All of Rokugan stands against it, but none as much as the Crab Clan. While the rest of the Emerald Empire politely schemes in courtly dramas, the Crab stand resolute against the greatest threat to Rokugan.

WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

Shadowlands is a guide to the dread realms of Fu Leng, where corruption and evil thrive in place of honor and courage. In it, players find information on this region as well as Crab lands and the great Kaiu Wall that divides the Shadowlands from Rokugan. With new schools, techniques, weapons, and more to aid them, PCs can fight the Tainted creatures and other terrors that would destroy the Emerald Empire.

This book is divided into three chapters:

CHAPTER 1

Dark Histories explores the Shadowlands and features several of the infamous locations including the Festering Pit of Fu Leng and Daylight Castle as well as the vile denizens that can be found at each. It then covers the clan which acts as the bulwark against this evil: the Crab, including its families and lands. Lastly, the chapter covers the Wall itself and the brave patrols that explore and investigate the Shadowlands.

CHAPTER 2

Honor Against Demons introduces the ghost-hunters of the Falcon Minor Clan, along with rules for creating player characters from this clan. It includes other new player options such as schools, weapons, armor, and techniques, plus patterns to create customized items to better protect the Empire. There are new advantages and disadvantages relating to the Shadowlands and, for those who dare, there is guidance for using mahō and new techniques for employing such dread blood magic.

CHAPTER 3

Out of the Shadows offers game master advice for running games set in the Shadowlands, especially using the horror themes which define this setting. It includes guidance

ADVENTURE SEEDS

Throughout this book, you'll find sidebars like this one presenting adventure seeds for GMs. If you're a player, you might want to avoid reading these, as doing so could spoil things should your GM adopt the ideas! If you're a GM, you can expand on these seeds to create fully fledged adventures, take bits and pieces, or simply use them for inspiration.

— Hook The hook provides the context for starting the adventure and introduces the important NPCs. We also provide a suggested way to involve the PCs in events, which you can tailor to fit your campaign.

— Rising Action In the next part of an adventure seed, we briefly describe the most likely way for events to escalate, further embroiling the PCs and raising the stakes.

— Climax Finally we offer a likely climax for the adventure, whether that is a decisive encounter with an NPC or a difficult choice the PCs must make. By this point, the events of the adventure are likely to have taken unexpected turns based on the PCs' actions, and you should feel free to modify the climax or resolve matters in whatever way fits the ongoing adventure.

RUMORS AND LEGENDS

Throughout this book, you'll find sidebars presenting just a few of the tales in circulation about a particular location or group. As a GM, you might use these for inspiration when PCs inquire about any local gossip or anecdotal reports. Following up on such rumors could even form the basis for an adventure.

As with all tales, it is not always clear which are true and which are false. We've left it up to you to determine which are which. Of course, even the most outlandish stories might have a grain of truth.

concerning roleplaying corruption, new ways to spend Opportunity in the Shadowlands, and additional NPC demeanors and templates for creating characters themed for Crab and Shadowlands adventures. Lastly, there are rules for crafting unique new oni to terrorize and devour the Empire—unless there are samurai courageous enough to stop them.



CHAPTER 1

Dark Histories

Hida Sanae propped her jade-studded tetsubō against the rampart and looked out to the horizon. The bleak landscape shimmered and shifted, a barren hill now, after an eye-blink, a stand of twisted, gnarled trees.

The bushi curled her lip. Such was the Shadowlands—a place of lies. Lies and horror and death. From here, high on the Wall, it was everywhere. Behind was her home and Empire, but before her was nothing but horror.

And something else. Something was moving, far in the distance. Moving in ways that hurt her eyes to view. Shouts went up along the Wall, and she could see signal arrows rising into the air while huge drums pounded out battle orders. It was time, yet again, to defend Rokugan.



The Shadowlands

South of the Emerald Empire sprawls the vile realm known as the Shadowlands. Spawned at the dawn of the Empire by the fall from the Heavens of the evil Kami, Fu Leng, the Shadowlands is the ultimate antithesis of Rokugan—a profane place of corruption, death, and destruction. It is a land steeped in vile power that emanates from Jigoku, the Realm of Evil, and its horrifying denizens have a single-minded purpose: to subjugate and destroy the Empire, and then the rest of the Mortal Realm of Ningen-dō.

Because it has played such a pivotal role in the history of the Empire, it is important to understand the Shadowlands—how it came into being, its essential nature, and the profoundly existential threat it poses.

ORIGIN AND HISTORY

Once, what is now the Shadowlands was a lush and fertile land, free of even a hint of corruption. This is how the *nezumi* recall it, at least, in stories of their ancestors, whose cities flourished in that region before the arrival of Fu Leng. Rokugani scholars debate how much of this is true and how much is fantasy, at least to the extent that any believe the rat people at all, for most Rokugani view them as bestial and primitive. Still, all generally agree that, at one time, what is now the Shadowlands was much like any other part of the Mortal Realm.

THE FALL OF THE KAMI

At that time, the seeds of celestial catastrophe were already being sown. In the Heavens, strife erupted among the Kami, the children of Lady Sun and Lord Moon. Much of it originated with the Kami known as Fu Leng. Fu Leng was the second best at all things among his siblings. He was strong, but Hida was stronger; he was wise, but Togashi was wiser; and so on it went with each of his siblings. Envy grew in Fu Leng's heart; it became resentment, and then hatred.

When the Kami finally fell from the Celestial Heavens, eight of them plunged into Ningen-dō, the Realm of Mortals, and became the leaders of the new Emerald Empire. They engaged in combat to determine who would be Emperor, and Hantei won. However, when Fu Leng fell, religious doctrine explains that his resentment for his siblings was a beacon for the malevolent powers of Jigoku, the Realm of Evil. Fu Leng was pulled away from the other Kami as he fell. On a new trajectory, he eventually struck Ningen-dō, but he smashed through its substance, tearing open a hole between the Mortal Realm and Jigoku. He kept falling, finally coming to rest deep in the Realm of Evil. In his wake, corrupting power oozed from the hole he had sundered, relentlessly afflicting the Mortal Realm around it with a malign contamination.

Soon, the lands surrounding the vile portal—now known as the Festering Pit of Fu Leng—became corrupted and steeped in evil. All of the things living in them were either destroyed or twisted into foul, unnatural forms, while the water, the air, and even the land itself were stricken by the emanations from the Festering Pit. Worse, monstrous things crawled out of Jigoku and into the Mortal Realm. The lands south of the nascent Emerald Empire were infused with the evil influence of Jigoku, a spiritual malady known as the Taint. In a few short years, they became a blighted nightmare realm where humans refused to tread. As for the *nezumi*, their stories tell of grand cities shattered and a vast civilization reduced to scattered bands of survivors in a hostile and hellish land.

THE FIRST WAR

It may be that the malign powers in Jigoku sought to enslave Fu Leng, but he was a divine being. This allowed him power over Jigoku in turn, resulting in a malevolent and supremely dangerous symbiosis that threatened not just the newly born Empire, but the entire Mortal Realm.

At first, the burgeoning Empire found itself contending only with occasional attacks by mysterious creatures skulking out of unexplored southern lands. Lord Hida and the Crab Clan warriors under his command noted these raids and began to organize a defense so that the followers of the Kami could be safe. As the raids had no central command structure, however, they were nothing more than irritations to a warrior of Hida's stature and the other great champions of old.

Then, Fu Leng unexpectedly arrived at Hantei's palace in Otosan Uchi and demanded his opportunity to compete for the rule of Rokugan. Despite the reassurances of his siblings, especially Shinjo, who had always been closest to him, Fu Leng raged that he had been left for dead, and that he was owed his opportunity to also prove his prowess in single combat. In his hateful speech, the other Kami came to believe that Jigoku had corrupted his soul, and that he could not be given the rule over Rokugan. Nevertheless, Hantei acquiesced.

Hantei named Togashi as his champion for the duel against Fu Leng, and Togashi named all of Rokugan as his weapon. Thus, the fallen Kami returned to the Festering Pit and unleashed his hordes upon the Empire. For three years, the forces of Jigoku—now organized under Fu Leng's leadership—laid siege to Rokugan.

This conflict, known as the First War, saw the Empire progressively driven back as the Shadowlands expanded, engulfing ever more of its southern lands in corruption and horror. By the year 42, the Empire faced defeat.

It was then that Shinsei, the Little Teacher, told the Kami there was a desperate hope: mortal heroes known as Thunders, selected from among their followers, could face Fu Leng and determine the outcome of the war. On the so-called Day of Thunder, these Seven Thunders traveled into the heart of the Shadowlands and defeated Fu Leng. Shosuro returned from the battle with twelve Black Scrolls and a dire warning that they must never be opened.

AFTER THE THUNDER

Without Fu Leng's will to guide them, the hordes fell into chaos. The corruption slowed, and the armies were reduced to an undisciplined threat for the next six centuries. In the year 716, a monstrous oni known as the Maw bound countless lesser horrors to its will, formed vast legions once again, and unleashed a coordinated attack upon the Empire. The lands of the Hiruma family of the Crab Clan were overrun by monsters and twisted as the corruption of the earth spread once again, and the Empire faced existential peril a second time. Through truly heroic measures, the Crab were able to stop this massive incursion and destroy the Maw, ending the threat.

Although Hiruma lands now fall within the Shadowlands, the Crab prevented its creatures from advancing any further through the construction of the mighty fortification known as the Kaiu Kabe, the Carpenter Wall. Moreover, after the defeat of the Maw, the spread of the Shadowlands ceased, and the mighty oni's lieutenants fell into disarray, making wild attacks against the Wall or striking at each other in petty bids to consolidate power. Still, an unspoken fear echoes deep within the clan's psyche—is there another being such as the Maw out there, ready to reunite the horrors that dwell

SHADOWLANDS TERRAIN QUALITIES

Terrain in the Shadowlands should always be off-putting, ranging from horrifically bleak and dark to disturbingly beautiful and enticing. Much of it should have the Dangerous, Entangling, and Obscuring qualities. Often it can be Imbalanced as well.

More terribly, all terrain in the Shadowlands has the Defiled quality. At the GM's discretion, some areas can be especially corrupted and increase the TN of checks non-Tainted characters make to resist Defiled effects by 1.

in the Shadowlands in a new campaign of terror against the Empire? And what of the Black Scrolls? Some have been linked to great catastrophes in Rokugan's history, while the rest have vanished to the ages, lost or hidden away that they might be kept from mortal hands.

THE NATURE OF THE SHADOWLANDS

To understand the nature of the Shadowlands, it is necessary to understand the nature of the corrupting force that underpins and, ultimately, drives all that exist there. This force is known as the Taint of Jigoku or, more commonly, simply the Taint.

The few Rokugani scholars who have dared to study the Taint—mostly the Kuni family of the Crab—have determined what the Taint is not. It is not a substance. It has no physical presence of its own. What the Taint is, however, is much less certain. It seems to emanate from Jigoku, mainly through the Festering Pit, as a spiritual affliction similar to a disease. This is its most egregious effect: it corrupts mortals, rendering their souls evil within and their bodies mutated without. There seems to be no cure; the corruption of the Taint on a mortal can be slowed or even temporarily halted, but there is no means known by which it can be wholly undone. The Taint also has a corrupting influence on the elements and the land itself. It can contaminate the land, the air above it, the water on and within it, and the plants and beasts that live upon it. It can even work its insidious influence on inanimate objects, such as buildings, weapons, and other items and implements, by corrupting the spirits within them.

It is against this background—of the Taint and its pervasive and implacable invasion of the mortal realm—that the following sections describe the nature of the Shadowlands.



THE SHADOWLANDS ITSELF AS AN ENEMY

While it may be tempting to pile on the horrific effects described here, a GM should be cautious about overdoing it and making the Shadowlands too dire an enemy. Unless it specifically suits their particular story to turn the environment itself into an ongoing nightmare, it is best to choose a few strange effects and describe them to the players.

Sometimes, the Taint could simply manifest in small, purely narrative ways, like the flickering of shadows in the corner of one's eye or whispering voices others cannot hear. Occasionally, one of these effects could trigger appropriate checks and threaten to harm the PCs. This should probably be done sparingly: forcing the players to deal with potentially damaging situations tends to slow the game down and may even cause the unnatural Shadowlands to become mundane through repetition.

The bottom line is that while the Shadowlands should always be portrayed as dangerous and aberrant, its landscape should generally not be the constant focus of an adventure. What happens to the PCs here is more important: how they face the challenges and to what lengths they are willing to go in order to achieve their goals and assigned duties. The focus, as always, should remain firmly on the PCs and their story.

THE CORRUPTED ELEMENTS

The Taint is so horrific that it is capable of afflicting the elements themselves. This is particularly the case in the Shadowlands, where the intensity of this elemental corruption increases with proximity to the Festering Pit. Conversely, the effect diminishes away from the Festering Pit, continuing beyond the Shadowlands. The Kuni family's studies suggest that the Shadowlands spread when the horrors of Fu Leng congregate in numbers—or when wicked rituals are used to blight the land. The lands of the Hiruma became Tainted as the Maw's forces spread over them. The Wastelands of the Kuni represent something of an aberration, however, as the region was subsequently cleansed of the Taint, but only by driving out all spiritual presences from the area, killing the land itself.

The most dreadful form of elemental corruption is that of the Tainted spirits known as *kansen*, or corrupted kami. It is through the perversion of these elemental spirits that the elements are most afflicted by the Taint. This is a subject of intense study by the Kuni, as *kansen* are a danger to anyone who calls upon the kami, such as shugenja. *Kansen* are particularly reviled, as Rokugani peoples consider the spirits divine and their corruption a particularly profane effect of the Taint.

The Land

Whether it is because of the corruption of the kami, a more direct and nightmarish effect of the Taint on the substance of the place, or both, the landscape in the Shadowlands is a twisted perversion of itself. The scenery changes—sometimes obviously, writhing and reshaping itself into new landforms as one watches, and sometimes subtly, such as a path slowly twisting itself to lead towards hazardous terrain. Those familiar with the phenomenon, such as Crab scouts, can still find it disturbing; to those newly exposed to it, this can be terrifying and utterly disorienting. There seems to be no natural pattern to the changes. Rather, they almost appear to be intentionally as confusing and distressing as possible, as though guided by the malign will of Fu Leng.

The land can also be immediately and directly dangerous. Pits and sinkholes can suddenly open beneath a traveler; ground that appears flat and dry can swallow feet in sucking mud; rocks can suddenly come crashing down along slopes that appear too shallow to pose such a threat. Seasoned travelers in the Shadowlands know to remain supremely vigilant, even if nothing obviously dangerous looms nearby.

The Air

Like the land, the air in the Shadowlands tends to be as inimical as possible, given the circumstances. If one seeks to travel quickly or labors hard to climb, then the air is sultry and hot. If one needs to see into the distance, then ominous mists rise, obscuring things more than a short distance away. When seeking shelter, torrential rain or sudden, intense cold descends. The rain is not always water: Hiruma scouts have reported that in the Shadowlands, downpours are often shot through with worms, blood, and chunks of viscera. Boiling water, acid, or venom might even fall from above. In extreme cases, clouds of soporific or even poisonous vapors envelop travelers, causing them to hallucinate, collapse in sleep, or become so ill as to perish between steps.

The Water

As the Crab know, water in the Shadowlands is never safe. Not only is it hazardous to drink, but it is perilous even to come into contact with it. In most cases, this is obvious, as streams and pools often appear slimy or sludgy, or glisten with an oily sheen. The water usually reeks of decay, sulfur, or caustic substances that burn the eyes and throat. Deeper into the Shadowlands, Crab scouts report that what should be water is sometimes replaced by blood, bile, or even more terrible fluids. That said, water that appears clear and uncontaminated is often the most dangerous. A cautionary tale among the Hiruma tells of a scout whose own supply of water had run out; driven by frantic thirst, he rejoiced when he found what looked like a clean, cold pool among some rocks. He desperately began to drink...only to realize, too late, that it was actually a powerful and corrosive acid.

PLANT AND ANIMAL LIFE

Like the land, air, and water, plant and animal life in the Shadowlands are twisted into foul and often dangerous forms. Trees, bushes, and even grasses may be stunted or malformed, or appear dead even as they continue to grow. Conversely, they may be growing grossly out of control, like cancerous tumors of greenery. Moss, lichen, and fungus form slimy, sickly overgrowths, while bloated mushrooms and toadstools burst into clouds of acrid spores if disturbed, sometimes causing horrific infections in those exposed to them. In all cases, plants in the Shadowlands are dangerous, with barbed thorns, razor-edged leaves, or any of a wide variety of toxic or corrosive secretions.

The Taint similarly distorts animal life in the Shadowlands. Insects tend to swarm aggressively, pinching, biting, and stinging with sharp pincers, powerful mandibles, or venomous barbs. Some of them swell into oversized monstrosities instead. Crab scouts commonly speak of spiders, centipedes, and flesh-boring worms as long as a person's forearm.

THE LOST

There are more than mere plants and animal threats in the Shadowlands. Corrupted and Tainted creatures abound, from goblins to oni. Perhaps the most dangerous, though, are the Lost.

The Lost are those humans who have fallen to the Taint and now reside permanently in the Shadowlands. Many are powerful samurai, such as the Dark Moto, while some of the others could be mahō practitioners who worship Fu Leng to gain power.

Encountering the Lost is always a terrible experience for samurai of the Empire. Not only are the Lost deadly combatants, but they also represent one of the horrible fates that could befall even the most loyal of Imperial servants.



BIG STINK

It is said that long ago, when Daylight Castle fell to the Shadowlands, a lesser Hiruma fortress also fell to evil. This was the Haikyo sano Kappa, which is not mourned to the same degree as the lost Hiruma home. Though this castle had great tactical value, few pressed to reclaim it then. Time passed, and given other pressing concerns, it was almost forgotten. Years later, when Hiruma scouts arrived to assess its status, they were astounded by what it had become.

There, where once had stood the proud and strong Kappa fortress, was now a place of ruins infested with countless goblins. The vile creatures had transformed it into a twisted city, complete with crude markets and congested streets. Hovels had sprouted up haphazardly like foul mushrooms, overflowing with goblins. The scouts could discern the markings of multiple goblin warbands, somehow coexisting without erupting into battle.

Captured goblins revealed their city's new name: Big Stink. It was certainly accurate given the intense odor from the concentrated goblins, one which could be detected many miles away.

The Crab promptly gathered a large force to eradicate the creatures; they could not reclaim the land, but they could at least cleanse it of goblins. It was a difficult campaign, but they left behind an empty city when they returned to the Wall.

This did not last long. Only a season later, other scouts reported the city infested again, filled with even more goblins. Though it was late in the year, a second Crab force was dispatched and put it to the torch. Early the following year, though, it was once more infested and the stench even more powerful. The cycle repeated multiple times over the following years, but slowly it became apparent that the goblins in Big Stink were far less of a menace than other Shadowlands dangers that were menacing the Wall and beyond.

Today, Big Stink is somewhat ignored. Occasionally, Crab bushi are assigned to become part of the next cleansing force as punishment. Only the Kuni keep a close watch on the city and its denizens, studying goblin society and seeking tactics to better deal with them in the Shadowlands and elsewhere in Rokugan.

Birds and mammals, on the other hand, are extremely rare. Presumably this is because unless they have mutated into aggressive and dangerous forms—birds that have become feathered masses of talons and beaks, or rabbits that have grown huge, tearing fangs—they simply became prey. Fish and other aquatic life, in the meantime, seem to thrive in horrifying ways, filling the waterways of the Shadowlands with gnashing teeth and tentacles that seek to grab, pull, and drown their quarry in the dark, fathomless depths.

Closer to the Festering Pit, scouts report having seen even stranger and more disturbing creatures—cryptic, misshapen things sporting armored legs, serrated claws, or entangling limbs—that either combine traits of other creatures in bizarre ways or have no recognizable attributes from the Mortal Realm at all. The Kuni speculate that these are things that scuttled and skulked out of Jigoku through the Festering Pit, never meant to exist in Ningen-dō. Many are small, or human-sized at their largest. Some, though, may be truly massive. Sailors who have ventured near the Sea of Shadows sometimes babble frantically about creatures the size of islands whose ponderous movements threaten to capsize even the largest vessels.

REGIONS OF THE SHADOWLANDS

While it is possible that the denizens of the Shadowlands have subdivided their territory into something similar to Imperial provinces, most Rokugani have no knowledge of such demarcations. To the Empire, the Shadowlands is essentially a single place, an undivided realm of corruption and horror. That said, those who study the Shadowlands do recognize there are sub-regions within it, distinguished by the intensity of the Taint as well by geography.

NEAR THE WALL

To the Crab, “near the Wall” is the semiformal designation for a specific part of the Shadowlands. It consists, of two parts: “Wall-Sight” and “Three Days’ March.”

The strip of land within sight of the Wall is simply known as “Wall-Sight.” The extent of Wall-Sight varies; in any given place, it extends from the base of the Wall to the horizon as seen from the top of it. This is the least-Tainted part of the Shadowlands, and the Crab consider it to be relatively safe unless an attack



is imminent or underway. Most others would see it as quite horrifying, of course, for the ground near the Wall is always soaked with blood and littered with unnatural bones. The Crab note that the Taint from the Shadowlands largely fades just before reaching the Wall, indicating to them that the Wall is a spiritual barrier as well as a symbolic embodiment of the defiant spirit of their clan.

The wider strip of land known to the Crab as "Three Days' March" extends from the limit of In-Sight to a point three days' journey from the Wall. Geographically, this is a much more diffuse area, given that travelers move at different rates depending on their intent and burdens, as well as the weather and shifting terrain of the Shadowlands. This doesn't seem to matter, though. Over the centuries, the Crab have learned that while the effects of the Taint intensify and the number of Shadowlands creatures seen increases—making Three Days' March itself hazardous—past the third day of travel, the danger increases dramatically.

The reason for this is not clear. The Kuni speculate that it may be related to the fact that the Hiruma lands at their widest encompass about three days of travel from the Kaiu Wall. Since they have been incorporated into the Shadowlands for only about four hundred years, the power of the Taint within them may not have been able to build up to the same extent. Still, the effects of the Taint are the same in areas of Three Days' March that weren't originally part of the Hiruma lands. Speculation on this phenomenon continues.

THE DEEP SHADOWLANDS



Beyond Three-Days' March is what the Crab recognize only as the Deep Shadowlands. Here, the corruptive power of the Taint increases in a dramatic way, its effects seeming to intensify with each step. Early in the Empire's

history, the Crab made attempts to enter this horrific realm to find and destroy the wellspring of the Taint.

Few who made the effort survived, and none were unscathed. The most notable expedition was that of the Seven Thunders as they ventured into the Shadowlands to face Fu Leng. It is believed they traveled almost as far as the Festering Pit to confront the Dark Kami in his keep. Only Shosuro and Shinsei returned from the Day of Thunder, so the account is somewhat unclear, beyond conveying that reaching Fu Leng's keep involved great trial. This vividly illustrates just how dangerous the Deep Shadowlands can be, that such mighty heroes as the Thunders found it difficult to enter and survive these areas.

Despite the Deep Shadowlands' largely impenetrable nature, hints of some of its places and features have filtered forward through the centuries. Lakes of blood, massive volcanoes, and strange, unnatural structures resembling blasphemous temples or tombs are all said to be found in this nightmare realm. How much of this is true is unknown; what is clear is that two subregions are commonly recognized as existing in the Deep Shadowlands—the Festering Pit of Fu Leng and the Haunted Jungles.

The Festering Pit is the portal between Ningen-do and Jigoku created when Fu Leng crashed through the Mortal Realm and into the Realm of Evil. In that sense, it is an existential wound in creation through which the malign influence of the Taint impinges on the mortal world. Aside from the Thunders, there have been very few known expeditions to the Festering Pit—and even fewer that returned. It can only be speculated that it is a fundamentally horrific place, where the raw stuff of Jigoku is exposed to the Mortal Realm. It is likely that the elements are so badly corrupted here that the land and air are entirely mutable and inimical to life, or at

least life that isn't itself an embodiment of the Taint, such as the demonic oni.

TAINTED RUMORS

I heard that if you pry a stone from the Wall and take it into the Shadowlands, it protects just like a finger of jade.

A friend said she saw something rise up out of the waters off the coast of the Shadowlands and drag a huge warship under the waves.

If you cover your ears at night in the Shadowlands, you can hear the voice of the creature that is coming to kill you.

Something else burns in the sky above the Shadowlands, something that hates us as much as Lady Amaterasu loves us.

A group of Hiruma told me that they found a twisted court in the Shadowlands where Lost courtiers craft elaborate intrigues to corrupt magistrates and others who enforce the Emperor's Laws.

A further point regarding the Festering Pit is worthy of note. According to the recollection of the nezumi, Fu Leng smashed through a great city inhabited by their ancestors when he fell, destroying it and subsequently causing that civilization to fall into ruin. This may be apocryphal, however; just a distortion of barely remembered stories passed from generation to generation.

Far beyond the Festering Pit (from the perspective of Rokugan) sprawl the Haunted Jungles. This would represent “the other side” of the Shadowlands, possibly bordering the distant Ivory Kingdoms. Little is known about these corrupted lands, aside from brief and sporadic accounts that filter into the Empire from gaijin travelers. One can only imagine what nightmarish effects the Taint has on thick, verdant lands teeming with life, many instances of which were already supremely dangerous.

THE SEA OF SHADOWS AND THE THORN COAST

On its eastern and southern sides, the Shadowlands borders the sea. These Tainted waters earned the name the Sea of Shadows: a vast swath plagued by sudden and destructive storms, long spells of eerie calm, and endless banks of thick, cold fog. Sometimes the water itself becomes a deadly foe, suddenly boiling, freezing into jagged ice, or clinging to the sides of ships as it congeals into blood, sludge, or corrosive acid.

If these threats weren’t enough to persuade the Empire’s ships to avoid the Sea of Shadows, the monstrous creatures that dwell within it certainly would be. Those who are brave enough to dare its dark waters—and survive—report glimpsing, just beneath the surface, the passage of gigantic, scaled things many times larger than kobune ships, huge masses of writhing tentacles, or swarms of glowing eyes. There are even more sporadic reports of especially horrifying and otherworldly encounters, such as with the Skull Tide—a literal tsunami of chattering, biting skulls many leagues across, which consumes everything in its path.

The shoreland bordering the Sea of Shadows, known as the Thorn Coast, is like the interior of the Shadowlands in character, except that it is much more rugged and mountainous. The Crab have deployed koutetsukan—stout but ponderous ships protected with iron armor and jade—on expeditions to investigate both the Sea of Shadows and the Thorn Coast. Sailors who survived the effort have said that the corrupted coastal lands are almost impossible to traverse, as the already significant dangers inherent to any mountainous region have been horrifically magnified by the Taint.

INTERVENING REGIONS

A number of notable locations rest uneasily between the Shadowlands and the uncorrupted lands of the Empire. These can be considered transitional, being wholly part of neither region.

• **The Plains above Evil:** The *Heigen yori ue ni Warui*, or Plains above Evil, are a broad expanse of barren wilderness separated from the vast woodlands of the Shinomen Mori, and the Empire beyond it by the northern range of the Twilight Mountains. They border the Shadowlands to the west and southwest, and the Crab lands to the south. The Plains are not, as far as the Crab can discern, rife with Taint; in fact, Shadowlands creatures generally avoid them. Still, their bleak, dry grasslands dotted with enigmatic ruins are inhospitable to the Rokugani. Attempts have been made to settle them, but crops failed, sources of water dried up, and disease and other misfortunes afflicted the would-be settlers. The Kuni speculate that there is some unknown involvement of the Taint. As there has yet been no success in dealing with the matter, the Plains above Evil remain empty and forbidding.



- ➊ **The Kuni Wastelands:** Once Tainted by a Shadowlands incursion, the Kuni Wastelands, which are on the Rokugani side of the Wall, were later cleansed of the Taint. The process, however, left them dead in an elemental sense, effectively devoid of life.
- ➋ **The Shadowlands Marshes:** In 815, a vast army of monsters attempted to force passage into Rokugan through the immense forest of the Shinomen Mori. Some mysterious and ancient power within the forest stopped and ultimately destroyed the raiders, but a sodden region within the woodlands became Tainted in the process. Whatever power destroyed the invaders appears to have contained the Tainted area, limiting it to a small but persistent corrupted region known as the Shadowlands Marshes. Unfortunately, the exact location of the Shadowlands Marshes isn't known (or it is possible they may drift within the forest), meaning that any expedition into the Shinomen is at risk of stumbling into them.

CREATURES OF THE SHADOWLANDS

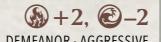
The most common Shadowlands creatures, such as goblins, skeletons, and zombies, are described beginning on page 318 of the core rulebook. These are the monstrosities most likely to be encountered, particularly in significant numbers. However, they are just a few of the many types of creatures samurai could confront in the Shadowlands, some of them quite bizarre and all of them extremely dangerous.

GASHADOKURO

MINION

CONFLICT RANK:  14  0

A Gashadokuro is an enormous skeleton composed of the melded bones of the unburied dead, said to be as much as fifteen times the height of a human. Early in the Empire's history, before strict provisions were made to recover, cremate, and properly dispose of all human remains, gashadokuro would arise at the sites of battles and rampage until they were destroyed. They are now very rare, thankfully. Occasionally, a gashadokuro is found prowling the Shadowlands, a remnant, perhaps, of the ancient past conflict. Time does not seem to have lessen such a creature's prodigious strength, however, and Crab patrols generally give it a wide berth until they can gather sufficient forces to attack.

 6	 2	 2	 4	ENDURANCE 20	FOCUS 6
 2	 2	 4	COMPOSURE ∞	VIGILANCE 2	
 +2, -2					DEMENOR - AGGRESSIVE

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 5	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 0
ADVANTAGES			DISADVANTAGES	
Massive Stature:  Martial; Physical			Easily Distracted:  Social; Interpersonal	
FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR				

Claws and Teeth: Range 0–2, Damage 7, Deadliness 7, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Bone plating (Physical 3, Unholy), rotted flesh and clothing

ABILITIES

MASSIVE BONES

A gashadokuro is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 5. The first time it would be defeated due to suffering damage each scene, it ignores that damage and its bone plating is destroyed instead.





HARIKAGO

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK: 4 3

Harionago appear as beautiful women with long, flowing hair. Unfortunately, their hair is tipped with poisonous, barbed thorns that can quickly ensnare and kill a human, whom they then consume. Nevertheless, they would be relatively easy to avoid, if not for a cunning ability to disguise themselves as lost Crab scouts or other travelers. They then attempt to get close to an intended quarry, ideally isolating them from any companions before attacking. Occasionally, these beings infiltrate the Empire, making them a possible threat even far inside the Kau Wall.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL
00 HONOR		ENDURANCE 16
05 GLORY	1	COMPOSURE 10
00 STATUS	3	FOCUS 9
+2, -2	2	VIGILANCE 3
DEMEANOR - SHREWD	1	

ARTISAN 2 MARTIAL 2 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Expert in Disguise:
 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Barbed Hair: Range 0-2, Damage 3, Deadliness 6, Snaring, Unholy

Gear: Variety of robes and other clothes suitable for posing as Rokugani citizens, small knife

ABILITIES

ENTANGLING TRESSES

A harionago is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. When a harionago deals damage to an Immobilized target, it ignores 2 points of the target's physical resistance (to a minimum of 0).

KYÖRINRIN

MINION

CONFLICT RANK: 3 2

Illustrative of the Taint's ability to corrupt nearly anything, a kyōrinrin is a being composed of scrolls, origami, or essentially anything else made of paper. Given their nature, they may not appear particularly dangerous. This is deceptive, however, as the power motivating kyōrinrin is a strong one, and they can bind, blind, or even smother their foes. The paper that composes them can be torn or burned, but they are tenacious and continue to attack, usually until they are completely destroyed.

2	3	ENDURANCE 6	FOCUS 4
3	1	COMPOSURE 10	VIGILANCE 3
3	1		+2, -2
DEMEANOR - SHREWD			

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Subtle Appearance:
 Martial; Physical

Fear of Fire:
 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Smothering Papers: Range 0-1, Damage 4, Deadliness 4, Snaring, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Shifting layers of paper (Physical 6, Supernatural 6, Unholy)

ABILITIES

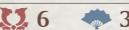
MASSES OF PAPER

A kyōrinrin is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 3. When a kyōrinrin defends against fire damage (such as from a Fire invocation, kihō, or a flame), its resistance counts as 0. When a kyōrinrin makes a successful Attack action check, it may spend +: as follows:

+: The target begins to suffocate (see page 269 of the core rulebook). After a character suffers strife and fatigue at the start of their turn from suffocating this way, the character may make a **TN 3 Fitness check (Fire 2, Earth 5)** to break free and breath normally.

PENANGGALAN

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  6 3

Penanggalan outwardly appear to be normal humans. Indeed, during the day, they go about their business in Rokugan as farmers, artisans, or even samurai. Patrols in the Shadowlands sometimes encounter them posing as lost merchants or scouts. At night, however, they reveal their true nature: their head and internal organs detach from their body and become capable of flying about. In this horrific form, they seek out their victims, usually individuals who are isolated or alone.

When they attack, they do so swiftly, strangling their victims with their dangling viscera and then draining them of their blood. Because their entrails become engorged, they have difficulty squeezing themselves back into the shell of their body, so they spend several days digesting their meal, soaking themselves in vinegar to speed the process. They take great care to hide their bodies away until their food is completely consumed; many believe this is because if the penanggalan's body is destroyed in the meantime, the creature itself will weaken and die. Because penanggalan thrive on secrecy, one is unlikely to attack a party of samurai unless it can arrange for one of them to be alone and takes them by surprise. If confronted, penanggalan are likely to flee, but they are fierce fighters if cornered. Some are even capable of using mahō, making them truly dangerous opponents.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 5 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Flying Horror:
 Martial; Physical

Vulnerable While Eating:
 Martial; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Tentacle Entrails: Range 0-2, Damage 5, Deadliness 6, Snaring, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Body shell (Physical 3 while the body is worn)

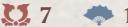
ABILITIES

FEASTER OF BLOOD

A penanggalan is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. While bodiless, it is silhouette 0; while wearing a body, it is silhouette 2. When a penanggalan inflicts a critical strike on its target, it removes fatigue from itself equal to the severity (after the check to resist). Optionally, the GM may choose 0-2 mahō (see page 224 of the core rulebook and page 118 of this book) that a penanggalan can perform; add 1 to this character's combat rank for each mahō chosen this way.

RAVENOUS SHADOWLANDS OGRE

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  7 1

Ogres are huge, violent creatures from the Shadowlands that can also be found north of the Wall. Once intelligent beings, long ago they were twisted into little more than beasts that live only to kill and devour anything they can catch.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 0 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Single-Minded:
 Social; Interpersonal

Always Hungry:
 Martial; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Huge Club or Tree Trunk: Range 1-2, Damage 8, Deadliness 2

Gear (equipped): Numerous hides (Physical 2)

ABILITIES

RAGE OF THE BEAST

A ravenous Shadowlands ogre is a Tainted being of silhouette 4. When the ogre suffers a critical strike, it becomes Enraged. Whenever it inflicts a critical strike, the target suffers the Prone condition in addition to all other results of the critical strike.

MONSTERS IN THE EMERALD EMPIRE

The Shadowlands are not the only place that horrific creatures can be found in Rokugan. Some of these beings are Tainted creatures such as penanggalan, that slip out of the Shadowlands through cunning or force. Others have been stranded after major incursions have been driven back.

However, not all of these creatures are the vile servants of Fu Leng. Tribes of mountain goblins, ogres that wander the high peaks, restless spirits on abandoned battlefields, and even ancient and demonic beings that lurk within forbidding swamps—all of the can be found lurking at the outskirts of civilization.

Many of these are not Tainted, but just because they are not in the thrall of the Fallen Kami does not mean they cannot be dangerous (nor do most Rokugani take the time to discern the difference). If the GM wishes to present such a being in their story as an adversary, they can remove the Tainted trait from the relevant NPC profile.

REVENANT

ADVERSARY

CONFlict RANK: 6 2

A revenant is a powerful undead servant, a creature that retains some intelligence and knowledge from its former life. If the mahō-tsukai who creates it wishes, they can supply a revenant with an *onikage* mount (see page 23) and even a group of animated dead that are ordered to obey the revenant's command. Such revenants can act as champions for the mahō-tsukai, but the practitioner should be certain of the revenant's loyalty before bestowing such power.



ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 5	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES		
Undead Gunsō:  Social; Interpersonal		Self-Knowledge:  Social; Mental		

Heavy Masakari: Range 0–1, Damage 4/5, Deadliness 4/6, Mundane

Gear (equipped): Rusted armor (Physical 2)

POWERFUL SERVANT

A revenant is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. It may issue orders to undead creatures if they were created by the same mahō-tsukai (see page 118). Undead creatures under its orders ignore their disadvantages and count as having the Revenant's assistance on all Scholar, Social, and Trade checks they make. At the GM's discretion, a revenant might be armed with a different weapon or even heavier armor.

TSUMUNAGI

MINION

CONFLICT RANK: 2 0

Also known as "blood eels," these foul creatures are found in ponds and waterways throughout the Shadowlands. They latch onto their prey with wickedly barbed hooks, bite exposed flesh with their jagged teeth, and proceed to drain the unfortunate victim's blood with the aid of saliva that prevents coagulation.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 1



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Slippery: Martial; Physical	Thirst for Blood: Martial; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Biting Teeth: Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 3, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Slimy skin (Physical 1)

ABILITIES

TWISTING LEECH

A tsumunagi is a Tainted being of silhouette 1. When making an Attack action check, a tsumunagi may spend $\diamond\diamond$ to attach itself to the target. The target suffers the Bleeding condition, and cannot remove this condition while the tsumunagi is attached. Any character at range 0–1 may make a **TN 3 Medicine check (Air 2, Earth 5)** to remove the tsumunagi, reducing the TN by 1 if they use a flame to scorch the creature off; if they succeed, it is removed; if they fail, the victim suffers a critical strike with severity 7 plus their shorfall.

UNDEAD HORROR		
ADVERSARY	CONFlict RANK:	TRADE 0

Formed from unholy assemblages of multiple corpses, undead horrors are one of the most terrifying creatures to be found in the Shadowlands. Even more unsettling, these huge monstrosities are said to have been seen in Rokugan during the dark days of Iuchiban's Bloodspeakers—and perhaps some linger in defiled wells or forgotten caverns.

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 0
ADVANTAGES			DISADVANTAGES	
Undead Flesh: Martial; Physical			Mindless: Social; Mental	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Rotted Fists and Teeth: Range 0, Damage 6, Deadliness 3, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Decaying flesh (Physical 3)

ABILITIES

FUSED CORPSES

An undead horror is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 3. Unless defeated by damage from a Sacred source, its component corpses separate and arise as three undamaged zombie peasants (see page 321 of the core rulebook).

WANYŪDŌ
ADVERSARY

CONFlict RANK: 4 2

A wanyūdō has the bizarre form of the flaming wheel of an oxcart, with a screaming human head for its hub. It rolls with preternatural speed across virtually any terrain, including water, attempting to wrench the soul from any mortal being it encounters. Each is said to be the tortured ghost of someone who was an oppressive tyrant while alive. It is a terrifying foe, especially when encountered outside of the Shadowlands.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL
00 HONOR	ENDURANCE 16
05 GLORY	COMPOSURE 10
00 STATUS	FOCUS 9
+2, -2	VIGILANCE 3
DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE	
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3
SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 3
TRADE 0	

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
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All-Terrain Wheel:

Martial; Physical

Painful Form:

Social; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Crushing Fire: Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 4, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Wooden form (Physical 3, Supernatural 1)

ABILITIES

FIERY SOULTAKER

A wanyūdō is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 2. When making an Attack action check, the wanyūdō may spend $\diamond\diamond$ to inflict the Burning condition on its target. Characters who perish while at range 0 of a wanyūdō have their souls dragged to Jigoku. The ramifications of this terrible outcome are at the GM's discretions, such as that they cannot be reincarnated until they are rescued.

SHADoWY RUMORS

There is a tree in the Shadowlands that can suck the soul from your body if your blood drips on its exposed roots.

There is a fire that dances endlessly that can burn the Taint out of your flesh—but you cannot make a sound while it does so, lest the flames leap into your throat and kill you.

There is a shrine in a valley where what remains of the humans who lived here before Fu Leng's fall now chant supplications to the Dark Kami.

There is a cave beyond the Pit filled with crystal that the goblins have collected.

There is a sea of quicksand six days' march away where a gleaming city that doesn't appear to house humans or even nezumi rises from the silken sands during each full moon.

There is a high plateau where powerful revenants who have somehow managed to kill their masters gather and scheme.

There is a small, clear pool just beyond Three Days' March that acts as a mirror. Your own reflection, though, shows a mutated face, grinning with hunger and indicating how you will fall to the Taint.

FALLEN CHRYSANTHEMUM LAKE

Far beyond the protective stone of the Wall, there is said to be a most wondrous vista. Serene and peaceful, it includes a beautiful lake that is even more a marvel given the despoiled nature of the Shadowlands. For lost scouts or warriors seeking respite from ravenous predators, it appears a blessing. What they soon realize, however, is that the blessing is actually a curse, for they have stumbled upon Fallen Chrysanthemum Lake.

WATERS OF DEATH

The lake appears quite idyllic at first glance. Flowering cherry trees line the shores, their blossoms slowly drifting down like gentle clouds. Soft breezes waft the sweet-smelling air to and fro. A village filled with mounted samurai lies along the far shore. There is a stillness here that contrasts with the brutal violence and screams that seem to fill the wretched desolation elsewhere. Then, as one grows nearer and studies the setting closer, the lake unveils its true nature.

The tall and proud trees have small barbs running along the bark like fangs, many glistening with a dark, oily residue, for they are not true cherry trees. Entangling vines run up the trunks, and vicious grubs burrow into the surrounding ground. The smell grows stronger, into an unforgettable stench. The flowers leave a rich, blood-red stain on everything they touch; even a few petals can contaminate a large swath of grass to give the illusion of a mass of blossoms. What might look like the setting sun reflecting on the lake is the actual hue of the water, for the falling petals share their deep crimson color as they bleed into the water like a beheaded samurai.

Even worse, the blossoms themselves carry the Taint. The lake, filled with ages of dissolved blossoms, is more terrible still as its effects are not apparent at first. It is only perhaps a day later when those foolish enough to touch or dare drink from it notice their vision turning red as their limbs grow numb and their blood thickens into gelatinous strands.

Like all things within the Shadowlands, the Taint infuses everything in this otherwise picturesque location. Even if someone avoids contact, merely breathing the air near the lake over a prolonged period allows its fumes to enter their body, thus corrupting their flesh. Blossoms that fall nearby are also hazardous for reasons Kuni scholars do not fathom.



Mutations arise from these instances that seem to reflect the vile nature of the trees. Skin turning hard and inflexible, eyes dripping crimson tears, and bony protrusions from the skull and joints are said to be common results of acquiring the Taint after exposure to the lake. More horrifically, it is said that if anyone so Tainted decides to end their life, their body melts into a pool of blood that, slowly and inexorably, makes its way back to the lake to spend eternity in the crimson waters.

THE RISE OF THE DARK MOTO

Most of the Crab hold that Fallen Chrysanthemum Lake rests far inside the Shadowlands, and those who have managed to survive the experience claim it was a seemingly endless trek to return to the Wall. As with many places within this corrupted expanse, however, every attempt to map its exact location seems doomed to failure, as either human senses cannot function properly the farther one goes into the Shadowlands, or more Troublesomely, the lake shifts its position within this twisted land. One group seems always able to find the lake, however: the Dark Moto.

The Dark Moto, who date from shortly after the Unicorn Clan's sudden reappearance early in the ninth century, are the result of one of the most courageous but foolish deeds in history. The Moto family, descended from the nomadic Ujik tribe that joined the Unicorn when the clan was in gaijin lands, saw the horrors of the Shadowlands as they roared through it and past the Wall. A decade after their arrival in Rokugan, their daimyō, Moto Tsume, declared that he and the greatest of his warriors would ride forth to do what the Crab Clan could not: end the threat of the Shadowlands once and forever.

His monumental hubris would be the end not only of him but of all who loyally followed him. None of his vast force would survive, or at least survive as the humans they once were. To this day, no one knows exactly what happened to them, only that none of the Moto returned.

Soon after, though, Hiruma scouts spoke of Moto in the Shadowlands riding demonic steeds. These Moto were clearly and fully corrupted with the Taint but still fought with the discipline of true samurai. Tsume himself was sighted on occasion, leading his fallen troops with perfect precision while wielding horrifying powers. The Crab realized they now faced a new enemy across the Wall, one unlike any other.

HOME OF THE DARK MOTO

Tsume became enchanted with the beauty and deadliness of Fallen Chrysanthemum Lake and constructed an equally pleasing village known as Thundering Tide Keep along a bank. He and his Dark Moto reside there,

LEGENDS OF THE LAKE

- ⦿ One samurai claimed that when she extinguished a burning branch in the lake, the waters cried and a gout of steam roared in fury, burning her face.
- ⦿ Once a boastful scout threw a rock into the lake, only for a wave to arise and pull him in. When the wave returned his corpse, his bones were missing.
- ⦿ Two hundred years ago, the Oni of Feathers stole a powerful nemuranai, the great hammer Soulbreaker, from the hero Kaiu Kyosuke, and cast it into the lake. The hammer, said to be the only weapon capable of felling this oni, lies there still—miraculously uncorrupted, as if to tempt any foolish enough to brave the Tainted depths.
- ⦿ Once a brave Kaiu attempted to chop down the nearby trees to end the plague of blossoms, only for hundreds of flowers to fall on them in a huge crimson mound. When all the flowers were swept away, their body was gone.

along with their onikage steeds and large numbers of attending slaves. Their ill-treated unfortunates must be replenished often; the Dark Moto seem to be eternally vigorous in their Tainted forms, but those they take captive soon become decrepit and perish.

It is here that the Dark Moto train endlessly, making them perhaps the most dangerous of the many threats to the Emerald Empire that exist in the Shadowlands. In combat, they display a fighting cohesion that most other Shadowlands beings lack. The ageless Dark Moto also retain much of their Ujik culture and weaponry, including the hunting skills that allowed mounted Ujik to encircle and take down huge herds of creatures or groups of humans. They remain loyal to their daimyō and firmly believe it is they who are the True Moto.

For centuries now, the Dark Moto, and especially their immortal leader, have conducted a campaign of terror against the Empire. Sharp-eyed watchers on the Wall have claimed to have seen the Second Wind's own tattered banner in raiding parties striking at the Wall. If Tsume himself truly rides to war against Rokugan, the situation has truly grown as dire as the dourest of Kuni prognosticators claim.

ADVENTURE SEED: FALLEN AT THE LAKE

Hook While in the Shadowlands, the PCs are captured in battle or awoken in the night to find themselves hopelessly outnumbered by Dark Moto. They are taken as captives to Thundering Tide Keep, where they are placed with enslaved and tortured captives, many of whom are samurai. All the captives show advanced signs of the Taint—indicating what the PCs' future holds should they fail to escape.

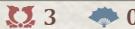
Rising Action An opportunity arises for a daring escape, as most of the Dark Moto are away on a goblin hunt. The PCs can free themselves (and perhaps try to burn the village), but this forces some hard decisions concerning what to do about the slaves. Their advanced corruption means that getting them across the Wall will be very difficult but leaving them here only empowers the Dark Moto.

Climax Do the PCs aid the slaves in committing seppuku, or kill them themselves, knowing they may arise as zombies? Do they smuggle them back to Rokugan and risk the Taint spreading? Or do they take them to the Kuni Wardens, guaranteeing their safety—but forever stripping them of their freedom? As in many aspects of samurai life, all choices are hard, and all have grave consequences.

FUDOSHI

MINION

CONFLICT RANK:



0

Many of the older trees near the lake are entwined with these masses of entangling vines, which also appear in other Shadowlands locations along with other foliage or in patches along the ground. They appear sessile, but when disturbed they suddenly leap out to ensnare and envelop their prey. The crushing death that follows is long and torturous.



ENDURANCE	10	FOCUS	3
COMPOSURE	∞	VIGILANCE	2
+2, -2			
DEMEANOR · AGGRESSIVE			

ARTISAN 0

MARTIAL 2

SCHOLAR 0

SOCIAL 0

TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
No Central Body: Martial; Physical	Impulse Attacker: Martial; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Tangling Vines: Range 0–2, Damage 3, Deadliness 2, Snaring, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Outer husk (Physical 3)

ABILITIES

CONCEALED CONSTRICTOR

A fudoshi is a Tainted being of silhouette 3. Characters count their vigilance as half its normal value for the purposes of noticing a fudoshi or when it uses the Snaring quality of its tangling vines weapon.

DARK MOTO BUSHI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK: 8 4

The warriors who followed Moto Tsume into the Shadowlands are now as horrid as their surroundings. Their forms are as corrupted as their souls, having taken on aspects of spiked bone or diseased skin, and their armor can be as misshapen as their flesh. They fight with disciplined order and powerful kata, some still using their ancestral Ujik weapons. Worse, having fallen completely to the Taint despite their honor and courage, the Dark Moto are terrible reminders that no one is immune to such a fate.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL
22 HONOR	12 ENDURANCE
08 GLORY	12 COMPOSURE
00 STATUS	5 FOCUS
+2, -2 DEMEANOR · ASSERTIVE	3 VIGILANCE

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 5 SCHOLAR 1 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 2

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Ageless Warrior: Martial; Mental	Corrupted Visage: Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Ujik Lance: Range 1–2, Damage 5, Deadliness 5, Prepare, Wargear (can only be used while mounted)

Gear (equipped): Corrupted armor (Physical 2, Supernatural 1, Unholy), katana or scimitar, horsebow and quiver, Dark Moto onikage steed (see page 23)

ABILITIES

ANCIENT RIDER

A Dark Moto bushi is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. When making an Attack action while on horseback, a Dark Moto bushi may spend $\diamond\diamond+$ to move 1 range band per $\diamond\diamond$ spent this way after resolving the action.

MOTO TSUME

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  12  8

The pride of Moto Tsume, the leader of the Dark Moto, led to a disastrous fall. He and his forces were utterly defeated and corrupted in the Shadowlands, but he remains his warriors' leader hundreds of years later. Now a being swelled with terrible power, Tsume ensures his warriors continually train and develop their martial skills, for he knows there will soon come a time when the Dark Moto shall be fully unleashed against the Emerald Empire.



ADVANTAGES

Ageless Tactician:
 Martial; Mental

DISADVANTAGES

Shameful Failure:
 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Scimitar of the Moto: Range 1, Damage 6, Deadliness 5, Ceremonial, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Corrupted daimyō armor (Physical 3, Supernatural 2, Unholy), Horsebow and quiver, wakizashi, Kyōfu (his Dark Moto onikage steed)

ABILITIES

MASTER OF TACTICS AND TERROR

Moto Tsume is an Otherworldly, Tainted being who may use any of the abilities of a Dark Moto. When making a Tactics check, Tsume may spend $\diamond\diamond+$ to inflict 1 strife on each enemy in the scene (or 1 panic on each enemy army in a mass battle) per $\diamond\diamond$ spent this way. During their turn, whenever non-Dark Moto characters would normally gain strife while in a scene with Tsume, they gain that much plus 1.

ONIKAGE

MINION

CONFLICT RANK:  2  0

Just as humans who die in the Shadowlands can attract kansen and arise as mindless zombies, so can their steeds. Formed from the remains of lesser horses, onikage are more bones than flesh, yet they can still effectively carry riders into battle.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 0 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Tireless:
 Martial; Physical

Hard to Control:
 Martial; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Teeth and Hooves: Range 0-1, Damage 4, Deadliness 3, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Corrupted hide and armor (Physical 2, Supernatural 1, Unholy), riding tack

ABILITIES

UNNATURAL STEED

An onikage is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 3. It can be ridden by any human-sized (silhouette 2 or lower) rider, using the **Mounts and Riding** rules from page 326 of the core rulebook. Unless the rider is Tainted, though, an onikage will attempt to throw the rider and then attack them.

DARK MOTO ONIKAGE

Dark Moto onikage are elite demonic mounts formed from the Unicorn steeds of the Moto. Like their riders, they are corrupted and terrible in appearance, with reptilian hides and crimson eyes. These steeds use the profile for onikage, adding the following additional ability:

DEADLY STEED

If the rider is a Dark Moto, when making an Attack action check, the rider may spend \diamond to have their mount lash out with its teeth and hooves, inflicting 5 damage with the Unholy quality on a character at range 0-1.

FALSE LANTERN GROVE

The False Lantern Grove is an apparent oasis of spiritual purity in these fell lands. The sorcery of its keeper allows it to masquerade as a shrine kept safe by the kami during the night, when the inviting glow of its paper lanterns draws in the foolish and the desperate. Under the blessed light of Lady Sun, however, its truth is revealed: the "lanterns" are the hanging skulls of those who have fallen victim to the oni who dwells within.

HISTORY OF THE FALSE LANTERN GROVE

The grove is not well-known to the Crab, and only a few rumors of its existence having made their way to the Wall. The first report that might refer to it dates from two centuries ago, when a patrol reported having encountered a fearsome oni who slew many of its number, only to retreat toward a shining light in the distance when the tide of battle began to turn. The much-reduced group dared not pursue the oni far, but their most daring scout made it far enough after the creature to see a number of hanging lanterns amid a copse of trees. The next force to travel past the reported grove found nothing, however, and the story was dismissed as an illusion the oni conjured to cover its escape. Over time, similar encounters were reported across the Shadowlands, although rarely near each other in distance or time, making it difficult for the Crab to be certain of the threat they face. The clan's scribes and shugenja regularly pore over reports of the strange threats found south of the Wall to try to determine patterns, but the fragmentary accounts that make their way out are of little help in solving this strange mystery.

What the Crab do not know is that there is but one False Lantern Grove, hidden by the twisting landscape of the Shadowlands. It was fashioned as a shrine to the glory of Fu Leng and Jigoku by a devoted lesser oni. The oni fancies itself a pious shrine keeper and treats all who approach as honored guests—until they refuse to

surrender their jade and submit to the Shadowlands Taint. While most of the samurai who have crossed paths with this oni refused its sermons and lost their heads for "blaspheming" against Fu Leng, some few saw its terrible power and succumbed to its offers, casting away their jade instead of their lives and joining the ranks of the Lost. Those who have fallen in this way maintain a twisted parody of their old religion, and sometimes they return to the grove to receive the oni's blessing again, as if it were an honored monk.

AS DIFFERENT AS NIGHT AND DAY

The False Lantern Grove cannot be seen in its entirety at any one time, for it appears differently by the light of the sun and of the moon. At night, without the blessed illumination of Lady Sun to cast away illusions, it appears as a thicket full of beautifully blossoming trees.



LEGENDS OF THE LANTERNS

- ⦿ A Hida samurai recently returned from leading a patrol that saw welcoming lights in the distance at night and heard the sound of shrine bells. He ordered them to turn away immediately, convinced that anything that appeared wholesome in the Shadowlands had to be a trap.
- ⦿ A young Hiruma scout encountered what appeared to be a monk wandering alone in the Shadowlands. He assumed the monk to be an illusion or one of the Lost, and so he attacked, but the monk fled before him, weeping. Now he fears he may have condemned an innocent man to die in the Shadowlands and hopes others can find his body and bring it back for proper rites.
- ⦿ Lanterns have been seen moving across the Shadowlands, visible in the dark from a great distance. As they pass, patrols sometimes go missing.
- ⦿ A patrol stumbled across a grove of withered trees hung with skulls and assumed that a band of Lost was making its base in the area. The patrol returned for reinforcements to deal with the fallen samurai, not knowing of the oni who was sleeping beneath their feet that day.

Each tree appears to have its tallest branches hung with paper lanterns that shine in the darkness of the night. The trees surround a simple but elegant pagoda hung with prayer strips beseeching the spirits for their blessing. However, a samurai or learned individual who has a chance to examine the prayer strips more closely may realize that they do not beseech the kami, but subtly invoke the kansen in their place, and that they praise not Hantei or his siblings, but Fu Leng.

Unfortunately, the oni caretaker of the shrine is rarely far from the pagoda, and its attempts to monopolize the attention of any visitors to prevent such realizations. At night, it adopts the guise of an unarmed Rokugani monk, using illusions to conceal its obsidian cleaver as a walking stick.

PCS IN THE GROVE

PCs who encounter the Grove in its guise at night and wish to examine the illusion for signs of the Taint must perform a check using a skill the GM deems appropriate to the method of investigation, such as a **TN 1 Theology (Air) check** to examine the prayer strips on the shrine or a **TN 3 Survival (Water) check** to examine the trees for concealed corruption. However, this likely alerts the oni to the PCs' presence. It appears in its human guise and attempts to subvert them unless they are exceptionally cautious in their approach (such as through a **TN 3 Fitness (Air) or Tactics (Air) check**). If the PCs are incautious enough to rest in the grove, the oni inevitably discovers them and attempts either to engage any lone sentries or to secretly steal their jade supplies while they sleep.

If the PCs come across the grove during the day, no checks are necessary to recognize it for what it truly is, as the horror of the grove is on full display. However, closely approaching or entering the grove is likely to wake the slumbering oni beneath it unless the PCs successfully perform a **TN 2 Fitness (Air) or Tactics (Air) check** as they approach. If the oni is awoken during the day it is unlikely to attempt its normal conniving tactics, and instead seeks to claim the skulls of any intruders to add to its depraved collection.

A visitor who happens across the grove by day sees a much different sight. Under the revelations of sunlight, the trees are shown to be withered and dead, blackened with rot and the Shadowlands Taint. Hanging from their decrepit branches are not lanterns, but skulls. Out of their eye sockets, the skulls cast light from candles that burn with an unnatural flame. Only the pagoda in the center of the grove appears unchanged, for it truly is as it seems: an exquisitely crafted monument to spiritual devotion. However, daylight also reveals the trapdoor beneath the pagoda that leads into the oni's foul den, in which it slumbers when it believes no guests are forthcoming and pens its blasphemous prayers in the blood of its victims.

In these hours, the oni's true form is revealed: that of a thickly muscled monster with a bluish hide and curving horns crowning its head. This form also becomes apparent when it strays from the shrine or becomes enraged with any who dare question its wisdom.

SKULL-CLEAVING ONI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:

9

7

Whereas most oni seek dominion, the skull-cleaving oni believes in Fu Leng's inherent authority and divinity in a twisted reflection of Rokugani veneration of the Dark Kami's siblings. As such, it prefers to proselytize its faith to others and try to win them over to the service of Fu Leng. Of course, being an oni, its ideas of persuasion do not always match Rokugani norms. While it may debate theology or argue for the benefits of embracing the Taint if given the chance, it also tries more forceful means of persuasion. Those who let their guard down may have jade stolen from them so that the Taint seeps in whether willingly accepted or not, or the oni may offer a defeated foe one last chance to "repent" before claiming their skull. Ultimately, the skull-cleaving oni doesn't care if its converts are sincere in their worship, as long as they offer it.

SOCIAL				PERSONAL
00 HONOR	4	3	18	ENDURANCE
05 GLORY	4	5	16	COMPOSURE
00 STATUS	3	8	8	FOCUS
0, 0 +1, 0 -2	0	4	4	VIGILANCE
DEMEANOR - DETACHED				
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 6	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

DISADVANTAGES

Unholy Strength:
Martial; Physical**Desperate for Converts:**
Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Obsidian Cleaver: Range 1-2, Damage 7, Deadliness 5/7, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy**Gear (equipped):** Demonic hide (Physical 4, Supernatural 4), tattered robes

ABILITIES

UNHOLY SHRINE GUARDIAN

The skull-cleaving oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 3. At night, its appearance changes to that of a placid monk of silhouette 2, and its cleaver to that of a walking stick. The oni may dismiss the illusion at any time, and it always does so before engaging in combat. Characters can make a **TN 4 Theology check** (Water 3, Earth 5) to see through this false appearance. Once per scene as a Support action, the oni may chant to summon and control 6 fudoshi vines (see page 22) that act at Initiative 1 each round.



The vines remain until a character interrupts the oni's chant by inflicting the Dazed, Disoriented, or Silenced condition on the oni (or killing it), returning the foliage to normal.

ADVENTURE SEED: FAR FROM THE TREE

Hook Hida Osamu, a young samurai newly appointed to command, led a patrol into the Shadowlands and encountered the False Lantern Grove, where most of his patrol was slain by his incautious leadership. The sole survivor returned to bear word of the encounter, and now Osamu's father, Hida Hisao, hopes to free his son's remains from defilement by the oni. He charges the PCs with finding the skull-cleaving oni so that proper funerary rites can be conducted for its returned collection of victims.

Rising Action If the survivor kept enough of his wits about him to report on the illusions surrounding the grove, the PCs can approach without fear of being deceived by the oni. However, he may have been so traumatized by the encounter that getting anything more than a vague location is impossible, meaning the PCs must follow in the footsteps of Hida Osamu and seek out the grove without knowing its secrets.

Climax When the PCs arrive at the grove, they must confront the oni, possibly in its guise as a monk if they arrive at night, and then retrieve the remains of the Hida officer and anyone else they can identify. Depending on how the encounter plays out, this may mean the group splits up so that one half can sneak off with the remains while the other distracts the oni, encouraging it to pontificate on its faith or facing it in battle to see if the grove gains new skulls or loses old ones.

THE FESTERING PIT OF FU LENG

Although the geography of the Shadowlands is fluid and mutable, it can nevertheless be said to have a center. The dark heart of this terrible realm is the Festering Pit of Fu Leng, the ancient site where the fall of the Dark Kami tore a hole in the mortal world and opened a doorway into the hellish realm of Jigoku. It is from the Festering Pit that the malevolent power of the Shadowlands originates, flowing into the mortal world in waves of corruption. While the Shadowlands Taint spreads in many ways, it is the Festering Pit that is its ultimate and original source.

THE PIT AND THE TAINT

When a character approaches the Festering Pit, the effects of the Taint are vastly amplified. Even a character with jade gains the Afflicted condition on a ring of the GM's choice for every twelve hours they spend there. When all of the character's rings are suffering from the Afflicted condition, each day one ring of the GM's choice gains the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage instead.

Characters who already have the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage hear the cajoling voices of the oni in their mind and feel the weight of corruption pressing down on them at all times, gaining 1 strife every six hours they spend there, and an additional strife at the end of every conflict scene. If a Tainted character unmasks in the wastes near the Pit, their unmasking must incorporate the horrific conditions of their amplified corruption, driving them to acts they normally would not consider even when Compromised.

Even the protection of jade is less sure near the Pit. As characters approach the Festering Pit, jade begins to fail sooner; enough to provide protection for a full day is used up in mere hours of travel. The exact details of this increased corruption are left to the GM, but it should grow worse the closer characters approach to the Festering Pit. At the mouth of the Pit, the amount of jade needed to protect a character is likely beyond their ability to carry.

Near the Festering Pit, the power of the Taint intensifies, oni wander freely, and even the blessed protection of jade falters. To approach the Pit is to approach Jigoku itself. As terrible and malign as the Shadowlands are as a whole, there is nowhere in all of Ningen-dō as terrible as the environs around Fu Leng's descent. On the rare occasions the Crab have cause to send scouts near the Pit, they do not expect them to return, hoping only that they will accomplish whatever urgent mission draws them forth before succumbing to the Taint. The rare few who do return become some of the Crab Clan's most venerated heroes—assuming the Kuni find them to be who and what they claim to be.

HISTORY OF THE FESTERING PIT

The story of the Pit is a story unlike any in Rokugan, for it is not a story of Rokugan and its people. It is a tale of the oni, and only the most fragmentary details are known to mortals. Not even the Kuni know what occurred in Jigoku before Fu Leng's arrival, but it is clear that since the descent and torment of the Dark Kami and his subsequent rise to power in that realm, the oni have turned their attention toward Ningen-dō and Rokugan.

According to ancient legends, it was this attention that led to the first expansions of the Shadowlands from around the Festering Pit, as Fu Leng's acolytes and servants boiled forth from its depths to conquer the Mortal Realm. The Day of Thunder halted the spread for a time, as did the rise of the Carpenter Wall after that, but the oni are always hungry. In the depths of the Pit, they wait still, the boldest of them venturing forth to lead assaults against the Wall or to answer the call of mahō-tsukai seeking power.

JIGOKU UNLEASHED

As terrible as the Shadowlands are, the Festering Pit is worse. The sky above the Pit is alternately red with fire or black with smoke, and blood is more likely to fall from the clouds above it than rain. The Pit itself yawns hundreds of yards wide, a gaping maw lined with jagged rocks and shards of obsidian, boring down through the belly of the world. It is said the lower reaches of the Pit roil with an inchoate sea of bile and filth from which constantly crawl newly formed monstrosities. Were a visitor somehow able to fight their way past the hordes of Lost samurai, oni, and stranger things that dwell around the lip of the Festering Pit and descend safely into this nightmarish froth, it is believed they would arrive in Jigoku itself. No one in Rokugan's history has been foolish enough to attempt to test this theory, and even the bravest samurai give the Pit as wide a berth as possible.

LEGENDS OF THE PIT

- It is said that long ago, Crab bushi pursued a band of Lost to the very lip of the Pit. There was only one survivor. Recently, a worried Yasuki scholar discovered that in each generation of the survivor's descendants, one has gone missing on a mission near the Pit.
- Reports occasionally surface of the Lost traveling to or from the Pit in large numbers and at great speed, as if energized by it. When near it, they fight with a terrible fervor. Over the years, some scouts have begun wondering if the Pit resembles some sort of foul parody of a holy site or shrine for the Lost, their journeys standing in for pilgrimages of sorts.
- Sometimes the arrival of a particularly mighty and terrible oni from out of the Pit can be noted from far away, as flames rise into the dark skies of the Shadowlands. Some say these signs have been seen far from the direction of the Festering Pit—perhaps even outside the Shadowlands. Surely oni cannot enter the Mortal Realm from anywhere else but the Pit, can they?

And yet, to say that the wastes around the Pit are safer and more hospitable than the Festering Pit itself qualifies as truth only by the barest of technicalities. For miles around, the land is cracked and broken, with sharp rocks and deep fissures lining every possible path. Foul oozes and pools of ichor fill many such crevices, while others serve as lairs to the fiercest monsters to crawl from the Pit. The very winds across the wastes are said to be the breath of Fu Leng, and the voices of countless oni can be heard echoing past at all times.

OBSIDIAN BONE ONI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  11  3

Fragments of one of the most massive horrors of Jigoku, obsidian bone oni are rarely seen far from the Festering Pit. Legend has it that not long after the creation of the Festering Pit, a monster of inestimable size attempted to force its way through into the Mortal Realm, but the effort shattered the being, sundering it into lesser horrors. Even these beasts were too large and horrific to maintain a presence in Ningen-dō, and so cunning servitors of Fu Leng drove massive spikes of Pit-forged obsidian into the bodies of these monsters. These obsidian bones sustain the oni, but at a terrible price: the flames of Jigoku burn constantly within their bodies, driving them to new heights of desperation and cruelty. Due to their shortsighted nature, they rarely approach the Wall, but sometimes warlords of the Lost or other oni enslave obsidian bone oni to make them part of their armies.



ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Pit-Fueled Strength:  Martial;  Spiritual	Constant Pain:  Martial;  Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Obsidian Claws: Range 0–2, Damage 7, Deadliness 6, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Bone layers (Physical 4, Supernatural 5)

ABILITIES
BURNING BONES FROM THE PIT
An obsidian bone oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 5. Once per round when a character makes an Attack check against it, the attacker may spend  in the following manner:

 The oni's pain becomes too intense, and infuriates the creature. Increase the TN of its next Attack action check by 1, and increase the deadliness of its claws by 1.

PIT-FORGED OBSIDIAN

Among the most terrible manifestations of the Taint near the Festering Pit is the appearance of Pit-forged obsidian. It is an unusually strong material, leading some of the Lost and even some oni to forge weapons from it. However, it is most notable for the potency of the Taint within it, for it burns to the touch with the very fires of Jigoku.

PATTERN: PIT-FORGED OBSIDIAN

A Tainted character with access to raw Pit-forged obsidian and a source of evil lore can learn to craft items from it using the rules for patterns (see page 109).

An item produced with Pit-forged obsidian gains +1 damage, +1 deadliness, and the Unholy quality. Additionally, while in possession of such an item, a character increases the TN of their Fitness and Meditation checks to prevent the Afflicted condition (see p. 271 of the Core Rulebook) from conferring the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage by 2 (to TN 6).

XP Cost: 4

Rarity Modifier: +4

ADVENTURE SEED: FROM THE PIT

— Hook Crab scouts recently reported encountering a group of Lost samurai armed with terrible obsidian weapons. The PCs are to join the survivors of the band of scouts to track down the Lost and confirm the source of their weaponry—and, if possible, stop them from harvesting more.

— Rising Action The PCs and the scouts must track the Lost as the fallen samurai head toward the Festering Pit. Soon they must decide whether to redouble their pace and catch the Lost or attempt to stretch their jade far enough to make it to the Pit.

— Climax The PCs must confront Lost armed with weapons of Pit-forged obsidian, doing so while either exhausted from their forced march or while approaching the Festering Pit. What's more, the Lost's leader appears to bear the mon of a Kaiu engineer thought long dead—one with extensive knowledge of the Wall. The PCs must decide whether to try to defeat the Lost deep in the Shadowlands, to rush back to the Crab and warn them of the threat, or to try some other cunning tactic that might distract or damage the operations of these Tainted samurai.



THE FORGOTTEN TOMB OF FU LENG

Deep within the Shadowlands lies an utterly inhuman building. The architecture of this ancient structure is alien, with impossible angles no mortal can fully comprehend. Its purpose is infuriatingly unclear. Its aura of doom and decay has given rise to the belief it is a tomb, but no one has found evidence or written records to prove anyone is buried there. Some legends hold that the Black Scrolls contain the sundered body of Fu Leng—his bones, his breath, his skin, his eyes, and other animating parts. Theologians have long argued over whether the Fallen Kami's soul was banished back to Jigoku, split among the scrolls, or trapped in Ningen-dō, the Mortal Realm. What the Tomb actually contains is a haunting question with no comforting answers, for evil creatures throng about it and no mortal has returned from it sane.

Once in known history, scouts attempted to claim the Tomb in hopes of using it as a stronghold deep in the Shadowlands. Under Hiruma Kosami, a legendary Crab renowned for his bold tactics and dauntless leadership, twelve brave Hiruma scouts entered the Tomb to drive out whatever evil lurked there. They were never seen again, and the Crab have avoided it since. Now only a desperate or ignorant samurai would attempt to take refuge from the dangers of the Shadowlands in such a place.

LEGENDS OF THE TOMB

- ⦿ Nothing human could have built the Tomb, but its origins are unclear. Some Kuni theorize it was built by the nezumi before the fall of Fu Leng. The nezumi, for their part, say their Rememberers have no accounts of this edifice.
- ⦿ It is no tomb, but a doorway between realms, releasing the hungry dead into Ningen-dō.
- ⦿ The Dark Kami himself built this as a another, secret entrance to Jigoku, the Realm of Evil.
- ⦿ There is a source of great power hidden inside, something that grants accursed priests their desires, something a great mahō-tsukai could harness and control.

A WINDOW BETWEEN WORLDS

The area around the tomb is seemingly devoid of life. Despite its damp ground, even Tainted weeds cannot take root. Each step taken toward the tomb leaves an imprint that fills with water, and in a certain light, these puddles offer glimpses of a very different landscape: the gnarled branches of dead trees, cliffs of blood-red stone, or a black, starless sky. *Gaki*, or hungry ghosts, infest the air from twilight to sunrise, and all manner of vile demons and creatures come and go, attracted by the power of the place but apparently repelled by something, too.

Wicked priests of Fu Leng use the tomb as a temple, performing depraved rituals and vicious sacrifices to receive favor from kansen, oni, and even the Dark Kami himself. They build altars and shrines outside and erect tent-like structures to sleep in, hoping to gain prophetic nightmares. They also leave grisly offerings hanging from the walls or on metal spikes pushed into the boggy ground. These odd accessories are made of bones, rusted metal, and shards of obsidian knotted together, and they rattle when the wind rises.

Every night, some disappear while others materialize, whether Fu Leng's priests appear or not.



BEYOND THE THRESHOLD

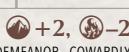
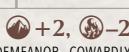
Some scouts describe the tomb as an enormous structure expelling putrid air from a gaping doorway, inside which burning eyes peer out from the dark. Others describe a squat mound sporting a mass of hornlike protuberances on the roof, with pillars leaning at odd angles inside. Many recount sensing a malefic presence, which augurs interpret as the cacophonous whispering of innumerate kansen that promise the power of mahō to anyone who can hear them.

GOBLIN ACCURSED PRIEST

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  

Goblins, or *bakemono*, usually only have power in numbers. Those singular goblins who achieve great power for themselves often do so by calling on the favor of Fu Leng, especially in order to become priests of their foul Kami. As accursed priests, they command cowering minions, but they know that one day they may be betrayed and sacrificed, just as they did to rise to their position.

	ENDURANCE 8	FOCUS 4
	COMPOSURE 8	VIGILANCE 3
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - COWARDLY		

ARTISAN 1 MARTIAL 1 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 2

ADVANTAGES

Whispers of Fu Leng:
⦿ Scholar; Mental

DISADVANTAGES

Cowardice:
⦿ Martial; Social

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Ritual Dagger: Range 0, Damage 2, Deadliness 4, Concealable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Defiled priestly robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 2, Unholy)

ABILITIES

FAVORED OF FU LENG

A goblin accursed priest is a Tainted being of silhouette 1 who reduces the TN of Command checks they make targeting goblins by 1. Once per scene, they may call on Fu Leng's favor to change any die result containing ⚡ to a result containing ⚢. The GM can choose 1–3 mahō (see page 224 of the core rulebook or page 118 of this book) that the goblin accursed priest can perform. Add 1 to this character's combat rank for each mahō chosen this way.

THE OBSIDIAN FLOWER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  

Called many names across the ages—the Obsidian Flower, the High Priest of Fu Leng, the Demon Bride—this ancient entity was once a human. Whispers say she was born to a powerful lineage in the third century of the Empire, and witnessed firsthand the callous turns of the court. Wretched cruelties befell people around her in service of nothing more than petty human ambition, and she grew to believe Rokugan's ruling caste was incurably corrupt—and that the founding Kami had forsaken their followers. Her desire became nothing less than to sweep the table clean. She stole a Black Scroll from the Yogo family and journeyed into the Shadowlands. There, she used the unspeakable knowledge within the scroll to become a twisted, demonic conduit. Now, within the Tomb, she waits and plans, whispering to Fu Leng as she slowly shifts pieces across the vast board of time. Over centuries, she has maneuvered humans into positions where their frailties might someday bring about the end of the Empire.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL
10 HONOR	2	12 ENDURANCE
01 GLORY	6	20 COMPOSURE
00 STATUS	2	7 FOCUS
	5	4 VIGILANCE
 +1,  -1 DEMEANOR - CALCULATING		

ARTISAN 6 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 6 SOCIAL 5 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Ancient Cunning:
⦿ Scholar; Interpersonal

DISADVANTAGES

Long View:
⦿ Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Claws: Range 0–1, Damage 4, Deadliness 8, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Ethereal clothing (Physical 3, Supernatural 5)

ABILITIES

THROUGH TAINTED GLASS

The Obsidian Flower is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. Each time PCs face the Obsidian Flower, choose two different Shadowlands Powers (see page 137) for her. Once per scene as an Attack and Scheme action, the Obsidian Flower may *summon* a dark reflection of each PC. This reflection uses the same profile as the character, cannot perform Attack or Scheme actions targeting any character other the PC it mirrors, and has the same Shadowlands Powers as the Obsidian Flower.



ADVENTURE SEED: CRAB FROM THE TOMB

Hook As the PCs journey through the Shadowlands, they unknowingly pass close to the Forgotten Tomb. Suddenly, a pair of Crab gaki attack them, trying to drive them inside. The closer the PCs get to the Tomb, the more gaki join the attempt. One, who bears the Crab mon on his faded armor, appears to lead the group. The gaki only attack samurai not from the Crab Clan at first, but they will fight anyone, even Crab, who attack them.

Rising Action The gaki don't follow the PCs into the Tomb but rather wait at the entrance to prevent their escape. The PCs are free to explore and find weapons, armor, and ceremonial items made of obsidian (which possess the Unholy quality, per page 214 of the core rulebook). If the PCs explore for too long, they risk becoming gaki-like themselves. They experience dark thoughts, evil desires, or strange visions. All hear the whispered laughter of the kansen in the tomb, letting them know they share the fate of the gaki outside.

Climax If the PCs reach the inner sanctum, they find the armored skeletal remains of Crab samurai, including one who was obviously the gunsō in charge of a patrol unit. If they discern the significance of the armor, the PCs could wear it and escape by posing as a higher ranking Crab samurai.

CRAB GAKI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  7  2

These ghostly samurai remember only the sense of duty from their life, the need to follow orders, and the pride achieved by victory. They hunger for these things and have been waiting near the tomb for the opportunity to prove themselves. The last order these gaki remember was to drive evil into the Tomb, so they attack all who approach. Travelers who wear the Crab mon and are sufficiently brave may be able to pass, but once they find the horrors awaiting them, may regret their action.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL
00 HONOR	ENDURANCE 8
09 GLORY	COMPOSURE 6
00 STATUS	FOCUS 5
 +1,  -2 DEMEANOR - ASSERTIVE	VIGILANCE 2

ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 3	SCHOLAR 0	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 0
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ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Insubstantial Form:  Martial; Physical	Hot-Tempered:  Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Ghostly Tetsubō: Range 1–2, Damage 7, Deadliness 3, deals supernatural damage

Gear (equipped): Spectral armor (Physical and Supernatural 5)

ABILITIES

UNDYING DUTY

A Crab scout gaki is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. As a former Crab, it always seeks to defend its chosen location unless a living Crab can convince it otherwise (a **TN 4 Command** or **Courtesy check**). For every kept  result a Crab scout gaki makes in a check, it also gains 1 strife. Should it unmask, it must spend its next turn attacking the nearest living character.

THE LOST LIBRARY

From a distance, the Lost Library appears as a large spike on the horizon, hazy and indistinct in the murky Shadowlands fog. Up close, it is a tower of black stone, rough and jagged to the touch, that rises so straight and tall that the spiked roof disappears into the sky. No one knows who gathered this profane collection deep in the Shadowlands, but for mahō-tsukai, it is a treasure trove. Lining the inside walls are curved shelves stuffed with crumbling tomes and ancient scrolls, some in languages no Rokugani scholar could identify.

Many of those who pursue wicked lore have made the journey to this library—as have a few brave or foolish souls who seek to understand it. Rumors among the Kuni whisper of scrolls so brimming with accursed knowledge that their ink spills from their pages, crawling into the eyes of would-be researchers, and of ancient sorcerers lost amidst the vast labyrinth, their foul curiosity pulling them ever deeper into the maze. The original collector is unknown, be they sorcerer, demon, or being as old and alien as the tower itself. Some say that the collector is the tower itself, the true collection is not books, but scholars.

LEGENDS OF THE LIBRARY

- ⦿ The tower is filled with Tainted *shikigami* (see page 115) that have killed their creators and seek those foolish enough to carry them into Rokugan.
- ⦿ Soon after the Isawa destroy a book of mahō, it re-forms in the tower.
- ⦿ Renowned scholar Kuni Toriko is said to have visited the tower. She denies it, but always with a hint of fear in her voice—as if she dreads to say more.

FORGOTTEN ORIGINS

The Kuni family has compiled records of library sightings, but these often conflict. The earliest records describe a much smaller tower and so are generally regarded as unreliable. The history taught to Kuni students, their interest piqued at the thought of this source of power, is that the tower was built before the fall of Fu Leng and the creation of the Shadowlands. It was a magnificent repository, until corruption spread through the landscape and the books within the library rewrote themselves, texts transforming just as those carried near the library are said to do.

A HAUNTED TOWER

The tower has no visible entrances, but it has windows high up the walls, just below the roofline. The uneven walls are climbable, but a fall from even halfway up would result in certain death. Even getting close enough to the tower to climb is a challenge, since a tangle of lurid green brambles grow around its base.

Tunnels below the tower lead to a hidden entrance, but it is easy to get lost in this dark, cramped maze. They are home to vermin and small Shadowlands creatures. Sometimes, text can be seen scrawled on the wall or floor, possibly leaked from nearby books. These words appear suddenly and unexpectedly, and they always cause unsettling emotions in those who attempt to read them.



POSSESSED TOMES

Within the tower, the walls are lined with books, scrolls, and piles of parchment, and if there are doors or stairs, the texts conceal them. Items often fall from the shelves as if leaping for attention, landing with pages open to particularly corrupting passages. Whether possessed by kansen or somehow animated by the power of the words within, some of the books in the Lost Library seem to have achieved something akin to sentience. Their only goal seems to be to share their knowledge, either by compelling a visitor to read them or by escaping to find unsuspecting readers elsewhere. Some painfully adhere to any hand that touches them, forcing unwilling readers to leave an imprint of skin or else carry the book indefinitely. Others latch onto an unwary hand, crushing fingers between pages. Some texts draw attention by some subtler means, whispering promises of knowledge and power.

FALLEN SCHOLAR

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  2  6

No one knows how many fallen scholars walk amidst the endless stacks of books, scrolls, and other inscribed works in the Lost Library. It is rare to see the same one more than once, and their appearance is as unsettling as their environment. Some wear garb not seen since the First Wall was constructed or speak languages only gaijin would recognize. The knowledge the kansen offered drew them down this path, and the promised secrets within the Lost Library became their obsession. Whether to gather personal power or to learn more about their enemies in the Shadowlands in order to better combat their evil, they rarely appreciate any who would disturb their studies.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	14	
06	GLORY	14	
00	STATUS	6	
 +1,  +1,  -2	DEMEANOR - DETACHED	3	
ARTISAN 0		MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 3
SOCIAL 1		TRADE 2	
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES	
Expert Liar:  Social; Interpersonal		Devotion to Books:  Scholar; Mental	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Concealable, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Faded robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3)

ABILITIES

CALL OF THE KANSEN

A fallen scholar is a Tainted being. While in the Lost Library, they count the TN of all Scholar skill checks they make as 1. The GM may choose 0–3 mahō (see page 224 of the core rulebook or page 118 of this book) that a fallen scholar can perform. Add 1 to this character's combat rank for each mahō technique chosen this way.

ADVENTURE SEED: HUNGRY TO LEARN

— Hook While within Crab lands or possibly even on the Wall, an aged scholar named Kuni Ryoji asks the PCs if they have seen Kuni Kagekatsu, a student of his who had espoused using any power, no matter its source, to fight Fu Leng and his followers. Ryoji fears that she went alone into the Shadowlands, seeking the Lost Library. He asks the PCs to aid his efforts to rescue her from Fu Leng's influence.

— Rising Action Ryoji points them in what he believes to be the right direction, and they eventually find the library's tunnel entrance: a visible natural doorway in a rocky outcrop. The PCs can either attempt to navigate the tunnels and continue toward the library aboveground or risk the climb to the windows above.

— Climax Kagekatsu, now a fallen scholar, is in the top room. She tries to persuade the PCs that the books' power could purify the Shadowlands, ending the threat it poses, and she believes the PCs have no right to stop her. If Ryoji is present, he reveals he was using the PCs to find the library, and he begins using mahō to drive everyone away so he can acquire exclusive use of its knowledge. The PCs may need to ally themselves with Kagekatsu to stop Ryoji, but this alliance surely cannot last long.

Daylight Castle

For over four hundred years, Daylight Castle—also known as Shiro Hiruma, or Hiruma Castle—has been a sinister beacon shining from the Shadowlands, a constant reminder to the Crab of their greatest failure. Once, it was the heart of the clan's defenses against the Shadowlands. In the eighth century, however, it fell to the Shadowlands, and it remains mired there still.

THE HISTORY OF DAYLIGHT CASTLE

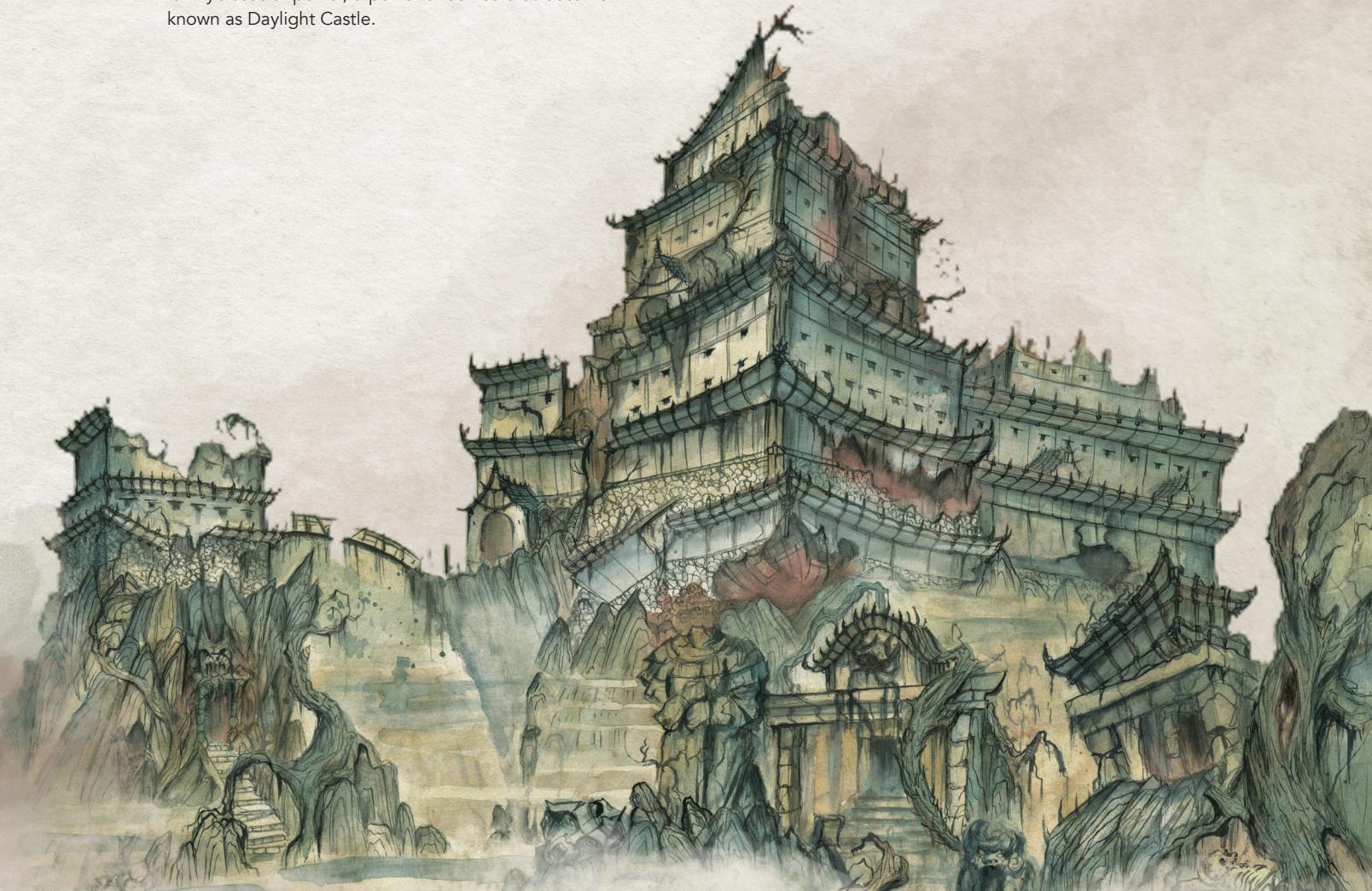
In the earliest days of the Empire, Hantei, the first Emperor, ordered his brother Hida to defend against incursions from the vile realm known as the Shadowlands. Hida and his followers created the "First Wall," a belt of fortifications—watchtowers, palisades, and bulwarks—designed to block attacks from the forces of Fu Leng. Foremost among Hida's followers was Hiruma, a skilled hunter and scout. Hiruma and his own followers proved so adept at preventing, detecting, and defeating attacks from the Shadowlands that Hida elevated Hiruma's family in status within the Crab. In the heart of the lands granted to him, he established the Hiruma family's seat of power, a powerful edifice that became known as Daylight Castle.

A GLORIOUS EARLY HISTORY

Daylight Castle became a linchpin in the First Wall, a center of command and logistics for the Crab defenses. Although small and unadorned by Rokugani standards, it was nonetheless a powerful fortress in its own right. For centuries, it served as the core of the Crab defensive efforts against the encroaching corruption of the Shadowlands.

In 314, a powerful army of horrors, facilitated by the treachery of a Kuni shugenja named Kaigen, attacked Daylight Castle. Only the timely intervention of a group of nezumi, convinced to help by the bravery of a young scout named Hiruma Kazumi, saved it from disaster. This impromptu alliance marked the beginning of a friendship between the Crab—the Hiruma, in particular—and the nezumi that has lasted to this day.

In 375, Daylight Castle was again attacked, this time by a force led by a powerful monster known as Usu no Oni. While the oni had the castle under siege, most of the Shadowlands force pushed on, plunging deeper into the Empire. Finally, a Crab army reinforced with the Imperial Legions, which the Emperor himself led, defeated Usu no Oni and its horde at the gates of Kyūden Hida. The joint Crab-Imperial force then marched on to Daylight Castle.



The Crab Clan Champion and the Emperor expected to find Hiruma Castle in ruins; they were surprised to see it not just intact, but still engaging a large army of foes. The castle was soon relieved, with the Crab Champion declaring that, had the defenders of Daylight Castle not mounted such a stubborn resistance, Usu no Oni's offensive may not have been stopped.

A FALL INTO DARKNESS

Daylight Castle's long years of glory were not to last. The First Wall, while formidable, lacked the integrated, contiguous defense of the later Carpenter Wall. In 716, the monstrous oni lord now known only as the Maw assembled an army of a size and power not seen since the time of the First War against Fu Leng. Under the Maw's cunning leadership, this horde revealed the First Wall's shortcomings. Fortress after fortress fell to the unrelenting offensive. On Last Stand Plain, the bulk of the Hiruma army was lost to the Maw's forces.

At that point, the only major fortification standing between the Maw's horde and the rest of the Crab lands and the Empire beyond was Daylight Castle. The defenders grimly prepared for a long siege, complacently believing that the conflict would play out as it had every previous time. However, the Maw employed demonic allies to corrupt and reanimate the corpses of the fallen. Each defender who fell immediately rose again as a new attacker. The battle rapidly turned against the Hiruma, until only a handful remained. It is said that these final defenders were somehow saved from the awful fate of their comrades, but Daylight Castle finally fell. Triumphant, the vast army of monsters raged on, farther into the Empire.

Mounting a desperate defense, the Crab finally stopped the Maw and its army at the River of the Last Stand, defeating them in what would become known as the Battle of the Cresting Wave. This time, however, there would be no triumphant relief of the troops at Daylight Castle. The castle, along with all of the Hiruma lands, was swallowed by the Shadowlands and now lies outside the Empire, beyond the Carpenter Wall.

The Hiruma would not rest while their ancestral home lay in the clutches of demons. As the family recovered from its grievous losses, they launched the first of numerous attempts to reclaim Daylight Castle. In 747, and again in 819, Hiruma forces did manage to retake the castle. In both cases, their victories were brief, measured only in weeks, before the ruined fortress was reclaimed by the Shadowlands. The Hiruma remain determined, however, to one day drive the corruption from their ancestral seat of power. Until that day, it remains a locus of evil power and a lasting reminder of bitter defeat for the Crab Clan.

IMPORTANT LOCATIONS AND FEATURES

While it was never as large or elaborate as the ancestral family castles of the other Great Clans, Daylight Castle was, nonetheless, an imposing structure, exuding a sense of grim strength and purpose.

SURROUNDINGS

Before its fall, Daylight Castle sat, in the manner typical of Rokugani castles, amid a thriving sprawl of farms and villages. Unlike typical Rokugani villages, most of these focused on defense. Many were small fortifications in their own right, surrounded by stout palisades and overlooked by watchtowers.

While the First Wall stood against threats from the Shadowlands, farms and villages near the castle would be overrun and razed, only to be built again. When the Maw attacked, however, the Hiruma lands became corrupted by the Taint of Jigoku. The once-fertile lands around Daylight Castle withered, becoming bleak and barren, the hard earth riven by great fissures or punctuated by pools of brackish water and pits of sucking, tarry muck. Those who venture close to the castle sometimes find poignant remnants of the once-vigorous hinterland around it: fragments of pottery, rusted farm tools, even the battered remains of children's toys. Such sad scraps only underscore the ongoing tragedy that is the fallen Hiruma Castle.

GENERAL LAYOUT

Most Rokugani castles combine the attributes of a fortification with a variety of nonmilitary functions: political courts, elaborate gardens, and elegant, stylized architecture. As Daylight Castle was on the front line of the war against Fu Leng's numberless minions, for the most part its construction is stark and functional.

The layout of the castle is straightforward. The outermost feature is the large and imposing curtain wall, or *maru*, now mostly slumped into ruin. This encloses a series of inner subdivisions, which are themselves separated by lesser walls and gates, also now largely in ruins. The innermost *maru*, known as the *honmaru*, encloses the four-story keep, known as a *tenshukaku*. Still largely intact, the *tenshukaku* is surrounded by the derelict remains of smaller buildings, including warehouses, smithies, and stables. Finally, the walls incorporate a series of watchtowers, or *yagura*, of varying size, all in crumbling disrepair.

MASK OF THE ONI

The adventure *Mask of the Oni*, a separate but companion piece to this book, is largely set in Daylight Castle. It offers a particular version of the various horrors that infest the castle. However, a GM who runs *Mask of the Oni* should feel free to draw inspiration from the material presented here to modify the adventure. Keeping the castle adaptable and personalized in this manner not only supports multiple campaigns but can allow for repeated visits during a single campaign, each being very different from the last.

A PLACE OF HORROR

Those brave enough to make the arduous journey to Daylight Castle find the castle generally conforms to the description above—but only generally.

The reality is far more horrific. Four centuries of immersion in the corrupt energies of the Shadowlands have permeated Daylight Castle with terrifying evil. The castle seems to possess a malign will of its own, shaping its horror according to those forced to experience it. It can be as disturbingly inconstant as the Shadowlands itself, with individual rooms and corridors appearing and then vanishing or changing shape. Even this pales in comparison to the very personal malignance Daylight Castle imposes on those who enter it.

There are as many tales of what lies within the castle as there are stones in the Wall. Many concern the locations of fabled creatures such as the Siren, the Watcher, and the Wounded Bushi. Here are but a few of them, some based on ancient scrolls depicting the castle's original layout, some based on historical passages about events at the castle, and some based on reports from those few who survived their time there:

- ➊ The dōjō, where Crab warriors trained to hone their martial skills, is located adjacent to the keep. During the final battle, many Crab fell there, along with their enemies, and their bones are said to rise to combat any who would enter their lair.
- ➋ A gloomy staircase leading to the keep's lower levels may actually be a massive gullet or may lead into a labyrinthine network of huge tunnels dug beneath the castle by...something. The scout who related this tale died soon after escaping, her having blood turned to bile.

LEGENDS OF THE CASTLE

- ➊ There are extensive tunnels underneath the castle. Some claim that a huge, burrowing worm creates them and devours anyone it finds.
- ➋ A Hiruma scholar of the occult is certain that a powerful goblin priest has an unholy shrine here and seeks to create a new gateway to Jigoku.
- ➌ Hidden in the castle is a secret armory filled with jade and crystal weapons that have never been wielded.
- ➍ When Tainted Hiruma perish, they are reborn in the castle as revenants.
- ➎ The castle shows everyone an intimate, individual manifestation of horror and evil. It could be the shattered sword of a dishonored ancestor; a statue or painting of a lost love weeping miserably or glaring at them with hatred; one of their own, terrified children being carried off into the darkness by something monstrous; or themselves, dying alone and forgotten in some dark, dismal place.

- ➊ Several of the larger rooms are strewn with garbage and noisome filth, the air thick with a rank, bestial stink. Some speculate this is the barracks of a pack of Shadowlands creatures.
- ➋ The daimyō's chambers, located at the top of the keep, are the most heavily Tainted area of the castle. This is an insult against the very heart of Hiruma ancestral power.
- ➌ The headless stone statue that seems to guard the front entrance sometimes appears to groan and shift, as if it might come to life one night.
- ➍ One room contains a huge mass of roiling flesh pulsating within, unable to escape but eager to capture the unwary to add to its bulk.
- ➎ There are numerous hidden tunnels under the castle, long believed to be overrun with goblins but now home to hordes of outcast nezumi.

A GLIMMER OF LIGHT

A flame of hope does flicker from Daylight Castle. Candle Temple, in the main keep, houses a shrine to the Fortunes—particularly Osano-wo, Fortune of Fire and Thunder—and more generally to Tengoku, the Celestial Heavens. Corruption has utterly failed to penetrate this holy place. The few courageous souls who have dared enter the castle report that this small oasis of righteousness remains a sanctuary to this day, inviolate and secure against effects of the Shadowlands.

THE IMPORTANCE OF DAYLIGHT CASTLE

Daylight Castle is important in two fundamental ways: first, in terms of the role it plays in the Shadowlands, and second, in terms of its importance to the Crab.

A HUB OF TERROR

Though in ruins, the castle is still an imposing fortress and one relatively near the Wall, making it useful as a staging ground for attacks against the Empire. Its position, though, is as shifting as its contents; the castle rarely is where ancient maps would indicate it should be. Scholars debate whether the castle moves across the Shadowlands like some beast or the land tricks travelers as part of the suffering it inflicts.

The castle also appears to be the focus of a complex and shifting political jostling among various evil factions exist in the Shadowlands. Scouts have noted that the creatures in and around the castle frequently change. Sometimes, it is infested by swarming goblins. At other times, massive ogres prowl among its ruined stonework, or Lost samurai guard its crumbling battlements. On one occasion, a patrol witnessed what appeared to be a ferocious battle between factions of terrible monsters over the ruins. Sometimes, scouts see no apparent evidence of the place being inhabited at all. Even so, one Hiruma patrol claimed that the seemingly abandoned ruin exuded such an intense aura of terror and dread from something lurking within that even those brave warriors had to withdraw.

A PLACE OF BURNING SHAME

There is no place or thing in the Emerald Empire that represents the shame of failure more acutely than Daylight Castle—especially for the Crab Clan, and even more so for the Hiruma family. But the ominous significance of the corrupted fortress extends beyond the Crab, being an expression of failure for the entire Empire.

For eleven centuries, creatures from the Shadowlands have plagued Rokugan, inflicting tremendous harm and loss. But the Empire has always eventually prevailed, reclaiming land that was lost even while somberly commemorating the bravery and sacrifice of those who stood against these corrupted foes. Daylight Castle is different. Despite repeated attempts to reclaim it, the castle remains stubbornly mired in the evil and horror of Fu Leng's minions. It mocks the Empire, the Crab, and the Hiruma, daring them to try yet again to retake it, risking the lives and souls of more loyal samurai in the process.

But the Crab, and the Empire, will not relent. The existence of Candle Temple, a small beacon of purity, offers hope that Daylight Castle could, perhaps, be reclaimed and purified. Some even say the structure may be a test of faith for the Empire, a trial whose significance lies not in overcoming it, but rather in continuing the attempt to do so.

DENIZENS OF THE CASTLE

It is possible to encounter virtually any sort of creature in Daylight Castle, especially goblins, lesser oni, and other monsters. There are several notable ones, however, that seem repeatedly drawn to the place or perhaps make it their home. They were named by the Crab; whatever their actual names may be are generally unknown.



THE SIREN

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  7  8

The Siren is an insidious, shapeshifting creature, thought to be an especially vile kansen and capable of assuming various forms. These guises can include that of a dying samurai, a lost scout, or someone else who appears harmless and in need of aid. Its true nature is to delay and confuse its targets, to more egregiously expose them to the corruption of the Shadowlands. If the Siren's true nature is revealed, it devolves to a greyish form, and it tries to flee farther into the castle to await new visitors.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	14
03	GLORY	COMPOSURE	14
00	STATUS	FOCUS	8
 +2,  -2	DEMEANOR - BEGUILING	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 5 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 2

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Dangerous Allure:
 Social; Interpersonal

Never Satisfied:
 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Raking Claws: Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 6, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Shifting garb (Physical 2, Supernatural 3, Unholy)

ABILITIES

CORRUPTING GUISES

The Siren is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. At the end of each round, each other character at range 0–1 gains the Afflicted condition. Once per scene, it may make a **TN 1 Sentiment (Air) check** to take the form of a friendly, nonthreatening person who would not seem out of place in its current location. Characters may attempt to see through this by making a **TN 4 Sentiment check (Void 2)** or a **TN 5 Meditation check (Void 3)**.

THE WATCHER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  10  4

The Watcher is usually encountered at a high vantage point in Daylight Castle. Kuni occult scholars believe it to be an low form of oni, but there is much disagreement on the topic. It resembles a man in a tattered kimono, but its pale flesh is punctuated by dozens of eyes that blink in waves that ripple across its body. Because these many eyes can apparently see, it is almost impossible to take the Watcher by surprise. It attacks its prey in an especially horrifying way: the eye sockets in the standard location on its face appear empty and black, but they can gape wide, revealing themselves to be wickedly fanged mouths. These bite at its opponents' eyes; if successful, not only does it gouge out its victim's eyes, blinding them, but new eyes appear on the Watcher's body.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	16
02	GLORY	COMPOSURE	18
00	STATUS	FOCUS	7
 +2,  -2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	VIGILANCE	4

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 4 SCHOLAR 1 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Always Watchful:
 Martial; Mental

Phobia of Fire:
 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Biting Eyes: Range 0, Damage 5, Deadliness 8, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Tattered robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 2)

ABILITIES

ETERNALLY VIGILANT

The Watcher is an Otherworldly, Tainted being that always uses its focus value for Initiative checks. When it inflicts a Permanent Injury on a target, that target is always assigned the Lost Eye disadvantage, and the Watcher removes 5 fatigue from itself (as well as growing a new eye on its body).

THE WOUNDED BUSHI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  14  4

Assumed to be some type of undead creature or oni, the Wounded Bushi is usually encountered in the armory or the dōjō. It appears as a large and powerful warrior in heavy samurai armor so battered and spattered with blood that its heraldry, if any, is obscured. Visible through gaps in the armor is flesh riddled with festering sores and infections. Worse, the various parts of its body are mismatched, as it is an amalgam of segments from multiple bodies. When encountered, it is invariably missing a hand or arm; its furious attacks are clearly intended to sever and steal the missing limb from its opponent. If defeated, the Wounded Bushi collapses into a pile of disarticulated limbs. Eventually, however, it manifests again, plaguing future visitors.



ADVANTAGES

Unholy Stamina:
• Martial; Mental

DISADVANTAGES

Lost Arm:
• Martial; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Debased Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Blood-soaked armor (Physical 4, Supernatural 4, Unholy)

ABILITIES

DESPERATE FOR NEW VITALITY

The Wounded Bushi is an Otherworldly, Tainted being. When it makes an Attack action check, it may spend • to cause the target to enter a Void stance. Whenever it severs a character's limb (such as via a Maiming Blow critical strike), it attaches the limb to its body. This removes 4 fatigue from the Wounded Bushi and possibly the Lost Arm disadvantage as well, depending on the limb.

ADVENTURE SEED: THE LOST HUNTER

Hook At the Kaiu Wall or while traveling in the Shadowlands, Crab scouts tell the PCs that a Falcon Clan Phantom Hunter (see page 94), thought to be lost to the Shadowlands, has found refuge in Daylight Castle. If they are using Candle Temple as a sanctuary, the Falcon may still be alive and uncorrupted. The PCs are the only ones in a position to rescue them quickly.

Rising Action The PCs arrive only to find that Candle Temple is empty. They do, however, find clues that the Phantom Hunter is somewhere in the castle: freshly bloodied bandages, a discarded finger of jade that is now almost totally corrupted, and arrows clearly of Falcon manufacture.

Climax The PCs find the Phantom Hunter, only to learn that they are already corrupted and dramatically empowered by the Taint (they can be represented by the wicked mahōtsukai profile on page 318 of the core rulebook). Alternatively, they could actually be the Siren. In any case, they have Shadowlands allies, such as goblins or Tainted samurai (these can be created by using the Tainted template from page 144 on samurai NPCs of the GM's choice). The PCs now must decide if the situation is so dire that they must retreat, at the cost of some of their honor and glory. Alternatively, the PCs may decide to fight on regardless, striving to end the threat to potential future victims of this foul scheme.

The Nezumi

The nezumi are ratlike humanoids whose culture existed long before the fall of Fu Leng. The Dark Kami's violent descent destroyed the civilization their ancestors had built, and the creation of the Shadowlands turned their homeland hostile. Unable to flee into human lands, the survivors have created a new society of nomadic groups that move from place to place to survive.

While many Rokugani consider the nezumi yet more mythological monsters of the Shadowlands, Crab samurai know better. Hiruma scouts foster communication with nezumi to acquire knowledge of dangerous and distant areas of the Shadowlands, and the Kaiu family relies on the Third Whisker tribe that lives under the Wall to aid in its defense. Crab peasants encourage nezumi to settle nearby, leaving offerings of food in the belief that nezumi help keep malignant forces at bay.

Nezumi put the well-being of family and tribe before individual needs, and though their manners are quite different from Rokugani ideals, they are not "monstrous savages" as some believe. Most tribes have their own ethics and rules, practices that don't hinder their survival in the harsh landscape of the Shadowlands—a code the practical Crab bushi can respect. Most importantly, the nezumi hate the Tainted beasts of the Shadowlands. Goblins, ogres, oni, and other creatures slaughter them mercilessly, and the nezumi have not forgotten what Fu Leng took from them when he fell.

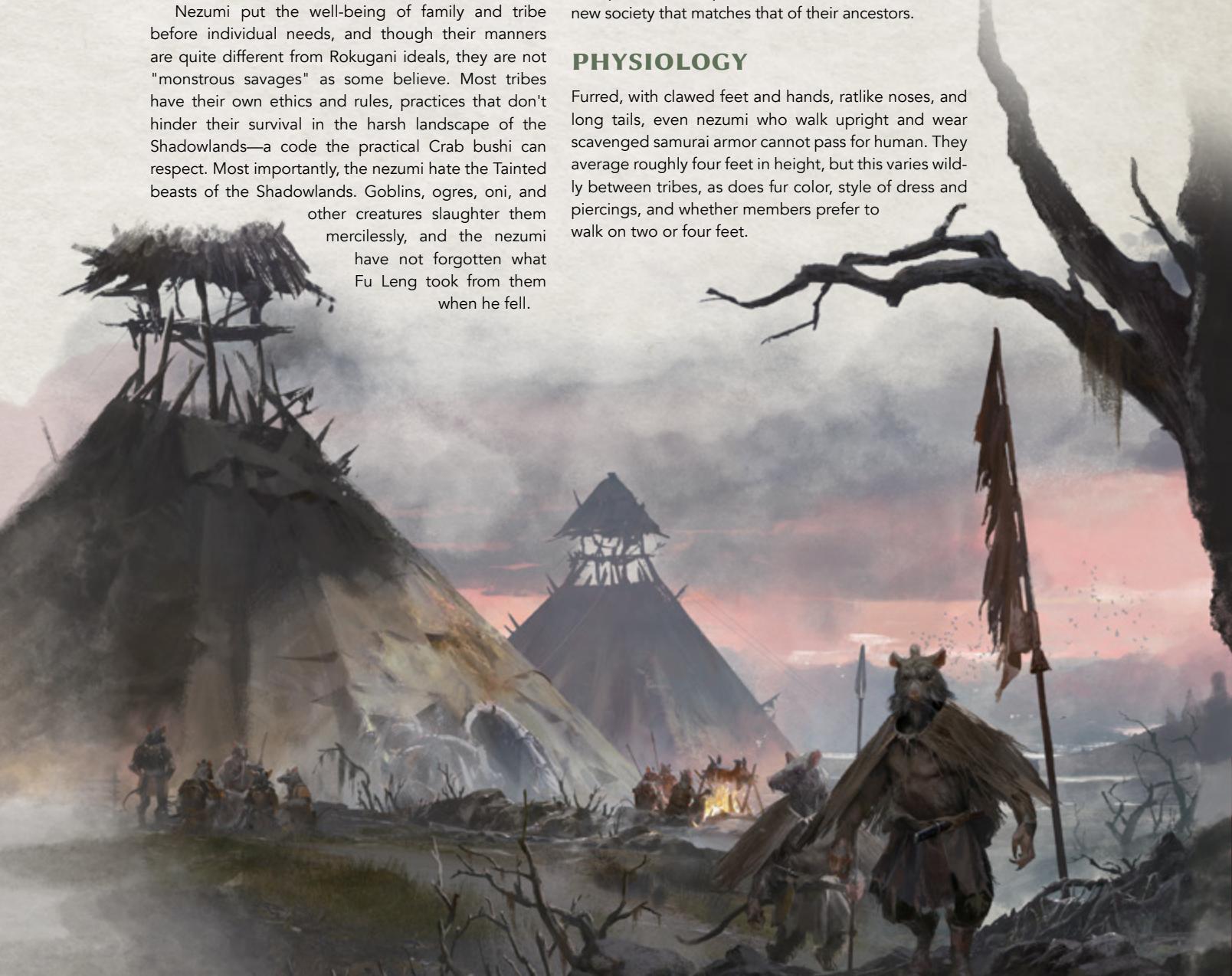
YESTERDAY

The nezumi Rememberers tell of a golden age, when their city was a center of learning and culture ruled by a monarch and council, the nezumi were peaceful among themselves, and their army kept other races at bay. Their philosophers and poets filled a great library with wisdom the likes of which Rokugan has never achieved. Their city was a marvel, and their culture superior to all others.

Then, a falling mountain crashed through their city, sending it to Yume-dō, the Realm of Dreams. In an instant, untold nezumi perished. Evil leaked into the world, and corruption spread across their lands, withering fields and transforming beings into vile beasts—all except the nezumi, who alone proved incorruptible, their steadfast morals and intellect granting immunity from the Taint. At least, this is the tale Rememberers tell, as their sacred task is to ensure the nezumi never forget their past, in the hope that one day, they might build a new society that matches that of their ancestors.

PHYSIOLOGY

Furred, with clawed feet and hands, ratlike noses, and long tails, even nezumi who walk upright and wear scavenged samurai armor cannot pass for human. They average roughly four feet in height, but this varies wildly between tribes, as does fur color, style of dress and piercings, and whether members prefer to walk on two or four feet.



Nezumi live three or four years on average. Their impressive rate of reproduction keeps up the numbers, and Rememberers, Dreamers, and tribal leaders often live a decade or more. Whether this is through some inherent physiological trait among their elite or they have developed a way to extend their natural lifespan, it ensures the tribes maintain their identities and histories consistently over many generations. The nezumi tradition of oral histories is universal among the tribes, and Rememberers teach pups through stories, so they learn as quickly as they grow.

UNTINTED

The dogma of the Remembers states that, unlike humans, nezumi have few hidden evil impulses onto which the Taint can anchor, making Tainted nezumi extremely rare. However, whether their fortitude is truly a matter of moral fiber or simply a quirk of their physiology is debated by both nezumi and Crab scholars.

The nature of the nezumi resistance to the Taint is a mystery many Kuni scholars attempt to solve. Before the nezumi had allies among the Rokugani, they were considered vermin at best and monsters at worst. Nezumi caught scavenging in human settlements were passed to the Kuni family for terrible experiments. The Kuni have never shared details of their abhorrent investigations but assert that while they learned much from nezumi bodies, they never had reason to believe their subjects were intelligent.

Now that the Crab have an uneasy alliance with the nezumi, the Kuni lack a steady supply of subjects. However, Kuni scholars sometimes venture into the Shadowlands in search of nezumi corpses. Stories of Kuni wardens seizing live subjects (or creating corpses) for study arise from time to time. Some are certainly true, for in every age there are horrible fanatics among the Crab who would trade any number of human lives for these secrets, to say nothing of the lives of nezumi.

NEZUMI MAGIC

Dreamers are the closest thing nezumi have to shugenja, but they function differently. Dreamers are attuned to Yume-dō, the Realm of Dreams. They commune with both Transcendents, the nezumi ancestors who dwell there, and with dream spirits known as *baku*. The former offer guidance and wisdom, which is usually vague and difficult to interpret. The latter lead Dreamers through the invisible barriers between dreams, granting them access to the dreams of other nezumi, animals, people, and even divine beings. As the Taint does not spread through dreams, there are scholars who question whether it is these abilities that grant their race resistance to corruption.

FIRE RAT SKIN VILLAGE

While many Crab view the nezumi as something between uneasy allies and tolerated enemies, there are accounts of attacks from ravenous, vicious nezumi against remote Crab homes and caravans. Similarly, there are other tales of regions where vile humans welcome nezumi only to capture and exterminate them. Most of these have little basis in fact or remain very isolated incidents.

There are disturbing rumors, however, that, while never proven, are even more troubling. One particularly horrid anecdote insists there is a village whose human inhabitants skin any unfortunate nezumi they find, often while still alive. The villagers wear the treated skins, believing this to offer protection against the Taint, and even fashion the leather into the exteriors of their tent-like houses. For the nezumi, such a place would be more terrible than any endless pit or blood-red lake.

To this day, no such village has been discovered. Some believe these tales are the work of cults out to poison relations between the Crab and nezumi. Some families, especially the Hiruma, worry how easily they spread throughout their clan, an indication that there may still distrust and even hate the nezumi. The nezumi, for their part, sometimes carefully check the scent of the leathers that some humans wear and keep a careful eye out when entering human habitations.

The abilities of Dreamers can include the following:

- ➊ **Dreamwalking** allows Dreamers to communicate with each other as well as with the residents of Yume-dō. It also lets them visit dreams of other creatures and people to learn, communicate, inflict nightmares, or even assert some limited control over them.
- ➋ **Dreamshaping** allows Dreamers to divine and change the identities of things within Yume-dō. The spiritual ramifications of such change can be permanent. While Dreamers cannot change the physical form of something or someone, it is possible to alter a destiny. This is usually used to aid allies, but there are stories of selfish Dreamers who steal destinies for themselves, shortening the lives of others to extend their own.

➊ **Dreamseeking** allows Dreamers to enter into Yume-dō bodily, find someone immersed in a dream, and return to the Mortal Realm through their dream, effectively tunneling through Yume-dō and being pulled out at the other dreamer's location. Normally, they can only make this leap across realms if the other dreamer grants them permission to exit through their dream—at which point, awakening pulls both back into Ningen-dō. Use of this ability can be quite taxing, but has allowed Dreamers to escape otherwise-certain death on many occasions. However, failure to make contact—or convince the dreamer to assist them in returning to the Mortal Realm—can leave a Dreamer stranded in Yume-dō with no clear path by which to return.

DANGEROUS NEZUMI

Most nezumi keep their distance from humans, but some isolated, warlike tribes consider humans the enemy. These nezumi are hardened by constant clashes with Tainted monsters and remain bitter that Rokugan did not offer aid or comfort to their ancestors in their great time of need. Fortunately for humans, these violent tribes live in the distant, most dangerous parts of the Shadowlands, and encounters with them are rare.

It is more common to encounter uncivilized nezumi, those who grew up without the nurturing guidance of a tribe; and outcast nezumi, banished for misdeeds against their people and condemned to an unforgiving, solitary life on the outskirts of their society. Either type might be found wandering in the Shadowlands wastes. Despite what the Rememberers may say, some nezumi are still very cunning, wicked, or desperate individuals. More dangerous than these are those Dreamers who have been consumed by ambition and seek greater power, no matter the cost.

NEZUMI TRIBES

The nezumi identify themselves by their tribes, which are usually their extended family. Loyalty is paramount, and betrayers are not granted the mercy shown to outcast nezumi. In fact, this is the one crime most tribes punish by death, and there are written accounts of such occurring. The nezumi take no satisfaction in execution, and ensure the end is swift and painless.

THE THIRD WHISKER

The Third Whisker is a small but important tribe of nezumi that largely makes its home underneath the Kaiu Wall. Small both in number and physical size, its members are quick to flee and hide if spotted. Though it is rare among their kind, they wear little or no decoration, and they often appear in clothes or armor their Crab neighbors have discarded or "lost" (once the nezumi have suitably altered them to fit their forms). The Kaiu tolerate their presence, as when the Wall comes under attack, the tribe protects its home with a ferocity the Crab samurai can only admire.

The leader of the Third Whisker is also its Dreamer, and several members of the tribe are both their offspring and apprentices. The tribe also boasts two fully fledged Rememberers and has more in training. Unlike some groups of nezumi who look primarily to the future of their civilization, this group considers the continuation of its ancestors' history and arts to be as important as the survival of its species. Other tribes that find themselves without a Dreamer or Rememberer come to the Third Whisker to bargain for a replacement, often providing an accomplished warrior in exchange.



THIRD WHISKER DREAMER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  

Many legendary Dreamers often come from the Third Whisker, and nezumi look upon even their apprentices with awe. These Dreamers sometimes serve other tribes. Unfortunately, their pride may prevent them from integrating, and their peculiar habits, such as spending hours dreamdwelling, set them apart. Third Whiskers live near Shiro Kaiu, and their Dreamers observe the dreams of their human neighbors. They are fascinated by the rituals and invocations of shugenja, and they spy on them, making off with robes, texts, or magical items unattended even for a moment. Any Dreamer wearing ill-fitting shugenja robes is likely to be of the Third Whisker.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL			
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	12		
08	GLORY	COMPOSURE	12		
00	STATUS	FOCUS	6		
0+2, 0-2	Demeanor - Ambitious	VIGILANCE	3		
ARTISAN 1		MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 3		
SOCIAL 2		TRADE 2			
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES			
Mystical Insight: Scholar; Spiritual		Arrogance: Martial; Interpersonal			
FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR					
Nezumi Blade: Range 0-1, Damage 3, Deadliness 3					
Gear (equipped): Stolen robes (Physical 2, Supernatural 2), several Rokugani and nezumi scrolls					
ABILITIES					
DREAMSHAPER					

A Third Whisker Dreamer is a being of silhouette 1 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. Once per scene, the Third Whisker Dreamer can make a **Theology (Void) check** to improve the destiny of a target at range 2. The TN of the check is equal to the target's Void Ring. If the check is successful, the target gains 1 Void point.

RENEGADE DREAMER

A Dreamer who has forsaken the well-being of their tribe and works only for personal benefit is extremely dangerous. Their talents can extend their life indefinitely, as they steal destinies via Yume-dō. This leaves victims like sleepwalkers, void of purpose or memory—a nezumi's nightmare, since they consider history so important. If such a Dreamer is killed, the death releases stolen destinies back into Yume-dō. These might eventually return to their original owners if no other Dreamer intercepts them. The Dreamer can also induce vivid hallucinations in an individual, though the effort drains the Dreamer for a time.

A Renegade Dreamer has an obsidian dagger (Range 0, Damage 2, Deadliness 4, Concealable, Razor-Edged, Unholy) as its weapon, and it uses the Nezumi Dreamer profile with these abilities instead:

STEALER OF FATES

A Renegade Dreamer is a being of silhouette 1 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. Once per scene, a Renegade Dreamer can make a **Theology (Void) check** to snip away at the destiny of a target at range 2. The TN of the check is equal to the target's Void Ring. If the check is successful, the target loses 1 Void point and gains the Disoriented condition. If the Renegade Dreamer is killed, the target regains the Void point.

DARK ILLUSIONS

As a Scheme and Support action, a Renegade Dreamer may make a **Theology (Air) check** to plant a nightmare into the mind of a target at range 0-2. The TN of the check is equal to the target's vigilance. If they succeed, the target is plagued by nightmares: they cannot remove fatigue or strife until they succeed at a **TN 3 Meditation check (Fire 2, Earth 5)** as a downtime activity.

"SCHOLARLY VIEWS"

An extract from *A Personal History of Rokugan*, author unknown

Concerning these creatures, whether we call them *gesshuirui*, *shojin*, or *nezumi*, it amounts to the same thing. They are vermin, unclean creatures that thrive in the Shadowlands, pillage our battlegrounds, and steal from the most vulnerable. Though they appear resistant to the Taint themselves, they spread its corruption wherever they go. My grandfather passed along horrible accounts of them eating their dead as well as our own. I myself came across one under the Wall, dripping with blood and undoubtedly busy undermining our defenses. The dead goblins at its feet were obviously its allies. It scurried away as I approached, showing its cowardly nature. I need not waste more ink on this matter; we simply cannot allow their kind to take root within the Empire. We must drive them back into the Shadowlands, where they belong.

THE CRACKED BONE

The Cracked Bone are stronger and larger than most nezumi, some reaching upwards of five feet in height. They carry weapons retrieved from fallen bushi or fashioned from whatever materials they can get their paws on: daggers and spears made of wood, bone, or stone—even obsidian. They pierce their ears, noses, and tails, adorning themselves with carved decorations of the same materials. They also wear scavenged armor, and they consider any garment that doesn't offer protection in battle pointless.

These nezumi are not actively hostile to the Rokugani scouts they encounter on neutral ground, but they fight to protect their territory. They expect intruders to heed the scents they leave marking boundaries, and so more than one scout has lost their life due to a cultural misunderstanding. The warriors of the Cracked Bone demonstrate none of the survival instinct common to most nezumi, but rather actively seek battle against Shadowlands creatures to prove themselves worthy. Their young must bloody their claws to achieve adulthood, in a ceremony not dissimilar to the Rokugani gempuku. Their leader holds their position by virtue of their martial skill, and when they grow too old to defeat all challengers, a victorious warrior kills them and takes their place.

CRACKED BONE WARRIOR

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  4  1

An accomplished warrior from a warrior tribe, this nezumi is not only large enough to look down on the average bushi, but they are also able to hold their own in a fight. Such warriors train hard from birth, so that an adult warrior can perform physical feats impossible for nezumi of more peaceful tribes. These include the abilities not only to strike with a tail but sometimes to use that tail to wield a weapon as well. Cracked Bone warriors typically sport many piercings, wounds, and scars. They are quick to fight and fearless when they do.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 4 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 2 TRADE 2

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Battle Hardened:

 Martial; Mental

Arrogance:

 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Small yumi (Range 2-3, Damage 4, Deadliness 3), quiver, nezumi armor (Physical 2, Supernatural 1, Wargear)

ABILITIES

TRIBAL WARRIOR

A Cracked Bone warrior is a being of silhouette 2 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. While making an Attack action check against a target at range 0-1, a Cracked Bone warrior may spend   to lash their foe with their tail, inflicting 3 physical damage and causing their target to suffer the Immobilized condition. Additionally, once per scene when an enemy succeeds on an Attack action check targeting another nezumi at range 0-1, a Cracked Bone Warrior may intervene, becoming the target of the action instead.

THE BURNT PAWS

According to the Rememberers of the Burnt Paws, their people come from a bellicose tribe known as the Ghost Paws. Fierce warriors who preferred stealing from the Crab rather than scavenging through Shadowlands filth, the Ghost Paws grew fond of the better things. This proved to be their downfall when the tribe traveled beyond the Wall to raid a town in which they hoped to find fine clothes, trinkets, and other unnecessary items. Unlike the usual peasant villages they preyed upon, though, this town contained veteran bushi. The Ghost Paws defeated as many as they could, but the samurai drove them into an empty storage building and shut them in. The samurai set fire to the building, and the only nezumi who escaped were those who fled over the burning wood as the walls collapsed, burning their paws.

Whether the story is true or not—and no Crab records verify it—the Burnt Paws are a cowardly tribe by their own admission. They avoid conflicts of all kinds, fleeing other tribes and scout patrols as readily as they do bands of wandering goblins. Remembering their past mistakes, they do not yearn for what they cannot have. They eat Shadowlands weeds and insects, sleep in deep burrows, and wear discarded scraps of cloth. Yet, their Rememberer is said to know where the armor and weapons of the Ghost Paws lie hidden, as the time may come when the tribe must become warriors again.

THE TATTERED EAR

Most nezumi tribes live in the Shadowlands, but tales are told of a tribe that managed to flee unseen through human lands and now lives hidden somewhere within the vast, enchanted Shinomen Forest. The nezumi consider the Shinomen a utopia, a home without threat of Shadowlands creatures or human intervention. Nezumi whisper about the Tattered Ear and the progress it must make without such considerations. Perhaps they even build cities among the trees, and one day will send troops of leaf-wearing warriors to lead their cousins out of the Shadowlands.

BURNT PAWS REMEMBERER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  1  4

While the Burnt Paws are, by large, extremely hesitant to engage in violence, their Rememberers tell tales of the warriors from whom they descend. Perhaps that is why these Rememberers conceal weapons in their robes. The senior Burnt Paws Rememberer wears a patchwork robe fashioned by the first Rememberer of the tribe. Each new Rememberer fixes and adds to the garment, and each piece is painstakingly embroidered with any new legendary deeds of the tribe. The Burnt Paws consider this garment sacred, perhaps even supernatural, though none dare speak about its supposed properties, or of what might befall the tribe if it were lost.



ADVANTAGES

Ready to Run:
 Martial; Physical

DISADVANTAGES

Lost in the Past:
 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Looted Knife: Range 0, Damage 2, Deadliness 4, Concealable, Mundane

Gear (equipped): Rememberer's robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 2, Ceremonial)

ABILITIES

KEEPER OF HISTORY

A Burnt Paws Rememberer is a being of silhouette 1 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. Whenever a character in a scene with the Rememberer makes a Scholar skill check involving the Shadowlands, the character may spend  to have the Remembrancer relate something tangentially useful, such as where additional components for a medicine just applied can be found, or how long ago their tribe managed to defeat an oni similar to the one threatening the group currently.

NEZUMI LIFE

Many nezumi villages consist of a combination of temporary dwellings and permanent burrows. Out of necessity, villages do not stay in any one place for long; nezumi pack up and move on when sources of food grow scarce, at the first sign of danger, or due to a Dreamer's warning. However, most tribes regularly return to the same locations, where they already burrowed out escape tunnels and storage spaces and know the terrain. Scouts check for unwanted squatters before the tribe arrives, and they seek out new locations to replace old sites they no longer deem safe.

NEZUMI PUP

MINION

CONFLICT RANK:  1  1

Nezumi pups begin life helpless, blind, and hairless. They develop quickly, emerging after two weeks to join older pups in training, foraging, and listening to stories. They are inquisitive and playful but know from scent markers where they can safely explore. Pups only wander away in extreme circumstances. Fear usually drives a pup back to a parent or other adult, but if its home suffers a disaster or is attacked, a pup obeys the instinct to flee. Unless found by its own or a friendly tribe, such pups either perish or become outcast nezumi.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL	
00	HONOR	ENDURANCE	4
05	GLORY	COMPOSURE	4
00	STATUS	FOCUS	3
 +1,  -2		VIGILANCE	
DEMEANOR - CURIOUS		1	

ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 1 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Unnoticed:  Martial; Physical	Defenseless:  Martial; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Teeth and Claws: Range 0, Damage 1, Deadliness 2

Gear (equipped): Fur (Physical 1)

ABILITIES

INQUISITIVE

A nezumi pup is a being of silhouette 0 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. Their curiosity means they might be found almost anywhere in the Shadowlands, such as curled up in a backpack or behind a tent flap. As a downtime

RAT TALES

- ⦿ Our Rememberers keep lists of names, carved in secret caves, where no human will find them. Every pup of every tribe is recorded somewhere, for the day we reclaim former glories and rebuild our libraries and archives.
- ⦿ Some of us are brave, and some of us are not, but none of us are stupid. If we cannot win a fight, we run, and so we live to tell our tales.
- ⦿ The greatest among us never die but ascend to Yume-dō as Transcendents. They are guided there by living Dreamers or by the Transcendents who passed before them. Their wisdom is never lost.

activity, a character may observe a nezumi pup's playful antics and remove 3 strife. A character who targets a nezumi pup with an Attack action receives 5 strife.

A GATHERING OF NOMADS

A tribe and its village are essentially the same thing. If a tribe becomes too small to function as a village, members find another depleted tribe to join and create a new tribe. Conversely, when a tribe grows too large, it splits into two or three new ones. It is impossible to know how many tribes exist at any one time, as there are many scattered across the Shadowlands.

All tribes have a leader, but in some this is the greatest warrior, while in others, it is a gifted Dreamer or wizened Rememberer. Most tribes require lookouts, scouts, and scavengers, as well as warriors for defense when they cannot flee, but these roles shift and change depending on the tribe's needs. Most nezumi can scout and scavenge, and even the youngest fight to protect the tribe when necessary.



A TEMPORARY HOME

The territories of some tribes include ruins, which the nezumi invariably consider to be the remains of their lost civilization. Such locations are popular places for tribes to set up camp, even if a ruin has a doorway built for creatures three times their size or it features headless statues with serpentine features. Among the stone, a tribe erects its tents, clever constructs of bone and leather. These protect the tribe's fires from the unpredictable winds and serve as shelter for scouts and lookouts, who maintain their vigilance aboveground while other nezumi sleep in burrows in the earth beneath them.

Every such location has escape tunnels, which are cleared as necessary when a tribe returns. Otherwise villages vary among tribes; some tribes favor large burrows where they can raise their families in safety underground, while others feel safer working and training on the ground above so they cannot be trapped. Some tribes build their leader, Rememberer, or Dreamer a grander burrow away from the rest of the tribe, while some tribes sleep all together in a single room.

OUTCAST NEZUMI

ADVERSAR'

CONFlict Rank: 3

3

These nezumi survive by instinct, running on four paws and eating anything they find, including rotting carcasses. Their solitary life in the Shadowlands leaves them unable to communicate even with other nezumi. They recognize scent signals to keep away, so they rarely bother the tribes, but consider any Rokugani either as an enemy or potential food. Without the advantages of civilized nezumi, they are usually a threat only to a lone scout or group of wounded samurai. Occasionally, they band together to hunt, but once the prey runs out they inevitably turn on each other.

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Instinctive Behavior:  Martial; Physical	Always Hungry:  Martial; Mental
FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR	
Claws and Teeth: Range 0, Damage 2, Deadliness 3	Gear (equipped): Fur (Physical 1), several haunches of raw meat
ABILITIES	
FEROCIOSUS DEFENDER	

Aerobic exercise and cognition

An outcast nezumi is a being of silhouette 1 who can never gain the Afflicted condition or the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage. When it is the target of an Attack action check, it may receive 1 strife to remove  from the attacker's check result.

ADVENTURE SEED: LAST OF THE LONG CLAWS

Hook While in the Shadowlands, the PCs encounter a nezumi who challenges them to a duel, hoping to win rations. A six-foot-tall warrior with thick black fur, she is called Three Knives, as she wields a knife with her tail as well as in each hand. She offers her Crab armor as a prize if defeated. If asked how she came by it, she explains she once befriended a Tainted scout called Hiruma Yuki. Yuki fought alongside her until she dueled and killed him, saving him from becoming a monster. He bequeathed his armor to her, and she has worn it since.

Rising Action Three Knives is the last survivor of the Long Claws, a warrior tribe that was once part of the Cracked Bone. If the PCs ask what became of her tribe, she tells them about the pack of outcast nezumi who killed them. She won't pursue the wild nezumi for vengeance, as she pitied them, but she admits they are moving in the direction of the Wall and may threaten Crab patrols.

Climax The PCs could persuade Three Knives to help if they are on a mission in the Shadowlands or could offer to help her find another tribe. If they decide to attack the outcast nezumi, however, she tries to stop them.

The Crab Clan

The southwest of Rokugan is an eternal battlefield, soaked in the blood of the Crab Clan. Since the descent of the Kami Hida to the Mortal Realm, his descendants and followers have been waging war against enemies beyond the Empire and within. Maps of their territory are marked with scars—swaths of land amputated or left half-dead, all stitched together by the mighty Carpenter Wall. Everyone within their borders has adapted to continuous violence. Noble and commoner alike wake each morning wondering if this day will be their last, unsure if their end will come by demonic claws or the swift strike of a honed blade.

Victories are often the products of several calculated defeats. Sacrifice ensured the Crab's continued existence, but it also shrank their borders and left one of their noble families homeless. In the eighth century, the oni lord known as the Maw led a massive Shadowlands army against the Crab. It overtook the lands of the Hiruma, and to this day they have not been reclaimed. The Hiruma's patience wanes with each year as they long for their revenge.

Centuries later, the Crab suffered another tragedy at the hands of a mysterious oni that appeared under the clan's very feet. Dōkutsu no Majo twisted earth kami into burrowing kansen and targeted the Kuni lands to tap into the family's strong spiritual energy. The resulting tunnels allowed Shadowlands invaders to flood beneath the Crab, leading to subterranean battles through the haunted, twisting chasms. After the blow from a Kaiju's ōtsuchi smeared Dōkutsu no Majo's head against a cave wall, the battle was won—but the war was far from over. Efforts to purge the vast network of tunnels and the kansen within left these Kuni lands spiritually desolate, and it is whispered that wicked shadows still cling to the darkest corners. On the surface, this wracked land is now known as the Kuni Wastelands.

The Crab's southeastern border is in constant flux. When the Yasuki family broke from the Crane to join the Crab Clan, they brought not only their mercantile prowess but also their enmity for the Crane. Disputes with the Crane over property rights and forged deeds and proclamations, as well as outright violence, cause Crab villages to shift ownership far too often. Any time the Yasuki reap success from their ventures, the Crane find some way to call their methods into question.



THE GUEST HOUSE

Every Crab town, no matter how small or impoverished, has a small house or hut set aside for guests. Visitors often remark on them, especially to note that they rarely seem to be in use—the Crab instead usually bring visitors into their own homes. Most visitors simply assume the empty dwellings are another odd feature of this odd clan and forget the matter upon returning to their own lands. The truth is much more disturbing and pragmatic, like many Crab customs.

One feature of all of these houses, no matter their location, is that they have a sliding beam to lock the door, but it is placed on the outside. Most of these dwellings are also of a sturdier construction than normal.

These houses are specifically designed for those who arrive unexpectedly, and especially so at night. No Crab would ever turn an unfortunate traveler away, but hospitality has to be tempered with suspicion. The Tainted might return, unaware of or refusing to admit their terrible nature, and could emerge as zombies or worse in the morning. Every Crab has heard a dozen variants of a tale in which a family welcomed back a group of cousins they had not seen for years. The next day, all that was left were gnawed bones and a thick trail of blood leading into a nearby forest.

Thus, the tradition evolved to put up travelers in guest houses (at least for the first night). A visitor might find it odd or perhaps discourteous, but the Crab are perfectly fine to exchange this for safety and containment of the Shadowlands.

Families of the Crab

The Crab Clan is a well-oiled machine, each family serving as an irreplaceable component. The Kaiu serve as the clan's foundation with their ingenuity and foresight. The Hiruma are the Crab's eyes, relaying critical information, while the Kuni are a hungry repository of knowledge. The clan's lifeblood—the food and funds necessary for the war effort—is provided by the mercantile Yasuki. And finally, guiding it all is the Crab Clan's heart, the courageous Hida. Together, their bond is as impenetrable as the Carpenter Wall.

Above all, the Crab embody courage. Shadowlands beasts and rivals alike dread confrontations with its samurai, albeit for different reasons. The same courage that allows the Crab to dominate a battlefield allows them to storm through social constructs. When courtesy or tradition hinders efficiency, the Crab boldly oppose convention. Members of the Crab are sure of themselves and their one mission: to protect Rokugan by any means necessary.

HIDA

The Kami Hida was the strongest of his kin, but for years, he put little stock in wisdom when the strength of his arm could serve him. In the series of tests to determine who would rule the Empire, Hida was defeated by his sibling's wits. The Kami felt weak for the first time in his existence. As he bemoaned his failure, a passing monk remarked that identifying one's weakness is a form of strength. Hida took the stranger's words to heart and spent the following years mastering strategy. His descendants continue Hida's legacy in their pursuit of tactical prowess. Success, whether it's in battle or personal growth, is often hidden behind painful defeats. Facing these sacrifices requires courage, and the Hida have no shortage of that.

REPUTATION AND VALUES

If they could, it is said, Hida bushi would deal with goblins and courtiers in a similar fashion: with swift brutality. All Crab live to carry out the Kami Hida's war against the Shadowlands. Any other task is an imposition, and the Hida are not afraid to say as much. The pampered nobles of other clans find Hida manners almost as shocking as a tetsubō to the back of the skull. Aghast allies and enemies alike have reflexively challenged Hida members to duels, only to be dismissed as yet another waste of time. The Hida are therefore considered impolite brutes.

DEFEND THE WALL!

What most would take as a simple game for Hida children actually acts as a powerful training tool for the family. It is quite simple: on the top of a hill, a line of children waits with linked arms as their friends attempt to scale the slope and break through them. If the line breaks, the invading children are chased until caught and driven back down the hill. Defenders must act quickly to catch them, though, before other invaders exploit the gaps in the line.

There is no strict victory condition for either side. Games generally continue until everyone collapses with exhaustion or is too injured to continue, for even in their youth, the Hida believe in playing hard. Some games last all day, crowds of parents and other onlookers cheering the children on and wagering on the outcome. Seeing the children displaying strength is especially rewarding for veterans, who know that when they fall in battle, there will be a new generation of Hida to replace them.

Understanding the Hida requires one to join them on the Kaiu Wall. In brief, nearly unnoticeable moments, boisterous Hida bushi fall silent, their eyes focused on a dark memory. Born and raised warriors to combat the foulest creatures in existence, the Hida are still not immune to grief. They manage their pain through black humor, drunken wrestling, and a frank acceptance of the world's horrors. Honesty allows the Hida to face their enemies. Courage allows the Hida to destroy them. But no amount of desensitization can prepare anyone for the inhuman brutality of the Shadowlands.

Loved ones in the Shadowlands don't just die; instead, their corpses claw back toward the Wall, disfigured by the Taint. There is a constant fear of penngalan and other monstrosities impersonating comrades. The sky above the Shadowlands is never welcome, either grim charcoal or burning red but never soft blue. Darkness and cold rain often accompany the Hida during their endless patrols. To be a Hida is to live without comfort. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that their tempers flare when the very people they live to protect fail to show any gratitude.

CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

A Yasuki merchant or Kaiu engineer may say that a warrior is as only as good as their weapon, but a Hida would argue that a true warrior is still deadly unarmed and stumbling drunk. Those born Hida must prove they have honed their body before they earn a weapon. Children are often taught the forms of *Kobo Ichi-Kai Jujutsu*, a type of hand-to-hand combat that focuses on disabling foes at the joints, controlling their momentum, and constantly delivering damage. Prospective bushi engage in brutal *kobo* matches against impossible odds. Winning is not the goal. Hida students are conditioned to accept small defeats in order to secure larger victories.

The Hida hone more than their bodies. A tactical mind shaped by theory and experience is more dangerous than the sharpest blade. Young Hida practice tactics through sessions of Go and *Sōogi*, and many of their childhood games operate like military drills. At their various *dōjō*, Hida spend as much time reading military theory as they do physically training. Tests are frequently performed in mock war rooms where everyone crouches around a map covered in miniature armies. Given its grim task, the Hida family cannot afford to cast aside anyone, and it teaches that all must serve according to their own strengths. For example, Daimyō Kisada's physically weak son, Hida Sukune, has earned great renown as a tactician and strategist. However, the ideal Hida is a paragon of both physical and mental excellence.

Like all families in Rokugan, the Hida have a great many traditions; some of these date from the founding of the Emerald Empire, or so the Hida claim. Unlike other families, though, the Hida rarely make their traditions into obsessions. Festivals are pleasant distractions, but nothing more. Heirloom weapons that can no longer function as well as newer creations are set

aside for more effective innovations. Bushi cannot risk turning their attention from the Shadowlands, so they keep their rituals short and on a flexible schedule. Every garrison has its own songs and routines, and garrisons regularly engage in friendly competitions. The Hida live in the now. They do not waste time pining for lost heroes like their counterparts in the Lion Clan.

CURRENT CONCERNS

The Shadowlands are rising. Frequent assaults against the Carpenter Wall have left the Crab starved for resources. With the Imperial Court ignoring their requests for aid, the Crab have limited options. The Crane Clan's ill will toward the Yasuki is threatening to divert staff and resources from the front line. Some Crab Clan leaders see an alliance with the Crane-hating Scorpion as a tempting option, but this would alienate one of the Crab's closest allies, the Phoenix. The ambitious Kuni Yori strenuously objects to this proposed alliance, greatly preferring access to the spiritual rites and secrets of the Phoenix's Asako family to those of the Scorpion's Yogo family. But the fact remains that the Yasuki cannot handle the Crane by themselves and something must be done.

Tensions between the Lion and all of their neighbors threaten to involve the Crab. The Lion may call on their assistance to fight the Unicorn, or the Crab may need to choose sides if the Lion assault the Phoenix. Hida Kisada has tasked his people with the following objectives: discover new ways to kill the monsters of the Shadowlands, reclaim the lost knowledge of the Hiruma, establish new trade routes, design more effective weapons, avoid conflict with other clans, and find out what is causing the surge of activity within the Shadowlands.

THE LANDS OF THE HIDA

The rolling farmlands of the Kaiu family stretch into the horizon, nestling along the protective Carpenter Wall until they gradually grow more rocky and dry. Once the rice paddies grow rare and the ground becomes marred with the crushing footfalls of repeated marches, one has entered Hida lands. The harsh landscape reflects the attitude of its ruling family. Outsiders—even, and perhaps especially, those representing the other Great

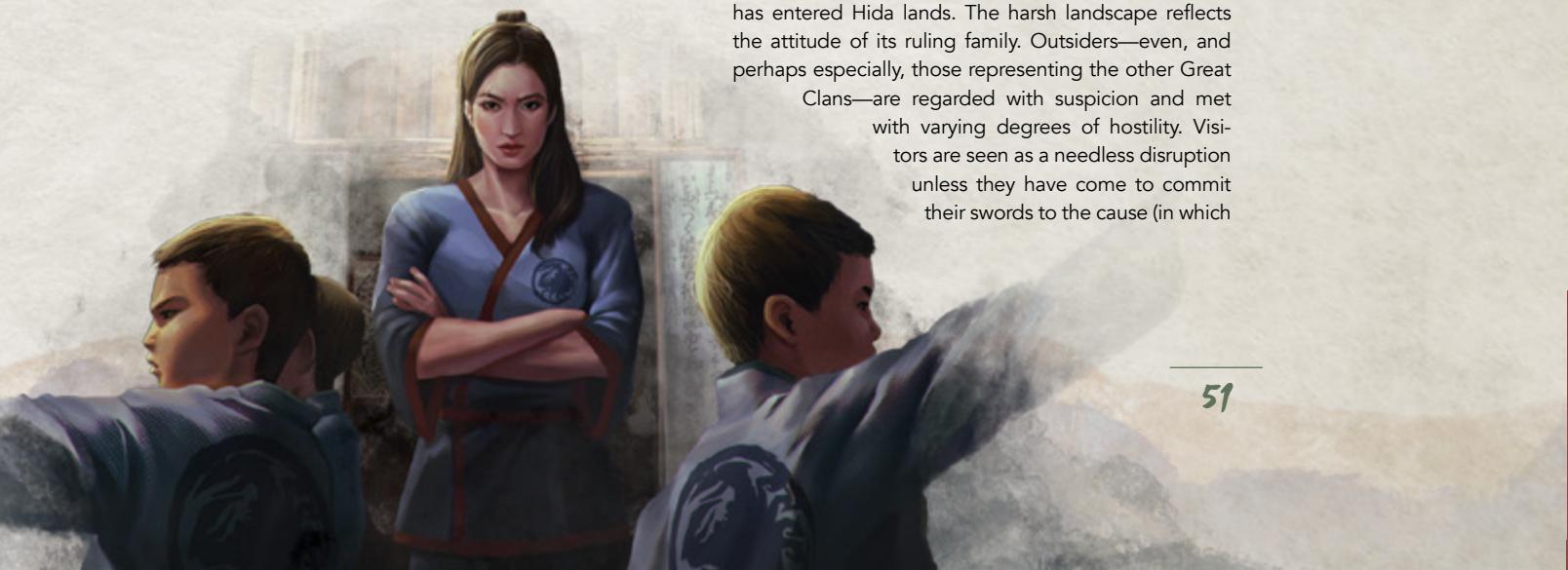
Clans—are regarded with suspicion and met with varying degrees of hostility. Visitors are seen as a needless disruption unless they have come to commit their swords to the cause (in which

HIDA RUMORS

The opium won't be coming this month—someone raided the smuggler's caravan. The Fortress of the Forgotten is sure to explode, and soon.

A stranger in green and yellow is gathering warriors for a raid beyond the Wall, but won't say why—only that it's vital to the Empire. They could be Imperial, but why the secretive manner?

The Skull of the Maw is dripping with blood. Fresh blood. Each night there is more, regardless of how often it's cleaned.



case, even gaijin mercenaries are welcome). Even the commoners lack respect for travelers from other parts of the Empire—and seem even to revere the Hida family more than the Emperor himself.

Whether samurai or commoner, almost everyone in the region has a nightmarish story of a hungry monster in the night, a bloody mist that stole away dozens of villagers, or another horror more unspeakable still. Some of these stories draw to a close tragically, but many end with the arrival of Hida samurai who drive back the night once again—ensuring people live to tell their harrowing tale, and their faith in their protectors stronger than ever. As disparate as the Crab's five families are, they unanimously trust the Hida's tried and tested leadership. As the saying goes, there are few places along the Carpenter Wall as safe as standing behind a Hida.

Hida Palace

Kyūden Hida is easily the most fortified castle in Rokugan. Its thick stone walls tower over 180 feet high, their rough surfaces lined the latest Kaiu defensive war machines. Giant gates partition the outer walls into a series of kill zones intended to corral invaders. Pulsing through the air are the beats of *taiko* drums directing the marches of practicing troops. Nearly everyone wears heavy armor, looking not unlike literal crabs as they move across the dark stone ramparts.

The most striking feature of this palace is mounted above its main entrance—the skull of the Maw. It grins threateningly out at the Shadowlands with rows of razor-sharp teeth. The interior of the palace is austere, its only decorations being the banners of the Crab families. Within these halls, adventurers can seek permission from Hida Kisada to enter the Shadowlands. However, visitors should beware: the Hida are notoriously uncooperative and hate glory seekers.

Fortress of the Forgotten

The Crab appear to thrive amid violence, but they are only human. Death and grief eventually chip away at anyone's resolve, and when some Crab find their limit, they suddenly snap and become erratically destructive. It is said that the only way to stop such a warrior's wrath once it has been roused is to decapitate them, yet stories are told of headless warriors getting in a few hits before tumbling to the ground. To achieve this berserker state deliberately, some Crab warriors spend months in meditation, slowly numbing their base instinct for survival, often with the aid of alcohol and opium. Some seek it so that they can achieve greater heights of

ADVENTURE SEED: TRUE INTENTS

→ **Hook** The Carpenter Wall has been breached. An oni stands upon a low peak of the Twilight Mountains, commanding its forces forward but not taking the lead itself. Despite the chaos, some of the junior Hida officers find the oni's behavior suspect. It appears to be taunting the Hida, having left itself exposed to a direct assault as its forces strike forward.

→ **Rising Action** PCs who are swept into the battle overhear the Hida soldiers hypothesize that this assault is a distraction. Their gunsō, Hida Dairoku, is hungry for the glory he would win by slaying an oni and will not listen. The soldiers believe that the true target could be a nearby mine that recently displayed invaluable jade deposits.

→ **Climax** Breaking formation to check on the mine will evoke the gunsō's ire. However, traveling there will confirm the soldiers' suspicions—a subterranean ritual to destroy the jade is underway. If Dairoku is humbled, he may offer to aid the PCs in the future as recompense for his actions.

power; others in an effort to quell the burns that war has seared onto their soul. Still others find this state without seeking it, born to battle rage or kindling it as life on the Wall heaps horror after horror upon them.

The Fortress of the Forgotten houses an ascetic order. But unlike monks, who seek peace and enlightenment, the berserkers who reside within seek the solace that can only come from the destruction of their enemies. These warriors arrive for a variety of reasons—some because they have been broken by war, some because they seek power to wreak vengeance, and some because they are too dangerous to their comrades to serve in a conventional unit when the fury takes them. Within the halls of the fortress, there is little conversation, just silent focus on becoming an emotionless weapon. Many inhabitants are Hiruma who have journeyed so long in the Shadowlands that even when they leave it, it never truly leaves them. Others are Hida, Kaiu, Kuni, or even rōnin who seek solace in shedding the blood of foes after horrific experiences while fighting to defend Rokugan.

The Hida and the Wall

The Hida are ever-present on the Carpenter Wall, and many of the family's major landmarks can be found along the Wall's length. As such, nearly anyone traveling Hida lands will come into contact with the structure at least once. Stretches supported by fortresses like Hida Palace are infrequently targeted, no matter the state of other battles elsewhere. However, isolated regions between strongholds are in constant danger, and passing travelers may find themselves pulled into a battle.

HIDA KOTOE, STOUT WARRIOR

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  3  2

Kotoe has served at the Wall for many years. Long ago, her fellow Hida nicknamed her "Thirteenth Tower" both for her steadfast nature and her height. When outfitted in heavy ō-yoroi armor and her huge family tetsubō, she is indeed a towering figure, and many Hiruma returning from scouting missions claim they can spot her on the parapets from many miles away. She can often be found where the fighting is the thickest, especially wherever the Wall has suffered a breach. Legend has it she singlehandedly held off waves of goblins who had burrowed under the Wall until their blood made the tunnel too slippery for them to climb out—at which point she grimly waded in and killed the rest. Kotoe comes from a long line of warriors, all of whom only fell after killing so many creatures that paths had to be made through the piles of corpses to reach their bodies. She wishes nothing more than to end her days in the same manner; given her strength and prowess in battle, though, that day may be a long time coming.

SOCIETAL		PERSONAL	
55	HONOR	12	
50	GLORY	16	
39	STATUS	4	
 +2,  -2	DEMENOR - GRUFF	3	VIGILANCE
ARTISAN 0	MARTIAL 4	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 1
TRADE 1			
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES	
Large Stature:  Martial; Physical		Slow Moving:  Martial; Physical	

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Tetsubō: Range 1–2, Damage 7, Deadliness 3, Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Ō-yoroi armor (Physical 6 [3 if suffering the Disoriented, Dazed, or Immobilized condition], Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), wakizashi

ABILITIES

DEFENDER OF THE WALL

As a Hida, Kotoe ignores the Cumbersome quality of any armor she wears or weapons she uses. When she makes an Attack action check, she may spend  in the following way:

Earth   +: Kotoe pushes the target of the attack 1 range band per  spent this way in a direction of her choice. If it collides with an object, it suffers damage as if it had fallen the distance it moved.

HIRUMA

When the Kami Hida claimed the western mountains, he challenged his followers to prove that they were strong enough to stand beside him. Three stepped forward. The very first was Hiruma, the hunter. Together, the trio embarked on a quest to slay Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni. Hiruma was instrumental in its demise, not only tracking and baiting the beast, but also delivering the killing blow. Since then, the Hiruma have been the right hand of the Hida. They serve as scouts, messengers, and spies. Without them, the Crab would be without its senses.

HIRUMA RUMORS

A merchant notes that many items said to have come from Daylight Castle have been offered at the market recently, as though someone has successfully looted our ancestral home!

The Crane are somehow behind the efforts to keep us from launching a full assault and regaining our lost lands.

Some other families are refusing to undergo proper inspection and cleansing procedures when returning from the Shadowlands. Why?

REPUTATION AND VALUES

The Hiruma are not well-known outside of the Crab lands. Visitors may note differences from the Hida; for instance, their lithe frames and light armor. Otherwise, Hiruma are too quiet and quick for travelers to get a prolonged impression. Besides those who join the Fortress of the Forgotten, Hiruma rarely linger in one place. Wherever they stay, they are passing guests.

The Hiruma live in silent shame. While the Hida wear their emotions on their sleeves, the Hiruma are cold and brooding. Both families are known to have volatile tempers, but the Hiruma snap so viciously that it often catches people by surprise.

Much of a Hiruma's life is spent in waiting—waiting days in purifying meditation, waiting weeks for their bodies to recover from venturing into the Shadowlands, and waiting generations for their lands to be reclaimed. Eventually, most exhaust their patience. It is little surprise that many Hiruma choose to leave the Mortal Realm by launching themselves into hopeless battle after hopeless battle.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Until the legacy of the Hiruma is recovered, they cannot start anew. They live in an empty space between their past and future where there is no glory—just a duty to persist until they are made whole again. Those born to the Hiruma stand to inherit no farmlands, no castles, no scrolls of ancient knowledge, no artifacts of mythic provenance, for all of these were lost along with their lands.

Without a formal *dōjō*, Hiruma learn from their immediate family. Hiruma children are trained to hunt as soon as they can walk. Most become skilled hunters before adolescence and are allowed to spend days alone in the wild honing their survival skills. Many confused peasants have mistakenly tried to help someone they thought was a lost child, only to end up groveling before nobility. A Hiruma's training focuses on survival, stealth, and speed. After trapping a Shadowlands beast for their *gempuku*, a Hiruma may serve behind enemy lines as a raider and scout, or beyond the Wall as a messenger.

Hiruma work closely with Kuni Wardens, who monitor them for the Taint. Preparing to traverse the Shadowlands is a lengthy process. Before crossing the border, wards must be painted on a scout's skin. After returning, the scout spends as much as four weeks undertaking strenuous purifying rites at one of the shrines of cleansing scattered throughout Kuni lands.

ADVENTURE SEED: ONE FINAL MISSION

— **Hook** The PCs come across, or are invited to join, a secret group of Tainted Hiruma who are fanatically dedicated to reclaiming their lands before they fall to corruption.

— **Rising Action** The small group includes a shugenja who now uses *mahō* and who claims to know a way to bind or destroy Tainted creatures and cleanse corrupted territory. They group plans to leave soon and asks the PCs for aid in stealing enough jade to support the mission. Although they might fail, they believe they deserve one last attempt to retake their homeland after all their service, especially for the sake of other families.

— **Climax** The PCs can aid in the theft so that the Hiruma can end their lives in honorable battle, but this means the loss of jade that could be used in other missions. The Tainted Hiruma might be further corrupted and become Lost, another possible drawback. Still, perhaps any risk is acceptable in attempting to regain land from Fu Leng...

CURRENT CONCERN

The Hiruma need to restore their name through the reconquest of their ancestral lands. Until that glorious day, they can find some satisfaction in the recovery of artifacts. Antiquarians sometimes come into possession of Hiruma scrolls and weapons, but more often than not, these objects are forgeries. The Hiruma's greatest hope for recovering their history is sealed in their homeland.

There are rumors that the Candle Temple in Daylight Castle has resisted the befouling infection of the Shadowlands. If true, there is little doubt that it contains preserved relics. However, the castle is crawling with Shadowlands creatures. Even if a person were to enter the temple sanctum, they would need to conduct a search undetected and risk the destruction of recovered objects during their return. Hida Kisada has yet to see a proposed mission into Candle Temple that he finds tactically sound. The Hiruma argue that the activity at the border might mean Candle Temple is now sparsely defended, but Kisada believes it is the Hiruma who are at risk of being spread too thin by vainglorious efforts. There has been talk within the family about

defying their Clan Champion's orders and embarking on a mission anyway—for victory would be too grand a success even for the stoic Hida Kisada to deny, and failure would spell certain death.

THE LANDLESS

Beyond the Wall, in the foothills of the Twilight Mountains, Daylight Castle waits. Shadowlands beasts crawl through its halls, defiling the majestic fortress. Claw marks scar the stone. Bones litter the floor. All is dark and putrid. According to the tales, though, within is Candle Temple, radiating with a divine light. It is a shining beacon calling out to the family it honors. Under its guardianship, the last surviving remnants of Hiruma history wait to be reclaimed.

To speak of the Hiruma holdings is a grave insult. For centuries, the Hiruma have been without a home, their territories having become part of the Shadowlands.

Hiruma often stalk the battlements along the Wall, gazing to the south at the lands that were once theirs. Anger and longing fill their souls, and each knows what the others feel without the need for words. One day, they silently whisper. One day.

HIRUMA IZUMI, CAUTIOUS SCOUT

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK: 2

Izumi's family was one of many whose homes were taken by monsters, and like all Hiruma, he lives only to see those homes retaken one day. That day is not today, probably won't be tomorrow, and likely won't happen until after he becomes ashes. Until then, though, Izumi does his part, venturing into the Shadowlands frequently and not returning until there is one fewer oni, ogre, or other vile creature to befool his ancestral lands. His actions are careful and precise, and he vigilantly watches his jade while across the Wall. The only thing worse than the monsters of the Shadowlands, he knows, would be to become one of them himself.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL		
38 HONOR	ENDURANCE	12	
34 GLORY	COMPOSURE	14	
34 STATUS	FOCUS	6	
 +2,  -2	VIGILANCE	3	
DEMEANOR - CAUTIOUS			
ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 2
			TRADE 3

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Careful Planner:  Martial; Mental	Live to Kill:  Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR
Yari: Range 2, Damage 5, Deadliness 3, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Ashigaru armor (Physical 3, Wargear), yumi and quiver, knife, traveling pack, finger of jade

ABILITIES
CAREFUL OBSERVER

Izumi counts his vigilance as 6 for purposes of noticing hidden Shadowlands creatures, jade decay, and evidence of Taint in a character (including himself). Decrease the TN of Survival skill checks Izumi makes while in the Shadowlands by 1.

KAIU

The second to accept Kami Hida's challenge, it is said, was the blacksmith Kaiu. As his companions prepared to face Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni, Kaiu set to work crafting the weapon that would bring about the oni's demise—Chikara. Kaiu's forge is in operation to this very day, acting as the heart of Kaiu Castle. Kaiu's spirit has continued throughout the generations, giving rise not only to master smiths, but also to inventors and engineers. The Kaiu strike down the legions of Jigoku without invoking the kami or ancient knowledge. They embody the potential of Rokugan—as they call it, the future.

REPUTATION AND VALUES

The Crab Clan has many detractors, but few criticisms are hurled at the Kaiu. At worst, bitter outsiders believe that the talented Kaiu are wasted making war machines—that their time would be better spent constructing music boxes and tiny dancing automatons, or at least noble and refined weapons, like bows and swords. But like all Crab, the Kaiu are unwavering in their dedication to keeping Rokugan safe.

Before the Yasuki became the clan's ambassadors, the Kaiu handled diplomacy. They were not trained courtiers knowledgeable in the intricacies of polite society, but their gifts were the stuff of legend, and their courtiers were at least trained to be personable. Even now, Kaiu tend to be soft-spoken and even tempered. Through rational words, they can soothe even the most irate of Hida. Their stability forms the foundation of the entire Crab Clan. Without their selfless support, the clan would fall. But behind these calm demeanors is a group of minds bursting with creative

KAIU RUMORS

There is a huge stockpile of captured gaijin weapons to the north in some village called Slow Tide Harbor. The Emperor refuses to allow us to inspect them. Why are we being kept from ways to improve our defenses?

Someone is stealing the jade we must have for experiments to forge new weapons. I think it's Yasuki out to make some fast koku.

There exists a special hammer that imbues jade into anything it forges. It got lost in the Shadowlands, but if only we could find it...

energy and invention. Rare Kaiu individuals resent being limited to war-related pursuits. Luckily for them, the Kaiu generally consider any technical tinkering an opportunity for discovery. Their schools are dedicated to fostering creativity and invention. When students indulge in music boxes and toys, the complex internal mechanisms frequently lead to new and useful innovations. Too much frivolity is eventually discouraged, but the Kaiu are open-minded.

As the Hiruma search for their past and the Hida confront the present, the Kaiu have their eyes on the future. Foresight is a key trait of any skillful Kaiu. When planning traps and fortifications, they must first envision every possible angle of assault. They must stay several steps ahead of ally and enemy alike. There is a saying among the Crab that if a Kaiu must quit the battlefield, defeat is on the way. The Kaiu's talent for calculating outcomes is almost prophetic.

CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

Creativity cannot be contained. The Kaiu, therefore, provide many avenues by which inventive minds may grow. If the traditional route of smithing is too limiting, one can design traps or ballistae. A young Kaiu who is more interested in the foundational components of metallurgy may specialize in geology or alchemy. Those who don't want to tinker in a workshop can create grand structures as architects or fight on the front line as combat engineers. There is no other family within the Crab that allows such diversity. Each field of study has its masters and students, as well as sequential tests one must pass to progress. Talent is celebrated, and the underperforming are seen as buds that have not yet fully bloomed.

Throughout the year, the Kaiu organize events that encourage the intermingling of diverse skill sets. These meetings result in much successful collaboration among Kaiu masters and even members of other clans. Despite Hida Kisada's notoriously low opinion of the Dragon Clan, the Kaiu regularly correspond with Agasha alchemists, and their combined knowledge of metallurgy has improved the ancient techniques of both families. The Kaiu's modest curiosity tends to endear them to intellectuals from most clans. Even Kakita swordsmiths have a pleasant (and useful) time conversing with the Kaiu when the opportunity arises.

The most common Kaiu specialization is that of the combat engineer. These samurai are not only talented bushi, but also architects, strategists, and resource managers. Combat engineers shape battlefields before conflict even arises. They dig trenches, sap walls, construct battlements, build bridges, and demolish abandoned Kaiu devices so they do not fall into

ADVENTURE SEED: PROGRESS CANNOT WAIT

Hook A sudden crisis of dwindling jade supplies is pushing the Crab to desperation. New weapons must be devised to combat the Shadowlands. There are Crane accounts of a naval battle with a gaijin ship that sprayed jets of liquid flame. This incendiary fluid only ignited after exposure to the air and bound like tar to whatever it struck. The horrific deaths of the Crane sailors motivated the Emperor to ban any attempt to procure or replicate the weapon.

Rising Action As much as the Crab would like to see the Crane engulfed in flames, they agree that turning such a weapon on humans would be repugnant. However, they disagree that it should be banned outright. Many members of the Kaiu Engineer School would give anything for the formula of the flaming fluid or the physical device.

Climax PCs embarking on this quest must avoid the Crane and work with pirates or the Mantis. They must also accept the risk of introducing this weapon into Rokugan. If details of its design fall into the wrong hands, it could lead to many atrocities on the battlefield.

enemy hands. It was combat engineers who defeated the subterranean invasion of Dōkutsu no Majo. They shaped the land through ingenuity and were able to crush, drown, and smoke out the oni's army. Most of Jigoku's agents have historically been thwarted by powerful shugenja, but the Kaiu proved that human ingenuity can be equally effective.

CURRENT CONCERN

Jade supplies are dwindling. The Kuni are attempting to diminish the negative effects of obsidian but have yet to find a solution. If the situation does not improve, the Kaiu will need to find a new way to pierce the armored hides of Shadowlands beasts. As a last resort, they may need to build up the Wall even higher. If this weren't enough, the Kaiu often find themselves playing the role of unwilling mediators. The Hida and

Hiruma bicker about the reclamation of Hiruma artifacts in the Shadowlands, and Kuni Yori fears that the Crab's friendship with the Phoenix's Asako family is threatened by the Yasuki who seek aid from the Scorpion. Further, the Lion insist that the Crab join them in combating the Unicorn. The Crab have had no love of the Unicorn since their tumultuous return to Rokugan several centuries ago, but neither do they wish to start another war on a new front, wasting valuable lives against merely human enemies.

THE LANDS OF THE KAIU

Before the Yasuki joined the Crab Clan's ranks, the Kaiu were considered the most hospitable family of the Crab. Their provinces are pastoral and calm. Commoners farm safely behind the Kaiu's meticulously maintained sections of the Carpenter Wall. The only interruption of the peaceful ambiance comes with the occasional, if noisy, testing of new war engines. Even then, the Kaiu's citizens find comfort in hearing the family's siege engines smashing hills into bits.

Most visitors to the Kaiu lands are either traders avoiding Shinomen Forest on their way to various mountain passes or warriors in search of masterwork Kaiu weapons. More than any other smiths in Rokugan, the Kaiu excel at inlaying jade. Their creations are the bane of monsters. Without jade, even the greatest samurai of the current era could not challenge the most dreadful of the Shadowlands' inhabitants.

Carpenter Castle

Life along the Carpenter Wall is dangerous, but the Kaiu consider it a valuable learning opportunity. Shiro Kaiu, known as the Carpenter Castle, predates and adjoins the Wall. Within its seamless stone facade, master smiths and engineers build the Crab Clan's future.

The interior of Carpenter Castle is almost entirely mechanized. It has platforms that rise and lower via groups of clever pulleys and counterweights, gear-propelled conveyor belts made of reed mats, a complex alarm system, lever-operated gates. In the entrance hall stands a famous music box boasting a wide selection of twinkling songs.

All of this wonder seems taken for granted by the bustling engineering students, whose pockets overflow with scales, templates, and rolls of schematic-covered parchment. Their quiet discussions fill the wide rooms with a soft hum, creating a contemplative atmosphere.

Outside, everything is much louder. Prototype war engines line the Carpenter Wall and unleash destruction on the Twilight Mountains beyond. There are nooks along the walkway where teachers and their pupils can duck in case of a machine's failure. In the last few centuries, this section of the Wall has taken more damage from faulty student designs than from ravening beasts or twisted armies. Not even the most dim-witted of goblins would venture close to Carpenter Castle of its own accord.

Within the castle's large courtyard, the legendary forge of the original Kaiu is still in operation. It is frequented by the family daimyō, Kaiu Shihobu, who helps students with a contagious enthusiasm. The bellows are pumped along to cheerful songs and the heavy clangs of the hammers.

Golden Carp Marketplace

The Golden Carp Marketplace lies at the base of Higashino shiro no kao, the Kaiu family's Face of the East Castle. There, the Unicorn and Crab mingle despite their history of conflict. The Kaiu are careful to extinguish any outbreaks of hostility. While many Hida incite confrontations, Kuni intrusively snoop, and Hiruma skulk about, the forward-thinking Kaiu are vividly aware that the Crab cannot afford another war along their borders. They play the part of flustered mediators, which is well outside of their comfort zone.



OVERHEARD AT
THE GOLDEN CARP...

“...someone has an old Hiruma scroll for sale. Could be something from Daylight Castle, or a new map.”

“...I heard there’s a Unicorn, new in town, who says he has word of an ancient Kaiu katana.”

“...that’s her, the merchant with a stockpile of jade she’s selling for only twice the normal price.”

“...there’s a Witch Hunter going around the area looking for leads on someone called ‘Whisper.’”



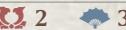
Amid this tension, criminals conduct their business unnoticed, or even encouraged when it results in access to critical supplies that would otherwise be unavailable. The constant flow of merchants allows illegal items to slip through the Golden Carp Marketplace with ease. A handful of mahō-sniffing Kuni Witch Hunters are regular visitors, but mere smuggling hardly concerns them when the fate of the realm is at stake. Smugglers employ looters to pick over Crab battlefields like buzzards, recovering and selling Kaiu masterpieces and family heirlooms as if they were common trinkets. A samurai looking to outfit himself with Kaiu weapons can either purchase them at this market or seek them via even less legitimate means. Obtaining rare artifacts could provide travelers with a number of advantages depending on the origins of the items.

The Golden Carp Marketplace is loud, crowded, and chaotic. Few permanent structures exist, and they are all old and ill managed. Tents and Unicorn yurts make up the majority of merchants’ places of business, and outside them, displays of easily toppled goods make up a maze. Criminals hide dug-out pits beneath rugs and chests to conceal illegal goods.

KAIU SUZUE, CLEVER ENGINEER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:



The Kaiu are renowned for their engineering, and Suzue hopes to be as famous (or at least as respected) as her great-grandmother Kaiu Asami. Suzue sees little hope for this currently, as she is assigned to repairing damaged weaponry, including massive war machines brought down from the Wall to her workshop, far behind the action. The work is, for the most part, tedious but essential. Suzue spends much of her time designing new weapons, often calling on wild tales of gaijin armaments for inspiration, and some of her refinements have made it to live testing in combat. Any groups passing through her area are sure to catch her attention, especially if they are headed to (or across) the Wall. She often makes the time to do repairs or make improvements to their weaponry in exchange for reports on how well her devices are faring.



ARTISAN 3	MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 0	TRADE 3
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ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Clever Thinker: ➊ Artisan; Mental	Bluntness: ➋ Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Hammer: Range 0–1, Damage 5/7, Deadliness 2, Mundane

Gear (equipped): Traveling clothes (Physical 2, Durable, Mundane, Subtle), oyumi and quiver, assorted tools, scrolls of various weapon designs, calligraphy set

ABILITIES

EXPERT REPAIRS

As a downtime activity, Kaiu Suzue may attempt to remove the Damaged or Destroyed quality from a number of items by making a **TN 1 Artisan (Earth) skill check**. If she succeeds, she repairs 1 item, plus additional 1 item per bonus success. She may spend ⚡ to add the Durable quality to any item she successfully repairs this way. If she is unable to repair an item, she can usually tell its owner what they will need to do to repair it—but lacks rare supplies or specific expertise. The item’s owner receives 1 strife, but the TN of the next check a character makes to repair the item is reduced by 1.

KUNI

The third person to accept the Kami Hida’s challenge in the tale was a shugenja clad in somber robes. Kuni was an ambitious scholar dedicated to the pursuit of knowledge. Through his invocations, Hajimeno Tatakai no Oni was ensnared in an elemental vortex, allowing Hiruma to land the killing blow. Kuni’s descendants continue his experimental investigations of the Shadowlands. They risk their minds and souls by probing into the evil forces of Jigoku.

REPUTATION AND VALUES

Beyond the Crab's borders, the Kuni are feared and distrusted. Rumors abound of their corruption and shameful willingness to dissect the dead. Religious leaders of other clans claim that the Kuni irreverently manipulate kami, and that their experimentations involving the Taint are reckless. Most outsiders have only experienced the Kuni through encounters with Witch Hunters, an elite order within the family dedicated to the absolute extermination of mahō-tsukai and other practitioners of twisted sorcery. These agents of the Kuni collect like buzzards around the faintest rumor of mahō use within Rokugan's borders. Their presence is viewed as an ill omen.

Although not all Kuni are inducted into this tradition, many find its reputation useful. Indeed, after the desolation of their lands, many Kuni have taken to the ancient Witch Hunter tradition of wearing imposing, theatrical face paint. While Witch Hunters generally do this to confuse and disorient demonic entities and evil spirits, other Kuni who wear the face paint frequently do so simply to instill awe and terror in outsiders. Fear gives them power, which they can put to use doing what the Crab do best: protecting Rokugan. As sinister as the Kuni appear and terrible as some of their methods may be, they do not aspire to villainy. Directly combating the dread inhabitants of the Shadowlands, the Kuni insist, requires them to get their hands dirty. They bear the dishonor of handling the dead and of being reviled, but their discoveries save hundreds of lives. Kuni shugenja bring hope when they join their clanmates upon the Wall. As the Kaiu look to the future, the Hida live in the present, and the Hiruma long for the past, the Kuni see everything and beyond.

Witch Hunters are generally the most fanatical among the Kuni. The Purifier and Warden schools teach their students how to destroy Shadowlands creatures and vanquish mahō users, but these are but two tasks among many. To any who become a Witch Hunter, it is a calling. Other Kuni are tend to be more cerebral, and some are even quite withdrawn, preferring the company of ancient scrolls and preserved specimens to other people. Many Kuni follow the example set by their current daimyō, Kuni Yori, who is terse, methodical, and bitingly sarcastic—as well as a bit socially inept. Kuni spend much of their lives in isolation along with only a handful of close family members. Exposure to other clans can result in alarming culture shock. Fortunately for the Kuni, most people find them too menacing or mystifying to identify the cause of their behavior.



CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

The Kuni are quick to learn from their mistakes. When the armies of Dōkutsu no Majo devoured their lands, their central library in Kuni Castle was almost lost. Had its contents not been evacuated, the Kuni could have gone the way of the Hiruma. Heeding this lesson, the Kuni divided the library between its branch families, ensuring that it could not be lost in a single strike. The Kuni are entirely decentralized, and they do not have a single school or shrine. This not only protects their research but quarantines any failed experiments. The Purifier and Warden schools are not academies so much as traditions taught by a diffuse network of masters. Each student is individually trained by experienced family members, and many small groups live in isolation within humble huts. Other teachers travel across Rokugan, taking in new students as they go and sending accomplished acolytes out to pursue rumors of new Shadowlands monstrosities, lost relics, or ancient secrets.

Dōkutsu no Majo's invasion shaped the Kuni's lifestyle forever when the attack poisoned their home with Taint. The family had no choice but to purge all spiritual energy from their land, leaving it desolate. To this day, a method of complete restoration has yet to be discovered, and still-unknown tunnels weave through the underground network left behind, providing havens in which shadowy creatures are said to lurk. A temporary solution has come in the form of hundreds of small shrines. These structures lure kami and direct them through Kuni lands like a form of spiritual irrigation.

KUNI RUMORS

The Dragon are secretly hiding Tainted monks from us—that's why they have so many secluded monasteries.

I heard that a presentation on Unicorn meishōdō was canceled at this year's gathering. What are these gaijin equestrians trying to keep hidden from us?

This season's harvest of jade petal leaves is very poor. Not everyone may get their tea, and we may need to provide a more permanent solution to their Tainted condition.

Each Kuni residence contains a shrine, and many more dot the landscape. The Kuni Wastelands are still plagued by twisted beasts, and therefore, it is essential that a traveling shugenja has quick access to a shrine at all times.

The Kuni are frequently criticized for their attitude toward the supernatural. They view spirits as tools whose invocation is purely practical. Shrines are erected to harness power, not to act as a place of worship. Everything the Kuni study they approach with emotional detachment to prevent developing biases. There is a joke—that many Kuni themselves tell—that if one of the founding Kami approached a Kuni shugenja, instead of averting their eyes in reverence, they would fetch a parchment and start taking notes.

Accusations concerning Kuni recklessness are both true and misleading. The Kuni take great risks but work hard to mitigate them at every turn. Every day, they apply Kabuki-style paint to mask their faces from evil spirits. In the presence of living Shadowlands specimens, they use false names, and they obsessively cleanse themselves with purified water. Even seemingly simplistic Kuni huts are constructed according to astrological geometries and are covered in wards. Kuni are diligent in their preparations for dealing with the Taint, and they consider laziness in this regard a crime.

CURRENT CONCERN

Every Kuni is engaged in their own project. Some go in search of specimens, relics, ancient texts, and smuggled Unicorn talismans. They rarely concern themselves with politics, but recent deals with the Scorpion risk upsetting the Phoenix. Asako Inquisitors are among the few people in Rokugan who trust the Kuni's methods. However, Inquisitors follow strict codes of ethics, while the Kuni believe that the ends justify the means. The Scorpion's Black Watch usually shares this mindset, but that is where the similarities end. The goal of the Black Watch is to punish practitioners of mahō, and these Scorpions are more executioners than researchers.

Because Kuni mystics tend to operate with little oversight, some have forged personal connections with the Black Watch despite the warnings of Kuni Yori. This can make members of Black Watch unwelcome guests in the Crab lands, as can the Scorpion habit of snooping about without permission. Said encounters rarely result in violence—or at least, violence is rarely reported.

Of the four original Crab families, the Kuni have the hardest time interacting with the socially vibrant Yasuki. Now that the Yasuki are courting the Scorpion, the Kuni's unease toward them has evolved into spite over the risk of losing a traditional alliance with the Phoenix.

THE LANDS OF THE KUNI

Several hundred years ago, something began to grow and fester underneath the territories of the Kuni. Plants withered, water became foul, and shugenja lost contact with the kami. The Kuni began to evacuate and cleared out their invaluable libraries just before hordes of Shadowlands creatures clawed out of the ground. This subterranean army was tunneling into the heart of Rokugan, led by an oni named Dōkutsu no Majo. The oni's defeat came due to the ingenuity of the Kaiu. Combat engineers diverted aquifers, collapsed tunnels, and invented brutal traps and machines. Once the last of Dōkutsu no Majo's spawn was slain, the Kuni went to work purging the Taint from their lands.

As a result, they were left with a desolate region devoid of spiritual energy: the Kuni Wastelands. Beneath the area are countless tunnels, chasms, and crevasses; driving the minions of Fu Leng from this nest of horrors has proven an insurmountable task. The Kuni have reclaimed most of the tunnels near their castle, transforming them into useful passages, but many forgotten corners and hidden passages are said to contain horrors of bygone centuries.

ADVENTURE SEED:
TAINTED TESTIMONY

— **Hook** While on the road, the PCs come across a Witch Hunter who asks for their aid in capturing a Tainted Hida who escaped while being treated for wounds she had suffered in the Shadowlands. She had awoken in a rage and ran off shouting for vengeance.

— **Rising Action** After tracking the samurai across wilderness areas, they find her holding a crossbow on three bound samurai on the ground. The Hida demands justice, claiming the three deliberately allowed her to become Tainted while she was wounded in battle, all to cover up their own cowardice. The trio deny this, asking how anyone can trust the word of one who is Tainted.

— **Climax** The Witch Hunter cares little for the Hida's story and wants only to execute her as Tainted. The Hida swears she will surrender peacefully as long as she and the trio are returned to the Wall so that their cowardice can be exposed. Does pragmatism demand the Hida be executed, or should the PCs aid in her quest for honor to be restored?



SECRETS OF THE KUNI

Schools in Rokugan jealously guard their secret techniques and share their lore only to those selected to attend. This ensures that only those chosen to learn their secrets do so, and thus also helps ensure the schools retain better control over their specialties.

This is not the way of the Kuni Purifier or Warden schools. Their members are open, often even eager, to pass on their learning, including scrolls of lore, mystical techniques, and special rituals that any other school would fight dearly to keep secure. In the view of the Kuni, the more who learn of the Shadowlands, the more who can fight against the monsters that crash against the Wall each day. Keeping useful information secret only weakens the Empire against its most horrific of foes. Both schools accept applicants from across Rokugan, provided that they have the aptitudes and fortitude required.

Sadly, it is almost unheard of for outsiders to accept this standing offer. Most Rokugani hold such knowledge as taboo, given that it involves the Taint and physical interactions with Shadowlands creatures. Students are expected to participate in studies of these beasts, including vivisections and dissections. Few students can escape the social stigma of association with such matters or overcome their personal repulsion toward such teachings. Even worse, it is no secret that such studies greatly increase the chances of contracting the Taint. The Kuni still strive desperately to gain more students. Within the Purifier and Warden traditions, the question of whether they might begin recruiting peasants who display the proper spiritual aptitude is an extremely contentious issue. Given the diffuse nature of the clan's structure, some masters are said to have quietly done so—without the overt permission of their daimyō.

Kuni Castle

Every Crab castle is a near-impenetrable fortress, and the comparatively small Kuni Castle is no exception. The squat building would be silent if its central location didn't make it a perfect staging area for troops. Barracks filled with loud bushi surround the castle, but rarely, if ever, do they go in. The dark halls are nearly abandoned save for a few archivists. The castle appears to be completely empty, for the Kuni laboratories and library are hidden underground. Outsiders are not permitted to browse the Kuni's research, with the exception of collaborating Asako Inquisitors and concerned magistrates.

However, once a year at the winter solstice, the castle hosts the Kuni Symposium. Witch Hunters return from their country-wide trek to join their family and a few select guests from other clans, and other mystics who have emerged from their lairs. The event is filled with displays of anatomical charts, preserved body parts, translations of texts from faraway lands or ancient ruins, crystals, amulets, and revised systems of wards. The macabre display is shocking to outsiders, but for the Kuni this event doubles as a joyous family reunion. Most Kuni spend their year conducting research in isolation. This is their annual chance to socialize, and they eagerly do so. Between presentations, the Kuni unfurl their signature wit and fill the dark halls with darker laughter. For most guests, this only makes the symposium more disturbing.

Visitors who are allowed to explore the castle's depths enter a nightmarish realm. Half-dead monsters lie drugged in cages, sometimes already partially dissected. Jade, tinged black with Taint, dangles from the ceiling like insect cocoons, and sitting in carved shelves within the rough rock walls are hundreds of scrolls. There is no clear system of organization. Kuni archivists, pale from years spent away from sunlight, must be consulted if one wishes to find anything, for only they know the library's full contents.

The Barracks of the Damned

The Kuni are rarely described as compassionate, but they are some of the few people in Rokugan to take pity on victims of the Taint. Anyone can contract the sinister infection: the rich or poor, young or old, wise or foolish, samurai or heimin. The Kuni's own founder fell to the sickness. Exposure to the befouling touch of Fu Leng is a near inevitability in the Crab lands, and the Kuni are dedicated to finding a cure. That being said, any contagion must be quarantined, and not every patient enjoys being locked away. It is for this purpose that the Kuni Wardens maintain the Barracks of the Damned.

The Barracks of the Damned is part barracks, as its name states, but also a hospital, a research facility, and a prison. The deeper one descends into this place, the more the ruinous work of Fu Leng is evident. While many Crab samurai contract the Taint and continue to serve, the corruption inevitably grows over time, and at a certain point, continuing to live in common society becomes impossible. The infected might suffer terrible mutations, bouts of unpredictable behavior, or the evil dreams of Fu Leng pervading their minds. Patients who become sufficiently Tainted are quarantined for their own protection and that of those around them.

Quarantined patients are sometimes allowed to fight for the Crab to the end of their service, but that opportunity is far from guaranteed—for the Kuni are loath to relinquish such valuable subjects, let alone allow them to venture into the Shadowlands, where the lure of Fu Leng can be irresistible. They are more likely to spend their remaining days in meditation and in the laboratories of Kuni who hope to use their foul fate to serve a greater good. Those who are part of promising research are not allowed to commit seppuku lest potential knowledge about treating or containing the Taint be lost. The Kuni treat their patients with a cautious detachment; they wish to help their charges live as humans to their end, but the keepers of this grim edifice see too many pass through their walls to become attached. Bedside manner is rarely their forte.



Naginata: Range 2, Damage 6, Deadliness 6, Cumbersome, Razor-Edged, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Sanctified robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3), wakizashi, makeup kit, satchel filled with scrolls and supplies for rituals, traveling pack

ABILITIES

FURY OF THE WITCH HUNTER

The first time a character in the scene performs a mahō technique or other blasphemous act, Kuni Hatsu suffers the Enraged condition and gains 1 Void point.

KUNI HATSU, LEGENDARY WITCH HUNTER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:

4 4

Hatsu has served as a Witch Hunter for many long years and has long since lost track of the Tainted individuals and mahō practitioners he uncovered in his travels across Rokugan. Almost as countless are the apprentices he took in for training; that many are still active speaks highly of his teaching techniques as well. His years are finally catching up with him, though, and he now spends most of his time near the Wall watching those who return from the Shadowlands for any signs of Taint or other corruption. He is also adept at scrutinizing those from other clans who wish to travel across the Wall, for he knows the lure of the corrupted lands is irresistible to those who are befooled. When Hatsu detects such horrid evidence, it is as if decades peel away from his body, and his strength is as it was for his gempuku. His fury is unstoppable if his targets refuse his commands to submit to imprisonment (or worse). His wizened body always pays a heavy toll after each battle, but that is a small price to pay in this war.

YASUKI

The core curriculums of the Crab schools created by Hida, Hiruma, Kuni, and Kaiu lack one crucial trait—charm—and any clan that fails to appeal at the Imperial Court is at a distinct disadvantage. Political minutiae, posturing, and gossip offend the honest Crab. However, they are more willing than other clans to admit that money is important. Long ago, having few valuable exports or political favors owed to them, the Crab needed to acquire members with financial expertise. The Yasuki came to their rescue. After defecting from the Crane, the Yasuki gifted the Crab with their mercantile savvy. Without their aid, constant assault by the horrors that dwell in the Shadowlands would surely deplete the Crab's resources until their bellies became as empty as their quivers.

REPUTATION AND VALUES

The Crane would have everyone believe the Yasuki are a collection of dishonorable criminals. They accuse the Yasuki of greed, duplicity, and blatant support of pirates and smugglers. Few people accept these exaggerations unquestioningly, but popular opinion characterizes the Yasuki as typical Crane with an added layer of dishonesty.

The Yasuki mesh well with the Crab due to their grounded realism. Gold runs the Empire, and to pretend it does not is delusional at best, dishonest at worst. The Yasuki expertly play the game of politics while remaining keenly pragmatic. Like master Go players, they secure trade deals, orchestrate contracts, and siphon business from the Crane into the Crab's pockets.

The Yasuki engage in social niceties but drop the act when it no longer suits them. This may appear manipulative, but the Yasuki would argue that their motives are more transparent than those of the pretentious Crane. Business associates appreciate the Yasuki's frank and casual manner. The family's support of ill-reputed merchants is often charitable in nature, giving criminals a second chance to become lawful citizens. A Yasuki saying states that loyalty is second only to gold in value. In sowing good faith, even among those blacklisted by society, they are growing a network of allies.

CULTURE AND TRADITIONS

To say that the Crab Clan is not preoccupied with art is perhaps an understatement, but the Yasuki make up for this deficit to a near-excessive degree. The courtiers from the Yasuki's academies are some of the most cultured, multitalented individuals to grace the high courts. They carry an edgy mystique due to their rebellious history, which is enhanced by the Crane's condemnation. The Yasuki invite artists, famous musicians, brewers, and theatrical companies, to settle within their luxurious ocean-side towns. Through the creation of entertainment monopolies, the Yasuki guarantee that fans will patronize their establishments. All are welcome in the lands of the Yasuki. Except, of course, members of the Crane Clan.

Not all wars are fought with armies. The Yasuki and the Daidoji Crane are locked in silent conflict, and their weapons are sabotage and subterfuge. The Yasuki call upon the Hida for support when their plans go awry, but more than any other Crab family, the Yasuki strive to be self-sufficient. They believe they owe the Crab a great favor for accepting them and fear becoming a burden. The Crane, though, are unwilling to let the Yasuki go their way. It was once a rite of passage for Yasuki youths to pick fights with their former clan, but now all of the pestering is perpetrated by the Crane.

Yasuki merchants are some of the finest in Rokugan, and their daimyō, Yasuki Taka, is known to many by his epithet, the Merchant King. The Yasuki rarely deal in inferior products and carefully screen their merchandise for forgeries. Trust is the backbone of their every deal. When not trading, the Yasuki engage in smuggling. The Lion Clan is always in the market for weapons; however, supplying this demand risks angering the targets of their aggression. Too overtly supporting the Lion could lead to flareups with the Unicorn or cause the Phoenix to sever their alliance.

YASUKI RUMORS

Vandals are disgracing the shrines dedicated to Yasuki Kiringu, the daimyō who joined us to the Crab. The Crane are surely behind this, so why do we wait to get revenge?

A new group is trying to offload goods at Friendly Traveler Village, but no one knows who is backing them. Some of their items appear foreign—the Unicorn could be behind this, but why?

Yasuki Taka, our daimyō, sometimes dresses as a humble traveler to inspect our markets and listen in. If you're planning on keeping a deal a secret, make sure absolutely no one is nearby!

CURRENT CONCERN

The Yasuki do everything in their power not to burden the Crab. So far, they have managed their rivalry with the Crane on their own, but in doing so, they have employed rōnin and other disreputable associates. Many of these outsiders have grown comfortable in Yasuki lands, benefiting from mutually profitable arrangements with the ruling family and helping them acquire key supplies. Unfortunately, tolerance for a certain amount of crime has led criminal organizations to become bold within their lands.





The Yasuki are struggling to reestablish control over trade within their lands while maintaining their footing against the Crane. Recently, furtive representatives of the Bayushi family have approached, offering their aid. In exchange, they want access to the Yasuki's mercantile network and the smuggling routes they still control. This may cause the opium trade to flood into the Crab lands. Battle-worn Crab soldiers already rely heavily on alcohol to ease their scarred minds and could become easy targets for such an addictive substance. Furthermore, forging an alliance with the Scorpion might endanger relations with the Phoenix, and Kuni Yori is outspoken in his resistance to this plan. The Yasuki dread defying such a frightening core family, but they cannot sufficiently serve the Crab with the Crane's disruptions.

THE LANDS OF THE YASUKI

The Crab are the first to admit that hospitality is sorely lacking within their borders, but the Yasuki do their best to reverse such impressions. They have transformed the sleepy fishing villages of Earthquake Fish Bay into exuberant centers of entertainment and commerce. It is their mission to fund the Crab's war against the Shadowlands, and they work to accomplish this goal by any means necessary. Unfortunately for the Yasuki, they have judgmental neighbors. Four hundred years after the fall of Fu Leng, the Yasuki violently fractured from the Crane Clan and were warmly accepted by the diplomatically disinclined Crab. The bad blood between the two clans boils to this day, and the Yasuki are desperate not to let the Crane distract from the front.

The Yasuki have employed rōnin, pirates, and other rough individuals to handle their former clan. These dealings have left the Yasuki with dangerous debts—debts they are willing to settle with violence, if they must.

Friendly Traveler Village

It isn't difficult to spot a criminal in Friendly Traveler Village, but not for the reasons one might expect. They are smug and rich, and they believe that their dishonest work has finally paid off. The Yasuki owe them a life of luxury, they think, and they are living it. Every time a paid-off crook drunkenly brags about their exploits, the Crane somehow catch wind, and magistrates arrive to hound Yasuki bureaucrats and traders. The Yasuki detest that this vulnerability has grown under their nose, and they are striving to clean house before it becomes a liability to the Crab Clan Champion, Hida Kisada, and his goals.

Friendly Traveler Village is rightly called the sake capital of Rokugan. Nearly every building is a brewery, each with its own special brews and promotions. The local theaters appeal to a low-culture crowd, performing crude comedies and music that is easy to sing along to. Giggling geisha charm visitors into emptying their pockets, somehow able to stay chipper in the haze of fermented breath. At night, the village is lit with hundreds of paper lanterns, leading drunks to their beds or at least to a comfortable patch of grass. It is not inconceivable that a person might stumble into the sea or drink themselves to death. The Yasuki insist all of their establishments are safe, but they can hardly protect people from themselves. Accidents happen at Friendly Traveler Village—frequently.

Yasuki Estates

The cliffside estates of the Yasuki are masterpieces of architecture. Also known as the Black Crane Estates, they elegantly nestle into the rock face like nesting seabirds, safe and comfortable above the gently lapping seas overlooking Earthquake Fish Bay. Below, long grids of docks harbor a fleet of merchant ships. Visitors disembarking their vessels traverse the pale maple planks to a winding road. Rickshaws and kago litters await honored guests to transport them to the estates. Everyone else must walk and cross multiple, impressively polite checkpoints. There are rarely any arrests, but those suspected of concealing their Crane affiliation may be quietly escorted to a secret location.

Merchants flock to the Yasuki Estates, as do treasure seekers. Many rare items pass through Yasuki hands, after all. The Yasuki also deal in information; if they do not have what someone wants, they likely know someone who does. They are more than willing to give discounts to friends of the Crab. A visitor carrying a friendly endorsement from a Hida is a rare surprise, and the Yasuki are always quick to welcome such individuals with the greatest generosity. To someone without this advantage, however, the Yasuki are cunning, thrifty hagglers. Their deals are rarely fair, and even wise traders are often played for fools by the Yasuki.

YASUKI NARUMI, OBSERVANT MERCHANT

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  1  3

Narumi runs a small series of stalls in Friendly Traveler Village. She has a good reputation in the region for the quality of wares and the expansive breadth of her offerings. Most days see her energetically negotiating prices on goods, something she appears to genuinely enjoy. Her colorful garb and cheerful voice herald her arrival seemingly from out of nowhere, and some wonder how she gets any actual sales done between long conversations with customers. While many of her competitors dabble in smuggling and petty crime, Narumi relies instead on excellent service and solid connections with traders from across the Emerald Empire and beyond. Many gaijin hired to fight along the Wall go out of their way to visit when possible, eager for a taste of their homeland and gossip. Narumi records all she hears from everyone each night, and once a week

leaves a pouch filled with her observations in a special hiding place after her children are asleep. She has no idea who picks it up, but the koku that replaces it certainly helps her business.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 0 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 3

ADVANTAGES DISADVANTAGES

Famously Honest:

 Social; Interpersonal

Dark Secret:

 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Traveling clothes (Physical 2, Durable, Mundane, Subtle), pouches of coins, assorted scrolls and papers, basic calligraphy set

ABILITIES

BARGAINS WITH A PRICE

When a character purchases or otherwise acquires an item at Narumi's stalls, reduce the rarity of the item by half (rounding up), to a minimum of 1. A character must forfeit glory equal to the rarity reduction to benefit from this service.

ADVENTURE SEED: THE DANCE OF THE WHITE AND BLACK CRANE

— Hook

While visiting the Yasuki Estates or Earthquake Fish Bay, the PCs are approached by a shabbily dressed, incredibly nosy individual. If the PCs are in search of something or someone (or looking for information), he says he knows what they need and that he can help them in their quest.

— Rising Action

If the PCs believe him and are amenable to a deal, the man reveals that he is Yasuki Hironori, a wealthy official who works under the Yasuki daimyō, Yasuki Taka. He delivers on his promise if they agree to help him locate Crane spies. Traders are being strong-armed into taking their goods elsewhere, and Hironori is sure he can smell the floral stink of Crane Daidoji. Since the PCs are not regulars here, Hironori believes they are perfectly suited, as their actions won't be traced back to the Yasuki.

— Climax

Tracking the Crane agents down won't be too difficult, as they stand out a bit here. When the Crane agents are discovered, they try to manipulate the PCs with a counter offer. If the PCs refuse them, a fight ensues. Neither side wants the other to discover its true backers. However, if the PCs accept this proposal, they find themselves needing to aid in the Crane agents' escape.

THE WAVE WALL

Few know that there is another wall defending the Empire from the Shadowlands and other threats, one that is located in Yasuki lands. Located at the Crab port of Clear Water Village at the mouth of the River of Gold, the Kaiu Wave Wall stands firm against threats from the sea.

Or at least that is the official reason for this wall. All within Yasuki lands know that it is there primarily to defend against the Crane, who seek to recapture the heavily fortified trading port. Losing this location would devastate the Crab Clan, which relies on it for many of its imports from the north and from the Mantis.

The Wall

The Kaiu Kabe, also known as the Carpenter Wall—or, more commonly, just the Wall—extends from the Sea of the Sun Goddess in the east to the Plains above Evil, near the southern margin of the Shinomen Forest in the west. It is by far the Empire's largest edifice, its vast walls, massive battlements, and soaring watchtowers girding Rokugan's southern border, the first and final line of defense against the depredations of the Shadowlands. Its story is more than a thousand years in the telling, chapter after grim chapter of courage, duty, and sacrifice. It is for good reason that its stones are said to be mortared in place with the blood of fallen Crab.

THE FIRST WALL

The original "Wall" was not really a wall at all. Rather, after the Day of Thunder in the year 42, the first Emperor, Hantei I, commanded that a defensive bulwark be built between the young Empire and the Shadowlands to the south. The forces of the Dark Kami, Fu Leng, had already attacked the Empire many times and had come close to overrunning it more than once. After Fu Leng's defeat on the Day of Thunder, the malign will driving the Shadowlands hordes faltered, at last giving the Empire an opportunity to see to its ongoing defense. Hantei I gave the task of constructing a great defensive work to his brother, the Kami Hida.

Hida, together with his followers in the Crab Clan, built a defensive line along the southern margin of what were, at the time, the lands of the Hiruma. It consisted of a series of palisades, bulwarks, and fortresses, the largest of which was Shiro Hiruma, or Daylight Castle, the linchpin of this new defensive line. It wasn't, however, a contiguous structure, but rather individual strongpoints arranged such that each one could be seen by two (or more, in some cases) others. Each was garrisoned and well provisioned with supplies, the strategy being that if one was surrounded and besieged by Shadowlands forces, it could hold out while Crab armies elsewhere were marshaled and deployed to counterattack. It was, therefore, a fluid type of defense, relying on maneuver and layers of defensive works to slow, contain, and ultimately destroy its attackers.



For over six hundred years, this sufficed to protect the Empire from the sporadic and uncoordinated attacks out of the Shadowlands. In 716, however, a powerful oni lord now known only as the Maw assembled a massive army and led it in a cataclysmic assault against the Crab defenses. They quickly began to crumble, threatening to leave the Empire open to a tide of corruption.

THE KAIU KABE

One by one, the Shadowlands army overwhelmed the fortifications guarding the Hiruma lands. This was no mindless horde winning only through sheer numbers and ferocity. Under the Maw's sinister leadership, the evil forces struck here, fell back there, and feinted somewhere else, keeping the Crab forces off-balance and unable to mount a concerted defense. A siege enveloped Shiro Hiruma itself, eventually causing the fall of even that great fortress. The Shadowlands army pressed forward, driving the Crab back, until all of the Hiruma lands were lost to the vile invasion.

FROM DESPERATION, HOPE

With the fall of the Hiruma lands, only a miracle, it seemed, could save the Empire.

And a miracle there was. As the Crab desperately formed a final defensive line along the Seigo River, a shugenja named Kuni Osaku importuned the water kami to raise the river in a massive flood. So great was the torrent that the Maw's army was halted, unable to proceed any farther. Seizing the opportunity, the Crab Champion, Hida Banuken, ordered the Crab to begin construction of durable defensive work along the river's eastern bank. For seventy-three days the Crab labored feverishly, while Osaku maintained her invocation. On the seventy-fourth day, Osaku's strength finally failed, and she died. As the flood receded, the Maw drove its army forward, only to slam headlong into a mighty wall—the Wall, or at least the core of what would become the vast Kaiu Kabe. The Crab immediately counterattacked the stalled and confused horde. The clash, which came to be known as the Battle of the Cresting Wave, saw the Maw slain and consigned back to the underworld, its great army routed and scattered.

A NEW WALL

A palpable sense of relief swept across the Empire as the Maw's offensive was broken. Among the Crab, however, relief was tempered by deep concern. Since the Maw's attack was a complete surprise, there were likely other such creatures lurking in the Shadowlands, preparing to launch other offensives. So, while the Empire rejoiced, the Crab went to work.

THE MAW

Oni lords stand apart from other oni, being far mightier and more willful. Moreover, they bear the name of whatever foolish mortal surrendered their identity in exchange for fleeting power, giving them a lasting link to the Mortal Realm. The oni lord known as the Maw is such a being.

It undoubtedly had a name, but that has been lost to time. This did not prevent it from plaguing the Empire, however. It emerged from the deep Shadowlands as a massive creature of vast power and malign will. Following it marched an army of a size and ferocity not seen since the days of Fu Leng. This was no mindless horde flinging itself wildly against the Empire. The Maw led its forces with a ruthless cunning that easily matched that of any human general before or since.

Over the coming months and years, the Kaiu Kabe was extended along the Seigo River, now known as the River of the Last Stand. A series of stone watchtowers were constructed; these were then connected by curtain walls, which were reinforced in turn by more towers and strongpoints. Barely twenty years after the Battle of the Cresting Wave, the Kaiu Kabe became much as it is today: a contiguous, fortified belt extending along most of the Empire's southern border. Sporadic incursions sometimes breach the Wall, but only briefly before being driven back. Otherwise, for the past four centuries, the Carpenter Wall has withstood every attempt the Shadowlands has made to defeat it, keeping the Empire defended against the evil minions of Fu Leng.

THE ARCHITECTURE OF THE WALL

In the broadest sense, the Wall is just that: a continuous wall of stone many days' travel from end to end, that forms a physical barrier against incursion into the Empire from the south. If it was merely that, however, it would be a fragile defense, far too long to defend effectively and vulnerable to local, catastrophic failure that would allow Shadowlands forces to rampage through. Instead, the Wall is really a complex and cunning array of defenses, incorporating powerful strongpoints, redundant means of protection, and sophisticated systems for command, control, and communications.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF KAIU SHUICHI

I have just spoken with a delegation of Lion who are viewing the Kaiu Kabe near the Watchtower of Deadly Claws. They marvel at the complexity of the Wall, at its many components and complex organization. Their leader, an Akodo, admits that he had always believed the Wall to be just that: a wall, nothing more. Would that more Rokugani could understand this, that the Crab do not simply stand as brutes, shoulder to shoulder upon a long line of inert stone, waiting to beat back the Shadowlands. They do not credit us with subtlety or cleverness or cunning works. Perhaps if all samurai spent time upon the Wall, they would understand this truth.

The Kaiu Towers

Foremost among the strongpoints are the twelve Kaiu Towers. The southeasternmost of these is designated the First Tower; they are then successively numbered to the Twelfth Tower, which overlooks the Plains above Evil to the far northwest. The Kaiu Towers are powerful fortifications in their own right, each similar to a *shiro*, or castle, that might stand over an entire town elsewhere in the Empire.

Each tower is laid out in essentially the same way, with a stout outer stone wall, enclosing number of courtyards, connected by strong gates. An enemy that breaches the outer stone *maru* is contained in a courtyard and subject to attack from the surrounding ones, making each of these into a killing zone. The innermost *maru* contains the *tenshukaku*, or keep, which is the last line of defense for a tower. The keep is itself a formidable fortress, well provisioned in order to withstand a lengthy siege. Smaller *yagura* provide additional strongpoints. Massive gates allow large forces to exit a tower to charge enemies as well.

All of the Kaiu Towers are well equipped with powerful siege engines such as ballistae and catapults, as well as multitudes of *daikyū* (long bows) above the Wall and *hankyū* (short bows) lower on the Wall or behind murder holes. Complex systems of gears, winches, and ropes move supplies and ammunition vertically and horizontally to ensure each area stays fully equipped.

Each of the Kaiu Towers houses a powerful garrison that defends not only the tower itself, but also the adjacent sections of the Kaiu Kabe. Each Kaiu Tower is considered equivalent to a legion of troops, irrespective of the actual strength of its garrison, and is commanded by a *taisa*, or captain.

Watchtowers

Interspersed along the Wall between the Kaiu Towers are a multitude of smaller watchtowers. Each of these is garrisoned by a company led by a *taisa*; lesser watchtowers contain squads commanded by a *gunsō* (sergeant). A group of three to five watchtowers, often called a Great Watch, has one of these commanders (normally a senior *taisa*) as its overall commander, who reports to the nearest Kaiu Tower.

Each watchtower is a formidable strongpoint, usually equipped with siege engines and other weaponry, somewhat like a scaled-down tower. As their name implies, however, their primary purpose is surveillance and warning. Accordingly, they are equipped with a variety of signaling equipment. They are neither designed nor provisioned to withstand a protracted siege, being expected to hold for only a few days at most.

Watchtowers are officially designated based on the Tower to their south and east. For example, the first watchtower west and north of the Fourth Kaiu Tower is the First of the Fourth Watchtower; the next along is the Second of the Fourth Watchtower, and so on. Few use these names, though, as most watchtowers also have more poetic names, given them by bushi who grew attached to the fortifications they were ordered to defend with their lives.

Curtain Walls

The curtain walls that connect the watchtowers and the Kaiu Towers are what most Rokugani envision when they think of "the Wall." These are, indeed, imposing structures—from fifty to one hundred feet tall, up to twenty feet thick and extending deep into the bedrock. Rokugani generally imagine these massive walls being constantly lined with Crab troops; they likewise believe that, should a curtain wall ever be breached, the Empire would be in imminent peril of being overrun.

This is not true, however. While the Crab do, indeed, make a determined effort to hold threatened sections of the curtain wall, they know that a single, linear defense is simply too fragile to be reliable. Accordingly, the main purpose of the curtain wall is to delay attackers, giving the Crab time to marshal and maneuver forces behind the Wall, in order to block and destroy incursions when they do occur.

The Watchtower of Iron Duty

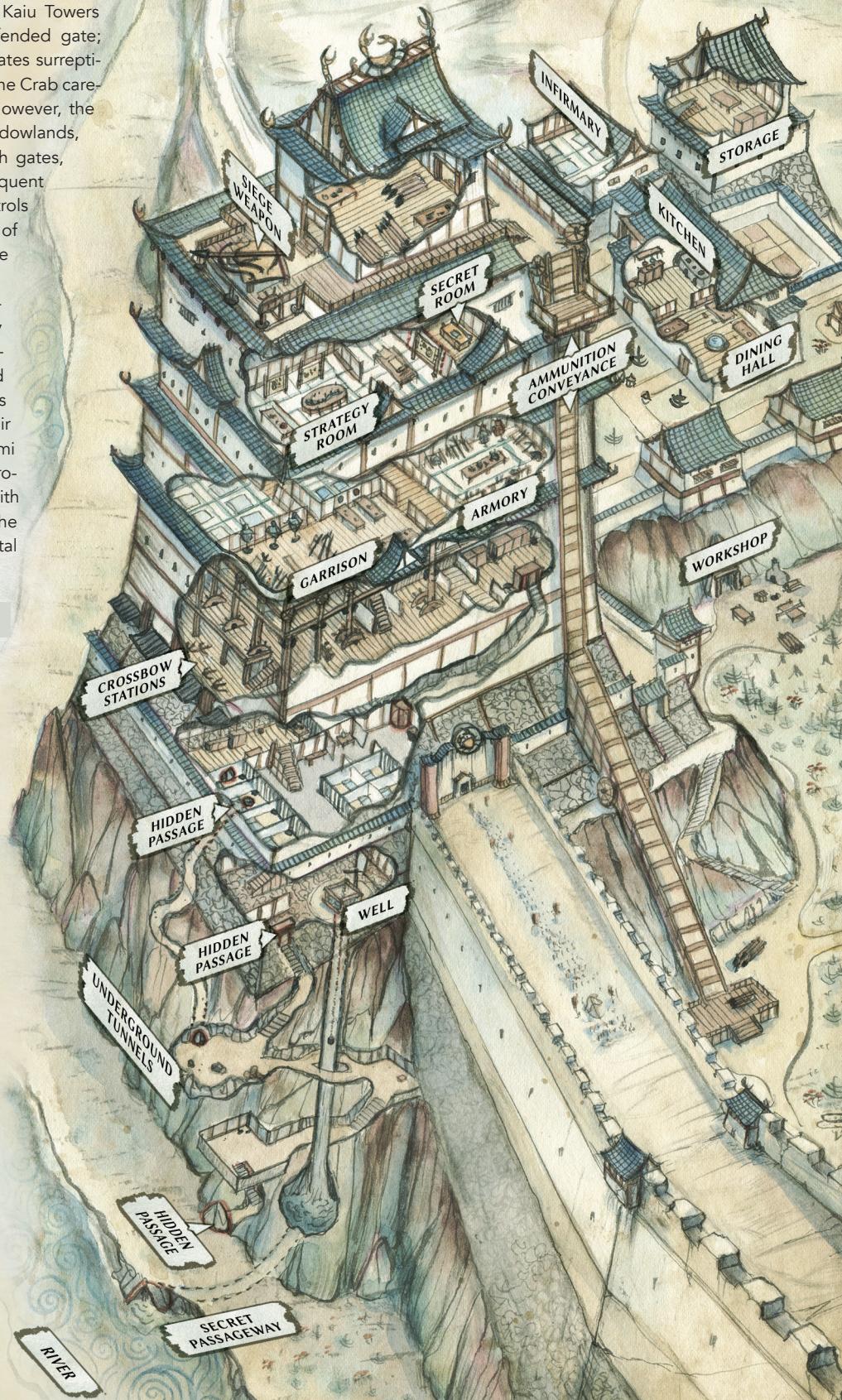
Tunnels

The weakest point in any defensive work is a passage through it, such as a gate. Each of the Kaiu Towers incorporates a massive and heavily defended gate; there are rumored to be other, smaller gates surreptitiously located in strategic locations, but the Crab carefully avoid confirming or denying this. However, the deployment of large forces into the Shadowlands, which would require access through such gates, is rare. To allow for the much more frequent access by smaller forces, such as patrols and scouting parties, elaborate systems of tunnels are constructed to allow passage under the Wall's defenses.

Some of these tunnels are dug for specific purposes and collapsed when they are no longer needed. Other, more permanent tunnel complexes are protected by cunning and deadly traps, small parties of dedicated defenders, or even just their twisting, labyrinthine nature. The nezumi (as described on page 40), who are prodigious diggers and commonly allied with the Crab, are instrumental in assisting in the construction and maintenance of these vital underground passages.

Garrisons

The sheer size of the Wall means garrisoning at full strength along its length is impossible, so large cadre are maintained at the Kaiu Towers, with smaller forces stationed at intervening watchtowers. Unless an attack is imminent or underway, most sections of the curtain wall are only patrolled at irregular and unpredictable intervals. The bulk of Crab forces are stationed behind the Wall, encamped at places such as Carpenter Castle, the Fortress of the Forgotten, Shiro Kuni, or Kyuden Hida. This allows them to quickly deploy to reinforce sections of the Wall or block and destroy incursions that breach it. Additionally, a small portion of the Wall's garrison operates on the Shadowlands side.





Early warning of impending attacks is vital, so the Hiruma in particular conduct regular scouting missions in the Shadowlands, braving the horrors of that cursed place to detect gathering and approaching hordes, giving their comrades precious time to prepare for attacks.

The implication, of course, is that the Crab maintain a military stance unlike that of any other clan. Inside the Empire, armies are normally marshaled for relatively predictable campaigns conducted during the late spring, summer, and early fall, and they stand down in other times. The Crab have no such luxury. Their enemy is wholly given to waging war at any time, regardless of weather or season. As a result, the Crab maintain a permanently mustered fighting force.

There are two other important facts about the Wall's garrison. First, the Crab maintain a much higher proportion of samurai relative to ashigaru—heimin peasant levies—in their armies, compared to other clans. While ashigaru make up the bulk of armies fielded by the Great Clans for battle with one another, they are largely unsuited for combat against the horrific opponents attacking from the Shadowlands; they simply lack the training and motivation for such dire combat. Second, and conversely, the Crab deploy far greater numbers of hinin "untouchables" in their forces. Commonly known as the "Mudcrows," these hinin levies labor not only after battles, but also during them, to remove the wounded and the dead. This is to ensure that fallen Crab warriors do not rise as new undead foes, attacking their fellow warriors while the battle still rages. Although provided with light ashigaru armor to protect them, losses among the Mudcrows are usually severe. Many of those who survive end up becoming Tainted from handling Shadowlands fallen, leading to the unfortunate but necessary reality that more must be executed after the battle is over.

Communications along the Wall

Implicit in the above is the role of efficient and effective communications. Sophisticated systems of warning and communications are maintained along the Wall, and between the Wall and the forces stationed behind it. These include fleet-footed messengers; acoustic methods like signal arrows, drums, and horns; and visual methods such as signal fires and smoke arrows. Using encoded signals, even complex messages can be passed quickly across long distances.

LIFE ON THE WALL

Life on the Wall, or in the armies stationed behind it, is difficult, stressful, and dangerous in a way that most Rokugani really can't appreciate without experiencing it themselves. Their enemies never relent, so the Crab forces must live in a state of constant readiness, forever poised to launch themselves against foes that personify mind-blasting horror.

Accordingly, while Crab are on Wall duty, discipline among them is enforced to a degree most would consider ruthless. There is simply no time or opportunity to do anything other than remain forever vigilant and instantly ready to repel the next attack.

For at least one week out of every four, however—and perhaps two, in times of particular quiet in the Shadowlands—the defenders are rotated. They are either moved into a "depth" position behind the Wall or, very infrequently, briefly paused from their duty. It is on these rare occasions that the Crab amply demonstrate a desire to just live for the moment, in a way most Rokugani samurai would find unseemly. They get drunk; play games such as Fortunes and Winds (a popular dice game), *moksha patam* (a board game imported from the Ivory Kingdoms), and draw-lot plays (a social game of portraying adopted characters); and often engage in a particularly popular Crab pastime: brawling amongst themselves.

This isn't to say that life among those who don't serve on the front lines of this war—people who support those deployed on the Wall but are not deployed there themselves—is less important. Those stationed in depth positions have essential work to do as well. They are constantly involved in drills and training, both to keep their own skills honed and to help improve and refine the skills of their comrades-in-arms, whether fellow samurai or ashigaru. They maintain weapons, armor, and equipment, and they oversee repairs and improvements to the Wall itself. Those on the Wall require daily deliveries of food, munitions, and other supplies, for the Wall is only as strong as those who defend it. Supporting these needs, as well as tending to the wounded and providing security behind the Wall against devious infiltrations and other threats from within, are as vital as duties on the battlements.

A Crab samurai's most important task, of course, is to remain constantly ready to be deployed to support the Wall's defense or to block and destroy incursions that manage to break through the Wall. Defense on the Wall relies on depth, and the Crab stationed behind it swarm to repel any breaches before they spread. Samurai from other clans are often surprised by how quickly a group of Crab samurai stationed behind the Kaiu Kabe can go from raucous gaming and brawling to cold, deadly purpose when the alarms sound, announcing an attack from the Shadowlands.

COMBAT ON THE WALL

No two attacks from the Shadowlands are the same. One may consist of a ravenous swarm of goblins that fling themselves at the defenses with wild abandon. The next may be a horde of undead shambling forward in eerie silence, and the next an incursion by shape-shifting oni seeking to infiltrate the defenses and attack them from within. Ultimately, the nature of the Shadowlands is such that attacks are predictable only in their unpredictability, and in the immutable fact that they threaten not just the lives of the Crab defenders, but also their sanity and the very purity of their souls.

To deal with these myriad horrors, the Crab have, over the centuries, developed a sophisticated and flexible system of defending against attacks of virtually any size or type. Each attack is met according to its particular nature, meaning that the Crab approach to defense must be adaptable.

Weaponry

The Crab have always seemed to favor heavy, durable weapons, and many believe it could be due to the constant battles they face. Katana and other keen-edged

FROM THE JOURNALS OF KAIU SHUICHI

I find myself at the Watchtower of Thunderous Blows...or what was once that strongpoint but is now just a ruin. Whatever abomination attacked this place was a dire thing, able, it seems, to consume the very stone with highly corrosive emanations of some sort. Once the bodies are removed by the Mudcrows, we will set about rebuilding it. This is another truth the Empire does not understand. The Wall is not "finished." It will never be "finished." It is a living thing, devoted to preserving its clan and Empire, so it deserves the respect owed to any loyal servant of Rokugan.

blades are quite deadly but are easily damaged or broken. A blunt tetsubō, on the other hand, can withstand constant impacts and still fell an ogre with its next blow. Most samurai on the Wall employ tetsubō and similar weapons, along with polearms such as naginata and yari that keep foes from getting too close. Bowfire is also a common tactic; approaching enemies usually see the sky darkened with masses of arrows.

Towers and watchtowers both feature huge siege weapons, devices powerful enough to topple even the largest oni. Many of these weapons are unique, either due to the many repairs and improvements made over time, or as the result of a Kaiu engineer's brilliant but singular design. Some even feature embellishments drawn from gaijin mercenaries who recall similar weapons in their distant homelands.

Early Warning

Intelligence and early warning is vital to ensure an attack is not just spotted, but noticed in time to mount a prepared and effective defense. The Crab also recognize that, despite the courage and best efforts of their scouting patrols, attackers sometimes reach the Wall undetected. For this reason, a variety of additional early warning measures are incorporated along the Wall, including much more heavily armed patrols operating within sight of the Wall and lookouts posted upon it. The primary role of these patrols and lookouts is still to provide as much warning as possible about an attack. They won't hesitate to fight if necessary, but in general, they avoid decisive engagement and withdraw to the Wall in order to bolster its defenses.

RUMORS ON THE WALL

- ⦿ A wild-eyed Hida deployed to a minor garrison to the far north insists they heard that the Lost have illusion magic now, granted to them by a Scorpion who snuck across the Wall.
- ⦿ The Kaiu will never admit it, but there are so many tunnels beneath the stretch between the Fifth and Sixth Towers that those portions of the Wall could collapse at any time.
- ⦿ Everyone knows the Watchtower of the Crashing Wave is an unlucky posting. It's infested with gaki and other malign spirits who haunt anyone on night duty.
- ⦿ Don't tell anyone, but there is a gambling den running to the rear of the Eleventh Tower in an old supply shack. Bring a jug of sake for admittance.

Initial Responses

As soon as the defenders on the Wall are made aware of an imminent attack, a warning is propagated along the Wall using the various signaling methods available. The commander of the watchtower nearest to the attack assesses the situation and directs an immediate response. This could be a defense using only immediately available troops and resources if this is deemed sufficient. If not, then the commander relays a call for reinforcements. The overriding principle is to meet each attack with the smallest force necessary to defeat it.

Whatever initial force is committed by the Crab, it generally deals with each attack the same way:

- ⦿ If scouts detected an imminent attack, they try to keep the approaching menace under observation, using courier parties shuttling back and forth between the scouts and the Wall to report information.
- ⦿ If larger Crab forces are deployed nearby in the Shadowlands, they may seek to harass the attackers, delaying them and causing attrition.
- ⦿ Once within sight of the Wall, the scouts withdraw. Larger forces may continue to engage, but they normally also withdraw rather than risk being caught between the attackers and the Wall.

- ⦿ As the enemy nears, ranged weapons crews open fire. Catapults and other siege weapons are fired first, and survivors are targeted by archers. When the attackers reach the Wall, defenders drop rocks or pour boiling oil or molten lead on them. If shugenja are present, they may call upon the elemental kami for additional assistance.
- ⦿ Any enemy that attempts to scale the Wall is met on the battlements by squads of Crab bushi, often reinforced by Kuni shugenja.
- ⦿ In the meantime, Crab forces summoned from nearby watchtowers, the nearest Kaiu Towers, or reserves behind the Wall converge on the point of attack. The most senior commander present directs some of these troops to reinforce the watchtowers and the battlements on the curtain wall. The rest are maintained behind, but close to, the Wall either to provide additional reinforcements or to block and destroy any enemy that manages to penetrate.
- ⦿ Should the attack be an especially large one, substantial forces may be deployed from the reserves and made ready to engage in a large battle, in case the Wall suffers a major breach.

INVESTIGATIONS ON THE WALL

Even given the highly disciplined nature of those who serve at the Wall, it should be no surprise that crime and corruption are as prevalent there as they are anywhere else in the Emerald Empire. What is worse is that the Wall's proximity to the evil of Fu Leng makes each investigation even more important. A murder could be a simple if horrible event—or it could be part of a cult sacrifice, a way to cover up evidence of the Taint, or the work of a corrupted killer roaming the Wall. Each murder lessens the fighting effectiveness of the Wall's defenders, something that threatens all of Rokugan, making each murder also a crime against the Empire.

Outside officials such as Emerald Magistrates often are assigned to such investigations, as their separation from the local units allows them a relatively unbiased view of the situation. Using external personnel also means that local commanders need not allocate any of their personnel to such duties; as important as investigations are, keeping the Wall in readiness is far more vital. Though they would likely not admit it, officers on the Wall know that some outside investigators have superior skills in such matters and might welcome their arrival.

Investigators must watch their step at the Wall. Those who serve there might not appreciate outsiders poking around, no matter how necessary. (An investigator who impresses the locals with their martial or medical skills can improve relations tremendously, though.) Further, more than once, a crime has been solved only when the criminal targeted the external investigators as victims.

Thefts and even murder at the Wall are sometimes committed in the name of what the perpetrator and many others view as the greater good. For instance, jade desperately needed by one garrison might be stolen from an overstocked garrison that is not releasing its excess. A troublesome or incompetent bushi who is a menace to fellow warriors might be permanently removed. Bringing such matters to an end that is in Rokugan's best interests might require subtle tactics, blackmail, placing blame elsewhere, or even looking the other way altogether if it keeps the war against the Shadowlands from faltering.

The Shadowlands, of course, loom over all investigations. Supernatural causes can never be ruled out, and the Taint is an ever-present concern even on and behind the Wall. A mundane murder suspect could be a disguised Shadowlands creature, or a collection of scrolls might contain mahō rituals that can corrupt anyone who reads them into betraying their clan and Emperor. Some investigations may even require trips beyond the Wall, should a suspect's trail lead to the south.

HIDA ETSUJI, WATCHTOWER COMMANDER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  8  4

Etsuji has served on the Wall for six years, and for two of them he has been commander of the Watchtower of the Iron Hammer (also known as the Second of the First Watchtower). Etsuji feels he has served long enough as commander there and is eager to continue his rise in rank. One spectacular military victory should make that happen, so he is actively watching for any opportunity to arrive. Failing that, he may be tempted to arrange for an opportunity to occur, just so that the right people see him in glorious battle.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 5 SCHOLAR 3 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 3

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
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Famously Lucky:  Social; *Interpersonal* **Delusions of Grandeur:**  Mental; *Interpersonal*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Family Ōtsuchi: Range 1, Damage 8, Deadliness 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Lacquered armor (Physical 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), wakizashi, tessen

ABILITIES

VISIBLE VICTORIES

As a Hida, Etsuji ignores the Cumbersome quality of his armor and weapons. When Etsuji is part of a group that defeats Otherworldly or Tainted beings, if the group's members would gain glory from the action, they gain that amount plus 3.



HIDA NANAKO, GARRISON TAISA

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  3  3

Like many taisa, Nanako gained her position as commander through family status, rather than battlefield proficiency, and she is painfully aware of that fact. She oversees the prestigious First Garrison of the Watchtower of the Emerald Dawn (more formally known as the Third of the Fourth Watchtower) which is stationed along the midpoint of the Wall. While she is a powerful fighter and as strong as any Crab, she lacks experience in leading troops. She has made many mistakes since taking command, but few have been serious, and with each one she learns, so they aren't repeated. Nanako knows her mother, who is still renowned as one of the finest tower commanders in history, arranged for her appointment, and she hopes that her mother won't one day feel her actions were in error.



ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Quick Reflexes:
Martial; Physical

DISADVANTAGES

Inexperienced Leader:
Martial; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Jade-Studded Tetsubō: Range 1-2, Damage 7, Deadliness 3, Cumbersome, Durable, Sacred, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Plated armor (Physical 5, Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear), wakizashi

ABILITIES

LEARNING QUICKLY

As a Hida, Nanako ignores the Cumbersome quality of her armor and weapons. After Nanako fails a Tactics check, she gains 1 Void point and decreases the TN of her next Attack action check by 1.

FROM THE JOURNALS OF KAIU SHUICHI

Today, as I inspected the Watchtower of Eternity Stone, drums signaling an attack sounded along the Wall against the Fifth Tower, just visible on a distant ridge. I only just visited there yesterday, drinking some very passable shōchū with the gunsō in command, a stout young Hida with an unusually quick wit. As I watched, a brief flurry of dazzling signals flashed from the distant tower, from an experimental sun-mirror the gunsō had been proud to show me. They abruptly halted, though, leading me to believe that such mirrors are—as I observed during my visit—simply too fragile for this sort of use. Now, the Fifth of the Sixth fires signal flares to describe the course of the battle. So far, they claim to be holding their own, and I am encouraged. I must admit that I dread the blue flare declaring that the watchtower is being overrun, as I have been hoping to share more shōchū with the young Hida on my return journey.

HIDA MASUO, WALL GUNSŌ

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  4  3

Masuo is a huge man with sun-baked skin and a thick black mane. He has intensely glaring, dark eyes, and when his mouth emerges from his turbulent beard it is surprisingly wide. His barrel chest helps him boom his every word. Even out of battle, he is bone-shakingly loud. Friends and rivals alike joke that Masuo can be heard coming from at least a province away. Masuo was recently promoted to gunsō, but all of his victories have been achieved through brute force rather than superior tactics. He has been lucky so far, but sooner or later, his cockiness will catch up with him.



ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 1

THE RIDE OF THE UNICORN

Perhaps the greatest failure in the history of the Carpenter Wall took place in the year 815, when a thundering horde of riders stormed across the Shadowlands and breached the Crab defenses. Though the Crab bushi stationed along the northern edge of the Wall were equipped with all manner of siege weaponry, they had never faced the speed and power of Unicorn warhorses or the destructive force of their meishōdō magic.

The Unicorn routed the Crab infantry, crossed near Razor of the Dawn Castle, and from there rapidly penetrated deeper into Rokugan. The Crab learned from the humbling defeat and strengthened their tactics against such foes. This would prove useful in coming years, as they would once again face dangerously skilled riders and mounts: the Dark Moto.

Perhaps even more importantly, the Crab also strengthened their patrol system. Should another attack come out of the Shadowlands, this time they will be ready.

ADVANTAGES

Large Stature:
⦿ Martial; *Physical*

DISADVANTAGES

Momoku:
⦿ Martial; *Spiritual*

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Tekkan: Range 1–2, Damage 4/6, Deadliness 3, Cumbersome (if 1-handed), Durable, Mundane

Gear (equipped): Lacquered armor (Physical 4, Ceremonial, Cumbersome, Wargear), kabutowari, wakizashi, large jug half-filled with sake

ABILITIES

LOUD

As a Hida, Masuo ignores the Cumbersome quality of his armor and weapons. Masuo gains 1 strife at the end of each of his turns if he had to remain quiet or act in a subtle manner during that turn. After unmasking when there are enemies nearby, he suffers the Enraged condition and immediately moves 1 range band toward his foes.



ADVENTURE SEED: WALL REPAIRS

Hook A patrol reports that a remote section of the Wall has been damaged, possibly during a recent attack. The PCs are tasked with inspecting the damage; Kaiu engineers at the site say repairs will take more than seven days.

Rising Action A fresh patrol just arriving says a second wave of Shadowlands creatures is on its way. PCs can help fend off the attacks, assist in patching up the breach, lead raids outside the Wall to deplete enemy forces, or find another way to help. The PCs may be certain this repair needs to be done, but the watchtower commander thinks it's not immediately needed and that they should instead join the defensive troops.

Climax The PCs must repair the Wall before the second wave arrives and rampages through the weak area. The PCs may try to negotiate or convince the commander to get the necessary repairs done. They might also pass through the Wall to inspect the weak area themselves (though others may want to keep that from happening). They might divert workers to perform the repairs or use their own abilities to patch up the damage. Disobeying the commander, though, could have serious repercussions.

Patrolling the Shadowlands

Duty on the Wall is but one part of the war against the Shadowlands. Long ago, the Crab learned that defending the Wall is not enough, and that the war also requires offensive tactics. As result, they began sending scouting parties beyond the Wall—perhaps the most dangerous of duties the Crab could imagine. At first, the patrols' goal was to watch for the movements of their inhuman enemies and report back when they detected massing threats. As time passed, patrols took on additional duties and became a formalized part of Wall operations.

Traditionally, the Hiruma provide a great many of the personnel for regular patrols, as few can rival the their scouts' expertise in navigating the Shadowlands. Other families also contribute samurai to missions, especially when specialization in certain fields are required. For this reason, Kaiu engineers, Hida warriors, Kuni Witch Hunters, and even Toritaka Phantom Hunters are not uncommon. Samurai from clans farther north may lend their expertise as needed, or even lead their own patrols in rare situations.

LAST WORDS

Overheard below the Second Tower, near the Tunnel of Lost Dreams

"We leave shortly. Some of you are on your first patrol. You will follow my commands in all things. Do not question; do not ask. If you are looking for glory, look elsewhere. Where we go, there is no glory. There is only honor.

"We do not seek battle today. We seek information. If we fight, we fight together. Attack as I direct, follow your training, and remember there are fates worse than dying.

"Check your supplies once more. Where we go, there is nothing we can eat or drink, no matter how tempting it appears. Everyone hold up your fingers. Green. Good. Watch your jade; watch the jade of everyone else.

"We leave now. We leave the Wall, but we take it with us. We are strong. We are Crab!"



PATROL MISSIONS

Missions into the Shadowlands are never taken lightly. To travel beyond the Wall is to venture into lands where the very environment is corrupting and lethal. No mission is ever routine, and those who survive soon gain a haunted, paranoid look in their eyes: the look of someone who never trusts a shadowed room or a silent grove.

The most common types of missions are those designed to gather information. These patrols are generally lightly armed and designed for stealthy movement. Members of these patrols are selected not only for their skills in silence and perception, but also for skills in remembering and recording their findings. Such information might concern assemblies of goblins or other creatures, new structures or foul shrines, or unusual tracks or signs of new creatures nearby. Unless situations that demand action arise, these patrols generally return with blades undrawn—something that is often a source of friction among younger members eager for glory.

Some patrols take part in battle or battle preparations. These might range ahead of Crab armies marching to attack Shadowlands forces before they can reach the Wall, supporting these armies with harassing attacks, or even making assassination attempts against enemy leaders such as mahō practitioners. When the Crab determine their foes are ready to attack the Wall, patrols can prepare forward defenses such as by setting pit traps and clearing fields to provide better vantages for archers and siege engineers.

Perhaps the most dangerous patrols are those focusing on retrieval. Missions they undertake might include tracking down priceless relics of the Hiruma or other families whose lands were lost to the evil of Fu Leng. Other missions might launch at the direction of the Kuni, to gather new samples of Tainted beasts for vivisection and study. In a rescue, a common mission type, a patrol is sent to locate samurai who were captured or are late in returning. Bringing them back is vital, lest they fall fully to the Taint. Often a rescue is too late, and the patrol must decide if recovering the bodies is possible or if they must cremate them in the field, for to leave bodies behind is to face new zombies another day.

PATROL DURATIONS

Most patrols last only a single night and are short-range missions to inspect for looming dangers that could attack within days. On this type of patrol, many Crab had their first opportunity to witness the horrors of the Shadowlands firsthand and learned to better prepare for longer missions. Longer missions can last multiple days or weeks, requiring more provisions and sometimes resupply missions to replenish provisions and personnel lost or killed. Such patrols also require additional jade, which is perhaps the most precious resource of all.

PATROL CAMPS

Most camps in the Shadowlands are pitched and taken down each day and are thus light and easily transportable. Longer-duration missions might establish a base camp in an easily defensible location from which shorter trips can be launched. Regardless of the type of camp, sentries are set throughout the night, often in pairs, and often during the day as well. Unlike other camps, those on watch not only guard against external threats, but also keep an eye on each other for signs of corruption and the Taint.

PATROL TOOLS

In addition to packing standard traveling supplies such as tents, lanterns, and the like, those who travel into the Shadowlands tend to bring very specific items for their missions. The most important, of course, is one or more fingers of jade; all Crab know that to forget or lose this is a death sentence, or worse. Provisions are also essential for even the shortest missions, as it is extraordinarily rare to discover anything in the Shadowlands that can be safely consumed. Supplies for medical treatment and protection rituals are also necessary, and many patrols pack smoke arrows and other means of communication. Combustible oils are favored both for starting fires and cremating bodies. Lastly, many also bring along prayer lockets, family amulets, or small personal gifts as ways of remembering those they leave behind and for whom they are fighting.

SHINSEI'S LAST HOPE

There is a small village on Earthquake Fish Bay that has resisted the Taint for centuries even though it lies within that foul domain.

Some claim the village's freedom from the Taint is due to the words of Shinsei, who long ago said it would remain so as long as the Crab defended the fertile valley in which it is located. Others point to the massive stone wall covered with glowing jade that surrounds the village.

The Crab use this heavily defended location to stage their Twenty Goblin Winters, whereby rōnin who return with the heads of twenty goblins gain a place in the Crab Clan. Possibly of greater importance, though, is that the village serves as a base for Hiruma and other Crab scouts to undertake missions into the Shadowlands. Few speak of the village, though, due to its location within the realm of Fu Leng.

RETURNING FROM THE SHADOWLANDS

Perhaps the most important part of any patrol mission is a thorough inspection upon return. Even a journey of a few hours runs the risk of contracting the Taint, no matter how green the jade. These inspections check for any signs of physical corruption, such as odd bruises, bleeding sores, skin discolorations, and the like. Wounds are assiduously inspected and cleaned or, if necessary, cauterized. Inspectors also scrutinize clothing, weapons, and anything else brought back to ensure no blood, tissue, or other parts of Tainted creatures or terrain remain on them. Kuni Witch Hunters and others inspect for spiritual corruption, which could come about simply from viewing and experiencing the horrors of the Shadowlands. These inspections are mandatory, and any samurai who refuses or seeks to avoid them quickly faces drawn bows and readied katana.

ADVENTURE SEED: TAINTED PROVISIONS

1 Hook The player characters are accompanying a patrol into the Shadowlands on a mission to find an ancient jade tetsubō lost in an earlier battle or another relic a family daimyō or other important official desperately wishes to recover.

2 Rising Action Several days into the journey, the PCs discover their supplies are infested with tiny grubs, insects, fungi, or other corruption. Worryingly, it is only their own supplies that are ruined. This could be the work of someone on the patrol team or of whoever prepared their supplies before they left.

3 Climax Most patrol members suggest returning, but the patrol leader thinks they can redistribute the supplies and still reach their destination, as delays might mean the item could be lost forever. Even if the PCs press on, who can they trust now? Turning back might mean failure, thus rewarding whoever sabotaged their packs. Going forward may lead to worse threats that could cause the deaths of the patrol members. The sabotage could become the start of an investigation that uncovers a conspiracy designed to shame the official who launched the mission.

HIRUMA MOTOKO, PATROL LEADER

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  7  3

Though advancing in age, Motoko is still perhaps the finest patrol leader along the Wall. He is legendary for bringing all his people back from each mission in the Shadowlands, even if not all have returned alive or escaped the Taint. His hair may be thinning and grey, but his aim is still true, and he feels he still has a few good years left before an oni catches him. He tends to keep to himself, politely declining almost all social events. Very few are aware of what he does when alone, for Motoko is secretly one of the finest origami artists in the region; even visiting Crane have remarked on the excellence of this unknown poet of paper.



ARTISAN 4	MARTIAL 5	SCHOLAR 2	SOCIAL 2	TRADE 4
ADVANTAGES		DISADVANTAGES		

Jurojin's Blessing:  Martial; Spiritual
Cynicism:  Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Oyumi: Range 2–5, Damage 7, Deadliness 3, Prepare, Wargear

Gear (equipped): Ashigaru armor (Physical 3, Wargear), katana, wakizashi, quiver, hand-drawn maps, traveling pack, finger of jade. Should the situation require it, Motoko and his patrol can be mounted on horseback; in this case, he carries a daikyū (Range 3–5, Damage 6, Deadliness 4, Wargear) instead of his oyumi.

ABILITIES

ALWAYS FINDS A WAY

Once per scene while in the Shadowlands, Motoko can spend 1 Void point to discover a hidden escape route out of a hopeless battle. The way is never easy, however, and every other character who is with him suffers 4 strife and 2 fatigue in the process.

RUMORS FROM PATROLS

- ⦿ A Hiruma swears she came across a splendid, uncorrupted tree in a thick copse not far from the Eighth Tower. The branches were covered with prayer ribbons, and the scout added her own. Later, she was shocked to discover a ripe plum in her pack—just the thing she had been wishing for earlier!
- ⦿ The gigantic, twisted peaks deep within the Shadowlands are visible from the parapets of the Wall, and some appear almost to reach the Celestial Heavens. One patrol insisted they climbed to the top of one and saw above them a long rope ladder dangling not far above their heads.
- ⦿ A patrol once became hopelessly lost when they came across an oasis of purity deep in the Shadowlands. The water was clean, and they were so filled with energy they returned to the Wall within the day. Retracing their steps, though, proved impossible.
- ⦿ There are lucky pieces of jade that never go black. The moment you examine one, though, it loses its power, so you have to keep it well hidden even from yourself.
- ⦿ Patrols that leave a uncorrupted finger of jade behind at their destination in the Shadowlands always return free of the Taint.



CHAPTER

2

Honor Against Demons

All along the Wall, the Crab readied themselves for battle, their actions smooth and practiced from daily drills. Additional troops in thick armor took up positions as gear-driven platforms brought stacks of ammunition up from internal depots built into the Wall.

Hida Sanae could hear shouts from the nearby Watchtower as the gunners readied their siege weapons. Shugenja were also making their initial efforts, beseeching the kami for support against the creatures that would befoul the land with the Taint. Soon the sky would be filled with huge ballistae bolts, hurled stones, and blasts of elemental fury.

Sanae looked over the Wall's parapet. A strange, swirling black haze masked the southern horizon. She set her kabuto firmly on her head, buckling the chin strap in place. Her voice echoed along the ramparts. "Make ready!"



The Falcon Clan

Rokugan is a land filled with wonders, but it is also a land filled with threats. Almost every samurai knows of the dangers beyond the Wall, for example. Ancient and often menacing entities also lurk within Rokugan's bounds, though many dismiss them as mere children's tales or superstitions. Among these beings are menaces from the spirit realms, from ghosts driven by their endless hunger to stalking specters that predate the dawn of humanity. Such creatures lurk in the shadows, in those patches of shade that seem not merely empty of light but filled with darkness. They are as nightmares made manifest, terrifying spirits eager to prey on the living.

Those who can perceive these spectral entities know that they infest all of Rokugan in seemingly endless numbers. It is the sworn duty of the Falcon Clan, a Minor Clan to the north of Crab lands, to face these spiritual predators. It is the Falcon who hear the wailing cries in the night, who can see the ghastly forms that have no business existing on the Mortal Realm. The Falcon do more than just battle with *yūrei* and similar ghostly threats, however. They also seek to understand them, and to use that knowledge to better protect the Emerald Empire.

THE FOUNDING

Many hundreds of years ago, or so the Falcon teach their children, a father in Toritaka province gave his life to protect the visiting Emperor's chief advisor from assassins. Such was the man's bravery that the Emperor granted his son the right to form a clan, the Falcon Clan, in his village and surrounding lands. For any other individual, the story might have ended there, with the formation of another small clan that would probably fade away after a few generations or become absorbed into a Great Clan.

The son, whose name was Yotogi, was insistent on learning more about the assassins who killed his father. He investigated and found they were only peasants, but had been possessed by evil, otherworldly beings. Yotogi called to his father's spirit for aid in understanding what could have caused this to come about. He meditated for months, and his people began to wonder if he had abandoned them. Finally, he emerged. Through his meditation, he learned something of the Spirit Realms but, he said "there are not enough names" for his new knowledge.

Learning about the Spirit Realms became the Falcon's new mission. They would be vigilant against the malign ghosts, but also seek understanding of them. Even now, centuries later, the wisest know there is still much to learn about the spirits.

YOTOGI AND THE LADY MAZOKU

Yotogi led the Toritaka family in this quest, and the Falcon became practitioners of the art of detecting and banishing those spirits who would do harm. The family gained a reputation for perceiving what others could not sense, perhaps due to an inherited trait originally caused by proximity to the haunted valley and forest nearby or the assistance of their *shiryō*, or ancestral spirits. As Yotogi and his followers began to codify their methods and organize training for new hunters, someone came to aid him: someone who could see his innate abilities to track and fight the supernatural and his skill in properly applying those abilities.

She never revealed her name to Yotogi or to his successors. What she did reveal were a great many techniques useful for hunting and banishing *yūrei* and other baleful spirits, techniques that made evident she had exceptional insight into these spirits' nature and weaknesses. She became known as Lady Mazoku for her almost casual-familiarity with the practices of the *mazoku*, the custodians who watch over the *gaki* and other corrupted souls in Meido. "Many *gaki* escape from that realm," she said, "As it has become so crowded that the *mazoku* cannot police all of its inhabitants."

Lady Mazoku visited the Falcon many times, but never stayed for very long. Her information, while never specific or overly detailed, would often lead them to new hauntings and offer ways to deal with them. Afterward, she would vanish, often for decades, before returning again. Her face, voice, and mannerisms were all so unremarkable that it was impossible to tell if the same person visited each time.

Her identity has never been discovered, but she has been an essential part of the Falcon ever since, even to the current day. Some of the clan assume she passed down her role to her children and grandchildren, and would rather not contemplate the logical alternative. The knowledge she possesses strongly suggests that she is not of the Mortal Realm. Some members of the clan suspect that she may be one of the *mazoku*. If this is true, it would explain why she is so eager to train the Falcon to hunt escaped spirits and return them to Meido. It would also mean the Falcon have a powerful and dangerous ally in their duties.

LANDS OF THE FALCON

Toritaka Province, the home of the Falcon Clan, lies along the northern border of the Crab lands and the western edges of Shinomen Forest. Nearby mountains give way to numerous hillsides, and woodlands give the region an appearance of peaceful serenity. Those who live here know better, though, for it is a land where the Spirit Realms draw very close to the Mortal Realm.

FALCON RUMORS

Whispers are heard in the forests saying that a great war is coming, originating not from the Shadowlands but from Otosan Uchi itself.

Falcon bushi assigned to defending against bandits say that the Hare are becoming more aggressive and blatant in their attacks, as if they know the Crab are too busy to aid the Toritaka.

Everyone knows that Lady Mazoku doesn't really care for the Falcon or honor, and acts only for her own secret goals. That's why she has been unseen for so long.

I heard of a shugenja who saw too deep one day, and ran away before the Council could claim him. You can still hear his screams in the forest at night, when darkness comes.

The Falcon know it to be a particularly haunted region. To reside here is to share the land with all manner of supernatural beings. For the Falcon, it is part of everyday life and the backbone of their duty to the Empire.

VALLEY OF THE SPIRITS

The wide area between mountains and forest is commonly known as the Valley of the Spirits, even by those who have no idea about its true nature. Although few could stand to live here for long, the Toritaka families learned to exist alongside and amongst the shades of the dead. The spirits are part of life there, whether they are of betrayed samurai demanding vengeance or common gaki obsessed with sating their endless hungers.

It is a life most in Rokugan could never imagine and forms the basis for many aspects of Toritaka customs. Almost all facets of daily life have some link to the spirits, and everyone takes great care not to upset or disturb them. Falcon samurai make meditation a vital part of their training regimens, to seek greater understanding of the supernatural around them. Visitors are reminded (sometimes in ways that lack expected politeness) of the local customs concerning the unseen all around them. Most travelers either learn to respect those customs quickly or suffer a poor time in the valley.

One well-known custom is one that the residents perform each night. Just as the sun sets, they light hundreds of huge lanterns and watch-fires around the boundary of the province. The bright fires form a ring of lights against the darkness, and many have called it one of the most beautiful sights in all of Rokugan. No one knows when the ritual began; some claim Lady Mazoku originated it centuries ago, or that the Toritaka families started it long before the formation of the Clan. However, all stories about it say that should the Toritaka fail in enacting it, even for a single night, the spirits lurking outside their province will eagerly rush in and devour them all.

Another ritual commonly practiced by the local inhabitants is to leave offerings to appease the spirits outside the valley. Peasants set out morsels of food, small, well-fashioned carvings, and other gifts along the edges of the valley, often near the Shinomen Forest where many angry spirits reside. The villagers know that no matter how terrible the spirits in the valley might be, there are far worse beings lurking in the forest.

CASTLE OF THE FALCON

At the center of the valley is the Castle of the Falcon, Shiro Toritaka. It is the ancestral home of the Toritaka family and, like the family itself, is small and modest. There is little to differentiate it from other minor castles

across Rokugan, except for the extensive series of mews set off of the castle's main keep. It is here that the clan's famous aviaries reside, home to many dozens of highly-trained eagles, hawks, and—of course—falcons.

It is unknown whether the Toritaka family has some instinctual bond with these birds, like their preternatural ability to sense spirits, or developed their connection with them after adopting the name for their new clan. The clan often uses its falconers on scouting missions, drawing on the strong connection between bushi and raptor to survey far afield for possible threats. Such is the renown of these falconers that other clans often seek them out to join their own patrols. These clans compensate the Falcon Clan handsomely in gold and supplies.

HUNTING GHOSTS

Like the Crab, the Falcon are usually pragmatic in their battles against their foes. There is little that is forbidden if it achieves desired results. This can even include trafficking with spirits—sometimes as a means to greater understanding, and sometimes as a weapon against other ghosts who threaten the living.

Unlike the Crab, who are quite satisfied with the destruction of any Shadowlands creatures they encounter, the Falcon seek out insight into those they hunt. Such awareness of the plight of the spirits, they find, can improve the chances of the Falcon returning them to their proper home (whether through violence or persuasion). When violence is necessary, though, Falcon samurai are second to none in dealing with spiritual threats. Though primarily concerned with their province and the surrounding dangers near the Wall or to the east in Shinomen Forest, they may be called far away to deal with hauntings elsewhere in the Emerald Empire. The bushi dispatched to deal with these far-away threats live lonely and risk-filled lives far away from any others who might understand what it is like to combat malign ghosts and their unnatural hungers. However, the Falcon pride themselves in being equal to the task.

THE COUNCIL OF TWILIGHT

The few Falcons who do live to a venerable age usually retire to an unassuming monastery in the valley. The valley is dotted with many monasteries and temples, and there is nothing to set this particular monastery apart. For the Falcon, though, it is perhaps their most important spiritual location. This is where the Council of Twilight convenes.

The Council is a living repository of wisdom for the clan and has a strong hand in guiding its activities. Its origins are lost in time, but perhaps came about as a means for samurai still actively combating the foul spirits

of the valley and beyond to gain advice from those who have lived through the struggle. While the Council provides valuable advice in spiritual matters, it also has the grim task of dealing with those Falcon who delve too deeply into the spiritual realm during their meditations.

Falcon samurai do more than just hunt spirits—they also seek to understand them. For many, this is done through meditation and reflection. Such activities offer great benefits, but in such a haunted land, they can have horrible consequences. Sometimes, they can offer both.

It happens with little warning: a patch of shadow in which the darkness suddenly deepens, or a corner the fire's light refuses to touch. The samurai stares into the black depths and learns something utterly terrifying and true, something that leaves them screaming and shaking uncontrollably.

Such Falcon are taken to the Council, which convenes behind closed doors. What happens to these samurai is unknown, but it is said the Council is somehow able to pry the hard-won knowledge from them and thus enhance the strength of the clan and its hunters. All that is known for certain is that the interior of the Council's chamber is filled with lanterns, and their light is powerful enough to shine through the joints in the walls like the sun itself.

Of late, however, the Council has become uneasy, for one of its unofficial but valued members has been missing for some time. Lady Mazoku has not been seen for several generations, and some of the younger members cannot remember her presence. A few even wonder if she is but a myth from the Falcon's founding. The eldest members worry she may have abandoned the Falcon, or worse, perished.

ALLIES AND RIVALRIES

Given the Falcon Clan's proximity to the Crab and these clans' common duty to combat the supernatural threats against the Empire, it is no wonder they are strong allies. More importantly, they both recognize the strengths and expertise of the other.

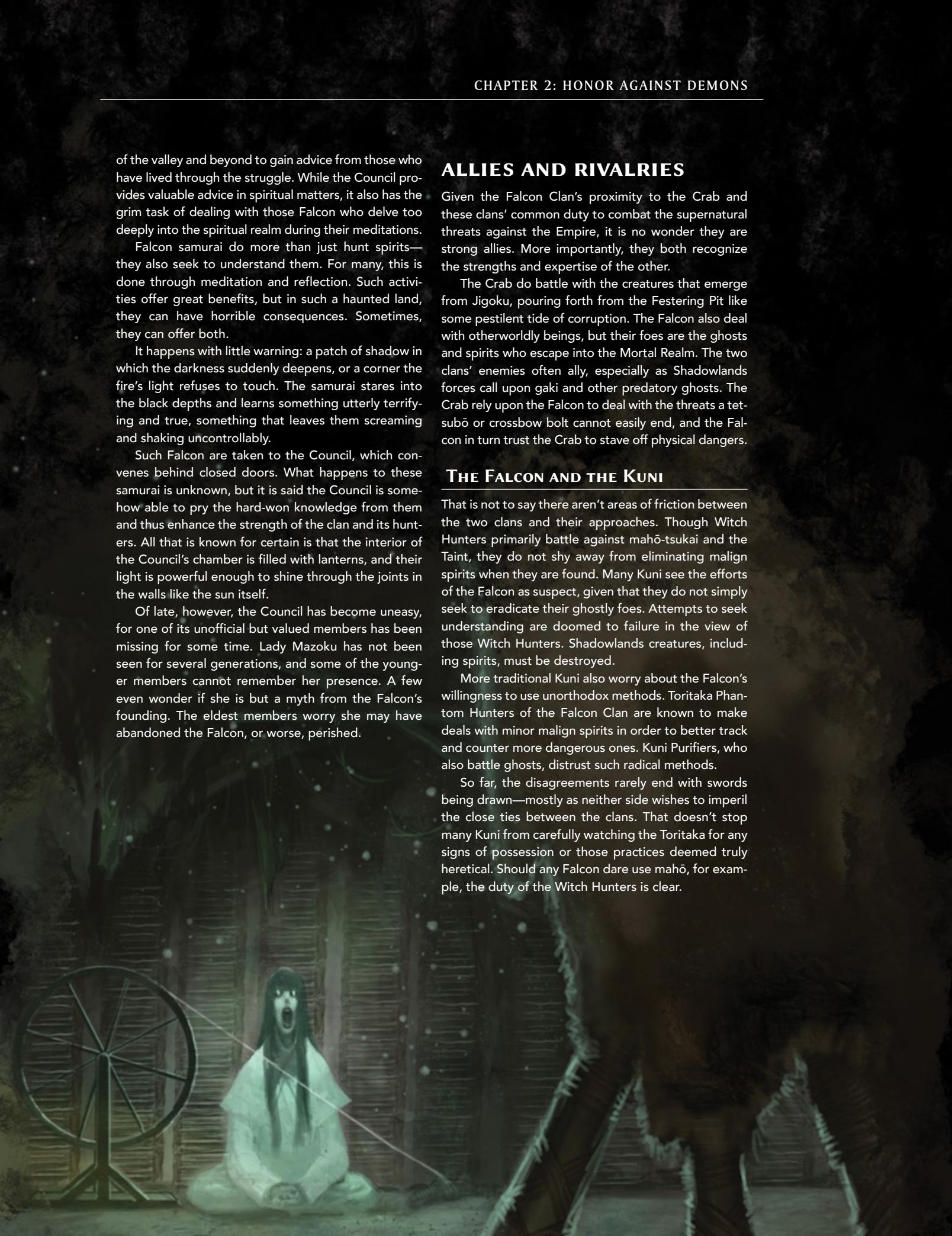
The Crab do battle with the creatures that emerge from Jigoku, pouring forth from the Festering Pit like some pestilent tide of corruption. The Falcon also deal with otherworldly beings, but their foes are the ghosts and spirits who escape into the Mortal Realm. The two clans' enemies often ally, especially as Shadowlands forces call upon gaki and other predatory ghosts. The Crab rely upon the Falcon to deal with the threats a *tetsubō* or crossbow bolt cannot easily end, and the Falcon in turn trust the Crab to stave off physical dangers.

THE FALCON AND THE KUNI

That is not to say there aren't areas of friction between the two clans and their approaches. Though Witch Hunters primarily battle against *mahō-tsukai* and the Taint, they do not shy away from eliminating malign spirits when they are found. Many Kuni see the efforts of the Falcon as suspect, given that they do not simply seek to eradicate their ghostly foes. Attempts to seek understanding are doomed to failure in the view of those Witch Hunters. Shadowlands creatures, including spirits, must be destroyed.

More traditional Kuni also worry about the Falcon's willingness to use unorthodox methods. Toritaka Phantom Hunters of the Falcon Clan are known to make deals with minor malign spirits in order to better track and counter more dangerous ones. Kuni Purifiers, who also battle ghosts, distrust such radical methods.

So far, the disagreements rarely end with swords being drawn—mostly as neither side wishes to imperil the close ties between the clans. That doesn't stop many Kuni from carefully watching the Toritaka for any signs of possession or those practices deemed truly heretical. Should any Falcon dare use *mahō*, for example, the duty of the Witch Hunters is clear.



THE FALCON AND THE HARE

The Falcon have also had disputes with other clans, most notably the Hare. The Hare, a Minor Clan like the Falcon, has lands along the opposite side of the Shinomen, near the southern edge of the haunted forest. Despite the distance (and the treacherous woodland) between them, the two clans have a lengthy history of enmity. This is largely the result of periodic bandit attacks against the Falcon. The clan is loath to assign their limited number of bushi to deal with such threats, as the spirits require their full attention.

Many Toritaka hold the Hare responsible for aiding these attacks, but the accusations are mostly kept to whispers. The only thing worse than bandits, after all, would be an actual war with another clan. For their part, the Hare claim no responsibility, and some wonder if the neighboring Scorpion Clan could be playing a role in the hostilities as a way to keep the Hare and the Falcon from gaining power, or to draw Great Clans into a war as they support opposite sides.



ADVENTURE SEED: THE CIRCLE IS BROKEN

Hook As the PCs are traveling near the borders of the Valley of Spirits, hot on the trail of their quarry, they hear loud cries of anguish ahead. One of the lanterns along the border has been toppled and destroyed, and a group of Toritaka peasants beg them for aid in creating a new lantern, or at least a powerful blaze that can last the night. They have but a few hours to do so before the sun sets over the mountains.

Rising Action The PCs may be unaware of the Toritaka customs concerning the circle of light and press on in their hunt. If so, as they depart, they feel the spirits around them, hungry to enter the valley once darkness falls, and they are pushed back.

Climax The PCs can aid in gathering wood or help the peasants to start a fire. They may also split their forces to fight off the spirits while generating a sufficiently large fire. If the PCs are not equipped to battle ghosts, a Toritaka Phantom Hunter arrives on the scene and helps them. The Falcon can also call on other spirits for aid—which the PCs may not view as proper behavior.

TORITAKA HATSUE, THE YOTOGI

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  7

The lineage of Yotogi remains strong for the clan, and his successors have made his name synonymous with clan daimyō. Like their founder, each Yotogi has a preternatural awareness of spirits. The current Yotogi, Toritaka Hatsue, has ruled the Falcon for a dozen years. She has successfully dealt with many hauntings in the Shinomen as well as performing a dangerous banishment in a nearby Lion castle. Lately, though, she is spending more and more time in meditation, and many worry that one day she will see something too powerful and terrible for her mind to bear.



ARTISAN 2 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 4 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 1

ARTISAN 3 MARTIAL 4 SCHOLAR 5 SOCIAL 4 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Sense for the Spirits: • Martial; Spiritual	Close to the Edge: • Social; Spiritual

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Gaki-dō Knowledge: • Social; Interpersonal	Desperate for Aid: • Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Katana: Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Sanctified robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 3, Ceremonial), scrolls, supplies for rituals, wakizashi

ABILITIES

PENETRATING SIGHT

As a descendant of the first Falcon daimyō, Hatsue can discern Otherworldly beings such as gaki and always recognize any such beings that attempt to disguise themselves as human or otherwise mundane. This does not, however, mean she always feels it is in the best interest of the Falcon or the being involved to reveal this to those around her.

ABILITIES

MAGISTRATE OF GAKI-DŌ

A mazoku is an Otherworldly being, though it appears as a normal samurai. It doubles its vigilance when detecting Otherworldly or Tainted beings, mahō use, or kansen activity. When a mazoku unmasks, everyone who can see it suffers 6 strife as its form shifts into inhuman shapes before settling as it composes itself.

MAZOKU

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:

Just as there are hierarchies and bureaucracies in the Mortal Realm of Ningen-dō, so there are ones in the Spirit Realms. The realm of Gaki-dō, where gaki and other hungry spirits are sent from Meido after being found wanting, is filled with administrators and other officials who oversee the realm on the behalf of Emma-o, the Fortune of Death. Mazoku serve a vital role as magistrates and guards within Gaki-dō, but the sheer number of spirits there utterly overwhelms any attempt to properly keep them contained. Many gaki escape Gaki-dō to haunt Rokugan, especially in areas where the two realms draw near, such as where violent battles, terrible murders, and other blood-soaked horrors occurred. Hunting down and returning these troublesome spirits to Gaki-dō is nearly impossible for the mazoku, which is why they sometimes work with Phantom Hunters to jointly accomplish their common mission.

LADY MAZOKU

This mysterious being appears as an elegant woman wearing robes of a style not seen for many centuries. She uses the Mazoku profile with the following changes and new ability:

Skill Groups: +1 Scholar, +1 Social

Gear (equipped): Ancient Falcon Katana (Range 1, Damage 4, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged, Sacred)

VETERAN GAKI HUNTER

Many centuries operating in Ningen-dō means Lady Mazoku has honor 70, glory 70, and composure 20. Once per scene, should a PC sufficiently impress her with devotion to the cause of capturing and containing malign spirits, she may impart to the PC some of her wisdom concerning this subject. The PC lowers the TN of their checks targeting such spirits by 1 for the remainder of the session.

TORITAKA DAIROKU, COUNCIL OF TWILIGHT MEMBER

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  2  7

Like all Council of Twilight members, Dairoku has witnessed terrors that would drive lesser samurai over the edge, and they possess terrible secrets of the Spirit Realm that few could hold without screaming the knowledge to the skies. In their case, it came about while simply meditating on the nature of dust motes dancing in a sunbeam. Though of advanced age, Dairoku still possess a strong vitality despite the mind-wrenching event. Their days of direct conflict with the phantoms and ghosts might be long behind them now, but they know their current service is more vital to the Falcon than it would have been otherwise.

SOCIAL	PERSONAL		
60 HONOR		ENDURANCE	12
55 GLORY		COMPOSURE	12
45 STATUS		FOCUS	6
 +2,  -2		VIGILANCE	3
DEMEANOR - SERENE			



ARTISAN 2 MARTIAL 2 SCHOLAR 4 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 0

ADVANTAGES

Hidden Realizations:

 Social; Interpersonal

DISADVANTAGES

Terrifying Knowledge:

 Social; Mental

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Wakizashi: Range 0–1, Damage 3, Deadliness 5/7, Ceremonial, Razor-Edged

Gear (equipped): Ancient robes (Physical 1, Supernatural 2)

ABILITIES

THOUGHT THE UNTHINKABLE

Once per scene, Dairoku may make a **Performance (Void)** skill check targeting a character at range 0–2 to impart only a fraction of their learnings. If the check is successful, that character recovers 1 Void point but reduces their composure value by 2 until they get a night of restful sleep.



FALCON CLAN PLAYER CHARACTERS

Players who wish to build a Falcon Clan character can do so using the clan and family information provided here. At the GM's discretion, a Falcon character could study at a Great Clan school, or a character from a Great Clan could fall in with these grim spirit hunters. The rules for one of the most iconic schools of the Falcon, the Toritaka Phantom Hunter School, can be found on page 94. As with any character extending beyond their clan's teachings, such as be part of a school outside of their clan, the GM has final say over whether a particular concept is appropriate for the story being told.

THE FALCON MINOR CLAN

Ring Increase: +1 Void

Skill Increase: +1 Theology

Status: 26

While the Crab guard the Emerald Empire from the terrors that seek to destroy the Wall and invade Rokugan, the Falcon guard against more subtle threats: the malign creatures from the Spirit Realms. Ghosts and similar dangers can occur anywhere, so the Falcon must remain ever watchful. This holds especially true in the nearby Shinomen Forest, perhaps the most haunted region in all of the Emerald Empire. Though most of the Great Clans ignore or dismiss their work, samurai of the Falcon Clan know what lurks just out of sight in every dark room or obscured copse.

THE TORITAKA FAMILY

Ring Increase: +1 Earth or +1 Water

Skill Increases: +1 Survival, +1 Meditation

Glory: 35

Starting Wealth: 3 koku

The Toritaka are the foremost family of the Falcon, and most outsiders are likely unaware there are any others. Most are large and stocky, reflecting their shared heritage with the nearby Hida, but unlike Hida, the Toritaka are typically quiet and reserved. Many believe them distant and cold, but the Toritaka view themselves as focused and calm, ready to stand between Mortal and Spirit Realms. They know emotion can often lead to turbulence between the two, and so hold that only by controlling their own passions can they effectively understand, mediate, and if necessary, eliminate the dangers *yūrei* can bring to the living.

WHAT DOES YOUR CHARACTER KNOW?

All Falcon Clan characters have a greater awareness of the following topics:

- ⦿ You have a strong grasp of the politics within the Falcon land of Toritaka Province, as well as general information concerning the Crab Clan.
- ⦿ You know much about the Shinomen Forest and the dangers that lurk within.
- ⦿ You have a strong familiarity with *yūrei* and may have even had firsthand experiences with one or more of them.
- ⦿ You may know one or more terrifying secrets gained through meditation.

WHAT DOES BUSHIDŌ MEAN TO YOUR CLAN?

The Falcon have studied what results from lives that do not follow Bushidō and see this every time they face ravenous *gaki* or other foul spirits. This is what comes of lives that are without honor, so the Falcon feel they know better than any how important this tenet of Bushidō truly is. For this reason, Honor (Meiyo) holds a special place for the Falcon.

The Falcon have little time for the niceties of courtly life or such trivialities as poetry. They rarely care to develop skills in these areas, but they also know that it may result in dishonorable behavior. To avoid this, they instead simply refrain from such settings as much as possible, much in the same way a perfect defense is to simply not be present for an attack. Thus, the Bushidō tenet of Courtesy (Rei) is less important to members of the Falcon Clan.

See page 301 of the core rulebook for more information on how these can affect your honor and glory.

**NEW TECHNIQUES
INTRODUCED IN
THIS BOOK**

Most of the techniques listed in the school profiles described in the following pages are covered in the core rulebook in Chapter 4.

Those shown in bold, such as **Essence of Jade**, are new techniques not found in the core rulebook. These are covered later in this chapter on pages 114–115.

New Schools

The following are new schools that PCs can select as part of character creation.

Asako Inquisitor School [Courtier, Shugenja]

Unlike the horrors of the Shadowlands, mahō can arise anywhere and can exist in any location as a hidden corruption. To root out and combat this, the Asako Inquisitors were formed in the third century. Originally, they concentrated on their own clan, to purge the Phoenix of any who would engage in such foul practices, but over time, their remit widened to include all of the Emerald Empire. This has brought Asako Inquisitors, who answer only to their clan's Council of Five and the Emperor, into conflict at times with people of the Kuni Purifier School.

Rings: +1 Fire, +1 Void

Starting Skills (choose three): +1 Courtesy, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Martial Arts [Unarmed], +1 Meditation, +1 Performance, +1 Theology

Honor: 35

Techniques Available: Invocations (火), Rituals (祓), Shūji (祓)

Starting Techniques:

- ➊ **Rituals:** Cleansing Rite, Commune with the Spirits, Divination
- ➋ **Shūji:** Cadence, Truth Burns through Lies

Traces of Passage (School Ability): Once per scene as a Support action, you may scry to detect any supernatural abilities used at range 0–3 in the last day (such as invocations, mahō, and kihō). Reduce the TN of your checks to investigate this phenomenon by your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, sanctified robes, daishō (any one sword of rarity 7 or lower and wakizashi), scroll satchel, traveling pack.

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Rank 1 Fire Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Threshold Barrier	Technique
RANK 2	Weight of Duty	Technique
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Government	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	❖ Essence of Jade	Technique
	❖ Open Hand Style	Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Medicine	Skill
	Performance	Skill
	Theology	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1–3 Earth Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	❖ Regal Bearing	Technique
	Touchstone of Courage	Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
RANK 5	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Water Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	❖ The Soul's Blade	Technique
	Bravado	Technique
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Composition	Skill
RANK 6	Skulduggery	Skill
	Tactics	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Fire Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	❖ Striking as Void	Technique
	Rouse the Soul	Technique
	Resilient Readiness (Mastery Ability): When you make a check to investigate a supernatural phenomenon, you may spend 5 as follows: 5+: Increase your resistance against that phenomenon (such as a specific invocation, kihō, mahō, or NPC ability) by an amount equal to the 5 you spend this way. This effect persists until the end of the scene.	



Kakita Swordsmith School [Artisan, Courtier]

Like all institutions of the Crane, the Kakita Swordsmith School emphasizes perfection and excellence. The blades they forge are renowned across Rokugan as the finest that can be made; some duelists wait long years for the opportunity to have one of these blades crafted for their use. Very rarely, a venerable swordsmith will take on a promising youth as an apprentice, though most apprentices spend decades before they are honored as "proficient."

Rings: +1 Air, +1 Fire

Starting Skills (choose five): +1 Aesthetics, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Courtesy, +1 Culture, +1 Sentiment, +1 Smithing, +1 Theology

Honor: 55

Techniques Available: Kata (↖), Rituals (↘), Shūji (↙)

Starting Techniques:

- ⦿ **Kata (choose one):** Soaring Slice, Striking as Air, Striking as Fire
- ⦿ **Shūji:** ⦿ Artisan's Appraisal

Patterns: Kakita Pattern. You can apply this item pattern (see page 109) to any bladed weapon you craft.

Sacred Art of Steel (School Ability): Once per game session when you make a check to craft, improve, or maintain a weapon, you may add a number of kept █ set to █ results equal to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, ceremonial clothes, daishō (a personally crafted katana with Kakita pattern [see page 109] and wakizashi), smithing hammer, traveling pack, an attendant (see page 64 of the core rulebook) or Rokugani pony (see page 326 of the core rulebook).

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Artisan Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Culture	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Rank 1 Kata	↖ Tech. Grp.
	⦿ Blessing of Steel	↘ Technique
RANK 2	Well of Desire	↙ Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Aesthetics	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Smithing	Skill
	Rank 1-2 Rituals	↗ Technique
RANK 3	⦿ Ebb and Flow	↙ Technique
	Tributaries of Trade	↙ Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Sentiment	Skill
	Smithing	Skill
	Theology	Skill
RANK 4	⦿ Rank 1-4 Air Shūji	↙ Tech. Grp.
	All Arts are One	↙ Technique
	Dazzling Performance	↙ Technique
	Artisan Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
RANK 5	Performance	Skill
	Rank 1-4 Kata	↖ Tech. Grp.
	⦿ Soul Sunder	↖ Technique
	Bravado	↙ Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Design	Skill
RANK 6	Smithing	Skill
	Rank 1-5 Fire Shūji	↙ Tech. Grp.
	Buoyant Arrival	↙ Technique
	Striking as Void	↖ Technique
	Ashidaka's Method (Mastery Ability): When you create a new weapon, you may apply two different patterns that you know to it (instead of one).	



Kitsu Medic School [Artisan, Bushi]

Though the Kitsu family is known more for its shugenja samurai, the students of the Kitsu Medic School are also of note. They are skilled in the martial arts, but their primary vocation is healing. As such, they are an important part of any Lion army going into battle. The warrior skills of Kitsu Medics mean they can be at the forefront of the fighting, killing foes as well as tending to their clan's wounded.

Rings: +1 Earth, +1 Water

Starting Skills (choose five): +1 Command, +1 Fitness, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Martial Arts [Unarmed], +1 Medicine, +1 Sentiment, +1 Survival

Honor: 44

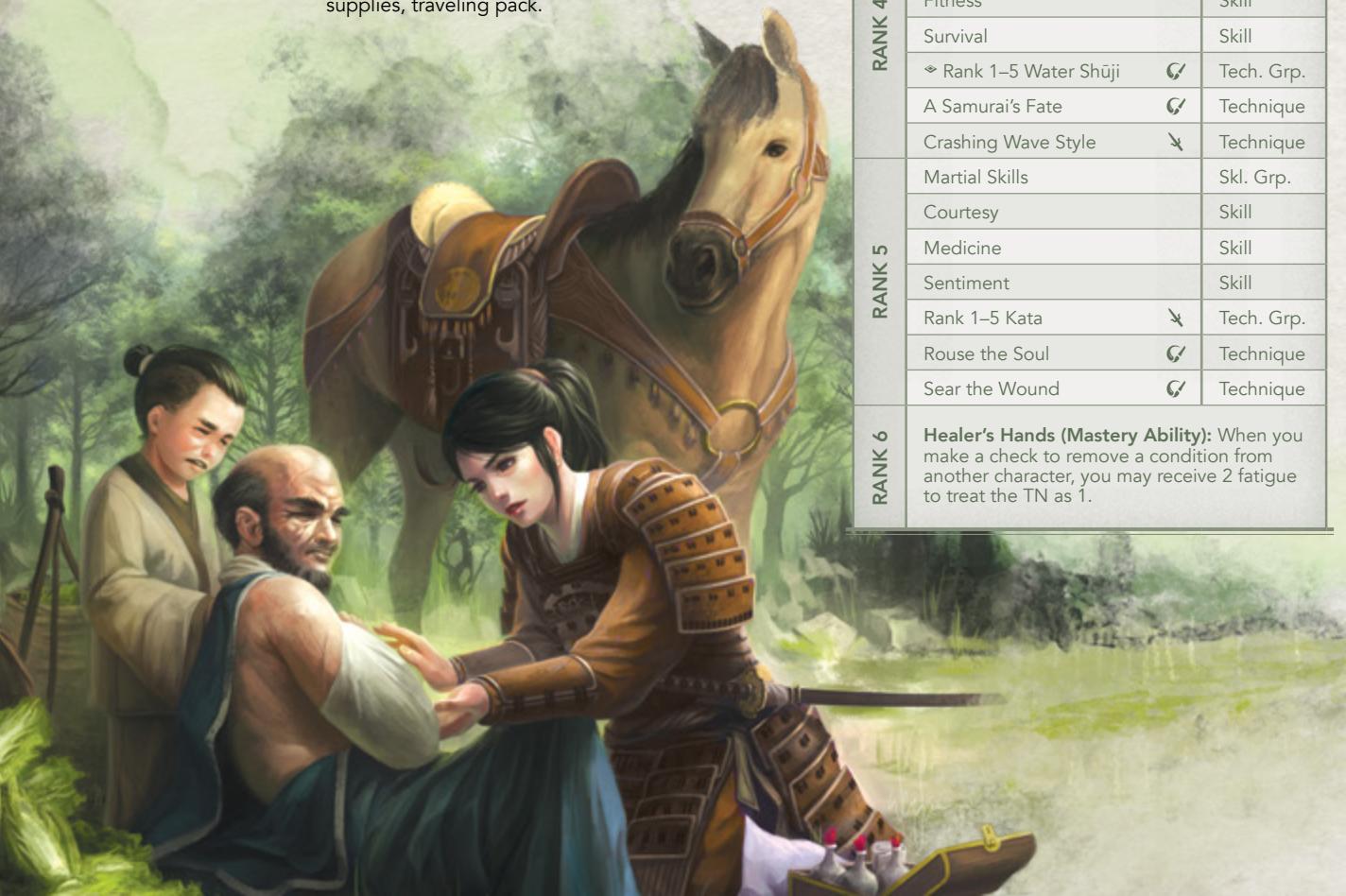
Techniques Available: Kata (↖), Rituals (↘), Shūji (↙)

Starting Techniques:

- ⦿ **Kata (choose one):** ↘ Crescent Moon Style, Striking as Earth, Striking as Water
- ⦿ **Rituals (choose one):** Cleansing Rite, Threshold Barrier
- ⦿ **Shūji:** Stonewall Tactics

Field Medicine (School Ability): When you perform a Medicine check to remove fatigue or a condition from a friendly character, that character removes additional fatigue up to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, ashigaru armor, daishō (katana and wakizashi), satchel of medicinal supplies, traveling pack.



	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Fitness	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1 Kata ↖	Tech. Grp.
	Commune with the Spirits ↘	Technique
RANK 2	Honest Assessment ↙	Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Medicine	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Earth Shūji ↙	Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	↖ Flowing Water Strike ↖	Technique
	Rushing Avalanche Style ↖	Technique
	Artisan Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Martial Arts [Unarmed]	Skill
	Medicine	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1–3 Kata ↖	Tech. Grp.
	↖ Iron in the Mountains Style ↖	Technique
	Touchstone of Courage ↙	Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
	Fitness	Skill
RANK 5	Survival	Skill
	↖ Rank 1–5 Water Shūji ↙	Tech. Grp.
	A Samurai's Fate ↙	Technique
	Crashing Wave Style ↖	Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
RANK 6	Medicine	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Kata ↖	Tech. Grp.
	Rouse the Soul ↙	Technique
	Sear the Wound ↙	Technique
	Healer's Hands (Mastery Ability): When you make a check to remove a condition from another character, you may receive 2 fatigue to treat the TN as 1.	

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Martial Arts [Unarmed]	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	❖ Rank 1 Kata	Tech. Grp.
	Courtier's Resolve	Technique
	The Body Is an Anvil	Technique
RANK 2	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Performance	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Fire Kihō	Tech. Grp.
	❖ Crimson Leaves Strike	Technique
	❖ Coiling Serpent Style	Technique
RANK 3	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Fitness	Skill
	Martial Arts [Unarmed]	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–3 Earth Kihō	Tech. Grp.
	❖ Thunderclap Strike	Technique
	Rallying Cry	Technique
RANK 4	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
	Government	Skill
	Skullduggery	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Void Shūji	Tech. Grp.
	Bravado	Technique
	Death Touch	Technique
RANK 5	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Fitness	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Void Kihō	Tech. Grp.
	❖ Striking as Void	Technique
	Sear the Wound	Technique
RANK 6	Sacred Fist (Mastery Ability): All of your kihō gain the following additional burst effect: If you have 3 or more bonus successes, your unarmed attack profiles gain the Sacred quality until the end of your next turn.	

Kuni Warden School [Monk]

A number of Kuni who lack the aptitude to become shugenja are trained in the tradition of the Kuni Wardens. These grim monks maintain the Barracks of the Damned, a massive hospital, laboratory, and prison that is also their temple. Experts at subduing Tainted humans and overcoming sorcery, even without weapons, many serve at or near the Wall, but some Wardens occasionally make their way into the wider world. The order sometimes sends its agents to "tend to the spiritual needs" of those who have been exposed to the corruption of Fu Leng. This can include offering the mercy of death, should their charge be fully consumed by the Taint.

Rings: +1 Fire, +1 Void

Starting Skills (choose four): +1 Command, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Martial Arts [Unarmed], +1 Meditation, +1 Performance, +1 Theology

Honor: 34

Techniques Available: Kihō (❖), Rituals (❖), Shūji (❖)

Starting Techniques:

- ❖ **Kihō (choose one):** Cleansing Spirit, Flame Fist
- ❖ **Rituals (choose one):** Cleansing Rite, Threshold Barrier
- ❖ **Shūji:** Truth Burns through Lies

Suppressing Blows (School Ability): When you perform an Attack action check using Martial Arts [Melee] or Martial Arts [Unarmed], you may spend ❖ as follows:
❖+: One character per ❖ spent this way who is in range of the weapon you used suffers the Silenced condition. You can spend a maximum number of ❖ this way up to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Sanctified robes, concealed armor, daishō (kabutowari and wakizashi), calligraphy kit, traveling pack.



Mirumoto Taoist Blade School [Bushi, Monk]

As the name suggests, the monks of the Mirumoto Taoist Blade School make study of swordplay an integral part of their quest for Enlightenment. Such are their skills that their blades act as if part of their bodies, striking as easily as fists would do for others. Their isolated monastery and dōjō is nestled deep within northern mountains within Dragon lands, and it is extraordinarily rare for them to host visitors. Most Rokugani who witness their skills do so when one of these monks departs to walk the Emerald Empire in search of new insights and possibly even new lessons in the blade.

Rings: +1 Void, +1 Water

Starting Skills (choose four): +1 Labor, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Martial Arts [Unarmed], +1 Meditation, +1 Survival, +1 Theology

Honor: 48

Techniques Available: Kata (✗), Kihō (✗), Rituals (✗)

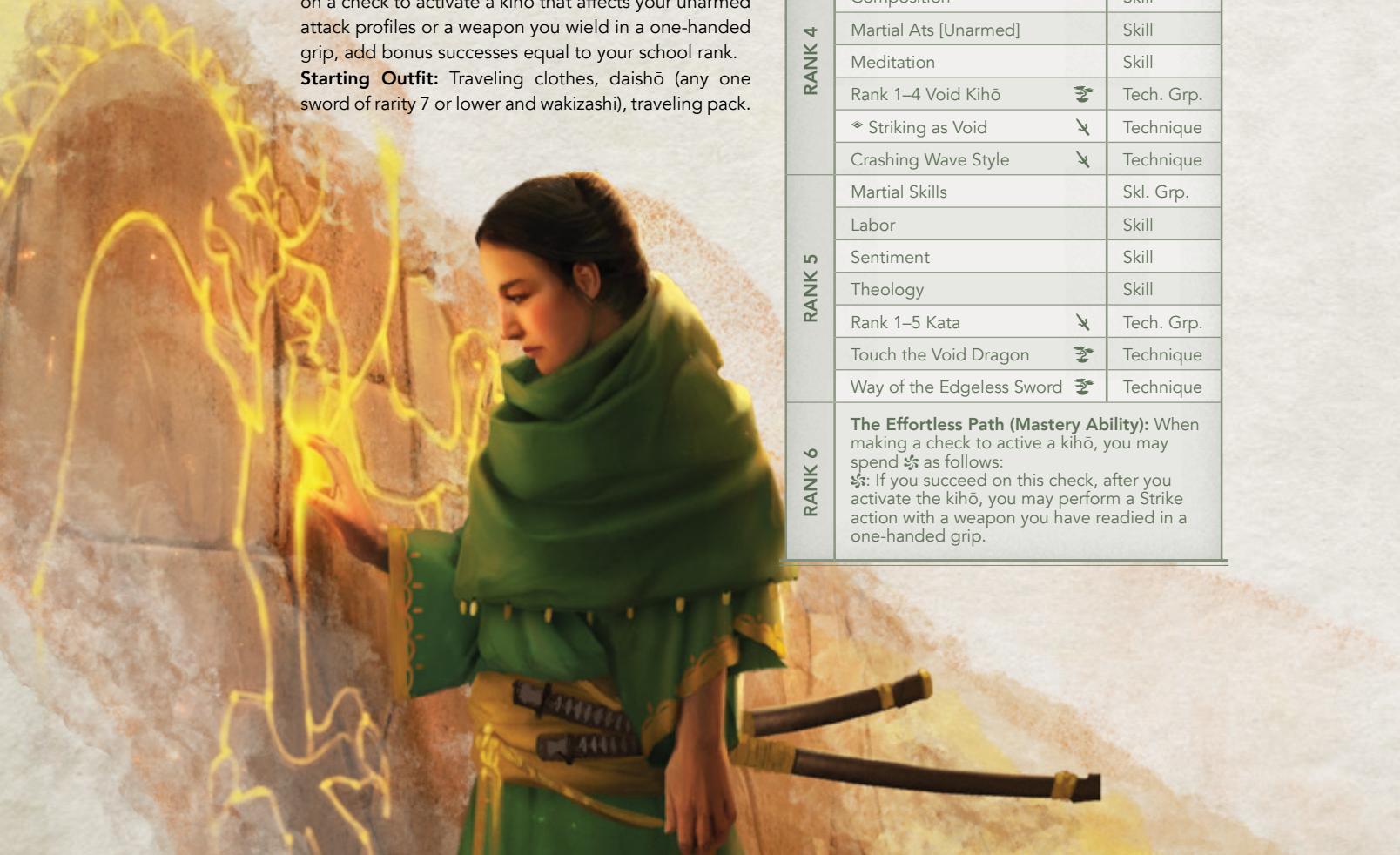
Starting Techniques:

- ➊ **Kata (choose two):** ✷ Iaijutsu Cut: Rising Blade, Soaring Slice, Striking as Water
- ➋ **Kihō:** Water Fist

Sharpened Ki (School Ability): Your kihō that affect your unarmed attack profiles also apply to weapons you wield in a one-handed grip. When you succeed on a check to activate a kihō that affects your unarmed attack profiles or a weapon you wield in a one-handed grip, add bonus successes equal to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, daishō (any one sword of rarity 7 or lower and wakizashi), traveling pack.

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Labor	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1 Kata	✗ Tech. Grp.
	✷ Crescent Moon Style	✗ Technique
RANK 2	Ki Protection	✗ Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Fitness	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Meditation	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Water Kihō	✗ Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	✷ Flowing Water Strike	✗ Technique
	Iaijutsu Cut: Crossing Blade	✗ Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Medicine	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Theology	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1–3 Earth Kihō	✗ Tech. Grp.
	Crimson Leaves Strike	✗ Technique
	Still the Elements	✗ Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Composition	Skill
	Martial Arts [Unarmed]	Skill
RANK 5	Meditation	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Void Kihō	✗ Tech. Grp.
	✷ Striking as Void	✗ Technique
	Crashing Wave Style	✗ Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Labor	Skill
RANK 6	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Kata	✗ Tech. Grp.
	Touch the Void Dragon	✗ Technique
	Way of the Edgeless Sword	✗ Technique
	The Effortless Path (Mastery Ability): When making a check to activate a kihō, you may spend ✷ as follows: ✗: If you succeed on this check, after you activate the kihō, you may perform a Strike action with a weapon you have readied in a one-handed grip.	



	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1 Rituals	Tech. Grp.
	↳ Bind the Shadow	Technique
RANK 2	Caress of Earth	Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Culture	Skill
	Medicine	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1-2 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	↳ Essence of Jade	Technique
	↳ Touchstone of Courage	Technique
	Trade Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Tactics	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1-3 Earth Shūji	Tech. Grp.
	↳ Earthquake	Technique
	Earth Becomes Sky	Technique
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Medicine	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
RANK 5	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1-4 Earth Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Rise, Air	Technique
	Wolf's Proposal	Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
RANK 6	Performance	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1-5 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Rouse the Soul	Technique
	Tomb of Jade	Technique
	Empathic Transfer (Mastery Ability): When you nourish , you may remove one condition the target is suffering by transferring it to yourself. When you drain , you may remove one condition you are suffering by transferring it to one of your targets.	

Moto Avenger School [Shugenja]

The Moto revere life, death, and the passage between the two. Life comes from the meeting of earth and sky as the rain falls to the plains; at death, the two are divided, for the body returns to the soil while the spirit returns to the sky. Moto spiritualists work to guide spirits to their proper place, that they may return to the eternal cycle, keeping the cosmos in balance. However, some beings defy the cycle through heresies such as undeath—and Moto Avengers are specialists trained to rectify such perversions of the natural order. The many Moto who have became Tainted within the Shadowlands have drawn Avengers from the distant corners of the Moto lands, that they might destroy these abominations and free the spirits of their fallen comrades.

Rings: +1 Air, +1 Earth

Starting Skills (choose three): +1 Courtesy, +1 Culture, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Sentiment, +1 Survival, +1 Theology

Honor: 44

Techniques Available: Air and Earth Invocations (↙), Rituals (↘), Shūji (↙)

Starting Techniques:

➊ **Invocations:** Grasp of Earth, Tempest of Air

➋ **Shūji:** Ancestry Unearthed, Honest Assessment

Hands of Earth and Sky (School Ability): When you perform an invocation that targets at least one other character, if you succeed, you may **nourish** or **drain**:

If you **nourish**, you may receive fatigue up to your school rank. One target removes fatigue equal to the amount you received.

If you **drain**, you may remove an amount of fatigue from yourself up to your school rank. One target receives fatigue equal to the amount you removed.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, ashigaru armor, wakizashi, scroll satchel, finger of jade, traveling pack.



Toritaka Phantom Hunter School [Shugenja]

From the days of the Falcon Clan founder, Toritaka Yotogi, Toritaka Phantom Hunters have sought out gaki and other malign supernatural beings, a task that is often unfortunately easy, given the clan's proximity to the haunted Shinomen Forest and the corrupted Shadowlands. Phantom Hunters often act in concert with Crab Clan warriors, using their legendary abilities to detect supernatural threats that others, even the skilled bushi stationed on the Wall, cannot perceive.

Rings: +1 Air, +1 Water

Starting Skills (choose three): +1 Culture, +1 Government, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Sentiment, +1 Survival, +1 Theology

Honor: 40

Techniques Available: Invocations (䷀), Rituals (䷁), Shūji (䷂)

Starting Techniques:

- **Invocations:** By the Light of Lord Moon
- **Rituals:** Cleansing Rite, Commune with the Spirits, ♦ Tea Ceremony
- **Shūji:** Courtier's Resolve

Eyes of Yotogi (School Ability): Otherworldly beings treat your vigilance as being increased by your school rank. When you make a check to search for Otherworldly beings, or make an Initiative check in a conflict against them, if you succeed, add bonus successes equal to your school rank.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, sanctified robes, daishō (katana and wakizashi), scroll satchel, traveling pack.

	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Courtesy	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Bō of Water	Technique
RANK 2	Threshold Barrier	Technique
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Culture	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Water Shūji	Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	♦ Essence of Jade	Technique
	Striking as Air	Technique
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Government	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Sentiment	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1–3 Water Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	♦ Rise, Water	Technique
	♦ Crescent Moon Style	Technique
	Trade Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Performance	Skill
RANK 5	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	♦ Rouse the Soul	Technique
	♦ Soul Sunder	Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Command	Skill
RANK 6	Courtesy	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Air Shūji	Tech. Grp.
	♦ Flowing Water Cut	Technique
	Wrath of Kaze-no-Kami	Technique
	Yotogi's Piercing Gaze (Mastery Ability): You can perceive beings that are normally invisible to human sight, such as spirits and characters concealed by supernatural abilities. When you deal damage to an Otherworldly being, you ignore an amount of its resistance up to your ranks in Meditation.	



	ADVANCE	TYPE
RANK 1	Artisan Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Culture	Skill
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1 Fire Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Cloak of Night	Technique
RANK 2	Reflections of P'an Ku	Technique
	Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Aesthetics	Skill
	Courtesy	Skill
	Skulduggery	Skill
	Rank 1–2 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
RANK 3	❖ Hands of the Tides	Technique
	❖ Skulk	Technique
	Trade Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Government	Skill
	Smithing	Skill
	Theology	Skill
RANK 4	Rank 1–3 Fire Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Vapor of Nightmares	Technique
	❖ Wings of the Phoenix	Technique
	Social Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Martial Arts [Melee]	Skill
	Performance	Skill
RANK 5	Sentiment	Skill
	Rank 1–4 Air Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Silencing Stroke	Technique
	Suijin's Embrace	Technique
	Artisan Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Culture	Skill
RANK 6	Government	Skill
	Theology	Skill
	Rank 1–5 Fire Invocations	Tech. Grp.
	Ever-Changing Waves	Technique
	Tomb of Jade	Technique
	Kingdom of Paper and Ink (Mastery Ability): When one of your shikigami performs an action, it may spend  as follows: ❖+: Another one of your shikigami at range 0–3 of you may perform an action. Increase the  cost of this ability by  for each of your shikigami that has acted this turn.	

Yogo Preserver School [Shugenja]

Like all Scorpion, Yogo Preservers view their duty to the Emperor as being beyond the considerations of honor. Theirs is a special task, bound to the cursed destiny of the original Yogo—protecting shrines that contain artifacts best lost to history, such as the Black Scrolls. Using their paper servants called *shikigami*, these somber individuals poison, murder, and thieve—in the name of staving off the darkness that threatens all Rokugan.

Rings: +1 Fire, +1 Void

Starting Skills (choose three): +1 Aesthetics, +1 Courtesy, +1 Martial Arts [Melee], +1 Sentiment, +1 Skulduggery, +1 Theology

Honor: 38

Techniques Available: Invocations (❖), Rituals (❖), Shūji (❖)

Starting Techniques:

❖ **Invocations:** By the Light of the Lord Moon,
❖ Embrace of Kenro-Ji-Jin, Yari of Air

❖ **Rituals:** ❖ Craft Shikigami, Threshold Barrier

Warded Shikigami (School Ability): You can have a number of additional shikigami (see page 115) up to your school rank. Once per scene, after you perform an action, you may instruct one of your shikigami to perform an action, for which it benefits from your assistance.

Starting Outfit: Traveling clothes, sanctified robes, concealed armor, wakizashi, bō (staff), traveling pack.



Shadowlands Advantages and Disadvantages

Those who follow their duty to stand against the creatures of the Shadowlands tend to acquire character changes to both their personality and physical forms. While the new advantages and disadvantages that follow are often linked to service on the Wall and beyond, they can also be used for samurai in other lands where tales of oni and nezumi are more childhood stories than serious threats.

SPECIFIC DISTINCTIONS

These distinctions follow the same format as those in **Chapter 2** of the core rulebook.

DEAD EYES (EARTH)

Hida Fumiko led the young samurai along the parapets near the Third Tower, pointing out the best locations for defenses. It had all been part of their earlier training, but there was no such thing as too much preparation in Fumiko's opinion. She looked down the stonework that formed the walkway along that part of the Wall and gestured to a tall Crab standing more like a statue than a human. "You see him?" she asked. She continued without waiting. "That's Hiroki. Never runs from anything, no matter what comes over the side."

She paused. "Don't bother talking to him. He died a long time ago. One day, his body will realize that."

Type: Mental

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Dead Eyes distinction:

- ➊ After what of you've seen, the world holds no true dread for you any more. While you are not immune to stress or fear, during battle you go "dead in the eyes," allowing you to act unclouded by terror, emotion, sentiment, or hesitation even while Compromised (though you still suffer the negative mechanical effects of this state). You are also more dour at other times, and struggle to find pleasure in many of life's joys.
- ➋ When performing a check that relies on avoiding fear or exuberant emotions (such as a Meditation [Earth] check to avoid running screaming from a monstrous oni or a Sentiment [Earth] check to avoid being caught up in a raucous crowd), you may reroll up to two dice.

FRIEND OF THE NEZUMI (WATER)

I loyally report all of the secret tunnels detected in my patrols under the Wall, and the many goblins and other creatures slain inside them. My gunsō praises my work.

I do not mention who helps me find them, who helps me kill their occupants. They saved me on a patrol long ago, and I saved them on another. There are no lies, and there is no need for anyone to know. They keep my secrets, and I keep theirs.

—from the personal journal of Hida Gakuto

Type: Interpersonal

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Friend of the Nezumi distinction:

- ➊ Somehow you earned the respect and admiration of the nezumi, and you count them among your closest allies. You are an honorary member of a specific nezumi tribe, able to enter their warrens freely and enjoy the hospitality of their people. You speak their language at a basic level, understand their culture and customs, and may ask their leaders for favors.
- ➋ When performing a check to interact with nezumi or one that relates to your status with them (such as a Courtesy [Water] check with a nezumi to help locate a secret tunnel near the Wall or a Performance [Water] check to convince a tribe to follow your lead), you may reroll up to two dice.

LIGHT SLEEPER (WATER)

"You see these scars?" she asked. He nodded respectfully at the Hiruma. It looked like someone had run a rake down her face—then repeated the action several times.

"This is what you get when you dare slumber here. Everyone else died that night." She closed her eyes for a moment, then opened them abruptly, startling him. "You rest your guard, you die." She looked closely at him. "You learn to stay awake, even when you sleep. Or you join the rest of my old patrol."

Type: Physical

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Light Sleeper distinction:

- ➊ You rouse from sleep very easily, a trick considered essential in hostile territory. You are trained to awaken before danger arrives, sleep with your weapons ready, and pretend to be in a deep sleep to lure enemies closer. You can go from a deep sleep to fully alert and fighting in the blink of an eye.

- When performing a check that calls on rapidly recovering from sleep (such as a Survival [Water] check to detect a threatening sound while dozing or a Fitness [Water] check to react even when someone else is standing watch), you may reroll up to two dice.

SPECIFIC PASSIONS

This passion follows the same format as those in **Chapter 2** of the core rulebook.

CREATURES (FIRE)

Doji Kaagi leaned forward eagerly as the wizened scout's words faded into the air. "Tell me more, please," he asked. "How many horns did the beast have, and was it really taller than a pagoda?"

Type: Mental

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Creatures passion:

- You are fascinated by strange creatures, monsters, *bakemono*, and other such oddities. You can easily identify such creatures and know them by heart. Tales of monsters and local horror folklore transfix you, and you are always eager to build your wealth of monster lore further.
- After performing a check to study or hear tales of odd creatures (such as a Culture [Fire] check to wonder about new creatures or a Performance [Fire] check to entice someone to offer you a tale of encounters with Shadowlands monsters), you remove 3 strife.

SPECIFIC ADVERSITIES

These adversities follow the same format as those in **Chapter 2** of the core rulebook

DEMON WOUND (EARTH)

It burns. Even after I stabbed it and it collapsed onto me, its last, fetid breaths entering my ear. Even after the scars faded to thin, almost invisible lines. Each night, each patrol, it comes back like boiling oil dripping onto my flesh.

It may be dead, but it lives in my skin.

Type: Spiritual, Scar

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Demon Wound adversity:

- You were wounded by an oni, and while the scar isn't Tainted (or perhaps even isn't visible anymore), it causes you to suffer from terrible nightmares.
- When you make a check that involves your wound (such as a Fitness [Earth] check to get a good night's sleep while in the Shadowlands or a Meditation [Earth] check to refrain from crying out in pain while near an oni), you must choose and reroll two dice showing **Q** or **G** results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

LOST NAME (VOID)

Kuni Kazu sat in contemplation. She closed her eyes and calmed her heart. Sleep had been difficult of late, and she knew it would not improve while traveling. Kazu knew why, but that didn't help. She also knew she could never tell anyone of it or seek outside aid. This was her own personal demon, she thought, almost with a laugh—a laugh she knew would turn to screams if she allowed it to happen.

Kazu could hear it now, soft whispers in her head. She could even see the letters of its words carved into the blackness behind her eyelids. With each day, the voice grew louder, the letters brighter. One day, she would hear only its voice, see only those letters. Or she would destroy it as she had so many other dangers. And that day, she knew, was coming soon.

Type: Spiritual

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Lost Name adversity:

- Your name is no longer your own, and it now belongs to an oni. Perhaps it was stolen from you, taken in a moment of weakness. Or perhaps you gave it willingly in exchange for fell power. But now the oni knows your every secret, hears your every thought, and can see the world through your eyes. You are both bonded now, and it will surely end you if you cannot sever the connection.
- When you make a check that involves personal convictions (such as a Meditation [Void] check as part of your quest for Enlightenment or a Survival [Void] check to create a spiritually harmonious rock garden), you must choose and reroll two dice showing **Q** or **G** results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

SPECIFIC ANXIETIES

These anxieties follow the same format as those in **Chapter 2** of the core rulebook

FALLEN ANCESTOR (VOID)

"This is unacceptable." The powerful samurai stood, almost posing, as the last sunlight filtered through into Kaiu Namio's room. "You are a pitiful excuse for a Crab, let alone a Kaiu. Your works collapse. Your weapons fail." Namio had heard it all before. Endlessly. All his life. His cheeks burned in shame.

The figure turned, and the light shifted as it passed through its clothing. "You know what you need to do to regain honor for yourself and your family. Our family." It beckoned to a pile of papers. "All of my records are there. All I have learned of the ways others were too stubborn to accept. You need but use them, and the power I possessed will be yours."

Namio reached for one and began to read.

Type: Spiritual, Interpersonal

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Fallen Ancestor anxiety:

- ➊ Your ancestor fell to Jigoku's seductive call, giving their name to an oni or committing a terrible atrocity. Now their spirit calls to you from Jigoku's maw, tempting you into following them down the same dark path.
- ➋ After performing a check that involves the spirits or your family history (such as a Theology [Void] check to perform a family ritual or a Sentiment [Void] check to show mercy to a wounded opponent), you receive 3 strife. If this is the first time this has occurred this scene, gain 1 Void point.

OBTUSE (AIR)

Hida Shion looked out over the field, filled with plants. Flowers, actually, more than she'd ever seen before. It was spring, and suddenly flowers were everywhere. Even here, just north of the Wall, there were flowers.

Children ran among them, playing. Couples made their way through them slowly, enjoying the fragrances and smiling at the life all around them.

Tomorrow it would all be cleared to make way for a new dōjō, something actually useful. Shion picked up one of the purple petals, then snorted and dropped it to the ground.

Type: Mental

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Obtuse anxiety:

- ➊ Try as you may, you just cannot enjoy art, poetry, music, or other such needless frivolities. Subtlety is lost on you, beauty is something you don't comprehend, art is a waste of resources, and anything but the purely functional is meaningless in your eyes. Your dour presence can be overwhelming in social settings, and you generally forget social niceties unless reminded.
- ➋ After performing a check to analyze or react to the emotions of others (such as a Design [Air] check to compliment someone's garb or a Sentiment (Air) to decode a double meaning in someone else's speech), you receive 3 strife. If this is the first time this has occurred this scene, gain 1 Void point.

REFORMED MAHŌ-TSUKAI (WATER)

I remember my past. It was always filled with heat. Flames roared in my eyes, blood dripped from my knives, the air itself burned as things not of the Mortal Realm did my bidding.

I know my present. It is simple, isolated, penitent. I see those who died at my hand when I look across the fields, their eyes piercing my soul with each hateful stare. I hear whispers in the night, plots from those who sacrificed at my side but now want only to carve me as we once did to our captives. I can feel tendrils of



power seeking me out, Witch Hunters and others who can never forgive what I was or accept I have changed.

I do not believe I have a future in this life. Perhaps, after many hundreds of passages around the Celestial Wheel, I may be allowed to reincarnate as a human again. Perhaps.

Type: Interpersonal

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Reformed Mahō-Tsukai adversity:

- ➊ Once you were a mahō-tsukai who wielded dreadful blood magics under the tutelage of the Bloodspeakers or your own occult study. But that was then. You have since seen the error of your ways and live a life of atonement. You've done everything you can to bury your past, but a bell cannot be unrung, and now and again it still catches up with you. The consequences of the atrocities you committed still find you out, oni you summoned still seek you, and the tsukai with whom you once consorted will stop at nothing to silence you. We cannot outrun our shadows; sooner or later, you know that yours will claim their due. If the details of this your terrible past life become public, your glory value decreases dramatically, as if you had lost staked glory (by 30 to 40). Your status value also decreases considerably by the same amount, as if you had lost staked status.
- ➋ After performing a check that reminds you of your former life (such as a Courtesy [Water] check to speak pleasantly with a priest or religious scholar or a Meditation [Water] check to calm yourself when witnessing the aftermath of a blood magic sacrifice), you receive 3 strife. If this is the first time this has occurred this scene, gain 1 Void point.

NEW SHADOWLANDS TAINT DISADVANTAGES

The following are new alternatives to the Shadowlands Taint disadvantages offered on page 127 of the core rulebook. When a character receives their second, third, fourth, or fifth Shadowlands Taint disadvantage, then at the GM's discretion, they may choose one of these instead of the standard version of the disadvantage for that ring. These can also provide ideas for creating new disadvantages along the same lines, perhaps even specific ones based on a PC's particular idiosyncrasies or background.

SHADOWLANDS TAINT [KANSEN WHISPERS] (AIR)

"I was called to examine the sleeping Hiruma, who returned several weeks ago from a long patrol. She was loudly crying out in opposition to something, an argument of which we could hear only one side. Such was her fervor that it took several of her comrades to hold her down, and her face was wet with tears and sweat. Nearly an hour later, she collapsed, nodding her head.

"The next I heard of her was when a visiting Crane took offense at her words. Both died soon after."

—The Obsidian Journal

Type: Curse, Mental

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Shadowlands Taint [Kansen Whispers] (Air) adversity:

- ➊ You are a Tainted being. The kansen speak to you each night, filling your dreams with secrets of Rokugani history concerning betrayals, foolish decisions, and many, many lies. Each morning, you awaken filled with anger at your society, but can you never remember the details of the revealed knowledge.
- ➋ When you make a check to use subtlety in your communications (such as a Courtesy [Air] check to convey a double-meaning in court or a Composition [Air] check refine your letter declining an important invitation), you must choose and reroll two dice showing ⚡ or ⚡ results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

SHADOWLANDS TAINT [DISTORTED LIMBS] (EARTH)

"We on the Wall watch to the south, but not enough of us watch each other. My fellow Kuni do this for those known to be Tainted, especially those in the Barracks of the Damned, but this is a task all of us must take on. I chastise myself as well as our clan in this.

"The only sign was when his weapons fell and struck the parapet stones. We could only gasp as he leapt over the side and crawled, limbs akimbo like a spider, headfirst down the Wall to disappear into the darkness at the bottom."

—The Obsidian Journal

Type: Curse, Physical

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Shadowlands Taint [Distorted Limbs] (Earth) adversity:

- ➊ You are a Tainted being. One or more of your limbs or digits grew longer but became less powerful. You are able to reach things in narrow gaps and can climb faster than normal.
- ➋ When you make a check that calls on your physical prowess (such as a Fitness [Earth] check to survive a fall or a Labor [Earth] check to exert yourself in the field), you must choose and reroll two dice showing Q or S results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

SHADOWLANDS TAINT [UNNATURAL SKIN] (FIRE)

"Long before I set out past the Wall, I had a friend. A good one. We had our gempuku the same day. We were Crab, we knew of the Taint, and we knew of our duty should it appear in us.

"He went missing in for weeks. When I broke into his hovel, I found only a huddled mass of pale, grisly flesh, shot through with thick chitin. It took me long minutes to find the head and remove it."

—The Obsidian Journal

Type: Curse, Physical

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Shadowlands Taint [Unnatural Skin] (Fire) adversity:

- ➊ You are a Tainted being. Your skin is leathery and thick and may even take on the coloration of a corpse. Your skin is treated as concealed armor (see page 237 of the core rulebook).
- ➋ When you make a check requiring rapid movements (such as a Fitness [Fire] check to vault over a falling log or a Martial Arts [Unarmed] [Fire] check to strike swiftly), you must choose and reroll two dice showing Q or S results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

SHADOWLANDS TAINT [ONE WITH THE DARKNESS] (VOID)

"The report was simple: one of the patrol had simply vanished in the night. No signs of struggle, no cries for help. Only what remained of a jade finger, now a puddle of dark tar. Why its owner did not report this days earlier, when the patrol could have safely returned, is unknown.

"Others of the patrol were lost on the way back, the butchery displayed horrible in the extreme. What is worse is that two peasants in a nearby village were found today. The same claw marks marred their flesh."

—The Obsidian Journal

Type: Curse, Physical, Spiritual

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Shadowlands Taint [One with the Darkness] (Void) adversity:

- ➊ You are a Tainted being. When fully covered by shadows or in an unlit location, you cannot be detected. You are also able to conceal nonphysical effects of the Taint from any detection.
- ➋ When you make a check to intuit meaning (such as a Courtesy [Void] check to seek a hidden threat in a message or a Survival [Void] check to sense what crops will grow best next season), you must choose and reroll two dice showing Q or S results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

SHADOWLANDS TAINT [BLASPHEMOUS APPETITES] (WATER)

"I can feel it. Stronger now, stronger than yesterday. Soon it will be stronger than I am.

"I see those around me and cannot see anything about them. Their faces are obscured, and their voices muffled, as if under a cloth. All are as puppets...except the wounded. Their torn flesh. Their bloodied limbs. Only long meditation can clear my head, and I fear one day that will not be enough. I must end it, before it ends me."

—The Obsidian Journal

Type: Curse, Mental, Spiritual

Effects: The following apply to a character with the Shadowlands Taint [Blasphemous Appetites] (Water) adversity:

- ➊ You are a Tainted being. Your appearance now includes fetid breath, bleeding gums, and jagged, discolored teeth. You have a near uncontrollable hunger for raw meat: the bloodier, the better. You aren't particular over the species and may even devour carrion or small chunks of obsidian if especially ravenous. Once sated with such delights, you remove all strife.
- ➋ When you make a check to notice details about those you care about (such as a Sentiment [Water] check to detect the emotional state of a friend or a Medicine [Water] check to determine their physical state), you must choose and reroll two dice showing Q or S results. After resolving the check, if you failed, you gain 1 Void point.

New Samurai Heritages

A variety of unique heritages arise from having a bloodline derived—at least in part—from the Crab. This is true even for non-Crab characters, who may bear Crab blood because of the marriage of members of that clan into their family lineage. There are also more sinister heritages that might apply, thanks to the influence of the Shadowlands and the Taint of Jigoku.

Table 2-1: New Samurai Heritages represents these backgrounds when creating a new samurai PC who has ancestral connections with the Crab Clan or to Shadowlands. This table can be used instead of **Table 2-1: Samurai Heritages** on page 96 of the core rulebook, and is used in the same manner.

TABLE 2-1: NEW SAMURAI HERITAGES

ROLL	RESULT	MODIFIERS	OTHER EFFECTS
1	Blood and Mortar: You can unequivocally trace your lineage back to the earliest days of the Kaiu Wall. It is said that the blood of your family is mixed with the mortar holding together the first stones of the Wall.	Increase your status by 3.	You gain the Blessed Lineage advantage (see page 103 of the core rulebook). This can be assigned in excess of the normal limitations on disadvantages at character creation. While on the Wall, your glory rank is treated a1 higher.
2-3	Infamous Builder: One of your distant ancestors designed and built a fortification or weapon that failed at a crucial moment. Many samurai perished as a result, and your ancestor's name is still cursed to this day.	Decrease your glory by 5.	Roll a ten-sided die again to determine a skill to aid in restoring your ancestor's name (1-3: Government, 4-6: Labor, 7-10: Smithing); gain +1 rank in that skill.
4-5	Lost in the Darkness: One of your ancestors vanished in the Shadowlands. Rumors dog your family that your ancestor simply fled out of cowardice...or that they even came to embrace corruption as one of the fallen samurai known as the Lost. One day you vow to learn the truth of the matter.	Increase your honor by 5 and decrease your glory by 5.	Roll a ten-sided die again to determine a skill to aid in learning of your ancestor's fate (1-3: Culture, 4-6: Survival, 7-10: Theology); gain +1 rank in that skill. Additionally, your ancestor might still be alive, in the Shadowlands...waiting.
6-7	Vengeance for the Fallen: Your ancestor fought many battles against the Shadowlands, and finally fell while facing an immensely powerful oni. Your ancestor calls to you to find and destroy the vile creature responsible for their death, for only then can they find true peace in the afterlife.	Increase your honor by 5.	You gain the Haunting (Void) adversity (see page 122 of the core rulebook). This can be assigned in excess of the normal limitations on disadvantages at character creation. Roll a ten-sided die again to determine a Martial skill (1-3: Fitness, 4-5: Martial Arts [Melee], 6-7: Martial Arts [Ranged], 8: Martial Arts [Unarmed], 9: Tactics, 10: Meditation); gain +1 rank in that skill.
8-9	Twenty Goblin Thief: The Crab periodically announce a "Twenty Goblin Winter," during which rōnin who return with the heads of twenty goblins are accepted as members of the Crab Clan. One of your ancestors is said to have stolen heads from another rōnin and claimed the heads as their own.	Decrease your glory by 3.	Roll a ten-sided die again to determine a skill to aid in learning of your ancestor's fate (1-3: Culture, 4-6: Skulduggery, 7-10: Theology); gain +1 rank in that skill.
10	Tainted Blood: Your ancestor is rumored to have flouted Imperial law and hidden their Taint. Worse, you worry that perhaps your bloodline is also corrupted, and a foul influence still lurks deep in your being—and that it influences you in subtle and insidious ways.	Decrease your status by 3.	You gain the Fallen Ancestor disadvantage (see 98). Choose one of your character's rings; you may reduce the value of that ring by 1 to increase the value of your Void Ring by 1 (this still cannot raise it above 3).

New Weapons

Crab warriors tend to favor large, two-handed weapons and powerful crossbows to tackle the terrible creatures of the Shadowlands. In addition, they have adopted a handful of foreign weapons from gaijin mercenaries hired to shore up sections of the Wall over the years.

SWORDS

While the Crab are famous for their use of heavy and blunted weapons, they are still Rokugani and therefore hold the sword up as the ultimate weapon.

FLYSSA

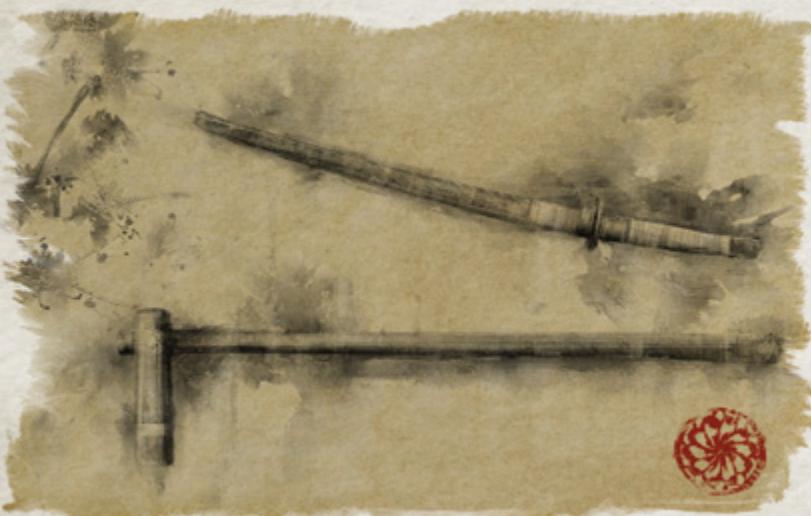
The *flyssa* is a gaijin weapon that foreign mercenaries introduced to the Crab. Similar to the *nodachi* in use and construction, the *flyssa* has a long blade tapering to a deadly point, a sizeable hilt, and no crossguard. While relatively thin, the blade has a broad belly like a scimitar's and it flares near the hilt to provide a bit of protection to the wielder's hand.

While making an Attack action check using a *flyssa*, you may spend $\diamond\diamond$ as follows:

$\diamond\diamond+$: Ignore 1 point of your target's physical resistance per $\diamond\diamond$ spent this way.

KABUTOWARI

Similar to the *tekkan*, the *kabutowari* is a blunt, cast-iron sword the Crab use in their defense of the Wall. Developed from the humble *jitte*, the "skull breaker" is the size and shape of a *wakizashi*. It has a curved, blunt blade with a rectangular cross section, a small cast crossguard, and like the *jitte*, a sizeable hook cast into the back of the blade near the crossguard. Often carried as a backup weapon by Crab samurai and ashigaru, it is used more to pry apart armor or chitin plates than to slash or stab foes.



TEKKAN

More a solid truncheon than an actual sword, the *tekkan*—the name translates roughly to "iron pipe"—is a single-piece, cast-iron weapon used to crack open armor and battle creatures immune to slashing weapons. Roughly five feet long, the *tekkan* resembles a primitive *nodachi* in size and shape. It has a long, curved "blade" with a rectangular cross section and a two-handed hilt with a small crossguard.

HAMMERS AND AXES

As Rokugan's premier military engineers, members of the Crab Clan tend to carry weapons that started their lives as tools. A warrior can never be when monsters of the Shadowlands will attack, and every Crab knows that a stout hammer can break open armor or shatter a bony carapace just as easily as driving a spike into a plank.

GENNO

The *genno* is a massive, long-handled hammer used for demolition and construction. Essentially a scaled-up artisan's hammer, it consists of a square or octagonal steel head mounted on a long ironwood haft around four feet long. The head is made from relatively soft steel and has two hardened striking surfaces: one flat, the other slightly convex or crowned. The flat head is used for basic hammering, chiseling, and demolition. The crowned surface is used for driving spikes and nails flush with surfaces and other work that requires a more focused power.

When you perform an Attack action check with this weapon, you may spend $\diamond\diamond$ as follows:

$\diamond\diamond$: If you succeed but your target reduces the damage of this Attack action to 0, they suffer the Dazed and Prone conditions.

TSURUHASHI

The humble *tsuruhashi* is one of many tools repurposed as a weapon by the Crab. Based on the common miner's pickax, this ax features a forged-steel head mounted to a solid wooden haft. Roughly the length of a *katana*, the *tsuruhashi*'s head features two striking ends—a flat blade and a sharp point. While it is commonly used in construction and demolition, many Crab ashigaru and even some clan samurai use the *tsuruhashi* in battle to deadly effect. The blade head can pry apart armor, while the pointed head easily pierces it, and both cause grievous wounds thanks to the leverage provided by the long handle.

When you perform an Attack action check with this weapon, you may spend \diamond as follows:

$\diamond \diamond$: If you succeed but your target reduces the damage of this Attack action to 0, their armor gains the Damaged quality and they suffer the Bleeding condition.

BOWS AND CROSSBOWS

The Crab use ranged weapons primarily to defend positions along the Wall. To that end, the Crab have developed numerous heavy crossbows and specialty weapons that use mechanical principles to improve performance against the evils lurking in the Shadowlands.

DOOM CROSSBOW

This massive and powerful crossbow is a middle step between the common oyumi and the ballista siege weapon. A little over three feet in length, it has a sturdy ironwood stock and long bow limbs made of steel. A doom crossbow fires long ironwood bolts about as thick as an average Rokugani's thumb, which are typically tipped with a barbed, armor-piercing head. Thanks to the size and the strength of the steel limbs, it requires a special detachable, hand-cranked windlass to cock it. The weapon's power allows its deadly bolts to punch through metal plates, armor, and the thick, scaly hides of oni with ease.

Despite its fantastic destructive potential, a doom crossbow has a number of serious drawbacks. It is quite heavy and requires uncommon strength to use. It is also quite hard to aim at nearby targets. However, when its user is fighting on the Wall, these issues can be lessened by securing the crossbow into a stand, and become fair trade-offs for a weapon that can potentially drop a raging ogre with one shot.

When you perform an Attack action with a doom crossbow that inflicts a critical strike, increase the severity by the silhouette of the target.

KAIU NO OYUMI

Developed within the last century by Kaiu engineers, this large, bulky weapon is essentially a rapid-fire oyumi. The Kaiu no oyumi consists of a heavy oyumi with a large box attached to the top of the stock. The box contains a magazine of bolts and a cocking mechanism that, with a single pull, draws the string, loads a bolt, and readies the mechanism to fire. While they are few in number due to their relative mechanical complexity compared with the standard oyumi, they have proven very valuable in extended engagements on the Wall, allowing small numbers of soldiers to face down numerically superior foes while awaiting reinforcements.

When performing an Attack action check with this weapon, you may spend \diamond as follows:

$\diamond \diamond$: After performing the Attack action, immediately prepare this weapon for use again.

STORM BOW

The strange and wondrous storm bow is a recent addition to the Crab arsenal. Designed by Crab engineers to tackle groups of massed enemies, this large and awkward weapon fires a cloud of vicious darts with one pull of the trigger. Overall, it resembles a larger, bulkier Kaiu no oyumi.

Unfortunately, the ability to strike many targets at once comes with numerous drawbacks. The weapon is extremely front-heavy thanks to the firing mechanism. In addition, it has a shorter range than a typical crossbow, and its darts are less lethal than standard bolts.

When performing an attack action check with this weapon, you may spend \diamond as follows:

\diamond : Each character at range 0–1 of your initial target also becomes a target of this attack.

SHIELDS

The use of shields is rare in Rokugan. Those that do exist in the Empire are made of either hardened wood or metal and decorated with clan mon and other symbols of the samurai who wield them. Shields are most commonly found among the Crab, who use them occasionally and, more often, give them to ashigaru, who tend to pair them with either crossbows or polearms.

A character can only wield one shield at a time.

SODE

A throwback to an earlier age of armor making, sode are rarely seen outside of Crab lands. These medium-sized shields first appeared on Rokugan's battlefields centuries ago and soon were considered a standard part of a warrior's armor. Made of hide, iron, and steel plate, sode attach to the wearer's shoulders and extend to the elbows. They provide excellent coverage and allow a mounted samurai to keep their hands free while still receiving the benefits of a shield. Use of sode has fallen off over the past few decades, but some tradition-minded Crab warriors wear them when fighting on the Wall or patrolling the Shadowlands, especially when wearing heavy, old-fashioned ō-yoroi armor.

A set of sode do not require free hands to wield, but cannot be wielded with another shield. While wielding readied sode, treat your physical resistance as 1 higher when reducing damage from projectile attacks (such as Martial Arts [Ranged] checks).

TABLE 2-1: WEAPONS

NAME	SKILL	RNG	DMG	DLS	GRIPS	QUALITIES	RARITY	PRICE
SWORDS								
Flyssa	[Melee]	1	4	4	1-hand: – 2-hand: Razor-Edged	Wargear	8	15 koku
Kabutowari	[Melee]	0-1	3	3	1-hand: –	Durable, Snaring	7	6 koku
Tekkan	[Melee]	1-2	4	3	1-hand: Cumbersome 2-hand: Damage +2	Durable, Wargear	8	50 koku
HAMMERS AND AXES								
Genno	[Melee]	0-1	3	3	1-hand: – 2-hand: Damage +4	Durable, Mundane	5	1 koku
Tsuruhashi	[Melee]	1	4	3	1-hand: Cumbersome 2-hand: Deadliness +2	Mundane	4	5 bu
BOWS AND CROSSBOWS								
Doom Crossbow	[Ranged]	3-5	8	6	2-hand: –	Cumbersome, Prepare, Wargear	10	80 koku
Kaiu no Oyumi	[Ranged]	2-5	7	3	2-hand: –	Cumbersome, Prepare, Wargear	8	60 koku
Storm Bow	[Ranged]	1-4	4	3	2-hand: –	Cumbersome, Prepare, Wargear	9	60 koku
SHIELDS								
Sode	[Melee]	0	1	1	Shoulder: –	Durable, Wargear	8	8 koku
Large Shield	[Melee]	0	3	2	1-hand: –	Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear	8	10 koku
Small Shield	[Melee]	0	2	2	1-hand: –	Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear	8	6 koku
SIEGE WEAPONS								
Ballista	[Ranged]	3-5	14	8	2-hand: –	Durable, Prepare (2)	7	60 koku
O-Gata Dohou	[Ranged]	4-5	16	6	2-hand: –	Durable, Prepare (2)	7	120 koku

LARGE SHIELD

Large shields, also called body shields, are a common sight among Crab ashigaru on the Wall. Typically used in conjunction with polearms, they provide incredible protection from both melee and ranged attacks. Roughly the size of an average Rokugani, a typical body shield is made from hardwoods reinforced with steel and covered in leather.

While you have a readied large shield, treat your physical resistance as 6.

As a Movement and Support action, if you have a shield readied, you may increase the TN of Attack action checks made targeting you by 2. This persists until the start of your next turn.

SMALL SHIELD

Roughly the size and shape of a sode, small shields are the most common type of shield the Crab (and some Unicorn mounted forces) use. Usually made of iron or steel, small shields are carried in one hand by a sturdy handle. They are typically square or rectangular and often feature spikes, scalloped edges, engraving, embossed images, and other embellishments. Small shields are often used by skirmishers patrolling the Shadowlands or by lightly armed ashigaru. They provide respectable coverage without weighing down the user overmuch.

While you have a readied small shield, treat your physical resistance as 5.

As a Movement and Support action, if you have a shield readied, you may increase the TN of Attack action checks made targeting you by 1. This persists until the start of your next turn

SIEGE WEAPONS

Along with their defense of the Wall, the Crab are famous for being extremely talented at the fine art of the siege. While other clans often refrain from using destructive force against castles and cities, Crab warriors attack fortifications with relish.

Longer Preparation: A siege weapon modifies the Prepare quality with an (X) value. This means you must use X number of Support actions instead of 1 to prepare it. Note that multiple characters at range 0 of the weapon can undertake this Support action.

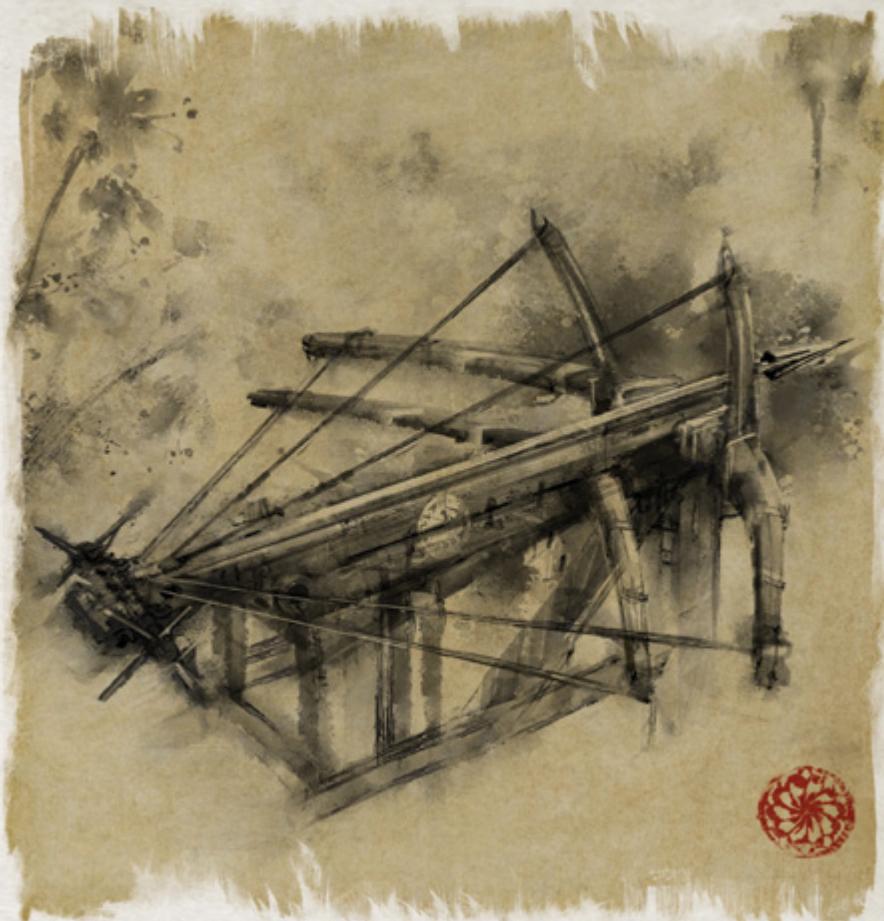
BALLISTA

Used as both a siege weapon and a defensive weapon to ward off creatures along the Wall, the ballista is a crossbow writ large. Mounted on a tilting, swiveling frame and operated by a crew of two or three, the ballista is made primarily of wood, with metal fittings and accents. It fires massive bolts nearly four feet long and four inches across and performs extremely well against heavily armored enemies and flying creatures. A skilled, well-equipped crew can keep up a withering rate of fire and can provide pinpoint support fire or deny an area with equal ease.

Damage inflicted with a ballista ignores 4 points of physical resistance.

O-GATA DOHOU

The o-gata dohou (literally, "stone-throwing machine") uses mechanical principles to fling heavy stones, flaming balls of pitch, scrap, corpses, or anything else handy over long distances. Mounted on wheels and served by a crew of up to six depending on the size, the o-gata dohou is used primarily in siege warfare to batter fortifications and destroy buildings. The Crab also use it as an antidemon and antipersonnel weapon to fling sanctified stones or flaming projectiles at fiends from the Shadowlands that are attacking the Wall.



New Armor

It is common knowledge that the Crab love armor—and the heavier, the better. Their long service on the Wall and their experiences with dangerous Shadowlands creatures has made Crab warriors appreciate a sturdy suit of armor more than warriors of other clans.

Ō-YOROI

Ō-yoroi—also known as great armor or Wall armor—is the heaviest armor worn by Crab samurai, and possibly the heaviest armor in Rokugan. These are huge, boxy, often ornate suits used by high-ranking Crab officers and powerful samurai assigned to Wall duty. The armor features all the components of lighter, lesser armor, but on a grander scale. Massive sode cover the wearer's arms nearly to the wrist, thick iron plates and countless steel scales are laced together then lacquered to provide unparalleled protection, and outsized crests decorate the conical helmets with their monstrous masks.

All this protection and glory comes at a price, however. Since these suits were designed to serve on the Wall, nearly all their protection is focused on the wearer's front.

While you wear ō-yoroi, if you are suffering the Disoriented, Dazed, or Immobilized condition, treat your physical resistance as 3 as your foes can strike at your lightly armored back.

TABLE 2-2: ARMOR

NAME	R. VALUES	QUALITIES	RARITY	PRICE
Ō-yoroi	Physical 6	Cumbersome, Resplendent, Wargear	8	60 koku
Tatami Gusoku	Physical 3	Wargear (while equipped)	4	7 koku
Tosei-Gusoku	Physical 4	Cumbersome, Durable, Wargear	8	50 koku

TATAMI GUSOKU

Tatami gusoku is a type of lightweight “folding” armor worn by Crab scouts and skirmishers. A typical suit consists of an armored jacket called a tatami katabira and a folding helmet called a tatami kabuto. Other bits of armor, particularly gauntlets, leg armor, and different helmets can also be worn with the suit. The tatami katabira consists of dozens of *karuta*: square and rectangular metal plates of various sizes stitched together with chainmail and sewn to a thick cloth or leather backing. Both the jacket and helmet can be folded up and easily stored for travel or hidden away in an emergency.

TOSEI-GUSOKU

Tosei-gusoku is a new style of protection recently developed by Crab armorers. Vaguely resembling a suit of *gaijin* armor, a *tosei-gusoku* uses large, contoured steel plates laced together and worn over a chain or ring-mail coat. Plated gauntlets, iron greaves, a *kabuto*-like helmet, and a four-piece *haidate* of laced steel plates completes the suit. Thanks to the shape of the plates and the clever use of hinges and laces, a *tosei-gusoku* provides better defense against ranged weapons than more common suits of armor.

Despite the utility and improved protection a *tosei-gusoku* offers, it remains unpopular among Crab samurai. Due to its deviance from normal traditions of armor making and the fact that it tends to be drab and utilitarian rather than lovingly decorated like most armor, many more traditional-minded samurai consider this suit fit only for ashigaru, *rōnin*, and samurai of a poor lord.

While wearing *tosei-gusoku*, treat your physical resistance as 2 higher when reducing damage from projectile attacks (such as Martial Arts [Ranged] checks).



Personal Effects

Those going into the Shadowlands know that weapons alone are not enough to make for a successful mission. Veterans often bring special items that help ensure they can better survive in this vile setting, for to die before actual battle would be shameful.

CLIMBING KIT

The warriors of the Crab Clan do a not-insignificant amount of climbing, and so the climbing kit is an important part of many samurai’s

military gear. It typically includes a few coils of rope, a small hammer, an iron chisel, powdered chalk, and a handful of spikes, pitons, and other climbing ephemera. In addition, some climbers add special spiked bands that slip over their hands and feet for extra grip. (Cost: 2 bu. Rarity: 3.)

ENGINEER'S KIT

These kits provide an architect, civil engineer, siege engineer, or builder with a set of basic tools for surveying and building. These tool kits typically include measuring and surveying tools, rolls of parchment for making plans, various drafting implements, and an assortment of carpenters' and masons' tools. (Cost: 3 bu. Rarity: 3.)

SAPPER'S KIT

A sapper's kit includes basic tools to help sappers and miners in their work undermining and destroying fortifications. It typically includes a small shovel, small pick-ax, flint and steel for lighting fires, a bucket, a small amount of pitch, a coil of rope or chain, and an assortment of other common building tools used in demolitions. (Cost: 1 bu. Rarity: 3.)

SMITHY'S KIT

This kit is necessarily larger and more complex infinitely less portable than smaller kits like those used by sappers and bowyers. It includes a variety of metalworking tools, specialty tools for weapon or armor making depending on the user's specialty, a small anvil, a portable forge, a crucible, and numerous hammers, tongs, pliers, and blacksmithing tools.

A smithy's kit is Cumbersome and has a silhouette of 1. (Cost: 3 bu. Rarity: 3.)

SMOKE ARROWS

Smoke arrows, also called smoking-bulbs arrows, are modified humming-bulb arrows created by Crab armorers for signaling. They are tipped with a perforated, egg-shaped head filled with a mixture of alchemical substances that, when jostled, emit a thin cloud of smoke in a variety of colors depending on the specific mixture. Archers can fire these arrows high into the air, using the smoke trails to signal other units up and down the Wall. Depending on the smoke color, they can indicate breaches of varying severity, calls for reinforcements, or that victory was achieved.

Smoke arrows modify a bow's profile as follows: Damage -2, Deadliness -2. (Cost: 3 bu. Rarity: 4.)

SPYGLASS

Spyglasses are wondrous devices brought to the Crab lands by foreign mercenaries. At their most basic, spyglasses are long brass tubes full of polished glass lenses. Some are heavy enough to require a tripod for use, while others are collapsible and small enough to fit in a pouch or pocket. No matter their size, all spyglasses do the same thing: make objects far away easier to see. While rare and expensive, these items are gaining popularity among Crab officers and scouts.

A common spyglass allows a user to see small items with great clarity and detail at up to range 5. Larger versions can let the user see clearly to range 6, while smaller versions may only be useful out to range 4. What a spyglass can and cannot see is ultimately left to the game master's discretion. (Cost: 2 koku. Rarity: 5.)

TAKETABA

Taketaba are covered mobile platforms designed to give archers and crossbow users cover on the battlefield. While they vary in size and construction depending on their use and the materials at hand, a common taketaba is a wheeled platform large enough for several warriors armed with bows or crossbows. The front of the platform is covered in thick planks or bundles of bamboo. (Cost: 4 bu. Rarity: 4.)

TATE

Tate are a type of large, semiportable protection used by warriors in the field. They are extremely simple affairs consisting of a few thick wooden planks nailed together and painted or engraved with a clan or army's livery. They are carried into battle and set up by propping a support plank behind them at an angle. Once set, tate provide ample cover for archers, crossbow wielders, and other warriors who need respite from flying arrows and debris. A set of tate provides cover for one individual, but multiple tate can be set to provide cover for larger groups.

A character can set up a tate as a Support action. Once set, increase the TN of all Attack action checks with projectiles (such as Martial Arts [Ranged] checks) targeting a character behind it by 2. (Cost: 3 bu. Rarity: 3.)



Signature Scrolls

Every scroll that a school entrusts to its pupils contains sacred knowledge, much of it unique to that school. Further, each shugenja expands their mystical practices and keeps their own records. Thus, a novice cannot simply go to a library and acquire the lore of the greatest shugenja of generations past. But they might be entrusted with (or "liberate") a scroll of an ancient master that unveils new cosmic secrets, granting their invocations new effects.

"LIBERATED" KNOWLEDGE

At the GM's discretion, if a character gets a scroll for which they do not meet the prerequisites, they still might be able to learn its secrets—though doing so could make powerful foes for them if they are not careful to conceal their new knowledge!

If a shugenja who meets the prerequisites acquires a signature scroll, they can learn its secrets by spending the listed XP.

ICHI'S SECOND SIGHT

Ages ago, there lived a Witch Hunter named Kuni Ichi who was legendary for his ability to spot mahō-tsukai, hidden demons, and Tainted individuals. As he aged, however, Ichi's eyes grew milky, and his sight began to fade. Not one to take this lying down, Ichi developed an enhancement to requests to the kami for aid in divination that allowed him to see infernal presences despite his failing eyesight.

Prerequisites: Witch Hunter, Crab Clan
XP Cost to gain use of scroll: 3 XP

New Effects: After the shugenja successfully uses an invocation to scry, any Supernatural or Tainted beings they perceive as part of the invocation glow faintly with an aura visible to the shugenja, even through smoke, mist, fog, or obscured vision.

HASEGAWA'S DENIAL

Ugawari Hasegawa was a famous Crab shugenja who discovered a way to enhance his offensive scrolls and control the movement of demons on the battlefield. He was known for being able to herd oni around during combat, leading them into traps and killing zones with a few well-placed blasts of magic. At the end of a long and successful life, Hasegawa finally recorded his secrets for posterity so that future shugenja could use his techniques in defense of the Wall and the Crab Clan.

Prerequisites: Crab Clan shugenja, school rank 3

XP Cost to gain use of scroll: 3 XP

New Effects: After the shugenja successfully uses an invocation to smite a target, the area at range 0–3 of the target becomes Dangerous terrain for Tainted beings. This effect persists until the start of your next turn.

MAIKARA'S REBUKE

Yasuki Maikara was a wandering shugenja famous for her fearlessness, her passion, and the strength of her devotion. She often disappeared for weeks at a time into the Shadowlands in search of particularly dangerous oni. While she sometimes traveled with a rōnin companion named Shintaro, she mostly traveled alone with only her fervor to protect her. During one of her longer forays among the oni, Maikara developed a way to augment her calls to the kami even in these kansen-infested regions. These enhancements had some surprising and often explosive effects creatures from Jigoku, and she made sure she spread her techniques far and wide before she disappeared into the Shadowlands forever at the ripe old age of 120.

Prerequisites: Shugenja

XP Cost to gain use of scroll: 3 XP

New Effects: After the shugenja successfully uses a Fire invocation to smite a target, that target treats the next attack targeting them as having the Sacred quality. This effect persists until the end of the scene.



Item Patterns

Not all weapons and armor are created equally. A katana forged by a novice swordsmith is typically of lower quality than one forged by a master, and different schools or techniques might favor one weapon feature over another.

There are two methods for gaining an item with one of these patterns. The first is for your character to apprentice themselves to a master to learn the means of crafting a new weapon with the desired pattern; this requires the PC to win the master's trust within the story of the game, then spend the XP to learn the pattern. The other method is to requisition, purchase, or find an existing item with the pattern. The price is the same, but rarity is altered by the pattern's listed rarity modifier.

KAKITA PATTERN

Kakita swordsmiths are known across Rokugan for their finely crafted weapons. While hardly one sword in a generation is deemed worth to bear the name "Kakita blade," all of their works have an exquisitely sharp edge with no sacrifice to the weapon's sturdiness.

A bladed weapon produced in the Kakita Pattern gains +1 deadliness.

XP Cost: 6

Rarity Modifier: +4

KENZŌ BLADE

The Kenzō smithy is one of the premier smithies in the Crane lands. Founded centuries ago by Ashidaka Kenzō, this smithy produces wondrous dueling weapons for the Kakita family. Indeed, Kenzō blades—nearly every weapon that has come out of the Kenzō smithy has been a sword of one kind or another—are considered to be among the finest dueling weapons in Rokugan. Kenzō blades are both beautiful and extremely deadly.

A weapon produced in the Kenzō smithy gains +1 deadliness, -1 damage, and the Resplendent quality.

XP Cost: 8

Rarity Modifier: +5

SHIROGANE JADE INLAY

Kuni Shirogane was a weaponsmith renowned for his beautiful and deadly weapons. During his long career, Shirogane developed a process to make a jade-infused resin that could be applied to suitably crafted weapons and armor to protect an individual against the terrors of the Shadowlands. Items forged to use this jade

resin are typically heavily engraved with ornate designs into which the resin is poured. As the item is exposed to Shadowlands Taint, the jade slowly turns to muck, requiring another application of the resin. While it seems inconvenient to some, Shirogane jade inlay has protected the lives and souls of many Crab warriors.

Weapons and armor designed for Shirogane jade inlay gain the Sacred quality. Armor so altered loses 1 point of physical resistance, and weapons lose 1 point of deadliness. Should the item become Damaged, the jade is chipped away as well and must be reapplied. When this happens, the item loses the Sacred quality until a smith applies more jade resin by making a **TN 3 Smithing (Earth) check** as a downtime activity. This process consumes one finger of jade per attempt.

XP Cost: 3

Rarity Modifier: +2

UCHEMA'S TECHNIQUE

Uchema's technique is a style of armorsmithing used to produce specialty armor for scouts and siege engineers. A suit of armor made using Uchema's technique can be anything from a simple suit of ashigaru armor to a splendid, heavy suit of ō-yoroi. With careful tailoring and clever use of lacing and straps, an armorsmith can use the technique to make a suit of armor more flexible and easier to wear. A warrior wearing a suit made with Uchema's technique can run, climb, bend, leap, and otherwise move as if they were wearing simple clothing rather than bulky armor.

A suit of armor made using Uchema's technique loses the Cumbersome quality and loses 1 point of physical resistance.

XP Cost: 4

Rarity Modifier: +3

YASUNORI STEEL

Decades ago, Kenru Yasunori, a Crab swordsmith, developed a new steel alloy while tinkering in his forge. Quite by accident, they discovered that a mix of various ores and refined metals made a steel that is both lightweight and strong but lacks the beauty of traditional Rokugani steel. Soon they began creating massive two-handed swords and axes for use in defending the Wall. Yasunori steel weapons are popular among Crab samurai who appreciate a sturdy, well-made blade and care little for aesthetics.

A weapon made from Yasunori steel loses the Ceremonial, Cumbersome, and Resplendent qualities (and can never gain any of these). It gains the Durable quality; if the weapon already has the Durable quality, it gains +1 deadliness instead.

XP Cost: 5

Rarity Modifier: +4



Artifacts of Jigoku

Rokugani culture venerates ancestral belongings. Preserved artifacts are passed down from generation to generation. However, there are objects for which this tradition is dangerous. All things cast a shadow; if an artifact can be blessed, then it can be cursed as well.

CURSED LINEAGES

Within every object rests a latent spirit. This spirit is made of two parts: the *shen*, or benevolent side, and the *kuei*, the malevolent. For most objects, the spirit remains dormant, these aspects never realized. But when an object drowns in the foul deeds of its wielder or the corrupting touch of Jigoku, the item's *kuei* awakens.

There are a number of ways this can happen. Impure materials and methods can create unholy works—when Asahina Yanjiden unknowingly used Bloodspeaker rites taught to him by the disguised Iuchiban, he forged the infamous Bloodswords that went on to a carve a tale of woe. However, even impure thoughts are said to be able to befoul a creation. The creator's mindset affects the item, so the smith fills their heart with negative emotion as they hammer the steel, ensuring it awakens angry.

The *kuei* can also awaken when it is used by an already Tainted being. An oni's touch is often enough to corrupt an item's essence, and the Lost of the Shadowlands gradually Taint carried possessions. Awakened items are like impressionable children, influenced invisibly by their wielder.

Finally, an item's *kuei* awakens when it is used in an act so profane as to shame all involved. In this case, the intentions of the wielder do not matter. Even if the user

is virtuous, even if "good" comes from their actions, resorting to a vile act will curse the item. One such instance was the deposing of Hantei XVI, the Steel Chrysanthemum, a tyrant of an Emperor who nearly destroyed Rokugan with his sadistic greed and paranoia. Even though slaying him freed the land and saved the Empire, felling a Son of Heaven brought down the direst of curses upon the sword.

CARRYING THE BURDEN

Cursed objects affect their users in numerous, inescapable ways. The most subtle is also the most dangerous: cursed objects affect the personality and emotional state of the wielder. They may grow paranoid and distrustful, or ambitious and reckless, or bloodthirsty, or obsessed with revenge, or even enslaved by their own desires. The shift is slight at first but grows more severe every time the item is drawn. Eventually the wielder's personality changes completely. Such enthralled warriors ultimately self-destruct, and then the item is passed to another unsuspecting victim for the horrid cycle to continue.

Those cursed items that are bound to the power Jigoku—such as those listed in this volume—are especially pernicious. Every time such a Tainted object is used, kansen flock invisibly to the wielder, tempting them to greater and greater acts of wickedness and destruction. The symptoms worsen over time, and are relieved only when the wielder obeys their Tainted item. Attempts to cast out the item cause the owner to grow sick and desperate—most end up seeking the item again eventually, if they survive the wracking pain of separation.

Destroying cursed items releases their spirits into the world, creating foul entities, new curses, or other unpredictable evils. Thus, when these items are identified, they are usually hidden and kept under constant protection. It is a terrible burden, one carried by entire bloodlines, but containing the evil is worth any personal cost.

Legends exist of heroes whose virtuous deeds ultimately redeemed cursed artifacts, awakening the *shen* and silencing the *kuei* forever. But these instances are rare, and foolhardy samurai who believe themselves greater than a cursed artifact have done more harm in the Empire's history than good.

THE PENALTY FOR POWER

Carrying or using a cursed item warps the character's personality. Their composure is reduced by 2. Additionally, they can only unmask using the Unmasking Form associated with the cursed item.

CONCEALED HORRORS

Just as the virtuous forge items to combat evil, so do servants of evil create objects that are like beacons to Jigoku. Many appear indistinguishable from everyday objects: a Tainted hairpin, a hand mirror with cursed runes hidden behind the polished glass, or a pillow book whose words are written in obsidian ink. Such is their insidious purpose, for one does not realize they are aiding Jigoku until it is too late.

THE ANVIL OF DESPAIR

Among the foulest artifacts to exist in Rokugan, the Anvil of Despair is also one of the most infamous. Its creator, Agasha Ryuden, used iron extracted from oni blood and sacrificed the entire Boar Clan to give it birth. Any item forged on this anvil awakens cursed and malicious, eventually corrupting its wielder. It played an invisible hand in shaping Rokugan's history, and none can say how many evil blades have been hammered into being on its cursed back.

Effects: The Anvil requires a proper sacrifice for mahō (see p. 224 of the core rulebook) each time you wish to perform a Smithing check using it. Any weapon forged on the Anvil of Despair gains +2 deadliness and the Unholy quality.

Unmasking Form: Honor's Challenge

THE BLACK PEARLS OF FU LENG

When a particularly pure pearl or gemstone is exposed to the Taint, it easily picks up spiritual impurities. After being heavily exposed to corruption, especially by direct contact with the power of the Shadowlands, such a treasure becomes twisted and treacherous.

Mahō users can offer these Black Pearls of Fu Leng to attract swarms of malicious kansen from miles around.

Effects: While wielding a Black Pearl of Fu Leng, you may use mahō without making a proper sacrifice (see page 224 of the core rulebook). When you perform a check to activate a mahō technique without a proper sacrifice, add two kept ■ dice showing ♫ ♪ results.

Unmasking Form: Bend Principles

THE HENGE-OKURIMONO

Created by a mahō-tsukai, the cursed "shape-shifting gifts" are seemingly mundane household items, each depicting a different animal: the hawk hairpins, the silver origami cat, the wolf kimono, the boar sandals, and

the dog fan. These trinkets can change their wearer into their depicted animal and back again, but each time, the user suffers gradually more Taint, until they are trapped in a monstrous version of their animal form, unable to change back.

Effects: Each henge-okurimono depicts an animal (all of which can be found on page 325 of the core rulebook). Once per game session as a Support action, you may use a henge-okurimono to curse and augment your body, transforming it into that of the animal depicted in the artwork. While in this form, you use its ring values, derived attributes, abilities, and advantages with the physical or social type, but you use your own skill ranks and advantages with the mental or spiritual types. This effect persists until you choose to end it or are rendered unconscious, at which point your form reverts to its original state and you suffer the Afflicted condition. Do not remove any fatigue or strife you suffered in the alternate form when you return to your original; if this causes your fatigue to exceed your endurance (or your strife to exceed your composure when it did not in your alternate form, you suffer a critical strike with severity 5 (or you become Compromised, in the case of strife).

Unmasking Form: Panicked Retreat

THE PORCELAIN MASK OF FU LENG

As it is described only in thirdhand accounts of Shosuro's final words, it is not certain that the Porcelain Mask of Fu Leng even exists. It is said that when donned, the mask seals itself to the wearer's face, detaching only after death. It can change its visage to any face the user imagines, and through its eyes, the mask reveals horrors normally hidden to mortals. If this artifact does exist, then surely its foolish owners were lost to what nightmares the mask reveals.

Effects: Once you don the mask, it cannot be removed until your death (or another exceptional event), and you are assigned one Shadowlands Taint disadvantage of the GM's choice.

While wearing the mask, as a Support action, you may augment yourself, shifting the mask into an illusion of any face you wish to present; any other character must make a **TN 4 Sentiment check (Earth 5, Fire 2)** to find a flaw in your facade. This effect persists until you are rendered unconscious or will it to end.

While wearing the mask, as a Scheme action, you may scry for supernatural presences, causing them to glow with sickly purple light that only you can perceive. This effect persists until the end of the scene.

Unmasking Form: Expose an Opening

SHADOWLANDS ITEMS IN CAMPAIGNS

A Shadowlands item can be a compelling focal point for a campaign. In literature, cursed objects are often metaphors for human vices, like greed, lust, or anger. Giving in provides an immediate gain but creates escalating problems.

When an item's curse is revealed, the GM should make the "rules" of the curse explicit. Cursed items provide a significant boon, and the narrative should feature adequate temptations to use it. Maybe the item offers a convenient solution to a complex problem or provides something a character wants or needs. Do the players accept the potential consequences of using this item? Can the downsides be mitigated for ultimate benefit? Maybe just this once...

Blessed Treasures

Most blessed treasures are *nemuranai*—awakened items that to level the playing field when confronting the evils of the Shadowlands (see page 307 of the core rulebook). Others are items and concoctions that use jade or obsidian in their makeup. All blessed items should be rare and hard to come by, and especially in the case of weapons, samurai must prove themselves worthy to wield them. After all, if a samurai falls while wielding such an item against the minions of Fu Leng, it could be lost forever!

USING JADE AND OBSIDIAN

While many objects use jade and obsidian in these materials' unaltered forms (such as the fingers of jade issued as basic provisions for patrols into the Shadowlands), some artisans craft jade and obsidian into items of greater potency. Even simple additions of these blessed materials to weapons can turn common katana into powerful forces against Tainted beings.

One common tactic is coating a weapon in oil and then dipping it in powdered jade. This bestows jade properties onto ordinary weapons, albeit temporarily. This can be done with obsidian powder as well to similar effect, but because obsidian is connected to Lord Moon and known to attract negative emotions, most are loath to resort to it.

Another method is affixing written blessings to the weapon or ammunition, especially arrows. Selections from the Lotus Sūtra, which are believed to be too pure for oni to endure, are commonly used for this purpose, as are Fortunist writings, especially excerpts from the Sun Goddess's doctrine.

TREASURES OF THE CRAB

The following are but a sample of items from Crab lore that are part of that clan's struggle against the denizens of the Shadowlands and the effects of the Taint—or that others use to further their own desires for power.

THE JADE CUPS OF TAIRA

Most of the disgraced rōnin Taira's creations are lost and forgotten, but his jade cups are still remembered. These appear as ordinary sake cups, but upon closer inspection, their interior is almost invisibly lined with white jade. It is not known how many Taira made, but now and again, one appears in a market or among a daimyō's prized possessions.

THE IMPERMANENCE OF JADE AND OBSIDIAN

All Crab know what happens to jade in the presence of the Taint: it slowly turns from vivid emerald to soft, black sludge. In the Shadowlands, this process appears barely noticeable close to the Wall, but as a person carrying jade moves deeper into that corrupted land, the deterioration becomes faster with each league traveled. The blackness might first appear where the jade touched a Tainted creature, from within like a cancerous growth, or as a network of fine lines that grow thicker each day. Legends say that jade near the Festering Pit is consumed so rapidly that the progression can be witnessed like the sun setting into darkness.

Some scholars, such as Kuni shugenja, study these remains, seeking out any useful properties they might contain. Most samurai, though, merely dispose of the material as they would dirt clinging to their sandals.

What few know is that obsidian also perishes, though in this case, it is from exposure to sacred lands. It most commonly transforms into black smoke that drifts away into the air, but its effects upon those who wield it may last a lifetime.

As these materials, especially jade, dissipate based on exposure, game masters are encouraged to use them as a way to build tension within the Shadowlands. The main means that jade should be corrupted is by protecting its bearer from the Afflicted condition (see the Sacred quality on page 241 of the core rulebook). Therefore, having the PCs make checks to avoid becoming Afflicted just before a particularly powerful monster or horrific sight appears can ratchet up the tension in the same way as heavy footsteps or a dramatic scream in a horror story.

Awakened Item: The Cups of Taira are a *nemuranai*. As such, they have the Durable and Sacred qualities.

- ➊ **Quirk:** The cups glow when Otherworldly creatures are nearby (at range 0–3, if relevant).
- ➋ **Sealed Invocation:** Once per scene, you may perform the Jurojin's Balm invocation using your Medicine skill.

JADE PETAL TEA

One of the only medicines known to combat the Taint, jade petal tea is not a true tea, but instead a tincture made from rice *shōchū* and a special flower known as a jade lotus. These flowers are grown in Crab lands using water infused with jade powder, resulting in edible petals containing the jade's spiritual properties. The considerable time and expense involved makes jade petal tea a rare medicine. When consumed, grants temporary resistance to the Shadowlands Taint and suppresses its effects.

Kuni Wardens carefully control production and distribution of the tea and maintain records of all in the Emerald Empire to whom they provide it to. This is done both to monitor its effects on those suffering from the Taint and to ensure there are no Tainted individuals outside of their records. There are frequent attempts to steal tea supplies, and the Kuni are ruthless in tracking down and punishing anyone caught with illicit quantities.

Effects: After you consume jade petal tea, remove the Afflicted condition.

Additionally, you ignore all of your Shadowlands Taint disadvantages. This effect persists until you suffer the Afflicted condition, or for one week in narrative time (whichever comes first).

KISHU: THE ONI-CUTTING SWORD

To prove their worthiness, Hida tasked Hiruma, Kuni, and Kaiu with the destruction of Hajimeno Tataki no Oni. To this end, Kaiu created Kishu, known colloquially as the "Oni-Cutting Sword." Designed for a left-handed warrior, the iron of this ancient *tachi* is blended with powdered jade. It cuts through oni armor, no matter how thick. Kishu has been lost in the Shadowlands, some believe it still sleeps in fallen Daylight Castle.

Awakened Weapon: Kishu is a chokotō. As a nemuranai, it has +2 deadliness and the Sacred and Durable qualities.

- ➊ **Quirk:** Kishu only cuts when wielded in the left hand.
- ➋ **Sealed Invocation:** It has the Bind the Shadow invocation sealed within it, which the wielder may perform once per session using Martial Arts [Melee].

OBSIDIAN INK

Obsidian inksticks, which contain pulverized obsidian in addition to the usual ingredients, are insidiously visually identical to ordinary inksticks. When mixed with water on an inkstone, the resulting obsidian ink temporarily bestows the spiritual properties of obsidian on any scroll, canvas, or other surface. But when blood is used instead of water, the resulting ink attracts kansen and imbues mahō rituals with even greater power.

Effects: When preparing an a ward containing an invocation (see **Prepared Invocations** on page 190 of the core rulebook), if you use obsidian ink, you may receive up to 3 strife to add that many kept █ showing ♡ results.

Additionally, you may use this ink mixed with blood to prepare a ward containing a mahō technique as if it were an invocation. If you do, you may suffer up to 3 strife to add that many kept █ showing ♡ results.



New Techniques

The following are new techniques that can aid samurai in Tainted lands as well as in secret-filled courts.

EARTH INVOCATION

The following new Invocation is useful when traveling in the Shadowlands.

Essence of Jade

Rank 3

IN THE LIGHT OF YOMI (ANCESTRAL), CONSECRATION OF THE SEVEN (FORTUNIST), THE WHEEL THAT REPELS DEMONS (FOREIGN)

The shugenja takes a pinch of jade powder and sprinkles it in a pentagram symbolizing harmony of the Five Elements on the world, recalling the spirits of the land to their rightful place to provide a bulwark against the forces of evil.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 3 Theology (Earth) check** targeting one position at range 0–2.

Effects: If you succeed, you purify the area and remove the Defiled terrain quality from an area that extends a number of range bands around the target position equal to your Earth Ring. This effect persists for one round, plus additional rounds equal to your bonus successes.

New Opportunities

- ⦿: This effect persists until the end of the scene instead.
- ⦿⦿: While the effect persists, the terrain gains the Hallowed (Earth) terrain quality.
- ⦿: While the effect persists, each Tainted being in the affected area increases the TN of all checks they make to resist effects by 2.
- ⦿: You may choose a character instead of a position. The cleansed area follows that character.
- ⦿: While the effect persists, all damage inflicted in this area has the Sacred quality.

RITUALS

These rituals can be used to craft weapons ideal for combat or create small creatures useful for carrying out secretive missions.

Blessing of Steel

(Artisan) Rank 2

The sword is the soul of the samurai, and proper maintenance of one's ancestral wargear is not just an important physical act, but also a sacred rite in its own regard.

Activation: As a downtime activity, you may make a **TN 2 Smithing check** using any ring to undertake the maintenance of your weapons and armor.

Effects: If you succeed, apply one of the following based on the ring you used:

- ⦿ **Air:** Increase the deadliness of a weapon by 1.
- ⦿ **Earth:** Remove the Damaged quality from the item. If it did not have the Damaged quality, it gains the Durable quality.
- ⦿ **Fire:** The item gains one quality that it could logically possess. The GM is the final arbiter of what quality can be added this way, and they should inform the player of whether an option is possible before their character undertakes this downtime activity.
- ⦿ **Water:** Increase the base damage of a weapon by 1 and decrease its deadliness by 1, or increase the supernatural resistance of a set of armor by 1 and reduce its physical resistance by 1.
- ⦿ **Void:** Reduce the TN of the next check the character makes with this weapon by 1.

Only one of these effects can be applied to an item. Any effect applied this way persists until the end of the next scene in which the item is used.

Craft Shikigami (Shugenja) Rank 2

It is a minor thing for mystical adepts to create these small creatures, often from paper but sometimes from other materials. They can take almost any form, and as such they can offer much amusement in courts as they caper about or even fly through the air. Surely, no one would ever think to use them to sneak into secured rooms or secretly add poison to a lord's sake. Surely.

Activation: As a downtime activity using a consecrated vessel of silhouette 0 or smaller, you may make an **Artisan skill (Void) check** to create a shikigami (see page 115). You choose the TN of the check (minimum 1).

Effects: If you succeed, choose a number of invocations that you know up to the TN of the check. Record the selected invocations and create a unique name for the shikigami. While the shikigami exists, the chosen invocations are sealed within it—you cannot use them, but the shikigami can. You can have up to one shikigami at a time. When the shikigami's physical form is destroyed, its essence returns to you; you can re-create it by making a new physical form for it in the manner of making a new shikigami, but it retains its memories and personality.

The shikigami is intelligent, can communicate with you, and generally obeys your orders. It can perform any invocations you have sealed within it as an action, using your ranks in Composition and its ring value for the skill check.

SHIKIGAMI								
MINION	CONFLICT RANK:  1  1							
These small creatures can be created through relatively simple rituals that tie the newly constructed beings to their creator. Paper is commonly used, allowing them to be folded flat and rest inside books, or even flutter about on butterfly wings. Shikigami follow the directions of their creator (for the most part) and can perform simple tasks or remember conversations.								
 <table border="1"> <tr> <td>ENDURANCE 4</td><td>FOCUS 2</td></tr> <tr> <td>COMPOSURE 4</td><td>VIGILANCE 1</td></tr> <tr> <td colspan="2">  +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - FIERCE </td></tr> </table>		ENDURANCE 4	FOCUS 2	COMPOSURE 4	VIGILANCE 1	 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - FIERCE		
ENDURANCE 4	FOCUS 2							
COMPOSURE 4	VIGILANCE 1							
 +2,  -2 DEMEANOR - FIERCE								
ARTISAN 1	MARTIAL 1	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 1	TRADE 1				
ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES							
Tireless:  Martial; Physical	Rebellious:  Martial; Mental							
FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR								
Cutting Edges: Range 0, Damage 1, Deadliness 2								
Gear (equipped): None								
ABILITIES								

IMBUED WITH POWER

The more powerful the invocations invested into a shikigami, the higher its associated ring values become. If a shikigami is invested with one or more invocations of a particular element (Air, Earth, Fire, Water, or Void), it treats that ring value as equal to the highest among the school rank prerequisites of those invocations.

Example: A shikigami invested with a rank 2 Air invocation, a rank 1 Earth invocation, and a rank 3 Water invocation would have ring values of Air 2, Earth 1, Fire 1, Water 3, Void 1.

LIVING INVOCATION

Once per scene as an action, a shikigami may perform one invocation invested in it without making a check. It counts as having 2 bonus successes and  .

ANIMAL SHIKIGAMI BY ELEMENT

Shikigami are often crafted from paper or other common materials, but they can also be fashioned out of dirt, loose bits of metal, liquids, or even small flames. They generally take the shape of small, ghostly figures with humanoid forms, though they can have animal traits or forms as the shugenja desires. Depending on the sorts of invocations used to animate a shikigami, some common forms are:

- ⦿ **Air:** Birds, butterflies, bats, moths
- ⦿ **Water:** Fish, frogs, salamanders
- ⦿ **Fire:** Dragonflies, fireflies, centipedes
- ⦿ **Earth:** Mice, rats, spiders

RESTRICTED ACTION

During a conflict, if a shikigami and the ritualist who created it are both present, the shikigami does not take its own turn. During the shugenja's turn, it can move up to 1 range band. As a Support action, the ritualist may have the shikigami perform an action with their assistance (see page 26 of the core rulebook).

New Opportunities

- ⦿: Choose one of your advantages and one of your disadvantages. Add these to the shikigami.
- ⦿: Instead of appearing as the item or material from which it was created, the shikigami has a different form of your choosing of the same silhouette.
- ⦿+: Increase the silhouette of the shikigami by 1 per  spent this way.
- ⦿+: Choose one skill. The shikigami possesses a number of ranks in this skill equal to the  spent this way. You may activate this multiple times for different skills.
- ⦿+: Increase the shikigami's endurance or composure by 2 per  spent this way.



Mahō

Anyone can perform blood-fueled incantations to the corrupt kami known as kansen. Frustrated samurai might use mahō to gain power the kami deny them, and downtrodden peasants might use it right wrongs when pleas to Fortunes go unanswered. The cost of such power is the mind, life, even soul of the practitioner, but the desperate or ignorant overlook this cost. Some believe they can tap into the power of mahō without becoming corrupted, using it for good. Even if this were possible, mahō is considered the worst kind of blasphemy.

The abundance of kansen in the Shadowlands means mahō is both easier and more dangerous there than elsewhere. It is easy to attract swarms of kansen or summon the wrong demon, and the Taint is inescapable. Those who use mahō there gain an advantage but also succumb to the Taint at an advanced rate.

THE BLOOD PRICE

Kansen require a sacrifice of fresh blood. Depending on the ritual, this may mean a mere drop, or enough to drain a body dry. Most kansen crave human blood, and mahō-tsukai who substitute animal blood usually regret it. This may be why there are no known nezumi practitioners. The practitioner's own blood signifies a personal sacrifice, and mahō-tsukai quickly learn where to make cuts that bleed freely without causing permanent damage. Those studying under the watchful eye of a more experienced practitioner learn basic anatomy. Only an untutored mahō-tsukai would risk the use of their hand by cutting their palm or leave scars on their wrist where a Witch Hunter might see them.

Some kansen prefer the blood of high-born samurai, powerful shugenja, or enlightened monks, or that from a specific family or clan. The right sacrifice attracts more powerful spirits and renders invocations more potent. Scouts found alone in the Shadowlands, lost travelers, and overly trusting samurai are all potential sacrifices. To arrange a sacrifice for a demanding kansen, a mahō-tsukai may perform many smaller sacrifices and rituals that help them set up the final victim and remove any yōjimbō or other obstacles. By the time the objective is achieved, the mahō-tsukai will have entreated many kansen, spilled much blood, and become heavily Tainted.

FORBIDDEN TEXTS

To prevent the use of mahō within the Empire, the Isawa destroy any suspect book or scroll. This makes finding forbidden texts difficult. There are other ways of learning mahō incantations, however. Mahō-tsukai sometimes take on apprentices, for instance, who both serve the mahō-tsukai and learn from them.

Anyone who hears the whispers of kansen can learn incantations from these vile spirits, who lure people into service with promises of great power. Trained shugenja may resist, but the untrained are more susceptible and should avoid venturing into the Shadowlands without a more knowledgeable guide.

THE ULTIMATE SACRIFICE

Any samurai knows that neither blood nor life is the ultimate sacrifice. A mahō-tsukai forfeits honor and soul for their foul craft. However, especially for samurai fighting in the Shadowlands, there might be times when forsaking personal honor could win a victory for the family or fulfill a duty for the clan. A shugenja defending the Wall may feel justified using mahō to drive back a demonic assault if it saves the Empire.

Even if their first use of mahō is minor and does not result in the Taint, a user tastes a power that tempts them until they succumb again. Most samurai only resort to mahō in the direst of circumstances, if at all, knowing there is no going back. Afterward, they watch themselves for signs evil is taking hold and fall upon their own swords rather than become servants of Jigoku. However, there are also users deluded enough to believe they are bending evil forces to their bidding, while in reality, they are slipping under Fu Leng's control.

DEMONIC SUMMONINGS

Attracting the attention of an oni is a simple process, especially within the Shadowlands, where it can happen by accident. Controlling the oni is the difficulty. The summoner can strike a bargain to inflict the oni upon a victim, but oni want more than blood, and specific requirements vary between oni of different levels and types.

An accomplished mahō-tsukai learns the desires of the oni first and has something ready to bargain with, but they also ensure that the demon's needs are aligned with their own. A practitioner who wants revenge on an old rival who joined a monastery might summon an oni that delights corrupting monks, for instance. If acquiring political power is the goal, they might summon one that specializes in manipulating minds and overthrowing authority.

All unnamed oni desire a name, since this allows them to take form in Ningen-dō. A mahō-tsukai who grants their own name to an oni is tied to it forever, an exchange that both enslaves and empowers the practitioner. The two essentially become one, in a near-unbreakable pact. A named oni is more powerful than an unnamed one, and it is far more dangerous, as it can roam the Empire at will.

The abilities of oni are vast, destructive, and difficult to control. Many practitioners who attempt to control an oni are tricked, forced to give up their name, or simply destroyed. Since most practitioners are already deeply steeped in corruption, they act heedless of the dangers. Some, believing themselves strong enough to bend the demon to their will, even summon a powerful oni who already possess name and form.



To CALL DEMONS FROM JIGOKU

The nameless oni who enter Ningen-dō through the Festering Pit cannot remain in the Mortal Realm for long. Summoning is required to make use of an oni anywhere else in the Shadowlands or beyond. This is achieved through an incantation accompanied by blood sacrifice to incite a kansen to drag the oni from Jigoku. This allows even a nameless oni to stay in Ningen-dō long enough for it to perform an action for the summoner. If it escapes the summoner's control, it wreaks as much havoc as it can before it is drawn back into Jigoku. If a named oni escapes, it rampages unchecked through Ningen-dō until defeated. This is rare, but even a single such oni causes unimaginable chaos.

EXAMPLE DEMONS

The variety of oni in the Shadowlands is immense and inexhaustible as each is a unique creature. Following are a few that a mahō-tsukai may summon and set to some malevolent task, using the Accursed Summoning mahō technique on page 118. See the **Oni Generation** section on page 134 to create and unleash more.

The Shadow Oni is a demon that hides in shadows and reflections, revealing the dark side of anyone it encounters and gradually turning them into their worst selves. It wants name and form, and a skilled mahō-tsukai might promise such gifts but find a way to withhold them indefinitely. Given form, it becomes a shadowlike warrior that no barrier can keep out, insubstantial until it grasps a victim's own weapon and strikes.

The Oni of Desire renders a victim's repressed desires and ambitions so powerful that no ascetic monk could control them. It affects each victim differently, feeding on their longing for what they desire the most. It will gladly serve a mahō-tsukai targeting monks or highborn samurai, enjoying their frustration and inevitable weakness. Given form, it appears as a geisha, befriending victims and persuading them they deserve all they desire, then reveling in their downfall.

The Parasitic Oni announces its presence by buzzing like a locust in the practitioner's mind. It infects anyone the mahō-tsukai wishes, entering through the victim's ear and slowly consuming them from the inside out, driving them beyond the edge before eventually killing them. It wants name and form. Given form, it appears as a swarm of locusts, which could infect a whole castle or town. It is extremely difficult to contain and control.

Renjiro no Oni stole the name of a shugenja who came to the Shadowlands to conduct experiments. Renjiro believed that through a combination of ritual and surgery, he could cure the Taint. His vain efforts resulted in his own affliction and possession by an oni attracted to his invasive methods. Now, Renjiro no Oni is a robed monstrosity of muscle and grey matter seeking Tainted subjects. Its human face offers redemption, but then it turns its head and reveals its demonic visage, which extends a drill-like tongue to suck the brains from its victims.

NEW MAHŌ TECHNIQUES

The following techniques are designed to supplement those in the core rulebook on page 224, allowing characters to embrace the power of mahō. They follow the same rules for proper sacrifices and requisites for learning mahō as described there as well. Fortunately, the Shadowlands boasts kansen eager to whisper to those who can hear, mahō-tsukai requiring apprentices, and the vile texts of the Lost Library.

Accursed Summoning

Rank 1

Description: The mahō-tsukai spills blood and recites a foul prayer to summon a chosen oni and bind it to their will. The oni appears caught in an invisible prison, unable to act except at the summoner's direction.

XP Cost: 3

Activation: As a downtime activity action, you may make a **Theology (Void) check** with TN equal to the oni's Intrigue rank.

Effects: If you succeed, you summon the desired oni and bind it to your will, unable to act without your consent.

If you fail, you summon the desired oni (or a different one, at the GM's discretion) but it breaks free of your control and curses you, causing you to suffer the Afflicted condition.

If you have 3 or more kept \diamond results, the summoned oni scries and learns your name.

New Opportunities:

$\diamond+$: The sight of the oni instills primal terror in any onlookers. Each character who can see the oni and is within range 3 suffers a number of strife equal to \diamond spent this way.

$\diamond\diamond$: The oni instills a Shadowlands Taint disadvantage of your choice upon anyone within a range equal to the number of your rings with the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage attached.

Bind the Undead

Rank 2

The mahō-tsukai draws on the power of Jigoku to extend their will over the animated dead (such as skeletons or zombies). These undead then act as the mahō-tsukai commands, mimicking gestures or following simple instructions. They can attack a target or follow the mahō-tsukai like a squad of troops follows their leader. A smaller number of undead allows the practitioner greater control, and a single undead being can act naturally enough to infiltrate a town or castle, if the practitioner remains nearby and sustains the necessary concentration.

Activation: As a Scheme action, you may make a **TN 2 Theology (Fire) check** targeting a number of undead creatures up to your Earth Ring at range 0–4. You can only choose undead creatures with combat rank 3 or lower this way.

Effects: If you succeed, you bind each target to your will. They can now act only under your control, via simple voice commands. You can issue straightforward commands with your allocated five words per turn, or you can issue more complex commands if you dedicate your action to giving a command. If you are killed or become Unconscious due to a critical strike, all bound undead under your control cease to function, slumping to the ground as inanimate corpses.

Whether you succeed or fail, an area encompassing 1 range band around each target's position gains the Defiled terrain quality.

New Opportunities

$\diamond\diamond$: One undead creature you choose becomes a revenant (see page 18) in addition to becoming bound.

$\diamond+$: Treat the maximum range of the technique as 1 higher per \diamond spent this way.

$\diamond+$: Treat the maximum combat rank of an undead creature you can bind as 1 higher per \diamond spent this way. If you bind an intelligent undead creature this way and later lose control of it, it reverts to its own goals instead of becoming inanimate.

Commune with Evil

Rank 1

The practitioner detects any malevolent supernatural entities in the area, senses their desires, and makes a bargain for an unholy blessing.

Activation: As a downtime activity action, you may make a **TN 1 Theology (Void) check**.

Effects: If you succeed, you scry for the presence of any Otherworldly or Tainted beings at range 0–6.

USING MAHŌ IN THE SHADOWLANDS

When resolving a check to perform mahō in the Shadowlands, the character always counts as having assistance—from Fu Leng himself! This means they roll one additional \triangle for the check and may keep one additional die. Fu Leng has no advantages the character may apply, though, and refuses to suffer strife to negate \triangle on the character's check. The mahō may still receive assistance from other characters as the GM deems suitable.

New Opportunities

- : If there are any such beings, they accept your offering, and they augment you with an unholy blessing that increases the value of the ring you used for the check by 1. You can only have one unholy blessing at a time, and it persists until the end of the scene.
- +: If you receive an unholy blessing, it temporarily increases the ring's value by an additional 1 per •• spent this way.
- +: If you receive an unholy blessing, it persists for 1 additional round per • spent this way.

Dark Reflection

Rank 1

The mahō-tsukai must obtain an obsidian mirror, pool of Tainted water, or other corrupted reflective surface. By appealing to kansen, the practitioner makes the object becomes a divinatory tool for a time. The practitioner can receive visual answers to questions or spy on a person or area. Kansen are willing to play this “game,” but the accuracy of images may not be reliable.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 2 Theology (Water) check** targeting a person, object, or location you have encountered before.

Effects: If you succeed, you scry upon a chosen person or location. However, the image is distorted: one minor detail within it, of the GM's choosing, is always incorrect, reflecting instead the fears or desires of the mahō-tsukai.

New Opportunities

- : You bind the kansen within the object permanently. The object gains the Unholy quality and retains its divinatory properties after the initial use. As a Support action, a character may give the object an offering of blood to show the chosen object, person, or location again.

Entreat the Shadow Steed

Rank 2

The mahō-tsukai compels the kansen to fetch a suitable mount. The onikage rises from the ground as a skeletal mount, or an undead horse with decaying flesh comes galloping across the Shadowlands.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 2 Theology (Earth) check**. This technique can be used only in the Shadowlands, or near a place where the corpse of a horse might be found, such as an ancient or recent battlefield.

Effects: If you succeed, you summon an onikage (see page 23) and bind it to your will. It obeys your commands, allowing you to ride it as per the **Mounts and Riding** rules on page 326 of the core rulebook. It reacts violently if others try to ride it.

New Opportunities

- : The equine creature retains enough flesh to pass as a living horse; characters with vigilance 3 or lower do not notice its undead status.
- : Other characters whom you designate can also ride the onikage.
- +: Summon one additional onikage per •• spent this way.

Fiend's Retreat

Rank 3

This technique allows its user to exchange positions with an unsuspecting character, leaving them to meet a miserable end. The blade descends, but the sorcerer's flesh twists like wax and melts to foul muck, revealing some unfortunate whom the mahō-tsukai left to meet the judgment they so richly deserve.

Activation: Once per scene, as an Attack and Movement action or as an out-of-turn action when you are targeted by an attack, you may make a **Theology (Air) check** targeting one character at range 2–3. The target must be Incapacitated or a minion NPC, and the TN of the check is equal to the target's vigilance.

Effects: If you succeed, you curse the target, forcing them to exchange physical locations with you. The target becomes the target of any attacks that were targeting you.

New Opportunities

- +: Choose one additional character at range 0–1 to move and one additional target per • spent this way.
- +: Increase the maximum range by 1 per • spent this way.

Shape the Flesh**Rank 4**

The *mahō-tsukai* transforms their body, taking on a demonic aspect. Ragged wings or a glistening carapace sprouts from their flesh, or their form flows like fouled water, extending unnaturally. They might even fade into living shadow, becoming a creature of pure obscurity that shrugs off even the holiest of talismans and prayers.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 4 Theology (Air) check**.

Effects: If you succeed, you augment and curse yourself in one of the following ways, depending on the ring you used:

- ➊ **Talons and Fangs (Fire):** The damage and deadliness of your Unarmed profile become 6, and it gains the Unholy quality.
- ➋ **Thick Hide (Earth):** Your physical resistance becomes 7.
- ➌ **Wings (Air):** You gain flight; you can move vertically and ignore the negative effects of terrain.
- ➍ **Malleable Form (Water):** The maximum range of your unarmed and melee attacks becomes 3.
- ➎ **Shadowy Form (Void):** Your supernatural resistance becomes 7. You count as an Otherworldly being.

New Opportunities

➊ ➋: Once before the end of the scene, as an action, you may perform this technique again with a different ring and maintain both effects.

Spiritual Shackles**Rank 1**

Mahō-tsukai deal constantly with powerful, dangerous beings, and those who live long enough learn that *kansen* can only be trusted to be untrustworthy—but deceit can be repaid in kind. Other spirits might also seek to wreak vengeance upon *mahō-tsukai*, from the hungering ghosts called *gaki* to wrathful ancestor spirits, and it pays to have protection against such beings. The *mahō-tsukai* uses trickery and sheer will on a *kansen* or other spirit, sealing it within an object.

Activation: As an Attack and Intrigue action, you may make a **Theology (Air) check** targeting one Otherworldly being at range 0–1. The TN of this check is equal to the target's vigilance and is reduced by 2 if the target is also a Tainted being.

Effects: If you succeed, you *bind* the spirit inside an object of silhouette 1 or less at range 0–2. If the being you bound is Tainted, the object gains the Unholy quality.

If you fail, the spirit curses you, and you suffer the Afflicted condition.

New Opportunities

➊: The object gains one other quality of your choice from the following list: Concealable, Durable, Resplendent, Subtle.

➋: As an action, the holder of the object may release the bound being to importune one *mahō* (or invocation, if you have bound an elemental spirit) without paying the usual costs or making the usual TN adjustments (see **Importune Invocations** on page 189 and **Importune Mahō** on page 225 of the core rulebook).

Spread Corruption**Rank 2**

The practitioner channels their inner corruption into their skin, so that their touch becomes contagious. Anyone or anything they touch is assailed by the foul influence of the Shadowlands, which seeks any gap in their spiritual fortitude that it can grasp.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 2 Theology (Fire) check**.

Effects: If you succeed, you augment your touch with a corrupting influence. Anyone whose skin you touch (such as with an unarmed attack) is *cursed*, and they must resist with a **TN 4 Fitness** or **Meditation check (Earth 2, Fire 5)** or suffer fatigue equal to their shortfall and the Afflicted condition. This effect persists until the end of the scene.

New Opportunities

➊ ➋: After you touch someone, the effect is delayed for three rounds, or about a minute in narrative time.

➌: While this effect persists, any ground you walk on becomes Defiled terrain (see **Terrain** on page 267 of the core rulebook).

➍ ➎: Increase the severity of any critical strike you inflict with your unarmed attack profiles by 2 for each of your rings with the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage.

Sword of Blood**Rank 2**

The mahō-tsukai draws blood from an open wound, the vital fluid swirling up to their outstretched palm and congealing into a deadly weapon.

Activation: As a Support action, you may make a **TN 2 Theology (Water) check**. Performing this technique requires a source of blood, such as a corpse or nearby foe with the Bleeding condition. If the mahō-tsukai uses their own blood, they receive 3 fatigue.

Effects: If you succeed, you summon a weapon of your choosing made of blood. It has the Unholy quality (see page 241 of the core rulebook).

New Opportunities

✿: You may summon a pair of identical weapons instead of a single weapon.

✿: At the end of each of your turns, you may transform the weapon into a different weapon.

✿ ✿: You may immediately perform a Strike action using the weapon you summoned.

✿ ✿: After you inflict a critical strike on another character with this weapon, remove fatigue from yourself equal to the severity of the critical strike (after the check to resist).

Twisted Summons**Rank 3**

The mahō-tsukai calls forth an abomination from Jigoku, giving it a temporary cage of flesh from which to wreak carnage upon the Mortal Realm. The being that comes forth is a fused horror, an agglomeration of multiple corpses twisted into unnatural form.

Activation: As an Intrigue and Support action, you may make a **TN 3 Theology (Earth) check** to call upon a foul spirit to target a number of corpses at range 0–2, reshaping them into an abominable body for its use.

Effects: If you succeed, you summon an Undead Horror (see page 19) and bind it to your will. However, the summoned creature is one not easily kept shackled; if you become Compromised or Incapacitated, it breaks the binding and sets off on its own to devour the living and absorb the dead.

Whether you succeed or fail, an area at range 0–2 of your target becomes Defiled terrain.

New Opportunities

✿+: The Undead Horror absorbs up to two additional corpses at range 0–2 for each ✿ spent this way. Increase its endurance by 2 for each corpse it absorbs. For every five corpses the monster absorbs this way, increase its silhouette by 1.



CHAPTER 3

Out of the Shadows

Hida Sanae raised her tetsubō to a ready position. Her comrades around her along the Wall did the same. There were no words spoken. They all knew what was coming. They all knew what they had to do.

The wave poured towards them, seething and pulsating like a mass of worms. Arrows darkened the skies and slowed the advance, but then a gigantic form rose from the tide. Sanae's eyes widened as the monstrous creature grew to its full height. It was horror of protruding bone, razored talons, and gigantic tusks. Its eyes—and there were far too many of them—burned with crimson flames, and its terrible roar filled the air like summer thunder.

Oni, she thought. Demon from Jigoku. She looked to her left and her right, and was heartened to see each warrior standing tall. The creature was soon covered with ballista bolts, yet continued to advance. It would be at the Wall in moments.

"Courage!" Sanae bellowed, and as one the Crab around her answered. Then the oni was upon them and the fighting began.



Running Shadowlands Games

Setting a *Legend of the Five Rings* roleplaying game or campaign in the Shadowlands, or even making its dread presence felt in a game, offers unique and interesting opportunities for play. To do it effectively, however, can be demanding. Simply replacing clan samurai, rōnin, commoners, and various other “typical” opponents normally encountered in the Empire with Shadowlands monsters will certainly present the players with some new challenges. If this is as far as a GM goes, though, it doesn’t exploit the true value offered by the Shadowlands: the opportunity to include some significant elements of horror in the game. The following sections highlight what the inclusion of the Shadowlands in a campaign can offer and how to take advantage of these things.

HORROR THEMES IN ROKUGAN

Legend of the Five Rings has a richly detailed setting—the Emerald Empire of Rokugan—and GMs should draw upon this to help their games feel unique. The player characters encounter plot elements from honor-driven conflicts with samurai from the Great Clans to shadowy battles against the schemes of criminal conspiracies. The supernatural is very much part of the setting, but it is often in the background of the events of the plot.

Hurling the PCs into the Shadowlands can take the story in a much more disturbing direction. The Shadowlands is an excellent venue for horror elements, but horror in roleplaying games works best if both the GM and players are interested in engaging with it.

When contemplating including Shadowlands elements in a game, the following questions are very helpful to consider:

- ➊ What proportion of scenes in the campaign should be spent on supernatural horror rather than other activities?
- ➋ What form should the supernatural horror elements take?

How Much Shadowlands?

To help answer this question, it is useful to consider the role of Shadowlands games in three general categories of game play types: low, mid, and high Shadowlands intensity.

Games with Low Shadowlands Intensity

Despite their best efforts, it isn’t possible for the Crab to entirely prevent horrors from slipping into the Empire. Individual or small groups of Shadowlands creatures are still able to infiltrate by bypassing the Wall and skulking into the Empire from the west, through or near the Shinomen Mori. Some of these monstrosities have even developed abilities and attributes to facilitate their infiltration. Bog-hags, penanggalan, and shape-shifting oni are able to conceal themselves as ordinary Rokugani, only revealing themselves when they wish to strike.

Some servants of Fu Leng can even originate within the Empire. Samurai and commoners alike can become mahō-tsukai, practitioners of foul blood magic. They tend to carry out their evil schemes in secret, meaning that they could be essentially anyone, anywhere in Rokugan.

What characterizes all of these sorts of foes is that they are individuals suited to specific, one-time encounters or relatively brief side quests. Confrontations with them can certainly inform the larger campaign, but generally in a low Shadowlands intensity game, the main action is not about the Shadowlands. In these sorts of games, other supernatural beings not related to Fu Leng such as ghosts and yokai could also provide elements of horror.

INCLUDING HORROR

Perhaps an even more fundamental question a GM should consider is if they want to include horror or horrific elements in their game at all. Many people are drawn to *Legend of the Five Rings* for its “samurai drama”: honorable conflict and sacrifice, political scheming, and all the other myriad elements that make roleplaying in the Emerald Empire the unique experience it is. It is quite possible that some of these players will not appreciate the addition of horror elements; they may find them off-putting or even upsetting. A GM should be certain that their players will find the inclusion of frightening Shadowlands creatures and events an enjoyable experience. They may not mind battling unnatural creatures if their presentation is more oriented toward action than horror, for example. If the GM isn’t sure, they are strongly recommended to discuss it with their players is comfortable during the game.

MIXING INTENSITY

While the low, mid, and high intensities presented here are mutually exclusive for a single game session, they are not mutually exclusive as parts of a campaign. Various levels could co-exist during the course of a campaign, one leading into another.

For example, encountering a lone mahō-tsukai (a low intensity game) could lead to the PCs uncovering a large and powerful cult (a mid intensity game). Once the PCs destroy the cult, its leader could escape and flee to the Shadowlands, inducing the PCs to chase them until they meet a final confrontation somewhere deep within the domains of Fu Leng (a high intensity game).

Games with Mid Shadowlands Intensity

In a mid intensity game, Shadowlands elements play a more central role, but much of the game still revolves around the more “traditional” aspects of roleplaying in the Emerald Empire. Shadowlands horrors are generally greater in number or more organized, presenting the PCs with a more significant threat.

An example of a mid-level game would be one that involves a cult led by one or more mahō-tsukai. Now, instead of a single character wielding evil magic, there may be several, who may in turn have allies, followers, and minions. Samurai and commoners alike can be drawn in by the terrible temptations of power. The mahō-tsukai also may be able to call upon more powerful Shadowlands creatures, such as undead or oni, to do their bidding.

Games with High Shadowlands Intensity

In this type of game, the bulk or even all of the story action revolves around Shadowlands elements and may even take place in the Shadowlands itself. The PCs may find themselves on or near the Wall, facing the prospect of a full-scale attack by Shadowlands forces; indeed, a following section deals with this situation specifically. They may instead find themselves venturing into the Shadowlands, exposed to the full horror of Jigoku's corruption.

Alternatively, the PCs could be forced to deal with a Tainted location inside the Empire, such as the foul marshes in the Shinomen Mori or another location of the GM's design. For example, an incursion by an army of monsters might overrun a village, town, or castle, or the actions of a powerful cult might transform a serene temple into a place of terror and death.

WHICH HORROR ELEMENTS?

Just as the extent of horror elements in a game or campaign can be divided into categories, so can the nature of Fu Leng's corruptive presence. There are three broad categories that describe what sort of effect the Shadowlands elements are intended to have on the game and, by extension, its players. These are paranoia, creeping dread, and visceral horror.

Paranoia

One of the defining characteristics of the Shadowlands is its secretive nature. As noted above, some creatures are able to convincingly impersonate nearly anyone they encounter. By creating situations in which the PCs are unsure whether someone is actually who they

appear to be, an atmosphere of paranoia can be fostered. For example, assume the PCs are delegates to a Winter Court that became snowed in. An NPC delegate is found apparently several days dead—except the PCs spoke to the NPC that very morning. It appears that a shapeshifter of some sort is loose in the court, and now the PCs aren't sure who is actually whom. This sort of paranoia can fuel a tense and exciting game as the PCs struggle to uncover and deal with the impostor.

Creeping Dread

An atmosphere of mounting dread is an excellent way of exploiting the disturbing and sinister nature of the Shadowlands. The Shadowlands terrain itself, with its shifting landforms and perils lurking in every corner, should make journeys through this region tense and nerve-wracking. Offered hints and suggestions of horror and danger can keep the tension high as the PCs worry about what lies beyond that next barren hill, or that shadowed doorway from which they heard furtive whispers or perhaps a child's unsettling laughter. In order to create and maintain a meaningful sense of dread, it is essential that there occasionally be an *actual* threat, but the ultimate goal is to convince the players that menace surrounds them and that the further they venture, the more imminent danger becomes.

Visceral Horror

Visceral horror is just that: the sudden discovery of a bloody, gory scene of slaughter, or an unexpected attack by a terrifying monster. In some ways, though, this is actually the weakest type of horror, particularly if it is used too often. Too-frequent exposure to sudden frights and egregious gore diminishes their impact, so this should be reserved for specific and important scenes in the story. An obvious such instance would be the climax, when the PCs come face to face with the awful reality of a mahō-tsukai's ultimate ritual, or with a monstrous oni that threatens to consume not just their physical bodies, but also their very souls.

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Each level of intensity can be combined with different horror elements to create a unique feel. While a low intensity game is certainly suited to an atmosphere of paranoia, it can rapidly spiral into stark, visceral horror. Using the example of the PCs trapped in an isolated Winter Court with a shapeshifter, once the creature is found and cornered, it could be revealed as a vicious, horrifying oni. Likewise, a mid intensity game can easily incorporate a sense of creeping dread: for instance,

the PCs, investigating an apparently unremarkable village, could find clues that something is terribly amiss. Eventually, they may begin to suspect that a blasphemous cult is conducting human sacrifices, and that all of the villagers may be involved. The PCs could then find themselves outnumbered, with darkness falling and a long, empty road ahead of them leading to the nearest source of help.

By remaining mindful of the intensity and horror elements they want in their story, a GM can offer a rising and falling tempo of fear as the players progress, giving them a truly memorable experience—one worthy of the full, dreadful potential of the Shadowlands!

PLAYER CHARACTERS AND MAHŌ

For all the fun and excitement that introducing the Shadowlands into a game can offer, there is a risk. Blood magic, or mahō, which is a fundamental aspect of Shadowlands power—particularly with respect to mortal humans—is potentially just as available for the PCs’ use as it is for their adversaries. As described in this book as well as the core rulebook, the only requirements to become a practitioner of mahō are that the character in question has access to some appropriate form of evil lore. There are a variety of ways these things can come about during the course of a campaign once a GM decides to introduce the Shadowlands as an element of their game. This means that a GM needs to consider whether they want to allow PCs to be able to use mahō and what the implications for the game are if they do.

One answer to this is to simply disallow it. The GM could specify that PCs—even Tainted ones—simply don’t have access to the evil lore required to allow them to use mahō. This helps reinforce a more heroic tone for the game, but it does remove a potentially interesting element from the game.

If the GM is going to allow PCs to use mahō, they should consider the effect it will have on the story. Foremost among them is the effect on the PC or PCs in question. The use of mahō is manifestly illegal in Rokugan, no matter how good the intentions of the one using it. Openly using mahō is an invitation to Emerald Magistrates, or even other loyal samurai, to take action that could certainly include killing the mahō user. Moreover, even if the PC doesn’t get caught using mahō, the requirements of blood sacrifice and concealing this power will almost certainly lead to situations where the character must forfeit honor to continue to wield this power.

Further, these powers frequently lead to conflicts between PCs. A group could collectively decide to tacitly approve of their colleague’s use of evil magic, perhaps by looking the other way, or they could even decide to all embrace it and effectively become a “coven” of mahō-tsukai. This would result in a very different game, with the PCs effectively playing villains (or at least antiheroes). If this works in the context of the campaign, then that’s fine. Again, though, the PCs should have to forfeit honor to take such actions.

COMBINING THE TYPES

Like the intensity levels of Shadowlands horror, the various types of horror can be combined. For instance, the PCs could be traversing the Shadowlands, experiencing a growing sense of paranoia as they approach an evil shrine. As they enter, they are stunned to see one of their own number is already there, bound to an altar amidst the blood-soaked remains of earlier sacrifices. They desperately claim to have been taken prisoner the day before—so the PCs must decide which one is real and which is the impostor. Even as they wrestle with this dilemma, a fierce roar announces the appearance of a powerful oni bent on their destruction...



PORTRAYING THE SHADOWLANDS

GMs should always attempt to portray time in the Shadowlands as an unsettling experience, one that grows even worse the farther characters journey past the Wall. Nights might be utterly silent, absent of even the comforting sounds of crickets, only to be punctuated with horrible screams in the distance or childish giggles that feel all too nearby. The PCs might come across areas filled with the stench of rotting meat or spilled blood even though they are completely clear of such materials. Sunlight from above could be rippling or diminished without a cloud in the sky. Days might seem to last forever, and nights only a few hours, or the reverse. Even walking through plain fields might be laborious, as if the ground is reluctant to release their feet. With each new day, things should become even more disturbing and difficult, fraying tempers and keeping PCs on edge. Most importantly, each visit into the Shadowlands should be a unique experience: there should never be a "standard" or "normal" passage through the Shadowlands.

If the other PCs do not accept their comrade's use of mahō, however, one or more PCs might decide that their colleague's actions are inexcusable, and attempt to arrest or even attack their ally. While this sort of in-party conflict can be fun for some groups, other groups might prefer to play with less tension. The potential for conflict between PCs should be carefully considered by the entire group.

Finally, because mahō involves blood sacrifice, it is important to consider the real-world views of players. A character engaged in mahō should be cautioned not to exceed the group's tolerance for graphic descriptions of violence and gore. A frank and respectful discussion among the group is highly recommended before any player starts their PC down the path of using mahō.

ON THE WALL AND BEYOND

A question that may arise while planning a game set near, on, or beyond the Kaiu Kabe is why would a situation involving the Shadowlands happen in the first place? The Wall is a massive fortification designed to protect the Empire from the Shadowlands; it is not a casual destination for curious samurai. The Crab rigorously control who has access to the Wall, because it is a profoundly dangerous place for those unfamiliar with it—and that includes almost all non-Crab samurai. Allowing samurai who aren't properly trained or prepared onto the Wall not only puts those samurai at serious risk, it also risks the lives of Crab samurai who are bound to protect them. Accordingly, unless a samurai has a specific reason or duty that would takes to the Wall, they are simply not welcome there.

This is doubly true when it comes to providing access to the Shadowlands. Unless they try to sail through the Sea of Shadows or detour far to the west through the Shinomen Mori or across the Plains above Evil, those who want to enter the Shadowlands need Crab permission. The tunnels that pass beneath the Wall are specifically designed to thwart those not intimately familiar with them, after all.



Nevertheless, there are bona fide reasons for the Crab to allow PCs on or even through the Wall and into the Shadowlands, all of which can be used as part of ongoing campaigns or as the basis for a new adventure. Examples include:

- ➊ The PCs are carrying out an important mission with Imperial sanction or the approval of the Crab Clan leadership. They possess documents specifying this, which not only grants them access or passage, but also gains them assistance from the Crab for their mission. Potential missions could include pursuing a quarry into the Shadowlands, retrieving something of value, or gathering information or Tainted specimens for study.
- ➋ The PCs are assigned to duty on the Wall. While it is rare, samurai from other clans do sometimes receive such assignments, usually as a part of a larger treaty or agreement between their clan and the Crab. Alternatively, samurai who somehow wronged the Crab Clan through their words or deeds could be assigned to the Wall as a form of punishment or restitution. In either case, the PCs are treated like any new Crab samurai assigned to the Wall, which means they are rigorously trained and drilled and expected to participate fully in the Wall's defense.
- ➌ Young PCs are assigned to the Wall, or even sent into the Shadowlands, as part of their gempuku ceremony. This is especially true for students of Sunda Mizu Dōjō, the oldest dōjō of the Crab Clan and where many of its samurai train. Sunda Mizu Dōjō does, on occasion, accept young would-be samurai from other clans.
- ➍ Rōnin PCs are participating in a Twenty Goblin Winter and are permitted entry into the Shadowlands to gather the twenty goblin heads required to become Crab samurai.

DEALING WITH THE CRAB

No matter their reason for being at the Wall or entering the Shadowlands, PCs have to deal with the Crab. When on duty, Crab samurai tend to be extremely vigilant and focused on their tasks. They have little time for or interest in acting as tour guides for visiting samurai. When portraying them as NPCs, the GM should keep in mind that Crab tend to be blunt and to the point, with a brusque attitude that often borders on rudeness.

If the PCs object to this treatment, they're likely to earn nothing but more contempt. The Crab generally believe, after all, that the Empire simply doesn't understand or appreciate their sacred duty of protecting Rokugan. Accordingly, they have little time for the niceties that characterize interactions among samurai elsewhere.

If the PCs are actually assigned to the Wall or to a related task such as a patrolling in the Shadowlands, then their Crab colleagues are even less forgiving. The PCs are not only subject to the same harsh discipline as any Crab samurai, but also find themselves under intense scrutiny. Here, clever words and the glory of past accomplishments carry little weight. Only if they carry out their duties well, with great courage and a clear willingness to sacrifice themselves if the circumstances demand it, can they earn the respect of the Crab.

DEALING WITH THE LOST

Despite the horrific nature of the Shadowlands, there are many humans—or those who were once human—who have fallen to under the sway of Fu Leng. These Tainted individuals are collectively known as the Lost, and there are many ways they can be brought into Shadowlands adventures.

The most frequent tactic, of course, is to use them as enemies, often powerful ones at that. Dark Moto are powerful warriors on par with the greatest bushi of Rokugan, and mahō users who have escaped to the Shadowlands can be deadly foes in this kansen-infested territory. With so many unnatural creatures to draw on, GMs can utilize human adversaries whom the PCs can converse and engage in intrigues with as a change of pace from what could feel like endless combats.

While many of the Lost serve Fu Leng knowingly, others are fully under his sway but believe they are still serving their own purposes, or even that of their lord. The line between self-delusion and the convictions of Tainted warriors like the Damned (see page 128) is intentionally murky. A Tainted guide who believes they maintain self-control might be a powerful ally in the Shadowlands—but the PCs should never be completely sure if they are able to resist the snares of Fu Leng or merely believe themselves free of the Fallen Kami's schemes.

Depending on how a GM wants to present them, these samurai could be tragic warriors who seek only a proper death against Fu Leng's minions and desire the PCs' aid in their quest. Others might be one step from treachery, and the slightest insult from a PC could be enough to spur them into battle or betrayal. Most importantly, they act as constant reminders of what the PCs' fate might be should they drop their guard or forget for an instant the awful nature of the Shadowlands.

New Titles

Few would choose to enter the Shadowlands of their own volition, but those who do often develop specific types of expertise that make them valuable in the wider war against Fu Leng's minions. These new titles follow the rules described on page 305 of the core rulebook.

THE DAMNED

One of the tragic realities faced by the Crab is that death isn't necessarily the worst outcome of confronting the Shadowlands. Even if they survive battle relatively unscathed physically, many become afflicted with the Taint of Jigoku. For most Rokugani, becoming Tainted is so abhorrent that even seppuku seems preferable to the slow, creeping corruption that twists their body and imperils their soul. However, some samurai have duties they cannot so easily abandon. As such, the Crab allow the Tainted to serve, eventually moving those too suffused with the essence of Fu Leng to the Damned, a legion based in a fortress located close to the Wall—the so-called Barracks of the Damned. The existence of the Damned is not exactly a secret, but neither are the Crab quick to speak of them, particularly to outsiders.

Assigned By: Kuni daimyō or other officials. Note that you must possess at least one Shadowlands Taint disadvantage to receive this title.

Status Award: -20 (to a maximum of 30)

XP to Completion: 20

Immediate Effects: Gain the Ferocity disadvantage.

Tainted Warrior (Title Ability): Increase the TN of all your non-Command Social skill checks by 1, and reduce the TN of all your Martial Arts [Any] skill checks targeting Tainted beings by 1 (to a minimum of 1). Non-Tainted beings receive 1 strife whenever they make a Social skill check targeting you.

THE DAMNED

TITLE	ADVANCE	TYPE
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Medicine	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Theology	Skill
❖ Rank 1-2 Kata	✗	Tech. Grp.
❖ Heartpiercing Strike	✗	Technique
❖ Rallying Cry	❖	Technique

HARVESTER

Even those among the Crab who are most fervently devoted to destroying the creatures of the Shadowlands recognize value in obtaining specimens—both living and dead—for study by anatomists and other scholars. Harvesters are samurai skilled in traversing and surviving the Shadowlands, who also undertake the profoundly dangerous task of collecting and returning such specimens for research. Unsurprisingly, Harvesters are most commonly found among the Hiruma. Individuals or small groups of Harvesters hunt and trap smaller Tainted creatures; occasionally, larger groups of Harvesters, often supported by detachments of Crab bushi and Kuni shugenja, set out to collect bigger (and correspondingly more dangerous) monstrosities.

Assigned By: Hiruma or Kuni officials.

Status Award: +10 (to a maximum of 45)

XP to Completion: 20

Capture Evil (Title Ability): Reduce the TN of your Survival checks to track down a Tainted being by 1. When you inflict a critical strike on a Tainted being, you may spend ✘ as follows:

❖ ❖: The target suffers the Dazed, Disoriented, or Immobilized condition.

HARVESTER

	ADVANCE	TYPE
	Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.
	Smithing	Skill
	Survival	Skill
	Theology	Skill
❖ Rank 1-2 Kata	✗	Tech. Grp.
❖ Rank 1-2 Rituals	❖	Technique
❖ Skulk	✗	Technique

TWENTY-GOBLIN CRAB

At one time, the character was a rōnin, eking out a meager existence on the fringes of Rokugani society with no lord to provide for them. Now, however, they are an accepted member of the Hida family of the Crab after completing a harrowing Twenty Goblin Winter. By slaying and bringing back the heads of twenty goblins from the Shadowlands, they earned a place among the Crab. As far as their comrades are concerned, they have always been one of the Crab—even if they can't forget the long, bitter days of being cursed and reviled by "proper" samurai of the Empire as an honorless rōnin dog.

Assigned By: Hida daimyō or other officials.

Status Award: +15 (to a minimum of 30 and a maximum of 40), officially become samurai and member of Crab Clan.

XP to Completion: 20

Goblin Killer (Title Ability): When making a Martial Arts [Any] check targeting a goblin, you may spend ⚡ as follows:

⚡+: Each other goblin at range 0–2 of your target receives 1 strife per ⚡ that you spend this way.

TWENTY-GOBLIN CRAB

	ADVANCE	TYPE
TITLE		
Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.	
Social Skills	Skl. Grp.	
Culture	Skill	
Government	Skill	
❖ Rank 1–2 Kata	⚡	Tech. Grp.
❖ Thunderclap Strike	⚡	Technique
❖ Stonewall Tactics	⌚	Technique

WITCH HUNTER

Because of the diffuse structure of the family, the Kuni are known as much for their order of Witch Hunters as they are for their schools. Garbed in dark robes and daubed with imposing makeup to hide their faces from evil spirits, the members of this group seek out mahō-tsukai and any who dare to practice the foul art of mahō within Rokugan. While the Kuni would generally

accept anyone with the skills needed (shugenja primarily, but rarely, other mystics or experienced hunters of mahō-tsukai), in recent years, only members of the Crab Clan have sought out this solemn duty. Most are from the Kuni Purifier School. Witch Hunters operate with little oversight, each doing what they deem necessary to defend Rokugan against these threats. Any Witch Hunter can elevate another to the task, though few do so unless their apprentice has proven themselves time and again, and faced horrors that would shatter any soul still harboring doubts or uncertainties.

Assigned By: Another Witch Hunter.

Status Award: +10 (to a minimum of 30)

XP to Completion: 45

Bane of Sorcerers (Title Ability): When you make a check to resist the effects of a mahō technique, you may spend ⚡ as follows:

⚡: Reduce the TN of your next check targeting the mahō practitioner who performed it by 1 per ⚡ spent this way.

⚡⚡: If you succeed on the check to resist, the mahō practitioner receives strife equal to your ranks in Theology.

WITCH HUNTER

	ADVANCE	TYPE
TITLE		
Martial Skills	Skl. Grp.	
Scholar Skills	Skl. Grp.	
Command	Skill	
Skulduggery	Skill	
❖ Rank 1–4 Kata	⚡	Tech. Grp.
❖ Rank 1–5 Rituals	⚡	Tech. Grp.
❖ Honest Assessment	⌚	Technique



Spending Opportunity in Shadowlands Games

The threat of the Shadowlands requires brave and stalwart samurai to step up to the challenge of facing it, seizing any weapon they can in the hope of pushing back the Taint. Whether driven by the honor of their clan, devotion to Rokugan as a whole, or a more pragmatic approach to survival, samurai facing Tainted dangers need every advantage they can find.

GMs running Shadowlands-focused games may use the following tables to allow players additional means of spending \diamond in their games, or as inspiration for new options of their devising. Options are included for games focused on the Shadowlands, for games focused on dealing with the threat of the Taint elsewhere in Rokugan, and even for Tainted characters, including PCs with the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage.

OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHADOWLANDS

Table 3-1: Spending Opportunity in the Shadowlands details a selection of ways to spend \diamond on checks while in the Shadowlands. One option is presented for checks of each ring, although at the GM's discretion, an option may be applied to checks using other rings or used as the basis for a new idea for spending \diamond .

TABLE 3-1: SPENDING OPPORTUNITY IN THE SHADOWLANDS

COST	OPPORTUNITY
Air $\diamond\diamond\diamond$	You detect a subtle sign in your environment that lets you get your bearings, such as a stream that runs slightly less Tainted than the environment around it or the growths on the twisted trees that point toward the Festering Pit. This landmark helps guide you for one scene, plus one additional scene in the Shadowlands per \diamond spent this way.
Earth $\diamond\diamond$	Your resolute nature steels you against the unstable environment of the Shadowlands. You count your vigilance as 1 higher the next time you seek to notice or avoid a hazardous situation or creature.
Fire $\diamond\diamond\diamond$	You spur your comrades on with pleasing encouragement or biting criticism. One other character in the scene per \diamond you spend this way reduces their next TN to resist physical hardship or the influence of the Shadowlands by 1.
Water $\diamond\diamond\diamond\diamond$	By luck or careful scavenging, you are able to find a useful item not yet corrupted by the Shadowlands. Such items have a maximum rarity of 3, plus 1 for each additional $\diamond\diamond$ spent. The GM should modify this depending on the exact nature of the item as well.
Void $\diamond\diamond\diamond\diamond$	Though Jigoku's power weighs heavily upon them, you are undeterred. By drawing on memories of the un-Tainted lands north of the wall, you can keep yourself focused and ignore all \diamond results on your next check.



OPPORTUNITY AMIDST CORRUPTION

Table 3-2: Spending Opportunity against Tainted Threats, on page 131, details a selection of ways to spend \diamond on checks in a game when the characters confront Tainted threats outside of the Shadowlands, such as while pursuing secretive mahō-tsukai. One option is presented for checks of each ring, although at the GM's discretion, an option may be applied to checks using other rings where appropriate or used as the basis for a new idea for spending \diamond .

TAINTED OPPORTUNITIES

Table 3-3: Spending Opportunity While Tainted, on page 131, details a selection of ways to spend \diamond on checks made by Tainted characters. These options might be used by Tainted foes of the PCs or even by PCs who are themselves Tainted. One option is presented for checks of each ring, although at the GM's discretion, an option may be applied to checks using other rings where appropriate or used as the basis for a new idea for spending \diamond .

TABLE 3-2: SPENDING OPPORTUNITY AGAINST TAINTED THREATS

COST	OPPORTUNITY
Air ✿✿	Confronted with the horrors of the Taint, you remain alert and able to discern a weakness in your foe. Reduce the TN of your next check made to oppose or harm a Tainted character by 1, as you examine the threat before you and formulate an appropriate response.
Earth ✿✿	You are able to weather such terrible things as the revelation of a secret mahō-tsukai or the summoning of an oni. The next time you suffer strife this scene, you suffer 2 fewer strife, to a minimum of 0.
Fire ✿+	The righteous fury you display can cow even the most terrible of Tainted fiends. Each Tainted being in the scene gains 1 strife, plus 1 additional strife for every ✿✿ spent. If you are unaware if another character is Tainted, the GM should record this strife secretly.
Water ✿	You adapt yourself to better fight the corrupted power before you. Once before the end of current the game session you may either reduce the TN of a check to resist a Tainted power, such as a mahō technique, assaulting you by 1 or increase the TN of another character's check to target or affect you with such a power by 1.
Void ✿✿ or ✿✿✿	If the character spends ✿✿, they discern that the kami have fled, as well as the type of disturbance (mahō, kansen, or similar). If the character spends ✿✿✿, they can also determine the total combat  threat rating of all Tainted beings that caused the kami to flee.

TABLE 3-3: SPENDING OPPORTUNITY WHILE TAINTED

COST	OPPORTUNITY
Air ✿✿	Your newfound cunning is able to redirect attention away from you, potentially concealing your Tainted nature or letting you avoid scrutiny. The TN of the next check made to scrutinize you or your actions is increased by 1.
Earth ✿✿	No mortal concern can slow you, as you already endure worse than most can even imagine. For the rest of the scene, whenever you suffer fatigue reduce the value suffered by 2, to a minimum of 0.
Fire ✿✿	The furious power of Jigoku flows through you, granting you unnatural might. Add 1 kept  showing a  result to the next Martial Arts check you make. This effect persists until the start of their next turn.
Water ✿✿	You briefly become fluid in mind or body, shaking off disorientation or even injury. You remove one of the following conditions: Dazed, Disoriented, Immobilized, Intoxicated, Lightly Wounded, or Prone.
Void ✿+	The unnatural insights of the kansen voice themselves wordlessly to you, granting knowledge you could not possibly have known otherwise. You learn something relevant to the current situation, appropriate in scope to the number of ✿ spent. For each ✿ spent in this way, you receive 1 strife due to the unnatural means by which you gained this knowledge.

Corruption

Samurai in Rokugan face all manner of threats on a daily basis, from the mere physical dangers of combat to deeply difficult trials of their honor and duty. These threats, they believe, can all be faced and defeated through sufficient courage and skill. There is one threat they can never defeat, however. At best, they can try to protect themselves against it. This threat is the Taint, the result of the corruption that comes from Jigoku, insidious enough to destroy even the most courageous and skilled of samurai.

This is a hard fact for all who are aware of the Shadowlands and its nature. Many samurai try to push such thoughts away and treat the Taint as something that happens only to the unprepared or inept. Ignoring the implacability of the Taint, however, can only lead to a terrible fate, for only unending vigilance toward this enemy can hope to provide defense against it. Even the Crab, who recognize the Taint is a very real danger and ward against it to degrees no other clan would contemplate, can still become Tainted. To suffer from the Taint is more than just the horrible mental and physical changes it forces upon an individual—it is knowing that one's very soul is being corrupted. How one deals with this is perhaps the truest indication of a samurai's spirit.

THE NATURE OF CORRUPTION

The greatest source of corruption is the Shadowlands, and the Festering Pit of Fu Leng is the location of greatest potency. This is, after all, the rupture between the Mortal Realm and Jigoku, the font of unspeakable evil emerging into the world. The possibility of corruption exists throughout Rokugan, however, not just in the Shadowlands. It is true, of course, that the threat of the Taint is greatest in the South, but mahō practitioners and Tainted objects have no borders and thus can spread corruption elsewhere. Even beyond the bounds of Rokugan, there are tales of sinister powers that seem to match the stories of the Taint.

Jade is the most effective way to ward against corruption, and thus is a part of all expeditions into the Shadowlands. As jade protects its wearer, however, it is slowly expended. Unprotected exposure always carries the risk of corruption, and from that point on, the subject walks on the precipice of shadow.

Corruption only deepens with time, like a foul weed burrowing and extending itself through the infected body. Its growth can only be reduced, however, and

CORRUPTION AND THE CRAB

Many clans view becoming Tainted as a stain upon their honor and that of their family. For them, a samurai suffering from the Taint is to be pitied and erased from their history. Many Crab, however, view it as a proud symbol of their endless conflict against the Shadowlands. It marks them as a true samurai warrior, one who fought firsthand against the terrors in the South. Operating on the Wall, patrolling in the Shadowlands, and even studying the Taint all come with the risk of supernatural contamination, and for a Crab to shy away from the risk is to fail in their duty to clan and Emperor.

Even though there is no recovery from the Taint, the Crab view it more as a grievous battle wound than a mark of shame. Unlike other clans, the Crab know full well what it means for those who are corrupted this way, and they would never waste a Tainted samurai with reclusion. Many Tainted Crab join the ranks of the Damned, seeking an honorable end in battle before they fully fall to their corruption and become a threat to the Empire. Even the Crab know that any who suffer from the Taint cannot be fully trusted, though, so they ensure Kuni Wardens watch over them at all times.

can never be completely stilled. Jade petal tea is most frequently used to slow the Taint within a person. Some believe that meditation is also effective, though this is hard to verify or deny rigorously.

As with many aspects of the Taint, there is no firm understanding of how the progression occurs. For many, its effects flow from minor behavioral shifts to minor physical ones, such as thickened nails or odd skin rashes. As the Taint deepens, the changes become more pronounced, including violent personality changes, physical mutations, and even the manifestation of vile powers rightly forbidden to all in Rokugan.

No matter what is done to quell it, eventually the Taint consumes entirely, and the afflicted falls to Fu Leng's domination. This is perhaps one of the worst aspects of the Taint, for many a fully corrupted samurai believes they have control over themselves when in actuality, the Dark Kami guides their every action.

ROLEPLAYING THE AFFLICTED CONDITION

The Afflicted condition (see page 271 of the core rulebook) can represent the first signs of corruption, possibly leading to gaining the Shadowlands Taint. It can also reflect a haunting by a vengeful spirit that weakens a character's resolve, or another supernatural plague that might make them tempted by Fu Leng's whispers.

For Shadowlands-themed campaigns, having the PCs constantly worried that those around them are Tainted can lead to interesting situations. Wondering if the tired Hiruma scout leading the group toward Daylight Castle is hiding a secret allegiance to the Dark Kami, for example, can turn a stop to rest into accusations of Taint.

GMs are encouraged to try out some of these subtler signs of corruption to offer additional representations of this state in their NPCs, especially when running Shadowlands campaigns. Players can similarly do the same for their PCs with the Afflicted condition. Players are also invited to create new behaviors that are more customized to their character and their character's background.

- ➊ You are perpetually unlucky in games of chance.

- ➊ You feel tired all the time, but you don't remember the horrific visions each night that keep you from fully resting.
- ➋ The smell of cooked food makes you nauseated.
- ➌ Your eyes appear lighter than normal and you continually complain that the sun is too bright, even on overcast days.
- ➍ Animals become upset when you are near, barking or hissing at you even in the dark.
- ➎ You delight in rash behavior and never feel a decision needs to be thought out before you act on it.
- ➏ You notice clumps of hair in your bedding each morning, but you can never detect any actually missing from your body.
- ➐ Jade feels unpleasantly greasy or prickly when you handle it. You really don't like it touching your skin.
- ➑ You sometimes find yourself intentionally defying social conventions or questioning their importance.

CORRUPTION COMES TO ALL

As too many samurai sadly learn, there is no escape from corruption save death. The Taint can take root in anyone, and it can make plants, animals, and even the land turn foul. The very spirits of Rokugan, the kami, can become corrupted into kansen, who seem attracted to Tainted beings and may accelerate the spread of corruption within. Even the extreme resistance to the Taint of the nezumi may not be infallible, though ancient and dubious Kuni records and whispers among nezumi Rememberers are the only evidence of such occurrences.

Tainted Crab samurai are watched closely by the Kuni Wardens for signs of worsening conditions. Late stages of Fu Leng's corruption can even become contagious, through the blood or the defilement of the terrain around the person. In Crab lands, the Kuni family studies these effects tirelessly. In other places in Rokugan, it is extremely rare for the Taint to progress this far, except in mahō-tsukai who carefully hide their corruption.

Not all, though, fear or avoid corruption; some actively embrace it as part of their path to power. Mahō practitioners become stronger as they grow more Tainted, and they may seek out the Taint even though it brings them closer to death. Some Crab researchers venture deep into the Shadowlands, seeking greater understanding, while knowing they are doomed to become Tainted themselves.

One thing that has been established is that the corruption of the Taint is almost always linked to supernatural circumstances, such as exposure to Tainted objects, contact with oni or other supernatural creatures under Fu Leng's power, or the incantations of Tainted individuals. It is highly unlikely that people who perform merely terrible acts such as betraying their daimyō or poisoning a rival village become Tainted without the aid of the supernatural. Rokugan might certainly judge them as evil and deserving of punishment, but they have not fallen to the power of Fu Leng—at least, not yet.

Oni Generation

GMs interested in creating their own custom foes for their *Legend of the Five Rings* campaigns can use the following rules to develop new oni with which to populate the Shadowlands in their games. The rules in this section include a variety of base profiles with which to start, as well as sample supernatural powers for oni antagonists. Additionally, some guidelines on how to use oni in games are included to help GMs make them compelling and horrifying antagonists.

HIERARCHY OF ONI

When creating an oni antagonist, the GM should first select a profile from one of the following options. Each oni is truly a unique being—but within the mortal realm, oni are capable of splitting into multiple forms to act in several places simultaneously. Lesser oni represent small shards of an oni's soul, and are the weakest. Next are powerful oni, which are quite potent and possess a more substantial array of tricks and abilities, but still might have 1-2 other forms active. Finally, oni lords are complete beings—the full entity, with all its dread powers—and can threaten even the most powerful groups of samurai.

VILE TRICKSTER (LESSER ONI)

ADVERSARY CONFLICT RANK:  4  8

Though small and weak by the standards of the oni, these foul shards are no less dangerous for their lack of physical prowess. This profile represents oni that focus on misdirection, deceit, and subtle corruption instead of raw power.

SOCIAL		PERSONAL			
00	HONOR		ENDURANCE	12	
06	GLORY	2	COMPOSURE	14	
00	STATUS	3	FOCUS	8	
 +2,  -2	DEMEANOR - SHREWD	3	VIGILANCE	4	
ARTISAN 0		MARTIAL 2	SCHOLAR 1	SOCIAL 3	TRADE 1
ADVANTAGES			DISADVANTAGES		
Unholy Might:  Martial; Physical, Spiritual			Sickening Visage:  Social; Interpersonal		

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Cruel Talons: Range 0–1, Damage 5, Deadliness 4, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Demonic hide (Physical 2, Spiritual 2, Unholy)

ABILITIES

TRICKERY OF JIGOKU

A vile trickster oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 2. It may purchase up to two of the Shadowlands powers beginning on page 137.



SAVAGE BRUTE (LESSER ONI)

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  10  3

This profile represents an oni that is physically mighty but lacks the malign intellect and drive that characterize its more insidious cousins. Most oni with this profile are only interested in inflicting pain and violence and are easily used as pawns by mahō-tsukai or their own more powerful kin.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 3 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 0 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Unholy Might:

 Martial; Physical, Spiritual

DISADVANTAGES

Sickening Visage:

 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Corrupted Tetsubō: Range 1–2, Damage 8, Deadliness 3, Durable, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Thick demonic hide (Physical 3, Supernatural 3, Unholy)

ABILITIES

SAVAGERY OF JIGOKU

A savage brute oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 4. It may purchase up to two of the Shadowlands powers beginning on page 137, except for Captivating Voice, Human Mask, Illusion Master, or Scent of Weakness.

HELLISH SORCERER (POWERFUL ONI)

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  8  10

The power of oni with this profile does not lie in their physical might, although they do not lack for sheer strength. Instead, this profile is for oni that have the power to tap into the Taint to power dangerous magic rivaling the most depraved mahō-tsukai. With this dark power backed up by their natural prowess, a hellish sorcerer is a dangerous threat even among the spawn of Jigoku.



ARTISAN 0 MARTIAL 2 SCHOLAR 2 SOCIAL 3 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES

Devious Cunning:

 Scholar; Spiritual

DISADVANTAGES

Sickening Visage:

 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Bone Naginata: Range 2, Damage 6, Deadliness 7, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Thick demonic hide (Physical 3, Supernatural 3, Unholy)

ABILITIES

SORCERY OF JIGOKU

A hellish sorcerer oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 3. It automatically possesses the Tainted Sorcery Shadowlands power, and it may purchase up to two additional Shadowlands powers from those beginning on page 137.

MONSTROUS WARRIOR (POWERFUL ONI)

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  12  4

The raw power of this profile is appropriate for a wide variety of deadly oni antagonists. Such foes tend toward unsubtle displays of force, but they are fully capable of cunning and devious tactics when appropriate.



ADVANTAGES

Unholy Strength:
 Martial; Physical

DISADVANTAGES

Sickening Visage:
 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Massive Ax: Range 1-2, Damage 10, Deadliness 7, Durable, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Demonic hide and scavenged armor (Physical 4, Supernatural 3, Unholy)

ABILITIES

MONSTER OF JIGOKU

A monstrous warrior oni is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 4. It may purchase up to four Shadowlands powers from those beginning on page 137.



WARLORD OF JIGOKU (POWERFUL ONI)

ADVERSARY

CONFLICT RANK:  14  10

The mightiest of oni can be represented with this profile, including those oni who have gained power from a name stolen from or granted by a past summoner. Such a fiend can be a serious threat even to a large group of experienced samurai, and is likely to massacre those who approach it without proper caution.



ADVANTAGES

Aura of Terror:
 Social; Spiritual

DISADVANTAGES

Sickening Visage:
 Social; Interpersonal

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Massive Claws: Range 1-2, Damage 9, Deadliness 8, Razor-Edged, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Demonic hide and Pit-forged armor (Physical 5, Supernatural 5, Unholy)

ABILITIES

LORD OF JIGOKU

A warlord oni of Jigoku is a Tainted, Otherworldly being of silhouette 5. It may purchase up to five Shadowlands powers from those beginning on page 137.

STOLEN NAME

An oni that was summoned by a mahō-tsukai and given a name (or stole a name) gains tremendous power. Should the GM decide to have an oni possess a name, increase each of its rings by 1. The oni may also purchase up to two additional Shadowlands powers from those beginning on page 137.



SHADOWLANDS POWERS

The otherworldly powers of the oni are strange and varied, as their demonic proclivities take many different forms. Listed on the following pages are example powers, featuring some of the more common tricks and talents oni tend to wield, as well as some that are designed to provide interesting and unique antagonists for players. These powers are by no means a comprehensive list of the capabilities of every kind of oni, but they can still provide a wide array of antagonists or help inspire GMs to design their own unique Shadowlands powers.

Each Shadowlands Power has a value in combat (reddish-orange) or intrigue (blue) threat rating (some can have both), listed alongside its name. Add these to the oni's threat values when creating an oni with new powers, then apply the changes listed under the "First Rank" entry to the oni's profile.

Powers can also have restrictions, which prevent them from being taken alongside other Shadowlands powers. If a power has restrictions, they are listed in the "Restrictions" entry.

Some powers can be purchased multiple times, usually for a lesser cumulative effect. If a power has an "Additional Ranks" entry, purchasing it another time (again applying the changes to the oni's threat rating) also confers these effects.

BONY CARAPACE

 +2

The oni is covered in thick hide, bony plates, or some other form of natural armor beyond even the substantial protection typical of its kind.

Restrictions: Cannot be selected with Serpentine Speed.
First Rank: Increase the oni's physical resistance by 2 and its supernatural resistance by 1.

Additional Ranks: Increase the oni's physical resistance by 1.

CAPTIVATING VOICE

 +2

Some oni speak with honeyed voices at odds with their hideous appearance, giving them the ability to cajole and coerce even stalwart samurai with their words.

First Rank: As a Scheme action, the oni may attempt to influence the mind of a listener by making a **Social (Fire)** check with a TN equal to the target's vigilance. If the oni succeeds, the target suffers 1 strife, plus 1 strife for every 2 bonus successes. If the oni is aware of the target's ninjō, it adds 4 bonus successes to the check if it succeeds. A character who becomes compromised in this manner must spend 1 Void point or immediately unmask.

Additional Ranks: Reduce the TN of the check by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

DARK PUPPET

 +2,  +2

By some vile art, the oni is able to act as if it is many in number. Splitting their form in this manner usually weakens them, but some can bend a suitable substitute to their will, striking through their shadow or another sinister proxy.

First Rank: Once per scene, the oni may perform a second action at Initiative 0.

Additional Ranks: The oni may use this power one addition time per scene. It can only use it once per round.

FOUL SEPARATION

 +1,  +1

Beyond the ability to manifest as numerous lesser versions of themselves, some oni exhibit the even more disturbing power to tear out their own organs or limbs to serve as puppets for their will, allowing them to see, act, or speak at a distance. The scuttling claw of an oni can serve as a secretive assassin, its tongue could utter terrifying secrets of Jigoku or whisper lies to a samurai to tempt them into betraying their comrades, and its floating eye might be able to spy on foes who would spot the massive demon were it to approach.

First Rank: When purchasing this power, the GM must select a body part the oni can remove, typically an eye, hand, or tongue. The oni may tear this element of its body out or reattach it freely, but it reduces its endurance by 5 and all of its rings by 1 while the body part remains separate. The body part then acts separately from the oni, possessed of all of the oni's senses and awareness and directed by its will, using the oni fragment profile presented here. Any critical strike inflicted destroys the fragment, although the oni can regrow a body part destroyed in this way over a single month.

Second Rank: Choose 1 additional body part that the oni can split off.



ONI FRAGMENT

ADVERSARY

CONFlict RANK:  3  3

This profile represents the detached eye, hand, or tongue of an oni with the Foul Separation power. Certain elements of this profile are limited to a fragment of the appropriate type, as noted within.

 2	 2	ENDURANCE 8	FOCUS 4
 2	 2	COMPOSURE 8	VIGILANCE 2

DEMEANOR - AS ONI

ARTISAN 0 MArtIAL 1 SCHOLAR 0 SOCIAL 1 TRADE 1

ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
Terrible Grip (Hand): ➊ Social; Interpersonal	Dulled Senses (Hand): ➋ Martial; Physical
Keen Sight (Eye): ➊ Martial; Physical	Weak (Eye): ➋ Martial; Physical
Persuasive Voice (Tongue): ➊ Social; Interpersonal	Sensitive Flesh (Tongue): ➋ Martial; Physical

FAVORED WEAPONS & GEAR

Demonic Claw (Hand only): Range 0, Damage 6, Deadliness 4, Unholy

Gear (equipped): Demonic flesh (Physical 1, Spiritual 1, Unholy)

ABILITIES

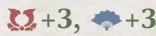
SEGMENT OF JIGOKU

An oni fragment is an Otherworldly, Tainted being of silhouette 0. It may use any Shadowlands powers appropriate to its form, so an oni's tongue might speak with a Captivating Voice, while an oni with envenomed claws may have the Shadowlands Venom power apply to its claws' attacks while its hand is separated. If the fragment is an eye, add 1 to its Air Ring; if a hand, add 1 to its Fire Ring; and if a tongue add 1 to its Water Ring.

HUMAN MASK

The most cunning of oni sometimes transform themselves into human guise. Though imperfect, these disguises are often capable of fooling the unwary and allow the oni to close with a victim or to bypass a foolish sentry. Closer scrutiny often reveals the truth, however, as even the cleverest of oni won't follow (or comprehend) the tenets of Bushidō properly. Less cunning oni, with little or no understanding of how to act human, behave in bizarre fashions that even gaijin would notice as not falling within Rokugani norms.

First Rank: As a Scheme action, oni with this power can weave an illusion of Tainted sorcery to change its apparent nature. It may only initiate this illusion while unseen by others. While under the illusion, the oni appears to be a normal human unafflicted by the Taint, its silhouette is reduced to 2, and it is unaffected by its Sickening Visage disadvantage. However, some element of the oni's inhuman nature remains, allowing careful observers to note something wrong by performing a **TN 4 Medicine (Air) or Theology (Earth) check**. Outside of the Shadowlands, the oni's illusions are harder to maintain, reducing the TN of the check to 3. Success reveals the horn carefully hidden in hair, the fire in the oni's eyes, or some other tell that reveals it as an inhuman monster. The oni may dismiss the illusion as a Support action and typically does so before engaging in combat.

ILLUSION MASTER

The treachery of oni knows no bounds, and some oni have learned vile magics that can deceive the senses and mind into perceiving that which is not there. By means of this sorcery, these oni are able to call up phantasms of lost family to torment samurai, to cloak their movements in impenetrable shadow, or to appear to be more numerous and terrible than they truly are.

First Rank: Oni with this power can call forth illusions of objects, people, and creatures as a Support action. Once created, an illusion remains for the duration of the scene, continuing to act in accordance with the oni's will. The oni may maintain illusions with total silhouette no greater than 8, with two silhouette 0 illusions counting as a single point of silhouette. Therefore, the oni could create the illusion of two ogres (silhouette 4 each), or it could make itself appear to be even larger (increasing its apparent silhouette by 1), wielding a sword the size of a tall human (silhouette 2), and preceded by a pack of five Tainted hounds (silhouette 1 each).

The illusions the oni creates have no substance and cannot directly physically harm anyone, but they can speak if the oni wishes it, or conceal details such as deadfalls or other dangers. Touching an illusion reveals its falsehood but does not end its effects unless the illusion is brought into contact with jade. Characters who have reason to suspect an illusion can attempt to see through it or reveal it with a **TN 3 check** using a skill the GM deems appropriate.

OBSIDIAN JAWS

The hideous visages of some oni are further marred by massive jaws filled with teeth of obsidian shards.

First Rank: The oni gains the following unarmed attack profile: Obsidian Bite (Range 0, Damage 4, Deadliness 8, Razor-Edged, Unholy).

Additional Ranks: After the oni inflicts a critical strike using this profile, it removes 2 fatigue per additional rank purchased.

SCENT OF WEAKNESS

The secret desires of a samurai's heart are as playthings to an oni, who may be able to see hidden weakness as if written in burning letters on the samurai's face or to smell the wants and needs the samurai keeps hidden as clearly as wafting perfume.

First Rank: As a Scheme Action, the oni may make a **Social (Air) check** targeting one character in the scene with a TN equal to the target's vigilance. Success reveals the target's ninjō to the oni, including contextual details. For example, an oni using this power against a character with a ninjō of secret love would learn not only about this hidden desire, but also whom the character longs for, what their love looks like, and similar information as the GM deems appropriate. This does not in and of itself grant the oni power over the target, but may help the oni in other ways, such as empowering the Captivating Voice power (see page 137) or enabling it to further a secret scheme. Characters who have their secrets exposed to the oni in this way have no way of knowing the extent of what it learned.

Additional Ranks: Reduce the TN of the check by 1 (to a minimum of 0).



SERPENTINE SPEED

kusarigama +2

Oni with this power are preternaturally swift, capable of reacting and moving with blinding speed. The impossible grace of a massive and powerful oni has been the downfall of many skilled samurai.

Restrictions: Cannot be selected with Bony Carapace.

First Rank: Increase the oni's focus attribute by 2 and decrease the TN of Fitness checks it makes by 1 (to a minimum of 0).

Additional Ranks: Increase the oni's focus attribute by an additional 2.

SHADOLANDS VENOM

kusarigama +4

The oni's weapons or attacks carry the threat of deadly venom, smeared on a weapon or injected by its claws or bite.

First Rank: After the oni inflicts the Bleeding condition on a target, that target also suffers the Lightly Wounded condition for one ring of the oni's choice.

Additional Ranks: Increase the TN of checks to resist critical strikes inflicted by this oni by 1.

TAINTED SORCERYkusarigama +5,  +5

Some of the most fearsome oni wield powerful Tainted sorcery akin to mahō, cowing the kansen into submission or drawing on the power of Jigoku instead of enticing the corrupted spirits with blood offerings.

First Rank: An oni with this power gains up to three mahō techniques, chosen from pages 224–225 of the core rulebook and from pages 118–121 of this book. When using these powers, the oni never suffers spiritual backlash, nor does it take damage for channeling the techniques. For the purposes of using mahō, all five of the oni's rings count as having the Shadowlands Taint disadvantage attached.

Additional Ranks: The oni may be given 2 additional mahō techniques.

TWISTED GOALS

There is more to the mind of an oni than a lust for battle. Oni are cruel and brutal creatures, but they also have their own twisted goals and motivations that drive them. The oni of Jigoku are deeply bound to the Fallen Kami Fu Leng, and they share his appetite for conquest and dominion. The breach from Jigoku gives them a new realm into which they can spread their horrors.

The acquisition and wielding of power is the ultimate goal of most oni, and they use their cruelty and raw power as tools toward that end. However, the oni have no interest in building kingdoms or establishing dynasties. Theirs is a love of power for its own sake, not to use for any other purpose.

While all oni share similar goals in broad strokes, their exact plans and aspirations may vary. For example, the skull-cleaving oni (from page 26) seeks to curry the favor of the Dark Kami by establishing a faith among the Lost devoted to its worship, while obsidian bone oni (on page 28) only wish to spread pain to all they encounter. Some oni might be fascinated with corrupting Rokugani shugenja and monks into seeking forbidden lore, while others might delight in stalking the dreams of their prey before devouring their bodies.

Using oni as characters in a *Legend of the Five Rings* campaign allows the GM to create potent and memorable villains. Oni gleefully perform atrocities and seek the ruin of all that a loyal samurai holds dear, while having the power to back up their cruelty and challenge even the toughest groups of PCs. However, encounters with oni should be about more than just pulling out the biggest weapons the PCs can find and stopping a slaughter. The GM should consider what the oni want in any given situation and direct their vile entertainments and actions toward those goals. Keeping the goals of the oni in mind helps prevent them from becoming one-note or mundane encounters and serves to further magnify the horror that samurai feel upon encountering them.

When creating or using an oni NPC, the GM should try to think of a unique hook for that oni, keeping the broader strokes of their demonic nature in mind. If the GM is using the **Oni Generation Rules** starting on page 134, the choice of profile and Shadowlands powers can help inspire ideas. A vile trickster oni with the Human Mask and Captivating Voice powers is unlikely to be interested in butchering random villagers when it could be luring innocents into the Shadowlands, while a hellish sorcerer oni whose shadow serves as a Dark Puppet might be interested in influencing and corrupting others with its magic. Other, similarly predetermined elements of an oni's appearance in the campaign can help define its motivation. If the GM knows they want an oni to be terrorizing a mountain village in the Dragon provinces when the PCs arrive, then thinking about how it got there and why it is so interested in the village are both good starting points.



The following motivations are options for GMs to use for oni in their games, either as presented or to vary as appropriate for their personal use:

- ➊ The oni enjoys luring mortals into the wilderness to be attacked by Tainted animals but prefers not to get involved in killing them itself. Instead, it savors their fear from the shadows.
- ➋ Nothing is sweeter to this oni than the anguish of mortal grief, so it enjoys creeping into Rokugani settlements and arranging for tragic "accidents" to occur.
- ➌ The oni has a hated rival amongst its own kin! To humiliate or harm this other oni, it is not above using human pawns, seeing them as pieces in a greater game than mortals can imagine.
- ➍ Capable of playing a longer game than most, the oni has been posing as a human for years now, deep in Rokugani society. It attempts to ingratiate itself with figures of local influence, and it dreams of insinuating itself into the high courts of the land.
- ➎ Although the oni delights in slaughter, its defeat at the hands of a valiant samurai centuries ago taught it the value of subtlety. Now, it stalks isolated areas and preys on those who will not be missed, all the while dreaming of an elaborate revenge on the samurai's descendants.

Tenets of Bushidō: Courage

Six of the seven Bushidō virtues pertain to external qualities, how a warrior relates to others or society. Only one relates purely to the samurai: *Yū*, or Courage. While it is the virtue most embraced by the Crab Clan, all clans recognize its importance and seek to cultivate it in their samurai. After all, without Courage, none of the other virtues are possible.



DEFINING COURAGE

Courage is to completely disregard consequences in favor of righteous action. It therefore unites the other Bushidō tenets. To show Courtesy to one's victorious enemy, to offer one's own life in protest with Sincerity, to heed Duty to the point of completely surrendering one's own agency: these things all require Courage. Without it, there is no Bushidō.

The GM should recognize and reward courageous action during games. But that leads to a question: when is a player character acting courageously?

Not all courageous acts need life-or-death stakes or take place on a battlefield. Courage takes many forms. There are essentially two components to courageous action: the disregard of fear or consequence, and virtuous action.

THREE FEET FROM DANGER

A samurai is always willing to die. But there are worse things to lose than one's life. Most samurai would rather die than lose their reputation, the respect of others, or the *menboku*, or face, of the clan. So how many risk these things to do what is right?

Courage means acting in spite of what one has to lose. If one stands to lose nothing, then action doesn't require courage. One does not avoid the consequences, nor even attempt to mitigate them. Indeed, it never occurs to the courageous to avoid consequence at all. Thoughtlessly, they give everything, then accept whatever comes next. When a PC acts without regard to the dangers, fully knowing and then enduring the consequences, they are exemplifying Courage.

BRAVERY IS NOT COURAGE

Bravery and Courage are not the same. Bravery is merely acting in spite of fear. Courage means not only being brave, but also doing what is right. To quote a saying attributed to a real-world philosopher (Confucius), *"Perceiving what is right, and doing it not, argues lack of courage."*

Integrity defines courageous action. Fighting a horde of skeletal warriors is brave, but distracting them so the town can evacuate is courageous. Delivering a report that damages one's reputation is brave, but genuinely offering *seppuku* afterward is courageous.

This distinction may seem trivial, but it can help tell the GM when to award honor. Bravery is second nature in roleplaying games, to the point where cowardly action rarely occurs to the players. Courage, though, means putting something precious at risk

to do what is right. It means defying commands that order the burning of an innocent village. It means entrusting your beloved's fate to their yōjimbō instead of abandoning your post. When the player chooses the righteous action over the easier path, they are exemplifying Courage.

COURAGE AND BUSHIDŌ

As mentioned, Courage is Bushidō's binding virtue. It takes Courage to see the other virtues through. Righteousness is especially important to Courage; action is only courageous when it is also righteous. Courage is also a byproduct of Honor. Honor is the virtue of knowing oneself and holding to one's own personal truth. This enables one to be courageous. If Courage is the water, Honor is the well.

Bushidō is complex. Sometimes Courage conflicts with the other tenets. It requires Courage to defy a Duty one knows is wrong, such as an order to kill an enemy daimyō's child. It requires Courage to cast aside Compassion to execute luckless peasants who have may been exposed to the Shadowlands Taint. Even something as simple as an apology to a rival can be a violation of Honor. When Bushidō is wrong, it takes Courage to recognize it.

MAKING COURAGE YOUR HOOK

Courage can be a powerful quality to use in encounters, especially as a means for PCs to demonstrate their adherence to this tenet and the value they place in it. NPCs might also display exceptional Courage or failures of the same to allow the PCs to examine their own beliefs and their strength in them.

As with most roleplaying in the Emerald Empire, there should rarely be easy solutions a character faces issues of courage. Ideally, it should not be easy for the PCs to detect that this tenet is highlighted. It may evolve organically in an encounter, quite unexpected as the players take things into unplanned areas. GMs, especially when Crab samurai are involved, should be ready to use these situations as they occur. Courage could then become a strong theme for an adventure. A single instance in which Courage is shown (or is avoided) can drive the narrative deeper into the impact of Bushidō in the PCs and even create conflicts between this tenet and others. Above all, GMs should watch for displays of Courage when they fit into a PC's view of this tenet and reward their actions appropriately.

TRIFLING BREACHES AND SMALL SACRIFICES

In the *Legend of the Five Rings* core rulebook, there are guidelines for gaining honor for virtuous deeds, as well as for forfeiting honor to act disgracefully. However, minor acts can affect one's honor as well. A samurai ideally adheres to Bushidō in all aspects of their life, and many small demonstrations eventually add up.

What follows are optional additions to **Tables 7-1: Honor and Glory Forfeits/Awards** on page 300 and the examples related to Courage on pages 301–302 of the core rulebook.

TRIFLING BREACHES

When a character wishes to commit a breach of Courage that is judged to be lower than a minor breach, they must first forfeit 1 honor.

Examples of trifling breaches of Courage:

- ➊ Allowing fear for someone else's well-being to influence your actions.
- ➋ Concealing your identity in battle.
- ➌ Avoiding a conflict when you are in the right.
- ➍ Saving yourself when risking yourself would have advanced your lord's goals.

SMALL SACRIFICES

When a character makes a sacrifice in the name of Courage, but it is judged to be lower than a minor sacrifice, they are awarded 1 honor.

Examples of small sacrifices of Courage:

- ➊ Accepting a challenge from an enemy of unknown skill.
- ➋ Enduring a minor public humiliation to right a wrong.
- ➌ Publicly attempting something in which you have no skill in order to serve your lord.
- ➍ Refusing to back down when faced with superior forces.

New Demeanors and NPC Templates

Game masters should always call on the wide assortment of NPCs from the *Legend of the Five Rings* core rulebook when creating adventures, but tales set in the Shadowlands and nearby lands call out for more flavor in the selected characters. Such characters are likely to be of the Crab Clan, possibly crewing the Wall or scouting for the dangers looming to the south. They could also hail from the mysterious Falcon Clan when threats from vile spirits arise. They might even be members of the Damned, those unfortunates suffering from Shadowlands Taint but seeking out an honorable death fighting against the Dark Kami and his minions.

This section provides GMs with a new demeanor and new NPC templates for fashioning such characters, using the NPC profiles from the core rulebook and other supplements as their basis. These tools take NPCs without an assigned clan and make them into Crab samurai and other characters more suited to adventures along the Wall and beyond, thus making them more fitting for these areas.

NEW DEMEANOR: COURAGEOUS

The following new demeanor is designed to reflect a personality often found in Crab Clan members and in other samurai who value the tenet of *Yū* above all others. Such characters do not hesitate to overcome their fear and act correctly, no matter the consequences. Courageous works in the same manner as the other demeanors on page 310 of the core rulebook.

Social Skill Check TN Modifiers: Air +2, Earth –2

Common Way of Unmasking: Angry Dismay

The NPC loudly complains about the cowardice of others around them, especially concerning their lack of concern of Shadowlands threats and a lack of enthusiasm for going to the Wall to better serve the Empire.

NEW NPC TEMPLATES

The following new NPC templates allow GMs to turn generic NPC profiles into ones the PCs might more commonly encounter in Crab lands or the Shadowlands. Each works the same as the templates in the core rulebook on page 311, but also includes types of applicable NPCs. Sadly for all in Rokugan, the Taint can strike almost anyone, so there are few chances the Tainted template might be inapplicable.

CRAB CLAN SAMURAI

This template can be used with any clan samurai profile.

Conflict Rank: Combat +2

Ring: +1 Earth

Skills: +1 Martial and Trade skills

Advantages (add/replace 0–2): Expert Haggler (Water) [Social; Interpersonal], Large Stature (Earth) [Martial; Physical], Makes Things Work (Water) [Artisan; Physical], Veteran of the Shadowlands (Water) [Martial; Physical]

Disadvantages (add/replace 0–2): Wall Weary (Earth) [Social; Interpersonal], Bluntness (Air) [Social; Interpersonal], Ends Justify the Means (Void) [Scholar; Mental]

Techniques (add 0–2): Kata (剣), Rituals (魔術)

Demeanor (replace 1): Courageous, Gruff, Shrewd

Equipment: Replace katana with tetsubō

FALCON CLAN SAMURAI

This template can be used with any clan samurai profile.

Conflict Rank: Combat +1

Ring: +1 Void

Skills: +2 Scholar skills

Advantages (add/replace 0–2): Knowledge of Gaki (Void) [Scholar; Mental], Probing Sight (Water) [Martial; Physical], Sense for the Spirits (Void) [Martial; Spiritual]

Disadvantages (add/replace 0–2): Disdain for Courtly Matters (Air) [Social; Interpersonal], Close to the Edge (Void) [Social; Spiritual], Deals with Spirits (Fire) [Social; Interpersonal]

Techniques (add 0–2): Incantations (呪), Rituals (魔術)

Demeanor (replace 1): Detached, Gruff

TAINTED

This template can be used with any clan samurai profile as well as the trained ashigaru and skillful rōnin profiles. It can be used to create fallen samurai such as the Damned and the Lost.

Conflict Rank: Combat +2

Ring: +1 Earth

Skills: +1 Martial skills, –1 Social skills (to minimum of 0)

Advantages (add/replace 0–2): Accepts the End (Void) [Social; Mental], Knows the Enemy (Earth) [Scholar; Mental], Veteran of the Shadowlands (Water) [Martial; Physical]

Disadvantages (add/replace 1–2): Shadowlands Taint (Any) [varies]

Other Disadvantages (add/replace 0–2): Quick to Rage (Air) [Martial; Mental], Distrust of Kuni (Water) [Social; Interpersonal], any disadvantage with the Mental type

Demeanor (replace 1): Assertive, Detached, Gruff



Legend of the Five Rings™ ROLEPLAYING

SHADOWLANDS

ENTER THE LANDS OF EVIL

South of Rokugan lies the foul Shadowlands, the home of horrid demons and unnatural creatures. Centuries ago, the Crab Clan built the huge Kaiu Wall to contain these threats, but each day sees new assaults. Without samurai of courage and honor to defend against the threats of the Shadowlands, the Emerald Empire would surely fall.

Shadowlands explores these dark realms and the tainted creatures that fester within, as well as the samurai who do battle against them at the Wall or beyond.

In this sourcebook for the *Legend of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game*, you will find a wealth of information for gaming in the Shadowlands as well as in Crab Clan territories, including:

- Tales of the Shadowlands and its many vile denizens and locations such as the Festering Pit of Fu Leng, plus those of the Crab Clan and the Kaiu Wall itself.
- Rules for the Falcon Minor Clan, plus new schools, weapons, techniques, and weapon patterns designed to thwart the evils of the Shadowlands. Players also gain new mahō techniques, should they dare to use such forbidden blood magic rites to gain power.
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