

The People's Expense

***A One Round Low-Rank
Living Rokugan Tournament***

by Robert Hobart

A ceremony to celebrate the retirement of a noble Crane sensei is interrupted by reports of a mysterious ghost. What compels this restless spirit to stalk the gates of Shiro Sekinin?

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

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

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

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

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

In addition to the text of the adventure below, you will need to be familiar with the Legend of the Five Rings rulebook.

GM's Information

This adventure should not be run cold!!!

This adventure is a Low Rank adventure. This means that only Rank One or Two characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank Three or higher characters in mind and cannot anticipate what these characters may bring to the table.

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

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

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Adventure Background

Once, there was a samurai, a handsome and dedicated man who obeyed his lord and prayed to the Fortunes. A noble man, who understood the sacrifices required of those who follow the path of bushido. His name was Doji Kajo.

A day came when Doji Kajo rode through the lands of his lord, and in the fields he saw a simple peasant woman, working in the hot summer sun. And in that moment Kajo's heart was stolen away from him, and he stared at her as though she were a thing come down from the Heavens.

He approached her, and at first the poor young woman, whose name was Ai, was terrified of this mighty, magnificent samurai. But with time, Kajo's gentle words and kindness won her over, and they became

lovers. Kajo swore that he would take Ai away from her miserable peasant life and make her his concubine, and Ai smiled at his ardent words. But her heart was filled with worry, for she was sure that their relationship was a violation of the Celestial Order, and they both would suffer for it.

And she was right. The lord of her land, Doji Morisato, was a cruel and oppressive man, and when the harvest that year was poor, he demanded that the peasants pay their full taxes, even though it might starve them. The peasants rose in revolt, and sought to storm the castle. Ai ran on ahead, hoping to warn her love. She succeeded, but in the battle that ensued she was struck down upon the very gates of the castle. She died alone, in the night, whispering her love's name. The rebellion was brutally crushed; a few years later, the heartbroken Kajo retired to a nearby monastery.

Fifteen years later, Doji Kajo lives a life of contemplation...but Ai's spirit still haunts the castle gate of Shiro Sekinin, Kajo's former residence, unable to move on to Jigoku. Only if her true killer is revealed and slain will her crippled spirit be able to resume its journey on the Celestial Wheel.

And the PCs have come to visit a monastery...

The Dark Truth: One of the samurai in the castle (the Karo, Doji Shingi) was a dishonorable, ambitious man who wanted to become lord of the province. He secretly incited the peasants, promising them if they overthrew Lord Doji Morisato, he would "put down" the revolt bloodlessly and then ease the crushing taxes upon them. When Ai came with her warning, he saw his plan was ruined, and quickly murdered her rather than let her tell anyone else of his plot. The other survivors were too terrified of further retribution to tell the truth, especially since Shingi was now one of the "heroes" who had put down the revolt.

Player's Introduction

The PCs have come to the Monastery of the Cherry Blossom, a Shin Taoist stronghold in the mountain foothills just north of Samui Kaze Toshi (Cold Wind City) in Crane lands. They are here as guests to witness the retirement of Kakita Miroji, one of the sensei at the famed Kakita Dueling School. If the PCs are Clan members (Major or Minor), they have been sent here by their daimyo as guests at the ceremony. If they are ronin, they are here at the invitation of Miya Yoto, the aged daimyo of the Imperial Miya family, who is also a guest at the ceremony and a great friend to ronin across the Empire.

It is the afternoon of the fifteenth day of the month of Doji (April), known in the common usage as the month of the Serpant. The day is crisp and cool, a thin sheeting of clouds drifting across the sky, as you gather in the courtyard of (Cherry Blossom House), a monastery devoted to the study of Shinsei and the worship of Hotei, the Fortune of Contentment. Before you stands a tall, proud, slimly graceful man whose hair has only just begun to gray at the temples: Kakita Miroji, of the Kakita Dueling School. He has removed the kimono and daisho of a samurai and wears only the simple robes of a monk as he kneels before the entrance of the monastery.

Many have come here to witness this famous man's first steps into his second life. Beside yourselves, there are guests from many of the Clans, both Great and Minor, as well as the monks of the shrine and even some ronin. Seated prominently among the crowd are Kakita Yoshi, daimyo of the Kakita family, and Miya Yoto, the gray-bearded daimyo of the Miya family, the Imperial heralds and peacemakers.

Kakita Miroji smiles and bows to the crowd, and then recites a haiku:

***Leaves blowing past
Swirl like smoke from a fire
Gray earth waits for rain***

***Mother Sun's blessing
Warm light upon fertile soil
A new life begins***

The poem finished, he bows his head and carefully shaves off the elegant, white-dyed locks of hair which hang to his shoulders. There is a collective release of breath at this tangible symbol of Miroji's passage into his new life as a monk. The shaving completed, Miroji kneels before the abbot of the monastery and recites his vows, swearing to abandon all worldly interests and temptations and pursue the path of enlightenment and contemplation.

The simple ceremony ended, Miroji takes the new name Choku ("Simplicity"), bows again, and walks quietly into the monastery in the company of his new-made brothers. Kakita Yoshi rises and turns to the crowd. "We will be guests tonight of the monks of the Cherry Blossom, to join them in praying for the enlightenment of their newest member. You honor us with your presence." After the slightest of glances at Miya Yoto, he adds grudgingly, "All may join us here,

regardless of Clan or name.” Yoto smiles benignly as the crowd begins to follow the monks into the monastery.

The PCs are led into the central hall of the monastery, where a simple meal of rice and pickled vegetables has been prepared for the guests. The two daimyo are seated with the abbot at a separate table – they are much too high-ranking to share tables with ordinary samurai. Still, it is an honor for the PCs even to eat in the same room as these august personages. The monks eat wherever there is room at a table, showing the same smiling politeness to samurai, ronin, and each other.

The guests here represent a cross-section of Rokugan’s samurai, but Lions are few and Cranes predominate. The monks will insert themselves into conversation whenever it seems time for a good lesson in enlightenment or an apt quote from the Tao. The GM should feel free to improvise whatever dinner conversationalists might be interesting to the players. A few suggested NPCs follow:

Kakita Miroji/Choku: the honored, just-retired sensei is a fine example of the very best the Crane have to offer, a swordsman of honor and artistry, a poet, and a brave and honorable man. He has served his daimyo for twenty-five years and now is ready to follow the path of enlightenment and contemplation. He will be polite to all the guests here, showing no particular prejudices (except toward Ronin, with whom he is distant). He will be especially friendly to “enlightened” types like Ise Zumi or Phoenix.

Tomu: This blind old monk, well into his eightieth decade, is highly enlightened and possesses strange insights into the world around him. He may approach one of the PCs to make an odd but frighteningly accurate prediction about their past, their true nature, or their future. The GM should come up with something appropriate based on knowledge of the PC (e.g. Advantages and Disadvantages). The other monks treat Tomu with great deference and will not tolerate any insult or abuse against him.

Kakita Orochi: this tall, elegant middle-aged Crane is another sensei at the Kakita dueling school, and a personal friend of Kakita Toshimoko. Normally a man of kindness and gentle good humor, he turns cold and bitter in the presence of Lions; his younger brother died in the fighting at Toshi Ranbo six years ago. He enjoys practicing his skills and sparring with those of other schools, and also enjoys injuring Lions in such “friendly” matches. He will excuse such wounds with a cold smile and a seemingly sincere apology: “An unfortunate miscalculation, Lion-sama.”

Kakita Orochi

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

TN to be Hit: 20
 School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 4
 Honor/Glory: 2.5/3.4
 Skills: Acting 1, Archery 2, Athletics 1, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, History 2, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (Bushi) 2, Political Maneuvering 2, Sincerity 3, Shintao 2, Tea Ceremony 1, Theology 1
 Advantages/Disadvantages: Heart of Vengeance (Lion Clan), Social Advantage (Kakita sensei)/Bad Reputation (abusing non-lethal duels)
 Equipment: Exquisite kimono, fine daisho set (Kakita blade, 4k3).

Matsu Seijuro: The famous “Crane-tainted” Lion is here to witness the retirement of his former sensei. Statistics and details on Seijuro can be found in *Way of the Lion*. He will avoid sparring with Orochi, and can warn Lion PCs away from such a course.

Shiba Tomodachi: a Phoenix bushi who was honored to train at the Kakita school under the just-retired sensei. This man is calm, placid, a pool of water left undisturbed by whatever ripples pass. A student of Shintao, he is also an expert swordsman who enjoys sparring with others, seeing it as an exercise in meditation. The retired sensei, Kakita Miroji, calls Tomodachi “My best student,” and the two share a pleasant conversation over dinner. Of all the NPC guests, Tomodachi is most comfortable with the monks here, and enjoys their company.

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

TN to be Hit: 15
 School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 2
 Honor/Glory: 3.4/1.8
 Skills: Archery 1, Courtier 1, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2
 Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Irreproachable
 Equipment: Fine kimono, fine daisho set

Bayushi Fumi: a lovely and charming Scorpion shugenja-ko, recently honored to spend the Winter Court in the lands of the Asahina. Fumi is a skilled courtier and seductress but is not, at present, pursuing any nefarious goals; she is merely here to make Scorpion-fearing PCs nervous. She secretly sees the monks as useless and “quaint,” and will drop a few subtle put-downs in their direction, given the chance.

Meeting Kajo

During the dinner, the PCs should also make the acquaintance of a specific monk, a simple shaven-headed man in late middle age (late thirties or early forties, it is hard to tell with monks). He calls himself Kajo. The former Crane is a calm, soft-spoken man, the very picture of an enlightened monk, but there is an aura of sadness and loss about him, a feeling of a man with a bitter past that cannot be forgotten. If the PCs comment on this, or ask about his past, Kajo smiles sadly. “One seeks, in this life of contemplation, to purge oneself of the Three Sins – Desire, Regret, and Fear. I am afraid the task is easier for some of us than for others.” He will say no more until after the report of the ghost.

A Tale of Fear

About midway through the dinner (after the PCs have had a good chance to role-play, spar with some other samurai, and meet Kajo), there is an interruption: a terrified Crane bushi rushes into the chamber. Abasing himself before the collected guests (especially the two daimyo), he gasps out, “Honored Abbot! Lord Doji Takaya begs your assistance – the ghost has appeared again!”

Murmurs run through the crowd, and the PCs can see several of the monks making warding gestures or muttering quick prayers. With a Simple Perception roll at TN 15, they notice Kajo turn pale and mutter something to himself. If they rolled TN 20 or better, or can Read Lips, they know he says, “Ai-chan...won’t you ever rest in peace?”

The abbot rises, apologizing to his guests. “We have attempted several times to exorcise the ghost which haunts Lord Doji Takaya’s castle, but with no success. With your permission, noble lords, I shall take some of my monks and make another attempt.” Yoshi and Yoto nod permission, and Yoto remarks, “Perhaps my friend Koan can offer you his skills,” pointing to a ronin shugenja who is among the guests. Not to be outdone, Kakita Yoshi quickly volunteers the help of several shugenja among the guests (including any PC shugenja), and several other non-shugenja guests offer

to accompany the monks as well. Kajo, however, is not among them.

Hopefully, some or all of the PCs will accompany the monks on their mission. A brisk fifteen-minute walk through the evening gloom ensues, with the monks carrying paper lanterns which cast flickering yellow light as they bob on the end of long bamboo poles. Ahead the PCs can see the lights of a medium-sized castle, the abode of the local Crane daimyo.

If the PCs question the monks or the Crane samurai about the ghost, they can learn the following:

- The ghost is female, and – judging from its garments – a peasant.
- The ghost always appears just outside the gates of the castle, walking back and forth and moaning softly.
- The ghost does not respond to anyone speaking to it, except to moan, “My love, you must escape, hurry.”
- The ghost usually appears in the evening, just after dark. There do not seem to be any particular days or seasons which it favors.
- There have been rumors of the ghost for years – it is difficult to say how long, exactly – but no public admission until Lord Doji Takaya took over the district from his late father, Morisato, four years ago. Since then, at his request, there have been six exorcism attempts, none successful. “The ghost must feel a great weight upon its soul to remain here so stubbornly,” one of the monks remarks.

Arrival at Shiro Sekinin (Castle of Duty)

The castle where Kajo once served his lord is a fine, four-story edifice constructed with all the skill and beauty for which the Crane are renowned. Now, several frightened bushi are gathered in the courtyard, clutching lanterns and weapons and staring fearfully into the dark outside the gate. As the monks and PCs approach, they catch sight of the ghost:

A dim, phosphorescent light seems to hang around the disheveled figure of a peasant woman, her simple garments torn and stained with mud. There is a bloody wound in her side, below the ribs, and blood soaks her garments on that side and drips from the hem. Her feet fade into insubstantiality, and the drops of blood never strike the ground.

She turns toward you, and you realize with shock that, despite the terrible sadness which contorts her

features, she is remarkably beautiful. Tears stream down her cheeks. She seems to see you for a moment, and her face lights for the briefest instant with hope, but then sags in disappointment. Her eyes no longer seem to see you as she moans, "Hurry...you must escape...hurry...."

Ai's ghost will not respond to the PCs, ignoring their words or questions and slowly wandering back and forth before the gates, moaning her warning. If any PC works up the courage to touch the ghost, their hands pass right through, leaving only a clammy sensation and a sudden sense of overwhelming sadness, which passes after a few minutes.

Any PCs with the Lost Love disadvantage who spend more than a few minutes in the presence of Ai's ghost find themselves remembering their lost one, and unable to break free of their sorrow (even if they spend a Void Point) until they leave the presence of the ghost.

The monks will gather in a loose semi-circle before the gates and begin praying, calling on the unquiet spirit to leave this realm and go to its appointed place in Jigoku. Any PC shugenja who are present are invited to join in the ritual. The monks pray for several hours, without apparent effect, and sometime in the Third Hour of Fu Leng (also known as the hour of Kurayami, about 2-3am), the ghost simply fades from view. The abbot wipes sweat from his brow and sighs deeply. "I fear we have failed...again."

Talking to Ai

There are two possible ways for the PCs to communicate with the ghost. One is if the PCs have the ability to commune with ancestral spirits and ghosts, such as a *sodan-senzo* or an Ise Zumi with the Cloud tattoo. The other is if the PCs overheard Kajo (or if some of them, remaining at the monastery, convince him to speak about the past), and address the ghost by its name, Ai. Either approach will cause a glimmer of recognition to appear in the ghost's transparent eyes. "Who...who are you?" the ghost murmurs. "You are not my love."

The ghost, if approached in this manner, can provide the PCs with the following information:

- Her name is Ai. She died fifteen years ago.
- She died trying to warn "her love" about a revolt.
- Her love was a samurai who lived in this castle. The ghost will be very reluctant to reveal his name, since their love was forbidden. Only if the PCs can make an eloquent appeal and succeed with a

Void+Sincerity roll at TN 25 will the ghost admit his name: Doji Kajo.

- The ghost knows little about the revolt, except that the leaders (several of the more prominent peasants in the town) told the starving peasants that no harm would come to them if they overthrew Doji Morisato, the lord of the castle. They promised that another samurai would protect them from retribution. She does not know who that samurai was.
- The ghost does not know who killed her, except that it was a samurai. Nor does she know whether her love escaped the revolt.
- If the PCs ask Ai what will grant her rest, she moans, "Stop the revolt. Save my love. He must know the truth, or all is lost..."

Questioning Kajo

If the PCs question Kajo about his words, or about the ghost's statements, he will sigh heavily and, after a long pause, relate his story:

I was once an earnest young samurai, a man of honor and duty. But I was not without weaknesses. To my shame, I fell in love with a peasant girl named Ai. She knew our relationship was against the Celestial Order... if only I had listened to her!

There was a peasant revolt. I do not know who led it, or why, though I remember that there had been several years of poor harvests and the peasants were hungry and fearful. Somehow Ai learned of the revolt and came to the castle to warn us – to warn me! Her screams brought us to the gates in time, but she died in the fighting. I could not even pray at her grave – it would have exposed our dishonorable relationship. I retired later that year.

If any of the PCs show the slightest sympathy, Kajo will beg them to find a way to put Ai's spirit to rest. "I fear I cannot move on to my next life until she has moved on to hers," he sighs. If the PCs heard Ai ask that Kajo "know the truth," he will be even more anxious in his requests for their help. "I am forbidden from traveling far from the monastery. Perhaps if you can learn whatever secret torments Ai's spirit, we may both be set at rest."

If the PCs ask for more details about the revolt, Kajo can supply few – he was asleep when the action began, and by the time he put on his armor and rushed to the walls of the castle, the peasants were already broken and running. The castle karo, Doji Shingi, had happened to be checking on the gates and was able to quickly rally the defense after Ai screamed her warning.

If the PCs inquire further about the cause of the revolt, Kajo will reluctantly confess that his lord, Doji Morisato, "could sometimes be a harsh ruler" and that

the peasants were suffering badly from the poor harvests. “Lord Morisato refused to lower the taxes – perhaps he feared the displeasure of his superiors, or perhaps he did not want to lose face by going without his own monies. Still, I cannot understand why they would have undertaken such a desperate action. Shiro Sekinin is a strong castle – even if they had not been betrayed by Ai, they could not have hoped to capture the castle.”

Questions in the Village

Since the PCs are investigating a peasant revolt, they may decide to question the local commoners. The village attached to Shiro Sekinin is called Shiawase (“Happiness”), and is home to about three hundred peasants.

The village is large and fairly prosperous in appearance. Men and women labor in the fields, and peasant children run shrieking through the streets. You count about forty peasant huts, along with a black smithy, a silk weavery, and a large roadside inn with an attached sake works. There is also a small private dwelling, somewhat higher quality than the peasant huts, on one edge of the village.

The three-room private house is the residence of Musei (“Silent”), the ronin yoriki (deputy) who serves the local Crane magistrate, Kakita Tomoita.

The ordinary peasants who live in the village will be uncommunicative. The revolt is a painful and dangerous memory which they try to avoid at all costs; no peasants will admit to participating in the revolt (“all those madmen were killed by Lord Doji-sama”), nor will they admit its cause (“no loyal peasant would ever find cause to revolt, samurai-sama”). The following specific individuals, however, may be more informative:

The Innkeeper, Kobe

This is a plump, rotund merchant-type commoner whose business (which includes both the Inn and an attached sake works) is sponsored by the local daimyo, and has been for generations. Kobe has nothing but good things to say about Doji Takaya and his father Morisato, and seems oblivious to the concerns of other peasants. “I don’t understand why there could have been a revolt – I’ve always been treated very well by the great lords. There must have been bad elements in town – perhaps they were Bloodspeakers.” He has no evidence for this supposition, which is basically a red herring. If the PCs ask if anyone in the village knows about the revolt, he mentions Kiki at the silk works (“her husband died in the revolt”) and the local blacksmith, Shigei, whose parents perished as well.

The Village Headman, Buta

This middle-aged man was appointed to his position eleven years ago, after the village had gone four years without a headman (the previous one was executed for allowing the revolt, a fact which Buta will remember with many protestations that said execution was just and proper). Buta did not participate in the revolt, and tries not to remember or talk about it, but if the PCs are persistent he will reluctantly admit that he heard rumors: “The rebels claimed they had the support of a samurai in the castle, who promised they would be spared retribution for their actions. It was all lies, of course – no samurai would ever support a revolt. No, I never heard a name, honorable samurai – I am sure the story was untrue.” Buta honestly does not know who the “samurai” was, or if the story was true. If the PCs ask for others who might know such things, he will – very reluctantly – mention Old Cho.

The Blacksmith, Shigei

The smith is a sullen young man, his shoulders corded with heavy muscle, who keeps his eyes lowered and answers most questions as briefly and uncooperatively as he can get away with. Shigei’s father was killed in the revolt, and he hates all samurai with a bitter, useless anger. He will only be cooperative with PCs who are clearly not “samurai-types” – e.g. monks, Ise Zumi, witch-hunters, PCs with an affinity for heimin, and so forth.

If he is convinced to open up, all his repressed anger and bitterness comes boiling out in hot, stumbling words: “W-we were starving! The lord wouldn’t lower the taxes even though we’d had three bad harvests in a row... Children were *dying*, lord, we had to eat *millet* because all the rice went to taxes. The samurai, the *lying* samurai told my father and the others he would prevent any reprisals if they rose up and killed Lord Morisato-sama. He said he would become the lord, lower the taxes, and all would be well. But that girl betrayed us, and all was for naught. Lord Morisato-sama *butchered* everyone...” If the PCs ask who “the samurai” was, Shigei answers honestly: “A Crane who lived in the castle, that is all I know. I was very young. One of the older villagers might know – Old Cho, or Kiki at the silk weavery, perhaps.”

The Silk Merchant, Kiki

The silk weavery is managed by a quiet, plain-faced commoner woman, Kiki, who took over the business after her husband died in the revolt. She managed to save herself and her children by persuasively pleading complete ignorance. Like Shigei, she will be very wary of speaking openly to the PCs, and will prefer to plead

deferential ignorance. Non-samurai PCs may be able to convince her to speak (Sincerity may help here, or Shintao – she respects the path of enlightenment very much). Unlike Shigei, however, she knows something about the political divisions within the Empire, and might be willing to speak with Crab, Scorpion, or Phoenix PCs if they are persuasive and careful in their approach, emphasizing that they are no friends to the Crane.

Kiki knows that the karo, Doji Shingi, was the samurai who promoted the revolt, and that he promised the peasants to let them into the castle and then prevent retribution afterwards. Kiki thought this was a very bad idea, but the peasants were desperate, and her husband determined to join them. If the PCs request Kiki's testimony against the karo, she begs them to spare her and her children the certain consequences of such a thing; as a peasant, her word is useless against a samurai. "Who would believe me? Please, samurai-sama, allow me and my children to live in peace."

If the PCs ask whether anyone else can confirm her story, she may point them to Old Cho.

The Elder, Old Cho

An aged, toothless, half-blind man, perhaps seventy, perhaps ninety, who lives alone in a small hut at the edge of the village (think of the old geezer from Kurosawa's classic film *Seven Samurai*), Cho puts on a front as a senile elder who barely remembers his own name, let alone what happened fifteen years ago. However, this is a practiced front, part of the same act which allowed him to successfully deny involvement in the revolt.

PCs who approach Cho will have to convince him that they are genuinely interested in the truth. He does not fear death or even torture (he is too close to the end of his own life to worry about such things), and will continue to play the hapless, senile old man until the PCs convince him they are seriously interested in the truth about the revolt. **Awareness+Sincerity** rolls will be very useful in this regard, as will credentials such as Emerald Magistrates. He will be especially favorable to Crab and Phoenix PCs (due to their reputations, different in tone but similar in heart, for treating their peasants well). Crane PCs will get little cooperation, since he believes they will protect their Clan first.

If Cho speaks, he can identify the samurai who helped provoke the revolt as the castle karo, Doji Shingi, the same karo who serves the current lord. He can also identify Shingi as the murderer of Ai: "I was in the first group that reached the castle, and I saw that Crane run his sword through her and then slam the gate in our face. A moment or two later and the arrows began to fall like rain." Cho will not identify anyone else in the village who knows the truth ("no, no, I'm the

only one who survived,"), nor will he testify against Shingi; indeed, such an idea fills him with mirth. "A senile, lying old peasant? I'm sure the Crane would bow down before my unmatched wisdom!" he cackles.

Cho can offer one other clue to the PCs: he remarks that "some of the other samurai must have known what Shingi wanted, because so many of them died or retired in the after years." This is a hint for the PCs to track down other samurai from that time.

The Yoriki, Musei ("Silent")

The magistrate of Shiro Sekinin, Kakita Tomoita, spends his time relaxing in the castle, and leaves most of the actual work of policing the district to his hired ronin yoriki, Musei ("Silent"). This grim, taciturn woman in her early thirties wears her hair in a severe short cut and usually greets acquaintances and strangers alike with a scowl. If the PCs do not seek her at her small residence (a humble but solidly-built house with three modest rooms), they will eventually spot her walking through the town as she investigates some trivial crime or disturbance.

Silent is a former Phoenix, a shugenja who underwent the Ritual of Forgetting. Her speaking voice is hoarse and raspy, the result of the misguided magical experiment which caused her to be Forgotten, and she never speaks more than she absolutely has to. Silent will cooperate with the PCs reasonably well, although she grows quietly miserable around Phoenix and exhibits a restrained contempt toward Crane (her employer has not impressed her). PCs who seem genuinely interested in solving the problem of the old revolt will interest her, as will PCs who earn the enmity of the castle residents – she will help these just to spite Kakita Tomoita.

Silent has been here six years, and has learned a great deal about the old revolt through her constant contacts with the peasantry. She knows specifically that a samurai promoted the revolt by promising no retribution to the peasants. "Must have had rank," she growls. "Not just a castle guard." She also knows that several bushi left the castle, retired, or died in the years which followed the revolt, and may suggest (obliquely) that someone was covering his/her tracks. She can recommend the Captain of the Guard, Daidoji Usoji, as a reliable source within the castle. She thinks little of anyone else there, although Lord Takaya seems "decent enough for a pup."

If the PCs ask her whether she knows of any of the old, revolt-era samurai who are still alive, she mentions the karo Doji Shingi, Kajo at the monastery, and Doji Aki, who she knows is running a dojo at the nearby port city of Samui Kaze Toshi. ("Spurred there once or twice.")

If the PCs ask for possible sources within the village, Silent will point them at Old Cho. “There’s more to him than you might think,” she remarks.

Questions at Shiro Sekinin

If the PCs visit Shiro Sekinin at any time during the scenario, they will have to present their chops at the gate and wait for about an hour before they are granted admission. Lord Doji Takaya will grant the PCs a brief audience; how he reacts depends on what the PCs say. If they claim to be seeking a way of exorcising the ghost, he will be pleased, and offers whatever help he can, including permission to question everyone at the castle. If, on the other hand, they blurt out something about a samurai fomenting the revolt, Takaya is insulted and expels them from the castle; in that case, they will not receive any cooperation from any of his subordinates.

Lord Doji Takaya

The daimyo of Shiro Sekinin, who has held his position for only four years, is an earnest and devout young nobleman who takes his duties very seriously. Handsome and well dressed, with long hair dyed the traditional Crane white, he palpably exudes sincerity and honor. Takaya is deeply concerned about the ghost haunting his castle, seeing it as a sign of the Fortunes’ disfavor – he admits that his father, “while honorable, could be a harsh man,” and he secretly wonders if the ghost is the legacy of some forgotten cruelty. If the PCs seem to have an idea of how to deal with the ghost, Takaya will cooperate readily – unless they insult him or his retainers in the process. He trusts the karo, Doji Shingi, implicitly, and will not tolerate any insult against him unless it is backed with the testimony of samurai.

Takaya knows there was a peasant revolt in his childhood (he was six years old when it happened), but knows none of the details – his father never spoke of it much, and it seemed best not to pry into such a shameful episode.

Morisato’s Widow: Doji Hana

The widow of the late Doji Morisato is a gracefully aging woman in her late forties, her hair tinged with gray and worn in a simple ponytail. She is always the picture of perfect feminine manners, keeping her eyes downcast and speaking in a soft, careful voice. She will never say anything about the revolt (“I was asleep in the castle, my lord”) or her husband (“a fine, honorable daimyo, my lord”), unless the PCs questioning her are Imperial family or fellow Crane.

In the latter two cases, Hana can be persuaded (with a careful, eloquent, private appeal and an **Awareness+Sincerity** roll at TN 20) to confess what she knows. Her husband was a cruel and unfeeling man, to her as well as to his subjects, and she understands perfectly why the peasants revolted. “The harvests had been poor for several years, and there was desperation in the air. I urged my husband to relent on the taxes, but he only told me that such matters were not my concern.”

Hana is aware that something about the revolt and its sudden defeat wasn’t quite right, although she is loath to speculate. Nevertheless, she will admit that it was a remarkable stroke of luck that the karo, Doji Shingi, happened to be at the gate at just the right time. She also wonders about the death of the peasant girl who screamed out the warnings that alerted the castle guards. “It was said that the other rebels killed her for betraying them. Yet when I rushed out from my chambers, she already lay dead at the gate, and the peasants were only just reaching the castle, waving their farming tools and howling like desperate beasts.”

If the PCs later present reliable evidence against Shingi (e.g. the testimony of Doji Aki or Daidoji Makuni), Hana cries out softly as she suddenly remembers what seemed so strange the night of the revolt. “Of course,” she says, pointing at the karo. “There was blood on your sword even before those peasants reached the gate. *You* killed her.”

The Karo: Doji Shingi

The karo of Shiro Sekinin is a cold, self-controlled man filled with bitterness, thwarted ambition, and secret fear. Shingi has always believed himself a better man than his lords, and is filled with secret contempt for them. However, he is also a skilled deceiver who plays the role of the loyal, obedient karo to the hilt. A slim man of medium height, his hair worn in a traditional undyed topknot, he usually sits behind and to the right of his lord, watching the proceedings carefully and occasionally leaning forward to offer low-voiced advice. Lord Doji Takaya defers to him often, and any PC rolling **Awareness+Courtier** at TN 20 will surmise that the karo actually does most of the work of running the province.

If the PCs ask him about the revolt, Shingi will act embarrassed about this shameful incident, and quietly explains that the Fortunes must have been watching over the castle: “I happened to decide to take a late-evening tour of the castle walls, and heard the screams of the first peasant, the girl who shouted the warning. I was able to quickly bar the gates and alert the troops before the peasant horde reached us.” If the PCs ask about the ghost, he says he has no idea why it still haunts the castle, and claims not to recognize it. All of

this is a lie, of course, but the PCs will have trouble seeing through them (contested **Perception** vs. **Awareness+Acting** roll).

If the PCs ask whether any other samurai from the time of the revolt are still here, Shingi professes not to know. “Such things are the concern of the Captain of the Guard. Ask him.”

Shingi will not let anything slip to the PCs until and unless they produce witnesses. Until that time he will play his role flawlessly, although skilled PCs may be able to tell (with the aforementioned Contested rolls) that he is hiding something.

Local Magistrate: Kakita Tomoita

The magistrate of Shiro Sekinin is an elegant, refined artisan who got his position on politics, not skill. He prefers composing poems to enforcing laws, and leaves most of the work of his position to his ronin hireling, Musei (“Silent”). Tomoita is a delicate-looking man with slim fingers and a pensive air; he prefers talk to action and will, given the chance, talk the PCs’ ears off, gossiping about trivial courtly matters and commenting anxiously about the “horrible ghost” that haunts the castle. He has been here eight years, and knows nothing about the revolt other than the official story. He will, however, admit privately to stylish or courtly PCs that the previous daimyo, Morisato, was “a cruel, hard man, with little taste in the arts.”

Captain of the Guard: Daidoji Usoji

The commander of Shiro Sekinin’s house troops is a tough-looking, middle-aged bushi with dark gray eyes and a scarred, rugged face. He was assigned here shortly after the revolt (three of the guards, he explains, committed seppuku to atone for allowing the revolt to happen at all), and took the commander’s post when the previous Captain of the Guard died five years ago. (His predecessor was actually poisoned by the karo, but no one knows the truth of the matter.)

Usoji will cooperate with any PCs who have gained the trust of his lord, Takaya. He will be especially friendly to fellow Crane, Imperial family, Phoenix, and Crab (he has fond memories from his youthful visit to the Kaiu wall), and conversely, guarded and terse to Scorpions and Lions. Unlike many Crane, he respects ronin – Musei having impressed him favorably in recent years.

Usoji knows nothing personally about the revolt, and has accepted the official description of events. However, if the PCs ask he can point them toward three of the remaining samurai who witnessed it: the karo, Doji Aki (currently running a dojo at Samui Kaze Toshi), and Daidoji Makuni (now semi-retired and living on his own lands south of the city). If the PCs ask, he will confirm that none of the other samurai from

that time remain: “Some have died, some retired to monasteries. Such is the way of the Celestial Wheel.”

Seeking the Other Samurai

If the PCs spoke with the right people (Daidoji Usoji or Musei/Silent), they should know that two other samurai who witnessed the revolt are now living elsewhere: Doji Aki and Daidoji Makuni. These two witnesses represent the key to exposing the karo’s treachery. Aki in particular is important, since she actually realizes what Doji Shingi was doing.

If the PCs go in search of these witnesses, it will take one day of travel to reach Samui Kaze Toshi and Aki’s dojo, and another half-day past that to reach Makuni’s lands. The journey is without incident, and the PCs are struck by the peace and prosperity of the rugged, hilly lands they travel through, pleasant little villages and small, beautiful castles nestling in the narrow valleys and perching on the hillsides. The peasants here are well fed and content, and there is nothing to suggest that revolt and massacre once stalked the land.

Samui Kaze Toshi: Aki’s Dojo

The city of Samui Kaze Toshi is one of several prosperous port cities located along the coast of Crane lands, and does a booming trade with the Mantis Islands and the rest of Crane lands. Squat kobune ships crowd the harbor, and merchants, craftsmen, and peasants bustle, haggle and deal everywhere. These commoners will, of course, step aside and bow low for any samurai who pass among them, offering nothing but proper deference. The small garrison of Daidoji soldiers who guard the city make only a brief, *pro forma* inspection of the PCs’ travel papers; here in the heart of Crane lands, no one expects trouble.

The dojo of Doji Aki can be easily located with a few questions; both commoners and samurai will be happy to point out the way. A small, elegant structure with an adjacent personal residence, the dojo is located on a narrow but clean side street. As the PCs approach, the dojo echoes with the sounds of practice and exercise, grunts of exertion, battle cries, and the smack of flesh against wood. A wooden sign proclaims “***Jiu-jutsu and Kendo. Sensei Doji Aki.***”

As the sign implies, the dojo primarily teaches unarmed combat (the famed Mizu-Do technique of the Crane) and formalized sparring with bokken and shinai (wooden and bamboo swords). No secret Crane swordsmanship techniques are taught, since that would be a betrayal of the Crane school. When the PCs arrive, there are a half-dozen students – Crane bushi, a visiting Unicorn, and a ronin – going through kata and

practicing throws and falls. Doji Aki watches with folded arms and offers occasional words of advice.

Doji Aki

Aki is a fit, lean woman in her mid-thirties, with a long face and sharply slanted eyes. Her black hair is worn in a tightly bound pigtail that has a habit of flopping over her shoulder, causing her to absently flip it back with one hand during conversation. She is a cautious woman; she suspects that several of the other guards from Shiro Sekinin were poisoned or browbeaten into seppuku to prevent them from exposing the truth about the karo, and she deliberately chose to retire, leave the castle, and start this dojo in order to escape a similar fate.

Aki will size the PCs up carefully. Regardless of how they approach her, she will wait until her students finish their lessons and depart. That done, she asks the PCs if they wish to spar with her. She will accept challengers in either Hand-to-Hand or Kenjutsu, the latter matches using shinai (Ok1) to prevent lasting damage. Aki will consider the PCs' behavior and fighting technique as well as their words and manners before deciding whether she can trust them. She will be most impressed by polite but honest PCs who display decent combat skills. She does not think much of shugenja and even less of courtiers, whose lack of fighting technique disgusts her (a courtier with decent combat skills will surprise and impress her).

Although Aki is very reluctant to expose the truth about the revolt – partly from fear, and partly from an unwillingness to expose a dishonorable secret which could publicly embarrass her Clan – she is also a pious and honorable woman whose conscience is burdened by the knowledge she carries. PCs who impress her in a sparring match can convince her with an eloquent appeal to duty and honor, followed by an **Honor Test** at TN 15, or an **Awareness+Sincerity** roll at TN 25. If Aki agrees to tell the truth, she will recount the following tale:

I had always been suspicious of Doji Shingidono...he seemed altogether too ambitious for me. On the night of the revolt, I was walking the north wall of the castle, but when I heard the peasant girl screaming warnings, I rushed to the south wall, where I could hear her approaching the castle gate.

The gate was open, and Doji Shingidono stood there, as though waiting. As the peasant maiden rushed up to the gate, crying out again, he looked around, cursed, and lowered the portcullis with a slam. Then he drew his sword and stabbed the peasant girl through the bars. I heard her cry out a name...it might have been "Kenji," or "Kajo"... and Shingi turned away from the gate, shouting the alarm. I could see it in his eyes, though – the bitterness, the

disappointment. He meant to allow those peasants into the castle.

Aki will also explain that several other samurai seemed to share her suspicions of the karo, although none of them admitted to seeing anything. Later, several of them were shamed into committing seppuku for failing to detect the revolt earlier, and some of them died "at young ages, in the prime of health." The Captain of the Guard was among the latter. Aki, finding it more and more difficult to serve under a man she believed to be dishonorable, soldiered on for several years, carefully harboring her suspicions. When the new daimyo inherited, a weak young man who the karo wrapped around his finger, she decided to retire and start her dojo.

Aki knows about the ghost of Ai – it was already starting to appear while she still served at the castle – and is not at all surprised to learn it still haunts the gates of Shiro Sekinin. "That woman defied her maddened fellow peasants to warn us, and for her courage she was murdered by Shingi. Small wonder that her spirit can find no rest."

If the PCs can convince Aki that they fully intend to expose the truth about Doji Shingi, she will agree to accompany them back to the castle to tell her tale before the daimyo. The PCs may need to make an **Awareness+Sincerity** roll (TN 15) to convince her, although Emerald Magistrates or other PCs with obvious clout (such as members of the Imperial families) won't even need to roll.

Daidoji Makuni

The other survivor from Shiro Sekinin lives in a private house to the southwest of Samui Kaze Toshi, on lands owned by lord Doji Takaya's line. He was granted the house as a wedding gift, and four years ago asked permission from the newly appointed lord Takaya to retire here with his wife and see to the raising of their three children. The young lord, true to his generous nature, agreed, and Makuni has lived here in quiet contentment ever since.

The house is one of several fine samurai dwellings located in the rolling, lightly wooded hills southwest of the city; a medium-sized peasant village, complete with inn, teahouses, geisha house, smithy, sake works, and other artisans, is located near the center of the area to fill any needs the samurai might have. Makuni's dwelling is typical, a single-floored wooden structure with half a dozen rooms, the inner walls constructed of the classic framed rice paper. Two small children run cheerfully around the grounds, watched by a maidservant, while a boy of about nine practices sword kata under the guidance of his father. When the PCs approach the gate to the house, a servant hurries

forward, bowing, and asks for their chops (names) and business, while Makuni watches from a distance.

Daidoji Makuni is a well-kept man in early middle age, with a calm, open face and a soft speaking voice. Once he learns the PCs' business (assuming they either tell the truth, or offer a plausible tale) he invites them inside, where a maidservant offers tea and rice cakes. Makuni greets his visitors politely, then pauses to greet his wife, Daidoji Suko, as she pads silently into the room.

Makuni does not guess the full depths of what happened fifteen years ago, but he has always felt that the karo, Doji Shingi, was an ambitious man who didn't know his place or respect the celestial order. He felt he could serve the Empire and his Clan better by leaving the castle and focusing on raising his children to be fine, honorable samurai. Although he will be willing to share these facts with anyone who does not strike him as dishonorable (anyone but a Scorpion or ronin, in other words), he is hesitant to speak on the matter of the revolt, seeing it as an embarrassing blight on the Crane Clan. He will not wish to speak of the ghost either, since he knows she is connected to the revolt. The PCs will have to make a cogent, persuasive argument for why he should speak to them, and make an **Awareness+Sincerity** roll at TN 20, to convince him to open up. His wife Suko, a traditional Crane woman, will support whatever decision he makes, but plays no part herself in the conversation.

If the PCs do convince Makuni to speak of the ghost and the revolt, he sighs and lowers his head for a moment before speaking. *"I was patrolling the walls that night. I heard the warning – some peasant girl screaming that rebels were coming – and rushed to the gate. Just as I got there I saw the karo thrust his sword through the gates and kill the girl. Then he shouted for us to sound the alarm and defend the walls. When the rest of the peasants arrived a few moments later, we cut them down with arrows."* He frowns. *"I never questioned Doji Shingi-dono's killing of the girl. I suppose he panicked, and thought she was with the rest of the rebels. When the ghost started to appear a year or two later, I knew he'd been mistaken...but there was nothing to be done about it now."*

Although Makuni did not particularly like the karo, he does not realize the full implications of what he saw, nor will he allow himself to be persuaded by reports of peasant testimony (although it will be clear that such stories, if the PCs repeat them, shake him badly). However, if the PCs share the testimony of Doji Aki (especially if they have her with them), he will be shocked into realizing the truth. "So that's what it was," he murmurs, eyes shadowed. "I always wondered why the peasants would have tried such a mad undertaking."

Once the PCs have opened Daidoji Makuni's eyes, he will be willing to accompany them back to Shiro Sekinin to testify against the karo. He bids his wife a dignified but quietly affectionate farewell, speaks briefly with his children, then fetches his daisho set and traveling pack.

Shingi's Ronin

Doji Shingi will be aware of the PCs' investigations – he has made it his business to keep track of such things for the last fifteen years, lest his involvement in the revolt come out. If the PCs go to speak with Doji Aki or Daidoji Makuni, Shingi takes alarm and hires a group of ronin to follow the PCs and, if necessary, kill them and any witnesses they bring back. While the PCs are traveling through the region (especially in the city of Samui Kaze Toshi), have them roll **Perception+Hunting** occasionally at TN 30 (TN 25 if they have the Stealth skill). With a success, the PCs notice that they are occasionally spotting the same faces in the crowds. The ronin will melt away and vanish (with the help of Mists of Illusion, if needed) if they are pursued.

Whenever the PCs are on their way back to Shiro Sekinin with witnesses to confront the karo, the ronin will strike.

The Ambush

The ronin are led by a shugenja, Kaze ("Wind"), a former Scorpion who specializes in air magic. Kaze will cast Mists of Illusion to create the false image of a copse of trees alongside the road to Shiro Sekinin, concealing the other four ronin as they wait in ambush. The PCs (and Aki and Makuni, if they are along) must roll **Perception+Battle** at TN 30 to notice that something is amiss (the sound of a footstep, the smell of unwashed ronin bodies, perhaps a sandaled foot just sticking out of the illusion). If the party fails to spot the illusion, the ronin attack by surprise, getting a free round of attacks against TN 5 before anyone can roll for initiative.

There will be a total of four ronin bushi (five if there are six or seven PCs), plus Kaze.

Kaze will lurk in the trees about thirty yards away, casting Wind's Distractions on two PCs (his first targets will be shugenja, followed by the most powerful-looking warriors). He will follow up with Earth's Stagnation, if the fight lasts that long. Kaze is a cautious man with a strong instinct for self-preservation; he will reserve one Air ring, and if the fight shifts against the ronin (or if a PC comes hunting for him) he will use Know the Shadows to melt into the trees and retreat, then cast Torrential Rain to cover his withdrawal. Unless the PCs are very lucky or very

clever, Kaze should escape – he will appear again in other Living Rokugan tournaments.

The ronin bushi are not suicidal or stupid. If the fight looks to be going badly against them, they will either flee (scattering into the nearby forest) or surrender, trying to bargain for their lives in any way they can. They will be happy to explain that the karo hired them, and even testify against him, if the PCs will promise them mercy. Ruthless PCs who refuse to spare the captured ronin will be met with a shrug and a sneer, and the ronin will seek to escape as soon as they can.

Return and Confrontation

Once the PCs have the testimony of Daidoji Makuni and, especially, Doji Aki, they can confront Doji Shingi with proof of his crimes. The testimony of the peasants, such as Kiki and Old Cho, can also be used now, since it will be corroborating the words of a samurai. Any surviving ronin who are spared by the PCs will be happy to testify that the karo hired them to murder the PCs and the witnesses.

It is up to the PCs exactly how they go about presenting this accusation. Legally, this matter should be brought before the local magistrate and Lord Doji Takaya (as the PCs will know with an **Intelligence+Law** roll at TN 10). The PCs may decide to speak with Kajo first, telling him of the fate of his love; in this case Kajo, filled with sorrowful wrath, will insist that they head to the castle and confront the treacherous Shingi immediately.

If some of the PCs are Emerald Magistrates, they may want to arrest the karo themselves (inciting a peasant revolt falls under the “general lawlessness” clause of an Emerald Magistrate’s duties), but since he is a samurai, they will need an order of appearance signed by the local authority (back to Takaya and his magistrate Tomoita) or the Emerald Champion (beyond the scope of this adventure). Logically, regardless of the exact details of the PCs’ approach, they probably wind up in a formal confrontation with Shingi in the presence of the daimyo, the magistrate, his yoriki Silent, and the rest of the local samurai population. The guests who were here for the recent retirement ritual, however, will have departed by now (no Deus Ex Machina to step in and help the PCs – after all, they’ve taken up this investigation on their own).

The testimony of Doji Aki is the key to the case, but Daidoji Makuni can also unlock the case through his testimony of the karo’s murder of the peasant girl, which will be confirmed by Doji Hana’s suddenly jogged memory. If the PCs lack the testimony of these two individuals, they will not be able to prove the karo’s guilt, no matter how many peasants or ronin they cajole into testifying – Shingi simply laughs these low-ranking witnesses out of the room.

Regardless of what evidence the PCs have, the GM should carefully weigh the tone and approach they take in presenting their accusations. Crude or insulting PCs will get nowhere – Doji Takaya will simply expel them from his domain for daring to question the loyalty of his faithful karo. PCs who take a polite, honorable, and nuanced approach, however, will impress him deeply. Note also who is serving as the main spokesman of the PCs’ case – Takaya will not be very impressed with the words of a ronin, Unicorn, Lion, or Crab, but will pay special attention to Imperial family, enlightened types such as Dragon or monks, or fellow Crane.

If the PCs have solid evidence and present their case well, Takaya is clearly shaken, and looks at his karo with a sudden expression of terrible doubt. Shingi, visibly alarmed, leaps to his feet, protesting his innocence, and demands the right to face his accusers in a duel. “My blade and the strength of my honor will prove these accusations as the lies they are!”

If Kajo accompanied the PCs here, at this point he will not be able to keep his silence any longer. “A duel, you say?” he cries, leaping to his feet. “I am Doji Kajo, and I demand the right to face *you*, Doji Shingi, for your crimes against our lord, against me, and against all I held precious!” There is a stunned silence at this violent outburst, and then Doji Takaya bows to the monk, acknowledging his challenge.

The Duel

If Kajo is not present to make his challenge, one of the PCs will have to champion the party’s accusations against Shingi. If none of the PCs carry a katana, they can select a champion from those NPCs present (Daidoji Usoji, Doji Aki, and Daidoji Makuni are obvious choices; “Silent” a less-obvious but still valid choice). Resolve this as a lethal iaijutsu duel according to the standard rules. If Shingi wins, he is considered cleared of the accusation, and a relieved Doji Takaya expels the remaining PCs from his lands.

If Kajo is present, he will be absolutely insistent on taking up the challenge, no matter what the PCs try to do to dissuade him. He will request that one of the PCs – whichever one has struck him as the most honorable and sympathetic – loan him a sword for the duel. If all the PCs refuse, “Silent” will offer her sword. Read the following text:

Although you know it has been almost fifteen years since Kajo carried a sword, the moment he steps forward into the dueling circle he takes up a perfect iaijutsu stance, his eyes fixed on his opponent as though to kill him with his gaze alone. Doji Shingi is visibly shaken as he takes up his own stance. A timeless, eternal moment passes with the two combatants facing each other, and then both draw in

a single instant. A moment later both fall, soaked in blood, from equally lethal strokes: a kharmic strike.

Kajo turns his head toward you, and he smiles and mouths, "Arigato" (thank you). Then his eyes begin to wander and fade. "Ai," he whispers, as the life leaves his body.

Failure: Aftermath

If the PCs failed to prove their case against the karo (either through a poor presentation, lack of evidence, or losing the duel), Doji Takaya immediately expels them from his lands, warning them not to return on pain of death. As they depart, Doji Shingi's poisonous glare promises that he will not forget their actions. All PCs lose 2 Glory for this public humiliation, and must write down **Sworn Enemy: Doji Shingi** on their character sheets.

Success: Aftermath

If Kajo dies in the duel, he is given full funeral rites as a samurai; Doji Takaya himself thanks this old retainer for putting an end to "a serpent in our midst." In this case, the ghost of Ai is never seen again; she has moved on to her proper place in the spirit world.

If the PCs, or their champion, killed Shingi, word of these events will soon reach Kajo at the monastery of the Cherry Blossom, whether or not the PCs deliver it. Stunned and amazed, he rushes to the castle and holds a vigil at the gates. He invites any PCs who have especially impressed him to share his vigil. That night, the following occurs:

As the ghost of the lovely peasant girl appears once more before the castle gates, Kajo utters a strangled moan and rushes forward, prostrating himself. "Forgive me," he begs. "The one who murdered you has met justice at last, but not by my hands. Forgive my cowardice and helplessness." The ghost's silent tears stop, and you swear that she actually smiles for a moment. Then she simply fades from view.

Kajo rises, his own face calmer and more relaxed than you have yet seen, and bows to you. "Although I shaved my head almost fifteen years ago, in my heart I have never truly left the path of bushido. I ask now that you help me once more, this time to leave that path forever, and journey on to my next life." He kneels before you and carefully opens his robes, exposing his belly for the ritual of seppuku.

Kajo wishes one of the PCs to permit him the use of a blade and to serve as his second. It is up to the PCs whether or not they do so – this is a slightly irregular procedure, after all, given Kajo's current status as a monk. If none of the PCs are willing to help, either Musei the ronin or Doji Aki (whichever the GM feels

would be more dramatically effective) steps out of the darkness and assists Kajo. Despite the agony of the seppuku ritual, the monk dies with a smile on his face.

Regardless of how Doji Shingi dies, his body is cremated and the ashes scattered to the winds. The rest of his family commits ritual suicide, wiping the shame of Shingi's traitorous acts from their line.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure: 2 XP
Learning the truth about the revolt: 1 XP
Bringing justice to Doji Shingi: 1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

Crane PCs receive +1 Honor if Doji Shingi was exposed and killed for his acts.

Monk, sodan-senzo and witch-hunter PCs gain +1 Honor for successfully sending Ai to her place in the afterlife.

Glory

None awarded for success in this adventure. However, if the PCs accuse the karo but fail to prove their case, they lose 2 points of Glory for this public humiliation.

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs accused the karo but failed to convict him, they gain **Sworn Enemy: Doji Shingi**.

NPCs

Doji Takaya, Daimyo of Shiro Sekinin

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 1

Honor/Glory: 3.6/5.5

Skills: All High skills at ranks 1-2, plus Archery 2, Defense 1, Horsemanship 1, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 1.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Gentry, Social Position (daimyo of Shiro Sekinin), Voice/Idealistic, Sworn Enemy (the karo, not known).

Equipment: Exquisite kimono, fine daisho set

Daidoji Usoji, Captain of the Guard at Shiro Sekinin

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (15 without light armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 2

Honor/Glory: 2.6/3.5

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 1, Battle 2, Courtier 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Shintao 1, Yarijutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick, Social Position (captain of the guard at Shiro Sekinin)

Equipment: Light armor, fine kimono, fine daisho set, yari

Doji Shingi, Treacherous Karo

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 3

Honor/Glory: 0.6/4.7

Skills: Acting 2, Archery 2, Courtier 2, Dance 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 3, History 1, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Poetry 2, Political Maneuvering 2, Sincerity 3, Tessen 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Apparent Honor (3), Crafty, Heartless, Social Position (karo)/Dark Secret (instigated peasant revolt), Driven (to become a daimyo), Jealousy (daimyo's position and power).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine daisho set

Doji Aki, Sensei and Witness

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/2.4

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 3, Etiquette 2, Hand-to-Hand (Mizu-Do) 4, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 2, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Hands of Stone/Dark Secret (knows the karo's intentions during the revolt)

Equipment: Fine kimono, bokken (3k1), shinai (0k1)

Daidoji Makuni, Retired Samurai and Witness

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

[EARTH 3 (wounds +3 per rank, from Honor)]

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 1

Honor/Glory: 3.2/2.1

Skills: Archery 1, Athletics 1, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand 1, History 1, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 1, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Bland, Gentry/Soft-Hearted, True Love (wife)

Equipment: Fine kimono, daisho, traveling pack

“Kaze,” Ronin Shugenja

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Soshi Shugenja 1

Honor/Glory: 0.4/1.1

Skills: Athletics 1, Calligraphy 2, Courtier 2, Etiquette 2, Kenjutsu 1, Meditation 2, Poison 1, Sincerity 2, Stealth 2, Tantojutsu 2, Theology 1

Spells: Sense, Commune, Summon, (Air) Mists of Illusion, Wind’s Distractions, Know the Shadows, (Earth) Earth’s Stagnation, Jade Strike, (Water) Torrential Rain, Reflecting Pool, Path to Inner Peace, (Fire) Amaterasu’s Blessing, Evil Ward.Advantages/Disadvantages: **Innate Ability (Wind’s Distractions)/Sworn Enemy (Scorpion Clan), Social Disadvantage (Ronin)**

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, tanto (1k2)

Musei (“Silent”), Ronin Yoriki

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (15 without light armor)

School/Rank: None (forgotten Isawa shugenja)

Honor/Glory: 1.7/0.8

Skills: Athletics 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Meditation 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 1, Theology 1, Yarijutsu 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Patron (magistrate Doji Tomoita), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (cynic), Forgotten, Social Disadvantage (Ronin)

Equipment: Light armor, kimono, daisho set

Ronin Mercenaries (4-5)

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (15 without light armor)

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0.5/0.8

Skills: Archery 1, Athletics 2, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Stealth 1, Yarijutsu 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (Ronin)

Equipment Light armor, kimono, daisho set (half of them also have 4k2 yari)

Events Summary

Fill out this form and return it with the Who's-Who for all playings of this event at CogCon 9 (September 21-23, 2001).

Did the PCs learn the truth about the peasant revolt?

Did they prove the crime of Doji Shingi?