

# Lion Clan: Your Objectives

From Akodo Toturi, Champion of the Lion Clan, to my honored servant, Greetings:

This Winter Court presents us with grave challenges. Matters on our northern border, near Toshi Ranbo, have been escalating dangerously. The Crane have accused us of seeking war merely for taking the prudent step of reinforcing our garrisons in the villages of Oiku and Renga Murai. Matsu Tsuko, the daimyo of the Matsu family and overall commander of our forces in that region, assures me that these build-ups are in no way offensive in nature, but merely a response to the general increase in tensions.

The Crane must recognize that, if war is to be averted, they must offer us some sort of concession. The Matsu armies believe they have endured too much from the Crane, and if any unfortunate incident should occur on the border, it could quickly lead to all-out war, which would be in the interest of neither Clan. I therefore urge you to demand the return of our northern territories, those of Toshi Ranbo and indeed Shiro Kyotei itself as well. It is unlikely that the Crane will offer any major concession, but you must hold out for the maximum possible gain and always hold over their heads the threat from the warlike Matsu armies. In return (but ONLY in return) for territorial concessions, we are prepared to withdraw the garrisons from Oiku and Renga Murai.

With regard to our relations with the other Great Clans: it is of paramount importance that the Unicorn not be allowed to take possession of the City of the Rich Frog. The city is a buffer between our two Clans, and were the Unicorn to claim it, their cavalry would stand on our very borders. We will threaten war rather than permit this, but it should be understood that such a war would be an absolute last resort, since it could well drive the Unicorn into alliance with the Crane. It would be far better to make the Unicorn's other neighbors, the Dragon and Scorpion, concerned about the threat from a Unicorn expansion. Perhaps we might even be able to drive the Unicorn to war against the Scorpion, since this would weaken two of our enemies at the same time.

We have, at present, no conflicts with the Dragon, Phoenix, or Crab. If possible, we should seek to gain the favor of these three clans and turn them against the Crane. There are rumors of conflict on the southern border between the Crane and Crab – perhaps we can exploit this.

Finally, the Lion stand opposed to the Mantis Clan's petition for Great Clan status. Such a change would be an offense against the order which has governed the Empire since its founding, and should never be permitted.

## Lion Clan: Game-play Effects

As a representative of the Lion Clan, you are empowered to promise the withdrawal of Lion troops from the border villages of Oiku and Renga Murai, in response to a territorial concession (or a major political gesture) from the Crane. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you take this action.

You can dispatch troops to the City of the Rich Frog in order to oppose a Unicorn annexation of the city. If you are Matsu, you can also dispatch them to occupy the city yourself. Inform the judge if you take either action.

You can make offers of military/political alliance to other Clans (anyone but the Crane and Unicorn), subject to the ruling of the judge.

You can offer marriages to two Lion brides by way of cementing such alliances. The head judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has certs detailing the dowry and benefits which come with these brides. You might wish to review these before promising them in marriage.

### What You Know About the Other Clans:

**Crane:** The Crane dogs laugh at us from behind their fluttering fans. Only the favor of the Emperor protects them from our righteous wrath. Perhaps, if enough other Clans can be brought against them, they will no longer be able to hide behind the Hantei's mercy.

**Unicorn:** These barbarians occupy lands which were ours for centuries, and now they seek to encroach even closer by taking the City of the Rich Frog. Further, the Unicorn are said to be friendly with the Crane Clan! An alliance between them cannot be allowed. Better to drive the Unicorn into war with the Scorpion. The Unicorn are known to be obsessed with upholding the law, and especially with shutting down the opium trade. Perhaps if evidence can be found which shows the Scorpion to be behind the opium trade, such a war would indeed break out... which might leave us free to annex the wealthy City of the Rich Frog.

**Crab:** The Crab are said to be feuding with the Crane, and this may offer us an opportunity. However, the Crab are not wealthy and their troops are tied up at the Wall, so it remains to be seen whether they can offer us anything of value against the Crane.

**Phoenix:** We are at peace with the Phoenix, and that should remain the case. There is no need to add to our list of enemies at this time. Perhaps we can improve our relations with them, so as to ensure that they do not side with the Crane in future.

**Dragon:** The Dragon also border on the territory of the City of the Rich Frog. Perhaps they can be convinced to speak out against the Unicorn annexing the city. Still, it is hard to know what a Dragon is thinking – perhaps it is better simply to leave them in their distant mountains.

**Scorpion:** Never trust a Scorpion. They seek nothing but their own power, and do so by the vilest and most dishonorable means. We do not know what, if anything, they seek at this Winter Court, and it could be dangerous to find out. Better to ignore them. Better still to drive them into a war with the Unicorn. There are rumors that they have discovered some great treasure in the caverns beneath their chief city, Kyuden Bayushi – perhaps that can be used against them somehow.

**Minor Clans:** The minor Clans are of no importance, unless they can aid us against the Crane. Even so, they should come to us as supplicants, not equals.

## **Special Note for Matsu-family characters (only):**

Matsu Tsuko seeks to build up the Clan for the war with the Crane which she is certain must come. However, at present the Lion Clan is desperately short of the resources (money and food) needed to fight such a war. Tsuko has therefore directed you to make any sort of secret arrangement or alliance which will bring such support to the Lion Clan. She has also directed you to seize the City of the Rich Frog if you can manage to do so without provoking a war with the Unicorn. If the Unicorn take the city first, it **MUST** be taken back from them, even if war is the result.

# Crane Clan: Your Objectives

From Doji Satsume, Daimyo of the Crane and Emerald Champion of the Divine Hantei XXXVIII, greetings:

This Winter Court will be an important one for the future peace and prosperity of our Clan and the Empire. The crude and warlike Lion press us, the Yasuki insult us, and unless these threats can be averted we could well find ourselves at war. Although the divine Hantei Emperor will surely listen to our pleas for His protection, the Lion might yet inflict terrible damage upon our lands before His hand restrains them.

Of particular concern to us are the troops which the Lion have posted in the villages of Oiku and Renga Murai along their northern border. These are clearly intended to threaten the city of Toshi Ranbo, which we took from the Lion in certain political and military maneuvers a generation ago. The Matsu daimyo, Matsu Tsuko, would undoubtedly like to retake the city, and the presence of her troops there is clearly a provocation aimed at starting a war. We must insist that they be withdrawn before any further negotiations can take place. Once the Lion have given us face by withdrawing, we can perhaps throw them a small bone by granting some minor territorial concession – the village of Koga Mura, for example.

We must also prevent the Lion from annexing the wealthy ronin settlement, the City of the Rich Frog, which lies between their territory and that of the Unicorn. Far better to let the Unicorn, so often our allies, take the city and thereby grow stronger, better able to off-set the Lion numbers. Indeed, perhaps it may be possible to nudge the Lion into a war with the Unicorn which will avert any conflict with us.

Regardless, we must cement our ties with other Clans in order to protect ourselves in the event of war with the Lion. You are directed to seek marriage alliances with other Clans, in particular the Phoenix, Dragon, and Unicorn, for this purpose.

The Crab Clan are another problem. Their filthy merchant family, the Yasuki, were caught some months ago smuggling forbidden gaijin pepper in through the territories of our Daidoji family. Although two of their so-called daimyo committed seppuku to atone for this crime, the Daidoji family do not consider themselves satisfied in this matter, and I am inclined to agree with them. The Yasuki must make further amends for their deeds, whether it be through political concessions, territorial grants, or some other way. Warn them that if they do not give us face, they run the risk of war – something the Crab can hardly afford, with their constant duties on the Wall.

The Minor Clans are of no concern to us, and if any of them show their faces at court, pay them no mind. We make a sole exception for the Mantis Clan, whose foolish ambitions of gaining Great Clan status offend us. Do not permit them to achieve any success in these impudent dreams.

## Crane Clan game-play effects

You can, in concert with the other Crane representatives, offer the territorial concession of the village of Koga Mura (total annual production: 7 koku) to the Lion Clan in exchange for their withdrawal from the villages of Oiku and Renga Murai. By order of your Champion, this concession cannot be made until after the Lion have withdrawn. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) must be informed when and if this concession is made.

You can, in concert with the other Crane representatives, order your Daidoji family not to attack the Crab, if you choose. Or you can give them permission to go ahead and attack as soon as spring arrives. Inform the judge of either decision.

You can offer up to six Crane brides to other Clans in order to cement alliances. The head judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has certs detailing the dowry which accompanies each bride. (You may also arrange marriages of Crane PCs to PCs from other Clans, if it is acceptable to them.) You should probably review the certs before making any marriage offers.

You may also, in agreement with the other Crane PCs present here, make up to three Gifts (value 1,000 koku each) to other Clans in order to ensure their friendship. Inform the judge if you make such a decision.

### What You Know About the Other Clans:

**Lion:** The Matsu daimyo, Matsu Tsuko, is said to be secretly preparing for war despite the wishes of her Clan Champion, Akodo Toturi. If these rumors are true, there is a deep rift within the Lion Clan. Perhaps it will be possible to play the Matsu and the Akodo families against each other.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn seek to annex the wealthy ronin city of the Rich Frog. They clashed there with the Lion some months ago. We favor their acquisition of the city, since it will strengthen them against the Lion. (Besides, filthy ronin have no business running a city anyway.) Indeed, if we push the Unicorn into annexing the city, it may result in a war between them and the Lion, a war in which we would (naturally) support the Unicorn, and which would weaken our Lion enemies. The Unicorn also seek our help in gaining control of the medicinal opium trade from the Scorpion – a worthy cause, and one worth supporting if it brings us their military help.

**Crab:** You know that the Yasuki were caught smuggling gaijin pepper (gunpowder), and that two of their daimyo committed seppuku to atone for the discovery. You also know that the Crab have been hard-pressed on the Wall this past year, and are therefore in little position to resist if you press them for further concessions. Get as much out of them as you can, holding out the threat of war with the Daidoji.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix have often been your friends and allies in the past, and you should see to it that they remain so in the future. There are said to be some minor border disputes between the Phoenix and the Dragon – if you take the Phoenix side, it will probably help keep them friendly to you. Perhaps you could even convince them to side with you against the Lion.

**Dragon:** Who knows what the Dragon want? And who cares? Their ways are as mysterious and pointless as ever.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion have been very cagey of late, ever since they discovered that cave beneath Kyuden Bayushi two years ago. All manner of rumors have circulated about the ancient treasures they found there, although they've been predictably secretive about the truth of the matter. Let them keep their secrets, so long as they do not harm your cause.

**Minor Clans:** The Mantis are increasingly open in their attempts to gain Great Clan status, and have been aggressively seeking alliances with other Minor Clans (such as our distant cousins in the Sparrow Clan) to this end. They have also been trying to gain influence with the other Great Clans, hoping for their support, although all they can offer in return is gaudy trinkets. You should oppose their goals whenever possible.

## Crab Clan: Your Objectives

From Kuni Yori, daimyo of the Kuni family and advisor to Clan Champion Hida Kisada, greetings:

The Crab Clan has but little interest in the foolish games which obsess the other Clans at these winter gatherings. Our sole concern is the threat of hostilities on our inland border, where the Crane are threatening to “chastise” (as they so arrogantly put it) our Yasuki family over some trivial matter last year, an accusation of smuggling gaijin pepper through Crane coastal lands. Two Yasuki daimyo committed seppuku to atone for this evil, but apparently the Crane are more interested in grabbing territory than in satisfying Honor.

We cannot afford a war with the Crane now, not when the Shadowlands are more aggressive and militant than they have been at any time since the rise of the Maw. However, we see no need for further apologies or concessions when two of our daimyo have already made the ultimate apology. Therefore, no further apology will be made. Instead, we should seek alliances with the Crane’s neighbors (such as the Lion and Phoenix, or even the Scorpion) to discourage them from waging war against us. In particular, the Lion would be glad of the financial help which we could offer them for their own conflicts with the Crane.

Finally, it has come to the attention of our Lord Hida Kisada that the Mantis Clan, under its aggressive daimyo Yoritomo, is actively seeking to gain Great Clan status. Although many of the Great Clans oppose this, we see things in a more practical light. The Mantis have much wealth and economic power, more than many others suspect, and an alliance with them could strengthen our own Clan greatly, not to mention offsetting the power of the Crane. And as for their demand for Great Clan status... why not? After all, they are descended from the blood of our own founder, Hida himself.

## Crab Clan game-play effects

You can, in concert with the other Crab Clan representatives, offer a gift (food, weapons, and supplies) totaling 1,000 koku in value to any one of the three Clans bordering the Crane territories (Lion, Phoenix, and Scorpion) in order to encourage them to take action against the Crane Clan.

You can also offer two Crab brides to cement any alliance which you manage to form with any of the other Clans. (You can also negotiate the marriage of Crab PCs to other Clan PCs, with their permission.) The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has certs which detail the dowry which accompanies each bride. You should probably review these before negotiating any marriages.

### What you know about the other Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion are divided – the Matsu family are clearly preparing for war with the Crane, but their Akodo rulers seek to hold them back. Perhaps we can encourage the Matsu in their warlike fever. The Lion are also upset about the Unicorn Clan's plans to annex the City of the Rich Frog, but that is hardly our concern.

**Crane:** The Crane are foolish, arrogant children who care nothing for the price we pay to keep the Empire safe. They will, as usual, try to buy their way out of any troubles that face them, bribing the other Clans with gifts and pretty brides. With the Lion threatening their borders, they should be avoiding trouble with us, but instead they court it – a clear sign of their foolish pride. However, you should beware of their skills in the courts – they will try to make you look foolish and dishonorable, even though they are clearly the ones at fault.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn are too close to the Crane, and they still remember how our general Hida Tsuru humiliated their vaunted cavalry. Perhaps we can mend our relations with them now, and drive a wedge between them and the Crane. They wish to annex the City of the Rich Frog – what do we care about a ronin city? Let them have it.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix have lived in peace and security for so long that they have forgotten that the Shadowlands even exist. How else to explain that they let the Bloodspeaker Yajinden slip into their library last year? Now they seem to be having some border troubles with the Dragon. Perhaps if we support them on this matter, we can turn them against the Crane.

**Dragon:** As usual, the Dragon as a whole are mysterious and distant. Although they claim to seek peace, their Mirumoto family seem eager for trouble with the Phoenix. The daimyo of the Mirumoto is a foolish girl named Hitomi, who is obsessed with some sort of vendetta against Hida Yakumo, our Clan Champion's eldest son. A humiliation at the hands of the Phoenix might teach her to stay home and mind her own business, rather than seeking quarrels with us.

**Scorpion:** Do not trust a Scorpion. Do not listen to a Scorpion. They live with lies, treachery, and cowardice every day of their lives. We may have to seek their help against the Crane, but that should be a last resort.

**Minor Clans:** The Mantis have ambitions to become a Great Clan, and seek to unite the other Minor Clans behind them. We should support them on this. Their wealth, allied to us, would be a useful counter to the Crane.

## Special Additional Material for Kuni-family Characters

**From Kuni Yori's Letter:** It is well-known, as a rumor at least, that the Scorpion have uncovered some ancient relics and documents in a cave beneath Kyuden Bayushi. I have reason to believe (from my own sources) that these items pertain to the rising threat from the Shadowlands and the possible threat of the Dark One, Fu Leng, returning to the Empire after his thousand-year banishment. If the Scorpion can be quietly appraised of my knowledge, perhaps we can convince them to let the Kuni family see their discoveries first-hand. The Kuni have much wisdom in these matters, and the Scorpion would be foolish to refuse our help. In return, we could pledge to keep such matters absolutely secret from the rest of the Empire, whose foolish citizens are incapable of understanding the threat from the darkness.

**In Game Terms:** You know that the Scorpion discoveries beneath their castle deal with ancient prophecies of the return of Fu Leng. You also know they are keeping this information secret from the rest of the Clans, including the Hantei Emperor himself.

You can share this information as you see fit, but your objective is to convince the Scorpion to let the Kuni family "in on the secret" and gain access to the secrets in that cave for your family and Clan. Only the Kuni can be trusted to deal with such secrets properly.

# Unicorn Clan: Your Objectives

From Ide Tadaji, ambassador to the court of the radiant Emperor Hantei XXXVIII, greetings:

Our Clan stands ready, as always, to prove that we are the true defenders of the peace and security of the Empire. To this end, we seek to annex the City of the Rich Frog, a ronin settlement which lies between our territory and that of the Lion. The City is a major center for criminal activity, especially the trade in illegal opium, and both the city and the Empire would benefit if it were placed under the administration of our skilled and honorable magistrates. However, the Lion Clan seems hostile to our proposal. It is the nature of the Lion to see threats and challenges where none exist. We must convince the Lion that our taking the city would actually be of benefit to them, since it would help control the opium trade. Above all we must prevent the Lion from annexing the city themselves, for this would only encourage the most warlike elements of their Clan.

It does not help, of course, that recently one of our magistrates in that city was accused of murdering the Lion ambassador. Although we proved his innocence, the Lion are always reluctant to forgive when they believe themselves wronged. No doubt they would still seek a war, given the chance. We must therefore also assemble many allies in support of our annexation of the City, so that the Lion will see the wisdom of avoiding conflict. Alliances through marriage will assist this effort greatly.

In a related matter: we also seek to convince the Empire that the Scorpion can no longer be trusted to administer the medicinal opium trade. The so-called "Opium War" in the Scorpion city of Ryoko Owari suggests that the illegal opium trade operates through the same routes as the legal one, and the Scorpion have done little or nothing to crack down on these dishonorable crimes. If we were to share control of the medicinal trade with the Scorpion, our magistrates could see to it that no criminal activities took place. No doubt the Scorpion will resist this proposal, so we must seek help and assistance from the other Clans. If enough of them support our position, the Scorpion will have no choice but to agree.

We seek only peace and open trade with the other Clans of the Empire. If they need our assistance in maintaining peace, law, and order in Rokugan, we will be happy to provide it. We should try to avoid being drawn into their quarrels.

Finally, we have learned that the Minor Clan of the Mantis seeks allies to support its petition to gain Great Clan status. We neither favor nor oppose their efforts. If they prove themselves worthy of being a Great Clan, let it be granted, for their bloodline is descended from Hida himself. Only their deeds will tell the tale.

## Unicorn Clan game-play effects:

You can, in concert with the other Unicorn Clan representatives here, agree to dispatch troops to occupy and annex the City of the Rich Frog. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you take this action. You can also agree to dispatch troops to oppose a Lion annexation of the city, should that occur.

You may also, in agreement with the other Unicorn here, form military alliances with other Clans, or take military action against other Clans, should it seem justified for the good of the Unicorn Clan and the Empire. In particular, you may take military action to suppress the illegal opium trade.

You may offer two Unicorn brides to cement agreements or alliances with other Clans. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has the certs for these two brides, listing the dowry and benefits which come with them – you may wish to review them before making any offers. You may also arrange marriages for Unicorn PCs, with their permission.

You may collectively offer two “gaijin gifts” in value equal to 800 koku each to cement alliances or agreements with other Clans. Inform the chief judge of any gifts you make.

### What you know about the other Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion are still resentful about the assassination of their ambassador, and angry that we may acquire the wealth of the City of the Rich Frog. However, they are also clearly eager for war with the Crane Clan. You may be able to use this to turn their wrath aside from us.

**Crane:** The Crane have always been our friends. They are quarreling now with the Crab Clan, over certain activities of the Yasuki family, and we should support them in this – the dishonorable Yasuki make our own merchants look as respectable as Imperial courtiers. In return, we should seek the help of the Crane in our campaign to annex the City of the Rich Frog and to share control of the opium trade. However, we should also be wary of letting the Crane drag us into a war against the Lion.

**Crab:** Although the Crab are valiant, they are also crude and brutal. We should not forget how cruelly their general Hida Tsuru treated our defeated bushi a few years ago, forcing them to cut the throats of their own precious mounts. Let the Crab stay on the Wall where they belong, and all will be well. Otherwise, we may have to teach them a lesson in Honor.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix are peaceful and enlightened, close friends to the Crane, and we should seek their support in our efforts this winter. We have heard that they have some border troubles with the Dragon – perhaps we can be of help in that matter.

**Dragon:** We have never understood the Dragon, and perhaps we never will. The City of the Rich Frog lies close to their borders, so we should at least try to make sure they will not intervene if we annex it.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion are not to be trusted, which is why they should be forced to share the medical opium trade with us. We suspect they are involved in the illegal opium trade as well, but we have never been able to prove this. If we ever gain such proof, the Scorpion will feel the righteous wrath of our mighty cavalry.

**Minor Clans:** The Mantis seek to gain Great Clan status. Indeed, all of the Minor Clans hold the seeds of future greatness in their hearts. If such seeds ever germinate, they will be worthy additions to the ranks of the Great Clans.

## Scorpion Clan: Your Objectives

From Bayushi Kachiko, wife of our Champion Bayushi Shoji, speaking with his voice, greetings:

We have but little concern in the affairs which distract the other Clans at this Winter Court. After all, it is not the peaceful Scorpion who threaten to shatter the Empire with war.

The Lion and Crane speak bravely of war. Let them continue to speak, and if possible, encourage them to act on their impetuous words. Such a war would weaken two of our enemies to no loss of our own.

The Unicorn Clan resents our control of the medicinal opium trade, suspecting that we use it to support the larger illegal opium trade. We would never admit to such a crime, of course. Now it is said the Unicorn seek to take joint control of the medicinal trade, to watch over us more closely. They will try to persuade the other Clans to back them in this venture. Do not permit them to succeed in this insult to our honor and duty. Perhaps a war with the Lion will distract them from such things.

Many Clans have heard rumors of what we may (or may not) have discovered in an ancient cave beneath our stronghold of Kyuden Bayushi. Such rumors should be denied and encouraged at the same time, so long as they do not approach the truth. What we have actually discovered is a secret so vital and deadly that not even the Emperor Himself can be allowed to see it, lest it threaten His purity and safety. The future of the Empire and the continued imprisonment of the Dark One may rest on keeping this secret. If anyone should come even close to the secret, seek to distract them with false hints or courtly games. If they persist, you may contact me through the senior member of your party and I shall instruct you further.

No other matters at the Winter Court concern us directly, so Lord Shoji directs you simply to pursue what course seems most prudent and effective at building the influence and power of the Scorpion Clan. One other directive he sends: the Three-Man Alliance (the minor clans of the Sparrow, Wasp, and Fox) have never paid the full price for their military defeat of one of our armies a few years ago. Anything which can discomfit or weaken these Clans will be welcome. We are told that the Mantis seek an alliance with these Clans, so you should attempt to disrupt their plans as much as possible.

## Scorpion Clan game-play effects:

The Scorpion PC (or NPC) with the highest Glory has been entrusted with a valuable nemuranai (magical item), the Obsidian Pendant. This item allows you to speak with Bayushi Kachiko, the wife of the Scorpion Clan Champion, for information or instructions. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you wish to contact Kachiko.

You know that the secret beneath Kyuden Bayushi concerns the possible return of Fu Leng. You also know that not even the Emperor has been informed of the secret. If anyone should learn of the secret, and you are unable to distract them, you must contact Bayushi Kachiko for instructions.

With the agreement of your fellow Scorpions, you can offer one Scorpion bride to any Clan PC who seeks alliance with the Scorpion Clan. The chief judge, Otomo Hiroshi, has the cert which details the dowry and other benefits for this bride. (You should check the cert before making any marriage offers.) You are also free to negotiate any Scorpion PC marriages to other PCs, with their permission.

Over the course of the Winter Court, you can learn SECRETS about the other PCs or NPCs. You can learn about their Advantages or Disadvantages, their Clan objectives, or the information they have. Each Scorpion PC at the Winter Court may learn one such SECRET for free, simply by asking a judge. You may learn additional SECRETS by rolling **Courtier/Awareness**, **Stealth/Agility**, or **Investigation/Perception** (your choice) in front of one of the judges. The TN for the first SECRET is 20, +5 for each additional SECRET. (Place a check-mark on this sheet for each SECRET you learn.)

SECRETS learned:

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### What You Know About the Other Clans:

**Lion:** The Matsu family is eager for war with the Crane, and equally eager to gain control of the ronin City of the Rich Frog before the Unicorn can take it. If we encourage them, they will rush headlong into wars with our enemies in the Crane and Unicorn Clans. Such useful tools, the Lion!

**Crane:** The Crane have always been our greatest rivals in the courts, and some of them are almost as skilled in intrigue as we are. It will be useful for them to be distracted by a war with the militarily superior Lion Clan.

**Unicorn:** Besides their designs on the opium trade, the Unicorn also wish to take control of the ronin city of the Rich Frog, which lies between their lands and those of the Lion. Such a move would almost certainly lead them into a war with the Lion Clan. Perhaps you can encourage them to annex the city. For example, if they were deceived into thinking that other Clans would support them against the Lion.

**Crab:** The Crab are busy with their war against the Shadowlands, and their quarrels with the Crane. Let them continue to fulfill their duties and they will not trouble us.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix, above all others, must not be allowed to learn what we have under Kyuden Bayushi. After all, they stole three of the Black Scrolls from us many generations ago, and their lust for such dark knowledge has not abated. Distract them with mundane concerns, such as their border quarrel with the Dragon.

**Dragon:** The Dragon are as mysterious as ever. However, we have learned that one of their generals has conceived an enmity with a Phoenix daimyo across the border. Fanning the flames of this little dispute should keep those Clans from meddling in our own affairs.

**Minor Clans:** The ambitious fool Yoritomo dreams of Great Clan status for the Mantis, and to that end seeks friendship with the Three-Man Alliance. Indeed, his agents were even able to take advantage of our maneuver against a recent Crane-Sparrow marriage to arrange a Mantis-Sparrow marriage instead. It is time for him to learn that it would be better to remain in Minor Clan obscurity.

# Phoenix Clan: Your Objectives

From Shiba Ujimitsu, champion of the Phoenix, expressing the wishes of the Isawa elemental council:

It has been a difficult year for the Empire. The kidnapping and rescue of the Divine Hantei Emperor's son has shaken the Empire to its foundations. And the Elemental Council senses that a great evil is rising, an evil of which this was just the first taste. Now is not the time for war – now is the time for the Clans to unite in peace, to protect the Empire from threats both external and internal, and to soothe the growing fears of the peasants and the other common folk.

The Lion and Unicorn seem almost eager for conflict, and the Crane are little better. We should encourage all three Clans to seek the path of peace instead. In particular, a war between the Lion and the Crane would be disastrous, since it would inevitably draw in other Clans as well – perhaps even our own. Such a war should be prevented at all costs. Perhaps we may serve as mediators between those two Clans, or offer a marriage which might encourage them to a peaceful resolution.

Unfortunately, we ourselves have recently become involved in a border conflict with the Dragon, although it is a minor one compared to the Lion-Crane struggles. One of our lesser daimyo, Shiba Tsumenitsu, has fought several border skirmishes with an aggressive Dragon general, Mirumoto Sanbe. Although the Dragon claim that Tsumenitsu-san is to blame for the troubles, I have spoken with him and have learned that the true cause of the problem lies in Winter Court two years ago, when Sanbe-san insulted Tsumenitsu-san's swordsmanship. An apology from Sanbe-san would easily resolve the problem. Perhaps others can encourage Sanbe-san to follow the honorable course.

Finally, we are curious about the recent reports that the Scorpion have unearthed some sort of ancient secrets beneath their castle of Kyuden Bayushi. The Elemental Council would greatly like to learn more of this matter, and whether it has any connection to their own growing concerns for the future of the Empire.

## Phoenix Clan game-play effects:

You are empowered, in concert with the other Phoenix at the Winter Court, to offer an Isawa shugenja spouse (either male or female) to one of the other PCs. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has the cert listing the dowry and other benefits associated with this spouse (you should review the cert before making any marriage offers). PC to PC marriages will also be useful, if all agree to them.

Such offers should most likely be made to cement a political agreement which you favor – for example, rewarding a Clan which has chosen the path of peace rather than war. They could also be done to encourage someone to put pressure on Mirumoto Sanbe to apologize for his insults to Shiba Tsumenitsu.

Shiba Tsumenitsu will not issue an apology to Mirumoto Sanbe, or in any way accept blame for the recent border troubles, unless all the Phoenix PCs and NPCs at the Winter Court agree that he should do so.

### What You Know About the Other Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion armies are eager for war, whether with the Unicorn or the Crane does not seem to matter to them. Fortunately, their Clan Champion Akodo Toturi has a more enlightened approach, and seeks to avert war. You should assist him by urging the Lion to accept peaceful compromise on both fronts.

**Crane:** The Crane have always been our brothers in seeking the path of peace and enlightenment. We should support their efforts, while guiding them away from their arrogance and pride. In particular, their Daidoji family seem eager to provoke a conflict with the Crab, whose defense of the Empire would be weakened badly by a conflict with the Crane. Here again, we should urge a peaceful compromise.

**Unicorn:** The Clan of the Ki-Rin are still too enamoured of their barbaric steppe-riding ways to truly understand the ways of the Empire. They seek to annex the City of the Rich Frog and to take joint control of the medical opium trade. Although such actions might seem laudable, they upset centuries of tradition and stability. The Unicorn must be made to see that their actions are, in their own way, bringing war just as surely as the militance of the Lion and the arrogance of the Crane.

**Crab:** The Crab fulfill an important duty by protecting the border. Sadly, they too often lose sight of honor and enlightenment while following their path. Small wonder that the Yasuki fell into smuggling Gaijin Pepper. You must make the Crab see that their actions brought the wrath of the Daidoji upon themselves, so that they and the Crane can find the way to peace together.

**Dragon:** The Dragon are, as always, unknowable. However, the insults and aggression of Mirumoto Sanbe are easily understood. Sanbe must apologize if our own Shiba bushi are to feel that their honor is protected.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion love their secrets. While they have not been able to conceal the discovery they have made in the tunnels beneath Kyuden Bayushi, they have prevented any from learning just what that discovery is. We must persuade them that if it concerns the prophecies of the return of Fu Leng, it is just as much our business as theirs.

**Minor Clans:** The Minor Clans are unimportant, and will always be unimportant. We have heard that the Mantis dream of attaining Great Clan status, but this foolish dream can never be. The sooner they give it up and accept their station, the better for all.

## Special Note for Shiba Family PCs

Although the Elemental Council desires peace with the Dragon Clan, many in the Shiba family feel that Mirumoto Sanbe's insults go beyond anything which can be resolved with a mere apology. Perhaps another duel could settle the matter, if Sanbe were willing to fight one rather than spitting insults and leading his men across the border to harass Tsumenitsu-sama's lands. Or perhaps the matter will have to be resolved on the battlefield. In any case, this matter cannot be swept aside by the sweet words of courtiers. Even we Shiba have the pride of a bushi.

### **Game-Play effects:**

You have been directed to seek allies for a possible military clash with the Dragon. If the Shiba can show such allies now, it may force Sanbe's superiors to act against him. It does not matter which Clan you ally with, so long as you can be confident of their support.

In order to secure such an alliance, you can offer a Shiba bride. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has the cert listing the dowry and other benefits associated with this spouse (you should review the cert before making any marriage offers).

With the agreement of all the Shiba PCs here, you can also reinforce such an alliance with a promise of military support from the Shiba family. Inform a judge if you make such an offer.

# Dragon Clan: Your Objectives

From Mirumoto Sukune, honored uncle to our family daimyo Mirumoto Hitomi, greetings:

We wish you good fortune for your journey to Shiro Kyotei. It is the desire of our Clan and our Champion to avert any war between the Clans, for these are dangerous times and the Empire can ill-afford such a conflict. In particular, a war between the Lion and the Unicorn Clans over the City of the Rich Frog is much to be avoided, since such a conflict would lie upon our very borders and could easily spill over into our lands.

We do not wish either Clan to annex the City of the Rich Frog, for our Lord Togashi Yokuni has directed us that the city should remain neutral. He has not instructed Hitomi-san or myself to actually intervene with force, but it cannot hurt to *appear* as though we are willing to fight anyone who tries to seize the city.

Our only personal concern at this court is with the recurrent incidents which plague our border with the Phoenix Clan. The Phoenix daimyo, Shiba Tsumenitsu, has repeatedly picked quarrels with one of our generals, Mirumoto Sanbe. This Tsumenitsu seems to believe that his swordsmanship is superior to the daisho technique, and when Sanbe rightly rejected this claim, picked a duel. Although the duel was not resolved (both combatants were too badly injured to proceed), Tsumenitsu has been unwilling to let the matter drop, and continues to provoke border incidents and skirmishes where his lands adjoin ours. He insists that Sanbe must apologize for insulting his swordsmanship. We believe, however, that it is Tsumenitsu who must apologize for his continuing provocations.

Apart from these two matters, we have no concerns at this Winter Court. As our Clan Champion commands, our only concern should be to maintain peace in the Empire.

## Dragon Clan game-play effects:

You must not allow the Dragon Clan to be drawn into war, but you can threaten war to try and bring others to their senses. You can, however, offer a reward – an Ise Zumi tattoo – to another Clan which takes the path of peace. Only one PC may receive this reward, and it must be agreed on by all Dragon PCs at the interactive. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has the cert for this tattoo; inform him if you are giving it to someone.

Mirumoto Sanbe will not apologize to the Phoenix unless all the Dragon PCs and NPCs agree that he should do so. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you come to this agreement.

Over the course of the Winter Court, you can learn one SECRET about any of the following: the other PCs and NPCs (their Advantages or Disadvantages), their Clan objectives, or the information they have. Each Dragon PC at the Winter Court may learn one such SECRET for free, simply by asking a judge.

### What you know about the other Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion are goaded to war by their Matsu family, and while Akodo Toturi tries to restrain him, his efforts may be in vain. The Lion long for vengeance against the Crane, and they see all obstacles as having only a military solution. War, if it comes, will be disastrous for the Empire. Perhaps there is still time to turn the Lion aside from this path, if they will listen.

**Crane:** The Crane dream that the protection of the Hantei Emperor will always shield them for their enemies. But if they continue to provoke the Lion and the Crab alike, they may find that even the Divine Hantei's power has limits. It may be futile to enlighten these dancing courtiers, but we must try.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn mean well by trying to take the City of the Rich Frog, but their efforts will most likely only serve to drag them into war with the Lion. Their exuberance and courage are powerful weapons, but they must be tempered with wisdom. If we support them on lesser matters, perhaps they can be convinced to turn away from the lure of that ronin city, which our lord Togashi Yokuni has commanded to remain independent.

**Crab:** Our Mirumoto daimyo, Hitomi, seeks a duel with the Crab heir, Hida Yakamo, but he disdains her and treats her like a child. Thus, while our Clan has offered the Crab respect in the past, for now we must treat them as enemies. Hopefully this will soon change.

**Phoenix:** You know that Shiba Tsumenitsu is now a minor daimyo, controlling territories on the border with Dragon lands. He was appointed to this position after winning a swordsmanship contest in Phoenix lands last winter. Since then, border incidents have occurred almost constantly. Clearly Tsumenitsu is a man divorced from the Phoenix tradition of peace, enlightenment, and honor. Perhaps his shugenja masters can be persuaded to bring him to heel and deliver the required apology.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion embrace their secrets as a child embraces its mother. But they do not have as many secrets as they might wish, and they show too much contempt for less devious Clans. They, like the Crane, have need to learn humility.

**Minor Clans:** Yoritomo of the Mantis seeks to elevate his Clan to our own level. While his energy and spirit are to be commended, he reaches too high. A mountain cannot be built in a year. He must learn patience.

# **Additional notes for Mirumoto Family PCs**

## **Letter from Mirumoto Hitomi:**

The insults and arrogance of this Shiba daimyo, Tsumenitsu, can no longer be endured. Although others in our Clan prefer the path of peace, we believe that ultimately, our pride as the greatest swordsmen in the Empire can only be maintained through proof of our superior arms. This Tsumenitsu dares to believe that the feeble Shiba technique can match the fearsome perfection of the Daisho!

Peace with the Shiba can only come if Tsumenitsu humbles himself and apologizes for his arrogance. Otherwise, if war is sought, war will be given.

## **Game-Play notes:**

You have been directed to sabotage any agreement with the Phoenix that does not involve an apology from Shiba Tsumenitsu. You have also been directed to prevent any apology by your own Clan's Mirumoto Sanbe.

A closer alliance with the Lion or the Crane might be useful in the event that the Phoenix seek war.

# Mantis Clan: Your Objectives

From the desk of Yoritomo, greetings:

Our invitation to this special Winter Court is an opportunity not to be missed. The diplomats of all the Clans will be gathered, ready to trade favors and seek alliances. In such an environment, we can take a great stride forward toward our goal of Great Clan status.

Many of the Clans will seek wealth or military assistance. The gifts and tools which I entrust to you will be much coveted by their diplomats. The help of the Mantis Clan, with our fleets of ships and our great wealth, could be vital to any one of the seven Great Clans. By skillfully making offers to different factions, it should be possible to win the support of at least one of the seven for our petition.

If there are any of the other Minor Clans in attendance, seek alliance with them. Ultimately, I believe that we will not be respected until we stand together. One need only look at the example of the Hare Clan, wiped out by the Scorpion just three years ago. Would the Scorpion have dared to contemplate such a thing if the Hare were allied with all the other Minor Clans? Of course not.

The Three-Man Alliance (the Clans of the Wasp, Fox, and Sparrow) should be of especial concern to us, for together they have the power to control a large part of southern Rokugan. We have already strengthened our ties to the Sparrow, and if we can bind the Fox and Wasp to us as well, the Three-Man Alliance could instead become the Yoritomo Alliance, a power to match any of the Great Clans.

## Mantis Clan: Game-Play Effects

You can, in concert with any other Mantis PCs and NPCs here, offer a preferential trade agreement (value 1200 koku) to any one of the Great Clans. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you make such an agreement.

You can also offer secret access to gaijin gear, to the same Clan or a different one. Again, inform the judge if you do so.

You may agree to a military alliance with any one Great Clan, and/or with any number of Minor Clans.

Finally, you can offer one Mantis bride to cement an alliance or agreement. The chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) has the cert outlining the dowry and benefits of marriage to Yoiko. (You might wish to consult it before making any marriage offers.) You can also negotiate the marriage of Mantis PCs, with their permission.

### What you know about the other Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion are eager for money and military support so that they can go to war with the Crane. However, they also despise us as “Minor Clan trash.” They must learn to show us respect before we offer them our help.

**Crane:** The Crane will never respect us, and they believe their own wealth and influence is more than sufficient to protect them. Perhaps if the Lion crush them, they will look on our help with more favor. In the meantime, avoid their pleasant smiles, which hide only mockery.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn might be willing to support our petition, if they were not so distracted with their own affairs, such as this attempt to annex the City of the Rich Frog. They also seek to share control of the medical opium trade with the Scorpion. Perhaps we can use them as weapons against the Scorpion.

**Crab:** Of all the Clans, the Crab are most in need of our help, and most likely to support our petition for Great Clan status. After all, our Champion Yoritomo is descended from their own great Hida Osano-Wo. With the Crane threatening their northern border, the Crab will probably be eager for allies, so this is fruitful ground to explore.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix are too secure in their own power and wisdom to ever respect us and our goals. Something will have to humble them before we can treat with them as equals. In the meantime, treat them with polite distance.

**Dragon:** The Dragon seem to actually seek the betterment of the whole Empire, so perhaps they may be persuaded to support us. Unfortunately, they are also interfering with our goal of uniting the Minor Clans, both by their direct influence over the Dragonfly and by their betrothal to the Centipede Clan heir last year. We must convince them to let us be the true protectors of the other Minor Clans.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion are our enemy, and also the enemy of the Three-Man Alliance. They will crush our ambitions, given half a chance. Find some way of distracting or hurting them. They have discovered some great secret under their city of Kyuden Bayushi – perhaps that is a weakness we can exploit.

**Minor Clans:** The other Minor Clans – especially the Three-Man Alliance – must be convinced to join with us. The Dragonfly are probably a lost cause, and the Falcon and Badger are too distant, but all the other Minor Clans – even the foul Tortoise – should rightly join their strength to ours.

# Ronin: Your Objectives

From Ichiko, Magistrate to the Kaeru, rulers of the City of the Rich Frog, greetings:

Thanks you for taking our commission, ronin-san. In exchange for your efforts on behalf of the Kaeru, you will be paid four koku at the conclusion of the Winter Court.

My masters the Kaeru are greatly concerned over the talk of a Great Clan annexing their city. Both the Lion and the Unicorn cast covetous eyes on the City of the Rich Frog, but it is the wish of the Kaeru to remain independent of both, and to continue to live peacefully in the neutral ground between them. We ask that you pursue this goal on our behalf at the Winter Court.

Although we would prefer that both Clans be peaceably deterred from seizing our territory, we are prepared to take extreme steps to ensure our independence. If need be, we would encourage you to drive these two Clans into war, with each other or with different Clans, rather than allow one of them to take our city unmolested. To this end, we are prepared to offer a sizable gift – a bribe – to a Clan of your choosing.

The City of the Rich Frog must remain independent. Seek allies wherever you can find them. We pray for the success of your efforts.

# Ronin: Game-Play Effects

You can offer a bribe/gift in a value of 500 koku to any one Clan. You must agree with the other ronin here (if any) before making the gift. Inform the chief judge (Otomo Hiroshi) if you make this gift.

## What you know about the Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion are eager for war with the Crane, but lack the wealth and resources to prosecute it to their full strength. They are also furious at the thought that the Unicorn might take control of the City of the Rich Frog. No doubt they would like the city's resources for themselves, but perhaps we can arrange for them to gain wealth from other sources.

**Crane:** The Crane, as always, seek alliances through gifts and marriages. They have no designs on our city, of course, and are much concerned by the threat from the Lion. They seek the help of the Unicorn Clan to counterbalance the Lion. Perhaps they can be led into dissuading the Unicorn from annexing our city.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn are eager to annex the City of the Rich Frog, believing they can administer it better than the Kaeru. This must not be allowed. Perhaps they can be distracted with war, with the Lion or maybe the Scorpion or Crab.

**Crab:** The Crab, as usual, have little care for anything but their war with the Shadowlands. We have heard that they have border troubles with the Crane, and so would be eager for another Clan to strike the Crane Clan. Can we use this in some way?

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix are peace-loving, but they are unlikely to help us, since they look down on ronin as filthy, uncultured thugs. We do know that they have some border troubles with the Dragon.

**Dragon:** The Dragon seem to support the idea that the City of the Rich Frog must remain independent. Perhaps they can be persuaded to ally with us and protect us from both the Unicorn and the Lion.

**Scorpion:** We know the Scorpion run opium smuggling routes through our city. We can even offer some evidence of this to others. We may be able to use this to distract the Unicorn or the Lion.

**Minor Clans:** The Minor Clans are not our concern, unless the Mantis are willing to support our independence.

# Imperial Family: Your Objectives and Game-Play effects:

From the desk of Otomo Sorai, daimyo of the Otomo and advisor to his serene majesty Hantei XXXVIII:

The Clans are at each others' throats, and this is as it should be. So long as they quarrel, they cannot threaten the reign of the Divine Hantei. Encourage their quarrels wherever possible, but do it subtly, so that they do not recognize the hand which guides them. Let the Scorpion and the Crane believe that all dance to their will, while you direct their actions as surely as a Kabuki play.

## What you know of the Clans:

**Lion:** The Lion lust for a war of vengeance with the Crane, a war they will surely win, growing too strong to be acceptable. Fortunately, they are also on the brink of a war with the Unicorn over the City of the Rich Frog. Push them into a two-front war which will exhaust their strength while also weakening both their foes.

**Crane:** The Crane think that the Divine Hantei is their personal protector, and therefore do not fear a war with the Lion and Crab at the same time. But even the Hantei can lose patience with Crane games. A war which weakens both the Crane and their rivals is to our benefit.

**Unicorn:** The Unicorn are splendid tools, too honest and forthright to avoid being manipulated. If only they could learn proper etiquette and civilized ways! Until then, use them, but hold them at arm's length, lest their gaijin ways compromise your honor.

**Crab:** The Yasuki family have broken Imperial law and smuggled gaijin pepper into the Empire. It is only fitting that they be chastised by the Crane. That will also help to remind the rest of the Crab that their role on the Wall does not exempt them from the Emperor's law. Their Champion, Hida Kisada, grows altogether too open in his disrespect of the Hantei line.

**Phoenix:** The Phoenix have a quarrel with the Dragon. Encourage the quarrel. Their power has too few checks as it is, and a war with the Dragon may be just the thing to bring them back to heel.

**Dragon:** It is difficult to know how to deal with the Dragon as a whole. However, their Mirumoto family seems eager to continue their quarrel with the Phoenix, so encourage them as much as possible.

**Scorpion:** The Scorpion are the Emperor's loyal Under-Hand, but sometimes they forget who is the servant and who the master. Perhaps forcing them to give up one of their secrets – such as the nature of what they have found beneath Kyuden Bayushi – will be a proper humbling lesson for them.

**Minor Clans:** Bah! The Minor Clans have no importance and offer no threat. Ignore them.

## Special Note for Miya characters:

You have received two sets of orders. The first yet, from your aging daimyo Miya Yoto, directs you to seek peace and compromise wherever possible. The second set, from his son and heir Miya Satoshi, directs you to support the Lion against the other Clans, no matter what the result.

## Zurui, ruthless Mantis ambassador

|         |              |
|---------|--------------|
| FIRE 3  | AIR 2        |
|         | Reflexes 3   |
| EARTH 3 | WATER 2      |
|         | Perception 3 |
| VOID 2  |              |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Mantis bushi 2

**Honor/Glory:** 1.2/1.6

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle 3, Commerce 6, Courtier 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 4, Kenjutsu 5, Nofujutsu 6, Sailing 4, Sincerity 5, Stealth 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty, Storm Legion

**Appearance:** Zurui is a deceptively heavy-set man who usually wears a pleasant smile, but the perceptive will note the powerful muscles beneath his fat and the calculating glint in his dark, observant eyes.

**Personality/Background:** Zurui is a completely loyal servant of Yoritomo, the Champion of the Mantis Clan. He is a practical and ruthless man, perfectly prepared to bend the rules of Honor in the name of his Clan. He will not hesitate to employ stealth, blackmail, and other dishonorable methods in pursuit of his goals – as far as he is concerned, the good of the Mantis Clan outweighs his own personal Honor.

**Goals:** Zurui's goal is to gain political and military allies for the Mantis Clan. In particular, he is trying to get members of the Great Clans to pledge support for the Mantis Clan's quest to gain Great Clan status itself.

He is also here to strengthen the Mantis Clan's ties with the other Minor Clans, especially the Sparrow, Wasp, Fox, and Centipede.

# Hida Rokotsu

|         |                       |
|---------|-----------------------|
| FIRE 3  | AIR 3                 |
|         |                       |
| EARTH 4 | WATER 3<br>Strength 4 |
| VOID 3  |                       |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Hida bushi 3

**Honor/Glory:** 0.4/3.2

**Skills:** Acting 5, Archery 4, Athletics 6, Battle 5, Defense 5, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand (kubo) 5, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (Kolats) 9, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Sincerity 5, Sleight-of-Hand 5, Stealth 6, Tsubojutsu 7, Yarijutsu 4.

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

**Appearance:** Rokotsu is a big, gruff Hida bushi in the classic mold, with little time for the prancing and manners of the other Clans. Even the Unicorn strike him as fancy and foolish. He will dismiss most friendly approaches with scowls and insults. Aside from fellow Crab, the only people he seems to get along with are Daidoji and any others who have served time on the Kaiu Wall.

**Personality/Background:** There is much more to Rokotsu than meets the eye. He is a high-ranking Kolats, probably their highest-ranking Crab operative. He was recruited as a child and is completely devoted to the Kolats' ultimate goal of overthrowing the Hantei line and the Celestial Order. Of course, Rokotsu keeps this well-hidden and always maintains his public persona of the crude, dim, sake-swilling Crab.

**Goals:** Rokotsu's secret goal is to encourage the Crane-Crab troubles on the Yasuki border, while appearing in public as though he is trying to deter that war. The Kolats have decided that it would be useful to weaken the Crab and allow some of the Shadowlands' strength into the Empire – the chaos and fear this would create would serve the Kolats' long-term goals nicely.

Rokotsu knows that Yasuki Taka is a fellow Kolats who he can call upon at need. He will also know if anyone else here has alliances or enmities with the Kolats, and will help or hinder them accordingly (so long as it does not conflict with his primary goal above).

## Matsu Ketsui, Lion Clan bushi and duelist

|             |            |
|-------------|------------|
| FIRE 3      | AIR 3      |
|             | Reflexes 4 |
| EARTH 2     | WATER 3    |
| Willpower 3 |            |
| VOID 4      |            |

**TN to be Hit:** 20

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 2

**Honor/Glory:** 3.8/2.1

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, History 4, Iaijutsu 6, Jiujutsu (hand to hand) 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (bushido) 4, Meditation 2, Sincerity 4

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Ancestor (Matsu Hitomi – spend a Void to re-roll an attack or damage roll), Death Trance, Higher Purpose (swordsmanship), Quick/Can't Lie

**Appearance:** Matsu Ketsui is an athletic young woman in her late teens, muscular and fit, stronger than some men her own age. Her stance is always militant and proud, and her hands are never far from the hilt of her katana. Although her face is pretty, she usually conceals it beneath a cosmetic “war mask” of white paint, with red arrows pointing down her cheeks. This is her way of showing her dedication to the Lion Clan: she is a bushi, not some simpering courtier.

**Personality:** Matsu Ketsui is a proud bushi, a warrior of the Lion Clan who has sworn an oath of chastity and means every word. She despises the more peaceful Clans of the Phoenix and Crane, believing that they are not true followers of bushido. Bushido is the Way of the Warrior, not the Way of the Courtier! Those who spend their time writing poetry or trading delicate insults are wasting time and energy that would be better spent in the dojo, practicing kenjutsu. Ketsui has dedicated herself to the sword, not only on the battlefield but in the art of dueling, and is widely regarded as the most promising young duelist in the Lion Clan. Ketsui is usually a cheerful girl (unlike many Lion), and she is never happier than when her sword is in her hand.

Ketsui is the niece of Matsu Tsuko, the daimyo of the Matsu family, and is here as Tsuko's personal representative, a duty she takes very seriously. She is determined to repay Tsuko for her trust.

**Goals:** Matsu Tsuko seeks to build up the Lion Clan for the war with the Crane which she is certain must come. However, at present the Lion Clan is desperately short of the resources (money and food) needed to fight such a war. Tsuko has therefore directed you to make any sort of secret arrangement or alliance which will bring such support to the Lion Clan. She has also directed you to seize the City of the Rich Frog if you can manage to do so without provoking a war with the Unicorn. If the Unicorn take the city first, it MUST be taken back from them, even if war is the result.

You are uncomfortable with this sort of diplomatic role, especially since it involves things like negotiating marriages and fighting with words. You prefer to speak the truth and fight with steel. If someone gives you an excuse for a duel, you will take it gladly.

## Matsu Tagemuchi, Lion Clan general

|                     |                         |
|---------------------|-------------------------|
| FIRE 3<br>Agility 4 | AIR 3                   |
| EARTH 3             | WATER 3<br>Perception 4 |
| VOID 3              |                         |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 3

**Honor/Glory:** 3.4/4.2

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

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

**Appearance:** Matsu Tagemuchi is a tall, broad-shouldered man in his thirties, with thick dark hair and a close-trimmed beard and moustache. He feels most comfortable in full battle armor, and always looks a little out of place in a formal kimono. His usual facial expression is an angry scowl, especially around Cranes or Unicorns.

**Personality/Background:** Tagemuchi is a general in the Lion armies, and proud of the fact. He has risen through the ranks from *gunso* (sergeant) to his present position, and feels contempt for those who gain political appointments based on their influence rather than their skills. He tends to speak his mind, regardless of circumstances, and often lets his temper get the better of him in courtly or diplomatic situations. In a battle, on the other hand, he is in complete control of himself, directing his troops with effortless ease and skill. His soldiers worship him like the second coming of Akodo One-Eye himself.

Tagemuchi led the Lion army which marched on the City of the Rich Frog last summer. He was determined to avenge the death of his Clan's ambassador, and was convinced that the Unicorn magistrate, Shinjo Taneka, had indeed committed the murder. After all, the Unicorn are honorless barbarians, not fit to walk the same ground as a true samurai. Tagemuchi was furious when the Unicorn managed to come up with an alibi for Taneka, and swore he would bring the Unicorn magistrate to justice some day.

Tagemuchi hates the Unicorn and the Crane Clans, and feels a distant contempt for most of the other Clans. Only the Crab get his grudging respect for their valiant defense of the Kaiu Wall.

**Goals:** Besides the general goals of the Lion Clan (and the specific goals of the Matsu family), Tagemuchi has a personal goal: to make the Unicorn Clan pay for the murder of the Lion ambassador. He will oppose the Unicorn every chance he gets. If Shinjo Taneka or one of his defenders is actually here, Tagemuchi will do his damndest to provoke them into a duel.

## Shinjo Taneka (Unicorn magistrate)

|           |            |
|-----------|------------|
| FIRE 3    | AIR 2      |
|           | Reflexes 3 |
| EARTH 2   | WATER 3    |
| Stamina 3 |            |
| VOID 3    |            |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Shinjo Bushi 2

**Honor/Glory:** 2.2/3.7

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Horse Archery 4, Horsemanship 6, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Law 5, Lore (Opium) 3, Poetry 2, Research 3, Sincerity 4.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Higher Purpose (destroy opium trade), Social Position (Clan magistrate)/Bad Reputation (suspected in murder of Lion ambassador), Bitter Betrothal (Otaku), Dark Secret (relationship with Yumi), True Love (Yumi the geisha).

**Appearance:** Taneka is a slim young man in his early twenties, of slightly below-average height. He has a somewhat haggard, driven expression, and always speaks very seriously and earnestly. His usual expression is a slight frown, and he grows tense around Lions.

**Personality/Background:** Taneka is a Unicorn Clan magistrate, obsessed with ending the threat from the illegal opium trade, which leads hundreds of samurai into dishonor every year. He is a humorless man who seldom smiles and never laughs. He is even more driven to destroy opium since the events of a few months ago, when he was framed for the murder of a Lion ambassador in the City of the Rich Frog. The city, a ronin settlement, is a major hub for the illegal opium trade, and Taneka is convinced that the frame-up (which luckily was not successful) was an attempt to block him from continuing with his investigations. The Lion Clan was only too ready to believe in his guilt, and he remains uncomfortable around them even now.

Taneka is not a man without weaknesses. The frame-up came so close to succeeding because he had fallen in love with a geisha, Yumi, and was visiting her that night. He was afraid to admit where he was because he is betrothed to an Otaku battle maiden. The Otaku view geisha as a disgusting male weakness, and if his affair with Yumi ever became known it would jeopardize the engagement and his family's future prospects. Luckily, the secret didn't get out, but he worries daily that it might. This has not prevented him from writing endless love-letters to Yumi, and sending her gifts whenever he can.

**Goals:** You are one of the primary movers behind the Unicorn Clan's current objectives (annexing the City of the Rich Frog and forcing the Scorpion to share control of the legal, medicinal opium trade). You view both these goals as vital to your personal crusade against opium. Also, annexing the City of the Rich Frog will make your relationship with Yumi much easier to maintain in secret.

If your secret relationship with Yumi is ever threatened with public exposure, you will do almost anything to protect yourself. After all, if you are dishonored, the crusade against opium will surely fail.

## Shosuro Tajiki

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

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Shinobi (assassin) 3

**Honor/Glory:** 0.4/3.7

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

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Apparent Honor (2), Dangerous Beauty, Heartless, Shadow Brand (1), Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)/Dark Secret (Shosuro assassin), Sworn Enemies (many).

**Appearance:** Tajiki is a charming, friendly Scorpion who wears a minimal silk mask which shows off his handsome features. He is almost always smiling, and makes sure to wear his Emerald Magistrate's sash where it is clearly visible. He wears the mon of the Bayushi bushi school.

**Personality/Background:** Tajiki is, in actuality, a ruthless Shosuro assassin and accomplished liar, a "trouble-shooter" who the Scorpion Clan dispatches to deal with problems that threaten their goals. He can put on a very good imitation of a bushi, but his real skills lie in stealth, assassination, blackmail, and seduction. His loyalty to the Scorpion Clan is complete and total. He regards bushido, etiquette, and the rules of Rokugani society simply as tools to be manipulated for his benefit.

**Goals:** Besides the general Scorpion Clan goals, your specific purpose here is to blackmail and compromise a member of the Unicorn Clan in order to disrupt their investigations into the Scorpion opium trade. If the NPC Shinjo Taneka is here, he should be your primary target. If he is not here, target one (or more) of the Unicorn player-characters.

## Isawa Tomo, Phoenix Master of Water

|         |            |
|---------|------------|
| FIRE 3  | AIR 3      |
|         | Reflexes 5 |
| EARTH 4 | WATER 6    |
| VOID 5  |            |

**TN to be Hit:** 25

**School/Rank:** Isawa Tensai (Water) 5

**Honor/Glory:** 2.1/4.1

**Skills:** Calligraphy 10, Cipher 6, Courtier 3, Dance 5, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, History 5, Mizu-do 2, Poison 7, Meditation 8, Shintao 10, Sincerity 4, Theology 4

**Spells:** Tomo knows all Water spells in the rulebook, plus all Earth spells of Mastery Rank 3 or less and all Air spells of Mastery Rank 2 or less. If you want to cast a spell or create some sort of magical effect, consult the Chief Judge (Otomo Hiroshi).

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crafty, Luck (rank 2), Social Position (Master of Water)

**Appearance:** Isawa Tomo is a cheerful, happy man in his late twenties. He keeps his head shaved like a monk, and he wears only a simple kimono in the orange of the Phoenix Clan.

**Personality/Background:** Isawa Tomo has followed the path of Water since he was a child, just as his older brother, Isawa Tadaka, has followed the path of Earth. His maturity has not dimmed his childhood sense of mischief and daring, and he often proposes unconventional or startling solutions to problems. At the same time, he partakes of the tranquility of Water. When in meditation his mind is unshakable, and he can analyze any problem the way a wave wears down stone. Although he is the Master of Water and thus one of five people who control the Phoenix Clan, he has not a trace of arrogance in his nature.

**Goals:** Tomo's goal is straightforward – Peace. He believes that the other Clans are all heedlessly rushing into wars which will tear the Empire apart. The enlightened Phoenix see the danger in this, for they realize that the power of Fu Leng is rising once again. Soon the survival of the Empire will be threatened, and these wars and squabbles are only lethal distractions.

Tomo has come here in the hope of serving as a “fire brigade”, damping the flames of anger which are certain to spring up in the Winter Court. If everyone can be kept calm and centered, reminded of the wisdom of Shinsei, then perhaps peaceful solutions to all these problems can be found. This includes his own Clan's troubles with the neighboring Dragon Clan. Tomo hopes that calm talk and reason can turn aside the anger and arrogance which so often bring war to Rokugan. The future of the Empire may depend on his ability to persuade others to his point of view.

## Isawa Uona, Phoenix Mistress of Air

|         |         |
|---------|---------|
| FIRE 4  | AIR 5   |
| EARTH 2 | WATER 3 |
| VOID 4  |         |

**TN to be Hit:** 25

**School/Rank:** Isawa Tensai (Air) 5

**Honor/Glory:** 4.1/7.0

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Calligraphy 6, Courtier 8, Dance 6, Etiquette 4, Heraldry 7, History 4, Investigation 5, Manipulation 5, Meditation 4, Shintao 6, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 4, Theology 4.

**Spells:** Uona knows all Air spells in the rulebook, as well as all Fire spells of Mastery Rank 3 or less, and all Water spells of Mastery Rank 2 or less. If you want to cast a spell or create some sort of magical effect, consult the Chief Judge (Otomo Hiroshi).

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Meddler, Overconfident, Vanity

**Appearance:** Uona is a woman in her late twenties, with long hair which she wears loose (it often seems to be drifting in a breeze). She is pretty but remote, and does not flaunt her looks. She always dresses in the most formal manner, and her manners and etiquette are flawless.

**Personality/Background:** Uona is superficially a shy and retiring young woman of perfect manners and grace (she was trained by the Crane as a youth). Underneath, however, she possesses a considerable store of arrogance and condescension, the result of ascending to the status of Mistress of Air (one of the five Elemental Masters who rule the Phoenix Clan) at such a young age. This tends to come to the surface whenever someone questions her ability or contradicts her plans and goals.

Uona thinks little of the more warlike Clans (such as the Lion and Crab), regarding them as bad-tempered children who need lessons in humility. The Unicorn are violent barbarians in need of civilizing, and the Scorpion are treacherous fools who delight in trickery and deceit for their own sakes. Only the Crane and Dragon get her respect, for their more peaceable and enlightened ways.

**Goals:** Uona's goal is straightforward – Peace. She believes that the other Clans are all heedlessly rushing into wars which will tear the Empire apart. Only the enlightened Phoenix see the danger, for they realize that the power of Fu Leng is rising once again. Soon the survival of the Empire will be threatened, and these foolish wars and squabbles are only lethal distractions.

Uona sees herself as a sort of lone “fire brigade” tasked with damping the flames of anger which are certain to spring up in the Winter Court. If everyone can be kept calm and centered, reminded of the wisdom of Shinsei, then perhaps peaceful solutions to all these problems can be found. This includes her own Clan's troubles with the neighboring Dragon Clan. Everyone **MUST** see the wisdom of peace, and she knows she is the only one who can make sure it happens.

## Yogo Asami, Scorpion Clan seductress and assassin

|         |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
| FIRE 2  | AIR 3                   |
| EARTH 2 | WATER 2<br>Perception 4 |
| VOID 2  |                         |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Shosuro Assassin 2

**Honor/Glory:** 1.2/1.2

**Skills:** Courtier 4, Disguise 8, Etiquette 4, Explosives 2, Investigation 5, Law 3, Locksmith 4, Mimic 10, Ninjutsu 6, Poetry 2, Poison 6, Seduction 7, Sincerity 5, Sleight of Hand 8, Stealth 8.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Benten's Blessing/Small

**Appearance:** Asami is a beautiful young woman with a strong resemblance to Bayushi Kachiko, the Imperial Advisor and wife of the Scorpion Clan Champion. In fact, she has sometimes served as Kachiko's double. She usually wears a thin silk mask to accentuate her looks.

**Personality/Background:** Yogo Asami is a ruthless Scorpion agent and seductress. Born a peasant, she used to serve as Kachiko's double. Later she was recruited as a Shosuro assassin, and married an aging Yogo to make her a part of the Clan officially. (He died soon after.) She is completely loyal to the Scorpion Clan and especially to Bayushi Kachiko. There is nothing she won't do on behalf of her Clan and her former mistress. She is a skilled actress (not surprising, given that she used to imitate Kachiko flawlessly), adept at counterfeiting emotions, and knows how to exploit male weakness and vanity (another skill learned from Kachiko).

**Goals:** Besides the general Scorpion Clan goals, your specific purpose here is to blackmail and compromise a member of the Unicorn Clan in order to disrupt their investigations into the Scorpion opium trade. If the NPC Shinjo Taneka is here, he should be your primary target. If he is not here, target one (or more) of the Unicorn player-characters. Seduction is the easiest approach, but finding out the Unicorn's secrets might be more fruitful in the long run.

If the Unicorn seem likely to succeed with their goal of taking over the medical opium trade, you have been instructed to push them into a distracting war with the Lion Clan. If there is any threat to your own Clan, you are to divert it by any means possible.

## Togashi Mitsu, Dragon Ise Zumi trickster

|                      |         |
|----------------------|---------|
| FIRE 4<br>Agility 5  | AIR 3   |
| EARTH 4<br>Stamina 5 | WATER 3 |
| VOID 5               |         |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Togashi Ise Zumi 3 (tattoos: Centipede, Crow, Dragon, Monkey, Tiger)

**Honor/Glory:** 2.3/6.4

**Skills:** Acting 3, Athletics 6, Defense 7, Investigation 5, Jiujutsu (kaze-do) 8, Lore (heimin) 5, Medicine 4, Shintao 8, Wrestling 7

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Ambidextrous, Clear Thinker, Great Destiny, Magic Resistance (rank 1), Quick/Brash

**Appearance:** Outwardly, Mitsu is a classic Ise Zumi, shaven-headed and covered with tattoos. He usually wears nothing more than a pair of hakama pants in Dragon green. His preferred facial expressions are either mischievous humor or thoughtful contemplation.

**Personality/Background:** Togashi Mitsu is probably the most famous Ise Zumi in the Empire today. Unlike most of his brethren, he does not usually speak in riddles, and he prefers to laugh rather than to frown. He travels all over the Empire, protecting peasants (who have a special place in his heart), driving off bandits and monsters, and humbling arrogant samurai. He is always learning new skills and trying new things. Mitsu is fearless, and seems to genuinely enjoy risking his life on his adventures.

**Goals:** Mitsu has come to this Winter Court simply to observe on behalf of his master, Togashi Yokuni, the Champion of the Dragon Clan. He finds considerable humor in the elaborate posturing of the Rokugani courts, and won't hesitate to poke fun at those he thinks deserve it. At the same time, he is aware that the decisions made here could bring about wars, wars which would inflict untold misery on the common folk of Rokugan. Thus, Mitsu will also not hesitate to berate those samurai who embrace foolish pride and pointless slaughter.

## Tsume (Doji) Takashi, daimyo of Shiro Kyotei

|         |                         |
|---------|-------------------------|
| FIRE 3  | AIR 3                   |
| EARTH 2 | WATER 2<br>Perception 3 |
| VOID 3  |                         |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Kakita bushi 3

**Honor/Glory:** 3.5/6.0

**Skills:** Bard 5, Courtier 7, Defense 6, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 5, History 4, Iaijutsu 6, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Gentry, Social Position (head of Tsume family)/Dark Secrets (father's debts, father's death)

**Appearance:** Tsume (Doji) Takashi is a young man, in his early twenties, and is always dressed immaculately. His manners are perfect and his every motion and gesture is carefully practiced. He never lets his true feelings show on his face, except when dealing with ronin (he finds it impossible to hide his disgust at them).

**Personality/Background:** The Tsume family earned their own name many generations ago, although they are still considered part of the larger Doji family. It was your father, Tsume Retsu, who won control of Shiro Kyotei twenty years ago, ruthlessly slaughtering the Lion family which had dwelt there before. Unfortunately, Retsu was a cruel, relentless, ambitious man who treated his peasants harshly and constantly berated his son (you) for perceived shortcomings. His own flaws he kept hidden until his death, when you discovered them – he was an inveterate gambler, and died owing a huge sum of money to a local Scorpion-backed gambling house. You were able to quietly arrange with other Cranes to have the debt paid.

Retsu died four years ago because you foolishly invited a geisha to visit you in Shiro Kyotei. You were in love with the geisha, who turned out to be a survivor of the Lion family which Retsu had destroyed. She had conspired with a ronin bushi (another former Lion) to murder Retsu in vengeance. The knowledge that you were responsible for your father's death weighs heavily on you.

You are determined to be the finest samurai possible, the ideal Crane, master of art, politics, and the sword. Your father's spirit would expect nothing less.

**Goals:** You must at all costs protect the secrets of your family. If your father's gambling debts, or the shameful manner of his death, became public knowledge, the Tsume name would be irretrievably dishonored.

You dislike Lions (although you don't show it openly) and hate ronin, especially since it was ronin (Lion ronin at that) who conspired to fool you and murder your father. You will do anything you can to bring misery on ronin, and to thwart the designs of the Lion Clan. Supporting the Unicorn Clan's claim on the City of the Rich Frog would be a good way to accomplish both goals.

# Game Events and Goals: Tsume Takashi

## Poetry Contest

About an hour through the Interactive (at a specific time chosen by the Chief Judge, Otomo Hiroshi), you will offer a poetry contest to the Winter Court. This should be introduced with a public announcement something like the following:

*“Samurai, honored courtiers, guests of Shiro Kyotei. I trust you have been enjoying the winter so far?”*  
[Wait for assent.] *“It has been a profound honor to me to host so many samurai here in the name of the Emperor. I wish I might have something to commemorate this splendid winter. A gift to remember it by in later years. A poem, perhaps, that captures the spirit of this magnificent winter. A guest who could offer me such a poem would have my deepest gratitude.”*

The reward for the winning poem (chosen by the vote of the three judges) will be a cert for a Wondrous Calligraphy Set, which you will present to the winner.

## Mini-Adventure: A Winter Haunting

Shortly after the start of the Winter Court, you will receive word that one of your villages is being haunted. You will need brave samurai and shugenja to deal with this problem. You should try to recruit PCs who owe you favors, or who can be relied upon to act with discretion (you want to keep this embarrassing matter quiet). Shugenja will be useful if there really is a ghost involved, and PCs with experience against the Shadowlands or Maho might not be a bad idea. Also, try to avoid duplicating PCs who are going on the other mini-adventure, “Taka’s Quest.”

Once you have at least three PCs recruited for your mission, inform the Chief Judge (Otomo Hiroshi) who will decide when this adventure should run.

You have the following information which you can share with the PCs:

- You have heard vague reports from the village of San no Mura (Village of Two) that an evil spirit or ghost stalks the forest, kidnapping children and leaving their frozen, bloodless corpses in the snow. This ghost is variously described as a “demon woman,” a “ghost” of a woman, or a “gaki” (hungry ghost) in female shape.
- These reports were brought by Tokan, the village doshin (armed peasant), who returned to the village after delivering his message. If the PCs want more information, you should suggest they speak with Tokan or with the village headman, Kuwabara.
- You dispatched a samurai, Doji Ikari, to investigate these matters. A week has passed with no word from Ikari or the village.
- There are no previous reports of ghosts or angry spirits in this area.

## Takuhiro, Ronin emissary

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

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** None. Knows the Machi-Kanshisha technique, which lets him take a Free Raise when using a bo staff or his iron pipe as a weapon. When using either weapon, he can disarm a foe or knock them unconscious with two Raises.

**Honor/Glory:** 0.6/0.8

**Skills:** Acting 3, Athletics 4, Bojutsu 5, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, History 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Lore (ronin) 5, Manipulation 4, Sincerity 5.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Allies (rest of the Kaeru family), Benten's Blessing, Crafty, Heartless.

**Appearance:** Takuhiro is obviously a ronin (he wears no Clan colors or mon), but a refined and well-dressed ronin. The Kaeru have outfitted him with a fine kimono in neutral light gray and light green colors, and he wears a sword which has obviously been cared well for over the years. He also carries a heavy iron pipe, the mark of one of the Machi-Kanshisha, the ronin band organized by the Kaeru to protect the peace in the City of the Rich Frog.

**Personality:** Takuhiro is actually a low-ranking member of the Kaeru family, here under a false name to pursue their goals. He comes across as a friendly, good-tempered, slightly dim-witted man who just wants to help the City of the Rich Frog. He is actually a very cunning and manipulative fellow who makes an art out of letting people underestimate him, planting ideas in others' heads, and letting others take all the credit for his ideas. In some respects, Takuhiro is far more skilled at manipulation than Scorpions or Cranes, since he must work without their Clan protections.

**Goals:** Takuhiro's goal is simple – keep the City of the Rich Frog independent by any and all means. The most obvious way is to distract the two Clans who covet it (the Unicorn and the Lion) by driving them into wars with other Clans, such as the Scorpion and Crane. Another, riskier, method would be to trick them into warring on each other, since they might then be too distracted to actually take the city. Regardless, Takuhiro will do whatever it takes – lie, manipulate, blackmail, bribe, bargain – to achieve his goals.

## Yasuki Taka, Crab Clan Merchant

|                          |                         |
|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| FIRE 2<br>Intelligence 4 | AIR 3<br>Awareness 6    |
| EARTH 2                  | WATER 2<br>Perception 5 |
| VOID 3                   |                         |

**TN to be Hit:** 15

**School/Rank:** Yasuki Merchant 5

**Honor/Glory:** 1.2/2.7

**Skills:** Acting 5, Bard 5, Bojutsu 2, Commerce 9, Courtier 7, Etiquette 4, Gambling 6, Heraldry 5, Sincerity 8, Stealth 4

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Absolute Direction, Blackmail (you don't want to know how many), Clear Thinker, Luck (rank 1), Read Lips, Voice/Dark Secrets (Kolats, enemy of the Kolats), Small

**Appearance:** Taka is the epitome of the “greasy merchant,” a skinny man who is always perpetually smiling, rubbing his hands together, and counting his many koku. He dresses simply, more like a peasant than a samurai, although for this Winter Court he usually wears a normal kimono in Crab colors.

**Personality/Background:** Taka is the daimyo of the Yasuki family, and made his fortune on the high-quality sake which he brews in his home village. He travels all over the Empire, usually bringing along a merchant's cart loaded with expensive trinkets. He is always alert for an opportunity to make more koku. Taka is somewhat nervous and cowardly, but can screw up his courage to act when he has to. He prefers to work through others whenever there is danger involved.

Beneath his harmless exterior, Taka has many depths. He is a high-ranking member of the Kolats, and at the same time one of the Kolats' greatest enemies. He secretly runs anti-Kolats operations through his huge network of contacts and allies, while at the same time serving the Kolats loyally, never letting them guess that he is their enemy. At this winter court, Taka is conducting an operation on behalf of the Kolats (see “Goals” and “Recruiting for the Mini-Mission” below) but he is also on the lookout for clever, cautious samurai who might be useful against the organization.

**Goals:** Taka's primary goal here is to sell lots of items and make lots of money. Your other handout explains what items you have to sell and for how much.

Taka's second goal is to recruit a group of samurai for a mission against the Tortoise Clan in Otosan Uchi. The tortoise are smuggling gaijin weapons into the capital city, stockpiling them in case they are ever needed to defend the Emperor. The Kolats are quite upset about this, since such radical weapons could disrupt all sorts of plans. They want only themselves to have access to such weapons, not the Tortoise or the hated Emperor. They want the weapons confiscated and destroyed. Taka's orders are to recruit a group willing to do this without asking too many inconvenient questions. Ruthless, pragmatic samurai (such as ronin or Crabs) are probably the best choices, although any easily-manipulated samurai will work. And of course Taka can play on the hatred most samurai feel for the Tortoise Clan.

Taka's third goal is to recruit new agents for the Kolats. He can do this by offering to carry out difficult and dishonorable favors for samurai who seem to be prey to their own emotions and weaknesses. He can recruit two new Kolats agents in this way, if the opportunity arises. (You have two “Owned by the Kolats” certs which you can hand out to those who accept your dishonorable offers.)

Taka's fourth and final goal is to identify a few clever and resourceful samurai who might be useful against the Kolat someday. Should you find such individuals, inform them at the end of the Interactive that they have gained the advantage "Major Ally: Yasuki Taka."

### Recruiting for the Mini-Adventure:

If Taka thinks that a samurai seems a likely choice for dealing with his problem with the Tortoise Clan, he will speak as follows (more or less):

*"Ah, noble samurai, I wonder if you might do me a favor. I have a little difficulty, and need the help of some brave, resourceful samurai to solve it. In return, I could offer you the gift of one of the items on this table, regardless of price. After all, money has no meaning, ne?"*

If the PC seems interested, continue: *"You see, one of my ships, containing some very valuable items, was attacked by pirates a few days ago, while approaching the bay to Otosan Uchi. These pirates, I have learned – yes, yes, one of the crew did escape, he swam to shore despite the freezing cold, a brave man – these pirates operate under the protection of the so-called Tortoise Clan, out of the tunnels beneath the capital city itself! Scandalous! Of course, I can't get away from here to deal with the problem myself, since there's koku to be made..."*

*"So perhaps, you could assist me in teaching a lesson to these pirates? I'm sure they've already sold off my belongings, of course, so this is merely a mission of vengeance – but if I wait until spring, those cursed Tortoise will be able to petition the Emperor for protection against me. The Son of Heaven, bless him, is a kindly man, and has always been generous to the Tortoise – more generous than they deserve, indeed."*

If the PC agrees to the mission, Taka says he will contact them when the time is right. The adventure will require a minimum of four PCs, a maximum of six. Keep the Chief Judge (Otomo Hiroshi) informed of how many recruits you have.

## Taka's Treasures

As the proprietor of Taka's Treasures, you can offer the following items for sale:

Epigrams of Shinsei (1 koku, total of 10): "you will never lack for the wisdom of the great Shinsei with these in your traveling pack. Scribed and blessed by the priests of the Temple of the Kami in the Imperial capital!"

Good-luck Tokens (2 koku, total of 8): "blessed by the priests of Daikoku in the city of Ryoko Owari, guaranteed to bring the favor of the Fortunes to your path"

Fine-quality Fans (3 koku, total of 4): "protect your words in court and keep a cool breeze about yourself with these magnificent fans, crafted by the finest Crane artisans. Sure to attract favorable eyes!"

Pouch of Jade Powder (3 koku, total of 6): "the same powder the Crab Clan uses to destroy the fearsome evils of the Shadowlands."

Crystal Broaches (3 koku, total of 3): "the perfect ornament for a lovely wife/concubine. See how the light sparkles when it shines through!"

Excellent Puzzle Box (4 koku, total of 2): "Scorpions themselves won't fear to place their secrets inside." You do not have the solutions to opening these puzzle-boxes – at least not that you'll admit!

Jade-tipped Arrows (4 koku each, total of 12): "built by our famed Kaiu weapon-smiths. Why risk closing with a deadly foe when these blessed arrows will slay it at 300 yards?"

Crystal-tipped Arrows (5 koku each, total of 8): "found in the Shinomen Forest, these ancient, beautiful arrowheads have been remounted on fine quality crab arrow-shafts."

Gaijin Spyglass (16 koku, total of 1): "imported from the exotic gaijin lands, this splendid curiosity can make the most distant visions seem right before you."

Excellent Pony (18 koku, total of 2): "bred by the Crab Clan for sturdiness and loyalty, as tough as an Otaku warhorse, but as gentle as a geisha."

Jade-Edged Knife (26 koku, total of 1): "the highest possible quality, imbued with jade and consecrated by our Clan's shugenja."

Fine Light Armor (40 koku, total of 1): "crafted by Kaiu Kinotsu, one of the finest arms-smith in Rokugan!" The name Kaiu Kinotsu on the armor has actually been forged... although it is still a fine suit of armor.