

**NAME:** Bayushi Hayato  
**CLAN:** Scorpion  
**SCHOOL:** Bayushi Bushi     **RANK:** 3

**Age:** 24     **Sex:** Male     **Height:** 5'6"  
**Physical Description:** Undernourished; looks like he never gets enough sleep; controlled, but brittle under stress.

**FIRE 3**                     **AIR 4**  
Intelligence 3             Awareness 4  
Agility 3                     Reflexes 4

**EARTH 3**                     **WATER 2**  
Willpower 3                 Perception 2  
Stamina 3                     Strength 3

**VOID 2**

**GLORY 3.2**  
**HONOR 2.1**  
**INSIGHT 185**  
**TN TO BE HIT:** 15 (20 in armor)

Wounds	Dice Penalty
____(0-6)	-0
____(7-12)	-1
____(13-18)	-2
____(19-24)	-3
____(25-30)	-4
____(31-36)	Down
____(37-42)	Out
____(43-48)	Dead

### SCHOOL TECHNIQUES

*Way of the Scorpion:* Roll 2k2 for initiative.

*Pincers and Tail:* Roll Agility + Kenjutsu, TN of target's Reflexes x 5. The TN to hit them next round is 5.

*Strike at the Tail:* Roll Agility + Kenjutsu, TN of opponent's Weapon Skill x 5 to disarm them. Two raises takes the weapon.

### ADVANTAGES

Ancestor: Bayushi (Kharmic Tie to Iuchi Li-Hsu; you can spend each others' Void. If she dies, you can never spend Void again.)

Benten's Blessing (keep 1 extra die on social rolls, 2 if they are attracted to you already)

Heart of Vengeance: Unicorn (keep 1 extra die on skill rolls against Unicorns)

### DISADVANTAGES

Minor Obligation: Iuchi Ohasu (stepfather)

Driven (prove yourself better than stepfather)

*Junshin* (i.e. honorable Scorpion)

*Never judge a man by instinct,  
only by his past.*

*-Bayushi Tengen*

### SKILLS

Archery 3	Investigation 2
Battle 2	Kenjutsu 4
Calligraphy 1	Knife 1
Courtier 2	Law 3
Defense 3	Lore: Scorpion Clan 3
Etiquette 4	Poison 2
Heraldry 3	Sincerity 3
History 2	Stealth 2
Iaijutsu 3	Tea Ceremony 2

### EQUIPMENT

Katana (Str + 3k2) with eight purple ribbons on the saya, Wakizashi (Str + 2k2), Light armor, bow and 20 arrows, tanto (Str +1k2), fine Unicorn kimono, average Scorpion kimono, knife, 2 obi, sandals, 20 zeni.

## **HISTORY**

### **Your Family**

You don't remember much about your father, but you know your parents' marriage was a political decision that worked. The first five years of your life seemed blissfully happy. War was just something in the background, something grown-ups had been handling since before you were born. You didn't even know what the word meant until your mother ran into the house, grabbed you, and escaped out the basement tunnels.

You spent the next month on horseback, retreating from castle to village to castle, until the wave of refugees washed up at Shiro Soshi. Less than a month later, the daimyo declared he would end the war at any cost. Your mother was part of that cost.

Your father had done his duty behind enemy lines, and was one of many captured. He would be executed, his swords taken, and his wife forcibly married to her husband's murderer. Even at five, you knew a Scorpion's response to this situation, and you waited for the day you would find your stepfather poisoned on the floor.

That day has yet to come.

The barbarian told you all your life that he should have killed you by right of war, and your mother's tears were the only reason you still lived. You learned the lesson quickly, and were rarely beaten, except when you did something to the ratty daughter he spawned on your mother.

It wasn't so much that you hated her, but that you should have. Every look at Rishuko (you refuse to call her that unpronounceable foreign word) made you ache at the injustice -- a Scorpion child, playing in the dirt like a peasant, baring her arms like a prostitute... But you could feel the potential in her, the sister you would have longed for were she truly yours.

### **Leaving Home**

At your gempukku, you left them behind, walking to Kyuden Bayushi and demanding your rightful place at the bushi school. To your disgust, they granted it only when your stepfather agreed to pay for your education. Which he did... on the condition that you pay him back with interest when it ended.

It did not take many months before you realized the students there were hardly a step up. Poisoners, drunkards, men who hit women... yet all claimed to be honorable by serving the clan.

You stayed proudly in the middle of the class and refused to join in the dirty tricks that

promoted others. When asked why you did not try harder, you said you did not want to be a target -- you were wiser than that and had other agendas. The sensei laughed and you met him late that night. He gave you an engraved teak box, saying it had been waiting for you a long time. You refused; you wanted no gifts and no debts. He insisted, and you refused again; but the next morning you found it by your futon, opened, its contents arranged over your sword.

Your father's mask.

### **Your Companions**

You became a magistrate in Ryoko Owari because you heard it was teeming with wealth, but you soon learned how little was shared with those who did not take bribes from opium dealers. For a year you struggled under your superiors' derision, unable to make the payments the barbarian demanded. Then the Emerald Magistrate, Doji Himeko, offered a loan, the only catch that you help her grow antidotes to the smugglers' most common poisons.

Working with her, you realized you were not as pure as you thought. Himeko cuffed you for a month once she reviewed your record of cutting down or beating "firemen" gangs for extorting money. In that time, you thought a great deal about mercy; and the treacherous Scorpion who credited another five of their brutalities to your name.

But you are a better man now.

It was only on the recommendation of a mysterious benefactor that she arranged to bring you with her when she left that filthy city. A letter told you to meet your patron at the bridge to Kyuden Doji where Satsume would give your assignments. You went... and found Rishuko.

"Surprise," she said.

You left, and she followed, saying her father had bought the position with wealth and influence, and her using it to help you could serve as at least part of an apology.

Himeko kept the two of you working together through a few winter courts, so you were also relieved when she switched you to supervising Mirumoto Seiji, the most bizarrely talented shugenja you've ever met. His schemes to investigate murders (which seemed to crop up wherever you went) and dispense justice weren't so much dishonorable as... crazy. Some of them worked, like when you flushed the bandits out of the temple by pretending to be Osano-Wo. You still wonder if that was blasphemy, but, hey, he's the shugenja...

### **And Now...**

This was not how you planned your return to the lands of your childhood, but when the Emerald Champion asks the services of Scorpion magistrates who know Unicorn lands, you were not about to refuse. At least this time you (through Himeko) have the legal power to control the situation and make certain no more lives are ruined by the cowardice and pettiness of either side.

### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS**

**Iuchi Rishuko (Li Hsu):** Uppity. Slovenly. Improper. You're afraid to ask where she's been half the time...but a part of you realizes it's because you're worried about her.

You will not turn away from the affection she offers, but you can never have the pure friendship she seems to want. You will never look on her without seeing *him*, and nothing she can do will change that.

**Akodo Ryuko:** The sort of bushi you want to be, though you're careful not to show it. She's intimidating in her intensity, and interesting in her innocence. You wonder what price she had to pay for perfection.

Her ward, Seppun Ichiko is a little frightening in how much she already knows. You weren't half that well-trained at nine.

**Shiba Kiyoshi:** He's helped you put things in perspective, not from any effort on his part, but just from who he is. Kept a prisoner of war by the Matsu, he manages to harbor no hatred in his heart. But he is not you, and his way, not yours.

**Doji Himeko:** She protects her own, you included, and better, does so competently. While she carefully manages her emotions, you would not call her flawless, though that is the reputation she strives for.

**Mirumoto Seiji:** The best to be said about him other than his humor, is that his creativity can be reined in with a strong enough command. An interesting and surprisingly useful man.

### **OTHERS YOU KNOW**

**Soshi Bantaro:** Daimyo of the Soshi. The heir to the man who sold out your mother, though he is related only by marriage. He is said, even among Scorpions, to be both petty and treacherous.

**Soshi Shinobu:** Bantaro's wife, the daughter of Soshi Takanori, and likely the guiding hand behind Bantaro's successes.

**Shosuro Norie:** An Emerald Magistrate, Norie was friendly and warm toward you at court... without apparent reason. You're suspicious, but her record is impeccable.

**Iuchi Kimiyo:** Your mother. You adore her, but it was always uncomfortable being around a woman who cried so much. At first you sympathized, but when nothing changed it made you start to hate her. You try to stay away and preserve the memory of who she once was.

**Iuchi Kurosho:** The Iuchi daimyo of your parents' generation.

**Iuchi Daiyu:** The current Iuchi daimyo. Rustic and deeply stupid, like most of them.

**Iuchi Hiroichi:** The current *karo* of Iuchi palace, which makes him your stepfather's commanding officer.

**Iuchi Ohasu:** Your stepfather, nearing retirement age. You can always hope he got crushed under an offal cart. Perhaps shot in the back by his own troops?

### **YOUR DAISHO**

Noting the single-minded revenge in your words, your sensei named your katana *Jonin* ("Sweetheart"), because it was the only graceful curve you would touch until your war was over. It has a short handle, useful for fast drawing and one-handed use. The wakizashi does not have a name, and is made of higher-carbon iron, making it look rusty or dirty...and preventing it from reflecting moonlight.

**NAME:** Iuchi Li-Hsu

**CLAN:** Unicorn

**SCHOOL:** Iuchi Shugenja **RANK:** 3

**Age:** 18 **Sex:** Female **Height:** 4'11"

**Physical Description:** Impish, skinny and wild-looking, with frequently bared arms. Refuses to wear fancy women's kimonos.

**FIRE 3**

Intelligence 3  
Agility 3

**AIR 3**

Awareness 3  
Reflexes 4

**EARTH 2**

Willpower 2  
Stamina 4

**WATER 3**

Perception 4  
Strength 3

**VOID 3**

**GLORY** 4.6

**HONOR** 1.2

**INSIGHT** 185

**TN TO BE HIT:** 20

**Wounds**

\_\_\_\_(0-4)  
\_\_\_\_(5-8)  
\_\_\_\_(9-12)  
\_\_\_\_(13-16)  
\_\_\_\_(17-20)  
\_\_\_\_(21-24)  
\_\_\_\_(25-28)  
\_\_\_\_(29-32)

**Dice Penalty**

-0  
-1  
-2  
-3  
-4  
Down  
Out  
Dead

**TECHNIQUES**

Free raise to all Water Spells.

**ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

See next page.

**EQUIPMENT**

Unicorn horse, fine kimono that needs a cleaning, scroll satchel with 14 scrolls, 2 pillow books, pillow, 4 blank sheets, personal journal, fine tanto (Str +2k2), fine bo staff (Str +3k2), fine traveling pack, umbrella and bedroll, bag o' herbs, heavily-knit bag of steel shot, salt, parts for a game snare.

*Learn to see what you are meant not to see.*

*--Mirumoto Hojatsu*

**SKILLS**

Athletics 4	Horsemanship 3
Bojutsu 2	Hunting 3
Calligraphy 2	Jiujutsu 3
Courtier 2	Locksmith 1
Dance 1	Lore: Shugenja 2
Defense 3	Meditation 2
Etiquette 2	Navigation 2
Heraldry 2	Sincerity 2
Herbalism 3	Spellcraft 2
Knife 1	Stealth 3

**SPELLS**

Sense  
Commune  
Summon  
Counterspell  
Sukinjin's Gift (Water, innate)  
The Penetrating Drop (Water)  
Path to Inner Peace (Water, innate)  
Bo of Water (Water)  
Master of the Rolling River (Water)  
Fires of Purity (Fire, innate)  
The Light of Amaterasu (Fire)  
Calling the Elements (Earth)  
Whispers of the Land (Earth)  
Accounts of Shorihotsu (Air)  
Know the Shadows (Air, Innate)

## **ADVANTAGES**

Ancestor: Bayushi (Kharmic Tie to Bayushi Hayato; you can spend each others' Void. If he dies, you can never spend Void again.)  
Crafty (All Low Skills at 1)  
Luck (once per session, may reroll any roll)  
Way of the Land (Unicorn Lands)  
Innate Ability (marked)

## **DISADVANTAGES**

Contrary (Cannot remain neutral on any issue; simple Willpower roll to avoid acting in tense situations)  
Gaijin Name (-1 die on social interactions with non-Unicorns)  
Dark Secret (see history)

## **HISTORY**

### **Your Family**

It would not have taken long even for a child much duller than you to sense the unhappiness which surrounded your home from your earliest memories. And it did not take long after your first questions for your half-brother Hayato to explain why.

He was the first to tell you of the war that ended almost exactly nine months before your birth. As a lad of ten, Hayato knew little about why the *luchi* had attacked the clan he loved, driving his family from their home. But he did know that it was *luchi* Ohasu who had demanded the death of his adored father, and took his mother as a trophy of victory, siring a daughter on her who, Hayato claimed, she could only hate to the end of her days.

You are that daughter, and when you asked your father of the war that led to your birth, he told a far different tale. Of Soshi treachery that had driven Unicorns from homes they had held for generations, and strangely branded assassins who crept through castles by dark and murdered his first family in their beds. It was only just, he said, to put to death the daimyo who had sanctioned such actions. Sparing your mother and her son was an act of mercy.

You have never known who to believe.

Most of your childhood was spent deep in the woods, chasing rabbits and climbing trees with village children. It kept you out of a house of arguments and winter courts you were expected to spend wrapped in silks, cringing under Hayato's jealous gaze, enduring the praise of the father you had come to hate. Hayato sneered at your lack of social graces and called you a peasant, but at least then, you saw a little care in

his eyes. And for that, you would do anything.

### **Your Training**

When you were ten, Hayato ran away. At first, you thought your life was over. You kept looking around, hoping to see him watching, or hear his snort of laughter as you tore up yet another kneecap tripping over your kimono hem. Though neither of you have ever spoken of it out loud, it was clear that he felt the same pull, and he returned a few months later to tell the family that he had been accepted to the Bayushi bushi school.

It was scant weeks after that your father enrolled you in the *luchi* shugenja school. Your studies there helped to ease the parting a little.

Unfortunately, you were a mediocre scholar at best, still preferring to spend your time arguing with your teachers, exploring the woods past the school, and wrestling with the Hiruma scouts training at the Shinjo school down the road.

### **Becoming a Magistrate**

But your father had served *luchi* Kurosho-sama and Shinjo Yokatsu-sama well, and he got you a position as a magistrate before your outspokenness earned you many nights mucking the stables.

Dispensing justice was a job you could sink your teeth into, and your willingness to ignore social convention in pursuit of speedy results earned you equal parts punishment and praise... until you learned to hide your methods beneath a polite veneer. Suddenly you gained the favor of your superiors, enough to get you appointed as a shugenja retainer of Doji Himeko, an Imperial Emerald Magistrate.

You were so excited when she asked for a recommendation of other magistrates to work with. At last you and Hayato could be reunited, and he would achieve his dream of working directly in the service of the Emperor. And he did seem happy at first... until you told him it was you who had recommended him.

It is easier now to understand why he despises the *luchi*, but that doesn't make it hurt any less. Sometimes you wonder if you made the wrong decision, but you work so well together that it is difficult to question. And you think you now understand why.

You asked your mother a few weeks ago if there was any way to make Hayato love you and forgive you for the circumstances of your birth. Your mother told you it would be difficult. Hayato loved his father and would never forgive the man who had killed him.

"Nor will I," your mother said, looking at you very seriously. "Bayushi Dokuro is the only man I acknowledge as my husband. I could not love any child who was not his."

And you know your mother loves you very much.

#### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS:**

**Bayushi Hayato:** Can you ever earn the respect he gives those of his clan so freely? You don't dare tell him what you suspect about your parentage. Were you wrong, he would never forgive the lie, and were you right and word got out, your mother would be executed and as for you...who knows?

**Doji Himeko:** You'd expected a spoiled Crane who would laugh at your clothes and accent, underestimate your spells, and despise your morals, but Himeko shares your sense of justice, and doesn't seem to mind where it comes from. You haven't gotten very close personally, but that may only be a matter of time.

**Akodo Ryuko:** Frightening. She looks at everyone like she's thinking about killing them, and from what you can tell, she is. Good thing she's a bodyguard and not one of those Scorpion assassins.

You feel sorry for her ward, Seppun Ichiko. Everyone else here has forgotten what being nine ought to be like. You try to show her whenever possible, but Ryuko wants her trained like an attack dog with manners. Frightening.

**Shiba Kiyoshi:** He makes you uncomfortable. Not that he's mean...or loud...in fact, he's always very quiet, like he's not sure what to say. But then, your father always got real quiet right before he got mad. And you've heard some things about what the Matsu did to him in the last war, and where those scars on his hands come from.

**Mirumoto Seiji:** When he's around, nobody gets mad at you. A little sparkling, a little mysterious, a little older...hmm. Does a samurai-ko's vow of chastity count for, uh, *everything*, or just...*some* things?

#### **OTHERS YOU KNOW**

**Soshi Bantaro:** Daimyo of the Soshi. Your father

always used to call him "the little nipple who couldn't find dung in an outhouse," but you suppose it wouldn't be wise to mention that here.

**luchi Kimiyo:** Your mother. It would be wonderful to show her how much you've done as a magistrate, maybe even help set things straight in the war. Maybe this time, it will end right for her.

**luchi Daiyu:** The current luchi daimyo. He came to the school once while you were training, and gave candy out to the younger children. He is kind and knowledgeable, but you can't imagine him surviving in a court.

**luchi Hiroichi:** The *karo* of luchi palace, he was always straightforward on his inspections, and took no nonsense from the students. You hope he never figured out who pasted that sign to his horse's butt...

**luchi Ohasu:** Your father, nearing retirement age. The war has probably brought out the worst in him. And there was little enough good that he shows to people anyway. He always treated you with a distant affection, handing out money and high expectations, but rarely taking the time to listen. He frightens you when he gets angry, and you see why he has led so many troops to victory in battle.

**NAME:** Shiba Kiyoshi  
**CLAN:** Phoenix  
**SCHOOL:** Shiba Bushi **RANK:** 3

**Age:** 32 **Sex:** Male **Height:** 5'8"  
**Description:** Gaunt, haunted-looking, alert, with sunken eyes in a lined face and hands which are stiff with burn scars.

**FIRE 3**  
Intelligence 4  
Agility 3

**AIR 2**  
Awareness 2  
Reflexes 3

**EARTH 3**  
Stamina 3  
Willpower 4

**WATER 2**  
Perception 3  
Strength 2

**VOID 4**

**GLORY 5.1**  
**HONOR 1.6**  
**INSIGHT 185**  
**TN TO BE HIT:** 15 (20)

Wounds	Dice Penalty
____(0-6)	-0
____(7-12)	-1
____(13-18)	-2
____(19-24)	-3
____(25-30)	-4
____(31-36)	Down
____(37-42)	Out
____(43-48)	Dead

### TECHNIQUES

*Way of the Phoenix:* Add your Void (+4 points) to hit *or* damage, not both. You can spend up to all your Void in one action.

*Dancing With the Elements:* Spend a Void point to add or subtract 5 to the TN of any spell cast upon you.

*One With Nothing:* Spend 1 Void to take an additional action (not an attack) per turn.

### EQUIPMENT

Wakizashi (Str +2k2), Yari (Str + 4k2), Nunte (Str +3k2), Tanto (Str + 1k2) Bow, 10 armor-piercing arrows (3k2), 10 ya (4k2),  
Light armor, 2 kimono, sandals, mountain pony, dried rations, half a broken arrowhead, identity papers stamped by Doji Satsume.

*What is the deepest truth?  
Everything I have taught you is wrong.  
-- Shinsei*

### ADVANTAGES

Crab Hands (all weapon skills at 1)  
Precise Memory (make a simple Intelligence test to remember facts and conversations)  
True Friend (Mirumoto Seiji)  
Death Trance (ignore fear effects)

### DISADVANTAGES

Phobia: Claustrophobia (roll 2 fewer dice, or spend 1 Void to avoid it for 1 action)  
Bad Reputation (see history)  
No katana  
Jealousy (Mirumoto Seiji; friendly competition over almost everything)

### SKILLS

Archery 2	Lore: Shugenja 1
Athletics 2	Lore: Phoenix Clan 2
Battle 3	Knife 2
Defense 4	Medicine 2
Etiquette 2	Meditation 2
Horsemanship 2	Sincerity 1
Hunting 2	Slight of Hand 1
Iaijutsu 2	Shintao 2
Jujutsu 3	Stealth 3
Kenjutsu 2	Tea Ceremony 1
Law 1	Yarijutsu 3

## **HISTORY**

### **Your Family**

You do not often think of your parents any more. It only brings back memories of a tradition you no longer care for.

There was never any question what your future would hold. You were the only son of Shiba Uwate, bodyguard to Isawa Kitse, the adept of Air whose talents earned the praise of the whole Elemental Council. You would attend the Shiba bushi school like your father, upon your gempukku accept a charge from among the best of the Isawa your age, and serve him until death. Every man in your family for the last two hundred years has received the katana *Daiyomi* on the day of his gempukku, and carried it in the service of the Isawa until passing it on to his own son. Your family's role in the Celestial Order has been as simple and unstoppable as rain.

There was never any question.

But your first years of training were marred by the arguments in court between Isawa Kaiyoko and Matsu Iniri. The Lion demanded that shugenja be disallowed from combat with regular troops, denied their status as men and samurai and relegated to acting as monks and messengers.

At the time of your gempukku, the official challenge was made. There would be a war for the rights of shugenja in Rokugan. All Shiba graduates were pressed into service for the forming army.

For three months, you fought on the front line, sent charging against the screaming Matsu to soften their defenses before the Isawa called upon the elements to decimate them. But you did not protest, for this was only another way to serve the family your ancestors had sworn their lives to.

Even when your leg was shattered by a Lion's arrow and you were left for dead on the battlefield, you did not complain. If the Fortunes had called for you to die at this time, your only regret was that there was no one to carry your daisho back to your father and Chuyoko, your wife of only a few months, who you had left, already expecting your first child.

### **Your Imprisonment**

It was there that the Matsu found you, lying helpless. You bowed as best you could through the pain, and asked that they grant you the mercy of a swift death.

But the Lion whose name you never learned only smiled cruelly and pried *Daiyomi* from your fingers before ordering his men to carry you to

their camp.

You do not know how long they kept you there, stripped down to clothes that rotted from the blood that soaked them, and festered against your wounds. The days were an endless cycle: a single meal of molding rice before the torches entered and the eta began their work, holding your hands and face to the flames as they asked where Kaiyoko would strike next.

You knew nothing, but they did not care. It was not information they wanted, but pain. In the darkness all that sustained you was the thought of escape and reclaiming *Daiyomi*.

### **Your Escape**

Every day, when they left, you wormed your fingers past the ropes, and dug into the half-healed flesh of your leg for the arrowhead lodged against your bone. When you finally pulled it out, you were almost too weak to saw the tiny edge through the knots on your arms, but at last, the rope parted.

You slit one guard's throat, took his knife, and the rest were slow and easily surprised.

It took another month for you to reach Mamoru Kyotei Toshi, where the remainder of the Dragon, Phoenix, and Lion had gathered for a settlement of peace before the Emerald Champion. Still weak from your wounds, you had planned to first find your commander and report your capture and escape, but the sight of a Matsu carrying *Daiyomi* drove all thought from your mind, and you shouted your grievances before the Emerald Champion.

The man who bore your sword denied his actions, claiming the katana had been his always, and demanded a duel to settle the point. Exhausted, starved, and with only a wakizashi, you knew you could not win, but no one among the Phoenix would speak in your defense. The slash across your face was only one more among many scars he had already given you.

The deeper scar was in your heart, for you could never again believe in another cause, another line given by the Phoenix to end samurai lives before they began.

There had never been any question.

As you stepped away from the duel, the whispers began -- some who looked at you with sidelong pity, others who simply smiled at another game won and lost. Only one person spoke to your face -- Mirumoto Seiji, a Dragon you had never met before.

"Why did you want to lose so badly?" he asked. "Had you asked permission to wait and heal first, you would have won."



Furious, you were determined to prove him wrong, and threw yourself back into your duties. Everywhere you turned, it seemed, he was there, taunting you, infuriating you... and, you eventually realized, saving your life. For without his constant goading, you would probably have taken the wakizashi to yourself within the first few days.

You don't admit it to him, but you have come to rely on the goofy Dragon in a way you never have with anyone else. His jibes cut you when you're well, spur you when you're down, and remind you you're worth something if he's trying to taunt you so badly.

### **Becoming a Magistrate**

Your renewed fervor and your dignity in the duel, caught the attention of Doji Satsume. Months after your return, you received a summons to Otosan Uchi, where the Emerald Champion himself spoke with you.

He could not act on your accusations once the duel decided the issue, he said, but he was impressed with how much you had survived. Though your reputation had suffered from your outburst, he offered you a position as a retainer to one of his Emerald Magistrates in Ryoko Owari.

Though you will never be the idealistic bushi you were ten years ago, you have found a new master in the Empire. It is just as well, for you still cannot face the company of your parents, Chuyoko, or your son Ichiro, who was born when they thought you dead and who is growing up without you.

Only by keeping your mind busy can you push the memories back enough to sleep. There may be no justice, no hope, maybe even no reincarnation, but your work, your competition with Seiji, your journal...these are here, and they somehow make it bearable.

### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS**

**Bayushi Hayato:** He figured out not to believe his superiors while still young. He could go far if his search for revenge doesn't kill him.

**Iuchi Li-Hsu:** This is the kind of woman you hope you live to warn your son about. Shameless, impulsive, and well-meaning enough that it would be easy to be carried away by her. A capable, intelligent magistrate with "future tragedy" written all over her. She and Hayato are like day and night; it is hard to believe they are related.

**Mirumoto Seiji:** He put you back together when

you were broken and defeated, but if you're not careful, he might drag you both off a cliff while trying to find out if he can fly. While neither of you likes to talk about it, you think he needs you to steady him as much as you need him to keep you going.

On the other hand, he can still drive you batty with that, "Oh, I'm a Dragon. I'm too enlightened to do any work" act. And losing to the shugenja in sparring is humiliating.

**Doji Himeko:** She has provided you an honorable job and place in society, money to feed your wife and son, and an excuse not to return to them. She is smart, charming, and dedicated to her duties, but it is difficult to believe that she actually drags around a servant on your investigations for the sole purpose of combing her hair. She does not ask about your life before, and you are just as happy not to tell her of it.

**Akodo Ryuko:** Someday she will realize the value of questioning her orders. Hopefully before it kills her. In that way, she reminds you of Hida: stronger than anyone, skilled, noble...and ultimately, mortal.

Her ward, Seppun Ichiko, is an obedient yet determined little girl. You hope Ryuko has in mind for her a more complete life than her own.

**NAME:** Akodo Ryuko

**CLAN:** Lion

**SCHOOLS:** Akodo Bushi and  
Seppun *Miharu* **RANK:** 1 and 2

**Age:** 21 **Sex:** Female **Height:** 5'9"

**Physical Description:** Unusually tall, with a steady, attentive gaze (trained herself out of blinking). She never sits except crouched on the balls of her feet.

**FIRE 2**

Intelligence 2  
Agility 3

**AIR 2**

Awareness 2  
Reflexes 3

**EARTH 4**

Willpower 4  
Stamina 4

**WATER 3**

Perception 4  
Strength 3

**VOID 3**

**GLORY** 5.0

**HONOR** 4.5

**INSIGHT** 185

**TN TO BE HIT** 15 (25 in armor)

**Wounds**

\_\_\_\_(0-8)  
\_\_\_\_(9-16)  
\_\_\_\_(17-24)  
\_\_\_\_(25-32)  
\_\_\_\_(33-40)  
\_\_\_\_(41-48)  
\_\_\_\_(49-56)  
\_\_\_\_(57-64)

**Dice Penalty**

-0  
-1  
-2  
-3  
-4  
Down  
Out  
Dead

**SCHOOL TECHNIQUES**

*Way of the Lion:* Free Raise to attack rolls, may use to ignore the opponent's armor.

*Never in Darkness:* Add your School Rank to your Honor or Willpower (to roll and keep) to avoid temptation away from your duty.

*The Clouds Part:* For the first turn of combat only, add 4k1 to all skill rolls and Initiative. You may make a Perception test (TN 5x the attacker's Honor + assassin's School Rank) to avoid being surprised by an attack.

**ADVANTAGES**

Multiple Schools (Seppun Imperial Guards)  
Social Position (Seppun mother)  
Clear Thinker (+10 to TN to lie to you)

*Excuses are the bane of justice.*

*--The Lady Seppun*

**DISADVANTAGES**

Compulsion (TN 20 to resist): Defend Doji Himeko's honor.

Dependent: Seppun Ichiko

Lost Love: Grandmaster Seppun Oyama

**EQUIPMENT**

Excellent katana (Str+4k3), fine wakizashi (Str+3k2), fine dai-kyu, 10 fine armor-piercing arrows (4k2), 10 fine watakusi (5k3), fine heavy armor and helm, horse, satchels, three fine kimonos, emerald badge of office, sandals, tabi, boots, fine tessen (Str+1k2), fine kaiken (Str+2k2).

**SKILLS**

Archery 2	Iaijutsu 3
Athletics 2	Investigation 1
Bard 1	Kenjutsu 4
Battle 3	Law 3
Courtier 2	Lore: Bushido 5
Defense 3	<i>Obiesaseru</i> 2
Etiquette 2	Shintao 3
History 1	Sincerity 2
Horsemanship 2	Yarijutsu 2

## **HISTORY**

### **Your Family**

You were a gift to your parents, and that is most noble thing you will say of them when asked. Your father was a loyal Akodo who served in the Emerald Legions in order to avoid petty Clan politics, but you and generations of your ancestors know that Clan disputes are anything but petty. Just as a samurai's words are his actions, a daimyo's command is a statement meant to live up to his ancestors and the thousands more of each samurai under him. Every war, every declaration, serves its place as an instrument of celestial destiny.

Your mother was hesitant when your father's valor earned him a rare honor -- his next son would be welcomed at the Seppun's own school of Imperial Guards. The midwives had warned that another child could kill her, for giving birth to your sisters Kyoko and Giriko had been difficult. You remember her sacrifice on the first of every month when you burn incense and offerings.

Your father was aghast when you were only another girl, but once you realized the problem, you solved it simply. If what was needed was a son, you would be his son. When he said that was against tradition, you pointed out that by Akodo's words, you were already his doshi -- his brother.

### **Your Training**

In your early years at the Akodo-ryu, the sensei sometimes beat you, but you knew that the soul of a samurai must be pounded in fire thousands of times to be forged correctly. You kept count of the number of times you were hit from the time you were five to when you were eleven: 1,533.

Before your gempukku, you were lined up with a half-dozen other Akodo to perform your kata before Sensei Seppun Toshifumi. All executed the moves with precision, but when questioned about bushido, about ethics and honor, about duty to the Empire, none but you considered their answers carefully. Most were bored by hours of lecturing, even on the most sacred of subjects.

You were worthy of the honor your father had earned, he declared, and performed your gempukku himself, on the stairs of Seppun-ryu, under the watchful eyes of grandmaster Oyama.

But there were delays before you could train in earnest. The Akodo warred with the Matsu, and your birth and position required you to be lieutenant, though you were thirteen. Eager to lead with only minimal advice, you acquitted

yourself honorably for your age... but you will always remember the three hundred men who died in Toshi no Senchi. The Lions congratulated you, but your arrival at Seppun-ryu felt oddly hollow.

You are forbidden to speak of the techniques of the Seppun, but you don't mind saying that working until you vomited was considered a compliment to the sensei. You trained from the time you woke to the time you slept, and often students attacked with shinai in the night. Oyama watched your practice and said that your body type (tall, with flexible wrists) was best for the *Osaboro* kata. It is your duty to practice it until perfection or your death. It was quite a compliment: *Osaboro* is difficult, and requires you to practice with three other people: one to be the target, and two to shoot the arrows at her.

Trust is...important.

### **Ichiko**

Your time was so taken with training, that it was not until he fell ill that you learned Oyama-sama's interest in you came in part because he was your grand-uncle. He had been your guiding force in the school; it seemed impossible that he could waste away in his bed while surrounded by men who would give their lives for him. In the dojo, the old light would still come into his eyes and he would throw off the yojimbo helping him walk, or move a paving stone you could not lift. But when alone, at the end, he would ask you to fetch him water, when it was too much.

His last request was that you care for his nine-year-old granddaughter, Seppun Ichiko, whose parents were in Violence Behind Courtliness City, a Crane holding which has been besieged by the Lion since the spring.

If Ichiko's parents were alive, they would have been released by now.

### **Your Journeys**

When Emerald Magistrate Doji Himeko petitioned your school for a yojimbo, you were chosen. At first, Ryoko Owari both baffled and infuriated you. Himeko-sama's days were spent immersed in a crazy system of dozens of names and favors and gifts she had to remember at all hours of the day. It was only after you met enough people that you realized she was not the one from the strange world. You were.

People out here walk within sword range of you and think nothing of it. They smile, and play games, make little promises and break them, and try to gain your services through empty words

and pleasantries. And everyone accepts their "white" lies, and says it doesn't matter if no one was harmed.

You once told Himeko that you didn't understand why everyone out here was so weak. She laughed, and said it was because making strong wills takes too long. Most of them will fade from existence like a spring blossom, and they care little for what will happen in the fall.

### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS**

**Doji Himeko:** Your vigilance and skill are what stands between her and death.

While no one could take Oyama-sama's place, Himeko-sama has filled the void he left in your life. She guides you in unfamiliar situations, cares for you when you are hurt in her defense, and spends long hours talking with you of history and bushido and politics. While your father was angry that all your training led only to you serving "some petted Crane," you informed him that you would allow *no one* to speak of your lady like that. Serving her is an honor, and you would be proud to continue it for the rest of your life.

**Seppun Ichiko:** Your vigilance and skill are what stands between her and death.

She is a Seppun child: obedient, cultured, and capable of withstanding more than most adults think possible. She bores easily, and you are trying to teach her to retreat sideways from a situation, rather than in straight lines. She often chooses not to listen, and claims to want to attend a courtier school, but that path lacks purity, and you are certain she will grow out of it.

**Shiba Kiyoshi:** He uses a formidable mind to rationalize why life is not war, rather than knowing it is.

**luchi Li-Hsu:** Odd and interesting. How do the Fortunes pay attention to one so uncivilized? You have tried to instruct her in the Tao, but she claims the luchi use an "updated version." You had not known such heresy was possible, but the girl seems well-meaning.

**Bayushi Hayato:** A calming influence on his sister Li-Hsu, but his intense dislike of an entire clan is incomprehensible to you. Revenge and blood feuds are supported by the Emperor, but criticized in the Tao, and such duality is bound to explain why he seems so unhappy.

**Mirumoto Seiji:** A strange and sometimes

fascinating man. Were anyone in either the Lion or Seppun to speak and act so outrageously, they would not be allowed to live past gempukku. Yet he has made you laugh on occasion, without distracting you when duty calls. Perhaps there is truly some wisdom in the Dragon.

### **YOUR DAISHO**

Your katana is more glorious than Himeko. *Shobatsu* ("Rewards and Punishments") took the swordsmith Yajishi four years and nine thousand folds to create. It was immortalized in an Ikoma play, "The Shouts of the Sun," though few people remember its name. It dates back to Hantei Yugo-zohime (Hantei VII), an Empress born in a time when the Phoenix, Crane, and Scorpion tried to keep her isolated on the throne from birth. Yugo-zohime challenged them, choosing Seppun Mizato to defend her honor.

He came to the duel with the still red-hot *Shobatsu* as a political statement -- it was believed swords were best quenched in the blood of convicted criminals. *Shobatsu* passed through 28 generations of Seppun since, including Oyama-sama's wife Narumi, who died at the Battle of Kyuden Kitsune.

*Shobatsu's* saya is velvet-lined teak, its tsuba mirrored chrysanthemums beneath a silver filigreed Lady Sun (rare art, since such depictions were outlawed in 606). Its hilt wrap is made from the under-tail skin of three albino manta rays called from the sea by Imperial shugenja.

Its mated wakizashi was used for seppuku once, so its new companion, *Hittan* ("Brush Tip") was named to honor such the decision. In calligraphy, each stroke is final and indelible, showing every success and error without going back: swords are the same.

**NAME:** Doji Himeko

**CLAN:** Crane

**SCHOOL:** Doji Courtier **RANK:** 3

**Age:** 26 **Sex:** Female **Height:** 5'2"

**Physical Description:** Simple, wholesome but not stunning features, self-confident pose and voice but not of attention-getting stature; think of Jodie Foster in *Contact*.

**FIRE 3**

Intelligence 3  
Agility 3

**AIR 3**

Awareness 4  
Reflexes 3

**EARTH 2**

Willpower 3  
Stamina 2

**WATER 2**

Perception 4  
Strength 2

**VOID 3**

**GLORY** 5.6

**HONOR** 3.8

**INSIGHT** 185

**TN TO BE HIT** 15

**Wounds**

**Dice Penalty**

____(0-4)	-0
____(5-8)	-1
____(9-12)	-2
____(13-16)	-3
____(17-20)	-4
____(21-24)	Down
____(25-28)	Out
____(29-32)	Dead

**SCHOOL TECHNIQUES**

*The Perfect Gift:* Call in a number of favors per adventure equal to Air + School Rank.

*A Whisper from the Soul:* Make a contested Awareness roll after five minutes of conversation to influence someone's emotional state.

*Test of Honor:* Three times a day, before an action is rolled, you may make a contested Honor roll (non-Cranes drop any dice lower than your Honor). If you win, their action is automatically a failure.

**ADVANTAGES**

Ancestor: Lady Doji (all High Skills at 1)

Social Position (Emerald Magistrate)

Ally: Soshi Oshiro (*karo* of Soshi castle)

*One life can make the difference.*

-- Kakita

**DISADVANTAGES**

Unluck (GM can force a reroll once per session)  
Meddler

Enemy: Soshi Yasamari (Bayushi Courtier)

Enemy: Mirumoto Tobezu (Commander of the Mirumoto peace-keepers)

**EQUIPMENT**

Four fine kimonos, under-kimonos, nice sandals, a fine aiguchi (Str + 1k2), 15 koku, 7 netsuke (gift boxes) with rice paper, writing implements, fine pony, emerald badge of office, traveling papers for extended stay, and a servant (Teju) to take care of your fabulously long hair.

**SKILLS**

Calligraphy 3

Lore: Crane Clan 3

Commerce 3

Lore: Scorpion Clan 2

Courtier 5

Lore: Unicorn Clan 2

Defense 2

Manipulation 3

Etiquette 4

Mizu-do 3

Heraldry 3

*Obiesaseru* 2

History 3

Oratory 2

Investigation 3

Sincerity 4

Knife 1

Tea Ceremony 3

Law 4

## **HISTORY**

### **Your Family**

Your father Giichin had you late in life, and that is perhaps the saving grace of your dealings with him. He was a courtier who specialized in inheritance law, and was understandably acid-tongued. Not that he was unkind to you, but he was not easily impressed. And when you turned out to be his only child, and a daughter at that, it made for some rough nights.

To top it off, you were not a stunning beauty, and the Crane practically have a cult around pretty faces, which disgusted you. All the boys were training to be bushi like the world depended on them. And the girls? Giggling fools. It seemed crazy. But your ninth and thirteenth winters at the Bayushi court brought it all together. The world *did* depend on you; it was your peers who did not realize the responsibility of privilege.

Just before your *gempukku*, your father retired, leaving your mother to arrange your acceptance to the Doji Courtier school, something that would give you a chance for a life that is not dependent on the man you marry. When put against that alternative, you were happy to go.

The school was almost nauseatingly polite; you soon realized it was a test to see how much dross you could move aside and manipulate to get to the real political action underneath. Through *mizu-do*, you trained yourself not to panic under stress and learned that the competition and give-and-take exhilarated you in a way nothing ever had. The martial training also taught you to maintain your authority in the face of death, and you soon found out how important that would be.

### **Becoming a Magistrate**

At the School, Emerald Magistrate positions were given according to who your father was, or by establishing and maintaining a reputation even through the constant turn-around and fresh faces of the week. Getting an appointment was not as difficult as you imagined, but that was only because of the location of your first job: Ryoko Owari.

The "City of Lies" didn't bother you... it was that the place should have been called "City of Cheap, Available Assassins." Every smuggler you busted had a boss, every Scorpion you manipulated came back in the form of a dozen stalkers, until you threw yourself in debt to Satsume and requested a Seppun-trained bodyguard. Within a week of her arrival, you saw two poison-testers and four assassins dead.

Once you didn't have to fear for your life, you established a workable power base in the city, gaining the service of an honorable Scorpion bushi named Hayato, and learning when to push and when to pull against the city's ever-changing political currents. It was simple after a while, as long as you understood that nothing was free -- anything you did would come back to haunt you and anything done for you had an unnamed price.

### **Your Assignment**

Satsume-sama was impressed with your work and understood your greatest strength -- you can find those people others underestimate and coax their strengths and loyalties toward serving the Empire. He sent you several men over the years who other magistrates had given up on, and you have shaped them into what you think is the best possible team: a completely loyal bodyguard and four associates who complete tasks with unquestionable honor... you don't question how they did it, and you get lots of honors.

Now the Emerald Champion wishes you far from the Crane-Lion war, and that is fine by you. The situation there is murky at best, and you don't want to risk yourself or Ryuko on some other courtier's mistake.

Though the war promises to be ugly, you're almost looking forward to the job. There are people in need, and a situation you can help, and you'll be there for them to thank when it's all over. It makes you feel like you can make a difference.

### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS**

They follow your lead, so you know how to prod them, organize them, and get them planning. While you are careful not to ask too closely into some of their methods, you respect their abilities, and set firm guidelines of what you won't tolerate. While you like them well enough, you're careful not to get too close; relaxation leads to failure.

**Akodo Ryuko:** You don't know what she's trying to gain by defending your honor as well as your body so often. She reminds you of a Kakita you once knew, but he was trying to get you to marry him. You owe her so much already; it makes you uncomfortable having no way to repay such devotion.

You have started by trying to help her nine-year-old ward, Seppun Ichiko. When Ryuko told you her parents died because they were with the Doji besieged by the Lion, it was the least you could do to take care of her. She's nine, but quite

a proper little girl and not at all silly. Ichiko is fascinated by what you do, and stays out of the way and silent during business, but always watches. She has the potential to be something great, and you want to help her achieve it.

**Bayushi Hayato:** Honest, but a little simple and driven. Keep him busy, or he'll bicker with his half-sister Li-Hsu. He despises Iuchi, and must be carefully managed.

**Iuchi Li-Hsu:** A welcome addition to your team, this shugenja's virtue is silence in more than one sense. Excellent at ferreting information from places she is not welcome, she'd better stay silent in formal courts, or her peasant attitudes will embarrass you all.

**Shiba Kiyoshi:** Being ready for death at all times is a wonderful attribute in a samurai, but it's a damper on a friend. He respects your authority but not others'. This makes him useful...and dangerous when left alone.

**Mirumoto Seiji:** His banter and antics are amusing, but you know how hard clowns work to appear at ease. His mind is sharper than he lets on, his creativity can be reined in with a firm hand and voice, and he has the courage of the completely mad. As long as Hayato or Kiyoshi is put in charge of him, he does well, but you'd *never* trust him alone.

### **OTHERS YOU KNOW**

**Soshi Bantaro:** The daimyo of the Soshi, he is a shugenja of reasonable ability. Satsume said he is never to be trusted. He is ambitious, cunning, and if rumors are taken as evidence, oddly, maliciously stupid.

It's odd because he married into the throne of the Soshi, indicating some court ability, but *you* haven't seen any. Perhaps his late father Wachigai had more to do with it. He has three sisters and five half-sisters, a wife named Shinobu about which you have heard little, and a ten-month-old son, Ichiro.

**Iuchi Daiyu:** The daimyo of the Iuchi, he is also a shugenja, but spends his winters at home. He is supposedly wise, blessed by the spirits of the Burning Sands, and capable of magic like no one in Rokugan has seen.

He has one daughter, Shahai, who has never been to Scorpion or Crane courts.

**Soshi Oshiro:** The last time you visited the Soshi court, Oshiro apologized for his daimyo's rudeness and you spoke at length. He is sincere, and doesn't hide behind fans and fabricated mystery. He enjoys the theater and song, at least in your presence.

**Soshi Yasamari:** This hulking boor of a courtier presents Soshi Bantaro with profits from opium smuggling in Ryoko Owari. You can't prove it -- he saw to that -- but he still despises you. You owe him for the death of Ide Meiko, a magistrate associate of yours.

**Mirumoto Tobezu:** This ill-mannered, temperamental killer wanted to duel your cousin Satoshi, who traveled to Ryoko Owari for your help. You refused to sanction the duel: he had just come out of a war, and you had no reason to believe he'd stop at first blood. You suggested a cooling-off period in which he trained in control, he said you insulted him, the Scorpion put him in jail for a week, and he returned north.

### **MIZU-DO TECHNIQUES**

These require a Full Defense to use. If the attempt fails, the opponent gets a Free Raise on their attack.

**Catch the Shadow:** If someone makes an attempt to grapple you, a Reflexes + Mizu-do roll can avoid the attempt. Exceed their roll.

**Bend Like a Reed:** If someone swings a sword or staff at you, roll Reflexes + Mizu-do, TN of 5x their weapon skill. Success means you've dodged and they may make no more attacks this round.

**Flight of Dragons:** Defensive throwing. Roll Agility + Mizu-do, TN 5 x their Agility. The opponent makes an Agility + Jujutsu or Athletics test, TN 20 + 5 for each Raise you took, or they take their Str(+1)k1 damage.

**NAME:** Mirumoto Seiji  
**CLAN:** Dragon  
**SCHOOL:** Agasha Shugenja  
**RANK:** 3

**Age:** 23      **Sex:** Male      **Height:** 5'5"  
**Physical Description:** Stoic-looking until he opens his mouth, wild hair he occasionally shaves when he remembers, slightly heavy... think "Rokugani Chow Yun Fat."

**FIRE 4**  
Intelligence 4  
Agility 4

**AIR 3**  
Awareness 3  
Reflexes 3

**EARTH 3**  
Willpower 4  
Stamina 3

**WATER 2**  
Perception 3  
Strength 2

**VOID 3**

**GLORY** 3.8  
**HONOR** 2.6  
**INSIGHT** 185  
**TN TO BE HIT** 15

#### **SCHOOL TECHNIQUE**

You have 1 Free Raise to all Fire spells

<b>Wounds</b>	<b>Dice Penalty</b>
____(0-6)	-0
____(7-12)	-1
____(13-18)	-2
____(19-24)	-3
____(25-30)	-4
____(31-36)	Down
____(37-42)	Out
____(43-48)	Dead

#### **ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES**

See next page.

#### **EQUIPMENT**

Kimono, sandals, traveling pack, scroll satchel, 15 scrolls and 4 blank, writing implements, wakizashi (Str + 2k2), aiguchi (Str + 1k2), 3 koku, a nice fan, a horse ("Kintaro"), a lantern, fire-starter, hand-held mirror, papier-mâché paste, 3 firecrackers, a disassembled flare, stale bun, mixing bowl, an umbrella, two dried plants you saw on the road, purple dye, four shiny quartz lumps, pet cricket, a scroll of unspecified magic.

*Among the blind, even the honest lie about the color of the sky.*

*-Scorpion proverb*

#### **SKILLS**

Advanced Medicine 2	<i>Kagaku</i> 2
Battle 1	Kenjutsu 3
Calligraphy 2	Law 2
Craft: <i>Mitsugusuri</i> 2	Lore: Shugenja 2
Defense 3	Meditation 2
Etiquette 1	<i>Nazodo</i> 2
Explosives 2	Shintao 2
History 2	Sincerity 1
Investigation 3	Spellcraft 1

#### **SPELLS**

Sense  
Commune (innate)  
Summon (innate)  
Transform (innate)  
Counterspell  
Earthquake (Earth)  
The Fires from Within (Fire)  
The Fury of Osano-Wo (Fire)  
Amaterasu's Blessing (Fire)  
Katana of Fire (Fire, Innate)  
Call Upon the Winds (Air, Innate)  
Calm Mind (Water)  
The Path to Inner Peace (Water)  
Nature's Touch (Water)



## ADVANTAGES

Daredevil (in risky/impossible tasks, you have a +10 to the result 50% of the time)

Ambidextrous (no off-hand penalties)

Innate Ability (marked)

True Friend (Shiba Kiyoshi)

Ally: Mirumoto Hatoshi (retired former sensei, lives in this area)

## DISADVANTAGES

Jealousy (Shiba Kiyoshi, friendly competition over everything)

Benten's Curse (-2 to social rolls)

## HISTORY

### Your Family

"No, Seiji!"

"Seiji, what in the name of every Fortune that ever lived is going on here? Were you *trying* to kill yourself?"

"Seiji, don't play with those peasants!"

"That is *not* what a tanto boken is for, and quit telling all the girls such filthy things."

"Ew, here comes the freak again..."

That was your childhood. Ten thousand adults telling you no, and a herd of kids giving you glares and gressed-out faces. What was wrong with putting cicadas in your mouth, saying, "Look! I've got Taint!" and coughing them up?

There was more to your life than immature pranks, but you *have* always wanted to discover things. How ants worked. How you could put shochu on your arm and set it on fire, and it wouldn't hurt for a few seconds. How sprays of water made little rainbows in the sun.

Well, your parents...when they were home...didn't care for such things. Your father was off at war all the time, and he died there, leaving all those arguments unresolved. Your older brother Shincho said you had to come to the Mirumoto school with him, but after the first three years, it really didn't hold your interest. Everyone there was obsessed with being an invincible bushi and fighting a whole lot of people, which seemed to you a radical interpretation of the Tao.

After a boken shot that knocked out a tooth and broke your nose, you decided you'd had enough. If you just sat there, they couldn't make you fight and they couldn't make you commit seppuku. When Hatoshi- sama finally asked what you were trying to do, you told him you wanted something more in your life than swords and armor and macho prancing.

So he sent you to the Agasha.

Who sequestered you in an absolutely boring monastery -- practically a death sentence -- and spouted a lot of butterfly and cocoon analogies. You tried to be good and pray to the Fortunes... at least whenever the sensei were there to check on you. They would let you out, they said, when the Fortunes started answering.

It wasn't long before they did. You started turning air to gold and light into swords. It was odd to think of light as fire (you think there's a deeper principle there somewhere) but making it do what you wanted wasn't so hard after all, and pretty soon, they started you working one on one with the sensei. They said you would be instrumental in the fate of the Empire, but you listened at the door after, and they told a lot of kids that.

You're not really sure if you're looking for enlightenment, because the harder you look, the further away it gets. So by taking time off from the search, you're getting closer, and thus searching without knowing about it. You know all is one and one is for all, and the energy of the Order will make your decisions for you so you don't have to worry. That's not *exactly* what your sensei taught, but you fell asleep while meditating a lot.

### Becoming a Magistrate

The Dragon mountains are about the most boring place in Rokugan, and chatting with Earth spirits didn't liven it up much. So after you impressed the court, you asked to travel a little... and got drafted for battle.

Due to a clerical error (there are evidently eight Mirumoto Seijis from southwest Dragon Lands), you got put in the bushi unit. Well, you weren't about to disappoint your ancestors, so you started blowing up bridges, conjuring daishos of fire, electrifying rivers, and calling down rains of jellyfish, frogs, and blood. It made the Lion hesitate; the Dragon annihilated them and you were granted a boon.

"I want to see the world," you told your captain, and he made you a magistrate, trying to organize who got what after the three-way Mirumoto, Shiba and Matsu war.

It was there you saw Shiba Kiyoshi, an escaped prisoner of war, claim a Matsu stole his katana. He was obviously exhausted and starved and lost the duel, after which he collapsed on his knees, a broken man.

But you've always liked fixing things.

You knew he had fire left in him, but if you didn't spark it right then, he would slink off under a rock somewhere, so you taunted him in private...getting him mad enough at you that he

forgot to feel sorry for himself. You kept at it for a while, letting him know he still had a reputation to protect, and more, a sense of self-worth. It wasn't the best "mysterious Dragon who knows you better than you know yourself" routine you've ever pulled, but you pretended you knew the meaning of life like all the guys from up north, and it worked out. Just a few months ago, you dragged him out for some *real* fun, and by the end of the week, both of you were inside a Togashi-shaped float made of firecrackers, with an underage Isawa and two bottles of shochu, running for the carp pond, 'cause the fuses were lit.

After you got out of the cuffs, you got a new assignment in Ryoko Owari. Armpit of the Empire it might have been, but the Emerald Magistrate, Doji Himeko, made you feel right at home. ("No, Seiji!")

It was there you and Kiyoshi began your intellectual games. Go, word games, puns, Tao-quoting, Tao-altering, bushido debating; it takes many forms. You want to push him to his intellectual and philosophical limits, because otherwise, who will? It's sometimes frustrating how well he pushes back. You never met anyone so close to your match in either school.

After some time, Himeko moved to advance her career, and invited your present group to travel the length of Rokugan as her assistants. You accepted: how else could you see the world? And now it's taking you near your old sensei. How's that for cosmic turnaround?

### **About Your Unknown Magic**

In Shosuro lands, you had to solve a murder case involving a beheaded Kitsu *sodan-senzo* with forged papers and a lot of scrolls in code, so you couldn't really identify him to get his scrolls back to his family. You didn't really understand the magic, but it reminded you of some stuff you'd always wanted to try. So you rewrote it.

It has something to do with living animals, a centered effect on your body, precious metals, expulsion/intake processes, and it *might* mutate the scroll's ink as it goes along. If cast slightly wrong, all the elements involved ...and you're not sure which ones those are... may transform into their polar opposites. Maybe Void, too.

In any case, you've never cast it.

### **WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS**

Most of them need cheering up. You need to ensure they don't turn into a pack of angry bushi out here, 'cause short tempers in the mountains leads to fights, cannibalism, and one guy always

hogging the water.

**Shiba Kiyoshi:** When you decided to put his life together, you never thought you'd play such a big part in it. But you two just keep ending up together, and you really can't think of anyone else you'd rather work with...or have on your side in an argument. There's not much you wouldn't do for him, as long as it keeps you from being as moody as he is.

**Bayushi Hayato:** The path of blood is a circle. He should choose whether he wants to be in it, on it, or out of it. He's also great fun -- tell him there's a Unicorn molesting peasants in the tannery and watch him run.

**Doji Himeko:** She measures kindness as gifts of rice, not the pair of mirrors that surround her. Ironically, she might understand you better than the rest of them, and boy, wouldn't it piss her off if you told the other Cranes that.

**Iuchi Li-Hsu:** The delicate flower has been planted oddly, with a harder stem and deeper roots than anyone realizes. Might it be up to you to water her? And maybe prune and weed and tie and other things that her grouchy brother would disapprove of?

**Akodo Ryuko:** It is said, "Study the Tao and study the Emperor; in one you will find the other." Does she know what she serves? Has she ever laughed in her entire life?

Her nine-year-old ward, Seppun Ichiko knows more about Shintao than you. You can't have that... Dragons everywhere are counting on you to look enigmatic. Blow her mind.

