



# Legend of the Five Rings



TOURNAMENT OF THE EMPEROR'S FAVORED  
THIRD EDITION





## The Tournament

The Tournament of the Emperor's Favored, known to most throughout the Empire simply as the Tournament of the Minor Clans, is an annual event conceived, sponsored, and run by the assembled Minor Clans. Although there are numerous tournaments that are well known in Rokugan, the Tournament of the Emperor's Favored is one of only a few that are held annually and perhaps the only one open to virtually any member of the samurai caste who wishes to participate. Individually, of course,

the Minor Clans would be incapable of conducting a tournament of any significant size or prestige; they simply lack the resources to do so. Collectively, however, they can carry out an event that rivals anything hosted by a Great Clan, and perhaps even those conducted by the Imperial families.

The tournament is designed to recognize personal achievement among the contestants. A wide variety of skills, predominantly those practiced by individual Minor Clans, are tested and rewarded, culmi-

nating in a large event that pits the finest competitors against one another to determine the one among them most worthy of distinction. It is in this that the true purpose of the tournament lies. First begun centuries ago, the Tournament of the Minor Clans was designed to foster allies among the Great Clans. Consistently lacking both the military resources and the political influence to ensure their continued survival if they go it alone, most Minor Clans consider it essential to cultivate alliances — and the strength and durability of a Great Clan can make it worth a considerable investment in treasure to gain an alliance with one. Thus, this tournament can play a significant role in the long-term viability of a Minor Clan.

Participation in the Tournament of Minor Clans is open to any samurai, although it is focused primarily on attracting the attention of Great Clan members. Minor Clan samurai are free to attend, although it is an unspoken custom for such individuals to remove themselves from competition if they feel that doing so will benefit the alliance of Minor Clans in some manner. While in theory this rule of open participation could result in an overwhelming number of contestants, in reality a samurai must receive both permission from his lord and be temporarily released from his duties in order to attend, and few Clans can afford to lose a significant number of their samurai for such a relatively minor reward.

## History

The Tournament of the Minor Clans is nearly as old as the Empire itself. Its foundations were laid when the first Hantei watched as his sister Shinjo led her people through the northern mountains and into the lands beyond, never to return in his lifetime. Despite his terrible and lingering wounds from the war with Fu Leng, the Emperor recognized that if Shinjo could depart the Empire unimpeded, even with such a large force, then an unknown force of enemies could just as easily enter his Empire and strike at its heart before anyone realized that danger was among them. With the Clans of his brothers and sisters dramatically weakened after the epic conflict with their fallen sibling, Hantei knew that a second invasion would destroy everything they had built. The Emperor died only a short time later, but before his death he wrote in detail about his concerns regarding the northern mountains. When his son Hantei Genji assumed the throne, he made certain that those of Shinjo's followers that had remained within the Empire guarded the passes to the north.

More than 60 years after Genji's coronation, he turned again to the northern passes with a concerned eye. The Lion had displaced the few remaining followers of Shinjo, but Akodo's Clan had little native knowledge of the passes through the mountains. Determining that a radical solution was required, Genji held a great tour-

namment to measure both the strength and fighting capability of the contestants. The tournament was won by a servant of his uncle Hida, and as such it was a Crab who earned the right to create a Minor Clan and guard the northern passes leading into the Empire. Thus, the Badger Clan was born.

The Badger were not the first Minor Clan, but they were the first created through something so capricious as a tournament. Out of necessity, if little else, the Badger soon made contact with both the Fox and the Mantis and suggested the idea of sharing resources. Although the three Clans were reluctant at first to share freely what little they had, they did agree that they required allies and recruits. So all three accepted new members on a regular basis, provided they could prove themselves useful. The three Clans came together and held a tournament, wherein any warrior who could prove his worth would be granted the chance to join one of the Clans and serve as a samurai.

Naturally, this tournament was controversial for quite some time, as it involved a considerable investment in time and resources. Fortunately for the Clans involved, it was not held on a regular schedule, as the three Clans could ill afford such expense on a regular basis. Over time, more Minor Clans joined the alliance and it became possible to hold the tournament on a dependable schedule. But by that time, the development of the ronin — a samurai who could get along without a master — restricted the Minor Clans in their ability to recruit new members. Still, the opportunity to attract allies was quite tempting, and it was at this point that the tournament was opened to Great Clan samurai in the hopes of winning allies. It was a long-term investment on the part of the Minor Clans, but one that has paid off to a sufficient degree to keep the tournament alive for centuries.

The tournament received a considerable boost during the second rise of the Gozoku Conspiracy, during the era dominated by the Empire's struggle against the Bloodspeaker cult. It was during that time that the Dragon Clan championed the cause of the Minor Clans in the Imperial Court, and the Tortoise Clan was given the right to represent the assembled Minor Clans there. Although the fledgling alliance was in theory given the same rights and clout in Court as a Great Clan, in practice this was not quite the case. Still, the Minor Clans were looked upon with considerably more favor than before by many parties, and the Tournament of the Minor Clans soon became a popular topic of discussion among several prominent courtiers. For the first time, the Great Clans stood to gain nearly as much as the Minor Clans if their representatives emerged victorious at the tournament, and the attendance nearly doubled.

The last few years have brought almost unprecedented good fortune to the Minor Clans. In addition to Toturi III's creation of the Bat and Oriole Clans (although the latter was done by proxy during the Emperor's absence), the Minor Clan Alliance is more powerful than it has ever been, save perhaps the days of the Clan War when Yoritomo himself stood at the helm. The Clans do



not have the same strong leadership as in those bygone days, but they do have a clear sense of purpose and a heretofore unseen level of cooperation between them. The Tournament of the Emperor's Favored is more popular than it has ever been, and seems to be having more effect than ever before.

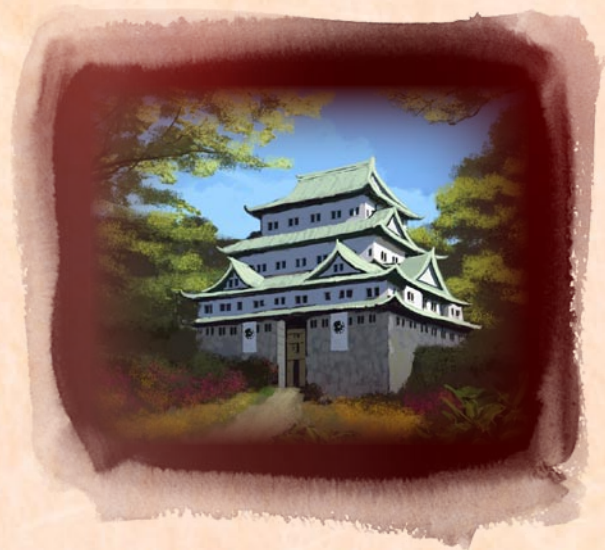
## Location

The tournament has been held in various places throughout the centuries. Originally it moved with each instance between the lands of the Badger, Fox, and Mantis. When it was decided that the Badger and Mantis holdings were simply too distant to encourage attendance, the event was moved to the Fox Lands on a more permanent basis, and has remained there for the most part. Conflicts in the surrounding area have caused it to be moved on occasion, and there have even been periods when the tournament was suspended altogether, although never for more than three years. It always returns after these absences, most frequently near the outskirts of the vast and enigmatic Kitsune Mori, in the heart of Fox Clan territory. Locations of interest in the general vicinity of the tournament include the following:

**Kitsune Mori Mura.** This village is the closest settlement of any significant size to the tournament grounds, and is perhaps an hour's travel from the tournament if one knows where to go. Many merchants and spectators that attend the tournament are actually from the village, which lies within the confines of the forest itself. Most contestants tend to visit the village either before, during, or after the tournament is concluded, if for no other reason than to see its unique architecture. Ever the naturalists, the Kitsune have built the village in harmony with the forest rather than carving out a location within it. Still living trees factor prominently into most buildings, while other houses exist entirely within the base of especially large trees grown precisely for that reason. Rice paper has been almost entirely replaced by fine sheets woven of fallen leaves, and this particular material is among the most commonly sold commodities within the village despite the peril in transporting such a delicate substance.

**Ookami Toshi.** This Crane city lies a day's ride east of the tournament grounds, and is a common destination for Crane contestants once the tournament has concluded. The city, built on a cliff overlooking the passage through the mountains to the coast, is well defended and in truth is more of a fortress than a city. Although the Crane are generally distrustful of visitors, they do not forget their obligation of hospitality, and the city is large enough to support almost any creature comforts that a contestant living near the edge of a forest for a week might appreciate.

**Meidochi.** Lying a little more than a day's travel to the northwest, there are admittedly few reasons



for any contestant to travel to Meidochi, although many travel through it coming to and departing the tournament. The village is a minor holding of the Hare Clan despite its great distance from Shiro Usagi, a fact that many blame on the Clan's dissolution and reformation nearly a generation ago. The village now comes under the administration of the tiny Ujina Family, the most stalwart of the Usagi's servants, and they conduct most of their affairs from this village. Given the somewhat questionable nature of the Ujina Family's origins, many choose to avoid the village altogether when possible.

**Kaia Osha Mura and Kyuden Kitsune.** These two sites, both extremely important to the Fox Clan, are on the opposite side of the Kitsune Mori. While it is possible to reach them by traveling through the forest itself, the danger associated with such a trip generally makes it wiser to simply go around the forest altogether. A handful of times throughout the tournament's history, contestants from the tournament's final test have emerged on the opposite side of the forest, nearly 50 miles from their intended location. While such incidents are obviously viewed with some degree of humor, the Fox nonetheless respect individuals such as these. After all, their survival in the forest for such a distance clearly indicates that the spirits were watching over them, and for that they will always be well-regarded by the Kitsune Family. In one rather famous incident, one featured in at least three plays, a contestant emerged from the forest after disappearing at the tournament seven years previously, apparently no older and none the worse for wear, but having no memory of the intervening years. A shrine to the man's memory still stands in both villages.

## Arriving at the Tournament

Each year, the tournament grounds are set up weeks in advance so that the judges conducting the individual tests — samurai who sometimes travel the entire width of the Empire — can arrive early and have time to familiarize themselves with the area and to prepare it adequately. This brief period is a major diplomatic event for Minor Clan ambassadors and courtiers, as well as an opportunity for bushi and shugenja to fraternize with one another without the constraints of greater concerns weighing upon them. Inevitably, the local dojo and shrines fill with individuals representing different styles and Schools, enjoying the spirit of competition that fills the air in preparation for the impending tournament.

## The Tests

The tests conducted at this tournament can vary widely in both format and content. Each Minor Clan participating in the tournament is responsible for offering a single test. The sponsoring Clan determines the format and the means by which the selected skill will be assessed, and supplies all the materials necessary to conduct it. Tournament competitors from an individual Minor Clan do not compete in the test conducted by their Clan. To make up for this inability to demonstrate their worth, they are given a bye on the assumption that they have previously proven themselves capable of performing that test outside the bounds of the tournament.

The tests traditionally take one of three different formats. The first and simplest is a trial, in which the contestant's skill level is tested in the absence of others' ability. This usually involves a task to be completed by the contestant without anyone else involved save for the judges. In some cases the judges merely observe how the contestant performs, while in others they are active participants in what is happening. Depending upon the skills being tested, however, individual achievement may not be possible. In such cases, the test may take the format of a duel, in which case two contestants are pitted against one another in a display of the skill in question. This is most frequently the case with tests of martial skill or matters of debate. For certain skills, however, multiple contestants may compete against one another simultaneously. These tests, called matches, are relatively uncommon and generally only performed for tests that can accommodate large numbers of competitors at the same time, thereby reducing the number of tests to be conducted during the day.

Completion of a test confers a certain amount of points based on its difficulty as well as the contestant's actual performance. Ostensibly, a contestant's point total does nothing more than determine the advantage that individual will be given in the final competition. But in reality, the culminating test of the tournament is so challenging to all of the competitors that the leader going in has a very commanding position. Generally speaking, it is rare for the competitor possessing the highest point total going into the final contest to lose, or at least fail to place very highly in the final standings.

These are the tests traditionally offered by each Clan:

### **The Badger Clan:** Sumai

**Format:** Duel

**Lead Judge:** Ichiro Chingoro

**Primary Roll:** Strength/Jiujitsu (Wrestling)

The Badger Clan reveres strength and physical power above all else. Perhaps it is a product of their Crab ancestry, or perhaps a result of being raised in an environment where everything is stone and there is nothing soft and yielding to be found. Regardless, one could well say that the only real pastime the Badger enjoy is violence, so it comes as no surprise to anyone with even passing knowledge of that Clan's customs that their test takes the form of a hand-to-hand combat competition.

The Ichiro Family's test is quite simple. It pits two contestants against one another in a traditional wrestling match, although there are no particular restrictions on the style or combat style used other than that it may not employ such force as will kill or permanently injure the opponent. Grappling is the recommended form of combat, as it permits a contestant to incapacitate his opponent with virtually no lasting damage. For the purposes of this contest, assume that any damage done is purely temporary and will heal completely in a number of hours equal to the defeated character's Earth Ring. Both victorious and defeated contestants in this particular test are permitted time to rest after their exertion before competing in another test. The victor of this duel gains 5 points. The defeated contestant may gain 2 points as well, assuming that he performs admirably in the eyes of the judges.

### **The Bat Clan:** Meditation

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Komori Iongi

**Primary Roll:** Void/Meditation

Save for the Oriole, the Bat are the youngest Minor Clan in existence, having sprung into being shortly after the coronation of Emperor Toturi III. The Clan's founder, a veteran of the Clan War and a former Mantis named Komori, has sought out only a handful of other shugenja

to bring to his banner. Thus far, his recruits are almost exclusively Mantis, though there have been a handful of ronin accepted as well. With so little of their own traditions as yet developed, the Bat have almost nothing that they can expect of others to mirror their own customs and ways, and so they have clung to the mannerisms of all shugenja with their test for the moment: meditation. Easily the most subjective of all tests administered at the tournament, the Bat test is overseen by Komori Iongi, one of Komori's most trusted advisors and first recruits to the symbol of the Bat.

The meditation trial is perhaps the strangest test presented at the tournament. The initial test simple involves meditation under normal circumstances, and it can be passed with a successful Meditation Skill Roll against a TN of 10. Following that, the judge provides distraction in the way of conversation, and observes whether the contestant is able to meditate in the face of such distraction. This increases the TN of the Meditation Skill Roll by 5. If the contestant is successful, then the judge increases the level of distraction to include loud, boisterous sounds such as music, random metallic sounds such as striking an anvil with a hammer, and various other things of that nature. This increases the TN by an additional 10. If the contestant is successful at only the first trial, he gains 2 points. If he succeeds at the second, he gains a total of 3 points, and if he can meditate in the face of all three, he gains a full 5 points.

**The Dragonfly Clan:** Divination

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Tonbo Hachiko

**Primary Roll:** Awareness/Divination

The Dragonfly have a tumultuous history, one that begins with a conflict with the Lion Clan and that has nearly ended on several occasions with the Clan's extinction by the Lion Clan as well. For centuries the Dragonfly existed almost exclusively on the charity of the Dragon and Phoenix, the two Clans that gave rise to their founders. During the period of conflict following the death of Toturi I, however, the Lion had occasion to decimate the Dragonfly under the guise of marching on the Dragon as part of the Lion's treaty with the Phoenix. The Dragonfly were very nearly destroyed, but survived largely through the efforts of one woman blessed with the gift of foresight. Since that day, the Tonbo Family's interest in divination has become what could more accurately be described as reverence.

Divination is a Skill typically possessed and practiced exclusively by shugenja, giving them an advantage in this particular test. Treat the test as a normal Divination Skill Roll against a TN of 15. Contestants who do not possess ranks in Divination may attempt the test using a Raw Trait Void Roll, but the TN for the roll is increased to 25. Successful divination, as determined by the judges, gains 5 points for each contestant who performs admirably.

**The Fox Clan:** Herbalism

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Kitsune Toru

**Primary Roll:** Intelligence/Medicine (Herbalism)

Herbalism is not an art traditionally practiced by the samurai caste; traditionally, it has been a practice of the lower castes. The Fox are hardly typical samurai, however, and they have elevated the art of herbalism to a level unprecedented anywhere else in the Empire. This was more a matter of survival than anything else, however, as the Fox were originally the servants of Lady Shinjo who remained behind to oversee her lands after she led the rest of followers out of Rokugan. When the Lion forcibly annexed those lands, the Fox were forced to find other lands, and settled near the Kitsune Mori. Their survival was by no means assured in those days, and it was then that the Kitsune Family first took up the practice of herbalism, a practice they have continued to this day.

The herbalism trial consists of several simple tests placed before the contestant. These are by no means advanced inquiries, but they do involve a small number of commonly found and well known herbs and plants, and how they can be prepared to create specific compounds or poultices. Typically the judge demonstrates how the substance in question is to be created, and then requires the contestant to duplicate it. The instructions are always clear, but sometimes issue quickly and the test requires both rapt attention and a keen mind. Success in replicating the substance requires a successful Medicine (Herbalism) Skill Roll against a TN of 15. For those without the Herbalism Emphasis for the Medicine Skill, the TN increases to 20. Successful completion of this trial results in 5 points for the contestant.

**The Hare Clan:** Athletics

**Format:** Match

**Lead Judge:** Usagi Uono

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Athletics (various Emphases)

Despite the general level of paranoia that has infected the Hare Clan over recent years, the Clan resumed its support of the tournament immediately after its status was restored. The years that the Hare survivors existed as ronin, hunted by the Kolat and threatened by every enemy imaginable, both reaffirmed their need for physical and mental prowess and instilled in them a deep-seated mistrust of anyone they do not know personally. Regardless, they are still considered trusted members of the Minor Clan alliance and are even respected by the Great Clans for the athletic fighting style that is uniquely theirs.

The athletics test can accommodate multiple contestants at the same time, and frequently tests up to

six competitors simultaneously. The test is conducted away from the tournament grounds, and takes place along an infrequently used path that skirts the edge of the Kitsune Mori. It involves sprinting, climbing, and jumping, and other portions that vary from year to year. The standard format is typically as follows: The initial portion is a lengthy sprint requiring two Skill rolls using the Running Emphasis (TN 10). This stretch ends at a ditch, perhaps four feet deep, that must be leapt to cross it (TN 15). After crossing the ditch, there is a second run that takes the contestants through a heavily wooded area, making it difficult to maintain any real speed (Running, TN 25). This terminates with a large rock pile that must be crossed using the Climbing Emphasis (TN 20), and finally with a last sprint back to the starting point (TN 20). To determine the overall winner of the race, total the rolls of every competitor who succeeded at every Skill Roll. The one with the highest total is the winner. The winning contestant gains 5 points. Other contestants who successfully complete the trial in a timely manner — as indicated by succeeding at every Skill Roll — gain 2 points as well.

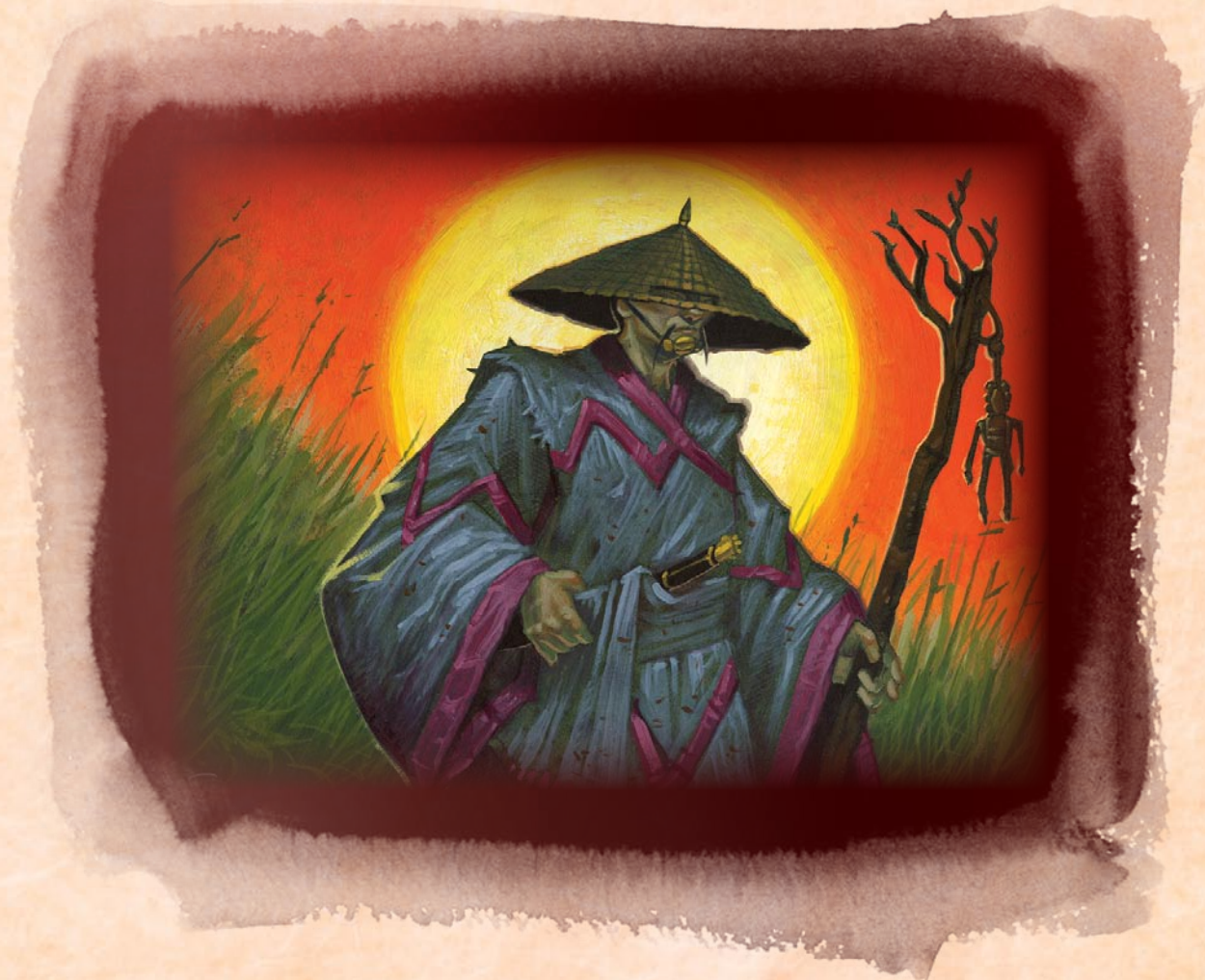
**The Monkey Clan:** Kenjutsu

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Toku Satsuko

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Kenjutsu

There is no Minor Clan so traditional, nor so beloved by the common folk of Rokugan, as the Monkey Clan. The family and followers of Toku, the man known to many simply as the General, embody a legacy of heroism such as the Empire has never seen, and their love of the traditional kenjutsu style practiced by samurai throughout Rokugan makes them ideal judges to oversee such a competition. With the exception of perhaps the Sparrow and their iaijutsu tradition, there are no Minor Clans save the Monkey who are universally respected by the Great Clans for their martial traditions. Were any other Minor Clan to presume to test a Great Clan's samurai on their mastery of kenjutsu, it could conceivably be viewed as an insult, but the Monkey are so beloved that the Great Clans accept their right to do so.





The kenjutsu trial is a rather straightforward test. There are a number of young, talented Toku swordsmen on hand to face a contestant in battle with padded armor and bokken. The test is not about performance, or at least not about victory over an opponent. The Monkey judges instead observe the confrontation to determine how skillfully the contestant performs. In addition to using Agility/Kenjutsu for the duel itself, the contestant must also to make an Agility/School Rank Roll against a TN of 10 to suitably impress the judges. Success indicates that the individual has represented their School's style well. Failure means that the judges have found fault with their presentation. Regardless, the judges typically award a contestant between 2 and 5 points based on their overall performance. Only dishonorable individuals who completely embarrass their School and sensei are denied any points whatsoever. Like the Sparrow Clan's iaijutsu test described below, the kenjutsu test allows for shugenja and courtiers to participate in this test by proxy if they so choose.

**The Oriole Clan:** Craftsmanship

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Tsi Zutaka

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Craft (any)

The newest and least established Minor Clan, the Oriole, have readily entered into both the Minor Clan alliance and support for the Tournament of the Emperor's Favored. The Oriole are led by the Tsi Family, previously a ronin Family with a proud, centuries-old tradition of smithing and craftsmanship that is well known throughout the Empire. It is no surprise to many, therefore, that the Oriole have brought this particular emphasis of theirs to the tournament, although many are shocked to learn that the Oriole Daimyo, Tsi Zutaka, chooses to oversee the tournament in person. Given that the Tsi have historically accepted the majority of their apprentices from outside the Clan, it may be that Zutaka thinks the tournament may be an opportunity to recruit any ronin contestants that demonstrate a suitable level of skill. It may also be that Zutaka wishes to attempt to build more bridges between his line and the Great Clans. Or it might be that he simply loves his art and wishes to see it taught to others, even if only in the most basic sense.

Any true artisan is well aware that true mastery of craft cannot be demonstrated in the meager time allowed for this particular test. Instead, this test is designed to look for those who possess the basic levels of skill or even simply the aptitude to learn such skills. The Tsi provide a wide assortment of materials associated with crafting or general artisanship, and the contestant merely has to select an item or items of their choosing and work with it for the allotted hour. At the end of an hour, Zutaka inspects their work and weighs it against the materials with which the competitor began. Use a successful Skill Roll in the Craft Skill of the contestant's choice against a TN of 15 as the standard by which Zutaka will judge him. If the progress is considered excellent, then

the contestant is awarded 5 points. Lesser rewards are granted to those whose work is considered adequate or at least demonstrative of some degree of aptitude in the crafting arts.

**The Ox Clan:** Horsemanship

**Format:** Match

**Lead Judge:** Morito Shimaru

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Horsemanship

The Ox are the wayward sons of the Unicorn Clan, the followers of the former Shinjo Morito and his fellow outcasts. Many among the Clan were exiled from the Unicorn for errors of philosophy or action, many for offenses relating to their treatment of their steeds. Some believe that the Ox do not share the Unicorn's reverence for their steeds, but this is not the case; the Ox do indeed care for their horses almost as much as their Shinjo and Utaku cousins. They also realize, however, that sometimes even that which one loves above all else must be sacrificed in the name of Family and Clan. That the Unicorn do not consider such self-sacrifice acceptable flies in the face of all that a samurai is supposed to be, in the eyes of the Morito.

The Ox oversee the only other test that regularly involves more than two contestants, much in the same way that the Hare Clan oversees the test of athletics. The Morito judges maintain a dozen well-fed and well-trained horses, and will use up to a half-dozen at a time to test their competitors. This allows for two rotations, so that each group of horses has time to rest between contests for years when attendance is particularly high.

The test itself is rather simple. It consists of a race, of sorts. The initial leg proceeds over smooth, even ground and covers roughly a quarter mile of open plain. This requires a Horsemanship Skill Roll against a TN of 10 to manage. At the end of the first segment, there is a low rock wall that the horse must jump across. The wall can be circumvented, but doing so adds nearly a full minute to the race and essentially precludes any chance at winning. The jump requires another Skill Roll, against a TN of 20. The race concludes with a gallop back to the starting point, which requires a third and final Skill Roll, against a TN of 15. To determine the winner of the race, add together the Skill Rolls for each contestant. Subtract 30 from the total for each failed Skill Roll, and again if the contestant chose to circumvent the wall in the second leg of the race. Rank the contestants by their adjusted totals. The first place contestant receives 5 points, and each contestant following receives 1 point less. This means that the last place contestant receives no points.

**The Sparrow Clan:** Iaijutsu**Format:** Duel**Lead Judge:** Suzume Akashi**Primary Roll:** Reflexes/Iaijutsu

As might be expected given their Crane ancestry, the Sparrow Clan has the strongest dueling tradition of all the Minor Clans, although their style and philosophy has little in common with their Crane forefathers. The Suzume Family views iaijutsu as an almost meditative art, and does not permit dueling to the death among their ranks save for the most heinous offenses, typically involving murder or some form of treason. It is the Suzume's hope that, in addition to any other benefits gained as a result of their participation in the tournament, that they might be able to spread their philosophy to others. They came to this decision after their attempts at implementing a test involving meditation met with failure and disinterest.

The Sparrow test is a fairly straightforward iaijutsu duel. Two competitors are randomly matched in a duel to first blood. A duel resulting in any sort of significant injury is not only a considerable dishonor and grounds for expulsion from the contest, but grounds for the potential expulsion of all members of the competitor's Clan as well. It is unlikely that so severe a punishment would ever actually be levied, of course, as it is directly counter to the Minor Clans' stated goal of gaining allies among the Great Clans, but the potential for such a ruling acts as a sufficiently powerful deterrent. The victor of the duel gains 5 points. A defeated opponent who performs admirably and honorably in the eyes of the judges is awarded 3 points as well.

In this particular test, shugenja and courtiers are welcome to participate. If they wish, however, they are permitted to select another samurai as their champion, and they share in that samurai's victory or defeat when his turn to duel comes. However, the points awarded for the victory are the same, and an agreement on how the points will be divided between the two sharing a victory must be made prior to the duel. Once entered, this agreement is inviolable.

**The Tortoise Clan:** Sadane**Format:** Trial**Lead Judge:** Kasuga Kaiten**Primary Roll:** Awareness/Games: Sadane

Although hardly considered a fixture in the Empire's courts, the sardonic Tortoise Clan is perhaps the most socially adept of all their peers. It is, after all, the only way they can survive given the generally dishonorable nature of their daily activities. Still, no self-respecting samurai would permit themselves to be tested on social etiquette by a Clan known for having none of the same, and so the Tortoise have instead tailored their test in a manner so that it does indeed reflect the contestant's

ability to interact with others while simultaneously reflecting the Clan's philosophy in a more consistent and accurate manner.

Rightfully assuming that many bushi, whether Great Clan or Minor Clan, have little interest in the game of sadane, the Kasuga administering the test have historically and wisely chosen not to pit contestants against one another, but instead placed them in a position to play the game against a Tortoise participant. Not only does this ensure that at least one participant will be skilled at the game, but can prevent creation of long-standing feuds between previously uninvolved contestants. The contest consists of a normal game of sadane, in which the Kasuga and the contestant exchange politely worded insults for several minutes until one is unable to respond, either because they admit defeat or because they can think of nothing else to say. The Kasuga rarely loses, but an opponent who is creative and thick-skinned, who endures the game without becoming agitated, will receive the full 5 points for their involvement. A cunning insult or two can still earn fewer points for one not deemed worthy of the full award. It is rare for a contestant to be awarded 0 points unless he loses his temper and becomes angry.

Resolve this test as a Contested Games: Sadane Roll. If the contestant wins, he receives the full 5-point award. A catastrophic failure means that the contestant has lost his composure all together and receives 0 points. Lesser degrees of failure entitle him to a partial award based on his proof that he at least possesses some degree of cleverness and social skill. You may also roll-play this test, with GM awarding points at his discretion.

## The Lost Tests

A number of Minor Clans no longer exist. Given the long history of this particular tournament, it is entirely possible that it was conducted during years in which those Clans existed, and they may well have participated at that time. In the interest of allowing this Appendix to be used during campaigns set in past periods of Rokugani history, here are the now-extinguished Minor Clans and the tests they administrated:

**The Boar Clan:** Metalworking**Format:** Trial**Lead Judge:** Heichi Tokaro**Primary Roll:** Intelligence/Craft: Metalworking and Agility/Craft: Metalworking

The Boar Clan died centuries ago, brought to destruction's door by the actions of Agasha Ryuden, one of Iuchiban's most loyal servants and by some accounts an exceptionally gifted apprentice of the dread artisan



Yajinden. Regardless of Ryuden's true nature, the fact remains that the Boar perished to a man, their souls used as the raw materials to craft perhaps the most insidious artifact ever crafted, the Anvil of Despair. The Boar were a hardy people that spent their lives hewing a life from the earth itself, and their test was a reflection of that lifestyle.

The Boar test of days past filled much the same niche that the Oriole Clan's test currently occupies in the tournament's overall structure. Of course, like the Oriole's test, the normal arts the Boar would consider a true test of a contestant's worth would take far longer than the tournament allows, and thus they have little choice but to provide partially completed metal works and allow the contestants the tools and accommodations to complete them. Katana are of course prohibited from such proceedings, because allowing a half-hearted and unskilled attempt to create such a sacred weapon would be almost blasphemous in the eyes of samurai. In all other instances, however, the Boar test is identical to that of the Oriole Clan.

**The Centipede Clan:** Theology

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Moshi Minako

**Primary Roll:** Intelligence/Theology

The Centipede Clan no longer exists, having been absorbed into the Mantis Clan as the Moshi Family after the Mantis were granted Great Clan status. At that time, however, the Moshi were among the greatest and most devoted adherents of Lady Sun. Easily among the more devout and pious shugenja families of the Empire at that time, the Centipede administered a test that was a matter of theology, and was applicable as easily to bushi contestants as any other.

The Centipede test was one of theological matters including both facets of Rokugan's accepted religious practices. Half involved questions regarding the Fortunes and other divine occupants of the Celestial Heavens that affect the mortal realm, as well as the philo-

sophy of Shintao that was adopted from the teachings of the prophet Shinsei. Contestants were asked five questions, and are given 1 point per correct answer. Sample questions included the following:

- \* Name the ten Kami (Hida, Doji, Togashi, Akodo, Shiba, Bayushi, Shinjo, Hantei, Fu Leng, Ryoshun)
- \* Name the Seven Fortunes (Benten, Bishamon, Daikoku, Ebisu, Fukurokujin, Hotei, Jurojin)
- \* Who rules over the dead in the Realm of Waiting? (Emma-O, Fortune of Death)
- \* Which divine entities sponsor the Oracles of Light? (the Elemental Dragons)
- \* Who scribed the first Tao of Shinsei? (the Kami Shiba)
- \* Which Emperor incorporated worship of the Fortunes with Shintao? (Hantei Genji, the Shining Prince, son of Hantei)
- \* Which Family traditionally oversees the Order of Ten Thousand Temples? (the Seppun Family)

**The Falcon Clan:** Hunting

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Toritaka Rikken

**Primary Roll:** Perception/Hunting (Tracking), possibly others as well

The Falcon Clan was a regular supporter of the tournament, but rarely had sufficient resources to do more than conduct a meager test. When the Clan fell into chaos and ruin in the years prior to the Clan War, the other Minor Clans viewed their absorption into the Crab Clan with a mixture of disappointment and hope. While they regretted the loss of their cousins, they had hopes that the new Toritaka Family would lend their assistance to the Minor Clans in times of trouble. That has been true to some degree, although not to the extent that the Minor Clans had hoped. Still, they can count the Toritaka among their greatest allies, and that at least is some consolation for the loss of the Falcon Clan.

The Falcon's test was one of hunting. The Falcon themselves were hunters of spirits, but that would be unsafe even if it were possible for contestants to perform it at the tournament, upon command. Instead, a lone Falcon samurai would enter the Kitsune Mori. Ten minutes afterward, the contestant would be permitted to enter in pursuit. The contestant would be given a single hour to attempt to locate the Falcon through whatever means he chose to employ. At the end of the hour, if the contestant had not located his prey, the Falcon found him instead and led him back to the tournament, defeated.

Resolve this test by having the contestant make three Hunting (Tracking) Skill Rolls. The TN for the first roll is 15, and increases by 5 if the contestant succeeds. If the contestant succeeds on the second roll, then the

TN increases by 5 again for the final roll. The contestant must succeed on all three rolls to find his prey.

**The Firefly Clan:** Defense

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Hotaru Robun

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Defense

Strictly speaking, the Firefly Clan does not exist in canonical Rokugan. It was created as an example in the Legend of the Five Rings Second Edition supplement Way of the Daimyo for the purposes of demonstrating the creation of a Minor Clan and its School. However, the Clan is inexplicably popular among certain circles, and so its test is included here in the interest of completion.

The Hotaru fighting style is defensive in nature, designed around the philosophy of enduring an enemy's assault in hopes of finding and exploiting a weakness in their style. Toward that end, their test consists of the contestant wearing padded armor and wielding a practice version of their preferred weapon (essentially a normal weapon with blunted wood replacing the metal components, such as a bokken). The contestant must then endure the assault of a Firefly bushi. The attack lasts for two minutes. Then a second attacker is added, and that endures for an additional minute. At the end of three minutes, the contestant is awarded 5 points, minus 1 point for each time they were struck. The weapons are treated with chalk so that it is immediately obvious if an actual blow was landed.

Resolve this test as a normal skirmish between two samurai wearing heavy armor. Because both are wearing padded armor and using blunted weapons, successful attacks cause no damage.

**The Snake Clan:** Lore

**Format:** Trial

**Lead Judge:** Chuda Aoiko

**Primary Roll:** Intelligence/Lore: Shadowlands or Lore: Maho

The Snake Clan was eradicated centuries ago by the Phoenix Clan in a brutal purge known as the Five Nights of Shame. Although the Snake Clan was founded by an Imperial magistrate and noted hunter of maho-tsukai, the practice of maho was rife within its ranks at the time its destruction. Thus, the Clan is no longer spoken of, even among the other Minor Clans that were associated with it at the time. They are the greatest shame among all the Minor Clans, and their name is considered by most a tremendous black mark against the alliance and all that it wishes to accomplish.

The test of lore conducted by the Chuda was designed around the premise that it is important to know one's enemies. The matters discussed in the test are generally considered inappropriate topics of conversation,

but the Chuda and the tournament organizers received special dispensation from the Emerald Magistrates to do so without breach of the law or social restrictions. Thus, they were be discussed in this particular instance without fear of honor loss. Even if only briefly, the Chuda were a shining light against the darkness, and encouraged others to know the foes that waited in the shadows for them. Each contestant was asked three questions of varying difficulty, and awarded 2 points for each correct answer. The questions were invariably selected from the following:

First Question: TN 10

- ★ What sacrifice must a servant of darkness make in order to cast maho? (Answer: blood)
- ★ Whom do all practitioners of maho ultimately serve? (Answer: Fu Leng)
- ★ What blood sorcerer has risen twice (or three times, depending on the historical moment) to threaten the Empire's well-being with his cult? (Answer: Iuchiban, the Bloodspeaker)

Second Question: TN 15

- ★ How may the undead created through maho be destroyed? (Answer: By shattering the ceramic ritual masks they wear.)
- ★ How are Oni Lords created? (Answer: When an oni consumes the soul of the one that lent it his name.)
- ★ What are the individuals chosen by Fu Leng to serve as his servants and generals called? (Answer: Maho-bujin)

Third Question: TN 20

- ★ What is the name of the corrupted elemental spirits that teach the dark art of maho to those willing to learn? (Answer: Kansen)
- ★ What Lost Crab shugenja first discovered the secrets of maho? (Answer: Kuni Nakanu)
- ★ Who are the four Oni Lords? (Answer: This number and the names will vary with time, but for most of history they are Oni no Akuma, Oni no Shikibu, Oni no Tsuburu, and Kyoso no Oni. Later periods may include the Maw, the First Oni, or Yakamo no Oni as possible answers according to greater understanding of such concepts among such scholars as the Kuni.)

**The Wasp Clan:** Kyujutsu

**Format:** Duel

**Lead Judge:** Tsuruchi

**Primary Roll:** Reflexes/Kyujutsu (Various Emphases may be used based on equipment)

The Wasp Clan were particularly active in the administration of this tournament, intent as they were on individual achievement. A similar tournament was held

annually in the Wasp Lands, and those who performed well were offered fealty. Although the Wasp have since become the Tsuruchi Family of the Mantis Clan, they are still allied with the Minor Clans conducting the tournament and often contribute resources toward it each year. On more than one occasion, the tournament has been held in the Tsuruchi Lands when circumstances prevent use of its normal site.

This test pits two contestants against one another in a test of archery. First, the two are given five arrows each and expected to fire at stationary targets. The first target is placed 50' away, then 10 additional feet for each following shot. The targets are small and not easy to hit, despite the close distance. Hitting the first target requires a successful Kyujutsu Skill Roll against a TN of 10, with the TN increasing by 1 for each subsequent target.

Once the stationary test has been completed, the contestants are given an additional five arrows. Then, small targets, metal rings with cloth stretched across them are thrown into the air three at a time. Four sets of three are thrown, and the contestants may use their five arrows as they see fit. Only those capable of striking two targets before they all hit the ground can achieve the maximum score in this contest. Resolve this part of the test like so: The contestant may fire up to 2 arrows per set of rings. Each shot requires a Kyujutsu Skill Roll against a TN of 25 to hit a ring.

When both contestants have expended all their arrows, the contestant with superior marksmanship is awarded 5 points for the contest. His defeated opponent is awarded 2 points, assuming that he scored a hit with at least seven of ten arrows.

**The Mantis Clan:** Personal Combat

**Format:** Duel

**Lead Judge:** Yoshine (later Yoritomo Yoshine)

**Primary Roll:** Agility/Weapon Skill of choice

The Mantis Clan occupies a unique position in the tournament's history. They were among the tournament's founders and principle financial supporters for centuries, given that the Mantis were always the wealthiest of the Minor Clans. Their ascension to the position of a Great Clan created an awkward situation between them and the other tournament participants. The assembled Minor Clans looked to the Mantis as an example of what was possible for them, and at the same time they hoped that as a Great Clan the Mantis might further their lot as well. For their part, the Mantis desired only prosperity for their allies, but knew that further close association with them could cause other Great Clans to doubt the validity of their new status. And so the Mantis withdrew from actual participation in the tournament, continuing only financial support. While their ongoing sponsorship is greatly appreciated, there is nevertheless some resentment among other Minor Clans that the Mantis seem to have forgotten the circumstances of their origin.

The Mantis have ever been hardy folk, and in the decades since the Clan War have striven to emulate the man responsible for their ascension, the warrior Yoritomo, perhaps the greatest combatant that has ever walked the Empire. Even before that, however, the Mantis believed in carving one's destiny with one's own hands, and personal combat was the means by which many imagined such things would be achieved. For the most part, their former contest took the same format as the current Monkey Clan contest, although it allowed for virtually any melee weapon, to be chosen by individual contestants. It also pitted two contestants against one another rather than against judges. Victors received 5 points, while those who demonstrated adequate skill while failing to emerge victorious received 2 points.

## The Final Test

Much like other prominent tournaments, the initial tests in the Tournament of the Emperor's Favored serve primarily to arrange the contestants by score in order to determine the order in which they will participate in the final test. This is a common practice, used most famously at the Topaz Championship, the most renowned gempukku ceremony in the Empire. Some involved with the tournament and familiar with its history quietly propose that the Tournament of the Emperor's Favor was the first tournament to adopt such a practice, and that other Clans have merely mimicked their successful innovations. Such beliefs are generally kept private, however, as even after centuries of hard work, the tournament could be completely destroyed by little more than the ill will of a Great Clan.

The Master of Ceremonies at the tournament, usually a Fox Clan samurai but occasionally a Miya in attendance at the organizers' behest, addresses the assembled contestants after the rounds of individual Clan tests have been completed. The contestant or contestants with the highest point totals are grouped together, and in subsequent groups according to totals. The group with the highest point is admitted to the final test first, followed by another group every five minutes until all contestants are involved in the process. In years where the lead contestants have been particularly skilled and the point spread sufficiently wide, it is not completely unheard of for the first contestants to return from the test before all contestants have begun. Considering that the test is ended when the first contestant emerges from the Kitsune Mori, this is an odd occurrence, but still not out of the question. As for the objective, the following is an example of the address the master of ceremonies might offer the assembled contestants:

***"Noble guests, your attendance at our tournament honors us, and your performance a greater honor still. Now that you have passed the tests presented to you by***

***the Minor Clans, the descendants of those most favored of the Emperor's servants, granted the right to create a lasting tradition in their own name and Clan, the time has come to determine who among you shall recognized this day as the victor. Perhaps such a samurai, one of valor and prowess, might one day stand among us as the creator of your own Clan. Such would be our hope, to have personages of your caliber stand among our number.***

***"Behold the Kitsune Mori. The legends surrounding it are innumerable, although they have largely been overshadowed by the inestimable Shinomen far to the southwest. Still, one could rightly say that no more mysterious, enigmatic place exists throughout the Empire. The spirits within are ever eager to play their mischievous tricks upon all who enter. Deep within it, there is a shrine, constructed by the founders of the Fox Clan to honor both Lady Shinjo and the kistune that helped them survive. Upon the altar of this shrine there are tokens, each carved with the image of a single Minor Clan. Reach the shrine and return with one of these tokens. The first to arrive shall be declared the victor. May the Fortunes confer their blessing upon you."***

At first glance, the final task may not seem overly difficult, particularly if a contestant possesses sound woodland skills, or is simply exceptionally athletic. This is hardly the case. As the master of ceremonies indicates, the forest is full of mischievous animal spirits and trickster spirits, most of whom are not interested in killing anyone, but who have a poor understanding of how dangerous their games actually are. What's more, the shrine is located a full five miles within the boundary of the forest, and requires considerable stamina and agility, not to mention navigational skill, to reach it successfully and return. There have never been any confirmed casualties as a direct result of participation in this tournament, but there have been a number of temporary disappearances over the years, typically among the less physically inclined contestants who refused to participate in the final test by proxy.

Resolving the final test requires the characters involved to make successful Intelligence/Hunting (Wilderness Lore) Skill Rolls in order to navigate their way through the woods to find the shrine, and then successfully return, without getting hopelessly lost. In order to successfully complete the outbound leg of the test efficiently enough to preserve a chance of winning the test, you must make 5 consecutive successful Intelligence/Hunting (Wilderness Lore) Skill Rolls against a TN of 20, 1 for each mile of distance from the edge of the Kitsune Mori to the shrine. Failing any one of these rolls means that you have lost your way badly enough to preclude any realistic chance of winning the test. At the GM's discretion, spectacular failure can mean any of the following possibilities: You have lost your way badly enough to force you to turn back; you have encountered a spirit of the forest who will try to hinder you; or you have encountered a spirit of the forest who will try to help you get back into the running! At every step, the

GM should keep a tally of the margin by which characters have succeeded in their Hunting (Wilderness Lore) Skill Rolls. To reflect the test's staggered start, subtract 15 from the total for each group that starts before that contestant's group. In other words, a contestant suffers a -15 penalty if he belongs to the second group to set out, a -30 penalty if he belongs to the third group, a -45 penalty if he belongs to the fourth group, etc. The contestant with the highest cumulative margin after the staggered start penalty is applied is the first to reach the shrine.

Successfully returning from the shrine also requires making 5 consecutive successful Intelligence/Hunting (Wilderness Lore) Skill Rolls, as the forest is dense and treacherous enough so that finding your way back is not as easy as it may seem. For the return leg, however, the TN for the rolls is only 15. As on the outbound leg, the GM should keep a tally of the margin by which characters have succeeded in their Hunting (Wilderness Lore) Skill Rolls, again applying the staggered start penalty as required by the contestants' starting positions. The contestant with the highest cumulative margin for both legs of the test combined wins the test.

## The Awards Ceremony

The final test typically ends in the late afternoon, and the awards ceremony is almost always held a few short hours later, right around dusk. The ceremony is a simple affair, with the tournament's victor recognized for his valor and skill, and awarded multiple prizes from the various Minor Clans conducting the tournament. Unlike many other tournaments, however, in this instance individual Minor Clans also have the option of recognizing other contestants as well if they feel that such individuals performed admirably and represented the spirit of the Clan conducting the test well. This is only done after the champion is presented with his gifts and given the accolades he is due, so as to not undermine his achievements.

### So What Does the Winner Get?

If, as is so often the case, a player character emerges victorious at the Tournament of the Emperor's Favored, then the player in question will doubtless wonder what he or she will receive. The prize varies each year, and depends upon which Clans are conducting the tournament. Generally speaking, each Minor Clan grants a gift of some sort to the victor, and usually at least one other gift of a similar nature to one other participant in the tournament. In this way they hope to accrue more allies to their banner, and anyone receiving a prize from

the tournament would qualify for purchasing any Advantages relating to Minor Clans, such as Allies or something similar.

The gifts offered by the Clans might include one the following:

**Badger:** A heavy weapon bearing the Badger mon, and unlimited access to training with the Ichiro sensei in all Badger dojo.

**Bat:** A private session with Komori sensei to speak to the winner's ancestors.

**Boar:** Fine quality armor.

**Centipede:** An elaborate kimono created with the winner's Clan and Family mon, and a satchel of scrolls for shugenja contestants.

**Dragonfly:** A private reading with shugenja sensei to divine the winner's future.

**Falcon:** An assortment of ward ribbons used to protect the bearer from malicious spirits, an exquisite falcon-themed helmet, and an actual trained hunting falcon.

**Firefly:** An elaborate jitte with the Firefly mon engraved into the hilt.

**Fox:** An advanced herbalism kit that provides 2 Free Raises to Medicine (Herbalism) skill Rolls and lasts twice as long as the normal item, and a scroll satchel of spells for shugenja winners.

**Hare:** A scribe to record the tale of the winner's exploits in an epic play or book. When complete, the winner gains a number of Glory Points equal to the scribe's Storytelling Skill.

**Mantis:** A sizeable sum of koku, and papers allowing free passage throughout the seas of Rokugan on any Mantis vessel.

**Monkey:** A fine quality katana with the Monkey mon engraved into the hilt.

**Oriole:** A Tsi blade or other crafted weapon.

**Ox:** An Ox steed, and various cavalry weapons including a daikyu or no-dachi.

**Snake:** A tanto with jade inlays.

**Sparrow:** An exquisitely rendered copy of the Tao.

**Tortoise:** A number of legal gaijin trinkets, a small kobune, tortoise-shell armor (value equals 3 x normal price of armor).

**Wasp:** A Tsuruchi longbow.

## Possible Complications

There are any number of potential problems with getting together such a large number of samurai to compete with one another. Despite that they are representing their Clans — or perhaps because of it — contestants have been known to act upon conflicts between Clans and make them personal affairs, greatly complicating the tournament in the process. The truth is that certain Families and Clans send contestants to such events for no purpose other than to gain information on their enemies and to ensure that, if the prize is not to be gained for their Clan, then their enemies certainly will not achieve it either. It is merely one more layer of the dense political layers upon layers that flavor the interaction of samurai in the Empire of Rokuan.

The following are some examples of complications that GMs using this tournament might include to make things more interesting. These are merely examples, and should be modified to suit the needs of your campaign, or perhaps even used as springboards to send the campaign in new directions.

### Hunting the Shadows

**Challenge:** A Hare Clan samurai, Usagi Binjiro, has entered the contest. His younger brother, a sickly shugenja named Tojiro, attends but does not compete. The two share frequent intense looks and quick conferences between tests. In particular, they seem to be paying special attention to any player character participating in the tournament. Their attention only increases as the tournament progresses.

**Focus:** Binjiro discovered materials he believes are the trappings of a maho-tsukai discarded near the tournament grounds the day before the tournament began. The player characters are among the only individuals that were present in the proper timeframe to be the culprits, and Binjiro has eliminated most other candidates in one way or another.

**Strike:** The materials were maho related, and were discarded by Binjiro's brother Tojiro. Tojiro has been sickly and in poor health most of his adult life and is willing to make almost any sacrifice in order to be strong like his brother, whom he idolizes. If the truth comes out, both brothers will be devastated, perhaps beyond the ability to recover.

### Mischievous Impersonation

**Challenge:** Throughout the entire first day of the tournament, other contestants and attendants look at one or more player characters with strange expressions and unusual reactions. Complete strangers act as if they had spoken to the character before, and recently, while long-term acquaintances act as if offended by something, although the characters have no recollection of what they might have done to offend. Similarly, personal

belongings have been going missing and reappearing in strange places, occasionally in the possession of others.

**Focus:** After some investigation, the characters discover accounts of their actions that take place simultaneously with their participation in other tests at the tournament. Thankfully, the word of the judges at these tests is sufficient to deflect any possible loss of Honor or Glory as a result of the alleged incidents. The Kitsune overseeing the tournament take particular interest in this series of events, and ask the characters a number of questions in an attempt to discover what they may or may not have done.

**Strike:** As the Kitsune suspect, the player characters have attracted the attention of one or more trickster spirits from the forest. They could be simply mischievous, or they could be the more unpleasant sort of spirit that occasionally manifests in such places, and consider a suitable punch line to be the death of their target. The Kitsune Family will be eager to correct the situation quickly and quietly, as public knowledge of such a thing could damage both their honor and the tournament's reputation as a whole. The characters' assistance in this matter would result in their being held in very high regard by the Kitsune in the future.

### A Belligerent Menace

**Challenge:** One contestant, ideally a burly sort such as a Hida, Ichiro, or Morito, has been causing a stir with his belligerent, outspoken, almost hostile behavior. Regardless of the test in which he is participating, his behavior is outrageous, bordering upon shameful. He shouts unnecessarily, questions everything others around him do, and generally makes a spectacle of himself in every way.

**Focus:** Although evening entertainment is limited, there are numerous contestants who saw their belligerent co-competitor by himself near the forest's edge, drinking quietly throughout the evening hours. Speculation as to what could cause a bushi to surrender so to vice with so much riding on the tournament's outcome has given rise to countless rumors, including allegations of a lost love, some secret disgrace, or even more scandalous allegations such as gambling debts or simple alcoholism.

**Strike:** The contestant in question is not drunk or hung over, but is in fact being given large quantities of a potent herb that causes an altered state of mind, primarily unwarranted hostility and an inability to identify inappropriate social behaviors. Whether this compound is being given to the bushi without his knowledge, or whether he is taking it deliberately for some unknown purpose (perhaps to treat an even more severe malady) is unknown.

### Tournament Interrupted

**Challenge:** As the tournament convenes this year, rumors of rampant bandit activity throughout the Kitsune Provinces circulate among the contestants.



Certainly there is a marked increase in the number of magistrates in attendance, with even a handful of Emerald Magistrates on hand in the event that anything unpleasant rears its head while the Kitsune are distracted by the tournament. Unfortunately, the Kitsune are a small family and cannot spread themselves too thin; thus the whispered rumors of bandit activity continue.

**Focus:** On the final day of the tournament, the first contestant to reach the shrine within the forest (which may be a player character) returns to the tournament grounds and reports that the tokens are missing from the shrine. Many theories quickly circulate, including the ever-popular blaming of trickster spirits and the accusations between different contestants of Clans that are currently hostile toward one another. The tournament threatens to break down into open skirmishing if the matter is not resolved, and soon.

**Strike:** There are indeed bandits in the area, and they are a particularly unpleasant lot. The group, having recently fled from the Scorpion Lands, has settled in the Kitsune Mori in hopes of waiting out any magistrates that might be pursuing them. The ronin leader, a former Toritaka, knows just enough about spirits to ensure that they cannot harm the band, and that the bandits can leave enough signs to fool unwary Kitsune into believing that there is nothing amiss going on in the forest. Unfortunately for the bandits, they did not anticipate the tournament, much less the dozens of Great

Clan samurai who will be on hand to provide support for their Kitsune hosts if the bandits are exposed. What was intended to be a period of hiding out to allow time for the magistrates to lose interest in them could quickly become a skirmish that would result in a considerable amount of blood being spilled within the Kitsune Mori, and of course the characters would be right in the midst of it all.



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2007