

To my most Esteemed Daimyo

I would ordinarily go on and on with fake titles to attempt to amuse you at the very least in these trying times for the Crab. However, this letter must be written and delivered as fast as possible. I am Kaiu Koshin, a much humbled creator of half-steps and almost-theres. Writing to you from the Kuni Wastes, where Lord Yori stationed me when I took up the old quest to find a reproducible substitute for Jade.

When I took up this task, I was paired with a curious and quiet Kuni. Her name is Kuni Kousaku. She is full of endless half-formed ideas and plans. Perfect for me to help complete. And it is one of her inventions that she came up with years before I arrived that is the subject of this letter. A Garden of Sand, with grains imported from all over the empire and rocks gathered from notable locations. The idea is that when spiritual disturbances occur, the earth kami shift and tremble with it, shifting the sand and dirt in this facsimile as well.

It hardly ever moves normally, but this is evidently far from a normal year. The tsunami that struck the Crane shifted the designs. Then a ripple emerged from the rock that I believe is Ootosan Uchi and stretched across all of Rokugan. Then came a small ripple from our border with the Shadowlands and there it stayed for weeks until it smoothed itself out. Finally however, a ripple came from I think the Scorpion, reaching across all of Rokugan again, this time in greater waves.

Lady Shihobu, I know that you are busy with a wedding, but Lord Yori is probably absorbed in his work and Lord Kisada is inundated with letters and news. You are my only hope of seeing to it that this information is investigated, for I cannot help but feel that this is not random happenstance or a malfunctioning test.

If these incidents involve the Shadowlands as I fear, then the Crab **must** know and mobilize to defend Rokugan!

Kaiu Koshin, a Much Humbled Inventor



My Lord

I ask you to please excuse my bluntness cousin; I unfortunately am not gifted with your mastery of both the written and spoken word. But as your cousin I feel a need to send this letter to you with great haste with a simple question; what in the hell is going on?! I've received news that not only has Kyuden Kakita has been captured by the Lion, but destroyed! By gaijin pepper! Where did the Lion get gaijin pepper?! The idea of centuries of history, art and culture being destroyed by a gaijin invention pains me thus I ask you for confirmation, as I only trust you with such grave news.

If this news is true, the idea that I, Kakita Ran, was not there to help drive the Lion back troubles me and I offer my apologies for my inability to protect our family's ancestral home. I swear to you, my cousin, that if I was there, Kyuden Kakita would still be standing and the fields would be awash with Lion blood. No doubt I would be presenting Matsu-San's head to you in court as a message to the Lion that such a cowardly attack will not be tolerated as long as I and Daidoji-Sama still live! Though, I wonder why Doji-Sama's brother was not present for the siege.

I am happy to hear that you have reclaimed your post as Imperial Regent, as it should be. While I do not doubt Bayushi-Sama's capability as an administrator he and his clan were acting in a brazen disregard of the traditions that have held this Empire together for a thousand years. But I must ask you, as I know how much you overwork yourself, is your family alright? I hear your brother is with our clan champion but what about your wife and son? If you need me to look for them, I will.

Ever your loyal servant

*Akiyama no Kakita Ran
Daimyo of Houze Province*



To my Lord Daidoji Uji

I have served 15 years now as a member of the honor guard for Lord Yoshi, and I am writing to express my deep concerns. The reports we are receiving in Ootosan Uchi are scattered at best, although this is the hub of all activity in the Empire. The political situation is extremely delicate, and yet our forces here have no direction with regards to the future or the role we should be playing with.

But first, let me provide an update.

In the days following the Autumn Moon Festival, we maintained vigilance over Lord Yoshi. He did not show it, but we could tell he was devastated over the loss of Kyuden Kakita and the situation with the Regent and Lady Kachiko. Yoshi-sama was gravely concerned about the prospect of Scorpion assassins, and we had to keep double watches for months, while short staffed. For when Lord Kuwanan left, he took four of our guards with him. We were told he was rendezvousing with you in Kintani valley, and reports were that he was involved at the battles of Kyuden Kakita, but his guards still have not returned. Osayo and Naoyori are close friends, and I would dearly like to know where to send correspondence for them. Are they going to Toshi Ranbo with Lady Hotaru? Or elsewhere?

With Lord Bayushi as regent, lacking any other direction from you, we have continued maintaining our guard. But it has been difficult. Rumors of the Emerald Champions death, of course, but also simply believing this edict? Why would the Emperor do such a thing?

But in the last two weeks, the pace of change has come without limit. The Lord Toturi appeared as if from the dead, like a ghost, accusing the Regent of orchestrating a murder attempt upon him. The Ruby Champion called herself complicit in placing him upon the throne, and charged the regent with the murder of the Emperor. She broke her swords, and Toturi-sama declared himself ronin. Then the Dragon army that has been occupying the city swept Lord Shoji from power, and Yoshi-sama remains regent, though the heirs of the Emperor are missing. Then we hear that Kyuden Kakita is destroyed? And by Crane hands? The Lion accused as such before Lord Yoshi expelled them.

Did...we blow up Kyuden Kakita? Do we try to find the heirs? What do we do about the Lion? What do we do with Shoji and all these angry Scorpion in the Capital?

*What is Lady Hotaru going to want of us next?
All your guidance is deeply appreciated.*

*Daidoji Yukimura
Guard in Ootosan Uchi*



To Daidoji Harumi, And the Daidoji Trading Council,

Attached herein: reports of all koku and goods exchanged within southern markets. As per usual my duties have kept me mobile the entire year and I have reported below my most frequent stops.

<i>Frequent Stops</i>
The House of the Laughing Carp: 12
The Flowing Sake Cup: 51
Crossroads of Three Paths: 61
Five Winds Estates: 71

My heartfelt joys and blessings to you and your lovely wife on the fourth birthday of your son Ichiro. I am delighted to hear he has already shown a delight in the musical arts. I know a talented shamisen artist by the name of Yogo Hiruo who may prove to be an excellent teacher should your son continue to show an interest and talent in the instrument.

<i>Notable Festivals Attended</i>
Crab Regions: 21
Crane Regions: 23
Scorpion Regions: 34

Among several recent operations, I found ways to navigate the issues we had been facing with the Hare clan. Under Usagi Tsukiko-Dono the minor clan has been expanding to secure new locations for their expanding population. I believe they would be amicable to additional trade if we wish to pursue the issue. The Scorpion may contest our markets but at this time the Yasuki are preoccupied with other matters.

<i>Caravans Dispatched</i>
Daidoji Akio: 15
Daidoji Tomio: 31
Daidoji Amaya: 41
Daidoji Chikako: 71
Daidoji Shou: 91

Despite the insanity prevailing right now, art expanded at an unforeseen rate within Hida regions of the Crab lands. I spent several weeks investigating this phenomenon on a personal trip to Kyuden Hida and it appears the philosophies of Hida Sukune are beginning to become more prevalent within Crab leadership and a focus on mental rest and health is being tested as an avenue to care for their veterans, which could turn into an entirely unprecedented market.

<i>Donations to the Temples</i>
Hotei: 11
Bishamon: 17
Ebisu: 33
Kisshoten: 41
Jurojin: 43
Benten: 51
Fukurokujin: 71
Daikoku: 73
Shinsei: 81

I'm curious, are the rumors surrounding Doji Hebei founded upon anything serious? I know the magistrate had a reputation for harsh punishments but I have been hearing the most outrageous accusations regarding their honor.

<i>Number of deals negotiated by promising young courtiers</i>
Doji Shigeru: 21
Doji Minoru: 23
Asahina Ko: 31
Daidoji Takehiko: 83

I have found ronin to be very active within Yasuki lands, even beyond the numbers we had previously predicted. I wonder if their economic situation is worsening. If this trend continues in any noticeable way I will be sure to inform you with due haste.

<i>Pieces of Art Sold</i>
Hida Mamoru: 21
Kaiu Tomo: 22
Ide Yoshonori: 61
Bayushi Kotone: 62

I am hopeful in regards to our continued endeavors to solidify control over the River of Gold. I have personally seen continued pressure in critical areas as well as diversified funding to the usual operations.

<i>Settlements Visited</i>
Shiro Kaiu: 31
Shiro Daidoji: 41
Shiro Usagi: 51
Kyuden Kasuga: 52
Ryoko Owari Toshi: 89

Regrettably, raids have continued on our coastal assets. Unaligned pirates have grown bolder in their attacks on particularly slow or unguarded ships. I am afraid the only possible measure we can take will require funds not available to the council at this point in time.

<i>Sculptures Commissioned</i>
Hida Sukune: 16
Shosuro Ibeki: 31
Shinjo Yumiko: 48

May I recommend, for expanding our trade options, Shiro Kandai as a continued investment point? I am aware the intent was to focus our efforts further north, solidifying control of Toshi Ranbo and the surrounding regions but continue to maintain that control of the River of Gold is the most profitable course for the Crane.

<i>Most Rice Sold</i>
Shiro Toritaka: 11
Maemikake: 12
Shiro Usagi: 38
Kyuden Hida: 83
Shiro Kaiu: 84
The River of Gold: 91

If the latter proves to be the tactical source of our continuing operations, I am prepared to relocate my efforts to our northern arena of operations. I recommend Daidoji Hikari as my replacement if that is required. Her expertise and familiarity in our dealings with the Shosuro would be ideal for continuing our southern efforts.

<i>New Openings Within</i>
Shiro Kandai: 12
Shiro Kaiu: 31
Kyuden Shosuro: 35
Shiro Usagi: 45
Ryoko Owari Toshi: 81
The Southern Coast: 91

Granted, I would not want to advise beyond my station. Please forgive me, I am only worried at our continued economic investments drying up when we are so close to securing the southern markets

<i>Biggest losses per invested koku</i>
The Hirosaka Venture: 11
Ronin Security: 12
Supplies for the Wall: 32
Sea-based Trading: 51

Outside any outstanding resources flooding Ryoko Owari Toshi, I predict we will succeed in gaining control of three more districts within the next five years. Doubling down on our efforts in this sector could prove greatly rewarding but only time will tell.

<i>Investments into Economic Stability</i>
Local Security: 11
Sea-based Trade: 22
Ronin on the Yasuki Border: 31
Emerald Magistrates: 32
Border Magistrates: 41

By the good graces of Lady Doji may eternal peace lay upon you and your family in the upcoming year. I wish you many joyful moments this winter, may your talks be fruitful, and your profits, ever expanding.

<i>Personal Favors Secured</i>
The Court of the Hare: 11
The Court of the Moth: 32
The Court of the Shosuro: 42
The Court of the Ide: 71
The Court of the Kaiu: 91
The Court of the Ryoko Owari Toshi: 94

A Humble Feather,
Daidoji Kageyu



IF TOGASHI YOKUNI DOES NOT RECEIVE THIS LETTER, TO WHOM DOES IT BELONG?

THOUGH THIS YEAR HAS BEEN HARD, I HAVE ENDEAVORED TO EAT THE STRAWBERRY EVEN AS THE TIGER SWIPES FROM ABOVE. THE BURDENS OF THIS YEAR HAVE NOT WEIGHED UPON ME; I SET HER DOWN ON THE BANK AFTER CROSSING THE RIVER.

THOSE WE ONCE CALLED ALLIES LAMENT THEIR LOSS OF FORTUNE, BUT IF IT IS THEIR NATURE TO STING, REMEMBER THAT WE ARE WASHING OUR BOWL ON A LOOSE BANK. HOW UNFORTUNATE THE EMPEROR SHOULD PERISH, THE CLANS CRY. "IS THAT SO?" HOW FORTUNATE WE HAD AN ARMY IN THE IMPERIAL CITY WHEN IT WAS NEEDED, THE OTHER CLANS CRY. "IS THAT SO?" WHO SHOULD WE SUPPORT AS REGENT? EVERY REGENT IS THE BEST! YOU CANNOT FIND A REGENT THAT IS NOT THE BEST! WHEN THE PRINCE RETURNS AND ASKS WHAT WE HAVE DONE TO HIS EMPIRE, LET LADY HITOMI RAISE THE DISMEMBERED FINGER.

WHO SHALL WE SUPPORT? YOUR ORDER HAS SECURED A NEW CAT TO BIND.

TEN YEARS OF HUMBLE PATIENCE AND TWENTY OF STRIFE,
TOGASHI KATSUJINKEN



To the righteous Daimyō Mirumoto Masashige,

I hope this letter reaches Mirumoto no Shiro before winter leaves the streets utterly impassable. Since my last letter to you, I continued following the trail of the small group of heretics that gathered around the two Rōnin called Satto and Ichirō, as per your request. Following their trail hasn't been especially hard, even though I kept my safe distance of a day or two through most of the journey. They mostly traveled from village to village and the sect members living there are naively friendly towards anyone that claims to have a tragic backstory and mutters the mantra of the sect from time to time.

A few weeks ago, however, it looked like the trail went cold when I arrived in an unnamed village near the southern border of Dragon lands. The peasants told me the group has been leaving the village to the south, but I wasn't able to follow them further without risking to get lost in the weather. I decided to make the village my shelter for the winter and resume my task in spring.

Luckily for me, the group seemed to have the same plans, as they arrived in the village a few days ago. They had three new people in tow, a boy, a girl and a grown man. While they all pretended to be simple folk, I am certain that the man in the group is Togashi Mitsu, the famous Ise Zume and heir to our Clan. I briefly talked to him some years ago at the Iron Mountain Castle and while I didn't recognize him at first, I realized it was him when I saw one of the many tattoos he tries to hide while he helped an old lady washing clothes.

I don't think Togashi-sama recognized me, I doubt he would even remember who I am, but seeing him together with devout members of the Sect when he is supposed to be with the Army of the Rising Wave troubles me. I pray to the Fortunes that he is not a Perfect Land believer as well.

I will report to you again in spring.

Your loyal servant Mirumoto Mātin"



To my esteemed Daimyo Kitsu Takeko

I write this missive with a heavy heart and a clouded mind. In recent weeks, we have received missives referring to both Lord Akodo Toturi and Lady Matsu Tsuko as the Clan Champion, with many of our military leaders backing Lady Matsu in her recent assault on Kyuden Kakita. To the best of my knowledge, Lord Akodo Toturi had not stepped down as Clan Champion after becoming the Emperor's Emerald Champion, and, apparently, has since stepped down from that position in a rather boisterous manner and denouncing the Regent to the Throne, Lord Bayushi Shoji.

I feel that we stand upon a precipice of history, where the time will come, soon, that we will be called upon to make a choice between two masters. On the one side, our Lord Akodo Toturi who, by all rights, should have renounced his claim to Clan Champion upon taking the mantle of Emerald Champion but did not. On the other, the Lady Matsu Tsuko, who has claimed the title of Clan Champion, despite not being an Akodo. I know it is not my place, but I feel that I must call upon you as our Daimyo to act on behalf of our clan. We cannot serve two masters. The time is coming when we as a clan must choose who to rally behind.

I can only hope that the wisdom of our ancestors guides us along the correct path.

*Your faithful servant,
Kitsu Kotaris*



Ikoma-dono,

It is cold. A cold so bitter that not even the fury of a roaring campfire could subdue its harsh bite. Lady Sun retires for the evening and within her withdrawal we are left within a placid and uneasy darkness. Every soldier of the Lion, in their own fashion, struggles against the uncertainty of our fate which awaits us tomorrow. As we silently await our orders from Ikoma Tsunari-sama, here within the fields surrounding Four Roads village, we must contend with the retribution of the cold.

After the Battle of the Plains of Bloodied Honor, I was tasked with delivering ministrations to the wounded and suffering. I was in the midst of attending to a dying soldier, when I happened to bear witness to a flurry of falling snow. Listless and delicate it lasted for but a fleeting moment before fading from the world, remaining only long enough for the event to be embedded within the trappings of my own memories. It was thereafter I was left troubled with the thoughts of winter's arrival and the disaster it threatened. The further we are driven into the province of Ikoku without the support of our supply lines, the less certain I am of the efficacy of this campaign. The soldier, Matsu Aki, lamentably expired not long after.

I confide in you milord; initially, I claimed an unwavering confidence in our advancement into Unicorn lands, so much so that I was willfully ignorant to any portents which would have suggested anything contrary to the utter success of the endeavor. Yet, as the days passed, my confidence faltered as incoming reports were received in regards to the resources and supplies which we desperately require. At first these reports returned with the assessment that supplies were tentatively scheduled to arrive. Then, the reports claimed that the supplies were rerouted and requisitioned for another campaign being led by Matsu-ue. Later, reports mentioned that supplies were being acquisitioned once again and due to arrive with haste. Afterwards, the reports ceased mentioning supplies altogether.

We require supplies and reinforcements.

**Winter beckons sleep
I rest beneath a gnarled tree.
Snow blankets a corpse.**

-Matsu Aki's death poem.

Ikoma Jinsuke, Eisei-hei



*Asako Anakazu, Isawa Eju, Isawa Rujo, Isawa Tsuke, Isawa Ujina
Most honoured Masters of the Elemental Council*

I come humbly seeking your wisdom and guidance on matters of some small concern that have transpired at my posting in Kyuden Ikoma.

Primarily, there is a need to know a stance to take in relation to the position of the Lion Clan Champion. I had initially assumed that the Phoenix would continue to support Akodo Toturi as Champion, given his recent marriage to our own Isawa Kaede (may Kisshōten bless them) and the more aggressive posture taken by Matsu Tsuko. However, rumours have begun to reach me that he has very publically resigned from all positions. Should we now support the claim of Matsu Tsuko, tacitly supporting her attacks on our ally the Crane, or seek some other solution, risking relations with a Clan we have made serious efforts to ally with?

Secondly, I have been approached by a member of our own Clan, Kaito Yōsuke, with a request to help rebalance the elements of a nearby shrine. He claims to have the authority of the Champion to analyse the elemental balance of the kami as he travels between shrines. This does not appear to extend to doing anything about it, but there is an expectation that shugenja in the area will assist in resolving any issue. I regret to inform the Council that my skills do not yet encompass such a task and request that either useful instruction or an appropriate colleague be dispatched forthwith.

Finally, relating back to the rumours emanating from Otosan Uchi I mentioned previously, what is the current status of the Emperor and his regency? It would be useful to know who is actually ruling the Empire currently.

May the kami of the wind and stone protect you. May the kami of the wave and fire inspire you. May the void unite us all in peace.

*Isawa Umeko
Aide to the Phoenix Clan Ambassador to the Lion
Shugenja of the Elementalist School*



Lady Shiba-ue,

I pray you will forgive my boldness in writing; yet, it has been some months since Asako Tsuki departed for Crab lands, seeking the Master of Earth, and we have had no news. Doubtless, the journey to the southern border of the Empire is long and difficult; nevertheless, as I write this letter, frost has already begun to settle upon the world, and neither she, nor the Master of Earth, have returned. Given the difficult situation in the capital, and the escalating tensions among the Great Clans, I am concerned the Phoenix may be unable to benefit from the full wisdom of the Council of Masters.

In my search for news, I traveled to the market in Kakudaira Toshi; the traders there are an invaluable - albeit, imperfect - source of information regarding events in the wider world. I found precious little news coming from the southern border; however, I am encouraged to hear that our own samurai have joined the Crane in wintering at Toshi Ranbo. Perhaps the wise council of the Phoenix can prevail among those who seek a swift and peaceful end to the Lion-Crane conflict.

Other tidings are less welcome - traders speak uneasily of the heresy gathering strength in the Dragon mountains; they whisper rumours of restless kami and corrupted shrines in our own lands. I have spent many hours combing the manuscripts in the palace library at Kyūden Asako, searching for insight into these spiritual disturbances. The history of the Empire is long; it is my hope that the wisdom of the past will guide us as we seek a solution to our present woes.

*Your humble servant awaits your guidance,
~ Asako Hikaru*



To Lord Bayushi Shoji, Imperial Regent, The Most Dutiful, Master of Secrets, among other titles known and unknown, Daimyō of the Bayushi, and Champion of the Scorpion Clan

My lord, while our Empire is in turmoil and the Lion, Unicorn and Crane are still fighting, the treacherous Kakita Yoshi has been scheming. The fact that he questioned the Emperor's edict that you should become Regent already shows him as unworthy to hold the post.

The accusations made by Akodo Toturi, who was hiding and did not perform his duties, and Agasha Sumiko are not confirmed by anything and are not only shameful, but also dangerous at such a time.

Emerging rumors about the fall of the Castle of Learning under the pressure of the forces of demons from Jigoku add to the fears.

In this regard, we ask for clarification on how all loyal samurai of Scorpion should act.

**Loyal vassal,
Bayushi Manabu**



My Lady Kamoko

It has been more than a year since I left you and my sisters at Shiro Utaku Shojo. I was a child when I left, unprepared for the world away from our verdant plains. Now I am an adult, tried and tested by the Empire. I have made friends and enemies. My honour and loyalty have been tested, both on the battlefield, and in the courtly arena. While at times I faltered, I am proud to say that I never broke. The thought of you and my sisters has kept me grounded. While we may not be together in person, we are joined by spirit and blood.

I have heard of our conflict with the Lion Clan. I wish I could be with you, riding shoulder to shoulder with my sisters against the enemy. However, I have been given duties away from our lands, and they must come first. Know that wherever I am sent, whatever task I am assigned, I carry the spirit of the Unicorn with me. I work to honour our clan and our family with my every word and deed.

So I find myself writing to you my lady, requesting news from home. How fares the conflict with the Lion? Though I cannot ride to battle at your side, I will do what I can to support our clan elsewhere in the Empire. If there is anything I can do to help in this conflict my lady, please tell me, and I will do all I can to fulfil your request.

May the wind be ever at your back.

Your Battlesister, Utaku Khorijin
Emerald Yoriki

