

Challenge, Focus, Strike!
Adventure Hooks for Legend of the Five Rings
#161 through #164
Crane Month

[\[CFS\] CFS of the Week #161 - Crane Month #1](#)
Greetings and Salutations, everyone!

There have been some delays, but Challenge Focus Strike of the Week is finally ready to continue its grand tour of the Empire!

Our next stop is the preeminent museum of the Crane Clan, where art and beauty infuse the very city itself.

[Location Summary Start]

Name:

Bijutsu Toshi – The City of Art

Stewards:

The Crane Clan

Suggested Location:

In Kakita or Doji Lands, relatively near a prominent palace or settlement. If necessary, you can establish the “City of Art” as a district within a larger city.

Background:

Bijutsu Toshi was established as a major holding during a period when the Crane were often favored with visits from the Emperor. In order to display their culture and refinement, the Crane set about constructing a guest estate of unparalleled splendor. Then, in typical Crane fashion, they built an incredible garden all around it. Finally, they set up a small city around that where artisans and craftsmen could continue to produce things of beauty for the Emperor to enjoy. It took years to complete, but the Crane were successful in dazzling the Emperor with their pursuit of perfection.

At the end of his reign, the Emperor returned stewardship of the city to the Crane, on the condition that they maintained it as a permanent home for the many works of art he had collected over the years. The Crane agreed, and in the years since then they have added to the majesty of the city significantly. Today, the City of Art is rivaled only by the Imperial Palace and the Kakita Artisan Academy as the greatest collection of art in the whole of the Empire. Because of that great reputation, it has attracted a number of artisans and noble patrons, who serve to increase the beauty and splendor of the city.

Even in times of war, Bijutsu Toshi has been spared from devastation. This is largely due to its lack of tactical significance, but the fact that other Clans are reluctant to damage the property of the Emperor is also a large factor. Although there have been times when the city was threatened, it

has never seen full scale warfare and its beauty remains unspoiled. Because of this, many of the older buildings in the city are also considered works of art, demonstrating styles of architecture that date back several centuries.

It would not be accurate to say, however, that the City of Art has never seen conflict. Several decades ago there was a schism at the Kakita Artisan Academy between the older, more traditional sensei and a number of younger artists who wished to experiment with new styles. While this movement was largely unsuccessful in changing attitudes at the main branch of the Kakita Artisan Academy, it did manage to find some support in Bijutsu Toshi, and the spirit of unbridled innovation continues to this day. This has led to a somewhat discordant atmosphere, with the traditional influences of the Conservatory occasionally clashing with the more unorthodox styles of some teachers and students at the Bijutsu Academy. While these two views seem to have come into balance in recent years it remains to be seen whether the City of Art will ever manage to fully reconcile them.

Major Features:

The heart of the city is the Imperial Conservatory, which once served as the Emperor’s estate. It is here that the artistic treasures of the Imperial Family are maintained. The inner chambers of the Conservatory are restricted, but the room that once served as the Emperor’s audience chamber has been converted into a gallery, and members of the Crane Clan routinely select pieces from the Emperor’s collection to be displayed for visitors to admire. On occasion, pieces by contemporary artists are shown in the gallery as well, and to have one’s work displayed in the main hall is regarded as one of the highest honors an artist can achieve.

Adjacent to the Conservatory, in the buildings that once housed the Emperor’s staff and guests, are the various Bijutsu Academies, a branch of the Kakita Artisan Academy. While not as prestigious as the main Kakita school, they are still widely known for training a number of great artists. The steward of the Conservatory also officially presides over all the Academy, although the actual teaching and most of the day to day operation are left to the sensei to manage. The work is typically split among the teachers according to rank and seniority, but when an instructor is called upon to undertake a special project (either by the steward of the Conservatory or a daimyo of the Crane Clan) they are excused from their normal duties. Thus, there is a tremendous amount of competition among the sensei to gain a noble patron’s attention so that they may have more time to work on their own

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artistic pursuits.

The garden that surrounds the Conservatory and the Academy is known as Fugetsu Koen, or Cool Breeze and Bright Moon Park. While some have compared it to the Fantastic Gardens of Kyuden Doji, it is quite different in both character and design. Instead of numerous amenities and luxuries, Fugetsu Koen offers only beauty and art, both in the form of sculptures and garden arrangements. The staff and students of the Bijutsu Academy are responsible for its maintenance, and they go to great lengths to make it every bit as refined as the Conservatory itself.

The city itself offers all the commodities and conveniences that one could wish for in a settlement of its size, and it also boasts a large number of independent craftsmen and artisans. Some have come to seek patronage from the noble families of the Crane, while others are simply interested in hawking their wares to travelers that visit the city. Indeed, many courtiers visit the city to find interesting and unique gifts that can be presented to their allies. Although it is not necessarily true that all items that come from Bijutsu Toshi are of sufficient quality to please the Emperor, many samurai still have the idea that works of art from the city's artisans are somehow superior to others.

You can, of course, add other features that you think would be appropriate or interesting. Over the years a number of artists have left their mark on the city in various ways, so even if an element seems out of place you can justify it as having been the pet project of a past master.

NPCs:

The current Steward of the Conservatory is Kakita Den'yu, who was promoted to the rank only recently. He is younger and less experienced than many of the sensei at the Academy, but he shows great promise as an artist and is constantly creating new works as well as organizing exhibitions in the halls of the Conservatory. His medium of choice is ikebana, but he is also known to compose poems and dabble in bunraku puppetry. He is also quite skilled as a scholar of art, possessing an almost encyclopedic knowledge of art history. When it comes to interpreting the meaning behind works of art (or indeed, behind many things in life), however, he has a tendency to be somewhat non-conformist and read deep messages into a piece that may not actually be the ones the artist intended.

Since coming to Bijutsu Toshi, Den'yu has hired two retainers. One is a bushi named Sudou. Despite his martial training and a love for tales of

heroism, Sudou is clearly not suited for the life of a soldier. He is given to flights of fancy, and can even be immature at times. If it were not for his skilled hands and gift in crafting complex origami he would likely have ended up a failure. At Bijutsu Toshi, however, his eccentricities are easily overlooked, and he has more than enough time to pursue his frivolous interests. He can often be found setting up scenes from famous battles with origami soldiers and painstakingly detailed models of castles.

The other is a young girl named Niko. Although she is only fourteen years old and completed her gempukku only recently, she has a maturity and intellect beyond her years. Indeed, she is often the one to remind Sudou to be more practical. Although she is a talented shugenja, she has another unique skill. Beloved by the Air kami, Niko is gifted with preternaturally acute hearing and a talent for mimicry. In addition to being able to hear a whispered conversation from across a courtyard, she can also imitate almost any voice she hears, male or female, with uncanny accuracy. This skill is often useful during dramatic performances, and Den'yu sometimes calls upon her to mimic famous persons for the purpose of adding realism to a play.

Den'yu's fiancée, Doji Mizuho, is also staying in the city. A romantic at heart, Mizuho dreams of the day when she and Den'yu are married and live together and her main reason for coming to Bijutsu Toshi was to spend time with Den'yu. Unfortunately, his duties often prevent her from seeing him. She has taken up painting in an attempt to fill her idle hours. The masters in attendance at the Academy are happy to have such an eager student, so they let her spend as much time there as she wishes. While she is by no means uncomfortable, her current life is not the one she envisioned when she came to the city, and there are times when she feels very frustrated and neglected.

You can, of course, let the PCs encounter other NPCs at Bijutsu Toshi as well. Students, teachers, and patrons of the arts, no matter what their Clan background, spend quite a bit of time in the City of Art, and dignitaries and travelers often visit the city to relax or conduct courtly business.

Atmosphere:

Bijutsu Toshi may appear at first to be no more than a giant art museum, but with so many masters and students of the arts within its walls it is also a place of intense creative spirit. There are those who create works of art in an attempt to convey some deep message or to inspire others to examine their own values and beliefs. There are others who wish to achieve immortality by

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leaving a legacy that will last throughout the ages. Still others seek recognition, craving the fame and fortune that being the next artistic sensation will bring. The idealism, dedication, fervor, ambition and competitive spirit that these souls bring to their work is contagious, filling the whole of the city with anticipation over what great masterpieces will emerge next.

The theme of these adventures is the role that art and artistic endeavors play within Rokugani society. Although the Clans pay a great deal of attention to martial or political pursuits, the creation and appreciation of things of beauty is also a significant part of samurai culture. The PCs may not practice any forms of art themselves, but during their stay they will witness the passions that drive artists in their craft and the results, both good and bad, that come from such dedication to the ideals of beauty and perfection. They will also have to learn how to handle themselves in an environment where image and style are as important as one's inner character.

Getting There:

There are a number of ways you can get your players to visit Bijutsu Toshi.

If they belong to the Crane Clan, you can have them assigned to the city as part of any number of duties. Bushi and yojimbo are needed to guard the treasures of the city and also to protect the teachers and craftsmen that are its living treasures. Courtiers might entertain guests and arrange alliances. Shugenja and other practitioners of the mystic arts would also be needed in such an environment to maintain harmony and balance. The city is an important center of culture for the Crane, and all sorts of samurai are needed to ensure that it runs smoothly.

If your player characters all come from Clans that have friendly or neutral relationships with the Crane you can have them stationed at Bijutsu Toshi in a diplomatic role. While not one of the major courts of the Crane, the City of Art does see a good deal of politicking, and several members of other Clans maintain homes there so that they can meet with Crane courtiers. The PCs may be sent to Bijutsu Toshi as guards or aides to a diplomat. Alternately, they could be sent on behalf of their respective Clans to serve as emissaries themselves.

If there are any characters in the party that belong to Artisan schools or have ranks in Artisan or Craft skills, you can have their teachers send them to Bijutsu Toshi as part of their training. The Crane are not the only artists in the city, and masters of numerous art forms from families and

Clans all across the Empire go there to study, share their knowledge, and show off their achievements. The PCs might visit the City of Art to learn from great masters or to gain prestige and glory for their Clans. If none of the PCs have a high enough rank in a suitable skill they could also serve in the honor guard of a prominent artist from their family.

Even if your player characters have no connection to the Crane Clan or any sort of artistic endeavors at all it is still possible to have them visit Bijutsu Toshi. The city is a frequent stop for travelers, with merchants, pilgrims, messengers, and dignitaries passing through every day. If the PCs are traveling with an NPC, he or she could visit Bijutsu Toshi either on business or for pleasure. Additionally, the Imperial Conservatory is still considered a holding of the Imperial Family, and all Clans are expected to make some contribution to its upkeep and security. While being sent to protect the City of Art is not as impressive as being in the Imperial Legions, it is still an honored duty, and the PCs would still have a hard time refusing such an assignment.

[Location Summary End]

Our first adventure in demonstrates just how important art is to the Crane and what a significant part of life it is in Bijutsu Toshi.

Challenge:

When the PCs arrive in Bijutsu Toshi they are met by Sudou and Niko, who tell them that Kakita Den'yu wishes to meet with them at their soonest possible convenience. They can provide no other details beyond saying that Den'yu was quite direct about his wish to have them come to his studio in the Conservatory once they have settled in.

Focus:

When the PCs go to meet Den'yu he is visibly harried but still manages to greet the PCs warmly. After introductions and an initial exchange of pleasantries he asks the player characters if they would be willing to help him out of a difficult position. As part of his duties as Steward of the Conservatory he is expected to select a promising graduate from the Bijutsu Academy and provide sponsorship that will enable the young artist to fulfill his or her full potential. This year, however, there are a number of outstanding artists and he is finding it quite difficult to make a final decision. If the PCs could help him they would have his deepest gratitude.

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Strike:

Den'yu has narrowed the field of candidates down to six or seven students, and all of them have their own workshops in the city. Visiting each student and seeing their work should present no problem to the party. Making a decision, however, is not something to be done lightly. By choosing one candidate to support the player characters are also making a statement, whether intentionally or otherwise, about they believe art is and what it should be. In a city full of artists this can be a very controversial thing indeed, and the PCs may find themselves facing a number of offended citizens if they are not careful.

Because tastes in art are subjective it may be helpful to have the students under consideration give the PCs some information about the aims, philosophy, and ideals they take into consideration while working on a project. Simply showing the players seven different pictures and asking them to choose which one their characters would prefer is quite simple, but asking them to examine the values of the artists and choose one to throw their support behind involves much more thought and potential for character interaction. To this end, seven possible NPCs for use in this scenario are listed below, along with short descriptions of their outlooks and views towards art. Family names, backgrounds, and personalities have been left open for you to develop as desired. If an NPC (or PC) in your campaign has any artistic skills you could even add them as candidate as well.

Akai says that his work seeks to capture the true spirit of the Empire, render it timeless, and preserve it for posterity.
One possible piece you can use for his work is here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/334/334.35.jpg>

Daidai feels that the primary aim of art should be to explore the world of imagination, as only art can show people the realm of the unreal.
One possible piece you can use for his work is here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/436/436.01.jpg>

Kii believes that art should express beauty above all else, for beauty will stir people's hearts and give them hope for better things.
One possible piece you can use for his work is here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/331/331.09.jpg>

Midori presents an unflinchingly realistic view of the world in her art, as she hopes her portrayals of vice will inspire people to better themselves.
One possible piece you can use for her work is

here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/183/183.03.jpg>

Aoki's art centers around traditional themes and is meant to reflect high culture, showing people the kind of life they should aspire to.

One possible piece you can use for his work is here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/88/88.01.jpg>

Aiko believes that art is the truest form of self-expression, as it allows one to share emotions with others without ever meeting or exchanging words.

One possible piece you can use for her work is here:

<http://www.fujiarts.com/japanese-prints/k114/202k114f.jpg>

Murasaki's work is influenced heavily by popular opinion. She holds that art should bring people pleasure, and as such she aims to create art that will entertain the masses.

One possible piece you can use for her work is here:

<http://www.yoshitoshi.net/images/223/223.52.jpg>

Note that all of these pictures are by the great ukiyo-e artist [Tsukioka Yoshitoshi](#). This has been done in order to minimize the effect that artistic quality and style may have on the player's judgment. Since they were all done by the same artist the only major difference should be the subject they present. You can, of course, use other works of art if you so wish. A quick Google image search can turn up a wide variety of images that would be suitable for this adventure.

No matter which candidate the PCs choose there are bound to be people who disagree with them. Master artisans who agree with one student's view or style of art may demand to know why the PCs selected another. This could even be the reason why Den'yu asked them to help in the first place. By putting the responsibility for the decision in the PCs' hands he can avoid upsetting anyone himself. Even if the player characters do not have any strong views on the meaning of art one way or the other, they may find themselves being vilified by artists who feel that the PCs are biased against them. At the very least they will have to put up with people accusing them of having horrible taste.

You can, of course, add a political dimension to this challenge if you so wish. Friends and family members of the students may come forward and try to influence the PCs' decision with gifts or promises of support. Perhaps a sensei from the Academy hopes to see his protégé gain fame and glory. Or maybe he wants to ensure a rival sensei's students do not see success. If some of

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the students come from different Clans or families the PCs may have their own loyalties called into question. Can they really make an impartial decision when one of the candidates is from their own Clan? What if one of the students under consideration is related to a rival of one of the player characters? Being honest is a virtue, but so is loyalty to one's family and superiors. Even if the right choice seems clear based on the students' work, outside factors may make the process much more difficult.

One possible complication in this scenario involves the students making emotional appeals to the PCs. Perhaps one student comes from a wealthy family, and while he does not require any monetary support or patronage from the Conservatory in order to continue his career he still desires the fame that being selected as the top student of the year will bring. On the other hand, another student may have fallen on hard times, leaving her without enough money to even buy new brushes or paint. A third might have had to overcome tremendous personal hardship in order to be admitted to the Academy, where another, more skilled candidate managed to get in simply by virtue of personal connections. With so many people trying to tug at their heartstrings how will the PCs make a fair assessment of the students' true skill. And what if one of the sob stories that moves them turns out to be nothing more than a clever fabrication?

Another way to play on the PCs' sympathies is to alter the nature of the decision somewhat. Instead of giving one student an award, Den'yu might be forced to select one or two students to leave the Academy. In the final year of their training students work one on one with a master artisan in order to refine their skills. Unfortunately, this year there are more gifted candidates than the number of available teachers, so not everyone will be able to advance. It is a painful decision, so he turns to the PCs for help. Of course, they might find it just as difficult as he does.

In both of these cases one interesting twist can be to make all the students either deserving or unpleasant in some way. If the PCs find themselves sympathizing with (or disliking) all of the candidates their decision may become much more difficult.

If the PCs have no trouble making their decision and you find yourself with time left to fill you can also add some controversy after the fact. The PCs might be accused of accepting a bribe or giving in to political pressure. Alternately, the student they selected could come under suspicion of having copied the winning piece from another artist and an investigation launched. Maybe the disgraced student really is innocent and she asks one of the PCs to champion her

cause. Perhaps the winner mysteriously disappears after the decision is announced. Did he drink too much while celebrating and forget to let his teacher know he was going home to inform his parents of the news, or is there foul play afoot? In any situation where there is fame and fortune at stake there will always be someone who is unhappy with the results, and dealing with their fury can be a formidable task indeed. What if that fury is directed towards the PCs themselves?

Art may be beautiful, but that doesn't stop arguments about it from turning ugly from time to time.

Excellent work as usual. And using Yoshitoshi as a base is great too.

Another idea to make this little choice interesting would be to have an artist representing each traditional art: painting, ikebana, origami, calligraphy, sculpture, gardening, puppetry, poetry, architecture and music, for instance. So instead of just going for a choice of taste and statement, it would also automatically become political: if they chose ikebana, they will be suspect of favoring the master rather than going for the true masterpiece. But if they chose the music piece, won't all plastic artists feel threatened or slighted?

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

[\[CFS\] CFS of the Week #162 - Crane Month #2](#)
Greetings and Salutations!

We have another adventure of an artistic bent this week. Remember that no smoking, eating, or drinking is allowed in the main exhibition hall.

This week's adventure is set in [Bijutsu Toshi](#) and involves NPCs that were introduced previously. If you have not already played through CFS of the Week scenario #161 you can still use the following adventure seed. Simply bring the PCs to Bijutsu Toshi and have Sudou and Niko ask for help as in the Focus section below. You could even have the PCs come to the Imperial Conservatory to see the exhibition or to pick up or drop off one of the works of art in question if you are so inclined.

If your players are not at Bijutsu Toshi you can move the action to another venue. Den'yu might bring a collection of art with him when he pays a visit to the home of the player character's superior, or you could use another figure in his place.

Whatever option you choose, once the proper situation is set you can drop the PCs into it and let them deal with things from there.

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Challenge:

To commemorate the visit of a renowned painter of the Unicorn Clan, Den'yu has gathered several original copies of the artist's work to display in the main hall of the Conservatory. The paintings show places that Ide Hikaraku visited in his youth while traveling around the Empire. That journey took place over thirty years ago, and many of the beautiful locales portrayed in the pictures have since been ravaged by war, devastated by flood or fire, or irrevocably changed by the construction of roads and farms. This makes Hikaraku's work an important piece of Rokugan's historical legacy.

Focus:

Not long after Den'yu has the paintings put on display a terrible crime is committed. During the night someone sneaks into the Conservatory and defaces one of Hikaraku's paintings, smearing it with black ink. The next night another painting is destroyed in a similar manner. When the vandal strikes again on the following evening, Den'yu swears that he shall have vengeance. Sudou and Niko ask the PCs to help them find and apprehend the culprit. Whoever the vandal is, he or she seems to have extensive knowledge of the Conservatory and is able to move about unseen. They do not want to scare the vandal away by posting guards, but hope that having more people to help them patrol the Conservatory will enable them to apprehend whoever is behind this travesty.

Strike:

It may take a few nights to catch the miscreant, but eventually the PCs should be able to do so. When they unmask the vandal, however, they are in for a surprise, for it is none other than Hikaraku himself. As unusual as it is for an artist to deface his own work, his reasons for doing so are even stranger. Hikaraku claims that his changes to the paintings are an artistic statement. By denying future generations the chance to look on his works as they originally were he hopes to cause viewers to reflect on how unfortunate it is that the passage of time brings ruin to all things and the need to protect things of beauty.

Depending on the type of adventure you want to present, catching Hikaraku in the act may be rather easy or quite difficult. If your players prefer talking things over and exploring political issues, Hikaraku may be nothing more than a simple artist and catching him may be as simple as having enough people to cover all the entrances and exits. If your players enjoy investigation and the thrill of playing cat and mouse, Hikaraku could be a former scout trained in stealth, able to

run like the wind and move without making a sound. If your players are interested in combat, Hikaraku might be a skilled bushi who is able to trade blows with pursuers before giving them the slip. He might even have a number of accomplices helping him if you think the PCs will not find a single adversary to be challenging enough. While one of his helpers draws the PCs' attention, Hikaraku can slip into the Conservatory, do his dirty work, and make his escape.

You may want to stress the point that Den'yu is absolutely against bloodshed in the Conservatory and would like the culprit to be captured alive. If the PCs ignore this warning and strike down a respected artist then they have only themselves to blame.

If you think your players will not appreciate the political undertones of Hikaraku's intentions, you can change things by having another person vandalize the artwork in Hikaraku's place.

-Someone who harbors a grudge against Hikaraku or the Unicorn Clan might object to the exhibition and attempt to disrupt it.

-An enemy of Den'yu or the Crane Clan could be trying to cause his rival(s) disgrace by destroying the valuable artwork in the Conservatory's care.

-Someone could be trying to create political tension between the Ide and Kakita families. Defacing the artwork is simply a means to an end.

-The culprit could be someone who hates the Imperial Family and is taking this opportunity to destroy their property. Hikaraku's work was targeted first simply because it was displayed in the main hall and was the most visible target.

-A rival artist may disagree with Hikaraku's views, technique, or artistic philosophy and seek to ruin his most beloved masterpieces.

-Hikaraku might have died and left orders with a family member or student to destroy all of his work, either as part of an artistic statement, out of protest, or simply because he did not feel they were good enough to serve as part of his legacy.

-Alternately, a family member or student of Hikaraku may be trying to garner publicity for Hikaraku by sparking a scandal.

-A merchant who deals in art has copies of some of Hikaraku's less famous paintings and is trying to raise their value by removing any other pieces from the market.

-A gang of thieves is stealing the original artwork and replacing them with forgeries. The forgeries are then defaced, leaving Den'yu to believe that they were the originals. The gang members then go on to sell the originals to unscrupulous art collectors.

-A madman could have become obsessed with Hikaraku's work, lashing out at the paintings for a reason only he can comprehend.

-There might be those who find the art offensive

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or heretical in some way and seek to destroy it. They could portray a Clan or honored figure in a negative or scandalous manner. Or maybe the paintings contain hidden clues that can lead to the discovery of another family's dishonor.

-Perhaps the culprits are official agents of the Imperial Family and the art portrays some dark secret that is best left undiscovered. Close examination reveals that the woman in one picture bears a striking resemblance to the Seppun daimyo's wife, but the man holding her hand is not the daimyo.

-The paintings could have been affected by a ritual that bound a spirit (either malicious or benevolent) within them, with someone now trying to free the spirit once more.

-Or maybe the culprit is a maho-tsukai who has cast a spell on the pictures linking them to the places they portray, and is now inflicting devastation upon various locales across the Empire as he destroys Hikaraku's artwork.

You can also use this scenario to explore the concept of ownership as it applies to works of art. If a noble commissions a painting from Hikaraku, who owns the resulting work? Does it belong to the noble who paid for it, or is it still the property of the artist? If it does belong to the noble, how far does that ownership extend? May Hikaraku make changes to that painting later? May the noble, or the steward of the museum it was entrusted to do so? Do any of them have the right to definitively interpret the painting's meaning? If things get very intense the PCs may have to intervene in an argument between Den'yu and Hikaraku. Which side will they take, and how far will they go to defend that stance?

Great artists have been known to die for the sake of their craft. Hopefully the PCs won't have to be the ones to kill them.

Here are a few other guests who might attend the exhibition and draw suspicion:

-A Crane artist who is jealous of Hikaraku and asks Den'yu why his works are not also being displayed in the main hall of the Conservatory.

-Another Crane artist. This one idolizes Hikaraku and asks to be taken on as a student, but Hikaraku informs him that he is no longer working on any new paintings and so he has nothing to teach.

-A Lion samurai who was humiliated by Hikaraku in the past. He still holds a grudge, and the fact that he's here now could either be bad timing or deliberate malice on his part.

-A Scorpion infiltrator who spends a lot of time skulking around the Conservatory. He's trying to find a secret message that was left there, but it has nothing to do with the current problems.

-A Dragon monk who is rumored to be insane. Like the Scorpion, he acts in a manner that draws suspicion. However, he has no motives or connections to the crime.

-A Mantis courtier who once owned two of the paintings in the collection. They were given to the Conservatory as gifts, and the Mantis resents the fact that so far the Kakita have given his family nothing in return.

A number of other figures from different factions could be included as well. The exhibition is very similar to a courtly event, so various figures might be in attendance. The more people there are the more involved the hunt can become. Having multiple suspects can also give the PCs something to investigate during the daylight hours as well. Red herrings often travel in large groups, after all...

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

[\[CFS\] CFS of the Week #163 - Crane Month #3](#)
Greetings and Salutations, Everyone!

Crane Month continues with an adventure seed that, while late for Valentine's Day, shows the importance of demonstrating one's feelings throughout the entire year.

This week's adventure is set in Bijutsu Toshi and involves NPCs that were [introduced previously](#). If you have not already played through CFS of the Week scenario #161 you can still use the following adventure seed. With their relationship uncertain, Mizuho and Den'yu are sure to be in confused emotional states, so they will both welcome the companionship of any PCs that offer a friendly face and sympathetic ear. If your players are not at Bijutsu Toshi you can move the action to another venue. Again, it may be necessary to let the PCs get acquainted with Den'yu and Mizuho before using this scenario. If necessary, substituting NPCs that the party members are already inclined to help can make it easier to get the PCs involved. Whatever option you choose, once the groundwork is done you can get on with the action.

Challenge:

The PCs notice that Mizuho seems sullen and out of sorts. If the PCs investigate they may learn (either through gossiping with Niko and Sudou or by talking to Mizuho herself) that she feels Den'yu has been ignoring her. Before he became steward of the Conservatory they spent a lot more time together, but now it is common for several days to pass without her seeing him at

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all. She is no longer content living a solitary life in Bijutsu Toshi and is considering leaving. If the PCs helped Mizuho earlier (way back in [CFS of the Week #17](#)) they may recall that her relationship with Den'yu is based on love and not on politics. If they are unaware of this fact you can have another NPC fill them in. For Mizuho to give up on marrying Den'yu now must mean that something is very wrong indeed.

Focus:

When Den'yu learns of Mizuho's unhappiness he admits that he has been neglecting her and vows to change his ways. She is his inspiration, and were it not for her support he would not be able to function as an artist. Thus, he becomes determined to show Mizuho just how deep his feelings for her truly are and recapture her heart. Of course, being a consummate artist, Den'yu is not content to demonstrate his feelings for Mizuho in any simple manner. Instead, he plans an elaborate spectacle that will use the entire city as a canvas upon which to present his message of love.

Strike:

As a samurai, it would be scandalous for Den'yu to declare his love for Mizuho outright. Instead, he plans to place clues as to his own identity and that of the object of his affection in public displays of art. For example, he will have dancers parade through the streets of Bijutsu Toshi on a route that spells out the words "Den'yu loves Mizuho." He will commission sculptures and paintings that, when viewed from the right angle in the right light, portray the two of them together. He will recite poems that contain references to her beauty but stop just short of revealing her identity. And he will organize a dramatic performance that mirrors the events of the early stages of their courtship but uses different names for the main characters.

Of course, all of this is meaningless if Mizuho does not see the displays he organizes on her behalf. To that end, Den'yu asks the PCs to help make sure that she is in the right place at the right time. As a man driven by love, he has no qualms about promising to do anything he can to repay the PCs for their efforts, and the party will surely enjoy his undying gratitude. If everything goes according to plan, that is.

Organizing a massive show is a difficult undertaking, and there are many things that could go wrong. The dancers might find their way blocked by arguing merchants. A drunken samurai could take offense at Den'yu's poetry recital and try to start a fight. Another woman may claim (either mistakenly or maliciously) that she is the one portrayed in the paintings that spring up around town. Some of the participants

in the dramatic performance may fall ill at the last minute, leaving no one available to replace them. There are many, many difficulties that might need to be overcome, and you can introduce any problems that you think would be challenging, engaging, or interesting for your player characters during the course of the adventure.

Sudou and Niko could certainly be recruited to help in this endeavor if the player characters think to ask them. Sudou's attention to detail and keenly analytical mind would help ensure that every step of the operation goes according to plan, while Niko's mystic gifts might be useful in dealing with unexpected complications. Despite their skills, however, they would have trouble organizing and carrying out the scheme by themselves. The same holds true for just about any other servants or subordinates the PCs could recruit to aid them. They can offer help, but there are many things they cannot do. Success should require the PCs themselves to take an active hand.

Other possible complications include Mizuho developing feelings for another man in the time it takes Den'yu to make preparations, a rival of Den'yu's trying to interfere with the process, Mizuho failing to pick up on the hints that Den'yu has hidden in his art, or just plain bad luck. Mizuho might have other plans for her day and need convincing in order to go along with the PCs, or other matters that require immediate attention might arise. What if Den'yu has to deal with a sudden, unrelated crisis? Or Mizuho? Or one of the PCs? Can the plan be salvaged, or will it need to be abandoned completely? Even if the plan goes perfectly, there is no guarantee that Mizuho will react in the way Den'yu hopes. Sometimes the heart follows its own path.

If your players are not interested in romance or you feel they will not be willing to help an NPC with such a personal matter, you can change the background to make things more political. Den'yu must convince an emissary from another Clan to continue participating in an alliance with the Crane. The emissary feels that the Crane look down on her Clan, and the displays Den'yu orchestrates are meant to convince her that he has nothing but the greatest esteem for her family and kin. Again, he calls upon the PCs to help him prove his sincerity before the emissary. You could also take the adventure in a much darker direction. The Champion of the Crane Clan (or a member of the Champion's family, or even a member of the reigning Imperial Family) pays a visit to Bijutsu Toshi during an auspicious occasion (such as the anniversary of a great victory, the month before the guest's upcoming marriage, or another significant event). Den'yu is ordered by the daimyo of the Kakita to arrange a

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“[spontaneous outpouring of adoration](#)” for the visitor. All available resources in the city are to be put towards making the spectacle the grandest in history, and participation is mandatory for all citizens. Of course, there are bound to be some who do not believe the “honored guest” is not worthy of such worship and try to disrupt the proceedings. How will the PCs react to such a conflict, and what will they do if they find themselves agreeing with the instigators?

Do any of the PCs have wives, fiancées, or romantic interests who are fond of pillow books or romantic literature? If so, it is possible that they might become jealous of Mizuho upon seeing the lengths Den'yu goes to in attempting to make her happy. What has the PC done for them recently? An Ikebana arrangement or heartfelt poem might placate an angry lover for a short while, but the fires of love need to be stoked from time to time lest they grow cold. Alternately, if any of the PCs has someone they would like to start a relationship with they could undertake a similar operation for their own sake.

Art may be a labor of love for some, but it can also be a labor for the sake of love for others.

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

[\[CFS\] CFS of the Week #164 - Crane Month #4](#)
Greetings and Salutations!

Even though the end of Crane Month is a sad occasion, there is still a festival to enjoy. Let's make the most of one last week in the City of Art!

This week's adventure is set in Bijutsu Toshi and involves NPCs that were introduced previously. If you have not already played through [previous adventure seeds](#) set in Bijutsu Toshi you can still use the following scenario. The festival provides an excellent reason for the PCs or whomever they are traveling with to visit Bijutsu Toshi and participate in the excitement. If your players are not at Bijutsu Toshi you can move the action to another venue. Perhaps the danjiri festival is celebrated in other areas as well, or maybe Kakita Den'yu is attempting to introduce it to other cities and start a new tradition. In either case, once you have the festival established and the PCs present you can start the fun!

Challenge:

The summer season brings the Danjiri Festival, a

signature event of Bijutsu Toshi and a chance for various groups to show their wealth, power, and spiritual devotion. All of the major art schools, local shrines, and important families throughout the city present a danjiri float to the Imperial Conservatory. Then, the floats are paraded through the town, visiting five sites of religious significance before returning to the center of Cool Breeze and Bright Moon Park. The first float to complete the pilgrimage is said to enjoy the favor of the Fortunes.

Focus:

Unless another team (or teams) approaches them first, Den'yu attempts to convince the PCs to help with the Conservatory's danjiri float. Each of the sensei teaching at the Academy will be leading students in organizing a float, and he wants to show them that the Conservatory is just as much a part of the celebration. Mizuho, Sudou, Niko, and any other NPCs the party have met at Bijutsu Toshi will also encourage them to take part in the festival, as it is an important local cultural tradition.

Strike:

Negotiating a two-story, multi-ton portable shrine through narrow streets is no easy feat. Neither is attempting to ride it as it races along at high speeds. The PCs will have to do their best to complete the course while avoiding any accidents and property damage. In addition, there is no guarantee that competing teams may not be above playing dirty or simply get carried away in the excitement. The festival could very easily end in tragedy if the party members are not careful.

The [Danjiri Festival](#) is a [real event](#) in Japan and is truly a thrill to watch. One of the most famous Danjiri Festivals is held every year in the town of [Kishiwada](#). Seeing these giant floats going through the streets at great speeds makes one appreciate the devotion to tradition evident in Japanese culture.

You can find the explanation from the official Kishiwada city website [here](#), while [this site](#) gives a fantastic explanation of the logistics of pulling the float.

You can find pictures of danjiri floats without any riders [here](#), [here](#), and [here](#). A google image search for “danjiri” will turn up many more images of the floats being pulled by teams of people. You can also find a number of videos of the Kishiwada Danjiri festival online. [This one](#) in particular shows how wild the festival can get.

Of course, things are bound to be a little different in Rokugan, and there are a number of different twists you can make on the festival.

One option is to use [mikoshi](#) shrines without

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wheels. These would certainly be easier to control, but carrying them for a long period of time would be quite tiring. The PCs might need to work on rounding up a number of helpers and convincing them to join Den'yu's team in order to even have a chance at completing the festival. You could also use larger and more ornate hoko or yama floats that are seen in [Kyoto's Gion festival](#). While they do not move anywhere near as fast as the floats in the danjiri festival, preparing and operating these magnificent structures requires a lot of courtly knowledge and refinement. The party would have to make sure everything was arranged just properly and maintain that level of decorum for the entire length of the festival.

If you want to make things really interesting you can replace the human teams pulling the danjiri float with horses or oxen, turning the festival into something more like a chariot race. Even if Rokugani generals do not use [chariots](#), ancient Chinese armies did, and there is no reason why a similar vehicle could not play a ceremonial function.

Of course, as the video above shows, the danjiri festival can be quite dangerous. The PCs will have to worry about the safety of the float (which can be quite expensive), themselves, their fellow team members, onlookers, structures along the parade route, and other danjiri teams. Disaster could strike at any moment, so they had best stay sharp and be on their toes! After all, if the PCs let some kind of crisis occur they might not be invited back next year. That *is* the worst thing that could possibly happen to them, right?

Additional Ideas:

Here are some other events you can have happen at Bijutsu Toshi.

-An army appears in the vicinity of the city. It could be an invasion by a rival clan, a group of Shadowlands monsters, or bandits intent on looting the Imperial Conservatory. A defense plan will have to be implemented.

-A group of mujina manage to somehow inhabit a sculpture. They ride their new body through the streets, causing panic and chaos. Some way to stop them will have to be found. To make things worse, Den'yu insists that the sculpture not be harmed.

-An artist is found murdered in his ransacked workshop. He did not have any enemies, but he was said to have been working on a masterpiece to present to the Emerald Champion. The piece will have to be found and the killer brought to justice.

-One of the player characters is asked to serve as a model for a piece of art by a local artist. However, several people express doubt over whether the finished product will actually be

suitable for presentation, and the PC must decide what to do.

-A traveling artisan holds a tournament, offering a set of ten origami mythical creatures to the winner. Sudou asks one or more of the PCs to help him win the prize. But the contests the artisan selects are quite unusual, like eating massive amounts of noodles, being the first to find and purchase a pair of green slippers, and catching a fish with one's bare hands.

-Niko believes that a friend of hers is being blackmailed. Although she didn't mean to eavesdrop, her sharp hearing let her catch snippets of a conversation that sounded like her friend was being coerced into hurting someone. She asks the PCs to help her save her friend and uncover the truth.

-Den'yu begins experimenting with new styles of art, but the results are quite jarring and unsettling to look at. Mizuho, fearing that he may have gone mad, asks the PCs to investigate and intervene if necessary.

-In addition, if all goes well, more twists on the theme of studying in a dojo (such as the Bijutsu Artisan Academy) will be posted [here](#).

Mechanical Information:

Here is what Bijutsu Toshi looks like according to the dojo rules presented in Way of the Daimyo. Players who wish to establish a similar school or perhaps even take over custodianship of Bijutsu Toshi itself can use the following guidelines as a reference.

These statistics will be updated for 4th Edition once the new version of Emerald Empire becomes available.

Bijutsu Toshi – Dojo, 34 pts (see Way of the Daimyo, Chapter Four)

Location: 5 pts. The Conservatory and Academy are the most important institutions in the city, and the city itself is a major destination for merchants and travelers.

Surroundings: 3 pts. The gardens provide ample places for contemplation, and the city is considered an important holding of the Crane.

Structure: 4 pts. The academy has a large dojo capable of holding many different classes and housing numerous sensei. Up to 72 students can be accommodated at one time. The Academy and Conservatory are both in good condition.

Materials: 2 pts. The dojo itself is designed to be defensible and can hold off minor assaults. Once an invading force captured the city, however, the Conservatory and Academy would be surrounded, and the only course of action for those inside would be to try and hold out long enough for reinforcements to arrive.

Living Quarters: 3 pts. There is suitable housing for all the students and sensei who study and work at the Academy and an ornate private room

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for the steward.

Reputation: 5 pts. The Conservatory and Academy are known across the Empire.

Staff: 4 pts. One student helper, one shugenja, and one scribe are in attendance specifically to aid in the daily affairs of the Conservatory and Academy.

Resources: 3 pts. The dojo is a repository for works of fine art in a number of styles and has all the materials necessary for artisans to practice their crafts. If special resources are needed they can be procured in a reasonable amount of time.

Allies: 4 pts. Influential artists, Crane nobles, and even members of the Imperial Families pay visits to the Conservatory from time to time and are invested in its upkeep and well-being.

Notes: It is not necessary to be a member of the Crane Clan to preside over the Conservatory and Academy, but any candidate will have to demonstrate skills that impress the masters of the Kakita Artisan School. This could take the form of artistic skill, an eye for design or detail, or an excellent grasp of art history. Those without the Master Sensei station could still serve as stewards, but would need to make arrangements to secure the services of skilled teachers.

For those who wish to run [CFS of the Week #100](#) with the NPCs from this month as guests, here are their simplified statistics and goals. See that adventure seed for more information.

Kakita Den'yu and Doji Mizuho's information from that scenario are reprinted here for the sake of convenience.

Kakita Den'yu (originally appeared in CFS #17, CFS #161, CFS #162, CFS #163 and CFS #164)
 Crane Artisan

C: Acting, Lore: Fashion, Tea Ceremony,
 Perform: Puppeteering, Etiquette

B: Awareness, Artisan: Origami, Artisan: Ikebana,
 Craft: Cooking, Perform: Poetry

A: Lore: Art

Agenda:

Den'yu takes pride in his skills as an artist, and is eager to show off for the assembled members of Court in the Emperor's competition. But there is another reason why he competes as well. The Crane are attempting to curry favor with another Clan, and any favors Den'yu acquires will be used on behalf of members of that Clan. Den'yu might even give the favors themselves away as gifts. But after the Crane have given so much, they're sure to expect something in return.

Doji Mizuho (originally appeared in CFS #17, CFS #163, and CFS #164)

Crane Courtier

C: Perform: Storytelling, Lore: Heraldry,
 Calligraphy, Perform: Flute

B: Tea Ceremony, Courtier, Etiquette, Perform:

Dance

A: Artisan: Painting

Agenda:

Mizuho cannot help but feel a twinge of envy when she looks upon her sister. Hikaru and Toshihisa have settled into married life quite comfortably, while she and Den'yu have yet to set an official date for their marriage. Mizuho has no intention of stealing her sister's husband, but she figures that if she can show Den'yu that others appreciate her womanly charms he just might get jealous and pay more attention to her instead of his work.

Sudou (originally appeared in CFS #161, CFS #162, CFS #163 and CFS #164)

Crane Bushi

D: Fascination: Stories

C: Strength, Lore: History (Heroes), Craft:

Karakuri, Spears, Craft: Armorsmith

B: Stamina, Lore: Drama (Heroic Tales), Athletics (Running), Defense, Artisan: Origami

A: None

Agenda:

Sudou's family is in the process of trying to find him a wife. Unfortunately, they are not having much luck. Although he would like to get married, his unremarkable career to date and frequent flights of fancy make it difficult for him to attract many potential brides. He would normally ask Niko for advice, but she seems to be preoccupied, so he is trying to muddle through the matter by himself. Winning a favor from the Emperor would make him more desirable, but he'd be willing to try any other methods suggested to him as well, as he knows he needs all the help he can get.

Niko (originally appeared in CFS #161, CFS #162, CFS #163 and CFS #164)

Crane Shugenja

D: Strength

C: Investigation (Notice), Lore: Music, Spellcraft,
 Perform: Storytelling, Air magic

B: Perception, Perform: Singing, Etiquette, Acting (Mimicry), Sincerity

A: Inner Gift: Voice Mimicry & Acute Hearing

Agenda:

Niko has been feeling rather conflicted since she arrived in Court. Through her acute hearing she has heard people whispering about secret deals, scandalous liaisons, betrayals, and hurtful rumors. Her parents and sensei have told her that she should keep out of matters that do not concern her, but being confronted with so much ugliness and cruelty makes her want to help people even more. Niko is still not sure what she will do, but in her heart she knows she must do something.

Akai, Daidai, Kii, Midori, Aoki, Aiko, Murasaki, and Momo (originally appeared in CFS #161)

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Crane Students

D: None

C: Etiquette, Calligraphy, Lore: History, Lore: Heraldry, Lore: Art

B: Specialty Skill (see below), Secondary Skill (see below)

A: None

Agenda:

These eight students are all seeking recognition. The glory and fame that come from having their artistic skills publicly praised would certainly give their careers an auspicious start. Although these young artisans are not very skilled politically, they each know that there is much to gain from finding supporters among other Clans and will seek to find people who appreciate their skills. But with eight artists all trying to be known as the best, the competition between them may turn ugly.

Akai's specialty skill is Artisan: Sculpture, and his secondary skill is Craft: Blacksmithing.

Daidai's specialty skill is Artisan: Painting and his secondary skill is Craft: Papermaking.

Kii's specialty skill is Perform: Dance and his secondary skill is Athletics.

Midori's specialty skill is Artisan: Ikebana and her secondary skill is Craft: Gardening.

Aoki's specialty skill is Artisan: Painting (Woodblocks) and his secondary skill is Craft: Woodworking.

Aiko's specialty skill is Perform: Flute and her secondary skill is Lore: Music.

Murasaki's specialty skill is Artisan: Origami and her secondary skill is Craft: Papermaking.

Momo's specialty skill is Artisan: Poetry and her secondary skill is Perform: Oratory.

Ide Hikaraku (originally appeared in CFS #162)
Unicorn Artisan

D: None

C: Agility, Stealth, Defense, Kenjutsu, Lore: History, Athletics

B: Glory, Horsemanship, Lore: Geography, Hunting, Spears

A: Artisan: Painting

Agenda:

Hikaraku plans to make another political statement through his art this winter. Each day he paints a picture showing the major events taking place in Court. So far everyone has agreed that his paintings are excellent. But what they do not realize is that Hikaraku is gradually exaggerating the features and mannerisms of those he paints in each successive picture, making them look more and more foolish as time goes on. He is confident that no one will notice until after Court is over and he is long gone, but if anyone does catch on to him a terrible scandal is sure to result.

This wraps up our tour of the City of Art. Don't forget to stop by the gift shop on your way out.

We'll move on to our next faction (the Phoenix Clan) and a new location later this week. See you soon!

Until next time,
-Isawa Nazomitsu

Special Bonus "Nazomitsu is Definitely Crazy" Material!

The Great Danjiri Race Mini-Game

The following rules can be used to let your players race their danjiri through the streets of Bijutsu Toshi at completely unsafe speeds with little or no regard for personal safety!

A Danjiri Team Sheet for use with these rules can be found here:

<http://pics.livejournal.com/cfsoftheweek/pic/00006xda>

Warning: These rules have yet to be completely play-tested. Some modification may be necessary.

In any case, have fun! 😊

Attributes

Because of the massive numbers of people involved in moving a danjiri float, it would be extremely time consuming to make skill rolls for each individual. Instead, the Team of people moving the danjiri are treated as a single entity, with each member contributing a small part of the full total.

A Danjiri Team has two attributes: Team Strength and Team Stamina.

Team Strength and Team Stamina are calculated in a way that is similar to how Honor, Glory, and Status are tracked. Each member of the team contributes a number of points of Team Strength equal to his or her own Strength score. Every 10 points of Team Strength equals 1 rank of Team Strength. Team Stamina is calculated in exactly the same way.

For example, Ichi, Ni, and San are members of a Danjiri Team. Ichi and Ni both have Strength ranks of 6, and San's Strength rank is 7. This adds up to 19 total points of Team Strength, giving their danjiri a Team Strength rank of 1. In Stamina, Ichi has a Stamina rank of 7, Ni has a Stamina rank of 6, and San has a Stamina rank of 8. They contribute a total of 21 points of Team Stamina, giving their danjiri a Team Stamina rank of 2. Even though they are a very small team, they just might have a chance (albeit a slim one) of completing the race.

When the Danjiri Team needs to make a Strength roll it uses its Team Strength rank. When the Danjiri Team needs to make a Stamina roll it uses its Team Stamina rank.

Optional Rule:

If you would like to reduce the amount of

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bookkeeping involved in the danjiri race, you can rule that each Team member contributes only 1 point of Team Strength and 1 point of Team Stamina, regardless of that character's actual Strength and Stamina scores. This eliminates the need to keep track of each member's attributes, letting players focus simply on how many active Team members they have left. However, it also means that a team of burly Hida or Akodo samurai is no more effective in the race than an equal number of peasant laborers.

Maneuvering

Any time the Danjiri Team attempts to move the danjiri they must make a Team Strength check. The TN for this check is based on the type of maneuver the team wishes to execute, and is further modified by the speed the danjiri is moving at (see below). Turning a stationary float is fairly easy, although it can be more difficult in tight quarters where there is not enough room for the float to pivot. Turning a float while it is in motion is more complex, and a float moving at high speeds can be almost impossible for an inexperienced Danjiri Team to control.

Only one maneuver can be attempted per turn. For example, Ichi, Ni, and San attempt to turn their danjiri while moving at Medium Speed. The base TN for turning is 20, which is further increased by the +15TN speed modifier, for a total TN of 35. Their danjiri Team Strength rank is 1, so they roll 1k1. The result is 17 - they got lucky, but not lucky enough! They have an accident and suffer 18 points of damage, as explained below.

Maneuver TNs: Move Straight (at current speed rank): TN10.

Fine Maneuvers: TN10. This maneuver can only be attempted when the danjiri is Stopped or moving Very Slow. Making such slight adjustments to the danjiri's course is usually not needed, but it can be useful in some cases.

Turn: TN20. Sharp turns may have higher TNs at GM's discretion.

Increase Speed: TN15 to increase speed by 1 rank (such as from Very Slow to Slow). Apply speed modifiers for the float's current speed.

Decrease Speed: TN20 to decrease speed 1 rank (such as from Fast to Medium). Apply speed modifiers for the float's current speed.

Attack/Evade: If one Danjiri Team wishes to use its float to cause damage to another Team's float, the two teams make a Contested Team Strength roll. Each team may apply its speed modifier as a BONUS to the total result of its roll (as moving faster makes it easier to interfere with or escape from another float). The Team that wins this roll suffers no damage. The Team that loses suffers damage equal to the difference between the two Teams' rolls. A Danjiri Team can only attempt an attack on a float that is in the same immediate

area. Note that this attack does not involve actually striking the rival float (as that would be dishonorable), but coming close enough to them to cause them difficulty in maneuvering.

Speed

There are six speeds a danjiri may move at: Stopped, Very Slow, Slow, Medium, Fast, and Very Fast.

A Stopped danjiri does not move at all. Unless it is acted upon by outside forces (such as another danjiri crashing into it), there is no way for a Stopped danjiri to have any sort of accident, but it may not make any maneuvers and will not get any closer to the finish line.

A danjiri moving at Very Slow speeds moves Team Strength Rank x 5 feet per round. Keeping up such a pace is fairly easy, and maneuvering the danjiri presents no special challenge in such conditions. The TN for any Team Strength and Team Stamina checks made at this speed are increased by +5.

A danjiri moving at Slow speed moves Team Strength Rank x 10 feet per round. This speed is a little more difficult for the team, but not very much so. The TN for any Team Strength and Team Stamina checks made at this speed are increased by +10.

A danjiri moving at Medium speed moves Team Strength Rank x 15 feet per round. It is increasingly difficult for the team to control the danjiri and keep this speed for extended periods of time. The TN for any Team Strength and Team Stamina checks made at this speed are increased by +15.

A danjiri moving at Fast speeds moves Team Strength Rank x 20 feet per round. Controlling the danjiri at this speed is very difficult and the team will either quickly become tired or lose control of the float. The TN for any Team Strength and Team Stamina checks made at this speed are increased by +20.

A danjiri moving at Very Fast speeds moves Team Strength Rank x 25 feet per round. It is very likely that a danjiri moving at this speed will careen out of control and crash into something, topple over, or even escape from its handlers (who may not be able to move quickly enough to keep up at this speed). The TN for any Team Strength and Team Stamina checks made at this speed are increased by +25.

Exhaustion

The GM may, at certain intervals, call for a Danjiri Team to make a Team Stamina check to resist exhaustion. The base TN for this roll is 10 plus speed modifiers, but it may also be affected by factors such as terrain, morale, and whether or not the team has been maintaining a strenuous pace without any rest. If the Danjiri Team has been moving at higher speeds the GM may

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choose to call for Team Stamina checks more frequently.

Each time a Danjiri Team passes a Team Stamina check they manage to press on, but the TN for the next such check is increased by +5. If the Danjiri Team fails a Team Stamina check, it suffers an amount of Attrition Damage (see below) equal to the amount by which it failed the roll. So if a Danjiri Team fails a Team Stamina check by 12 points, it suffers 12 points of Attrition Damage.

You may notice that the longer the race continues the more likely a Danjiri Team is to suffer Attrition Damage from exhaustion, losing members, lowering its Team Strength rank, and therefore making it more likely that it will have an accident. This is a deliberate design choice. Crashes and near misses are much more interesting than an uneventful race where everything goes smoothly.

Optional Rule: Terrain

While it is possible to assume that all streets in the city are even, some GMs may wish to incorporate different types of terrain into the race. Here are modifiers for traversing different types of terrain while pushing a danjiri.

*Terrain Modifiers wrote:*Level Ground: No modifiers.

Uphill: Danjiri automatically slows down 1 speed rank per round. Team must make a Team Stamina roll each round they attempt to move the danjiri uphill. If the Danjiri Team suffers an accident while moving uphill, the danjiri may begin to move downhill, going in the opposite direction as intended.

Downhill: Danjiri automatically speeds up 1 speed rank per round. All TNs to control the danjiri are increased by +5. This penalty can be increased (at the GM's discretion) for particularly steep hills.

Damage

If a danjiri float fails a Team Strength check, it suffers an accident and takes damage.

The amount of damage suffered is equal to the amount by which the danjiri failed the Team Strength check. So if a Danjiri Team fails a Team Strength check by 9 points, it suffers 9 points of Attrition Damage.

There are four types of damage that a danjiri float and its team can suffer: Collateral Damage, Cosmetic Damage, Structural Damage, and Attrition Damage.

Collateral Damage has no bearing on the danjiri float itself, but reflects the damage inflicted on buildings, items, and bystanders in the area. See the section on Collateral Damage below.

Cosmetic Damage affects the danjiri float's Decoration and makes it appear less aesthetically pleasing. See the section on

Cosmetic Damage below.

Structural Damage reduces the danjiri float's Wear and may result in the destruction of the float itself. See the section on Structural Damage below.

Attrition Damage reflects injury to members of the Danjiri Team and may result in some members being unable to continue in the race. See the section on Attrition Damage below.

When a danjiri float is in an accident the GM should roll on the Damage Table to determine what kind of damage is suffered. Whenever a danjiri suffers more than one type of damage, the amount of damage suffered is the same for each type. So if a danjiri takes 9 points of damage and it is then determined that the accident resulted in both Collateral and Cosmetic damage the danjiri would suffer 9 points of each type of damage.

*Damage Table: wrote:*Roll 2k2. Dice may explode on this roll. Some examples of possible accidents are given, but the GM can provide alternate scenarios as well.

2-3 = Float knocks over a merchant's sign. Suffer Collateral Damage.

4-5 = Decorations get caught on an awning. Suffer Cosmetic Damage.

6 = Float scrapes against a building. Suffer Collateral and Cosmetic Damage.

7 = Float breaks through a fence. Suffer Collateral and Structural Damage.

8 = Float strikes a building. Suffer Cosmetic and Structural Damage.

9-10 = Float strikes a tree. Suffer Structural Damage.

11 = Team member trips over a bucket. Suffer Collateral and Attrition Damage.

12 = Team falls and pulls off a piece of the float. Suffer Cosmetic and Attrition Damage.

13-14 = Team members are injured keeping float upright. Suffer Attrition Damage.

15 = Float strikes wall, injuring team members. Suffer Structural and Attrition Damage.

16 = Float crashes into wall. Suffer Collateral, Cosmetic, and Structural Damage.

17 = Sides of float clipped by house. Suffer Collateral, Cosmetic, and Attrition Damage.

18 = Float tips over. Suffer Cosmetic, Structural, and Attrition Damage.

19 = Float hits noodle stand. Suffer Collateral, Structural, and Attrition Damage.

20+ = Float suffers a catastrophic accident! Apply all types of damage.

For example, in the situation above, Ichi, Ni, and San failed their Team Strength check by 18 points. The GM rolls 2k2 on the Damage Table and gets a result of 7. The danjiri goes crashing through a fence. The team suffers 18 points of Collateral Damage (which is added to their previous total) and 18 points of Structural Damage (which is subtracted from their float's Wear).

Optional Rule:

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If you don't want to track all the different types of damage, you can eliminate Collateral Damage, Cosmetic Damage, and Decoration points from the game and focus simply on the Danjiri Team and the damage done to the float itself.

If you want a very simple game you can rule that the danjiri float itself is too solid and sturdy to be destroyed by any mundane means and keep track of Attrition Damage only. Alternately, you can keep track of Structural Damage only and assume that the number of members on each team is so large that there will always be someone available to push or pull the float.

Collateral Damage

A danjiri float begins with 0 points of Collateral Damage. Any time a danjiri takes collateral damage this number goes up. Unlike the other types of damage, there is no limit to how much Collateral Damage a danjiri team can accumulate. Most teams cause at least a small amount of incidental destruction, but devastating accidents can also occur. (In modern times people who live or work near the parade route often take out danjiri insurance.)

Any Collateral Damage the PCs' danjiri causes will have to be compensated once the race is finished. The exact form this compensation takes and the cost required is up to the GM to determine, but 1 koku per each full rank of Collateral Damage is usually the minimum payment expected.

Cosmetic Damage

A danjiri float begins with 50 points of Decoration. Any time a danjiri takes Cosmetic Damage it loses an amount of Decoration. If a danjiri float reaches 0 points of Decoration it may still be functional but has lost all of its majesty and is no more than a wooden cart. Finishing the race with a danjiri with no remaining Decoration is commonly considered a disgrace.

Cosmetic Damage can also be inflicted through unarmed or melee weapon attacks, with each Wound inflicted counting as a point of Decoration lost. Although defacing a danjiri deliberately is frowned upon, some participants do tear ribbons or break small pieces off of rival floats.

Structural Damage

A danjiri float begins with 100 points of Wear. Any time a danjiri takes Structural Damage, it loses an amount of Wear. If a danjiri float reaches 0 points of Wear it is completely demolished and can no longer be used in the festival.

Structural Damage can also be inflicted through melee weapon attacks, with each Wound inflicted counting as a point of Wear lost. It should be noted that attacking a danjiri in this way is extremely dishonorable and will draw the wrath of the Fortunes.

Attrition Damage

The total number of members on a given Danjiri Team may vary. Some Teams have a very large number of members, while others make use of a smaller number of more physically fit individuals. The Danjiri Team can be considered to have a number of Wounds equal to the total number of Stamina ranks among its members. An easy way to think of this is to picture the Danjiri Team as having a number of Wound Ranks equal to the number of members on the Team, with each of those Wound Ranks containing a number of wounds equal to that individual member's Stamina.

Any time a danjiri takes Attrition Damage, that damage is divided among the Danjiri Team members in any way the team leader desires. Each point of damage a Team member suffers reduces their Stamina by an equal amount. This reduction also lowers the total amount of Stamina shared by the Team, and may even result in a lowered Team Stamina rank.

For example, Ichi, Ni, and San have another accident and suffer 8 points of Attrition Damage. Ichi (the leader) decides to apply 3 points of damage each to himself and San, and 2 points to Ni. Ichi's Stamina is reduced from 7 to 4, Ni's Stamina is reduced from 6 to 4, and San's Stamina is reduced from 8 to 5. They now have only 13 total points of Stamina, which lowers their Team Stamina rank from 2 to 1.

If a Team member's Stamina reaches 0 (for any reason), they are no longer able to participate in the race, and no longer contribute any Stamina or Strength to the Team.

It takes a minimum of 10 cumulative ranks of Strength (or 1 rank of Team Strength) to move a danjiri float. As such, losing too many members may mean that the team is no longer able to compete.

Optional Rule:

If you do not wish to track each member's current Stamina each time the Danjiri Team suffers Attrition Damage, you can simply subtract the damage from the team's total Stamina and reduce the team's Team Stamina appropriately. This removes an element of tactics from the game, but makes bookkeeping much easier. It also means that the number of members on the Team will remain relatively unchanged no matter how much Attrition Damage is suffered. In this case, the GM will have to determine the exact effects (if any) of losing a rank of Team Stamina on the Danjiri Team's Team Strength rank.

Optional Rule: Encouragement

Some daring individuals ride on top of danjiri floats, cheering and shouting encouragement to their teammates. Not only does this add to the excitement of the race, but it also helps the members of the Danjiri Team to focus every

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ounce of their energy on the task at hand. Anyone riding on top of a danjiri float may spend a Void Point to increase the number of dice rolled on any Team Strength or Team Stamina roll the Danjiri Team makes by +1k1 per Void Point spent. Up to three people can ride on the top of a danjiri float at the same time, and all three may spend a Void Point to increase the same Team Strength or Team Stamina roll. Staying upright on a moving danjiri float requires an Agility check at TN15 each round. This roll is increased by the appropriate speed modifiers. Characters who fail this roll may, at the GM's discretion, be allowed to make another Agility roll at the same TN to avoid falling off the float completely. The GM may also require riders to make an Agility roll to avoid falling off whenever the danjiri suffers damage. The effects of falling off a moving danjiri or being thrown from the danjiri in the event of a crash are up to the GM to determine.

Charting a Course

There are a number of ways to keep track of which danjiri is in the lead and how far each danjiri has left to go. One method is to plan out a course, determining how long the route is and when turns are required. For example, one very simple route might look like this:
*Sample Race Route wrote:*Total Length: 1000 feet.
Straight stretch from start
250 feet from start: Right turn
325 feet from start: Left turn
650 feet from start: Left turn
850 feet from start: Right turn
Straight stretch until finish line
The various teams can all progress through this route at whatever speeds they wish, making maneuver rolls when necessary and competing to be the first to complete the race.

You can simplify this even further by simply determining how far each Danjiri Team has to go to reach the finish line and calling for Turns at random intervals. Again, teams can choose their speeds as they wish and the first to complete the required distance is the winner.

My favorite method is to let players choose their own route from start to finish. A map of Bijutsu Toshi can be found here:
<http://pics.livejournal.com/cfsoftheweek/pic/00005h89>.
Cool Breeze and Bright Moon Park is in the upper middle, surrounding the building just left of the 東 (East) symbol. The other five locations can be placed wherever you wish. The scale is also left to individual GMs to determine for themselves. This approach lets players choose

and adjust their route as they move their danjiri through the streets on the map. It can be a little more complex, but the tactical choices involved in this style of racing can add a great deal of excitement and drama.

Winning (and Losing) the Race

The first Danjiri Team to visit all five locations participating in the festival and return to the starting location in the center of Cool Breeze and Bright Moon Park is officially recognized as the "Bearers of Fortune" and rewarded with glory, adulation, free sake, and countless invitations to dinner from nobles and merchants alike. Other Danjiri Teams are also awarded titles according to their performance. The Danjiri Team with the most remaining Decorations on their float is named "Doji's Majesty." This is also a title that brings the team much glory. The Danjiri Team with the least remaining Decorations on their float is called "Wagon Peddlers." This title is mildly insulting, but is used only in jest. The Danjiri Team that causes the least amount of Collateral Damage is awarded the title "Protectors of the City." This team is commonly forgiven for any Collateral Damage it incurs during the race and does not need to help clean up after the festival. The Danjiri Team that causes the most Collateral Damage is known as "Seppun's Terror," and are expected to do the most work to repair and clean up after everything is over. Failure to do so carries a very heavy social stigma. The Danjiri Team with the most remaining Wear is awarded the title "Iron Racers." This title does not carry as much public recognition, but those who respect strength hold it in particular esteem. The Danjiri Team with the least remaining Wear is named "Drunken Goblins." This is another mocking title that is used in good-natured jest. The last Danjiri Team to complete the race is named "Stale Rice," implying that everyone's dinner has gone cold while they were waiting for the team to finish. While it is not official, any Danjiri Team that fails to complete the course due to Structural Damage or Attrition Damage may find themselves being referred to as "Wayward Fortune." Because the destruction of a danjiri float or injury of so many team members can be a sad event this title is rarely (but sometimes) used to address the team directly. GMs are encouraged to make up titles for other achievements, such as taking the longest route to visit all five sites, causing the most damage to rival Danjiri Teams, having the most accidents, losing the most members to Attrition Damage and still managing to complete the race, or keeping the longest sustained burst of speed.

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Have fun and enjoy the race!