

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

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

FIRE 3
Intelligence 4
Agility 3

AIR 2
Awareness 2
Reflexes 3

EARTH 3
Stamina 3
Willpower 4

WATER 2
Perception 3
Strength 2

VOID 4

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

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

TECHNIQUES

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

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

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

EQUIPMENT

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

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

ADVANTAGES

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

DISADVANTAGES

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

SKILLS

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

HISTORY

Your Family

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

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

There was never any question.

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

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

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

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

Your Imprisonment

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

But the Lion whose name you never learned only smiled cruelly and pried *Daiyomi* from your

fingers before ordering his men to carry you to their camp.

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

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

Your Escape

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

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

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

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

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

There had never been any question.

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

"Why did you want to lose so badly?" he asked. "Had you asked permission to wait and

heal first, you would have won."

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

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

Becoming a Magistrate

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

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

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

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

WHAT YOU THINK OF THE OTHERS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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