

Unclean Sacrifice

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A [Low]-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne

Month of the Horse, 1340 (Summer)

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Investigation, Combat, Supernatural
Part two of 'Cult of the Priest'

A Dark Ritual threatens to return an ancient evil to the realm.

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This module is written for the Legends of the Five Rings Roleplaying Game Fourth Edition, originally published by Alderac Entertainment Group.

Please refer to the *Heroes of Rokugan 4: Champions of the Ivory Throne Campaign Primer* for information on how to run official campaign modules. In addition to the basic setting information and house rules for this campaign, it details the various administrative necessities of the living campaign. GM reporting is crucial to players' ability to engage with the setting and to increase their characters' influence.

Adventure Background and Summary

A brief description of the background elements that lead to the events of the module goes here. A few relevant comments on the history of important people, or groups of people such as clans, may be important to set the context for the GM. Likewise, a mention of the primary locations to establish where the PCs will be going is helpful (though, of course, full descriptions should be located in those sections of the adventure where the characters actually go to those places).

From there, a rough description of what sort of events or circumstances bring the PCs together should be included. Most modules begin with the conceit that any given PC, as a samurai under the authority of their superiors, has been sent to further the interests of their lord (or potentially family or clan), though other motivations may be appropriate. In general, either some NPC will have a task to perform or the PCs are in a public venue and tasked with representing their groups as appropriate to the occasion.

The next major data point is a brief discussion of the projected events of the module. If there are a large number of different choices available to the PCs, it will necessarily require the summary to be more vague, but providing a mention of the key scenes for the module will give the GM an idea of what will be the most important situations to focus on. This can help with pacing, and will ensure that the GM will have them in mind as they run the players through the establishing scenes.

A thumbnail description of the climax may be useful as a conclusion to the summary, again, simply to stress to the GM what the module will be building toward. Specifying the primary choice or challenge the PCs must face by the end will help the GM set the proper tone through the entirety of the slot.

Upkeep

The events of the modules are certainly of primary importance in the lives of the characters, but many of them will have been working on a variety of tasks in the times between modules. At the beginning of the module, several things will need to take place (though some are obviously dependent on the actual needs of the PCs at the table).

Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. It is frequently helpful to have a list of specific mechanics that come up in the course of the module determined at the start of the module so the GM does not have to slow down play to check and see which parts apply to which PC. These can be Advantages, Disadvantages, Schools, Skills, or any other particularly relevant mechanics.

- PCs who have Ally: Kyouji

News from the Empire

While the GM is looking over sheets, it's a good time to distribute the first player handout of most modules. The News of the Empire is an overview of the recent events of the Empire in a fashion that shares the ongoing story with the playerbase without requiring a Skill Roll or interfering with the actual plot of the module. Any plot-relevant Rumors will belong in the appropriate section of the module to be learned during play.

Inactivity

At the start of the module, the PCs suffer an L0 Glory loss. This loss cannot bring their glory below their insight rank (the fame advantage increases their effective insight rank by 1 for these purposes).

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** is (Taint Rank*5)+10.

Crafting

The Crafting rules are detailed in the Campaign Primer, based largely on the Crafting rules in the core book (page 258). Unless explicitly indicated otherwise, a PC may only make one Crafting Roll per module, and any Void Points or other character resources (spell slots, Luck, etc) spent on the roll do not refresh for the duration of the module. Any

successful roll is noted on the provided sheet with the description.

Preparation Techniques

Techniques like the Agasha Shugenja or Yogo Wards do not quite fall under Crafting, but still can benefit from pre-planning and the Upkeep is a good opportunity. However, unlike Crafting, this is not the only time these Techniques may be used during a module – this is just a chance for the GM to remind the players and get it out of the way.

Ronin Survival

Life is difficult for ronin in the Empire at the best of times. PC ronin are no exception to this. At the start of the module, a PC ronin must roll **Hunting (Survival) / Stamina** at a TN of 10. Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

Experience Expenditure

Finally, the players should be given one last chance to spend any experience they wish before the module begins. Unless the module specifically allows it, experience may not be spent during the adventure.

Introduction

Depending on the timing that PCs have played modules (especially for rank 2 PCs who could not play CIT 13), their reason for being called upon could be different. PCs who have played through CIT 13 are called to the command tent of the 11th Imperial Legion for a matter of ‘importance.’ PCs who have not or cannot play CIT 13 are coming off a boat on the orders of their daimyo, here to assist with resolving the unrest that has threatened to boil over since they last were in the city. It has been two months since the PCs had left Rokugan, and it seems that for once Suitengu has seen fit to make the journey uneventful. Ronin PCs, whether there before the mod or coming off the boat, were informed that they need to “deal with an issue” of some importance. If they make a fuss out of it, they will be given three bu and told to be glad for it.

You are led inside a large command tent, which is a flurry of activity. Samurai from nearly every clan, all wearing the emerald green and mons that signify them as Imperial Legionnaires, move with urgency throughout the tent, checking papers, looking over maps and otherwise giving the appearance of an army preparing for war. At the main table, two men sit as

veritable calms in the storm. One is an older man in the oranges and reds of the phoenix clan. The other is younger man, though that is certainly a relative term, wearing the mons of an Ikoma, though the emerald green armor makes his status as a member of the Imperial Legion readily clear.

Finally, the legionnaire speaks. “Ah, yes, you are here. If but putting in a request in for Samurai from Rokugan was not a guaranteed way to have to delay something two months.” He takes a breath, then continues, “I am Ikoma Sho, Shiriekan of the Eleventh Imperial Legion. I am tasked with defending this city from anything that might threaten it. I suspect some of you are already acquainted with Gennai Okusukai here,” he nodded to the Phoenix, “Gennai-san, if you might?”

Okusukai bows his head in thanks to Sho, keeping it slightly inclined as he speaks. “As many of you know, last fall we had an issue with some Ronin disappearances, all Shugenja. I had organized some Samurai to get to the heart of the matter, and they were able to save one of the ronin. That group of Samurai returned to me with a few things of interest. The book and letter that was brought to me was written in a language that I had not seen before. In fact, it took most of the Winter trying to find an Ivindi who had recognized the language and did not wish my death.

“When finally I was able to get the work translated, well... that was when I requested assistance from the Legion. It appears that this ‘Cult of the Priest’ that had been dealt with before is some sort of offshoot of the Cult of Ruhmal.” Not waiting for someone to ask the obvious question, he continues, “this cult has been taking Ronin shugenja as part of a Ritual of some form that appears to be connected to the Wrathful Aspect of their God called Shiva.

“It goes without saying that we cannot allow that to happen, but the forces that are already here are stretched rather thin. With the unrest already happening in the city, the magistrates are too busy here, and the Imperial Legion is preparing for the very real possibility that the city could be attacked any day now.

“With that in mind, we’ll be sending you to find the Cult and try to stop whatever it is they are planning. Lest you think we are sending you with too little to go on, we have arranged a mutual contact at some place called the ‘Second Chance’ inn. They will be able to direct you from there.”

At that moment, Sho clears his throat and speaks again. “It should be noted that I am not expecting you

to commit suicide. Half the reason I requested you is that I might have more troops to prepare for the battle that is no doubt coming. If it's something that can be stopped, do your best, but unless the situation is desperate I do not wish for you to intentionally go on a suicide mission." Sho and Okusukai bow and motion you on your way.

Likely, the PCs will make their ways efficiently towards the Second Chance. It is not hard to find directions to it, and more than likely PCs who

Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll. PCs with Hero of the People or PCs native to Balishnimpur receive a free raise on this roll.

- 10: Tensions between the Rokugani and the Gaijin have boiled close to a breaking point. With the self-proclaimed Maharajah's army expected to appear near the city any day now, there are concerns that the Ivindi may try and assist him against the Rokugani.
- 15: The reaction to this Maharajah has been fairly mixed both in and out of the city. While many are eager to have a charismatic leader fighting on their behalf, a large number of Ivindi are skeptical of the purity of his claim. Without the Scepter or Crown of Arun to bolster his claim, to many he is just another despot vying for power.
- 20: The Demon attacks have largely subsided since their lair was discovered several months ago. With warning of how they operate and what they can do, even most Ronin Shugenja now have an extra hand or two to act as extra insurance.
- 25: Rumors of gaijin proselytizing in the slums are becoming slowly more prevalent in the last few months. Words of deliverance from 'the oppression of the samurai' are becoming more and more prevalent as time goes on.
- 30: The Demons were not completely gone, it seems. One of them managed to kidnap a Unicorn shugenja-ko.

Part One: On the Hunt

The market district of Balishnimpur has finally ceased much of the construction windfall that had plagued it for the past year and a half. The ostentatious displays of the Mantis are rather obvious throughout the market district, wealth being shown throughout all of the main thoroughfares. Unfortunately, your directions take

you away from these streets and into the sordid alleys of Balishnimpur. While numbers help assure that you are not accosted, certainly it is not the most comfortable of places. Soon, you find yourself in what appears to be a small establishment with a sign that simply has the Kanji *Second Chance* adorned upon it.

As you enter, you find a surprisingly clean establishment. While the patrons still count themselves among the more rough and tumble within the city of Balishnimpur, the tables are clean, the serving girls are well dressed and treated with respect, and sake and tea are served politely to all in the establishment.

Very quickly, your presence is noticed by a small man, smiling brightly and bowing low as he approaches. "Ah, Samurai-sans! I hope the day finds you blessed indeed! May I offer you assistance today?"

PCs who played CIT 07: A Breed Apart should recognize this man as the proprietor of what was the *Clam's Pearl*. If asked, he will explain that the arrival of clan samurai in his establishment served as a bit of a wake-up call, and he cleaned up his shop and his act. While his clientele isn't always of the most reputable sort, he has given up on trading in illicit goods. He also will finally introduce himself as Gomen.

If the PCs ask about someone they were supposed to meet, Gomen will be confused for a moment, but then nod in sudden recognition. "Ah yes, Kyouji-sama did say he was expecting guests today!" He leads the PCs then to a large table around the center of the room.

Sitting at a large table is a young man, clearly a ronin by the quality of his dress, and clearly a shugenja by the satchel at his hip. He offers a wide smile regardless, bowing to all of you, with an extra low bow to those of you who he may have met previously. "Well met, Samurai. I realize that with time being what it is we do not have time to go through the standard Samurai pleasantries, but I'd invite you still to at least enjoy some tea."

Once you have had time to take a breath, Kyouji will get down to business. "I assume you were sent by Okusukai-sama? My friend Oiki and I have spent our time helping the Magistrate's office find where this Cult has been hiding. We have narrowed it down to a section of jungle a few days travel from here, and only need to figure out exactly where. I'll be coming with you to help find the place, but a fighter I am not. So once we get there, I will be leaving that part to you.

“Before we leave, however, we might take the chance to see what information can still be gleamed here. If there’s a chance to go in with more information, I’d rather have it than not have it, neh?”

Where is the Cult?

“As I said before, [Name]-sama, I do not know exactly where. Oiki-san and I tracked the cult close to where the map suggested, but there is likely another step involved, as I did not see anything what resembled a cultist’s camp. And unfortunately, the Ruhmal cult seems to operate indirectly through their offshoot cult, which isn’t terribly up to date understanding what their actual aims are.”

So how are we supposed to find the Cult?

“That is the trick, yeah. While they’re really secretive, though, I suspect that they have recruiters somewhere not too far from here. Judging by how well those “Demons” know the city, they have to be native to Balishnimpur, which means that the Cult’s recruits are locals. Might have to get your hands dirty talking to some gaijin, but I’d like to think it’s worth it if we can figure out who did this.”

Where is Oiki?

“Resting. He’s been scouting with me diligently since I was rescued, and he deserves the rest. Suits me just as well, I’ll admit. Ronin though I may be, I’ll admit I feel like my pride’s been damaged more than a bit through this whole ordeal.”

Where is Ryoko?

“She’s doing a few odd jobs so we can afford to get back to Rokugan proper once this is all done. Once all this has resolved, I think I prefer the social judgments of the Samurai proper to being kidnapped to be potentially used for some foul ritual or other.”

Where can we start looking for information?

“There’s a few places. I’ve heard of a shugenja who’s gone missing from the unicorn, a Dragon researcher that may know some things, and of course rumors of some gaijin proselytizer.”

There are several avenues of exploration that PCs may take.

The Slums

In many ways, this is the most difficult avenue of inquiry. The Ivindi are wary of the Rokugani in the first place, and will be wary of their motivations. Asking around about the man preaching deliverance is certainly possible, but will be exceptionally difficult, requiring a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll at TN 35 to find someone willing to talk about him. A PC

gains a free raise on this roll if they have the Languages: Ivindi advantage. They can also get a free raise if they are willing to throw some money at the problem, though such will cost them a D3 honor loss.

A PC instead is likely to find more success finding those who know about this man by seeking out the less scrupulous among the Gaijin. To do this, the PCs may roll Lore: Underworld / Awareness at TN 25.

Assuming success, the PCs are led to a small hut on the westmost edge of the city.

The small building has clearly seen better days. There are several large holes in the roof, the door can only generously be described as ‘functional,’ and dead plants litter the ground around its tiny yard. Before you can finish approaching, the door falls off its hinge, and with a sigh an old man steps out of the threshold.

The man before you now appears to be an ancient man, eyes glazed over. His head moves around for a long moment, as if seeking something. “Ah,” he speaks in clear Ivindi, looking to no one in particular, “then there are more today to hear the good word?”

The PCs are free to question the man as they wish. While a charismatic voice for the Cult of Ruhmal, he is nonetheless an aged, blind man, and will not bother attempting to fight back. If PCs start asking about why he does what he is doing, he will speak at length about the injustices the Rokugani have inflicted on the Ivindi, and how no cost is too great to remove the Rokugani threat from their lands.

If a Samurai speaks in Rokugani instead of Ivindi, however, his voice will darken, and he will speak to them in a surprisingly practiced Rokugani.

“Ah, I see,” the old man shakes his head, “then I suppose there is no use in sticking to pretense. You have caught me, Lord Samurai.” His hand raises, “I am certain that you have no interest in infuriating the populace more, so allow me to come with you peacefully wherever you wish to take me.”

What is the Good Word?

“Ah, of course. I have spoken at great length of the great priests of the Rokugani, and how their salvation is the key to ours. We hope to free them of the yoke of their Samurai oppressors, so that they might become a force to bring freedom to us as well!” (An Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness roll at TN 20 will inform the PCs that this is, in fact, BS).

How will the Priests of Rokugan help us?

“The ritual of ascending, of course! When we teach them how to ascend, they will be enlightened to the true plight and will join us in our fight!”

What is the Cult of the Priest really about?

The old man laughs heartily. (If he did not know that they were samurai before this point, he will know now.) “These men and women are so eager for a savior, if you have not noticed, Samurai-san. A promise of salvation is a powerful motivational tool for the desperate. The preaching of the Priest gives them what they want while allowing us to collect what we need for the real plan.”

What is the real plan?

“Do you see me as some storybook villain who simply reveals his plan to his enemy in soliloquy? Pray tell, give me a little more credit than that. But worry not, I will help you where you need to go. After all, you are our invited guests.”

If given the opportunity, he will speak at length about the oppression the Rokugani have enforced upon Rokugan (“for two hundred years we have suffered under your oppression. There is none left who even remember what it is to be free”).

The Scholar

PCs who are interested in speaking to the Shugenja who had been studying the literature at least can find the man easily enough. The ronin mentioned by Gomen points the PCs to the Dragon Embassy in the Noble District and referred to one Kitsuki Nobue. It does not take much to get him to agree to meet after the PCs

Kitsuki Nobue is a rather young man, no more than twenty years old. Nonetheless, he presents a rather bookish persona, carrying several books with him and setting them on the nearby table. “Now then, you wanted to know more about this cult, as I recall?”

Nobue will be rather helpful, of course, willing to answer any questions as best he can.

- Nobue was the one to realize that the Cult of the Priest was just a front for the Cult of Ruhmal. He is something of a scholar on the matter.
- The Cult of Ruhmal are also known as the Cult of the Destroyer. They represent a heretical sect of the Ivindi religion, looking to bring out the wrathful aspect of Shiva the Destroyer.

- Nobue isn’t entirely sure how Rokugani shugenja fit into the equation. Summoning an aspect of an Ivindi God does not require a human’s life as sacrifice, but are rather historically the result of great displays of humility and contrition.
- The painting that was found in the lair was that of a Harbinger of destruction called the Ebon Daughter. Even many among the Ivindi populace seem to know little about her, save that she is apparently exceedingly powerful.

The Missing Unicorn

Asking around after the Unicorn Girl will, inevitably, take someone to the Unicorn Embassy. There is not much known about the girl’s disappearance herself, but talking around with various Unicorn there can glean the following information.

- The missing woman is Iuchi Mizuko. She is a shugenja of some talent.
- Mizuko is a gentle soul, having never so much as raised her wakizashi against another. She does not know any prayers that would assist her in harming another.
- Mizuko had been helping the Ivindi for several months now, trying to quell the unrest and encourage them to seek a different path. She is a rather vocal supporter of the Ivindi, and has several times publicly admonished people who mistreat them.
- She spent most of her days in the slums, and it was likely that she was heading there.

Part Two: Seeking the Cult

A NOTE ON SPELLCASTING: All Spellcasting rolls in Part Two and Three have their TNs increased by 5 due to the lack of proximity to Rokugani controlled territory. The kami here are awake, but are not nearly as active as they are in Balishnimpur.

Once the PCs have collected sufficient information, Kyouji will request not spending too much more time in the city. Even if it means traversing the jungle for a little bit at night, he is eager to get moving, if only to put them a bit closer to their destination.

The first day of travel is fortunately uneventful. Even without speaking to the old man, Kyouji has narrowed down the places where the lair could stand. The first evening, of course, he will ask the PCs to plan out watches, providing the PCs with food and blankets.

While some might be expecting a large fire or the like, Kyouji is rather insistent on refraining, lest they give too much warning to their quarries. Thankfully, he came prepared with plenty of cold food for everyone. Once food has been passed out, he leans back against a tree. "You know, what these people are doing. It's our fault it's come to this, isn't it?" he speaks aloud, looking out toward you.

Kyouji shakes his head as he continues, "desperate times and all that. I know it isn't any of your concerns or anything, but I think you all really should think about why these people are acting the way are. If anything, we Samurai are responsible for this cult gaining the traction it has. 200 years in another person's land without so much as trying to understand their culture. I imagine it takes its toll on these people."

Certainly PCs may take some offense to Kyouji's thoughts. For his part, Kyouji won't be surprised by any indication of offense, but will defend his point of view on the matter.

If someone specifically tries to call him out for blasphemy though, or once everyone has had some time to discuss the matter, he will respond rather specifically.

"Please, Samurai-sama, I mean no offense. I am not Ivindi sympathizer or the like, believe me. But it's something I think about every so often. In some ways, their lot is a lot like mine, after all. Ostracized and hated by those who rule for reasons that you could never control? It's hard not to get angry, to be disenfranchised. If we Samurai were in the same shoes, I suspect we'd be fighting every bit as hard to get our land back." Kyouji looks up, looking right into your eyes. "To most of you, these are just gaijin, but these people were clients. Hell, some of them damn well qualified as friends before this business came about, so I've heard a lot about it. I don't expect your paths to change or for you to suddenly sympathize with the Ivindi. I just want you to understand their perspective."

Once the conversation dies down, Kyouji will go to sleep, encouraging the PCs to do the same.

The next morning, Kyouji will have woken up to relieve the final PC watches. As the PCs wake up, he is rather clearly more focused than he was the previous night.

Kyouji watches the clearings north of the party with a more focused expression than he had carried before this point. When he notices all of you are awake, he nods. "I haven't seen anything yet, but with how close we are getting to their perimeters... well, don't be surprised if we run into a less than friendly patrol or two as we push on."

Kyouji will encourage taking a quieter approach through the next section of jungle. While not dropping into out and out stealth, he will not begrudge anyone who wishes to scout ahead.

Scouting ahead

If anyone chooses to scout ahead, first have them make Stealth (Sneaking) / Agility rolls at TN 20. This may be done as a cooperative roll (all participants roll, adding the stealth skill of the PC with the highest Stealth skill).

After the PCs roll, they may then roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 20. If they fail this roll, they are unable to join their party until the second round of the ensuing combat. If they succeeded at both rolls:

As you make your way through the jungle, you swiftly catch sight of a small group of men trying to remain hidden just as you. Just as you are now tracking them, it seems that they have caught the trail of your party of Samurai, clearly preparing to strike.

The scouting PCs will get a round of actions in advance of the ensuing combat to do as they wish. Initiatives are still rolled and stance declarations still happen (the enemy ambushers will stay in attack stance, not immediately realizing there is another threat for them to pay attention to).

As PCs who are not scouting forge on, have them roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception at TN 25. PCs who fail this roll are Surprised, and take a -20 to their initiative for the first round of combat.

Despite Kyouji's precautions, he can only shout in surprise as an arrow barely flies past his face from a nearby copse of trees. Only moments after, several men of clear Ivindi descent rush from the trees, spears and swords brandished in hand. One walks calmly out of the thicket with no weapons, his eyes clearly darting between the shugenja among you.

There are a number of Ivindi warriors equal to half the number of combat ready PCs, plus one Destroyer Monk. Shugenja PCs count as combat ready PCs if

they have more than one spell that is useful in combat, even if the spell in question is not a direct damage spell. The Ivindi warriors will pair with the bushi, while the Destroyer Monk will focus on incapacitating shugenja with their throat strike.

Ivindi Warrior

Loyal member of the Cult of Ruhmal

School/Rank: None (Insight Rank 2)

Initiative: 5k3

Armor TN: 20 (25 in armor) **Reduction:** 3

Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Out)

Attack: 7k3 (Spear or Sword, complex)

Damage: 7k2 (Sword)/6k2 (Spear)

Air 3	Earth 2	Fire 2	Water 3	Void 0
		Agility 3	Strength 3	

“Honor”: 1.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Swordsmanship/Spears 4
(Swordsmanship shares its masteries with kenjutsu)

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Destroyer Monk

“Demon” trainer

Initiative: 6k4

Armor TN: 25 **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

Attack: 10k3 (Fist, Complex), 9k3 (Shortsword, Complex)

Damage: 4k1 (Fist), 7k2 (Shortsword)

Air 4	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 2
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Honor: 0.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Athletics 4, Martial Arts 6, Swordsmanship 5, Stealth 5, Investigation 4

Advantages/Disadvantages: Prodigy (all listed skills are considered ‘school’ skills), Silent/Dark Secret (Demon)

Special Mechanics:

Throat Punch: The Demon may, as a part of an unarmed attack, choose to forgo doing normal damage to an opponent. Instead, he makes a contested air roll against the target’s earth. If he succeeds, the target is rendered unable to speak for the Monk’s air in rounds (and thus unable to cast spells).

Significant Dice Pools: Athletics (7k3), Stealth (10k3)

It is entirely possible that the PCs will think to try and take one of the enemy combatants prisoner. Any of the Ivindi warriors can be potentially taken prisoner and questioned. The Destroyer Monk, however, will

fall on his sword the moment is clear that he will not be able to complete his mission (when he reaches the crippled wound rank).

If the PCs capture one of the patrolling cultists, he will be able to lead them to the entrance to the Cult’s lair easily enough. Otherwise, searching for the lair is mostly a matter of time.

It should feel hardly surprising that the entrance to the Cult’s Lair is a small cave mouth, marked clearly as a place of importance by the constant hustle and bustle that moves around, in, and out of it. It is not only Ivindi who are spied, but also some Rokugani, most notably a small group of ronin Shugenja who walk the halls freely, offering blessings to those who ask. All in all, about two dozen people seem to call this cave system home.

Most notable among these men, however, is a man dressed in what appear to be some form of priest’s robes. He walks through the crowds with a pleased smile, raising his staff high. “My friends! The time has come for us to complete the rituals we have so meticulously planned for this past year! Pray, come with me, to bear witness to the rise of our deliverance!”

All activity around the cave stops as people take heed of the man’s words. The men and women follow the priest deeper into the cave, until swiftly the only souls in sight are yourselves.

“...That doesn’t seem good,” Kyouji notes.

Part Three: Ritual Sacrifice

Once the PCs resolve to enter, Kyouji will fall back behind them. While certainly not afraid of what these cultists might bring to bear, he certainly isn’t eager to play the role of prisoner a second time.

The Cave System appears to be largely straight forward. While there appear to be some branching paths, it does not take overly long to note that they are mostly dead ends or lead to housing areas and the like. The way seems to be largely unguarded: clearly the entire cult has made its way to see this ritual, and any careful planning seems needless for the moment.

The main pathway finally leads to a large opening. Torches provide surprisingly good lighting, providing an exceptional view of what appears before you. A large crowd stands in a central gathering area, eyes exclusively pointed in the direction of a large dais.

Two figures stand at the dais. One is that Ivindi Priest that had summoned the cultists before. The other is a young Rokugani woman, rather clearly a shugenja. She wears purple and mons that indicate her an Iuchi. The priest turns to the Iuchi woman and speaks to her in a soft voice that seems to reach all within anyway, as though the kami themselves were ensuring he could be heard.

“My Lady Iuchi Mizuko, it is auspicious indeed that you have chosen to see this place, to see our suffering. You have born witness to the trials of the people here for the span of a month now, and heard testimony of their plight. Now, I ask of you, my Lady, are you prepared to take the next step? Are you prepared to help us save our people, and to smite the evil that plagues our realm?”

Mizuko nods without hesitation. “I am. To smite the evils that plague this land, I am ready to act.”

The priest grins at the woman’s answer, producing an ornate dagger from his belt. “Then take this dagger, my lady. To be able to smite the evils of this land, first you must show willingness to commit the ultimate act of Mercy.” His arms motion towards a sickened man splayed out on the table. “Release this man from his ruined flesh, that it might be born again, strong and able.”

The Iuchi takes the dagger and stands over the sickened man on the altar. Even from here, the hesitation in her eyes is evident. Kyouji looks to you all expectantly, waiting for someone to take the opportunity to react.

The PCs do not need to roll stealth to have surprise for the first round of combat. The cultists are too focused on the going ons of the dais to be concerned about their sneaking around. From here, the PCs need to either stop Iuchi Mizuko from killing the sacrificial target. This can be done in several ways.

- A PC may make a well-reasoned argument and roll an appropriate social skill roll (most often Sincerity / Awareness, but other rolls like Temptation and Intimidation may apply). The base TN for this is 30, but a PC may gain a free raise through good role playing (specifically keying on her pacifistic nature will be generally more effective than keying off the dangers of what they might be trying. At the least, she is convinced that they are a people that need help). This is considered a contested roll, and Mizuko has 4 points of mental/social disadvantages.

- A PC may try to rush the dais and tackle her before she can finish the deed. This requires an Athletics (Running) / Water Roll at TN 20 followed by a Jujutsu / Strength roll at TN 25.
- Trying to disarm her of the knife with an arrow or the like requires 4 raises to hit the knife without hitting her. The base TN of the roll is 10.
- Alternatively, a PC may elect to kill her. Iuchi Mizuko has an effective TN of 5 because of her distraction coupled with the element of surprise. She has an earth of 3 (46 wounds must be dealt in order to knock her into down and thus stop her from completing the ritual) Mizuko, too distracted by the going ons of the ritual and the Samurai charging forward, will not spend void to mitigate damage.
- A PC may determine instead to shoot the man on the altar. He is not difficult to hit, requiring only a TN of 10 on the attack roll itself. 25 wounds is enough to kill the man.

If the PCs succeed in stopping her:

As a bewildered Iuchi Mizuko finds her way further from the Priest’s sacrifice, recognition and rage contorts the man’s face. “YOU!” he shouts in anger, fingers pointed at those who have stopped his designs, “You have desecrated this holy place with your presence!

Cultists and Ronin alike begin fleeing from the area, panicked at the sudden anger and rage. Those most loyal to the Priest swiftly move to surround him and Mizuko. In only moments, the chamber is filled only with you and yours, as well as the priest and his minions. The priest’s hand flashes out swiftly to proffer up an order to his men. “Kill the intruders! When they are dead, we may continue!”

There are a number of Ivindi Warriors equal to the number of PCs – 1, plus Amar, the Ivindi Priest. One of the Ivindi Warriors will focus his attention on guarding Amar, while the others will move to engage the PCs.

Amar himself will try to attack the least threatening looking PC (prioritizing Courtiers, but ones with little to no armor will work as well). He will strike them with his dagger, then try to utilize the Cult of the Destroyer technique to steal their blood to cast against the most threatening PC.

If the PCs do not succeed in stopping her:

Iuchi Mizuko takes a deep breath, eliminating all distractions from her mind. In spite of any protest, with only one more word of encouragement from the priest, she takes the dagger and cleanly cuts the throat of the man before her.

For but a moment, there is naught but silence. Within that moment, even the priest appears confused... until black energy burst forth, surrounding and consuming the Unicorn Samurai, whose screams seem to mix pain and pleasure both. "AMAR!" She shrieks. "What... what have you done?!"

The old man chuckled at the sight. "Feel the power of Kali-Ma, Samurai. Taste the fragment she offers, and know absolute divinity."

Mizuko tries to respond, but is quickly enveloped completely by darkness. Her panicked screams soon give way to terrible laughter as the darkness consumes her.

As the darkness subsides, what stands atop the dais appears just as the picture the Cult of the Priest had hung in their office. Wearing little more than coverings for her breasts and a long, flowing skirt, her hair had turned stark white. Dark eyes turn to the priest, then to you, as the priest raises his hand in victory. "Behold, Samurai! The prophecy is fulfilled, and the Ebon Daughter walks among us again!"

PCs may wish to try something, but in the moments immediately after the summoning, the Ebon Daughter is so filled with power as to be effectively immune to any effects that the PCs might muster. In order to weaken her enough to potentially be killed, someone must offer their lives to the kami in order to provide the power to weaken the Ebon Daughter (RE: Life casting). If no PC chooses to do this, Kyouji will (they must come up with the idea themselves, the GM should not prompt them to do this).

Kyouji takes a deep breath, before pulling a scroll out of his satchel. His eyes move to [Ronin PC or PC with highest honor] and he tosses his wakizashi to them. "Please... take that back to Ryoko."

Without any more explanation, Kyouji begins to read the scroll. As he does, Water begins to appear as if from the air itself, surrounding and enveloping the Shugenja, until he himself is no longer visible. From the bubble that has been formed, only two more words can be heard. "For Rokugan!"

The bubble tightens and takes the shape of a long spear, hurling itself at the Ebon Daughter. Three Ivindi warriors leap to try and block the attack, which simply pushes through them, leaving their bodies behind as it finally strikes its target. The Ebon Daughter shrieks in pain as the spear pushes through her, vanishing in a moment after. The Ebon Daughter staggers backwards in shock, touching the hole in her chest with shock, before her attention turns to you in rage. "You will pay for that Ronin's insolence!" She shrieks, charging at you with fury. The few remaining Ivindi Warriors move to fight with her, Amar the priest following shortly behind.

Beside the Ebon Daughter, there are a number of Ivindi Warriors equal to half the number of PCs – 1, plus Amar. As above, one of the warriors will move to protect Amar while the others engage the PCs. Amar will attack the weakest PC first, then use their blood to cast against the strongest.

For the Ebon Daughter: Each round, she will attack a completely random PC, lost to rage as she is.

Amar - Destroyer Priest

School/Rank: Cult of the Destroyer Shugenja 3

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20/26

Reduction: 0

Wounds: 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out)

Attack: 7k3 (Dagger, Complex)

Damage: 4k1 (Dagger)

Air	3	Earth	4	Fire	3	Water	3	Void	3
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Awareness	5	Intelligence	4
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Honor: 0.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Spellcraft 5, Knives 4, Lore: Theology (Ivindi/Ruhmal/Cult of the Destroyer) 6, Sincerity 4, Courtier 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Forbidden Knowledge (Cult of the Destroyer) / Driven (Drive the Rokugani out of the Ivory Kingdoms)

Special Mechanics: Cult of the Destroyer Technique: Feeding the Goddess (Once per round, a Cultist can choose to power their dark spells with the blood of someone they have damaged in a previous round instead of themselves. The Destroyer must make a contested Spellcraft/Willpower roll against the target's IR + Earth/Earth. Upon success, may cast a maho spell as if they had spilled an amount of blood equal to the wounds dealt in the previous round. This action cannot

be hidden, as the blood visibly pours from the victim toward the Cultist in the form of red energy.)

Maho Spells: Ward of Divine Peace (Air 1), Gift of the Maker (Fire 2, gives the Destroyer Priest the Disrupt the Chi Shadowlands Power[Simple action, make a contested willpower roll adding taint against target's willpower adding honor. If you succeed, target must use lowest trait for all skill or trait rolls for the next 10 rounds]), Tomb of Earth (Earth 4) Blood Rite (Earth 1, heals target for 1k1 wounds and increases one physical trait by 1, gives target 1k1 points of taint with no opportunity for resistance), Sinful Dreams (Air 1), Curse of Weakness (Water 2, target suffers +10 TN penalty to all physical actions requiring a skill or trait roll, -10 to ATN)

The Destroyer's Blessing: The Destroyer Priest is not tainted (maho is being used as an approximation of his magical abilities), but has a taint rank of 5 for the purpose of any technique or spell that triggers off of one's taint rank.

Significant Dice Pools: Spellcraft/Willpower: 9k4

Ivindi Warrior

Loyal member of the Cult of Ruhmal

School/Rank: None (Insight Rank 2)

Initiative: 5k3

Armor TN: 20 (25 in armor) **Reduction:** 3

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

Attack: 7k3 (Spear or Sword, complex)

Damage: 7k2 (Sword)/6k2 (Spear)

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 3	Void 1
		Agility	Strength	
		3	3	

"Honor": 1.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: Swordsmanship/Spears 4
(Swordsmanship shares its masteries with kenjutsu)

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

The Ebon Daughter

Aspect of the Destroyer

Initiative: 7k4

Armor TN: 25 **Reduction:** 5

Wounds: 85 (Dead)

Attack: 8k4 (Sword, complex)

Damage: 7k3 (Sword)

Air 4	Earth 5	Fire 4	Water 4
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"Honor": 1.0 Status: -10 Glory: 0.0

Primary Skills: The Ebon Daughter has a large number of skills, however none of them are particularly relevant to this module.

Special Mechanics: Regeneration: The Ebon Daughter recovers 5 wounds each round.

Magical Resistance: All Elemental Spells targeting the Ebon Daughter require one additional raise to cast for no effect, or else the spell automatically fails.

Special Immunity: The Ebon Daughter takes no negative effects from any status condition.

Conclusion

Once the PCs have resolved combat, they will be free to return to the city. Ikoma Sho will not be able to personally take their report, being too busy preparing for the battle that is mere hours away, and Gennai Okusukai waits with Ryoko to take the PCs report.

- Assuming the PCs stopped the summoning entirely, Okusukai will commend them for their effort. He then apologizes to the Bushi, as they will not be able to get much needed rest... they are needed to defend the city.
- If Kyouji has sacrificed himself, before Okusukai has a chance to ask for their report, Ryoko will sheepishly ask "...where's Kyouji?" Upon learning of his sacrifice, it is all that Ryoko can do to maintain some semblance of On as the PCs give their report.
- If Mizuko was returned with the PCs, after realizing just how dangerous her actions were, she will act with contrition and make known her intent to commit seppuku to atone for her sins.

No matter what happens, there is little time for bushi PCs to rest. The sounds of alarm begin to sound, and very quickly the PCs are sent off to prepare for the fight.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1 XP

Good Roleplaying: 1 XP

PCs kill the Destroyer Priest: 1 XP

PCs stop the Summoning of the Ebon Daughter: 1 XP

OR

PCs slay the Ebon Daughter: 1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Favors

If the PCs kill the Destroyer Priest, they gain one favor.

Honor

If the PCs stop the summoning without killing Mizuko, they receive an H5 honor gain.

Glory

If the PCs stop the summoning, they gain G4 glory.

If the PCs fight and slay the Ebon Daughter, they gain G6 Glory.

Allies and Enemies

If Kyouji survives the module, the PCs gain Kyouji and Ryoko as allies. Both have influence 0. Kyouji is devotion 1, and Ryoko is devotion 2. If PCs already have them as allies, each of their devotions raise by 1.

Other Awards/Penalties

GM Reporting

- 1) Was the Ebon Daughter summoned?
- 2) Did Mizuko survive?
- 3) If Mizuko survived, did the PCs encourage her not to commit Seppuku?
- 4) Did Kyouji sacrifice himself?

The GM must report this information by (date three months after release) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

If any NPCs require statblocks not listed elsewhere in the module

Kyouji

“Altruistic” Ronin

School/Rank: Self taught Shugenja (Water) 2

Initiative: 5k3

Armor TN: 20/26

Reduction: 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out)

Attack: 5k3 (Wakizashi, Complex)

Damage: 4k2 (Wakizashi)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 2

Honor: 1.9 Status: 0.0 Glory: 3.2

Primary Skills: Lore: Theology 1, Spellcraft 2, Stealth 4, Kenjutsu 2, Athletics 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Friendly kami (Water) / True Love (Ryoko), Idealistic

Special Mechanics: Water Spells (7k4): Path to inner Peace, Regrow the Wound, Strike of the Tsunami, Reflective Pool Fire (4k3): Fires of Purity

Significant Dice Pools: if the NPC is likely to be called on to roll for specific tasks, like dueling or social resistance rolls

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

War comes to Balishnimpur, Samurai. It seems that the issues regarding our occupation here combined with the spouted divinity of this so-called Maharajah has inspired an army that stands against the gates of the Imperial City of Balishnimpur. Even now, forces from the Empire arrive to supplement the Eleventh Imperial Legion and ensure this city, claimed by the divine providence of Empress Toturi II, does not fall into the hands of enemies.

With the forces that we have at our disposal, Ikoma Sho has shown himself to be confident. He has sworn to slay the Gaijin interloper personally, and return his head to Bayushi Kimetiko-sama as a trophy and a gift. The Soldiers of the Eleventh stand firm with him, prepared to repel the gaijin threat for the sake of peace for this colony.

