

The Soul Goes Forth

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**A Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

The Month of the Moon, 1341 (Spring)

**Module Number: CIT20
Release Date: 03/16/2018**

Crafting, Supernatural, Politics

The cycle of life, death, and rebirth is not always simple. Finding one's way back, and one's path upon the return, sometimes requires the aid of a chosen few.

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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

As dark forces threaten the Empire from without and perhaps within, some heroes of past ages choose to leave the comforts of the eternal heavens and return again to service upon Ningen-Do. Not all such heroes are men and, indeed, some were never living, breathing beings at all. One such hero, an ancient Shutsudohin (awakened spirit of a nemuranai that was destroyed), has chosen to once again return. To do so, however, it will require the assistance of a master smith as well as the guidance of worthy samurai to determine who and how best to serve.

At the start of this module, the PCs have been sent by their lords to help a samurai with a unique issue, courtesy of their reputation as adaptable problem solvers. One of the finest smiths of the Dragon, Mirumoto Nittoho, has been chosen by the spirit to help forge it a new earthly vessel. For that to be achieved, Nittoho will need assistance gathering both the materials and the supernatural support that he cannot readily acquire for himself, which is where the PCs come in. There are useful appendixes for this: Please be sure to look them over; the NPC pages have some useful information about personality and history, and there is an index to try and help with navigating.

All the while the PCs are facing challenges, the spirit itself, long absent from the world, will be learning from its 'aids'. The PCs interactions with the spirit, and the assistance they may choose to give in the forging, will shape the nature of the blade it will become.

Once the katana is made, it must be gifted to a worthy master. In the spirit's eyes, the most worthy is the line of Toturi. It will fall to the PCs to help it choose which child of the line it should serve.

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.

- Blessed or Cursed by the realm: Yomi
- Chosen by the Oracles (Water)
- Contrary
- Disbeliever

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

Time passes, and though the PCs' deeds will earn them a reputation, the Empire is a large place and lasting fame is a long-term goal not easy to achieve. The time between modules will see a slow drain of Glory from the PCs, with the amount of time generally relating to the amount of Glory lost at the beginning of each module – as a general rule, between one point and five points. This cannot reduce a PC's Glory Rank to less than their Insight Rank, and the Fame Advantage increases their Insight Rank by one for these purposes.

The Glory Loss at the beginning of this module is 3 points.

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** will vary depending on the time frame. If a character is growing close to being Lost (Shadowlands Taint Rank 4.5+) , it is recommended that the player have another PC ready to replace them.

The TN for this module is 15

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 determined by the module. (Difficulties should range from 5-30, possibly higher for High Rank modules). 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.

The Survival Roll for this module is TN 20; those with Blood of Osano Wo only need to make a TN 15.

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

Within weeks of the spring thaw, a messenger arrives for the PCs, summoning them north and into the Dragon Mountains. Their exploits in the last years have drawn the attention of certain parties and earned them a reputation as ‘problem solvers’. As it happens, one Mirumoto Nittoho, Master Smith, has a rather unique problem (or, as he puts it, ‘challenge’) for which he requires able help. Though the PCs’ lords aren’t informed exactly what the challenge is, they have sent their votes of confidence along with the orders. In the case of ronin, they should be hired for their help for a fee of 1 koku.

After several weeks of somewhat miserable travel through lands that are still covered in the remnants of winter snow, the party arrives in Suigeki Toshi (Water Hammer City) an hour or so before dark. Lodgings have already been secured for them and Nittoho eagerly awaits their arrival.

Part One: Making a Very Unique Acquaintance

Arrival in Suigeki Toshi

Though spring has marched relentlessly across the majority of the Empire, winter is slow to release its grasp upon the mountains that the Dragon call home. Snow still lies hip-high in places, though diligent Dragon have done their best to ensure that the roads, at least, stay clear. Still, it is a welcome change to enter the boundaries of Suigeki Toshi, a city so full of the craftsman and their respective workshops and forges that it has raised the ambient temperature within its boundaries to almost tolerable during the day.

The city spreads itself before you in the late afternoon sunlight, with a mighty waterfall cascading down from the heights along its eastern edge adding a constant low hum to the sounds of voices and artistry. The river it feeds, swollen and fast-moving with the snowmelt from the heights, burbles merrily between buildings, spanned here and there by bridges of various sizes. Blue-tinged stone makes up the lower floors of many of the buildings, with grander structures rising up here and there on both sides of the river. The Temple at the city’s heart, a glorious construction of blue stone and imported white marble, rises high above all the rest, is clearly the beating heart at the town’s center, however, and draws the eye easily from any street in town.

The city is fairly large and divided into two halves, determined by which side of the river they fall upon

(North or South). Each is further sub-divided, with districts which reflect not only their purpose but the flavor of the Clans which tend to reside there. Though it is a Dragon city, the Mantis, Scorpion, and Unicorn all have interests here and this is reflected in both the architecture and the population of each area.

The invitation the samurai receive indicates that quarters have been reserved for them within the Commercial Quarter on the Southern Side of the river. This area has a significant Mantis population and is also the first area one sees upon reaching the city proper. It is worth noting that, since this city hosts formal embassies for Mantis, Scorpion, and Unicorn, members of those Clans can choose to stay there instead of at the Inn.

Because there is a fair bit of wandering around that can be done in random order, page numbers for various areas/NPCs is found in Appendix #2.

If PCs go to the Inn first, start on page 5. If they decide to check in with the Master Smith, start on page 6. Note that it is too late in the day to present themselves to the Governor, so that can't take place until the next day.

Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll. Dragon and those with any Craft or Artisan skill of 3+ receive a free raise on this roll.

- 10: The first of the caravans have started for the year. As usual, the Unicorn have arrived first; the fresh supply of grains they bring with them, especially rice, has made for fuller stomachs and calmer tempers these last few weeks.
- 15: There are surprisingly large numbers of guests from strange Clans mixing among the artisans for this time of year. The upsurge in Crab merchants, thanks to trade agreements from winter, is expected; The sudden influx of Crane was not.
- 20: The Dragon are sparing no expense on their artisans as they prepare the best of their respective craft to adorn the future Empress and her entourage, hopefully sparking trends, and therefore commerce, for years to come.
- 20: The Smiths in the Ring are looking surly. Seems that ore shipment still hasn't come. I wonder when the Governor will send the bushi to investigate?
- 25: Such a shame to see a young man like that looking so burdened. Why, that Agasha boy can't

be more than twenty, yet there he kneels in Sorrow's temple, as bent as a man thrice his age.

- 30: Some of the Crane guests who claim to be here to prospect for new talent for their Academy seem to be rather more interested in their hosts than the artisans. Doji Tamura, in particular, hasn't even bothered to leave the Manor in weeks. Kitsuki-dono can't be pleased.

The following rumors are only available via the Lore: Underworld/ Awareness skill. Use of the skill in this fashion causes .1 loss of honor.

- 15: There's been some tension in the First Ring for the last weeks. It started with the arrival of a stranger, muffled and wrapped so against the winter cold that all one could see was the oddly metallic gray of their eyes.
- 20: A lot of money is passing through town, even more than usual. Bandits who would generally leave the treacherous passes alone in favor of easier pickings have taken note. Some of them are still reasonable to those of similar disposition, however, and are happy enough to let small groups pass for a small 'toll'.
- 25: Did you see the amount of guards outside that old Tsuruchi's warehouse? Not a bit of business for years, but now they've got a full squad on the place at all hours and no one but samurai're allowed within a stone's throw. Don't know what they're guarding, but it must be choice!

Arriving at the Inn/ The Merchant City

The southern side of town is the quieter side. It houses a somewhat haphazard combination of temples and mercantile centers, with the Mantis contribution to the later being rather obvious in the color choices and adornments on even the simplest of warehouses. The inn where the party has reservations is nestled near a small bridge between the two regions, just barely on the Merchant City side of the divide.

The Azure Rill (the Inn)

Your destination, an inn on the Southern side of the city, stands on the banks of the river that divides the city and marks the border between Kitsuki and Mirumoto provinces. The Azure Rill is a small but elegant structure, showing more than a hint of gaijin influence in its design. It is nestled in a bend between the river and one of it's 'children', with the distributary

cleverly routed with small dams to arc softly through a rather pleasant water garden behind the Inn proper.

A bridge made from the local blue-tinged stone crosses the smaller river near the Rill's main entrance. On the bridge's far side, a large torii arch guards the path to the temples of Natsu-togumara {fortune of travel} and Daikoku as well as myriad other small shrines.

Inside, the Inn shows clear Mantis influence. Gilding has been added to anything that makes sense, and sometimes places where it doesn't. The scenes on the walls are of the ocean, which is expected in a city said to be sacred to the Water Dragon, but also of cargo and even war ships, crewed by men and women in bright silks of teals and golds.

The patrons, too, display a bit more wealth than is tasteful. Many are clearly merchants, heimen with sufficient skill and fortunes to gain admittance to levels of luxury that typically only samurai enjoy. Two, currently engaged in a dicing game, appear to be samurai, with daisho on racks behind them and Yoritomo mons on their chest.

Because of the size of the current crowd, the PCs will have to share the largest room on the second floor; a number of painted screens can be, with some creativity, arranged to make it nearly as private as most rooms in large shared residences. The proprietors are more than happy to set the PCs up and even to have their two children borrowed as runners if needed.

There is a bathing room, of course, but it is small and doesn't allow for more than two bathers at a time. Moreover, it is shared with heimen, so prudish PCs may wish to go elsewhere.

The food served here is tasteful and very well prepared; even common arts, like cooking, are taken very seriously in this town. Mountain Tuna *is* on the menu, as are some of the other dishes that were necessary adjustments to traditional samurai diets in the rather barren Dragon lands: Buckwheat soba noodles instead of rice is common, and what fish there is comes solely from rivers a day or so out of town: Due to local superstitions, no one dares to fish in the sacred river while the Temple is still in sight.

The Proprietors

The primary person encountered at the Inn is a cheerful middle-aged woman named Nakami. She manages the logistics of lodging for both humans and the frequent draft animals that belong to them, while her husband, Iroshi, handles most of the cooking and

occasional repair work. Both heimen are perfectly comfortable with samurai; indeed, Nakami will cheerfully explain if asked that she prefers samurai over her fellow heimen as customers; they tend to fight less, drink more, and generally pay their lodging fees on time.

Some questions and answers that the Proprietors can help with:

- Who's the Governor? *"Kitsuki Kirino-dono has lead here for several years now. We don't see her, often, but business has been fine so we have no reason to complain."*
- Any particular gifts the Governor is partial to? *"Kitsuki-dono used to be a professional yojimbo, you know. I've heard she still has an interest in the Art and its history, though I've never spoken to her personally to ask."*
- Do you know anything about Mirumoto Nittoho? *"Well, if he's one of the Masters, he'll be in the inner ring, the one still considered part of Temple grounds."*
- Who does the primary Temple at city center honor? *"Why, the Water Dragon, of course! Oh, and Suitengu-kami, too, but it's the Dragon's Scale that anchors the sacred forge and led to the birth of the town."*
- Is it true there are more samurai guests than usual in town? *"Not here, but I've heard from my cousin who sews for one of the junior courtiers that they've had enough new samurai this last month that Kitsuki-dono's had to hold court every other day just to keep up with them all!"*
- What sort of entertainment is there around? *"Oh, that's the North Bank you'll be wanting. Say what you like about Scorpion, they've earned their reputations for fine geisha houses and theaters here in town! Just follow the main road"*

The Other Guests

The heimen guests are all important, insofar as peasants can be important. All of them have samurai patrons; none of them are particularly interested in interacting with samurai who are NOT said patrons, unless of course the samurai is buying drinks or looking to engage in serious, long-term commerce.

If the party tries to greet the two Mantis, they will be greeted with what is best referred to as 'polite disinterest'. They will introduce themselves as

Yoritomo Kunal and Yoritomo Sadao readily enough, but will demure any invitations to share a drink or to join their game (which is Fortune and Winds, and over which they appear to be gambling about something private, not coin).

If there is a Mantis among the PCs, the pair will be slightly more welcoming; they will at least sit and share small talk a while. The pair will admit to being partners and patrons of a few local interests; the game they are having (best of seven, a virtuous number) is over which one of them is going to have to be the one to escort their latest products all the way overland to the nearest port (in Phoenix lands) to sail it back to the Isles.

These two are, mostly, useless and just for decoration; they can, however, offer directions around the Merchant City free of charge. They can also help supply materials for Part 3 if the option of simply making a purchase is used.

The Merchant City

The so-called ‘City within a City’ is a noisy and chaotic place at first glance, with shops, warehouses, and workshops scattered along lanes with no obvious form of organization or planning. Small wagons that sell rice cakes sit to a zeni stand next to opulent storefronts that offer gold-threaded and finely embroidered obi; the obi shop stands next to a warehouse which holds various grades and types of stone for the making of statues.

Visitors, who are easily distinguished from residents by the expressions of high-constant confusion or exasperation they often bear, can easily lose half a day seeking a single building here. The residents, often descended from the first Mantis to settle here, are well aware of the problem and have, in true mercenary fashion, found a way to exploit it for profit. On every major corner, young children ranging in age from six to thirteen, can be found standing at the ready, a signature blue paper lantern in hand to help guide anyone willing to pay their fees to where they need to go.

There is very little of special interest here, other than a large supply of higher-quality-than-usual artistic supplies. There are finished goods as well, though it should be noted these tend to lean toward the traditional: Gaijin Gear cannot be found in any of these shops.

Because the goods are so fine, and shipping to/from the mountains expensive, all of the prices from the book are raised by 25%. A commerce check vs TN 15 can lower this by 5%, with an additional 5% for successful raises. Failing this will cause the price to go up by 5% instead, with an extra 5% per failed raise.

PCs can also, thematically, purchase Inheritance grade items here. This would cost the expected number of Favours and XP, but it does allow for an in-canon explanation of origin.

A Very Surprising Meeting

Eventually, the party will have to go and meet Mirumoto Nittoho to see why they’re here. His invitation indicates that his workshop is in the southern half of the Inner Ring.

The entry to the massive temple complex is guarded by an impressive display: the arch is adorned by a massive statue of the Water Dragon, wrought in blue stone that seems to shift and move when you catch it from the corner of your eye. The statue, a masterwork of Phoenix artistry, shows no sign of the centuries that have passed since it was gifted by the then-Master of Water to the City.

As you pass through to the ring, you almost feel the Dragon’s eyes on your back.

The Inner Ring is just that; a ring of workshops that surrounds the Water’s Strength Temple. The workshops here belong to Masters, either former Apprentices who chose to stay or those who have earned their titles by a Lord’s recognition and support. Every workspace is also graced with a small antechamber, meant for the greeting of and negotiations with would-be patrons.

There is at least some foot traffic here at all hours, heavier during the day. As the party heads toward where their invitation indicates they can meet Nittoho, they should roll Investigation (Notice)/ PER vs TN 15 (20 mid) to observe that the usual flow of traffic stops a few places away from his workshop on either side; what few people there are (if it’s daytime) are fellow artisans, peeking out from curtains before quickly disappearing behind them if they are caught watching.

Your destination, marked by Nittoho’s Chop on a small wooden plaque alongside the curtained entrance to his workshop, is one of the few that does not ring with the sounds of industry. Even as you approach it, however, the curtain ripples and then draws aside,

revealing a boy of perhaps ten. He blinks at you for a moment in wide-eyed interest before bowing.

“You must be the ones Master sent for. Please, come inside.”

The first room, the antechamber, is largely empty; it holds a low table and some tatami for sitting and talking, as well as a bookshelf with a few scrolls tucked inside, but little else. A second doorway, this time barred by a door of sturdy wood, stands closed before you, until the boy raps out a pattern on its surface before pushing it open.

Inside, Nittoho’s workshop is laid out in perfect order. While minimalist in style, it is clearly well equipped and kept as clean as it is possible for a place full of soot and ash to be. The forge here, however, is dark, and no projects sit in stages of completion along the many shelves and tables. Instead, two individuals sit in a corner near the forge on two benches.

One of them, a man with black hair faintly streaked with gray, wears the Mirumoto Mon and has the massive shoulders and brawny arms of a smith. The other is almost completely hidden by the robes and shielding tengai {basket hat} of a travelling monk.

As you enter, the Dragon rises, bowing in welcome. “Welcome, samurai, to my forge. I am Mirumoto Nittoho, and I thank you for your attention to this matter.”

Anyone with Courtier 3 or higher will immediately recognize that Nittoho is both deeply relieved and highly anxious about the party’s arrival. He will make small talk for a brief time, inquiring about the conditions of travel and confirming the Inn is sufficient quality. The stranger will sit in silence the whole time, while the apprentice bustles around and makes tea for everyone EXCEPT the stranger.

After the bare minimum of pleasantries have been exchanged, Nittoho takes one last long pull of bracing tea.

“You are doubtless curious as to why you are here and, I am certain, as to why my guest is here.”

The Dragon turns to the silent observer, bowing deeply in their direction.

“You are here to assist me in assisting **him**.” Reverence tinges the smith’s voice. “This is Kami-Shi,

or so I am permitted to call him. As to his true Name, I have not been so blessed as to learn it.”

At the introduction, the silent figure moves to remove its tengai. The hands that slip from its robes are pale and long-fingered, with strange almost blunt fingertips and no obvious nail. Its motion as it moves is strange, starting and stopping with a bit more abruptness than most manage.

The features that are revealed as the hat is set aside are stranger still. Though the overall shape is that of a man, it is clear that this being is nothing so simple. Steely gray eyes stare calmly and a bit too long from a pale, androgynous face, with blade-sharp cheekbones and thin lips over teeth that gleam like daggers when it smiles.

The Shutsudohin

Anyone who wishes to can make a Lore: Nemuranai/Int, Lore: Non-humans/Int, Lore: Theology/INT, or Spellcraft/Int vs TN 25 (30 for mid) to identify the entity as a shutsudohin, the awakened spirit of a nemuranai which, upon it’s earthly vessel’s destruction, ascended to the Heavens just as a worthy Mortal hopes to do at the end of their turns on the Wheel. This makes the entity an equal to a Revered Ancestor dwelling Yomi, at least so far as the Celestial Order is concerned. The name that Nittoho has chosen for it literally means ‘royal spirit’ and reflects the fact that this is, in fact, a divine being.

Nittoho continues. “Kami-Shi came to me some weeks ago with his request. He has chosen to leave Yomi to serve once again in Ningen-Do, and I am to help him attain a suitable physical host. Your help, I fear, will also be required, for I am but a simple Smith and cannot accomplish alone all that must be done.”

The entity nods and speaks, with the sounds of steel being drawn underlying its words. “No ordinary blade can contain my essence. It will take one formed of the finest materials, shaped by the finest hand, and born in the finest forge, for my rebirth to be completed in the time that I have been allowed. I have found the smith, but you must help with the rest.”

At that, Nittoho pulls a fold of parchment from a sleeve and spreads it out on the tea tray.

“I’ve narrowed down the most appropriate resources available in the time allowed.” He turns briefly to the spirit, which nods and says, “Two weeks. Any longer, and I and this chance are lost.”

The list has a number of items on it, as well as likely locations. ****NOTE: Do not include the Agasha Garden unless there is an Agasha (either by Family or training) in the party! If they ask how Nittoho knows, he'll just point at the shutsudohin.**

This list contains the following:

- Sacred Water
 - Water's Strength Temple
 - The Scale's Source
- Blessed Pine (for charcoal, and for the wooden parts of the katana)
 - ****Kuroshin's Pine, in the Agasha Gardens**
 - The White Pine
- Tamahagane (Steel sand for forging)
 - The Wrath of the Kami
 - The Serpent's Tail Mine

"I require other aid as well." Now, the Master Smith appears a bit chagrined. "My talents are with steel and fire, not people. There are those that must be convinced to help us, but I lack the skill and the position to secure such aid. The Abbot must agree to allow me to use the sacred shrine, and a priest must be found of sufficient knowledge to conduct a particular blessing. Moreover, permission must be granted for you to leave the town. My influence was enough to get you here, but I could not secure papers to allow you deeper into Dragon Lands. The Governor must grant that right."

Naturally, the party is going to have questions at this point. Nittoho, having never left the city since he came as a boy, can't answer much, but what he can answer is below. The spirit knows a lot more, but isn't willing to share much since it has no reason to trust the PCs yet. For anything else, the party should make an appropriate Lore Roll (Lore: Dragon Clan will work for most of them, with Lore: Theology working for those dealing with sacred sites and Craft: (any sort of metal) /Int or Commerce/Int working for the metal locations. TN should be 20 (25 for mid), with Dragon or those with Way of the Land: Dragon Provinces getting a +5 to their roll. For the results of a successful roll, refer to the first paragraph of each respective section.

Things Nittoho or the Spirit can answer:

Nittoho:

- What do you know about the mines? *I've used their steel before, but we haven't heard from them since before the thaw. Finding*

what I need should be simple, but getting there may not be.

- What do you know about the Wrath of the Kami?"*It's a volcano, kept asleep somewhat by the Agasha. Strange things happen on its slopes, and I've heard even stranger things happen below. I've never been there myself, so you will have to find your own way once you must leave the roads."*
- Can you recommend a priest for the ritual? *"I am certain there are Agasha in town, but I haven't met them. The Governor's Court will have someone who will know."* **Note: This is enough to trigger as a lie, since he is evading full disclosure. An Investigation/PER vs TN 15 (20 for Mid) will make him disclose the rest.** *"The only shugenja I know of who might have the ability isn't who I would choose, given any other option. She's a Yogo, you see, and you know how it is with that Family...still, if you must...you can find her at the House of Shadow. Minato is her name. She's the Patron."*

The Shutsudohin:

- What sort of priest is required? *"One able to bespeak the kami of the forge, those of earth or fire, is ideal, though a holy man of sufficient knowledge will suffice."* **Note: For specifics of qualifications, see the Priest Section starting on page 13.**
- Who did you belong to? *The shutsudohin stares at you, seeming almost to see through you before replying. "Who my 'sire' was matters little. I scarcely remember them, or my time on Ningen-Do. Only our shared understanding of Duty to the Empire remains."*
- Why serve the Toturi? *"I possess a form of enlightenment no human advisor could. I can advise as no other can. Why should that knowledge be wasted on anyone less than the line that will lead the Empire away from darkness or damn it entirely with poor choices?"*
- What happens if this fails? *Solemnity sits strangely on the spirit's face and its tone takes on the high, strange sound of metal about to buckle. "I end."*

Once the party agrees to help, Nittoho has a few useful things for them: A map of the Serpent's Tale Mine and the roads to reach it, a beautifully made galss bottle to hold the sacred water, and a pass to take to the local

stableyard to secure mounts for anyone who doesn't have them.

Note: From this point on, the Shutsudohin will attempt to accompany the party in all endeavors, with the notable exception of going to the Wrath of the Kami (see section for more details). It prefers to go in its sword form, unobtrusively at the side of one of the bushi, but will go in wandering monk guise to places where a sword isn't permitted. It can and will still speak in sword form and will show no concern about changing in public if it isn't convinced otherwise. It also has no nudity taboos between shifts, so use this for maximum amusement if the chance comes up.

Part Two: Gathering Support

As the players go about these tasks, the spirit will seek to accompany them. How the PCs handle each encounter will impact the way the shutsudohin feels about matters of honor and morality; those choices, in the end, will ultimately impact the bearer in some way. This should not be a choice the PCs realize they are making, so try to keep the tracker sheet out of sight as much as possible!

Presenting Themselves to the Governor

Good samurai should know that presenting themselves to the local leadership is considered good manners. If they seem to be unaware of this out of character, allow their PCs to figure it out with an Etiquette/AW check of TN 15. Since the party will need to send at least one person to the estate for proper travel papers if they plan to go out to get materials in person legally, it is best to nudge your players to only go to the Estate after they meet Nittoho.

If the party tries to come at night, they will be politely turned back at the closed gates, told to 'come back tomorrow, the Lady Governor is entertaining.' In this case, that's actually true, not just a euphemism, but PCs may take it either way.

The Governor's Estate is the second-largest structure in Suigeki Toshi, second only to the great Water Strength Temple in both size and beauty. Elegantly designed and situated with the finest view of the river and the lake below, this marvel of Kitsuki and Agasha architecture marries form and function in a way few engineers ever master. Broad gates, sculpted from wood and metal, bar both the Eastern and Western

approaches, though during the daylight hours, they stand open, guarded by watchful Mirumoto.

It is at the side of one-such bushi, ostensibly an honor guard, that your party is permitted entrance to the Estate. After several turns down elegant, minimally decorated halls, you reach the Court proper and are announced.

Court is an every-other-day occurrence; for the sake of ease, the first time the PCs come in daytime is a court day.

There are quite a lot of NPCs here. For a full list of their names (just in case) see Appendix #3.

After your names are announced, a servant leads you into the court proper. A large, airy chamber faces southerly, with wide doors opened wide to allow those within to bask in the glorious view of the lake below. The chill that this invites is combatted by the court's chosen seating: instead of tatami or stools or cushions lined in tidy rows or groups, this court has elected to instead place individual kotatsu {Warming tables with blankets over them and heated braziers beneath} throughout, each surrounded by a number of cushions based on size. At this hour, only half of the kotatsu are populated by samurai, with fewer numbers but higher prestige accruing the closer one sits to the seat of power.

At the head of the chamber atop a raised platform, the Governor sits in pride of place. She does not share the accommodations of her guests; instead, the tiny, delicate woman kneels on a tatami between two large sculpted braziers made of blue-green sea glass. As the party reaches the court's center, she inclines her head in recognition, causing a brief hush to sweep across the courtroom.

This is an open court session. Etiquette simply dictates that the party present themselves and their reason for visiting the city. Some PCs may choose to offer gifts; if they wish to do so, this is the time. Once they have had ample opportunity to make introductions, and to ask any questions that are suitable for public discussion, court business resumes.

Once greeted, you are finally given the chance to examine your fellow attendees and find your own seats.

As expected, Dragon make up the majority of the population here. In addition to a handful of steadfast

Mirumoto bushi, acting as guards, a number of young attendants and aids sit arrayed at the most distant tables from the center, anxiously observing the Court and waiting for the slightest hint that their service as scribe or runner may be required. Most wear the Kitsuki mon, though a Tonbo mon adorns a shoulder or two as well. The only Agasha present has a rather more prestigious place, seated at the table to the Governor's right hand. With him are mishmash of other guests, including a few Brotherhood monks, all happily discussing the would-be apprentices who are due to present themselves to the Temple Abbot in a few weeks' time.

A number of Scorpion sit scattered about as well, with several Soshi taking up a whole table by themselves, where they are engaged in speculation about the year's theme for something called the Painted City.

Ide and Utaku sit alongside the chamber's only Togashi, clustered at the table nearest the outdoors; they appear seemingly disinterested in the Court itself, being rather more occupied with the view and the sumi-e painting of it that the Dragon is currently drafting, with many suggestions and opinions from his companions proving a shared enthusiasm.

At the kotatsu to the Governor's left, only three cushions are filled, though there are several notably vacant as well. A lovely woman in Crane blues is clearly the dominant person at the table, with another, younger woman in the soft sea greens of the Moshi currently listening to her intently even as a young man with a Yasuki mon shifts and tries, unsuccessfully, not to look uncomfortable. All three are skilled enough not to be overheard, which has earned the table no few sidelong glances from the Scorpion scattered around.

Just as you turn away, the Crane's attention falls on your party and for only a moment, she smiles in invitation.

Seating is more fraught than it first appears: There is definite social hierarchy in place, and to sit uninvited or out of order may risk causing offense. An Etiquette (Courtesy)/Aw vs TN 15 allows the party to identify two possible places that are 'proper' for them to take: An empty kotatsu, midway down the row on the left (best for those not of allied Clans), or an empty table a bit closer to the view on the right (best for parties which are mostly Dragon or Allied PCs).

PCs may of course try to join one of the other tables: Doing so politely requires an Etiquette (Courtesy) /Awareness vs TN 20, with a free raise given for being

part of a Clan involved OR for having at least three points in the artistic matters being discussed:

- Sumi-E/Painting (Unicorn/Togashi Table)
- Acting or Theater set design (Soshi Table)
- Weapon, Armor, or any other type of Metal smithing (Agasha Table)
- Any High skill (Junior Kitsuki/Tonbo Table)

The Crane's table is another matter all together: She will cheerfully sit with the party if they are brave enough to accept the invitation, but doing so will cause an immediate frown from the Governor. Any future rolls with Kirino have their TN's raised by 5.

IF the party has Kami-Shi with them, it will ask the party to explain their seating choices. If it is asked, it will suggest a seat with the Agasha, simply because it finds mortal discussions about craftsmanship useful at this point and it has no real understanding of the social difficulties involved. It will sulk if its wishes aren't met, either on purpose or due to failing the rolls, muttering something about stupid human customs (add a point to the Ruthless column).

If the (majority of the) party chooses an empty table:

As you settle into place, soft-footed servants arrive with a pot of tea and cups. Once they have departed, a young man in the Kitsuki mon approaches and bows, smiling a bit shyly. "Greetings, samurai, and welcome to my lady's Court. She has asked that I attend to you and learn more of your business, to determine if it requires personal attention."

The young man is Kituski Anharu, a very recent graduate from the Kitsuki School. He knows a little bit about the court, and can answer a few questions for the party if asked. This of course starts with him being able to name all of the attendants who are of any import (See Appendix 3). He knows nothing of Nittoho or his projects, but becomes instantly fascinated if/when he is introduced to Kami-Shi (if it is there).

If the party is simply here to do their duty, he will take down their names, their purpose, and check over their papers. He will then quietly explain that their duty has been discharged, wish the group well, and rise to bring his report to the Governor.

As Kirino bends to listen to her young Cousin, a soft, amused voice rises from her left. "It is so kind of you to allow your juniors to gain experience with out of Clan guests, Kitsuki-sama. How blessed you are, to have the chance to serve yourself and your young Cousin all at once. "

All eyes turn as the murmurs of conversation fall to silence. The Dragon in the room appear stoic; the Scorpion whose masks allow the expression seem amused. The Governor, however, looks annoyed. “If I wanted your opinion on how I conduct my court, Doji-san, I’d have asked for it. If you have a point to make that will serve this gathering, you may do so. If not, I’m certain you’ve meddling...excuse me, matchmaking...you should be doing.”

The Crane’s smile never wavers, but her icy eyes glitter dangerously, like a predators upon sighting weak prey. “I only act to serve as I was trained, Kitsuki-sama, because you still have not seen fit to allow me to complete the tasks I have been assigned.”

Kirino’s green eyes narrow and her right hand flits toward her side, as if seeking the katana which currently hangs behind her. “You know very well what I think of your orders, Doji-san. Will you force me to repeat my stance here, in front of the whole gathering?”

This situation is clearly a fraught one. PC’s can chime in on either side, try to calm matters, or choose to remain silent, ignoring the entire affair (the socially correct response). Contrary PCs should have to roll to stay out of it.

IF the party chooses to side with the Doji: Make a contested Courtier/AW vs. Kirino’s 6k3. Success will force Kirino to back down, murmuring something about ‘discussing it again later’ to Tamura. This will earn the PC’s Kirino’s dislike, but also earn them Tamura’s favor, meaning she will happily help them with Materials later.

IF the party chooses to side with the Kitsuki: Make a contested Courter/AW vs Tamura’s 9k4+5. Success not only forces Tamura to apologize for her presumption but also earns Kirino’s highest favor. She will make it known that she wishes to thank the PC ‘in person at your convenience’. If this occurs, she will not only happily provide the party travel papers when they come to ask her but also an escort of guards when they leave town as well, ensuring they do not have any encounters with bandits or other hazards on the road. Tamura, on the other hand, will refuse to speak to them, meaning she won’t be of assistance with Materials.

IF the party tries to smooth the matter over: Roll an Ettiquette (Conversation)/ Awareness vs. TN 20 (25 for Mid tables). This will allow the PC to rise and

change the subject to introduce themselves and their party, effectively eliminating the argument by changing the topic.

Alternatively, PC’s may instead begin a performance, using any audible or visual Perform or Artisan skill they may possess/Awareness vs TN 20 (25 for Mid tables). Success provides enough of a distraction to allow Kirino to recognize the performer and invite them forward to finish their ‘show’. This will earn Kirino’s favor, while not upsetting Tamura.

Regardless of how the matter is handled, Court will settle after a few more minutes. Talk will be somewhat more subdued, however, and after only another half hour, Kirino will dismiss the Court for the day.

If they explain that they need assistance with travel papers, however, his expression grows a bit more worried. “I see...that will require an audience, given the, um, reasons. That will be...um..yes, well. I’ll just go...yes.” Nibbling on his lower lip, Anharu pushes back to his feet and visibly wavers a bit in direction before moving toward the dais.

After several minutes of discussion with first one of the other junior courtiers and then the Governor, the young man hurries back. With his voice lowered, he urges, “Go up to the step, but no further. **She** will try to make a fuss, but just ignore her.”

“**She**”, in this case, is Doji Tamura. The boy won’t explain, though he will tilt his chin in her direction if the party ask about it, clearly trying to be as unobtrusive as possible as he does so but only doing a moderately good job. Once the party approaches:

Just as your feet meet the last pavers before the dais, the Crane woman to the left snaps open a fan, fluttering it gently. “I see Court business is finally to be addressed. High time.”

Those among the Crane who have the cadence ability (Doji Rank 2) or anyone with Courtier 5+ will be able to roll Courtier/INT vs TN 15 to read her signals as a combination of “Apologies” and “Stand Down”.

As all eyes turn toward her, the Crane continues blithely on. “It is always refreshing to visit the lands of the Dragon. Such new ways of thinking, free of traditions of precedence in rank when assisting guests, is surely unique to your Clan.”

PC’s may choose to take exception to this statement, particularly if they are Dragon, or they may elect to pile on behind Tamura. Wise PCs from neutral

Clans/groups may well choose to ignore the whole thing; Contrary PC's must roll to be able to stay out of it.

If the Party chooses to refute the Doji's statement: Make a contested Courter/AW vs Tamura's 9k4+5. Success not only forces Tamura to apologize for her presumption but also earns Kirino's highest favor. She will make it known that she wishes to thank the PC 'in person at your convenience'. If this occurs, she will not only happily provide the party travel papers when they come to ask her but also an escort of guards when they leave town as well, ensuring they do not have any encounters with bandits or other hazards on the road. Tamura, on the other hand, will refuse to speak to them, meaning she won't be of assistance with Materials.

IF the party back's the Doji's Claims: The easiest means to do so is to simply bow to her and sit back down. This will allow Tamura to approach in their stead. She will go into a very politely worded request for 'research access, as my Lord Doji-ue has asked', and Kirino will be forced to accede at least in part and with very poor grace. This opens the floodgates, and several more people (mostly Scorpion) will approach her before the PCs finally get their turn. By this point, Kirino is well and truly annoyed:

IF the party tries to smooth the matter over: Roll an Ettiquette (Conversation)/ Awareness vs. TN 20 (25 for Mid tables). This will allow the PC to rise and change the subject to introduce themselves and their party, effectively eliminating the argument by changing the topic. Alternatively, PC's may instead turn the opening into an impromptu game of sadane. They should roll Games: Sadane/ INT vs TN 20 (25 for Mid tables). Success provides the opportunity for the situation to become more playful, which saves face for both women. Kirino will be happy with them, and Tamura will be amused.

If the party chooses to accept the Doji's Invitation: *At your approach, three pairs of eyes turn in your direction. One set, that belonging to the Crab, holds relief: the other two hold appraisal and, in the case of the Mantis, more than a little annoyance.*

It is the Crane who speaks, smiling warmly, though it doesn't light her eyes. "Ah, more visitors. I am sure Kitsuki-sama will be delighted. I do hope you plan to be in town for some time...please, join us."

She will introduce herself as Doji Tamura; pointedly, she introduces her companions simply as "Moshi-san and Yasuki-san". An astute individual (Courtier of 3 or more) will recognize this as a way to minimize their importance. It is an insult, especially to the Crab, though he seems glad enough for the disruption of new arrivals to ignore it.

IF the PCs make a fuss about it, it will be contested Courtier vs Etiquette (Tamura's stats are in the NPC section). She will apologize gracefully enough if she is beaten in such a roll, but it will simmer, making her assistance much harder to acquire. Kirino, however, will notice the interaction and will be delighted by it; this act alone will get the PCs in her good books.

Tamura will spend some time in idle banter with the party, eventually working her way around to asking why they are here. If it is simply for the formalities, she will turn the topic to her profession and start to ask the group about their marital status and prospects. The Yasuki will use this as a perfect excuse to escape.

IF the party has already been to the forge and share their needs with her, Tamura will show no visible reaction, which is in and of itself a reaction. If Kami-Shi is with the party, she will become wary around it once it becomes clear what it is. Still, she is still willing to offer assistance, to a certain degree.

If the party asks for help with materials: *"It is true that my work has made me many friends with many interests. I would hate to trouble them for a trifle, but perhaps for you..."*

With a successful Contested Courtier Roll (She rolls 9k4 on Courtier checks), she might be persuaded to help. Fellow Crane, or one from an Allied Clan (The Mantis or the Owl), receive an extra +5 to their roll. Alternatively, one may take a Minor Obligation to the Crane.

She can then use her Rank Three Doji Courtier technique to acquire one of the Material items required for the re-forging.

If the party mentions the need for travel papers:

For a moment, the Crane's ice-blue gaze turns toward the small figure on the dais, before turning back to you. "My influence doesn't spread quite so far. Our esteemed host might well grant what you desire, though I would be surprised." Her gentle smile never changes, though her tone shifts just enough to be overheard. "Goodness knows she hasn't prove to be terribly accommodating to guests outside her own Alliance so far."

On her dais, Kitsuki Kirino turns her gaze in the table's direction.

"I don't see how you can complain, Doji-san." Kirino's voice is steely and her expression stern. "And don't presume to speak for me. Just because the orders you were sent here to fulfil are ridiculous it doesn't mean others are as demanding."

The PC's have a brief window in which to intercede and smooth over the situation with an Etiquette (Conversation)/AW vs TN 20 (25 for Mid); if they fail to do so, then the argument starts. If a PC wishes to chime in on one side or the other, this is instead a contested Courtier roll against the NPC they are opposing. Defending the Doji (and thereby the Crane) will also secure Tamura's assistance (as seen in the 'materials' section above); she will actively offer to assist once Court winds down.

Ending Court

If Kirino and Tamura have a spat that is either mediated or ignored, the court ends as follows:

After another half candlemark, court is brought to a close by virtue of the simple act of the departure of the host. Kitsuki Kirino rises and bows, briefly, to the assemblage. Her general annoyance is obvious; she doesn't appear even to make an effort to hide it. "That's all, we're done for the day. Fortunes' smile on you until the next time we must gather here."

If Tamura is defeated in a verbal skirmish, the ending goes this way:

Court goes on for a bit after that. The room is full of subtle amusement, almost all of which is directed at the now quietly furious Doji. As soon as it is possible to do so, Tamura excuses herself.

"I find I am fatigued. My apologies to all, I will of course return the day after this."

"No need, Doji-san." Kirino, rising to close the court, smiles smugly at her vanquished rival. "Court will resume its usual schedule. I'm certain you can find other ways to amuse yourself for the next week or two. Certainly the Scorpion have built a lovely artistic presence here; why don't you patronize them?"

As masked, smiling faces turn her way, Tamura breaks her On and, for only a moment, glares. "That won't be necessary."

Her departure is first, but Kirino's comes shortly after. As others begin to follow suit, the Scorpion file out en masse, already murmuring amongst themselves in low, excited voices.

If Kirino is the one to lose the argument:

The silence that follows the argument breaks at last as Kirino rises. She says nothing to the assemblage, only jerking through a strictly proper bow before turning and storming from the Court.

Her aides bend toward one another, murmuring furiously, before one of them rises and moves to the court's center. With masterful display of On, the young woman bows and dismisses the assembly, trying her best to make it seem as if this is all totally acceptable.

The expression on your fellow guests as you file out, and the excited conversations that begin as soon as they are out of ready earshot of any Dragon, promises a great deal of gossip about the whole affair will be known throughout the city in very short order.

In all instances, if the shutsudohin is present, track how the conversations went. If the choice is for mediation or ignoring the problem, mark a point for Jinshin; if a PC joins the argument, or uses a Low skill, mark a point for Mujihi.

A Priest's Aid

If the party has a sufficiently talented Shugenja or Monk in it, it is possible for them to take on this responsibility themselves. GMs may also elect to allow non-priest PCs with a more mystical focus to their characters to participate if they have the required Lore skills. To qualify, they must meet at least one of the following criteria.

- Spellcraft or Lore: Nemuranai 5
- Ability to cast Level 3 Earth OR Fire spells
- A friendly kami of Earth or Fire

If the party doesn't have such a person in it, they will have to go recruiting. There are two NPCs in town powerful enough to perform the needed rites and possibly willing to do so. Nittoho knows about the Scorpion, though he hesitates to recommend her based on Family alone. To learn about the Agasha, the PCs need to either get the rumor or ask the Governor's Spiritual Advisor or staff for advice.

- Agasha Takeru, a troubled Dragon in his last days of sabbatical

- Yogo Minato, a long-term resident, merchant patron, and member of the Yogo Trading Consortium

Agasha Takeru

Agasha Takeru is here on his last few days of a sabbatical before he has to leave for the capital to manage the fireworks show that will accompany the celebration of the Emperor's forthcoming marriage. He is spending that time in solemn contemplation in the Temple to the Fortune of Sorrow in the mornings, or in a large warehouse in the afternoons and evenings, before retiring to his temporary living space (again, the temple) at night.

If he is found by way of rumor, the PCs should look for him at the Fortune of Sorrow. If they learn about him from the Governor's Advisor, Agasha Noritoshi, they will instead be sent to him at his workshop. If the PC's managed to get in good with the Governor, he will provide them a pass; otherwise, they are on their own.

If the party secures Takeru's assistance and think to ask him, he will be able to help with the collection of the steel Materials from his personal supply. He will only do so if the party used High skills to get his help.

The Temple of the Fortune of Sorrow

"The Temple district is as eclectic in its population as one might expect of a religious center in a Dragon city. From the great shrines devoted to the Seven Great Fortunes, down to tiny shrines little larger than a merchant's stall, many of the thousand have been granted a place here, if only a guest can locate it.

The Shrine of Kamashi-okara is housed in a small building that might have been a shop in a previous century, based on the size and layout. It is the most westerly of the lesser temples in the Temple District, its western wall open so that the ten-foot tall statue of its patron Fortune can gaze sadly toward the death of each day.

Only two persons occupy the shrine as you enter: a young miko, busily replacing the spent incense sticks with fresh, and a tired-looking man in the robes of a Dragon shugenja. An air of grief clings to him, just as a faint whiff of something pungent and unpleasant clings to the fabric of his robes.

Takeru is a man torn between joy at being honored with the prestige of being the master of hanabi for the most important wedding likely to occur in his lifetime

and his utter, wretched sorrow over losing the love of his life in that exact ceremony. He's not the kind to mention any of this, of course, though a Lore: Heraldry check will reveal his role in the upcoming wedding.

If confronted at the Temple, he will be well in the grip of his melancholy. Efforts to use High Skills (Theology/Int to argue the importance of the need to serve such a spiritually important being or simple Courtier/AW to persuade him the old fashioned way) will have a harder time, resulting in a TN of 25 (30 for mid). More forceful attempts will be much simpler, as in his low spirits Takeru is easy to bully. Intimidation (Bullying)/Willpower vs TN 15 (20 for mid) works well against him. Temptation attempts have an astronomically high difficulty, given his current fixation with a woman and lack of interest in money. The TN for those is 30 (35 for mid).

If Kami-Shi has come with the party, he may also simply speak on his own behalf if the party seems to be failing to do so. He will do this by revealing himself, which will cause no small amount of shock throughout the district. This counts as a Mujihi action on the checklist, since it is essentially its position in the Celestial Order as a hammer. This will also result in the PCs who are with the group at that time incurring a -1k0 penalty to all social rolls with any monks in town for the rest of the mod, since they will be associated in rumor with a powerful and possibly dangerous spirit of unknown purpose all through the city in a matter of hours.

Workshop in the Afternoon

Takeru is still working to finish the fireworks that he will bring to the celebration. The Governor has provided him a workspace, materials, and a force of round-the-clock guards to ensure that no one gets their hands on the dangerous explosive components that go into the making of the fireworks.

The building to which you were directed appears, at first, very like all the rest in this part of the Merchant City. It is made of the local blue stone for the first floor, with more typical gray granite for the upper portion.

Unlike every other warehouse in the area, however, it has a full complement of Mirumoto stationed at both the front and back entrances, with more walking patrols.

Getting to talk to Takeru is the first challenge here. The guards have been given very firm instructions as to who is a permitted guest; obviously, none of the PCs are on it {unless they happen to be a bushi stationed in

this city with military-related Status 2+, in which case they will be allowed through, OR if they impressed the Governor enough to earn a pass}. To convince the locals that they are harmless, the PC's must be able to make a contested Sincerity check against the nikutai's 8k3 Investigation roll. Failure to do so will get the PC's shooed off in short order. The same Investigation roll will also be used if someone tries to sneak inside; the results for being caught will be a very one-sided combat followed by death or an arrest, which will keep the PC(s) involved locked up the rest of the module.

Once the party gets inside, they will find Takeru hard at work.

Inside the stone warehouse, a large variety of tables with strange tools and containers have been arrayed along the right wall. The left wall contains a large number of crates, loosely built and full of straw. The entire building reeks of chemicals, sharp and offensive to the sense.

Working at one of the tables is, presumably, the man you have come to see: Agasha Takeru. He is currently bent over an alembic, biting his lip as he adjusts the flow of liquids from one vial to another just the tiniest amount.

Interrupting him at this time is clearly a terrible idea; it results in the destruction of Takeru's current work and also the loss of his temper. He will flat out refuse to hear the PCs further at this point, relenting only if they have the pass from the Governor's Court.

If the party waits politely, it will take another ten minutes or so before the man turns and greets them.

"Sorry."

The man turns and bows, displaying the Mon of his Family over his breast as he does so.

"I heard you come, but it was just too critical of a point...now. Why are you here?" He blinks, then adds, belatedly, "Hey. **How** are you here?"

Once the party explains the situation, Takeru, in his current scholarly state of mind, will be fascinated. If the spirit has been allowed to come along, it will request the honor of speaking to it briefly. Assuming no one objects, the two will go to a back corner for a bit and return with Takeru easily agreeing to help. This will earn a point in the Jinshin column.

If the party doesn't have the spirit, or has advised it not to talk while out, the party will have to make a successful contested Sincerity/AW vs Takeru to convince him that they are truthful about their cause. A successful Courtier/AW check vs TN 25 (30 for mid) will also be enough to get his assistance.

Yogo Minato

The other alternative for a priest is a long-term resident of the town, as reclusive as she is rich. Very few can ever confirm having met the woman, though rumor has her in so many places at one time no one is ever quite sure that they haven't.

Nittoho, if he recommends her, will be able to tell the party where they should go to have the best chance of finding her during the day; her actual home, near the Scorpion Embassy. If the party relies on other sources, however, they will likely find themselves spending an evening at her most famed establishment instead: The House of Shadow Noh theater.

If the party looks for Minato at her home

The private lodging of the Yogo shugenja is deceptively humble, at least from the outside. A mere two stories tall and narrow from side to side, and with no real garden, one would never guess that it is the home of one of the richest people in the whole North of the Empire.

At most hours of the day, except evening, Minato will be home but not particularly interested in company. The group will be greeted by a polite older woman, the head of Minato's small household. She will start out with the usual 'Yogo-sama is quite busy, please come again tomorrow.'

If the party tries to press, or has a Scorpion with them, the woman will finally, resignedly, offer to serve them tea while she goes to fetch 'Yogo-sama's second'. This only happens during the day; in the evening, she will instead route the party to the House of Shadow instead (see next descriptive section).

The sitting room you are led to is a testament to actor's craft. Moments of performances long past line the walls...fans, old masks, and more worryingly, dozens upon dozens of puppets dangling from the ceiling, shifting and creaking faintly with every faint hint of movement in the room.

You are there for nearly half a candlemark before someone other than a servant enters. A woman in the sturdy red and black of a Scorpion Bushi slips in with

a bow, her face obscured from lips up by a mask carved in the likeness of a koi fish, its fins and tail designed to send flares back along the right side of her face and well into her hairline.

“I hear that you require something of Yogo-sama.” Dark brown eyes survey you all in turn. “I’m here to be sure you’re not wasting her time.”

This is Shosuro Kirase, a deceptively innocent-looking woman in her mid twenties. She intends to guard her superior’s peace: only Clanmates can expect any real welcome. Allied Clans (Dragon and Unicorn) will earn a greeting, though it will be offered grudgingly and as briefly as possible; anyone else will have to talk their way in with a Courtier (Manipulation)/Awareness vs TN 30. Seduction and Intimidation are also valid rolls.

Finally, the Shosuro nods and rises from the table “Come. Be quick about it, you’ll have perhaps a minute to keep her attention before your chance is lost.”

She leads you up the stairs and into a large, airy room, festooned with many small pots of delicate blossoms. A massive composition table dominates the room’s center, almost overshadowing the delicate woman behind it. Yogo Minato, with black hair streaked faintly silver at the temples, doesn’t so much as glance in your direction, her gaze focused on the slate before her.

“Well, Kirase, what did they want?”

Kirase will introduce the party, then leave them to fend for themselves.

At last, the Scorpion priestess turns to regard you. Though a mature woman, her features are still lovely, the fine delicate bone structure only emphasized by the twisting filigree of delicate silk wire strung with ruby and diamond that twine around her eyes. Only a few lines of displeasure over her brow indicate her true age, even as they indicate her annoyance.

“Well. You’re here. Tell me why, and then leave me alone.”

For the rolls, check the ‘persuading Minato’ portion below the theater description.

If the Party looks for Minato at the Theater

The Entertainment District of Suigeki Toshi is home to most of the City Scorpion and looks it, with tasteful

elegance at every turn and the sounds of smooth voices and music coming from most of the storefronts. Fine eateries, play houses, and geisha houses line the streets in orderly rows, with many spaces left between for pleasure gardens for guests to wander in between other delights.

At the heart of one of the finest rows, a majestic theater stands three floors high. The entire front façade is painted black, a marked contrast to the white marble and blue-grey stone more commonly used throughout the city. Only the door, a brilliant crimson, breaks up the stark matte surface. There is no nameplate here, no sign...such is the place’s fame that it needs no such markers.

Going inside is a relatively simple matter; admittance runs 3 bu a person, which will offer the chance to see the current showcase: An old ghost story, telling the story of a simple gardener who loved a woman far above his station. When she learned of his love she encouraged him, telling him she would come to him in the night if he only played the drum she had left him. The drum is covered in soft woven fabric, however, and no matter how hard he tries it makes no sound. Enraged and broken-hearted, he drowns himself in the garden pond, leaving his restless spirit to haunt his tormenter for the rest of her life.

Should the party decide to sit and watch the play, it proves to be very well done. The music and the use of light are both particularly notable, even for aficionados of the theater. Anyone watching with any sort of skill with Air kami will detect their presence in a few of the scenes, a rare treat few patrons ever get to enjoy.

It is only after the first show, in the period between it and the next, that the party can try to speak to the Patroness, Yogo Minato, as she moves among her ‘guests’.

One Scorpion among many, it should have been difficult to pick the Yogo out of the crowd. Somehow, this is far from the case; it is obvious, by reading the direction of bows and inclined heads, just which of the Clan of Secrets rules this crowd. Dressed in unlevned black, with only the rubies on her silver wire mask adding color to her, Yogo Minato accepts the praise heaped upon her, and her actors, with the grace of one who has long since grown accustomed to such accolades.

Getting to talk to her in this area is more a challenge of dodging the other patrons long enough to do so.

Ettiquette/Agility vs TN 20 (25 for mid) must be used to weave through the crowd without causing any undue offense to the others who wish to meet the woman.

Once you stand before the priestess, her dark eyes meet yours assessingly. “You are new here.” It is declaration, not question, and seems to send a ripple through the conversations around you for just a moment. “Welcome to the House of Shadow. I trust you enjoyed the play.”

Minato is all to used to praise; if the party offers it now, she will simply nod. Artful criticism, in the form of Sadane, is much more likely to make her truly pay attention to the speaker. If the PC can make a Games: Sadane/Int vs TN 20, she will condescend to allow the group to join her in a private corner room, attended only by a young bushi with a koi mask who pours the tea.

Persuading Minato

Persuading Minato to stir herself from her own pursuits to attend to some ridiculous business of a living sword is a difficult task. Courtier can be used, but so can Temptation. The base TN is 30, with the following modifiers (stacking):

- Anyone with at least 3 ranks in a Perform skill get +5 to their roll (only applies once)
- Allied Clans (Unicorn and Dragon) get a +5 to their roll
- Scorpion get +10 to their roll

Alternatively, PCs can attempt to use contested Commerce/Intelligence against her and simply hire her help (in proper, genteel samurai fashion, of course). The same bonuses and TN apply, but with the addition of an extra +2 to their roll per koku spent. This CANNOT be honor rolled.

If the sword is present and the persuasion doesn't go well, it will make a rare offer: If Minato can rise to the challenge of staging a play without rehearsal, it will use its ability to change form at will, and it's strange visage, to allow her to put on a singular production that same evening (or the next, if the party meets Minato after a show). The opportunity also will allow any Actors in the group to showcase their talents, since her own troupe is less skilled with improvisation. In this case, Minato's willingness to assist is based on the skill of the show: if no PCs assist, it can be assumed to be at least enough, but if a PC DOES join in, they will need to make a suitable Acting/AW of at least 20 to suitably impress the Yogo into helping.

In addition to being able to assist in the matter of the actual forging, Minato is also able to help her fellow Scorpion in a unique fashion: She happens to have very serious Blackmail against Kanja, the local Abbott, and will happily use it on a Clanmate's behalf if asked to do so. This can allow the Scorpion PC in question to get the Abbott's Permission without much difficulty, though doing so is a dishonorable action and causes L1 Honor Loss.

Forge-right

To be permitted the right to use the Sacred Forge, Nittoho has to receive permission from the Abbott of Water's Strength Temple, an older man named Kanja. Such rights are generally awarded only once a year and then only to a select few: the nine apprentices for that year.

To get permission out of season is all but unheard of and Nittoho, humble man that he is, knows full well he lacks the talents of persuasion required. It is for this, more than anything else, that he needs the PC's help: Without this permission, he will have to use his own forge, and though fine, it is not sufficient in quality to do what is required without a minor miracle.

The Water's Strength Temple is the oldest structure in the city and clearly the most important. Even though it is, at heart, a giant forge, it still displays all the grace and beauty that one would expect to find in the house of the Fortunes.

The central space for worship can be entered from either primary door to the temple, east or west, and leaves one in a tall, graceful space that honors all things aquatic. Statues, different in style but equal in craftsmanship to the ones at the gates, depicting the Water Dragon coil upward in place of columns, while the mighty Suitengu stands at the center of the back wall. Monks spot the space, either at work cleaning or kneeling in prayer. All of them move about the space in strange patterns that only make sense when one realizes that, here and there, the floor itself is studded with holes, small enough to prevent someone falling through but large enough to allow the sound and scents of the running river below to ring through the temple space.

It is worth noting that, if the party still needs the sacred water, this is one of the two places to get it. Any priest in the temple can scoop some of the water through the holes, blessing it as they do so: Convincing them to do so simply requires a request by a person who has

showed proper respect and who is not Cast Out or otherwise offensive to the Brotherhood, the Water Dragon, or Suitengu.

This location is the one that the shutsudohin is most insistent on visiting. It is also a bit anxious; it has no desire to cause a panic among the monks, who may have the spiritual sensitivity to perceive its nature even through its heavy disguise. If the party tries to refuse the spirit, it will not argue, but this act will sway the spirit a point toward Mujihi.

If the party DOES allow the sword spirit to come along, it will try to remain unobtrusive, though it will be clear that at least some of the senior monks have suspicions. One of these older monks (Jai, who was at Court at the Agasha's table, if the PCs have been there) will approach and ask the party why they are there.

Honesty, particularly about the spirit's nature, is the best recourse here. If the PC's are vague and say only that they need to consult the Abbott, Jai will eventually comply, but it will set Kanja slightly against them from the beginning, adding a +5 to the TN of rolls against him.

Finally, the brother leads you to a small room located down a curved hall from the main temple chamber. After offering the spare refreshment usual to the Brotherhood, he excuses himself to find his Abbott.

Some time later, you hear the slow, laborious steps of someone moving slowly and perhaps with some difficulty, the soft 'tap' of a cane almost lost in the rustle of fabric and hesitant slaps of tabi against stone. When the door opens once more, it reveals a ruinously old man, the wrinkles of the skin of his face so deep that his eyes can barely be seen behind the folds. His bow, while slow, is still perfectly correct as he greets you. His voice displays none of the ruin of the rest of him, smooth and polished and musical to the ear even in the simplest courtesies.

"I am Kanja, the abbott. I am told you have business that you wish to discuss?"

The old man will be patient enough, though he will at first misunderstand the party's application: he will assume they are there to support Nittoho's application to become a potential Apprentice, not to request immediate use of the sacred forge. Once this is made clear to him, however, he turns serious.

"There is more to what you ask than simply my permission." The old man, too long now on his feet,

leans against the door frame for support. "I have been given, in my position, some ability to tune to the scale that forms the heart of the sacred forge. I have learned, over my time here, something of how it will react to those who would seek to use it. I know enough to know who to dismiss outright from among the applicants, for example, no matter how talented they might be at their craft. To be presented to the Scale is to be presented to the Water Dragon; not all souls can bear the weight of its touch, even for so brief a time. It will be a dangerous undertaking for this Nittoho, even if I am willing to allow it...which, frankly, I am not yet certain I should do."

Kanja is an old former courtier and hasn't been so quick to leave his old life, and old prejudices, as he should be. He is quick to snub those of low birth (Ronin, Minor Clansman, or members of Vassal Families all have -5 to any rolls against him) and to favor those of high birth (Those who are Kuge, Imperials, or who have Status of 3+ get a bonus of +5 in rolls against him).

Artistic individuals can try to impress the Abbott with their skills prior to asking for help. A successful performance, artisan, or craft skill (for which the PC must have some sort of appropriate equipment at hand) vs TN 20 (25 for mid) will get the party a +5 roll bonus, with an extra +5 per raise. Failing this, however, detracts the same amount.

Convincing him to help requires either a contested Courtier/AW roll vs his 8k5 etiquette OR a Temptation/AW roll vs his 6k3 resistance. If the party has the Blackmail information from Minato (Scorpion only), this information can be used for an automatic victory.

IF the party fails to persuade the Abbott and the spirit has come along, it will unveil itself before him to try and force the issue as a direct divine order. This will work, but it will also move the sword towards Mujihi.

Expedition Preparation

Travel Papers

The party's travelling papers only cover them so far as getting to Suigeki Toshi and home; if they plan to go out and look for any of the materials in person, they are going to require new travel papers for that purpose. These can be granted by the Governor (see page x).

If the party has already done the meet and greet with the governor prior to talking to Nittoho and made a decent impression (GM's discretion), a return for

papers can be mostly handwaved with a simple Etiquette (Bureaucracy)/Awareness vs TN 20. Dragon and allies (currently Mantis and Scorpion) get a free raise on this roll.

If the party has met the Governor and it went poorly, they will either have to 1) find alternative means (see below) or 2) suitably appease Kirino.

Appeasement: There are a few options here.

- Apologize!: A public apology for whatever the fault might have been (which will cause a Glory Loss in points = {status} + {Insight Rank}, to a maximum of .5) must be made before the full court. This requires a Sincerity/AW vs TN 20 (25 for Mid) Remember court meets only every other day.
- Owe Her One: A PC (ideally, the one who botched the thing the first time) can take on a Minor Obligation to the Dragon. For a Major Obligation, they will get guards as well.
- Favors: A PC may choose to spend a Favor in exchange for papers. They may also choose to spend a Favor for guards, if they think to do so.

The Dishonorable Option

If the party decides they can't work with the Governor, or fail to do so, black market travel papers can be made using Forgery/Intelligence check vs TN 20 or purchased for 5 koku after finding a source using a Lore: Underworld/Awareness check vs TN 20 (free raise for Scorpion, since the 'artisan' is one of theirs). If the PCs make a fuss about paying or in any other fashion make themselves irritating to deal with, they also get the Blackmailed (Shosuro Family) Disadvantage.

Yogo Minato can also provide false papers; see her section in the theater district on page 15.

Part Three: Gathering Materials

Any single one of these materials can be gathered from Doji Tamura, assuming the party met and worked with her in Court (page 8). It is impossible to run out of time unless the party fails to retrieve items from their first choice twice; one fail/backtrack is fine.

NOTE: If you have to start cutting for time, cut out the Water requirement; it can be sourced locally easily enough not to bother with here.

Throwing Koku At It (All Three)

If strapped for time, or if running for players who don't enjoy fetch quests overmuch, feel free to allow them to just buy some or all of the materials outright. This is quite expensive: Each component will cost 20 koku each, OR a Minor Obligation to either the Mantis or the Dragon.

Tamahagane (Steel)

Though there is ample steel, even Kaiu-grade, available in the city, the exact type that Nittoho hopes to use is found in only two places, which can be found below.

The Serpent's Tail Mine

The Serpent's Tail is one of the best known mines in the lands of the Dragon, possessing not only steel but gold and rare Jade as well. It is the product of an ancient war between two extremely powerful elemental kami; one of Earth, and one of Fire. For centuries, a small group of Agasha shugenja has been responsible for appeasing the two kami, keeping them from renewing their battle in what will doubtless be catastrophic violence.

At this time, the usual spring caravans are late.

Traveling to the Mines

Because of the high amount of bandit activity around Suigeki Toshi, there is a certain amount of risk even in leaving the city for the wilder areas. Since the road to the Serpent's Tail is the main road north, it happens to be a primary target for bandits. While Kitsuki Kirino may loan the PCs a guard (see page x), going without one invites attack unless the PCs are very cautious.

There are a few ways to avoid the conflict:

Stealth: In this case, the PCs must make a cumulative Stealth/Agility Roll equal to TN 10 + (5x number of PCs) to try and sneak through without notice. This does not count as a Low skill when used in this fashion.

Tracking and Avoidance: If the PCs can make a TN 30 on a Hunting (Tracking)/Perception check, they can identify the locations that the bandits are likely to be in and avoid the conflict completely.

Bribery: If the PC's picked up the rumor that the bandits can be bribed, one (or more) of them may

choose to seek out the Bandits and simply pay them off. This costs 3 koku and requires either a Commerce (Awareness) or a Lore: Underworld (Awareness) check of TN 15. This will inflict an L2 Honor Loss on the individual(s) in question, but will result in the party being allowed to pass completely unmolested both directions.

If the PCs choose to simply take their chances, allow the them to roll Battle (Perception) vs TN: 25. If the PCs pass, they will be able to identify the Ambush point before the trap is sprung. This will give them the chance to avoid the Surprise round in the combat. There will be (Party – 1) Bandits for Low Tables, (Party +1) for Mid. Half (round down) should be archers.

Bandits!

Initiative: 5k3

Armor TN: 23

Reduction: 1, Ashigaru Armor

Wounds: 15 (+0), 6 (+3), 6 (+5), 6 (+10), 6 (+15), 6 (+20), 6 (Down, +40), 6 (Out)

Attack: 6k3 (Bow), 8k3 (Katana)

Damage: 6k2 (katana), 5k2 Bow (Fleshcutters)

3 Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3
Void

Special: If the bandit ambush isn't spotted, two will spend their first round to unleash a rockfall to start their first round. Avoiding it is a raw Reflexes roll vs TN 10 (15 for Mid); failing knocks the party Prone and causes 3k3 damage.

At the Mine

After several days travel, the small grouping of outbuildings that line the road just outside the mine appear before you. It is obvious at a glance why no one has reported in from this location in some time: All of the buildings show signs of fire, with only the stone foundations still standing in their original form.

Shugenja in the party who attempt any sort of Sense or Commune here will quickly learn the cause of the fire: The two major kami who made this space have fallen out of harmony and have begun to show their strength as they resume their fight.

Investigation rolls that make at least TN 20, meanwhile, will prove that no mundane act of arson could possibly have lead to such a fierce fire; it burned so hot and so fast that not even the structural beams of the buildings are left.

As you approach the mine entrance, you see before you not a wooden palisade, or a metal gate, but a wall of stone, seemingly borne of the mountain itself. Only a slight difference in shade, and a certain lack of wear and weathering, indicates that this is a new development.

Once again, shugenja should be able to tell that this, too, is part of the warring kami's renewed action. This time, the Earth kami acted up, putting a 'bubble' over the mine entrance. The miners, and the two shugenja assigned to pacify the kami, have all been trapped on the wrong side of said bubble: an Investigation (Notice)/PER check vs tn 20 (25 for Mid) will allow the sounds of them trying to dig their way out to ring through the stone cap on the entry.

The party, if they are willing to do so, can try to help the miners dig out; there are ample tools scattered around the area that survived the fire that will allow them to do so. It will take a full day of work in this fashion, but will ultimately result in the stone being breached. Alternatively, a Commune with at least two raises can be used to ask the (clearly reluctant) kami to move aside.

Once the way has been reopened, glad shouts erupt from the far side. A dozen men and a few women stumble out into the dying light of day, falling to their knees and offering prayers to the Fortunes for their deliverance. All are dirty and all are clearly worn, yet they seem, for all that, in remarkably fine health.

Anyone with Medicine/INT vs TN 15 can tell these people have not, in fact, starved: the reason for that is made clear shortly after.

Last to immerge from the mine are two people in the robes of Dragon priests. One, an aged woman, leans heavily on the shoulder of the other, a man in his middle years. Both look worn, but the woman appears very nearly ready to swoon.

Once again, a Medicine/INT vs TN 15 reveals that both individuals are exhausted, the woman rather more than the man. The woman is also ill and likely has been for many months, growing worse over time. The disease is a bad one, of the sort that attacks a single individual over time but which doesn't have the ability to spread via contagion to others, and is in fact slowly killing Nariko.

The male shugenja introduces himself and his companion as Agasha Tsugumori and Tonbo Nariko respectively, tenders of the local shrine. Tsugumori

has been responsible for pacifying the great Fire kami here, while Nariko worked with the great Earth kami. He is deeply grateful for the rescue, though he is quick to assure the watching miners (heimen all) that he is confident that their strength alone would have ultimately succeeded. He reveals to the party that it was the gifts of the kami (in the form of the spell Inari's Blessing) that has kept them in good shape while trapped.

Any of the miners will, of course, be more than happy to help the samurai who rescued them with their task here. The Agasha is also willing, but he warns that he doesn't consider the mine safe with the sprits no longer in balance. Though he doesn't say so, it is clear that Tsugumori knows that his cohort is failing; when the party goes to leave, he will pull one of them aside (either the party medic or a sympathetic-looking Dragon or Allied Clanmember by choice) and ask that they bear word with them back to town that a new shugenja beloved of Earth will need to be sent for right away.

IF a Dragon PC wishes to take the job, they need to have at least Earth 4 and the ability to cast R3 Earth spells. The Player should be warned that doing so will render their PC an NPC, since by its very nature guardianship here doesn't allow travel.

If the party goes to collect the ore themselves, they will find that ore is in the heart of the mine, along with three shrines: one to the great Earth kami, one for the great Fire kami, and one to Lady Sun, which is centered in a sunbeam. Kami-Shi, if it is in the party, will actually take the time to honor Lady Sun.

The Wrath of the Kami

With this option, the material Nittoho requires can be found in the dark, winding, and often-dangerous cavern system beneath the volcano called 'the Wrath of the Kami'. Though some parts of the volcano have reached a type of peace with the Agasha who live there, other parts, primarily those inhabited by non-human entities like the zokujin that live here, are far less tame.

This region is justifiably famous for its unique purpose: It is where the shugenja of the Empire send nemuranai judged too dangerous to be allowed to remain to be destroyed. It has left a great many spirits, both of the items and the elements, roaming freely and this can sometimes be a trial for Shugenja. Any time a spell is cast here, if it fails by less than five, it will go off but with a random target or effect.

Interestingly, this location is also the only time the shutsudohin displays anything resembling a mortal Sin: Fear. While it will, if pressed by arguments of Duty, come along, it will use any argument it can think of, based on what the PC's have taught it so far, to remain back with the horses instead of going inside. If forced to go, it will only go as a sword in the saya of what it sees as the best bushi in the party. Forcing it in this fashion gives a point in the Mujihi column.

Reaching the caverns that Nittoho mentioned is only hard for the last several miles. Well-traveled roads get them to a place where they fork, with one path going up to the Volcano proper and one going on to Shiro Agasha. The third 'path', such as it is, is the one the PCs need and also where Nittoho's directions end.

After a few days ride along roads that would seem narrow anywhere but here, you find yourself facing an even more perilous looking trail that can only barely qualify as more than an animal path. It twists and turns through the sparse treeline, soon disappearing downward around a bend.

Anyone with at least three ranks in Horsemanship will quickly identify this as a bad place to ride. The horses can be left behind easily enough in a clearing, though if the party doesn't leave anyone with them one of them should disappear by the time the party returns if no other precautions are taken.

If the party chooses to ride anyway, at least one pc must make an Animal Handling/AW vs TN 15 (20 for Mid) to get the horses to go. If they do so, a Horsemanship/Agility Roll must be made against TN 25 (30 for mid). Failing results in a terribly bad fall, which will inflict 4k4 damage and temporary Missing Limb on the PCs involved and will kill the horse.

Navigating the Caverns

After a descent of several hours, the dark stone you walk beside breaks, revealing an even darker cavern. The rough walls and various angles are sure proof that no man has ever shaped the stone here, assuming any man has ever been here at all.

The party should now check inventory, to ensure they have at least one light source for every three persons. Lack will make any search rolls much harder.

The party has a few options within the caverns:

- Go searching themselves: If they do this without trying to be stealthy, they will encounter the Zokujin. If they do succeed at stealth (TN is 20), they will have to make a

successful Investigation (Search)/PER vs TN 25 (30 for mid) to find the exact vein of metal they require. Blindness penalties apply if they don't have a light.

- Try to Sense the direction with the kami: This can be done with a Sense spell and the Earth element. If the PC calls two raises (without prompting), they will not identify the metal but the Zokujin encampment instead.

The Zokujin

This cavern is inhabited by the Zokujin, or "Copper Goblins". This particular tribe is just as pacifistic as any of their kind and will never attack the PCs first. If one of their number is attacked, however, they will turn viciously upon the offender, using their command of the Earth to entomb the offender.

If the party encounters them, either by following the earth kami or by not being sneaky:

Strange sounds surround you as you descend deeper into the caverns. Dripping water, falling pebbles, and strange susurrations of wind surround you, along with the feeling of being watched.

The party can make an Investigation (Spot)/Per check vs TN 20 (25 for Mid) to see the first few scouts; If they fail, they will only spot them when their Chief makes himself known.

A few twisting, cramped turns later, the path you follow opens into a small cavern. It is several stories tall, the walls marked with many small openings, in which strange creatures squat or stand. A particularly large and well-equipped member of the breed stands calmly at the cavern's center, a staff with many strange talismans dangling from it in its hand. Red and gold glowing eyes stare at you from reptilian faces, set in expressions of what might be curiosity.

Identifying the Zokujin requires a Lore: First Races/INT vs TN 15 or a Lore: History vs TN 25. Lion and Dragon get a bonus on these rolls, thanks to their Clan history of interacting with the zokujin. A failed Lore: Shadowlands check should also indicate that they are mujina; this is false, but that is what failure is for.

If approached with proper respect (They are, after all, one of the Five Races and spirits of this place with whom the Dragon have long had a peace treaty of sorts), the Zokujin may be inclined to be helpful. They do not speak Common, but can speak the tongue of the Earth kami. Any shugenja can speak to them in basic

terms; so long as the shugenja agrees to make a suitable offering, the same way they would when Communing with the Kami, the Zokujin will quite happily go and gather the needed materials for the party, allowing them to depart without further ado.

If no one in the party is a shugenja, however, pantomime must be used instead. If the players are clever at this, by all means allow it; otherwise, the party will have to search again, only this time they will do so knowing that they are constantly watched.

Again, any attempt to harm the zokujin in any way should be fatally foolish. Allow the PC(s) in question one chance to avoid the Entombment by making a raw Reflexes check vs TN 15 (20 for mid); failure will result in the PC falling into a pit which the zokujin will close around them the next round if they are not promptly rescued. If the party is wise and flees, they will not be pursued; if they try to fight, the Zokujin will kill all resistors eventually.

Pine (Charcoal)

There are two options for this that will most suit Nittoho: Charcoal born from the White Pine, or Charcoal from the hidden Shrine to Kuroshin in Agasha lands.

The White Pine

Several days' travel outside of town, the Brotherhood of Shinsei maintains a tiny shrine, Howaido Matsu. This shrine honors the Little Teacher's beloved Crow companion, and has been placed here for a simple reason: One pine here has, for centuries uncounted, been the home of a flock of crows which are still the original uncorrupted white.

Reaching the shrine is not terribly difficult; it is far enough off the trade-ways to not be of interest to the local bandit population, and the paths, while small and a bit overgrown, are low enough in the mountains not to be at risk of adverse weather conditions. The problem is, instead, with the birds themselves.

After two days of twisting trails up through beautiful but challenging terrain, you reach the tiny shrine. The entry to the last path is marked with a tori arch, a cheerful red which stands out against the surrounding green of trees, bushes, and plants that seem to grow in abundance at this place.

Further up this trail, the greenery begins to shift, with fewer and fewer large trees and bushes but ever more vibrant ground cover. As you ascend the last half mile

toward the shrine, the sound of birds grows ever louder.

Finally, you reach the top of the small mountain and see the great White Pine before you. The tree, the largest one you have ever seen, soars upward more than twenty times the height of even the tallest Hida. Massive crows, as white as snow, perch on every branch and study you as you approach.

At the base of the tree, almost overlooked, is a small woman in the robes of the Brotherhood, seated on a bench. She pays your party no mind, only continues to feed a few of the smaller members of the flock from a bag of millet seed at her side.

Mae, the monk, is in fact quite deaf; it is part of why she can take this duty and not be driven half mad by the endless chatter of the birds. She does know sign language, and is literate; once she notices the new arrivals, she will fetch a slate and chalk with which to communicate if need be. She should always start out with an offering to help the party honor the children of the Little Teacher's Crow: If the party accepts, they will be instructed in how to use the ceremonial scoop (carved with tiny images of the story of Shinsei) to offer millet.

Once she is told why the party has come, she will nod, then whistle for a crow. The bird (a veritable giant of the breed) will fly up and land on a branch that is 'only' thirty feet up the tree on one side. This branch lacks the robust life of the rest of the tree and is safe to harvest without harming the tree.

Performing the feeding ritual pacifies the birds; if a PC approaches and starts to climb who has NOT participated in the ritual, the crows will erupt in a great spiraling mass of feathers and noise. It is still possible to climb with the crows this agitated, though by Mae's expression this is not a wise option. Any failure of the climb by more than ten results in not only a fall but the inadvertent injury to one of the sacred birds, an act that will result in the offending individual being Cast Out from the Brotherhood of Shinsei.

The roll for this climb is Athletics (Climbing)/Reflexes, since one has to actively dodge the birds and their nests while ascending. The TN is 20 (25 for Mid). A failure results in a 2k2 fall; failing by more than 10 results in the afore-mentioned Cast Out.

Kuroshin's Pine

The party (unless it has an Agasha in it) will have no way to fetch this material themselves from the wild;

the location of the hidden Shrine is just that: Hidden, even from other Dragon Families. The reason for this is simple: The Agasha use this small valley to grow the plants they require for both alchemy and the creation of their spectacular fireworks and to allow such things to fall into the wrong hands is tantamount to treason.

If the party DOES have an Agasha in it, the Agasha PC has a few options:

- Take the Party along with them as far as Shiro Agasha, then leave them there and go to the Shrine themselves. This is potentially dangerous, since it is very easy to get lost (The PC must make a Sailing (Navigation)/INT vs TN 20 OR a Hunting (Tracking)/PER vs TN 30 or else become hopelessly lost, taking xkx damage from privation/injuries, where x = every 5 by which they fail the roll). Success means they secure the needed materials without further difficulty. This can be attempted only once per PC, since there is something of a time limit on this mission. **NOTE:** If the PC tries to sneak his friends along with him and they are discovered {by failing to reach a Stealth/AG of TN 35}, the Agasha immediately loses a full rank of Status. If this brings them to 0 or below, they will ultimately be stripped of their Family status, becoming Ronin or else committing seppuku to cleanse their shame. The non-Agasha friend, meanwhile, will gain Sworn Enemy: The Agasha Family. If by chance they already have this (or Sworn Enemy: Dragon Clan), then that PC's player needs to talk to the Admin staff.
- If the Agasha is at least Status 2, they can simply requisition the materials they require. They simply have to send a message off via one of the attaches in Kirino's Court and the materials will be provided in days.

The Dragon's Tears (Water)

This is, potentially, the easiest item to get. It can come from two places: From Water's Strength Temple (with the grace and blessing of the priests there) OR from the heart of the falls (which the PCs must secure themselves). The former option is ideal for parties that lack anyone with spiritual acumen; to be able to attempt the later, at least one PC must have either

Lore: Theology or Spellcraft at a rank of 3 (5 for Mid tables).

NOTE: Anyone with “Chosen by the Oracles: Water” can simply invoke their patron over any clean water source and make water sufficient for the rite. This can be done with a Water Check vs TN 10. **IF THIS IS HONOR ROLLED AND FAILED**, the PC will lose this Advantage in addition to the Honor Rank.

Water’s Strength Temple

This option can be undertaken at the same time as seeking out the Abbot’s permission to work with the sacred forge (see page 17): while the Abbot himself is rather too busy and important to do something as simple as blessing water, other priests within the Temple are more than happy to do so for those who show proper respect and piety (make their offerings, make their prayers, follow the ritual cleansing, etc). If the party goes to Court and bespeaks the monks there, they can offer to do the blessing there, if the matter is broached before them. It will take a simple Courtier/AW of TN 15 (20 for mid) OR Lore: Theology/AW of TN 15 (20 for mid) to convince them.

Note that the priests WILL NOT HELP any individual who has the Cast Out (Thousand Temples or Suitengu) Disadvantage.

The Scale’s Source

The so-called Dragon’s Scale was found at the base of the falls long ago. Water from that same source would best serve the effort Nittoho wants to make, but getting it and then blessing it are two different efforts.

To attain the water, one must either swim out to the site and then dive, or else climb the mountain to a height and dive.

Swimming: A PC must fight against the waterfall’s battering and the swirling rush of the rapids at the base. This requires someone to succeed at a Athletics (Swimming): Strength vs TN 20 (25 for Mid tables) and then an Athletics (Swimming): Stamina vs TN 20 (25 for Mid tables). These rolls can be repeated, but for each time the person fails a roll, they will take 2k2 damage.

Diving: The PC must first climb up the wall with an Athletics (Climbing)/ Strength check vs TN 15 (20 for Mid tables). Then they must dive and land so as to avoid the rocks, making an Athletics/ Agility check vs TN 25 (30 for high tables). Failing the Climb does 1k1 damage; failing the dive does 3k3 OR take 1k1 and get

Phobia: Heights (Player Choice). The Phobia option is not available if the PC already has that phobia.

Part Four: A Sword Reborn

Once all necessary items, permissions, and personnel have been accounted for or attempted and failed, it is time to actually attempt the forging. It will take place at dawn the day after the last thing is finished by the PCs. Nittoho, the shutsudohin, and any crafter who plans to aid him, will spend the entire night before in solemn meditations at the Shrine to Tsukune, Fortune of Rebirth. PC’s who do this should roll Meditation/Stamina vs TN 15 (20 for Mid tables) to avoid Fatigue penalties. Those who have Blessing of Yume-Do do not need to make this role.

The party is of course invited to observe the attempt, even if they are not participating. Note that the presence of PC’s with Cursed by the Realm: Yomi will add a -10 penalty to the roll. Conversely, one Blessed by the Realm: Yomi adds a +10 bonus.

Note: At any time during this section, a PC with a Friendly Kami of earth or fire may sacrifice it to automatically succeed in any one roll. This will gain them Honor as per the book for an act of great personal sacrifice. Thematically this doesn’t KILL the kami; it simply frees it to dance with either for forge fires (for Fire) or the steel of the tools (for Earth), where it will live thereafter.

Be certain to tally the count and have the sword’s name chosen before you reach the conclusion!

With proper permissions to use the forge, start here. If that wasn’t granted, skip down to page 25.

The Great Forge

On the morning of the forging, a sense of restrained excitement fills the whole of the Temple. All of the monks, even those who are strange to your eyes, seem aware of just who you are and why you are here. Their eyes follow you, as do many smiles and gestures for good fortune, as you are collected by the ancient Abbot, now dressed in ceremonial best, and brought into the Temple heart that so few ever see.

The great forge at the heart of Water’s Strength Temple is at once utilitarian and somehow awe-inspiring; the sense of the divine weighs upon the shoulders of all who enter. At the rooms center sits the Dragon’s Scale, a bright iridescent blue-green which shimmers in the light from the great forge burning

across from the entrance. The walls of the chamber are full of tools of all types, suitable for virtually any type of craft one could imagine.

“You should rest there.” The old abbot gestures to a space cleared of tools and the worst of the soot, furnished with simple tatami mats. “Unless you are assisting, sit and be silent until this is done.”

With that, Kanja approaches the Scale, gesturing Nittoho, whose hair is now noticeably grayer, forward, with the shutsudohin and the chosen priest falling in behind him.

IF the priest is a PC: They will need to roll either Spellcraft (Nemuranai)/Void or Lore: Nemuranai/Void vs TN 20 (25 for mid) or {Earth or Fire ring} vs TN 15 (20 for mid). If the PC has a friendly Kami, they should roll the appropriate Ring as if it was one higher.

If the priest is an NPC, roll for them as well, using 3k3 (Raw Fire) for Takeru or 5k3 (Spellcraft) for Minato.

On Success:

The shimmering scale pulses, just once. The shutsudohin shudders in response, then moves to a place beside the anvil. Without hesitation, it reaches forward, the oddly angular shapes of its fingers beginning to flow like molten metal as it touches the smooth surface.

“Now, Nittoho-san. Bring forth your steel.”

With a surprisingly beatific expression, the Master Smith complies, pulling the steel he so lovingly prepared from the forge to place upon the Scale. Without hesitation, he brings down his hammer for the first strike.

On Fail: The priest’s words fade, leaving all silent save for the crackling of flames. For a moment, the old Abbot’s face shows dismay, only for it to fade away before forced calm.

“Nittoho-san. It is your skill that will tell, now. May the Fortunes’ smile on you.”

Nittoho nods and moves to the forge, pulling the molten steel forth with tongs. The shutsudohin paces behind him, its angular features making its expression of doubt all the more jarring.

All Rolls now have a -5 penalty.

Now begins the long process of forging the blade. The sacred steel slowly takes shape upon the anvil returning again and again to the forge between folds. Painstakingly, the smith works, expression intent, even as the temperature in the chamber becomes almost unbearable.

At this point, it is time for the crafting roll. If there are any PC’s with suitable craft skills (Weaponsmithing is the obvious one, but woodcraft can be used for the hilt, weaving for the silk of the wrappings, jeweler for the carving of the decorations, and so forth. GMs are encouraged to let PC’s figure out ways their craft might apply) they may roll their own Craft skill with either Earth or Fire as the ‘keep’, vs TN 15 (20 for Mid). Every raise the successfully make gives a raise to Nittoho for his final roll, but every failure (with an extra failure per raise) gives him a -5. Remember the penalty if the blessing failed!

The Scale itself applies a negative, due to being so strangely shaped. Nittoho’s roll, adjusted for this, is 10k5-8 (with emphasis) to begin with before adjustments. These adjustments are:

- +5 for any contributed raises from PCs
- -5 if the blessing failed
- -10 if someone with Cursed by Yomi is present
- +10 if someone with Blessed by Yomi is present

His TN is 30, +5 for each assisting PC crafter.

On Success:

As Nittoho’s hammer falls for the last time, the ringing sound of steel changes from clamor to an exultant chiming. The sound echoes from the spirit, which has drawn steadily nearer to the blade as it took its final form.

“At last!” Even as it begins to lose its corporeal form, it smiles, exultant. “Let the chosen bearer know: The name I bear now is {{Refer to the score sheet}}!”

With a last flash, the shutsudohin disappears. The new katana lies, shining and perfect, upon the Scale. Nittoho, all but overcome, falls to his knees before it, head bowed. Kanja, weeping openly in wonder, goes to him, even as he gestures for all others to leave. “I will care for him now, samurai. Go, rest and recover. You will hear from him soon enough.”

On Failure:

All time seems to stop, with even the forge flames halting in their dance. The serenity of the Temple is gone in an instant, leaving the air heavy with what feels much like sorrow.

With an anguished cry, Nittoho falls senseless, even as the spirit's earthly form shatters along with the flawed blade it was meant to inhabit. Shards of steel fly in all directions, causing a cry of pain from the abbot as he is struck, dropping to a knee.

All PCs should make a raw Reflexes save vs TN 20 (25 for mid) to avoid the shrapnel; by every five they fail, they take 2k2 damage.

Other monks hurry in from outside, rushing to attend the fallen men. None meet your eyes, even the young one who urges you quietly to leave. Your last sight of the Heart of the Temple is of tear streaked faces, Nittoho's among them, even when his consciousness has fled.

Nittoho's Forge

This option should only be used if the PC's fail to gain Forge Right. It is very likely that the effort will fail here, without a great deal of sacrifice from a PC and/or an extreme act of mercy from the Dice Kami.

Nittoho greets you in much the same way he did at your first meeting, though there is a set to his shoulders that speaks of worry and self-doubt.

"There is no time left, I fear. If the spirit is to have its chance, we cannot delay further. We will do what we can and hope that we are mortal enough for the Fortunes favor, however divine our beneficiary might be."

With his expression set, he turns to his apprentice, nervously standing at the bellows. "Let us begin. Priest-sama, if you would?"

IF the priest is a PC: They will need to roll either Spellcraft (Nemurani)/Void or Lore: Nemuranai/Void vs TN 25 (30 for mid) or {Earth or Fire ring} vs TN 20 (30 for mid). If the PC has a friendly Kami, they should roll the appropriate Ring as if it was one higher.

If the priest is an NPC, roll for them as well, using 3k3 (Raw Fire) for Takeru or 5k3 (Spellcraft) for Minato.

Failing this roll imposes a -10 on subsequent rolls.

Once the blessing is complete, Nittoho steps forth, his favorite hammer in his hand, and sets to work. The shutsudohin joins him at the anvil, crouching beside it to whisper in strange, metallic tongues to the sword as it is formed.

At this point, it is time for the crafting roll. If there are any PC's with suitable craft skills (Weaponsmithing is the obvious one, but woodcraft can be used for the hilt, weaving for the silk of the wrappings, jeweler for the carving of the decorations, and so forth. GMs are encouraged to let PC's figure out ways their craft might apply) they may roll their own Craft skill with either Earth or Fire as the 'keep', vs TN 15 (20 for Mid). Every raise the successfully make gives a raise to Nittoho for his final roll, but every failure (with an extra failure per raise) gives him a -5. Remember the penalty if the blessing failed!

Nittoho's roll to begin with before adjustments is 10k5 (with emphasis). These adjustments are:

- +5 for any contributed raises from PCs
- -10 if the blessing failed

His TN is 40, +5 for each assisting PC crafter.

Upon Success:

With only mortal tools at his disposal, Nittoho's labors take hours, even with the spirit's aid. Day passes and dusk has nearly darkened to true night by the time the hammer falls for the final time. The resulting blade has a quiet beauty, understated but sure, and brings a joyous smile to the smiths' face as he looks upon his creation.

The shutsudohin's face, strange and inhuman, is not made for smiling. Still, it's satisfaction radiates from it as it rises and lays a hand atop the blade. Even as it fades, its essence merging with the cooling steel, it looks at its 'midwives' one last time. "Thank you. Tell the Toturi, it is {{Name from sheet}} who serves him."

Then it is gone, and Nittoho, pushed beyond his limits, falls in a dead faint beside his anvil. His apprentice, equally weary, falls where he stands, leaving the fires to flicker slowly to ash.

After a period of recovery from the trials and the dehydration, Nittoho will ask the party to advise which of the two Toturi is best served by the new blade. Allow each PC to voice their choice, then go with the majority. Note that if there is a GM Certed PC at the table, their opinion should count twice. If there is a

tie, err toward Kazetora for Mujihi, The Emperor for Jinshin.

Upon Failure:

Nittoho's expression is that of stunned horror as he escorts you from the forge. He will meet none of your eyes as he bows, formally. "I thank you for your efforts, my friends. I grieve that I failed, both you and him. Rest assured, I will ensure no stain falls upon you from your Lords in this matter."

Before you can speak, he turns away, quietly closing the shutters of his shop after you.

Conclusion

Upon Success:

As you rest and recover from your efforts in the comforts of the Azure Wave, Nittoho's apprentice arrives. The boy's eyes are bright, still lit with the wonders of what he has seen. "Master invites you to the Temple...it's time for his vows, and he wants you to help with this rebirth, too!"

The ceremony that follows is a simple one. Kanja, smiling for the first time since you've met him, oversees the death of the samurai Mirumoto Nittoho and welcomes into the fold the monk Masaru, new initiate to the service of Suitengu and the Water Dragon. The two monks, joined by the others, invite you to share a cup of the finest tea, and then send you off with their blessings.

When you leave, it is in the company of a well-guarded caravan, bearing the case that will bear the newly reborn blade to its new master in the Capital.

Upon Failure:

One of the PCs will later receive a letter, carried by the red-eyed apprentice, asking for their service as a second. Order or precedence is: Fellow Mirumoto; Fellow Dragon; Allied Clan member; best Kenjutsu score. The sepukku is a private matter, not open to any PC not the second. Performing this act gains that PC .1 Honor.

"The event takes place at sunset, an exception chosen by the condemned man himself. The affair is attended

only by a single monk from the local temple, who seems strangely reluctant to offer the usual prayers

No rumors of his demise follow you as you depart the city the next day: it is almost as if Nittoho never dwelled here at all."

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: +1 XP

Good Roleplaying: +1 XP

Succeeded in gathering all needed supplies/assistants: +1 XP

Succeeded in re-forging the blade: +1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Favors

Successfully helping Nittoho attempt the forging at the temple, regardless of success or failure, earns each PC one Favor.

Honor

If there are any Honor gains beyond those already mentioned in the module, they go here. Using the Rank-based system as specified in the Campaign Primer makes a useful shorthand.

The GM may grant up to 2 extra points of Honor to a PC for actions not detailed in the module, though no PC should gain more than 2 points in this fashion.

Glory

If the sword is successfully re-forged, gain G8.

Allies and Enemies

Assuming the sword is re-forged, gain Masaru as an Ally of Influence 1/ Devotion 4.

GM Reporting

- 1) Did the re-forging succeed?
- 2) What name did the Sword choose? {Jinshin or Mujihi}
- 3) Which Toturi gets the blade? {Kazetora or Shin-Zhu/The Emperor}

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

Appendix #1: NPCs

Mirumoto Nittoho

Nittoho is a bushi in name only. He has never been in an actual fight for his life, nor has he ever participated in any of the martial contests in which so many bushi find themselves during their careers. Recognized for his gifts with steel at a very early age, Nittoho was singled out for his artistic skills by the seniors of his dojo and carefully shielded from anything that might risk his singular talents.

Some bushi might see this as a curse; Nittoho, on the other hand, considers this a singular blessing, a

privilege that he feels only the Dragon would have been wise enough to grant to him. In his Clan, all are encouraged to walk the path to which they are best suited and for him, the choice to find his purpose in the forge was made without thought. His contentment is reflected in the quietly joy with which he lives a peaceful, gentle life.

For all of his adult life, Nittoho has served as a master among masters. In times of need, he is capable of making fine blades in half the time of his peers, but his true joy is in the making of masterworks, beautiful

blades and the occasional spear that are prized by the one who receives them. Though no Kaiu, it is said that no weapon of his making has ever been shattered in battle. His forge is in the First ring, the most prestigious possible outside the great Temple itself. Despite his talent, he has never before applied to use the sacred anvil.

The arrival at his forge of an Ancestral Blade, seeking reincarnation, is without question the most exciting challenge that has ever come to Nittoho and has, at last, spurred the master smith to attempt the Water Dragon's Scale. He considers it an honor almost beyond bearing, and intends that it shall be the last, finest work of his career as a samurai.

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1/Water Hammer Smith 1

Initiative: 4k2

Armor TN: 15 **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 10 (+0), 4 (+3), 4 (+5), 4 (+10), 4 (+15), 4 (+20), 4 (Down, +40), 4 (Out)

Attack: XkY+Z (Weapon, Simple/Complex)

Damage: XkY+Z (Weapon)

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4
(Str 4)

Honor: 4.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 6.0

Primary Skills: Craft: Weaponsmith (Katana) 7, Etiquette 3, Meditation 5, Lore: Weapons 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Soft Hearted, Soul of Artistry (Craft),

Special Mechanics: When making crafting rolls, Nittoho can spend a Void and add his Water ring x 2 as a static bonus to his roll.

Kami-Shi

The ascended soul of an awakened katana long since broken, this sword spirit (a shutsudohin) has no actual name, or at least not one it will reveal to casual acquaintances. Kami-Shi is the term that Nittoho used to address it at their first meeting and so that is what it now answers to.

Though it has a sliver of the soul of the samurai to which it once belonged as part of its being, the shutsudohin will never be mistaken for human, or, indeed, a mortal at all by anyone who pays it any real attention. Its form is merely a manifestation and can be abandoned or replaced as needed, thanks to the grace of the powers that have chosen to assist it in its quest to return to Rokugan in this time of growing darkness. Its humanoid form is decidedly androgynous and oddly angular in a way that human physiology simply does not allow. It speaks rarely and the words are always underscored by a strange metallic echo,

rising to a ringing clash if the spirit becomes agitated or excited in any way.

As a spirit, the shutsudohin has only the barest understanding of mortal concepts of morality. It does understand the concepts of service and sacrifice, however, and will think more favorably of those who demonstrate willingness and ability to demonstrate those virtues.

It has chosen Nittoho for his genius, but it views him almost more as a servant than a helper. Its worth was weighed and measured by beings far above mere samurai long before the smith was ever born and considers him, and most other mortals, well beneath it. Only those of highest birth or greatest station will be treated politely from the start; all others must demonstrate their worth in word and deed.

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: 20 (Human Form) **Reduction:** 5, Limited Invulnerability

Wounds: 15 (+0), 6 (+3), 6 (+5), 6 (+10), 6 (+15), 6 (+20), 6 (Down, +40), 6 (Out)

Attack: See Sword Form

Damage: See Sword Form; Human form will not attack.

3 Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water

Primary Skills: Lore: History 5, Intimidation 3, Theology 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Disturbing Countenance, Invulnerability to normal weapons (Human form only), Heartless

Sword Form: Kami-Shi can take on the form of the katana it once was and self-animate in battle for a brief period of time (5 rounds for Low tables, 3 rounds for Mid tables). This transformation takes 1 full round.

It has the following stats: Initiative: 6k3 Attack: Simple; 9k4 (with emphasis), damage 5k3. No Void, TNtbH: 30 Wounds: 30 (+0), 10 (Down, +40), 10 (Out)

Significant Dice Pools: if the creature is likely to be called on to roll for specific tasks, like stealth or tracking

Doji Tamura

Doji Tamura is a tall, elegant, and poised samurai in her late thirties. Though always swathed in the finest silks, there is no softness to her: her mind and manner are as sharp as a blade. Tamura has, within her own Clan, something of a reputation as a skilled nakodo. She was one of several who had already begun to examine the maidens of the Clan in anticipation of the new Emperor's need for a bride, beginning the day the young Toturi was invested.

Her shock and displeasure over the break from tradition that a Dragon bride represents has driven Tamura quietly and firmly around the bend. Unable to choose a Crane, she has convinced herself that if she can only learn something damning enough about the Dragon, the Kitsuki, or the Future Empress in particular, the union can be halted and a 'proper' bride found. Upon learning of Kirino's blood tie to the future Empress, Tamura has arranged a flimsy excuse with impeccable references to worm her way into the Governor's manor. That Kitsuki Kirino wants no part of her has had no discernable effect on Tamura's determined offensive of politeness so far.

Ultimately, Tamura has two goals: Learn what she can of the soon-to-be Empress and, if possible, identify her confidants for possible future secrets and favors.

It is possible that Tamura can be persuaded to assist the party in gathering resources. With a successful Contested Courtier Roll (She rolls 9k4 on Courtier checks), she might be persuaded to help. Fellow Crane, or one from an Allied Clan (The Mantis or the Owl), receive an extra +5 to their roll. She can use her Rank Three Doji Courtier technique to acquire one of the Material items required for the reforging.

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 3

Combat NA

Air 4 Earth 2 Fire 4 Water 2 Void 3

Honor: 6.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 4.5

Primary Skills: Courtier (Manipulation) 5, Etiquette (Conversation) 5, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 3, Calligraphy 3, Games: Sadane: 3, Games: Kemari: 3, Lore: Heraldry 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: Status: (Respected Crane Nakodo), Balance, Jealousy (Imperial Nakodo)

Kitsuki Kirino

The current Governor of Suigeki Toshi, and several-times distant cousin to the future Empress, is a tiny spitfire of a woman. Unlike most of her predecessors, Kirino isn't trained to the Family school. She has, instead, taken up the paired blades of the Mirumoto. Rather respected as a duelist, Kirino spent several years championing courtiers and the occasional shugenja throughout the north. She learned enough by observation to settle with only minimal difficulty into the governor's role when the previous Lord, Mirumoto Takeshi, chose to retire five years ago.

Much of the time, Kirino's job is easy. She handles the rare interclan dispute that arises with swift authority, relying on her own reputation to reinforce her decisions. It's rarely been required, with the various long-term guests from out of Clan having been

perfectly content to keep their squabbles to a minimum much of the time.

The recent changes of alliance, leaving the Mantis outside the circle formed by the other three Clans in residence, has made that task slightly more challenging of late. The arrival of strangers from the other Clans has only increased the strain, with a certain Crane woman's presence being the most irritating of all.

At this point, Kirino is eager for an excuse to get Doji Tamura gone. She has long since reasoned out why the woman is there, and she finds the orders (to be allowed to research in the private libraries) insulting. She also dislikes the production that Tamura's very presence has made of her Court; if the Crane doesn't leave soon, Kirino worries, the Scorpion who've come to fence words with her might force the afternoon Court to become a regular event, a fate that Kirino is anxious to avoid.

Her favor as Governor, if earned, can grant the party passage to the mines. If the party is particularly persuasive (or manages to thwart Tamura in some way that provides amusement), she may send along an armed escort as well. Members of her Clan and those allied with them (Scorpion and Unicorn) get a +5 to all rolls with her.

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 3

Initiative: 6k3

Armor TN: (Unarmored) 23 **Reduction:** 0

Wounds: 15 (+0), 6 (+3), 6 (+5), 6 (+10), 6 (+15), 6 (+20), 6 (Down, +40), 6 (Out)

Attack: Kenjutsu (Katana) 9k5;

Damage: 6k2 (Katana), 5k1 (Wakizashi)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4

Honor: 6.5 Status: 4.0 Glory: 4.5

Primary Skills: Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Sincerity 3, Intimidation 5, Iaijutsu (Focus) 7, Kenjutsu 5, Defense 3, Investigation 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Status: Governor of Suigeki Toshi, Clear Thinker, Small

Agasha Takeru

Agasha Takeru is a relatively new arrival in Suigeki Toshi. He is here, he says, on a pilgrimage, seeking solace and peace away from the heat and intellectual rigors of the infamous Laboratories of his Family. While this is true, so far as it goes, it is far from the primary reason he seeks peace.

Takeru, in his youth, was a younger classmate of Kitsuki Miyabe, the woman who is soon to become Empress of all Rokugan. He has been quietly in love with Miyabe since their training years and seeks time

away from the things that remind him of her, trying to resign himself to the reality of his situation.

Before taking his sabbatical, Takeru labored in the great Agasha Laboratories. He specializes in rare alchemical formulae, specifically those used to create *hanabi*, the famed fireworks of his Family. That his gifts have earned him the right to participate in the forthcoming ceremony is a bitter honor to swallow, and it is one of the reasons his Lord took pity and allowed him this brief reprieve.

He is currently an honored guest at one of the smaller shrines in the Temple district, one which honors Kamashi-okara, Fortune of Sorrow. His daily petitions asking the Fortune to withdraw her attentions take up his mornings without fail; in afternoons, he labors in the warehouse-cum-workshop that the Governor has arranged for him, crafting the displays that will be featured at the Imperial wedding.

Asking him for help is more a matter of disrupting his ennui than favors. Appeals to his honor or his duty as a priest of the kami of his Clan (Courtier (Manipulation/ AW vs TN 20) will be enough to secure his support in the endeavor.

School/Rank: Tamori (Agasha) Shugenja 3

Combat NA

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 3
(Int 4)

Honor: 4.5 Status: 2.0 Glory: 4.0

Primary Skills: Divination 3, Lore: Theology: 3, Craft: Hanabi: 7, Medicine: 3, Spellcraft: 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Prodigy, Lost Love: Kitsuki Miyabe, Dark Fate, Fame: Hanabi artist

Yogo Minato

The seldom seen patron of the esteemed House of Shadow *noh* theater in the heart of the Scorpion's district is, it is said, the richest person in the province. Certainly the House, as well as the various other establishments in which she has a hand, are popular among the samurai residents and guests, with most full of light and laughter well into the small hours.

Contrary to popular rumor, however, Minato does not spend her every waking hour in disguise, endlessly testing and judging those who work for her. She has no need; that is what the fine young Shosuro her Clan sent as yojimbo is for.

Instead, Minato spends her days in pursuit of her true passion: The composition of music. Much of the music played in the theater has passed across her desk, either as an original composition or for a fresh reimagining of an older piece.

School/Rank: Yogo Wardmaster 3

Combat NA

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 3

Honor: 1.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 4.0

Primary Skills: Investigation 3, Lore: Theology: 3, Artisan (Musical Composition) 5, Acting: 3, Spellcraft: 5, Commerce: 3, Etiquette: 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Ally: Shosuro Kirase (yojimbo and personal spy); Gentry (Numerous holdings in the Scorpion District), Fame: Gifted Composer, Wealthy x 5, Greedy, Blackmail: Kanja the Abbott of Water's Strength Temple {Knows of and supplies his Opium addiction}

Kanja, The Abbott

The Abbott of the Water's Strength Temple is a ruinously old man, well past eighty years of age. Unlike most who have held the position, he is not a blacksmith, though he did practice that trade in his youth, before the strength began to fade from his limbs. He is allowed the position here for two reasons: First, because his administrative capabilities are exemplary and far exceed that of any other Monk at the Temple, and Second, because even the Brotherhood has internal politics and nepotism and Kanja has happily exploited both.

In his former life, Kanja was once Otomo Hakuchou, a jewel of the Imperial Court. His artistic and creative skills were considered prodigious, enough so that he was offered the chance to train at the Kakita Academy (which he declined). He spent his samurai life in and around Otosan Uchi, using his talents to gain entrance to artistic salons where he could gather a great deal of useful gossip and spread enough of his own to serve the Otomo regime of Clan disharmony.

Though he has been retired for nearly four decades, and Abbot for a decade, Kanja still has more than a few hints of snobbishness from his younger years. He is quick to snub those of low birth (Ronin, Minor Clansman, or members of Vassal Families all have -5 to any rolls against him) and to favor those of high birth (Those who are Kuge, Imperials, or who have Status of 3+ get a bonus of +5 in rolls against him). He also maintains a certain degree of entitlement and considers himself above certain doctrines of the Brotherhood, at least in private. One such doctrine is that against profaning the vessel: Not only will Kanja still raise a toast of sake on occasion, but he also has a long-hidden addiction to Opium that he feeds via Scorpion back-channels.

Still, though he is flawed, his piety is genuine. Kanja genuinely believes in the teachings of the Fortunes and, in his own way, strives to be a better servant than

he was in his youth. For all his prejudices, when the annual Selection of Apprentices takes place, he uses his skills at reading people and judging quality to make true, worthy choices. It is perhaps for this reason that the Dragon's Scale at the heart of the Sacred Forge still responds to him, even though he himself has not used it since he arrived.

School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 2/ Temples of the Thousand Fortunes Monk 2

Combat NA

Air 5 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 4

Honor: 1.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 4.0

Primary Skills: Investigation 5, Lore: Theology (Fortunes): 5, Craft: Weaponsmith 5, Courtier: 5, Etiquette: 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Soul of Artistry (Crafting); Blackmailed (Yogo Minato); Dark Secret (Opium Addict); Weakness (Strength); Inner Gift: Empathy; Social Position: Abbott of the Water's Strength Temple

Appendix #2 – Mod Index

The following is an index for where important NPCs and various locations can be found inside this module, since the choice of where to go when is a bit random and it might otherwise be hard not to get lost.

Note that the items in the curly brackets indicate which Clan or Family is in charge of a given district, in case players inquire.

Southern Half {Kitsuki}:

- Merchant City {Mantis} PG 4
- Temple District {Tonbo} PG 13
- Agasha Takeru

Northern Half {Mirumoto}:

- The Mountain's Wrath Dojo {Unicorn} NO ENTRY, BUT RENTAL HORSES COME FROM HERE
- The Artisan's District {Scorpion} PG 15
- Yogo Minato

City Center:

- The Governor's Estate PG 8
- Doji Tamura
- Kitsuki Kirino
- Water's Strength Temple PG 17
- Kanja
- The Inner Ring Forges {Oriole} PG 5
- Mirumoto Nittoho
- The shutsudohin (Kami-shi)

Material Gathering:

Sacred Water

- Water's Strength Temple PG 23
- The Scale's Source PG 23

Blessed Pine (for charcoal, and for the wooden parts of the katana)

- **Kuroshin's Pine, in the Agasha Gardens ** AGASHA ONLY, PG 23
- The White Pine PG 22

Tamahagane (Steel sand for forging)

- The Wrath of the Kami PG 20
- The Serpent's Tail Mine PG 19

Appendix #3 – Court Guests

The following is a names list for the individuals at Kirino's court. Most of them are a handwave sort of option and shouldn't have a lot material to interact upon unless noted in the main section for the Governor's Court, other than passing around any gossip the PCs may have missed. This includes mention of Agasha Takeru, if needed.

Governor's Right

Agasha Noritoshi (M, Status 3.5): Noritoshi is Kitsuki Kirino's spiritual advisor. He served the previous Governor as well as Kirino and honestly could have retired by now, if he wanted to, but he enjoys the prestige and relative ease with which he earns it. He will NOT help with the forging project if asked; his role is here.

Hosun (M, Status 1.5): Hosun is one of the younger monks from the local Temple. He has served there since being brought to the temple as an orphaned child and so has more importance there than his youth would suggest. If asked, he is more than happy to provide the blessed water for the re-forging...it simply has to wait until after Court is over.

Soshi Mariko (F, Status 2) Mariko is a long-term guest; she was an Apprentice last year as an armorer. Despite the Family, she is not a shugenja, but a bushi instead. She has to go home when the new Apprentices start and is a bit sad. Kitsuki Mae (F, Status 1) Mae is technically Noritoshi's yojimbo, and looks rather uncomfortable here.

Jai (M, Status .5) Jai is one of the monks and deeply interested in the ongoing artistic traditions here. To his sorrow, he has no talent with metalcraft, being despised by the fire kami. He makes murals instead, and is in fact responsible for several that adorn the outside of buildings throughout the town.

Right Mid

Soshi Hiyaki (M, Status 2.0): Twin of Shinai. Hiyaki is another one of the local Scorpion. His role is shrine keeper at the Embassy. He would be happy enough to help with the ritual if asked, but he lacks the needed abilities. Finding that out will make him very quiet.

Soshi Shinai (M, Status 2.0): Twin of Hiyaki. Shinai is not local; he is simply here to visit his brother. He is as interested in the local theater scene as anyone, however, and seems delighted to be here.

Soshi Aiko: (F, Status 1.0) Aiko is the youngest Scorpion in the room, and acts it. She is very shy to speak but listens carefully to everything her seniors say.

Soshi Roteki: (M, Status 3.0) Roteki is the Junior Ambassador to the Scorpion present. He's here today because his superior didn't wish to be and is a bit resentful of that fact.

Far Table

Togashi Eiguchi (M, Status 2.0): A local painter. Utterly uninterested in anything but his project.

Ide Amit (M, Status 3.0): A merchant patron with obviously non-Rokugani blood. Keeps trying to get Eiguchi to add more lighting to the work-in-progress, but is clearly doing it just to get a rise out of Hana.

Utaku Hana (F, Status 2.0): One of the sensei from the local Unicorn dojo. Very interested in minimalist styles of art, this 'new fad' of realism/third dimension to art upsets her no end. Spends most of her time suggesting exactly the opposite of what Amit wants.

Ide Kou (M, Status 1.0): A young, earnest bushi attendant of Amit's. No real opinion on art, but he says whatever Amit does in a show of Family solidarity.

Utaku Tadashi (M, Status 2.0): Who knows what his job is, other than 'guard of some kind', because he's dead silent the entire time, much more interested in the view than anything else.

Governor's Left

Doji Tamura (See NPC section and main section)

Moshi Chiasa (F, Status 2.0): Would-be nakodo client of Tamura's. She is clearly interested in Yasuki Eiji. She is also more than a little interested in Tamura. She isn't local, but is here as a messenger.

Yasuki Eiji (M, Status 3.5): Kuge (second cousin of the Daimyo) Not a local but would like to set it up so he could be. He's trying to get the Crab a foot in the city, with very limited success. Not interested in Eiji at all, but too polite to say so.

Player Handout #1: News From the Empire

Samurai of Rokugan,

As the Winter comes to an end, it seems that the Courts of the Empire have been busy. The most notable news, which I am certain that august Samurai such as you have already learned, is that of the Emperor's proclamation requiring the Scorpion to allow troop movements from the Lion as they prepare for their Summer conflict against the Crab. This has been a chafe to the Crane, who spent much of the winter trying to negotiate terms to allow the Lion through, but what can be done in such a situation?

In positive news, the woman who will be the Imperial bride has been chosen. Kitsuki Miyabe, a daughter of our esteemed Kitsuki Daimyo, has been selected to be the Empress come this spring. She is something of an oddity, even for a Kitsuki, as her training is not in the Kitsuki school, but as a Shugenja in the Agasha school. Still, I have managed to steal a conversation with her, and she gives every impression of being a woman of great spiritual understanding.

The Ikoma have been out in force throughout the Courts of the Empire this winter. Most that have dealt with them have said that they have been friendlier even than the Ikoma usually tend to be. There is plenty of whisper that the Lion are merely trying to build allies before their war with the Crab, but the Ikoma themselves have made no such direct mention.

Things have, fortunately, quieted down in Balishnimpur since the Maharajah's uprising over the Summer. The Ivindi who still live in Rokugan are still somewhat antsy, which I suppose is somewhat understandable, but there seems to be plenty of indication that their spirit for further rebellion has been quelled.

Lastly, Shinjo Hazumi was notable by her lack of presence in the Courts of Rokugan this Winter. There are words that she road out of the Empire this Winter to repel a Gaijin element of some form in the Burning Sands. But surely the Clan Champion of the Unicorn would not need to ride out herself?

As always, I am a servant of the Throne.

-Otomo Yusuke

GM Worksheet

For GM sanity, this worksheet can be used to help keep track of Kami-Shi's reactions to things to help determine what name it eventually chooses for itself in sword form. For each event, put a check in the small cell; at the end, count the number of checks and the majority wins! Note that for some of these, it's possible for something to happen more than once; if so, instead of a check you might write the number of times one of the incidents occurred.

If there is a tie, GM should choose based on overall party behavior during the module. This is essentially a case of bushido vs shourido, so instances of Low skill vs High Skill is another means to track if needed.

If there is a discussion or occasion that occurs between PCs and the sword that isn't on this chart, feel free to add a mark in the blank boxes.

Please use pencil and write softly; if you can't or this sheet seems too worn, please be sure to ask at the desk for a new copy to be put in the folder before you return this mod to the box!

Event	Jinshin {Kindness}		Mujihi {Ruthlessness}	
Governor's Court	Successfully defusing the would-be conflict between Kirino and Tamura OR honorably ignoring it.		Failing to sit with the Agasha, if Kami-Shi is present and asked the party to do so OR making the Kirino/Tamura conflict worse	
Getting Forge-Right	Impressing the Abbott with Craft skills or Courtly persuasion		Intimidating or Blackmailing the Abbott	
Getting Shugenja Help	Convincing either NPC to help with High Skills OR allowing the spirit to talk privately and politely with the priest		Convincing either NPC to help with Low/Merchant Skills OR the spirit reveals itself in public to force the issue after PCs fail	
Gaining Misc. Extra materials	Impressing Doji Tamura so she gives you one as a gift		Throwing koku at it {only when this section isn't cut for time}	
Traveling to the Mines	Avoiding combat without Dishonor OR defeating all bandits in honorable combat		Paying off the Bandits, Ignoring the bandits and letting them roam free, OR letting some bandits escape	
Dealing with the Zokujin	Successful Negotiation		Combat OR Thievery OR forcing the Shutsudohin to go down into the caverns	
Getting the Pine	Using status to requisition the materials from the Agasha's garden OR using High skills to persuade the priest at the White Pine		Stealthily getting the materials from the Agasha's garden OR using Low skills on the priest at the White Pine OR harming one of the crows	
Getting the Water	Impressing a priest with proper piety or high social skills		Using a low social skill to bully the monks OR paying someone to go fetch the water for them	
Element Used in the Forging IF a friendly kami is given	Earth		Fire	

Total: ____

Total: ____