

# **The Balance Shifts**

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

Month of Akodo, 1341 (Summer)

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Investigation, Intrigue, Combat, Horror  
Part 3 of Shifting Sands

Can a madman with an ancient gaijin artifact be stopped before it is too late?

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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

For the past three years, Moto Ayumu has searched. A man of shattered faith but great resources, he discovered a promising gaijin legend - a knife meant to seal pacts and offer sacrifices to a blasphemous foreign god of trade.

Two years ago, Otomo Katsuo accidentally stumbled upon Moto Ayumu's plot while apprehending gaijin involved in smuggling. Last year, Katsuo attempted to apprehend Ayumu with the assistance of a group of samurai. Ayumu escaped but Katsuo recovered a great deal of evidence.

Katsuo believes he has found a lead on Ayumu's next target. To that end, he has called together samurai to apprehend the criminal. Unfortunately, Ayumu has dispatched gaijin fanatics to murder Katsuo to prevent any further interference. After doing so, they will accidentally run into the PCs.

The PCs will hopefully escape this encounter and investigate the site of their intended meeting with Otomo Katsuo. Amongst the survivors is a Scorpion magistrate named Bayushi Tenno, an old friend of Katsuo. While Tenno is too heavily wounded to help, between his knowledge and what the PCs discover they will find what Otomo Katsuo had realized; that Ayumu's next target is Shinden Horiuchi.

A hidden path through the Spine of the World mountains will lead the PCs into the Unicorn lands to stop a great tragedy from occurring at Shinden Horiuchi.

They will be too late. They will catch up to Moto Ayumu after he has slaughtered the Horiuchi family to a member, their souls sacrificed to feed the gaijin blade.

Due to circumstance or ill luck, a Unicorn magistrate will arrive in the aftermath of the violence. Unaware of

Moto Ayumu's plot, the Magistrate will immediately identify the deceased as Iuchi Jinsoku, brother to the jade champion Iuchi Katachai and court shugenja to Moto Sartaq. Accordingly, he will place everyone present under arrest and escort them back to Shiro Moto until matters can be resolved.

Without the presence of an Emerald Magistrate, the PCs will be hard pressed to explain their involvement and their legal basis for being in Unicorn lands in the first place. The PCs will need to seek allies - friends among the Unicorn might be persuaded to help, as might the Crane, Dragon, or Scorpion.

In the court chambers of the Moto, the PCs will be forced to prove their innocence as well as the posthumous guilt of Iuchi Jinsoku.

**GM's note:** This module involves the death of children. This may be problematic for some players. Use your judgement if creative editing is needed to accommodate a player or to avoid causing emotional distress. The mod is designed to evoke anger towards the villains, but there is a point beyond which this is unhealthy.

## 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.

Check for the following advantages or disadvantages:

- Ally (Moto Sartaq, Doji Hanako, Ide Kazuyuki, Bayushi Akinishin)
- Sworn Enemy (Moto Noritoshi, Moto Sartaq, Doji Hanako, Bayushi Tenno, Bayushi Akinishin, Ide Kazuyuki), Softhearted, Brash, Wrath of the Kami (Any), Cast Out, Disbeliever, Phobia: any water or heights

### 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.

**All PCs suffer an L3 glory loss.**

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.

### 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 Earth Roll is **15 for R3+ characters, or 10 for R2 characters.**

### 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 25.

Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

### Experience Expenditure

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

## **Part One: The Road**

**Give the players Handout 2.** Allow them time to read it before proceeding.

The early summer sun is warm and pleasant. In the northern lands of the Scorpion the heat of summer is not yet at its peak and it is nothing compared to the sweltering summers of Balishnimpur.

The road is well maintained and busy with travelers. In the distance the Spine of the World Mountains loom, and somewhere at their foot is your destination, Beiden City.

Night falls and lights begin to twinkle far off in the distance, the first signs of Beiden. It will likely take one more easy day of travel before you arrive in the city.

In the meantime, a roadside inn beckons with warm lights and delicious smells. The telltale steam of a bathhouse rises from one of the out buildings. The wooden placard bearing a green frog swings lightly in the breeze as you turn from the road, ready to take your ease for the night.

A strange scene greets you. The common room is nearly empty, save for a lone innkeeper and a group of men sitting at a large table in the middle of the room. The men wear dark cotton clothing in an obvious gaijin style and carry curved swords, slightly smaller than scimitars. Confused looks pass across the faces of the gaijin men as they notice you standing in the doorway. Then the man at the head of the table gestures to you, "I see Fate has a sense of humor. Please, samurai-sans, come, sit down, join us for tea. We need not be impolite. I am Alim Abd Al-Karim."

The other gaijin look at one another nervously. Their hands do not move to their weapons, but they do conspicuously carry them on their belts.

If any PC has Brash, they should roll a check for it now. If they fail, they breach Courtesy (see below).

There are Gaijin Assassins equal to the number of combat capable PCs minus one, plus Alim Al-Karim, for a total of gaijin equal to combat capable PCs.

The PCs have two options; they can sit down and speak with Alim or simply attack the gaijin. Attacking the gaijin, while reasonable, would be dishonorable as it violates Courtesy.

Alim is quite aware of this and intends to use the opportunity to get what information he can out of the PCs. He is morally conflicted about Iuchi Jinsoku's plan and is involved primarily to get vengeance for the death of his brothers. He and his men have already killed Otomo Katsuo, but he will under no circumstances admit this, nor can he be talked out of a confrontation as he blames the PCs for his brothers' deaths.

If the PCs decide to preemptively attack, proceed to the combat below and all involved suffer an D2 honor loss. Otherwise,

Alim smiles good naturedly and gestures for the samurai to seat themselves. He begins to pour tea for the assembled samurai and takes a sip from his own cup as the innkeeper brings rice and soup for the new arrivals.  
"I am glad we are able to be civilized. So, how are you? Hopefully your journey has been pleasant."

Alim will answer the PCs questions, but for each answer he provides he will ask a question in turn. Once has finished all his questions, proceed to the fight.

- So, tell me of your greatest accomplishment.
- (Select a PC, choosing one who is Cast Out or a Disbeliever if possible) Do you consider yourself a devout man / woman? Why?
- If a man killed your brother, even if he was justified in doing so, what would you do?
- Which of your Kami was the greatest? No cheating and naming your own clan's. Why?
- If your Kami asked you to do something you knew was wrong, what would you do?

If the PCs decline to drink tea or otherwise indicate they think it could be poisoned:

Alim takes a long drink from his own cup and gives the samurai an aggrieved look. "Oh, come now. It is not my intent to poison you. Such suspicion is unbecoming a samurai."

Some answers to questions the PCs will likely ask him: Why are you here: "We have come to distract you while our lord finishes the next stage of the plan. But I see Fate has a sense of humor."

An **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at TN 20 will reveal he is hiding something. If pressed he will add "Otomo Katsuo and his toadies killed both of

my brothers. So, I guess we are also here for revenge. Even if they deserved their fates, they were still my brothers."

Who are you: "As I said, I am Alim Abd Al-Karim."

How do you know who we are: "Our lord has been watching you and your master, Otomo Katsuo. It would not do to have your interfere at this stage of his plan."

What quarrel do you have with us: "Your master, Otomo Katsuo, killed my brothers. Even if they deserved their fates, there are certain obligations which cannot simply be ignored."

Who is your lord: "Well, the Generous Trader is our lord. But I am guessing you meant Moto Ayumu. He is the Trader's Vessel currently, so we obey him, as he obeys her. I am afraid I am not at liberty to say much more about either."

Who is the Generous Trader: "She is our god. I apologize, but I do not speak of her to unbelievers. Then again, Fahud was always the most devout of the three of us."

Where is your lord: "Shiro Ide."

An **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at TN 25 reveals he is lying. If pressed he will shrug his shoulders and add, "Well, we wouldn't be a very good distraction if I told you the truth, would we?"

What is your lord planning: "I do not ask such questions of the Vessel. It is not my place."

Why are you doing this: He shrugs, "Because my god commands it and I took an oath to obey."

Once he has finished his questions, Moto Alim will sigh. "Well then, I suppose we should get on with things. If you'd like to retrieve your weapons, we will wait."

If any PC turns to go retrieve their weapon from the innkeeper, the gaijin immediately attack while the PCs back is turned.

Alternatively, the PCs may simply attack the gaijin without or during conversation. Either way, Alim knocks over the table effortlessly and the gaijin leap to their feet prepared to fight to the death.

The gaijin do not have a Down or Out wound rank. All of them took an exotic stimulant earlier in the day which has not quite worn off yet.

**Note:** If all players are Rank 2, the Gaijin Assassins (but not Alim) begin with their first wound rank filled

and have used all their void points. If all the players Rank 4, Alim is Earth 4 and Reflexes 4.

**There are Gaijin Assassins equal to the number of combat capable PCs minus one, plus Alim Al-Karim, for a total of gaijin equal to combat capable PCs.**

### Alim Abd Al-Karim

**School/Rank:** Temple Guard 3

**Initiative:** 7k3

**Armor TN:** 23 (Concealed Ashigaru) **Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 57 (+17)

**Attack:** 9k4 (Scimitar, Simple), 10k7 in Full Attack

**Damage:** 7k3 (Scimitar)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 4 Void 2

Honor: 3.5 Status: 0 Glory: 1

**Skills:** Swords (Scimitar) 5, Knives 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 1, Stealth 5, Horsemanship 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages** Languages (Rokugani, Yodotai) / Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

#### **Techniques:**

*Trained for War* – Reduce wound penalties by 3. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

*Strike with Fury* – 1k0 to Initiative. 1k0 to Attack while in **Full Attack**.

*Implacable Foe* – Simple attacks with swords.

### Gaijin Assassins

**School/Rank:** Temple Guard 3

**Initiative:** 7k3

**Armor TN:** 23 (Concealed Ashigaru) **Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 57 (+17)

**Attack:** 8k3 (Saif, Simple), 10k5 in Full Attack

**Damage:** 6k2 (Saif sword)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 2

Honor: 3.5 Status: 0 Glory: 1

**Skills:** Swords 5, Knives 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 1, Stealth 5, Horsemanship 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages** Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

#### **Techniques:**

*Trained for War* – Reduce wound penalties by 3. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

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## Part Two: The Inn

In the aftermath of the fight the common room of the inn is a scene of chaos. The innkeeper comes out from behind an overturned table, promptly turns slightly green, then darts back behind it. The sounds of the innkeeper becoming sick are unmistakable.

If the PCs attempt to interrogate the innkeeper, he will tell them that his name is Basho and he knows nothing about the men. They arrived two hours before the PCs, requested rooms, paid in advance, bathed, and then sat down to dinner.

There are several clues on the gaijin. Any reasonably thorough search will find them:

- Alim carries a piece of paper bearing the words ‘Inn of the Red Carp’ in Rokugani.
- Alim has a set of travel papers, stamped with an Emerald Magistrates’ chop. **Calligraphy / Perception** at TN 25 or **Forgery / Perception** at TN 20 will determine that they are forged.
- Alim has a piece of paper, carefully folded, containing a detailed drawing of himself, perhaps 10 years younger, and two other men who look very similar to himself. All three are smiling.
- One of the gaijin has in his pocket the chop of an Emerald Magistrate, identical to the one used to stamp the travel papers.

A search of the gaijin’s rooms will reveal mundane items - clothes, bags, extra rations, and the like. If the PCs take the time to search, they will find:

- A map in a scroll case of the City of Beiden. The Inn of the Red Carp is circled.
- A second case containing a map of the Unicorn lands. Shiro Ide, Shiro Shinjo, and Shinden Horiuchi are circled.
- A small wooden box contains five empty vials. There is a slight blue residue on remaining in the vials. A **Medicine / Intelligence** TN 30 roll reveals that the residue is the remains of an extremely powerful stimulant.

It is up to the PCs whether they wish to press on to the Inn of the Red Carp tonight or wait until morning. If they press on tonight, they will reach the Inn by 4 am. If a PC wishes to stop and report the incident at the Inn of the Green Frog to the local magistrate, they will be informed that he was last seen going to a meeting at the Inn of the Red Carp.

## Part Three: The Raven

The Inn of the Red Carp looks serene and pleasant as you walk up to the door. A candle burns in the window. A smiling wooden fish in bright red paint hangs above the door.

The door slides silently on freshly oiled runners.

The inside of the inn could not be a greater contrast to the placid exterior. Blood is splashed liberally across the walls and the one table which remains approximately in place. The other two tables have been thrown haphazardly against the walls, the broken remains of fine bowls and cups are strewn about the floor, and a set of chopsticks breaks under your sandal as you step into the room.

The metallic scent of dried blood is overpowering. Three bodies lie in the room. A man in the colors of the Otomo family lies amidst the detritus.

Lying next to him is the body of a gaijin, looking almost serene in death.

The last, its legs sticking out from behind the innkeeper's desk, wears a set of black and red hakama.

Suddenly from behind the desk comes the sound of a shallow ragged gasp. A masculine, scratchy, barely controlled voice follows it. "Who's there?"

A moment later a hand clutches the top of the desk, and a Scorpion samurai pulls himself up by his right arm. His face is covered by a mask designed to look like a black bird with wings outstretched across his forehead.

He coughs, "Good ... evening? Samurai-sans. I am Bayushi Tenno, and I am afraid I am in no condition to offer you tea. Katsuo-san is dead, the gaijin saw to that. "

He gestures feebly, then slumps back against the desk, wheezing.

#### **Otomo Katsuo:**

Otomo Katsuo is dead. He was a fit man in his late 20's, with a traditional topknot and a hawk-like nose. He suffered multiple stab wounds, and his throat was cut.

A search of the body reveals the following facts:

- He was killed with a large sword, likely a scimitar. He clearly tried to put up a fight and took multiple slashes before dying. His throat was cut post mortem.
- His chop is missing.
- His hair smells vaguely of lilac.

#### **The gaijin:**

- All his possessions appear to be gone. He was killed by a single slash across the chest.
- A golden gaijin coin is tied around his right forearm with a piece of string. It appears to have been placed there posthumously. One side has a picture of a set of scales, and the other bears the image of a woman holding a knife in one hand and a gem in the other.

#### **Bayushi Tenno:**

Bayushi Tenno is an extremely handsome man, though he has clearly seen better days.

If a PC wishes to inspect or treat his wounds, he will not refuse assistance. Doing so discovers the following:

- He has a large gash across his left arm and left leg. He likely will have trouble using that arm and that leg for some time.
- Tenno's right arm is also wounded, but it does not appear to inconvenience him nearly as much as his left.
- Though he does his best to hide it, there is a dark red patch on his black kimono over his upper right flank. Combined with his ragged breathing, it is very likely he has an injured or collapsed lung.

A roll of **Medicine (Wound Treatment)** / **Intelligence** at TN 20 or 30 points of magical healing will help him get back on his feet.

Once the scene has been assessed and medical attention provided, or if the PCs ask Tenno what happened:

Bayushi Tenno takes a long breath, holding it and steadying himself as best he can. He cradles his immobile left arm in his right. For a moment a sarcastic smile crosses his face, then it is quickly banished as his On is restored.

"I apologize samurai-sans. The gaijin burst in while we were eating dinner. I tried to defend Katsuo, but there were too many of them. I killed one, but their leader was too fast and murdered Katsuo-san before I could stop him."

He shakes his head, an expression of grief passing over his fine features. "There were just too many of them. I held them as long as I could, but once I was no longer able to fight... well, I suppose they assumed I was dead and left. I could not say for certain how long I was unconscious; I only remember tiny bits between then and when you walked in the door. I am... sorry."

His face hardens, “Katsuo-san thought he had their leader’s next target. He thought they were planning to steal a magical relic, a nemuranai. But where and which, I fear he may have taken that information with him to the grave. But I will help you in any way I can. We must stop the people who did this. Maybe he left something upstairs?”

**Questions the PCs might ask Bayushi Tenno:**

Why are you here / Who are you: “I am Bayushi Tenno, chief magistrate of the city of Beiden. Otomo Katsuo and I worked together in the past on a variety of investigations, and he wanted to discuss his progress on the case.”

Did Katsuo say anything about the investigation: “He said he was close to identifying the leader of a criminal conspiracy. He found evidence suggesting their next target, but he hadn’t gotten to that part yet when the gaijin arrived. He was explaining that their leader was clearly an important man in the Unicorn, going by a false identity.”

Do you know anything about the gaijin: “I’m sorry, I do not. We rarely have to deal with them directly in Beiden.”

If a PC shows Tenno the Emerald Magistrate’s chop: Tenno nods somberly, “This is Otomo Katsuo’s chop. The gaijin must have stolen it from him. Curious, I wonder what they wanted with a magistrate’s chop.”

If a PC shows Tenno the gaijin travel papers: Bayushi Tenno inspects them for a moment, “These papers grant travel permission between here and the shrine of Shinden Horiuchi. That is the seat of the Horiuchi family. I wonder why the gaijin have these... they are excellent forgeries. The stamp appears completely authentic.”

If a PC shows Tenno the map taken from the gaijin: Tenno scrutinizes the map for a moment, “Strange. Two of these are trade hubs. Shiro Shinjo and Shiro Ide both do quite a bit of commerce with the those from outside the empire. It makes sense that gaijin would go those places. Easy to blend in, easy to do business. But Shinden Horiuchi has no commercial value, it is a temple.”

If a PC shows Tenno the empty vials from the gaijin: Tenno takes a long sniff then makes a face. “I recognize that smell. It’s a powerful analgesic – a medicine to dull pain. Where did you find this? Hmm... and there’s something else, but I don’t recognize what it is.”

If a PC shows Katsuo’s note to Bayushi Tenno:

“Interesting. Perhaps Katsuo-san thought that someone at Shinden Horiuchi might know who the leader is? Katsuo was explaining to me that the leader was obviously a shugenja, so perhaps he was going to see if the priests of the Horiuchi family might recognize him.”

**Katsuo’s room:**

Searching Otomo Katsuo’s room is relatively straightforward. His things are well organized and have been neatly unpacked. Most are completely mundane; traveling clothes, a small turquoise rabbit figurine, and rations.

On the small writing desk in the room is a series of papers.

- A map of the Unicorn provinces, with strikes through Shiro Shinjo and Shiro Ide, and a circle around Shinden Horiuchi.
- A series of names, all but the last crossed out. At the bottom is written ‘Daisho of Water’.
- An unsealed letter. If a PC chooses to open this letter, give them Handout 3.

**If the PCs have not figured out that their next move is to visit Shinden Horiuchi:**

Bayushi Tenno looks thoughtful for a moment, and attempts to stand, then immediately slumps back down, leaning against the desk for support. “We must proceed with Katsuo-san’s investigation, these men must face justice. He seemed certain of where he intended to go once you arrived. Did nothing upstairs suggest a target?”

**Once the PCs have figured out that they need to head to Shinden Horiuchi:**

Bayushi Tenno’s face lights up momentarily, “Yes! The Daisho of Water is a relic that has been in the possession of the Horiuchi for the past few hundred years. That must be what Moto Ayumu is after.”

Bayushi Tenno’s face hardens, and he nods solemnly, “Time is of crucial important and we have precious little of it. You must reach Shinden Horiuchi at once; the Horiuchi must know that Moto Ayumu means to steal the Daisho of Water.”

Tenno looks thoughtful for a moment, idly rubbing at his left arm with his right, “A man that has the

resources to send assassins into our lands will doubtless by watching the roads. There is a well-hidden pass that runs from Shiro no Soshi through the Spine of the World Mountains into the Horiuchi lands. It is by far the quickest way and will avoid any spies Moto Ayumu has placed.

I am sorry that I cannot accompany you, samurai-sans, but my wounds would only slow you down. I am in no shape to travel, much less to travel through the mountains. What I can do is write you travel papers through the Scorpion lands, authorize the use of the pass, and loan you horses.”

“You must reach Shinden Horiuchi and stop this man. It is what Otomo Katsuo-sama would have wanted. It is what your duty to him demands. Carry the fortunes.”

**If a PC has Bayushi Tenno as a Sworn Enemy** (He glares at the specified PC or PCs):

Bayushi Tenno fixes you with a glare, “I do not need to explain the stakes to you, samurai-san. Do not fail. If you do, there will be consequences. You have disappointed me once already, see that it does not occur again.”

#### **Travel Papers:**

If any PC has ranks in Lore: Law they will realize that entering Unicorn lands without travel papers is technically illegal.

If a PC asks Tenno about travel papers:

Bayushi Tenno sighs. “I can not write you travel papers into the Unicorn lands. I can permit you to reach them, but I can’t authorize your entry. I will send a letter to Unicorn authorities explaining the situation and I promise that the Clan of Secrets will clean up any issues that arise. We don’t have time to wait for formal approval.”

If the PCs have Otomo Katsuo’s chop and decide to forge travel papers, Tenno will pointedly not notice.

## **Part Four: The Mountains**

With the aid of horses from the stables of the governor of Beiden travel through the Scorpion lands to Shiro no Soshi is quick and easy. The roads grow steadily emptier as you reach the northernmost regions of the lands of the Clan of Secrets. Turning from the road, you begin your trek up a narrow trail into the Spine of the World mountains. Even in the summer, the air begins to grow chill, and you can see white caps on a few of the peaks in the distance.

The road through the mountain is narrow and the temperature plunges as you ascend the peaks. There are no signs of other travelers or any inns. Only the occasional waystone marks the confines of the trail.

On the second day in the mountains the road circles round a bend, bringing Seiketsu Pass into view. Seiketsu, far below you, is larger and much more well-travelled. Merchant caravans and samurai proceed along easily, but slowly, and are checked by guards as they do.

At this point, all PCs should roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception**. Any that make a 25 will notice a small group of men in brown clothing wearing no mons in the pass below watching the people moving through. A single, well disguised, gaijin is amongst them.

### **The Rocks**

On the third day you are met with an unfortunate sight. The road is covered with loose rocks, ranging in size from as big as your head to boulders the size of a horse; a rockslide has cut off the trail.

The path in this part of the mountains runs very close to a cliff face. Even were it not covered by rocks it would only permit travel single file, and at any moment a wrong step could send you and your horse hurtling into the abyss. The chill air whistles through a ravine far below. The cliff goes up on the other side of the road, full of protruding rocks and crevasses.

There are a number of ways forward: The easy answer to moving the rocks is, of course, magic. The PCs could conceivably climb along the cliff face itself, which has a higher chance of falling, but at least they’d be bypassing the unstable footing. Finally, they could try to pick their way through the rocks.

The trail here is very bare, but there were trees in the area just passed, and there are plenty of stable protrusions to tie ropes to. Clever solutions should be rewarded with 1-2 free raises.

#### **Magic:**

A Commune (Earth or Air) spell with 3 raises for Clarity will locate a relatively safe path through the rock slide, reducing the TNs for riding through by 15 and the TN for walking by 10.

A Summon (Earth) spell with 3 raises will allow the construction of a massive ramp that can circumvent the hazard entirely, otherwise they will be required to traverse the hazard as below. However, successfully casting such a spell will be exceedingly taxing, and require the dedication of a total of 3 Earth or Void spell



slots. Any spell slots used to circumvent the hazard will not be regained during the module, due to the angry kami in the area.

### **Climbing:**

There are enough hand holds and protruding rocks that it is conceivable the PCs could climb along the side of the cliff face. Obviously, falling in this situation is dangerous, but not as dangerous as falling into the chasm would be.

Particularly clever uses of ropes could significantly reduce the danger of falling.

To climb across the cliff face is **Athletics (Climbing) / Strength** at TN 30. Failure results in a fall onto the path, causing 2k2 wounds. At that point they can either climb back up onto the cliff face and try again, with a bonus to their roll equal to their previous roll or continue on foot (see Going Through).

### **Going through:**

The most direct method is going through the uneven ground caused by the rockslide.

First, picking your way through the rocks will require a **Hunting (Trail Blazing) / Perception** roll at TN 20. Success reduces the TN to ride or walk through by 5. If any PC makes a 30, they will find a safer route through the rocks, reducing the TN for riding through by 15 and the TN for walking through by 10 (not cumulative with the prior reduction).

Once the PCs have found a trail or forced to travel across directly, they can carefully traverse it either on horseback or on foot. Riding through requires a **Horsemanship / Agility** roll at TN 35, failure causes a fall as the horse misses a step and pitches their rider (the horse survives regardless). Walking through requires an **Athletics / Reflexes** roll at TN 30, failure causes a fall.

If a PC falls, another PC can attempt to grab them with a **Raw Reflexes** roll at TN 17 before they go over the cliff. If the grabbing PC fails, both fall (and another PC can attempt to grab either, with the same consequences for failure). Alternatively, they can attempt to arrest their own fall before they plummet over the cliff edge by making a **Raw Reflexes** roll at TN 20 (Only one can be chosen, either being saved by another or trying to save themselves, though a PC that is pulled over by another may still elect to try to save themselves).

If a PC falls over the cliff, they land at the bottom in a heap, mangled and injured but alive. They will suffer a Permanent Wound for the duration of the module, and perhaps some lasting effects of broken bones until powerful magic can be applied.

## **The River**

After navigating the rocks, the path begins to slope down and widen. The air warms ever so slightly and a breeze begins to blow through the trees, though the temperature is still well below what you'd expect for this time of year.

An hour of travel later, you suddenly hear flowing water. As you round a bend, a coursing mountain stream comes into view. The water churns as it moves around square stones placed at regular intervals in the river.

The remains of a wooden bridge are easily discernable on the far side of the river, perhaps 40 feet from where you stand, and the ragged edge of the bridge just barely touches the water's edge on your side.

Placing a hand in the river confirms that the water is both swift and freezing cold. Crossing would be possible, but no doubt dangerous.

The easiest answer to this problem is, of course, magic. Any magic that enables flight could easily carry the samurai over the pass. Alternatively, a Summon (Earth) spell with three raises could reconstruct the dilapidated bridge well enough to allow travel. However, casting such a spell would be exceedingly taxing, and requires the use of two Earth or Void spell slots. As before, any spell slots used to circumvent the hazard will not be recovered during the module, due to the anger of the local kami.

An appropriately clever application of Engineering might also succeed, constructing a makeshift bridge from trees or other available materials could be done with a TN 20 **Engineering / Intelligence** roll. If a PC comes up with a similarly clever way to bypass the hazard, an appropriate skill roll at the same TN should also succeed. There are plenty of materials at hand, and PCs should be encouraged to make use of their surroundings (pushing boulders into the river, swinging across on ropes, etc).

Lastly, the samurai could simply swim across the river. The water is ice cold and fast moving. Swimming across will require an **Athletics (Swimming) / Strength** roll at TN 20. Anyone with Phobia: Water (Phobia: The Ocean will also apply, because let's face it drowning is scary even if it's mountain drowning) will be penalized for this roll.

If one PC makes it across and thinks to use a rope to assist their comrades, they can award a free raise to the swimming rolls of anyone that comes after.

Anyone that fails will be swept slightly downriver and slammed into rocks, causing 3k3 damage. They will also take a -5 penalty on their hypothermia roll.

Any horses will be able to swim across on their own without a roll but attempting to swim the river while on horseback is impossible.

Once all the swimming PCs have emerged from the river, the lingering effects of near freezing water in the chill air of the mountains must be dealt with. All swimming PCs must roll Raw Stamina at TN 15, or spend the rest of the mod afflicted with a severe cold and cough. Their initiative rolls will be penalized by 5 and their social rolls by 5.

Any PC with warm blankets or other defenses against the cold gets a freeze raise on this roll. The illness is stubborn and not easily treatable by magic.

Superstitious or particularly pious PCs such as monks and shugenja may find the presence of two sequential disasters to be a little too coincidental. A **Lore: Omens / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 (or Lore: Theology at TN 25) might suggest these are manifestations of the element's displeasure.

If a PC thinks to do so, commune will not be helpful at determining why the elements are displeased but will confirm that they are angry and agitated about something.

## The Ferry

Regaining the path, the road winds through the mountains for another day before abruptly stopping. The road ends at a small plateau before dropping off a sheer cliff face.

A pair of ropes has been secured around a wheel and then run across the chasm to another wheel on the other side. A large basket with a floor of solid planks hangs from the ropes a few inches off the ground.

The ropes flex and sway as the wind whips loudly through the narrow canyon. The ropes seem sturdy enough, but the basket's stability is in question. Unfortunately, there doesn't seem to be any other way forwards.

The basket can accommodate 3 PCs at a time, or 1 PC and a horse.

PCs with a rope might think to use it to stabilize the basket. Doing so grants a free raise to everyone traveling in the basket **after the group with the rope crosses**.

Any magical attempts to fly across the canyon will require two raises on the spellcasting roll, as the air kami are disturbed and angry. A commune with 3

raises and requiring two spell slots will appease the air kami, making the trip in the basket easy and require no rolls. However, calling upon the air kami in this canyon is exceptionally taxing and any successful spellcasting to appease or avoid the hazard (simply assessing the problem does not count) will not be recovered during the module.

Crossing the chasm in the basket looks far more dangerous than it is. For all their rage, the air spirits have no desire to kill anyone. However, in their spite they would find it funny to steal something the samurai value.

All PCs travelling in the basket must roll **Raw Reflexes** at TN 10. Failure indicates they accidentally drop something valuable, but not critical, down into the gorge to be lost forever. Primary weapons like katana should not be dropped, though a wakizashi (but not for a Mirumoto bushi) or prized fan might be.

They must also roll **Raw Stamina** at TN 10. Failure indicates the strong rocking motion has made the PC visibly sick, costing them one point of glory.

Animals have no trouble traveling in the basket.

If the PCs attempted to divine the omens previously and failed or did not think to do so previously, they can attempt to do so here. The TN is reduced to 10 (15 for Lore: Theology).

After crossing the chasm, the remaining trip out of the mountains is swift and easy. The pass begins to descend sharply, crisscrossing the mountain face in a series of switchbacks. The road takes a sharp turn around the mountain, then leads into a small heavily wooded area of trees, thick enough to block out the sun. A waystone marks the end of the hidden trail as you take the final step from stone path onto the floor of the tiny forest. No guards stand to welcome you to Unicorn lands or check your papers. However, the smell of something burning wafts towards you on the breeze.

You soon emerge from the trees and the vast fertile plains of the Unicorn stretch into the distance before you. A few miles away in the direction of your destination, behind a low hill, thick black smoke rises into the sky.

Give the PCs a moment to collect themselves, if necessary. If they choose to put on armor here there is no honor penalty for doing so, though not all samurai may wish to don battlefield gear before knowing more. It may be wise to remind them that they are in Unicorn lands without official travel papers.

## Part Five: The Orphanage

As you reach the top of the low hill, Shinden Horiuchi rises from the plains below you. The temple and its outbuildings smolder, belching black smoke into the sky. The gates stand open wide and unguarded, revealing the central courtyard to be suspiciously devoid of people. Embers crackle and there is a distant sound of battle, or simply someone crying for help.

All the outbuildings have been burnt to the ground and ahead of you is the main entrance to Shinden Horiuchi. A body lies sprawled just inside the entryway.

Within the courtyard are several horses, one saddled in the standard unicorn style and the others with strange foreign tack.

It is up to the PCs how to proceed here. It should be obvious that someone is still here, since their horses are still present. Again, if the PCs wish to spend a few moments here donning armor before entering, they can. There is no-one around to stop them or take insult.

There are horses equal to the number of combat capable PCs plus one. The outbuildings have very recently burnt down, the remains are still warm but there doesn't appear to be any danger of the fire spreading to the main temple.

These fires were clearly set deliberately and with great care to not spread to the main building. The damage has been done in the past few hours.

If the PCs wish to consult the spirits, they are angry about something, and all commune spells require an additional raise to get information.

The spirits know that a man of strong water with a Great Wrongness came along with Outside Ones and began killing the samurai. They unleashed the fire-cousins on the buildings (set fires) then went inside. The kami are angry about the Wrongness and want them to leave.

### Shinden Horiuchi

Stepping carefully over the body of a dead Horiuchi bushi, you enter the yawning gates of Shinden Horiuchi. The torches have all been extinguished, throwing the entry hall into a dark gloom. It takes a moment for your eyes to adjust to the sudden dark after the bright afternoon sunlight. The moment you step over the threshold the acrid smell of iron assaults your nose.

There is not a soul alive in the entryway, just bodies. The corpses of Unicorn bushi lie on the floor in front of you, most dead without having had time to draw weapons.

Pushing past the entry way, holding your nose as best you are able, the inner doors lead you into a large hall.

Instead of a welcome temple lit by soft torchlight, walls covered in tasteful artwork and shrines, a scene greets you out of a nightmare. The torches have been cast down from their sconces, the shrines ripped from their plinths, and bodies sit sprawled over the pedestals where depictions of the fortunes and the ancestors once stood.

A few of the dead are bushi, crowded around the door, but most are children. They have been dragged onto the stone altars to the fortunes and their ancestors then had their throats cut, left to bleed onto the once holy spaces.

One bushi stands out, wearing bright purple armor, her katana lying unsheathed on the floor, barely beyond her fingertips. The blade reflects a bright blue in the torchlight.

Any PC with the Soft-Hearted disadvantage is wracked by guilt and grief at the sight of a charnel house of dead children. They suffer a +10 TN penalty for all rolls for the remainder of the module. This is in addition to and stacks with the normal penalty for Soft-Hearted, if that penalty happens to trigger.

#### Searching the bodies:

- There are about 20 dead children. There are 3 dead bushi. The bushi were all killed with large slashing weapons; likely a scimitar or no-dachi. The children were killed with knives.
- About half of the children do not have any mons; these are likely members of the Horiuchi Orphanage. All these children are dead upon shrines to the fortunes. Only children with mons were killed on shrines to the ancestors.
- One of the bushi, dead in front of the door, has a very stylized katana, made of shimmering blue steel. It is immediately identifiable this weapon as the Daisho of Water.

If a PC has any ranks in hunting, or possesses the Notice emphasis (or rolls a TN 20 **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** check):

- There are scuff marks on the floor leading to this room from other parts of the temple. The children were clearly dragged here from other parts of the temple or the grounds, then had their throats slit. Someone was very methodical about their deaths.

### Examining the shrines:

- These shrines are dedicated predominantly to the famous ancestors of the Unicorn clan; Shinjo, Moto, Iuchi, Otaku, and Ide are all present, as are the great heroes of the clan, such as Shinjo Shono, Utako Kumiko, and the founder of the Horiuchi, Horiuchi Shoan.
- The shrines have all been desecrated, the idols knocked off their altars and smashed onto the floor.
- The only shrine still standing is the one to Shinjo-kami.
- Four dead monks bound with rope are lying around the shrine to Shinjo.
- The monks were badly beaten, with extensive bruising, and had their throats cut with a knife.

## The Great Hall

Leaving the hall of ancestors behind, you move on to a massive set of closed wooden doors. However, they are not barred and swing open easily.

Before you is the court chamber of Shiden Horiuchi, brightly lit by ceremonial lanterns in white, red, and purple. It is not as large as a normal court chamber, which is to be expected given the small size of the Horiuchi family, most of whose corpses seem to line its edges.

A handful of gaijin wearing brown and grey wrappings stand atop the dais on the far end of the room, their arms crossed in front of their chests, quietly murmuring in a foreign tongue. Some clutch scimitars, but two are conspicuously unarmed.

In the middle of the platform is a thin bald man with his back turned towards you, wearing a deep purple kimono bearing the mon of the Iuchi family. His sleeves are rolled up and tied back. In one hand he holds a knife and his bare arms are encircled by green jade bands. His right-hand rises, holding the knife, then slashes downwards, cutting the throat of an old woman.

Her body tumbles to rest between a pair of young samurai, a boy and a girl.

The old man turns. His eyes glow a bright blue and his voice is deep, “Well, well. You’re a few minutes early.” He sighs and gives a dismissive gesture towards the gaijin, “Just a little more time. Delay them, please.”

The old man sits, the dagger on his lap, and a bubble of shimmering water springs up around him. The gaijin lunge forwards. Whips of crackling fire spring from the hands of the two unarmed gaijin, lashing the stone floor.

A Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence check at TN 15 will identify the dead woman as Horiuchi Mikiko, former regent of the Horiuchi, and the dead young samurai on the altar as Horiuchi Xue, the daimyo of the Horiuchi, and Horiuchi Haru, her twin brother.

If a PC rolls a 30, they will also identify the old man, no longer disguised, as Iuchi Jinsoku, older brother to the Jade Champion.

The gaijin move to attack.

The gaijin will fight aggressively, but Jinsoku will take no part in the fight. His water bubble makes him completely immune to attack and it cannot be dispelled while the gaijin live, but he needs time to finish his ritual.

If a PC has Wrath of the Kami the gaijin sorcerers will target them with direct damage spells corresponding to their disadvantage. Otherwise, they will attack with their fire whips. If a PC extinguishes their whip, they will either re-summon it if the gaijin are winning or target that PC with direct damage spells (Strike of the Tsunami, Fires from Within) if the gaijin are losing. The sorcerers will use their technique every round if they have an available void point.

**There are Gaijin Assassins equal to the number of Combat Capable PCs minus two, plus two Sorcerers. None of them are Tainted. All fight to the death.**

If the PCs labor under the misapprehension that Iuchi Jinsoku or the gaijin are tainted, allow them a Lore: Shadowlands / Intelligence roll to spot the jade armbands they are all wearing which make direct contact with their skin. Wearing such armbands would be excruciating if they possessed the Shadowlands Taint.

**Note:** If the PCs are all rank 2, the gaijin have used all their void and have their first wound rank filled.

If the PCs are all or mostly rank 4, the gaijin have taken a powerful stimulant and pain suppressant, rendering them immune to wound penalties, including Down and Out. They can fight at full effectiveness until they are dead.

If a PC decides to wield the Daisho of Water, it is a 3k3 katana that allows the user to take Move actions as though their water was 5.

## Gaijin Assassins

**School/Rank:** Temple Guard 3

**Initiative:** 7k3

**Armor TN:** 20

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 45 (+17), 57 (+17), dies at 58.

**Attack:** 9k4 (Scimitar, Simple)

**Damage:** 6k3 (Scimitar)

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 2  
Agility 4

Honor: 3.5    Status: 0    Glory: 1

**Skills:** Swords 5, Knives 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 1, Stealth 5, Horsemanship 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

**Techniques:**

*Trained for War* – Reduce wound penalties by 3. 2k1 when voiding on school skills.

*Strike with Fury* – 1k0 to Initiative. 1k0 to Attack while in **Full Attack**.

*Implacable Foe* – Simple attacks with Scimitars.

## Gaijin Sorcerers

**School/Rank:** Scions of the Djinn 3

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Armor TN:** 20

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+2), 33 (+7), 39 (+12), 45 (+17), 57 (+17), dies at 58.

**Attack:** 10k4 (Whip, Simple)

**Damage:** 3k3 (Whip)

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 3  
Agility 4

Honor: 3.5    Status: 0    Glory: 1

**Skills:** Knives 5, Commerce 3, Etiquette 2, Lore: Law 1, Stealth 3, Horsemanship 3, Spellcraft 5, Lore: Theology 5

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Disadvantage (Gaijin)

**Techniques:**

*Speed of Flame* – Can make simple action attacks at rank 3 with conjured weapons. Once per round may spend a void point to cast a spell of rank 3 or lower as a Free Action (no raises required for casting speed). Affinity for Fire. Can't cast spells above rank 3.

**Spells:**

**Earth Becomes Sky (Earth 2)** – 3k3 damage. (Raise for +1k0).

**Tempest of Air (Air 1)** – 1k1 damage and contested Earth vs Air roll to avoid knockdown in 75 x 15 foot cone. (Raise for +5 bonus on the air roll).

**Strike of the Tsunami (Water 3)** – 3k3 damage and Earth vs TN 15 to avoid knockdown in 25 x 15 foot cone. (Raise for +1k0 damage or +5 to Earth TN).

**Path to Inner Peace (Water 1)** – Heal equal to amount the cast roll exceeds the TN.

**Fires of Purity (Fire 2)** – Anyone attacking or attacked by the target in melee takes 2k2.

**Fires from Within (Fire 2)** – 3k3 damage to one target. (+1 target per 2 raises).

**Tail of the Fire Dragon (Fire 2)** – Summons a whip of fire (see above).

The gaijin sorcerers do not require scrolls to cast their spells.

As the last gaijin falls the bubble of water collapses. The Iuchi stands up, holding the dagger reverently in his hands. He smiles, but his face betrays sadness. “Ah, well then. So, Fate has brought you here, a touch earlier than expected. I suppose my part of things is complete. When the time comes, I hope I can trust you do to what must be done?”

Iuchi Jinsoku is insane but believes he has glimpsed a variety of possible futures.

When answering the PCs' questions, he has uncannily accurate information about the PCs' history and he believes he is working to stop a grave threat to the empire. He is extremely vague about what that threat is other than that something threatens to consume the empire. He know he has committed terrible actions, but sincerely believes they are required to save the Empire and so feels completely morally vindicating in having done so. He feels no remorse.

If the PCs decide to attack, go immediately to **Part Six: Oops**. Otherwise, Jinsoku will answer a few questions. **If the PCs seem to have finished speaking with him, or you feel the conversation is running out of steam, move on to the next part.** If a PC specifically wishes to kill Jinsoku, allow them to do so and modify the following box text as appropriate. He offers no resistance.

Some answers / responses Jinsoku might provide:

Who are you?

I was Iuchi Jinsoku... wait, I'm not dead yet, not quite, so I guess I still am Iuchi Jinsoku.

Why did you do this?

Because it was necessary to save the Empire. The Emperor. Any other course, and all die.

Save the Empire from what?  
The Darkness. It's coming.

You killed the entire Horiuchi family!  
Yes, but do not fret. They always die, in every future. They got an extra few hundred years in this one.

What is that knife?  
A gaijin relic... a power to stop the darkness. To change the course of the future. But it requires an exchange. But any price to safeguard the empire is a price paid gladly.

What are we supposed to do? / What is your part in things?  
You are the hands that will wield the knife, mine were the hands that prepared it. Or maybe not yours... the waters were unclear... but yours are the hands that carry it next, that is certain, yes, that much is clear.

What do you mean? / You can see the future?  
I've seen bits and pieces of the future. Things the water has shown me. I know what I must do, what I've done, it's necessary. But my part is complete... your part is next. (After answering this question move on to **Part Six: Oops**)

## Part Six: Oops

If a PC kills Iuchi Jinsoku, omit the paragraph of box text where he falls onto his knife.

The old man smiles, his face serene. He steps forward from the platform, moving to the samurai in an eyeblink. A door behind you slams open. The Iuchi holds the knife in front of himself, the hilt pressed against one of you, and falls forward onto the blade.

The blue glow in his eyes fades as he crumples to the floor, leaving only blind milky white orbs.

For a moment, silence falls over Shiden Horiuchi, then a gasp from behind you.

"Who... what..." Behind you, standing in the entry way, is a bushi in the purple of the Unicorn. He bears the mon of the Ide on his kimono, and a dark purple magistrate's sash.

He stops for a moment, taking in the scene. His cheeks begin to turn green and he wavers slightly. Then his eyes fall upon the man at your feet. "That's... Iuchi

Jinsoku-sama! You murdered him! You're responsible for this!"

He lifts a hand accusingly, and his face hardens, "In the name of the Unicorn clan, I, Ide Kazuyuki, place you under arrest for the crimes of murder and blasphemy! Guards! The Scorpion warned us someone was going to attack the temple, and now you will face justice for what you've done!"

He waits for a moment before realizing that none of the Horiuchi are coming. His hand twitches towards his sword, then stills as his voice stammers, "You are bound by law to come with me to Shiro Moto to face justice."

The PCs have three general options here. They can either attack Ide Kazuyuki, who should be reasonably easy to overpower, they can flee, or they can go with him to Shiro Moto.

If any PC thinks to do so, a Lore: Law / Intelligence roll at TN 10 will remind them of two things: First, they are most likely in Unicorn lands without valid travel papers, which is itself illegal.

Second, this is explicitly an interclan affair, ergo Ide Kazuyuki has no authority to pass judgement upon them. Only an Emerald Magistrate may do so. However, Kazuyuki is entirely within his rights to arrest them and force them to present themselves before such a magistrate. Because he is only a clan magistrate his testimony will hold weight but will not be enough to condemn the PCs.

If asked why he is here, or about the scorpion warning, he will answer that this morning a letter arrive from the Scorpion warning of an impending attack on Shiden Horiuchi as criminals meant to steal the Daisho of Water. If the PCs recovered it from the corpse earlier, he will point out that they carry it, so are clearly the criminals the Scorpion warned him about.

If the PCs try to explain themselves, he will reiterate that they are clearly criminals, and honor and the law demand that they come with him to Shiro Moto. If they are carrying the Daisho of Water, he will add that the Scorpion warned him criminals were meaning to steal it, and he clearly caught them in the act.

Once at Shiro Moto they will have to face an Emerald Magistrate, as Kazuyuki is not authorized to pass judgement on crimes of this nature.

If the PCs wish to stay here and attempt to sanctify the scene or otherwise spiritually purify the area, Ide Kazuyuki will scold them that this is not their place or responsibility and the job is much too large for them.

If they insist on staying he grudgingly allow them to do so if they stay where he can see them, since he can't really do anything about the matter. By nightfall a much larger group of Unicorn will arrive with priests in tow to take over the effort. Kazuyuki will then insist them come with him and allow the monks and Luchi to finish the purifications. If the PCs seem uncooperative at this point, a large squadron of Unicorn guards will compel their cooperation.

If a PC attempts to challenge Kazuyuki to a duel, he will smirk, and reply that they will get their duel... once the Emerald Magistrate finds them guilty.

Moreover, Kazuyuki knows he's entirely within his rights to disregard any challenges until after the trial, as any ranks in Lore: Law will tell the PCs.

If they decide to attack Kazuyuki, his stats are in Appendix #2. Once they kill him, proceed to **Conclusion – Flee Justice**

If they decide to make a run for it, anyone that attempts to do so will automatically escape. Ide Kazuyuki will not pursue anyone that runs. Any PC that chooses not to run will be taken to Shiro Moto by Ide Kazuyuki (and move on to Part Seven).

Proceed to **Part Six and a Half - Escape?** for everyone that decided to run for it.

If they agree to return to Shiro Moto with him, he will march them out of the castle, mount his horse, and demand they mount theirs and ride in front of him to Shiro Moto. If any PC tries to make conversation, he will snap "Be silent criminal!" and refuse to answer or acknowledge them further.

It takes approximately a day of hard riding to reach Shiro Moto.

Proceed to **Part Seven – A day in Court.**

## Part Six and a half: Escape?

You leap onto your horses and gallop away from Shinden Horiuchi. The shrine smolders as you reach the small forest which hides the trail into Scorpion lands. Travel through the high pass is easy and swift. Waiting for you at Shiro no Soshi is a massive group of Scorpion bushi. Their leader, a tall man in gleaming black armor, steps forward.

"Samurai-sans, I am Bayushi Shiromori. I have received news of the events at Shinden Horiuchi.

Apparently, a group of criminals responsible for burning the shrine decided to flee justice and were last seen coming this way.

Obviously, that would not be you. I would appreciate if you would come with us to clear up this matter."

The Bayushi's meaning is obvious and there can be no escape from the massed Scorpion. Running would be suicide.

The commander leads the samurai under heavy guard to Shiro Moto. Ide Kazuyuki waits at the gates with a smirk. For a moment, Shiromori's On falters and his face turns to a look of utter contempt towards the Unicorn.

Shiromori nods briefly and quietly says, "Good luck, samurai-sans. Carry the Fortunes" before turning and marching his troops back towards Shiro no Soshi.

The march to Shiro Moto takes 8 days and the PCs are always under heavy guard. Running or escape is effectively impossible; the Scorpion have several skilled archers and shugenja. Any attempt to flee is met with instant and overwhelming violence.

Engaging the Scorpion in conversation is difficult, but Shiromori will allow that he has been briefed on the PCs' mission via a letter from Bayushi Tenno. He must turn them over to the Unicorn, but firmly believes they will have the ability to prove their innocence.

If pressed on the matter, he will note that Ide Kazuyuki has something of a bad reputation for erroneous arrests and the Khan is a reasonable man.

Proceed to **Part Seven: A day in Court.** The trial will have been delayed to account for the fleeing PCs, and they will only have that evening to speak with the NPCs, rather than evening and morning. Also, all TNs to convince NPCs, other than Bayushi Akinishin, will increase by 5. Edit the box text as appropriate.

If only part of the table fled, the non-fleeing PCs will have been marched to Shiro Moto and then held under guard until the Scorpion could deliver the remainder.

## Part Seven: A Day in Court

It is early evening as you make your way into the city surrounding Shiro Moto.

Shiro Moto is an imposing fortress, a mix of gaijin and Rokugani architecture. Kazuyuki leads you inside, walking with head held high through the main corridors into the central court chamber.

A giant of a man sits upon a low dais, wearing an exceedingly traditional kimono in bright purple. He

gazes intently at each of you as you enter. Just in front of the dais stand a woman in the colors of the Crane, a man in the red and black of the Scorpion, a young man in the colors of the Moto wearing a blue Kakita mon on his shoulder, a man in the green of the Dragon, and lastly a very old monk in plain brown robes.

Ide Kazuyuki bows low, going to his knees before the man sitting on the dais. “My khan” Kazuyuki begins, only to be cut off by a sharp gesture from the man on the throne.

“Ide-san, my guards have already brought me your report. Go and fetch the Emerald Magistrate, Shinjo Hideki-san. He has authority over interclan affairs.”

Kazuyuki sputters for a moment before regaining his composure, “Yes... yes my lord. He is travelling, but should be able to... I will have him here by tomorrow. Thank you, my lord.” Kazuyuki swiftly rises, turns, and leaves the hall.

The Khan, Moto Sartaq, leans forward upon his throne, glaring down at you, “Ide-san says that you murdered Iuchi Jinsoku, brother to the Jade Champion, shugenja to my court. He says that you orchestrated the arson of Shinden Horiuchi and slaughtered almost everyone inside it.”

The Khan holds up a hand, stilling any thought of a rebuttal. “Kazuyuki has been wrong in the past. But that does not mean he is wrong this time. You will remain here until the Emerald Magistrate hears your testimony and passes judgement.”

The Khan pauses and looks to the other members of the court, as if waiting for them to interject. “Any that wish to speak on your behalf at that time may do so.”

The Khan sighs lightly and stands up from his throne, turns and leaves the room.

The PCs have the rest of the evening and tomorrow morning to speak with any of the NPCs present. It is in their best interest to convince anyone they can to testify on their behalf before the Emerald Magistrate.

Give the Players **Handout 4**. It has the freely available descriptions and gossip about the people present at the court.

The NPCs are described in further detail in Appendix 2.

The PCs have until tomorrow afternoon to talk to the NPCs. This gives them enough time to visit up to two NPCs each, one tonight and one tomorrow morning. **If any PC ran in Part Six, then the PCs only have the morning and each PC can only visit one NPC.**

NPCs by default will offer no testimony.

Make a note of any NPC that agrees to support the PCs during the Trial, they will testify in support of the PCs. Also make note of any NPC they specifically offend, using your judgement, those NPCs will testify against the PCs.

An NPC that has an ally at the table has all TN’s to acquire support reduced by 10.

**An NPC that has a Sworn Enemy (or a Cast Out PC for Katsurou) at the table will never agree to support the PCs and will always testify against them.**

There are some rumors available in the court of the Khan, if anyone wishes to gather them.

### Rumors

The following information is available with a Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness roll.

- 10: The Khan is exceptionally proud of his son’s recent success. Noritoshi apparently won a death duel last winter!
- 15: Some say that Doji Hanako was doing secret business with ex-Mantis ronin in the Ivory Kingdoms last year. **(GM’s note: This is not true)**
- 20: I heard Doji Hanako paid off some ronin in Dark Edge Village last fall. **(GM’s note: This is not true)**
- 25: Bayushi Akinishin is a very well-connected individual. He seems to know a little something about everyone and always enjoys helping others, even with the smallest problems.
- 30: I heard a Dragon magistrate was looking into the death of the Ide daimyo’s grandfather. They say he has found a new lead.
- 40: I heard Katsurou used to be someone important before he retired. Not sure who though.



## Part Eight: The Trial

The peel of a bell rolls through Shiro Moto as Lord Sun reaches his zenith above the lands.

A few courtiers pass you in the hallways as you enter the court of the Khan, looking at you with a combination of distrust and disgust.

The court of the Khan is virtually barren, the large chamber as silent as a tomb.

Before you stand a handful of courtiers, the Khan glaring down from his throne, and a portly man with a long drooping mustache wearing the colors of the Unicorn and a bright emerald sash. The portly man leans heavily upon a cane as he glares at you.

The emerald magistrate clears his throat and a pair of guards swing the door to the court chamber closed.

“I am Shinjo Hideki, Emerald Magistrate. You have been brought here on charges of Murder, Arson, and Blasphemy. I will now hear testimony from those who care to offer it.”

Hideki pauses to survey the assembled samurai, “Ide Kazuyuki claims to have seen you murder Iuchi Jinsoku, brother to Iuchi Katachai, the Jade Champion, and places you at the scene of the arson and the blasphemous acts.”

“What testimony do you have to give? What do you have to say for yourselves before I pronounce judgement?”

This is an opportunity for the PCs to describe their side of the story and to make arguments to persuade the magistrate that they are not guilty of the crimes which have been laid at their feet.

Once all the PCs that wish to speak have done so, have the PCs select one samurai as the ‘lead’ speaker. This should probably be whichever PC gave the most compelling testimony.

All except the ‘lead’ speaker that wish to give supporting arguments can roll Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness at TN 30 or Sincerity (Honesty or Deceit) / Awareness at TN 25. Each success grants the lead speaker a free raise.

The lead speaker must then roll Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness or Sincerity (Honesty or Deceit) / Awareness. Inform them that Courtier will be more difficult.

The base TN for this roll is 35 plus 5 per player at the table. However, that TN is adjusted as follows based on which NPCs supported or opposed the PCs:

NPC supports the PCs - Reduce the TN by:

Doji Hanako: 5 (8 if allied or owed an Obligation)

Katsurou: 3 (5 if a PC confronted him with his old identity)

Bayushi Akinishin: 4 (10 if allied or owed an Obligation)

Moto Noritoshi: 3

Kitsuki Oda: 2

NPC argues against the PCs - Increase the TN by:

Doji Hanako: 5 (10 if Sworn Enemy)

Katsurou: 2 (10 if Cast Out)

Bayushi Akinishin: 5

Moto Noritoshi: 3 (8 if Sworn Enemy)

Kitsuki Oda: 2

### The PCs pass the roll:

Shinjo Hideki strokes his long drooping mustache.

“There has been quite a lot of testimony today, much of it contradictory. But, based on the words I have heard today and the sincerity with which you speak them... I believe Ide Kazuyuki was wrong. You were, as you said, there to stop the actual criminal, Iuchi Jinsoku.”

Ide Kazuyuki leaps to his feet and attempts to say something in his defense but can only stammer and stutter before an imperious glare from the Khan cuts him off. Kazuyuki turns sharply on his heel and exits the court chamber in a huff.

Proceed to the **Conclusion – prove their innocence.**

### The PCs fail the roll:

Shinjo Hideki strokes his long drooping mustache.

“There has been quite a lot of testimony today, much of it contradictory. But, based on the words I have heard today... I believe Ide Kazuyuki is correct. However, the evidence is in doubt, so the accused have the right to prove their words with steel.”

Ide Kazuyuki stands and smirks, eyeing you with the look of a vulture about to swoop upon its prey.

Ide Kazuyuki bows to the Khan, “My khan, I will prove the truth of my accusations. These criminals \*will\* answer for their murder of Iuchi-sama and the atrocities they committed at Shinden Horiuchi.”

The court moves outside to a well maintained and prepared dueling ring. The air is warm and the sky cloudless. The khan settles himself into the high seat, his face an iron mask, while Ide Kazuyuki steps into the dueling ring. The Ide rests his palm on the handle of his katana and waits for one of you to step forwards.

Any PC from the group may face Ide Kazuyuki's challenge. This is a duel to the death.

Ide Kazuyuki's dueling stats are in Appendix 1.

#### **If a PC wins the duel:**

You stand victorious in the dueling ring. The Ide's corpse lies on the fresh sand before you. Shinjo Hideki turns to the Khan, "My Khan, the heavens have shown us whose testimony was correct. These samurai are innocent of the charges leveled against them."

The khan sits silent a moment, then nods.

Proceed to the **Conclusion – prove their innocence**.

#### **If a PC is about to lose the duel:**

Use your discretion as a GM to allow the duel to proceed as far as possible until it is obvious the PC is about to lose, but do not allow a PC to die.

Proceed to the **Conclusion – Duel Interrupted** and begin its box text. Do not allow the duel to complete with the death of the PC (the box text interrupts the pending action).

## **Conclusion**

#### **PCs prove their innocence:**

The Khan rises to his feet and steps down from his chair. He reaches out his hand and the magistrate places the strange dagger within it. The khan regards the dagger for a long moment, then with a look of disgust on his face hands it to one of the guards.

"Samurai-sans, you have done a great service to the Unicorn. You have exposed a traitor, stopped him before he could bring even greater harm to our clan, and recovered a vile artifact. Though my heart is heavy from the grave loss we have suffered, I must express my thanks to you for your deeds on our behalf.

I will grant you horses from my personal stables. May they bear you home swiftly and safely. I apologize that

I cannot extend the hospitality of my court to you any further, but ... I have to prepare for a great many funerals."

With a sigh, the Khan returns to his throne and dismisses you from the court.

All PCs receive the **Unicorn Horse From the Khan's Herd** cert.

#### **Duel interrupted:**

Just as the killing blow seems inevitable the doors to the castle slam open, throwing one of the guards aside.

A massive voice bellows out, "Wait."

All turn to face the newcomer, who strides into the ring completely unperturbed that he has interrupted the sanctity of a duel. The man stands even taller than Khan, fur cloak upon his shoulders, leather armor dyed a deep purple, and shoulders bearing the mon of the Moto.

"I am Moto Ogedei, daimyo of Enkaku, and I have testimony to offer. Last summer, I saw Iuchi Jinsoku commit blasphemy and murder a man, though I did not know at the time it was him. These samurai are innocent of the crime of which they are accused. Iuchi Jinsoku is the criminal."

Shinjo Hideki looks startled for a bare moment, then recovers his face. "Ah, well, thank you, Ogedei-sama. Your testimony in this matter is... compelling. Given your station and witness to the crimes, I have no choice but to pronounce these samurai innocent."

Moto Ogedei smiles slightly, and nods to you. From his throne, Moto Sartaq, Khan of the Moto, surges to his feet. "You come into my court, disturb the proceedings of a magistrate, interrupt a duel, and think blindly that you are welcome, Ogedei-san? I have had enough of your impudence. My father may have favored you for your skill as a general, but that does not mean I need to. You are banished from this court and this castle. Return to your lands. Do not show your face here again."

Ogedei's face hardens as the guards surround him to 'escort' him, and yourselves, out of the castle.

Moto Sartaq has banished the PCs from the lands of the Moto.

Any Moto family PC is now Ronin. Their status is reduced to 0. Moto Ogedei offers any such PCs

employ in his household as daimyo of Enkaku province. If they accept, they may ignore ronin survival rolls and gain Obligation: Moto Ogedei.

Any PCs with the Moto Bushi school are barred from their school and may no longer advance in school rank. Moto Ogedei offers to continue the instruction of any such PCs, allowing them to continue to rank up as Moto Bushi, though they gain Obligation: Moto Ogedei (Major Obligation if they accept both offers).

If any PC has Sworn Enemy: Bayushi Tenno, that PC gains two ranks of Infamy as their reputation is slandered mercilessly.

**If the PCs kill Iuchi Kazuyuki and flee justice:**

Ide Kazuyuki's body falls to the floor of the court chamber, joining the many others already present. The room is silent. None were alive to bear witness to your crime.

As one, you turn and leave, taking the path back into Scorpion lands. Waiting for you at Shiro Soshi is a letter from Bayushi Tenno.

'Samurai-sans, I have received news of the events at Shinden Horiuchi. There are no words for what happened there. It is a tragedy of the greatest proportions.

It is doubly unfortunate that the honorable Ide Kazuyuki died stopping the criminals, but thankfully his soul can rest knowing he accomplished his duty to the empire.

I have important business to attend to here, so I hope you will forgive my lack of manners and wish you goodbye by letter rather than in person.

Your friend, Bayushi Tenno.'

The PCs have two options now.

Option 1: Silence.

The PCs may agree to tell no one what occurred at Shinden Horiuchi. All PCs gain 'Dark Secret (killed Ide Kazuyuki)' and 'Blackmailed (Bayushi Tenno)'

Option 2: Honesty

The PCs may tell the truth about what the events at Shinden Horiuchi. Initially it is a scandal, but thanks to some unexpected assistance from the Scorpion clan, everything is explained, and Ide Kazuyuki's death ruled an unfortunate byproduct of the chaos. The Unicorn however are slightly less understanding, even if Imperial Justice has technically been served.

Any Unicorn PCs are made ronin. Their status is reduced to 0.

All PCs are barred from the lands of the Moto.

All PCs lose 2 ranks of glory and gain 2 ranks of Infamy.

## The End

### Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Iuchi Jinsoku dies:	1 XP
Facing justice (regardless of outcome):	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

#### Favors

If the PCs prove their innocence, they receive 1 Favor.

#### Honor

Ending the blasphemy of Iuchi Jinsoku:	H10
Returning the Daisho of Water:	H4
Attacking Ide Kazuyuki and fleeing justice	D-10

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

Killing Iuchi Jinsoku:	G6
Winning the duel:	G5
"Losing" the duel:	I4
If any PC has Sworn Enemy: Doji Hanako for all PCs	I10

#### Allies and Enemies

If the Flee Justice or Duel Interrupted conclusions occur, all PCs gain Sworn Enemy: Moto Sartaq.

#### Other Awards/Penalties

If the Prove Their Innocence conclusion occurs, all PCs gain the Unicorn Horse From the Khan's Herd cert.

If a PC steals the Daisho of Water, contact the campaign admin.

**Duels:** If a PC persists in challenging Ide Kazuyuki to a duel after they are found innocent, he will give a half-hearted apology before the PC and the Khan. If this still fails to satisfy the PC in question, the Khan will declare the matter settled and dismiss the PC from his lands. And further persistence from the PC they will

gain Sworn Enemy (Ide Kazuyuki) and Sworn Enemy (Moto Sartaq), and they will have their authorization to be in Moto lands revoked.

- 2) Did the PCs flee justice?
- 3) Did Ide Kazuyuki survive?

#### GM Reporting

- 1) Was the Daisho of Water returned?

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

## Appendix #1: Court NPCs

### Moto Noritoshi

Eldest son of the Khan, a pale man with white hair of average build and slightly below average height.

**School/Rank:** Kakita Bushi 4

**Initiative:** 8k4+14

**Armor TN:** 25

**Reduction:** 0

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

**Attack:** 10k4 or 10k5 (Katana, Simple, reroll 1's)

**Damage:** 7k2 (Katana, explode 9's)

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4

Honor: 4.0 Status: 4.0 Glory: 4.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Iaijutsu (Focus, Assessment) 7, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Artisan: Poetry 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Position (Khagan of the Moto), Overconfident

**Special Mechanics:**

Kakita Bushi school techniques rank 1-4.

**Significant Dice Pools:**

Assessment: 10k4

Focus: 10k7+13 or 10k10+15 (assessment)

Strike: 10k6+4 (uses the 1k1+4 bonus on damage)

### Ide Kazuyuki

An overzealous magistrate of the Unicorn, tall and conventionally handsome. **He uses his scimitar if attacked in the open, or his katana in a duel.**

**School/Rank:** Moto Bushi 3

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Armor TN:** 20 (25 in armor) **Reduction:** 0 or 3

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

**Attack:** 9k4 + ½ opposing wound penalties (Katana or Scimitar, Simple)

**Damage:** 7k3 (Scimitar) or 7k2 (Katana)

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4

Honor: 5.5 Status: 3.0 Glory: 5.0

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Scimitar) 5, Iaijutsu 5, Lore: Law 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 5, Lore: Heraldry 6

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Social Position (Unicorn Magistrate), Swift 1

**Special Mechanics:** Moto Bushi 3

**Significant Dice Pools:**

Assessment: 8k3

Focus: 10k5+9 or 10k6+9 (assessment win)

Strike: 8k3 (uses the 1k1+4 bonus on damage)

### Katsurou

A simple monk.

**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 5, Emerald Champion path, Kenburo's Way, Temples of the Thousand Fortunes 2 / Insight Rank 9

**Initiative:** 10k7

**Armor TN:** 30

**Reduction:** 4

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

Air 5 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 6

Perception 5

Honor: 8.0 Status: 2.0 Glory: 0.5

**Primary Skills:** Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Defense 3, Kyujutsu 3, Iaijutsu (Focus, Assessment) 8, Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Jujutsu 5

Etiquette 6, Courtier 4, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Intimidation 6, Lore: History 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 8, Lore: Law 7, Lore: Theology (Fortunes) 5, Meditation 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Allies (Many), Bland, Clear Thinker, Leadership, Tactician / Idealistic

**Special Mechanics:** +1k1 on all High and Bugei skill rolls, and +1k0 on all School skill rolls.

*The Butcher's Gaze* - During an iaijutsu duel, before Assessment, may spend a Void Point to make a Contested Intimidation/Willpower roll. (This is considered a Fear effect) If you win the Contested Roll, opponent's dice do not explode on Assessment and Focus.

Akodo Bushi school techniques rank 1-5.

## Appendix #2: NPCs at Shiro Moto

### Moto Noritoshi – Kakita Bushi 4

The Khagan of the Moto, eldest son of Khan Moto Sartaq. Noritoshi is a man of average build, slightly below average height, and has quite pale skin for a Moto. He completed his gempukku four autumns ago and to the surprise of many took the name of one of his mother's ancestors. He carries a katana instead of a scimitar and dresses in a very conservative Rokugani style showing no elements of traditional moto garb.

Noritoshi has a dismissive attitude towards most other samurai, owing both to the high station of his birth and to his own estimation of his skills. He is rabidly loyal to his father and his father's goals.

He will talk up himself, the Unicorn, and the Crane. He loves Iaijutsu and fancies himself an excellent duelist. He has significant talent but still overestimates his skills. He is susceptible to flattery and will happily converse at length upon things that 'traditional' samurai like, such as haiku, iaijutsu, origami, or calligraphy.

He had no love for Iuchi Jinsoku. While Noritoshi was growing up he felt that his father gave too much heed to the priest's words and he was pleased when the priest's appearances in court became much scarcer starting a few years ago. He is however skeptical of the idea of a vast conspiracy, gaijin magic, or visions of fate.

If any PC asks about his visit to the shrine of the Emerald Champion, he will readily admit that he visited Dark Water Village two years ago and that he was praying at the shrine of his ancestor Kakita. If pressed on the matter or 'the relic of the Generous Trader' is brought up, he will flatly deny it, rolling his Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness against that of the inquisitive PC. Doing so increases the TNs to convince him to support the PCs by 5.

Example topics of conversation:

"So, why were you there in the first place?"

"Jinsoku always was convincing, but a cult? Gaijin magic? That seems a little far-fetched."

"I can't say I cared much for him, but he was always a loyal servant, why would he turn against my father?"

Gaining Support:

Noritoshi likes winning, flattery, dueling, and art. Any PC approaching him that flatters either him or the Unicorn clan gains a free raise.

He will flatly refuse to support the PCs (and will testify against them) if any of them has him as a Sworn Enemy, being minimally polite and largely dismissive of anyone that attempts to appeal to him.

Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness: TN 40

Artisan (Any) / Awareness: TN 35

Fighting a 'practice' duel against him and losing: Automatic support.

Fighting a 'practice' duel against him and winning: PC gains Sworn Enemy: Moto Noritoshi, and Noritoshi argues against the PCs.

Ads / Disads: Social Position (Khagan of the Moto) / Overconfident

Social Traits: Awareness 4, Willpower 3

Social Skills: Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Artisan: Poetry 3.

Status: 4.0

## Doji Hanako – Doji Courtier 5

A familiar face in all of the major courts of Rokugan, Doji Hanako represents the interests of the Crane with grace and dignity. A soft word from her has brought an end to several incipient conflicts (to the chagrin of those who wished to make their reputation in war), though it is rumored that she is more willing than most of her family to use sterner measures when required.

Doji Hanako has been (very effectively) representing the Crane in the Khan's court but finds the court rather boring. She successfully arranged a set of agreements but is now impatiently waiting for her next assignment. Accordingly, she is happy to have any diversion, even one as macabre as current events. She is very interested in the PCs and intends, one way or another, to have some fun with the situation.

She knows nothing about Iuchi Jinsoku and has never visited Shinden Horiuchi. She is unmoved by appeals to compassion or 'justice', but certainly would listen to an argument regarding how supporting the PCs is good for the Crane. Failing that, any form of interesting or artful diversion would please her.

Example topics of conversation:

"So, the death of an entire family? How bold. I didn't realize the [PC's clan] clan was intending to undertake acts of war against the Unicorn."

"Ide Kazuyuki does have something of a reputation as a troublemaker. I was wondering how long it would be until he attempted to arrest someone innocent and important. So, are you someone important... and innocent?"

"I hear that Noritoshi loves dueling. Have you crossed blades with him perchance? He must be so bored in his father's court." [A suspicious PC may think to roll **Investigation (Interrogation)** / **Awareness** at this statement, a 40 realizes Hanako is purposefully concealing something in this statement. She is attempting to cause trouble for the PC in question].

**If the PCS fail to influence her to testify for them, she will testify against them, impugning their character to the magistrate, even if none of them are her Sworn Enemy.**

Gaining Support:

Doji Hanako appreciates art, refinement, and things that gain advantage for the Crane clan. An offering of art, a clever and refined gift, or a promise of assistance to the crane clan will make swaying her substantially easier.

A thoughtful gift gives one free raise to any roll to secure her support.

If any PC has her as a Sworn Enemy, she will engage with them politely, but will testify against them in court regardless of rolls unless all PCs agree to accept an obligation to the Crane.

Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness: TN 35

Artisan (Any) / Awareness: TN 30.

An Obligation: Any PC may accept an obligation to the Crane clan to secure Doji Hanako's support, unless a PC present has her as a Sworn Enemy, in which case all PCs must accept an obligation to the Crane.

Ads / Disads: Benten's Blessing, Voice, Allies (Many)

Traits: Awareness 4, Willpower 3, Perception 4, Void 3

Skills: Courtier (Manipulation, Gossip) 7, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Games: Sadane 5, Artisan: Poetry 3, Perform: Oratory 4.

Status: 4.0

## Bayushi Akinishin – Bayushi Courtier 4

Clever with both his hands and his words, Akinishin is welcome in most of the Empire's courts. He can always be counted upon to provide a pleasant diversion, whether it be an engaging game of go or sharing one of his vast trove of amusing anecdotes.

He also knows a bit about all the other courtiers present and for the exchange of a promise to do him a favor in the future (a Minor Obligation) will happily tell the PCs what kinds of things the other courtiers like. He can give a high-level summary of the all various ways to gain their support. Scorpion get this summary for free.

Bayushi Akinishin has met Iuchi Jinsoku before and has distrusted the man since their first conversation. He is not surprised that Jinsoku would be plotting something nefarious, but he is in awe of the scope of Jinsoku's schemes. Akinishin received a letter from Bayushi Tenno a few days before the PCs arrived explaining the actual events. However, given the scope of the damage the Scorpion clan has chosen to disavow all knowledge of the PCs. Akinishin sympathizes with their situation but will flatly refuse to publicly acknowledge that the Scorpion encouraged them to travel to Shinden Horiuchi (though he will not outright contradict the PCs testimony if they say so).

If the PCs talk to him in complete privacy, or only Scorpion PCs speak with him, he will acknowledge that Tenno has alerted him about their dilemma, but for political reasons the Scorpion can't get involved unless the PCs can prove themselves innocent of the charges. He is sympathetic, but his hands are tied.

Example topics of conversation:

"Iuchi Jinsoku always struck me as a bit... distracted. Could he really have put together as vast a conspiracy as you claim?"

"Hmm... your words have weight, but why should I testify in this matter?"

"The court of the khan is a bit emptier than I expected. So, what do you think of it?"

Gaining Support:

Bayushi Akinishin is not difficult to convince to help. He was already suspicious of Jinsoku (and received a letter from Bayushi Tenno explaining the PCs were sent by the Scorpion). The PCs don't need to convince him Jinsoku was guilty, but rather that testifying in their favor is in his (or the Scorpion clan's) interest. Failing that, he would be happy to have a pleasant and diverting conversation, or even to just play a good game of Go.

Being a Scorpion, he will of course accept an Obligation to the Scorpion Clan in exchange for his support.

**If any PC has him or Bayushi Tenno as a Sworn Enemy, he will engage in polite conversation, but will make it obvious that he cannot support the PCs. However, he will broach that he would still support the PCs in exchange for assistance in the future (an Obligation).**

Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness: TN 30

Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness: TN 25

Games: Go / Intelligence: TN 20

An Obligation: Any PC may accept an obligation to the Scorpion clan to secure Bayushi Akinishin's support. If a PC has him or Bayushi Tenno as a Sworn Enemy, he will still support them in exchange for an obligation, but in this case, it would be a Major Obligation.

Ads / Disads: Dangerous Beauty

Traits: Awareness 5, Intelligence 4, Void 3

Stats: Courtier 6, Etiquette (Courtesy) 5, Sincerity (Deceit) 5, Investigation 5, Games: Go 5.

Status: 4.0



## **Katsurou – Akodo Bushi 5 / Emerald Champion / Kenburo’s Way / Temples of the Thousand Fortunes 2**

An unassuming monk of advanced age (easily past 60 winters) with an immanently forgettable face. Despite his age he still moves with a smooth step, exhibiting great grace and poise. He shows deference to samurai, and is clever at concealing his interrogations. He is happy to converse at length regarding the Tao, matters of law, or military history.

Thanks to his exceptionally average appearance and long retirement, very few recognize him as the former Emerald Champion Akodo Saburo (Lore: Heraldry at TN 50). He had a reputation as a skilled general, an excellent duelist and a peerless magistrate. While he somewhat disdained the courts, he oversaw an expansion of the Emerald Office that reduced crime throughout the empire, much to some clans’ displeasure.

If PCs speak to him, he will be subtly question them to ascertain their guilt. He will listen to their story and ask questions about specific events. He will ask them to retell their story, starting from the end. He will pretend to be confused about specific facts, then ask follow-ups based on things that didn’t happen (which he ‘misheard’ or ‘misunderstood’) in attempts to catch the PCs in falsehoods or to unravel their version of events.

If any PC lies to him, he will attempt to see through their statement. **If he does catch any PC in a material lie, he will testify against them in court, regardless of other rolls.** Per his stat block in Appendix 2, his Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness roll to identify lies is 10k9 with emphasis.

Example topics of conversation:

“Please, samurai-sama, tell me what happened. In your own words.”

“Pardon this old man, but I think I’m confused. So, tell me again, the Iuchi tried to kill you, then gaijin attacked? Did I understand that right?”

“Ah. My mistake, my mistake. Forgive me. Tell me again, what happened at the end? Oh? and right before that?”

“I think there was mention of the Daisho of Water? How does that relate to all this?”

Gaining Support:

Katsurou appreciates justice and proper procedure. If the PCs explain the situation honestly and completely, they are likely to garner his support. He is an intensely law-abiding individual, so any lies will earn ire.

He understands that the pursuit of justice in exceptional circumstances requires exceptional measures. But exceptional circumstances require exceptional explanations.

If a PC fails the roll to gain his support and decides to Honor Test, the TN is reduced by 5, as the honor of their words moves him.

**If any PC has Cast Out, he will pointedly ignore that individual, and politely but firmly remind other PCs that they have a blasphemer in their midst, and therefore he couldn’t possibly believe the words of those who would associate with such an individual.**

Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness: TN 45

Lore: Law / Intelligence: TN 35

Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness: TN 20

He catches a PC lying to him: He automatically testifies against the PCs.

(see stat block in Appendix 1)

Ads / Disads: Allies (Many), Bland, Clear Thinker, Leadership, Tactician / Idealistic

Traits: Awareness 5, Intelligence 4, Perception 5, Void 6

Stats: Courtier 4, Etiquette 6, Sincerity (Honesty) 5, Investigation (Interrogation) 8, Lore: Law 7, Intimidation 6.

Status: 2.0

### **Kitsuki Oda – Kitsuki Investigator 3**

An aspiring investigator, Oda's career has conducted three successful criminal investigations so far, one of which was the murder of a samurai. He idolizes his uncle, Kitsuki Hisashi, one of the greatest living investigators. He is quite polite and knows his way around court but longs to be out 'on the road' solving crimes. If anyone speaks to him at length he will invariably turn the conversation to topics of law, and would be very interested in any legal investigations the players have been involved in.

He has a bad reputation for 'jumping at shadows' and being a little too quick to conclude that a crime has been committed. He also has trouble sleeping and tends to spend the late evening hours wandering the castle. If any other PC is out of their room at night, it is likely they will accidentally run into Oda.

Oda, in common with certain other Kitsuki, has a latent suspicion that all Scorpion are up to... something. He does not trust Bayushi Akinishin and will be instantly distrustful of any Scorpion PCs (their TNs to convince him are increased by 5). If the PCs admit that they were sent by a Scorpion or entered Unicorn lands via a hidden Scorpion trail, he will instantly jump to the idea that the Scorpion were Behind It The Whole Time.

Example topics of conversation:

"So, you admit you didn't have travel papers. If you are confessing to one infraction, why should I believe you didn't commit more?"

"So, you claim to have been working for a magistrate. Why didn't he accompany you or write you travel papers? Very suspicious to be in Unicorn lands uninvited."

"Yes, yes, you testify that Jinsoku was the criminal, all well and good, but what evidence do you have that he killed the Horiuchi?"

Gaining Support:

Kitsuki Oda loves the law and investigations. He is most likely to be convinced to help the PCs if they can convince him of the technically correct nature of their investigation and provide solid non-testimony "evidence" linking Iuchi Jinsoku to the crimes (for example, that the Horiuchi were killed with knives and scimitar, not katanas). Alternatively, if they are exceedingly clever they may realize that he needs something to help him sleep; an herbal sedative would be greatly appreciated.

Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness: TN 25.

Lore: Law / Intelligence: TN 25.

Medicine / Intelligence: 20.

Ads / Disads: Wary / Curse of Yume-Do

Traits: Awareness 3, Reflexes 3, Intelligence 4, Perception 4, Void 3

Stats: Courtier 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Sincerity 2, Investigation 5, Iaijutsu 2, Lore: Law 5

Status: 2.0

## **Player Handout #1: News from the Empire**

This is simply a short list of the major happenings of the last few months or weeks for the Empire. This is common knowledge; no rolls are required. They should be written with a fairly impartial viewpoint, though having them in the “voice” of the wandering herald Otomo Yusuke provides a certain amount of continuity.

## **Player Handout #2: A letter from Otomo Katsuo**

Samurai-sans,

I appreciate your lords being so kind as to respond to my request for assistance and to lend your talents to the Emerald Office.

In brief, two years ago in the process of investigating the murder of a samurai, the Emerald Office came into possession of evidence that an illegal smuggling ring was operating in the lands of the Unicorn. Last year I was assisted by a number of samurai in unraveling the business of these smugglers and came across the name of their leader – Moto Ayumu. He is now wanted for criminal conspiracy, blasphemy, the murder of a samurai, and tax evasion.

I have found a lead on his location. I intend to apprehend him and for that I require your assistance.

Please meet me at the Inn of the Red Carp in the city of Beiden with all due haste. I have attached travel papers to authorize your travel to the Scorpion lands.

Regards,  
Otomo Katsuo, Emerald Magistrate

## **Player Handout #3: A letter to Otomo Akiko**

Dear Aki-chan,

We travelled through Beiden pass today. The mountains are magnificent. The cliffs are so tall you can't see the top, and the pass is always in the shade. It is cool even in the summer. Pretty pink trees grow on the cliff walls and they make the air smell sweet.

I met a man who said he had travelled all the way from Medinaat al-Salaam. He had small figurines made of stone. One of them looked exactly like the rabbit you had two summers ago.

Your sensei says that you have been an excellent student. It will not be too much longer before you are ready to join the courts yourself. I am so proud of you, and I know that your mother and father would have been as well if they could see you now.

Love,  
Uncle Katsuo

## Player Handout #4: Notable NPCs

The following NPCs are present at Shiro Moto, and here's what people are saying about them:

Moto Noritoshi – The eldest son of the Khan and Khogun of the Moto. Noritoshi is a handsome man, four years past his gempuku. People say he's more of a Crane than a Unicorn. I guess he takes after his mother's family. She was a Crane, you know. An important one. Too bad about her death.

Doji Hanako - A familiar face in all of the major courts of Rokugan, Doji Hanako represents the interests of the Crane with grace and dignity. A soft word from her has brought an end to several incipient conflicts (to the chagrin of those who wished to make their reputation in war), though it is rumored that she is more willing than most of her family to use sterner measures when required.

Bayushi Akinishin - Clever with both his hands and his words, Akinishin is welcome in most of the Empire's courts. He can always be counted upon to provide a pleasant diversion, whether it be an engaging game of go or sharing one of his vast trove of amusing anecdotes.

Katsurou - An unassuming monk with an immanently forgettable face of advanced age, easily past 60 winters. Despite his age he still moves with a smooth step, exhibiting great grace and poise. He shows great deference to samurai that he meets. I hear he is normally responsible for tending a shrine in Dark Edge Village, but I guess he's here for the summer.

Kitsuki Oda – An investigator and courtier from the Kitsuki. I heard that he solved a murder last summer! A dragon monk killed a Crab. Or was it a Crab that killed a Dragon monk? I'm not sure, I've heard both. But I am quite certain he solved a murder. Someone saw him wandering the halls of the court late last night, I wonder what he was looking for?