

A Cleansing Breath

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**An Intro-Rank Adventure for
Heroes of Rokugan: Champions of the Ivory Throne**

Month of Akodo, 1342 (Mid-Summer)

**Module Number: CIT37
Release Date: 08/01/2019**

Combat, Intrigue, Investigation, Introductory

A tournament of Rokugan's most sacred art is approaching, and all of Rokugan is watching. In the shadows, however, deals and trades are made that will shape the future of the Empire, and an even deeper darkness lies at its heart.

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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

There are many similarities between Rokugan and the Ivory Kingdoms, and for most of them, the resemblances only really serve to highlight the differences. One example of this is organized crime. In Rokugan, organizations such as the Kolat or fireman gangs act as thugs-for-hire, run local protection rackets, or even paid assassins when the need arises. The Ivory Kingdoms has similar groups, many of whom are referred to by the Ivinda as "*sthagi*." The word has roots from an older tongue and it means "to strangle," in recognition of their trademark killing practice: the use of a wide piece of cloth, often disguised as a turban or multi-layered sash, to choke their victims to death. This tradition arose from the proclamation of a rajah several centuries ago, who announced that any who shed the blood of another and caused their death would be guilty of murder. Although wiser rajahs have since closed the "bloodshed only" loophole, the *sthagi* tradition remains.

During the two centuries of Rokugani occupation in the Ivory Kingdoms city of Balishnimpur, the *sthagi* have generally given the colony a wide berth. Never common in that part of the Kingdoms, it seemed unnecessarily provocative to clash with Rokugan's own criminal elements or reveal themselves to the notoriously brutal samurai when so many ripe targets were available elsewhere. The unrest in the city three years ago changed that balance, though, at least for one branch of the *sthagi* organization. A man named Dabaana realized that groups of low-ranking, almost anonymous samurai called "ronin otokodate" were widely accepted by Rokugani but rarely scrutinized by them. Since some locals have been converted by the Brotherhood of Shinsei to the worship of the Fortunes and some native warriors had been inducted into the Clans, Dabaana correctly surmised that a group of *sthagi* could enter the city as one of these "otokodate"

and operate quite openly. He promptly formed the Claws of Ravana, named for a powerful demon king in the Ivindi faith, and took several followers into the city.

The gambit worked perfectly, and the Claws of Ravana became a successful ronin band within Balishnimpur. They inducted new members, many of whom were disgraced former kshatriya, making sure to supply each recruit with a wakizashi, so their "ronin" status was not questioned. In fact, it went so well that Dabaana decided to expand the otokodate to Rokugan itself, believing that the Rokugani homeland will be no more difficult a target to fleece than Balishnimpur was.

Dabaana took passage with a Daidoji trading ship, bringing a handful of his lieutenants with him, and has just arrived in Rokugan itself. The Daidoji vessel was bound for a newly constructed shrine just north of the Sparrow lands, called the Shrine of the Dragon Soul. There, it seemed, a tournament of shugenja practicing a dueling art called "taryu-jiai" was scheduled.

Rokugan, as it happens, is not particularly concerned with the Colony at the moment, as matters closer to home have captured the attention of many. In particular, the shocking and terrible massacre of nearly every samurai who bore the Horiuchi name. The Unicorn, still in shock from that tragedy, suffered another blow when a Dragon bushi made an assassination attempt on the Unicorn Clan's Champion, Shinjo Hazumi. And now they face a third challenge, as the Miya Imperial family has put forward a claim to the Horiuchi province. They wish to build a fortress on the north side of the Spine of the World Mountains. The Unicorn, however, hope to resist this claim, even despite it coming from an Imperial faction.

In addition to Dabaana, five influential samurai from different Clans will be present at the taryu-jiai tournament, each with enough influence to sway many others in one direction or another between the Miya and the Unicorn, and circumstances seem to have arranged themselves so that the fate of the Horiuchi lands will be decided against a background of elemental power.

It is into this space that the PCs arrive, taking their first major steps onto the stage of Rokugani events. As attendees of the taryu-jiai tournament, they happen to be positioned in a useful place to advance their Clan's agenda. Under the guidance of either Ide Denraku, representing the Unicorn, or Miya Ryukousha, representing the Imperials, the PCs will attempt to sway each of the five important NPCs toward their

Clan's objective. Along the way they might also be able to claim other boons for their Clans. (Shugenja might also be able to battle on the taryu-jiai field, though victory is unlikely.)

Sadly, all the politics are destined for disruption during the night of the tournament's second day. One NPC, frustrated by being unable to accomplish their goals, hires Dabaana to murder the most successful NPC among the five. The adventure then becomes an investigation, as the PCs - guided by a monk who happens to be the Oracle of Thunder - must race against time to learn the murderer's identity before he can escape. Once that is done, however, they will also learn he was hired by a true samurai - how then will they proceed? And what impact will it have on the fate of the Horiuchi province?

Upkeep

Character Notes

GMs should be aware of any Allies or Sworn Enemies the PCs might possess, because they might interfere with the PCs' negotiating efforts (for good or ill). In addition, GMs will want to be aware of any of the following:

- Advantages or Disadvantages that apply to Social Skill rolls
- Disbeliever or Cast Out - as the adventure occurs at a monastery currently occupied by many shugenja, these Disadvantages should come into play

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

As this is an Introductory module, there is no Inactivity loss of Glory.

Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** will vary depending on the time frame. Failure on this roll

causes the PC to gain a point of the Shadowlands Taint. If a character is growing close to being Lost (Shadowlands Taint Rank 4.5+) , it is recommended that the player have another PC ready to replace them.

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 TN 5. Failure on this roll gives the ronin the Permanent Wound Disadvantage for the duration of the module. Koku may be spent on this roll to gain a Free Raise for every koku spent before the roll is made, or one Free Raise for every two koku spent after the roll is made.

Experience Expenditure

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

Introduction

In the spring of the one thousand three hundred forty-second year of the Isawa Calendar, in the fourth year of the reign of Toturi, Tenth of that Name, word spread around the Empire of a unique contest to be held the following summer at a monastery called the Shrine of the Dragon Soul. This tournament would be a rare opportunity for the samurai and peasants of Rokugan alike to see the priestly art of taryu-jiai, the ancient form of dueling between shugenja. It has never been common for those who can speak to the kami to clash

directly with one another; many years will pass between one such incident and the next. The only regular tournament to set shugenja against shugenja is the famed Jade Championship, an event that might happen only two or three times in a samurai's lifetime.

It is for this reason you have journeyed across Rokugan's golden lands, despite the summer heat, to the recently-constructed shrine at the foot of Mount Raimei in the Wall Above the Ocean Mountains. Dozens of other samurai have traveled ahead of you, and more still travel behind to see this rare event. Such a gathering of powerful nobles all but guarantees there will be more than just the contemplation of the sacred happening among the attendees - and indeed, the fate of a Great Clan's province will likely be determined by your actions over the next few days.

Each of the PCs has received a letter from a higher-ranking member of their Clan, explaining the dispute over the lands of the former Horiuchi family and detailing their Clan's position on that dispute. Each letter also tells the PC to work with either Ide Denraku or Miya Ryukousha to try to persuade five influential samurai toward their Clan's preferred position during the taryu-jiai tournament. (See Player Handout #1.) Ronin PCs have been hired to aid his interests by Ide Denraku for 2 koku - though if the PC would prefer, Miya Ryukousha would happily match Denraku's price. Monk characters are likely just attending the Championship for the sake of seeing the mystic display, but Kobu will find them out not long after they arrive, attempt to get them to articulate some position on the matter of the Horiuchi lands, then recommend seeking out Denraku or Ryukousha. While the PCs are free to observe and enjoy the spectacle of the Dragon's Breath Championship, they should be aware that this is a working vacation, with Glory and Honor riding on their success. Of course, any PC shugenja may wish to participate in the tournament, and though the odds are against their victory, they are free to do so. There will be enough time between rounds that they can work on other goals without impacting their bouts on the tournament field.

As you arrive at the shrine, your gaze cannot help but linger on the cloud-wrapped peak of Mount Raimei looming above. Though Lord Sun shines down on you at the mountain's base, thick storm clouds shroud its heights, flickering with distant lightning. It is said that Mount Raimei is always surrounded by storms, and it is for that reason that Shinden no Tamashii Ryu, the Shrine of the Dragon Soul, was built here.

The shrine itself, a blocky, almost fortress-like complex of several smaller structures around the central temple, looms ahead of you, white-painted walls gleaming in the afternoon light. As you pass beneath the great torii arch that marks the gate of the temple proper, you see a wooden tablet hanging from the center of the arch, into which a quote from the Tao of Shinsei has been carved: "We tell stories of heroes to remind ourselves that we too can be great."

Shinden no Tamashii Ryu is one of the newest shrines in Rokugan, founded just six years ago by a splinter sect of monks from the Shrine of Osano-Wo. These monks, calling themselves the Order of the Dragon Soul, now venerate the Dragon of Thunder, who is said to have been the mother of Osano-Wo and to have given humanity its potential for heroism and greatness. The Order still maintains many connections to the Shrine of Osano-Wo, as well as to the Order of Heroes and the Shrine of the Seven Thunders. Since it is so new, it hasn't become terribly well-known thus far, and the taryu-jiai tournament, called the Dragon's Breath Championship, is the first most samurai have ever heard of it.

The Shrine of the Dragon Soul

It is likely that pious samurai will wish to visit the actual Shrine itself at the heart of the temple complex. The Shrine is a tall, open building, containing just a single room. The walls around the edge of the shrine are lined with tables holding candles and sticks of incense, but the centerpiece is the bronze statue of the Thunder Dragon that rears up nearly thirty feet over the devotees, blazing eyes gazing intently down at them. A circular hole in the ceiling reveals sunlight spilling down, but a small metal gutter around the inside of the hole continually drips raindrops in a ring around the statue, so that a continual uneven curtain of water encircles the Dragon. Flickers of rainbows can sometimes be seen where the sunlight flickers through the water, and tiny lightning bolts glitter on its hundreds of scales.

As attending the tournament is as much pilgrimage as it is spectacle, accommodations within the temple are fairly plain, but the expansive temple grounds don't lack for space at the least. It is clear that the temple has been preparing for the tournament for some time, as several outbuildings housing many low-ranked samurai show signs of very recent construction, likely since the end of winter. A bevy of young monks, likely newly-sworn initiates, greets new arrivals and directs them to their assigned accommodations for the event, all under the watchful eye of Kobu, the second-highest

monk in the Shrine. Every samurai has their own room within the new barracks, but they are simple monk-like cells with only enough room for a futon and some simple furnishings to hold clothes or valuables. The higher-ranking samurai, including most of the favored contestants in the championship, are hosted within the temple itself. Though the PCs will not get to see these chambers until later in the story, the truth is that the rooms are more spacious but not much more comfortable, in keeping with the ascetic beliefs of the monks. Two bathhouses are also available, although one is noticeably lacking in many of the traditional comforts and is primarily intended for use by the monks or those samurai inclined to asceticism.

If the substance of the monks' hospitality is somewhat lacking, the intent is nonetheless clear, especially when they host a welcoming feast within the main temple building the evening after the guests arrive. The PCs are of course invited to attend, and are seated in accordance to their station, toward the end of the large tables and away from the most important guests.

The room where the feast is taking place is obviously not designed for the purpose; it appears to be a spacious dojo that has been converted into a meal hall, likely the only room in the shrine large enough to hold the few hundred attendees now kneeling around the dozens of low tables. At the room's far wall a line of tables are arranged perpendicular to the rest, allowing the diners seated on the far side to gaze out at the rest of the attendees. Though not elevated or otherwise marked out, you know that this table holds the abbot of the temple and his highest-Status guests. In addition to the abbot Kowareta, who is seated at the table's center, you note the presence of his chief advisor Kobu seated to his left, and flanking the two of them are Miya Ryukousha, Ide Denraku, Hantei Zetsubou, Yasuki Kashite, Moshi Gekai, Shosuro Fumei, and Daidoji Kawari.

The abbot rises, and after a few moments the low rumble of conversation drops away to a respectful silence. The abbot is a large man, powerfully built, with the bearing of a warrior. You see few signs of the age one might normally associate with a respected monk. Indeed, his shaved head and simple robes seem at odds with his martial carriage, but you can see that he is only able to hold himself upright thanks to a carved wooden cane. Most of his left leg is missing, and the pant leg has been hemmed together. The injury tells the story: you have no doubt that this was once a deadly warrior, forced to retire early when he suffered a crippling wound. A glance around reveals that he has not lost the ability to command, as every eye seems fixed on him.

"May the Thunder Dragon bless you all," the abbot begins, "and may your visit here open your eyes to the lightning. I am called Kowareta, and I have been honored by my brothers and sisters here to be chosen as their leader. We of the Order of the Dragon Soul welcome each of you to our shrine and hope that you will find some echo of wisdom or spark of inspiration to take with you when you venture again into the world." Kowareta's voice is low, gravelly, but it carries well, filling the hall.

"It is the nature of thunder and lightning to appear and vanish swiftly, unexpectedly. Many times as we live our lives we experience change and upheaval in a similar way. It is in those moments, when we see opportunity or catastrophe but have not yet acted, that we come to know the quality of our souls. Like the peaceful breaths that come between the lightning and the thunder, in that instant we choose how we will shape our futures, whether we will rise to our potential or leave greatness for others to grasp." Kowareta's eyes sweep the room, and you feel for a moment as though they linger on you.

"It is for this reason that the Order of the Dragon Soul has invited you here, for the first Dragon's Breath Championship. The art of taryu-jiai is one of peaceful action, of focused stillness. We hope that each of you will feel the Thunder Dragon's breath in your souls, and gain strength from it. Thank you for coming." The abbot offers a very deep bow to the assembled guests, then smoothly retakes his seat. With a sharp clap, Kowareta summons a number of acolytes into the room, each carrying trays of rice, noodles, and vegetables to set before the samurai at each table. As food arrives, the murmur of conversation returns along with it, and the hall is as it was before.

The PCs are seated together, but the closeness of the tables means that they can hear other conversations nearby as well. Allow the PCs to introduce themselves, then have each PC roll **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness**.

Rumors

- TN 5: The Order of the Dragon Soul was founded by Kowareta in 1336 after he received a vision from the Thunder Dragon herself. Kowareta was a member of the Shrine of Osano-Wo at the time, but he and several other members of the Shrine left it to come here and found this temple.
- TN 10: The subject of the Miya's push to claim the Horiuchi province is a topic of much

discussion among the attendees, but almost as many are either fascinated or scandalized by the presence of a ronin named Dabaana, a ronin of the Ivinda people of the Ivory Kingdoms, at the Championship.

- TN 15: It is said that Mount Raimei, which overlooks the Shrine of the Dragon Soul, is the place where the Thunder Dragon met Hida-kami more than a thousand years ago and lay with him. She would eventually bear Hida a son, Osano-Wo, who would one day become the Fortune of Fire and Thunder.
- TN 20: It is believed that the Mantis, Scorpion, and Dragon Clans are supporting the Ide family's claim to the Horiuchi provinces, while the Crab, Crane, Lion, Owl, and Phoenix are backing the Miya. These are Clan-level attitudes only, though, and individual samurai cannot be assumed to think all the same way.
- TN 25: The shugenja widely expected to triumph in the Dragon's Breath Championship is Agasha Chuso, one of the Agasha daimyo's favored students. Some observers, however, suggest that Chuso's talents are overrated, and instead recommend watching Shiba Nikene, a talented shugenja often overlooked due to her family's reputation as warriors rather than priests.
- TN 30: While it is impolite to speak of a retired monk's life before they took their vows - it is said that a monk's old life dies when they shave their head and change their name to join the Brotherhood of Shinsei - there are still a few who will share that Kowareta was once Kuni Taryasu, a powerful and deadly shugenja of the Crab Clan who often preferred to battle Shadowlands creatures hand-to-hand, with weapons formed from the elements themselves. Some claim he still remembers those prayers, even though he no longer carries a scroll satchel.

Part One: The Time Between Breaths

Once the feast is complete, Ide Denraku and Miya Ryukousha will both call together their respective PCs - that is, those PCs supporting their positions - for a meeting to discuss strategy for the remainder of the championship. During this time, they will lay out the general structure of the political section of the adventure, with information gathering to take place on Day One and persuasion attempts on Day Two. Both will emphasize the importance of understanding what each of their targets wants, so as to have every tool necessary at hand to convince them.

Enterprising PCs might suggest beginning that process at the feast, with the idea of wasting as little time as possible. Unfortunately, the amount of socializing going on means that they cannot secure enough time with any of the guests to do any real digging. That said, the PCs can meet the various important NPCs and get a feel for their personalities. Daidoji Kawari is standing toward one side of the chamber, looking over the movement of the people in the room as though studying the position on a go board; though he immediately focuses his attention on anyone approaching him personally, it's hard to shake the impression that he is continually sizing up his conversation partner as well as everyone around him. Hantei Zetsubou seems strained and snappish, though she will immediately apologize after any outburst. Moshi Gekai is having a good-natured debate with a ronin shugenja named Dai about the relative merits of magical healing versus mundane medical techniques, but doesn't hesitate to offer a cup of sake to anyone coming to speak with him. Shosuro Fumei is politely greeting their fans, but will take a few moments to speak to a PC before moving on to the next excited audience member. Yasuki Kashite is polite but distant, her scowl usually putting people off a bit initially, but she will usually try to break the ice with a new conversation partner by asking if they know the smith who forged their family sword, or where the steel came from. (Encourage players to make up answers if they wish.) If approached by a PC from the opposing faction, Ide Denkaru idly suggests a wager on one of the matches tomorrow or even the outcome of the Miya/Unicorn dispute, but takes any refusal amicably, no matter much the refusing samurai might condemn dishonorable behavior like gambling. Miya Ryukousha is edgy and bored, clearly wishing he were outside, but most of his sentences begin with a phrase like, "As I was just writing to Matsu Rojume-san," or "You know, that reminds me of something I said to Matsu Rojume," all without him seeming to be aware of the repetition. If called on it, however, he blushes furiously and quickly excuses himself from the conversation. In addition, Dabaana is present at the feast, should anyone desire to speak with him. The *sthazi* "ronin" is highly amused by all the spiritual talk and invocations of heroism, and doesn't do a very good job of hiding his condescension toward such concepts.

Although they cannot learn much about or persuade anyone directly, PCs can make use of the feasting to prepare themselves for what's to come. With a **Raw Awareness** roll, TN 10, a PC who has a conversation with at least one of the five NPCs can learn that NPC's Initial Position as well as one of the Personal Interest Skills they can use on Day One to gain Background

Information on that NPC. (Determine which Skill they learn randomly.) An individual PC can only make this roll once per NPC, but if multiple PCs are part of the same conversation, they can roll and get results individually. The GM is advised to keep these conversations brief, both to emphasize the Status of the person they are speaking to and to make sure that the module keeps progressing steadily.

The Dragon's Breath Championship

Eventually, the feast winds down and the guests retire to their chambers for the evening. This happens much earlier than in a traditional Rokugani celebration, as the monks' dietary restrictions forbid alcohol on the premises. (A few determined Crab and Mantis brought their own, but not in adequate quantities to sustain the whole gathering.)

The tournament is scheduled to last for three days, as the field of more than three dozen contestants is whittled down to a final pair on the third afternoon. Contestants are fully healed by the monks overseeing the tournament after every round, but contestants should be aware that they will be using a Spell Slot in every match, which might affect their abilities in other events outside the Championship. (Likewise, they will need to have the necessary Spell Slot available when the match begins if they do not wish to concede.) PC shugenja are welcome to participate if they so desire, but this tournament involves some of the most powerful shugenja in Rokugan, so newly-made PCs have little chance to win. Even competing, however, might earn Glory.

If a PC chooses to participate, they will make one Spell Casting roll for each match, expending one Spell Slot. In the rounds before the final match, these are simple uncontested rolls to speed play. Have the player select the Element they will use - they apply any Affinity or Deficiency they have to that Element, but no School Techniques apply. Contestants earn 1 point of Glory for every match they win before the finals.

On the first day, the PC will have two matches, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. If the timing matters, assume the morning match takes place before any politicking occurs, and the afternoon match takes place after the day's politics. If the PC exceeds TN 20 on both rolls or exceeds TN 30 on a single roll, they join the top sixteen on Day Two. From this point on, the Championship is single elimination. The top sixteen will compete in the morning; the TN to move on is 30. The top eight compete in the afternoon; the TN to move on is 40. The final four compete on the morning of Day Three; reaching the finals requires

hitting a TN 50. If two PCs somehow manage to reach this point, they duel each other in a full taryu-jiai match for the Championship; should three or more PCs do so, take the two who rolled highest. A summary of the rules for taryu-jiai and other information about the final match are in Appendix #4.

The tournament occurs in an open stretch of grass to the west of the shrine, dozens of paces across in every dimension. A small rise to one end of the stretch provides a natural vantage point to watch the proceedings, and it is there where most of the spectators watch. It is an impressive spectacle, with raw elemental power surging around the competitors before being hurled together in violent clashes that send billowing steam, melted rock, clouds of smoke and dust, and more swirling into the air. It is clear why the duels take place outside, for no ordinary human structure would withstand the contest unscathed. After each contest, applause bursts out for the victor as other shugenja and monks rush forward to tend the wounds of both parties, making clear the violent contest is not merely a show.

Part Two: Don't Waste Your Breath

Persuading each of the influential NPCs is a complicated process that will spread across the first two days of the Dragon's Breath Championship. In order to keep matters progressing smoothly, there is a structured format for this module to organize everything.

For the purposes of describing the major NPCs involved with the politics section of this adventure, Hantei Zetsubou, Yauski Kashite, Moshi Gekai, Shosuro Fumei, and Daidoji Kawari are collectively referred to as the Negotiators. Each Negotiator has a Boon that they can offer: something that two of the other Negotiators would like, for themselves or for others, and conversely, all of the Negotiators have two Boons they would like to acquire. By learning what Boons each Negotiator has and which ones they want, the PCs will have the opportunity to build deals that get each Negotiator what they want in exchange for their support on the matter of the Horiuchi.

I Get By With a Little Help from My Friends

The PCs may call on their allies to aid them in their goals, and it is possible that their enemies might become involved in their machinations. During the

investigations on Day One and the persuasion attempts on Day Two, PCs who are aligned with one another can work together during these rolls to improve their odds of success. Doing so uses the Teamwork rules: one PC makes the roll, and any other assisting PCs add their Ranks in the appropriate Skill as a static bonus to the roll. Each person's time is limited, however; no individual PC can be the lead roller for more than two rolls on a given day, and can only add a Teamwork bonus for three rolls. The Skills for Personal Interests can be used for this purpose, and the GM should assign the specific Skill to each PC based on their individual approach to the challenge. In addition, anyone assisting the primary roller may spend 1 Void Point as an Enhancement to the roll in order to increase the bonus they give the leader with their Air Ring (Shiba Bushi and other similar effects that double the benefit of a Void Point instead add 2x Air Ring). So a character with no useful Skill and Air 2 could spend a Void Point to add +2 to the leader's roll, while someone with Intimidation 3 and Air 3 could spend a Void Point to add a total of +6 to it.

If a PC has an Ally or a Sworn Enemy present at the Championship (see the Major NPCs list from Appendix #2), those characters can intervene for or against the PC. An Ally can be called upon to lend their voice to the PC's; this grants the PC an additional number of unrolled dice for a Background Information or Persuasion roll equal to the Ally's Influence (so an Influence 2 Ally would grant +2k0 to the roll).. The Ally is willing to do this for a number of rolls in the module equal to their Devotion. Conversely, if the PC has a Sworn Enemy present, that Enemy will attempt to bias the Negotiators against the PC. This effect manifests as a forced reroll on a successful Persuasion attempt, as though the PC had a rank of Unluck. (This is cumulative with any actual Ranks of Unluck the PC might possess.)

For the most part, Miya Ryukousha and Ide Denkaru prefer to spend their time working on the rest of the tournament attendees, building a broader base of support for their positions, while the PCs focus on the major players. However, it is possible that a faction will not have enough PCs to handle the Negotiators, in which case Denkaru and/or Ryukousha will step in to fill in the gap. If a faction has two or fewer PCs in it, the faction leader will be available to aid rolls via Teamwork and even take the lead on some rolls. Ryukousha and Denkaru can aid a PC via Teamwork on any number of rolls, though they will not spend Void Points to do so. They can also take the lead on a certain number of rolls on Day Two. If the faction has no PCs, the faction head will roll for all the Persuasion attempts on Day Two for their faction. With one PC,

the faction head can roll three times. With two PCs, the faction head will roll once. They won't assist a faction with three or more PCs, assuming that such a group can manage themselves. Faction leaders always use **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** to roll or aid via Teamwork, and will only use Boons for Raises or call Raises to earn Boons if their faction's PCs instruct the GM to do so (so they can only use or request Boons that the PCs themselves have learned about). Neither one will spend a Void Point unless either required to for their Disadvantage or if they are currently behind on the Negotiator count for their side.

Day One: Getting to Know All About You

Although all the Negotiators are participants in the games of court, they are also all humans with unique personal interests and Clan ambitions to balance against one another as well. As a result, they all want things for themselves or their Clans that can be used to manipulate them; moreover, who they are as people can sometimes influence their thinking on political matters, even if they would like to think otherwise.

The first step in using that information, though, is actually learning it, and it is to this task that Denkaru and Ryukousha set their allied PCs on Day One of the tournament. Each Negotiator, as well as Ide Denkaru and Miya Ryukousha, is listed below with several pieces of information. These include:

- Initial Position - Whether the Negotiator supports the Miya or the Unicorn coming into the tournament.
- Information TN - the TN of a roll to learn any one of the following pieces of information about the Negotiator: their Initial Position, their Boon, one of their Desired Boons, one of their Personal Interest Skills. This is typically a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness, Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness, or Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, but Personal Interest rolls can be used as well. The TN is based on the Negotiator's Glory. The PC receives one piece of information for making the TN, and one additional piece for each successful Raise.
- Personal Interests - each Negotiator has a reputation and various contacts in several fields of activity, thanks to their hobbies or inclinations. The Skill/Trait rolls listed here can be used to learn information or to Persuade the Negotiator in place of the usual Social Skill rolls. A PC can learn these at the welcoming feast or simply guess them based

on the Negotiator's description in Player Handout #1, as well as through gathering information.

- **Boon** - The gift that the Negotiator has to offer. The additional information about the Boon is included for the GMs to supply to the PCs as they deem appropriate.
- **Desired Boons** - each Negotiator is interested in acquiring two Boons from the other Negotiators. Successfully Persuading a Negotiator to supply a Desired Boon to another Negotiator gives the PC a Free Raise to Persuade the recipient.
- **Yojimbo** - The name of the yojimbo who will champion the Negotiator in any duel.
- **Weakness** - While Ide Denraku and Miya Ryukousha don't have Personal Interests, Boons, or Desired Boons, they do each have a weakness that can be exploited by a PC who knows it during any Contested Roll against them. This uses the listed Information TN, but can normally only be learned via a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness, Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness**, or **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, as faction leaders don't have any listed Personal Interest Skills, but as a special use of their Weakness in My Strength Technique, Bayushi Courtiers learn it automatically whenever they are about to make a Contested Roll against the faction leader.

Crab, Crane, Mantis, Owl, and Scorpion Clan PCs should already know the Boons their clanmate has to offer, as well as the ones they are seeking.

As noted earlier, a specific PC can only be the leader on up to two rolls, and can only provide Teamwork benefits on up to three more. The PCs in each faction can choose to focus on the same Negotiator for multiple rolls, potentially gaining new information each time, but each roll counts against the PC's limits.

Day Two: Winning Friends and Influencing People

On Day Two, the two factions make their pitches to each of the Negotiators. These Persuasion attempts are Contested Rolls between the two factions, with one PC, potentially being assisted by other PCs via Teamwork, rolling on each side. (As explained above, factions with few or no PCs might instead use Miya Ryukousha or Ide Denraku as the rolling character for that faction on some rolls.)

The Persuasion attempts work as follows. Before each attempt, one character from each faction (PC if possible, only a faction leader if there is no PC of that faction) rolls **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness** in a Contested Roll. This represents the political maneuvering and counter-maneuvering to gain access to these influential samurai. The winning faction may then choose which Negotiator will be contested next, setting the political agenda. These Etiquette rolls are not subject to limits on how many rolls a character can make.

Once the Negotiator to be contested has been chosen, each faction selects a PC or, if needed, faction leader, to attempt to persuade the Negotiator. This is a Contested Roll, and Teamwork may be used as described above. Each faction can choose to either Persuade the Negotiator to support Denraku or Ryukousha, to select a recipient for their Boon, or - with a Raise - both. (Raises on Contested Rolls apply a -5 penalty to the result of the roll rather than raising the TN.) Each Negotiator has a starting position in favor of the Unicorn or the Miya; if the winner of the Contested Roll does not attempt to Persuade the Negotiator toward one of the two factions, they remain in their original preference. This is typically a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness, Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness, Sincerity / Awareness, Temptation / Awareness** or **Intimidation (Control) / Willpower** roll, but Personal Interest Skills can be used as well at a -5 penalty to the roll. (NOTE: All Persuasion Rolls are considered to be Social Skill Rolls for the purposes of Techniques, Advantages, and Disadvantages that apply to such, regardless of what Skill is actually being rolled.) At the GM's discretion, well-roleplayed arguments might receive a Free Raise. It is very important to make clear to the players that **only the winner of the Contested Roll effects any changes as to the Negotiator's stances**. Even if one side was just arguing for the disposition of the Boon and the other only trying to persuade the Negotiator on the Horiuchi matter, only the winner of the Contested Roll succeeds in their attempt.

If one of the factions has arranged for a Boon for the Negotiator, that roll gains a Free Raise, which can be used either for +5 to the roll or to Persuade on both possible topics with taking a penalty. Each Negotiator wants two Boons, so two Free Raises are possible.

If the faction so desires, it is possible to lie and pretend to have arranged for a Boon that they have not actually acquired. Doing so causes a D3 Honor Loss and demands a **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** roll, with no other Skills (including for Teamwork) possible. In addition, if the Persuasion is successful but the Boon

does not later materialize, the lead PC gains 1 Rank of Infamy and the Negotiator immediately changes to a position of opposition to the lying faction.

After the Contested Roll has been resolved, the **Etiquette (Bureaucracy) / Awareness** roll is repeated to determine the next Negotiator to be contested, and the process repeats. On the last Negotiator, there is no need for the Etiquette roll.

Appendix #3 provides a tracking sheet to aid the GM in determining the result of each Persuasion attempt.

That Personal Connection

The five Negotiators are described below. This information is summarized, along with their statblocks, in Appendix #1

Daidoji Kawari

Despite his training as a Doji Courtier, who are traditionally known for their ability to make friends and win allies, Kawari is a very reserved, dispassionate man, but nonetheless is known for his skill at navigating the treacherous currents of court through careful calculation than appeals to emotion. Kawari was born and raised in the Crane enclave in Balishnipur, during which time he became a devoted student of both *The Subtlety of the Court* (a famous treatise comparing courtly maneuvering to battlefield strategy) and the gaijin game of strategy known as *chesu*. He has brought this tactical style to his dealings in Rokugan's courts, becoming known as something of a broker for ronin services in addition to his other, less mercantile interests. Since traveling to Rokugan proper, Kawari has also begun studying go, shogi, and the Senpet Empire's popular game called *senet*. Unlike many of his more refined Doji cousins, Daidoji Kawari is no stranger to life in the wilderness, as he often meets with his ronin contacts well outside the comforts of civilization.

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 10

Personal Interests: Battle / Perception, Games: (Any) / Intelligence, Hunting / Perception, Lore: (Any Gaijin) / Intelligence

Boon: Service contract for the Claws of Ravana otokodate. Ahead of the upcoming conflict between the Owl and Scorpion, both clans are looking to hire additional forces, and the Claws of Ravana fit that bill.

Desired Boons: Journal from the Owl, silk works from the Scorpion.

Yojimbo: Daidoji Manin

Hantei Zetsubou

Zetsubou has been assigned to the Owl Archives since she became an adult, and consequently most of her life has been spent in a library - and the underground one at that. She would like to revel in her chance to not only experience the wider world first-hand but also to actually see the shugenja practices she has only read about before, but has instead been forced to try to put her long-neglected courtier talents to use. The fact that she might not be offered another chance in the future should she fail in this has only increased her stress. And then, on top of everything else, the Owl will soon face war, and the Clan and her Archives both need every advantage they can get if they hope to survive. Hantei Zetsubou is a very tense woman.

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 15

Personal Interests: Lore: Shugenja / Intelligence, Spellcraft / Intelligence, Lore: Theology / Intelligence, Lore: History / Intelligence

Boon: The original journal of Heichi Deshi, the second head sensei of the Yasuki Merchant School (while the Yasuki were still a Crane family) and a returned spirit who swore fealty to the Heichi Family at the Owl Clan's founding. Wanted by the Crane and the Crab Clans.

Desired Boons: Ronin contract from the Crane; shipping route from the Crab

Yojimbo: Heichi Genko

Moshi Gekai

Though not a shugenja himself, Moshi Gekai is extremely excited to support his cousins participating in the Dragon's Breath tournament. Gekai is a skilled ship's doctor with a history of service on a variety of Mantis vessels, and much of his spare time at the Shrine is spent aiding the shugenja healers. Gekai is no stranger to court, however, often aiding his ship captains in negotiations with merchants and refined samurai alike. Gekai has goodwill throughout his Clan, which gives him outsized influence for someone in his particular position would otherwise have. Gekai's unique talent for taming and training seabirds, many of whom fish for him while they sail together, is so exceptional that many wonder if it somehow represents a gift of the kami related to but unlike that of his Moshi cousins. Gekai himself seems to find the very idea hilarious, insisting that anyone who can't do what he does simply isn't trying hard enough.

Initial Position: Unicorn

Information TN: 10

Personal Interests: Animal Handling / Awareness, Athletics / Strength, Craft: Sailing / Intelligence, Medicine / Intelligence

Boon: Blessed ivory from the Ivory Kingdoms. Gekai's most recent travels to Balishnimpur (and some very skilled and rather underhanded dealmaking while there) netted him a large quantity of blessed ivory, a substance said to have spiritual powers similar to jade, crystal, and obsidian. Both the Crab and the Scorpion have expressed interest in testing these properties in their battles against the Shadowlands and other mystic horrors.

Desired Boons: Silk works from the Scorpion, shipping route from the Crab

Yojimbo: Yoritomo Rosun

Shosuro Fumei

Fumei is a mystery. Their true face is unknown, their birth a secret, their gender and family carefully concealed. Fumei is a renowned kabuki actor, famous for disappearing into their role, inhabiting that persona in any public appearance until the final performance is done. When not rehearsing for or performing a role, as is the case now, Fumei wears a generic, blank, full-face mask and thick layers of kimono that render any attempt to identify a face or body useless. Fumei's voice is pitched so as to give no hint as to whether they are male or female, their gestures too stylized and artful to give any hints to their training or personality. Many speculate that Fumei is not one actor but several, given the skill with which they portray each role in turn, but most theater mavens deny this - Fumei's sheer brilliance is an unwavering constant. Though they do not discuss such matters in person, Fumei is also known as a patron of many arts, from painting and sculpture to song and poetry, spending generously to support a number of talented creators across the Empire.

Initial Position: Unicorn

Information TN: 5

Personal Interests: Artisan: (Any) / Awareness, Perform: (Any) / Awareness, Lore: Underworld / Intelligence, Stealth / Agility

Boon: The assets of the former Taishiki Silk Works. The owner of the Taishiki was a disgraced Soshi who is believed to have somehow betrayed the Scorpion Clan; although he cleansed his shame via seppuku, the Scorpion Clan have decided to transfer the assets (the trained workers, cuttings from the mulberry trees to be planted elsewhere, carefully-tended worms) to another Clan, to rid themselves of the whole affair. The Crane and the Mantis Clans have both expressed interest

Desired Boons: Blessed ivory from the Mantis, ronin contract from the Crane.

Yojimbo: Bayushi Shinme

Yasuki Kashite

Yasuki Kashite loves steel. She loves the way it looks, the way it feels, the way it sounds. She loves to watch it take shape, to polish it until it gleams. She loves the artistry of its forging and of its use. She wonders sometimes if she had the talent to speak to the kami, and the singing she imagines she hears from a sword as it is shaped and quenched and honed is real. Not naturally sociable by inclination - which one would expect to be a hindrance in a merchant patron - Kashite comes alive when the topic of conversation is weapons or metals, making it easy for her to persuade others as to the value of her goods. She has been considering expanding her trade network to the Islands of Spice and Silk, a rich market in lands not known for steel deposits, but the Owl Clan has been aggressively wooing her to send ships to Azuma no Miru Mura instead...

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 13

Personal Interests: Craft: Weaponsmithing / Intelligence, Craft: Blacksmithing / Intelligence, Kenjutsu / Agility, Commerce / Intelligence

Boon: Establishing a regular trade route to either the Mantis' Islands of Silk and Spice or the Owl port of Azuma no Miru Mura. Both Clans have little iron ore resources and the ships would be very welcome.

Desired Boons: Journal from the Owl; Sacred ivory samples from the Ivory Kingdoms imported by the Mantis.

Yojimbo: Hiruma Kiriko

Ide Denraku

Denraku is an ambitious man, a man who likes high stakes, especially when he wins. His primary interests are in horse breeding, and there are few outside the Utaku stables who can match his eye for fine steeds. He doesn't limit himself to just horses, however. He volunteered to handle the Unicorn Clan's negotiations with the Imperial Court over the lands once held by the Horiuchi because he saw the chance to enrich the Ide family - and himself. The Horiuchi did little to exploit the mineral wealth in the Spine of the World Mountains along their southern border, but if the Ide family can claim that territory, Denraku plans to change that. He foresees a mining town in every valley between Shiro Ide and the ruins of Shiro Horiuchi, all lining his coffers with koku.

Initial Position: Unicorn

Information TN: 13

Yojimbo: Shinjo Masaro

Weakness: Overconfident. If the PC knows this Disadvantage, they can force Denraku to declare

all possible Raises of the opposed roll and to refuse any Free Raise to which he would otherwise be entitled.

Miya Ryukousha

Ryokousha had always spurned the politics of the other Imperial families, even to an extent that surprised most of his Miya relatives. It was the horizon that called to him, not the court; at best, most people were a distraction from the wonders that awaited him around the next hill, and at worst they were an active obstacle. His only real concession to diplomacy was to make certain he never had problems with travel papers, a task that required only minimal effort thanks to his Imperial heritage. Then, at a roadside inn in the middle of the Lion provinces, he met Matsu Rojume. At the end of one long night of sake and conversation, Ryukousha's life had changed forever. He was in love. He knew he could not say the same for Rojume, though, so it became clear that he would need to become a man she would love, a samurai of influence, power, and culture: a lover from the most torrid pillow book. He has sought out training from singers, poets, and actors, trying to master love as he has mastered exploration. Whether those efforts have paid off has yet to be seen, but Ryukousha is nonetheless ready to begin the next step in his plan: successfully convince the Unicorn to turn the Horiuchi provinces to Miya control.

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 13

Yojimbo: Seppun Mojime

Weakness: True Love. A PC who knows this Disadvantage can force Ryukousha to confront the fact that his negotiations are for his own interest and not his family's, and thus force him to spend a Void Point or fail the roll. Ryukousha will choose to fail any Contested Roll of Etiquette to set the political agenda as well as any roll made to Persuade a Negotiator who began on his side; he will spend Void to attempt to Persuade someone who did not begin on his side.

Part Three: To the Last Breath

For the first two days of the Championship, matters proceed fairly normally. Shugenja duel, intrigues occur, deals are struck. However, under intense pressure to achieve their goals, on the evening of Day Two, one of the Negotiators takes a step over the line, from cutthroat deals to actually cutting throats.

At the end of the afternoon time window on Day Two,

determine which Negotiator has achieved the fewest of their Desired Boons; break any ties by selecting the lowest Honor Rank. This Negotiator becomes the "Employer." The Employer approaches Dabaana on the evening of Day Two and hires him for a very specific task: the murder of another Negotiator. This Victim should be the Negotiator who has achieved the most Desires, breaking any ties by choosing the highest Honor Rank. Dabaana accepts the Employer's offer, slips a sedative made from the datura root into the Victim's evening tea, then sneaks into the Victim's room and strangles them with his turban garrote. Although he is successful, there is a brief struggle, enough to attract the attention of a passing monk. Dabaana is forced to retreat to his own room before he can clean up the scene - leaving traces of his culpability that the PCs can find.

In the very early hours of the morning on Day Three, the PCs are awakened by a young monk called Yanagi. It is still very much dark outside, with dawn hours away, but the PCs should be considered to have received enough rest to recover Void Points and spell slots. Yanagi apologetically and quietly asks the PCs to accompany him to meet the monk Kobu, Kowareta's most respected advisor. Although the monk explains he has not been given any specifics, he believes there was some kind of tragic incident, and Kobu would like to call upon the PCs for assistance with it somehow. Yanagi suggests that weapons and armor might be appropriate, under the circumstances.

Assuming the PCs follow him, the young acolyte leads the PCs out into the darkness of the shrine's grounds, across to the central hall. They see no other guests, and only a bare handful of lesser monks performing custodial tasks. The temple kitchen has not yet begun preparations for the morning meal, and at this hour, even deep summer still carries a hint of chill. Kobu is waiting for the PCs within the central building, in a small meditation cell on the second floor at the end of one of the guest room corridors. As the PCs arrive, they can see one of the rooms further down the corridor, has a pair of sohei monks, each with bisento ready to hand, standing in front of the door.

The meditation cell is small and cramped, too much so to easily hold a group of your size, but the monk Kobu nonetheless closes the door behind you and seats herself easily on the woven mat, gesturing for you to do the same. Kobu is of medium height and lightly built, a sharp contrast to the imposing frame of her abbot, but there is a quiet wisdom in her eyes that seems surprising in a woman still not thirty years of age.

She speaks quietly, clearly aware of the late hour and paper walls around you. "I must beg your forgiveness for interrupting your rest, samurai-samas. You are honored guests, not normally to be burdened with hard tasks, but I felt the guidance of the Thunder Dragon touch me as I considered our circumstances, and your faces appeared in my thoughts. I am not one to ignore such wisdom when it is brought upon me."

She sighs, her face marked briefly with sadness before calm reasserts itself. "This matter is very upsetting, I am afraid, and not something we are well-equipped to address. You see, one of our guests has been killed. Murdered, it would seem, within our walls. This is a dishonor to us and an insult to the Thunder Dragon. I am hoping you can help me quickly locate the murderer."

Kobu continues, naming the Victim and explaining that their room is just down the hall, currently guarded against further intrusion.

"One of our sisters was passing nearby about half an hour ago and heard a disturbance. She approached and called out, but heard no answer. Fearing for the safety of our guest, she entered and found the body, whereupon she came to me. I have asked that she meditate in the other chamber like this one at the far end of the hall, so she should be available if you need to speak with her. I ask that you be... sensitive... if you do so. She is young, and serenity does not yet come easily." Assuming the PCs agree to aid her, Kobu follows them throughout their investigations, making sure to smooth over any questions the monks or other guests might have about the PCs' actions and supporting their decisions without hesitation.

The young monk is named Ishime, a girl with a shaven head, no more than 15 years old, and she is found in a room essentially identical to the one in which Kobu met the PCs. She has fallen asleep in a meditative pose, dried tears still glittering on her cheeks. She awakens with a start as the PCs enter, scrubbing at her cheeks and bowing deeply; even a casual glance sees that she is shaking and barely holding onto her calm. When asked, she tells the following tale:

"I was set to making sure that the lamps in our guest quarters had been turned out for the night, so I was walking down the corridor. I heard some kind of thumping and grunting, like something heavy had just fallen to the floor, but there were voices too. So I hurried over to the door and called out. I heard a shout then, a man's voice, angry, but I have never heard the language before, I don't know what he said. Then I heard running feet. I called again, heard nothing, and

then I opened the door. Then I saw..." she trails off, seeming unable to vocalize details. Instead, she just gestures vaguely in the direction of the Victim's room.

If pressed for details, she will force herself to describe the body half-off the futon and the open door to the balcony, but cannot offer any additional details; anything else she might have seen has been washed away by panic and horror. If anyone happens to speak Ivindi and do so in front of her she will confirm that it sounds like the language she heard (while also looking at the speaker as though they have turned into an oni).

The Room Where It Happened

As the PCs enter the Victim's room, read the following:

The room is about twice the size of the ones you have been assigned, but other than a door opening onto a small balcony that looks out toward Mount Raimei in the distance, it lacks few if any additional amenities beyond those offered in the smaller cells where you have been staying.

[Victim]'s body lies in the middle of the chamber, sprawled half off the futon, legs on the mattress and torso and head on the wooden floor. Though there is no blood staining the scene, a thick dark bruise wraps around the front and sides of [their] neck. [Their] hands are still clenched near [their] throat, as though grasping or pulling at something you cannot see. [Their] simple night clothes are askew but otherwise unmarred.

Looking around the rest of the room, you note a writing table with a small tray of tea and some papers scattered across it. A pair of lanterns have been lit at two corners of the room, providing a cheery light that is at odds with the view it allows.. Despite the death before you, the room seems almost unsettlingly ordinary in every other respect.

There are a number of areas of investigation within the room the PCs might examine, including primarily the body, the table, and the balcony. Each of these can be searched with an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll. Teamwork can be used on these rolls, and anyone aiding the rolling PC can spend a Void Point to add their Water Ring to the roll in addition their Investigation Skill Rank.

The body:

- TN 10 - The bruising strongly suggests that the victim was strangled to death. The

bruising pattern is remarkably uniform, though, unlike fingers normally make when a strong grip is applied to flesh. It seems more likely to have been a wider object of uniform width, perhaps something like an obi.

- TN 15 - There is something still clenched in the body's hand. Once the grip is pried open, it turns out to be a torn piece of cloth, less than a hand's-width across and about as wide as a finger. It is made of a strange, yellowish-white fiber that does not match anything common in Rokugan at first glance.

The desk:

- TN 10 - The papers are mundane correspondence, of no real importance, but the tea does have a slightly strange smell. A small amount of tea remains in the bottom of one of the cups, and seems to leave a strange residue if sloshed around.

The balcony:

- TN 10 - A set of three parallel gouges are visible in the balcony's railing, a fingernail deep and perhaps an inch and a half between them.
- TN 15 - Directly below the balcony is some bare mud, where a footprint can be clearly seen.

If the torn fabric is found, a **Lore: Ivory Kingdoms / Intelligence, Craft: Tailoring / Intelligence**, or a **Commerce / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, recognizes the fabric as wata, a plant-based fiber common in the Ivory Kingdoms but that does not grow well in Rokugan's climate. Any PC who has lived in or visited Balishnimpur will recognize the fabric without needing to roll, as it is common to make kimono of wata for samurai who live there. (*Wata* is cotton.) PCs might recall that Dabaana was seen at the greeting feast on the first night wearing a headwrap of cloth of this type and color, one composed of a single long strip of cloth wrapped around on itself several times. A character with Precise Memory remembers this without rolling, but any PC who asks if they have seen something similar can make a **Raw Intelligence** Roll, TN 10, to be reminded of this fact.

The tea's smell and residue do indicate that the Victim was poisoned, but in truth the "poison" was merely a sedative slipped into their tea to make the later strangulation proceed more smoothly - though it did not work out this way in this instance. A PC who examines the tea can roll either **Medicine / Intelligence** or **Craft: Poison / Intelligence**, TN 15, to recognize datura root, which can be used as a poison

or as a sedative and painkiller depending on dosage. It is rare in Rokugan, however, as it is not native and must be imported from the Ivory Kingdoms, making it both more expensive and less effective than locally-grown opium. In general, healers only turn to datura for patients with a history of opium abuse.

The three gouges in the balcony railing are from a grappling hook, as PCs might guess, but anyone with the Ninja Weapons Skill, Crafty Advantage, or a grappling hook in their traveling pack can confirm that without needing to roll. If a PC examines the mud patch below the balcony, a **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** roll, TN 10, notes that the "footprints" are actually boot prints, not of local design. Two prints can be distinguished in the mud, one approaching the building and the second, later print is heading away. Though there is no clear trail beyond the mud patch, the one visible print points in the direction of one of the guests barracks, not the one in which the PCs have been given rooms but the other. Should any ask Kobu, she can confirm that Dabaana's rooms are in the barracks to which the prints lead.

Should a PC shugenja wish to Commune with the kami - or be reminded by Kobu to do so if they don't think of it themselves - there are examples of all the usual kami in the room. There is water in the teapot, flames in the lanterns, earth in the wood of the floors and walls, and air throughout. All can describe the same basic scene, each in its own way: a dark-skinned figure not of Rokugani spiritual nature (easily recognizable as Dabaana if the water kami are showing the scene) climbed up onto the balcony, entered the room, unwrapped his turban and instead wrapped each end around his hands, and proceeded to use it as a garrote to strangle the victim. A brief struggle ensued, during which the killer dragged the victim half-off the futon, eventually dropping them to the floor when the victim finally died. At that moment, however, the initiate Ishime called out, startling the killer and causing him to flee back over the balcony in undue haste.

If the water kami specifically are invoked and questioned, they can also tell the PCs that the monks brought tea up the Victim's room, left it outside the door, and Dabaana passed by shortly later to place the datura root in the tea. The monks in the kitchens can also tell the PCs that the Victim requested tea and it was left outside their room.

Are You Ready to Rumble?

By the time the PCs have completed their examination of the Victim's room and spoken with Ishime, they

likely suspect Dabaana in the killing. This is, of course, correct. Once a clear suspect has emerged, Kobu will urge rapid action - since it seems that the killer knows that their crime has already been discovered, it's likely that they will already be attempting to flee the shrine. A swift confrontation seems wise. If the PCs wish to seek out Dabaana, Kobu volunteers to go to the monks at the front gate, verifying that no one has so far left, and have those gates closed.

The grounds of the shrine are wrapped in deep darkness, with only a thin sliver of Lady Moon showing the dark shapes of the complex's buildings against the starry sky. As the PCs cross the space between the main shrine building and the distant barracks, they can make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 10, to spot flickering lantern light coming from the stables. If no one spots the light, or the PCs choose not to seek out its source, they find an unconscious monk slumped over near the barracks door, a cup of tea fallen from his hand. Just inside, in the ground floor of the barracks corridor, a nearby room door gapes open, muddy prints leading both toward and away from it. The room beyond shows signs of having been recently crowded with three or four occupants, based on the straw pallets on the floor, but is entirely empty now, despite the lateness of the hour. Kobu reappears as the PCs come across the scene, warning them that she spotted lights in the stables and fears that the killer might be trying to flee.

When the PCs reach the stables, whether or not they detoured to the guest barracks first, they find the massive door on one end of the great barn-like structure partly open, the locking beam tossed to the grass on one side. Within, figures carry lanterns and speak to each other in sharp, low tones; although the words can't be made out, Ivindi speakers recognize the language of the Ivory Kingdoms.

Inside, Dabaana and his fellow *sthazi* are preparing to flee the shrine in hopes of getting a head start before the inevitable search for the Victim's killer begins. Dabaana had expected to have quite a bit of additional time to clean up the murder scene after completing the grisly task, but Ishime's untimely interruption ruined that, leaving the murderer with little choice but to flee. Dabaana knows that samurai are coming, and is prepared to fight his way to freedom if he must. Likewise, his fellows have heard horrific stories of how *samurhai* kill their prisoners - brutal evisceration, **then** beheading! - and would much rather die in combat than experience such a grisly fate.

The stable is quite expansive, about 80 feet long, with a central path of beaten earth down the middle perhaps 15 feet across. Wooden pens line the sides of the main aisle, each with sleeping or snuffling horses within. Roughly twenty feet from the entrance, Dabaana and the other *sthazi* are attempting to steal and saddle some horses for a quick flight, but the beasts have so far not cooperated. There is another massive door on the building's far end, but it remains shut and barred from the outside. When the PCs arrive, it is immediately clear that the *sthazi* have only one means of escape, and it lies through the PCs. Initiative begins at once.

Dabaana enters the Defense Stance on the first round while he readies his turban garrotte; his *sthazi* allies can draw their katars and wakizashis as Free Actions, however, and will close to combat at once. If a PC has a steed as part of their Outfit, they find that their horse is "coincidentally" stabled right near the entrance, close enough to open the pen and mount as a Complex Action if desired. (Horsemanship Mastery Abilities reduce this as normal.) This is not, as it happens, coincidence at all, but is rather Kobu's doing on the day of the PCs' arrival.

If there are 6 or more PCs at the table, Dabaana has a third *sthazi* with him named Lehka.

Dabaana

Dabaana was born into the world of the *sthazi* and has never known anything else. Though his family operated in and around Balishnimpur, they rarely visited the occupied city for fear of provoking the *samurhai* there. Dabaana, however, saw opportunity where others felt only fear, and he persuaded his family and some followers to let him test his belief. Dabaana created the Claws of Ravana "ronin band" right beneath the noses of the arrogant Rokugani, and constantly laughed to himself as they piled gold upon gold to have him kill for them. His audacity paid off handsomely, so much so that he decided to expand the Claws of Ravana right into the heart of Rokugan itself. Such a rich land, so ripe for the taking... Dabaana is of middling height, with the rich brown skin of the Ivinda peoples and well-calloused hands. He favors the traditional tan-yellow turban of the *sthazi*, but he wears a wakizashi to mark his status as a "ronin" alongside the punching dagger, called a katar, that he prefers to fight with.

Air 3	Earth	Fire 3	Water	Void 2
	3		3	

Honor 0.0 Status 0.0 Glory 1.5
Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 6k3e (turban garrote, Complex) or 5k3 (unarmed, Complex) or 6k3 (katar, Complex)
Armor TN: 23, or 25 with katar and wakizashi (ashigaru armor) **Damage:** special (turban) or 3k1 (unarmed) or 5k1 (katar)

Reduction: 1
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out), 58 (Dead)
School/Rank: Sthagi Marauder 2

Techniques: *A Cleansing Breath:* can make a grapple attack with a chain weapon to ensnare an opponent; neither combatant gains the grappled condition; an ensnared target cannot move, gains -1 Reflexes for purposes of Armor TN, and loses access to either one arm (for using weapons) or their voice, attackers choice; target can break free as a Free Action at the start of their turn with a Contested Roll of **Jiujutsu / Strength** vs the attacker's **Chain Weapons / Strength**; if attacker starts turn with ensnared opponent, can make another grapple attack with turban garrote against them to instead give target entangled condition (see L5R 4E Core, pg 89)

The Bloodless Silence: can make an unarmed attack against ensnared or entangled target during Reactions Stage

Skills: Athletics 2 (Climbing), Chain Weapons 3 (Turban Garrote), Defense 2, Hunting 2, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 1, Knives 3 (Katar), Lore: Underworld 2 (Ivory Kingdoms), Sincerity 3 (Deceit), Sleight of Hand 2, Stealth 3 (Ambush, Sneaking)

Mastery Abilities: make Grapple attacks with chain weapons, no penalties for dual-wielding with knives; Simple Moves while sneaking are Water x5 feet

Advantages/Disadvantages: Momoku

Rahi and Kalyani

Air 2 Earth 2 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2

Honor 0.0 Status 0.0 Glory 0.0
Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 4k2 (wakizashi, Complex) or katar (5k2, Complex)

Armor TN: 16 (katar and wakizashi) **Damage:** 4k2 (wakizashi) or 4k1 (katar)

Reduction: n/a
Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Out), 39 (Dead)
School/Rank: none (Insight Rank 1)

Skills: Athletics 1, Hunting 1, Intimidation 1, Investigation 1, Jiujutsu 1, Kenjutsu 2, Knives 3, Stealth 1

Mastery Abilities: no penalties for dual-wielding with knives

Advantages/Disadvantages: Momoku

If the PCs manage to capture any of the *sthazi* alive, they confess their true associations and status as criminals rather than samurai of any stripe. They will also tell the PCs the name of the Employer. If not, Dabaana's traveling pack - on the ground near the horse he was planning to steal - contains 30 koku stamped with the Clan of the Employer. (The koku is confiscated by the Emerald Magistrate, sorry ronin PCs.)

Part Four: No Breath of Scandal

Regardless of whether any of the *sthazi* tell the PCs who hired Dabaana, as gaijin criminals without any actual standing as samurai, their testimony is worthless in Rokugan. Any PC who succeeds at a TN 10 **Lore: Law / Intelligence** roll knows that a magistrate will only convict an accused criminal if at least one samurai of higher Status or at least three samurai of equal Status or lower provide testimony of their criminal action. No matter the PCs' suspicions, they do not have any way to get that testimony officially.

If there are any *sthazi* survivors, Koku sends for Emerald Magistrate Tsuruchi Fumihiro, who is attending the Dragon's Breath Championship as a spectator. He sentences any survivors to death by hanging (ironically sparing the *sthazi* the deaths they had feared, as they are not samurai), and though he listens patiently to any "theories" the PCs might have about who hired Dabaana, he is careful to point out that he needs testimony, and they simply don't have it.

Whether or not Fumihiro gets involved, when the PCs are alone once more, Kubo quietly raises the question of justice. "If you feel as though the guilty party will walk free," she observes, "there are a few possibilities

you might consider. The testimony of three samurai would see that person convicted. You might be able to supply such testimony.” If a PC points out that they didn’t actually see anything, Kobu nods, but replies, “What you saw and what you say need not align, if you feel that justice is worth that.”

Some PCs, especially honorable ones, might be shocked or surprised that a monk would suggest lying to a magistrate. Kobu replies calmly, “Bayushi Kachiko poisoned her husband for a year. Toturi was a ronin. Hida Yakamo and Isawa Tadaka were both stained by the Taint. For some heroes, honor strengthens heroism, but for others, heroism redeems dishonor.”

If three PCs agree to offer the needed testimony, they suffer D0 Honor loss, but Fumihiko accepts their testimony and convicts the Employer. A PC with an Ally attending the tournament can permanently reduce that Ally’s Devotion by 1 to convince them to provide one of the needed pieces of testimony as well. (A PC with Fumihiko himself as an Ally can likewise reduce his Devotion by 1 to have Fumihiko convict the Employer.)

If lying to the magistrate doesn’t appeal to the PCs, though, Kubo makes another suggestion. “For many samurai, their reputation is more valuable to them than even their life. If word were to spread around the attendees here that this person hired a gaijin, of all things, to commit such a terrible crime, I suspect they would find the willingness of others here to associate with them much reduced.” Kobu smiles slightly. “The people of the Emerald Empire are nothing if not willing to share a spicy tale.”

The PCs can attempt to slander the Employer’s reputation by making a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, DC 15, but they should be aware that, unless they declare a Raise to hide the source of the rumors, the Employer will find out who is spreading the accusation and will likely confront them. Kobu points this out if the PCs are not already aware of it.

In this instance, the Employer will indeed find the PC who made the rumor roll early on Day Three and challenge them, demanding a public apology and retraction. If the PC does not do so, the Employer will challenge them to a duel. As this is a matter of apology rather than criminal accusation, the duel will be to first blood. (Refusal strips the PC of 1 Rank of Status, likely resulting in them becoming ronin.)

As the PC is the challenged party, they can determine the format of the duel: either iaijutsu or skirmish

combat. Regardless of the format, it is a first blood duel, and should not result in a PC death. None of the Negotiators are bushi, and thus choose their yojimbo as their champion. A non-bushi PC may do so likewise. If it an iaijutsu duel, it is resolved normally; if it is skirmish, it is a standard skirmish combat (in armor) until the first strike lands. In either case, if the yojimbo strikes first, they keep low dice on damage, in keeping with first strike traditions.

Duelist Yojimbo

Air 3	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 2
			Strength 3	
Honor var		Status 1.0		Glory 1.0
Initiative: 4k3			Attack: 6k3 (katana, Complex)	
Armor TN: 20 (25 in light armor)			Damage: 7k2	
		Reduction: 0, or 3 in light armor		
		Wounds: 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Out), 39 (Dead)		
		School/Rank: Hiruma Bushi 1 or Daidoji Iron Warrior 1 or Yoritomo Bushi 1 or Heichi Bushi 1 or Bayushi Bushi 1		
		Techniques: varies		
		Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 2, Iaijutsu 3 (Focus), Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 3 (Katana), Kyujutsu 1, Lore: Bushido 1		
		Mastery Abilities: ready katana as a Free Action, +1k0 damage with swords		
		Advantages/Disadvantages: none		

If the PCs decide they are unwilling to take any action without trying to confront the Employer, they may do so the following morning (after the early round of the tournament). The Employer denies everything with smug courtesy; if the PCs attempt to push the issue, they are warned that they risk insult. Any further action results in the same challenge as above.

Conclusion

Regardless of whether there is a duel afterward, by shortly after dawn, word has spread around the Championship of the murder the night before. Though everyone has also heard that the Ivindi murderer has been identified and dealt with, it nonetheless casts a pall over what should have been the triumphant final day of the tournament. Nonetheless, the semifinals occur in the morning (any remaining PC contestant has not had a chance to regain spells or Void Points since

the combat against Dabaana). After the morning contests are done, any challenge made by a Negotiator occurs, and then the consequences of the duel apply.

If the PCs spread rumors and hid their involvement, the following scene occurs:

A small disturbance draws your eye near the front gate: [The Employer] is trying to speak to Ide Denraku, but the narrow-faced Unicorn steadfastly refuses to acknowledge [them], raising a fan to block [the Employer]'s face from his eyes. Others begin to approach, but each courtier produces a fan and places the brightly-colored face so hide [Employer] from their eyes. After several long breaths, as [Employer] spins around, trying to meet any gaze, Denraku finally lowers his fan and looks directly at [Employer]. "Perhaps you would find more suitable company with your gaijin friends. I strongly recommend you seek them out and trouble us no further." A shocked look crosses [Employer]'s countenance, shattering [their] mask of calm. A last wild look around shows no friend among the other courtiers, and [their] yojimbo steps to [their] shoulder, murmurs into [their] ear, and draws them away into the shrine building. A few minutes later, the two of them hurry out through the shrine gates, making no goodbyes as they go.

If the PC won their challenge, the following scene occurs afterward:

[Employer] meets your gaze with barely concealed fury, then draws [their] wakizashi, slashing a wound through their skin to match [their] yojimbo's. Then, lips curling back from [their] teeth, [Employer] hurls the blade into the ground, where it quivers as though as angry as its owner. [Employer] spins away and stalks into the crowd, leaving the sword - and [their] honor - behind.

Winning the duel earns 1 point of Glory; keeping minimum damage is a H5 Honor gain as well.

If the PC loses their duel, the Employer nods in satisfaction, barely concealing a smug grin, before visibly dismissing the PC from their attention and moving back into the assembled crowd. Several courtiers approach to speak with them, and it quickly becomes clear that the challenge has only increased their influence. If the challenged PC was not the actual duelist, remind them they are expected to deal themselves a similar wound to the one received by their champion.

If the duel is a karmic strike, both sides take Wounds as appropriate (keeping low dice still nets the duelist the potential for some Honor) and the matter is left unresolved. The challenged PC loses 2 points of Glory, as they gain a reputation for rumor-mongering beyond what is seemly, but the Employer faces additional difficulties in their dealings with the rest of the samurai assembled. A short while later, the following scene occurs:

A small disturbance draws your eye near the front gate: [The Employer] is trying to speak to Ide Denraku, but the narrow-faced Unicorn steadfastly refuses to acknowledge [them], instead staring up at Mount Raimei with deliberate inattention and fanning himself. After several long breaths, Denraku finally lowers his fan and speaks without looking at [Employer], as though idly talking to no one in particular, "One would think that one would recognize when one's presence causes more problems than it solves, and withdraw so as to reduce any further shame or dishonor." [Employer]'s face tightens as [they] visibly fights to contain [their] emotions. Before [they] can make any response, however, [their] yojimbo steps to [their] shoulder, murmurs into [their] ear, and draws them away into the shrine building. A few minutes later, the two of them hurry out through the shrine gates, making no goodbyes as they go.

That afternoon sees the final taryu-jiai duel. If no PC has made it to the finals, the last duel is between Agasha Chuso and Shiba Nikene. It is an awe-inspiring display of elemental power, as the earth itself shakes beneath Chuso's feet and stones rise into the air around him; a vertical whirlpool swirls into existence behind Nikene, waves lashing forward as she gestures with her arms. Finally, a boulder as large as a small house rises over Chuso's head and down toward Nikene like a mountain collapsing on her. It seems impossible that anyone could survive, let alone overcome such power, but Nikene brings her hands forward, sculpting the water into a stream as narrow as a blade, meeting the stone with astonishing force and cleaving it neatly apart, leaving two hunks of stone with faces so smooth you can almost see your reflection in them. As the thin stream of water breaks through the boulder's far side it explodes outward, crashing down on Chuso and sweeping him back, his connection to the earth doing nothing to help him keep his feet. In seconds, the Dragon shugenja lies motionless on the grass, but even before the other priests can reach him to heal his wounds, Nikene gestures again and all his injuries close and fade at once. As Chuso's eyes open, the crowd roars its

approval and acknowledges the first Dragon's Breath Champion.

If a PC manages to reach the finals, see Appendix #4 for a summary of the rules of taryu-jiai and a statblock for Shiba Nikene. Remember that, although Nikene has no desire to try to kill anyone, taryu-jiai can be a very dangerous experience and a Rank One character stands a very real chance of death in this conflict. Advise the player accordingly during the Assessment step, in case they wish to concede. Winning the Dragon's Breath Championship earns a PC one full Rank of Glory.

Finally, once the Championship is done, Kobu approaches the PCs on the ground near the dueling grounds. She gives them a measured bow, then raises her eyes to meet that of Kowareta, watching her curiously from where he is congratulating Nikene on her performance in the tournament. A sudden grin lights up Kobu's face, making her seem much younger, and she turns to the PCs.

"I wish to thank each of you for your aid to the Shrine. It has not gone unnoticed," the monk smiles. "I am quite confident that today is not the last the Empire will ever hear your names."

Suddenly, the air around Kobu darkens, as though the night sky had suddenly wrapped itself around her in the midst of Lord Sun's light. Blazing lines of blue-white light, bolts of lightning caught and frozen in the single breath of their existence, are etched through the shadowy space over and around Kobu, marking out the form and shape of a massive dragon whose brilliant sparking eyes are matched by Kobu's own. As one, the monk and the dragon-image speak in a voice that rolls across the plains and up toward Mount Raimei like the rumble of a distant storm. "After all," they say together, "it is my nature to recognize heroes."

A shock of white light washes the world away from your vision and a hammer of sound batters you hard enough to make your bones shake. When at last you can blink away the green spots from your eyes and hearing starts to return, you see Kobu is gone, leaving only a black scorch mark and a thin twist of smoke in her wake.

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Successfully Persuading or Aiding in the Persuasion of At Least One Negotiator:	1 XP
Defeating Dabaana:	1 XP
Negotiating a Boon Outside Your Clan's Orders:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	5 XP

Favors

As long as at least one Negotiator was persuaded by a PC, that PC receives a Favor.

Honor

There are no Honor gains or losses in this module beyond those listed in the text itself for certain actions.

Glory

For receiving the recognition of the Oracle of Thunder in a very public setting, the PCs each receive G9 Glory.

Allies and Enemies

There are no Allies or Sworn Enemies gained in this module.

Other Rewards

For being recognized by the Oracle of Thunder, each PC receives the Blessing of Thunder cert.

A PC who wins the Dragon's Breath Championship receives the Toryu's Wakizashi cert.

Module Reporting Questions

Which faction won the support of the majority of the Negotiators?

Who was the Victim?

Who was the Employer?

What was the Employer's fate?

Which Clan received the Journal of Heichi Deshi?

Which Clan received the shipment of blessed ivory?

Which Clan received the Taishiki Silk Works?

Which Clan will see a new Yasuki trade route established?

Appendix #1: Negotiators

Each of the Negotiators in the adventure is listed below, with their usual statblock (should it be needed) as well as some additional information that relates to the politicking the PCs might be involved in. The information is as follows:

- 1) Initial Position – Whether the Negotiator supports the Miya or the Unicorn coming into the tournament.
- 2) Information TN – The TN of a roll to learn any one of the following pieces of information about the Negotiator: their Initial Position, their Boon, one of their Desired Boons, one of their Personal Interest Skills. This is typically a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness, Etiquette (Conversation) / Awareness, or Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, but Personal Interest rolls can be used as well. The TN is based on the Negotiator's Glory. The PC receives one piece of information for making the TN, and one additional piece for each successful Raise.
- 3) Personal Interests – The Skill/Trait rolls listed here can be used to learn information or to Persuade the Negotiator in place of the usual Social Skill rolls. A PC can learn these at the welcoming feast or simply guess them based on the Negotiator's description in Player Handout #1, as well as through gathering information.
- 4) Boon – The gift that the Negotiator has to offer. The additional information about the Boon is included for the GMs to supply to the PCs as they deem appropriate.
- 5) Desired Boons - Each Negotiator is interested in acquiring two Boons from the other Negotiators. Successfully Persuading a Negotiator to supply a Desired Boon to another Negotiator gives the PC a Free Raise to Persuade the recipient.
- 6) Yojimbo - The name of the yojimbo who will champion the Negotiator in any duel.

Daidoji Kawari

Despite his training as a Doji Courtier, who are traditionally known for their ability to make friends and win allies, Kawari is a very reserved, dispassionate man, but nonetheless is known for his skill at navigating the treacherous currents of court through careful calculation than appeals to emotion. Kawari was born and raised in the Crane enclave in Balishnipur, during which time he became a devoted student of both *The Subtlety of the Court* (a famous treatise comparing courtly maneuvering to battlefield strategy) and the gaijin game of strategy known as *chesu*. He has brought this tactical style to his dealings in Rokugan's courts, becoming known as something of a broker for ronin services in addition to his other, less mercantile interests. Since traveling to Rokugan proper, Kawari has also begun studying go, shogi, and the Senpet Empire's popular game called *senet*. Unlike many of his more refined Doji cousins, Daidoji Kawari is no stranger to life in the wilderness, as he often meets with his ronin contacts well outside the comforts of civilization.

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 3
Awareness 3				
Honor 6.5		Status 3.5		Glory 4.0
Initiative: 4k2		Attack: 5k3 (katana)		
Armor TN: 15		Damage: 6k2 (katana)		
Reduction: n/a				
Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)				

School/Rank: Doji Courtier 2

Techniques: *The Soul of Honor:* gain Free Raise to Courtier, Etiquette, Sincerity rolls while Honor 6+; may make Contested Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness vs Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness to learn if target needs a favor

Speaking in Silence: Courtier / Intelligence, TN 15, to communicate simple message to another Crane Courtier via fan, Raises for more complex messages

Skills: Battle 3, Calligraphy 2, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Etiquette (Courtesy) 2, Games: Chess 3, Games: Go 1, Games: Senet 1, Games: Shogi 2, Hunting (Survival) 2, Lore: Ivory Kingdoms 3, Perform: Storytelling 1, Sincerity 2, Tea Ceremony 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: none

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 10

Personal Interests: Battle / Perception, Games: (Any) / Intelligence, Hunting / Perception, Lore: (Any Gaijin) / Intelligence

Boon: Service contract for the Claws of Ravana otokodate. Ahead of the upcoming conflict between the Owl and Scorpion, both clans are looking to hire additional forces, and the Claws of Ravana fit that bill.

Desired Boons: Journal from the Owl, silk works from the Scorpion.

Yojimbo: Daidoji Manin

Hantei Zetsubou

Hantei Zetsubou is a short, rather round woman with large eyes that make her look much like her Clan's

namesake. A lifelong Archivist in the Owl Libraries, Zetsubou specializes in shugenja practices of the various Clans; as such, the lure of an Empire-wide taryu-jiai tournament was too much to resist. Zetsubou is not a particularly talented diplomat, however, and was not best pleased when she learned that she was to pursue her Clan's political agenda during the tournament. This has made the normally-genteel librarian more short-tempered than usual as she tries to avoid revealing how out of her depth she is.

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 2	Voi d 3
Awareness 4		Intelligence 4		
Honor 5.5	Status 3.0		Glory 3.0	
Initiative: 5k3			Attack: 4k3 (wakizashi)	
Armor TN: 20			Damage: 4k2 (wakizashi)	

Reduction: n/a

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

School/Rank: Hantei Courtier 2

Techniques: *Wisdom of the Owl:* +1k0 to Etiquette rolls; Lore: Nonhumans / Intelligence, TN 20, to remember social customs for nonhuman culture

Unity of the Realms: Courtier / Awareness, TN 25, to make non-hostile nonhuman into an Ally

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Courtier 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 4, Intimidation 1, Kenjutsu 1, Lore: History 4, Lore: Nonhumans 2, Lore: Shugenja 4, Lore: Theology 3, Sincerity 1, Spellcraft 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: none

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 15

Personal Interests: Lore: Shugenja / Intelligence, Spellcraft / Intelligence, Lore: Theology / Intelligence, Lore: History / Intelligence

Boon: The original journal of Heichi Deshi, the second head sensei of the Yasuki Merchant School (while the Yasuki were still a Crane family) and a returned spirit who swore fealty to the Heichi Family at the Owl Clan's founding. Wanted by the Crane and the Crab Clans.

Desired Boons: Ronin contract from the Crane; shipping route from the Crab

Yojimbo: Heichi Genko

Ide Denkaru

Ide Denkaru is a tall, muscular man with long mustaches and an ear pierced with a bronze ring. Primarily a trader in horses between the various families of the Unicorn Clan, Denkaru is actually a widely diversified merchant patron, with business interests in a variety of fields and a continual attraction to developing more. He is a fan of gambling, and has come to the Temple of the Dragon Soul to see if the Fortunes will favor him in his bets on the matches. He knows that Miya Ryokousha is going to want to discuss the lands of the former Horiuchi, however, and plans to gamble on his success there as well. Many "proper" Rokugani consider him to be a bit uncouth and tainted by foreign cultures, but Denraku cares little for their jealousies.

Air 3	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 2
	Stamina 4			
Honor 3.5	Status 2.5		Glory 4.0	
Initiative: 5k3			Attack: 5k3 (wakizashi)	
Armor TN: 20			Damage: 5k2 (wakizashi)	

Reduction: n/a

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

School/Rank: Ide Emissary 2

Techniques: *The Heart Speaks:* Etiquette (Courtesy) / Awareness, TN 20, to avoid giving unknowing offense; Free Raise on Sincerity (Honesty) rolls; +5 TN to Sincerity (Deceit) rolls
Piercing the Veils: read target's emotions in a social scene with Contested Etiquette / Awareness vs Etiquette / Willpower

Skills: Animal Handling (Horses) 3, Calligraphy 1, Commerce (Appraisal) 4, Courtier (Manipulation) 4, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Conversation) 4, Games: Fortunes and Winds 4, Horsemanship 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Burning Sands 3, Sincerity (Honesty) 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Overconfident

Initial Position: Unicorn

Information TN: 10

Yojimbo: Shinjo Masaro

Weakness: Overconfident. If the PC knows this Disadvantage, they can force Denraku to declare all possible Raises of the opposed roll and to refuse any Free Raise to which he would otherwise be entitled.

Personal Interests: Animal Handling / Awareness, Athletics / Strength, Craft: Sailing / Intelligence, Medicine / Intelligence

Boon: Blessed ivory from the Ivory Kingdoms. Gekai's most recent travels to Balishnimpur (and some very skilled and rather underhanded dealmaking while there) netted him a large quantity of blessed ivory, a substance said to have spiritual powers similar to jade, crystal, and obsidian. Both the Crab and the Scorpion have expressed interest in testing these properties in their battles against the Shadowlands and other mystic horrors.

Desired Boons: Silk works from the Scorpion, shipping route from the Crab

Yojimbo: Yoritomo Rosun

Shosuro Fumei

Fumei is a mystery. Their true face is unknown, their birth a secret, their gender and family carefully concealed. Fumei is a renowned kabuki actor, famous for disappearing into their role, inhabiting that persona in any public appearance until the final performance is done. When not rehearsing for or performing a role, as is the case now, Fumei wears a generic, blank, full-face mask and thick layers of kimono that render any attempt to identify a face or body useless. Fumei's voice is pitched so as to give no hint as to whether they are male or female, their gestures too stylized and artful to give any hints to their training or personality. Many speculate that Fumei is not one actor but several, given the skill with which they portray each role in turn, but most theater mavens deny this - Fumei's sheer brilliance is an unwavering constant. Though they do not discuss such matters in person, Fumei is also known as a patron of many arts, from painting and sculpture to song and poetry, spending generously to support a number of talented creators across the Empire.

Air 3	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 2
Awareness 4			Perception 3	
Honor 2.5		Status 2.5		Glory 5.0

Initiative: 5k3 **Attack:** 8k3 (aiguchi)
Armor TN: 20 **Damage:** 2k1 (aiguchi)

Reduction: n/a

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

School/Rank: Shosuro Actor 2

Techniques: *The First Face:* gain one persona; add +3k1 when spending Void Point on Acting or Sincerity (Deceit)

The Subtle Sting: +2k0 to attack rolls with Small weapons

Skills: Acting 5, Artisan: Poetry 3, Courtier 3, Etiquette 2, Knives 3, Lore: Underworld 3, Meditation 1, Perform: Storytelling 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 4, Stealth 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: none

Initial Position: Unicorn

Information TN: 5

Personal Interests: Artisan: (Any) / Awareness, Perform: (Any) / Awareness, Lore: Underworld / Intelligence, Stealth / Agility

Boon: The assets of the former Taishiki Silk Works. The owner of the Taishiki was a disgraced Soshi who is believed to have somehow betrayed the Scorpion Clan; although he cleansed his shame via seppuku, the Scorpion Clan have decided to transfer the assets (the trained workers, cuttings from the mulberry trees to be planted elsewhere, carefully-tended worms) to another Clan, to rid themselves of the whole affair. The Crane and the Mantis Clans have both expressed interest in acquiring these resources.

Desired Boons: Blessed ivory from the Mantis, ronin contract from the Crane.

Yojimbo: Bayushi Shinme

Yasuki Kashite

Yasuki Kashite is a broad-shouldered, broad-faced woman whose Hida blood shows clearly in her towering stance. She tends to glower at everyone in a genial fashion, which serves nicely to confuse those she meets and conceal the truth: she's a complete sword nerd. Blades from every Clan and several gajin lands occupy her quarters in Black Crane Castle, and she can speak for hours on forging technique or the sublime beauty of the rippling hamon pattern down a katana. Though she would have made a fine bushi, her mercantile family recognized the value her knowledge could offer them as a weapons and metal-ore merchant and trained her appropriately. Kashite finds the idea of a taryu-jiai tournament rather dull, as it lacks the steel of a more martial contest, but she has come to find a way to escape an impending arranged marriage - and perhaps to make a little profit at the same time.

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 3	Void 3
Awareness 3		Intelligence 3		
Honor 3.5		Status 2.5		Glory 2.5

Initiative: 4k2

Armor TN: 15

Attack: 5k2 (katana)

Damage: 7k2 (katana)

Reduction: n/a

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

School/Rank: Yasuki School 2

Techniques: *Way of the Carp:* Free Raise to Commerce roll; no Honor loss for conducting trade; roll Commerce / Perception vs Etiquette / Awareness to determine material object or service target desires

Do As We Say: Can reroll failed Sincerity or Intimidation check twice per session

Skills: Commerce (Appraisal) 4, Courtier 2, Craft: Blacksmithing 3, Craft: Weaponsmithing 4, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Large

Initial Position: Miya

Information TN: 13

Personal Interests: Craft: Weaponsmithing / Intelligence, Craft: Blacksmithing / Intelligence, Kenjutsu / Agility, Commerce / Intelligence

Boon: Establishing a regular trade route to either the Mantis' Islands of Silk and Spice or the Owl port of Azuma no Miru Mura. Both Clans have little iron ore resources and the ships would be very welcome.

Desired Boons: Journal from the Owl; Sacred ivory samples from the Ivory Kingdoms imported by the Mantis.

Yojimbo: Hiruma Kiriko

Appendix #2: Other NPCs Present at the Championship

Major NPCs:

Ide Denraku (Ide Emissary): Ide Denraku is a well-connected merchant patron both within and beyond the Unicorn Clan, specializing in the breeding and trading of fine riding steeds. An inveterate gambler and gamesman, Denraku has traveled well beyond the Empire's borders in search of additional sources of wealth and new opportunities to test his luck. These experiences have weakened his connection to the conservative culture of Rokugan, but the Unicorn Clan has nonetheless trusted him to represent its interests in regard to the lands once held by the Horiuchi family, even in the face of an Imperial family wishing to claim them.

Kowareta (Temple of Osano-Wo Monk): Kowareta may have lost his leg and his right to serve alongside his brothers on the Kai Wall, but he has never allowed that to break his will. Despite his amputated limb, he nonetheless chose to retire to the notoriously martial order of monks at the Shrine to Osano-Wo, and proved himself a worthy member of their ranks even without his spells. He believes that it was that determination and unwillingness to back down that brought him to the attention of the Thunder Dragon six years ago. She gave him a vision of the shrine he would build at the foot of Mt. Raimei, along with an unrelenting sense that Rokugan would soon need heroes. The Battle of Broken Jade, just two years later, seemed to confirm that need, and Kowareta will do whatever he must to make sure the Empire is ready for the challenges ahead.

Kobu (Order of Heroes Monk): Kobu was born to peasants of the Monkey Clan, but when they died of plague when she was just two years old, she was given to the Brotherhood to raise. The monks claimed that she had a distant family link to the Fortune of Heroes, Toturi Miyako, and was destined to be a part of their Order. Kobu wasn't so sure, but accepted the idea of her destiny with humility and a certain degree of resignation. When the Order of the Dragon Soul was founded, however, she surprised her fellows by choosing to join it over staying with the monks who had raised her; she refused to explain the decision beyond hinting that it might be her long-awaited destiny. When she arrived, her wisdom and knowledge of the Thunder Dragon's lore made her Kowareta's most trusted advisor, and the Order of the Dragon Soul now recognizes her as second in authority only to the abbot himself.

Miya Ryukousha (Miya Herald): The descendent of a branch of the Miya family that heavily intermarried with the Tsuruchi family, Ryukousha has only recently begun trying to raise his profile on the Empire's political stage. Until the past year, Ryukousha was loner and explorer on the Empire's fringes. Rumor suggests that the herald's new attitude stems from an infatuation with a Matsu bushi, who he intends to woo for marriage. In addition to wanting more political status, he has been trying to add a veneer of culture to his reputation, acting as a patron to poets and musicians in several Clans.

Others:

Kuni Tokimasa (Kuni Shugenja): The Kuni family have a strong tradition of fighting the Taint and those who would use it anywhere, and many of them take positions as Jade Magistrate to facilitate doing so. Tokimasa had no such plans or ambitions, but came to the attention of the last Jade Champion shortly before his death alongside the Emperor. Though the Crab are somewhat undermanned following the Shadowlands assault, the opportunity for another competent voice in the Jade Magistrates was too important to pass by; Tokimasa remains unsure that his new position is the best place for him to be.

Kakita Okiku (Kakita Artisan): Okiku does not match the appearance generally imagined for one of the most gifted artisans of her generation: her hands are strong and scarred, her arms well-muscled, and she is frequently covered in clay from her constant work as a sculptor. While as capable as any other Crane of presenting an appropriate appearance for court, Okiku would much rather be in her studio, wresting another vision of beauty from the bones of the earth.

Daidoji Takehide (Daidoji Scout): Takehide is a bluff, boisterous bushi whose combination of rough charisma and commercial acumen has led to his current assignment far, far away from the courts. Captain of the *Haggard Yojimbo*, a vessel named in "honor" of his brother, Takehide is one of several naval commanders that guard the

vessels traveling to Balishnimpur; while his passengers never have glowing reports of the comforts of his ship, they do all refer to their voyage as “memorable.”

Togashi Inori (Togashi Monk): The monks of the Togashi family occupy an almost unique place in the folklore of the Empire’s lower orders. None are more mysterious and adventurous than Togashi Inori, who appears to have taken her search for enlightenment out into the world. Whether defeating groups of bandits single-handedly or stopping her journey to offer a last prayer for a dying farmer, the peasants of Rokugan share tales of her deeds with awe. Inori responds to her inadvertent fame as might be expected from an enigmatic Dragon: “I seek what I need; if others find what they need in my search, so much the better.”

Agasha Shumei (Agasha Shugenja): Innovation is not well-regarded in most of the Empire, though the Dragon are sometimes an exception; curious minds like Agasha Shumei often have difficulties with this fact of life. A genius constantly searching for new applications of his family’s alchemy, his pursuits have led him all over Rokugan seeking rare ingredients.

Kitsu Isei (Kitsu Shugenja): Isei is one of the most promising shugenja of his generation, with a connection to the ancestors many of his family find inspiring. He is less certain of this, accepting his gift with humility and some hesitation (perhaps stemming from how regularly he hears the voices of the shiryo).

Moshi Saori (Moshi Shugenja): Saori is a highly traditional shugenja, devoted to the memory of Amaterasu and the majesty of Yakamo. Her faith has led her to an interest in the Naga, in an attempt to understand how Yakamo’s connection to that race affected his ascension to the Sun, and she has journeyed across the Empire in search of the ruins of their civilization.

Tsuruchi Fumihiko (Tsuruchi Bounty Hunter): Continuing a tradition of service in the Emerald Magistrates that goes back to the founding of the Tsuruchi family, Fumihiko is renowned as one of the best trackers in the Empire. Though not as skilled with a bow as the common perception of the Tsuruchi would indicate, he compensates for this with a keen intellect and razor-sharp instincts.

Chise Sanako (Chise Shugenja): Sanako has worked hard to become a Jade Magistrate, finally achieving her goal two years ago. While she performs her duties admirably, she makes no secret of the fact that she hopes to establish a tradition of Imperial service for the Owl Clan, and generally forge closer ties to the Imperial families.

Asako Montaro (Asako Loremaster): Few scholars among the Asako are as interested in the world outside their libraries as Montaro is. Claiming a fascination with the way that human choice shapes history, he has visited (and in the opinion of some, made a nuisance of himself in) most of Rokugan’s major courts. Few courtiers appreciate his overly analytical view of their actions, possibly more because he has a distressing tendency to be correct.

Isawa Miyo (Isawa Shugenja): Miyo is an Acolyte of Air, one of the assistants to Master of Air Isawa Himeko, and frequently acts as a court representative for the Elemental Council. Somewhat more assertive than her Master, she has encountered some difficulties due to her somewhat condescending attitude toward Asahina and Soshi shugenja.

Soshi Yukiyo (Yogo Wardmaster): The Jade Legion attracts samurai who are devoted to their duty, but even in that company, Soshi Yukiyo stands out as a dedicated destroyer of darkness. Following the mysterious deaths of her family in Balishnimpur, she has pushed for action against all manner of cultists.

Iuchi Yumiko (Iuchi Shugenja): A powerful water shugenja and noted tactician, Yumiko is a chui in the Baraunghar army known for her interest in the military traditions of the other clans. There are rumors that she and her squad spent several weeks observing the Crab and Crane forces during their recent war, even though there is no record of travel papers having been issued.

Dai (Order of Isashi Shugenja): When there is fighting, there will be injured, and while the healers of the Order of Isashi are staunch pacifists, they prove their bravery by tending the wounded at the worst battlefields in the Empire. One of their number, a simple shugenja by the name of Dai, has earned a name for himself by going into the heaviest fighting to save as many lives as possible. Some even say that he was present at the Emperor’s final battle, and only the death of so many samurai kept him from the Son of Heaven’s side. (Dai is **not** a competitor in the Dragon’s Breath Championship, but is instead helping to tend the wounded after each round.)

Appendix #3: Negotiation Tracking Sheet

NEGOTIATOR

BOONS

HORIUCHI LANDS

Appendix #4: Taryu-Jiai Dueling

Taryu-jiai dueling works much like iaijutsu dueling in most respects. As with iaijutsu dueling, taryu-jiai occurs over three rounds, beginning with an assessment stage, a focusing round, and finally a striking round.

Before the Duel

Each duelist selects the Ring which they plan to use for the contest. This cannot be Void.

Round One: Assessment

Each duelist attempts to sense the strength of the other's elemental connection. This is a Contested **Spellcraft / Void** roll. The winner learns the loser's Ring and their Rank in that Ring; if they win by more than 10, they also learn their choice of the loser's School Rank or Void Ring Rank. At this point, either contestant can concede; if neither does, the duel continues.

Round Two: Empower

There is no roll of Round Two. Instead, it is merely a long moment of energy gathering and buildup for the duelists.

Round Three: Strike

The duelists now hurl their gathered energy at one another and see who survives. This is a Contested Spell Casting roll, using each duelist's chosen Ring; Affinities and Deficiencies apply as normal, and a spell slot is used as well. The winner of the roll deals 2k2 damage to the loser, +1k1 for each multiple of 5 by which they won the roll. The loser rolls half as many dice of damage (rounded down) against the winner.

The duelist who inflicts the most Wounds is declared the winner.

Shiba Nikene

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 5 Void 4

Intelligence

3

Honor 4.5

Status 2.0

Glory 6.5

Initiative: 7k3

Attack: 5k2 (unarmed strike, Complex)

Armor TN: 26 in

Damage: 6k1

Defense Stance (37 with

(unarmed strike)

Cloak of the Miya)

Reduction: 0

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

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 3/Isawa Tensai (Water)

Techniques: *Isawa's Gift:* gain a Free Raise on Water Spells

Embrace the Elements: gain additional Affinity for Water; Deficiency in all others

Spells Known: *Air Spells* (Spell Casting 7k3): Call Upon the Wind, To Seek the Truth; *Earth Spells* (Spell Casting 7k3): Earth Becomes Sky, Earth Kami's Blessing, Jurojin's Balm, Soul of Stone; *Fire Spells* (Spell Casting 6k2): Extinguish, Mental Quickness; *Water Spells* (Spell Casting 10k6): Cloak of the Miya, Path to Inner Peace, Peace of the Kami, Reflections of Pan Ku, Regrow the Wound, Rejuvenating Vapors, Reversal of Fortunes, Rise Water, Suitengu's Embrace

Skills: Athletics (Climbing) 3, Battle 1, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Defense 3, Investigation (Notice) 3, Jujutsu, (Martial Arts) 3, Lore: Elements 5, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 3, Meditation 3, Spellcraft 5

Advantages/Disadvantages: none

