

Legacy of the Ancients

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

Month of Bayushi, 1342 (Early Autumn)

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Combat, Intrigue, Introductory, Travel

When clues point to a lost period of Rokugan's history, a Mantis scholar calls upon noble samurai to aid her in uncovering the mystery.

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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

The history of the land now known as Rokugan stretches back for many centuries before the fall of the Kami and the founding of the Emerald Empire. Although many samurai prefer to think of history as beginning simultaneously with the start of Hantei-kami's rule, there are some who find this prehistory fascinating and actively seek out information about it.

One such is the Mantis shugenja Moshi Saori, a scholar and researcher who has long studied the tales and lore of the naga. In the wake of the attack of the Great Sea Spider on Rokugan's shores, Saori has connected the accidental discovery of a weathered statue on a tiny island to records of a lost naga treasure. Saori is in for a surprise, however, because what she believes is a lost treasure of the naga is actually a deliberately-hidden collection of cursed nemuranai from a culture even older than the naga: the Alliance of Five Races.

Long before humanity appeared in the world, the Five Races faced the threat of Jigoku, much as the Seven Thunders would do many years later. A faction of kitsu called the Soultwisters wished to unleash the Five Races' most powerful weapon against Jigoku's forces, but were denied the right to do so by the Five Races' leadership, who feared (correctly, as it turned out) that the weapon could not be safely controlled. The Soultwisters' leader, Tsuno Kishenko, pretended to acquiesce, offering an apology in the form of five potent nemuranai to the Five Races to be used as weapons against Jigoku. Each nemuranai strengthened not only the hero that wielded it but conveyed some of its strength throughout the entire Race to which it was tied.

The nemuranai were poisoned gifts, however, cursed to weaken even as they strengthened. As the curse took its toll on the Five Races, Kishenku was able to seize

control of the City of Night and unleash the power of its crystal weaponry against Jigoku's demons. The gamit worked, but it also destroyed the City of Night and most of the Five Races, bringing the curse of the nemuranai to full power.

In the aftermath, the five nemuranai were hidden away in an underwater cave and guarded by the ningyo. When the ningyo later fell to insanity from a completely different curse, they nonetheless continued their stewardship over the cursed treasures, even if they could no longer have even said what they were nor why they should be hidden.

Now, though, Moshi Saori's investigations are destined to uncover the nemuranai once more. First, though, she needs an actual expedition, and so calls upon her contacts to send aid in the form of newly-gempukku'd samurai. She hopes that these samurai will provide research assistance and, if necessary, physical protection during her explorations.

The first obstacle Saori's expedition will face is getting to the site to explore it, as Saori's records suggest it is probably in an underwater cave near a tiny, unnamed island in the Umi Amaterasu. She has learned that there is a spell that can be used to help samurai move around underwater, but it is too powerful a prayer for her to master. Ideally she would get the aid of a Phoenix shugenja, as the Phoenix lands are nearby and Isawa magics are known for their potency, but the Phoenix have recently been quite sensitive, especially the Master of Water, and Saori is unsure whether she can persuade them to aid her. Her back-up plan is to sail to the Islands of Silk and Spice to recruit a Yoritomo shugenja, but would rather not spend the time.

The decision of how to proceed will be up to Saori's assistants, the PCs. If they seek out Phoenix aid, they can meet with Shiba Nikene, one of the Master of Water's favored students, and try to persuade her to help. If they fail, or choose not to seek her help in the first place, they instead must sail to Toshi no Inazuma to recruit Yoritomo Oyoguhito. On the way back from the Mantis Isles, however, they encounter a potent taifun, and must contend with wind and wave to reach the lost island safely.

Once they reach the island, they can explore its surface and then, with the aid of their shugenja ally, the waters around it. There they find an ancient ningyo structure, purpose-built to hold the cursed nemuranai, and contend with its guardians: feral ningyo, still defending their charges after centuries. Once the ningyo have been overcome, the five nemuranai can

be claimed, their power - and their curses - free to once more shape Rokugan's history.

Upkeep

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

Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. Take note of any PC that has any one of the following:

- Blood of Osano-Wo
- Ally: or Sworn Enemy: Moshi Saori
- Phobias relating to water

News from the Empire

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

Inactivity

Time passes, and though the PCs' deeds will earn them a reputation, the Empire is a large place and lasting fame is a long-term goal not easy to achieve. As this is an Introductory module, there is no Glory loss due to inactivity.

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 a TN 15. 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

It is said that Otsan Uchi, capital of Rokugan and ruling seat of Toturi X, is the most beautiful city in the mortal realm, and the view through the open door at the far end of the room does little to dispel the notion. The House of the Emerald Lion is a teahouse whose name reaches back to the founding of the Toturi Dynasty, and its position near the wall of the Forbidden City at the capital's heart gives you a view of both the majesty of the Imperial Palace and the breathtaking sweep of Golden Sun Bay beyond. A cooling breeze off the water cuts through the unseasonable autumn heat wave, allowing you to enjoy the Emerald Lion's fine tea and sweet bean filled cakes in comfort.

At the table's head is your host, a short, studious-looking woman with a touch of grey in her stylish hairstyle. Her rich green kimono is speckled with golden sunbursts and twining centipedes in indigo

threads; a satchel containing a shugenja's prayer scrolls rests on her hip, marked with the icon of the Moshi family. She finishes pouring your tea, smiling, and offers you each a respectful bow. "My name is Moshi Saori," she says. "I requested assistance from your daimyo in my researches, and I am pleased to see that they have sent their most worthy servants to my aid. We have nothing but success ahead of us, I am certain!"

Saori is a Moshi School shugenja, but her interests are actually more in scholarship than piety, particularly the history of the Naga race. As such, she is something of a curiosity in the courts of the Empire - occasionally entertaining or amusing, but not granted much genuine respect. Thus, when she requested aid for a particular new investigation, Rokugan's daimyo were only willing to send their least influential samurai to her. Although aware of this, Saori is determined to make the best of the situation, seeking to share her enthusiasm with the PCs and hope that they will come to be invested in the topic as she is.

To begin the process, Saori asks each of the PCs to introduce themselves and offer any of their more worthy exploits to the group. If Saori has met any of the PCs before, she saves those samurai for last, encouraging others to speak before she brings her acquaintances into the conversation.

As your conversation and the pot of tea both reach their end, Saori sets her cup aside and takes a deep breath. "Now, I am afraid, we must turn to our business here. As you may already know, in addition to being a priest of the elemental kami and the Fortunes, I am also something of an historian, and my particular focus of research is the Naga. They are a fascinating race, as I'm sure you'll agree, ancient and inhuman, but longtime allies of the Emerald Empire against corruption and destruction nonetheless. While it is not merely humility that prompts me to say that there is far more about them that I do not know than that I do, it is also not pride alone that leads me to say that I am among the most knowledgeable samurai in Rokugan on this topic.

"Thanks to my specific interests, I often learn about new discoveries that are connected to the Naga. One such has just recently appeared, and I am excited to pursue the possible lead. It is, in its own way, a tale of promise born out of tragedy, as I hope you will see.

"I need not remind you all of the horrible events of last summer. When the Great Sea Spider rose and began its march of destruction along the coast, it not only

affected mainland Rokugan and the Mantis islands, but also sent ripples of disruption and terror across seemingly-empty stretches of open ocean. In one such instance, two fishermen from the Phoenix lands were caught in a massive wave and washed well out to sea, only to eventually be cast ashore on a tiny island about 40 miles from land. The island where they were shipwrecked appears on some sailors' charts, but is so small and so out of the way that it has never been named. Suitengu chose to bless these men, however, and a passing Mantis vessel, likewise sent off-course by the Sea Spider's passage, spotted and rescued them.

"When they were rescued, they told the ship captain a fascinating story. According to their report, this tiny island is home to an ancient stone statue carved from volcanic rock in the shape of a figure that is part human and part serpent."

Saori produces several sheafs of paper from her satchel, unfurling one to reveal a sea chart of the waters near the Phoenix coast. "Naturally, when I heard of this report, I did some research of my own, and I found some translated stories from the Naga city of Nirukti that speak of a volcanic island near this spot, 'where the watcher of stone stands guard over the exiled treasures,' and describes the island in enough detail that I believe it is the same place! The translation continues, 'what was placed beneath the waves in the heart of flooded stone still waits, for what need could drive an exile's return?' I don't know why this 'treasure' is called an exile, but I would very much like to find out. Are you ready to begin the hunt?"

Assuming the PCs agree - and since they were sent here by their daimyo or hired by Saori for this very purpose, they don't have much choice - Saori asks the PCs if they have any questions. (Ronin characters have been hired by Saori for a total of 1 koku, 3 bu.) Unfortunately, she has few of the answers the PCs are likely to ask; she does not know the exact nature of the "treasures," nor whether there might be any protections, wards, or other obstacles in the way of reaching these treasures. If asked, she does speculate that the "heart of flooded stone" might be an underwater sea cave or the like, but admits it might also be a more metaphorical name, in which case it could mean almost anything. For most other questions, she admits ignorance, while expressing her enthusiasm for learning the answers together. Once the questions are dealt with, Saori moves on to explaining her current dilemma.

"There is an issue regarding this expedition that we must resolve before we can move forward," Saori

sighs. “The Nirukti translations refer to the treasures being beneath the waves and hint at the possible existence of some kind of undersea cavern. Naga are known for their prodigious swimming ability, and they frequently collect pearls from beds no human diver can reach and return from alive. If we have to perform extended exploration underwater, we will require resources I don’t currently possess.

“There is a prayer to the kami known as ‘Within the Waves’ that would aid us, but it requires more skill in speaking with the water kami than I possess. In order to successfully complete this expedition, we will need to recruit the services of a strong shugenja, favored by the water element.”

A frown creases Saori’s finely-lined face, and she bites her lip pensively for just a moment before reasserting her face and her composure.

“The closest supply of such a shugenja would be the Phoenix lands themselves, which of course is also on our way to the island. However, Isawa Norimichi, the Elemental Master of Water, has been frustrated and even belligerent with the other Clans since the Great Sea Spider’s attack; he has accused the rest of the Empire of doing nothing to aid his people in the aftermath of the catastrophe. I’ve heard rumors of Phoenix ports being closed to outside ships and even non-Phoenix samurai being turned away at the border. Norimichi leads the Phoenix Clan’s Elemental Council, and I fear that he might not wish to expend resources on behalf of an outsider such as myself at this time.”

A PC who makes a **Lore: History / Intelligence** roll, TN 10, or **Lore: Phoenix** or **Lore: Mantis / Intelligence** roll, TN 5, recalls that the Mantis Clan, of which Saori is a member, and the Phoenix have had a special history of mutual antagonism for much of the Mantis Clan’s existence, a fact that Saori regretfully confirms if asked.

“The Phoenix have always been scholars at heart, and I have managed to make at least a little headway with them in some preliminary correspondence, and Norimichi has agreed to send an agent to meet with us to negotiate some possible aid if I request it.”

Saori shrugs gracefully, continuing, “It also might not be necessary. The dojo of the Yoritomo Shugenja School in the Mantis Islands, in the city of Toshi no Inazuma, would no doubt have several shugenja strong enough to do what I ask. Toshi no Inazuma is much more distant and the journey would take several days

longer to complete, but at least there we would face no issues with the politics. I would welcome your advice in the matter, samurai-sans.”

The PCs are free to argue for or against either option, but should eventually come to a consensus. Other options that the PCs might suggest will be problematic for one reason or another - in particular, if a shugenja PC offers to cast the spell themselves, Saori will point out that they have not reached a high enough degree in their School to master it (it is a Mastery Level 4 spell) - but Saori will hear them out nonetheless. Suggestions to involve other mainland Clans rather than the Phoenix don’t gain any traction either; Saori rather deplores dealing with inter-Clan politics, and is only willing to put up with it for the sake of the Phoenix’s renown as shugenja. For anything less, she’d rather just stick with the Mantis and avoid the issue altogether.

If any PC happens to ask about what lies behind Saori’s dilemma, she will confess that it has to do with efficiency and impatience: she wants to make as few stops as possible before reaching the island, and to do so as quickly as she can. As far as she is aware, though, there is no time pressure or deadline involved, so if the PCs argue in favor of trying to woo the Phoenix and, if that fails, traveling on to the Mantis Isles, she immediately agrees that this is her failsafe plan as well and it should work just fine.

If the PCs choose to reach out to the Phoenix, proceed to Part One: The Ebb and Flow of Politics. If they instead elect to recruit from the Yoritomo School, skip ahead to Part Two: Blow, Winds, and Crack Your Cheeks.

The Best of Enemies

If one or more of the PCs have Moshi Saori as a Sworn Enemy, the introduction scene proceeds largely unchanged, though Saori does not make much pretense of cordiality to her Sworn Enemy. (She considers her Enemy’s presence here to be an insult from their daimyo, one she will repay in kind at some future point.) Anyone who rolls a successful TN 10 **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll picks up on her antagonism. For the moment, though, she sets her enmity aside for the sake of her research. As it happens, though, if the PCs wind up facing the taifun during Part Two, Saori does see an opportunity to perhaps rid herself of an annoyance - see that section for details.

Part One: The Ebb and Flow of Politics

If the PCs decide to try to meet with the Phoenix, Saori tells them that the Phoenix will be sending one of Isawa Norimichi's most famous and promising students, a Water tensai named Shiba Nikene. Saori hopes to persuade Nikene to join the expedition and use her magic to enable underwater exploration of whatever Saori's research uncovers.

The meeting is set to occur in the village of Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi, a small settlement in the heart of the Owl provinces. Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi lies at the confluence of several trade routes: the road from Imperial Capital north to Toshi no Omoidasu in the Phoenix lands, as well as the road from the Palace of the Emerald Champion west to the stronghold of the Owl Clan at Toshi Ranbo. It is also at a key bridge over the Kintani River, the waterway that connects most of the Owl lands to the sea. Despite this geographic prominence, however, Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi is itself not much to look at, consisting of a handful of small samurai dwellings surrounded by a few dozen peasant homes of varying size and comfort, themselves surrounded by several miles of rice paddies deep in the midst of the year's second harvest. The only thing that marks Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi as at all unusual is the local building tradition of placing most structures atop tall stone foundations, some taller than a man. The dark water marks on the stones show the need for such elevation to protect from the Kintani's seasonal floods.

Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi is about two days' travel north from Otosan Uchi, and Saori uses that time to somewhat nervously remind the PCs about how to behave in order to avoid giving offense to Nikene when they meet her. Among the other points she makes, Saori reminds the PCs not to bring up business until after dinner is finished and to remember to refer to Nikene as "Shiba-sama" or "Shiba Nikene-sama," as she has much higher Status and calling her -san or Nikene (either one) would be an insult to her. Conversely, they should expect to be called by their family name without an honorific by Nikene; if she calls them -san, she is honoring them, and they should react appropriately.

Shiba Nikene is expecting to meet Saori and her party in the largest inn in Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi, the creatively-named Inn at the Bridge. As one would likely guess, the Inn at the Bridge sits at the southern foot of the span across the Kintani, and both the bridge and the inn that shares its name show signs of damage,

currently being repaired. Workers on scaffolding crawl around and under the bridge, reminders of how even here, almost 50 miles from the sea, the Empire felt the destruction brought on by the Great Sea Spider's rampage.

The Inn at the Bridge is operated by an elderly couple, the ronin Kashi and her husband Tenro. When Saori's party arrives, they fall over themselves to apologize for the inn's "sorry condition" but quickly escort Saori and the PCs to the attached bath house to clean up from the road. Shiba Nikene, they are told, is already present and will join them for tea once they are finished washing and have gotten dressed again.

Nikene is a large woman, not tall but with an imposing physique. Her sharp eyes constantly sweep the room, measuring and judging, but her smile seems warm and genuine as she rises and bows politely to Saori. Her bows to the PCs are not nearly as deep, but show respect nonetheless. In addition to her orange and red kimono, dyed in an abstract pattern reminiscent of both birds and waves, Nikene wears a shugenja's scroll satchel, very similar to the one Saori wears, but she also has an unusual sash, one marked with a dragon breathing lightning. Such sashes are common as marks of special commendation, and a **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** or **Lore: Shugenja / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, recognizes this particular sash as belonging to the Dragon's Roar Champion, the winner of a shugenja dueling contest.

Nikene is here as a volunteer; she is intrigued by the research Saori is doing, and rather wants to be convinced to assist. However, her teacher, Isawa Norimichi (who she calls "Norimichi-sensei," a mark of her favored status in his eyes), is violently opposed to generosity toward any of the other Great Clans at this moment, so she cannot simply agree and be done with things. During the conversation, Nikene is polite and attentive, but does her best to maintain some reserve. Despite the relative differences in Status between her (Status 4.5) and the PCs, she gives them her full attention while they make their case and does not dismiss them out of hand, as others of similar status might.

In order to persuade Nikene, the PCs must first avoid giving her any discourtesy. This requires a total number of successful **Etiquette / Awareness** rolls, TN 15, equal to the number of PCs at the table. Each successful Raise on this roll counts as an additional successful roll, which might help cover for the less-socially-adept members of the group. Assuming the PCs do not give offense, they can make their case to Nikene with either **Sincerity / Awareness** or **Courtier**

/ Awareness, TN 30. This can be done as a cooperative roll, with one PC as the lead and any others adding their Ranks in their Courtier or Sincerity to the total of the roll. Remember that a PC *must actually make an attempt to persuade Nikene in order to make this roll or assist in it*. An assisting PC may also spend a Void Point to add their Air Ring as a bonus to the roll as well; thus a character with Sincerity 2 and Air 3 could spend a Void Point and add +5 to the total of the roll, while someone with no Sincerity or Courtier and an Air Ring of 2 could still spend a Void Point to give a +2 to the roll. The GM is encouraged to give Free Raises or free uses of Void Points for well role-played arguments.

If the PCs are successful in making their case to Nikene, she agrees to accompany them; if either the Etiquette or the Sincerity/Courtier rolls fail, however, Nikene announces that the resources of the Phoenix cannot be spent on such an endeavor, no matter how worthy it might appear. Either way, Saori and her party leave the following day, traveling down the Kintani to the port town of Azuma no Miru Mura. Like Hashi no Taikutsuna Machi, Azuma no Miru Mura was heavily damaged by the Great Sea Spider's attack, but the closing of the Phoenix ports has driven many trading ships to the Owl's only port, and repairs are being feverishly worked upon. Once the group reaches Azuma no Miru Mura after perhaps a day and a half's travel, Saori leads them to a waiting Moshi vessel, the *Red Sky Dawning*, captained by a salt-blown and sun-leathered Mantis named Moshi Kameta. Kameta has been awaiting Saori's arrival, and - depending on how things went with Nikene - Saori directs him to sail either to the Mantis Isles (and Part Two: Blow, Wind, and Crack Your Cheeks) or on to the mysterious island (and Part Three: The Heart of Flooded Stone).

Part Two: Blow, Wind, and Crack Your Cheeks

If Saori and the PCs decided to sail directly for Toshi no Inazuma, they can do so from the docks at Ootosan Uchi, which sits on the exceedingly well-sheltered Golden Sun Bay. There they meet Moshi Kameta, Saori's cousin and captain of the *Red Sky Dawning*. Kameta has been a sailor since he was old enough to see over the gunwales, and has a very dark and biting sense of humor. He is salt-blown and sun-weathered, dark enough to almost pass for an Ivinda, and it's impossible to tell if the creases around his eyes and mouth are from age or the ceaseless ocean winds.

If the PCs first went to meet with Shiba Nikene instead, Saori took a moment to send a message to

Kameta, asking him to meet them in Azuma no Miru Mura. Regardless of where they meet him, he is entirely loyal to Saori and completely neutral with regard to the rest of his passengers.

The passage to Toshi no Inazuma takes most of a week, and though some of the PCs may find themselves a bit unsteady on the rolling waves of the Umi Amaterasu, there are no major events that occur during the trip. Toshi no Inazuma itself turns out to be an impressive sight, one of the largest cities in Rokugan, built on the slope of a tall mountain all the way down to the very edge of the beach. The various neighborhoods and districts are easily visible from the docks as rising layers climbing the mountain slope, with the Temple to Osano-Wo and the dojo of the Yoritomo Shugenja School at the peak. The glittering dome of the temple bears a single steel spire rising upward, and stories say that the spire is struck by lightning at least once a year, a mark of Osano-Wo's favor.

Though Saori is not a student of the Yoritomo School, she is a respected shugenja of the Mantis, and she is welcomed as a colleague by the dojo's sensei. A meal is set out for her and the PCs, and by the end of the dinner, Yoritomo Oyoguhito, one of the mid-ranked sensei, has happily agreed to aid Saori. During the feast, the Yoritomo shugenja engage in an informal boasting contest, mostly centering on the elemental forces of wind or lightning they are able to call upon or bend to their will; other topics, such as wrestling, drinking, or sailing are also addressed. The PCs are welcome to join in on the experience; a **Perform: Oratory / Awareness** roll, TN 20, earns the boasting PC 1 point of Glory. If the PC is a shugenja who knows at least one spell with the Thunder keyword, they gain a Free Raise on this roll.

After the PCs have the chance to sleep off any aftereffects of the feast, Kameta sails the *Red Sky Dawning* out of the docks with the morning tide. It is another five days' travel to the unnamed island. Unfortunately, this part of the journey is not nearly as uneventful as the previous one was. On the morning of the fourth day (or the third day, if the PCs were delayed by first meeting with Shiba Nikene), heavy dark clouds appear on the northeastern horizon, growing and spreading southward as the day continues. Moshi Kameta watches the clouds with countenance that rapidly darkens to keep pace with the looming storm.

The last of the summer heat has spawned one of the deadly taifuns that occasionally threatens the coasts of Rokugan every few years. Although this particular

storm will not reach Rokugan's mainland, it lies directly in the path of the *Red Sky Dawning*.

Moshi Kameta consults with Saori and with Yoritomo Oyoguhito. Oyoguhito calls upon his School Technique to try to lessen the storm's effects as the *Red Sky Dawning* gets closer, but it is clear that a taifun on this scale, probably more than thirty miles across, would be beyond any single shugenja's powers to calm. Instead, by evening, the ship has reached the outer bands of clouds, sending wind and rain whipping over the deck.

The ship continues sailing through the night, trying to stay ahead of the storm, but not long after morning, the full fury of the taifun breaks overhead. In order to withstand Osano-Wo's wrath, the PCs will need to make a series of rolls; these rolls will be listed with a standard TN and effects, and then a second TN and effects marked by "Delayed:" these Delayed entries apply to a table who attempted to recruit Shiba Nikene but failed, the delay having allowed the storm to strengthen further before they encountered it.

Each PC can prepare themselves to get through the storm by making a **Hunting (Survival) / Perception** or **Craft: Sailing / Perception** roll, TN 10 (Delayed: TN 15). Success on the roll grants +1k0 to the coming resistance rolls; a PC may declare one or more Raises to increase this bonus by an additional +1k0, or may declare two Raises to increase the bonus by +0k1 instead (this works just the same way as Raises on damage rolls work). The PC must be trained in Hunting or Craft: Sailing to make the roll, or must spend a Void Point to become trained for the roll.

Whether or not they were able to ready themselves at all, the PCs must get through the storm by making the following three rolls: **Athletics / Strength**, TN 10 (Delayed: TN 15), **Athletics / Stamina**, TN 10 (Delayed: TN 15), and **Defense / Reflexes**, TN 10 (Delayed: TN 15). Each failed roll deals the PC 1k1 damage (Delayed: 2k1), and if a PC fails all three rolls, they are also Fatigued.

If the PCs did not try to recruit Shiba Nikene, they are able to break out of the storm and, despite continued rain and wind for the following days, the weather is manageable and any Fatigued character can get enough rest to not be Fatigued by the time Saori is ready to begin exploring the island. If they were delayed by a failed recruitment, however, the storm continues to rage even as the *Red Sky Dawning* reaches the tiny island, and any spent Void Points are not recovered, nor are any Fatigued PCs sufficiently rested to have shaken off the Condition.

As per usual, a PC with the Blood of Osano-Wo Advantage is immune to all of these effects and can laugh their way through the weather without harm.

Keep Your Enemies Closer

If one or more PCs has Moshi Saori as a Sworn Enemy, she takes advantage of the taifun to try to dispose of the PC. Such a PC does not make the Defense / Reflexes roll during the storm and is instead assumed to have failed it. (This might cause the PC to Fatigued as usual.) In lieu of the standard damage, Moshi Saori casts Fury of Osano-Wo on the PC, dealing them 6k2 damage (reduced from 6k3 by Yoritomo Oyoguhito's efforts to calm the storm). She will only try this once per PC, since she has no interest in falling under suspicion if the assassination attempt fails. A paranoid or forewarned PC might be keeping an eye on Saori for just such a moment - they can spot her casting in the middle of the taifun with a successful TN 20 **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll. However, there is little they can do about it, even if they do realize it happened - not only is Saori very probably of higher Status than the PC (she is Status 2), but Moshi Kameta and his crew will stand behind Saori without hesitation, testifying that they saw her do no such thing. A PC might be able to drive the issue to a duel, but not a lethal one; in such an instance, Kameta is Saori's champion (consider him to have Skills and Traits at 3 for any relevant rolls), the duel is to first blood, and the loser essentially must apologize to the winner for speaking rashly. No other satisfaction is available within the bounds of bushido or the law.

Part Three: The Heart of Flooded Stone

When the *Red Sky Dawning* finally reaches the unnamed island, the PCs find it to be quite tiny indeed, only perhaps 300 paces across in total, most of which is water. The island is a broken ring of volcanic rock, mostly pumice, into which the ocean has long since flooded, forming a lagoon in the center. When the rain of the taifun stops (if indeed the PCs ever encountered it at all), they can easily see the bottom of the lagoon, which is only perhaps fifteen or so feet deep at most. Surrounding the lagoon is a curving ridge, reaching about 40 feet above the narrow black sand beach. There is no real plant life visible on the rock, though fish, coral, and seaweed can all be found in the lagoon, and the absence of trees or scrub makes the presence of the stone statue atop the ridge on the island's western face quite visible.

It is a rough scramble up the ridge with sharp-edged rocks, filled with holes that range from tiny to large enough to catch and trap an unwary foot. Nonetheless, once the PCs have reached the statue, it quickly becomes clear that the weathered carving is not of a human head and torso with a snake's body below the waist, as one would expect for a naga, but of a humanoid shape that somehow blends into a fish-like tail, fins and even gills still visible despite the age of the statue. Saori identifies it as one of the ningyo, mermaid-like inhabitants of Rokugan's lakes and oceans; although not a naga, Saori still takes the statue's presence as confirmation that the expedition has come to the right place, as ningyo are known to protect some naga pearl beds even now. "It hardly seems unlikely that they might also protect other naga treasures!" she observes excitedly.

It is already late in the day when the *Red Sky Dawning* reaches the island, and Saori regretfully determines that it makes more sense to rest one more evening and begin the exploration in the morning. The narrow beach is barely enough to make a camp on, but there is enough space between slope and sea to fit some tents and a cooking fire in. Otherwise, the PCs are welcome to spend the night on board the *Red Sky Dawning* and return to the island the following day. Either way, Saori elects to pass the time by asking the PCs to help her name the island in her notes, as it will likely be gaining some notoriety soon. If the PCs reach any consensus on a good name, the GM should note it on the reporting sheet.

The next day, Saori and her recruited water shugenja are ready to begin their preparations for the exploration. Again, if the PCs were delayed by attempting to recruit Nikene before choosing to go to Toshi no Inazuma, the taifun is still blowing hard and the PCs without Blood of Osano-Wo have not recovered Void Points or spell slots and have not gotten rid of Fatigue if they have it. Taking the statue's westward-facing position as a hint, Saori elects to begin by descending into the depths on the west side of the island first. To do so, Nikene or Oyoguhito performs a complicated rite (a series of castings of *Within the Waves* and *Sympathetic Energies*) to give Saori and each of the PCs a ten-foot-wide bubble of air for the next two hours. While underwater during the spell's duration, the PCs can make Move Actions as normal, but in all three dimensions. The spell casting exhausts Nikene/Oyoguhito, so they remain above on the island shore while Saori and the PCs explore below.

The island is a volcanic seamount, essentially a mountain growing up off of the ocean floor whose peak just barely breaks the ocean surface. Below the water, the island continues to slope downward at roughly the same angle as it did above the water. All around, schools of colorful fish, beautiful coral, and gracefully-waving kelp glitter in the crystalline water. As the PCs descend, the light begins to fade, darkening as the group goes deeper; Saori uses *Summon Fire* to provide light, taking the lead with her glowing handful of flame.

After several minutes of descent, a series of carved limestone columns appear out of the gloom below. There are six total, three pairs marching away from - or perhaps lining the way toward - the sloping seafloor. The furthest out and tallest are close to thirty feet high; the eastern ones are closer to fifteen feet tall, so that the tops are at an even depth. There is also a carved passageway leading into the side of the seafloor slope, a ten-foot-high arch placed as though the columns were flanking an approach up to it. Standing just to either side of the archway are two more stone statues of ningyo, these even larger than the ones above and carrying carved tridents, crossed in front of the archway in a distinctly forbidding manner.

A Note on the Kami in the Area of the Heart of Flooded Stone: Although the kami here are not fundamentally different from the kami elsewhere in Rokugan, they were shaped along ago through the magical traditions of the Five Ancient Races, making them strange and somewhat surly when contacted by Rokugani shugenja. Most spells work as normal, but *Commune* spells reveal this difference in attitude and *Raises* for clarity cannot be taken.

Saori is not deterred by the forbidding statues; indeed, she seems quite excited and rushes forward, dodging between the tridents and into the stone corridor beyond. The passage curves slightly upward as it goes deeper, having gained about ten feet of height over its roughly one hundred foot length. Saori's lights quickly disappear into the darkness ahead unless the PCs follow.

Once they reach the end of the passage, Saori and the PCs discover a much larger chamber beyond it, carved out of the volcanic rock. It is roughly eighty feet wide, forty feet high, and forty feet deep, approximately oval in shape overall. The walls, floors, and ceiling (none of which are easily differentiated from each other) are all made from the same carved limestone blocks. There are six openings in the walls; in the center of the west wall is the archway that links to the entrance passage, while directly opposite it on the east wall, as

well as in mirrored spots to the left and right, are five shallow niches, about six feet high and three across. A bright white light shines from the niche across from the archway.

Just as Saori, leading the way down the corridor, enters into the larger chamber, there is a blur of movement and she is struck by a fast-moving figure, thrown against one of the stone walls and knocked unconscious. Her light goes out, but the glowing white object across the room provides more than enough illumination. The PCs must make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 15, to avoid being surprised by the ambush; anyone who fails takes a -5 to their initiative roll, or a -10 if they rolled a total of 5 or less.

The blurred attackers reveal themselves as vicious, maddened humanoids, green-skinned and scaled, with large eyes, layered gills, and savage-looking claws. They resemble the statues outside well enough for the PCs to recognize them as ningyo, but the crazed expression looks nothing like the sober stone carvings. There are two ningyo, unless there are more than 5 PCs at the table, in which case there are three.

Feral Ningyo

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3
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Reflexes 3
Initiative: 4k3
Armor TN: 20
Reduction: 2
Wounds: 16 (+5), 32 (+10), 48 (Dead)
Skills: Defense 2, Hunting 2, Jiujutsu 2, Stealth 3
Special Abilities:

- Aquatic: Ningyo move regular speed below water, breathe water, cannot breathe air (but can survive for an hour), and move as though Water 1 on land.
- Ningyo Speech: Ningyo can speak to one another underwater without being heard by humans.

The ningyo are insane, so they cannot be reasoned with, and they fight to the death.

Saori is merely unconscious, not terribly wounded, and after a few moments she awakens; a successful **Medicine / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, can reawaken her in just three Rounds. Once the combat is over, the rest of the chamber can be more easily explored.

Other than the 5 niches and the contents thereof, there is nothing else to see or find in the chamber. Each niche is identical other than the objects within, 6 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 2 feet deep. Beginning with the niche to the left as the PCs entered the chamber, the objects are as follows:

- An oversized forge hammer, from which bubbles of steam continually rise (That Must Be Forged Anew);
- A katana with a number of holes of varying sizes drilled into the back edge of the blade (Harmony of Tempests);
- A brilliantly-glowing white crystal, carved into the shape of a lantern (the Bloodwhite Beacon);
- A large leather gauntlet with four curving black blades that extend over where the hand would go (the Blade of Five Edges); and
- A trident carved from unmelting ice (Vortex Immutable).

A **Spellcraft / Intelligence** or **Lore: Spirit Realms / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, identifies the objects as potent nemuranai; a **Lore: Theology / Void** roll, TN 20, reveals the same information but also senses a vague malevolence about them. The PCs can Commune or Sense with the items, but for most of them only one element's kami are reachable - That Must Be Forged Anew is heavily aligned with fire, Harmony of Tempests with air, the Bloodwhite Beacon with earth, and Vortex Immutable with water; the Blade of Five Edges contains all four elements, but Sense Void registers the Blade of Five Edges as having potent void associations as well. If a PC does Commune with the nemuranai, they are even more surly and unpleasant than the kami in the area, but they admit to being created by the Five Ancient Races, and are meant for and were once used by the trolls, the kenku, the zokujin, the kitsu, and the ningyo respectively.

Reflections of Pan Ku confirms all of the above, but also hints at some kind of disaster in their past, as well as suggesting something similar might be still to come.

Conclusion

Saori seems deeply conflicted by the discovery of these nemuranai, intrigued by their power but concerned by the hints of danger they possess. Nonetheless she does collect them and returns with them to the surface for further study. The *Red Sky Dawning* runs into no further difficulties as it returns to
Otosan Uchi.

Very shortly after the expedition returns to the mainland, rumors begin to circulate in and around the Imperial capital of several powerful weapons having been recovered by the Mantis, weapons potent enough to possibly bless an entire Clan - but also cursed enough to potentially threaten the Empire's very existence. Consensus seems to be building that the nemuranai must be separated to prevent the curse from striking - but which Clans will claim their power? That remains to be seen...

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 XP
Good Roleplaying:	1 XP
Defeated the Ningyo:	1 XP
Learned Something About the Nemuranai:	1 XP
Total Possible Experience:	4 XP

Favors

All PCs earn 1 Favor

Honor

Succeeding on the Etiquette rolls with Shiba Nikene is H2 gain; succeeding with a Raise is H5.

Glory

Recovering the nemuranai is a G7 gain.

Allies and Enemies

All PCs who do not have Moshi Saori as a Sworn Enemy gain her as an Ally (Inf 1, Dev 1), or give her +1 Devotion if they already had her as an Ally.

If a PC with Sworn Enemy: Moshi Saori has played all three of Legacy of the Ancients, and Pearls of Wisdom, and The Ruins of Shiro Fukurou, Saori develops a grudging respect for the PC's ability to withstand her efforts against them; they may buy off the Sworn Enemy without spending Favors.

If the PCs successfully persuaded Shiba Nikene to join the expedition, she makes arrangements for the Isawa libraries to provide them with copies of Within the Waves: as soon as the PC becomes capable of casting Mastery Level 4 spells, they learn Within the Waves without any Favor use or choosing it during their Rank up process.