

# Reflect the Spirit

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

Month of Hantei, 1343 (Late Spring)

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[Travel, Investigation, Supernatural]

Pursuing a fugitive into the Kitsune Mori, the PCs will have to decide how to draw the line between justice and vengeance.

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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

Two hundred years ago, the Kitsune Mori burned.

It was in the tumult of the first years of the reign of Toturi II, while she was a child and when Imperial factions divided the daimyo into strife. A mad Dragon tattooed monk, spurred on by malefactors seeking to cause more chaos, burned cities and villages across half of the Empire before he was stopped in the forest of the Fox Clan. But the Minor Clan's castle, as well as the ancient forest around it, were destroyed in the process.

There were significant political consequences, of course. The Fox Clan maintained its independence, though the Mantis tried to force them into accepting an invitation to join. Most of the Empire provided some assistance to the disaster-stricken Kitsune, including no small amount of resources from the Dragon as penance for their renegade's actions. The shugenja and spirits tended to the trees, and the Kitsune Mori has regrown nearly to its former glory.

But the Kitsune Mori remembers.

The samurai who stopped the mad monk were granted a few precious relics of the forest by an enigmatic spirit. Most of these found their way back to the Kitsune Mori, and were instrumental in restoring the land. But one was kept by the Imperial families for study, and has been displayed in Ootosan Uchi for generations. A Dragon monk, who had been a Kitsune before he took the Togashi name, learned that the last Heart of the Forest was there, and tried to have it returned. When polite attempts failed, he acted more directly and stole it – killing a guard in the process.

Now a fugitive, Togashi Koken has returned to the Kitsune Mori to try to restore the last of the ancient forest's spirit. He is pursued by Kitsuki Ogai, an

influential and entirely secularly-minded magistrate. The PCs will be assigned to assist Ogai in his pursuit of the fugitive, and will have to deal with the Emerald Magistrate's single-minded determination to find the fugitive, even at the cost of other wrongs.

The chase will take the PCs through the Kitsune lands, exposing them first-hand to the enmity of the woods for outsiders and the raw anger it has for Dragon in particular. They will have to choose to support Ogai in his focus, or attempt to make things right on their own. And they will need to decide what to do with the fugitive once they find him trapped alongside the soul of the arsonist that burned the forest two centuries ago.

For the Kitsune Mori has not forgiven.

## 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, and take note of any PCs with the following:

- PCs from the Dragon Clan or Fox Clan
- PCs with Status on the Emerald Magistrate track
- PCs with Glory Ranks of 6.0+
- Shugenja PCs, particularly Kitsune Shugenja
- Touched by the Realm: Chikushudo or Cursed by the Realm: Chikushudo
- "Kitsune's Boon" from CIT03: *Legacy of my Ancestors* or CIT34: *Seeking the Way*
- PCs with the Disbeliever Disadvantage

### 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.

### 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. Each PC loses **2 points of Glory**. This cannot reduce a PC's Glory Rank to less than their Insight Rank, and the Fame Advantage increases their Insight Rank by one for these purposes.

### Taint Progression

If a PC possesses the Shadowlands Taint, they will need to roll at the beginning of the module to see how much it has grown over the intervening time since the last module. The TN of this raw **Earth Roll** is **15**. 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, any ronin PCs lose half of their koku. This cannot reduce their accumulated wealth below an amount of bu equal to their highest Skill.

### 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**

Being in the area, the PCs have been sent by their lords to assist Emerald Magistrate Kitsuki Ogai. The

message directing them to meet with him at Mura Sabishii Toshi has little information on how they are to assist him, other than mention of a fugitive.

Mura Sabishii Toshi is a busy Crane port city, dealing with a large amount of naval trade for the wealthy clan. It is primarily a commercial hub, but, being a Crane city, is still designed with an eye to the aesthetics of the samurai who make it their home.

You, however, find yourselves at one of the less-impressive inns by the docks to await the Emerald Magistrate that your lords sent you to help. Yado no Hi is a relatively comfortable place, but obviously more used to the custom of wealthy merchants or the occasional samurai patron of lower social standing. Its main advantage appears to be its proximity to the piers used for passenger ships.

The PCs should be informed by the inn's staff that they are all present for the same purpose, and that rooms have been arranged for them by Kitsuki Ogai. They have time to meet and speak with each other while they await the arrival of the Emerald Magistrate. (Giving players who have not had a chance to play together before an opportunity to introduce their characters.)

PCs who have a courtly bent may know a bit about Ogai already, and as he was an NPC at a court interactive (Int07, Wartime Allies, at GenCon 2018) may have already met him. Those with 5 or more Ranks in the Courtier School, or who can succeed at a **Courtier** or **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll with a TN of 30, will know the following facts before meeting him:

- Kitsuki Ogai is a high-ranking Emerald Magistrate with a reputation for seeking justice even beyond what the Dragon family normally does. Specifically, he has been known to heed testimony from peasants when supported by evidence over the sworn word of samurai.
- These are not the only semi-heretical beliefs he has, as he has been vocal in the past about separating the spiritual world from the legal and political affairs of the Empire. This has made him quite unpopular with many shugenja and monks.
- He has endured several political altercations stemming from his beliefs due to his proven ability but also his family connections: his uncle is the Kitsuki family daimyo, which also means that the Empress is his cousin.
- Ogai was under consideration to become the Imperial Advisor a few years ago, though that title was granted to the Emperor's younger brother instead. In the meantime, Ogai has risen through

the ranks of the Emerald Magistrates and his presence in the field is something of an oddity.

When Kitsuki Ogai arrives, it is with little in the way of ceremony. He simply summons you to a meeting room, bare of any refreshments other than simple tea. A tall man in his mid-thirties with a thin beard and shaven head, he covers his face often with an ornate fan bearing the Imperial mon. His features are greenish and his hand shakes, though he makes an effort to keep his voice steady as he greets you. "I do appreciate your prompt arrival, and I ask your pardon for dispensing with the pleasantries. You have no doubt been through many of these briefing meetings, and I am not up to the usual small talk after the... ship voyage that brought me here from Otosan Uchi." He blanches again, raising the fan to conceal his expression for a moment.

"Apologies, I am from the mountains, and the coastal climate has been an adjustment. Regardless, I will recover on our journey, I am sure. To that end: I have requested your assistance in tracking down a fugitive. This individual has violated Imperial law, and crossed into the territory of another clan, making it a matter for the Emerald Magistrates. While it is greatly preferred that we take him into custody alive, he is to be considered very dangerous and certainly I will not ask you to sacrifice yourselves to save his life." Ogai pulls a notebook from an oiled travel satchel and opens it. "I do not have much information on the fugitive, but what I have is here."

Ogai is somewhat seasick from his voyage, which may not give the best first impression but he will recover from in time. For now, he is simply eager to get the mission briefing over with so he can rest before setting out in the morning. He does not have much more than basic information about the fugitive, but obviously will share what he has with the PCs (allowing them to ask and receive answers as appropriate).

- The fugitive is Togashi Koken, a Tattooed Monk of the Togashi Order. Before he joined the Order, he appears to have been a shugenja from the Kitsune family, though Ogai has no information on his doings before. (He was, in fact, a PC by the name of Kitsune Kambei, but changing personal name when joining the Togashi is not unusual.) Koken evidently styles himself the "Defender of the Wilds", though the source of that title is unknown.
- Koken petitioned the Imperial Museum of Antiquities for the release of an artifact, with the support of the Dragon Clan Champion. (This

petition is the source of much of the information Ogai has on Koken.) When the request was denied by the Imperial Families, he broke in and stole it two weeks ago. In the process, he was discovered by a trio of guards; in the ensuing fight, two were injured to incapacity and the third later died from the wounds he sustained. (Ogai has no idea why the Imperials denied the petition, but he has noted that the Imperial families have been increasingly obstructionist of the Dragon, hence his concerns for the clan's place in the courts.)

- A man matching Koken's description was seen boarding a ship heading in this direction, though he was covered enough to prevent identification solely from his tattoos. (Description: a burly man wearing a wide jingasa and the brown robes of a ronin shugenja.)
- Evidence from Koken's rooms at the Dragon Embassy indicate that he intended to return to the Kitsune Mori. He had been researching the history of the fire that destroyed the woods two hundred years ago, and maps and travelers' accounts from that time period were left behind. (Ogai is cautious, because there is no way to know what Koken took with him.)
- The artifact in question was recovered from the Kitsune Mori two hundred years ago during the fire, though little is known of its nature. It appears to be a large acorn, and the original leaves and twine that wrapped it were kept with it (though their extreme age should have caused them to rot away years ago). Ogai does not care particularly for the fate of the artifact, though the Imperial Museum undoubtedly wants it back. His concern is entirely for the criminal who took it.
- Ogai will not mention it directly unless pressed, but the reason he is overseeing this mission personally is an attempt to clear the Dragon Clan's reputation at least somewhat. The death of a Seppun guard and theft from the Imperial archives is bad enough, but Koken had involved the Dragon Champion earlier and the Imperial Families are using the issue to put pressure on the Dragon in court.
- Ogai also wishes to capture Koken rather than execute him immediately in order to force the monk to provide testimony that will clear the Champion of complicity in the matter. He does not know why Hoshi was involved, but he also does not understand anything about the Togashi (and will readily admit such), but is concerned over the political consequences.

Once the basic briefing is done, Ogai is eager to get to his rooms:

“I have secured passage for us on a boat heading to Kyuden Kitsune tomorrow morning. While I did make a few inquiries around the docks that indicate Koken may have disembarked here within the last week, I was unable to confirm that he either took ship or departed overland.” He grimaces slightly, before raising the fan once more. “If you wish to ask around, perhaps you would find better results than I was able to, discommoded as I am. In any event, that is our mission: to arrest Togashi Koken and remand him to Imperial custody. I have arranged travel papers, accommodations on our way, and secured permission to be prepared for violence at least as long as we are outside any settlements. Unless you have any further questions, I am eager to rest and recover for our mission.”

Ogai simply needs to recover from his journey, a matter of time spent on land (or at least off the sea itself), and though he is trying to be polite, will brush off anything that isn't of immediate significance. There will be time to talk on the journey, after all.

If the PCs wish to investigate around Mura Sabishii Toshi, they may roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** to ask around town. (If a PC has a specific group they wish to approach, other Skills may be appropriate at the GM's discretion – Lore: Theology for asking among the temples, Lore: Underworld for ronin or criminals, etc.) Success at a TN of 30 confirms what Ogai already said: a burly man dressed as a ronin shugenja, wearing a battered jingasa and brown robes, arrived on a ship from Otosan Uchi four days ago. If the PCs roll 40 or higher, they can learn that he stopped at the Shrine to Suitengu to give thanks for his passage, and left the city through the northern gate. This is good news for the PCs, as the overland route is likely to take more time, giving them a chance to catch up to him or at least narrow the lead.

## Part One: Kyuden Kitsune

In the morning, Ogai and the PCs depart the port city on a small craft captained by a placid ronin woman named Seishi. The journey itself is quiet enough, though Ogai remains seasick and queasy through the first day, while the boat is sailing along the coast to the River of Gold. Once on the river, the gentler waves and slower travel ease his discomfort, though the nausea only passes entirely once the party arrives at Kyuden Kitsune and remains on dry land for a full day.

The city surrounding Kyuden Kitsune rests on the River of Gold, across the waters from the fabled

Kitsune Mori. The castle and most of the city are constructed primarily from stone, and are secured within a high wall. A small dock section on the river and the main markets on the Imperial Road actually lie outside the wall, demonstrating that the Fox Clan care far more for the lives and safety of its people than the profit to be had from trade.

Ogai leads the party into the city, blowing past the guards with barely a glance and a peremptory display of his papers. He heads strait for the castle itself to announce his presence to the local lord.

Ogai squints up at the afternoon sun as he strides through the city. “At the very least, I need to announce our presence to the local authorities. In this instance, that will likely mean seeking an audience with Kitsune Oioko, the Fox Champion. Whether she meets with me or delegates one of her advisors, I do need to meet the proper forms. I do not like the thought of giving up too much of our time, however.”

Ogai's plan at this point depends in no small amount on the makeup of the party. If there are any courtiers (either PCs with decent social Skills or actual Courtier Schools) or any Fox PCs, he will suggest they accompany him while the rest of the group begins making inquiries in the city. PCs with close connections to the Fox are also valuable for these purposes (Allies or “Noticed by”, for example). Ogai is aware that there may still be some issue with his presence as a Dragon and wants to have some courtly assistance, but he will not order it if all of the PCs are uncomfortable with a audience with the daimyo.

Ultimately, this is the players' choice, and Ogai does intend to oversee and participate in further investigations, but he knows enough to prevent giving the Fox cause for complaint.

### Meeting with the Fox Champion

While it would be easy for a castle of stone to seem dour, the Kitsune have made significant effort to craft their stronghold to be welcoming and open, with large windows and airy passages. What the castle itself lacks in defense is made up for by the high walls that surround the complex. Once you pass through the gates, you could be forgiven for thinking yourself in the woods, as the grounds outside the castle are covered by a well-cultivated grove of trees. The interior of the castle continues the impression, decorated with rich greens and carefully-polished wood in natural patterns.

Inside, guards take your papers and provide a place to leave your weapons and spell scrolls where proper care will be provided for them. The samurai of the castle are cautious with outsiders, and while Ogai's Imperial mon receives appropriate deference and respect, his Dragon mon seems to give them pause. Nonetheless, an audience with the Fox daimyo is arranged fairly swiftly as such matters are concerned; barely more than an hour passes before the servants arrive to lead you to an open air meeting room where half a dozen Kitsune samurai wait, their expressions stony.

Members of the Fox Clan or people with Oioko as an Ally will be recognized and given somewhat more welcome, though only they will receive refreshments initially. Non-Dragon PCs may be served if they ask or even seem interested, but Dragons will be entirely ignored.

Kitsune Oioko is a stern woman in her late thirties, with a melodious voice and dressed in a finely-embroidered kimono of green and russet brown. Her advisors are similarly-clad, though less elaborately. She has a somewhat archaic form of speech in formal settings, but has the confidence of a powerful shugenja and champion of her clan.

The daimyo's voice is cold as she addresses Ogai. "I bid you greetings, Kitsuki Ogai-san, and grant you the hearing due your station. You are to be commended, I suppose, for your diligence in presenting yourself before you sought quarters or made yourself suitable for a court appearance."

Ogai lets out a short breath. "With respect, Kitsune-sama, had I taken the time, I am reasonably sure you would have found exception with my tardiness. It is gratifying to receive the welcome I anticipated."

A deep frown crosses her face for a moment, and she bites out, "Whether you are well come or ill has yet to be determined, Dragon. Your clan has not always brought good to mine. What brings you here?"

At this, Ogai hesitates, glancing to the PCs to invite them to speak in the hopes that they will not further antagonize the local authorities.

In brief, Oioko is not going to be happy to learn that an ise zumi is wandering the Fox lands, as there is still a strong feeling of antipathy from the burning of the Kitsune Mori (see "History of the Burning" for details, but note that she will not share them with anyone other than a Fox PC). Ogai is not good at speaking with

shugenja, and the Fox's initial bias won't help the situation, but a PC with some tact can defuse the situation slightly. If a PC makes some effort to smooth things over, they may roll **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at a TN of 30; success will calm the Fox Champion slightly, give a good impression with Midori, and reduce the TNs of any Skill Rolls to research or investigate in Kyuden Kitsune by 5.

Oioko is not interested in sharing information with the magistrate or his assistants, though she will (grudgingly) grant them permission to investigate on their own, and supply them with a local guide.

Whether the PCs calm her down or not, Kitsune Oioko will cut the audience short soon after being informed of the nature of the Emerald Magistrate's business in her lands. (Obviously, if she is being antagonized by Ogai or the PCs, she will be sharper in the following speech.)

Oioko shakes her head in irritation, if not outright anger. "Very well, Kitsune-san. Your duties compel you to follow this... individual, and I would not stand in the way of an Imperial mandate. In fact, I shall provide you with all due assistance." She raises a hand to one of her samurai kneeling at the edge of the room. "Midori-san, you will lend your services as a guide and advisor to the Emerald Magistrate while he is in our lands."

The samurai in question, a stocky woman in her late twenties clad in raiment more practical than courtly, swiftly steps forward to kneel and bow before Oioko. The Fox Champion continues, "Midori-san is one of my own students, and few are as well-acquainted with the Kitsune Mori. I am certain that her skills will speed you from my lands, which we will no doubt agree is entirely for the best."

There is visible tension in Ogai's back as he bows, but he accepts the assistance and the dismissal silently.

As the group leaves, Midori will try to introduce herself, but Ogai largely ignores her (still stung by the daimyo's hostility). She, in turn, dismisses him but she is willing to be cordial at least with the PCs as long as they aren't rude to her.

Ogai is eager to get back with the rest of the group, or to begin investigations in town, but that will not prevent Midori from chatting with the PCs. She is well-acquainted with the city and the province, and can help the PCs in their inquiries, but is not herself used to hunting people so does not have a lot of advice on where to start. She can direct them to the

appropriate places to find information (as noted below). It is important to note that Midori does not know Togashi Koken, nor did she ever meet him as Kitsune Kambei, so she does not have any specifics herself on the fugitive.

### Investigations in Kyuden Kitsune

There are several avenues open to the PCs should they ask around town for word of the fugitive. The most basic, of course, is the general rumors that are circulating in town. Additionally, however, they may try looking into the background of “Togashi Koken”, research the stolen artifact, or try to learn about the history of the Burning of the Kitsune Mori. In general, other options should yield the PCs the core information outlined in this section if the GM deems it reasonable, but the TNs for the rolls should generally be at least 5 higher if approached in an alternate fashion.

Note that if the PCs do not uncover anything of note, whether due to lacking initiative or failing their rolls, Kitsuki Ogai can be considered to have learned all of the rumors on his own within a day. Having a direction of travel and the assistance of the Fox tracker, he will lead the party out by the west gate, but due to his utter focus on pursuing the fugitive, the opportunity for a deeper understanding of the situation will be lost.

### Rumors

The following information is available with a **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll. Fox PCs receive a Free Raise on this roll.

- 10: There are a lot of Minor Clan samurai in town recently, building support for the Minor Clan Alliance. The Fox Champion is known to be one of the less supportive members of the alliance, but the other clans seem to be going to some effort to ingratiate themselves with the Kitsune.
- 15: Bandit activity has been on the rise again, though the Crab’s recruitment efforts and the MCA’s activity in the region seems to be cutting down on the problems the Fox have been having.
- 20: There was a disturbance at the Temple to Inari three nights ago, though none of the monks have reported anything to the authorities. Some people in the area claim to have heard shouting for a few minutes, but it was very unusual considering the reverence the Fox Clan has for the Fortune of Rice (who is also the celestial patron of foxes).
- 25: The spirits of the Kitsune Mori have been unsettled for some time now, ever since the rising

of the kumo. Some blame it on ancient hostility between the spider creatures and the kitsune, and some on the presence of outsiders in the woods, but it has caused issues for the few strangers that try to go into the forest.

- 40: A Dragon Tattooed Monk came through town a few days before, though he was hiding who he was. No one is exactly sure when, though he has been blamed for the trouble at the Temple to Inari. He left by the road to the west, and the few who have heard of it are very worried about the consequences.

### Kitsune Genealogy

In general, the local samurai are unaware of the fate of Kitsune Kambei. It is possible to learn a bit more about him if the PCs tie the sightings of “Koken” to the name “Kitsune Kambei”, but no one recognizes the name “Kitsune Koken” as a living shugenja. Speaking with the people who keep family records can yield some information, if the PCs have learned about his family connections via the Temple or previous information. Doing so does require a **Lore: History** or **Lore: Heraldry / Awareness** roll at a TN of 25, but gains the following information:

Kambei was a fairly well-known Fox shugenja, active on the clan’s behalf in the Empire at large, and trained as a Summoner, but he discussed his plans with no one when he left to confront the Dragon Clan Champion, and had in fact spent a year on musha shugyo before that. He was very martial for a shugenja, the son of a ranger tasked with the defense of the Kitsune Mori, and was known to have issues with the Dragon Clan – which makes it hard to credit his joining the Togashi, but stranger things have happened. (Kitsune Kambei was a PC in the campaign, and some players may have been familiar with him in play.)

### Temple to Inari

The Temple to Inari in Kyuden Kitsune is one of the largest to the Fortune of Rice in the Empire, as the Fortune is particularly revered by the Fox Clan. Passing within the torii arch, there is a path leading between the rice paddies and cultivated groves that take up most of the grounds of the temple complex. A smiling, elderly monk waits by the chozuya, the fountain provided to cleanse yourself on your entry, and he gives warm welcome and a hearty blessing to all who enter.

In addition to the usual buildings dedicated to worship, the Temple grows rice and fruit that they donate to those peasants who have had misfortunes. One of the

stands of trees is also called the “memorial grove”, where by Fox tradition, trees are used for gravesites instead of the stone markers often used in Rokugan to inter the ashes of the departed. (As in the rest of the Empire, the actual remains are not necessary for a memorial shrine.)

Togashi Koken came here three nights ago, to leave an offering at his brother’s memorial tree. He was discovered by one of the groundskeepers, and there was a noisy disturbance, though no actual violence, and the tattooed monk took counsel with the temple’s abbot.

The PCs are welcome to speak to the monks, though there is only a little information to be gained here. They can be directed to either the groundskeeper, the abbot, or abstract the interaction with a **Lore: Theology / Awareness** roll. Success at a TN of 20 tells them that no real harm was done, but that a ronin shugenja matching the description they have caused a disturbance a few nights ago in the memorial grove, and will give them the information that it was at Kitsuki Takeshi’s memorial and that the abbot spoke with the ronin afterwards. (Speaking directly with Henshiro yields this information via roleplay, with no roll required.)

The groundskeeper, Henshiro, will speak of finding a strange ronin in the memorial grove. “It was very late, after midnight maybe. I stumbled over someone in the memorial grove, leaving an offering maybe. He wasn’t causing any trouble, but I was surprised, so I yelled out, which surprised him, and he knocked over a tree... Caused a bit of a fuss, but no real harm done. Well, he didn’t say anything, but after we both calmed down, he helped me replant the tree and then he went off to speak with the abbot.” Henshiro provides little more in the way of description, saying that the ronin’s robes were “sort of muddy” and that he isn’t sure, but he might have seen some sort of green glow when the man helped him settle the tree. (Not a large tree, perhaps twelve feet tall and less than a foot in diameter – but still a notable feat accomplished with some minor magical assistance.)

Henshiro can show the PCs which memorial the ronin was leaving on offering at: a five-foot oak tree, with a simple marker reading:

Kitsune Takeshi  
Fell Defending the Empire, 1339  
One With the Wild

The abbot is initially suspicious of the PCs, and absolutely will not tell them anything of significance

if Ogai is present. “He was an itinerant priest, samurai-sama. We discussed the Fortunes, and the spirits of the wild. Nothing of interest to you, I’m sure.” (Suspicious players may wish to roll **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** at a TN of 25 to confirm that he is being evasive.) He will cover to Koken as much as possible, though he’s not going to outright lie to samurai. “I have sworn to serve the Fortune, and what I do, I do because I feel it is the best way to serve the interests of the land.”

Getting him to share more requires either convincing him that they intend Koken no harm (quite probably an outright lie, considering the Rokugani legal system) or an appeal to him for counsel as an advisor to samurai; either avenue allows the PC to make a **Sincerity** or **Lore: Theology / Awareness** roll at a TN of 35. Even this likely only gains basic information: he knew Togashi Koken before his entry into the Dragon order, though they were not close. He can tell them Koken’s previous name of “Kitsune Kambei”, and that he spoke with Koken about the best means of using the Heart of the Forest to restore the Kitsune Mori. “It needs to be returned to the place where the greatest harm was done, where the scar on the spirit of the forest remains. The ruins of the old castle. I don’t know exactly where it is, but it’s deep in the woods. Haunted now, but any shugenja with a sense of the wild should be able to find it.” The abbot knows that the artifact was stolen, but not that samurai were killed in the process (since Koken was not aware he killed a guard), and views the legal matters as none of his business.

Threatening the monk does not help, as the local authorities are absolutely not going to support the outsiders (Emerald Magistrates or no) over their own familiar religious leader. Ogai is aware of this, and if his presence seems to be inhibiting the abbot, will encourage PCs to visit without him.

### The History of the Heart of the Forest

If the PCs attempt to research the artifact that was stolen by their fugitive, they will need to speak with local Kitsune shugenja and/or do research in the archives. As the destruction of the old castle during the Burning also destroyed what records they had at that point, the Fox archives are not as robust as might be assumed for a Minor Clan that is generally led by its shugenja. This requires rolling **Lore: Theology / Awareness** to get the shugenja and archivists to find the right records. Alternately, the PCs may roll **Lore: History** or **Investigation / Intelligence** to find the appropriate records themselves, but doing so treats the



TNs as 10 higher. Success provides the following information:

- 10: The Kitsune Mori was deliberately put to the torch two hundred years ago. Such a large forest does not burn without significant effort, but the locals are largely unconcerned with the larger political reasons behind it or the twisted theology of the madman responsible. All the Kitsune care to remember is that a Dragon tattooed monk went insane and destroyed their home. More than half of the clan was killed, and it took generations for the Fox to recover. They did so with the help of most of the Great Clans, including the Dragon, but the pressures put upon them at that time still have lingering effects.
- 15: One of the significant facts of the situation is that the current Kyuden Kitsune is not the castle that held that name during the Burning. The Fox tried to rebuild on the site of their original castle, but discovered that the spirits there were too unrestful. Moreover, relocating the main holding of the Minor Clan to the other side of the river and onto the Imperial Road helped with the arduous task of rebuilding. The ruins of the former castle are further into the Kitsune Mori, though few now remember the exact location. (Even Midori, who knows the forest better than almost anyone else, only has a vague idea where the ruins are – it remains a place that everyone stays away from.)
- 20: The acorn was one of several recovered following the Burning, as blessings from the Lady of the Forest (an enigmatic spirit associated with Benten, Inari, or perhaps Shinjo). They were referred to as “Hearts of the Forest”, and were thought to contain a dormant spirit of the land.
- 25: The Heart of the Forest held by the Imperial families was the last remaining in the Empire; the rest had been returned to the Kitsune during the rebuilding process.
- 40: Maps showing the location of the old castle are difficult to come by; previous generations of Kitsune had decided to let the site fall out of memory, but dedicated effort can find a guidebook that details its location.

## Part Two: The Kitsune Mori Has Not Forgotten

As long as the PCs have the basic direction that their fugitive left the city by, Midori can track him. Ogai will give them a day or so to uncover background information, but if it seems that they have stalled out

or uncovered all the leads they are likely to, he will order them to depart.

### Travel through the Kitsune Mori

The Kitsune Mori is one of the Empire’s great forests, and has a great deal of spiritual activity. It is not as overtly hostile (normally) as the Shinomen, and its connections are entirely to Chikushudo rather than some of the further Realms (like the Shinomen or the Isawa Mori). When the party approaches the ruins of the old castle, the overall aura of the environment will become more angry and aggressive but the source remains the same.

While the Kitsune Mori was ravaged by fire two centuries ago, the massive trees of the forest have largely recovered – no doubt in some part due to the dedicated efforts of the shugenja of the Fox Clan. The trees cluster around you, and the canopy high above filters a vibrant, green light down on you. Out of the direct sunlight, the air is a little chilly, but the thick woods muffle the wind and your guide leads you along your quarry’s trail at a brisk enough pace to keep warm.

The Kitsune family maintain only two major holdings, both on the south side of the River of Gold and along the Imperial Road. There are numerous smaller settlements scattered across the Kitsune Mori, connected by game trails or walking paths only wide enough for smaller carts. (Rumors of tunnels between the small hamlets and villages are never confirmed by the Kitsune.)

During the journey, Ogai and Midori clash on a regular basis. Ogai is focused entirely on catching up to Koken, and considers the spiritual surroundings or the potential implications of Koken’s goals to be nothing more than distractions. Midori, on the other hand, is concerned about the presence of a tattooed monk in the forest and the way that the spirits are likely to react (and if the party has discovered information about the Heart of the Forest, the possible consequences that may come from interrupting the monk’s quest) – all of which Ogai has no patience or concern for.

As the PCs travel, shugenja or other PCs sensitive to natural spirits will feel a certain amount of scrutiny. For the most part, this is not hostile but more a curious interest – however, Disbeliever or Dragon PCs may feel uncomfortable. Any PC with the “Cursed by the Realm: Chikushudo” Disadvantage is regarded as an enemy by the nature spirits, however, and their constant surveillance prevents such PCs from

recovering Void by any means while they are in the Kitsune Mori.

Despite her dislike of the Emerald Magistrate, however, the Kitsune guide will lead the PCs with skill (she has decided that the best way to get Ogai out of the Fox lands is to accomplish his mission as quickly as possible). PCs who wish to assist her will be welcome to do so, though her magic and familiarity with the environment should impress them with her competence.

Shortly after mid-day after leaving Kyuden Kitsune, Koken's trail will lead the party to a campsite the fugitive Togashi used. At the site, Ogai stops to take a look around – PCs who wish to do so themselves may roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception** at a TN of 30 to find signs of occupation, including a disturbance where he used his magic to create shelter, and the strange sight of bear tracks (strange because there are no bear tracks leading into the campground, and none leaving as he summoned the creature to watch over his rest). Hunting (Tracking) may also be used to learn about the tracks, at the GM's discretion.

While there, Ogai takes the opportunity for a break. "This is a relatively secure site. We can catch our breath here, and continue on faster for having rested." Ogai tosses some wood into the abandoned firepit, but when he kneels to light the fire, it almost explodes in a blast of heat and sparks. He, and any other Dragon character with the Disbeliever Disadvantage, take 20 Wounds.

This obviously sets Ogai and Midori on edge. PCs who are curious as to the cause may roll **Spellcraft** or  **Lore: Spirits / Intelligence** (TN 30) to ascertain that it was not a spell effect but rather a specific reaction from the local nature spirits, who are antagonized by the presence of Ogai (and any other samurai of his clan and beliefs).

Following the spectacular display, Midori suggests heading to a roadside inn she is familiar with. "It's not far from here, and we'd be able to rest the night there. It's not too far off the track we've been following, and I've stayed there before." Midori will not volunteer to heal Ogai, and will only offer healing to other PCs injured by the incident if they have made an effort to make themselves pleasant companions; however, if the PCs suggest it, she will do it without complaint. For his part, Ogai will not ask for healing from anyone but will not refuse it either.

### Trouble at the Roadside Inn

Arriving at the inn takes a few hours, and the party gets there a little before sunset.

The inn that Midori leads you to is a two-story establishment tucked amongst the trees. A few pack animals and draft oxen are tied in a nearby clearing to graze, while a trio of carts are tucked to one side of the inn's yard. In the porch that serves as entry before the common room, a burly peasant sits next to a rack with a few swords and other weapons. He glances over your group and stiffens in alarm, then looks down and mumbles something that might be a greeting to his knees.

This is predominantly a reminder of one of the setting elements that often gets overlooked, that samurai generally do not carry their primary weaponry into places of business. (Especially places of business that provide alcohol.) Not doing so is a violation of Courtesy, likely to cause a D7 Honor loss – only an issue for the most stringent adherents to bushido.

Of more concern to the players may be the guard's reaction. He will prove uncommunicative, but makes no effort to stop them if they do not wish to leave their weapons behind. If the PCs spend more than a few moments on the issue, Ogai will move past impatiently, leaving his katana in the rack.

Inside, the common room is busy but not full; finding a table is fairly easy, though there is a large group of rough-looking ronin who have pushed several together and are making a bit of a spectacle of themselves; notably, they still have possession of their weaponry, and all of them are at least slightly wounded (bandages, scrapes, and bloody armor are all quite visible). The other tables are occupied by merchants or peasants trying to take their ease despite some nervousness at the loud group, with a few single ronin sitting at tables that appear to regret having left their swords at the door.

The loud ronin band go silent as the party walks in, and any PC who succeeds at a **Raw Perception** roll with a TN of 20 (Read Lips also applies, with a TN of 15) can clearly hear the concern of the group over a magistrate. One of the larger ones, with a massive no-dachi leaning against his shoulder, hisses, "Be still! They probably aren't here for us!"

This is predominantly a role-playing challenge. While the ronin are nervous about gaining the attention of the magistrate and the PCs, they will not start a fight unless the PCs are aggressive. Ogai, for his part, has no interest in the ronin – even if they are bandits, they are a matter for the local authorities, not the Imperial

ones, and he is entirely focused on finding Togashi Koken. Midori, while not a magistrate, is somewhat worried about a group of violent ronin hanging around the Kitsune Mori, though she will not ask the Emerald Magistrate or the PCs for direct involvement (she will make clear that she will support the PCs if they choose to take action, however).

As it happens, the ronin are a loose otokodate who engage in a variety of activities both legal and illegal. While they have occasionally performed acts of banditry, including attempting to rob Togashi Koken recently, they are as likely to hire out as guards or bounty hunters. Toson is the leader and founder, though Murai is the second in command and somewhat more inclined to staying out of trouble. If the PCs approach them politely and can convince them (likely with a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll at a TN of 30) that the magistrate has no interest in them, Murai will keep the others calm enough to describe their encounter with the fugitive monk: “We found this guy, just wandering the woods on his own, and when we talked with him, he just made this bear show up out of nowhere! We didn’t want to mess with a shugenja, so we left him alone, but this was just down the road earlier today, maybe five miles from here, on the edge of the haunted lands.” They will confirm the description the PCs have of Koken, and no roll is required to tell that their intentions toward the fugitive had not been particularly friendly.

On the other hand, if the PCs are aggressive or attempt to use Intimidation, it will scare the ronin into attacking. Convinced that the magistrate will have them all put to death, they have no interest in surrender. There are twice as many ronin at the table as there are PCs, including the two leaders (Toson and Murai). The enemies all have taken Wounds to fill their “Grazed/+5” Wound Rank. (If the average table Insight Rank is 3, this can be increased to the “Hurt/+10” Wound Rank.) Any ronin reduced to the +15 Wound Rank will break and run, though Murai will attempt to fight intelligently and is far more willing to just flee if the opportunity presents itself.

Midori will fight alongside the PCs, using her magic to support them. Ogai will try to refrain from the combat, only drawing his wakizashi if the ronin threaten him directly. (Whether they do is at the GM’s discretion, based on how aggressive the PCs are – the ronin are convinced they will be killed regardless, and killing the Emerald Magistrate would be an obvious way to keep him from executing them in their minds.)

## Ronin Bandits

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 3
Reflexes 3		Agility 4	Strength 4	
Honor 1.8		Status 0	Infamy 1.0	

**Initiative:** 6k3                      **Attack:** 10k4e (katana, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 25 (Light Armor)                      **Damage:** 8k2 (katana)

**Reduction:** 3

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

**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 3

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle 3, Defense 4, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 4, Investigation 3, Jujutsu 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Knives 5, Lore: Underworld 4, Stealth 4

## Toson

A wiry, hot-headed former Crab who lacked the discipline for the Wall.

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 3
Reflexes 4		Agility 4	Perception 4	
Honor 2.8		Status 0	Glory 0	

**Initiative:** 8k4                      **Attack:** 10k5e (Katana, Simple)

**Armor TN:** 30 (light armor)                      **Damage:** 7k2m (Katana)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out), 58 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Hiruma Bushi 4

**Techniques:** *Torch’s Flame Flickers:* +1k0 to attack rolls while in Attack Stance.

*Wolf’s Little Lesson:* Adds 5 to Armor TN every time he hits with a melee weapon, up to +20 and only in Attack Stance.

*Hummingbird Wings:* Once per Round, may activate this Technique when an opponent targets him with an attack to gain a +8 to Armor TN for that attack.

*Shark Smells Blood:* Simple Action attacks with Samurai weapons.

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Hunting (Survival) 6, Intimidation 4, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Shadowlands 2, Stealth 4

Battle 4, Engineering 3, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 3, Jujutsu 3, Knives 5, Lore: Underworld 4, Sincerity 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Strength of the Earth / Brash, Social Disadvantage: Ronin

## Murai

A grizzled former Lion with a slightly more level head than his companions.

Air 3 Earth 4 Fire 3 Water 4 Void 3  
Reflexes 4 Agility 4 Strength 5  
Honor 5.1 Status 0 Glory 0

**Initiative:** 8k4+5 **Attack:** 10k5e (no-dachi, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 30 (light armor) **Damage:** 9k3m (no-dachi)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 2 (Insight Rank 4)

**Techniques:** *The Way of the Lion:* May either ignore the portion of an opponent's Armor TN derived from Armor, or gain a Free Raise when attacking. (Do not ignore Reduction from the Armor while choosing the first option.) +1k0 to attack rolls on first melee attack against an opponent in a skirmish, or against any opponent who has declared a Raise on an attack against since last turn. Add only a total of 1k0 for an enemy who Raised against you, no matter how many times they actually Raised.

*Strength of Purity:* During a skirmish may add Honor Rank to the total of any single roll during Turn. May not increase damage rolls in this fashion, nor can this be done in the Center Stance.

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle (Mass Combat) 5, Defense 3, Kenjutsu (Katana, No-dachi) 7, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: History 3, Sincerity 3

Engineering 3, Etiquette 2, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3, Intimidation 4, Investigation 2, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Underworld 2, Polearms 3, Stealth 2, War Fans 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Crab Hands / Social Disadvantage: Ronin

If the PCs fight the ronin or put them to flight in some other fashion, the innkeeper will give them his thanks, and Midori will express her gratitude as well. The innkeeper or his staff can confirm that the trail the PCs are following is heading into the haunted area of the forest, and that there are old tales that say the ruins of the old castle are in that direction (but they don't have a specific location for the ruins).

If the PCs get involved, Ogai will question them on their motivations, though he is not angry or upset, just curious. If the PCs want to explain it as the right thing to do (whether as a larger duty to the Empire as a whole, a concern for bushido, or even just a desire to see justice done), they can roll **Sincerity / Awareness** at a TN of 35. Success does not have an

immediate effect, but grants two Free Raises on further Social Rolls with Ogai (for example, in the next section).

If the PCs choose to leave the ronin largely alone, Midori will question that decision. "It may not be what we're here for, but it's still something that ought to be done. How do we know they won't attack someone who can't defend themselves? I may not be a magistrate, but I don't like the thought of my people being made victims by these kind of ronin." While she speaks somewhat pointedly toward Ogai, he refuses to rise to the bait, but listens to any PC response carefully.

The players may be reluctant to push back against the Status 6 magistrate, but this is an opportunity to make him think over his position. If the PCs can make arguments that would cause him to reconsider (some suggestions are listed above; note that he is a generally-reasonable samurai, despite his prejudices against spirituality), they may roll an appropriate Skill of the GM's determination related to their approach with Awareness at a TN of 35. (Sincerity may always be used as a default in this instance.) Success grants the same bonus as above, and should help them realize that they can sway the NPC's reactions – this is required to help him survive the Kitsune Mori's wrath.

## Part Three: The Kitsune Mori Has Not Forgiven

The next day, the PCs will approach the area of the woods that the locals recognize as haunted. Following Koken's trail also leads them past the site of his altercation with the ronin bandits, but there is little here to discover other than the same appearing-then-disappearing bear tracks that were found at the camp.

As noon approaches, the sun seems to fade behind a denser canopy than present in the rest of the forest. The trees themselves seem darker, as though the bark covers a layer of charred wood. The air is still and hushed, with neither a breeze nor any sound of animal life. The trail ahead of you remains clear, though Midori is tense and even the least spiritual-sensitive among you can sense the regard of the spirits. Your guide murmurs, as though trying to avoid attention, "This is the part of the forest we've avoided for as long as I know. It's a reflection of the spirits' anger at the Burning. We should be cautious."

Even here, the spirits are only outright hostile to those who have attracted their negative attention already

(Cursed by the Realm: Chikushudo or Dragon PCs in particular), but anyone can feel that they are being watched closely. Ogai's demeanor is sterner as he is extremely uncomfortable by being confronted with exactly the sort of forces he wishes to remain apart from his duties.

If the PCs wish to analyze the situation with Skills, Lore: Spirit Realms or Lore: Theology are appropriate but reveal little more than mentioned above. The Kitsune Mori has a close connection to the Realm of Chikushudo, and the spirits are very active here. These spirits are not necessarily shapeshifting *hengeyokai* like the kitsune the PCs may have met in previous modules, but simple nature spirits are capable of remembering wrongs done to them centuries before even if they lack a human intelligence.

The Sense spell can also provide some information on the surrounding area; this requires casting it as an Earth spell with one Raise for the difference between nature spirits and elemental earth *mikokami*. Doing so informs the PC that the spirits of the forest are active in this area and are unable to be communed with due to their focus being elsewhere. It also gives them a general sense of direction, along the trail that they are already following toward the ruins of the old castle.

### Ruins of Kyuden Kitsune

Following the trail eventually brings you into a large clearing in the forest. While you may have thought to see the sun overhead as soon as you break out from under the trees, the sky is instead a featureless grey void as though covered in smoke. Scattered boulders and broken rocks lie on the ground, covered in a dark green moss, and blocking your vision across the entire field. The ancient foundations and basic shapes of the old castle can be recognized with some effort, though the edges of the stone have been blurred by the passage of years. An eerie sound carries across the air, the wind humming over the stones perhaps.

Ogai is clearly unnerved but remains dedicated to the mission, gesturing for the PCs to continue to follow the tracks.

Like many castles, the old Kyuden Kitsune was built on a hill near water – there is a tributary that feeds into the River of Gold flowing through the clearing, but the PCs do not have to cross it while following the tracks up the hill toward the remains of the stronghold. Like the wind, however, the sound of the stream is muted and hushed. The trail leads down into a ditch that may have once been a moat, now dry and filled with little

more than scrub – already moved aside by the fugitive the group is pursuing.

Once the party climbs to the other side of the ditch, they are stepping onto the grounds of the actual castle, and the spirits' activity becomes more pronounced. Out of the corner of their eyes, the PCs can see the outline of the old castle as it was before the fire, though like it's on fire, and they can smell smoke on the air; additionally, each PC should roll **Raw Perception** at a TN of 25. If no one succeeds, whoever rolled the highest will get the following information right before stepping into the main keep.

The uncanny sound on the wind grows louder, resolving itself into the sound of a man screaming. Rather than ceasing to draw breath, however, the hoarse cry is continuous and never seems to grow louder or softer.

This is the sound of *Hitofu no Yorei*, the soul of Hoshi Hitofu, who started the fires and has spent two centuries being tortured by the spirits of the forest for it. PCs have no way of knowing this, of course, but if they want to make rolls using Lore: Spirit Realms or Lore: Theology, they recognize the keening of a ghost if they roll 40 or higher.

The trail leads inexorably to the center of the castle, to the main keep where the Fox Clan ruled these lands from for most of a thousand years. Massive, tumbled stones lie ahead, with a break between them appearing like a doorway. The sounds of screaming come from the doorway, but nothing can be seen within.

The PCs should make a roll to resist **Fear 3** at this point (Raw Willpower, adding Honor to the total, at a TN of 20). They may make any preparations they wish, though Ogai will be slightly impatient with any spellcasting (he wants to be over and done as soon as possible).

When you step within what would have once been the main hall of the castle, the first thing that claims your attention is the twenty-foot pillar of fire. Inside it, the head, arms, and torso of a man writhe in agony; the fire is silent, lacking any roar or crackle, and the form's screaming is muted. Overhead is nothing but blackness, though the ruins should be open to the sky.

Between you and the fire is a strange tableau. A muscular man kneels on the stone, flanked by an ephemeral bear that pulses in time with the green glowing ursine tattoo that spreads across his back. Both man and bear are holding animals at bay – a boar

and stag are pressed into the rocky ground by the bear, while the man in the jingasa holds a badger, gnawing on his forearm, in one hand and wards a fox off with a gesture from the other hand. A wolf and serow pace in the space between the confrontation and the fire. All of the animals have a strange aura; while they do not glow, they are clearly visible despite the stark shadows cast in the room by the pillar of flame.

The PCs should get a chance to react immediately, as Ogai stops cold in consternation. While he does not look away from his struggle, Koken turns his face slightly in their direction as if to inquire what they intend.

Unless the PCs specifically attempt to appeal to Ogai about the spiritual matters that are obviously immediately afoot, he will shake himself slightly and move ahead with his mission.

Ogai mutters under his breath, “This is all.. immaterial.” Striding forward and ignoring the spirits, he proclaims, “Togashi Koken. You are under arrest by my authority as an Emerald Magistrate. Cease your current... activities, and come with us peacefully.”

At this point, the PCs have a chance to speak. If they want to try to talk Ogai down, they may roll **Sincerity** or **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at a TN of 35; this is increased by 10 if the speaker is a shugenja or monk, and any argument that relies on devotion to Rokugani religious beliefs also increases the TN by 10 (these penalties do stack).

Only one PC may make this attempt, as Ogai is within sight of his goal.

If the PC fails, or no PC tries:

“I don’t care. None of this matters!” Ogai takes a sharp breath after shouting, and coughs. “He must return to Otsan Uchi!” He coughs again, chest laboring in his anger. “He must admit that his crimes are his own-” This time the cough interrupts him, and a whisp of smoke curls from behind the hand he raises to his face. “He must take responsibility for the harm he has done to the clan and give up this foolishness-” As the magistrate takes another step forward to lay his hand on the kneeling monk’s shoulder, fire erupts from his mouth. No scream is audible over the sound of crackling flames, pouring out of his throat and bursting his eyes. It is, perhaps, mercifully quick, but Kitsuki Ogai collapses to the ground smoking from his head and chest.

This does kill him outright.

If the PC does succeed in convincing him to wait, he still presses forward, but he is less directly disrespectful and will survive.

“I want this over and done with.” Ogai steps forward to lay a hand on the kneeling monk’s shoulder. “This is, none of it, our business. The Fox can handle it.” The magistrate coughs suddenly, but stubbornly continues. “This is not what we came for.” He coughs again, and a wisp of smoke trails from behind the hand he raises to cover his face. “He must answer for his crimes, and we need to leave this to-” A spasm of coughing overtakes him, and he collapses to his knees with smoke pouring out of his mouth and throat. After a moment, he loses consciousness and the smoke dissipates, leaving him breathing hoarsely on the stony ground.

In this instance, Ogai survives, but is incapacitated for the remainder of the scene.

In either case:

Koken grates out from between clenched teeth, “Idiot. I’m trying to put these spirits to rest, but they are resisting. I got them to manifest, but they won’t listen to me for some reason. If you can’t make them understand, we’ll have to fight them or banish them.”

If the PCs require more information, Koken is free with his intent: he wants to plant the Heart of the Forest in the center of the castle, which will return the last lost spirit of the forest to the Kitsune Mori. The effects won’t be immediate, but it will allow the scar that has afflicted the area for centuries to heal. Practically, it involves physically planting the artifact and then casting Commune on it to waken the spirit residing within it so that it can know that it’s home.

The spirits have to be dealt with first, however.

### Option 1: Calm Spirits

The spirits won’t heed Koken’s words because he is both a Togashi Tattooed Monk and a Kitsune Shugenja, and they feel he betrayed his family to join the same Order that destroyed the woods two hundred years ago. Because they are fully manifested, they can be interacted with.

Should the PCs wish to talk them down, they may make appropriate arguments, presumably in support of Koken’s attempt to use the Heart of the Forest. roll

either **Sincerity / Awareness** or **Lore: Theology / Willpower** at a TN of 30. This requires three different characters to succeed; while they can roll using the Cooperative Skill Roll rules, three different PCs must make the rolls. Additionally, both Skills should be used at least once.

The Touch of Chikushudo Advantage gives +1k1 to these rolls, and the Kitsune's Blessing cert grants double its usual bonus.

Ideally, this can be done as a back-and-forth with the spirits in conversation. Any of the spirits will speak with the PCs, and will back off of Koken and his guard when the PCs begin to talk. The primary thing the spirits will want assurances of is that Hitofu has been punished "enough". What "enough" means in this context is up to the PCs to determine, and explain to the spirits. Their anger is literally not human, and their understanding of human justice is very limited.

### Option 2: Fight Spirits

Because the animal spirits have manifested, they can be fought physically, though it is not an easy fight. If the PCs cannot talk them down, they may need to deal with them in a direct fashion. When defeated, an animal spirit returns to Chikushudo, fading away to the other Spirit Realm, and loses some of their hold on the mortal Realm.

When all of the Spirits are defeated, the pillar of fire will go out, and the ghost of Hitofu will pass into Meido.

There are a number of Spirits equal to the number of PCs at the table; they all use the following stats regardless of the form they have taken.

### Spirits of the Forest

Manifested animal spirits, angry over past wrongs.

<p>Air 2 Reflexes 6</p> <p><b>Initiative:</b> 8k6</p> <p><b>Armor TN:</b> 35</p> <p><b>Reduction:</b> 5</p> <p><b>Wounds:</b> 60 (Dead)</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Defense 3, Hunting 6, Intimidation 4, Jiujutsu (Grappling) 4</p> <p><b>Special Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Swift 2</i></li> <li>• <i>Spirit</i> (half damage from all sources, including nemuranai, that are not jade, crystal, or obsidian weapons or spells)</li> </ul>	<p>Earth 3</p> <p><b>Attack:</b> 7k7 (Claw, Bite, or Gore; Complex)</p> <p><b>Damage:</b> 7k4</p>	<p>Fire 2 Agility 4</p>	<p>Water 4</p>
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- *Fear 2*
- *Ferocious Strike:* When a Spirit succeeds on an attack, the target must make a Willpower Roll against a TN equal to the Wounds they take or be treated as if they'd failed a Fear 2 effect; this roll is treated as a roll to resist Fear, including adding the target's Honor Rank to the total, but they are not considered to have failed by 15 or more no matter what they roll. If they fail, they may attempt a re-roll on a later Round as a Complex Action.

### Option 3: Banish Spirits

In general, it is very difficult for shugenja to Banish the spirits; in this instance, it requires casting "Sense Earth" with 3 Raises, and then "Commune with Earth" with 5. Kitsune Midori can do it (or a PC Kitsune Shugenja with Void 4; Koken cannot because he is struggling with the manifestations of those spirits), but requires convincing. This requires a roll of **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at a TN of 25 or **Intimidation / Willpower** at a TN of 35. Midori can be considered to automatically succeed, but when the animal spirits are banished, they will release the ghost of Hitofu into the mortal Realm as a last gesture of anger.

The burning pillar of flame before you diminishes to a ghostly, fiery shape. Its cries changing from agony to elation, it charges toward you.

Midori and Koken will assist, though they will largely hang back and cast spells to assist the PCs. Koken, in particular, should save his Earth spells and Silent Waters in case the PCs choose to argue with him over the Heart of the Forest.

### Hitofu no Yorei

A burning form, mindless from the pain of two centuries' torture.

<p>Air 3 Reflexes 4</p> <p><b>Initiative:</b> 10k4</p> <p><b>Armor TN:</b> 25</p> <p><b>Wounds:</b> 80 (Dead)</p> <p><b>Skills:</b> Jiujutsu 7</p> <p><b>Special Abilities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Fear 6</i></li> <li>• <i>Superior Invulnerability:</i> The hitofu no yorei is immune to all fire damage and all arrow damage, as well as the normal effects of Invulnerability.</li> </ul>	<p>Earth 4</p> <p><b>Attack:</b> 10k7e (Fiery Fists, Simple)</p> <p><b>Damage:</b> 5k4+10 (Fiery Fists)</p>	<p>Fire 5</p>	<p>Water 3</p>
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- *Fiery Form*: The hitofu no yorei is comprised of fire and fury; any character that strikes it with a melee weapon takes 5k3 damage that ignores Reduction.
- *Fiery Fists*: Unarmed strikes from the hitofu no yorei do damage as above, and additionally any target struck by it is set on fire and takes 10 more Wounds in the Reactions Stage until they take a Complex Action to douse the flames (or Extinguish is cast).
- *Fiery Weakness*: The hitofu no yorei takes double damage from any damaging Water spells, and casting Extinguish reduces the damage it deals by 1k1 for one Round.

#### Option 4: Seppuku for Kambei

The PCs may decide (largely, correctly) that the spirits are angry with Koken and unlikely to allow him to proceed without some form of grand gesture of repentance (largely incorrectly). However, if the PCs can make an honorable argument and succeed at a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** at a TN of 50, he will agree that it is a reasonable course of action. This also requires promising to fulfill his mission of planting the Heart of the Forest, and necessitates a **Sincerity (Honesty or Deceit) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 40.

Koken releases the spirits, who back away distrustfully. “I will do whatever it takes to see this accomplished. The restoration of the forest has been my goal for a long time. You must complete this task, so that all of this wasn’t for nothing.” He steps back, pats the spirit of the bear that was helping him on the head and it fades away. With a grimace, the tattooed monk kneels and glances to you. “Who will stand as my second?”

Koken’s second must succeed at a **Kenjutsu / Void** roll with a TN of 35; if they do, they gain H10 Honor.

If the PCs choose to renege on their promise after he is dead, they lose D-2 Honor (their current Honor Rank plus 2 points) and gain Sworn Enemy: Kitsune Midori.0

## Conclusion

Kambei will surrender peacefully as long as the PCs allow him to plant the Heart of the Forest in the ruins, will be downright friendly if they calmed the spirits.

He is not quite hostile if they fought them, but will defend himself if attacked.

Koken rolls his shoulders and frowns. “Allow me to finish my task, and I will surrender peacefully. I did not intend any harm, but I will face the consequences for my actions. Only... do not try to make all that has been lost already be lost for nothing. Let me heal this wound in the world, and you will have no problem with me.” His fists clench tightly, and he seems to take ahold of himself. “Understand that I will. Not. Abandon this task.”

Koken may accept compromise as long as he is allowed to accomplish the task – letting Midori or PC shugenja assist him, etc. He will not allow them to do it without him, however. If the PCs seem uneasy about allowing him to cast spells, he will give them his scroll pouch as a gesture of good faith (most of his spells are Innate, but it’s as close as he can come to disarming himself). Assuming they allow it:

Koken kneels on the bare flagstone, where moss never grew in the heat of the forest’s wrath. Closing his eyes, he pulls at the stone and it yields, rising with his hand to uncover the dark loam beneath. Whispering prayers to the spirits, he presses the acorn into the soil. There is no fanfare, but the greens of the forest and the bark of the trees seem to lighten slightly. The scar is not yet gone, but healing has begun.

If the PCs do not allow Koken to plant the Heart of the Forest, he will try to push his way through, even initiating combat as noted in his character notes; if it appears he is outmatched even with his magical enhancements, he can summon another creature to hold the PCs off while he life-casts to activate the nemuranai.

If Ogai was killed, the PCs will need to report to the Kitsune authorities first. Oioko is not terribly distraught over Ogai’s death, but will provide the PCs with assistance in returning the fugitive to Otsan Uchi and the proper Imperial authorities.

If Ogai survived, he will thank the PCs for their assistance and dismiss them; if they wish to accompany him back to Otsan Uchi, he will accept their aid but it proves unnecessary – as long as he accomplished his task, Koken has accepted his fate, and places himself at the mercy of the Emerald Magistrates.

## The End



## Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module:	1 EXP
Good Roleplaying:	+1 EXP
Found Koken:	+1 EXP
Restored the Kitsune Mori:	+1 EXP
Total Possible Experience:	4 EXP

### Favors

For assisting an Emerald Magistrate, even if he does not survive, the PCs gain one Favor.

### Honor

There is no inherent Honor gain for this module.

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

### Glory

Assisting an Emerald Magistrate earns the PCs a G8 Honor gain. The effects on the Kitsune Mori are too subtle at first to stand out for the Empire as a whole.

### Module Tracking Sheets

If Kitsuki Ogai survives, the PCs gain “Kitsuki Ogai’s Writ”, granting them a Free Raise once per module on Social Skill Rolls when dealing with Emerald Magistrates.

### GM Reporting

There should be a few reporting questions for each module,

- 1) Did the PCs fight the ronin otokodate?
- 2) Did Kitsuki Ogai survive?
- 3) Were the nature spirits Banished?
- 4) Did the Heart of the Forest get planted?
- 5) Was Koken returned to Otosan Uchi?

**GM must report this information BEFORE (6/15/2021) for it to have storyline effect**

## Appendix #1: NPCs

### Kitsuki Ogai

Ogai is a tall man in his mid-thirties, with a shaven head and a thin beard. He is absolutely dedicated to pure justice, though he has of late begun to temper his approach with the practical concerns of politics. When he sets his mind on a course of action, he focuses on it entirely, often to his detriment, and he has no understanding of (or regard for) spiritual matters – both of these facts will cause him major problems.

Air 4 Earth 3 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 4  
Willpower 4 Perception 5  
Honor 7.3 Status 6.5 Glory 4.8

**Initiative:** 9k4 **Attack:** 10k4e (katana, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 35 (light armor) **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Out), 58 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Kitsuki Investigator 5

**Techniques:** *Kitsuki's Method:* Free Raise on Investigation Skill Rolls. Adds Perception Trait Rank to Armor TN.

*Wisdom the Wind Brings:* The TN to deceive or Disarm Ogai is increased by +25.

*Know the Rhythm of the Heart:* Can roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception against a TN of the target's Intelligence x 5 after speaking with someone for a few moments to gain a true and accurate, if simple, picture of their personality and motivations.

*Finding the Path:* Can learn a target's Allies by conversing with them for a few minutes, and succeeding at a Contested Roll of Investigation (Interrogation) / Intelligence against their Etiquette (Courtesy) / Intelligence.

*The Eyes Betray the Heart:* Automatically rolls Contested Roll of Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception against a liar's Sincerity (Deceit) / Willpower, and gains a further +5k0 bonus if Ogai already knows they're lying. May call Raises on the roll in an attempt to make them inadvertently give away more information than they intended (GM's choice what information they reveal).

**Skills:** Courtier 5, Etiquette (Bureaucracy, Conversation) 5, Investigation (Interrogation, Search) 8, Kenjutsu (Katana) 6, Lore: Law 7, Meditation 2, Sincerity (Honesty) 4

Athletics 3, Calligraphy 4, Defense 4, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu (Assessment) 6, Intimidation 5, Jiujutsu 3, Lore: Heraldry 5

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Allies (Kitsuki Daimyo, Empress), Balance, Irreproachable / Disbeliever, Idealistic

### Kitsune Midori

Wearing practical clothes, Midori is an experienced guide and scout. Her patience is often strained by the strictures of courtly manners, but her respect is not hard to earn by those willing to show respect in turn.

Air 2 Earth 4 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 4  
Reflexes 3 Perception 4  
Honor 4.1 Status 2.0 Glory 3.4

**Initiative:** 7k3 **Attack:** by spell or 6k3 (wakizashi, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 33 **Damage:** 6k2 (ashigaru armor, wakizashi Defense Stance)

**Reduction:** 1

**Wounds:** 20 (+0), 28 (+3), 36 (+5), 44 (+10), 52 (+15), 60 (+20), 68 (Down, +40), 76 (Out), 77 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Kitsune Shugenja 4

**Technique:** *Essence of Chikushudo:* may use Sense, Commune, or Summon to affect animal spirits of Chikushudo as well as kami. Free Raise on any non-damaging spell cast on an animal.

**Affinity/Deficiency:** Earth/Air

**Spells:** Sense, Commune, Summon; (Air: 6k2); Arrow's Flight (ML1), Nature's Touch (ML1) (Earth: 10k4) Courage of the Seven Thunders (ML1), Jurojin's Balm (ML1), Stone's Endurance (ML1), Force of Will (ML2), Whispers of the Land (ML2), Bonds of Ningen-do (ML3), Shelter of the Earth (ML3), Armor of the Emperor (ML4), Essence of Earth (ML4), The Kami's Strength (ML5); (Fire: 8k3) Extinguish (ML1), Hungry Blade (ML3); (Water: 8k3) Path to Inner Peace (ML1), Reversal of Fortune (ML1), The Ties That Bind (ML2)

**Skills:** Athletics 5, Calligraphy 3, Defense 5, Hunting (Survival, Tracking) 6, Medicine (Herbalism) 4, Meditation 3, Spellcraft 5  
Animal Handling 4, Commerce 1, Engineering 2, Etiquette 2, Investigation (Notice) 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Nature 4, Spears 3, Stealth 3

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Absolute Direction, Friendly Kami, Way of the Land: Kitsune Mori / Antisocial I, Contrary

## Togashi Koken

A burly man wearing the brown robes of a ronin shugenja and a wide-brimmed jingasa. Tattoos swirl across his back and chest, though they are usually covered to avoid attention.

Air 2    Earth 5    Fire 3    Water 4    Void 4  
Reflexes 4  
Honor 3.4                      Status 1.0                      Glory 1.2

**Initiative:** 9k4                      **Attack:** 9k4 (unarmed, Complex)

**Armor**    **TN:**    33                      **Damage:** 6k2  
(Defense)    (unarmed)

**Reduction:** by spell

**Wounds:** 25 (+0), 35 (+0), 45 (+2), 55 (+7), 65 (+12), 75 (+17), 85 (Down, +37), 95 (Out), 96 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Kitsune Shugenja 4/Kitsune Summoner/Togashi Tattooed Monk 2

**Technique:** *Essence of Chikushudo:* may use Sense, Commune, or Summon to affect animal spirits of Chikushudo as well as kami. Free Raise on any non-damaging spell cast on an animal.

**Techniques:** *Blood of the Kami:* Gain two Tattoos.

*Body of Stone:* Gain a bonus of +1k1 to the total of all unarmed attack and damage rolls.

*Ocean:* When granted this tattoo, you no longer have need of food or drink, although you may still partake of them if you wish. When this tattoo is activated, you are instantly refreshed as if you had spent eight hours of sleep, and you regain all spent Void Points. This tattoo may only be used once every three days.

*Bear:* While active, may increase Stamina by School Rank or Strength by half School Rank, round up.

**Affinity/Deficiency:** Earth/Air

**Spells:** Sense, Commune, Summon; (Earth: 10k5) Earth Becomes Sky, Grasp of Earth, Whispers of the Land, The Wolf's Mercy, Strength of the Crow, Earth Kami's Blessing, Essence of Earth, Sapphire Strike, Jade Strike, The Kami's Strength, Force of Will; (Fire: 8k3) Extinguish; (Water: 9k4) Path to Inner Peace, Reversal of Fortunes, Rejuvenating Vapors, Silent Waters

**Skills:** Calligraphy 1, Defense 3, Hunting 2, Investigation 3, Medicine (Herbalism) 1, Meditation 1, Spellcraft 5

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Craft: Tattooing 1, Jiu-jitsu 5, Lore: Theology 1

Battle 2, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Intimidation 2, Lore: Animals 3, Lore: Chikushudo 3, Stealth 2

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Elemental Blessing: Earth, Friend of the Elements: Earth, Strength of the Earth Touch of the Realm: Chikushudo / Antisocial I, Ascetic, Driven: Bring Peace to the Spirits of the Kitsune Mori

**Notes on Spells:** In combat, Koken has Force of Will in a Silent Waters that triggers when he is struck; he should cast The Kami's Strength to gain Strength 9 and Reflexes 9 as well as Reduction 20 as his first action and fight from there.

## Bear

Air 1                      Earth 6                      Fire 1                      Water 2  
Reflexes 3    Agility 4    Strength 7

**Initiative:** 4k3    **Attack:** 6k4 (Claws, Simple) or 5k4 (Bite, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 20    **Damage:** 7k3 (Claws) or 4k3 (Bite)

**Reduction:** 9

**Wounds:** 30 (+5), 60 (+10), 90 (Dead)

**Special Abilities:**

- *Fear* 2
- *Swift* 3 (except when going downhill)
- *Huge*