

# **Boiling Point**

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

[Rokugani Month], 1343 (Fall)

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Investigation, Roleplay, Combat

A missing Artifact threatens to cause tensions to boil over.

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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

It has been several weeks since the Samurai arrived in Balishnimpur, where troubles are brewing once again, demanding immediate attention. Unfortunately, the city's overworked magistrates have been under even more pressure ever since the battle over the city a few scant years ago and have become unfortunately suspicious of Ivindi concerns, especially when those concerns are competing with a great many others.

However, the Ivindi are not content to let this problem remain unaddressed, and so Guru Bodhi and Kshatriya Jayesh Suresh have taken steps to deal with the matter personally. A relic of Vishnu--one of the chief gods of the Ivindi people--has been stolen, a powerful artifact that could cause great destruction if corrupted toward evil ends. To retrieve it they are willing to work with the Rokugani in order to ensure this does not come to pass.

They warn of the Ruhmali, a heretical cult that has seen a rise in influence over the years, especially in the wake of the battle. They warn that they know the darkest magicks, consort with monsters, and would corrupt even the gods' powers to make their warped vision a reality.

Unfortunately, a combination of prejudice and genuine lack of resources has left them largely ignored by the authorities until just recently. The local magistrates have not immediately discounted their warnings, but don't have the ability to do much about them.

Fortunately, a group of capable Samurai have been sent to assist with the troubles of the city...

## Upkeep

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

### Character Notes

The GM should take a few minutes to examine the players' character sheets in order to have an idea of the nature of the PCs at the table. It is frequently helpful to have a list of specific mechanics that come up in the course of the module determined at the start of the module so the GM does not have to slow down play to check and see which parts apply to which PC. These can be Advantages, Disadvantages, Schools, Skills, or any other particularly relevant mechanics.

- Language: Ivinidi
- Spy Network
- Wrath of the Kami (Particularly Air and Fire)

### 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. At the beginning of the module, all PCs lose 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 20.

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**

It is a wet day that finds you summoned to the office of Gennai Okusukai, rain pouring down in sheets and whipped into a frenzy by the wind. It tugs at your mino and soaks into the thin material of your clothing, weighing you down as if the sky itself was pressed upon your shoulders. Blessedly, it begins to ease as you approach your destination, and you can barely restrain a sigh of relief once you are inside.

The Magistrate's office is cramped as always, but it is dry and warm. How strange it is that you wished for such a thing in a city normally sweltering, but the small monsoon you found yourself walking through has sapped all the heat from your bones.

So it is that you gratefully sit down at the low table offered to you, cups of tea placed in your hands. After a few minutes you recover feeling, and soon are presentable enough for the meeting you were requested to attend.

The Magistrate's office is bustling with activity, aides carrying papers to be reviewed and removing forms that have already been stamped with the proper seals of office. Most of the space is filled with people rushing around to complete one vital task before moving on to another. It is a scene of tightly controlled chaos, the Magistrate and his assistant Ryoko directing with but a few words and gestures to ensure as little time as possible is wasted in the flow of work.

But none of that strikes you as odd, or at least not as odd as the two Ivindi men sitting in front of the Magistrate's desk.

They are a mismatched pair--one is clearly a warrior in the prime of his life, physique honed for battle. His posture is stiff, a little impatient--you see his hand occasionally drifting toward where a sword would be, but for the needs of politeness requiring him to give the weapon up. The other is far past that, a lean old man who perhaps might have been a warrior once, but who has been retired for decades. He is much more relaxed than his companion--still alert, but one imagines that he could wait patiently in his seat for another day, if he had to.

"Oh good," Okusukai says as you enter, holding up a hand to stall an aide bearing yet more reports to look over. "You're finally here."

"This is the help you promised us?" the younger Ivindi asks. "About time."

"Please, Sri Jayesh, there's no need to be rude. They are here now, and that is enough." The older man says as he turns to you and smiles. "Please forgive my friend. He is very dedicated, and his zeal does him credit."

Okusukai will introduce the two men at this point. The elder of the two is named Bodhi, a Guru. Bodhi will elaborate that he fulfills a role similar to that of Rokugani monks. The younger man is Jayesh Suresh, a Kshatriya and bodyguard to Bodhi. (Anyone with Lore: Ivory Kingdoms can roll to determine that House Suresh is actually a rather powerful family in the Ivory Kingdoms.)

The Magistrate will go on to explain why the PCs are here. Bodhi and Jayesh have been coming to his office every day for the last two months, asking for help with a matter of utmost urgency. Unfortunately, Okusukai hasn't had much in the way of manpower to actually look into this issue beyond very basic information gathering.

But now that help has arrived from the mainland, and the PCs have been assigned to aid the office of the Magistracy, this can be rectified.

At this point, the PCs will likely have many questions. Here are some sample answers.

What exactly is the issue, and what involvement does it have with the Ivindi?/Why are they here? [Say unprompted if PCs don't immediately ask]

Bodhi will answer this question by saying "A powerful relic has been stolen from a temple dedicated to Vishnu the Preserver, one that might cause great harm if twisted toward evil ends. We believe those who have taken it came to this city in order to discourage pursuit. Or at the very least are nearby."

Who stole this artifact?

Bodhi will begin to speak, but Jayesh will interrupt by growling "A band of madmen who call themselves the Cult of Ruhmal. I believe you may have heard of them?" If the GM wishes, they can have Bodhi gently rebuke him for speaking out of turn--Jayesh will accept the rebuke.

(Tell players who need a refresher that the Cult of Ruhmal is a strange group of Ivindi who, to the best of your--being the PCs--knowledge worship an Ivindi deity of destruction. [This is a vast oversimplification of the Cult's heresy, but it is likely as much as the characters will be aware of either through past experience or hearsay.]

Why do you believe the thieves have come here?

Okusukai will answer with "My best guess is that the continuing unrest from the siege has made Balishnimpur uniquely suited as a hiding place."

Bodhi will then speak up. "Our influence in this region has been... lessened. Identifying and dealing with them ourselves is not so simple."

What is this artifact?

Bodhi will answer. "A sacred relic of Vishnu, who preserves and protects all things. It is a weapon meant to be wielded only by one chosen as worthy in his sight, and cannot be shot, strung, or even touched by those who intend to misuse it."

How did the thieves steal it, then?

(GM's choice of who responds)

Bodhi: He smiles thinly. "Very carefully, I imagine."

Jayesh: He takes a deep breath, and almost seems to deflate before answering "We don't know."

Why does the cult want this artifact?

Okusukai: "They could use it to rally another uprising."

Jayesh: "I doubt it is anything so mundane."

Bodhi: "I agree with my associate, though I am unsure what exactly they wish to accomplish. My fear is that they might have some means of warping its purpose, and in so doing use its power in service to their madness."

What do you want us to do about this?

Okusukai will smile and say "I haven't had the resources to look into this properly while maintaining the order of the city. But now that you are here I finally have people to dedicate to this problem. You are to be my yoriki, working with Bodhi-san and Jayesh-san in uncovering this plot."

Where should we look?

Bodhi: "I want to check with the temples, both of your gods and what few of mine remain in the city. If one artifact has been stolen, there is a possibility more relics have also been taken."

Okusukai: "And there are always rumors floating around the marketplace to follow up on. As well as... around the marketplace. Less than reputable places I won't sully your ears with naming, but there is a possibility to learn something there."

## Part One: Gathering Information

At this point there are three possible avenues for the players to take in order to gather information. They can look in the Temple District, the Markets, or interact with criminal elements. Each can be taken one at a time or with the group splitting up to handle multiple avenues at once. The Underworld section resolves first, and there are special consequences if the Temple District is ignored.

Bodhi will encourage visiting the Temple District as he wishes to see if any religious artifacts have been taken from the city. However, he is a newcomer to Balisnapur and if no one wishes to accompany him then he will join the largest group.

### The Temple District

The air is pleasantly cool now that the rains have passed, the natural heat of Balishnimpur beginning to return now that the skies have ceased their downpour. In time it will be stifling, a wet hand around the throat and limbs. But for now, as the sun comes into view behind the clouds, it is almost as if you are enjoying a stroll down any city within the Empire proper.

Even with such amiable distractions, however, you cannot help but notice something is wrong as you make your way toward the Temple District. Bodhi is in front, Jayesh at his side, as you push through the crowds. All too often men and women only reluctantly make way for your party, and then only because they can see you. In turn, you can see a number of Ivindi at the edges who are not nearly so fortunate, and the look in their eyes makes it clear their tempers are beginning to flare as much as your own might be. The crowd seems to be focused on something--or someone--that you can't quite make out, until finally you come to a break and see what has brought so many eyes.

“Look at them!” cries a man in the plain robes of a ronin at the front of the small crowd, standing atop an overturned crate for height. He points with bandaged hands to a group of Ivindi cowering in the eve of a temple to one of their gods. “They come into our lands, brought under the aegis of heaven by our great

Empire, and take advantage of our goodwill! Thieves in the night! Defilers of all that is sacred!”

The crowd roars in response, surging like a wave before settling back. Most of the mob is made up of peasants, their faces flushed red with anger and a strange exultation. But among them you can see the hilts of swords in obi, the hands of ronin resting easily upon them. Four step forward, faces flushed with a rage they clearly intend to exercise. The Ivindi recognize the hostility in the air and begin edging toward the temple door, though a few of the braver ones stand firm in stiff (but silent) opposition to the invective.

“For too long have we abided the presence of these ungrateful wretches; the very same wretches that attacked the shrine to our beloved Toturi Tsudao!” the lead ronin goes on, leaning close so his face seems to touch the crowd below him. When he rises his gaze locks with yours, and his expression twists with almost animalistic fury; and a flicker of recognition? “And yet more come here, to our places of worship! How shameful it is that proper Samurai walk with such miscreants! Have we truly fallen so low?”

As one the horde turns--as if an enormous monster shifting its weight--to look at you. The force of their rage, the sheer hate, almost takes your breath away. The other ronin step forward, teeth gritted, to the front.

**GM note only:** The demagogue is the rakshasa in a disguise; he recognizes Bodhi, and has turned the crowd on them to prevent himself from being discovered.

The PCs will need to act fast. There are multiple options for defusing this situation. For diplomacy, any arguments that mention the Ivindi are also being stolen from will lower the TN by 5. The base TN is 35. TN 40 for Intimidation; this cannot be reduced. For Scorpion players they have 10 points of Social/Mental Disadvantages (Brash, Gullible, Social Disadvantage [Peasant])

If intimidation or diplomacy fails, or the players take a defensive stance around the Ivindi without making any arguments, a skirmish breaks out. The Samurai in the crowd will rush forward and attack. This will be resolved with a combat skill role, TN 35; if players succeed they're able to subdue the enemy samurai, with participants taking 2k1 wounds (unexploding).

On a failure, it requires the assistance of local magistrate forces to fully subdue the ronin, and the PCs instead take 3k2 wounds.

The crowd disperses; no one has either the spirit or the confidence to stir embers, and the instigator seems to have gotten away. It takes a few minutes to persuade the temple to re-open its doors, and the people you saved--an extended family, as it turns out: three generations of parents and children, come to greet you.

“Thank you, Ksha... Samurai-samas,” the grandfather says, bowing low. “I don’t want to think of what might have happened to us if you had not arrived.”

“Is this common?” Jayesh asks, his incredulity obvious. “I was aware our people were not treated well in this city, but to think it would go so far...”

“Times have been... rough, since the siege,” the old man answers. “There are many who blame us despite taking no part in the battle, but I’ve never seen anything like today.”

“Troubling. Very troubling,” Bodhi says. He nods to the family, giving them a polite smile. “Go with the grace of the gods, good people. May they bless you, as they will hopefully bless our own endeavors.”

They smile at the blessing, bow, and leave.

However, the fact remains that you did come here for a purpose, and that needs fulfilling. Bodhi will insist (if the players don’t take the initiative themselves) on continuing with investigations.

Asking around the Temple District reveals that, yes, a number of items have been stolen from numerous temples. They are of varying levels of importance, mostly at random. An Investigation/Perception roll at TN 25, or a Lore: Theology/Perception Roll at TN 20 (Intelligence at TN 25), will let the players recognize that all the artifacts stolen are locally beloved or significant--all are items that will be missed.

As well, no matter what temple they visit, they will see the monks all in states of great unease. Most can’t properly detail why. They simply find their meditations troubled, as if the Fortunes are bothered by something. If they speak with an abbot, then they

will relate strange visions of calamity and tigers that seem to come from the jungle.

This allows Bodhi to realize the stolen goods are a red herring. The goal isn’t theft, especially in this blatant way. It is to stir up tensions. If the roll is failed, he will only be certain that there is an additional layer to the mystery.

If they pass the roll:

“There is no pattern to the thefts? But then it makes no sense, why bother--unless there is no sense at all, beyond the theft itself. They have been stolen to distract and to enrage. But to succeed so often... they must be close; hidden in the jungle, perhaps?”

If they do not pass the roll:

“There must be something more to this...a ritual? Perhaps the visions pointing to the jungle are the key?”

## The Markets

Despite the heat bearing down like a wet cloth across your brow, the markets are full of activity. Hawkers loudly proclaim the quality of their wares while decrying those of their neighbors, and more than once it seems a scuffle is about to break out. But aside from the occasional slap and shouting of curses, nothing truly violent happens.

The smell of freshly cooked food assails you as you wander through the streets, many familiar and some you cannot recognize. Samurai and peasants alike go about their business, most clothed in the thin summer styles so prominent to Balishnimpur. Those who stubbornly remain in the multi-layered kimono of the mainland walk drenched with sweat, their teeth gritted, but most have adapted to sensible practicality.

If Bodhi is not with this group, they will be approached by a Rokugani peasant with heavily bandaged hands who introduces himself as Tora. He mentions having seen strange people moving about, and that he’s frightened they are up to no good. Tora has brought this up to the magistrates, but they have brushed off his concerns, and he even claims to have been beaten for his persistence.

Tora is lying, but so convincingly that players must prompt any attempts to see through him

themselves--this will trigger an Investigation/Awareness roll at TN 45 (success in the Underworld section reduces this TN by 10, and the GM should prompt the players to roll). Passing lets them recognize his lies for what they are; if he is challenged, he will flee. PCs can attempt to chase him down, and must meet an Athletics/Agility roll of TN 30 or else the unnaturally agile beggar will disappear from sight almost immediately; instead they will lose sight of him at the edge of the jungle. PCs who manage a roll of 50+ will be close enough on his heels that he will compliment them for their tenacity before magically disappearing into the foliage.

[Note: If no PCs went to the temple, he will instead disappear in a dead-end alleyway deeper in the city, having turned himself invisible.]

Should the PCs not see through his lies, he will lead them into an ambush in a secluded alley by Ruhmali cultists. This will trigger a combat skill roll at TN 25; on a success the PCs will be able to subdue their ambushers with no injuries; on a failure the PCs take 2k2 wounds in the process of defeating them. Tora will have disappeared once the fight is finished, but the PCs can make a TN 20 (15 if successful in the Underworld) Hunting/Perception Roll (or a TN 25 Courtier: Gossip/Awareness Roll, if they choose to ask around) to find that the Ruhmali entered the city from the northern jungle.

If Bodhi is with the party, Tora will not confront them directly. Instead he will cause a scene in an alleyway like he, or someone else, is being assaulted. If the PCs investigate the fight will happen exactly the same as above, with similar results.

## The Underworld

### D3 Honor Loss for entering here

You wander close to the market district, but do not enter. That is not your destination. Instead, you venture into the alleys behind the reputable shops, toward doors where no casual passerby would ever enter. The stench of opium and poorly brewed alcohol assaults your nose as you continue through the twisting maze, until in the end you find what you are looking for.

The "teahouse" barely deserves the name, a ramshackle collection of wood and cloth that seems like it will fall over in a stiff breeze. But the door is

solid enough when you knock on it, and the window that opens up reveals hard eyes as they look over you. There is a grunt, and then you are allowed inside. Most of the patrons do not look up at you, and you make your way to the bar without trouble.

It's difficult to place the bartender at a glance; his features seem to be a mix of both Rokugani and Ivindi, and he speaks perfect Rokugani if you engage him. He will even switch to flawless Ivindi if PCs speak it to him. He's well-muscled, and a well-worn club lying behind him speaks to a man very capable and ready to defend himself should the patrons not prove capable enough.

He introduces himself as Ayush, and at the earliest opportunity--he'll let you order a drink, of course--will ask the PCs what they want to know. After all, why else would upstanding samurai come here?

(If the PCs ask for a strong drink, he mixes up a drink from Shochu, sugar, a lime, and an Ivindi bottle that reads 'Lugdi'. Drinking more than a very small amount of it triggers a raw Stamina roll at TN 25; failure leaves the PCs impaired from drunkenness. -5 to all of their rolls for the rest of the day. This TN can stack, if the players decide to go for seconds).

The PCs can gain information from him with a cooperative Courtier roll and 1 Koku, with varying degrees depending on their roll. They can also roll Temptation (Bribery) with a free Raise for every 3 Bu spent. If they give him 3 or more Koku total, just give them the whole list without requiring a roll.

- 20: There have been some really prickly strangers picking up weapons within the city lately. They don't start trouble, exactly, but they're dangerous.
- 25: Lightfoot Lao tailed a few of them for a bit to figure out where they were taking the weapons; he lost them at the edge of the jungle, though. Ayush will call on Lao to speak up, and he will reveal what he knows. (no check needed to follow up on this information, and he is clearly being sincere--free raise on all hunting rolls in the next section of the mod)
- 30: There's this real weird beggar who keeps getting into the nicer teahouses somehow; usually that wouldn't be worthy of much note, maybe even a good thing if they were

the sort to sell choice bits of overheard conversation, but this one doesn't deal with anybody. Doesn't even beg that often. The last time somebody tried roughing him up for pocket change they fished her out of the harbor, looking like she had been mauled by a wild animal--and I don't mean a shark. (Free raise to recognize that Tora is lying if they go to the Market next, and a prompt to suspect him)

## Part Two: The Journey

By this point the PCs should know where the trail begins, having made a hunting roll to find where the Ruhmali entered the city. From there they can follow the trail to their lair. As such, much of this section is going to involve interaction between the PCs and the Ivindi accompanying them. Make note that Jayesh is carrying more gear than would be strictly necessary for an excursion into the jungle. If asked about this, Bodhi will say it is a precaution in case the enemy you face is greater than initially assumed.

The jungle looms before you like a solid wall, the vines of towering trees falling down like limbs into the grasping underbrush. A gentle breeze brings relief from the heat, somehow even more terrible and cloying now that you have left the confines of the city, but the rustling it brings to the world around you almost sounds like laughter. Beyond the safety of the familiar rests dangers unknown, and it is your duty to venture forth into it.

Bodhi steps forward to that unnerving barrier, moving aside the foliage. When he turns back toward you there is a smile on his face.

"Come, my friends. There is still work that must be done."

The first few hours pass in relative silence, with nothing but the sounds of wind, wildlife, and walking--perhaps there is the odd grunt of exertion, but it fades into the background like most of the rest. Closed in on all sides by the jungle, there is only so much one can notice before everything begins to look the same.

So perhaps it is no surprise, as you all stop to refresh yourselves, when Jayesh asks a question.

"Why do you all care about your swords so much?" He pauses a moment, as if realizing the words slipped out, and looks toward Bodhi. The old man does not say anything, however, instead inclining his head for Jayesh to continue. "I apologize if that was rude of me. It's just something I have been curious about for some time now."

Jayesh does not address this question to any PC in particular, so any can answer. If he is given the likely response that the daisho represents a Samurai's soul and the honor of their Family, he will express some confusion before replying: "That is... I mean no offense, Samurai, but that is odd to me. We venerate the bow, for Vishnu wielded one when he freed us from the tyranny of demons, but even we do not hold it in that kind of esteem."

[The intent here is for there to be some back-and-forth. Jayesh (and Bodhi, though he does not let it show obviously) is curious, and wants to know more about Rokugani culture, and is willing to explain a little about his own in turn.]

Bodhi is a calm, thoughtful man who is happy to discuss theology and philosophy. He is not easily roused to annoyance or anger, and is quite patient with any who are genuine in their desire to learn. He has a sarcastic wit though, and is perfectly happy to use it if he detects rudeness or insincerity, or for the odd joke if the opportunity presents itself. This annoys Jayesh, and he is aware of that.

Jayesh is a forthright young man who takes his duties very seriously. He is not one for word games, though he enjoys crafting poetry. It's different than haiku, and is much longer. However, he can appreciate the graceful simplicity of the Rokugani style. If any wish to spar with him or engage in a contest of archery over the march, he will be happy to do so. He is concerned with the appearance of respect, and is quicker to anger if he feels he or Bodhi is being disrespected.

Replies to common questions are listed below:

So who are the Ruhmali anyway? Aren't they Ivindi like you?

Bodhi will answer: "The material and the divine are both intrinsic parts of a greater whole. Just as the gods influence us in our lives every day, so too do we influence the gods. The Cult of Ruhmal wishes to



pervert this balance by forcing a corrupt vision upon the Goddess Shiva. They are madmen and monsters.”

Why does Jayesh defer to you?/Are you his lord?

Jayesh stares in confusion at whoever asks the question, and eventually manages a “What?”

Bodhi will merely smile and say: “Our gods gave of themselves to create us, and our place and our purpose are decided by the parts we were made from. I am Brahmin, and Sri Jayesh is Kshatriya. I am to contemplate and interpret the will of the gods, and to guide our people to walk the righteous path.” He looks toward Jayesh, who recognizes the signal and speaks in turn.

“And I am to fight, that neither man nor beast may clutter that path.”

So you’re like a monk or shugenja?

They look at each other, and seem to have a short back-and-forth in gestures and expressions before Bodhi turns back and speaks. “I believe our role is closer to that of your monks than the shugenja. The latter are... confusing.”

Jayesh may ask, bluntly, if shugenja are sorcerers. If answered in anything resembling the affirmative, he will scowl but remain silent.

Bodhi, however, will say: “And thus you see the reason for our confusion. Your shugenja perform many duties that we would approve of, and yet also seem to make demands of the gods. Such practices are troubling. The gods are not to be bargained with or cajoled for favors. They are to be shown reverence and prayer, and if they deem to act then it is on their will and no other that action will be taken.”

Bodhi and Jayesh are under a misunderstanding on the nature of kami--given the literal meaning of the word in translation, they assume that shugenja are entreating beings of similar stature to the gods. Furthermore, they do not realize that shugenja spellcasting is prayer, ritualized and set down for others to study. If the kami do not wish to answer those prayers, then they will not. If the players don’t realize this on their own and/or the GM so wishes, a TN 20 Theology/Intelligence roll can recognize the misunderstanding.

An explanation that covers this issue in whatever degree the GM deems satisfactory will improve their impression of shugenja, and any shugenja in the party may notice that Jayesh seems less tense around them now.

Assuming that the party has engaged Jayesh and Bodhi on that and at least one other topic, Jayesh will produce a game board, along with immaculately carved ivory pieces. He will explain that this is chaturanga, and as he explains its rules Rokugani will recognize it as similar enough to shogi that perhaps the skillsets may cross over. Anyone wishing to play him may roll Games: Shogi (Intelligence), or Battle (Intelligence) calling a Raise to no effect due to the unfamiliarity of the ruleset. Compare their results against Jayesh’s to determine the winner. He will play as many games as there are PCs who want to play against him. This gives the opportunity to spend exp to learn Games: Chaturanga (can be done after the mod completes).

After the conversation Bodhi will stand up and say: “There is still some daylight left. Come, let us continue on while we are still able.”

A day passes, and so you march. What relief the shade brings you from the heat is countered by the claustrophobic closeness of the jungle on all sides. There is little wind within the depths of this sea of green, and what breeze reaches you brings the smell of earth and animals prowling.

Both Bodhi and Jayesh seem comfortable in this environment, negotiating obstacles and underbrush with an ease borne of long practice. Often they will point out what is to be avoided, like small snakes they explain can kill in minutes, or the buzzing of terrible hornets who will swarm at the slightest provocation. And, perhaps most worrying, the trails of tigers on the hunt. Old, but always worth noting.

PCs will need to make a TN 30 Investigation (Notice)/Perception roll to avoid setting off a tiger trap (TN reduced by 5 if Lao is present), containing two desperately hungry tigers; the first two PCs to fail are caught by the trap, and take 3k3 damage from their hungry jaws in the initial ambush. They and any party members who wish to assist must then roll a combat challenge at TN 25 to drive them off; if at least two successes are not made, another 3k3 damage is dealt to all who rolled from more tiger bites before they’re driven off.

The third day dawns, and with it comes the rank stench of rotting wood and stagnant water. The ground beneath your feet indents uncomfortably as you walk, mud clinging to your sandals and soiling the hem of your clothes. The jungle falls away, and

before you stretches what might have been a lake if it were not for the biting flies swarming around decaying plants and unfortunate animals stuck within the mire.

Cloudy water stretches to the horizon, bubbling as foul smelling gases are released into the air. At a glance it is obvious none could hope to traverse this safely, but the trail leads right up to its edge. Wherever your quarry has gone, it is through the swamp.

This is extremely hazardous terrain, and full of toxic air. PCs can attempt to trudge through the swamp, but this will require making ever increasing Athletics/Stamina to avoid injury. They will need to make three rolls, beginning at TN 30, advancing to TN 35, and ending in TN 40. They will have the option of turning back at any time.

Shugenja can clear a space by communing with the kami of the earth, air, water, and fire. Each can be appealed to in order to make a safe path. Earth, so they don't sink. Air, so they don't choke. Water, so they don't drown. Fire, so that the gases don't risk explosion. The TNs start at 25, and Rokugani shugenja must call a raise to no effect in order to commune with foreign kami. If the PCs have spells that they believe would resolve the situation, they are free to cast them.

Bodhi will offer to pray for the intervention of the gods alongside the shugenja (or alone, if there are no shugenja present). He is not doing magic as Rokugani understand it, for the Ivindi do not believe in directing the power of the divine. Instead they beseech, and the gods will act as they deem fit. This will remove the need to call raises to no effect, and even increase the potency of certain spells for clearing a path, sufficiently that no additional spells will be needed. If he is praying alone, eventually a path sufficient for the party to cross safely and comfortably will appear safely.

## Part Three: The Fight

Beneath the towering trees with their hanging vines, among the grasping underbrush, there is no possibility for a cool breeze to take away the edge of the feverish warmth that seems so common to this part of the world.

As always, neither Bodhi or Jayesh seem particularly bothered. At least, not by the heat. Their faces are set in expressions of stony determination, minds set clearly on what they see as the battle to come, and not the difficulties of the march. Few words are exchanged between them or yourselves, and you can tell by their grim stoicism that you are heading toward a daunting trial.

It is on the fourth day that you gain some small relief, a gentle wind brushing against you as you continue following the meager signs of the trail. But then you pause, realizing something is wrong. Bodhi and Jayesh stop almost at the same time, looking toward you with a dawning understanding.

There shouldn't be any wind.

"Hello there, little people." It says in flawless Rokugani. "I see you."

"Do not listen to it," Bodhi hisses. "It speaks only lies, and will attempt to distract us from our purpose."

"Oh come now, priest. I only wish to better understand. Isn't that what your lot are always encouraging?"

If the PCs ask what this is, Bodhi will say it is their worst fears made manifest. A Rakshasa, a tiger demon that walks like a man. He had suspicions, but did not want to speak them aloud for fear of tempting fate.

The Rakshasa is well aware the party is coming and communicating with them through the use of air magic. The intention here is to taunt them, and to show off the Rakshasa's personality. He is cruel and vain, assured of his own self-importance and in his natural right to rule over humankind.

However, he will also express confusion over certain matters and use that to further deride the party. He will make note he could not have achieved this without the presence of the Rokugani, and will specifically point out that he does not understand the mental gymnastics they do to justify their rule. The weak rule over the strong. There's no need to declare them subhuman. The fact that this means the strong eat the weak is just how the world works.

Should the PCs take Bodhi's advice and refuse to engage, it will taunt them for as long or as little as the GM feels appropriate, and then the breeze will disappear.

Here is a list of example dialogue to help give you ideas. If no one responds, it will at least say the first example as a parting shot.

"I really do have to thank you all, you know. None of this would have been possible if you hadn't come here, planting your flags and settling on this land. Do you even understand just how bitter these people are? How angry they have become? Oh yes, I couldn't possibly have done this without you. I didn't even have to trick most of them!"

If PCs ask some variation of "How is this our fault?" the Rakshasa will reply:

"Please, don't lessen my opinion of you more than you already have. Recruitment is up, donations are flowing, and it has been CENTURIES since I've had fanatics this enthusiastic to serve me directly! It takes more than a ruthless raja to inflame the people like this."

Another possible topic:

"I've been watching you people for some time, and there's always been one thing that has confused me. Your peasants... Your burakumin... You consider them less than human. I've never understood that. Sure, stratification is the way of the world; the strong rule the weak, and deciding the matter by birth is reasonable enough, but even I can see that you are all still people. Frankly most of you don't even taste that different. Why you all go through so many games to justify your rule is beyond me."

If the PC's ask "Where are you?" it will say something like:

"I would hope the trail you have been following would answer that question for you, but if you are still lost, I'm not sure what to tell you."

If the PC's ask "How did you take charge of the Ruhmali?" it will simply respond:

"Easily."

If any PC vocally denies engaging with the Rakshasa, or is especially rude or insulting, make a note. This

will have special consequences during the upcoming fight.

(Almost) immediately after the conversation ends and they begin moving again, the party must make another Investigation (Notice)/Perception roll at TN 35(30 if Lao is present). The first party member to fail falls into a shallow spiked pit trap and takes 2k1 damage (unexploding). No roll is required to climb out.

A few hours later the party will come across the Rakshasa's lair, a ruined temple to Vishnu.

The tree line thins out around you, giving space after so long enclosed. Ahead you can see the edge of a ruined courtyard. Beyond that a series of columns, all in various states of decay, surround a low building flanked by two short towers. They are intricately carved, set with images of elephants and other animals. As well, there are images of men and women in prayer to a tall, shining figure sitting on a lotus.

The faces on each of them have been cut out, as if by angry claws.

At this point Bodhi will turn to the rest of the group and inform them of the Rakshasa's weaknesses. Blessed ivory will get past its supernatural defenses, and Jayesh will hand out three blessed ivory arrows (damage as willow leaf) to each bow-wielding PC; he will also offer spears tipped with blessed ivory (stats as yari) to other PCs, cautioning that preferably one does not get close to such a monster at all, lest it strike with its poisonous bite.

Jade and Crystal should also work, but Bodhi does not believe this will be as effective as blessed ivory. They do not believe anything else will work; if the PCs press, Bodhi and Jayesh do not know that nemuranai are ineffective (although they are).

The doorway looms at the edge of the courtyard, a portal leading into darkness. Tall and thin, it is easy enough for you to go in one by one. The first thing you notice as you enter is that it is remarkably cool, the overwhelming heat and humidity dying away. The second thing you notice is an overpowering smell of blood, along with the sickly sweet scent of cooked meat.

Torches come to life along the walls, revealing the inside of the temple. It is lined with stolen artifacts, the Ivindi items given pride of place above the Rokugani, which are haphazardly strewn along the floor, care given just enough to ensure that they won't be caught underfoot. Dozens of men and women stand ready with weapons raised, murder in their eyes. And behind them...

Behind them sits a monster.

Even lounging upon his throne, wine in hand, he is enormous. Easily as tall as a man while reclining, you can only guess he towers above even the largest Crab Samurai while upright. His face is that of a tiger's, orange and white fur lined with stripes beneath a flowing robe of purple trimmed with silver. His wrists are covered in golden bracelets, resting atop bandages that cover what were likely wicked looking claws. Now, though, you can see both skin and fur has been charred as though from a fire.

He does not stand to meet you, and in fact as you file in he does not even bother hurrying to end his meal; it is mere luck that he finished with whatever meat he was dining on as you entered.

Pause to see if any of the PCs start speaking of their own volition; if not, continue on to the next box text.

If someone from the party plays along with his warped sense of theatrics, save them for last in combat. He enjoys the opportunity to put on a good show.

"Welcome to my humble abode," the Rakshasa says. "I am Chakravartin Jatasura. It would be appropriate to address me as Jatasura-heika, or Jatasura-sama. Ah--don't worry, this was just a boar. I do not make a habit of feasting on my people."

"Well? Do you have anything interesting to say, or should we commence with carving you up?"

Pause again to see if the PCs respond. After, have Bodhi say:

"Monster, the gods have already punished you for your transgressions and I see the sacred relic behind your gaudy throne. We shall complete the will of the gods."

## Cultists

Fanatically loyal to the Rakshasa

Air 2    Earth 2    Fire 3    Water    Void 1  
2

Honor                      Status                      Glory  
**Initiative:** 5k3                      **Attack:** 6k3  
(Shortsword, Simple)

**Armor TN:** 25 (Light armor)                      **Damage:** 5k2 (Shortsword)

**Reduction:** 3

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

**School/Rank:** N/A

**Techniques:** May make attacks as simple actions

**Skills:** Swordsmanship 3

**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to damage with swords (figured in)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** N/A

**Outfit:** Sword, clothes, light armor

## Elite Cultist

The Rakshasa's Inner Circle

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 3    Water    Void 2  
3

Honor                      Status                      Glory  
**Initiative:** 7k4                      **Attack:** 10k3 (Talwar, Simple)

**Armor TN:** 30 (Light armor)                      **Damage:** 7k2 (Talwar, exploding 9s)

**Reduction:** 3

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

**School/Rank:** N/A

**Techniques:** May make attacks as simple actions

+1k1 to initiative

**Skills:** Swordsmanship 7

**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to damage with swords (figured in)

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** N/A

**Outfit:** Sword, clothes, light armor

## The Rakshasa, Jatasura

The Would be King

Air 5	Earth 6	Fire 5	Water 5
Reflexes 6		Intelligence 7	Perception 6

**Initiative:** 10k6

**Attack:** 10k6

(No-Dachi, Simple)

10k5 (Bite, Complex)

**Armor TN:** 45 (Light)

**Damage :** 9k3

(Nodachi, exploding

9s), 8k3 (Bite)

**Reduction:** 5 (0 vs Blessed Arrows)

**Wounds:** x5 (+0), x2 (+3), x2 (+5), x2 (+10), x2 (+15), x2 (+20), x2 (Down, +40), x2 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** N/A

**Skills:** Acting 6, Athletics 5, Battle 5, Courtier 5, Defense 6, Etiquette 3, Investigation 6, Sincerity (Deceit) 8, Lore: History 5, Lore: Rokugani 3, Lore: Anatomy 5, Spellcraft 5, Calligraphy: 5, Perform: Oratory 5, Kenjutsu 7, Kyujutsu 5, Knives 5, Stealth 5

**Spellcasting:** 10k5 (air & fire only)

**Spells Known:**

Air: Striking the Storm (p. 170), Tempest of Air (p. 167), Benten's Touch (p. 168), Mists of Illusion (p. 169), The Kami's Whisper (p. 169), Your Heart's Enemy (p. 171)

Fire: Fires of Purity (p. 181), Fires from Within (p. 182), Hungry Blade (p. 184), Breath of the Fire Dragon (p. 183), Death of Flame (p. 184)

{the GM may use whatever other Air/Fire Spells up to MR 4 they feel appropriate}

**Special Abilities:** The Rakshasa can call four raises on all rolls

- **Invisibility:** A rakshasa can turn invisible as a Free Action and likewise can reappear as a Free Action. It becomes visible again automatically when it attacks (TN 25 Investigation/Notice to pin its location; while invisible, Raise to no effect to strike it due to being unable to fully see it). This cannot be done on the same round he Shapeshifts.
- **Poison:** The fangs of a rakshasa are poisonous, delivering an agonizing venom. Those struck by its Bite attacks are afflicted with terrible pain that shoots through their limbs and bodies. They suffer a +20 TN penalty to all actions for the next hour; a Stamina roll at TN 25 upon being bitten can

reduce this to a +10 TN penalty. Multiple poisonings do not "stack" the TN penalties, but do extend the duration for one hour each time.

- **Regeneration:** A rakshasa which takes actual damage (from an attack type that does not instantaneously heal) will heal 25 Wounds during the Reactions stage of each Round; in order to kill it, it must be injured so severely that it cannot heal itself to positive Wounds at the end of the Round. Damage from crysteel weapons and from weapons of blessed ivory cannot be healed.
- **Shapeshifting:** A rakshasa can change its shape any number of times per Round as a Free Action. It can take any human form and any animal or monstrous form that is reasonably close to human in size and mass. It can imitate any human it has seen, although it cannot match their voice. This will clear any stat/ring adjusting effects. This cannot be done on the same round he goes Invisible.
- **Sorcery:** A rakshasa can cast Air and Fire spells as though it is a Rank 4 shugenja with no Affinity or Deficiency.
- **Superior Invulnerability:** A rakshasa is effectively immune to all mundane attacks and to all spells that do not have the Jade or Crystal property; he heals all damage from such attacks instantaneously. It takes normal damage from jade, crystal, blessed ivory, crysteel, or obsidian, and from spells that have the Jade or Crystal keywords.
- **Swift** 5
- **Unique Vulnerability:** If a rakshasa is hit by a missile weapon which has been blessed and consecrated by Vishnu the Protector, it must make a Willpower Roll against the total damage from the missile or die instantly. Regardless, it cannot regenerate the damage from this weapon.

**For the fight:** There will be the rakshasa, elites equal to half the party rounded up, and regular cultists equal to the party.

The throne is 50 feet away. The Rakshasa can close this in a Free Action.

First and foremost, the rakshasa fights intelligently; it has decades of combat experience; the following are only suggestions for its behavior. It will attempt to bite all of its enemies at least once (prioritizing

spellcasters) to ensure their weakness, and will then favor attacking with its sword, an overly large tulwar that operates like a nodachi, augmented with whatever spells (it is a Rank 4 Air and Fire shugenja) it feels appropriate. It will turn invisible before attacks to guarantee itself freedom of movement (attacking drops invisibility, but if it is invisible at the end of a round PCs can roll Investigation/Perception, with Search and Notice emphases both applying, at TN 25 to find it.)

Should anyone cast Jade Strike on him, it will have no effect; Jatasura is not tainted. However, he finds the implication--for he recognizes the spell--incredibly offensive. He will immediately respond with "How dare you? Hell!?" upon receiving the attack, and will prioritize the caster.

The elites and non-elites following it will each pick a target that isn't being engaged and attack them, or continue to fight whoever first attacked them--if everyone has been engaged, they will double (or triple) team the most dangerous target not being engaged by the Rakshasa. They begin the fight thirty feet away. The elites are spread out, while the regular cultists are clustered together.

The bow is 60 feet away (2 Simples at Water 3); picking it up is a Free Action. It is only possible to pick up if they do not intend to use it (ask them to be sure). It is large enough to require both hands to hold, but seems to weigh almost nothing despite being made of pure gleaming steel. A suggestion for Jatasura's response as they attempt to leave the temple with the bow is to use disarm actions to keep them from escaping with it. He may also attempt to use Tempest of Air for much the same reason.

### **GMs Read This**

If the players decide (or it becomes overwhelmingly clear) they cannot win and must run, Jayesh will take it upon himself to draw the attention of the Rakshasa by shooting it repeatedly with blessed arrows. A PC can choose to do this (or intercede similarly) instead, and will be allowed to; this will kill them instead of Jayesh, but otherwise the results will be identical to the following. He will yell for Bodhi to grab the artifact, which Bodhi will do before running away with the party. This will lead to Jayesh's death, but the party will escape with the artifact. Due to their imminent pursuit they are forced to follow Bodhi to Ivindi lands, where he will drop the artifact off and ensure their safe passage back to Balishnimpur. The

mod effectively ends here; skip down and reward the PCs appropriately.

If the players are able to successfully get everyone and the bow through the temple entrance Jatasura does not pursue (because he can't move the bow again, and for all he knows an army might show up to kill him soon).

## **Conclusion**

The Rakshasa falls with a crash like thunder, blood staining his magnificent purple robes. His golden bracelets ring out as he reaches one bandaged hand toward the ceiling, as if trying to grasp a ledge that is quickly falling away. Then, with a final gasp, the hand falls. You are perhaps disturbed to note that the body... remains.

What cultists are left are quickly dispatched, some surrendering while many go down fighting. But, in the end, the battle comes to a close. You are victorious.

But Bodhi does not seem gladdened by this victory. He stares down at the corpse of Jatasura with a furrowed brow, his hands clenched into fists. When he turns toward you there is fire in his eyes.

"This can never happen again," he says through clenched teeth. "This demon... It did not come from nothing, did not create the turmoil it exploited from thin air. So long as my people have no control over their own fate within the lands that have been taken then we will merely repeat these same tragedies with different faces. It has to end. My people must have their dignity again."

Jayesh walks to Bodhi's side, his exhaustion plain from the slump of his shoulders. He bows to the older man, then settles into the position you have come to expect from him. Slightly behind Bodhi, his hand resting on the hilt of his sword.

Behind the throne, in a room not quite hidden, is an altar with a shining bow, seemingly crafted entirely out of steel. Its glow comes not from the reflection of the light, but from some inner power radiating from deep within. The illumination brings comfort in this dreary space, banishing the darkness and pushing away the smell of death.

“It’s beautiful,” Jayesh whispers. “A gift from the Preserver.”

Bodhi nods. “Yes, and back to his temple it shall go.”

The samurai recognize that they have a decision to make--Bodhi and Jayesh are only two men, and certainly recovering this artifact would see them gain fame and recognition, and excite any number of historians and scholars. However, even the most liberal of Rokugani scholars would agree that this artifact is not theirs to recover, and it would be unquestionably dishonorable to betray Bodhi and Jayesh for it.

The bow will resist any attempts to move it, and any players who try will find themselves unable to lift it from the altar. Bodhi will lift it easily, and explain that he has no intention to use it and thus has been granted the right to deliver it to its rightful user by the grace of Vishnu.

If the players attempt to force Bodhi to carry the artifact back to Rokugani lands, he will refuse outright, and is equally intransigent to negotiation. Not even the threat of death will sway him, and any such attempts will earn an angry growl from Jayesh as he interposes himself between the samurai and his charge. He is willing to be escorted to his destination, and also willing to return with the party after delivering the bow to testify.

If the PCs agree to his wishes, he will also say: “I will speak with the rajas and encourage them to reach out to your Emperor. What has gone on before cannot continue. There must be change if there is to be any chance of peace.” If they do not, when the PCs attempt to force the issue the bow will glow with divine light, blinding the PCs; when their vision returns, Bodhi and Jayesh will have escaped with the bow (this will also happen if a PC is carrying the bow and changes their mind about delivering it where Bodhi wants it to go).

## The End

### Rewards for Completing the Adventure

Surviving the Module: 1 XP  
Good Roleplaying: 1 XP  
Navigating the Jungle: 1 XP

Retrieving the Artifact: 1 XP  
Slaying Jatasura 1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

#### Favors

If Jatasura is slain, the PCs gain 1 favor.

#### Honor

If the PCs allow Bodhi to carry the bow to its rightful destination, they gain H7 honor for Compassion.

#### Glory

If the PCs slay Jatasura, they gain G7 glory.

#### Allies and Enemies

If the PCs allow Bodhi to carry the bow to its rightful destination, they gain Bodhi as an ally. He is Influence 1/Devotion 2.

#### GM Reporting

1. Did the party get Sworn enemy: the Rakshasa?
2. Did the party get Sworn Enemy: Bhodi?
3. Was the bow returned to the Ivindi?

**GM must report this information BEFORE (5/13/2022) for it to have storyline effect**

## Appendix #1: NPCs

If any NPCs require statblocks not listed elsewhere in the module

### Bodhi

Guru

Air 4    Earth 3    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 4

Awareness 5  
Intelligence 4  
Reputation: 7.3    Status 0.0\*

**Initiative:** 8k4

**Armor TN:** 25

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** x5 (+0), x2 (+3), x2 (+5), x2 (+10), x2 (+15), x2 (+20), x2 (Down, +40), x2 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Guru 5

**Techniques:** None relevant to the module

**Skills:** Theology (Ivindi) 7, Courtier 5, Etiquette 5, Investigation 3, Sincerity 3, Meditation 3, Lore: History: 5

**Mastery Abilities:**

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Sage, Clear Thinker, Hero of the People (Ivindi), Languages (Rokugani, Ruhmali)

**Outfit:**

### Jayesh

Kshatriya dedicated to Bodhi

Air 4    Earth 4    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 3

Awareness

5

Honor

**Initiative:** 9k5

**Armor TN:** 35

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 20(+0), 28 (0), 36 (+2), 44 (+7), 52 (+12), 60 (+17), 68 (Down, +37), 76 (Out)

**School/Rank:** Kshatriya 5

**Techniques:** Simple Action Attacks, +1k1 initiative

**Skills:** Kenjutsu 5, Spears 5, Kyujutsu 7, Courtier 3, Etiquette 3, Hunting 5, Games: Chaturanga 5, Investigation 7

**Mastery Abilities:**

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Strength of the Earth, Great Potential (Kyujutsu), Languages (Rokugani, Ruhmali)

**Outfit:**

Status

Glory

**Attack:** 8k3 (tulwar, simple), 10k6 (bow, simple, has emphasis)

**Damage:** 7k2 (Tulwar), 6k2 (Willow Leaf, Blessed Ivory Arrow), 6k3 (Fleshcutter)