

A Heart of Vengeance

A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald Empire)

The Lion and the Crane, Part 2

by Robert Hobart

Plague ravages the Crane territories. If you cannot find the cause, the entire Empire may be threatened with starvation.

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this scenario.

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

The players are free to use the game rules to learn about equipment and weapons their characters are carrying.

Some of the text in this scenario is written so that you may present it as written to the players, while other text is for your eyes only. Text for the players will be in ***bold italics***. It is strongly recommended that you paraphrase the player text, instead of reading it aloud, as some of the text is general and must be adapted to the specific situation or to actions of the player characters.

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! The Gamemaster should read the scenario thoroughly before trying to run it.

This adventure is a Low-Mid Level adventure. This means that only Rank 1, 2 or 3 Characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 4 through 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate all that these characters may bring to the table.

All bulleted information is just that, pure information. Feed it to the players through an NPC when appropriate. Sometimes, reading it straight just doesn't sound right.

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyo) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

The end of this adventure lists suggested Glory and Honor awards (and penalties) for dealing with the challenges presented herein. However, at times the players may take extra actions which the GM judges worthy of additional reward – or punishment. The following may be considered as guidelines:

- Performing an act of selfless, sacrificial loyalty to one's daimyo or clan: +1 point of Honor.
- Abiding by the tenets of bushido when one could gain an obvious advantage from breaking them: +1 point of Honor.
- Betraying or disobeying your duty, Clan, or family: lose 1-10 points of Honor and Glory, depending on the severity of the failure.
- Crying out in pain when injured: lose one point each of Honor and Glory.
- Using sneaky, underhanded, or treacherous methods when at an Honor rank higher than zero: lose 1-5 points of Honor.
- Using poison: lose 1-10 points of Honor, depending on the circumstances (there is always an Honor loss for using poison).
- Performing a socially acceptable public act of extreme courage and skill: +1 point of Glory.
- Drunk, insulting, or otherwise ill-mannered in public: lose 1-5 points of Glory.
- Made ronin: Glory drops to zero.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low/Mid-Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank Two.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters are Rank One):

- The Dark Oracle will not directly intervene in the combat.
- Iuchi Dogo has Earth of 4, Air and Water of 3 each, and does not have the Beyond the Elements ability.
- TNs for resisting the Black Wind are 5 less.

High End Party (most/all characters Rank Two and Three):

- TNs for withstanding the attacks and harassments of the Dark Oracle are 5 higher.
- Iuchi Dogo has Earth of 6, Air of 5, and Shadowlands Taint rank of 4. His Strength of the Earth is at Rank Two.

Adventure Summary and Background

There is illness in the lands of the Crane, spreading fever and death among the fertile plains which feed much of Rokugan. Despite the best efforts of the local shugenja, the cause of the plague cannot be determined, and the Emperor has grown concerned that the health of his Left Hand is threatened. He has ordered all the Clans to send messengers and investigators to the stricken area to try to learn what has happened.

The true cause of the trouble is indeed unnatural, born of foul magic. Iuchi Dogo, a crazed Unicorn shugenja obsessed with vengeance against the Crane Clan, has discovered and opened one of the Twelve Black Scrolls. Using the eldritch ritual within, he has been spreading plague throughout the Crane lands, starting in the territories of the particular branch of the Kakita family which he hates above all others.

Iuchi Dogo has been assisted in his quest by Isawa Gidayu, the Dark Oracle of Air, a being of unimaginable evil which does the bidding of Fu Leng. Together, they threaten the very survival of the Empire.

Introduction

Plague! Few words in the Rokugani language carry more fear within them than this one. And now, this word is whispered throughout the courts of Rokugan, for a deadly sickness has befallen the central Crane territories, the legendary Osari Plains. These lands grow more food than all the rest of the Empire, and trouble there threatens not merely the Crane but every Rokugani, from the lowliest eta to the greatest of Clan Champions. With the autumn harvest only weeks away, disaster looms.

At the order of the Emperor, the Great Clans have dispatched a chosen band of samurai to the stricken province. They are to learn whether the problem is truly as terrible as the rumors say, and if so, whether anything can be done to lessen the danger and suffering of the vile illness.

You are both honored and more than a little concerned to be a part of this expedition. Although the stakes here are more than high enough to justify your deaths, you can't help but think how shameful it would be to die of sickness, weak and helpless, rather than in honorable combat or revered retirement.

From the Imperial capital,OTOSAN Uchi, you have traveled south into the Crane territories, accompanied by two representatives of the Emperor: Kakita Ichiro, a prominent courtier and son of the legendary Kakita Toshimoko, and Otomo Otohime, one of the finest ladies of the court, who is distantly related to the Son of Heaven himself. Such prestigious company leaves you feeling awed, and you are determined to perform your duties well.

The PCs have all been assigned by their daimyo in response to the Emperor's call for "brave and resourceful samurai" to assist the Crane in these terrible days. This assignment may be especially galling to Lion PCs, of course, since their Clan is at war with the Crane. Ronin PCs have been hired by the Miya family (the Imperial peacemakers) to assist in the investigation, at the rate of 5 koku plus expenses.

Once the PCs have had a chance to introduce themselves to each other, share the following additional information:

What little news has reached the capital says that the illness is a sudden and terrible one, striking down the populations of entire villages in a matter of days. The first symptoms are fever and aching joints, followed swiftly by livid boils, vomiting, delirium, and finally an agonizing death. It is said that the Emperor himself turned pale when he heard descriptions of some of the villages stricken down by this terror. No one has been spared – even shugenja, masters of the elements, are said to have fallen victim to this mysterious killer.

PCs with the **Medicine** or **Herbalism** skills may roll (with the **Intelligence** trait) at TN 10 to know that no previous disease matches these reports, either in symptoms or in virulence. A **History/Intelligence** roll at TN 15 can recall that there have been epidemics in Rokugan before – unavoidable in a land as densely populated as this one – but none have appeared so suddenly or killed so swiftly.

The NPCs

As mentioned in the introductory section, the PCs are accompanied by two representatives of the Imperial Court. Statistics for these personages (and the accompanying bodyguard) are given at the end of the module. Their appearances and personalities are as follows:

Kakita Ichiro

Ichiro is an arrogant, spiteful young man in his early twenties. He is the son of Kakita Toshimoko, the legendary “Gray Crane,” and has long felt burdened by the weight of his father’s reputation and resentful of his father’s distance and lack of affection. PCs who have played the adventure *Satsume’s Tournament* may have met Ichiro before, and anyone who rolls Crane Lore/Intelligence or Courtier/Intelligence at TN 10 knows who he is.

Ichiro is handsome in a dandyish, pouting sort of way, but has only moderate skill as a swordsman – he relies on his social position to protect him from the consequences of his actions. He enjoys baiting and tormenting those who annoy him or who strike him as uncouth (Lion, Crab, Unicorn). He is also something of a womanizer, and will flirt with (and possibly try to seduce) Otohime and any attractive female PCs.

Otomo Otohime

Otohime is a prominent lady of the Imperial court, known for her closeness to the Imperial Hantei. Indeed, she is distantly related to the Emperor by blood. She is here as the Emperor’s eyes and ears, and makes it plain that she expects the deference which is due her position.

Otohime is extremely beautiful in the classical Rokugani style, and always wears formal kimono and heavy cosmetics in the fashion of a court lady. She prefers the company of stylish courtiers, especially Crane and Phoenix, and will flirt subtly with any well-mannered male PCs from those Clans, including Ichiro. (Any PC who rolls **Courtier/Intelligence** or a suitable **Clan Lore** skill at TN 15 will recall rumors that Otohime has been involved in more than one court romance.) Toward others she will be more distant, especially crude or militant PCs such as Crab, who she treats with cold reserve. She is especially hostile to Unicorns, since she sees them as “gaijin interlopers” who have no business inhabiting the Empire at all.

Otohime is attended constantly by her bodyguard, Seppun Toji, and by a pair of meek, dutiful young handmaidens who attend to her every wish.

Seppun Toji (Otohime’s bodyguard)

A loyal, honorable bodyguard of the Seppun family, this serious young man wears his hair in a strict topknot. Toji will speak politely with any PCs who strike him as honorable (although he will avoid speaking to Unicorns in front of Otohime), and will coldly ignore any who seem of questionable honor. He will not voluntarily take action unless Otohime is threatened, in which case he springs into violent motion, doing whatever is necessary to protect her.

Scene One: Arrival

Allow the PCs time to introduce themselves and to role-play with their NPC companions. Once the NPCs are established, move on to the first scene:

After a week of travel, you have reached the edge of the Osari Plains. Ahead of you, the road forks, one branch continuing down the coast while the other turns inland toward the Plains. A sizable village sits on the fork, and a large castle squats atop a nearby hill overlooking the scene. From here you can see that on the far side of the village, a troop of Crane bushi have blocked the road and are apparently refusing to let anyone pass. Wagons and people on foot are backed up as far as the eye can see. It looks as though panicked peasants and anxious merchants, often with their entire worldly belongings on their backs, are trying to flee the plague-ridden province.

The village, Museru no Mura, is home to almost a thousand people, ruled by the local daimyo, Kakita Gouri, from his castle of Shiro Seikyou (Castle of Prosperity). Like much of the Crane lands, this is a prosperous place, boasting many craftsman’s and artisan’s shops, a sake works, silk weaveries, a water-powered mill, two inns, three teahouses, and a geisha house. The surrounding rice paddies, grain fields, and vegetable plots are lush and fertile. A wide stream runs through the village and irrigates the fields. Beyond the stream, at the edge of some distant woods, is a small shrine to Inari, Fortune of Rice.

Many of the villagers are out in the rice fields, but there are plenty of them still in the streets, watching the spectacle of the roadblock and commenting on the situation with a mixture of sadness and gathering fear. Crowds of anxious people gather at street corners to share the latest gossip, falling silent whenever samurai

pass by. Anyone who stops and speaks with these commoners can learn the following:

- Plague is said to have struck most of the villages beyond the roadblock. Lord Kakita Gouri ordered the road closed six days ago, apparently to block the spread of the disease.
- There is a tent-hospital at the roadblock where Lord Gouri's shugenja are trying to treat the sick.
- Everyone is afraid that the plague will spread here, or to other villages along the coast. So far, though, there have been no reported cases. "For which Jurojin and Jizo be thanked," they say piously, invoking the names of the Fortunes of Health and Mercy.
- Some people have been secretly fleeing the village before the plague can reach here. Rumor has it that the same thing has been happening at many other villages. Gossipers will point out that this or that house is empty, the basket shop is closed, and so forth.

The Shrine

If the PCs visit the shrine to Inari, they find it manned by a single old nun, a toothless crone in her sixties who smiles, chats to the PCs in a grandmotherly fashion, and serves them tea. She has the same information as the other villagers, but can also share the following additional specific clues. Her tone in delivering them should seem slightly batty and off-kilter, so that the PCs are not certain whether she is wise or merely senile:

- She has scented "bad winds" in recent weeks. "Something evil rides the night sky, yes. I don't sleep as well as I used to, and I smell it in the wee hours, when the rest of the land dreams."
- The daimyo's efforts to seal the plague behind a quarantine are doomed. "This sickness doesn't spread like a proper one, no. Flies like a carrion bird, it does, full of hunger and hate."

The Roadblock

There are almost thirty bushi at the roadblock itself, plus several mounted squads who patrol the lands to either side, trying to stop those who flee cross-country. Together these represent almost all the military strength of Lord Kakita Gouri. Whenever the PCs approach the roadblock for the first time, they see the following:

There are wooden barricades stretched across the road, and stern bushi in Crane sky-blue stand behind them, holding off the crowd with yari and naginata. An officer speaks with the panicked people on the far side, demanding their travel papers and turning back those who have none. As you watch, he gestures sharply at a peasant family, and they stagger off to the right side of the road, supporting one of their number who is obviously sick.

The sickly peasants stagger toward a grassy lowland which is covered by a large complex of tents and pavilions. Apparently this is a place for gathering and treating the plague victims. Beyond it, near the edge of the woods, is a large raw pit in the earth. Thick greasy smoke spirals up from the pit, and as you watch, a pair of grubby-looking men – eta – carry a body over and toss it into the pit, followed by armloads of brush and firewood.

This sight should be unsettling to any proper Rokugani – the dead are being disposed without the slightest ceremony or reverence, so severe has the problem become.

The commander of the roadblock is a harried-looking thirty-something bushi named Kakita Shidou. He will explain the situation as best he can, although he has little time to spare for the PCs. If they ask, he will also give them a pass into the tent-hospital.

Shidou and his men know the following:

- The plague first erupted at the end of summer, over a month ago. Several regions were affected almost simultaneously, and new outbreaks are still being reported every few days. Lord Gouri's lands are said to be among the heaviest-hit.
- Many of the peasants are in a panic, claiming that a "foul wind" is carrying the sickness. The villagers are full of tales of ghosts, curses, angry spirits, mysterious strangers, and so forth. Shidou and the other samurai dismiss this as peasant superstition, although a **Contested Awareness** roll suggests that some of the younger samurai are having a hard time quelling their fears. If the PCs wish more information about these rumors, Shidou will permit them to speak with some of the refugees before they are turned away. He will also suggest that they interview some of the victims at the hospital.
- Shidou is deeply worried about the growing panic among the peasants. To a sympathetic PC he will

confide: “Frightened people become desperate, dangerous people. These sort of circumstances can bring on riots or revolts.”

- The shugenja complain that normal methods of treating sickness do not seem to work on the disease. If the PCs wish more information, Shidou will direct them to the tent-hospital.
- If the PCs ask about strange travelers or odd incidents in the region, Shidou remarks that the crisis has left him little time to look into such matters. “These refugees must have dozens of tales of such things, if that’s what interests you.” See “Questioning the Peasant Refugees” for details of what the PCs can learn on such topics.

Kakita Shidou will absolutely not let the PCs past the checkpoint without permission from his daimyo. He will be adamant on this point, even if Otohime (or a similarly prestigious PC) tries to push social rank. “Our lord has charged us to control this border, even though it cost us our lives and honor. We will not fail him. If he gives permission for your passage, we will gladly let you through, but until that time this route will remain closed.”

The Tent-Hospital

The improvised hospital is comprised of several dozen tents and pavilions, many of which are colorful, decorative things which would normally be used for festivals. Dozens of cots and futons are spread out beneath these sheltering eaves of silk, and every one of them holds a plague victim – sometimes two or three crowded together. Three Asahina shugenja, two men and a woman, are in charge of the improvised hospital. They have over two dozen assistants, a mixture of castle servants, older villagers, and eta.

The hospital stinks of the scores of sick people who lie here, most of them dying. The PCs can clearly see the evidence of the plague – flushed faces, victims moaning and tossing in fever-delirium, and more than a few sporting the awful red sores and blisters which signify the plague’s final stages.

The harried shugenja will not be able to spare much time for the Emperor’s representatives, but they can share the following information:

- The plague strikes young, old, men and women with equal ferocity. It does not seem to spread like a normal sickness, but appears suddenly, afflicting half a village in a day or two.

- Once the first symptoms show, it is only a matter of a couple of days before the victim is bedridden. Death follows within two or three more days. Only about one victim in five survives, even with the best of care.
- The plague does not seem to spread easily to those who treat the sick. Dead plague victims, however, seem to be a focus for spreading infection, so the eta are burning the dead as quickly as they expire.
- Strangely, the disease does not affect animals – only humans.
- Curative spells and herbal infusions have had little or no effect on the plague. Even the spell “Hands of Jurojin,” which is supposed to cure all sickness, has only a weak effect. All that can be done is to keep the victims comfortable and hydrated, and hope they can fight off the sickness.
- The shugenja have sought to find a source or vector for the plague, but have had little luck. The peasants can offer only superstitious tales of a “black wind” that carries evil through the land. If the PCs seem curious about this “black wind,” the shugenja shrug and suggest they ask the peasants themselves. See “Questioning the Peasant Refugees” for more information.

Staying at the Roadblock

If the PCs stay at the roadblock for any significant length of time, they will witness many more instances of fearful peasants trying to flee the region, only to be intercepted by the Crane bushi. Some of the peasants turn back in despair. Others, in even greater despair, try to slip (or run) through anyway, and are hunted down and killed by the bushi. It is clear that the Crane, while putting on a strong face, are deeply horrified by this cruel duty, and not a few bushi are seen to have quiet tears running down otherwise-stoic faces.

At least one in four of the peasant refugees are showing obvious symptoms of the plague – feverish flushes, boils on their skin, and so forth. These victims are segregated from the rest and herded into the tent-city hospital, there to join the ever-growing number of patients.

The PCs should soon realize that this attempt at a quarantine, while well-meant, is doomed – the samurai cannot possibly control all the access routes to the afflicted region.

Questioning the Peasant Refugees

If the PCs question some of the refugees about the plague, they will need the permission of the daimyo or of Kakita Shidou to do so. There are always several hundred people backed up behind the roadblock, day and night, so finding someone to question will not be difficult. Most of the refugees are peasants, but there are enough craftsmen, artisans, and merchants mixed in that the PCs can speak to any sort of commoner they desire – even *eta*.

Peasant and *eta* refugees will be terrified and frantic, begging the PCs to let them through, crawling on the ground at their feet, holding up their children to plea for mercy, and so forth. The PCs will have to be either very firm or very merciful to get useful information from them. Merchant or craftsman refugees, on the other hand, will be somewhat calmer and more calculating, perhaps trying to bargain their information for a chance to get their families out of the plague zone.

If a PC seems especially mercenary or dishonorable (or is a ronin), a merchant might try bribing them to be allowed through the roadblock.

- The overall picture the PCs gain from the common folk is similar to that from the shugenja in the hospital – the disease strikes suddenly and without warning, afflicting a whole village or region in a matter of a day or two.
- The disease afflicts men but not beasts. The villagers regard this as certain proof that the plague is supernatural in origin, a curse brought down on them by angry spirits. Many peasants refer to the recent kidnapping of the Emperor's son as proof that the Fortunes have forsaken Rokugan.
- If the PCs ask about the “dark wind,” or if they ask if the peasant remember anything strange happening before the plague struck, they will get some variant on the following story: “Yes, the night before, there was a foul wind that blew through the village/across the fields/into the town. It stank like the grave, and the moon seemed to be obscured by it.”
- If a PC thinks to ask about strangers passing through the area, or odd happenings apart from the “dark wind,” they will get a whole plethora of stories: ghosts, strange samurai or ronin travelers, demons disguised as men, ninja, shapeshifting animals, and so forth ...the full gamut of peasant xenophobia and superstition.

- A PC who listens to these tales and rolls **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20) will notice something: mixed in with all the confusing rumors are consistent reports of a strange thin man with wild hair, sometimes seen riding a horse and other times flying through the sky. Some peasants have bizarre stories of seeing him floating through the clouds, laughing maniacally, riding a horse with demonic burning eyes, and so forth. If the PCs ask about the horse, the descriptions always match a gaijin (Unicorn) horse, not a Rokugani pony.
- If the PCs carefully question every commoner who reports the story of the strange wild-haired man, they will realize that he has been seen in several different parts of the afflicted region.

Sneaking Past the Roadblock

If the PCs should decide that their duty requires them to investigate beyond the roadblock (whether the Crane allow it or not), they can try to sneak their way into the infected region. Otohime and Ichiro will both be reluctant to participate in such a venture, and if Ichiro dislikes the PCs he will refuse outright, instead hurrying to the daimyo to report this violation of the quarantine. Otohime's bodyguard Toji will likewise argue against any such risky venture, but if the PCs can convince her to go along with them, he will reluctantly agree.

Sneaking over the border will be difficult during the day, but at night can be accomplished fairly easily by rolling **Contested Agility** (or **Stealth/Agility**) against the patrols' **Perception** of 2. If the PCs make a deliberate effort to find an area which is less well-patrolled, or which has sheltering terrain (woods, gullies, etc), they get a Free Raise on their roll.

Shugenja PCs can potentially use various spells to aid in such an infiltration attempt. The GM should adjudicate any unusual actions which the PCs attempt. It is not really that difficult to circumvent the patrols – which should point up to the PCs just how futile the quarantine really is.

Once the PCs get inside the afflicted region, they will discover a nightmarish land:

The road is littered with bloating corpses. As you approach a village, the stench of rotting flesh rises until it is numbing. Corpses of peasants lie in the streets, swelling and blackening under the sun, and

the buzzing of flies is a horrible undertone to the moan of the wind. A mangy dog and a pair of oxen wander through the village, looking lost and helpless. Smoke drifts up from the ruins of one peasant hut which has burned down.

If the PCs search through any of these abandoned villages, they will normally find no clues of interest (other than the general proof of disaster and hasty flight). However, if any PC somehow thinks of searching the roofs of the huts (or flies overhead with magic), they will find that the huts in each village of the plague zone have the kanji for “Adauchi” (“Vengeance”) written on the thatch roofing in dried blood.

Any PCs who spend more than a few minutes in one of these ghost-town villages will be exposing themselves to the plague, and must make a **Simple Stamina** roll at TN 15 (or TN 25 if they have the Dark Oracle of Air as a Sworn Enemy) or come under the effects of the disease. See “Scene Three: The Black Wind” for details.

Scene Two: Visiting the Daimyo

If the PCs express interest in visiting Lord Kakita Gouri, Shidou will assign one of his guards to escort them to the castle which perches hawk-like over the land. Alternatively, some PCs may decide to visit the castle directly, rather than going to the roadblock first. (It is customary for travelers to announce themselves to the local lord, after all.)

The castle stands on the upper slope of a steep hill, looking down on the prosperous village at its feet. Although there has been no war here in centuries, the castle’s walls and defenses are well-maintained and look ready to repel invaders. Banners in the blue and white of the Crane Clan flutter from the walls. Despite the castle’s proud aspect, there is a distinct air of fear about the two Kakita bushi who greet you at the gates. Still, their voices are polite as they ask your business.

Once the PCs explain their purpose, they will be quickly admitted to the castle. Lord Gouri will see them after only a minimal delay (twenty minutes).

Lord Kakita Gouri is a nondescript man in his late thirties or early forties, with thinning hair and a bit of a pot-belly distorting his frame. His face is deeply creased with stress and worry, and there is a haunted

look in his eyes as he bows to you in greeting. “We welcome the appointed messengers of the Emperor to our lands,” he says, in a voice that shakes a bit with suppressed fatigue. “I am Kakita Gouri, lord of Shiro Seikyou. How may I assist your investigations?”

It should be plain that Kakita Gouri is stressed beyond his limits and does not know how to solve the crisis facing him. He is quite happy to have official Imperial investigators here and will do his best to cooperate. Clearly he hopes the PCs will be able to “pull a rabbit out of a hat” and save his province.

Daimyo Kakita Gouri knows the following:

- Many regions have been hit by the mysterious plague, but his seems to be suffering the worst. Seven of his ten villages lie within the plague zone, and already the dead number over a thousand. There is no telling what will happen if the disease cannot be stopped.
- At first, Kakita Gouri sent shugenja and bushi to help the afflicted villages, but those he sent often became sick as well, and the plague continued to spread unchecked. Now he has switched to a containment strategy, hoping against hope that the disease will “burn itself out” within the quarantine zone.
- There is no known cause or source for the plague, although the corpses of the dead seem to spread it more quickly. They are burning the bodies to prevent this, but don’t know what else to do.
- If the PCs ask whether anything strange or supernatural is happening in the area (curses, ghosts, angry spirits, etc.) Kakita Gouri seems baffled. “Although these lands have always had legends of ghosts, none of them have ever been shown to have truth. The Fortunes have always blessed these lands with good harvests and healthy people. I have asked the shugenja to see if we have offended any god or spirit, but so far they have been unable to learn anything.”
- If the PCs ask about strangers or mysterious travelers, Gouri shrugs. “None that my guards informed me of. Kakita Shidou, my captain of the guard, might know more. He is manning the roadblock.”

After the audience, Kakita Gouri will offer the PCs (and their NPC companions) housing in his castle, and will promise to help them in any way possible. He will

be downright insistent, in fact, that Otomo Otohime stay with him. (“I could not live with myself if I allowed a daughter of the Imperial line to sleep under the stars or in some rude inn.”) If the PCs insist on staying elsewhere, he will be somewhat insulted, but does not press the issue.

Scene Three: The Black Wind

It is most likely that the PCs will spend the night in Shiro Seikyou as guests of Daimyo Kakita Gouri, although they might also choose to camp out somewhere or to stay at one of the inns in the village. (Kakita Ichiro and Otomo Otohime will both be quite determined to stay in the castle and enjoy proper Crane hospitality.) Regardless of where they stay, that night the Black Wind will come again, striking in their area.

The Dream-Vision

Shortly before the Foul Wind strikes, the Dark Oracle of Air may decide to visit an unpleasant vision upon some of the PCs. Any PCs who have the Dark Oracle as a Sworn Enemy (which could have happened in the adventures *Legacy of the Dark One* or *The Ties That Bind*) will receive this unpleasant dream-vision, as will any PCs with half a rank or more of Shadowlands Taint. The dream-vision is described in HANDOUT #1, which should be given to the relevant players.

After the dream, PCs can glean the following information from it:

- Any PC will be able to recognize that the dream involved one of the legendary Black Scrolls by rolling **Lore: Shadowlands**, **Lore: Maho**, or **Lore: Shugenja** with the **Intelligence** trait at TN 20, or **History/Intelligence** at TN 25.
- The castle where the PC dreamed of stealing a Black Scroll will be recognized by any Scorpion shugenja as Shiro no Yogo, home to the Yogo family, the guardians of the Black Scrolls. Other Scorpion PCs will recognize the location with a **Simple Intelligence** roll at TN 10. Non-Scorpions can only recognize it with a **Lore: Shugenja** or **Lore: Scorpion Clan** roll (**Intelligence** trait) at TN 15.
- The locations where the dream-person cast the spell from the Black Scroll are here in Crane lands. PCs with knowledge of Crane lands (Way of the Lands advantage, the **Lore: Crane** skill, Crane

brides or allies, or similar) can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 to determine this.

- Any PC who has previously encountered Isawa Gidayu, the Dark Oracle of Air (in the adventures *Legacy of the Dark One* and *The Ties That Bind*) will automatically recognize him in the dream.

The Wind Comes

If any PCs are awake (keeping watches, staying up drinking, or whatever) after midnight, they will automatically notice the Black Wind. If they are sleeping, have them roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 to wake up in time to notice what happens. Either way, they encounter the same thing:

The peaceful sounds of an early autumn evening are broken by a sudden, relentless howl of wind. Dark clouds blot out the moon as cold air rushes down from the sky, snatching at clothing, whirling in through windows and doors. With the icy gale comes a foul stench, terrible as an open grave.

The wind lasts only a few minutes, but while it endures, the stench is almost unbearable. Then, as quickly as it came, the wind dies off, and the clouds drift away to let the moon shine clear once again.

Have all PCs make **Simple Stamina** checks. Do not tell them the TN for the roll (it is 15), and do not tell them whether they succeeded or failed. Any PC who has the Disadvantage “Sworn Enemy: Dark Oracle of Air” must roll at TN 25 instead (do not tell them that either). No immediate ill effects are apparent, regardless of whether the PCs succeeded or failed.

Those PCs who failed their roll have contracted the plague. How quickly it assails them depends on how badly they failed the roll:

- Fail by 5 or less: Slow onset
- Fail by more than 10: Fast onset

Kakita Ichiro and Seppun Toji are considered to succeed in their rolls. Daimyo Kakita Gouri fails by a small margin. Otomo Otohime is considered to have failed by a large margin.

The Symptoms Set In

The next morning, all those who suffer a “fast onset” result experience the following:

You feel feverish and weak. Your skin is flushed and hot to the touch. Your joints ache abominably, and when you stand up, a wave of dizziness strikes you and your vision blurs.

All characters suffering from a “fast onset” have suffered Wounds sufficient to fill their first (+0) Wound Rank. They suffer an additional +10 TN penalty to all physical actions. Mental activities are at +5. These characters will have difficulty walking for any great distance and will be swiftly exhausted by any sort of vigorous activity (such as combat) – they will be unable to sustain such activity for longer than 4 rounds.

By the second day, they will be at the +6 Wound rank, delirious with fever, and exhibiting red boils on their skin. Such characters will be incapable of physical action or coherent thought and can only wait to die, recover, or be cured.

Characters who suffer a “slow onset” experience milder symptoms:

You feel achy and slightly dizzy. Your skin feels warm and you are sweating more than usual.

Such PCs have no immediate TN penalties, but they will find that strenuous physical activity (running, fighting, etc.) wears them out much faster than normal – they have “lost their wind.” By the end of the day, they will be suffering a +5 TN penalty to all physical actions. By the second day, their symptoms will be matching those suffering a “fast onset.”

PCs with the **Medicine** or **Herbalism** skills can mitigate the symptoms slightly (with herbal drinks, infused tea, acupuncture, etc) with a **skill/Intelligence** roll at TN 20. This will reduce the TN penalties by 5 for eight hours. Once the disease progresses past the second day, such treatments will no longer work. Spells such as *Hands of Jurojin* will likewise ease the symptoms for a few hours but do not otherwise arrest the disease.

The Plague Spreads

Besides any PCs who are afflicted, daimyo Kakita Gouri and many of the servants and bushi in the castle will be showing symptoms of greater or lesser severity, as will Otomo Otohime. (The pampered court lady will be unwilling to do anything other than lie in bed, moan her discomfort, and make demands on her maidservant.)

The village of Museru no Mura will be in a visible panic. Even from the castle walls, the PCs can see

people fleeing with their belongings on their backs. Samurai from the roadblock are stopping some, but the mass exodus is too great for them to contain.

The PCs (those who are not already too sick to function) will be called in to a meeting with Kakita Gouri. The daimyo is sweating a bit but seems otherwise fine. He explains the situation with a sort of flat despair: *“The plague has broken out again, here in the castle and in the village below. I am trying to have my men contain the flight of refugees, to keep it from spreading even farther... but perhaps this is a fool’s quest. Perhaps this disease cannot be stopped. We can only pray to the Fortunes for mercy.”*

Hope?

While the PCs are meeting with Kakita Gouri, a samurai will arrive to report the poor success they have had in trying to stop the fleeing villagers. “It is not just the fear of disease,” he reports. “The villagers have got word that some famous monk, a healer, has come into the district. A man named... Kaoku? Many of them are fleeing to the Hitsuzensei Monastery down the road, in hopes of his assistance.”

If the PCs did not spend the night in the castle, or left the castle before Gouri could summon them, they will learn this news directly, from the peasants who shout it to all and sundry as they run through the streets.

Who is Kaoku?

PCs can roll **Theology**, **Shintao**, or a suitable Lore skill (such as **Lore: Medicine** or **Lore: Monks**) with the **Intelligence** trait at TN 15 to recognize the name of Kaoku. He is a monk, a member of the Brotherhood of Shinsei and a famous healer, revered for treating Imperial heirs and penniless *eta* with the same compassion and skill. If a PC is a monk, an Ise Zumi, or has the **Medicine** or **Herbalism** skill at 5 or more ranks, they will recognize the name with a **Simple Intelligence** roll at TN 5.

Scene Four: Visiting Kaoku

Once the PCs have learned about Kaoku, Otohime’s bodyguard Seppun Toji will demand that they seek his help to cure the “great lady.” Kakita Ichiro will also agree with this course of action, and in fact will be quite vehement about it. (Any PC succeeding in a **Contested Awareness** roll with Ichiro will realize that he is quite terrified by the sudden spread of the plague,

and is actually motivated more by the desire to protect his own life than by any concern for Otohime.)

If the PCs decline to go in search of Kaoku, Seppun Toji and Kakita Ichiro will set out anyway, bringing the sickly Otohime along on a palanquin. Ichiro will make biting, disparaging remarks about the PCs' "failure of duty" and so forth. See "Conclusions" for details of what happens if the PCs do not go to Kaoku for help.

It will take about three hours' travel down the coastal road to reach the Hitsuzensei Monastery. Otohime will make the trip extremely unpleasant with her endless moans, demands for water, and so forth. Furthermore, the road is crowded with peasants, many of them sick, frantically trying to reach the famous healer. Eventually, however, the PCs will reach another large village, Hokuei no Mura (840 inhabitants). The monastery can be easily located on a wooded hill outside the town. When the PCs arrive, the scene is one of abject chaos:

A torii arch bestrides the stone steps which ascend the wooded hill toward the walled compound of the monastery. You can just see the monastery's peaked roof above the trees, whose brown leaves are dropping with the autumn. The steps and the fields below are choked with people, hundreds upon hundreds of peasants, packed in shoulder to shoulder. A low pleading wail rises from the crowd as they struggle vainly to push their way up the steps.

In order to even reach the gates of the monastery, the PCs will need to force a path through the crowd. Violence is the obvious way to do this, but the people are so panicked that merely brandishing a weapon will not suffice – the PCs will have to actually cut someone down or bludgeon someone out of the way before the rest of the people crash away from them in a screaming panic. (This could potentially cost Honor for compassionate PCs, such as Crane or Phoenix.)

PCs who flinch at such violent methods can attempt to frighten or persuade the crowd into moving (rolling **Intimidation** or **Oratory** with the appropriate trait), but due to the peasants' overwhelming panic these efforts will have a TN of 20. The **Obeisaseru** skill (available to Imperial family and Emerald Magistrate PCs) can clear a path more easily. Clever PCs may come up with other ways to bypass the crowd (such as creative use of magic).

The Door Guards

Once the PCs reach the gates of the monastery, they will find two strong young monks standing guard, holding bo staffs. The monks, Choku and Ran, are fearless and skilled, and have managed to hold off the entire crowd despite its vast numbers. "The venerable Kaoku has many demands on his time!" they bellow. "Only those judged worthy may see him!"

The PCs will have to convince these young monks to let them in to see Kaoku. The two monks are quite immune to threats, and if the PCs attack them, will defend themselves with vigor, calling on the rest of the monastery (some 40-plus monks altogether) to assist them. The PCs will have to either convince the monks to let them in, or find some way of bypassing the gate (such as flying magic).

The monks will not be moved by invocations of rank. If the PCs cite Otomo Otohime's condition, the monks remark that there are hundreds of women here who are suffering just as much – why should the honored Kaoku choose to treat her over them? Similarly, attempts to demand entry on the basis of samurai rank will be ineffective against these servants of Shinsei. (Kakita Ichiro will be furious at their "insolence" and openly suggests cutting them down for insulting his honor.)

The best arguments will be ones which suggest that Kaoku could help with saving the whole province (especially if the PCs claim to have clues about the possible causes of the plague). Another possible argument is to invoke the PCs' responsibilities to the Emperor, who has appointed them to investigate the problem – since they are here on his behalf, they should be given the same deference as he would get. Arguments which invoke a sincere sense of compassion for the suffering of the commoners will also go over well with the monks.

This is a role-playing encounter – skill rolls can help, but it is the strength of the PCs' arguments which will decide the matter. Once the GM judges that the PCs have convinced the monks, the two young men lower their bo staffs and allow them entry to the compound. A young apprentice monk will be sent to inform Kaoku that he has visitors. Other monks will serve the PCs tea while they wait.

If the PCs speak with the monks, they can learn the following:

- Many monks have sensed great evil in the area. They are not certain of its nature or form, and believe that it is moving frequently. Some of them suspect an oni or a powerful gaki (ghost), while others believe it is something even more fearsome – what, they cannot imagine.
- None of the monks have fallen sick yet. They attribute this to the cleansing power of enlightenment and the Void.
- There have been no reports of a “Foul Wind” or “Black Wind” in this village, although the monks have heard rumors from other villages of such reports.
- Kaoku came here after he heard rumors of the plague, and has treated several sick peasants, but with little or no success so far.

Meeting with Kaoku

After a wait of no more than a quarter hour, you are led into another room of the monastery. Here, a peasant child lies on a futon, sweating and moaning with fever. An old man in saffron robes kneels by the boy, touching atemi points on his neck and head, and presently the lad quiets and drifts to sleep. The old monk rises with a creaking of limbs and walks over to you, bowing politely. “Greetings,” he says, in a soft wavering voice. His face is as lined as a dried prune, and he wobbles on his feet, but his eyes are clear and bright.

Kaoku is an old, old man of profound wisdom and spirit. Because of his age, he tires easily, and sometimes his head droops onto his chest as though sleeping – but as soon as the PCs begin to think he may have fallen asleep, he pops an eye open and resumes his conversation.

The old monk listens carefully to everything the PCs have to say, and asks searching and perceptive questions. If the PCs have found key evidence but have not “connected the dots” yet, Kaoku will be able to do so. He will exhibit an uncanny talent for spotting telling details or hidden knowledge which the PCs might have. In particular, if any of the PCs have experienced the Dark Oracle’s dream, Kaoku will specifically ask whether anyone has recently had “dreams, visions, strange omens.”

Once the PCs have given Kaoku all their information, he meditates on it for a time, seemingly falling completely asleep. Other monks silently arrive, serve

tea and rice, and retire just as quietly. If any of the PCs disturb or interrupt Kaoku’s meditations, his eyebrows quirk in irritation, and the other monks return to urge the offending PC(s) to wait outside.

A Solution?

Eventually, Kaoku will open his eyes and resume speaking as though nothing had happened. *“Interesting. I had already noticed that this disease is most peculiar – it strikes men but not animals, it spreads from living and dead alike, and it resists even the strongest of healing magic and kiho.” He heaves a deep sigh. “I believe this plague may indeed be caused deliberately, by a curse or dark magic of some kind. The progress of the disease is tied too closely to this strange ‘Black Wind’ to be a coincidence. Therefore, usual cures will not work. But...”*

The monk looks sharply at the PCs. *“If I can learn the nature of this magical curse, perhaps see the original incantation, it may be possible to create a counter-ritual. Or at least to find a specific way of strengthening the victims’ chi against it.”*

If any PCs are suffering a “fast onset” of the plague, they will now be too weak to travel farther (as will Otomo Otohime). Kaoku and the other monks will offer to let them stay at Hitsuzensei Monastery while the rest of the party searches for the source of the disease. Seppun Toji will insist on remaining at the monastery as well, in order to guard Otohime. Kakita Ichiro will (somewhat reluctantly) accompany the PCs in their search, assuming they undertake it.

Scene Five: Searching for the Source

Whether or not the PCs visit Kaoku, they will probably want to search for the source of the plague and the mysterious Black Wind. Clues to the Wind’s origin can be found in a number of ways:

- If the PCs did not think of it already, asking about supernatural events or strangers passing through the area will get a whole plethora of stories: ghosts, strange samurai or ronin travelers, demons disguised as men, ninja, shapeshifting animals, and so forth ...the full gamut of peasant xenophobia and superstition. A PC who listens to these tales and rolls **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20) will notice consistent reports of a strange thin man with wild hair, sometimes seen riding a horse and other times

flying through the sky. Some peasants have bizarre stories of seeing him floating through the clouds, laughing maniacally, riding a horse with demonic burning eyes, and so forth. If the PCs ask about the horse, the descriptions always match a gaijin (Unicorn) horse, not a Rokugani pony.

- The wild-haired man has been seen in several different parts of the afflicted region. If the PCs systematically record the sightings and locations, they can determine with a few hours' questioning that the most recent sightings were to the southwest.

Tracking the Wind

If the PCs actually watched during the onset of the Black Wind to see where it came from, they can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20, **Hunting/ Perception** at TN 10, or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 to determine that it came from the southwest. PCs who try to remember this the next morning can make the same rolls at +5 on the TN. They can also opt to wait for the next night and watch for the return of the Wind (it will strike again).

- PCs who suffered the dream-vision from the Dark Oracle of Air can try to recognize the locations where the dream-person cast the spell from the Black Scroll. PCs with knowledge of Crane lands (Way of the Lands advantage, the **Lore: Crane** skill, or similar) can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 to get a rough estimate of the last location in the dream (which, again, is to the southwest).
- Clever PCs may think of graphing the spread of the disease on a map (in the daimyo's castle, for example). This will require a roll of **Battle** at TN 20, **Investigation** at TN 15, **Hunting** at TN 20, or **Nazado** at TN 10 (all with the **Intelligence** trait) to deduce the pattern by which the plague is spreading (from hilltops). From there it can be seen that the most recent release of the Black Wind was from a hilltop to the southwest, about ten miles away.
- PCs who can sense Taint (Witch-Hunters and Rank Two Moto bushi) can roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 to sense the faint traces of the Foul Wind still lingering in the air. These can be traced to the southwest, to the location of Iuchi Dogo, with another **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 25, or **Hunting** or **Investigation** (with the **Awareness** trait) at TN 20.

Asking the Spirits

Shugenja PCs can *Commune* with elemental spirits to learn what is happening. All of the spirits can report that something "bad" is spreading in the area, and if asked properly, can trace the most recent eruptions of evil to the southwest. Air spirits, however, can say more: they know there is a "dark, terrible Air spirit" in the area, which is going wherever the Taint appears. The Air spirits can also, if asked, describe how "a bad man" sometimes flies through the region, and trace him to his most recent location (the hill ten miles to the southwest).

- If the PCs have met Iuchi Dogo before (in the adventure *A Foreign Legacy*), they can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 to realize that the spirits' descriptions of the "bad man" match him

Recognizing Iuchi Dogo

Besides interrogating the Air spirits, the PCs may also recognize Iuchi Dogo if they have met him before and then experienced the dream-vision. Such PCs can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 10 to realize that Dogo was the person whose body they seemed to occupy in that dream.

- If the PCs have met Iuchi Dogo before (in the adventure *A Foreign Legacy*), they can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15 to realize that the peasants' descriptions of a "wild-haired man" match him.
- PCs who know they are dealing with Iuchi Dogo can track him with the spell *The Ties That Bind*, as well as other such magics.

Scene Six: Finding Iuchi Dogo

In order to find Iuchi Dogo, the PCs will have to find some way of tracking him to the hill ten miles to the southwest where he is currently operating. The previous section discusses various ways in which this can be accomplished. If the PCs can come up with none of these options, they can always wait until the next night and trace back the Black Wind visually.

If none of the PCs can find a single clue as to Dogo's location, the GM can leave them to suffer, or can choose to have Kakita Ichiro figure it out. Of course, the arrogant Crane will not hesitate to rub in the fact that he found the answer. He may even slander the PCs in court afterward, costing them Glory.

Getting There

Iuchi Dogo is currently holed up on a rugged, wooded hill located ten miles southwest of Shiro Seikyou. He will be sleeping during the day, hidden under a pile of twigs and leaves, waiting for nightfall to unleash his dark magics once again. His work here is nearly done. Dogo cannot be caught totally by surprise, however; the Dark Oracle of Air lurks in the area, watching over this useful servant.

If the PCs have only a general direction or vague description to work from, they will need the **Hunting**, **Investigation**, or **Nazado** skills (with the **Intelligence** trait) to deduce the correct hilltop. The TN for this roll is 15, or 10 if the PC in question has the skill **Lore: Crane Clan** or the advantage Way of the Land (Crane). At the GM's option, other skills, advantages, or spells might also help the PCs find the correct hill.

It will take the PCs about seven hours to reach the hill if they have solid information on where it is located. If they are working on only a general direction (as listed above), it will take ten hours.

Scene Seven: Approaching Dogo and the Oracle

The Dark Oracle of Air will be aware of the PCs' approach and will act to defend its mortal partner. Exactly what the PCs encounter on their approach to Dogo's hill will depend on whether they arrive in daylight or at night.

Daylight

If the PCs approach during the day, the Dark Oracle will manifest itself as they come closer:

Ahead of you, a rugged hill rises from the farmlands, its sides and peak crowned with thick trees. The clear day has suddenly turned cloudy and windy over the last two miles of travel, and now dark gray clouds fill the sky. Abruptly, a howling wind slams into you, whipping leaves and dust through the air, making your kimono flap wildly. The roaring winds smells of fresh blood.

The powerful wind, summoned by the Dark Oracle, will exhibit a fiendish intelligence and willfulness as it blasts at the characters and snatches at their weapons and gear. Horses will be in danger of toppling, shugenja PCs will find their scroll-cases being blown

free and the precious parchments flung wide by the wind, while bushi PCs will struggle to hold on to their arrows and pole-arms. Any PCs who have the Sworn Enemy: Dark Oracle of Air will hear their names whispered by a malevolent voice that weaves through the howling gusts. Also, any PC who labors under the Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air will find the Curse activating at this time.

Each shugenja PC must roll **Athletics/Strength** at TN 10 or **Simple Strength** at TN 15 to hold onto his/her scroll-case. If the roll fails, the shugenja must roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 10 to try and catch one of the scrolls as they are blown free on the wind (each Raise allows the shugenja to catch an additional scroll, to a maximum of three).

Bushi PCs who carry quivers of arrows can make a similar **Simple Reflexes** roll to catch blown arrows (with the same Raise effects). PCs who carry pole-arms (naginata, yari, etc) must roll **Athletics/Strength** at TN 10 or **Simple Strength** at TN 15 to hold on to the weapon, otherwise it goes cart-wheeling away.

Finally, PCs who are traveling mounted (including Kakita Ichiro) must roll **Horsemanship/Agility** at TN 20 to keep their mount upright (PCs riding Otaku warhorses get a Free Raise due to their mount's great weight and strength). Failure means the mount falls, suffering a broken leg and inflicting 5k3 damage on the rider.

Once the PCs fight their way past the wind and up the hill, the Oracle will awaken Iuchi Dogo. See "Daylight Confrontation" under Scene Eight for details of what will happen when the PCs approach Dogo.

Night

If the PCs approach at night, the Dark Oracle will be focused on helping Iuchi Dogo to spread the Black Wind. These PCs will see the following:

Ahead of you, silhouetted against the starry night sky, a rugged hill rises from the farmlands, its sides and peak crowned with thick trees. A pallid, sickly green glow flickers near the crown of the hill, lighting the trees from below, as though some hellish bonfire is being stoked there. A chill wind, stinking of blood and rotting flesh, wails past you, and you can faintly hear a ragged, high-pitched voice screaming words of power.

Dogo will be alerted to the PCs' presence and, after hurriedly completing his ritual, will take to the air,

casting *Call Upon the Wind* and then sweeping down to attack the party. The PCs must roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 to notice Dogo before he gets off a surprise attack (TN 15 if they specify that they are watching the sky). PCs with the advantage Elemental Attunement (Air) get a Free Raise on these rolls.

Again, PCs with the Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air will find the Curse activating at this time.

Scene Eight: Confronting the Darkness

Iuchi Dogo has degenerated badly from the vengeful shugenja the PCs may have met in the Unicorn lands a year ago. Now he is a Tainted madman, spreading darkness through the lands of the Crane and, perhaps, the whole Empire. What happens when the PCs confront him depends on whether they approach during the day or at night.

Daylight Confrontation

If the PCs reach the hilltop during the day, they find the newly-awakened Dogo preparing for their arrival:

The wind at last subsides as you force your way through the trees toward the top of the hill. Ahead of you, you hear the crashing of leaves and twigs as someone or something moves hurriedly in the brush. Then you emerge into a small clearing, shaded by the trees with their thinning crown of autumn-brown leaves. The bare center of the clearing sports a heap of ashes, still smoking faintly.

A man in a ragged, filthy purple kimono stands blinking in the clearing. His long wild hair and straggly goatee are tangled with twigs and dead leaves, and his eyes are fever-bright and sunken into his narrow hawk-like face. Behind him you can see a large traveling pack lying in a heap of leaves, and a thin, bony horse stands there as well, its mane hanging lank and dirty on its drooping neck.

PCs who have played the adventure *A Foreign Legacy* will recognize Iuchi Dogo on a **Simple Perception** roll (TN 10). If they examine the scene closely (rather than immediately attacking) they can roll **Battle** or **Investigation** (with the **Perception** trait) at TN 10 to see that Iuchi Dogo wears a wakizashi and a scroll satchel and has a scroll clutched in his hand. Another roll will notice a yari slung in the saddle of the horse. A PC looking at the horse can tell it is a Unicorn riding horse, and can roll **Horsemanship/Perception** to see

that the animal is extremely sick. Finally, any PC with the ability to sense Taint (Witch Hunters, Moto bushi, etc) will immediately pick up a strong aura of the Taint in this entire area.

Dogo will be a bit confused and blurry (having just awoken) and may try to bluff the PCs, pretending to be a simple Unicorn wandering the Empire (especially if none of them recognize him). Failing that, he will try to hurriedly cast *Sympathetic Energies* (the 1st Edition version) to drain Earth from one of the PCs. He will then use the scroll in his hand (*Obsidian Armor*) to protect himself from the PCs' anti-Taint magic.

Nighttime Confrontation

If the PCs come at night, Iuchi Dogo will be alerted to their presence by the Dark Oracle. He quickly casts *Obsidian Armor* and *Call Upon the Wind*, then swoops down to attack the PCs from the air.

Dogo will stay in the air as much as possible, avoiding melee and using his spells to weaken and slay the PCs. Unless they have an excellent assortment of archers and shugenja, the PCs may well be forced to flee for their lives.

The Dark Oracle's Actions

Regardless of whether the PCs encounter Dogo during the day or at night, the Dark Oracle of Air, Isawa Gidayu, will be lurking nearby, watching over this useful tool. The presence of Isawa Gidayu will cause any Air or Air-related spells which Dogo casts to function at maximum effect. In particular, if Dogo casts *Call Upon the Wind*, the power of the Dark Oracle will allow him to fly farther and faster than any PC shugenja can match.

If any of the PCs have the disadvantage of Sworn Enemy: Dark Oracle of Air, the Oracle will intervene against them directly:

You have a sudden vision of a pale man walking toward you, passing through the intervening trees as though they do not exist. As the man comes closer, you see that he has no skin, and the translucent muscles and tendons of his body glisten horribly. The smell of blood chokes your nostrils.

The Dark Oracle reaches out its hand and plunges it into the chest of the targeted PC(s). The PC must roll **Simple Air** at TN 20 to resist this attack. If the roll is failed, the PC suffers XkX wounds, where X is the PC's own Air ring. The Oracle attacks one such PC each round until it has attacked all of its Sworn

Enemies. It then re-activates any of its Curses in the party before withdrawing to observe the rest of the action from a distance.

Kakita Ichiro

The young Crane will at first fight courageously enough, but given the chance, he will rush to search Iuchi Dogo's campsite while the rest of the party is battling the crazed maho-tsukai. (He will justify this afterward on the grounds that capturing the Black Scroll was more important than fighting the villain.)

If the party is defeated (everyone reduced to Down or otherwise incapacitated), Ichiro will not hesitate to abandon them and dishonorably flee.

Victory?

If Iuchi Dogo is clearly losing the fight (down to the +20 Wound Rank) he will try to flee. If he is not already flying (or if *Call Upon the Wind* has expired), he will pull out the scroll for *Call Upon the Wind*, cast the spell, and flee the scene. Given the chance, he will return to his campsite and retrieve his equipment, including the Black Scroll – but if doing so seems a fatal risk, he will simply flee as quickly as he can. If for whatever reason Dogo cannot cast the spell, or fails to cast it, he will try to run back to his Tainted mount and escape on its back, using his Unicorn Clan spells to speed it along.

The Dark Oracle will enhance Dogo's Air spells to help ensure his escape, but will not otherwise intervene. Once Dogo flees, the Oracle vanishes as well.

If the PCs succeed in reducing Iuchi Dogo to the Down or Out level of Wounds, he falls to the ground (any of his active spells fail at this point), and screeches out: "Gidayu! Save me, my friend!" (This invocation of the Dark Oracle's name will re-activate the Curse, of course.) A cloud of dark, whirling air and vapor surrounds Dogo, who struggles to pull out the scroll for *Call Upon the Wind*. (His unnatural vitality allows him to do this even at the Out rank.) The dark whirlwind will block all missile weapons and functions as Magic Resistance +10 against spells. In order to physically force their way through this whirlwind and attack Dogo, PCs will have to roll **Simple Strength** at TN 15.

If the PCs actually manage to kill Iuchi Dogo, the crazed Maho-Tsukai perishes with a despairing wail. Remember that he has the Dark Fate advantage, meaning that the first time he is killed, he instead

remains alive at 1 Wound (resulting in his invoking Gidayu as above).

If Dogo perishes, the Dark Oracle immediately materializes above his body:

A pale, translucent man appears before you, a man without skin on his body. His exposed muscles glisten and undulate as his dark eyes, like chips of obsidian, bore into your very souls. "You have annoyed me, little insects. My master will not be pleased at losing such a useful servant. He will remember your names, as will I." The apparition vanishes, unraveling like mist, leaving behind only the lingering stench of blood.

Any PCs who did not previously have the Dark Oracle as a Sworn Enemy gain him as one now. PCs who already have him as a Sworn Enemy now gain a point of Shadowlands Taint. (PCs with the Curse of the Dark Oracle gain two points of Taint.)

Defeat?

If all the PCs are reduced to the Down or lower Wound Ranks, Iuchi Dogo will select one of them to be sacrificed to the Dark Oracle of Air. The chosen PC will die a bitter and dishonorable death, his/her lifeblood spilled out to feed the power of one of Fu Leng's mightiest servants. Dogo will then depart to continue his unholy rampage elsewhere, leaving the surviving PCs to suffer with their dishonor and humiliation.

Dogo's Campsite

Once the battle is over (one way or the other), surviving PCs can search Dogo's campsite. Alternatively, aggressive or clever (or cowardly) PCs may emulate Kakita Ichiro and search the site while their comrades are battling the crazed Unicorn.

If Dogo fled the scene, he will have left his traveling pack behind (although he may have tried to snatch the Black Scroll). If he fled by air, his sickly and Tainted horse is here as well. The poor beast is far gone on the road to becoming an Onikage (demon-steed), and the best course of action will be to kill it and burn the corpse.

Dogo's pack contains his personal belongings, including two spare kimono (both just as filthy and ragged as the one he is wearing), a personal chop with his name, a writing kit, and several crumpled up sheets of parchment (some blank, some covered in random crazed scrawlings about the evil of the Crane and the

power of his “new friend, Gidayu”). It will also contain the Black Scroll, if Dogo did not have time to retrieve it.

Conclusions

How this adventure turns out (and what happens to those PCs who are suffering from the plague) depends both on whether the PCs visited Kaoku and on whether they manage to track down Iuchi Dogo and take the Black Scroll from him.

Kaoku Gets the Scroll

If the PCs manage to bring the Black Scroll back to Kaoku, the old monk regards the Tainted, evil parchment with an expression of restrained horror before carefully opening it (with chopsticks) and briefly reading the incantation within. He questions the surviving PCs carefully about their encounter with Iuchi Dogo, and seems especially interested in their descriptions of the Dark Oracle. Finished, he meditates for a time before stirring and heaving a breath.

“I believe this to be one of the Twelve Black Scrolls which Shosuro brought back from the Shadowlands. The fact that it has been opened means that a small portion of Fu Leng’s blackened soul has been freed from its prison.” Kaoku regards each of the PCs gravely. *“This bodes terrible danger for the future of the Empire. For now, however, I think I can perform a counter-ritual which will strengthen the spirits of the victims and mitigate the effects of this evil. It will be a difficult ritual to master, and I fear there will not be time to save all those perishing from this unnatural plague... but every life saved from this vile evil has value.”*

Kaoku will spend the rest of the night in prayer and meditation, developing the new kiho which he will use to counteract the plague. The next morning he will perform the kiho on any sick PCs, as well as on the child in his care. He will not readily treat Otomo Otohime unless one or more of the PCs plead on her behalf – otherwise he will instead make the sick peasants outside the monastery his first priority. The PCs can plead with him to treat other victims (such as Kakita Gouri) – it is up to the GM whether their pleas move him to action.

Those who are treated with Kaoku’s new kiho may make **Simple Stamina** rolls at TN 10. Success means their strengthened spirits are able to defeat the plague and they recover quickly. Failure means the plague is too strong to be easily reversed, and the victim must

allow the disease to run its course (see “Surviving the Plague” below).

The GM may allow a player to roll on behalf of Otomo Otohime, if they wish.

Regardless, old Kaoku will continue to use his kiho until he literally drops from exhaustion. Over the next several days, a handful of other monks will be able to learn the kiho before the elderly monk finally works himself to death. The efforts of the monks will mitigate the effects of the plague somewhat, although thousands will still die before the disease finally runs its course.

Kaoku Does Not Get the Scroll

If the PCs are unable to recover the Black Scroll (either due to not finding Dogo, being defeated by Dogo, or Dogo escaping with the scroll), they can still choose to report back to Kaoku. He will listen to their story carefully, asking pointed questions about Dogo, the Dark Oracle, and other salient points of their encounter.

Finished, Kaoku meditates for some time before stirring and heaving a breath. *“I believe this evil has been wrought by a powerful maho ritual, perhaps assisted by this dark Oracle of the Air. The power of Fu Leng has been awakened. It may be that, as some of us fear, one of the Twelve Black Scrolls has been opened.”* Kaoku regards each of the PCs gravely. *“This bodes terrible danger for the future of the Empire. For now, however, I think I can perform a counter-ritual which will strengthen the spirits of the victims and mitigate the effects of this evil. It will be a difficult ritual to master, and I fear there will not be time to save all those perishing from this unnatural plague... but every life saved from this vile evil has value.”*

As before, Kaoku will spend the night in prayer and meditation. However, without knowing the exact nature of the spell he is countering, his kiho will be less effective. Those treated by it must roll **Simple Stamina** at TN 15 to recover safely from the plague.

As before, Kaoku will push himself to exhaustion and ultimately death in his struggle to save as many lives as can be saved.

The PCs Did Not Visit Kaoku

If the PCs did not go to visit Kaoku, they will not know what to do with the Black Scroll even if they recovered it. In this case, Otomo Otohime must face the plague without help (see “Surviving the Plague” below). If

she dies, both Seppun Toji and Kakita Ichiro will do their best to blame the PCs.

Clever PCs may deduce that it is possible to create a counter-ritual from the Black Scroll. A shugenja who reads the scroll (possibly suffering a loss of Honor) can roll **Spellcraft/Intelligence** at TN 20 or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 30 to develop a Water-based ritual which will somewhat counteract the effect of the plague. For game purposes, this “spell” is considered Mastery Level 3, and if cast, allows the recipient to roll **Simple Stamina** at TN 20 to recover from the plague.

It will take twelve hours of study for a PC to improvise this ritual, and another hour to teach it to another shugenja. It is highly unlikely that the PCs can learn this ritual and travel to Hitsuzensei Monastery in time to use it on Otomo Otohime. However, if they do not at least attempt to do so, Seppun Toji will eventually find out and challenge them to a lethal duel for “failing to defend the Imperial line.”

Surviving the Plague

Anyone who cannot recover from the plague with the help of magic must instead suffer through the course of the disease. Such victims (PCs and NPCs) must roll **Simple Stamina** at TN 30 to survive the plague. Failure means the victim perishes in fevered agony. Success means the victim slowly recovers, but is marked for life with pockmarked scars on the face and body (this is considered the equivalent of Benten’s Curse in game terms).

Iuchi Dogo’s Fate

If the PCs succeeded in killing Iuchi Dogo (it will be effectively impossible to take him prisoner), they will come into possession of his equipment, including several Unicorn secret spells and, even worse, several maho scrolls. What the PCs do with these is their choice, although the honorable path is to return the Unicorn spells and destroy the maho scrolls. PCs who fail to do either of these things should suffer Honor (and possibly Glory) losses.

If Iuchi Dogo escapes, he will remember the PCs as bitter enemies. All PCs will gain him as a Sworn Enemy, and Crane PCs will also get him as a Nemesis.

Fate of the Black Scroll

As a result of this adventure, the PCs may come into possession of a Black Scroll. It is up to them what they choose to do with the scroll after showing it to Kaoku (if they show it to him at all). If Kaoku sees the scroll,

he will want to keep it in the hands of the Brotherhood of Shinsei, where it will be safe. Scorpion and especially Yogo-family PCs may object to this (since the Black Scrolls were originally given into their care), but Kaoku will respond that the Scorpion were unable to protect the scrolls the first time, so why should they be trusted again? This could potentially lead to violence, in which case Kaoku will be defended by the entire strength of the monastery.

A possible compromise would be to put the scroll into the keeping of the Imperial families. Seppun Toji might propose this if things seem likely to escalate into open violence.

If the PCs do succeed in returning the Black Scroll to the Scorpion Clan, the Scorpion will be quite grateful and will politely “ask” the PCs to keep the secret of what happened to it. All PCs who keep this secret will gain Allies in the Scorpion Clan.

If a PC chooses to keep the Black Scroll, they will suffer a severe Honor hit, as will any other PCs who are aware of their act. They will also immediately gain one point of Shadowlands Taint.

The Scroll is basically indestructible, and cannot be harmed by anything short of a major supernatural being. It will have to be kept somewhere.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

At the end of the scenario, any PCs with Shadowlands Taint must make a Simple Earth roll with a TN of 5 + (5 x Taint Rank). If the roll is failed, the PC acquires one additional point of Taint.

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	1
Good role-playing:	1
PCs save Otomo Otohime from the plague:	1
PCs defeat Iuchi Dogo:	1

Total Possible Experience: 4

Honor

If the party save Otomo Otohime from the plague, all Imperial-family PCs gain +1 Honor.

If Otomo Otohime dies of the plague, all PCs lose 2 Honor. Imperial-family PCs lose 3 Honor.

Compassionate or Soft-Hearted PCs who ruthlessly cut their way through the crowd of peasants at the

Hitsuzensei Monastery will lose 1-4 points of Honor, at the GM's discretion.

Reading the Black Scroll will cost 1-3 Honor for PCs who are highly honorable or deeply hostile to Maho or the Shadowlands. Pragmatic or dishonorable PCs do not lose Honor.

A PC who chooses to keep the Black Scroll will lose a full Rank (ten points) of Honor. Other PCs who are aware of this and fail to stop it will lose a half-Rank (5 points).

Scorpion PCs who ensure the return of the Black Scroll to their Clan will gain +1 Honor (+2 if they are Yogo family).

If the PCs were defeated by Iuchi Dogo, but survived (after one of their comrades was sacrificed), they lose a half-Rank (5 points) of Honor.

Glory

If the PCs save Otomo Otohime from the plague, they will each gain +1 Glory.

If Otomo Otohime dies from the plague, all PCs lose a half-Rank (5 points) of Glory.

If Kakita Ichiro gets any justification, he will slander any PCs he dislikes, costing them 1-5 points of Glory (depending on how badly they angered him)

Scorpion PCs will lose 1 point of Glory if they are unable to return the Black Scroll to their Clan.

If the PCs were defeated by Iuchi Dogo, but survived (after one of their comrades was sacrificed), they lose 3 points of Glory.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs who defeat Iuchi Dogo gain the Dark Oracle of Air as a **Sworn Enemy** (if they did not have him as one already). If they already had the Dark Oracle as a Sworn Enemy, they gain one point of Shadowlands Taint (two points if they have the Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air).

If Iuchi Dogo escapes (victorious or otherwise), he will become a **Sworn Enemy** for all the surviving PCs. Crane PCs will also gain him as a **Nemesis**.

Plague victims who survive now have the equivalent of **Benten's Curse**, due to ugly facial scars.

If the PCs return the Black Scroll to the Scorpion clan, all PCs get **Allies** in the Scorpion Clan.

And of course, the PCs could potentially keep the Black Scroll for themselves... in which case they get the appropriate cert.

NPCs

Kakita Ichiro, spoiled young Crane

FIRE 3	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Stamina 3	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with armor)

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 1/Doji Courtier 1

Honor/Glory: 1.3/3.8

Skills: Athletics 1, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Heraldry 3, History 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu 2, Law 2, Manipulation 3, Poetry 2, Political Maneuvering 2, Shintao 1, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Multiple Schools, Quick, Social Position (son of the Gray Crane)/Driven (to prove himself greater than his father), Insensitive

Equipment: Fine daisho set (+1 skill die), exquisite kimono, fine light armor, 23 koku.

Seppun Toji, fierce bodyguard

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 22 (Fine Light Armor)

School/Rank: Seppun Bodyguard 1

Rank One Technique: add school rank to Honor or Willpower rank when resisting anything that would make him forsake his duty to the Hantei line.

Honor/Glory: 4.5/2.4

Skills: Archery 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 5, Law 1, Lore (Imperial Families) 2, Meditation 2, Naginata 2, Poetry 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 2, Yarijutsu 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable/ Bad Reputation (inflexible)

Equipment: Fine daisho set (+1 to skill dice), fine light armor, fine bow (+1 skill die), 20 arrows, steed (Unicorn riding horse)

Otomo Otohime, elegant lady of the Court

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 2 Awareness 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Otomo Courtier 1

Honor/Glory: 2.7/4.8

Skills: Acting 2, Courtier 4, Etiquette 4, Dance 2, Heraldry 3, History (Imperial) 2, Manipulation 2, Meditation 1, Music (Biwa) 3, Oratory 2, Origami 2, Poetry 3, Seduction 3, Shintao 1, Sincerity 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position/Spoiled

Equipment: Fine kimono

Generic Crane bushi

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (light armor)

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick

Equipment: Daisho (fine quality, +1 skill die to both weapons), light armor, fine bow (+1 skill) with 20 arrows, kimono.

Kakita Shidou, commander of troops from Shiro Seikyou

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 25 (15 without armor)

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 2

Honor/Glory: 3.6/2.7

Skills: Archery 2, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, History 2, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Poetry 2, Political Maneuvering 1, Sincerity 3, Tessen 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Balance, Social Position (commander of the guard).

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine daisho set, heavy armor.

Kakita Gouri, daimyo of Shiro Seikyou

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
Willpower 3	Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 22 (fine light armor)

School/Rank: Kakita Duelist 2

Honor/Glory: 4.1/6.2

Skills: Battle 1, Courtier 4, Etiquette 3, History 2, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 2, Law 3, Meditation 3, Oratory 3, Poetry 4, Political Maneuvering 3, Shintao 2, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Gentry, Social Position (local daimyo)/Soft-Hearted

Equipment: Fine daisho (excellent katana, +1 skill die, 3k2 damage), fine light armor, fine kimono.

Generic Monks

FIRE 2	AIR 2
Agility 3	Awareness 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
Willpower 3	Strength 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Monk 1

Honor/Glory: 3.5/2.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Bojutsu 4, Fasting 2, Defense 3, Jiu-jutsu 3, Meditation 4, Shintao 4, Theology 2

Kiho: Heart of Stone (spend a Void point to reduce all damage dice above 10 down to 10).

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Ascetic

Equipment: Clothing, bo staff (2k2)

(Iuchi) Dogo, crazed shugenja and maho-tsukai

FIRE 2	AIR 4
Intelligence 3	
EARTH 5	WATER 4
VOID 2	

[Wounds are at +1 per rank due to Shadowlands Powers]

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 4.8

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 2 (but effectively Insight Rank 4 for casting non-Maho spells)

Honor/Glory: 0.3/0.6

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Defense 2, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Horsemanship 4, Hunting 3, Kenjutsu 3, Law 2, Lore (Crane Clan) 2, Lore (Maho) 3, Lore (Black Scrolls) 2, Medicine 3, Poetry (Unicorn) 2, Spell Research 5, Spellcraft 4, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 5, Theology 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Water) *Ride Through the Night**, *Speed of the Waterfall**, *Sympathetic Energies* (both 1st and 2nd Edition versions)*, (Earth) *Earth's Stagnation, Elemental Ward, Know the Ground*, (Air) *Call Upon the Wind, Way of Deception*, (Maho) *No Pure Breaths**, *Mists of Fear**, *Obsidian Armor**, *Tomb of Earth**.

Dark Kiho: Breath of the Kumo*.

Spells and Kihos marked with an asterisk (*) are Unicorn or Maho spells, and are described at the end of the NPC section.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Ally (Dark Oracle of Air), Crafty, Innate Abilities (1st Edition *Sympathetic Energies, Know the Ground, No Pure Breaths, Tomb of Earth, Way of Deception*), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Compulsion (gain power), Dark Fate (evil version of Great Destiny), Driven (to hurt the Crane Clan), Social Disadvantage (poor family).

Shadowlands Powers: Beyond the Elements (spells cast against him are at +10 TN, he gets a Free Raise to all Maho spells), Blessing of the Dark One (+1 Wounds at each Wound Rank).

Equipment: Kimono, wakizashi (1k2), tanto (2k1), yari (1k2, 2k3 mounted), Unicorn steed (Tainted), scroll satchel.

Unicorn Clan Spells

Ride Through the Night

Mastery Level: 2

Duration: Caster's Water in hours

Area of Effect: One horse

Range: 50'

This spell allows the target horse to run at a gallop for the duration of the spell or until dawn, whichever comes second. The horse does not need food, water, or rest while under the influence of this spell.

The caster may take Raises for additional targets (one per Raise) or to extend the spell's duration (by 1 hour per raise).

Speed of the Waterfall

Mastery Level: 1

Duration: Caster's Water in minutes

Area of Effect: One creature

Range: 50'

This spell doubles the speed of the target when moving downhill. Besides increasing speed on downhill slopes, this also increases the impact damage from a lance charge (a lance attack rolls extra To-Hit and Damage dice equal to the caster's Water ring).

The caster can take Raises for additional targets (one per Raise) and to extend the duration (each Raise adding the caster's Water in minutes to the duration).

Sympathetic Energies (1st Edition)

Mastery Level: 3

Duration: 3 rounds

Area of Effect: One target, one recipient

Range: 100'

When cast, this spell reduces the Ring (and Traits) of one creature by 2 and increases the same Traits of another creature by the same amount. A Ring/Trait cannot be reduced below 1 by this spell. The effect lasts for the duration of the spell. Unwilling targets add their (Fire x School Rank) to the TN for casting this spell.

Maho Spells

Maho spells are cast by rolling dice equal to **Earth+Taint Rank**, keeping **Earth**. The caster must spill blood (their own or another's) equal to the spell's Mastery level, and gains Taint equal to twice the Mastery level.

The caster may take Free Raises for each additional amount of blood (equal to the Mastery level) which they spill.

No Pure Breaths

Base TN: Target's Earth x 5

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Raises: Casting Time, Damage (one non-kept die per raise), Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The air within the target suddenly corrupts and explodes out of the body, rupturing the lungs and tissues. The target suffers wounds of a DR equal to the caster's Taint rank. The victim also suffers a +10 penalty to all TNs until magically healed, due to the pain of ravaged, Tainted lungs.

Mists of Fear

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: 5 Rounds

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Raises: Casting Time, Duration (5 rounds per Raise)

Effect: The caster can summon an image of that which his target fears most (usually a person or thing associated with that fear). To the target, the caster appears as this person or object. This will activate any Phobia disadvantages, and gives the caster a Fear rating of 3 for the duration of the spell.

Tomb of Earth

Base TN: Target's Air x 5

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Variable

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 6

Raises: Casting Time, Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: A dark reflection of Tomb of Jade, this spell replaces the target's Earth with the caster's Taint. If successful, the spell turns a target to stone, starting from the outside (armor, then clothing, then flesh). Each round the target must make a Contested Air roll against the caster's Earth or suffer 2k2 wounds. The spell ends when the target dies (becoming a statue), or when the target succeeds in the Air roll. The stone remains for 1-10 days before crumbling to dust.

Obsidian Armor

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 10 Rounds

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 6

Raises: Casting Time, Duration (5 rounds per raise)

Effect: This spell summons a powerful aura of Taint which surrounds and protects the caster. The Taint will absorb and nullify the first Taint-targeting spell or special ability (such as Jade Strike) which targets the caster. The spell disperses once this ability has been used.

Dark Kiho: Breath of the Kumo

By concentrating for one round, Dogo can summon forth a blast of Tainted air from deep within his lungs. This air is a noxious poison which affects anyone within arm's reach. Targets must roll **Stamina** at TN 20 or spend the next two rounds lying on the ground, retching helplessly.

Player Handout #1: Dream-Vision

You seem to be flying above the darkened land, looking down on tiny houses, roads, castles, and rice fields like a child looking down on toys. You feel a boiling contempt for the tiny people who inhabit the houses below, mere insects grubbing in the earth, unable to see how easily they can be snuffed out. Your ragged kimono flutters around you like a breeze as you ride the winds, laughing.

You swoop in on a tall, thin castle, somewhere in an open plain. You blow through the corridors of the castle like a breeze, and the dull-witted mortals who guard the place scarcely notice your passage. Deep within, behind sealed doors, you find a locked chest with bands of iron and magical wards. It yields to your power, and you reach in with a trembling hand and pull out an ancient scroll, black and shiny.

The scene shifts. Suddenly you are on a hilltop, looking down on a prosperous land of farms and villages. A man stands before, a man without skin, glowing with a pale white light. He whispers to you in a voice like a rasping file, and at his direction you pull the black scroll out of your belt. It seems to tremble and throb with energy, like a living thing struggling to escape from your grasp. You recite as the man directs, and pry open the thick black parchment. Words of power blaze up from the scroll, shining with a lurid green which burns into your eyes and mind. As you recite the words on the scroll, a terrible wind whirls around you, and your vision goes dark.

Again and again you read from the scroll, each time in a different place, and each time blackness whirls around you while the pallid skinless man watches and smiles and laughs.

Then suddenly you are yourself, dressed in your own garments. The black scroll twitches and writhes in your hands, and agonizing pain shoots up your arms. The pale-glowing skinless man smiles at you horribly, and you realize that everything you have seen is real, all of it happened, and this monstrous creature has chosen to show it to you, to mock you with this terrible knowledge.

You awake in an icy sweat, listening to the howl of the wind.