

The Fate of a Hantei

**A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Living
Rokugan**

The Sixth and Final Chapter of “The Soul of Iuchiban”

by Robert Hobart

The Emperor’s son is missing, stolen by the Bloodspeakers. Across the Empire, thousands of samurai seek in vain for word or sign of the lost heir. Now a chance meeting may put you on the right track.

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This is a RPGA Network adventure game. A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing the game (or this round of the game), but the actual playing time will be about three hours.

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.

Scoring the game for RPGA points: The RPGA has three ways to score this game. Consult your convention coordinator to determine which method to use:

1. *No-vote scoring:* The players write their names and numbers on the scoring packet grid, you fill in the top of the grid. That is all. No one is rated. This method is used for people who are just playing for fun.
2. *Partial scoring:* The players rate the game master and the scenario on their player voting sheet, and provide personal information, but don't vote for other players. The game master rates the scenario and completes personal and event information, but does not rate the players as a team or vote for players. This method is used when there is no competition, but the convention coordinator wants information as to how the game masters are performing, or the game master wants feedback on his or her own performance.
3. *Voting:* Players and game masters complete the entire packet, including voting for best player. If this method is used, be sure to allow about 15-20 minutes for the players to briefly describe their characters to the other players, and about 5-10 minutes for voting. This method is used when the players want to know who played the best amongst them, or when the adventure is run in tournament format with winners and prizes. Multi-round adventures usually required advancing a smaller number of players than played the first round, so voting is required for multi-round adventures.

When using Voting, rank the players in order of your voting choice while they are completing their forms, so that you are not influenced by their comments on your abilities.

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!

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

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) 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."

This adventure makes use of materials, particularly NPCs, originally published in the *Tomb of Iuchiban* boxed set (Alderac 1999), but ownership of that material is not required to play.

This is a very straightforward adventure by Living Rokugan standards: the PCs must travel to the Bloodspeaker caverns, explore them, and rescue Hantei Sotorii before he can be possessed. The GM should advise players beforehand that courtier characters will be ill-suited to this adventure.

Adventure Background

This is the final chapter of "Soul of Iuchiban," the story arc which began at GenCon 2001. At the end of the previous chapter of "Soul of Iuchiban" (*Winter Court: Kanrinrin's Duty*), the Emperor's only son, Hantei Sotorii, was kidnapped by the Bloodspeaker Cult. The Cult believes it can free its long-lost master, Iuchiban, by switching his imprisoned soul with that of Sotorii (Iuchiban himself was of the Hantei line, which is what makes this possible).

None or more determined to stop the Bloodspeakers than Kuni Vistan, a Witch-Hunter who has devoted his life (now well into its sixth decade) to uncovering the cult's secrets and destroying it. Now, with the Hantei dynasty itself under attack, Vistan's determination has redoubled. At last his dedication has borne fruit – he has discovered the secret lair where the cult is gathering for the ritual to free its master.

As Vistan flees back to warn the Empire of what he has found, one of the cult's most dangerous minions pursues him – right into the hands of the PCs.

Player's Introduction

The weather is cold and forbidding, the sky filled with clouds as though Mother Sun herself fears to show her face on a world where the son of the Divine Hantei can be stolen. In the two weeks since that terrible day that Hantei Sotorii disappeared from the capital, you have been among the thousands of samurai who have fanned out across the Empire, searching desperately for any word of his whereabouts. So far, however, all your efforts have ended in failure. It is with heavy hearts that you have stopped at an inn for the night, joining a few other bedraggled samurai for a meal and a few hours' rest before resuming the search.

The PCs are in southern Phoenix lands, just north of the Kiken Roka (Traacherous Pass) in the Mountains of Regret. The inn where they are staying (called Shinsei's Rest, it claims to be built on a site where Shinsei once slept) is a typical one, and the clientele are the usual mix of local commoners, traveling merchants, and samurai. The most important guest here (besides the PCs) is a commoner, Koba, who encountered Kuni Vistan a few days ago. Koba's stories can put the PCs on Vistan's trail and thence, on the trail of the Bloodspeakers. Getting the PCs to pay attention to Koba's tales should be the primary goal of this encounter.

The guests at the inn (besides the PCs) comprise the following noteworthy individuals:

Seppun Giri: this man is an Imperial Seppun guardsman, passing through here on his own desperate search for Hantei Sotorii. He is a tall, physically imposing man, clean shaven, with his hair in a severe samurai topknot. Giri is heading north from the capital toward Shiro Shiba, accompanied by his friend Shiba Osagi (see below), to help search the central Phoenix territories. He will speak readily with any PCs, but has

no good news for them: the latest messengers to return to the capital report no success in locating the Imperial heir. Anyone who speaks with Giri for a few minutes can tell that, beneath his hard veneer of duty and stoicism, he is very frightened about the future of the Empire and the Hantei line.

Shiba Osagi: This Emerald Magistrate is a small, delicate young woman with piercing eyes and hair trimmed short. She is a bushi, but so gentle and delicate in her behavior that she is often mistaken for a harmless courtier. She is normally assigned to Dragon lands, but the current crisis took her to the capital, where she met Seppun Giri. The two are cooperating on plans to search the central Phoenix territories – they have heard rumors of peasant unrest in that area which might be connected to the Bloodspeaker cult. Osagi is clearly filled with unease about the state of the Empire, and particularly what will become of the Hantei line if Sotorii is not rescued. She met the Emperor while in the capital and was shaken by the sight of him. “The Shining Prince has aged decades since this began,” she says gravely.

Togashi Shuji: This is one of the legendary Ise Zumi, the tattooed men who serve the Dragon Clan Champion. Shuji is an ageless man, smooth of skin but with eyes that have seen many experiences. He enjoys observing the world and the people in it, and watches everything with a delighted wonder undimmed by the years. He speaks seldom, generally only when spoken to, and prefers to be brief and cryptic. He is the only guest here who is not obviously frightened or troubled by the current situation, and watches everything with bright attention.

Isawa Nobuyoshi: this intense, hard-eyed man in his early twenties is a Phoenix Inquisitor. PCs who have played the adventure “Legacy of the Dark One” have met him before. He is stopping at the inn for a quick meal before riding on south, following clues of his own, and will depart while the PCs are still eating. If he recognizes any of the PCs, he will pause briefly to speak with them and wish them good luck.

Michiru: A plump merchant who nervously counts and recounts the money in his purse as he consumes a hefty meal. Michiru is taking a caravan of goods from the capital north to Kyuden Isawa. He talks at length with the other commoners in the room about how bad business has become since “this dreadful affair” started, how untrustworthy everyone is becoming, and his worries for the future. He will not approach any samurai PCs (unless they are Yasuki), but if anyone questions him about his business and affairs, he

launches into a lengthy complaint about his “unreliable help”; it seems that several of his employees, hired for the trip, vanished yesterday after the caravan came through the Treacherous Pass. (They were Bloodspeakers who left to join their compatriots for the upcoming ceremony.)

Koba: Koba is an ordinary commoner, a laborer who works for the local carpenter. However, he has a vital clue: he saw Kuni Vistan pass through the town “a few days ago” (he is not more certain than that). The PCs will overhear him speaking with his dinner companions about the “batty old Witch-Hunter” who claimed to be on the trail of something important. If asked, he can describe the witch-hunter (“old fella, white hair, with a jade-tipped staff, and he had a peculiar foreign-soundin’ name, beggin’ yer pardon, lord, somethin’ like Vordan or Vista”). By his account the witch-hunter stopped at the inn for a brief afternoon nap and then headed southeast toward the mountains, claiming to be on the trail of the “demon Yajinden, whoever that might be, lord, I ain’t acquainted with the names o’ demons.”

PCs who have played in the adventures *The Falling Darkness* and/or *Drawing Out the Darkness* will probably recognize this description as the Witch-Hunter Kuni Vistan (PCs who have him as an **Ally** automatically do so). Also, any PC who hears the name “Yajinden” can roll **Lore (Maho)/Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Shadowlands Lore** at TN 15) to recall that Yajinden is the name of the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban’s most infamous lieutenant, the supposed creator of the notorious Bloodswords.

The PCs can confirm part of Koba’s story (the afternoon nap) with the innkeeper, who can say with certainty that it was two days ago.

None of the other samurai at the inn will give much credence to a story of a mad witch-hunter. In particular, Isawa Nobuyoshi will be dismissive, remarking that the report “sounds like the madman who profaned the Phoenix libraries last year.” The story of the theft and battle at the Phoenix Libraries has become quite notorious in Phoenix lands in the year since, and most have heard only a distorted version that labels Kuni Vistan as a babbling madman.

The only person at the inn who will pay attention to Koba’s story (besides, hopefully, the PCs) is the Ise Zumi, Togashi Shuji. This man will ask Koba about his story if no one else will, remarking “knowledge is a blessing of the Kami. I will not shut the door on such a visitor.” He listens carefully to the tale while nodding

thoughtfully. Afterward he remarks softly, “The paths of Spring and Winter seldom coincide,” and begins preparing to leave the inn. If any PCs are Dragon (or, especially, are Ise Zumi), Shuji will suggest (in an elliptical fashion) that they should pay attention to Koba’s story: “Knowledge comes from places unexpected. Did not Shinsei say to seek wisdom in rice cakes?”

Ultimately, the PCs must decide whether or not to follow Koba’s clue as Shuji suggests. If the PCs do not choose to do so, they will get one last warning to take that path (see “A Striking Omen,” below). If they still refuse, the scenario is over.

The Dream

Some of the PCs may receive a warning vision in their sleep. PCs qualify for this vision if they meet any of the following criteria:

- They have the Advantages **Inner Gift** or **Clear Thinker**.
- They have the Disadvantages **Chemical Dependency**, **Compulsion** (sake or opium), **Sworn Enemy** (dark oracle of air), or a **Dark Secret** which is in any way associated with Maho or the Bloodspeaker Cult (such as knowing the true identity of Iuchiban).
- They have the Shadowlands Taint, possess any Maho items, or know any Maho spells.
- They have three or more Ranks in **Lore (Maho)**, **Lore (Bloodspeakers)**, or **Torture**.
- They have Kuni Vistan as an **Ally**.

The dream is described in Handout #1. After experiencing it, or hearing it described, any PC can roll **Lore (Maho, Bloodspeakers, or Iuchiban)/Intelligence** at TN 20 to recognize the black shape as the Oracle which supposedly appears to Bloodspeakers in their dreams and gives them the will of their imprisoned master, Iuchiban.

A Striking Omen

The next morning dawns cold and cloudy, a chill breeze cutting through the PCs’ clothing as they leave the inn to resume their fruitless search. As they stand outside the inn, a crow lands with a fluttering of wings on a nearby post. The black bird can be recognized (**Shintao/Intelligence** at TN 5, **Theology/Intelligence** at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 15) as a symbol of Shinsei. It knocks its beak against the post a few times, then caws, “Koba! Koba!” before flying away.

If the PCs did not speak to Koba last night, they can find him at the carpenter’s shop easily enough by

asking around. He will be bewildered to hear that a crow called his name, but if asked whether anything strange has happened to him, can recount his meeting with Kuni Vistan.

Getting Help?

If the PCs do decide to pursue the story about Vistan, they may want to recruit help. Although the local Phoenix will be thoroughly unwilling to cooperate with anything to do with the notorious Witch-Hunter, a PC who invokes the name of the Emperor (and especially PCs who are Emerald Magistrates or members of the Imperial Families) can probably persuade the local authorities to send a squad of six Shiba bushi with them – this will probably require a roll with a skill like **Sincerity** or **Intimidation**. PCs who are Emerald Magistrates can, of course, simply requisition local troops to assist them.

The PCs may also be able to persuade Seppun Giri and his companion Shiba Osagi to divert from their current task and accompany them. This will require an eloquent appeal and rolling **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15. Giri and Osagi will not readily forsake their current duties – the PCs must offer a tangible reason to accompany them (such as their identification of Yajinden, or convincing testimony on Kuni Vistan’s knowledge of the Bloodspeakers).

On the Trail of Kuni Vistan

Once the PCs decide to follow Vistan’s trail, they can get Koba to point out the secondary road which Vistan took. A thin winding dirt trail, it runs between low hills and patches of scrub woods. Small villages are located along the trail every few miles, and the locals (who are insular and ignorant folk, often going years without seeing a samurai) are fearfully cooperative with the PCs.

If the PCs ask about travelers or strangers, most villagers can report that a group of “Phoenix samurai” passed through the area three or four days ago, and a tired old man came through on foot a day or two later. Exact times are difficult to pin down, and the villagers are easily frightened into incoherence by angry or forceful questioning. They cannot describe the Phoenix except to say that there were “a lot of them,” some on horses and some afoot, and most of them did not carry swords. Their descriptions of the “old man” matches what the PCs know of Kuni Vistan, and it is clear from

their accounts that Vistan is pushing himself past the point of exhaustion.

If the PCs decide to search the trail for the tracks of Vistan or the large group of “Phoenix,” they can roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 10 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 20 to determine that the peasants are truthful: a large group, both mounted and on foot, passed this way in the last few days. If the PCs can make two or more Raises or the roll, they can also distinguish the slightly more recent tracks of a lone man on foot.

Oka’s Corpse

At some point in the late afternoon, have the PCs roll **Simple Perception** at TN 15. A success indicates the PC spots a small cloud of birds circling over a wooded gully fifty yards or so south of the road.

If the PCs investigate, they find the birds have been attracted to the body of a young peasant man. The man (scarcely more than a boy) was killed by an ugly ragged wound in his throat, and is pale with blood loss, but there is oddly very little blood on his body or the ground. Anyone who looks at him closely can also tell (by rolling **Medicine/Intelligence** or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10) that he was actually strangled to death before his throat was ripped open. Another **Medicine/Intelligence** (or **Battle**) roll (TN 10) can determine that his body is about two days old or a little less.

This is the body of Oka, a young man from the Village of Ashi (see below) who was sent to seek the help of their distant daimyo. Although his face is contorted in terror, the PCs can see that he has a stubbly moustache and a scar on one cheek. He wears a surprisingly pretty bracelet of woven grass (a gift from his wife).

If the PCs check Oka’s trail, a **Hunting/Perception** or **Investigation/Perception** roll at TN 10 can backtrack him to the road about a hundred yards further on. It is obvious from the tracks that he ran here, fleeing or chasing something.

Ashi Village

The day of travel and questions has brought you to the rugged foothills of the Mountains of Regret. Villages have grown sparser, and for the last several miles, as the sun dips to touch the mountain peaks westward, you have seen no sign of human habitation. Just as you are wondering whether you will have to spend the night camped in the wild, you spot a few

huts tucked in the shadows between the hills to your left, just under the mountains. This must be the smallest village you've seen all day, and from this distance it looks deserted.

The inhabitants of this place have lived in the shadow of the Bloodspeakers' secret cave complex for generations, locking themselves in their huts at night and trading fearful tales of the "night spirits" who steal away the unwary. Their numbers have declined over time, and more than half the fifteen huts in the village are uninhabited. Already terrified by the recent traffic through their town, they will stay locked fearfully in their homes, trembling and whimpering, until the PCs physically pound on their doors and drag them out into the street. (The six inhabited houses can be spotted easily by the faint flickers of light which leak from their windows.)

The peasants, once forced out of their houses, can share the following information:

- Dozens of people have passed through this area in the last few days, all heading into the "haunted mountains" south of here. Some of the travelers were samurai, but most were commoners (merchant caravans, it seemed, or maybe yakuza). The villagers were frightened by this unusual traffic, and hid in their houses until the strangers passed.
- Two days ago, in the middle of the afternoon, an old man staggered into the village, exhausted and parched. He seemed different from the other travelers – friendlier, less distant. They gave him food and water. He said he was following a "terrible man" and warned them that a dreadful danger was gathering in the mountains. He also told the villagers to send for help; they dispatched a young man named Oka to seek help from their lord, who is a day's travel to the north. He left immediately and promised to walk all night.
- If the PCs describe the corpse they found, or show the bracelet it wore, Oka's young wife and old parents dissolve in wailing tears.
- The mountains are haunted by evil spirits. Villagers have seen ghosts and demons walking through the forests, and those who stay out at night often disappear. Many people have fled the village over the years, despite the traditional prohibitions on unauthorized travel.

The villagers will (reluctantly) provide the PCs with places to stay the night, or with lights if the PCs wish to continue their pursuit at night. If Seppun Giri and

Shiba Osagi accompanied the PCs, they will by now be convinced they are on the trail of something important and advocate immediate pursuit, despite the darkness.

Vistan's Fate

This encounter occurs either when the PCs begin a nighttime pursuit into the "haunted mountain," or when they decide to rest in the village. In either case, have the PCs roll **Simple Perception** at TN 10 (TN 15 if they are indoors). Success indicates the PCs hear a distant stumbling and gasping, followed hard by a triumphant inhuman growl.

Kuni Vistan, wounded and bleeding, has made it back to the village, only to be attacked on its very outskirts. His assailant is Shinko Kumiko, the ancient pennagalon who is one of the Five Masters of the Bloodspeaker Cult. Whenever the PCs see what is happening, read the following text:

An old, white-haired man dressed in dark gray and black garments is staggering toward you. Wrapped around his upper body and throat are a set of dripping human entrails! As you watch in horror, you see the innards pulse and squeeze, choking the life out of the old man. A woman's head rises from behind him, attached to a long length of throat, and grins at you with a mouth filled with sharp teeth.

Kumiko is Invulnerable (takes only 1 point of damage from normal weapons). She takes full damage from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic. She will continue to throttle Vistan for another two rounds, breaking his neck on the second round, then moves on to the PCs. She continues attacking until she takes a total of 12 points of damage (from any source), then retreats, swooping away through the forest with a mocking laugh. Pursuit will be futile, although the spell *The Ties That Bind* can track her to the Bloodspeaker caverns.

Vistan's Injuries

If the PCs managed to drive off Kumiko before she killed Vistan, they can try to treat his wounds. He is at the Down rank if they rescue him on the first round, Out if they rescue him on the second round. Besides being choked by the Pennagalon, he is also suffering from an ugly knife wound in his side, one that looks to be at least a day old.

If Vistan lives (and is conscious), he can provide the following information:

- He spotted a Phoenix shugenja several days ago behaving oddly, and suspected this might be the body-hopping Bloodspeaker Asahina Yajinden, whose trail he lost at Kyuden Isawa many months ago. He followed the Phoenix, who joined a caravan of other suspicious samurai and commoners, to these mountains.
- He has tracked these people to a nearby cave, but when he tried to enter, he was spotted and attacked. He got away with a serious injury, but passed out in the woods from blood loss. When he recovered late this afternoon, the pennagalon was hunting him.
- Vistan is convinced that the Bloodspeakers are gathering to attempt the resurrection of their dark lord Iuchiban. From “certain information” he gained a couple of months ago (in the adventure *Drawing Out the Darkness*), Vistan is sure they have Hantei Sotorii there as well.
- He will be horrified to realize that his injury left him unconscious for over a day. “There is no time to lose! The ceremony may already have started!”
- If Vistan is too badly injured to function (+20 Wound Rank or worse), he will give the PCs directions to the cave. If they are Allies, he also asks them to look for his enchanted jade staff – he lost it when he passed out.
- If Vistan is healed to +15 or better, he will accompany the PCs back to the cave himself, and will locate his jade staff in the underbrush outside.

If the PCs were unable to save Vistan’s life (or saved it but could not restore him to consciousness), they can follow the trail of his bloody, stumbling footprints back to the cave with a **Hunting/Perception** roll at TN 10, **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15, or **Simple Perception** at TN 20. Add 5 to these TNs if the PCs did not bring light sources (the moon is only half-full). The PCs must go to the cave now – if they wait for daylight, it will be too late. Seppun Giri and Shiba Osagi will certainly demand an immediate pursuit. If any PCs choose to wait for morning, they are suddenly awakened within a half-hour by a cawing and flapping crow. The bird will not leave them alone until they set out for the Bloodspeaker lair.

Finding the Caverns

The route to the Bloodspeaker caverns leads up the rugged, forested lower slopes of the Mountains of Regret. Vistan’s trail is a winding and wavering one (he was wounded, weak with blood-loss, and panicked

by the pursuing pennagalon), and runs for some two miles. PCs who roll **Hunting/Perception** at TN 15 suspect that many others have passed this way recently as well.

If Vistan did not accompany the PCs, have them roll **Simple Perception** near the end of the trip. If they make TN 25 (20 if Vistan told them where to look), they discover Vistan’s jade-tipped staff lying in the brush near a blood-stained hollow. If Vistan accompanied the PCs, he will recover the staff himself.

The cave itself is a low, nondescript opening, barely five feet high and narrowing to less than two feet at the top. The ground in front of it has obviously been trampled recently by many feet. Vistan can describe the first area within (Location 1), which is where he was attacked.

The Bloodspeaker Caverns

This network of caves and tunnels is the primary base of the Bloodspeaker Cult, and home to one of their Masters, the undead abomination Fushiki. Now almost the entire cult is gathered here for the ritual to restore their long-lost master. The PCs will have to find their way through the caverns to the main ceremonial chamber where the ritual is underway... and stop it.

The caverns and tunnels are unlit except for where lights are specifically noted. The tunnels are typically about five feet wide (although specific dimensions vary), and the PCs will usually have to advance in single file.

There is a network of small tunnels and tiny passageways running through the ceilings of the main caves and chambers in this complex. The pennagalon Shinko Kumiko uses these networks to move through the complex in secrecy. If she was not killed during the “Vistan’s Fate” encounter, she will have healed her wounds from then and will stalk the PCs through these passages, striking them by surprise either when they cross the chasm (area 4), when they discover her lair (area 5), visit the well (area 7), or in any event when they reach the main ceremonial chamber (area 9).

Area 1: Guards/Ambush

There are normally one or two cultists in this room, but now the Bloodspeakers have been alerted by Kuni Vistan’s visit. Four of their number are now posted here as guards, waiting in the dark. Unless the PCs are

trying to be stealthy, the guards will automatically hear them coming and prepare an ambush. PCs who try to advance with Stealth must roll **Contested Stealth/Agility** against the cultists' Perception of 2 in order to approach undetected.

If the cultists stage an ambush, they will stretch a thin length of silk rope across the entrance and lurk to either side. When the first PC crosses the entrance, two of the cultists will jerk up the rope, tripping their target. The other two will immediately fall upon their prone victim with knives, striking at TN 5. The victim can spot the rope by rolling **Simple Perception** at TN 25; the trip attempt can be dodged by rolling **Athletics/Agility** or **Defense/Agility** at TN 20.

Once they have sprung their ambush (or been detected), the cultists will fight to the death. Their statistics are identical to the "Standard Bloodspeaker" listed at the end of the module, but they are armed with extra-sharp knives (0k2).

Besides the four cultists, this chamber is little more than a damp, irregular cave with a few worn tatami mats on the floor. There are two candles set on rocks in the corners but they are kept unlit. There are numerous muddy footprints on the mats scattered through the room, and any PC rolling **Hunting/Intelligence** at TN 15 can deduce that the heaviest traffic was to the southernmost of the three tunnels which lead further into the complex.

Area 2: Cult Barracks

These two caverns are nearly identical apart from their outlines: low-roofed caverns whose floors are covered in muddy tatami mats. Those cultists who stay here from time to time reside in these caverns. The rooms are empty now – all the cultists are at the ritual in the main ceremonial chamber (area 9).

Aside from the mats, the only things to be found here are a few scattered personal belongings, all of them clearly of peasant make – combs, sandals, scraps of clothing, etc.

Area 3: Prison Area

This cavern is large but low-roofed, the ceiling (covered in small stalactites) dipping as low as five feet in places. The far side of the cave looks out onto a deep crevasse, from which you can hear the sound of rushing water. A flimsy-looking bridge of rope and wood planks crosses the crevasse.

Nearer at hand, you can see several bamboo cages have been built into the eastern wall. Filthy straw covers the floors of the cages, and you can see iron manacles set into the stone cave-walls at the back. A pair of iron hooks hang from the ceiling in front of the cages, perhaps to hang lanterns.

There are a total of six cages along the eastern wall, each of them sporting several sets of iron manacles set into the back walls. Cheap pottery bowls were probably used for feeding. The cage doors are normally tied shut with heavy cord, but with the prisoners gone this is currently hanging loose. If the PCs search the caves, they can easily deduce (**Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 5) that they were occupied until very recently. A careful search (and a **Simple Perception** roll at TN 15) will find a kanji scratched into the dirty floor of one cage: "Sotorii."

Area 4: The Underground River

A river runs through a deep chasm that cuts across the tunnel complex. The river arrives as a waterfall at the west end of the chasm, and flows eastward through the complex before finally vanishing deeper into the earth. The chasm is about sixty feet deep (the water another ten to twenty), and anyone who is unlucky enough to fall in will suffer 5k5 damage (not to mention running the risk of drowning if the cannot swim in the icy water, requiring an **Athletics/Stamina** roll at TN 10).

The Bloodspeakers have constructed two bridges across the chasm, each of them narrow rope-and-plank structures which can only be traversed in single file. Any PC who attempts to fight or otherwise engage in violent action, or who takes damage, while on one of these bridges must roll **Simple Agility** at TN 10 to keep their feet. Failure means the PC is sprawled on the bridge, clinging for dear life, unable to act until they stand again. If the roll is fumbled (failed with three 1's), the PC falls into the chasm.

East of the bridges, there are a pair of ledges which narrow the chasm to less than ten feet (area 4a). PCs can jump across this gap by rolling **Athletics/Agility** at TN 5. Failure means the PC must make another roll (at TN 10) to catch the far edge before plummeting into the chasm. Tying together with ropes (if the PCs have them) can reduce or eliminate this danger.

If the PCs try to cross the chasm at any of these three points, the pennagalon Shinko Kumiko will attack them. She will float down silently from above, striking by automatic surprise (TN 5 to hit her target) unless the PCs have specified they are watching for attack from

above. She will preferentially attack targets in vulnerable positions (on the bridge, hanging for their life from a ledge, etc.). If Kuni Vistan has survived, he will be her first target – otherwise she will choose whoever looks strongest or most threatening. She will attack until seriously wounded (22 or more Wounds inflicted), at which point she retreats swiftly up and out of sight.

Area 5: Kumiko's lair

The passage leads into a damp, narrow, irregular chamber with a high ceiling. At the far end of the room a large opening gives onto an open chasm; a waterfall roars and thunders there, hazing the air with mist. The air stinks of vinegar and putrefying flesh. You can see what appears to be a headless woman's body lying on a muddy tatami mat; a yari (spear) lies on the floor next to it. Nearby is an unlit glass-and-metal gaijin lantern, sitting on a broken-off stalagmite next to it.

This is the body of Shinko Kumiko, left here for safe-keeping. If it is destroyed, she will weaken and die within a few days, so she swiftly attack anyone threatening it. She will swoop down out of the chasm, her hair beaded with mist from the waterfall, and attack without mercy or quarter, stopping only if the PCs flee the chamber.

Aside from her body, the weapon, and the lamp, the room contains only a moldy wooden chest. The chest holds several bottles of vinegar and an assortment of cheap, lower-class women's clothing.

Area 6: The Library of Yajinden

This cave is dryer than the rest of the complex, and the walls look to have been worked and smoothed somewhat with tools. There are a pair of low wooden tables in the middle of the room, surrounded by tatami mats, and several unlit candles rest upon them, along with many sheets of paper weighed down with small stones. One wall of the chamber boasts a large, well-stocked scroll rack; clearly this is the chamber of a scholar. The opposite wall is much more unsettling: several dozen human skulls have been mounted there on metal spikes driven into the stone. Hanging among the skulls, as though in a place of honor, is a sheathed sword.

This chamber is Yajinden's library, and he has spent countless hours here in the last two centuries. It is also a sort of trophy room, home to the skulls of enemies which the Bloodspeakers have vanquished over the years. The sword which holds a place of honor on the

wall is the blade of Akodo Minobe, the Lion samurai who helped overthrow Iuchiban's first attempt to seize power. The hilt is bound in brown and gold thread, which can be identified (by a Lion PC, or a non-Lion rolling **Heraldry/Intelligence** at TN 5) as the colors favored by the Lion clan. The sword is a Fine quality blade (damage 3k2, wielder gets one additional skill die), and is also a nemuranai, capable of harming Invulnerable creatures (like Shinko Kumiko).

The scrolls in the shelves are all Bloodspeaker lore and history and Maho spells, items which any sane, honorable samurai will destroy. The papers on the desk are Yajinden's notes and preparations for the impending ceremony. Any PC who looks through these can deduce (with a **Research/Intelligence** or **Calligraphy/Intelligence** roll at TN 10) a number of unsettling facts:

- The Bloodspeakers know that Iuchiban was of the blood of the Hantei line.
- They believe Iuchiban's soul can be freed from his Tomb by transferring it to the body of another Hantei.
- This procedure will require a physical link from Iuchiban's prison. The cult has created such a link by crafting a mask from the corrupted jade of Iuchiban's coffin.
- Yajinden is somewhat doubtful about whether resurrecting Iuchiban is really a good idea. The last time he was freed, Iuchiban's ambitious and careless activities nearly destroyed the Cult. If this resurrection attempt fails, Yajinden does not plan to try another.

Area 7: The Well

This small egg-shaped cave shows obvious signs of human traffic, including many footprints in the muddy floor. There is a large irregular hole in the floor, about four feet across. An iron ring is set in one wall, and tied to it is a stout rope which descends into the hole.

This room is basically a red herring: the hole in the ground is a natural well, and the rope ends in a heavy wooden bucket. PCs who listen at the well can hear (with a Simple Perception roll at TN 10) the distant gurgle of water. The cultists used this well in the early days of the complex, before an earthquake opened up the underground river, and have continued using it out of tradition and habit.

If any PC is foolish enough to descend into the well, Shinko Kumiko (if still alive) will swoop out of a hole in the wall and attack the isolated PC.

Area 8: The Laboratory of Fushiki

This cave reeks with the charnel stench of dead flesh. In the faint light of a single candle, you can see a heavy, dark-stained wooden table on which a days-old human corpse rests. Next to the corpse are a number of oval, near-featureless porcelain masks. The opposite (north) wall boasts another table, this one covered with several more masks and tools for carving them. Behind it, against the wall, is a wooden shelf with dozens more of the awful masks, staring at you like blank, empty faces. The squelches beneath your feet, and you do not want to think about what has been spilled in the past into that layer of stinking mud.

This chamber has been the home and laboratory of Fushiki, the first and greatest of the Bloodspeaker zombies, for almost four centuries. Currently he is at the ritual in the main ceremonial chamber, but his work is ready for him to resume.

There are over fifty completed Maho masks here, each capable of creating a zombie when affixed to a human corpse. The north desk contains eight more partially-completed masks, along with an assortment of carving tools and several moldy scrolls covered in vile incantations. Amidst all this “normal” Maho equipment is something curious: a pile of small black fragments. These slimy, crumbly bits can be identified (with a **Shadowlands Lore/Intelligence** roll at TN 10) as corrupted jade.

If any PC happens to search under the tables, they find a moldy wooden crate. Inside are a pile of dirty linen bandages, several moldy cloaks, an ink stone and quill, a thick pile of blank scrolls, and an ivory tube containing Fushiki’s accumulated personal journals. PCs can decipher these with a **Calligraphy/Perception** roll at TN 15. From these the PCs can learn the following:

- Fushiki was once an ordinary cultist. Iuchiban placed the first-ever Maho mask on his face, and the mask seared through his flesh and bonded to his skull. Because this was done while Fushiki was alive, he retained his mind in undeath, though his will was now bound to Iuchiban.
- Fushiki has spent most of the centuries since then making Maho masks for the cult. He has perfected this art, one which few others in the cult can master.
- Fushiki hates his undying existence, and wishes someone would destroy him, but lacks the volition to do so himself.

- He has recently crafted a Black Mask from the corrupted jade of Iuchiban’s coffin. This mask is to be used in the freeing of Iuchiban from his Tomb. Fushiki is not sure whether to celebrate or despair at this prospect.

Area 9: Main Ceremony Chamber

As the PCs approach this place (from any direction), they will hear the low chanting of many voices. The sound will be clearly audible, and drowns out any noise from the PCs (short of a battle-cry).

You look out at a huge cavern, more than a hundred fifty feet long and half as wide. The roof, covered in stalactites, arcs to over thirty feet overhead. The irregular stone floor is equally covered in stalagmites, but the tops of most of them have been broken off and replaced with lit candles. Hundreds of yellow candle flames give the room an eerie, flickering glow.

There are scores, maybe hundreds of people here, all kneeling and chanting softly. They seem mostly to be commoners, although you spot a few samurai topknots among the bowed heads.

The crowd’s attention seems to be focused on a higher section of the floor, a kind of natural dais. There, within a circle of candles set on human skulls, are eight people dressed in dark hooded robes. They hold their hands high, brandishing bloody knives, as they lead the crowd’s chant. One figure holds something else: a mask, crafted of some black substance. The sight of it chills your blood even from this distance.

In the center of the circle of hooded figures is the slight, bowed form of Hantei Sotorii, dressed in rags, bound and kneeling. Around him lie the corpses of over a dozen people, their blood spilled from slashed throats.

The total number of cultists is indeterminate – there are more of them than the PCs can ever manage to kill, even if they brought help. The cultists essentially function as hazards and obstacles. The enemies who matter are the Maho-Tsukai on the dais, who are performing the ritual. These comprise Yajinden (currently in the body of a Phoenix shugenja), the undead monstrosity Fushiki, and six generic Bloodspeaker sorcerers. The PCs must destroy/defeat all of these people in order to stop the ritual.

The Battle

The PCs must act quickly. Once the mask is placed on Hantei Sotorii's face, it cannot be removed. At that time, Yajinden must speak a special incantation to pass Iuchiban's spirit through the mask into Sotorii's body. Only Yajinden knows this part of the ritual, which will take a full round of uninterrupted chanting. If he manages to complete it, Iuchiban's soul will occupy Sotorii's body, but will require a few moments to adjust to its new host after so many years without a body.

Getting to the Dais

The general crowd of cultists will attempt to block any PCs from reaching the dais and interfering with the ritual. PCs with spells and missile weapons can attack the sorcerers without crossing the room, but if the PCs want to attack in hand-to-hand, they will have to get through the crowd. Use the following as guidelines for how long that will take:

- PCs who attempt a fighting advance across the room will take six rounds to reach the dais from the front (north) of the room, three rounds from the back (south). They will be attacked by three cultists each round.
- PCs can choose to take Raises on their attack rolls to speed their advance through the crowd (in effect "cleaving their way through"). Every two Raises they take for this purpose speeds their advance by one round (to a minimum of one round spent crossing the room).
- A PC who declares a Full Attack maneuver speeds their advance by one round each time they do so.
- A PC can also choose to forgo attacking at all, focusing simply on bulling through the crowd as quickly as possible. This will take only four rounds from the front of the room, two rounds from the back. However, such PCs will be attacked by five cultists each round.
- PCs making such a "high-speed advance" may roll **Defense/Agility** at TN 10 to reduce the number of attacks they take by one. Each Raise dodges one additional attacker, to a minimum of one attacker.
- Such PCs may also roll **Athletics/Agility** at TN 15 to speed their advance by one round. Every two Raises reduce the time to cross the room by one round (to a minimum of one round).
- Shugenja PCs who decide to cast attack spells to "clear a path" to the dais will speed the

advance of their comrades by one round for each such spell they cast.

The Cultists' Activities

Once the PCs attack, the hoard of cultists will attempt to block them from reaching the ceremonial dais. To get through them, PCs can either fight their way through, or try to charge in and bull their way to the dais. See "Getting to the Dais," above, for details.

- Fushiki and the six sorcerers will continue the ritual chant as long as they can, stopping only if they are personally attacked. Yajinden, however, will break off the chant to use his spells the moment the PCs attack.
- It will take a total of five rounds for the sorcerers to complete their ritual chant and be able to place the black mask on Sotorii's face. If Fushiki and all six of the supporting sorcerers are killed/disabled before that time, the ritual fails.
- Once the mask has been attached, Yajinden can summon Iuchiban's soul into Sotorii by standing within ten feet of him and chanting a special incantation for one full round.
- Yajinden cannot attack or switch bodies on the round he performs the chant. If he succeeds in completing the chant, Iuchiban possesses Sotorii.
- Once Iuchiban arrives, it will be two more rounds before he adjusts to his new body enough to act. If Sotorii is killed in the meantime, Iuchiban is killed also, this time forever. If Iuchiban reaches the end of those two rounds, he is truly free (see "Iuchiban Triumphant," below).

The Black Mask

The mask is shaped in the form of a grotesque demonic face, and somehow fashioned from the black, corrupted jade of Iuchiban's coffin. Anyone who touches the mask with bare flesh immediately gains one point of Shadowlands Taint.

If the mask is affixed to someone's face, it seals itself into the flesh and remains attached until the individual dies. The individual immediately gains 1d10 points of Taint, plus an additional point of Taint every month thereafter. Physically tearing the mask free costs the unfortunate victim 4k4 wounds and leaves them horribly disfigured.

The mask is held by Fushiki at the start of the combat. He will keep it until he is killed or he can attach it to

Sotorii. If he is slain, the other sorcerers will attempt to pick up the mask and attach it. Attaching the mask is considered a **Hand-to-Hand (Jiu-jutsu)** attack, but does not require a die-roll unless the PCs are interfering – Hantei Sotorii is far too dazed and weakened to dodge on his own.

The mask can only be destroyed with a crystal or magical weapon (such as the sword of Akodo Minobe).

Asahina Yajinden's Powers

Yajinden can switch bodies at will. He will do this anytime he is in danger of being killed in his current body (anytime he is reduced to the Down or Out rank). He will also switch if his current body has been disabled in some non-lethal way (stunned or grappled, for example). Yajinden can act (fight, cast a spell, etc.) on the same round that he switches.

The only way to kill Yajinden is to reduce him from functional (+20 or higher Wound Rank) straight to Dead. If this happens, he must roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to be able to make the jump before his current body is killed. If not, he is forever dead.

Yajinden will cast Maho spells with abandon, since he can freely abandon badly wounded bodies. His preferred targets will be enemies known for their opposition to the Bloodspeakers: Crab, Witch-Hunters, Emerald Magistrates, and Ise Zumi. Once he starts switching bodies, he will preferentially switch to the body of one of the generic Bloodspeaker sorcerers (he will not switch to Fushiki). If no sorcerers are available, he will switch to a random cultist.

Only if the mask has been attached to Sotorii, but Iuchiban has not yet been summoned, will Yajinden become desperate enough to try switching to one of Sotorii's rescuers (roll randomly to determine which PC/NPC gets targeted) in order to get close enough to chant the final incantation. Yajinden must succeed in a **Contested Willpower** roll with his chosen victim in order to possess them – if he succeeds, the unfortunate victim's soul is snuffed out and devoured. Yajinden will only try this once before giving up and fleeing the area.

NPC Allies

If the PCs brought any Phoenix bushi with them, it may be assumed that the bushi will launch a concerted attack toward the dais. This will effectively shave one round off the time it takes any PC to reach the dais. It also reduces by one (to a minimum of one) the number

of attacks per round which the PCs will suffer from the cultist horde.

If Seppun Giri and Shiba Osagi accompanied the PCs, Giri will attempt to fight his way through to Sotorii's side, while Osagi will hang back and use her bow to attack the sorcerers. Giri will not hesitate to give his life to save Sotorii; however, if Sotorii should be possessed by Iuchiban, he will also not allow the PCs to kill the Imperial heir. His loyalty is blind.

If the PCs managed to save Kuni Vistan from Kumiko earlier, he will unhesitatingly charge the dais, fully prepared to give his life to stop the Bloodspeakers.

A Pennaggalon Ambush

If the PCs have not yet slain Shinko Kumiko, she will float into the cavern behind them on the third round of combat, attempting to surprise and slay one of their number. Her preferred targets will be archers or shugenja who are holding back to support a rush toward the dais. The chosen victim must roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 to detect Kumiko – otherwise she will strike by surprise (TN 5 to hit).

A Last Resort: Killing Hantei Sotorii

As described above, if Sotorii has been possessed, it is still possible for the PCs to win if they slay him within two rounds, while Iuchiban is still confused. After that time the supreme Maho-Tsukai will have recovered his balance and will be able to switch bodies at will.

Killing the Imperial heir, even to "save the Empire," is a terrible and dishonorable act. Seppun Giri will fight to prevent it, if he is here. Honor and Glory penalties for this deed are listed at the end of the adventure. PCs may want to consider seppuku as a means of atonement...

Iuchiban Triumphant

If the PCs fail to prevent Iuchiban's resurrection, history's greatest Maho-Tsukai is unleashed upon the world.

Sotorii suddenly straightens, his eyes gleaming through the horrible black mask. A dark and terrible power seems to dance around him, and then an echoing laugh bursts from his lips. "At last!" he roars, in a voice too deep for his youthful throat. "After three centuries, I am free! The world will be mine, and pay vengeance for all I have endured!"

The cultists prostrate themselves as one before their returned master. He steps forward, raising his hands over their heads as though in benediction, as he strides from the chamber.

PCs who are foolish enough to attack the Bloodspeaker get what they deserve: he strikes down one or more of them with the Maho spell *Touch of Death* (7k7 wounds). Iuchiban cannot be killed – he is the supreme master of body-jumping magic, and literally cannot be trapped in a dying body.

The PCs can flee this terrible scene at any time, more-or-less unmolested. The rest of the Empire has to be warned of what has happened, after all.

Iuchiban Defeated!

If the PCs manage to succeed in preventing the resurrection of Iuchiban, a despairing wail runs through the surviving cultists and sorcerers. Many of them (including Yajinden) flee immediately. The rest gather together, screeching in fury, to attack and destroy these samurai interlopers. Wise PCs flee the scene as best they can – hopefully taking a living Hantei Sotorii with them (he is too weak to run, and must be carried). If they stay to fight, they will certainly be overwhelmed and slaughtered.

As the PCs begin to flee through the tunnels, they encounter Togashi Shuji. The ageless *ise zumi* is, for once, free of riddles and quite straightforward. “Flee! Take the heir with you. I will buy time.” If Kuni Vistan is still alive at this point, he will insist on remaining behind with Shuji. “I have spent a lifetime thwarting the Bloodspeaker cult,” he remarks with a weary smile. “I cannot think of a better place to die.”

PCs may, if they wish, stay behind to die with Shuji and Vistan. Such players should be commended (publicly, if possible) for their noble and honorable role-playing.

Aftermath

The sacrifice of Shuji will allow the PCs to escape the tunnels safely. From there it will be a simple matter to return to the safety of Imperial civilization.

If the PCs rescued Hantei Sotorii, they are brought to the capital of Otosan Uchi on the swiftest horses available. The Emperor is overjoyed at the return of his son (even if the black mask is stuck to the boy’s face), and thanks the PCs publicly and effusively for their heroic actions. Although he is still aged by this

experience, some of his vigor seems to return with his son. Each PC is presented with a gift to show the Emperor’s approval. At the premier of this event (at GenCon 2002), one PC from each table is also gifted with the sword of Akodo Minobe... and one unlucky PC gets a Bloodsword, instead. See “Rewards and Consequences” for details.

If the PCs failed to save Sotorii, or killed him to prevent the resurrection of Iuchiban, they are hauled before the Emperor for judgment. Pale with rage, trembling with exhaustion and despair, the Son of Heaven condemns them as dishonorable cowards. If the PCs request permission to commit seppuku, it is denied – they must live with their failure and disgrace. In all likelihood, they become ronin (again, see “Rewards and Consequences,” below).

Rewards and Consequences

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 scenario:	1 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
PCs defeat the resurrection of Iuchiban:	2 XP
PCs save Hantei Sotorii BEFORE he gets the Black Mask:	2 XP
OR	
PCs save Hantei Sotorii AFTER he gets the Black Mask:	1 XP

TOTAL POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE: 6 XP

Honor:

If the PCs save Hantei Sotorii and prevent the resurrection of Iuchiban, they each gain +4 points of Honor (+6 points if they are Emerald Magistrates or Imperial Family).

If the PCs saved Hantei Sotorii, but he now wears the Black Mask, they instead gain only +1 point of Honor.

If they failed to save Sotorii, but prevented the resurrection of Iuchiban, they lose 4 points of Honor (8 points if they are Emerald Magistrates or Imperial Family).

If Iuchiban is successfully resurrected, the PCs each lose an additional 3 points of Honor (in addition to the honor loss for failing to save Hantei Sotorii).

Glory:

If the PCs save Hantei Sotorii, they each gain +5 points of Glory (one full Rank of Glory if they are Emerald Magistrates or Imperial Family).

If the PCs save Hantei Sotorii, but he has the Black Mask, they gain no Glory.

If they failed to save Sotorii, they lose thirty points (three full Ranks) of Glory, regardless of whether or not they stopped Iuchiban. If this reduces their Glory to zero, their daimyo declares them ronin.

Other Consequences:

As mentioned above, any PC whose Glory is reduced to zero as a result of failing to rescue Hantei Sotorii is immediately reduced to ronin status (no daimyo will accept the service of a samurai who failed to protect the Emperor's son).

On the other hand, if the PCs succeeded both in rescuing Sotorii (with or without the Mask) and preventing the resurrection of Iuchiban, the Emperor's personal thanks extends to giving each of them a great gift. All bushi and courtier PCs (even ronin) are given a Kaiu Blade (Certe d Item). All shugenja PCs are given a copy of Howl of Isora, a rare spell (also a Certe d Item.)

Special Awards: GenCon 2002

One PC from each victorious table that plays this event at GenCon 2002 will be granted the honor of bearing the sword of Akodo Minobe, the Lion warrior who helped defeat Iuchiban five hundred years ago. This blade (again, a Certe d Item) will go to the winner of each table (in place of the Kaiu Blade for courtiers/bushi, in addition to the spell for shugenja).

However, ONE of these blades is NOT Akodo Minobe's blade – it is, instead, the Bloodsword Treason, a never-completed fifth Iuchiban blade which Yajinden has finished just recently. The certificate for this blade will be awarded to the OVERALL TOP-SCORING PLAYER for Living Rokugan at GenCon 2002.

NPCs and Monsters

Kuni Vistan, obsessed witch-hunter

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 1 Willpower 4	WATER 1 Perception 4
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kuni Witch-Hunter 4.

Rank One: Two attacks per round against Tainted foes.

Rank Two: Sense Taint by rolling Shadowlands Lore/Awareness.

Rank Three: When rolling to hit against Tainted foes, keep additional dice equal to their Taint Rank (3 for the Oni).

Rank Four: Immune to maho spells.

Honor/Glory: 2/4

Skills: Athletics 5, Bojutsu 6, Defense 4, Herbalism 3, History 4, Hunting 3, Investigation 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Bloodspeaker Cult) 7, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Medicine 5, Stealth 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Higher Purpose (to destroy Bloodspeaker Cult, especially Yajinden)/Brash, Gaijin Name

Equipment: Kimono, Jade-Tipped Bo Staff (This staff is enchanted with the spirit of a helpful *kami*, and will cause 3k3 wounds, rather than the normal 2k2, to opponents with the Shadowlands Taint. If Vistan is killed, the *kami* is released, and the staff becomes a normal – albeit jade-tipped – weapon.)

Seppun Giri

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: Strength of the Earth (rank one)/Idealistic

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

Shiba Osagi

FIRE 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 2	WATER 2 Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 20 (Light Armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 3.5/3.6

Skills: Archery 4, Courtier 5, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 3, Law 4, Meditation 4, Naginata 2, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Tea Ceremony 3

Equipment: Daisho set, light armor, bow with 20 arrows, steed (Rokugani pony)

Random Phoenix Samurai

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (Light Armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 2.5/1.3

Skills: Archery 1, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Meditation 2, Naginata 1, Shintao 2, Sincerity 1, Tea Ceremony 1

Equipment: Daisho set, light armor, bow with 20 arrows, naginata

Typical Bloodspeaker Cultist

FIRE 1 Agility 2	AIR 1 Reflexes 2
EARTH 2	WATER 1 Perception 2
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 0.5

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 1, Athletics 1, Craft (various) 1-2, Nofujutsu (peasant weapons) 2, Sincerity 1

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Bloodspeaker), Social Disadvantage (heimin)

Equipment: Clothing, sandals, jo stick (0k2) or knife (1k1)

Bloodspeaker Sorcerers (6)

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 2
VOID 2	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.3

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 2, Athletics 3, Craft (various) 2-4, Knife 3, Sincerity 2

Spells: *Fires of Corruption, No Pure Breaths, Pain*

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Bloodspeaker), Social Disadvantage (Heimin)

Equipment: Clothing, sandals, sharp knife (0k2).

Fushiki, Undead Horror

Fushiki is the first zombie ever created with a maho mask, and the crafter for most of the masks created since. He is an animated corpse, his rotting flesh held together with endless bandages. His face is covered and replaced by a porcelain mask which seared through his flesh and affixed itself to his skull. His eyes peer out of the mask's holes, burning with an ancient weary agony. Death would be a release for him, but giving it to him could be difficult indeed – he is Invulnerable (only magic, crystal, or jade will hurt him), pain does not trouble him, and he can re-attach lost limbs.

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Strength 4

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k3

Damage: 5k2

Carapace Armor: 7

Wounds: 60: Dead

Special Abilities: Invulnerability

Asahina Yajinden

Yajinden can switch bodies at will. He will do this anytime he is in danger of being killed in his current body (anytime he is reduced to the Down or Out rank). He will also switch if his current body has been disabled in some non-lethal way (stunned or grappled, for example). Yajinden can act (fight, cast a spell, etc.) on the same round that he switches.

The only way to kill Yajinden is to reduce him from functional (+20 or higher Wound Rank) straight to Dead. If this happens, he must roll Simple Awareness at TN 15 to be able to make the jump before his current body is killed. If not, he is forever dead.

FIRE 2 Intelligence 5	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3 Willpower 4	WATER 2 Perception 4
VOID 6	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 4.6

TN to be Hit: 15 (in current body)

School/Rank: None (former Asahina artisan)

Honor/Glory: 0/2.0 (in current body)

Skills: Athletics 2, Defense 4, Herbalism 7, Hunting 5, Investigation 8, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Bloodspeakers) 10

Spells: *Corruption of the Earth, Fires of Corruption, No Pure Breaths, Pain, Touch of Death*

Advantages/Disadvantages: Soul-Switching Technique/Dark Secret (to say the least)

Equipment: Clothing (Phoenix colors), wakizashi (1k2), knife (0k2).

Shinko Kumiko

Kumiko is an ancient pennagalon. Like all of her kind she is able to masquerade as human while attached to her body, but becomes a floating horror without it, a fanged head with dripping internal organs hanging below.

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 2 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 2k2 (entrails)

Damage: Bite 2k1 (only bites foes trapped in entrails), Constricting Entrails 3k1 plus target is immobilized unless they can make a Contested Strength roll.

Carapace Armor: None
Wounds: 6: +5; 18: +10; 30: Dead
Special Abilities: Fear 4, Invulnerability

GM's Note: Casting 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.

Corruption of the Earth

Base TN: 15

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: 4 rounds

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 8

Raises: Area (3 feet diameter per raise), Casting Time, Duration (4 more rounds per raise)

Effect: This spell causes the earth within three feet of the target to turn to mud and swallow them up at the rate of two feet per Action. PCs trying to escape must roll Simple Earth at TN 15 to move three feet. Each attempt to move (whether successful or not) requires a Simple Water roll at TN 10 to avoid sinking an additional foot into the mud. Pulling free of the mud requires a Simple Earth roll at a TN of 5 times the number of feet the victim has sunk into the mud.

Fires of Corruption

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 3 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 9

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

Effect: This spell is a twisted, maho-powered version of the shugenja spell Fires from Within. The caster calls forth a pillar of black, pulsating fire which smites the target(s), who must be visible and within 100 yards. The spell's DR is equal to the caster's Fire+Taint, keeping Fire.

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.

Pain

Base TN: 10

Casting Time: 1 Action

Duration: 1 Round

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Raises: Duration (1 round per raise), Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The target (who must be visible and within 25 feet) is suddenly wracked with terrible, debilitating pain. The victim may not act for the duration of the spell. Further, victims of this spell must roll Simple Earth at TN 15 or cry out in agony, dishonoring themselves.

Touch of Death

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 2 Actions

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Raises: Range (2 feet per raise), Casting Time, Number of Targets (one per raise)

Effect: The target(s) of this spell must be within ten feet (plus 2 feet per Raise). Their skin, hair, and flesh blacken and flake away as they age with supernatural speed, suffering 7k7 wounds.

Handout #1: the Dream

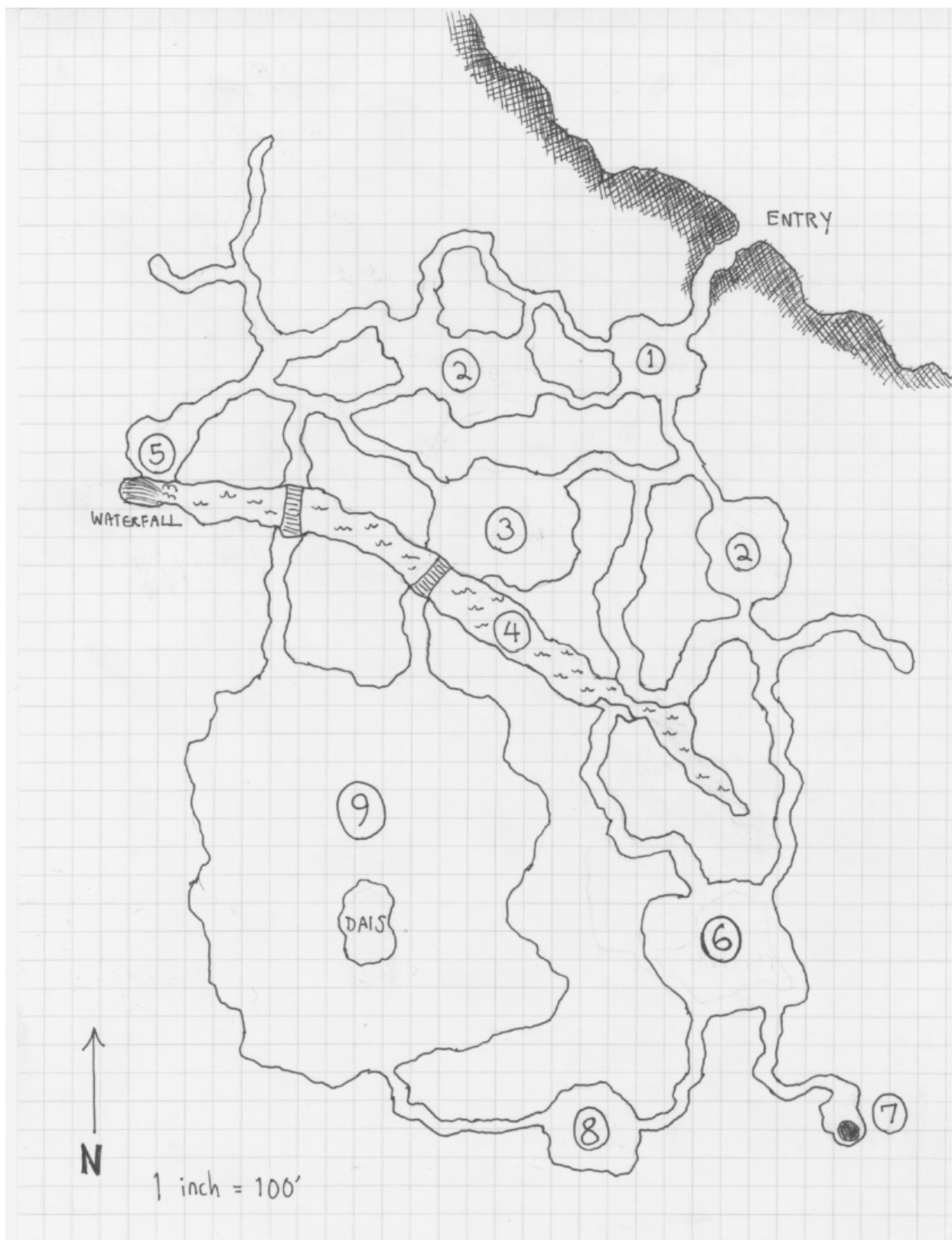
You seem to be walking through a dark tunnel or hallway, finding your way as much by feel as by sight. Ahead, a distant chanting in many voices draws you forward. Something about it seems strangely compelling, and you feel no choice but to keep fumbling your way toward it.

Suddenly, without apparent transition, you are in a large cave or chamber, lit by several flickering yellow-orange torches. Before you is an old man, kneeling with his back to you, facing toward a pool of black water which lies at the center of the torches. As you watch, a featureless black humanoid shape writhes up out of the pool, as though shaped out of the black water itself. A terrible voice, deep and menacing and trembling with madness, emerges from it. “At last, at last, the imprisonment is ended, and I shall take the place which is mine.” It reaches out its liquid fingers for the kneeling man.

You try to cry out to the old man, to help him, but you are rooted to the spot. The black figure embraces the old man, and after a brief struggle, is absorbed into him. He slowly rises to his feet and turns to face you. Darkness stares out of his eyes, and with a shock of dreadful horror you recognize his features as those of the Emperor Hantei the 38th.

You awake with a shuddering gasp.

Map of the Bloodspeaker Complex



Adventure Summary

Fill out for all tables of this event that run at GenCon 2002.

Did the PCs save Hantei Sotorii?

If so, was the mask placed on his face?

If the PCs did not save Sotorii, did they manage to kill him before Iuchiban could take full control?

Did Yajinden survive?

Did Fushiki survive?