

Fury of the Elements

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

by Robert Hobart

A violent earthquake points at the wrath of the Kami. But what has drawn their anger, and how can it be appeased?

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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 Rank adventure. This means that only Rank 1 or 2 characters should be allowed to play. This adventure was not written with Rank 3 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."

Credit Where It Is Due: This scenario draws loose inspiration from a scenario seed originally published in the excellent *City of Lies* boxes set (Alderac 1998).

Adventure Summary and Background

This scenario takes place in autumn, in the unclaimed territories between the lands of the Phoenix and Dragon Clans. The PCs are traveling through the scattered villages in these lands when a violent earthquake occurs. After the PCs help the locals recover from the disaster, a ronin shugenja will perform a divination to learn why the spirits were angry enough to cause an earthquake.

The true cause of the disaster is at the nearby Shrine of the Ki-Rin. The abbot of the shrine, a powerful monk of the school of Osano-Wo, has been seduced and corrupted by a Bog Hag, Nikui ("Hateful") guised in the skin of a gardener's daughter. The bog hag hates the servants of Shinsei, and finds nothing more amusing than to corrupt them into submitting to their

baser instincts. She has traveled all across the Empire, seducing monks and samurai, and finally arrived at this remote shrine.

The spirits can say nothing of this, of course – all they know is that something is wrong at the Shrine, and it has angered them. Once this has been determined, the locals will beg the PCs to go to the shrine and solve the problem, whatever it might be (the ronin shugenja is too old for the rigors of visiting a shrine high in the mountains). The PCs must uncover the danger, overthrow the corrupted abbot, and drive away or slay the bog hag.

Player's Introduction

It is the month of Bayushi, the month of the Rooster (August) in common usage. The lands between the Dragon and the Phoenix territories are wide and mostly empty plains, interspersed with occasional patches of trees and even more occasional ronin villages. You have journeyed through these lands for several days, a wearisome trip whose only virtue is that it is the fastest way between those two great Clans.

Have the PCs introduce and describe themselves. They can create whatever reasons they wish for taking a journey between Dragon and Phoenix lands. The scenario assumes they are traveling together for reasons of mutual protection in an unsettled region of the Empire – lands outside of the Clan borders are often home to bandits and thieves. At the GM's option, the PCs may have already encountered such threats in their journey.

Once the PCs have had a chance to establish themselves and role-play a little, proceed to the following:

You suddenly notice that there is not a single sound of an animal, not a song from a bird or a chirp from an insect, anywhere to be heard. Just as you reach that unsettling discovery, the ground heaves beneath you, as though the Earth Dragon himself is stretching his spine. A hundred yards away, a great fissure opens in the ground, groaning like a man in torment.

The earthquake ends after a few terrifying moments. As you pick yourselves up, you spot a smudge of smoke rising on the northern horizon. The distant sounds of screams come to your ears.

The Village of Goutan

Presumably any samurai worthy of their names will investigate the smoke and screams to the north. (If they don't, the scenario is over!) It takes about a half-hour's brisk walk, or ten minutes at a gallop, to reach the source of the problem – a small village.

You can see a small village, probably home to no more than two hundred people. There is no sign of a castle or barracks – clearly this is an unclaimed village surviving on its own. At the moment, however, that survival is in doubt. Many of the buildings have collapsed, and smoke is boiling up from several of them. Villagers run about in panic, some of them screaming hysterically. Others are trying to help their fellows out of ruined buildings. A collapsed pagoda roof marks a structure that might have been a small shrine or temple. Next to the shattered edge of the village well, a small girl cries unceasingly, "Kasan! Kasan!"

"Kasan" is a Rokugani childhood term for "Mother."

The PCs have the opportunity to help these poor peasants save their wounded and dying. As the text above suggests, there are a variety of heroic and merciful deeds which the PCs can perform.

Helping the Wounded

Any PC can assist the injured villagers, but only those with the **Medicine** skill or healing magic (*Path to Inner Peace*, *Regrow the Wound*) can make a difference. There are a total of eleven badly wounded villagers. A PC using the **Medicine** skill can roll only once, with a base TN of 5; each Raise helps an additional peasant. Each casting of a healing spell likewise helps one peasant. If the PCs manage to save all eleven peasants, award +1 Honor to each PC who helped in the healing.

The Well

The little girl's mother fell into the well when its mud-brick sides collapsed during the quake. She will tearfully explain this to any PC who approaches her. The woman below is struggling to keep her head above water, and will soon drown if she is not rescued.

There are a couple of different ways to save the woman. Shugenja PCs can use Air magic to float her out, or Water magic to keep her afloat. Clever PCs may be able to think of ways to use Earth or Fire magic as well.

To retrieve the woman physically, the PCs will probably need rope. If they do not have rope in their own equipment, a rope can be found quickly with a roll of **Simple Perception** at TN 10, and the PC must then roll **Athletics/Strength** at TN 10 to haul the woman out of the well. An extremely bold PC can climb down into the well themselves (requiring an **Athletics/Agility** roll at TN 15), or can be lowered down on the rope. Clever PCs may think of other methods.

The Village Shrine

This collapsed building has attracted several people, who are calling into the wreckage. They are answered by the weak voice of an older man. This is the village priest, Shounin, and the peasants frantically beg the PCs to help them rescue him. He has been trapped within the wreckage by a fallen beam which has pinned his leg.

To get him out, the PCs must roll **Athletics/Intelligence** at TN 15 (or **Engineering/Intelligence** at TN 10) to safely move the wreckage and reach him. PCs who describe safe and intelligent methods of getting into the wreckage can get a reduction to their TN. If a PC fails to make at least TN 5, the wreckage collapses and the poor old priest shrieks with pain (lose 1 Honor for causing needless injury to another). The PCs should not actually be able to kill the priest through incompetence (he is the key to advancing the scenario), but if they make a mess of things, the peasants will eventually rescue the old man instead, while humbly remarking, "It's all right, great samurai, we know you did the best you could."

Burning Houses

The PCs can help the peasant control the fires by beating out the flames, fetching water from the wells, or having shugenja Summon water spirits to smother the flames. (Another use of magic would be to persuade Air spirits not to feed the flames.) However, a peasant is trapped in one of the burning houses. He is screaming for help, and his wife and mother are sobbing and kneeling on the ground outside, begging someone to save their son/husband. The PCs can do so by quickly extinguishing the fire (the GM should adjudicate some skill or trait rolls, depending on what method the PCs use), or a bold PC can charge into the house and try to get the man out (by wrapping him in something and carrying him out, for example).

Charging into the house will inflict 2 dice of burning damage on the PC, but earns a point of Glory if the peasant is rescued successfully.

Other Collapsed Houses

Besides the shrine, there are several collapsed huts with peasants trapped inside. PCs can, at their option, pitch in to help dig them out. If the PCs do not help at all, at least one of these people will smother to death before they can be rescued. The GM might consider charging a point of Honor to PCs whose Clans traditionally try to help the peasants (such as Crane and Phoenix).

Aftermath of the Disaster

Assuming the PCs helped the villagers deal with the immediate aftermath of the earthquake, the peasants will thank them and offer them food and drink. The village headman, a thin older man named Nenpe, speaks in a quavering voice as he says, "We live so far from any help... it must have been the kamis' blessing that brought you here at just this time."

If the PCs ask about the village, the peasants can explain that they were founded by a group of peasants who were led here by a monk. *"Times were hard in the old lands, among the Dragon. The monk convinced the lord to let him lead us to new lands, saying that would be better than a peasant revolt due to starvation. The lord, who was an enlightened man, agreed, and the monk brought us out to these empty plains. He said that these lands were blessed by the mountain kamis and we would thrive here. And we did, until now. What can have made the spirits angry?"* There is no way for the PCs to know whether this story is true or not (History rolls cannot uncover any recollection of such a tale), but there is no question that the land around this village is fertile, and the grain fields and rice paddies are bearing a good crop.

The Priest's Words

Whether they helped or not, the PCs will meet afterward with Shounin, the local priest. He is a short, stubby man with a shaven head, dressed in rough brown garments. He is polite to the PCs, but also somewhat remote. PCs from the Crane clan can roll Awareness to detect a carefully veiled hostility (Shounin is a former Crane who retired out of disgust with his Clan's wealth and luxury).

The priest explains that he has "some limited skills" as a shugenja. "I have communed with the kamis and the spirits of the earth, asking what has angered them such as to unleash their wrath. They tell me something is wrong in the Shrine of the Ki-Rin, in the mountains to the north. Whatever it is, it has angered them deeply."

The villagers beg the PCs to go to the shrine and stop whatever it is that is angering the kamis. “Please, great samurai!” they beg, prostrating themselves. “Our village will not survive another such eruption of the spirits’ wrath.”

The priest himself does not wish to leave the village. Aside from his age and whatever injuries he sustained from the shrine collapse, he will insist, “My place is here, in the village. I must help them rebuild from this disaster.” If none of the PCs agree to go to the Shrine, the priest will wearily attempt the journey (he will fail).

Communing

If some of the PCs are shugenja, they can try communing with the spirits and kamis themselves to confirm what Shounin told them.

Communing with Spirits: The Earth spirits are the only ones who can offer useful information. They can confirm that the “kami of the mountains” are angry about something at the “place of men” which rests high in the mountain peaks.

Communing with the Kami: The relevant kami is that of the mountains to the north (as explained by the Earth spirits). A PC who wishes to commune with this actual Kami must cast a *Commune* (Earth) spell with three successful Raises. (A Kitsusodan-senzo can do it with only two raises.) The Kami manifests itself as a shadowy humanoid form, like a samurai carved from earth and stone, which towers angrily over the shugenja. It is furious about a “foulness” in the Shrine of the Ki-Rin. “The house of worship is stained. It must be cleansed, or my wrath will only grow!” The Kami cannot explain specifically how the Shrine is “stained” – it only knows that something there is wrong. If the PCs promise to “cleanse” the Shrine of the Ki-Rin, the kami will reluctantly agree to withhold its wrath for a few days.

Deciding What to Do

The PCs do not have to undertake this journey if they do not wish to do so. Of course, if they choose not to, they are effectively condemning the land to suffer additional earthquakes and other troubles from the wrath of the kami. Any shugenja PC who does such a thing, and any PC from the Dragon or Phoenix clans, loses a point of Honor for such an irresponsible choice.

If the PCs do agree to travel to the shrine and discover the nature of the problem, the villagers are deeply grateful, and offer gifts of food to speed them on their

way. Shounin the priest blesses each of the PCs, invoking the favor of the Fortunes on their journey.

To the Shrine

From the village, the PCs must travel about two days to the north (one day if they can all travel on horseback) to reach the mountains where the Shrine of the Ki-Rin is located. The journey is without incident. The farther north the PCs travel, the more open and uninhabited the plains become, until for the last several miles they see no sign of human habitation at all.

Ahead of you, the steep crags of the Great Wall of the North rise up from the plains, mounting toward the heavens in jagged leaps and bounds. The mountain slopes are covered in thick evergreen trees. Clouds scud around their upper levels in shifting patterns. Just at the base of the mountains, you can make out a torii arch standing over a path which winds up into the rocks, vanishing beneath the trees. This must be the path to the Shrine of the Ki-Rin.

The path ascends the mountains in a long, winding route that varies between shaded trees and open rocky ledges. It is mostly a smooth slope but switches to stairs at the steepest points. Twice, it spans deep gorges on narrow rope-and-plank bridges. The path is narrow – just wide enough for one horse or two men. Cold wind whirls around the PCs as they ascend, and it seems as though they hear the vague voices of spirits on the breeze – or perhaps that is just an illusion.

Climbing the path takes about half a day, and the PCs should reach the top in early evening. As the PCs climb, they twice glimpse a crow perched on a tree-branch, regarding them with a beady gaze. A roll of **Shintao/Intelligence** or **Theology/Intelligence** at TN 5 reminds the PCs that the crow is the symbol of Shinsei.

The Shrine of the Ki-Rin

After many hours you approach the peak of the mountain. The path turns and cuts steeply up between two great boulders. At the top, you pass under another large torii arch and emerge onto a wide flat space. A couple of acres of open ground are covered in grain fields and vegetable gardens, and close to you are what appear to be a few peasant huts. Beyond, at the far end of the flats, a large complex of buildings – clearly a monastery and temple – nestles against the spiked peaks of the mountain. The setting sun turns the wood and stone of the buildings a rich gold.

You can see a few people in peasant garb working in the fields and gardens. The entire scene seems peaceful and harmonious.

The air here is thin and bracing, and a sharp breeze blows across the mountaintop. As the PCs walk forward, the peasants in the fields and gardens notice them and prostrate themselves. After a moment, an elderly man rises and steps forward before bowing again. “Greetings, noble visitors,” he quavers. “I am Chu, the senior gardener here. May we assist you?”

Any PC who rolls **Simple Perception** at TN 10 notices a very pretty teenage girl looking out anxiously from one of the huts. If they seem to notice her, she squeaks and ducks back into the hut. Chu will apologize: “My daughter has seldom seen samurai.” He names her as Mirai, if anyone asks.

If the PCs explain why they are here, Chu leads them to the gates of the Shrine proper, where they are greeted by one of the monks. See “Speaking With the Monks,” below.

Speaking with the Peasants

If the PCs speak with the peasants, they learn that there are four families living here (three of farmers and one of *eta*). They traditionally send their daughters down to marry into lowland families, while the sons marry girls brought from elsewhere, ensuring their bloodlines do not become stale.

- Chu is the head gardener and functions as a sort of headman for the peasants, although their relationship with the monks is more of a partnership than a normal lord-and-subjects one.
- If the PCs ask the *eta* family about the body of Karigi, the drowned monk, they must make it clear that they suspect the possibility of foul play. In that case, the *eta* will mention that there were faint bruises on the dead monk’s chest, as though someone had pressed down to hold him beneath the water.
- The peasants claim not to know of any troubles or problems in the shrine (although they are all aware that a monk drowned in the bath a few weeks ago). However, a **Contested** roll of **Perception** against

Awareness can determine that Chu is troubled by something.

- Chu will not confess what the problem is unless the PCs give the impression of being perceptive, kind, and genuinely interested in the “simple troubles” of peasants. Then he admits, “I think my daughter may be infatuated with one of those monks. She resists whenever I mention going in search of a husband, and sometimes she slips out at night when she thinks I’m asleep.”
- If a PC speaks with Mirai herself, she denies everything and insists that she is only sneaking out to “watch the stars at night.” Since the Bog Hag is a skilled deceptor, the PCs are unlikely to see through her act.

Speaking with the Monks

The monks of the shrine will greet the PCs and welcome them. There are a total of about forty monks, of both genders and all ages from children to tottering oldsters (although most are in the 20-40 age range), and most of them come out to see the visiting samurai. Once the PCs explain why they are here, the monks will take them in to an audience with the abbot, Nanten.

An Audience with the Abbott

The abbot greets you in his private quarters, a small building behind the main residence hall. He is a heavy-set man in his late fifties or early sixties, with thickly-muscled arms and legs. An old scar creases his shaven scalp. Clearly he is a retired samurai. “Greetings, samurai,” he rumbles, his voice deep and gravelly. “What fate brings you to the Shrine of the Ki-Rin?”

The abbot, Nanten, is of course one of the sources of the trouble at the shrine, but he has deceived himself well enough that it will be difficult to ferret him out. He will listen to the PCs’ story with grave concern, and explains that, while he himself knows of no spiritual trouble at the shrine, one of the monks did drown to death in the bathhouse a few weeks ago.

- The victim, Karigi, was a recently retired Iuchi shugenja who came here because of the Unicorn Clan’s historic connection with the legendary Ki-Rin.
- Karigi was found drowned to death in the bathhouse. There was no overt sign of foul

play. He was cremated by the *eta* family and his ashes placed in the shrine.

- The abbot will allow the PCs to look through Karigi's belongings if they request it. See "Clues" for details of what they can find.
- If the PCs press Nanten on his claim that there is nothing spiritually wrong at the shrine, he will grudgingly admit that some of the younger monks have been complaining of an inability to concentrate.
- If the PCs ask about the peasants outside the shrine, Abbott Nanten explains that a few peasants and eta have always lived here to help keep the shrine running properly. A PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 (or **Ichu Miru/Awareness** at TN 10) senses that Nanten is made slightly uncomfortable by the topic. He will deny such a thing, of course.
- If the PCs specifically mention Mirai, the abbot will brush off the question. "Yes, the gardener's daughter does accompany him sometimes. What of it?" He denies any other specific knowledge of her. If PCs mention her father's suspicion that his daughter is having an affair with a monk, Nanten laughs off such a suggestion. "A peasant cannot comprehend our self-discipline. No monk would ever succumb to such foolishness." A **Contested** roll of **Perception** against Nanten's **Awareness** can detect that he is hiding something about Mirai.

Speaking with Other Monks

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

- Several of the monks, especially the younger ones, have recently been experiencing difficulty in meditating or focusing themselves. They have been uncertain as to the cause of this, but grow quite concerned if the PCs mention the anger of the mountain kami.
- If the PCs ask about the late Karigi, they learn that he had only recently retired here after serving the Unicorn Clan as a shugenja for many years.

- If the PCs ask what Karigi was doing the day he died, or whether anyone ever noticed him doing anything odd, they will discover one monk, a young boy named Shin, who claims that Karigi seemed very concerned about something the night that he died. "He kept frowning and saying that such a thing couldn't really be here," the boy says.
- The dead monk was discovered by two of his fellows when they went to bathe. They describe him as floating face-up in the water. If the PCs question them carefully about anything strange or odd about the body, one of the monks frowns and remarks, "I recall, Karigi's hands were gripping the sides of the tub, as though he had tried to pull himself back up. Perhaps he slipped and stunned himself, and was trying to reach for air with his last strength."
- If any PCs ask about the local peasants, the monks mention that the head gardener Chu often comes into the shrine to discuss the crops with the abbot. His daughter Mirai sometimes accompanies him, although the monks don't mention this unless the PCs mention her specifically.

The Story of the Shrine

If any PC should happen to ask a monk about the history of the Shrine of the Ki-Rin, they can recount the following story:

A monk came to these mountains. Do not ask his name, for it is not important, any more than yours. He climbed this mountain until he found a clear space very near the peak, and there he meditated, seeking enlightenment. For four days he meditated, and on the morning of the fifth day, he looked up and beheld a might Ki-Rin, shining with the light of the Sun herself. In that moment the monk was enlightened. When he began to descend the mountain, he found a fresh mountain stream where none had been before, and he followed that stream to a mountain clearing he had missed on his climb up. And there he laid the foundations of our shrine.

Buildings and Locations

The overall layout of the Shrine of the Ki-Rin is shown on MAP #1. The Shrine complex is surrounded by a low stone wall, with a single gate piercing it in the front and another to the rear. Each gate is topped by another

torii arch. The path behind the complex leads up to the very peak of the mountain (see “The Peak” below).

Peasant Dwellings

These four simple huts house a total of nineteen people. Chu, the head gardener, has one hut to himself and his daughter. There are not actually enough peasants here to do everything – the monks themselves assist in the fields during harvest and planting.

There are clues to be found in and around Chu’s hut, if the PCs search there. See “Clues” for details.

The Residence Hall

The main building, a large single-story structure with a peaked roof where the monks (about forty of them) live, eat, and sleep. There are, of course, no servants – monks consider work to be spiritually cleansing. The building contains the following rooms:

- Monks’ cells – there are fifty of these small rooms, each containing a futon and a small closet. The PCs will be offered housing in empty rooms of this sort, although they can choose to camp outdoors if they wish.
- Dining hall. This long room contains several low tables where the monks sit and eat their two modest meals each day.
- Kitchen. The monks prepare all the food themselves, taking it in turn.
- A small library of shintaoist works. There is nothing here of interest, although PCs with a high Shintao skill will be impressed with the selection of books here.

The Abbot’s Residence

This small building, connected to the main hall by a covered walkway, houses Nanten, who runs the Shrine of the Ki-Rin. The residence contains a single large room and is severely plain, with polished wood floors and a complete absence of artworks or decorations. Abbott Nanten will meet PCs here when they first arrive.

- The only furnishings are a futon rolled up in a corner, a weapons rack displaying several bo staffs and a much-used naginata, and a plain writing desk (with papers and supplies).
- If a PC should happen to search the desk, they can roll **Investigation/Perception** twice: once at TN 10 to discover a letter from the Abbott’s sister (HANDOUT #1), and once at TN 15 to discover a partially completed love-poem to “Mirai-chan.”

- The naginata clearly has the look of an excellent old weapon lovingly maintained. It is an Exquisite weapon (2k3).

Dojo

This large plain building is a classic dojo, with smooth wooden floors and racks of bo staffs along the wall. The place is normally empty except for a few monks engaged in meditation, but every morning the entire monk population comes here and spends a full Rokugani hour (about two of our hours) in kata and exercise, led by the abbot himself.

- If any PC watches the morning exercise, they can roll **Battle/Awareness** or **Hand-to-Hand/Awareness** at TN 10 to realize that the abbot is “off his center” and clearly distracted by something.

Bathhouse

This simple wooden bathhouse uses a wood-fired furnace to heat its water (monks take it in turns to feed the furnace) and draws water from the icy mountain stream that runs through the Shrine complex. Unlike normal Rokugani bathhouses, this one has no separate chambers for men and women (monks, regardless of gender, are supposed to be above such things). The monks will politely avoid using the bathhouse while any female PCs are there.

See “Clues” for what information the PCs can find here about the death of Karigi the monk.

Garden

Unlike the practical vegetable gardens maintained by Chu and his comrades, this is a “true” Rokugani decorative garden, with carefully arranged shrubs, rocks, and pools surrounded by precisely raked sand and gravel. The monks often spend time here in contemplation, spending hours watching a simple thing like a spiderweb or a pattern in the sand. The abbot, however, is never found here.

If any PC with an Honor Rank of 2.0 or better spends time in the garden, perhaps joining the monks in contemplation, they experience a vision. A Ki-Rin appears to them in a blaze of silvery-gold light. The divine being is clearly mourning something, its tail drooping and its eyes filled with sorrow. When it disappears, it leaves behind in the sand the kanji for “Desire.” (All Rokugani know that Desire is one of the Three Sins, the other two being Fear and Regret.)

The Shrine

The actual shrine to the Ki-Rin is a two-story-high pagoda temple. Within, the shrine is a single large chamber whose ceiling rises the entire two stories. Sunlight from high windows pierces the otherwise gloomy interior, and illuminates the golden Ki-Rin statue which stands in the center of the chamber. The statue's legs straddle a chuckling mountain stream which flows through the shrine in a stone-lined channel. The pleasant sound of the water is a constant backdrop in the shrine, and when the monks gather here in the afternoons for prayer and worship.

There is a long row of ceramic jars on shelves along one wall of the shrine. These are the ashes of monks who died here over the years. If the PCs check the ashes of Karigi, the murdered monk, they can detect a very faint residue of Taint.

Any PC who spends time in the shrine (perhaps in prayer or meditation) can roll **Shintao/Void** at TN 10 to sense that something here is amiss. The harmony and purity of the shrine has been tainted in some way. If the PC makes TN 15 or better, they can sense that the disruption has something to do with one of the Three Sins (Desire, Fear, and Regret).

If a shugenja PC *Communes* with any of the spirits in the shrine, they can learn that the harmony in the shrine is being disrupted by one of the monks. "There is falsehood in one who prays here, and that falsehood taints this place," the spirits explain. If the PCs specifically ask the Water spirits in the stream which monk suffers from "falsehood," the Water spirits will show an image of the abbot.

If any PC tries to Meditate here, they suffer a +5 penalty to their roll – the harmony of the shrine has been subtly damaged by the abbot's sins and insincerity. The PC cannot pin down why it is more difficult to focus here – something about the place is just "off."

The Peak

The path behind the Shrine complex winds several hundred yards up the last jagged slopes of the mountain and comes out on a small ledge near the very peak. For much of its length the path follows the course of the mountain stream which runs through the Shrine, but eventually the stream vanishes into the rocks and the path continues alone.

At the peak is another torii arch, inscribed with kanji describing the original Ki-Rin vision (as explained under "Story of the Shrine").

If any PC Meditates here, the purity and serenity of the locale allows the PC to roll an additional unkept die.

Clues

There are a number of clues which the PCs can uncover if they search the right places.

Bathhouse Clues

There are no physical clues remaining from the drowning of Karigi the monk. However, any PC who has the ability to sense Taint will pick up a very faint residue of it in the bathhouse.

If a PC *Communes* with the spirits in the bathhouse, they can learn (from Earth and Air spirits) that a "foul woman" came into the room and pushed a man down into the water until he stopped moving. If the PCs *Commune* with Water spirits, they will have to make two Raises in order to get the spirits that were here that night. The Water spirits show an image of Mirai sneaking in to the bathhouse and drowning Karigi. Her face is twisted into an expression of rage and glee as she does so.

Clues in Karigi's Effects

If the PCs ask to see the effects of the late monk Karigi, they are shown the following:

- Two sets of simple monkish robes.
- A scroll satchel containing a half-dozen spell scrolls. The satchel is marked with the Iuchi mon and the monks plan to return it and its contents to the Unicorn Clan. Shugenja PCs can tell from these scrolls that Karigi was once a shugenja with considerable Earth skills, an unusual choice for an Iuchi.
- An inkstone, brush, and set of blank pages.
- A jade pendant carved with the Kuni mon. This item was a gift to Karigi from his old friend Kuni Yori. PCs may find uses for it as a Taint-detector or even as a weapon.
- A partially-completed letter which Karigi was composing. See HANDOUT #2.

Clues in Chu's Hut

If the PCs should decide (for whatever reason) to search Chu's hut, they can discover the following:

- A roll of **Simple Perception** at TN 10 will notice a faint rancid odor in the hut. The smell

has no specific source, and is a miasma left behind by the bog hag. If the PCs ask Chu or Mirai about it, they answer that they don't smell anything (Chu has lived with the odor too long to notice it, and the Bog Hag of course won't admit to it).

- A roll of **Investigation/Perception** at TN 10 will discover a folded piece of paper tucked into Mirai's futon. A rather stumbling love-poem is written on the paper. It is not signed, but if the PCs check, it matches the abbot's writing-style.
- There is a faint residue of Taint in the hut. PCs who can detect Taint (such as Witch-Hunters and rank two Moto) will feel uneasy around the place.

The skinned body of the real Mirai is buried in a pile of rocks behind the hut. If PCs are searching around the hut (rather than inside), they can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 10 to notice a faint odor of decay coming from a pile of rocks. The body within is that of a young woman, but cannot be identified with certainty without its skin. Any PC who makes this discovery can roll **Lore (Shadowlands)/Intelligence** at TN 10 to recognize this as the work of a Bog Hag.

Clues in the Abbott's Quarters

Besides the letters and partial poem mentioned before, the abbot's residence also contains traces of Taint, which can be detected in the usual fashion.

The abbot himself is slightly Tainted by his association with the Bog Hag, and jade will burn him.

If the PCs interrogate the spirits in the abbot's quarters, they can learn that a "foul woman" visits the abbot every night.

Surveillance

Clever or ruthless PCs may decide to post night-watches on Mirai, the abbot, or simply the shrine as a whole. This will require a **Stealth/Awareness** roll at TN 10 for the PCs to stay quiet and hidden enough that the Bog Hag doesn't notice them.

If the PCs are not staying up to watch things, have them roll **Simple Perception** to see if they wake up and overhear the Bog Hag sneaking in to visit the Abbott. The TN for this roll is 20 if the PCs are in the residence hall, 15 if they are camped outside (10 if they camped close to the Abbott's residence).

Confrontations

Once the PCs realize what is happening, they have the choice of whether to first confront Nikui the Bog Hag or the Abbott. How the scenario resolves depends on which they approach first, and what they do in either case.

Walking in on Things

Bad-mannered or aggressive PCs might simply storm into the Abbott's quarters while he is "entertaining" the Bog Hag. Nanten will be frozen with shame and humiliation in such a case, while the Bog Hag attempts to play the "I'm a poor peasant girl" card as listed under "Confronting Mirai" below. The Abbott, however, will eventually snap out of his horrified stupor and insist that Mirai seduced *him*. In all likelihood, the Bog Hag will wind up fighting the PCs as outlined below under "Confronting Mirai."

Confronting the Abbott

Unless they literally walk in on him with the girl, Abbott Nanten will be aggressive and temperamental toward any accusations, insisting that he has done nothing wrong and that the PCs are liars. To convince him to repent voluntarily, the PCs must take a completely non-violent and non-confrontational approach, avoiding anything which might antagonize the monk. Any aggressive, rude, or other insulting approach will cause him to fly into a rage and snatch up his naginata. "Prove it with your bodies, then!" he roars, whirling the weapon with blurring speed.

If the PCs stay completely non-confrontational, the GM must judge how eloquent and persuasive they are in their approach. The GM can opt to require rolls of **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Manipulation/Awareness** (depending on what approach the players are taking) but ultimately it is the player's role-play which will determine this. If the GM judges the PCs have been sufficiently persuasive (effective appeals to shintao or bushido are very helpful here) the abbot breaks down and confesses his sins. Otherwise, he takes a violent approach as outlined above.

If the PCs fight the abbot, he will do battle with them until he is reduced to the Down or lower wound rank. Then, shamed by his defeat, he breaks down and confesses that Mirai seduced him.

If the PCs confront the abbot after unmasking the Bog Hag, he immediately breaks down and confesses, stricken with horror at what he has done.

Confronting Mirai

If the PCs confront Mirai before they approach the abbot, or after a non-violent resolution with the abbot, she is caught by surprise. She tries to talk her way out of things, claiming the monk seduced her and not the other way around. "I am a simple peasant girl, how could I say no to an Abbot? I knew it was wrong, great samurai!" If these gambits fail, she reveals her true self:

With a horrible cackling laugh, the peasant girl reaches up, grips her face, and rips her own skin off with a single jerk! Beneath is a twisted mockery of the female form, a thing of green warty skin and lank hair, its mouth gaping with sharp teeth and iron-hard claws sprouting from its fingers. "Fool samurai!" it screeches. "Die now and curse the name of Nikui!"

The Bog Hag will try to slay at least half the PCs before fleeing in a cloud of dark air *kansen* (evil spirits). Like all Bog Hags, she is Invincible (takes one point of damage from normal weapons, full damage from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic), so this fight could easily be deadly for the PCs. If they flee, she laughs hysterically and mocks their honor and courage before departing on her cloud of dark spirits.

If the PCs come here after a fight with the Abbott, the Bog Hag is gone, leaving behind the skin of the poor innocent gardener's daughter.

Resolution

The unmasking of the Bog Hag is of course the key to resolving this adventure. Once she has been revealed, the abbot can make confession of his sins (and learn that he has been Tainted). The abbot will resign his position and depart to seek the cleansing of his soul, and in due course the Brotherhood of Shinsei will appoint a new (and hopefully, less vulnerable) abbot.

The monks (including the abbot himself) will be deeply grateful to the PCs for discovering this terrible evil before it could infect the Shrine any further. They offer to train the PCs in the ways of Shinsei. (See "Rewards and Consequences" for details of the results of this training.)

The PCs can confirm that the shrine has been cleansed if they consult with the Kami and spirits.

They can also confirm it if they stop at Goutan Village after they leave the shrine. The priest Shounin will meet them and thanks them profoundly for soothing the

kami and restoring harmony. The entire population of the village lines up to bow to the PCs and chant their gratitude: "Domo arigato gozaimasu, honto-yo!"

The End

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 the scenario:	1 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
Restoring harmony to the Shrine:	2 XP
Destroying the Bog-Hag:	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

Honor

If the PCs manage to treat all the injured peasants in Goutan Village: +1 Honor to each PC who helped.

Shugenja PCs, and samurai PCs from the Dragon and Phoenix clans, gain +1 point of Honor for restoring the Shrine of the Ki-Rin to harmony.

Likewise, shugenja PCs and samurai PCs from the Dragon and Phoenix clans lose 1 point of Honor if they refuse to investigate the problems in the Shrine of the Ki-Rin.

Crab Clan, Inquisitor, and Scorpion Black Watch PCs gain +1 point of Honor for destroying the Bog Hag.

Glory

+1 Glory to the PCs if they actually manage to kill the Bog Hag.

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs succeeded in restoring the Shrine of the Ki-Rin to its proper enlightened state, the grateful monks will offer to teach the PCs. It is up to a PC whether to undergo this training, which costs 2 XP.

A shugenja, sodan-senzo, witch-hunter, or ise zumi PC who undergoes this training and spends 2 XP may learn the Kiho *Freezing the Lifeblood* (certed item).

Any other PC who undergoes the training and spends 2 XP gains two ranks in the Shintao skill and two ranks in the Theology skill.

NPCs and Monsters

Nanten, Abbott of the Shrine of the Ki-Rin

FIRE 4	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 5	WATER 2 Strength 4
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3/Monk 1

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.0

Skills: Athletics 5, Archery 3, Battle 4, Bojutsu 3, Hand-to-Hand 5, Naginata (specialized weapon skill) 3, Shintao 4, Sincerity 3, Tsubojutsu 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick, Strength of the Earth (rank three)/Dark Secret (seduced by Mirai), True Love (Mirai)

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

Equipment: Robes, exquisite Naginata (2k3, +1 skill die)

Generic Monks

FIRE 2	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Monk 1

Honor/Glory: 2.4/2.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Bojutsu 3, Hand-to-Hand 3, Shintao 3, Sincerity 2, Tsubojutsu 2, Tea Ceremony 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Robes

Generic Peasants

FIRE 1	AIR 1 Awareness 2
EARTH 2	WATER 1
VOID 1	

TN to be Hit: 5

School/Rank: None

Skills: Athletics 1, Craft (farming) 3, Nofujutsu (peasant weapons) 1, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (heimin)

Equipment: Clothing

Nikui, Old and Experienced Bog-Hag

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 3k2 (claws)

Wounds: 10: +10; 20: +15; 30: Dead

Spells: Can use clouds of dark *kansen* to fly away.

Special Abilities: Invulnerable (one wound from normal weapons, full damage from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic).

HANDOUT #1: Letter in the Abbott's Room

Nanten-chan,

It is still alright if I call you that, isn't it? Even if you're an abbot, now, you'll always be my elder brother. I can still remember when you carried me up to the Wall and showed me the dark fields of the Shadowlands, and told me that I would always be safe, because you and your comrades would always stand there and protect us. And now my son stands there in your place.

Speaking of sons, I have news about Mariko-san. Her eldest son, Chugo, has been appointed to the Hida Honor Guard, to stand alongside Kisada-sama himself! Such an honor must be very pleasing to Mariko-san and Akira-san. I know you have always had trouble forgiving Akira-san, but I hope you will at least be able to be happy for Mariko-san's son, in light of the esteem you have always held for her.

I trust you have found the tranquility you sought up there in the mountains. Write to me soon – I miss your kind words.

Your sister,

Nabiki

HANDOUT #2: Partially-Completed Letter

Yori-sensei,

Although as a new-clothed monk I am supposed to leave my previous life behind me, I find that this is far more difficult than I had imagined. The old instincts and skills you taught me are still active.

I write to you concerning a peculiar matter troubling me at my new home. The abbot Nanten is a good man, yet he seems strangely distracted, and I sense a shadow within him that reminds me of those you showed me on the Wall. I hesitate to make the test of jade, lest I be accused of insulting my superior, yet I can see no other way to be sure of my suspicions. Before you ask, I do not believe him to be a practitioner of the dark arts. There is something subtler at work here, something I cannot see. I need your advice and expertise.

MAP #1 (The Shrine of the Ki-Rin)

