

Legacy of the Dark One

A One-Round Low Rank Living Rokugan Adventure

by Keith J. Weepie & Robert Hobart

A Phoenix Inquisitor, Isawa Nobuyoshi, has accused a simple historian named Asako Keiko of the crime of Maho. Moreover, he claims the Asako Family is holding a dark secret that threatens all of the Emerald Empire. Is he wrong? You have three days to prove Keiko innocent.

LEGEND OF THE FIVE RINGS and RPGA are registered trademarks of Wizards of the Coast, Inc. Scenario detail copyright 2000 by Wizards of the Coast, Inc. ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. This scenario is intended for tournament use only and may not be reproduced without approval of the RPGA Network.

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.

In addition to the text of the adventure below, you will need to be familiar with the Legend of the Five Rings rulebook.

GM's Information:

THIS ADVENTURE 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 to 5 characters in mind and cannot anticipate what these characters may bring to the table.

(Low Rank indicates characters of Rank 1 or 2, Mid Rank indicates characters of Rank 2 or 3, and High Rank indicates characters of Rank 3 to 5. There will also be Low-Mid Rank adventures.)

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."

Background

One of the duties of the Phoenix Clan's obscure Asako family is to hold certain secrets for which the rest of the Empire – even the rest of their own clan – are not prepared. One such keeper of secrets is a gentle young maiden named Asako Keiko: she knows the secret of the legendary Maho spell that gave immortality to the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban. She holds this spell within her mind, as her mother and grandmother did before her, keeping it hidden but preserving the knowledge in case it is ever needed. It is a heavy burden, but Keiko has never broken under it; on the contrary, she seeks to ease her mind by making sure she brings joy into the lives of all those around her.

As a child, Asako Keiko was a light, carefree soul who played with the local peasant children as readily as with those of her own caste. Even her maidservant, Jun, was more of a playmate than an underling. After Keiko

began her training in the Asako school, however, she was forced to distance herself from those not of her caste, although doing so hurt her deeply. Jun for her part was left bitter by her childhood friend's "abandonment." That bitterness would fester for years, until it bore bitter fruit...

Ten years ago, Isawa Gidayu was a promising young student of the Element of Fire. He proved, however, to be more ambitious than was good for him, and began expanding his studies to include all the other elements, delving into forgotten corners of the Isawa libraries. There he stumbled across a hidden compartment containing a small cache of Maho Scrolls. Once, Gidayu would have reported such a find to his superiors, but now his ambition had the better of him, and he hid them away for later study. By this time, it was clear that Gidayu was no longer following the path of a Fire Tensai, and his teachers ordered him to make a final decision on which branch of the Isawa School he would take. Fearing that the sensei suspected something about his new Maho research, Gidayu fled his home in the dark of night, taking his scrolls and dreams with him.

By a cosmic irony, Gidayu's brother Isawa Nobuyoshi was a member of the Inquisitors, the branch of the Phoenix Clan that hunts the practitioners of Maho. Nobuyoshi was in Dragon lands when Gidayu vanished, and returned determined to learn why his brother had suddenly abandoned his school and Clan. He found a set of notes that Gidayu had left behind in his haste to leave. They indicated that Gidayu had found a cache of ancient Asako documents, apparently Maho-related, in the Isawa library. Nobuyoshi was horrified to discover (as he believed) that the secrets the Asako guarded so tightly were dealings with the darkest powers in Rokugan. Convinced that the Asako's corruption had stolen his brother's soul, Nobuyoshi vowed not to rest until all the secrets of the Asako were exposed and cleansed from the Phoenix Clan.

Years later, Gidayu's quest for ever more knowledge and power caused him to invoke the Dark Oracle of Air, seeking the secrets of Iuchiban. The Oracle stated that Asako Keiko held the key to Iuchiban's power, but that "for you to succeed, you must follow the path of purity." Bewildered by this condition, Gidayu set out in search of Asako Keiko.

He finally found her last summer, at a minor Phoenix castle called Shiro no Bujisokusai. Here, plotting for the way to ensnare her, he stumbled across a commoner maidservant named Jun. Gidayu felt the world slow and the words, "follow the path of purity" echo through his mind, for the name Jun also meant "purity."

Gidayu could easily sense the jealousy and envy in Jun's heart, and quickly lured her onto the path of Maho

with promises of vengeance and power. She, in turn, helped him recruit a local cult of the Bloodspeaker. As yet, however, she has not been able to learn Keiko's secret. Gidayu remains patient, confident in the Dark Oracle's promise. Outside events, however, are about to disrupt his careful plans.

Isawa Nobuyoshi has been investigating a rumor of a Maho cult forming in the region of Shiro no Bujisokusai. Nobuyoshi is convinced that Asako Keiko is the mastermind behind the local cult, but as yet he has only circumstantial evidence; he plans to confront Keiko directly, and to that end has notified the regional Governor, Isawa Akira, of his investigation. The Governor is planning to attend the Festival of Jurojin at Shiro no Bujisokusai in just a few days, so he ordered Nobuyoshi to present his evidence on the opening night of the festival. This would allow Nobuyoshi to prepare the case and notify all the involved parties before the Governor arrived. It would also let him resolve the case in plenty of time to enjoy the rest of the festival.

As the scenario begins, Isawa Nobuyoshi has arrived at Shiro no Bujisokusai. He can feel the sickness seething beneath the calm peaceful face of this community, and looks forward to exposing this Asako Keiko as the purveyor of corruption that she is. Perhaps this will finally give him the chance to expose the dark secrets of the Asako family...

PC Introduction

Lady Sun shines down on a beautiful spring day in the Phoenix lands. Your travels have brought you to Shiro no Bujisokusai, a minor Phoenix castle, for the famed Festival of Jurojin, Fortune of Health and Longevity. You have arrived just in time for the opening ceremony.

Have the players describe their characters, who are just a few of the large gathering crowd, and give them a chance to role-play and introduce themselves. Then proceed with the scene.

A group of monks have gathered in a small clearing outside the castle, lining up behind a bonsai tree and a large brass bell, blazing with reflected sunlight. The local daimyo, Asako Hiroshige, stands nearby, surrounded by the members of his small court. Each monk invokes an aspect of Jurojin, then rings a single peal from the bell. But upon the invocation of the Community's Health, the bell makes a sour tone. The monks look confused, and the crowd murmurs and shifts in puzzlement and concern. A moment later, a figure in Phoenix red-and-orange steps up to the lead monk.

Any PC who makes a Perception+Heraldry roll at TN 10 will recognize the Phoenix as an Isawa shugenja. If the roll makes TN 20 or better, they will realize he is also an Inquisitor, one of the Phoenix order dedicated to hunting down the workers of Maho.

The crowd is filled with whispered rumors, but then falls silent under the stranger's grim stare. He turns to the daimyo, Asako Hiroshige, and announces: "I, Isawa Nobuyoshi, stand before you to deliver an indictment. Asako Hiroshige-sama, daimyo of Shiro no Bujisokusai, do you have a Historian in your service by the name of Asako Keiko?" Hiroshige looks aside and nods, and at the gesture a sleight young woman walks forward and bows politely.

Nobuyoshi smiles grimly. "Asako Keiko, you hereby stand accused of practicing Maho and inciting the peasantry against the Empire. These crimes are detailed within this scroll, which bears the seal of the Regional Governor, Isawa Akira."

He presents the scroll to Hiroshige, who regards it stone-faced. Finally, the daimyo replies in stern tones, "I refute these charges on behalf of my loyal servant, Asako Keiko. If you wish to continue with this ridiculous claim, you must prove it in a trial, prove it to both the Governor and myself! Until then you will not lay one finger on this precious flower."

Nobuyoshi bows deeply. "Of course, Hiroshige-sama. The Governor will be here in three days, and I will present my full case then. Until that time, I must ask that Asako Keiko be confined in your castle." Hiroshige nods curtly.

Asako Keiko looks to her lord and, at his nod, she bows again and begins to speak in a small fragile voice. "Noble Isawa, I assure you I am innocent. However, knowing the Inquisitors, you would not be here without strong evidence. Therefore, I cannot help but think that there are outside forces at work against my family and myself. I wish to seek out those truly responsible for this, but since I will be confined to the castle..." She looks around the crowd, but few are willing to meet her eyes. "I humbly request champions to seek the truth on my behalf."

Nobuyoshi seems at a loss for a moment, caught off-guard by Keiko's gentle defiance. He looks at Hiroshige, and reads the daimyo's expression. "Very well," he growls. "But in return, I insist that these champions be strangers to you, so that they do not let feelings or loyalties obscure their judgement."

There is a long silence as Asako Keiko looks around the crowd with a hopeful expression.

Obviously, the only available champions who are not already acquainted with Keiko are the PCs. If they do

not volunteer their services, the scenario is effectively over. Ronin PCs should be reminded that this might be an ideal chance to prove themselves and gain a new lord. If some of the PCs volunteer while others do not, proceed with the scenario – the holdouts can volunteer later, if they wish. Once all the PCs have decided whether or not to volunteer, proceed with the scene.

As Asako Keiko acknowledges each of you as her champions, you realize that your name is now linked with hers. Success will mean much glory, but failure will link your names forever with a known Maho User.

With a wave of his hand, Asako Hiroshige dismisses the gathered crowd. You are all led into the audience hall of Shiro no Bujisokusai.

Scene I: Interview with Asako Keiko

The audience hall is well lit, and seems perversely bright and cheery for such a grave occasion. Asako Keiko seats herself at the foot of her daimyo. Despite her physical frailty she holds an aura of quiet serenity and confidence. Isawa Nobuyoshi stands before her, tense and confident. As Keiko's champions, you are asked to stand at her side, flanking Nobuyoshi.

Hiroshige speaks with careful control. "You will be allowed to question Keiko-san until the midday meal. I will not allow you to disturb her more than that. You can continue the investigation elsewhere, as you see fit, until the Governor arrives three days hence." He nods for you to begin.

Note that, under Rokugani law, only confession, personal testimony, and direct physical evidence are legally binding. Knowing someone is lying (by making contested Perception vs Awareness rolls, or using skills such as Ichi Miru) is useful only insofar as it tells one where to investigate next.

Nobuyoshi immediately begins to question Keiko. His questions are direct and ruthless, although he knows she is unlikely to confess. The PCs are free to step in with their own questions at any time, but remember that this is an interview with Asako Keiko, not with Isawa Nobuyoshi or Asako Hiroshige. Questions should be directed to her alone. The PCs cannot ask Nobuyoshi for the meaning or motivation behind his questions (he will brush off such inquiries with the remark, "I am not the one who has been accused").

Also, interrupting is rude. The GM should leave a brief pause between each of Nobuyoshi's questions to allow the PCs the chance to ask their own. Nobuyoshi's

questions are listed below, in order, along with Keiko's answers and any psychological information the PCs may be able to glean from her and the Inquisitor. Keiko's answers to PC questions can be derived from this and from the general information listed below.

- Any PC can roll Awareness (+Ichi Miru, if available) to try to "read" Keiko and Nobuyoshi's personalities. The TN is 30 (20 with Ichi Miru). Keiko is a calm, innocent, dutiful, and loyal woman, but there is a hint that something darker is hidden beneath the surface. Nobuyoshi is a confident, perhaps overly confident man, certain of his own competence as an Inquisitor. He is truthful and honorable, but in this case there is something driving him on which he is hiding behind his "on" (face).
- Asako Keiko's secret is Iuchiban's Maho spell of immortality. She has never used it and never will. Any attempts to detect her lying about this secret is made at a +20 TN penalty, due to her long practice at holding this secret. Her mother taught her the secret at her gempukku ceremony, explaining that it had been passed down unused through her family for many generations. Keiko believes she would die before she would reveal the secret.
- Asako Keiko knows most of the peasants and commoners in Shiro no Bujisokusai and the surrounding village, but she has never seen anything that could be construed as Maho. She truly cares about heimin and samurai alike, and tries to bring a little brightness and enlightenment to all those around her everyday.
- Isawa Nobuyoshi's hidden motive here is to try to prove that the Asako family are hiding Maho practices from the rest of the Clan. This matters to him as much, or more, than Keiko's own supposed guilt.

The Questions

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"I have personal testimony and evidence showing that you are the leader of a local Maho cult of about a dozen peasants. Who are these peasants?"*

Composure: Nobuyoshi appears focussed, energetic, and self-controlled at all times, except as noted below.

Asako Keiko

A: *"Noble samurai, I am not a Maho user and I do not know any cultists. Therefore, I cannot name them."*

Truth Meter: True.

Composure: Calm and innocent.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"From whom did you learn Maho?"*

Asako Keiko:

A: *"Nobuyoshi-sama, I repeat that I am not a Maho user."*

Truth Meter: True, but a hint of holding something back.

Composure: Calm and innocent.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"Why do you resist? Your plans have been exposed. The truth will be known."*

Note: With a contested Perception vs Awareness roll, the PCs may realize that Nobuyoshi is also referring to some larger "Truth."

Asako Keiko

A: *"I am cooperating, Nobuyoshi-sama. I truly hope that the truth will be known. And that those responsible will be exposed."*

Truth Meter: Mostly true

Composure: Calm and innocent.

Again, with a contested Perception vs Awareness roll, the PCs realize Keiko also means that the "Truth" about this trial will be known.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"What Maho spells have you learned?"*

Asako Keiko

A: *"As I have said earlier, Nobuyoshi-sama, I am not a practitioner of Maho."*

Truth Meter: True. However, with a Perception+Investigation roll (TN 20) the PCs realize that Keiko did not actually answer the question.

Composure: Calm and innocent.

If the PCs made the roll to realize Keiko dodged the question, they may roll contested Perception vs Awareness against Nobuyoshi to realize that he notices Keiko did not answer the question, although he does not pursue it.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"What are your plans for the peasants?"*

Asako Keiko

A: *"To help them along the path of the Celestial Order when I can. Treat them with kindness and make sure they are well cared for."*

Truth Meter: True

Composure: Innocent and wistful.

Note: Nobuyoshi actually stops for a moment, startled by Keiko's apparent sincerity, then continues on.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"What other Maho cells do you know of? What are your contacts?"*

Asako Keiko

A: *"Since I am not a Maho user, I certainly cannot know of any Maho cells."*

Truth Meter: True

Composure: Calm and innocent

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"How did you learn your Maho spells?"*

Composure: More intense. There is a sense of Nobuyoshi circling in on a target.

Isawa Keiko

A: *"As I said before, I am not a Maho user, so I have not ever used any form of Maho and I never will."*

Truth Meter: +20 to the TN. She is telling the truth, but leaving something unsaid.

Composure: Slightly tense, unmoving.

Again, with a Perception+Investigation roll (TN 20) the PCs notice that Keiko did not say that she never learned Maho, just that she never used it. If the PC makes TN 30 or better, they realize that she purposefully avoided mentioning that she never learned Maho.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"Did you learn them from documents, perhaps? Old scrolls, family records?"*

Composure: More intense yet, focused.

Asako Keiko

A: *"I do not know of any such documents." Pause, thin smile. "Perhaps the Isawa libraries would know of such things."*

Truth Meter: true.

Composure: tense and focused, but rallying.

Nobuyoshi smiles and nods slightly, as though conceding a point... and then pounces like a cat.

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Q: *"What is your secret Asako Keiko? Is this a family secret? How many generations has it been passed down for? Tell me now!"*

Composure: Completely focussed. He believes this is the heart of the matter.

Nobuyoshi's last question leaves Asako Keiko quivering like a leaf in a breeze, shaken by some intense emotion, though whether it is anger or fright is impossible to tell. Asako Hiroshige stands and glares at Nobuyoshi, ready to intervene, when a servant steps through the door. "The midday meal is ready, noble samurai," he murmurs. The tension leaves the room as Hiroshige and Keiko depart for some private dining area. Nobuyoshi and the (number of PCs) of you are lead to another room where a meal awaits.

Scene II: Lunch with Nobuyoshi

Isawa Nobuyoshi will speak politely with the PCs (unless any of them are Asako, in which case he treats those individuals with hostile reserve) during the meal. He will willingly discuss the following topics:

His travels in the Dragon lands.

- Nobuyoshi has spent much of the last few years in Dragon territories, where he often cooperates with the Kitsuki family.
- His most dangerous and successful case involved a cell of Bloodspeaker peasants who were summoning Oni to attack Shiro no Mirumoto, the seat of the Mirumoto family.
- Nobuyoshi saved several Dragon samurai with a well-timed Tomb of Jade, imprisoning an enraged Oni before it could slaughter them all.
- It took weeks to purify the area and hunt down all of the minor Oni spawn. An entire village had to be burned to the ground.
- The Kitsuki family honored Nobuyoshi's efforts by teaching him their secret skill: Ichi Miru.

His family

- Nobuyoshi is the eldest son of Isawa Kansuke, an enlightened Water Tensai.
- His sister Kimoe is an Air Tensai. It is said that she is one of the Chosen of the Oracle of Air.
- He will not mention his brother. If any PCs ask whether he has any brothers, he will reluctantly

confess that he does have one brother, Isawa Gidayu, whom he has not seen in many years.

- If the PCs ask about his brother's profession, Nobuyoshi says only "he is following the way." Anyone rolling Simple Awareness at TN 15 can tell that Nobuyoshi is hiding some of his feelings about Gidayu.

The Case against Asako Keiko

- Nobuyoshi believes Keiko is guilty, and says it is only a matter of time before she cracks and admits her guilt.
- Nobuyoshi believes he will be able to uncover the rest of the cult easily and force them to testify against their mistress.
- If there are no Asako PCs, Nobuyoshi will hint that Keiko is only the symptom of a deeper problem within the Asako family. "The Asako should not keep secrets from their own clan," he grumbles. He will not elaborate, merely shrugging his shoulders and saying, "That is why I am here."
- He suggests that the next person to be questioned should be Asako Keiko's personal maidservant. As the meal ends he questions the servants, and learns that the maid's name is Jun and that she lives across the castle from here, near the garden.

Scene III: The Shadow of Maho

After lunch is done, Nobuyoshi will lead the players to Jun's quarters.

As you cross the garden toward the servants' quarters, Nobuyoshi suddenly grunts as though struck in the belly. He falls to the ground wheezing, blood trickling from his mouth and nose. Black rings can be seen around his eyes.

Jun has just used the Maho spell "No Pure Breaths" to attack the Inquisitor, sacrificing a cat for the blood needed to cast the spell. She hid at the edge of the garden to cast the spell and then fled to her mistress' chamber, tossing the dead cat in the garbage cart behind the kitchen.

Nobuyoshi is now at the "Down" Wound Rank. He weakly beckons the PCs and tries to tell them what has happened. "Maho..." he rasps, blood trickling past his lips. "I have...seen this spell before. Corrupts the air within the body. I knew I was right about her..." He trails off into unconsciousness as servants rush forward, asking what has happened.

Any PC can recognize the spell with an Intelligence+Maho Lore roll at TN 20, or

Intelligence+Shadowlands Lore at TN 25. They will also know that only magical healing can restore Nobuyoshi's damaged lung tissues. The wounded shugenja is taken to the castle's infirmary to rest, and he will be given magical healing there if the PCs did not already provide it. In either case, he will be out of action until the next day.

The following clues are available:

- Searching the garden can locate (with a Perception+Investigation roll, TN 15) some splatterings of blood behind some bushes.
- Once the blood is found, a Perception+Hunting roll can track the footprints of a small person (probably a woman, or perhaps a child) running into the castle.
- If the PCs make a Perception+Investigation roll at TN 20 while following the trail, they notice the dead cat lying in the garbage cart behind the kitchen. The trail passes close by the cart before entering the castle.
- Keiko is in her quarters, reading the Tao of Shinsei. Jun is with her. If the PCs ask their whereabouts, Keiko says she was returning to her room after the meal when Nobuyoshi was attacked. Jun was waiting for her here, and seemed a bit out of breath.
- Jun says she helped the cook carry in some baskets of vegetables before returning to her mistress' room. She is lying, but the PCs will have to ask whether she is being truthful and win a contested Perception vs Awareness roll to see that she is hiding something.
- The cook can confirm, truthfully, that Jun helped him. (She cast the spell afterward.)
- The castle guards report that they saw no strangers enter or leave the castle. Besides the PCs and Nobuyoshi, the only one to visit today was a local merchant, Kanjiro, who left around midday (just before the attack, actually). Kanjiro is a well-known local figure who visits the castle regularly to sell his goods. Refer to "Investigations" for more information on him.

Scene IV: Investigation

The PCs have the rest of today and all the next day to investigate and prepare for the trial of Asako Keiko, which will begin as soon as the Governor, Isawa Akira, arrives on the third day. They do not have to visit every location or question every NPC in order to solve the scenario; the GM should adjust play according to how much the PCs have learned and how much time is left in the round.

Note on confronting cultists

If any of the heimin cultists are directly confronted and accused, they will initially deny all charges. However, the PCs can quickly break them down with threats or repeated accusations (especially if they have skills like Intimidation or Obeiseseu, or Advantages like Large). Once broken, the cultists will either try to run (if escape seems possible) or confess and beg for leniency, hoping to save their pitiful lives by testifying against their fellows. All of the cultists have the following information:

- Jun is their leader.
- Jun knows who “the Master” is, and where his base is located.
- Jun and “the Master” are the only ones that can cast Maho spells.
- Jun and the Master have been plotting something against Asako Keiko. They want to steal something dear to her, although no one knows exactly what this might be. Keiko is not aware of the cult.
- Jun has been stealing personal items from Keiko and giving them to the mysterious “Master.”

Shiro no Bujisokusai

Shiro no Bujisokusai is a small castle, only three stories above ground and one below. The ground floor includes a walled courtyard (where the castle bushi practice in the morning) and a large central garden, the pride of the castle. Besides the guest rooms where Nobuyoshi and the PCs will be housed, the castle also contains quarters for the daimyo Hiroshige, his karo Shiba Kyumei, Keiko, and the local Phoenix Clan magistrate Asako Masanori. Other facilities include a dojo, infirmary, kitchen, guard barracks, and servants’ quarters. The PCs are free to go anywhere in the castle except Hiroshige’s quarters, which are guarded at all times by the two best bushi in the castle (rank 3 Shiba school).

If the PCs are actually bold (foolish) enough to break into Hiroshige’s chambers, they will lose 3 points of Honor (1 point for Ronin and Scorpions) and will not discover anything of interest, merely mundane records of his small castle and territory. It is extremely likely that they will be caught in such an act, in which case they lose one full Rank of Glory and are expelled from Hiroshige’s lands. They also get the Bad Reputation disadvantage (for no points) for such a grotesque act.

The Karo (Castle Chamberlain), Shiba Kyumei

Shiba Kyumei is a solid, pragmatic samurai-ko in her mid-thirties. Her duty is to choreograph the day-to-day

functions of the castle, especially at festival time. She is more than a little irritated that all her preparations for the Festival have been wrecked by Isawa Nobuyoshi. She is sure Nobuyoshi’s accusations are false, since there is no way that Asako Keiko could even contemplate Maho, let alone be a practitioner.

Given the chance, Kyumei will list her complaints at great length: the festival schedule has been completely disrupted, its harmony has been wrecked, and the ceremony where the daimyo was to acknowledge his samurai’s accomplishments for the year has been postponed indefinitely. Not to mention that housing arrangements have been disrupted for arriving guests arriving from all over the Empire, and Hiroshige’s reputation in the courts of Rokugan will suffer untold harm...and so forth, and so on.

If the PCs ask her about Asako Keiko, Kyumei is quite emphatic in her belief in the young historian’s innocence. She regards Keiko as one of the most polite, well-mannered young noblewomen she has ever met. Keiko has a kind word for everyone she meets and is as well read and enlightened as the monks in the local shrine. Such a person could not possibly practice Maho. Besides, there have been no sightings of Oni or other horrors in the region.

If the PCs ask about Jun, Kyumei knows only that she is a helpful, obedient servant who seems to genuinely like her mistress.

Asako Keiko’s Private Room

Keiko will be in her quarters most of the time, but leaves for meals and for occasional walks in the garden. If the PCs visit while she is present, Jun will answer the door for her mistress and politely bows the PCs into the room, then fetches tea. If they visit while Keiko is absent, Jun will be gone as well. Jun will be visibly anxious any time the PCs visit Keiko (she excuses this as concern for her mistress, but a Contested Perception vs Awareness roll reveals that she is hiding something else).

Asako Keiko’s room is large and spacious, yet bare and simple, like a monk’s cell. There is a simple shrine to Jurojin in one corner, with a stand that holds an open scroll. Tatami mats are arranged for guests to sit, with a small brazier nearby that can heat tea. Another corner has a wardrobe cabinet with drawers. There is a small chest and a rolled-up futon against the far wall.

The wardrobe contains clothing for all occasions, all of fine quality. Buried under the silken garments is a small stuffed bear that has seen better days. The scroll is a well-read copy of the Tao of Shinsei.

The chest is unlocked and contains several blank scrolls (some blank, some filled with writing), a writing kit, a portable writing table, and 5 koku. The written scrolls are detailed (and quite boring) histories of various families in the Phoenix Clan. This would be of great value to a Scorpion blackmailer, but of little use to anyone else. Stealing such private items is a dishonorable act, costing 4 points of Honor (half for Scorpions and Ronin).

If the PCs question Asako Keiko:

- She will readily share anything in her background except the various secrets she must protect (Iuchiban's spell, the true nature of the Asako family, and so forth). She has no idea why Nobuyoshi has accused her.
- If the PCs ask her about Jun, she explains that Jun has been her maidservant since they were both very little; they grew up together in her father's house. Keiko says that Jun has been a good and obedient maidservant, and Keiko trusts her implicitly. Anyone making a Simple Awareness roll at TN 15 can tell that Keiko thinks of Jun more as a sister than as a servant, a rather improper attitude for one of the samurai caste.
- If the PCs ask whether Jun has any friends or acquaintances, Keiko will send the maidservant out for more tea, and then confess softly that Jun has been spending much more time in town lately. Keiko thinks the local merchant is courting her. She is saddened that she might lose her maidservant, but happy that Jun may have found someone to care for her.
- If the PCs ask about missing personal items, Keiko will admit that she has misplaced a few minor things in the last few months: an old kimono, a writing quill, a scarf, and a hairbrush. She does not think the items were stolen – she is incapable of suspecting such a thing.

If the PCs question Jun in Keiko's presence:

Jun refers to Keiko in the most worshipful terms, calling her "Asako Keiko-sama," saying she has been a very kind mistress who teaches her the Tao of Shinsei and treats her almost like family. Keiko-sama could never practice Maho or do anything else to embarrass or dishonor her daimyo or herself. All of which, so far as it goes, is true. Jun will never break down or let anything slip while in Keiko's presence, and Keiko will shield her maidservant from any questions she thinks improper or cruel.

Castle Magistrate, Asako Masanori

Asako Masanori is a calm, attentive, traditional man in his late twenties. He likes Asako Keiko a great deal, is shocked by the charges against her, and will gladly aid the PCs in any way he can.

Masanori knows the following:

- Asako Keiko is a trained historian, and is said to have done quite well in her family school. Since coming to Shiro no Bujisokusai, she has served Hiroshige-sama with honor, duty, and skill. In fact, she has often volunteered her services to help Masanori research some of his legal cases.
- If the PCs ask about Jun, Masanori says Keiko brought the maidservant with her when she came to Shiro no Bujisokusai. Jun seems to be a dutiful and good-natured maidservant. Keiko sometimes seems to be a little too close to Jun as is proper, but then again, Keiko treats everyone with kindness and friendship, no matter what her station. "She is like a child that wonders at everything," Masanori observes. "Perhaps that is what makes her a good historian."
- Masanori knows nothing about Maho – there have never been any incidences of it in this region. There have been no killings or disappearances in the village or the surrounding area for many years, and the last time anybody vanished it was a young peasant couple running away together against their parent's wishes. Nor have there been any bandits active in the area, or animals dying without cause, or anything else untoward. Certainly there have been no reports of ghosts, evil spirits, or Shadowlands monsters.
- If the PCs ask about the village, Masanori says it is usually a quiet place, seldom troubled by anything more than the occasional family quarrel. The headman usually takes care of any problems without involving his betters. So far as he knows there have been no signs of Maho cult activity, or of peasants being incited against their betters. The headman or the local merchant, Kanjiro, could tell the PCs more, however.

The Kitchen

A large stone hearth dominates the center of the castle kitchens. Tables surround it, covered with the tools and ingredients of cooking. A stocky heimin man, perhaps fifty years old, is standing at one of the tables busily chopping up a pile of vegetables, while a boy sits by the hearth stirring a bubbling pot. As you enter, the man looks over; his eyes widen and he drops to his knees, bowing deeply. "Welcome honorable samurai!"

I am called Bokkai. How may I be of assistance to you?"

Bokkai has served as the castle's cook for his entire adult life. He is actually only 40, but like most commoners he looks older than his age. The boy, aged eleven, is his apprentice Gekko; Bokkai, who has never married, treats the boy as the son he never had. Both of them will be completely cooperative.

Bokkai knows the following:

- If the PCs ask about Jun, Bokkai can confirm that she sometimes helps out in the kitchen (including shortly before the attack on Nobuyoshi), and goes into the village to help fetch supplies from the merchant's shop. He describes her as a nice young lady who is helpful and respectful of her elders. "Pretty, too," he adds with a wink at Gekko. The boy blushes and turns away, busying himself stirring the pot.
- Some young man in town is courting Jun. It is about time, every young woman needs a husband to take care of her. Bokkai is happy for her.
- If the PCs ask about Asako Keiko, Bokkai becomes positively rapturous. "She is like a ray of sunshine on a dark winter's day," he says. "Even reads to me from the Tao of Shinsei." He is sure a kind, caring, enlightened woman like her cannot possibly be a Maho user. Besides, she has no deformities or boils, and there are no Oni running about.
- Asako Keiko sometimes dines alone rather than with the other castle residents. At those times Jun delivers the meal to her room.

Gekko will keep stirring the bubbling soup-pot unless the PCs specifically speak to him. He can supply the following information if asked:

- Gekko likes Jun. A lot. She is so pretty and friendly... He's sure that fellow she's seeing in town is just a friend, nothing romantic going on. Yes, he's sure of it.
- Gekko often runs errands to the town. He likes everyone in the village except Juichi, the stable boy ("he's weird, thinks the only ones you can trust are horses") and "the painted faced lady," Ryoko.
- If the PCs ask about Juichi, Gekko says the stable boy likes animals more than people, and mocks samurai behind their backs. He keeps saying that someday he'll have real power and then those "stupid samurai" will pay. Gekko will hasten to add, in the most respectful terms, that he himself certainly does not share any of Juichi's strange ideas. If the PCs ask, he says Juichi works for the local merchant, Kanjiro.

- Ryoko is one of the women at the local geisha house. Gekko is genuinely frightened of her, and says he fears for his life and spirit when he is around her. He cannot give any reason why, except to say, "She says things to me. Things that aren't right."

Servants' Quarters, General

The servant's quarters are a series of small rooms, each of which houses a servant and family (if any). By the standards of such housing, they are large and comfortable (although nothing a samurai would tolerate). There is nothing of interest here except for the servants themselves, who know all manner of rumors and tales. PCs can elicit the following in conversation:

- If the PCs ask about Jun, they learn that Jun's family died when she was a young girl; Keiko's parents took her in as a maidservant partly to save her from starvation.
- Jun is a private young lady who seldom shares much with the other servants. She doesn't always seem to understand her place as a servant, perhaps because she grew up so close to Keiko-sama. "Ah well, she's still young, she'll learn," one of the older maids comments.
- There was some fear that Jun might end up an old maid, but now she is seeing some young man in town. He must be a friend of the merchant Kanjiro, since she always meets him at the merchant's shop.
- Jun has become moody and secretive in recent weeks. Perhaps her young man is trying to arrange a marriage, and she is nervous about it.
- Jun has befriended Kanjiro's wife, Mai. The servants can't figure out why. Mai is a selfish, vain woman who continually babbles about how much wealth and influence she will have someday. "She's been married to a merchant too long," the servants cluck. (Merchants are traditionally regarded as the lowest and least reputable of the heimin class.)
- If the PCs ask about Asako Keiko, the servants light up with enthusiasm. They love Keiko with all their hearts; she genuinely cares for them and takes time out of her day to talk with all of them. Everyone is shocked that Asako Keiko has been accused of Maho. Such a kind, dutiful young woman couldn't possibly be involved in that sort of evil. Besides, she doesn't have any of "the signs." If asked, the servants can supply a long list of "symptoms" for Maho use, such as clouded skin, cuts, deformities, boils, and so forth. (Any PC rolling Intelligence+Maho Lore knows that Maho does not actually leave any external evidence...the Taint it creates is all internal. Commoners, of course, are ignorant of such facts.)

- There have been no problems in the village, so there can't be any Maho users running about. That nasty Inquisitor must just hate Keiko-sama for some reason.

Jun's Quarters (Servants' Quarters)

Jun's room looks like any another servants' except that she has more and better belongings than most. She can be found here intermittently throughout the day, whenever her mistress has no need of her.

If the PCs question Jun away from her mistress, they can ask her about her private life, her supposed paramour in town, and so forth. If they are here to actually accuse her of Maho, go to "Scene V: Confronting Jun and Finding Gidayu." Until that time, Jun will be polite and project an aura of helpful cooperation.

Jun will tell the PCs the following:

- Asako Keiko-sama (Jun always uses the full title) is a very dutiful and enlightened samurai-ko. She would never do anything to embarrass or dishonor her daimyo nor herself. She has been a very kind mistress, and has taught Jun the Tao of Shinsei. The charges against her are totally untrue. She would never practice Maho!
- Jun's duties to Keiko-sama include cleaning up, making her presentable at court, running errands for her, helping to prepare meals for her, and in general serving her every need. Keiko-sama never asks too much of her, and gives her ample time to herself. She is a very good and kind mistress. Jun could ask for nothing more. (This is actually a partial lie – Jun wants a great deal more, and resents her mistress bitterly – but the PCs will have to ask about Jun's sincerity and make a Contested Perception vs Awareness roll to discern this.)
- If the PCs ask about her errands to the village, Jun says she sometimes delivers messages or visits the shop for her mistress or for the cook. Again, she is not being completely truthful.
- If the PCs ask about Jun's supposed courtship, she blushes and admits to seeing a "friend of the merchant, Kanjiro." If the PCs ask, she names the friend as "Gidayu," and says he is a merchant who travels through the village every few weeks. If asked, she will admit that he is in the village now, for the festival. She will also beg the PCs not to mention this matter to Keiko-sama, since she does not want her mistress troubled with such trivial matters at this stressful time. Again, Jun is being less than truthful, if the PCs can manage to discern it.

The Village

The village that surrounds Shiro no Bujisokusai is a large, prosperous place with about 200 residents. It is clean as such things go, and the residents appear well fed and healthy. They bow low to any samurai who come near, and cooperate readily with any orders they are given.

Besides the several dozen huts that house the bulk of the population, the village also contains the headman's home, a merchant's shop (with attached stable), a teahouse (which includes a geisha house within), a blacksmithy, a weaponsmith's shop, and a shrine to Jurojin. Also, with the Festival beginning, samurai from other Clans will be trickling into the village throughout the course of the scenario; feel free to improvise any samurai encounters that seem appropriate.

Peasant Gossip

Feel free to drop in any of these rumors whenever it seems appropriate, using a suitably craven peasant tone.

- There are wild spirits out in the woods that steal children in the night. No children have actually disappeared any time in living memory, but the farmers are sure those spirits are waiting...
- Jun, Asako Keiko's maidservant, is seeing some nice young merchant in town.
- Asako Keiko-sama is a kind and good noblewoman who helps the monks teach us about Shinsei. Once she was even seen to help an old woman who was fainting under her burdens. The peasants all hope she finds a worthy young samurai to marry.
- The peasants are sure she can't be a Maho user. After all, there haven't been Oni about for generations. Besides, she has clear skin, she is kind and nice, and she doesn't have big bulging eyes, or big nasty claws, or anything like that.
- The crops are good. They have always been good in these parts, in fact.
- There can't possibly be a Maho cult in the village. No one has any of the signs (same list of "symptoms" as used for Asako Keiko)...well, except old Joko who has a bulging eye. But he's too dim to be a Maho user.

The Village Headman

The headman's hut is larger than any other dwellings in the village, and better kept as well. A strong, healthy-looking man in his thirties is sitting on the steps of the house, working on a piece of wooden furniture. As you approach, he stops working and bows low. "Greetings, noble samurai. I am Satoshi,

headman of this village. How may I be of assistance to you?"

Satoshi is honest, hardworking, and – in his own humble way – noble. He does his best to treat everyone in the village fairly and to solve their problems without troubling the nobles in the castle. He is always honest, even when humbly addressing a daimyo, and everyone (even lord Hiroshige) respects him for this. Satoshi will invite the samurai in for tea with his wife Hiroko. His two sons are out working the fields right now.

Satoshi can provide the following information:

- Asako Hiroshige-sama is a fair and good lord. The peasants have no complaints about his rule.
- Asako Keiko-sama is a kind and gentle woman who cannot possibly be a Maho user. Satoshi likes her a great deal, but thinks she is a bit naive. He will be careful about saying such things to samurai, of course, especially if any of them are Phoenix.
- The village has had no problems of any consequence in many years. The peasants are hardworking, well treated, and well educated. Satoshi is quietly proud of his community, but will avoid boasting.
- If the PCs ask about Jun, Satoshi says she is a good young woman. He knows nothing about her except that she is supposed to be seeing some merchant associate of Kanjiro.
- If the PCs ask, Satoshi did once meet this associate of Kanjiro. The man was polite enough, but something about him made Satoshi's hair prickle. He shivers a little now, remembering it, and mutters, "Merchants," before resuming the conversation.

The Merchant's Shop

A colorful sign, depicting two samurai exchanging packages, hangs above the door to this large, brightly-lacquered wooden building. Within, light from the narrow windows and several hanging lanterns illuminates the many shelves of finished goods, preserved foods, tools, and other goods.

Other, more valuable items are for sale here as well, including trinkets and jewelry, fine silk garments, and even a few weapons. Behind a wooden counter stands a smiling merchant, his wife behind him. His eyes twinkle as he bows low before you. "Good day noble samurai! Welcome to my humble house of gifts. I am called Kanjiro. How may I be of assistance?"

Kanjiro appears to be a genuinely happy and energetic man in his mid-twenties. He is always smiling

(especially when showing the PCs his wares) and is a master of making pleasant conversation. His wife, Mai, smiles as well, and puts on the appearance of a dutiful wife while watching everything with hard flat eyes. She dresses in fine silks, as good as anything a samurai might wear.

After speaking with Kanjiro and Mai, the PCs may roll Simple Awareness (+Ichi Miru, if they have it) at TN 20 to realize that there is something subtly wrong, subtly off, about Kanjiro and especially his wife.

The shop can supply any basic equipment the PCs might want or need at the standard L5R rulebook prices. The weapons (a daisho set, tanto, bow, and one of each type of arrow) are displayed on polished wooden racks on one wall; Kanjiro freely admits that he cannot sell these; they are here to advertise the village weaponsmith, Zeshin. Kanjiro recommends both Zeshin and the village blacksmith, Baiko, for any metalwork the PCs might need.

There are a few interesting trinkets and luxuries for sale here as well:

- Scrolls with devotions to Jurojin, 1 Bu each.
- Scrolls with sayings of Shinsei, 1 Bu each.
- Little trinkets carved with daily affirmations from the Tao of Shinsei, 2 Bu each.
- Jewelry: Hairpins, necklaces, etc. Mai will model these for the PCs if they wish. 3 to 5 Bu.

Kanjiro and Mai are willing to give the following information. It is almost all lies, but the PCs will have to make Contested Perception vs Awareness rolls to see through the merchants' oily tongues:

- If the PCs ask about Jun's merchant friend, they will admit to knowing the man and name him as "Gidayu." They say he is a merchant from a nearby village, and sometimes exchanges wares with them.
- Mai claims to be a friend of Jun, and speaks with her whenever the maidservant visits the village. She introduced Jun to Gidayu. She stops by whenever she is in the village to talk and visit for a while. That is how she met Gidayu.
- Jun and Gidayu have been courting one another for a few months. If the PCs make a Simple Perception roll, TN 20, they notice an odd smile creep across Mai's face when this is mentioned.
- If the PCs express interest in meeting Gidayu, the merchants say he should be coming for another visit either later today or tomorrow, and offer to arrange a meeting.
- The accusations against Asako Keiko-sama are absurd. There are no Maho users here. (Lie!).
- If the PCs ask about visits to the castle, Kanjiro readily admits to going there often to deliver food and goods to lord Hiroshige.

- If the PCs seem to be asking overly pointed questions, or if they return for a second visit, the two merchants will begin to get nervous and sweaty (roll Awareness+Investigation, TN 20, to pick up on this), although they will deny that anything is wrong. A successful Perception+Investigation roll at TN 20 will notice that Mai keeps darting glances at the mat that covers the floor under one of the displays.

The Merchants' Secrets

Kanjiro and Mai are both members of the Maho cult. They know Gidayu as their Master, and regard his power as near divine, a Dark Kami in their midst. Jun is the local leader of their cult cell, and the only one of them who knows Maho. She has been teaching Mai, but the merchant's wife has not yet grasped the secrets of the Dark Path.

The merchants (who are literate) keep the records of the cult in a small compartment beneath the suspicious mat on the floor. Within are scrolls containing a complete membership roster, as well as many letters between Kanjiro and Isawa Gidayu. It is clear from these documents that Gidayu is the driving force behind the cult, expressing his wishes through Jun.

List of Cult Members

1. Baiko – Blacksmith
2. Aya – Baiko's wife
3. Juichi – stable boy
4. Kanjiro – Local Merchant
5. Mai – Kanjiro's wife
6. Toru – eta, male
7. Ryoko – Local Geisha
8. Hitoshi – Farmer
9. Kyumei – Hitoshi's wife

The Stable

Behind the merchant's shop, a long low building opens into an open exercise yard. Within the building are two rows of a dozen stalls each, along with an open area for grooming the horses. You hear a rustling in one of the stalls, then a small head pokes out and exclaims, "Noble samurai! Please excuse me but for an instant! I will be out in mere moments." A few seconds later an eleven-year-old boy comes running up. "I am Juichi. How may I be of assistance to such accomplished samurai as yourselves?"

Juichi is (superficially) an enthusiastic and respectful peasant boy. He is very good with horses, with which he has an instinctive rapport. He hates and fears the samurai caste, but knows how to be respectful to their

faces. If the PCs stable horses here, it will cost 2 Zeni per night; Juichi makes sure the horses are fed, groomed, and exercised.

Although Juichi seems normal enough, he is actually a cultist. Any PC who rolls Simple Awareness (+Ichi Miru, if they have it) at TN 20 senses something about Juichi – he seems to value the lives of horses above human beings.

Juichi will admit to knowing Jun, since she is a friend of Mai and Kanjiro, who hire him to run the stable. He claims to like Jun and hope that she is happy with the merchant she is seeing. He will also insist that there are no Maho activities in the village. "Everyone is happy and obedient."

Juichi is lying, of course, although the PCs will have to make the usual Contested roll to realize it. He understands very little about the cult, except that it has promised him power he could never have in his normal life.

The Teahouse (House of Silk Cherry Blossoms)

A pennant of pink silk flaps above the door to this two-story establishment. Embroidered on the pennant is an image of cherry blossoms falling about a teacup. As you enter, a matronly peasant woman bustles forward and greets you. "Welcome to the House of Silk Cherry Blossoms noble samurai. I am called Kikyo, and I am the proprietor of this humble teahouse. Please rest your weapons here while you enjoy yourselves." She pulls open a rice-paper door, revealing a set of weapon racks.

Remind the PCs that it is customary for samurai to place their daisho sets and other heavy weapons (if any) in the closet while in an inn or teahouse. They do not have to give up their weapons, but to refuse is extremely rude. Kikyo thanks them and leads them to a table. If any of the PCs are non-Ronin males of Honor 1.5 or higher, she suggests that later they might wish to enjoy some "refined entertainment," a subtle reference to the geisha in the back of the establishment.

Kikyo is a skilled businesswoman and a shrewd judge of character. She has normal servants and maids in the teahouse, serving food and drink to her customers, and she will expect her guests to behave properly. Besides the PCs, there will be various peasants and a few visiting samurai in the establishment. A meal of rice and pickled vegetables is 5 Zeni. Sake is 2 Zeni a cup. Samurai don't have to pay, but not paying is extremely rude.

The PCs can pick up any of the standard peasant rumors while here. If anyone mentions Joko of the bulging eye, a raspy voice bellows, "Stop spreading fool

rumors!” from across the room. The source of the shout is an older peasant with a stooped back and one bulging eye.

After the meal, or before the PCs leave, Kikyo will approach them and invite any suitable male samurai (non-Ronin with Honor 1.5 or better) to visit the Geisha house in the back of her establishment. In return she asks only the small gift of 1 koku.

There are already several samurai, a mixture of locals and visitors, in the back rooms enjoying the company of the geisha. **For this encounter it is important to remember that geisha are not prostitutes; they are entertainers.** Sleeping with a geisha is something that only happens after a long period of courtship. Instead, these women will offer the PCs music, singing, pleasant conversation, and the chance to take off their “faces” and be ordinary men. (Some geisha houses also have male geisha to cater to samurai-ko, but this establishment is too small to offer such variety.)

There will be one geisha per PC, with names like Hana, Koi, Mana, Tara, Sui, or Yuya. Ryoko, one of the cultists, will also be here, and will gravitate to the PC with the highest Glory, or any PC with Benten’s Blessing or Dangerous Beauty. Ryoko will entertain them with music and charming conversation, while trying to find out why the PCs are in town and how long they plan to stay. She always acts highly impressed with anything the PCs say (as, for that matter, do all the other geisha).

Any PC who spends time talking with Ryoko can roll Simple Awareness at TN 20 to sense that there is a dark, violent, perverse monster lurking beneath her charming exterior, mocking them all through her white face paint. Ryoko is, in truth, a cruel and gleeful madwoman.

If the PCs question Ryoko, she can share the following information. Of course, most of it is untrue. Any attempts to discern the truth behind her words are at +20 to the TN due to her long practice in hiding her real emotions.

- If asked about Jun, Ryoko describes her as a “pretty young woman that any man would desire.”
- If asked about Jun’s relationship with the merchant in town, she admits to seeing her with a man, but then smiles and says, “I probably shouldn’t continue. It is not proper to talk of two lovers in front of noble samurai. Oh, the things they do...”
- If asked about Maho, and the accusations against Keiko, Ryoko feigns disinterest. “Why do you want to talk of cultists and Maho in this place? You should relax and enjoy yourself.”

The Blacksmith

An open stone building sits next to a large stone furnace. A huge muscular man and his younger apprentice are hard at work, beating out a ringing cadence on the anvil. As you get closer a woman steps out of the wooden hut attached to the smithy. She says something to her husband, who looks up and hands off his work to his apprentice. He bows deeply. “Welcome to my humble smithy. I’m called Baiko. Your horses need shoe’in?”

Baiko appears to be a hardworking blacksmith. He does all of the non-military metalworking for the town – tools, horseshoes, and so forth. He is curt and to the point, and speaks in a thick country drawl. His wife Aya is more soft-spoken and polite. Although both of them appear to be obedient peasants, they are actually loyal members of the cult. They have the same information as any other normal cult members. Any PC who rolls Simple Awareness (+Ichi Miru, if they have it) at TN 25 after speaking to them realizes there is a strange deadness behind their eyes.

Baiko’s apprentice, Taikan, is a large, strong thirteen-year-old boy. He is already over five feet tall with very broad shoulders. Taikan is quiet and very respectful, always bowing low, never meeting superior’s eyes, and doesn’t speak unless spoken to. He has no idea of what sort of people Baiko and his wife really are.

Baiko will offer the following (brief) information to inquisitive PCs:

- I do a lot of work for Kanjiro and the headman.
- Don’t do weapons. Nope. Zeshin the Weaponsmith does that.
- Crops are fine.
- Nope, no Maho here. No Maho nohow.
- Asako Keiko? Don’t know much about her.
- Yup, I know Jun. She buys things here from time to time.

The Weaponsmith

The Weaponsmith’s shop is a large wooden building with a worked stone section at one end. Both the door and the windows stand open. Within the large front chamber, a thickset man with shoulder length white hair sits at a workbench, carefully examining the blade of a katana. As you near the door, the tinkling sound of a bell emanates from a small crane statuette just outside of the front door. The man slowly looks up, sets down the unfinished weapon carefully, and walks over with a measured pace. He looks you over with penetrating eyes before finally bowing and speaking in a low, gravelly voice. “Welcome,

honorable samurai. I am Zeshin, Master Weaponsmith of Asako Hiroshige. What do you require?"

Zeshin is an expert swordsmith and bowyer, and as such is accustomed to receiving somewhat more respect from the samurai caste than would be usual for a commoner. He is capable of creating a weapon of average quality by the end of the adventure if the PC pays him the listed rulebook price for the item up front. It will have the proper mon and colors of the player's Clan, if any (Ronin PCs get no mon, and will have to pay an extra 3 koku). He is also capable of creating blades of fine or exquisite quality, but will not undertake such work for anyone but his own lord. The only weapons he will create are swords (katana, wakizashi, no-dachi), tanto, bows, and arrows.

Zeshin does have a few display items that he will be willing to part with, if the PCs are prepared to pay exorbitant prices. If they do actually pay, he will modify the colors and mon on the weapons to match the purchaser. These items comprise a fine quality daisho set (70 koku), a fine quality no-dachi (60 koku), and a fine quality tanto (6 koku). Each of these weapons rolls one extra damage die (e.g. the katana rolls 4k2 damage rather than 3k2).

Zeshin can also repair weapons that have been damaged for 1/10th the list cost of the weapon. It will take most of the day to fix such weapons. However, he will not repair a tetsubo or any peasant weapon.

Zeshin will speak of non-business related topics for only a short while before excusing himself to go back to his work. He knows the following:

- Zeshin has seen Jun at Kanjiro's shop frequently. He knows nothing about her except that she is Keiko's maidservant.
- Zeshin has also seen Asako Keiko in the village frequently. She has a knack for saying the right thing every time, and her words have sometimes helped him focus when he was working on a difficult job.
- Zeshin will not comment on the accusations against Keiko. "I am a Weaponsmith, not a Maho hunter. I cannot speak on what I do not know. All I can say is that I have never seen her cast a spell of any kind."
- If the PCs ask about Kanjiro and his mysterious friend Gidayu, Zeshin remarks that he deals with merchants all the time, but there is something about Kanjiro and his wife that bothers him intensely. He cannot put his finger on it. He has never met Gidayu.

- Zeshin's wife and daughter are in another village discussing a possible marriage with a young weaponsmith from Shiba lands.

The Shrine of Jurojin

The Shrine of Jurojin is a simple pagoda; its sides open to the elements. Within the shrine, monks are busy cleaning, exercising, or meditating. One is speaking with a group of peasant children. Another steps forward to greet you as you approach. "Welcome to the shrine of Jurojin, fortune of Health and Longevity! How may I be of assistance today?"

There are a total of ten monks here, guiding the village's spiritual life and keeping the rituals of the Fortunes. They all look much alike, with their shaven heads and simple robes, and the PCs may not even notice that two of them are women.

- The monks do not believe that there are any Maho users or cultists in or around the village. There is no evidence of such activities, and everything is quiet and peaceful. "In the Crab lands, perhaps, but not here. The Fortunes watch over us and protect us from evil."
- The monks believe the peasants are well treated in this village, and they have seen hardly any animosity between the castes. This is as it should be, when the Celestial Order is properly respected.
- If the PCs ask about Jun, the monks say that she was once angry about her place in the Celestial Order, but now she has recognized that all have a role to play in the proper unfolding of the cosmos. Sadly, she does not venerate Jurojin, but she at least venerates Daikoku, Fortune of Wealth, along with Kanjiro and her new merchant friend.
- The monks have met Jun's merchant "friend" only once. He seemed to know much of the Fortunes and of Shinsei, but there was a strange tone to the man, something vaguely unwholesome. Perhaps he was schooled in the ways of the Black Crane (Yasuki). The monks confess that he never said where he was from, and they never thought to ask. Such questions seem to slip away like eels where he is concerned.
- If the PCs ask about Asako Keiko, the monks cannot say enough good things about her. She helps the peasants, is joyful and always has a kind word for others. She is also highly enlightened and can debate the mysterious of the Tao with the best of them. One of the monks does confess, however, that something seems to weigh heavy upon her soul. "Sometimes you can see it in her eyes or behind her smile for just an instant. Perhaps her

duties are more trying than they first appear. After all, not all histories are pleasant.”

Scene V: Confronting Jun and Tracking Down Gidayu

Once the PCs realize that Jun is a major figure in the cult (from interrogations, or by discovering the information in the merchant’s shop) they will probably want to confront and interrogate her. Whenever they do, they catch her in her quarters, apparently about to leave for a trip to the village. She has a loaded traveling bag slung over her shoulder. So long as they have at least some conclusive evidence, she will quickly break down.

“Noble samurai, please forgive me! I did not know what I was getting into! He was a noble Isawa of great power, but now I see the truth behind his power. Please, honorable samurai, give me the chance to atone for my heinous crimes before I die, so I may have a chance to be released back into the Celestial Order.”

Assuming the PCs agree to let her live a little longer, she will confess everything. She names the cult leader as Isawa Gidayu, a former Fire Tensai, and explains that he and the rest of the cult are even now conducting a dark ritual:

“He seeks to pierce the veil surrounding Asako Keiko and steal her secrets. I was about to join them for the ritual when you stopped me.”

Jun will volunteer to lead the PCs to the cave where the cult is conducting the ritual. She will also confess to casting the spell on Nobuyoshi, saying she was panicked by his sudden arrival and accusations. If the PCs search Jun’s bag, it contains clothes (some of them Keiko’s), some food, and a scroll containing the Maho spell “No Pure Breaths.”

Jun will also agree to testify against Gidayu and the other cultists in Keiko’s trial.

Scene VI: Confronting Gidayu and the Cult

If the PCs confronted Jun, while they were doing so the cult kidnaps a child from the village and begins the ritual to steal Iuchiban’s spell from Keiko’s mind. Villagers rush to the castle, begging for help, and a dazed but functional Nobuyoshi seeks out the PCs to help him.

If the PCs tell Nobuyoshi about Jun’s confession, he is excited. “Ha! I knew one of them would crack once the pressure became too great. She knows where they are? Let us be off then!”

If the PCs find the list of cult members in Kanjiro’s shop they may decide to attempt to round up the entire cult, either alone or with the help of the castle troops. In this case, all the cultists who are not caught immediately will flee to Gidayu’s cave, snatching a child as they run. Jun will likely not escape, since she is inside the castle. Gidayu will quickly try to complete the ritual before he is tracked down. Again, Nobuyoshi will seek an alliance with the PCs.

If the PCs do seek assistance from the castle guards (regardless of the circumstances), the karo will supply them with a few Rank 1 Shiba bushi (use the standard statistics listed at the end of the tournament). The total number of PCs plus guards should not exceed 8, not counting Nobuyoshi and Jun.

Jun leads you out of the village and into the forested bluffs that clutter this region of the Phoenix lands. The air is close and humid, and your clothing sticks to your bodies unpleasantly.

If it is evening or night, so much the better. The PCs locate the cave about two miles from the village, well away from any signs of civilization. If it is dark, the orange-yellow light of a fire is faintly visible to the PCs. As they draw closer, hollow chanting will be heard faintly from within the cave. If the PCs ask Jun about guards, she will say that there usually are two cultists watching the entrance, but now everyone is needed for the ceremony. (She is being truthful, if the PCs check.) Nobuyoshi becomes ever more eager as he approaches the cave, muttering things like, “I can almost smell them!”

Although Jun is right, the cave has not been left without protection. Gidayu has summoned three Shadowlands Revenants, vile undead monsters, and has left one to guard the entrance. The thing lurks in the bushes beside the cave, silent and unmoving, but can be spotted with a Perception+Hunting roll at TN 20. If the PCs fail to spot the monster, it will strike by surprise, attacking one random PC at TN 5. Regardless of whether it surprises the PCs or not, they will need to make a Fear Test against the revenant’s Fear Rank 3 (TN 15).

Suddenly a figure steps out of the bushes and rushes toward you, brandishing a katana. You see worm-eaten dead flesh hanging from its bones like gaijin

leather, and a stench as from the grave assails your nostrils. Worms slither from the thing's hollow eye-sockets as a grating laugh bursts from between its blackened teeth.

Revenant

FIRE 4	AIR 2
EARTH 5	WATER 2
VOID 0	

TN to be Hit: 20 (light armor)

Attacks: 6k4

Damage: 5k2 (rusty katana)

Wounds: 15: -1; 30: -2; 45: -3; 60: -4; 75: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 3. Anyone who strikes the revenant for 25 or more points of damage in a single blow will be splashed with the vile, putrescent ichor that fills its rotting body. Such PCs must make a Simple Earth roll at TN 10 or gain one point of Shadowlands Taint.

Unless the PCs make an extreme amount of noise, this combat will go unnoticed by the cultists within the cave. The cave extends about 20 feet into the earth before making a sharp right turn; the chanting and firelight comes from around that corner. The cave is wide enough for two PCs to walk abreast, and has a ten-foot ceiling.

As the PCs near the turn in the cave, the chanting echoing all around them, they suddenly hear a deep voice rise above the chant in a triumphant shout. "There it is! Yes! Iuchiban's secret will be mine!"

Nobuyoshi's face turns pale as he recognizes his brother's voice. "Gidayu," he whispers.

The tunnel opens into a large cavern. A huge bonfire burns in the center of the room, and on the far side is a rough-hewn stone altar. The cultists stand facing the altar, their bodies muffled in brown robes, while a tall figure in a white kimono stands behind the altar, arms thrown wide in a gesture of triumph. Lying on the altar is the body of a young child, opened up like a vile crimson flower.

The white-garbed figure suddenly notices you, shouting "What?!" He turns to look directly at Nobuyoshi. "Ah, brother, you have found me at last. Please, join me. The Oracle has need of one with your talents."

Isawa Nobuyoshi walks slowly into the chamber, his face tightening into a stony mask. "You are not my

brother, though you wear his face and voice. My brother died the day he took those scrolls from the Asako."

Gidayu snorts and gestures to the cultists. "Kill them, and bring my brother to me."

It is impossible for the PCs to surprise the cultists, since Gidayu's connection to the Dark Oracle gives him preternatural senses. Of course, aggressive PCs will probably cut short the verbal exchange between Gidayu and Nobuyoshi.

The other two Revenants (statistically identical to the first) are hiding in the shadows to either side of the tunnel entrance. The PCs must roll Simple Perception at TN 20 to notice them; otherwise they will strike by surprise (making their TN to hit PCs a 5) at the end of the first round of combat.

Due to the cramped conditions and poor lighting in the cave, any archery attacks will be at +15 to the TN. Any PC with Archery skill of Rank 2 or better will realize that this is a poor site for archery. If an arrow-shot misses, there is a 50% chance that it strikes someone else in the cave (choose a target randomly). Gidayu is the motivating force behind the cult, and if he is defeated the other cultists quickly lose heart and surrender, offering to testify to their crimes as a way of cleansing their souls before death. So long as Gidayu remains in the fight, however, the cultists will never give up. The total number of cultists will be equal to 9, minus any the PCs already exposed and captured in town. They will spread out to attack as many opponents as possible, with one or two of them attempting to subdue Nobuyoshi. Gidayu will try to hang back and cast spells. The revenants will, of course, fight until destroyed.

Nobuyoshi is still down one Wound Rank from the effects of the No Pure Breaths spell. He will spend the first few rounds trying to cast spells at Gidayu (first Jade Strike, then Tomb of Jade), but both spells will fail due to Gidayu's magic resistance. He will then try to use Counterspell against Gidayu's magics, or assist PCs who are in trouble. He can also be used by the GM to save the PCs if they are losing badly.

If the PCs brought Jun into the combat, she will try to subdue other cultists, but will not use Maho (even if the PCs left the scroll with her).

Note that Gidayu has Great Destiny (Chosen by the Dark Oracle of Air). Thus, he cannot be killed by an accident of combat (he will be left with one wound). The PCs must deliberately kill him after he is down in order to end his life.

See the Non Player Characters section at the end of the tournament for statistics on Gidayu, Jun, Nobuyoshi, and the cultists.

Scene VII: The Trial of Asako Keiko

The morning is clear and bright as you gather in the audience hall of the castle for Isawa Keiko's trial. Keiko sits once again at the foot of her daimyo. The Governor, Isawa Akira, has arrived overnight and now stands watching impassively as Isawa Nobuyoshi prepares to deliver his case. The room is filled with guests and delegates from the various Clans, and you feel as though all the Empire is watching.

The course of the trial depends on the outcome of the PCs' investigation and the encounter with Gidayu.

If the PCs tracked down and defeated Gidayu (whether he survived or not), Isawa Nobuyoshi bows humbly to Asako Keiko and announces to the Governor that new evidence has prompted him to reconsider the case. He asks that all charges against Keiko be dropped, and instead charges Gidayu with leading the cult. The Governor agrees, but then pauses and asks, *"Is this Gidayu your brother?"*

Nobuyoshi's face is expressionless as he answers, "My brother is dead. This thing called Gidayu is an eta."

Nobuyoshi will call for the testimony of the PCs and any surviving cultists to make his case, working through everything with great care and thoroughness. If Gidayu lived, he will be in an apparent stupor and will not testify for or against himself. At the end of the trial, Isawa Akira praises both Nobuyoshi and the PCs for their diligent work, and thanks them for their service to the Empire. He orders all the remaining cultists hanged, and Isawa Gidayu's name stricken from the Clan's records.

If Gidayu is still alive, he will be hanged. Go to Part VIII: A Hanging.

If the PCs did not find out about Gidayu, Nobuyoshi will still try to make his case against Asako Keiko (and in a larger sense the entire Asako family), and the PCs must defend her. Nobuyoshi will have arrested at least one of the cultists (notably Kanjiro) and has identified most of the others, although they may not have been captured. He will present four witnesses and a set of letters as evidence; the PCs can then attempt to refute him by questioning the witnesses themselves, calling their own witnesses, examining the letters, and so forth.

Nobuyoshi has four witnesses: A Crane named Doji Ryo, two adult peasants named Ayano and Danjuro, and

a peasant boy named Haru. Their testimony (and possible PC responses) are as follows:

- **Doji Ryo** will testify that the geisha Ryoko tried to convert him to the cause of Maho during an earlier visit to the village. He saw Ryoko speaking of Maho with Jun, the maidservant of Asako Keiko, and witnessed Jun performing various errands for her mistress and dealing with people who are now known to be cultists (e.g. the merchants). Nobuyoshi takes this as evidence that Jun was acting on behalf of Keiko.
- If **Ryoko** has been captured, the PCs can have her testify that Keiko was not involved in the cult, and that Jun learned Maho from some Isawa Ronin by the name of Gidayu. She laughs viciously as she makes this slur against the Isawa family, and one of the Shiba guards strikes her in the face.
- **Ayano**, a small peasant woman, will testify that Kanjiro's wife Mai tried to lure her into the Maho cult with promises of power and revenge. According to her, Mai said that the entire Asako family was behind the cult, and that Asako Keiko was the local cult leader.
- If **Mai** has been captured, she will testify (with a snide smile) that she used Keiko's name to impress this foolish woman, but she should have known better than to try recruiting such an idiot.
- **Danjuro**, a muscular but sad-looking peasant in his twenties, will testify that Baiko the blacksmith tried to force him into the cult, saying that Asako Keiko was the leader and she would make his life unbearable if he refused. Danjuro said he would think about it, then went to the Inquisitor when he arrived in town. But he has paid the price for his loyalty, for his son has vanished. Danjuro begins to break down in tears as he begs Lord Hiroshige to find and rescue his son.
- If **Baiko** has been captured, he will testify that Mai told him to use Keiko's name to help win recruits in the village. "Too bad about the boy," he smirks. "Maybe you should have listened to us." One of the Shiba guards slaps Baiko across the face, twice, but the big man doesn't flinch. Blood trickles from the corner of his mouth.
- The last witness, **Haru**, is a ten-year-old boy. He testifies that Juichi tried to force him into the cult, beating him and then telling him to join the cult and become stronger. Juichi told him that Asako Keiko had picked him personally to be in the cult, but Haru could not believe that someone as nice as Keiko could be involved in such things, so he refused. Haru clearly worships the ground Keiko walks on, and after testifying he walks away in tears, unable to even look at her.

- If **Juichi** has been captured, he will testify that he only used Keiko's name because he knew Haru was so utterly infatuated with her. He sneers at the smaller boy for running away like a scared little girl.

After the witnesses have testified, Nobuyoshi presents what he considers to be the clinching evidence, an intercepted letter.

"After I heard Doji Ryo's report, I was able to intercept this letter from Shiro no Bujisokusei. As you can see, the letter is written in cipher – a cipher which I have confirmed as that used by the Asako family. By deciphering the letter, I learned it was written by a Maho cult leader, a woman from the style, and addressed to a superior who is identified as hailing from the Asako family." At that Asako Hiroshige half-rises and glares at Nobuyoshi, but the Inquisitor continues without hesitating. "Further, the letter boasts of recruiting many peasants into the cult, and gives thanks for the gift of the spell "no pure breaths," which is a known Maho spell with which I myself was assaulted just two days ago. And lastly, the letter also promises to secure items which will enable them to gain the forbidden knowledge of the Bloodspeaker Iuchiban!" At the mention of that hated name, everyone watching the trial gasps and murmurs. Nobuyoshi looks around triumphantly before delivering the conclusion of his case. "From the testimony and evidence I have shown, it is evident that Asako Keiko is both a Maho user and the cult leader, and was in contact with others of her family who knew of her activities and condoned them. Isawa Akira-sama, I ask one simple question: Can the Empire afford to let the Asako keep their secrets any longer?"

The Governor nods thoughtfully, impressed both by Nobuyoshi's case and by the larger implications he has made. He turns to the PCs and calls on them to offer their defense of Asako Keiko.

The various refutations that the PCs could offer to the witness testimony have already been listed. Refuting the letter is also possible – it was actually written by Jun, using the Asako cipher she had learned from her mistress, and was addressed to Isawa Gidayu. If the PCs examine the letter, they can roll Intelligence+Cipher at TN 20 to try to translate the code. (Keiko can do it for them, but her translation will be considered suspect.) A successful roll will reveal that Nobuyoshi made a numerical substitution error: the family of the addressee was the first family of the Phoenix Clan – the Isawa family – not the second, the Asako family. Nobuyoshi will be quite upset at this, and rereads the letter

furiously, only to turn pale as he realizes the PCs are right.

If any of the PCs' cultist witnesses refer to Isawa Gidayu, Nobuyoshi will splutter angrily, declaring such statements the lies of known Maho cultists. However, if the PCs have already exposed his mistranslation of the letter, Nobuyoshi's denials will have less weight of conviction. Soon he will be re-reading the document, murmuring silently to himself. Any PC with the Read Lips advantage can roll Simple Perception, TN 10, to see what Nobuyoshi is saying: "Brother, I will find you..."

Once the PCs have finished presenting their case, Isawa Akira will make his ruling. The GM should decide Akira's ruling based on the quality of the PCs' defense and the eloquence of their role-playing. This is a judgement call for the GM, but in general, if the PCs have caught the error in Nobuyoshi's translation of the Cipher, and have rebutted most or all of his witnesses, Akira will probably rule in their favor. It will also help if they present other witnesses of samurai caste to testify on Keiko's good character (such testimony carries more weight than the word of mere heimin, after all).

If the Governor rules in Keiko's favor, he proclaims both her and the Asako family innocent of all charges. "It is evident that someone else was the culprit here, using Asako Keiko as a shield for their vile activities. I ask Nobuyoshi-san to find and punish this person as soon as possible." The Inquisitor nods expressionlessly. "All peasants found guilty of Maho will be hanged until dead, as shall any others who aid or shelter them. This proceeding is closed."

If the Governor finds Keiko guilty, he orders that she be tortured into confession and then hanged along with the other Maho cultists. Her name will be stricken from the Asako family records and her ashes scattered at sea so that they do not pollute the Phoenix lands. He makes no mention of Nobuyoshi's larger accusation against the Asako family, but from the whispers that circulate through the crowd, it is clear the entire family has suffered a grave loss of face from this incident. Keiko sits stunned for a moment, and then whispers: "I am innocent, my lord. And the one responsible for this is still at large, uncaught." The guards lead her away. Go to PART VIII: A Hanging.

Part VIII: A Hanging

The execution is held at the edge of the village, where nooses have been suspended from the branches of several large trees. Any captured cultists are hung first, meeting their ends with weeping, curses, or stoic

defiance as their personalities dictate. What happens next depends on who is to be hung:

If Keiko is to be hung, she is half-led, half-dragged from the castle. The marks of the torture that brought her confession are plain upon her. (Rokugani law demands that a criminal confess as the final step in their trial.) The guests and visitors who have come for the Festival gather to witness the execution, and many of them stare accusingly at the PCs, whispering vicious gossip about these questionable individuals who defended a Maho-Tsukai.

Isawa Nobuyoshi watches the execution with an expression of grim satisfaction. However, as he turns to leave, a young lady in Crane colors, a courtier here for the Festival, approaches him and whispers something in his ear before accompanying the other Crane guests back to the castle. Nobuyoshi turns pale and stares after her in confusion, then slowly walks away, alone. He will not answer any questions from the PCs, but if any PC has the Read Lips advantage, they will be able to roll Simple Perception at TN 15 to tell what she said:

“Brother, she was innocent.”

If Gidayu is to be hung, the scene is somewhat different. Nobuyoshi’s face is set and hard as he watches his stupefied brother led to the noose. Just as the rope is settled around Gidayu’s neck, however, something happens. The Maho-Tsukai revives, struggling and shouting. “How dare you! My life is not yours to take!” His voice rises to a shriek. “Oracle, I am yours! Take me now!”

A strange shadow passes over the scene, and then the guards shout in horror as Gidayu’s body crumples in their hands. He is nothing but a hollow husk, a man-shaped sack of shriveled skin. The guards jump back, cursing and wiping their hands as though to cleanse the taint of dead flesh from themselves. Whatever dark master Gidayu served has taken its due.

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 Point Awards:

Playing through the scenario:

2

Saving Asako Keiko from the false accusation:	1
Defeated Isawa Gidayu (killed him or brought him back for trial):	1

Total Possible Experience Points	4
---	----------

Honor Awards:

Saving Asako Keiko	1 point
Killing Isawa Gidayu	1 point
or	
Bringing Isawa Gidayu back for trial	2 points
Failed to save Asako Keiko	-3 points
PC kept Jun’s Maho scroll	-10 points
PC knows that another PC kept the Maho scroll	-5 points

Glory Awards:

PCs saved Asako Keiko	3 points
PCs killed Isawa Gidayu	1 point
or	
PCs captured Isawa Gidayu and brought him back for trial.	2 points
PCs failed to save Asako Keiko	-5 points

Intangible Awards (and Penalties)

If the PCs succeed in getting Asako Keiko acquitted (for whatever reason), they gain the advantage **Major Ally: Asako Keiko**. Also, Keiko will give the PC with the highest Honor a fine quality writing kit engraved with her personal chop.

If the PCs succeeded in uncovering and defeating the Maho cult, any Ronin PCs will be offered the chance to join the Phoenix Clan and join either the Shiba school (if bushi) or the Isawa school (if shugenja). They will start at Rank 1 with an Insight of 120, and can increase their Insight normally from there. (Phoenix Clan ronin will be allowed to rejoin their former school at their former Insight level.)

If the PCs failed to save Asako Keiko (she was convicted and hanged), they all gain the disadvantage **Bad Reputation: Defended a Maho-Tsukai**. “No good deed goes unpunished.”

If the PCs uncovered and defeated Gidayu, at the end of the adventure they gain the disadvantage **Sworn Enemy: Dark Oracle of Air**. The PCs must write this down on their character sheets and must inform the GM at the start of each subsequent adventure that they have this disadvantage. Surely, though, this will never show up in any future adventures...

Non-Player Characters

Asako Keiko.

Phoenix Clan Henshin, female, age 18

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

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: Henshin 2

Honor/Glory: 3.5/2

Skills: Advanced Medicine 2, Calligraphy 2, Cipher 2, Courtier 3, Defense 1, Hand to Hand 2, Heraldry 2, History 4, Law 1, Lore (Fortunes) 2, Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 1, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Medicine 2, Meditation 2, Painting 1, Shintao 3, Sincerity 3, Tantojutsu 1, Theology 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Benten's Blessing, Forbidden Knowledge (Iuchiban's Spell of Immortality)/Dark Secret (Iuchiban's Spell of Immortality), Soft Hearted

Equipment: Kimono

Special: Due to her intense mental training, Asako Keiko's mind cannot be magically read or accessed without a major magical effort (beyond the abilities of any PCs).

Isawa Nobuyoshi

Phoenix Clan Inquisitor, age 28

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 2

Honor/Glory: 4.3/4.5

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Hand to Hand 2, Heraldry 2, Ichi Miru 2, Investigation 4, Law 3, Lore (Asako family) 2, Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 4, Lore (Shugenja) 2, Medicine 2, Meditation 3, Shintao 4, Spellcraft 3, Theology 2.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon, Counterspell; (Air) Accounts of Shorihotsu, By the Light of Lord Moon, Call Upon the Wind, Whispering Winds; (Earth) Elemental Ward, Jade Strike, Tomb of Jade; (Water)*

The Path to Inner Peace; (Fire) Last Rites, The Fires That Cleanse.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Clear Thinker, Read Lips/Driven (to expose the sinister secrets of the Asako family)

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel

Jun

Maidservant (and Maho-Tsukai), age 18

FIRE 2	AIR 2 Awareness 3
EARTH 3	WATER 2
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint: 2.2

TN to be Hit: 10

Honor/Glory: 1.2/0

Skills: Cipher 1, Craft (Maidservant) 2, Forgery 1, Investigation 2, Seduction 1, Sincerity 2, Stealth 1, Tantojutsu 2

Spells: *No Pure Breaths (Maho)*

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Maho Tsukai)

Equipment: Kimono, tanto, travelling bag (with scroll)

Isawa Gidayu

Phoenix Clan Ronin and Maho-Tsukai, age 26

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

Shadowlands Taint: 3.4

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Isawa Fire Tensai 1

Honor/Glory: 0.3/0

Skills: Calligraphy 2, Cipher 2, Forgery 2, Herbalism 2, Heraldry 2, History 2, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Dark Oracles) 2, Lore (Iuchiban) 2, Lore (Maho-Tsukai) 4, Lore (Shugenja) 3, Meditation 2, Poison 2, Shintao 2, Sincerity 3, Stealth 2, Theology 2, Torture 2.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon, Counterspell; (Fire) Amaterasu's Anger, The Fire From Within, Inflame, Wings of Fire; (Air) By the Light of Lord Moon; (Earth)*

Earth's Stagnation; (Maho) Dark Divination, No Pure Breaths, Summon Revenant.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Great Destiny (Chosen by the Dark Oracle of Air), Magic Resistance (rank 3), Quick/Black Sheep, Dark Secret (Maho-Tsukai), Driven (master magic in all its forms).

Equipment: Kimono, wakizashi, tanto, scroll satchel

Peasant Cultists

(all stats identical except as noted)

FIRE 2	AIR 2
	(Awareness 4 for Ryoko)
EARTH 2 (3 for Baiko and Mai)	WATER 2 (Strength 3 for Baiko)
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint: 1-2

TN to be Hit: 10

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Bojutsu/Kamajutsu 2, Craft (as per occupation) 2, Sincerity 1, Stealth 1. Ryoko also has Bard 1, Etiquette 1, Music 2, and Seduction 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Dark Secret (Maho cultists)

Equipment: Bo (2k2) or Kama (2k2)

Typical Castle Guards

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 2
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 15 (light armor)

School/Rank: Shiba Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 3/2

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

Advantages/Disadvantages: None.

Equipment: Daisho, light armor, bow and 20 arrows

Spells not in the L5R rulebook.

Last Rites

Casting Time: 1 action

Base TN: 5 x Shadowlands Rank

Raises: N/A

This spell completely removes the Shadowlands Taint from the target. However, it also kills the target. The spell can only be cast on a willing recipient. If the spell fails, the target's restless spirit will haunt Rokugan forever.

Maho Spells

To cast a Maho spell, the caster must spill enough blood to power the spell. The blood does not have to come from the caster. The number of Wounds' worth of blood required is equal to the Mastery Level of the spell.

After spilling blood, the caster rolls Earth+Shadowlands Taint, keeping Earth, to cast the spell. Free Raises may be obtained by spilling additional blood, at the rate of 1 Raise for each additional "Wounds Required" amount of blood spilt. Each casting of a Maho spell causes the caster to gain a number of points of Shadowlands Taint equal to twice the spell's Mastery Level.

Summon Revenant

Casting Time: 5 actions

Base TN: 20

Raises: Duration, Casting Time

Duration: 1 hour or Permanent

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 7

Concentration: None

This spell summons an undead champion, appearing from nowhere and obeying the summoner. At the end of 1 hour the Revenant will vanish unless the caster sacrifices 1 full Rank of Earth to bind it forever.

No Pure Breaths

Casting Time: 2 actions

Base TN: Target's Earth x 5

Raises: Damage, Casting Time, Number of Targets

Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

Concentration: None

This spell instantly corrupts the Air spirits within the target's lungs, causing the Tainted air to explode out of the victim's body. At its most successful, the target literally explodes; more often the spell simply ruptures lungs and stomachs, causing internal bleeding. The spell has a base DR of the caster's Shadowlands Rank. The target (if still living) suffers a +10 TN penalty to all actions until magically healed, due to the pain of their internal injuries.

Dark Divination

Casting Time: 3 actions

Base TN: 15

Raises: Questions

Duration: 1 Action

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 4

Concentration: Complete

This spell allows the caster to ask questions of the GM. The GM must answer the question honestly, but is only required to answer with a "Yes" or "No". For each Raise the caster can ask an additional question...and gains an additional 8 points of Taint.

Event Summary

Fill out these questions for all playings of “Legacy of the Dark One” between November 2000 and August 2001, inclusive. Return the completed summary with the Who’s-Who sheet.

Did the PCs save Asako Keiko?

Did the PCs kill Isawa Gidayu?

If not, did they capture him?

Legend of the Five Rings
Champions of the Emerald Empire

This Document Proclaims That

is in possession of the Maho Scroll

No Pure Breaths

This Scroll was obtained in the adventure *Legacy of the Dark One*.

The use of Maho is an extremely dishonorable and corrupting act. Every time you cast this spell, you lose 3 points of Honor and gain ten points of Shadowlands Taint. Of course, the use of Maho is illegal and the penalty is death.

It takes 2 Actions to cast the spell, and you must spill 5 Wounds of blood (your own or someone else's blood, it doesn't matter which). The roll to cast the spell is Earth+Shadowlands Taint Rank, keeping Earth, and the TN is equal to 5 times the Earth ring of the target of the spell. If successful, the air within the target's lungs instantly corrupts and explodes out of the body, inflicting damage of a DR equal to your Shadowlands Taint Rank. The target will also be at +10 TN to all actions until magically healed. You may take Raises for damage, casting time, or number of targets.

By the way: for every extra 5 Wounds of blood you spill after the base 5, you get a Free Raise.

Judge Signature

RPGA Number



Proclamation of (dis)Honor