

A Test of Courage

**A One-Round Multi-Rank SHADOWLANDS Adventure
for Heroes of Rokugan (Champions of the Emerald
Empire)**

by Rob Hobart

A Lion shugenja dispatches you on a deadly and desperate quest to destroy one of the most powerful evil forces in Rokugan.

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A four-hour time block has been allocated for playing this game. The actual playing time should be about three and a half 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.

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

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

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD! Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

This adventure is a Multi-Rank adventure. This means that it has two sets of statistics for NPCs, one for low-end parties (Ranks 1, 2, and 3) and one for mid/high-end parties (Ranks 2 through 5).

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

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

Please note that this is a SHADOWLANDS module, and as such, presents a much greater threat of death and Taint than is normally found in other Heroes of Rokugan adventures. Non-combatant PCs, especially courtiers, are likely to be very much out of their element in this scenario. The GM should make this clear from the beginning, so the players can choose whether or not to play a particular character in this adventure.

Glory and Honor Awards and Penalties

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

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

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Multi-Rank adventure, and contains two sets of statistics for the villains: one for Low-End parties (School ranks 1-3, average 2) and one for High-End parties (School ranks 2-5, average 3.5).

The Skill and Trait roll TNs listed in the module are for high-end parties. For a low-end party, reduce the TNs by 5.

The GM may need to make additional "tweaks" for parties which lie at an extreme end of the power curve. Suggested tweaks are listed below:

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

- The Oni no Kaisaku is not Invulnerable.
- There are only 3 Corrupted monks and 12 children.
- Only one Oni no Kaze will appear in the Temple.

High End Party (average party Insight Rank is Four or higher):

- The Corrupted Children and Corrupted Monks are Invulnerable.
- Three Oni no Kaze will appear in the Temple.

Adventure Summary and Background

This adventure begins in the Imperial Capital, where the Empire is holding the state funerals of Miya Satoshi, the Imperial Herald, and Kitsu Okura, the Jade Champion. Okura, after holding office for a scant two months, has perished from a sudden fever, one which could not be cleansed with magic. In actuality, he has been murdered by a rival, Isawa Akei, who has sold her soul to the Dark Oracle of Air, Isawa Gidayu.

Akei has now defeated her one remaining competitor, Kitsu Makoto, and will soon assume the office of Jade Champion. Makoto, however, knows the truth about Akei, and intends to confront the Emperor with this knowledge... and to offer his own *seppuku* to prove his words.

Before that desperate deed, however, Makoto is determined to take action against Akei's sinister benefactor, the Dark Oracle of Air. Through magical divinations, Makoto has learned that the Dark Oracles can be controlled and thwarted through possession of certain powerful artifacts: the Dark Covenants. Unable to pursue those artifacts himself, he intends to send the PCs on a quest to discover them... and to banish Isawa Gidayu from the Empire.

Player's Introduction

The autumn air is chilly, and a thin scud of clouds drifts across the sky as you find yourself once more in the Imperial Capital, Otosan Uchi. It is the sixth day of the month of the Dog, and the cold weather and drifting brown leaves seem to match the grim mood of the city. You have come here to witness a grave occasion: the state funerals of the Jade Champion and the Imperial Herald.

It was less than four months ago that Kitsu Okura won the Jade Tournament and was appointed as the

Emperor's enforcer of the laws on magic and maho. Now he is dead, stricken down by a fever as he returned from a visit to the Asahina Temples. Rumor has it that in the scant eight days since his final breath, the Emperor has already appointed a replacement from the ranks of the finalists in the Jade Tournament.

Only a few weeks past, the Imperial Herald Miya Satoshi was preparing for his wedding to Matsu Miako. But his wedding at Kyuden Miya was assaulted by a pack of vicious ronin, supposedly led by none other than Toturi the Black, the fallen Akodo. Satoshi and many members of his family perished, and his office stands empty until the Emperor can appoint a new daimyo to the Miya.

Mourners line the Imperial Way which leads into the Forbidden City. As direct servants of the Emperor, Kitsu Okura and Miya Satoshi have been honored to have their mortal remains consumed with the very walls of the Emperor's sacred compound. Eta carry the biers with their remains up the street at a stately pace, passing beneath the crystal-topped gates of the Forbidden City, as Imperial shugenja and priests from the three temples of Otosan Uchi follow behind, chanting prayers for Okura's journey to the afterlife. The Emperor himself, thin and pale in a beautiful golden kimono, kneels within the gates, and bows as his faithful servants are carried past him.

Twin funeral pyres have been prepared in the midst of the Imperial Gardens, both of them next to the Lion Clan's Guest House, for Satoshi was schooled by the Lion and held the Emperor's Right Hand in great repute. The Jade Champion's body is laid upon one pyre, the Imperial Herald's upon the other, and the shugenja ignite them with whispered invocations of the Fire Kami. As the two men's mortal remains are consumed, a pillar of gray-white smoke rises up into the cloudy sky.

The PCs are assumed to be guests at the funeral. Where they are located during the ceremony will depend on their social status and Glory Rank:

- (1) PCs with Glory of 5.0 or more, who are members of one of the Imperial Families, who have the Advantages "Ear of the Emperor" or "Imperial Spouse," or who have a True Friend in the Imperial Families are allowed to watch the funeral from within the Forbidden City.
- (2) PCs who do not qualify for this, but who have Glory above 3.0, or who have Allies in the

Imperial Families, are allowed to watch from just outside the crystal gates of the Forbidden City.

- (3) PCs who do not meet any of these qualifications are placed farther back along the Imperial Road (though still within Otosan Uchi itself). They witness the funeral pyres only as columns of smoke rising into the sky.

PCs who are watching the funeral from the same area will be free to speak with each other, role-play, and otherwise interact before and after the funeral.

Meeting Kitsu Makoto

Kitsu Makoto observes the funeral from within the Forbidden City. After the funeral pyres are ignited and the ceremony concluded, he will approach the PCs to recruit them for his quest.

Makoto is a strong, physically fit young man who stands a few inches below average height. His hands and face are horrifically scarred, covered in pock-marks from a bout with disease. His hair is worn loose and long (almost four feet), and the bottom half is dyed white, as though he used to color his hair in the Crane style. He dresses in a beautiful kimono in Lion colors, displaying the mons of the Kitsu family and school, and carries a fine daisho as well as a scroll satchel.

How Kitsu Makoto approaches the PCs will depend on where they watch the funeral and whether they know him. Makoto is a former Player Character, and many players may have had a chance to share a table with him prior to this adventure.

- If the PCs know Makoto well, he will deliberately seek them out. He will start by approaching those PCs within the Forbidden City, then work his way out to those outside. In all cases, he speaks to the PCs in a grave, serious manner: “My friends. It is good to see you again, although I wish it were under better circumstances. Will you walk with me? There are important matters which I would discuss with you.”
- If the PCs do not know Makoto well, but are watching the funeral from within the Forbidden City, he will approach them immediately after the funeral. “A great tragedy for the Empire, to lose two such fine servants so closely together.” He bows to the PCs. “Samurai-sama. I am Kitsu Makoto, *sodan-senzo* in the service of the Lion Clan and the Empire. I wonder if we might speak together?”

- If the PCs do not know Makoto well, and are outside the Forbidden City, he will approach them after recruiting any other PCs who qualified above. “Your pardon, samurai-sama. I am Kitsu Makoto, *sodan-senzo* in the service of the Lion Clan and the Empire. I have need of your assistance, if you are willing to offer it.”

The PCs can always choose not to help Makoto, in which case they are out of the adventure.

A Conversation with Makoto

Once he has collected all the PCs, Makoto will take them for a stroll in the Hito Water Gardens, one of the more famous locations in the Imperial City. The gardens are spacious and serene, the main noise being the chuckling of water through the many streams and ponds, and Makoto strolls along paths and over beautiful arched bridges, nodding and bowing to other samurai and courtiers as they pass.

“Samurai, I have approached you over a matter most grave. Our Empire’s Jade Champion served for only a few months before dying, of a fever which even the blessed spirits could not cure.” He does not openly state that he was one of those who attempted to treat Kitsu Okura, but PCs should be able to draw their own conclusions. ***“I believe his death may be laid at the feet of a dark power, a servant of He Who is Not to be Named. One who some of you may have met before. The Dark Oracle of Air, who once went by the name of Isawa Gidayu.”***

The Dark Oracles are a new phenomenon, one which has only recently emerged from the Shadowlands, and Makoto has been studying them, trying to learn how they may be defeated. ***“I have discovered that the power of all the Oracles, Light and Dark alike, is bound by certain mysterious artifacts known as the Covenants, which govern the connection between the Oracles and the Celestial... or demonic... power which flows through their bodies. Someone who came into possession of one of these Covenants could give a command to the Oracle to which it belonged, a command which that Oracle would be unable to refuse. For example, a command to never again meddle in the affairs of the Empire.”***

Makoto wants the PCs to go in search of the Dark Covenant of Air. ***“All of the Dark Oracles are threats to the Empire, but Isawa Gidayu has wrecked havoc among our people for years. It was he who helped a crazed Iuchi shugenja to steal one of the Black Scrolls***

and unleash the Wasting Disease on the Crane lands two years ago. I believe it is also he who was responsible for the death of Kitsune Okura-sama. He must be stopped."

Makoto cannot accompany the PCs himself. ***"I have... another matter, most grave, which I must attend to here in the capital. A matter which may be just as important to the future of the Empire. It may take my life. I would ask you to take up this quest for me, so that the Dark Oracle of Air no longer plagues the Empire."***

Assuming the PCs agree (or at least seem cooperative), Makoto can share the following additional information:

- Why did he choose the PCs? "I have asked the Fortunes and Ancestors for guidance. They led me to you. I cannot refuse their choice."
- How Can the PCs Find the Dark Covenants? "The Oracles are all connected, each to the other, and each – whether Light or Dark – must answer one question of those who approach it. I do not know where the Dark Oracles may be found... but I do know, from my communions with the blessed ancestors, that the Oracle of Earth is currently residing at the Shrine of Osano-Wo, on the Plains of Thunder. His guidance should be able to lead you to the Dark Covenant of Air."
- What do the Dark Covenants look like? Makoto does not know. He does know that the Covenants of the true Oracles resemble scrolls, and expects that the Dark Covenants will either be the same, or a similar small object.
- What exactly should the PCs do with the Dark Covenant? "The Covenant will protect you from the Dark Oracle's power, and he will have to answer one question from you. Then, you will be able to issue one command against him, which he must obey. I would suggest commanding him to leave the Empire and not return." He also warns the PCs that once the command is issued and fulfilled, the Covenant will no longer protect them from the power of the Oracle – which makes commanding him to leave all the more desirable.
- What is the "other matter" which he must attend to? Makoto will be somewhat reticent about this, but remarks, "There are other threats to the Empire than the Dark Oracles, and I am preparing to face one of them. It is a task which only I am suited

for." He will not accept any offers of help with this mysterious errand.

Makoto does not have any other information he can offer the PCs. However, if none of them are Emerald Magistrates, he can arrange travel papers for them. He will also offer to hire fine riding ponies (+1 Horsemanship skill) for any PCs who need mounts.

Finally, if a Lion PC with Honor 4.0 or better agrees to undertake this quest, Makoto will cast *Immortal Steel* on that PC's katana. For the duration of the adventure, the sword will be considered a magical weapon, and will do an extra 1k1 damage.

Part One: To the Shrine of Osano-Wo

From the Imperial Capital to the Shrine of Osano-Wo is a journey of over four weeks. The PCs pass through Crane lands for twelve days, another day in Lion lands, then another two days passing through the mighty Beiden Pass. Six more days take the PCs through the Scorpion lands and across the Plains of Thunder.

The rolling plains are the domain of Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder, and are plagued with frequent storms, fierce lightning-split downpours that rush out of nowhere and turn the day almost night-dark for their brief durations. The PCs will be dirty, tired, and thoroughly drenched by the time they finally reach the Shrine.

The Shrine of Osano-Wo, the Fortune of Thunder, is a large compound surrounded by a low stone wall. Seven large torii arches straddle the path that leads through the wall and up to the main temple building. Other smaller buildings – monk's barracks, dojos, and so forth – surround the main pagoda structure of the temple. Outside the wall is a sizable village, probably home to several hundred people, and you can see rice paddies and grain fields beyond.

Politely smiling but very muscular monks will welcome the PCs to the Shrine. Many of them have scars and other legacies of a lifetime of martial service – the Order of Osano-Wo is one of the few branches of the Brotherhood of Shinsei that attracts many retirees from the Crab Clan.

Meeting the Abbot

After a short wait, the PCs will be taken to meet with the abbot of the shrine, Gyoto, a muscular and serene old man in his mid-sixties, with four parallel claw-scars

which crease his shaven scalp. Gyoto is friendly and good-natured, but a bit quirky in his behavior – for example, he likes to mix, brew, and serve his own tea, and will offer some to the PCs when he welcomes them to his room. He usually comes across as a kindly but eccentric old uncle, although PCs may sense some steel beneath the friendly surface – Gyoto was once a Hiruma berserker. “How may the Shrine of Osano-Wo assist you, samurai?”

Presumably the PCs will ask about the Oracle of Earth. Abbot Gyoto will raise his eyebrows. “Hiruma Osuno-sama has been in the shrine for only the last three months. I am surprised that word of his presence has stretched so far.” He is not immediately willing to let the PCs meet with the Oracle – they must convince him that their mission is worthy.

This is a minor role-playing challenge for the PCs. Deception and incomplete information will not impress the abbot (he is more than perceptive enough to see through any false story), and PCs who take such an approach will be scolded for their lack of honor. PCs who are honest and explain their mission fully will impress the abbot.

If the PCs are dishonest, the abbot will not want to let them speak with the Oracle. They will have to offer a well role-played apology and roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 20 in order to convince him to change his mind.

Assuming the PCs do convince the abbot to let them speak with the Oracle, he will clap his hands, summoning one of the junior monks. “Take these honored samurai to the gardens, to speak with our special guest.” The young monk bows and leads the PCs through the Shrine complex.

Speaking with the Oracle

The young monk leads you through the Shrine’s main temple, past the mighty statue of Osano-Wo, and through a back door to the temple rock garden. Raked gravel forms subtle patterns around the large boulders, sculpted shrubs, streams and pools which dot the large garden, lending an air of serenity and quiet perfection that is only enhanced by the cool autumn breeze. Overhead, a thick stormcloud drifts across the sky, shrouding and then revealing the afternoon light of Mother Sun.

Hiruma Osuno, the Oracle of Earth, appears to be a broad-shouldered, muscular man in middle age, with a thick belly and bald head. His skin has a dark tan-gray tone, and his eyes gleam softly with the green

light of jade. He is seated cross-legged on a large boulder, both hands pressed against the black stone, a blank expression on his face.

When the PCs approach, Hiruma Osuno blinks, turns his face toward them, then lifts his hands and sets them on his knees. “So. Kitsu Makoto has sent you, to seek the Oracle of Earth. I am he. Ask and learn.”

Each PC is entitled to one question of the Oracle of Earth. He will answer each question, but does not always do so clearly – being an Oracle, he will often speak in an enigmatic or mysterious way, answering incompletely or obliquely. However, he will never lie or deliberately deceive in any way.

The Oracle can offer the following specific information, although the GM should feel free to present it in mysterious “Oracle-type” language:

- The Dark Covenant of Air is kept in a place Osuno calls “the Lost Temple.” It is a place that serves the Ninth Kami (Fu Leng).
- The “Lost Temple” is located in the northern Shadowlands, at the fork of the Black Finger and Dark Moon Rivers.
- If the PCs ask what sort of opposition they may face, Osuno tells them the Temple is guarded by “those who maintain it, and by the servants of the Dark Oracle.”
- If the PCs ask for more background on the Temple, or why it is called “Lost,” Osuno will explain that long ago, before the First War, it was a shrine to a Jizo, the Fortune of Mercy. “When Fu Leng’s armies marched out of the Shadowlands, they took the place and made it their own. Now those who dwell there follow false paths, and serve lies.”
- If the PCs ask what the Covenant looks like, Osuno says it is an ancient scroll-case carved from obsidian, inlaid with tracteries of gold, and stoppered with carved bone. “But within is no scroll, only choking dust.”
- If the PCs ask about the other three Dark Covenants, Osuno will frown. “One Oracle will be more than enough for you to face, I am sure.”

Once he has finished answering their questions, the Oracle of Earth will return to his meditations and ignores any further comments, questions, or actions of the PCs. As a celestial being, his power is far beyond

theirs – any PC foolish enough to threaten or attack him will be seized and held in a massive hand of stone which rises out of the ground. Osuno leaves such disrespectful PCs in the grip of this stone hand until the next morning, as a lesson in manners.

How Do We Get There From Here?

Any PC with “Way of the Land” for Crab lands (or the Shadowlands) will know the simplest route to get to the rivers which Osuno mentioned. PCs can also know this by rolling **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 15. Such PCs will know that the so-called Black Finger River branches off from the River of the Last Stand on the northern edge of the Shadowlands. The Black Finger winds deeper and deeper into the Shadowlands, and at some point splits, forming another river, the Dark Moon. The fork is located about three days into the Shadowlands as the crow flies, six days if one follows the Black Finger River from the border.

In the absence of such personal knowledge, the PCs can ask the monks at the Shrine, since many of them are retired Crab. Abbot Gyoto, for one, can tell the PCs exactly where they need to go, although he finds such memories painful:

“In the northern Crab lands, above the Great Carpenter Wall, the border of the Shadowlands is guarded by small towers and keeps, as it was everywhere in the old days, before the coming of the Maw.” He pauses and runs his hand slowly over the scars on his head. *“The Hiruma often send scouts through the border there, since it is easily traversed and there are few evil creatures to obstruct them. It is in those lands that a waterway branches off from the River of the Last Stand, and winds its way into Fu Leng’s land. The Black Finger, we call it, for its waters are dark and foul. If one follows this river for six days, one will come to a place where it forks, creating a lesser branch called the River of the Dark Moon.”*

The abbot warns the PCs that, while the northern Shadowlands are sparsely inhabited, the farther they follow the Black Finger the more dangerous the lands become. *“Even the most experienced Hiruma scouts do not often venture deeper than the fork of the Black Finger and Dark Moon. Those lands lie close to the Festering Pit, and are deadly to all things not already of Jigoku.”*

Part Two: To the Crab Lands

Presumably, the PCs will want to travel to their goal as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, the Shinomen Forest – domain of the Naga – lies athwart the most direct route. In the past, the Crab would escort visitors through the narrower regions of the Shinomen, but now any PCs who try to cross the forest will be signing their own death warrant. Since the Naga clashed with the Imperial Legions last summer, they will not suffer any human to cross their borders. PCs who had previous friendly contacts with the Naga (such as in the module *Tao of the Naga*) will be warned off by Naga warriors before they are committed to a fatal course of travel.

Barring this catastrophe, the PCs can choose to circle the Shinomen either to the north or the south. Going north will take the PCs more directly to their goal, but will also be a longer trip.

PCs can use Map #1 (routes to the Crab lands) to plan their journey.

Traveling North

This route will take the PCs through the southern Unicorn lands, past the Chrysanthemum Petal Lake, then south through the vast Naga Road Plain (Naga Doro Heigen), an empty territory controlled by neither the Naga nor the Empire. At the end of seventeen days, the PCs will reach the small fertile valley which is the meager territory of the Falcon Clan.

The Falcon have held themselves aloof from the conflicts elsewhere in the Empire, including the Crab civil war, and will offer polite hospitality to the PCs regardless of Clan affiliation.

From the Falcon lands, three more days of travel will take the PCs to the Crab stronghold known as Face of the East Castle. This territory is controlled by the Crab “rebel” faction led by Hida Sukune. Alternatively, the PCs can cross the low, jagged peaks of the Mountains of Twilight to the main “rebel” stronghold at Razor of the Dawn Castle, which takes two days longer.

Traveling South

The fastest route is to take a boat on the Kawa no Kin (River of Gold), traveling south along the border of Scorpion lands to the Lake of Cherry Blossom Snow, at the edge of Sparrow lands. This will take twelve days.

There, a large Lion army is encamped. This force of 24,000 bushi is led by Matsu Agetoki, one of the mightiest of Lion generals, and has come here to intervene in the Crab civil war. They are currently patrolling the area and trying to get a feel for the situation in Crab lands before advancing farther. Any PCs will be briefly questioned and then, assuming they are polite, led to a meeting with Agetoki.

The Lion commander is a tall, muscular man with a thick moustache and a wide, infectious smile. His armor is splendid and the orange mane of his war-helm is a formidable sight. As you enter his command pavilion, he thumps a hand on his armored thigh and calls for sake.

Matsu Agetoki is a loud, bluff, vivid, energetic man, a devotee of the joy of battle, who likes nothing better than to charge across a field at the head of a troop of Lion cavalry. He is somewhat irritated by his current mission, and seems unsure which side he should be fighting. He will regard the PCs as a welcome distraction, and offers all the help he can. He can share the following information with the PCs:

- There are no Crab troops in the immediate area. As nearly as he can determine, most of the “loyalist” troops (followers of Kisada) are to the south, centered around Kyuden Hida and Shiro Kuni, while the “rebels” (followers of Sukune) are to the west, near Razor of the Dawn Castle. The rebels also control Face of the East Castle. Shiro no Kaiu is still officially neutral, although Agetoki has heard gossip that the Kaiu family secretly supports Sukune.
- The Lion have not encountered any Shadowlands creatures, but they have heard rumors that many of these creatures have gotten over the Wall due to the civil war. “No need to worry – if any of them get this far, they will pay the price for meddling with the Lion!”
- If the PCs explain where they must go (the Black Finger River), Agetoki will suggest that they travel across the northern edge of Crab lands until they reach the “rebel” territory. “Kisada’s followers are more likely to attack you than talk to you – they aren’t happy about outsiders in their lands right now,” he grins.

If the PCs take Agetoki’s advice and travel across the northern edge of Crab lands, they will safely bypass the major fighting of the civil war, and, depending on their choice of route, eventually arrive at either Face of the

East Castle or Razor of the Dawn Castle (both controlled by the “rebels”). This will take another fourteen days.

Face of the East Castle

This was formerly the castle where the Crab Clan conducted most of its diplomacy with the outside world. The combination of the civil war and the awakening of the Naga has abruptly reduced this castle to an insignificant backwater, and Sukune’s “rebel” faction has taken control, although the castle proper is still ruled by diplomats from the Yasuki family. Compared to most Crab castles, Face of the East is a comfortable and well-decorated place, with beautiful artwork, excellent furnishings, and other luxuries to fulfill the expectations of visiting dignitaries from wealthier Clans.

A small garrison of fifty “rebel” Crab bushi guards this region, mainly to protect the area against Shadowlands incursions and Naga raiders, as well as to ensure that the region’s modest crops are harvested for the rebels and not for Kisada.

The local commander, Hida Hirose, is a grim, serious man who the PCs may have met in the adventures *Lies, Lies, Lies* and *Soul of Akodo*. He is very conflicted and uncertain about the civil war – although he is no longer willing to follow Hida Kisada, he is not yet convinced that Hida Sukune was right to rebel, and he does not feel that he can fight his fellow Crab. (Which is why he has been sent here to guard this castle.) He was originally a “loyalist” but switched sides after he saw Sukune’s troops fight off a huge Shadowlands force with the help of the Jade Hand (the adventure *Dark Eyes on the Wall*).

If the PCs explain their mission, Hirose will be impressed. He knows nothing about any “Lost Temple,” but is well aware of the threat from the Dark Oracles, having seen the Elemental Terrors on rampage. Assuming the PCs seem brave and competent, and behave reasonably respectfully, Hirose will offer to provide them with safe-conduct to the Crab outpost which lies closest to the Black Finger River: a minor stronghold called Shiro no Yotogi (Vigilant Castle).

Razor of the Dawn Castle

This modest, heavily-fortified castle, built into the foothills of the Mountains of Twilight, is the current headquarters of the “rebel” faction led by Hida Sukune and his sister O-Ushi. An army of about 5,000 bushi and ashigaru is stationed immediately in and around the

castle, with smaller forces positioned farther out to guard against any moves by the “loyalists.” PCs who pass within a day’s travel of the castle will be detected, stopped by a patrol, and brought in for questioning.

The PCs will meet with Hiruma Yoshi, the aging daimyo of the Hiruma family. A grim, haggard man who is well past the normal age of retirement, Yoshi will question the PCs slowly and carefully, paying particular attention to any Crab, Lion, or Mantis PCs. (He will want to know which side the Crab PCs support, and will be inherently suspicious of the Lion and Mantis due to their Clans’ dubious intervention in the Crab civil war.)

Once Yoshi has satisfied himself that the PCs are not spies and that their mission is genuine, he will answer a few questions. He will not permit the PCs to meet with Hida Sukune or Hida O-Ushi, even if they have been friends with those individuals in the past. He will claim that both leaders are laboring under “great burdens” and cannot spare time to meet with visitors. PCs who make a **Contested Awareness** roll against Yoshi’s **Awareness** of 4 will realize that he is hiding something, but he will not admit anything. (In actuality, Sukune is very sick and O-Ushi is with child.)

- Yoshi can tell the PCs that the Black Finger branches from the River of the Last Stand near a minor outpost called Shiro no Yotogi (Vigilant Castle). He will give the PCs a pass to visit the castle, if they have not already gotten one from Hida Hirose.
- Yoshi knows little about the Dark Oracles. “We have heard rumors of these demons for many years, but it is only recently that those rumors have been confirmed by experience. Now their Elemental Terrors appear in the ranks of every Shadowlands army.” He will show a grudging respect for the PCs’ willingness to deal with the threat of the Dark Oracles, and wishes them well.
- Yoshi will not share any information on the Crab civil war unless “rebel” PCs speak with him privately. In that case, he will confide that the situation looks grim. “The only reason we are not already defeated is that a few allies elsewhere in the Empire have been smuggling supplies and ronin to our army. If this Lion army truly takes action against Kisada, then perhaps... we shall see.” He is not sure they can hold out through the winter.

- Yoshi does not share his opinions about the civil war with anyone, not even from his own Clan. “My actions speak for me,” he growls.
- If the PCs ask about the Kaiu Wall, or about Shadowlands attacks, Yoshi will openly admit that many sections of the Wall are no longer defended, and Shadowlands forces are ravaging the lands between Shiro Kuni and Razor of the Dawn Castle. “Shiro no Kaiu has even been attacked, although the demons who made that mistake are no longer among the living.”
- If the PCs ask for any advice or help on going into the Shadowlands, Yoshi regards them quietly. “We can spare little, but Shiro no Yotogi can at least give you jade fingers and preserved rations. Beyond that... I can only tell you to trust in your courage.”

Dealing With the Loyalists

It is possible that the PCs may ignore the suggestions of Matsu Agetoki (or take a route not considered here) and try to pass through territory controlled by the Crab “loyalist” faction. This is a dangerous choice – after the public black eye he suffered from the last group of visitors to enter Crab lands (in *Dark Eyes on the Wall*), Hida Kisada has ordered his patrols to attack on sight. Unless the party is composed entirely of Crab loyalist PCs (or perhaps ronin or other non-threatening “neutrals”), the PCs will be repeatedly attacked by patrols of 15-20 Crab bushi. No negotiations will be permitted, and the bushi will pursue until the PCs flee their territory.

Shiro no Yotogi

You hike through the rugged hills of the Mountains of Twilight, following a narrow path which skirts the edges of the steeper hills, cuts through narrow valleys, and occasionally leaps gullies and streams with squat, sturdy bridges. For the last half-day you have seen no signs of human habitation, and the autumn weather has grown cloudy and cold, an icy wind whistling through the rocky valleys to tug at your clothing.

Ahead, you see a gray tower rising above the hills. As your route emerges from between jagged boulders, you can see more clearly: a squat, simple fortress, little more than a tower and surrounding curtain wall, crouching on the shoulder of the mountain. Below the stronghold, a clear view stretches across lower hills and valleys toward the dim, gray realm of the Shadowlands on the western horizon. Bushi stand

watch on the walls of Shiro no Yotogi, and several of them quickly notice you.

The Crab will be suspicious but not immediately hostile, and once the PCs present their safe passage (whether from Hirose or Yoshi), they will be welcomed to the castle's meager hospitality. Shiro no Yotogi is a cold, bluntly practical stronghold without the slightest hint of comfort or luxury: the PCs will be stuffed into barracks rooms to share their nights with snoring Crab bushi.

The commander of Shiro no Yotogi is Hida Yotako, a short, bullet-headed man in his thirties with a shaved scalp and narrow, squinting eyes. He is sensitive about his height (which earned him his name, "Little Yota") and generally takes a dim view of non-Crab, who he tends to regard as fools and effete dandies. He takes no position on the Crab civil war: "My duty is here, and remains here. Whatever may happen elsewhere, Shiro no Yotogi will not fail its duty."

Yotako's assignment at this castle is usually tiresome and boring – when things get interesting, it means something has gone terribly wrong. Consequently, he regards the unexpected arrival of the PCs as a bad turn of fortune, and possibly a sign of worse to come. He will be brusque and impolite with the PCs, although he avoids openly insulting anyone of high station (Imperial Families, or PCs with Glory 4.0 or better).

Once the PCs explain their mission, Yotako will definitely shift them into the "fool" category, and does his best to discourage them from going farther. (Crab PCs will be urged to "talk some sense into your friends.") If the PCs lose their tempers or otherwise behave foolishly, he will simply expel them from his lands – if the PCs want to continue, they will have to either apologize humbly, or do without Crab help (such as jade fingers).

Assuming the PCs avoid giving offense, Yotako will eventually realize he cannot dissuade them from going on their "fool's mission." In that case he will grudgingly supply them with preserved rations (rice balls and dried fish) for twelve days, and two jade fingers each (enough to endure the Taint for thirteen days).

Yotako and his men can share the following additional information, although the PCs will need to show respect for the struggles and duties of the Crab in order to get their cooperation.

- Hiruma scouts have indeed reported seeing something which resembles a "temple" at the fork of the Black Finger and Dark Moon rivers. They describe it as an ancient structure swathed in gray mists. None have ever ventured inside.
- The river fork is about six days' travel into the Shadowlands.
- The border of the Shadowlands is considered to be the River of the Last Stand, which is about six miles from here. Although there is no Wall to guard the border here, in these northern regions the Shadowlands is only sparsely populated. Attacks are few and usually weak, and the small garrison here is able to handle them easily.
- If at least one of the PCs is a Crab, they will be warned that a new oni, resembling a ball of tentacles, was spotted two weeks ago in the Black Finger River. No one has actually fought the creature yet, so they have no information on its nature or vulnerabilities.

Option: Taking the Direct Route?

Some PCs, especially those who have personal knowledge of the Shadowlands (Way of the Lands, or **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 15) may think it is more efficient to march directly overland to the fork of the Black Finger and Dark Moon rivers, rather than following the Black Finger downstream. This could certainly reduce the amount of time they must spend in the Shadowlands, potentially halving the travel time from six days to three.

However, this option has a fatal flaw. In order to attempt such a direct march, the PCs would have to cross the Kaiu Wall in the region close to the Fifth Tower, where the Shadowlands now holds sway. This region is controlled by an army of monsters and undead led by Hida Atarasi, a powerful akutenshi (evil angel). Any Crabs the PCs encounter will warn them against this route in the strongest possible terms. Those who ignore such advice sign their own death warrants.

Part Three: Into the Shadowlands

Once the PCs have acquired their supplies, and assuming they are adamant about continuing their mission, Hida Yotako will reluctantly order three of his bushi to guide the PCs to the fork of the Black Finger and Last Stand rivers.

From Shiro no Yotogi, a two-hour march takes you down through the foothills of the Twilight Mountains to a broad, rocky valley. The River of the Last Stand, which farther downstream is a formidable natural barrier, here is a broad, shallow waterway, the surface of the water broken by rocks and sand-bars. The Crab lead you downstream a couple of miles, to where a rugged, forested hill splits the river in two. The main channel continues to flow sluggishly southeast, toward the distant Kaiu Wall. The other branch, narrower and deeper, plunges off southwest, cutting between jagged hills. The Crab point across at it. “That is the mouth of the Black Finger River. Here the water is still pure, but once you cross over you will be entering Fu Leng’s realm, and nothing there can be eaten or drunk safely.” They bow briefly. “May the Fortunes guide your path.”

The PCs can easily ford the River of the Last Stand (it flows slowly here, and is seldom more than three feet deep). Once they are on the far side, following the Black Finger river, they will enter the Shadowlands within a few miles.

Effects of the Shadowlands

Once the PCs enter the Shadowlands, the following effects will apply:

- Wood, cloth, and other flammables will not burn properly, emitting only a weak, sputtering blue flame which offers little or no heat (but does attract nocturnal predators). Dead bodies also are reluctant to burn naturally, should the PCs need to perform an emergency cremation (the Crab usually use spells).
- Wounds will not heal naturally. Curative magics (such as *Path to Inner Peace*) and nemuranai (such as Crane fetishes or Dragon Clan potions) will work normally, however. Also, any time a PC is injured in the Shadowlands, they must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 10 or gain a point of Taint.
- All spells cast in the Shadowlands (except *maho* spells) are at +10 TN due to the unfriendly nature of the local spirits.
- Void points and spell rings do not recover naturally (e.g. through rest). The Meditation skill will still work for recovering both Void and spell rings. It is impossible to perform a Tea Ceremony in the Shadowlands.

- If the PCs should lose their jade fingers, they will be vulnerable to the Taint. They must roll **Simple Earth** for each day and each night they spend unprotected in the Shadowlands. The TN is 5 for the first roll, 10 for the second, 15 for the third, and so forth. If a roll is failed, the PC gains a point of Taint immediately, and one additional point each day and each night thereafter until they leave the Shadowlands.
- Food and water brought into the Shadowlands will quickly become Tainted and diseased unless it is stored in proximity to jade. Likewise, any food or water the PCs scrounge or hunt while in the Shadowlands (except food offered by ratlings) carries the Taint. Eating Tainted food or drinking Tainted water requires a **Simple Earth** roll at TN 15 to avoid getting 1-5 (1 die halved) points of Taint.

Three Days Without Incident

For the first three days, the PCs will pass through empty, rocky lands, following the Black Finger River as it winds between low, jagged hills. Clumps of stunted, unhealthy-looking trees decorate the slopes. The weather is cloudy and cold, with chilling winds at night. With each day, the water of the Black Finger grows darker, muddier, more threatening. Aside from that, however, the only real signs that the PCs are in the Shadowlands are the sputtering green light of fires and the slow corrupting of their protective jade fingers.

During this time, however, have each PC roll **Simple Awareness**. Secretly subtract 5 from the roll for any PCs who have Shadowlands Taint, 10 if the Taint exceeds a Rank. The PC who gets the lowest roll attracts the attention of a *yokai* (Shadowlands ghost), Isawa Kakusu-Sakana. Formerly one of the five Masters of the Bloodspeaker Cult, he was slain in the Shadowlands three years ago, and now seeks living souls to torment.

A “Helpful” Spirit

Isawa Kakusu-Sakana will attach himself to the PC who got the lowest Awareness roll. The yokai will harass him/her, offering “advice” which mostly consists of urging the PC to go back to the Empire, collect the scattered survivors of the Bloodspeaker Cult, and lead them to glorious victory. He will relentlessly ridicule the PC’s beliefs in Honor, the Empire, and the Celestial Order, and will drag out the PC’s darkest inner secrets and insecurities for attack, using them all to attack the PC and support the Bloodspeaker faith. Finally,

Kakusu-Sakana will also make ironic and sniping comments on the PCs' progress through the Shadowlands, pointing out every mistake the PCs make when it is too late to help. ("Oh, you really shouldn't have touched that plant, too late now.")

Other PCs cannot see, hear, or communicate with the yokai unless they use a Cloud tattoo or can cast the spells *Sense Ancestor* or *Summon Ancestor*. (A Falcon PC can also spot the yokai with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20.) The yokai cannot be attacked or dispelled, although the spell *Evil Ward* will force it to stay away until the magic expires (it will be unhappy about this).

Kakusu-Sakana does not actually help the PC in any way unless the PC knows *maho* spells. In that case, the yokai offers the PC advice on how to work the spells more effectively, causing the PC to gain a Free Raise when casting *maho*.

Worms in the Night

On one of the nights the PCs spend in the Shadowlands (regardless of where they make camp), a large, pale-gray bloodworm will slip up on them. The worm is silent and moves slowly, and cannot be noticed unless the PCs are somehow able to keep their camp brightly lit or magically warded for the entire night.

The worm will preferentially try to conceal itself in a helm which was removed for the night. If that option is not available, it will hide in a traveling pack or scroll satchel, hoping to sneak out later and attach itself to the owner.

The PC who has the worm will need to roll **Simple Perception** at TN 25 to notice the faint pin-prick of the worm biting (its saliva is mildly paralytic). If the PC fails to notice, s/he will suffer 1k1 Wounds per hour until the worm has drunk a total of 20 Wound of blood, at which point (if not yet detected) it detaches itself and falls off. It is possible that the PC, or other PCs, might notice the worm before then, depending on where it is attached and what the PCs are doing – the GM should adjudicate this.

If the worm is discovered, it can be easily slain or removed. However, doing so improperly is hazardous – the PCs must roll **Lore: Shadowlands/Intelligence** at TN 15 to remember the correct method of getting rid of the worm, which is to lightly burn it with fire or jade (this will cause it to detach itself and curl up in a ball). Ripping the worm off by force is easily done, but the

PC suffers an additional 2k1 Wounds as the worm's sharp teeth tear loose.

The worst solution is to kill the worm (inflicting 6 or more Wounds) before detaching it. This will cause it to regurgitate Tainted, half-digested blood into its victim, who suffers an automatic 1 point of Taint and must roll **Simple Earth** at TN 20 or become infected and feverish. An infected victim suffers a +5 TN penalty to all actions, increasing by an additional +5 each day until cured or until the penalty hits +25, at which point the PC is delirious and physically too weak to move. The infection can be cured with *Hands of Jurojin*, or with a medical kit and **Medicine/Intelligence** or **Herbalism/Intelligence** at TN 20 (after successful treatment, the TN penalties will decline by 5 per day until gone).

Fourth Day: A Dangerous Forest

Early on the fourth day, the river passes into a low, broad valley filled with a dark, ugly forest. The trees are skinny and sprout branches in strange, erratic patterns, forming a menacing tangle of naked limbs and intermittent clumps of dark, green-black leaves. Thick, pale-green vines twine through the branches like sleeping snakes.

PCs can choose to circle around this forest, leaving the riverside and staying in the rocky foothills until they reach the far end of the forest and find the river again. This will be a safe and mostly boring journey, but will take two days, adding a day to the total length of their journey. Their jade may not last through such detours...

If the PCs remain by the river, they will spend the entire fourth day under the canopy of the unnatural forest. If they stop at nightfall, they will have to camp under the trees as well.

If the PCs push on past nightfall, they will reach the edge of the forest within another two hours. However, unless they can make magical light, they will be traveling in near total darkness. Each PC must roll **Simple Reflexes** at TN 10 or stumble and suffer a painful fall, taking 1k1 damage. If the PC fumbles (fails with three or more 1's), s/he suffers a sprained ankle, and is at a +5 penalty to all physical actions which require the use of that leg (such as fighting) until the injury is magically healed or treated with a **Medicine/Intelligence** roll at TN 20.

The forest is a dangerous place. If the PCs spend the day traveling through it, they will have two encounters

(described below). If they camp for the night within the forest borders, they will have a third encounter, likewise described below.

First Daylight Forest Encounter: The Fallen Child

The PCs hear light, childish laughter ahead of them. If they do nothing, the laughter continues for a time, then slowly fades away. If they investigate before the noise fades, they will find a disturbing sight:

Kneeling by the edge of the river is a small child, no more than eight years old. He is dressed in a dirty garment which resembles a monk's robes, and his skin is pale and clear. He is drinking, lowering his face to the water. After a moment he lifts his head and sits back, swallowing with every appearance of enjoyment. His face is sweetly innocent.

If the PCs do not conceal themselves, the child will quickly notice them and introduces himself. He calls himself “Yukiro” and talks with the PCs in a friendly, sweet-natured, innocent manner, seemingly oblivious to the nature of his surroundings and the dangers of the Shadowlands.

Yujiro is one of the Corrupted Children from the Temple (see Part Four). Anyone who can detect Taint (Witch-Hunters, Moto) can tell that Yujiro is deeply Tainted. Jade will burn his flesh, and he will scream and run away crying if anyone hurts him with jade or anti-Taint magic.

Barring that, Yujiro will tag along with the PCs, talking with them and asking questions. He will want to know who the PCs are, what their names are, where they live, and so forth. He has never met samurai before (but has heard stories about them), and will be very curious. In return, he will tell the PCs a great deal about himself:

- He lives in “the Temple,” where he and other children are watched over by “old monks.” He regards these old monks as mean and boring. “They make us study and work, and beat us if we misbehave.” He confesses, with childish glee, that he ran away from them several days ago. “It’s much more fun out here, with so many things to see and do.”
- He describes the “Temple” as located in the fork of two rivers, and says it is very old and run-down. “The monks say it has been there since the beginning of time. Maybe that’s why it’s always foggy. I don’t like fog.”

- Many children live in the Temple. “Sometimes there’s as many as twenty of us!” New children arrive from time to time, and others are taken away by the monks when they get “too old.” (This is apparently about fourteen.)
- None of the children remember where they came from or who they were before arriving at the Temple, and Yujiro grows distressed if the PCs press him on this matter.
- He does not say how many monks are there, and does not describe them beyond saying, “They’re monks! Old monks! Don’t you know what monks are?”
- Yujiro doesn’t know anything about a “Dark Covenant,” but if the PCs ask about a black scroll-case, he says there is one in the Temple’s central shrine. “The monks say it is very important. They say prayers to it, every night. We aren’t allowed in there except four times a year, for special ceremonies.” He won’t describe these ceremonies. “They’re special – we can’t talk about them to outsiders.”

Yujiro is Tainted and evil, but it is a childish, almost unwitting evil. If the PCs allow it, he will be their friend for several hours, traveling with them, listening to their stories, and telling his own. After that time, however, he tires of the PCs, and begins to regard them as irritants and bores rather than friends. Given the chance, he will try to steal something from one of the PCs (preferably something small and valuable, such as a spell-scroll or a pouch of jade powder). Eventually, either after he has stolen something or when he is caught trying, he will abruptly leave the PCs and run away into the forest. If the PCs do not catch him, he will never be seen again.

Second Daylight Forest Encounter: Bloodsucking Vines

Some of the thick, pallid vines in the trees are actually predatory. One of the PCs (chosen randomly) will be targeted by the vines, which will suddenly try to drop in suffocating folds around the PC’s head and neck.

The PC can dodge the vine by rolling **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 20. The PC gets a Free Raise if wearing a helm. Failure to dodge means the PC is trapped in the smothering vine. At the beginning of the next round, small mouths open in the sides of the vine and begin to

suck out the PC's blood, causing 2k1 damage per round.

The writhing, pulsating vine clings to the PC and attempts to gorge itself with blood, continuing until the PC is dead or it is driven off. The PC who is trapped in the vine is blinded and smothering, and suffers a +10 TN penalty to all actions. Any attempt to peel off the vine will require a **Contested Strength** roll, with no more than two PCs combining their efforts. Striking the vine where it is attached to the PC will require two Raises to avoid hitting the PC – the vine can also be attacked and severed higher up (away from its victim), but if it is hacked loose in this way, it will continue to suck blood for one more round before its unnatural vitality fades.

Low-End Vine: TN 15 to hit, Carapace of 5, 25 Wounds, Strength 4.

High-End Vine: TN 20 to hit, Carapace of 7, 35 Wounds, Strength 6.

Nighttime Forest Encounter

If the PCs camp in the forest (instead of pushing on into the open land beyond), the following incident will occur during the night:

You hear the faint sound of music, drums and flutes, mingled with laughter. Pale lights of yellow and red and blue, like the glow from colored lanterns, bob through the forest in the distance, winking in and out.

If the PCs ignore the lights and noises, they will get louder and brighter, circling close around the camp and making it impossible for the PCs to rest or center themselves (meditation attempts will be at +10 TN due to the relentless distraction). The next day (the fifth day), the PCs will all be at +5 to their actions due to weariness.

If the PCs go out to investigate or attack, they will find themselves chasing the bobbing lights and laughing music through the pitch-dark forest. All PCs who pursue in this manner must roll **Athletics/Reflexes** at TN 15 or **Defense/Awareness** at TN 20 to avoid tripping and falling painfully for 1k1 damage. Again, if the damage die explodes, the PC suffers a sprained ankle, inflicting a +5 TN penalty on all actions that involves standing or walking (including combat) until healed with curative magic or a **Medicine/Intelligence** roll at TN 20.

Once the PCs have pursued for at least a half-hour (or at least two of them have gotten hurt), the lights and noise fade away. At that point, the PCs who gave chase are alone in a pitch-dark forest in the Shadowlands.

- If only some of the PCs gave chase, they will have to reunite with the rest of the party. This will require a roll of **Hunting/Intelligence** at TN 20 or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25 to find their way back to their camp. (Alternatively, if they wait for morning and then try to follow their own tracks, the TNs are reduced by 5.) Advantages such as Way of the Land, or creative use of spells (such as *The Ties That Bind*) could also guide the PCs back to their camp.
- If all of the PCs gave chase, they will have to find their way back to the river in order to continue their journey. This will require the same rolls as above, but with the TNs reduced by 5.

Fifth Day: Slough of Despair

After the forest, the land becomes bleak and rocky again, the river winding between hills and cliffs. In early afternoon, the river broadens out into a dark, mist-shrouded swamp. Sickly-looking reeds and occasional stubby, broken-off tree-trunks stick out of the brown, opaque water.

The swamp is hemmed in on both sides by steep, rocky hills. Climbing these hills in order to bypass the swamp will require a roll of **Athletics/Agility** at TN 20 or **Climbing/Agility** at TN 15. It will also add a day to the PCs' journey, as they slowly struggle up and down the stony slopes.

If the PCs go through the swamp, they will be exposed to the filthy, Tainted water for the rest of the afternoon.

This will require a **Simple Earth** roll at TN 10 to avoid getting a point of Taint. They will finally reach dry land shortly after nightfall, as the river narrows down into another rocky valley.

Fifth Day Encounter: Oni no Kaisaku

The swamp is the domain of Oni no Kaisaku, the Cutting Oni. This entity lurks beneath the water, waiting for victims, watching for prey with a single thin eyestalk that pokes above the surface of the water. Have all the PCs roll **Simple Perception** at TN 25 or **Lore: Shadowlands/Perception** at TN 20. With a success, they spot the eyestalk. The Oni will immediately lunge out of the water and attack, but

initiative is rolled normally. If the PCs fail to spot the eyestalk, the Oni waits to attack until they are very close, and automatically wins initiative on Round One of the combat.

The water erupts like a geyser, and something resembling a writhing mass of green-gray tentacles surges into view. It is as large as a small peasant hut, and quakes and shudders obscenely as it lurches toward you. Several of the tentacles end in large, bright-orange claws, like those of a lobster, which snap hungrily as they reach for you. Two beady eyes on the ends of thin, whip-like stalks twist and turn to keep you in view. A gurgling roar comes from a toothless, slobbering maw near the center of the thing's mass.

The Oni no Kaisaku will attempt to snip bite-sized chunks (hands and feet) off the PCs and eat them, stuffing them into its mouth with the non-clawed tentacles. If it manages to eat at least four such meals, the Oni will retreat, diving under water and swimming rapidly away, leaving the PCs to bind their wounds and struggle on.

If the Oni is slain, it collapses into a heap of tangled gray-green flesh, vomiting out any recent meals and immediately beginning to decompose, emitting an indescribably foul odor.

The Sixth Day: Approaching the Goal

On the sixth day, the land becomes dry and rocky, with many hills and ridges. The river cuts and winds through the hills, becoming narrow and deep. The PCs will have to climb up and down many rugged slopes in order to make progress.

Assuming they press on, the PCs will reach their goal a little after midday.

Part Four: The Lost Temple

As you stagger through the jagged, rocky slopes of the Shadowlands, you crest a low ridge and see ahead what must be your goal.

The rushing, filthy waters of the Black Finger River part around a thick clump of twisted, lifeless trees, and the narrower channel of the Dark Moon River turns away into the rocks. Between the two rivers, resting on boggy ground behind the thick tangle of

naked trees, is a building which vaguely resembles a traditional Rokugani temple, complete with a three-story pagoda structure. Its roof tiles are black as pitch, and a thick gray mist hovers around its walls.

Standing in front of the temple's main door, instead of a torii arch, are a pair of thin wooden posts. Stretched between them, forming an archway, is what appears to be a desiccated human corpse.

You can dimly make out a few robed forms moving in the mists near the temple. Several of them appear to be quite small, as though they are children.

In order to reach the Lost Temple, the PCs will have to cross one of the rivers. The water is deep (about four feet) and fast.

- Walking across will require an **Athletics/Strength** roll at TN 20 (+5 penalty for Small PCs, Free Raise for Large PCs). Due to the depth and current, the PC cannot move faster than a slow walk. A failed roll means the PC is knocked over by the current and must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 20 to avoid swallowing a gulp of water and taking an automatic 1 point of Taint. To recover and find his/her feet again, the PC must roll **Athletics/Agility** at TN 15 – otherwise the PC begins to drown, taking 1k1 damage and 1 point of Taint each round.
- Alternatively, a PC can try swimming, either from the shore or when knocked over. This will require an **Athletics/Stamina** roll at TN 15. However, the PC will have to beat the TN by at least 5 to avoid accidentally swallowing some water and gaining 1 point of Taint. A failed roll means the current sweeps the PC away, requiring another roll (or help) to reach shore. Failure with a botch (three 1's on the dice) means the PC begins to drown as above.
- Various kinds of magic, especially flying magic, may enable the PCs to cross the river safely.
- Clever PCs may develop other ideas (such as sending someone across with a rope, and using that rope to guide those who follow). The GM should reward intelligent and creative thinking.

Welcome to the Temple

Once the PCs are across the river, they can advance through the wispy, clinging mists toward the temple. The body hanging on the wooden posts is indeed

human, and as the PCs draw closer they see that, despite its ghastly skeletal thinness, it is still alive – the eyes roll and stare down at the PCs, and faint croaking noises come from a mouth which lacks a tongue.

As the PCs draw close, four monks approach from the temple. The children wait behind them, peering out curiously but cautiously from the doors of the Temple – much like children in a Rokugani village.

The four monks are dressed in the typical robes worn by such folk, but the cloth is dark brown, almost black. They appear to be very old men, their pale faces deeply lined, their withered flesh shrunk down against the bones within. Rheumy eyes stare at you with calm, blinking curiosity. “Greetings, travelers,” rasps the oldest of the four. “Are you here to pay homage to the gods?”

The Corrupted Monks are deeply Tainted (as a Moto or Witch-Hunter can tell), and are in fact a form of Akutsukai (Servant of Evil), humans who have embraced their Taint and draw power from it. However, they are not aggressive, and will not initiate hostilities. They exist to serve the Temple and worship their “old gods,” imaginary deities which the madness of Jigoku implants in their minds. So long as the PCs do not attack them and do not attempt to remove the Dark Covenant, they will not actually attempt to harm the PCs. (Although they will still offer “hospitality,” see below.)

If the PCs speak with the monks, they will converse in a civil and learned fashion, very much like a conversation with monks back in the Empire. However, there will be a constant faint edge of mockery and threat in their words. They are remarkably well-informed about the history and current events of the Empire, and show a certain detached contempt for the foolishness and futility of Rokugani politics.

- If the PCs ask who “the gods” are, the monks reply: “The old gods, those who ruled this land long before the false ones fell from the sky, and who will reign here again. Their power will not be denied.” Contested Awareness rolls will show that the monks genuinely believe what they say.
- If any PCs accuse them of serving Fu Leng, the monks smile. “The Dark Kami is merely another servant, greater than we, who follows the dictates of the old gods. His dominion will be the first step in restoring their power.”
- If the PCs ask about the children, the monks explain that they are raised here in “the true religion” and then sent forth to serve the “old gods” wherever they might be needed. They will not say where the children come from. “They find their way here, as the gods require.”
- If the PCs ask about the shriveled body held on the stakes, the monks explain that he was a “blasphemer” who they punished in a manner pleasing to the gods. They will not identify him further. If any PCs should try to help the man, the monks will become angry and obstruct them. (This could lead to a fight if the PCs are persistent.) If the PCs “mercy kill” the man, the monks will be angry but do not take violent action.
- If the PCs ask about the Dark Covenant, the monks will frown. “It is a relic of the power of the old gods, samurai, placed into our sacred care. If you meddle with it, the servants of the Dark Oracle will strike you down – we cannot be responsible for the results.”
- The monks will allow the PCs to see the Dark Covenant if they either promise sincerely not to remove it, or express a sincere desire to pay homage to it. (If the PCs lie to the monks, they will have to defeat the monks’ **Investigation/Perception** with their **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Acting/Awareness**.) The monks will refuse admittance to PCs who fail to convince them (although a properly subservient and convincing apology might cause them to change their minds).

Hospitality

If the PCs are friendly and maintain good relations with the monks, they will be invited inside as “honored guests.” The monks lead them inside to a large room with polished floors of dark wood. The interior walls are painted black, and light comes from candles made of human fat. The children follow the PCs, whispering and giggling among themselves, peeking around corners, and drawing occasional stern looks from the monks.

The monks will offer the PCs food (rice, pickled vegetables) and drink (tea, sake), as well as a place to rest and sleep if they desire it. If the PCs refuse the offers, the monks feign hurt feelings, but will eventually back down if the PCs are polite and unyielding.

Needless to say, eating or drinking anything in the Temple is extremely unwise. The Taint is concentrated in these offerings, and anyone ingesting them automatically gains three points of Taint for each item (bowl of rice, bottle of sake, etc).

Anyone who sleeps in the Temple will suffer dreadful hallucinatory dreams. PCs with Taint must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 15 to avoid getting another point of Taint. PCs with Shadow Corruption must roll **Simple Void** at TN 10 to avoid gaining another Shadow Point.

Meditating in the Temple is impossible, as strange visions and unhealthy emotions crowd into the PC's thoughts.

Also, if the PCs try to rest in the Temple, some of the Corrupted Children will try to sneak in and steal some of their smaller, more useful belongings (such as scrolls, pouches of jade powder, and so forth).

Combat?

If the PCs ever initiate the use of force, the monks will battle back with all the strength and power at their disposal (which is considerable). In addition, the sixteen children in the Temple will rush forth to swarm the PCs, clawing, biting, and scratching.

Once a fight is begun, it will continue until the PCs either flee the area (in which case the children will taunt and insult them horribly as they flee), or until all the monks are killed (at which point any surviving children will flee, shrieking and crying).

Part Five: Confronting the Dark Oracle

If the PCs manage to maintain good relations with the Corrupted monks, they will be allowed to enter the central worship chamber of the Lost Temple. In this case, the PCs will be escorted to the entrance of the chamber and then sent in alone. The monks offer one last warning: "Remember, if you should fail to properly respect the Oracle, his servants will undoubtedly destroy you."

If the PCs manage to defeat the Corrupted monks in combat, they will be free to enter the worship chamber on their own.

In the center of the temple is a huge vaulted chamber, two stories high. Where the statue of a Fortune would stand in a normal temple, however, is simply a low,

plain block of obsidian. A hollow space lies in the center of the top, and sight and smell alike inform you of the dark, crusted stain which lies there: blood.

Next to the bloody depression rests a polished knife, also apparently of obsidian, dried blood crusted on its blade. And beside the knife is another item of the fabled black stone: an ornately carved scroll tube.

The knife is an obsidian weapon (1k2, Tantojutsu skill), capable of harming any creature, but carrying with it the curse of Lord Moon: each time it is used, the wielder must roll **Simple Willpower** at TN 20 or fall under the effects of schizophrenic madness for a number of hours equal to 8 minus his/her Willpower.

The scroll-tube is, of course, the Dark Covenant of Air.

The Guardians

This place is protected by the power of the Dark Oracle of Air, and it will sense hostile intent from those who enter. Any PCs who intend to use the Dark Covenant against the Oracle will have to make **Contested** rolls of their Awareness against an **Awareness** of 9 (representing the Oracle's power). If even one PC fails the roll, the Dark Oracle's minions – the Oni no Kaze – will step out of the air to attack:

A foul stench suddenly assails your nostrils. From out of the air itself, as though coming through invisible doorways, emerge two horrible creatures. They resemble giant dead baby birds, as tall as samurai, walking on thin spindly legs that fade to translucency near the floor. Horrible reedy voices issue from their blunt, slimy beaks. "Faithless ones! Those who do not serve the name of Isawa Gidayu will pay with their lives!"

If any PCs have the Curse of the Dark Oracle of Air, it will activate at this point.

The two demons will fight until destroyed, until a PC picks up the Dark Covenant (which will prevent them from attacking), or until all the PCs flee the chamber (they will not pursue beyond the chamber unless the PCs try to fight them from outside).

Using the Covenant

The PCs can pick up the Dark Covenant at any time. If they do so while the Oni no Kaze are still in the room, the Oni immediately stop attacking and pull away – if the PCs continue to attack them, they vanish back into the air.

Within moments of the PCs touching the Dark Covenant, the Oracle will arrive:

The air shimmers in front of you, and the stench of fresh blood is suddenly thick in your nostrils. The shape of a skinless man, his muscles and veins writhing horribly, appears before you, floating just above the ground. His flesh is pale and faintly translucent. His naked, staring eyeballs glow with hatred as he stares at you, seeming to look directly into your soul.

The Dark Oracle cannot attack the PCs so long as one of them carries the Covenant (and none of them have given him a command). He will circle around the PCs, glaring at them with his lidless eyes, hissing and snarling in a harsh, rasping voice. “Ask your questions, little mortals,” he snarls. “Ask, and I will answer, and then I will destroy you.”

Each of the PCs can ask the Dark Oracle one question. Isawa Gidayu must answer these questions truthfully, and always knows the answers (he is a super-powerful being with near-omniscient knowledge). However, since Gidayu is hostile to the PCs, he will do his best to answer in elliptical, deceptive, or useless ways. The GM must judge how he will answer each question, based on what the PCs ask. In general, the PCs should not be able to gain information which the GM does not know him/herself.

Giving an Order to the Oracle

The PC who possesses the Covenant may, at any time, give the Dark Oracle a single order. The Oracle must obey this order. The PCs get only one chance to deliver such an order – they cannot get multiple orders by passing the Covenant around, or putting it down and picking it up again. The PCs can give pretty much any order they want, however, the Oracle is not omnipotent and many types of “over-powered” orders cannot be obeyed (such as “Kill the Emperor” or “Make me immortal”). The following guidelines can offer guidance to the GM in dealing with this:

- Orders for the Oracle to grant the PCs power, wisdom, or a similar benefit will most likely result in their gaining a Rank or two in Lore: Maho or a similar skill.
- Specifically requesting a physical benefit (“Make me faster,” or “Make me stronger”) will result in a temporary boost to the Trait in question, which ends when the adventure is over.

- Requesting magical power or a spell will result in the PC learning a *maho* spell, chosen by the GM.
- Ordering the Oracle to kill someone will only work if the person in question is not a major campaign-level NPC. In general, anyone of Glory 7.0 or higher is beyond the reach of the Dark Oracle.
- The Oracle is a creation of Fu Leng and cannot be forced to betray his master.

The Oracle will laugh at PCs who waste their order on something he cannot do, and immediately attacks them.

If the PCs give an order similar to the one which Kitsuru Makoto suggested (“leave the Empire and do not return”), the Oracle will immediately depart, and the PCs will be safe from his direct vengeance (any remaining Oni no Kaze, however, will immediately resume their attacks).

Any order which does not force the Oracle to leave will result in his attacking the PCs immediately after fulfilling the order (or refusing to do so, if it is something he cannot do). He stretches out his pale skinless hands and tries to reach into the bodies of the PCs, striking first at those who are his Sworn Enemies. PCs can dodge these attacks by rolling **Defense/Reflexes** at TN 30. If an attack hits, the PC suffers damage of 8kX, where X is the PC’s Air ring. The Dark Oracle continues to attack until the PCs flee the chamber.

Some PCs may attempt to drive the Dark Oracle away with attacks. He is TN 40 to hit, and most physical weapons cannot harm him. However, crystal or obsidian will hurt him, and anti-Taint magic can harm him as well. If the PCs manage to inflict 100 or more wounds with these attacks, the Oracle will retreat immediately.

Needless to say, once the Oracle starts fighting, any remaining Oni no Kaze will also resume attacking the PCs.

Fate of the Dark Covenant

Once the PCs give an order to the Dark Oracle (whether or not it is one he can obey), the Dark Covenant ceases to protect them from the Oracle and the Oni no Kaze. The item will now simply be an inert, beautifully decorated tube of obsidian. As soon as the PCs are not paying attention to it, it will mysteriously vanish, returning to its place here at the Temple after a few days. This cannot be prevented – as an artifact of

Jigoku, the Dark Covenant is beyond the control of mere mortals.

Leaving the Temple

If the PCs try to take the Dark Covenant out of the ceremonial chamber, the Corrupted monks and children will immediately attack them (unless the PCs already defeated them). Even if the PCs hide or conceal the Covenant, the monks will sense its presence and act accordingly. However, so long as the PCs leave that item behind, the monks will not obstruct them from leaving the chamber (or the Temple itself).

The monks will also try to stop the PCs from taking the obsidian dagger. However, they cannot sense its presence in the way they can the Dark Covenant, so if the PCs hide it they can remove it safely.

The monks will not seem terribly perturbed if the PCs drove away or exiled the Dark Oracle. “The power of the old gods is eternal. Such minor irritations are of no account to them.”

Conclusion: Returning to the Empire

If the PCs follow the same route back to the Empire, they will face the same obstacles (crossing the river, the Tainted swamp, the forest) but this time there will be no encounters beyond the simple physical challenges of swimming, wading, etc. The vines in the dark forest will not attack again – however, if the PCs skipped spending the night in the forest, the strange nighttime lights can still appear.

The GM should keep careful track of how many days the PCs spend in the Shadowlands – they have preserved rations for only twelve days, and jade for only thirteen. If the PCs go for more than one day without food and water, they will begin to suffer cumulative +5 TN penalties for starvation and dehydration. If their jade runs out, they will have to begin making rolls to resist Taint.

Once the PCs make it back to Crab lands, Hida Yotako will be surprised, and grudgingly pleased, to see them alive.

When the PCs return to the Empire after their long and difficult journey, they learn that Kitsu Makoto has been made ronin after a private audience with the Emperor.

However, if they succeeded in banishing the Dark Oracle, they receive a letter a few weeks later from Makoto (who now goes only by his own personal name). He praises their courage and accomplishment, and expresses the hope that he may be able to call on their help again in the future.

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

Experience Points

Playing through the adventure:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	+1 XP
PCs slay the Oni no Kaisaku:	+1 XP
PCs successfully banish the Dark Oracle:	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 5 XP

Honor

Anti-Shadowlands school PCs (Witch-Hunters, Moto bushi, Kuroiban, Inquisitors) and PCs who have the Dark Oracle as a Sworn Enemy gain +1 Honor for successfully banishing him.

Glory

Crab PCs get +1 Glory for destroying the Oni no Kaisaku.

Other Awards/Penalties

PCs can potentially keep the obsidian dagger, which is a cursed item.

Appendix #1: NPC stats

Typical Hida Bushi

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 4, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank 2)/Brash.

Equipment: Kimono, heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, yari, bow with 20 arrows.

Typical Kuni Shugenja

FIRE 3	AIR 2
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 10 (15 with light armor)

School/Rank: Kuni shugenja 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 2, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Hand-to-Hand 2, Kenjutsu 2, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Medicine 4, Meditation 3, Shintao 1, Spell Research 2, Spellcraft 3, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: *Sense, Commune, Summon*, (Earth 1) *Force of Will, Jade Strike, Tetsubo of Earth*, (Fire 1) *Biting Steel, Fury of Osano-Wo*, (Water 1) *Path to Inner Peace*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Innate Ability (any one Earth spell), Strength of the Earth (rank 1)/Bad Reputation (creepy).

Equipment: Kimono, light armor, wakizashi, tanto, scroll satchel.

Hida Hirose, Commander of Face of the East Castle

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 2.1/4.8

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 2, Hand-to-Hand 3, History (Crab lands) 2, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 4, Stealth 1, Tsubojutsu 5.

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

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, assorted other weapons.

Hida Yotako, Commander of Shiro no Yotogi

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 with heavy armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.7/1.8

Skills: Archery 4, Athletics 3, Battle 4, Defense 2, Hand-to-Hand 4, Kenjutsu 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Tsubojutsu 6, Wrestling 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Position (commander of Shiro no Yotogi)/Small.

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo, bow and 30 arrows, pouch of jade powder.

Appendix #2: Low-End Villains

Corrupted Monks of the Lost Temple

FIRE 3	AIR 3
	Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 4

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Monk 1

Skills: Athletics 4, Investigation 4, Jiu-jitsu (Hand to Hand) 4, Lore (Shadowlands) 6, Lore ("old gods") 6, Medicine 3, Sincerity 3, Wrestling 4.

Special Abilities: Dark Kihos (each maybe used once per day)

Dark Kihos:

Child of the Corrupted Dragon: The monk's skin turns the color of moonless night, shadows crawl across his flesh, and his eyes burn a sickly green. For a number of rounds equal to the monk's Taint rank, elemental spells which target the monk have their TN increased by the monk's Earth x 2.

Corrupted Touch: The monk channels a small amount of Taint into the target with a finger strike (Hand-to-Hand attack). The target's balance and harmony are disrupted, and s/he is considered to have a Void ring of zero for a number of rounds equal to twice the monk's School rank.

Equipment: Robes, sandals.

Corrupted Children of the Lost Temple

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

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 3

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Skills: Hand-to-Hand 3, Club 3, Bite 3.

Special Abilities: None.

Equipment: Clothing, sandals.

Oni no Kaisaku (Cutting Oni)

FIRE 4	AIR 4

EARTH 4	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: Two tentacle "snippers," 4k4

Damage: 3k2 plus "Chopping Effect," see Special Abilities below

Carapace Armor: 6

Wounds: 30: +5; 60: +10; 90: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 3, Partial Invulnerability (half damage from normal weapons, full damage from jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic), "Chopping Effect" – if a snipping claw hits and exceeds the target's TN by 20, and does at least 20 points of damage, it snips off an extremity, starting with hands/feet and then, with subsequent hits, working its way up the limb a joint at a time. Roll a die to determine which extremity is targeted. 1-3: Left Arm. 4-6: Right Arm. 7-8: Left Leg. 9-10: Right Leg.

Lesser Oni no Kaze, Elemental Terror of Air

FIRE 3	AIR 5
EARTH 2	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 25

Attacks: 5k3

Damage: 4k2

School Rank: Shugenja 3

Carapace Armor: None

Wounds: 20: +5; 40: +10; 80: Dead.

Spells: these Oni no Kaze know the following spells. Each can be cast only once.

Quiescence of Air (Air 1)

Tempest of Air (Air 1)

Know the Ground (Earth 1)

Extinguish (Fire 1)

Inferno's Tooth (Fire 2)

Breath of the Fire Dragon (Fire 3)

Castle of Water (Water 1)

Path of the Scorpion (Water 3)

Special Abilities: Flight (can move up to Air x 5 feet each round and still act, or double that distance if it does nothing but move), Partial Invulnerability (takes half damage from normal weapons, but takes double damage from all spells), Twisted Elements (all enemy spells cast within 100' have their TN raised

by 15 – if the spell fails, the spell-scroll is destroyed and Oni no Kaze gains the ability to cast the spell).

Appendix #3: High-End Villains

Corrupted Monks of the Lost Temple

FIRE 3 Agility 4	AIR 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Strength 4
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 5

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Monk 2

Skills: Athletics 4, Investigation 5, Jiu-jitsu (Hand to Hand) 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 7, Lore (“old gods”) 6, Medicine 4, Sincerity 4, Wrestling 5.

Special Abilities: Partial Invulnerability (half damage from non-magical weapons), Dark Kihos (each maybe used once per day)

Dark Kihos:

Child of the Corrupted Dragon: The monk’s skin turns the color of moonless night, shadows crawl across his flesh, and his eyes burn a sickly green. For a number of rounds equal to the monk’s Taint rank, elemental spells which target the monk have their TN increased by the monk’s Earth x 2.

Corrupted Touch: The monk channels a small amount of Taint into the target with a finger strike (Hand-to-Hand attack). The target’s balance and harmony are disrupted, and s/he is considered to have a Void ring of zero for a number of rounds equal to twice the monk’s School rank.

Venom’s Touch: A successful hand-to-hand strike disrupts the flow of Water through the victim, causing them intense pain. The target suffers 2k2 Wounds per round for a number of rounds equal to the monk’s Taint rank.

Equipment: Robes, sandals.

Corrupted Children of the Lost Temple

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

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 3

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: None

Skills: Hand-to-Hand 3, Club 3, Bite 3.

Special Abilities: None.

Equipment: Clothing, sandals.

Oni no Kaisaku (Cutting Oni)

FIRE 5	AIR 4
EARTH 5	WATER 4

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: Two tentacle “snippers,” 5k5

Damage: 4k2 plus “Chopping Effect,” see Special Abilities below

School Rank: Shadowlands 1

Carapace Armor: 7

Wounds: 40: +5; 80: +10; 120: Dead.

Special Abilities: Fear 4, Invulnerability (only hurt by jade, crystal, obsidian, and magic), “Chopping Effect” – if a snipping claw hits and exceeds the target’s TN by 20, and does at least 20 points of damage, it snips off an extremity, starting with hands/feet and then, with subsequent hits, working its way up the limb a joint at a time. Roll a die to determine which extremity is targeted. 1-3: Left Arm. 4-6: Right Arm. 7-8: Left Leg. 9-10: Right Leg.

Oni no Kaze, Elemental Terror of Air

FIRE 4	AIR 7
EARTH 2	WATER 3

TN to be Hit: 35

Attacks: 6k4

Damage: 5k2

School Rank: Shugenja 4

Carapace Armor: None

Wounds: 20: +5; 40: +10; 80: Dead.

Spells: these Oni no Kaze know the following spells. Each can be cast only once.

Quiescence of Air (Air 1)

Tempest of Air (Air 1)

Dominate the Mind (Air 4)

Know the Ground (Earth 1)
Shatter (Earth 4)
Extinguish (Fire 1)
Breath of the Fire Dragon (Fire 3)
Heart of the Inferno (Fire 3)
Castle of Water (Water 1)
Path of the Scorpion (Water 3)

Special Abilities: Flight (can move up to Air x 5 feet each round and still act, or double that distance if it does nothing but move), Invulnerability (but takes double damage from all spells), Twisted Elements (all enemy spells cast within 100' have their TN raised by 25 – if the spell fails, the spell-scroll is destroyed and Oni no Kaze gains the ability to cast the spell).

Map #1: Routes to the Crab Lands

