

Unmaker's Shadow

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

Part Seven (Final) of *Shadow's Path*

Round One

by Rob Hobart

The Living Darkness threatens to consume all of Rokugan. A secret meeting puts you on the path of a ritual which may be able to name the Shadow... but with Shosuro herself hunting you, can your quest possibly succeed?

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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."

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):

- All the Kolat ninja are Standard (no Elites).
- The Goju pack which attacks with Shingosha numbers only four.

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

- All Kolat Ninja are Elite (no Standards).
- Himitsu has Air of 6 and is School Rank 5.

- The Goju who attack with Shingosha have an attack roll of 5k3 and have 40 Wounds each.
- Goju Shingosha has Awareness 5, Earth of 6, 130 Wounds, and Magic Resistance of Rank 3 (+15 to hostile spellcasting).

Adventure Summary and Background

Two years ago, the Living Darkness allied itself to Fu Leng, the dark god who was beginning to awaken from his thousand-year imprisonment. Under cover of assisting his return, the Darkness began to spread throughout the Empire, slowly subverting the Clans and insinuating itself into the highest ranks of Rokugan's ruling class. Now, as the Shadowlands openly ravages the Empire, and Toturi the Black marches on Otosan Uchi, the Shadow is spreading in their wake like wildfire, devouring entire towns and castles.

The only group in the Empire which has a way to stop the Shadow is the sinister conspiracy known as the Kolat. For centuries, the Kolat has kept fragments of a ritual which could potentially force the Sun and Moon themselves to come down to the earth and name the Shadow. Such a cataclysmic event has as much potential to destroy the Empire as to save it, and the Kolat has always hesitated to use it, even as a last resort.

Now, with the Shadow moving faster and more powerfully than ever before, a split has developed within the ranks of the Kolat. Some among the Ten Masters believe the time has come to use the ritual, lest the entire world be devoured. The majority, however, remain unwilling to take such a drastic step, particularly since doing so would mean to depend on the intervention of the very gods which the Kolat hopes to overthrow.

Emon, the "Shadow Bane," one of the Ten Masters, has decided to take matters into his own hands. He has arranged to smuggle the fragments of the ritual to Yasuki Taka, who he suspects (correctly) of running his own clandestine operations independently of the Kolat.

Taka, in turn, contacts the PCs, some of whom may already serve as his agents – and many of whom are enemies of the Kolat. If the PCs take up his quest, they will be facing a deadly struggle against the agents of both the Shadow and the Kolat... and a difficult quest to retrieve the sacred artifacts needed to perform the incredible ritual.

NOTE on RUNNING THIS SCENARIO: Some PCs in the campaign may have certs marking them as "Owned by the Kolat." This adventure represents the last chance for those PCs to free themselves of the Kolat's influence. If they fail to do so, they will face likely death after the upcoming adventure "The Dragon's Heart."

Player's Introduction

The PCs begin this scenario in the port city of Samui Kaze Toshi, Cold Wind City, a major trading port in the Kakita lands. Some PCs may have been here before, in the adventure *The People's Expense*.

Chronologically, this adventure takes place immediately after *Along the Coast at Midnight*, in which the PCs attempted to rescue Hida O-Ushi from the Crab port at Earthquake Fish Bay. In that case, their ship could have taken them to Samui Kaze Toshi, which is one of the largest ports on the southern Crane coast. If the PCs did not play *Along the Coast* immediately prior to this adventure, they should develop their own reasons for why they might be in this city. Given the precarious state of affairs in the Empire, there are any number of reasons why the PCs might be in the city. It is possible they are here to look into their daimyo's commercial interests (especially if they are Crab, Crane, Mantis, or Unicorn). PCs who recently played the adventure *Blood of Midnight* might also have concluded their journeys in Samui Kaze Toshi.

Samui Kaze Toshi

The city of Samui Kaze Toshi is one of several prosperous port cities located along the coast of Crane lands, and normally does a booming trade with the Mantis Islands, the Yasuki territories, the Imperial capital, and the rest of Crane lands. Geographically, the city and its associated farmlands are isolated against the coast by the Seikitsu (Spine of the World) Mountains, with only a single narrow road passing through the rugged peaks to the Fox lands.

Samui Kaze Toshi perches on a cliff above the water, so that it looks as though the entire city could easily slide down into the sea. Below, in the sheltered harbor, piers and docks extend along the shoreline for half a mile, and stretch a quarter-mile into the water. Squat kobune ships crowd together, their masts a forest that bobs on the wave-tops. With the Empire's southern coastline ravaged by war, the port is even more crowded than normal, and the banners of the

Mantis and Crab are almost as numerous as those of the Crane.

The city normally has only a small garrison of Daidoji soldiers, since its location is so secure. Now, with other ports ravaged or besieged, Samui Kaze Toshi is crowded with both refugees and extra soldiers, and tensions are high. Rumors fly left and right, and the PCs will hear a dozen different stories in the course of the day:

- It is rumored that the Crab “loyalists” have won the civil war against Hida Sukune’s “rebels.” There are also many reports that Crab troops are massing on the borders of the Crane, Sparrow, and Scorpion Clans... or perhaps have even crossed those borders.
- The “Northern War” between the Dragon, Phoenix, Lion, and Scorpion is a source for dozens of rumors. Some reports say that Kenson Gakka has fallen to the Scorpion, while others say a Lion relief force has saved the city. There are also rumors that peace negotiations have begun, although these are unconfirmed. (PCs who have recently played *Faith in My Clan* may know the reason behind these rumors – Mirumoto Daini’s attempt to overthrow Mirumoto Yukihera.)
- The ronin army of Toturi the Black has joined the fighting in the Northern War, and has reputedly engaged in a bloody battle with Dragon, Lion, and Phoenix forces in the high passes of the Phoenix Mountains. All three Clans are said to have suffered very heavy casualties, and reports are confused as to which side Toturi fought for.
- There are rumors of some sort of internal struggle within the Scorpion Clan, even stories of a “purge” in which large numbers of the Clan have been made ronin or condemned to Traitor’s Grove. Such stories are unconfirmed, of course. Scorpion PCs can be assumed to have been absent from their homelands for many weeks, perhaps even months, depending on what adventures they have played before now.
- There are unconfirmed reports of a major battle between the Naga and the last remaining Imperial Legion (the Fists of the Emperor) somewhere between Unicorn and Dragon territory.
- Rumor has it that large numbers of Shadowlands creatures made it into the Empire during the chaos of the Crab civil war. There are reports of major

Shadowlands raiding forces in the Fox, Scorpion, and even Lion lands

After the PCs have had a chance to role-play, interact with each other, and catch up on the current news of the Empire, the scenario proper can begin.

A Meeting with Yasuki Taka

A rattling noise draws your attention up the street. A merchant’s cart, piled high with pots, bottles, and crockery, is rolling up the street, drawn by a shaggy Rokugani pony. Walking beside it is a skinny man in a tattered gray kimono, his features concealed by a wide-brimmed straw hat. As the wagon draws abreast of you, he tilts back his hat and beams at you with a wide smile.

PCs who have played the Interactives *Winter Court: Shiro Kyotei*, *Chrysanthemum Festival*, *Winter Court: Shiro no Kaiu*, *Storm and Forest*, *Shiro Iuchi*, or *Winter Court: Kyuden Bayushi* have met Yasuki Taka before, and will recognize him. PCs may also have met him in the adventure *Fist of the Earth*. If none of these factors apply, the PCs can still recognize the infamous daimyo of the Yasuki family with a roll of **Heraldry/Intelligence**, **Lore: Crab/Intelligence**, or **Commerce/Intelligence** at TN 15.

Taka will greet the PCs in a friendly and personable (but slightly greasy and simpering) manner, observing what a happy coincidence it is to meet with such a diverse group of samurai in this isolated Crane port city. He will listen with interest to anything the PCs might say about why they are here. If they ask his own reasons for being in a Crane city, he sets one finger on his chin and observes, “Well, in these times, a wise merchant seeks the most secure markets. Surely you would agree that this city is such a place.”

After some small-talk, Yasuki Taka will lean casually on the side of his wagon and tilt his hat forward to shroud his face, showing only his smiling mouth. “Tell me, samurai,” he says in a carefully normal tone of voice, “are you afraid of Shadows?”

Taka is seeking confirmation that the PCs recognize the threat from the Living Darkness. If they seem to miss the point of his initial question, he will ask others, trying to root out the PCs’ attitudes and knowledge of the Shadow, and to indirectly convey that he is an enemy of the Shadow as well. It is possible that some paranoid PCs will assume that Taka is himself an agent of the Living Darkness, and may start brandishing crystal or otherwise behaving aggressively. Taka will

try to calm the PCs and prevent them from making a public spectacle. “It is unwise, these days, to display such knowledge too openly,” he warns the PCs, making soothing gestures with his hands. If the PCs are insistent on “testing” him with crystal, he will try to suggest they wait until a private meeting later.

Ultimately, Taka’s goal will be to get the PCs to a private meeting at the House of Red Waves, an unsavory sake house at the dockside. He will drop stronger and stronger hints until the PCs show interest, then suggest that “it might be better to continue this discussion in private, later today,” and then name the House of Red Waves as a suitable meeting place. “The hour of the Monkey, I think,” he suggests. (The hour of the Monkey is equivalent to 4-6pm in Western time.)

If any of the PCs are ronin, Taka will be more direct, suggesting that they have an opportunity for “lucrative employment” if they meet with him later at the House of Red Waves.

Kolat PCs

It is possible that some PCs have the cert “Owned by the Kolat,” signifying that they are controlled by the Kolat conspiracy. Yasuki Taka will drop hints to those PCs that they should speak with him separately, prior to visiting the House of Red Waves. If need be, he will create an excuse for them to do so: “Ah, samurai-sama, I have an answer for your daimyo regarding that private matter. Perhaps you might walk with me?”

Once they are alone, Taka will begin speaking more openly. The contrast with his earlier simpering lowly-merchant persona will be striking. “Samurai-san, I believe you have for some time found yourself... indebted, in the service of an unusual master. Am I correct?”

Taka will speak in this manner for some time, probing the PC’s attitudes toward the Kolat conspiracy. He will make clear that he is a member of the Kolat, but will carefully not reveal his own attitude toward the organization – his questions can easily be interpreted as “tests of loyalty.”

- If the PC seems comfortable with being a pawn of the Kolat, Taka will eventually suggest that the upcoming meeting concerns an important task on behalf of the organization. “You would be well-advised not only to help, but to see to it that your comrades do so as well. Much is riding on this mission.”

- If the PC seems unhappy with being a Kolat pawn, or expresses the wish to escape its grasp, Taka will smile. “It may be that I can assist you, samurai-san. The... brotherhood which you serve is quite complex, and there are... disagreements within the ranks. Such disagreements can offer opportunities to someone in your position.” Although he will never say it outright, Taka will strongly suggest that if the PC can successfully perform the upcoming task, he can arrange an end to the PC’s indenture to the Kolat.

An Ignorant Party?

It is possible (although unlikely) that the entire party is comprised of inexperienced PCs who have never encountered the Living Darkness. In this case, Yasuki Taka will take a somewhat different approach, suggesting that he is in need of “brave and honorable samurai” and implying that the PCs will earn the gratitude of the Yasuki family for helping him. Ronin PCs will, again, be directly offered employment.

Part One: The House of Red Waves

Any *ronin* PC will have heard of the House of Red Waves with a **Simple Intelligence** roll at TN 15. Other PCs can know something about it with a roll of **Commerce/Intelligence** at TN 15 or **Lore: Crane/Intelligence** (or **Lore: Yakuza, Law**, or some similar skill granting knowledge of criminal matters). The House of Red Waves is the most famous sake house in the city, but most of the clientele are transients – sailors and *ronin*. It is known as a somewhat rough place, one which it can be unwise to visit after dark, although jaded Crane nobles sometimes do so for a thrill. (Fortunately, it is still only late afternoon when the PCs arrive.)

The House of Red Waves is located on the edge of the cliff above the bay, and perches at the corner of the road which switchbacks down the cliff to the port itself. The narrow two-story building seems almost to loom over the cliff-edge, as though contemplating a leap into the blue waters below. Several seedy-looking ronin lounge on the step in front of the building, passing a bottle back and forth and sharing occasional jokes.

The ronin are strangers, sharing some sake and enjoying the warmth of the Sun. They will move aside for PCs entering the house (albeit, perhaps, with a few

jokes or rude comments, if they think they can get away with them). Inside, the sake house is dimly lit, with only a few narrow windows allowing sunlight to filter inside. The customers are sailors, ronin, common laborers, and other disreputable types – many of them pretty obviously yakuza and criminal low-lives. The PCs will get a lot of furtive side-long looks, although no one will openly harass them. After a few moments, one of the bartenders will step forward, wiping his hands with a cloth, and speak in a low voice. “You are here to meet with someone, samurai-samas?”

Assuming the PCs agree, the bartender will lead them upstairs to a small private room, lit by a pair of lanterns. Yasuki Taka is waiting for them there, sipping from a cup of sake. He smiles a welcome, and gestures to a tray with sake bottles, a teapot, and a plate of sushi and pickled vegetables.

Once the bartender is gone, Taka clears his throat, and a door in the back wall slides open. Emon the Shadow-Bane enters the room.

Meeting with Emon

The Kolat Master is a slim, athletic man in his late twenties or early thirties, with nondescript features, smooth skin, and long black hair which is worn loose. He dresses in a fine quality kimono of mixed black, brown, and dark green, and is obviously of the samurai caste, but wears no mon or unified Clan color. He wears a traveling pack but carries no obvious weapons (he actually has a pair of crystal tantos concealed inside the sleeves of his kimono).

Emon will seat himself and greet the PCs by name. “You may call me Emon,” he says. “My friend Taka-sama has suggested you as brave and resourceful samurai, who understand the... nature... of the threat which faces the Empire today.” With that, he lifts a crystal pendant out of his obi, and uses it to “test” the PCs for Shadow Corruption, focusing lamplight through the pendant. (If any of the PCs have three or four Shadow Points, they will appear slightly translucent in the crystal light.) If any PCs wish to “test” him in the same way, he will not object, and in fact will be somewhat pleased that the PCs understand the threat.

That done, Emon will, at first, simply speak with the PCs about the Shadow, explaining its nature and the threat which it poses. “The Unicorn call it the Lying Darkness, and fought it once before, outside the Empire. It is a force of darkness, without a true name or form of its own, which seeks to devour the world, to

take away the form of others in order to redeem its own lack of form.” He explains that the Shadow’s only vulnerability is to the “tears of Lady Sun” (crystal) and to light focused through crystal.

- If any of the PCs have knowledge of the Shadow (which is quite likely, unless the entire party is composed of new/inexperienced characters), Emon and Taka will both encourage them to discuss and explain their own experiences.
- If any of the PCs show signs of Shadow Corruption, Emon will speak gravely to them, explaining that they are in great danger. “For now, you retain your own will. However, once this power invades your soul, it inevitably corrupts and consumes you. You are living on borrowed time... unless the Shadow can be destroyed.”

Emon will be very cagey if the PCs question him about his own identity and how he knows so much about the Shadow. As mentioned, he will allow the PCs to test him with crystal and (if they wish) jade, to prove that he is not tainted or corrupted in any way. He will not give his Clan or true name, and will only say that he belongs to “an organization which has fought against the Shadow for many years.” He will feign ignorance if the PCs mention the Kolat.

Yasuki Taka will allow Emon to take the lead in this discussion, but will make it clear that he shares Emon’s knowledge of and concern about the Shadow, and that he considers Emon trustworthy.

Once Emon has established his knowledge of the Shadow, he will try to gauge the PCs’ reactions. He is looking for PCs who are clearly hostile to the Shadow and are willing to take allies where they can find them. If the PCs seem excessively hung up on his own identity and motives, and persistently demand to know who he really is, who he is working for, etc., Emon will give them one chance to figure things out: “Do you wish to fight the Shadow, samurai, or do you wish to fight me? You cannot do both.”

Emon Explains the Quest

If and when Emon is satisfied with the PCs’ attitude toward the Shadow, he will begin to explain the situation in more detail:

“My... organization... has been aware of the threat from the Shadow for a very long time. I myself have made a careful study of this darkness, its methods,

and its weaknesses. Over many years we have studied its history, and we have learned its true origin.”

If the PCs show interest, Emon will continue. *“As nearly as we can tell, the Shadow seems to be a remnant of the formless unreality from before the creation of the world. It is the one piece of the world which was not named, when the Sun and Moon walked through the new-made world and gave all things their names. This is the source of its power – it is, in truth, nothing at all. So long as the Shadow is without a name, it can take the names and forms of others, more and more, until the world itself is devoured and unmade.”*

“My colleagues and I have been aware of this potential threat for some time, and have done what we could to restrain the power of the Shadow.” If some of the PCs have previously been involved with anti-Shadow actions in modules such as *Fist of the Earth* and *Time to Pay the Price*, or belong to the Crystal Tears Dojo, he will nod to them respectfully. *“You, too, have taken action to restrain or roll back the advances of the Shadow. Taka has taken notice of your actions, and brought them to my attention.”*

Emon will not simply make speeches to the PCs – he wants to make sure the PCs understand what he is saying and realize what the stakes are. The GM should run this as an interactive conversation rather than a “boxed text” proclamation.

Eventually, if the PCs show both an understanding of the Shadow’s threat and a desire to stop it, Emon will get down to the nitty-gritty. *“We concluded some time ago that the only way to ultimately defeat the Shadow would be to name it. With a name, it would no longer be able to devour others, no longer be able to shape itself to imitate other things. Its power would be gone. But only the Sun and Moon, who first named and ordered the universe, have the power to do that. And they dwell in Tengoku, beyond the reach of mortals.”*

“Over the years, we have... unearthed... fragments of a possible magical ritual, a ritual of unimaginable power. One which would summon the Sun and Moon themselves down to the earth, where they could name the Shadow and end its threat. However, we know that such a drastic step would be extremely dangerous. The presence of two such mighty Fortunes could do incredible damage to the world, kill thousands, level cities. It would be an act of desperation, taken because the only alternative would be the final victory of the Shadow.”

Emon hesitates a moment before revealing his final secret. *“My colleagues do not believe we have reached such a desperate time. But having studied the Shadow all my adult life, I personally believe they are mistaken. The Shadow’s power is growing by leaps and bounds.”* He looks pointedly at any Scorpion or ex-Scorpion PCs. *“It has seized control of entire Clans, devoured cities and temples and dojos. It has possessed the Emperor himself, and corrupted the Element of Void. I believe... as my friend Yasuki Taka believes... that the Shadow must be stopped now, or it cannot be stopped at all.”*

Emon looks searchingly at the PCs, particularly those with past experience of the Shadow. *“This is what I believe. What of you?”*

It is up to the PCs how to respond. Emon is looking for honest answers, and any PC who tries to deceive him will have to make a **Contested roll of Sincerity/Awareness** against his **Investigation/Perception**. (Note that Emon is a Clear Thinker, giving him two Free Raises.) Yasuki Taka will watch this exchange with hooded eyes, giving no sign of where his own opinions lie.

- If the PCs answer honestly that they believe the time has come for desperate action, or if they successfully deceive Emon, he will go on to present them with the Kolat ritual. See “Fragments of Hope” below.
- If the PCs do not agree with Emon’s grim assessment, or fail to convince him with a lie, he will sigh and fold his hands. “It seems we have nothing further to discuss. My apologies for wasting your time, samurai.” He rises and departs immediately. Yasuki Taka will linger a bit, trying to salvage something from the unsuccessful meeting. See “Rejection?” below.

Under no circumstances will Emon ever confirm that he is a Kolat, nor will he provide the PCs with any details about his “colleagues” or “organization.” He will relentlessly stonewall any PC efforts to search him out or trip him with words, and will quickly grow impatient with PCs who seem more interested in questioning him than in fighting the Shadow.

Some PCs may have earned the enmity of the Kolat in previous adventures (such as *Damning Evidence*). Emon will not give any hint that he knows these PCs better than others or that he feels any special enmity toward them. (He considers it entirely appropriate that he use the Kolat’s enemies to accomplish its goals.)

Reading Emon's true intentions requires a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 40, or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** at TN 35.

Fragments of Hope

If the PCs convince Emon that they share his sense of desperation over the growing power of the Shadow, he will make a small nod toward Yasuki Taka, then reaches into his traveling pack and draws out a small bundle of ancient scrolls. *"These writings contain all that we have been able to accumulate on the ritual which could summon the Sun and Moon down to earth. I regret to say the ritual is not complete – you will have to find the remainder in the libraries of the Empire. I entrust it to you, in confidence that you will use it for the salvation of the Empire."*

After presenting the scrolls, Emon will answer a limited number of questions from the PCs:

- If the PCs ask where the rest of the ritual may be found, Emon will heave a sigh. *"We have searched the libraries of the Phoenix and Unicorn Clans quite thoroughly – that is where we unearthed the materials you hold now. There is unlikely to be anything in the records of the Crab or Mantis. The Dragon... yes, perhaps. I would certainly suggest also searching the records of the Lion and Crane."* He will absolutely not admit that the Kolat have been unable to get any agents in to search the Dragon libraries.
- If any PC mentions that Emon did not list the Scorpion Clan in his discussion, he smiles thinly. *"The Scorpion are famed for their secrets, yes. But in the field of magical and esoteric wisdom, all of their secrets have long since passed into the hands of the Phoenix. And they are... unlikely to cooperate with you. It may be that you ultimately need to visit the Scorpion Clan, but I would not suggest beginning your quest there."*
- Emon has no suggestions for how the PCs should complete the ritual, other than searching in the oldest documents of each Clan. *"It is exceedingly ancient, from the earliest days of the Empire. In truth, we are not sure if this ritual was ever completed. It may be that this is a fool's errand, and the Shadow will defeat us all."*
- Emon cannot supply the PCs with any assistance other than what he has already offered. Depending on how useful and intelligent the PCs seem, he

may also point out that his "colleagues" may actually try to impede the PCs' quest. "You are, after all, now in possession of secrets which we have guarded for centuries."

- Especially perceptive PCs may realize that Emon is using them to complete the ritual because he is unwilling to directly defy his "colleagues." He will not deny this, and indeed will show a pleased look that the PCs are intelligent enough to recognize the situation. *"I have enlisted you help because I disagreed with my colleagues' judgment. But I cannot openly oppose their decision, not without jeopardizing my own ability to fight the Shadow. Through you, I can take action without that risk."*

Assuming the PCs don't back out, Emon will wish them good luck. "You may report your progress to Taka-san, who is a trusted associate," he says, and departs with a smooth bow.

Attacking?

Some aggressive or rigidly honorable PCs may try to attack or arrest Emon. This is most unwise. Emon has two elite Kolat ninja waiting outside the room, who will immediately charge in and hurl smoke-bombs while Emon retreats. They will fight to the death while Emon withdraws through the back hallways of the Inn – pursuing PCs will also be intercepted by various yakuza thugs and ronin guards who Emon has bribed to cover his escape.

Time with Taka

After Emon departs, Yasuki Taka will speak with the PCs quietly, offering advice and information for their quest. The contrast between his normal "simpering, slimy merchant" persona and this more serious, focused man will be striking. He can offer information on the following topics:

The Kolat: Unlike Emon, Taka will be a bit more forthcoming about who the PCs are dealing with. "I think you already have some idea of who Emon and I serve," he remarks. If the PCs have played the adventure *Damning Evidence*, he will hint more strongly. "Shosuro Tajiki came to close to learning about this, and paid the price."

The Ritual: Taka believes the ritual to be authentic. *"I suspect it is a leftover from the days before the Empire, when men did not respect the Fortunes in the same way they do now. That is why only fragments of it survive, scattered across the Empire. Emon and his*

compatriots have had access to the Phoenix and Unicorn libraries for a long time, and recovered everything they could find there.”

Travel Arrangements: Taka has many contacts throughout the Empire to facilitate his trading activities. If none of the PCs are Emerald or Jade Magistrates (able to write their own travel papers), he will offer to facilitate their travels to the various Clan libraries. *“I have extensive contacts with the Crane, and modest but effective allies among the Lion and Dragon as well. I can easily arrange travel papers for you, as agents acting on my behalf.”*

Taka's Allegiance: Some PCs may press Taka about his own membership in the Kolat. He will try to shrug this off as much as possible, and will drop hints that he is acting against the Kolat as well as serving it. If the PCs seem excessively hung up on this point, Taka will become somewhat impatient. *“By my pots and kettles, samurai, you’ve already decided that the Shadow is the most important threat facing us. Why prattle on about this now? There will be plenty of time later to deal with such questions, if there is a later.”*

The Scorpion Libraries: Some PCs may, again, suggest visiting the Scorpion Clan, or wonder why Emon seemed so set against the idea. Taka will look slightly exasperated. *“Surely you have realized what is happening. The Scorpion Clan attacking the Lion, accusing them of an assassination attempt in Kyuden Bayushi itself? Who ever heard of such a thing? The Scorpion are controlled by the Shadow, samurai-san. Their lands are succumbing to darkness. Even if they once had information which would have helped with this quest, the Shadow has already claimed it.”* He is being completely honest here, which should be alarming to any Scorpion PCs who do not already realize what is happening in their Clan.

If the Secrets are in These Three Clan Libraries, Why Haven't They Been Found Already? Taka smirks. *“Our all-knowing superiors decided some time ago that it was too risky to even try this ritual unless all seemed lost already. Therefore it seemed best to them to stop looking for it, lest they draw the Shadow's attention to it. A pity; things would be much easier if they had simply finished the job... but hubris and excessive subtlety are among their weaknesses.”*

What Do We Do When We Find It? Taka will explain that Emon has deputized him to meet with the PCs once they have recovered enough of the ritual to make it viable. *“You may send word to me at the*

businesses of any of my kinsmen or their servants. I will make my way to you as swiftly as can be.”

Rejection?

It is possible that the PCs may fail to meet with Emon's approval, in which case he will refuse to tell them about the ritual, and will quickly depart.

After Emon leaves, Yasuki Taka may speak with the PCs privately. Whether or not he does so will depend on whether he feels the PCs are genuine enemies of the Shadow. If the PCs are true opponents of the Shadow who simply could not bring themselves to trust Emon, Taka will try to enlist them on his own. He will ask to meet with the PCs later that evening, at a different Inn (he suspects the Kolat will be watching this one for some time yet).

Assuming the PCs do attend this meeting, Taka will explain the existence of the incomplete ritual, and tries to persuade the PCs to undertake the quest on his personal behalf. *“Although Emon and his... associates... believe me to be a willing agent of theirs, I recognize the greater good of the Empire is at stake here. Perhaps even the greater good of the entire world. I am prepared to defy them all for that.”* This is a partial lie, of course – Emon himself is defying the other Kolat masters, and Taka is helping him – but Taka considers this the best way to enlist the PCs, and to see through him they will have to win a **Contested Roll of Investigation/Perception** against his **Sincerity/Awareness**.

If the PCs are willing to accept Taka's story, he will explain the nature of the ancient ritual and ask them to seek out the rest of the documents in the various Clan libraries and records. He will provide the PCs with as much information as he can, but he does not know any more than what Emon could tell the PCs. He proposes that the PCs bring back whatever they can and then arrange a meeting with him. *“By then, I should be able to make copies of the documents which Emon already has.”*

Reading the Scrolls

Undoubtedly, at least some of the PCs will wish to read Emon's scrolls and try to decipher them. In order to extract any useful information from them, the PCs will need to spend at least a full day reading through them, and make a roll of **Lore: Shugenja/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Calligraphy/Intelligence** at TN 25, **Spellcraft/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 30. PCs cannot combine their

efforts on these rolls – understanding these documents requires personal, individual insight.

A PC who succeeds in deciphering the documents concludes that they do, indeed, contain the outlines of a powerful magical ritual which can summon the Sun and Moon down to earth. However, the ritual is incomplete, and cannot be performed with the information available. Furthermore, it appears from the documents that the ritual would require several powerful artifacts in order to work – but it is not clear which artifacts, or how they would be used. Acquiring the remainder of the ritual may shed light on these questions.

Part Two: Travel and News

Assuming the PCs undertake the quest for the remaining fragments of the ritual, they will be facing a somewhat open-ended task. They will be free to go where they see fit, in whatever order they think best.

Taka and Emon both nudge the PCs in the direction of the Dragon, Crane, and Lion Clans, and these are indeed the Clans where the PCs can find the lost documents they need. However, some PCs may suspect that they are the targets of “disinformation” and try to look somewhere else.

In general, the GM should discourage the PCs from wasting time on long visits to other Clans – with the Shadow growing steadily stronger, Shadowlands forces loose in the Empire, and the Crab invading their neighbors, the PCs can ill afford to waste time visiting other Clans. However, some of them may try anyway...

Visiting the **Crab Clan** is pretty much out of the question, since Hida Kisada has won the Crab civil war and his troops will attack on sight anyone entering their territory. PCs who have already played *Along the Coast at Midnight* should realize that to even go near the Crab lands at this time is tantamount to a death sentence.

The **Scorpion** lands are not so immediately threatening, but the information from Emon and Taka (not to mention the rumors of purges within the Scorpion ranks) should be a strong disincentive for the PCs to visit. In addition, the Scorpion are among the least likely of Clans to allow outsiders to enter their libraries and perform research. Unless the PCs are mostly or entirely Scorpions, this option is unlikely.

Some PCs may not trust Emon’s claims that all possible information has already been extracted from the **Phoenix** and **Unicorn**. However, in the case of the Phoenix, the destruction of Kyuden Isawa last autumn has greatly reduced the possibilities for research. And in order to reach the Unicorn, the PCs will have to pass through either the Scorpion lands, or the region where the Naga are fighting the Fists of the Emperor legion – not the most encouraging prospect.

A few PCs may hold out for visiting a more obscure location, such as a Minor Clan, or possibly the Imperial Capital. Such trips will be essentially wastes of time, but the PCs are free to attempt them if they wish.

Travel and Time

Regardless of whether they stay “on target” or get distracted trying to go somewhere else, the PCs will be spending a considerable amount of time traveling from place to place.

The following should be used as a rough guide for how long the PCs spend “on the road” between each major location of the adventure. Note that all of these travel times incorporate the fact that the major Crane port of Kyuden Doji is now a citadel of Shadow, and has been “blockaded” by the Daidoji, making it inaccessible.

From Samui Kaze Toshi:

- To Kyuden Asahina: by sea, two days on water, then one day overland to reach the castle.
- To Kyuden Asahina, by land: seven days.
- To Beiden Pass (leads overland to Kyuden Ikoma and Kyuden Agasha): Ten days.
- To the Imperial Capital, by sea: three days.

From Beiden Pass:

- To Kyuden Ikoma: ten days overland.
- To Kyuden Agasha: twenty-five days overland.
- To Kyuden Asahina: eighteen days overland.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi: ten days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital, Otosan Uchi: fourteen days overland.

From Otosan Uchi, the Imperial Capital:

- To Beiden Pass: Fourteen days overland.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by sea: three days.
- To Kyuden Agasha: Nineteen days overland.
- To Kyuden Ikoma: Twenty days overland.
- To Kyuden Asahina, by sea: Four days at sea, then one day overland.

From Kyuden Ikoma:

- To Beiden Pass: ten days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: Twenty days.
- To Kyuden Agasha: fifteen days.

From Kyuden Agasha:

- To Kyuden Ikoma: fifteen days.
- To Beiden Pass: twenty-five days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: nineteen days overland to the coast.

From Kyuden Asahina:

- To Beiden Pass: eighteen days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: one day to the coast, three days by sea.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by sea: one day to the coast, two days at sea.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by land: seven days.

Pushing the Pace

The PCs may decide to try to push themselves to travel faster, especially once timeline events begin placing pressure on them (see below). The PCs may make one attempt to speed their pace during each segment of their journey (between each of the “way points” listed above).

PCs who are traveling mounted can roll **Horsemanship/Awareness** at TN 20. If the horse was successfully treated with **Animal Husbandry/Intelligence** at TN 15, the PC can get a Free Raise on the roll. Creative use of spells like *Nature's Touch* and *Ride Like the Wind* can also award a Free Raise.

PCs who are traveling on foot must roll **Athletics/Willpower** at TN 20. The PC gets a Free Raise if s/he has some ability that enhances travel speeds (such as the Hiruma School or the Centipede Tattoo). Again, creative use of magic could also earn a Free Raise.

If at least two-thirds of the PCs make their rolls, their travel time is shortened by one day out of every seven (rounded off). Thus, if this portion of their journey was slated to take fifteen days, with successful rolls the time is reduced to thirteen days.

Timeline Events

As the PCs spend time on their quest, larger events will continue to transpire within the Empire, and the PCs should learn about them as the adventure progresses. The PCs should pick up this information from the

gossip of other travelers, nervous talk in the common rooms of Inns, speaking with border guards as their travel papers are inspected, and so forth.

The GM should begin “counting” the days once the PCs set out from Samui Kaze Toshi.

After ten days:

- The Crab invade the southern Crane lands, following up two days later with a strike through Sparrow territory toward the Scorpion lands. If the PCs are in Kyuden Asahina at any time after this, they will encounter the invasion first-hand (see Part Six for details).

After twenty days:

- Rumors of the Crab invasion spread quickly. By this time the PCs will hear about them no matter where they are.
- Word gets out that the forces of the Yoritomo Alliance in Yasuki lands have been attacked as well, and may be besieged in Yasuki Yashiki.

After thirty days:

- Refugees from the Crab invasion have traveled as far as Beiden Pass.
- The armies of the Three-Man Alliance (Sparrow, Fox, and Wasp) are said to be rallying to block the Crab invasion, with some assistance from the Mantis.
- Scorpion armies attempt to storm the besieged Lion city of Kensen Gakka (Humility's Lesson), but are repelled.

After forty-five days:

- Crab troops reputedly capture Garden Under Shadow City (a Daidoji possession on the far side of the Tidal Land Bridge).
- The Naga invasion has reputedly been halted near the City of the Rich Frog by the combined efforts of the Unicorn Clan and the Fists of the Emperor legion.
- Shiro Kitsuki is attacked by a force of Goju and Shadow-corrupted Oni. The castle is badly damaged, most of the defenders are slain, and family daimyo Kitsuki Yasu is kidnapped, along with the infamous relic known as Kitsuki Kaagi's Journal. If the PCs travel through Dragon lands after this time (going to or from Kyuden Agasha), they will find Shiro Kitsuki devastated and blackened by siege and fire, with shell-shocked Kitsuki and Mirumoto troops trying to clean up the aftermath.

After sixty days:

- Crab forces crush the Three-Man Alliance at the Battle of Crimson Grasses (on the Blessed Ground Plain). There are rumors that Shadowlands forces intervened in the battle, although whether they took sides or merely slaughtered indiscriminately is uncertain.
- Rumors of the attack on Shiro Kitsuki reach the rest of the Empire. The nature of the attacking force is uncertain, but is generally believed to be Shadowlands in nature. Losses are reported as heavy, and the Kitsuki daimyo is known to be missing.

After seventy-five days:

- The Goju/Shadowlands force besieges Shiro Sano Kakita. If the PCs attempt to visit that castle at any time after this, they will find it surrounded by the Shadowlands army, while Crane troops attempt to rally for a relief effort.

After eighty days:

- Scorpion troops occupy Beiden Pass. Any PCs traveling overland through this region (such as moving overland between Kyuden Asahina and any of the other locations) will now find the Scorpion in control of the pass.
- Scorpion forces fight the Lion armies in a bloody, two-day engagement near Kenson Gakka, amidst heavy rain: the Battle of Flooded Courage. Lion troops hold the field but are forced to withdraw afterward due to lack of supplies and reinforcements.

After eighty-five days:

- Rumors of the siege of Shiro Sano Kakita reach the rest of the Empire.

After ninety days:

- Crab troops are rumored to have reached the village of Shimomura in southern Scorpion lands. So far, there are no reports of major fighting between the Scorpion and Crab.

After 110 days:

- Toturi's Army is reported to be moving south through Phoenix lands. The Phoenix have declared Toturi a traitor, claiming he switched sides during the spring battles, and there are rumors that he is destroying the remains of the Phoenix and Lion armies as he moves south.
- Kyuden Asahina is reported to have been razed to the ground. If the PCs have somehow not yet completed their work in that city, it is now too late.

After 120 days:

- Rumors leak out of the Mantis Islands that they have lost over half their fleet to a surprise attack from the Crab "turtle ships."
- It is reported that a vast legion of Dark Moto has swept through Crab lands and is riding north toward the Unicorn territories.

After 130 days:

- The Fists of the Emperor Legion is reputed to be force-marching toward the capital in order to block the march of Toturi's Army.

Part Three: The Kolat Assassins

After the PCs visit either Kyuden Asahina or Kyuden Ikoma (whichever they reach first), the rest of the Kolat conspiracy will become aware of them and their quest. A team of Kolat assassins will be assigned to hunt down and kill the PCs.

The assassins will strike at whichever location the PCs visit next. Thus, if the PCs start at Kyuden Asahina and then go next to Kyuden Ikoma, the Kolat will strike at Kyuden Ikoma.

The assassin team will tail the PCs for a couple of days, observing their behavior. During this time, PCs may make **Contested Rolls** pitting their **Hunting/Awareness** against the **Stealth/Intelligence** or **Hisomu/Intelligence** (depending on where the PCs are) of the Kolat Elite Ninja who is scouting them. PCs who succeed in the roll will realize that this man has been watching them for some time. If they attempt to turn the tables and follow him, he will immediately retreat, requiring at least three additional successful Contested Rolls in order to tail him back to the rest of the assassins.

In addition, the Kolat team's shugenja, Himitsu, will monitor the party with the spells *Reflecting Pool* and *The Ties That Bind*. PCs with the ability to sense the use of magic in their vicinity (such as Dragon PCs with Elemental Attunement) may be able to notice this with a **Simple Awareness** roll at TN 20. Likewise, shugenja PCs can attempt a **Contested Spellcraft/Awareness** roll to notice Himitsu's magic. Himitsu will *Counterspell* any PC attempts to employ similar detection/scrying magic against him or his fellow Kolat agents.

After two days of observations, the Kolat team will attempt to ambush the PCs in a vulnerable area. The exact location will vary depending on where the PCs are when the attack occurs, but the following should serve as general guidelines:

- At Kyuden Agasha, the Kolat will strike when the PCs are one day away from the castle, either approaching or leaving (GM's choice). The PCs will be in the high passes of the Dragon Mountains and will have to spend the night in an isolated roadhouse. The Kolat will attempt to strike at night, catching the PCs off guard.
- At Kyuden Asahina, the Kolat will strike while the Crab armies are approaching (see Part Six below) and will try to hit the PCs while they are in a village street full of peasant refugees fleeing from the area. The Kolat will try to mingle with the crowd of refugees and use that to get close enough to the PCs to attack.
- At Kyuden Ikoma, the Kolat will ambush the PCs on the road, a half-day before they reach the city. They will choose a point where the road goes through a small belt of trees in hilly terrain, allowing them to spring out from hiding.

Regardless of where they attack, the Kolat assassins will attempt to approach the PCs stealthily and then strike by surprise. In the case of the roadhouse ambush, they will work their way up to the doors and then burst inside. For the street ambush, they will dress as peasants and attempt to "drift closer" through the crowd before attacking. For the woods ambush, they will conceal themselves next to the road and spring out without warning.

To detect these ambushes, the PCs will have to make **Contested rolls**. Any PC who could legitimately notice the assassins can make such a roll (in the case of the roadhouse ambush, this will be limited to those PCs who are taking the night's first watch – if nobody is on watch, no one can notice the ambush).

- For the roadhouse ambush, the roll is PC **Hunting/Perception** against Kolat **Stealth/Agility** to notice a few giveaway noises outside the building.
- For the street ambush, the roll is PC **Hunting/Awareness** or **Investigation/Perception** against Kolat **Hisomu/Awareness** to notice that some of the peasants don't seem "right."

- For the woods ambush, the roll is PC **Hunting/Awareness** or **Investigation/Perception** against the Kolat Ninjas' average **Stealth/Willpower** to notice a few tell-tale noises (heavy breathing, rasp of weapons) from the underbrush.

If the PCs do notice the ambush, they will have a few moments (equivalent to one action) to shout warnings, draw weapons, go for scrolls, etc., before the fight begins. As long as those PCs who noticed the danger make a clear warning, none of the PCs will be surprised.

If none of the PCs notice the ambush, they will be caught by surprise. The Kolat will get one free round of attacks, and during that round the PCs will be TN (5+Armor) to be Hit. Note that in the case of the roadhouse ambush, only two Kolat will be able to get through the door on the first round, which will limit their options somewhat.

Kolat Numbers and Combat Tactics

The exact composition of the Kolat strike team will depend on the strength of the PCs.

- Against a low-end party, there will be two Elite Kolat ninja, and four Standard Kolat ninja, plus Himitsu.
- Against a high-end party, there will be four Elite Kolat Ninja and six Standard Kolat ninja, plus Himitsu.

The Kolat assassins are highly skilled and completely ruthless. They will attempt to prioritize their attacks against the most dangerous PCs (powerful shugenja, very tough bushi). They do not fight honorably, and will not hesitate to gang up on PCs, strike helpless or sleeping victims, or any other vicious tactic.

The shugenja, Himitsu, will hang back, preferably in hiding, and use his spells to confound and disorient the PCs. Favorite tactics include using *Quiescence of Air* to confuse the PCs and prevent spellcasting (the Kolat are trained to fight in silence), crippling PCs with *Wind-Born Slumbers* and *Earth's Stagnation*, and saving his actions to *Counterspell* the PC shugenja. (See the L5R GM's Guide, page 96, for details on Counterspelling magic.)

The Kolat are fearless and fanatical – each of them goes into action with a fast-acting poison capsule in their mouths, and will use it if in danger of capture. If the PCs seem to be clearly winning the fight, Himitsu will

try to use *Call Upon the Wind* to escape, reporting their failure back to their superiors. The other Kolat will fight to the death.

Part Four: The Goju Stalkers

The Shadow is already aware that Emon is attempting to find a way to destroy it, and realizes that the PCs are involved in this somehow. It will begin to hunt the PCs as soon as they set out on their quest, although it will take some time for the Darkness to escalate to direct action.

The GM should strive to use these encounters to build a sense of growing fear, paranoia, and anxious anticipation in the PCs. By the time Goju Shingosha takes direct action against the PCs, the outburst of violence should come almost as a relief after the building tension.

Surveillance

During the PCs' initial trip from Samui Kaze Toshi to their first destination (wherever that might be), a single Goju will begin following them. Have all the PCs roll **Simple Perception**. The PC with the highest roll will notice a recurring face in the crowd, each time they pass through a village, town, or city. The face is bland and unremarkable – the only reason the PC notices is that it is sometimes the face of a samurai, sometimes a peasant, sometimes an inn worker or an *eta*, sometimes a man and sometimes a woman...

Once the PCs notice this, it should certainly unnerve them, especially if they have prior knowledge of the Living Darkness. They will be unable to get close to their enigmatic foe, who will continue to appear in passing crowds without ever speaking or getting close.

A Corrupted Horse

If any of the PCs have mounts, the Shadow will “take” one of their mounts about halfway through the adventure. The PC in question (choose randomly) can roll **Simple Perception** at TN 20 once for each “leg” of travel after the mount is possessed. A successful roll notices a flicker of swirling blackness in the horse's eyes. The horse can also be detected by testing it with light shone through a crystal (which will inflict 3k3 damage on it), or cutting it (its blood will boil away in black smoke).

If the PCs detect the mount's corruption, it will wheel and attack the party, while trying to throw its rider

(**Horsemanship/Strength** at TN 20 to hold on, otherwise take 3k1 damage and stunned for a round). Stats for the corrupted horse are listed in Appendix #1. If the mount is killed, it abruptly melts away in a cloud of boiling black smoke, deflating like a punctured bag.

If the PCs do not detect the corruption of their mount, it will turn on them during the final Shadow attack (see below).

Faces in the Shadows

If any of the PCs have Shadow Corruption, they will begin to glimpse faces out of the corners of their eyes anytime they are in a poorly lit area. (Especially when the PCs are indoors, at night, etc.) These vague, shapeless faces will have an unsettling resemblance to people the PC has met in the past, many of whom the PC will know to be far away, or dead.

The faces will not actually do anything, but as the adventure progresses, the corrupted PCs should begin to hear whispering voices, and feel occasional feathery touches or caresses. These alarming sensations will continue to escalate until the final confrontation with Goju Shingosha (see below).

Goju Shingosha

The Shadow has dispatched one of its unique minions, Goju Shingosha, to hunt the PCs. This being was formerly Hida Shingosha, a player character, and appears to be a tall, burly Crab bushi, scruffy and blunt-spoken, dressed in a slightly ragged kimono and carrying a tetsubo slung across his back. PCs who have played with the original character can roll **Simple Intelligence** at TN 10 to recognize him.

Shingosha will first appear soon after the PCs begin to notice the Shadow surveillance. Immediately after spotting the mysterious Goju tail yet again, one of the PCs should notice a tall Crab watching them from nearby (down the street, in the middle of the road, or similar, depending on the location of the fight). Once the PCs notice him, he turns and strides away, disappearing after a few paces behind a building, tree, or other visual obstruction. If the PCs pursue, they find no trace of him – not even footprints.

Shingosha will appear again at the second library/castle the PCs visit. Have the PCs roll **Simple Perception** – the PC with the highest roll will spot Shingosha sitting in a dark corner of a noodle shop, tea house, sake shop, or other such simple eatery (the sort whose front wall is open to the street). He will smile at the PC and hold up

a cup of sake, as though inviting them to join him in the shadowy corner.

- If the PCs stay away, or try to speak from a distance, Shingosha's face will go blank and he will drop down into the shadows, vanishing.
- If the PCs approach, Shingosha will introduce himself as "Hida Shingosha," and makes a point of greeting any PCs who knew him by that name. He will chat with the PCs, asking how their quest is going, and assuring them cheerfully that it cannot succeed. "We will not allow it," he says pleasantly. "We are close, very close. Already the edges of the world begin to fray. Do you really think a few mortals can halt this?"
- If any PCs try to argue with him about the power or imminent victory of the Shadow, Shingosha laughs. "I used to think that way too, in the old days. Then the Shadow set me free, and I learned better."
- Shingosha will continue to speak in this manner until the PCs either leave (in which case he wishes them a chillingly pleasant goodbye) or attack (in which case he drops into the shadows as above).

The Final Attack

Goju Shingosha will launch a final strike at the PCs after they locate all the documents for the ritual (meaning after they finish their research at whichever location they reach third). The attack will take place while the PCs are heading to their rendezvous with Yasuki Taka (at either Samui Kaze Toshi or Otosan Uchi). If the PCs decide not to meet with Taka, the Shadow will simply attack them while they are setting out to whatever they choose as their next destination.

- If, due to their choice of which locations to visit first, the PCs fought the Kolat assassin team at their last research location, they will have at least five days before the Shadow strikes, giving them the opportunity to heal any injuries.

The attack will take place in the late afternoon of a day which has been cloudy and dark, with rumbles of thunder and intermittent rain showers. A fierce, blowing rain will begin to fall right before the attack begins, reducing visibility to about sixty feet, and clear vision to about twenty. Thunderclaps echo from the distance.

When the attack begins, the PCs' road will be on an earthen causeway, passing between rice paddies. The surface of the water in the paddies is churned nearly to foam by the slashing downpour, and the roar of falling water fills the PCs' ears.

Have those PCs in the lead (no more than two, due to the narrowness of the road) roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 30. With a success, they sense someone running toward them the rain, and have one round to prepare themselves, shout warnings, pull out scrolls, etc., before Goju Shingosha looms up out of the storm, tetsubo shedding a sheet of water as he whirls it overhead.

- Any PCs who do not act to prepare themselves will be caught by surprise by Shingosha's sudden looming onslaught, and are TN 5+Armor to be Hit on the first round of combat.
- A pack of Goju are lurking beneath the churning water of the rice paddies on either side of the PCs. When their initiative comes up on Round One, they will explode out of the water, striking by surprise (except against PCs who have specifically declared they are watching for an attack from the flank or rear). There will be eight Goju against a High-Rank party, six Goju against a Low-Rank party.

Due to the narrowness of the causeway, no more than two PCs may fight abreast. Those who wish to circle around the sloping sides of the causeway to strike at Shingosha must roll **Simple Agility** at TN 20 to avoid slipping on the mud and falling into the rice paddy. PCs fighting on the muddy slope cannot Full Attack.

The weather conditions will inflict a +20 TN penalty on any ranged attacks (archery, hand-hurled weapons, etc) and will also require shugenja to make an extra Raise in order to cast a ranged spell accurately beyond a distance of twenty feet. Also, any time a PC shugenja changes spell-scrolls, the PC must make a **Simple Agility** roll at TN 20 to keep the scroll from being snatched out of his/her hands by the storm and blown away. (The scrolls can be recovered after the combat, if the PCs spend a half-hour searching for them.) Finally, the massive downpour of water will be discouraging to Fire spirits and heartening to Water spirits – all Fire spells are at +10 TN to cast, but Water spells get a Free Raise.

Needless to say, the storm will also make it impossible for the PCs to employ crystals as light-focusing devices.

Shingosha and his Goju minions will fight to the death, without mercy or quarter. During the battle, Shingosha will use the most brutal and unfair tactics possible, taking full advantage of the fierce weather (for example, taking three Raises to knock PCs off the causeway into the water). He will also taunt the PCs by shifting his facial features to resemble friends and allies who have died or been devoured by the Shadow.

Part Five: Kyuden Ikoma

The seat of the Ikoma family is a huge walled fortress, located in the shadow of the Mountain of the Seven Thunders, mightiest peak of the Spine of the World Mountains. Within the walls can be seen the great peaked roofs of the Hall of Ancestors and the Ikoma Libraries, as well as the six stories of the castle itself. Smaller barracks, dojos, and shrines also poke their roofs above the massive stone walls.

A large urbanized area sprawls outside the walls of the fortress, spreading for over a half-mile. This settlement is known as “Ikoma’s Eye,” from the saying that “If something is worth seeing, than Ikoma’s eye has already found it.” A sizable military camp is located at the edge of the settlement, banners fluttering bright in the summer sun, men marching and drilling in the open fields.

As the PCs approach, a Lion patrol (four bushi and an officer) will approach them and ask to see their travel papers. If the PCs have travel papers from Yasuki Taka, or have Emerald or Jade Magistrates among them who can write their own, the Lion will not obstruct them (although they will carefully question any Dragon or Scorpion PCs about their purpose in Kyuden Ikoma). Otherwise, the PCs will be refused entry to the city. The Lion are absolutely unbending on this, and in fact will warn the PCs to depart Lion lands forthwith if they do not wish to be arrested for traveling without proper permission.

The Local Authorities

The Ikoma family daimyo, Ikoma Ujiaki, is also the general of the Imperial Legions, and is in the Imperial capital trying to rebuild the Legions after last year’s disaster in Shinomen Forest. In his absence, the castle of Kyuden Ikoma itself is ruled by Ikoma Tsanuri, the cousin and confidant of Clan Champion Matsu Tsuko. The Ikoma Libraries themselves are under the administration of Ikoma Kaoku, an aging historian.

If the PCs wish to get access to the Ikoma libraries, they will have to request an audience with Tsanuri. The Lion will make the PCs wait at least three days for this audience, unless the PCs have strong political influence with the Lion Clan or the Imperial families. This could include the following:

- PCs from the Lion Clan or Imperial Families with Glory of 5.0 or better.
- PCs with Ear of the Emperor or Imperial Spouse.
- PCs with multiple/Major Allies or Favors with the Lion Clan.

PCs who can bring such political strength to bear can get an audience after only a single day.

An Audience With the Lion

A quiet servant leads you into a modest-sized audience hall, whose bare stone walls are decorated only with the tattered banners of defeated enemies. The courtiers in the room are silent and attentive, sitting in two precise rows to either side, only their eyes moving as they observe your approach.

Seated at the head of the room is a young woman, no older than her early twenties, with short-cropped hair and an athletic build. She is dressed in a simple, dignified kimono in Lion brown and gold. An excellent daisho set rests on the floor, placed politely on her right. To her left and slightly back sits a much older man, balding, with a white goatee. His eyes sparkle with interest as he watches your approach.

- If the PCs arrive at Kyuden Ikoma after day 30 of their travels, when the Scorpion attempted to storm Kenson Gakka, there will be another notable at the audience, seated to Tsanuri’s right: Matsu Kiyone, daimyo of Kenson Gakka. She is a fit, round-faced woman in her late twenties, dressed in court garb but with the build of a warrior.

Tsanuri will listen quietly and attentively to whatever the PCs ask, showing a maturity and poise beyond her years. Allow the PCs to make whatever statements and petitions they wish. In deciding how Tsanuri and her court will respond, the GM should consider the following:

- Lion and Imperial PCs will always be regarded with greater favor than others. PCs who are Ikoma Omoidasu (bards) will be automatically allowed to

visit the libraries, although their companions will still have to seek permission.

- PCs who are over-eloquent and flowery will make a bad impression with the Lion, who are suspicious of “honeyed tongues.” On the other hand, a PC who is crude or ill-mannered will also make a bad impression, since the Lion value etiquette and dignity. A PC who is clear-spoken, polite, and civilized will make the best impression.
- The Lion are currently at war with the Scorpion and Dragon Clans. Tsanuri will absolutely not allow members of either Clan to access the Ikoma libraries. She will be predisposed against PCs who are known to be closely allied with either of those Clans (married into them, for example).
- If members of the Scorpion Clan serve as the primary mouthpieces for the PCs, Tsanuri will assume that the rest of the PCs are “Scorpion dupes” and will refuse all of them.
- None of the Lion here have ever heard of the Shadow/Living Darkness, and they will look strongly askance at PCs who launch into explanations of ancient and previously unheard-of evils. Describing the Shadow as an “evil force allied with Fu Leng” will produce a much better result.
- If the PCs speak in a manner which shows deep respect for history and scholarship, Ikoma Kaoku will be favorably impressed with them, and whispers as much to Tsanuri.
- If Matsu Kiyone is here, and some of the PCs previously helped obstruct the prosecution of Shosuro Tajiki in the adventure *Damning Evidence*, she will speak to Tsanuri in a low voice, labeling the PCs as Scorpion allies. This will not automatically disqualify the PCs, but it will weigh against them.

If the PCs attempt to offer a false justification for visiting the Ikoma library (such as claiming to be conducting historical research), they will have to succeed in a **Contested roll** of **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Acting/Awareness** against the **Investigation/Perception** of both Tsanuri and Ikoma Kaoku. If Tsanuri does not detect the lie herself, Kaoku will whisper to her, telling her of his observations. Only if the PCs deceive both of the Lions will such a ruse succeed. Otherwise, Tsanuri will expel the PCs from

her court, coldly informing them that the Lion do not take kindly to being deceived.

Assuming the PCs do not get caught in a lie, after they finish their presentation the PC who took the lead in addressing Tsanuri may make a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll. If other PCs spoke as well, they are considered to be assisting the primary speaker (adding their skill dice). The base TN to convince Tsanuri to let them into the library is 25. Add 5 to the TN for each factor which weighs against the PCs (bad manners, Kiyone’s hostility, babble about Shadow, etc), and subtract 5 for each factor which favors them (Lion or Imperial PCs, good manners, support from Kaoku, etc).

If the PCs succeed, Tsanuri will gravely nod. “Although we prize our secrets as highly as any Clan, we are not enemies to the calls of honorable need and scholarship.” She will still not allow Scorpion and Dragon PCs into the libraries (“We cannot ignore the realities of war”), but all other PCs will be granted permission to conduct research.

If the PCs fail, Tsanuri will be polite but firm. “Both our Clan’s secrets and the histories of the Empire have been placed into the care of my family, and I cannot allow myself to risk betraying that trust, no matter how eloquently you may plead.” Her decision is final, unless one of the PCs has a Major Ally with the Lion Clan. That PC (only) can “cash in” (erase) that Ally to make one final role-play appeal, which, if sufficiently impressive, can allow one final roll (either **Sincerity/Awareness** or an **Honor Test**, player’s choice) at TN 25.

The Ikoma Libraries

The building which houses the famed Ikoma libraries, the most complete records of the Empire’s history, is a single massive stone edifice, two stories high, with massive oaken crossbeams supporting a peaked roof of gleaming golden brown tile. A huge carved wooden double-door, as big as the gates to many castles, offers access, and a pair of alert-looking Lion bushi in full armor flank the mighty entrance, carefully watching all who climb the front steps.

Within the door, light slants down from a few high, narrow windows near the roof. Giant wooden shelves, stretching from floor to near the two-story ceiling, fill one great chamber after another. Ikoma historians, many of them quite venerable and frail-looking, move quietly through the library, collecting and shelving scrolls, poring over them at reading tables, or scribing

their own documents to add to the great store of knowledge.

The Ikoma historians willingly cooperate with anyone who has gained permission to enter the library. They will not perform research for the PCs themselves, but they can guide the PCs to promising sections of the records (the ancient Empire, early research into magic, theology involving the creation of the world, etc).

PCs who are researching in the Ikoma library may make one skill roll for every eight hours they spend in the library; however, no PC may make more than three such rolls. The possible skills rolls roll is **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Calligraphy/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 30. PCs may not assist each other on these rolls. If a PC spends multiple eight-hour stretches back-to-back, there is a cumulative +5 TN penalty for each consecutive one.

In order to locate the information they are looking for, the PCs will have to get a total of three successful skill rolls. The PCs will need to copy down the information they find – they will not, under any circumstances, be allowed to remove scrolls from the library. (An Ikoma historian will always be lurking nearby, making sure the PCs don't hide any scrolls.)

Sneaking In

Some PCs who have been rejected may decide to try to access the Ikoma libraries by stealth (perhaps supplemented with force). There are basically two possible ways to do this successfully:

- Use magic. Shugenja PCs whose spells allow deception, illusion, or invisibility could use such techniques to slip unobserved into the libraries. Flying magic could be used to slip into the windows, although this would need to be done at night to avoid immediate notice. Shugenja could also use spells such as *Know the Ground* to open a tunnel into the library, although this would again be quickly noticed during daylight.
- A sneaky PC with ninja-like ambitions could try to climb up to one of the windows. Climbing the sheer walls of the Ikoma library requires a roll of **Climbing/Agility** at TN 20 or **Athletics/Agility** at TN 25. If the PC has access to climbing gear (claws, grapple hooks, etc) this will award a Free Raise on the roll. Again, this would probably have to be done at night to avoid notice.

Regardless of how they sneak in, the only time the PCs would be able to conduct research without being noticed would be at night, when the Ikoma historians are absent. The PCs would get one eight-hour research period, and would have to find a way to leave again unnoticed in the morning.

PCs who are discovered violating the Ikoma libraries will be mercilessly attacked and hunted by all the Lion in the vicinity.

The Kitsu Tombs?

It is possible that some PCs may think of trying to conduct research at the Kitsu Tombs, the home of the Lion Clan's shugenja family. This is more than a little problematic, however, since the location of the Tombs is a closely held secret, known only to senior members of the Lion Clan. No PC, not even a member of the Kitsu family, will know the specific location of the Tombs, although a roll of **Lore: Lion Clan/Intelligence** at TN 20 or **Theology/Intelligence** at TN 25, or a Lion Clan PC rolling **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25, will know that the Tombs are somewhere in the Matsu lands.

The PCs will not be able to locate the Tombs, no matter what they do. Time spent on such efforts is simply wasted.

Part Six: The Asahina Temples

The Asahina lands are among the most peaceful territories in the Empire, a patchwork quilt of farms, small villages, temples, shrines, and samurai residences, free of any large cities. However, if the PCs travel through these lands any time ten or more days after the start of their quest, they will encounter refugees on the roads, fleeing the Crab invasion farther west. They will also encounter occasional groups of Daidoji bushi heading toward the battlefield.

Kyuden Asahina itself is a large, sprawling complex surrounding a beautiful ten-story castle. The lesser structures spread for hundreds of yards away from the castle, and contain guest quarters, banquet rooms, audience halls, dojos, baths, servants' quarters, gardens, orchards, koi ponds, and the barracks for the small contingent of troops which guard the place. The military contingent here numbers less than thirty, and is largely ceremonial – the Asahina are strict pacifists.

PCs who have played the adventure *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* have spent a winter in this magnificent

castle complex, and have met the family daimyo, Asahina Tamako. They may even have helped drive ratlings out of the castle libraries.

Seeking an Audience

The PCs will be welcomed to Kyuden Asahina with full honors and exquisite manners – the Asahina would never dishonor themselves by refusing courtesy to anyone, even a warlike Lion or brutal Crab. The PCs are shown to a set of fine guest rooms, offered the chance to bathe and eat, and generally treated as well as anyone could ever ask.

However, actually getting something done will be more difficult. The PCs will need to seek an audience with Asahina Tamako in order to get permission to visit the libraries. How quickly the PCs are able to arrange such an audience will depend on who they are and what approach they take.

It will require a base of five days of requests to get the PCs an audience with Tamako. This can be modified in the following ways:

- If the party includes Crane or Imperial PCs, subtract one day. Subtract a second day if any of the PCs are Asahina family or school.
- If at least one of the PCs has Glory of 5.0 or better, subtract one day. If all the PCs are Glory 1.5 or less, add one day.
- Add one day if any of the PCs are Scorpion.
- Lion and Crab PCs will be repeatedly told apologetically that “Lord Tamako regrets the delay, but he simply cannot see you today.” Add one day for EACH Lion and Crab PC in the party.
- If any of the PCs have Crane bridal certs, they may subtract one day per cert.
- PCs may “cash in” (erase) Allies or Favors with the Crane Clan to shorten their waiting time. A Favor or a Minor/Normal Ally will shorten the time by one day. A Major Ally or True Friend will shorten it by two days.
- A PC who makes a well role-played appeal for their audience may roll an appropriate social skill (**Sincerity, Diplomacy, Manipulation, Courtier**, etc) with **Awareness** at TN 15 to shorten the time by one day.
- A clever PC may take the opposite approach and stage a temper tantrum, creating a spectacle which the Crane can only end by granting an audience. The GM will have to adjudicate the results of such a strategy, which can potentially cost the PCs significant Glory.
- If any of the PCs played the adventure *Winter Court: Kyuden Asahina* and helped solve the murder mystery in that adventure, they may shorten the waiting time by one day.

Meeting with Asahina Tamako

The audience is held in one of the many modest-sized, pleasantly decorated meeting rooms in the complex. An open wall looks out onto a small garden, where a stream chuckles merrily through a narrow channel between carefully situated shrubs, flowers, and saplings. A water clock slowly fills its bamboo tube before dropping to strike with a sharp “tok.”

The Asahina daimyo is a thin, wizened older man with a long goatee. His face is lined with age and care, and his hair is nearly pure white. He clears his throat carefully before greeting you. “Welcome to Kyuden Asahina, noble samurai. How may our peaceable family assist you?”

The PCs will be served tea and cakes during the meeting, and observant PCs will note that Tamako’s hands tremble slightly as he lifts his own cup to sip from it. He has always been a sickly man, and the past two years of war and strife, not to mention the disgrace of his cousin Doji Kimi, have been very hard on him.

To convince Asahina Tamako to let them into the library, the PCs will have to present an effective verbal appeal. Tamako is a peaceful and enlightened man, but he recognizes that the times are dire and that, with Crab troops invading his lands, even the gentle Asahina may not be able to avoid conflict.

- Tamako will be most impressed by any appeal from the PCs which seems honorable, well-intentioned, and truthful. Likewise, expressing the desire to hold off evil and protect the Empire will impress him.
- Aggressive and warlike talk will not please Tamako. He will try to maintain the Asahina family’s traditional attitudes of pacifism and non-intervention. However, PCs who can press him on this matter without being overly aggressive in their own attitudes (and especially those who draw

attention to the looming threat from the Crab) can force him to reluctantly acknowledge the need to take action.

- Tamako is not impressed by those who bluster, shout, speak crudely, or otherwise lack self-control. He is most impressed by those who remain dignified and soft-spoken even in crisis.
- Tamako will be more cautious about listening to the words of Scorpions or Crabs, but will not automatically dismiss them.
- Tamako knows nothing about the Shadow. However, he has heard many rumors of a strange, dark evil which has taken control of Kyuden Doji. PCs who seem to offer an explanation of that evil will command his interest and respect.
- If the PCs politely express concern over Tamako's health, he will thank them for their concern, but insists there is nothing to worry about: "I am old, and age extracts a price." He will be favorably impressed with PCs whose concern is genuine, but repelled by any PC who tries to use this to manipulate or bribe him.
- Direct threats or crude browbeating cannot move him – he is personally quite fearless. He will quietly order such PCs to leave, and after a few minutes the castle's small contingent of Daidoji will arrive to escort the PCs off the premises.

This is a pure role-playing challenge, based entirely on the PCs' ability to present arguments which will persuade the daimyo of Rokugan's most peaceful and isolationist family. The GM must adjudicate, based on the guidelines listed above, whether or not the PCs manage to convince Asahina Tamako to assist them.

The Asahina Library

The Asahina library takes up almost the entire second and third floors of the main castle. There is only a single entrance, a large door on the second floor which is guarded by a Daidoji bushi at all times. Within, steep wooden staircases connect the two floors of the library. The rooms are crowded by high wooden shelves filled with scrolls. Narrow windows between the shelves allow light during the day. At night, servants bring candles to assist those whose researches cannot wait for the next dawn.

Asahina shugenja and artisans, of both genders and all ages from young apprentices to venerable scholars, are

in the libraries at all hours of the day and night, quietly poring over scrolls of ancient wisdom. Some of them will enjoy pausing to converse with visitors, while others will be irritated by interruptions. Even with the clouds of war drawing ever closer, they continue to study and work quite placidly.

If the PCs start asking any of those in the library about ancient rituals, the creation of the universe, or anything else similar, one of the scholars, Asahina Tokutsuki, will become interested in their work. He is an inquisitive middle-aged scholar, and is frequently nursing a cold, sniffing and sneezing. His manners are normally good but fall apart when he becomes excited by a research topic. If the PCs can get Tokutsuki working for them, they will get a Free Raise on all their rolls here.

As with the Ikoma libraries, PCs who are researching in Kyuden Asahina may make one skill roll for every eight hours they spend in the library. No PC may make more than three such rolls. The possible skills rolls are **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Calligraphy/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 30. PCs may not assist each other on these rolls. If a PC spends multiple eight-hour stretches back-to-back, there is a cumulative +5 TN penalty for each consecutive one.

Again, in order to locate the information they are looking for, the PCs will have to get a total of three successful skill rolls. The PCs will likely need to copy down the information they find – unless they can take advantage of the chaos triggered by the Crab attack (see below), they will not be allowed to remove scrolls from the library.

The Crab Attack

On the morning of the seventh day after the PCs arrive at Kyuden Asahina, a spearhead of the Crab armies will attack the place. This will place an intrinsic limit on how long the PCs have to get their audience with Tamako and conduct their research in the library. The GM should warn the PCs as the time ticks down – the smoke on the horizon gets closer each day, the flow of refugees intensifies, rumors arrive of Crab atrocities, and so forth.

On the seventh morning, an exhausted Daidoji courier will ride into the front courtyard, reining in his foam-speckled pony and shouting for the captain of the guard. Within minutes, panicked rumors spread through the entire palace complex: the Crab are close, within a few miles, and marching this way.

Kyuden Asahina is not designed to withstand a siege. The palace's small contingent of Daidoji troops will concentrate their efforts on getting Asahina Tamako and the other high-ranking members of the family out of the area as quickly as possible. Meanwhile, the rest of the Asahina are divided: some refuse to panic, following their enlightened and pacifistic ideals to the last; others flee, joining the general exodus of terrified peasants, servants, and other commoners; a few choose to stay and to fight, using their modest Air magic as best they can to resist the Crab aggression.

The PCs will most likely join the flight from the castle. (And may get ambushed by the Kolat on the way out, see Part Three for details.) So long as the PCs flee promptly, they should be able to make it out, although they may experience some tense moments as they struggle to push through the panicked crowds while the Crab army marches relentlessly closer.

In the unlikely event that some or all of the PCs stay and try to help defend the palace, they should quickly realize their cause is doomed. Ten of the Daidoji troops here escort Asahina Tamako and his kin out of the area, leaving less than twenty to garrison the palace. They are joined by about fifty more, many of them wounded, who trickle in ahead of the Crab advance.

The captain of the guard is Daidoji Hajime, a stern, fit young bushi with white-dyed hair in a short ponytail. (PCs may have met him in the adventure *Lies, Lies, Lies*.) Knowing he has no chance to stop the Crab or hold the castle, he decides to sell the lives of his small force as dearly as possible, delaying and bleeding the Crab as much as he can to buy time for the escape of the Asahina and civilians. PCs who place themselves under his command will be doomed to perish heroically (unless they dishonorably change their minds later).

Some PCs may wish to stay long enough to get a close look at the Crab army. This is a dangerous choice, since it will make it difficult for the PCs to escape the palace safely – Crab scouting forces are ranging ahead of the main force, and a troop of four Corrupted Hiruma Scouts (see Appendix) will intercept anyone who waits before fleeing Kyuden Asahina. However, in exchange for this hazard, the PCs will be able to get a good look at the main Crab army:

- The Crab force numbers over a thousand. It seems to be comprised overwhelmingly of bushi, but PCs who roll Simple Perception at TN 20 will notice a small group of Kuni shugenja as well. If the PC makes TN 25 or better, s/he will also notice what

appear to be troops of undead mixed in with the Hida bushi.

- PCs who can detect Taint can roll Simple Awareness at TN 15 to pick up a powerful aura of Taint from the Crab army.

Part Seven: Kyuden Agasha

To reach the castle of the former Agasha family (who have recently renamed themselves Tamori), the PCs will have to travel up the single road which leads into the Dragon mountains, passing the humble castle of Shiro Kitsuki and then turning east toward Shiro Mirumoto. The road to Kyuden Agasha, known as the “Mountain Path,” turns aside from the main route one day before the PCs would reach Shiro Mirumoto.

Any Dragon/Dragonfly PCs, and any other PCs who roll **History/Intelligence** or **Lore: Dragon/Intelligence** at TN 10, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 20, will know that in order to take this road at all, they will first have to visit Kyuden Tonbo, the seat of the Dragonfly Clan, which serves as the “gateway” to the Dragon lands. (If all of the PCs are Dragon or Dragonfly Clan themselves, this will not be necessary.) This rule applies even if the PCs have travel papers authorizing them to visit Dragon lands.

A Visit to Kyuden Tonbo

The Dragonfly lands were heavily fought-over during the previous year's Lion-Dragon conflict, and the PCs will pass much wreckage and remnant of conflict – ruined villages, trees marked with sword blows and arrow-stubs, roads churned up by marching armies and not yet repaired, and so forth.

Kyuden Tonbo is a modest-sized castle, but one of unusual design: it is circular, and built in six stories which are all of the same size, despite the tile roofs which project out from the sides of each. The castle and the small village around it seem to have been spared the wartime damage which afflicts the Dragonfly lands closer to the border.

The PCs will be admitted to the ground floor of the castle. After an hour's wait they meet with Tonbo Tohyu, the daimyo of the Dragonfly Clan. Tohyu is a placid, thoughtful young man, although his face is prematurely lined with the cares and difficulties of the recent wars.

Tohryu welcomes any Dragon or Dragonfly PCs back to their homes, then asks the other PCs to explain why they wish to visit the Dragon lands. ***“It is our task to serve the great Dragon Clan by considering all requests for audiences or visits. The Dragon value their privacy, and therefore we must consider carefully the merits of your visit. Please, tell me your names and the reason you wish to disturb the solitude of the Dragon.”*** He will deliver this speech with complete sincerity, even though the “private” Dragon Clan is currently busy warring on and invading its neighbors.

Presumably the PCs will offer some variant on a request to visit Kyuden Agasha for scholarly research. Tohryu will listen to their words attentively with his hands clasped before him. So long as the PCs do not attempt an open and blatant deception, once they are finished, they can roll **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Diplomacy/ Awareness** at TN 15 to convince Tohryu.

- If Lion or Phoenix PCs are in the party, their TN suffers a +5 penalty.
- If the PCs actually tell the whole truth, or a significant part of it, Tohryu is intrigued (although he does not fully believe them), and they gain a Free Raise on their roll.
- If the PCs make up some false or unlikely story to justify their visit to the Dragon lands, they must defeat Tohryu with a **Contested roll** of their **Acting/Awareness** or **Sincerity/Awareness** against his **Investigation/Perception** of 4k3.

If Tohryu refuses the PCs, they can “cash in” one Ally or Favor with the Dragon Clan to force a single re-roll at +5 to the TN.

If Tohryu approves the PCs, he will issue them a special set of travel papers, granting them permission to enter Dragon lands. They will then be able to find the road to Shiro Kitsuki without difficulty.

Bypassing the Dragonfly?

If all of the PCs are themselves Dragon or Dragonfly, they can bypass Kyuden Tonbo without risk. Otherwise, they will find it strangely difficult to locate the road to Shiro Kitsuki (the road known as “Kitsuki’s Dance”). In order to spot this road amid the confusing, chaotic foothills of the Dragon lands, the PCs will have to roll **Meditation/Awareness** at TN 25.

Regardless, if the PCs enter Dragon lands without speaking to the Dragonfly Clan, they will be stopped a day short of Shiro Kitsuki by a Dragon patrol, consisting of six Mirumoto bushi. If the PCs can present valid travel papers (from either Yasuki Taka, a Jade/Emerald Magistrate PC, or a Kitsuki Magistrate PC), and do not mention that they bypassed the Dragonfly, they will be allowed to proceed. Otherwise, they will be ordered to return to the Dragonfly to petition for permission to enter Dragon lands.

The Fate of Shiro Kitsuki

On day 45 (see Timeline), Shiro Kitsuki will be attacked by a large force of Goju and Darkness-corrupted Shadowlands creatures. If the PCs are traveling to or from Shiro Agasha around this time, the GM should “fudge” the timing so that the PCs do not actually witness the attack. They can, however, encounter its aftermath.

The modest castle of the Kitsuki family is now a smoking ruin, the blackened teeth of its roof timbers sticking up forlornly from the fire-scorched stone walls. The surrounding town has been leveled, and the stench of burning mingles with the smells of blood and death. Dead peasants and samurai are everywhere, many with their bodies torn apart. Mingled with them are other corpses, badly decayed humanoid things with black slimy flesh. Eta and peasants pick through the ruins, recovering bodies and trying to find a few survivors amid the wreckage. A few shell-shocked Dragon samurai stand guard over the ruins of the castle itself.

The Dragon samurai are a mix of Kitsuki and Mirumoto, most of whom were previously stationed here as guards or residents. They will describe the attack as best they can:

- The attackers were a horde of undead, led by demons and by things which resembled men, but were black and featureless. The demons and faceless men bled black slime when wounded. Some of them dissolved away in clouds of black smoke when slain, while others did not.
- There were also maho-tsukai among the enemy, who summoned horrible and destructive blood-magic.
- The demons and faceless creatures resisted normal weapons, and the defenders had little jade or crystal. The daimyo’s court shugenja managed to

burn down many of them, but was eventually overwhelmed.

- The faceless men were able to run up walls and along ceilings, outflanking every defense.
- After the attack, the daimyo, Kitsuki Yasu, was missing. His body has not been found among the slain.
- Many of the samurai who defended the castle and lands are now missing as well.
- If any of the PCs know about Kitsuki Kaagi's journal (**Lore: Shadow/Intelligence** at TN 15, **Lore: Ninja** at TN 20, or **Lore: Dragon/Kitsuki** at TN 25), they can determine it is missing, and the crystal chamber which housed it has been shattered.

Shiro Agasha

The road known as “The Mountain’s Path” winds up into the highest central peaks of the Dragon lands, many of which are volcanoes with puffs of white smoke drifting from their peaks. The path is all but empty, with simply roadhouses to shelter travelers for the night. (If the Kolat team hits the PCs in Dragon lands, it will strike when they are at one of these roadhouses.) When the PCs finally reach the castle itself, it is the first sign of civilization they have seen in two full days.

You finally emerge from the high passes onto a small plateau, perhaps a mile across. Modest farms are scattered about this patch of flatland, although no farmers’ huts are to be seen. Across the plateau, the jagged shape of Fire Tooth Mountain rises into the sky. Built into its south side, halfway up the mountain and facing south toward you, is the huge complex of Shiro Agasha. The castle itself is surrounded by frowning battlements and defensive towers, looking more like a Crab fortress than the home of a shugenja family.

Shiro Agasha is a nearly self-sufficient castle. The peasants who work the fields below, the artisans who make clothing and tools, the eta who deal with waste and corpses... all dwell within the walls.

The PCs will be welcomed politely into the complex and escorted to guest quarters. On their way, they pass a large training field right outside the castle proper. Scores of shugenja are training in the ways of the katana and wakizashi, under the watchful eye of instructors from the Mirumoto school. In any other

shugenja family in the Empire, such militarism would be shocking – here, it is simply a part of their lives.

Important note: With the exception of their daimyo Agasha Tamori, all the members of the family who remain within the Dragon Clan have changed their name to “Tamori” to protest the departure of the “Agasha dissidents” to join the Phoenix Clan. The castle itself retains the old name, but that is expected to change as soon as Agasha Tamori gets permission from the Clan Champion. PCs should be reminded of this frequently, especially if any of them are “Agasha dissidents” themselves.

Negotiating with the Tamori

Agasha Tamori himself is absent – he is in the field with the Dragon armies. Currently, the highest authority in the castle is Tamori Hizoku, a middle-aged daimyo with graying hair and a cheerful, pleasant demeanor. He will meet with the PCs after a half-day’s wait. At the audience, he is accompanied by someone else: a fiercely beautiful teenage shugenja-ko, Tamori Shaitung, daughter of Agasha Tamori.

While the PCs are speaking, Tamori Shaitung will quietly cast *Whispering Wind* several times, allowing her to tell if the PCs are lying. She will pay special attention to Lion and Phoenix PCs, most especially “Agasha dissidents” who joined the Phoenix, since she assumes they are enemies and up to no good. If she catches a PC lying, she will whisper the information to Tamori Hizoku, who nods and smiles as though he is hearing a mild pleasantry. PCs who roll **Simple Awareness** at TN 20 (or **Ichu Miru/Awareness** at TN 15) detect a subtle coldness to his manners after that.

The PCs must, as usual, present a justification for being allowed to explore the Agasha libraries. After making a well role-played “pitch,” they must roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 20. (PCs who role-play exceptionally well can substitute other social skills such as **Diplomacy**, **Courtier**, or **Manipulation**.) The TN is modified according to the following criteria:

- PCs have Lion or Phoenix among them: +5 to TN, +10 if those PCs do most of the speaking.
- PCs include one or more “Agasha dissidents”: additional +5 TN penalty.
- A Dragon or Dragonfly PC serves as primary spokesman: -5 to TN, -10 if the PC is Agasha family.

- PCs speak rudely, crudely, or without skillful role-play: +5 to TN.
- GM judges that the PCs role-play exceptionally well: -5 to TN.
- PCs are caught lying by Tamori Shaitung: +5 TN for each lie detected.

If the PCs talk about the Shadow, Hizoku will listen carefully. He does not automatically dismiss the PCs' words as those of other Clans might do – he has heard the rumors of Kitsuki Kaagi's journal.

If the PCs fail the roll, they can “cash in” one Favor or Ally with the Dragon Clan to get a single re-roll at +5 to the TN.

Regardless of what the PCs roll, Tamori Hizoku will not allow any Lion or Phoenix PCs access to the library. He will be apologetic but firm. “We are still at war, samurai-san, even if there are rumors of peace negotiations. I cannot allow a battlefield foe to plumb our Clan's deepest secrets, however great your need might be.”

Researching in the Agasha Library

The library occupies a single floor on the castle's first floor, enclosed by thick stone walls and with low, claustrophobic ceilings. Other stone passages lead even further down, to the legendary foundries where the Tamori study the ways of alchemy, but the PCs will not be allowed down there unless they are members of the Tamori family themselves.

The library is lit only by candles, hundreds of which are arrayed in iron racks along the walls, and their flickering glow lends the place an eerie atmosphere. The other Tamori will not assist the PCs in their researches – in the fashion of the enigmatic Dragon, they conduct their own work and leave their guests to fend for themselves.

As with the Ikoma and Asahina libraries, PCs who are researching in Shiro Agasha may make one skill roll for every eight hours they spend in the library. No PC may make more than three such rolls. The possible skills rolls are **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Calligraphy/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 30. PCs may not assist each other on these rolls. If a PC spends multiple eight-hour stretches back-to-back, there is a cumulative +5 TN penalty for each consecutive one.

Again, in order to locate the information they are looking for, the PCs will have to get a total of three successful skill rolls. The PCs will not be allowed to remove scrolls from the library, and must make copies of any information they find.

Part Eight: Assembling the Ritual

In order to have a chance of assembling the complete ritual, the PCs will need to successfully collect information from at least two of the three Clans they investigated (the Lion, Dragon, and Crane). It will be easier, of course, if they have collected it from all three.

In order to put together the material they have collected, the PCs will need somewhere safe to study and work. Depending on where they ended their quest, they might need to escape from a local crisis before beginning their work.

Each day that the PCs spend in study of the documents will allow one roll to decipher them. Two PCs may combine their efforts on this roll. The possible rolls are **Research/Intelligence** at TN 25, **Nazado/Intelligence** at TN 20, **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 25, or **Cipher/Intelligence** at TN 20. A total of four successful rolls will be needed to assemble the complete ritual.

Once the PCs manage that, they will be able to determine the following:

- The ritual must be performed at Seppun Hill, where the fallen Kamis first touched the mortal earth.
- It will require the efforts of a large number of shugenja, perhaps 20 or more, in order to have a chance of success.
- Five specific artifacts will be required in order to create sufficient spiritual power to wrench the two supreme Fortunes down from the Celestial Heavens. Give the PCs Handout #1: Sacred Artifacts.

Identifying the Artifacts

PCs may not immediately recognize all of the artifacts in the list. They may make skill rolls to try to recognize the references.

For each of the six descriptive elements listed below, each PC may make one roll of either **Lore: Relics** (or similar **Lore** skill)/**Intelligence** at TN 15, **Theology/Intelligence** at TN 20, **History/Intelligence** at TN 20, or **Simple Intelligence** at TN 25. A successful roll earns the first clue. The PC may then make a second roll, with a Raise, to get the second clue.

Alternatively, if the PCs are still at one of the three Clan libraries where they recovered the ritual, and can spend a day researching, they can substitute a roll of **Research/Intelligence** at TN 20 or **Calligraphy/Intelligence** at TN 25.

“An obi woven from the light of the Sun.” 1st Clue: There are rumors of a golden obi associated with the worship of the Sun Goddess. 2nd Clue: The obi is said to be in the possession of the Centipede Clan.

“Bathed in Celestial Fire.” 1st Clue: “Celestial Fire” is probably a reference to the Fire Dragon. 2nd Clue: There is a sacred glowing orb at the Temple of the Sun in Ryoko Owari which is said to contain the preserved breath of the Fire Dragon.

“Hand of a maddened Fortune, cut free by a vengeful son.” 1st Clue: Some stories claim that Lord Moon is mad, or was driven mad by the rebellion of his children. It is said that Lord Moon’s hand was cut off when Hantei defeated him. 2nd Clue: There are rumors of a black stone hand which has been in the possession of the Scorpion Clan for a thousand years.

“Hand of sacred stone.” 1st Clue: “Sacred stone” probably means jade. 2nd Clue: There have been rumors of a “Jade hand” being used by the “rebels” in the Crab civil war. Supposedly it was smuggled out shortly before the war ended.

“Tears shed by the most beautiful of Kami, mingling beauty and sadness, gift more precious than life.” 1st Clue: The most beautiful Kami was certainly Lady Doji. 2nd Clue: It is said that Lady Doji shed jade tears when she learned of her brother Fu Leng’s death. The tears have been preserved by her descendents in the Doji and Kakita families.

“A gift offered freely and without guile by the Lady of the Forest, the ten-tailed fox.” 1st Clue: The Lady of the Forest is a name given to a legendary supreme Kitsune spirit, inhabiting the lands of the Fox Clan. 2nd Clue: It is said that the Lady of the Forest is an aspect of Benten, the Fortune of Love. She is capable of granting wishes, or of stealing men’s hearts

forever. What manner of gift could she give? And what could convince her to give it?

The Two Hands

It is a good bet that at least one PC has played through the adventures in which the Obsidian Hand and the Jade Hand appeared. In fact, it is quite possible that at least one PC has the cert “Bearer of the Obsidian Hand” or “Bearer of the Jade Hand.” This solves the problem of finding these artifacts.

Even if none of the PCs has one of these certs, there is an excellent chance that they have previously met/played with PCs who do. They will know that they can eventually track down these PCs, a task which will have to wait until after they recover the other items.

In the unlikely event that none of the PCs in the adventure has the cert, and none of them have ever played in an adventure with a PC who possesses those certs, the party will simply have to collect what they can now and go on. Since the actual completion of the ritual is beyond the scope of this adventure, this is not a serious problem.

Conclusion: Meeting with Taka

If the PCs send word and meet with Yasuki Taka as originally planned, a return message will ask them to meet him. If the PCs are in Lion or Crane lands when they send the message, he will ask them to meet him back at the House of Red Waves in Samui Kaze Toshi. If they are in Dragon lands, he will ask them to meet him in the Yasuki Trading Grounds in the Imperial Capital. The GM should keep track of the travel times required to reach the rendezvous, and announce any relevant news.

Taka will be his usual “wimpy/slimy” self until the meeting is private, then turns intent and serious. “What have you learned?”

It is up to the PCs how much information to share with Taka, but he is a perceptive fellow, and will probably realize if the PCs are hiding anything from him. (Contested roll of **Acting/Awareness** or **Sincerity/Awareness** against Taka’s **Investigation/Awareness**.) If he thinks the PCs are concealing information, he will not automatically be upset with them – he may, in fact, openly compliment their caution. “As you may have realized, samurai-san, we are caught in the midst of a rather complex struggle,

and it is best to keep one's weapons, and secrets, close at hand."

Taka is prepared to assist the PCs in any way he can. If they share at least some information on the artifacts they must find, he will nod excitedly. "Of course, of course. A connection to the Celestial Heavens would require the power of things which have been imbued with the Heavens' essence. We must certainly prevent these items from falling into the hands of those who seek to obstruct our goal."

Taka can recognize the references in the document, if the PCs ask him for help:

- "Bathed in Celestial Fire? Hmmm. I seem to recall that the Temple of the Sun in Ryoko Owari, in Shosuro lands, has a great orb which is said to contain the breath of the Fire Dragon."
- "Tears of the most beautiful of Kami... how poetic." He smirks a bit, the slimy-merchant side showing through. "I suppose that would have to be Lady Doji, wouldn't it? I believe there is a legend that the Crane Clan retains a few of her tears, solidified into jade. Kept by the Kakita and Doji families, I understand, doubtless in their family seats."
- "Hand of sacred stone? Obviously, the Jade Hand. The last I heard, Hida Sukune's troops had it, but there was a rumor they tried to smuggle it out when they lost the war." If any PCs have the cert "Bearer of the Jade Hand," he looks at them pointedly.
- "Hand of a maddened kami..? Hmmm, how peculiar. I have heard a story of a black hand in the possession of the Scorpion Clan." Again, if any PC has the cert for "Bearer of the Obsidian Hand," he will look at them.
- "Gift of the Lady of the Forest..? They must mean the great ten-tailed Kitsune who is sometimes seen in Fox lands. I wonder, though, how one would convince her to give a gift."

Taka Sends Them On

Taka will again supply the PCs with travel papers to expedite their journeys across the Empire. However, he will also warn them that his papers will not solve all problems, and some parts of their journey will be fraught with peril. "The Shadow's power is growing, and Fu Leng's armies are on the march. You may find

that travel papers are not enough to get past some obstacles. And it is unlikely that you can expect any help from my and Emon's... associates. However, my own family will help you where it can." He presses a small wooden chop into the hand of one of the PCs, preferably one who he spoke to privately at the beginning of the module. "Show this to my kinsmen in the Yasuki, and they will help you as best they can."

Going Solo

It is possible that the PCs will decide to proceed with their quest without meeting Taka. (This might be simply because they consider their work unfinished, or because they don't trust Taka.) This is perfectly acceptable. However, if the PCs are operating without Taka, they will have to make their own arrangements for travel papers. This will not be an issue for PCs who have Emerald or Jade Magistrates in their ranks, but without such friends, they will need to make their own arrangements:

- PCs with Otaku Taro (the Emerald Champion) or Isawa Akei (the Jade Champion) as an Ally, or who have a Favor with either of those individuals, may "cash in" (erase) that Advantage in order to acquire travel papers.
- Likewise, PCs who have an Ally, Favor, or True Friend among the Imperial Families (Otomo, Seppun, or Miya) may "cash in" that Advantage to acquire travel papers.
- PCs can also "cash in" Allies or Favors with the various Great Clans, or families within those Clans, in order to acquire papers for travel to their lands. For example, a PC with a Favor from the Kakita family could use that to acquire papers for travel in Crane lands.
- Assistance from the Scorpion or Kolat will NOT be available to the PCs, regardless of the PCs' own alliances and whether or not the PCs have certs which would normally allow them to get help from those groups.
- Assistance from the Yasuki will not be available if the PCs have bypassed Yasuki Taka.

If the PCs cannot acquire papers, they will have to deal with the local authorities every time they cross Clan borders (or enter a major city). This possibility is discussed in the appropriate sections in Round Two.

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 successfully assemble the ritual:	+1 XP

Total Possible Experience: 4 XP

Honor

None intrinsically awarded for the adventure.

Glory

None intrinsically awarded for the adventure.

Other Awards/Penalties

None.

Appendix #1: NPCs

Emon, the Shadow Bane

FIRE 4 Intelligence 5	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 3 Willpower 7	WATER 3 Perception 4
VOID 6	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Archery 6, Courtier 3, Defense 6, Etiquette 3, Forgery 5, History (Kolot) 6, Iaijutsu 4, Investigation 6, Kenjutsu 7, Law 3, Lore (Shadow) 6, Meditation 5, Mimic 7, Poison 4, Shintao 5, Sincerity 8, Stealth 7.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Major Allies, Clear Thinker, Heart of Vengeance (Shadow), Higher Purpose (Defeat the Shadow), Luck (rank 1)/Dark Secret (Kolot Master), Sworn Enemy (Shadow).

Equipment: Fine kimono, daisho set, pair of crystal tanto (2k2 damage).

Yasuki Taka

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Yasuki Merchant 5

Honor/Glory: 1.2/2.7

Skills: Acting 5, Bard 5, Bojutsu 2, Commerce 9, Courtier 7, Etiquette 4, Gambling 6, Heraldry 5, Investigation 5, Sincerity 8, Stealth 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Absolute Direction, Blackmail (you don't want to know how many), Clear Thinker, Luck (rank 1), Read Lips, Voice/Dark Secrets (Kolot, enemy of the Kolot), Small.

Equipment: Kimono, merchant's cart, tanto, 20 koku.

Ikoma Tsanuri, Acting Daimyo of Kyuden Ikoma

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 3	WATER 3

Willpower 4	Perception 4
VOID 4	

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Akodo Bushi 3

Honor/Glory: 3.4/6.5

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 6, Courtier 2, Defense 4, Etiquette 4, Heraldry 3, History 4, Iaijutsu 4, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 6, Lore (Lion Clan) 4, Sincerity 5, Yarijutsu 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Combat Reflexes, Death Trance, Luck (rank 2), Proud, Natural Leader, Social Position/Brash, Obligation (to become daimyo)

Equipment: Fine kimono, fine daisho set.

Ikoma Kaoku, Imperial Historian

FIRE 2 Intelligence 5	AIR 1 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 1 Perception 3
VOID 3	

TN to be Hit: 5

School/Rank: Ikoma Omoidasu 4

Honor/Glory: 4.5/3.7

Skills: Bard 7, Courtier 3, Diplomacy 4, Etiquette 4, History 8, Investigation 4, Law 2, Research 6, Shintao 3, Sincerity 4, Theology 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Precise Memory, Social Position/Old, Weakness (Air and Water).

Equipment: Fine kimono.

Daidoji Hajime, Captain of the Guard at Kyuden Asahina

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

Wounds = (Earth+2) per rank [Daidoji School]

TN to be Hit: 25 (light armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 4

Honor/Glory: 2.4/5.5

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 2, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 5, Kenjutsu 6, Kyujutsu 5, Oratory 3, Sincerity 2, Stealth 3, Yarijutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable, Quick, Social Position.

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set, yari.

Typical Matsu Bushi

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 with light armor)

School/Rank: Matsu Bushi 1

Rank 1: The Lion's Roar. When in Full Attack, creates Fear equal to School Rank +1.

Honor/Glory: 3.5/1.0

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

Advantages/Disadvantages: Death Trance/Brash

Equipment: Daisho (fine katana, +1 skill die), light armor, bow with 20 arrows.

Typical Daidoji Bushi

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

[Wounds are at +2 per Rank]

TN to be Hit: 20 (light armor)

School/Rank: Daidoji Bodyguard 1

Rank One Technique: Add Honor rank to total of each Wound rank.

Honor/Glory: 2.7/1.0

Skills: Archery 2, Athletics 2, Bard 1, Battle 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Hand-to-Hand 2, Iaijutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Law 1, Medicine 1, Sincerity 2

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

Equipment: Light armor, fine daisho, bow with 20 arrows, yari.

Typical Mirumoto Bushi

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

TN to be Hit: 26 (21 without Light Armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 2.5/1.0

Skills: Archery 2, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu 4, Lore: Shugenja 1, Meditation 2, Poetry 1, Sincerity 2.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Light armor, daisho

Typical Bayushi bushi

FIRE 3	AIR 3
EARTH 2	WATER 2
VOID 2	

TN to be Hit: 15 (20 in light armor)

School/Rank: Bayushi Bushi 1

Honor/Glory: 1.5/1.0

Skills: Athletics 3, Bard 2, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Heraldry 2, Iaijutsu 3, Jujutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Kyujutsu (Archery) 4, Sincerity 5, Stealth 2, Yarijutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: None

Equipment: Light armor, daisho set, yari.

Appendix #2: Villains (low-end)

Corrupted Hiruma Scouts

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 3	WATER 3
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.1

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Hiruma Scout 2

Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge. Add 5 per School Rank to TN to be Hit by Shadowlands creatures.

Rank Two: Run Like the Wind. Can run at 10mph for a number of hours equal to Stamina x 2.

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Hunting 3, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 4.

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set.

Goju Shingosha, Shadow-Corrupted Crab

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (30 with Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 3

Wounds: 70: Dead

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 3, Defense 3, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Tsubojutsu 5, Wrestling 4.

Advantage: Large

Special Abilities: Shadow Invulnerability (takes double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). He can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Goju

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 2	WATER 2

	Strength 3
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TN to be Hit: 15

Attacks: 4k2

Damage: Ninja-to (4k2), Shuriken (3k1), or Garrote (3k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

Skills: Stealth 4.

Wounds: 24: Dead.

Special Abilities: Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

Shadow-Corrupted Mount

FIRE 1 Agility 2	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 3 Strength 6

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 3k2

Damage: 6k2 (kick)

Wounds: 48: Dead.

Special Ability: Shadow Invulnerability (takes double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks).

Kolat Ninja

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kolat Assassin (Insight rank 1)

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 3, Athletics 3, Defense 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 3, Poison 4, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 3.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Kolats)/Dark Secret (Kolats).

Equipment: Clothing, tanto (2k1), steel-wire garrote (0k2, uses Hand-to-Hand skill).

Elite Kolat Ninja

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Kolat Assassin (Insight rank 2)

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 4, Climbing 3, Defense 4, Jujutsu (hand-to-hand) 4, Poison 4, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick/Dark Secret (Kolat).

Equipment: Clothing, tanto (2k1), steel-wire garrote (0k2, uses Hand-to-Hand skill).

Himitsu, Kolat shugenja

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

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Ronin Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 3, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 4, Law 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: (Air 1) *Cloak of Night*, *Quiescence of Air*, *Way of Deception*, *Wind-Born Slumbers*, (Air 2) *Call Upon the Wind*, *Mists of Illusion*, *Whispering Wind*, (Air 3) *Essence of Air*, *Forgotten Murmurs*, (Water 1) *Path to Inner Peace*, *Reversal of Fortunes*, (Water 2) *Reflective Pool*, (Earth 1) *Earth's Stagnation*, *Force of Will*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Kolat), Innate Abilities (Call Upon the Wind, Earth's Stagnation, Wind-Born Slumbers)/Dark Secret (Kolat), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, tanto.

Appendix #3: Villains (high-end)

Corrupted Hiruma Scouts

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
EARTH 4	WATER 3
VOID 1	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.1

TN to be Hit: 20

School/Rank: Hiruma Scout 2

Rank One: Dance the Razor's Edge. Add 5 per School Rank to TN to be Hit by Shadowlands creatures.

Rank Two: Run Like the Wind. Can run at 10mph for a number of hours equal to Stamina x 2.

Honor/Glory: 2.4/1.3

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Hunting 3, Jiu-jutsu (kobo) 3, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (Archery) 3, Lore (Shadowlands) 3, Stealth 4.

Shadowlands Gift: Uncanny Speed (+2k1 to Initiative rolls).

Equipment: Kimono, daisho set.

Goju Shingosha, Shadow-Corrupted Crab

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

TN to be Hit: 25 (35 with Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Hida Bushi 4

Wounds: 100: Dead

Skills: Athletics 4, Battle 3, Defense 4, Iaijutsu 1, Jiu-jutsu 5, Kenjutsu 5, Tsubojutsu 7, Wrestling 5.

Advantages: Large, Quick

Special Abilities: Shadow Invulnerability (takes double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). He can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

Equipment: Heavy armor, daisho set, tetsubo.

Goju

FIRE 2 Agility 3	AIR 3 Reflexes 4
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EARTH 3	WATER 2 Strength 3
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TN to be Hit: 25

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: Ninja-to (4k2), Shuriken (3k1), or Garrote (3k2). Damage listed includes Strength.

Skills: Stealth 5.

Wounds: 32: Dead.

Special Abilities: Shadow Invulnerability (take double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks). They can "Shadow-walk" and move instantaneously between any two shadows within 100 feet.

Shadow-Corrupted Mount

FIRE 1 Agility 3	AIR 2
EARTH 4	WATER 3 Strength 6

TN to be Hit: 10

Attacks: 4k3

Damage: 6k2 (kick)

Wounds: 64: Dead.

Special Ability: Shadow Invulnerability (takes double damage from crystal attacks and half damage from all other attacks).

Kolat Ninja

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Kolat Assassin (Insight Rank 2)

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 3, Athletics 4, Defense 3, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 4, Poison 4, Stealth 4, Tantojutsu 4.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Kolat)/Dark Secret (Kolat).

Equipment: Clothing, tanto (2k1), steel-wire garrote (0k2, uses Hand-to-Hand skill).

Elite Kolat Ninja

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

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Kolat Assassin (Insight rank 3)

Tiger's Claw technique: May make an extra attack each round against an unaware opponent, and gains a Free Raise on any attack against an unaware opponent.

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 4, Athletics 5, Climbing 3, Defense 4, Jiu-jutsu (hand-to-hand) 5, Poison 4, Stealth 5, Tantojutsu 5.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick/Dark Secret (Kolat).

Equipment: Clothing, tanto (2k1), steel-wire garrote (0k2, uses Hand-to-Hand skill).

Himitsu, Kolat shugenja

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

TN to be Hit: 25

School/Rank: Ronin Shugenja 4

Honor/Glory: 0/0

Skills: Acting 3, Calligraphy 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Investigation 4, Law 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 6, Stealth 5, Tantojutsu 3.

Spells: (Air 1) *Cloak of Night*, *Quiescence of Air*, *Way of Deception*, *Wind-Born Slumbers*, (Air 2) *Call Upon the Wind*, *Mists of Illusion*, *Whispering Wind*, (Air 3) *Essence of Air*, *Forgotten Murmurs*, (Air 4) *Call Upon the Wind*, *Dominate the Mind*, (Water 1) *Path to Inner Peace*, *Reversal of Fortunes*, (Water 2) *Reflective Pool*, (Water 3) *Path of the Scorpion*, (Earth 1) *Earth's Stagnation*, *Force of Will*, (Earth 2) *Tremor*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (Kolat), Innate Abilities – *Call Upon the Wind* (rank 4), *Earth's Stagnation*, *Wind-Born Slumbers*/Dark Secret (Kolat), Social Disadvantage (ronin).

Equipment: Kimono, scroll satchel, tanto.

Appendix #4: Travel and Time

From Samui Kaze Toshi:

- To Kyuden Asahina: by sea, two days on water, then one day overland to reach the castle.
- To Kyuden Asahina, by land: seven days.
- To Beiden Pass (leads overland to Kyuden Ikoma and Kyuden Agasha): Ten days.
- To the Imperial Capital, by sea: three days.

From Beiden Pass:

- To Kyuden Ikoma: ten days overland.
- To Kyuden Agasha: twenty-five days overland.
- To Kyuden Asahina: eighteen days overland.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi: ten days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital, Otosan Uchi: fourteen days overland.

From Otosan Uchi, the Imperial Capital:

- To Beiden Pass: Fourteen days overland.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by sea: three days.
- To Kyuden Agasha: Nineteen days overland.
- To Kyuden Ikoma: Twenty days overland.
- To Kyuden Asahina, by sea: Four days at sea, then one day overland.

From Kyuden Ikoma:

- To Beiden Pass: ten days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: Twenty days.
- To Kyuden Agasha: fifteen days.

From Kyuden Agasha:

- To Kyuden Ikoma: fifteen days.
- To Beiden Pass: twenty-five days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: nineteen days overland to the coast.

From Kyuden Asahina:

- To Beiden Pass: eighteen days overland.
- To the Imperial Capital: one day to the coast, three days by sea.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by sea: one day to the coast, two days at sea.
- To Samui Kaze Toshi, by land: seven days.

Appendix #5: Timeline Events

As the PCs spend time on their quest, larger events will continue to transpire within the Empire, and the PCs should learn about them as the adventure progresses. The PCs should pick up this information from the gossip of other travelers, nervous talk in the common rooms of Inns, speaking with border guards as their travel papers are inspected, and so forth.

The GM should begin “counting” the days once the PCs set out from Samui Kaze Toshi.

After ten days:

- The Crab invade the southern Crane lands, following up two days later with a strike through Sparrow territory toward the Scorpion lands. If the PCs are in Kyuden Asahina at any time after this, they will encounter the invasion first-hand (see Part Six for details).

After twenty days:

- Rumors of the Crab invasion spread quickly. By this time the PCs will hear about them no matter where they are.
- Word gets out that the forces of the Yoritomo Alliance in Yasuki lands have been attacked as well, and may be besieged in Yasuki Yashiki.

After thirty days:

- Refugees from the Crab invasion have traveled as far as Beiden Pass.
- The armies of the Three-Man Alliance (Sparrow, Fox, and Wasp) are said to be rallying to block the Crab invasion, with some assistance from the Mantis.
- Scorpion armies attempt to storm the besieged Lion city of Kensen Gakka (Humility’s Lesson), but are repelled.

After forty-five days:

- Crab troops reputedly capture Garden Under Shadow City (a Daidoji possession on the far side of the Tidal Land Bridge).
- The Naga invasion has reputedly been halted near the City of the Rich Frog by the combined efforts of the Unicorn Clan and the Fists of the Emperor legion.
- Shiro Kitsuki is attacked by a force of Goju and Shadow-corrupted Oni. The castle is badly damaged, most of the defenders are slain, and family daimyo Kitsuki Yasu is kidnapped, along with the infamous relic known as Kitsuki Kaagi’s Journal. If the PCs travel through Dragon lands after this time (going to or from Kyuden Agasha), they will find Shiro Kitsuki devastated and blackened by siege and fire, with shell-shocked Kitsuki and Mirumoto troops trying to clean up the aftermath.

After sixty days:

- Crab forces crush the Three-Man Alliance at the Battle of Crimson Grasses (on the Blessed Ground Plain). There are rumors that Shadowlands forces intervened in the battle, although whether they took sides or merely slaughtered indiscriminately is uncertain.
- Rumors of the attack on Shiro Kitsuki reach the rest of the Empire. The nature of the attacking force is uncertain, but is generally believed to be Shadowlands in nature. Losses are reported as heavy, and the Kitsuki daimyo is known to be missing.

After seventy-five days:

- The Goju/Shadowlands force besieges Shiro Sano Kakita. If the PCs attempt to visit that castle at any time after this, they will find it surrounded by the Shadowlands army, while Crane troops attempt to rally for a relief effort.

After eighty days:

- Scorpion troops occupy Beiden Pass. Any PCs traveling overland through this region (such as moving overland between Kyuden Asahina and any of the other locations) will now find the Scorpion in control of the pass.

- Scorpion forces fight the Lion armies in a bloody, two-day engagement near Kenson Gakka, amidst heavy rain: the Battle of Flooded Courage. Lion troops hold the field but are forced to withdraw afterward due to lack of supplies and reinforcements.

After eighty-five days:

- Rumors of the siege of Shiro Sano Kakita reach the rest of the Empire.

After ninety days:

- Crab troops are rumored to have reached the village of Shimomura in southern Scorpion lands. So far, there are no reports of major fighting between the Scorpion and Crab.

After 110 days:

- Toturi's Army is reported to be moving south through Phoenix lands. The Phoenix have declared Toturi a traitor, claiming he switched sides during the spring battles, and there are rumors that he is destroying the remains of the Phoenix and Lion armies as he moves south.
- Kyuden Asahina is reported to have been razed to the ground. If the PCs have somehow not yet completed their work in that city, it is now too late.

After 120 days:

- Rumors leak out of the Mantis Islands that they have lost over half their fleet to a surprise attack from the Crab "turtle ships."
- It is reported that a vast legion of Dark Moto has swept through Crab lands and is riding north toward the Unicorn territories.

After 130 days:

- The Fists of the Emperor Legion is reputed to be force-marching toward the capital in order to block the march of Toturi's Army.

Player Handout #1: Artifacts

To summon forth the Sun and Moon, one must have four tokens of their power, relics which carry the touch of the Celestial Heavens within them.

An obi woven from the light of the Sun, and bathed in Celestial Fire.

The hand of a maddened Fortune, cut free by a vengeful son.

A hand of sacred stone, clutching tears shed by the most beautiful of Kami, mingling beauty and sadness, gift more precious than life.

A gift offered freely and without guile by the Lady of the Forest, the ten-tailed fox.