

Winter Court: Kanrinrin's Duty

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

Chapter Five of “The Soul of Iuchiban”

by Robert Hobart

You have been appointed as caretakers for the Imperial Palace during the Emperor's winter absence. Great honor awaits those who prove themselves worthy of the Emperor's trust...and great humiliation for those who fail to measure up to their duties.

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

It is a good idea to ask each player to put a name tag in front of him or her. The tag should have the player's name at the bottom, and the character's name, race, and gender at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

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

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

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

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

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

GM's Information

THIS TOURNAMENT SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

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

The world of Rokugan is a cross between feudal Japan and China. It is set in an age of honorable samurai, serving their Lords (Daimyos) and Empire. Remember that family names come before personal names. Akodo Toturi is from the Akodo family and his personal name is Toturi.

A note on female designations: If a samurai has the designation of -ko, then the samurai is a female. For example, if you see Samurai-ko, then this denotes a female samurai.

A note on commerce in Rokugan: Samurai are not supposed to care about worldly possessions, especially money. A samurai pays a commoner as if the money is meaningless, a concession to the commoner's silly needs. Between samurai, the exchange of money and merchandise is an exchange of "gifts."

Please note that this is a WINTER COURT adventure, and as such, will offer only moderate opportunities for combat-oriented characters. Courtiers, on the other hand, will be in their element. The GM should announce the type of adventure to the players beforehand, so they can choose which character they wish to play.

This adventure, including the map in Handout #1, is based on materials published in the excellent *Otosan Uchi* boxed set (Alderac, 2000), but ownership of that set is not required to run the adventure.

Adventure Background

This adventure takes place in the Imperial capital of Otosan Uchi. Each year, the Emperor and his court depart the capital to spend the cold winter months as guests of one of the Clans or Imperial families. In their absence, the Imperial palace is entrusted to the care of a few *kanrinrin* (caretakers), carefully chosen by the Miya family, the least of the three Imperial families. This year, the PCs have been given this great honor.

Miya Yoto, the kindly old daimyo of the family, has recognized the lowly PCs for their efforts with this appointment.

Unfortunately, the PCs are not the only samurai who have been tasked as kanrinrin. Miya Yoto's bitter and alienated son, Miya Satoshi, has chosen his own set of caretakers for the Emperor's palace, a group of samurai from the Unicorn Clan's notorious Moto family, and they will not appreciate sharing their duties with the PCs. There will be more than a little tension between these two groups, and such a rivalry could well sabotage the entire task of protecting the Emperor's home – especially when the local *yakuza* (criminal gang) get involved.

But there is another danger threatening this winter, a danger far graver than mere political rivalries. The Bloodspeaker Cult, followers of the imprisoned sorcerer Iuchiban, are plotting the kidnapping of the Emperor's son, Sotorii. To that end, they are infiltrating the city's *yakuza* gangs, so as to take control of the tunnels which lie beneath the city – the one access to the Forbidden City which is not guarded and warded against them. At the end of winter, when the Emperor returns from his sojourn with the Crane Clan, the Bloodspeakers will strike.

Notes on running this adventure: As with many courtly adventures, *Kanrinrin's Duty* includes several NPCs, and the GM should read their descriptions and motivations carefully beforehand. The greatest challenge in this adventure will be to avoid escalating the conflicts with the rival caretakers (the Moto) into disaster. The PCs should feel that each encounter with the Moto is a desperate struggle to avoid conflict and chaos, with the actual duties and problems only secondary in importance. However, in truth, this whole adventure is a kind of a red herring: the real threat, from the Bloodspeakers, will not appear until the end, although the PCs may also encounter a few hints of it earlier.

Also, it should be noted that this adventure ends (deliberately) in an unavoidable cliffhanger. It will be impossible for the PCs to prevent the kidnapping of Hantei Sotorii, or to rescue him once he is taken. The fate of the young Hantei, and the outcome of the Bloodspeakers' plot to revive Iuchiban, will be found in the next and final chapter of *Soul of Iuchiban*, *Fate of a Hantei*.

Introduction

The chill winds which blow through Otosan Uchi, the Imperial capital, cannot dim the splendor of the Emperor's caravan as it proceeds with stately deliberation down the Imperial Road. Commoners and samurai alike bow as low as they are able, prostrating themselves before the beloved Son of Heaven and his entourage, as they depart the capital for the winter. This year, the glorious Crane Clan is once again honored to host the Emperor's winter court at their palace of Kyuden Doji. So often has the Emperor blessed the Crane with his presence that they maintain a special residence there, just for his visits.

Not all, not nearly all, will gain the singular honor of sharing the Emperor's winter court. For some, indeed, winter will be a time of duty. As the procession passes through the outer gates of the Enchanted Walls and departs Otosan Uchi proper, a servant bows to you and guides you into the Forbidden City. You are led to the small but elegant palace of the Miya, the Imperial Herald, and left to wait on the polished wood of an audience room. A few other samurai share your company.

Have each player describe their character. PCs may choose to introduce themselves or to wait in silence, as befits their personalities. Once there has been time for everyone to describe and introduce themselves, proceed with the scene:

Your long wait finally ends with the arrival of several servants and low-ranking Miya courtiers, followed at last by Miya Yoto himself. The aged daimyo's white beard trails nearly to his waist, and he moves with deliberate care as he paces to the middle of the room and then seats himself, his limbs creaking slightly.

Yoto's voice is old and raspy, but he should nonetheless convey a certain sense of strength and unbreakable will. This is the Emperor's peacemaker, the man who has spent a lifetime traveling the Empire to end wars and ease the suffering of its common folk. He will make especial note of any PCs who have encountered him in previous adventures (such as *Occult Murders*).

"Welcome, honored kanrinrin. All of you are known to me by deed and reputation, and some have served me directly. Now I have chosen you to fulfill a duty which, while it may seem simple or even tiresome, is no less honorable for that. The Emperor has departed the capital for the winter, to spend it with the Clans as is his eternal custom. In his absence, his palace must

be watched, protected, supervised, warded from harm or vandalism or danger. That precious task, the task of palace kanrinrin, caretakers, I have given to you. I have every confidence that you will fulfill my trust, and that when the Emperor returns in spring, his palace will be as perfect as he left it.” He bows, acknowledging you, and as you bow in return you feel the crushing weight of responsibility settle on your shoulders.

After Yoto’s explanation, he will briefly answer any questions the PCs may have, then provide them with a writ of authority conferring on them the duty of *kanrinrin* for the winter. Yoto can provide the following additional information:

- The PCs will be housed in the Miya family palace, the smallest of the four palaces within the Forbidden City.
- Their responsibilities are supervising the servants and Imperial guards who protect and care for the four palaces (Miya, Seppun, Otomo, and Hantei) and the various guest houses. They will also be expected to assist the governors of the four districts of Otosan Uchi’s inner city, the Ekohikei, should they request help from the palace. The GM can offer the PCs HANDOUT #1 (the map of Otosan Uchi) and the accompanying guide (HANDOUT #2) as a quick guideline to how the city is laid out.
- The servants will carry out their usual duties, but the palace major-domo, Heisei, will be available at all times to accept direction from the PCs and to report any problems. The contingent of the Palace Guard which remains here for the winter (totaling forty bushi) will also be available to the PCs for anything which might require them.

Once he has explained things, Miya Yoto bows in dismissal and departs to join the Emperor’s caravan for the trip to Winter Court. He is the last of the Imperial court and household to depart – only servants, a few residents who are not accompanying the Emperor, and the PCs remain. The servants show the PCs to their small but quite pleasant quarters in the Miya palace.

Heisei the Major-Domo

Heisei will introduce himself as the PCs are escorted to their rooms. He is a thin, smooth-faced older man who takes great pride in his position. He is always perfectly mannered, exquisitely deferential to the PCs and other samurai, and anxious to avoid any problem or scandal.

He is a master of using indirect language and judicious pauses to convey his meaning without having to speak uncouth truths aloud. As the head servant of the palace’s winter contingent, he views his duty as ensuring that the Emperor’s residence is kept perfect for the springtime return of the Shining Prince. He will be quite concerned about the problems posed by the soon-to-arrive Moto, but lacks the stature or social position to do much about it (other than looking pained).

Event 1: The Rivals Arrive

As the PCs are settling in to their quarters, something happens. Voices are raised in anger and confusion in the halls of the palace. When the PCs investigate, they discover a group of four Unicorn samurai standing in the front entrance hall, angrily naming themselves as *kanrinrin* and demanding that the servants provide them with rooms. The servants are confused and fearful; as they vacillate, the largest of the samurai, an obvious bushi, sets hand on sword-hilt.

If the PCs do not respond promptly to the noise, Major-Domo Heisei will come in search of them, explaining the situation with much embarrassment.

These four individuals are from the Moto family. They have been appointed as *kanrinrin* (caretakers) by Miya Satoshi, the son of Miya Yoto, and have a writ to prove it. They will not accept that the PCs’ appointment supercedes theirs – “We have the word of the Miya heir, set here on paper. If his word is not good, neither is the word of any Miya!”

The Moto are determined to stay and carry out their duty. They see their appointment as *kanrinrin* as proof that the Empire is learning to set aside its irrational fear of their supposedly “cursed” family, and a rare opportunity to earn glory for the Moto name. They do not realize that they are actually pawns in Miya Satoshi’s attempt to discredit his father.

The Moto will insist on remaining in the Palace compound and carrying out their duties independent of the PCs. If the PCs argue with them for too long, Moto Sango will lose his temper and accuse one of the PCs of insulting their honor. A quick and effective apology will be required to avoid a duel.

Confrontational (or foolish) PCs may wind up escalating this situation by questioning the Moto’s word or trying to deny them housing in the Miya palace. In that case, a duel will be certain, and the soft-spoken Moto Ibuki and the clever Moto Koruma will

attempt to lay the blame for the situation on the PCs (“you leave us no choice, samurai, but to defend our honor with steel”). They will be sure to summon a few of the Imperial Guard to witness their own explanations and the PCs’ intransigence.

If a duel occurs, Moto Sango will be champion for Ibuki or Koruma; Moto Xian Zhu will fight for himself. Regardless, the combatant will not be satisfied with first blood, insisting on fighting until at least one combatant is down. The fight will rage through the grounds of the Forbidden City and, unless it ends in two rounds or less, will cause considerable damage to the grounds and gardens (trampled plants, smashed statues, etc.).

If the Moto lose the duel, they will still insist on remaining within the Forbidden City in one of the Clan guest houses (outside the palaces), and they will attempt to function as “kanrinrin” regardless.

Full descriptions and statistics for the four Moto are given at the end of the adventure (under “NPCs and Monsters”).

Event 2: Dinner with the Moto

Regardless of the outcome of their first confrontation with the PCs, the Moto will send a letter the following evening inviting the PCs to share dinner at the Thousand Story Inn, one of the fine inns in Otosan Uchi. The letter is signed by Moto Ibuki, and offers “a candid discussion of our unfortunate situation.”

If the PCs decline, they are effectively delivering an insult, and the Moto will send a challenge to a duel a few days later. A wiser choice is to accept.

The Thousand Story Inn is located in the Hito District, north of the Forbidden City. A fine establishment serving excellent food and offering comfortable lodging to travelers, it is run by Ikoma Chomei, a young *omoidasu* (bard) with an apparently endless supply of tales and histories.

The meal is excellent (hardly surprising at an inn of the capital city). The four Moto use this public situation as an opportunity to feel the PCs out and look for any weaknesses they can exploit.

- Moto Ibuki will take the high road, speaking quietly of how the Moto and PCs have to “work together for the honor of all.” Meanwhile Moto Koruma, who is clearly

Ibuki’s aide and diplomatic assistant, will subtly probe and insult the PCs, trying to learn their motivations and find their weak points.

- Moto Sango, a crude and temperamental man, will try to get into a drinking contest with a suitable PC. This may well result in some sort of embarrassing public spectacle or brawl, from which the other Moto hold aloof while trying to get as many PCs involved as possible.
- Moto Xian Zhu will trade morose stories of Shadowlands horrors with any PCs who might be acquainted with the evils of Fu Leng’s realm (e.g. Crab). The other Moto (especially Koruma) will watch the PCs’ reactions to such stories to gauge how well they can tolerate each other.

Opium Calls

Midway through the meal, Moto Xian Zhu will become irritable and quiet, and apparently lose his appetite. Eventually he stands up, declaring that he needs to “clear his head,” and hurries outside. PCs with Opium-related disadvantages (such as Compulsion or Chemical Dependency) will recognize his symptoms, as will PCs who roll Medicine/Intelligence at TN 15.

PCs who roll **Simple Perception** at TN 25 (or **Stealth/Perception** at TN 15) notice one of the commoner guests at the inn, a nondescript fellow who is apparently a merchant or scribe, leave shortly after Xian Zhu.

Moto Xian Zhu will find a nearby alleyway to light up his pipe; the commoner (who is a yakuza) approaches him and quietly offers to “fulfill his needs” for a modest price. The Moto mutters and grumbles for a moment before nodding his head. PCs who wish to overhear this conversation must approach with **Stealth** (Contested **Stealth/Agility** against 4k2). If the PCs are overheard, the two break off their conversation and part ways as soon as a PC approaches.

Xian Zhu will frantically deny any accusations of opium abuse, and calls upon Moto Sango to champion him against these “insults to his honor.”

Paying the Bill

At the end of the splendid meal, one of the Inn’s serving-maids humbly presents the bill: four silver bu each! It seems that meals at such a splendid place are not without cost.

The PCs do not have to pay, of course – but refusing to pay for services rendered is an act of questionable honor. The Moto, especially Koruma, will make especial note of any PCs who seem to have money problems, and may even drop subtle put-downs: “Your daimyo does not provide for your needs?” Or, to a ronin: “Ah, it must be difficult, the life of a wave man, never knowing where your next meal comes from.”

If the PCs hesitate over the bill for more than a few moments, Moto Ibuki pays the entire bill, dropping the coins onto the table with a casual, dismissive gesture.

The Opium Addict

Moto Xian Zhu will become much more relaxed after the first few weeks of winter, and start making frequent evening visits outside the Forbidden City. PCs who have observed him and surmised his nature as an opium addict can tell he is getting regular doses. If they have not figured it out, allow them a **Medicine/Perception** roll at TN 15 (or **Simple Perception** at TN 20 if they are opium users themselves) to notice the glassy look in his eyes when he returns from these trips. If any PC asks him about these trips, he lies and claims to be visiting different inns and businesses around the city. “It is a rare opportunity for a Moto to see the divine capital, even during winter.” If the PCs are persistent, he will take offense and may even demand that Moto Sango be his champion in a duel.

The yakuza, now controlled by the Bloodspeakers, will use Xian Zhu’s opium habit to blackmail him, forcing him to give them a complete layout of the palace grounds. At that point (about midway through the winter) Xian Zhu will once again become gloomy and taciturn, although his addiction will remain as relentless as ever.

If a PC ever follows Xian Zhu on his evening trips, they must roll **Stealth/Intelligence** at TN 10 (or **Hunting/Awareness** at TN 15) to track him undetected. If he does not realize he is being followed, he goes to a small house in the Karada District, an opium den, and there spends an hour or two enjoying a pipefull of the drug. The house will not admit strangers without an invitation (Xian was admitted by the yakuza), and if the PCs barge in anyway, everyone flees out windows and back doors in blind panic (“it’s a raid!”).

There is a hidden trapdoor in the opium den (**Simple Perception** at TN 35 to find it), and the place will make Shadowlands-detectors feel uneasy. The trapdoor leads to the huge, and apparently endless, network of tunnels

beneath the city. The PCs will be unable to find anything useful in these tunnels, although they can easily get lost for hours or even days.

Exposing Xian Zhu

If Xian Zhu is threatened with exposure by the PCs, the yakuza will supply three other blackmailed samurai (all Glory rank 1) to testify that Xian Zhu was nowhere near that opium den. (Moto Sango may well take this testimony as “proof” that the PCs are lying about his friend Xian Zhu, and demand a duel.) Only if the PCs’ Glory outweighs that of the witnesses will they be able to make their charges stick. Even then, the other Moto will remain loyal to him, and they will back his demands for a duel to prove his innocence.

If Xian Zhu loses the duel, he will commit seppuku. Regardless of the outcome of the PCs’ accusations, the other Moto will be implacably hostile thereafter.

On the other hand, unscrupulous (or Scorpion) PCs who become aware of Xian Zhu’s opium habit have the potential to use it to blackmail him, too. The GM should adjudicate such matters. An obvious use of such blackmail, of course, would be to reduce the interference and antagonism from the Moto contingent.

Event 3: A Plea for Help

If the PCs made it through the dinner at the Thousand Story Inn without a duel, the Moto will take a less confrontational approach for a while, attempting to fulfill their duties as kanrinrin without openly confronting the PCs. If the dinner was a failure, however, the Moto will continue to stage frequent minor confrontations with the PCs. If the round is running quickly, the GM is encouraged to stretch it out with various minor crises or incidents involving the Moto.

Regardless, the next significant event takes place several weeks into the winter.

Major-Domo Heisei enters your chambers and bows politely and a trifle nervously. “A messenger has arrived from Governor Ide Ukuri of Hito District, requesting an audience with the noble kanrinrin. Er,” he pauses and clears his throat, “he did not specify which kanrinrin.”

The PCs must decide whether or not to notify their Moto “competitors” of this summons. In point of fact, Ide Ukuri (a true master of diplomacy) knows of the

situation and has also sent a separate message to the Moto, but the PCs do not know this.

If the PCs notify the Moto, the four Unicorn are pleasantly surprised, and meet the PCs at the audience room with polite bows. But if the PCs choose to meet the messenger themselves without notifying the Moto, a nasty confrontation ensues:

You enter the audience room, a small but elegant chamber with a fine statue in one corner. The four Moto are already seated opposite a rather uncomfortable-looking young man in Lion colors. Moto Sango glares at you dangerously, and you notice that while he has set his katana on the floor as etiquette demands, he has deliberately left it on his left side, signifying his readiness to use it. Moto Koruma smiles mirthlessly as he says, "It seems our standing has been rebuked once again. How fortunate that Governor Ide Ukuri-sama saw fit to send us an invitation of our own. Why," (he focuses his gaze on whichever PC has been least cooperative with the Moto) "were I or Ibuki-san men easily offended, we might say that our honor has been insulted here. What say you, Sango-san?" The huge bushi only growls in response, the cords on his neck standing out.

A quick and effective apology (and a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll at TN 10) will be needed to avoid an immediate duel with Sango. The duel will not be lethal, but Sango will insist on fighting until one combatant can no longer continue (reaches the Down rank). If the fight lasts more than two rounds, Sango will accidentally smash the statue in the corner during one of his attack maneuvers.

Governor Ukuri's Request

Once the situation with the Moto is resolved, they and the PCs can meet with the messenger, Ikoma Gomuri. This man is the assistant to Governor Ide Ukuri, and greatly admires his superior's intelligent and effective administration of the Hito District. He speaks politely and eloquently, and tries to smooth over or ignore any uncouth clashes between the PCs and the Moto.

"Lord Ide Ukuri-sama, Governor of Hito District, requests your help in a rather awkward matter. There are certain... elements... in the common population of Otosan Uchi engaged in questionable activities. Lord Ukuri-sama has done his best to keep such things under control, but recently we have encountered a rather...perplexing obstacle."

Gomuri explains the situation as carefully and indirectly as he can. The problem has to do with yakuza, after all, and it is undesirable even to admit that yakuza exist in the capital city. "All cities have certain... undesirable elements, shall we say? Such problems have been few and far between in our glorious capital, of course. But in the last few months, Governor Ide Ukuri-sama has noted an increase in such troubles within his district. Trivial matters of crime and vice which we would never seek to trouble your important time with."

These "trivial matters" are in fact a violent conflict within Otosan Uchi's crime syndicates, as the faction controlled by the Bloodspeaker Cult (originally based in the Outer City, beyond the capital's legendary Enchanted Walls) sets out to infiltrate the city and, in particular, take control of the tunnels beneath. This "mob war" has been leaving corpses all across the city. The Bloodspeaker faction, the so-called "Morning Swallows," is based primarily in Karada District; its principle opponents, the "Jade Shells," are based in Hito and Kanjo Districts.

The problem, as Gomuri will struggle to explain, is that criminals fleeing acts of murder or assault are crossing District lines to get beyond the reach of local authorities. "Governor Ukuri has made several requests of Governor Hida Reitaan, asking that he post guards on the river bridges to search and control the traffic there. But he has so far refused even to answer Ukuri-sama's letters. In the absence of the Emperor's Sentaku Tribunal, which has accompanied him to the Winter Court, you are our only recourse. The Governor has directed me to ask your assistance in this matter."

Governor Ukuri wants the PCs to intervene on his behalf, approaching Governor Reitaan directly to request his assistance. "These... questionable persons insult the very capital of the Shining Prince by evading the laws in this manner. If guards can be placed on the city bridges, it should be possible to bring a halt to this defiance."

If any PCs ask why Governor Reitaan has refused to cooperate, Gomuri looks embarrassed and perplexed. "I cannot say. One hears things, of course, but gossip is not to be trusted." A fellow Lion can convince him to open up, as can any other PC who makes an Awareness/Manipulation roll at TN 10 or a Simple Awareness roll at TN 20. In such a case, Gomuri confesses that "scurrilous rumors" have arisen about Governor Reitaan, claiming that he has become erratic

and paranoid, dismissing all his assistants and closeting himself within his residence.

The Problem with Reitaan

Hida Reitaan is a man living under a curse, plagued with insecurity and paranoia. (The full nature and explanation of his troubles, which are not relevant to this adventure, are given in the *Otosan Uchi* boxed set.)

If the PCs ask around about Reitaan, they can learn that he was a capable governor when he took the position from his father several years ago, but his performance has since declined sharply.

Any PC who asks about Reitaan's father can learn (by rolling **History/Intelligence** or **Go/Intelligence** at TN 15) that Reitaan's father was famous for his obsession with *go* (Rokugani chess), but retired after his unhealthy and dishonorable obsession was exposed by an Otomo who committed seppuku at the end of a go match. He died shortly thereafter, and his ashes were buried alongside his *go* board.

Getting a Meeting with Reitaan

No letters or messages to Hida Reitaan will be answered. If the PCs wish to speak to him, they must go to his quarters in the Karada District and request a meeting in person. The servants of Reitaan's house are polite and apologetic, explaining that the Governor has "many demands on his time," and suggest that the PCs "come back tomorrow." Any PC rolling **Etiquette/Intelligence** at TN 5 knows this is a polite way of saying "he won't see you, so don't come back."

If the PCs do return again, the servants will keep putting them off with similar excuses – Ide Ukuri encountered the same problem.

If the PCs are determined to speak with Reitaan, they will have to force the issue. They can do this by overawing the servants (**Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15, **Obeisaseru/Willpower** at TN 10), by physically threatening them (although such a crude, barbaric approach should cost them Glory and Honor), or by simply refusing to leave, staying until the spectacle of their continued presence forces the servants to act (if one or more PCs are creative enough to take this approach, it should require considerable patience – at least a day of such stubborn waiting will be required).

If the PCs question any of the governor's servants about what keeps the Governor so busy, they will offer platitudes about how "the esteemed Governor has so many responsibilities upon his shoulders, so few to share his burden," and so forth. It will become

apparent that Hida Reitaan seems to have no assistants and governs the district entirely on his own.

The Moto will try to arrange a separate audience with Reitaan. Whether they succeed or fail depends on how well the PCs do.

An Audience with a Paranoid

Hida Reitaan is a thick-set man with a bald head and a grim, harried expression. He meets the PCs alone, unaccompanied by any servants or assistants, and greets them with obvious suspicion. He listens in sullen silence as the PCs explain themselves.

This is a pure role-playing encounter. How Reitaan reacts depends on what sort of approach the PCs take to this interview. If they suggest in any way that he has been derelict in his duties as governor, or say anything which he can interpret as criticizing him personally, Reitaan swiftly flies into a rage. "You're like all the others, doubting me, subverting my rule," he accuses, veins suddenly throbbing across his bare forehead. Any mention of yakuza operating out of his district will also draw his ire. "Are you suggesting I cannot maintain the law in my own district?" he demands. "This Ide is probably sending them across the boundaries to discredit me! Yes, that must be it!"

PCs will have to take a very careful and nuanced approach to navigate through this conversational minefield. If Reitaan does become enraged, it may still be possible to soothe and persuade him through skillful role-play – the GM must adjudicate how well the players do at this. If they can they succeed in presenting their case without arousing Reitaan's ire, he will reluctantly agree to post guards on the bridges and order them to coordinate with Ukuri's magistrates.

If the PCs do enrage Reitaan, there is one approach which can succeed in forcing his cooperation: a PC can threaten to commit seppuku to protest Reitaan's irresponsible governorship (perhaps inspired by the story of Reitaan's father). The GM should make sure whether the PCs are bluffing, or really mean it – bluffing PCs lose 2 points of Honor and must roll **Sincerity/Awareness** at TN 15 to convince Reitaan they mean what they say.

Faced with a successful threat of seppuku, the governor is deeply shaken, and immediately stops the PCs from completing such an act. "There is no need for such a... drastic step," he says, suddenly pale and hoarse with emotion. "I will deal with the problems you have

reported. You have my word, on my honor as a samurai.”

An Alternative Solution

If the PCs are unable to meet with Reitaan, or are unable to deal effectively with his paranoia, it is still possible to solve Ide Ukuri’s problem. The PCs do, after all, have access to resources of their own – the Imperial troops who guard the Forbidden City through the winter.

The Imperial Guard will not automatically do this – it means diverting troops from their normal duties. The Guard commander will delicately suggest that “perhaps this should be a matter for the district governors.” The PCs must explain the situation both diplomatically and convincingly, and make a **Sincerity/Awareness** roll at TN 15 to convince the Guard captain to undertake this task. Otherwise he apologizes politely, explaining that “the Emperor has given me the task of protecting his city, and I cannot risk any dereliction of that duty.”

A Task Fulfilled

If the PCs succeed in solving the problem (either by convincing Reitaan, or by sending Imperial troops), they receive a letter from Ide Ukuri a few weeks later, thanking them deeply for their efforts. Ukuri explains that the “troublesome incidents” have declined sharply since the PCs intervened. In conclusion, the letter promises to report the PCs’ deeds to the Emperor when he returns from the winter court.

The Moto will be left out of this letter of thanks. They are likely to be bitter and resentful, recounting their repeated attempts to visit Hida Reitaan, unless the PCs offer them a chance to save face (for example by promising to mention their efforts to the Emperor).

Failure: The Moto Save the Day

If the PCs were completely unable to deal with this problem, the Moto will eventually (after a couple of weeks) succeed in meeting with Reitaan and convincing him to help with the problem.

A message arrives for the PCs from Ide Ukuri a couple of weeks later, politely thanking them for their efforts, “however regrettably unsuccessful they may have been.” The Moto receive a far more generous letter effusively thanking them for their assistance. Moto Ibuki will make sure this letter is read where the PCs can hear it, hoping to provoke them into an embarrassing display of temper.

Event 4: The New Year’s Festival

The end of the year has come at last, and bells are ringing all over the city to celebrate the beginning of the year 1121 in the Imperial Calendar. A fresh coat of snow has left the city a landscape of sparkling and beautiful white, on which the light of Lady Sun seems to dance. The cold, crisp air seems as fresh and clean as the scenery.

During and after the New Year’s Festival, any PCs with the ability to sense Shadowlands Taint (such as Witch Hunters) will begin to feel uneasy, suffering from bad dreams and a general sense of something being “off.” Moto Xian Zhu also becomes even more edgy and irritable after this time, despite his regular supply of opium.

It is traditional during the New Year that the Emperor closets himself in a shrine and offers prayers for the health and prosperity of the Empire. Major-Domo Heisei will explain to the PCs that their own duties as kanrinrin are somewhat similar. As the Emperor’s caretakers, they are tasked with taking gifts to each of the three major temples within the city: the Temple of Eternal Redemption, the Temple to the Seven Fortunes, and the Temple to the Kami. The gifts (a set of three elegant statues of the First Hantei) symbolize the Emperor’s beneficence, his promise of a good year to come, and his veneration of the kami and fortunes.

How this affair progresses depends in large part on how well the PCs have handled the Moto up to this point. If they have managed to avoid or defuse the various confrontations, Moto Ibuki will propose a compromise whereby both groups will deliver the gifts jointly. If, however, the PCs have suffered through a more confrontational time with the Moto (and in particular, if they have fought one or more duels with them), the Moto will insist that the insults to their honor have been many and multifold, and claim they will only be satisfied with delivering all the gifts themselves.

Diplomatic PCs can volunteer a compromise themselves, either a joint delivery or, perhaps, splitting the duties up in some way. The GM must adjudicate how well the Moto respond to such offers, depending on what approach the PCs take, how hostile they have been to the Moto so far, etc. They can assist their efforts with **Sincerity/Awareness** or **Etiquette/Awareness** rolls (TN 15), but this is ultimately a role-playing encounter.

If the PCs are unable or unwilling to compromise, Moto Sango will fly into a rage, accusing them of “stealing our duties, insulting our honor, to deny us the rights and duties we have earned through long and faithful service to the Empire!” If the PCs do not immediately apologize and offer some sort of restitution (e.g. letting the Moto deliver some of the gifts), Sango finally snaps completely, drawing his sword and chopping one of the golden statues in half before attacking whichever PC has been most troublesome to the Moto. This combat will be to the death, or at least to unconsciousness – Sango is too maddened with rage to hold back. The other Moto watch appalled (even Moto Koruma realizes that things have gone too far), but do not intervene in the fight unless the PCs gang up on Sango (in which case they feel compelled to assist their fellow Unicorn). If they do get involved in the combat, they try to end it quickly and non-lethally.

Afterward, Koruma and Ibuki will angrily blame the situation on the PCs’ “arrogance and intransigence” and promise to report the whole debacle to the Emperor before retiring to their quarters. The PCs will still have to make the deliveries to the temples, and explain to the Temple of Eternal Redemption why they have no gift.

Assuming the PCs can avoid this disaster, it should be possible to arrange some sort of compromise joint delivery of the gifts.

A Dark Omen

Assuming the PCs averted the disastrous conflict with the Moto described above, they will be able to deliver the gift statues to all three temples. At the third and last temple (the Temple of the Kami), a strange incident occurs:

As you bow and present the golden statue to the venerable priest, there is a sudden flurry of wings. A crow drops from the sky, landing heavily on the stone walkway beside you. Droplets of blood spatter from the bird’s impact, dirtying you and the statue you carry. The priest lurches backward with a shocked cry. The bird lies unmoving, obviously dead.

This strange incident is clearly an omen, as the shaken priest will aver. Any PC with Theology or Astrology (or Moto Xian Zhu, if nothing else) can remember that the crow is a symbol of Shinsei. A PC who can roll **Theology/Void** or **Astrology/Intelligence** at TN 10 can interpret the omen as a warning of impending disaster for the Hantei line.

Event 5: The Theft

This incident happens about three weeks after the events of the New Years’ festival. The winter has passed without incident since that stressful day, and the Moto have confined themselves to baleful looks (unless Moto Sango was killed, in which case the Moto refuse to be seen anywhere near the PCs). The Emperor is expected back within a month, and the PCs should be wondering how they are going to explain any violent incidents or problems that have occurred.

This morning, your breakfast is interrupted by a visit from Major-Domo Heisei. He bows low, apologizing for interrupting your meal. “The blessings and felicitations of the fortunes on you, noble samurai, on this glorious morning. It is with the deepest regret that I impinge upon your valuable time with this trivial and, I am certain, easily remedied matter.”

Heisei goes on in this manner for some time, circling carefully around the subject, and allowing the PCs to prod him into reluctantly explaining things. It seems that a small but valuable statuette, a bust of the Imperial heir Hantei Sotorii, has vanished from the quarters of one of the Emperor’s former concubines. The woman in question, Sae, is the mother of Sotorii, although she is now retired from her duties and lives in the Hantei Palace. The statuette was a gift from the Emperor on her retirement from her days as his concubine, in remembrance of the son she had given him. Sae noticed its absence this morning while brushing her hair – she normally keeps the statuette on her cosmetics table.

The item was stolen by Kumi, a maidservant who has been suborned by the Bloodspeaker-controlled yakuza.

They plan to use it to track the location of Hantei Sotorii (through sympathetic magic) when he returns from the winter court.

Questioning Sae

Sae is a tearful middle-aged woman (clearly once very beautiful). She is proud of her status as the mother of the Imperial heir, and quite upset at the loss of her statuette. Sae is a very proper Rokugani woman, always keeps her eyes averted in the presence of men, and is always humble and soft-spoken toward her social superiors (e.g. samurai).

If asked, Sae can recall seeing the statuette the previous evening. She sleeps in another room adjacent to where the statuette is kept; her maids, Kumi and Atsuko, usually clean her rooms in the morning. She noticed

the statuette was missing when she returned from her morning bath. If the PCs specifically ask where the maids were when she found the statuette missing, she recalls that Atsuko was helping her dress while Kumi was away taking her sleeping garments to be washed.

Investigating the Theft

The maids will both be terrified by questions from samurai, but any PC who rolls **Simple Awareness** at TN 15 (or **Ichi Miru/Awareness** at TN 5) can tell that Kumi's fear is of a different and deeper quality than Atsuko, who is merely frightened by the general situation. Both maids claim that they cleaned Sae-dono's quarters in the morning, while she was bathing. When Sae returned to dress and array herself, she noticed the theft. Neither of the maids will admit to noticing the absence of the statuette before that. If the PCs ask specifically who cleaned where, Kumi will (reluctantly) admit that she cleaned the living room (where the statuette was kept), while Atsuko cleaned the sleeping chamber.

If the PCs have a shugenja among them, they can question the spirits in the room and learn that Kumi took the statuette when she cleaned the room. Although this is not legal evidence, it tells the PCs who to question. If the PCs do not think of questioning the spirits, Moto Koruma will do so – while dropping suggestions that the PCs may have had questionable motives for overlooking such an important investigative tool.

Kumi can be “broken” in questioning by any PC who can make a **Contested Willpower** roll against her Willpower of 2, or who can roll **Intimidation/Willpower** at TN 15 (or **Obeiesaseru/Willpower** at TN 5). She will quickly confess that she stole the statuette at the orders of Hidoi, a man who is part of the “Morning Swallows” yakuza gang. She hid the statuette under her kimono and then quickly dodged out of the palace (through the servants' entrance) on the pretense of an errand. Hidoi waited for her outside the palace and took the statuette away with him.

If the PCs ask why Kumi was willing to perform such a terrible act, she tearfully explains that she has been stealing and selling small items from the Palace for months, in order to support her parents (who are old and too ill to work). Hidoi somehow found out what she was doing and threatened to expose her if she did not steal what he told her. That was over two months ago, but she did not hear from Hidoi again until this

week, when he ordered her to steal her mistress' statuette.

Kumi can describe Hidoi as a “short, vile man with a dirty goatee” and says she first met him at the Yasuki Trading Grounds, where he was working for a merchant named Gyozei (a man who bought many of the trinkets she sold). She knows nothing else, and begs the PCs to show mercy (“not for me, o-samurai-sama, but for my family”).

It is up to the PCs how they choose to deal with Kumi. However, if they take a merciful route, the Moto will take a “hard line” and demand that she be tortured for additional information, then executed (or at least reduced to eta) for betraying the Imperial house. Moto Koruma and Moto Xian Zhu will both attempt to cast doubts on the motivations of merciful PCs: “Why are you so eager to let this criminal go unpunished, kanrinrin-san?”

A Visit to the Yasuki Trading Grounds

Based on Kumi's descriptions, the PCs can attempt to track down Hidoi at the Yasuki Trading Grounds in Karada District.

The Trading Grounds are a bustling place of commerce and industry, even now in the midst of winter. Merchants hurry about, buying and selling, while others shout their wares from stalls. Boys with brooms hurry about, keeping the walkways free of snow. The clink of koku trading hands is a constant backdrop to the yammer of voices.

The merchant Gyozei is a fearful, skinny little fellow in his forties, wrapped in a heavy cloak to ward off the chill weather. His stall sells a variety of trinkets and decorative items, of the sort favored by rich courtier women, and he smiles greedily as the PCs approach, hoping for a sale. Like most of the merchants here, he is sponsored by the Yasuki, and proudly displays their mon on his stall.

Questioned about Hidoi, Gyozei will turn fearful and evasive, claiming (falsely) not to know anyone by that name. He will quickly break under pressure, however, identifying Hidoi as a yakuza of the “Morning Swallows” gang. He claims to have had no choice but to employ Hidoi – “if I hadn't hired him as they demanded, they'd have burned my stall and destroyed my livelihood!” He explains that Hidoi has worked here for over a year, and sometimes brings him stolen items to fence. Gyozei can also identify Kumi as

someone who sometimes brought him items to sell. “Very pretty little things, I never asked where they came from.”

Gyozei does not remember anything resembling the statuette of Sotorii, and will be quite honestly horrified to learn he has been fencing items stolen from the Imperial palace. He begs the PCs for mercy in the most lowly and contemptible manner, crawling at their feet, promising the favor of the Yasuki family, and so forth. He will also willingly tell them where Gyozei lives, in a small residential neighborhood at the southern end of the district.

Tracking Down Hidoi the Yakuza

Hidoi’s residence is one of several dozen small, low-class houses huddled on the southern edge of Karada District, just north of the old earthquake crevasse which marks the dividing line from Chisei District. The people living here are mostly laborers and eta, serving the city’s most basic and unpleasant needs.

Hidoi’s residence can be tracked down with a few questions. Some of the people here are yakuza, however, and will try to warn Hidoi that samurai are searching for him. The yakuza will attempt to flee his one-room hovel out the back window, running through the narrow alleys to lose his pursuers. The PCs will need to roll **Athletics/Agility** at TN 10, **Hunting/Perception** at TN 10, or **Investigation/Intelligence** at TN 15 to catch him. If the PCs cannot catch him, he will flee into the earthquake gully and from there into the maze of tunnels beneath the city.

If captured, Hidoi will be resolutely uncooperative. He must be put in the hands of a torturer to get any information from him. Under such questioning he will eventually confess that the boss of his gang, a man known only by his nick-name Oogata (“Big”), ordered him to have Kumi steal the statuette. Hidoi passed the statuette on to his “brothers,” other gang members, presumably for delivery to the boss. He will not identify any of these “brothers,” nor will he give any further information on Oogata, no matter how severely he is tortured (“it’s worth more than my life, samurai”). He will, however, confess that his “Morning Swallows” gang has been at war with the city’s other gangs this winter. “We’ve been expanding our territory, and that’s angered the other chiefs.”

Hidoi has no idea why his boss needed the statuette, nor does he realize the true significance of the yakuza wars. He is a small pawn in a large machine, and certainly

has no idea that his gang has been taken over by Bloodspeakers. If the PCs ask why his gang is expanding its territory, he will shrug and remark sneeringly, “It’s my business? I do what I’m told, samurai, just like you.”

An Unsettling Death

Legally, the PCs are obligated to eventually hand Hidoi over to one of the city magistrates for punishment. Once this happens, the yakuza will be scheduled to be hanged the following morning. During the night, however, he dies suddenly and mysteriously. Guards arriving at his cell in the morning find him shriveled, blackened, and hairless, as though he aged a half-century in a single night. The Bloodspeakers, fearful that he might crack at the last minute, have murdered him with the spell *Touch of Death*.

Consequences and Accusations

The trail of the statuette dries up with Hidoi. The PCs know that the yakuza have the statuette, but not where to look for it. They will have to explain themselves to the Emperor when he returns.

If the PCs did not succeed in tracking down Hidoi, the Moto will do so. Furthermore, if their relations with the PCs up to this point have been extremely bad (in particular if they fought with the PCs over the delivery of gifts to the temples), they will attempt to use this opportunity to attack the PCs.

Hidoi will be tortured into implicating one or more of the PCs in the theft. The favored target of such an accusation will be a PC who displayed money problems during the dinner at the beginning of winter (especially a ronin). If Moto Xian Zhu’s opium addiction has not been exposed to this point, he will cooperate with the yakuza to produce several blackmailed samurai witnesses who can testify to the “crimes” of the target PC(s).

Moto Ibuki will take the stance of an honorable man who is gravely troubled by these accusations, but feels no choice but to follow them through. The accused PC can demand a duel to prove their innocence, of course. Moto Sango will fight the duel unless he was killed earlier, in which case Moto Xian Zhu will take on that duty. It is up to the PC whether to fight to first blood, to unconsciousness, or to the death. A PC who loses such a duel is considered to have admitted guilt, and will face either criminal prosecution (and execution), or a choice between seppuku and reduction to ronin status. The GM should adjudicate this situation as seems appropriate – it may, for example, be possible to

reverse things by exposing Xian Zhu's opium addiction, or through political maneuvering.

Event 6: The Emperor Returns

Finally the end of winter arrives, and the Emperor's caravan returns to the city, riding up the Imperial Road at a stately pace while the citizens of the city bow in welcome. The caravan enters through the crystal gates of the Forbidden City and halts in the gardens outside the Palaces. The Emperor descends from his palanquin and accepts the welcoming bows from his faithful *kanrinrin*. Then he follows them into the Hantei Palace, making note of how well they have discharged their caretaking duties. The rest of the caravan waits outside while the Shining Prince renders his judgment.

This scene should be played for tension, with the Emperor gravely expressionless as he walks through the palace at a measured, stately pace. If any property damage has occurred, or if anything is missing, he notes it with a slight frown. However, even if everything is perfect, he still refrains from offering any hint of whether he is pleased or displeased. Nor does he respond to any statements or reports from the PCs or the Moto, save to occasionally nod in grave acknowledgement. Stretch out the tension as long as you see fit before launching into the final scene.

To judge whether the PCs have been successful caretakers or not, use the following criteria:

- If any property damage has occurred, such as sword-slashes in the walls or statues smashed, the PCs failed.
- If Moto Sango destroyed one of the three gifts to the temples, the PCs failed.
- If the PCs were unable to trace the disappearance of the statuette to the yakuza, they have failed.
- The PCs have also failed if the Moto managed to successfully smear the name of one or more of the PCs with the false accusation of theft.

The Glory and Honor rewards and penalties for the PCs' performance as *kanrinrin* are listed at the end of the adventure.

The Bloodspeakers Strike!

As you are waiting anxiously on the verdict of the Shining Prince, a sudden burst of noise comes from outside the palace, where the rest of the caravan still

awaits. A moment later, shockingly, you hear the sounds of combat! An inhuman screech rises above the clash of weapons and shouts of alarm.

Every guard in the vicinity will rush for the doors. No doubt the PCs follow.

Outside, a portion of the grounds has apparently collapsed, exposing a tunnel beneath. Squatting over the hole in the ground, slaveringly gnawing on a samurai's severed arm, is a bloated monstrosity of pinkish flesh, sporting spiky limbs and a gaping, slobbering maw. It's beady black eyes dart around, seeking more prey, but it does not move from its position. Around it are scattered the overturned palanquins and torn bodies of the Imperial caravan. Mixed with them are the bodies of other people, commoners from their garb, covered in dirt and blood, and the distorted shape of some monstrous beast, dead from a score of sword-strokes.

A horribly wounded Seppun bodyguard staggers toward the bloated monster, trying to hold up his blade with an arm that is slashed to the bone. "The prince!" he croaks. "Sotorii... they have him!" A moment later the flesh of his body blackens and crisps from his body. A thin, filthy commoner steps from behind one of the toppled palanquins, clutching the knife with which he has just slashed his own arm. "You are too late, samurai fools!" he screeches. "Tuchiban will be free!"

All PCs must roll Fear (rank 3). The Bloodspeaker sorcerer is already at the +6 Wound Rank, and will attempt to cast his spell (the dreaded *Touch of Death*, 7k7 damage) once more. The PCs can stop this easily enough, of course, by killing him first (assuming they can beat him on initiative).

The Oni no Abura (Fat Oni), which the Bloodspeakers summoned, will not move from its place atop the tunnel. It must be slain before anyone can pursue the Bloodspeakers. The beast is Invulnerable, so unless the PCs have jade, crystal, or a magical weapon, they will only be able to inflict one point of damage per hit. Spells will damage it normally. The Oni has already taken six wounds.

The Moto will pitch into the combat with a will, although they have no jade. If any PC thinks of asking for jade, it will take ten rounds to fetch jade powder from the Imperial storerooms.

A PC of especial boldness might call for one of the magical swords (the Hantei blade or the Akodo blade)

from the throne room. This will require an eloquent appeal from a PC of at least Glory 2.0, and a successful **Awareness/Sincerity** roll at TN 20. If successful, the PC will be allowed the use of the blade until the end of the combat (only). Since the PCs are really not of sufficient rank and ability to use these sacred weapons properly, treat them simply as 4k3 magical katanas.

Once the Oni has been slain, the Bloodspeakers' trail can be followed into the tunnel. The tunnel is clearly fresh, dug in the last couple of months, for its first fifty feet. Halfway down the tunnel, the PCs find a commoner lying dead in a pool of blood, his throat slashed open. He was fuel for the cultists' Oni-summoning spell.

The fresh tunnel soon merges into what is obviously a much older passage of mixed earth and stone construction. The cultists' trail is at first fairly obvious, spattered with droplets of blood, although the PCs will need a light source to find it. After several hundred yards the trail becomes harder to follow, requiring a **Hunting/Perception** roll at TN 10 or **Investigation/Perception** at TN 15 to take the correct turn at each of three successive intersections.

A Lost Yakuza

A hundred yards or so after the second intersection, the PCs come upon a maddened, dying yakuza, his arm slashed to the bone for blood to power another Bloodspeaker spell. "Madness," he cackles, "madness, we gave them the gate and they opened it, oh yes!" He can be forced (with Intimidation or Torture) to explain that the Bloodspeakers infiltrated and took over his yakuza gang, the Morning Swallows. "The boss started acting strange last autumn, right before the Emperor left, and then all these new members showed up. Tunnels, all they wanted was the smuggling tunnels, and they had us digging day and night! Digging like moles, ha ha!"

After the third intersection, the PCs find their path blocked by a deep crevasse, apparently left from a long-ago earthquake. A bridge of rope and wooden slats once crossed it, but the Bloodspeakers have cut the bridge away. The gap is too wide to jump (requires an **Athletics/Agility** roll at TN 45). PCs with Air magic can continue the pursuit alone, chasing the fading blood droplets and the occasional distant echoing voices, but must make three more **Hunting/Perception** or **Investigation/Perception** rolls at the same TN as above to continue on the trail. Eventually, if they do not take a wrong turn, they emerge from an old, half-collapsed earthquake crevasse

more than a mile outside the walls of the city. There is no sign of their enemies... except for another bloody corpse, and a torn golden kimono with the Hantei chrysanthemum mon.

Conclusion

As soon as the PCs give up their chase (if any), they receive an emergency summons to the Imperial palace. Grim-faced Imperial guards, hands on katana, escort the PCs into the main audience hall. Over a hundred other samurai and courtiers also wait there, their faces pale with shock, their voices the merest whispers as they trade rumors of what has happened. The GM should feel free to throw in conversations with any notable Rokugani NPCs who seem appropriate (Kakita Yoshi and Bayushi Kachiko are obvious choices); the PCs may actually know more than most of the people in the room, and may find themselves urgently queried for information.

Dead silence falls as the Son of Heaven at last enters the room. You are shocked by how Hantei the 38th has been transformed; where there once stood a splendid, vigorous man who barely showed his age, now a stricken, trembling man wobbles to his seat on the Emerald Throne. It is as though the weight of all his years has landed on him at once. A torn golden kimono is clutched in his trembling hands. The silence remains absolute as everyone bows and remains bowed for long minutes, unwilling to shame the Son of Heaven by witnessing his open emotions. Finally he speaks, in a soft quavering voice that is a hollow mockery of his former confident baritone. "They have my son. Find them. Find him."

No further words are needed. As one, the assembled courtiers and ambassadors prostrate themselves and depart in a swirl of kimono, rushing forth in search of the lost Hantei... yourselves among them.

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 scenario:	2 XP
Good role-playing:	1 XP
Successfully completing Kanrinrin duties:	2 XP

Killing the Oni no Abura: 1 XP

TOTAL POSSIBLE EXPERIENCE: 6 XP

Honor:

If the PCs successfully complete their winter Kanrinrin duties, despite the problems with their rivals, each of them gains +2 Honor.

If the PCs did not manage to perform their duties successfully, the Emperor is displeased, and his judgment weighs heavy. Each PC loses 3 points of Honor (2 points if they are ronin).

Glory:

If the PCs successfully completed their winter Kanrinrin duties, despite the problems with their rivals, each of them gains +3 Glory. Even if they are ronin.

If the PCs did not complete their duties without damage or dishonor, word of the Emperor's disapproval spreads quickly. They each lose 6 points of Glory.

If any of the PCs have **Allies** with the Miya family (from playing *Occult Murders*, for example) they can "cash in" that advantage (erase it) to have Miya Yoto intercede on their behalf. This will reduce the Glory loss to zero.

Other Consequences:

PCs who learned of Moto Xian Zhu's opium addiction may opt to gain the Advantage **Blackmail: Moto Xian Zhu** if they choose.

If the PCs "failed" as kanrinrin, the Moto failed as well.

All PCs gain these Moto (Ibuki, Xian Zhu, and Koruma at least, and Sango if he lived) as **Sworn Enemies**.

Ronin PCs who complete their duties as kanrinrin successfully are paid 5 koku.

NPCs and Monsters

Moto Sango, temperamental bushi

This man is a towering juggernaut, clearly someone whose family has a few “Crabs in the woodpile.” He wears long mustachios which hang down past his chin, but is otherwise clean-shaven. His eyebrows are thick and press down from a forehead which is often furrowed in anger. Sango is a hot-tempered man who easily loses his temper, especially if he feels his much-maligned family is being insulted. He instinctively mistrusts all other Clans, since they are all unfairly biased against the Moto family.

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

TN to be Hit: 15 (25 with Heavy Armor)

School/Rank: Shinjo Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 1.2/1.7

Skills: Athletics 4, Defense 3, Horsemanship 6, Iaijutsu 4, Kenjutsu 4, Sincerity 2

Advantages/Disadvantages: Strength of the Earth (rank one)/Brash, Moto Curse

Equipment: Fine daisho, heavy armor.

Moto Ibuki, soft-spoken diplomat

Ibuki is trained as an Ide diplomat, training which he has put to good use in a lifetime serving the Moto family, struggling to make the rest of the Empire accept them and forget their terrible history. He sees this kanrinrin appointment as the culmination of his life’s work, and resents the PCs for standing in the way of this great honor. He will cloak this attitude, however, beneath a near-impenetrable veneer of calm and good manners. The oldest of the four Moto, he is nearing the age of retirement, and has lost most of his hair. His smooth-shaven face is always calm and observant, but a close look will detect a fire smoldering in his deep-set eyes. He regards all non-Moto as either useful tools or troublesome obstacles, but is a brilliant manipulator who easily feigns both friendship and enmity.

FIRE 2 Intelligence 3	AIR 3 Awareness 4
EARTH 2 Willpower 3	WATER 3

VOID 3

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Ide Emissary 2

Honor/Glory: 1.6/2.3

Skills: Calligraphy 4, Etiquette 6, Manipulation 5, Oratory 4, Poetry 5, Shintao 3, Sincerity 7

Advantages/Disadvantages: Allies (many), Bland, Voice/Driven (to raise the stature of the Moto family), Moto Curse

Equipment: Fine kimono, exquisite fan

Moto Xian Zhu, embittered monster-hunter and opium addict

Xian Zhu is a “true” Moto, trained in the family school, who has spent ten years of his life on deadly, fruitless missions into the Shadowlands. He is tall and muscular, with thick hair tied back in a long ponytail. His skin is pale and unhealthy-looking, with an ugly network of scars that runs down the left side of his face (just missing the eye) to vanish beneath his kimono. He is not Tainted, but his experiences have left him bitter, unstable, and tormented by nightmares. He is addicted to opium, the result of a long and agonizing convalescence from the injuries which scarred his face. He respects Crab but despises all others as weaklings who “don’t know the true nature of things.”

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

TN to be Hit: 20 (25 with Light Armor)

School/Rank: Moto Bushi 2

Honor/Glory: 0.8/1.7

Skills: Archery 3, Athletics 3, Defense 4, Horsemanship 3, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu 5, Lore (Shadowlands) 5, Sincerity 2, Stealth 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Quick/Chemical Dependency (opium), Moto Curse

Equipment: Fine daisho, light armor

Moto Koruma, ruthless shugenja

Koruma is a small man with a wide face and a ready (if facile) smile. A cousin and long-time friend to Moto Ibuki, he shares his older relative’s desire to elevate the Moto family and win renown for their name. Koruma is a ruthless and cold-hearted man who has learned many of his courtier lessons from Scorpions; he will not hesitate to manipulate, trick, blackmail, and insult

when it suits his needs. Naturally enough, he doesn't trust Scorpions himself, and sees most other clans as arrogant fools.

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

TN to be Hit: 15

School/Rank: Iuchi Shugenja 3

Honor/Glory: 1.3/3.3

Skills: Acting 3, Courtier 4, Etiquette 5, Heraldry 3, Horsemanship 4, Medicine 4, Shintao 3, Sincerity 5, Spellcraft 2, Tantojutsu 4, Tea Ceremony 3, Theology 2.

Spells (spells with an asterisk are from Way of the Unicorn): (Water) *Path to Inner Peace*, *Regrow the Wound*, *Ride Through the Night**, *Speed of the Waterfall**, *The World is Not Heavy**, *Wisdom and Clarity*, *Yuki's Blessing**, *Walking Upon the Waves*, (Air) *Nature's Touch*, *Quiescence of Air*, *The Four Winds' Favor**, *Whispering Wind*, (Earth) *Courage of the Seven Thunders*, *Fires From the Forge*, *Force of Will*.

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Heartless/Moto Curse

Equipment: Fine kimono, scroll satchel, tanto (0k2)

Wounded Bloodspeaker Sorcerer

This crazed peasant sorcerer is already at the +6 Wound Rank, but will try to cast his spell Touch of Death one more time.

FIRE 2	AIR 2
EARTH 3	WATER 2
VOID 2	

Shadowlands Taint Rank: 2.3

TN to be Hit: 10

School/Rank: None

Honor/Glory: 0/0

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

Spells: *Touch of Death*

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

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

Oni no Abura (Fat Oni)

This bloated monstrosity has taken six Wounds. It likes to pick up foes and chew on them with its mouthful of sword-like teeth.

FIRE 4	AIR 4
EARTH 4	WATER 4

TN to be Hit: 20

Attacks: 5k2 (grab)

Damage: 3k2 (chewing)

Carapace Armor: 5

Wounds: 20: +5; 40: +10; 60: Dead

Special Abilities: Fear 3, Invulnerability.

GM's Note: Maho Spells

Maho spells are cast by rolling dice equal to Earth+Taint Rank, keeping Earth. The caster must spill blood (their own or another's) equal to the spell's Mastery level, and gains Taint equal to twice the Mastery level.

The caster may take Free Raises for each additional amount of blood (equal to the Mastery level) which they spill.

Touch of Death

Base TN: 20

Casting Time: 2 Actions

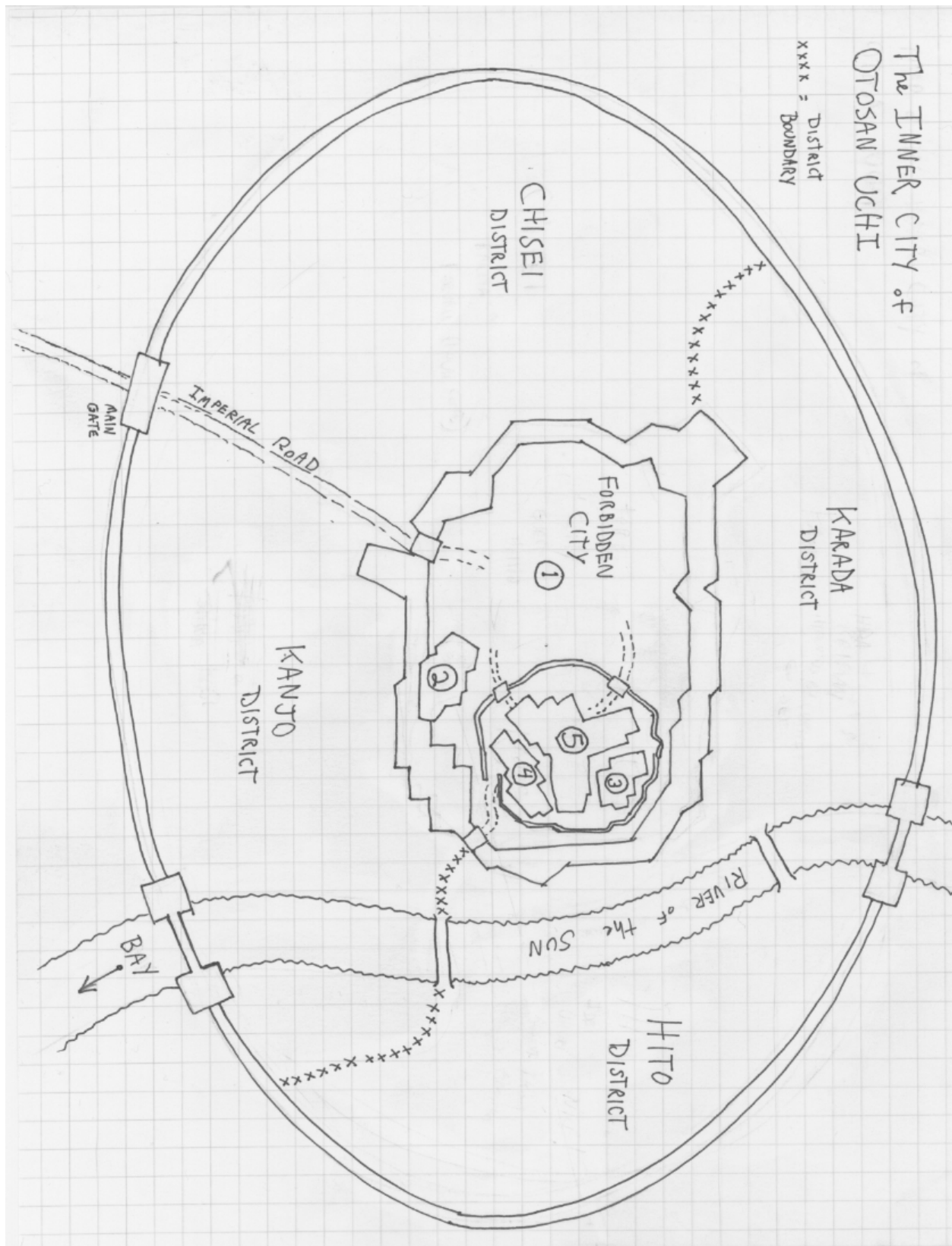
Duration: Instantaneous

Mastery Level/Wounds Required: 5

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

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

Handout #1 (Map of Otosan Uchi)



Handout #2 (Guide to the Inner City of Otosan Uchi)

Kanjo District: Governor Shiba Kagi

Phoenix, Scorpion, and Southern Lion Embassies
Temple of Eternal Redemption

Chisei District: Governor Kakita Foruku

Hatake no Henkyaku Surudo ("Field of Sharp Returns") legendary teahouse
Crane and Minor Clan Embassies
Seppun Hill (where the Kami first landed from the Heavens)
Temple to the Seven Fortunes

Hito District: Governor Ide Ukuri

Temple to the Kami
Unicorn and Fox Clan Embassies
Western Lion Embassy
Hito Water Gardens

Karada District: Governor Hida Reitaan

Yasuki Trading Grounds
Imperial Museum of Antiquities
Crab Embassy

Forbidden City

1. Guest Homes
2. Miya Palace
3. Seppun Palace
4. Otomo Palace
5. Hantei Palace