

Bonds of Fate

**A One-Round Low-Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido**

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A learned guest at the wedding of an influential lord's son delivers news that will drive a samurai to the limit of his loyalty and obedience.

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This module is written for the Legend of the Five Rings: Fourth Edition, published by Alderac Entertainment.

GM's Information

THIS SCENARIO SHOULD NOT BE RUN COLD!

Please read the scenario thoroughly before attempting to run it.

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, gender, glory and status at the top. This makes it easier for the players to keep track of who is playing which character.

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

Players will have Module Tracking Sheets that need to be filled out at the end of the game, which is to keep track of certain circumstances and events for future GM's to create a better roleplaying experience for the player. Important information to be included in the game will be listed at the beginning of the module, and information that needs to be recorded will be listed at the end of the module. Please fill out the GM tracking sheet attached to the end of this module and return it to the Campaign Coordinator. If you need an electronic version of the form, please contact the Campaign Administrator or Campaign Coordinator (e-mail addresses are available on the website).

Rokugan has a complex and rich culture that is different in many ways from modern Western civilization. The Legend of the Five Rings book details these numerous differences, but it is suggested that GMs keep a few specifics in mind.

- Family name preceds personal name for all characters; Akodo Toturi was a member of the Akodo family with the personal name of Toturi.

- Samurai do not commonly concern themselves with money or commerce; exchanges between samurai are treated as gifts, and payments are made to peasants as though humoring the lower orders' petty ways.
- An event is not truly considered to have happened without samurai witness; even criminal investigations rely entirely upon eyewitness testimony.

Some events that occur within this module affect the storyline and may need to be reported by the Campaign Administrators. This module has an effective 'active' period which is 3 months after its release, and these events (listed at the end of the module) **MUST** be reported by the GM to the campaign administration before the end of the active period for them to take effect.

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. **Please consult the Honor table on page 91 and the Glory table on page 93** of the Legend of the Five Rings Fourth Edition core sourcebook for more specific guidelines for Honor and Glory gains and losses. Specifically, be mindful of the performing PC's current Honor, Glory, and Infamy when meting out rewards and punishments.

Reminder

This module is intended for entertainment purposes; this means that the goal is to provide an enjoyable playing experience for the players. The events of the module should be challenging, so as to ensure the players have a sense of accomplishment, but the mechanics presented here are, ultimately, guidelines. If adjustments are necessary to adapt to the specific group of players, it is suggested that care should be taken to ensure the player characters do have a reasonable chance of achieving their goals (or at least of achieving an entertaining failure). Remember that the GM has the final word at the table, and use that power with discretion and consideration.

Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low-rank adventure, and the encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank One.

Although most of the challenges here are role-play oriented and thus not terribly dependent on party strength, a few changes can be made to adjust the adventure difficulty for high-end parties, as follows:

High End Party (at least three non-courtier characters of Rank Two): Mirumoto Takako is present for the final scene with Koishi in his tower, and will fight to defend him.

Take note of the following Advantages and Disadvantages:

- Oath of Fealty (Iuchi Barashi)
- Oath of Fealty (Toritaka Shippou)
- Insensitive

Adventure Summary and Background

Fate is a powerful force in the life of any Rokugani. From the highest to the lowest, each person living in the Empire has a destiny of some kind or other, even if it is of no great significance or importance. Most samurai have no idea what this destiny may be, but meet their fate with as much dignity and honor as they can.

Recent events have changed much, however: returned spirits stand slightly outside the karmic cycle, and their actions can therefore alter the course of fate. This has been made abundantly clear with the demise of the Empress, but there are a steadily-growing number of smaller, more subtle instances that have begun to change the Empire's path even further.

The PCs will begin the module at the wedding of Iuchi Aseo, son of Iuchi Barashi. Iuchi Barashi is a highly influential daimyo, as a number of samurai around the Empire owe much to his abilities as a healer. One of the things that this module will explore is the nature of samurai duty, and it will be one of the first to make use of the extended daimyo character options.

The wedding itself is nothing more than background material; the ceremony itself, and the build-up to it, has little to do with the plot other than to get the PCs together. After the introduction, a fair amount of travel will be required of the PCs, with the details largely handled by the relevant NPCs. The players will encounter a situation in the eastern Dragon lands that will require them to make a choice between helping a loyal samurai serve his lord's best interests at the cost

of disobeying his lord's commands, or to help the lord save the life of his son.

Introduction

The PCs have been sent to the lands of Iuchi Barashi to attend the wedding of his youngest son Aseo to Toritaka Hamako, the daughter of Toritaka Shippou, a Crab provincial daimyo. Iuchi Barashi is an exceptional healer, and over the course of several decades of activity, has accrued a large number of political favors from various lords across the Empire. The PCs' daimyo owe Iuchi Barashi, and the PCs have been sent to represent their lords at the wedding and to provide (or look for) any necessary service for Barashi in order to discharge that debt.

The wedding of Iuchi Aseo to Toritaka Hamako goes entirely without incident. It is not until the feast following the ceremony that something happens to gain the entire court's attention.

Part One: Unexpected News

Wedding guests gather in the garden of Shiro Onseba, the castle of Iuchi Barashi. Banners bearing bright colors are everywhere. The tables have been set with thick soft cushions to sit on, and brightly, almost garishly, clothed Unicorn samurai wander about. The servants circulate with smiles and polite bows, seeing that all the guests are given refreshments while they wait during the ceremony itself.

The bride, elegant in her fine red wedding robes, and the groom in his formal black kimono emerge from the shrine with their parents. Iuchi Barashi raises his arms, gesturing to the couple with an open smile. "My guests, I have been honored on this day to welcome a new daughter into my home! I ask you all to greet Iuchi Hamako, and make her feel welcome among us!"

With that, the bride and groom step down towards the small tables set out for the evening, taking a moment to greet each of their guests before the meal. The feast is laid heavily in the Unicorn style, though not of exclusively Unicorn foods for the sake of their guests' sensibilities. Music is planned throughout the night, though a play is scheduled for just after sunset.

Barashi's guests are given a table of their own, near the family. The PCs will share the table with a few members of other Clans, as well as the highest-ranked guest.

- **Agasha Koishi:** Dragon Clan shugenja and servant of Mirumoto Takejiro (governor of Heibeisu). He is a tall, thin man with a pinched face and the typical ascetic demeanor of his Clan. He is a driven man, utterly loyal to his lord, and has little patience for the frivolity of the festivities. His lord has sent him to escort a shipment of medicines from Barashi back to Heibeisu.
- **Bayushi Sugimi:** Scorpion Clan courtier. A quietly pretty older woman, she watches the proceedings (and the other guests) from behind a feathered mask of white and black. She will not speak of it, but one of her daughters was fostered to the Crane during the Scorpion's banishment to the Burning Sands, and there is a subtle tension between her and Mizuyumi.
- **Doji Mizuyumi:** Crane Clan duelist. She is a diminutive, lovely young woman, with exquisite manners but a core of steel. She has little patience with the Scorpion; the result of having been forced to accept a Scorpion as a foster-brother shortly before her gempukku.
- **Moto Maduhl:** Representative of the Khan. A boisterous, somewhat uncouth Moto from the Burning Sands, he speaks Rokugani with a heavy accent, but is proud of his facility with the language after four years' of learning.
- The last guest is none other than **Isawa Tomo**, the Phoenix Master of Water, and brother to the late Empress. He is a slight man with an undeniable aura of power in addition to the glowing nimbus that marks him as a returned spirit. The Master of Water has worked with Barashi for years, both before and after Tomo's death, as both are among the most skilled magical healers in the Empire.

The players will get some time to interact with each other and the other guests over the meal. The other guests, except for Maduhl and Tomo, are representatives of daimyo that owe Barashi (much like the PCs). Maduhl is present to observe a traditional Rokugani wedding, which the Iuchi present far closer than the Moto do (marriages between Clans require approval from both Champions, and Gaheris' curiosity was piqued). Tomo is merely an old friend of the family; as the highest-ranked samurai in attendance, he is somewhat uncomfortable with the attention he is receiving.

Sake, and stronger drink, flows freely, and as the sun sets, the guests become more boisterous in their celebration. Isawa Tomo is a notable exception to this; though he is polite, the gathering is obviously more than he was expecting to deal with. When the meal comes to a finish, the Master of Water rises to call down blessings upon the union. *"May joy and prosperity flow to you from the Fortunes, in measure as bountiful as the sea."* He turns to Barashi, and continues politely. *"I thank you for your hospitality, Barashi-san. I am certain that your guests share my amazement at the boundless depths of your generosity. The welcome I have been given is beyond anything I would have expected. With your indulgence, I would like to present my gift to the happy couple."* Tomo gestures to a servant, who brings forward an ornately covered scroll-case. *"This is the original of a treatise I have been working on for some time now. Between Barashi-san's many years of study of the elements, and Shippou-san's long devotion to the other Spirit Realms, the subject of this work seems highly appropriate for the union of their children. This is the research I have done into the nature of returned spirits. If I may, Barashi-san, I should like to give a short reading from it."* Fascinated, the Unicorn host nods and gestures his assent. Tomo opens the scroll and reads an excerpt from the introduction. The subject matter is relatively esoteric, dealing with the effects of returned spirits and their nature in the Realm of Ningen-do. It theorizes that, having met their destiny in their first life, spirits stand slightly outside the standard karmic order. Most of the guests are somewhat nonplussed, though shugenja or spiritually-inclined people don't seem to have too much trouble following it. Barashi, Aseo, Hamako, and Shippou all are politely attentive, though the two daimyo do continue to drink while the Master of Water reads. The other guests are significantly less enthralled, with the exception of Agasha Koishi. The Dragon shugenja is riveted on Tomo's words, and seems disappointed when the Phoenix comes to the end of his excerpt.

After the rest of the gifts are given, the evening's entertainment begins with a short kabuki play. Packed with action, it rivets the attention of the crowd with the tale of the Unicorn's return to the Empire and eventual revelation as the former Clan of the Ki-Rin. During the play, perceptive PCs (those who make an **Investigation / Perception** roll with a TN of 20) will notice Agasha Koishi approach Isawa Tomo for a quiet conversation. The two shugenja speak quietly for a few minutes, then the Dragon bows and departs abruptly. Tomo watches him go with a disturbed frown, then turns his attention back to the play.

If any PCs wish to chase down Koishi, they may do so, but he is very curt and unresponsive. *“The Master of Water was kind enough to answer some questions of mine; I must meditate upon the answers. Please excuse me, samurai.”* He will quickly gather his things, and leave the castle that night.

The festivities continue well into the night, with music, storytelling, and even the spectacle of drunken samurai dancing. The next morning, Iuchi Barashi summons the PCs to a private audience.

Iuchi Barashi is an older man, with hair almost entirely white and flowing moustaches that dangle below his chin. He strokes them thoughtfully as he speaks, obviously nursing certain ill effects from the night before. “I hope that you all have felt welcome in my home. It has been an honor to have guests of such distinction, and I glad to have been able to share this celebration with you. Unfortunately, something unexpected has happened. One of my other guests left in the night without warning. This would not normally be something worth speaking of, however, Agasha Koishi-san was also sent here to escort a shipment of medicines to the city of Heibeisu. A... “gift” from myself to Mirumoto Takejiro, the governor of that city. Your daimyo have sent you to my court to represent them, and though I am loathe to deprive them of your service for any longer than need be, I find I must ask of you a favor.” He pauses for a moment to take a sip of his tea while he studies the reaction of his audience.

This is a moderately subtle reminder that the PCs have been sent to help him with whatever he might ask. He is not quite crass enough, hangover or not, to bring it up directly, but he will make certain the characters understand what is going on.

Barashi continues blandly, “This is the third such shipment to be sent; the other two never arrived at their destination. I am uncertain exactly what occurred, but we have begun to suspect perhaps bandit activity in the mountains. Takejiro-san had sent one of his most able servants, but, well. I am certain that this will not prove beyond your abilities, and I know that your daimyo would not begrudge me your assistance in this matter. I would ask you to escort the medicines to Heibeisu, in the Dragon lands.”

This is obviously what the PCs’ daimyo were hoping would happen when they sent the PCs here. (PCs who are vassals of either Iuchi Barashi or Toritaka Shippou are treated somewhat differently: Barashi simply orders his own servants to escort the shipment, while Crab

samurai in service to the Toritaka provincial daimyo will be directly ordered by Shippou to assist his new in-law.)

The PCs may have questions for Barashi, and he will answer to the best of his ability. That is, unfortunately, not likely to be particularly informative – he does not know why Koishi left, though he suspects it had something to do with his conversation with Tomo. He doesn’t know anything about the potential bandits, though he has been assured by the local Dragon daimyo that their magistrates are looking for them.

Barashi will arrange travel papers, supplies for the journey, and whatever else the PCs will need to make the trip. The caravan consists of two wagons and a half-dozen peasant porters, with one other samurai remaining as escort. **Mirumoto Takako** is a low-ranking ji-samurai from a vassal family sworn to the Mirumoto; she was sent to help Koishi, and is quite irritated to have been left behind. Takako is a fairly skilled samurai, and will serve as a native guide for the PCs through the Dragon mountains.

If the PCs think to seek out Isawa Tomo to question him, they will discover that the Master of Water is fairly approachable, but that he does not have much information. He will reveal that Koishi spoke with him during the play, and that the Dragon asked him several uncomfortable questions about how spirits interact with prophecy. Tomo will admit that Koishi seemed extremely intense, but that he was not specific about the prophecy that concerned him. The Master of Water was at a loss for what the Agasha’s true concern, but the subject was too close to the death of the Empress for Tomo’s comfort.

Part Two: On the Road to Heibeisu

The road to the Dragon lands heads east from Shiro Onseba, into the Lion lands and along the River of the Drowned Merchant. The road will turn north at Oiku toward Kyuden Tonbo, which serves as the gateway to the mountains. The Dragonfly Clan historically act as the keepers of that gate, preventing people that the Dragon Clan do not want to deal with from traveling into their lands. They do so very politely, of course, with claims of waiting for “appropriate guides to show the safe passages through the dangerous mountain passes”. The PCs do not have to worry about such delaying tactics, however, as they are expected in Heibeisu, and have both papers and a Dragon samurai

to prove it. When they cross into the mountains, the journey becomes somewhat more difficult, as the high passes are still fairly chilly in mid-spring, but no major problems arise until they are about two days out of Shiro Mirumoto.

Inns have been few and far between along the mountain roads through the Dragon mountains. This has required stopping for the night and camping alongside the road, but while the spring weather in the mountains has been a bit chilly, it has not been cold enough to be truly uncomfortable. The peasant porters tend to the wagons and the tents as the sun sets behind you.

The PCs may make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll at a TN of 20. Success lets them notice five men moving carefully through the brush down the hill, toward the camp, and spreading out to flank the PCs. If challenged, they will pause for conference, and two of them will approach more openly.

“Well, well, well, what have we here?” The question comes from a large, shadowy form on the edge of the camp, with a spear slung casually over one shoulder. Barely a second passes before it is answered from an unexpected source – the small figure behind him pipes up in a clear voice: “It, ah, appears to be a group of well-armed and highly trained Clan samurai. Pardon, samas, but might you be in need of guides?” The large man turns toward him in evident surprise.

The five men are bandits, former ashigaru who have taken up a life of crime after the wars. The large man is their leader, Aki, and is not a very subtle thinker – his second in command, Ichi, is far more clever and realizes that the PCs are well out of their league.

How the encounter goes will depend entirely on the PCs choices. Ichi will try his best to talk Aki out of attacking, without tipping his hand to the samurai; he will try offering the samurai his knowledge of the area as a guide, but does not have much in the way of hope that this will succeed. The PCs should be suspicious, as the bandits’ approach was hardly upfront, but the bandits will not attack first. If combat starts, Aki and the other three will close without much self-preservation (they are used to attacking ronin or ashigaru guards who are relatively easily intimidated), but Ichi will simply run away.

Bandits

Air 1	Earth 2	Fire 1	Water 2	Void 1
Reflexes 2	Stamina 3	Agility 2		
Honor 1.5		Status 0.0	Glory 0.0	
Initiative: 3k2		Attack: 4k2 (bow or		

Armor TN: 15 **Damage:** 4k2 (bow or spear)
spear)

Reduction: 1 (partial armor)

School/Rank: none

Skills: Athletics 1, Defense 1, Hunting 2, Kyujutsu 2, Spears 2

Wounds: 10: +0; 14: +3; 18: +5; 22: +10; 26: +15; 30: +20; 34: Down; 38: Dead.

This is not designed to be a significant encounter; however the PCs choose to deal with the bandits, they will meet a Dragon patrol the next day. They can report the whereabouts of the bandits or turn over any prisoners and receive thanks from the local bushi.

Part Three: Guardian of the Dawn

After almost three weeks on the road due to the slow pace of the wagon over the mountain passes, the PCs do eventually arrive at Heibeisu.

Heibeisu is a small city, though it is one of the largest in the Dragon lands. It is home to several thousand people, and serves as a trade hub between the Dragon, Phoenix, and Crane lands. Buildings come right up to the low walls of the city, with the main keep of the governor’s mansion rising above them all. You arrive at the city walls just before midday; the road is backed up, with guards carefully searching all traffic and paying extremely close attention to every wagon or cart departing the city. Stone-faced Mirumoto bushi examine your papers and the wagons, then provide directions to the governor’s keep. Tension is heavy in the air, with the merchants and travellers uncertain as to why the guards are so attentive.

Heibeisu is a fairly prosperous city, with new construction and a bustling trade district. There is a fairly large temple dedicated to Bishamon in the city, which has recently seen an increase in its patronage, and a smaller shrine to Fukurokujin that has unfortunately seen better days. (This is a direct result of the increased tensions between the Dragon and Phoenix since the defection of the Agasha family.)

If the PCs seek gossip on entering the city (or later), they may make the usual **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 10 to gain one random item from the list below; every 5 they exceed the TN by gives them one additional piece of information.

- The guards have been acting strangely all day; ever since the first caravans tried to leave this morning, they have been carefully scouring every single person and vehicle that leaves the city walls. They refuse to answer any questions, which has caused more than a few problems and delays, but something has obviously happened to attract their interest. The most common speculation is that something was stolen from the lord of the city.
- Mirumoto Takejiro is the governor of Heibeisu. He served as a shireikan during the Clan War and was on Hitomi's command staff in the early part of the War Against the Shadow. The city has prospered under his command, and he has a great deal of respect from his vassals for both his prestigious military career and for his adept administration of the city.
- The eastern division of the Mirumoto armies, a unit called the Army of the Dawn, has recently been reassigned to Heibeisu. Though they had been headquartered here before the Clan War, they were moved to Shiro Mirumoto afterward. Their return is attributed to the increased tensions between the Dragon and Phoenix Clans following the defection of the Agasha family.
- Construction of shrines to the newly-named Fortune of Noble Sacrifice has begun; the first, in Otsan Uchi, has almost been completed. Others are planned throughout the Empire, though the Emperor's proclamation that samurai should be willing to undertake the labor themselves has not been well-received.
- A group of bandits recently attacked a shipment of rice bound for Otsan Uchi; though they were hunted down and exterminated by the Imperial Legions almost immediately thereafter, the fact that a band of criminals was bold enough to assault an Imperial shipment has disturbed many in the Empire.

Mirumoto Takako will escort the PCs and their cargo to the governor's keep, and will provide introductions to the governor's staff, who will take custody of the delivery. (Afterwards, she will receive orders from her commander concerning the missing boy; suspicious, she will seek Koishi in his tower, and speak with him there. She will be convinced by him to save their lord, but will not be present at the final confrontation unless it is a high-ranked table.) **Mirumoto Tetsuzan**, a grizzled older samurai and the captain of the city's guard, will meet the PCs as they leave the keep. He informs them that the city governor, Mirumoto

Takejiro, wishes to speak with them. *"I will be honored to escort you to your audience with him."* Though polite, it is fairly obvious that Tetsuzan is not actually asking.

The PCs will be given a place to rest and recover from their journey, but within an hour (far sooner than might be expected when dealing with a samurai of the governor's Status), Tetsuzan will escort them to an audience chamber.

A tall, well-dressed bushi in Dragon colors rises as you enter, and offers you polite bows. "Greetings, samurai. I am Mirumoto Takejiro. Welcome to Heibeisu." Takejiro's voice is deep and even, and though there does appear to be some strain in his posture, his demeanor is polite. He gestures to the servants, who pass around refreshments, and sits. "Please take your ease, my friends."

Takejiro and his guard captain settle in while the servants follow their orders. The governor studies your group for a few quiet moments, then speaks again. "I thank you for the service you have done my city, samurai. The loss of these shipments has been felt keenly. I appreciate your assistance in this matter... but it seems as though I must ask something more of you. Your daimyo are honorable samurai, and I trust that they will not begrudge me your help; I assure you, that it will be remembered." He sighs heavily and looks around. "I ask that you keep this matter discrete until it is resolved. Late last night, my son was abducted. I would ask that you help find and recover him. My guards are searching, but I believe that an outsider's perspective may prove necessary."

Takejiro is fairly desperate, and is willing to owe the PCs' daimyo a favor in exchange for the PCs' help. Given that this is the sort of thing that got them involved in the first place (repaying a favor to Barashi), they should understand what is happening.

Takejiro will answer whatever questions the PCs may have to the best of his ability, with a few exceptions. He has informed only a few of his direct servants and his guards that the boy is missing, and a concerted search of the city is underway. A lord of Takejiro's station cannot avoid having some political enemies, but he does not know of any that would be responsible. He is concerned that one of his vassals was involved (this is why he is willing to bring in outsiders), but is hesitant to mention it unless the PCs bring it up first. He will not speculate on Koishi unless the PCs mention the shugenja by name; the Agasha has not reported in since returning to the city, so Takejiro is not certain where he is. Takejiro knows that Koishi felt he has reason to be

concerned about Fukurou, but will not mention it unless directly asked.

If the PCs specifically ask if any of Takejiro's vassals would wish to do Fukurou harm, he will pause thoughtfully before sending Tetsuzan and the servants out of the room. *"I do not wish to speak of this, but as you point out, it may be relevant. However, I must have your oath as samurai that you will never discuss this matter with anyone else. I assure you, it will bring no dishonor to you, or danger to your lords... but I have my reasons."* Takejiro will not speak of this with anyone who does not vow to keep silent, sending them away if they do not feel that they can. Once he has an oath of silence, he will continue: *"When my son was born, Agasha Koishi, my spiritual advisor, read the omens and reported to me that Fukurou is fated to kill me. If that is my karma, then so be it; I will face what my destiny brings as a samurai should. But Koishi-san never seemed willing to accept it. No one else knows of this; I do not wish my political enemies to use it to pressure me to disinherit my son or try to claim the city as I have no other heir. Even Fukurou-kun himself does not know. His mother died in childbirth, and I did not wish to further burden him with this knowledge."* Takejiro is concerned that, if Koishi is the one responsible, this may allow Koishi to sway his other vassals. He only suspects Koishi of his involvement,

If questioned about Koishi, he will report him to be a loyal samurai. *"I have had many vassals over the years, but none as dedicated as Koishi-san. He spent the Clan Wars building the defenses of the Dragon Clan, and has a greater affinity for Earth magics than many of his family. I understand that he is, like many of his School, a skilled alchemist, but I do not know where he conducts those studies – his rooms are almost entirely empty. I have to order him to accept his stipend; he truly does not seem to care for material things."*

Takejiro will allow the PCs access to most of his residence, encouraging them to examine his son's rooms. He will also allow them to search Koishi's room if they ask.

Searching the Mansion

Mirumoto Fukurou's rooms are on the third floor of the mansion; they consist of three rooms, with a main room that opens out onto a balcony above the gardens. They have been left as the servants found them: the shoji screen between the sleeping chamber and the main room has been shattered, and the bedding and futon in the sleeping chamber have been scattered. An **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll with a TN of

20 will find a few more clues – from the pattern of disturbed items in the main room, it becomes clear that someone was carried to the balcony. Additionally, they will find a rock (slightly larger than a fist) embedded in the solid wall of the sleeping chamber near the ceiling. If they rolled a 25 or more on the **Investigation** roll (or make a separate **Investigation / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 20), they will realize that this stone likely is what shattered the screen; a **Spellcraft / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 20 will realize it was caused by a casting of Earth Becomes Sky. (Agasha Koishi used the spell to break the screen, which was latched from the inside; casting Commune with the stone will not likely identify Koishi directly, but should provide a clue as to his identity.) Finally, if the initial **Investigation (Search)** roll was a 35 or higher, they will notice a small streak of clay on the wall outside the balcony. **Investigation** in the garden (with a **Search** TN of 20) will give the same clue, along with an empty glass bottle – this is residue from Koishi drinking a potion of Hands of Clay to gain access to Fukurou's room. (Communing with the potion bottle produces the same results as communing with the stone in the ceiling beams.)

Seeking witnesses yields little further: one of the servants heard what they describe as a "crashing sound" (most likely the shattering of the shoji screen), and ran to report it to a guard. The guard entered the room and found the scene described above.

Searching Koishi's rooms provides some interesting results. The rooms are very sparsely furnished: only the essential furniture, no decorations, and very few personal belongings. This is actually a clue in itself (and the PCs may roll **Investigation / Intelligence** to realize it): he is a powerful shugenja, and may have been mentioned as an alchemist, yet there are no scrolls and no alchemical apparatus in the room. This indicates that he has a laboratory elsewhere. If they search the room, a result of 25 on **Investigation (Search) / Perception** will discover a hidden compartment under the writing desk – this contains a significant amount of koku, and it appears from the dust that several strings have been recently removed.

Investigation in Town

Koishi has a number of close associates in the city, though few of them would be best described as friends. Takejiro will tell the PCs that, as his main spiritual advisor, Koishi has worked closely with Mirumoto Tetsuzan (Captain of the City Guard), Komasan (abbot of the temple of Bishamon), and Hireiji (monk at the shrine to Fukurokujin). Any of them are willing to speak about Koishi, describing him as a dedicated servant of Takejiro (though certainly not an easy man to know), and a powerful shugenja of note. These three

men know that Koishi refurbished a ruined watchtower about two miles away from the city as a sort of retreat – it is far enough away from other structures to keep his experiments from endangering anyone else.

Asking around town requires an **Investigation / Awareness** roll, with a TN of 20 (**Lore: Underworld / Awareness** is also possible, at a TN of 15, though the PCs would have to specify that they are asking among ronin or the lower orders). Agasha Koishi has been seen in the rougher part of town, talking to ronin – this is not difficult to determine because he stands out like a sore thumb in that crowd. He was most recently reported at a very seedy sake house, the Broken Bowl, speaking with a ronin by the name of Kanjin.

Speaking with Kanjin will prove informative, if possibly trying to samurai sensibilities. The ronin is fairly rude, though he takes care to avoid giving quite enough offense to be called out by any but the most touchy Clan samurai. He is dirty, unshaven, and unkempt – but he also knows things of use, and is happy to sell his services or knowledge (“at a reasonable rate, of course, sama”). Koishi came to speak with him about hiring a spirit ronin for some sort of unpleasant task. *“Aren’t too many of them around, but I knew a guy, returned spirit, willing to do pretty much anything for enough money... arranged for a meet between them. I could probably find them, if you want, samurai.”* Kanjin is fairly cavalier about the thought of his contact doing something terrible, unless the PCs mention the fact that a child is involved. If Fukurou is brought up, Kanjin will realize (from his interaction with Koishi) what the shugenja’s goal is, and this will actually bother him enough that he will offer his services for free – to either track the spirit to the meeting, or help fight, or whatever is necessary to save the child.

Part Four: A Question of Duty

One way or another, the PCs should find themselves heading out of the city by sunset. Agasha Koishi’s hideout is a ruined tower located a mile and a half away from the city walls. It was a watchtower that was mostly destroyed during the Clan War by Shadowlands forces that assaulted the Phoenix and eastern Dragon lands indiscriminately; after the wars were over, it was decided that the ruined tower was not worth rebuilding and the city built a new tower a few miles away. Koishi turned his engineering expertise to the task of

refurbishing it as a personal retreat, where his occasional experiments would not risk the city.

The PCs arrive just before sundown, as Koishi and the spirit ronin are negotiating:

Voices emerge from the ruined tower ahead and echo off its shattered stone walls. A deep, gravelly voice that you recognize as belonging to Agasha Koishi responds to a thin, sneering one. As you approach, their conversation becomes more clear.

“... don’t care what you ‘normally ask for this sort of thing’, ronin. Count yourself fortunate that I am not inclined to ask how extensive your experience in this field is and inform the magistrate.” Koishi’s voice betrays both exhaustion and desperation.

The thin voice replies: “Ah, but it is you that wants me to do something unsavory, is it not, Agasha-sama? Who would the magistrate have the most interest in? Me, for simply selling my sword to survive? Or you, for trying to purchase this unsavory service?” The owner of the thin voice chuckles, unpleasantly. “But no. You see yourself as an honorable man, and I won’t try to take that from you. Twenty koku will buy what you wish. Leave the money and the boy with me, and you’ll not see either of us ever again.” Shadows move in the lantern light that spills out of the broken gate.

“I must see it happen with my own eyes, ronin. Otherwise, fate...” Koishi breaks off suddenly, and his voice sharpens. “Someone is coming. Guard that door.”

The main floor of the old watchtower is Koishi’s “study” – he has somewhat refurbished the structure and taken it over as a retreat. It contains his personal library, worktables for his mizugusuri, a private meditation chamber, and living quarters. It is also where he has come to meet with the spirit ronin **Yasutake** to negotiate the spirit’s murder of Mirumoto Fukurou. Yasutake is a sallow, lean ronin with a perpetual sneer; there is essentially nothing he won’t do for enough money, and he smells a healthy profit to be had from Koishi’s desperation. If the PCs move into the base of the tower, they will see him moving casually toward a wooden door off to one side where Fukurou has been locked in the meditation chamber.

If the group does not immediately step forward, Koishi calls out to the opening, inviting the PCs to come out. *“The spirit of the mountain is my ally. I know you are there; come forward.”* When the PCs do confront him, recognition will light his eyes, and he stands straight

with a hand held out in a gesture of warding, glaring at the interlopers. *“This is none of your affair, samurai. I will do as I must, to save my lord.”*

The PCs must decide exactly how to react to this. If Takejiro told them about the prophecy, they may try to speak with Koishi and talk him out of his chosen course of action. If not, it is possible they’ll be curious about Koishi’s insistence that he is serving his lord. Talking Koishi out of what he is doing is almost impossible, but he is uncertain enough about his course of action to feel it necessary to justify himself.

“The child must die, samurai. My lord... when his son was born, a vision came to me. A baby owl, tearing apart its parents. I knew, without doubt, what it meant: my lord’s wife died in childbirth. I even sought the Oracle of Fire in his retreat near the Wrath of the Kami, and he confirmed my fears. The boy is fated to kill my lord. Takejiro-dono, he is too proud, or perhaps the death of his wife just resigned him to his fate... he refused to allow anyone to try to save him.” Koishi draws a ragged breath, fists clenched in frustration. “It is not right – my lord is the finest samurai in the Empire! Brave, noble, honorable – a skilled general, he has given nothing but service to his lord and he treats his servants better than any. He does not deserve this!” If any of the PCs are Dragon, he will single them out. *“Think! What is in the best interests of the Clan? Some child who may never amount to anything, or a proven leader like my lord?”*

Koishi knows that he is disobeying his lord’s orders, but he honestly believes that what he is doing is in his lord’s best interests. He has chosen to do something that he knows is wrong to save his lord, and convincing him to let the boy live is extremely unlikely. He will insist that saving his lord takes priority over anything. Intimidation or bribery will simply not work; threats will cause him to attack immediately. A very well-roleplayed argument about the proper obedience a samurai is due his lord may convince him to let the boy go. This will require a **Courtier / Awareness** roll with a minimum TN of 40; remember that this entire thing is an act of pure desperation on Koishi’s part, and swaying him from this course of action should be a truly epic feat.

While the PCs are trying to convince Koishi to let the boy go, he will be trying to convince them to allow him to kill his lord’s son. *“I take no joy in it, but it is what must be. The Master of Water told me what must be done to defy fate. A returned spirit, one who has fulfilled their destiny, can change another’s. The death of the Empress proves it!”* He will look at the

PC with the highest Honor Rank with an almost pleading expression. *“I would have you stand as my second, once this is done. Take my head back to my lord with my apology, but let me see him saved first.”*

The PCs are entirely free to let Koishi kill the boy; it is highly questionable whether or not it is their business, apart from whatever they may have told Takejiro that they would do. Koishi’s violation of his lord’s orders is certainly distasteful to samurai, but it is technically between Koishi and his lord. If the PCs have not promised to return the boy to Takejiro, it is actually possible for them to honorably assist Koishi in pursuit of his duty.

Of course, the PCs may simply choose to attack immediately. (Note that in order to place themselves at risk, any PC with the Insensitive Disadvantage must spend a Void Point – he is not threatening them, and the possible gain to their lord is not direct enough. They can, after all, just let Koishi kill the child.) In this case, he will order the ronin to go kill the boy and try to buy enough time for that to happen – he won’t go out of his way to kill any of the PCs, but he won’t stop fighting until forced to. Most of Koishi’s spell slots are bound up in potions, preventing him from reacting with a wide range of versatility, but effectively allowing him to cast a spell every round he can get his hands on a potion. Fortunately for the PCs, his creations are not immediately close to hand. Yasutake will enter the Defense Stance on the first Round of combat, opening the door as instructed. If the PCs do not attack him, he will enter the room – it will take him two rounds to kill the boy (Fukurou puts up a good fight for a twelve-year-old boy, but ultimately, he is still an unarmed, half-trained child). If attacked, Yasutake will enter Full Defense and try to flee, only attacking if it seems necessary to escape.

Koishi will begin by moving toward his worktable, where most of his potions are located, and drink a potion for a suitable defensive spell. After that, if the PCs appear to be moving to interfere with Yasutake, he will take a potion containing Hurried Steps, to allow him to cast Wall of Fire and seal everyone in the tower. Between the Wall of Fire and his other potions, Koishi will try to burn everyone alive inside the tower. Flames will spread through the structure, and the Wall of Fire will make the entrance essentially impassable. Koishi is a powerful shugenja, but has bound almost all of his spell slots into his potions (he only has his three Void slots remaining for versatility). Koishi is a powerful shugenja, and has long experience with defensive warfare, but he is not thinking entirely clearly – he should be a challenging opponent, but he is not fighting to the best of his ability. (Another suggestion to

The End

Rewards for Completing the Adventure

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

If a PC has a Crafting cert, they may make a Crafting roll at this time.

Experience Points

Surviving the adventure:	1XP
Good roleplaying:	+1XP
Escorting the caravan to Heibeisu:	+1XP
Rescuing Fukurou <i>or</i> Assisting Koishi:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

The PCs gain one point of Honor for rescuing Mirumoto Fukurou as long as their Honor was less than 7.0.

If the PCs assisted Koishi in meeting what he thought of as his duty, they gain a point of Honor if they assist him to commit seppuku. The character who stands as his second gains an additional point of Honor.

Glory

PCs with less than three Ranks of Glory gain 2 points for recovering Mirumoto Fukurou. PCs with three Ranks or more gain 1 point.

If the PCs fight the “bandits” in the mountain and report their defeat to the Dragon patrol, they will gain a single point of Glory if they have less than two Ranks of Glory. (Those were not particularly impressive opponents, after all.)

Other Awards/Penalties

If the PCs rescue Mirumoto Fukurou, or bring Takejiro Koishi's head if Fukurou dies, Takejiro will consider himself obligated to their daimyo and the PCs will gain

a point of Status as they gain their daimyo's appreciation.

If the PCs recover Mirumoto Fukurou, they will gain Mirumoto Takejiro as an Ally (2 Influence/ 1 Devotion).

If the PCs fail to recover Fukurou, they still gain the Status (as Takejiro feels he owes the daimyo for their servants' attempt), but his bitter disappointment turns to anger when it comes to those who dashed his hopes: the PCs gain Mirumoto Takejiro as a Sworn Enemy.

Module Tracking Sheets

Mark any PC who swore to keep Takejiro's prophecy a secret with “Oath to Takejiro”. If they ever reveal this information, they will lose two Ranks of Honor and gain Mirumoto Takejiro as a Sworn Enemy (losing him as an Ally if they had him as such).

GM Reporting

- Did Mirumoto Fukurou survive?

GM must report this information BEFORE (Expiration date) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Kanjin

“Kanjin” means “scoundrel”, and the man who chose that name did so intentionally. He is not a bad man, though he is aware of the reputation ronin have and plays upon people’s expectations with glee. He bathes and shaves irregularly, just to manipulate others’ perceptions, and he is generally rather rude to Clan samurai simply to see how far they are willing to let him go. He is not without compassion, however, and there are definite limits to what he is willing to do for either a koku or to tweak the nose of the powerful.

Kanjin is a short, stocky man with a powerful frame. Though he knows how to use a sword, he does so only rarely, preferring to rely on his hands and feet. He would much rather grapple an opponent into submission than kill them; explaining bodies is generally more work than he prefers to go to.

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 2 Void 2

Honor 3.5 Status 0 Strength 3 Infamy 1.0

Initiative: 3k2 **Attack:** 6k3 (unarmed), 5k3 (katana)

Armor TN: 18 (ashigaru armor) **Damage:** 4k2 (unarmed), 7k2 (katana)

Reduction: 1

School/Rank: none

Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 1, Defense 2, Hunting (Tracking) 3, Iaijutsu 1, Investigation 1, Jiu-jutsu 3, Kenjutsu 2, Lore: Underworld 3

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crab Hands, Crafty, Hands of Stone, Luck I, Strength of the Earth / Benten’s Curse, Infamous

Mirumoto Takako

Takako is a low-ranked ji-samurai. She is competent and capable, despite her low birth, and frequently somewhat frustrated by the limitations her station places on her, but she does her best to perform her duties as she can.

She is a tall, slender woman with her hair in a maiden’s foxtail. Her gear is well-maintained, though obviously not of high quality, but she is determined to do the best she can with what she has.

Air 2 Earth 3 Fire 2 Water 2 Void 2
Reflexes 3 Agility 3
Honor 4.5 Status 0.5 Glory 1.0

Initiative: 4k3 **Attack:** 6k3 (katana)

Armor TN: 27 (light armor and daisho) **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)

Reduction: 3 (light armor)

School/Rank: Mirumoto Bushi 1

Skills: Athletics 1, Defense 2, Etiquette 1, Hunting 2, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 1, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Shugenja 3, Lore: Theology 2, Meditation 2

Mastery Abilities: +1k0 to damage with swords

Advantages/Disadvantages: Social Disadvantage (vassal family)