

# **The Final Breath**

**A One-Round Low-Rank Adventure for Heroes of  
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of the Hantei, 1138 (Spring)**

**by Arthur St.Onge  
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An aging samurai dreams of past battles and lost glory. His son asks you to accompany his father on one last mission... one from which no one may return.

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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 both discretion and consideration.

## Adjusting for Party Strength

This is a Low rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. 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** (three or more combat-capable PCs are Rank 2): There are eight basic bandits in the final combats.

## Adventure Summary and Background

Akodo Taiko is the gokenin of a Seidai Juujiro Mura, a small, largely overlooked village in the Kokoro province. Historically, his line has been responsible for administrating a strategic crossroads in Lion lands. They have a small keep and a village has grown up around the crossroads over the centuries. The family has carried out its duty, minor though it is, with honor and dedication for generations.

Akodo Taiko achieved more glory than his forefathers. Thirty years ago, Taiko distinguished himself on the battlefield in a series of skirmishes against the Unicorn. He was recognized and decorated at the end of the minor war and was also awarded several trophies from the battlefield, including the banner of an enemy squad he personally captured. Ten years ago, he proved himself to still be an able commander during the Clan War, but it was obvious his best days were done, and he was left in the Lion lands as a garrison commander during the War Against the Shadow.

Today, Akodo Taiko is a man lost in the past. He knows his greatest achievements are behind him and he longs for the days of glory and honorable battle. When not administrating his village, he often sits in his audience room surrounded by trophies of the war and losing himself in reverie. Lately, he has been known to don armor and mount his horse to go “patrolling in search of bandits.” This too, is just an excuse to ride forth and remember days of battle and glory.

Akodo Warate is Taiko’s son, a skilled bushi and talented administrator in his own right. He serves as Taiko’s karo. Taiko and Warate have something fairly rare in Rokugan: a close father/son relationship

uncomplicated by the more formal aspects of Rokugani society.

Warate knows his father is slipping farther and farther into his memories. As karo, he has taken on more and more of the administrative duties of the keep and the village. He knows he will inherit his family’s lands when his father either steps down or dies. Unlike a lot of Rokugani stories, Warate is in no rush for this to happen. He has no hidden agenda, and really is the dutiful, loving son he appears to be.

Also in the keep is Matsu Gehiko, the commander of Shiro Seidai Juujiro’s small garrison. The samurai-ko is strong willed and has a fiery temper. She was at first resentful of being assigned to such a minor post. She has since found a new avenue for her strong emotions: she is secretly in love with Akodo Warate. Her duty demands that she not act on these feelings however, and she has worked hard to bury them under the demeanor of duty, skill, and efficiency. For his part, Warate has no idea of Gehiko’s feelings.

Fifteen years ago Akodo Taiko put down a bandit gang operating in the area. He led his troops in tracking down the camp and setting upon the bandits with a fury. In the confusion, the bandit leader, a man named Sosetsu, escaped, although he was horribly disfigured in the fighting. Akodo Taiko forgot about the incident afterward, consigning it as just one more duty of being a lord, nothing more or less. He has since given the event little thought.

Sosetsu has not forgotten. He has nursed a hatred of Akodo Taiko all these years, and has now amassed enough resources to field a small army of more professional bandits and ronin. Having recently made common cause with a group of disgruntled peasants (by misrepresenting his motives), he intends to exact revenge on Akodo Taiko by sacking the Lion’s village and burning his castle. In an ironic twist of fate, an incident Taiko does not recall in his reveries of the past may be the very one that is his undoing.

*Dedication: This module is dedicated to my Father, Charles St. Onge. While thankfully not prone to living in the past, he is Taiko to my Warate. Thank you for showing me everything. – AJSO*

## Character Notes

Check the PCs’ character sheets for the following:

- Characters with Oath of Fealty: Daidoji Heizo (Kosaten Province) have all Glory gains doubled.

# Introduction

The PCs begin the adventure travelling together, on the road from Otosan Uchi to the Lion lands. Their daimyo have sent them to escort an offering for the funeral of Ikoma Sume, the Ikoma family daimyo's nephew, and their path leads through the northern provinces of the Lion first, to collect the statue from Renga Murai. They will have had several days together on the road to get acquainted, and their travel conditions have been surprisingly gentle so far. They are, in fact, several days ahead of schedule and will likely have to wait for the funerary statue to be readied when they arrive in Renga Murai.

## Rumors

While traveling, the PCs can attempt to gather information from the Empire. A **Courtier (Gossip) / Awareness** roll, TN 10; a successful roll learns one rumor at random, plus one extra rumor for every 5 points by which the roll beats the TN. The rumors include:

- Kakita Toshiken, missing from Otosan Uchi for months while pursuing those he claims to be responsible for the death of the Empress, made a memorable appearance in Zakyo Toshi. Rumors indicate that he slew a Seppun taisei assigned to the Imperial Legions stationed there, though the motivation for this killing is unknown. Speculation runs the range from a personal matter left over from his youth as a Seppun to the influence of the Lying Darkness – attributed to either party, depending on the teller.
- Mantis river barges have ceased traveling further up the River of Gold than Kyuden Kitsune, citing the unrest in the southern Empire following the tsunami that devastated the Yasuki and Asahina provinces as a reason. As this had been a major source for silk, spices and other exotic goods for the inland provinces of the Empire, the effects are being felt through the Scorpion, Lion, and Dragon lands, though the Unicorn and Crane have gladly taken advantage of the lessened competition for their caravans.
- Though the Shadowlands remain quieter than they have been in more than a generation, the Crab Clan have reported a few disturbing events south of the Wall. Though no attack has taken place against the Wall itself yet, there has been a major assault against one of the larger Nezumi tribes. Most Rokugani barely acknowledge that Ratlings are not themselves Tainted, even after the assistance

provided by the Nezumi during the March to Voltturnum, but the Crab have maintained closer ties with the tribes due to their common enemy in the Shadowlands. It is uncertain what, if any, long-term impact the destruction of this “Crippled Bone” tribe will have on the Crab's ongoing war against the forces of Jigoku.

- Tensions between the Lion and Unicorn continue to grow, following accusations from both sides of theft and espionage. A skirmish was recently only narrowly avoided when a band of Unicorn engineers moving south to build roads in the Crane Oyomesan province passed through Shiranai Toshi, near where the Ikoma family daimyo's son was recently slain. The Unicorn's possession of an Imperial order allowing their passage may have been the only reason the local Lion allowed them to pass, but it was a publicly unpleasant spectacle nonetheless.
- Lion troops have been on the march in greater numbers than any time since the March to Voltturnum. The Ikoma Army has mobilized in the western provinces of Gisei and Shiranai, and rumor has it that the First Matsu Army will soon be joining them in putting down the bandits responsible for Ikoma Sume's death. The Akodo Army has been sent onto the Emerald Champion Plains for training maneuvers. This puts them east of Ninkatoshi, in close proximity to both the Phoenix city of Mamoru Kyotei Toshi (Honored Treaty City) and the Crane-held Toshi Ranbo.

Make certain that the players establish what gear they have to hand (wearing armor at the PCs' discretion; their duty allows it, but it is still a declaration of martial intent and will be something that the locals will react to), and determine which characters, if any, are mounted.

## Part One: Bandits in the Woods

*It is late spring, the month of Hantei (also known as the month of the Serpent to the common folk, or “June” to gaijin), and the light of the sun blesses the land with a warm golden glow. Lord Yakamo smiles down up on the Empire as Rokugan prepares for summer, the season of war. The weather favors you as you enter the Kokoro province in the northern lands of the Lion, several days ahead of schedule. Though this road, west out of Ninkatoshi, is not well-*

*travelled, it is still maintained with the care the Lion legions always show for their lines of march. You are passing through the southern portion of the Kokoro Mori, the largest forest entirely within the Lion lands, en route to Renga Murai. The trees are in full bloom, their strong branches lifting to the Heavens as though to thank Lord Sun for his blessings.*

Call for **Investigation / Perception** rolls at a TN of 15 from the PCs. Those who fail are **surprised**.

*Suddenly, you hear a crashing sound from the woods ahead: a rider emerges from the trees and wheels his horse to face you. He is clad in heavy armor laced in the colors of the Lion Clan, and a full mempo covers his face. Naked steel glitters in his hand; a small banner with the mon of the Akodo snaps behind him as he pauses for no more than an eyeblink. Given his bearing and equipment, he is obviously someone of station, but this is all the information you can readily discern before the rider spurs his horse and charges with a loud kiai shout.*

Roll for initiative. PCs who failed the previous Perception roll are surprised and will not act in the first round – treat them as in the Defense Stance for the first round, though they can take no actions. The rest of the combat will proceed normally.

The rider is Akodo Taiko, out on one of his “patrols for bandits.” Somewhat lost in his reverie, he mistakes the PCs for brigands and attacks them. Taiko charges and attacks one of the PCs. He attacks mounted characters first regardless of Clan or station. If none of the PCs are mounted, he will target the best armed or armored; in case of a tie, he instinctively attacks the PC with the highest Honor, whom he perceives as the worthiest opponent.

### Akodo Taiko, Aqing Daimyo

Air 4	Earth 3	Fire 4	Water 3	Void 3
	Willpower 4		Perception 4	
	Honor 8.3	Status 4.7	Glory 3.4	

**Initiative:** 9k4+6      **Attack:** 10k4 (katana)  
**Armor TN:** 35 (heavy armor)      **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)  
**Reduction:** 5 (heavy armor)  
**Wounds:** 15: +0; 21: +3; 27: +5; 33: +10; 39: +15; 45: +20; 51: Down; 57: Dead  
**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 5  
**Techniques:** *Way of the Lion:* ignore armor bonus to Armor TN or gain a Free Raise; +1k0 on first attack against a target or against a target who has called Raises  
*Strength of Purity:* add Honor (8) to one roll per round (not damage)

*Strength of My Ancestors:* may make attacks with Samurai weapons as a Simple Action

*Triumph Before Battle:* once per skirmish, may designate an opponent and ignore Armor TN bonus from Stance during the next Round

*Akodo's Final Lesson:* when Raise on any Bugei Skill Roll, success without effect of Raises if meet or exceed original TN

**Skills:** Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Calligraphy 3, Coutier 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Horsemanship 7, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3, Kenjutsu (katana) 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: History 5, Sincerity 4, Spears 5

**Mastery Abilities:** Add Battle Skill to Initiative in skirmishes; may keep a Full Defense roll for more than one round; may Full Attack from horseback and mount or dismount as a Free Action; can ready a sword as a Free Action; +1k0 to damage with swords

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Leadership, Social Position, Tactician / Bad Sight, Dark Secret

Taiko makes a single attack against his target and rides past (each taking a Simple Action), then brings his horse about, putting some distance between himself and an immediate counterattack. (It is unlikely he will kill a PC in a single attack; if necessary, the GM should keep lower damage dice to prevent an outright slaying, though dropping a PC to Down would certainly gain the party's attention.)

If several PCs attack, Akodo Taiko will go on Full Defense to protect himself. If only one or two attack, he will return blows furiously. Taiko will remain mounted as long as possible, frequently using a single Simple Action to attack and another to move his horse into an advantageous position.

PCs attempting to discern information about their attacker, rather than fighting him, can make a variety of rolls as detailed below. (These rolls can not be made if the PC is in the Attack or Full Attack Stances, as they are focused on other matters, but there are no penalties for being in any of the other Stances.)

- **Perception, TN 10** reveals the attacker, under the armor, is actually an old man; perhaps in his 60s, though obviously very spry for his years.
- **Lore: History / Intelligence** or **Lore: Armor / Intelligence, TN 15** reveals the armor the attacker is wearing is approximately thirty years old, although well kept and still quite formidable.
- **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence, TN 20** shows the man is of fairly high rank (Status 4 at least) and a member of a minor branch of the Akodo family. Lion PCs gain a Free Raise on this roll, and characters with a Lion Bushi School recognize the banner as belonging to a taisei from the *Kaisha*

*Kimabusha*, a cavalry unit developed by Akodo Toturi when he was the Lion Clan Champion almost twenty years ago. Rolling a 35 or higher allows the PC to recognize the man's personal mon as that of Akodo Taiko, once a high-ranking commander in the Lion armies and now in semi-retirement as *gokenin* of a relatively isolated Lion village.

The purpose of this encounter is to introduce a high-Status character in a highly-charged situation; hopefully, the PCs will figure out something is wrong, and wonder why a powerful older man in armor decades old is attacking them without cause. Allow the battle to progress for at most two rounds. It is hoped the PCs won't kill Taiko. If they manage to do enough damage to kill him (likely, given one man versus a party of PCs), have him drop to Down and slide off his horse, barely conscious.

If the PCs attempt negotiation, Taiko will respond with accusations of banditry; this will likely confuse the situation further, though if the group can succeed at a total of three **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** rolls (TN 20), they will get through to Taiko enough for him to cease attacking. Every attack roll made against him, however, will require an additional successful Courtier roll (whether the attack hits him or not).

After two rounds of combat, or when Taiko is defeated but before the PCs can move in for a *coup de grace*, a group of more local Lion will interrupt.

*Several riders emerge onto the road from a branch down the path, the same place your attacker came from. There are six total: a solidly built young man in the lead, with a samurai-ko beside and just slightly behind him, and four bushi. All are wearing the colors of the Lion. The man in the lead calls out, "Hold! What goes on here?" The four bushi behind him ready dai-kyu while the samurai-ko unlimbers a heavy no-dachi with a fierce snarl.*

The man is Akodo Warate, Akodo Taiko's son and karo, and the woman at his side is Matsu Gehiko, Taiko's Captain of the Guard. Warate's next statement depends on what has happened. If Akodo Taiko is still up and attacking, Warate brings the older man up short with "**Father, stop! What are you doing? These are honorable samurai, not the bandits you are seeking!**" Taiko will immediately cease his assault, reining in and moving away from the PCs while he reassesses the situation.

If Akodo Taiko is down, Akodo Warate dismounts and rushes to his father's side, angrily asking "**What have you done!?**"

## Sorting Things Out

How this encounter goes from here depends on how the PCs treated Akodo Taiko. If he is fine, more or less, Akodo Warate will respectfully dismount, bow to the assembled PCs, and introduce himself, Matsu Gehiko, and his men. He explains they are from the nearby castle of Shiro Seidai Juujiro, of which the older man, Akodo Taiko, is the commander. For his part, Taiko will be winded from the fight, and slow to come out of his bloodlust. With prompting from his son, he acknowledges his mistake. "**Forgive me, honorable samurai. I am the lord of this portion of the Lion lands, and as such it is my duty to root out bandits, ronin, and other undesirables. My eyes are not as fresh as they once were, and I mistook you for such riff-raff.**" Any ronin in the party are, according to etiquette, expected to just take such a comment in stride. They can only lose Honor if they bristle or comment.

If Akodo Taiko is hurt enough to be Down, Warate rushes to his side as mentioned above. Determining his father to be alive, he will stand, bow formally to the PCs, and address the PC with the highest Status first (or highest Honor if there is a tie). He introduces himself and angrily demands to know what has happened. This is the opportunity for the PCs to explain.

Once the PC explains that the mounted man attacked them without provocation, Warate sighs and apologizes. "**My father is the lord of these lands, and he takes his duty very seriously. He often patrols alone, looking for bandits and such to visit justice upon. I offer my apology for this unfortunate mistake.**"

In either case, one or more of the PCs may take umbrage at being confused for ronin or common bandits. Akodo Taiko has enough Status that there is unfortunately very little that the PCs can do about it. Akodo Warate, on the other hand, will again profusely apologize on his father's behalf, with sincerity and honesty. If necessary, he will make a **Sincerity / Awareness** check versus the PC(s). In any case, he is being honest in trying to diffuse the situation. He knows his father's propensity for fantasy has gone too far this time and is trying to keep it from going any farther. However, should any of the PCs sound like they are about to offer a challenge to Taiko, Warate will step in and force them to challenge him instead. Win or lose, Warate will not allow his father to be put in a position where he will have to accept a duel.

For his part, Akodo Taiko will either stay on the ground if injured, or sit atop his horse with disinterest in the whole affair after his initial near-apology, as if that is all that is necessary to explain the situation. He will delegate all interaction with the party to his karo. He will ignore any but the most direct address, and even then simply repeat his apology and refer the situation back to Warate. He will attempt to give the impression that “this incident is beneath my notice”, as befits his Status and position.

If the PCs try to examine the motives of the NPCs, they can roll **Investigation** / **Awareness** at a TN of 15 to learn the following:

- **Akodo Warate** is an intelligent, earnest man who takes his duties seriously. Those rolling 25 or higher also glean that he knows more than he is offering about his father’s attack on the PCs and that the situation has worried him deeply.
- **Matsu Gehiko** displays the cold professionalism that is the hallmark of the Matsu. She takes her duty seriously to the point of blocking out everything else. Also, she is completely loyal to both Taiko and Warate. Those making a 25 realize there is a deep secret within her that her cold demeanor is, in part, an attempt to hide – she does a very good job of hiding her feelings for Akodo Warate, though she will initially have a very cool reaction to any attractive woman, particularly one who appears to show an interest in Warate.
- **Akodo Taiko** is an intensely prideful man. He takes his duties seriously, but it is clear from the interplay between him and Warate that the older man depends on his son a great deal. Those rolling a 25 realize that during the encounter, Taiko was not entirely in the present moment until his son arrived and shocked him back to reality; Taiko is embarrassed by his confusion of the situation and is hiding behind his superior social position.

Use these pieces of information to adjudicate various School abilities that PCs may bring into play to learn about these NPCs. The soldiers are just ordinary “garrison” samurai and know nothing of any value.

### An Offer of Hospitality

Akodo Warate will make one final apology and offers the hospitality of Shiro Seidai Juujiro for the night.

*Akodo Warate bows deeply to you all, and addresses you in a rigidly formal, polite manner. “Honored samurai, please allow me to once more apologize for this incident. Let me reassure you that no disrespect was intended to any of you. Please allow me make this*

*up to you by offering the hospitality of Shiro Seidai Juujiro for the night. This has been a stressful day. Surely a hot bath and a warm meal will do much to ease the day’s tensions, and it will do my family much honor to have such worthy samurai as yourselves as our guests.”*

As before, Akodo Warate is being sincere and honest, hoping the situation can be salvaged by an offer of hospitality. If he’s laying it on a little thick, it’s only because he’s worried about the political ramifications of the situation.

### Troubleshooting

There are basically two things that can go wrong up to this point in the module. The less serious of the two is that one or more of the PCs refuse Warate’s offer of hospitality and insist on staying at the inn at Seidai Juujiro Mura. In this case, allow the these PCs do so, but have a garrison samurai invite them to go out the next morning with Akodo Taiko, thereby getting them back in the module. They will miss out on dinner that night, and feel free to have the players leave the table for the events that evening at the castle. Nothing interesting happens at the inn.

The more serious possibility is if one or more of the PCs insist on continuing the fight with Akodo Taiko, and/or attack Warate and the others once they arrive. It is hoped that cooler heads will prevail to prevent this. If it does occur, the soldiers will fire *en masse*, all on one initiative count, at those PCs continuing to fight, massing their fire on one PC at a time while ignoring the non-combatant PCs (their stats can be found in the Appendix). Akodo Warate will ride into the fray to rescue his father, while Matsu Gehiko will fight to cover him. They will fight only long enough to rescue the older man and then ride out again.

The implications of this for the continuation of the module are serious. Those PCs fighting will not be invited to the castle for the evening, and are effectively out of the module. Akodo Warate will order them from his family’s lands immediately. He will parley with the other PCs as described above. If Akodo Taiko is killed, he will order *all* the PCs from his lands and they will have earned Akodo Warate as a Sworn Enemy. Award the PCs one experience point. The module is over for them at this point.

## Part Two: Shiro Sedai Juujiro

*The Akodo samurai take up honor guard positions as Akodo Warate and his father lead you to their castle and the village that surrounds it. Seidai Juujiro Mura appears to be home to some 300 souls and sports the usual amenities: a small inn, a granary, blacksmith, apothecary, a minor shrine to the Fortunes, and a small sake works. One low building near the castle stands out, as most Lion villages, particularly those of this size, do not have a stable. Nearby, fields of rice stand empty, ready to be planted for the new year's crop. The peasants dutifully bow to the passing Lion samurai.*

Players making any mention of more closely examining the village or the peasants may make one of several rolls:

- **Commerce (Merchant) / Awareness** at TN 15 or **Investigation (Notice) / Awareness** at TN 20 to observe that Prosperous Crossroads Village is not very prosperous. Everything in the village is dingy and not well kept. Fences need painting, buildings are in slight disrepair, and an overall feeling of age and poverty pervades the village.
- PCs with various **Lore** skills, such as **Lore: Lion, Lore: Battles** or any others the GM feels appropriate, can roll the skill with **Intelligence** at TN 25 to know that Seidai Juujiro Mura was on the trade route that went to Toshi Ranbo before it was taken by the Crane. The PCs may surmise the village was once important by virtue of geography but is no longer, as the larger city of Ninkatoshi serves as the Lion headquarters for all military efforts in this area.
- Lion PCs can roll raw **Intelligence TN 15** to know this fact outright. Further, they know that this branch of the Akodo family has the dubious honor of administrating a village and surrounding territory that is no longer of any real importance.

If the PCs have the lack of etiquette to ask about this state of affairs here, allow them an **Etiquette / Intelligence** roll at a TN of 10 to realize this is not appropriate. If they continue, dock them two points of Honor and have Akodo Warate explain that here, in front of the peasants, is not the place to discuss such things. Dock them an extra point if they ask Akodo Taiko, who refuses to even acknowledge anything is amiss. "They are peasants. It is no concern of mine if they do not keep their dwellings in order." Once the PCs have had a chance to absorb the general state of things in the village proper, their escort leads them out the other side of the village up to the castle.

*The road leading through the village rises as it nears the castle. Shiro Seidai Juujiro appears suddenly from among the trees that surround it. Built atop a high*

*spot on cleared ground, Shiro Seidai Juujiro has the imposing military bearing typically found in Lion construction, but has obviously seen better days. The castle compound contains a single square tower three stories tall, with an attached one-story building that houses kitchens, barracks, and other necessary functions. Two Lion bushi salute to your party as you pass through the single gate in the stone wall that surrounds the castle. You notice Matsu Gehiko give them a stern look as she passes through the reinforced wooden gate.*

The look means nothing special, but paranoid PCs may make more of it than that. She is simply a harsh taskmaster and is reminding the guards of who is in charge.

As grooms come to take the horses, Akodo Warate excuses himself to go make arrangements for the PCs' accommodations. Akodo Taiko leaves the PCs and heads into the keep tower without another word. Matsu Gehiko shows the PCs into a reception area, where they wait for their rooms to be prepared. Tea is served almost immediately as the castle's staff swings into action for unexpected visitors. Within a half-hour, the PCs are shown to their rooms: one for the men, another for the women. If anyone is wounded, a servant arrives with bandages, hot water, and a healing kit. This servant is considered to have 5k2 Medicine roll and will do his best to help the PCs.

## Audience with the Daimyo

The PCs are given the chance to wash up and meditate or rest if they so choose. After a short time, Akodo Warate comes to them and explains they are expected for an audience with his father.

*Warate leads you through the castle to Akodo Taiko's formal sitting room. Warate kneels before his father, pulls his swords from his belt, and places them on the floor to his right side. The room is decorated with various weapons, armor, and war standards. On the right side of the room is a large banner, but not of the Lion Clan. The colors are the purple and white of the Unicorn, and the item is clearly a war banner, the kind used to direct armies in the field.*

*Akodo Taiko is seated on a low dais at the far end of the room, where he has an excellent view of the accumulated historical paraphernalia. He seems lost in thought and has not yet acknowledged your presence.*

Ask how each of the PCs is presenting themselves. Proper etiquette would be to follow Warate's lead, but

simply kneeling until recognized will do. Anyone who is obviously being disrespectful should lose between one and three points of Honor (depending on how many Ranks of Honor they have), and particularly outrageous breaches of etiquette can cost up to five points of Glory as well.

The accumulated trophies are from a lifetime of service, but mostly from before the Scorpion Clan Coup. Any PCs making a **Lore: History / Intelligence TN 25** can easily identify most of the artifacts as from nearly every conflict the Lion have been involved in for the last forty years. The banner is an actual Unicorn Army banner. Taiko captured it during a series of border skirmishes with the Unicorn thirty years ago, earning himself much glory and honor in the process. He has made it the centerpiece of his audience room's décor. Obviously, Unicorn PCs may be offended by this. How they handle this is up to the player(s), but keep in mind that war is rarely taken as a personal matter in Rokugan. Additionally, Taiko substantially outranks them. Their opinion is not important to him. Making a huge scene can only cost them Honor, and possibly accumulate Infamy, at the GM's discretion.

PCs curious about Taiko's condition may roll **Perception** at TN 20 to discern the man is simply lost in deep thought. Some PCs may speculate that he is in an opium haze. **Medicine / Perception** at TN 15 or similar skill as appropriate will reveal this is not the case. In fact, Taiko is lost in his reveries of the past, when he was a much younger man and doing great things.

*Finally, after several minutes, Warate gently clears his throat. "Father, we have visitors." The older Lion blinks several times, as if clearing his head. "Ahh, thank you, my son. Noble samurai, I welcome you to Shiro Seidai Juujiro on behalf of the Lion Clan. Our accommodations are meager, but they are yours as my guests for the night. I invite you to join me and my men for dinner this evening, as well as what simple entertainment we have to offer. Please, make yourselves comfortable during your time here."*

The invitation is straightforward and is not the kind of thing that needs to be refused twice. Etiquette would demand that the PCs simply accept Taiko's hospitality graciously and not do anything to place the lord's responsibilities at odds with those as a host. He does not bring up the unpleasantness of earlier, and it would be poor manners for the PCs to do so. In his mind, Taiko has apologized for the misunderstanding and that is that. (The PCs may feel differently, but that is one of the advantages of rank.)

Should the PCs have thought to present any gifts to their hosts, Taiko will accept politely (after refusing twice). Appropriate roleplay should be rewarded with a point of Honor for their dedication to Courtesy.

The PCs will have some more time to prepare for the meal; the servants will escort them to dinner when the time comes.

## Dinner at Shiro Seidai Juujiro

*Akodo Warate has put his best face on having unexpected guests, and has done well given the circumstances. Shiro Seidai Juujiro, as a more martial stronghold than political one, has no formal dining hall. The lord, his officers, and all the bushi eat in a large common dining room, with a head table for the ranking samurai and long tables and benches for the men. The room is decorated with various Lion battle banners and the personal standards of previous lords. A place of honor at the head of the room has been set for your group. The meal consists of rice and vegetables in locally brewed soya sauce, and an excellent miso soup.*

Akodo Taiko will play the part of the aloof lord throughout dinner, politely deflecting most attempts at engaging him in conversation. He will be somewhat dismissive of Unicorn PCs, though he would never be so crass as to be obvious about this (a lingering unconscious bias left over from the war.) PCs who persist can only cost themselves Honor and perhaps Glory for being so rude. Taiko warms up once the stories begin and the sake loosens him up a bit, laughing at jokes and tall tales.

Throughout the evening, Akodo Warate tries hard to be a good host: engaging the PCs in conversation, asking about their travels and duties, what life is like in their home provinces, and other topics designed to elicit a positive response from the PCs. He tries especially to engage courtiers, realizing they will be the most out of place in Lion hospitality, the hardest to impress, and possibly in the position to do the most damage once they return to court. The GM may role play this out as time and player temperament allow.

Over the course of the evening, the PCs will see that Akodo Warate takes his role as Shiro Seidai Juujiro's karo very seriously and has pulled out all the stops to make this evening as proper and pleasant as possible given Shiro Seidai Juujiro's limited resources. (**Investigation / Awareness** at TN 15 to realize he is still embarrassed at what happened earlier and is hoping to keep the episode from becoming a major inter-Clan

incident by making a good impression and winning over courtier characters.)

If PCs interact with Matsu Gehiko, or are paying particular attention to her, they can roll **Investigation / Awareness** at TN 20 to realize she seems to be particularly unfriendly or 'catty' towards females (especially attractive ones) or any female who flirts and takes the attention of Akodo Warate.

PCs interacting with or talking with Akodo Taiko will have a chance to learn about his history during the course of dinner, as he will be happy to tell anyone who listens of his exploits:

- Former Commander of the Kaisha Kimabusha
- Earned his place fighting against the Unicorn Clan when Toturi established the Kaisha Kimabusha, becoming one of its first commanders.
- Gained a great deal of glory when he defeated Shinjo Yokatsu, the former Unicorn Clan Champion, in battle and seized the Unicorn Banner to return to the Lion as a war trophy.

PCs may become curious as to what someone who is so old and has had such a full life as Taiko may be doing still holding on to these things; if they inquire about it, he will not mention what he is currently doing, instead turning the conversation towards the past, or on the PC themselves. (*Come now, my friend, why talk of now, when we have a glorious future ahead of us and a storied past to remember!*)

PCs who are curious, or engage Taiko actively, may roll **Investigation / Awareness** at TN 20 to realize that with his advancing age and refusal to retire are signs that he longs for days far gone past, and is struggling to try and find some way to regain the glory and prestige he had from thirty years ago. Despite his advanced years, Taiko has no desire to retire as most samurai would, and a PC who totals more than 30 on the above roll can tell that he is somewhat unconsciously seeking an end worthy of song.

*Once dinner is cleared, Akodo Warate formally introduces the group to the assembled troops. "Bushu of Shiro Seidai Juujiro, we have special guests tonight: honorable Samurai from across the Empire, who have come to share the humble hospitality of the Akodo. Let us welcome them." (introduce each PC in turn).*

*After introductions, Warate will continue. "The Lion are not known for pursuits like music or poetry, as are common among other Clans. Entertainment at Shiro Seidai Juujiro consists of telling stories for the amusement of Lord Taiko. Who would like to regale*

*the gathering with a tale of valor?" Servants begin to bring forth sake as the tales begin.*

The storytelling contest is essentially an exercise in samurai bragging. The roll involved is **Perform: Storytelling / Awareness** against TN 20, with success earning a point of Glory. Failure indicates that the story was so poorly told as to be embarrassing. The GM is encouraged to allow the players to role-play out their stories if there is time and the players are so inclined. Two NPCs will make attempts, one bushi with a tale of a hunting expedition, and Matsu Gehiko with a tale of beating her rival at school in a public kenjutsu tournament. Gehiko rolls 5k2 (though she will spend Void if she sees any female PC as a romantic rival), while the bushi rolls 4k2. Again, the GM is encouraged to role play out these descriptions if so inclined. Any PCs who wish are invited to participate. The GM can award 1 or 2 Free Raises if the player actually describes the event they are bragging about. The NPCs address their stories directly to Akodo Taiko, and the PCs are expected to do likewise. However, the Lion PCs from Shiro Seidai Juujiro address Taiko as "my lord". PCs would not do this, as he is not their lord. Instead, they should refer to him as "Akodo Taiko-sama." Persistent mistakes in this formal setting can result in a loss of Honor or Glory .

- The storytelling is also a competition of sorts. There is an opportunity for gaining Glory here: in addition to gaining a point of Glory for making TN 20, if a PC makes the highest roll, they gain an additional point of Glory. Any Lion PCs succeeding at the base TN 20 gains an extra point for bragging in a Lion court setting. If a Lion wins the competition, they get both extra points.
- As she begins her story, Matsu Gehiko addresses Lord Taiko, but her performance is directed at Akodo Warate in a subtle way as well. PCs can make **Investigation / Awareness TN 15** or raw **Awareness TN 25** to notice, as if he was "her lord", too. Various School Techniques and abilities may be brought to bear on this as well.

Dinner breaks up after several rounds of stories. Akodo Taiko stands, and everyone present stands as well, bowing to the Lord. He then exits and everyone heads off to bed or their next duty.

## An Evening Summons

As the PCs are making ready to retire for the evening, a senior servant comes to them and asks if they would join Lord Warate in his study. PCs doing so will discover the younger Akodo waiting for them.

*You find Akodo Warate in a small room dominated by a writing table. Records are spread across the table and in the scroll nooks set into the wall. A side table has been set with tea for all of you, lit by a paper lantern. "Thank you for coming. I have an odd request, one I hope you will look upon favorably, in a spirit of compassion." He serves the teas smoothly and moves on to the matter on his mind as quickly as politely possible.*

*"As you may have observed, my Father is not a young man, and his best days are behind him. I deeply honor and respect my father, and I do not want to see him discredited in his final years. You have been very kind to us thus far in how you have reacted to today's events, but I am worried about future incidents. I would ask for you ride out with my father tomorrow and make a good show of trying to find these bandits he believes are out there. I can assure you there are no bandits and you would be in no danger. Such a patrol would only take a few hours. With proof that there is nothing out there to find, I can quietly encourage him to remain here and avoid any more incidents. I would consider myself deeply in your debt. The next group of samurai may not be as forgiving. What say you: Will you give an old man one last chance at glory and honor?"*

Allow the PCs to consider Warate's request. Some may be disturbed at the duplicity of riding out with Taiko when there is nothing to find. Others may be worried about taking the time away from their duties to their daimyos. All of these are valid considerations and each PCs must decide for themselves how to respond. On the other hand, Duty and Compassion are among the tenets of Bushido, and honoring a distinguished warrior with such service is certainly within the bounds of Honor. Scorpion PCs may be particularly vexed given the man's history. Some less-than-scrupulous PCs may see this as an opportunity to gain blackmail on either Taiko or Warate. This should be discouraged; putting that kind of pressure on Warate will certainly give him a poor opinion of the PCs, but if they choose to do so, they may. (See the Rewards section for the full consequences.)

Those PCs who agree are presented to Akodo Taiko the next morning. Those who do not are invited to stay in the keep until they return or retire to the inn inside the village proper if they prefer. Either way, they will be present when the attack comes tomorrow, and may take part in the defense if they choose.

## Exploring the Village

If the PCs wish, they can do some looking around town to determine what is going on. Depending on how they go about it, they can learn the following information:

- **Investigation / Awareness TN 15:** The peasants are very proud of their lord and the storied, glorious history in the Empire that he has. They are also very happy with Warate and his performance in the province. They feel safe, happy, and proud to be part of a strong and honorable village led by glorious samurai.
- **Investigation / Awareness -OR- Lore: Underworld / Awareness TN 20:** The peasants think it is very unfortunate, not just for them but for the entire village, that times are difficult for everyone. However, they accept that this is the way things are in the world, and that "this too shall pass". The local peasants are not resentful of their lords at all and there is absolutely no indication that an uprising of any kind is looming on the horizon.
- **Courtier / Awareness TN 15:** Warate's son led forces in War Against Shadow, and not only did he return, but he was home with a sizable amount of his army intact, displaying both his ability to lead men and also protect them on the battle field.
- Despite all of this, the peasants will mention other strangers that have come through town recently, asking similar questions about the local lord and conditions in the village. The peasants do not know who they are or why they're doing so, though the more irascible older men call them "troublemakers" and want to have nothing to do with "their kind".

Note: For PCs who don't go with expedition, they may have chance to look into same things. This is entirely at the GM's discretion.

## Part Three: Into the Wilderness

The next morning, those PCs willing to go along with Akodo Warate's plan are presented to Akodo Taiko in his audience room.

*Akodo Warate knocks at his father's sitting room door and waits for a response. "Enter," comes the reply from inside. Warate kneels as he did yesterday, with his swords to his right side. His father acknowledges him immediately, dismissing a low-ranking functionary already present with a wave of his hand. "Yes, my karo. What is it?"*

*Warate stands and bows. "My lord, I beg your forgiveness, but I have spoken with our guests about the bandit problem. These honorable samurai have eagerly agreed to help. I know you have no need of such assistance, that we Lion can handle these dogs ourselves, but they have asked for the privilege of serving under your leadership. They would consider it an honor to accompany you and follow your direction and tactical acumen to a victorious conclusion to this matter. Will you have them?"*

*Akodo Taiko considers for a moment. At first he is lost in thought, as if considering this course of action.*

PCs can roll **Investigation / Awareness** at TN 25 (or bring various Techniques into play) to notice a barely suppressed tear come to Taiko's eye as he looks at his son and realizes what is going on. Only PCs really paying attention should get this. After but a moment, he gets his emotions under control, replaces his *on*, and continues.

*Akodo Taiko clears his throat. "Hai! I will have them! The honor is mine, noble samurai. With your strong arms and my guidance, we will crush these lawless dogs, and then return here to celebrate tonight. Go and prepare. We leave in one hour." The older man smiles broadly as he rises to his feet and bows to you all.*

The PCs have an hour to prepare themselves. Those with horses find the grooms have them ready. Wearing armor is perfectly appropriate given the mission. After an hour, Akodo Taiko comes down wearing his distinctive suit of heavy armor: richly decorated in the fashion of the Lion but dating from more than thirty years ago, long before the Scorpion Clan Coup. Mounted on a long pole attached to his saddle is the standard he rode under when he was a young man, which proudly displays his family name and the mon of the Lion Clan. He rides forth with an air of dignity and self-confidence.

## Tracking the Bandits

At this point, the PCs have two things to seriously consider: how are they going to make a good showing of "looking for bandits" (being convincing without lying or accidentally dishonoring Taiko), and how much effort overall are they going to put into making a good show of it? Keeping in mind how proud of a man Taiko is (and if the PCs seem to forget this, kindly remind them), they will have to put forth at least some modicum of effort.

Some possibilities are as follows:

- PCs can make **Hunting / Awareness** rolls at TN 15 to give the appearance of looking for tracks through the underbrush. PCs can take raises to make this attempt "look better" if they choose. Failure, however, causes Akodo Taiko to question that PC's competence under his breath, but loud enough to be heard. The appropriate thing is for the PCs to take such comments in stride.
- PCs can scout ahead, moving ahead of the main body into the brush and then reporting back that "there are no signs." Doing so without actually making an effort to look will require a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll at a TN of 20, to avoid giving insult to Taiko.
- Shugenja may Commune with the kami, or pretend to do so for Taiko's benefit. However, PCs doing this late in the day may get a clue as to what is about to happen. See below.
- The PCs may pretend to find something to keep themselves or Taiko interested. Adjudicate these attempts as best you can. **Sincerity / Awareness** checks may be necessary, at whatever TN appropriate by the GM, possibly opposed by Akodo Taiko's skill.

The PCs may come up with any number of ways to make this a convincing show for Akodo Taiko. The important thing is to make a good faith effort. For his part, Taiko will play the aloof lord, responding to information provided without much comment, but generally directing the PCs through the countryside. The PCs can earn 1-2 points of Honor at the GM's discretion if they interact with the older Akodo to make him feel included, important, and needed. If any PCs ask about Taiko, they can make **Investigation (Notice) / Awareness** rolls at TN 20 to notice that underneath his commanding and aloof demeanor, Akodo Taiko is enjoying himself immensely.

Allow the charade to continue as long as time and player temperament permit. Once they have grown bored with process of "looking for bandits" with Akodo Taiko, proceed to the next section.

## The Real Bandit Camp

After a long day of pretending to search for the bandits, several of the PCs putting forth effort may in fact come across something "real". Have the PCs participating make **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** rolls at TN 15.

Pull the PCs who succeed aside and give them the following information:

- Searching through the underbrush, the PCs will actually discover real tracks.

- Those who make TN 20 or better will be able to determine that the tracks are fresh (within the last day), and made by several dozen men with a few mounted members of the group.

It is the middle of the afternoon when the PCs discover this, and they are many miles from Shiro Seidai Juujiro. The tracks can be followed to their source, which is a cleft in a forested hill half a mile from where the tracks emerge into the greater wilderness where the PCs are tracking. The tracks head deeper into the province in the general direction of Seidai Juujiro Mura. If the PCs dither about following the tracks into the hills or heading back to the village, Akodo Taiko orders them to investigate the source of the tracks. Remember, nobody is expecting to really find anything.

PC shugenja who have been periodically communing with the kami to ask if there are any bandits about or similar questions unexpectedly get a positive answer if they ask at this point. This could also serve as a clue that something is not right.

The tracks lead to a moderately-sized bandit camp. Clever PCs will attempt to scout the situation first. Various Skills and School Techniques can be used in this situation, opposed by the sentries' **Investigation / Perception** of **3k2**.

Sosetsu did not leave a large number of sentries to guard his camp, but those present have cover and are not going to expose themselves unnecessarily. There are three archers hidden on short ledges in the wooded hill above the campsite. (Use their **Stealth (Ambush) / Agility** to hide from the PCs, who can make opposed **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** rolls to see them.) No two of them are closer than 30 feet together. The archers have cover in the trees, adding a +5 to their TN to be hit. They will attempt to ambush the PCs from their perches once they notice the party.

In addition, there is a ronin swordsmen per two combat-capable characters, including Taiko, rounded down. This will typically result in three ronin. They are hunched around a piece of wood laid on the ground near the fire pit on which they are playing dice.

How things go here depends on the PCs' actions. It is likely the archers will see the PCs approaching and start the fight that way, with the ronin in the camp not coming into play until the second round.

Adjust the following text as necessary, depending on the PCs' method of approach:

*The trail leads to a cleft of rock bordered by forested hills. Inside the cleft is a well ordered camp. A few rude tables and benches have been set up for meals and several bedrolls and small camp fires are set up around a central fire pit. The smoke of a cooking fire hangs in the air. To one side are some crates of vegetables and sacks of rice, and a large scale cooking operation is set up near them. At the back is a small pavilion tent, presently closed.*

Add a description of the ronin at the central table if the PCs have not dispatched them yet.

Allow the PCs to pursue battle as they wish. The ronin will fight to the best of their ability, but run off if they take more than half their Wounds. Unfortunately, the only way out of the cleft is past where the PCs came in, so unless they can make it past the entire party, they are unlikely to escape. The archers are pretty much stuck, as they would need to either climb down to the camp or up the hillside to escape. If the party is weak, either made up mostly of non-combat types or just low level, have the archers pick individual targets versus combining their fire. If the party is particularly strong, have them combine on shugenja and opposing archers first before picking off bushi. Akodo Taiko will spend the first round assessing the situation and allowing the younger, stronger PCs into the fight first, then ride in making a mounted attack, much as he did to the PCs earlier, aiding any PCs who seems to be in trouble with the ronin. It may prove simpler to have him engage one of the swordsmen, and remove them from immediate consideration.

### Basic Bandits

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 1
Honor 2.0		Status 0.0	Glory 0.0	
<b>Initiative:</b> 3k2		<b>Attack:</b> 5k2 (spear or bow)		
<b>Armor TN:</b> 18 (ashigaru armor)		<b>Damage:</b> 4k2 (spear or bow)		
<b>Reduction:</b> 1 (ashigaru armor)				
<b>Wounds:</b> 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)				
<b>School/Rank:</b> none/Insight Rank 1				
<b>Skills:</b> Athletics 2, Defense 1, Hunting 2, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 3, Spears 3, Stealth (Ambush) 2				
<b>Mastery Abilities:</b> may string a bow as a Simple Action, ignore 3 points of reduction during first round of combat with spear				

### Ronin Swordsmen

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 2
Reflexes 3		Agility	Strength 3	
Honor 2.0		Status 0.0	Glory 0.0	

**Initiative:** 4k3                      **Attack:** 6k3 (katana)  
**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)      **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)  
**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)  
**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15),  
45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 1  
**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 1, Defense 2, Hunting 2,  
Investigation 1, Kenjutsu (katana) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore:  
Underworld 2  
**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to damage with swords

## After the Battle

The PCs are free to search the camp after the archers and ronin swordsmen have been dispatched. The details are as follows:

- PCs attempting to determine the number of men in the camp can make **Battle (Mass Combat) / Intelligence** at **TN 20** to determine between forty and fifty people were using the camp, based on the number of bedrolls and the amount of supplies present. **Hunting / Perception** at a TN of 20, however, will determine that more people than that made the tracks that the PCs found, and a 25 will allow them to realized that two groups met here and then left for the village.
- Searching the pavilion reveals it to be a campaign tent like the ones used by armies in the field. Inside is a bedroll, a camp table, remains of a meal, and a small chest. PCs can make **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll at TN 15 to find inside the chest, amid the clothes other personal items, a scroll case. Inside is Sosetsu's battle plan for the village and Shiro Seidai Juujiro. A detailed map of the village and the location of the keep are clearly indicated. However, there is no time frame referenced in the plans.
- Interrogating any survivors can be done using any number of methods, although the use of outright torture by the PCs should carry the accompanying Honor cost. The ronin will resist as best they can, but in the end clever and determined PCs should get them to explain:

*“We work for a powerful warrior named Sosetsu. He’s horribly disfigured, a truly ugly man, inside and out. He has a powerful hatred for the lord of these lands, Akodo Taiko. He’s gathered an army to go sack the village and burn the castle. We were left behind to guard the camp.”*

The prisoners can answer as to when the army left (this morning), how many (almost a hundred, with the addition of a group of ashigaru veterans that

Sosetsu has deceived), their basic plan (attack Seidai Juujiro Mura and burn the castle to the ground). The PCs have never heard of Sosetsu, if they ask.

## Taiko’s Speech

Akodo Taiko is stunned by what is going on at this point, although he quickly begins to figure it out.

*Akodo Taiko looks as if he can’t quite understand what is happening, but he soon addresses you all. “I am sorry, my friends, for bringing us to this. It was vanity that brought me out here, searching for bandits, for one last adventure. Even I, deep in my heart, never expected to find anything. It was just an old man’s fantasy, longing for the past. When I was strong, and I did important things. When I was young.*

*“But now my home, and my son, are threatened. I have no recollection of this man Sosetsu or why he hates me so. But I ask you, come with me and let us give what aid we can in this dark hour. We must, together, teach him what it is to attack the Lion!” Taiko is standing taller now and there is a new fire in his eyes.*

Those so inclined can roll raw **Awareness TN 20** to see Akodo Taiko is truly contrite, and that his heart is nearly broken from grief and what he expects to find. But he is also angry and full of righteous indignation at the thought of some ronin band having the audacity to attack his home.

Examining battle plans to get bonus in battle section – know where larger groups are at; know where strongest local resistance is by changes from battle plan and actual conditions in battle

## **Part Four: Into Battle**

The trip back from the bandit camp to Seidai Juujiro Mura can be completed quickly and without incident. About a mile from the town, the PCs see smoke on the horizon. It is clear the attack has already begun.

The topography of the area precludes approaching the castle from some other direction than through the town. This is a deliberate arrangement, which forces attackers to come through the town and defenders there before dealing with the castle proper. In this case, it also prevents the PCs from circumventing the town and going straight to the castle.

*It is late afternoon. Seidai Juujiro Mura is under heavy assault when you arrive. Many of the buildings*

*have been put to the torch, and the bodies of both livestock and peasants can be seen slaughtered in the streets. As you move deeper through the town, the sounds of battle can be heard from several places in the village, as well as higher up the hill. The attackers have split their forces to put down resistance in the town, while the bulk of their troops are besieging Shiro Seidai Jujiro.*

The PCs may search the town if they wish, if for no other reason than to aid survivors. However, Akodo Taiko will press them to move on to the castle. PCs can make **Battle (Mass Combat) / Perception** at TN 15 or **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** at TN 20, to locate several knots of resistance in the village – places where local bushi are fighting back against the invaders. PCs who studied the battle plans found at the bandit camp gain a Free Raise on this roll. If no PC makes this roll, Akodo Taiko will point out a location at random, and order them to provide relief for his troops there. In any event, the press of battle will sweep the aged Lion away from the PCs as he moves to find other troops trapped in the village.

From here, the PCs have several options. For the next three "waves", the PCs will have the option to pick one point of tactical value to assist, and in doing so, will free up troops who can march to and help relieve the castle. As they progress, they are effectively working their own way towards the castle to provide assistance as well. This is where the entire battle will be decided, as if the PCs are not able to free up enough troops to help at the castle, the castle stands in very real danger. The PCs are also aiding in providing a distraction so that Taiko may advance to the fighting near the wall.

NOTE: The PCs (or at the very least, their players) should know, or be told if it seems they do not realize, that splitting up to try and cover multiple strategic points is almost certainly suicide, and that if they do so the changes are highly likely that they will die fighting.

GM Note: These battles are to be fought as a standard skirmish with six basic bandits and a leader (who varies by location); if the PCs are able to kill the leader, the henchmen will lose resolve and flee **UNLESS THE PARTY HAS SPLIT UP**. Groups at each tactical location will not change in size based on party strength.

### Basic Bandits

These are the basic enemy troops for each location.

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 1
Honor 2.0	Status 0.0	Glory 0.0		
<b>Initiative:</b> 3k2		<b>Attack:</b> 5k2 (spear or bow)		

**Armor TN:** 18 (ashigaru armor)      **Damage:** 4k2 (spear or bow)

**Reduction:** 1 (ashigaru armor)

**Wounds:** 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15), 30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 1

**Skills:** Athletics 2, Defense 1, Hunting 2, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 3, Spears 3, Stealth (Ambush) 2

**Mastery Abilities:** may string a bow as a Simple Action, ignore 3 points of Reduction during first round of combat with spear

### Blacksmith

Here, the PCs see that there are looters who are seeking to upgrade their equipment and better outfit themselves for the attack. The village blacksmith is trying to fend them off with the assistance of several local ashigaru; unfortunately, telling friend from foe is somewhat difficult... (This complication is predominantly role-play based; if the PCs just enter the fray without taking any effort to identify their foes, there is a 50/50 chance of attacking a local ashigaru, who will retreat back into the smithy. There are eight defending ashigaru and eight attacking ashigaru; if all of the defenders retreat, the PCs will not gain any troops from this tactical objective.)

### **Defenders: Blacksmith and local ashigaru**

#### Leader: Hayai, Ronin Swordsman

A lean, scarred ronin swordsman clad in battered light armor but wielding a katana with impressive skill.

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 3
Reflexes 3		Agility 4		
Honor 3.2		Status 0.0		Glory 1.3

**Initiative:** 6k3

**Attack:** 9k4 (katana)

**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)      **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)

**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 2

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 1, Defense 4, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu (Focus) 4, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (katana) 5, Lore: Underworld 3, Spears 2

**Mastery Abilities:** may keep a previous Full Defense roll; may ready a sword as a Free Action; +1k0 to sword damage

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Magic Resistance I / Unlucky I

### Inn

As the PCs reach the inn, they encounter a ronin shugenja with a group of peasant rebels. *However, the Ronin is here because he was tricked by Sosetsu; If the*



the horses from being taken by the bandits, being led by a ronin woman wielding a nagamaki.

### Defenders: Stablehands and Lion cavalry officer

#### Leader: Hanashi, Ronin Killer

A pretty young woman with dead eyes and a razor-sharp weapon.

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3

Honor 1.2 Status 0.0 Glory 1.0

**Initiative:** 6k3 **Attack:** 8k3 (nagamaki)

**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor) **Damage:** 5k3 (nagamaki)

**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 3

**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 2, Defense 5, Hunting 3, Iaijutsu 2, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 3, Lore: Underworld 3, Polearms (nagamaki) 5

**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to sword damage; +5 to initiative score for first round of combat when using polearm; +1k0 to damage with polearm vs mounted or significantly larger targets

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Quick / Antisocial II

### Path to the Castle

Finally, reaching the end of town, the path towards the castle lays before the PCs. How they handled the village invasion, and how many 'troops' they were able to free up during their push towards the castle will dictate how this part of the encounter should be handled. A swirling mass of men wielding peasant weapons, katanas and bows lay before the group.

NOTE: If the PCs were able to free up at least one group of Defenders -AND- succeeded at freeing up a location during at least two waves, then this encounter effectively happens "in cinema" as the groups from the town will be helping the PCs spearhead through towards the castle. If they didn't, or if they ignored the village and just pressed on through toward the castle, then there are 12 basic bandits, 4 with bows and 8 with katana, and 3 archer commanders.

### Archer Commander

Experienced soldiers overseeing the rear formation of Setsuo's invaders.

Air 3 Earth 3 Fire 3 Water 3 Void 3

Reflexes 4 Agility 4

Honor 2.3 Status 0.0 Glory 1.0

**Initiative:** 7k4 **Attack:** 9k4 (yumi)

**Armor TN:** 30 (light armor) **Damage:** 6k2 (yumi)

**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)

**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 3

**Skills:** Athletics 4, Battle 4, Defense 4, Hunting 4, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 4, Kyujutsu (yumi) 5, Lore: Underworld 3

**Mastery Abilities:** may keep Full Defense roll for following rounds, +1k0 to sword damage, may ready bow as Simple Action, increase by range by 50%

### The Final Breath

As the battle winds down, Akodo Taiko and Sosetsu find each other on the battlefield, and a decades long enmity is brought to its conclusion:

*The sky burns a deep red as the sun sets over the battlefield. A loud cry brings your attention to a spot on the wall right in front of the main gate. Akodo Taiko seems to have found the elusive enemy commander, the mysterious Sosetsu.*

*There is a look of shocked recognition on Taiko's face. It is clear the Akodo lord recognizes the bandit leader. Taiko shouts at the man: "Brigand! Dishonorable cur! Face me!" He then spurs his horse into a charge at the ronin leader.*

*Sosetsu proves to be a heavily built man with long wispy hair hanging to his back. His left eye is gone, the socket and the whole left side of his face a mass of scar tissue. He is armed with an equally aged katana. The ronin leader acknowledges Akodo Taiko mockingly, though his voice trembles in fury: "Come and get me, you toothless old lion! Let's finally finish this!"*

*What happens next is almost too quick to follow. Sosetsu stands to receive Taiko's charge, then side steps at the last moment. A long sweep of his sword cuts the front legs out from Taiko's horse. The Akodo daimyo is pitched forward and lands with a sickening sound in the dirt.*

*The battle comes to a halt as samurai, peasant, and ronin all stop to watch this most personal of battles. Sosetsu hobbles closer to deliver the final blow to Taiko. As he raises his sword, Akodo Taiko rolls over, bringing his own katana up and plunging it into Sosetsu's chest. The ronin leader falters, then falls, his weapon driving through Taiko's fine armor and out the other side. They fall to the ground together, and the last light of the sun washes over them.*

(The PCs may be tempted to try to intervene in this ending. Explain the events unfolded so fast, and yet seemingly in slow motion, that they were unable to help.)

The battle is now effectively over. The remaining ronin are either easily rounded up by the PCs and Lion samurai or flee post haste. Akodo Warate cries out from the top of the wall, openly crying in his grief. He comes down from the wall and through the gate to clutch at his father's dying body. Etiquette would dictate the PCs ignore this until he can get his emotions under control. Feel free to dock any PCs a couple of points of Honor if they don't.

Akodo Warate is clearly distraught over the death of his father, especially in such a senseless way. But there is also an odd sense of pride. His father led in battle once more, and died a hero. Warate knows it is what his father would have wished for.

## Conclusion

In the days that follow, the remaining peasants clean up the town and the castle. Eta are summoned from a nearby village to handle the dead and reports are sent to the Akodo leadership describing what happened. The PCs attend Akodo Taiko's funeral and Akodo Warate temporarily takes over as gokenin of Seidai Juujiro Mura until his permanent status as gokenin is confirmed by the Akodo Daisetsu, the provincial daimyo.

Before the PCs leave, Akodo Warate summons them to his study. He has not moved into his father's audience room just yet. He explains that he looked through his father's journals, and finally found brief mention of having put down a band of ronin many years ago. The leader got away, but was savagely wounded and burned in the fighting before escaping. The entry was barely a footnote in the journal. His father had never mentioned it.

Akodo Warate makes an offer to any Unicorn PCs present. He takes down the Unicorn War Banner and offers it to any Unicorn PCs so they can return it to their Clan. He views the banner as part of his father's past, not something that needs to be displayed in his home. And given the present climate in the Empire, it might just help calm tensions a bit.

If they accept, they are assumed to have returned the banner to the appropriate people and earn +2 Glory. However, if the PC(s) *ask* for the banner before Akodo

Warate offers it to them, dock them 2 Glory for being so rude. This results in a net zero for the PC(s).

### 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
Finding the Bandit Camp	+1XP
Fighting in the Battle of Seidai Juujiro	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience: 4XP**

### Honor

PCs gain a point of Honor for acquitting themselves well in the defense of Shiro Seidai Juujiro.

PCs gain a point of Honor for accompanying Akodo Taiko on his "quest" if their Honor is less than six ranks.

### Glory

PCs may gain Glory for taking part in the storytelling contest.

All PCs who took part in the Battle of Seidai Juujiro gain three points of Glory (unless they have three Ranks or more of Glory, in which case they gain two points).

Lion PCs who take part in the Battle of Seidai Juujiro gain an additional point of Glory.

Unicorn PCs may gain two points of Glory for returning the Unicorn Army banner.

### **Other Awards/Penalties**

PCs who aid Akodo Taiko and defend Shiro Seidai Juujiro gain Akodo Warate as an Ally (1 Influence, 1 Devotion).

PCs who help defend Shiro Seidai Juujiro gain a Lion Clan Favor.

PCs who choose to blackmail Akodo Warate gain the Blackmail Advantage (worth 4 points at the end of the module), but also gain him as a Sworn Enemy.

PCs who killed Akodo Taiko gain Akodo Warate as a Sworn Enemy.

### **GM Reporting**

- Did Taiko die in battle against Sosetsu?
- Did Warate return the Unicorn banner?
- Which tactical locations did the PCs choose to attack?
- Which ronin officers survived? (The two locations that were not attacked, and any that may have escaped the PCs)
- Did Matsu Gehiko survive?

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

# Appendix #1: NPCs

## Akodo Taiko, Aqing Daimyo

Air 4    Earth 3    Fire 4    Water 3    Void 3  
Willpower 4    Perception 4  
Honor 8.3    Status 4.7    Glory 3.4  
**Initiative:** 9k4+6    **Attack:** 10k4 (katana)  
**Armor TN:** 35 (heavy armor)    **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)  
**Reduction:** 5 (heavy armor)  
**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 5  
**Techniques:** Way of the Lion: ignore armor bonus to Armor TN or gain a Free Raise; +1k0 on first attack against a target or against a target who has called Raises Strength of Purity: add Honor (8) to one roll per round (not damage)  
Strength of My Ancestors: may make attacks with Samurai weapons as a Simple Action  
Triumph Before Battle: once per skirmish, may designate an opponent and ignore Armor TN bonus from Stance during the next Round  
Akodo's Final Lesson: when Raise on any Bugei Skill Roll, success without effect of Raises if meet or exceed original TN  
**Skills:** Battle (Mass Combat) 6, Calligraphy 3, Coutier 4, Defense 4, Etiquette 5, Horsemanship 7, Hunting 4, Iaijutsu 3, Investigation 2, Kenjutsu (katana) 6, Kyujutsu 3, Lore: History 5, Sincerity 4, Spears 5  
**Mastery Abilities:** Add Battle Skill to Initiative in skirmishes; may keep a Full Defense roll for more than one round; may Full Attack from horseback and mount or dismount as a Free Action; can ready a sword as a Free Action; +1k0 to damage with sword  
**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Leadership, Social Position, Tactician / Bad Sight, Dark Secret  
**Wounds:** 15: +0; 21: +3; 27: +5; 33: +10; 39: +15; 45: +20; 51: Down; 57: Dead

## Akodo Warate

Air 3    Earth 3    Fire 3    Water 3    Void 4  
Agility 4    Status 3.5    Glory 2.5  
**Initiative:** 6k3    **Attack:** 9k4 (katana)  
**Armor TN:** 30 (heavy armor)    **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)  
**Reduction:** 5 (heavy armor)  
**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 3  
**Skills:** Athletics 1, Battle (Mass Combat) 4, Calligraphy 2, Commerce 1, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 2, Games: Go 2, Horsemanship 4, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation 3, Jiujutsu 2, Kenjutsu (katana) 5, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 3

**Mastery Abilities:** may keep a Full Defense roll for following rounds; gains a Free Raise on Focus rolls; +1k0 on damage with swords, may ready a sword as a Free Action; may Full Attack while mounted  
**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Balance / Can't Lie

## Matsu Gehiko

Description  
Air 2    Earth 3    Fire 2    Water 3    Void 3  
Reflexes 3    Strength 3    Honor 7.2    Status 3.0    Glory 2.5  
**Initiative:** 5k3    **Attack:** 7k3 (no-dachi)  
**Armor TN:** 30 (heavy armor)    **Damage:** 7k3+7  
**Reduction:** 5 (heavy armor)  
**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15), 45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** Matsu Bushi 2  
**Skills:** Athletics 3, Battle 3, Horsemanship 3, Hunting 1, Jiujutsu 3, Kenjutsu (no-dachi) 4, Kyujutsu 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Theology 2, Perform: Storytelling 3  
**Mastery Abilities:**  
**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Bishamon's Blessing / True Love (Akodo Warate)

## Lion Bushi

Basic bushi sworn to Akodo Taiko  
Air 2    Earth 3    Fire 2    Water 3    Void 2  
Reflexes 3    Agility 3    Honor 6.5    Status 1.5    Glory 2.0  
**Initiative:** 5k3    **Attack:** 7k3+6 (sword or bow)  
**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)    **Damage:** 6k2 (sword) or 5k2 (bow)  
**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)  
**Wounds:** x5 (+0), x2 (+3), x2 (+5), x2 (+10), x2 (+15), x2 (+20), x2 (Down, +40), x2 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** Akodo Bushi 2  
**Skills:** Battle (Mass Combat) 2, Defense 3, Horsemanship 3, Kenjutsu (katana) 4, Kyujutsu (dai-kyu) 4, Lore: History 2, Sincerity 2  
**Mastery Abilities:** may keep a Full Defense roll for following rounds, +1k0 damage with swords, may string a bow as a Simple Action

## Basic Bandits

Air 2    Earth 2    Fire 2    Water 2    Void 1  
Honor 2.0    Status 0.0    Glory 0.0  
**Initiative:** 3k2    **Attack:** 5k2 (spear or bow)  
**Armor TN:** 18 (ashigaru armor)    **Damage:** 4k2 (spear or bow)

**Reduction:** 1 (ashigaru armor)  
**Wounds:** 10 (+0), 14 (+3), 18 (+5), 22 (+10), 26 (+15),  
30 (+20), 34 (Down, +40), 38 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 1  
**Skills:** Athletics 2, Defense 1, Hunting 2, Kenjutsu 2,  
Kyujutsu 3, Spears 3, Stealth (Ambush) 2  
**Mastery Abilities:** may string a bow as a Simple  
Action, ignore 3 points of reduction during first round  
of combat with spear

### Ronin Swordsmen

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 2
Reflexes 3		Agility	Strength 3	
Honor 2.0		Status 0.0	Glory 0.0	

**Initiative:** 4k3                      **Attack:** 6k3 (katana)  
**Armor TN:** 25 (light armor)      **Damage:** 6k2 (katana)  
**Reduction:** 3 (light armor)  
**Wounds:** 15 (+0), 21 (+3), 27 (+5), 33 (+10), 39 (+15),  
45 (+20), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)  
**School/Rank:** none/Insight Rank 1  
**Skills:** Athletics 2, Battle 1, Defense 2, Hunting 2,  
Investigation 1, Kenjutsu (katana) 3, Kyujutsu 2, Lore:  
Underworld 2  
**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to damage with swords