

Twisted Fate

**A One-Round Low-Mid Rank Adventure for Heroes of
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido
Month of Shinjo, 1138 (Late Fall)**

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The first generation of Toku children are ready to start seizing their destiny – but something else may be seizing it first...

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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-Mid Rank adventure, and thus can involve parties of widely varying capabilities. The

encounters have been optimized for a party of average Rank Two.

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 low-end and high-end parties, as follows:

Low End Party (most/all characters Rank 1): The PCs have three rounds to deal with any spirits that remain in the courtyard after they close the gate (instead of only one).

High End Party (most/all characters Rank 3): There are two additional spirits in the first round of the final encounter.

Adventure Summary and Background

Five years ago, spirits from across the Nine Spirit Realms flooded into Ningen-do, the Realm of Mortals, through Oblivion's Gate, taking on mortal form and forever changing the course of Rokugan's destiny. Now nearly one samurai in ten is one of these returned spirits, but their impact on the Emerald Empire goes beyond the obvious effects on politics and war. These spirits have resolved their destinies and completed their karma, but their actions disturb the destinies of the still-living samurai around them. In most cases the effect is small, but sometimes, the change is more profound – and no change is greater than death.

A new Spirit Realm, called Kousoku no Chigiri (the Realm of Thwarted Destiny) by the shugenja who has spent the most time researching it, has formed in response to this spiritual upheaval, and an increasing number of its inhabitants are the restless souls of those mortals who died with their destinies disrupted through the actions of a returned spirit. Even now, most destinies remain unaffected by the returned spirits, but their impact is cumulative and growing. In particular, the summer's conflicts between the Clans saw many lives – peasant and samurai – lost at the hands of returned spirit warriors, and every one of those souls was snatched away from the Karmic Wheel to languish in Kousoku no Chigiri.

Souls trapped in the Realm of Thwarted Destiny are tormented by the awareness of their lost destinies and a maddening sense of separation from the Celestial Wheel; they are trapped in this agonizing half-existence

until they are somehow reconnected to Destiny itself and can move on to Meido. Destiny, however, is something only living mortals possess; in order to move on, a spirit trapped in Kousoku no Chigiri must either be given destiny by a living person – or take it by force.

As with all Spirit Realms, it is possible for portals between Kousoku no Chigiri and Ningen-do to open. Portals between Realms tend to open when an event in Ningen-do resonates strongly with the spiritual nature of the other Realm; this adventure focuses on one such portal, opening in the lands of the Monkey Clan. The Toku family has at last opened a formal dojo for its newly-fledged Bushi School, and is accepting its first students who were born to Monkey Clan parents and have thus been Monkey Clan all their lives. It is a major turning point for the destiny of the Monkey, and as such is enough to forge a link to Kousoku no Chigiri. This portal will allow a small number of spirits from Thwarted Destiny to pass through and steal the strongest, most powerful destinies in the area, with potentially lethal results. Only the PCs can stop them and close the portal in time to prevent the destiny of the Toku family itself from being stolen forever.

This module refers to events and characters from the following previous adventures:

- SoB00: New Beginnings
- SoB02: Bonds of Fate
- SoB04: Personal Sacrifice
- SoB07: Delicate Negotiations

In particular, the mod cert from Personal Sacrifice should indicate which PCs sacrificed “Destiny Points” to help redeem the spirit possessing Isawa Ume. It will also be important to note any characters who possess the Touch of Destiny, Great Destiny or Dark Fate Advantages/Disadvantages.

Introduction

The adventure begins as the PCs arrive at the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey, in the heart of the small Toku province. They are here to attend a festival held in honor of the formal opening of the main dojo of the Toku Bushi School. Clan samurai have been sent by their daimyo to represent their daimyo for the festivities; ronin have been hired to act as yojimbo for Isawa Ume, who has also chosen to attend the festival.

Heavy rains, portents of a chilly winter now just weeks away, have delayed your arrival at Saru no Keikai Torid-e, the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey, and when you finally make it to the castle you find that you have

only about an hour to deal with the water and mud on your clothes before the festivities are to begin. The Vigilant Keep, a well-built fortress whose complex and maze-like construction is a reminder of its past as a Scorpion holding before the rise of the Monkey Clan, is a bustle of activity, servants and samurai alike moving with a sense of well-disciplined panic as they deal with last-minute tasks.

The celebration is in three parts: a parade, moving from the gates of the Vigilant Keep through the village surrounding the castle to the newly-built dojo on the edge of the village; a feast for the samurai guests in the castle itself, hosted by Toku and his family; and a two-day holiday for the peasants, with traditional festival activities including games, music, and dancing. It is the parade that is due to begin shortly after the PCs arrive; as honored guests, they are free to either watch the parade or participate in it. Fortunately, the weather has cleared just in time for the parade to begin, and beautiful sunshine breaks through the clouds as the event gets underway:

With the boom of taiko drums, the colorful parade moves out from the gates of the Vigilant Keep of the Monkey and into the prosperous village around the castle walls. Dragon dancers, in the guise of the Thunder Dragon, patron of heroes, lead the procession; the Dragon's fearsome eyes and fluttering strips of paper – representing its traditional corona of lightning – flash in the breeze as it moves along the streets. Next come the new students and their parents: perhaps two dozen seven-, eight- and nine-year-olds in pure white kimono, walking in two lines, while a single parent walks alongside in their finest clothing. A blood-red ribbon has been tied around the wrist of each child, the other end of which is held by their mother or father as they walk along.

Toku and his wife, Toku Inao, follow next. Toku is mounted and wearing a resplendent set of ceremonial armor; unfortunately, his well-trained and highly-bred steed and the armor together still cannot manage to lend the Monkey Clan Champion the dignity his position would seem to demand. The former-peasant-turned-samurai-and-Minor-Clan-daimyo is a short, unassuming man with a rather homely face; without the trappings of his station, only his broad smile would attract any notice whatsoever. By contrast, his wife Inao is a tall, graceful woman, renowned as one of the great beauties of the Scorpion Clan before she married Toku. She rides in a palanquin carried by four strong bearers, waving languidly at the crowds and trying to keep her young daughter, Toku Miyako, from squirming too much in her seat. The two-year-old girl is the current heir to the Monkey Clan, but

seems mostly interested at the moment in climbing out of the palanquin and onto her father's horse.

The rest of the parade is made up of peasant entertainers – musicians (including the taiko drummers), street magicians, and the like – merchants and other well-to-do heimin, Toku bushi marching in parade formation, monks offering blessings to the crowd, and so on. If any PCs choose to participate in the parade, they lead this portion of the procession, right behind Toku and his wife.

Eventually, the parade reaches the newly-built walls of the Toku Bushi School dojo. The dojo grounds cover several acres of recently-cleared earth on the edge of the village, and fresh paint gleams in the sunlight on just-sanded wood. Standing in the open gateway as the parade arrives is a large, heavysset man whose movements betray strength rather than lassitude despite his size. He positively beams as the parade draws nearer to the gates, and he adjusts his well-made kimono – the mon of the Toku Bushi School prominently displayed on back and shoulders – several times as the procession moves up the road to the dojo.

As the dragon dancers turn aside and disappear into the crowd, the drums reach a thunderous crescendo and then fall silent as the large man in the gateway raises his arms. *“Good people of the Monkey Clan! I am Toku Doppo, and it is my honor to be the head sensei at the Toku Bushi School, recently renamed in honor of our most worthy founder! Today is a unique day, a day unlike any before in our history, and one that will never come again! Today we celebrate the opening of the main dojo of our Clan's own School! Today, we welcome the first children born as samurai of the Monkey Clan into our school! This day represents not only a recognition of how far we have come in the nine years since our founding, but stands as a testament to the power of our collective determination and will. Today we take another step toward our destiny! Come, little ones, and let us make history together!”*

With a sweeping gesture, Doppo invites the children into the dojo and bows to the crowd. The parents untie the ribbons from their children's wrists and urge them forward; some hurry excitedly past Doppo and into the dojo's grounds, while others cling fearfully to their parent's arm or leg, tears beginning to flow. Not every parent's eye is dry either, though they maintain proper face as best they can. One by one, however, the children are ushered through the dojo's gates, and the gates themselves then slam shut behind them with a crash. Spurring his horse forward, Toku turns and waves to the crowd. “We have a school!” he cries out.

“And that means we must have a festival! Go and enjoy yourselves!” The drums and musicians start up again, and the crowd turns its attention to merrymaking in earnest.

Part One: Destiny Reforged

The feast itself is held in the main hall of the Vigilant Keep, a large room that has been filled with tables to hold the many samurai that have come to participate in the festivities. Most of these samurai are Toku bushi, but a large number are also ronin, including a number of former members of Toturi’s Army. In recent months, many bushi who fought alongside Toturi during his time as a ronin have left behind the Legion of the Wolf – all that remains of the formal structure of Toturi’s Army – and taken fealty with the Toku, strengthening the ties between the two groups. Those who have not already joined the Monkey are being wooed extensively by the young Minor Clan, anxious to boost its military capabilities as quickly as possible.

As honored guests representing their daimyo, the PCs are seated at the high table, along with Toku and his family and the other notable attendees. In particular, seated next to Toku is **Akodo Ginawa**, the daimyo of the Akodo family; on the other side of his wife, Toku Inao, is Inao’s younger brother, **Shosuro Yudoka**, the daimyo of the Shosuro family. Ginawa is a square-jawed block of a man, imposing despite not being terribly large, with graying temples and a perpetual squint. Despite his reputation as a swordsman of substantial skill, Ginawa does not carry a katana; the wakizashi marking his station as a samurai is paired only with a war fan, tucked casually into his obi.

By contrast, Shosuro Yudoka is tall and lean – that much one can see through the heavy, dark robes he wears. Beyond that, however, nearly all else is difficult to discern through the layers of draped cloth and concealment offered by his white mask, which leaves only his two dark eyes visible. Though he too carries a wakizashi to mark his station, he wears the katana as well, but shuns both in favor of a bizarre weapon rumored to have come from the Scorpions’ time in the Burning Sands: a lengthy polearm, with a silk-wrapped grip in the center like a staff and a pair of inwardly-curving blades on each end, one blade in each pair longer than the other. The effect resembles a scorpion’s

claws, and indeed reputation claims that Yudoka calls the strange weapon “Pincers and Tail.”

In addition to the two family daimyo, there are several other noteworthy guests. **Kakita Rensei**, a large and surprisingly well-muscled Crane bushi with a sharp broad nose, sits next to Yudoka, surrounded by the soft glow of a returned spirit. A **Lore: Heraldry**, **Lore: Katana** or **Lore: Crane / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, reveals that Kakita Yoshi is said to have approached Rensei to serve as Master Sensei of the Kakita Dueling Academy after the death of Kakita Kaiten, but much as he did during his first lifetime, Rensei refused, preferring instead to assume command of the Kakita House Guard. Though Rensei was trained by the Daidoji Iron Warriors, he nevertheless is reputed to have been one of the greatest masters of the secret techniques of the Kenshinzen in the Crane’s history.

Seated next to Ginawa is **Toku Choroihime**, one of the most successful of the Monkey Clan’s small cadre of diplomats. (Players may have encountered her during the adventure “Delicate Negotiations.”) Choroihime is small and rather more cute than pretty, with a glowing smile and a carefully maintained air of benign confusion. Despite the mon of the Bayushi Courtier School on her kimono, a large portion of those she meets still manage to come away with the impression of a bubble-headed and easily-manipulated young woman out of her depth in the courts. She is extremely effective.

On Choroihime’s other side is **Suzume Nizou**, another well-respected Minor Clan diplomat (and another character the PCs might have met in “Delicate Negotiations”). Nizou has a topknot almost as severe as the sharp-nosed expression he sends around the room at all parties equally. Nizou’s clothes are, as always, well-worn and threadbare, almost the point of disreputable in a formal court, but they serve their purpose as a reminder of both the Sparrow Clan’s traditional poverty and Nizou’s own well-known asceticism. Nizou is mildly disdainful of everyone, but he reserves particular distaste – right up to the point of insult, though he is careful not to go beyond that point – for individuals with unusual physical characteristics, including the Large Advantage and the Bad Sight (One Eye), Missing Limb, Blind, Disturbing Countenance, Bad Fortune (Evil Eye), or Lane Disadvantages. (Small does not bother him.) He also finds Isawa Ume’s behavior disturbing, and generally ignores everything she says.

Unfortunately for her, **Isawa Ume** is seated right next to Nizou, meaning she has little choice but to direct her conversation toward the PCs, who are all seated near

her. Ume may have encountered the PCs in either “New Beginnings” or “Personal Sacrifice,” and she warmly greets the PCs who helped her in either or both adventures. Ume is small and slight, though those who have met her before might notice she seems a bit more comfortable with travel than she did when they last encountered her. She wears her hair in a maiden’s foxtail, and though she is polite and earnest in her conversation, her habit of occasionally turning her head and muttering, as though to someone only she can hear, is somewhat off-putting.

During the course of the evening, Ginawa acknowledges any PCs who might have met him before, most likely as a result of the events of the adventure “Emperor’s Favor.” If any PCs asks about the boy Kaneka, Ginawa says only that he is “doing well,” in a tone that makes it clear that the topic is closed. If the PCs pursues the matter further, Ginawa grows visibly annoyed (and glances several times at Yudoka with concern); the PC in question must either let the matter drop or gain Ginawa as a Sworn Enemy.

Also while the guests are chatting with one another, Yudoka quietly leans close to any Scorpion PC and murmurs, “Cousin, if you have a moment this evening after our meal is concluded, I would like a word with you in my rooms.” This is, of course, not a request.

Nizou and Choroime are primarily engaged in conversation with one another throughout the meal, but if any PC has a Major Obligation to Choroime, she makes a point of speaking to them as well, smiling cheerfully and whispering in a conspiratorial fashion, “I still remember our talk during Miya Saruko’s lovely go game. You were so open with me! It’s such a rare thing. That was a wonderful moment, my friend, and I treasure the memory.” Otherwise, she and Nizou appear to be discussing the possibility of a marriage, though it is not clear whether it is to be between the two of them or between two other Monkey and Sparrow samurai. The focus of the discussion seems to be more on the effects of closer ties between the two Minor Clans than any personal connection.

For her part, Ume focuses her attention on the PCs. If any of them helped her deal with the spirit of Seppun Eitou during “Personal Sacrifice,” she volunteers that she has been researching what exactly happened then, trying to learn more about whatever lay behind the arrival of the spirit. She leaves it there, but a **Courtier** or **Investigation (Interrogation)** / **Awareness** roll, TN 15, suggests that she’s holding something back, and a **Courtier (Manipulation)** or **Etiquette (Conversation)** / **Awareness** roll, TN 20, and a well-roleplayed appeal

allows the PC to persuade her to open up about what she has found so far.

If she is convinced to discuss her findings, Ume tells the PCs – with some hesitation – that she believes the very order of the Spirit Realms has changed. “I do not know exactly how or precisely when, but I have come to suspect that there is in fact a new, tenth Spirit Realm, one that I have come to call ‘Kousoku no Chigiri,’ the Realm of Thwarted Destiny. I do not know if it came into existence as a result of Kaede-heika’s death or was merely reshaped by it, but there is no doubt there is some connection between the two. I believe it was to Kousoku no Chigiri that we were transported during the events of the Topaz Championship immediately after Kaede-heika died.” She tilts her head to the side suddenly, murmuring, “Yes, but that’s not what’s important right now,” as though speaking to someone else, before continuing, “I still have no proof or references from the texts to support my theory, but I have been traveling the Empire in search of those things. Perhaps I will find a shugenja or a record whose experiences match my own and we can learn more.”

Rumors

During the meal, it is possible to pick up news from across the Empire by listening to the table gossip. Any PC who wishes to listen for rumors may make 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:

- The Crane Clan appears to have accepted the demise of the Minor Clan Alliance as inevitable, and has instead moved their focus to building smaller ties between individual Minor Clans rather than trying to hold together a larger framework. Though this contributes to both the peace the Crane usually favor and their own network of allies, it does nothing to support the Mantis Clan, and the openness with which the Crane have abandoned the Minor Clan Alliance project is seen by many as a rebuke of the Mantis for allying with the Crab Clan in the aftermath of the Crane/Crab military conflicts last summer.
- Kitsu Motso has offered a formal retraction of his accusation, made last spring, that a Unicorn thief might have stolen the Mempo of the Void from the Castle of the Swift Sword. The Mempo was returned, and Motso has said he considers the matter closed. However, Ide Gokun, the new daimyo of the Ide family, has

not officially accepted Motso's apology, and word continues to spread of Utau magistrates scouring the Empire for any sign of the Armor of Earth, also lost around the same time.

- Miya Mashigai, the Imperial Regent, will host the first Imperial Winter Court of his reign as regent at the Imperial Palace in Otosan Uchi. All of the members of the Regency Council that selected him – Emerald Champion Kakita Toshiken, Miya family daimyo Miya Yumi, Imperial Chancellor Otomo Mitsuhide, Seppun family daimyo Seppun Hotaitaka and Jade Champion Kuni Utagu – are all expected to attend. Utagu's presence is likely to mean a much greater Crab role than would normally apply; the courtiers of the Empire are suddenly scrambling to deal with the consequences of this strengthening of Yasuki political influence.
- A great deal of talk has recently focused on the workings of Miya Rintaro, a shisha who has made waves in several courts over the last year. Formerly only of moderate note, Rintaro has begun working hard over the last year to raise his profile, tapping resources he had not previously displayed to build an impressive network of agents and information-gathering allies across the Empire.
- Despite her age, several samurai throughout the Empire have made offers of betrothal for the hand of Toku's two-year-old daughter, Miyako. Such arrangements are not unusual between samurai families, but Toku's wife Inao has refused to entertain any of them at this time, as she was persuaded by a fortune-teller who read the omens of her daughter's birth that Miyako had a great destiny before her. Inao has said that no marriage negotiation could yet take into account Miyako's eventual greatness, and thus any such discussions are premature.

An Unusual Dinner Conversation Topic

Eventually, Ume turns to Toku and addresses the Champion directly: *“Toku-sama, I was wondering if you might talk with us about your belief in the... I think you called it the ‘Age of Man?’ Your history is well-known to all of us, of course; you are nothing if not an example of how virtue and honor can allow a samurai to forge his or her own destiny.”* Toku laughs, waving the comment away, but Ume continues, *“Over the last several months, I have spoken to shugenja from around the Empire, and many have*

said the same thing: somehow, the tragic death of the Oracle of the Void has... disturbed... destiny. I had always been taught that the Heavens set our paths for us, and how well or poorly we walked that path determined our karma, but if it is true that destiny itself no longer functions as it should, perhaps it would be easier to say whether samurai can truly determine their own destiny, or whether the actions of chance and self-determination are merely expressions of the will of Heaven.”

Though her question might strike some samurai as blasphemous, suggesting that the Celestial Heavens might not have complete control over the world, the truth of the matter is that Shinseism is predicated at least partly on an assumption that the universe is not pre-determined. (A PC who makes a TN 15 **Lore: Theology / Intelligence** roll knows this; if a PC who fails the roll and challenges Ume on it, she gently corrects them, costing the PC 1 Glory.) According to Shinseism, every individual is assigned a role in the Celestial Order, called their dharma. The better the individual performs their role – the better a samurai performs their duties as samurai, the better a peasant does their duties as a peasant – the more karma they accrue, and the closer they come to leaving the cycle of reincarnation forever, joining the blessed ancestors in Yomi. Karma could not accrue if the universe were predetermined. Ume's question is aimed at the idea of dharma – whether a soul can set its own path and still accrue karma for following it. This is obviously a question of great significance to Toku, a peasant who pursued the dharma of a samurai instead.

Toku blinks in surprise at the question, but after a moment nods thoughtfully. “That's... an interesting question, Isawa-san. Perhaps my guests would like to comment?” He looks around at both the NPCs sitting near him and at the PCs as well.

None of the NPCs comment until at least one PC does, and Toku makes it politely clear he wants all of the PCs to offer some response, though it can be as simple as, “I don't think I have anything useful to contribute,” or the like. (This is basically the response offered by Yudoka, for instance.)

In between the PCs responses, the NPCs offer the following answers in whichever order seems to best fit the flow of the conversation.

Akodo Ginawa: “Looking back on it, I can only see two options for how I got here: real, Heavenly fate or sheer dumb luck. I certainly never had much control over where I was going, and there's no way in the world I would have ever picked it.”

Kakita Rensei: “If I understand things correctly, those of us who have returned through Oblivion’s Gate have already met our fates, for good or ill. If we are to have a destiny, it must be one that we make. What concerns me, however, is the possibility that one cannot reshape what is simply not there; how can a man walk his Path if he travels beyond its end?”

Suzume Nizou: “The wisdom of the Heavens simply cannot be grasped by mortals. If we appear to be outside Fate, it is only our own perceptions that are faulty, not the perfection of the Celestial Order. We know we are asked of us; if we accomplish that, we will rise in our next lives as we deserve.”

Shosuro Yudoka: “I am a soldier, not a philosopher. I leave such things to my Yogo and Soshi cousins.” (Inao looks momentarily disbelieving – she doesn’t for a second think that Yudoka lacks an opinion on the matter – but covers it quickly.)

Toku Choroihime: “Oh, we can do anything we set our minds to! That is the lesson Toku-dono taught us when he first founded the Clan, and it’s as true now as it was when he first said it! Destiny can’t hold us back, can it, Toku-dono?” (Toku looks a little nonplussed at this enthusiastic question, and doesn’t reply. Choroihime doesn’t seem to notice, continuing to beam around the table.)

Toku Inao: “Perhaps our fate readjusts to our own actions? The greater we prove ourselves, the more fate asks of us.”

Eventually, once everyone else has had their say, Toku responds, *“I think that Heaven has deliberately withdrawn its guidance, allowing each samurai to succeed or fail on the basis of his or her own adherence to bushido and submission to the Celestial Order. We have not been abandoned, but taught, just as Doppo-san is now taking those little children under his wing, and like any good sensei the Heavens are now allowing us, their students, to use what we have learned on our own as we will. The Day of Thunder was our gempukku – we are now ready to stand or fall on our own.”*

If at some point during the discussion someone suggests that dishonor allows one to “cheat” and get ahead, Toku responds to that claim specifically, arguing that such victories are temporary, and that the rules of the Celestial Order will vindicate the honorable in the end, as they did with Toturi. (Throughout the discussion, Toku would prefer to consider Toturi as a shining example of a mortal forging his own destiny rather than

himself.) Yudoka raises an eyebrow at this, exchanging glances with both his sister Inao and any Scorpion PCs, but he does not say anything, and Toku doesn’t seem to realize the Scorpion might not agree.

Once the discussion is finished, Ume thanks Toku for his insights and the conversation moves on to other topics. Shortly thereafter, Toku and his wife announce their intention to retire, and the feast winds to its conclusion. The PCs are scheduled to remain through the festival’s conclusion, two days hence, but the rest of the time is their own.

Meeting With Yudoka

Any Scorpion PCs in the group should remember that they have been requested to attend Shosuro Yudoka in his chambers after dinner. Yudoka forgoes the usual ceremony involved with meeting a family daimyo, seeing them as soon as they arrive and speaking with them alone, in the spacious guest rooms he has been given. The room seems unusually dark, and Yudoka appears quite comfortable in the shadows, perhaps again reminding the PCs that the castle was originally constructed by the Scorpion.

Beginning without preamble, Yudoka says, *“Thank you for seeing me this evening, cousin. You may have heard rumors of a... disagreement occurring within our Clan in recent months. These rumors are true, and I wish to address the matter with you directly. We are a Clan of duty and loyalty above all else, but every samurai must choose how best to show his loyalty, to pursue her duty. We are the Underhand of the Emperor and vital to the survival of the Empire, but we have come near to annihilation twice within a generation. Yojiro-dono believes we must find a way to do our duty without threatening the rest of the Empire, so they will not seek to destroy us a third time; he would have us make a greater show of our understanding of honor. I disagree – I say that fear of our wrath is what keeps the other Clans honest, and that we need not fear for our own destruction, for we have survived Fu Leng and the Lying Darkness both; our best course lies in increasing that fear, so that the Clans will not risk a third attempt. Please understand that I speak no treason, here, and I will brook none in my fellow Scorpion. We are all united under Yojiro-dono’s leadership. We merely have, as I have said, a disagreement, one that Yojiro-dono and I have spoken of directly many times. But I wish to hear your thoughts on the matter. What course would you suggest for our Clan?”*

If a PC hints that he/she is unwilling to take a position, particularly one in opposition to Yudoka's, the ninja points out, *"You will make enemies and friends no matter which side you choose, samurai, and if you choose none you will quickly find you have none but enemies, with no friends in sight. Speak your mind."*

Yudoka accepts any answer the PC chooses to give, as long as it contains some substance. Attempting to spin a position to make it sound more favorable to Yudoka does not provoke him, though those watching his eyes behind his mask might see a tightening, as though of disappointment, at such shadings. An outright lie, however, requires beating Yudoka's **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll of 10k4 (and he has the Emphasis) with the PC's **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness**. Assuming the PC lied in an attempt to seem as though they were in agreement with him, if Yudoka spots the lie, he barks a short laugh, then shakes his head. "You argue in favor of deceit while employing it yourself," he says. "Perhaps you should think more closely on the words you have just spoken." Regardless, once the PC has spoken their piece, Yudoka nods and sends them on their way.

Dreaming of Death

Once the PCs retire to their beds, have them all make Pure Void rolls. The TN is 25, but the PCs receive an additional +1k1 to the roll for every point of Destiny they may have sacrificed during the events of "Personal Sacrifice." (A PC who sacrificed their Touch of Destiny gains no bonus on this roll, as that destiny was artificial and did not truly tie to them.) A PC who meets or exceeds the TN has the following dream during the night:

You are standing in a vast room, a bizarre mix of architectures and styles, where a low hum of conversation and the rattling of dice swirl about you. In the vague distance, people of every description play dominoes, go games, dice games and more around low tables as mismatched as the building itself. Directly before you, however, are two people playing Fortunes and Winds: a young peasant man, perhaps 15 years old, and a middle-aged woman, with pure white hair and green-gold eyes, dressed in a well-made kimono suitable for a prosperous merchant or the okaa-san of a geisha house. The young man picks up the dice and throws them across the table; they rattle and spin, finally coming to rest showing the North Wind, the West Wind, the East Wind, the South Wind and the Sun. The boy raises his hands in delight – he has won. Abruptly, though, the Sun die flips over, revealing the Moon in its place, and the woman

shakes her head regretfully. The young boy grabs his throat, suddenly choking, and water dribbles out from between his lips. He collapses backward, dead, while the woman watches sadly. She scoops up the dice, murmuring, "When the rules change, no one wins," before turning to you and holding out the dice. They are all marked with the kanji for the Void. "Next?"

(PCs who have the dream and who also played through the adventure "New Beginnings" may recognize the woman as being very similar to the game-playing spirit they met during that adventure – there are several small differences in appearance, however, and it is impossible to say for certain if it is the same woman.)

Regardless of whether they experienced the dream, however, the PCs are awakened immediately afterward by the sound of a scream coming from the room of Isawa Ume, just down the hall from the rooms the PCs have been given. It is the shout of someone awakening from a nightmare, and no further outcry follows; nevertheless, the PCs will likely wish to investigate. (One of the castle's Toku bushi, patrolling the hallways, also looks down the passage with a curious and wary expression.)

If the PCs knock on her door, Ume answers it after a short pause, wearing a hastily-donned kimono and an embarrassed expression. "Forgive me for disturbing your rest, samurai-sans," she says, looking at her feet. "I had... an unpleasant dream, nothing more. Please, do not concern yourself with it further." Pressing the matter will exacerbate her shame and also bring it on the PC as well – a character who refuses to let it lie will eventually earn themselves a point of Glory loss. (If the PCs are not getting it, Ume will suggest, "Perhaps we can discuss this in the morning?" in a desperate tone.) Regardless, though she did in fact share the same dream as the PCs, she has no interest in speaking of her dream tonight.

Part Two: Destiny Unraveled

The following morning, Ume joins the PCs for breakfast, look far more composed than she did the night before. Even so, there are circles under her eyes, and she spends more time talking to the voices in her head than she usually does. Ume is also much more willing to discuss the dream than she was the night before, summarizing the events in a hushed tone before adding, "It felt... important. Like some of the echoes I hear through the Void sometimes. I don't think it was a simple dream."

If any PC admits having shared the dream, she looks worried but not especially surprised. She is willing to discuss possible meanings with the PCs, but refuses to settle on any interpretation, claiming that she and the PCs both still lack the necessary facts to draw a real conclusion from.

Before the discussion can advance too far, however, the morning meal is interrupted by a servant, bringing a request to Ume and any PC shugenja that they meet with Toku Maishu, the castle's chief magistrate at once. Ume agrees without hesitation, apologizing for her withdrawal; other PCs may accept or refuse the request as they choose, but courtesy would suggest they attend. If other PCs ask to come along, Ume does not object, and the servant does nothing to suggest that the magistrate will either.

Toku Maishu's office is in a part of the castle the PCs are not likely to have visited yet, and the office itself is both spacious and well-appointed, a marker of the Monkey Clan's prosperity. Maishu is an attractive woman, athletic and somewhat taller than usual, whose skin and hands bare the marks of many years' work outside the comfort of offices like these. Although she wears her daisho as any bushi would, her weapon of preference is a well-polished bo staff that she usually keeps leaning against her desk when she's not carrying it on duty. As long as the PCs attended the previous day's parade, they may make an **Investigation (Notice) / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, to recall that Maishu was escorting one of the children to the dojo; if asked, she proudly admits her 9-year-old son Butaka entered the Toku Bushi School yesterday.

When the shugenja enter her office, she rises from behind the table and bows respectfully; her status is such that the bow is probably deeper than it should be, but is an indication of both her piety and lack of confidence where the kami are concerned.

Maishu gets right to the point – she habitually speaks in short, brusque sentences. ***“Thank you for coming, samurai-sans. I need your aid. Investigation, handed to me this morning. Peasant death in the village. Drowned, but his clothes are dry. Found in his bed. No water anywhere. Looks like magic. Not my specialty. Was hoping you could help.”***

Ume looks surprised. “Did you say he drowned? In his own bed?” She looks worried, and murmurs “Yes, yes, that’s what I was thinking too,” to no one in particular.

Maishu has little additional information; the dead man was a well-respected and fairly wealthy villager named

Tsuki, but the report from the village headman doesn’t seem to suggest robbery as a motive. Though well aware that the testimony of the kami is not admissible in court, she nevertheless is hoping that Ume and any PC shugenja might be able to either confirm or rule out the possibility of magic being involved in the death, and perhaps point her in the right direction if magic is involved.

For her part, Ume immediately sees a connection between the drowned man in her dream and the mysterious death; as a result, she suggests bringing the rest of the PCs onboard as yoriki – particularly if they aided her during the events of “New Beginnings” or “Personal Sacrifice,” adding that she knows they are worthy samurai who have proven themselves in the past. Maishu nods at once, more than happy to take the shugenja’s recommendation. Another servant is immediately dispatched to request the presence of the remaining PCs, and once they arrive, Maishu gives them essentially the same speech she gave the shugenja originally.

What Troubles a Man

Assuming the PCs do not reject her offer to serve as her yoriki (those that do are out of the adventure until the events of Part Four), Maishu leads them into the castle village proper to meet with the village’s headman. The village is fairly large, more than 500 people, and quite prosperous; again, this reflects the good fortunes of the Monkey Clan overall, which has benefited greatly from its close ties to the Toturi dynasty.

As the PCs move through the village, the festival that began yesterday is still continuing, with music, games and merrymaking all around. However, a successful **Investigation (Notice) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, picks up an unusual undercurrent of resentment toward the samurai as they make their way through the village: the music pauses, peasants look down or away angrily, mutters trail behind them before the music starts up again. It is not directed at any one individual, but instead seems to be a function of the samurai’s status overall. This should strike the PCs as unusual; the Monkey are known for their good relationship with their peasants, as one might expect given Toku’s own history.

If any PC confronts the peasants about it, they behave with perfect humility, carefully denying that anything is wrong and offering no insult or other provocation. If, on the other hand, someone brings the matter to Maishu’s attention, she sighs, seeming unsurprised, but waves the matter away with a simple, “It’s temporary.

It'll pass." The village is typically quiet and peaceful, and Maishu does not believe this is likely to change soon; while she does seem to have some idea what's going on, she is initially unwilling to discuss the matter, as she thinks it is irrelevant to the investigation at hand.

As is usually the case, Saru no Keikai Torid-e Mura has a village headman, whose responsibilities include acting as a liaison between the peasants and their ruling samurai. For Saru no Keikai Torid-e Mura, that headman is Nikui, a former budoka who is unusually young for his position, only in his late thirties. Maishu takes Ume and the PCs to Nikui's house, the largest in the village, so that he can fulfill his role as liaison once more.

Nikui is handsome and fit, with hints of grey in his hair and short beard but no other signs of advancing age. He greets Maishu and her entourage with a stiff courtesy, bowing deeply and speaking in precise, wooden tones. His every action and movement scream resentment at having to assist Maishu, at having to deal with samurai in general; though he follows the rules of protocol to the letter, his words are spoken through clenched teeth, and every muscle is tense. Maishu either does not notice or pretends not to for the sake of propriety – she merely commands that Nikui lead the way to Tsuki's house, which he does in a stew of silent anger.

Though Maishu is willing to let the matter lie, some PCs may not be. If confronted, Nikui responds much as the other peasants do, denying that there is a problem and offering utterly insincere apologies if the samurai find his behavior lacking in any way. He is careful not to offer the PCs any actual justification to take him to task, and although some PCs might choose to berate or discipline him regardless, such a display will cost the PC 1 point of Glory (and between 0-3 points of Honor, depending on their Honor Rank) for allowing themselves to be provoked by a peasant. Only a Monkey Clan PC actually has the legal right to discipline Nikui in the first place; a member of any other Clan who attacks Nikui risks legal action for damaging another samurai's property.

If a PC brings the matter up, either through confrontation with Nikui directly or by addressing Maishu about the matter, the magistrate purses her lips before curtly dismissing Nikui, telling him she can manage the investigation without him. He nods, seeming relieved (though no less angry) and departs at once; once he is gone, Maishu sighs and offers an explanation:

"Nikui's got a daughter. Kimagureko. Until a few months ago, was being wooed by a bushi at the castle. Everyone was thrilled. Nikui thought his daughter would marry a samurai. Kimagureko apparently thought she might get to be a samurai-ko someday. Planned to ask Toku to elevate her after the marriage. Got ahead of herself, though. I found her in the woods, couple of months ago. Was trying to teach herself kenjutsu with her man's daisho. Arrested her, brought her before Toku-dono. Toku-dono was merciful: peasant with a katana is a death sentence. Toku-dono offered her a choice. Flogging as a peasant, or seppuku as a samurai. He offered his seppuku to Toturi after all, once the truth came out. Kimagureko took the flogging."

"Since then, girl's been all but suicidal. Scandal cost her the marriage. She's hardly left the house in months. Don't think Nikui's taking it well."

On hearing the story, Ume observes that it sounds as though Kimagureko tried to take her destiny into her own hands, and it backfired.

If any PC questions the "mercy" of Toku's sentence, particularly in light of his own history, Maishu insists that it was not only just but indeed far kinder than it needed to be. *"If she'd really been worthy of being samurai, she'd've performed the cuts. Her next incarnation would have been a samurai for sure. She failed. Shows she was just a peasant all along."* If pushed, Maishu readily admits that Nikui likely doesn't see it that way, and furthermore much of the village's current resentment toward the samurai is likely tied to a perception of hypocrisy on Toku's part, given his own past.

If any PC is curious, a **Courtier / Intelligence** roll, TN 15, suggests that Toku would have been extremely unlikely to grant Kimagureko's request to become samurai, despite any sympathy he might have felt for her desire. His past means he is extremely closely watched for signs that he is offering any further disrespect to the Celestial Order; while Toturi might have been willing to grant a request put forward by his oldest and dearest friend, the new regent, Miya Mashigai, would be far, far less likely to do the same.

If no PC brings the matter up, however, Maishu does not address the matter and Nikui remains with the group throughout the investigation, even (though still through gritted teeth) volunteering information about the Fingerless Man if the question of dark magics should arise.

The Thing That Never Happened

Tsuki's death was neither an accident nor murder, and yet in a sense it was both. A spirit from the Realm of Thwarted Destiny passed through the still-forming passage on the grounds of the Toku Bushi School dojo and, drawn to Tsuki's powerful destiny, stole that destiny from him. The lost destiny unraveled Tsuki's own history, causing him to die "retroactively" from an accident he suffered ten years previously when trying to cross a frozen river. The spirit has already returned to Kousoku no Chigiri and moved on along the Karmic Wheel, taking Tsuki's destiny with it forever. The consequences, however, have been left behind for the PCs to deal with.

Tsuki's house is extremely impressive for a peasant, rivaling Nikui's own house in size and exceeding it in grandeur. It could easily pass for a minor samurai's home, with both a well-tended garden and a tiny private shrine behind a privacy fence. It is clear that Tsuki was a man of surprising wealth for a commoner, so much so in fact that he could afford to pay a housekeeper, an aged widow named Anki. Anki was the one who found the body when she arrived at the house for work this morning – she has remained with it, to answer questions from the authorities, but in truth knows little. Tsuki was home working when she left the night before; when she returned before dawn, she found him in his current state. (An **Investigation [Interrogation] / Perception** roll, TN 10, confirms her truthfulness.) If asked about his relationships with the community, possible enemies or the like, Anki insists Tsuki was universally beloved. "Tsuki did not need a housekeeper, samurai-sama. I knew that as much as anyone. But he paid me to keep his house anyway, because he knew I had no one. That is just the sort of man he was..." She is deeply aggrieved by his death, and her quiet sobs continue as long as she is present.

Physical examination of the area produces no indications of what occurred. The bedroom, where the body was found, is spacious and well-appointed, if somewhat spare. A well-made table and wardrobe, both of rich cherry wood, along with the sturdy futon complete the room's furnishings. There are no obvious signs of struggle or other mishap; an **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll, TN 20, confirms that there are no non-obvious signs as well. The same roll also turns up a sizable string of koku hidden under some clothes in the wardrobe; it is clear both that Tsuki was a wealthy man and that no serious attempt at robbery took place. The only element out of place is a small water stain on the futon mattress, still slightly damp, near where Tsuki's head would have rested. Anki (or

Nikui, if he is still present) can confirm that the water came from Tsuki's mouth, and was spilling out in small rivulets when he was found. The body itself has already been collected by the village eta, and is being prepared for cremation.

If the PCs choose to visit the eta to inspect the body, they have time to do so before the cremation takes place. Tsuki was a broadly handsome man in his mid-twenties, but both his looks and his robust constitution have been lost in death. His face and throat are bloated and swollen, tinged with a nauseating blue-green color. (If a PC asks Ume to connect the body with the boy in her dream, or attempts to do so themselves, it requires a successful **Investigation (Notice) / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, thanks to both the age difference and the effects of drowning. If Ume or the PC makes the roll, however, they can say with some certainty that this man was the boy they saw the night before.) The eta, in fawning tones, tell the PCs that Tsuki drowned, which the PCs can confirm with a **Medicine / Perception** roll, TN 15. An autopsy, if the PCs wish to have the eta perform one, finds water in Tsuki's lungs, but neither the physical examination nor the dissection locates any other evidence of what might have happened; the body is not bruised or otherwise damaged in any way.

In the absence of physical evidence, and because Toku Maishu believes that magic might well have been involved, a PC shugenja or Ume will wish to Commune with the kami in the bedroom. There are air and earth kami in abundance, while the water kami in the futon are particularly likely to draw attention; on the other hand, finding fire kami requires several Raises, as the lamp on the low table has been out for some time, the wick long since gone cold. Ume is more than willing to Commune with the local kami, but she will leave the choice of questions to the PCs (with one exception: if no PC asks, she will put the question of whether kami were involved with the man's death to them directly, so as to answer Maishu's concerns). The PCs are of course free to ask any questions they wish.

No matter which element the PCs choose, the kami are edgy and agitated, seeming grumpy (in the case of earth kami) or nervous (for air, fire or water kami). Speaking with the earth or air kami (or fire kami, with enough Raises) allows the PCs to learn the following information:

- Tsuki was alone in his room when he died
- His death was not violent
- The kami were not involved in his death
- With several Raises for clarity or specific questioning, the kami will also say that a spirit – not a kami – entered the room and took in some of Tsuki's breath just before he died

Communing with the water kami on the futon produces a very different story, however. With their traditional images in place of words, the water kami will reveal that they were in an icy river just before they found themselves in Tsuki's lungs – they can also show an image of the boy who breathed them in, but it is a confused, shadowy image of a struggling young man drowning in a river. (Again, Ume or a PC who dreamt of the drowning boy the previous night might be able to guess that it is the same person, but it's impossible to say for sure.) The water kami, too, deny any involvement in killing Tsuki beyond simply being there as he drowned.

After Communing with the kami, a PC who noticed the kami's agitated state can make **Spellcraft** or **Lore: Maho / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, to realize that kami cannot usually sense the work of kansen, but the presence of such corrupted spirits often upsets them. They will not have heard of any particular maho spell that drowns people, however; hitting a TN 25 (on the Spellcraft roll only) does allow the PC to recall the existence of a potent prayer to the Water kami, called Suitengu's Wrath, that can accomplish such a thing, but that is all.

Regardless, once the shugenja have spoken with the kami, Maishu turns the PCs toward finding the core requirement of her investigation: testimony. What testimony she is searching for, however, depends on what the PCs have so far uncovered. No matter what, she asks the PCs to help her learn who might have wished Tsuki ill; if the specter of maho has been raised, however, she also asks them to help her find testimony that might point toward a tsukai.

In speaking with the peasants, the PCs encounter an unusual mix of reactions. Although the villagers still seem resentful about the presence of samurai, rumors have already begun to spread that Tsuki was murdered, and it would appear that Anki was correct: he was indeed widely beloved, and the peasants know that the magistrate and her assistants have the best of chance of catching the murderer. Thus, though they initially seem just short of hostile, once the PCs begin asking about Tsuki the peasants become quite helpful, and many ask several times if Tsuki was in fact murdered and whether the samurai will be able to catch whoever did it.

All the villagers with whom the PCs speak have basically the same response: Tsuki was extremely well-liked. He was generous, friendly, a pillar of the community – in fact, he was, after the Toku family itself, the largest sponsor of the festival currently taking place in the village. What little ill-feeling the PCs can

pick up on seems to be good-natured envy of Tsuki's extreme good fortune. As an example, one peasant tells the following story:

“Things have always gone his way, it seems! Ever since that time when Tsuki fell through the ice. He was trying to cross a frozen river one day about a decade ago, when suddenly – bam! The ice gave out and the current swept him under the ice sheet. His brother and sister were with him, but they couldn't reach him without risking the ice themselves, and he couldn't break through the ice from underneath in order to climb out. All of a sudden, though, this tree leaning over the river suddenly loses a huge branch to the ice, which crashes down and through the ice right downstream from where Tsuki was! He climbed up the branch and got out, and the worst he had to deal with was a cold from the water! Since then, seems like so many things went his way. Wish I had luck like that.”

Tsuki appears to have had exceptional luck in nearly every aspect of his life; he was a skilled carpenter (he helped design and build the new dojo for the Toku Bushi School), he had several worthy offers for marriage, and he seems to have been friends with everyone in the village. The PCs can find no one willing to say an unkind word about him.

If the PCs ask specifically about enemies, the villagers initially insist that Tsuki had none. An **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll, TN 20, reveals that they are holding something back, however, something involving a possible suspect that they do not wish to discuss for some reason. A second roll at the same TN, or succeeding at a TN 30 on the first roll, convinces one of the peasants to open up, looking extremely uncomfortable:

“There is a... a monk, or so he calls himself, in the woods outside the village. We call him the Fingerless Man, since he... well, is missing some of the fingers on one hand. A few months ago, he came into town and demanded on Tsuki's doorstep that he go into the forest and build the Fingerless Man a temple. Tsuki didn't like him any more than the rest of us do – he's.... he's just creepy, samurai-sama – and told him no. He was working on the new dojo, anyway, but I think he would have said no regardless. I sure would have. The Fingerless Man told him he'd be cursed to Jigoku for refusing the work, then ran out of town cackling like a madman.” The peasant admits that the Fingerless Man strikes her as the tsukai type if anyone she's ever met does.

If the possibility of maho has already been raised, Maishu will ask the PCs to help her find testimony related to a tsukai specifically. Here, the villagers react differently – they are clearly uncomfortable as soon as the subject comes up, and it takes no skill at questioning whatsoever to realize they are afraid of something. Simple pushing on the topic is enough to get them to open up, fearfully:

“There’s a hermit in the woods south of here, an old man who claims to be a monk. He’s not right, though, samurai-sama; he’s twisted, in body and in mind. The children in the village scare each other with stories about him. They call him the ‘Fingerless Man,’ because the stories say his fingers have all rotted off and worms crawl in and out of the stumps. I don’t believe such stuff, of course, but... I don’t go in that part of the woods either. If there’s a tsukai here somewhere, sama, it’s him, no question.” Once the villagers have admitted the existence of the Fingerless Man, it only requires an **Investigation (Interrogation)** / **Awareness** roll, TN 15, to get them to tell the story of the Fingerless Man demanding a temple from Tsuki.

Part Three: Destiny Unearthed

With the information about the Fingerless Man in hand, Maishu is more than willing to conclude that she has found her suspect. (If the PCs argue that there is something else going on, Maishu responds that the possibility of a tsukai must be addressed at once regardless, but she fully expects to find that the two are linked.) If Nikui has been sent away, she summons him again – once he is present, she orders him to gather the village doshin and prepare to accompany her and the PCs to confront the Fingerless Man. Nikui is not happy about the idea of spending more time in the company of samurai, but he does seem anxious to have the “monk” dealt with. While the doshin are gathered (there is one peasant peacekeeper for each PC, +2 if the table is mostly Rank Three), Maishu suggests that the PCs make whatever preparations they feel are appropriate for possibly confronting a maho user; she is perfectly willing to authorize the wearing of armor and carrying of any weapons the PCs might have available for this purpose. Should the PCs question whether the doshin are necessary, Maishu replies, “Who knows what we’ll find. We might need a cleaning crew, if nothing else. We go prepared, samurai-sans.”

Nikui and his men know precisely where to find the hermit, and they lead the way unerringly through the woods south from the village. The journey takes about

an hour, and occurs in a strained silence unless the PCs attempt to break it. Maishu walks in grim determination, while Ume looks around anxiously as though someone is whispering while walking back and forth behind her and the peasants work to hold back their fear at what is coming.

With little warning, you step out into a broad clearing, roughly oval-shaped, about 50 yards long and half that wide. The clearing is centered on a small spring that feeds a stream flowing west and south, away from where you are standing. Near the clearing’s far edge, the stream has been diverted to flood a tiny rice paddy, and a small hut and uneven-looking shed have been built close beside. There is a small garden between the two buildings, and a rough pen contains a flock of tut-tutting hens and a single, rotund pig.

There are two people near the pen, apparently taking care of the animals. One is an older man, with a bald head, hooked nose and impossibly long and scrawny arms; his joints bulge disturbingly from limbs that are fair to thin to support them, and though he stoops with age, it still seems as though his fingers would brush his knees if he stood upright. There are indeed no fingers on his left hand, though it looks more the result of some old injury than the work of crawling worms. The other is a young girl, perhaps 11 years old. Though she has no physical deformities the way the older man does, the girl is unsettling in her own way: she is bizarrely pretty, with flawless skin the white of finest porcelain, beautiful overlarge eyes, the slightest hint of a natural blush on her cheeks, and shockingly ruby red lips, all completely unsuited to her rural, earthy surroundings. She looks more like a finely-made child’s doll brought to life than an actual girl, for all that she wears a simple peasant’s tunic and pants as she tosses feed to the chickens.

As you enter the clearing, the old man looks up and spots the large group of armed samurai and doshin. His reaction is immediate. Reaching out his impossibly long left arm, he wraps it around the neck of the girl, jerking her toward him with careless brutality. Even as she struggles, he produces a knife in his right hand and slashes her across the throat. Dark red blood pours across her paper-white skin as he shouts foul words that seem to twist the air itself; even as your mind rebels at the sound, the earth beneath your feet tosses and heaves, opening into a chasm that swallows Nikui and the doshin whole before slamming shut like a hungry maw.

The PCs must make Earth rolls, TN 10 + (5x the average PC Rank) to avoid being caught in the tsukai’s spell as well. As it was centered on the group of

doshin, the effect is weaker on the PCs – those who fail their rolls suffer 2k2 Wounds and are half-buried in the earth, requiring a Complex Action to dig themselves free. Once a PC has freed themselves, they are still considered prone until they take a separate Simple Action to stand up. Ume and Maishu both fail their rolls; they will spend the first two Rounds of the following combat freeing themselves and readying for battle.

Once the spell's effects resolve, the actual combat begins. The Fingerless Man is roughly 130 feet from the PCs when the fight begins and only about 20 feet from the comparative safety of the forest. On the first Round, the tsukai uses his own blood to animate the bodies of the crushed doshin as zombies, who immediately burst up out of the earth; there is one zombie per PC (+2 if the table is mostly Rank Three), the same number as the doshin. (Casting this spell costs the Fingerless Man Wounds equal to 2x the number of doshin, minus 1.) The zombies too must dig themselves out of the earth with a Complex Action and are prone until they stand up. Their bodies clearly show the crushing effects of the hungry earth, but they are not slowed by their apparent injuries; indeed, the zombies always Full Attack. On the second and third Rounds, the Fingerless Man flees into the forest – by the second Round, assuming he has not been stopped, the Fingerless Man has cover from the trees, and by the end of the third Round, he has fled far enough that he can use other magics to hide his trail and disappear. The Fingerless Man does not use his other spells unless cornered and forced to fight.

Doshin Zombies

Air 0	Earth 3	Fire 0	Water 1
Reflexes 1		Agility 2	Strength 3
Initiative: 1k1		Attack: 6k3 (fist, Complex, Full Attack)	
Armor TN: 0 (unarmored, Full Attack Stance)		Damage: 3k2 (fist)	

Reduction: 5

Taint Rank: 3

Special Abilities: *Beheading:* A zombie can normally only be killed by hacking it apart (dealing enough Wounds to reduce it to Dead). However, it can be destroyed instantly by severing its head. This requires 3 Raises for the Called Shot maneuver and then inflicting at least 18 Wounds. (For a Low Rank table, the Full Attacking zombies also grant a Free Raise for this maneuver.)

Fear 3.

Undead.

Wounds: 45: Dead

The Fingerless Man

Air 1	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 2
Reflexes 3				
Honor 0.2		Status -10.0	Infamy 1.7	
Initiative: 5k3		Attack: 5k3 (tanto, Complex)		
Armor TN: 25 (in Defense Stance)		Damage: 4k1 (tanto)		

Reduction: 0

Taint Rank: 3.7

Skills: Animal Handling 2, Athletics (Running) 1, Craft: Farming 2, Defense 4, Hunting (Survival) 3, Investigation (Notice) 2, Jiu-jitsu 1, Knives (Tanto) 2, Lore: Maho 4, Lore: Shadowlands 3, Sincerity (Deceit) 2, Spellcraft 2, Temptation 2

School/Rank: None (Insight Rank 2)

Spells Known: *Earth:* Fury of the Earth (ML 4), Pain (ML 2), Spreading the Darkness (ML 2), Summon Undead Champion (ML 1); *Fire:* Bleeding (ML 1); *Water:* Curse of Weakness (ML 2)

Shadowlands Powers: Distorted Limbs (mutation), Blessing of the Dark One, Master of Blood, Unearthly Regeneration (regenerates 3 Wounds per Round)

Wounds: 18: +0; 27: +3; 36: +5; 45: +10; 54: +15; 63: +20; 72: Down; 81: Dead

Just as the combat ends, the earth heaves one last time as a final figure crawls up out of it: Nikui, covered in dirt but seemingly unharmed by the tsukai's spell! His surprise at being alive is enough to make him forget for a moment that he is angry at samurai. *"When I fell, I somehow got caught in a pocket in the earth – it was tight, but I just got tossed about a bit. There were cracks in the soil, so I could see a little, and I just used my tanto to dig my way out."* He pauses, then shrugs. *"Pretty lucky."*

Ume stares at him for a long time before nodding slowly. "Yes... Lucky..."

Investigating the tsukai's hut and shed reveal an abattoir and the legacy of what is clearly a lifetime of corruption, including blasphemous texts, a small collection of maho scrolls (including all the spells listed in the Fingerless Man's stat block), and "souvenirs" from a number of past murders. Though nothing in the area seems to directly connect the Fingerless Man to Tsuki's death, Maishu is extremely comfortable concluding that she and the PCs have resolved the matter permanently. She orders the buildings burned, and commands a return to the Vigilant Keep. If the Fingerless Man is dead, she is extremely satisfied; if he escaped, she plans to contact the Jade Magistrates at once in order to arrange a manhunt. Regardless,

Maishu promises to speak highly of all the PCs in her report, but considers the investigation closed.

Part Four: Destiny Unbound

That night is due to be the PCs' last as the guests of the Monkey Clan. Unfortunately, it is destined to be even less calm than the night before, as the PCs' sleep is once again interrupted by a scream from Isawa Ume's sleeping quarters. Unlike the previous night, however, this is not a shout of terror or discomfort, but a battlecry.

As they enter the castle corridor, just ahead of the Toku guards patrolling the keep, they see a half-dressed Ume pursuing a semi-transparent figure from her room, a prayer scroll clutched tightly in her hand. Although translucent, the figure does not seem to be a ghost; his feet are clearly visible, he is not wispy or unusually pale, and so on. In fact, he is clearly recognizable as a tall, thin man, with a narrow, almost pinched face; he is reeling as though injured, with thin trails of smoke rolling up from incorporeal but still burnt skin. Any PC who played in the adventure "Bonds of Fate" can immediately identify the figure as Agasha Koishi, the shugenja who attempted to kill Mirumoto Fukuro, the son of Mirumoto Takejiro, in order to save Takejiro from a fated death at his son's hand. The yellow-white glow of a returned spirit – or, more accurately, of a spirit that has passed bodily from one Realm to another – surrounds him, as it did not do in life. Regardless of whether the PCs recognize him, however, Koishi's eyes hold no recognition as his gaze falls on the PCs – instead, Koishi's expression is one of feral, animal hunger, with nothing of a samurai, indeed almost nothing human, in it whatsoever.

After a single moment to lock gazes with the PCs, Koishi dashes through the castle wall as though it were not there. Ume, still struggling to get her kimono tied properly, shouts, "After him! He tried to kill me, just as he killed Tsuki!" Even as she shouts, she runs down the passageway in hot pursuit, ignoring the pair of confused Toku bushi she rushes past, coming to discover the source of the commotion.

The spirit was drawn to Ume because of her Great Destiny; denied the chance to take her destiny by Ume's magic, it now seeks another powerful destiny within the village itself. Though in life Agasha Koishi was an intelligent and strong-willed man, a powerful

shugenja and a noted scholar, his experiences trapped in the Realm of Thwarted Destiny have stripped all that away from him, leaving little but a maddened drive for the sense of connection that his separation from the Karmic Wheel has torn from him. As a result, his behavior is more like a hunting beast than a skilled and thoughtful samurai; he pauses to "scent the air" as he closes in on his quarry, is basically incapable of speech, and his face is a rictus, frozen in a bestial snarl. Nevertheless, as an incorporeal spirit, he can make his escape from the castle far quicker than can the PCs, who must be concerned with obstacles such as walls.

By the time the PCs reach the streets of the village, they have likely fallen some distance behind the frenzied Koishi. Each PC is a number of Rounds equal to (8 minus their Water Ring) behind Koishi – while it is likely that the PCs grabbed weapons as they investigated Ume's screams, other actions such as readying armor or heading to the stables for a horse should increase the number of Rounds behind appropriately. As the PCs chase Koishi through the darkened streets of Saru no Keikai Torid-e Mura, they may make an **Athletics (Running)** / **Water** roll, TN 15, to reduce the number of Rounds behind they by 1, plus an additional 1 for every successful Raise. (A character with a mount uses the mount's Water instead of their own, as modified by any ranks of Swift the mount might possess, and rolls Horsemanship instead of Athletics.) A character under the effects of a spell that improved movement speed gains Free Raises on the Athletics roll equal to the Mastery Level of the spell; likewise, any Technique or other effect that increases or decreases a character's Water Ring for the purposes of movement modifies the character's Water Ring for the purposes of the Athletics roll as well. If using the spell will actually increase a PC's Water Ring, Ume will use Ebbing Strength to aid in that PC in the pursuit, falling behind herself in consequence.

Unfortunately, as Koishi is currently incorporeal, there is likely little the PCs can do to affect him even when they catch up to him. Only Void spells, spells that specifically affect spirits or spells with the [Crystal] or [Jade] descriptors can actually affect him (Ume has a special Technique allowing her to grant the [Crystal] descriptor to her spells, but she is wary of actually "killing" Koishi, having badly hurt him already with Fires From Within); similarly, only weapons of crystal, jade or obsidian can touch him. Without such benefits, all the PCs can do is follow him.

Koishi rushes through the village, heading more-or-less directly for the town's market square, the functional center of town (the geographical center being the Vigilant Keep itself). Here, despite the post-midnight

hour, the revelry of the festival continues in slow fits and starts; a small group of musicians plays around a fire in one corner, while a small knot of celebrants cluster around the town's well in the middle of the open space. It is to this group that Koishi throws himself, as a starving dog might leap upon a piece of thrown chicken. The glow that surrounds him makes him easy to spot and to recognize as something unearthly, and several of the peasants scream and throw themselves out of his path. As they do so, Koishi's target, at the center of the group, becomes visible: Nikui, the village headman.

Nikui stares uncomprehending at the specter before him, opening his mouth as though to shout an order or scream in fear, but neither occurs. Instead, a strange yellowish mist appears around his mouth and nostrils, a mist that flows through the space between the two men and into the spirit's mouth as it inhales deeply. Nikui clutches at his chest and throat as if he were suddenly unable to breathe freely, staggering back, but the spirit follows him steadily, and the mist continues to flow between them, out of Nikui and seemingly into the spirit's incorporeal lungs.

The PCs may attempt to intervene, but unless they can affect Koishi, they are helpless to stop the process – merely moving Nikui does nothing, and dragging him away means only that Koishi will follow, still inhaling Nikui's destiny. (A PC who either sacrificed their destiny or watched someone else do so during the events of "Personal Sacrifice" will recognize this process as similar to what they experienced at that time.) It takes Koishi three Rounds to finish inhaling Nikui's destiny, during which time more of the PCs might catch up; once he is finished, however, a horrible transformation befalls the headman.

As the last wisps of the yellowish mist peel away from Nikui's mouth and disappear into the spirit's, Nikui suddenly jerks sideways, his body seeming to collapse in on itself as though the very air were crushing him. Blood spurts from wounds across his body, and in the space of an instant, a smashed and broken corpse lies on the ground before you. The body is covered in dirt and earth as if it had just been dug out of its grave, reminding you all too clearly of the fate suffered by the doshin only earlier today.

As Nikui dies, the animalistic glare in Koishi's eyes fades away, leaving the light of intelligence and awareness behind. The shugenja, now apparently conscious of himself and his surroundings, stares with sorrow and regret at the body before him (this takes a Round). If any PCs are present, he looks up at them, shaking his head and apparently battling tears, before

turning and running off once more. Now he heads in a different direction – toward the Toku Bushi School dojo, where the portal back to Kousoku no Chirigi waits. Any PCs who caught up with him during his confrontation with Nikui can keep pace; all others are still the same number of Rounds back, which will affect their possible actions once Koishi reaches the dojo grounds.

Part Five: Destiny Restored

Although the passage between the Realms is located at one specific spot within the dojo's walls, the metaphysical impact touches everywhere within the dojo grounds. Ningen-do and Kousoku no Chigiri "overlap" to an extent as soon as one passes through the dojo gates; though this has no real impact on the PCs, it has a significant effect on Koishi. The instant he is steps onto the dojo grounds, he loses his incorporeality and is affected by his substantial Wound Penalty. Now is the time for the PCs to act, as Koishi is suddenly moving much more slowly and will be greatly hampered if he tries to fight back.

The fleeing spirit suddenly gains solidity as it steps through the dojo gates, but it also stumbles under the weight of wounds it did not seem to feel before. It struggles on, however, and its ultimate goal is clear: in the air over the dojo's practice field, some thirty or so paces away, a vast section of the world has been torn away. Something silvered and misty, like a mirror brought into a warm house on a cold day, taller than a man and three times as wide, ripples and shifts just above the hard-packed dirt. Within it or beyond it – you cannot tell the difference – vague, indistinct humanoid figures claw at the barrier, making it stretch and flex under their hands. "A portal!" Ume gasps. "To one of the Spirit Realms!"

Koishi drags himself toward the passage, and it is up to the PCs to stop him if they want answers. To that end, Ume shouts a warning not to kill him; she is aware that his "death" would only return him more directly to Kousoku no Chirigi, where he would return at once to the karmic wheel and Nikui's destiny, like Tsuki's before him, would be lost forever. The passage is 90 feet away from the dojo gates, and with his Wounds, Koishi can manage no more than 30 feet per Round.

Agasha Koishi (spirit of Thwarted Destiny)

Air 2 Earth 4 Fire 4 Water 3 Void 3
Reflexes

Initiative: 6k3**Spellcasting:** Fire 9k4,
Earth 8k4, Air 6k2,
Water 6k3**Armor TN:** 26 (in
Defense Stance)**School/Rank:** Agasha (Dragon) Shugenja 3**Skills:** Athletics (Throwing) 4, Battle 1, Calligraphy
(Cipher) 3, Defense 3, Divination 4, Engineering 4,
Jujutsu 2, Kenjutsu 1, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine 3,
Spellcraft 5**Mastery Abilities:** +1k0 to Spellcasting Rolls; may
keep a Full Defense roll result for following rounds**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Paragon of Duty /
Ascetic, Cursed by Maiga no Musha (actually Kousoku
no Chigiri)**Personal Creations:** Due to long study, Koishi may
create potions with spells that have a Target of
“Personal” by spending a Void Point when he creates
the potion.**Spells:** (Koishi has no spell scrolls or potions, and thus
can only cast the spells he has memorized.)Commune; *Earth:* Grasp of Earth (ML 2); *Fire:* The
Fires from Within (ML 2), Wall of Fire (ML 4)**Wounds:** already at 60:+20; 68: Down; 76: Dead

Koishi makes little attempt to fight back if attacked, focusing his attention on trying to reach the spirit passage. However, he does not fight if the battle becomes hopeless – once reduced to Down or if grappled and unable to break free on his first try, he surrenders. If he makes it to the portal or the PCs should happen to kill him, the adventure is not over: they lose the chance to save Nikui’s life and to find out what Koishi knows about the portal, but the passage must still be closed.

Assuming the PCs defeat and capture Koishi without killing him, they are free to interrogate him for information. Some of the possible questions they might ask and answers he gives follow:

- Who are you? *“My name is Agasha Koishi. I am... I was the advisor to Mirumoto Takejiro. My lord labored under the threat of a fated doom, but I learned of a way that fate might be changed. I tried to save my lord, but failed him instead. I died trying to change destiny, only to find that destiny was the one thing I could not exist without.”* He will not give more details about Takejiro’s “fated doom” if the PCs do not already know the story.
- What did you do to Nikui? *“He had a strong destiny, much like yours” – he motions*

toward Ume, who looks shocked at the statement – “strong enough to call to me from one Spirit Realm to another. I took that destiny from him, in order to replace my own. Without destiny to protect him, a fate he had avoided – death from a tsukai’s spell – claimed him after all.”

“You are from Kousoku no Chigiri,” Ume murmurs, and Koishi laughs. “Thwarted Destiny?” Yes, that’s it precisely.”

- Why would you do such a thing? *“I regret my actions, but I had no choice. You cannot imagine what it is like. Think... think what it would be like to have someone else’s arm attached to your shoulder, or to see a stranger’s face in the mirror when everyone else seems to recognize you. Madness is not the word. It is a splinter in your soul, a piercing pain that you cannot dig into and pull out, no matter how hard you try. I could not have resisted the pull of that destiny any more than a drowning man could keep from sucking in air when he reaches the surface of the pond.”*
- Did you kill Tsuki as well? *“No. That was another, one no doubt long gone. There are more of us than you can imagine over there. I was not the first to cross, though most don’t have the strength of will to manage it.”*

If the PCs threaten Koishi with death or attempt to somehow intimidate him, they find him completely immune to such concerns. As long as he has a destiny, he has what he wants – killing him will only speed him back to the Karmic Wheel, which is where he is trying to go anyway.

Eventually, if the PCs do not ask, Ume will speak up: “Can you release Nikui’s destiny and undo what you have done?”

Koishi shakes his head violently. *“I could, but I will not. I won’t go back to where I was before. I need to move on, to rejoin the Karmic Wheel. I would rather endure the fires of Jigoku than return without a destiny of my own. Besides, I do not know if you would want me to. I can... taste... his destiny, where it would have led him. He was destined to one of the leaders of a great peasant revolt, one that will shake the Empire. Without him, the revolt will be weakened. Would you really want that man back, to take up his destiny once more?”* (In case the PCs are not certain, both Ume and Koishi believe and will confirm that if Koishi were to release Nikui’s destiny, Nikui would no longer be dead. “Fate is a strange thing,” is Koishi’s only comment on the matter.)

Ume turns to the PCs. *“Leader of a revolt or not, Nikui’s death is a gross violation of the will of Heaven,” she argues. “We must do something. I was once in a position not so much different from Nikui’s, and a noble group of samurai”* – she nods to any PCs present who were with her during “Personal Sacrifice” – *“gave up a small part of their fates in order to repair another spirit’s link to the Karmic Wheel. We could do the same again now. Nikui is the victim of this spirit, but he is himself a victim of metaphysical accident that continues to tear away at the Dharma of the world. We must help him – help them both!”* Ume seems remarkably focused and clear during this speech – whatever voices she might normally be hearing, she does not seem to notice them now.

It is up to the PCs what choice they make. If the PCs do decide to give up their destinies, they (as a group) must sacrifice a total of three “Destiny Points” to satisfy Koishi – returned spirits cannot give up Destiny Points, however. As in “Personal Sacrifice,” a character with Touch of Destiny may instead choose to give up that Advantage to “pay” the whole cost of the destiny, freeing the rest of the group from the need to pay any Destiny Points at all. A PC who has Great Destiny or Dark Fate can also give that up – doing so, however, means the PC dies instantly if he/she has ever used the Great Destiny or Dark Fate to stay alive (such a player is entitled to a substantial Karma award bonus for their next character, and should contact the Campaign Admin to discuss the matter).

Assuming the PCs inquire exactly what it is they are being asked to do, Ume describes the situation this way: *“The destiny these spirits can assemble from your own consists of key moments in your fate, times when your destiny would have guided or protected you and perhaps now will not. Merely missing your destined tie to these moments may mean they never occur, or it may mean that they will have some other, potentially dangerous, outcome. This is the price you are being asked to pay for the sake of restoring the Celestial Order.”*

If no PC is willing to give up their destiny, or the PCs will not give up enough of their destiny to meet the required three Destiny Points, Ume will volunteer to give up her Great Destiny. This will kill her, as she should have died during the events of New Beginnings. As soon as she makes the offer, she stiffens, tilts her head, and then says, “No! This is the will of the Heavens, and I will see it done!” Talking her out of the sacrifice requires meeting a TN 45 on a **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness** roll. Arguing Toku’s position – that we are meant to make our own destiny

now – earns the PCs a Free Raise, while appeals to “the good of the Empire” by letting Nikui stay dead instead increase the TN by 5 – “the Empire is made better, samurai, by the struggles we face. The easy way is not the best way; you do not forge a sword with gentle taps.”

If the PCs agree to the exchange, or if Ume does instead, Koishi asks all participants to swear on their honor that the exchange will go through. If they do, he nods, then slowly exhales a yellowish mist that floats up into the air before quickly dissipating. The hungry, frenzied look returns to his eyes, but any PCs who agreed to give up their destiny for him feel a sudden tugging in their chests, as though they were being squeezed. The same yellowish mist appears around their mouths, and is quickly inhaled by Koishi.

Note: if a PC attempts to take advantage of the moment when Nikui’s destiny has been released but Koishi has not gained a replacement, they may do so – but Koishi will defend himself if possible, and breaking the agreement will cost the character 1 pip of Honor for every Honor Rank they possess, or double that loss if they gave their oath to Koishi. Such a character will also earn Sworn Enemy: Isawa Ume.

When Fate Closes a Door...

If he has a new destiny, Koishi submits to whatever fate the PCs decree for him. His preference is to simply pass through the portal once more, but if the PCs demand seppuku or some other punishment for him, he accepts without hesitation. Regardless, once Koishi’s fate is settled, Ume turns her attention to the matter of the still-open spirit passage. (If she gives up her own Great Destiny, she relates the necessary information before the transfer occurs.)

“We need to seal this passage before any other spirits come through it,” she tells the PCs. “The portal will be ‘anchored’ in Ningen-do by the local kami and dragon lines. We need to locate and disrupt – not necessarily destroy, just move or change in some way – the anchors in order to cause the portal to come adrift. By sensing the kami, we should be able to find them and deal with this quickly.”

The anchors are non-obvious – just looking won’t find them. On the other hand, Sense spells will – a Sense [Element] spell can find the anchor of that element, while Sense Void can be used to find any of the anchors as a Simple Action while concentration is maintained. Disrupting an anchor is a Simple Action – they are all within 20 feet of the portal (assume the PCs can reach

them with a Free and Simple Move action). Any shugenja who locates an anchor can point to it or call out its location as a Free Action so that the other PCs can deal with it.

The anchors are as follows:

Air: a banner on the edge of the practice field, shifting very slightly without any wind to blow it

Earth: a stone lodged in the earth near the center of the field

Fire: a burning coal in the brazier within the small shrine at the edge of the practice field

Water: a small puddle filled with rainwater from a few nights before, in a small depression off to one side

Though the actual process of finding and disrupting the anchors is fairly straightforward, the situation becomes much more complicated as soon as Ume and any PC shugenja begin readying their energies to cast the spell. The spirits of Kousoku no Chirigi seem to somehow know what is occurring, and they lunge against the stretching barrier with a newfound desperation. Several of them manage to tear through it, and the portal grows even larger as they do so.

Have the PCs roll initiative when the shugenja begin to cast their spells. On that Round, on their rolled initiative, a number of spirits equal to half the number of PCs (+2 if the table is Rank Three) tear through the passage and into Ningen-do. One of these is an Elite Spirit. During the Reactions Stage of every Round (including the first), another spirit tears through the portal. When a new spirit arrives, roll a die – on an 8+, the new spirit is also Elite. All the spirits attempt to flee the dojo grounds; they are 90 feet from the gates, but will typically do nothing but take Move Actions to run toward the exit. (Elite spirits move more tactically, shifting Stances as appropriate and fighting their way through enemies if needed.) If they reach the dojo gates, they become incorporeal and are essentially unstoppable. The PCs must disrupt the anchors and simultaneously keep the spirits from escaping. When the spirits are “killed,” they dissolve into the same grayish fog that covers the portal as they return to Kousoku no Chigiri.

Typical Spirit

Air 1	Earth 1	Fire 1	Water 1	Void 1
Honor N/A		Status N/A	Glory N/A	
Initiative: 2k1		Attack: 2k1 (unarmed, Complex)		
Armor TN: 12 (unarmored, in Defense Stance)		Damage: 1k1 (unarmed)		
Reduction: 5 (0 against				

crystal, jade or obsidian)

Special Abilities: The spirit begins suffering movement penalties (a Simple Move Action becomes Complex, and a Free Move Action becomes Simple) when he or she enters the +10 Wound Level.

Wounds: 5: +5; 10: +10; 15: Dead

Elite Spirit

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 2	Water 2	Void 2
Reflexes		Agility	Strength	
3		3	3	
Honor 4.5		Status N/A	Glory N/A	

Initiative: 4k3 **Attack:** 6k3 (katana, Complex) or 5k3 (unarmed, Complex)

Armor TN: 20 (unarmored) **Damage:** 7k2 (katana) or 3k1 (unarmed)

Reduction: 5 (0 against crystal, jade or obsidian)

Special Abilities: The spirit begins suffering movement penalties (a Simple Move Action becomes Complex, and a Free Move Action becomes Simple) when he or she enters the +10 Wound Level.

GMs are encouraged to modify Elite Spirits to provide a suitable challenge to their tables, including adding Rank 1-3 Techniques, armor, additional suitable Skills, etc.

Wounds: 15: +5; 30: +10; 40: Dead

When the PCs finish disrupting the anchors, the portal “mists over,” becoming much cloudier, its borders less distinct, until in moments it seems as though it is only a patch of fog slowly drifting apart in the night air. If the PCs stop all the spirits the same round that they finish disrupting the portal, all is well – no spirit comes through the portal on the Round that it is disrupted. If, on the other hand, they disrupt the portal but the spirits are still around, the spirits remain corporeal for one more Round before becoming incorporeal and fleeing – the spirits remain physical for that Round, but visibly begin to “fade” and become transparent over the course of the Round. If need be, Ume will warn the PCs about the time limit. Any spirits still in Ningen-do at the end of the Round become incorporeal and escape.

Conclusion

With the portal closed – or potentially, with the PCs unable to close it – the adventure is largely finished. If any spirit became incorporeal and got away, or the PCs are unable to close the portal, a spirit is later seen breathing a strange golden-white mist into itself from the nose and mouth of Toku's daughter, the two-year-old Toku Miyako. Because her destiny has not saved her from anything, she does not die – but her destiny is lost forever. Ume, if she is still alive, tells Toku what this means, and reminds him that he believes we can make our own destinies now

Ume also confesses to the PCs that she has been studying the spirits of Chigiri no Kousoku for some time, ever since she was possessed, and has been looking for more appearances from them that she can study – that is why she came to the festival to begin with. If the PCs gave up their destinies and allowed Nikui to live, she offers to teach any shugenja in the party the Technique she has developed to help her against the spirits (they receive the Crystalline Void cert). If they did not and she is still alive, she shows signs of retreating further into her own world, the conversations she has with herself growing more frequent.

If the PCs convinced Koishi to give up Nikui's destiny, he is indeed alive once again. Ume will argue that the PCs should try to change his path, testing the idea that mortals can now rewrite their fates. This is primarily a roleplaying challenge – Nikui needs to see something that would ease his daughter's shame. Simply talking him out of it won't work – he needs deeds, not words. The PCs can persuade him that they will take actions to appease him, attempt to appeal to his sense of justice or honor, even explain to him that samurai have sacrificed their destinies in order to return him to life, and a persuasive orator might convince him temporarily, but if those words are not later followed by concrete actions, he will revert to his previous anger once the mod is done, his fate unchanged. If the PCs do come up with an appropriate act, however, Nikui's resentment is weakened, and he turns away from his fate.

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
Defeat the Fingerless Man:	+1XP
Save Miyako's Destiny:	+1XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

A PC who gave up one or more Destiny Points or Touch of Destiny gains +1 Honor point

A PC who gave up Great Destiny gains +1 Rank of Honor

A PC who gave up Dark Fate gains 5 Honor points

Glory

If the Fingerless Man was defeated, the PCs gain +1 point of Glory

Other Awards/Penalties

The PCs gain a Favor from the Monkey Clan for defeating tsukai, +1 point of Honor as well if they are less than Honor Rank 6

Any PC who did not already have Isawa Ume as an Ally gains her as one as long as Nikui lives (she has Influence 1 and Devotion 2)

If the Fingerless Man was killed rather than escaping, the PCs gain Toku Maishu as Ally (she has Influence 2 and Devotion 1)

Monkey Clan samurai must turn in a report to Toku about the module's events, but gain 2 points of Status for doing so

The player of any PC who attempts to claim the Fingerless Man's maho scrolls should contact the Campaign Admin

Module Tracking Sheets

Note if any PCs sacrificed Destiny Points to Koishi
Mark the position taken by any Scorpion PCs in their discussion with Yudoka

GM Reporting

What was the Fingerless Man's fate?

Did Nikui live? Did Ume?

Was the passage to Kousoku no Chigiri sealed?

Meta-Question for Year Two of the Campaign:

Do you want your PC's daimyo to support the Toturi Dynasty or the Hantei Dynasty?

This is not entirely an in-character question; the players are being given a chance to determine which daimyo support which side of the coming conflict. List the name of the daimyo and the side that each individual player chose for their answer in the reporting sheet. (More than one PC at a table sharing a daimyo each get their own, independent, vote.)

GM must report this information BEFORE (4/20/12)
for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Isawa Ume

Isawa Ume has had her life torn apart, and is still trying to put the pieces back together. Growing up, Ume's passion was always the written word, and even after she learned that she had the rare talent needed to touch the Void, she still thought of herself more as a scholar than a priest, treating her expanded awareness of the world as just another means of "reading" it. After a harrowing experience at the Topaz Championship, however, much of that has changed. Her sense of the Void is both broader and deeper, but it seems to intrude on her thoughts more frequently, distracting her and disrupting the introspective focus she used to achieve so easily. Both her friends and family have begun to avoid her now, unsettled by her new habits, but it seems as though the more she tries to hold onto the way things were, the faster they slip away.

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 2	Void 4
	Willpower 3	Intelligence 4		
Honor 5.1		Status 1.7		Glory 2.0

Initiative: 4k2

Spellcasting: Air 5k2, Earth 5k2, Fire 6k3, Water 5k2, Void 8k4

Armor TN: 20 (in Defense Stance)

Reduction: 0

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

School/Rank: Isawa Shugenja 1/Weavers of Destiny
Affinity/Deficiency: Void/none
Isawa's Gift: Gains a Free Raise on all Void spells

Crystalline Void: Can spend Void Point to give spell Crystal or Jade keyword; incorporeal spirits are affected as though they were corporeal

Spells Known: *Air:* By the Light of the Moon (ML 1); *Earth:* Elemental Ward (ML 1); *Fire:* The Fires From Within (ML 2), *Water:* Ebbing Strength (ML 1), Path to Inner Peace (ML 1); *Void:* Drink of Your Essence (ML 2), Reach Through the Void (ML 2), Sense Void (ML 1), Touch the Emptiness (ML 1)

Skills: Athletics 1, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Investigation 1, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Spirit Realms 5, Lore: Theology 4, Medicine 3, Meditation 4, Sincerity 1, Spellcraft 5, Survival 1

Mastery Abilities: need not reroll a Full Defense roll; regains 2 Void on a successful meditation roll; adds +1k0 to all Spell Casting rolls

Advantages/Disadvantages: Great Destiny, Ishiken-do / Frail Mind, Phobia (horses)

Toku Maishu

Maishu was once a simple ronin's daughter, samurai caste by the thinnest of margins. Despite that, however, her mother continually reminded her that she was born into the highest caste of Rokugani society, and worked hard to inculcate the traditions of bushido into her young daughter. Unfortunately, not long after Maishu had become an adult in her mother's eyes (she did not truly ever have a gempukku), the Wasting Disease swept through the Empire, taking her mother with it. Unable to survive on her own, Maishu eventually was forced to sell even her mother's katana. She turned to the bo staff for her defense, scraping together odd jobs for the meanest of pay. Soon, though, she heard the call of Toturi, the Black Lion, and felt the echo of her mother's old lessons in the honorable ronin's rallying cry. She joined Toturi's Army without hesitation, serving with distinction throughout the Clan War and proving herself to Toku himself. When Toku was given a Clan, she was one of his first recruits, and she still wears his name with pride. Though her husband, also a Toku Bushi, died near the start of the War Against the Shadow, she looks forward to seeing her son grow up with all the privileges of the samurai caste, in the way she never could.

Air 2	Earth 3	Fire 4	Water 3	Void 2
	Willpower 4		Perception 4	
Honor 5.7		Status 3.8		Glory 4.7

Initiative: 5k2

Attack: 10k4 (bo staff, Complex) or 6k4 (katana, Complex)

Armor TN: 20 (Light Armor)

Damage: 4k2 (bo staff) or 6k2 (katana)

Reduction: 3

Wounds: 15 (+0), 21 (+0), 27 (+0), 33 (+2), 39 (+7), 45 (+12), 51 (Down, +40), 57 (Dead)

School/Rank: Toku Bushi 2 (Insight Rank 3)

Skills: Athletics 3, Battle 2, Commerce 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Games: Fortunes and Winds 2, Horsemanship 1, Hunting (Tracking) 4, Iaijutsu 1, Investigation (Notice, Search) 5, Kenjutsu 2, Kyujutsu 1, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Law 3, Lore: Underworld 3, Medicine (Wound Treatment) 2, Staves (Bo) 6, Stealth 3

Mastery Abilities: no movement penalty for Moderate Terrain, and Difficult Terrain only reduces Water by 1; need not reroll Full Defense rolls; gains +5 to any

Contested Investigation roll, and can reroll a Search roll once with no increase to the TN; armor has no special bonus against her staves, and she gains a Free Raise to Knockdown with them; can move Water x5 feet as a Simple Move while using Stealth

Advantages/Disadvantages: Irreproachable / Doubt (Kenjutsu)