

# **A Time for Vengeance**

**A One-Round Low/Mid-Rank Adventure for Heroes of  
Rokugan: Spirit of Bushido  
Month of the Moon, 1139 (Spring)**

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What impact do old passions have on new conflicts?

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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 precedes 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 1-3.

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 TN of Willpower rolls to resist the Greater Mokumokuren's attack is reduced by 5, and it has an effective Fear Rating of 2. There is only one o-toyo in the final encounter. The GM may reduce various TNs by 5 at their discretion.

**High End Party** (most/all characters Rank 3): The TN of Willpower rolls to resist the Greater Mokumokuren's attack is increased by 5, and it has an effective Fear Rating of 4. There are three o-toyo in the final encounter. The GM may increase various TNs by 5 at their discretion.

## Adventure Summary and Background

During the past summer, the Dragon Clan attacked the Phoenix, sending troops across the Dragon Heart Plain to avenge their honor over the defection of the Agasha family. This was a bitter struggle, fueled by feelings of betrayal on both sides, and resulted in many deaths on both sides. Ultimately, the Dragon proved victorious despite a hard-fought defense by the Phoenix. An Imperial Peacekeeper, Miya Shozaru, has been dispatched to monitor the situation and determine what changes have occurred to the Empire as a result. His mission is three-fold: to determine whether the fighting is likely to start up again, whether all rules of warfare and honor were followed in this conflict, and what the new border between the Dragon and Phoenix lands looks like. As border conflicts and wars attract a large number of bandits and ronin he has taken the liberty of bringing some escorts from Clans neutral to this struggle, and also to judge their reaction to the fighting.

Both the Dragon and the Phoenix still have forces in the area, intent on making the most of their military gains, or on minimizing their losses, respectively. There are many details that must be dealt with following even the relatively contained skirmishes, and both there are

eager to avoid incurring a loss of face with an Imperial witness. It is customary in Rokugan to return the daisho of fallen samurai to their family so it can be passed on to the next generation. Doing so honors the fallen and shows courtesy to a worthy opponent. The Phoenix have not received all their fallen samurai's daisho back, and there are two in particular they are certain that the Dragon are holding out on them.

Agasha Sukima and Shiba Tansaku were both assigned to a small scouting squad sent forward to observe Dragon troop movements. Shiba Tansaku was a returned spirit from the 5<sup>th</sup> century who had overindulged in his baser urges and behaved inappropriately with a few of his female charges. Upon his death he found himself in Gaki-Do, the Realm of the Hungry Dead, as penance for his actions in life. The gaki were most unhappy to see him leave when Oblivion's Gate provided a passage back to the Empire, and they have been waiting for a chance to claim his spirit once more. During this ill-fated scouting mission, they received it...

It will be up to the PCs to recover the daisho of the fallen Phoenix, either in support of the Imperial Herald, or to prevent their Clan from losing face (for Dragon and Phoenix PCs). During the course of their search, they will encounter the gaki who have taken the opportunity to sate their hungers in Ningen-do, and may come across hints of other, darker secrets once lost to history.

## Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- Returned Spirit characters who were alive during the fourth century (specifically 339-401) may recognize the area the PCs are heading toward as once being part of the Snake Clan's lands. Such a spirit should receive a Free Raise for any Lore: History rolls involving recognizing the details of the Snake ruins; returned spirits who were actually Chuda automatically succeed at these rolls.

## Part One: Negotiations Interrupted

*Spring has come to the Empire once more, and with it a breath of hope. Though the fighting during the summer was relatively contained, many through Rokugan pray for the return of peace with the new year. You arrive at Honored Steps Village, the*

*armistice grounds for negotiations between the Dragon and Phoenix. A sizable force of Mirumoto Bushi occupies the village, and a significant number of Shiba are visible in a fortified encampment to the east. The village gokenin's house has been taken over by the occupying force's commander, and will be used for the purpose of the meetings. It is there that you are to report in to your superiors for this mission.*

All Dragon and Phoenix PCs are assumed to be part of their Clan's forces in the area, either military or part of the follow-up diplomatic entourage. Anyone else has been summoned to assist Miya Shozaru in examining the situation. Commanding the Dragon contingent is Mirumoto Takejiro, the overall commander of the Dragon forces during the summer and the city governor of Heibeisu – PCs who played SoB02, “Bonds of Fate”, should recognize him. Assisting him is Kitsuki Yasuhiro, a courtier and investigator pulled in for this meeting. Leading the Phoenix delegation is Asako Norikai, a courtier chosen to convey the Phoenix desire for peace in the region. Norikai is being assisted by Agasha Eriko, the younger sister of Agasha Sukima and she will become relevant later. Shiba Kiku, the commander of the Phoenix military forces, is at a fortified camp between the village and Honored Treaty City, ready to defend the Agasha provinces from further encroachment.

PCs may have some questions about what is known about the NPCs; they may make the following rolls to learn more. PCs of the appropriate Clan receive a Free Raise to these rolls.

**Mirumoto Takejiro** (Status 5 Glory 6, Honor 7)

-Takejiro is a tall, fit bushi wearing Dragon colors with a traditional topknot and a stern demeanor. Though he wears sturdy clothing that looks appropriate for court he always keeps his daisho close at hand.

-**Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence TN 20** allows the PC to recognize Takejiro as a high-ranking Dragon samurai. He serves as the commander of the eastern Dragon armies, and the governor of the city of Heibeisu. (PCs may have info on him he would prefer kept secret – trying to play off of this will earn him as a Sworn Enemy worth 5 points. Openly revealing it will result in a challenge – the player will need to contact the Campaign Admin Staff.)

**Kitsuki Yasuhiro** (Status 2, Glory 2, Honor 6)

-**Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence TN 40** will identify Yasuhiro as a young rising star in the Kitsuki method who spent much of his previous time investigating criminal matters. This is his first assignment interacting with other clan samurai.

**Asako Norikai** (Status 4, Glory 3, Honor 6)

-Asako Norikai is an older man, approaching retirement age and much of his remaining hair has faded to white at this point. He walks with a cane and wears thick robes to help keep out any possibly chill, giving him a hunched and voluminous appearance. Norikai has a habit of speaking down to people, especially those of lower status since he is used to lecturing young students but will swiftly remember his place if challenged or speaking to one of higher status.

-**Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence TN 35** (or having 3 or more ranks in **Lore: Phoenix**, or a Phoenix Courtier school) will recognize Norikai as a scholar and a sensei in the Asako Loremaster school. He has been an outspoken critic of ‘Dragon aggression’ and believes absolutely that the Phoenix’s actions in this situation have been lawful and correct.

-**Courtier / Intelligence (Political Maneuvering) TN 40** will reveal that Norikai has never actually seen war or fighting firsthand, and tends to regard such events in an entirely abstract sense. He was chosen more for being able to resist the Dragon consolidating gains than for any personal stake in the conflict.

**Agasha Eriko** (Status 2, Glory 2, Honor 4)

-**Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence TN 40** will identify Eriko as a fresh graduate from the Isawa shugenja temples, just in time to be sent into battle. She acquitted herself with distinction and was granted a small promotion and sent to give Norikai a front line perspective on the conflict.

**Miya Shozaru** (Status 5, Glory 3, Honor 6)

-Shozaru is surprisingly heavysset for a Miya, a trait he owes to an Otomo mother, and carries only the wakizashi showing that he is a court dignitary not someone trained in battle. He speaks softly but insistently and has an extremely placid and mild temperament unless riled.

-**Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence TN 35** (or having 3 or more ranks in **Lore: Imperial**, or an Imperial school) will identify Miya Shozaru as a long time peacekeeper thoroughly disgusted with war and those who profit from it. Those who attempt to exacerbate conflicts draw his wrath, as some members of the Lion and Unicorn clans have found out to their dismay in the past.

-**Courtier / Intelligence (Political Maneuvering) TN 40** will determine that Shozaru specifically asked for this assignment and likely has some agenda of his own related to the Dragon-Phoenix conflict. Anyone who beat this roll by at least 5 can discover that Shozaru has a daughter who married into the Shiba.

Give the PCs a chance to introduce themselves to their superiors and each other for this mission. There will be

some time to explore the village and meet up with the various NPCs. Negotiations will start in earnest tomorrow, they have time to set up accommodations, bathe, eat, and tour the area.

## Rumors

News in the area is available with 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:

- Over the course of the summer fighting, the Dragon armies took all of Dragon Heart Plain but were largely repulsed from mountains, and they made no headway into the Agasha provinces that were their obvious target. While the Dragon were able to overrun vast areas of the Phoenix lands, these were largely isolated and unimportant stretches of empty land. They took serious losses at several better defended, central locations – particularly Nine Stones Bridge. The Dragon have split their advance – holding the Dragon Heart Plain in north, and a small swathe of the Shiba provinces up to Honored Steps Village in the south. They are almost certain to continue this offensive in summer, heading for their true objective: Honored Steps Village is only a stepping-stone to Honored Treaty City and the Agasha provinces.
- The Phoenix are still having political issues, with no consensus on Council for how the Clan is to proceed with the war. While there is no argument with Shiba Tsukune's military leadership, the Phoenix are uncertain how to deal with the other Clans. The Phoenix are expected to look to their recent alliance with the Scorpion for political assistance against the Dragon, but no one expects military aid from the Clan of Secrets any time soon.
- The Imperial Legions are beginning to move through the Empire once more after being assigned to Otosan Uchi all winter. Two of the Legions, the Fourth (under the command of Mirumoto Komachi) and the Eighth (under Shiba Hideyama) are not terribly far away. While the Legions are traditionally neutral in inter-Clan disputes, both sides of the conflict anticipate the other Clan to call upon their military contacts in the Legion if the fighting goes poorly for them.
- Mirumoto Takejiro, the commander of the Dragon forces, is the brother of the head sensei of the Dragon Agasha Shugenja School.

Agasha Takenao was born a Mirumoto, but joined the Agasha at some point after the War Against the Shadow. Some whisper that Takejiro's service in the military action against the Phoenix is personally motivated, though there is no agreement if he is driven to punish the "traitors" or to show leniency to them.

- Word has recently arrived that a large peasant uprising has taken place in Ryoko Owari. Evidently the heimin have taken arms against their lords, though many speculate that the opium trade may have had something to do with the situation. It is indicated that the Scorpion put the rebellion down in short order, but it appears as though the leaders of the revolt spent the entire winter planning their attacks, and it is not known if all of the instigators were dealt with.

Notable areas in the village include a set of shrines dedicated to the Seven Great Fortunes as well as a few small shrines dedicated to certain minor Fortunes that the Phoenix particularly revere. There is also a small library, with information on the area tended by an aging Phoenix ji-Samurai. There is also a small tea house, across the street from an inn and just down the street from the gokenin's house.

The shrines are tended by a group of monks and those who visit will notice them speaking amongst themselves rather animatedly but will become quiet when anyone approaches. If induced to speak, they will mention that there was a traveling monk who passed through. Apparently he had just come from Dragon lands and he had quite a few interesting ideas to pass along, and they have been discussing their conversation for quite some time. (This is the same monk from **Walk Through the Mountain and Stand Against the Waves.**)

The library is a modest two-story affair, making it the third largest building in the village. It is run by a member of the Nasu vassal family of the Shiba, a man nearing retirement by the name of Ijimitsu. He attends to the library with slow, methodical precision as though he knows that neither he nor the information within his care is going anywhere. The fact that this village is in danger of shifting to Dragon hands does not register at all with him, and he reacts to all concerns with the staid implacability of a wall. The library contains a great deal of information on the Phoenix lands, and its treasure-trove of maps and data on the Clan's holdings was one of the reasons Honored Steps Village was selected for these talks.

The tea house is a modest one-story affair which sadly does not have much in the way of variety, just a local blend that is fairly tasteless. The proprietor, a graying heimin woman named Momo will apologize profusely for the lack of proper accommodations and fare, though she does manage some excellent refreshments to accompany the tea. She will gossip freely if given half a chance, and the GM is free to throw out a rumor or two that may have been missed.

## The Negotiations

The PCs are fortunate enough to be included with the notable NPCs in the gokenin's house where the discussions are being set up. (If the players express curiosity, the gokenin was a fairly average bushi by the name of Shiba Aisetsu who died during the fighting; the Dragon have shown respect to his memory as an honorable samurai who died in defense of his home.) A large table with a map of the region dominates the area, with notations for where battles were fought and a list of casualties and reports set nearby for reference. Shozaru sits at one end of the table with the Phoenix on his left and the Dragon on his right. PCs will sit (if **Status Rank 3** or higher) or stand with the side they are assisting.

*As you are settling down to begin the discussions, the Asako rises and clears his throat. "Honorable Miyasama, there is a matter of honor we must address before we begin. We have received a number of Phoenix blades back from the Dragon, that they may be returned to their families. However, there are two that are missing, the blades of Shiba Tansaku and Agasha Sukima. It will be difficult to proceed if they are not returned. I ask the honorable Dragon to determine where these blades are located and see them returned at once."* Norakai eyes Takejiro levelly.

*Mirumoto Takejiro rises to his feet. "Asako-san, you have my solemn assurance that the Dragon Clan has returned all blades that were found to their families. Even in the events of blades damaged in the fighting, we have seen them repaired and restored. If these weapons were to be found on a battlefield, they would have been already, and returned without hesitation." The Kitsuki beside him nods his head absently in agreement to his superior's words.*

*The young woman beside Norakai leans forward, placing her hands on the table. Her voice is tight with anger, and she barely displays an appropriate amount of respect. "Then where is my sister's blade? Her unit went out scouting towards the end of the fighting and they never came back!" Norakai raises a hand at the outburst and she settles back, containing a scowl.*

*"Please forgive my assistant her outburst, but it is a matter of honor for her family. You are certain that all blades were returned?"*

*Takejiro nods, "I swear upon my honor, we have kept careful track of which Phoenix fell in battle with our forces. You have received all blades belonging to them. If they have not been returned, then there is another explanation." He locks stares with Norakai, unwilling to lose face over this point.*

*Miya Shozaru clears his throat in some exasperation. "Asako-san, Mirumoto-san, it seems to me you are throwing a stumbling block into our work before we have even begun. This disappoints me, and will disappoint my superiors as well. Clearly this missing unit must be accounted for, but I will not allow our work be stymied because of it. This unit was set out into Dragon controlled territory was it not?" Agasha Eriko nods, her burning eyes never leaving the Dragon contingent. "Then we will send out a party to find them."*

If there are no Phoenix PCs: *He points to her, "You will accompany them to identify the blades in question."*

If there are no Dragon PCs: *His hand then sweeps to the Kitsuki advisor with the Mirumoto. "And you will serve to liaise with the Dragon forces in the area so that they may know this is official."*

*"I trust I have your support in this matter? And that by taking these steps, you will support moving forward with our negotiations?" He eyes both Norakai and Takejiro at this point and they nod their assent.*

*Takejiro frowns, "But who will go looking?"*

Presumably the PCs will volunteer to undertake this task (if they don't, then Shozaru will nominate them and they won't receive the bonus Honor award at the end). Kitsuki Yasuhiro and Agasha Eriko will be assigned to them if necessary to ensure that there is a representative of the respective Clans, and they will receive papers signed by Mirumoto Takejiro authorizing them to be in Dragon lands.

Whether they accompany the PCs or not, the two aides will assist in locating the area to search. Copies of Miya Gokinju's maps from SoB01 ("Undefined Border") will help in the area, though the actual route taken in that module is a fair distance to the north.

Eriko will look to them, and explain, *"I do not know where exactly my sister was scouting, only the general*

*area. It will be up to us to determine the most likely location for her unit to have been intercepted.”*

Yasuhiro speaks up at this point, *“I assure you, that the Dragon have not found their unit. Therefore we should be looking somewhere that they could likely have disappeared or hidden. You did say they were scouting yes? Let us consult the maps and find an optimal place to use as a scouting post.”*

It becomes clear that Eriko does not trust Yasuhiro, and is quick to point out any possible failings in his plan. While Yasuhiro, for his part, cannot conceive that he might be wrong. If both NPCs accompany the group, the PCs will be subject to their continued arguments. Any provocation from a Dragon or Phoenix PC will result in similar intransigence, should only one of these NPCs be accompanying the group.

Examining a map will allow the PCs to narrow their search area significantly. Anyone who makes a **Battle / Intelligence** or **Stealth / Intelligence** roll at **TN 20** (having **Battle 3** or higher obviates the need for a roll) can pick out a lightly-forested hill on the Dragon Heart Plain that occupies no real strategic value but does offer a sheltered view of the plains for quite a ways around. They can identify this as a good spot for any army moving through the area to establish a forward scout post. Having copies of Gokinju’s maps of the Dragon Heart Plain for comparison grants a Free Raise on this roll. If none of the PCs are able to make the roll, Eriko can figure it, out provided that she can be convinced to accept Yasuhiro’s theory.

The PCs may also speak with Phoenix samurai who served with the missing samurai; while the rest of unit was largely wiped out by Dragon forces, there are survivors and others who served with them before. Heading toward the Shiba military encampment will require a Phoenix escort – Agasha Eriko will do so if asked, but will not graciously lead a Dragon PC to the camp. Asking around the camp requires an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Awareness** roll at a TN of 20 to gather any significant information. Success allows the PCs to gather some basic information on the missing samurai:

- Agasha Sukima was a dedicated young shugenja, driven to find acceptance for herself and her family in their new Clan. She viewed the Dragon invasion as an almost personal threat, and wished to prove that the Agasha would bring more than this trouble to the Phoenix. She trained at her family’s School, and the wakizashi she carried was very similar to Eriko’s (which will make identification very simple for the PCs).

- Shiba Tansaku was a returned spirit who his comrades report as being quiet, competent, and devoted to the protection of his charge – all of which is a fairly generic description of Shiba Bushi, but his former companions will admit that he seemed to have something in his background that he felt a need to atone for. While there is some speculation, no one really knows what that may have been. Tansaku had a journal that he was frequently seen writing in, though no one knows what he may have been putting in it. Rolling more than a 30 will get some additional information: Tansaku was familiar with the area that he was tasked with scouting, though he seemed very reluctant to return. A description of his daisho can be readily obtained – they are of a very old style, one that can be identified as being several centuries old (a **Kenjutsu / Intelligence** roll against a TN of 25 will place them as seven hundred years old).

The Phoenix forces will provide a general area for the PCs to search; while they don’t have a specific location, the party would have a basic direction that they may be able to narrow down with some investigation.

*Having found a place to start your search, you set off north into the Dragon Heart Plains. Kitsuki Yasuhiro reminds you all that the Mirumoto patrols should see the area safe and secure. Agasha Eriko sniffs at that and puffs away on her pipe, “Don’t waste any more time. My sister is waiting.”*

## Part Two: Into the Snake’s Nest

Traveling through the plains is fairly simple due to the papers signed by Mirumoto Takejiro and having a Dragon samurai along (either Kitsuki Yasuhiro or a Dragon PC). Shozaru will provide supplies, and steeds will be arranged if the PCs ask for them. A Mirumoto patrol will stop to check the group at least twice along the way, and it takes a good four days to make the trek.

Wearing armor on this journey would be a breach of etiquette – as the Miya has tasked them with this mission as part of the official peace talks, it would show a lack of trust in the Dragon forces that have taken control of the area. Treat it as a “Breach of Etiquette, minor” per the table on page 91 of the L5R Fourth Edition Core Book for each day that they choose to don their armor. (Carrying the armor along on the

mission in anticipation of needing it is not a breach, but wearing it without a specific reason is.)

The area that the PCs are traveling to was once held by the Snake Clan before its destruction by the Phoenix Clan, a relatively obscure fact that most PCs will only be aware of if they can succeed at a **Lore: History / Intelligence TN 35** roll. Almost no one in the Empire know why the Phoenix wiped out the Snake Clan in 401 in what has come to be known as the “Five Nights of Shame”; all the Phoenix have ever said about it is that it was “necessary”. (Any actual Chuda will recognize the area without the need for a roll. Returned spirits from era have better chance as well, give them a Free Raise.) The ruins of Kyuden Chuda are somewhat to the east of where the PCs are going, and unless they choose otherwise, their route will not take them to the Snake Clan’s castle.

### **Abandoned Village**

*Four days north of Honored Steps Village puts you deep into the Dragon Heart Plain, well away from the Imperial Roads. This is a very remote part of the Empire – no maps show any villages for miles in any direction, with gently rolling hills extending from horizon to horizon. Small brush dots the landscape here and there, but the only significant vegetation can be found near waterways, and for the most part, the land seems too dry for rice cultivation. It is something of a surprise, then, when several buildings come into view on the horizon.*

The PCs have found an abandoned village that does not appear on any maps. While it was once on the Imperial roads, there is very little sign of this. The former road is not visible until the village is in sight. Once in the village, they will see that only those buildings with significant stone construction are still standing. Only one sizable structure is in particularly good shape, a large stone building that appears to have been a dojo or temple if explored (PCs who do so may roll **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** at a TN of 35 to recognize the Snake Clan mon; again, PCs who lived in that time period have an advantage and Chuda need not roll). The signs of wind and weather are on everything, but nature has otherwise left the village alone – exposed wood has rotted away, but nothing has sought to grow in its place. It is evident that nothing was scavenged – the entire village was simply abandoned. A successful roll of **Engineering / Intelligence** at a TN of 20 (or a suitable Lore Skill; Investigation may be substituted, but increases the TN to 30) will allow the PCs to realize the village has been abandoned for seven hundred years. The village was once the site of the main Chuda

Shugenja School dojo, and when it was wiped out by the

Any significant search of the village will reveal an area where it looks like a large pit was once dug and then covered over, the ground is significantly lower here. Within the ground is a mass grave of Chuda purged during the Five Nights of Shame. Bones of men, women, and children can be found, indicating quite clearly that whatever happened here happened before the rise of Iuchiban prompted the Empire to begin cremation in the sixth century.

Even without finding the mass grave, the village should be highly unsettling – there is no sign of life, and everything was left as though it were cursed. The fact that it does not appear on any maps indicates that the Empire has done their best to try to forget the very existence of this place.

As the PCs travel north, they will cross tracks heading east – a dozen men or so, bearing two litters, moving slowly. If asked, Yasuhiro does not believe them to be a Mirumoto patrol as the numbers are wrong and they would not be heading east if they had wounded. Eriko for her part will state that hardly anyone lives out this way, she doesn’t know of any settlements inhabited in this direction.

### **Ruined Watchtower**

If the PCs choose to follow the tracks, they will find another old, abandoned structure from the days of the Snake Clan (though they are not likely to recognize it as such). However, a group of bandits has made camp at the base of the ruined watchtower. The open plains allows the PCs to see the camp from more than a mile away, but it also allows the bandits to see the incoming group of samurai. One of them sees the party coming and flees before they get there; only mounted PCs or those capable of supernaturally swift movement can catch him. The rest are broken in spirit, exhausted and apathetic. There are twelve men in various stages of injury, and two more on litters with bandages around their eyes. Examining the wounded reveals no physical damage, though they all move as though they are injured. The exception is the two men on the litters – both of them have bloody ruins where their eyes used to be.

*As you approach, the largest of the scruffy-looking men drags himself to his feet. A no-dachi lies on the ground at his feet, though he bears no wakizashi to indicate his station, and, like the rest of the group, he wears patchwork armor. The entire group is evidently armed and armored from battlefield leavings, but their*

*attitude does not match any bandit group you have ever heard of. The presumed leader shuffles forward dispiritedly, and mutters, "What do you want?"*

This motley group is all that remains of a much larger bandit gang that was attracted to the area by the fighting in anticipation of easy looting. They wintered in a village closer to the Phoenix border, dodging Dragon patrols and waiting for spring. Two nights ago, however, they camped at a manor house on a wooded hill and the majority of the band was destroyed by what they describe as an "evil spirit". The survivors will admit what they are without significant pressure, and though they are not eager to speak of their ordeal, it is obvious that it was horrible. If the PCs inquire about the house, one of the men on a litter will begin to thrash in a seizure and start screaming about 'the eyes'. He is entirely incoherent, but his ramblings should be unsettling to say the least. If the PCs attack, the bandits are not a terrible challenge – only six of them are healthy or stable enough to fight (three will flee immediately, and the other three, including the most talkative, will simply lie down to die). Those bandits who fight are armed with parangu and can be assumed to have straight 2's in all Skills and Traits, are at the +5 Wound Level, and have no Void Points to spend. Otherwise, it is largely up to the PCs to decide what they wish to do with the confessed criminals.

### The Hill

Whether by finding it on the map or by following the bandit's directions, the PCs will eventually make their way to the wooded hill where Agasha Sukima and Shiba Tansaku met their fate.

*A line of hills rises ahead of you on the horizon. Trees cling to their sides and claw at the sky, resisting the new growth that has blossomed across the rest of the land. A weather-beaten roof is barely visible above the treetops at the top of the central hill, but the trees cluster together and there is no sign of a trail that may lead to the top.*

It is up to the PCs to decide how to begin their search. If he is present, Yasuhiro will suggest splitting up to cover as much ground as possible. Eriko, if she is along, will recommend remaining close together to avoid being taken by surprise by whatever may have claimed her sister. If both are along, they will argue over the issue. In any event, the PCs are the ones with the final say over how to proceed.

Anyone casting Sense or Commune with the kami in the area will definitely get a sense from them that something is wrong, though the kami themselves aren't

exactly sure what's going on. They are quite insistent that something is here that shouldn't be, but the spirits simply do not understand what is happening so cannot tell the PCs (no matter how many Raises are called for clarity).

Finding a trail towards the old house requires a **Hunting / Perception** roll at **TN 25**. The hill is not that big, but failure will cost the PCs time. And as it was already mid-day when they arrived at the hill, it could get dark before too long. If none of the PCs succeed, compare the highest roll against the TN as follows: If the highest roll failed by 5 or more, then the two combat encounters both take place in the evening. If it fails by 10 or more, then both combat encounters take place at night. If they fail by 15 or more, then the monk leaves the forest before the PCs arrive (he decides to leave the creepy forest during the night).

### The Monk

After some exploring through the wooded hill, the PCs will hear the tapping of stone on stone. Underneath the shade of a large oak they will find a monk setting up a pile of stones, stacking one on top of the other with careful and meticulous grace. Currently he is up to six stones, each about the size of two fists balanced on one another. He will then turn (unless PCs are being deliberately stealthy) and smile towards them. "Greetings! Would you care to help me out?"

The Monk's name is Kojaku and he is a middle-aged man, clearly a lifelong adherent to the brotherhood and most likely not a retired samurai. He wears a straw jingasa to shade the sun from his eyes and walks with a worn staff. Some possible questions the PCs might ask him include:

- Why are you here? *"I met a most interesting monk in my travels recently; he opened up my eyes to a number of possibilities I had not considered. This hill seemed auspicious to begin contemplating some of the ideas he had passed on to me."*
- What do you need help with? *"I was seeing how many stones could be balanced together at once. I thought of how there are so many different parts of the world, and so many needs, yet how can they all be juggled together without some falling by the wayside. Perhaps you could attempt to stack as many as you could without them falling?"*
- Who was the interesting monk you met? *"I did not ask his name, and he did not give it. But he was certainly much closer to enlightenment than I am. Oh, the*

*conversations we had... alas that I could not grasp quite all of the points he had to share. But what I did manage to gather out of our talk was that enlightenment is the study of the world, and that by the most natural following of the world possible. Though what exactly that was... I could not say."*

- Have you seen any samurai in this area? *"Before you, no. But these woods have clearly felt the signs of their passing I think." He looks around. "This seemed an auspicious place specifically because the balance here seemed to be off."*

Assisting the monk with stacking the stones takes half an hour and anyone who does so can roll **Meditation / Void, Engineering / Void, or Artisan: Sculpting / Void** at a **TN of 20** to recover a Void Point. If they roll a 25 or more and have not spent any Void Points, they gain an additional temporary Void Point beyond their normal maximum (this Void Point is lost if not spent before the end of the module). If they are present, Yasuhiro will join in the exercise but Eriko will not. After this is done the monk is about to set another stone on top of the tallest pile when suddenly the bottom stone in the pile cracks in half and the stack falls. Kojaku shakes his head. *"A bad omen... I think I will be moving on now in my journey. But I wish you good luck in your search, may the Fortunes show mercy on these missing samurai you are seeking."*

Kojaku bows and heads back off the way the PCs came from, his part in this module concluded. If invited to join the PCs he will shake his head, "This is not part of my karma. I cannot keep you from learning the lessons you must learn."

### **The Old House**

The old house that the PCs are looking for tops a low rise and rests in the middle of a clearing. The building is clearly of poor construction and very old, though not as old as the village or watchtower (only two centuries or so). All of the external paper screens are gone, having been destroyed by the elements, giving it almost a skeletal appearance. The interior walls, however, are apparently mostly intact. At least one screen appears to have been kicked out entirely, lying on its side next to the structure toward the rear of the building.

Anyone who enters or approaches can see several inert forms in the interior rooms formed by the shoji screens. The bodies have had their flesh and clothing stripped away, as though animals have gotten to them. The screens are obviously set up with several rooms further in the house that are not visible from outside.

Upon entering the house, the PCs will see that the bodies are a mix of relatively recent (within the last few days) and somewhat older (several months). There are more further into the house. Anyone with three or more Ranks in Medicine (or two or more Ranks in Lore: Nature or Lore: Anatomy) will recognize that the markings on the bodies are not consistent with normal scavengers.

Shortly after making these observations, those within the house get the distinctive feeling they are being watched. They can all roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** against a TN of 20 to spot several bizarre eyes peeking in through the holes in the rice paper screens, eyes studying them with blazing hunger. At this point the shoji screens will animate to close up gaps in the house, herding everyone towards the center. The withered and maimed body of a female Phoenix shugenja can be seen lying in the middle of the house with a wakizashi in one hand and a crumbling scroll in the other. Eriko will cry out in recognition upon seeing it. It will take three Rounds to get to the central room, and four Rounds to get out, during which the PCs will be attacked as below:

The character who rolled the highest on the above Investigation roll is the first attacked by the Greater Mokumokuren. On each following round, the next highest Investigation roll is attacked, then on the second round the next highest, etc. An actual tie gives it an attack against each target.

### **Greater Mokumokuren**

Strange eyes peer out of holes in the shoji screen...

Air 0	Earth 2	Fire 0	Water 0
Awareness 4		Intelligence 1	Perception 6

**Initiative:** 2k1

**Attack:** see below

**Armor TN:** 15

**Damage:** see below

**Reduction:** 0

**Wounds:** 20 (+10), 40 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 0 (it is a gaki, not a creature of Jigoku)

**Special Abilities:**

**Gaze Attack:** The Greater Mokumokuren "attacks" on target's initiative order – the target sees the eyes open up on the wall and makes Raw **Willpower** roll at **TN 30**. If they fail, they take Wounds equal to the amount they failed by. This damage is non-physical, ignores Reduction, and cannot be healed with Medicine. If they fail to meet a 20 (15 for characters with "Paragon of Courage"), they suffer from the effects of Fear 3.

**The Corners of the World:** The Mokumokuren exists within the borders of Ningen-Do and can only peer out from holes in rice paper walls. If a victim locks eyes with the Mokumokuren it immediately makes it mental

attack. It may not attack under any other circumstances.

**Spirit:** Attacking the walls with weapons requires a roll of **Weapon Skill / Willpower** against a TN of 30, suffering the same effects as an attack. Anyone who fails to roll a 15 on this attack drops their weapon (dropping your katana is an honor loss as per fleeing from battle); success allows them to do half weapon damage to the Mokumokuren. PCs cannot call Raises, as there is no actual attack roll to hit a wall.

Fire scares the spirit and does not require Willpower roll to use it against screens – however, the screens move on their own to try to herd PCs to center of house. Anyone who spots the eyes can make a **Lore: Spirit Realms / Intelligence** roll at **TN 30** to identify this thing as a Mokumokuren, a beast that lurks within the holes in rice paper walls and feeds upon those who meet its gaze. As it is resilient to most weaponry, the easiest solution is to fall back and torch the house, thus depriving it of any avenue to feed; this will also make recovering Agasha Sukima's sword very difficult. PCs with the right attack spells may be able to slay the beast. If the house is burned without recovering the blade, the PCs must roll **Investigation (Search) / Perception** at a TN of 40 to find the blackened and twisted steel from the rubble and ashes.

Seeing the house, the scouting party decided to camp here for the night as it was a defensible position. Unfortunately Tansaku's Curse of Gaki-Do attracted the attention of the Mokumokuren and it started picking people off. Tansaku fled quickly and was set upon by other gaki in the forest. After investigating the house, particularly the area with the kicked out screen, the PCs can roll **Hunting (Tracking) / Perception** at TN 20 to find a few discarded arrows leading to a drop-off down a hillside. Passing the Tracking roll allows PCs to find a kabuto in Phoenix colors, as well as a few scattered coins and personal effects that Tansaku dropped in his flight. These things have remained in place through the winter without being disturbed, though they do show signs of appropriate weathering. (The presence of so many gaki has driven most natural creatures away from the area.) The kami of the house and woods can also be communed with to learn the direction Tansaku fled.

*After having dealt with the spirit in the house, you press on through the woods following the occasional gleam of a fallen coin or arrowhead. Shiba Tansaku seems to have fled in great haste from what was in the house.*

## Part Three: Lost Little Kittens

Shiba Tansaku was finally brought down about half a mile from the house. His body lies crumpled next to a tree, his blades inches from his fingers as though knocked away from him by something massive landing on him. Anyone inspecting his body will find him dead from several lacerations; those making a **Medicine / Intelligence** roll at TN 20 will identify them as claws and fangs, most likely from the great cat family. Anyone with three or more ranks in Lore: Nature can also determine the same without a roll. Clearly he was eaten by some sort of predator.

Shortly after this conclusion is made, or someone approaches the body, they will hear a soft 'yow' and a cat will wander out of the bushes. It looks like some kind of wild cat, the undomesticated cousin of the common house cat that some samurai have seen before. Anyone checking around may see another (unless Low-ranked table, where there is only one; High-ranked table has a total of three, so there will be two others circling the group).

The cats meow and circle the group, looking expectantly as though searching for a handout. Some PCS may think to look around to see if there's a larger cat nearby, any such PCs who look for something other than the cats can roll raw **Perception** at **TN 25** to see out of the corner of their eye that the small wild cats are actually full sized cats with exaggerated fangs and small claws. The creatures are actually O-Toyo, spirits of Gaki-Do, known for feeding on humans. They will give the PCs a chance to drop their guard, but will quickly lose their patience and attack or if anyone alerts the group to their true forms they will attack. If present, Kitsuki Yasuhiro will catch the cats true form and will not be surprised, he will try to shout a warning if no one catches them in time.

During combat, Yasuhiro will draw his sword in defense stance the first round, assume Center stance for the second, then join in attacking an O-Toyo already being fought each round. He will repeat this cycle of center and attack, using the center bonus to help him hit. Eriko will cast Cloak of the Miya, using her free raise to cast in one round, then summon a Bo of Water and wade into combat.

## O-Toyo

These creatures resemble common house cats, though obviously wild. Save to those able to see through their deceptive visage who see a large cat with extended fangs and short claws.

Air 2      Earth 2      Fire 2      Water 3  
Reflexes 4      Agility 4      Perception 4

**Initiative:** 2k1      **Attack:** Fangs 9k4  
(Complex)

**Armor TN:** 25      **Damage:** 5k3 (Fangs)

**Reduction:** 3

**Wounds:** 20 (+10), 40 (Dead)

**Taint Rank:** 0 (gaki)

**Skills:** None

**Special Abilities:**

**Deceptive Visage:** Appear as common house cat unless a raw Perception roll TN 25 is passed.

**Destroyer of Life:** Each successful attack by an O-Toyo heals it by 5 wounds.

**Spirit:** Half damage from all weapons that are not Crystal or Jade.

The O-Toyo attack viciously, and unlike the Mokumokuren they will pursue as far as the edge of the woods. Unless PCs have some method to outrun them, they will likely have to fight. However, as the O-Toyo are predators (if supernaturally adept and cruel ones), they will flee if they take more than 20 Wounds. If the encounter happens in the evening then all ranged attacks are at -1k0. If at night, all melee attacks (both by the PCs and the O-Toyo) are -1k0, and all ranged attacks are -2k1. Once the fight is over the PCs can claim Shiba Tansaku's daisho and journal and return to the village.

*Having defeated the unnatural cats you return back to Honored Steps Village, your task hopefully accomplished for now.*

## Conclusion

Returning triumphantly with Tansaku's daisho and Sukima's wakizashi, they will be praised by Asako Norikai and Miya Shozaru, and given a gruff nod from Mirumoto Takejiro. With this incident behind them, the parties are able to conclude their business here, in fact much of the discussion occurred while the PCs were off in the woods searching for the daisho.

Kitsuki Yasuhiro gives a full and detailed report to his superiors, and will be sure to mention all actions of the PCs he has observed.

The journal has Tansaku's memories of horrible things done in these lands, and his fear of returning to them is made clear, but there are no real specifics. There are several references to things that he did on orders from the Clan, horrible things that the Council said were necessary, and that he fears the spirits of those they slew. With these clues, a TN 20 **Lore: History / Intelligence** roll (if not already made) will allow the PCs to recall Five Nights of Shame when the Phoenix destroyed the Snake Clan.

**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
Return Sukima's Wakizashi:	+1XP
Return Tansaku's Daisho:	+1XP

**Total Possible Experience:** 4XP

### Honor

Returning the swords exhibits courtesy and PCs who readily volunteered for this task should receive 2 points of Honor for their part in this, unless their honor is eight or higher.

### Glory

For their part in banishing the Gaki and helping to prevent an incident, Miya Shozaru speaks well of them to their daimyo. Any PCs with less than three ranks of Glory receives 3 points of Glory, anyone with more than three ranks but less than six receives 1 point. Those with six or more ranks of Glory receive nothing, but suffer no atrophy either.

## **Other Awards/Penalties**

All PCs receive a favor from the Phoenix, Dragon and Phoenix clan PCs also receive a point of Status unless they already have three Ranks of Status.

If the PCs burned down the manor house to destroy the Greater Mokumokuren, they may well not have recovered Agasha Sukima's wakizashi. If they did not, they gain Agasha Eriko as a Sworn Enemy.

## **Module Tracking Sheets**

If the PC actually killed an O-Toyo, note on the Module Tracking Sheet that they have the "Mark of the Cat".

## **GM Reporting**

How much experience was awarded to the PCs?

Did either NPC accompany the group? Which one?

Did the group recognize the Chuda lands and report it back to their superiors?

Were both blades recovered?

### **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

### Kitsuki Yasuhiro, Young Dragon Investigator

Yasuhiro is a young and fastidious man wearing immaculate kimono with kataginu. He stands shorter than most, barely reaching five feet tall but has a sharp and ready mind, with a scholar's grasp for knowledge and information. He carries only a wakizashi and did not bring armor, he did not anticipate combat and has generally left such tasks to others in the past. But if trouble starts he will not hesitate to do his best to join the fight.

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire	Water 2	Void
Awareness3	Willpower	3	Perception	3
	3		4	

Honor: 6.3	Status: 2.0	Glory: 2.8
<b>Initiative:</b> 4k2		<b>Attack:</b> Wakizashi 5k3 (Complex)

<b>Armor TN:</b> 19	<b>Damage:</b> 3k2 (Wakizashi)
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#### **Reduction: 0**

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

#### **School/Rank:** Kitsuki Investigator 2

Rank One: Kitsuki's Method (Free Raise to all your Investigation Skill rolls, in a skirmish add your Perception to your Armor TN)

Rank Two: Wisdom the Wind Brings (Anyone making a Social Skill Roll for the purposes of lying to you or deceiving you, or making a Feint or Disarm maneuver against you in a skirmish must add +5 to their TN for each of your Kitsuki Investigator ranks)

**Skills:** Courtier 3, Etiquette (Courtesy) 3, Games: Go 3, Investigation (Interrogation) 4, Kenjutsu 1, Lore: Heraldry 2, Lore: Law 4, Meditation 2, Sincerity 3, Tea Ceremony 2.

**Mastery Abilities:** None

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Prodigy/Idealistic, Small.

### Agasha Eriko, Fresh Phoenix Shugenja

Eriko is a woman who has seen a lot at an early age. Though her hair is still bound in a maiden's foxtail and she can't be more than a year from her gempukku she carries a haunted and cautious look in her eyes and is quick to snap at people for perceived offense or mistakes. She has taken to smoking as a means of calming her nerves and unusually enough carries a kiseru pipe with her.

Air 2	Earth 2	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 2
Reflexes				
3				

Honor: 4.2	Status: 2.0	Glory: 2.8
<b>Initiative:</b> 4k3		<b>Attack:</b> Bo of Water 6k3 (Complex)

<b>Armor TN:</b> 20	<b>Damage:</b> 4k2 (Bo of Water)
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#### **Reduction:**

**Wounds:** x5 (+0), x2 (+3), x2 (+5), x2 (+10), x2 (+15), x2 (+20), x2 (Down, +40), x2 (Dead)

**School/Rank:** Isawa Shugenja (Water) 1

**Rank One:** Isawa's Art (Free Raise to all Water Spells)

**Skills:** Battle 2, Calligraphy (Cipher) 2, Courtier 1, Defense 3, Etiquette 1, Investigation 2, Lore: History 2, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine 4, Meditation 2, Staves (Bo) 3, Sincerity 3, Spellcraft 3.

**Mastery Abilities:** May retain the result of a previous Defense/Reflexes roll rather than make a new roll if Full Defense is maintained. Opponents do not double their armor bonus against her staff attacks.

**Advantages/Disadvantages:** Wary/Contrary.

**Spells:** Sense, Commune, Summon, Blessed Wind (Air, ML 1), Jurojin's Balm (Earth, ML 1), Never Alone (Fire, ML 1), Bo of Water (Water, ML 1), Path to Inner Peace (Water, ML 1), Cloak of the Miya (Water, ML 2), Rejuvenating Vapors (Water, ML 2). She has all of these spells innated and distinctly does not carry her scroll satchel with her most of the time.

## Appendix #2: Shiba Tansaku's Journal

*5<sup>th</sup> day of Doji, 1138: My commanders have assigned me to protect a shugenja traveling through the old territory. There just seems to be something unnatural about traipsing about where their ghosts are waiting, but I did not protest my duty then, I most certainly will not protest it now.*

*6<sup>th</sup> day of Doji, 1138: We have started out into the plains and I can see the remains of the last village we purged. Despite my protests, Sukima declared we would camp in the shelter of the dojo. Every creak of the boards sounds like they are shuffling towards us. Is not seven hundred years of torment enough to silence them?*

*8<sup>th</sup> day of Doji, 1138: I can see the hill up ahead where we are to set up our forward observation post. I could not sleep the last few nights as I could hear the children playing games. It's sick really, that what happened here so long ago must have seemed like a child's game to that monster. Tagging one person after another until there is no one left. May the Fortunes and my Ancestors forgive me, but my heart is troubled. Why did we have to be the ones to do it? Why hasn't it stopped?*

*I march to war  
Enemies before, behind  
The little ghosts laugh*