

Claiming the Throne

**A One-Round All-Ranks Adventure for Heroes of Rokugan:
Spirit of Bushido
Month of Doji, 1139 (Summer)**

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Confusion at court leads to fundamental changes for Rokugan's future.

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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.

Adventure Summary and Background

When the Shadow opened Oblivion's Gate and allowed thousands of spirits from throughout Rokugan's history to return to the mortal realm seven years ago, a small number of those returned spirits were actually former Emperors. Most of these men were honorable souls, favored by Heaven and purified by the time they spent in Tengoku – they knew and acknowledged the transfer of the Celestial Mandate from the line of Hantei to the line of Toturi, and chose honorable retirement to contemplate the Kharmic Wheel before their second lives ended and they returned to Heaven once more. One, however, never went to Tengoku in the first place, and did not choose a course of quiet obscurity; instead, Hantei Okucheo, the man who was once Hantei XVI, began to lay plans for a return to the power and position he once held. Okucheo, once known as the Steel Chrysanthemum, was easily the most tyrannical Emperor Rokugan has ever seen, responsible for hundreds of deaths and thousands upon thousands of abuses upon samurai and peasants alike; the atrocities he committed were such that he became the only Emperor until Hantei XXXIX (who was possessed by Fu Leng) to be overthrown by his own subjects.

Now, the time at last has come for Hantei XVI to make his move. With the assistance of a number of regional daimyo from across the Empire, samurai who remember the reign of Hantei with fondness (and perhaps also view the reign of Toturi with suspicion), Okucheo has assembled an army of loyal troops in Otosan Uchi. While much of the rest of the Empire is distracted by a peasant army marching toward the capitol, Okucheo's forces – under the guise of “defending the city” – have effectively taken control of the seat of Imperial power. On the outside, nothing appears to be different, but that too is about to change. Soon, all will know that the Hantei line once again claims the throne of the Emerald Empire.

The key to Okucheo's plans is Toturi Tsudao, the four year old daughter of Toturi and current Empress of Rokugan. For the moment, the Empire is ruled by Miya Mashigai, chosen to be the Empress' Regent by a council of high-ranking Imperial samurai, but Okucheo plans to take over those duties himself. The Hantei recognizes that many in the Empire still hold the Toturi line in high regard; rather than take those loyalists on directly, he plans instead to offer them a path that will allow their honors to support him without violating their oaths to Toturi – at the same time he claims the

Regency, he will also announce a betrothal with the Empress. Such arranged marriages are not uncommon in Rokugan, despite the age difference; when Tsudao reaches her gempukku, the marriage will occur and Okucheo will Emperor once more. (What might then happen to his new bride none can now say, though it is perhaps not difficult to imagine.)

It is into this political pressure cooker that the PCs find themselves unknowingly dropped. Sent by the Emerald Champion to learn why so many daimyo did not send their troops to his banner when the time came to put down the peasant rebellion, they instead witness Okucheo's coup as he forces Hida O-Ushi to kill Miya Mashigai and then claims the Regency for himself. Before they are required to offer their oaths of fealty to Okucheo, though, the Imperial Chancellor, Otomo Mitsuhide, approaches them with a seemingly-impossible task: find a way to remove Tsudao from the Imperial Palace before someone kills her. The PCs must overcome the Palace's own security measures and flee Otosan Uchi with the young Empress as they confront the new Empire in which they now live.

Character Notes

Check the PCs' character sheets for the following:

- A cert for the adventure “Emperor's Favor.”
- Certs for any of the adventure “Un defended Border” or the “Harvest Festival” interactive.
- Oath of Fealty to any of the following daimyo (these daimyo have troops in Otosan Uchi in support of Okucheo):
 - Crab: Hida Tetsuya, Hiruma Yabu, Kaiu Mai, Yasuki Minoru
 - Crane: Daidoji Nyoko
 - Lion: Akodo Hiraku, Akodo Kyuwa, Ikoma Sho
 - Mantis: Yoritomo Marihito, Yoritomo Tadanobu
 - Phoenix: Asako Toson, Isawa Mariko, Shiba Gadaiyu
 - Scorpion: Bayushi Hotaka, Soshi Ayane, Yogo Tabusa
 - Unicorn: Moto Su-Tai
- Any Social or Mental Disadvantages that would relate to opposition to the Toturi Dynasty.
- A Karmic Tie to Seppun Toshiaki (from Hope in Shadow)

Introduction

In the wake of the battle against the peasant army on the Plains of the Emerald Champion, the PCs are sent to escort the new Imperial General, Seppun , to Otosan Uchi to learn why several daimyo did not send troops to the battle, instead directing them to the Imperial Capital. is more curious than angry; Kakita Toshiken, the Emerald Champion, on the other hand, is livid. Most of the General's troops are still in the field, mopping up after the battle and securing the Plains of the Emerald Champion against future attacks by the remnants of the peasant army, so the PCs have been chosen to provide the entourage Murayasu's new rank requires. Seppun Murayasu has an honor guard of roughly thirty Emerald Legionnaires, but beyond that, the PCs are it. To emphasize the Imperial General's status as a representative of all the Clans, the escort is likewise intended to represent support from across the Empire, but there are few samurai available with the battle's aftermath still needing to be addressed – the PCs are what is ready to hand. Some may be heroes of the battle, but regardless, they are not otherwise occupied, and so off they go.

Otosan Uchi remains the largest and most beautiful of the Empire's cities, for all that it has been attacked and burned several times within the last decade and a half. It seems, like the sun itself that glitters over the eastern bay, the Imperial Capital somehow rises out the darkness each time more magnificent than before. In the midst of the sprawling city, the Imperial Palace stands proudly over its subjects, a beacon of Imperial power and the physical manifestation of the glory of Heaven present in the Realm of Mortals. As you make your way through the Western Hub Village toward the city's main gates, you hear hundreds of voices in accents from every corner of Rokugan calling out to one another, the whole business of the Empire swirling around you with the relentless energy that only comes from being at the very center of the world.

The peasant crowds step quickly aside as they see your party coming, thirty Emerald Legionnaires on foot lead by a group of mounted samurai, and at their head, Seppun Murayasu himself, newly appointed as the Imperial General, leader of the Imperial Legions and the combined military might of the Eight Clans. In truth, his current status would likely demand a greater escort than the one you and the Legionnaires are providing, but with the remnants of the peasant army still in the field, there was nothing more to spare. It is up to you to supply the grandeur the Imperial General requires.

The PCs and their companions make their way through the crowded streets to Murayasu's new headquarters in Otosan Uchi, a well-appointed samurai's estate, now converted into a military holding, that covers several acres near the Forbidden City. The headquarters have only existed as such for a few days and the conversion is still very much an ongoing process – there are workmen building new training facilities and expanding the stables even as the PCs arrive. Nonetheless, the household servants are skilled and well-trained, the General's adjutant focused and disciplined and everything is waiting and ready as soon as the group arrives.

No sooner than the PCs have had a chance to brush the travel dust from the clothes and perhaps take a quick bath, though, than word arrives at the headquarters that Miya Mashigai, the Imperial Regent, has called a court in the Palace for that very evening, to hear the General's report on the battle and present him to the Imperial Court as an acknowledgment of his new position. In addition to Seppun Murayasu, the court will include several other elite guests, among them the Crab Champion Hida O-Ushi, the renowned general Hida Tsuneo, a number of provincial daimyo and even the former Emperor Hantei Okucheo. The PCs, thanks to their status as Murayasu's entourage, are permitted to attend as well.

Part One: The Edge of Honor

The court itself takes place the same evening the PCs arrive in the city, giving them little chance to prepare for the event. When they arrive, they are going to be in the presence of the Empress' chosen representative, and as such will not be permitted either weapons or armor of any kind – indeed, any character who arrives without the heavy, awkward court kimono expected for this kind of event suffers the loss of a full Rank of Glory, and potentially some Honor as well for a breach of etiquette. (They will have time to shop in the city for appropriate clothing, and Murayasu will provide such if they cannot afford their own. A suitable court kimono will cost roughly 2 koku; truly extravagant kimono can run to 5, 10 or even 30 koku for the ridiculously wealthy, but such outfits must usually be custom-made, and cannot be assembled in the necessary time frame. PCs who played through “Emperor's Favor” should already have suitable garb from their last visit to the Imperial Palace.) The court is filled with high-ranking characters – in addition to the ones mentioned, Kuni Utagu and the daimyo of the three Imperial Families are

here as well, along with Otomo Mitsuhide, the Imperial Chancellor.

When you step onto the grounds of the Forbidden City, you feel a rush of energy through you, and it is hard to tell if it is the proximity of Tengoku to this sacred place or simply the excitement of participating in a true Imperial Court that makes your heart beat a little faster. Murayasu's Emerald Legionnaires do not follow you through the torii arch that acts as a gate here, but a squad of fifty Seppun miharu take up position around you in their place, making certain the Imperial General has the recognition he deserves.

Once inside, you are lead up a flight of stairs to the second floor of the Palace. All around, beautiful artwork and stunning architecture make it almost impossible to decide where you should stare first; the combined effect is almost dizzying, and you notice that even some of the Seppun guards, well-used to the surroundings as they must be, still seem a bit starry-eyed a few times as they guide you along. Soon, though, you step out into a massive chamber, fifty paces wide and twice that long, lined with painted screens to provide semi-private enclosures around the edge of the room. Dominating the room's far edge, a dais holds a replica of the Steel Throne, and the Imperial Regent, Miya Mashigai, sits uneasily upon it as he watches the courtiers in the room mingle together.

Mashigai is an elderly man, heavyset and balding, with a thick beard that flows down his chest. Though he carries himself with a certain air of wisdom and solemnity, he seems ill-at-ease with his surroundings, in particular the chair on which he sits. On the dais nearby, Hantei Okucheo, Seppun Hotaitaka (daimyo of the Seppun family), Miya Yumi (daimyo of the Miya family and Imperial Herald), Otomo Sorai (daimyo of the Otomo family) and Otomo Mitsuhide, the Imperial Chancellor, are all seated on rich cushions as they watch the proceedings as well.

Rumors

The PCs can pursue rumors about some of the more prominent samurai present in the court this evening. If they choose to do so, they 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:

- Though many have whispered that Hida O-Ushi and Hida Tsuneo might have become

paramours, it seems that recent weeks have seen a sharp falling-out between the two. O-Ushi has hardly been seen outside her rooms in Kyuden Hida or leading her men on the Wall; not even her closest companions can say what has changed her attitude, but it is clear that a new and deep coldness has developed between them.

- Kuni Utagu was thrust rather unexpectedly into the political spotlight last year, when he joined the council of high-ranking samurai who made up the Regency Council and that chose Miya Mashigai as the Regent. Since that time, he has reportedly been working to leverage that position into an increased focus on maho in the Empire – the early reports suggesting that the peasant rebels were making use of maho has put new urgency into his actions, and a number of daimyo seem to be listening to him now.
- Seppun Hotaitaka, the Seppun daimyo, has been spending a great deal of time in recent weeks in prayer at the Seppun family shrine within Kyuden Seppun. Previously, the leader of the Seppun family was a man not largely given to extreme displays of piety, but he has not discussed what might have caused this new attitude. Some whisper it might be related to the recent reshuffling of a number of Seppun bushi within the Imperial Legions, with several being transferred out of the First Legion to other, less-prestigious positions.
- Otomo Sorai, the aged daimyo of the Otomo, is expecting the birth of his first child at long last, many years after most of his family had given up hope for an heir of his blood. His current chosen successor, Otomo Ishihama, is said to be displeased by the notion. Sorai's wife, Mishiako, is believed to have left Otosan Uchi to stay with her mother's family during the pregnancy, however a few reports have indicated she might still be in the city, although no one can say where.
- Questions have arisen in the Imperial City about the unusual delay in sending the Empress' Blessing out into the Empire this year. The annual donation of goods and services from the Imperial treasury to a needy province somewhere in Rokugan is coordinated by the Miya family and usually sent out fairly early in the summer, in order to have the best weather for construction and similar projects, but so far, Miya family daimyo Miya Yumi has not sent it anywhere. Last year's Blessing was sent to the Crane lands to help with the rebuilding after the

tsunami and many expected it would be again, as there is still much work to be done, but Yumi has continually delayed a decision “until a clear choice can be made.”

The PCs may seek these rumors or pursue other courtly interests if they wish, but at some point during the evening Mitsuhide approaches each PC to speak with them privately, drawing them into one of the side chambers created by the silk screens around the room’s edge to speak one-on-one. Up close, Mitsuhide does not look like a man who would hold the kind of political power he does – the only thing that marks him out in any way is the soft yellow glow of a returned spirit. He has a bland, unassuming face, neither handsome nor ugly, and manages to seem rather unimportant even when he is standing at the front of an Imperial Court. A PC who makes a **Courtier (Gossip) / Intelligence** roll, TN 20, has heard that Mitsuhide has apparently turned this quality to his advantage; he guides the Court from behind the scenes rather than from a visible position at its forefront, allowing Mashigai (and Toturi before him) to take most of the credit for the political accomplishments Mitsuhide arranges. Mitsuhide’s purpose in speaking with the PCs is to assess their loyalty to the Toturi Dynasty, as well as their willingness to support a Hantei claim to the throne. He does so very carefully, but he is almost impossible to lie to. A typical line of questioning would be as follows: *“I have heard some in the Court claim that Tsudao-heika is the reincarnation of Amaterasu herself, and her birth heralded a new era of prosperity for our Empire under Heaven’s blessing. What do you think of such claims, samurai-san?”* Once the PC responds, Mitsuhide continues, *“Of course, she is also only a child now, with her potential – whatever it may be – still ahead of her. I have heard some argue that, without an Emperor of divine lineage leading us through these dark times, we risk the wrath of Heaven. If such a man were to step forward, would that give you hope for Rokugan’s future?”* A PC can answer however they like – Mitsuhide gives no sign how he feels on the matter whatsoever – but a character who attempts to conceal their opinion or mislead the Chancellor must make a TN 50 **Sincerity (Deceit) / Awareness** roll. The TN is increased by 5 for every 3 points of Mental or Social Disadvantages the character has (rounded as appropriate, to a maximum of +25 TN). Note that a character who attempts a non-answer must still make the roll (though doing so does not cause an Honor loss for using a Low Skill); Mitsuhide can read the character’s reactions as well through an evasive or even a philosophical answer as through an active attempt to deceive him.

Over the course of the evening, the PCs also meet Seppun Katsuharu, a reserved Seppun guardsman; as with Mitsuhide, Katsuharu makes sure to speak with all the PCs, though he does not necessarily try to do so individually. Katsuharu is one of the rare returned spirits whose self-image was apparently not associated with the prime of his life; though clearly in excellent physical condition and possessed of the bearing of a skilled warrior, Katsuharu’s face shows a few lines of age and care, and hints of grey lighten the hair near his temples. A **Lore: Heraldry / Intelligence** roll, TN 30, recognizes him as one of two returned spirits in the unit of miharu that were defending the Emperor on the day Empress Kaede was assassinated – the other was the assassin, and although Katsuharu’s blade was the first through the assassin’s chest, the event nevertheless left a deep stain on his reputation. (PCs who played through the adventure “New Beginnings” have seen Katsuharu briefly; he was with Toturi when the Emperor returned to Ningen-do with the body of his wife.) Since that time, Katsuharu has kept an extremely low profile in the courts.

As he sounds out the PCs, Katsuharu’s conversational gambits are less oblique than Mitsuhide’s; he merely wishes to assess the overall trustworthiness and honor of the PCs, and encourages them to tell tales of their heroism or courage, whether it be in the recent battle against the peasants or other acts from previous adventures. While they are speaking to him, the PCs may make an **Investigation (Interrogation) / Perception** roll, TN 30; if successful, they pick up on the fact that Katsuharu is nervous, and the target of his nervousness seems to be Hantei Okucheo. He won’t explain why, however, and the PCs risk a failure of etiquette if they push the matter too far.

If the PCs ask any of the daimyo here, all of whom failed to send troops to the battle, why they did so, they all say that they felt that protecting Otsan Uchi was vital, and that they believed their troops were more valuable in that role than fighting alongside the Emerald Champion and the Imperial General. The daimyo present are as follows:

- Crab: Hida Tetsuya, Hiruma Yabu, Kaiu Mai, Yasuki Minoru
- Crane: Daidoji Nyoko
- Lion: Akodo Hiraku, Akodo Kyuwa, Ikoma Sho
- Mantis: Yoritomo Marihito, Yoritomo Tadanobu
- Phoenix: Asako Toson, Isawa Mariko, Shiba Gadaiyu

- Scorpion: Bayushi Hotaka, Soshi Ayane, Yogo Tabusa
- Unicorn: Moto Su-Tai

There are no Dragon daimyo present, and when the daimyo later bring their troops into the court, there are no Dragon among them.

Eventually, a series of three sonorous clangs of a gong call the court officially to order. Mashigai stands up and, in a quavering and somewhat weary tone, says, *“We thank you all for coming to Our Court this evening, on such short notice. We have summoned you here to listen to the report of Our newly-appointed Imperial General on the unfortunate events that have recently occurred on the Plain of the Emerald Champion. General, please step forward and deliver your report to this Court.”*

The PCs accompany the General as he steps out into court and delivers a summary of what transpired.

“The forces of the Empire marched out in good order and met the peasant rebels at the Bridge of Red Gates over the Golden Heavens River,” Murayasu says calmly, with the detached air of a professional soldier delivering a report. “They made far better time than we had expected, an indicator of the unusual degree of training they had received; when our forces arrived, they had already reached the river and begun the crossing. Despite the unplanned reduction in our forces, I was forced to order an immediate charge, and we were able to drive the enemy back across the river relatively quickly. It did not prove to be so simple, for their dishonor was not limited to merely taking up arms against their samurai lords. A group of saboteurs employed gaijin pepper to destroy the Bridge itself while my men were crossing it. When their inevitable defeat became obvious, one among them called upon foul magics to summon a corrupt monster in the sacred heart of the Plains of the Emerald Champion. I should note that many among the rebels turned and fled at the abomination’s arrival, and some even turned their weapons against it, however futile the effort turned out to be – it did not seem to be part of their battle plan, nor was it countenanced by their rank and file. Nonetheless, we were able to scatter the rebel force and end the threat to the city; no more than one out of every three among those who raised arms against us survived to flee the field. These stragglers are even now being pursued by the forces that remain in the area, under the command of Kakita Toshiken-sama.”

Throughout the recitation, Murayasu’s voice remains even and factual, though any PC who wishes to roll

Investigation or **Courtier / Awareness** at a TN of 25 will note that he is curious about the missing forces as he eyes the daimyo present that withheld their troops. Those who roll a 35 or higher will see that he takes no pride in having ordered the death of nearly 35,000 people (rebel or not), but because ending the threat to Ootosan Uchi and the Empress was his duty, he performed it to the best of his ability. He is not bloodthirsty, nor interested in glory for its own sake, but truly dedicated to doing his duty – loyalty to the Empire is his driving goal.

As he finishes, Hantei Okucheo steps up next to Mashigai and cuts the Regent off, raising a hand and proclaiming, “The Empire thanks you, General, for your service. All here assembled stand witness to your bravery and honor, and will remember your heroism.” Mashigai’s mouth falls slightly open in surprise at this interruption, and he turns to the Hantei, saying, “We appreciate your desire to congratulate these fine warriors Hantei-san, and are grateful for your presence at Our court, but We must ask that you resume your place until We recognize you officially.” Okucheo looks utterly furious for a moment, but he reasserts his face swiftly and nods to Hida Tsuneo, also standing to one side of the dais who in turn nods at several daimyo around the room. These daimyo open the doors to the court to allow hundreds of samurai, all armed and armored, to pour into the room. There are samurai from every Clan except the Dragon, but you quickly see that roughly half are from the Crab Clan, and a sizable fraction are returned spirits. The bushi form a barrier between the dais and the rest of the room while Mashigai stares in shock, unable to say anything, and Okucheo takes the opportunity to turn his attention back to the Court and continue speaking.

“Honorable samurai, it is with a conflicted heart that I come before you tonight. Unfortunately, though the Imperial General and his courageous bushi have stood against these rebellious and impious peasants, that such an event was allowed to come to pass is testimony to the inadequacy of those who should have been at the forefront of the effort to prevent it. It is the role of the Emperor to provide such leadership. However, it is clear that a lesser man cannot do the same. Thus, I must undertake the obligation that Miya-san failed to uphold.” He takes a step forward, raising his voice. “As of this moment, We resume Our divine duty as the representative of Heaven in the Realm of Mortals. We proclaim Ourselves Imperial Regent, steward of the Emerald Empire until Toturi Tsudao is able to claim her place on the throne. At that time, we will marry, and the Empire will see the two lines of Emperors, both blessed by Heaven and

protected by Divine Mandate, brought together.” Mashigai gasps in shock, and mutters run around the room from the assembled courtiers and daimyo. Most look approving, though Murayasu is frowning in deep thought, and Katsuharu looks all but panicked. “Furthermore, while We thank Miya-san for his service to the Empress and the Throne, We cannot accept the failure he has overseen in allowing Our Empire to be threatened by those so far beneath us. Miya-san, We grant you the right to perform the three cuts.” Mashigai’s face pales, and Okucheo smiles faintly. The ripple of murmurs sweeps across the room again, and there are far more this time that seem upset or displeased, including a handful of the daimyo who had been nodding just before. Okucheo looks toward Hida Tsuneo for a moment, but his eyes drift sideways and settle instead on Hida O-Ushi. The smile grows. “Hida O-Ushi, Champion of the Crab, you shall stand second for Miya-san’s seppuku.”

O-Ushi doesn’t move for a moment, her eyes widening at the order. If the PCs do not understand the subtext here, they can make a **Courtier / Awareness** roll, TN 20, to grasp it: Okucheo is ordering Mashigai’s death – that is why he did not allow Mashigai the chance to offer his seppuku before “granting” it – and at the same time attempting to prove his authority by forcing O-Ushi to participate in the execution as well. That O-Ushi’s response is surprise and hesitation, rather than anger or confusion, suggests that he *has* that authority, at least where she is concerned.

In that space, one of her daimyo turns from where he was guarding the dais and says, “**No, my Champion! This is not what I thought we were doing here! We are protecting the Empire from peasants, not supporting an usurper!**” The speaker is Hiruma Yabu, daimyo of Ienikaeru Province, a skilled warrior whose still-black hair and unlined face belie his many years of experience battling the Shadowlands and rebuilding his family’s homeland. Okucheo glares daggers at Yabu, but his reply is theoretically directed at O-Ushi: “**You are protecting the Empire, remember? Your soldiers are here defending the man who will make sure they continue to have the food they need to eat, the weapons they need to fight, and the families they hope to come home to. Will you see that taken away from them, O-Ushi, or will you do as I command?**” (Again, a **Courtier / Awareness** roll, TN 20: Okucheo’s reference to “the families they come home to” is a threat to have their families killed if she does not comply.)

Yabu stares between Okucheo and O-Ushi, and his face falls when O-Ushi slowly, and with great regret on her face, reaches for her katana. Yabu, however,

acts first, drawing his blade and charging toward Okucheo, shouting, “For the Crab!” Three of the guards in front of the dais die in a single breath, and he is suddenly on the dais – and then Tsuneo is there, grabbing Yabu’s wrist in one hand and his throat in the other, and crushing both mercilessly. The katana falls to the ground only moments before Yabu’s body joins it. The murmurs return, swelling, threatening to become an uproar.

The PCs, at this point, can act if they wish. If the PCs seem inclined to follow Yabu’s example, Katsuharu will intercept them, whispering fiercely, “No! Not now! You are needed for the sake of the Empire! Don’t throw yourself away here!” He won’t explain more right then, asking for the PCs’ trust and promising answers soon. In addition, if said PC is Crab, O-Ushi will meet their eyes and shake her head firmly no. Still, the PC can do so if they want to – this earns them the “Truest Test” cert, worth double the usual karma, and the player can make a new character and bring them into the module in the next scene if they can do so quickly enough. On the other hand, the PCs can simply speak up in protest, offering their support to the others in the room who are equally upset. If the players ask, the daimyo listed in Appendix #3 as providing full support to the Hantei dynasty are reacting favorably to the events, while those listed as supporting Toturi, even with some influence from the Hantei, are less pleased. The Imperial figures present are reacting with no visible sign of pleasure or displeasure; their face is as perfect as they can make it in this critical situation.

Regardless of which course they choose, if the PCs take actions to support the atmosphere of dismay that is building in the room, Okucheo senses the shift in the mood and his façade of calm disappears.

“Kill him,” he snaps to O-Ushi. “Now.” O-Ushi hesitates once more, and Okucheo’s face becomes a mask of fury. “Kill him, on the command of the Hantei, or subject your loyal followers on the Wall to corruption and death when Tsuneo’s troops withdraw here. Remember the oath you swore to the Empire, O-Ushi, and do as We say.” O-Ushi, whose advance toward Mashigai had stopped when Yabu charged, takes a deep breath, then starts walking again. Mashigai cringes back in the Imperial Throne. O-Ushi raises her blade, but before she can swing, Okucheo calls out, “Wait! Get him off the Throne first. I don’t want his blood on it.” O-Ushi’s face darkens, and for a moment it almost seems as though she is going to follow Yabu’s example, but her gaze falls on the Crab samurai in front of the dais. The fury in her eyes returns to the reluctant sadness they had held before. The Crab Champion looks back at

Mashigai, reaching out to pull him roughly out of the chair before lifting her blade again. Mashigai falls to his knees, opening his mouth to say something – but O-Ushi's blade cuts it off forever.

If, on the other hand, the PCs do nothing but watch, Okucheo draws the moment out, and the mutters die down. O-Ushi slowly approaches the Throne, drawing her katana as she does so.

Mashigai cringes away, but when she stands before him, O-Ushi says, quietly, "Kneel and draw your wakizashi, Miya-sama. I will do the rest." Quivering, his eyes darting back and forth in search of aid, Mashigai does not move at first – but when no one says anything, he stands, kneels on the floor, and draws his wakizashi. Bowing his head, he places the tip against his stomach, and O-Ushi's katana finishes the act.

Either way, once Mashigai is dead, Okucheo smiles, stepping over the body to stand in front of the Throne. He raises his fan, shielding his eyes from the sight of Mashigai's corpse, turning instead to the rest of the Court. *"Honorable samurai, We regret that Our hospitality has been lacking so far tonight; however, We assure you it will not remain so. You are all invited to remain within the palace tonight, as Our guests."* The smile takes a predatory turn, and he continues, *"As such, We will accept your oaths of fealty tomorrow morning, when We reconvene Our Court. And, in order to make certain that we are not disturbed before that can happen..."* Okucheo sits down on the replica of the Imperial Throne, placing his hands on the two armrests and closing his eyes for a moment in concentration. An instant later, a ripple of power and light sweeps across the room and through the walls, and there is a sudden sense of pressure in the air, a strange tingling and slight sense of both heat and cold. *"There,"* Okucheo says, opening his eyes. *"The old wards still remember the power of the Hantei. None not of the blood of Hantei or Toturi can enter the palace. We will remain... untroubled... through the night."* He smiles, then rises and sweeps out, followed by Tsuneo.

Assuming any Crab characters survive, O-Ushi approaches them when Okucheo is gone and tells them to find Hida Yasamura once they can leave and give him a message: "Tell him I said this: 'You were right, my love, and I was wrong. Do what you must, for the sake of both of us.' Tell him that, and... and that is all." Whether she speaks to any Crabs or not, before she leaves the court, O-Ushi draws her hammer and lays it across the body of Hiruma Yabu, sliding the hammer's handle between his hands as though he were

holding it. Then she leaves without saying another word.

Part Two: No Battle Plan Survives...

The PCs are sent to the rooms they have been assigned in the palace, to await their chance to offer their fealty the next morning. (If any PC attempts to simply leave, Katsuharu notices them and intercepts them, asking them to stay for the sake of the Empress and the Empire.) That night, however, Mitsuhide and Katsuharu come to them quietly, drawing them together into one room so they can speak easily, and without being overheard.

"Honorable samurai," Mitsuhide says carefully, "we have all seen much tonight to give us pause. Five samurai are dead, killed before our very eyes, and the Empire stands on the precipice of change unlike any it has known in generations. In some ways, this has never happened before – not once in the history of Rokugan has a former Emperor taken his place a second time on the throne, and certainly not by his own command. Nevertheless, that is not why I have come to speak with you tonight. That reason is quite simple: Empress Tsudao is not safe within the palace. Despite all of the new Regent's precautions, there are those within these walls that would see her dead before morning. I mean to prevent that, but I cannot do so myself. I am a public figure, with eyes on me from the highest reaches to the lowest. You, however, are not the sort to draw attention, not with all that has happened tonight – and so you are the ones I have come to in hopes of saving the Empress' life."

The PCs may have several questions – some of the most likely, and Mitsuhide's responses, are as follows:

- What kind of danger is she in? Who wants to kill her? *"I cannot be more specific than I already have been. Partly because I do not know all who might be involved, and partly because I do not wish you to risk yourselves – and thus, the Empress' hope for survival – in a foolish assault on an obvious target. No matter who I might name, I promise you there would be others standing ready to take their place, and Tsudao-heika's fate would be the same. Focus on rescuing her, not on anything else."*
- How do you expect us to accomplish this? *"Katsuharu-san has information you can use to plan your efforts. Beyond that, I do not know what you will do; you will have to make*

and execute your plan yourselves. But you must not fail – Tsudao-heika's life hangs in the balance."

- Is it Okucheo who wants to kill her? / Why not warn Okucheo? *"Hantei-sama has tied his standing to Tsudao-heika by taking the throne in her name and announcing their betrothal. He would not see her dead now. But neither will he want to have her removed from his sphere of influence, and so would refuse to let her go were I to ask – and he cannot protect her, no matter what he thinks. We must do what is necessary for the Empress, regardless of his preferences."*
- Why us? Why can't you get her out? Will you help us? *"My own position is too exposed, and my duties to the Empress demand that I remain in the palace – I need access to this Court to do as the Chancellor must, regardless of who is Regent. I cannot do more than I am already, and even this has risks. Were I to help you further, I would only draw attention to your activities. Katsuharu-san will be able to help you further, and I believe he will be less concerned about returning once Tsudao-heika has been safely escorted away."*
- Where is the Empress' Guard in all this? *"The Guard were... distracted, by the threat against the capital from the peasant armies. They have deployed to the field; only a small force remained behind, under the command of Akodo Haronabu. I... am afraid that they refused to accept the new Regent's proclamation of betrothal or to stand down at his command. I am told they died well."*

If Mitsuhide spotted someone who supported Okucheo earlier, he focuses his attention on that person (or those persons), drawing them away from the others, and asks if the evening's events have changed their minds at all. Again, successfully lying to him will be nearly impossible. If they are still supporters of Okucheo, Mitsuhide continues, *"If you are concerned about the possible loss of face Hantei-sama might suffer without the Empress by his side, let me offer this: I have it within my power to replace her with something that will definitely serve to reinforce his position. You have heard, of course, the tale of how the Kami Hantei battled Onnatangu, the Moon, and cut open his father's belly in order to free his siblings, the other Kami, before they all fell to earth. The blade Hantei-kami used was called Kumo-o-kiru-ha, Cloud-cutter. It was lost when the Kami fell, but one of my agents visited the Oracle of Earth not long ago and was given its location. Although the Oracles seem not to know*

how much to rely on their own prophecies now, this answer was a true one, and the Blade of Clouds was recovered. I can arrange for it to be delivered to Hantei-sama. If it will satisfy you, I give you my word that, once Tsudao has reached safety, Hantei-sama will be given Kumo-o-kiru-ha to wield as his ancestor once did."

Again, Mitsuhide will be looking for signs that the PC is lying, agreeing to help while planning to kill the Empress or expose the plot to Okucheo or another authority. If he sees them and it appears that it is because they are a loyal Hantei supporter, Mitsuhide narrows his eyes and says fiercely, *"Realize, samurai, that Hantei-sama has nothing if he cannot maintain a claim as Regent and a line on the throne through marriage. If Tsudao dies, then he is an usurper, nothing more, in the eyes of most of the Empire."* If the PC played through the module "Emperor's Favor," Mitsuhide continues, *"As you might recall, in fact, Tsudao is not the only child of Toturi – and if the Empress dies, that other will be raised up as the true heir of the line, and Hantei-sama will have no claims at all to controlling him."* If they did not, Mitsuhide says instead, *"In fact, rumors have already begun circulating that Tsudao was not Toturi's only child – and if the Empress dies, that other will be raised up as the true heir of the line, and Hantei-sama will have no claims at all to controlling him."* Either way, he concludes, *"Getting Tsudao out of the palace is the only way to save her – and the only way to protect his position."*

On the other hand, if it looks like the PC might be lying for some other reason – a desire to kill Tsudao themselves, for instance – Mitsuhide leans close and says flatly, *"Give me your word you will see Tsudao-heika safely out of the palace and delivered to the Emerald Champion or I will have Katsuharu-san cut you down like the traitor you are this instant."* (He also does this if his previous arguments to Hantei supporters have failed.) At this point, Mitsuhide can be assumed to know any Social or Mental Disadvantages the PCs might have; if these would lead to an attempt on Tsudao's life, he reacts the same way. The PC must convince Mitsuhide, either by making an extremely impressive Sincerity roll (again, the TN is 50 and increases by 5 for every 3 points of Mental or Social Disadvantages the PC possess) or by actually sincerely agreeing, or Mitsuhide orders Katsuharu to kill the PC, a task Katsuharu performs with alacrity.

Assuming he obtains agreement from all the PCs, Mitsuhide turns the floor over to Katsuharu, who begins explaining the security measures the PCs will need to deal with in order to get Tsudao out of the castle. The

first and largest one would be reaching the royal wing of the castle to begin with, but according to Mitsuhide, there is a way to get around that obstacle. *“There is a secret passage within the palace, one that leads from the rooms of the Imperial Regent to the servants’ quarters of the palace,”* the Chancellor explains. *“Only a small number of people know it exists – while it is likely that Hantei-sama does, the Seppun miharu watching over Tsudao-heika will not, and Hantei-sama will continue the Imperial tradition of secrecy in this matter,”* Mitsuhide continues. If the PCs have played the adventure “Emperor’s Favor,” they will already be familiar with this passage’s end point, as Mitsuhide will point out. *“The servants’ chambers are nearby – you should be able to enter them easily and without drawing attention. From there, you can enter the passage and climb to the Imperial residence on the fifth floor.”*

Katsuharu takes over the conversation once more. *“That is when you will run into trouble,”* he says uneasily. *“Okucheo has commanded that there be six miharu on duty within the residence at all times, as well as a member of the Hidden Guard. Three protect the Imperial audience chamber, two more stand guard in the main hall of the residence itself, and the last will be in Tsudao’s chambers. The shugenja might be anywhere, though he usually spends his time meditating or praying in the private Imperial shrine on the sixth floor. He can be on the fifth floor in seconds, however, and his relationship with the kami is such that he might well know of your arrival as soon as you set foot on the floor. Time will thus be of the essence.”*

“I know all six of the Seppun guards; they are honorable bushi, each and every one, but all are loyal to the Hantei. Persuading any of them to permit or even aid your actions might be possible, but would require a skilled tongue guided by a soul of honor to accomplish such a task. They are also dedicated, but none will expect trouble so deep into the palace – distractions might well serve your turn, if you need to move past them unseen. I recommend against battle; all are tested and skilled warriors of at least the third dan in their School. You would find such a battle difficult at best, and these warriors are assets to the Empire, performing their duty as they understand it. Still, the life of the Empress is at stake, and I know all would prefer their deaths to hers if we offered them the choice – do what you must. I have drawn a map of the floor, so that you can see for yourself the task in front of you and make your plans. If you have questions, ask and I will answer as best I can.”

The map is of the fifth floor of the palace, and represents Katsuharu’s best understanding of the security arrangements as he knows them. Each “SG” indicates the usual spot for one of the guards, though he notes they do move about, to check on other rooms or pass messages or orders along to one another. Some of the questions the PCs might ask, and his answers to them, include:

- How are we to fight without weapons or armor? *“I can provide you with such things from out of the armory of the miharu. Let me know what you require and, if it is available, I will bring it.”* The armory contains light and heavy armor, as well as katana, wakizashi, no-dachi, nage-yari and yari, as well as all of the heavy weapons, polearms and bows listed in the Core Rulebook. Other weapons are not available, however. If the PCs request other equipment for their plan, such as rope, climbing equipment, and so on, the availability is at the GM’s discretion; only items that would reasonably be in the Imperial Palace should be accessible, though a good rationale might go a long way to justifying an unusual request. Note that shugenja will have their scroll satchels in their rooms – these are religious artifacts, and away from the dangers of an active court, the PCs’ duty to carry and protect those artifacts returns to prominence. Katsuharu will arrange for any significant personal possessions the PCs do not have with them to be brought when he arranges for their transport from the city.
- Can you help us with this? *“I have contacts within the city that I plan to use to arrange transportation for us and the Empress once you have rescued her. In order to contact them, though, I need to leave the palace, and once I do so, I will not be able to return until the wards are down once more. It is up to you, I am afraid.”*
- Can you tell us anything about these guards? *“They have been chosen for their loyalty to Okucheo over their skill – though they are still formidable warriors, all of them. Seppun Fukusho, Seppun Chiara and Seppun Bonume will be in the Throne Room; Seppun Aito will be in with Tsudao in the residence, while Seppun Enuke and Seppun Direpu will be in the main hallway. Aito has always been fond of the Empress, which could give you a lever to persuade him; Enuke is the only returned spirit, and her dedication to the idea*

of a Hantei on the throne once more is perhaps the greatest of any of them.”

- Are there any other ways into or out of the floor beyond the stairs and the secret passage? *“There are windows in the Imperial suite, the Regent’s quarters and the Throne Room; other than that, though, I know of none.”*
- Why are there so few guards? *“The palace’s security is focused on the lower levels – under ordinary circumstances, reaching the fifth floor without being seen and challenged (and probably killed) would be impossible. It is only because of the secret passage Otomo-sama spoke of that this plan is even conceivable. Also, we have the advantage of Okucheo’s own paranoia – his own security is much tighter, and the most skilled bushi among those loyal to him are protecting him rather than the Empress.”*
- Where is Okucheo right now? *“In the private meeting rooms near the main audience hall on the second floor, with most of the high-ranking samurai who were here tonight. The samurai who were protecting the audience hall are still with him; if you have any thoughts of attacking him, discard them now. However, the meetings provide our window to act – he will not head toward the fifth floor rooms for several hours.”*

Once the PCs have asked all the questions they have, Katsuharu leaves to collect the requested equipment and make transportation arrangements for himself, the PCs and Tsudao to reach the camp of the Emerald Champion. (He will also go to the General’s Headquarters to recover the PCs’ personal possessions and mounts.) Once he departs, Mitsuhide asks their plan – if any seem particularly unlikely to work (due to inadequate PC Rank, apparent flaws or poor assumptions; the GM should use their best judgment to make these assessments) he will point the fact out, but the choice is ultimately up to them. Time is a factor here: if the planning discussion takes the mod beyond about 2 and a half hours running time, he pushes the PCs to make a decision, reminding them that Okucheo will return to the fifth floor soon, and once that happens the chance will be lost – the Empress will effectively be dead.

Mitsuhide also brings up the question of where the PCs will take the Empress once she is out of the Palace. He suggests four possible destinations: Kyuden Tonbo, in the Dragonfly lands, under the effective protection of the Dragon Clan; Toshi no Meiyo Gisei, on the border between the Lion and Unicorn, distant enough to be safe from both the Crab lands and Otosan Uchi and

easily claimed by an Imperial force in the inconclusive aftermath of the Lion attack on it; Ookami Toshi, in the mountains on the western edge of the Crane lands, in one of the most impregnable fortresses in the Empire; or Ryoko Owari, amid the more subtle protections of the Scorpion. He notes they need not decide immediately, but their recommendation will undoubtedly carry weight with the Emerald Champion when they meet him to hand over the Empress.

Part Three: ...Contact With the Enemy

Regardless, once the PCs have their plan in place, they must actually attempt it. The primary obstacles are the Seppun guards and the Seppun shugenja who are present on the floor – their stats can be found below. In addition, the following applies to the floor itself:

- All the internal walls of the fifth floor are paper screens; they block sight but do little to impede sound or, for that matter, a determined samurai who wishes to move through them. Tearing through a screen can be done as a Free Action, but allows the guards to make **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** rolls, TN 10 (modified for distance, as noted below), to hear the noise. If the cutting character attempts to do so quietly, they can replace the TN with a **Stealth** or **Sleight of Hand / Agility** roll; the result acts as the base TN instead, with further modifiers for distance, and takes a Complex Action.
- Other than the walls, there is essentially no usable cover for hiding; a guard in the same room as a PC notices that PC automatically. The only way to avoid this is to use distractions or illusion magic to create cover, but Seppun are notoriously difficult to fool with illusion magic (a point that Mitsuhide will make); mundane solutions will have a better chance, if they can be arranged. If the PCs can arrange cover or a distraction, though, they can attempt Stealth normally. Alternatively, a PC attempting to sneak up on or past a lone guard in a room can do so, by basically just trying to stay always behind them, but the guard gains three Free Raises on their Perception rolls due to the lack of cover.
- Hearing-based Perception rolls for the guards to hear the PCs increase based on how far away they are from the source of the sound they are trying to hear. Count the Regent’s Quarters, the Main Hall, the Imperial Suite, the Imperial Throne Room and the Private

Audience Chamber Hall each as separate “zones” – if the source of a noise is at the other end of a zone from the listening guard, the TN goes up by +5; the TN is +10 in an adjacent zone; and if the listener is two zones away (as a guard in the Imperial Suite or the Throne Room listening for a sound in the Regent’s Quarters) the TN is +15. Quiet talking and careful movement will not provoke Perception rolls if the guard is in a different zone.

- If the PCs decide to climb around the outside of the building using the windows, they find the sharply-angled roof of the fourth floor is usable as a traveling surface, if only barely. Reaching the window outside the Imperial Suite requires either two **Athletics / Agility** rolls at TN 30 or four **Athletics / Agility** rolls at TN 15; each time a PC makes a roll, however, one of the guards on the walls of the Forbidden City can make an **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** roll, TN 35, to spot the PC on the roof. (Use the same stats for the guards on the walls as for the guards in the palace.) If a PC Raises twice on the Athletics roll, they can make a **Stealth / Agility** roll as well; subtract 10 from the result and increase the guard’s Investigation TN by that amount. Failing the Athletics roll by less than 10 means the character cannot progress and must try again (provoking another Investigation roll); failing by 10 or more means the PC has slipped and fallen. They get one chance to make an **Athletics (Climbing) / Reflexes** roll, TN 20, to catch the roof before they fall – success means they can make an **Athletics (Climbing) / Strength** roll, TN 15, to climb back up (provoking another Investigation roll), while failure means a fall, dealing 7k7 Wounds. If a PC should happen to survive such a fall, they can re-enter the servant’s quarters and make their way back up to the fifth floor without major incident. If the guards on the wall spot one or more PCs, one will fire an arrow at the character (-3k0 penalty due to range) and a second fires a signal arrow, alerting all the guards within the palace to the PCs’ presence. Four guards from the lower floors arrive two Combat Rounds later, and two more arrive every Round thereafter.
- As soon as the PCs reach the fifth floor, Seppun Toshiaki (Communing with the kami outside the Toturi’s private shrine on the sixth floor) can make a **School Rank / Air** (8k3) roll, TN 30, to realize they have arrived. If

this roll is failed, he can reattempt it once a minute. (The PCs going out onto the roof, however, deprives him of this chance.) If a PC casts a spell or initiates combat, the kami become more agitated, allowing him to roll once every Combat Round. Once he realizes there are intruders (all he will know is that someone who is not supposed to be on the fifth floor is there – he will not know who, where or how many, or even whether it was combat or magic that provoked the kami), he heads down to the fifth floor, taking two Combat Rounds to reach it, and notifies the guards in the Throne Room. He then leads them on a search of the floor – two of the guards join him, while the third (the one nearest the Private Audience Chambers) moves to the center of the room. This might provide quick-thinking PCs with an opportunity.

- All spells cast within the Imperial Palace, whether by Toshiaki or by a PC, receive a Free Raise, thanks to the potent sacred energies of the site. (This also applies to maho, as Fu Leng’s possession of Hantei XXXIX opened a connection to Jigoku.)
- The Seppun are well-trained, and not easy to fool or distract from their duty, but they are not infallible either. The guards resist most attempts to fool or distract them with their **Investigation (Notice) / Perception** or **Investigation / Willpower** rolls (depending on whether they are being outright deceived or simply mislead with fast-talk or some other distraction) – they also gain a bonus of +3k0 from their Never in Darkness Technique if they are resisting a Social Skill. Skills the PCs might roll, depending on their approach, could include **Courtier (Manipulation) / Awareness, Sleight of Hand / Agility**, or even **Athletics / Reflexes** (if, for instance, they plan to throw something to cause a distraction elsewhere). If no particular roll seems suitable, the base TN for the guards to overcome in order to resist the distraction is equal to the 5 + (5x the PC’s Insight Rank), modified as seems appropriate for particularly clever or poorly-thought-out plans.
- Obvious threats or intruders are confronted with weapons drawn – anyone with weapons or scrolls in hand is attacked without hesitation, while an unarmed intruder will be offered one and only one chance to surrender – they will be told to kneel and place their hands behind their head, and if they do not comply, the guards attack. The shouts of combat or confrontation with an intruder can be heard

throughout the floor – as a rule, only combat will draw the other guards from their posts. When they first hear combat, the guards everywhere except the Imperial Suite and the Throne Room will move to join the battle if it is not already at their location; one of the guards from the Throne Room will do so as well, but the other two remain at their posts (the one who leaves will usually be the one nearest the Private Audience Chambers) at first. If the combat lasts longer than two Rounds, though, a second guard from the Throne Room will join the fight, while the other will head down the stairs to summon help from the lower floors. They will return with four more guards in five Combat Rounds, and an additional two guards will arrive every Combat Round afterward. If the combat begins in the Throne Room, every guard except the one in the Imperial Suite will join the fight; if the fight lasts longer than two Rounds, though, one of the guards will withdraw (unless they are the last one alive) to the lower floors in search of help, as above. If the combat instead happens in the Imperial Suite, every guard will join the fight save one, who heads to a lower floor for help immediately. Assume a guard in the same “zone” (see the listening-based Perception rolls section, above) can join the battle immediately, while guards one zone away take one Combat Round to arrive and guards two zones away take two Rounds to reach the fight.

- There are two eta in the Main Hall, cleaning up the aftermath of the battle between the Seppun guards and the Empress’s Guard. The eta are entirely focused on their jobs, scrubbing the floors to remove the stains of death, and will not interfere with the PCs’ actions or get involved in any fight- they know all too well that, even if they wished to alert the guards as to an intruder in the palace, they are not allowed to address them and would only be cut down for the attempt.
- Persuading one of the guards to lay down their arms and potentially even to aid the PCs in bringing out Tsudao requires a **Sincerity (Honesty) / Awareness** roll, resisted by the guard’s **Investigation / Willpower**; they gain the +3k0 from their Never in Darkness Technique, and an additional +10 to their roll because of their dedication to their duty. The bonus increases to +25 for Seppun Enuko, but if a PC approaches Seppun Aito and specifically references the potential threat to

her life, he does not gain the +10 (he does still get the +3k0, however). Against higher-Rank tables, most of the guards will likely Honor Test a failed resistance, and Seppun Enuko always will; Aito might not however, if the GM is sufficiently impressed with the PCs’ roleplaying and have targeted his sympathy for Tsudao.

- Under normal circumstances, it is not possible to persuade Seppun Toshiaki to ally with the PCs – he will attack them on sight, and anyone (save Tsudao and Yemi) who is with them. However, a PC who has a Karmic Tie to Toshiaki can actually make a persuasion roll, resisted as usual by his **Investigation / Willpower** roll (he gains no special bonuses). The Karmic Tie does add +3k0 to his roll to detect the PCs’ presence on the floor, however.

The Regent’s Quarters, as the PCs discover when they reach them, are a small suite of rooms decorated with surprising austerity for a man with such political power. Most of the walls contain scroll racks with dozens upon dozens of scrolls on topics such as history, culture, fine arts and more. The center of the large study is a well-polished and well-maintained writing table, and the fine paper still resting upon it reveals that Mashigai was writing a collection of stories about some of the spirits who returned through Oblivion’s Gate, many of whom are among the greatest heroes in Rokugan’s history – a collection he will now never complete. The section ends in the midst of the tale of [Seppun or Gusai, if either was made Imperial General – otherwise it is the story of Otaku Shiko]. If the door is closed, it is a TN 40 **Investigation (Search) / Perception** roll to find the opening into the secret passage; a searcher who knows it is there gains two Free Raises on this roll.

Outside, the main hall is a wide passage, almost 40 feet across and more than three times as long, lined with brilliantly-painted images of the Eight Kami holding the tournament to determine which would win the right to be Emperor. Beyond that, the smooth polished wood of the floor normally holds only the reflections of the guards who stand watch at either end; now, however, that perfection has been marred by signs of recent battle, where the Empress’ Guard stood against the Seppun miharu and were cut down. Two eta scrub at the bloodstains on the wood with scraping stones; they steadfastly ignore both the guards in the hallway and the one body that has not yet been taken away, that of Akodo Harunobu. He lays face-up, staring blindly toward the ceiling, sword wounds visible across his body and a pool of drying blood all around him. His katana is still on the floor next to him, the hilt a few

inches from his fingers. The yellowish glow that had surrounded him in life is now gone – he is just one more dead samurai, like any other.

The Imperial Throne Room is a vast space, as large as the main audience chamber three floors below where Mashigai called tonight's court, but the room is empty save for the guards in various corners who watch it carefully. Painted screens – a mix of religious scenes showing the Eight Kami, the Fortunes and the Elemental Dragons and scenes of battle depicting the various heroes of the Second Day of Thunder, including Toturi himself – surround the edges of the room, and a large dais holds the massive Steel Throne, the grandeur of which far outshines that of the smaller throne in the audience chamber below. Three statues – of Amaterasu, Onnatangu and the Celestial Dragon – stand on the east side of the room, near the stairs, while a row of columns holds up the ceiling to the north. To the southwest, a smaller hallway holds several chambers for holding private audiences, each as large as the apartments you were assigned for your stay tonight.

The Imperial Suite is a vast residence, bigger than many samurai houses just in itself. The rooms are decorated in a surprisingly simple style, but everything is made from the richest, highest-quality materials. Low tables and small stands hold flower arrangements or tiny statues, most of military subjects; scroll racks, half-filled, cover several walls as well. The Suite holds a man and two women: Seppun Aito, the miharu guarding Tsudao within her chambers, Seppun Yemi, Tsudao's *katei kyoushi* (her governess, essentially) and of course, Toturi Tsudao herself. Yemi and Tsudao are sitting on the broad futon, Tsudao leaning into Yemi's shoulder while Aito stands over them. Tsudao and Yemi are both still upset as a result of hearing the battle between the Seppun and the Empress' Guard outside – Yemi much more so than Tsudao, who is really only upset because her teacher is.

The PCs must reach Tsudao and get her off of the floor before the rest of the guards arrive to kill them all. Getting Tsudao to come with them is not difficult – though she has shown remarkable prowess with a katana already, she is still only a 4 year old girl. If the PCs are wise, they will also bring Seppun Yemi with them, who can keep Tsudao calm and relatively focused as they leave the building. Convincing Yemi to come with them, though, will require a **Sincerity / Awareness** roll, TN 30; this TN is increased by +10 if Yemi has personally witnessed the PC committing violence upon the Seppun guards. (It would be higher still, except the Seppun already attacked the Empress' Guard, and thus Yemi isn't really sure who to trust right now.) Yemi is an attractive woman in her mid twenties,

trained as a courtier by the Otomo; her duties have largely focused on taking care of Tsudao since the death of the Empress' mother two years ago, however, and she sees herself less as a teacher and more as a surrogate parent to the little girl, especially since the death of Toturi last summer. She is not a warrior, but she has a tanto and will gladly die to try to protect Tsudao if need be.

Seppun Guardsmen

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 3	Water 3	Void 3
Honor 7.5		Status 3.0	Glory 4.5	
Armor TN: 25 (Light Armor)		Attack: 10k3 (katana, Complex)		
Reduction: 3		Damage: 8k2 (katana)		
Initiative: 6k3				
School/Rank: Seppun Guardsman 3				
<i>Never in Darkness:</i> adds +3k0 to resist Social Skills that would sway them from their duty; gains +1k1 on Investigation rolls to spot an ambush or surprise attack.				
<i>The Clouds Part:</i> may spend Void Point at start of turn to add (+Honor Rank) to result of attack and damage rolls for the turn				
<i>Sun's Light Reveals:</i> can spend a Void Point as Free Action to roll Investigation (Notice) / Perception , TN 25, to see through all disguises or illusions around you, normal or magical (Seppun Aito does not need to spend a Void Point to activate this Technique).				
Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 3, Courtier 2, Defense 3, Etiquette 3, Horsemanship 2, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation (Notice) 3, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 3, Jiu-jutsu 1, Lore: Bushido 2, Lore: Heraldry 2, Medicine 1, Meditation 2, Sincerity 2				
Mastery Abilities: can keep a Full Defense roll if desired, gains +1k0 to damage with swords, can draw swords as a Free Action, rerolls 9s and 10s on damage with swords				
Advantages / Disadvantages: Crab Hands, Irreproachable (Seppun Enuke also has Touched by Toshigoku) / Idealistic (Seppun Enuke also has Driven [Restore the Hantei to the Throne])				
Wounds: 15: +0; 21: +3; 27: +5; 33: +10; 39: +15; 45: +20; 51: Down; 57: Dead				

Seppun Toshiaki

Air 3	Earth 3	Fire 5	Water 3	Void 3
Reflexes 4	Willpower 4			
Honor 5.5		Status 3.8	Glory 4.5	
Armor TN: 33 (Defense Stance)		Spellcasting: Air 8k3, Earth 8k3, Fire 10k5, Water 7k3		
Initiative: 8k4				
School/Rank: Seppun Hidden Guard 4				

In Defense of the Throne: Gains a Free Raise on all spells cast in defense of member of Imperial families (except himself).

Spells Known: *Air:* By the Light of the Moon (ML 1), The Eye Shall Not See (ML 3); *Earth:* Armor of Earth (ML 1), Earth's Protection (ML 3), Force of Will (ML 2), Soul of Stone (ML 1); *Fire:* Extinguish (ML 1), Light of the Sun (ML 5), Hurried Steps (ML 2), Ravenous Swarms (ML 3), The Fires From Within (ML 2), Wall of Fire (ML 4), Ward of Purity (ML 2); *Water:* Path to Inner Peace (ML 1), Reflective Pool (ML 2)

Skills: Calligraphy 3, Courtier 3, Defense 4, Etiquette 3, Investigation (Notice) 4, Lore: Theology 3, Medicine 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 4, Spellcraft 5, Stealth 4

Mastery Abilities: can keep a Full Defense roll if desired, gains +1k0 to Spell Casting rolls; can make Simple Move Actions while using Stealth to move Water x5 feet

Advantages/Disadvantages: Crafty, Silent / Contrary, Small

Wounds: 15: +0; 21: +3; 27: +5; 33: +10; 39: +15; 45: +20; 51: Down; 57: Dead

Conclusion

Once the PCs have managed to get Tsudao into the secret passage, they find it is a simple matter to get her out of the palace entirely. They meet up with Katsuharu at the front gates of the Forbidden City, where he is standing just outside the activated wards with a set of horses and a tall wagon. The guards at the gate are unconscious, and Katsuharu holds a drawn yumi with a signal arrow resting on the string – as soon as the PCs mount and Tsudao is settled into the wagon, he fires the arrow in order to make sure the gate will be guarded after the PCs depart, then mounts as well and guides the PCs into the darkened city. The route they take is twisting and circuitous, but somehow manages to avoid any and all patrols, right up until the party reaches the city gates. When the gates do appear ahead, Katsuharu calmly rides up, hands over a set of travel papers, and collects them back just as quickly. With no greater fuss, the PCs are out of the city and on their way to meet with Kakita Toshiken, the Emerald Champion.

About a mile outside the city, Katsuharu draws rein near a small stand of trees, and a man dressed in the simple clothes of a traveling monk steps out of the foliage. The man is surrounded by the glow of a returned spirit, and any PCs who played through the adventure “All That Will Be Lost” recognize the monk Hitoshirenu, who was once Hantei XIV. Katsuharu calls out, “Good to see you, my friend! Please, get in

the wagon – you will be most comfortable there.” The monk bows and nods, and introduces himself to any of the PCs he does not already know.

Once he has settled in and the party is moving again, Hitoshirenu gestures for the PCs to maneuver their horses close enough to hear him speak. (The wagon does not move all that quickly.) He explains that he was partially responsible for arranging the night's events, having contacted Katsuharu after escaping Toshi no Meiyo Gisei the month before. “*You see, after I died and ascended to Tengoku, I continued to watch over my son and his son after him. Thus, I knew the truth of Hantei XVI's reign over the Empire. Let me tell you what I saw:*

“Hantei XVI took the throne early, as he had managed to persuade his father that he would be a brilliant and enlightened ruler. Unfortunately for all of Rokugan, this was only the first of his many terrible deceits. Hantei XVI was a cruel and utterly heartless despot, who personally tortured his political enemies, murdered his own wife, ordered the deaths of all his other siblings and attempted to poison his mother. When a tattooed monk from Chokai Province – what is now the land occupied by Nanashi Mura – asked a riddle in the Imperial Court that the Emperor found offensive, he ordered every samurai in the province killed; when two Mirumoto were reported to have survived, Hantei XVI had all 100 of the Seppun bushi he sent to carry out the task impaled on pikes along this very road. (That history is why the Dragon have not claimed Nanashi Mura for many centuries.) He had two of his political enemies publically executed by hanging, and then abused his divine right to declare new Fortunes by naming them the Fortunes of Dung and Torture, respectively.” Hitoshirenu looks especially outraged by this particular abuse.

“Eventually, the horrors he gleefully inflicted on the Empire were too much for even his own yojimbo to withstand. On the day he ordered Hida Tsuneo, his Emerald Champion, to kill his mother barehanded, the Seppun guards turned on him, aided by Hantei XVI's last surviving brother and his young son.” At this, Katsuharu flinches hard, and looks fixedly at the ground. After a long silence, during which Hitoshirenu patiently waits for him to speak, the Seppun finally says, “*It was... a difficult decision for all of us.*”

Hitoshirenu nods without reproof, then finishes his story. “*After his death, the reputation of the Hantei line was protected by the Ikoma and Miya historians, and within two generations, none remembered the terrors Hantei XVI had brought about. Normally, I would applaud their pious actions, but in this case, it*

has left Rokugan sadly unprepared for the danger Hantei Okucheo now poses. It will be up to us to see that the word is spread.”

A day’s travel later, the PCs reach Toshiken’s camp, and they must explain to the Emerald Champion both what happened in the Capital and why they have the Empress with them. Once he understands, though, he orders the army to move at once, asking the PCs for their recommendation as to where the young Empress should be taken, and following their advice. Most of the army cannot move as quickly as he needs it to, however, and he is forced to take a much smaller force to escort Tsudao, leaving the largest portion behind under the command of the Imperial General.

Reports emerge from the capital that the General refused to swear fealty directly to Okucheo, and instead reaffirmed his loyalty to Toturi Tsudao as the Empress. Though the rumors indicate the self-appointed Regent was less than pleased, the respect Murayasu earned during the fighting, and the support he enjoys from his troops still in the field, largely prevented Okucheo from taking any direct actions. Perhaps emboldened by this example, a handful of the daimyo who lent their troops to the Regent’s use followed suit and used similar wording to indicate that they are not yet fully committed to supporting Okucheo’s actions. (These are the daimyo listed in Appendix #3 as “Evenly Split”).

In the following weeks, the Empire solidifies into two opposing camps, each in support of either the Toturi or the Hantei lines. Fears of another Clan War, however, are forestalled by Seppun Murayasu’s proclamation of neutrality; he issues a declaration that reads, in part, “We are all servants of the Empress Tsudao and the Celestial Heavens; as such, my forces will enforce her peace against any and all who threaten it.” With the Imperial Legions and the army left behind by Toshiken, Murayasu has the might to enforce this decree. Two days later, Okucheo makes a play for Murayasu’s allegiance by issuing a command that promotes him to the equal of the Emerald Champion and gives him permanent command of the Emerald Legions (dividing them from the Emerald Magistrates); the next day, Toshiken issues the same decree in the name of Tsudao. Each also offers another decree – though the wording is slightly different, the meaning is the same for both:

“Not all daimyo in the Empire recognize the true Regent and have offered proper fealty to Tsudao’s divinely-chosen representative. As such, as is her right as the supreme head of the Order of the Brotherhood and the official speaker for the Celestial Heavens on earth, she has dissolved all oaths of fealty sworn to those who do not accept her Regent’s actions. Every

samurai is encouraged to offer their swords to daimyo who uphold the Empress’ true representative.”

(If any of the PCs wishes to do this, the consequences are outlined below in the “Rewards” section.)

Okucheo also announces the creation of a group he calls his Owls – his “watchers in the Empire.” Drawn from a group of investigators originally formed by Miya Rintaro, the mandate of the Owls is to “alert the Regent of any activities that might threaten the peace or stability of Rokugan.” Following Rintaro’s recent death, the organization will serve the Regent directly, apart from any other group’s interests. (Any PC who has the Eyes of the Miya cert is either inducted into the Owls at this point or gives up the cert, along with all its associated benefits.) The Owls are viewed with deep suspicion by most samurai aligned with Kakita Toshiken against the Hantei, but they have enough support that this new corps of agents is not actively opposed by any of them.

Any Crab PC who delivers O-Ushi’s message to Yasamura will be given distant but polite thanks by the Clan Champion’s husband before he moves out with his troops “on extended maneuvers” in the far northern reaches of the Crab lands. Further involvement with Yasamura’s plans (already some months in preparation) will require contacting the Campaign Admin. Yasamura does not know who to trust, and though he will provide something of a rallying point for those Crab daimyo who do not support the Hantei, he has no immediate intention of leading Crab troops against their own Clan.

In amidst all the other events, one small thing goes unnoticed by many – while the bulk of the Empress’ Guard was with Toshiken and accompanies him to wherever the PCs suggest Tsudao be taken, Matsu Goemon chooses the Three Cuts in order to expunge his failure to protect her from Okucheo in the first place. The rest of the Empress’ Guard, much chastened by the consequences of that failure, rededicate themselves to protecting the young Empress. Whether they have any greater success will remain to be seen.

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
Seeing Tsudao safely to Toshiken:	+2XP

Total Possible Experience: 4XP

Honor

Any PC who sees Tsudao safely to Toshiken gains +1 point of Honor, regardless of their Honor Rank.

Glory

Any PC who sees Tsudao safely to Toshiken gains +2 points of Glory, as large parts of what happened cannot be publically discussed.

Other Awards/Penalties

Successfully escorting Toturi Tsudao to the Emerald Champion gains the PC a Favor from both the Emerald Champion and from the Imperial Chancellor.

If a PC wishes to change their fealty to another daimyo, presumably based on their stated loyalty to either the Toturi or the Hantei Dynasties, they may do so without significant penalty. They will lose two points of Glory per Insight Rank and one point of Honor per Rank of Personal Status that they possess. (Note that these penalties are far lower than might have been expected without the decrees from both factions.) However, their Status and School affiliation will not change – they will essentially be placed in the service of the other daimyo doing the same sort of duties they were accustomed to for their previous daimyo. They do not gain a free rank in the Skill favored by their new daimyo, nor do they lose the Rank they received from the old one, but their Outfit bonus will change accordingly. (By the wording of the decrees, it may be possible to change Clan as

well; however, such an action is somewhat beyond the scope of this module and a player wishing to do so must contact the Campaign Admin.)

Alternately, any PC may choose to commit seppuku in objection to their lord's stated loyalties. If they do so, they will qualify for the "Truest Test" cert. If they wait until after performing this module's mission (escorting Tsudao to Kakita Toshiken), they will gain the full experience for this module rather than half.

If any PCs express a desire to offer their fealty to Hantei Okucheo directly (as they were, after all, going to be allowed to do if they had not instead left with Tsudao), Otomo Mitsuhide makes the appropriate arrangements. If, as is likely the case, Mitsuhide also promised such a PC that Okucheo would be given Cloud-cutter, he arranges for the PC(s) to personally present the sword to the Regent. This not only diffuses any lingering anger Okucheo might hold toward the PC(s) if their role in Tsudao's escape is known, but they are also granted a position in the Owls and receive the Eyes of the Miya cert.

GM Reporting

- Did Mashigai perform "seppuku" with O-Ushi's assistance, or was he simply killed outright by her? (Essentially, did the PCs object to Okucheo's declaration in court?)
- Did Mitsuhide promise to give Okucheo Cloud-cutter?
- Which, if any, of the Seppun guards were convinced to join up with the PCs, and did they wind up accompanying the PCs all the way back to Toshiken?
- Did Seppun Yemi reach Toshiken as well?
- Give the name, Clan, School and School Rank of any PC who chose either seppuku or died fighting during the mod.
- Where did the PCs recommend the Emerald Champion take the Empress?

GM must report this information BEFORE (11/25/20012) for it to have storyline effect

Appendix #1: NPCs

Seppun Katsuharu

Katsuharu is a man who knows all too well that he has lived too long and seen too much. What he experienced during the first reign of Hantei XVI has left him with memories he can never manage to quite leave behind; knowing that he failed to protect Kaede has only compounded his sense of self-loathing. Nevertheless, he still holds tightly to the one duty he has left: the protection of Toturi Tsudao. If she lives and keeps Hantei Okucheo from another horrific and bloody tenure as Emperor, then perhaps all that he has been through will somehow prove worthwhile.

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

Honor 7.2 Status 3.0 Glory 2.8

Armor TN: 30 (Light Armor) **Attack:** 10k4 (katana, Simple)

Reduction: 3 **Damage:** 7k2 (katana)

Initiative: 8k4

School/Rank: Seppun Guardsman 4

Never in Darkness: adds +4k0 to resist Social Skills that would sway him from his duty; gains +1k1 on

Investigation rolls to spot an ambush or surprise attack.

The Clouds Part: may spend Void Point at start of turn to add +7 to the result of attack and damage rolls for the turn

Sun's Light Reveals: can spend a Void Point as Free Action to roll **Investigation (Notice) / Perception**, TN 25, to see through all disguises or illusions around him, normal or magical.

Speed of Heaven: can make attacks as Simple actions with weapons with Samurai keyword

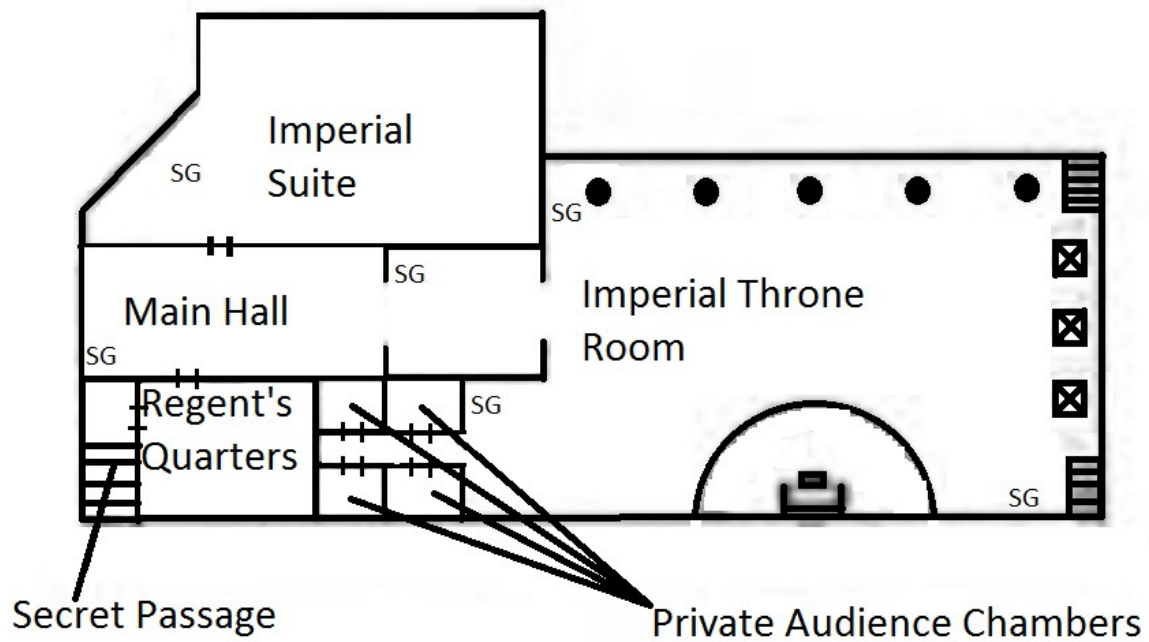
Skills: Athletics 2, Battle 4, Defense 5, Etiquette 4, Iaijutsu 5, Investigation (Notice) 5, Kenjutsu (Katana) 7, Kyujutsu 4, Lore: Bushido 3, Meditation 3, Sincerity 3

Mastery Abilities: can keep a Full Defense roll if desired, gains +1k0 to damage with swords, can ready swords as a Free Action, rerolls 9s and 10s on damage with swords; can reroll an Investigation (Search) roll once without penalty

Advantages/Disadvantages: Clear Thinker, Paragon of Honor, Touch of Yomi (Investigation) / Antisocial (Minor), Unluck

Wounds: 20: +0; 28: +3; 36: +5; 44: +10; 52: +15; 60: +20; 68: Down; 76: Dead

Appendix #2: Map of the Imperial Palace, Fifth Floor



Appendix #3: NPCs

The following is a list of provincial daimyo by Clan and which Dynasty they are currently supporting. If they are not listed, it can be assumed that they have yet to declare which side they will support. Certain daimyo have been courted by both factions; some of these have made a decision one way or the other, while others are still undecided.

Toturi: Full Support

Crab

Hida Dayu
Hida Rei
Hida Sorai
Kuni Roka
Kuni Tsubu
Toritaka Shippou
Yasuki Ebi

Crane

Asahina Manobu & Ume
Daidoji Nayoko
Daidoji Heizo & Raicho
Daidoji Tsukasa
Doji Hoshi
Doji Kei
Kakita Hisaki
Kakita Inejiro
Kakita Yae

Dragon

Agasha Hibiki
Agasha Odasake
Hitomi Anako
Kitsuki Rikuto
Kitsuki Shichirou & Hara
Mirumoto Akashi & Tsukiyama
Mirumoto Isao
Mirumoto Nobu

Lion

Akodo Daisuke
Akodo Kasumi
Akodo Kohaku
Ikoma Bokkai & Suzuko
Ikoma Yachi
Kitsu Koan
Matsu Akane

Mantis

Moshi Reiko
Tsuruchi Meiji
Tsuruchi Totoya
Yoritomo Date

Phoenix

Agasha Hama

Agasha Manabu
Isawa Mitsukuni

Scorpion

Shosuro Atsumori
Shosuro Ryouta
Soshi Toshiro

Unicorn

Shinjo Mei-Ling
Utaku Ju-Jing
Utaku Qiu Mei

Sparrow

Suzume Gesshin

Toturi Support with Hantei Influence

Crab

Hiruma Yabu*

Scorpion

Bayushi Makoto & Atsuko

Hantei Support with Toturi Influence

Mantis

Yoritomo Tadanobu

Phoenix

Asako Toson

Evenly Split

Crab

Kaiu Mai
Yasuki Minoru

Lion

Akodo Kyuwa

Mantis

Yoritomo Utaemon

Phoenix

Isawa Mariko

Scorpion

Bayushi Hotaka
Soshi Ayane

Hantei: Full Support

Crab

Hida Tatsuya

Crane

Daidoji Nyoko

Lion

Akodo Hiraku
Ikoma Sho

Mantis

Yoritomo Marihito

Phoenix

Shiba Gidayu

Scorpion

Yogo Tobusa

Unicorn

Horiuchi Hachirou
Moto Su-Tai

Fox

Kitsune Teika